

Policy Name:	7.2 Community Engagement
Department:	Community Development
Date Adopted:	20 September 2012
Last Reviewed:	19 December 2019

Preamble Policy in respect to the engagement of the community.

Objective To give Council guidelines in respect of engaging the community. This will help the Shire of Bruce Rock make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

Definitions **Community** – those who live, work or recreate in Bruce Rock.

Community engagement – is any process “that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions”.

Community engagement may refer to a range of interactions of differing levels of engagement between the Shire and the community, including;

1. Information sharing processes, to keep the community informed and promotes understanding.
2. Consultation processes, to obtain feedback.
3. Involving community members consistently throughout the process to ensure community concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
4. Collaborating with community members in each aspect of the decision making process.
5. Empowering the community.

Policy The Shire of Bruce Rock is committed to strengthening the Shire through effective community engagement to share information, gather views and opinions, develop options, build consensus and make decisions.

The Shire of Bruce Rock is a proactive organisation which has a willingness to listen to and value what community members have to say about an issue, and through community engagement, seeks to use the ideas, knowledge and skills of members of the community to enhance its decision making.

Community engagement assist the Shire of Bruce Rock to provide good governance and strong leadership, delivering better decisions to guide the Shire’s priorities into the future.

This policy does not negate the requirement of the Shire to comply with statutory obligations.

Principles for Community Engagement

The following principles apply to all community engagement undertaken by the Shire of Bruce Rock;

Focus and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of each community engagement will be clearly scoped to determine how the engagement will add value to the Shire's decision-making process.• Each community engagement will be planned to clarify the level of influence the participants will have over the decision they are being invited to comment on or participate in. The person or body who is responsible for the final decision will be notified.• The Shire is genuinely open to engaging with the community and committed to using a range of appropriate engagement methods.
Transparency and openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All community engagement processes will be open and transparent.• Comment will be documented and analysed.• The Shire will seek to understand the concerns and interests of all stakeholders and provide opportunities for participants to appreciate each other's perspectives.
Responsiveness and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Shire will advise participants of progress on issues of concern and provide feedback in a timely manner on the decision made and the rationale for the decision will be communicated where necessary.• The best interest of the community will prevail over the individual or vested interests.
Inclusiveness, accessibility and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons or organisations affected by or who have an interest in a decision will have an opportunity to participate in the community engagement process.• Community engagement process will be open to all those who wish to participate.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Shire will seek community engagement to enhance its decision-making, however, where the Shire is responsible and accountable for a given matter, it will accept its responsibility to make the final decision and provide leadership.
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate, accessible information will be available to ensure participants are sufficiently well informed and supported to participate in the process.

Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement will be undertaken early enough in the process to ensure that participants have enough time to consider the matter at hand and provide meaningful feedback. • All engagement processes will have timeframes that will be made clear to participants and adhered to by the Shire.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire will allocate sufficient financial, human and technical resources to support community engagement.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire will monitor and evaluate processes to ensure the engagement being undertaken is meeting planned outcomes.

Head of Power Nil