



Community Engagement Feedback Report

Draft Community Engagement Policy

Consultation dates: 23 April to 15 May 2026



Contents

1.0 Background	3
2.0 Engagement Snapshot.....	4
2.1 Engagement communications	5
3.0 Consultation Response Overview.....	6
4.0 Self-nomination to participate	11
5.0 Consultation images.....	11

1.0 Background

We sought feedback on Council's Draft Community Engagement Policy (the Policy).

The Draft Policy was developed to be in line with the State Government *Community Engagement Charter* (the Charter) and the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act).

Why we reviewed the Policy

On 11 December 2025, the State Government approved the new Charter, which provided updated expectations for how councils across South Australia design, deliver, and report on community engagement. The Charter refers only to consultations that are required under the provisions of the Act, it does not apply to discretionary consultation activities undertaken by councils.

A new section within the Act (Section 50A) was created requiring councils to adopt a community engagement policy that sets out the principles, procedures, and practices that the council will apply when undertaking community engagement on matters prescribed under the Act, consistent with the provisions of the Charter.

In conducting the consultation on the Policy, the opportunity was seized to seek feedback on a broader set of consultation issues which, while relevant to the Policy, will have applicability to the broader review of Council's community engagement strategy in the next council term.

Levels of engagement within the Charter

The new Charter sets different levels of required engagement based on how important a decision is by grouping decisions into different categories.

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(4a)(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)
- Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6)
- Access to meetings and documents - section 92(5)
- Power to make orders - section 259(2)(b)

Local

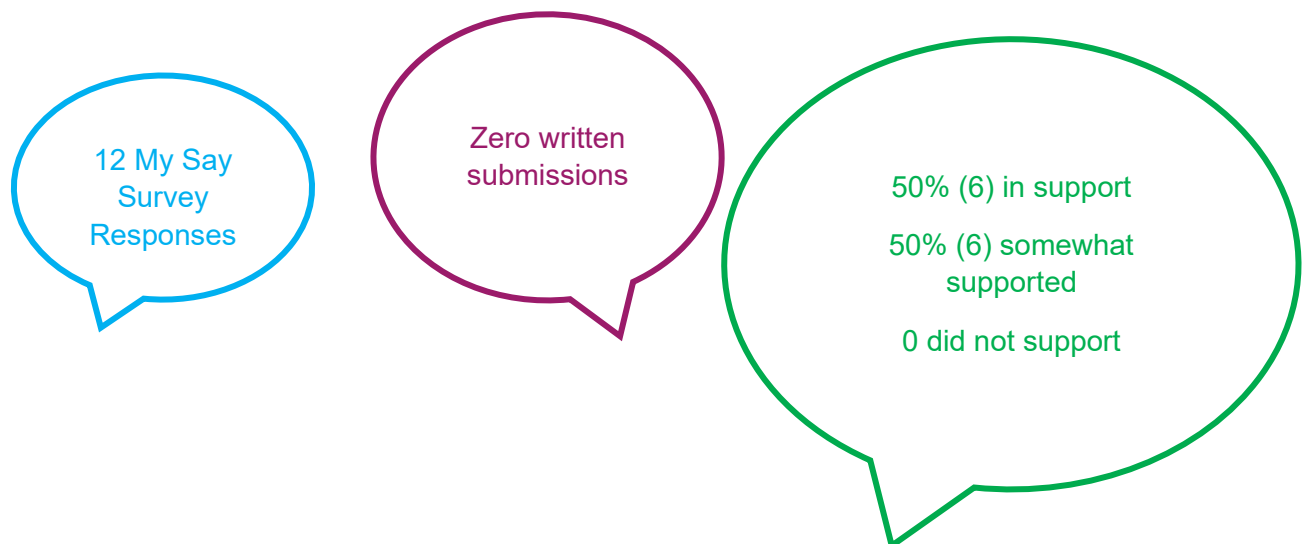
- Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available - section 223(1)
- Proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 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 ensures that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
- Election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*

2.0 Engagement Snapshot

During the consultation period from 23 April to 15 May 2026 **a total of 12 responses** were received through the My Say platform.



2.1 Engagement communications

Audience	Channel	Results
Residents/ Ratepayers	Council website - Latest news article on home page of corporate website (space permitting)	Duration of consultation
	Social media (Instagram and Facebook) – 23 April and 13 May	Facebook - Views: over 1.2k - Link clicks: 6 - Interactions: 5 Instagram - Views: over 230 - Reach: 152 - Interactions: 1
	Council office displays - entryways	Duration of consultation
	Community noticeboards	N/A
	My Say e-newsletter subscribers	23 April - Sent to 2,332 subscribers (45.6% open rate)
	Corflutes (large waterproof signage on site)	N/A
Adjoining Property Owners / Business Owners	N/A	N/A
Government and key agencies	N/A	
Section 41 Committees / Advisory Committees/ Audit and Risk Committee	N/A	
Community groups, resident and ratepayer associations	N/A	

Media	Fleurieu Sun, The Southern Argus	 ALEXANDRINA COUNCIL Community Consultations Council seeks community feedback on the following three (3) consultations. Please direct all written submissions via mysay.alexandrina.sa.gov.au, email alex@alexandrina.sa.gov.au or by post to the Chief Executive Officer, PO Box 21, Goolwa SA 5214. For further information, contact Council on 8555 7000. Draft Community Engagement Policy Council seeks feedback on the Draft Community Engagement Policy. The Policy has been developed to be in line with the State Government's Community Engagement Charter and the Local Government Act 1999. Submissions will be accepted by Council until 5 pm, Friday 15 May 2026. Future Planning for Goolwa Main Street Trees Council seeks feedback on the six (6) proposed options to plan for the Cadell Street avenue of trees. This follows consistent community feedback that the trees along Cadell Street (from Gardiner Street to Goolwa Terrace) are causing nuisance to both property and infrastructure. Community feedback will help to define the next steps for management of these trees. Submissions will be accepted by Council until 5 pm, Friday 22 May 2026. Draft Recreation Open space and Sport Strategy 2026-2036 (ROSS) Council seeks feedback on its first ROSS 2026-2036. The draft Strategy aims to guide the future development of recreation, open space and sport facilities across the Council district. Submissions will be accepted by Council until 5 pm, Friday 5 June 2026.
Internal staff	Connect Intranet Announcement	Duration of consultation
Council Members	Briefing to Council Members via Council Report, CM Portal, email, Council Information Session	Council Decision to proceed to community engagement 20 April 2026

3.0 Consultation Response Overview

3.1 Evaluation

Overall submissions were constructive and generally recognised the Policy as a positive starting point, but noted it largely reflects minimum legislative requirements. A consistent theme was the need for:

- stronger transparency
- clearer information to support informed participation
- greater confidence that community feedback meaningfully influences decisions.

Feedback also highlighted opportunities to improve accessibility and engagement through broader communication channels, clearer language, and more inclusive approaches.

Overall, respondents supported the intent of the Policy, while highlighting the need to strengthen its implementation and build greater community confidence in the process.

3.2 Summary of feedback by question

Do you support the Draft Community Engagement Policy?

Yes	50%	6
No	0%	0
Somewhat	50%	6

Feedback directly related to the Draft Policy

Key point	Officer comment	Times heard
Participants felt the policy only meets minimum requirements and would like Council to include approach for non-legislated consultations. Call to state what consultations are above minimum requirements.	This is useful feedback however the purpose of the Policy is to align with the provisions of the Charter, which only relates to mandated consultation. The broader review of Council's community engagement strategy in the next council term will likely result in a document that describes the approaches to mandatory and discretionary consultation.	4
Request to include overarching statement advising Policy includes only minimum requirements and where appropriate, Council will consider more than required.	Clause 3 of the Policy deals with matters of scope and it clearly states that the policy relates to public consultations required under legislation (i.e. mandated).	1
Appreciation for Council's efforts	Noted	1
Didn't understand Draft Policy	Noted, it is a relatively technical document because it relates to specific provisions of legislation. To make it more accessible clauses 1-6 have been rewritten in plain English to aid comprehension.	1
Provide critical information and clarity around rationale for consultation	Clause 5 - Policy Statement has been revised to incorporate the points raised.	1
Council provides superficial summaries of information	Clause 5 - Policy Statement has been revised to incorporate the points raised.	1

Further comments

Key point	Officer comment
Decisions are made regardless of feedback	Community engagements need to be genuine but also to clarify that community feedback is an input into the decision making process.
Planning legislation requirements are inadequate	Consultations are largely mandated in the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> .
Reading is not preferred learning style for information	Council is striving to make its information more accessible through initiatives contained in its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).
Concerns with Facebook and AI submissions	Council is aware of the potential for consultations to be impact by artificial intelligence methods however the My Say app does reduce the potential for exploitation. Council does not include Facebook commentary as formal feedback.
The call for transparency in communications	This is recognised in the Community Engagement Policy.
Consultations should not be undertaken during the Christmas holiday period	Some consultations may be enhanced by also considering perspectives from visitors or holidaymakers, where appropriate. Where consultations do need to occur over holiday periods, the consultation period is usually extended to maximise the potential for participation.
Where is consultation with First Nations?	Council Community Engagement Plans make provision for bespoke consultation with First Nations groups, as appropriate.
How do we engage with groups that may not engage through the formal process?	In addition to the more standard approaches, Community Engagement Plans can include more bespoke approaches for engaging with harder-to-engage groups, such as youth.

How do you find out about Council's community consultation?

Rank	Channel / Source	Percentage
1	Community groups on Facebook	41.67% (5)
1	Word of mouth	41.67% (5)
3	Browsing the My Say website	33.33% (4)
3	Council's website	33.33% (4)
5	The Fleurieu Sun	25.00% (3)
5	Posters on community noticeboards	25.00% (3)
5	Newsletters published by community/local neighbour groups	25.00% (3)
8	Council's Facebook	16.67% (2)
8	My Say Alexandrina e-newsletter	16.67% (2)
8	Alexandrina Alive (quarterly newsletter)	16.67% (2)
8	Council office posters and digital displays	16.67% (2)
8	Through Council Members	16.67% (2)
8	Other - Strathalbyn Chat (Facebook Group) - Reposted onto another Facebook page	16.67% (2)

**Do you have any other ideas how we can share community consultations with you?
E.g. My Local Services app, other mainstream media, direct participation in
community organisations or local groups, specific locations for signage.**

Ideas:

- Contact community pages directly when there is a new consultation and ask for help to promote
- Social media works best
- My Local Services App
- Poster on the external library door and above the return chute Comments:

What stops or prevents you from providing feedback on community consultations?

- Perceived tokenistic consultation and lack of genuine community consideration (3)

- Not hearing about it in time/ not knowing about it (3)
- Short consultation timeframes (2)
- Lack of time to complete submission (4)
- Insufficient information and not supported by rationale/ explanations (3)
- Too many consultations at once (1)

Other comments:

- Prefer short surveys
- Transparency and accountability are important.
- Council needs to provide better background information to enable community to understand what the issues are.

Thinking about how we run community consultations, how much do you agree with the following statements?

Statement	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
Information is easy to understand	58.33% (7)	25.00% (3)	16.67% (2)
I can participate in consultations in a way that suits me	66.67% (8)	25.00% (3)	8.33% (1)
I understand how my feedback will be used	16.67% (2)	25.00% (3)	58.33% (7)
Council explains decisions clearly	8.33% (1)	25.00% (3)	66.67% (8)

Do you have any additional suggestions on what council can do to improve how we consult with you?

- Council must clearly show that it values community consultation and carefully considers and responds to community input. (2)
- Follow the feedback (1)
- Some elected members have shown a concerning tendency to disregard clear community feedback in favour of unsupported agendas. (1)
- There have been efforts to undermine community groups involved in the consultation process. (1)
- The presentation of feedback by prioritising positive, then neutral, then negative comments can misrepresent the overall sentiment when negative feedback is more substantial. (1)
- This approach may create a perception of bias towards the administration's preferred outcome rather than accurately reflecting community views. (1)
- Prefer face-to-face consultation (1)
- Post consultation updates in a variety of forums including face to face including rationale (1)

- It is unclear what weight is given to community input and how it is balanced against other decision-making factors. (1)
- The community possesses valuable expertise that, if engaged earlier through collaboration and partnerships (such as with universities), could help Council develop more comprehensive, evidence-based decisions without significantly increasing cost or complexity. (1)

4.0 Self-nomination to participate

It is important to acknowledge that involvement in the public consultation process is voluntary, with participants self-nominating to contribute. As a result, the feedback gathered should not be regarded as statistically representative of all perspectives.

5.0 Consultation images

N/A