



# Kyogle Council

## Community Engagement Strategy

### Strategic Plan Review

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to outline the ways in which Council will engage the local community in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF) plans including the review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

The new IPRF prescribed in the Local Government Act and Division of Local Government Guidelines and Manual recognises that “communities do not exist in isolation. They are part of a larger natural, social, economic and political environment that influences and, to a large extent, shapes their future direction.”

“Neither do council plans exist in isolation. Land use and infrastructure planning produces social, environmental and economic outcomes, and vice-versa – they are connected.”

“It recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: A safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities for employment, reliable infrastructure, etc. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs. That is what shapes the character of individual towns and cities.”

“The new framework opens the way for councils and their communities to have important discussions about funding priorities, service levels and preserving local identity and to plan in partnership for a more sustainable future.”

During 2011/12, Council developed a new CSP that identified the community's main priorities and expectations for the future. Through this process, Council had an opportunity to review and add value to current planning activities, to better integrate these activities across the organisation and to further develop processes for working with the community.

The Council elected in 2012 is required to review the CSP within twelve (12) months. The communities have an important role in recommending the priority areas for Council to target their resources. As is the case with other councils and other levels of government there are a limited amount of resources available as well as certain legislative requirements which have to be met and Council will consider these along with what is important to the local community when allocating resources.

Council believes that meaningful participation by community and stakeholders in the development of the CSP will lead to more informed and robust decisions for all. Council is committed to providing opportunities for community and stakeholders to be involved in the development of the CSP and will communicate how that input was considered and included.

Council has based this Strategy on the engagement spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2): Inform; Consult; Involve; and Collaborate; as recommended by the Department of Local Government.

This Strategy relates to the development of a CSP and does not override or replace Council's existing Community Consultation Policy or related documents..

This Strategy will continue be reviewed and further developed throughout the CSP preparation process as Council explores the best and most effective way to involve and engage our community in decision making.

## 2. Guiding Principles

"Community Engagement is any process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision making and uses community input to assist in making decisions" (International Association for Public Participation, 2006).

Council needs to be responsive to the needs of the community that it serves. Through community engagement the community can:

- learn about what the Council does or plans to do;
- express views on decisions that affect them; and
- suggest how the Council may improve the way it plans for and provides services and facilities

The process of engaging with the Community will at all times reflect the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, principles which also underpin the Community Strategic Plan itself.

The NSW Government's social justice strategy is based on the following interrelated principles:

**Equity** – there should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances

**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 genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives

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

*(Taken from the Planning & Reporting Manual for local government in NSW, 2010)*

Engagement activities have been planned to encourage involvement from all sections of the population, including minority or hard to reach groups. Key stakeholder groups include young people, older people, people in the workforce, parents, people with a disability and their carers, women, children, Aboriginal people and people from different cultural and language backgrounds.

### 3. Our Demographics

The following table highlights key demographic features of our community and the strategies Council will carry out to ensure wide engagement of our diverse community.

<b>Demographic Feature</b>	<b>Key Statistics 2011</b> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data	<b>Strategies for Engagement</b>
Total Population	9,288 people	Carry out targeted engagement methods to enable the best opportunity for community involvement.
Age Structure	0 to 14 years – 19.1% 14 to 40 years – 23.1% 41-64 years – 40.5% 65 years and over – 17.3%	To reach people from across all age groups, a variety of strategies will be used during each stage of the community engagement process, Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of both electronic and non electronic media. Use social media.</li> <li>• provide access for people experiencing disadvantage to attend workshops and activities.</li> <li>• schedule engagement activities at various</li> </ul>

		times
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	3.5% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. The most common other languages spoken at home were German, Italian and Bundjalung	Key information will be translated as required.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	5.3% of the population is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.	All engagement will be promoted through existing local Aboriginal groups and networks. The Community Development Officer will provide advice and information to ensure strategies are culturally appropriate and that all key groups have the opportunity to participate.
People with a Disability	.	Face to Face engagement activities will be held in accessible venues. Additional devices such as Audio Loops will be used wherever possible, and scribes provided as required. Accessible print will be used as appropriate. Engagement activities will be taken to existing groups and networks to maximise involvement.

#### 4. Who Are Our Stakeholders?

Stakeholders include all individuals and groups based in and outside the Local Government Area who have an interest in the future of the Council.

It is intended that all stakeholders will be provided with the opportunity to be involved in all stages of the development of the CSP. A range of methods will be employed to maximise involvement. Consideration will also be given the diversity

of the community and those whose voices may not normally be heard in community discussions.

Our stakeholders include (but are not limited to) the following key groups:

Residents	People who live or own property in the Local Government Area.
Visitors/ Residents From Neighbouring LGA'S	People who travel to/through the LGA or use assets and infrastructure provided here.
Landowners/Developers	Landowners (that are not residents, business operators, government departments or infrastructure providers) in the LGA.
Education and Training	Local primary and high schools (public and private), TAFE and other training providers.
Government Departments and Agencies	State and Federal Government Departments and agencies responsible for areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning;</li> <li>• Housing;</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Health &amp; Community Services</li> <li>• Sport and Recreation</li> <li>• Lands</li> <li>• Aged &amp; Disabled</li> <li>• Aboriginal Affairs</li> <li>• Industry &amp; Investment</li> <li>• Environment, Climate Change &amp; Water</li> <li>• Emergency Services</li> <li>• Safety/Policing</li> </ul>
Adjoining Local Government Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lismore City Council</li> <li>• Richmond Valley Council;</li> <li>• Tweed Shire Council;</li> <li>• Clarence Valley Council;</li> <li>• Tenterfield Shire Council</li> <li>• Scenic Rim Council</li> <li>• Southern Downs Regional Council</li> </ul>
Infrastructure & Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads and Maritime Authorities;</li> <li>• Railway organisations</li> <li>• Bus operators;</li> <li>• Telecommunications suppliers</li> <li>• Energy suppliers</li> </ul>
Arts & Cultural Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts Councils</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical Societies</li> <li>• Theatre Groups</li> <li>• Musical Groups</li> </ul>
Clubs and Shared Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber of Commerce;</li> <li>• RSL Clubs</li> <li>• Church Groups</li> <li>• Scouts</li> <li>• Guides</li> <li>• Lions and Rotary Clubs</li> <li>• Senior Citizens Groups</li> <li>• Kyogle Youth Action</li> <li>• Youth Ventures</li> <li>• Kyogle Together</li> <li>• Growing Kyogle</li> <li>• Village Progress Associations</li> <li>• Country Women's Association</li> <li>• Local Aboriginal Land Councils;</li> <li>• Local Sporting Groups</li> </ul>
Local Councillors and Members Of Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Kyogle Council Councillors;</li> <li>• State Member for Lismore;</li> <li>• Federal Member for Page</li> </ul>
Council Staff	All staff, including those in office and field-based positions.

General advertising and promotion will also be used to invite all members of the community to participate.

## 5. What Groups Will Be Hard To Reach?

There will be some parts of our community that will be harder to reach than others. These groups are outlined below. Whilst people who identify with these groups may choose not to participate in any activities, it is Council's role to ensure that the methods used do not exclude people from the process either directly or indirectly. Any form of communication used during the engagement process will be flexible enough to consider the needs of the following groups.

- People with disabilities
- Homeless people
- Commuters
- Children and Young people
- Carers / parents
- Transport disadvantaged
- Socially or physically isolated
- Uninterested / Apathetic

- Aboriginal community
- Multicultural community
- People with literacy issues
- Older people
- Tourists
- Property owners who do not reside in the area

## 6. Risks to Public Participation

The following risks to public participation were identified:

- Diversity is not represented
- Being exclusive
- Low participation levels

Mitigation and management of these risks will form part of the project plan for the CSP.

## 8. Engagement Plan

Over the course of the project, active conversations will be maintained with both Council staff and Councillors to ensure collective understanding of both our stewardship role, and operational implications for Council.

Effective engagement requires a range of methods to be employed to keep participants willing to be involved throughout the process, or alternatively participate in a time and manner of their choosing.

It is important that we build on past experience and avoid the notion of ‘over consultation’, where stakeholders feel they have provided the same opinions and advice to Council on the same or similar issues. It is also important that contributors’ are acknowledged.

Our engagement will aim to:

- Acknowledge people for their contribution
- Keep people engaged during the process via regular updates.
- Provide feedback mechanisms and ongoing opportunities for people to be involved in the refinement and evaluation of the CSP.

## 9. Engagement Activities and Timelines

The CSP process will follow three stages.

**Stage One** - Preparing information  
Workshop with Councillors

Discussions with particular groups, State agencies etc to help prepare papers or 'State of the LGA' information, that will inform the CSP.

These discussions may also identify relevant regional strategies or plans from other agencies and groups.

Council may also seek to obtain feedback from particular stakeholders on the effectiveness of previous plans or strategies.

### **Stage Two - Developing the Draft CSP**

A series of engagement activities based on the discussion papers/ reports prepared in Stage One.

This will be the most resource intensive stage, involving a range of activities for different groups, at different times.

Discussions on levels of service and possible resourcing levels will be held at this stage.

### **Stage Three - Reviewing the Draft CSP, Resourcing Strategy & Delivery Program**

This is the stage where the community will refine the CSP and consider Council's response to the CSP via the Delivery Program.

Council will need to plan for a range of communication methods to ensure as many community members as possible are aware of the draft CSP and the Delivery Program. This may include a combination of attending meetings of organisations within target groups, social media, informal information sessions Use of targeted discussions or focus groups may also be appropriate.

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
February 2013	Public Exhibition of Engagement Strategy	Media Releases, Newsletter, Website, Advertisements, Direct Mail	All Stakeholders
February/March 2013	Awareness of Engagement Strategy and process in creating CSP.	Information dissemination via Newsletter, Media releases, Email, Website, Direct Mail.	All stakeholders
March 2013	Agreement on the best way forward and ensuring that IPRF requirements are met	Council Workshop	Councillors and Staff
March/April 2013	To gather information for input into the CSP and encourage community	Community Conversations, Forums, Reference Groups, on-line forums, discussion boards.	Community

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
	participation Meet with stakeholders and community members to review current issues and opportunities and to 'update' long-term vision and develop objectives		
March/April 2013	To gather data from the community on preferred service levels and future aspirations/priorities.	Distributed through Newsletter, Website, Advertisements, Direct mail. Community displays	Community
March/April 2013	Clarify priorities and information on vision, goals, challenges and opportunities  Continue discussions about levels of service and resourcing  Evaluate effectiveness of community engagement	Community/Stakeholder workshops, Media Releases, Discussion papers, Web site, community exhibits.	Community
April 2013	Draft CSP prepared and adopted for exhibition and feedback sought.		Diverse group of community members, Councillors, Staff
May 2013	Launch Draft CSP, call for submissions and thank community and stakeholders	Media Releases, Newsletter, Website, Advertisements, Direct Mail, Letter to residents	Councillors
April-May 2013	Preparation of Draft Resourcing Strategy & Delivery Program	Staff works allocation, direct correspondence, face to face meetings.	Staff, Councillors, Agencies CSP Reference Group

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>
May 2013	Review of the Draft CSP, submissions, Evaluate effectiveness of community engagement, Adopt of Resourcing Strategy & Delivery Program	Presentation to Council	Diverse group of community members
June 2013	Adoption of Final CSP and accompanying plans	Presentation to Council	Councillors

#### 4. **Success Indicators**

A range of qualitative and quantitative measures will be used to assess the success of the community engagement process.

This will include:

- Requests to Council to present at community/stakeholder forums
- Number of people attending face-to-face sessions
- Number of visits to CSP area of website
- Contributions people make at workshops, meetings and on-line forums.
- Formal submissions received
- Media coverage
- Survey results
- Adoption of the plan by Council.
- Engagement methods and techniques have reached all relevant stakeholders.
- Data and information gathered through engagement activities is of high quality and integrity and informs the development of the Community Strategic Plan.
- The views, visions, aspirations and priorities of the community are heard and accurately recorded.
- Council's Legislative requirements are met.
- Diversity of representation
- Quantity and quality of input received