CO1 – Communications and Engagement Strategy

CO1 **Communications and Engagement Strategy**
234992   TRIM 10030

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council's Community Planning and Engagement Team have developed a Communications and Engagement Strategy which outlines Council's commitment to keep the community informed and provide opportunities for feedback and participation in the 'business' of Wollondilly.

- The Strategy covers all areas of Council's communication and engagement functions and identifies actions to support, enhance and evolve communications and engagement across Council.

- The high level strategy will be supported by a series of 'Action Plans' for each Focus Area which will support the implementation of the Strategy by staff.

- It is recommended that Council adopt the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

REPORT

Communications and Engagement practice at Wollondilly Shire Council has always been centred on respect, trust, openness and accountability. Following a review of existing communications and engagement protocols and procedures, it was agreed that a more strategic approach was required to support this fast evolving function of Council.

We know that our community feels that it is very important to have opportunities to participate in decision making and have access to Council information. With technology evolving at a rapid pace and increasing expectations to engage with Council outside of business hours, Council must be strategic and proactive in its approach to be in a strong position to take up opportunities that will ultimately improve customer service and build strong relationships with the community.

The Communications and Engagement Strategy outlines Council's commitment to keep the community informed and provide opportunities for feedback and participation in the 'business' of Wollondilly. The document is our commitment to continue to strive for best practice in communications and engagement and to reassure the community that we are listening.

Community

CO1 – Communications and Engagement Strategy

The document will support Council to:

- Engage and communicate with our community in a transparent, open and 'user-friendly' way that supports good decision making.
- Better understand and respond to community expectations in terms of communication and engagement.
- Deliver more efficient communications and engagement methods that are timely, responsive and tailored to our community's needs.

The Communications and Engagement Strategy uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and Social Justice Principles as benchmarks for enhancing and improving communications and engagement between Council, the community, government institutions and other key stakeholders. The strategy outlines a set of guiding principles based on these best practice approaches.

The high level strategy will be supported by a series of 'Action Plans' for each Focus Area which will support the implementation of the Strategy by responsible officers. These action plans will be evolving documents and can be changed to adapt as new opportunities arise.

CONSULTATION

The Communications and Engagement Strategy has been developed by the Community Planning and Engagement Team. The strategy was informed by:

- The findings of a community telephone survey conducted in 2017
- A review of best practice approaches within Local Government
- Acquired knowledge and information gathered from previous communication and engagement campaigns.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No funding has been allocated for this project, however many of the actions identify the need for specific funding to enable the take up of emerging approaches to communications and engagement.

ATTACHMENT INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. Communications and Engagement Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Community