

MAY 2024

ELT Interviews

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.

Further consultation activities will occur to gain deeper insight into current engagement activities and improvements.

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

2. Methodology

Interviews with the Executive Leadership Team were held in May to gather insights and feedback on Council's current engagement practices.

A focused conversation was facilitated by Articulous, who used prompting questions to gather views on current engagement activities and what participants would like to see going forward. Notes were taken and this summary report could 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.

- What type of activities have you participated in?
- What would like input on?
- What would present a good case/argument to Council? What does an informed decision look like?
- What sort of feedback have you previously sought? From who?
- How has engaging with Council benefited your activities?
- Council is looking to develop a framework, what factors should be considered?
- What support do you need to participate in engagement activities?

3. Emerging principles

Throughout the discussions, multiple principles have been identified that reflect community concerns and aspirations for engagement for specific community groups.

Common themes	
Principle: Solutions focused	ELT staff identified that Council engagement should require more planning to ensure it is solutions focused. They highlighted that sometimes small projects can have big impacts if not properly prepared for. <i>"Biggest issues are sometime not big projects"</i> Additionally, ELT staff highlighted the benefits of forward thinking as Council currently tend to be reactive rather than proactive. In order to be solutions focused, ELT staff highlighted the importance of reviewing past engagement which can be used to prioritise further engagement activities.
Principle: Diversity	ELT staff highlighted the need to engage with and capture ideas from a diverse range of people. Council should engage with people from a range of demographics including education level. Diversity should not only be sought in demographics but also in the ideas people may have. ELT raised that some community groups are often actively engaged in activities therefore Council should expand their networks and seek alternative groups to engage with.
Principle: Communication	ELT staff raised numerous points in relation to communication including but not limited to: - Ensuring community are fully aware of the scope and expectations of engagement activities - Managing confidential projects so that community can be involved without breaching any contracts and maintain a transparent process - Increasing communication with community and stakeholders to keep them informed of engagement activities
Principle: Education and up skilling	ELT staff raised various points in relation to educating both community and staff. Community should be educated on what can be expected from engagement activities as to manage expectations of outcomes. Council staff need to be educated on what effective engagement is. <i>"If they don't get the outcome they like assume the process is flawed"</i> Furthermore some ELT raised the need to increase Council staffs' data knowledge which could improve reporting outcomes. Good reporting will improve transparency and ensure future engagement activities are developed using prior learnings.
Principle: Advocacy	ELT staff would like to see Council play more of an advocacy role in the community. Through doing this, Council may be able to gain a deeper understanding of community sentiment prior to engagement activities, and will be able to utilise this to improve their engagement.

4. Areas to explore

The discussion revealed some topics for further exploration:

- Opportunity to review current Council service levels e.g. are things being serviced too often?
- "Need to acknowledge bad news is as important as good news"
- "Need to remind people of past decisions"
- Two different cities in the Redlands – the mainland and the islands
- "85% of Council employees live in the Redlands".