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|  <b>SOUTHERN<br/>LIMESTONE<br/>COAST<br/>COUNCIL</b> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Community Engagement<br/>Policy</i></b><br/><i>Policy No. GOVPOL 15</i></p> | <b>Version No:</b>            | 4                   |
|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                  | <b>Responsible Officer/s:</b> | Executive Assistant |
|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                  | <b>Classification:</b>        | Council             |
|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                  | <b>Issued:</b>                | December 2015       |
|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                  | <b>Next Review:</b>           | <b>April 2030</b>   |

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist Council to meet its legislative obligations regarding public consultation by:

- Meeting the requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act) and the Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) published by the relevant Minister.
- Using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process.
- Providing for appropriate participation by the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties.
- Using feedback to enhance decision making.
- Providing information on the reasons for decision or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by the Council, a delegate of the Council or a person exercising power on the Council's behalf, where public consultation is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this policy. A reference in this policy to 'Council' includes a reference to a delegate or other person exercising power on the Council's behalf.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and application of this policy, and where necessary reporting the outcomes of consultations to the Council. The specific delegations made under this Policy are outlined in section 6 of this policy.

This policy does not apply where the Council is exercising powers and functions under other legislation that prescribes its own consultation requirements, such as the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, whereby specific processes take precedence.

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### 3. Definitions

Definitions whether listed or not, are to be taken as consistent with relevant legislation as referenced in section 7.

|                                                    |                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Significant—annual business plan and rating policy | decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates.           |
| Significant                                        | decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area. |
| Standard                                           | decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.                                              |
| Local                                              | decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.                                           |
| Inform                                             | matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision.                                                      |

### 4. Policy

This policy is a statement of Council's general position in relation to community engagement (public consultation), as required under the Act and the Charter.

The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfil the Council's obligations to prepare and adopt a policy under section 50(A) of the Act. The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this policy:

- community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;
- information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;
- participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;
- participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and
- insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

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Council will undertake public consultation in accordance with the Act, the Charter and this policy.

Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this policy in relation to a matter for which it is required by the Act and/or the Charter to undertake public consultation.

However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter. A well-intentioned engagement that does not generate the anticipated level of engagement is not a breach of this policy.

Council may, from time to time, alter or substitute a new policy, following public consultation.

#### 4.1. Public Consultation Categories

The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires public consultation to be undertaken.

The Charter establishes different categories of consultation for matters, as follows:

- **Significant – Annual business plan and rating policy**

- Adopting an Annual Business Plan - section 123(3)(b)
- Changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating - section 151(5)(e)

- **Significant**

- Representation reviews - section 12(7)
- Development and review of Strategic Management Plans - section 122(6)
- Changes to use of differential rating - section 156(14a)(b)
- Revocation of classification of land as community land - sections 194(2)(b)
- Community Land Management Plans - adoption - section 197(1)
- Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - section 198(3)
- Alienation of community land by lease or license - section 202(2)

- **Standard**

- Opening hours and place of principal office - substantial changes - section 45(3)
- Community Engagement Policy - section 50A(6)(b)

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- Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6)
- Access to meetings and documents - section 92(5)
- Power to make orders - section 259(2)(b)

• **Local**

- Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - section 223(1)
- Proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 232(b)

• **Inform**

- Opening hours and place of principal office – minor changes - section 45(3)
- Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council requires that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
- Election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*

The table in Section 5 of this policy sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the requirements of each matter for which public consultation must be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Charter.

#### 4.2. Other Decisions, Activities and Processes

Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate.

Council may undertake community engagement activities for community participation in relation to other decisions, activities or processes of the Council not specified in the Charter at its absolute discretion. However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any such steps in relation to these matters.

### 5. Consultation Strategies

Under the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), the relevant Minister has published a Community Engagement Charter to make clear the requirements under the Act for meaningful engagement between local government bodies and their communities. Council will comply with the minimum mandatory public consultation requirements for each category of matters set out in the Charter.

The following table sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the public consultation requirements in the Act and the Charter.

|                                                                                   |                                                                   |                        |                     |
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In circumstances where more than one engagement activity is specified, there is no obligation on Council to utilise all engagement activities in respect of each Charter requirement.

*Table 1: Engagement Requirements*

|                                                                                                           | Significant – ABP and RP | Significant                   | Standard | Local | Inform |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|--------|
| Consult with whole community                                                                              | *                        | *                             | *        |       |        |
| Inform whole community (or local/ affected community as appropriate)                                      |                          | * (s194, s197, s198 adoption) |          |       | *      |
| Consult with local community (consider best way to reach affected community)                              |                          |                               |          | *     |        |
| Website                                                                                                   | *                        | *                             | *        | *     | *      |
| News publication – Print (if available, not Council)                                                      | *                        | *                             |          |       |        |
| Summary provided in rates notice                                                                          | * (s123(9) final ABP)    |                               |          |       |        |
| Invite submissions (include how to make submission)                                                       | *                        | *                             |          |       |        |
| Seek feedback (consider best way to get feedback, how it will be used and appropriate timeframe)          |                          |                               | *        | *     |        |
| Explain decision making process (what is proposed, why is it proposed, and what is trying to be achieved) | *                        | *                             |          |       |        |
| Summary of feedback considered by Council (before decision made)                                          | *                        | *                             | * (s259) |       |        |
| Minimum Engagement Period of 42 Days                                                                      |                          | * (s13 council type or name)  |          |       |        |
| Minimum Engagement Period of 21 Days                                                                      | *                        | *                             |          |       |        |
| Minimum Engagement Period of 14 Days                                                                      |                          |                               | ✓        |       |        |

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| Hold a Public Meeting (As part of Council meeting or separate)                 | * |               |  |                             |   |
| Invite to present at a Public meeting (As part of Council meeting or separate) |   | *             |  |                             |   |
| Gazette                                                                        |   | * (s12, s13)  |  |                             | ± |
| Minister/ State Approval                                                       |   | * (s12, s194) |  | * (s223 notice to agencies) |   |

± \* s54 EM Vacancy, s56 Special Election, s141 Gifts to Council, s167 Valuations, s192 Land, s208/s210 Roads, s249/s250 By-law

Note: \* Legislated    ✓ Council policy only

*Table 2: Additional Engagement Strategies*

|                                                                   | Relatively Free | Will need budget | Significant programs/ projects only | Discuss with EA |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Social Media                                                      | ✓               |                  |                                     | ✓               |
| Information available at Principal Office                         | ✓               |                  |                                     | ✓               |
| Information available at other Offices (PMCC, Saleyards, Airport) | ✓               |                  |                                     | ✓               |
| Targeted Letters                                                  |                 | ✓                |                                     |                 |
| TV/Radio Promotion                                                |                 | ✓                | ✓                                   | ✓               |
| Your Say                                                          | ✓               |                  | ✓                                   | ✓               |
| Focus Group/s                                                     |                 | ✓                |                                     | ✓               |
| Elected Member Briefing                                           | ✓               |                  |                                     | ✓               |
| Leaflets / Brochures                                              |                 | ✓                |                                     | ✓               |
| Newsletter                                                        | ✓               |                  |                                     | ✓               |
| Community Advisory Groups                                         |                 |                  | ✓                                   | ✓               |

## 6. Responsibilities

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                       |                               |                     |
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Specific engagement activities for any given decision, activity or processes will be determined on a case by case basis, with due consideration to Council's Community Engagement Framework by:

- Council, by resolution;
- the CEO;
- a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
- a delegate with power to make a decision or undertake an activity or process that requires community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.

Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities or engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker.

It is the responsibility of the community, in seeking to make a submission as part of any consultation process, to make those submissions as outlined in the consultation documents, or in writing to Council, addressed to Council's Principal Office:

Southern Limestone Coast Council  
324 Commercial Street West  
(PO Box 724)  
Mount Gambier SA 5290 or  
email: [info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au](mailto:info@dcgrant.sa.gov.au)

Consistent with Council's Privacy Policy (GOVPOL 13), all personal details provided as part of any consultation process, will be omitted from Council reports and submission summaries. Unless otherwise prescribed by legislation, personal details will not be disclosed, without prior consent of the applicant..

## 7. References / Other Documents

References to legislation and/or documents include as amended, supplemented, updated and/or augmented from time to time.

### 7.1. Legislation

*Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)*

*Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*

*State Records Act 1997 (SA)*

### 7.2. Council Policies / Procedures

Community Engagement Framework

Media Communications and Social Media Policy ADMPOL 11

Privacy Policy GOVPOL 13

|                                                                                   |                                                                    |                        |                     |
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### 7.3. Other

Community Engagement Charter (as Gazetted)

## 8. Review

To ensure Council continues to meet legislative requirements and undertakes effective community engagement, this policy will be subject to periodic evaluation and review.

This Policy shall be reviewed by the Southern Limestone Coast Council at a minimum, once within every four (4) year Council term (or on significant change to legislation or other matters which could affect this policy).

| Action              | Date             | Minute Reference |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Adopted by Council  | 21 December 2015 | 15157.1          |
| Amended             | 21 October 2019  | 19144.4.4        |
| Amended             | 18 May 2020      | 20055.8          |
| Amended             | 6 June 2022      | 22149.2          |
| Amended             | 21 October 2024  | 24200            |
| Reviewed            | 15 June 2026     |                  |
| Approved by Council | 20 July 2026     | 26167            |