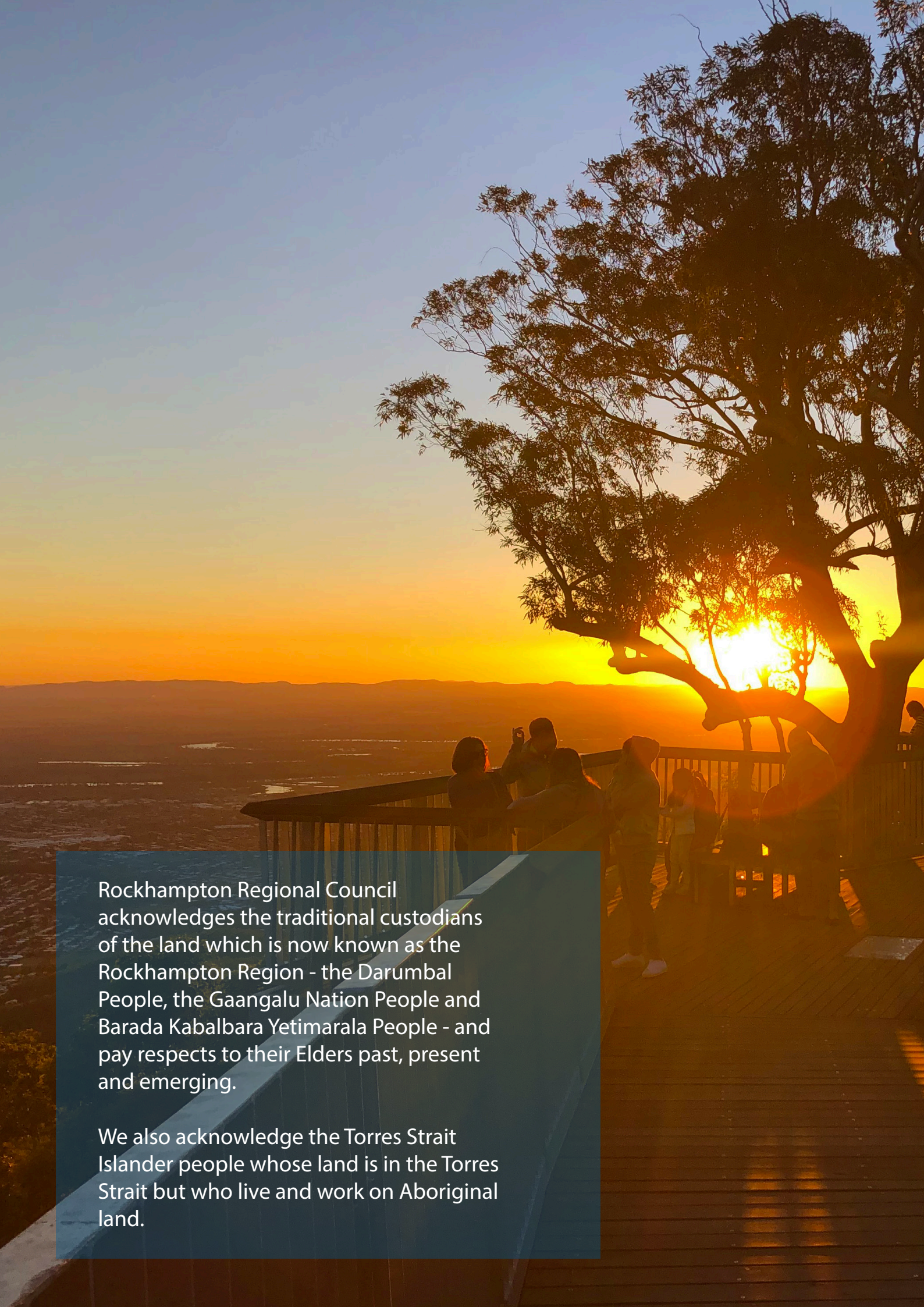
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Rockhampton Regional Council



Rockhampton Regional Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land which is now known as the Rockhampton Region - the Darumbal People, the Gaangalu Nation People and Barada Kabalbara Yetimarala People - and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge the Torres Strait Islander people whose land is in the Torres Strait but who live and work on Aboriginal land.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Tony Williams
Mayor

The Rockhampton Region is a vast community but no matter where you live, its residents are the beating heart of our slice of paradise. Our Council places our community and stakeholders at the centre of our organisation and we want to partner with our whole community to ensure its voice is heard when Councillors are making decisions.

To do that, we need to ask you, we need to hear from you, and then we need to act on your feedback. We need your ideas, your aspirations and your ideas for the future of our region.

This Engagement Framework aims to guide exactly how we do that. It is about a top-down approach to embedding a culture within Council that engagement is at the centre of everything we do that affects our community.

Our Council's commitment is to provide the community with opportunities to have your say and give you the confidence that we are listening to you when we ask. We need your voice to help shape our community into a bigger and better Rockhampton Region.

It is by no means an easy or quick task but it is one we will achieve together with many small steps. This framework is the first step and begins the task of seeing a planned and consistent approach to consultation embedded across the organisation. You can make a difference, but only if you work with us and contribute to the discussions we will be having in the future.

I would encourage every member of our community, every resident and stakeholder group, to engage with us in a meaningful, constructive manner. As a Council, we want to see more people have their say and we want to increase our collaboration with the community in our decision making.

It is my genuine hope that we go on this journey together and at the end we are seeing positive outcomes for both the community and for Council. Unless our residents care a whole lot, we will never improve. I know our community cares, and Council looks forward to making our Region better with your help and support.

INTRODUCTION

The Rockhampton Regional Council Community Engagement Framework has been prepared to better engage with the Rockhampton Region community. It is built around the internationally recognised IAP2 Engagement Framework and recognises that community engagement is the responsibility of all Council staff, and that good practice considers the needs of those whose Council decisions affect.

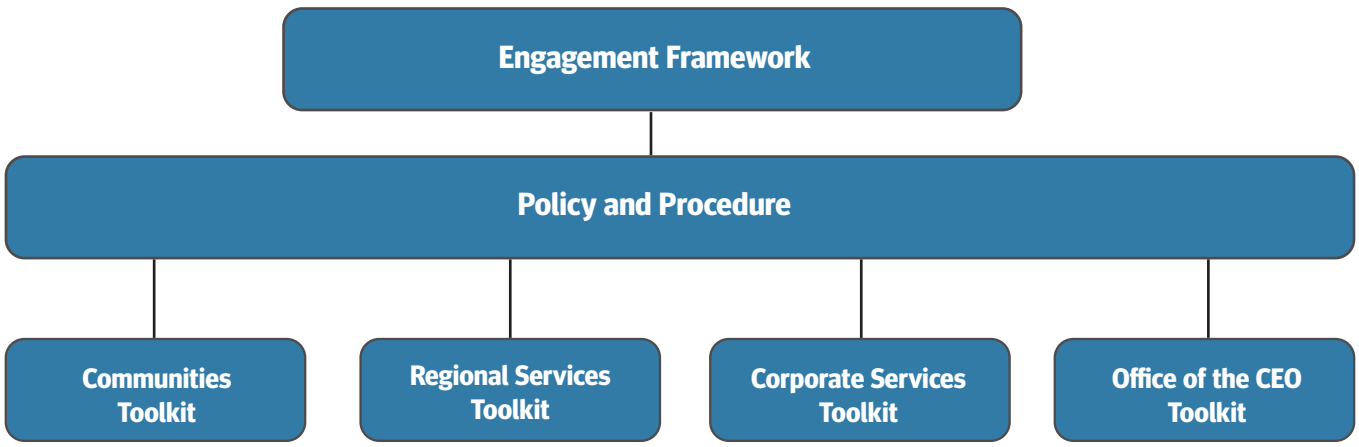
It also recognises there is a growing trend in Local Government engagement to prioritise face-to-face contact where possible; and to ensure the community has multiple opportunities for engagement because our communities are diverse and their ability to engage can be limited by a range of social, physical, and geographic barriers.

The Framework is based on a set of principles and recognises that engagement is a planned practice which should be tailored to particular circumstances, taking into account factors such as complexity, risk, significance, sensitivity, timing, or opportunity.

It is applicable to the array of engagement processes that shape programs, services and infrastructure provided by Council, and plans that guide Council's work. The Framework enables Council to engage with the community in a strategic, ongoing, flexible and locally appropriate way.

The Framework is supported by a policy, procedure and toolkits which are tailored to the needs of each department. It aligns with our commitment as set out in the Rockhampton Regional Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027.

"We will engage with the community to provide facilities that meet their needs, and have Service Delivery Standards and measures for key areas."



OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

ACCOUNTABLE

We are proactive and take personal responsibility.
We are clear on our expectations, if in doubt we seek clarification.
We do what we say we will do and deliver our promises on time.
We hold ourselves and others accountable.
We take personal accountability for our own and others safety.
We trust individuals to do their job.

CUSTOMER FOCUSED

We are timely and responsive to our customers and community.
Our decisions and actions have the customer and community at the front of mind.
We engage with and listen to the customer.
We support each other to achieve the best outcome for the customer.

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Leaders coach, support and listen to their people.
We support and develop our people to ensure they can reach their full potential.
We will seek and provide feedback with the constructive intent.
Development is focused on technical and behavioural capability.
People are valued and treated with respect regardless of position.

ONE TEAM

We work together to find solutions and opportunities.
We openly share knowledge, information and resources in order to deliver the best outcome for the Council.
We talk with each other and seek ways to collaborate.
We understand our shared goals and how each area fits together.
We develop solutions with the big picture in mind ensuring we encourage collaboration and consider the impact on others.Communication and engagement are priorities at all levels.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We take the time to explore better ways to do things.
We listen to and genuinely value ideas from all staff.
We accept mistakes will happen and we ensure we share the learnings.
Continuous improvement is valued as an opportunity not an expense.
We will be open to change, have an open mind and maintain a positive attitude.

IAP2 CORE VALUES

As well as adhering to our values, Rockhampton Regional Council seeks to adhere to the values of the International Association of Public Participation or IAP2.

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 throughout the world.

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed the IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes.

The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. The core values are reflected in a number of key pieces of policy and legislation, locally, nationally and globally.

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.

4. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.

6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

WHAT IS COMMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is a fundamental part of Council's decision-making process, where working alongside organisations, stakeholders and community can assist to solve problems and/or shape decisions.

It helps inform Council's vision, strategic direction, planning and decision making, while also providing Council with a better understanding of community priorities.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the international member association which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community and stakeholder engagement. Council has adapted the IAP2 definition of community engagement for the purpose of this framework.

*Based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Uses of Engagement.

WHY DO WE ENGAGE?

Good community engagement is the basis for understanding decisions, sharing perspectives, improving outcomes and building trust between Council, the community, and other partners.

Some benefits of community engagement include but are not limited to:

- building an evidence base to inform decision making
- understanding of the needs and priorities of the community
- building community's confidence and trust in Council
- identifying and mitigating potential risks
- strengthening stakeholder relationships
- building community capacity, cohesion, and connection

HOW WILL COUNCIL ENGAGE?

Five core principles drive Council's approach to engaging the community. Principles guide us by providing direction to commence engagement and can help resolve challenging issues during an engagement process.

This approach aligns with the *Local Government Act 2009 Section 4* and the following principles recognise that each engagement has a distinct purpose, with a unique set of stakeholders and specific circumstances.

Principle	Our Commitment
Authentic and Meaningful	• The purpose of the engagement and the scope of what's being decided including which aspects the community can influence is and clearly communicated • Community input will not be sought if a decision has already been made • The community's input is considered in the final decision or outcome
Proactive and Timely	• We will be proactive to ensure the community is consulted in a timely manner • Adequate notice and time for the community response will be provided
Tailored and Flexible	• We will ensure that the engagement plan is tailored to particular circumstance as identified in the planning, particularly when there is complexity, risk, significance or sensitivity • We will monitor and assess the engagement and adapt if necessary to ensure the project aligns with these principles
Inclusive and Accessible	• Barriers to participation will be identified and removed or mitigated • Participants taking part in the community engagement will be provided reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement
Transparent and Informative	• We will use language that is clear and relevant • We will inform participants of the level of influence they have, as described in the IAP2 spectrum • We will close the loop by communicating to people involved in the process and to the broader community with an explanation of how community input influenced the decision

WHEN COUNCIL WILL ENGAGE

Deciding when to engage about a project or an issue can be influenced by several factors including resources, level of impact, significance, complexity, or risk.

The following examples of when Council may engage include but are not limited to:

- changes to a community service or facility
- proposing a change in strategic direction, policy, or plan
- developing a project or initiative that would impact the community
- during the planning and delivery of major infrastructure projects
- resolving community concerns eg. managing vandalism or antisocial behaviour
- encouraging behaviour change eg. waste behaviours
- strengthening relationships with First Nations groups to build stronger communities

Engaging with the community is one of the guiding principles for councils under the *Local Government Act 2009 Section 4* and is an important part of local democracy. Some engagement processes are already prescribed by legislation and Council's practice will always meet these minimum requirements.

WHEN COUNCIL WON'T ENGAGE

Where there is no scope for community input, Council will only inform the community of decisions or actions. A mechanism to inform Councillors will be formalised in the processes which flow out of this framework.

The following examples of when Council won't engage include but are not limited to:

- risk to public health and safety or emergency response
- during caretaker period preceding a Council election
- an immediate decision is needed
- the decision relates to confidential or commercial information
- changes to internal operational processes
- where there are legal constraints
- when it is deemed financially unviable / there is no other option

THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1 Plan

- Understand the drivers and strategic links that have triggered the need for engagement
- Set purpose, objectives, timeline, and scope
- Identify and analyse stakeholders, levels of engagement
- Identify risks and resources and possible barriers
- Confirm roles and responsibilities
- Design communication and engagement plan using the most effective methods and tools

2 Implement

- Launch and implement communication and engagement plan
- Monitor, respond and adapt plan if necessary

3 Review

- Analyse the data to identify themes, priorities and preferences
- Collate community and stakeholder input from each engagement activity and identify any limitations
- Close the loop with the stakeholders and participants and communicate next steps of the project

4 Evaluate

- Debrief, review and document learnings
- Evaluate success of engagement process

THE ROCKHAMPTON REGION COMMUNITY

A region defined by its natural environment, Rockhampton straddles the Tropic of Capricorn in Central Queensland and is known as the Beef Capital of Australia. It is home to over 80,000 residents and is blessed with over 300 days of sunshine each year.

The Rockhampton Region is a major economic and lifestyle hub for Central Queensland. Our vast geographic area, and diverse natural environment, supports a variety of urban and rural communities, businesses, industries, and livelihoods.

Our diverse community is made up of individuals and groups who may be connected by geography, interest, identity, or affiliation.

HOUSEHOLDS
66.3% Families
29.9% Lone persons

3.2 Average number of people per household

PRIVATE DWELLINGS
Approx 37,000

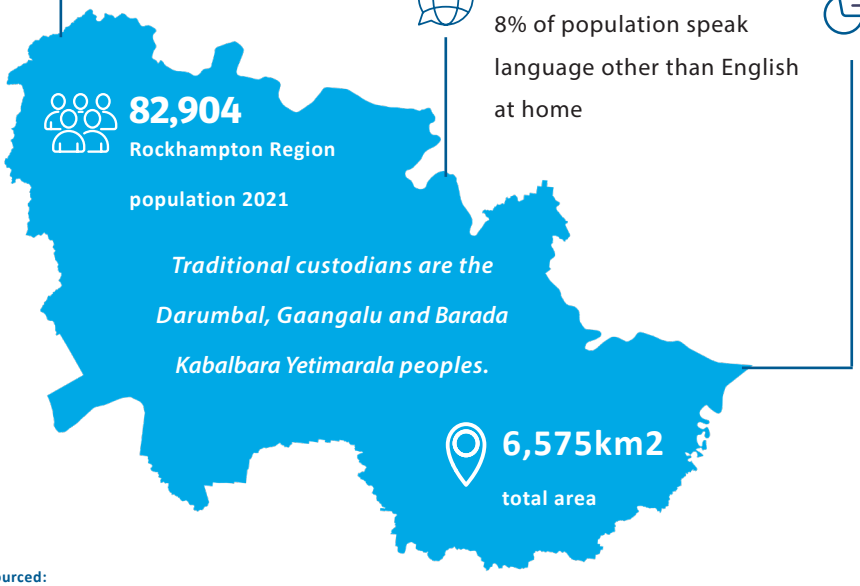
EDUCATION
15.2% of population are tertiary educated

BACKGROUND
9.2% of population have Aboriginal and/or Torres Straight Islander background

LANGUAGE
8% of population speak language other than English at home

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT
15% Healthcare & Social Assistance
11% Retail Trade
10% Education & Training
7% Accommodation & Food Services
7% Construction

NEED FOR ASSISTANCE
7.5% of population need help in their day to day lives due to disability



Sourced:

ID Informed Decisions (2022), https://profile.id.com.au/rockhampton, Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data (2021),https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA36370

IDENTIFYING OUR STAKEHOLDERS

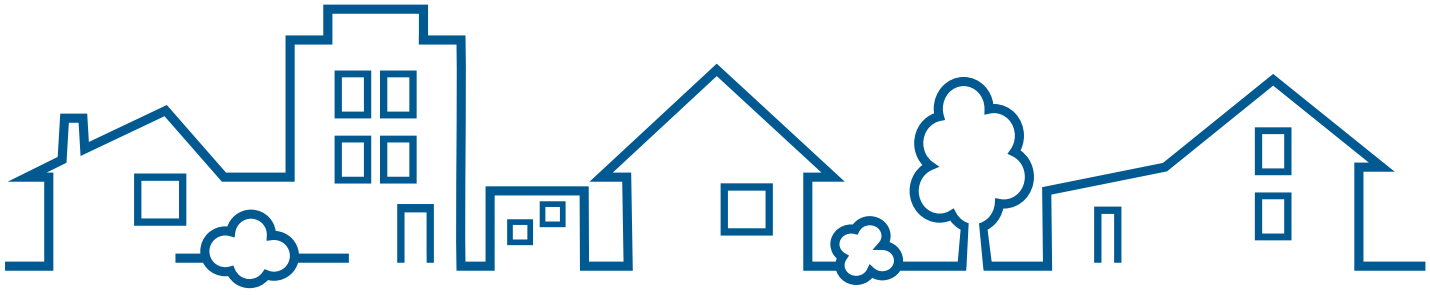
Council will conduct a thorough stakeholder identification analysis to determine who will be impacted, or may have interest in a decision.

Opportunities for participation will be promoted to identified individuals, groups and organisations, ensuring that an appropriate sample of the population is represented.

Council will provide inclusive opportunities for engagement so that the community's values, needs, and expectations are fairly represented.

Internal and external stakeholders who may be identified include but are not limited to:

- Community groups
- Youth
- Rate payers
- Residents
- Children and families
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Seniors
- People with a disability
- Service/ facility users
- Business and Industry
- Agencies
- Ethnic groups
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTQI
- Students
- Visitors
- NGO's and service providers
- Other Councils
- Councillors
- Internal stakeholders across Council departments
- Volunteers
- Media
- Sporting, leisure and recreational clubs and groups
- State and Federal Government (including local MPs)



LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

The level of engagement will depend on resources, level of impact, significance, complexity, risk or sensitivity and will be determined according to:

- What participants expect
- What participants can and can't influence (the negotiables)
- What assumptions or constraints are impacting the process

**This table is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of engagement.*

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/ or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Role of the Community	**Listen**	**Contribute**	**Participate**	**Partner**	**Lead**
Our Approach	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Possible Engagement Activities	Media Release Fact Sheet Posters/Flyers Signs Newsletters Council Website	Surveys Events/ pop ups Online tools EHQ Social Media Public Meetings Interviews	Workshops Deliberative Polling Visioning sessions	Citizen Advisory Groups Consensus Building	Delegated Decision Making Co-design

DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement - The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), defines community engagement as: "Any process that involves the community in problem solving or decision making and uses community input to make better decisions.

Council - Rockhampton Regional Council

Stakeholders - IAP2 define stakeholders as any individual, group of individuals, organisations, or political entity with a stake in the outcome of a decision.

Public - IAP2 define the public as those stakeholders who are not part of the decision-making entity or entities.

Deliberative Engagement - IAP2 describe deliberative engagement as bringing together a group of people who represent the community. The group of community members form a "mini public" in age, gender, race, language, income, education or other criteria to reflect the community.

PRIVACY

Rockhampton Regional Council take privacy obligations seriously. Personal information is information we hold which is identifiable as being about you.

Our collection, use and disclosure of personal information for the purpose of community engagement is regulated by the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)* and the Information Privacy Principles. Information on privacy rights can be accessed through the Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/(External link)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Council must act in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019* and conduct all community engagement activities in a way that respects, protects and promotes the human rights of individuals.

CONTACT

Email: engagement@rrc.qld.gov.au
Phone: 07 4932 9000
Website: https://engage.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/

Rockhampton Regional Council
232 Bolsover Street
Rockhampton QLD 4700

Rockhampton
Regional Council