



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY







*Journey Through Time*, created by local school students and artist Steven Campbell.

### Acknowledgement of Country

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

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**ABOUT  
THIS STRATEGY**



# About this strategy

## Introduction

We work with our community in a meaningful way, making sure they are at the centre of everything we do. It is our responsibility to support our community's right to access information, be consulted, and actively take part in Council's planning and decisions.

Positive and purposeful communication and engagement with our community brings many benefits, like strengthening relationships, gaining support, and increasing awareness and participation in our programs, projects, activities, and services.

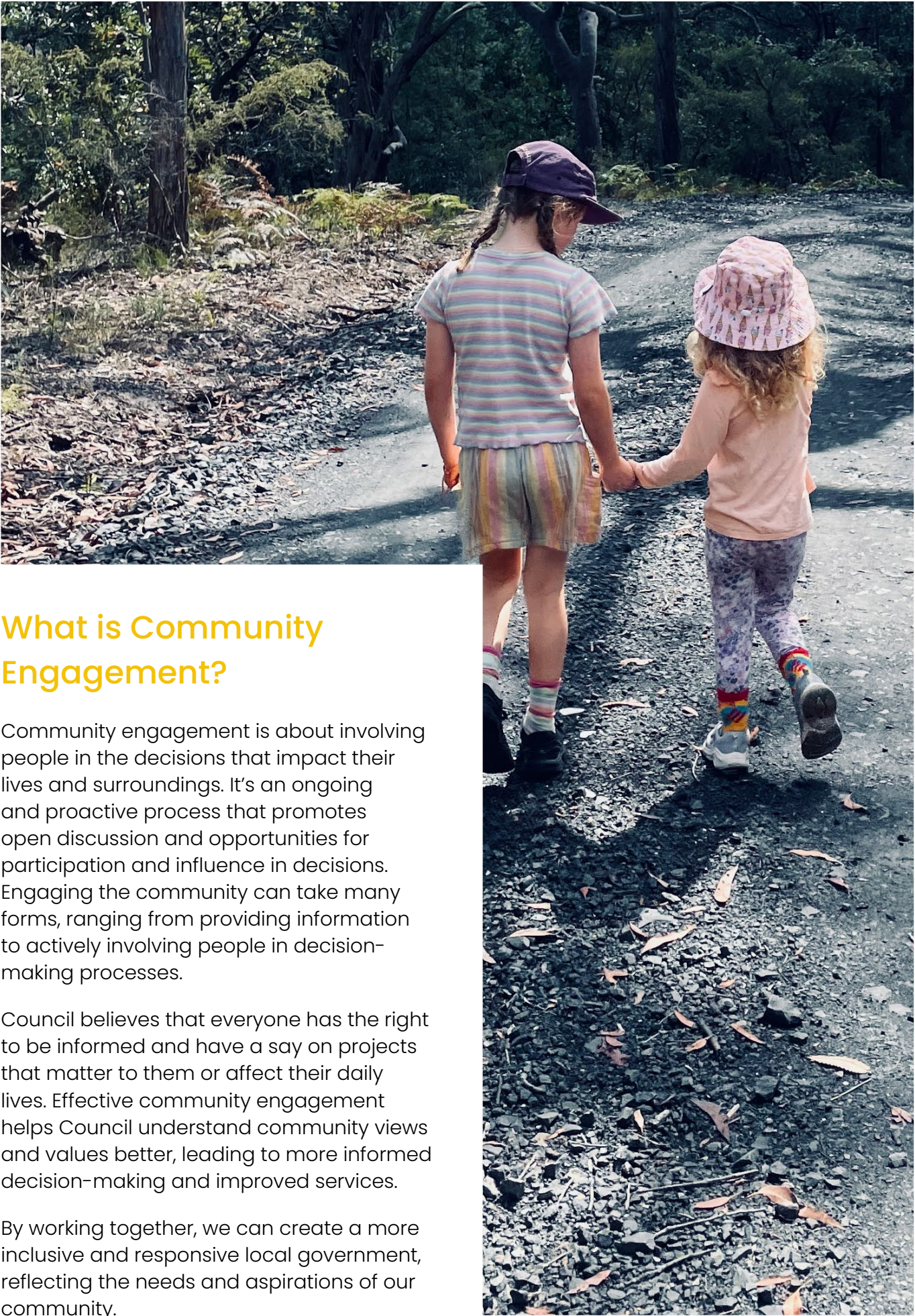
The Community Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) outlines our commitment to community engagement and sets a strategic direction to increase opportunities for meaningful participation.

We want our community to know that we are here with them, making decisions and implementing plans for the future of our community.

This Strategy supports us in undertaking effective community engagement and being more responsive to our community. Our goal is to deliver strategies, services, projects, and programs that help achieve our community's aspirations for the Cessnock Local Government Area.

The Strategy provides a framework to support the development of our strategies, including our Community Strategic Plan, which identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and identifies ways of achieving these goals.

The Strategy incorporates objectives, actions, and guidelines to ensure continual improvement of our practices. Informed by our community, this Strategy reflects our commitment to communicate and engage in ways that best suit the diverse communities that call the Cessnock Local Government Area home.



## What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is about involving people in the decisions that impact their lives and surroundings. It's an ongoing and proactive process that promotes open discussion and opportunities for participation and influence in decisions. Engaging the community can take many forms, ranging from providing information to actively involving people in decision-making processes.

Council believes that everyone has the right to be informed and have a say on projects that matter to them or affect their daily lives. Effective community engagement helps Council understand community views and values better, leading to more informed decision-making and improved services.

By working together, we can create a more inclusive and responsive local government, reflecting the needs and aspirations of our community.



A photograph of two women walking outdoors in what appears to be a winery or vineyard. The woman on the left is wearing a white blouse with lace detailing and dark pinstriped trousers, holding a blue clipboard. The woman on the right is wearing a dark pinstriped button-down shirt with a 'TAMBURLAINE ORGANIC WINES' logo and dark trousers. They are both smiling. In the background, there are wooden barrels stacked on racks, a green building with signs (one says 'CAUTION 15 km/h Limit'), and a white building with a checkered pattern. The image has yellow graphic overlays in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

# INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING



# Integrated planning & reporting



## The framework

When we communicate and engage with our community, we do so within a strategic planning framework (see page 11) that guides how we plan and deliver services. This framework, called the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework*, is established by the Office of Local Government.

This framework ensures that our daily activities align with our community’s long-term goals and aspirations. It also helps to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and that the community receives regular, transparent updates on our progress.

## Legislative requirements

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires Council to establish and implement a Community Engagement Strategy for consulting the local community when developing plans, policies, and programs, and for determining its activities, excluding routine administrative matters.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* also mandates that councils outline how and when the community will be engaged in planning functions, such as policy-making and assessments.



Integrated Planning and Reporting framework



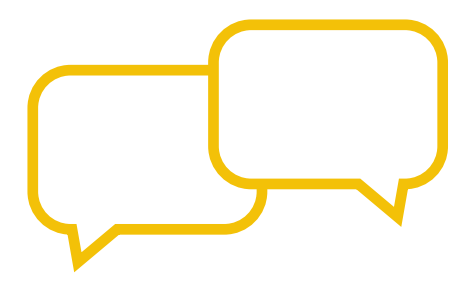


# WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

## What our community told us



**64k**  
visits to Together Cessnock  
(All time July 2022 –  
November 2024)



**13.9%**  
Online  
engagement rate



**49**  
Engagement Pop ups and  
events for face to face  
conversations in 2024





Throughout 2024, Council engaged extensively with the Cessnock community as part of our work on the Together Cessnock 2035 Community Strategic Plan. During this engagement, the community shared how they would like Council to involve them in our projects.

*I do not feel that the community concerns are taken on board.*

*I think the walk and talk idea is awesome! Sometimes it's hard to clearly explain what your concern is. By getting Council staff out in the community with residents it can help explain challenges better and means better outcomes can be achieved.*

*You need to demonstrate how the community has influenced the decisions.*

*The opportunities that I have seen offered for community engagement have been at very short notice.*

*Very good posters and maps.*

*Improved transparency and a commitment to truly listening to residents would go a long way in building trust and ensuring that Council actions reflect the needs and desires of the community.*

*Unless you are signed up to this site you don't always hear about things.*







# CHALLENGES TO ENGAGEMENT

## Challenges to engagement

These challenges came to light through conversations with our community during the Community Strategic Plan engagement, input from Council staff, and lessons learned from past projects. They highlight areas we can improve to make engagement more effective and meaningful for everyone.

### Lack of trust

**What we'll do:** Be transparent, provide timely and accurate information, and close the loop on engagement projects so stakeholders know we're listening and understand how their input is used.

### Inclusive, accessible & available

**What we'll do:** Ensure communication is clear, easily accessible, and user-friendly. Conduct engagement in accessible locations using both online and offline methods to reach a wider audience.

### Internal engagement

**What we'll do:** Initiate early and have ongoing discussions with Council staff about engagement opportunities to foster collaboration and internal support.

### Engagement fatigue

**What we'll do:** Stagger engagement, or coordinate engagement activities for projects sharing audiences, where possible, to reduce the risk of the community and key stakeholders feeling saturated.

### Setting and meeting expectations

**What we'll do:** Provide clear context and scope for engagement activities to help manage community expectations and clearly define engagement goals.





# STAKEHOLDERS



# Stakeholders

In our community engagement process, it is central to identify and understand the key stakeholders who could be impacted by or have an interest in a decision. These stakeholders play an essential role in participatory decision-making, shaping the places where we live, work, play, and create. There are roles for both Council and the community in initiating, leading, participating in, and delivering engagement activities.

We are committed to ensuring that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are included in our engagement process. Engagement with these communities will be undertaken in line with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Action Plan and guided by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee.

## Key stakeholders

RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS	Individuals who live in and/or pay rates in the Cessnock Local Government Area.
COUNCILLORS	Elected representatives who serve the Cessnock community at a local level.
LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES	Including local Aboriginal land councils, elders, representative bodies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations.
STATE AND FEDERAL MEMBERS	Elected representatives who serve the community at state and federal levels.
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	Including relevant departments such as the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Transport for NSW, Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Health, Office of Local Government, Destination NSW, Create NSW, and NSW Office of Sport.
COMMUNITY-CENTERED COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY PANELS	Such as youth advisors, access and inclusion panels, and other groups that provide insights and advice on community matters.
LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY	Business owners, Business chambers, associations, development industry, investors and networks active in the Cessnock Local Government Area.



COMMUNITY, SPORTING, CULTURAL, VOLUNTEER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS	Organisations with a specific interest or involvement in local activities and services.
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	Including local schools, TAFE, and other educational institutions.
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES	Organisations providing health and wellbeing services to the community.
NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS AND REGIONAL BODIES	Collaboration with neighbouring councils and regional organisations.
VISITORS AND TOURISTS	Individuals and groups who visit the Cessnock Local Government Area.
LOCAL MEDIA	Media organisations that report on and inform the community about local issues and events.
OUR EMPLOYEES	Council staff who play a critical role in delivering services and engaging with the community.





# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Roles and responsibilities

### Council staff

All Council staff play a vital role in identifying opportunities for community engagement within their work areas. They are responsible for actively seeking the views of stakeholders who are affected by or interested in projects, and considering this input impartially in their decision-making processes. Council staff must also ensure that participants are informed about how their feedback was used and the final outcomes of the process. A toolkit is available to help staff design effective engagement processes.

### Community Engagement Team

The Community Engagement Team leads the planning, coordination, and delivery of engagement activities across Council. They support staff by providing resources, guidance, and training on best practices in community engagement. The team also monitors the effectiveness of engagement strategies and ensures that feedback is collected, analysed, and communicated back to the community.

### Councillors

The role of each Councillor in implementing the Strategy is to represent the interests of ratepayers and residents, facilitate open communication between the community and Council, and thoughtfully consider the results of community engagement processes when making decisions at Council meetings.

### Community

The community is encouraged to actively participate in engagement opportunities, staying informed about these chances to contribute. Community members should carefully consider the information provided, engage respectfully in activities, share their views, and offer feedback to Council on the engagement process.

### General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, ensuring they are endorsed by the elected Council. It is also their duty to make sure that community members have the necessary information to participate meaningfully in the Integrated Planning and Reporting process.







# HOW WE WILL ENGAGE





# How we will engage

## Levels of engagement

The following table explains how we will engage with our community across various levels of participation, from informing to empowering. This framework outlines our goals and how each level of engagement will look in practice. For Land Use Planning-related projects, specific exhibition timeframes are outlined in the Community Participation Plan.



PURPOSE	INFORM	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
OUR GOAL	We will keep you informed	We will listen to, acknowledge and consider your concerns	We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible	We will implement what you decide
COMMUNITY'S ROLE	Keep in touch and seek out information on items of interest	Contribute ideas and feedback based on your experiences and interests	Participate in the engagement process by sharing ideas, concerns and aspirations and collaborating with us to implement agreed decision	
HOW IT LOOKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Letterbox drops</li><li>Postcards Posters/signage Social</li><li>Media Posts</li><li>Websites</li><li>Newsletters (physical/digital)</li><li>Project Updates (physical/digital)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Town Hall Meetings (physical/digital)</li><li>Polls</li><li>Surveys</li><li>Digital Mapping</li><li>Pop up stalls</li><li>Formal submissions</li><li>Interviews</li><li>Project walk and talks</li><li>Call centre hold cue survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Polls</li><li>Surveys</li><li>Digital Mapping</li><li>Pop up stalls</li><li>Formal submissions</li><li>Workshops</li><li>Digital Forums</li><li>Working groups Advisory committees</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Polls</li><li>Surveys</li><li>Digital Mapping</li><li>Pop up stalls</li><li>Formal submissions</li><li>Workshops</li><li>Digital Forums</li><li>Working groups</li><li>Project Steering Groups</li></ul>





## How we listen and get back to you

After gathering input, our staff carefully consider your feedback and recommend the next steps or outcomes. To ensure transparency and keep you informed, we'll take the following actions to close the loop:

### Project page updates

We'll update the project page on the Together Cessnock website with a summary of the engagement outcomes and outline the next steps.

### Direct communication

If you've provided feedback, we'll send you an email with the consultation outcomes and a link to the project page.

### Reporting back

When a matter has been out for community consultation or public exhibition and results in a report to the Council, the report will include a summary of the community engagement, detailing the methods used, participation statistics, and key feedback received. An attachment summarising submissions and providing staff responses will also be included.

For strategies, masterplans, and other projects that are endorsed by the General Manager rather than being reported to Council, outcomes and feedback will still be communicated to the community. This will be done via updates on the Council website, emails to participants, newsletters, or other appropriate channels to ensure transparency and close the loop with stakeholders.

### Outcome notifications

Following a decision being made, we'll notify everyone who provided feedback about the outcome. We'll also update the project page and include the results in our community engagement newsletter, ensuring you stay informed every step of the way.

## Evaluation

To ensure that our community engagement efforts are effective and meaningful, we evaluate them by considering several key factors:

### Participation levels

We look at how many people took part in engagement activities, taking into account the nature and scope of the project.

### Relevance of feedback

We assess the relevance and depth of the responses we receive in relation to the program or project at hand.

### Appropriateness of methods

We evaluate whether the engagement methods used were suitable for the stakeholders involved.

### Community feedback

We gather verbal and written feedback from the community on how effective our engagement activities have been.

### Achievement of objectives

We measure how well we've met the engagement principles and objectives outlined in this strategy.

### Inclusivity

We assess whether our engagement represented the diversity of our community.





Action Plan

To continue to improve how we engage with our community, and based on the feedback we have received, we have set four objectives to guide us.

Engagement culture:

Support a culture of community engagement within the Council, emphasising the importance of community input in decision-making.

- Encourage teams across Council to plan and budget for community engagement as part of their activities.
- Provide staff with support and training in the IAP2 framework, ensuring they have the skills to engage effectively.
- Implement a system for regularly collecting feedback from staff and community members on engagement activities, and use this feedback to improve future practices.
- Develop a recognition program to celebrate staff who demonstrate excellence in community engagement.
- Embed engagement into the planning phases of projects to ensure community input is considered for all projects with high community impact.
- Ensure senior leadership communicates the importance of community engagement and leads by example through active participation.
- Create and support a message board for internal staff to share insights experience, tools, and best practices.
- Develop case studies of successful engagement projects to share through internal communications, highlighting effective strategies and lessons learned.



Honest conversations

Facilitate honest and open conversations with the community, promoting mutual respect and understanding.

- Develop and maintain transparent communication channels, such as the Together Cessnock Platform, where community members can ask questions and receive honest, timely responses.
- Publish reports on community engagement activities, detailing what the community said, and how it influenced Council decisions.
- Schedule dedicated engagement sessions focused on specific issues or projects, enabling in-depth discussions and honest feedback.
- Clearly communicate any limitations or constraints on Council's actions and decisions to manage expectations and build understanding.
- Continue to conduct the customer satisfaction survey every 2 years to gather insights on community perceptions and engagement effectiveness.
- Regularly communicate the connection between Council operations and the Community Strategic Plan, ensuring community understanding of Council's broader objectives.



# Relationship building

Strengthen and build positive relationships with the community, fostering trust and collaboration.

- Provide easy-to-understand FAQs for engagement projects, ensuring clarity and accessibility of information.
- Use a diverse range of engagement methods, combining digital and face-to-face interactions where appropriate, to reach a broader audience.
- Increase the use of video content, featuring staff explaining projects and processes in a relatable way.
- Implement a regular customer service stall at community events to engage directly with residents and answer questions.
- Identify projects requiring engagement in the Operational Plan and ensure they include community consultation.
- Include community engagement requirements during the project design phase to capture public insights early.
- Clearly outline the engagement process for each project, including defined timeframes, so participants know what to expect.
- Work closely with hard-to-reach communities to ensure engagement methods are tailored to their needs, encouraging wider participation.
- Identify and address access barriers for people with disability, ensuring engagement is inclusive and accessible to all.



# Insight and learning

Enhance community understanding of Council's decision-making through clear communication, and use feedback and data to drive continuous improvement.

- Use social media platforms to regularly update the community on Council's decision-making processes, ensuring transparency.
- Provide information in plain language that is easy to understand, making Council decisions and processes clearer for all.
- Use visual content (e.g., infographics, charts, videos) where appropriate to simplify technical information and make it more engaging.
- Conduct interactive webinars where Council members and staff explain recent decisions, share updates, and answer community questions.
- Ensure that all information necessary for understanding decision-making processes is readily available and accessible to the community.
- Consider accessibility needs when planning written communication, and communicate our ability to provide alternative formats when requested to accommodate all residents.
- Develop and share responses to frequently asked questions on key topics, ensuring consistent understanding across the community.
- Continuously gather feedback on the clarity of Council communications and use this data to refine engagement approaches.
- Regularly evaluate engagement projects, measuring factors such as participation levels, community satisfaction, and the impact of feedback on decision-making. Use these insights to refine future engagement approaches and ensure continuous improvement.





# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Community participation plan

We firmly believe the community has a right to be informed about planning matters that affect them. Wherever possible, we encourage opportunities for meaningful and effective community participation in land use planning.

Our community participation plan outlines our requirements under planning legislation. It's designed to make it clearer and easier for the community to understand how to participate in planning decisions.

The chapter 'Community Participation Plan for land use planning' includes information on strategic planning, development assessments and how to engage with us on land use planning matters.

Community participation in planning matters is central to the creation of thriving communities through a shared vision.





## What is the Community Participation Plan?

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) sets out how and when Cessnock City Council (CCC) will undertake community participation as part of its planning functions.

The CPP has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 No 203](#) (EP&A Act, 1979), the Local Government Act, 1993 (LG Act, 1993) and Council's Community Strategic Plan 2036.

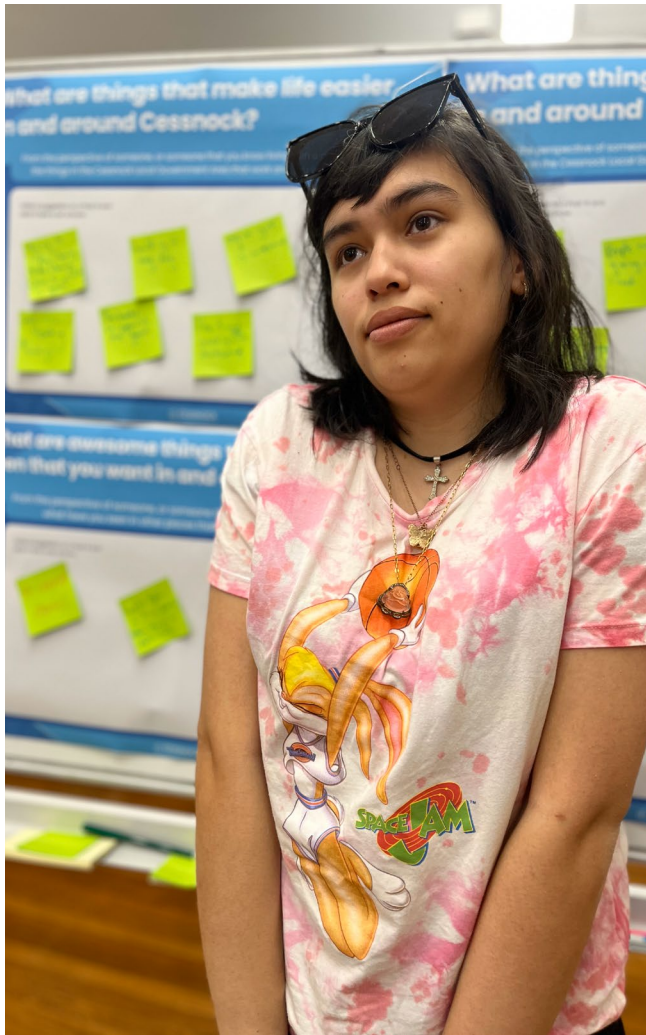
The CPP identifies legislated public exhibition and notification requirements set out in [Schedule 1 Community Participation Plans](#) of the EP&A Act, 1979 and additional requirements set by Council where planning matters may have a broader community impact. Council may meet these requirements via:

- Written notice to individual landowners or occupiers
- Council's Development Application Tracker
- Announcement on Council's [Together Cessnock](#) website
- Availability of information and documents online or in public places eg Council's administration building, library etc

## Where does the CPP apply?

The CPP applies to the whole CCC Local Government Area and to activities under the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 No 203](#) that are being assessed by CCC. All other NSW planning authorities are required to prepare their own CPP.

The CPP is supported by Council's Community Engagement Strategy, which may be used to enhance the minimum requirements set out in this Plan.



## What planning matters are covered by the CPP?

The CPP covers planning matters including policy, plan making, planning agreements, development controls and assessments, as defined below.

**Community Participation Plan** (this document) outlines how and when Council engages with the community on land use planning matters.

**Complying Development** is a combined planning and construction approval for straightforward development that meets the pre-specified requirements and are eligible for fast-track approval, without the need for a full development application.

**Contributions Plans** are prepared by councils to levy new development to fund additional or improved local, public services and infrastructure needed by the development and used by the whole community.

**Council-related development** means development for which the Council is the applicant developer (whether lodged by or on behalf of Council), landowner, or has a commercial interest in the land the subject of the application, where it will also be the regulator or consent authority.

**Development Application** is a formal request for consent under the EP&A Act, 1979. It is required to change the use of land, subdivide land, carry out building, landscaping and other work unless what is proposed is considered exempt development.

**Development Assessment** is the evaluation of an application proposing new development in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

**Development Control Plans** are guidelines prepared by councils that describe the preferred way to undertake development that is enabled by a Local Environmental Plan to get good planning and design outcomes and manage impacts.

**Local Environmental Plans** are the local planning laws prepared by councils but approved by the NSW Government. They set out what development can take place where, the maximum height and density of development, and what places need to be protected for their heritage value. They are amended by preparing a Planning Proposal.

**Local Strategic Planning Statement** sets a vision for the planning direction of the Cessnock Local Government Area for 20 years. The planning priorities outlined within the planning statement reflect future land use directions based on the themes: liveable, productive, sustainable and unique.

**Planning Agreement** a voluntary legal agreement between a developer and a planning authority and is usually negotiated when a developer is submitting a development application or planning proposal.

**Planning Proposal** is a document and supporting information that explains the intended effect and justification of a proposed Local Environmental Plan or an amendment to a Local Environmental Plan.

**Strategic Planning** includes long term policy and plan making.

**Structure Plans/Place Strategies** provide guidance and principles for the future development of an area by coordinating strategic planning objectives, staging requirements and delivery of essential infrastructure in line with the vision and goals of the area.



# Important things to consider

## Privacy

Council is committed to safeguarding the privacy of individuals and handling of personal information in accordance with the [Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998](#) (NSW) and [Information Privacy Principles](#), the [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002](#) (NSW) and [Health Privacy Principles](#), and any subordinate legislation.

Submissions are not kept confidential. Council releases submissions when a request is made in accordance with the relevant provisions under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. When a submission is released by law, Council routinely withholds names, contact numbers, email addresses and signatures.

Should you wish for all personal details or any information that may identify you to be withheld from the public, this should be clearly stated in your submission. The supply of personal information with your submission is voluntary, however the submission will not be considered for Development Assessment purposes.

Copies of submissions may be forwarded to the applicant or proponent seeking that they address the issues raised in the submissions, by way of comments or amendments to the proposed application or plan. Submission may be shared with other government agencies associated with the project. Personal information will be kept in Council's Information Management System in accordance with the relevant legislation. If making a submission through Council's webpage, your information will also be held by EngagementHQ and Council recommends you read their privacy statement.

The information collected will be used for the purpose outlined in the notification, related administrative functions, compliance and complaint handling, internal auditing, and in accordance with Council's [Privacy Management Plan](#) and [Privacy Statement](#) which can be found on Council's website. The intended recipients of the personal information are relevant Council officers and submission may be included, with personal information redacted, in a council report that will be published in the public domain.

To access, correct or update personal information:

- Visit [Council's website](#);
- Contact Council's Privacy Contact Officer on **4993 4100**, or
- Email [council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au).

For more information about Council's obligations regarding personal information or personal rights, contact the [Information and Privacy Commission](#) or visit their website [ipc.nsw.gov.au](http://ipc.nsw.gov.au).



## Making a submission

Any individual or organisation can make a submission during the public exhibition period. Submissions must be made in writing, include the address or application number or the name of the exhibited planning matter and submitted to Council via:

**Mail:** PO Box 152, CESSNOCK NSW 2325; or

**Email:** [council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au); or

**Dropped into the Cessnock City Council Administrative building:** 62-78 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325; or

**Have your Say Webpage:** <https://together.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/>; or

**Via the Application tracker (Development Applications only):** <http://datracker.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/>; or

**Via the NSW Planning Portal:** <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/>

The submission must contain the author's name and address, and their contact details, including a return email or postal address. This will allow acknowledgement letters to be sent.

If you require assistance with your submission, Council's Customer Service Team can assist at the front counter.

## Objections Vs Submissions

There is a difference between a submission and an objection. However whether supporting or objecting to a proposal, the following minimum standards apply to all submissions:

- It must be received within the designated public exhibition period, and
- It must include the author's name and address.
- Must include clear reasons as to why the author objects to the proposed development; or alternatively, must include clear reasons as to why the author supports the proposed development.

## What is an Objection?

An objection must contain clear reasons as to why the author objects to the proposed development or plan. An objection is NOT:

- A submission that only seeks clarification in respect of a proposal;
- A submission that is in support of a proposal;
- An anonymous submission; or
- A submission that is indifferent to a proposal



How are Objections counted / considered?

- Multiple submissions from one household are considered one objection.
- One petition is considered one objection, notwithstanding the number of individual signatures contained in the petition.
- In the event multiple submissions in the form of pro-forma letters are lodged, each pro-forma letter is considered one objection, but only if the submission clearly addresses the other requirements prescribed in this section of the CPP.

Petitions

Where a petition is received, the person who submits the petition to Council will be acknowledged as the point of contact for all future correspondence on the progress of the application/project.



Important public exhibition information

- Timeframes for all public exhibition are in calendar days and include weekends, exclusive of Planning Proposals which are in working days.
- If the nominated exhibition period is due to close on a weekend or public holiday Council will extend the exhibition to finish on the first available work day, this will be explained in all correspondence relating to the exhibition.
- The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.
- A public authority is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an Environmental Impact Statement whose publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason.

Conflict of Interest in Council-related Development Applications

- A council-related development application must be accompanied by a management strategy, being a statement specifying how CCC will manage conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with the application because the council is the consent authority, or a statement that the council has no management strategy for the application.
- A council-related development application must not be determined by the consent authority unless the council has adopted a conflict of interest policy and considers the policy in determining the application.





# Minimum exhibition / notification periods and formats – Strategic Planning

Table 1 below identifies the minimum timeframes for the public exhibition of Strategic Planning matters. The timeframes for matters denoted by an asterix (\*) are legislated by the EP&A Act, 1979. The remaining matters are considered best practice timeframes for public exhibitions.

Table 1 also outlines how Council will notify the community of the commencement of the exhibition period.

**Table 1:** Minimum public exhibition periods for plans

PLANNING MATTER	PUBLIC EXHIBITION TIMEFRAME	EXHIBITION/NOTIFICATION FORMAT
Draft Community Participation Plans*	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Draft Local Strategic Planning Statements*	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Planning Proposals* for local environmental plans subject to a Gateway determination	<p><b>a.</b> If the Gateway determination for the proposal specifies a period of public exhibition—the period so specified, or</p> <p><b>b.</b> If the Gateway determination for the proposal specifies that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal—no public exhibition, or</p> <p><b>c.</b> Otherwise—28 days.</p>	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a> , NSW Planning Portal, in writing to affected and adjoining landowners where practicable
Draft Development Control Plans*	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Draft Contribution Plans*	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>

PLANNING MATTER	PUBLIC EXHIBITION TIMEFRAME	EXHIBITION/NOTIFICATION FORMAT
Draft Planning Agreements*	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Reclassification of land*	<p>28 days or</p> <p><b>a.</b> If a different period of public exhibition is specified in the Gateway determination for the proposal—the period so specified, or</p> <p><b>b.</b> If the Gateway determination specifies that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal—no public exhibition.</p> <p>and</p> <p>a public hearing to occur after the conclusion of the public exhibition</p>	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a> , NSW Planning Portal
Draft policies or guidelines	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Public Domain Plans, Masterplans and similar plans for urban renewal, structure plans, place strategies	28 days	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>
Re-exhibition of any matter referred to above	As per the original exhibition period.	Council's <i>Have Your Say</i> website – <a href="#">Together Cessnock</a>

Notwithstanding the timeframes above, Council may choose to extend the public exhibition period relating to any proposal should the scope of the project be determined to require it, or should the elected representatives resolve to do so.

Additionally, Council may use other optional exhibitions/notification formats such as newspaper/written media, hardcopy viewing at other venues, social media, drop in consultation sessions, workshops and community meetings, advisory panels or reference groups or others, determined at the discretion of Council staff and based on the scale of the planning matter.





## Minimum exhibition / notification periods and formats – Development Assessment

Council is not the only consent authority for development applications in the Cessnock Local Government Area. Regional development is determined by the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel. State Significant Development and state significant infrastructure is assessed by the New South Wales Minister for Planning or delegate.

In addition, Private Certifiers are able to approve certain types of development as **Complying Development** under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development) Code 2008*.

Where Development Applications are assessed by Council, notification is sent in writing to adjoining landowners and additional properties at Council discretion / where practicable.

Table 2 identifies the minimum timeframes for the public exhibition of Development matters. The timeframes for matters denoted by an asterix (\*) are legislated by the EP&A Act, 1979. The remaining matters are considered best practice timeframes.

Where a development type is not addressed in Table 2, Council will defer to Schedule 1 Community Participation Plans of the EP&A Act, 1979 and the associated EP&A Regulations.

Any development application that is amended under section 37 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, that requires re-exhibition under section 23 of the EP&A Act 1979, must be exhibited in accordance with Table 2. The regulations may specify the circumstances in which a plan or other matter is required or not required to be re-exhibited. Re-exhibition is not required if the environmental impact of the development has been reduced or not increased.

Table 2 also outlines how Council will notify the community of the commencement of the exhibition period.

Table 2: Minimum public exhibition periods for development applications and other matters where CCC is the consent authority

**Table 2:** Minimum public exhibition periods for development applications and other matters where CCC is the consent authority

APPLICATION TYPE	LEGISLATED TIMEFRAMES	EXHIBITION/NOTIFICATION FORMAT
Application for <b>development consent</b> other than for a complying development certificate, for designated development, for nominated integrated development, for threatened species development or for State significant development	14 days	Notification in writing (discretionary), Council <a href="#">Development Application Tracker</a>
Council-related development	28 days	Notification in writing (discretionary), Council <a href="#">Development Application Tracker</a>
Application for development consent for Designated Development	28 days	Notification in writing (discretionary), Council <a href="#">Development Application Tracker</a> , site notice, viewing at other venues (where practicable)
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	14 days	Notification in writing (discretionary), Council <a href="#">Development Application Tracker</a>
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1	28 days	Council Website (including application tracker)
Threatened Species Development	28 days	Council Website (including application tracker)
Nominated Integrated Development	28 days	Notification in writing (discretionary), Council <a href="#">Development Application Tracker</a>
Complying Development	Only where required by relevant provisions in the EP&A Regulations	



# Development Assessment not requiring exhibition

[Schedule 1 Community Participation Plans](#) of the EP&A Act, 1979 allows Council to identify types of development applications that will not require public exhibition.

Public exhibition will not be carried out for the following development types, except where the development application proposes a variation to a development standard under Clause 4.6 of Cessnock Local Environment Plan 2011 (CLEP), or is for works on a **heritage item** or in a **heritage conservation area** as outlined by the CLEP.

1.

The application is for a **temporary use** as outlined in clause 2.8 of Cessnock Local Environment Plan 2011 in cases where the number of participants and spectators is less than 2000 people.
2.

The application is for subdivision for the purpose of:

a.

Boundary adjustments; or

b.

A dual occupancy under Clause 4.1C of the Cessnock Local Environment Plan 2011; or

c.

A strata subdivision; or

d.

A subdivision of no more than two (2) lots in a residential zone; or

e.

A subdivision of no more than five (5) lots in a employment zone.
3.

Development is for a new **dwelling house** and additions to a dwelling house, provided that the development:

a.

Is a maximum of two storeys;

b.

Is a maximum height of 8.5m from the existing ground level; and

c.

Is setback a minimum of 900mm from the property boundary.\*
4.

Ancillary development,\*\* excluding outbuildings exceeding the height of the equivalent Complying Development standard.
5.

Development is for a **dual occupancy** or **secondary dwelling** and is located within the R1 General Residential, R2 Low Density, R3 Medium Density or MUI Mixed Use zones, provided that the development:

a.

Is a maximum of two storeys;

b.

Is a maximum height 8.5m from the existing ground level; and

c.

Is setback 900mm from the boundary.\*
6.

**Commercial premises** and **shop-top housing** in employment zones where the site does not directly adjoin land in a residential zone.
7.

Permissible land-uses in employment zones where the site does not directly adjoin land in a residential zone.
8.

Development is for **extensive agriculture**, or development that is ancillary to the rural use of the land including but not limited to **farm buildings**, dams etc.
9.

Internal works to buildings, where there is no change to the external configuration of the building.
10.

Demolition works.
11.

Development for the purpose of advertising signage.

**\* Note 1:** Notification / exhibition will not be required when the development has a shared boundary with a property owned by the applicant, despite having a setback of less than 900mm from that boundary.

**\*\* Note 2:** As defined in the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*.

**Note 3:** Notwithstanding any other provision of the CPP, Council may elect to notify or exhibit any proposed development if, in the opinion of Council, it is in the public interest to do so.





