

7.4 Community Engagement Policy

Abstract

This report presents the Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 for Council adoption. The Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 replaces the current Community Engagement Policy and has been developed in response to the new *Local Government Act 2020*, which requires adoption of the Policy by 1 March 2021. The Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 has been developed using the existing policy as a basis and further refined through insights gained from community consultation and benchmarking with other local governments.

Key updates to the Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 include Council's requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020* particularly around deliberative engagement. The Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 defines how deliberative engagement will be applied for the City of Boroondara and this will be used to inform the community engagement approach for the Boroondara Community Plan, Council Vision, Council Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and the Ten-year Asset Management Plan.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, the policy is to be developed in consultation with the community. Consultation informing the policy in 2020 necessarily took place during the period that COVID restrictions were in place. It is recommended the policy is reviewed in 12 months' time at which time further consultation can be undertaken including through face-to-face processes.

Officers' recommendation

That Council resolve to:

1. Adopt the Community Engagement Policy 2021 - 2026 as annexed to the Minutes.
2. Note a review of the Community Engagement Policy 2021 - 2026 will be completed by February 2022 and the outcomes of the review will be reported to Council.

Responsible director: Bruce Dobson, Director Customer and Transformation

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of the Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 replaces the current Community Engagement Policy. Key updates include Council's requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020* particularly around deliberative engagement. Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to develop a community engagement policy in consultation with the community and define deliberative engagement, with the Policy to be adopted by 1 March 2021. The Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 defines what deliberative engagement means for the City of Boroondara, and this will be used to develop the Boroondara Community Plan, Council Vision, Council Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and the Ten-year Asset Management Plan.

3. Background

As a result of the *Local Government Act 2020*, local governments are required to develop a community engagement policy to support other key legislative requirements, particularly with respect to deliberative engagement. It is important to note while deliberative engagement is legislated, it is up to each individual Council to define it within their policy to best suit the needs of their local municipality.

While many Councils in Victoria did not have an existing policy, the City of Boroondara had a well-developed policy informed by community consultation, benchmarking and reviewing best practice. This former policy is the basis of the Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026.

The key differences in this updated policy compared to the previous community engagement policy include:

- meeting Council's legislative requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*
- ensuring the proposed policy is appropriately focused on principles and best practice for employees to follow
- providing more clarity on the range of practices that may be applied in engaging with the Boroondara community

There were a number of uncertainties during the year that were considered in the timing and development of this policy. These include the roll-out of the new *Local Government Act 2020* and understanding its implications, and defining a community engagement approach for the Boroondara Community Plan refresh. Consideration of these elements ensured the Community Engagement Policy would meet not just our legislative requirements but fulfil the needs of the organisation and the community more broadly.

4. Outline of key issues/options

The Community Engagement Policy is based on the former policy with enhanced language regarding accessibility considerations and relevant aspects of the new *Local Government Act 2020*. These include:

- Statements regarding Child Safe Standards and ensuring we provide opportunities to young people to participate and have a voice
- Defining deliberative engagement and when Council must use deliberative engagement
- Removing elements of the policy better suited for inclusion in the accompanying guidelines

While deliberative engagement is legislated, it is up to each individual Council to define what it means for the Council and its community. A deliberative engagement process can take various forms but should always include these elements:

- a representative sample of the community who are going to be impacted
- clear scope and remit for the deliberation including a commitment to participants on the level of influence of their recommendations or decisions
- provision of timely, impartial information
- adequate time for deliberation by participants
- support from Council to participate (accessibility, potential co-design of process, potential reimbursement)

The summary of deliberative engagement within this policy will provide the direction for the approach to community engagement for elements within Council's strategic planning framework including the Council Plan, Council Vision, Long Term Financial Plan and Ten-year Asset Plan.

The Community Engagement Policy must be endorsed by Council by 1 March 2021. Due to COVID-19 impacts and timing of advice by the Victorian Government, it is recommended the Policy is reviewed in 12 months' time after further consultation with the community including face-to-face consultation.

5. Consultation/communication

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to develop the Community Engagement Policy in consultation with the community. COVID-19 restrictions were in place at the time the *Local Government Act 2020* was adopted which restricted the opportunity for face to face consultation which ordinarily would have been undertaken. The opportunity was further impacted by the timing of the election period which removed the opportunity to delay consultation until restrictions had eased to facilitate face to face methods. Therefore, consultation involved the following approach:

- The community was informed of the upcoming consultation via the Boroondara Bulletin (print and electronic versions) and a social media campaign that promoted the link to the survey.
- A survey was available online via Councils' Have Your Say Page, in hard copy upon request and some feedback was provided and captured verbally over the phone.

- There was significant work done in working collaboratively with other Councils to understand how each Council interpreted the legislation and defined deliberative engagement relative to its community.
- Internal consultation occurred at various stages of development for the Community Engagement policy across various departments and directorates.

Although more limited than may normally be the case, the feedback received was nonetheless valuable and there were a number of key themes identified through the consultation. These themes have helped to shape the Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026 as follows:

- The importance of community involvement and opportunity to provide feedback on Council decisions
- The need for clarity on the level of influence community feedback will have on a decision
- Opportunities to work more closely with stakeholder groups on a broad range of issues
- Consideration of consultation timeframes on major issues
- Surveys are easily accessible and can be accessed at a time that suits the community
- The Boroondara Bulletin is used well to highlight opportunities and projects where feedback is sought
- The processes on small to medium size projects were seen as highly consultative

Further to community consultation, this policy has been developed in consultation with a number of external agencies and organisations including:

- Working with a network of engagement specialists in the local government sector
- Participating in a number of State-led engagement sessions regarding the new *Local Government Act 2020* and through participation on Engage Victoria sessions.
- Working with various teams within the City of Boroondara

6. Financial and resource implications

The actions identified within the Policy will be delivered within existing operational budgets.

7. Governance issues

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*. The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

8. Social and environmental issues

This Policy has been developed to support effective community engagement practice across the City of Boroondara and to ensure community members that are impacted by decisions will have an opportunity to have their say.

Manager: **Jeanine Nieuwenhuizen, Chief Customer Officer**

Report officer: David Eastham, Community Engagement Specialist

Community Engagement Policy

2021 - 2026

Responsible Directorate: Customer and Transformation
Authorised By: Council
Date of Adoption: TBC
Review Date: February 2022
Revocation/Sunset Date: February 2026
Policy Type: Council



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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The City of Boroondara is committed to engaging with Boroondara's diverse community and stakeholders using appropriate, effective and inclusive engagement practices. The Community Engagement Policy 2021 - 2026 (the policy) acknowledges participation in civic life is central to good health, developing strong and supportive networks and creating a positive community spirit.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Council will fulfill its commitment to create genuine and transparent opportunities to enable community members to provide feedback about matters of interest to them through Council's decision-forming processes.

This policy describes the role of community engagement in the Council decision-forming process including, but not limited to:

- strategic projects
- community vision
- policy, plan and strategy development
- service delivery programs
- major projects
- capital works.

This policy provides direction to Council staff about identifying when and how to implement a range of community engagement strategies, and the policy applies whenever any level of public input or participation is sought from the community in relation to Council projects, strategies, plans, programs or service delivery.

Further to this policy, a Community Engagement Guide has been developed to assist Council officers undertake engagement activities. This guide provides a variety of resources including templates and examples and advice on a range of community engagement scenarios. The guide is updated regularly. It also provides information on deliberative engagement at the City of Boroondara.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of Council who are involved in engaging with the community of Boroondara. This policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to Council, and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.

The policy outlines requirements to comply with Council's approach to community engagement. It aims to:

- outline the principles that guide community engagement in Boroondara
- set out how and when community engagement activities are undertaken by Council staff, including employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of Council
- incorporate changes from the *Local Government Act 1989* to the *Local Government Act 2020* recognising Council's role in engagement, including when to undertake deliberative engagement
- outline a community engagement approach that takes in to account the diverse needs of our community and is based on industry standards for sound public participation
- promote consistency of approach across Council to ensure, when appropriate, all communities can receive opportunities for engagement and participation
- encourage a complete process in consultation activities that includes providing feedback to the community.

1.3. Corporate framework

Boroondara Community Plan

The *Boroondara Community Plan* sets out the 10-year vision for our future based on the values, aspirations and priorities that the Boroondara community told us were important to them. It builds on what makes Boroondara a remarkable place to live now, and forms the foundation for us to work alongside our community and partners to achieve our vision together. As a key strategic document, the plan guides decision making and directly informs the Council Plan, Budget, strategies, policies and actions. The plan also identifies the health priorities Council will focus on, in partnership with local agencies, and responds to the requirements of the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Council Plan 2017-21

The *Council Plan 2017-21* outlines the way Council seeks to achieve goals for Boroondara over the four-year Council term. The Council Plan aligns with the community priorities identified in the Boroondara Community Plan and outlines key focus areas for Council services. The *Community Engagement Policy* supports the theme 'Civic Leadership and Governance', with particular reference to the strategic objective: *Ensure that ethical, financial and socially responsible decision making reflects community needs and is based on principles of accountability, transparency, responsiveness and consultation.*

2. Background

2.1. Policy environment

The City of Boroondara continues its long-standing commitment to engaging with its local communities and stakeholders using best practice. The development of this policy is an opportunity to amend the previous policy and incorporate engagement aspects in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

2.2. Policy context

The Local Government Act 2020

The *Local Government Act 2020* states that a role of Council is to provide governance and leadership for the local community through advocacy, decision making and action. The primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community with respect to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. In making decisions, Council holds the responsibility to take into account the diverse needs of the local community.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, the 'local community' includes:

- people who live in the City of Boroondara
- people and bodies who are ratepayers
- people and bodies who conduct activities in the City of Boroondara.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is about the relationship between government and the people it serves, and sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. This Act enshrines the human right to take part in public life, stating that "every person has the right to take part in public life, such as the right to vote or run for public office".

3. Methodology

3.1. Consultation

The *Community Engagement Policy 2021-26* builds upon, and replaces, the *Community Engagement Policy 2015-20*.

Community consultation

Community members were invited to provide feedback through an online survey via the Your Say website. The link to the online survey was promoted in the *Boroondara Bulletin*, a regular newsletter distributed to

all residents published in hard copy and electronically and promoted through social media channels. The survey was also available via hard copy on request and community members could provide feedback directly to the Community Engagement Specialist.

Desktop research

Desktop research included a detailed study of the community engagement policies developed by a number of Victorian municipalities and workshops facilitated by State Government. Information and clarity was sought on changes to the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure that the policy meets relevant legislation.

Internal consultation

The policy has been developed in consultation with various key stakeholders within the City of Boroondara organisation.

4. Policy statement

4.1. What is community engagement?

Community engagement is a process in which the community has a role in Council's decision-making process. For Council decision-making to be an effective, transparent and accountable process, decisions are made by weighing and balancing community expectations with other factors such as:

- fiscal responsibility
- economic considerations
- health and safety considerations
- equity and diversity considerations
- environmental, social and cultural benefits throughout the City.

Engagement processes should be designed so that views are representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter. This means aiming to design engagement programs tailored to reach all groups and individuals in the community, including those whose views are less often heard, or who are more difficult to reach through traditional engagement approaches, such as:

- children and young people
- senior citizens
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people who live with a disability, and their carers.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an international member association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world. The *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum* consists of five levels of public participation, which are displayed in Table 1.

Council is committed to using the levels of public participation in its community engagement practices to create a shared language for engagement, in order to build community trust and understanding. Council staff will be supported by the Strategic Communications Team in selecting an appropriate level of engagement for their community engagement programs and to ensure they meet the intent of this policy. Application of this policy will be guided by the following principles as defined in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

| Principle | Our commitment to the community |
|--|--|
| A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope | <p>Council will ensure all community engagement is planned and has clearly defined objectives and scope. This includes identifying the purpose and objectives of the community's participation in the engagement process.</p> <p>Council will ensure the purpose of the engagement is communicated clearly to the community and/or participants.</p> |
| Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation | <p>Council will strive to provide information that is objective and relevant in a timely manner.</p> <p>Information provided is accessible and easy to understand.</p> <p>Council will ensure the community has the information necessary to participate meaningfully.</p> |
| Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement | <p>Council will conduct appropriate research to identify stakeholders that will be impacted.</p> <p>Council will ensure that participants in the engagement are representative of those impacted in the community.</p> <p>Council will conduct engagement in accordance with Child Safe Standards ensuring that children are empowered and encouraged to participate in community engagement</p> |
| Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement | <p>Council will ensure engagement activities and information provided are accessible to the community.</p> <p>Council will ensure that everyone that would want to have a say, can have their say.</p> <p>Council will take into account the diverse communication needs of the community to ensure engagement is inclusive and accessible for all.</p> |
| Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making. | <p>Council will be transparent with the community on the level of influence the community has on an engagement process. These will be based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).</p> |

Council will refer to the model of engagement developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) known as the *Public Participation Spectrum*. The spectrum outlines the types of engagement that can be undertaken with stakeholders and communities and shows different levels of participation as appropriate to the circumstances are legitimate in decision-forming processes.

Council uses the IAP2 Spectrum (see Table 1 below) as a guide to reflect international best practice. It is important to note Council operates as a body elected by the community to provide good governance in Boroondara for the benefit and wellbeing of the Boroondara community. While the *Empower* level of public participation is described as placing decision-making in the hands of the public, it is important for decisions to be made by those elected by the community to make decisions on their behalf. This ensures both balanced representation and the necessary accountability between decision makers and those impacted by the decisions made. References to 'Empower' within the IAP2 Spectrum and this policy will therefore be interpreted as attaching significant weight to recommendations made by groups formally established by Council for the purpose of providing recommendations regarding a particular matter.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Table 1: IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation (represented to reflect City of Boroondara context)

| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Public Participation Goal | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives 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 aspects of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place decision-making elements in the hands of the public. |
| Example tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheet • Website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Public comment • Focus group • Pop-up Council • Workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Online wiki • Working group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference group • Working group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's Panels |
| Role of community | Listen | Contribute | Participate | Partner | Partner |
| Commitment to the community | We will keep you informed | We will listen & acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how the community feedback influenced the decision | We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are reflected in the alternatives developed | We will work with you to innovate, seek your advice and incorporate your comments to the maximum extent possible | We will attach significant weight to what is recommended. |

4.2. Types of community engagement

Broadly speaking there are two types of community engagement that fall within the IAP2 Spectrum, participatory and deliberative. Many projects will involve both types of engagement at different stages of the process. This may be as a result of the planned engagement process or due to different stakeholders choosing to engage at different levels of public participation.

4.2.1. Participatory engagement

Participatory engagement is more common in the first two levels of the IAP2 spectrum, Inform and Consult. Participatory engagement is typical when Council is seeking feedback on ideas and concepts, draft documents or as an insight in to a communities view on a particular subject.

Examples of participatory practices are:

- surveys
- polls
- submissions

4.2.2. Deliberative engagement

Deliberative engagement is more commonly used in the latter levels of the IAP2 spectrum, and identified in the *Local Government Act 2020*, however it is not defined. It is important to note there is a difference between a deliberative engagement process and an engagement process that has deliberative elements. A deliberative engagement process can take various forms but should consider these elements:

- a representative sample of the community who are going to be impacted
- clear scope and remit for the deliberation including a commitment to participants on the level of influence their recommendations or decisions hold
- provision of timely impartial information
- adequate time for deliberation by participants
- support from Council to participate (accessibility, potential co-design of process, potential reimbursement)

Deliberative engagement is a process that allows members of the impacted group or community to come to a decision after considering all information and prioritising solutions. In some circumstances, an independent facilitator may be used to assist deliver a fair and equitable process.

4.2.3. Submission process

At times, the only form of community participation may be through a submission as governed by Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. It is important to note that Section 223 is not repealed from the *Local Government Act 1989*. Where other legislation requires a Section 223 process Council will continue to manage the submission process in the same way as it previously had.

Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* will still apply to various provisions of that Act including:

- Section 157(5) – council decision to change system of valuation
- Sections 163A and 166(4) – special rates
- Section 169(1C) – rebates and concessions
- Section 179 – Regional Library agreements
- Section 199 – concentration or diversion of drainage
- Section 200 – drainage of land
- Section 207A – a range of traffic and road related matters

4.3. When to engage

The *Community Engagement Policy 2021-2026* aims to support effective project outcomes. Planning for community engagement as part of the initial whole-of-project planning stage to better manage timeframes, cost and resources associated with engagement, is best practice. Good engagement takes time, preparation and resources.

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councils must at a minimum, apply this policy in the development of the following:

- planning and financial management
- community vision
- council plan
- financial plan
- revenue and rating planning
- asset plan
- proposal and/or amendment of a local law
- selling, leasing or exchanging land.

Specifically in relation to deliberative engagement, Council must use a deliberative engagement process as defined in section 4.2.2 of this Policy for the following:

- maintenance of their Community Vision
- preparation and adoption of a Council Plan
- development and adoption of a 10 year Financial Plan
- development and adoption of a 10 year Asset Plan.

While not specifically directed by the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council may engage with the community when:

- reviewing existing strategies and proposing a change in strategic direction
- substantially changing or reviewing a service, program or project
- proposing a new policy or strategy
- proposing a change to the way a public space looks, or is used
- making rules or regulations that govern the use and enjoyment of public space
- planning major projects
- proposing urban redevelopment proposals, such as structure plans, to significantly change the existing amenity or characteristic of an area
- planning capital works projects including public buildings, centres or other infrastructure.

Opportunities for community engagement may also arise when:

- the community raises an issue with Council for a decision (or outcome) and there are likely to be competing community interests
- the proposed change is likely to generate significant community outrage (strong and mixed views)
- Council needs more information to make an informed decision
- an issue may significantly affect the community in terms of economy, lifestyle, environment or amenity of the municipality.

The specific methods for engagement are not prescribed within this policy as it is not best practice to prescribe methods without understanding the scope, intent and audience of the project. Those designing the engagement plan should take in to consideration the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, understand what commitment they are making to the community and then follow the process outlined in section 4.5 of this policy.

4.4. When not to engage

There may be times when engagement is not appropriate. Some examples of this include:

- when it has potential to conflict with other engagement activities being led by Council. Recommendations may include deferring engagement until a more appropriate time
- the duration of the election/caretaker period as governed by the *Local Government Act 2020* and/or Council's Election Period Policy

- when it conflicts with statutory processes such as those identified in Section 4.2.3 of this policy
 Exceptions to this may occur. This will be resolved by Strategic Communications working with the relevant Department Manager to reach an agreed approach to progress a project.

This is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of when a staff member or other person as identified in this policy will need to seek guidance from the Community Engagement Specialist. Through following the below 12-step approach as listed in section 4.5 it is expected staff members may identify other times in consultation with key stakeholders it is not appropriate to engage.

4.5. How to engage

A 12-step best practice approach to stakeholder engagement has been developed to use alongside the IAP2 Spectrum. This is based on the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard by AccountAbility which is a widely applied global standard that aims to set the benchmark for good-quality engagement. Outlined below is the process for planning, implementing and reviewing community engagement activities. For larger projects all steps should be considered however for others, there may be need to focus on a few of the components.

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| Plan | 1. Establish purpose | Identify and define why you're engaging. What is the intent? |
| | 2. Define scope | What can the community influence? What's negotiable? |
| | 3. Identify stakeholders | Internal and external, who needs to be involved? |
| | 4. Develop methodology | How will Council engage and ensure the community are engaged? Methodology should ensure engagement takes into account the communication needs of our diverse community to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive of all members of the community. |
| | 5. Set timeframes | Allow time for engagement and that there are no conflicts e.g. caretaker periods. Usually a minimum time of two weeks should be allowed for simple consultation projects. |
| Do | 6. Organise resources | What is needed for your different engagement activities? Staff? Interpreters? Materials? Catering? An accessible location and facility? |
| | 7. Invite Participation | Ensure all community that would want to have a say are aware they can have a say. Include information on inclusive methods available to participate i.e. Auslan interpreting is available on request for a workshop or to contact us to access information in alternative formats including in languages other than English etc. |
| | 8. Provide information to participants | Ensure that the community are provided with information to ensure they can engage meaningfully. |
| | 9. Conduct engagement activity | Commence the various engagement channels and tools. |

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| Review | 10. Collate and analyse community feedback | Analyse your qualitative and quantitative data. What has the community said? |
| | 11. Report back to community | This can be an opportunity to test what you have heard and how their input has been incorporated in the decision |
| | 12. Evaluate process | Has the engagement process been effective? Conduct a lessons learned workshop. |

4.6. Who do we engage with

Understanding the key stakeholders in any project is paramount to good community engagement. When Council are planning to make a decision, we need to identify those that are likely to be affected and involve them in the decision making process. It is important to understand that particular groups in our community may have barriers to engaging with us and we need to ensure we design engagement plans that includes methods that enable and encourage participation by all.

Some projects that Council will engage on impact our entire community, but we acknowledge some projects or decisions may impact some people more than others. It is important that prior to any community consultation a thorough stakeholder analysis is completed to ensure we are engaging with all of the relevant community members and considering any requirements of their communication needs i.e. the translation of information, the use of interpreters or information in alternative formats.

Council should ensure that the children of our municipality are provided with the opportunity, encouraged and empowered to participate in community engagement on matters that are impacting them. This is in line with Victoria's compulsory Child Safe Standards.

4.7. Reporting

Reporting back to the community closes the feedback loop. The report should recognise and respect the contributions made by community members, the expertise and experience shared, and the time taken to participate.

Capturing and reporting feedback demonstrates the consultation activity was taken seriously, and community members' input was heard and valued. The report-back process is an important step in the community engagement process that:

- builds confidence in the process
- shows participants that their views have been accurately represented
- stimulates interest in participation in consultation activities.

Community members are interested to know how their feedback will affect the final decision. Feedback about the final decision may use the structure: What we asked... What you said... What we did...

This simple structure demonstrates:

- the clear purpose of the consultation
- that community feedback was heard and acknowledged
- how community feedback informed the final decision made by Council.

The timely and accessible provision of a report maintains community interest and momentum around a program.

Council uses a variety of report-back formats, and staff are encouraged to select a report format that is consistent with the consultation approach used in the community engagement program. A report may, for example, use the format of:

- a letter to the stakeholders involved in the community engagement program

- a draft strategy, plan or policy
- an 'at a glance' overview of key findings and next steps
- a video
- a Council report.

5. Implementation and monitoring

5.1. Revision

The policy will be reviewed and updated in 2022, then again in 2026, or as required following significant changes. As required under the *Local Government Act 2020* Council must adopt and maintain this policy including amendments to the policy made before the policy sunset date.

5.2. Accountabilities

The Head of Strategic Communications coordinates the implementation, maintenance and review of this policy, ensuring stakeholders are aware of their accountabilities.

The Strategic Communications Team is an active participant in the delivery of the community engagement culture and practice at the City of Boroondara. The Strategic Communications Team will bring expertise, influence and resources to support departments in the development and delivery of community engagement programs, as required.

All staff will be supported by the Strategic Communications Team in being accountable for this policy. For all queries or feedback regarding this policy document, please contact the responsible department below.

| Position Title | Contact number | Contact department email |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Head of Strategic Communications | (03) 9278 4444 | ecomms@boroondara.vic.gov.au |

6. References

6.1. Community engagement is required under the following legislation:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Health Act 1958*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation*

6.2. Definitions

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Community | People who live in the City of Boroondara, people and bodies who are ratepayers; and people and bodies who conduct activities in the City of Boroondara. |
| Engagement | <p>'Engagement', as used in this policy, is a practice, specifically through the development and delivery of a community engagement program.</p> <p>'Engagement' may also describe the broad range of interactions between people, including approaches such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.</p> |
| Stakeholder | The term 'stakeholder' in this policy represents a broader definition than a group with a special or particular interest in an issue; it is extended to include the broader community and Council staff as stakeholders. |
| Deliberative engagement | The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> does not prescribe what are deliberative engagement practices. The key characteristics of deliberative engagement are considered to be: authentic engagement with the community; good representation of the community in engagement activities; clear demonstration of how all views have been considered; accessible and relevant information available to the community to ensure the decision-making process and the community's level of influence is clear in each instance; and that participants are fully informed. Transparency is key to an effective process. |
| Representative sample | <p>A representative sample is a subset (smaller group) that seeks to accurately reflect characteristics of the larger population of interest.</p> <p>Engaging with a representative sample is appropriate in complex or high-stakes situations when it is not practical or possible to engage with every community member. The views of the representative sample can be relied upon to represent the views of the whole community.</p> <p>A representative sample is a subset of Boroondara community members whose demographic characteristics mirror Boroondara's whole population. The key characteristics of relevance to this policy at a minimum include gender, age-group, suburb of residence and cultural diversity.</p> |