

REPORT on DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT, AUGUST 15 2011 to Basin Villages Forum
CHRIS GROUNDS

There have been two Council committee meetings since my report to our last meeting in July.

The Community Draft of this policy is now very near completion. Work on sections dealing with Purpose, Principles and Support was completed. The Draft has been provided in 'graphic arts formatted' style to assist the committee to visualise an appropriate presentation other than repetitive pages of text.

In the last two meetings some extensive discussion and work has involved concepts of Implementation, Empowerment and Evaluation.

The Draft now includes recognition that all levels of community engagement will empower the community and that Council has a responsibility to foster access to knowledge, understanding and skills in their community engagements.

Major discussion and debate occurred with the concept of Evaluation, especially in terms of Evaluation of community engagement activities providing the basis for planning for change and improvement. All community engagement activities are to be evaluated to some degree and a record maintained. It has been a specific suggestion from the community representatives that this must be included to ensure progress in the future of community engagement.

Major discussion and work with various models of Implementation of community engagement has also occurred.

The draft policy recognizes five levels of engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. The Goals and Promise of Council with each of these is defined. The committee is now working on a final recommended model which sets out what things will be done to implement community engagement based on High and Low Priority matched to City wide or Locality application, e.g. Local Environment Plan : High Priority – City wide, St Georges Basin Development Pollution: High Priority – Locality wide; and so on. It is anticipated the sub-committee report can be put in place quickly and the draft finalised.

I think it can be said at this point, that the community representatives have made substantial contributions to the Policy, some of which will actually be innovative for Council if accepted by Councillors. All deliberations have involved participation with the General Manager [Russ Pigg] and Assistant General Manager [Rob Donaldson] and this has worked really well.

One more meeting and one more report to you and the Draft will be ready.