

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting

Team Name:	Communication and Engagement Advisory Group		
Date:	20 September 2023	Time:	5:00pm - 6:30pm
Chairperson:	Cr Leah Anderson	Venue:	Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom
		Minutes:	Elizabeth Akerman/Emily Livens
Purpose of Meeting:	To provide advice and guidance on communications and engagement projects		
File:	PSC2023-03041		

Attendance

Councillor Anderson Port Stephens Council	Councillor Wells Port Stephens Council	Cassandra Schmitzer Community representative	Paul Baxter Community representative
Lauren Whitelaw Community representative	Angela Peace Community representative	William (Bill) Doran Community representative	Tanya Martin Community representative
Ben van der Wijngaart Community representative	Casey Freeman Community representative	Greg Brown Community representative	Emily Livens Port Stephens Council
Kelly Hammond Community representative	Ros Armstrong Community representative	Elizabeth Akerman Port Stephens Council	

The following guests are invited to attend:

Janelle Gardner Port Stephens Council			
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Apologies

Councillor Kafer
Port Stephens Council

Greg Brown
Community representative

Margarete Ritchie
Community representative

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
1.0	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES				
1.1	Acknowledgement of country and welcome	2 mins	Chairperson	RECORD – Welcome and acknowledgement of Country undertaken. Housekeeping outlined including keeping the meeting on time, location of amenities and emergency exits.	Nil
1.2	Warm up	10 mins	Everybody	RECORD – The attendees provided their 'life highlight' since the last meeting.	Nil
2.0	FEEDBACK – COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLANNING				
2.1	Feedback from previous meeting	5 mins	Emily Livens	RECORD – We received feedback about how we would address the groups 'current frustrations' recorded at the previous meeting. These were printed out to help keep them front of mind when discussing communication and engagement planning for projects that will be brought to the group. RECORD – We received feedback that Council staff did talk a lot at the inaugural meeting but this was more about setting the scene and providing context and background. RECORD – Ros wanted process clarification for CX staff when transferring calls to voice mail.	Nil
2.2	Local Housing Strategy Review Presentation	10 mins	Emily Livens	RECORD – An overview of the context associated with the Local Housing Strategy Review and the	Nil

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
				associated draft communications and engagement plan was presented to the group.	
	Local Housing Strategy Review Communications and Engagement Plan	60 mins	Emily Livens	RECORD – Some of the points of the group discussion key points of the group discussion are included below: General group consensus regarding draft approach phasing and targeted engagement for phase 2; General group consensus that phase 2 of the Local Housing Strategy Review was set at ‘involve’ level; Include in the targeted engagement stakeholders from Sports Councils, Tenancy support groups, Housing Advocacy Groups, Housing providers, health and aged care, Defence, Workers; specific community cohorts etc not just developers and real estate agents. Include clear information around how we propose to meet the state government targets for increased population and increased housing – must include different housing types; gap analysis between existing housing strategy; challenges and opportunities and also the implications if we do not meet the targets. Group discussion around enabling general community representation at the proposed forum during phase 2 resulted in general group support for an EOI process to help enable a cross section of interested people to attend the forum not just community group representatives.	To be included where possible into the draft Local Housing Strategy Review communication and engagement plan By 16/10/2023 By 25/09/2023 Done

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
				ACTION: • Council staff to update the stakeholder listing and circulate to CEAG member (excluding private details) for value add. • Update key messaging in the plan to include that consideration will be given to infrastructure upgrades is housing increases • Undertake an EOI to attract general community representation for the Housing forum	From 16/10/2023
2.2	Night at the Beach	15 mins	Group	RECORD – Feedback from the Night at the Beach event from the group was that it was a fabulous event and well attended. Some future improvement suggestions were: • don't believe initial flyer was needed • better promotion of the courtesy bus was needed ACTION: • Report feedback to our Events team.	18 October 2023
2.3	Coastal Management Program Public Exhibition			RECORD – Time didn't permit. Item moved to next meeting.	
2.4	Smart Parking			RECORD – Time didn't permit. Item moved to next meeting.	

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
3.0	OTHER MATTERS				
3.1	Meeting format discussion	5 mins	Cr Anderson Emily Livens	RECORD – Suggest longer meetings to allow us to get through the agenda. Also, suggest pre-reading options with project pre-amble still to be conducted at meeting. ACTION: • Next meeting to be scheduled for 5-7pm	
3.2	Thank you, next meeting and close	2 mins	Chairperson	RECORD - Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 18 October.	

MEETING CLOSED AT: 6:55pm

NEXT MEETINGS

Date: 18 October 2023

Time: 5:00pm

Venue: Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom

ATTACHMENT 1 – GROUP EXPECTATIONS

Group expectations
Create consultative processes for the community
Improve community confidence in Council
A better understanding of community expectations and needs
A better understanding of why decisions are made
More understanding of council roles
A better understanding of how Council connects with community
Increase community engagement
Leads to informed decision making
Increased community participation in engagement, surveys, drop-ins, etc.
Knowing that the community is being heard
Influence strategic outcomes
Present views of my community about the way council communicates and engages with them
Better engagement of the community in council decisions
Improved quality of community voice during engagement strategies
Ensure that Council understands the importance of effective communication
Present the interests and concerns of our community
A more diverse range of age, demographic, culture etc. engaged in communicating with Council
Engagement strategies reach a broader audience (age, socio-economic etc.)
Contribute to the planning through my own experience, expertise, and connections
Provide knowledge and experience
A higher community engagement score about Council's communication and engagement
Improved community sentiment toward engagement strategies

Communications & Engagement

Advisory Group

20 September 2023

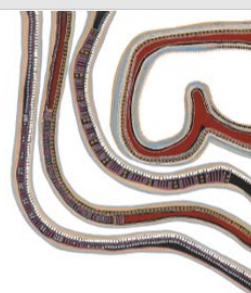


1

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Worimi as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens.

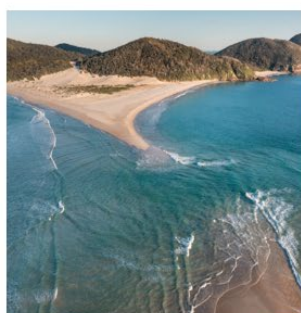
May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.



2

It's always good to get to know each other more!

What's a life highlight since the last meeting?



3

Local Housing Strategy Review



4

Local Housing Strategy Review

- Housing crisis
- Growing employment sectors, domestic tourism growth and increased remote working opportunities
- Local business who struggle to attract workers particularly in the aged care, hospitality and health sectors.
- NSW Government identified that will need to find housing for an additional 20,000 residents over the next 20 years.
- Limited opportunity for greenfield development, housing prices rising and low rental vacancies



5

Communications and engagement objectives



Use existing community engagement outcomes to inform the strategy review.



Increase awareness of State Government housing targets, economic growth and the need to diversify housing types across Port Stephens.



Provide an ongoing conversation with residents and business on the social and economic impacts of housing supply, diversity and affordability.



Seek stakeholder and community feedback on the proposed direction for housing in Port Stephens.



6

Communications and engagement phases

Phase 0 – Existing strategy engagement outcomes

Phase 1 – Council engagement

Phase 2 – Target engagement and community awareness

Phase 3 – Public exhibition

Phase 4 – Closeout



7

Engagement level

IAP2 Spectrum Engagement level	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Inform		✓		✓
Consult			✓	
Involve		✓		
Collaborate Let's work together	✓			



8

Phase 2 – Targeted engagement

IAP2 - Involve

Stakeholders:

- Councillors
- Developers
- Real estates agents
- Business owners
- Community group reps
- Young leaders
- Council advisory group reps

October – December 2023

9

Phase 2 – Targeted engagement

IAP2 - Involve

Communication methods:

- Presentations to select community groups and organisations
- Small Business Month Lunch
- Your Business electronic newsletter
- Direct email

Engagement methods:

- Forum
- Post forum survey

10

Phase 2 – Community awareness

IAP2 - Inform

Stakeholders
Businesses
Residents

October – December 2023

Communication methods

- Media release
- Your Port article
- Web page
- Print advertising
- News of the Area editorial
- Ward communications
- Community catch ups
- Social media

11

Happy birthday
Kelly!



12

Night at the beach



13

Thank you!



14

Communication & Engagement Strategy

Strategic Priority 1: Community Engagement

Plan and deliver meaningful community engagement that enables community participation and builds trust in Council decision making

Strategic Priority 2: Community Communications

Deliver timely, creative and transparent internal and external communications that connects our stories, our people and our place.

Strategic Priority 3: Media and Public Relations

Build trust and reputation through proactive, consistent and trustworthy information that reasons to issues and community priorities.



Strategic Priority

1. Community Engagement

Examples:

- Communication and Engagement Advisory Group
- Engagement opportunities that enable more time for considered thought and contribution.
- Engagement opportunities consider place, diversity and accessibility
- Reporting back to the community connecting feedback and decision making.
- Use technology to increase participation and a diversity of voices.
- Build on the use of social media as a tool for feedback.



7

IAP2 Spectrum



Different projects can use different parts of the Spectrum for different phases.



Communications and Engagement process

1. Understand the project
2. Identify what we need to engage on (what's negotiable and non-negotiable)
3. Understand the stakeholders
4. Identify the purpose of engagement
5. Identify level of influence (IAP2 Spectrum)
6. Determine communication and engagement methods
7. Determine schedule and budget
8. Deliver and monitor engagement
9. Report on engagement findings
10. Evaluate engagement

Communications and Engagement Plan
Communications and Engagement Report



ATTACHMENT 3 – CURRENT FRUSTRATIONS EXPERIENCED

Current frustrations
First line of communication is the front desk – at times unhelpful and frustrating
When council staff come to community meetings they must know the topic and be able to talk to it
Dislike post notes
Lack of access to feedback after decisions
Closing the loop on engagement strategies
Not knowing until the wheels are already in motion
Report it back to councillors and the community
Given assurance that someone will get back to you and they don't
Often missed out in regards to community consultation e.g. only found out about Karuah Place once it won an award
Selective/partial dissemination of information
Accessing established community groups during engagement sports clubs, residents, OOSH, businesses
Feel disengaged in Fern Bay, we can be forgotten
Vulnerable and marginalised groups not consistently engaged
Lack of transparency
Lack of transparency in all areas - erodes community trust
Take more time to obtain feedback after communicating/engaging
People affected by the decision are not always engaged
The perception that the loudest voice has swayed Council
Discussions with key stakeholders
Closed-question surveys - are not conducive to open discussion
The rate rises community session – was a tick the box session
Lack of big picture future casting consultation e.g. how do we want our community in 20 years time
Spend more time out in the community – listening and communicating
Sufficient time to put input into complex plans and projects
Pre cooked solutions – communities fight solutions rather than participate in their creation