

Community Engagement Policy

1. Document control

Policy Number:	<i>13/16094</i>	Council Resolution Number:	<i>2022-26/1050</i>
Document Owner:	<i>Director Corporate Services, Strategy and Innovation</i>	Document Author:	<i>Senior Manager Economic Activation and Strategy</i>
Approval Date	<i>18 August 2026</i>	Next Review Date:	<i>18 August 2030</i>

2. Statement of Intent

- 2.1. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that The Barossa Council (Council) meets its legislative obligations under section 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* and the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025, regarding public consultation by:
 - 2.1.1 Meeting the requirements set out in the Act and the Charter.
 - 2.1.2 Using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process.
 - 2.1.3 Providing for appropriate participation by the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties.
 - 2.1.4 Using feedback to enhance decision making.
 - 2.1.5 Providing information on the reasons for decisions or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.
- 2.2. This policy is a statement of Council's general position in relation to community engagement (public consultation), as required under the Act and the Charter.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. Council is committed to open, accountable, and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and engagement between Council and the community. Including communities in decision-making processes is important to the successful development of appropriate and informed decisions and policies by Council.
- 3.2. Council's community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of Council. Council recognises that a community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest) or a community of affiliation, practice or identity (such as industry or sporting clubs).
- 3.3. The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfil Council's obligations under section 50(A) of the Act. The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this policy:
 - 3.3.1 Community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of and to participate in relevant processes;

- 3.3.2 Information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;
- 3.3.3 Participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;
- 3.3.4 Participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and
- 3.3.5 insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of Council.
- 3.4. When required Council will undertake public consultation in accordance with mandatory requirements as detailed within the Act, the Charter and this policy.
- 3.5. Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine in relation to a matter for which it is required by the Act and/or the Charter to follow its community engagement policy, to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this policy. However, council is not required to consider and/or determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter before taking any action or making any decision in relation to such a matter.
- 3.6. **Public Consultation Categories**
- 3.6.1 The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires public consultation to be undertaken.
- 3.6.2 The Charter establishes different categories of consultation for matters, as follows:
- **Significant – Annual business plan and rating policy**
 - Adopting an Annual Business Plan - section 123(3)(b)
 - Changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating - section 151(5)(e)
 - **Significant**
 - Representation reviews - section 12(7)
 - Development and review of Strategic Management Plans - section 122(6)
 - Changes to use of differential rating - section 156(4a)(b)
 - Revocation of classification of land as community land - sections 194(2)(b)
 - Community Land Management Plans - adoption - section 197(1)
 - Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - section 198(3)
 - Alienation of community land by lease or license - section 202(2)
 - Making bylaws (section 249)
 - **Standard**
 - Substantial changes to opening hours and place of principal office - section 45(3)
 - Community Engagement Policy - section 50A(6)(b)
 - Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6)
 - Access to meetings and documents - section 92(5)

- Power to make orders - section 259(2)(b)
 - **Local**
 - Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - section 223(1)
 - Proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 232(b)
 - **Inform**
 - Minor changes to opening hours and place of principal office - section 45(3)
 - Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council ensures that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
 - Election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*
- 3.7. The table in Part 4 of the Community Engagement Process sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the requirements of each matter for which public consultation must be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Charter.
- 3.8. Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to Elected Members sitting as the Elected Body, Council Employees, contractors, agents, and consultants acting on behalf of Council.
- 4.2. This policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by the Council, a delegate of the Council or a person exercising power on the Council's behalf, where public consultation is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this policy. A reference in this policy to 'Council' includes a reference to a delegate or other person exercising power on the Council's behalf.
- 4.3. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this Policy, establishing the consultation level, reporting outcomes of the consultations to Council, reviewing the Policy, and determining elements within the supporting process.
- 4.4. This policy does not apply where the Council is exercising powers and functions under any other Act. Where there are consultation requirements under other legislation, e.g. the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, those specific processes take precedence over this policy.
- 4.5. This policy excludes:
- 4.5.1 Non-legislated community engagement.
 - 4.5.2 Internal engagement with staff, which is managed through separate organisational policies and processes.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, by:
- 5.1.1 Council, by resolution;

- 5.1.2 the CEO;
 - 5.1.3 a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
 - 5.1.4 a delegate with power to make a decision or undertake an activity or process that requires community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.
- 5.2. Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities or engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker.

6. Legislation and References

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1999*, section 50 and 50A
- Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter
- *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*, Section 13A

Supporting Documents

- Community Engagement Process
- Community Engagement Framework
- Local Government Association's Community Engagement Handbook

Related Policies

- Internal Review of Council Decisions Policy

7. Definitions

Act	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>)
Charter	The Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter, published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	means the Chief Executive Officer of a council and includes a Deputy or other person acting in the office of Chief Executive Officer.
Community	includes ratepayers, residents and service specific customers (i.e. internal staff as customers, program participants etc.).
Community Engagement	See consultation.
Consultation	involves the sharing of information and the exchange of views between employers and the persons or bodies that must be consulted and the genuine opportunity for them to contribute effectively to any decision-making process to eliminate or control risks to health or safety. The extent and nature of the consultation will vary between workplaces and the different situations.
Council	The Barossa Council in its entirety as an organisation.
Public	includes all people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of The Barossa Council.

8. Version History

This Policy will be reviewed by the Policy Author in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, within four years or more frequently if legislation or Council's need changes.

Version No.	Date.	Summary of Changes
1	16/03/2010	New Policy
2	16/04/2013	Policy was significantly updated to provide details of requirements and occasions when Council must follow its Policy and where there are specific alternate processes.
3	26/09/2016	Significant re-work of policy due to amendments from the Local Government (Accountability and Governance) Amendment Act 2015.
4	19/05/2020	Policy updated to incorporate the Public Access and Public Consultation Notice (No 2) 2020, issued by the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government pursuant to section 302B of the Local Government Act 1999 in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
5	19/07/2022	Removal of COVID-19 Pandemic legislative changes no longer applicable from 21 June 2022.
6	28/01/2025	Updated template with minor formatting and grammatical changes.
7	18/08/2026	Transferred to new corporate template. Added responsibilities section. Alignment to new legislated Community Engagement Charter. Significant rework of the policy to align with the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter under the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> Retitled Policy

9. Further Information

This Policy is available on Council's website at www.barossa.sa.gov.au. It can also be viewed electronically at Council's principal office at 43-51 Tanunda Road, Nuriootpa during ordinary business hours. A printed copy of this Policy can be obtained upon payment of a fixed fee.

Feedback regarding this Policy or its application can be made to the Customer Service Team on 8563 8444 or barossa@barossa.sa.gov.au in the first instance, who will refer you to the most appropriate officer.