Town of
Port Hedland

Engagement Strategy

2025-2028

Advice

This document may contain images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this document are made in good faith and while every care has been taken in preparing this document, the Town of Port Hedland makes no representations and gives no warranties of whatever nature in respect to this document, including but not limited to, the accuracy or completeness of any information, facts, and/or opinions contained therein. The Town of Port Hedland, its Elected Members, staff and consultants cannot be held liable for the use of and reliance on the options, estimates, forecasts and findings in this document.

Acknowledgement of Country The Town of Port Hedland would like to acknowledge the

Kariyarra, Ngarla, and Nyamal
people as the Traditional Custodians of the Port Hedland lands. We recognise their strength and resilience and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people of the local community and recognise their rich cultures and their continuing connection to land and waters.

AMBULANCE
VOLUNTEER
AMBULANCE
VOLUNTEER

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Glossary of Terms

To assist with knowing how the Town talks about engagement and be more familiar with some key terms within our documents, below are some common terms explained:

Elected Members: (Sometimes referred to as Councillors) Members of the community who have been selected by the wider community to oversee the strategic direction of the Local Government Authority.

Engagement: The Town adopts the IAP2 definition of engagement:
"An intentional process of working across organisations, stakeholders, and communities to shape decisions or actions, in relation to a problem, opportunity, or outcome."

Engagement therefore refers to our deliberate interactions with community and stakeholders to build strong relationships and facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, influence and collaboration.

Consultation: A type of engagement activity that seeks input on a specific matter at a point in time, usually where additional information or representation is required to that already achieved through ongoing engagement.

Community: Individuals who have been grouped together by geographic location (community of place), similar interests (community of practice), or affiliation or identity (such as membership of a club or association).

Partnership: A type of engagement activity that produces formal agreements between stakeholders to work together.

Traditional Owners: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have unique relationships to the land, sea and waterways. Their ownership and stewardship of Country needs to be acknowledged. Australian law recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have rights and interests in the land and sea under their traditional laws and customs1. Please note, the Town operates on Kariyarra land however the local government area also extends to Ngarla and Nyamal country.

Town Officers: Refers to the employees of the Town.

Stakeholders: Individuals, groups, organisations or communities with a specific interest or involvement in a matter who have direct input into the decision making and actions that affect them.

1. Engaging with Traditional Owners. https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/engagingwithtraditionalowners.pdf

Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to introduce you to the Town of Port Hedland's Engagement Strategy.

Our Towns vision is;

"Together, we create a thriving, resilient and inclusive future for our diverse community."

As a Town that is undergoing significant development over the coming years, the role of engagement is going to become even more important to achieving this vision.

The Town of Port Hedland is deeply committed to ensuring that our community's diverse voices are heard and valued in shaping the future of our town.

This framework is designed to evolve over time, being responsive to the dynamic needs of our community. It is our hope that this framework provides clarity on how the Council engages with our community and stakeholders, fostering a transparent and inclusive decision-making process, setting the intention to build strong and robust relationships with our community.

Jessica Shaw
Chair, Commissioner

Understanding Engagement

Defining Engagement

Engagement is founded on the principle that people have a right to be involved in the decisions and actions that affect their lives2. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) defines engagement as:

"An intentional process of working across organisations, stakeholders, and communities to shape decisions or actions, in relation to a problem, opportunity, or outcome."

Being an intentional process, we use the term 'engagement' to define those point in time, process that is intended to contribute to the sharing of information, ideas, influence, decision making, partnerships and collaborative action.

Engagement seeks to understand the diversity of views, issues and aspirations expressed by the community and then seek an outcome that balances the various views with and technical, budgetary and legislative constraints. While the outcomes from engagement, will always be valued, engagement does not replace the overall decision making responsibility of Council.

(IAP2): Core Value #1 Town of Port Hedland Engagement Strategy

Quality Engagement

The following principles will guide the design, delivery, reporting and evaluation of the Town's engagement initiatives. These principles are founded on the best practice models and frameworks of the International Association for Public Participation.

Purposeful	We deliver timely, well-structured engagement that support the community and Town to achieve a shared outcome.
Respectful	We deliver engagement that fosters quality relationships and builds shared understanding.
Effective	We consider the time, budget and representation required to deliver robust engagement outcomes.
Transparent	We support participants with timely, easy to understand information at all stages of the process.

Why We Engage

Engagement is a vehicle for building the kinds of relationships and understanding that allows the Town to make quality decisions, build sustainable partnerships, and have confidence that we are implementing the programs, services and projects that best support the community. Through this collaboration, we ask members and essential stakeholders to collectively shape the future of the Town.

This Framework recognises the Council's commitment to engaging in a manner that;

- Ensures transparency and follows a clear, logical process.
- Adapts to individual cases, considering contextual factors that impact projects or decisions.
- Aligns with community expectations for honest and respectful interaction.
- Informs decision-making to secure financially, socially, and environmentally sound outcomes.
- Embraces diverse perspectives to enrich understanding.
- Cultivates and sustains constructive relationships with the community and stakeholders.

Additionally, this framework aligns to the Local Government Act 1995, Section 1.3 (2)also points to engagement leading to;

- Better decision making by local governments
- Greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of local governments
- Greater accountability of local governments to their communities
- More efficient and effective local government.

Who We Engage

The Town is made up of a diverse population that each contribute to the social, economic and environmental fabric of the community.

This includes rate payers, residents, students, workers and business owners, as well as stakeholders such as community groups, businesses, organisations and other spheres of government.

Our goal is to engage in a way that is inclusive of all members of the community, regardless of age, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, education, ability and other diverse aspects of identity.

Engagement is not a one size fits all process and we will engage with different people in different ways, based on their need and the context and impact of the project we are engaging on.

The Town of Port Hedland recognises the value of both community consultation and cultural expertise.

Unpaid participation includes general community input through surveys, forums, and open consultations.

Paid contributions may apply when individuals are engaged for their cultural knowledge, lived experience, or advisory roles such as participating in co-design workshops, providing cultural guidance and other specific information sort by Town.

Engagement Groups

We recognise that the needs of specific population groups are diverse. When planning engagement activities, we will consider how the engagement process can accommodate the needs of specific population groups including:

First Nations People Engagement

Understanding and celebrating Aboriginal culture and history is an important part of delivering quality community outcomes.

We will consult and seek advice from recognised Elders, community leaders and engage in a culturally-appropriate way with the Aboriginal community. Please see the next page for more on this.

Older People Engagement

It is important that we ensure the Town remains accessible and age friendly.

We will provide diverse methods of communication and maximise our relationships with local organisations that engage face-to-face with older people.

Young People Engagement

We are building for the future and need to ensure we have platforms for young people, to be engaged and participate in civic life.

We engage with schools, utilise social media and have our Youth Advisory Council (YAC) as part of our network of engagement, as the vehicle for building youth leadership.

People with Disabilities Engagement

An accessible Town needs to be accessible for all abilities.

The Town places emphasis on how we building connection and engagement with people with disabilities and their families.

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

With approximately 20% of the Town born overseas, using diverse and culturally appropriate means of engagement is important to ensure the voices we hear from are as diverse as our community.

Hard-to-Reach Groups

The Town recognises that some groups may face barriers to participation in traditional engagement processes. Specific strategies will be developed to engage FIFO workers, remote residents, and individuals with limited literacy or digital access. This may include mobile outreach, translated materials, visual tools, and partnerships with local service providers to ensure inclusive and equitable engagement

Engagement with traditional custodians of country

The traditional custodians of Port Hedland Local Government Area are recognised as the Kariyarra, Ngarla, and Nyamal people. Engagement with these communities needs to be founded in a holistic approach to relationships, decision-making, and community well-being. While the Town might seek to engage on a specific topic or subjects, the town recognises that culturally, this one subject is part of the interconnectedness of all living things, land, and culture.

Engagement will also guided by principles of respect, cultural safety, and self-determination. Specific engagement methods will be developed through co-design with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to ensure culturally appropriate and meaningful participation.

There are two primary forms of engagement of the Kariyarra, Ngarla, and Nyamal people.

1. Engaging to understand, respect and respond to the Kariyarra, Ngarla, and Nyamal people's responsibilities as custodian of country.

- This specialised expertise is guided by the wisdom of Elders and those granted the authority by these communities to speak for country. Even though there maybe people authorised to speak for country, they are also bound by their own community governance process, which would need to be respected and resourced.

2. Engaging to understand this community's needs, priorities and views on any given topic as part of the wider community.

- The views gathered from this engagement form part of a broader consultation with all the needs, priorities and views of for everyone living and working in Port Hedland are considered as part of the decision making process.

Looking more broadly at engagement with Aboriginal communities and people. A central theme to the United Nations UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the concept of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC).

According to the Community Guide, The right to participate in decisions that affect communities should be guided by and include the principle of free, prior and informed consent. This standard of consent is to be met before any of the following actions are taken:

- projects or decisions that affect our country including mining, development and the use of sacred sites
- practicing and revitalising cultures and to have cultural property protected including the use of biological materials, traditional medicines and knowledge, artwork, dance and song
- making agreements or treaties between government and our peoples
- the creation of laws or policies that affect our peoples

Free means no force, bullying or pressure.

Prior means that we have been consulted before the activity begins.

Informed means we are given all of the available information and informed when that information changes or when there is new information. If our peoples don't understand this information then we have not been informed. An interpreter might need to be provided to assist.

Consent means we must be consulted and participate in an honest and open process of negotiation that ensures:

- all parties are equal, neither having more power or strength
- our group decision-making processes are allowed to operate
- our right to choose how we want to live is respected.4

How We Engage

The methods we use to engage are determined through the engagement planning process demonstrated on page 18 of this document.

The methods selected are based on;

- The desired project outcomes
- The needs and suitability for the people and groups being engaged
- The level of influence being offered through the engagement.

Digital Engagement Strategy

The Town will strengthen its use of digital platforms to enhance accessibility, reach, and responsiveness. This includes applying accessibility standards, using analytics to monitor engagement performance, and developing tailored strategies to reach digitally excluded groups such as remote residents, older adults, and non-English speakers.

We use the IAP2 spectrum to determine the level of influence and then choose the method that matches that level. For example:

	The IAP2 Spectrum				
Sample Methods	**Inform**	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
1-1 Meetings with stakeholders	▲	▲	▲	▲	
Advisory groups and committees		▲	▲	▲	
Council meetings					
Deliberative panels			▲	▲	▲
Face to face meetings with community groups and other stakeholders	▲	▲	▲	▲	
Focus groups and workshops	▲	▲	▲		
Town engagement hub website	▲	▲			
Interagency groups	▲	▲	▲		
Interagency networks	▲	▲	▲		
Newsletters	▲				
Notices in Newspaper	▲				
Partnerships			▲	▲	▲
Phone calls	▲	▲			
Public displays and pop up events	▲	▲			
Social media posts	▲				
Surveys		▲			
Yarning circles		▲	▲	▲	

The IAP2 spectrum describes 5 levels of influence that various methods can be used for.
See Appendix 1 and www.iap2.org.au for more information about the spectrum and its application.

When We Engage

When do we need to engage?		When we may not engage?
(1) When there is a specific law that requires it	(2) When it's required under the Town's Engagement Policy and/or the Significant Decision Making Policy	
• Local Government Act (WA)1995 • Western Australian Legislation - Planning and Development Act 2005 • Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 • Western Australian Legislation - Road Traffic Act 1974 • Land Administration Regulations 1998 • Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 • Public Health Act 2016 • Privacy Act 1988 • WA Health Act 1911 and Associated Regulations • Heritage of WA Act 1990 • Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 and Associated Regulations • Environmental Protection Act 1986 • Bush Fires Act 1954 and Associated Regulations	• Decisions that have a significant impact on part or all of the community (social, economic or environmental). • Decisions that bring high levels of community concern or interest • Decisions that have a significant impact on the councils budget and by extension rate payers • Decisions that have a significant impact on the land owned or used by Council • Council deems it appropriate or beneficial	• There is a critical need to make a decision quickly • Where certain legal, commercial or legislative constraints prohibit engagement. • Where the decision is being made by a third-party agency and the Town has little influence • Decisions are considered operational or 'day to day matters' involved in the running of the organisational element of the Town eg: internal staff restructures; changes in the Towns IT systems.

Table 1A

5. See the Town of Port Hedland's significant decisions policy All legislation is available on the Western Australian Government Legislation website: www.legislation.wa.gov.au

Table 1A above offers guidance on the types of instances warranting engagement.
Table 1B overleaf presents a sample list of common engagement scenarios within the Town of Port Hedland. This list is not exhaustive and is intended to serve as a guide.

Typical Engagement Scenarios

- Advice of Council Meetings
- Advisory Groups
- Allocation of Grants/Funding
- Allocation of Marketing and Events Funding
- Award and Recognition Opportunities
- Bushfire Notice
- Changes to Facility Operating Hours
- Town Planning Updates
- Closure of Road / Public Places or Spaces
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Development Applications
- High Profile Capital Works Projects
- Local Law Review
- Minor Capital Works (causing disruption)
- Naming Places
- New Events / Event Applications
- Participatory Budgeting
- Precinct Structure Plans
- Public Notices
- Reconciliation Action
- Removal of Trees / Vegetation
- Significant Items on Council Agenda
- Strategic Planning Documents
- Tenders / Expressions of Interest
- Town Planning Scheme Amendments
- Upgrades to Public Open Spaces / Places
- Working Groups established to project design

Table 1B

Roles Within Engagement

For engagement to contribute to positive and quality outcomes, different parties take different roles. This section explores some of these roles.

The Role of Council Staff

Planning	Implementation	Influence	Transparency
To ensure engagement planning is informed by an understanding of the social, technical, environmental, and economic interplays of a proposed project, policy, or initiative.	Securing the resources to deploy methods that promote diverse and respectful participation.	Respecting the time and views contributed and giving the level of influence promised by considering the contribution faithfully.	Communicating the outcomes, rationale, and next steps to the community.

The Role of Elected Members

Awareness Raising	Quality	Decision Making	Leadership
Building community awareness and involvement in engagement initiatives.	Consider periodic reviews of the Town's engagement process for alignment to principles in this policy.	Using the outputs from engagement to inform Councillors decision-making role. Balancing the tension between the need for popular decisions and decisions that support the long- term viability of the community and Council.	Ensuring the resourcing that allows the desired quality of engagement to be achieved.

The Role of Community/Stakeholders

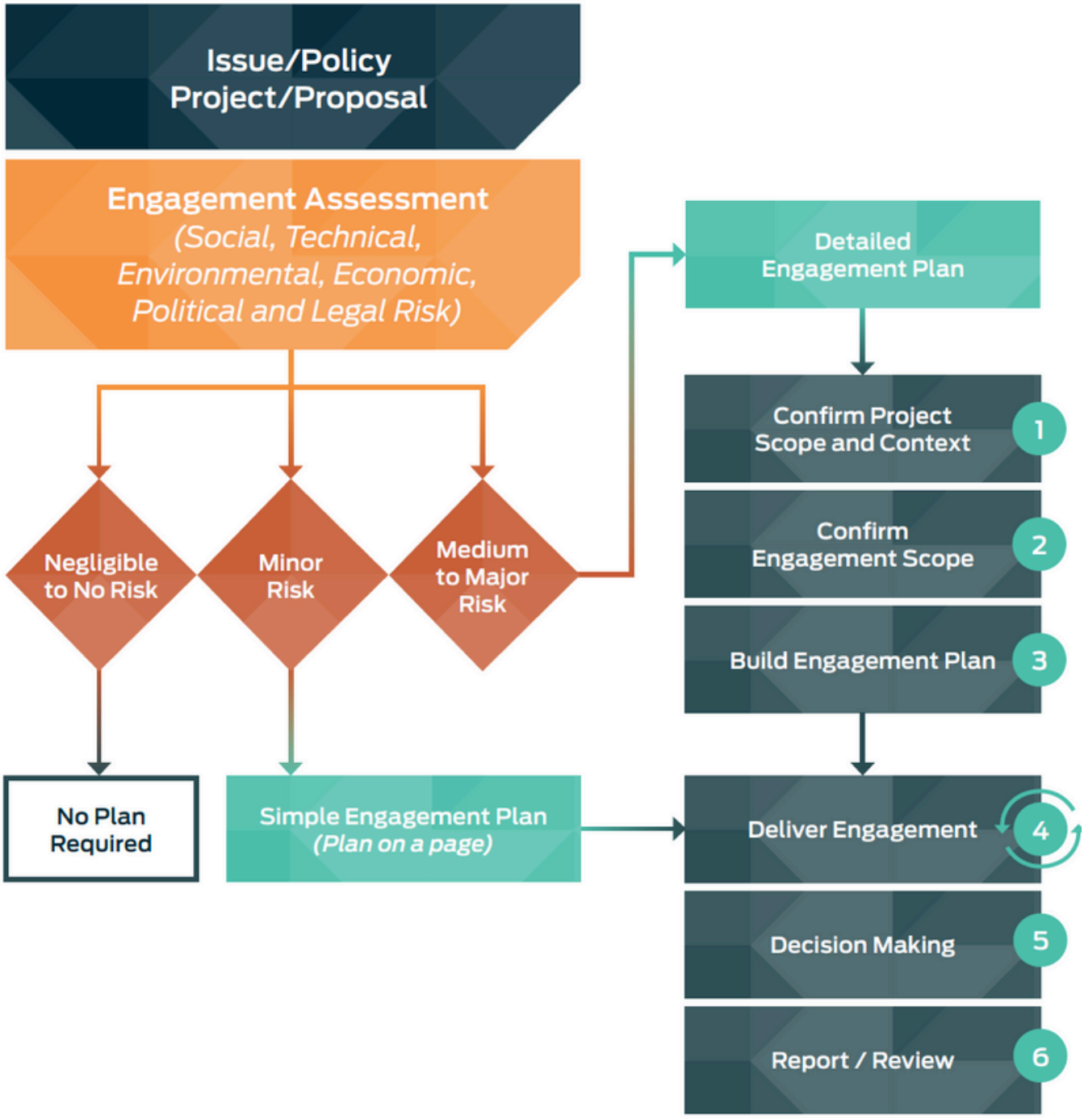
Participation	Inclusion	Perspective	Collective
To ensure engagement planning is informed by an understanding of the social, technical, environmental, and economic interplays of a proposed project, policy, or initiative.	Securing the resources to deploy methods that promote diverse and respectful participation.	Respecting the time and views contributed and giving the level of influence promised by considering the contribution faithfully.	Communicating the outcomes, rationale, and next steps to the community.

Governance and Accountability

Community Development Team	Engagement Reporting Platform	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Continuous Improvement
Responsible for facilitating engagement planning and advising departments on best practice methods, cultural safety, and inclusive approaches. This team will support staff in designing and delivering engagement activities aligned with the strategy.	A centralised reporting platform will be developed to capture engagement activities, outcomes, and lessons learnt. This platform will enable transparency and continuous improvement and will be monitored by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).	Accountable for overseeing the implementation of the Engagement Strategy, reviewing engagement reports, and ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and legislative requirements.	Engagement processes will be periodically reviewed to ensure they remain effective, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. Feedback from stakeholders and staff will inform updates to the strategy and associated tools.

Engagement Approach

This approach explains the steps used in the scoping, planning and delivery of our engagement processes



Strategic Integration of Engagement Outcomes

Engagement outcomes play a critical role in shaping the Town's strategic direction. Insights gathered through community and stakeholder engagement are analysed and used to inform key planning documents, including the Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan, and Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

This ensures that community priorities, lived experiences, and local knowledge are embedded in decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery. By aligning engagement outputs with strategic planning cycles, the Town strengthens transparency, responsiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Stages of the Detailed Engagement Planning

The Plan	
1. Confirm Project Scope and Context	· Log engagement on register · Notify internal stakeholders from R.A.C.I. Matrix · Understand project history, context and drivers · Confirm project objectives and timelines · Check for lesson learnt from previous engagements
2. Define Engagement Context	· Complete context and stakeholder analysis · Confirm engagement budget and timelines · Define decision constraints (Negotiable/Non Negotiable) · Set engagement objectives
3. Build Engagement Sequence	· Determine level of influence (IAP2 spectrum7) · Define engagement techniques/process · Build communications plan · Confirm project governance
4. Deliver Engagement	· Deliver and adjust engagement activities · Collect and manage data · Monitor engagement process · *Note: This may have multiple cycles of engagement (eg: options development/review)*
5. Decision Making	· Analyse engagement outputs · Progress decision making processes
6. Report/Review	· Complete evaluation and capture lessons learnt · Report back to community and stakeholder process findings and decision outcomes

7. Please see appendix 1

Engagement Reporting

After completing an engagement initiative, it's crucial to analyse the feedback data to identify themes and perspectives that will guide decision-making.

This process typically involves compiling an engagement report, which should encompass several key elements:

- Identification of the stakeholder groups involved in the engagement.
- Explanation of the approach taken, detailing the methodology utilised and the strategies employed to encourage participation (such as advertising).
- Documentation of the number of responses received.
- Consideration of any weighting applied to the responses, if applicable.
- Highlighting of the key issues raised during the engagement.
- Presentation of recommendations for Town action based on the received information.
- Description of the methods utilised to provide feedback to participants.
- Assessment of the overall effectiveness of the engagement initiative.
- Incorporation of impactful statements from stakeholders and community members that encapsulate their views.

Closing the feedback loop is an essential aspect of the engagement process, fostering trust between the Town and community members while also promoting future participation. When reporting back to the community, it's an opportunity to communicate what was heard, what actions are planned, and the rationale behind those decisions.

Feedback to participants should include:

- Recognition of their participation.
- Updates on the progress of the process.
- Insights into how their views were taken into account, considering other factors such as technical, financial, and legislative requirements.
- Provision of the engagement outcomes report.
- Information on any further consultation opportunities, if applicable.
- Feedback may be disseminated through various channels such as the Town of Port Hedland website, email, mail, or phone, depending on the nature of the engagement. Officers responsible should determine the most suitable form of communication for each situation.

Evaluation and Measurement of Engagement Success:

- Number and diversity of participants Satisfaction ratings
- Engagement reach (online/offline)
- Feedback incorporation rate
- Annual review cycle for engagement effectiveness

Invitation to engage

We are keen to hear from you.
Are you wanting to get involved or being a part of regular consultation opportunities?

You can contact the Town via

communityengagement@porthedland.wa.gov.au
or https://haveyoursay.porthedland.wa.gov.au

to have your say about various projects and other engagement activities.

Appendix 1 - IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing Impact on the Decision →

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Appendices and Tools

To support consistent and effective implementation of the Engagement Strategy, a suite of practical tools will be developed and included as part of the rollout. These will assist staff in planning, delivering, and reporting on engagement activities. The following resources will be added to the appendix:

- Sample Engagement Plan Template
- Stakeholder Mapping Tool
- Engagement Reporting Template
- Checklist for Culturally Safe Engagement

These tools will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect best practice and feedback from users.

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