

Making your voice matter 2026

Community Engagement Summary



At a glance

Participation

77 community submissions

580 page views

Engagement Scope

11 internal teams engaged

Presence at major events

Listed on social media and in the Ballarat Times

Sent to **6,505** MySay subscribers



What we heard

Strong Alignment with our vision

“Successful community engagement is one in which the community feels heard, connected, and actively involved in shaping local decisions. Genuine inclusion and trust emerge when the community can see how their insights help shape real decisions. Effective engagement uses both traditional methods - such as surveys and information sessions - and also creates additional opportunities that ensure harder-to-reach community members can participate meaningfully”

100% of respondents strongly agree, or mostly agree with the vision

- Inclusive
- Transparent
- Impact-focused



Community have a mixed experience of engagement

Average satisfaction: 5.37 / 10

- Highly variable experiences

Awareness Gap

- People know about engagement... but don't always participate
- Biggest drop-off in in-person activities

Demand for Transparency

Top message:

“Show us how our feedback is used”

Preference for informal engagement

Most popular:

- Pop-ups, events, casual settings

Least popular:

- Formal meetings, council settings

Multi-channels needed

Top channels:

- Newsletter
- Website
- Social media
- No single channel reaches everyone

Barriers

What's stopping participation?

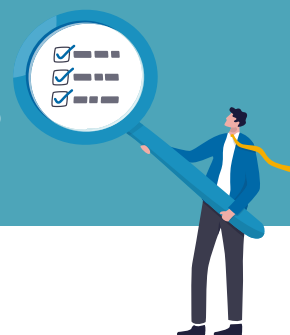
- Limited visibility of outcomes
- Engagement doesn't feel meaningful
- Communication gaps
- Timing and accessibility issues
- Platform usability challenges

What success looks like

“Successful engagement is when people feel heard and see real outcomes.”

Community says engagement should be:

- Welcoming & friendly
- Purposeful and impactful
- Interactive and engaging
- Transparent with clear follow-up
- Flexible and accessible



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Where to Next? Strengthening Community Engagement

Opportunities

Increase participation

Move beyond awareness → make engagement compelling

Build trust

Show impact of community input

Strengthen capability

Continue staff collaboration and training

Key message

Bottom line

Community members are willing to engage, but participation is not yet consistent. The key barriers are trust, visibility and perceived relevance. Improving engagement will depend on making opportunities easier to access, more meaningful for participants, and more transparent in how feedback is used.



Recommendations

01 Flexible & Accessible Engagement

- Offer varied times (incl. after hours)
- Provide online + in-person options

02 Improve Communication

- Promote across multiple channels
- Clearly explain opportunities & outcomes

03 Close the Loop

- Show what changed because of feedback
- Provide updates and follow-up

04 Reduce Barriers (MySay)

- Keep anonymous/no-login options
- Improve usability

05 Make Engagement More Engaging

- Interactive activities
- Community-based settings
- Friendly, informal approach

06 Multi-Channel Approach

- Combine digital + face-to-face
- Reach diverse audiences

07 Increase Transparency

- Clearly show decision-making process
- Demonstrate real impact

Building a more inclusive, transparent and impactful engagement approach for Ballarat.

