



20 July 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Re: **Tweed Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy - Citizens Panel**

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia holds the vision of: *better decision-making, stronger communities, active democracies*. As the professional association working in the field of public participation, we are committed to advancing the practice of community engagement across Australasia in a number of ways; these include supporting and documenting leading practice, undertaking and supporting practitioner-led research, and in leading the integration and embedding of public participation throughout public and private sector organisations.

A significant body of research globally now provides the evidence base to support a rigorous, quality community engagement process that delivers real and positive impact for all stakeholders, particularly in

- improved decision making
- shared vision and understandings, and
- greater community involvement.

This, in turn, leads to sustainable outcomes, stronger communities and a more productive and cohesive society.

Increasingly, people want to participate in our democratic processes, and by putting people at the centre of the decision making that impacts their lives, better results are achieved. The work of community engagement professionals working within our Association's framework is assured as effective, and having the integrity and legitimacy to bring about strong, positive community outcomes. This work is based on the world-renowned IAP2 Spectrum (attached), and is backed up by a strong Code of Ethics which supports and reflects the seven Core Values of Public Participation.

Having reviewed the Tweed Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy, we are confident that this Plan holds to the values of IAP2, and follows the principles of community engagement necessary to bring about real change for good.

The commitment of the Tweed Shire Council to create a truly representative, demographically diverse, open and transparent process through the engagement of Citizens Panel is a best practice methodology that we support. Further, we support the aims and purpose of the Citizens Panel as it appears in the Tweed Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy:

Aim: To establish an unbiased representative community resource for ongoing feedback and comment to Council.

Purpose: Provide considered input regarding plans, priorities, services and performance. Citizen Panel members may be involved in surveys/polls and online forums. At times, focus/reference groups may also be sourced from members of the Citizens Panel. The Citizens Panel operates in partnership with other methods of community engagement. While it is just one of many methods defined in the Community Engagement Strategy, the panel is designed to provide input from community members who might otherwise not participate in the engagement process.

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasian Affiliate

PO Box 471, Warrandyte, VIC 3113 Tel : 03 9844 5499 Fax : 03 9844 2933 Email : info@iap2.org.au Web : www.iap2.org.au

ISBN : 61 198 064 285



On the understanding that proper process are observed and applied in regard to Confidentiality and Privacy requirements, our Association supports the request of Council to gain access to information from the electoral role. This information would enable Council to reach their constituents, particularly the traditionally hard-to-reach groups, and pursue their aims of engaging unbiased community representation by those community members who wish to participate.

Accordingly, as the approach by Tweed Shire Council represents a genuine attempt to reach a wide range of Tweed constituents who can represent diverse groups in respect of gender, age and geographical distribution to engage them in meaningful out-comes driven community engagement, IAP2 supports the approach by Tweed Shire Council to obtain, and protect, the information derived from their local government area.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Kimbra White
President
International Association for
Public Participation Australasia

Shires Association of NSW



Our ref: R90/0095-02 Out 19704
Your ref: CME1
22 July 2011

Mr Mike Rayner
General Manager
Tweed Shire Council
PO Box 816
MURWILLUMBAH NSW 2484

Support for Tweed Shire Council to gain access to the electoral role

Dear Mr Rayner,

We refer to the above matter and your letter dated 27 June 2011.

The Association has had the chance to peruse Tweed Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy and are very supportive of the endeavors of council in implementing the Strategy.

This includes the creation of the innovative Tweed Shire Citizens Panel.

The Association was disappointed by the decision of the NSW Electoral Commissioner to refuse to provide an electronic copy of the Tweed Electoral Roll for council to use its Community Engagement Strategy.

The Association acknowledges that the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* does not allow the use of personal information for a purpose other than for which it was collected but are not aware of any other means of obtaining the information required for Tweed Shire Council to implement the Tweed Shire Citizens Panel.

This may weigh significantly on the question of public interest when deciding on providing access to the electoral roles.

As Tweed Shire Council have provided a guarantee that the Electoral Roll will only be used for the purposes of establishing the Tweed Shire Citizens Panel, the Association is happy to provide our support that the Electoral Commissioner provide Tweed Shire Council access to the Electoral Roll for this single purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Cr Ray Donald
President
Shires Association of NSW



GPO Box 7003 Sydney NSW 2001
L8, 28 Margaret St Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9242 4000 • Fax: (02) 9242 4111
www.lgsa.org.au • lgsa@lgsa.org.au
ABN 49 853 913 882

