

Engagement Framework



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Acknowledgement of Country

City of Kwinana acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play, the Nyoongar people. We recognise their connection to the land and local waterways, their resilience and commitment to community and pay our respect to Elders past and present.

The City of Kwinana is committed to the journey of conciliation and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's connection to the Country as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The City of Kwinana's mission is to work together with the Kwinana community to build positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Aboriginal communities. Throughout this journey, the City aims to promote and assist with the development of pathways and opportunities in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are meaningful, mutually beneficial, and sustainable, including efforts to improve engagement and collaboration.



1. Introduction from the Mayor

I am pleased to introduce you to the City of Kwinana Engagement Framework.

The City has a community of diverse individuals, groups, businesses and organisations that we highly value. It is our absolute priority to involve you in helping shape our day-to-day decisions and to work in partnership with you to create the Kwinana we love.

We regularly hear from you about how Kwinana has a small town feel where lots of good people and organisations roll up their sleeves to help each other.

As we rapidly grow however, that close-knit identity may be tested. So it is imperative we maintain that identity by being more deliberate in engaging with each other well. The City will do this by identifying our stakeholders, building genuine two-way relationships, developing stakeholder capacity, providing opportunity for shared influence, and working together on actions.

Therefore, in developing this Framework we knew we needed to focus on relationships and not just a process of consulting with you every now and then about projects or plans.

As we continue improving how we engage, please bear with us while we try new things. Or better yet, work with us! We would love your help, so feel free to join us in the community's online Love My Kwinana Engagement Hub at www.lovemymywinana.com

I invite you to read this framework, embrace our commitment and approach, and engage with us soon.

Yours sincerely

Carol Adams OAM

Mayor of Kwinana

2. The Engagement Framework

A framework is an overarching document to explain the different parts of a whole.

The City of Kwinana's Engagement Framework consists of four important parts: a policy, an approach, a toolkit and an action plan:

Engagement Policy



Our commitment to quality engagement and our Engagement Principles

Engagement Approach



The why and how of engagement across our three-pillared approach

Engagement ToolKit



A series of guides and templates to support good engagement practice

Engagement Action Plan



The current dynamic plan for implementing and continuously improving our engagement

The policy and approach communicate to our community how and why we do engagement. The toolkit and action plans are more inward facing documents to guide the City's engagement practices.

This framework document first discusses how the City of Kwinana understands engagement, before outlining the four parts to the Framework in more detail.

3. Understanding Engagement

Defining Engagement

Engagement is founded on the principle that people have a right to be involved in the decisions and actions that affect their lives¹.

As a local government everything we do is done on behalf of the community, so we want to involve them as much as possible.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) defines engagement as:

“An intentional process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholder or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.”²

For the City this means being more intentional in all of our processes for engaging community; in understanding our stakeholders, building relationships, communicating, collaborating, partnering and consulting.

We therefore see an engagement activity as any interaction with community and stakeholders, big or small, formal or informal, intended to contribute to the sharing of information, ideas, influence, decision making, partnerships and collaborative action.

¹. International Association for Public Participation (IAP2): Core Value #1

². International Association for Public Participation (IAP2): Engagement Definition

Why We Engage

Engagement is not an end in itself. It is a vehicle for building the kinds of relationships and understanding that allows the City to make quality decisions, build sustainable partnerships, and have confidence that we are implementing the programs, services and projects that best support the community.

The *Local Government Act 1995, Section 1.3 (2)* also points to engagement leading to;

- Better decision making by local governments
- Greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of local governments
- Greater accountability of local governments to their communities
- More efficient and effective local government.

The City seeks to understand and act on the views, issues and aspirations expressed by the community, balanced against other influences such as budgetary and legislative constraints. While it will always be highly prioritised and valued, engagement does not replace the overall decision making responsibility of Council.

Essentially, it is the City's vision to build a better Kwinana and the best way to do this is by working together with community wherever possible.

Who We Engage

Kwinana has a diverse population who individually and collectively will shape life in Kwinana and will influence its development.

Our community includes individuals such as rate payers, residents, students, workers and business owners, as well as stakeholders such as community groups, businesses, organisations and other spheres of government.

The City of Kwinana will ensure that opportunities exist for everyone to provide input, influence and collaborate on issues that affect them, regardless of age, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, education, ability and other diverse aspects of identity.

We understand it can sometime seem difficult to engage with us, so will explore different ways to talk to our community to increase inclusion and representation.

We prioritise engaging widely when there is a broad community context or impact, in a more focused manner where impacts are narrow or localised, or quite specifically with known stakeholders with a particular interest in a matter.

Better engagement also occurs when there are strong participants and stakeholders able to readily contribute. We commit to community and economic development and capacity building; where we work deliberately with community and stakeholders to build their strength so they can work with us to achieve the best outcome.

Engagement is also not just externally focused. We will also work across different parts of our organisation with the same principles of engagement that we would apply to the wider community.





Ways That We Engage

The City engages using many different methods and we will be creative in trying to grow the reach and effectiveness of our engagement. Engagement activities will often dynamically change to suit the context of any community issue or opportunity. As such, the detail is captured where it can be updated more flexibly; in specific engagement practice guides, templates, documents and supporting resources that form the Engagement Toolkit.

Some example engagement activities the City undertakes include:

Partnerships



Community building activations



Interagency collaborations



Council meetings



Stakeholder meetings



Information sharing



Deliberative correspondence



Consultations



Network meetings



Online engagement hub



Reference groups



Social media information



While our focus is on the importance of longer term relationships with community and ongoing meaningful opportunities to influence our decisions, traditional project consultation is still critically important. When we do need to consult, it will take place early in the planning stage of any significant change in service, activities or infrastructure where it would be beneficial to have additional information, representation, or evidence than our ongoing engagement give us. This will be guided by a Consultation Guide that is part of our Engagement Toolkit.



Key Terms

To assist with knowing how the City talks about engagement and be more familiar with some key terms within our documents, below are some common terms explained:

Engagement:	The City adopts the IAP2 definition of engagement: "An intentional process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholder or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome." Engagement therefore refers to our deliberate interactions with community and stakeholders to build strong relationships and facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, influence and collaboration.
Partnership:	A type of engagement activity that produces formal agreements between stakeholders to work together.
Consultation:	A type of engagement activity that seeks input on a specific matter at a point in time, usually where additional information or representation is required to that already achieved through ongoing engagement.
Community:	Individuals who have been grouped together by geographic location (community of place), similar interests (community of practice), or affiliation or identity (such as membership of a club or association).
Stakeholders:	Individuals, groups, organisations or communities with a specific interest or involvement in a matter who have direct input into the decision making and actions that affect them.
City Officers:	Refers to the employees of the City.
Elected Members:	(Sometimes referred to as Councillors) Members of the community who have been selected by the wider community to oversee the strategic direction of the Local Government Authority.



4. Engagement Policy

A Policy is a formal statement of intent about how the City will act. Its most important elements are the Policy Statement and Engagement Principles:

Policy statement

For the City of Kwinana to deliver on the aspirations of the community it needs meaningful and productive relationships, partnerships and practices. This will ensure that the City better understands the community and is able to provide ongoing opportunities for community and stakeholders to influence decisions, collaborate on action and share in success.

Engagement thereby encompasses all informal and formal interactions that contribute to shaping the decisions of the City or working with the City on actions. It is more than consultation that is done every now and then; it sits at the heart of how City business is done with respect to building enduring goodwill and cooperation to achieve more than can be done alone.

To implement this the City commits to six Engagement Principles and an Engagement Framework that articulates the City's approach and methodology in greater detail.

Engagement Principles

Principle 1 Engagement Culture

The City embraces engagement as key to successful governance and will build a culture and environment conducive to engagement excellence.

Principle 2 Relationships

The City sees strong relationships as the basis of its work, to build goodwill and harness collective insight and collaboration.

Principle 3 Participation

The City actively encourages broad participation and will provide equitable opportunities to engage.

Principle 4 Processes

The City's engagement practices will be undertaken with a genuine intention to be transparent, fair and meaningful.

Principle 5 Outcomes

The City engages to improve community outcomes, so will be deliberate in linking engagement into planning and actions, and will provide timely feedback to community on how they contributed to the final outcome.

Principle 6 Evaluation

The City will reflect on how well it engages in order to continuously improve engagement effectiveness.

5. Engagement Approach

An approach is an explanation of why and how we go about things, and provides a guide for the way we work.

Our Engagement Approach is a positively focused three-pillar approach.

Love My Kwinana

We have called our approach the Love My Kwinana Engagement Approach. The 'Love My Kwinana' phrase has become familiar to the community after being coined to encourage participation in developing our 2021 Strategic Community Plan. We received great feedback about this positive approach.

'Love My Kwinana' captures the positivity and pride most people in Kwinana feel for their community and its identity; characterised by a small town feel with an abundance of green spaces and nature, a mix of old and new, and the promise and opportunity that rapid growth brings. 'Love My Kwinana' also speaks to our forward looking approach, to engaging with the community to build and grow a Kwinana we will always love.

Love My Kwinana Engagement Approach

The City's Love My Kwinana Engagement Approach is a three-pillared approach that sees us prioritise positive, enduring relationships with our community through engagement activity that:

- Builds a strong foundation to enable good engagement;
- Fosters ongoing goodwill, shared influence and collaboration; and
- Mobilises these relationships to come together and focus on particular issues or actions; all in the best interests of the Kwinana we love.

This is how we conceptualise this approach:

Love My Kwinana Engagement Approach

Foundational Engagement

Understanding who our community and stakeholders are and how we can best engage with them, and having the tools and capacity to do it well.

Ongoing Engagement

Longer-term engagement to build strong relationships and a deeper two-way understanding to guide ongoing activity and foster partnerships.

Focused Engagement

Engagement about a specific matter to build upon our ongoing engagement.

The following table outlines the objectives for each engagement type, and some example engagement activity associated with each.

Approach	Objectives	Examples
<div>Foundational Engagement</div> <div>Understanding who our community and stakeholders are and how we can best engage with them, and having the tools and capacity to do it well.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure we know who we need to engage and share information with, and understand how they prefer to be engaged and their key interests• Make it easy for others to engage and access information from us• Build and maintain the tools and systems to avoid duplication and share understanding across the City• Maintain staff engagement capability and culture to a level that is conducive to engagement excellence• Provide resources to undertake community and stakeholder capacity building</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement training for staff• Having a guide to effective consultation• Stakeholder mapping, databases and management plans to better understand who we can engage with• Hosting an online community engagement hub• Building and championing this framework• Establishing a cross-functional engagement championing team• Employing community and economic development officers who build capacity and encourage engagement</div>
<div>Ongoing Engagement</div> <div>Longer-term engagement to build strong relationships and a deeper two-way understanding to guide ongoing activity and foster partnerships.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form and maintain stakeholder one-to-one relationships to improve understanding and foster goodwill, supporting our decision-making and actions• Form and maintain networks and groups that enhance collective understanding, influence and collaborative actions• Build long term partnerships that share the responsibilities of decision making and implementation• Implement general 'quick win' collaborative activities that build engagement momentum and readiness to come together around issues and opportunities</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• A long term agreement with a stakeholder to work together• Reference groups and committees to provide ongoing advice• Monthly meetings with stakeholder groups or networks• Regular communication through diverse mediums to seek advice and understanding• Long term development work in a new community to build leadership and local stakeholders and capacity• Events that connect the City and community and foster community spirit to grow interest in participating in other engagement activities</div>
<div>Focused Engagement</div> <div>Engagement about a specific matter to build upon our ongoing engagement.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue issue-specific partnerships that advantage community outcomes• Engage in a timely manner when priority issues or opportunities arise• Ensure pre-planning assessments accurately identify when consultation is required• Ensure consultation planning and resourcing delivers methods that fit the context and level of influence</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• A partnership to work together on a specific issue• A targeted consultation about a project• An activation activity to bring people together around a specific issue or action• Calling together key stakeholders to workshop a coordinated response to a critical issue or emergency</div>





6. Engagement Toolkit

The Engagement Toolkit is a set of guides, templates, documents and other tools City Officers use to guide engagement activities.

While developing staff engagement competencies through training and practice is also fundamental to a good engagement, we recognise that City officers will be at different stages of engagement skill and experience, so the toolkit is designed to provide something for everyone; covering the basics through to best practice information.

The Toolkit is intended to develop flexibly; able to have new and updated guides, templates and other resources added at any time. Some of its key tools will include a partnership guide, consultation guide, customer service charter, stakeholder management database, communications guides and our online Love My Kwinana Engagement Hub.

The Love My Kwinana Engagement Hub at www.lovemykwinana.com provides a range of ways to engage with us, featuring some highlighted partnerships, community activation to be involved with, a register to let us know what you are interested in, local stakeholder group opportunities, as well as a range of topics we are consulting on at the moment.



7. Engagement Action Plan

The City's Action Plans state specifically what actions the City will take about a certain area of our work. The Engagement Action Plan outlines the steps we will take to achieve improved engagement practice; detailing exactly what will be done and by who.

These are dynamic documents that are updated regularly and respond to what we learn and agree with community are issues and appropriate actions to take. They then inform our Annual Business Plan which commits us to some priority actions for the year ahead.

The plan also has measures of success to help us track and evaluate how we are improving and achieving the things we said we would do.



8. Framework Evaluation

The City is constantly reviewing our own community engagement practice and researching contemporary best-practice. The Engagement Framework, including all its component parts, will be a living document that will be evaluated and updated as appropriate, in collaboration with our community.

9. Invitation to Engage

We would love to have you involved with us and receive your 'Love My Kwinana' story, ideas, input and collaboration.

You can call, email or write to the City at any time to enquire about opportunities to engage with us, or join us in our Love My Kwinana Engagement Hub at www.lovemykwinana.com



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