

Richmond
Valley
Council



Community Strategic Plan - Engagement Strategy

Our Big Conversation
2021-2022

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Executive summary

Our Big Conversation is your chance to get involved in a Valley-wide discussion to help our area deal with opportunities and challenges, such as:

- Provision of quality services
- Job creation
- Housing availability and affordability
- Sustainability and the environment

The community will also be presented with plans and strategies associated with Richmond Valley Council's Community Strategic Plan. How we address these core strategies will shape life in the Richmond Valley local government area for at least the next decade; the way we make our towns and villages liveable and affordable, the way we get around, and how we work...

Get involved in Our Big Conversation

We want to hear more voices than ever before. We're taking inclusive approaches to make sure all of our communities have a say, including the disabled community, young people, older people, students, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We'll share what you're telling us, so you know what other people in the Valley are saying and how it will affect decision making.

To get involved, make sure you take part in:

- the latest surveys and consultations
- Face-to-face sessions with councillors and Council staff
- community conversations with local interest groups
- workshops about opportunities and challenges

Continued conversations ...

Early 2022, we will consult with community members about their vision and priorities for the Richmond Valley local government area's future. This will involve an online survey, a community workshop, and a series of pop-up kiosks. We will also hold workshops with key stakeholders who will help deliver the strategies. The information, ideas and feedback from this engagement will be used to develop a Statement of Vision and Priorities.

By April, the Statement of Vision and Priorities will be placed on public exhibition, providing a starting point for the preparedness of the second Richmond Valley Council's Community Strategic Plan. In May, all associated plans, strategies and processes will be placed on public exhibition. All plans will be presented at an extraordinary Council meeting in June for adoption.

01 Purpose

Richmond Valley Council is embarking on the development and delivery of its Community Strategic Plan.

The Community Strategic Plan will capture the community's vision for the area and identify key social, economic and environmental priorities, along with long-term strategies for the next 10 years.

The Community Strategic Plan will reflect the aspirations, needs and priorities of the local community.

The purpose of this engagement strategy is to ensure the Community Strategic Plan is developed in close consultation and collaboration with our local community.

This engagement strategy outlines the stakeholders to be engaged, proposes a range of engagement approaches, and presents key timelines to assist in the delivery of the Community Strategic Plan.

This strategy will evolve as opportunities emerge and feedback is sought from the community.

02 Background

All councils in NSW are required to plan and report on their activities as part of an integrated planning and reporting framework set out by the *Local Government Act 1993* and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

The integrated planning and reporting framework requires all councils to prepare a Community Strategic Plan (10+ years), Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program (four years), Operational Plan (one year) and Annual Report.

The Community Strategic Plan will set the future direction for the Richmond Valley local government area covering a period of 10 years.

The Richmond Valley Made Strategy is the name given to our Community Strategic Plan.

Legislative Requirements

All councils are required to prepare and implement an engagement strategy to meet the provisions of Section 402A of the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016*.

The Act specifically states that councils are required to “establish and implement a strategy for engagement with the local community when developing their plans, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining activities”.

Previous Engagement

Richmond Valley Council has been engaging with its community and stakeholders throughout the development of several projects and activities such as:

- Local Strategic Planning Statement: Beyond 20-20 Vision
- Richmond Valley Development Control Plan 2021
- Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012
- Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021-2025

The results of engagement activities derived from these projects will help to inform the development of the Richmond Valley Made Strategy.

03 Engagement Goals

In delivering the Richmond Valley Made Strategy, we want to push our engagement goals further than we have before, and we are aiming to:

- Increase our engagement with young people, such as those aged 15 to 30 years
- Increase our engagement with the families who live in our towns and villages
- Increase our engagement with local business owners, employees and visitors coming to our local government area
- Understand the aspirations of our community in meaningful, innovative and creative ways
- Create a memorable and innovative campaign of engagement with the community

04 Engagement Principles

Council has developed a set of eight principles to guide our approach to engagement activities throughout the development of the Richmond Valley Made Strategy. Our engagement strategy must be ...

1

Easy for the community to access and participate in

Taking into consideration location, timing, and accessibility for the disabled

2

Interactive

Inspiring the community to get involved and contribute through interesting and non-static engagements

3

Inclusive of the whole community

Considers the cultural, geographical and logistical needs of the community

4

Fun, novel and engaging

Activities and events which are exciting and interesting to the community

5

Clear and simple

Activities, events and services which are easy to understand, follow and participate in

6

Meaningful, authentic and adds value

Activities, events and services which are not trivial and have a clear link to creating value for the community

7

Snappy, short and sharp

Does not require large time commitments from the community

8

Impactful and tangible

Activities, events and services which hit the ground and make a difference

Engagement Principles

In addition to the eight engagement principles listed previously, the engagement strategy is aligned with the spectrum of participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation.

The Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation which defines the public's role in any public participation process, including the development of community strategic plans.

The spectrum has five participation goals:

INFORM - to provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

CONSULT – to obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

INVOLVE – to work directly with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions.

COLLABORATE – to partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions.

EMPOWER – to place final decision-making in the hands of the community.

Throughout the development of the Richmond Valley Made Strategy we will focus on activities which achieve the goals of inform, consult and involve.

05 Potential barriers to engagement to consider

When planning an engagement process, it is important to recognise the diversity of the communities with which we will be engaging. Considering the inclusiveness of engagement strategies is very relevant for Richmond Valley Council. There are barriers to engagement which are often over looked, and can inadvertently exclude some groups.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented us with challenges to continuing our engagement programs as usual. While the social distancing requirements meant face-to-face meetings, events and workshops were not an option, we wanted our communities to continue to have a say in the planning and delivery of projects which affected them. This saw us exploring digital ways of engaging our stakeholders.

We met with many business and resident groups and individuals online via Zoom and other video-hosting programs, and sought public feedback via our social media platforms and website.

These tools proved effective and will continue to be part of our engagement process going forward.

Capacity and ability of different stakeholders to participate	Levels of community infrastructure	Contested or divided communities	Gaps in information	Literacy and numeracy levels
Some venues may restrict people with disabilities and the elderly to access, participate or contribute to engagement activities.	Community infrastructure can create a potential barrier to participation when engagement activities or events require participants to be physically present. For Richmond Valley, the main infrastructure considerations would be public transport.	Religious and cultural beliefs could lead to divisions in the community which may exclude one or more groups from actively engaging with the Council.	Misinformation and incomplete information can cause unnecessary confusion or misinformed opinions.	The assumption that all members of the community have a similar level of literacy and numeracy can inadvertently exclude some members.

06 Who are our stakeholders?

Local residents and ratepayers



As a local resident, you can best engage me if ...

- I feel a sense of belonging in my local area and community
- I have easy access to mobility and transport services
- I have access to cultural and recreational activities
- I have stability and choice in accommodation
- I have access to entertainment, restaurants and recreational space
- I have access to sporting groups and clubs
- I'm able to participate from home
- I can socialise with friends and family
- I'm able to move around safely

Councillors



As a Councillor, you can best engage me if ...

- I'm not inconvenienced
- Workshops and meetings are efficient
- Information presented is complete, correct and easy to understand

Council staff



As a Council staff member, you can best engage me if ...

- I'm able to contribute quickly and easily
- I don't have to break from my daily routine
- I can socialise with my friends and colleagues

Council volunteers



As a Council volunteer, you can best engage me if ...

- I have easy access to transport
- I feel that my contributions will be heard and will make a difference
- I have access to cheap and easy food and entertainment
- I have access to a social network of like-minded people

Who are our stakeholders?

Council advisory committees



As a Council advisory committee member, you can best engage me if ...

- I have networking opportunities
- I feel that my contributions will be heard and make a difference

Local business owners, employees



As a local business owner and an employee, you can best engage me if ...

- I have easy access to transport in and out of the area
- I have employment and networking opportunities
- I have access to restaurants, shopping and exercise opportunities
- I have access to entertainment activities and events
- I'm able to socialise with friends, family and colleagues

Visitors and tourists



As a visitor to the Richmond Valley, you can best engage me if ...

- I have clear wayfinding that is easy to understand
- I have diverse shopping opportunities
- I have access to quality recreational facilities
- I'm able to attend a range of events
- I feel safe and secure

Interest groups



As a member of an interest group, you can best engage me if ...

- I feel a sense of belonging in my community
- I'm able to meet and socialise with like-minded people
- I have access to food and entertainment facilities
- I have access to technology and the Internet
- I feel safe and secure

Who are our stakeholders?

Community and cultural groups



The Richmond Valley is a culturally diverse area and is home to the Bundjalung people. It also has strong Italian and Filipino communities.

As a member of a cultural group, you can best engage me if ...

- I feel confident and proud
- I'm actively involved in cultural events
- I have a cultural sense of community
- I have space to practice cultural or religious activities

Families



The Richmond Valley has seen an increase in families with children over the past five years.

As a family, you can best engage us if ...

- We have access to quality education
- We have access to shopping
- We have access to sporting groups
- We have access to housing opportunities
- We have access to entertainment, restaurants and recreational space
- We have easy access to on-street parking
- We have job security
- We feel a sense of belonging in our community

Students



As a primary school, high school or university student, you can best engage me if...

- I'm able to socialise with my friends and family
- I'm able to have fun
- I have access to food, entertainment and educational resources
- I'm continuing my daily routine
- I have a platform to be heard and I can express myself honestly
- I'm able to interact with role models
- I have access to the Internet and technology
- My privacy is maintained
- I have space to hang out with friends

Have Your Say users



As an 'Have Your Say' user, you can best engage me if ...

- I can see real outcomes from my contributions
- I have access to technology and Internet
- I feel my identity is safe and secure
- I'm able to meet and socialise with like-minded people

Who are our stakeholders?

State and Federal Members of Parliament



As a member of State or Federal Parliament, you can best engage me if...

- I'm not inconvenienced
- I understand the scope and direction of the engagement
- There is a clear course of action to make changes

Small and medium enterprises



As a small or medium enterprise, you can best engage me if...

- I have networking and employment opportunities
- I have access to technology and the Internet
- I have promotional opportunities
- I have access to potential users or customers

Government agencies



As a government agency, you can best engage me if...

- I'm not inconvenienced
- I'm able to build stronger relationships and links with the Richmond Valley community and Council
- I understand the scope and direction of the engagement
- There is a clear course of action to make changes

Non-government organisations



As a non-government organisation, you can best engage me if...

- I have networking and employment opportunities
- I have social research opportunities
- I have access to the community

07 How will we engage the community?

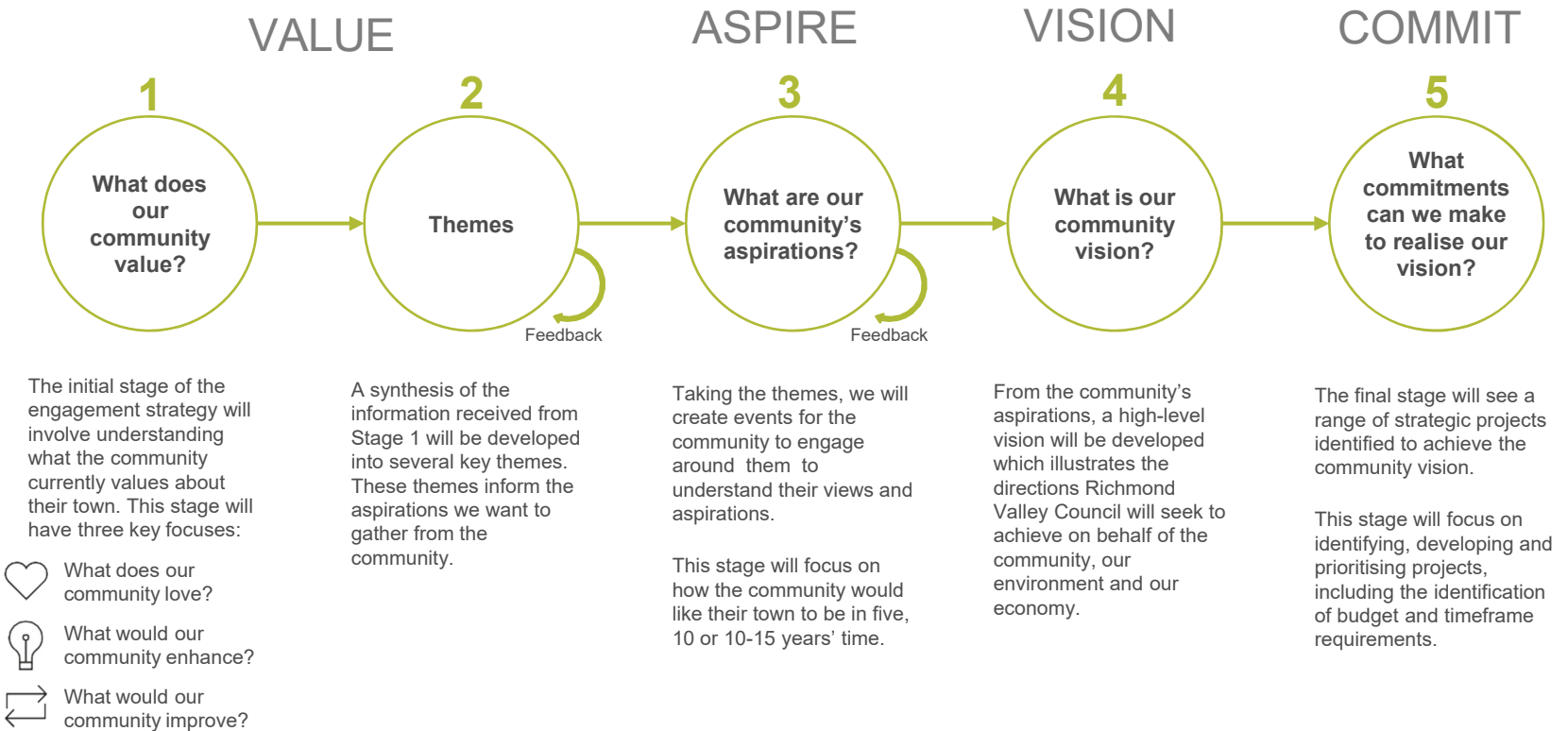
Examples of tools to be used to engage our community include:

- Face-to-face engagement at events, workshops
- Web-based engagement services such as Have Your Say online, polls and surveys
- Wishing trees/ideas boards – located in prominent, high-foot traffic locations allowing the community to submit their aspirations and visions
- Social media such as Facebook and Instagram
- Pop-up stalls – by utilising our public spaces and shopping precincts, the community can visit and provide feedback, opinions, thoughts and insights

08 Engagement Methods Summary

Method	Stage of Engagement	Timeframe/ events to leverage	Local Residents and Ratepayers	Councillors	Council staff	Council volunteers	Council advisory committees	Workers	Visitors and Tourists	Interest Groups	Community and Cultural Groups	Families	Students	Have Your Say users	State and Federal MPs	Small and medium enterprises	Government agencies	Non-government organisations
Web-based Engagement Services	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Events Traditional marketing and engagement activities 	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
App and Mobile-based Engagement	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Events Traditional marketing and engagement activities 	•	•	•			•		•		•	•	•	•			•
Face-to-face	All	Whole-of-Richmond Valley event	•		•	•		•		•		•		•				
Social Media Campaign	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Events Traditional marketing and engagement activities 	•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Mobile-friendly Marketing	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school bulletins 	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•			
Pop-up Stalls	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBDs, shopping plazas, sports days 	•			•					•	•	•			•		
Telephone Survey	All		•			•		•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•
Have Your Say	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion at all events 	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•

09 Stages of Engagement



10 What do we want to know from our community?



Love

- What's important to you about the Richmond Valley?
- What is it about the Richmond Valley that makes you want to call it home?
- The Richmond Valley is great because ...
- What is the best thing about the Richmond Valley?
- Do you spend your recreation time in the Richmond Valley?
- What facilities do you use?
- What do you like about our public facilities, including open spaces, parks, libraries, swimming pools, events and festivals?



Enhance

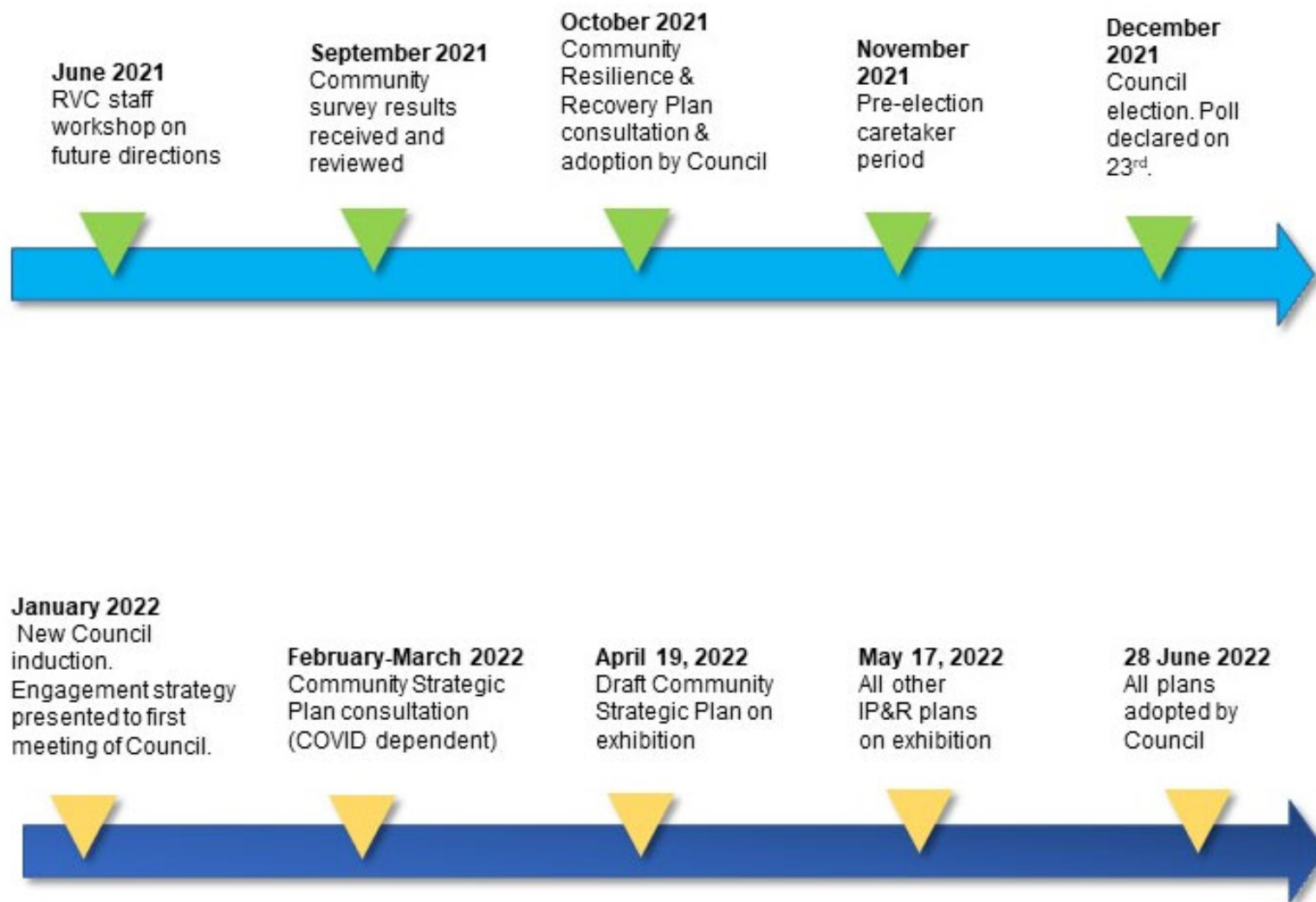
- Name one thing that ensures the Richmond Valley has a good future
- What would you like to see in 10 years in the Richmond Valley?
- What is your five-year vision for the Richmond Valley?
- What in the Richmond Valley would you like to leave or preserve for the next generation?
- What do you want in your community that you don't have now?
- Why do you live in the Richmond Valley?



Improve

- What is missing from the Richmond Valley?
- What do we need more of?
- What could be improved about the Richmond Valley?
- What services and infrastructure need to improve?
- What are the needs of your community?
- Identify issues which Council could improve which have had a large impact on your life
- What have you seen or experienced in another community that you'd like to see in the Richmond Valley?
- Can you see yourself still living in the Richmond Valley in 10 years? Why/why not?

11 Engagement Timeline



12 Resources required for engagement

The resources required for community engagement will be dependent on the specific method. However, most forms of engagement will require the following resources at a minimum:



Input by staff, volunteers and other interested stakeholders



Independent facilitation



Background information or briefing papers on the issues or plan proposals



Logistics - Communication and promotion, venue hire



Printing and circulating a report on the output of the process and for provision of feedback



Resourcing local community and voluntary groups

13 Measurement and Evaluation

There are several methods of measurement and evaluation to determine how the community is engaged. Broadly this includes:

- Social media reach including likes, shares, retweets and hashtag usage
- Number of people attending face-to-face events such as pop-ups and participation at workshops
- Number of hard copy and online surveys completed
- Visits to web-based engagement tools such as Have Your Say

