



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-2028



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The original inhabitants and traditional owners of Glen Innes and surrounding areas are the Ngarabul people. The indigenous name of the area of Glen Innes town is Gindaaydjin, meaning “plenty of big round stones on clear Plains”.

The Ngarabul people lived within a tribal boundary (including the area of Ashford, Tenterfield and Glen Innes), moving within this area due to the seasonal resources available. The value Aboriginal people place on natural resources stems from the strong relationship and respect they have for the land.

As the original occupants of this continent, Aboriginal people used the natural resources according to their ‘lore’ in order to maintain systems and species. The health of the land and the maintenance of biodiversity continue to be linked to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, both physically and spiritually (from Land of the Beardies).

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

Our Vision

A prosperous connected community that nurtures its people and places.

Our Values

RESPECT for each other.

INTEGRITY as a foundation.

COURAGE to make the right decisions.

HONESTY in all dealings.

TRANSPARENCY to support accountability.

INTRODUCTION

This Community Engagement Strategy outlines our approach to engaging with the community and stakeholders. It provides transparency and clarity for all stakeholders so they can understand their role in the decision-making process. The strategy outlines who, when and how we will engage on plans and policies. The level of community involvement varies depending on the project and the potential impact of the decision.

Engaging with our stakeholders and community allows us to gather feedback, which may include views, needs, issues and aspirations, and use this information to make effective, robust and sustainable decisions.

While engagement does not replace the final decision-making of Council, community engagement plays an important role, ensuring the final recommendations made by staff are equitable and well-informed.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives and their city. It is proactive and ongoing, promoting open discussion and shared responsibilities for decisions.

Community engagement can involve a broad variety of activities. One way to understand the different types of engagement is through a continuum from informing (reflecting a low level of engagement) through to empowering (reflecting a high level of engagement).

Council recognises that people have a right to be informed and to have a say on projects that are important to them or may impact on their daily lives. Community engagement gives Council a better understanding of community views and values and helps us make more informed decisions and deliver better services.



PRINCIPLES

Community Engagement will be based on the four social justice principles:

Equity: Everyone should experience fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Access: Everyone should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to maintain or improve quality of life through community activities.

Participation: Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their community.

Rights: Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.



LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Council must comply with several pieces of legislation that set out when we must initiate consultation. The *Local Government Act 1993* requires that Council establish and implement a strategy (its Community Engagement Strategy) for engagement with the local community when developing its plans, policies and programs, and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).

Our Community Engagement Strategy has been developed in accordance with these requirements, as well as those set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

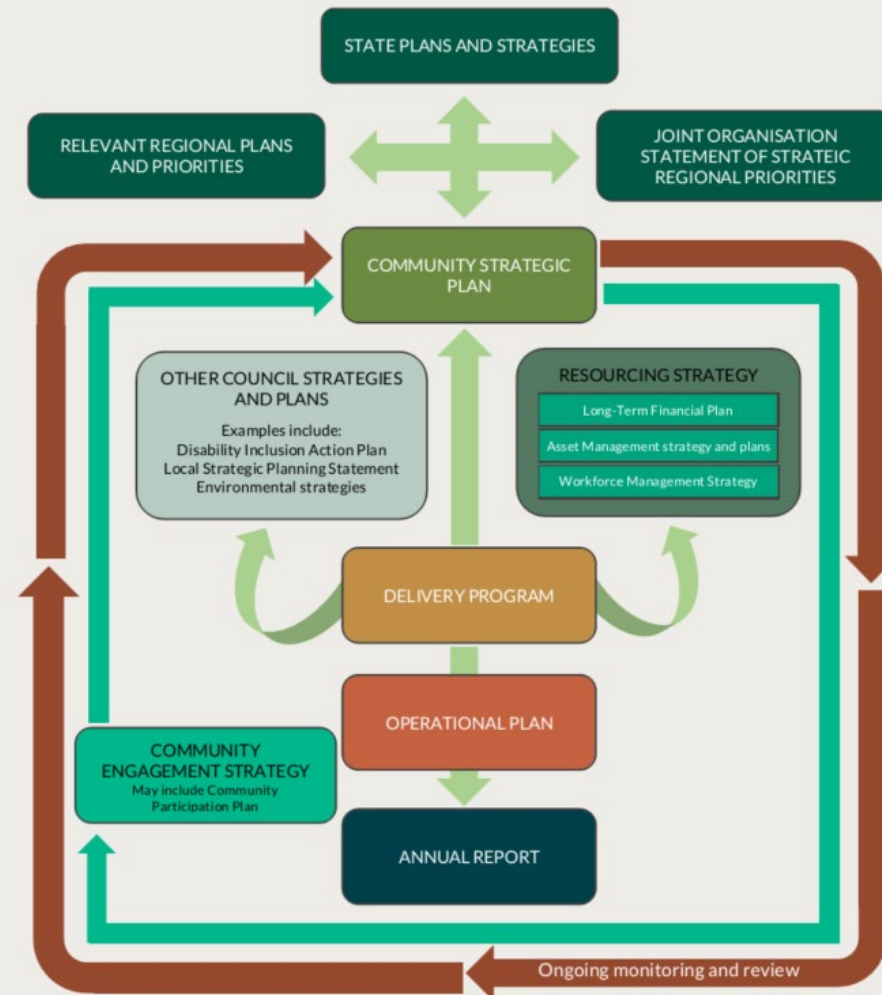
The Community Engagement Strategy will be reviewed prior to 31 December in the year of the ordinary local government elections, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Strategy does not expire on the review date, but will continue to be in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* also requires that all councils outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policymaking and assessment. Refer to the Community Participation Plan in relation to planning related projects and specified exhibition timeframes that must be met by Council.

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

The **Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R)** Framework recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, a sustainable environment, a caring and engaged community, opportunities for employment, reliable infrastructure, etc. That is what shapes the character of individual cities, towns and villages. The IP&R Framework also recognises that Council plans and policies should not exist in isolation and are connected on many levels.

The IP&R Framework allows Council to draw its various plans together, to understand how they interact and inform each another, and to get the maximum benefit from its efforts by planning holistically for the future.



PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Public exhibition plays an important role in enabling the community to participate in the planning process. Public exhibition is the official period in which draft documents or certain development applications are made available for feedback.

Some public exhibitions, particularly those that are related to planning and development, have legislated minimum exhibition periods.

Draft documents on public exhibition are often first endorsed by Council before being made available for public comment.

Publicly exhibited plans, planning and development applications and other matters cannot be made, determined or finalised until after the endorsed period of public exhibition.

Anyone is welcome to make a submission. Submissions by the community, with respect to a plan, planning or development application or other matter, may be made during the period of its public exhibition.

Information on public exhibitions can be found at: haveyoursay.gisc.nsw.gov.au



WHAT IS OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Meaningful engagement helps shape the strategic direction of our city, as well as informing the various policies and plans that support this vision.

Our engagement is governed by the requirements specified in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

When Council can control the outcomes of a decision, we are committed to providing best practice engagement. We have chosen to follow the internationally recognised International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as the framework for determining how we engage and on what issues.

Our engagement approach can vary depending on the need and impact of the project. Legislation sets the minimum requirements for planning-related projects. You can find more information about this in the 'How we engage' section of this strategy.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER*
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
EXAMPLE TECHNIQUE	Website, social media newsletters	Public exhibitions Surveys	Workshops Drop-in sessions	Community-centred Council committees Community and stakeholder reference groups	Deliberative processes

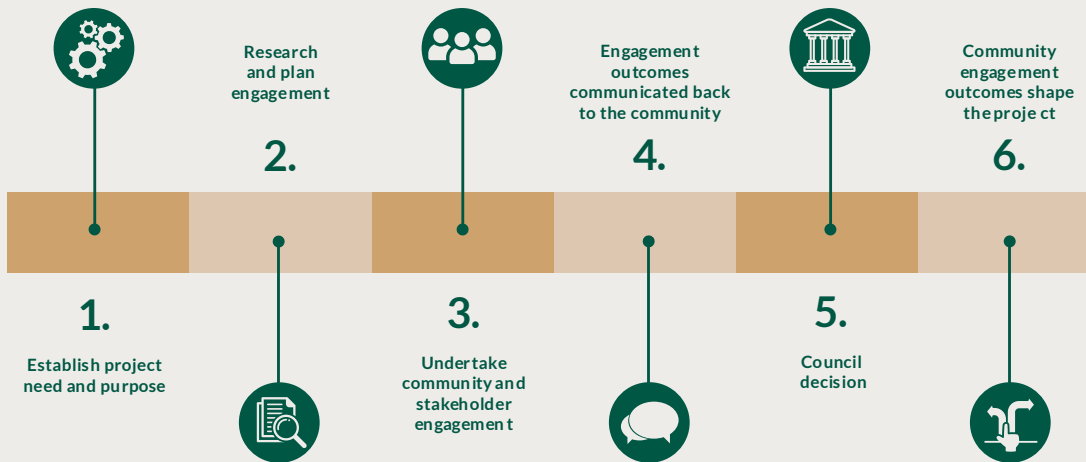
Source: IAP2 International Federation

*Empower will only be recommended for specific complex projects as part of a broader engagement plan endorsed by Council resolutions.

KEY OBJECTIVES

This strategy will guide how we plan and undertake engagement. Successful engagement programs are underpinned by careful preparation and thorough planning. Planning for engagement considers a range of factors including who the project will impact, how much impact the project will have and how interested the community might be in the project. The requirements for community engagement will also be considered (e.g. minimum or maximum exhibition timeframes) to ensure the community can provide input. It is important we prepare ourselves effectively to deliver best practice community engagement. The general process for starting community engagement, and how it works within Council, is shown in the diagram.

THE PROCESS



CHALLENGES TO ENGAGEMENT (RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES)

Council will need to consider the following challenges when undertaking engagement activities:

LIMITED PARTICIPATION: Engagement needs to be broadly promoted to ensure all members of the community can actively participate.

ACCESSIBILITY: Engagement needs to take place in accessible locations across the LGA and use both technology and traditional methods.

FAILURE TO ENGAGE HARD TO REACH GROUPS: Targeted engagement is needed to reach priority population groups.

RESOURCE AND TIMING CONSTRAINTS:

We must ensure there are a range of opportunities and sufficient information available to enable a high level of public participation.

SCOPE CREEP* AND EXPECTATIONS: It is important to provide context and scope to help manage community expectations and define engagement aims.

LACK OF INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT: Start the conversation early with Council staff around the opportunities for involvement.

CONSULTATION FATIGUE: Stagger engagement to reduce the risk of the community and key stakeholders feeling overwhelmed.

* the definition of scope creep is when a project's scope changes, the project work starts to extend or 'creep' beyond what was originally agreed



STAKEHOLDERS

Community engagement is a shared responsibility. We all have a role to play in participatory decision-making that shapes the places where we live, work, play and create. There are roles for both Council and the community in initiating, leading, participating in and delivering engagement activities.

A vital component of the community engagement process includes identifying and understanding key stakeholders who will be impacted by or who have an interest in a decision. Key stakeholders include but not limited to:

- Glen Innes Severn residents and ratepayers
- State and Federal Members
- relevant government agencies (such as NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, NSW Environment and Heritage, Transport for NSW, Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Health, Office of Local Government, Destination NSW, NSW Department of Education)
- non-government agencies
- community-centred committees
- local business community and organisations
- interest and industry groups
- sporting clubs and bodies
- arts and cultural groups
- community and multicultural groups (e.g. progress associations, Men's Sheds, Rotary, etc.)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- advisory groups
- schools and youth groups
- older persons and disability groups



ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	INFORM
The Mayor	<p>Act as the spokesperson for the Council to promote engagement on key strategic plans including developing the Community Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.</p>
Mayor and Councillors	<p>Promote engagement on key strategic plans including supporting and participating in community engagement for the development of the Community Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Participate in the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, including the Community Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Endorse the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and approve the remaining component Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.</p> <p>Participate in community engagement activities, alongside Council staff.</p>
Council staff	<p>Oversee preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents and endorsement by the elected Council.</p> <p>Ensure that community members are given enough information to participate in the IP&R process in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Development of the strategy and plans to engage the community.</p> <p>Implement the Community Engagement Strategy and provide timely advice on community views.</p> <p>Ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between Council and the local community, such as allocating funds from major projects for community consultation.</p>



HOW WILL WE ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY?

We use a range of channels to inform our community about opportunities to engage with our projects and gather their feedback. As well as capturing project-related feedback, we may also collect relevant demographic information, such as stakeholders' age and location, to help us better understand community feedback and how it might shape our work.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION	CHANNEL OF INFORMATION	IN PRACTICE
Inform	Website, digital media, print media, newsletters, radio, Council's meeting Business Paper and minutes	Provide information via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Organisation website and community engagement platform (https://haveyoursay.gisc.nsw.gov.au) - Social media, including Facebook, Instagram (Glen Innes Highlands only) LinkedIn, YouTube - Digital and print media
	Advertisements via public notices, media releases, paid print media, radio advertising, signs, letters and resident newsletters	This information could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inviting the community to participate in engagement - describing the matter, project or issue - outlining how people can find out information - advising how to make a comment or be involved - outlining the timeframe for consultation
	Town Hall and Church Street Offices, Glen Innes Library, Glen Innes, Emmaville and Deepwater Post Offices	Information may be accessed during public exhibition at these locations.
Consult and Involve	Glen Innes Severn Council's Engagement HQ (Have Your Say) page	Council's online engagement platform, EHQ, enables the community to provide feedback on council projects and public documents, including strategies, policies, and other key materials placed on public exhibition. The platform features discussion forums, mapping tools, idea walls, surveys, Q&A sections, polls, and submissions to facilitate community input
	Community meetings and workshops	Meetings (in person, online or hybrid) with community members and stakeholders to provide an opportunity to work through an issue or gather feedback on particular aspects of a project.
	Council's meetings	Members of the community can participate in Council's formal meeting process prior to a decision being made, as outlined in Council's Code of Meeting Practice. This can include speaking at Public Forum or submitting a petition.
	Public exhibitions	The exhibition process seeks online or written community and stakeholder feedback on a plan, development application, policy or project.

	Surveys	Using market research software for telephone, online and offline surveys, such as the biennial Community Satisfaction Survey. Demographic information may also be collected.
	Drop-in sessions and pop-up stalls	Provide a face-to-face opportunity for the community to attend a drop-in session or a pop-up stall to gather information and provide feedback on an issue or project/policy-related decision. Depending on project need, drop-in sessions and pop-up stalls may be held outside business hours, including on weekends, and at high-traffic locations (such as markets, recreation areas or Council facilities) to increase accessibility.
Collaborate	Community-centred Council committees	To support community engagement, Council may establish committees in accordance with relevant laws and Council policies and procedures, to assist in achieving objectives under the Community Strategic Plan. Membership can be made up of Councillors, Council staff, external agencies and skilled community members. Information on Councillor representation on community-centred Council committees is available at gisc.nsw.gov.au
	Community and stakeholder reference groups	Groups of community and stakeholders that meet with staff, Councillors, or others to work through an issue, determine a decision for a project, policy or plan and provide advice.
Empower*	Deliberative processes	Deliberative forums are used for in-depth consideration of an issue by a cross-section of the community to provide well-informed feedback on a particular issue.

* will only be recommended for specific complex projects as part of a broader engagement plan endorsed by Council resolution

HOW WE ENGAGE

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The following table explains how we will engage with our community about plans and strategies, as well as other work we do, so our community knows what to expect from us which are outlined below:

PROJECT	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
Council's key long-term plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Strategic Plan ▪ Delivery Program ▪ Resourcing Strategy ▪ Community Engagement Strategy Other plans and strategies	Consult and Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views. Prior to public exhibition there may be multiple rounds of engagement undertaken to develop draft plans/strategies.	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 days
Council's annual Operational Plan and Budget	Consult and Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views.	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 days
New major capital works	Consult and Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views.	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	Minimum 21 days
New minor works	Inform	Provide a range of opportunities/channels for the community to share their views.		
Key Council policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Code of Meeting Practice ▪ Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillor Policy ▪ Local Approvals Policy Other policies as required	Consult and Involve	Provide opportunities for community feedback via public exhibition on Council's website.	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 days or 42 days as specified by legislative requirements or Council resolution.

Refer to the Community Participation Plan in relation to planning related projects and specified exhibition timeframes that must be met by Council.

SUBMISSIONS

Public exhibitions play an important role in enabling the community to participate in the planning process, and anyone is welcome to make a submission regarding plans, policies, strategies, etc or other matter during the period of its public exhibition.

Submissions can be made through Have Your Say Glen Innes Severn at haveyoursay.gisc.nsw.gov.au, via email to council@gisc.nsw.gov.au, or in writing. Written submissions may be delivered by post or submitted in person at Council's Administration Office.

Hard copies of the documents are available for viewing at several locations, including Council's Town Hall and Church Street Customer Service Offices, Glen Innes Severn Public & TAFE and the village post offices in Emmaville and Deepwater. While it is not a requirement, submitters are encouraged to include their name, suburb and a contact (email, phone or address) with their submission. This allows Council staff to keep submitters informed as the matter progresses.

Form letters (i.e. templated letters with standardised content) will be considered as individual submissions. If form letters are received during public exhibition, the number of form letters received will be included in the Council report and/or assessment report alongside the total number of submissions received.

Multiple submissions received from the same person during the same exhibition period are considered as a single submission. Duplicate submissions will be counted as a single submission even if received across several notification periods.

Petitions, including e-petitions, will be considered as a single submission.



RESPONDING TO YOUR FEEDBACK

We want to ensure the feedback of people we engage with is considered when decisions are made. Once feedback has been considered, Council staff will recommend next steps or outcomes. As part of the process to close the loop, we will:

- update Council's website outlining engagement outcomes and next steps
- email those who provided feedback with the outcomes of the consultation and link to the project page. Prior to the elected Council considering the matter, we will also email everyone who has provided feedback (and requested updates), that the item/report has been placed on the Council meeting agenda.

- what engagement and communication methods were used
- statistics of participation and promotion, including the location and age of contributors
- information about submissions/feedback received.

The report will also include an attachment that summarises the submissions received and provides a staff response.

Following a Council resolution, we will email everyone who has provided feedback (and requested updates) of the outcome, update the Council project page and include the outcome in the e-newsletter.

When an item has been placed on public exhibition or has been out for community consultation, any resulting report to Council will present the findings of the community engagement undertaken including statistics and data. The Council report will include a high-level summary of engagement including:





EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

To measure and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement, we assess:

- participation levels in engagement activities, considering the nature of the project
- the quality of responses in terms of relevance to the program or project
- assessment of relevant engagement methods appropriate to stakeholders
- verbal and written feedback from the community on the effectiveness of engagement activities
- achievement of the identified engagement principles objectives within the Community Engagement Strategy
- inclusive community representation.

These evaluation results will be used to improve future engagement strategies and methods.

CONTACT AND CONNECT

The community is encouraged to keep up to date on Council news and to access opportunities to learn more and have their say on Council matters:



Visit Council's website for all Council information and updates.
www.gisc.nsw.gov.au



Register to 'Have Your Say' to learn more about Council projects seeking community feedback, have your say and contribute to decision making at a time and place that suits you. [Have Your Say Glen Innes Severn \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.gisc.nsw.gov.au)



Follow Council on social media.
[Glen Innes Severn Council](#) | [Glen Innes NSW](#) | [Facebook](#)



Watch livestreamed Council meetings or read minutes from Council meetings.
[Council Meetings](#) | [Glen Innes Severn Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)



View advertised Development Applications (DAs) – A DA is a formal request for consent to carry out proposed development. This could include change of use of land, subdividing land, carrying out work on a building, and landscaping.
[Advertised Development Applications](#) | [Glen Innes Severn Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Council Contact Information

Correspondence

All correspondence to Glen Innes Severn Council should be forwarded to:

The General Manager
Glen Innes Severn Council
PO Box 61
GLEN INNES NSW 2370

Main Administration Centre (Town Hall Office)
265 Grey Street Glen Innes NSW 2370
Phone: (02) 6730 2300
Office Hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm Mon - Fri

Email: council@gisc.nsw.gov.au

