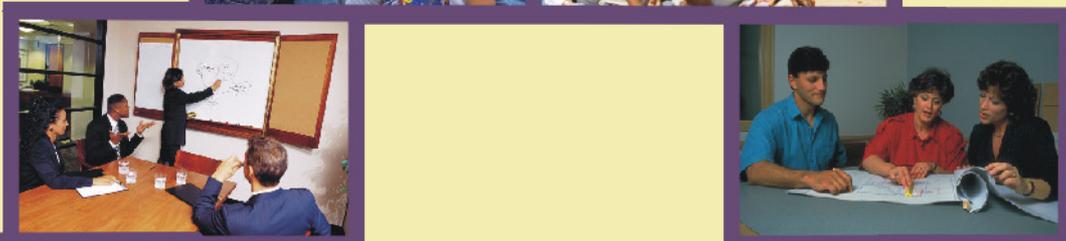


WARRINGAH COUNCIL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MATRIX

A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION



Warringah Council



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Background

THE CONTEXT

The Community Consultation Matrix is part of an overall Community Consultation Framework. The Matrix aims to guide staff on WHEN and HOW they should consult with the community for different situations. It is an implementation tool of the Community Consultation Framework.

The Community Consultation Framework also includes a Consultation Strategy. The Consultation Strategy provides strategic directions for community and internal consultation, including the systems and strategies that should be in place within the organisation to ensure appropriate consultation.

The Community Consultation Framework and this Matrix reflect Warringah Council's ongoing commitment to appropriately informing and involving its community, and to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

It should be noted that this Matrix relates to all community consultation undertaken by Council except the Development Approval Process. Community consultation guidelines for the Development Approval Process are outlined in the Council's Notification Policy and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Use of the Matrix

The Community Consultation Matrix is relevant to all staff that have or should have any dealings with the community, except where staff are dealing with Development Approvals (this is addressed by the Council's Notification Policy and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979). It aims to guide staff in their dealings with the community and ensure the appropriate level of community participation for a range of projects, services and activities.

It is recognised that there is diversity in the activities and projects across Council, and the type of consultation undertaken should vary accordingly. As such a flexible approach has been adopted in the design of the Community Consultation Matrix, enabling staff to determine the potential impact of a situation, and therefore the appropriate level of community participation.

The Community Consultation Matrix should be used at the commencement of all projects or reviews of services, and also as part of day to day operations, to ensure that the appropriate consultation is identified and undertaken.

How To Use The Matrix

The Community Consultation Matrix does not prescribe exactly how the community should be consulted for every project, issue, service or action in Council. This would be an onerous task, given the range of projects and activities. Instead, it identifies different levels of impact that would require certain types of consultation. It is then up to staff to determine the level within which their project, issue, service or action fits.

Overall, the Community Consultation Matrix enables flexibility, and recognises that staff have the capacity to judge the potential impact of a situation and the appropriate level of community participation.

The main steps to using the Matrix are as follows:

Step 1 Assess Level Of Impact

Determine the likely 'level of impact' of the project, issue, service or action, using the assessment criteria on page 4.

Step 2 Determine Community Participation

Determine the desired level of community participation/ involvement, eg whether the community just needs to be informed, or whether they should have the opportunity to be involved in decision making. This will be influenced by the degree of impact and the desired outcomes of consultations. Use the guidelines on page 7 to make this decision, and also consider legislation or other Council Policy requirements (refer Attachment 3).

Community consultation could also occur at the end of a project – eg 'informing' people of a proposed direction following the earlier consultations, or 'seeking information' (feedback) on a plan or direction.

Step 3 Determine Type Of Consultation

Use the Matrix on page 9 to determine the type of consultation that should occur in relation to the level of impact and the desired community participation.

Step 4 Fine Tune Consultation Tasks

Use the chart outlining the benefits and constraints for each type of consultation (commencing on page 10), to 'fine tune' the selection of specific consultation tasks.

In conjunction with these Steps, complete the Consultation Checklist and the Consultation Action Plan provided as Attachments 1 and 2, to record decisions and actions.

Step 1 – Level Of Impact

The Community Consultation Matrix is based on four (4) impact levels, where impact relates to the ‘effect of an action or change on the community’. The impact levels are as follows:

Level of Impact	Brief Description
Level 1 (High – Warringah)	High level of impact on the whole or a large part of Warringah.
Level 2 (High – Local)	High level of impact of a local nature, eg a local area, specific community or user group.
Level 3 (Lower – Warringah)	Lower level of impact on the whole or a large part of Warringah.
Level 4 (Lower – Local)	Lower level of impact of a local nature, eg a local area, specific community or user group.

These levels are based on the assumption that any project, issue, service or action will have some real or perceived impact on the community.

To determine the Level of Impact, staff will firstly need to determine the community group/s and stakeholders that are affected by the project, issue, service or action. It may be appropriate to involve other Council staff in making these decisions and the approach to involving other staff should be determined early in the process, as recommended in the Consultation Strategy.

The criteria that staff should use to determine the ‘level of impact’ of a project, issue, service or action is provided on the following page. Examples of activities across Council are also provided to assist staff to more accurately make their decision.

Criteria for Determining Level of Impact

Use the following criteria to determine the likely ‘level of impact’ of your project, issue, service or action.

Level of Impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Examples
Level 1 High Impact– Warringah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of real or perceived impact or risk across Warringah. • Any significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the whole of Warringah, such as the natural environment or heritage. • Any impact on the health, safety or well being of the Warringah community. • Potential high degree of controversy or conflict. • Likely high level of interest across Warringah. • Potential high impact on State or regional strategies or directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s Management Plan • Local Environmental Plan • Plan of Management (district or regional) • A change to land categorisation, ie community to operational land • Disability Action Plan • Strategy Plan, eg Culture, Youth, Aged • Removal of a facility or service catering across Warringah, eg library services • Provision of a district or regional facility, eg skate park, indoor sports centre • Key changes to a Warringah wide service, eg Beach Services, Waste Management • Changes to or impact on natural bushland or waterway (where the natural values could be affected)

Step 1 – Level Of Impact

Criteria for Determining Level of Impact

Level of Impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Examples
Level 2 High Impact – Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of real or perceived impact or risk on a local area, small community or user group/s of a specific facility or service. • The loss of or significant change to any facility or service to a local community. • Potential high degree of controversy or conflict at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal or relocation of a local playground • Change to or loss of valued activity or program, eg local youth activity • Re-development of a sportsground • Proposed removal or development of small pocket park • Local street road closure • Increase or removal of car parking in local shopping centre

Criteria for Determining Level of Impact

Level of Impact	Criteria (one or more of the following)	Examples
Level 3 Lower Impact – Warringah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower, although still some real or perceived impact or risk across Warringah. • Potential for some controversy or conflict. • Potential for some although not significant impact on State or regional strategies or directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to a Warringah wide service, eg Emergency Services, Library Services • Upgrade of a district or regional facility, eg Warringah Aquatic Centre • Changes to Customer Service processes, eg payment of rates • Most changes to fees and charges (unless contentious) • Provision of a community wide event • Review of community needs, eg Biennial Survey, recreation needs assessment
Level 4 Lower Impact – Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level of real or perceived impact or risk on a local area, small community or user group/s of a specific facility or service. • Only a small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level. • Low or no risk of controversy or conflict at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of a local playground • Local street or streetscape upgrade • Changes to a local activity program, eg timing or venue/ location

At any time during a project, issue or action, it may be necessary to reassess the Level of Impact and vary the consultation approach accordingly, due to a change in the situation or recognition of implications.

Step 2 – Level Of Community Participation

Having decided on the ‘level of impact’, the next step is to determine the level of community participation that is appropriate for the particular project, issue, service or action. Not all ‘high impact’ projects or issues will require a high level of community involvement or partnership, although some will. Due to the diversity of activities in Council, staff need to have flexibility in making this decision.

It then becomes the responsibility of staff to fully understand the impact of their project or issue on the community and to select the appropriate level of community participation to match the situation.

Four (4) levels of community participation have been developed, based on the level of involvement of the community. These levels are defined below.

Level of Participation	Definition
Informing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising the community of a situation or proposal. • Informing on a decision or direction. • Providing advice on an issue. • No response is required, although people are free to seek a further level of participation.
Seeking Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking market research to identify needs or issues. • Seeking comment on a proposal, action or issue. • Seeking feedback on a service or facility. • Requiring a response, but limited opportunity for dialogue. • Option for people to seek a further level of participation.
Involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving the community in discussion and debate. • Ensuring informed input through briefings and information. • Adopting a more personal and innovative approach through personal contact and meetings/ sessions that encourage participation. • Involving at different times in the planning process, ie keeping informed and enabling further comment.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a structure for involvement in decision making, eg committee. • Enabling ongoing involvement and keeping informed. • Allocating responsibility in achieving initiatives.

The likely link between ‘level of impact’ and ‘level of participation’ is provided on the following page to assist staff in their assessment. To ensure the appropriate level of community participation, staff also need to consider specific legislative requirements and other relevant Council Policy. The requirements of a number of key legislation and the Council’s draft Notification Policy are outlined in Attachment 3.

Guide for Determining Level of Participation

Use the following chart to assist in determining the appropriate level of community participation relative to the likely ‘level of impact’ of a project, issue, service or action. As highlighted by the chart, more than one level of participation will generally be required. It should be noted that the order of undertaking the different levels of participation will vary with each project. For example, it may be appropriate to seek information before informing the community.

It may also be necessary to undertake a level of participation more than once. For example, to ‘seek information’ regarding the needs of the community at the commencement of a project and then to ‘seek information’ to gain feedback from the community regarding a proposed plan or direction (following all other consultations).

Step 2 – Level Of Community Participation

Level of Impact	Level of Participation Generally Required	The Exceptions
Level 1 High Impact– Warringah	Informing Seeking Information Involving Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal committee or partnership may not always be appropriate. This will only be essential where an ongoing involvement and community commitment is sought. • In an emergency situation, it may not be feasible to involve the community or seek information prior to action.
Level 2 High Impact – Local	Informing Seeking Information Involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be times when partnerships will be beneficial, eg community involvement in fund raising for a facility.
Level 3 Lower Impact – Warringah	Informing Seeking Information Involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will not always be necessary to involve the community. For example, a review of needs may only require a survey, particularly if the community has been involved previously.
Level 4 Lower Impact – Local	Informing Seeking Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be times when staff will want to involve program or activity participants in planning or deciding on changes (to achieve a sense of ownership). • At times it may be advisable to involve a local community in planning or decision making to avoid the risk of a project or action becoming a greater issue.

Step 3 – The Matrix

Use the Matrix on the following page to decide the specific types of consultation that are appropriate for the chosen 'Impact Level' and for the desired level of community participation.

In particular:

1. Select the desired level/s of participation in the left hand column.
2. Move to the appropriate Impact Level column.
3. Be guided by the symbol in that column.

The symbols are intended to have the following meaning:

- ★ Essential (the task must be undertaken).
- ✚ Desirable (preferably the task will be undertaken, although there will be exceptions).
- ◆ May be Appropriate (task may or may not be appropriate depending on the situation).

Staff will need to use the chart in Step 4 to determine whether a task that is designated 'Desirable' or 'May be Appropriate' should be undertaken for a specific situation.

The Matrix is divided into four (4) sections linked to level of participation, ie:

- Informing
- Seeking Information
- Involving
- Partnerships

Appropriate consultation types/ tasks are listed under each level of participation. Symbols have then been allocated firstly for the overall level of participation, ie informing, seeking information etc, and then for each of the consultation types/ tasks.

It should be noted that the recommended consultation approach for a 'level of participation' will not necessarily match the specific tasks. For example, if a level of participation such as 'informing' is designated as essential, this does not mean that a specific task will also be essential. Instead it means that 'in general' the level of participation must be undertaken and that one or more of the specific tasks must be selected by staff to achieve this.

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Level 1 High Impact– Warringah	Level 2 High Impact – Local	Level 3 Lower Impact – Warringah	Level 4 Lower Impact – Local
INFORMING	★	★	★	★
Personal Telephone Contact	◆	+	◆	◆
In Person Meeting	◆	+	◆	+
Written Correspondence	★	★	◆	◆
Pamphlet	◆		◆	
Letter Box Drop	◆	+	◆	◆
Notice in Local Paper	★	◆	+	◆
Notice in Newsletter	◆	◆	◆	◆
Media Release	★		◆	
Site Display	◆	◆	◆	◆
Displays in Other Locations (eg shopping centre)	◆	◆	◆	
SEEKING INFORMATION	★	★	★	+
Suggestion Box			◆	+
Telephone Survey	◆	◆	◆	◆
Written Survey	◆	◆	◆	
Hotline/ Phone-in	◆	◆	◆	
Letter or Media Promotion Inviting Submissions	★	◆	◆	
Public Exhibition	★	◆	◆	
Interview	◆	+	◆	◆
Focus Group Session	+	+	+	+
INVOLVING	★	★	+	+
Meetings with User or Stakeholder Groups	★	+	+	+
Meeting with Existing Group, eg parents, school children, youth, aged, businesses	+	+	+	+
Workshop Session	+	+	+	◆
Meeting by Invite	+	◆	+	◆
Site Tour/ Meeting	◆	+	◆	◆
Public Meeting	◆	◆	◆	
PARTNERSHIPS	+	◆	◆	◆
Committee of Management	◆			
Taskforce or Working Party	+	◆	◆	
Joint Venture	◆	◆	◆	◆

★ = Essential, + = Desirable, ◆ = May be Appropriate

Where there is no symbol, this means that the type of consultation is not as appropriate for the Impact Level.

Step 3 – The Matrix

The following chart is provided to help staff define their specific approach to consultation, particularly where the Matrix identifies a consultation task as ‘desirable’ or ‘may be appropriate’. The chart provides a brief description of each type of consultation and highlights the benefits and the constraints of the approach.

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
INFORMING			
Personal Telephone Contact	Informal unstructured information exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited capacity to discuss issues Opportunity to exchange basic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to be customer initiated No formal record/ tracking of information
In Person Meeting	Informal / semi formal discussion either one-to-one or in a small group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to discuss issues and exchange different points of view Opportunity to develop rapport with community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to be customer initiated Limits the number of people accessing information
Written Correspondence	Personally addressed letter informing residents of a project, issue, service or action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All affected people receive the same information Record of communication Generally cost effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes literacy levels of residents
Pamphlet	An leaflet designed to provide information on a particular item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables presentation of the facts (ensuring an informed community) Potential to create greater interest through appealing presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more costly exercise Assumes literacy levels of residents
Letter Box Drop	Mass produced communication to affected people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All affected people receive the same information Affordable broadcast of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes literacy levels of residents May be perceived as ‘junk mail’ and ignored
Notice in Local Paper	Paid advertisement in local newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A method of advising all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes interested/ affected people will read the paper

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
INFORMING			
Media Release	News story in the local paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates interest in an issue through local media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on media reporting Risk of misrepresentation
Site Display	On-site information board describing proposed development / activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places information in local area which is accessible to affected residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of information depends on the quality of the display
Displays in Other Locations (eg shopping centre)	Visual and/ or auditory information is placed in a areas of high public use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to capture and inform a wide cross section of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on quality of display May be a high cost if display is supported by staff to explain /answer questions
SEEKING INFORMATION			
Suggestion Box	Provision of a place for customers to lodge ideas/ feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will lose impact if feedback is not provided on suggestions Can appear tokenistic if used as sole source of consultation
Telephone Survey	Individual phone contact to complete a structured interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides data to assess needs/ trends Personal approach tends to increase the level of response Capacity to reach a wide range of groups in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be costly and time-consuming depending on the sample size Need to limit question options for ease of analysis Excludes people who do not have a telephone Major surveys can result in high 'knock back' (too busy, invasion of personal space etc)
Written Survey	Written structured survey to gather data/ information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides basis for assessing needs/ trends or obtaining feedback on a service Enables broad or targeted input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracts the interested respondents Can be costly depending on sample size. Tend to be limited to closed questions for ease of analysis Assumes literacy levels of residents
Hotline/ Phone-in	Time-limited opportunity for customers to make contact and provide feedback in a semi-structured/ informal context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to reflect/ expand and clarify points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on skilled interviewers Relies on publicity and public interest

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
SEEKING INFORMATION			
Media Promotion Inviting Submission	Broadcast to community seeking a written presentation of views on a proposal/ concept / activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful as part of a wider consultation process • Broadens potential information source • Easy to implement • Enables formal comments on issues • Demonstrates commitment to resident input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits the opportunity for dialogue/ clarification • Attracts organised & motivated groups/ individuals (not the silent majority)
Public Exhibition	The formal exhibition of a plan or document at key locations for a set period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives all people in the community the opportunity to view and comment on a plan or strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a high level of promotion • Requires the allocation of additional time to a planning process • Requires motivated people to respond
Interview	Face to face structured interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms the basis of assessing issues/ trends • Rich source of customer information • Capacity to reflect/ expand and clarify points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming and costly • May not be representative of all groups
Focus Group Session	Semi-structured interview in a small group (with invited representative participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants explore and build on issues • Allows in-depth discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be representative of all groups
Meeting with User or Stakeholder Groups	Face to face semi-structured meeting with a specific group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to draw out issues of concern to the group • Opportunity to clarify issues of contention/ uncertainty • Opportunity to develop an action that responds to issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a competent and effective facilitator

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
INVOLVING			
Meeting with Existing Group, eg parents, school children, youth, aged, people with disabilities, business group etc	Link to an existing meeting or formed group to discuss broader community needs or issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves people who would normally not have the interest or time • Provides rich source of information on needs and issues within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires facilitator who is skilled in relating to different groups and creating an interest in the topic
Workshop Session	Structured approach to involving meeting participants in working through an issue and/ or developing solutions. Can be selected participants or an open meeting, although generally need to limit numbers to be effective, ie 10-30 people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can produce a plan or recommended actions or obtain specific feedback on plan or program • Enables the involvement of all participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires participants to be open minded and represent a diversity of interests • Requires a skilled facilitator • Requires detailed recording of notes
Public Art Session	The integration of public art into the consultation process, ie using public art as a tool to encourage people to express their ideas, views and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive and creative way to involve people. • Contributes to community development. • Results in an art ‘product’ that can be used to enhance the urban environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources required for materials. • Requires a skilled facilitator
Community Forum	The use of speakers to provide information and facilitate informed discussion on a topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants become informed of all aspects of an issue. • Good for less contentious issues or when seeking to generate interest in a topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires organisation in advance. • Need to ensure speakers give balanced view.

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
INVOLVING			
Community Debate	Organised speakers and debating panels, used to discuss an issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes informed thinking. • Ensures managed debate and discussion, and the recognition that there is more than one side to an argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires organisation in advance. • Needs to be clear sides to an issue.
Site Tour/ Meeting	Semi-structured or unstructured meeting at place of issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for affected parties to view/ visualise issues or proposals • Opportunity to clarify concerns and exchange views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require balanced participation to resolve issues and make recommendations
Public Meeting	Gathering of large numbers of people to inform them of an issue or enable comment/ input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcast of information to large group • Open to anyone who has an interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires good facilitation and management to ensure information exchange is handled well • Risk of control or disruption by interest groups/ individuals
PARTNERSHIPS			
Committee of Management	Committee that works with Council under delegated power to manage a service or facility Representation may be by appointment or election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares responsibility for the management of a facility and/ or delivery of a service • Involves community members in the care and control of local resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure the broad involvement of interested individuals • Potential to be controlled by select few
Taskforce or Working Party	Group of people selected to work with Council to complete a task or develop a new service or facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to maximise skills and resources within the community • Rich source of skills and abilities to complement the roles undertaken by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a skilled chairperson to maximise the contribution of all members

Step 3 – The Matrix

Type of Consultation	Description	Benefit	Constraint
PARTNERSHIPS			
Joint Venture	A formal arrangement with stakeholders or organisations to plan for and achieve a project or service, eg a funding joint venture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater commitment and responsibility from within the community to establish a facility or service • Less reliance on Council funding and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency for strong sense of ownership by groups that have contributed funds and time

Step 4 – Define The Consultation Approach

DEFINITIONS

Definitions for key terms that are used in this Community Consultation Matrix and not previously defined in the document are outlined below:

Community

The term community relates to all people, groups or organisations that reside or operate in Warringah. This includes government and agency stakeholders as well as residents and workers.

Level of Impact

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

Community Participation

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

Warringah (Impact Level)

Where a project, issue, service or action:

- Relates to all people living or working in Warringah, or
- Relates to a significant proportion of people, or
- Has the potential to impact on other facilities or activities within Warringah.

Local (Impact Level)

Where a project, issue, service or action primarily relates to a local community or a group of users of a specific facility or service.