

Council Policy (WCC.004 V3)

Community Engagement

Responsible Officer:

General Manager

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February 2026

Review Date:

December 2028



Version	Document produced	Approved by GM	Policies Repealed	Approved by Council
1	May 2020		Policy No. 14 Community Consultation Model	
2	August 2020		Community Engagement WCC.004 V1	25 August 2020
Note		New policy review process implemented. Result – new policy numbering & modified review.		26 October 2021
3	May 2022		WCC.004 V2	24 May 2022
4	February 2026	Policy review result - policy simplified and creation of staff toolkit for ease of implementation.	WCC.004 V3	26 February 2026

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Appendices

- A. Draft West Coast Community Engagement Framework**
- B. Draft West Coast Council Staff Toolkit – Community Engagement**

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1. Purpose

The Community Engagement Policy outlines West Coast Council's commitment to meaningfully engage our community in decisions which affect them and sets out how we will do this.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council officers, contractors, and external consultants engaged by Council to undertake or participate in a community engagement project or activity.

This policy applies across all work delivered by Council, from strategic planning to service delivery, and will inform the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of community engagement activities.

This policy does not replace legal and statutory obligations. Implementation of this Policy is further guided by the Community Engagement Framework (see Related Documents).

3. Legislation

Section 20(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that a Council, in performing its functions, is to consult, involve and be accountable to the community. *

Section 28(1)(c) provides that a Councillor, acting in the capacity of an individual Councillor, has the function to facilitate communication by the Council with the community. ** [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#) accessed 25/11/2025

4. Guiding Principles

West Coast Council will undertake community engagement in accordance with the following Guiding Principles.

Transparency - We will clearly communicate what we are asking, how community can engage and how their input will be used.

Inclusivity – We will engage in a way that enables as many people within our communities as possible to participate and overcomes barriers to participation.

Accountability – We will report back to the community on what we heard during community engagement and how their feedback influenced our decisions.

Partnership - We will build effective relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual understanding to deliver the greatest benefit from community engagement.

A Culture of Engagement - Council will prioritise community engagement and staff will have the skills, knowledge, and resources to implement it effectively.

5. Our Commitment

Council’s mission is to work together in partnerships to provide and continually improve the facilities, services and infrastructure that will serve the needs of our communities.

Council’s values of responsiveness, leadership, unity of purpose, partnership, respect and trust, and consistency underpin the way we work.

We believe that when our community is potentially affected by, or interested in, any decision we make, they have a right to be involved in the decision-making processes.

We are committed to seeking out and facilitating that involvement and believe our mission and values provide the basis for doing so genuinely and effectively.

Our community has varied skills, experience and knowledge that play a key role in shaping the future of the West Coast. Effective and meaningful engagement builds positive relationships with our community and leads to informed decision-making where we consider the views, needs, and aspirations of our community. This will be balanced with expert advice, budgetary needs, and legislative requirements.

6. Why We Engage

Good decisions are made when those affected by the outcomes have had the opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process. Community engagement:

- Builds trust in Council’s governance processes
- Creates active and informed conversation

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- Allows Council to better understand the views and aspirations of the community
 - Builds partnerships and creates ownership of Council decisions
 - Informs decision making, resulting in better outcomes for the community
 - This policy will enhance and guide the Council's implementation of the Annual Plan and the West Coast Community Plan.

7. When We Engage

We will engage with the West Coast community and stakeholders:

- When a decision is likely to impact on our services, facilities, and programs
- To inform long-term and strategic plans, policies, and major projects when there is significant community interest, conflict, or sensitivity
- When there is a genuine opportunity for the community to influence the outcome
- If there is a legislative requirement to do so

8. Privacy in Community Engagement

Council is committed to protecting the personal information of all participants in its community engagement process. Personal information collected in any engagement activity will only be used for ongoing engagement on the issue by Council. Such information will not be made available to the public.

Written submissions received as part of community engagement process will be considered as available for public inspection in its entirety, unless confidentiality is requested by the person making the submission.

Council will be guided by the West Coast Council Privacy Policy and the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)*.

9. Related Documents

West Coast Annual Plans

West Coast Council Media and Communications Policy

West Coast Council Customer Service Charter

West Coast Community Plan 2035

West Coast Council Corporate Plan 2020-2030

Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (Tas) [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#)

Local Government Act 1993 (Tas) [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#)

*** 20. Functions and powers**

(1) In addition to any functions of a council in this or any other Act, a council has the following functions:

- (a) to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
- (b) to represent and promote the interests of the community
- (c) to provide for the peace, order, and good government of the municipal area.

(2) In performing its functions, a council is to consult, involve and be accountable to the community.

(3) A council may do anything necessary or convenient to perform its functions either within or outside its municipal area.

**** 28. Functions of councillors**

(1) A councillor, in the capacity of an individual councillor, has the following functions:

- (a) to represent the community.
- (b) to act in the best interests of the community.
- (c) to facilitate communication by the council with the community
- (d) to participate in the activities of the council.
- (e) to undertake duties and responsibilities as authorised by the council.