



**Community
Participation and
Engagement Policy**
DRAFT



Translating and Interpreting Service

English:

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call Central Goldfields Shire Council on 03 5461 0610. Our business hours are Monday to Friday 9am-4pm. You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides. Visit: www.tisnational.gov.au

Greek:

Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, καλέστε την TIS National στο 131 450 και ζητήστε να καλέσουν το Central Goldfields Shire στον αριθμό 03 5461 0610. Οι ώρες λειτουργίας μας είναι Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Σχετικά με τις υπηρεσίες που παρέχονται από την Εθνική Υπηρεσία Διερμηνείας και Μετάφρασης, μπορείτε να επισκεφθείτε και τον ιστότοπο της υπηρεσίας στη διεύθυνση: www.tisnational.gov.au

Tamil:

உங்களுக்கு ஒரு மொழி பெயர்த்துரைப்பாளர் தேவைப்படின. 131 450 ல் தேசிய மொழிபெயர்ப்பு மொழி பெயர்த்துரைப்புச் சேவையை அழைத்து. (இளநசவ லழரச யபநஉல யெஅந) (இளநசவ லழரச யபநஉல phழநெ ரெஅடிநச) அழைக்கும்படி கூறவும். ஏங்கள் பணியக நேரங்களாவன (இளநசவ லழரச டிரளிநெளள hழரசள).

நீங்கள் எமது தேசிய மொழிபெயர்ப்பு மொழி பெயர்த்துரைப்புச் சேவையின் இணையத் தளத்தில். தேசிய மொழிபெயர்ப்பு மொழி பெயர்த்துரைப்புச் சேவை வழங்கும் சேவைளின் தகவல்களைப் பெறலாம். றறற.வளையெவழையெட.பழள.யர

Traditional Chinese:

若你需要口譯員，請撥打TIS National電話131 450並請他們轉接 Central Goldfields Shire 的電話03 5461 0610。我們的工作時間是 Monday to Friday 9am-4pm。你也可以瀏覽TIS National 網站瞭解TIS National 的服務資訊，網址：www.tisnational.gov.au

Dutch:

Als u een tolk nodig hebt, bel dan TIS National (nationale vertaal- en tolkdienst) op 131 450 en vraag hen om de Central Goldfields Shire Council (raad van het zelfstandig gebied van Central Goldfields) te bellen op 03 5461 0610. Onze openingstijden zijn maandag tot vrijdag van 09.00 tot 16.00 u. Op de website van TIS National staat ook vertaalde informatie over de diensten die TIS National levert. Ga naar: www.tisnational.gov.au

German:

Wenn Sie eine Verdolmetschung brauchen, rufen Sie bitte TIS National unter 131 450 an und fragen Sie nach der Central Goldfields Shire Council, Rufnummer 03 5461 0610. Unsere Geschäftszeiten sind montags bis freitags 9:00 bis 16:00 Uhr. Übersetzte Informationen über die Dienstleistungen von TIS National finden Sie auf der Website von TIS National. Besuchen Sie www.tisnational.gov.au.

Tagalog:

Kung kailangan mo ng interpreter, mangyaring tawagan ang TIS National sa 131 450 at hilingin sa kanila na tawagan ang Central Goldfields Shire Council sa 03 5461 0610. Ang aming mga oras ng opisina ay Lunes hanggang Biyernes 9:00 ng umaga hanggang 4:00 ng hapon. Maaari mo ring bisitahin ang website ng TIS National para sa naisalin na impormasyon tungkol sa serbisyong ibinibigay ng TIS National. Bisitahin ang: www.tisnational.gov.au

Central Goldfields Shire Council Community Participation and Engagement Policy

Date created:

13 November, 2020

Version:

Draft for community consultation

Authors:

Manager Community Engagement, Kate Bucknall
and Working for Victoria – Communications Officer, Jo Postlethwaite.

Disclaimer: *The information contained in this policy is for information purposes only and recommends that readers exercise their skill and care to ensure all relevant representations, statements and information are correct, and obtain their own independent advice before acting on any information contained in or in connection with this report. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information is correct, Kate Bucknall, Joanne Postlethwaite and Central Goldfields Shire Council will not accept any liability for any loss or damages that may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon this policy by any third party. The information in this report is current at the date of publication.*

Cover photo: *Opening of the Youth Hub at the Maryborough Town Hall in February, 2020.*

Directorate:

Chief Executive Officer

Responsible Manager:

Manager Community Engagement

Implementation date:

March 2021

Date adopted:

TBA

Review Date:

March 2022

Acknowledgment of Country

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges and extends appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the traditional owners of the land that we are standing on today.

We pay our respects to leaders and elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung people.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorry for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Contents

Strategic Risk Assessment	4
1. Introduction	5
2. What do we mean by ‘meaningful participation and community engagement?’	6
3. Our commitment to our community	7
4. Our 8 Guiding Principles	8
5. Who We Engage	9
6. When We Engage	10
7. Deliberative engagement	11
8. Levels of participation	12
9. Community Engagement Resources	13
10. Community Engagement Methods	14
11. Study 1: Local knowledge helps us build understanding	15
12. Monitoring and Evaluation	15
13. Responsibilities	15
14. Definitions and acronyms	16
15. References	17
16. Acknowledgments	18

Strategic Risk Assessment

- Business Continuity
- Community Wellbeing
- ✓ Government Policy Changes
- Climate Change Adaptation
- ✓ Financial Sustainability
- ✓ Information Management and Protection
- Property and Assets
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Legislative Requirements
- ✓ Community Engagement

1. Introduction

Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to listening to and understanding our community's aspirations, values and needs because it improves council's planning and delivery of services to achieve the best outcomes for the community.

Achieving the best outcomes for the community also means having regards to the long-term and cumulative effects of decisions.

We aim to 'TIE' into our daily interactions, methods of transparent, inclusive and meaningful community and stakeholder participation and engagement, and to embody our three core values, ensuring all voices are heard, including those experiencing barriers to participation.

This purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance and support Councillors and Council staff in the performance of their duties in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

Figure 1: Central Goldfields Shire Council 'TIE' interactions



Our Values

Community and customer focussed	We ensure the community and our customers are at the centre of everything we do. We communicate openly and honestly and take responsibility for our actions.
Collaborative and inclusive	We work together to deliver the best outcomes for our community. We appreciate and learn from each other's expertise and respect different views and perspectives.
Challenge the status quo	We explore new and innovative ways to work and deliver services and programs. We try new things and learn from our mistakes.

2. What do we mean by ‘meaningful participation and community engagement?’

This is how Central Goldfields Shire Council enables the community and other stakeholders to have their say on planning and decision making, and builds their capacity to be more effective in engaging with Council.

Meaningful participation and engagement informs and strengthens the community’s capacity to drive planning and decision making and to take ownership of it. This results in more sustainable outcomes and importantly underpins transparency, integrity and trust in Council processes.

As the municipality grows, the diversity of lifestyles, interests and needs is also increasing and we need to provide opportunities for new voices in the community to be heard.

It is also important there is continuity and sustainability of good engagement and flexibility to tailor-make opportunities for community and stakeholder groups to participate.

Good community engagement allows Council to advocate effectively on behalf of the Central Goldfields community and other stakeholders, with external agencies and other tiers of government. The Community Engagement Framework (below) identifies the contributing factors to good community engagement.

Figure 2: Central Goldfields Community Engagement Framework.



3. Our commitment to our community

This Policy is Central Goldfields Shire Council’s commitment to our community and stakeholders. It outlines Our 8 Guiding Principles (see p.8) guiding engagement practice of Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers in their roles, by enhancing the integrity of the participation process. This Policy also underpins the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2022.

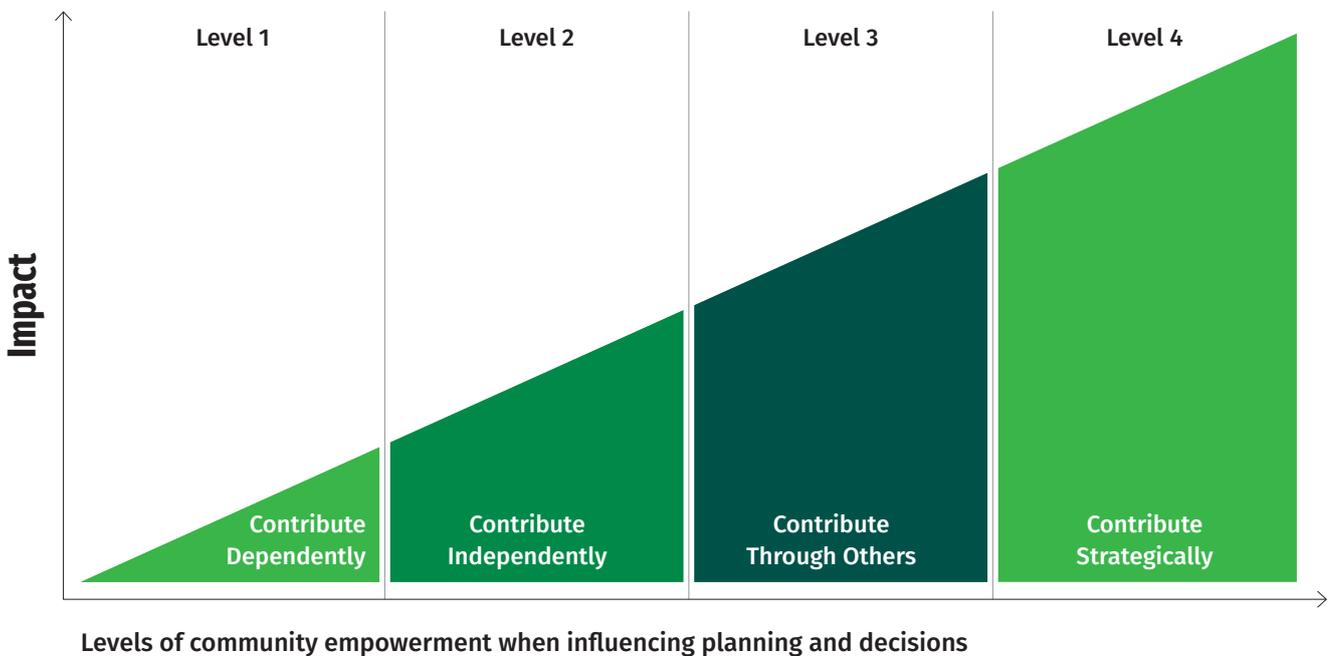
This Policy helps Council meet legislative requirements and is aligned with best practice principles and ethics, including the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement (2015). However, the scope of this Policy is not limited to this standard with many other reports from experts in the field of community engagement informing this document.

Council also recognises that “what may work well for one group or situation may not work for others” (Morris. R. 2012, p48) and can be barriers for participation. We must be flexible in our approaches and look to local knowledge to guide us to be more understanding of our community’s needs, creating “new and innovative methods to build relationships and thus new approaches to creating systematic change” (King and Cruickshank, 2012).

Community and stakeholder influence

The level of community and stakeholder influence on planning and decision-making rests a lot on Council’s ability to enable the community: improving engagement methods; resources; and addressing knowledge gaps. Council’s commitment is to measure and continuously improve ways to increase community capacity so that; “Community can drive policy development rather than policy driving community development” (King & Cruickshank. 2012, p10).

Figure 3: Central Goldfields Shire Council ‘Four Levels of Community and Stakeholder Contribution Model’ used to measure engagement and impact of community influence.



4. Our 8 Guiding Principles

These principles guide Council how to deliver best practice planning, decision making and evaluation activities and place the community at the centre of everything they do.



5. Who We Engage

Anyone who may be affected by or have an interest in Council decision making are who we engage. This includes those who may find it more difficult to participate due to barriers such as access to transport and the internet.

Figure 5: 'Who we engage' infographic.



6. When We Engage

Community engagement is considered invaluable in the way it enhances Council's capacity to make well-informed, accepted and sustainable decisions. It does not however, replace the final decision-making power of Councillors or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The results of community engagement activities will also be balanced against the evidence provided by professional staff.

Figure 6: 'When we engage' infographic.



7. Deliberative engagement

Issues and decisions that have a high impact on the community is where ‘deliberative engagement’ is used. A deliberative approach involves much discussion and time to understand the issues, options and consider multiple points of view before coming to a judgement. These processes require the highest level (Level 4) of community and stakeholder engagement and often must meet specific legislative requirements under the Local Government Act, 2020.

Figure 7: Central Goldfields Shire Council Deliberative Engagement Process.

DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



A list of the deliberative processes presently required for high level community engagement under the Local Government Act 2020, include:

- Development or review of the Community Vision (s 88)
- Preparation and adoption of the Council Plan (s 90)
- Development, adoption, and review of the Financial Plan (s 91)
- Development, adoption, and review of the Asset Plan (s 92)
- Electoral structure review (s 16)
- Governance rules (s 60)
- Proposing and making a local law (s 73)
- Budget or Revised budget (s 95 & 96)
- Compulsory acquisition of land (s 112)
- Selling, exchange or lease of land (s 114 & 115)

8. Levels of participation

There are different ways that Council engages with the community. Sometimes it's to just to advise of times and dates of events and meetings, other times the opinions of the community and stakeholders are needed.

The public's role in any community engagement program is dependent on the goals, time frames, resources, and issues which may be of concern, particularly how they may directly or indirectly impact the community and other stakeholders.

To guide these interactions Council has adapted IAP2's *Public Participation Spectrum* five levels of engagement: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower.

The table below demonstrates how we will work to consult, act and report back to the community at each level and some local examples are provided.

Figure 8. Levels of Engagement Participation adapted from IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (reproduced with the permission of IAP2 Federation).

Levels of Engagement		Recent Examples
EVALUATE	Providing the community with information & educational materials.	Weekly newspaper advertisement, Website & Social Media
CONSULT	Opportunities for the community and stakeholder to participate in Council decision making and/or researching their opinion or perspective.	'Have Your Say' portal, Information Sessions & Online surveys
INVOLVE	Enable participatory process that help Council & the community identify concerns, issues and aspirations.	Listening Posts & Economic Development Recovery Taskforce
COLLABORATE	Working together with the community to develop ideas, innovations and recommendations. Advocating on their behalf to a third party	'Go Goldfields' Collaborative Table, Maryborough Skate & Scooter Park Project
EMPOWER	Placing the final decision in the hands of the community and encouraging them to lead the initiatives.	Community Township Plans

9. Community Engagement Resources

The following suite of resources are available to support the implementation of this Policy:

Central Goldfields Shire Website

The Central Goldfields Shire website provides a central space for the sharing of information about community engagement opportunities across Council, providing updates, a consultation register and key dates. It also provides a section for online discussion. The 'Have your Say' section of Council's website is available to view at: www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

Central Goldfields Shire Engagement Toolkit

The Toolkit is a planning resource and provides a logical and accountable process for community engagement.

It includes a best practice model called the 'Engagement Checklist' (McRae and Bonnitcha, 2020), developed for rural and regional Victorian by Rural Councils Victoria, which is also based on the IAP2 QA standard.

The Engagement Checklist provides the framework for the delivery of deliberative engagement and includes six stages: prepare, frame, design, execute, report and evaluate.

This is supported by internal training.

Figure 9: Engagement Checklist. (Adapted and reproduced with permission from Projectura and Rural Councils Victoria).



Online Communications Policy

The Online Communications Policy outlines the responsibilities of Council staff, Councillors and contractors with regard to online media usage in an official capacity.

Central Goldfields Community Voice Panel

The Community Voice Panel is a database of people with an interest in the decision making of Central Goldfields Shire Council. They provide insights into community sentiments and support for existing or proposed policies, programs and services.

The Community Voice Panel is invited to complete surveys, and from time to time to participate in face-to-face engagement and online-engagement activities on important issues affecting our community.

The Community Voice Panel is recruited through an expression of interest process. Membership aims to be representative of the broad Central Goldfields community and include people from a range of ages, household types, geographic locations and cultural backgrounds.

Members are required declare any real or potential conflicts of interest and may choose to opt out at any time. The group is reviewed annually.

Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees consist of representatives from Council, community, government, community groups and other stakeholders. They provide expert advice, feedback and recommendations to Council on specific issues.

Examples of these committees are: The Audit and Risk Advisory Committee, and Township Tree Advisory Committees.

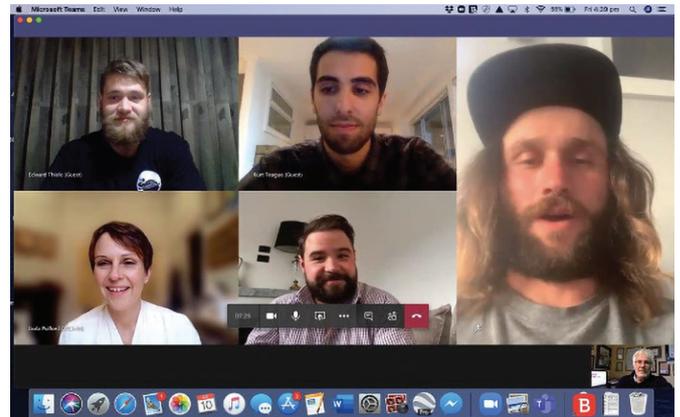


10. Community Engagement Methods

There are a broad range of methods Council can use when engaging with the community and other stakeholders. Some of these will be new methods, such as the use of online forums, and others will have been used for many years already. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the methods that can be used:

- Workshops, community meetings and local events
- Stakeholder meetings and forums
- Public exhibitions and submissions
- Central Goldfields Shire website and social media
- A dedicated online forum
- Virtual focus groups
- Community and stakeholder reference groups
- Advisory Committees and Steering Committees
- Drop-in sessions
- School workshops
- Business forums
- Surveys – online and paper-based
- Mail-outs and signage
- Customer service counters
- Community Liaison Groups
- Stakeholder interviews
- Media releases and newspaper advertisements
- Less formalized 'get togethers'

Council will consult with the community about what methods they would prefer to use. One method is not better than another, but the aim is to choose the method/s which most effectively engages with the impacted communities.



“Let people engage
in the process ‘in their
time and comfort zone.’”

— Morris, R. (2012)



11. Study 1: Local knowledge helps us build understanding

Children connect with and contribute to their world

Kerri Douglas from the *Dja Dja Wurrung* community chatted with the kinder Kookaburra, as they were unable to meet (face-to-face) due to COVID-19 restrictions. We were all honoured with her welcoming us to Country as we continued to explore our understanding of the *Dja Dja Wurrung* People.

What a joy to join together with our familiar *'Wominjika'* greeting and consider the other words we have been practicing of the *Dja Dja Wurrung* language; *'Burrrp, Bakarrra, Barrrring, Dinrra'* (heads, shoulders, knees & toes touched as the musical tune guided).

There was opportunity to ask Kerri questions and the Kookaburras learned that the didgeridoo is called a *'yidaki'*. Kerri shared the importance of kinship as our letter of the week, 'K', was connected to the security we all feel in family.

With everyone using their sticks, including Kerri, we tapped our percussion instruments in joyful song- wonderful extension of the program investigation of what an 'orchestra' is.

'Triganin' Kerri, the Kookaburras are looking forward to chatting time again on Zoom.

– Wendy Powell, Central Goldfields Shire Kindergarten Education Leader (Powell, Wendy. 2020).

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Community engagement activities will be monitored for effectiveness through both qualitative and quantitative measures, including before the engagement process and afterwards, and this feedback provided to the community:

- Number of community engagement activities conducted
- Participation numbers
- Informal and formal feedback captured from participants
- Online engagement activity, including number of visitors, demographic information of visitors, document downloads, video views and comments
- Social media statistics
- External expertise evaluations to remove bias

This information will be used to refine and develop new community engagement methods, as a resource for staff and the community, and to minimise over duplication. It is stored in a centralised Council database for ease of accessibility for all staff.

13. Responsibilities

All Central Goldfields Shire Council Officers are responsible for implementing this Policy, however some teams have specific responsibilities.

The **Executive Team and Leadership Group** has overall responsibility for delivery.

The **Community Engagement Team** is responsible for leading and facilitating. They will:

- Develop and maintain the Community Engagement Toolkit
- Coordinate the Community Voice Panel
- Actively promote community engagement across Central Goldfields Shire
- Support engagement activities
- Provide and support ongoing training for staff
- Work with departments to formulate clear and effective media strategies to leverage good engagement outcomes



14. Definitions and acronyms

Term	Definition	Source
Act	Local Government Act 2020	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/local-government-act-2020/003
CALD	CALD is the acronym for 'culturally and linguistically diverse'. There are some aged care facilities which offer CALD specific services. They may have staff that speak a foreign language, organise specific cultural activities or meet spiritual needs.	https://www.agedcareguide.com.au/terms/
CEO	Chief Executive Officer includes an Acting Chief Executive Officer	Central Goldfields Transparency Policy
Community	Municipal community - members of the public who are typically not part of the decision-making entity or entities in a locality.	IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement
Core values	Central Goldfields Shire Council's intent to create a vibrant, thriving, inclusive community and achieve the best outcomes for them.	Central Goldfields Shire Council Website
Deliberative	Engagement that authentic and transparent and is grounded in the 5 principles contained in the Local Government Act 2020: defined, objective relevant and timely, representative, supportive and ensures influence of community and stakeholders.	Community engagement – A guide to community engagement in rural and regional Victoria, 2020: https://media.ruralcouncilsvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/06144245/Community-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf
Djandak	Country of the Djaara people of the area	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Djaara	Traditional owners of the area through bloodline and kinship.	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Dja Dja Wurrung	Traditional owners of the land of the Central Goldfields Shire	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Engagement	A planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of the members of the community, stakeholders, or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome.	IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement
Guiding Principles	IAP2 core values which define the quality (best practice) throughout the process of community and stakeholder engagement.	IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation	Available at: http://www.iap2.org.au
Martinga Kulinga Murrup	Ancestral Spirits of the Dja Dja Wurrung people	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Municipal Community	People who live in the municipal district of the Council; people and bodies who are ratepayers of the Council; traditional owners of land in the municipal district of the Council.	Central Goldfields Shire Public Transparency Policy
Participation	The process that involves the community in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses the community to make better decisions.	IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement
Stakeholders	Any, individual, group of individuals, organisation or politics entity with an interest or stake in the outcome of a decision	IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement

15. References

Related Procedure

Central Goldfields Shire Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2022.
Central Goldfields Shire Community and Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit.

Documents

- Central Goldfields Shire Engaging Central Goldfields (2018) – A Community Engagement Framework.
- Central Goldfields Governance Rules (2020)
- Central Goldfields Shire Public Transparency Policy (2020)
- Central Goldfields Privacy Policy (2020)
- Central Goldfields Shire Service Charter (2018)
- Central Goldfields Shire (2019). Vision, Purpose and Values. Available at: <https://www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/Council/About-Council/Our-Organisation/Vision-Purpose-and-Values>
- Powell, Wendy. (2020) 'Children Connect With & Contribute to Their World' Facebook, Central Goldfields Shire Workplace (accessed 5th August 2020) Available at: <https://centralgoldfieldsshirecouncil118.workplace.com/>

Legislation

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 2004
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Public Administration Act 2004
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Road Management Act 2004
- Subordinate Legislation Act 1994

Other

Age Care Guide Website. Available at: <https://www.agedcareguide.com.au/terms/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-cald>

IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) AIP2 Published Resources – Spectrum and quality assurance webpage. Available at: <https://www.iap2.org/page/resources> (accessed 30th July 2020).

IAP2 Australasia. (2015) Quality Assurance Standard For Community and Stakeholder Engagement. Available at: <http://www.iap2.org.au>

King and Cruickshank. (2012) *Building capacity to engage: community engagement or government engagement?* *Community Development Journal*, Oxford University Press.

McRae and Bonnitcha. (2020) *Rural Councils Victoria Community Engagement – A guide to community engagement in rural and regional Victoria*. Community Engagement Toolkit (accessed 13th August 2020). Available at: <https://media.ruralcouncilsvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/06144245/Community-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf>

Morris, R. (2012) *Community Engagement in Rural-remote and Indigenous Local Government in Australia*, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology, Sydney.

The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2016). *Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan* (accessed 13th August 2020). Available at: https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/47482/Victorian-Aboriginal-and-Local-Government-Action-Plan-Web-LR.pdf

16. Acknowledgments

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation: Representative organisation for the traditional owners of the area.

International Association of Public Participation Federation: Community engagement peak body responsible for endorsing the international standard for public participation practice and education.

Local Government Victoria: State government department for implementing the Local Government Act, 2020.

Rural Councils Victoria: A local government representative body representing 38 rural councils in Victoria.

Australian Government Department of Home Affairs Translating and Interpreting Service.

Translations Australia: multilingual typesetting services.