



Name	COR02 Communications and Engagement
Policy Type	Council
Responsible Officer	Director Community and Corporate Services
Approval Date	20/04/2026
Review Date	19/04/2030

### 1. Purpose

This Policy establishes the principles and minimum standards for communications and engagement at Litchfield Council.

It outlines Council’s commitment to providing clear, accessible and transparent communications while ensuring meaningful opportunities for residents, stakeholders and community members to participate in decisions that may affect them.

The Policy supports Council’s commitment to good governance, accountability and informed decision-making.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to Councillors, staff, consultants and contractors, and any other parties undertaking communications and/or engagement activities on behalf of Litchfield Council.

### 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Engagement Institute	Engagement Institute, formerly the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), is a leading organisation providing engagement training to professionals and provides the principles of public participation in Australia that most engagement practitioners follow.
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Director Infrastructure and Operations, Director Governance and Community, Director Corporate Services.
Senior Leadership Team	Managers and Advisors
Media	Media refers to all forms of media including traditional, social and digital media.
Traditional media	Traditional forms of media are those that currently exist and existed before the internet. Key examples include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, notice boards and direct mail,

Social media	Online communication platforms used to create, share and exchange information or content with the public. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, online forums and emerging digital platforms.
Digital media	Digital media is an umbrella term for any content or communication delivered via digital devices (websites, e-books, video, audio, podcasts, vlogs, etc.)
Communications	The provision of timely, accurate and accessible information to residents, stakeholders and the broader community regarding Council decisions, services, projects and activities
Engagement	The process of seeking feedback, participation or collaboration from the community and stakeholders in relation to Council initiatives, projects or decisions
Stakeholders	Individuals, Northern Territory Government (NTG), organisations or groups who have an interest in, or may be affected by, Council decisions, projects or services
Community	The residents, ratepayers, businesses, community groups, organisations and visitors who live in, work in, conduct business in or have an interest in the Litchfield Council Municipality and may be affected by Council initiatives, projects or decisions

#### **4. Policy Statement**

4.1. This policy provides the framework for Litchfield Council’s communications and engagement.

4.1.1. Litchfield Council is committed to effective communications and engagement with residents, stakeholders and the broader community.

4.1.2. Council recognises that clear communication and meaningful engagement:

- Builds trust and transparency
- Supports informed decision-making
- Strengthens relationships with the community
- Enables Council to better understand community needs, priorities and aspirations.

- 4.1.3. Council will provide opportunities for the community to receive information, contribute feedback and participate in decision-making processes, where appropriate.
- 4.1.4. Communications and engagement may be:  
**Proactive** – informing or seeking input before decisions are made  
**Responsive** – responding to community enquiries, concerns or emerging issues.
- 4.1.5. Council will ensure communications and engagement activities are:
- Clear and accessible
  - Inclusive and respectful
  - Transparent and accountable.
  - Appropriate to the level of community interest or impact.

#### 4.2. Communications and engagement approach

- 4.2.1. Council will determine the appropriate level of communications and engagement based on:
- The scale of the project or decision
  - The potential impact on the community
  - Legislative requirements
  - Community interest or sensitivity.
- 4.2.2. Council will use a range of communication and engagement methods, these may include:
- Council website
  - Digital platforms
  - Social media
  - Media releases
  - Community meetings and forums
  - In-person meetings
  - Stalls at markets and stands in shopping centres and/or prominent locations
  - Public noticeboards
  - Surveys and online feedback tools
  - Inviting written feedback either by mail or email
  - Stakeholder briefings

- Public notices and consultation processes.

4.2.3. Where engagement is required, the approach taken will be guided by the public participation principles and standards developed by the Engagement Institute, including the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum.

Training is available through the Engagement Institute and other engagement training organisations for Councillors and Council Officers who participate in engagement activities and who wish to develop their skills in this area.

4.2.4. Council will also consider, where necessary, other sources of information in conjunction with community input, such as legislative requirements, specialist or expert reports and local or national research studies, in the decision-making process.

#### 4.3. Digital engagement

4.3.1. Council recognises digital platforms as a key channel for communicating and engaging with the community.

Digital channels may include:

- Council website
- Social media platforms
- Online engagement tools
- Email communications
- Digital surveys.

Digital engagement will be used to improve accessibility, reach broader audiences and enable more convenient participation.

#### 4.4. Transparency and reporting

4.4.1. Where engagement activities are undertaken, Council will ensure that:

- Feedback is recorded and considered
- Outcomes are reported to Elected Members and other decision makers, where applicable
- The community is informed of how their feedback influenced the decision, where appropriate.

All engagement activities will comply with privacy, record keeping and legislative requirements.

#### 4.5. Roles and responsibilities

4.5.1. Councillors

- Play a vital role in reflecting community sentiment by engaging with residents, businesses and stakeholders, and bringing forward local ideas, concerns and emerging issues for Council's consideration. This input helps inform decision-making and ensures Council's priorities and actions remain responsive to the needs and expectations of the community
- Represent and advocate for the interests of the community
- Encourage community participation in Council engagement activities
- Consider community feedback as part of the decision-making process.

#### 4.5.2. Chief Executive Officer

- Promotes a culture of effective communications and engagement across the organisation
- Ensure appropriate resources and governance frameworks are in place.

#### 4.5.3. Executive Leadership Team

- Ensure communications and engagement considerations are integrated into project planning and service delivery.

#### 4.5.4. Senior Leadership Team

- Identify when communications or engagement activities are required
- Work with the Communications Officer to plan appropriate activities.

#### 4.5.5. Communications Officer

- Provides advice and support to Councillors and staff
- Develops and delivers communications and engagement plans, where required
- Coordinates communications and engagement activities
- Undertakes monitoring, analysis and reporting
- Promotes best practice communications and engagement methods.

#### 4.6. Risk implications

##### 4.6.1 Failure to implement appropriate communications and engagement processes may result in:

- Reduced community trust and confidence in Council
- Reputational risk
- Increased complaints or community dissatisfaction
- Decisions that do not reflect community needs or expectations.

Council will manage these risks through clear communication, appropriate engagement planning and adherence to this Policy.

**1. Associated Documents**

Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plans 2022-2025

COR01 Media Policy

**2. References and Legislation**

Engagement Institute - IAP2 Framework

**3. Review History**

Date Reviewed	Description of changes
22/11/2017	New Policy
16/11/2021	Policy reviewed, minor amendments made.
08/04/2026	Policy reviewed, major amendments made.