

WHAT WE MAKE IT

DRAFT

ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

This document provides an overview of
how and why the City of Karratha engages
with its community and stakeholders





Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Karratha acknowledges the Aboriginal people throughout this vast land and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

WARNING: This document may have pictures or mentions of people who have passed away.

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ABOUT THESE ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

We are striving to work together with our community and stakeholders to achieve our shared vision for the City of Karratha to be:

Australia's
most liveable
regional city.
**THE PLACE WE ARE
PROUD TO CALL HOME.**

These Engagement Guidelines were created after listening to people from our community, our own staff, and learning from best practices led by the *Engagement Institute*. These guidelines explain:

- **What** we mean by the term 'engagement'
- **Who** we engage with
- **Why** we engage and why your voice matters
- **What** the City's Engagement Framework includes
- **When** we engage
- **How** we plan and conduct engagement
- **How** we can all play a part in making our City better

Why do we need Engagement Guidelines?

Our community includes people from diverse backgrounds. Each of our towns is unique, and people residing in each place have different experiences. Each service, program, and project the City delivers is also different. This is why our engagement can look different each time, from small projects that only involve a small number of stakeholders, to big citywide plans that impact everyone in our community.

No matter the size, we want to make sure that anyone who may be affected by a decision has clear information and the chance to be heard.

By listening, sharing, and working together, we can build a future that reflects the ideas, needs, and hopes of everyone who lives in, works in, and visits the City of Karratha.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE TERM ‘ENGAGEMENT’?

Engagement is how the City of Karratha informs, encourages participation, listens to, and works with our community and stakeholders to make decisions and create better outcomes for everyone.

It can include:

- Sharing clear and useful information
- Asking for feedback and ideas
- Involving people in planning
- Working together to find solutions
- Letting the community help decide what happens

In short, engagement means making sure you always have the information you need, and when decisions are going to impact you, finding ways to hear your voice, because better decisions can be made by the City when our community has a voice.

Who do we Engage with?

At different points in time and for a variety of purposes, the City will engage with members of its community and stakeholders.

Who is the Community?

When we say community, we mean people who share something in common, such as:

- Where they live (like a suburb or town),
- What they care about (like sport, the environment, the arts), or
- A shared identity (like a cultural background, language group, or a stage of life).

A community can be large or small, and people might know each other well or just be connected by shared goals or interests.

Who are Stakeholders?

Stakeholders are people, groups, or organisations who are affected by, interested in, or can influence a decision the City makes. This could include:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Traditional Owners
- Local clubs
- Tourists and Visitors
- Community Organisations and Not-For-Profit Organisations
- Non-residential Workers – commonly referred to as FIFO workers
- Educational Institutions
- State and Federal Government Agencies
- Legal and Regulatory Bodies
- City of Karratha staff.

Sometimes stakeholders are part of the community, and sometimes they're not. If the topic or issue is something they have a role in, like the state government, they will also be informed or consulted to help inform a City project or decision.

WHY DO WE CONDUCT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES?

Because we believe good decisions start with listening. We ask you to share your experiences and ideas to learn what our community needs. Together, we can make the roles of local government work better for everyone.

These are the roles of the City of Karratha



Deliver

Play a lead role in providing services, programs, facilities, and infrastructure to meet community needs.



Empower

Facilitate and support others to deliver services and programs to the community.



Regulate

Regulate particular planning and public health matters (e.g., licensing and monitoring food premises), local laws, the appropriateness and safety of new buildings, and the use of land to ensure compliance and maintain community standards.



Partner

Collaborate and build partnerships with others to achieve shared goals and deliver community outcomes.



Advocate

Advocate on behalf of the community to influence decisions and secure resources to meet the needs of the community.

WHAT IS THE ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK?

The Engagement Framework is the City of Karratha's way of improving how we work with our community and stakeholders.

From October to December 2024, we asked questions, listened to people, and did research to build a strong foundation for how we engage.

We started with three simple questions:

1. What are we doing now?
2. What do we want to do better?
3. How will we get there?



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What are we doing now?

You told us that when we listen to each other and work together, we create better outcomes for our towns, communities, and everyone who lives, works, or visits here.

Here's a summary of the benefits of engagement that members of our community and staff told us about.

Better Decisions

When Council decisions are shaped by community and stakeholder feedback, the outcomes are more useful, equitable, and suited to local needs.

Builds Trust

When the City listens, shares honestly, and includes community and stakeholders in decision-making, it shows we value the community. This builds trust and improves communication, especially with people who may have felt left out in the past.

Pride and Involvement

Engagement helps people feel connected to their local area. When people participate in decision-making, they feel included, respected, and proud of where they live, which supports a stronger sense of belonging and overall wellbeing.

Supports Local Growth

When the community feels connected, local businesses benefit too. A strong, engaged community attracts new people, supports tourism, and encourages long-term residents to stay.

What do we want to do better?

You told us the City of Karratha currently talks to community members and stakeholders in several ways, such as phone calls, surveys and workshops.

You also told us that good engagement is about more than just talking. It is also about doing it well and making sure any feedback is considered when decisions are being made.

Here are some of the engagement challenges we need to keep in mind to help us improve our engagement efforts:

- **Engagement takes time** – good engagement needs planning and time
- **Relationships are important** – our staff need to invest time and energy into building relationships with their community and stakeholders to build trust. Engagement is not just about collecting answers to questions
- **Not everyone agrees** – sometimes, Council decisions may differ from what some people want, and we need to handle this openly and respectfully
- **Quiet voices matter** – we need to work harder to include those who don't always speak up or are harder to reach, and not only listen to the loudest voices
- **Too much engagement can be tiring** – asking for feedback too often or at the wrong times can cause people to switch off, this is called engagement fatigue
- **Cultural respect is essential** – we need to make sure our engagement is culturally appropriate and sensitive and when we don't get this right, keep learning and keep getting better
- **Not everyone is online** – so we need to keep using different formats to share information and gather feedback
- **Balancing roles is hard** – City staff must be conscious of remaining neutral while performing their role for the City and be transparent in communicating both the views of their organisation and their community
- **We must close the loop** – if we don't explain how feedback was used, or why decisions were made, people might feel like their input didn't matter. When people feel like their input isn't effective, they will stop participating in local government decision-making. This is another form of engagement fatigue that we want to reduce



Photo credit: Joseph Penipe

How will we get there?

The Engagement Framework outlines ‘how we will get there’ and has four main parts:

1. **Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy** – This is Council’s formal and principle-led commitment to engaging with our community and stakeholders to inform Council decisions.
2. **Engagement Guidelines** – This document is our promise to you, explaining how and why we engage.
3. **Engagement Toolkit** – These are the tools and templates staff use to plan, run, and review engagement activities.
4. **Engagement Implementation Plan** – This is our 4-year plan, which aligns with the Council Plan, for putting engagement into action and tracking how we improve over time.

Together, these parts will help us create inclusive, and effective engagement that supports better decisions for our community.

City of Karratha Engagement Framework



What does a Principle-led Commitment to Engagement Mean?

The best way to improve how we engage with our community and stakeholders is to make sure all of our engagement activities are guided by principles.

These are the principles we are committed to:

1. Timely, Responsive and Adaptable

The City will start engagement early so our community and stakeholders can help shape decisions. When this isn't possible, we will make sure we keep everyone informed. We will adapt engagement plans to respond to community and stakeholder needs and we will avoid conducting engagement when participation is likely to be low.

2. Inclusive, Equitable and Culturally Respectful

Everyone should be able to take part, no matter their background, ability, language, or circumstances. We try to remove barriers so we can hear all voices. We respect diverse needs, including those of our Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples.

3. Transparent, Honest and Ethical

The City will be clear about what the community can influence and will explain how feedback has shaped outcomes. All engagement will be equitable, honest, and easy to understand.

4. Impartial, Balanced and Informed

Everyone will get clear, accurate information. Decisions will be based on facts and community input – not personal bias.

5. Leadership and Organisational Commitment

City leaders will support and model good engagement practice across the organisation, making it a core part of how we make decisions.

6. Learning, Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The City will keep learning, keep trying new ways to engage, and keep improving how it engages with the community over time.

For more information about the City's commitment to these Engagement Principles, see the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy CS24 karratha.wa.gov.au/council/plans-publications-and-policies/policies



WHEN DO WE ENGAGE?

Sometimes, the law says we must engage with our community.

For example, we will always consult you when:

- We create or update our **4-year Council Plan**
- There are changes to **local laws** – like rules around dog ownership
- We assess **planning applications** or major development proposals

But even when it's **not required** by law, the City may still choose to engage — especially when a decision is complex, has the potential for wide or deep impact, or affects the future of our towns.

We promise to engage in a way that is meaningful, timely, and suited to the scale of the decision.



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When the City may Pause Engagement

Sometimes we need to **delay** engagement out of respect or to ensure everyone has a fair chance to take part. These times may include:

- **Public holidays**
- **Aboriginal lore/law time**
- **Sorry business** – mourning before and after a funeral
- **Significant cultural or religious events**, as advised by the community
- The **end-of-year break** between the last and first Council meetings of the year
- The **election care-taker period** – when Council candidates are campaigning before a local government election

If there's a decision that can't wait and we don't have time to engage, we will use trusted community data already collected and stored in our **Knowledge Bank**. We will always explain why engagement didn't happen and what information we used to decide an outcome.

What is the Knowledge Bank?

The City's **Knowledge Bank** is a secure internal digital library where we store feedback and data from past engagement activities. It helps us learn from what the community has already told us and can reduce the need for repeated engagement:

- especially when time is tight,
- new engagement isn't possible, or
- we recognise segments of our community are experiencing engagement fatigue.





HOW DO WE PLAN AND CONDUCT ENGAGEMENT?

Our **Engagement Process** guides how we plan and conduct engagement with our community and stakeholders.

Plan

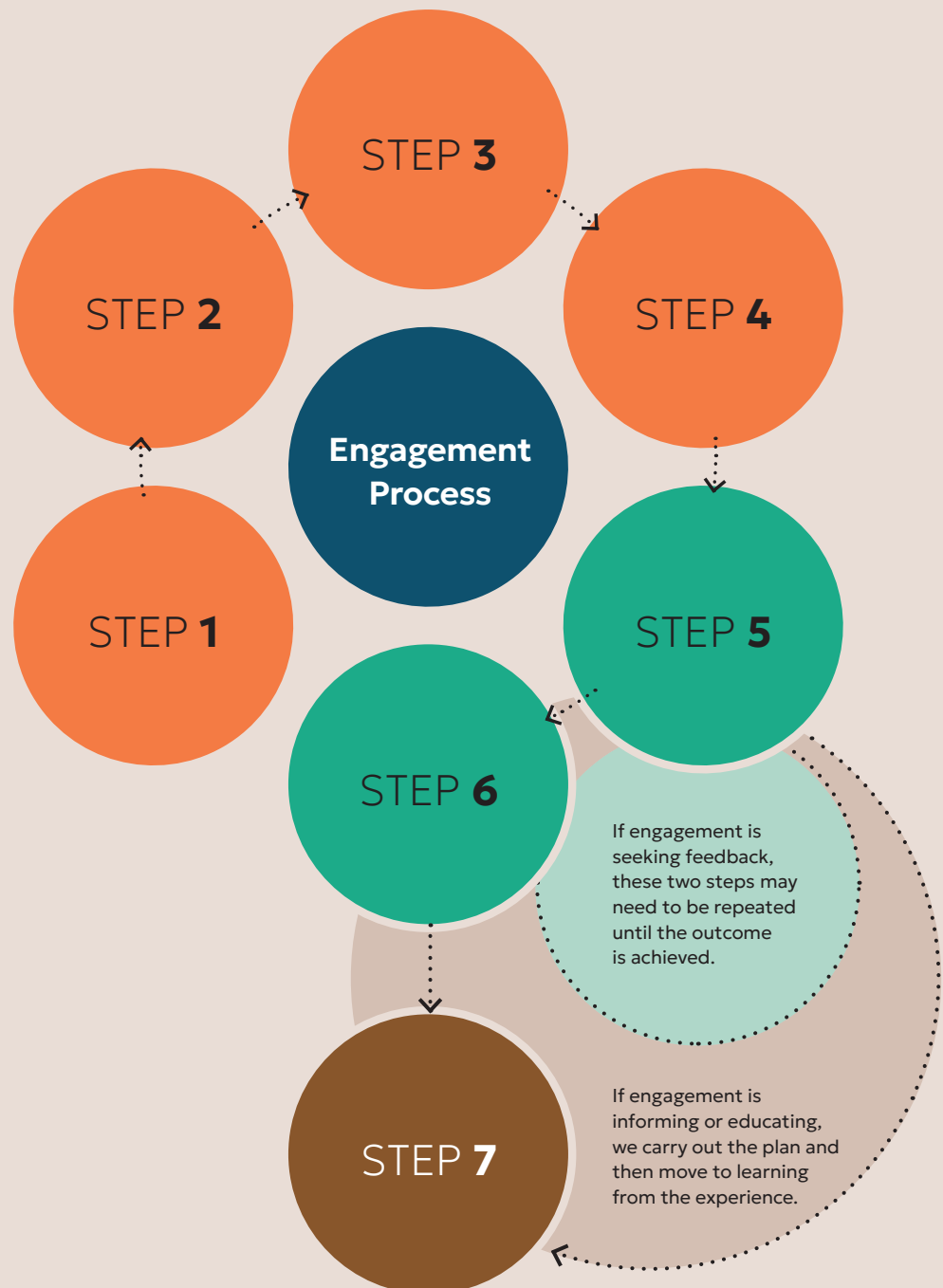
- STEP 1**
Be Clear About the Purpose of the Engagement and Communication Activities
- STEP 2**
Understand Who is Affected and How to Communicate with and Involve them
- STEP 3**
Get Ready by Making Sure we have Everything we Need to Engage Well
- STEP 4**
Make a Formal Plan

Deliver

- STEP 5**
Carry Out the Plan and Adjust as Needed
- STEP 6**
Close the Loop by Sharing What we Heard and How we Used Your Feedback

Improve

- STEP 7**
Learn from the Experience And Keep Getting Better



STEP 1

Be Clear About the Purpose of the Engagement and Communication Activities

Before we ask for your input, we make sure we're clear on a few important things. This helps you understand what the decision is about and how your voice can shape it.



We start by asking:

What is the decision that needs to be made or outcome that needs to be achieved?

What part of this decision or outcome can the community help shape?

How much influence can our community have on the decision or outcome?

How will we know if we have been successful in our engagement efforts?

By starting with these questions, we can:

- Be clear in our communications
- Make sure we consider your rights and follow any laws that apply
- Understand the level of participation we are trying to achieve. For example: encouraging participation in a service or program, asking for feedback, or helping us make a decision

This sets clear expectations from the beginning, so we all understand our roles in the engagement process.

STEP 2

Understand Who is Affected and How to Communicate with and Involve them

We want to make sure the right people are part of the conversation, and that everyone has a fair chance to participate. This means knowing who is affected by a decision, *how* they're affected, and *how* to reach them in ways that work. This also applies when we are only seeking to inform or educate our *community* about something.

We take the time to find out:

- Who will be impacted by this information or decision?
- Who might be interested in the topic?
- Who has knowledge or experience that could help?

We use existing information and, if needed, do extra research to make sure we're not missing anyone.

Not everyone is affected the same way, so we consider:

- The **type** of impact – Is it financial, cultural, environmental?
- The **level** of impact – Is it big or small? Long or short term?

Sometimes, we check this with people in the community to make sure we've got it right.



We also want everyone we've identified to be able to take part. This means:

- Finding out if there are **barriers** – like language, literacy, location, digital access, cultural needs, or feelings of distrust
- Finding out if there are any special considerations we need to make if topics are sensitive or vulnerable members of our community need to be involved

If there are barriers, we **adjust** the engagement approach – such as providing translated materials, easy read formats or in-person meetings.

We try to choose engagement methods that suit and consider:

- People's availability
- How they prefer to be involved
- What support they might need to take part

The better we understand this, the more effective our engagement will be.

We always explain:

- What we're asking people to help with or act on
- What part of the decision can be influenced by community and stakeholders
- The information needed to participate in a meaningful way
- What the City's priorities and responsibilities are

This helps us build a shared understanding of the engagement process and ensures expectations from the process are realistic.

STEP 3

Get Ready by Making Sure we have Everything we Need to Engage Well

To make engagement meaningful, we need the right tools, the right people with the right skills, and enough time. Before starting, we plan carefully to make sure we're properly prepared to listen to you and act on what we hear.

When we invest properly in resources, skills, and time, it shows that we value your input and want to make it count.



STEP 4

Make a Formal Plan

Once we've figured out what the engagement purpose is, who's involved and how it will be done, we write it all down. This helps keep things clear, on track, and fairer for everyone involved.



Sometimes, things don't go as planned

There may be:

- Limited time;
- Low interest from our *community* in being involved; or
- Unexpected *community* concerns

We make sure we consider these sorts of risks so we can plan to reduce them and adjust as needed. If something does go wrong, we make sure we communicate what happened and why.

We also put in place:

- A clear team structure;
- Defined roles and responsibilities; and
- Leadership support to guide the process

This helps us deliver meaningful engagement and stay aligned with the City's goals and values.

STEP 5

Carry Out the Plan and Adjust as Needed

Once the engagement plan is ready, it's time to put it into action. We:

- Follow the steps we planned
- Check in regularly on how we are progressing
- Adjust if needed
- Keep our community up to date throughout the engagement process



Ways We Will Engage with You

There are many ways the City of Karratha listens to and involves the *community* and *stakeholders*.

Each way helps us hear different voices, learn from real experiences, and make better decisions together.

How we connect with you online:

- **Online Engagement Platform – WHAT WE MAKE IT.** This is our digital space where you can give feedback, share ideas, and take part in local projects. Each project has its own feedback tools - like surveys, polls, maps or ideas boards – and is also where you can find relevant documents like plans and strategies – to help you join in from wherever you are.
- **Direct Email Campaigns** – if you subscribe to WHAT WE MAKE IT, any of our other communication subscription options, or you are identified as a key stakeholder such as a community group committee member, we may email you about feedback opportunities directly.
- **Online Team's Meetings** – sometimes it is easier for community members and stakeholders to provide feedback via an online meeting which can be facilitated by City of Karratha staff members.



- **Facebook** – The City of Karratha has several Facebook Pages and Groups it uses to communicate information about services, events, key projects and decisions, and to advertise feedback opportunities.

Pages:

- › City of Karratha
- › City of Karratha Events
- › Wickham Recreation Precinct
- › Karratha Leisureplex
- › FeNaCING Festival
- › Cossack Art Awards
- › Red Earth Arts Festival
- › Karratha Tourism & Visitor Centre

Groups:

- › City of Karratha Libraries
- › City of Karratha Youth Services

Ways we connect with you in-person

- **Pop-Up Stalls** – These are temporary information booths set up in busy places across each town, like markets or community events. You can stop by, ask questions, give feedback, and learn more about local projects.
- **Workshops** – Small group activities where people come together to talk, share ideas, and help shape plans or solutions.
- **Focus Groups** – These are small, guided conversations with selected participants. We use them to explore a topic more deeply and understand different views and experiences.
- **One-to-One Interviews or meetings** – Sometimes, we speak with people individually. These personal conversations help us better understand someone's unique perspective or lived experience.

STEP 6

Close the Loop by Sharing What we Heard and How we Used Your Feedback

When the engagement process is complete, we take time to review and then share what we heard. We call this 'Closing the loop,' which means:

- Letting you know what we heard and asking you if we got it right?
- Letting you know how your input shaped the outcome – or if it didn't, why it didn't



STEP 7

Learn from the Experience and Keep Getting Better

After we have shared your feedback with you and let you know how this feedback influenced the outcome, we take time to reflect, listen, and learn so we can improve how we do things in the future.



We ask ourselves:

- Did we meet our goals?
- Did we reach the right people and hear a range of views?
- Did participants feel listened to and respected?
- How accurately did we capture what people said?
- What worked well, and what didn't?

Twice a year on larger engagement projects, we will check in with participants to hear their thoughts about how things went and ask what we could do better next time.

Continuous improvement will help us build stronger relationships with our *community* and *stakeholders* and ensure our engagement efforts become more meaningful and effective.

HOW WE ALL PLAY A PART IN THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

While successful engagement includes Council Members and City staff, as *community members* and potential stakeholders, you all have a part to play too.

We simply cannot do this without you.

Who is Responsible for Engagement?

Our staff and leaders follow the values and commitments in our *Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy CS24* and these *Engagement Guidelines*. But more importantly, we want to partner with you, our *community*, to shape a shared future that reflects everyone's voice, everyone's needs and everyone's aspirations.

So, we all have a role in this.

The role of our Mayor:

Our Mayor represents the Council and helps connect with our *community* and stakeholders'. By supporting the Council's approach to listening and working with the *community*, the Mayor leads by example and helps build a strong, respectful engagement culture.

Elected Council Members:

Our Elected Council Members support *community* and *stakeholder* engagement by getting involved in activities and showing they value *community* input. They also help make engagement happen by approving the money and resources needed so everyone can take part.

City of Karratha Staff:

Staff members carry out engagement for projects and decisions that affect our *community*. Sometimes they will also work with consultants to help get better engagement results.

Staff make sure the engagement process is open, honest, and respectful for everyone involved and feedback is clearly and accurately communicated to our decision-makers.

Staff also help leaders and decision-makers understand good engagement practices, so they can recognise when it's done well, when it isn't, and understand the commitment that has been made to the *community* and *stakeholders* about how their input will shape each decision being made.

The Community Engagement Team and the Marketing and Communications Team:

The community engagement and communications teams help by:

- Making sure information is clear, easy to understand, and easy for everyone to find.
- Encouraging people to get involved in learning about the City's services, activities, feedback opportunities, and decisions.
- Speaking up for our *community* to help make sure the City's actions and decisions match what we heard.

These two teams work closely with other teams in the City and with our *community* members to make these things happen.

Our Community and Stakeholders:

You are an important part of the decision-making process.

We encourage you to:

- **Join In** – Take part in surveys, workshops, or meetings.
- **Speak Up** – Share your ideas and experiences.
- **Listen** – Respect other people's views, even if they are different from yours.
- **Ask Questions** – It's okay to ask for more information, in fact, we like it when you do!
- **Tell Others** – Invite your family, friends, and people you know to take part too.

When you get involved, you help the City make decisions that will be better for our local *community*!



**We hope to
hear from
you soon**



Community Engagement Team

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