

JUNE 2024

Staff Workshop

Summary report

Redland City Council

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Acknowledgment of Country

Articulous respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. We recognise their cultures, histories and diversity, and their continuing connection to the lands, waters and seas of Australia and the Torres Strait.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Traditional Owners of the many lands where we meet, work, learn and connect. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and emerging.

1. Introduction

Articulous has been engaged to develop an engagement framework for Redland City Council staff to use to guide their engagement activities with community and stakeholders. This framework will help ensure Council are engaging appropriately and successfully with all members of their community, and that Council officers understand the purpose, practice and use of engagement.

The framework is driven by key principles that reflect the multiple community groups in the Redlands and their values. Furthermore, examples of any engagement activities that worked well may be included in the framework to use as evidence of effective engagement.

The Engagement Framework will be given to Council in June 2024.

2. Methodology

A Staff workshop was held on Friday 21 June 2024 to gather insights and feedback on current engagement practices by Council. A variety of Council departments were represented in the room.

A focused conversation was facilitated by Articulous, who used prompting questions to gather views on quality engagement and understanding Council's current engagement activities. Notes were taken and a summary report will be provided to participants to close the loop.

The following questions were used to prompt the conversations. Not all questions were asked depending on the flow of conversations led by the participants.

- How would you define what quality engagement is?
 - Process
 - Outputs
 - Reach
- What are our emergent themes?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of doing quality engagement?
- Consider these principles and share your thoughts on their importance to yourself and the community you come from.
- Are there other principles that should be included?
- Council is looking to develop an engagement framework for Council officers, what factors should be considered?
- Any concluding observations?

3. Quality engagement

Throughout the discussion, participants identified processes, outputs and types of reach that they associate with quality engagement.

Category	
Process	Co-design: Effective co-design includes reaching out and collaborating with community. A clear definition of co-design and when to use it would be beneficial to Council. Two-way flow of information: Council can build knowledge and collect insights using an inside-out (using Council information to inform community) or outside-in (using community knowledge to inform Council) approach. Improving internal processes: Council's internal processes should be improved to ensure engagement activities are high quality e.g. getting all staff together to survey an event site and work collaboratively to plan an engagement activity. Treat people like people: Talk to community with respect and in the same manner you would want to be talked to. Consideration of personal circumstances: Levels of knowledge and education are different in community therefore engagement activities should reflect this diversity. Education: In order to make valuable inputs on engagement activities, community should be well informed and educated on the particular topic. Statutory processes: Some projects require certain activities to be completed before conducting engagement activities or may require a certain type of activity to be undertaken. Some items in a project may be non-negotiable therefore Council should clearly highlight this. Strong messaging: All engagement requires strong messaging to reach all targeted stakeholders. Bring people on the journey. Set clear expectations for community when communicating engagement activities.
Output	Tangible actions: Community should learn something or have capacity to do something e.g. call to action after participating in some form on engagement. Community can take ownership of an issue. Measurable behaviour change: Council can see changes to community's behaviour and understanding of certain topics. Metrics and comparing data: Council would like to collect a variety of information including: demographics, sentiment, categorisation of feedback comments, attendance rates (including previous and recurring), question answers and additional information. Furthermore, this information should be comparable to other data source and previous engagement outputs. Clear understanding of success: Successful engagement can include not reaching consensus in a situation. Some community members will not always be happy with the chosen outcomes.

Reach	Diversity of views: Council should aim to collect a diversity of views from engagement participants. This can vary depending on the size of a project e.g. a smaller project may not need a co-design activity compared to a larger project. Dynamic flow: Outcomes from engagement can flow through Council and affect internal decisions and processes. Staff not initially engagement can be affected.
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4. Other principles

Participants identified other principles that should be included in the framework:

- Trust
- Transparency
 - Engagement purpose
 - Use of engagement outputs
 - Tangible outcomes
 - Community understanding of activity and value of activity
- Authenticity
- Honesty
- Communication
- Commitment
- Integral
- Unity

5. Framework inclusions

Participants identified sections or items they would like to see in Council's Engagement Framework.

- How to coordinate consultation across Council departments
- Blueprint/steps to completing community consultation including:
 - What information is required to get approved?
 - What communication channels should be used?
 - What values should be considered?
 - What information should be sent to community?
 - Different processes for different levels/scales of projects
 - Are there legislative requirements?
 - What might be some constraints?
 - Avoiding engagement fatigue
- Guidelines to promote safety of staff e.g. dealing with tough situations with community
- Delegation of roles and responsibilities for elected representatives to support Council officers
- Ideas for engagement activities including online and in-person tools and techniques