

Griffith City Council  
*Community Engagement Strategy*



# Message from the Mayor

Griffith City Council's Community Engagement Strategy has been developed to ensure that those who live and work in the LGA are able to contribute to the development of the Community Strategic Plan – Growing Griffith 2030.

Through GG2030 the community expressed a desire to be further involved in the development of the City and decision making.

This strategy aims to increase levels of engagement, and we are committed to having an open, honest, truthful and respectful conversation with members of the community.

Griffith would not be where it is today without the contributions and support of our great community. Griffith City Council would like to ensure everyone has equal say in the future of our City and this document outlines ways in which we can do that.

I look forward to working with you all in the future.

Sincerely,



**JOHN DAL BROI**  
**MAYOR**



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# what is community engagement?

Community Engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with organisations, stakeholders and the community to shape the decisions or actions of the members of our City in relation to challenges, opportunities or outcomes.

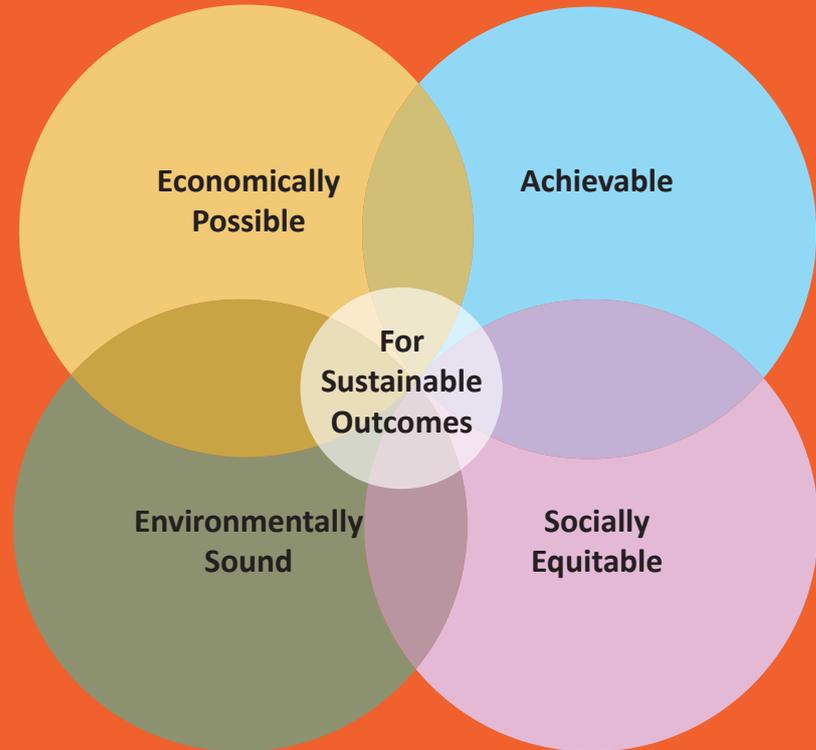
Community Engagement includes all aspects of identifying challenges and opportunities, developing alternatives and making decisions.



# why engage?

The Griffith Community has a strong voice and Council's Community Engagement Strategy provides an essential link between Councillors, Council Staff and the community to ensure those voices are heard. This Strategy aims to:

- Gauge the needs of the Community by ensuring residents are given equal opportunity to be included, informed and contribute
- Reduce misinformation and/or miscommunication
- Gather ideas and input from the community
- Make decisions that will strengthen and improve the social fabric of the community
- Reinforce community ownership in the decision making process
- Enable Council to make sustainable decisions
- Enable Council to be transparent and equitable in all decisions



# when will we engage?

Community engagement and consultation can take place at any time of the year depending on Council's work program. Each time there is a project to be developed or a decision to be made there is an opportunity for community consultation and feedback.

Early notice of emerging issues puts Council in a better position to respond in a proactive way.

In the engagement planning process, consideration is given to the complexity of the decision and the optimal time needed for people to respond. Whilst the Local Government Act 1999 sets out

minimum requirements for some specific consultations, each engagement process is considered on its individual basis and merit.

To ensure a successful consultation, careful consideration is given to the appropriate tools and timing for the project or decision.

Attention is given to things like community and stakeholder interest, political sensitivity, opportunities for partnerships, the level of social, economic and environmental impact, legislative requirements, time, resource and monetary constraints.

# how will we engage?

## Example Tools

		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Participation Goal	Goal	One way communication to provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has already happened.	Two way communication designed to obtain feedback on ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform our decision making.	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to our decision making.	Working together to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions for joint decision making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the community.
Our Promise	Council's Approach	We will share information about a decision or direction.	We will explore options, gain feedback and an understanding of your concerns and preferences.	We will involve you in the process so your ideas, concerns and aspirations are reflected in the alternatives developed or the final decision.	We will collaborate with you so your advice, innovation and recommendations are included in the final decision that we make together.	We will implement what you decide.
	Role of Stakeholder/Community	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Decide



we will...

## **Inform**

There are times when stakeholders and the community need to receive information to gain a better understanding of an issue or understand why a decision has been made. 'Inform' is the appropriate level of engagement needed to provide information about a decision or outcome, who it was made by and what the impact on stakeholders and the community will be. For example, a fact sheet or letter is sent to stakeholders and the community.

## **Consult**

'Consult' is the appropriate level of engagement when input, views or feedback is sought from the community to better inform a decision-making process, or to help inform the direction of a proposed plan or project. 'Consult' is selected when Council asks and listens to the community about ideas to improve something, to obtain views on a particular

proposal, understand what would happen if Council made a certain decision, or when a number of options are provided and which option is preferred. For example, providing feedback on a draft plan to upgrade a nearby park.

## **Involve**

'Involve' is the appropriate level of engagement when local input is required to identify issues early and inform Council's planning process. This level of engagement is selected when Council wants to include the community early in the planning process to ensure all concerns and aspirations are both heard and understood. For example, the community are engaged to help identify issues and solutions to create a CBD Strategy. This initial input and local knowledge is used to inform the development of the Strategy, which is then presented for further feedback before being finalised.



## **Collaborate**

‘Collaborate’ is the appropriate level of engagement when Council or staff mutually share the decision-making with various levels of government, community groups, key stakeholders or members of the public. ‘Collaborate’ is selected where issues and solutions are unclear and Council works with equal power and partnership to find solutions that lead to an agreed outcome. For example, Council works closely with and supports a local ‘Neighbourhood Watch Group’ to identify local safety issues. We work together to gather local knowledge, evidence and statistics to better understand the issues and to develop a Crime Prevention Plan to address our shared responsibility for community safety.

## **Empower**

‘Empower’ is Council’s promise is to ‘implement what you decide’. ‘Empower’

is selected when the community and stakeholders are provided with the skills, information, authority and resources in order to make the final decision. Under the Local Government Act 1993, the only decision-making power which is entirely placed in the hands of the public is that of electing Council Members and the Mayor every four years.

## **Role of the Community and Stakeholders**

The role of the community/stakeholders is to listen, contribute, participate and partner with other stakeholders and Council to decide on outcomes that are socially and economically viable and provide sustainable outcomes for the whole community. For example in the planning for a new cemetery all cultural beliefs and burial rights should be heard and included in the final project plan for a cemetery.

# who will we engage with?

Council, will make every effort that all viewpoints are considered and will involve community groups and individuals, including those who can be difficult to reach. This includes:

- Children
- Young people
- People with disabilities and/or special needs
- Women
- LGBTIQ - (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ))
- Socially disadvantaged
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse populations
- People who are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background
- Families
- Single parents
- Community groups
- Villages
- Stakeholders
- Councillors
- Council Staff

# our community



# methods of engagement

Community engagement is about ensuring that the community has an opportunity to be involved in the decisions made by Council. The Community Engagement Toolkit provides step-by-step practical

- Online
- Community Opinion Group
- Council newsletter/Community Catch-up
- Social media
- Councillors
- Community groups
- Focus groups
- Council Committees and Action Groups
- Advertising across print, television and radio
- Letterbox drop

advice for staff on how to select and use the most appropriate tools for a Griffith City Council engagement.

These include:

- Letter
- Petition
- Survey
- Site visits
- Personal Briefings
- Media Release
- Email
- Telephone
- Community events
- Community Indicators and profiling data



# councillors and staff

Community engagement is about ensuring that the community has an opportunity to be involved in the decisions made by Council.

A Councillor's role in this is to participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider these views when making a decision.

Engaging with the community provides the Councillors with valuable input, allows them to understand the community's position on issues and make sure their constituents are properly represented when Council make resolutions which will impact the community.

The role of Council staff in community engagement is to organise and facilitate discussion, record, provide feedback, evaluate the engagement which has been undertaken and consider the feedback of the community when making recommendations to Council.

Both Councillors and Council staff are encouraged to not direct or dominate discussions, or dismiss the input provided by the community. Councillors and staff should encourage open, honest and respectful communication.

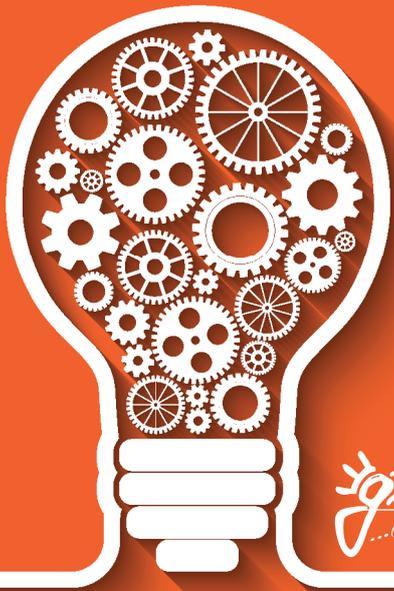
# *feedback on this strategy*

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas about the Community Engagement Strategy, we would like to hear from you!

You can contact us on 02 6962 8100 or email [admin@griffith.com.au](mailto:admin@griffith.com.au)



*This document was produced by Griffith City Council, May 2016*



*Griffith* city council   
...love the lifestyle...