

Developing a Community Plan

Strathbogie Shire
Council
July 2021

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Developing a Community Plan

The development of a Community Plan requires a whole of community approach where all groups and individuals in the community have an opportunity to be involved.

Every four years, Community Planning Reference Groups undertake community consultation to come together to identify and select priorities for their community to include in their Community Plan.

Timeframe: 6 Months

The three stages in the development of a Community Plan are:

Phase 1: Information Gathering

Phase 2: Community Consultation and Engagement

Phase 3: Preparation of Community Plan

Phase 1: Information Gathering

- Establish a community Project Team – this will be your Community Planning Reference Group.
- Identify assets, skills and resources available within your community.
- Engage community champions to assist with the consultation process.
- Collect and review local demographics & strategic links (the collation of demographics assists in developing an understanding of the size and structure of a town or area as well as identifying other characteristics of the community).
- Collect and review existing Council reports and projects that impact on the local community.

Phase 2: Community Consultation & Engagement

- Determine a consultation plan together with the community project team and Council.
- Develop consultation tools.
- Undertake community consultation for a minimum of four weeks.
- Undertake an audit with Council staff to identify current works, activities and programs that are undertaken in the area.
- Assist in building the capacity in the community and encourage community ownership of the plan in accordance with the Assets Based Community Development approach.
- Develop outcomes that are realistic, sustainable and can be implemented.

Phase 3: Preparation of Community Plan

- Development of written community plan and action plan incorporating data gathered in phase one and two.
- Community Plan is to align with strategies identified in Strathbogie Shire Council Plan.
- Draft plan is circulated throughout the wider community for feedback for a minimum of three weeks.
- Community Plan is finalized.
- Community Plan presented to Council for endorsement.
- Community to identify annual priorities

Engaging with your Community

Who is in your Community?

- Brainstorm who's who in the community! Local community groups, organisations, businesses, service clubs, sporting clubs, neighbourhood houses, kindergarten, school, library.
- Collectively use your contacts to spread the word!
- Identify any Council services within the community (Maternal Child Health Nurses, Evolve, Committees of Management)
- Target particular groups that might be missing from your committee
- Identify a range of methods to consult and engage with residents from your local community to encourage a wider variety of community members to participate, including marginalised groups.

Engagement ideas

- Develop a flyer
- Develop a survey. Survey Monkey provides free online questionnaires and surveys
- List Community Plan priorities on one page
- Hold a 'Priorities and Pie' night
- Have a Community BBQ or event, inviting the community and local organisations
- Conduct a phone tree to make sure everyone knows the review is happening (A phone tree is a network of people organized in such a way that they can quickly and easily spread information amongst each other)
- Attend community events and activities (sporting events, school fetes, markets etc.)
- Engage with the community online (town websites, Council website, etc.)
- Hold a conversation hour (or two or three) at the local store or cafe
- Promote the consultation through local newsletters (school, store)
- Ask the local library to distribute information with each borrowed book (including the mobile library)
- Target specific groups of your community (i.e. youth burger night, art project with the school)

Council may be able to assist by:

- Promoting the engagement process on our website, social media channels, eNews and regular advertising columns.
- Assist with information being distributed through Council services: Maternal Child Health Nurses, Evolve, Committees of Management.
- Brainstorming other engagement ideas.

Other things to consider:

- Use a variety of consultation methods.
- Start small; only pick a few key consultation ideas to start with. Next year you might use more techniques to conduct your review.
- Chat to people in your community about it. The more people who know about it the better!
- Make sure you advise the community the date the feedback needs to be received by (minimum three weeks).
- Capture the numbers of people that contribute to the review.
- Develop a picture of the demographics of the community.
- How can people submit their feedback? Feedback boxes, Online, Postal address.
- Have you invited the Councillors to attend consultation sessions?

For more information

Asset Based Community Development Institute www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) is at the center of a large and growing movement that considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development.

The Bank of Ideas www.bankofideas.com.au

Bank of I.D.E.A.S. has worked with over 1600 communities throughout Australia and overseas seeking to facilitate fresh and creative ways that stimulate community and local economic renewal.

Our Community www.ourcommunity.com.au

The Our Community Group provides advice, connections, training and easy-to-use tech tools for people and organisations working to build stronger communities.