

JUNEE SHIRE COUNCIL APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION 2013/2014

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: DECEMBER 2012

INTRODUCTION

A Community Engagement Strategy will give the Junee Shire community a clear understanding of:

- Council's commitment to Community Engagement
- Strategy objectives and standards
- Key stakeholders and engagement methods
- What level of engagement will occur, and
- How the Community Engagement process will be managed; including feedback for the community and evaluation of the Community Engagement process.

Community engagement is a way of including the views of the Junee Shire community in the Council's planning and decision making processes. In other words, the Council will engage the community to identify, understand and develop strategies to address and respond to their needs and concerns for now and in the future.

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In recent years Junee Shire Council has made a more determined effort to engage the community, involving the community in a broad range of Council decisions and activities.

In conjunction with the wider community, Council has facilitated the completion of the "making tracks" Community Strategic Plan for the Junee Shire to 2022 (CSP). The Plan is focused on 'making tracks' – not standing still – and gives a clear direction for the future prosperity and wellbeing of the Junee community.

Under the theme of "A Livable Community" the CSP highlighted the importance of maintaining services, in particular ensuring appropriate future provisions for roads, drainage and building maintenance. To this end, the CSP states the role of Junee Shire Council to seek to provide for the increasing cost of maintaining and improving public infrastructure – roads, drainage, buildings. An increase in rate income derived from a special rate variation is an avenue to receive additional funding.

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES STANDARDS

Objectives

The following objectives should be observed when planning and implementing community engagement activities:

- Ensure Council Officers understand and effectively implement the Community Engagement Strategy and Policy
- Provide the Junee Shire community with opportunities to participate in decision making on both present and future issues
- Ensure participants and stakeholders represent a cross section of the community
- Incorporate a range of community engagement methods that:
 - Facilitate community awareness of the engagement topic
 - Gives the community opportunities to provide feedback
- Proactively and regularly inform the community about the outcomes from the community engagement activities
- Provide Council with a range of ideas, suggestions and general comments gathered from the engagement activities
- Ensure that Council, in exercising its power of decision making, is informed of and able to respond to the community needs and interest.

Standards

Junee Shire Council will measure the quality of each community engagement activity against the following standards:

- All communication will meet the needs of the targeted community
- All Council Officers and external consultants employed by Council, involved in implementing engagement activities, will have appropriate skills and experience to undertake engagement tasks
- An adequate period of notice will be given for each community engagement activity - the period of notice will not be less than two weeks for any activity that requires people to attend or get involved in an engagement activity
- Participants will represent a cross section of the community.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The following stakeholder list and engagement methods have been identified to assist in developing the special rate variation application consultation initiatives.

Group	Involving	Engagement Method
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • Major Business Owners • Junee Business and Trades Association • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sessions – held after hours so farmers and business owners can attend • Web Survey • Distribution of flyer and paper survey
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Sporting and recreation groups • Clubs • Aged Community • Volunteers • Charitable groups • Church groups • Health Services • Village groups • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Survey – promoted through newsletter, newspaper • Information sessions for all residents • Distribution of flyer and paper survey
State and Federal MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Micheal McCormack, Federal member for Junee • Mr Adrian Piccoli, State member for Junee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor and General Manger – meet to discuss key issues
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local newspaper • Council newsletter • Facebook page • Twitter account • Council website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General manager and Council staff to co-ordinate and monitor media and social media
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Survey (electronic) • Written Survey (hardcopy) • Information sessions

WHAT LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WILL OCCUR?

June Shire Council will implement different levels of engagement depending on the issue, and its immediate or long term impact on the community. In this instance the Council will reach a minimum Level 3 engagement with the aim of attaining Level 4. The levels of engagement are as follows:

Level 1 – INFORM - Giving information to the community

Level 2 – CONSULT - Obtaining community feedback

Level 3 – INVOLVE - Participating directly with the community

Level 4 – COLLABORATE - Partnering with the community to create solutions

Level 5 – EMPOWER - Placing the final decision making in the hands of the community

HOW WILL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES BE MANAGED?

- Each community engagement activity will be the responsibility of the June Shire Council Manager appointed as project manager
- When planning community engagement, Managers need to ensure that resources (staff and finance) for engagement activities across Council are effectively allocated and managed. Where possible, engagement activities will be combined with other activities that target similar community groups
- Every effort will be made to attract and reach a cross section of community by using a wide range of communication methods.

FEEDBACK TO PARTICIPANTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Upon completion of a community engagement activity, outcomes from the activity will be communicated to all participants and the community. A report will be developed for Council outlining the community engagement outcomes, considerations and recommendations.