



Hawkesbury City Council

Attachment 1
to
item 217

Draft Community Engagement
Framework 2019

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Draft Community Engagement Framework

September 2019





This document contains important information.
If you do not understand it, contact the
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The Hawkesbury 2036.... It's Our Future



OUR PLAN

Our Leadership

Intent

Be a respected civic leader through consistent, transparent and engaged decision making that the community can understand.



Our Leadership



Our Community



Our Environment



Our Assets



Our Future



Hawkesbury City Council acknowledges the Darug and Darkinjung people as the Traditional custodians of the land of the Hawkesbury.

We pay respect to all Elders, past, present and emerging and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this Country.



1 ■ Overview of Hawkesbury

1.1 Our City: Hawkesbury

The original custodians for the past 40,000 years within the Hawkesbury have been the Darug and Darkinjung tribes. At the time of European settlement there were up to 3,000 Aboriginal people living in the Hawkesbury area.

The Hawkesbury was settled by Europeans over 200 years ago and was one of the earliest areas to be settled after Governor Phillip's arrival in 1789. In 1794, farms were marked out from South Creek to Wilberforce and, within four years, the area was populated with 600 free settlers as well as convict labourers. In 1810, Governor Macquarie established five towns in the area - Windsor, Richmond, Wilberforce, Pitt Town and Castlereagh.

We are the largest geographical local government area (LGA) in Metropolitan Sydney with an area of 2,776 square kilometres. We are home to just over 66,000 people. The LGA is located 55 kilometres north-west of the Sydney CBD. We are;

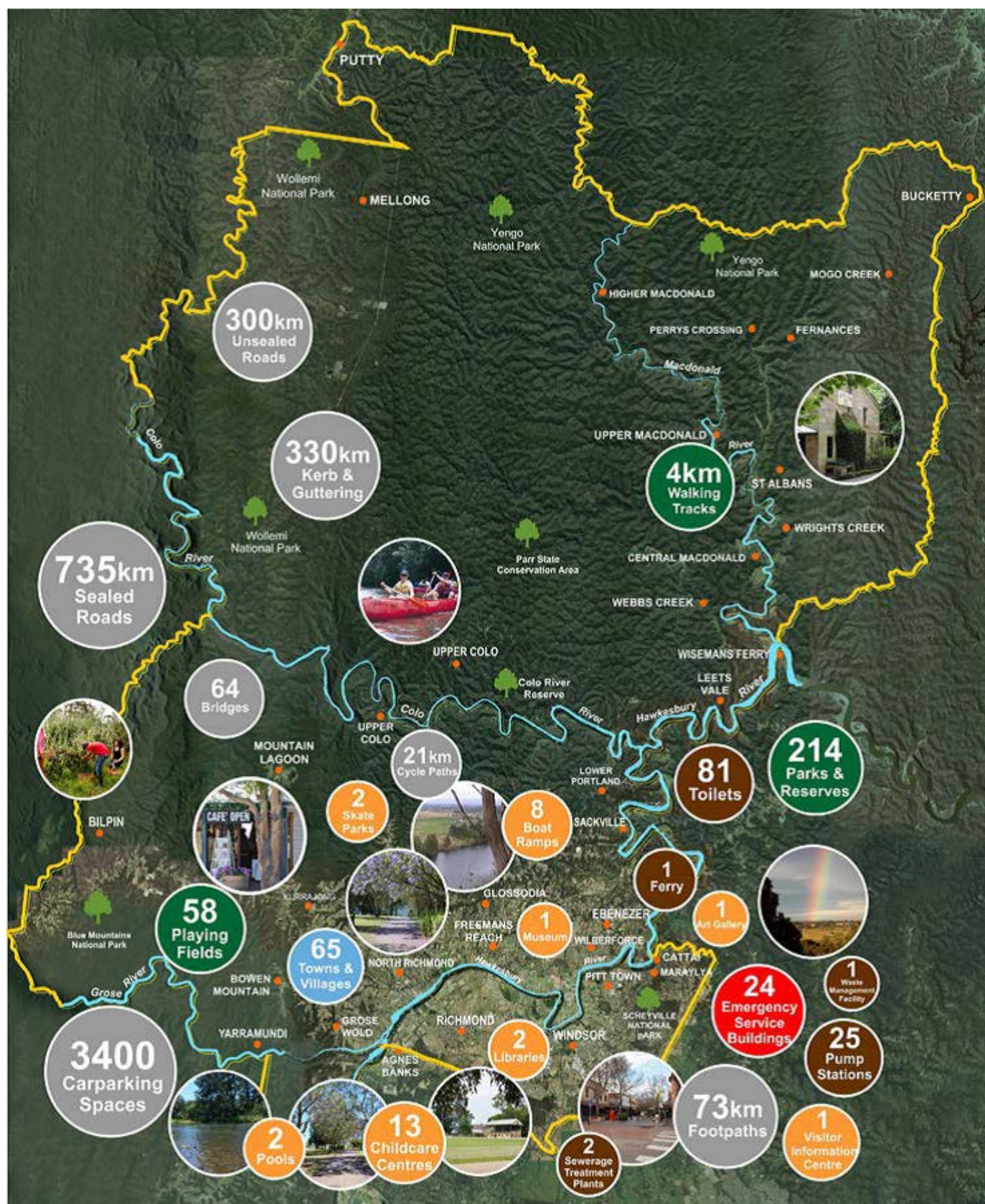
- A growing City: our City is expected to accommodate another 18,000 people by 2036.
- Diversity: 12.6 per cent of our residents were born overseas.
- Demographics: the median age in our City is 36 years old. The proportion of our residents who are younger - aged under 14 years old is 19.9 per cent which is comparable with Greater Sydney (22 per cent), those aged 65 or above (14.4 per cent for our City, compared to 19 per cent for Greater Sydney).
- A productive City: we are home to over 6,000 businesses and 27,723 local jobs. This results in \$3 billion gross regional product. Both our local businesses and our industrial sectors are important to our economic success. Our City houses 37 schools and the Hawkesbury campus of Western Sydney University.
- Our labour force is diverse: we have the full range of skills and qualifications in our area. The suburbs west of the river rank higher on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Advantage/ Disadvantage and are more likely to house highly qualified, high income households, while our suburbs east of the river rank lower.¹

These features of our population are important to keep in mind when designing engagement activities across the City, and indicate that a 'one size fits all' approach will not work in the Hawkesbury.

Figure 1 shows the City at a glance.

Our City is expansive and covers an area of 2,776km, with a population that has significant variability in income, education levels and employment.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Advantage and Disadvantage.



1.2 Our City's Vision and Mission

Our Vision

We see the Hawkesbury as a vibrant and collaborative community living in harmony with our history and environment, whilst valuing our diversity, striving for innovation, a strong economy and retaining our lifestyle and identity.

Our Mission

Hawkesbury City Council leading and working with our community to create a healthy and resilient future.

Our Values

Hawkesbury City Council is a professional, friendly and ethical organisation that consults with, and listens to the community. In our daily activities we embrace the following values, and aim to deliver on these in an effective and efficient manner:

PROFESSIONAL

We set clear goals, measure results and seek to improve

We are sustainable

We are resilient

ETHICAL

We behave with integrity

We keep our commitments and deliver

We make fair and consistent decisions

ENGAGING

We value open and clear communication

We listen to the contribution of every individual

We value differences in people and their perspectives

COLLABORATIVE

We work together

We are cooperative

We share our ideas and talents



2 ■ Engagement Framework

Purpose

The Community Engagement Framework formalises the commitment of Hawkesbury City Council (Council) to timely, appropriate and effective engagement with the community.

This Engagement Framework has been designed to guide a consistent, best-practice approach to engagement across our City.

In general, this Framework will assist Council in developing project plans that will allow more informed decision making by Council. From time to time, Council may engage with members of the community on projects or decisions outside of its direct responsibility.

We will evaluate and improve our engagement to ensure the community can easily participate.

We will maintain relationships and refine our engagement approach and efforts to communicate impact, answering 'what is in it for me?'

This Community Engagement Framework is Council's response to the Community Engagement Strategy requirements of Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993.

City Engagement Commitment

Hawkesbury City Council is committed to better decision making through an engagement program that is values-based and goal-driven.

Council acknowledges the significant geographic diversity of its community, and is committed to ensuring residents and business owners are informed and have opportunities to contribute to shaping Council projects, plans and decisions. Community engagement that is transparent, representative and that builds capacity is fundamental to developing an ongoing community-Council relationship based on trust and accountability.

Principles

Our approach to engagement is underpinned by a set of principles that define what members of the community should reasonably expect from Council when it is engaging on its plans, policies or projects. These principles are integrated into the planning, design and delivery of our engagement processes. They are:

- Flexible – our engagement provides members of the community with multiple opportunities to get involved, in ways that are socially and culturally appropriate. Engagement is also designed and delivered by a range of teams within Council, drawing on their existing networks and relationships. There is no “one size fits all” approach.
- Respectful – our engagement is respectful of the diverse views in our community and the many ways people like to be engaged. We acknowledge a person’s input by reporting back on how their views have informed our decisions and, if they haven’t, why.
- Credible – we are open, honest and transparent in engaging with our stakeholders. Our engagement is based on a foundation of authenticity and an evidence-based understanding of our community’s needs and preferences.
- Collaborative – our engagement is a joint effort across Council teams and between Council and community, which means building relationships with stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups, and keeping them involved in our activities.

- Consistent – engagement is the business of everyone in Council and is delivered by many people across our organisation. Engagement should be delivered in a planned and consistent way, so our stakeholders know what to expect when engaging with us.
- Educational – our engagement is supported by tools, processes and expertise that enhance the skills of Council staff and build the capacity of community members and other stakeholders to engage.
- Embedded – engagement underpins all of Council's strategic and operational work.
- Evaluated – our engagement processes will be reviewed, measured and refined in response to feedback from our communities.

Our Community Engagement principles are consistent with international best practice, most notably the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values. IAP2 core values identify those aspects of public participation which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries.

2.1 What do we mean by engagement?

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) defines engagement as “any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and uses public input to make sustainable decisions”.

Engagement or public participation as IAP2 terms the practice, “includes all aspects of identifying problems and opportunities, developing alternatives and making decisions” (IAP2, 2016: 2).

2.2 Why do we engage?

At Council, we are committed to ongoing and meaningful engagement with our communities and stakeholders. Engaging with our communities helps us to:

- **Identify and understand what is important to our communities** - their needs, priorities and aspirations;
- Ensure that our services best **meet the range of community needs** - inclusive of cultural and social backgrounds;
- **Allow a range of voices to be heard**, not just those people who are articulate, angry, loud or powerful;
- **Identify shared values, benefits and outcomes** and how Council and community can work together to realise our goals; and
- **Manage risks** by understanding and anticipating issues before they escalate.


2.3 Why engagement is fundamental to our business

By engaging with our communities, we can understand what is of most importance to them now and into the future. Our aspiration is to be an organisation that puts engagement at the centre of everything we do. To succeed, we need to involve our communities in a meaningful way in our operations and activities to build community trust. Ongoing discussions with our communities will empower them and influence positive and durable Council decisions.

The IAP2 Community Engagement Model (2014) acknowledges that engagement can originate and be implemented from, not only within our organisation, but also across the entire City.

Beyond statutory requirements, the NSW *Local Government Act 1993* states:

“Members of the public may influence council decisions concerning matters such as the levels of rates and charges, the terms of community strategic plans, delivery programs and operational plans, the granting of development consents, etc. by participating in council community engagement activities including by making submissions to the council and comments on or objections to proposals relating to those matters.”



Hawkesbury City Council recognises the value to be gained by engaging with the community beyond the statutory requirements.

2.4 When to undertake Community Engagement

Council will undertake or contribute to community engagement at any time an upcoming decision or project is likely to have a direct or indirect impact on either whole or part of the community. The extent of engagement will be guided by the:

- Level of impact, be it positive or adverse
- How much present data exists to convey community views on the topic
- Community appetite for engagement (with consideration for 'consultation fatigue').

The Hawkesbury City Council Community Engagement Framework provides guidelines for Council to determine the appropriate timing for the implementation of engagement activities.

A number of situations will trigger engagement by Council, including:

1. In response to issues raised and/or engagement initiated by the community
2. Where proposed changes are likely to impact on the community, including service and program planning, development, project delivery or policy change
3. In planning the strategic direction of Council, and/or
4. When required by law, policy or agreement with a government agency or statutory body.

2.5 How to undertake Community Engagement

Following the identification of the primary purpose and potential for community impact, the relevant engagement team within Council will determine the most appropriate engagement tools and activities. The methodology will be based on IAP2 practices and will put the specific cultural, economic, and social needs of the community at the centre. It will also be evidence-based so that Council can demonstrate effective engagement of a true cross-section of the community.

Engagement can take many forms and range from informing stakeholders about a plan, project or policy, to obtaining input and feedback, or including stakeholders in decision-making.

Council will undertake engagement with consideration to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, which is represented in the Figure 2 below. Levels of participation run from inform to empower and are determined by:

- An analysis of the objectives of the engagement process
- The level of impact the decisions being made are likely to have on members of the community
- The levels of interest and influence on the decision to be made
- The resources, budget and timeframes dedicated to engagement.

Our principles are consistent with international best practice, most notably the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values.

2.6 Participation spectrum

Engagement can take many forms and range from informing stakeholders about a plan, project or policy, to obtaining input and feedback, or including stakeholders in decision-making.


Figure 2: IAP2 public participation spectrum

Increasing level of public impact					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balances, objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives 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 issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public 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 provided feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advised and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
Some examples	Factsheets, letters, Have Your Say website and media releases	Focus groups, surveys, public comment on Have Your Say website and pop-up-stalls	Workshops and deliberative polling	Advisory committees and participatory decision making	Citizen juries, ballots and delegated decisions

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is an industry-recognised tool designed to assist in selecting the public's level of participation in a community engagement program. Levels of participation run from inform to empower, and are determined by:

- An analysis of the objectives of the engagement process
- The level of impact the decisions being made are likely to have on members of the community
- The levels of interest and influence on the decision to be made
- The resources, budget and timeframes dedicated to engagement.

When engagement is led by local sporting groups, clubs, businesses, schools or other government organisations, Council should be proactive in awareness of these conversations to identify opportunities presented for Council to investigate or become involved in.



In the City of Hawkesbury, this could mean that engagement:

- Is planned and led by all parts of Council
- Might be led by other levels of government, with aspects delivered by Council
- May originate from the community itself.

2.7 How much time and effort is required for engagement?

The time and effort we expend on engagement will be determined by:

- The level of complexity of the activities we are undertaking
- The level of impact they are likely to have on our communities and other stakeholders
- The level of public interest they are likely to generate.

The Community Engagement Toolkit includes a tool which can be used when analysing the level of impact and interest from the perspective of our communities and stakeholders.

2.8 The cost benefit of quality engagement

The plan is focused on the direct benefits of engagement during project design and planning, rather than immeasurable benefits and intangibles. These benefits include:

- Cost reductions through design improvements, as a result of community feedback
- Reduced unplanned risk contingency, as a result of improved risk pricing
- Funded risk contingency is saved through effective engagement activities and improved risk pricing.

2.9 Reporting and evaluating

Evaluation should be undertaken throughout the engagement period, to ensure that improvements to the engagement plan can be implemented throughout the process. It is also vital in ensuring the process is robust and has delivered the outcomes of the project.

The evaluation process allows Council to measure the participation satisfaction and experience. It also allows Council to action what the results are telling us.

Reporting engagement evaluation ensures Council is open and transparent, providing the community confidence in informed decision making by Council.

2.10 Community Engagement Toolkit

The Community Engagement Toolkit includes practical resources to assist Councillors, Council staff, and those undertaking engagement on behalf of Council, to fulfil their obligations under the framework. This resource provides tools to ensure that Council's engagement practice is inclusive.

Engaging well is the business of everyone in Council.



Legislative Compliance

Council is committed to acting in accordance with its legislative obligations and will ensure accurate records are maintained and managed according to Council's Records Management Policy. Additionally, Council will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of those partaking in community engagement activities in line with Council's Access to Information Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EPA) Act 1979*
- *State Records Act 1998*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

Associated Documents

- Community Engagement Plan
- Access to Information Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Privacy Management Plan

Definitions

Community	Community refers to the people who have a stake and interest in the Hawkesbury Local Government Area (LGA) this includes people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• live, work, study or conduct business in the LGA.• visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within the LGA.
Community Engagement	The involvement of the community in the decision making process of Council, where the community
Stakeholder	Individuals or groups who have an interest or are impacted by the decisions of Council, these may include business representatives, professional associations, local community groups, or other levels of Government and Government agencies.

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

IAP2 is an international association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community engagement, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world.

