

# Keeping the Yarrowee Clean: Planned Yarrowee River Stormwater Litter Trap

Community Engagement Summary Report  
June 2025



# Executive Summary

The City of Ballarat is planning to install a large stormwater litter trap across the Yarrowee River (Yaramlok), approximately 1.5 kilometers downstream of the city center. This proposed site, within the Sunnyside Mill precinct, is a key access point to the Yarrowee River Trail and sits within 10,744 hectares catchment area, 36% (3,870 hectares) of which is urban Ballarat.

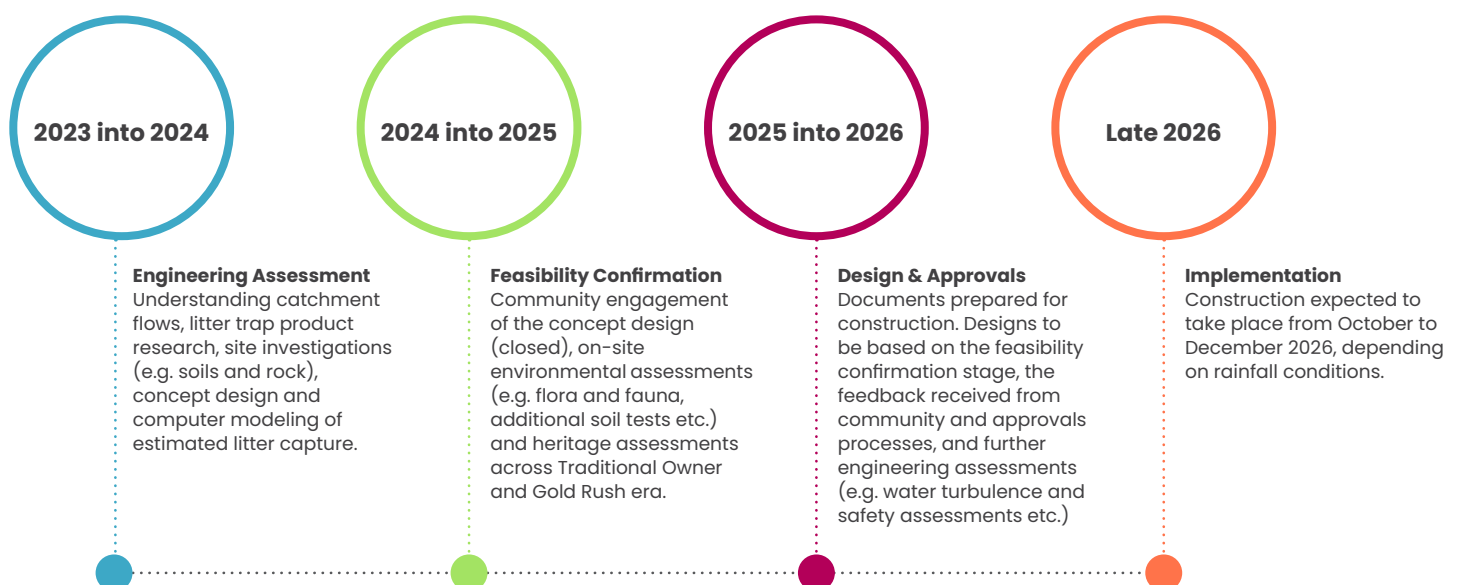
This project is designed to remove the highest possible volume of litter using proven Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) technology. And aligns with broader environmental and cultural objectives:

- Achieving significant environmental outcomes for the Yarrowee River and the Leigh and Barwon Rivers
- Reducing litter-related impacts for visitors and community downstream
- Supporting existing and future riparian restoration efforts
- Delivering benefits while minimising cultural heritage impacts

A Proof of Concept study completed in 2023 confirmed the technical viability of a GPT at the proposed location. In line with best practice, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners were consulted early in planning considerations along with internal teams and stakeholders – including environment, design and heritage planning. Preliminary design and cost estimates are now complete, and Council has endorsed internal budget allocations across FY24/25 and FY25/26 to progress Detailed Design, approvals, and construction.

Community Engagement was undertaken over four weeks to inform the community, gather local insights to improve the proposal, and understand priorities for design, amenity and education.

## Timeline



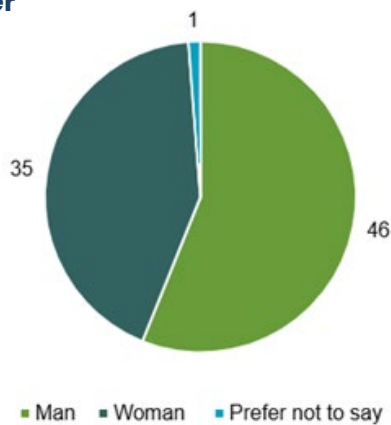
# Our Audience and Reach

## Overview- total number of people engaged

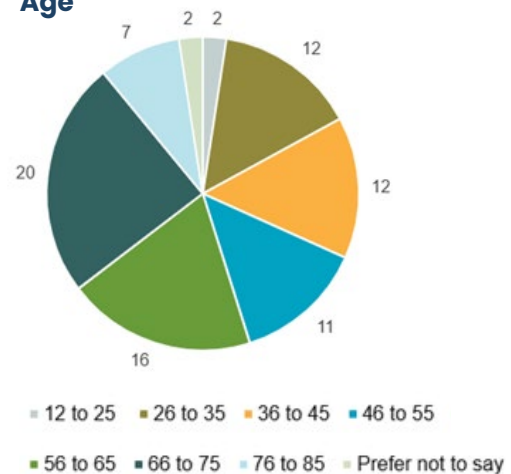
Engagement Events	Visitors to Engagement Events	MySay Page Visitors
5	150	306
Information Downloads & Video Views	MySay Attention >1 active minute	Submissions Received
453	42.30%	82

## Demographic breakdown

### Gender



### Age



## Geography

Alfredton	1
Ballarat Central - Bakery Hill - Lake Wendouree (South), Newington	9
Ballarat East - Eureka - Warrenheip	8
Ballarat North - Invermay Park	1
Buninyong - Rural South	5
Delacombe	2
Golden Point - Mount Pleasant - Canadian	15
Golden Point - Mount Pleasant - Canadian; Ballarat Central - Bakery Hill - Lake Wendouree (South), Newington	1
Lake Wendouree (North) - Lake Gardens	3
Miners Rest - Mitchell Park	1
Mount Clear - Mount Helen	7
Neighbouring municipalities	4
Outside of the region	1
Sebastopol - Redan	20
Soldiers Hill - Black Hill - Nerrina (South) - Brown Hill (West)	3
Wendouree	1

## Identity

I am Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3
I am from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background	1
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)	15
I identify as LGBTQIA+	1
None of the above	49
I prefer not to say	8
I identify as LGBTQIA+; I have a low income	2
I identify as LGBTQIA+; I am a person with disability; I have a low income	1
I have a low income; I am a person with disability	1
I am a person with disability; I have a low income	1

## Media and social media overview

Number of social media posts	Media Releases	Radio
2	1	1

## Stakeholder analysis

The engagement successfully reached the intended audience, particularly those with a strong connection to the Yarrowee River and the project site:

- 62.2% of respondents reported using the site frequently (daily or weekly), indicating a high level of familiarity with the area.
- 31.7% of responses came from residents in adjacent suburbs, and 24.4% from downstream suburbs, highlighting strong local and geographic relevance.
- 29.3% of submissions were directly attributable to on-site engagement (such as signage or pop-up sessions), reinforcing that the project connected well with active site users and local stakeholders.

These results suggest that the engagement effectively captured the views of those most likely to be affected by, or interested in, the proposed project providing a strong foundation for community-informed decision-making.

# The community response

## MySay Survey Results

Community feedback through the MySay platform demonstrated broad support for the proposed litter trap:

- 80% of respondents (64 of 82) reported regularly observing litter in the Yarrowee River or other Ballarat waterways, highlighting the visibility of the issue. Fewer than 0.5% reported never seeing litter.
- 94% supported the project's approach to litter reduction, with 74.4% expressing strong support.
- 83% responded positively to the artist impressions of the litter trap's design.
- Only 3.5% expressed concerns about the project's approach, and 9.7% had reservations about the visual design.

Common concerns included:

- Ongoing maintenance and the condition of existing litter traps.
- Potential impacts on fish habitat and movement.

Positive feedback included:

- Support for environmental benefits outweigh aesthetic concerns
- Interest in improved fish passage (e.g., adding snags, rocks, or low weirs).
- Requests for accessible education, including signage and links to water quality data.
- Emphasis on proactive and visible maintenance.
- Desire for landscaping enhancements with native and culturally significant plants, and habitat features for wildlife.
- Interest in expanding the litter trap network upstream and downstream
- Broader aspirations for the river corridor, including increased tree planting, weed and pest control, cultural heritage interpretation, and addressing illegal dumping.

## Social Media and Email Feedback

Social media and email responses echoed survey sentiments:

- 255 positive reactions, with no negative comments recorded.
- Feedback supported integrating the trap into the landscape, ensuring maintenance, maintaining habitat connectivity, and expanding the litter trap network.

## Advisory and Focus Group Input

The Ballarat Kids Think Tank, involving students from Dana Street, Buninyong, and Warrenheip Primary Schools, provided thoughtful input through discussion and pros/cons activity.

Key insights included:

- Support for displaying collected litter as an educational tool
- Concerns about odour and the visual impact of exposed waste.
- Suggestions for education signage and design solutions that balance visibility and aesthetics
- Awareness that pollution could negatively affect perceptions of Ballarat as a livable city

This input highlights a valuable opportunity to involve the community – particularly young people – in future design decisions, especially around concealment and educational messaging.

## Review of responses

Community feedback will continue to inform and strengthen the design, particularly in the areas of visual integration, amenity, education, and interpretation. Respondents consistently advocated for the trap to blend well with the surrounding landscape, prompting further exploration of landscaping, materials, and visual screening.

Education and interpretation will reflect community preferences for simple, accessible messaging, supported by digital links to further information and real-time data, such as water quality data. This approach will ensure that educational outcomes are achieved in a cost-effective and community-supported way.

Feedback has also reinforced key project values:

- Proactive and visible maintenance
- Supported fish passage and ecological health
- Sensitivity to cultural and environmental values in and around the Yarrowee.

## Next Steps (Closing the loop)

This engagement process has provided valuable community insights that are now actively informing key aspects of the design, especially around landscape integration, education, and amenity. Common themes such as maintenance, ecological functions, and public visibility have been noted and will continue to shape design decisions.

We heard that the community strongly supports the environmental goals of the project but wants to see this infrastructure delivered in a way that enhances – rather than detracts from – the river corridor experience. People suggested using local and native planting, providing visible education tools, and ensuring fish movement and ongoing maintenance are prioritised. We're incorporating these into the next phase of design and refining features like signage, interpretive elements, and materials selection to reflect these preferences.

The project is currently in the feasibility confirmation phase, including detailed environmental, heritage and cultural assessments. These assessments include:

- Flora and fauna surveys
- Additional soil testing
- Cultural heritage assessments (including both Traditional Owner values and Gold Rush-era heritage)

No further formal community engagement is scheduled at this stage, but we remain committed to keeping the community informed. As part of closing the loop, this Community Engagement Summary Report will be publicly available on the MySay Ballarat platform, ensuring transparency and demonstrating how community feedback is shaping the project as it progresses.

## Supporting documentation

Detailed survey dataset available on request.

**Customer Service**

Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm

**Phone**

5320 5500

**Email**

[info@ballarat.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@ballarat.vic.gov.au)

**Postal Address**

PO Box 655  
Ballarat, VIC 3353

**Website**

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

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