



1.0 AUTHORITY

- *Local Government Act 2020*, s. 55

2.0 INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the Mornington Peninsula Shire's (the Shire) commitment to engaging the municipal community through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practices in order to effectively inform decision making processes.

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and Councillors undertaking, or required to undertake, **community engagement** activities and covers all forms of community consultation and engagement other than activities that must follow a **prescribed statutory process** for **community engagement**.

4.0 GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must give effect to the following overarching governance principles:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;
- f) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

5.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The foundation of local government is built around the principles of democracy. A key hallmark of those principles is the opportunity for the community to engage and be involved in Council's decision-making processes.

5.1 Community engagement will be conducted in accordance with the following principles which are consistent with the Community Engagement Principles set out in section 56 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

- **Community engagement** is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be part of the decision-making process
- **Community engagement** is carefully and inclusively planned to ensure that the design, organisation, and implementation of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants
- **Community engagement** is representative; it seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- **Community engagement** provides participants with the information and support they need to



participate in a meaningful way

- Participants in **community engagement** are informed of the ways in which the **community engagement** process will influence Council decision-making
- **Community engagement consultations** to take place within a timeline of 4-6 weeks. Managerial approval is required for consultations that require less or more time within the 4-6 weeks' timeframe (excluding compliance regulations).

5.2 The type and form of **community engagement** the Shire undertakes will be fit for purpose and proportionate to the significance and complexity of the matter as well as the level of resources required.

5.3 Having regard to the significance of and level of public interest in a matter, the Shire will 'close the loop' by informing the municipal community of the outcomes of **community engagement** by one or more of:

- resolution made at a Council meeting
- publication on one or more of the Shire's website, social media pages or printed publications
- advertising in local and/or metropolitan newspapers and magazines
- any other appropriate means; including, but not limited to, media statements by the Mayor or appropriate senior staff, consistent with the Shire's Media Relations Policy
- correspondence to acknowledge/thank participants of the consultation within one month after the end of consultation date.

5.4 The Shire will undertake **community engagement** that includes **deliberative engagement** practices in the development of, but not limited to:

- Community Vision
- Council Plan.
- Financial Plan
- Asset Plan
- Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

5.5 The Shire will undertake **community engagement** consistent with this policy and its principles on, but not limited to:

- The budget
- Making a local law
- Acquiring or selling land
- Development of policies, plans and strategies

6.0 HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER COMPATIBILITY

This policy has been assessed as being compatible with *the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

7.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Community Engagement Strategy 2021 – 2026



- Mornington Peninsula Shire Public Transparency Policy
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Media Relations Policy
- Standards for public participation developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

8.0 DEFINITIONS

Community	means Municipal Community as defined in section 3(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and includes all residents, ratepayers, landowners and members of the general public including individuals, groups, visitors, organisations, government and business.
Community engagement	is a process to enable members of the municipal community to contribute to Council's decision-making.
Deliberative engagement	is a form of community engagement that requires participants to critically consider arguments and weigh-up competing demands in order to determine preferences for resolving public policy questions.
Prescribed statutory process	means a form of community engagement that is set out in legislation (other than the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>) and must be undertaken in a particular way. Examples include advertising of planning permit applications and special charge schemes.
Representative	means that community engagement activities generally involve a sample of the broader population that will be affected by a decision. How <u>representative</u> that sample is of the target population is often assessed by the proportionality of key characteristics. To illustrate, if our target population was 100 animal-lovers made up of 70 dog-lovers and 30 cat-lovers, then seven dog-lovers and three cat-lovers would form a representative sample.

9.0 POLICY SPONSOR

The Manager Advocacy, Communications and Engagement is responsible for overseeing the application and review of the Community Engagement Policy.

10.0 DOCUMENT CONTROLS

Council will review this policy within four years or earlier as required.

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy, and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters the document must be by resolution of Council.