



Central Coast Council  
**Community  
Engagement  
Strategy**

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Central  
Coast  
Council



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Darkinjung country, and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to these lands and waterways and extend this acknowledgement to the homelands and stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.



# Message from Central Coast Councillors

Central Coast Council is committed to fostering meaningful engagement with our community and key stakeholders on the issues that shape the future of our region. Genuine community engagement strengthens trust, improves decision-making, and ensures that Council's policies, programs, and services reflect the diverse needs of the people we serve.

Each year, Council facilitates a wide range of engagement activities to gather valuable insights from our community. This Community Engagement Strategy has been developed to enhance those interactions, ensuring that participation is inclusive, accessible, and meaningful. A key component of this strategy is the revised Community Participation Plan, which consolidates our approach into a single, clear, and cohesive document for the community.

Over the next four years, this strategy will guide Council in strengthening connections with our community, with a particular focus on First Nations people and equity-deserving communities. We recognise that inclusive engagement leads to better outcomes for all and helps shape a future that reflects the aspirations of our residents.

By listening, learning, and working together, we can create and deliver quality facilities and services that meet the needs of our growing and evolving region. We encourage all members of the community to be part of this journey as we work towards a stronger, more connected Central Coast.

We look forward to hearing your voices and working together to shape a future that benefits everyone.

**Central Coast Councillors  
March 2025**

*Image caption -*  
**Back Row (L to R)** Cr Corinne Lamont, Cr Kyle MacGregor, Cr John McNamara, Cr Trent McWaide, Cr Jared Wright  
**Middle Row (L to R)** Cr John Mouland, Cr Jane Smith, Cr Belinda Neal, Cr Rachel Stanton, Cr Kyla Daniels  
**Front Row (L to R)** Cr Margot Castles, Deputy Mayor Doug Eaton OAM, Mayor Lawrie McKinna, Cr Sharon Walsh, Cr Helen Crowley

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# Introduction



## Guiding Council's decisions

Engaging with our community is essential if we are to make informed decisions that reflect community priorities. Accessible, genuine and consistent engagement builds trust between Council, our community and stakeholders.

This Community Engagement Strategy outlines how we will ensure our community is aware of ways to participate in decision-making and have a say on the way we deliver services.

The strategy also outlines:



**Our legislative requirements**



**Our principles and commitment to open and inclusive engagement**



**When we will engage**



**How we will engage**



**What we do with feedback**

The opportunities for our community and stakeholders to provide input on our activities are as vast as the range of services and infrastructure we provide. This strategy is designed to give clear guidance on what the community can expect when participating in our decision-making process.

## Background

Since Central Coast Council was formed in 2016, our organisation has gone through significant change. Throughout this journey, our community engagement team has led the organisation through a fundamental cultural shift, aimed at improving the way we engage with our community to better influence decisions that impact their lives.

This progressive shift has been underpinned by our Engagement Framework, first adopted in 2017, and supported by a program to build staff skills across departments, and to create a culture of engagement across our organisation.

As a result, we are now engaging more than ever. Our community continues to seek greater access to information and transparency in decision-making, and wants to play an active role in shaping the future of the region.

We want to keep empowering our community as our organisation moves into a new direction.

This strategy serves as a refreshed point of reference and benchmark, providing consistent and reliable guidance to ensure we continue to hear our community's voices. It is community participation that will help us make balanced and sustainable decisions for the future of Council and the region.

## Legislation

This strategy is guided by NSW Government legislation and also links directly with many of Council's other plans, policies and strategies. Recent changes to Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993, which requires each NSW council to develop and implement a four-year Community Engagement Strategy, has been a primary consideration in the development of this strategy.

In this context, the principles of our existing Engagement Framework have now been incorporated into this strategy to create a single, cohesive document and one point of reference for our staff and community. The strategy also incorporates information on how the community can get involved in local and region-wide land use planning to meet requirements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

Key legislation informing this Strategy includes:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Crown Land Management Act 2016*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Water Management Act 2000*

In addition to this document, we also have a dedicated Engagement and Education Strategy for Council's water and sewer service, which sets out how we will engage, communicate, educate and continue to improve our water and sewer services.

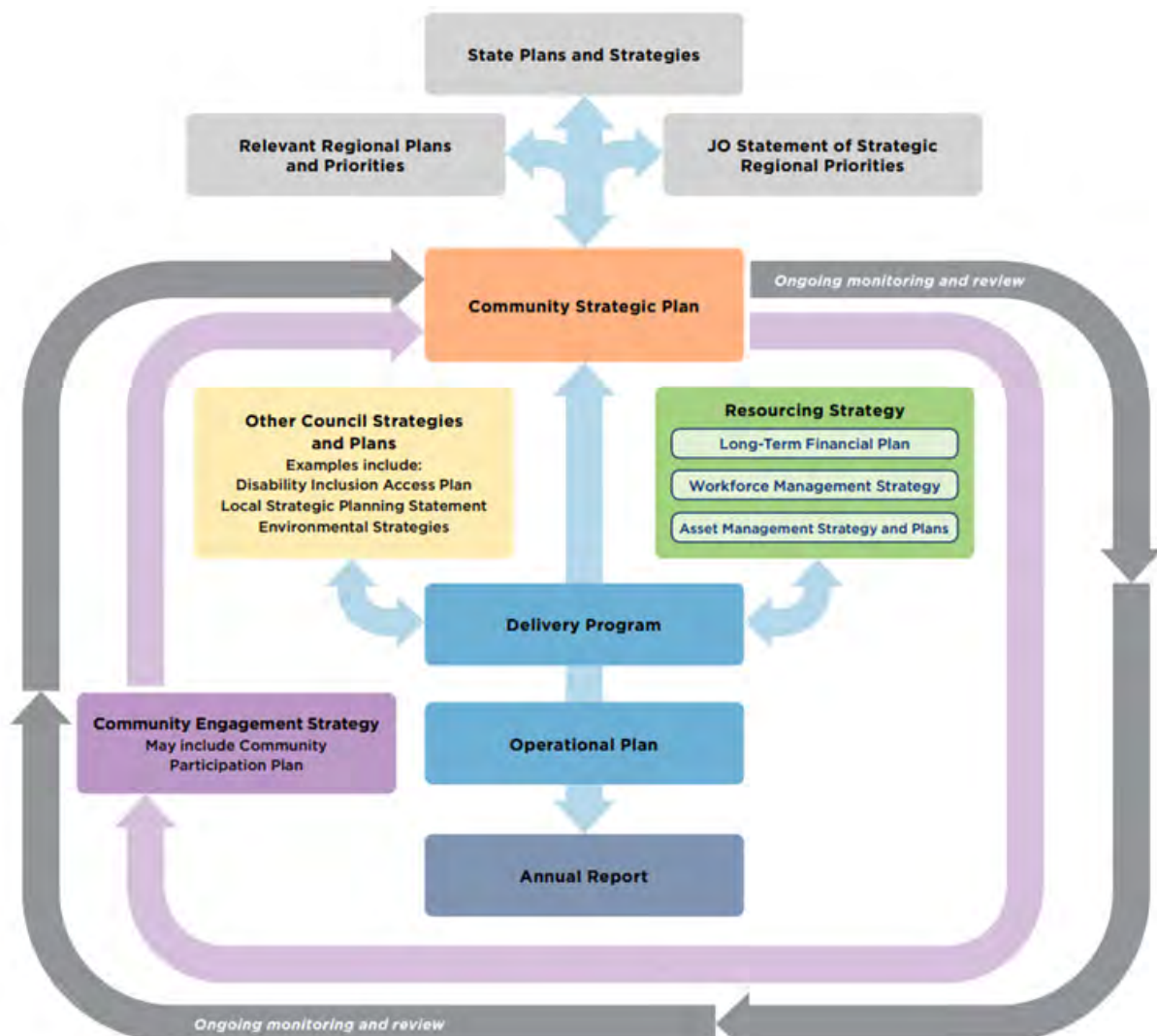
## Integration with our plans and strategies

Engaging with our community is essential when we develop strategies, plans and policies.

These documents are part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework that all NSW Councils are required to follow under the *Local Government Act 1993*. This framework underpins how we plan at Council and is fundamentally based on community desires and aspirations for the future.

We engage at every level of planning, from the overarching long-term Community Strategic Plan and our four-year Delivery Program, down to individual projects in our yearly Operational Plan. Our community has influence across a broad spectrum of Council activities.

Ongoing engagement with our community also helps up advocate in regional, state and federal planning matters, as well as in local place-based planning.



# Our community





## Community snapshot

A strong and positive relationship with our community is vital to a happy and inclusive region for all.

As a council serving a large population, we interact with thousands of individuals and groups every year. Our population is also growing and changing, bringing new challenges and opportunities to ensure we plan a future that supports our entire community.

Our region boasts a diverse population profile, with residents across various age groups. We also have a significant population of families and retirees, who are attracted by the coastal lifestyle and proximity to Sydney. Seasonal fluctuations see many holidaymakers and visitors come to the Coast, bringing economic value to the region. Our diversity creates an opportunity to hear from a range of voices whenever we engage.

**Population**  
**346,596**

**Aboriginal and/or  
Torres Strait Islander  
population: 4.9%**



*Source: profile.id using 2021 Census data*

## Disability

There are around 22,000 people on the Central Coast (about 6.4% of us) who need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability



## Top three age groups

60-64 years – 6.5%

55-59 years – 6.5%

50-54 years – 6.4%

A LANGUAGE  
OTHER THAN  
ENGLISH SPOKEN  
AT HOME

12.3%

## Households

Couples with children: 27.1%

Couples without children: 25.8%

One parent families: 12.8%

Group household: 2.8%

Lone person: 26%

Other: 5.5%



## Workforce participation



Not in work:  
4.7%



Working  
full time:  
50.1%



Working  
part-time:  
33.4%



Unpaid work  
and care:  
69.4%

## Education

Completed year  
12 and/or tertiary  
training: 61.6%

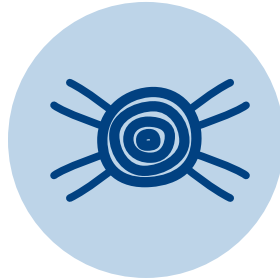


## Our stakeholders

With such a large population and demographic diversity, we need to understand who makes up our community, and how they may be affected by the decisions we make. We have identified some stakeholder groups often involved in our community engagement activities.



**Central Coast residents and ratepayers**



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals**



**People with a disability**



**Culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)**



**Tourists and visitors**



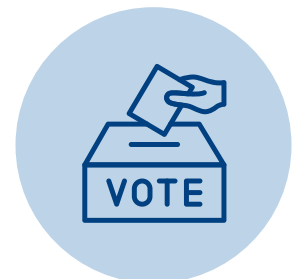
**Local business community**



**Community groups and organisations**



**Council's advisory committees and community reference groups**



**Elected representatives**



**Government agencies including Transport for NSW, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation, NSW Health, Department of Education, Office of Local Government, Destination NSW, NSW Office of Sport, Crown Lands.**

# Our principles and commitments



## Our approach

Our commitment to community engagement is deeply rooted in the belief that those affected by decisions have the right to participate in the decision-making process.



Our principles and commitments underpin our approach to community engagement and are interconnected with our Customer Experience Framework.

Our approach reflects the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

Principle	Commitment
<p><b>Respect and transparency:</b> Engagement is genuine and purposeful</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consult when needed and use the information gathered in a meaningful way</li> <li>respect your time and listen to you</li> <li>engage at a level that is appropriate to the possibility to influence</li> <li>share the responsibility, trust and transparency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access and inclusion:</b> It is easy to access and participate in engagement</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek a diversity of views and perspectives</li> <li>provide feedback to the community as to how their input contributed to decision-making</li> <li>endeavour to identify and remove barriers to participation</li> <li>use a range of opportunities and techniques to encourage participation, and increase awareness and understanding for all who may be affected by or interested in the outcome</li> <li>work in partnership with relevant community groups, State and Federal government, local government partners, and / or other stakeholders internally within Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clarity:</b> Engagement is clear and simple.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have genuine and open dialogue with the community</li> <li>clearly communicate the intention, scope and outcomes of the consultation</li> <li>use plain language and avoid jargon to provide clear explanation</li> <li>make information available in accessible formats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accountability and improvement:</b> Engagement is continually evaluated and improved.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek to maintain consistent standards and levels of quality</li> <li>share results internally and work together to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue</li> <li>evaluate engagement efforts and consistently seek to learn and improve practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity:</b> Engagement is for everyone.</p>	<p><b>We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>build the community's capacity to contribute, by educating and empowering both the community and staff so that they may participate in meaningful, two-way collaboration.</li> </ul>

# Spectrum of public participation

The International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) Spectrum has six levels of engagement that correspond to the community’s increasing level of influence on decision-making. We use the IAP2 Spectrum to help us to determine the appropriate level of input from the community and the role the community will have in the decision-making process.

INCREASING LEVEL OF COMMUNITY IMPACT 					
INCREASE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT 					
INFORM	EDUCATE	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<b>PURPOSE: Goal</b>					
To provide the community with information to assist their understanding of the issue, problem, opportunities or solutions.	Provide the community with the knowledge and skills to enable them to make an informed decision.	To obtain feedback and information about attitudes, opinions and preferences that assist Council in its decision-making processes.	To work on an ongoing basis with the community to ensure their concerns, ideas and hopes are listened to and understood.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives, sharing of resources, and the discovery of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders.
<b>PURPOSE: Our commitment</b>					
We will keep you informed.	We will equip you with an understanding of the issues.	We will listen to you, acknowledge your concerns and hopes, and provide feedback on if or how your input influenced the decision.	We will give you a role in shaping the project, and input into decisions, which will be visible throughout the process.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and incorporate this into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>PURPOSE: Methods</b>					
Council’s websites Social media E-news Advertisements Public notices Signs Letters Flyers Rates Newsletters Letterbox drops	Information sheets Online resources Workshops Webinars	Your Voice, Our Coast website Public exhibitions Pop-up events and drop-in sessions Workshops Focus groups Community meetings Surveys Stakeholder interviews School engagement Place-based engagement Public forums Public hearings	Project steering groups Working groups and community reference groups Deliberative processes Council committees and advisory group	Community partnerships Co-design workshops	Referendums

Adapted from: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and AA1000SE

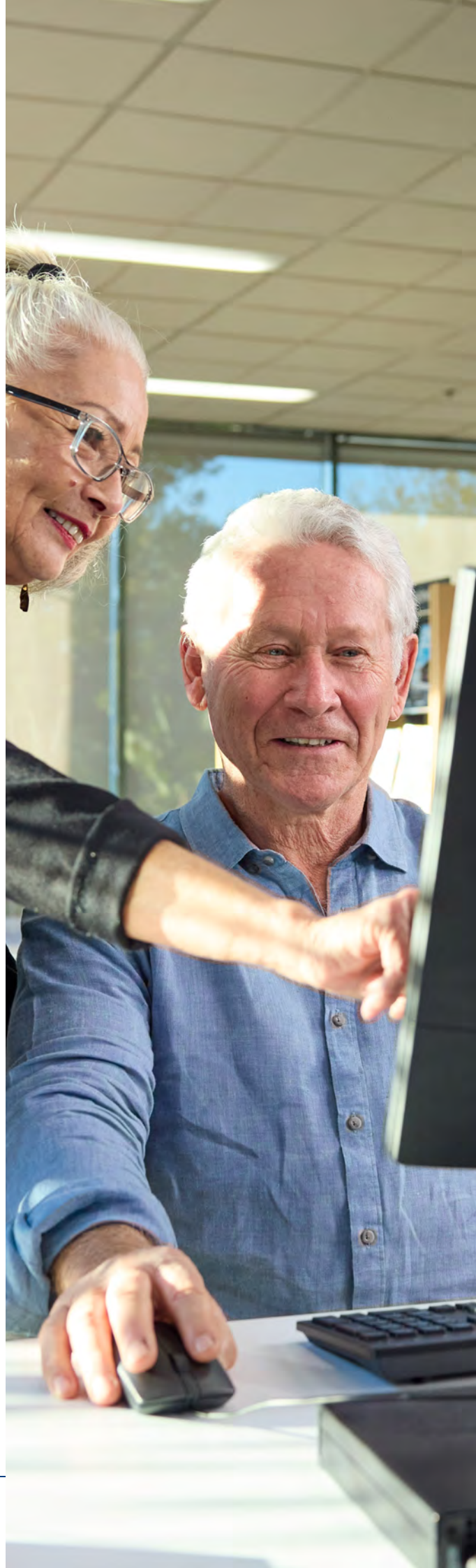
# Engagement in practice



There is no one-size-fits all approach when it comes to engaging with our community, and we use a diverse range of methods to help us reach and hear from those who are affected by a plan, strategy or project. The following outlines how we typically plan and deliver engagement, and the methods we use.

## The engagement process

- 1. Defining the project**
- 2. Identifying key stakeholders**
- 3. Planning engagement**
- 4. Carrying out engagement (can be in multiple stages)**
- 5. Outcomes of engagement reported to the community**
- 6. Council decision**
- 7. Council decision reported to the community**
- 8. Evaluate effectiveness of engagement**



## Our methods

We tailor how we share information and engage depending on the project or issue, and how much the community can get involved. We may use a single method for simple engagement, or a variety of methods for more complex engagement.

Level of engagement	Method	What is it?
<b>Inform</b>	Council's websites, social media, e-news	Regular email newsletters and updates about Council activities, events, and opportunities for engagement.
	Advertisements, public notices, signs, letters, flyers, rates newsletters, letterbox drops	Information published in local newspapers, on our website, and through other channels to inform the community about important decisions, consultations, and developments.
	Customer service centre and libraries	Locations for the community to seek information about projects that are open for community feedback and receive help with submitting feedback.
<b>Educate</b>	Information sheets, online resources, workshops, webinars	Various methods to educate the community on specific issues. Depending on the subject matter these methods may include a hard copy information sheet that includes key facts, interactive online-resources (such as water and sewer educational games) or an in-person workshop or webinar with Council staff or subject matter experts.
<b>Consult</b>	Your Voice, Our Coast website	Our online engagement hub, allowing our community to view current engagement opportunities, make formal submissions, take surveys, use interactive mapping and ideas boards.
	Public exhibitions	An official process with a set timeframe when a draft document is released for consultation and feedback. Feedback can be provided through a submission form, email or letter.
	Pop-up events and drop-in sessions	Informal opportunities where our community can speak to our staff and have their say about projects, plans or works. Pop-ups are face-to-face, and drop-ins can be virtual or face-to-face.
	Workshops, focus groups and community meetings	Structured forums where community members can discuss issues, voice concerns, and provide feedback on specific projects or proposals. These can be virtual or face-to-face.
	Surveys	Surveys and feedback forms on various topics to gauge public opinion, assess community needs, and understand preferences. These surveys can be online, offline and telephone. We also conduct surveys to gauge customer satisfaction of our services.
	Stakeholder interviews	One-on-one interviews to gain in-depth insight from community members. These can be done via phone, virtually or in person.
	School engagement	Workshops and other activities in schools to ensure we hear from school-aged young people.

Level of engagement	Method	What is it?
<b>Consult</b>	Place-based engagement	A holistic engagement approach where a local community can discuss and provide feedback on several Council projects and plans based on a geographic area. We use a combination of digital and face-to-face engagement methods.
	Public forums	May be prior to each Ordinary Meeting of Council to hear oral submissions from members of the community on items of business to be considered at the meeting. Public forums may also be held prior to Extraordinary Council Meetings and meetings of Committees of the Council.
	Public hearings	Public hearings may be held as part of an inquiry or other regulatory process and the public can hear details of submissions and ask questions of responsible authorities in a public forum.
<b>Involve</b>	Project steering groups, working groups and community reference groups	Established for major projects and initiatives, involving community members, stakeholders, and experts. These groups offer ongoing input and advice on specific issues or developments.
	Deliberative processes	An approach to decision-making where community members engage in active dialogue, exchange of ideas, and collaborative decision-making.
	Council committees and advisory groups	Formal committees of Council where community participants and experts help Council strategically plan a range of focus areas.
<b>Collaborate</b>	Community partnerships	Collaborations with community organisations, non-profits, and local businesses to promote community engagement and deliver services more effectively.
	Co-design processes	A human-centred research approach to identify pain points and develop innovative solutions.
<b>Empower</b>	Referendums	Voters are asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' to a particular question or questions. Voting in referendums is compulsory for enrolled voters. A referendum is required to change the number of Councillors, or ward structure, for example.

## Risks and opportunities

We want engagement to be consistent, simple and help people both understand an issue and participate. While engaging with the community on every issue is not always possible, we strive to ensure the community is well-informed about highly impactful issues, plans and projects.

This relies on us providing the necessary information for community members to form opinions and understand how we make decisions. We also recognise that a range of risks can arise, limiting the success of engagement. We look for opportunities to overcome these when we plan engagement.

These can include:

- **Communities and stakeholders with divergent or conflicting issues.** We seek to engage those affected, understand different and competing needs or expectations, so that we can determine a balanced and appropriate response.
- **Lack of balance between weak and strong stakeholders.** We plan engagement and use accessible and inclusive methods so all voices have an equal opportunity to be heard.
- **Difficulty engaging hard-to-reach groups.** We aim to create targeted and accessible engagement activities so we can hear from those who have barriers to participation. Methods may include one-on-one interviews, partnerships with community organisations or service providers, and working with Council's advisory committees.
- **Engagement fatigue.** Where possible, we combine engagement based on theme, or a geographic location to create a more holistic and efficient way for our community to participate, for example, our place-based engagement model.
- **Lack of trust in Council.** We refer to our principles when planning engagement, continue to evaluate and improve the way we engage, and be transparent in our decision-making.

By understanding these risks, planning engagement early and adhering to our principles, we aim to overcome or limit the impact of these challenges.

## When we will engage

Engagement is an intentional process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders, and communities to shape decisions or actions in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome. There are numerous reasons we engage.

- **Project engagement:** We seek community views and input into plans, strategies and projects. This engagement can occur as a separate stage before the draft document or design is placed on public exhibition for further feedback.
- **Community outrage or frustration:** We may engage in response to an issue or proposal if the community has indicated they have significant concerns, or when issues have not been adequately considered.
- **Community satisfaction:** We regularly seek insights into our performance in the delivery of key services, for example customer satisfaction surveys and recent service experience surveys. This ongoing feedback ensures our services meet community needs and is part of our Customer Experience Strategy.
- **Council resolution:** The elected Council may decide to change its services, regulations or initiate a major development, and we seek the community's view on the matter.
- **Statutory engagement:** Our engagement activities are often a requirement under legislation, such as the Local Government Act 1993, and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- **Regulatory engagement:** We engage on how much we should charge for rates, and water and sewer services. This engagement forms part of our regular submissions to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), which determines the final prices.

## When we won't engage

Engagement is not done on every project undertaken by Council. We do not engage on projects where:

- There is no scope for community influence
- Public health and safety are at risk
- We are responding to an emergency
- A matter is strictly confidential or commercially sensitive
- Legal constraints.

## Our Commitment to place-based engagement

Where possible and appropriate, we will endeavour to undertake place-based engagement—meeting communities where they are to ensure local voices shape local outcomes. We recognise that each neighbourhood, town, and community within the Central Coast has its own unique character, challenges, and aspirations. That's why we are committed to engaging directly with people in the places they live, work, and play.

Through this approach, we create opportunities for residents to learn about and provide input on a wide range of plans, strategies, and projects across Council departments—all in one place. Whether it's discussions about planning, parks, facilities, environmental initiatives, or road projects, multiple teams come together to listen to and collaborate with the community in a way that is accessible and meaningful.

Our place-based engagement model was shaped by community feedback—a direct response to residents telling us they want to share their insights and priorities in a time and place convenient to them. By embedding this approach into our engagement practices, we gain a deeper understanding of community goals and work across Council departments, and where possible, with other government agencies, to deliver more cohesive, locally responsive services and projects.

## Closing the loop

Once we have sought and received feedback from the community and made a decision, it is important to go back to our community and explain the nature of feedback we received and how it was used to come to a decision. The reason this is so important is that often there are many perspectives and ideas put forward from our community on any specific issue. We must weigh up this community input and use it to take a course of action. Naturally, not everyone will agree with our decisions, however communicating how feedback was used provides greater transparency and also acknowledges the efforts of those who provided feedback.

Depending on the project we aim to report back on engagement outcomes by updating the Your Voice, Our Coast project pages, publishing engagement reports or snapshots, and contacting participants and registered stakeholders with the outcomes. An overview of engagement outcomes is also included in reports for Council meetings.

### **Balanced decision making**

We do our best to plan and deliver services to meet the needs and aspirations of our community. Alongside community feedback, we also need to consider technical and environmental constraints, cost, safety and sustainability when making decisions.

# Roles and responsibilities



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your ideation.

Activation (Day) 15 16 17 18  
20 19  
Signage 33 34  
35 36

Activation (Night) 21 22  
23 24  
Public Toilets 37 38  
41 40 39

Graffiti and Murals 25 26  
27 28  
Bins 42 43  
44 45 46

Footpaths 29 30  
31 32  
CCTV Surveillance 47 48  
49

Maintenance 50 51  
53 52

54 55

56 57

58 59

SMILE YOUR  
ON CAMERA

Our key plans are guided by our community, in particular our Community Strategic Plan. This document is a ten-year plan that captures community aspirations and social, economic and environmental priorities. The below table outlines how the Mayor, Councillors, the CEO and staff will work together to ensure we engage on this important plan and activities under our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

Role	Responsibilities
<b>Mayor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act as the spokesperson for Council to promote engagement on key strategic plans, including developing the Community Strategic Plan.</li> <li>Together with the Chief Executive Officer, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between Council and the local community.</li> <li>Promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Mayor and Councillors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote engagement on key strategic plans, including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the Community Strategic Plan. Participate in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, including the Community Strategic Plan.</li> <li>Endorse the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. Participate in community engagement activities alongside Council staff, while observing the Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents and endorsement by the elected Council.</li> <li>Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the Integrated Planning and Reporting process in a meaningful way.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with and support the Chief Executive Officer in the development of the strategy and plans to engage the community.</li> <li>Implement the Community Engagement Strategy and provide timely advice to the Chief Executive Officer on community views.</li> </ul>

Source: Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook 2021, NSW Office of Local Government



## Councillors' role in Community Engagement

As elected representatives, Councillors play a vital role in shaping the future of the Central Coast, ensuring that the voices of our diverse community are heard, valued, and reflected in Council's strategic direction. Engagement isn't just a process—it's the foundation of good governance, and Councillors are at the heart of that connection between the community and Council decision-making.

A key responsibility of Councillors is to promote and actively support community engagement on major strategic plans, including the development of the Community Strategic Plan—the community's vision for the future. This plan is not just a document; it's a roadmap shaped by the aspirations, concerns, and priorities of the people who live, work, and invest in the Central Coast. By participating in engagement activities, Councillors help ensure that this vision is guided by genuine community input.

Councillors also contribute to the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents, working alongside staff to align Council's actions with the long-term needs of the region. By endorsing the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community, Councillors act as custodians of this vision, ensuring that it is upheld and implemented effectively.

Beyond policy and planning, Councillors are committed to being visible, accessible, and engaged. By attending community forums, local events, and consultation sessions, they listen directly to residents' experiences, concerns, and ideas, strengthening the relationship between Council and the community.

By fostering an open and participatory approach, Councillors help bridge the gap between community aspirations and Council's actions, ensuring that engagement is not just a requirement—but a meaningful and impactful process that shapes the future of our region.

# Central Coast Councillors



Lawrie McKinna  
Mayor  
East Gosford Ward



Doug Eaton OAM  
Deputy Mayor  
Budgewoi Ward

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## Budgewoi Ward



Helen Crowley  
Councillor



John Moulard  
Councillor

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## Gosford East Ward



Sharon Walsh  
Councillor



Jared Wright  
Councillor

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## Gosford West Ward



Trent McWaide  
Councillor



Belinda Neal  
Councillor



Jane Smith  
Councillor

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## The Entrance Ward



Margot Castles  
Councillor



Corrine Lamont  
Councillor



Rachel Stanton  
Councillor

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## Wyong Ward



Kyla Daniels  
Councillor



Kyle MacGregor  
Councillor



John McNamara  
Councillor

# Our focus areas



## Our focus areas

We have developed key areas we will focus on in the next four years:

### **Timely engagement:**

- continue to engage with the community effectively at the right time, and where there is room for influence
- avoid engagement prior to the December and January holiday period, where possible
- incorporate community feedback where feasible.

### **Internal collaboration and processes:**

- use internal working groups, and define project scopes and objectives
- collaborate with experts and cross-functional teams
- continue to integrate websites and social media platforms to provide a central source of information
- Regular monitoring and updating of internal processes and procedures to ensure best practice.

### **Updating communication and engagement channels:**

- explore new ways, both virtual and offline, to improve community engagement and adapt to changing community needs to provide a central source of information.

### **Closing the feedback loop:**

- provide regular updates and information on how community input influenced decision-making
- provide updates to stakeholders as projects, plans and strategies progress, including when matters go to Council, and when adopted.

### **Leadership and organisational culture:**

- support leaders in fostering a culture of engagement and support staff to deliver quality engagement across our teams.

### **External partnerships:**

- collaborate with neighbouring councils and government agencies, and partner with them to engage on shared projects.

### **Diverse approaches:**

- continue to use a variety of engagement methods and employ diverse approaches to ensure engagement is inclusive and accessible.

### **First Nations:**

- Develop a First Nations Engagement Framework, which is also a commitment in our First Nations Accord.

### **Customer service reviews:**

- continue to conduct regular customer experience research, to understand satisfaction levels and pain points among participants in various engagement activities.

### **Staff training and skill development:**

- provide staff with up-to-date tools, resources and training to enhance community engagement skills, and reward staff achievement.

### **Place-based engagement:**

- continue to deliver place-based engagement to understand the specific goals, aspirations and priorities of local communities to inform planning and service delivery.

### **Evaluation and continuous improvement:**

- employ a variety of methods for the community and our staff to reflect and report on engagement experiences.
- use feedback to evaluate engagement activities and outcomes to inform how we can keep improving.
- carry out ongoing research to understand barriers to the community's ability or desire to engage with us.

# Measuring the success of engagement



Central Coast Council

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## Measuring the success of engagement

We measure the success of engagement by asking ourselves these questions:



**Were activities and outcomes aligned with the objectives and principles of this strategy, as well as the specific objectives in our project-based engagement plans?**



**Were all those affected by a decision reached and given the opportunity to have their say?**



**Was the feedback we received relevant, and were we clear in what we were asking and why?**



**What feedback did we receive from the community about their engagement experience?**



**Were participation numbers sufficient in the context of the project?**



**Were participants informed of the outcome?**

Central  
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