



Corowa Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy

June 2011

Introduction

Under new legislation, NSW Council's are now required to develop a Community Strategic Plan to guide the way Council works with the community and implements priorities. As part of the planning process for this project, Corowa Shire Council will be working with the community to establish a 'Community Vision'. This will help Council, the community and local businesses to better understand what Corowa may look like in 20 years time. The plan will also identify the community's aspirations and objectives for the next 10 years and to plan strategies for achieving these objectives.

A community engagement process will be undertaken to inform the Community Strategic Plan. The process will provide the Corowa Shire community, including residents, ratepayers, workers, business and agencies, an opportunity to be involved and contribute to the Shire's future.

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines Council's intentions for involving the community in the development of the Community Strategic Plan.

Why is this Necessary?

In October 2009, the *Local Government Act 1993* was amended to include requirements related to the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting reforms replaced the former Management Plan and Social Plan with an integrated framework, which includes a new requirement to prepare a long term Community Strategic Plan.

The components of the new framework, and how they fit together, are illustrated below:

- A ten year Community Strategic Plan (CSP)
- A Resourcing Strategy consisting of a four year Workforce Management Plan (WMP), a ten year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and a ten year Asset Management Plan.
- A four year Delivery Program
- A one year Operational Plan
- Annual Report

This diagram taken from the Division of Local Governments Integrated Planning and Reporting guidelines best depicts how all of the components of Integrated Planning and Reporting come together:



The *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009* provides transitional provisions for phasing in the legislative requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. Council resolved to nominate to have the 30 June 2012 as its deadline for implementing the framework. This was gazetted by the Division and is now a statutory timeframe that Council must meet and the Community Engagement Strategy is the first stage and is what drives the process.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is about involving the community in the decision making processes for the development of long term objectives and strategies that impact the community. Community engagement covers a broad range of activities and can take many forms.

The Division of Local Governments Planning and Reporting manual identifies and defines various levels of community engagement. These are:

- **Inform:** One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.
- **Consult:** Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
- **Involve:** Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.
- **Collaborate:** Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.
- **Empower:** To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

The Planning and Reporting manual also directs that councils should aim to achieve to at least the '**Involve**' level and preferably reach the '**Collaborate**' level with structures established for ongoing engagement.

Further Requirements

Principles of Social Justice

A further requirement is that the Community Engagement Strategy must be based on the principles of social justice outlined in the Division of Local Government's *Social Justice Framework*. The social justice principles are:

- **Equity:** There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.
- **Access:** All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- **Participation:** Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.

- **Rights:** Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Quadruple Bottom Line

The Community Strategic Plan must also adequately address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership considerations. This approach is generally referred to as 'the quadruple bottom line'. In some models the fourth element is described as 'governance'. In the new planning framework, the term 'civic leadership' is used with similar meaning.

Purpose

The Community Engagement Strategy identifies the stakeholders involved in the development of the Community Strategic Plan and the methods of engagement for the specific stakeholder groups. The Community Engagement Strategy is designed to provide equal opportunities for each stakeholder to participate by utilising a variety of methods to engage.

Scope

The Community Engagement Strategy is designed to aid Council in identifying relevant methods of engagement for stakeholders that can assist in the development and implementation of the Community Strategic Plan. Whilst the Community Engagement Strategy can be utilised as a guide across Council for community engagement it was developed specifically as a tool for the implementation of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework requirements and not as a model for community engagement in general. A broader model may be developed in the future.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as someone who may be affected by or have a specific interest in the decision or issue under consideration. It is important to develop a consistent approach to ensure equitable inclusion of all potential stakeholders who reflect the demographics of the community. Not only will this ensure a credible process and equitable representation, but the approach will help to develop community trust in the process.

Who are our Stakeholders?

- Business
- Community Groups
- Cultural Groups
- Council Employees
- Environmental Groups
- Individual residents

- State and Federal Government
- Sport and Recreation Groups
- Non-government Agencies and Organisations
- Councillors

Target Groups

The Division of Local Government has identified groups of people who may have special needs, and who may not normally participate in community engagement processes. For the community engagement process to be fair and equitable, then these groups should be targeted to support and encourage their participation.

Who are our Target Groups?

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Children
- Young people
- People with disabilities
- People from diverse sexualities
- Women
- People from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Older people

Timeframes

May 2011 – Community Engagement Planning, community profile information.

July – October 2011 – Community Engagement

August – November 2011– CSP development

January 2012 – February 2012 – CSP out for community review

February 2012– CSP adopted by Council

November 2011– May 2012 – all supporting documentation developed

June 2012 – All documentation adopted

Community Engagement Activities

The following table details the activities that will take place throughout Corowa Shire Council's Community Engagement phase.

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates /Venues	Details
Inform	Advertising and marketing PR "Corowa 2022 and Beyond – It's your choice"	Newsletter Newspapers Posters	Community	July – August 2011	Marketing strategy to explain process and engage community members and stakeholders
Inform	Information	Administrative Building	Councillors, Managers	Monday July 2 nd	Community Engagement Strategy
Consult	Survey	Mail out to all households in shire. Also available on website and from Council offices.	General Community	Surveys available and promoted Monday August 8 th – Friday September 16 th	Mail out on Monday August 8 th
Consult	Comment Boards	Various locations throughout the shire including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main streets • Sporting events • Children's Festival • Medical Centre 	General Community – especially those who would not be likely to complete a survey or attend a meeting	Various	Comment boards strategically set up in locations that attract large numbers of people. 'Comment' pages available for people to fill in and stick on boards. Boards also contain info/photos from the shire that can stimulate thought and comments. Boards are manned by 2 people at all times.

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates /Venues	Details
Consult	Focus groups	Corowa High School	Young people (12 – 18 years)	Wednesday 22 nd June	2 focus groups held with secondary school students
Consult	Survey	Young People attending Corowa High School	Young People	Wednesday June 22 nd	100 surveys distributed
Consult	Workshop session	Preschools – Corowa, Howlong and Mulwala	Children	Various	Workshops will be held with preschool students to encourage them to ‘draw’ what they love about their communities.
Consult	Draw your community	Primary Schools – All	Children	August – September	All primary schools within the shire will be approached to be involved. Students will be given the opportunity to draw a picture under the heading ‘What is your vision for your community in the year 2030’. Pictures will be included throughout the final CSP.
Consult	Focus Group	Karinya House	Aged	September	Focus group conducted with residents

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates /Venues	Details
Involve	<p>Focus groups with services providers, stakeholders and 'community leaders'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport and recreation • Health • Community • Children and young people • Aged Services • Business 	Corowa	Community groups, 355 committees, Community members, Government agencies, Cultural groups, and Service providers.	<p>Community Workshop – Corowa – Tuesday August 23rd – 9.30am – 11.00am @ Oddfellows Hall Corowa</p> <p>Health Workshop – Tuesday August 23rd – 11.30– 1.00pm @ Oddfellows Hall</p> <p>Aged Services – Tuesday August 23rd – 1.30pm – 3.00pm @ Oddfellows Hall</p> <p>Children and Young People Workshop – Tuesday August 23rd - 3.30pm – 5.30pm @ Oddfellows Hall</p> <p>Sport and Recreation Workshop Corowa – Wednesday August 24th – 6.00pm – 7.30pm @ Oddfellows Hall Corowa</p> <p>Community Workshop Howlong – Wednesday August 24th – 1.30pm – 3.30pm @ Howlong Recreation Reserve</p> <p>Sport and Recreation Workshop Howlong – Monday August 29th – 6.00pm – 7.30pm @ Howlong Recreation Reserve</p> <p>Community Workshop Mulwala – Wednesday August 24th – 9.30am – 11.30am @ Civic Centre</p> <p>Sport and Recreation Workshop Mulwala – Monday September 5th – 6.00pm – 7.30pm @ Civic Centre</p> <p>Business Workshop - October 12th – 7.30am – 9.00am @Oddfellows Hall</p>	Workshops sessions will be held with stakeholders, community leaders and service providers. The workshops will focus on the needs and priorities of the community.

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates /Venues	Details
Consult	Business Conversations (Survey)	All towns	Business Community	Surveys available and promoted Monday August 8 th – Friday September 16 th	One on one conversations will be held with business operators to better understand their priorities and needs for the future
Consult	Community Groups – Surveys	Throughout Shire	Community Groups	Surveys available and promoted Monday August 8 th – Friday September 9 th	Surveys will be sent to all community groups to complete. Where appropriate Council's Community Development Officer will personally distribute the surveys at community group meetings.
Involve	Community Groups – meetings	Throughout Shire	Community group members	August or September meetings for the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corowa and District Interagency • Health Support Group • CDAT • Landcare • Safety Committee 	Meetings will be attended to explain the process and understand priorities and challenges of groups.
Consult	Comment Board	Sale Day – Corowa Saleyards	Agriculture Sector	Monday August 15 th	Opportunity for the agriculture sector to participate via comment boards.

Level of Engagement	Method	Location	Targeted Stakeholders	Dates /Venues	Details
Involve	Community Meetings – Action Meetings	Corowa Howlong Mulwala	General Community	<p>Corowa – Tuesday October 11th – 7.00pm – 8.30pm @ Oddfellows Hall</p> <p>Howlong –Tuesday October 18th – 7.00pm – 8.30pm @ Community Hall</p> <p>Mulwala – Wednesday Tuesday October 26th – 7.00pm – 8.30pm @ Civic Centre</p>	Community members will be presented with the information that has been gathered from the process so far (surveys, comment boards, etc). The community will then assist Council to prioritise the information and develop possible actions and strategies.
Collaborate	Strategic planning workshops	Administrative Building	Councillors, Employees	Wednesday November 16 th – 4.00pm – 6.00pm @ Corowa Council Office	All Councillors and Management.
Consult	Community Strategic Plan – review period. CSP will be available for review at strategic locations throughout the shire and on the website	Shire wide	All community members	Jan 2012 – Feb 2012	Available electronically and hard copy from Council, website, library. Advertising campaign.