Draft Community Engagement Strategy

Including Community Participation Plan



Central Coast Council



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Darkinjung country, and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to these lands and waterways and extend this acknowledgement to the homelands and stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Central Coast Council is committed to proactively engaging with the community and key stakeholders on major issues and plans affecting the future of the region and activities that have significant impact on the community. Council staff conduct a great number of engagement activities each year to better inform Council's decision-making process.

This strategy helps improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve best outcomes. I am pleased that it also incorporates a revised Community Participation Plan to provide a single, cohesive document for the community.

As you will read, this strategy identifies our key focus areas for the next four years and considers ways to deliver more inclusive, accessible and meaningful engagement with the public, particularly First Nations people and equity-deserving communities.

Council recognises the value to be gained by seeking to engage with the community - it helps strengthen the relationship between Council and the public, and shapes Council's policies, programs, and services to meet the diverse needs of the region.

I believe that by genuinely carrying out community engagement, the community has an opportunity to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality Council facilities and services which meet community needs and aspirations, ultimately contributing to the realisation of a better region.

Guided by this comprehensive strategy, Council looks forward to engaging with members of the community to help shape positive change now and into the future.

David Farmer
Chief Executive Officer Central Coast Council
June 2024

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Introduction



Guiding Council's decisions

Engaging with our community is essential if we are to make informed decisions that reflect community priorities. Accessible, genuine and consistent engagement builds trust between Council, our community and stakeholders.

This Community Engagement Strategy outlines how we will ensure our community is aware of ways to participate in decision-making and have a say on the way we deliver services.

The strategy also outlines:



The opportunities for our community and stakeholders to provide input on our activities are as vast as the range of services and infrastructure we provide. This strategy is designed to give clear guidance on what the community can expect when participating in our decision-making process.

Background

Since Central Coast Council was formed in 2016, our organisation has gone through significant change. Throughout this journey, our community engagement team has led the organisation through a fundamental cultural shift, aimed at improving the way we engage with our community to better influence decisions that impact their lives.

This progressive shift has been underpinned by our Engagement Framework, first adopted in 2017, and supported by a program to build staff skills across departments, and to create a culture of engagement across our organisation.

As a result, we are now engaging more than ever. Our community continues to seek greater access to information and transparency in decision-making, and wants to play an active role in shaping the future of the region.

We want to keep empowering our community as our organisation moves into a new direction.

This strategy serves as a refreshed point of reference and benchmark, providing consistent and reliable guidance to ensure we continue to hear our community's voices. It is community participation that will help us make balanced and sustainable decisions for the future of Council and the region.

Legislation

This strategy is guided by NSW Government legislation and also links directly with many of Council's other plans, policies and strategies. Recent changes to Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993, which requires each NSW council to develop and implement a four-year Community Engagement Strategy, has been a primary consideration in the development of this strategy.

In this context, the principles of our existing Engagement Framework have now been incorporated into this strategy to create a single, cohesive document and one point of reference for our staff and community. The strategy also incorporates information on how the community can get involved in local and region-wide land use planning to meet requirements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

Key legislation informing this Strategy includes:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Crown Land Management Act 2016*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Water Management Act 2000*

In addition to this document, we also have a dedicated Engagement and Education Strategy for Council's water and sewer service, which sets out how we will engage, communicate, educate and continue to improve our water and sewer services.

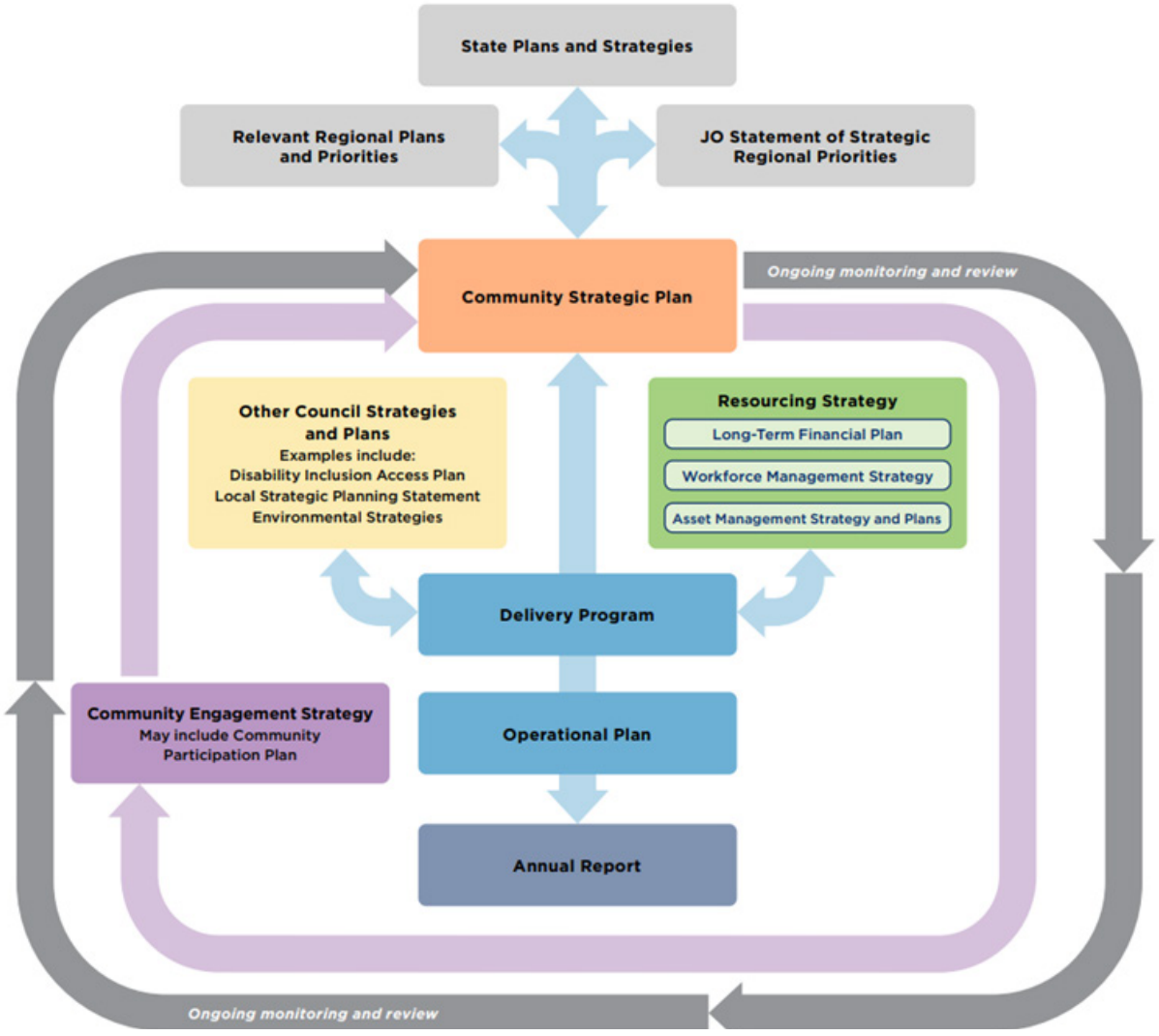
Integration with our plans and strategies

Engaging with our community is essential when we develop strategies, plans and policies.

These documents are part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework that all NSW Councils are required to follow under the *Local Government Act 1993*. This framework underpins how we plan at Council and is fundamentally based on community desires and aspirations for the future.

We engage at every level of planning, from the overarching long-term Community Strategic Plan and our four-year Delivery Program, down to individual projects in our yearly Operational Plan. Our community has influence across a broad spectrum of Council activities.

Ongoing engagement with our community also helps up advocate in regional, state and federal planning matters, as well as in local place-based planning.



Our community





Community snapshot

A strong and positive relationship with our community is vital to a happy and inclusive region for all.

As a council serving a large population, we interact with thousands of individuals and groups every year. Our population is also growing and changing, bringing new challenges and opportunities to ensure we plan a future that supports our entire community.

Our region boasts a diverse population profile, with residents across various age groups. We also have a significant population of families and retirees, who are attracted by the coastal lifestyle and proximity to Sydney. Seasonal fluctuations see many holidaymakers and visitors come to the Coast, bringing economic value to the region. Our diversity creates an opportunity to hear from a range of voices whenever we engage.

Population

346,596

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population: 4.9%

Source: profile.id using 2021 Census data

Disability

There are around 22,000 people on the Central Coast (about 6.4% of us) who need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability

Top three age groups

60-64 years – 6.5%
55-59 years – 6.5%
50-54 years – 6.4%

A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN AT HOME

12.3%

Households

Couples with children: 27.1%
Couples without children: 25.8%
One parent families: 12.8%
Group household: 2.8%
Lone person: 26%
Other: 5.5%

Workforce participation

Not in work: 4.7%

Working full time: 50.1%

Working part-time: 33.4%

Unpaid work and care: 69.4%

Education

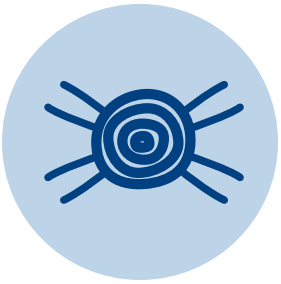
Completed year 12 and/or tertiary training: 61.6%

Our stakeholders

With such a large population and demographic diversity, we need to understand who makes u community, and how they may be affected by the decisions we make. We have identified some stakeholder groups often involved in our community engagement activities.



Central Coast residents and ratepayers



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals



People with a disability



Culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)



Tourists and visitors



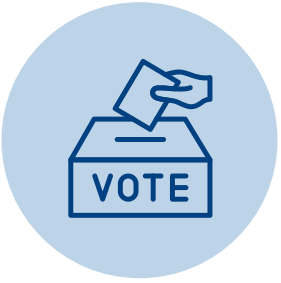
Local business community



Community groups and organisations



Council's advisory committees and community reference groups



Elected representatives



Government agencies including Transport for NSW, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation, NSW Health, Department of Education, Office of Local Government, Destination NSW, NSW Office of Sport, Crown Lands.

Our principles and commitments



Our approach

Our commitment to community engagement is deeply rooted in the belief that those affected by decisions have the right to participate in the decision-making process.

Our principles and commitments underpin our approach to community engagement and are interconnected with our Customer Experience Framework.

Our approach reflects the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

Principle	Commitment
Respect and transparency: Engagement is genuine and purposeful	**We will:** • consult when needed and use the information gathered in a meaningful way • respect your time and listen to you • engage at a level that is appropriate to the possibility to influence • share the responsibility, trust and transparency.
Access and inclusion: It is easy to access and participate in engagement	**We will:** • seek a diversity of views and perspectives • provide feedback to the community as to how their input contributed to decision-making • endeavour to identify and remove barriers to participation • use a range of opportunities and techniques to encourage participation, and increase awareness and understanding for all who may be affected by or interested in the outcome • work in partnership with relevant community groups, State and Federal government, local government partners, and / or other stakeholders internally within Council.
Clarity: Engagement is clear and simple.	**We will:** • have genuine and open dialogue with the community • clearly communicate the intention, scope and outcomes of the consultation • use plain language and avoid jargon to provide clear explanation • make information available in accessible formats.
Accountability and improvement: Engagement is continually evaluated and improved.	**We will:** • seek to maintain consistent standards and levels of quality • share results internally and work together to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue • evaluate engagement efforts and consistently seek to learn and improve practice.
Capacity: Engagement is for everyone.	**We will:** • build the community's capacity to contribute, by educating and empowering both the community and staff so that they may participate in meaningful, two-way collaboration.

Spectrum of public participation

The International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum has six levels of engagement that correspond to the community's increasing level of influence on decision-making. We use the IAP2 Spectrum to help us to determine the appropriate level of input from the community and the role the community will have in the decision-making process.

INCREASING LEVEL OF COMMUNITY IMPACT →					
INCREASE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT →					
INFORM	**EDUCATE**	**CONSULT**	**INVOLVE**	**COLLABORATE**	**EMPOWER**
PURPOSE: Goal					
To provide the community with information to assist their understanding of the issue, problem, opportunities or solutions.	Provide the community with the knowledge and skills to enable them to make an informed decision.	To obtain feedback and information about attitudes, opinions and preferences that assist Council in its decision-making processes.	To work on an ongoing basis with the community to ensure their concerns, ideas and hopes are listened to and understood.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives, sharing of resources, and the discovery of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders.
PURPOSE: Our commitment					
We will keep you informed.	We will equip you with an understanding of the issues.	We will listen to you, acknowledge your concerns and hopes, and provide feedback on if or how your input influenced the decision.	We will give you a role in shaping the project, and input into decisions, which will be visible throughout the process.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and incorporate this into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
PURPOSE: Methods					
Council's websites Social media E-news Advertisements Public notices Signs Letters Flyers Rates Newsletters Letterbox drops	Information sheets Online resources Workshops Webinars	Your Voice, Our Coast website Public exhibitions Pop-up events and drop-in sessions Workshops Focus groups Community meetings Surveys Stakeholder interviews School engagement Place-based engagement Public forums Public hearings	Project steering groups Working groups and community reference groups Deliberative processes Council committees and advisory group	Community partnerships Co-design workshops	Referendums

Adapted from: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and AA1000SE

Engagement in practice



There is no one-size-fits all approach when it comes to engaging with our community, and we use a diverse range of methods to help us reach and hear from those who are affected by a plan, strategy or project. The following outlines how we typically plan and deliver engagement, and the methods we use.

The engagement process

1. **Defining the project**
2. **Identifying key stakeholders**
3. **Planning engagement**
4. **Carrying out engagement (can be in multiple stages)**
5. **Outcomes of engagement reported to the community**
6. **Council decision**
7. **Council decision reported to the community**
8. **Evaluate effectiveness of engagement**



Our methods

We tailor how we share information and engage depending on the project or issue, and how much the community can get invovled. We may use a single method for simple engagment, or a variety of methods for more complex engagement.

Level of engagement	Method	What is it?
Inform	Council's websites, social media, e-news	Regular email newsletters and updates about Council activities, events, and opportunities for engagement.
	Advertisements, public notices, signs, letters, flyers, rates newsletters, letterbox drops	Information published in local newspapers, on our website, and through other channels to inform the community about important decisions, consultations, and developments.
	Customer service centre and libraries	Locations for the community to seek information about projects that are open for community feedback and receive help with submitting feedback.
Educate	Information sheets, online resources, workshops, webinars	Various methods to educate the community on specific issues. Depending on the subject matter these methods may include a hard copy information sheet that includes key facts, interactive online-resources (such as water and sewer educational games) or an in-person workshop or webinar with Council staff or subject matter experts.
Consult	Your Voice, Our Coast website	Our online engagement hub, allowing our community to view current engagement opportunities, make formal submissions, take surveys, use interactive mapping and ideas boards.
	Public exhibitions	An official process with a set timeframe when a draft document is released for consultation and feedback. Feedback can be provided through a submission form, email or letter.
	Pop-up events and drop-in sessions	Informal opportunities where our community can speak to our staff and have their say about projects, plans or works. Pop-ups are face-to-face, and drop-ins can be virtual or face-to-face.
	Workshops, focus groups and community meetings	Structured forums where community members can discuss issues, voice concerns, and provide feedback on specific projects or proposals. These can be virtual or face-to-face.
	Surveys	Surveys and feedback forms on various topics to gauge public opinion, assess community needs, and understand preferences. These surveys can be online, offline and telephone. We also conduct surveys to gauge customer satisfaction of our services.
	Stakeholder interviews	One-on-one interviews to gain in-depth insight from community members. These can be done via phone, virtually or in person.
	School engagement	Workshops and other activities in schools to ensure we hear from school-aged young people.

Level of engagement	Method	What is it?
Consult	Place-based engagement	A holistic engagement approach where a local community can discuss and provide feedback on several Council projects and plans based on a geographic area. We use a combination of digital and face-to-face engagement methods.
	Public forums	May be prior to each Ordinary Meeting of Council to hear oral submissions from members of the community on items of business to be considered at the meeting. Public forums may also be held prior to Extraordinary Council Meetings and meetings of Committees of the Council.
	Public hearings	Public hearings may be held as part on an inquiry or other regulatory process and the public can hear details of submissions and ask questions of responsible authorities in a public forum.
Involve	Project steering groups, working groups and community reference groups	Established for major projects and initiatives, involving community members, stakeholders, and experts. These groups offer ongoing input and advice on specific issues or developments.
	Deliberative processes	An approach to decision-making where community members engage in active dialogue, exchange of ideas, and collaborative decision-making.
	Council committees and advisory groups	Formal committees of Council where community participants and experts help Council strategically plan a range of focus areas.
Collaborate	Community partnerships	Collaborations with community organisations, non-profits, and local businesses to promote community engagement and deliver services more effectively.
	Co-design processes	A human-centred research approach to identify pain points and develop innovative solutions.
Empower	Referendums	Voters are asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' to a particular question or questions. Voting in referendums is compulsory for enrolled voters. A referendum is required to change the number of Councillors, or ward structure, for example.

Risks and opportunities

We want engagement to be consistent, simple and help people both understand an issue and participate. While engaging with the community on every issue is not always possible, we strive to ensure the community is well-informed about highly impactful issues, plans and projects.

This relies on us providing the necessary information for community members to form opinions and understand how we make decisions. We also recognise that a range of risks can arise, limiting the success of engagement. We look for opportunities to overcome these when we plan engagement.

These can include:

- **Communities and stakeholders with divergent or conflicting issues.** We seek to engage those affected, understand different and competing needs or expectations, so that we can determine a balanced and appropriate response.
- **Lack of balance between weak and strong stakeholders.** We plan engagement and use accessible and inclusive methods so all voices have an equal opportunity to be heard.
- **Difficulty engaging hard-to-reach groups.** We aim to create targeted and accessible engagement activities so we can hear from those who have barriers to participation. Methods may include one-on-one interviews, partnerships with community organisations or service providers, and working with Council's advisory committees.
- **Engagement fatigue.** Where possible, we combine engagement based on theme, or a geographic location to create a more holistic and efficient way for our community to participate, for example, our place-based engagement model.
- **Lack of trust in Council.** We refer to our principles when planning engagement, continue to evaluate and improve the way we engage, and be transparent in our decision-making.

By understanding these risks, planning engagement early and adhering to our principles, we aim to overcome or limit the impact of these challenges.

Balanced decision making
We do our best to plan and deliver services to meet the needs and aspirations of our community. Alongside community feedback, we also need to consider technical and environmental constraints, cost, safety and sustainability when making decisions.

When we will engage

Engagement is an intentional process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders, and communities to shape decisions or actions in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome. There are numerous reasons we engage.

- **Project engagement:** We seek community views and input into plans, strategies and projects. This engagement can occur as a separate stage before the draft document or design is placed on public exhibition for further feedback.
- **Community outrage or frustration:** We may engage in response to an issue or proposal if the community has indicated they have significant concerns, or when issues have not been adequately considered.
- **Community satisfaction:** We regularly seek insights into our performance in the delivery of key services, for example customer satisfaction surveys and recent service experience surveys. This ongoing feedback ensures our services meet community needs and is part of our Customer Experience Strategy.
- **Council resolution:** The elected Council may decide to change its services, regulations or initiate a major development, and we seek the community's view on the matter.
- **Statutory engagement:** Our engagement activities are often a requirement under legislation, such as the Local Government Act 1993, and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- **Regulatory engagement:** We engage on how much we should charge for rates, and water and sewer services. This engagement forms part of our regular submissions to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), which determines the final prices.

When we won't engage

Engagement is not done on every project undertaken by Council. We do not engage on projects where:

- There is no scope for community influence
- Public health and safety are at risk
- We are responding to an emergency
- A matter is strictly confidential or commercially sensitive
- Legal constraints.

Place-based engagement

From time to time, we engage in targeted geographical areas, or 'places'. During these activities, we encourage the community to learn about and have their say on plans, strategies, and projects from across departments, providing a 'one-stop-shop' experience. Multiple departments come together to have conversations with locals on planning, parks, facilities, environmental initiatives and roads projects, to name a few. Engagement is both online and face-to-face, allowing everyone to get involved.

Our place-based model emerged from community feedback - a desire to tell us what mattered about their local area in a time and place convenient to them. It helps us understand community goals, aspirations and priorities so we can work across Council departments and, where possible, with other government agencies, to deliver a more cohesive and collaborative approach to planning, projects and services.

Closing the loop

Once we have sought and received feedback from the community and made a decision, it is important to go back to our community and explain the nature of feedback we received and how it was used to come to a decision. The reason this is so important is that often there are many perspectives and ideas put forward from our community on any specific issue. We must weigh up this community input and use it to take a course of action. Naturally, not everyone will agree with our decisions, however communicating how feedback was used provides greater transparency and also acknowledges the efforts of those who provided feedback.

Depending on the project we aim to report back on engagement outcomes by updating the Your Voice, Our Coast project pages, publishing engagement reports or snapshots, and contacting participants and registered stakeholders with the outcomes. An overview of engagement outcomes is also included in reports for Council meetings.



Roles and responsibilities



Our key plans are guided by our community, in particular our Community Strategic Plan. This document is a ten-year plan that captures community aspirations and social, economic and environmental priorities. The below table outlines how the Mayor, Councillors, the CEO and staff will work together to ensure we engage on this important plan and activities under our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

Role	Responsibilities
Mayor	• Act as the spokesperson for Council to promote engagement on key strategic plans, including developing the Community Strategic Plan. • Together with the Chief Executive Officer, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between Council and the local community. • Promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.
Mayor and Councillors	• Promote engagement on key strategic plans, including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the Community Strategic Plan. Participate in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, including the Community Strategic Plan. • Endorse the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. Participate in community engagement activities alongside Council staff, while observing the Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy.
Chief Executive Officer	• Oversee preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents and endorsement by the elected Council. • Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the Integrated Planning and Reporting process in a meaningful way.
Staff	• Work with and support the Chief Executive Officer in the development of the strategy and plans to engage the community. • Implement the Community Engagement Strategy and provide timely advice to the Chief Executive Officer on community views.

Source: Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook 2021, NSW Office of Local Government



Our focus areas



Our focus areas

We have developed key areas we will focus on in the next four years:

Timely engagement:

- continue to engage with the community effectively at the right time, and where there is room for influence
- avoid engagement prior to the December and January holiday period, where possible
- incorporate community feedback where feasible.

Internal collaboration and processes:

- use internal working groups, and define project scopes and objectives
- collaborate with experts and cross-functional teams
- continue to integrate websites and social media platforms to provide a central source of information
- Regular monitoring and updating of internal processes and procedures to ensure best practice.

Updating communication and engagement channels:

- explore new ways, both virtual and offline, to improve community engagement and adapt to changing community needs to provide a central source of information.

Closing the feedback loop:

- provide regular updates and information on how community input influenced decision-making
- provide updates to stakeholders as projects, plans and strategies progress, including when matters go to Council, and when adopted.

Leadership and organisational culture:

- support leaders in fostering a culture of engagement and support staff to deliver quality engagement across our teams.

External partnerships:

- collaborate with neighbouring councils and government agencies, and partner with them to engage on shared projects.

Diverse approaches:

- continue to use a variety of engagement methods and employ diverse approaches to ensure engagement is inclusive and accessible.

First Nations:

- Develop a First Nations Engagement Framework, which is also a commitment in our First Nations Accord.

Customer service reviews:

- continue to conduct regular customer experience research, to understand satisfaction levels and pain points among participants in various engagement activities.

Staff training and skill development:

- provide staff with up-to-date tools, resources and training to enhance community engagement skills, and reward staff achievement.

Place-based engagement:

- continue to deliver place-based engagement to understand the specific goals, aspirations and priorities of local communities to inform planning and service delivery.

Evaluation and continuous improvement:

- employ a variety of methods for the community and our staff to reflect and report on engagement experiences.
- use feedback to evaluate engagement activities and outcomes to inform how we can keep improving.
- carry out ongoing research to understand barriers to the community's ability or desire to engage with us.

Measuring the success of engagement



Measuring the success of engagement

We measure the success of engagement by asking ourselves these questions:



Were activities and outcomes aligned with the objectives and principles of this strategy, as well as the specific objectives in our project-based engagement plans?

Were all those affected by a decision reached and given the opportunity to have their say?



Was the feedback we received relevant, and were we clear in what we were asking and why?



What feedback did we receive from the community about their engagement experience?



Were participation numbers sufficient in the context of the project?



Were participants informed of the outcome?

Engaging on local and regional land use planning

(Community Participation plan)



Effective planning shapes the future of the Central Coast while ensuring we protect the things that are most valued by our community. It is more important than ever to make sure we have the right balance of housing, infrastructure and services, while facilitating employment opportunities and looking after our beautiful environment.

This is a big task – made even bigger by the large geographic area we are responsible for. Community participation is essential to inform how we make planning decisions within the legislative framework in which we operate.

What is our Community Participation Plan (CPP)?

The Central Coast Community Participation Plan is designed to make community participation in planning matters easier and clearer for the community.

We have a responsibility to deliver the objectives of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) including the promotion of orderly and economic use of land, facilitating ecologically sustainable development and promoting social and economic wellbeing. Community participation refers to how we will engage with our community in our work under the EP&A Act.

The NSW Government requires Council to prepare a CPP to identify how and when we will inform and engage with our community as we carry out our planning functions.

How to participate in planning matters

There are a number of ways to get involved in planning matters:

- Make a formal submission to a proposal
- Visit Council's Administration Centre, website or libraries to access public exhibition documents
- Contact a Council officer if you require further information.

Role of exhibition

There are several factors that influence the type and level of community participation carried out during the planning and assessment process. These factors may include the nature, size and potential impact of the project. We will use a variety of notification methods to ensure the community is informed of planning projects and to outline opportunities to participate.

How we will notify

This table outlines planning functions and how we will notify the community.

	Written notification or letter	Newspaper advertisement	Central Coast Council website	Physical notice displayed on site
Draft Community Participation Plan	N	N The *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* was permanently amended in April 2020 to remove requirements for newspaper advertising in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	Y	N
Draft local strategic planning statements	N		Y	N
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to gateway determination	N		Y	N
Draft development control plans	N		Y	N
Draft contribution plans	N		Y	N
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	Y *	N	Y	N
Application for development consent for designated development	Y	Y	Y	Y
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations.	Y	Y	Y	N
DA – application for development consent for State significant development	Advertisement of State Significant development is managed by the NSW Department of Planning.			

* There are some instances where notification of a Development Application may not be required. This is generally for minor amendments that do not affect a site. Please contact us or visit our website for further advice.

Consideration of submissions

The purpose of advertising proposed development is to enable the community to participate in the planning process through submissions. We have a duty to consider all submissions received during the assessment process.

For a submission to be recognised as an individual submission it must be unique and distinctive. For example, form letters and petitions will be treated as one unique submission. Similarly, a single submission signed by 10 individuals or identical submissions received from the same address will be counted as one unique submission.

Once submissions are considered, any concerns raised through this process may be conveyed to the applicant for response. Notice of the application's determination will be provided to every individual who makes a submission. In the case of submissions with multiple signatories, the notification will be extended to the first signatory.

Re-notifications/ re-advertisement

Where an applicant makes amendments to their application before a determination is reached, we may re-notify or re-advertise the application if, in the opinion of Council, the environmental impact of the development has significantly increased.

To qualify as a submission, the submission must:



be in writing by email or letter



be submitted within the nominated exhibition time period



reference the application, policy or plan being exhibited



be based on planning grounds in support or objection of the proposal



include the name, address and daytime telephone of the author

Submissions must be lodged with Council by 5pm on the final day of the exhibition period.

Submission process for development applications

Submission is made to Council and assigned to corresponding DA » **Submission author or lead petitioner's details are recorded, and submission is acknowledged** » **Council officer receives notification of submission** » **Submission is considered in assessing the DA** » **Person making submission is formally notified of outcome**

The Joint Regional Planning Panel

In NSW, regionally significant development is assessed by a Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) appointed by the State Government and relevant Councils. The JRPP has the role of making independent and merit-based decisions on planning that may affect the region.

The mandate of the JRPP is specific and more information on its role can be found on the JRPP page of Council's website.



Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan notification requirements

Local Environmental Plans are the main environmental planning tool developed by a local planning authority to shape the future of communities and ensuring local development is done appropriately. An LEP sets the planning framework for a local government area.

The Central Coast Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2022 and Central Coast Development Control Plan (CCDCP) 2022 came into force on 1 August 2022. The CCDCP contains Chapter 1.2 Notification of Development Proposals. Chapter 1.2 identifies the requirements for the notification and advertising of development and other applications.

This chapter may be amended from time to time to reflect changes to legislation or as a result of community feedback when sought.

Planning instruments and minimum exhibition timeframes

This table outlines the planning functions, strategies and minimum exhibition timeframes as set out in Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act.

The number of days in an exhibition period are calendar days, not business days.

Note: As stated in the EP&A Act, if the exhibition period is due to close on a weekend or a public holiday we may extend the exhibition to finish on the first available work day. The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.

Project timelines

Exhibition timeframes are often just one part of a project's timeline, and some projects can take multiple years from conception and planning, to completion. It is important to know that your feedback is considered and referenced throughout the entire timeline of a project, even if it was provided at the start of the project.

Planning instrument	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft Community Participation Plan (this document)	28 Days
Draft local strategic planning statements Local strategic planning statements are a 20-year planning vision, including land use, infrastructure and sustainability objectives that demonstrate how a Council will meet the community's needs into the future.	28 Days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to gateway determination Planning proposals may be initiated by Council or submitted by applicants seeking an amendment to the Central Coast Local Environmental Plan or State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). The notification process will vary based on the size and complexity of the proposal.	Various
Draft development control plans Development Control Plans provide detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in local environmental plans. The Central Coast Local Environmental Plan 2022 and Central Coast Development Control Plan 2022 came into force in August 2022.	28 Days

Planning instrument	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft contribution plans Development Contribution Plans are contributions that refer to the money collected from developments to help maintain and build new infrastructure across the Central Coast, such as playgrounds, community facilities and local roads.	28 Days
Application for development consent (Development application/DA) A development application is a formal application to Council for permission to carry out a new development. There are multiple levels of development types, each with different requirements. Specific information is found under Central Coast Development Control Plan 2022 - Chapter 1.2 Notification of Development Proposals.	14 days (to 21 days for certain land uses)
Application for development consent for designated development Designated development refers to developments that are high-impact developments (e.g. likely to generate pollution) or are located in or near an environmentally sensitive area (e.g. a coastal wetland)	28 Days
Re-exhibition of any amended application for certain land uses	21 Days
Review of determination	14 Days
Environmental impact statement (EIS) obtained under Division 5.1 An EIS prepared for development under Part 5 of the EP&A Act for certain development such as state significant development.	28 Days
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.2 State significant infrastructure includes major transport and services development such as rail and road infrastructure, pipelines and development in National Parks.	28 Days
Local approvals policy A local approvals policy sets out the requirements for activities which require approval under Section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. It also establishes exemptions for which certain activities do not require application under Section 68 and relevant criteria that must be satisfied for each activity.	A Local Approvals Policy or amendment to an existing Local Approvals Policy is to be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days and submissions accepted for a minimum of 42 days from commencement of the exhibition period.
Non-statutory strategic planning matters There are a number of non-statutory planning matters that still require adequate public exhibition as part of Council's commitment to community engagement. These projects, studies and documents may include, but are not limited to: • Sector studies (e.g., new housing or economic development studies). • Masterplans and place plans • Precinct or centre studies/plans (e.g. Public domain plans).	28 days (not legislated)

Central Coast Council

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