

City of Hobart

# Policy

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**Title:** Community Engagement

**Category:** Community Services and Events

**Date Last Adopted:** 29 September 2023

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## 1. Objectives

The City of Hobart recognises that our community has a right to be meaningfully engaged in decisions which affect them. This Community Engagement Policy (the Policy) sets out how we achieve that goal. It should be read alongside our Community Engagement Framework (see Related Documents below).

This Policy:

- States our **commitment** to community engagement and its role in good decision-making
- Defines the **principles** guiding our approach to community engagement
- Embeds **best practice** community engagement into our organisational processes
- Outlines the **scope** of our engagement practice.

## 2. Background

This Policy was developed following a review in 2023 of our community engagement practice. The Policy reflects feedback from our staff and community.

In 2018, the City worked with the community to develop Hobart: A community vision for our island capital. The document guides the City of Hobart's work, so that Council decisions help create the Hobart that our communities want, for current and future generations.

This Policy supports delivery of the vision and responds to Pillar 8 in the document which states:

“We are a city of ethics and integrity. We govern with transparency and accountability, encouraging and welcoming active civic involvement. We collaborate for the collective good, working together to create a successful Hobart.”

## 3. Policy

### Our commitment

We believe that when our community is potentially affected by or interested in any decision we make, they have a right to be involved in the decision-making processes. We are committed to seeking out and facilitating that involvement.

Our community is diverse. Their varied skills, experience and knowledge play a key role in shaping the future of Hobart. Effective and meaningful engagement builds positive relationships with our community and leads to better decision-making.

In making informed decisions, we take account of the views, needs, and aspirations of our community. We balance that with expert advice, budgetary needs and legislative requirements.

This Policy reflects the aspirations identified in Pillar 8 of Hobart: A community vision for our island capital and associated outcomes and strategies from the Capital City Strategic Plan 2019-29.

### Guiding Principles

To guide the application of this Policy, we commit to the following Guiding Principles (adapted from the [IAP2 Core Values](#)). We use these Guiding Principles to support the development and implementation of best practice engagement processes.

#### Influence on decision-making

We recognise that our community has a right to be meaningfully engaged in decisions which affect them. And we commit to ensuring that community engagement influences the decisions we make.

#### Sustainable decisions

We seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision, including our diverse communities. We do that because recognising and communicating the diverse needs, interests and values of our community builds sustainable decisions. As part of this, we will design engagement activities that overcome barriers and enable Hobart's diverse communities to participate.

#### Transparency

Our engagement will be timely, well-planned and meaningful. We will clearly communicate so that our community understands what we are asking and how they can engage. As much as possible, we seek input from participants in designing how they participate. We will also ensure participants can access the information they

need to participate meaningfully. And we will be clear on the level of influence they can have. If influence is not practical, we will keep our community informed.

### **Accountability**

We will report back to community on what we heard during community engagement and how their feedback influenced our decisions.

### **A Culture of Engagement**

Community engagement is a shared responsibility across the City. That responsibility extends beyond the Community Engagement team. Every project and initiative that has an opportunity for engagement needs to have engagement build in by those managing the project or initiative.

We embrace community engagement as a key process in our governance of Hobart. We ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to implement community engagement. The Community Engagement Framework clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities for staff at all levels of the organisation.

### **Policy Scope and Implementation**

This Policy applies to all City of Hobart service areas, teams, and employees, as well as contractors and consultants we engage for projects and initiatives which impact the Hobart community.

This Policy does not replace legal and statutory obligations.

Implementation of the Policy is further guided by:

- The Community Engagement Framework
- The Community Engagement Toolkit
- Advice and support from the City's Community Engagement Team

### **Risk**

Alignment with this Policy reduces the City's reputational risk by building trust and forming relationships with our community. It responds to the community's expectations as set out in the Community Vision.

## 4. Legislation, Terminology and References

This Policy is informed by legislation, specifically the *Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)*. The relevant sections (Division 2, Section 20. Functions and Powers) are copied below:

- (1) In addition to any functions of a council in this or any other Act, a council has the following functions:
  - (b) to represent and promote the interests of the community
- (2) In performing its functions, a council is to consult, involve and be accountable to the community.

### Related Documents

- Community Engagement Framework
- Community Engagement Toolkit
- Hobart: A Community Vision for our Island Capital
- Capital City Strategic Plan 2023

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Head of Intergovernmental Relations and Partnerships
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