

	POLICY	Version:	1
	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT [2026]	Date Adopted:	8 Sep 2026
		Next Review Due:	Sep 2030

1. STATEMENT

Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and engagement between Council and the community.

Including communities in decision-making processes is important to the successful development of appropriate and informed decisions and policies by Council.

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

The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this policy:

- community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes
- information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation
- participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils
- participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes, and
- insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been considered and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

This policy is intended for use by all council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers involved in the design, delivery, or evaluation of community engagement activities.

2. DEFINITIONS

Communication the imparting or exchange of information between the Council and the community in a timely and accessible manner to produce a greater understanding.

Community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of Council. Council recognises that a community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest) or a community of affiliation, practice or identity (such as industry or sporting clubs).

Community Engagement is the process of seeking input or feedback from the community or stakeholders regarding a decision that may affect them. This includes any activity where Council provides information on a decision or invites comment on a matter. For the purposes of this policy, community engagement and public consultation are one and the same.

Public Consultation see Community Engagement above.

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Stakeholders are recognised as individuals, organisations and groups that have an interest in a decision or proposal or may be directly or indirectly affected by a decision that has been made or is being proposed. Business owners, retail outlets, State and Federal Governments, community groups, Local Government and not for profit organisations are all considered stakeholders. Stakeholders may also be individuals, groups or organisations who have a role to play in policy development and program or service delivery.

The Act is the *Local Government Act 1999*.

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

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Policy Objective

The objectives of this policy are:

3.1.1 to demonstrate the accountability and responsibility of Wattle Range Council to its community and stakeholders

3.1.2 to ensure that Council meets its legislative obligations regarding public consultation by:

- meeting the mandatory requirements in the Act and Charter
- using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process
- providing for participation by the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties, wherever possible and appropriate
- using feedback to enhance decision making
- providing information on how feedback has been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.

This policy is a statement of Council's general position in relation to community engagement ('public consultation'), as required under the Act and Charter.

3.2 Scope

This policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by the Council, a delegate of the Council or a person exercising power on the Council's behalf, where public consultation is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this policy. A reference in this policy to 'Council' includes a reference to a delegate or other person exercising power on the Council's behalf.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and application of this policy, and where necessary reporting the outcomes of consultations to the Council. The specific delegations made under this policy are outlined in part 3.8 of this policy.

This policy does not apply where the Council is exercising powers and functions under any other Act. Where there are consultation requirements under other legislation, e.g. the *Planning*,

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Development and Infrastructure Act 2016, those specific processes take precedence over this policy.

Where public consultation is required, Council may, having regard to the nature, scale, impact and community interest in the decision, elect to take additional steps to those set out in this policy.

In determining and communicating the appropriate level of engagement for a decision, activity or process, Council will also be guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation to clearly explain the purpose and intent of engagement and the extent to which community input will inform decision-making.

3.3 Public Consultation Categories

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

The Charter establishes different categories of consultation for matters, as follows:

3.3.1 Significant – Annual Business Plan (ABP) and Rating Policy

This consultation category comprises:

- adopting an Annual Business Plan - section 123(3)(b) of the Act
- changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating - section 151(5)(e) of the Act.

3.3.2 Significant

This consultation category comprises:

- representation reviews - section 12(7) of the Act
- development and review of Strategic Management Plans - section 122(6) of the Act
- changes to use of differential rating - section 156(4a)(b) of the Act
- revocation of classification of land as community land - sections 194(2)(b) of the Act
- Community Land Management Plans - adoption - section 197(1) of the Act
- Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - section 198(3) of the Act
- alienation of community land by lease or license - section 202(2) of the Act.

3.3.3 Standard

This consultation category comprises:

- opening hours and place of principal office - substantial changes - section 45(3) of the Act

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- Community Engagement Policy - section 50A(6)(b) of the Act
- Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6) of the Act
- access to meetings and documents - section 92(5) of the Act
- power to make orders - section 259(2)(b) of the Act.

3.3.4 Local

This consultation category comprises:

- proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - section 223(1) of the Act
- proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 232(b) of the Act.

3.3.5 Inform

This consultation category comprises:

- opening hours and place of principal office – minor changes - section 45(3)
- proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council ensures that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
- election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*.

The table in section 3.5 of this policy sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the requirements of each matter for which public consultation must be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Charter.

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3.5 Charter Engagement Requirements

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

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

The table below sets out examples of the minimum engagement activities Council will undertake to meet the public consultation requirements in the Act and the Charter. Where more than one engagement activity is specified, Council may use one or more of those activities, provided that at least one specified activity is undertaken.

The examples in the table are not exhaustive. Council may also determine that other engagement approaches are appropriate in the circumstances.

Table 1: Mandatory community engagement requirements

Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Website	Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a Council website	X	X	X	X	X	Information published on the Council website
News publication	Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the Council area and is not produced by the Council	X	X				Information published in a print or digital newspaper, community newsletter or other (non-council) publication circulating in the area of Council

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Consult with the whole Council area	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the Council area Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the community to bring the matter to their attention and to support participation	X	X	X			- Information published on online platforms maintained by Council (i.e. social media, resident notification app etc.) - Information made available at the Council Service Centre, libraries and visitor information centres Note: Consider the following: ○ if roadside and/or site-specific signage would be suitable for this engagement
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including the timeframe	X	X				- Engagement material provides information about how the community can make a submission, i.e.: - written submissions - completion of a survey or feedback form - attendance at a Council or public meeting, workshop or community forum including the minimum 21 day timeframe for submissions.

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Explain decision making process	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community.	X	X				- Information published on a website maintained by Council. Engagement material explains what the Council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve Information published explains that feedback received will be taken into account by the Council before making a decision Note: Consider the following: - if making the information available at Council Service Centre, libraries and/or community visitor information centres would be suitable for this engagement

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Seek and consider feedback from the community – significant matters	Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback Include a summary of community engagement feedback to the Council ahead of the decision	X	X				- Feedback will be invited by: - written submissions - completion of survey or questionnaire - attendance in person or by representative at a Council meeting or public meeting, workshop or community forum - promote opportunities to make submissions at a pop-up engagement activity or community event Community engagement period open for a minimum of 21 days Summary of feedback received will be presented in a report to be considered ahead of a decision. Submissions considered by the person or body with delegated authority to make the proposed decision or undertake the proposed activity or process (if delegable).

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Public meeting	Hold a public meeting where the community is invited to provide submissions (written or verbal) on the matter The public meeting may be part of a Council meeting or a separate event	X					Invite attendance at a Council or public meeting for the making of written or verbal submissions
Council meeting invitation	Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a Council meeting to speak to their submission before Council's decision is made		X				Invite community members who made a written submission to attend a Council meeting and speak to their submission before a decision is made by Council

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community Provide information about how community feedback will inform the Council's decision Ensure an appropriate period of time is provided to enable communities to provide feedback			X	X		- Feedback will be invited by: - written submissions - completion of survey or questionnaire - attendance in person or by representative, at a Council meeting or public meeting, workshop or community forum Summary of feedback received will be presented in a report to be considered ahead of a decision. Submissions will be considered by the person or body with delegated authority to make the proposed decision or undertake the proposed activity or process (if delegable). Community engagement will be open for a minimum period 14 days. Note: Consider the following: - promotional opportunities to make submissions at a pop-up engagement activity or community event.

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		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Consult the local community	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the local community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.				X		- Information published on a website maintained by Council. - Information published on online platforms maintained by Council (i.e. social media, resident notification app etc.) Note: Consider the following: - publishing in targeted letters or leaflet drops to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action - making the information available at Council Service Centre, libraries and/or community visitor information centres. - signage in a local location (e.g. reserve, shopping centre or community centre). - pop-up or drop-in engagement activities in a local location.

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Charter Requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to meet Charter requirements	Charter Category					Engagement Activities (One or more may be used)
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform	
Information to the whole Council area	Provide information to the whole of the Council's community if it may be directly affected by the Council decision or action					X	- Information published on a website maintained by Council. Note: Consider the following: - publication of information on a platform maintained by Council (i.e. social media, resident notification app etc.) - making the information available at Council Service Centre, libraries and/or community visitor information centres
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X	- Information published on a website maintained by Council. Note: Consider the following: - publication of information on a platform maintained by Council (i.e. social media, resident notification app etc.) - making the information available at Council Service Centre, libraries and/or community visitor information centres. - publishing in targeted letters or leaflet drops to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action.

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3.6 Other decisions, activities and processes

Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate.

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

3.7 Participation, submissions and confidentiality

Formal submissions received by Council as part of a community engagement process must include the name and residential address of the respondent, where required by legislation or Council policy.

The contact information (e.g. address etc.) of individuals who provide input to community engagement activities will be made known only to those who need to know for the purposes of compiling, analysing and reporting feedback, and will not be disclosed or made public by Council, except where required by law.

3.8 Delegation

3.8.1 Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, by:

- Council, by resolution
- the CEO
- a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
- a delegate with power to make a decision or undertake an activity or process that requires community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.

3.8.2 Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities or engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker.

4. REVIEW

To ensure Council continues to meet legislative requirements and undertakes effective community engagement, this policy will be reviewed every 4 years or earlier if the need arises (e.g. to respond to legislative changes or changes to the Charter).

5. AVAILABILITY

This policy is publicly available on Council's website www.wattlerange.sa.gov.au.

A printed copy may be purchased from Council upon payment of the relevant fee in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule.

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6. REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

References	
Relevant Legislation:	• <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> • Community Engagement Charter (Gazette reference 11 December 2025)
Relevant Policies / Procedures / Guidelines	

7. ADOPTION & AMENDMENT HISTORY

The table below sets out the adoption, review and amendment history of the policy.

Version No:	Issue Date:	Authorised by:	Description of Change:	Minutes Reference:
1	8 Sep 2026	Council	New policy adopted to align with the Community Engagement Charter.	Folio 11646, Item 15.2.2

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