

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL

Community Engagement Strategy & Community Participation Plan 2026

Adopted 22 July 2026
Resolution Number 174/26
Review Due 2028



CONTACT

Tenterfield Shire Council

247 Rouse Street

(PO Box 214)

TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

phone 02 6736 6000

email council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

website www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
What is Community Engagement?.....	5
Legislative Requirements.....	6
Principles.....	7
Stakeholders.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities.....	9
How we will Engage.....	10
The Engagement Process.....	12
Public Exhibition.....	13
Variations.....	19
What to Expect.....	20

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngarabal, Jukemba, Bundjalung, Kamilaroi, Githabul and Wahlubul people as the traditional custodians of various parts of the Tenterfield Shire.

Introduction

Our Community Engagement Strategy which incorporates Council's Community Participation Plan, sets out how we connect with our community and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and clarity around their role in decision making. Council supports the right of individuals to participate in decision making that affects their future. This strategy outlines who we engage with, when we engage and the most effective ways to connect on Council matters - ensuring our approach is tailored to the scale and impact of each project.

By engaging with our community, we gather valuable insights into local views, this results in representation from a broad cross section of the Tenterfield Local Government Area including its citizens, ratepayers, businesses, employees, visitors, community groups, and interest groups - a hallmark of a healthy community.

While final decisions rest with Council and hard decisions are still required to be made, meaningful engagement ensures recommendations from staff are equitable and reflect community input. However, it's important to recognise that while every voice is valued, not all views will align and decisions must consider the needs of our ever changing community. Council must also balance community input with budget constraints, legislative requirements and funding commitments.

To have the greatest impact, engagement needs to happen at the right time. The best way to ensure your voice is heard and help shape an outcome you support is to participate early and engage regularly during the planning and consultation stages and stay engaged throughout the process.

Many projects go through formal consultation periods before Council makes a final decision. Once a project has been endorsed, changes can be costly and may delay delivery. This Strategy provides guidance on when and how to engage and how you can expect to hear from us for new engagement opportunities to make it easier to contribute meaningfully to the decisions that affect our Shire.

The Strategy

1. Defines community engagement and identifies the methods of engagement Council uses for the key stages of engagement - inform, consult, and involve/collaborate
2. Identifies the broad categories of Council matters which require engagement
3. Provides an Engagement Matrix to align the methods of engagement with the category of Council matters

What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement is how we connect with our community to shape the future of our Shire. It's a shared responsibility built on open, ongoing conversations. Engagement takes many forms - keeping you informed about project updates, gathering feedback through surveys and submissions and hosting workshops and events where ideas and perspectives help guide Council's decisions.

Best practice community engagement as prescribed by the International Association for the Public Participation (IAP2) defines community engagement as:

"Any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions".

In general terms it is an inclusive process to ensure the community has the opportunity to participate in decisions that impact them. The process of community engagement can extend from a phone call or letter, to a program of major community workshops. The initiative for community engagement may come from within Tenterfield Shire Council or from outside.

Benefits

Effective engagement makes communities feel more connected with their councils, strengthens trust, goodwill and respect. The benefits resulting from a Community Engagement Strategy include:

- Helps Council plan services better to meet community needs and aspirations
- Helps Council prioritise services and make the best use of resources
- Allows a broader range of views to be expressed, more information to be assembled, and more possible solutions to be considered before making decisions
- Offers opportunities for residents to contribute to and influence outcomes which directly affect their lives
- Encourages greater community ownership and acceptance of Council decisions
- Reinforces Council's commitment to be open and accountable



Legislative Requirements

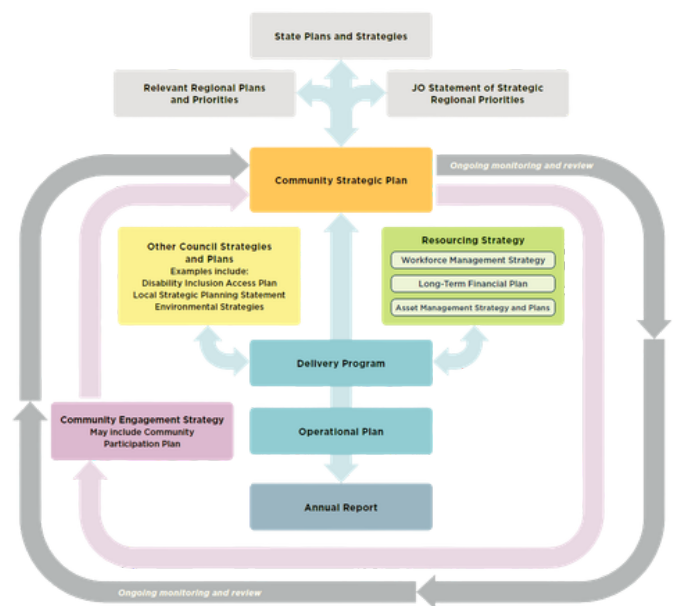
Council is required to meet legislative obligations that guide when and how we engage with the community. Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, we must develop and implement a Community Engagement Strategy to ensure meaningful consultation when shaping plans, policies and programs, as well as in decision making beyond routine administrative matters.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* also requires Council's to outline how and when the community will be engaged in planning functions, including policy development and assessments.

Our Community Engagement Strategy aligns with these requirements and is reviewed every four years.



Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework



**The Office of Local Government
Integrated Planning & Reporting framework for councils*

The NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework ensures Councils take a holistic approach to future planning. Council prepares several key plans that guide how we deliver works and services, based on community priorities identified through consultation.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is supported by the Delivery Program, which outlines initiatives over a four-year period; the Operational Plan, detailing annual actions, budgets and capital works; and the Resourcing Strategy, which ensures these plans are effectively resourced. Community engagement is central to this process, with the Community Engagement Strategy outlining when and how we engage to shape our priorities, day-to-day operations and long-term goals.

Principles

Council's community engagement practices are based on the principles of Social Justice and Community inclusivity:

Social Justice Principles

Equity - There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Access - All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Participation - Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.

Rights - Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Community Inclusivity

Council, in its engagement activities, will make every effort to ensure that all perspectives are considered by:

- Engaging a cross section of the community and using a wide range of information and engagement methods
- Involving targeted groups as identified in particular projects
- Accommodating participants cultural, linguistic, religious and other special needs in engagement activities
- Endeavouring to involve community groups and individuals who are sometimes hard to reach such as young people, people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Tenterfield Shire is committed to being an inclusive and accessible place for everyone, now and in the future. The Council seeks to meet legislative obligations under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and provide equitable opportunities for participation for everyone in the Shire.

Stakeholders



Community engagement is something we all contribute to. We each have a role in shaping the places where we live, work, play and create. Both Council and the community are essential in initiating, leading, participating in and delivering engagement activities.

A key part of this process is identifying and understanding the stakeholders involved in any given project - those who will be impacted by or have an interest in a decision. By working together, we can ensure that our engagement efforts are meaningful, inclusive and lead to decisions that reflect the values and needs of our community.

Our Stakeholders include:

- Ratepayers and all people who live, work, go to school or visit Tenterfield Shire
- Key demographic groups in our community - including, but not limited to; young people, those living with disability and isolated groups during emergencies
- First Nations groups - including, but not limited to Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC's)
- Businesses operating in the Tenterfield Shire
- Media outlets and news distribution channels
- Community, sporting, cultural and environmental groups
- Section 355 committees
- Schools, childcare services and centres, health and support services, disability and wellbeing support services and emergency services
- State and Federal Members
- Relevant government agencies - including, but not limited to tourism, transport, and health

Roles & Responsibilities



The Mayor

As the official spokesperson for Council, the Mayor engages with media to share important updates, decisions and initiatives, ensuring the community stays informed. Through interviews, public statements and Council's bi-monthly newsletter, Your Local News, the Mayor helps communicate Council's work and priorities. The Mayor also champions meaningful community engagement, fostering relationships with stakeholders, advocating for inclusive participation and building trust between Council and the community.

The Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor and councillors play a vital role in encouraging community participation and ensuring engagement informs Council's decision making. They actively support and take part in engagement activities, listen to community feedback and advocate for strategic priorities that align with the needs of residents. Their role is to approve key strategic plans and policies, ensuring that community input is reflected in Council's long-term vision. The elected Council is responsible for determining Development Applications, only when more than five unique objections are received as part of the consultation process.

Council Staff

Council Staff are the subject-matter experts of their defined role. They develop strategies and plans that align with the Community's Vision and implement work that is detailed within our operational planning documents. Council staff play an important role in the delivery of this Strategy as they are required to design and implement engagement activities that provide meaningful opportunities for the community to have their say. It is their role to ensure engagement is accessible and transparent, communicate complex information in a way that is easy to understand and provide insights to decision-makers on community sentiment. Council staff also maintain ongoing engagement channels such as Council's website, social media and media engagements, ensuring residents are kept informed and involved throughout the decision-making process.

How we will Engage

Community engagement plays a vital role in shaping the future of our Shire, helping to inform the policies and plans that support our Community Vision. Guided by the *Local Government Act 1993*, our engagement approach ensures that consultation is meaningful, transparent and takes place at the right stage of decision making.

The Public Participation Spectrum, below, developed by IPA2 identifies five different stages of consultation relative to the level of impact the community should have on decision making.

Increasing Impact On The Decision

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public

*Reference: International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

Increasing Level Of Public Participation

**Council functions under the Local Government Act NSW 1993; and accordingly only the elected body of Council is "empowered" to make decisions and implement actions.
Hence, engagement activities conducted at the Empower level will be limited to Council.*

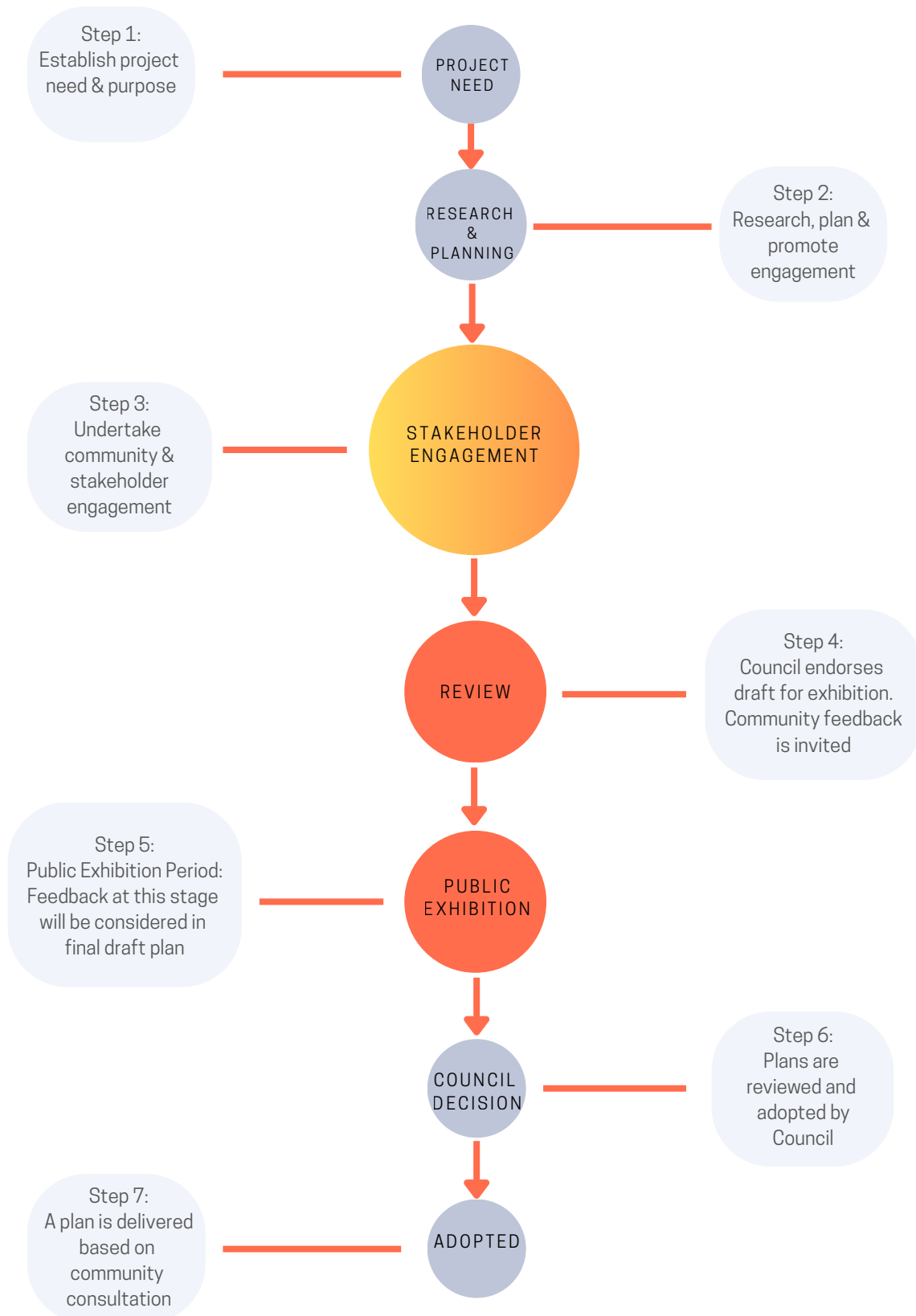
This approach follows social justice principles which means that all people receive a 'fair go' at the opportunities of life. It is about recognising that our society is made up of many different communities and working to ensure that no group or section of society is disadvantaged. In everything we do, we will respect the four interrelated social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

Our approach is flexible, varying depending on the project's scope and impact, while legislation sets minimum requirements for planning-related projects.

IAP2 level of engagement	Our Commitments	Examples
INFORM The inform stage is for day-to-day use, often when Council has already made a decision, to communicate the outcome or status of projects, or when there is only one way that Council believes it can progress a project.	We will keep you informed. COUNCILS ROLE Give stakeholders balanced, accurate and relevant information on decisions, policies, plans and strategies. COMMUNITY'S ROLE Listen	• Customer Service • Website • Social Media • Advertising • Media Releases • Publications/information • Council facilitated community events • Your Local News • Community Notice Boards • Site Specific Signage
CONSULT At this level, Council seeks feedback to identify important community issues and perspectives that can influence and assist decision making. Informing is a prerequisite for consultation.	We will listen to you, consider your ideas and concerns and keep you informed. COUNCILS ROLE Facilitate two-way communication between Council and the community. COMMUNITY'S ROLE Contribute	• Customer enquiries • Community Forums • Public exhibitions and submissions • Community displays/stalls • Surveys • Site Meeting/Tour • Briefings
INVOLVE/COLLABORATE Work directly and partner with the community in each aspect of a decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will work with you on an ongoing basis to ensure your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered. We will provide feedback on Council's decisions. COUNCIL'S ROLE Create a collaborative relationship/partnership between Council and the community, facilitating involvement in shaping decisions that affect community life. Informing and consulting are components of involving/collaborating. COMMUNITY'S ROLE Participate	• Meetings by invitation • Consultation with Specific Purpose Committees • Large Group/Stakeholder Collaboration
EMPOWER To place the final decision in the hands of the public	We will give the community the opportunity to participate in a transparent flow of information and feedback to Councillors, who have been empowered as the community representatives to make decisions in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. COUNCIL'S ROLE Decide COMMUNITY'S ROLE Vote for Councillors that you believe will make decisions in the best interests of the broad community.	• Via Resolution at Tenterfield Shire Council Meetings

The Engagement Process

The following outlines the process and timelines for community engagement. This process refers to our key plans, strategies and planning developments that are required under the *Local Government Act 1993*.



Public Exhibition

Public exhibition is an important way for our community to have a voice in Council's decision making. During this period, draft documents, planning proposals and certain development applications are made available for community feedback.

Most of Council's strategic planning documents and those related to planning and development, have minimum exhibition periods. In most cases, draft documents are first endorsed by Council before being placed on exhibition. No final decisions are made until the exhibition period has ended and all community feedback has been considered. These documents have specific exhibition timeframes that must be met, which are outlined below.

Everyone is welcome to 'Have Your Say' by making a submission during the exhibition period.

To view current public exhibitions and provide feedback, visit tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

Public exhibitions of Development Applications can be accessed through Council's website tenterfield.nsw.gov.au



PROJECT		HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
COUNCIL'S KEY LONG-TERM PLANS such as: • Community Strategic Plan (CSP) • Delivery Program (DP) and Operational Plan (OP), combined document • Resourcing Strategy • Other plans & strategies • Long-Term Financial Plan • Asset Management Plans	INVOLVE/COLLABORATE	• Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision • Provide a range of opportunities and channels for the community to share their views, prior to public exhibition there may be multiple rounds of engagement undertaken to develop a draft plan.	• Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 DAYS
COUNCIL'S ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN • Budget and fees and charges	INVOLVE	• Involve the community to ensure priorities are reflected in the decision. • Provide a range of opportunities and channels for the community to share their views.	• Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 DAYS
KEY COUNCIL POLICIES such as: • Code of Meeting Practice • Payment of Expenses • Provision of Facilities • Councillors Policy • others as required	CONSULT	• Documents can be reviewed on Council's website and at Council's office building - 247 Rouse St, Tenterfield NSW 2372.	• Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 DAYS
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	CONSULT	• Documents can be reviewed on Council's website and at Council's office building - 247 Rouse St, Tenterfield NSW 2372.	• Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	7 DAYS

PROJECT		HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
LOCAL APPROVALS POLICY The Local Approval Policy identifies low-impact activities that can be undertaken without approval from Council such as community events, footpath dining and mobile vending, provided they meet certain criteria.	CONSULT	Council's website	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	42 DAYS
RECLASSIFICATION OF LAND Land owned by Council must be classified for either community or operational use under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>. Community Land is for land designated for community use such as community halls, libraries and recreational facilities. Operational land serves a commercial or operational function such as offices, work depots or land being retained for strategic reasons. When land comes into community ownership (for example, new sportsgrounds) they need to be classified correctly.	CONSULT	- Council's website. - Letter/Email	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 DAYS* *Or as specified by the Gateway Determination and a public hearing scheduled for at least 21 days after the public exhibition occurs.

PROJECT		HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANS & GUIDELINES The Tenterfield Shire Council Development Control Plan 2013 (as Amended 2014) and Guidelines provide controls to guide new development, which are considered in the assessment of development applications.	CONSULT	- Council's website - If the Development Control Plan amendment is site-specific (for example, area plans which only apply to certain sites in the Shire) we notify landowners and adjoining landowners by letter/email. Minor amendments or general amendments that do not affect a specific site may not be notified by letter/email.	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision	28 DAYS
DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION PLANS A plan that levies new development for facilities such as transport, community and recreational facilities required to service new development.	CONSULT	Council's website	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 DAYS
DRAFT PLANNING AGREEMENTS Planning agreements entered into between Council and a developer. The planning agreement allows contributions for land dedication, recreation, community and transport facilities in lieu of development contributions under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EPA) 1979</i>.	CONSULT	Council's website	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	28 DAYS* *Certain Draft Planning Agreements may be exhibited in the same way and at the same time as a related application.

PROJECT		HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State Significant Development).	CONSULT	- Council's website - Letter/email See information on page 19 for when notification is not required, or when certain development may also be advertised.	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision	14 DAYS
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION CONSENT FOR DESIGNATED DEVELOPMENT Designated developments are higher impact developments that are detailed in Schedule 3 of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i>. These developments need to be supported by an environmental impact statement.	CONSULT	- Council's website - Letter/Email	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision	28 DAYS
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR NOMINATED INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT, THREATENED SPECIES DEVELOPMENT AND CLASS 1 AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT Must meet specific assessment and notification requirements due to their potential environmental impacts. These applications necessitate thorough evaluation and community involvement.	CONSULT	Council's Website	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 DAYS* *Council may extend the public exhibition period without further notification to those already notified as required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

PROJECT		HOW	WHAT TO EXPECT	EXHIBITION PERIOD
COUNCIL RELATED DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS Council has a policy which sets out how to publicly exhibit Council related development applications, which is available through Council's website.	CONSULT	Council's website	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision.	28 DAYS
PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS, SUBJECT TO A GATEWAY DETERMINATION Planning proposals can be prepared to: - Rezone land to change the uses allowed on the land. - Make amendments to the Tenterfield Shire Council Local Environmental Plan 2013 (Amended 2014) (for example, changes to building heights or lot sizes, adding heritage items, changes to permitted land use in certain zones, updates to clauses and maps).	CONSULT	- For site-specific amendments, a letter/email will be sent to landowners and adjoining landowners. - Minor amendments or general amendments that do not affect a specific site may not be notified by letter/email. - Council's website. - NSW planning portal.	Consider points raised and provide feedback on how public input was considered in the decision	28 DAYS* *Or as specified by the Gateway Determination, which may find that reduced exhibition, or no exhibition is required for a minor proposal.
ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS - OBTAINED UNDER DIVISION 5.1 Environmental approvals prepared for development under Part 5.1 of the EPA Act for certain development such as State Significant Development	AS REQUIRED	As required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment	Reflect community concerns and aspirations in the finalised plan.	AS REQUIRED

Disclaimer: For any inconsistencies, refer to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.

Variations

Applications for the following types of development are not required to be notified:

- Modifications of Consent involving an error or misdescription or minimal environmental impact.
- Applications that are modified during the course of assessment when the proposed changes will have no greater impact upon those persons previously notified.
- Applications which, at the discretion of Council staff, are of a minor nature and impact, for example:
 - Internal fit-outs to an existing shop that is not a change of use;
 - Internal alterations to a dwelling with no external changes;
 - Boundary adjustments that do not result in any additional lot;
 - subdivisions where less than 5 lots are proposed to be created; and
 - Minor residential development applications (such as alterations and additions to a dwelling, sheds and other outbuildings) that do not involve a variation to a development standard or planning control.

Applications in the above list may be notified at the discretion of Council staff.

In addition to any notification requirements for the following development types, these proposals shall also be advertised for broader comment on Council's website:

Notification shall be undertaken in accordance with Table 1

N = Neighbour notification

A = Advertising

LAND USE	ZONING		
	RU1	RU3	RU5
Agricultural produce industry >\$1.0mill.	N		N
Airstrip	N		
Amusement centre	N		N
Animal boarding or training establishment	N A		N A

Variations

LAND USE	ZONING		
	RU1	RU3	RU5
Backpackers accomodation	N		N
Brothel (sex services premises)	N A		N A
Car park higher than 3 metres			N
Caravan park	N		N
Cemetery	N		N
Cellar door premises	N		N
Child care centre	N A		N
Community facility	N A	N A	N A
Correctional centre	N A		
Crematorium	N A		N A
Eco-tourist facility	N		N
Entertainment facility			N
Extractive industry	N	N	N
Feedlot	N A		
Food & drink premises > \$0.5mill	N		N
Forestry			

Variations

LAND USE	ZONING		
	RU1	RU3	RU5
Function centre greater than \$ 1m	N A		N A
Funeral home	N		N
Hazardous industry	N A		
Hazardous storage establishment	N A		
Helipad	N		N
Hotel or motel accommodation	N		N
Information or education facility	N		N
Intensive livestock agriculture	N A		
Livestock processing industry	N A		N A
Mine	N A		N A
Mining	N A		N A
Mortuary	N		N
Multi dwelling housing >20 units	N		N
Neighbourhood shop	N		N
Offensive industry	N A		N A

Variations

LAND USE		ZONING		
		RU1	RU3	RU5
Offensive storage establishment		N A		N A
Passenger transport facility				N
Place of public worship		N A		N A
Pub		N A		N A
Recreation facility (indoor)		N		N
Recreation facility (major)		N A		N A
Recreation facility (outdoor)		N		N
Registered club		N A		N A
Residential flat building		N		N
Restaurant > \$ 0.5mill		N		N
Restricted premises		N A		N A
Restricted dairy		N A		
Seniors housing >20 units		N		N
Service station		N A		N A
Shed greater 3.6 in height				N
Dwellings greater than 2 storeys				N

Variations

A development consistent with any of these definitions shall not be advertised where Council is of the view that it represents only a minor addition to an existing facility or development that is ancillary to the core function of the overall facility. (For example: toilet blocks, landscaping, play equipment). Refer to Chapter 2 - Notification Procedures of Tenterfield Development Control Plan 2014.

Exempt & Complying Development

Some development, such as exempt and complying development under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008, may not allow opportunities for community engagement.

What to Expect

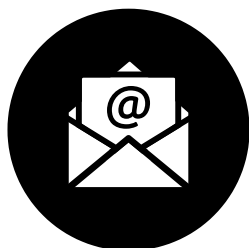
Submissions

Public exhibitions are an important way for the community to have a say on plans, development applications and other Council matters. During the exhibition period, anyone can make a submission to share their views.

Written submissions can be made online, by email, by post, or submitted in person at Council's Customer Service Centre. While not required, we encourage submitters to include their name, suburb and contact details.



Website



Email



In Person



By Post

Written notice of the development application is sent to the person(s) as appear to:

- own land that adjoins the land to which the development application relates
- own land that in the opinion of the assessing officer may be affected by the application.

Where the land is a parcel created under the Community Land Development Act, Strata titles, or Strata Titles (Leasehold) Acts, a written notice to the Governing Association is taken to be the owner.

Where more than one person is listed as the owner, a written notice to one of the owners is taken to be a notice to the owner.

We will notify landowners as per the details recorded in our systems. It is important you ensure your details are up to date to enable us to notify the correct landowner.

Where a development application is notified to adjoining owners or advertised for broader comment, details of the proposal will be placed on Council's website for the duration of the exhibition period.

Development Applications

We will consider the matters raised in submissions received during public exhibition in the assessment of the application and requisite details of the determination will be published on Council's website.

