Town of Port Hedland - Community Engagement Strategy

Date: July 2014

GLOSSARY of TERMS and ABBREVIATIONS

Capacity Building
The ongoing development of awareness, knowledge, skills and capability by certain groups and individual, normally the community, to achieve their purpose.

Community Consultation
The process of informed communication between the Town and the local community on an issue prior to the Town or Council making a decision or determining a direction on those issues. Consultation is a process, not an outcome and recognizes that Council has the mandate to be the decision-maker.

Community Engagement
The broad and ongoing range of interactions between the Town and the local community to build capacity and partnerships. Community engagement is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions.

Communities of Interest
A community of people who share a particular experience, common interest or characteristic. This could include but is not limited to: young people, gender and faith groups, indigenous people, resident groups, environmental groups, social groups and sporting groups.

Community Planning
A process of community engagement leading to the development of a future looking plan which sets out priorities and actions needed.

Stakeholder
Any person or group who has a stake in what happens in a Place or community.

Geographic Communities
Communities in a given location, such as the whole geographic area within the Town of Port Hedland's boundaries, or a Place, or a neighbourhood. Also known as Communities of Place.

Functional Communities
Communities defined by the commonality of their objectives and interests, such as service providers, specific interest groups or community groups; and/or by how their members identify themselves or how they are identified by society, such as young people, older people, people with disabilities, the working population, families, religious groups, Indigenous groups, ethnicity etc.

Public participation
The approach is about taking the voice of street-level knowledge in communities for use in bottom-up strategic planning.

REFERENCES

This strategy has been based on research and the varied experience of staff. A number of community engagement strategies from local governments, both national and international were also used as a guide of best practice in the preparation of this strategy.

- Bang the Table 2008 '*Why Engage On-line*' http://corporate.bangthetable.com/howtoguides Access 30 March 2009.
- International Association for Public Participation (2004) '*IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum*' www.iap2.org
- Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (2007) '*Effective Engagement*'
- http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn203.nsf/childdocs/-0B996EB412EAB883CA2570360014F01A-6BC40C338B25036ECA257036001555F2?open
- Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) 2006 '*Best Value Victoria Community Consultation*

Acknowledgement to Country

We would like to acknowledge the Kariyarra people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land.
We would also like to pay respect to the Kariyarra Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

Executive Summary

Community engagement is a regular and important part of the Town's everyday services, involving the interaction of the Town, Council, partners and the local community in a variety of settings and circumstances.

The Community Engagement Strategy aims to:
- Provide a consistent approach across the Town's departments as to how the Town and Elected Members engage with the local community
- Strengthen the partnership between the Town, government stakeholders, service providers, local organisations and the local community through ongoing community engagement
- Improve knowledge and skills of Town staff and to improve internal coordination
- Be proactive and open to innovative ways to consult with the whole of the community.

For the purpose of this strategy, the term 'Community Engagement' is used to describe the overall outcome that the Town is aiming to achieve, while the term 'Consultation' is used to describe the actual practice and a particular type of processes used to engage with the community. Effective community engagement should be a first thought, not an afterthought for any project. This strategy is based around a set of principles to ensure the Town engages with and encourages the local community to participate in engagement processes that influence our enjoyment of this Town as residents, workers, investors and visitors.

The seven principles of this strategy are:
- *Inclusiveness and Diversity* – Recognising and valuing the diversity of the local community and the different strengths each group and individual has to offer
- *Openness, Respect and Accountability* – Ensuring engagement processes and engagement with the local community is approached in an open and respectful manner with clear lines of accountability.
- *Leadership* – Taking the initiative for engagement, seeking support and partnerships to support and facilitate discussion which represents the wider community interests and encouraging leadership within the Town and the local community.
- *Purpose* – Providing clear direction and guidance for the local community, key stakeholders and the Town itself as to the reason for the engagement being conducted.
- *Information Sharing* – Providing clear, easy to understand information in a timely manner and sharing information that is as accurate as possible. Information sharing also relies on the involvement of participants and a commitment to be open to different views.
- *Feedback and Evaluation* – Informing participants as to how their opinions and information have contributed to the preparation and decision of the Town or Council is vital and understanding the views of participants specific to the engagement process itself is a valuable learning tool.
- *Resourcing and Timing* – Staff training requirements and the physical and financial resources involved in conducting engagement must be considered both for the individual project and the overall needs of the Town's departments.

Strategic Context

Introduction

Town of Port Hedland aims to inform, involve and effectively engage with the local community in the preparation of strategies, plans and policies, the implementation of projects and the Town's activities.

The preparation of this Community Engagement Strategy demonstrates a clear commitment of the Town of Port Hedland to actively engage the local community through best practice engagement methods.

The Strategy also sets out the Town's approach by identifying a set of principles that will shape how to encourage government / industry partners and the local community to play an active role in the way the Town plans for the future of Port Hedland and for the community.

This document outlines an understanding of community engagement. The adoption of the stated principles as a consideration for all engagement processes enables the Town of Port Hedland to engage more effectively with the local community.

Various legislation, such as the Local Government Act (1993), Planning Development Act (and Regulations) and the Environment Planning and Assessment Act (1979) set out minimum standards for community engagement.

Therefore, community consultation is an integral component in the preparation of a variety of the Town's strategic and corporate documents and plans, as well as the delivery of the Town's programs and services.

The Town of Port Hedland recognises the importance of internal consultation between directorates and departments. Maintaining a high level of communication between the Town's departments will ensure effective and coordinated engagement. The role of Elected Members is a link to and advocate for the local community. This also emphasizes the importance of openness and an agreed process for sharing information.

The Town of Port Hedland's Community Engagement Strategy is an evolving document. It will continue to change over time in response to legislation and to reflect best practice engagement guidance. This Strategy is to be reviewed every two years and updated accordingly.

1. Why Engage?	
1.1 Why is a community engagement plan required?	All local governments are currently required to produce a plan for the future under S5.56[1] of the *Local Government Act* 1995 (the Act). It is intended that regulations will be made under S5.56[2] of the *Act* to briefly outline the minimum requirements to achieve this. The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework provides the basis for improving the strategic planning in local government. It addresses the minimum requirements to meet with the *Act* and outlines processes and activities to achieve an integrated strategic plan at the individual local government level. (Ref: Integrated Planning and Report: Framework and guidelines, Department of Local Government WA). The aim is to build a cohesive and sustainable community by being responsive to the needs of our community; to engage and encourage the local community to participate in activities that influence our enjoyment of the Town as residents, workers, investors and visitors. The overall aims of this strategy are to: - Provide a consistent approach across the Town's departments and ensure that all engagement processes and community engagement activities are conducted according to the adopted 'Principles of Effective Engagement and Community Engagement' - Strengthen the partnership between the Town, government and industry stakeholders, service providers, local organisations and the local community through ongoing engagement. Also to encourage partners to be well informed and proactive about the issues that may directly affect them - Facilitate an environment in which the Town and the local community can exchange views, ideas and information, therefore resulting in policies, projects and the Town's activities that are more responsive to local needs, concerns and priorities - Improve communication and information sharing between the Town and the local community - Improve knowledge and skills of Town staff and to improve internal coordination between the Town's departments. Provide a greater staff understanding of decisions that affect the community - Be proactive and open to new and innovative ways to consult and maintain ongoing engagement with the whole of the community. Community engagement contributes to the creation of effective policies, planning, and service delivery. The collaborative process of engaging communities also contributes to building stronger communities.

2. Core Values	
	The purpose of core values* is to help an organisation, decision makers and practitioners make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. 1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives 2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision 3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers 4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision 5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate 6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way 7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. *** Source** IAP2 Core Values - "IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation" for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes.

3. What do we mean by 'Community Engagement', 'Consultation' and 'Statutory Advertising'?	
	"Community engagement is achieved when the local community is and feels part of the overall governance'' (VLGA 2006: 5). The International Association of Public Participation define community engagement as: *"any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses the public input to make more informed decisions".*
	The terms 'community engagement' and 'community consultation' mean a variety of things to different people. For the purpose of this strategy, **'community engagement'** is used as a generic, inclusive term to describe the broad and ongoing range of interactions between the Town and the whole of the local community. *(DSE 2007: 'What is Community Engagement').* Therefore, by this definition, community engagement is an outcome.
	The term **'consultation'** is used in this strategy to describe the actual practice and a specific type of process used to engage with the community and are part of the overall concept of community engagement. Consultation includes a variety of approaches and/or methods to achieve outcomes, such as information delivery, involvement and collaboration in decision-making and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.
	Engagement with the local community is a regular and important part of the Town's everyday services and involves the interaction of the Town and stakeholders in a variety of settings and circumstances. Formal engagement processes are conducted for a variety of projects and the Town's activities and will take a number of forms depending on the desired outcome of the particular policy, project and/or activity and consideration of any relevant legislative requirements. The methods of formal engagement can range from the public exhibition of a Town strategy, plan or policy; focus groups, online or written surveys; workshops, e-forums, newsletters and media releases.
	The Town is bound by requirements for '**statutory advertising'**, specifying minimum advertising periods and processes. Minimum advertising periods may be extended and processes expanded at the Town's discretion, dependent on the nature and complexity of the application / proposal. Following statutory advertising, all submissions are detailed in a report to Council. Decision made by Council 'on-balance' of information and submissions / advertising feedback.
	The Planning Development Act (and Regulations) and the Town of Port Hedland Town Planning Scheme No.5 specifies minimum requirements for advertising periods and processes, this (draft updated) Community Engagement Strategy acknowledges the potential use of improved technological tools to more easily provide information to the community on proposed developments, as well as on-line lodgment of statutory submissions. Submissions through this process will need to fulfill the Department of Planning's requirements for statutory comment.

4. When, Who and How to Engage	
4.1 Establish Objectives	**Key objectives that the project will address:** • To develop a Strategic Community Plan that clearly links the community's aspirations with the Town's vision and long term strategy (i.e. ten years), and drives the Town's corporate planning processes • To involve Town stakeholders in identifying their key long term priorities across the community • To assist the Town to clearly state a vision for the long term future direction of the Town, which aligns with community aspirations and priorities • To optimise stakeholder involvement and the quality of decision making • To maintain the integrity and transparency of the data collected in the processes, and ensure clear communication throughout the process. **The Town of Port Hedland (Community Engagement Policy) will take a 'principles approach' to community engagement, following the guiding principles from IAP2:** • **Integrity** – when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement • **Inclusion** – when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard • **Deliberation** – when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understanding and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities • **Influence** – when people have input in determining how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent. **A reference group of internal and external stakeholders can provide comment on the engagement objectives prior to the community engagement period. Main internal and external stakeholders consulted with in the development of the key objective(s).** **External:** Town of Port Hedland Stakeholders (e.g. industry, community members, groups, agencies, businesses, services etc.) **Internal:** Executive Management, Elected Members, and Project teams, Town Staff**.**

5. Stakeholder Identification	
5.1 Identify Communities to be Engaged	Identification of specific major stakeholders will be undertaken ensuring there is representation from: • General community, residents groups • Indigenous communities • People with disabilities • Non-residential workforce • Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities • Youth, children, seniors • Environmental interest groups • Business community • Services, agencies, organisations, Not for Profit (NfP), other sectors • Any other stakeholders. **Stakeholder analysis:** Once stakeholders are identified, they will be analysed to ascertain how they could be most effectively engaged. Not all groups can be consulted using the same techniques; some people are more comfortable with particular environments and methodologies. The outcome of the analysis will inform the detailed design of the engagement methodology. **Context:** Targeted sessions will be held to ensure major stakeholder groups are represented in the engagement process. Stakeholders will be given a variety of avenues to participate in the engagement process. **Visioning workshops:** General community members, business sector representatives and community organisations may be invited to participate in vision workshops through advertisements placed in conventional media and online or through direct mail where appropriate. Workshops may be 'themed' using the areas identified in the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines*. Discussion papers covering all key theme areas will guide participants. The participants may be asked to consider global and national trends, legislative or policy requirements, the current Town approach and develop their vision to guide for the Town's future direction.

Targeted visioning sessions:

Targeted stakeholder groups may be invited to participate in visioning sessions. The format of these sessions will be dependent upon the analysis of the particular stakeholder group to ascertain how they could be most effectively engaged. The sessions will be 'themed' using a similar approach to the general community sessions.

Opportunities may be sought for small group interaction with facilitators meeting with key groups who may not attend the public sessions, such as youth centres, playgroups, and frail-aged. The outline of these sessions will be developed in consultation with the external community engagement facilitator and with reference to relevant Town staff.

Surveys

Surveys may be used in hard copy and online to all (self-identified) stakeholders. The questions will elicit the same data as the visioning workshops and the targeted sessions. The format of the surveys will be determined in consultation the external facilitator to ensure consistency and validity of data. The surveys may be available in other formats to ensure inclusion and equity of access.

6. Models of Community Engagement	
6.1 Type of Issue / Decision	Community engagement occurs for a variety of levels for public influence.
	The Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) identifies the possible methods of engagement relative to the level of impact that the community would have on decision-making. The types of engagement include inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.
	Figure 1 shows the type of engagement, the engagement purpose or promise and some examples.
	The Town of Port Hedland will require different levels of engagement depending on the project or the issue, and its impact on the local community. Table 1 uses the types of engagement within the public participation spectrum and identifies the level of engagement based on its goal.
	Where appropriate, the identified level and method of engagement, as well as the financial, timing and resource implications for each project will be noted in a report to Council.
	The Town of Port Hedland aims to identify genuine opportunities for the opinions, expertise and concerns of the community to play a part in our activities and projects. For this to occur, we must ensure that the engagement methods used are appropriate to the stated purpose or goal; deliver on what we said we would do and preserve the Town's Principles of Effective Engagement and Community Engagement.
	Level 1 **Inform** Giving information to the local community Level 2 **Consult** Seeking feedback from the local community Level 3 **Involve** Working directly with the local community Level 4 **Collaborate** Creating partnerships with the local community to produce recommendations and solutions Level 5 **Empower** Putting the final decision making in the hands of the local community.

Figure 1

Increasing Level of Public Impact →

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	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 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 provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	• Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Complexity, Impact and Sensitivity

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		YOUR ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM(S) AND ISSUE(S)	RANKING Place a tick in the relevant column below to indicate degree of Complexity, Impact and Sensitivity		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
COMPLEXITY	One clear issue or problem that needs to be addressed				
	More than one issue and/or problem to be resolved				
	Multiple issues and/or problems and it is unclear how to resolve them				
POTENTIAL COMMUNITY IMPACT	Little effect on communities and they will/may hardly notice any changes				
	Fixes a problem or creates a change that will/may benefit communities and will/may cause minor inconvenience				
	Creates a change that will have an impact on communities and the living environment, and the degree of impact/outrage will vary				
SENSITIVITY	Has acceptance throughout the community				
	Some may see a potential in raising the profile of a project/plan/service to gain attention to their cause				
	Community expectations are different to those of the decision makers and there is a high potential for some to use the uncertainty to gain attention				

7. How we will Consult

The Town of Port Hedland will utilise a range of resources and evaluation techniques appropriate for the engagement process and where appropriate will outline a specific engagement plan which support the principles within this strategy at the level of community engagement (see Table 1). Other resources, such as engagement toolkits may be developed to support the preparation of these plans.

Effective internal engagement is important to the outcome, to help make informed decisions and make certain that engagement processes are coordinated, resourced and timely. This will avoid the local community feeling fatigued whilst building capacity and strengthening partnerships to ensure services and programs are delivered effectively and efficient.

Informed communication with Elected Members is also important to achieve more effective engagement. Elected Members are a vital link between the local community and Town of Port Hedland staff. Town officers must ensure that Elected Members are informed about the policies and projects that the Town is consulting on and the program for engagement with the community.

How the Town will consult the local community will depend on the purpose, stage and desired outcomes of the engagement program for the particular policy or project. Where appropriate, engagement may occur as part of, though not limited to:

- The Town's strategic direction
- Developing Town of Port Hedland policies and plans (not statutory)
- Changes to a site or facility that may have an impact on the community or service delivery
- When issues are brought to the Town of Port Hedland.

Some common forms of informing and engaging with the community that the Town of Port Hedland will continue to use include, but not limited to:

- Letters – are an effective method to provide information regarding the preparation and/or implementation of specific polices or projects. When informing the local community about specific engagement, they should include information on how and where people can obtain copies of the document and the way in which comments can be submitted.

- Leaflets, Flyers and Newsletters – are a way to provide information in an 'eye-catching', easy to read summary. They are used to highlight the main issues and let the local community know how to be involved in the engagement program. These are also a way to regularly keep the local community up to date via electronic means or post about the activities of the Town

- Notices in conventional media and media releases – can be used to regularly keep the local community informed about specific policies and projects. Media releases allow for more information to be provided while notices are to inform the local community about engagement, events and specific details on the engagement of specific policies and projects

- Town of Port Hedland Website and E-mail – is a valuable communication tool. It enables information to be provided to a large number of people which is cost effective and environmentally sustainable.

- Town of Port Hedland Facebook page – used to inform the community, not as a primary online community engagement channel.

E-Engagement

E-engagement or electronic engagement is the use of the internet, e-mail and other web tools to enable participation in, and sharing of ideas regarding specific policy issues and the preparation of strategies and/or projects. Importantly, the use of e-engagement methods is an effective way of maintaining ongoing engagement with the local community.

The most ardent community members are much easier to engage with and will always find a way to make comment. However, there are many other community members that wish to participate but who are unable to access or are uncomfortable in environments created by traditional engagement methods. E-engagement encourages informed public participation and engagement between the Town and the local community, while also allowing the individual to choose when and where they are engaged.

Unlike traditional methods of engagement, social media is driven by the users rather than controlled by an authority. The Town of Port Hedland acknowledges that social media is an important element of contemporary communication, but also not to be relied upon as the primary channel for community engagement.

Used in conjunction with existing engagement methods and techniques, e-engagement is the way forward in terms of 'bringing more people into the conversation'. Like all other engagement methods, the use of e--engagement must establish parameters for the discussion upfront. This includes moderation rules, closing dates, how this sits with the decision process and what feedback people should expect. The Town is already using e-engagement methods simply by providing documents and information on line, utilising e-mail to inform the local community and receiving comments on specific policy issues via email.

The next step is for the Town of Port Hedland to move e-engagement tools from a way to inform and encourage its use as a way to interact and open a new dialogue with the local community.

Some advantages of e-engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Compliments other forms of electronic interaction (website)
- The potential to reach, quickly and easily a wide and diverse audience
- The opportunity for people to participate and provide input at a time which is convenient to them and to respond interactively and register their views via email, rather than by post
- The opportunity for more informed engagement and ongoing engagement, by providing access to further information through links to online resources
- The opportunity to filter and analyse responses automatically as they are received electronically
- The ability to conduct sustained discussion over time, allowing ideas to grow and develop which is not always possible in a one-off, face-to-face engagement. It is also an effective way of maintaining an open line of communication to foster ongoing engagement with the local community
- The opportunity to generate feedback and to provide them with a flow of information and updates through email alerts when future, similar engagement programs are launched
- Increasing transparency between the Town, stakeholders and the broader community.

Some of the common e-engagement tools are:

- Online engagement platforms
- Internet forums (also known as "e-forums")
- Webcasting meetings
- Facebook / Twitter
- YouTube
- Online polls
- Podcasting
- Online Surveys Electronic Voting
- Online feedback Forms
- Webinars (on line seminars or meetings)

Despite the significant increase in the number of households in Port Hedland with access a computer and the internet, the Town also acknowledges that not all people in the local community have access to or ability to use the internet. Therefore, e-engagement should be used in conjunction with a range of engagement methods to make sure engagement with the community is inclusive.

Policy Environment

The Town of Port Hedland has developed a Social Media policy that will apply to Town staff and Elected Members.

The policy provides guidelines when a staff member or Elected Member is providing information or communicating on behalf of the Town of Port Hedland. The requirement is for the individual providing information in representing the Town to clearly detail their identity, their position within the organisation, to act within the authority level of their position and to ensure that information is based on fact.

Usage of Social Media within the Town of Port Hedland

Usage of social media within the Town of Port Hedland should be in accordance with:

- Town of Port Hedland Social Media
- Requirements of the *Local Government Act* 1995.

Accordingly, use of social media shall be issue / topic specific (engagement on a specific matter) or clearly branded and identified as a sanctioned Town of Port Hedland initiative allowable under legislation (including Mayoral Facebook). The parameters under which social media will function are detailed in the Town of Port Hedland social media policy.

Moderation / Control of Social Media

Social media communication (staff and Elected Member) will be monitored by the CEO's office. Communication will be recorded in accordance with all requirements of record keeping. Ultimate arbitration authority (including Elected Member) will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer.

8. Principles of Effective Community Engagement

Effective engagement should be a first thought, not an afterthought for the preparation of any strategy, policy or project of the Town. The Town of Port Hedland is committed to engage early with the community and continually throughout the process.

Town of Port Hedland's Community Engagement Strategy is based around a set of principles to ensure that these are embedded in the engagement processes that the Town implements to effectively engage with the local community.

To be effective, engagement programs must be based on openness, trust, integrity and mutual respect for the legitimacy and point of view of all participants. How to effectively consult and engage with the local community will be considered in the initial stages of planning for any policy, project and/or activity of the Town according to the following principles:

The Town of Port Hedland's seven principles for effective community engagement are:

- Inclusiveness and Diversity
- Openness, Respect and Accountability
- Leadership
- Purpose
- Feedback and Evaluation
- Information Sharing
- Resourcing and Timing.

Inclusiveness and Diversity

The Town recognises and values the diversity of its local community and the different strengths each group and individual brings to the implementation of Town projects and activities as well as the preparation of Town strategies and policies. The Town will work to promote equality of opportunity and empower people to have their voices heard through effective, appropriate and safe engagement practices.

The Town of Port Hedland aims to proactively reach out to better engage with the whole of the community and seek to widen participation by taking steps to be accessible and inclusive.

To achieve this, the Town will:

- Ensure that all engagement programs use accessible venues for participants and where possible, engagement methods facilitate equal access for individuals and groups

- Seek to identify, empower and protect stakeholder groups and individuals that experience barriers to participation or have traditionally been challenging to engage (such as people with a disability, young children and people who speak a language other than English)
- Ensure written information provides reasonable opportunities for participation (e.g. providing translated information, large print, audio etc). All written materials should provide clear and easy to understand information, considering the differences of the intended audience (e.g. literacy and education levels; age; cultural background)
- Be proactive in identifying the demographic and cultural changes that occur and be responsive to change. The Town will aim to anticipate the need for supporting new groups that arise from any demographic changes, aiding participation and representation from the whole of the local community
- Seek to engage and empower communities and individuals from under-represented groups directly, particularly where they do not have the necessary infrastructure and groups to articulate and promote their interests.

Openness, Respect and Accountability

The Town of Port Hedland aims to ensure engagement processes and engagement with the local community is approached in an open and respectful manner with clear lines of accountability. This does not mean that engagement will always lead to agreement or that decisions are subject to consensus; however, it should lead to a better understanding of the issues, a mutual respect for different points of view and contribute to secure workable solutions.

To maintain the integrity of all the Town's engagement processes, it is vital that the outcome of any engagement is not predetermined. The Town will ensure that all engagement with the community is conducted as openly as possible to preserve credibility with both the local community and of the document, project and/or activity itself.

The understanding of project and engagement objectives, purpose, and expectations of both the Town and the local community is essential; the agenda and process should be clear and any constraints should be considered from the outset of the project.

To achieve this, the Town will:

- Communicate clearly and promptly with the local community the aims, intended process of engagement and reporting/feedback mechanisms by using appropriate communication methods and establishing clear and consistent lines of communication
- Inform participants how and where feedback and results of the engagement process will be published and in what format they will be available
- Respect and acknowledge the accepted cultural practices and values of its diverse community

- Be open and honest about the level of engagement and the influence that they may have over the outcome (see table 1). Where a specific reference group or targeted engagement is being conducted, the Town will have an agreed and well publicised process for selecting participants
- Ensure that participation in engagement processes is accessible to those who wish to be involved, is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time
- Ensure that all personal information gathered is subject to the 'Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and other relevant privacy and freedom of information legislation. The Town must also respect the trust that participants bestow when they are actively engaged with the Town
- Ensure that community engagement with minors will adhere to relevant Child Protection legislation, best practice and duty of care guidelines.

Leadership

Leadership is not about telling others what to do. Rather it is the ability to support and facilitate discussion through best practice engagement and engagement to represent the wider community interests and ensure that recommendations do not only represent specific sectional interests.

Leadership involves taking the initiative for the activity and seeking support and partnerships. It also involves ensuring that engagement promotes the building of leadership within the Town and the local community. The Town of Port Hedland and Elected Members are committed to provide opportunities for engagement with the community.

Effective and ongoing engagement with the local community aims to create a strong partnership. This helps to build capacity between the Town and the local community and creates a shared ownership and commitment to specific engagement processes.

To achieve this, the Town of Port Hedland will:

- Ensure that all of the Town's engagement processes and community engagement activities are conducted within the endorsed community engagement framework
- Provide a well- planned and resourced approach for all engagement processes and community engagement activities
- Be prepared to tackle difficult issues and ensure that the engagement method chosen is flexible to facilitate discussion of these issues and employ good conflict resolution skills as required
- Be proactive in developing and strengthening partnerships with all levels of government, service providers, and the local community. The Town will also seek to better understand the strengths, aspirations and issues of the local community through the variety of engagement and community engagement activities
- Assess the needs of the strategy and/or project and consult all relevant stakeholders and members

of the local community. Where deemed appropriate, the Town will conduct wider engagement in developing the future direction and purpose of any strategy and/or project

- Employ a logical methodology when trying to resolve and represent conflicting interests. Whether individuals, legitimate local community groups and/or other interested stakeholders all views deserve equally consideration
- Ensure that the Town, for all engagement processes adheres to best practice health and safety principles and legislation. The Town must also recognise the risk management issues and acts on its duty of care to all participants.

Purpose

It is critical that a clear purpose is established for all community engagement activities. It provides a sound foundation for the planning, review and evaluation of all projects, and ensures that the types of engagement methods employed are appropriate to the project outcomes.

Having a clear purpose provides direction and guidance for the local community, key stakeholders and the Town of Port Hedland itself as to the rationale for the engagement being conduct.

When clearly communicated to all participants, it also provides realistic expectations, understanding and transparency of the engagement process.

To achieve this, the Town of Port Hedland will:

- Provide a clear purpose statement for all community engagement and engagement activities. It is critical to consider how to engage with individuals and groups to whom the issue is most relevant; plan who should be involved, at what stage and set the parameters for how the information will be used.
- Conduct a thorough identification of key stakeholders with regard to the policy and/or project that is being consulted on. It is important to also include other Town departments who can contribute to or who are affected by the outcome of the engagement process
- Clearly communicate the specific purpose of the engagement to ensure participants have a understanding as to their participation and an expectation as to their involvement in the decision making process
- Ensure that the most appropriate method of engagement is being used for the prescribed purpose and develop strategies to ensure that purpose is achieved in an appropriate manner with participants and other stakeholders.

Information Sharing

Providing clear, 'jargon-free' information in a timely manner is the basis of quality engagement and effective engagement with the local community and stakeholders. Well communicated information can motivate, increase interest and a willingness to be engaged in a specific project.

Critical to making informed decisions, information shared and gathered should be as accurate as possible and true. Information sharing must be reciprocal and relies on the involvement of participants in maintaining a flow of information and the commitment to be open to different views and issues.

Information can be provided in a number of formats such as written and verbal submissions; through group discussions; e-engagement; statistical information; maps and plans; graphs; photographs; narratives and art.
Information sharing between Town departments is critical.

Decisions by all parties to the project will be determined by the quality and timing of the information obtained and shared.

To achieve this, the Town of Port Hedland will:

- Ensure participants have timely access to relevant information that is accurate and unbiased, providing opportunities for them to form sound opinions and decisions
- Will ensure that participants are provided with relevant background information prior to any engagement and the way in which information is shared between the Town and the local community is appropriate to the particular project and is in place during the early stages
- Provide information that is concise, written clearly and is in plain English. In particular, where the information is technical in nature, supporting explanatory information will be provided in an easy to read format
- Endeavour to provide all reasonable opportunities for access to information in other formats (eg: large print, audio, electronically etc) and community languages
- Consider a range of information and formats as well as written to encourage wide participation and engage with new or previously disengaged groups and individuals
- Provide reasonable timeframes that accommodate effective information sharing, analysis and feedback; and
- Provide guidelines and ethical parameters, in line with the 'Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998' and other relevant legislation for the process of information sharing and gathering.

Feedback and Evaluation

Closing the 'engagement loop' and informing participants as to how their opinions and information have contributed to the preparation and decision of the Town or Council is vital. Providing participants with feedback is important in respecting the partnership and maintaining ongoing engagement with the local community.

The views and comments of participants specific to the engagement process itself is a valuable learning tool. Candid evaluation at the conclusion of each engagement program will ensure that the Town continues to improve how engagement is carried out in the future.

It should include questions regarding the values of the process; whether the stated objectives and purpose was clear and achieved and whether the methods used were suitable.

To achieve this, the Town of Port Hedland will:

- Aim to include details about the evaluation component in the planning of the project. This will ensure that issues are given due consideration in a methodical manner and where appropriate changes be made to the strategy and/or project to reflect the needs and priorities expressed by the local community
- Clearly outline and communicate the evaluation/feedback mechanisms and decision-making process with participants at the earliest possible stage of the project
- Use feedback and evaluation to review and improve the planning, design and delivery of community engagement and engagement practices
- Provide regular project updates and/or feedback on how decisions were made in a timely manner.
- Within a reasonable timeframe at the conclusion, the Town will ensure that the results and reports are made available in a range of formats and in a variety of venues as determined at the commencement of the project
- Provide, where appropriate, opportunities for feedback through a variety of means. This could include written submission via post or email; feedback forms; verbally through meetings and workshops or web-based methods, such as discussion boards or e-forums etc.

The Town will inform engagement participants when their feedback, comments and submissions will be considered by Council.

Resourcing and Timing

Building capacity may take time, particularly in engaging those who are "hard to reach" and disengaged. The Town and the local community may require time to develop relationships, and the engagement methods and approach must consider this.

It is important that participants have a realistic idea of how much time engagement is likely to take in the overall preparation and implementation of the specific project. Timing of engagement also ensures quality feedback and engagement with the local community. In terms of gaining maximum participation possible, the local community should be advised of any engagement at the earliest possible stage of the project. It is important that the timing of any engagement process must consider previous, current and future engagement activities of other departments to avoid engagement fatigue by the local community.

The specific financial costs involved in conducting engagement must be understood when planning any engagement process or activity. Where practical, consideration should be given to the coordination between Town departments for the coordination of engagement processes.

The sharing of information and resources can provide a reduction in financial costs while still achieving positive outcomes and wide participation.

To achieve this, the Town of Port Hedland will:

- Provide the necessary resources and support to ensure the principles of the Community Engagement Strategy are implemented throughout the various departments of the Town engaged in engagement
- Ensure that the Community Engagement Strategy is regularly reviewed (every 2 years) and evaluated to ensure best practise community engagement and engagement methods are being considered
- Ensure each project includes appropriate resource allocation and appropriate timeframes to deliver the stated goals and objectives of its engagement process
- Identify what skills are required to devise and conduct engagement and engagement activities and to provide opportunities for staff training to build organisational capacity and the necessary skills to effectively engage with the local community through the use of best practice community engagement methods
- Facilitate good governance through the commitment of adequate resources to effective engagement with the local community. These include, but are not limited to financial resources; time; staff experience and expertise; quality information; corporate systems and policies and adequate materials. Once identified, resource requirements should explored fully as part of the Town's engagement processes and engagement activities.

9. To What Effect???	
	Strategy evaluation: The community engagement strategy will be presented to the Executive team for their assessment and approval. It will be presented to Council via a report where applicable. Process evaluation: At the conclusion, an evaluation on the effectiveness of the community engagement strategy will be conducted and recommendations made for future improvements.