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Objective

The purpose of this policy is to outline Mid-Western Regional Council's approach and commitment in engaging with the community and stakeholders as part of the decision-making process. Council's goal is to create a transparent and collaborative relationship with the community that promotes trust, respect, and understanding.

Legislative requirements

Local Government Act 1993, Section 8A

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)

Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2017

Related policies and plans

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Participation Plan
- Community Engagement Procedure

Policy

Scope

This policy is relevant across all departments and activities of Council where community consultation or engagement is undertaken as part of the decision-making process. This applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and partners who represent Mid-Western Regional Council when engaging the community and stakeholders.

Policy Statement

Mid-Western Regional Council is committed to engaging with the community to serve in an open, respectful, and transparent manner.

Council's Community Engagement Procedure will be used to guide the planning and delivery of all community and stakeholder engagements.

Council's approach to community engagement is guided by the following principles:

Respect: We recognise and respect the diversity of opinions, cultures, and perspectives in the community. We will listen to and consider community feedback in our decision-making processes.

Transparency: We will be transparent in our communication with the community, providing timely and accurate information about our activities, projects, and decisions.

Integrity: We will act with integrity in all our interactions with the community, adhering to ethical and moral principles and ensuring that our actions align with our values and strategic goals.

Innovation: We will seek out innovative and creative approaches to community engagement, exploring new methods and technologies to better connect with the community we serve.

Accountability: We will be accountable to the community we serve, regularly evaluating and reporting on our performance and seeking feedback from the community on how we can improve.

Recognition: We will recognise and value the contributions of community members, organisations, and groups to our work. We will acknowledge and celebrate achievements and contributions to our shared goals.

These principles guide Mid-Western Regional Council's approach to community engagement and reflect Council's commitment to building a transparent, collaborative, and respectful relationship with the community and stakeholders.

Roles and Responsibilities

All employees, volunteers, contractors, and partners who represent Mid-Western Regional Council when engaging the community and stakeholders have a responsibility to adhere to this policy and to actively engage with the community in a respectful, open, and collaborative manner.

The following individuals have specific responsibilities related to community engagement:

Councillors: Responsible for decision-making whilst considering community feedback in conjunction with accompanying information such as technical, financial, legislative requirements. As well as:

- Promote engagement on key strategic plans;
- Participate in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents; and
- Promote partnership between key stakeholders and Council.

Council Staff: Responsible for engaging with the community in a respectful, open, and collaborative manner in their day-to-day work ensuring the following:

- Council policies and procedures are followed;
- Community engagement is carried out as per the policies and procedures approved by Council;
- Council is provided with technical, financial and legislative information and reports to assist Council to make informed decisions;
- Feedback is analysed from community engagement activities and this information is used to provide informed recommendations to Council;
- The outcome of decisions made by Council are communicated to the Community;
- The effectiveness of community engagement activities is evaluated; and
- Adequate feedback is relayed to stakeholders and participants in engagement activities.

Consultants and Contractors: Deliver engagement activities in line with Council policy and procedures as directed by Council Staff.

Evaluation and Review

Mid-Western Regional Council will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and our community engagement efforts to ensure that they align with our values, and strategic goals. Council will review and update this policy as necessary to reflect changes in our organisation and the community we serve.

Conclusion

Community engagement is a vital part of Mid-Western Regional Council's work. Council is committed to creating a transparent and collaborative relationship with the community we serve that promotes trust, respect, and understanding. This policy outlines Council's approach to community engagement and provides guidance to all individuals who represent our organisation in any capacity.