

# Buninyong Town Hall

COUNCIL CHAMBER

CITY OF BALLARAT

## Community Consultation Report

CITY OF  
BALLARAT 



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# 1. Executive Summary

The Buninyong Town Hall DDA upgrade provides City of Ballarat an opportunity to remove barriers and improve accessibility of the historical building so more people can access and use the hall without limitations.

This report presents the findings from all community feedback collected as part of the Buninyong Town Hall DDA Works community engagement process spanning March and April 2025.

The consultation consisted of 2 community drop-in sessions, 1 direct Senior Citizens consultation and an online My Say consultation opportunity. The project attracted a total of 583 visitors to the My Say page with 6 contributors, 2 of which identified as having a disability. In total, approximately 30 people visited the community drop-in sessions and 30 people attended the senior citizens consultation providing feedback to Council staff members. The concept plans that were on display were supported by community members and additional feedback was received on items both in and out of scope of this project.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Engagement

The City of Ballarat engaged hall user groups, local Buninyong residents and interested community members in a plan to upgrade the Buninyong Town Hall to increase accessibility through various consultations. The project will involve modifications to entry points, stage access, internal doorways and toilet facilities. These works will ensure that the building is Australian Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and creates an accessible space for all.

## 1.2 Findings and Themes

### Items within the scope of the works

- Alterations to the garden and pathway connections
- Alterations/adaptions to the entry points
- Improvements to signage and lighting along the new entry, entry path and new foyer.
- Alterations to the toilet facilities
- Alterations/improvements to internal doorways and access points

### Items outside the scope of the works

- Carpark upgrades
- Upgrade to heating/cooling
- Storage considerations
- Changes to governance structure, booking and maintenance processes
- Building Wiring upgrade
- AV installation
- Community activities
- Promotion of hall
- Synthetic grass out the front replaced with garden beds
- Lifting of front floorboards to expose heritage tiles

## 2. Project Overview

### 2.1 Background

The Buninyong Town Hall, Council Chamber and Court House complex was built in 1886. The Buninyong Court operated in the building from 1887 to 1980 when it was then declared redundant. It was later used as the meeting chamber of the Shire of Buninyong. In December 1993 the Local Government Board recommended a new super Council for greater Ballarat. This signalled the end of the Shire of Buninyong, which held its last meeting in April 1994.

The Council Chambers are now occupied by the Buninyong Historical Society. The Town Hall and meeting rooms are managed by the Buninyong Town Hall Community Asset Committee and are commonly used for community activities, events and programs. The Town Hall complex is on the Victorian Heritage Register, and included in the Buninyong Heritage Precinct of the City of Ballarat's Planning Scheme.

Due to the age of the building and audits conducted, the Buninyong Town Hall has been identified by City of Ballarat for a DDA compliance upgrade, as part of councils works program.

### 2.2 Project Scope

The project will deliver key outcomes including:

- Improved universal access for people with a disability and those with access needs
- Increase mobility between various areas of the hall
- An increase in social cohesion within the community, as people are more likely to feel welcomed and included within the space

The project deliverables are:

- Construction of an accessible entry
- Upgrades to allow full access to the stage
- Increasing the size of doorways access points
- Creating clear pathways to carparks
- Minor adjustments to circulation spaces in toilets.

Additionally, a range of negotiables and non-negotiables were identified.

<b>Non-negotiables</b> <i>What cannot be influenced in the project</i>	<b>Negotiables</b> <i>What can be influenced in the project (by community engagement).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heritage Vic approval</li><li>• DDA Compliance requirements</li><li>• No Resealing of the back carpark</li><li>• Items outside of DDA Compliance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stage access options for people with accessibility needs</li><li>• Access paths</li><li>• Internal and external styling/colouring within heritage approvals</li><li>• Internal and external access points</li></ul>

## 3. Community Engagement Process

### 3.1 Stakeholder Map

The following table outlines key stakeholder groups:

Stakeholder Group	Likely Engagement Interests	Engagement Level
<b>Buninyong Community Asset Committee</b>	Broad understanding on the users of the facility and their needs associated with the hall	<b>Involve</b> - High need for this group to be involved within the process as management committee of the hall. Gain an understanding of the connection to the hall by community and any barriers from accessing the space.
<b>Buninyong Senior Citizens</b>	Key user group with high need for works to support their use of the hall	<b>Consult</b> - Gain an understanding of the connection to the hall by community and any barriers from accessing the space.
<b>Hall User Groups</b>	Key user group with high need for works to support their use of the hall	<b>Consult</b> - Gain an understanding of the connection to the hall by community and any barriers from accessing the space.
<b>Local Residents</b>	Connection to the Hall. High interest in potential remediation works and impacts to the hall.	<b>Consult</b> - Gain an understanding of the connection to the hall by community and any barriers from accessing the space.
<b>Heritage Victoria</b>	Protecting the built heritage of the area	<b>Involve</b> - Heritage Victoria will be consulted with to provide Heritage approvals prior to construction commencing.

### 3.2 Communications and Promotion

The April consultation process comprised of a localised, multi faceted approach. Promotion of the various engagement opportunities through multiple communication channels including:

- Buninyong Community Newsletter.
- Direct email to user groups encouraging to share to members
- My Say page. Ability to include those not able to attend engagement sessions. Encourage attendees of focus group sessions to “follow” my say page for updates.
- Word of Mouth
- Targeted Social Media (paid ad targeting Buninyong residents)

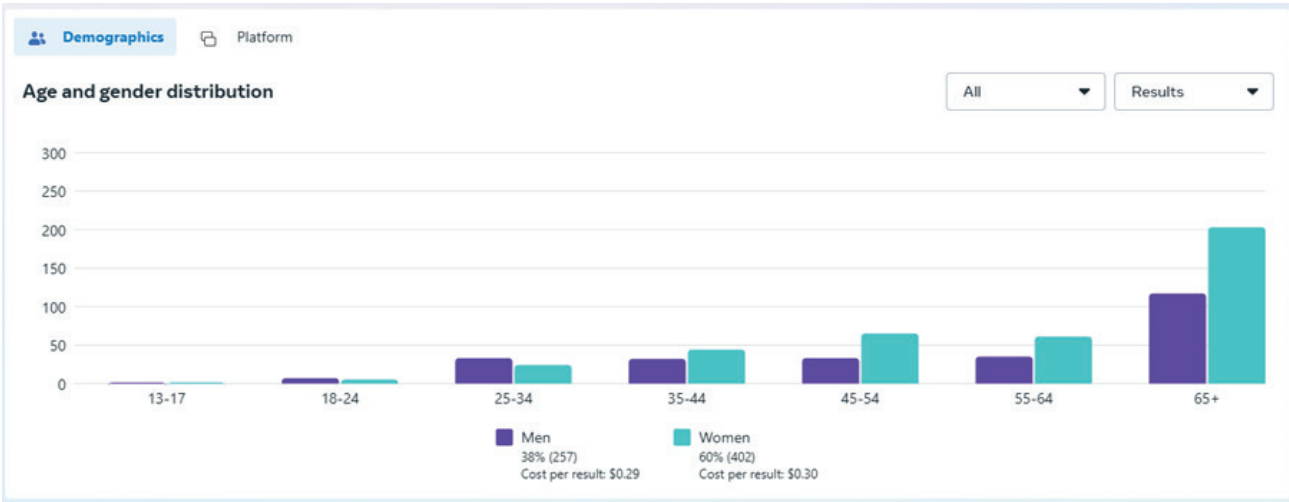
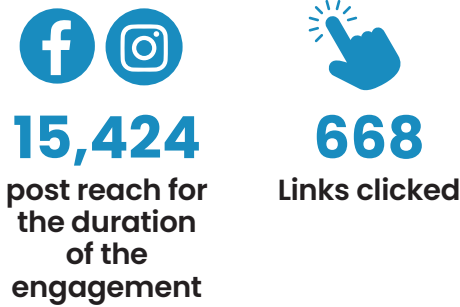
### 3.3 Engagement Overview

#### How we Engaged

We had a total of 66 individuals engaged in providing feedback either online or in person.



#### Social Media





## MySay Engagement

### Highlights

TOTAL VIEWS

**663**

TOTAL VISITS

**628**

TOTAL VISITORS

**583**

CONTRIBUTORS

**6**

CONTRIBUTIONS

**6**

FOLLOWERS

**2**

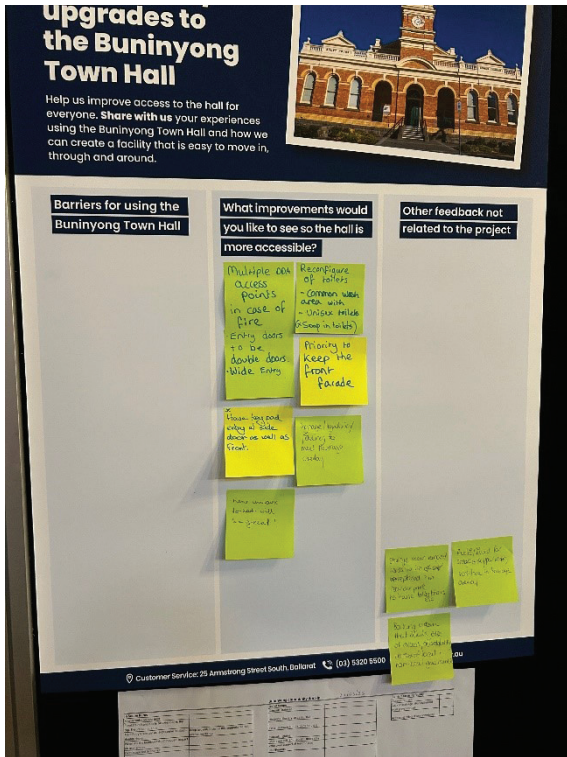
### Total of 6 responses | Demographic

- 3 were Buninyong residents  
3 were community members
- 4 were male, 1 female and 1 preferred not to say
- 2 identified with having a disability
- 3 did not select a demographic identity
- 1 did not say
- 1 was aged between 12-25  
2 were aged between 26-35  
3 were 65+

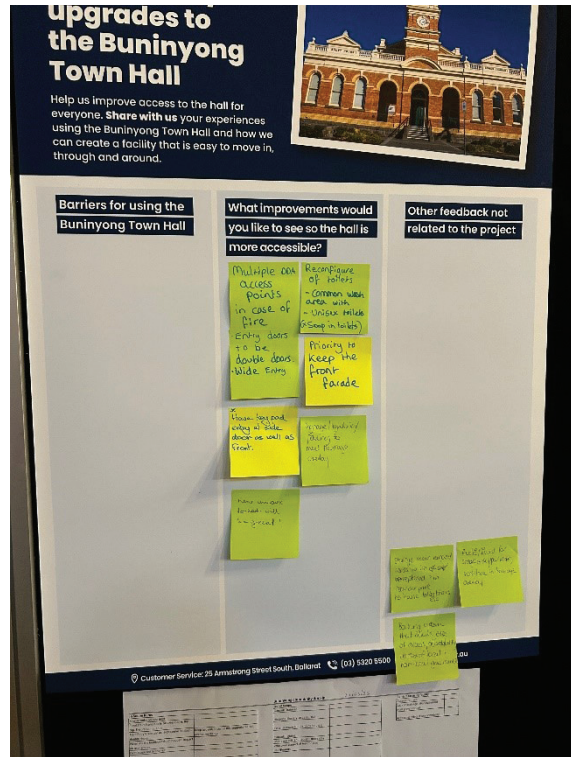
The face- to- face drop in sessions were held at allocated times to achieve the greatest opportunity for users of the hall to contribute to the feedback.

These included:

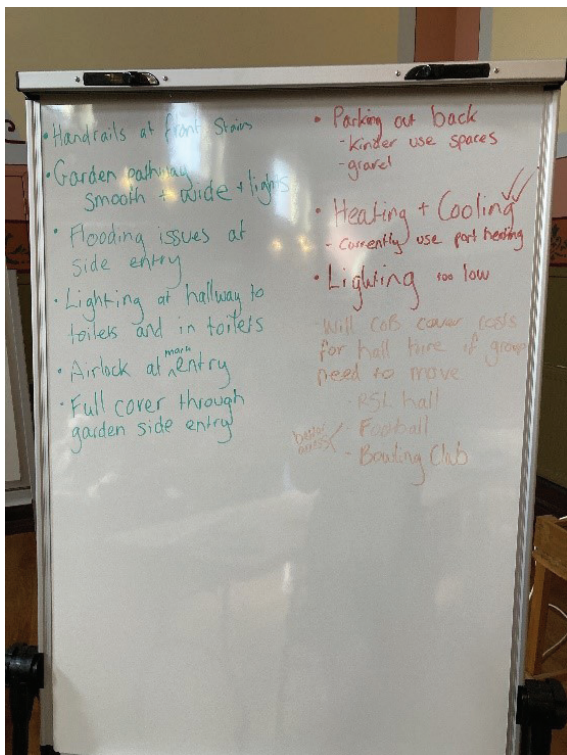
- 1x daytime drop in session- Thursday 27 March, 2pm-3pm.
- 1 x evening session in conjunction with Let’s Chat Buninyong Ward engagement session. Monday 31 March, 4pm-7pm.
- 1x senior citizens session- key user group of the hall. Tuesday 8 April.



Let's Chat Buninyong



| Drop in Community Consultation



Senior Citizens Consultation

## 4. What we heard

### 4.1 Themes and Insights

#### Items within the scope of the works

- Alterations to the garden and pathway connections
  - » You told us that the garden on the western side is a highly valued feature of the hall; however, alterations to the path are needed.
  - » You asked us to create a garden path that was wide enough to cater for wheelchairs and walkers as well as a smooth surface to ensure ease of use.
  - » You told us that water access for this garden is important, and the current tap location requires a hose to be run over the path.
- Alterations/adaptions to the entry points
  - » You told us that the front entry is of significant value to the community and should be kept as a secondary entry point to support community activities.
  - » A handrail to the front entry needs to be adapted to go all the way to the top and is heatproof.
  - » New entry point to be double doors with the inclusion of a keypad entry and automatic opening if possible.
  - » Considerations around multiple DDA entry points for safety
  - » Construct an airlock and entry shelter within the new entry point
  - » Address the flooding issues at the current side entrance
  - » Alterations to the Learmonth Street path entry point with the removal of the posts that obstruct access to wide mobility aids.
  - » New signage is required
- Improvements to lighting at new entry, pathways, hallway to toilets and within the toilets- consideration for sensor lights
- Carpark drainage upgrades
- Alterations to the toilet facilities with the potential of self-flushing, unisex toilets, a common wash area with soap
- Wiring upgrade due to circuit breaks occurring
- Alterations/improvements to internal doorways and access points

**Items outside the scope of the works**

- Carpark upgrades including resealing
- Allocation of parking
- Upgrade to heating/cooling
- Additional storage considerations due to removing of current internal storage
- Changes to governance structure, booking and maintenance processes
- Additional power supply to back carpark
- AV installation
- Community activities
- Promotion of hall
- Upgrades to Courthouse side of building
- Security upgrades including CCTV
- Implement a new sensory area
- Synthetic grass out the front replaced with garden beds
- Lifting of front floorboards to expose heritage tiles
- Lighting improvements to supper room

**Items previously identified and included within the draft design**

- Alterations to the servery to be more user friendly

## 5. Feedback and Implementation

### Items in scope

Feedback	Implementation
The front entry is of significant value to the community and should be retained with the addition of a handrail that is not subject to heat which runs to the top of the stairs.	Noted the importance of this entry for events, weddings etc.  An extension to the handrail is included within the project scope.
New entry point to be automatic double doors with the inclusion of proper drainage, prevent ingress of leaves, an air lock and awning to protect community from the elements.	Noted and will be considered within the project scope with design guidance from heritage Victoria. The available space may restrict the ability to provide air lock/ automatic doors.  Entry canopy is included in project scope which will provide protection over entry door.
Key pad entry on side door, which will become new entry	Noted and will be identified for consideration in project scope.
Alterations to the Learmonth St entry to be considered as current gates too narrow for mobility aids	Noted and can confirm this is part of the project scope.
Alterations to drainage from carpark	Noted and can confirm that stormwater flowing down the footpath is a hazard and is included in the project scope.
Alterations to the garden and pathway connections need to be wide and smooth enough for mobility aids.	Noted and can confirm that this is part of the project scope
Water access to help tender the garden to be relocated to a location that reduces trips and falls	Noted and works to rectify this issue will be included within the project scope.
Improvements to signage for the building	Noted with heritage requirements to be considered.  Wayfinding signage is part of the project scope.
Improvements to lighting at entry points and pathways especially within the hallways and toilet area- consideration for sensor lights	External lighting for the new main entry and pathway will be included in the project, pathway and entry lights would be on timer and/or sensor controls yet to be designed.  Ballarat City Council are currently investigating electrical issues within the town hall.

## Items in scope

Feedback	Implementation
Improvements to the toilets to be more accessible- consider unisex with shared wash area- soap to be made available- auto flushing to be considered	Minor improvements to toilet amenities and design included within the scope of the project. Amenities will meet the requirements of the NCC, DDA, public toilet strategy and City of Ballarat's building design standards.
Improvements to the internal doorways and access points to be more accessible	Improvements to the internal doorways to improve accessibility is part of the project scope.
Wiring upgrades within the hall	Noted and audit will be undertaken. Formal review of electrical services will inform future decision making
Access to the stage – with reconfigured entry will now be in 'main' entry	Noted. As the design progresses consideration will be given to ensure the stage access is screened from entry foyer.
Considerations of multiple DDA entry / exit points for safety	The improvements to the facility will abide by all DDA and National Construction Code legislation

## Items out of scope

Feedback	Implementation
Alterations to car park Surface, lighting, drainage, gradient, loading bay, ownership	The rear carpark is not fully within the title of the Town Hall. Easements exist within the carpark that make it difficult to formalise. These easements are the access points for adjacent properties.  Council will undertake investigations to identify any improvements that can be made to this space which may then become a project in a future budget.  A drainage strip between carpark and building is part of the project scope.
Allocation of parking for Senior Citizens	Accessible parking permits support an extended parking timeframe.
	Due to the limited parking that services the many businesses in the precinct there is currently not the support to issue permits to a specific user group.

## Items out of scope

Feedback	Implementation
Heating and Cooling improvements	<p>Initial investigations have occurred regarding options for heating improvements. The reconfigured entry location needs to be confirmed as this will impact on the potential locations for heating units to be installed.</p> <p>Once this project is complete heating improvements will become a future project following Council budgetary processes. Investigations will also occur to consider cooling requirements.</p> <p>Heritage considerations will form an important part of this future project.</p>
Portable heaters usage and tripping of circuit	<p>Noted and audit will be undertaken on electrical services to inform if any future works are required</p> <p>All equipment brought into the facility is required to have appropriate testing and tagging completed.</p>
Storage	<p>Comment noted. To be monitored on completion of project as increased provision may be apparent with change to design of toilets.</p>
AV installation	<p>Responsibility of Community Asset Committee</p>
Community Activities	<p>Noted and feedback will be shared with Community Asset Committee</p>
Removal of front floorboards to expose the heritage tiles	<p>Noted and may be considered for future investigation</p>
Changes to governance structure, booking and maintenance processes	<p>Noted and will communicate with Community Asset Committee.</p> <p>Maintenance processes are in line with City of Ballarat maintenance schedule and procedure.</p>
Synthetic grass to be removed and garden beds to be reinstated	<p>Comment noted, no works planned to change current landscaping.</p>
Lane beside town hall	<p>This is not within the boundary of the town hall. This is a private laneway</p>
Lighting improvements to supper room	<p>Outside the scope of works of this project.</p> <p>Landowner consent has been provided to the Community Asset Committee for minor improvement works</p>
Sheds	<p>Understand importance to community groups and will not be impacted by current project.</p>

## 6. Next Steps (closing the loop)

The following actions will be implemented to close the loop with community members and stakeholders following the engagement process.

The community engagement summary report will be showcased and available via:

- COB's My Say monthly engagement bulletin received by over 5,000 subscribers.
- The Buninyong Town Hall Community Asset Committee
- The Buninyong Senior Citizens group
- The Buninyong Town Hall Accessibility upgrade mysay page via news article and uploaded on the the page
- Direct email to community members who requested this report.

The project will now move through the Detailed Design process incorporating recommendations found via this Consultation report and the Gender Impact Assessment.



**The Phoenix | 25 Armstrong Street South, Ballarat, VIC 3350**  
**City of Ballarat | PO Box 655, Ballarat, VIC, 3353**

 03 5320 5500  [ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au)

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