

MAKING YOUR VOICE MATTER

YEAR 2 SUMMARY (2025)

Proudly working
with and for
our community



Thanks to everyone who shared their voice between 18 March and 30 April 2025.

We asked the Ballarat community how you'd like to be involved in Council decision-making — and over 340 people responded.

This summary shares what we heard, what worked well, and what we plan to do differently next time.

It also builds on last year's engagement, with a continued focus on making things more inclusive, accessible and meaningful for everyone — whether you're sharing your voice online, on paper or in person at a pop-up.

Our Engagement Goals

We ran this consultation to check how well our engagement tools are working and how we can improve them.

To build our understanding we wanted to:

- Hear from a broad mix of people in our community — especially those we don't usually hear from.
- Learn more about how the community prefers to be engaged to guide our future engagements.
- How we can make engagement easier, clearer and more inclusive for our community.

What did we do with your feedback?

We listened to your feedback and have used it to help shape how Council runs future engagement — especially how we design surveys, share engagements and reach more people in our community.

What we heard:

- 340 people completed the survey
- 36% were participating for the first time
- Most people prefer to engage:
 - Online via the MySay Ballarat platform
 - Through paper surveys
 - At pop-ups at community events
- Use of the MySay platform remains strong, with steady growth in membership and consistent community interest in online consultations.



- Around once a month
- Roughly once every 2-3 months
- Once or twice a year
- Less than once a year
- This is my first time

Who we heard from:

Respondents spanned all age groups, with most aged 36 to 65

- 64% identified as women
- 26% were on a low income
- 13.6% identified as living with disability
- 13% identified as LGBTQIA+

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Man	32.15%	109
Woman	64.31%	218
Non-Binary	1.18%	4
Prefer not to say	1.77%	6
Other	0.59%	2
Total	100.00%	339

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
I identify as LGBTQIA	13.02%	44
I am Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1.18%	4
I am a person with disability	13.61%	46
I am from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background	3.55%	12
I have a low income (e.g. I earn less than \$650 per week, receive a government pension or allowance, or hold a Health Care Card)	26.33%	89
None of the above	50.00%	169
Prefer not to say	7.69%	26

We listened to your feedback and have used it to help shape how Council runs future engagement

Throughout the consultation period, a series of in-person engagement opportunities were held at key community locations across Ballarat

Engagement Snapshot

Here's a quick look at how people engaged with the project online between 18 March and 30 April 2025.

- 1,858 page views
- 340 surveys submitted
- 109 downloads of the project summary and engagement materials
- Top traffic sources: 46% came via email campaigns, 33% direct links, and 8% via social media

What you told us:

- Keep it simple and easy to participate
- Give people more options — online, in person, and paper
- Close the loop more often and explain how feedback is used
- Not everyone knows when consultations are happening — promotion matters

In-person engagement and accessibility

Throughout the consultation period, a series of in-person engagement opportunities were held at key community locations across Ballarat. These included pop-ups at the Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre, Sebastopol Library, and the Delacombe Town Centre community day. While full event details are listed in the MySay project timeline, it's worth noting that QR code flyers and paper surveys were well received. Many community members appreciated the option to take surveys home and return them later using reply-paid envelopes — an approach that provided added flexibility for those unable to complete it on the spot.

These sessions reaffirmed the importance of offering a mix of formats to reach a broader cross-section of the community, particularly those who may not engage online.

Barriers to participation

Respondents — particularly those new to consultation — shared a range of challenges that made it difficult to participate in past or current engagement processes:

Limited internet access or digital confidence

Not everyone has reliable internet or feels confident navigating online platforms. This can exclude individuals from fully participating in digital consultations like MySay.

Time constraints

Some people said their work, caring responsibilities or other commitments left little time to engage, particularly if consultations were lengthy or required extra effort to access.

Lack of awareness

Several participants noted they simply didn't know when consultations were open or what topics were being explored. This highlighted a need for clearer, broader promotion.

Uncertainty about impact

A common concern was not knowing what happens after feedback is submitted. People wanted more transparency about how their input is used and whether it influences decisions.

Language and format

Some surveys were perceived as too complex or technical. Participants suggested using plain language and more accessible formats, especially for those with additional needs.

These insights will guide future improvements to make consultation more inclusive, approachable and transparent for all members of the community.

Spotlight on young voices

We met with 14 local students (Years 4–6) through our Children’s Advisory Group. They told us that surveys and online forms don’t always work for kids, and it’s important to reach them in schools and familiar spaces. We’ll continue exploring better ways to include younger residents in future decisions.

What’s next?

Based on what we heard, here’s how we plan to respond:

1. Improve the MySay experience

What you told us: People value MySay but want it to be faster, clearer and easier to navigate. Some found long surveys off-putting or didn’t realise consultations were open.

What we’ll do:

- Use shorter surveys where possible
- Include clearer instructions and key dates on project pages
- Review the layout and design of pages to improve readability
- Continue testing improvements with internal teams and community users

2. Create more accessible engagement formats

What you told us:

- Not everyone can engage online. Some prefer paper, face-to-face chats, or simpler formats. Others raised barriers like digital access, time, or unclear communication.

What we’ll do:

- Continue offering paper surveys with reply-paid envelopes
- Attend community events and pop-ups across the municipality where we can
- Use visual tools (e.g. posters, infographics) to simplify messaging
- Investigate options for translated materials and Easy English formats

3. Tailor future consultations for children and underrepresented groups

What you told us: younger residents, people living with disability, and those from CALD backgrounds may not feel consultations are designed with them in mind. Children said they find forms hard to access and need adult help to take part.

What we’ll do:

- Continue working with the Children’s Advisory Group to explore school-based engagement
- Continue to consider how we include young people’s voices in our engagement by designing child-friendly engagement activities.
- Review demographic trends to better target underrepresented voices
- Investigate how to work with community partners and advisory committees to reach CALD and disability communities more effectively

4. Keep community members updated with clear outcomes

What you told us: Some people weren’t sure what happened after they gave feedback — or whether it made a difference. You want more follow-up and transparency.

What we’ll do:

- Publish clear summary reports on MySay at the end of each consultation
- Share “you said, we did” updates where possible
- Encourage project teams to close the loop with email updates or social posts and utilise the follow function for interested parties to follow
- Investigate new ways to visibly demonstrate impact, including project timelines and decision-making stages

This year we also explored feedback from younger residents through the Children’s Advisory Group - a key step in making our engagement more inclusive

Building on last year’s feedback

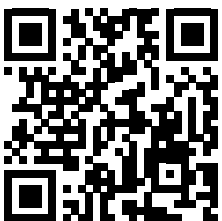
This year’s engagement builds on the original Making Your Voice Matter campaign in 2024, where we heard from over 600 community members. That feedback helped shape changes including:

- A cleaner layout and clearer instructions on MySay project pages
- Increased use of short, focused surveys
- A stronger emphasis on using plain language
- More pop-up engagement opportunities at community events

While 2025 saw fewer total contributors (340 people), the proportion of first-time participants remained strong (36% vs 40%), showing we continue to reach new voices. This year we also explored feedback from younger residents through the Children’s Advisory Group — a key step in making our engagement more inclusive.

You can read last year’s report here:

[Making Your Voice Matter Engagement Report 2024](#)



Want to stay involved?

Visit mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au or scan the QR code to sign up and be the first to hear about new consultations.



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All information correct at time of publication.