BRIGHTON COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

DRAFT

Brighton Council

We acknowledge the traditional owners who once walked this country: the Mumirimina people.

The Mumirimina belonged to the Oyster Bay tribe. This was the largest tribe in Tasmanian and covered 8000 square kilometres. Kutalayna levee in Brighton was a significant meeting place where hundreds of generations of Aboriginal families hunted, gathered, corroboreed, camped and traded.

In the course of colonisation, dispossession of the Mumirimina was early, rapid and extensive.

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community today as the continuing custodians of this land, pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Through our words and actions we strive to build a community that reflects and respects the history and hopes for all the people of Brighton.

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Our 2050 Vision

Our place is thriving: a destination for business, learning and creation.

Our home is comfortable: safe, clean and peaceful with services and facilities for all.

Our community is proud: we embrace who we are now, while celebrating our ancient past.

Our Council cares: progressive and consultative, it combines fair rates with great services.

Our opportunities are for all: from the young to the elderly.

Our environment is cherished: we act sustainably and mindful of climate change.

Brighton: We love it.

Why we built a 2050 Vision

In 2020, Brighton Council set out with the whole community to create a bold and optimistic plan for the future of Brighton Municipality over the next 30 years. That 30-year plan is called 2050 Vision.

2050 Vision lays out our shared hopes and goals as a community for the coming decades. It also acknowledges and responds to our current social, environmental and economic challenges.

2050 Vision has a clear focus on the things that Brighton Council has the power to shape and influence. It uses four headings to set out what Council is responsible for: Provider, Regulator, Facilitator and Advocate. Focusing on the four roles that Council has, helps ensure the Vision will be delivered.

2050 Vision is a statement of our collective aspirations for the future. By imagining together how Brighton could be in 2050, we are creating a way to make it happen.

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Cover: Food Hub volunteers.

What is the purpose of this strategy?

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines Council's commitment to engaging the Brighton community and valuing the diverse perspectives, experiences and expertise our community has to offer.

We view community engagement as vital for good governance and leadership, recognising the important role our community plays in shaping the Brighton Local Government Area (LGA).

Council is dedicated to meaningful and equitable community engagement. This strategy details Council's commitments to integrate community engagement into activities, supporting decision-making, relationship building, and community strengthening.

Brighton Council's approach to community engagement is also guided by the Tasmanian Government's Local Government Priority Reform Program 2024-2026. These reforms will mandate a new local government planning and reporting framework, including a legislated community engagement plan.

Community engagement is the responsibility of Councillors, council departments and employees, and also applies to contractors and consultants undertaking work on behalf of Council. To ensure the effective application of engagement processes and principles, the Community Engagement checklist has been developed to provide guidance for Council employees (refer Attachment 1).

The Community Engagement Strategy should be applied at the planning stage of any project or initiative, when a change in service, activities or infrastructure is considered, when an issue is raised and requires a decision or when more information or evidence is required. Engagement may be required at multiple stages within a project, program or development.

Brighton Council takes an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to working with and engaging with community. ABCD emphasises identifying and building upon the existing strengths, skills, knowledge, and connections within a community. It empowers communities to take ownership of their development, rather than relying solely on external resources. ABCD recognises the importance of local relationships in driving community development and connecting individuals and groups. It fosters collaboration among residents, organisations, and institutions within the community.

Our aim for community engagement, is to not only ask 'What do you need or want?' as a community member but 'How do you want to contribute, share your knowledge, bring your strengths to the table and fully participate in decision making and change?'

This strategy does not apply to processes that follow prescribed procedures, such as land use planning applications or other Council procedures, including service requests or complaints.

Council is dedicated to meaningful and equitable community engagement.

What is community engagement?

Community engagement provides various opportunities for public involvement in Council decision-making, relationship building and community strengthening.

Effective community engagement allows Council to make informed decisions at both operational and strategic levels, creating a mutual understanding between Council and the community.

Community engagement is achieved when the community is included and not only feels involved in the process but where relevant is driving the process and leading change.

Some community engagement processes are undertaken to support decision making, some are about relationship building whilst others are focused on community strengthening (or capacity building). Often engagement processes support two or all three of these objectives.

Inform decision making

To provide opportunities for the community to contribute to decision making process.

Build relationships

To build relationships and/or improve relationships with the community.

Strengthen community

To build the capacity of the community on a specific theme or issue to increase knowledge or change behaviours.

This strategy adopts the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum which underpins Council's planning, implementation and evaluation of its community engagement practices.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum demonstrates the possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities across five levels – **Inform**, **Consult**, **Involve**, **Collaborate** and **Empower**.

The table below identifies these levels and outlines the amount of involvement from both Council and the community/stakeholders within each level.

Inform Low level of public engagement		**Involve** Mid level of public engagement		**Empower** High level of public engagement	
	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
Goal	One-way communication to provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has already happened.	Two-way communication process aimed at obtaining feedback on ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform our decision making.	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	Working together to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred collective solutions.	To build the capacity of the community to lead their own plans for change.
Role of the community	***Listen***	***Contribute***	***Participate***	***Partner***	***Lead***
Possible engagement methods	• Advertisements • Brighton Community News • Public Notices • Social Media • Website	• Focus groups • Public exhibition • Surveys/Have your Say	• Workshops • Advisory Committees	• Participatory decision making • Facilitated workshops	• Community panels • Deliberative workshops • Training events • Co-creation workshops

Brighton Youth Action Group

Tea Tree Community Association

Our commitment to the community

Council's Community Engagement Strategy outlines our commitment to plan, develop, implement, evaluate and continually improve community engagement processes.

When engaging the community we will be open and accountable in our decision making process. Council commits that:

1. **We will ensure that the purpose of our engagement is clear, relevant and the methods used are well suited to generate highly effective community engagement.**
2. **We will provide information that is clear, easy to understand and accessible.**
3. **We will proactively engage with our community in an ethical manner using a range of methods and enable everyone to have a voice on matters of importance to them. We will provide engagement opportunities that are mutually respectful, undertaken in reasonable timeframes and with a shared understanding of how the input will inform decision making processes.**
4. **We will value all participants' knowledge, expertise and experiences, acknowledging that everyone has different views and needs.**
5. **We will undertake evaluation processes to continually improve our approach to community engagement.**
6. **We will report back to our community in a timely manner about how their input was considered and influenced the final outcome.**
7. **We will use information provided by community engagement to advocate on behalf of our community to relevant parties.**
8. **Where possible, we will give our community the power to make decisions on matters that directly impact their health and wellbeing.**

These commitments are built upon the core values identified by the International Association of Public Participation[1].

1. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an international organisation advancing the practice of public participation.

Why we engage . . .

Community engagement is a collaborative process that connects Council with the community in a mutually beneficial sharing of new ideas, skills, knowledge, expertise and experience.

Effective and meaningful community engagement has real benefits for both Council and the community. Identifying the priorities, needs and aspirations of the community will help Council enhance its strategic planning and service delivery. A regular two-way conversation ensures Council is transparent, accountable and informed in its decision making process, aligning with our core values of ***community; vision; integrity and respect***.

Where appropriate, community engagement should go above and beyond legislative requirements. The information and knowledge gained through hearing a range of community perspectives assists Council to make informed decisions; develop strong partnerships and create sustainable outcomes.

The community also benefit from participating in engagement activities. Participation can create a sense of belonging and connection; increase community involvement; unite and empower individuals and communities; and lead to greater community ownership and resilience. The knowledge, expertise and experience gained also provides Council with a foundation to advocate to other relevant parties, including Federal and State Government bodies, on issues that are important to our community and are out of its direct control.

In summary, there are a broad range of benefits to effective and authentic community engagement, both to Council and the community. Some of these benefits include:

- Better understand the needs and priorities of our diverse community and stakeholders
- Fostering strong relationships and partnerships within our community
- Providing a valuable source of evidence-based information which gives a wider perspective on issues and supports Council's future planning and service delivery activities
- Supporting transparency and accountability, integrity is demonstrated, and trust is built between all parties
- Ensuring the community's right to assist with democratic processes
- Ensuring informed decision making occurs and issues are addressed
- Helping to inform and assist with advocacy
- Leading to more sustainable outcomes
- Building community resilience and capacity leading to community empowerment

Who we engage . . .

Brighton is a diverse community with a mix of people from all walks of life, who all have unique experiences, interests and expertise. Our engagement process will identify community and stakeholders who are impacted by or interested in a project or Council decision.

For the purpose of this strategy:

- The Brighton community is defined as individuals or groups who live, work, play, visit, study, invest in or pass through the Brighton LGA.
- The term 'stakeholder' defines our community groups or individuals who are directly impacted by, involved with, or interested in, Council's decision making, relationship building or community strengthening processes.

Café Connections

Our stakeholders include:

- Ratepayers and residents
- Business community
- Community service providers
- Sports clubs
- Community/social groups
- Environment and climate groups
- Arts and culture groups
- Children and young people
- Seniors
- Emergency services
- Government agencies
- Local, State and Federal MP's
- Councillors
- Employees, contractors and consultants
- Council committees
- Youth groups
- User groups
- People from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Religious groups
- LGBTIQA+ community
- Indigenous community
- Media
- Neighbouring councils
- Schools and students
- Volunteers
- Volunteer organisations
- Philanthropic organisations

When we engage ...

Community engagement should take place at the planning stage of any project or initiative, when a change in service, activities or infrastructure is considered, when an issue is raised and requires a decision or when more information or evidence is required.

Engagement will often be undertaken at multiple stages within a project, program or development. In essence, community engagement should be ongoing, involving continuous collaboration and conversations between Council and community at all levels and in multiple ways that best suit how community members want to engage and communicate based on the topic or issue at hand.

Circumstances that trigger engagement activities:

Council will promote opportunities for the community to actively participate in the following Council processes:

- Where a proposed change to Council activities or strategic direction may significantly affect the community in terms of economy, lifestyle, environment, wellbeing or amenity of the municipality.
- Determining key long-term visions for Council.
- Introducing a new service, discontinuing an existing service or substantially changing or reviewing a service that may significantly affect how services are provided.
- Proposals for changing the way in which public space looks, is used or enjoyed.
- The community raises an issues with Council for a decision (or outcome) and there are likely to be competing community interests.
- Planning and development of major projects and capital works, including public buildings, centre or other infrastructure.
- Strategic planning and urban development/ redevelopment proposals, such as structure plans, that may significantly alter the existing amenity or characteristics of a geographic area.
- Any circumstance where Council and community needs more information or evidence to make an informed decision.

Mandatory engagement

Whilst the *Local Government Act 1993* and a range of other legislation set out minimum requirements for some specific consultations, each engagement process needs to be considered on its individual basis and merits. In many instances Council will go above and beyond the minimum requirements to gain a strong understanding of our community's wants and needs to ensure we are achieving the best possible outcomes for our community.

Circumstances where Council's engagement with the community will be limited

There are times when Council's level of engagement with the community and key stakeholders will be limited. In certain circumstances, Council may only be able to inform the community and stakeholders of Council's decisions and actions.

Examples include when:

- Council is not the lead agency
- an immediate resolution is required
- specialist or technical expertise is the critical determinant
- an initiative involves confidential or commercial information
- there are clear and defined legislative responsibilities that must be met
- developing or reviewing internal policies and procedures
- there is risk to public safety

How we engage . . .

There is no one-size fits all approach to community engagement activities.

A variety of methods will be required to cater for the different purposes of engagement as well as the broad range of groups and individuals in the community.

Relationship to Brighton Council Strategic Plan and 2050 Vision

Community engagement processes support the delivery of all outcome areas identified in the *Strategic Plan 2023–2033* and *2050 Vision*.

Brighton Council **Strategy 2023–2033**

Brighton Council

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, Council has prepared this draft strategic plan for 2023-2033.

Council invites submissions which will be considered before adopting the plan. Submissions are to be sent to Council's General Manager by XXXX

Our purpose: To create a thriving place with opportunities for all.

Our values: Community, Vision, Integrity, Respect

Our goals:	GOAL 1: Inspire a proud community that enjoys a comfortable life at every age	GOAL 2: Ensure a sustainable environment	GOAL 3: Manage infrastructure and growth effectively	GOAL 4: Ensure a progressive, efficient and caring Council
Our strategies:	1.1 Engage with and enable our community 1.2 Build resilience and opportunity 1.3 Ensure attractive local areas that provide social, recreational and economic opportunities 1.4 Encourage a sense of pride, local identity and engaging activities	2.1 Acknowledge and respond to the climate change and biodiversity emergency 2.2 Encourage respect and enjoyment of the natural environment 2.3 Demonstrate strong environmental stewardship and leadership 2.4 Ensure strategic planning and management of assets has a long term-sustainability and evidence-based approach	3.1 Implement strategic long-term asset management plan aligned to long-term financial plan 3.2 Infrastructure development and service delivery are guided by strategic planning to cater for the needs of a growing and changing population 3.3 Community facilities are safe, accessible and meet contemporary needs 3.4 Advocate and facilitate investment in our region	4.1 Be big picture, long-term and evidence-based in our thinking 4.2 Be well-governed, providing quality service and accountability to our community 4.3 Ensure strong engagements and relationships to shape the agenda and advocate for our community 4.4 Ensure financial and risk sustainability 4.5 Ensure Council is a desirable place to work with exceptional workplace culture, attracting and retaining high-performing, committed and fulfilled staff

Brighton Council **Values**

Brighton Council

Our core values and what they mean:

Community

- We believe in our community
- We are part of our community
- We listen and engage
- We are diverse and proud
- We are supportive and kind

Vision

- We think strategically and long-term
- We are evidence-based
- We are innovative and open-minded
- We try new things and take some risks
- We are stewards and legacy-makers

Integrity

- We do the right thing
- We live our values
- We are accountable
- We work as a team
- We learn from mistakes and celebrate successes

Respect

- We treat people well
- We expect to be treated well
- We are inclusive
- We are helpful
- We care

Brighton going places

Community Engagement Checklist

Project Name:

Project Officer:

Department:

Engagement dates: **From** **to**

Brief description of the project

What is the purpose and timeline?

Key issues

Identify any current/historical issues that may have an impact on the project.

Community Engagement objectives

What information do you need? What will you do with it?
What outcomes are you after by this engagement?

Authorisation of Community Engagement:

- ☐ Council Resolution (date of Council meeting)
- ☐ Annual Plan (identify reference)
- ☐ Legislative requirement (List Act/Regulation)
- ☐ Other (e.g Project Management)

What is the level of engagement?

☐ INFORM

One-way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.

☐ CONSULT

Two way communication designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.

☐ INVOLVE

Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.

☐ COLLABORATE

Working together with stakeholders to understand all issues and interests and to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.

Identify stakeholders to be engaged

Council stakeholders	☐ Office of the CEO Mayor and Councillors Council Committees
	☐ Others (list if applicable)
Community stakeholders	☐ Brighton wide
	☐ Local area/s (list)
	☐ Business community
	☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
	☐ Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALO) community
	☐ Families and children
	☐ Young people
	☐ Service networks
	☐ Persons living with disabilities and their carers
	☐ Other government agencies
	☐ Community associations/clubs/organisations
	☐ Older people
	☐ Other: (list)

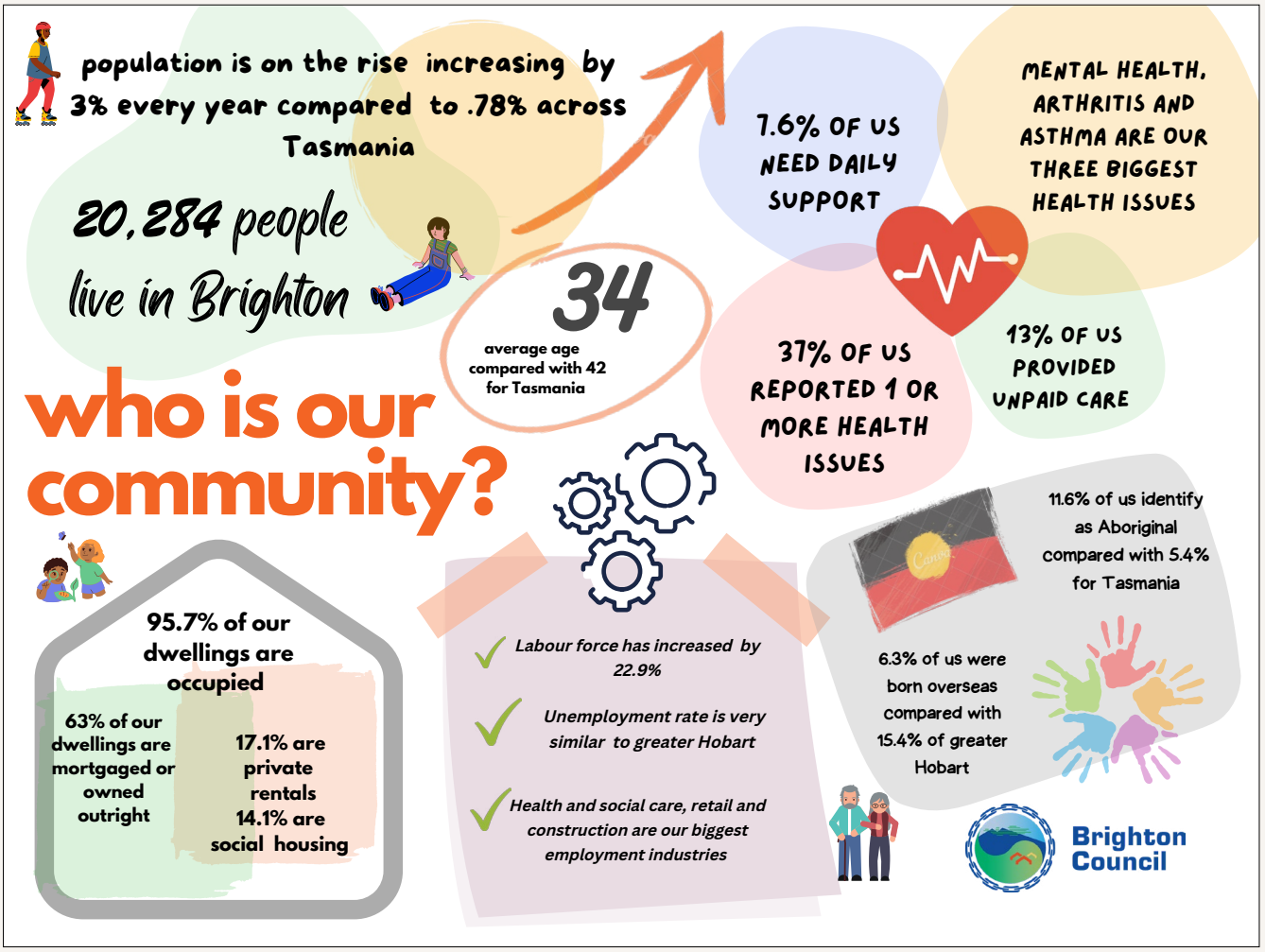
Engagement Method and Communication Plan

	Stakeholder	Engagement Method	Timeframe	Responsible Officer/s
		Pre-Engagement Phase		
What needs to occur prior to engaging stakeholders?				
		Engagement Phase		
How are you going to engage stakeholders?				
		Post Engagement Phase		
How will you report back to stakeholders?				

Evaluation

Identify measures to evaluate engagement (eg attendance number, number of response, diversity etc) consider the tool for the evaluation

Appendix 1: Who is our community?



ABS data

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Translating and Interpreter Service
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National Relay Service (NRS)
13 36 77

Brighton
going places