



Community Engagement Strategy & Policy

June 2006

Important

This document contains important information about Rockdale City Council. If you do not understand, please visit Council's Customer Service Centre at 2 Bryant Street Rockdale, Monday – Friday from 8.30am – 4.30pm. Council Staff will be happy to arrange interpreter services for you.

You may also contact Telephone Interpreter Services on 131 450 and ask them to ring Rockdale City Council on 9562 1666 on your behalf.

Arabic

هام:

تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على معلومات هامة عن بلدية روكدايل. إذا لم تكن قادراً على فهمها، يرجى زيارة مركز خدمة زبائن البلدية على العنوان التالي: 2 Bryant Street في روكدايل من الإثنين إلى الجمعة بين الساعة ٨،٣٠ صباحاً و ٤،٣٠ مساءً، حيث سيقوم موظفو البلدية بتأمين مترجم لك بكل سرور.

كما يمكنك الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية على الرقم 131 450 والطلب منهم الاتصال ببلدية روكدايل على الرقم 9562 1666 نيابةً عنك.

Italian

Importante:

Questo documento contiene importanti informazioni sul Comune di Rockdale City. Se avete difficoltà a comprenderne il contenuto, recatevi presso il Customer Service Centre del Comune a 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale dal lunedì al venerdì dalle ore 8.30 alle 16.30. Il personale del Comune sarà ben lieto di procurarvi un servizio interpreti.

Potete anche chiamare il Servizio telefonico interpreti (TIS) al numero 131 450 chiedendo che telefoni per vostro conto al Comune di Rockdale City al numero 9562 1666.

Chinese

重要消息

本文件載有關於 Rockdale 市政府的重要資訊，如果您有不明之處，請於星期一至星期五，上午 8 時 30 分至下午 4 時 30 分，前來位於 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale，市政府的顧客服務中心。市政府的職員會很樂意為您安排傳譯員的服務。

您也可以聯絡電話傳譯服務處，電話 131 450，並請他們代您致電 9562 1666 給 Rockdale 市政府。

Macedonian

Важно:

Ова документ содржи важни информации за Rockdale City Council (Градската општина на Rockdale). Ако не го разбирате, ве молиме, посетете го општинскиот Customer Service Centre (Центар за услуги на клиенти), кој се наоѓа на 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, од понеделник до петок, од 8.30 наутро до 4.30 попладне. Вработените во општината со задоволство ќе ви организираат да користите преведувач.

Исто така, можете да телефонирате во Telephone Interpreter Services (Служба за преведување по телефон) на 131 450, и да ги замолиме во ваше име да се јават во Градската општина на Rockdale на 9562 1666.

Greek

Σημαντικό:

Αυτό το έγγραφο περιέχει σημαντικές πληροφορίες για τη Δημαρχία Rockdale City Council. Αν δεν τις καταλαβαίνετε, παρακαλείσθε να επισκεφτείτε το Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Πελατών [Customer Service Centre] του Δήμου στο 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή από 8.30πμ - 4.30μμ. Το Προσωπικό του Δήμου θα χαρεί να κανονίσει υπηρεσίες διερμηνέων για σας.

Μπορείτε επίσης να επικοινωνήσετε με τις Τηλεφωνικές Υπηρεσίες Διερμηνέων [Telephone Interpreter Services] στο 131 450 και να τους ζητήσετε να τηλεφωνήσουν στο Rockdale City Council στο 9562 1666 για λογαριασμό σας.

Spanish

Importante:

Este documento contiene información importante sobre el Rockdale City Council (Municipio de Rockdale). Si no la entiende, le rogamos concurrir al Centro de Servicio al Cliente del Municipio, ubicado en 2 Bryant Street, Rockdale, atención de lunes a Viernes, de 8:30 am a 4:30 pm. El personal del municipio se complacerá en obtener los servicios de un intérprete para usted.

Puede asimismo llamar al Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes al 131 450 y pedirles que llamen de su parte al Rockdale City Council, teléfono 9562 1666.

Caring for the Environment

— In the interest of protecting and preserving our environment, Rockdale City Council uses Nordset paper for all of its pre-printed paper requirements.

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Introduction

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

Engaging the community is required by all Councils under Council's Charter Section 8 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993. The charter comprises a set of principles, where eight out of twelve principles directly reflect why Council should engage the community. These principles include:

- provide directly or on behalf of other levels of government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively
- exercise community leadership
- exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism
- promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children
- properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decision
- bear in mind that it is the custodian and trustee of public assets and to effectively account for and manage the assets for which it is responsible.

For our Council to meet these principles, it needs to ensure that effective levels of engagement is implemented depending on the project's current impact on the community and into the future.

This means that Council needs to be open and accountable to the community and provide ample opportunity for feedback. Council acknowledges that by involving a cross section of the community in a consultative process, it can make better decisions. Council also knows that strong relationships with the community is integral and is built on trust, goodwill and respect with the community.

It is intended that this Community Engagement Strategy and Policy framework will give the community a clear understanding of:

- Council's commitment to Community Engagement
- when Community Engagement will occur
- what level of engagement will occur
- how Community Engagement process will be managed.

Definitions

Community Engagement

Council adheres with Community Engagement definition formulated by the NSW Planning System Handbook 2003 defines as:

“ ... the public processes in which the general public and other interested parties are invited to contribute to particular proposals or policy changes. Community engagement has the potential to go beyond merely making information available or gathering opinions and attitudes. It entails a more active exchange of information and viewpoints between the sponsoring organisation and the public ...”

Community

Council defines ‘Community’ as people who live within the City of Rockdale and/or wish to live, visit, work and/or invest in it. The community includes residents, rate payers, state and federal government agencies, private sector and non government agencies.

According to the Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998, the mandatory community target groups for planning and consultation are:

- Children (0-11 years old)
- Youth (12-24 years old)
- Older people
- People with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI)
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- Women.

Strategy

This Strategy aims to make Community Engagement more effective by:

- establishing standard practices for community engagement
- ensuring standard engagement practices are implemented by Council officers and external consultants employed by the Council
- ensuring that decision making processes are based on outcomes acquired from community engagement process, relevant legislative requirements and other Council policies.

Policy Objectives

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

- ensure that Council Officers understand and effectively implement Community Engagement Strategy and Policy
- provide community with opportunities to participate in decision making on both present and future issues
- ensure the targeted group represents a cross section of the community
- incorporate a range of community engagement methods that:
 - ♦ facilitates community members' awareness of the engagement topic
 - ♦ provides access to information in different community languages, interpreters and/or AUSLAN interpreters for people with hearing impairment
 - ♦ gives the customers and 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

Council's Commitment

Council has a strong commitment to build partnerships with a range of stakeholders, and seeking greater community involvement with relevant Council projects and in decision making processes.

Council will adhere to the following principles and the standards to measure the quality of any community engagement. These principles are grouped under nine headings and are adapted from the NSW Planning System Handbook 2003:Community Engagement.

Principles

Clarity of Purpose

Clearly define why the engagement is occurring and its context, in order to plan and resource an effective process.

Commitment

Demonstrate commitment to establish and maintain credibility and accountability.

Communication

Establish a two way process of providing accurate and timely information, and demonstrate that feedback is being valued.

Evidence

Establish good engagement practices that are based on a sound research and quality information.

Flexibility & Responsiveness

Establish engagement plans that are flexible during the engagement process eg time and venue may change due to natural and/or political environment.

Timeliness

Ensure that participants know how long an engagement process is expected to last and when feedback is expected at each stage of the process.

Inclusive

Ensure that a cross section of the community is invited at the community engagement activity.

Collaboration

Establish partnerships with relevant community groups, state and federal government and/or with internal department/units within Council at an appropriate level.

Continuous Learning

Establish a reporting system to ensure that Council learns from the community engagement activity and is able to monitor and evaluate for future improvements.

Standards

Council will measure the quality of any community engagement activity against the following standards:

- all communication must meet the needs of the targeted community. Any written and/or verbal communications to be in plain English and in community languages as appropriate. Also where necessary have AUSLAN interpreter service available for people with hearing impairment
- all Council Officers and external consultants employed by Council involved in implementing engagement activities have appropriate skills and experience to undertake engagement tasks
- an adequate period of notice is given for each community engagement activity. The period may not be less than two weeks for any activity that requires people to attend or get involved in a engagement activity
- the participants represent a cross section of the community.

When will Community Engagement Occur?

Council will engage the community:

Strategy Planning

This refers to the development of strategic plans and projects that informs the Management Plan and Business Plans.

Policy Development and/or Implementation

This includes any policy development that has a direct impact on the community.

Site Specific

This refers to any changes to a site that may have impact on the community.

Service Planning

This includes the development and /or improvement of a service.

Areas of Improvement

This refers to any improvement required to increase the quality of lifestyle for the community eg shopping areas, open spaces, etc.

Legislative Requirements, including planning issues

This refers to all prescribed plans and projects under the Local Government Act (1993) and other relevant Acts.

What Level of Engagement will Occur?

Council will call for different levels of engagement depending on the issue, and its immediate or long term impact on the community. The levels of engagement with the community may include:

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

The identified level of engagement and its financial implications for each project will be noted in Council Committee Papers and Council Business Papers. The level will be determined in consultation with the Communications and Community Relations Unit.

How Community Engagement Activities will be Managed?

Community Engagement activities will include the following elements:

Management of the Community Engagement Activity

- Each community engagement activity will be the responsibility of the Manager within the unit
- 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 combine engagement activities with other activities that target similar community groups.
- When coordinating a community engagement activity, Managers need to refer to the Community Engagement Handbook

Community Representation

In planning community engagement, Council will ensure that every effort is made to:

- attract and reach a cross section of community by using a wide range of communication methods
- invite specific targeted community groups as identified in the project
- accommodate participants' cultural, language and special needs
- involve community groups who are sometimes hard to reach ie children, young people, people with disabilities, women and people from ATSI backgrounds.

Reporting Back to the 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 outlining the community engagement outcomes, considerations and recommendations made by Council.

Evaluation of the Community Engagement

Upon completion of a community engagement activity, an evaluation will be conducted to assess:

- community representation
- type of communications publicity methods most suitable
- method utilised for engaging the community
- timing ie promotion time and time of the actual activity
- qualitative and quantitative information gained and gathered

These assessment results will be used to improve future engagement plans and processes.

Staff Skills & Training

Review of Council Officers Skills List for inclusion of skills required to devise and conduct community engagement activities. Based on this skills review, training needs will be identified. This will be conducted by Community Relations Coordinator and Human Resources Development Coordinator.

Related Policies & Plans

- Management Plans
- Local Environment Plans (LEPs)
- Development Control Plans (DCPs)
- Plans of Management - Community Land, Designated Development, Suburb Boundaries, etc
- Social Plan
- Section 94 Constitution Plan
- Contaminated Land Policy, June 1999
- Community Participation Plan, August 2000
- Community Consultation on Rezoning Proposal, May 2001
- Operational Surplus Reserve, October 2001
- Moderation Policy, January 2003
- Code of Planning Practice, March 2003
- Development Control Plan No. 50 - Community Engagement in Development Decisions, August 2003. This supplements - Community Consultation in Development Decisions, 1999 and Rockdale Local Environment Plan, 2000
- Guarantees of Service - Consultation & Notification, March 2004
- Review of Environment Community Engagement Strategy, July 2004
- Code of Conduct

Comments Welcome

Comments and feedback on this policy are welcome and should be directed to Council's Communication & Community Relations Unit. These can be emailed to customerfeedback@rockdale.nsw.gov.au or via:

Rockdale City Council

Customer Service Centre

Address	2 Bryant Street, Rockdale NSW 2216
Postal Address	PO Box 21, Rockdale NSW 2216
Email	rcc@rockdale.nsw.gov.au
Telephone	02 9562 1666
Fax	02 9562 1777
Office Hours	8.30 am to 4.30 pm
Telephone Hours	8.30 am to 5 pm

