

Name:	Community Consultation		
Type:	Council Policy		
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer:	Director Community Services		
Approval Date:	16/02/2016	Next Review Date:	1/01/2019
Records Number:	365895	Council Decision:	8/1830

1 PURPOSE

This policy provides the framework and governance for community involvement in Council's planning and decision making. Community consultation allows Council access to wider sources of information, points of view and potential solutions. It gives the community a better understanding of the issues behind the decision making process and the related constraints or opportunities that exist.

The City of Palmerston is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making which is informed by effective communication and consultation between Council and Community.

The level of consultation undertaken relates directly to the nature complexity and impact of the issue, plan or strategy. In a number of areas, the Council is required to comply with specific legislative requirements such as minimum periods, publication in the Gazette and newspapers. Consultation processes identified in this Policy should be seen as complementing any prescribed statutory requirements.

2 PRINCIPLES

The City of Palmerston's Community Consultation Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The Community will be involved and informed about key decisions that may affect them.
- Consultation methods and strategies will be designed to maintain focus on the issue being addressed.
- Council will establish the level of consultation and identify potential stakeholders in each specific circumstance.
- Council will provide information that is accessible and easily understood.
- Council will provide contact details for obtaining further information and instructions on how to submit feedback in all consultation communications.
- A range of opportunities appropriate to the level will be provided for people to access information and be involved.
- Council will consider community views and take into account submissions made by various stakeholders.
- The best interest of the community will prevail over individual or vested interests.
- Council's requirement to balance community views and interest with other influences such as budgetary constraints.

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Community	Residents, property and business owners of the City of Palmerston
Consultation	The process of formal and informal consulting or discussion
Statutory	Required, permitted or enacted by statute
City Wide	The entire Municipality of Palmerston
Neighbourhood	Immediate environment, surroundings or related vicinity

4 POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Community Consultation Levels

Council reserves the right to review the elements of the consultation process to suit the requirements of any particular issue.

The Community Consultation Policy specifies three levels designed to suit all consultation requirements, ranging from the most basic public notification to seeking input on a major project or issue of community-wide significance.

- Level 1 consultation is the lowest level
- Level 2 consultation is the medium level
- Level 3 consultation is the highest level

Each level has a city wide or neighbourhood focus to suit the circumstances.

Where there is no statutory requirement for consultation, selection of the appropriate level will determine the level of resources to be allocated for consultation.

- Level 1 specifies no minimum period
- Level 2 sets a minimum of 21 days
- Level 3 sets a minimum of 35 days and requires Council to make a specific budget allocation commensurate with the importance of the topic.

It is Council's prerogative to establish the level of consultation required when considering a subject requiring community consultation. The level will need to reflect the minimum statutory requirements relating to that subject. It will be applied to any matter where consultation is required by legislation, Council policy or when Council considers this is to be appropriate.

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for implementation of the policy, which will include establishing the consultation level and determining which of the elements within that level will be undertaken where Council has not done so.

Any good consultation strategy requires a certain degree of flexibility to suit the specific situation. While setting out minimum standards, each activity level reflects this need by not being too prescriptive. The following list indicates which level may apply for certain activities. Clearly, according to community interest and perception at the time, the appropriate level can change and so the following list indicates only which level is more likely to apply certain activities. There are examples only and should not be regarded as comprehensive.

CITY WIDE

Level 1

- Code of Practice
- Change of Consultation Policy
- Changes to dates, times and venues to Council and committee meetings
- Changes to Council operating hours
- Temporary closure to Council facilities
- Road closure for Traffic Management
- Road re-sealing program
- Playground installation/removal of equipment (regional and major parks)

Level 2

- Municipal Plan (including budget)
- Major upgrade to Council facilities
- Permanent road closures
- Lease of community land or community asset
- New By-laws
- Policies in relation to order making power

Level 3

- Strategic Plans (Palmerston City Centre Master Plan)
- Major Projects
- Review of representation, Council boundaries and amalgamation

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Level 1

- Change of Street Name
- Notice of Works
- Changing of parking restrictions
- Closing Laneway
- Playground installation/removal of equipment (local parks)

Level 2

- Traffic Management proposals
- Planting vegetation where it will have a significant impact
- Local streetscape proposal

Level 3

- Sale of park or community asset
- Closure and sale of road
- Lighting of public places

The City of Palmerston's Community Consultation Policy		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
City Wide Issues:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Advertisement in the NT News. Options are a public notice advertisement or a display advertisement - Consider submissions made in response <p>* A letter box drop may be done as well, or instead of, press advertising.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Advertise in the NT News - Council's website - Council's Facebook Page - Media release, if appropriate - Allow a minimum of 21 days for response - Copies of major reports/plans available in the Library, Council Front Counter and for purchase - Consider submissions made in response - Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision <p>* A letter box drop may be done as well, or instead of, press advertising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As directed by Council, any or all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops ▪ Focus groups ▪ Open days ▪ Displays/notice boards ▪ Community forums ▪ Public debates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council allocates a specific budget - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Advertise in NT News including Palmerston Sun and NT News - Council's website - Council Facebook Page - Media release and/or briefings - Minimum 35 days response - Newsletter articles and specific publication to all residents - As directed by Council, any or all of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops ▪ Focus groups ▪ Open days ▪ Display/notice boards ▪ Variable notice boards ▪ Community forums ▪ Public debates ▪ Surveys ▪ Outreach to key groups where they are located - Copies of major reports/plans available in the Library, Council Front Counter and for purchase - Consider submissions made in response - Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision
Neighbourhood Issues:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Letter of advices to affected properties, or properties within 250m of site, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Letter of advices to affected properties, or properties within 250m of site, as appropriate - Allow a minimum of 21 days for response - Copies of major reports/plans available in the Library and for purchase - Consider submissions made in response - Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with statutory requirements (if any) - Letter of advices to affected properties, or properties within 250m of site, as appropriate - Neighbourhood forums - Minimum 35 days of response - Copies of major reports/plans available in the Library and for purchase - Consider submissions made in response - Report to Council summarising submissions for formal Council decision

COMM003

The City of Palmerston's Community Consultation process will be complimented by:

- Continued community participation on Advisory Groups and Committees;
- Elected Members maintaining a close contact with the community and keep Council informed of real experiences and views of residents within the Municipality;
- A Public Question Time session at each Ordinary Meeting of Council;
- A combination of web based applications, questionnaires, social media and professional surveys, as appropriate;
- Information packages consisting of information sheets, brochures and pamphlets.

In a number of areas, the Council is required to comply with specific legislative requirements, such as minimum periods and publication in a local newspaper. Consultation processes identified in this policy should be seen as complementing any prescribed statutory requirements.

This policy will be reviewed once during the term of Council.

Council's Community Consultation Policy is available for inspection without charge at the Council office. The policy may also be downloaded from Council's website www.palmerston.nt.gov.au.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- 6.1 Northern Territory Local Government Act 2014