

Public Consultation Policy

Purpose

This policy has been developed and adopted in accordance with section 14 of the *Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009* (the Act). Section 14 requires the Outback Communities Authority (OCA) to have a policy on public consultation and for that policy to identify the steps the OCA intends to take where the Act requires consultation. The policy must also provide for the steps to be varied according to the type of decisions to be made.

Policy Statement

The OCA is committed to fostering well-informed communities that are able to participate in the democratic processes that underpin the community. All community members are encouraged to actively participate in community life and have input into decisions that affect their lives. The OCA will use appropriate and cost-effective methods to engage with local communities, key stakeholders and interested parties, relevant to the specific circumstances of each topic.

Implementation

The OCA has strong regard for the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum in support of its community engagement strategies. When seeking to engage with communities the OCA will do so in accordance with the strategies set out in appendix 1 and the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. As a minimum, the OCA will seek to engage communities in regard to:

- Strategic management planning (see section 15)
- Annual business planning and budgets (see section 16)
- Community Affairs Resourcing and Management (CARM) agreements (see section 17)
- A decision or action taken by the OCA under a provision of the Local Government Act 1999 that requires public consultation (see Part 3 Division 2)
- The making of regulations applying the provisions of an Act (see Part 3 Division 3)
- The making of decisions of a kind prescribed by regulations
- The adoption, variation or substitution of our Public Consultation Policy
- Any other issue the OCA determines warrants community engagement

Community Engagement is an important aspect of the OCA's decision-making process. When consulting on any matter the OCA will ensure all intended participants are given fair and reasonable opportunity to make submissions on the subject.

The OCA will take account of the views and aspirations expressed by the community and stakeholders, and balance those with other influences such as budgetary constraints, to

make decisions within the context of the OCA's legislation and endorsed strategic directions.

Evaluation and Review

This Policy will be evaluated by OCA staff following each significant consultation. The Policy will be reviewed by the OCA Board on recommendation of OCA staff or within three months of the appointment or renewal of tenure of a Presiding Member, which ever shall occur first.

Unless an amendment to this policy has only minor significance and is likely to attract little or no community interest, an amendment to the Policy, or substitution of a new policy, will be subject to the public consultation in place at the time.

Definitions

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is the International Association for Public Participation¹. IAP2 is an international member association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community engagement, incorporating individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest.

References

Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009

Local Government Act 1999

Assent

This policy was adopted by the Outback Communities Authority on 17 November 2016

¹ <https://www.iap2.org.au/About-Us/About-IAP2-Australasia>

Appendix 1

When Will We Consult

The OCA will consult when:

- Preparing Strategic Management Plans:
 - When the Strategic Management Plan is in draft format and prior to submitting the Plan to the Minister responsible for the Act for approval
- Preparing Annual Business Plans and Budgets:
 - When the Annual Business Plan and/or Budget is in draft format and prior to submitting the Plan/Budget to the Minister responsible for the Act for approval
- Entering into, varying or substituting a CARM agreement:
 - When the CARM is in draft format and prior to entering into, varying or substituting an agreement
 - This may include consideration for a Community Contribution Scheme or other community investment decisions
- Making decisions or taking action under a provision of the *Local Government Act 1999* applied by the *Outback Communities (Administration & Management) Act 2009* that requires the following of the Public Consultation Policy:
 - When the OCA has endorsed a decision or action and before that decision or action is acted upon
- Making regulations applying to the provisions of another Act:
 - When a report setting out the substance and effect of the proposed regulation is endorsed by the OCA and prior to the formal Parliamentary process is commenced
- Making decisions of a kind prescribed by the regulations:
 - When the OCA has endorsed a decision and before that decision or action is acted upon
- Preparing a variation to or substitution of its Public Consultation Policy:
 - When the varied or substituted policy is in draft format and prior to it being adopted by the OCA. Consultation will not occur if the OCA determines the variation or substitution is of only minor significance that would attract little (or no) community interest

- Making a decision the OCA considers might have a significant impact on those affected by the decision:
 - When the OCA has endorsed a decision and before that decision is acted upon

Who We Will Consult With

The OCA will consult with those affected by a decision or action. Community members may not necessarily live in the area but will have a connection to the area, e.g. a landowner not living in the area.

How We Will Consult

The Act requires that reasonable opportunity for making submissions on the matters subject to consultation be provided. This means getting the message to the right people. The OCA will use its best endeavours to ensure relevant stakeholders are informed by using any of the following methods to engage with the community affected by a decision or action it desires to act upon:

- Personal representation
- Public meetings
- Community presentations
- Mail outs
- Email/electronic newsletter
- Media statements
- Media advertisement

In deciding upon how to engage with those affected by a decision or action the OCA will take into account:

- The significance of the matter to be consulted upon
- The effectiveness of the method in reaching the intended recipient(s)
- The timeframe required for consultation

The method of engagement may vary according to the category of decision being considered.

How Long the Consultation Period Will Be

The consultation period for significant variation or substitution of, or adoption of a new Consultation Policy will be at least one month. The consultation period for any other consultation process will generally be one month but may vary according to the category of decision being considered.

In any event the OCA will provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions on the decision or action subject to consultation.