Community Engagement Strategy

Draft 2025-2028

QPRC

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Queanbeyan-Palerang area and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of our First Nations peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

Acknowledgment of Country Artist: Lynnice Church
ABORIGINAL NATIONS: Ngunnawal, Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi

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Interpreter

TIS TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

English	Macedonian	Punjabi	Italian	Nepali	Filipino/Tagalog	Serbian	Hindi	Mandarin	Croatian	Spanish
If you require interpreting services in your language please call TIS National on **131 450** and ask to be connected to **1300 735 025**.	Доколку ви се потребни толкувачки услуги на вашиот јазик, ве молиме јавете се на TIS National на **131 450** и побарајте да бидете поврзани со **1300 735 025**.	ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੱਸਿ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਆ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ TIS National ਨੂੰ **131 450** ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰਕੇ **1300 735 025** ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਨੈਕਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਖ	Se ha bisogno di servizi di interpretariato nella sua lingua, chiami il TIS National al numero **131 450** e chieda di essere collegato al numero **1300 735 025**.	तपाईंलाई आफ्नो भाषामा दोभाषे सेवाहरू चाहिन्छ भने कृपया TIS National लाई **131 450** मा कल गरनुहोस् र **1300 735 025** सँग जोडनि अनुरोध गरनुहोस्	Kung kailangan mo ng mga serbisyo ng pagsasalin sa iyong wika, pakitawagan ang TIS National sa **131 450** at hilingin na maikonekta ka sa **1300 735 025**.	Ако су вам потребне услуге превођења на вашем језику, позовите TIS National на **131 450** и затражите да будете повезани на **1300 735 025**.	यदि आपको अपनी भाषा में दुभाषिया सेवाओं की जरूरत है तो कृपया TIS National को **131 450** पर फोन करके **1300 735 025** से कनेक्ट करने के लिए कहें	如果您需要口服，致笔 与口服 (TIS National) 号 **131 450**, 并要求接到 **1300 735 025**.	Ako su vam potrebne usluge tumača na vašem jeziku, nazovite TIS National na **131 450** i zatražite da vas spoje na **1300 735 025**.	Si necesitas servicios de interpretación en tu idioma, llama TIS National al **131 450** y solicita estar conectado al **1300 735 025**.

Foreword from the Mayor

Kenrick Winchester

Mayor
Queanbeyan-Palerang
Regional Council

Councils are the closest level of government to the community and local government exists to serve the community.

Council is committed to actively seeking the community's views and opinions. We believe that two-way communication between Council and the community will lead to better decisions.

Hearing the community's feedback on our major projects, policies, proposals, events, and services will help to make Queanbeyan-Palerang a better place for everyone.

As the Strategy outlines, there are many ways that you can get involved in Council decision-making, from voting at elections, to attending a community meeting, from making a submission on something on public exhibition to lodging a customer service request.

While we can't always do everything that the community wants, it is important that we give everyone an opportunity to have their say. We want to hear from our community so that we can work together to shape Queanbeyan-Palerang into the place we all want it to be.

This Community Engagement Strategy outlines the steps we will take to make sure we hear from as many people as possible.

The strategy aims to explain to the community the sort of engagement they should expect from Council and provides guidance to Council staff.

1. Introduction

1.1 Why do we have this Strategy?

The Community Engagement Strategy (Strategy) is a crucial component of Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) Framework.
The Strategy must be prepared based on social justice principles.

The Strategy has been written to provide Council staff with guidance when undertaking community engagement activities, particularly the development of the Community Strategic Plan and other IP&R documents like our Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It also serves to outline what community engagement the community can expect from Council.

The Strategy outlines the community engagement and public exhibition practices that Council will undertake for projects, policies, concept designs, infrastructure, budgets and more.

The Strategy has also been prepared to meet the requirements of a Community Participation Plan under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Information about community participation in Council's planning functions can be found in Section 5.

The Strategy is the overarching document that guides the Community Engagement Toolkit, which provides practical advice to staff about engagement activities.

1.2 What is community engagement?

These definitions explain some of the key terms used in the Strategy:

Community engagement

The process where Council and the community engage in a two-way conversation. This can be via formal or informal engagement processes. Community engagement relies on a two-way approach. Council and the community need to both actively communicate with each other.

Community

Includes all QPRC residents, ratepayers, businesses, community organisations, visitors, neighbouring councils, other levels of government and other stakeholders with an interest in QPRC.

Community consultation

A more formal process that generally relates to the 'consult' section of the IAP2 spectrum. Consultation generally involves Council presenting an idea, policy, or proposal to the community for input.

Public exhibition

The official period when a project is open for feedback. Often these periods are defined in legislation and the legislation includes specific notification and timeframe requirements.

Public notification

Notification informs a targeted audience about an application under consideration by Council and provides an opportunity to review the documents and make a submission on the perceived impacts of the development (both positive and negative).

1.3 What principles guide our engagement?

The Community Engagement Strategy and Council's engagement is based on four social justice principles of equity, access, participation, and rights. These social justice principles are further defined using the community participation plan principles outlined in Section 2.23 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

These principles are:

Right to be involved

The community has a right to be informed and involved in matters that affect them.

Relationship building

We will encourage effective and ongoing partnerships with the community to provide meaningful opportunities for participation.

Clear

Information will be in plain language and easily accessible. We will be clear about how the community can participate in decisions and why, how, and what we are engaging about.

Timely

The community will be given opportunities to participate as early as possible. We will genuinely consider community views.

Accessible and inclusive

Community participation will be inclusive. We will actively seek views that are representative of the community.

Transparent

Decisions will be made in an open and transparent way. We will provide reasons for those decisions, including how community views have been considered.

Relevant

We will use methods that suit the purpose and type of project we are getting community feedback on.
We will seek feedback from the appropriate members of the community.

For planning matters, members of the community who are affected by proposed State Significant Development Applications will be consulted by the proponent before an application for planning approval is made.

Considered

The methods of community participation and the reasons given for planning decisions will be appropriate. We will consider the likely impact of the proposal when doing community engagement.

Council recognises the importance of engaging with its communities to deliver services and infrastructure, and plan collaboratively.

The Strategy applies to all forms of engagement by councillors and staff, and to third parties such as consultants representing Council.

All engagement activities are done with the social justice principles of access, equity, rights and participation of all community members in mind.

This Strategy and the Community Engagement Toolkit are based on the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum which shows the different levels of participation we intend to undertake.

The Spectrum has been supplied by the IAP2 Federation.

IAP2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information.	To obtain public feedback on analysis and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public through the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To power 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	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.

1.4 How does the legislation read?

Council must comply with different pieces of legislation which set out when and how we should consult with our community.

Local Government Act 1993

Section 402(A) requires that:

A Council must establish and implement a strategy for engagement with the local community (called its Community Engagement Strategy) when developing its plans, policies, and programs, and for the purpose of determining its activities (other than routine administrative matters).

A Community Engagement Strategy must be prepared, adopted, and implemented, based on social justice principles, for engagement with the local community to support Council in developing its plans and determining key activities. This includes development of the Community Strategic Plan, and all relevant Council plans, policies, and programs.

At a minimum, the Community Engagement Strategy must identify relevant stakeholder groups within the community and outline methods that will be used to engage each group.

The Strategy must be reviewed within 3 months of the local government elections, as part of the broader review of the Community Strategic Plan.

Where a Council has community engagement requirements under other legislation or regulations, these should, wherever practical, be integrated into the Community Engagement Strategy.

Section 406 requires that:

All Councils in NSW use the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework to guide their planning and reporting activities. Community engagement at Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council is usually linked to plans, strategies and work outlined in the IP&R framework.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Division 2.6 requires that:

All planning authorities such as councils outline how and when the community will be engaged across planning functions like policy making and assessment.

Other requirements

The notification requirements around planning and development matters, such as for development applications, can be found in the Community Participation Plan in Section 5.

1.5 Who has a role to play in community engagement?

Councils are the closest tier of government to communities, providing local services, infrastructure, policies and planning. Local government in NSW (as set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*) provides for governed bodies of Council that are democratically elected generally every four years.

Councils make decisions through local democracy processes which are both representative and participatory. Councillors are elected to represent the entire local government area, via representative democracy.

Councillors

Queanbeyan-Palerang is represented by 11 councillors. The role of the elected Council is to develop and implement policies, programs and long-term strategic plans, as well as ensuring financial stability, monitoring performance, and making decisions to direct and control the affairs of Council.

The Mayor and councillors undertake formal and informal community engagement. They should promote engagement opportunities, participate in development of documents, and endorse Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting documents.

Councillors are accountable to the community and it is important that community members can contact and meet with councillors to discuss and contribute their views and ideas. Councillors have an important role to play in engaging with their constituents, recognising diverse local community needs and interests.

Mayor

The Mayor's additional role is as the spokesperson, who's role is to promote partnerships between Council and key stakeholders.

General Manager and Executive

The GM and Executive staff ensure implementation of this Strategy. They also provide approval, where required, for engagement projects. They ensure staff are sufficiently resourced to undertake the engagement, and community members are given enough information to participate in Council's engagement process in a meaningful way.

Managers and Project Staff

As subject matter experts, staff play a critical role in engagement. Project managers are responsible for complying with legislative requirements and this Strategy. Staff are to provide timely advice on community views and work with the Communications and Engagement team on community engagement.

Communications and Engagement team

The Communications and Engagement team provide advice and support to all teams across Council. The team manages Council's community engagement platform, Your Voice.

Committees

Council has advisory, statutory, and organisational committees made up of councillors, staff, and external community members. These committees provide advice and represent the needs and views of communities.

There are also important Section 355 Committees that help manage and provide advice to Council around halls, memorials, commons, and reserves. Council committees and representatives are listed at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/committees**

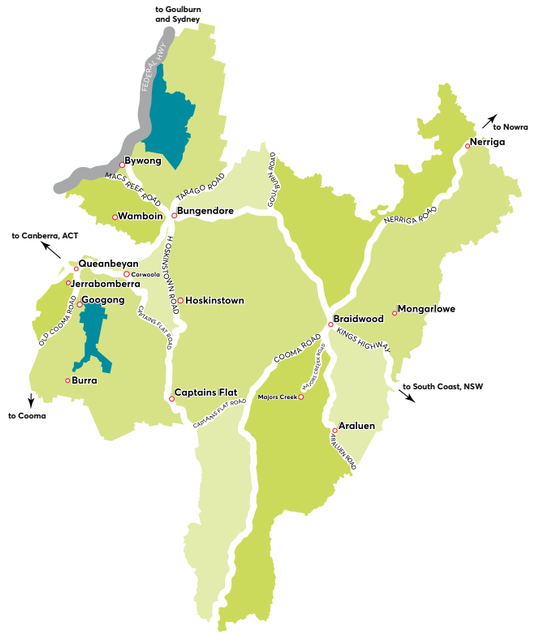
2. Who do we engage with?

2.1 Who are our stakeholders?

If we are to engage effectively, it is important that we know and understand our community. While our community is broadly defined as everyone who lives, works, or travels through QPRC, identifying our stakeholders helps to make community engagement effective.

Stakeholders for an engagement project could include (listed alphabetically):

- Australian Government ministers, representatives, and local Members of Parliament
- Australian Government departments
- Australians who speak languages other than English
- Businesses and business chambers
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Community groups and associations
- Council committees
- Councillors
- Disability support services
- Emergency services
- First Nations peoples
- Future residents
- General community – including those who live, work, play, and visit our region
- Healthcare and support services
- Industry groups or associations
- NSW Government ministers, representatives, and local Members of Parliament
- NSW Government departments
- Ratepayers
- Refugee community
- Residents
- Schools and other education providers
- Service users
- Special interest groups
- Sporting and community clubs
- Staff
- Students
- Surrounding local authorities, including the ACT Government
- Transport services
- Young people.



2.2 Our community demographics:

Population highlights

65,369

(ABS Estimated Residential Population 2023)

At the time of the 2021 ABS Census this was made up of:

Males: **50.3%** Females: **49.7%**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: **3.5%**

Australian citizens: **89.1%**

Median age: **38**

Median weekly household income: **$2,310**

Median weekly mortgage repayment: **$500**

Median weekly rent: **$359**

Where do we work?

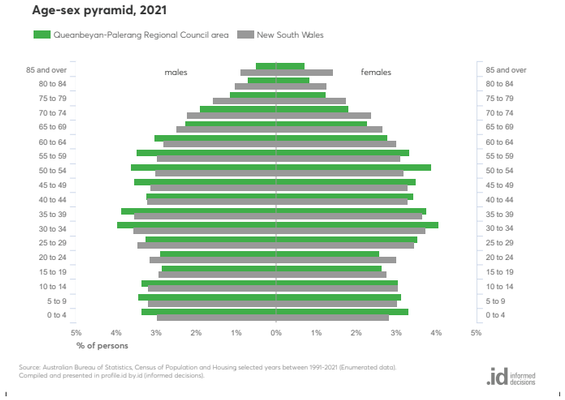
Public Administration and Safety	26.2% Total Percentage	Construction	11.6% Total Percentage
Health Care and Social Assistance	9.7% Total Percentage	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7.8% Total Percentage
Education & Training	7.3% Total Percentage	Accommodation and Food Services	5.0% Total Percentage

Demographic data on these pages is from material compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). **https://id.com.au**

How old are we?

At the 2021 Census, compared to the rest of NSW:

- A larger percentage of 'Older workers & pre-retirees' (14.3% compared to 12.3%)
- A larger percentage of 'Parents and homebuilders' (21.3% compared to 20.1%)
- A smaller percentage of 'Seniors' (7.7% compared to 10.2%)
- A smaller percentage of 'Elderly aged' (1.2% compared to 2.3%)



Other statistics

Households made up of couples and children

8,092 Total

33.3% Percentage (2021)

Lone-person households

5,817 Total

23.9% Percentage (2021)

Residents that hold a bachelor's degree or higher

17,348 Total

28.2% Percentage (2021)

Community engaged in volunteering work

8,491 Total

12.3% Percentage (2021)

Dwellings

24,311

Occupied dwellings at Census night 2021

2.3 What barriers and challenges to engagement need to be considered?

RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While community engagement is often required by legislation, we are committed to engaging with the community because it improves decision-making and leads to better results.

Engagement offers an opportunity to understand the values and views of the community. The community can help Council solve problems or offer different solutions that may not have occurred to Council.

The community expects to be able to connect and communicate with Council and councillors easily. If community engagement is not done or done poorly, there is a risk that a project or service Council provides won't meet the needs of the community.

The following section outlines some of the barriers and challenges that Council needs to consider in engagement.

Resourcing and timing constraints, and community expectations

We need to allow the community time to participate, however there will be times when projects have strict deadlines requiring a rapid turnaround from engagement activities.

We need to make the scope of projects clear, including what can be influenced or changed, to align with community expectations.

Limited participation and consultation fatigue

We need to promote opportunities to participate broadly.

We need to spread opportunities to engage across the year. There may be times where key stakeholders, in particular, may feel like they do not have time or energy to be involved.

Geographic diversity and spread

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council covers more than 5,300 square km of land, with a population of 63,364. Within this region, there are vast differences in population density. Population density is highest in suburbs like Crestwood and Queanbeyan and decreases as the region spreads eastwards, noting population density in Bungendore of 0.16 persons/hectare, Braidwood 0.07 persons/hectare and the Rural East of 0.01 persons/hectare (ABS Census 2021).

More than three quarters of the population live within a 30km radius of the ACT border. Outside of the city of Queanbeyan, Googong, Bungendore, Braidwood, and Captains Flat are the largest townships. At the 2021 Census, Googong (Township only) had a population of 6,224, Bungendore had a population of 3,935 (Township), Braidwood (Township) a population of 1,414 and Captains Flat (Township) a population of 473.

There are also rural-residential localities with larger populations, including Wamboin (1,805), Carwoola (1,602), and Bywong (1,342).

Hard to reach groups

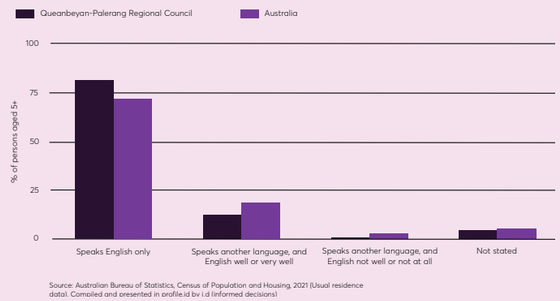
At times we will need to do more targeted engagement to reach certain groups. This may include rural communities, young people, or minority groups.

This may include in person contact and meetings, letters direct to properties, contact through community groups or other methods.

Language

According to data from the ABS Census 2021, in Queanbeyan-Palerang 795 people who spoke a language other than English at home reported difficulty speaking English. This is 1.3% of the population, in comparison to the figure of 4.5% for NSW.

Proficiency in English, 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by i.d (informed decisions)

We have an account with the National Translating and Interpreting Service. If community members need interpreting support when interacting with us, they can call TIS National 131 450 and ask to be connected to us on 1300 735 025.

Digital connection

A barrier to digital engagement is poor connection to the internet in some areas of the local government area. While this is not an issue that can be addressed directly by Council, the Mobile Black Spot Program, a combined State and Commonwealth government program, has delivered several base stations in our local government area. Council continues to advocate for improvements to connection black spots within our area.

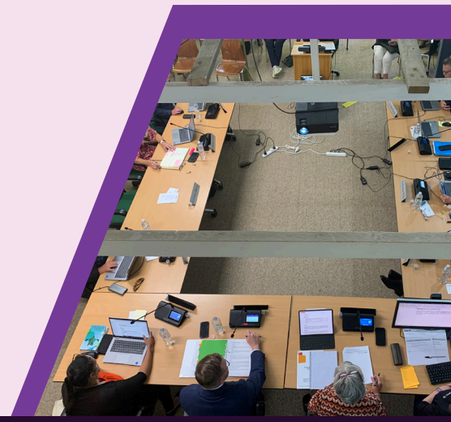
We provide free internet and computer access through our libraries in Braidwood, Bungendore, and Queanbeyan.

Accessibility

2,776 people (or 4.4% of the population) in Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. Council has an Access Committee who play a vital role in providing input into projects, plans, and policies where relevant.

Council has an adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26, and one of the actions in this document that relates specifically to community engagement is to increase accessibility of Council documents including developing Easy Read versions of key documents.

We need to provide in person engagement activities in accessible locations. We need to have multiple channels available to allow participation in a range of ways.



3. How do we engage?

3.1 How will the community be informed?

We use a range of methods to inform the community about work we are undertaking or opportunities to engage.

These include:

- Social media
- Council's website
- Eight QPRC News editions each year delivered to letterboxes
- Weekly e-newsletter to subscribers
- Fortnightly advertisements in local newspapers
- Emails to active participants on the Your Voice engagement website
- Letters or project newsletters directly to affected properties
- Media releases or hosting media announcements
- Public community meetings during the year
- Information in the mobile library which travels around the region
- Live-streaming Council meetings (which are also open to the public to attend).

Specific notification for planning matters is governed by legislation and can be found in the Community Participation Plan in Section 5.

3.2 What tools will we use to get feedback from the community?

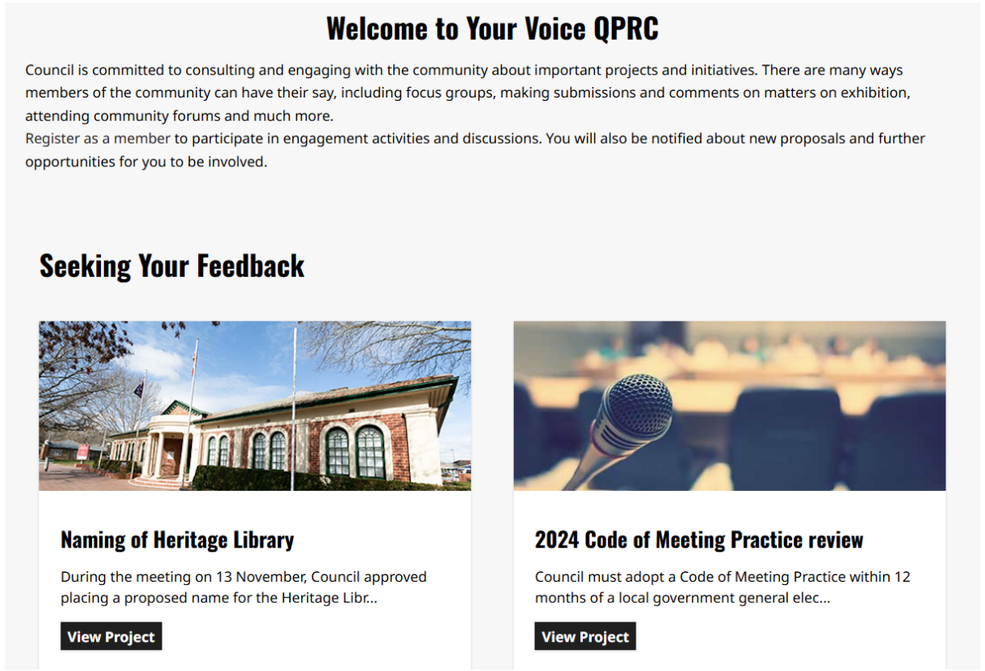
Our online engagement website is the main way we receive feedback. It is called Your Voice and is found at **yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au**

All consultation, public exhibition, and broad community engagement projects will have a page on Your Voice.

Your Voice has several tools that can be used to gain feedback, including surveys, polls, ideas boards, and location/mapping tools.

Other methods we might use in conjunction with a Your Voice page:

- Hard copy surveys or other online survey methods
- Pop-ups/drop-in sessions
- Face-to-face meetings
- Workshops/presentations or public meetings
- Focus groups
- Community reference groups.



3.3 How can the community provide feedback?

Vote at elections

General elections are held on the second Saturday of September every four years. If you are eligible to vote, voting is compulsory.

Speak with councillors

QPRC is represented by 11 councillors. If you have an idea or issue, you can raise it directly with councillors. You can find their contact details at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/councillors**

Attend Council meetings

Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, except December and January when a meeting is held on the third Wednesday. Community members can address the Council about a matter on the agenda. This can be done online or in person. Find out more at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/public-involvement-at-Council-meetings**

Join a Council Committee

We have a range of advisory and Section 355 Committees that provide advice to Council. You can find out more about our committees at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/committees**

Participate in Public Consultation/ Public Exhibitions

Give your feedback on anything on public exhibition or open for consultation at **yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au**

Development applications and other small-scale planning matters are not listed on Your Voice. You can find development applications that are on notification and make a submission by going to **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/notification**

Provide general feedback

You can provide general feedback, complaints, or compliments by calling 1300 735 025, email to **council@qprc.nsw.gov.au** or **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/report**

Lodge a service request

You can lodge a customer request using the smartphone app Snap, Send, Solve, by calling us on 1300 735 025, email to **council@qprc.nsw.gov.au**, online at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/report**, in person at one of our customer service centres, or by mail to PO Box 90, Queanbeyan NSW 2620.

Attending community meetings

We hold general community meetings as a chance to meet with councillors and staff, to discuss projects, ask questions and provide feedback. Individual community meetings or drop-in sessions about specific topics may also be held as required.

Lodge a petition

Community members can lodge petitions about issues that relate to the legislative responsibilities of Council. Council has adopted a Petition Policy to provide a consistent process to each petition that we receive. You can find more information about lodging petitions on our website at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Public-involvement-at-Council-meetings#section-5**

Informally

You can also get involved with Council activities in a less formal way by attending community events, following us and commenting on social media, joining a local special-interest group that works with Council, or visiting local libraries and community centres.

By getting involved, you can contribute to conversations which affect you. This helps us to plan, understand and work with communities to address issues.

3.4 What is the engagement process?

The questions in this section guide and explain our community engagement process and what the community can expect from our engagement.

When will we engage?

We will engage with the community when there will be a change to existing amenity, environment, space, accessibility, convenience, or provision of service, and there is an opportunity for stakeholders to influence the project.

We will also engage when:

- there is a history that may impact on the current project
- a project is controversial or political
- legislation requires it.

For some items the notification, advertisement, engagement, and community participation requirements are established under the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the Development Control Plans that apply in QPRC.

What decision needs to be made?

We will be clear about which aspects of the decision the community can influence. If any aspects are affected by legislation, we will make that clear in our engagement. The level of engagement and the tools we choose will depend on what portion of the project can be influenced.

Who do we need to engage with?

When required, we will engage with specific communities/groups through drop-in sessions or community workshops. This may include a specific geographic location, special interest group, or particular affiliation. We will think about whether there are relevant stakeholders that may be harder to reach.

When do we need to start engagement?

Engaging with the community early will deliver the best results. This may extend an overall project timeframe, particularly in the planning stages, but it will also reduce the risk of roadblocks and rework throughout the project. This may include engaging the community prior to a concept design, rather than engaging when a design has already been developed.

We will work backwards from project deadlines and factor in community engagement. We have a minimum **28-day** consultation timeframe on all matters, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which we will communicate. Planning matters have their own timeframes for notification which can be found in the Community Participation Plan in Section 6. The *Local Government Act 1993* and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* set mandatory periods for engagement for some items. Projects that require Council approval will factor in meeting dates as well as the length of engagement.

While we try to avoid engaging over the Christmas/New Year period, if we are engaging at this time, any days between 20 December and 10 January will not contribute to the total engagement period (i.e. those days will not be included when calculating an engagement period). This does not apply to notifications for development applications. Due to statutory time frames for determinations only those days between Christmas and New Year will be discounted from the required notification period.

How will we engage?

The methods of engagement we use will depend on who we need to engage with. All formal community engagement projects will include an online component, via Your Voice.

This decision process will include deciding which tools on Your Voice are most suitable for each project.

In deciding which methods of engagement we will use, we will ensure any public meeting venues are accessible and that sending notifications or letters gives enough time to the community to plan to attend the meeting or provide their feedback.

If there are particular stakeholders that may be harder to reach, we might need to use additional methods – such as direct contact via letter, email, through local community groups or local stakeholders.

How will we record and report public participation?

The methods we use to engage with the community will determine how the public participation is recorded and reported. This may include things like post-it notes in workshops, letters, and emails. For the online component on Your Voice, we will have a survey available along with other tools that may be used.

Respond to engagement

We will consider what the community has told us, and we will highlight how the project or issue is changing or being influenced because of the public's comments. This might include modifying the project, simply noting the comment and addressing concerns in an alternative way or acknowledging why an aspect of a project is unable to be changed. If the project is being reported to a Council meeting, how we have responded to engagement will be included in the report.

Close the loop

Report on previous steps. This will be via inclusion in a Council report, via a separate report that is placed on Your Voice and/or by responding to participants individually.

4. Implementation Plan

4.1 What are some key engagement opportunities throughout the year?

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

Engagement opportunities come up throughout the year, as projects, policies, and other matters are prepared by staff. One of the key, regular opportunities to be involved is in the preparation of the Integrated Planning and Reporting documents every year.

The overarching document is the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), which is a community document and asks the community to provide input into a 10–20 year vision for the local government area. The CSP is reviewed every four-year Council term.

At the start of a Council term, the elected Council uses the Community Strategic Plan and other adopted strategies and plans to develop their four-year Delivery Program. The Delivery Program is Council's response to the community's aspirations from the CSP over the period of its electoral term.

Council also works with local communities to develop local Community Plans. These are documents developed by local communities, which describe the community and their priorities. Some of the priorities in these local Community Plans are items that can be addressed by Council. These documents also feed into the four-year Delivery Program.

Each year, Council develops an Operational Plan which is the specific projects, activities, and budget over one-year. Alongside this, Council develops the Fees and Charges that outlines the fees and charges for the current financial year and the Revenue Policy which shows our rating structure and charges for key services such as water, sewer, and waste.

Calendar of key IP&R Documents for exhibition:

- **Early 2025** – Draft Community Strategic Plan open for community comment
- **April/May each year** – Integrated Planning and Reporting Documents presented to Council to be placed on public exhibition
- **June each year** – Council adopts documents after receiving and responding to community submissions and public feedback
- **Early 2028** – Community input into the next Community Strategic Plan.

4.2 What level of involvement do the engagement channels provide?

Different channels provide for different levels of community participation. Some of the channels may be across multiple IAP2 participation levels, depending on the project or issue and the level of involvement from the community.

Level of participation	Channel of information	What it looks like
Inform	Council website, social media, posters or flyers, eNewsletters, public notices, media releases, Mayoral columns, advertisements, letters, QPRC News, Your Voice website, Customer Service Centres, Queanbeyan-Palerang Libraries.	Provide information Invite to participate in engagement Describe the project, issue, policy Outline the timeframe for engagement
Consult (Depending on the matter this may include all the tools under Inform, plus additional channels)	Your Voice website	Online platform where community can provide feedback in multiple ways. At the 'Consult' level, this might include surveys, map tools, quick polls.
	Community meetings	Meetings open to the public or with specific stakeholders to present information or seek feedback.
	Council meetings	Members of the public can present to Council on matters on the agenda, in line with Council's Code of Meeting Practice.
	Notification of development	Affected residents are notified of development and provided opportunity to make a submission.
	Surveys	Surveys will be hosted on a Your Voice webpage, but might also be made available in other formats.
	Drop-in sessions or pop-up stalls	Provide a face-to-face opportunity for feedback and provide information on an issue or project.
	Public exhibitions	Exhibition process seeks online or written community and stakeholder feedback.
Involve (Depending on the matter this may include all the tools under Inform and Consult, plus additional channels)	Your Voice website	Online platform where community can provide feedback in multiple ways. At the 'Involve' level, this might include idea boards, forums, surveys that include idea generation questions and more.
	Community meetings and community workshops	Meetings open to the public or with specific stakeholders to generate ideas.
Collaborate and Empower (Depending on the matter, this may include all the tools under Inform, Consult and Involve, plus additional channels)	Council committees	Committees provide advice to Council or manage community facilities on Council's behalf.
	Community and stakeholder working and reference groups	Community working groups or reference groups may be established to investigate specific projects, policies, issues, or other matters.

4.3 What will engagement look like for key matters?

Project/Matter	Level of Engagement	How	What	Exhibition Period (minimums)
Key long-term plans • Community Strategic Plan • Delivery Program • Master Plans, Place Plans, and Strategies • Local Strategic Planning Statement • Community Engagement Strategy • Local Community Plans	Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision Provide a range of opportunities for the community to share their views	Reflect community views in the adopted plans	28 days
Annual Operational Plan, budget and fees and charges	Consult	Consult the community to ensure their views are reflected in the plans	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions.	28 days
Key Council policies where there is change	Consult	Consult the community to ensure their views are reflected in the plans	Acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions.	28 days or as specified by legislative requirements
Upgraded or new community focused capital works (e.g. park spaces, playgrounds, skate parks)	Involve	Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision Provide a range of opportunities for the community to share their views	Reflect community views in the final plan.	28 days

4.4 What does engagement with First Nations Peoples look like?

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan seeks to ensure that we continue to improve the way we collaborate with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.

First Nations organisations and Peoples are key stakeholders for many of the projects, services, or policies that Council seeks to implement. The tools and actions listed in this Community Engagement Strategy will be used to ensure Council receives feedback from and collaborates with First Nations stakeholders.

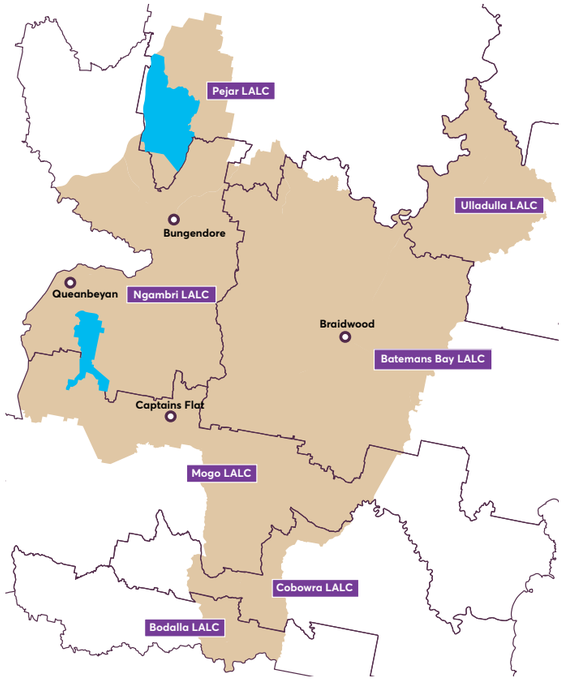
Some of the key features of engagement with First Nations Peoples include facilitating and participating in the Koori Interagency Network, sharing information and collaboration to support community development.

Formerly the First Nations Advisory Committee, Council is establishing a new First Nations Network to represent the interests, concerns, and ideas of First Nations community members. The Committee/ Network is an important link between Council and local First Nations Peoples.

The Network includes Local First Nations Traditional Owners, Local First Nations community members, representatives of Local Aboriginal Land Councils which intersect the QPRC local government area, First Nations representatives of organisations servicing local First Nations communities as required.

We employ an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer who is responsible for coordinating and delivering a range of community development and capacity building initiatives, implementing strategic plans and policies, supporting the First Nations Advisory Committee/Network, and advising on First Nations culture, heritage, and social justice matters.

We work with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC), of which there are 7 in the local government area. The areas that the LALCs operate in are mapped below.



We also consult with Registered Aboriginal Parties for major developments that Council is undertaking.

4.5 How can we improve our community engagement?

Action or Goal	Steps	Timeline
Maintain relationship with community groups, associations, and committees	• Maintain a list of contacts and keep up to date • Engage directly with these groups when matters affect their community • Seek the view of these representatives on LGA-wide matters	Ongoing
Improve engagement and communication with minority groups, including people with a disability and people who don't use English as their primary language	• Provide key documents in Easy Read format • Communicate in plain English • Present relevant policies or projects to Council's Access Committee • Provide links to Translation and Interpretation Services on key documents	Ongoing
All engagement activities include an accessible online component	• Communications and Engagement team to ensure all community engagement projects are on Your Voice	Ongoing
Increase subscribers to Council's Your Voice engagement hub	• Promote through communication channels	Ongoing
Clearly demonstrate how feedback was considered	• Include response to feedback in Council reports • Add Council reports to Your Voice pages	Ongoing
Incorporate community input earlier into the development of draft budgets (Delivery Program, Operational Plans)	• Provide opportunity for community submissions in advance of draft budget preparation • Record submissions from community as 'budget bids'	November each year
Investigate opportunities for opt-in notification via sms or email	• Notifications are already available via email for items on Your Voice for subscribers, but this does not include planning matters • Investigate opportunities for opt-in sms notifications	December 2025

5. Planning and Development - Community Participation Plan

This section of the Community Engagement Strategy has been prepared to meet the requirements of a Community Participation Plan under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Most development applications (DAs) are processed and determined by Council staff under delegation. Some other developments have such a minor impact (exempt development) or can be carried out in compliance with accepted building or environmental standards (complying development), and do not require a development application.

Under the EP&A Act, all DAs must be formally assessed by Council. This means that the site must be inspected, applicants and neighbours notified, reports drafted, and recommendations made.

5.1 Community participation in strategic planning matters

Community participation is invited in planning matters by means of placing documents on public exhibition and informing the community about them. These matters include planning proposals, local strategic planning statements, draft development control plans and any other land use planning documents listed in the EP&A Act.

Actions involving the reclassification or re-categorisation of community land (with the latter involving a change in the Plan of Management) under the *Local Government Act 1993* are also placed on public exhibition. They also include notification requirements in the case of native title reviews under the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*.

Exhibition periods are defined in the legislation. Advertisements will include how submissions can be made and where the documents are available for viewing.

5.2 Development Assessment

Council is the consent authority for a broad range of application types under the EP&A Act. Some of these application types will require a process of public notification to be undertaken throughout the assessment process.

The following section explains the application types that will have public notification, minimum periods of notification and the processes that will be followed where notification is required.

5.2.1 State and Regionally Significant Development Applications

Certain types of development are considered state significant, including proposals that are of a certain size, in a sensitive environmental area, or exceeding a specific capital investment value. State significant development applications are assessed by the NSW Department of Planning and determined by the Independent Planning Commission or the Minister for Planning or their delegate. The notification process for these developments is done by the NSW Department of Planning, and are available on the NSW Planning Portal at **planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects**. Submissions can be made through the portal.

Certain types of development are considered regionally significant, along with development applications that are larger in value, scale and/or complexity. These types of development applications are assessed by Council, but are determined by the Southern Regional Planning Panel. More information about planning panels is available on the Planning Portal at **planningportal.nsw.gov.au/planningpanels**

5.3 The Notification Process

Public notification informs a targeted audience of the receipt of an application under consideration by Council and provides an opportunity to review the documents and make a submission on the perceived impacts of the development (both positive and negative). The notification process is not the same as public consultation which is generally community-wide and seeks the wider community's views and feedback.

Public notification occurs in the following three ways:

- **Advertised development**
  Details of applications requiring advertisement under NSW planning legislation or this Strategy are published on our website at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/development-public-notices**
- **Adjoining Owner Notification**
  The owners of all properties sharing a common boundary with the subject property, including those separated by a roadway or similar thoroughfare, are notified in writing of the application.
- **Council website notification**
  All applications requiring public notification are published on Council's website at **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/notification**

Information about making a submission on a development application is in 5.6.

5.4 Minimum Notification Periods

Table 1 below highlights the minimum public notification period for the mentioned plans in accordance with Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* or with the *Local Government Act 1993*. If notification is occurring over the Christmas/New Year period, those days between Christmas and New Year will be discounted from the required notification period.

Table 1 - Minimum Public Notification Periods for Plans

Type of Plan	Minimum Notification Period
Draft community participation plan	28 days
Draft local strategic planning statement	28 days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to gateway determination	28 days (unless specified differently in a gateway determination)
Draft plans of management	28 days (with 42 days to make a submission)
Draft development control plans	28 days
Draft contribution plans (i.e. Local Planning Agreements and Section 7.11 plans)	28 days

Table 2 below highlights the minimum public notification period for the mentioned developments.

Table 2 – Minimum Public Notification Periods	
Type of Application	Minimum Notification Period
Development Applications – Applications for development consent for designated development Designated developments are higher impact developments that are detailed in Schedule 3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 and includes activities such as aquaculture, coalmines, chemical storage facilities, extractive industries, electricity generating stations and marinas. These developments need to be supported by an Environmental Impact Statement.	28 days
DA – Applications for development consent for State Significant Development Some types of development are deemed to have State significance due to the size, economic value or potential impacts that a development may have. Development that is State significant development (SSD) is identified in the State and Regional Development State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) and includes development such as new education establishments, hospitals and correction centres, mining and extraction operations, tourist and port facilities.	28 days
DA – Applications for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development) identified within Table 3 below. Examples include development applications for new two (2) storey dwellings, major commercial and industrial developments and development involving a local heritage item.	14 days
DA - Application for development consent for nominated integrated development or threatened species development	28 days
Application for development consent for category 1 remediation work under State Environmental Planning Policy No 55 - Remediation of Land	28 days
Council related Development Applications Examples include applications made: 1. By or on behalf of the Council 2. On land for which Council is an owner, lessee or licensee, or 3. On land which is otherwise vested in the control of Council.	28 days
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Obtained under Division 5.1 for works by or on behalf of Council An EIS is prepared for development under Part 5 of the EP&A Act for certain development permitted without consent undertaken by or on behalf of Council.	28 days
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – for State Significant Infrastructure under Division 5.2 State Significant Infrastructure includes major transport and services development such as rail and road infrastructure, pipelines and development in National Parks.	28 days

5.5 Notified Development

Table 3 below establishes application types, other than applications for complying development certificates, designated developments or State significant developments that Council deems to require public notification. It should be noted that exclusion from this list is to be taken as an exemption from requiring public exhibition in accordance with Part 1(7) of Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act.

Table 3 - Notified Development			
Type of Development	Advertised Development (website)	Notice to adjoining owners	Council website notification
Residential Development			
Two storey Dwelling Houses including a new or part storey (excluding RU1 Primary Production Zone)	NO	YES	YES
Dual Occupancy and Secondary Dwelling	NO	YES	YES
Multi Dwelling Housing, Residential Flat Buildings, Boarding Houses, Group Homes, Hostels, Rural Worker's Dwellings, Seniors Housing and Shop Top Housing	YES	YES	YES
Zero lot line walls – any dwelling or garage/ shed wall on the boundary or within 900mm of the boundary	NO	YES	YES
Commercial and Industrial Development			
Child Care Centres	YES	YES	YES
Licensed premises (such as a club, pub, hotel or night club)	YES	YES	YES
Major Commercial or Industrial developments (Such as supermarkets, bulky goods premises, function centres, entertainment facilities, takeaway food premises in new buildings and waste or resource management facilities)	YES	YES	YES
Offensive or Hazardous Industry	YES	YES	YES
Mining or Extractive Industry	YES	YES	YES
Rural Industry	YES	YES	YES
Education Establishment	YES	YES	YES
Tourist and Visitor Accommodation	YES	YES	YES
Brothels	YES	YES	YES

Type of Development	Advertised Development (website)	Notice to adjoining owners	Council website notification
Health Services Facilities	YES	YES	YES
Intensive Livestock or Plant Agriculture	YES	YES	YES
Place of Assembly or Worship	YES	YES	YES
Restricted Premises	YES	YES	YES
Change of use where "Existing Use Rights" (as defined in 4.65 of the EP&A Act) are involved	NO	YES	YES
Other Development			
Development involving a local Heritage Item	NO	YES	YES
Development in a Heritage Conservation Area (where the work is highly visible from the street)	NO	YES	YES
Development involving State listed Heritage Item (excluding the Braidwood and its setting State Heritage Conservation Area)	YES	YES	YES
Developments where, in the opinion of Council, the proposal is generally not in keeping with the established scale and character of surrounding development	YES	YES	YES
Development where, in the opinion of Council, it would be in the public interest to notify the application	YES	YES	YES
Earthworks - major earthworks and land forming operations	YES	YES	YES
Advertising Structures (excluding Building or Business Identification Signage)	NO	YES	YES
Integrated Development as identified in 4.46 of the EP&A Act	YES	YES	YES
Development involving a significant variation to a development control under a Development Control Plan	NO	YES	YES
Variations under Clause 4.6 of a Local Environmental Plan	YES	YES	YES
Variation to Building Envelope	NO	YES	YES
Modifications Under 4.55(1A)	NO	NO	NO
Modifications Under 4.55(1)	NO	NO	NO
Modifications Under 4.55(2)	Same as original application	Same as original application	Same as original application
Subdivision of land Creating 4 or more allotments (excluding strata title subdivisions)	NO	YES	YES
Remediation requiring consent	NO	YES	YES
Telecommunications Facilities, High Impact (i.e.Tower)	YES	YES	YES

Please note: The assessing officer may, at any time, use their discretion to require the notification of a specific development application given their assessment of the proposal's potential environmental, social, or cultural impacts.

5.6 Making a submission

Any person may make a submission in relation to a publicly notified application outlining their reasons for support or opposition to the proposed development. If the submission is an objection to the development, the grounds for objection should be clearly stated.

A person wishing to lodge a submission must disclose donations or gifts made to Councillors or Council staff. This is required under s 10.4 of the EP&A Act. Significant penalties apply for non-disclosure. See the form "Political Donations and Gifts Disclosure Statement" on our website **www.qprc.nsw.gov.au** for completion and attachment to submissions.

Submissions are required to be made in writing and can be submitted to Council for the duration of the notification period through Council's online submission form, by email, mail, or delivered in person to Council offices. Submissions received outside of the notification period will only be accepted at Council's discretion.

All submissions will become public documents, may be made available to applicants, and may be included in Council reports, published on Council's website and/or discussed at meetings. Applications referred to a Council meeting may include the name and address of the person making the submission as part of the information included in Council's Business Paper.

5.7 Consideration of Submissions

Where a development application has been publicly advertised or notified and one or more written submissions by way of objection have been received, the determination of the application will follow the process below:

1. The assessing officer will review the submissions to determine the validity of the concerns raised. Where the development satisfies Council's LEP and DCPs and the concerns raised are not deemed to be valid or are unsound or are of a nature that can be remedied through a condition of consent or the applicant has agreed to modify the development plans the development application will be determined under Delegated Authority of Council by an Authorised Officer.
2. Where in the opinion of the assessing officer significant valid concerns have been identified and where such concerns are unable to be resolved by staff or the applicant is unwilling to modify the development to overcome such concerns the application will be reported to a Council meeting for determination. The applicant and each person who lodged a submission will be notified (by letter, email, or verbally) of the date and time of the Council meeting and be advised of their right to attend and how representations may be made to Council when the business paper is finalised on Council's website.

Prior to the meeting an inspection of the property may be arranged by Council staff to which applicants and/or submitters may be invited to address Councillors and Council staff.

Any presentation to Council, whether by an applicant or submitter shall be carried out in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice.

Please note that the consideration of submissions is not a consultation or negotiation process with submitters. The concerns raised will be assessed on planning grounds. Other than acknowledgement of receipt of the submission, Council's next interaction with submitters will be as discussed in 5.8.

5.8 Notification of Determinations

Following the determination of an application where submissions have been received Council will notify each person who made a submission in respect of Council's determination of the application including a copy of that determination notice. Council also publicly notifies all decisions in accordance with Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act. The determination notice includes the following information:

- The decision
- The date of the decision
- The reasons for the decision (having regard to any statutory requirements applying to the decision)
- How community views were taken into account in making the decision.