WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

City of Diversity

Draft Community Engagement Strategy

January 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we stand, the Gamaragal people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

Mayor's foreword



In Local Government, community engagement underpins everything we do. As Councils, we deliver the critical services required for a functioning and thriving community, but also much more. From housing to transport, recreation, the local economy and environment, Willoughby City Council has the responsibility to shape our local area and importantly; to listen to the community's vision for it. Everyone in the Willoughby Local Government Area has a right to voice their concerns, ideas and views for how we can further nourish the immense beauty and diversity of our area.

And at a time when we continue to see the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, ballooning costs of living and on-going concerns for housing supply across Australia, listening closely to our community is more important than ever. This document sets in stone our commitment to that, outlining how we'll involve the community in our decision-making and how we'll ensure trust, transparency and integrity are maintained along the way.

By reaffirming the principles that underscore how we go about engagement, we hope to empower residents, businesses and community groups with openness, fairness and communication.
I encourage you to read this strategy, to better understand how you can have your say for the future of Willoughby and work with us to better our wonderful community.

Tanya Taylor
Mayor of Willoughby

General Manager's foreword



Our community has consistently emphasised the importance of engagement, reinforcing our dedication to involving stakeholders in every decision we make. This feedback has been pivotal in shaping our approach to community involvement.

Recognising the community's desire for a more significant role in Council decisions, we have ensured that from the initial stages of every major decision, plan, and strategy, the community has a seat at the table. This commitment has been a cornerstone since our last update to this Strategy.

Updating this Strategy is crucial to maintaining our consultation practices and strategies at the highest professional, legislative, and corporate standards, ensuring meaningful community engagement.

To further enhance this document, Council staff have gathered feedback from residents, staff, and Councillors through recent consultations. This valuable input, enriched by lived experiences, has been instrumental in refining our approach.

I extend my gratitude to all Council staff who have contributed to this strategy and will continue to act on its recommendations.

Hugh Phemister
General Manager

About the strategy

Why has the Council prepared this strategy?

All councils are required by the *Local Government Act 1993* to 'establish and implement' a Community Engagement Strategy to support development of all their plans, policies, programs and key activities. The Strategy must then be reviewed by the end of each local government election year as part of a broader review of the Community Strategic Plan.

This Community Engagement Strategy is the outcome of the most recent review process.

What has the Council considered in preparing this strategy?

In revising this strategy, Willoughby City Council has considered its corporate priorities, relevant NSW Government legislation, the latest Census data and early Councillor and community insights.

Community Strategic Plan

The Council's work is guided by its ten-year Community Strategic Plan, known as *Our Future Willoughby 2032*. This plan includes several priorities relevant to this strategy, including:

- **Priority 5.1** – Be honest, transparent and accountable in all that we do
- **Priority 5.4** – Anticipate and respond to changing community and customer needs
- **Priority 5.5** – Make it easy for citizens to engage and participate in decision making

Legislation

The strategy has also been prepared in line with the Section 402A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act), under which local councils are required to prepare a Community Engagement Strategy which must cover "*engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters)*".

Census data

The strategy has considered and responded the Council area's 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data, which is being progressively released from the second half of 2022. By doing this, the strategy seeks to respond to our unique community features.

Community engagement

The current Community Engagement Strategy was adopted by Council in May 2023 following an extensive community engagement period. The majority of people interviewed (80%) during the community engagement said they would like to make a greater contribution to Council's decisions. The community also told us it would like to participate early and often throughout the development of Council projects, programs and policies. When asked what was a barrier to participation, respondents typically stated that it needed to be easier to find out about new engagement opportunities, and given their limited available time they wanted surveys to be short.

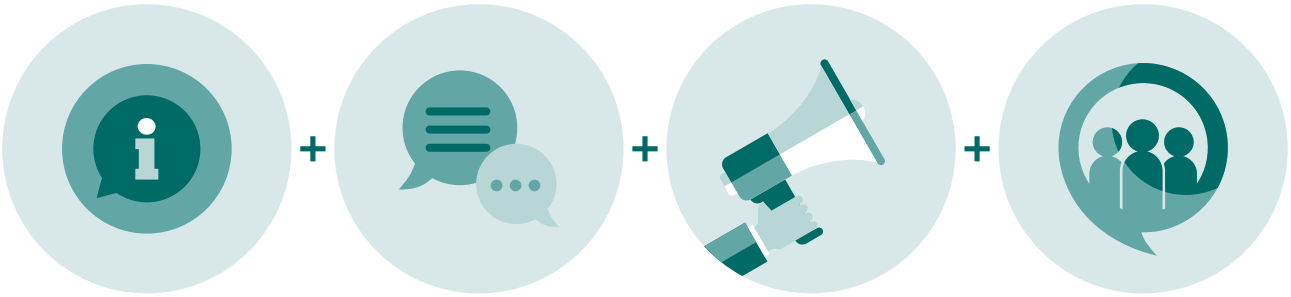
The community told us it was particularly interested in traffic and parking, planning and development, bushland management and sustainability initiatives.

These insights have been considered in this review, combined with the following inputs:

- Requirements under the Local Government Act
- Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Guidelines
- Community Wellbeing Survey 2023
- Community research
- Staff, consultant and Councillor feedback
- Recent lessons learned from engagement activity

What does this strategy cover?

Community engagement is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives. This strategy covers how the Council wishes to engage with its local community, including:



Informing the community about engagement opportunities

Engaging, or listening to, the community

Reporting back to the community about what we heard

Keeping the community regularly informed about engagement projects

What are the benefits of effective community engagement?

Councils make decisions about a diverse range of community needs, such as recreational facilities, planning and waste disposal. To cater for these needs, transparent and well-managed public participation can help to better inform local government policies and their translation into effective strategies, programs and projects.

Community engagement strengthens our planning, decision making and project delivery by ensuring that we understand and consider the needs and nuances of our community.

Engaging our community helps to:

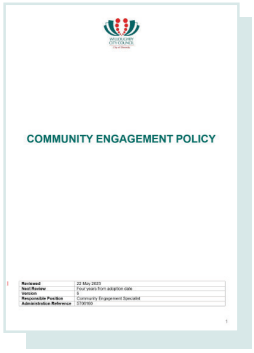
- Understand the needs and aspirations of our community
- Create a shared vision for our future
- Challenge our assumptions and broaden our understanding beyond our experience
- Empower communities to activate spaces, collaborate on programs and deliver services
- Check that we are on the right track

Community engagement enables good governance and ensures our Council staff and elected officials are making informed decisions by promoting a shared responsibility for the future of our local government area.

How does this strategy form part of the Council's Community Engagement Framework?

This Strategy is one of the three elements which form part of the Council's Community Engagement Framework. These elements are:

Community Engagement Policy

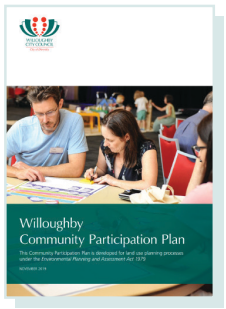


- Council's engagement principles
- Defines elements of the Council's Community Engagement Framework
- Defines internal roles and responsibilities



Community Engagement Strategy (this document)

- Required under Local Government Act
- Explains how the Council undertakes general local government engagement matters, including non-statutory strategic planning matters (such as centre, precinct or sector studies)
- Excludes statutory planning and development matters



Community Participation Plan

- Required under Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act)
- Explains how the Council undertakes engagement on statutory planning and development matters outlined in Division 2.6 of the EP&A Act, and some other planning matters such as certification

How this strategy relates to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

In line with international best practice, Willoughby City Council utilises the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. The Spectrum is a toolkit which can be used by project managers when designing engagement activity, to ensure that the level of engagement and the mediums utilised are in line with the level of community interest, and ability to inform the decision making process.

Table 1: IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

Participation status	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

This strategy utilises this spectrum, by:



- Asking project managers to identify all relevant stakeholders and designate how a project's engagement aligns with the spectrum and embedding this alignment into engagement plans



- Supporting staged engagement processes, which provides a greater opportunity in the early phases of a project to partner with the public and examine alternatives via the Involve or Collaborate participation status (see page 21 for a further discussion on this)



- Seeking greater engagement effort, including implementing the Involve or Collaborate participation status, for projects which have high levels of interest or impact (such as in the engagement methods matrix on page 24)

As Council undertakes a decision-making process, it will typically utilise the spectrum options ranging from Inform to Collaborate, to aid project teams and Councillors to develop a firm understanding of the community's desired outcomes and concerns, and for the community to understand the constraints on, and rationale for, proposed Council activity.

As the Council is the final decision-maker, it does not intend to use the Empower status option as part of this strategy.

Council matters our community wants to participate in

Research conducted for this strategy has provided some insights on the types of Council decisions that our community wants to participate in.[4]

Younger community members showed greater interest in community services, and cultural and community events, while community members older than 55 years of age showed greater interest in planning and development and streetscape issues.

Figure 3: Issues of interest to our community

	Area	Percentage of respondents who said they would like to provide input in this area
	Traffic and parking	56%
	Planning and development	52%
	Bushland management	47%
	Sustainability	46%
	Streetscape management	44%
	Cultural and community events and exhibitions	42%
	Parks and playground management	39%
	Community services, such as the libraries and youth services	39%
	New capital works projects	31%
	Council policy and vision documents	27%

4 See Community Engagement Strategy Community Survey Consultation Outcomes Report for full analysis (**http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/draft-community-engagement-framework**)

Our stakeholders

Our community engagement will identify stakeholders – individuals, groups or organisations who will be affected by, or who have an interest in, a Council decision – and promote opportunities for participation to ensure a range of perspectives is heard, and the community's needs, values and expectations are represented and considered in this decision.

Figure 4: Willoughby's stakeholder groups



Individuals and families

- Owner occupiers
- Renters
- Young people
- Seniors
- Families
- Single people
- Workers
- Commuters
- Visitors



Social groups

- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Community Leaders
- People living with disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- LGBTQI+



Special interest groups

- Progress Associations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Clubs
- Community groups
- People connected by a common interest or by a place
- Project Reference Groups
- Advisory Committees



Institutions and service providers

- Schools
- Faith communities
- Non-government organisations (NGOs)



Economic contributors

- Business owners and operators
- Development proponents
- Non-resident property owners



Other levels of government

- NSW Government
- Australian Government



Internal

- Council staff
- Councillors

Council's engagement principles

Willoughby City Council has adopted the following principles which represent the foundational elements and underlying aspiration for our community engagement.

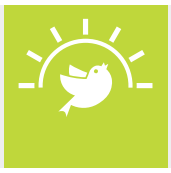
See page 19 for practical examples of these principles in action.

Table 2: Our engagement principles and practical examples of what they mean

Principle	What this means
Early	For more complex projects, taking advantage of opportunities to engage with the community before significant decisions are made
Easy to understand	Material which supports an engagement process will be easy to understand for all members of our community
Inclusive	Utilising engagement methods that enable a broad range of community members to participate in our decisions
Meaningful	Ensure community members have the opportunity to influence the outcome, subject to Council considering all factors
Visible	The Council will regularly go to people to seek input and feedback, rather than waiting for people to decide to participate
Responsive	The Council will be transparent about what feedback it has received, and how this feedback has been considered
Continuous	The Council keeps the community informed about projects as they are progressed

Willoughby's road to engagement success

The steps below illustrate how Willoughby's community engagement principles can be implemented at the project level to deliver a positive outcome.

1		We will build engagement into the start of our project planning
2		We will consider early and staged engagement
3		We will employ the right engagement methods for the circumstances
4		We will harness the insights of Willoughby's volunteers and special interest groups
5		We will carefully consider and respond to feedback we receive
6		We will keep the community engaged and informed during the project lifetime
7		We will monitor and evaluate our engagement function
8		We will provide opportunities for ongoing engagement



1 We will build engagement into the start of our project planning

We will carefully consider the need and objectives for engagement and the level of engagement effort likely to be required, when we begin planning a project. This will include whether engagement is a legislative requirement and the level of public interest and social impact of the project. Part of the planning stage will also involve ensuring sufficient resourcing and realistic timeframes are available for engagement purposes.

In planning for engagement, we will also consider the research conducted for this strategy, which provides insights on the level of community interest in potential engagement activity, depending on project type and community demographics and location.



2 We will consider early and staged engagement

We will conduct early engagement on more complex projects, to understand community views so that these views can be incorporated into the design of these projects. By doing this, we are able to increase the chances of project success.

See more details about early and staged engagement in our typical engagement steps on page 21.



3 We will employ the right engagement methods for the circumstances

We will identify the relevant stakeholders early in the planning stage and proactively invite them to participate in the project.

We will implement the right engagement method for the circumstances, after considering the engagement objectives, level of impact and community interest, the ability of participants to shape the decision-making process, community demographics and the efficient use of resources relative to the project budget.

Depending on the circumstances, this will include examining the best way to engage a wide range of community members, including members who:

- speak a language other than English
- are younger
- are older
- are time-poor working families
- live in a high density dwelling
- have a disability
- who are renting; or
- are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The Council has prepared an engagement methods matrix, which is available on page 24, which includes a range of mandatory or optional engagement methods which would be considered over the entire life cycle of a project.



4 We will harness the insights of Willoughby's community, volunteers and special interest groups

Willoughby LGA has a relatively high proportion of local volunteers and passionate interest groups. We will endeavour to engage these groups often and utilise their insights, expertise and enthusiasm.

For instance, volunteers freely contribute their local insights and expertise by taking part in Progress Associations, Chambers of Commerce and other local groups defined in our stakeholder groupings on page 12.

Volunteers also take part in Project Reference Groups. The Terms of Reference for each Project Reference Group states its role in the engagement process.

Project Reference Groups are time limited; established for particular projects that may be multi-staged or be delivered over a longer time period. They consist of a mix of community members with an interest or expertise in the project subject matter. They assist Council for the term of the project, providing an opportunity to tap into the community and / or experts for particular matters.

When we engage, we try to reach a broad cross-section of our community to ensure we hear a range of varying viewpoints. We are establishing a 'Community Voice' which will be used in an ongoing way as a community 'sounding board', to test ideas and concepts and to gauge community sentiment on projects.

Council has four Advisory Committees that provide strategic advice and assistance on specific topics for the term of Council. The committees for this term include:

1. Access and Inclusion
2. Active and Integrated Transport
3. Bushland and Natural Heritage
4. Sustainability



5 We will carefully consider and respond to feedback we receive

We will carefully consider feedback in our planning, development and decision-making. This will include by preparing reports which provide a clear analysis of feedback received, and by responding to issues raised in this feedback.



6 We will keep the community engaged and informed during the project lifetime

We will ensure that the community is engaged and informed across the full lifecycle of engagement projects, including when people have the opportunity to have their say, when the time comes to make a final decision and as a project is being implemented following this decision being made.

For more information about how we undertake this as part of a typical project, see our typical engagement steps on page 21.



7 We will monitor and evaluate our engagement function

We will monitor and evaluate the success or otherwise of individual projects, including their engagement process, and our overall engagement function (see page 28 for more details as to how we will do this).

This will include monitoring potential technology-led improvements in engagement outreach, which will take advantage of Willoughby's high rate of digital literacy.



8 We will provide opportunities for ongoing engagement

We will support community members to raise and discuss issues with us, outside of specific engagement projects initiated by the Council.

This could be via the community directly contacting and engaging with Council staff and Councillors, or by taking part in the open forum at Council meetings.

We will stay in touch with community leaders to encourage an ongoing relationship and their ongoing participation with Council projects.

~~Attachment A~~

Practical examples of our principles in action

The table below seeks to provide a selection of examples explaining how our engagement principles would be put into action during engagement activity. It is not designed to be an exhaustive list, but instead a guide to be applied in the right circumstances.

Table 3: Examples of Willoughby's engagement principles in action

Principle	Practical examples
Early	Undertaking a survey or co-design workshop to understand the community's needs and views before beginning the design or policy process for more complex projects Acknowledging that community interest begins well before planning or works are underway
Easy to understand	Using plain English in all our information, websites and communications Preparing maps for a major capital works project which could be understood by a layperson, as distinct to publishing maps used to inform the engineering or traffic management process Publishing summary fact sheets or brochures to explain the matter at hand Utilising high-quality photomontages so the community can understand proposed public domain improvements or land-use changes When a document has been updated, showing the changes in a different text style or through some other graphic design effect, or providing the previous document for comparison Minimising the use of technical terminology and acronyms in all community consultation communications
Inclusive	Allowing a longer exhibition period for complicated material All face to face engagement activities will be held in locations and venues that are accessible by wheelchairs and prams. As much as possible, physical assistance will be available to people with special needs attending these activities Making special effort to reach groups or individuals who either find it more difficult, or ordinarily may not consider, participating in decision-making Providing a range of methods for receiving feedback, including online forms and surveys, emails, letters and by phone The ability to translate all web material into another language and the attendance of translators if required at larger engagement events

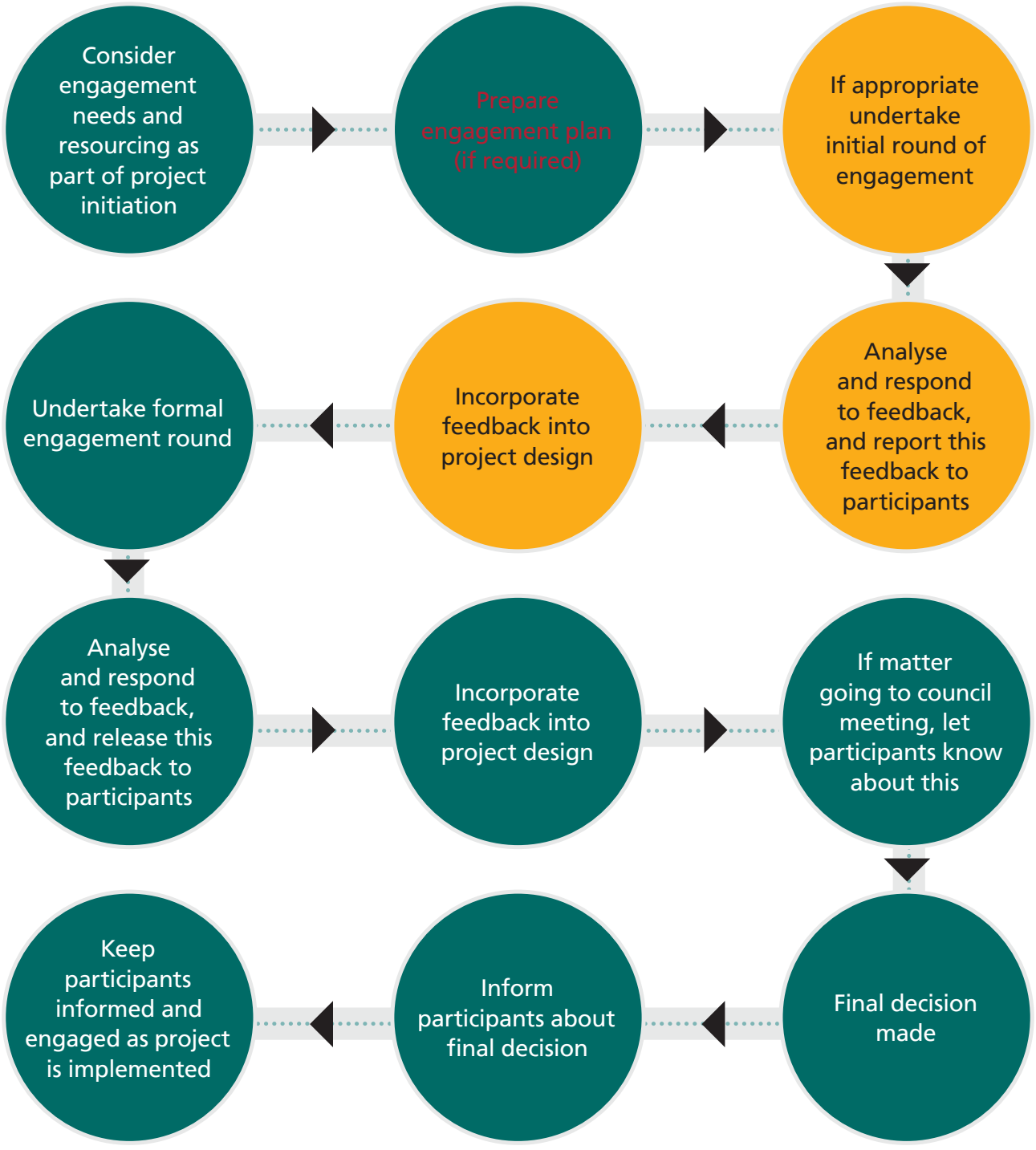
Principle	Practical examples
Inclusive	Planning engagement and engagement activities with consideration for the demographics and nuance of the impacted community Organising engagement events in a manner to reduce the potential, as far as is practically possible, of anger or hostility between people wanting different outcomes Making it clear, at public forums or events, that inappropriate behaviour may result in the forum or event being abandoned
Visible	Holding community engagement drop-in stalls and conducting intercept surveys in public areas where people gather, going to places that are convenient for people to participate (eg parks, playgrounds and shopping precincts) Erecting temporary signs at sites or public places which are the relevant location of an engagement activity Keeping up-to-date with relevant technology changes to engage with community members online Providing the names and details of staff contacts to help with queries
Meaningful	Ensuring that engagement takes place in a way and time that means that well-reasoned feedback and input will be able to alter or create a decision of Council Provide engagement opportunities that enable community and stakeholders to express their view
Responsive	Writing back to participants, to let them know their feedback has been considered in the decision-making process Publishing engagement outcomes reports, that transparently analyse and report what we heard from the community Providing opportunities for stakeholders to raise questions as well as provide feedback
Continuous	Community members who've had their say about a proposed project are kept up-to-date during the engagement process and as the project progresses Keeping engagement web pages up to date with the latest information, so the community can easily follow and understand the process Engaging with the community across a number of key stages in the design or program development process Maintaining an open line of communication to raise concerns or questions once the project is underway

~~Attachment B~~

Typical engagement steps

The diagram below explains our typical engagement steps. The circles marked in orange are relevant only for projects where multiple engagement stages are proposed to be undertaken.

Figure 5: Typical engagement steps for general engagement projects



Considerations during the engagement planning stage

- Community Engagement Plans will be prepared for all projects where there is perceived to be high community interest or social impact. See Level 1 and Level 3 examples in Table 5.
- The 2021 Census identified our LGA having proportionally high numbers of non-English speakers, time-poor working families, renters and people living in high density dwellings. It is important to undertake stakeholder mapping at the start of a project to ensure that any planned engagement provides opportunities for these sectors of our community to have their say. We will also harness the insights of our volunteers and special interest groups including Progress Associations.
- The Council will make every possible effort to seek community feedback at times when the community is best placed to provide this feedback and it's convenient to do so. We will do this by offering multiple channels of communication – via our website as well as hard copies of documents in Libraries and Customer Service. Also, drop-in sessions, webinars and other community engagement events will be held after hours or on weekends, whenever possible. Consideration should be given to holding public space stalls on weekends, or to coincide with community events.
- The minimum recommended engagement period is 28 days to allow adequate time for people to become aware of the project, read the information and then make a submission. This timeframe may vary under certain circumstances such as when State legislation or statutory requirements stipulate the engagement timeframe.
- Ideally, community engagement should be suspended from the middle of December to the middle of January to allow for the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Consideration will also be given to lengthen the engagement period if it falls over a school holiday period.
- It should also be noted that, if a matter needs to be re-exhibited with minor alterations, then it may be appropriate for a period of time to be deducted from our preferred minimum timeframes.

How we determine whether multi-stage engagement is appropriate

In some instances, more complicated projects will benefit from an initial period engaging with the community, to understand community sentiment and drivers, ahead of the creation of a plan or program which would then be the subject of a further round of engagement. At this early engagement stage, the Council would typically apply the Involve or Collaborate engagement status.

Usually, the first round of engagement will provide the community the opportunity to suggest, comment on or co-design ideas, ahead of a formal proposal being on the table. The second round of engagement will then examine this proposal.

A multi-stage process for complex projects increases the chances of engagement and project success, as community views are known and considered before significant internal resources are committed to delivering solutions.

The table below can be used as a guide as to whether multi-stage engagement is appropriate, while noting that this list is not exhaustive and that alternative decisions may be taken on engagement processes, based on the circumstances.

Table 4: Examples of single or multiple-stage engagement projects

Single engagement stage example project types	Multiple engagement stage example project types
Corporate policies and documents	Significant infrastructure and facility upgrades
Reserve action plans	Council sector strategies (such as strategies for housing, active transport, recreation or economic development)
Localised traffic and parking changes	Major planning strategies, including for precincts, town centres and corridors
Financial statements	

~~Attachment C~~
Proposed engagement options

This attachment has been prepared to help inform the community how the Council will carry out general engagement activities.

The matrix below outlines the different engagement methods the Council will consider for a range of engagement projects. The Council may undertake additional engagement activities (compared to those in the matrix) if this is considered desirable in the circumstances, or outlined in legislation.

Table 5: Matrix of engagement methods for general engagement projects

	Level 1 – High interest or impact LGA wide	Level 2 – Low interest or impact LGA wide	Level 3 – High interest or impact – local only	Level 4 – Low interest or impact – local only
Nature of impact	Has the potential to have an impact on, or be of interest to, a wide number of community members	Matters that are largely procedural in nature and will not, by themselves, impact on community members	Has the potential to have an impact on, or be of interest to, community members in a specific area	May be of interest to some community members who are active followers of the issue at hand
Example	Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework documents Sector-specific documents of widespread interest Regional facility	Corporate and governance policies Financial statements Sector-specific documents of niche interest	Centre strategies Plans of management Floodplain study Improvement Plans Playground upgrades	Reserve action plan Minor traffic or street changes Minor parking conditions changes
Likely maximum IAP2 engagement level	Collaborate	Involve	Collaborate	Involve
COMMUNICATION TACTICS A – Always U – Usually O – Occasionally R – Rarely				
Media release	U	O	U	R
Leaflet/brochure/ fact sheet	U	O	O	O
Promotional video	O	O	O	R

A – Always U – Usually O – Occasionally R – Rarely

	Level 1 – High interest or impact LGA wide	Level 2 – Low interest or impact LGA wide	Level 3 – High interest or impact – local only	Level 4 – Low interest or impact – local only
Map	U	R	U	R
Include in Monthly Have Your Say newsletter	A	A	A	A
HaveYourSay news flash[1]	U	O	U	O
Council News enewsletter[2]	A	U	U	O
Community Voice input	A	A	A	A
Subscriber updates	A	A	A	A
Newspaper advertisement/newsletter	O	O	O	O
Emails or letters to indirectly affected stakeholders[3]	U	O	U	O
Letters to directly affected stakeholders[4,5]	O	O	A	U
Site signage[6]	R	R	U	U
Customer Service Centre material	A	O	A	R
Posters and leaflet distribution[7]	U	O	U	R
Translated explanatory material	U	O	O	R
Social media posts[8]	A	O	U	R

1 This is a 'newsflash' style enewsletter, separate to the monthly all-subscriber newsletter
2 This is an email to around 1,924 subscribers (January 2025 figures) and is issued monthly
3 This may include Chambers of Commerce, Progress Associations and other interest groups
4 This would include letters to surrounding residents, businesses and property owners
5 Required for any proposed planning control changes which have an impact on specific sites or areas
6 Site signs should contain a QR code
7 This could be leaflets or posters distributed via libraries, council noticeboards, businesses or in malls / public spaces

A – Always U – Usually O – Occasionally R – Rarely

	Level 1 – High interest or impact LGA wide	Level 2 – Low interest or impact LGA wide	Level 3 – High interest or impact – local only	Level 4 – Low interest or impact – local only
ENGAGEMENT METHODS				
Phone contact/ hotline	A	A	A	A
Email contact	A	A	A	A
HaveYourSay portal page	A	A	A	A
HaveYourSay portal form or survey	A	U	U	R
Business or public space inception survey	O	O	O	O
Public space Have Your Say stall or table[9]	U	O	O	U
Phone survey	O	R	O	R
Site tour	O	R	O	O
Tactics to engage with hard-to-reach groups	U	O	U	O
Drop-in session or webinar	U	O	U	O
Engagement incentive[10]	O	O	O	R
Interactive map	O	O	O	O
Town Hall meeting or public hearing	O	O	O	R
Project Reference Groups ~~Community Panel~~	U	R	U	R

9 Particularly for open space or streetscape planning

10 Incentives should not be of a direct monetary value and should follow our Code of Conduct. Incentives might include VIP invitations to Council events for example. Council will further develop a protocol on this issue.

A – Always U – Usually O – Occasionally R – Rarely

	Level 1 – High interest or impact LGA wide	Level 2 – Low interest or impact LGA wide	Level 3 – High interest or impact – local only	Level 4 – Low interest or impact – local only
Stakeholder meetings or briefings[11]	U	O	U	R
Co-design workshop[12]	O	O	U	R
Randomly-selected focus group	O	O	O	R
REPORTING METHODS				
Project-specific community engagement plan	A	U	A	O
Engagement outcomes report[13]	A	O	A	O
Participants invited to address Council meeting (if item on meeting agenda)	A	A	A	A
Participants informed of final decision and how community feedback has shaped outcome	A	A	A	A

11 This may include consultation with Reference Groups, subject to their Terms of Reference
12 A collaborative workshop at an early stage of a project, where community members and key stakeholders are invited to help design the project
13 This is a report which would be uploaded to the Have Your Say portal page and be provided as an attachment to a report to a Council meeting. This report is optional if there are 12 or less comments and/or submissions, in which case each piece of feedback can be listed and responded to in the body of the Council report

Further matters to consider during the engagement process

Exhibition periods

The Council will make every possible effort to seek community feedback at times when the community is best placed to provide this feedback.

The table below includes Council's preferred minimum exhibition periods, including for each engagement stage of a project.

It should be noted that the exhibition period for a project is likely to be longer than this, if:

- This is required under legislation, or an instrument generated through legislation; or
- There is a need for a longer exhibition period, after considering:
  - The likely level of interest in the engagement matter
  - The complexity of the information which needs to be processed and understood
  - The level of impact of what is being proposed

It should also be noted that, if a matter needs to be re-exhibited with minor alterations, then it may be appropriate for a period of time to be deducted from our preferred minimum timeframes.

Table 6: Minimum exhibition periods

	Level 1 – High interest or impact LGA-wide	Level 2 – Low interest or impact LGA-wide	Level 3 – High interest or impact – local only	Level 4 – Low interest or impact – local only
Minimum exhibition period (days)[18]	28	21[19]	28	21

Exhibition periods include business days and weekends.

18. If legislation requires a longer timeframe, then this should be adopted
19. Excludes Draft Financial Statements which have separate notification requirements under the Local Government Act

Times during the year and week when we will seek community feedback

The Council will make every possible effort to seek community feedback at times when the community is best placed to provide this feedback.

In particular:

- The Council will seek to avoid commencing engagement in the period immediately before, or immediately after, Christmas.
- The Council will make reasonable efforts to extend exhibition periods, particularly for Level 1 and Level 3 matters (as shown in Table 5) if the exhibition period overlaps with a private and public school holiday period. It may be difficult to meet this aim for urgent matters.
- The Council will generally hold drop-in sessions, webinars and other community engagement events after hours or on weekends.
- Consideration should be given to holding public space stalls on Saturday mornings, or to coincide with community events.

Further protocol development

The Council will further develop a range of protocols to support the engagement process, which will reflect this strategy's principles. These proposed protocols are listed below:

Table 7: Proposed Council engagement protocols

Proposed protocol	Further detail on area of examination
Feedback collection, analysis and publication	• The best approach for the Council to collect, analyse and keep participant feedback, after considering what tools are available to assist the Council with this task • How the Council should publish participant feedback, after considering issues such as privacy and resourcing implications
Notification zones and approach	• Preferred notification scope for general engagement matters, depending on the engagement type and available resourcing, and outlining how are best reaching different stakeholders, including owners and occupants
Prizes and incentives	• Preferred approach to offering prizes and incentives for engagement activity

In addition, the Council will prepare a range of internal toolkits for staff, including in relation to:

- Ongoing liaison with community members across the life cycle of a project
- Preferred and locally appropriate methods to reach community members who may be less likely to take part in engagement activity (known as hard to reach groups)
- Preferred engagement tactics at the early and later stages of engagement.

~~Attachment D~~

Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of this strategy

The Council will regularly evaluate whether this strategy, and the Council's engagement effort, is meeting community expectations. It will do this by:

- Recording Councillor and community feedback about the engagement process, including compliments and complaints
- Monitoring the number of Have Your Say online portal registrants, with the aim to increase registrants
- Evaluating whether engagement activity has proceeded in a way which is consistent with this strategy
- Reviewing community perceptions of our engagement effort via our two-yearly Community Perception Survey
- Considering ongoing technology improvements, including through reviewing our Have Your Say portal and examining other potential improvements, such as new ways to notify and receive feedback from the community
- Evaluating individual projects upon completion, including the engagement activity which helped deliver these projects
- Part of this evaluation will include considering 'lessons learned' as per the Council's usual project management procedures.

Data collected over time will help inform the development of key performance indicators, to be included in, and reported against, in regular Delivery Program reporting.

~~Attachment E~~

Implementation plan

The Strategy is implemented through the delivery of the following elements.

Nature of improvement	Description
Protocols	• Feedback collection, analysis and publication protocol • Notification zones and methods protocol • Prizes and incentives protocol
Internal staff toolkits	• Community liaison toolkit, outlining how the Council will liaise with community members across the entire life-cycle of a project • Hard-to-reach group toolkit, outlining preferred and locally-appropriate methods to reach community members who may be less likely to take part in engagement activity • Staging toolkit, outlining preferred engagement tactics at the early and later stages of engagement
Staff training and project management improvements	• Train staff to help them implement strategy • Ensure community engagement is addressed in the budget bid process • Define community engagement steps as part of the Council's project management framework
Translated letters	Create letter template containing translation service information for general engagement matters
List of experts and service providers	Create a list of service providers and experts who are able to assist staff with tasks such as engagement planning, engagement outcomes analysis and engagement outreach
Development of standard external signage solution	Create a common approach for external signage, including QR codes
Community noticeboard review	Assess our community noticeboard network, including review how marketing and engagement material is integrated into the network
Marketing plan for Have Your Say registrations	Promote Have Your Say registrations
Have Your Say review	Review our Have Your Say online portal provider and Have Your Say user experience
Create Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Create KPIs for the Council's community engagement function

~~s of May 2023, the following elements have been delivered.~~

~~Nature of improvement~~	~~Description~~
~~Have Your Say newsletter~~	~~Monthly newsletter to all Have Your Say subscribers~~
~~Street stall~~	~~Branded street stall to support engagement activity in town centres~~
~~Strategy~~	~~Adoption of this strategy~~

Appendix
Our community

This section was moved from the main body to an appendix.

The Gamaragal People are the traditional custodians of the land, on which the Willoughby City Council area stretches, covering some 23 sq/km from St Leonards in the south to Roseville and Castle Cove in the north, and from Middle Harbour in the east to the Lane Cove River in the west. In 2021, the Council area had an estimated population of 76,034 people.

This strategy seeks to respond to the unique features of the Willoughby community and environment.

Our community in 2021

Figure 1: Key features of the Willoughby community[1]



76,034 people



Four wards

We have a relatively high proportion of high density dwellings

	Percentage of housing stock as high density
Willoughby	**43.1%**
Sydney	**27.1%**

We have a relatively high proportion of people who speak a language other than English

	Speaks a language other than English
Willoughby	**41.1%**
Sydney	**37.7%**

Most common languages (other than English)

Language	Percentage of population who speaks language
Mandarin	**12.9%**
Cantonese	**7.8%**
Japanese	**2.4%**
Korean	**2.3%**

1 2021 Census data used unless indicated otherwise



3.9% of our community have a disability, which is slightly lower than the Sydney average

We have a relatively high proportion of renters and outright home owners, but less mortgage holders than the rest of Sydney

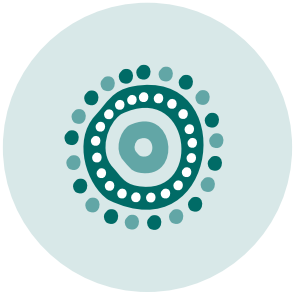
Housing tenure	Renting	Mortgage holders	Own home outright
Willoughby	**37.7%**	**26.1%**	**31.0%**
Sydney	**34.7%**	**31.9%**	**26.7%**

Compared to the Sydney average, we have a relatively high proportion of youths aged 5–17, parents and home builders aged 35–49 and older workers and pre-retirees aged 50–59

	Youths aged 5–17	Parents and home builders aged 35–49	Older workers and pre-retirees aged 50–59
Willoughby	**17.3%**	**24.6%**	**12.4%**
Sydney	**15.9%**	**21.5%**	**12.0%**



Compared to the rest of Sydney, we have a comparatively lower number of young workforce members aged between **25–29** and young children aged **0–4**



0.3% of our population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders



Our community is relatively well-educated, with **79.9%** of residents having completed Year 12, compared to **64.5%** across Sydney



Our community is digitally connected, with **87.2%** of households having an internet connection, compared to the Sydney average of **81.4%**[2]



16.3% of our residents are volunteers, compared to the Sydney average of **11.6%**



We have a large number of visitors, including **20 million** shopper visits



We have **78,629** local jobs and **12,816** businesses, contributing to a gross regional product of more than **$13 billion**[3]

2 2016 Census data
3 Figures from National Institute of Economic and Industry Research

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