

GAWLER RIVER FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Adelaide Hills Council
Adelaide Plains Council
The Barossa Council
Town of Gawler
Light Regional Council
City of Playford

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P O L I C Y D O C U M E N T

Public Consultation

Strategic Reference	
File reference	GRFMA, Admin, Policy
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Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 s50
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	

Introduction

The Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority (GRFMA) is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between constituent councils and the affected community within the flood plain of the Gawler River.

In carrying out its consultation process, the GRFMA will apply the following principles:

- Constituent council members and members of the community have a right to be informed about issues affecting their area from a flood management point of view and to provide input to influence GRFMA decisions about these.
- Community interest will vary depending on the issue and the number of people affected, and GRFMA's level of consultation will reflect this.

- Community involvement in GRFMA decision making should result in greater confidence in the GRFMA and responsive decision making.
- GRFMA decision making will be open, transparent and accountable.

Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the GRFMA meets its legislative obligations in regard to public consultation by:

- Using appropriate and cost-effective methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each consultation topic
- Identifying the level of impact on the community and key stakeholders
- Informing and involving the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties (underpinned by a Communication Strategy)
- Using feedback to enhance decision making.

Scope

This policy applies to GRFMA Board Members sitting as the Authority, contractors, agents and consultants acting on behalf of the GRFMA.

The Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of the Public Consultation Policy, establishing the consultation level, reporting outcomes of the consultations to the GRFMA, reviewing the value of the policy, and determining elements within that process where GRFMA has delegated responsibility.

Policy Statement

The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfils the GRFMA's obligations under section 50(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*. Section 50 provides that:

- The GRFMA must set out the steps that the GRFMA will follow in cases where the Local Government Act requires consultation on a matter, and
- The GRFMA may set out the steps that the GRFMA will follow in other cases involving the Authority's decision-making.

In addition, under the Local Government Act the GRFMA has the following obligations where it is required by law to follow its public consultation policy.

- GRFMA must provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions regarding relevant matters
- GRFMA must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area and on the Authority's website, describing the matter under consideration and invite interested persons to make submissions within a period (which must be at least 21 days) stated in the notice
- GRFMA must consider any submission received from the public during the prescribed consultation period.

GRFMA may, from time to time, alter this policy or substitute it with a new policy. In the instance that any significant changes are being proposed to the public, the GRFMA must submit the proposal to a public consultation process.

Other sections of the Local Government Act also refer to consultation requirements, and in some instances set out what a Council must do. See **Specified consultation requirements** below.

Specified consultation requirements

Under the Local Government Act, GRFMA is required to undertake particular types or levels of consultation (as a minimum) in relation to the following:

- Determining the manner, places and times of its principal office (section 45)
- Adopting or varying a public consultation policy (section 50)
- Altering the Code of Practice relating to the principles, policies and procedures that GRFMA will apply to enable public access to Board and Committee Meetings, their minutes and release of documents (section 92)

For details of the specific requirements under these sections, refer to the specified sections of the Local Government Act.

The GRFMA charter also separately provides consultation requirements in relation to:

- The Authority shall have a rolling Business Plan in respect of the ensuing three years. Prior to setting the draft budget each year, the Authority must review the Business Plan in conjunction with the Constituent Councils. The Business Plan must be updated to ensure it presents a plan for the ensuing three years.
- The Authority must provide a copy of its budget to each Constituent Council within five business days after adoption.
- The Authority must submit to each Constituent Council for approval, any proposed amendment to the budget that provides for an additional contribution by the Constituent Councils.
- The Authority must submit its annual report on its work and operations including its audited financial statements, to each Constituent Council before 30 September of each year.

Other consultation and engagement methods may include:

- Publication in a regular newsletter
- Letters to residents and other stakeholders
- Written notification to landowners who may be adversely impacted by any proposal that the Authority is consulting on.
- Other direct mail publications or letterbox drops, as appropriate
- Advertising in media outlets as deemed appropriate
- Media releases to appropriate media outlets and community groups
- Community forums and stakeholder meetings
- Direct consultation with community representative groups
- Relevant information relating to any consultation process provided on the GRFMA website.
- Active and passive use of Council's website and social media
- Use of a community email database
- Customer Surveys and / or on-line engagement techniques such as Q & A; Quick Poll Stories
- Fixed displays, e.g. community notice boards
- Drop in sessions
- Community group representations to respective Constituent Council workshops

Discretionary Consultation

The types of factors that might be considered in determining whether consultation is warranted include:

- Number of stakeholders likely to be impacted
- Scale of likely impacts
- Likely community interests

Constituent Councils

Constituent councils can also add value to the Authority's consultation exercises and are encouraged to assist, subject to their agreement, with distributing consultation related information (e.g. on their websites and social media platforms or by displaying printed materials at their public venues).

For clarity, Authority initiated consultation exercises will be led by the Authority and not constituent councils in the interests of maintaining a clear separation between the organisations.

The Authority will notify constituent councils about consultation exercises at least one week before consultation commences.

Further information

This policy is available for inspection and download, free of charge, from the GRFMA website:

www.gawler.sa.gov.au/grfma