



**COOTAMUNDRA-
GUNDAGAI** REGIONAL
COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Endorsed 23 May 2023



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY



Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council is committed to establishing and maintaining open communication channels with residents, ratepayers, local business, and community groups, as well as staff and their families. We are committed to engaging with the community of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and involving them in the preparation of strategies, plans and policies, the implementation of projects and Council activities.

The Communications and Engagement Strategy has been prepared as a framework to support Council's Community Strategic Plan and as part of Council's commitment to encourage open, transparent, and active relationships between Council and the community.

The strategy is underpinned by strong community feedback which provided Council with a clear understanding of our community demographics as well as insights into our community's desired relationship with Council. Council will continue to seek community feedback to further develop the plan into the future.

The objectives of developing this strategy were to:

- Understand community satisfaction and expectations of Council in the areas of communication and community engagement.
- Identify new initiatives that will assist with providing a service that supports Council in its commitment to communicate and engage in a way that encourages an open and transparent relationship between community and Council.
- Analyse Council's current process in Engagement and Communications to ensure Council is effectively reaching the community.
- Increase awareness within the community of Council's objectives.
- Increase knowledge and understanding.
- Change attitudes (i.e., gain acceptance).
- Change behaviours (i.e., build commitment).

The document proposes a marketing communications program for Council, designed to achieve the goals of engaging the community, building awareness of Council brand, culture, and reputation, promote characteristics of the region and reinforce positive community sentiment.

The strategy specifically seeks to support the following goals:

- Communities can readily identify with their council.
- A shared vision and direction for the whole community.
- Increase pride in the region.
- Increase awareness and support for community's vision.
- Increase awareness of major projects and how Council is progressing with milestones.
- Cultivate a positive and proactive culture.
- Increase internal awareness and commitment to the Communication and Engagement Strategy.
- Appropriately communicate with the demographic of the area using a variety of media platforms.

VISION STATEMENT

A vibrant region attracting people, investment and business through innovation, diversity, and community spirit.

OBJECTIVES

WHAT DOES IT MEAN



The primary objectives of the Council Communication and Engagement strategy are to:

- ≈ Achieve broad community engagement.
- ≈ Build trust in the organisation.
- ≈ Encourage community interaction and response.
- ≈ Improve communication within the organisation for the benefit of the community.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNICATIONS?

Communication is the process of facilitating information and knowledge exchange between an organisation and its stakeholders. It encompasses a variety of public relations functions including media management, marketing, internal communication, and stakeholder consultation.

COMMUNICATION PROMOTES

- Strong corporate culture;
- Coherent corporate identity;
- A genuine sense of corporate citizenship and staff satisfaction;
- Understanding of communication tools and technologies;
- An appropriate and professional relationship with media.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ENGAGEMENT?

The term 'community engagement' can mean different things to different organisations and community members. Here, the terms 'community' and 'community engagement' have been defined to provide clarity.

DEFINING COMMUNITY

The term 'community' is defined as individuals or organisations who may have an interest or potential interest in the outcome of a project and/or who may have some influence over the outcome of the project. The definition can be expanded to include those people who are impacted by a decision.

'Community' includes individual rate payers, community members and groups, government agencies, industry bodies, authorities and funders. Community can also be described in terms of a geographical area or by a shared interest or issue.

DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is the activities that Council use to gather and share knowledge, and interact with relevant stakeholders and the community, to:

- Include community knowledge in the design and implementation of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council strategies, programs and initiatives;
- Seek feedback from the community on proposed services, strategies, programs and initiatives;
- Involve the community in the implementation and monitoring of identified programs and projects;
- Develop enduring partnerships with key stakeholders that enable the sharing of ideas, resources and responsibilities for the Council's strategies, programs, and initiatives; and
- Better inform the community about Council's services, strategies, programs and initiatives.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY



Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) is a public service. Our communities expect an open transparent line of communication that informs them of Council services. They also expect to be notified of issues that may impact their way of life, standard of living and on services provided.

Council communicates and engages with the community through:

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAMS

- ✓ Customer Service Charter.
- ✓ Highly trained in dealing with customer requests.
- ✓ Provided with advanced information.
- ✓ Collaboration with communications team.
- ✓ Provide input and feedback on customer queries.
- ✓ Supported with additional information to assist with enquiries.
- ✓ Digital notice boards.
- ✓ Flyers, pamphlets, and posters.

REGULAR MEDIA RELEASES ISSUED TO

- ✓ Local and regional newspapers, television, and radio stations.
- ✓ Council website.
- ✓ Facebook page.
- ✓ Email contact list, including Councillors and all staff.
- ✓ Monthly newsletter.
- ✓ Extract in Snippets advertising.

PRINT MEDIA ADVERTISING

- ✓ ½ page advertisement in Cootamundra Times & Gundagai Independent newspapers each fortnight.
- ✓ Can be weekly if need arises.
- ✓ Sent to all staff and councillors and email content list
- ✓ Posted to Website & Facebook

SOCIAL MEDIA

- ✓ Regular Facebook posts, which include regulatory notices, events, library news, reminders & other relevant information.
- ✓ Scheduling of Facebook posts to create reminders on date sensitive events.

*OPEN FORUM SESSIONS

*LISTENING POSTS

*HOW TO CONTACT COUNCIL

* PUBLIC MEETINGS

*CGRC WEBSITE

*CONSISTENT MESSAGING

*COMMITTEE MEETINGS

*DIRECT CONTACT

*EVENTS

BRANDING

Every Council sign, letter, leaflet, uniform, building, and website is part of the corporate brand. To strengthen the image of the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC), the brand reflects a defined, professional logo and visual identity that embraces our shared values and our vision.



**COOTAMUNDRA-
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SIGNAGE

The effective use of signage will assist with community engagement and with the identity of the Council and reinforce brand awareness. A review of all Council signage will be required to ensure there are no remnants of the former Council's signage to ensure consistent representation. Signage and logo branding on relevant:



- ≈ Banners
- ≈ Infrastructure
- ≈ Vehicles
- ≈ Uniforms / badges
- ≈ Road / place signs
- ≈ Buildings
- ≈ Information signs
- ≈ Printed and Electronic materials
- ≈ Marquees
- ≈ Temporary event signage

The review process should consider the priority of each and note an appropriate time frame for refresh.

Consideration should be given to supplying local organisations and events with appropriate signage, banners, shades and other material to acknowledge Council's support either in kind or monetary.

WEBSITE

The website should act as a central hub (and single source of truth) and include information and services for residents, local business, potential investors, and visitors to the Cootamundra-Gundagai Region. It will also be positioned as being the key point of referral. It is now widely expected that council websites host a variety of information and online tools and meeting this expectation will ultimately increase user/customer satisfaction, while also benefiting the Council's internal resourcing.

To ensure the Council website meets the needs of the community and other users, it should as much as is practicable, include online best practice for Local Government websites.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Conversations on social media can be influential. Users have the potential to share valuable experiences with a wide audience and positive online commentary can build trust in a brand and take it to new audiences quickly and efficiently with limited resources. However, social media also needs to be monitored to keep content relevant and fresh.

There is significant potential for the Council to interact with customers, provide information about services and activities in the area, as well as reach an audience beyond the Council area who may be interested in visiting the region. There is also the possibility that tools such as a blog or Facebook page are used by disgruntled individuals to post negative comments about the Council, or its services and this risk needs to be managed. A separate Social Media strategy and policy has been developed and is attached.



Council's Social Media platform is primarily used for providing information, not for protracted engagements. Brief replies to users direct questions are the only replies given via this medium. Staff are prohibited from entering arguments, offering opinions or fuelling contentious issues via this medium.

Council can monitor other social media sites to gain an insight into community sentiment and opinion on issues that members of these sites are raising.

MEDIA RELEASES TO MAINSTREAM MEDIA CHANNELS

This communication channel offers a valuable, 'earned' (i.e., not paid) way to deliver key messages to key audiences and beyond. Council enjoys good relationships with local and regional media in both Gundagai and Cootamundra, and these should continue to be developed with the delivery of targeted media releases and stories. These relationships will be important to continue to foster as part of an overall marketing and communications strategy. Sound relationships based on mutual respect facilitate opportunities to mitigate potential issues before they gain traction.

Whilst local newspapers, regional radio and TV outlets might be the usual channels, state-wide rural publications like The Land, or national reach publications such as specialty tourism, business publications or special features in national newspapers could be included in the current media mix and development of further contacts is ongoing.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ≈ Announcing local Government services, funding programs or news. | ≈ Promoting successes in the region such as local businesses achieving awards. |
| ≈ Announcing new or expanded investments or facilities. | ≈ Celebrating successes among community groups. |
| ≈ Advocating on behalf of the region. | |

Good working relationships with local and rural journalists should be maintained, with Council executives being open to providing comment where appropriate and identifying issues in the media of relevance to the area, for example plans for new infrastructure. Such comment needs to be cognisant of the role of local Government in relation to the NSW and Australian Governments. Retaining sound relationships with the media will enable the Council to proactively clarify any misinformation in the community via stories through relevant media.

ADVERTISING

**COOTAMUNDRA-
GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Email: mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au | Website: www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au
Cootamundra Area: 1300 459 689
Gundagai Area: 1300 459 689
Like us on Facebook: @CootamundraGundagaiRC

SNIPPETS

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL: The ordinary meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 February 2023 at the Alby Schultz Meeting Centre, Cooper St Cootamundra. Starting at and livestreamed from 6pm. Please refer to Council's website for meeting agenda. Members of the public may address Council on matters related to associated agenda item only, as part of the Public Forum.

MURRAY STREET COOTAMUNDRA BEACH VOLLEYBALL: Motorists and pedestrians are advised Murray Street Cootamundra is closed between Bourke and Wallendoon Streets until Tuesday 21 February 2023 for the Beach Volleyball Carnival being held 17-19 February 2023. Motorists proceed with caution in and around Murray, Bourke and Wallendoon Streets during the carnival.

FITTING A NEW CHILD RESTRAINT? OR JUST WANTING SOME PIECE OF MIND? Council's Road Safety Officer (RSO) is available to check this device and advise on correct fitting. Call 1300 459 689 and make an appointment with the RSO to organise having your Child Restraint checked for approved installation.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Cootamundra's Bradman Cottage, and the Cootamundra Heritage Centre are looking for volunteers. Volunteering can be on a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly basis and expands social networks, provides new skills, and makes a difference to your community.

PROPOSED CHANGE OF NAME: COUNTRY CLUB OVAL TO BASSINGTHWAITE PARK: Council resolved at its July 2022 meeting of Council to consider a change of name for Country Club Oval. In accordance with the Geographical Names Act 1956, Council hereby gives notice of its intention to apply to the Geographical Names Board to have the sports field currently named Country Club Oval officially changed to Bassingthwaite Park. Council welcomes feedback up until the 16 March 2023. Please email mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au or post your comments to PO Box 420, Cootamundra NSW 2590.

REHABILITATION PROJECT COOPER LANE COOTAMUNDRA: Residents and motorists are advised that rehabilitation works have commenced on Cooper Lane Cootamundra, the work will continue until April 2023. During this time the lane will be closed to traffic periodically. Please obey traffic signals in area whilst these works are underway.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: Business Cootamundra is having a cocktail event on the evening of 8 March 2023 to celebrate International Women's Day at the Cootamundra Ex Services Club from 5.30pm to 7pm. Guest Speaker Leigh Bowden (CGRC Deputy Mayor, Business Cootamundra Board Member and Chair, the Coota District Co-op). International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The theme this year is Embracing Equity.

HEAVY PATCHING PROGRAM: Council has completed the heavy patching program on the Olympic Highway from the June boundary to the Hilltops boundary north of Wallendbeen. Line marking work will be undertaken as soon as possible. Please drive to the conditions, obey traffic signals. These works are fully funded by TfNSW and managed by CGRC.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE COUNCIL NEWS ELECTRONICALLY? Register via mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au. Like our Facebook page to get instant messages from CGRC.

CONSTRUCTION WORK WARNING: Construction work is currently being undertaken at the Swimming Pool, Carberry and Palmer Parks in Gundagai to erect shade sails. Users of these facilities are asked to proceed with caution. Construction work is also underway at the Gundagai Library where the new meeting room is being erected. The new Clubhouse at the Gundagai Netball Courts is nearing completion. The clubhouse houses kitchen facilities, toilets and storage areas. Expected completion date April 2022: weather permitting. Lindley Park Gundagai is also undergoing carpark, power and drainage work. Expect completion March 2023. Please keep away from construction zones and obey signage in place.

COUNCIL IS NOW HIRING.

GRANTS OFFICER – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA:

PLANT MECHANIC – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN GUNDAGAI

TECHNICAL TEAM LEADER – CONCRETE FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN GUNDAGAI

SEWER AND WATER OPERATOR – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA

PROJECT MANAGER – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA

PLANT OPERATOR – EXCAVATOR – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA

For more information on these positions and position descriptions please visit POSITIONS.VACANT | Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council (nsw.gov.au). Or call 1300 459 689. **CASUAL EMPLOYMENT?** CGRC IS NOW INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FROM PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CASUAL ROLES WITHIN COUNCIL. All departments are keen to hear from people who have the skills or the passion for working in Local Government. Complete the EOI form found at <http://www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au/positions-vacant/> attach a resume and send it in.

Council is bound by Government regulations to ensure residents are advised of information that relates to Council business and activities carried out by Council, recent changes to the legislation have seen the removal of mandatory newspaper advertising.

Due to the structure of the council region, with two vastly different towns in terms of demographic, geological location and collaboration, newspaper advertising must be spread across two publications. Council supports these small businesses, with the regular “Snippets” advertising.

The advertisement is in turn displayed on the Council website, posted to social media page and sent to residents who have registered to have information sent to them electronically.

Both publications have been very receptive to Council media releases and a good relationship exists amongst all stakeholders. However, the relatively low numbers reached by these publications and the high cost of advertising in both publications requires Council to look at alternatives that achieve the desired result. Council continues to advertise “Snippets” in these publications for mandatory notices.

CGRC COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER - DIRECT MAIL

The monthly newsletter produced in house has proved an effective tool to reach all residents within the LGA. The newsletter is mailed directly to all postal addresses within the region. The newsletter does meet with NSW Government OLG mandatory advertising guidelines, advising residents of Council works, public notices, advertisements, and other information relating to Council. The newsletter has also been a source for the promotion of events either organized or endorsed by Council or conducted by local community not for profit organisations.

The newsletter allows Council to present a positive and co-operative approach with the capacity to encourage community engagement and input. The direct mail approach ensures Council's information reaches everyone within the region.

A survey revealed: 65% of respondents indicated the community newsletter was their source of information from Council.

The publication is distributed directly after the Ordinary Council meeting to ensure residents are aware of Council resolutions and items on public exhibition.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

32nd EDITION
W/C 6 February 2023

2023 AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS: Our region was blessed with a beautiful day on Thursday 26th January 2023, festivities in Albert Park Cootamundra and Carberry Park Gundagai were jumping with live music, and a party atmosphere. Albert Park Cootamundra was a picturesque setting to celebrate the achievements of community members and the welcoming of new residents. Citizenship ceremonies took place in conjunction with Australia Day awards, where eight new Australian citizens were welcomed. Six in Gundagai and two in Cootamundra.

Australia Day Award recipients included:

Citizen of the Year – Garry James, Cootamundra. Phil Smith, Gundagai. **Young Citizen of the Year** – Grace Hovey, Cootamundra. **Indigenous Citizen of the Year** – Joshua Purtell, Cootamundra. **Sportsperson of the Year** – Archie Wheaton, Gundagai. A special **Australia Day Award** went to Tanya and Jason Baldock in Cootamundra for their fundraising efforts with Chop the Mop, that saw over \$124,000 raised for Cootamundra Can Assist.

COUNCIL IS NOW HIRING. POSITIONS VACANT:

WATER & SEWER OPERATOR – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA: PLANT MECHANIC – FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN GUNDAGAI. TRUCK DRIVER – HEAVY COMBINATION FULLTIME POSITION BASED IN COOTAMUNDRA: For more information on these positions and position descriptions please visit POSITIONS.VACANT | Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council (nsw.gov.au). Or call 1300 459 689. **CASUAL EMPLOYMENT?** CGRC IS NOW INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FROM PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR CASUAL ROLES WITHIN COUNCIL. All departments are keen to hear from people who have the skills or the passion for working in Local Government. Complete the EOI form found at <http://www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au/positions-vacant/> attach a resume and send it in.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUNDING: For amenities upgrade at Cootamundra's Fisher Park, and Stockingbongal's Ellwood Hall, was announced by Member for Cootamundra Steph Cooke on Australia Day. Steph met with Fisher Park user groups and members of Stockingbongal's Ellwood Hall committee. Pictured also with CGRC Item General Manager Steve McGrath and Mayor Charlie Sheahan.

AUSTRALIA DAY IN THE PARKS: (Left) A huge crowd turned out in Gundagai. (Top) Award winners with Mayor Sheahan and Australia Day Ambassador Bruce Whately in Cootamundra. (Above) Award winners in Gundagai.

2023 SENIORS WEEK: Senior citizens from across the LGA are invited to meet and greet local Councillors and Senior GCHQ Staff at morning tea events to be held in: Gundagai on Wednesday 8 February at 10am, at Council Chambers building in Sheridan St. Gundagai. Cootamundra on Thursday 9 February at 10am, at the Town Hall Foyer in Wallendoon St. Cootamundra. Seniors Expo on Thursday 9 February at Gundagai. Information on Library activities, Road Safety Initiatives, Tourism and Mosquito borne diseases will be available. Please join us for a cuppa and morning tea. Check out the CGRC Website for more information on Seniors Week activities.

CONSTRUCTION WORK WARNING: Construction work is currently being undertaken at Gundagai Swimming Pool, Carberry and Palmer Parks and Gundagai Library. Please keep away from construction zones.

FEEDBACK: ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL: The ordinary meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 February 2023 at the Alby Schultz Meeting Centre, Cooper St Cootamundra. Starting at and livestreamed from 6pm. Please refer to Council's website for meeting agenda. Members of the public may address Council on matters related to an associated agenda item only, as part of the Public Forum.

VIDEO

Video is an excellent way to speak directly to an audience and to demonstrate personal warmth and commitment.

Council has implemented video messages, available to view online and posted to social media. These videos presented by the Mayor and/or the Deputy Mayor giving a short overview of the most recent Council meeting.

In the longer term, video messaging is a powerful means of promoting the Council area by displaying the natural beauty of the region. A library of video and still images can be used as content for a wide range of media including TV advertisements, website, brochures, and banners. To be inclusive and illustrate the range of landscapes, features, and people of the Council area it is recommended that images be shot / filmed across the region.



SPONSORSHIP & SUPPORT

Council supports and sponsors events, organisations and promotions each year.

Through the Community Donations initiative to the sponsorship of major events held within our communities, Councils assistance either by financial or in-kind support/sponsorship is key to the success of these events and promotions.

All such events, promotions and organisations should be required to acknowledge Councils contribution by displaying the CGRC logo on all material that promotes the event, or the organisation.

Levels of recognition, either by logo placement on advertising material, signage at the event and mentions in press should be written into agreements between Council and the promoter.

Council does need to take responsibility for supplying and managing recognition and will supply logo suitable for print media, signage and will require proof of display.

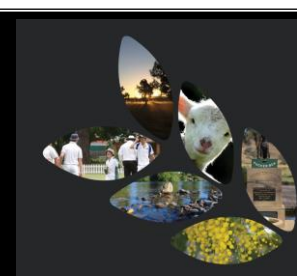


Above: The Coota Beach Volleyball Carnival attracts huge crowd to the town. Councils' contribution to this event is significant. The above promotion of the 2024 event, does not include any recognition that Council will be again asked and expected to supply.



Above: Gundagai's Christmas Carnival in 2022, saw Council support. There was little evidence of Council's involvement through lack of signage or logo placement on advertising.

MEASURING RESULTS



To determine the success of any communication plan, it is important to determine appropriate KPIs for each of the tactical elements of the communication strategy. Specific indicators will be set to reflect the individual tactics employed once this strategy is approved by Council.

However, in general the program should be measured against the five characteristics of a strong Council:

- ≈ Outstanding Service Provision – Council’s ability to provide residents and businesses with an efficient, convenient, and satisfying experience when using Council services, information, and infrastructure.
- ≈ Strong Performance – The Council is a robust, flexible, and capable organisation that delivers on the needs of the community.
- ≈ Sound Organisational Health – Council staff, leadership and culture directly contribute to the Council’s success and to positive customer-centric culture and delivery.
- ≈ Strategic Capacity – Council is a strong partner in the system of government, with a strategic outlook, confidently representing and progressing matters of local and regional significance.
- ≈ Robust Community Relationships - Residents and businesses have a voice in the vision for their community and there is meaningful, open dialogue between Council and community on solving local issues

Monitoring and reviewing Council’s engagement activities is essential to identify areas for improvement and to realise goals more efficiently. Council will use a variety of evaluation and reporting methods to assess and communicate its progress including:

- ≈ Undertaking annual audits to check progress against the objectives identified in this strategy.
- ≈ Reviewing the strategy, policy, and toolkit every four years.
- ≈ Undertaking a community satisfaction survey annually and reporting these outcomes.
- ≈ Reviewing participation levels in engagement activities.
- ≈ Reviewing verbal and written feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of our engagement activities.
- ≈ Quantitative and qualitative information collected.
- ≈ Quarterly executive level reporting to improve visibility of engagement delivery.



RESPONSIBILITIES & BUDGET



The Communications team is a supporting function within council, providing access to the communication channels available, online panel, providing advice on resources, engagement design, and engagement planning and communicating with the community through a variety of resources.

A dedicated budget for communications and community engagement activities regarding key Corporate Planning documents, such as the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework suite, sits within the Governance and Planning portfolios.

All other communications and community engagement activities except for the annual community satisfaction survey, the management of the online panel, and centralised database of projects and staff training, are to be funded by the relevant council department seeking input from the community.

All business teams must plan for communications and community engagement, ensure there is adequate budget set aside for engagement activities, and communicate within Council on an annual basis the engagement they have planned for the coming period.

The subject/project manager or expert is responsible for complying with legislative requirements and the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy.

The overall effectiveness of our Communications and Community Engagement Strategy is measured by Council decisions and actions that acknowledge and reflect quantifiable and evidence-based community input. This also includes stakeholder understanding of those decisions and actions, even if there is not always a shared agreement regarding the outcome.

In top-level terms, success will mean:

- ≈ There is a commitment by Councillors and staff and common understanding of when to engage with the community in a meaningful and appropriate way about decisions that affect them.
- ≈ We have consistently reached the participation targets in our engagement processes (number of participants/captured views etc).
- ≈ Council decisions and advocacy activities are evidenced by community engagement findings.
- ≈ We have utilised online communication and engagement techniques, complementing traditional engagement methods.
- ≈ We have provided a consistent and easy-to-understand process to guide staff through the engagement process for services, activities, projects or decisions.
- ≈ We have met and, in some cases, exceeded legislated engagement requirements.

Implementing this Strategy is the shared responsibility of the entire Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council organisation and applies to Councillors, staff, contractors, and consultants. The Strategy recognises that the key to successful community engagement is a productive and collaborative partnership between all stakeholders.

ENGAGEMENT METHOD



CGRC will use the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum principles to develop engagement strategies to ensure that community and stakeholders are appropriately involved on projects or matters that affect them.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATIVE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	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
PROMISES TO THE PUBLIC	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
EXAMPLES	• Newsletters • Websites • Events • Media releases • Advertisements	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public Meetings	• Workshops • Deliberative polling	• Stakeholder advisory committees • Consensus- building • Participatory decision making	• Stakeholder juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

<u>TIME FRAME</u>	<u>ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</u>	<u>METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT</u>
Quarter 1 -	Listening Posts Held in townships & villages.	Consult & Involve Community Participation.
Quarter 2 -	Meet with selected community/service/sporting clubs in towns & villages across the LGA.	Inform & collaborate with Community
Quarter 3 -	Media Releases, Social Media Posts, Advertising: Invite Public Comment.	Consult, Involve, Empower Community Input.
Quarter 4 -	Monitor & Evaluate	Advise, Collaborate & Inform

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



CONCLUSION

There are many opportunities to increase the community's awareness of the Council brand and develop positive connections between Council, the community, and stakeholders. However, for any communication and strategy to be effective, it must be embraced by staff, Councillors, and the community.

Encouragement, acknowledgement, and recognition of the communities' right and need for information will assist with effective communication channels between Council and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-term

Staff awareness of communication channels available to them.

Encourage open dialogue on communication between staff and departments.

Public relations training for staff and councillors.

Review media policy, writing and branding guidelines with staff and councillors in workshop environment.

Website development.

Encourage quick responses to community requests.

Follow up and report on issues.

Recognition of Councils support for events, community projects and organisations.

Increase face to face meeting opportunities through open door sessions with Council staff and members of the community.

Long-term

Investigate other digital means of communication.

Expand newsletter content. More pages or more frequently.

Continue with website development.

Engage with community to help understand changing media habits.

Key communication staff to undertake IAP2 training. (Cost implications).



COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL

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PO Box 420, Cootamundra NSW 2590
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81 Wallendoon Street, Cootamundra NSW 2590
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Gundagai Office:

255 Sheridan Street, Gundagai NSW 2722
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Fax: 02 6940 2127

