



NORTHERN TERRITORY
**PLANNING
COMMISSION**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

August 2026

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1. Purpose

The Northern Territory Planning Commission (the Commission) is committed to consulting with the community as a key part of how it carries out its functions and responsibilities under the *Planning Act 1999* (the Act).

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach for stakeholder and community engagement across the functions of the Commission. It ensures engagement is undertaken in a transparent, inclusive and proportionate manner to support informed decision-making and strengthen confidence in the planning system.

This aligns with the Commission's vision of planning for a resilient, inclusive and prosperous Northern Territory and reflects the Commission's values of being independent, strategic evidence-led, transparent and respectful.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the preparation of integrated strategic plans, guidelines and assessment criteria for inclusion in the Northern Territory Planning Scheme (NTPS), where the Commission has a statutory role. In these instances, the Commission is required to consult with the community and has discretion to determine the appropriate level and methods of engagement.

This Policy explains how the Commission will undertake engagement in fulfilling this role and provides a framework to guide the planning and delivery of engagement activities.

Where engagement requirements are prescribed by legislation, regulations or other statutory processes, those requirements will apply. This Policy does not replace or alter any consultation obligations established under law.

For other Commission activities not subject to prescribed engagement requirements, this Policy may be applied at the Commission's discretion. Any additional engagement will be determined on a case-by-case basis, having regard to legislative requirements and the nature of the planning matter.

2.1 Out of Scope

This Policy does not apply to the following functions established under the Act:

- Exhibition, consultation, hearings and reporting relating to proposed Planning Scheme Amendments and Exceptional Development Permit applications.
- Provision of advice to the Minister on requests to amend the NTPS.
- Preparation of independent planning advice and reports requested by the Minister in relation to significant development proposals.

These functions are undertaken to support Ministerial decision-making and are subject to separate legislative requirements, processes and timeframes.

The Commission is committed to engagement that is meaningful, transparent and appropriate when undertaking the above functions.

3. Objectives

The Commission will:

- Support transparent and well-informed planning decisions.
- Enable meaningful participation by stakeholders and the community.
- Improve the quality and credibility of planning outcomes through engagement.
- Provide clear and accessible opportunities for participation.
- Strengthen confidence in the planning system and the Commission's processes.
- Monitor and improve the effectiveness of engagement practices.

4. Engagement Principles and Commitments

The Commission will undertake stakeholder and community engagement in accordance with the following principles and commitments:

- Engagement processes will be conducted honestly and ethically, with clear communication about the purpose of engagement and how decisions will be made.
- Information will be shared in a timely and accessible way to support understanding of planning proposals, processes and outcomes.
- The Commission will actively listen to stakeholders and the community, seeking to understand their perspectives, concerns and local knowledge.
- All participants in engagement processes will be treated with respect, and diverse perspectives will be acknowledged and considered.
- The Commission will seek to engage a broad range of stakeholders and community members, with consideration given to reducing barriers to participation.
- The Commission will meet all applicable statutory requirements.
- Where needed the Commission will determine the level and methods of engagement based on the potential impact of the planning matter and the stakeholders affected, ensuring a fit-for-purpose approach.
- Engagement practices will be regularly reviewed and refined based on feedback, evaluation and experience.

5. Engagement Planning and Delivery

A Community Engagement Plan will be developed and approved by the Commission at the beginning of each engagement process which will detail how engagement will be planned and delivered, including:

- Identifying stakeholders.
- Determining engagement approach.
- Selecting appropriate methods.
- Providing clear and accessible information.
- Documenting and reporting outcomes.

5.1 Identifying stakeholders

Key stakeholders will be identified on a project basis; typical stakeholders may include:

- residents and prospective residents (community);
- Local Government and Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- industry and business associations; investors and developers;
- community and environmental groups;
- Traditional Owners and Land Councils;
- Government agencies (Territory and Federal);
- non-government organisations; and
- media.

5.2 Engagement approach

There may be different levels of engagement selected across a single project, depending on stakeholder and project needs. The Commission uses IAP2¹ Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum (the spectrum) to determine the right level of participation for each stakeholder.

Engagement approaches will consider barriers to engagement and seek to design engagement in a way that acknowledges and proactively seeks to resolve any barriers so that engagement enables as many people as possible to participate.

Cultural safety must be ensured in engagement processes. Cultural safety is defined by participants, not by the Commission. Engagement design should recognise how power operates and support dignity, respect and self-determination.

When engaging with remote communities affected by, or with an interest in, a project, engagement will align with the Northern Territory Government Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy. Communities will be provided with clear information about who is engaging, when and why, and given sufficient time to prepare. Engagement activities will be designed to be relevant and effective, with feedback on outcomes provided and access to interpreters where English is not the first language.

5.3 Engagement methods

When planning engagement activities, the Commission will seek to maximise opportunities for participation by using methods that are accessible, inclusive and appropriate for the communities and stakeholders involved. This may include providing multiple ways for people to participate and provide feedback.

Engagement may be undertaken using a range of methods, including online, written and in-person activities. The methods used for each project will be selected based on the project's objectives, stakeholders, and the level of engagement required.

¹ The Engagement Institute is the Australian affiliate of IAP2, the International Association for Public Participation.

Different levels of engagement may be applied within a single project, determined by the nature and extent of community interest and impact, stakeholder perspectives, project complexity, resource availability, and the level of public or media attention.

Engagement activities will be scheduled to maximise accessibility and participation, having regard to stakeholder availability, resource constraints, and, where practicable, avoiding public holidays and school holiday periods, with extended timeframes provided where engagement occurs during these periods.

5.4 Clear and accessible information

People need clear information in accessible formats to be able to provide effective feedback. Engagement materials will be tailored to the audience and identified stakeholders, including considering literacy levels, culture, gender, age and language.

Each project will be considered individually, but will usually:

- create a dedicated project page on the Commission website;
- notify stakeholders in writing, preferably by email, including link(s) to the project page on the Commission website;
- provide hard copies of materials on request and have some available at meetings and workshops; and
- use other methods identified through stakeholder analysis, including active and passive engagement tools.

5.5 Documenting and reporting outcomes

Participants will be kept informed throughout the project and provided with clear expectations. Contributions will be acknowledged, next steps outlined, and a public summary of feedback provided. Where possible, information will be shared on how community input influenced outcomes.

A consultation report may be published on the Commission's website following engagement. The preparation of reports may take time and will summarise feedback and key messages. Reports will not include the personal details of individuals.

Feedback and personal information are stored in the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment Records Management System. Records may be provided to decision-makers or the Commission and are subject to the *Information Act 2022*.

If a written submission contains inappropriate or harmful language or other content, the Commission may choose not to review it further or include in engagement data. Inappropriate feedback received via social media or other online platforms will be moderated in accordance with relevant policies which may include deletion of content, and blocking of users.

6. Evaluation and Continuous improvement

The effectiveness of engagement will be periodically reviewed to ensure alignment with this Policy and to support continuous improvement.