CITY OF VINCENT

DRAFT COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

‘Community engagement is an intentional process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.’

International Association for Public Participation Australasia Limited (IAP2 Australasia) trading as Engagement Institute.

OUR ENGAGEMENT COMMITMENT

This Framework outlines how the City engages with its community and stakeholders to ensure engagement is consistent, effective, inclusive and meaningful.

It supports the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy and aligns with the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

At Vincent, we are committed to giving our community a voice in decisions that affect and shape their lives, neighbourhoods and future.

We will listen, provide clear and timely information and involve the community in ways that are meaningful and proportionate to the project's impact.

Through our engagement, we seek to understand priorities, build trust and strengthen our connection with community and stakeholders.

Engagement supports and informs decision-making. As one element of the decision-making framework, engagement outcomes must be considered alongside technical advice, research, policy and legislative requirements, financial impacts as well as broader strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The City's Strategic Community Plan (SCP) sets the long-term vision, priorities and direction for the organisation and is informed by extensive community engagement. This Framework supports the delivery of the SCP and other key strategies by guiding how engagement is planned and undertaken for individual projects and initiatives.

Engagement under this Framework builds on existing strategic direction and previous engagement, ensuring that effort is proportionate, avoids unnecessary duplication, and focuses on matters where community input can meaningfully inform decisions or refine outcomes.

ENGAGING PROPORTIONATELY AND STRATEGICALLY

Engagement is scaled to match the level of impact of each project.

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT BY IMPACT

Levels of impact are assessed at the outset of a project to guide consultation and engagement planning and then integrated into project plans.

This is a preliminary assessment, informed by factors such as who will be affected, the scale of change, potential risks and likely community interest. The level may be refined as engagement progresses and as we learn more from the community.

The table below provides examples to guide thinking. It should be adapted to project context, risks and community expectations.

LEVEL OF IMPACT OR RISK	ENGAGEMENT FOCUS	TYPICAL METHODS
High (significant public interest, potential controversy or long-term impact)	Early engagement. Where possible involve, collaborate or empower to identify risks and community priorities before decisions are made.	Workshops, advisory groups, deliberative panels, place-based engagement, co-design, mix of online and in-person methods.
Medium (moderate community interest, some impact, options to influence)	Inform or consult as appropriate. In some cases key stakeholders may be involved earlier to test assumptions or refine options.	Surveys, feedback forms, pop-ups, information sessions, focus groups, online discussion forums.
Low (routine or operational matters, limited impact)	Inform as appropriate. Streamlined communication.	Website updates, FAQs, newsletters, signage, direct mail.

ENGAGEMENT TIMING AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The timing of engagement activities will be considered in relation to school holidays and other dates of significance.

The launch of major engagement will be avoided during school holidays where possible. Where engagement must occur during school holidays, the following conditions should apply:

- The engagement period is extended to include time before or after the holiday period.
- Additional face-to-face engagement strategies are implemented to mitigate reduced participation.
- The rationale for timing is documented in the engagement plan.

Face-to-face engagement during school holidays is encouraged where appropriate, particularly in public spaces and community settings where families and young people are likely to gather. Examples include:

- Pop-up stalls at the library, Beatty Park, parks or community events.
- Interactive consultation sessions designed to attract and engage children and families.
- Staffed sessions where community members can ask questions and provide feedback in person.

This approach recognises that school holidays can present both challenges and opportunities for engagement and aims to ensure that all community members have equitable access to participate.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

At Vincent, engagement is guided by the IAP2 Core Values and our Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy. Our principles set out how we engage.

INCLUSIVE AND PROPORTIONATE

We engage proportionately and inclusively. We work to remove barriers to participation so everyone has opportunity to be involved.

EARLY AND GENUINE INVOLVEMENT

We involve the community at a stage where feedback can make a difference and genuinely shape outcomes.

CLEAR PURPOSE AND INFLUENCE

We are clear and transparent. We define why we are engaging, what is in and out of scope and how the community's input will influence the decision.

EVIDENCE AND EXPERTISE

We consider community knowledge and lived experience alongside technical advice, research and strategic direction.

ACCESSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL

We identify and reduce barriers so that everyone who wants to participate can do so. Engagement is respectful and easy to understand.

CLOSING THE LOOP

We close the loop. We communicate how feedback was considered and explain the reasons for decisions made.

PRIVACY

We respect privacy. We take reasonable steps to protect personal information when collecting, using or sharing engagement data and only collect what we need for engagement in line with the City's Privacy and Information Breach Policy.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

At Vincent, we apply a simple cycle that helps us plan, deliver and learn from every project.

DEFINE → UNDERSTAND → PLAN → DELIVER → EVALUATE → LEARN

1. Define the purpose and scope
Clarify why we are engaging, what decisions can be influenced and what is out of scope. Where a project aligns with existing strategic priorities, we build on past engagement rather than duplicating it.

2. Understand who is affected
We identify who is likely to be interested, impacted or underrepresented and consider the best ways to involve them.

3. Plan the approach
We design engagement methods that fit the project's context, scale and objectives. We choose tools that are inclusive, accessible and meaningful to the identified stakeholders.

4. Deliver with transparency
We deliver engagement in line with the plan, providing clear information and reducing barriers so input can genuinely shape outcomes.

5. Evaluate and close the loop
We analyse and report what we heard, show how input influenced decisions and share outcomes with participants - and the wider community where appropriate.

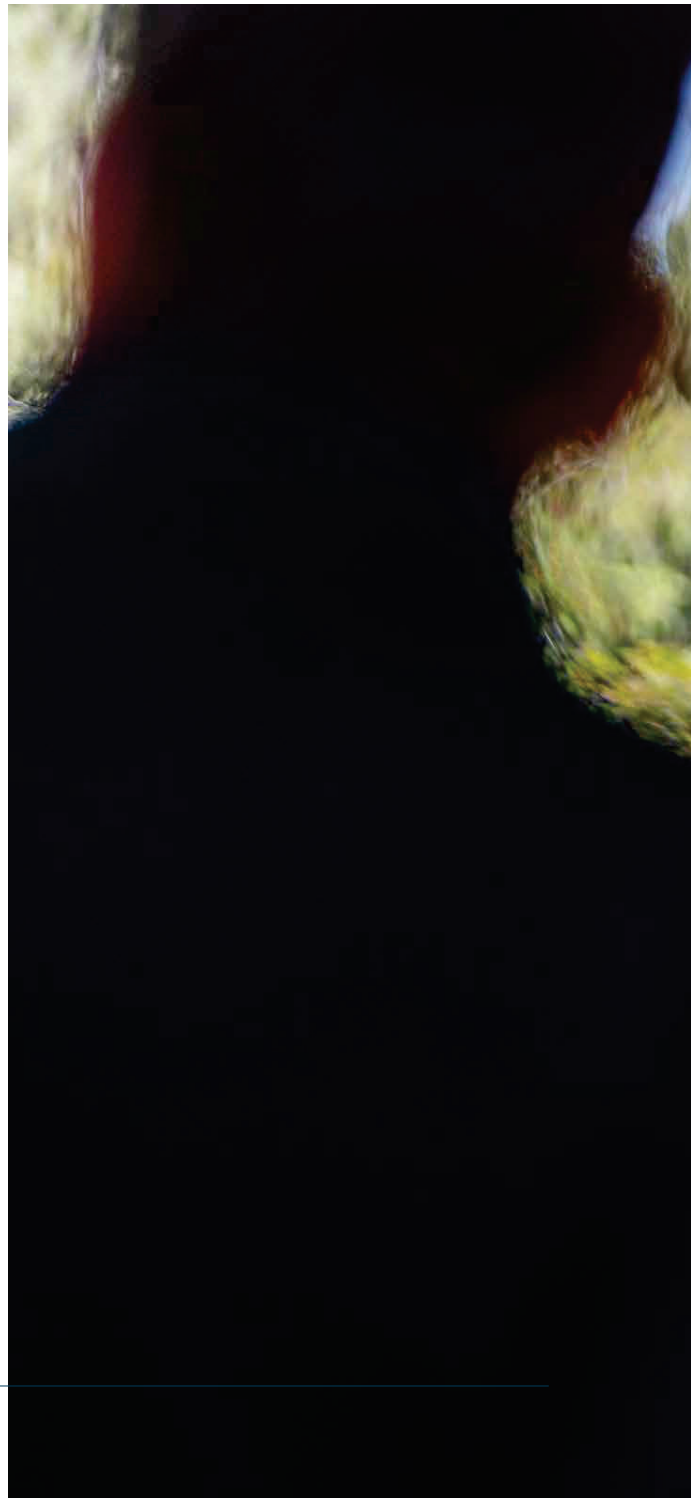
6. Learn and improve
We ask for feedback and reflect on the process, capture lessons learned and strengthen our practice for future engagement.

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Not all projects require consultation. Many projects will be delivered at the Inform level where the purpose is to raise awareness rather than seek feedback.

The IAP2 spectrum outlines levels of participation from informing to empowering. The appropriate level is determined by project scale, impact and scope for community influence.

LEVEL	OUR PURPOSE	OUR COMMITMENT	TYPICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
Inform	Provide clear, timely, accessible information. Informing is often the most appropriate level of engagement for routine or low impact matters.	We will keep you informed about decisions, processes and outcomes.	Project update email, signage, eNews, media, website, social media.
Consult	Seek feedback on ideas, options or proposals. Consultation may be light touch or more detailed depending on the purpose and scale of the project.	We will listen, consider your feedback and report back on how it influenced the decision.	Surveys, feedback forms, submissions, quick polls, pop-ups, workshops.
Involve	Work directly with stakeholders to explore issues and options.	We will work with you to understand your views and ensure they are considered in decisions.	Focus groups, advisory groups, community panels, stakeholder meetings.
Collaborate	Partner with the community in shaping solutions.	We will look to you for advice, ideas and recommendations and will work with you to find preferred solutions.	Co-design sessions, deliberative panels, collaborative design and visioning workshops.
Empower	Place final decision-making in the hands of the community.	We will implement what you decide.	Community-led planning processes.



STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

We take a structured approach to identifying stakeholders by considering who is affected by a decision or project, who has an interest or influence and who may be impacted as a result. We apply an equity lens to ensure underrepresented or less-heard voices are identified and included from the outset.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

We select engagement methods based on the purpose, audience and level of influence as guided by the IAP2 spectrum.

By focusing on the following principles, we ensure the methods we choose are effective, meaningful and respectful of the community's time and effort:

- Fit-for-purpose – methods are chosen to match the project objectives and community needs.
- Inclusive – information and activities are accessible and reduce barriers to participation.
- Flexible – we provide more than one way to participate using both online, hard copy and in-person options.
- Creative and place-based – we look for opportunities to design engaging, locally relevant experiences.
- Efficient – we avoid duplication and coordinate with other engagement activities where possible.

REPORTING AND CLOSING THE LOOP

We report back transparently, summarising feedback, explaining its influence and communicating decisions to maintain trust.

EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We evaluate engagement to assess objectives, inclusiveness and impact and share lessons to improve future practice.

TOOLKIT AND SUPPORTING RESOURCES

The toolkit provides templates, checklists and guidance to support implementation and will be updated more regularly than the Framework to reflect emerging methods and lessons learned.

REVIEW

The Framework will be reviewed every four years, aligned with the review of the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Policy, or earlier if required by significant changes to legislation, best practice or community expectations.

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This document is available in other formats and languages upon request.

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