

**ANNEXURE 3
ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY -
Appendix A
Community Strategic
Plan**

APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY BRIGHT FUTURE, BETTER LIFESTYLE

BACKGROUND

Local councils in NSW are required to undertake planning and reporting activities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

The *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009* was assented on 1 October 2009. These reforms replaced the former Management Plan and Social Plan with an integrated planning framework. It includes the requirements to prepare a long term Community Strategic Plan, a Resourcing Strategy, a four-year Delivery Plan, and annual Operational Plan, an Annual Report and an End of Term Report.

After extensive community consultation over an 18 month period Council adopted its first Community Strategic Plan – *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020* at its meeting of 27 April 2010

Bright Future, Better Lifestyle plans ahead for the next ten (10) years. It is not expected that the plan will remain unchanged for that period and it is a requirement of the Local Government Act that the Community Strategic Plan be reviewed every four (4) years.

From 2012, each newly elected council must complete the review by 30 June in the year following the local government elections. The planning period must be rolled forward by at least four (4) years so that it is always a ten (10) year minimum plan

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community Engagement

The processes through which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of our local community and other relevant stakeholders are incorporated into Council planning, policy development, decision-making and service delivery. Council views community engagement as critical to effective, transparent and accountable governance.

Community

The term community is used in a broad sense to encompass people who live, work, visit or study in the Kogarah Local Government Area. This includes residents, ratepayers, non government agencies, the private sector, community organisations, schools, religious groups and social and recreational groups. Other stakeholders which have an interest or partnership with Council or the Kogarah Local Government Area, such as State and Federal Government Agencies, Members of Parliament, adjacent councils, Regional Organisations of Councils, peak bodies or media organisations are also considered when referring to the Kogarah community.



Aim

The aim of a strong community engagement process is to gather a broader range of views that will assist Council in planning services to better meet community needs and aspirations and to also provide residents with greater opportunities to contribute to and influence outcomes which directly affect their lives.

This strategy ensures that Council's Community Strategic Plan, *Bright Future Better Lifestyle* is developed in collaboration with our community, and remains a relevant document that reflects the aspirations, needs and priorities of the community;

This strategy outlines the methods of engagement used to ensure that all members of the Kogarah Community were provided with an opportunity to have their say, including but not limited to:

- Children and Families
- Young People
- Older people
- People with a Disability
- People from Culturally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- Local businesses
- Government agencies and stakeholders
- Community and sporting groups
- Advisory Committees

Stakeholders

Community Engagement will be undertaken with a range of stakeholders, both within and outside our LGA and include but are not limited to:

- Councillors
- Kogarah City Executive Council staff
- Kogarah City Management staff
- Kogarah City staff
- Local Federal and State MPs
- State Government
- Federal Government
- Residents and rate payers
- Major businesses in the region
- Small businesses
- Non-Government Organisations
- Older People
- People with a disability
- Non-English Speaking residents
- Families
- Young People (12-24)
- Children (5-12)
- Preschool Children (2-5)
- Visitors and commuters to the area
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Legislative Requirements

The preparation and implementation of this Community Engagement Strategy is required to meet relevant provisions of the NSW Local Government Act (1993) and the accompanying Planning and Reporting Guidelines for Local Government in NSW (2010).

Section 402 of the Act specifically provides that Councils “..must prepare and implement a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles for engagement with the local community in developing the Community Strategic Plan..”

The Planning and Reporting Guidelines set mandatory requirements for Community Engagement Strategies. While the guidelines do not stipulate a prescribed format for these strategies, they do provide the following direction:

Essential Element 1.1

The Community Strategic Plan should be developed and delivered as a partnership between council, state agencies, community groups and individuals. It should address a broad range of issues that are relevant to the whole community.

Essential Element 1.2

Information that identifies key issues and challenges must be presented to the community in an accessible format to assist its participation in the planning process.

Essential Element 1.4

Due consideration must also be given to the expected levels of service expressed by the community when preparing the Community Strategic Plan.

Essential Element 1.5

As a minimum, the Community Engagement Strategy must identify relevant stakeholder groups within the community and outline methods of engaging each group.

Essential Element 1.6

Council must place the draft Community Strategic Plan on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days and comments from the community must be accepted and considered prior to the endorsement of the final Community Strategic Plan.



Guiding Principles

The Community Engagement Strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

Social Justice Principles: The Social Justice Principles of equity, access, participation and rights underpin the development of Council's Community Strategic Plan – *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle*.

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

These principles are interrelated and will continue to guide Council through the delivery and assessment of the effectiveness of our Community Strategic Plan.

In addition to the Social Justice Principles, this Community Engagement Strategy is aligned with the engagement spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

This engagement spectrum outlines the following five (5) levels of community engagement:

- **INFORM** – To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
- **CONSULT** – To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **INVOLVE** – To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **COLLABORATE** – To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions.
- **EMPOWER** – To place final decision-making in the hands of the Community.

This Engagement Strategy has particular emphasis on the Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate levels of engagement.

Developing *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle*

An integral component of the preparation of *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020* was the engagement of our community. The Engagement Strategy adopted by Council outlined how Council would effectively capture the shared aspirations of the community. The purpose of the Engagement Strategy was to involve the community in activities that allowed them to express their thoughts on their needs and expectations now and in the future as well as how this might be achieved.

A number of methods were undertaken to gather feedback from a wide range of people in our community including our residents, business community, stakeholders, Councillors and Council staff. More than 600 people participated in various community development activities and consultation processes that encouraged them to express their thoughts regarding what they value about their community and what they want to see as the future of the City of Kogarah. A key component of the process was to encourage the effective participation of a variety of age groups, including pre-schoolers, children and youth by enabling them to express their opinions.

A Postcard Survey was also developed and distributed widely throughout the community at various events, festivals and functions and made available on Council's website. More than 5,000 surveys were distributed throughout the community and over 400 were returned.

The feedback from the postcard survey aimed to identify the key issues that the community considered important and what Council should be focusing on over the next 10 years.

A Community Discussion Paper was then prepared, which identified the key issues and challenges under a series of broad headings. The Community Discussion Paper provided a summary of the issues that had been raised by the community. To ensure the issues that had been identified were in fact important to our community, two Community Forums were held in September 2009.

The Community Forums were held to provide further opportunity to elicit detailed information on key issues already raised. Targeted discussions were held as part of the Forums to consider each direction and the draft goals. Participants were able to provide verbal and written feedback on the key strategic directions of their interest.

A deliberative consultation was held in late November 2009 to seek feedback from the community on the key strategic directions and goals of the draft Plan and to explore options for future funding of the outcomes of the Plan. Twenty-four (24) residents who represented a broad cross section of the community attended the Forum, which was facilitated independently by consultants.



Council's Consultative and Advisory Committees

Council has a variety of consultative, advisory and working groups which are a valuable asset which enable Council to consult with informed residents on an ongoing basis.

Community Reference Group

The Community Reference Group is a selection of residents or rate payers of the Kogarah LGA who provide feedback to Council on the implementation of the Key Strategic Directions contained within *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle; Kogarah 2020*, Council's Community Strategic Plan.

The Community Reference Group has been established to:

- Operate as a mechanism for reviewing the status of the strategies contained within *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle; Kogarah 2020*.
- Provide review of the expenditure of funds raised through Council's Special Rate Variation that are allocated against the priorities identified in the Community Strategic Plan.
- Be an equitable forum for community members to have an opportunity to be involved in discussion with Council staff on relevant issues.
- Complement other elements of Council's broader consultation framework and act as a regular forum through which Council can refer items where consultation is required.

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

The YAC is voluntary and meets once a month to discuss issues, express their views and contribute to the development of the local community.

The committee:

- Has the opportunity to influence decisions made by Council that affect young people.
- Organise and participate in youth activities and events, such as Youth Week.
- Contribute to important community development projects affecting young people.
- Informs Council on issues that are important to young people.

Community Services and Community Relations - Community Development and Access Working Party

The objective of the Community Services and Community Relations – Community Development and Access Working Party is to consider all issues relating to access, community development and services.

Specifically the Working Party:

- Acts as a consultative mechanism for the development of Council's plans and strategies in the community services portfolio
- Monitors the changing needs and priorities of the community
- Informs Council of priority issues in relation to the Community Services sector
- Works in partnership with Council to respond to the changing needs and expectations of our community.

Consultations Informing the Review of *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle*

Kogarah City Council undertakes formal community engagement in a number of circumstances such as:

- Where community input can improve a project or enhance decision making;
- To help identify or clarify community needs or priorities;
- In response to expressions of community interest or concern;
- When Council resolves to consult the community; or
- When required by law, policy or by agreement with a government agency or statutory body.

The review of *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle* and the subsequent development of the 2013-17 Delivery Program and Operational Plans is based on information resulting from a continuous series of community consultations over the past three (3) years.

The review undertaken utilises the outcomes of these consultations, assesses them against current and future needs of the community identified in the CSP and incorporates them into actions in the draft 2013-17 Delivery Program.

Due to the diversity of Kogarah's community, Council needs to provide opportunities for engagement at times, places and in mediums convenient and comfortable for a range of different stakeholders. Therefore the following projects outlined below included a variety of engagement methods, relevant to the specific projects, including:

- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Online Surveys
- Website and media presence
- Letters and questionnaires
- Interviews

- Art & Story telling activities
- Market Stalls
- Public Meetings
- Information sessions and roundtable discussions
- Public exhibition

In particular the following projects involved considerable amount of community engagement and have played an important role in the Review of the Community Strategic Plan:

- Kogarah City Council Youth Strategy
- Kogarah City Council Multicultural Strategy
- Annual Safety Forums
- Kogarah City Council Ageing Strategy
- Community Workers Forum
- Kogarah Employment Lands and Economic Development Strategy
- Chinese resident survey
- Ageing in Place
- Environmental Sustainability Delivery Plan (ESD)
- Poulton Park Overland Flow and Risk Management Study and Plan
- Plans of Management, including:
 - Neverfail Bay
 - Oatley Memorial Gardens
 - Oatley Point
 - Sans Souci Park
 - Shipwrights Bay
 - Tom Ugly's Reserve
 - Merriman Reserve



Review of *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle*

As part of Council's review of *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle*, Council will be seeking feedback from the whole community on the following:

- Our community vision statement
- Our strategic objectives for the community that address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues identified by the community

When	Engagement Methods	Purpose
June 2012 – August 2012	End of Term Report	Report on Council's progress in the implementation and effectiveness of the CSP over the previous four (4) years.
June 2012 – September 2012	Review of community engagement undertaken since the development of the CSP in 2010	To ensure the outcomes of consultations undertaken over the past two (2) years is incorporated into the identified issues in the CSP and Delivery Program.
Ongoing	Your Say Kogarah Online Consultation Hub Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums • Community Survey (open September 2012 - December 2012) 	To provide online space for information and feedback during the review, development and exhibition phases of the CSP; including specific questions/issues for community comment/discussion.
August 2012	Focus Group Community Reference Group	Strategic Visioning Particularly focusing on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think Council's community vision is still relevant today? (can be found on page 6 of the CSP) • What do you like most about living in Kogarah? • What do you think could improve the Kogarah LGA? • What do you think should be Council's focus over the next four (4) years?

When	Engagement Methods	Purpose
September 2012 – January 2013	<i>Bright Future, Better Lifestyle</i> promotion through Market Stalls at local community events, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kogarah Spring Festival • Being Greek Festival • Dog's Breakfast • Carols at Twilight • Australia Day 	To provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to personally voice their views on future priorities for action.
September 2012 – March 2013	Ongoing promotion via media, website and front line services.	To continue generating broad community awareness of the CSP review and to advise of upcoming engagement opportunities.
October 2012 – February 2013	Councillor Workshops.	To ascertain Councillor views on the strategic vision, objectives and priorities. Identification of Councillor issues, values and priorities.
December 2012 – February 2013	Public exhibition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft CSP • Draft Resourcing Strategy • Draft Delivery Program 2013 – 2017 incorporating annual Operational Plans for 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 	To provide all interested stakeholders with access to the draft Integrated Planning documents and to generate discussion and further feedback on the draft content.
January 2013	Special Edition Kogarahlife.	To provide information to the community on major proposals regarding service levels/ infrastructure and their financial implications.
January 2013 – February 2013	Community Surveys and Meetings.	To ascertain community views on major proposals regarding service levels/infrastructure and their financial implications.
January 2013	Focus Group Community Reference Group	To ascertain community views on major proposals regarding service levels/infrastructure and their financial implications.
March 2013	Formal Adoption of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bright Future, Better Lifestyle</i> • Resourcing Strategy • Delivery Program 2013 – 2017 • Operational Plan 2013/14 	

