



Engagement Guidelines

Auckland Council's guide to involving communities in our projects and decisions.

December 2022



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Section 1: Wāhanga 1

Introduction

Your engagement project

You have an important project that needs the input of Auckland's diverse communities to ensure success.

But how and when should you engage our diverse communities?

These guidelines are here to guide you as you:

- Assess if and when to engage
- Develop a high-level strategy for your engagement project
- Plan out the actions required.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to engagement. We hope these guidelines help you to tailor your engagement approach to your specific project.

Reading this document: We recommend you read these guidelines on your council computer to access the council-hosted hyperlinks embedded throughout the document.

An overview of what you need to do

To plan, prepare and deliver your engagement project, we recommend you:

1. Print [Section 3: Wāhanga 3 - The Engagement Performance Framework](#) for a checklist of the actions you need to complete.
2. Save your own digital copy of either the Large Engagement Plan Template (for projects such as Bylaw Reviews) or the Small Engagement Plan Template (for smaller projects like a playground upgrade).
3. Work through the checklist in Section 3 from start to end, recording your ideas in your Engagement Plan as you go.

Allow 5 to 10 months to plan, deliver and review your engagement

Most engagement projects take between 23 to 46 weeks (5 to 10 months). The time will vary depending on the complexity, importance and resources available. Very few projects will take less than 5 months, so make sure you allow for this. Some longer-term projects will last longer than a year, such as engagement during an infrastructure project.

Much of the time will be spent on the phases that lead up to and include your public engagement:

1. **Plan – whakamahere.** Make it count. Allow 4 to 8 weeks.
2. **Prepare – whakarei.** Make it accessible. Allow 6 to 8 weeks.
3. **Engage – tūhono.** Make it visible. Allow 4 to 12 weeks.

You will also need to allow time for the three stages that follow on from the engagement:

4. **Report – pūrongorongo.** Make it transparent. Allow 3 - 6 weeks.
5. **Close the loop – katia te kono.** Tell the story. Allow 3 - 6 weeks.
6. **Evaluate – aromātai.** Make it better. Allow 3 - 6 weeks.

Work closely with the Citizen and Customer Engagement (CCE) Team

If you ever need help with your engagement project, and you don't know who to speak to, your first port of call should always be the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#). You can contact us at consultation@aklc.govt.nz.

Amongst other things, we:

- maintain the council-wide Engagement Calendar
- keep the Engagement Hub stocked with legal documents, how-to guides, tips and templates, case studies, previous feedback reports and professional development information
- manage the AK Have Your Say online engagement platform
- can help you create online feedback forms using the survey tool Engage
- operate the consultation mailbox
- manage the Engagement Network

Section 2: Wāhanga 2

Our engagement approach

What do we mean by consultation and engagement?

Our Significance and Engagement Policy explains the difference as:

Consultation is usually:

- on matters which council considers as having a relatively high degree of significance
- undertaken when we are required to under legislation
- focused on a particular project, issue or decision
- for a defined period
- driven by community needs and preferences.

Engagement is usually

- focused on a long-term relationship
- ongoing
- driven by a community's needs and preferences.

In reality, the two terms can mean different things to different people. “Engagement” covers an enormous range of council activities.

Generally, “engagement” is any two-way conversation or sharing of information and perspectives. It is the reciprocal element that defines something as “engagement”. We may well speak when we engage, but our main task is to listen and to do something useful with the ideas entrusted to us.

How Te Tiriti o Waitangi influences our engagement

Council is committed to acting under relevant statutory provisions relating to the Treaty of Waitangi - Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These include sections 14, 77 and 81 of the Local Government Act, relevant provisions of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, as well as our Significance and Engagement Policy.

In working with Māori in Auckland, we must make a distinction between:

- **mana whenua** (Māori with ancestral relationships to areas in Auckland where they exercise customary authority)
- **mataawaka** (Māori living in Auckland whose ancestral relationship is to land outside Auckland).

Your legal obligations to Māori include:

- providing opportunities for Māori to contribute to your decision-making processes
- receiving feedback from mana whenua and mataawaka as groups who have an interest in your project or decision
- if a decision relates to land or a body of water, taking into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

In some cases, you will also have obligations to engage with Māori under the terms of the Resource Management Act 1991. You can learn more about working with Māori in the Māori Engagement and Partnership Guidelines.

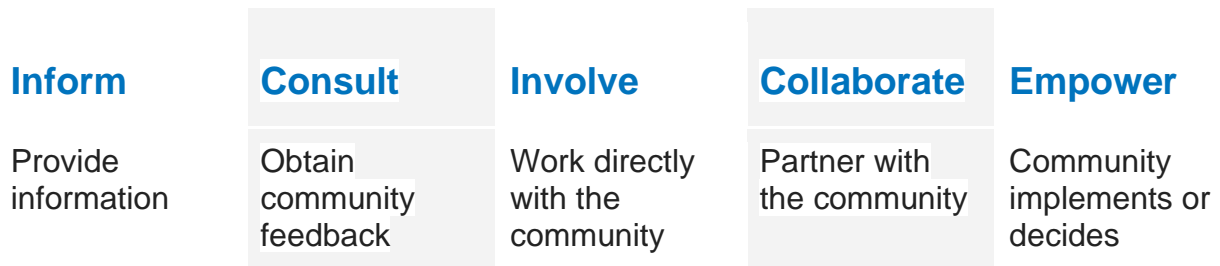
Our engagement principles

All staff, elected members and council-controlled organisations must follow the minimum standards for engagement set out in the Local Government Act 2002, which are affirmed in our Significance and Engagement Policy. At all times, you must:

1. conduct council business in an open, transparent and accountable manner; and meet our identified priorities and outcomes efficiently and effectively.
2. make yourself aware of and carefully consider the views of all Auckland's communities.
3. when making a decision, consider the diversity of the community and the community's interests and the interests of future as well as current communities and the likely impact of any decision on them.
4. provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to your decision-making processes.
5. ensure prudent stewardship and the efficient and effective use of council resources in the interests of the region.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation can help you to be clear about the level of participation. No level is better than any other level. Each is appropriate in different situations. Being clear about the level of participation helps to set realistic expectations with the communities you engage.

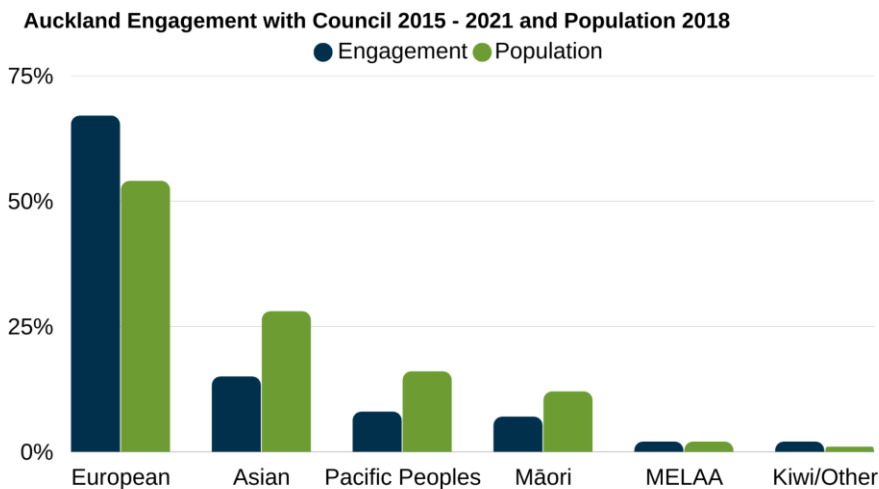


You can learn more about the Spectrum in the [Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Good Practice Guide for Community Engagement](#).

Our engagement needs to better reflect Auckland's diversity

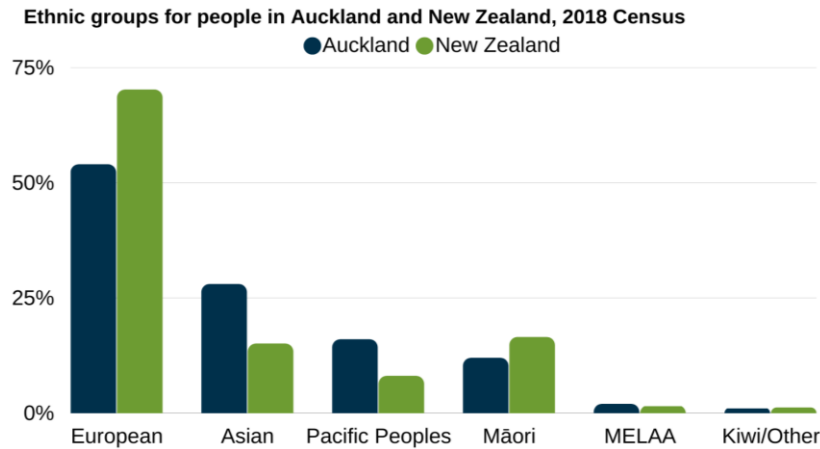
Auckland is New Zealand's largest and most diverse city, and this diversity is expected to rise. By 2038, Māori, Pasifika and Asian peoples will comprise over 50 per cent of Auckland's population.

However, our engagement data shows we need to work harder to engage those who identify as ethnicities other than European.

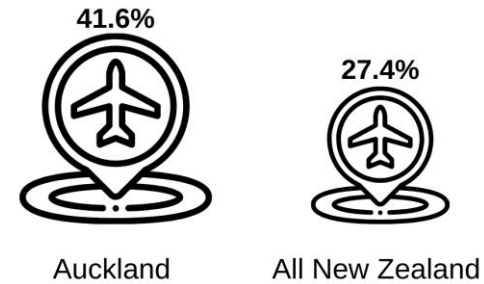


A snapshot of Auckland's diversity

Auckland is ethnically diverse



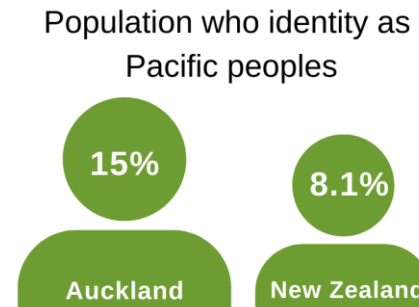
Many Aucklanders are born overseas



The percentage of Aucklanders who identify as Asian is growing



Auckland is an epicentre of Pacific culture



6 top tips for inclusive engagement

Our city's increasing diversity presents several challenges and opportunities for community engagement. Below are six tips for being inclusive in your engagement projects.



Go to where those communities are

People won't necessarily want to come to us, particularly if they have never engaged with council before. If your engagement project is about a particular place, host the engagement activities at that place. Otherwise, take your engagement to the places where people already live, work and play, such as:

- places of worship
- markets
- parks
- existing events.

You might also want to identify community leaders and spiritual leaders, particularly in Pacific and Asian communities, to help you understand how to engage and give credibility to your message.



Use a wide variety of methods

There is no one 'best' method for engaging our diverse communities. Try to use different techniques and styles to reach people in different ways and different locations. Use a mixture of face-to-face, online, at events, in central locations, and on-site. This allows people to engage with council in the most convenient way for them.



Mix up the time, day and place

Try to organise multiple events or workshops at different times, on different days and in different locations. This will allow as many people as possible to access an event if they chose to engage in this way.



Use participant-led techniques

Participant-led techniques are where our communities influence the process, as well as the information being shared. These techniques help people to participate in a way that suits them. They may be more suitable when you need to engage our diverse communities. A World Café is a commonly used participant-led method.

Council-led engagement techniques, on the other hand, are where council controls the information and how it is shared. For instance, an event might be 60 minutes long with council presenting for 45 minutes and 15 minutes for questions at the end.



Use a range of visuals and images with minimal text

This is particularly important in presentations and displays. Ensure the same information is available in alternative formats for those with a vision impairment.



Consider translating project communications into other languages

Translating project communications into other languages is not a silver bullet. Sometimes it may be more effective to communicate and engage face-to-face with an interpreter while working closely with community leaders to support people to get involved.

Tailoring your engagement to different communities

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement. To tailor your engagement to different communities, we have produced a range of specific guides with links to resources and relevant organisations.

Age ranges

Young people and older people have different preferences for how, when and why they like to be engaged. Auckland’s older population is growing proportionately faster than any other age group.

[Engaging Young Aucklanders>>](#)

[Engaging Older Aucklanders>>](#)

Different ethnicities

Five in ten Aucklanders identify as an ethnicity other than European. Council has specific responsibilities to Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

[Engaging and Partnering with Māori in Auckland>>](#)

[Kakala: Pacific Engagement and Practice>>](#)

[Engaging with Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African and Other Ethnic Communities>>](#)

Enabling accessibility

Up to 20 per cent of Aucklanders have some kind of access need. This includes cognitive, visual, auditory, motor and speech needs.

[Engaging Aucklanders with Accessibility Needs>>](#)

Rainbow communities

Auckland has NZ’s largest rainbow population of approximately 56,300. By ‘rainbow’, we mean people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual or other sexual and gender diverse identities.

[Engaging Rainbow Aucklanders>>](#)

Section 3: Wahanga 3

The Engagement Performance Framework

The Engagement Performance Framework is our overarching framework for engagement. We have developed it with input from communities, council and council-controlled organisations. It aims to ensure a consistent and coordinated engagement experience for the people we serve.

It consists of six key phases:

1. **Plan – whakamahere.** Make it count
2. **Prepare – whakarei.** Make it accessible
3. **Engage – tūhono.** Make it visible
4. **Report – pūrongorongo.** Make it transparent
5. **Close the loop – katia te kono.** Tell the story
6. **Evaluate – aromātai.** Make it better

In this section, we have a checklist to guide you through each stage of the Engagement Performance Framework. Print out the checklist and gradually work through it as you carry out your engagement project.

ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

1 MAKE IT COUNT

- Use the engagement calendar
- Know your target communities and what's been said before

2 MAKE IT VISIBLE

- Post to Have Your Say page
- Consider translations

6 MAKE IT BETTER

- Measure your success
- Strive for continuous improvement

3 MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE

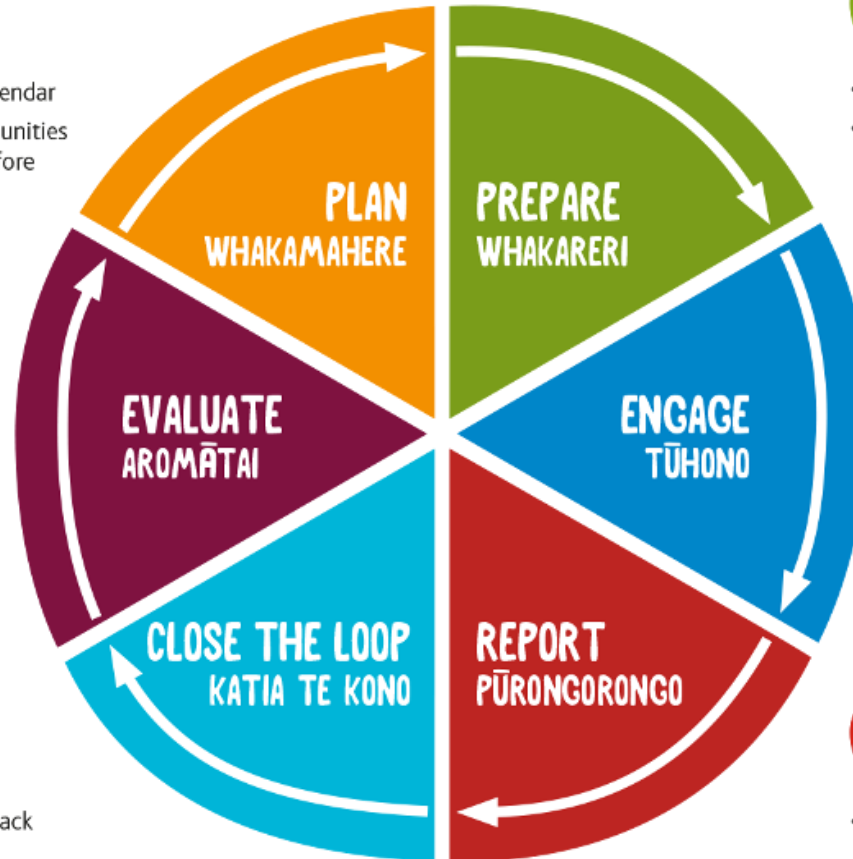
- Use approaches that connect with your target communities
- Consider partnering with relevant organisations

5 TELL THE STORY

- Communicate the feedback and outcomes
- Update the Have Your Say page

4 MAKE IT TRANSPARENT

- Analyse feedback and report to decision-makers



PLAN – WHAKAMAHERE - Make it count - Allow 4 to 8 weeks



The PLAN – WHAKAMAHERE phase lays the foundations for you to run an effective engagement project.

Background research

- Find out what has already been said before by using tools such as the [Insights Library](#) and [Knowledge Auckland](#).
- Review the [EngagementHQ Business Partner Guide](#). This provides key information on AK Have Your Say. This is our online engagement platform that uses a software tool called EngagementHQ. The guide tells you how to use the platform and what methods are available.

Assess project significance

- Use the Determining Significance Quick Guide to assess the significance of your project or collection of decisions. This will help you decide if a “special consultative procedure” is required under the Local Government Act. If you think this may apply to you, contact the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#).

Check if any other legislation applies

- Confirm if any other legislative requirements to consult apply to your situation. This includes:
 - the Resource Management Act
 - the Gambling Act
 - the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act
 - the Psychoactive Substances Act
 - the Reserves Act.

Make first contact with other Auckland Council teams

- You must email the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) to let them know about your planned engagement and seek advice.
- You may need to contact:
 - Your Local Board Engagement Advisor if your project relates to one or a few specific locations in Auckland
 - Te Waka Angamua if you need advice on Māori-specific policy, planning, research, evaluation, training, relationship management, bicultural

development or Māori protocols.

- Democracy Services if:
 - councillors or the advisory panel members are your decision-makers or may be interested in your project
 - You need to brief the governing body, a committee, or the mayor, or want your proposal considered at a governing body, committee or panel meeting,
 - You may want a councillor to attend or present at an engagement activity.
- The Hearings Team if you may need to hold formal hearings.

Complete your draft Engagement Plan

- Plan your project's engagement using either the large engagement project template (for projects such as Bylaw Reviews) or the one for small projects (like a playground upgrade). Allow 2-4 hours to complete a draft engagement plan on your own or with colleagues.

Plan your engagement activities

- Look at the [engagement calendar](#) to identify opportunities to join up internally with other projects.
- Look at [Our Auckland Events](#) to see what else is happening in the community. Contact event organisers to ask about engaging at their events.
- Complete an AK Have Your Say form so you can get your project uploaded onto council's AK Have Your Say online engagement website.
- Add your engagement project to the engagement calendar. To do this, email the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) to request publishing access to the calendar.

Review your engagement plan

- Arrange a meeting with the Citizen and Customer Engagement Team to discuss your project. Bring your Engagement Plan and AK Have Your Say application form. The [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) will help you refine the documents and finalise your approach.

PREPARE – WHAKAREI - Make it accessible - Allow 6 to 8 weeks



The PREPARE – WHAKAREI phase is about raising the visibility of your planned engagement project so the public is aware of how to contribute.

Prepare for your engagement activities

- Consider partnering with relevant organisations who may help raise awareness or support the delivery of the engagement. Talk to the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) if you need advice on who these organisations might be.
- Prepare the resources and people you will need to carry out the engagement activities. Contact the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) if you need engagement expertise for a complex project or one that is likely to raise a lot of conflict.
- Consider how to tailor your engagement to your target communities using our diversity guidelines. Learn more about these under the heading [“Tailoring your engagement to different communities”](#) in section 2 of these guidelines.

Contact Auckland Council teams who can help with promotion

You should:

- Send the final versions of your engagement plan and AK Have Your Say application form to the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) so they can add your project to the AK Have Your Say platform. Allow for at least 10 working days for your project to be added.
- Update i-Know through your assigned business partner with your proposal summary, dates and contact details so the Call Centre can respond to queries about your project.

You may wish to contact:

- The Auckland Insights Team if you are interested in using the online survey tool Engage or surveying The People’s Panel (a survey-based mailing list used for flagship consultation programmes like the annual budget. The Auckland Insights Team will evaluate the projects on a case-by-case basis to assess the appropriateness for The People’s Panel).
- Libraries if you want to provide information or feedback opportunities

via Auckland's libraries.

- Service Centres if you want to display your engagement information in public buildings.
- Local Board Communications if your project relates to one or more specific local communities.
- The Media Team if your project is a contentious issue so they can anticipate and prepare for media contact.
- Auckland Transport if you want to provide information or feedback opportunities across the transport network - e.g. on a bus.
- Tātaki Auckland Unlimited if you want to provide information or feedback opportunities in connection with relevant Tātaki Auckland Unlimited events, venues or facilities.

Contact Auckland Council teams and council-controlled organisations related to your engagement topic

Depending on the topic of your engagement project, you may wish to contact:

- Auckland Transport if your engagement will involve public transport considerations (including infrastructure).
- Tātaki Auckland Unlimited if your engagement relates to economic development, arts, culture and heritage, leisure, sport or entertainment.
- Watercare if your engagement may impact water or wastewater management.
- Eke Panuku Development Auckland if your engagement relates to commercial property or urban redevelopment.

Let your target audience know what you are planning

Prepare the communications materials that will support your engagement:

- Use the DIY communications templates as your first point of call for creating posters, flyers and newsletters. You can find these on Word under "File", "More Templates", and "Auckland Council". Contact the Communications team if you need further help and allow 3-4 weeks.
- Use the Our Voice Guidelines to write and edit your documents in plain English.
- Consider translations. More information can be found on the translation process by reading our Translation Guidelines.
- Circulate information through the channels identified in your Engagement Plan to reach your target communities. Always provide a link to your AK Have Your Say website.

ENGAGE – TŪHONO - Make it visible - Allow 4 to 12 weeks



The ENGAGE – TŪHONO phase is where you work with the public to enable diverse public participation in a manner that suits your project.

We recommend you refer to the specific guides we have created for engaging different communities. Learn more about these under the heading [“Tailoring your engagement to different communities”](#) in section 2 of these guidelines.

You should also:

- Consider partnering with relevant organisations to support the delivery of the engagement. Talk to the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) if you need advice on who these organisations might be.
- Ensure all resources about the engagement direct people to your AK Have Your Say page.
- Look ahead to start planning for the Report, Close the Loop and Evaluate phases. Discuss who is responsible for what task with your Local Board engagement advisor.

REPORT – PŪRONGORONGO - Make it transparent - Allow 3 to 6 weeks



In the REPORT – PŪRONGORONGO phase you will collate the inputs you have received and summarise these into a report for decision-makers.

Get prepared to write your report

- Check that any feedback mechanisms are now closed on your AK Have Your Say webpage. If a tile is on the main [Have Your Say](#) page, contact Digital to remove this.
- Set [engagement calendar](#) status to “Closed”.
- Enter paper versions of feedback forms into the online survey (if you used the online survey tool on your AK Have Your Say webpage).
- Send the automatic report from your AK Have Your Say webpage to the team who is doing the analysis, along with any other evaluation metrics you identified in the planning stage.

Prepare your report for decision-makers

- Analyse the feedback to identify key themes and important points. Include both qualitative and quantitative feedback in your report. Contact the Auckland Insights Team if you need help with the analysis.
- If you are engaging on a specific proposal, make any required changes to your proposal.
- Record how the feedback has or has not influenced decisions. You will need to publicly comment on this when closing the loop.
- Use the OurVoice guidelines to ensure your report is clear and easy to understand.
- Refer to the Quality Advice Hub for guidance on how to provide our decision-makers with the best advice, at the right time and in the right way, to help them fulfil their decision-making responsibilities.

CLOSE THE LOOP – KATIA TE KONO - Tell the story - Allow 3 to 6 weeks



Closing the Loop with the public grows trust in Auckland Council. Being transparent about what we have done and why is a legal and best-practice obligation.

If the final decision is going to take longer than 2 months, you will need to:

- Send a progress update email to submitters including the following information
 1. How many submissions were received
 2. The main themes of the feedback
 3. What will happen next
 4. When the final decision will be made
 5. How they can find out about the final decision.
- Update your [AK Have Your Say](#) project page with interim information on when a final decision is expected.
- Inform community partners and any relevant internal teams about the timeline.
- If you used another method of engaging – update back via that method.
- Update [engagement calendar](#) to “Progress updated”.

When the final decision is made, you will need to:

- Send a closing the loop email to submitters including the following information:
 1. Number of submissions received
 2. The main themes of the feedback
 3. What changes (if any) occurred due to the feedback given
 4. What the final decision was
 5. A link to the final reports and any other relevant information
- Complete the [Closing the Loop Application Form](#) and send it to the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#).
- Inform community partners and any relevant internal teams about the outcome.

- If you used another method of engaging – update back via that method.
- Update [engagement calendar](#) to “Loop Closed”.

EVALUATE – AROMĀTAI - Make it better - Allow 3 to 6 weeks



The EVALUATE - AROMĀTAI phase ensures we continually improve our engagement practices by sharing our successes and lessons with our colleagues.

Conduct a review debrief

- Conduct a project team debrief to identify positives and areas for improvement. You may wish to use the following inputs:
 - Feedback from attendees at events or other feedback mechanisms
 - Feedback from project team members
 - The objectives in your Engagement Plan.
 - The demographic variance of your engagement. This is the difference between your target audience and the actual people with whom you engaged. In your assessment, consider what you might have done differently to ensure a lower variance next time.

Share your insights and lessons learned

- Send learnings from debrief to the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#).
- Share your insights with your wider team.
- If you think other teams in Auckland Council could learn from your engagement, fill out [this form](#) to load the results of your engagement onto the Insights Library so they can be shared organisation-wide. If you do this, make sure you then update the [engagement calendar](#) to “Insights library report sent”.

Section 4: Wahangā 4

Learn more about engagement

Grow your engagement capability

Join Auckland Council's Engagement Network

The Engagement Network is an internal community of practice for council's engagement practitioners who do excellent work to bring the voice of Auckland into decision-making.

The Engagement Network provides 600+ staff with the opportunity to learn, connect and collaborate with co-workers to continually raise the quality of our engagement practices. Contact the [Democracy and Engagement Team](#) for more information and to join the network.

Become a certified engagement practitioner

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) is the peak body for community engagement in Australasia. Many Auckland Council staff have completed the [IAP2 Australasia Certificate in Engagement](#) as a way to deepen their confidence in community engagement. Contact the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) to see if any training programmes are coming up soon.

Other useful links and websites

The Engagement Hub

The Engagement Hub contains guidance, process documents, tips, templates, case studies of effective engagement and professional development information.

AK Have Your Say

[AK Have Your Say](#) is council's externally facing engagement website. You can get your project on there by completing an AK Have Your Say form. The website is run on a software platform called Engagement HQ.

Engagement Calendar

The Engagement Calendar provides:

- an overview of council's engagement activities - past, present and future
- a coordinated council-wide picture of local and regional interactions and feedback.

To add your engagement event to the calendar, email the [Citizen and Customer Engagement Team](#) to request publishing access.

Guides for engaging diverse communities

We have produced the following guides to help you engage with a diverse range of Aucklanders:

- Engaging Young Aucklanders
- Engaging Older Aucklanders
- Engaging and Partnering with Māori in Auckland
- Kakala: Pacific Engagement and Practice
- Engaging with Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African and Other Ethnic Communities
- Engaging Aucklanders with Accessibility Needs
- Engaging Rainbow Aucklanders.