CITY OF ADELAIDE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

May 2026

legislative

Primary document: City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines the City of Adelaide's legislative requirements under section 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) and the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (State Charter), which requires Council to adopt a community engagement policy that sets out the responsibilities of Council.

This Policy only applies to matters that require community engagement under the *Local Government Act 1999 (*SA) (the Act).

Community engagement prescribed under other legislation applicable to Council will be undertaken in accordance with those requirements, rather than this Policy, should there be any inconsistency.

This Policy is also supported by the City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (Council Charter).

STATEMENT

As a Capital City Council, we are the State's cultural, government and economic centre stage, with hundreds of thousands of people coming into our Council on a daily basis. This role means our community is diverse and the City of Adelaide, when undertaking engagement with our community, needs to consider this State role alongside all city users, that is, residents, businesses, workers, students and visitors.

Council also recognises and values the knowledge and experience of its diverse communities and is committed to involving the community in decisions that affect them. Equitable access to participatory decision-making by involving and empowering members of our community supports an inclusive, thriving and sustainable city that benefits everyone.

Community engagement is the process of actively involving the community in decisions, planning and projects that impacts them or their local area. For the City of Adelaide, our community includes "all people who live, work, study or conduct business in, or who visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places of, the City of Adelaide" (*City of Adelaide Act 1998).*

In line with the Council Charter, ensuring that our community engagement activities are community centric, accessible and inclusive and undertaken in a transparent and genuine manner is vital to meeting our commitments, supporting informed decision making, and building a strong community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHARTERS

State Government (State Charter)

Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) (the Act) provides for the State Government to "*establish a community engagement charter for the purposes of this Act*". In December 2025 The Minister for Local Government published in the Government Gazette a (State) Community Engagement Charter that included:

> *This charter has been prepared taking into account the following principles contained in Section 50(2) of the Local Government Act 1999—*
>
> *(a) members of the community should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;*
>
> *(b) information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;*
>
> *(c) participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;*
>
> *(d) participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes;*
>
> *(e) insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.*

City of Adelaide (Council Charter)

The City of Adelaide developed a Community Engagement Charter (Council Charter), which outlines our guiding principles to be bold, aspirational and innovative on how we work with our community to shape our city's future.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Charter.

This **Charter outlines our commitments** to how the City of Adelaide will engage with the community when making decisions, plans, or projects that affect them.

The Charter and Policy are guided by the following principles:

- **Community Centric** – The community is at the heart of what we do. We listen to them so that we can shape our city's bold future together.
- **Accessible and Inclusive** – All community members have an opportunity to participate in decisions that impact them.
- **Transparency and Trust** – Council builds trust by engaging authentically with our community on an ongoing basis.

Community engagement undertaken by the City of Adelaide takes into consideration the requirements of both the State and Council Charters.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Local Government Act 1999 (SA)

Section 50A requires Council to prepare and adopt a community engagement policy that sets out the steps that the Council must follow. It specifies that Council is required to undertake particular types or levels of community engagement (as a minimum) in line with the State Charter as well as instances where council must follow its community engagement policy. This ensures Council is effectively engaging with stakeholders and the community.

The Act also prescribes the requirement for community engagement under specific provisions of the Act and allows for Councils to make any additional provisions as required.

City of Adelaide Act 1998

Community engagement needs to also consider the *City of Adelaide Act 1998*, which recognises the special role our Council plays "*to support and advance the role that the City of Adelaide plays as the capital city of South Australia*".

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to Council Members, employees, contractors, volunteers, consultants and any other person(s) undertaking community engagement for, or on behalf of, the City of Adelaide.

Council is the elected body charged with responsibility for making decisions on behalf of the community. Under certain circumstances Council may delegate decision- making to Council officers.

Administration includes the people who support the day-to-day operations of Council. This includes the Chief Executive Officer, Executive, managers, and employees responsible for delivering Council services, projects, programs, and community engagement activities**.**

The **Chief Executive Officer** supported by staff and/or external contractors, is responsible for implementing and reviewing this Policy, and reporting outcomes of consultations and review(s) of this Policy to Council.

Senior Leaders are responsible for ensuring their staff comply with this Policy and make use of the support mechanisms and tools provided to guide implementation.

Staff and any third-parties undertaking community engagement for, or on behalf of, the City of Adelaide are required to meet the minimum legislative requirements for community engagement and adhere to the Principles contained within the Council Charter and this Policy.

The **Community Engagement Team** is responsible for providing advice and assistance to the community and internal and external stakeholders in relation to community engagement and keeping this Policy up-to-date and accessible.

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UNDERTAKING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When undertaking community engagement, Council recognises the need for various engagement methods to support the principles of the Council Charter, including commitments of:

- *Ensure that we seek our community's feedback in a way that is creative, engaging and innovative*
- *Recognise the diverse needs of our community and create inclusive, accessible opportunities*
- *Enable the community to provide feedback at a time, and in a way that works for them*

As such, when Administration is developing how, when and why community engagement is undertaken, the following methods could be considered:

Type	Intent	Examples
In Person	Relationship building, community at the heart of our decisions and builds transparency and trust	▪ Community forums, 'drop-in sessions' and targeted stakeholder meetings ▪ Community group representations to Council
Print	Meets some legislative requirements and may be more accessible by some members of the community	▪ Publication in a regular newsletter ▪ Letters to residents and other stakeholders ▪ Other direct mail publications or letterbox drops ▪ Advertising in media outlets as deemed appropriate ▪ Hard copies available in Council facilities
Online	Accessible 24/7, self-service and allows to provide for full information, interactive options and data collection.	▪ "Our Adelaide" Website ▪ Council's website and social media ▪ Use of a community email database
Other	Creative, innovative ways to engage with our community	▪ Media releases to appropriate media outlets and community groups ▪ Direct consultation with community representative groups ▪ Customer surveys ▪ Fixed displays, e.g. community notice boards

The following pages provide examples of actual community engagements that are undertaken, including those specifically required by legislation. These types of engagements have been provided under the **categories defined in the State Charter:**

> *"In recognition of the fact that the matters included for community engagement in this Charter have differing levels of impact on councils' communities, this Charter establishes the following categories of engagement and requirements that are appropriate to each group"*
> *(Local Government Act 1999 (SA), Section 50 Community Engagement Charter)*

CATEGORY - Significant – Annual Business and Rating Policy

Definition	Decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates.
Engagement that is driven by legislation	▪ Annual **Business Plan** (Adopting Annual Business Plan) – *Section 123* ▪ Basis of **rating** (Change to Basis of Rating Report) – *Section 151*
Mandatory minimum requirements	▪ Publish on Council website ▪ Publish information in a local news publication (print where available, otherwise digital) ▪ Consult with the whole Council area ▪ Invite submissions ▪ Explain the decision-making process ▪ Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days ▪ Seek and consider feedback from the community ▪ Hold a public meeting for the community to make submissions

CATEGORY - Significant

Definition	Decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area.
Engagement that is driven by legislation	▪ **Representation reviews** - *Section 12* ▪ **Strategic** Management Plans - *Section 122* ▪ **Differential rating and** special adjustments - *Section 156* ▪ Revocation of classification of land as **community land** - *Sections 193 and 194* ▪ Community Land Management Plans - adoption - *Section 197* ▪ Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - *Section 198* ▪ Alienation of community land by lease or license - *Section 202* ▪ Making **bylaws** - *Section 249* ▪ Considering a **change of status of council** or name change - *Section 13**
Mandatory minimum requirements	▪ Publish on Council website ▪ Publish information in a local news publication (print where available, otherwise digital) ▪ **Notice in Gazette* ▪ Consult with the whole Council area ▪ Invite submissions *(*invitation to make written submissions)* ▪ Explain the decision-making process ▪ Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days (**6 weeks*) ▪ Seek and consider feedback from the community ▪ Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a council meeting to speak to their submission **these items only apply to Section 13 "change of status or name change"*

CATEGORY - Standard

Definition	Decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.
Engagement that is driven by legislation	▪ Substantial changes to the **opening hours and place of council's principal office** - *Section 45* ▪ Community **Engagement Policy** - *Section 50A* ▪ Council **behaviour support policies** - *Section 75F* ▪ Access to **meetings and documents** - *Section 92* ▪ Power to **make orders** - *Section 259*
Mandatory minimum requirements	▪ Publish on Council website ▪ Consult with the whole Council area ▪ Seek and consider feedback from the community

CATEGORY - Local

Definition	Decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.
Engagement that is driven by legislation	▪ Carrying out commercial activities - **Prudential Arrangements** - *Section 48* ▪ Council is proposing a **permit or authorisation** for alteration of a road or use of a road for business purposes – **for more than 48 hours** (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - *Section 223* ▪ Consultation on proposed **planting of vegetation on a road** – significant impact - *Section 232*
Mandatory minimum requirements	▪ Publish on Council website ▪ Seek and consider feedback from the community ▪ Consult with local community

CATEGORY - Inform

Definition	Matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision
Engagement that is driven by legislation	▪ Minor changes to **opening hours** and place of council's principal office - *Section 45* ▪ Council is proposing a **permit or authorisation** for alteration of a road or use of roads for business purposes - **for less than 48 hours** and the council ensures that a detour is in place - *Section 223* ▪ **Election information** - *Section 13A* of the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999
Mandatory minimum requirements	▪ Publish on Council website ▪ Information to the whole Council area ▪ Information to local community

Delegations

The community engagement activities in this policy are general in nature, to meet the minimum mandatory requirements in the Act and State Charter.

Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, by:

- Council;
- The CEO; or
- A delegate with power to make the relevant decision or undertake the relevant activity or process. Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this Policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, any optional or additional engagement steps, or employ optional or additional engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker, such as for projects involving expenditure deemed 'significant' by the CEO; or matters likely to be of significant community interest.

The Chief Executive Officer has the delegation to:

- Approve, amend and review any procedures that shall be consistent with this Policy; and
- Make any legislative, formatting, nomenclature or other minor changes to the Policy during the period of its currency.

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ADMINISTRATION

Other Useful documents

Related documents

- City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (primary document)
- Privacy Policy

The City of Adelaide also develops a range of Strategies and Action Plans that drive the delivery of our services and projects. These documents may outline requirements for engagement activities as well – particularly in regards, but not limited, to Reconciliation and Access and Inclusion.

Relevant legislation

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*
- *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005*
- *City of Adelaide Act 1998*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Local Government Act 1999* (SA)
- *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*
- *Road Traffic Act 1961*

Glossary

Throughout this document, the terms below are defined as:
(the) Act is the *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*.
Council is the elected body charged with the responsibility for making decisions on behalf of the community. In certain circumstances Council may delegate decision making to the Chief Executive Officer (including staff / administration).
Community includes individuals or groups who have an interest in Council's decision-making and who are affected by Council's decisions. These individuals or groups may be identified as residents, voters, ratepayers, business owners, customers, contractors and suppliers, community interest groups, agencies and hard to reach groups.
Community Engagement is a planned process of engagement where information is provided and community and stakeholders are formally invited, as per the relevant requirements in the Act, to comment about matters on which Council will deliberate. It also describes varying levels of participation in our decision-making processes.
Stakeholders are recognised as individuals and organised groups who have an interest in Council's decision-making and who are affected by Council's decisions. Businesses, retail outlets, State and Federal Governments, community groups, other Local Governments and not-for-profit organisations are considered stakeholders. Stakeholders may also be groups or organisations who have a role to play in policy development and program or service delivery.
Submissions are contributions made by members of the community, expressing an opinion in writing (including on Council's community engagement website) relating to an issue and/or proposal which will be considered in Council's decision-making process.

Availability of the Policy

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's Offices during ordinary business hours and via the Council's website https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/.

History and Review

As part of Council's commitment to deliver the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan, services to the community and the provision of transparent information, all policy documents are reviewed as per legislative requirements. When there is no such provision, a risk assessment approach is taken to guide the review timeframe. Council reserves the right to request names and addresses of respondents making submissions to any public consultations depending on the nature of the project or initiative being consulted on. This Policy document will be reviewed every **four** years unless legislative or operational change occurs beforehand. The next review is required in **2030.**

For further information contact the Governance and Strategy Program:
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Review History

Record Number	Adopted Body	Date Adopted	Description of Edits
ACC2026/XXXX	*Council*	*XX/XX/2026*	*Policy updated to reflect new State Government Charter requirements*
ACC2025/02511	*Council*	*25/11/25-*	*Policy updated to reflect new Community Engagement Charter and to improve clarity and alignment to legislation*
ACC2022/64850	*Council*	*16/07/ 2019*	*Removal of 'Temporary revisions to theCommunity Consultation Policy imposed in response to the declared COVID-19 Public Health Emergency asof 24 May 2022. This Policy returns as endorsed by Council 16 July 2019.*
ACC2020/58461	*Council*	*12/05/ 2020*	*Updated to reflect requirements of thePublic Access and Public Consultation Notice (No 2) 2020*
ACC2019/63611	*Council*	*16/07/ 2019*	*Definition of 'community' updated (page 3); relevant legislation and related documents updated; compliance requirements of section 122 updated; privacy provisions updated; table 1 consultation steps 3 and 16 updated;*
ACC2019/63611	*Council*		*Compliance requirements for Section 122: Strategic Management Plansadded to Table 1;*
ACC2019/63611	*Council*		*'Administrative' section (page 3) updated to align with City of AdelaidePrivacy Policy;*
ACC2019/63611	*Council*		*Consultation Step 3 updated to removeduplication with Step 16. Step 16 removed;*

ACC2019/63611			*Table 1: Column 16, Section 232: Treeshas been amended to 'Submissions to be considered in decision-making under delegation (Step 13) replacing the need for 'Submissions to be considered by Council in decision- making' (Step 7)*
ACC2019/63611	*Council*		*Table 1: Column 18 (step 5) of Section 259: Councils to Develop Policies (power to make orders) is amended to indicate the minimum of period of consultation for this section is four (4) weeks.*
ACC2018/99497	*Council*	*08/05/ 2018*	*Major Review of this policy*