

Having more meaningful conversations with our community

our Community Engagement Strategy

2020 - 2026

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire

Having more meaningful conversations with our community

our Community Engagement Strategy

2020 - 2026

What art & cultural activities would you like more opportunities to participate in?

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire

Having more meaningful conversations with our community

our Community Engagement Strategy

2020 - 2026

What art & cultural activities would you like more opportunities to participate in?

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire

Having more meaningful conversations with our community

our Community Engagement Strategy

2020 - 2026

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire



Having more meaningful conversations with our community

our Community Engagement Strategy

2020 - 2026

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire



The foundation of local government is built around the principles of democracy. A key hallmark of those principles is the opportunity for the community to engage and be involved in Council's decision-making processes.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire plays an important role in looking after our community by delivering more than 70 services, caring for our environment, managing land and community infrastructure and ensuring the Shire is a great place to live.

Enhancing engagement opportunities will help us make better informed decisions for the benefit of the whole community.

Our vision is to have more meaningful conversations with our community.
– **CEO, John Baker**

We have heard from our community over recent years that Council needs to improve the way it engages. We have listened to the feedback and developed this Community Engagement Strategy as a guiding document to build Council's capacity to more effectively design, plan, deliver and evaluate our engagement activities.

An aspiration of this approach is to build capacity within the Shire's population by developing increased public confidence in the participation of community life through greater opportunities to engage.

This Strategy reinforces our commitment to have close connections and conversations with our community for shared leadership.
– **Mayor, Cr Despi O'Connor**

Our desired outcome of this strategy is that more community members will feel encouraged to share responsibility for their neighbourhoods and environment, create deeper local connections and participate in civic life. This will lead to an enhanced understanding of the role of local government and better alignment with our community.

This strategy has been developed with you, our community, in response to what you have told us. We look forward to many meaningful conversations and beneficial outcomes for the greater good of the Mornington Peninsula.

Councillor Despi O'Connor, Mayor
John Baker, Chief Executive Officer
Mornington Peninsula Shire

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

We are committed to the cultural safety of all people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the LGBTI+ community, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse and those who are religious.

This Strategy was adopted by Council on 8 December 2020.







Our Principles of Community Engagement

The way the Mornington Peninsula Shire (the Shire) approaches community engagement will be guided by the following principles that have been drawn from the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) 'Core Values'; the United States-based National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's (NCDD) 'Core Principles for Public Engagement'; and the 'Community Engagement Principles' set out in the Local Government Act 2020:

1. Community Engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Community Engagement is carefully and inclusively planned to ensure that the design, organisation, and implementation of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.
3. Community Engagement is representative; it seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
4. Community Engagement provides participants with the information and support they need to participate in a meaningful way.
5. Participants in Community Engagement are informed of the ways in which the engagement process will influence Council decision-making.

The principles are internationally recognised and adopted principles for making better decisions together. They are based on the belief that engagement, when done well, improves social, environmental and economic outcomes and increases trust in the democratic process.

Community Engagement is a planned process where the Mornington Peninsula community work together with Council to help inform decisions.



Our Approach

Our approach to community engagement is centred around the community influencing and shaping Council decisions, ideas and actions that affect, impact or interest them. This will lead to having an open and accountable Council that actively engages community in decision making.

The Shire is committed to the highest standards of performance, behaviour and service. To guide us in the delivery of exceptional community outcomes, we have five core values that are integral to everything we do.

Living our values

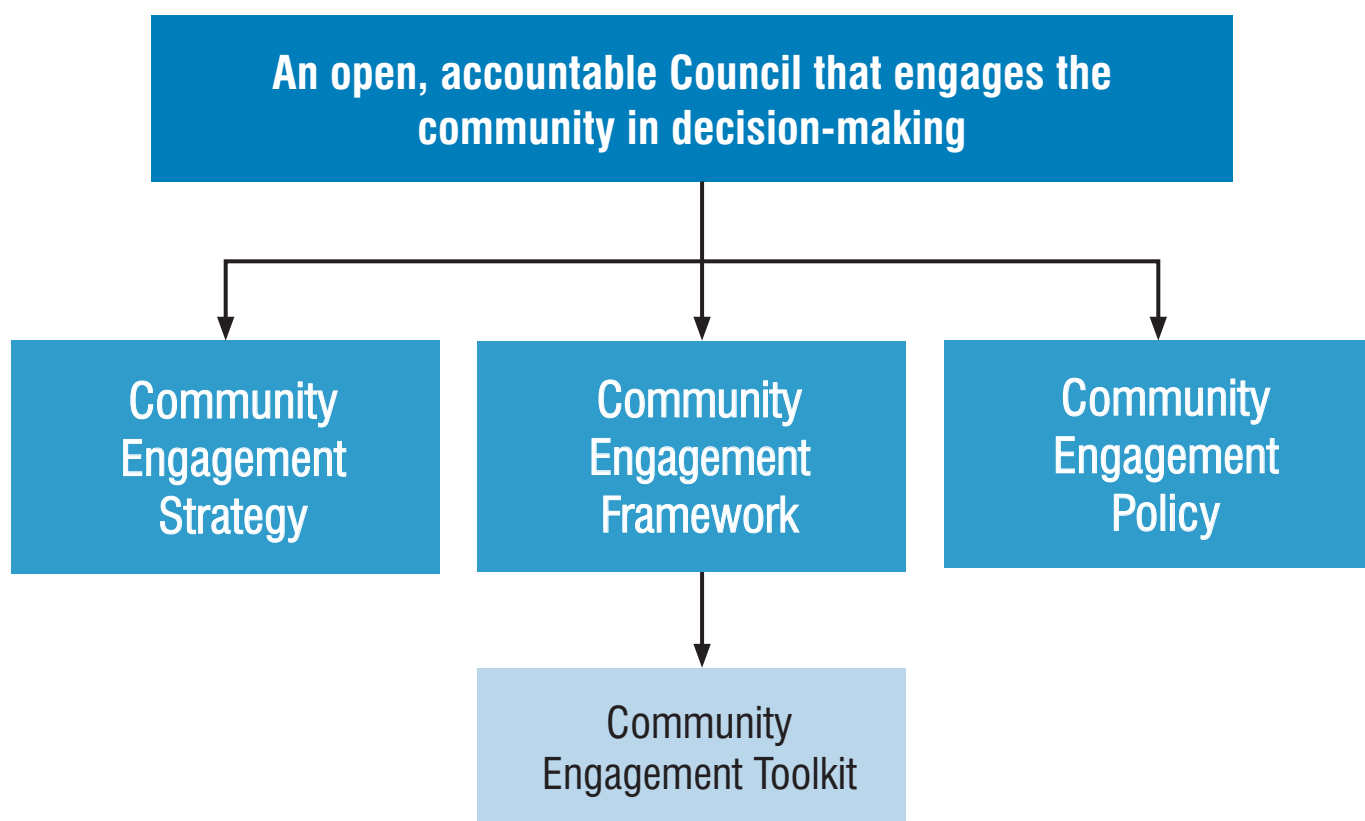


Our approach aligns with the commitments outlined in our Council's 2017-2021 Council Plan. That is:

- Providing effective leadership and representation by democratically elected councillors
- Listening and reflecting your collective aspirations in our plans
- Helping you create a resilient, inclusive community that can respond to challenges
- Bringing new ideas to discussions that create new opportunities
- Encouraging you to get involved in your community
- Working hard to provide the best possible service and value
- Keeping you up to date with what is happening across the Shire in an open and direct way

To achieve this, our Strategy and approach consider input from key stakeholders and the community about what they believe to be the characteristics of successful engagement:

- Good design and planning of the engagement processes
- A clear purpose that is communicated to all
- Identifying target audiences
- Effective two-way communication with clear and relevant information
- Transparency of both the engagement and decision-making processes
- Shared values
- Multiple options to participate in the engagement processes
- Giving feedback on the outcomes of the engagement processes and how these influenced the decision-making process
- Timely engagement that enables fair and reasonable opportunity for the community to give input to the engagement processes
- A Strategy that outlines several directions to help achieve this vision for successful engagement.



Our Strategy and supporting Framework look to achieve engagement that:

- is planned, purposeful, meaningful and inclusive;
- brings together the diverse range of stakeholders, communities and Council to collaborate; and
- informs decisions about services, events, plans and projects.



How this Strategy aligns with Council's Corporate Reporting Framework

This Strategy aligns with the Mission Statement contained in the Council Plan 2017 – 2021:

“Keeping you informed with what is happening across the Shire, engaging with you in an open, transparent and direct way is how we will measure our success and hold ourselves accountable in alignment with our values contained in the Council Plan.”

Council has been reviewing its approach to undertaking meaningful engagement with the community and considering the variety of options available.

To add to the thinking and planning Council has been doing, the recent introduction of the new Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) mandates councils to have a greater focus on improving their approach to deliberative engagement and ensuring the community are included in Council decision-making.

These changes are reflected in the requirement for councils to have a Community Engagement Policy and Public Transparency Policy, with principles that are set out in the Act.

Council will adopt and apply the principles and process set out in this Strategy in developing its future ten-year Community Vision and four-year Council Plan, as well as all other types of engagement or consultation with our community.

How this Strategy and our Framework have been developed

The Community Engagement Taskforce (the Taskforce) at the Shire was convened in September 2019 to design, drive and deliver Council's new approach to community engagement. The taskforce includes key staff from across the organisation with a range of skills and experience in engagement.

The following steps have been taken in the drafting and development of this Strategy to ensure appropriate and adequate engagement:

- **Community collaboration:** The community will be consulted on the draft Strategy to inform its contents and ensure it is designed using a community-centred approach. Engagement with the community on this Strategy will be designed through the 'involve' and 'collaborate' IAP2 spectrum lens, in that we will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected.
- **Councillor collaboration:** Councillors have worked alongside the Taskforce, through workshops and working groups, to provide input and guidance into the design and delivery of this Strategy and the Shire's approach.
- **Staff consultation:** Taskforce conducted internal consultation with staff across the organisation in December 2019, with opportunities to attend Community Engagement Discussion sessions or respond to a survey to provide input on key questions.

Components of our approach to community engagement

There are three important components to Council's overall approach to community engagement:

- **Our Strategy** includes Council's commitment, the principles and approach it will follow and goals when planning, delivering and reviewing engagement.
- **Our Framework** includes a range of tools and resources to help staff plan and implement engagement activities in a 'toolkit' format.
- The **Community Engagement Policy** and Public Transparency Policy are inherently linked to our Community Engagement Strategy and overall approach, as the policy documents outline what Council will do and the principles it will follow.



Your personal information and input

Council is committed to protecting your privacy. Any personal information you share will only be used in accordance with our Privacy Policy (see link at Resources and Links). We will not give this information to any other individual or organisation unless required to by law. Council is subject to and adheres to the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, the *Health Records Act 2001* and the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs).

What does success look like?

The overall success of this strategy will be measured by:

- Opportunities provided to the community to participate in a planned process to work together with Council to help inform decisions
- The level of satisfaction the community has with the process
- High participation rates in the engagement process
- A broad cross section of the Mornington Peninsula community participating
- Informed, considered and transparent decisions and outcomes that benefit the community

How we will apply the IAP2 Standards

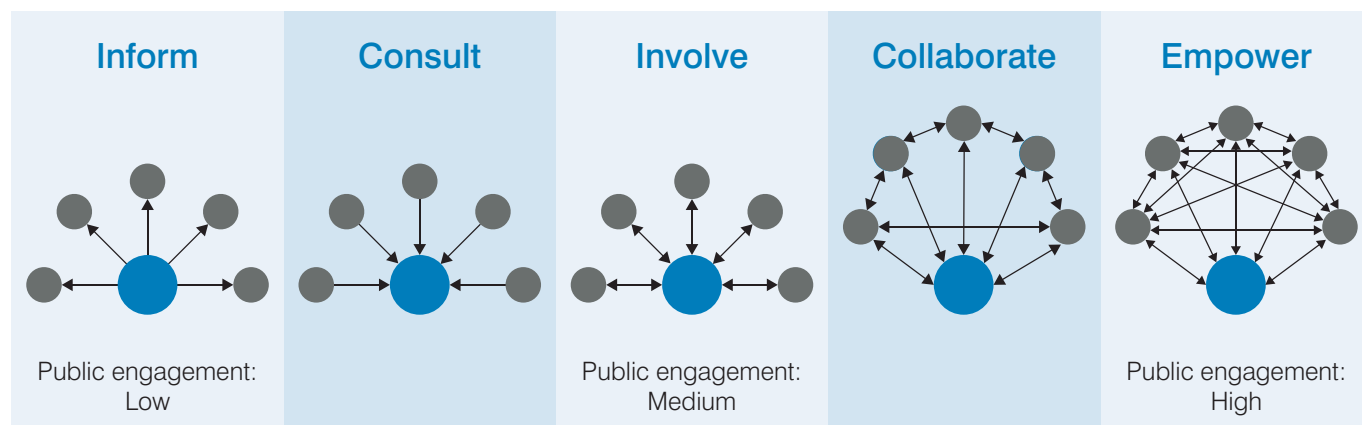
Council has adopted the community engagement principles of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) which are acknowledged as a global best practice benchmark.

The level of engagement that is appropriate for a project will depend on the nature of the project. The Shire will use the factors detailed below to determine on a case-by-case basis, what level of engagement will be used.

It may sometimes be assumed that the level of difficulty of the engagement process increases with the level of participation, with 'consult' being perceived as easy in comparison to 'empower'.

In terms of deciding where an engagement sits on the spectrum, no level of engagement across the spectrum is more difficult or preferable to another. Every community engagement process requires balanced and objective information to assist participants in understanding the question at hand, the alternatives to choose from and the opportunities the decision presents.

IAP2 outlines five different levels of public participation: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower.





The table below reflects Council's interpretation and application of the IAP2 spectrum.

IAP2	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand solutions, alternatives, opportunities and/or problems.	To obtain public feedback on decisions or ideas on alternative approaches.	To work directly with the public throughout the process so 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 final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the community	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns 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 direct 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.
Examples of how we will do this.	• Council website • Social media • Media releases • E-news • Advertising • Foyer displays • Mailouts • Site signage • Community roundtable and project reference groups • Workshops, forums, seminars	• Council website • Social media • Media releases • E-news • Advertising • Foyer displays • Mailouts • Site signage • Stakeholder groups • Community roundtable and project reference groups • Workshops, forums	• Written submissions • Stakeholder groups • Pop-up shops, stalls, drop-in events, listening posts • Surveys and opinion polls • Community roundtable and project reference groups • On-site meetings/tours	• Deliberative processes • Community roundtable and project reference groups • Written submissions	• Polls and referendums • Policy-making



Our Community

The Mornington Peninsula is a diverse and complex community. Widely known as an affluent tourist destination with many natural attractions, it is also home to some of the most disadvantaged communities in Victoria.

While it is a popular place for retirement and has a higher aged population than most municipalities, the fastest growing demographic in recent decades has been young working families who are choosing a quieter, more affordable lifestyle than that offered in the suburbs of Melbourne.

Describing our Community

We have a population of 167,636 people spread across 40 townships covering an area of 723 kilometres and visited by approximately 7 million people each year. It is difficult to define our collective identity, making the choice and variety of engagement approaches all the more important.

- Communities of place, across the 40 townships on the Mornington Peninsula
- Communities of interest, such as arts, sports, politics and environment
- Communities of affiliation, such as schools, local clubs and religious groups
- Communities of culture, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and those from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds
- Communities of identity, such as LGBTIQ+, disability, or other lived experience
- Communities of commerce, such as home, retail, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, service or agricultural businesses



192km²
of coastline



723km²
area



70% green
wedge



Median
age is 46



167,636
population



17.8%
population
born overseas



+0.59%
population
growth rate



89,116
dwellings



37.8% own home,
33.8% buying,
20% renting



2.4 people
average
household size



15,798
businesses



67,498
employed



The Shire is committed to the principles of open and inclusive government, including providing accessible content and services to the community regardless of disability, socio-economic status, culture or environment.

In some cases, lack of access can limit some of our community's opportunity to participate or contribute.

The Shire will provide opportunities for participation and engagement via a range of accessible and inclusive approaches, including the use of online tools and content, as well as more traditional methods such as face-to-face meetings, print media and paper-based surveys.

Every Community Engagement activity will identify how it will be inclusive and accessible to all stakeholders.

There are methods, processes, systems and tools in our Community Engagement Framework that provide guidance on the different approaches.

The lists at right set out our potential stakeholders and the diversity of stakeholders, clearly articulating the considerations council must take into account when designing community engagement.



Potential Stakeholders

(at any point in time – topic, issue or project dependant)

- Residents and ratepayers
- Users of services and facilities
- Community groups, sports clubs, local organisations
- People who work or volunteer in our community
- Visitors and tourists
- Local businesses and industry groups
- Service providers (such as education, health, emergency)
- Advocacy groups
- Other levels of government, statutory authorities and peak bodies
- Councillors, Council staff, leadership, contractors and consultants

Diversity of stakeholders to consider

(including people who may need specific or tailored engagement strategies)

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- People with a disability
- Children and young people
- Older people, including frail and elderly
- Carers
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities or individuals
- People who identify as LGBTIQ+
- Vulnerable people including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- People with illness including mental illness or chronic disease
- People who are socially isolated
- People of lower socio-economic status or otherwise disadvantaged



Our Process

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's goal is to undertake well-planned, clear and transparent community engagement practices, including opportunities for information exchange and meaningful involvement in Council's decision-making processes.

Council understands that community engagement is a continuous process that occurs in a variety of different but equally important ways in every phase of the Shire's assessment, planning, service delivery, and reporting.

It is how Council ensures the voice and needs of our community inform and provide feedback on how well Council is understanding, representing and delivering the aspirations and needs of our whole community.

Community engagement should be focused around specific, planned and purposeful outcomes.

Community engagement must follow a consistent and transparent process that lets community members understand how and why a decision is made. The best way to do this is to integrate community engagement into Council's decision making process.

Overleaf, the needs of the community are identified at each step of the decision making process. Each step in the decision making process is an opportunity to work with the community to build trust. Council can lose the trust of community members by failing to involve them until alternatives have been developed, or worse, a preferred alternative has been chosen.

Effective community engagement will clearly outline what information is needed, how stakeholders may participate in the process and follow up with participants when the project goals have been reached.

Community stakeholders participate in engagement activities because they believe that their participation will help shape the decision being made. Effective community engagement clearly states what decision is being made, and how stakeholder participation has shaped the decision.



The following six key steps
will inform Council decisions.

Step 1

**Define the problem/opportunity
and the decision to be made**

Result: Clear understanding of
the scope of the decision

Step 2

Gather information

Result: Objective information
about the issue to be addressed

Step 4

Develop alternatives

Result: Balance alternatives that include
stakeholder issues and concerns

Step 3

Establish decision making criteria

Result: Clear understanding
of the criteria by which the
alternatives will be evaluated

Step 5

Evaluate alternatives

Result: Clear comparison of
alternatives, based on criteria

Step 6

Make a decision

Result: Clear understanding of
who made the decision and how
stakeholder input was considered



Our community engagement process draws on best practice approaches and enables the overall goals of our Strategy by ensuring it is well-planned, our design approach is community and person-centred in its methods, and that we continually evaluate, reflect, improve and share the outcomes and learnings with our community.

Our Framework and tools enable and support Council to achieve effective community engagement as outlined on page 15. The detail on each of the steps for undertaking the phases outlined on the next page is set out in the Community Engagement Framework (see Resources and links). Our process is one of four key elements in our community engagement framework that enable and support Council to achieve this.

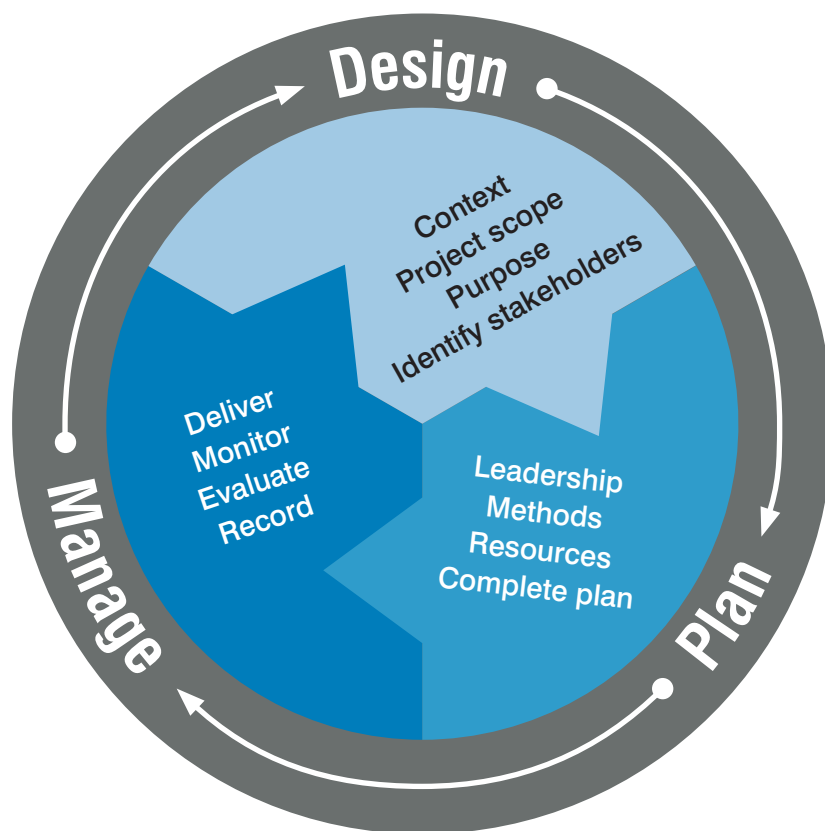




Table 1 outlines where these decision steps occur in Council's process as we design, plan and manage our community engagement activities.

Phase	Elements	Outputs
Design	- Understand the context - Scope the project - Define the purpose and intended outcomes - Identify Stakeholders - Level of influence (IAP2)	1. A clear understanding of the 'engagement profile' that will inform the design 2. A clear understanding of the scope of the decision for which the engagement is being sought
Plan	- Secure leadership commitment and support - Select the most appropriate and effective methods - Identify required resources - Complete an Engagement and Communications Plan	1. A tailored, budgeted and endorsed engagement plan 2. Full range of objective information about the issue to be addressed 3. Clear understanding of the criteria by which the alternatives will be evaluated
Manage	- Deliver the Plan - Monitor and respond - Close the loop on input and feedback with community - Evaluate engagement - Demonstrate how feedback has been considered - Capture the outcomes for future engagements	1. Balanced alternatives that include stakeholder issues and concerns 2. Clear comparison of alternatives, based on agreed criteria 3. Outcomes are evaluated, feedback is incorporated, participation is delivered, lessons are shared 4. Feedback includes a clear understanding of how stakeholder input was considered.

nd unique local environments the marine, coastal
spaces included.



Glossary of Terms

Key terms explained below are used throughout this Community Engagement Strategy.

Capacity building	The process of strengthening the skills, competencies, knowledge and ability of people, communities and organisations to achieve their objectives.
Community engagement	The process to enable members of the municipal community to impact on Council's decision-making.
Deliberative engagement	A form of community engagement that requires participants to critically consider arguments and weigh-up competing demands in order to determine preferences for resolving public policy questions.
Decision	Means a resolution after consideration. Decisions can take many forms and, in this Strategy, the term is used to include activities such as projects, service design/delivery and policy development.
IAP2	The International Association of Public Participation. An international member association that seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community engagement. Its frameworks, in particular the Public Participations Spectrum, is widely understood as the international best practice.
Representative	Community engagement activities are only ever likely to involve a sample of the broader population that will be affected by a decision. How representative that sample is of the target population is often assessed by the proportionality of key characteristics. To illustrate, if our target population was 100 animal-lovers made up of 70 dog-lovers and 30 cat-lovers, then seven dog-lovers and three cat-lovers would form a representative sample.



Resources and links

**For more information on
community engagement at Council:**

🔗 mornpen.vic.gov.au/ces

Quick links to other resources:

🔗 mornpen.vic.gov.au/demographics

🔗 mornpen.vic.gov.au/strategiesandplans

🔗 mornpen.vic.gov.au/policies

Contact Mornington Peninsula Shire

 1300 850 600 (24 hours) or 5950 1000
TIS: 133 677 then ask for 1300 850 600
NRS: connect to NRS on www.relayservice.com.au
then ask for 1300 850 600
 customerservice@mornpen.vic.gov.au
Private Bag 1000, Rosebud 3939 DX 30059

 facebook.com/mornpenshire
 [@MornPenShire](https://twitter.com/MornPenShire)
 [MornPenShire](https://www.youtube.com/MornPenShire)

Mornington Peninsula Shire Service Centres

ROSEBUD
90 Besgrove Street, 3939

MORNINGTON
2 Queen Street, 3931

HASTINGS
21 Marine Parade, 3915

SOMERVILLE
1085 Frankston-Flinders Road, within Somerville Library, 3912