



**BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL**  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

**PUBLIC ATTACHMENTS  
EXCLUDED FROM THE  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA  
OF 25 JUNE 2015**

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

**Organisation Development**

5.1 Community Engagement

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# **BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL**

## **POLICY**

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

# BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

5.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

<b>Date Adopted by Council</b>		<b>Resolution No.</b>	
<b>Policy Responsibility</b>			
<b>Review Timeframe</b>	June – 2017 (or as legislative changes require)		
<b>Last Review Date:</b>		<b>Next Scheduled Review Date</b>	

### *Document History*

<b>Doc No.</b>	<b>Date Amended</b>	<b>Details Comments eg Resolution No.</b>
#630640	24 November 1998	Policy 3.38 Community Consultation and Participation in Council's Decision Making
#E2015/13070		

### *Further Document Information and Relationships*

<b>Related Legislation*</b>	Local Government Act 1993 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
<b>Related Policies</b>	Communication Policy 2013 (E2013/72429) Social Impact Assessment Policy 2009 (DM906183)
<b>Related Procedures/ Protocols, Statements, documents</b>	Byron Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022

*Note: Any reference to Legislation will be updated in the Policy as required. See website <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/> for current Acts, Regulations and Environmental Planning Instruments.*

Byron Shire Council would like to thank and acknowledge Pittwater Council for the sharing their Community Engagement Policy which was utilised for the development of this policy.

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**POLICY TITLE** COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Community Engagement Policy is to articulate Byron Shire Council's whole-of-organisational commitment to healthy, rigorous and well evaluated community engagement processes. This policy will promote good governance and guide effective community engagement practices to support decision making in the public interest. It will provide community members with a clear understanding of Council's role and the avenues for meaningful public participation.

This policy supports Byron Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022 community outcome CM2: "*Informed and engaged community*" along with the following community strategies:

- CM2.1 Use a range of effective communication tools to engage the community to support transparent and accountable Council decision making.*
- CM2.2 Provide education, engagement and feedback initiative for meaningful community participation*

The policy is supported by a Consultation and Engagement Plan template (detailed at Attachment 1) that provides guidance on when it is appropriate to engage and at what level. The Community Engagement Plan template details:

- activities relating to the planning of community engagement activities
- stakeholder identification
- appropriate tools and engagement techniques
- evaluation

**2. OBJECTIVES**

This Community Engagement Policy aims to:

1. Confirm Council's commitment to conducting quality consultation and its willingness to actively engage the community in decision making processes.
2. Clarify the role Council will take to engage residents in decision making.
3. Provide clarity for staff undertaking consultation and increase their capacity to effectively engage with residents.
4. Provide opportunities for public participating in Council activities and processes that are transparent, accountable and accessible to the community.
5. Strengthen trust between Council and the community and build confidence in Council's ability to plan and make decisions that will respond to present and future needs.
6. Create an organisational culture in which community engagement processes are delivered in a context of best practice and good governance.
7. Develop a framework that ensures a consistent approach is undertaken across all service areas of Council in relation to proposals and projects requiring community consultation.

8. Ensure that Council meets its statutory obligations concerning community engagement.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

Byron Shire Council is committed to engaging the community and involving them in decision making processes. This policy recognises the value of engaging the community and involving them in a dialogue which shapes and influences community supported outcomes.

Community engagement is multifaceted and requires a standard of consultation that appropriately responds to the nature, complexity and impact of the issue/s involved. This policy emphasises that the community should be kept informed throughout consultation processes and receive feedback that demonstrates how their input has influenced decisions. Council also recognises that the range of methodologies utilised may be dependent on the resources that are available.

Finally, Council recognises that under various legislation, for example the *Local Government Act 1993*, it has obligations in relation to participation, consultation and engagement. To facilitate this commitment to the community, Council will aim to continually improve its capacity and performance in community engagement through resource development, review and evaluation of its community engagement practices.

### **4. DEFINITIONS**

#### 4.1. Community engagement

*“Any process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision making and uses the community input to make better decisions”* - International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

#### 4.2. Consultation

The act of discussing something with somebody or with a group of people before making a decision about it - Oxford Dictionary.

#### 4.3. Community

A broad term used to define a group of people; whether they are stakeholders, interest groups or residents. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of practice) or a community of affiliation or identity (such as business or sporting clubs).

#### 4.4. Level of impact

The degree to which a community is affected by a decision.

#### 4.5. Participation

The degree to which a community is involved in decision making.

**5. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The following principles will underpin Council's approach to all community engagement activities:

5.1. Committed

Community engagement will be conducted in a way that demonstrates a genuine commitment to quality consultation and a desire to hear the community's views and aspirations.

5.2. Coordinated

Community engagement strategies will be well planned and directed towards achieving a better understanding of the community's views on issues of importance to them.

5.3. Timely

Community engagement must seek to engage stakeholders at the earliest stage possible and continue to keep them informed and involved throughout the process.

5.4. Inclusive

Community engagement will be designed so that the broadest cross-section of the community is involved, especially those that are hardest to reach. Particular strategies may be required to gain involvement when barriers may limit participation (e.g. young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or people with a disability).

Consultation will be conducted in a way that is consistent with social justice and broad engagement principles such as equity, access, participation and rights.

5.5. Clear

Consultation objectives should be well defined from the outset. The role of the community in the decision making process will be made clear and recognise the decision making responsibilities of elected representatives.

5.6. Transparent

Information provided to the community will be comprehensive and provide objective, professional content about the issue/s involved with any particular project.

5.7. Engaging

Differing innovative methodologies will be used to encourage inclusive participation and engagement of the whole community.

5.8. Meaningful

Consultation activities will provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and input from key stakeholders.

5.9.

Accountable

Strategies will be incorporated into community engagement plans to ensure that feedback is provided to the community about the progress of the project or plan and which also demonstrate how input has influenced the decision-making process.

Council's principles are consistent with the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights as prescribed by the Local Government Act 1993.

## **6. BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT**

There are numerous benefits that result from engaging the community to shape Council decisions. These include:

- a better understanding of the community needs, wants and concerns
- a strengthening of the relationship between Council and community
- transparency in decision making
- better outcomes which match community aspirations
- increased trust in public administration
- a valued and proactive community.

## **7. WHEN TO ENGAGE?**

A range of triggers will necessitate engagement of the community in decision making processes. These may include:

- a need to inform a community about matters that will affect them
- complex issues and multiple stakeholders
- issues of significant importance across the Shire
- a need to build trust and respect
- a need to involve the community in seeking solutions
- a desire for the community to be part of a vision for the area
- a difficult history related to a project
- legislative requirements.

## **8. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

There will be occasions when community engagement practices must comply with statutory requirements within legislation. In these cases Council will adhere to the legislative requirement as the minimum standard. For example, community engagement for particular types of projects is required under the following New South Wales legislation:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Public Health Act 2010
- Road Act 1993

Legislation requirements may include:

- Minimum periods of time for public exhibition
- Methodologies for communication (eg newspaper advertisements as mandatory requirement)
- Specification about who should be consulted
- Methodologies for how consultation has to be undertaken.

While Council must comply with legislative requirements, Council is not prevented from carrying out further community engagement where community expectations, local sensitivities or project complexities merit additional effort.

## **9. WHAT DETERMINES THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?**

The community's involvement in decision making will vary greatly according to the nature of the project or issue. For most matters, the final decision will be made by Council's elected representatives or by the Executive under delegation. Community members and key stakeholders have a vital role in voicing concerns and shaping ideas and concepts within projects to inform the final decisions.

The 'Public Participation Spectrum', outlined as follows, clearly sets out the level of public participation according to the role the community will have in shaping decisions.

## **10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM**

Byron Shire Council's approach to community engagement is informed by the internationally recognised "Public Participation Spectrum" developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) which outlines five levels of public participation. The IAP2 Spectrum acknowledges that all levels of engagement are appropriate and legitimate, and no level is necessarily 'better' than another. When planning for community engagement, Council staff will need to determine the most appropriate level of participation depending on the nature and complexity of the project/activity/issue, timeframe and available resources.

The Public Participation Spectrum provides a description of the entire public participation model but it is recognised that Council performs a specific role. Many decisions will be informed by community input and may require professional or expertise contribution; however, ultimately the decision will be made by Council. Accordingly, Council will most commonly conduct community engagement at the Inform, Consult and Involve levels of participation.

In addition, Council will choose differing engagement techniques that are appropriate to the circumstances and desired outcomes of the specific engagement. Where the project/activity/issue is significant and community engagement necessary, Council will formulate a Community Engagement Plan (see template at Attachment 1), identifying the specific engagement techniques to be employed and assigning responsibilities for the various tasks.



International Association  
for Public Participation  
Australasia

# IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, 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.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
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.
Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Web Sites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberate polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Advisory Committees</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

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**11. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Reports to Council where consultation is a desired outcome must incorporate detail about the intended methods of engagement with the community. This may include a copy of the completed community engagement plan as an attachment.

Details about plans for community engagement must be included in any briefing to Council's Executive Team where community consultation is intended.

**12. ACCESSING COUNCIL INFORMATION**

Under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, Council is required to disclose a range of government information unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Council publishes this information on its website [www.byron.nsw.gov.au](http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au). A Publication Guide is available and outlines Council's structure, functions, the information it holds and how this can be accessed by the community. The Guide also sets out how members of the community can participate in the formulation of Council policy and the exercise of Council's functions.

**13. PRIVACY IN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

Council will regularly receive personal information during the course of consultation efforts; for example people's names, addresses and contact details within submissions.

Council must ensure it complies with the requirements of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (2000)* when undertaking consultation.



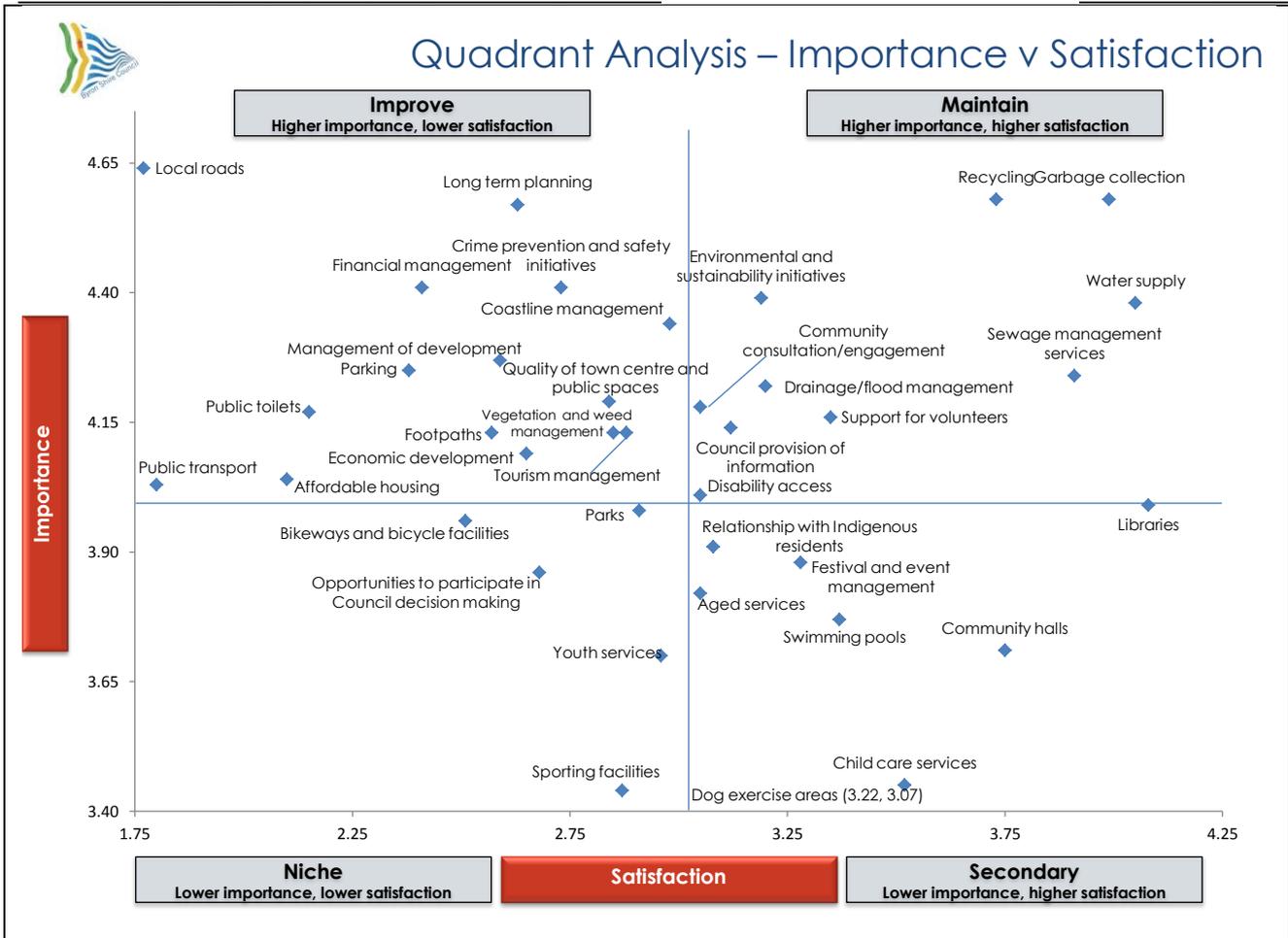
# TEMPLATE

## Consultation and Engagement Plan

#E2014/11898

Introduction

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Title of consultation issue</b>
<b>When</b>	XXX to XX 20xx
<b>Background</b>	Brief description of the issue and why the consultation is needed. Include any required regulatory requirements
<b>Community Satisfaction Survey 2013 results</b>	Include any performance measures from this document or other survey results. Include or remove following chart if not needed.



<p><b>Potential level of impact</b> [move tick to appropriate level]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Level 1 – high impact on local government area</p> <p>Level 2 – lower impact on local government area</p> <p>Level 3 – high impact on local area or group</p> <p>Level 4 – lower impact on local area or group</p>	
<p><b>Stakeholders</b> [list – they could even be broken down into demographic eg age groups if specifically targeted]</p>	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Councillors</li> <li>▪ Committee</li> <li>▪ PRG</li> </ul>	<p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ratepayers</li> <li>▪ Residents</li> <li>▪ Commercial businesses</li> <li>▪ Urban and rural properties</li> <li>▪ Business organisations (eg Chambers)</li> <li>▪ Progress Associations</li> <li>▪ Community groups</li> <li>▪ State government</li> <li>▪ Federal government</li> <li>▪ Neighbouring LGAs</li> <li>▪ Local media</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National media</li> </ul>
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## IAP2 's Public Participation Spectrum

<p><b>Public participation goal</b></p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">[refer IAP2 Spectrum within the Community Engagement Policy and adapt as required]</p>	<p><b>To the [insert committee or PRG name, community group etc] - INVOLVE</b></p> <p><i>We will work with the committee during the ....., to ensure that the community's concerns and aspirations consistently considered and understood.</i></p>
	<p><b>To the community – CONSULT</b></p> <p><i>Eg We will work with the community to find out your concerns and suggestions for ..... in Byron Shire.</i></p>
<p><b>Our promise</b></p>	<p><b>To the [insert committee or PRG name, community group etc]- INVOLVE</b></p> <p><i>Eg We will work with you to ensure that, where appropriate, your concerns and expectation about ..... are reflected in the delivery of the service and provide feedback on how community input influenced this decision.</i></p>
	<p><b>To the community – CONSULT</b></p> <p><i>Eg We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions made.</i></p>

## Where to next

<p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">[detail the steps to complete the project re timing – example provided]</p>	Step 1	
	Step 2	
	Step 3	
	Step 4	
	Step 5	
	Step 6	
	Step 7	
	Step 8	
	Step 9	
	Step 10	
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">[list the objectives – why are your doing this]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	

## BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

5.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

<b>Challenges</b> [list]	1. 2. 3.
<b>Key messages</b> [list]	1. 2. 3.
<b>Evaluation</b> [how will this project be measured]	1. 2. 3.
<b>Privacy</b>	Ensure consultation will comply with the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (2000)</i> eg include a privacy statement.
<b>Decision making process</b>	
<b>Define the problem/opportunity &amp; decision to be made</b>	Who will do this? Eg Committee, Council and staff
<b>Gather information</b>	
<b>Establish decision making criteria</b>	
<b>Develop and evaluate alternatives</b>	
<b>Final decision</b>	

## BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

5.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

<b>Consultation and engagement action plan</b>							
<b>Task</b>		<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Tasked to</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	<b>Advisory Committee Meetings / Project Reference Groups</b>	List number	List	Regular meetings with status reports on the Waste and Resource Collection Contract	Date	Division / area	
2	<b>Council reports</b>						
3	<b>Media releases</b>						
4	<b>Stakeholder briefing</b>						
5	<b>Deliberative invitation workshop</b>						
6	<b>Public meeting – open</b>						
7	<b>Focus Group</b>						
8	<b>E-news</b>						
9	<b>Social media eg Facebook</b>						
10	<b>Website</b>						
11	<b>Letter</b>						
12	<b>Email</b>						
13	<b>Phone</b>						
14	<b>Invitations</b>						
15	<b>Fact sheets + FAQs</b>						

## BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

5.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

<b>Consultation and engagement action plan</b>						
<b>Task</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Tasked to</b>	<b>Cost</b>
16	Discussion paper					
17	Rates notice insert					
18	Citizen panel					
19	Expo / display					
20	Online discussion forum					
21	Farmers and/or community markets					
22	Survey - community and business					
23	Provision of survey prize – incentivise					
24	Phone on hold message					
25	Newspaper/letterbox insert					
26	Display advertising					
27	Public notice advertising					
28	Other advertising eg radio, TV					
29	Information hotline					

## BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

5.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

Consultation and engagement action plan						
Task	Objective	Target Audience	Note	When	Tasked to	Cost
	<b>TOTAL COST</b>		<i>Please note that implementation of the above actions/tasks is dependent upon approved budgets and resourcing. Cost has been estimated based on similar past projects.</i>			<b>\$</b>



## DRAFT Community Roundtable Protocol

### 1. Definition - Byron Shire 'Community Group'

A formal group of at least 10 members, who reside within Byron Shire local government area and represent a broad range of interests.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Roundtable is to:

- 2.1 provide a medium for sharing information and knowledge to gain an understanding of differing perspectives and interests;
- 2.2 improve the level of understanding between community groups regarding the competing demands for improved infrastructure and services within the Byron LGA.
- 2.3 enable community groups to participate in planning 'whole of shire' future strategic direction for communities, services and Council and prioritise outcomes.
- 2.4 enable Council to update the group on strategic initiatives and future state and local government direction.
- 2.5 access community group connections to share information more broadly.
- 2.6 enable Councillors to listen to community groups.
- 2.7 give Council confidence to act on its legislative and regulatory power in dealings with the state government

### 3. Structure

The Community Roundtable:

- 3.1 will be chaired by Byron Shire Council Mayor or his/her delegate.
- 3.2 is open to all Byron Shire Councillors to attend.
- 3.3 will be attended by the General Manager (or his delegate), the Director Infrastructure Services, Director Corporate and Community Services, Director Sustainable Environment and Economies, Executive Manager Organisational Development and relevant staff.
- 3.4 will meet every three months at alternating locations within Byron Shire.
- 3.5 has one nominated spokesperson from each community group to speak on behalf of the group. This can be rotated.
- 3.6 operates on the basis of consensus and information exchange rather than on a binding vote.

### 4. Agenda

In the interest of access, transparency, equity and timeliness:

- 4.1 Byron Shire Council will request Agenda items two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 4.2 The Agenda will be emailed one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 4.3 Byron Shire Council has the option of presenting Agenda items at each meeting.

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- 4.4 Each community group can submit up to two Agenda items; however, due to the number of Agenda items received, it may not be possible to consider all items at the meeting.
- 4.5 Community group submitted agenda items are considered a priority and are encouraged to be 'shire-wide' and broad in nature.

### 5. Conduct

Everyone in attendance must:

- 5.1 treat each other with respect at all times.
- 5.2 not harass, discriminate against, or support others who harass and discriminate against colleagues or members of the public. This includes, but is not limited to harassment and discrimination on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, age, race, responsibilities as a carer, marital status, disability, homosexuality, transgender grounds or if a person has an infectious disease.