

Community Engagement Framework 2026-36

Working with you to shape
decisions for our community



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kurna Nation and its people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land in the ancient area that has only recently become known as the City of Onkaparinga.

We recognise that this local living culture has developed over tens of thousands of years and that in today's contemporary context, Kurna and other Aboriginal people are actively engaged in community life and bring their rich cultural heritage to the connected community and sustainable future to which we aspire.

We are mindful of Kurna people's spiritual relationship with country when we make decisions about this region and that protecting places of importance to Kurna culture has an impact on the wellbeing and prosperity of Kurna and other Aboriginal people.

Mayor's foreword

Community engagement is an important part of local democracy and helps shape the future of our city.

At the City of Onkaparinga, we want our communities to feel informed, included and heard on the decisions that affect them.

Your input helps council better understand local priorities, lived experiences and aspirations, leading to more informed decisions and better outcomes for our city.

Our Community Vision 2034 – Connected community, sustainable future – reflects the aspirations of our community and guides council's work and decision-making. Ongoing community engagement plays an important role in helping us deliver that shared vision for the future.

This Community Engagement Framework includes an adaptation of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation, and explains how council will work with the community, what you can expect from us, and how you can participate in decisions, plans and projects.

We are committed to engagement that is clear, inclusive, respectful and transparent, and to continually improve how we work with our communities.

I am passionate about including community voices in the work of council, and encourage you to get involved, share your views and help shape the future of Onkaparinga.

Moirá Were AM

Mayor, City of Onkaparinga



What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of informing you about decisions that affect you and, where possible, inviting your input to help shape and improve those decisions.

Not every decision requires community engagement. Whether we seek your input depends on factors such as the level of community impact or interest, legal requirements, available resources, and whether there is an opportunity for the community to meaningfully influence the outcome.

The value of community engagement

The City of Onkaparinga is a diverse and growing community, rich in local knowledge, lived experience and ideas.

Our Community Vision 2034 — Connected community, sustainable future — sets the long-term direction for our city and guides council's work and decision-making. Developed through broad community input, the vision reflects the aspirations of our community and the future we want to create together.

Active citizenship is an important part of good decision-making. Through community engagement and your participation, we learn from local experiences, hear a diverse range of views and better understand the needs, priorities and aspirations of our community.

People who are informed and get involved can help shape decisions that affect their lives, neighbourhoods and future. Meaningful engagement also helps strengthen civic participation, community connection and pride in our city.

By listening to community perspectives and drawing on local knowledge and experience, council can make more informed decisions and deliver better outcomes for our community.

We are committed to engaging with transparency, accountability and respect to support good governance, strengthen trust, and help deliver the shared aspirations of the Community Vision 2034.



Our guiding principles

What guides our engagement

The following legislation and policies guide our engagement approach.

State Government

- Local Government Act 1999
- Community Engagement Charter

Council

- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Engagement Framework (this document)
- Community Engagement Procedure



Our promise to you

We're committed to working with you to create a city that you're proud of.

Our guiding principles

Along with the principles in the State Government's Community Engagement Charter our approach is guided by 5 principles:

- Clear and honest - we explain the purpose of the project, what can and cannot change, and how decisions will be made.
- Inclusive and accessible - we aim to remove barriers, use plain language and provide different ways for people to take part.
- Proportionate and well planned - we match the level of engagement to the level of impact and plan engagement early where possible.
- Closing the loop - we report back on what we heard, how feedback was used and what happened next.
- Accountable and improving - we review our engagement activities and use what we learn to keep improving how we engage with the community.



Inform

We share information when there is no opportunity to influence a decision.



Consult

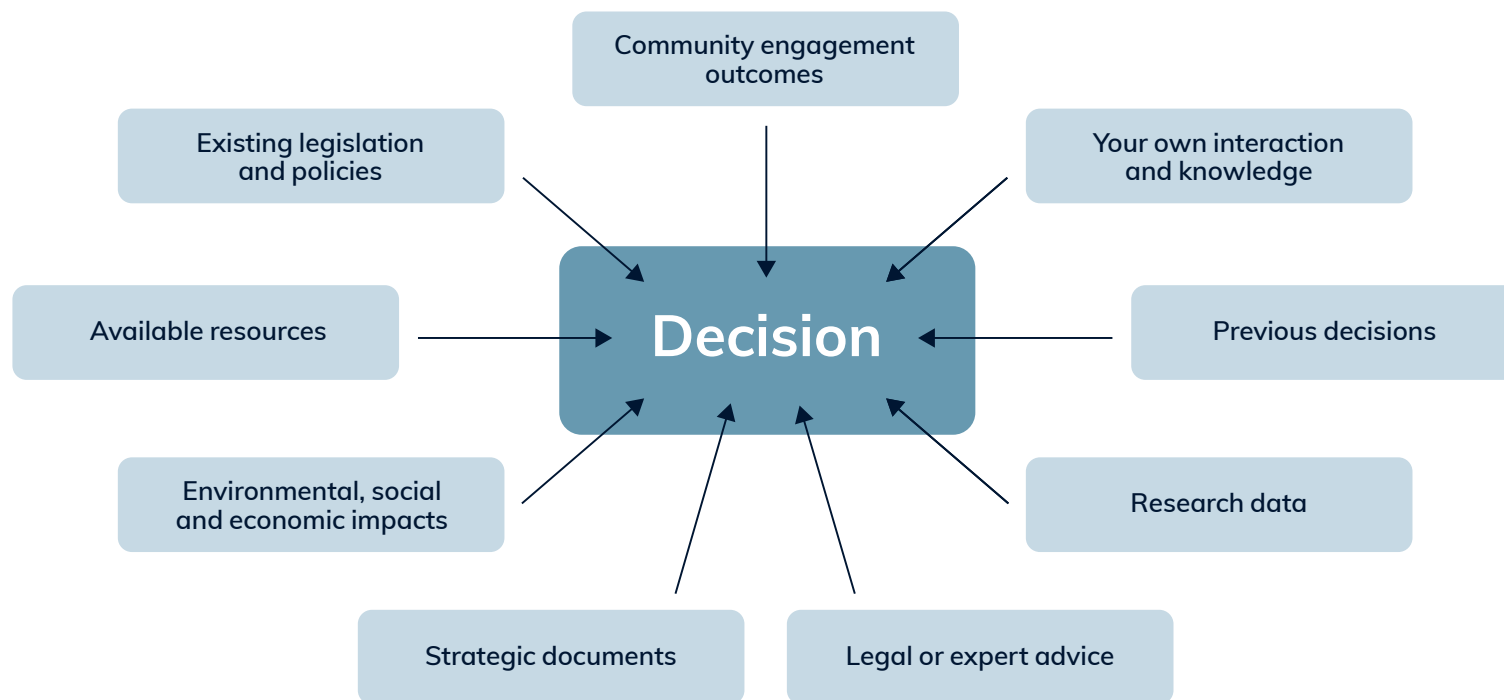
We ask for your input to help shape decisions or test options.



Active participation

We work closely with you on complex or high-interest matters.

How we engage



How decisions are made

Community engagement is one important part of decision-making, but it is not the only factor.

Along with community feedback and local knowledge, decision-makers may also consider:

- legislation and council policies
- budget and available resources
- safety, technical and environmental factors

- strategic plans and previous decisions
- research, analysis and expert advice
- the needs of the broader community, both now and into the future.

How you can help shape decisions

Not every project is the same, so the way you can participate will vary. We match our approach to the size and impact of the project.

How we engage depends on:

- how many people are impacted
- the level of community interest
- legal requirements
- complexity of the project and available resources.

For every project, we will clearly explain:

- what stage the project is at
- what you can influence
- what has already been decided.

Our engagement process

Community engagement is one important part of decision- making, but it is not the only factor.

Balancing different community needs

Sometimes the views of people directly affected by a project may differ from the needs of the wider community.

When this happens, decision-makers must balance local impacts with broader community benefit.



Your participation

We're committed to letting you know about engagement opportunities that may affect you.

We know you are more likely to participate when you feel strongly about an issue or believe it will significantly impact you. While not everyone will choose to participate, all community members are encouraged to have their say.

When limited feedback is received, we may proceed on the understanding that the level of community concern or interest is low.

Who makes the decision

Councillors are elected to represent your interests and it is their responsibility to make decisions.

Your input through community engagement is critical, providing Council with valuable information and feedback to support and help shape their decisions.



What happens after you provide feedback?

We:

- prepare an Engagement Feedback Report collating and analysing the data
- share what we heard with you
- provide all of the information to decision-makers
- communicate the decision with you and explain what changed (and what didn't)
- outline the next steps.

We aim to get back to you within 6 weeks of engagement closing and within 4 weeks of a decision being made.

Your role

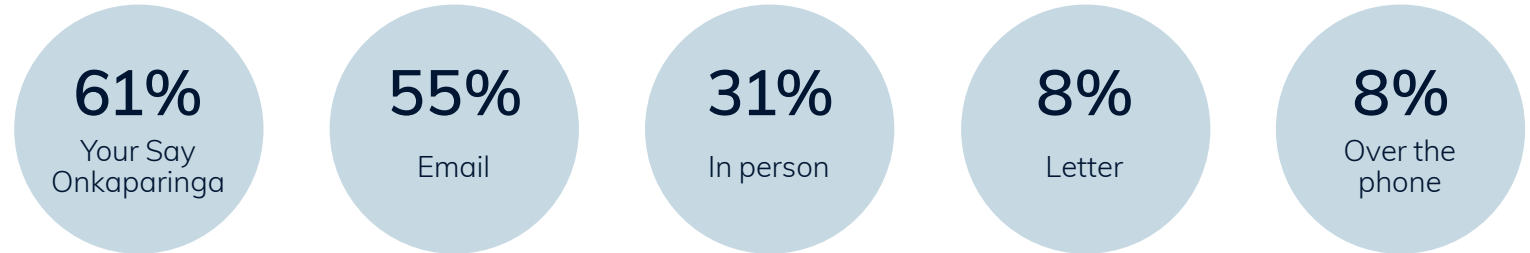
Your input helps council better understand community views, local knowledge and lived experience:

- read the information provided
- take part in a way that suits you
- tell us what matters
- share your views respectfully
- stay informed.

What we heard and what we will do

The 2026 engagement review survey revealed that you want to participate in engagements through these channels:

Note: Participants could select more than one option, hence the percentages add up to more than 100%.



What you told us

1. Focus on practice, not policy

You are more interested in how engagement works in practice than the wording of the policy itself.

2. Clarity and simplicity

You prefer plain language, shorter surveys and easy-to-understand information.

3. Visibility and awareness

The biggest barrier to participation is not knowing engagement is happening. Improved promotion and clearer communication are needed.

4. Timing and influence

You want earlier engagement and a clear explanation of what you can influence.

5. Trust and transparency

You expect council to show what was heard, what changed, and why.

What we will focus on

Earlier involvement

Involve people early based on how much they can influence the decision and explore more co-design opportunities.

More interactive digital options

Pilot online forums, information sessions and community Q&A opportunities.

Stronger First Nations engagement

Support development of guiding principles and a shared understanding of cultural safety.

Better inclusion for people with disability

Improve how we hear from people with disability through targeted actions and partnerships.

More inclusive decision-making

Apply learnings from accessibility reviews to improve engagement design.

Improved business engagement

Establish a coordinated approach to business communication and insights.

Greater transparency

Provide full feedback reports for all Your Say Onkaparinga consultations.

Improved community connections

Improve the interconnection between community engagement and community development.

Improved engagement on council's budget

Improve how we hear from you on council's Long Term Financial Plan, Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Measuring what good looks like

Goal	Measure
Adoption of the Framework across the organisation to ensure a consistent engagement planning approach	100% of engagements comply with the Policy and align with the Framework and Procedure
Increased transparency through consistent use of feedback reporting and sharing engagement outcomes with participants	100% of engagement feedback reports for all Your Say Onkaparinga consultations are shared with engagement participants
Growth and diversity of participation in engagement activities, including First Nations and other communities	Year-on-year increase in participation of targeted demographics
Improved community understanding of what they can influence	80% of engagement participants indicate it was clear what they could influence
Positive shifts in community sentiment and trust indicators over time	Year-on-year increase in community sentiment and trust indicators
Internal feedback on improved clarity, consistency and ease of working with engagement processes	Year-on-year increase in staff feedback for key indicators

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Your Say

Get involved by visiting
onkaparingacity.com/yoursay

