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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

The Flinders Ranges Council (the Council) is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is facilitated by effective communication and consultation between Council and the community. This Policy sets out the steps Council will take to establish partnerships and encourage community involvement in planning and decision making about the services Council provides and the management of community resources. Involving communities in decision-making is important to the successful development of appropriate and informed decisions and policies by Council.

Council's community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visits 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).

Section 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) requires Council to prepare and adopt a policy relating to community engagement for the purposes of the Act. The policy must be consistent with and comply with any requirements of specified by the Community Engagement Charter (the Charter).

2. Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Council meets its legislative obligations regarding public consultation by:

- Meeting the requirements set out in the Act and the Charter.
- Using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances or each decision, activity or process.
- Providing for appropriate participation by the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties.
- Using feedback to enhance decision making.
- Providing information on the reason for decision or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.

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. Scope

This policy applies to decision, 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.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and application of this policy, and where necessary reporting the outcomes of consultations to the Council. The specific delegations made under this policy are outlined in part 8 of this policy.

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. Policy Statement

The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfil the Council's obligations to prepare and adopt a policy under Section 50(A) of the Act. The following principles in the Charter have been considered in preparation of this policy:



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- community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;
- information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;
- participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussions and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils,
- participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and
- 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 councils.

Council will undertake public consultation in accordance with the Act, the Charter and this policy.

Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this policy in relation to a matter for which it is required by the Act and/or the Charter to undertake public consultation.

However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter. A well-intentioned engagement that does not generate the anticipated level of engagement is not a breach of this policy.

Council may, from time to time, alter or substitute a new policy, following public consultation.

5. Public Consultation Categories

The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires public consultation to be undertaken.

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)
- **Standard**
 - Opening hours and place of principal office - substantial changes - 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)

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- **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**

- Opening hours and place of principal office – minor changes - 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*

The table in Part 6 of this policy 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.

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6. Charter Engagement Requirements

Council will comply with the minimum mandatory public consultation requirements for each category of matters set out in the Charter.

The following table sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the public consultation requirements in the Act and the Charter.

In circumstances where more than one engagement activity is specified, there is no obligation on Council to utilise all engagement activities in respect of each Charter requirement.

Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activities
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Website	Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a Council website.	X	X	X	X	X	Information published on a Council website
News publication	Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the Council area and is not produced by the Council.	X	X				Information published in a print or digital newspaper, community newsletter or other (non-council) publication circulating in the area of Council
Consult with the whole Council area	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the Council area. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.	X	X	X			Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council, community newsletter, noticeboards, hard copies and on Council website.

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Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activities
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including timeframe.	X	X				Engagement material provides information about how the community can make a submission, including the minimum 21 day timeframe for submissions.
Explain decision making process	In material prepared explain what the Council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve. Explain how community feedback will inform the Council's decision.	X	X				Engagement material explains what the Council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve. Information published explains that feedback received will be taken into account by the Council before making a decision [or such other explanation as to how the feedback will inform the Council's decision.
Seek and consider feedback from the community—significant matters	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community. Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback. Include a summary of community engagement feedback to the Council ahead of the decision.	X	X				Feedback will be invited by (e.g.): • Written submissions • Completion of survey or questionnaire • Provision of an online response via social media • Attendance in person, by representative or via electronic means at a Council meeting of public meeting • Attendance in person, by representative or electronic means at a workshop, focus group or interview. Community Engagement period open for a minimum of 21 days



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Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activities
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
							Summary of community engagement feedback considered by Council ahead of decision
Public Meeting	Hold a public meeting where the community is invited to provide submissions (written or verbal) on the matter. The public meeting may be part of a Council meeting or a separate event.	X					A public meeting will be held either as part of a Council meeting, or as a separate event, for the making of written or verbal submissions.
Council meeting invitation	Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a Council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.		X				People who made written submissions will be invited to attend a Council meeting and speak to their submissions before a decision is made
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community Provide information about how community feedback will inform the Council's decision. Ensure an appropriate period of time is provided to enable communities to provide feedback.			X	X		Feedback will be invited by (e.g.) - Written submissions - Completion of a survey or questionnaire - Provision of an online response via social media - Attendance in person, by representative or via electronic means at a Council meeting or public meeting - Attendance in person, by representative or via electronic means at a workshop, focus group or interview Information published indicates that feedback received will be taken into account by the Council before making a

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Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category					Engagement activities
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
							decision [or such other information about how the feedback will inform the Council's decision] Community Engagement period open for a period of 21 days or such other period as determined by Council
Consult with local community	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the local community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.				X		e.g. - Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council - Information published in targeted letters or leaflet drops to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action - Information made available at Council offices and agencies,
Information to the whole Council area	Provide information to the whole of the Council's community if it may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X	Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council, community newsletter, noticeboards, hard copies and on Council website.
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X	Information published on a social media platform maintained by Council, community newsletter, noticeboards, hard copies and on Council website.

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7. Other decisions, activities and processes

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.

Council may undertake community engagement activities for community participation in relation to other decisions, activities or processes of the Council not specified in the Charter at its absolute discretion. However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any such steps in relation to these matters.

8. Delegation

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:

- Council, by resolution;
- the CEO;
- a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
- 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.

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.

9. Responsibilities

This Policy will apply to Council members, staff, contractors, and agents or consultants acting on behalf of Council.

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for:

- implementing communication and consultation initiatives in accordance with this Policy;
- reporting on outcomes of these initiatives to Council, to inform the decision making process; and
- reporting on the review and evaluation of the policy.

10. Legislation

[Local Government Act 1999.](#)

11. Review

To be reviewed within 12 months after a General Election, in line with legislation and any legislative changes or by resolution of Council.

Adopted by Council 14 August 2012
Resolution 164/2012

Review Date	Version Number	Change	Resolution
13 August 2013	1	Nil	181/2013
17 February 2015	2	Inclusion of first dot point, item 5 – level of consultation (Reviewed by Policy Review Reference Committee – Minutes endorsed by Council)	038/2015
21 April 2015	2	Nil - Adopted	110/2015

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30 June 2015	3	4. deletion of first sentence, <i>'Community consultation is only one aspect of Council's decision making process'</i> 6. reference to Facebook included Review – standard policy wording (Reviewed by Policy Review Reference Committee – Minutes endorsed by Council; public consultation process approved 21 July 2015)	229/2015
19 September 2017	4	Schedule 1 updated to include Section 123	157/2017
15 June 2021	5	Minor grammatical and formatting changes only.	132/2021
16 June 2026	6	Revamp of policy to fit with new legislation and Community Engagement guidelines released by the LGA SA	154/2026

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APPENDIX 1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

PUBLIC CONSULTATION POLICY – SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENTS

TOPIC	SECTION	LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT
DEFINITION OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION	4 (Interpretation)	Reference to Chapter 4, Part 5 only
Representation Reviews. Review and reporting to the Electoral Commissioner	12	- Public notice of a review inviting written submissions within six (6) weeks, including notice in a newspaper circulating within its area - Provide opportunity for person who makes written submission to appear before Council or a Council committee to be heard on submissions - Council to prepare report on the public consultation - By public notice inform of the completion and availability of the report for inspection and invite written submissions within three (3) weeks, including notice in a newspaper circulating within its area - Provide opportunity for person who makes written submission to appear before Council or a Council committee to be heard on submissions - Council must then finalise its report and refer to the Electoral Commissioner.
Status of a Council/ Change of Name - Change from a municipal council to a district council, or change from a district council to a municipal council - Alter the name of the council, the area of the council, or the name of a ward.	13	- Public notice of the proposal inviting written submissions within six (6) weeks, including notice in a newspaper circulating within its area - Provide opportunity for person who makes written submission to appear before Council or a Council committee to be heard on submissions
Principal Office – Opening hours	45	Consult in accordance with Council's Public Consultation Policy about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public for the transaction of business, and about any significant changes to these arrangements.
Commercial Activities – Prudential Requirements	48 (2) (d) 48 (5), (6)	Report addressing prudential issues to include the level of consultation with the local community, including contact with persons who may be affected by the project and representations made by them



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		the means by which the community can influence or contribute to the project or its outcomes.
Public Consultation Policy	50	Requirements for preparation, adoption and alteration to Council's Public Consultation Policy. - Policy must set out steps that Council will follow in cases where the Act prescribes public consultation - Policy may also set out steps to follow in other cases involving council decision making - Steps may vary, but must provide for a reasonable opportunity to make submissions in relevant circumstances - Section 50 (4) sets out minimum steps which require Councils to - publish notice describing the matter under consideration in a newspaper circulating within the area, and inviting submissions within stated period (at least 21 days) - consider submissions made in response. - Section 50 (4) applies before Council adopts, substitutes and/or alters a public consultation policy, unless the alteration is only of minor significance. - Council's Public Consultation Policy is to be made available for inspection without charge at the principal office during ordinary office hours, and for purchase on payment of a fixed fee by Council.
Code of Practice – Access to meetings and documents	92 (2)(b)	Before a council adopts, alters or substitutes a code of practice under Section 92 it must follow relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy.
Strategic Management Plans	122 (6)	Council must adopt a process or processes to ensure that members of the public are given a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the development and review of its strategic management plans (Plans for between 3 – 5 years).
Annual Business Plans, Budgets and Long Term Financial Plans	123	Council must adopt a process or processes to ensure that members of the public are given a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the development and review of its Annual Business Plans, Budgets and Long Term Financial Plans
Community Land Classification: All local government land (except roads) that is owned, or under care, control and management of Council is to be classified as community land unless Council resolves to exclude it from classification within 3 years of the commencement of the	193 (1), (2)	Before Council excludes land from classification as community land (within three years after commencement of the Act) it must follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy.

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TOPIC	SECTION	LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT
Act.		

TOPIC	SECTION	LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT
Revocation of classification of land as community land	194 (2)	Council must - follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy before revoking the classification of land as community land - submit a proposal with a report on all submissions made as part of the public consultation process to the Minister.
Management Plans - Public Consultation	197 (1)	Before Council adopts a management plan for community land it must - make copies of the proposed plan available for inspection or purchase at the Council's principle office - follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy - give public notice of its adoption of a management plan.
Amendment or revocation of management plans NB: A Council cannot dispose of community land until revocation of its classification as community land.	198	If Council has adopted a management plan after a process of public notification and consultation before the commencement of the Act, Section 197 (1) does not apply. Public consultation as required for a new management plan is to be carried out prior to adopting a proposal for amendment or revocation of a management plan. Public consultation is not required if the amendment has no significant impact on the interests of the community.
Alienation by lease or licence	202	Council must follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy, before granting a lease or licence relating to community land. Exceptions apply in circumstances where - lease or licence is authorised in an approved management plan, and the term is five years or less - regulations provide for an exemption for compliance with a public consultation policy.
Permits - Right of exclusive occupation Restricting access to a road - Use or activity for which public consultation required under regulations	223	Council must follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy before granting the authorisation or permit.
Roads – Trees		Before planting or authorising planting of vegetation:

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	232	If the vegetation may have a significant impact on residents, the proprietors of nearby businesses or advertisers in the area, councils must follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation policy
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TOPIC	SECTION	LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT
Passing by-laws NB: No specific reference to Council's Public Consultation Policy, but minimum standards apply	249	At least 21 days before resolving to make a by-law, Council must: • make copies of the proposed by-law (and other code, standard or other document proposed to be applied or incorporated by the by-law) available for public inspection • inform the public of the proposed by-law and set out the terms or describe in general terms the nature and effect of the by-law, through a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area • give reasonable consideration to a written or other acceptable submission made on a proposed by-law • Publish a notice of the making of a by-law in a newspaper circulating in the Council area.
Power to Make Orders Councils must take reasonable steps to prepare and adopt policies relating to power to make orders.	259 (2)	Council must • Prepare a draft of a policy • By notice in a newspaper circulating in the Council area, advise where the draft is available for inspection (without charge) or purchase (on payment of a fee fixed by Council), and invite written representations on the draft with a period specified by the Council (at least four weeks) • consider any submission made in response to the invitation. The requirements of Section 259 (2) apply prior to Council adopting an amendment to a policy pursuant to this Part (i.e. Orders) of the Act , unless Council determines that the amendment is of only minor significance.