

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Version 3.1

Date approved: 29/1/21.....



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Final

**Contact for enquiries and proposed changes**

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**Version Control**

Version	Date	Details
1.0	24.04.2013	
2.0	14.04.2015	Full review of policy. Inclusion of reference to IAP2 Endorsed by NTPC
3.0	13.08.2020	DRAFT Review and update, including amendments to style, references to templates and tools NTPC consideration – endorsed with amendment
3.1	29.01.2021	Approved by the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics under section 81L(2) of the <i>Planning Act 1999</i>

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## 1. Introduction

Consultation with the community is one of the primary functions of the Northern Territory Planning Commission (NTPC). The *Planning Act 1999* (The Act) states that the NTPC must carry out community consultation before preparing strategic plans, guidelines and assessment criteria for inclusion in the NT Planning Scheme. The Act also states the Commission must decide the appropriate method and extent of the consultation, taking into account the proposed integrated strategic plan, guidelines or assessment criteria being considered.

NTPC acknowledges the importance of engaging effectively with the community, to ensure that all views and concerns are allowed due representation when making decisions that will affect the community. The vision, principles and goals of NTPC (as identified in the NTPC Strategic Plan) are to be, inter alia, proactive and consultative.

This Community Engagement Policy (CEP) has been prepared to provide the community with a clear understanding of the NTPC commitment to effective engagement, by clearly outlining when, and at what level, engagement will occur. This Policy will also guide NTPC members and staff in the procedures for developing and managing engagement strategies for individual NTPC projects.

## 2. Community Engagement Policy Objectives

This CEP outlines the way in which NTPC will engage the community in the development and/or assessment of integrated strategic plans, planning proposals, projects or policies:

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- establish guidelines and standard practices for engagement with the community;
- ensure that standard engagement practices are implemented by NTPC staff and representatives;
- ensure the type and level of engagement undertaken is suitable, appropriate, respectful and inclusive;
- ensure the consultation process allows the community to access relevant information about the project, in appropriate formats, to participate in a meaningful way;
- indicate levels of engagement offered; i.e. how NTPC will listen, involve and seek feedback from the community in engagement processes;
- ensure NTPC accurately records feedback from consultation and considers the feedback in any deliberations, decisions and/or recommendations; and
- establish criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the consultation.

## 3. Definitions

### 3.1 Community

The community is defined as people who, or wish to, live, work and invest in the Northern Territory. The community includes residents, government agencies, private sector and non-government agencies.

### 3.2 Stakeholder

A Stakeholder is a person or group who may be affected by, or have a specific interest in, the plan or project under consideration.

### 3.3 Engagement

Engagement refers to the process of involving stakeholders and the community in the development of strategic plans, policies and projects undertaken by NTPC. It is an active exchange of information that will help inform recommendations made by NTPC.

### 3.4 Feedback

The process of communication whereby a stakeholder or member of the public that has been consulted is given the opportunity to agree or disagree, ask a question, or otherwise provide information to the NTPC in the communication process. Feedback may be in oral or written form.

### 3.5 Evaluation

The process of assessing consultation and engagement activities against set standards. Evaluations can assess the actual processes used to obtain ideas, opinions, beliefs and decisions for quality such as inclusiveness, informed decision-making, accuracy, and representativeness.

## 4. Planning for Community Engagement

A Community Engagement Strategy (CES) will be developed and endorsed by the NTPC at the beginning of each engagement process. Appendix A outlines the key items for inclusion in the CES.

In developing a CES, the NTPC will have regard to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values, the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and the NT Government Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy

### 4.1 When to engage

NTPC will engage with the community when developing or preparing the following plans or documents, as considered appropriate by the NTPC

- Strategic Plans intended for inclusion within the Strategic Framework of the NT Planning Scheme 2020, including, but not limited to:
  - Regional Plans;
  - Sub Regional Plans;
  - Area Plans;
- planning policies intended for inclusion within the Strategic Framework of the NT Planning Scheme 2020, guidelines and proposals;
- any other matter determined by the NTPC; and
- any other matter for which the NT Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics requests the NTPC consult with the community.

Community engagement will occur as early in the planning process as possible to ensure the community has ample time to consider the information and provide feedback to the NTPC. This will ensure the feedback is considered in the decision making process.

### 4.2 When to Use a Consultant

NTPC will determine if the engagement process will be delivered using internal resources or external consultants, or a combination, at the beginning of the planning process.

The Manager Project Coordination will be responsible for deciding if an external consultant is to be engaged, in consultation with the Director Communications, Media and Engagement and the Director Lands Planning, or other suitably qualified senior staff.

The following criteria will be considered when deciding if an external consultant will be engaged by NTPC:

- the complexity or scale of the engagement process being undertaken
- the availability and experience of internal resources
- the allocated budget for the project

External consultants will be provided with a copy of this policy, and any endorsed CES, to ensure the engagement process is conducted in accordance with the endorsed Policy.

### 4.3 Who to engage with

NTPC Secretariat maintains a list of key stakeholders (other than residents). Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- residents;
- Local Government;
- MLAs;
- industry associations;

- community groups;
- environmental groups;
- Land Councils;
- Traditional Owners;
- non-Government agencies;
- Government agencies (Territory & Federal);
- consultants; and
- media

Other stakeholders will be identified in the planning stages of the engagement process, and will include members of the public who will be affected by the plan, project or policy being undertaken by NTPC.

Stakeholder identification and analysis will be conducted as part of a CES and will clearly identify key stakeholders, likely issues to arise during consultation, communication methods and level of engagement.

<b><i>Key Points to Identifying Stakeholders</i></b>	
✓	Use a consistent method for the identification of stakeholders to ensure inclusive, credible and equitable representation in community engagement processes.
✓	Develop a list of potential stakeholders
✓	Consider physical context of project, demographics and socio-economic analysis to identify stakeholders
✓	Engage with key stakeholders as early as possible in the process
✓	Develop and maintain effective working relationships with identified stakeholders
✓	Leverage stakeholder networks to identify and engage additional or previously unidentified stakeholders
✓	Consider ways to identify potential “hard to reach” stakeholders and barriers to accessing community engagement processes, and maximise opportunities to engaging those stakeholders

#### **4.4 Level of engagement**

The level of engagement undertaken is to be determined independently for each project and each stakeholder, as a number of internal and external factors will require consideration for each project. Factors include, but are not limited to:

- immediate or long term impact on the community;
- level of interest from the community, as perceived by internal stakeholders;
- level of interest being shown by the community;
- degree of potential community impact;
- underlying values and views of external stakeholders;

- degree of complexity;
- degree of political sensitivity;
- availability of resources; and
- media interest.

The NTPC's approach to community engagement is informed by the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum. The IAP2 Spectrum identifies and defines recognised levels of community engagement.

When planning for community engagement the most appropriate level of participation should be determined in conjunction with the Spectrum, as well as the abovementioned factors. The IAP2 Spectrum is included as Appendix B.

## 5. Delivering the Engagement

### 5.1 Providing the Information

It is imperative that stakeholders and community have access to the documents, plans and information under consideration, in an appropriate format, so they can consider their position and provide effective feedback to the NTPC.

Engagement methods need to be carefully considered and flexible to ensure engagement is meaningful, fit for purpose and appropriate to stakeholders including consideration of literacy, culture, gender, age and language. This is especially important in the NT where engaging with remote and Aboriginal communities requires taking into account cultural protocols, language and associated sensitivities.

Engagement materials, including copies of the draft plan and/or documents, will be made available in the following ways:

- A webpage will be developed (where appropriate) on the NTPC website to summarise the project, and provide the following documents for viewing and/or download:
  - Relevant draft plans and/or documents
  - On-line feedback form for immediate response
- All key stakeholders will be contacted in writing, preferably by email, providing a brief summary of the project, and providing a link to the NTPC website to obtain the draft plans and/or documents.
- Copies of the draft plans and/or documents will be provided to those stakeholders who request a hard copy.
- Extra copies of the draft plans and/or documents will be held by NTPC Secretariat for use at information sessions, briefings and workshops, or as required.

Other methods of providing project information will be informed by the stakeholder analysis conducted for each project, and may include:

- traditional media e.g. newspaper, television and radio.
- social and other digital media
- imagery, videos and animations
- letter drops to residents
- open days
- information stalls in high traffic venues,
- workshops and public information sessions

## **5.2 Collating the feedback**

The NTPC values all feedback obtained during an engagement process. The importance of recording all feedback, both oral and written, is paramount.

All feedback, including oral feedback summaries, online feedback forms and written submissions will be included in a “summary of feedback” document prepared by NTPC or their consultant. The summary format should provide results that are easy to interpret and make sense to stakeholders and decision makers.

## **5.3 Providing feedback to participants**

NTPC acknowledges the importance of providing feedback to participants throughout project development and once the consultation period has concluded.

Periodic updates to be provided on project progress will be identified in the CES and distributed through the methods identified in the CES.

Notification of the conclusion of the consultation period will be provided to each participant, and will acknowledge the contribution made by all participants in the project.

Ideally, outcomes from the engagement process, as well as an indication of the next steps in the progression of the project should be advised to all participants. Where this is not possible, updates on the project will be provided to participants and the community.

## **5.4 Preparing a Consultation Report**

At the conclusion of the engagement process, NTPC or its consultant will prepare a consultation report. The report will include the summary of feedback, and outline key messages obtained from the consultation.

The consultation report will be made available on the NTPC website and all participants in the engagement notified of its availability.

# **6. Evaluation**

An evaluation will be undertaken at the conclusion of the project to measure the effectiveness of the engagement process undertaken for each project.

When compiling the evaluation, the following may be included:

- responses to evaluation questions distributed during the community engagement process
- informal or ad hoc feedback from participants in the community engagement process
- evaluation/summary/de-brief meetings with decision makers and key stakeholders.

The following table outlines performance measures for evaluating the engagement process:

<b><i>Stage of Engagement</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Measures</i></b>
Planning	Adequate resources and expertise have been provided to implement consultation outlined in the community engagement strategy
Consultation	Participants have a clear understanding of the objectives of engagement and their level of involvement in decision making.
	There is a variety of means by which a community can have a say
Analysis	The mix of methods used in consultation have engaged stakeholders
	Participation of stakeholders reflects the demographic profile of the community being engaged
Results	Stakeholders have been informed about the results of consultation and can observe how their input has been considered.

Results of the evaluation will be used by NTPC to improve future engagement strategies and processes.

## Appendix A – Key items for inclusion in Community Engagement Strategy

- 1. Introduction and Purpose**
  - 1.1 Project Introduction
  - 1.2 Purpose of Engagement
  - 1.3 Engagement Objectives
  - 1.4 Scope of Engagement
  
- 2. Key Messages**
  - 2.1 Overall Key Messages
  - 2.2 Focus Area / Issue Specific
  
- 3. Research and Analysis**
  - 3.1 Engagement Context
  - 3.2 Relevant learnings from previous engagement
  - 3.3 Stakeholder Analysis
  
- 4. Engagement Tools**
  
- 5. Engagement Action Plan**
  - 5.1 Engagement Activities Matrix
  - 5.2 Indicative Engagement Schedule
  
- 6. Monitoring, Review and modification of Engagement Activities**
  - 6.1 Review and modification of engagement activities
  - 6.2 Monitoring of engagement activities
  
- 7. Reporting**
  - 7.1 Interim Engagement Summary
  - 7.2 Consultation Report
  - 7.3 Lessons Learned
  - 7.4 Engagement Review / Debrief Meeting

## Appendix B – IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

<b>IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation</b>					
<b>Increasing Impact on the Decision</b> 					
	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Public Participation Goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that 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.
<b>Promise to the Public</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	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 work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>Examples of consultation tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Open days</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Information sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Forums</li> <li>• Stakeholder consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> <li>• Advisory committees</li> <li>• Expert panels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>