



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012

INFORMING THE FAIRFIELD CITY PLAN 2012-2022

Our home
Our City Our future



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The revised Local Government Act requires Council to lead the development of a Community Strategic Plan which documents the community's future vision for all aspects of the City, including those issues that are the responsibility of the Federal and State Governments and the not-for-profit and private sectors.

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines the principles, guidelines and actions Council will undertake in order to ensure that the community is engaged in the development, implementation and assessment of the Fairfield City Plan 2012 – 2022. The development of the Community Engagement Strategy is built on years of activity. Fairfield City Council has a wealth of information which continues to inform the direction for the City.

In 2010, Council undertook a comprehensive consultation to inform the Fairfield City Plan 2010-2020. This involved surveys (both residents and businesses), a series of focus groups with residents, government departments, community organisations, schools and youth representatives, a web feedback form and youth event. 1775 residents took the opportunity to have a say on what they feel is important to the community and where they believe Fairfield City should be heading.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework usually requires the Fairfield City Plan to be reviewed every four year. However, due to the introduction of the Legislation, this time, the review is required in a two year timeframe. Due to the comprehensive consultations occurring in 2010 it is proposed to primarily use focus groups and an on-line survey as the main ways of engaging with the community to confirm and update the Fairfield City Plan.

This Community Engagement Strategy will review and validate the identified Vision and Goals ensuring community concerns and aspirations for the future of Fairfield City are contained in the Fairfield City Plan 2012-2022.

INTRODUCTION

What is the Community Engagement Strategy?

The revised Local Government Act requires Council to lead the development of a Community Strategic Plan which covers all aspects of the LGA, including those issues that are the responsibility of the Federal and State Governments and the not-for-profit and private sectors. This approach acknowledges council's unique position as the only agency with an interest in all aspects of Fairfield City. It formalises the role of Council as the key advocate for the community in relation to all issues.

Community Engagement is an essential part of the way Fairfield City Council does business. Fairfield City Council recognises that to best meet the needs of our community, that planning and decision making is based on the needs and aspirations of our community.

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines the principles, guidelines and actions Council will undertake in order to ensure that the community is engaged in the development, of the Fairfield City Plan - Community Strategic Plan.



Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (Local Government Amendment: Planning and Reporting Act 2009) aims to improve Council's long term community, financial and asset planning. The Community Strategic Plan or Fairfield City Plan identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and must address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues for the City.

Council has a special role to play in the development of this Community Strategic Plan in that it is the agency which has been charged with its development. However, it is not the Council's sole responsibility to deliver on all the community outcomes identified in the Plan. A range of other governments (both Federal and State), organisations, institutions, agencies as well as every resident will have an important role to play in delivering the community outcomes identified in this plan.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requires Council to develop a:

- Fairfield City Plan or Community Strategic Plan: 10 year plan identifying the community's main priorities and aspirations.
- Delivery Program: 4 year plan outlining activities to be undertaken by Fairfield City Council in response the Fairfield City Plan and Council's commitment during its term in office.
- Operational Plan: annual plan detailing Council activity
- Annual Report: is the key point of accountability between Council and our community where we report on the implementation of the Delivery and Operational Plan. This Report also includes the State of the Environment Report.



Objectives

The Objectives of the Community Engagement Strategy are:

- Involve the Fairfield Community, including 'hard to reach' groups in the development of the Fairfield City Plan 2012-2022.
- Review / update/ validate the finding of the 2010 Community Consultations.
- Ensure community engagement methods support the social justice principles and that they meet the needs of the Fairfield community.
- Ensure that community concerns and aspirations for the future of Fairfield City are contained in the Fairfield City Plan and guide future decisions about Fairfield City.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Community Engagement Strategy.

Social Justice Principles

The Community Engagement Strategy is based on the following principles.

Equity – *there should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly those in need.*

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 participate in decisions which affect their lives.*

Rights & Responsibilities – *equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.*

What is Community Engagement?

For the purposes of this Strategy, 'community engagement' is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions (International Association of Public Participation - IAP2). It is an inclusive process to ensure the community has the opportunity to participate in decisions that impact on their lives.

Definition of Community

The word 'community' is a very broad term used to define groups of people; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups, citizen groups, etc. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice), or a community of affiliation or identity (such as business or sporting club).

Levels of Participation

There are degrees of participating ranging from a high degree of participation through to a low degree as described below in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Participation. The Community Engagement Strategy will aim to engage with the community on a number of levels from inform to collaborate ensuring the community have going opportunities to be involved in the Fairfield City Plans development.



DIAGRAM 2. IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION

Principles of Engagement

The Community Engagement Strategy: Informing the Fairfield City Plan will be structured around the following principles. Council is committed to:

- Building on previous consultations to avoid duplication and over consultation.
- Incorporating what the community has to say into the Fairfield City Plan 2012 - 2022.
- Listening to and understanding the community's view and aspirations to ensure better decision making.
- Being open and clear about the level of influence available to those attending each engagement process.
- Ensuring everyone has opportunities to be involved including the 'hard to reach' groups in accordance with Council's Assess and Equity principles.
- Ensuring the best interest of the community will prevail over individual or vested interests.
- Reporting back to the community 'closing the loop' on what we have heard and how it has influenced the Fairfield City Plan 2012 - 2022.
- Changing the way government and community work together.



Stakeholders

Our Whole Community

The Community Engagement Strategy targets the whole of the community including those who live, work and play within the Fairfield City. This includes: residents, ratepayers, landowners,

organisations, businesses, government agencies and anyone who has an interest in the City of Fairfield.

Ensuring we reach the hard to reach

The Community Engagement Strategy will engage with 'hard to reach' groups and the disengaged to ensure that all those affected have the opportunity to be heard. These include:

- Young people
- Older people
- Migrants and refugees
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People with a disability

Community Stakeholders

Includes those with an interest in the City whether they live, work or play. The Community Engagement Strategy will be inclusive and provide opportunities for residents, community groups, sporting clubs or interest groups to participate.

Business Stakeholders

Businesses are a key group and are directly affected by decisions and plans. The Chamber of Commerce and Town Centre Committees will provide a forum to ensure the views of businesses are heard.

Government Agencies

State and Federal Government agencies will be engaged at a number of levels including: reviewing state and regional priority plans, on the ground service providers, managers and regional agreements.

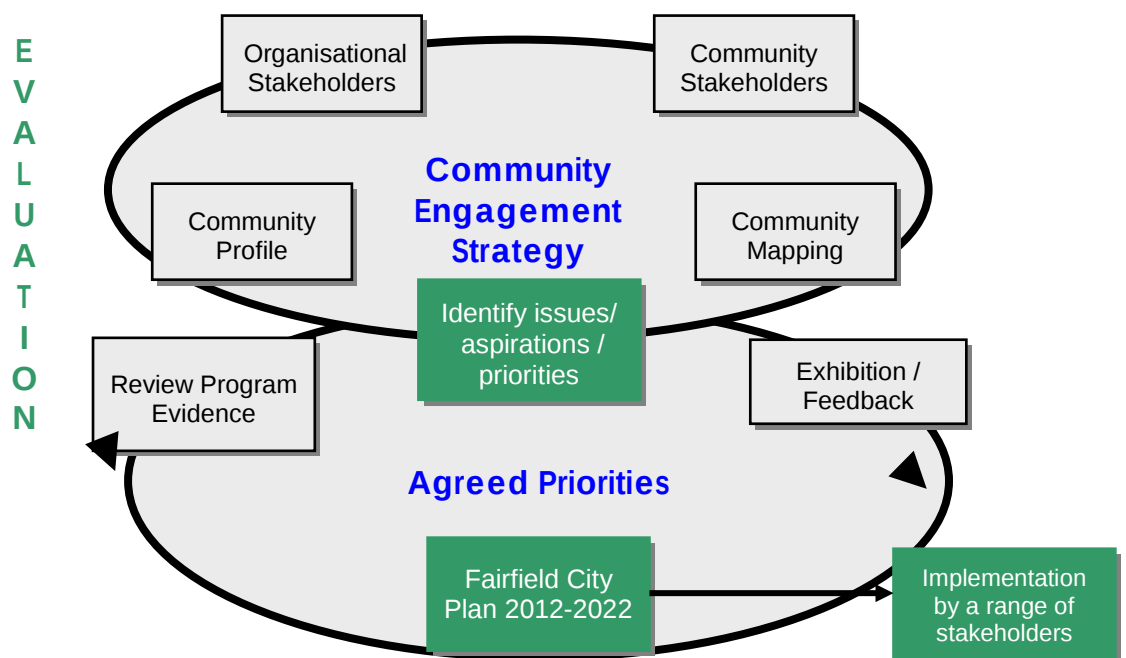


Non-government and not-for-profit organisations

Fairfield City is home to many NGO's. These organisations are instrumental in reaching the community and providing feedback and advocating for community needs.

Councillors

The role of Councillors includes: promoting and leading community engagement and considering advice on resource implications and discussing this with the community prior to making decisions.

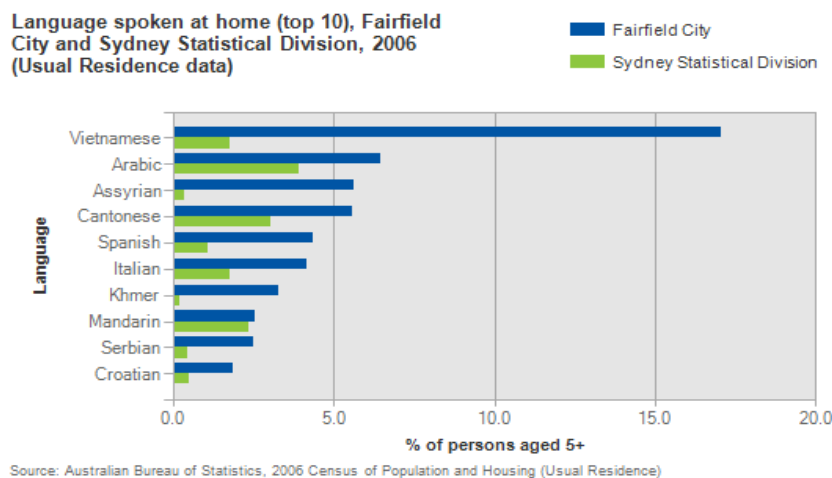


Key Engagement Considerations

Fairfield City Council is committed to inclusive engagement and reducing barriers to participation. Outlined below are engagement considerations to ensure 'hard to reach' groups are engaged in the development of Fairfield City Plan.

People from a Cultural and Linguistic Diverse Background

Fairfield is one of the most culturally diverse areas in Australia. Over half (51.5%) were born overseas, and of these, 95% were from non English speaking countries. Overall, 27.5% of the population spoke English only, compared with 63.9% for the Sydney Statistical Division. As outlined below, the dominant language spoken at home, other than English, in Fairfield City was Vietnamese (17.0%) (ABS 2006).



ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

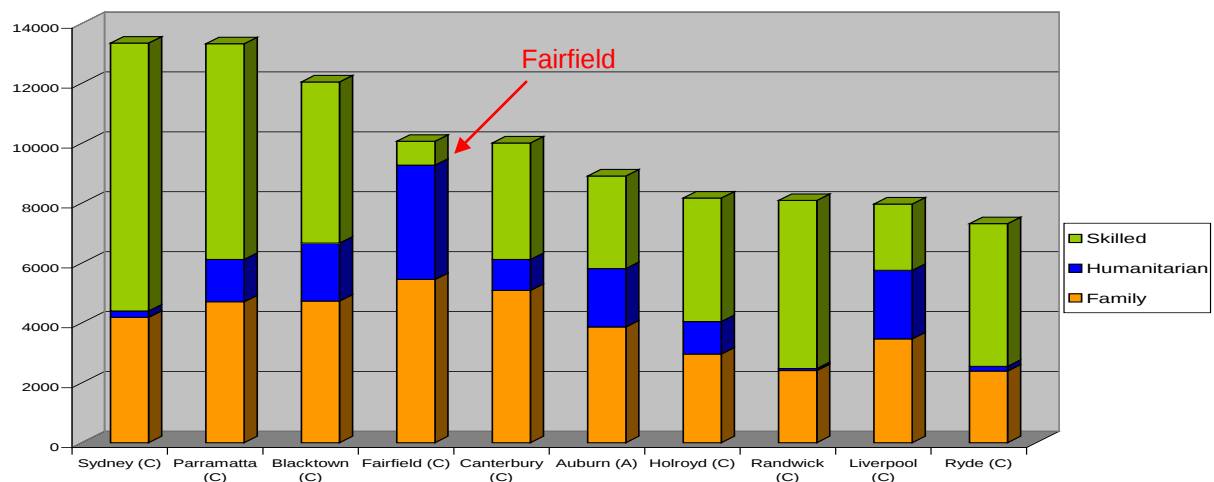
- Key information should always be in 'plain English.'
- Translate information into major community languages where possible
- Use interpreters, language aids, bi-lingual community educators and community partners
- Seek information on cultural practices / understanding from Council's Advisory Committees and community partners
- Ensure representation from a range of cultural groups

Migrant and Refugees

Fairfield City had the highest number of refugee's who arrived as Humanitarian Entrants (n=5,451) and Family Visa (3,817) into

Fairfield City in NSW. During the same period Fairfield City received only 795 skilled migrants compared to Sydney LGA and Parramatta LGA who received 8,947 and 7,202 respectively (DIAC 2011).

Permanent Migration Arrivals to Fairfield Local Government Area and Migration Stream 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2011



ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS – includes CaLD above

- Partner with ethic specific and settlement services to undertake consultation
- Undertake consultations in safe environment to alleviate any authority issues
- Provide equal opportunities for men and women to participate
- Be aware and responsive to any religious considerations such as time, food and practices

Young People

Young people account for 19.8% of Fairfield City's population. Their high levels of disadvantage, coupled with lower levels of schooling and English as a second language, have contributed to 21.5% unemployment rate for people aged 15-24.

ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Partner with Fairfield Youth Workers Interagency to engage with young people
- Collaborate with Fairfield Youth Advisory Committee
- Use engaging methods to engage with young people
- Access young people in places young people meet.

Older People

Analysis of the age structure of Fairfield City in 2006 compared to the Sydney Statistical Division shows that there is a smaller proportion of people in the older age groups (60+) with 15.1% aged 60 years and over, compared with 23.6% and 16.7% respectively for the Sydney Statistical Division. However, the population is ageing.

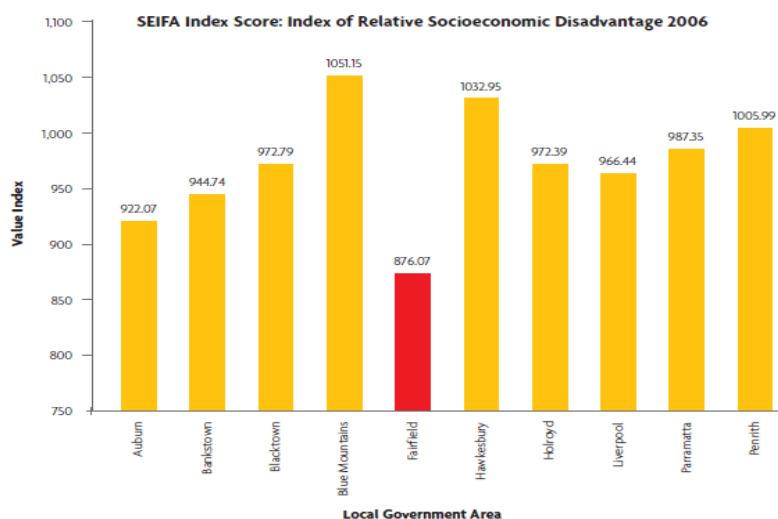
ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Collaborate with Fairfield Seniors Network
- Partner with aged care providers
- Access older people in places older people meet.



Disadvantaged

Fairfield City has a high level of disadvantage compared to the rest of Sydney and Australia. The 2006 SEIFA Index of Relative Social-economic Disadvantage shows a score of 876 for Fairfield LGA (a score of 1000 is considered average). Only two other areas in NSW had a lower SEIFA index and these were in non metropolitan areas (ABS 2006). Fairfield City has a small proportion of people who have formal qualifications with 60.8% having no qualifications, meaning its workforce is predominantly unskilled. Overall, 38.1% of the population left school at Year 10 or below, compared with 33.2% for the Sydney Statistical Division (ABS 2006). Unemployment rates for the City are high. Figures show a divide with the eastern parts (10.5%) of the City having doubled the rate of unemployment compared to the western parts (5.2%) of the City (DEEWR 2011).



ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Use informal community networks and community leaders
- Use libraries etc as point of engagement
- Use a range of methods that do not rely on written material only
- Undertake engagement activities in range of venues and reduce transport and financial barriers

Building on what we have heard

The development of the Community Engagement Strategy is built on years of activity. Fairfield City Council has a wealth of information which continues to inform the direction for the City. The Community Engagement Strategy harnessing the success of existing networks and previous consultations provide the foundations to build upon.

In 2010, Fairfield City Council undertook a comprehensive consultation to inform the Fairfield City Plan 2010-2020. This involved surveys (both residents and businesses), a series of focus groups with residents, government departments, community organisations, schools and youth representatives, a

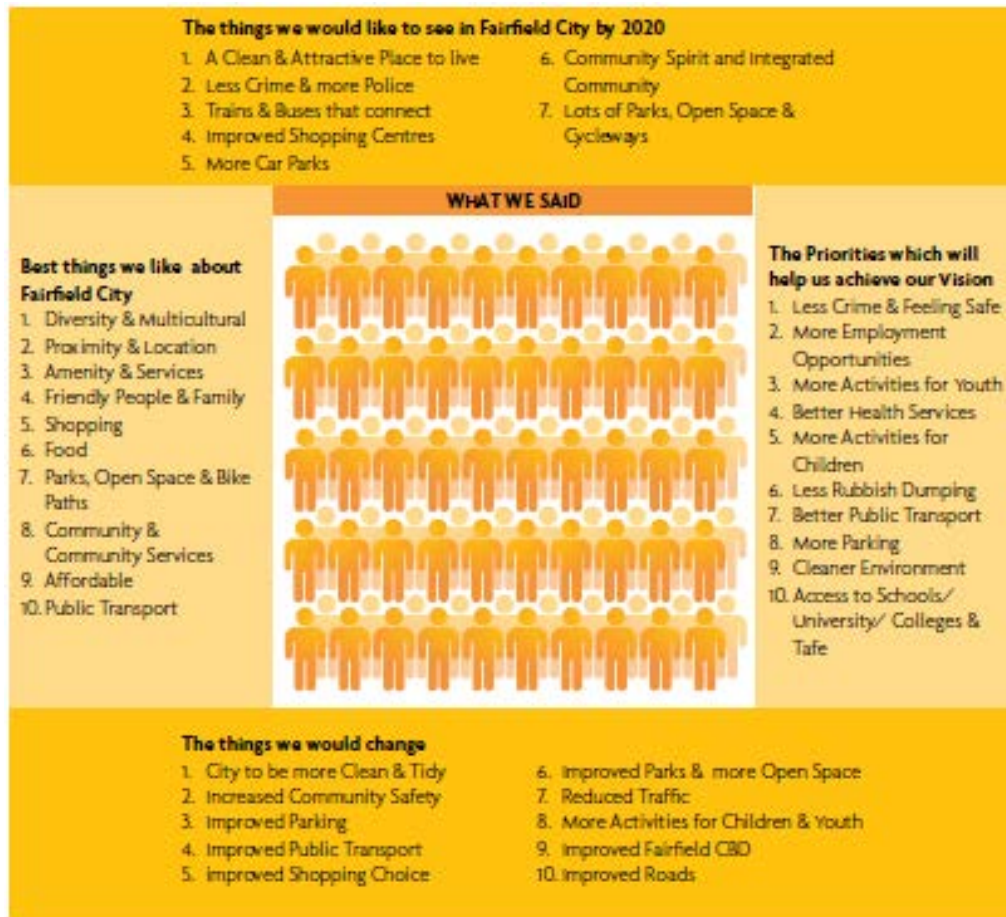
web feedback form and youth event. 1775 residents took the opportunity to have a say on what they feel is important to the community and where they believe Fairfield City should be heading. This community engagement asked residents to define what they like about living in the city, what they would like to change and then to prioritise what they want to see achieved in the future.

We asked if they were happy with the current Vision Statement for our city. Seventy three percent, who participated in the conversation supported the previous Vision Statement which was: 'A thriving, safe and friendly place where people are proud to live, invest and prosper'. However, many felt the Vision Statement could be further improved to reflect the spirit and heart of our city by adding words that better describe our city. Our shared Vision for Fairfield City is:

***We are Fairfield City – a welcoming, safe and
diverse community where we are proud to belong,
invest and prosper***



We asked the community to define the best things about our city, the things we should change and the things we would like to see in place by the year 2020. Set out below is a summary of the community priorities.



The Fairfield City Plan 2010-2020 has five themes and a series of Goals which sets out the specific direction the community wants to see the City heading towards. Each goal has a series of Community Outcomes which describe what they want to see happen.

This Community Engagement Strategy will review and validate with the community the Community's Vision and Goals and build on the previous consultation.



Methods of Engagement

Fairfield City Council will adopt a range of engagement methods to ensure that the Fairfield Community are heard. Attachment one (1) outlines the range and types of engagement practices which will be embraced. In summary they range from:

- Information posters and City Life newsletters;
- Media and Communications Plan;
- On-line survey;
- Focus groups;
- Meetings and forums;
- Bilingual Community Educators;
- Community feedback register; and
- more (see attachment 1).

Timeframe

The *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009* was agreed to by the Governor on 9 October 2009. This requires the next Integrated Planning and Reporting documentation to be adopted by 30 June 2013.

To meet this timeframe the following milestones for the Fairfield Plan 2012- 2022 are identified:

Dec 2011	Community Engagement Strategy Adopted
Feb / March 2012	Community Consultations
Nov 2012	Draft Fairfield City Plan
Dec 2012	Adoption of Fairfield City Plan



Evaluation and Monitoring

The Community Engagement Strategy is only effective if it achieves its objectives. The following aspects will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that we build our expertise and continue to refine our approaches and techniques:

- Participants have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the engagement, including the level and method.
- The engagement takes place when there is a real opportunity to influence the outcome.
- Adequate resources (time, budget, technology, etc.) and expertise are provided to achieve success.
- That we reach a broad representation of the Fairfield Community.
- Principles for engagement have been embraced.
- That we use a range of engagement methods appropriate to the target group.
- Adopt a Participatory Action Research methodology to ensure that we continue to improve and learn from our experiences.



Community Engagement Strategy and Actions 2012

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

GOAL 1: Ensuring that the Community Engagement Strategy is implemented in an effective and efficient manner.

Action	Activity	Action By	Timeframe	Performance Targets
Build on Council's commitment to public participation	Develop a Community Engagement Strategy	Manager, Policy and Community Development	Dec 2011	Adopted
Improve the quality and quantity of community engagement through current activity and the development and implementation of new approaches	Establish the Community Engagement Steering Group to guide the implementation to ensure that best practice approaches are adopted	Manager, Policy and Community Development	Dec 2011	Committee established
	Manage and coordinate engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality, partnership participation and reduce duplication	Steering Group	Ongoing	- Engagement undertaken in accordance with adopted Strategy - Evaluation completed
Ensure knowledge retention and knowledge sharing within and between organisations	Establish a recording system to capture key findings and record all community engagement activity	Steering Group	March 2013	- Recording system established # of documents
	Analyse findings from the survey and focus groups highlighting the community's key priorities and aspirations	SPA: Corporate Planning	Apr 2012	- Report developed - Priorities identified
Assess existing assumptions, provide feedback on priorities and review the City Plan	Modify the City Plan to reflect the views and aspirations of the community	SPA: Corporate Planning	Oct 2012	City Plan modified

	Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the Community Engagement Strategy	Steering Group	June – July 2012	• Inclusion of CES in key documents • Evaluation report
Measure the uptake and effectiveness of the Community Engagement Strategy	Ensure that the consultations reach and are reflective of the City's community	Steering Group	Ongoing	• Evident in report • Monitor reach
	Identify how the community prefer to be consulted/engaged; the support they need; and best communication pathways to inform future Strategies	Manager Policy and Community Development	Ongoing	• Gaps and needs identified •
	Lunchtime Showcases: develop a series of workshops showcasing effective methods and present findings	Steering Group	Ongoing	• # of sessions • # attending • % satisfaction

INFORM

GOAL 2: Keeping the Fairfield community informed and updated

Activity	Action	Action By	Timeframe	Performance Targets
Raise the communities awareness about the opportunities to be involved in decisions that affect them	Develop a creative and inclusive communications plan which includes: • Local newspapers • Community radio • Website – have your say • E-mail bulletins • Interested community based organisations • Staff networks, Staff language aids • Events	Communications Department Steering Committee	Jan – March 2012	• Communications Plan developed • # activities • Evidence of effectiveness

Increase the community's capacity to influence decisions that affect their community.	Develop material to inform the community including: - Media Releases - Backgrounder - Fact sheets: purposes of the theme, data, priorities and challenges - Q & A on how to have your say - Newsletter articles	Steering Committee	Jan 2012	- All material is targeted at grade 8/9 reading level # resources developed # articles - Customer feedback # complaints / complements
	Translated appropriate material	Council	Jan 2012	
	Ensure Plain English philosophy	Steering Group	Jan 2012	
Understand the communities main priorities and aspirations	Establish an e-distribution link	Communications	Ongoing	# of correspondence # registering # of submissions # promotional articles # circulated through e-list
	Ensure that Fairfield City Plan goes on public exhibition	SPA: Corporate Planning	Nov- Dec 2012	

CONSULT and ENGAGE

GOAL 3: Understanding the community's views, priorities, issues, interests, ideas and aspirations

Activity	Action	Action By	Timeframe	Performance Target
Adopt a range of consultation methods to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately represented and that their views	TARGET: WHOLE COMMUNITY Establish an on-line survey	Manager, Policy and Community Development Communications	Feb – Mar 2012	# completed # engaged

and aspirations are identified	TARGET: HARD TO REACH Undertake focus groups with Council's Advisory Groups to explore priorities for the City (short, medium and long) • Youth Advisory Committee • Multicultural Advisory Committee • Arts Advisory Committee • Aboriginal Advisory Committee • Mayor's Crime Prevention Committee • Community and Other groups	Community Development Team	Feb – Mar 2012	• # of focus groups • # of participates • Representative of the City • Priorities identified
	Target: Business Stakeholders Undertake focus groups with Council's Town Centre Committees and Chambers of Commerce • Fairfield • Bonnyrigg • Cabramatta • Smithfield Wetherill Park	Place Managers	Feb – Mar 2012	• # of focus groups • # of participates • # of surveys • Priorities identified
	TARGET: GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT LOCAL PROVIDERS Undertake focus groups at selected networks and meeting	Identified Council staff	Feb – Mar 2012	• # of focus groups • # of participates • Priorities identified
	Place the Fairfield City Plan on Pubic Exhibition in accordance with the Local Government Act	Council	Nov 2012	• # of submissions • Review of feedback