

# **Waverley Council**

## **Community Engagement Strategy**

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Waverley Council acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, who traditionally occupied the Sydney Coast and we acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future.

## Introduction

Waverley Council has a long history of engaging with the community in decision-making processes that affect the community. We acknowledge the importance of local government in building strong and trusting relationships with the community by operating in a transparent and accountable way.

Our Community Engagement Strategy was developed in accordance with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. The information received from the community will inform Council's key strategic documents as outlined below:



Community Strategic Plan

Community Engagement Policy

Community Engagement Strategy +  
Community Participation Plan

Community Engagement Guidelines

## Purpose

This Strategy outlines how Council will involve the community in Council decision-making and ensure the community can have their say.

The Strategy also outlines strategic actions for Council to investigate to further improve processes and instil a culture of best practice engagement.

## Definitions

**Community:** Refers to all stakeholders, audiences, community groups, businesses, outside of Councillors and Council staff.

## Our Statement of Commitment to Community Engagement

Council will engage with the community in an inclusive, transparent and accountable way, to make fair and equitable decisions that reflect the needs of the community.

## Our Community Engagement Values and Principles

The following **values** underpin Council's commitment to community engagement:

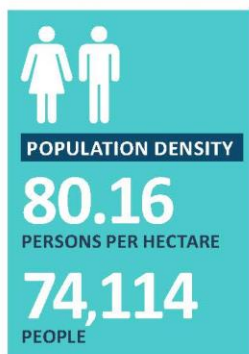
Values
1. We are committed to ensuring those who are impacted by, or have an interest in, a decision or initiative of Council will have fair and equitable access to participating in the decision-making process.
2. We will carefully consider the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including Council.
3. We will make every effort to notify and enable the involvement of those in the community affected by or interested in a decision.
4. The level of influence of the community will be appropriate for the nature, complexity and level of impact of the decision being made.
5. We will provide all relevant information to ensure the community can participate in engagement activities in a meaningful way.
6. We will report back to participants on how their input affected the final decision or outcome being considered.

The following **principles** guide and shape our approach to community engagement activities:

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Commitment</b>
<b>1. Build relationships</b>	We will engage in an honest, open and respectful way to build strong relationships and trust within our community.
<b>2. Right to be involved</b>	We believe that our community members have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.
<b>3. Build capacity</b>	We will work to build the capacity and opportunity for our whole community to genuinely participate in decisions.
<b>4. Clarity of purpose</b>	We will engage with our community with clarity around what the project/initiative/decision is and what the purpose of the engagement process is.
<b>5. Accessible and inclusive</b>	Information and engagement activities will be offered in a range of accessible formats to enable fair and equal access to participation.
<b>6. Timely</b>	We will engage early enough for participation to be meaningful. We will provide enough time for the community to provide input. Engagement timelines will be considered from inception of the project and built into the project timeline and project plan.
<b>7. Tailored</b>	We will use a range of engagement and communication methods that suit the purpose of the project and reach the community.
<b>8. Strategic</b>	We will collaborate across Council to ensure our engagement activities are approached in a strategic way to avoid duplication and inefficiencies. We will be conscious of the time of year and other consultation projects when planning our engagement.
<b>9. Transparent and accountable</b>	We will be open with information the community needs to be able to participate meaningfully and communicate how community input influenced the outcome.
<b>10. Representative</b>	We will aim to hear from the whole community, including those who face barriers to participation, to ensure we hear from a representative sample of the community being impacted by a decision or initiative.

## OUR COMMUNITY

Waverley is home to over **74,114 residents** and attracts millions of visitors every year. The Gadigal and Bidjigal peoples of the Eora Nation are the traditional custodians of the land. The Waverley community is made up of everyone who lives, works, studies and visits the area. The following statics are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census.



### AGE STRUCTURE %

6.6	Seniors (70 to 84)
23.6	Young workforce (25 to 34)
2.3	Elderly aged (85 and over)
7.3	Primary schoolers (5 to 11)
6.2	Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)
4.8	Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)
6.9	Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)
24.6	Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)
10.1	Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)
7.6	Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)



23.8	Couples with children
23.5	Couples without children
6.1	One parent families
1	Other families
10	Group household
24.7	Lone person

### HOUSEHOLD SIZE %

27.7	1 person
36	2 persons
16.3	3 persons
13.6	4 persons
4.8	5 persons
1.6	6 or more persons

### TENURE TYPE %

22.5	Fully owned
21.4	Mortgage
43	Renting



### INDUSTRY SECTOR %

17.4	Professional, Scientific and Tech Services
9.8	Health Care and Social Assistance
8.9	Financial and Insurance Services
7.8	Education and Training
7.2	Accommodation and Food Services
6.9	Retail Trade
6.3	Construction



### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE



### LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME OTHER THAN ENGLISH



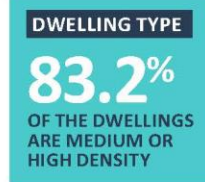
2.2	Russian
2.1	Spanish
1.9	Portuguese
1.8	French
1.7	Italian



### BIRTHPLACE %

50.2	Australia
8.1	United Kingdom
4.2	South Africa
2.6	New Zealand
1.7	Brazil

### BIRTHPLACE OVERSEAS BORN



### FINANCES



Our community is diverse, with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability, younger people, older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as people experiencing homelessness. Council is committed to ensuring all groups within the community have fair and equal access to participate and have a say.

Broadly, our community can be categorised as:

- ratepayers
- residents
- business owners
- visitors
- government agencies
- community/non-profit agencies.

Within these groups, we have a diverse range of interests including, but not limited to, arts, culture, environment, sport, recreation, community services and schools.

For all Council consultations, we aim to target those in the community relevant to the project as well as the broader community where relevant. One of the important ways that Council engages with the community is through the Precincts and Combined Precincts Committee.

We will also ensure engagement activities are planned with consideration given to our community demographics as well as age, accessibility, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

## Barriers to participation

Everyone has a right to have a say in civic decision-making processes, and we recognise that some may face barriers to participating. It is Council's responsibility to identify any barriers and take steps to address them to make engagement processes as accessible and inclusive as possible.

Communities are diverse and we need to ensure that the less powerful voices and groups are engaged and not marginalised. Some examples of barriers that can impact people's ability to have a say include:

- attitudinal
- apathy towards Council or a particular issue
- lack of confidence
- lack of money/financial means
- lack of knowledge of rights
- lack of literacy or numeracy skills
- mental or physical health issues
- physical or intellectual disability
- language barriers
- age barriers
- lack of social support
- lack of transport
- time constraints
- homelessness or without a stable physical location
- caring responsibilities and/or work commitments

This Strategy provides actions Council will undertake to address and reduce some of the barriers mentioned above to make Council's engagement practices more accessible and inclusive.



## Council's Engagement Framework

Waverley Council follows the IAP2 model for community engagement. The different levels of engagement under the IAP2 model as we apply it at Waverley Council are summarised below:

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Goal of engagement</b>	Relevant community members are well-informed	Relevant community members are well-informed and give feedback that Council considers	Relevant community members are well-informed and have scope to make substantial input.	Relevant community members are well-informed and have substantial and significant involvement in the development of the project	Relevant community members are well-informed and have total say and control over decision making
<b>Decision-making level of community members</b>	Relevant community members are informed of the final decision.  The final decision is made by Council.	Relevant community members' feedback will be considered in making the final recommendations to Council.  The final decision is made by Council.	Relevant community members will provide substantial input into the project which will be able to affect the final recommendations to Council. The final decision is made by Council.	Relevant community members are significantly involved in the final recommendations to Council. The final decision is made by Council.	Relevant community members have total say and control over decision making
<b>Example tools and methods</b>	Posters, flyers, noticeboards, walking around talking with people, use interpreters, newsletters, local radio, presentations, social media, site signage.	Surveys, interviews, small group discussions, focus groups, workshops, online engagement via Council's engagement website.	Stakeholder groups, committees, on-site meetings/tours, project reference groups.	Charette, deliberative processes, community reference groups.	Elections, referendums.

*Table appropriated with permission from the Department of Housing and Community Development's Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy 2016 based on the International Association for Public Participation IAP2 Spectrum*

## Our Engagement Framework in Practice

Project Type	Engagement Level	What we will do (minimum commitments)	How we will do it (minimum commitments)	Engagement Period
<b>General asset infrastructure and capital works eg. Kerb and gutters</b>	Inform	Let affected residents know of upcoming works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send or email a notification letter to affected residents.</li> </ul>	At least 14 days before work commences
<b>Council Plans and Strategies, eg:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space and Recreation Strategy</li> <li>Village Centres Strategy</li> <li>Cultural Plan</li> </ul> <b>Development of new versions of the Community Strategic Plan.</b>	Involve + Consult	<p>Provide at least two stages of feedback during the development of the project – one near inception for information gathering and scoping, and the second a public exhibition of the draft design/document before finalising.</p> <p>Keep community informed for the life of the project and show how feedback informed the final result of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send direct email to identified stakeholders.</li> <li>Hold meetings and workshops with identified stakeholders, including relevant Precincts (1 x minimum)</li> <li>Ensure hard copy information is available on request and/or to view at customer touchpoints such as Customer Service Centre, Library, Mill Hill, Bondi Pavilion.</li> <li>Provide a summary of information in Fact Sheets for an accessible approach to the documents.</li> <li>Promote engagement opportunities in general Council communication channels including social media, enews, website.</li> <li>Run at least 1 x external and 1x internal Have Your Say information stall or equivalent online method for Q&amp;A opportunities.</li> <li>Email/alert stakeholders on final decision and results of the consultation.</li> <li>Make available a hard copy survey or an equivalent means to enable you to provide feedback not online.</li> </ul>	Each engagement period will run for a minimum of four weeks
<b>New capital works and placemaking projects, eg:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bondi Pavilion Restoration and</li> </ul>	Involve	Provide an opportunity for the community to have their say at each stage of the project.	Everything listed above.	A minimum four weeks of each engagement period, and then 14 days notification



<b>Conservation Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bondi Junction: After Dark in the Junction</b></li> </ul>		Keep the community informed and updated before commencing the next stage of the project, including when work commences.		before work commences.
<b>Revisions to the Community Strategic Plan</b>  <b>Council's other key long-term plans:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivery Program, (includes Long Term Financial Plan, Strategic Asset Management Plan and Workforce Management Plan)</b></li> <li>• <b>Operational Plan (includes Budget and Fees and Charges)</b></li> <li>• <b>Significant changes to Delivery Program and changes to/new fees and charges</b></li> </ul>	Involve + Consult	Council will provide context information and give the community an opportunity to have their say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure hard copy information is available on request and/or to view at customer touchpoints such as Customer Service Centre, Library, Mill Hill, Bondi Pavilion.</li> <li>• Provide a summary of information in Fact Sheets for an accessible approach to the documents.</li> <li>• Create a dedicated project page on Have Your Say Waverley to enable submissions/Council website</li> <li>• Promote on social media and in Council enews.</li> </ul>	A minimum 28 days exhibition period.
<b>Council policies, eg:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public Art Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Events Policy</b></li> </ul>	Consult	Make available all relevant information and provide the opportunity for the community to submit comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a dedicated project page on Have Your Say Waverley with online submissions.</li> <li>• Ensure hard copy information is available and hard copy submissions are accepted.</li> </ul>	A minimum four weeks consultation period.
<i>Note: The engagement framework as they apply to Council's key and use planning instruments such as DAs and Planning Proposals, are covered in the Waverley Community Participation Plan, available on Council's website.</i>				



## Strategic Engagement Action Plan

The below outlines an action plan for Council's commitment to continuous improvement in community engagement. Based on the Community Engagement Values and Principles outlined above, the strategic aims are:

1. Continual development of an organisational culture focused on best practice community engagement
2. Enhance systems and processes to enable best practice community engagement
3. Ensure those who are impacted by, or have an interest in, a decision or initiative of Council are provided with the opportunity to do so
4. Ensure our engagement practices are accessible and inclusive

<b>Strategy 1</b>			
<b>Continual development of an organisational culture focused on best practice community engagement</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe (short, medium, long term)</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Value &amp; Principle focused on</b>
<b>1.1</b> Improve organisational understanding of engagement techniques from top-down, via the development of a training and development program for key staff across the organisation	Short-term to ongoing	Lead: Communications and Engagement Partner: Learning and Culture	Value: All Principle: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8
<b>1.2</b> Build on and promote the internal Community Engagement Guidelines and suite of tools and resources available	Short-term	Communications and Engagement	Value: All Principle: 2, 7, 8
<b>1.3</b> Investigate the establishment of an internal engagement committee to share experiences, key learnings, and better involve staff in projects that they have useful knowledge on or are affected by	Short-term to ongoing	Communications and Engagement	Value: All Principle: 2, 6, 7, 8
<b>1.4</b> Develop checklist for staff to better plan engagement events and standardised tasks	Short-term	Communications and Engagement	Value: All Principle: 6, 7, 8,
<b>Strategy 2</b>			
<b>Enhance systems and processes to enable best practice community engagement</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Value &amp; Principle focused on</b>
<b>2.1</b> Review and improve our community engagement website – Have Your Say Waverley – to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Council and the community eg. improve functionality, stability and overall user experience	Short to medium-term	Communications and Engagement Partner: Bang the Table service provider	Value: 1 Principle: 1, 2, 5, 7
<b>2.2</b> Create templates for consistent evaluation and consultation findings to be shared amongst departments	Short-term	Communications and Engagement	Value: 6 Principle: 7, 8, 9



<b>2.3</b> Investigate feasibility of integration of useful engagement findings and database with existing/future CRM	Medium-term	Lead/Partner: Communications and Engagement Lead/Partner: Customer Service, and other departments with engagement databases	Value: 1, 2, 3 Principle: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
<b>2.4</b> Establish major projects and engagement register to identify clashes and opportunities	Short-term	Communications and Engagement	Principle 2, 7, 8
<b>2.5</b> Regularly review engagement methods with the community on engagement methods to measure satisfaction	Medium-term to ongoing	Communications and Engagement Partner: Integrated Planning and Reporting	Value: 1  Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10
<b>2.6</b> Develop and implement an organisation-wide system to plan and monitor key project milestones, such as internal staff engagement and closing the loop, to ensure consistent delivery on our promises to the public.	Long-term	Communications and Engagement	Value: All  Principle: All
<b>Strategy 3</b> <b>Ensure those who are impacted by, or have an interest in, a decision or initiate of Council are provided with the opportunity to do so</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Value &amp; Principle focused on</b>
<b>3.1</b> Develop a schedule of regular engagement sessions in each ward, in accessible and visible locations, including online and precinct meetings, to enable broad feedback on LGA-wide relevant projects and initiatives	Short-term to ongoing	Lead: Communications and Engagement Partner: Project managers	Value: 1, 2, 3, 5  Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
<b>3.2</b> Review the model of existing Advisory Committees for improvements and innovation	Long-term	Lead: Communications and Engagement Partner: Departments responsible for the coordination of committees	Value: 1, 4, 5, 6  Principle: All
<b>3.3</b> Explore different ways of engaging people online, including workshops and focus groups	Short-term	Lead: Communications and Engagement Partner: Information Management and Technology	Value: 1, 3  Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10

<b>Strategy 4</b>			
<b>Ensure our engagement practices are accessible and inclusive</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Value &amp; Principle focused on</b>
<b>4.1</b> Build on existing relationships and strategies to engage our diverse community in all Council engagement, including older people, children and young people, people from CALD backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ie. Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Child Safe Policy	Medium to long-term and ongoing	Lead: Community Programs Partner: Communications and Engagement	Value: 1, 2, 3  Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10
<b>4.2</b> Build capacity and a better understanding in the organisation of ways to be more accessible and inclusive in engagement practices. Ensure these best practices are implemented across engagement projects	Short to medium-term	Lead: Communications and Engagement Partner: Community Programs	Value: 1, 2, 3 Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10
<b>4.2</b> Support and enhance a targeted children and young people engagement plan to ensure policy decisions, programs and services are appropriate, relevant, supported and responsive to the needs of young people	Medium to long-term and ongoing	Lead: Community Programs Partner: Communications and Engagement	Value: 1, 2, 3  Principle: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10

<sup>1</sup> Short term = 6 months  
Medium term = 18 months  
Long term = 3–4 years

## Resourcing the Strategy

This strategy is intended to be predominantly resourced from existing staff and budget. During scoping feasibility of each action, additional resourcing may be highlighted as necessary, of which a business case will be drafted and submitted to the Executive Leadership Team for consideration.

## Evaluation

Council will use a variety of methods to evaluate Council's engagement activities. These include:

- Assessment of relevancy of engagement methods appropriate to the target group
- Verbal and written feedback from the community on the effectiveness of the engagement activities
- Participation levels in engagement activities (number of participants)
- Achievement of the identified engagement objectives within this strategy
- Inclusive community representation
- Level of qualitative and quantitative information collected
- Periodic surveys to determine how we are tracking on reaching our vision, and community engagement techniques.

These evaluation results will be used to improve future engagement strategies and methods.

## Review

This strategy will be reviewed and updated every four years, as part of the review of the Waverley Community Strategic Plan, or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.

An annual report will be reported to Council at the end of each financial year, including the progress of each action outlined in the Strategic Action Plan, and an overview of engagement outcomes for the preceding 12 months.

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