District Council
of Yankalilla

Community Engagement Policy

(Formerly Public Consultation Policy)

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Responsibility	Strategic Reporting & Engagement Officer
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Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 (s50) Local Government Community Engagement Charter
Related Policies / Procedures	DCY 'Connecting with our Community' Framework
Related Strategic Documents	DCY Strategic Community Plan: VISION 2030
DCY Strategic Community Plan: VISION 2030	6.2 Community Engagement 6.2.1 – Council will continue its positive engagement activities and provide ongoing opportunities for the community to participate in decision making.

1. Objective

1.1. Council is responsible for providing local governance, leadership and decision-making in the public interest, working with the community to plan for the district's current and future needs. Good community engagement practice supports Council in making informed decisions by providing opportunities for the community to share insight on matters that may affect them.

1.2. This Policy fulfils Council's obligation under Section 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) to prepare and adopt a Community Engagement Policy. It outlines Council's approach to community engagement and how it will meet the requirements of the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter).

1.3. The level and method of engagement applied to a matter will vary depending on the nature of the matter under consideration, legislative requirements and the extent to which community input can influence the outcome.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all community engagement undertaken by Council as required by the Act and the Charter. It applies to Council Members, Council employees, contractors and consultants acting on behalf of Council.

2.2. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and application of this Policy, and where appropriate reporting the outcomes of community engagement to Council. The specific delegations made under this Policy are outlined in Part 8.

2.3. This policy does not apply where 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.

3. Definition

3.1. For the purpose of this policy:

'The Act' is the *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*.

'The Charter' is the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australian Gazette on 11 December 2025.

'Council' is a body of elected representatives responsible for providing local governance, leadership and decision-making in the public interest. Council works with the community to plan for the district's current and future needs and may delegate certain decision-making responsibilities to the Chief Executive Officer and Administration.

'Community' includes the individuals and groups who live, work, study, own property, conduct business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces within the district. 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).

'Community Engagement' is the planned process of involving the community in Council's decision-making and activities. It provides opportunities for individuals and groups to access information, share perspectives, contribute ideas and help inform decisions that may affect them. Community engagement can occur at different levels of participation depending on the nature of the decision and the opportunity for community influence.

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'Public Consultation' is a form of community engagement that seeks feedback on a specific proposal, policy, plan, project or decision under consideration by Council. It provides an opportunity for the community to review information, express views and make submissions before a decision is made. Public consultation may be undertaken voluntarily by Council or to meet legislative, regulatory or policy requirements, with feedback considered as part of the decision-making process.

'Stakeholders' are individuals, groups or organisations who have an interest in Council's decision-making, are affected by Council decisions, or have a role in policy development, program delivery or community outcomes. Recognising stakeholders helps ensure those most impacted have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making.

'Submissions' are written contributions from community members that express views, feedback or opinions on a proposal, issue or decision being considered by Council as part of a community engagement process.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. How we listen respond, decide and deliver matters. Council is committed to delivering community engagement that provides meaningful opportunities for participation and genuine consideration of community feedback as part of its decision-making processes.

4.2. Council's approach to community engagement supports well-informed decisions that balance the needs, values and aspirations of the community with Council's responsibilities, resources, risks and strategic priorities.

4.3. Council recognises that not every decision will satisfy all perspectives. While community input is an important part of decision-making, Council must balance a range of competing factors when making decisions.

4.4. This Policy has been prepared having regard to the community engagement principles set out in the Act and the categories and mandatory requirements established by the Charter.

4.5. To support informed decision making and good community engagement practice, Council will:

- Plan engagement programs that are fit-for-purpose, having regard to the significance and likely impact of the proposed decisions, activities and processes of Council.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for the community to share their views and have their feedback considered.

- Identify those most likely to be affected by matters under consideration and provide appropriate opportunities for their input.
- Use a range of engagement methods and channels to support participation and accessibility.
- Clearly communicate the engagement purpose and provide reasonable notice and timeframes for community participation.
- Provide clear, accurate and accessible information to support informed participation.
- Design engagement activities that seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate.
- Communicate decisions made and where appropriate, explain how community input informed the outcome.
- Provide reasonable and ongoing opportunities for the community to access clear and relevant information about Council decisions, activities and engagement processes.

4.6. Where appropriate, Council may undertake additional engagement activities beyond the requirements of this Policy, the Act or the Charter for matters that have greater significance, greater community interest or greater impact on communities.

4.7. Council is not required to undertake additional engagement beyond its legislative obligations. An engagement process will not be in breach of this policy because an engagement activity generated lower than anticipated participation or because circumstances required modification of the planned activities.

4.8. This Policy outlines Council's general approach to community engagement and how it will meet its obligations under the Act and the Charter. It is supported by Council's *Connecting with our Community Framework*, which provides guidance on the planning and delivery of community engagement activities.

5. Policy

5.1. Implementation

In recognition of the fact that the matters included for community engagement in the Charter have differing levels of impact on Council's communities, the Charter establishes the following categories of engagement and sets out minimum mandatory requirements for community engagement activities.

Council will apply the these proportionately, having regard to the scale, impact and level of community interest.

5.1.1. Significant – annual business plan and rating policy

Decisions related to a Council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its Council rates.

Minimum requirements:

- Publish information on Council website and in a local news publication
- Provide clear, plain language explanation of the proposal, purpose and impacts
- Explain how community feedback will inform the decision
- Invite submissions and provide clear instructions for participation
- Provide a minimum consultation period of 21 days
- Hold a public meeting or provide equivalent opportunity for verbal submissions (The public meeting may be part of a council meeting or a separate event).
- Provide a summary of community feedback to Council prior to decision-making

5.1.2. Significant

Decisions that a Council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area.

Minimum requirements:

- Publish information on Council website and in a local news publication
- Provide clear, plain language explanation of the proposal and its impacts
- Invite submissions and provide a minimum 21-day consultation period
- Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.
- Seek and consider community feedback
- Provide a summary of feedback to Council

5.1.3. Standard

Decisions that a Council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.

Minimum requirements:

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- Publish information on Council website
- Provide clear and accessible information about the proposal
- Invite submissions and provide an appropriate consultation period
- Seek and consider community feedback

5.1.4. Local

Decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.

Minimum requirements:

- Target engagement to affected stakeholders or local community
- Use appropriate notification methods to reach impacted parties
- Provide accessible information and opportunity for feedback

5.1.5. Inform

Matters where a councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision.

Minimum requirements:

- Provide timely and accessible information to the affected community

5.1.6. All Engagements must:

- Be conducted using plain language
- Be accessible and inclusive
- Clearly communicate how feedback will be considered

5.2. Matters where the Act requires community engagement (public consultation)

For matters where the Act requires community engagement (public consultation) to be undertaken, the Charter establishes different categories of consultation as follows:

5.2.1. Significant – Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy

- Adopting an Annual Business Plan – section 123(3)(b)
- Changes to the 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)

5.2.2. 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)

5.2.3. 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)

5.2.4. 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)

5.2.5. 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*

To meet its legislative obligations, Council will assess each matter individually and apply the requirements of the Act and the Charter to determine the appropriate level of engagement.

5.3. Community Engagement Process

5.3.1. For matters requiring community engagement (public consultation) under the Act, the Charter, a Community Engagement Plan will be prepared that sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet its legislative requirements for the matter under consideration.

5.3.2. Council will undertake community engagement substantially in accordance with the approved Community Engagement Plan. Minor changes to engagement methods, timing or activities may be made where necessary to improve participation, respond to unforeseen circumstances or address operational requirements. Any significant variation from an approved Community Engagement Plan will be documented and reported in the Community Engagement Report.

1	**Prepare a Community Engagement Plan that:** • Defines the purpose of the engagement • Identifies legislative obligations in accordance with the Act and the Charter • Determines additional community engagement activities as required • Identifies the stakeholders and community audiences • Determines the level of engagement to be undertaken • Outlines the objectives and methods of engagement • Sets out the timeline, milestones and reporting expectations • Considers communications and accessibility
2	**Obtain approval** As per the delegations in Part 8
3	**Develop and gather supporting information that:** • Outlines the project background • Sets out the project's current status and next steps • Explains the intended outcomes and how community input will be used • Ensures supporting information is easily accessible
4	**Engagement Delivery** Deliver the engagement program substantially in accordance with the Community Engagement Plan

5	**Feedback, Collection and Analysis:** • Collect, collate and analyse all submissions and feedback.
6	**Prepare a Community Engagement Report that:** • Outlines the engagement activities undertaken • Summarises the submissions and feedback • Outlines how community input has influenced outcomes • Records any significant deviations from the Community Engagement Plan
7	**Decision-making** Decision-makers consider the Community Engagement Report to inform decisions and next steps
8	**Communicate the outcomes of community engagement:** • The outcome(s) • The reasons for the decision • How community feedback was considered and did it influence the outcome(s)

5.4. Additional Community Engagement

5.4.1. Council or the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) may determine that community engagement beyond the minimum legislative or policy requirements is appropriate for matters of greater significance, community interest or community impact. Discretionary engagement activities will be outlined in the Community Engagement Plan.

5.5. Related documents, decisions, activities and processes

5.5.1. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Local Government Community Engagement Charter. However, Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but where community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate and beneficial. In such circumstances, Council may choose to undertake community engagement beyond its statutory obligations.

5.5.2. The District Council of Yankalilla's *Connecting with our Community Framework* outlines Council's broader approach to community engagement and how it works with the community to share information, seek feedback, build understanding and inform decision-making. This Policy should also be read in conjunction with the Framework.

5.6. Delegation

5.6.1. 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:

- Council, by resolution;
- the Chief Executive Officer (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.

5.6.2. 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. Further Information

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council office listed below during ordinary business hours and provided to interested parties as per Council's Fees and Charges Register. Copies are available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website: www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au/policies

District Council of Yankalilla
1 Charles Street
Yankalilla 5203

Phone: (08) 8558 0200
Email: council@yankalilla.sa.gov.au
Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (except public holidays)

7. Grievances

Any grievances in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

8. Review Cycle and Evaluation

This document is subject to review once during every four-year term of Council or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

Council may review, amend or replace this policy from time to time in accordance with requirements of the Act and the Charter.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored through evaluation of individual Community Engagement Plans submitted for approval prior to the commencement of community engagement activities.

9. Document History

Date	Version	Council Resolution No.	Description of changes
June 2001	1.0	Not in Use	Adoption of Policy
December 2012	1.1	Not in Use	Review of Policy
June 2014	2.0	Not in Use	Review of Policy
April 2020	2.1	C20026	Amended for COVID-19 Emergency Public Access and Consultation Notice (No 2) 2020
June 2026	3.0	C26174	Policy updated and renamed Community Engagement Policy (formerly Public Consultation Policy). Updates include revision of Policy and changes to reflect the DCY Connecting with our Community Framework and the Local Government Community Engagement Charter.
5/11/26	3.0	Administrative	Note added under Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Connecting With Our Community Framework

Note: Council's Connecting with Our Community Framework, which supports this Community Engagement Policy, is currently being updated. The revised Framework will be published as Appendix 1 to this Policy in December 2026.

Appendix 2: Local Government Community Engagement Charter

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

Section 50 Community Engagement Charter

The Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) is established by the Minister for Local Government pursuant to Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) for the purposes of this Act.

Principles

This charter has been prepared taking into account the following principles contained in Section 50(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999*—

(a) members of the community 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;

(b) information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;

(c) participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;

(d) participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes;

(e) 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.

Categories

In recognition of the fact that the matters included for community engagement in this Charter have differing levels of impact on councils' communities, this Charter establishes the following categories of engagement and requirements that are appropriate to each group—

- **Significant—annual business plan and rating policy**: decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates.
- **Significant**: decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area.
- **Standard**: decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.
- **Local**: decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.
- **Inform**: matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision.

Mandatory Requirements Definitions

Where the Charter includes a mandatory requirement, the following table provides more information about actions that must be taken at a minimum to meet that requirement for community engagement.

While these actions are mandatory, councils should actively consider all activities that should be undertaken for each matter that it is consulting on to give community members the best chance to make their views known. In particular, councils should undertake additional engagement for matters that have greater significance, greater community interest or a greater impact on communities.

In this Charter 'community' means individuals, groups or stakeholders that are impacted by or interested in a particular council decision or action. Councils should seek broad, diverse and representative views across its community.

Whenever a council is preparing information to support engagement, it should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation.

Categories

Mandatory Requirement	**Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements**	**Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)**				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan 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
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			
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		

Mandatory Requirement	Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements	Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including timeframe.	X	X			
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			
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			
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				
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			
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	
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	
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

Mandatory Requirement	Mandatory Minimum Actions to Achieve the Mandatory Requirements	Mandatory Requirement that Applies to Matters Categorised as: (X indicates that the mandatory requirement applies)				
		Significant—Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the council decision or action.					X

Matters (in Legislative Order)

Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
Significant	Representation reviews	Section 12(7) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is doing a review of its internal representation (including possible changes to its ward structure, number of council members, change of council or ward names).
Inform	Minor changes to opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be minor.
Standard	Substantial changes to the opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be substantial.
Standard	Community engagement policy	Section 50A(6)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Councils must consult before adopting its community engagement policy, which is the document that demonstrated how the council will consult in accordance with this charter and on other matters.
Standard	Council behavioural support policies	Section 75(F)(6) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to adopt behavioural support policies.
Standard	Access to meetings and documents	Section 92(5) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	How councils ensure that council documents are made available and accessible to community members.
Significant	Strategic Management Plans	Section 122(6) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	The development and review of a council's strategic management plan. Strategic management plans lay out the council's strategic directions for a future ten-year period, including council's long-term financial plan and infrastructure and asset management plan.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Annual Business Plan	Section 123(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Adopting an annual business plan. Annual business plans set out the decisions a council makes each year on the rates and income they will receive and how they will spend these funds.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Basis of rating	Section 151(5)(e) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to the basis of its council rates, including declaring differential rates; imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge; changing the basis on which land is valued for the purposes of rating.
Significant	Differential rating and special adjustments	Section 156 (14a)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to its use of differential rating.
Significant	Revocation of classification of land as community land—in all other cases	Section 194(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that councils must undertake before revoking the community land status of any land that is community land.

Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—adoption	Section 197(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Before a council adopts a community land management plan, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—significant amendments	Section 198(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	If a council amends a community land management plan, and the amendment has a significant impact on the community, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Alienation of community land by lease or licence	Section 202(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to lease or licence community land.
Inform	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for less than 48 hours and the council ensures that a detour is in place.
Local	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available.
Local	Consultation on proposed planting of vegetation on a road	Section 232(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Consultation that a council takes when it proposes or authorises or permits for planting street trees or other vegetation on council roads, if the planting may have a significant impact on residents, nearby business or advertisers in the area.
Standard	Power to make orders	Section 259(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1999*	Councils must have policies in place on how they make orders relating to hazards on land adjoining a public place and the inappropriate use of a caravan or vehicle as a place of habitation and must consult before they adopt these policies.
Inform	Election information	Section 13A(2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*	Councils must provide information, education and publicity for local government elections.

Commencement

The Community Engagement Charter comes into operation on the day on which it is published in the Gazette.

Dated: 2 December 2025

HON JOE SZAKACS MP
Minister for Local Government