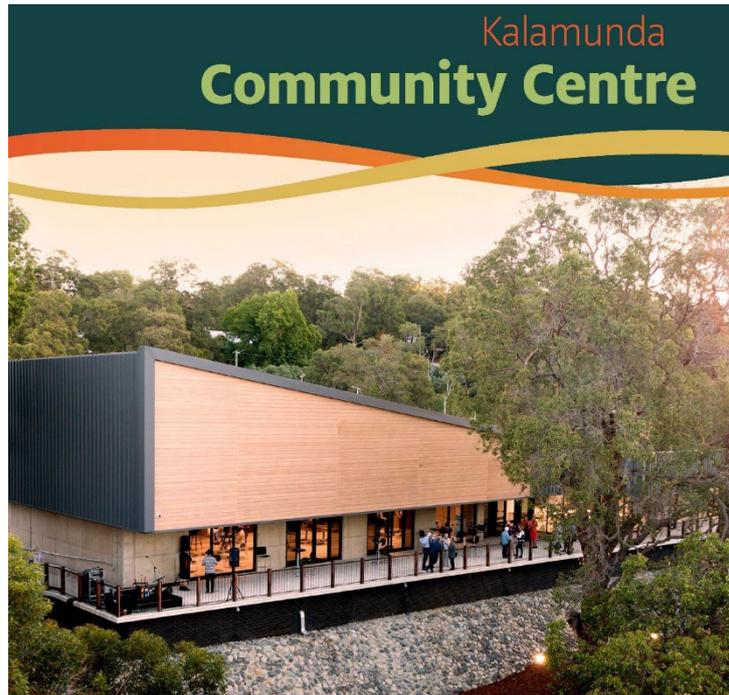


Case Studies Series 2021

Core Values Awards 2021 Entry

Case Study 1:

Kalamunda Community Centre



Highlights at a glance

- A City of Kalamunda project within the Perth Hills of Western Australia.
- City-created Community Reference Group to oversee design and construction.
- More than \$6.6 million in grant funding received covering entire project thanks to strong community and City-led advocacy.
- Empowering the community through strong collaboration resulting in high level of community ownership, satisfaction and pride.
- Case study showcases benefits of community empowerment with initial contention amongst various stakeholder groups in regard to the building location successfully resolved through the City's engagement methodology and implementation process.

Key search words: Local government, community vision, deliberative engagement, collaborate, reference group

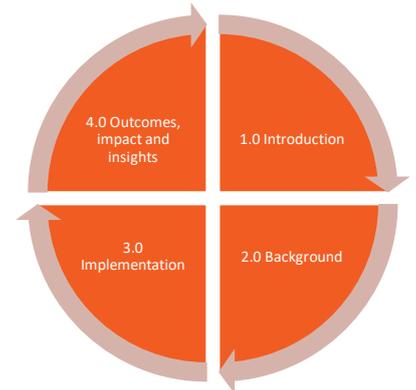
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1.0 Introduction

To empower is to place decision-making through a process underpinned with the principles of mutual trust, transparency and inclusiveness so the final decision making is placed in the hands of the public. Following years of community engagement and advocacy to obtain funding and in response to a strong community need, in January 2019, the City appointed Bollig Design Group to design the new Kalamunda Community Centre. The new facility would replace the Jorgensen Park Pavilion, a repurposed golf club room which had reached its end of life and provide a new home for the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre whose membership had grown to more than 800 members in recent years.



This case study showcases the significant community and project benefit that can be achieved through collaboration and empowerment. The proposed location of the new Kalamunda Community Centre was contentious in the community however, cohesion was achieved via the establishment of a community reference group, comprising members of the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre, local neighbours, the Friends of Jorgensen Park, dog walkers, nature lovers and interested community members.

The Kalamunda Community Centre was funded from the Federal Government (\$1 Million), Lotterywest (\$2.5 Million) and the State Government of Western Australia (\$3 Million) with a \$150,000 contribution from the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre.

We engage with our community because meaningful and effective community engagement will make us a better local government more able to meet community needs and aspirations. The reference group put forward a final proposed location which was accepted by all parties and stakeholders resulting in a strong sense of community ownership. The project's wider engagement included a naming competition and a strong informing campaign throughout design and construction phases.

Section 2.0 provides an overview of the project background and public participation context including how the engagement project was designed and planned. Section 3.0 describes the implementation phase including how the engagement was managed from delivery through to analysis and reporting. Section 4.0 presents a reflection of the engagement with a focus on evaluation outcomes, impact and insights as well as evidence against the IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation.

Genuine and quality consultation can contribute significantly to deliberative democracy, building trust and confidence in people and unleashing their potential as citizens. The early and continuous community involvement from concept through construction has been one of the project's most significant achievements and meant community involvement was not a singular moment but an effort from beginning to end. This case study shows the importance of community empowerment in resolving contentious issues and how initial contention amongst various stakeholder groups in regards to the building location was successfully resolved through the chosen engagement methodology and implementation process.



2.0 Background

Design engagement

The City is committed to doing more than the minimum when it comes to community engagement and public participation. The initial project concept was developed by the City of Kalamunda in consultation with the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre and other potential users. The new premises needed to be accessible for a wide range of user groups of many ages and abilities.

The existing Pavilion was used by after school arts, Kalamunda Community Learning Centre, The Mankind Project and the Darling Range Naturalists Club. Council adopted the new building design in June 2019, following extensive consultation with the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre as the largest user group, along with wider community consultation, and the creation of the Community Reference Group. Early strategic, community engagement planning focused on stakeholder mapping and issues identification. The location of the new building emerged as a contentious issue with a variety of conflicting community views. This was important to resolve to allow the project to progress in a timely manner. Establishing the Community Reference Group was key to the project's success and ensured the design phase was completed on time and budget.

Extensive community consultation was undertaken across the project, including the creation of the reference group to provide meaningful information and feedback on all matters relevant to the planning, location, and design of the new Kalamunda Community Centre. The reference group was made up of 12 members - two (2) elected members appointed by Council, two (2) City staff representatives, one (1) representative from each of the three stakeholders and five (5) representatives from interest and community groups.

Integrated property and construction group Pindan began construction in February 2020. The official commencement of construction on 31 January 2020 was attended by Premier Mark McGowan, Hasluck MP Ken Wyatt and Kalamunda MP Matthew Hughes. Throughout the project planning and build phases, the City maintained a focus on social justice principles - equity, access, participation and rights - and gave due consideration to State planning and other relevant requirements to deliver an extraordinary facility accessible to both the local community and commercial sector. The City ensured that everyone that felt they had a stake in the project was able to have a voice. Aboriginal Elders and community members were engaged throughout the project with cultural protocols at the heart of engagement.

From March to May 2020, consultation was undertaken regarding naming suggestions for the new facility. In accordance with Council policy, any person was invited to submit suggestions although submissions had to include relevant information in order to meet criteria set by the City. Of the 80 names received, six were shortlisted by a selection panel for the public vote. The shortlisted names* were: Bibbulmun Community Centre; Cala Munda Community Centre; Cala Community Hub; Jorgensen Community Centre; Kaartdijin Community Centre and Kalamunda Community Centre. Public voting on the shortlisted.

The reference group was a vital component in the project's successful delivery with members helping the City to understand and stay across local issues and community concerns. The City of Kalamunda engaged with the wider community to ensure they were kept informed during construction. Engagement elements were designed to increase community awareness of the project and its benefits and to create a sense of ownership, including asking the community to name the new centre.

- Community Advocacy
- Strategic Planning
- New Building Announcement
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Reference Group
- Reconciliation

Plan engagement

The Engagement and Communications Plan for the project had the following core objectives:



- To empower community to make decisions in regard to the design and development of the Kalamunda Community Centre.
- To keep Stakeholders including community members up to date with latest developments regarding the build of Kalamunda Community Centre and how it will impact them.
- Increase community engagement via the naming competition for Kalamunda Community Centre
- To align communication with stakeholder needs and expectations.
- To increase community awareness of the project and its benefits.
- To create a sense of optimism and ownership among stakeholders.
- Influence 100 stakeholders to provide suggestions to name the new Kalamunda Community Centre. 100 survey responses.

In terms of reach, the plan set out the following minimum requirements.

- Direct contact via letter to Stakeholders and residents surrounding Jorgensen Park.
- 2,000 people via social media posts on all City of Kalamunda platforms.
- Four placements of adverts in local newspapers.
- Posters displayed where the current community events are taking place.
- Community Reference Group to be established.

The Community reference group had the following objectives:

- To consider all matters relevant to the planning, location and design of the Kalamunda Community Centre (the Centre).
- To provide advice, local knowledge and information to the City about local implications and opportunities for consideration during the planning and design of the Centre.
- To liaise and consult, with individuals in the community and community groups that will assist in understanding local issues and concerns.

It was important when planning the consultation to determine what the focus was: getting the ‘right result’ or ensuring the processes and procedures are likely to result in an outcome that every participant can live with. A decision is more likely to be deemed legitimate if all participants concur on the process

3.0 Implementation

As the needs of our community evolve, so too must our community spaces. With this idea underpinning the community centre visioning, design and build components, the City has delivered a space that is both innovative and able to serve a variety of interests.

The City undertook stakeholder mapping to understand who may have an interest or an impact in the project. The City’s work in advocating for and promoting the delivery of a purpose-built community centre started at a grassroots level more than a decade ago and has delivered best practice across all stages of the project.

At the start of the engagement campaign the City set its objectives and developed a Communication and Engagement Plan. This included setting Key Performance Indicators, implementation Timeframes, Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis, Stakeholder Mapping: Interest–Influence Grid, Communications Analysis Matrix, Key Messages, Tactics & Tools and Accountability Framework: RACI Matrix, Activity Schedule and Budget. The emphasis on community consultation was significant with the City calling for the Kalamunda Community Centre Reference Group in 2017 to assist with all aspects of the final design and build. The reference group comprised local residents, direct neighbours, Friends of Jorgensen Park, Kalamunda Community Learning Centre representatives and other interested stakeholders, all with one outcome – to create a multi-purpose community hub. Community consultation then continued with the naming of the facility. From March to May 2020, consultation was undertaken to seek naming suggestions for the building. Some 80 responses were received with six shortlisted and put to a community vote with Kalamunda Community Centre the overwhelming winner.



The City worked closely with the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre to lead the advocacy campaign and raise the many millions of dollars needed for the project. Accessibility was one of the key criteria for the new centre with advice sought from the Kalamunda Disability and Carers’ Advisory Committee to help create the design brief.

The appointment of architect Bollig Design Group ensured the facility would meet the needs of the region’s changing and aging community and exceed the current statutory requirements for disability access.

Similarly, the City’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was also used to guide the facility’s design to ensure programs and services offered could be accommodated and delivered to a diverse community now and in the future.

The early and continuous community involvement from concept through construction has been one of the project’s most significant achievements and meant community involvement was not a singular moment but an effort from beginning to end.

By activating the community first, the City was able to focus on delivering a multi-purpose facility that will meet the needs of local residents in regard to culture and lifestyle, infrastructure, community health and wellness and economic development not just now but for many years to come.

This community-led focus continued from pre-construction to close out with all stakeholders, consultants and subcontractors working to deliver best practice across Project Management; Shared Leadership; Risk Management and Project Delivery to effectively schedule and deliver the best project outcome on time and budget.

The City’s Manager Customer and PR Nicole O’Neill oversaw the community engagement plan’s management and implementation with the staff Communications Advisor responsible for its execution in

The City of Kalamunda website hosted project updates and acted as the interface for the community to submit their proposed names in phase one, and the voting mechanism in phase two. Ongoing regular communication with all internal stakeholders was conducted via email and face to face staff meetings. Information for the community was also delivered through the City of Kalamunda Newsletter and monthly eNews. Social media was used to disseminate key messaging. Ads notifying the public of the naming competition – phase one and two - were placed in the local newspaper with the chosen name announced prior to the official opening event in March 2021.

Face to face meetings with the Community Reference Group, along with one-on-one meetings with each of the user groups was extremely important to the project’s success and supported by walk throughs during the construction phase and community tours post practical completion. Surveys were also used in the project’s early stages to understand the wider community’s views. The Community engagement project was successful because there was clarity about the decisions to be made, appropriate choices were made regarding the role of the public, and core values were expressed throughout the process.

Kaya. The new Centre is Moorditch. I was proud to do Welcome to Country and see Noongar language used at the Centre. Was happy to work with the City. – Whadjuk-Noongar Elder Neville Collard.

The City of Kalamunda now have a Community Centre to be proud of both in its situation and in the way council and ratepayers were able to interact (argue and agree) and establish a modern building which will be used by many organisations into the future. – Glynn Tomazin

Reflection and evaluation of engagement

Review and Evaluation

The objective of our review and evaluation component was to monitor the effectiveness of the Communications and Engagement Plan, to identify elements of the strategy that worked well and highlight areas that did not perform as anticipated. Review and evaluation is a dynamic process that provides opportunities for new ideas and improvements to be incorporated into the strategy, and for the Plan to be adjusted to account for changing circumstances. Whilst the formation of the reference group was not part of the original Community engagement plan, it proved critical to the success of the project. It was important to be flexible as the project commenced and ensure that we were adaptive to the needs to the community.

Conclusion

This project will have a significant positive impact for the Kalamunda Community. The vision underpinning the Kalamunda Community Centre is that of a vital community hub delivering a distinct sense of place and belonging. Community engagement and the process utilised throughout the design and construction phase was pivotal to the success of the project.

The building has been designed to be a flexible with specific spaces dedicated to various community groups, along with a large range of other casual hires including seniors, children, families, keep-fit activities, meetings and gatherings.

Through both the services delivered by the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre, and bookings for one-off training and other learning opportunities the new infrastructure plays an important role in bringing people together, helping to form friendships and social support networks, and in helping communities to develop life skills and resilience. A 2018 study by Swinburne University found 1 in 4 older Australians feel lonely always or often. Having a place to visit regularly is vital for many older people. It provides routine, something to look forward to and new opportunities. Similarly, it's important local youth have a safe space to visit and take part in new activities. The new centre provides classes and events such as physical, creative or social activities. The centre's programming offers countless opportunities for young people to make friends and learn new skills. Programs and classes offered at the Centre promote healthy living and encourage creativity and culture. The new community hub promotes a culture of wellbeing across social, mental and physical health.

From an economic perspective, the community centre delivers some amazing benefits including an affordable option for those seeking a venue for one-off social and family events; community integration of community members living with a disability; new business attractions; year-round boost to visitors and long-term community sustainability.

As a multi-purpose facility, the economic benefits to the City are realised by the reduction of single purpose venues and maintenance costs and more efficient use of the integrated space. In addition, as the Centre is located just outside the Kalamunda Town Centre, it is anticipated visitors to the Centre will create a flow on effect to the local cafes and services.

From an environmental viewpoint, great emphasis was placed on highlighting and enhancing the magnificent natural bush surroundings (the Centre is located in the beautiful Hedley Jorgensen Park, adjacent to the Kalamunda National Park). The timber and stone design textures give the building a natural feel, paying tribute to its surrounds. The facility is north facing to take advantage of natural light and also features a balcony overlooking the valley with spectacular views. The building was designed specifically without gutters to ensure the water runs off the roof into specially made swales, that send the water into living stream of Jorgenson Park and ultimately Piesse Brook, a significant waterway identified as a rare wildlife corridor that runs from the Darling Scarp to the Swan Coastal Plain and into the Helena River catchment. The Community Centre was built and designed to nestle in harmony with the

picturesque bushland and preserve the vital habitat for the endangered Carnaby Black Cockatoo who return to the area each year to breed. Getting people involved can be one of the most important and most challenging part of community engagement. Success in this area was one of the projects major wins. Community engagement without adequate participants is ineffective, a waste of resources, a lost opportunity and disheartening for the staff involved and those community members who did participate.

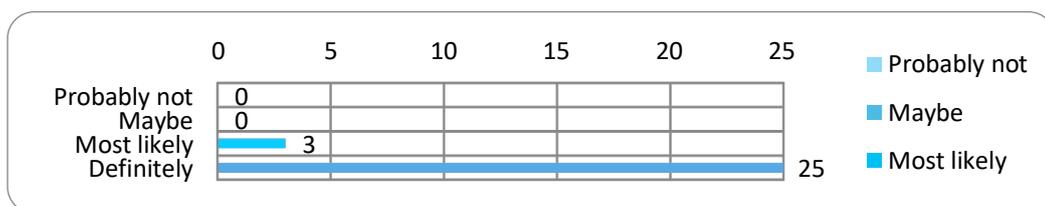
Putting the effort into designing good community engagement, which attracts a significant number and diversity of participants, not only created better outcomes it created positive relationships between the local government and the Community. It increased acceptance of decisions, reinforced to Council and Staff the value of community engagement and encouraged the Community to participate in future community engagement activities.

When the project was completed, we held a launch event and invited the community to tour the facility and provide feedback. All members of the Community Reference Group were taken on the first tour. The Premier of Western Australia also toured the facility. Feedback was as follows:

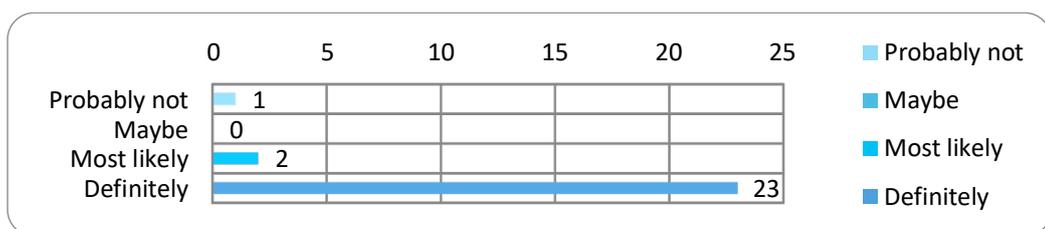
Did you enjoy your tour?



I would recommend the centre to friends and family.



I would recommend the centre to my community group(s).



The City received hundreds of complements, with people sharing what they loved about the Centre. Community members were a part of the decision-making process. The City is committed to providing ongoing, well-planned and credible community engagement in accordance with Kalamunda Engages – its community engagement strategy. As the form of government closest to the people, local government has always taken an active approach to engaging with the community. The Local Government Act 1995 contains a legislative requirement to ensure community input is a part of the decision making process and best practice recommends Councils’ should formally adopt a Community Engagement Strategy, as Kalamunda has done. The City of Kalamunda takes pride in the strong and collaborative relationships it has developed with community members. Community engagement can occur in many different ways depending on the situation, priorities and outcomes required. This project showcases one of the many the City has successful undertaken, improving understanding both within and outside of the local government and demystifying the concept of community engagement for all.

Alignment with IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation

IAP2 Core Values	Example or evidence from this project
1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process	The City of Kalamunda established a Community Reference Group to ensure that stakeholders had the ability to directly impact decision making. The reference group decided on the location of the building, along with choosing colour schemes and design elements.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision	To get everyday people in the room making a considerable time commitment, they need to know that the recommendations they reach mean something and won't be consumed within the bureaucracy. The City of Kalamunda moved the location of the building based on feedback from the Community Reference Group, particularly local residents. The City also worked with the local Aboriginal community, and had a series of one-on-one conversations and meetings in regards to the room names. A member of the Whadjuk Noongar Community suggested rooms should be named after a Noongar colour which the City adopted and actioned.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers	<p>The City of Kalamunda engaged with the wider community to ensure they were kept informed during the construction of the centre. Engagement was designed to increase community awareness and benefits of the project; and to create a sense ownership, including asking the community to name the new centre.</p> <p>The City also worked with the local Aboriginal community, and had a series of one-on-one conversations and meetings, along with undertaking a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country. A member of the Whadjuk Noongar Community suggested rooms should be named after a Noongar colour which the City adopted and actioned.</p>
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision	<p>The City identified that one of the main Stakeholders, the Kalamunda Community Learning Centre, had a significant amount of input into the project, and had assisted with advocacy. A Community Reference Group was established, to ensure all stakeholders had equal opportunity. Local neighbours had indicated concerns to both the Council and the State MP in regard to the potential location.</p> <p>The reference group was a vital component in the project's successful delivery with members helping the City to understand and stay across local issues and community concerns.</p>
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate	The reference group was asked to decide on their terms of reference, reviewing the draft, making changes and then finalising the document. Community opinions, ideas, and perspectives were sought with sincerity and considered a valuable and positive part of the City's planning processes and service delivery.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way	All available information on the project was utilised as a part of the Naming Competition so that community members had necessary background in order to put forward a name and why they felt it should be called that name. Names were then published for community voting.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision	The City ensured a strong communication campaign throughout the project, so that community members understood the role of the reference group, how the location was determined, and what stage the project was at. All members of the reference group were invited to attend the official opening of the new Kalamunda Community Centre. From March to May 2020, consultation was undertaken regarding naming suggestions for the new facility.

Acknowledgements and to find out more

City of Kalamunda



We would like to thank the City of Kalamunda for agreeing to share this case study and insights to advance engagement practice. This case study was authored by Nicole O’Neill and peer reviewed by Kath Parkinson.

At the time of publishing, Nicole O’Neill was employed by City of Kalamunda in the position of Manager of Customer and PR. She has experience in the local government sector, not-for-profit and commercial sectors and expertise in empowering the community. Nicole was the Local Government Professionals WA Emerging Leader of the Year in 2020 for her work in community engagement. Nicole has a Bachelor of Communications with a double Major in PR and Advertising, a Graduate Diploma in Education, Diploma’s in Community Development, Public Relations and Mass Communications. Nicole had also completed Certificate of Engagement Courses and is a highly competent facilitator. Nicole O’Neill was engaged by IAP2A to support practitioners to share their engagement story as a case study.

For more information about this project see:

- www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au
- <https://engage.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/>
- [City of Kalamunda - Home | Facebook](#)
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/cityofkalamunda/>
- [City of Kalamunda \(@cityofkalamunda\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)
- [City of Kalamunda \(@CityofKalamunda\) / Twitter](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNji8DogWlQ0tWitLVepJNw>

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- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/noneill1> – link to LinkedIn profile

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