



## Consultation Policy and Procedure

Policy #	Adoption Date	Effective Date
1	27 August 2020	17 February 2021

### Revision History

Version	Adoption Date	Authorised by	Approved by	Revision Date
1	27 August 2020	CNSWJO Executive Officer and NSW Regional Leadership Executive	CNSWJO Board and NSW Regional Leadership Executive	November 2021

## 1. Consultation Policy and Procedure

### **Codesigned by Regional Leadership Executive and Central NSW Joint Organisation**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

1. To provide guidance for consultation with Local Government in Central NSW
2. To deliver a codesigned communication through the collaboration between the Regional Leadership Executive and the Central NSW Joint Organisation
3. To leverage the potential of the new relationships being forged from the outcomes of the Joint Organisation Legislation

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The CNSWJO/RLE Consultation Policy has been codesigned by the Central NSW JO and the Regional Leadership Executive for Orana and the Central West to provide guidance to other levels of government and industry when considering consultation with Local Government in Central NSW. It has been approved by the CNSWJO Board and the RLE.

Recognising the challenges of short deadlines, high expectations and consultation fatigue, these guidelines seek to leverage the collaboration and cooperation between the Regional Leadership Executive and the Joint Organisation. This can be particularly useful when there are several consultations in region from agencies that may of aware of the other activity in the region.

Consultation methodologies will differ depending on a variety of factors, not the least resourcing and timeframes. Agencies are asked to adapt the following advice to best suit their circumstance.

#### **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

Consultation in this region is based on the following values and principles:

1. mutual respect
2. thoughtful contribution
3. acting in the public interest
4. intergenerational equity
5. timely and appropriate responsiveness
6. willingness and commitment
7. accountability and transparency
8. sharing and positive intent
9. adding value

In order to consult using these values and principles, the following approaches are encouraged:

1. Ensuring fit for purpose processes;
2. Setting clear, central goals, policies, and oversight that add value- then decentralising implementation
3. Pursuing a customised response, not one-size-fits-all
4. Using incentives in place of disincentives where possible
5. Being respectful of Council governance arrangements and timelines
6. Placing a greater reliance on risk management than on risk avoidance
7. Emphasising being performance and outcomes based rather than process and compliance focused in accountability and oversight
8. Recognising that consulting with the Joint Organisation is not an alternative to working directly with Councils, but an opportunity to optimise and codesign consultation in the interested of Joint Organisation members.

The region supports local decision making and decentralised, place based and collaborative implementation.

The Central NSW Joint Organisation is embedded in its membership and their communities and seeks advice through Councils from community. The Joint Organisation recognises it is well positioned for interfacing between Councils, their communities and other levels of government. The Central NSW Joint Organisation recognises a need in the nation for a more detailed understanding of our communities, their assets and aspirations. The Joint Organisation therefore seeks to work in collaboration with other levels of government to optimise our ability to develop and share our deep knowledge of the region.

## PROCEDURES

The Joint Organisation or RLE should be the first point of call when considering consultation in Central NSW. What may be a priority for those undertaking the consultation may not be a priority for stakeholders. Understanding this and what is happening in region are important considerations to ensuring optimal outcomes from a consultation.

Where possible, a consultation and or communication plan should be codesigned with the RLE and Joint Organisation.

Recommended approaches	What does this look like
Ensuring fit for purpose processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring you have the right people in the room</li> <li>• The Agenda will be provided by email at least one week before meeting. Any background reading should be provided one week before to allow attendees time to prepare. A power point format with slides clearly numbered will be shared where necessary.</li> <li>• Sufficient time for agenda items eg 5</li> <li>• minutes on risk management won't get you there'</li> <li>• Feedback loops are important - what</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• happened with the advice provided?</li> <li>• Only use confidentiality clauses, documents and agreements when it is required .</li> <li>• Ideally the process is codesigned with the Joint Organisation and RLE.</li> </ul>
Setting clear, central goals, policies, and oversight that add value- then decentralising implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to understand why you are consulting.</li> <li>• Try not to over promise and under deliver.</li> <li>• Try to include local departmental staff of the appropriate delegation.</li> <li>• Authorised representatives engaged in the consultation must have the necessary delegation to make informed and binding decision necessary to comply with policy and code of the Joint Organisation, any statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 or Regulation or any other law, rule or regulation affecting Joint Organisation.</li> </ul>
Pursuing a customised response, not one-size- fits-all;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek advice from the JO or RLE on the Local Government landscape.</li> <li>• Every region and every Council have different priorities and different capacities to engage.</li> <li>• Ideally the consultation process is codesigned with the Joint Organisation.</li> </ul>
Using incentives in place of disincentives where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils are often asked for data which they do not have, thoughtful approaches to resourcing data collection will lead to better outcomes.</li> </ul>
Being respectful of Council governance arrangements and timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice should be given for a meetings/workshops at least 6 weeks in advance;</li> <li>• Meetings will take place in a central location or via an audio-visual platform;</li> <li>• Meetings should go no longer than two hours;</li> <li>• Workshops/meetings will aim to finish before 3pm in order to allow for travel.</li> <li>• Bearing in mind that stakeholders in Central NSW may have travelled for hours to attend a consultation.</li> <li>• Refreshments should be provided for face-to-face meetings.</li> <li>• If the consultation seeks to have an adopted position of a Council or a Joint Organisation, sufficient time should be allowed for the requisite governance process;</li> <li>• Returning data collected from Councils to Councils.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include feedback loops on what happened as a result of the consultation.</li> </ul>
Placing a greater reliance on risk management than on risk avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only using confidentiality clauses and other processes when they are really required.</li> <li>• A bias towards sharing information where possible, so for example using "cabinet in confidence" when this is actually the case.</li> </ul>
Emphasising being performance and outcomes based rather than process and compliance focused in accountability and oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codesigning consultation will help achieve this.</li> <li>• The use of online platforms that allow for collaboration on outputs.</li> <li>• The use of issues papers co-written by stakeholders.</li> <li>• Ticking a box approaches are usually recognised by local government as just that.</li> </ul>
Recognising that consulting with the Joint Organisation is not an alternative to working directly with Councils, but an opportunity to optimise and codesign consultation in the interested of Joint Organisation members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation enables Council engagement coordinated by the JO.</li> <li>• Adequate time frames etc - see above.</li> <li>• Approach the RLE/JO for advice and support.</li> </ul>