

Community Engagement Feedback



Over a six-week period in January and February 2021, we asked you for input on Council's draft **Community Engagement Policy 2021-24**.

The survey, which focused on five community engagement principles set by the **Local Government Act 2020**, provided the opportunity to contribute feedback on Council's commitment statements which clarify how we could deliver these engagement principles.

158 community members took the opportunity to be part of the conversation. Here is what you told us....

Your thoughts and ideas

1 The community engagement process has a clearly defined objective and scope.

Your feedback 3.87/5 ★★★★★☆

THEMES:

Information – Council was urged to use various communication mediums, such as electronic and print, to allow the community to contribute to engagement opportunities. Council was asked to explain how feedback will be used. It was noted public trust would be gained by making feedback public.

Decision-making – How does the proposed project/activity align with the Council vision and plan? Council should detail how the community will benefit from the proposed matter or project, noting who initiated the project and how it may affect stakeholders.

Influence – People wish to understand the level of government involvement - local, state and federal - and receive a clear outline of what can and can't be influenced and why. Is there a legislative reason?

2 Participants in community engagement will have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation.

Your feedback 4/5 ★★★★★☆

THEMES:

Timelines – Council is urged to advertise widely in a timely manner. Council needs to provide timely information and appropriate timeframes for community input. It was felt there was often not enough time which resulted in engagement seen as token.

Accessibility – Consider community diversity, engagement being seen and multiculturalism. Aids to assist those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in addition to supporting those with learning, language and cognitive barriers.

Information – Development of 'Frequently asked questions' to assist in building community knowledge and addressing community concerns. Explore increased opportunity for online engagement in the age of COVID.

Stakeholders – Understanding of how engagement activities and feedback have been considered, and timely and clear lines of feedback to community questions.

3 Participants in community engagement will be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter.

Your feedback 3.76/5 ★★★★★☆

THEMES:

Information – Council should consider more avenues of contact with the community other than Facebook and the Latrobe Valley Express.

Stakeholders – How will Council consider who is affected by the decision/issue at hand? Council needs to ensure many people from many groups are consulted, not just town associations. Ensure the people directly affected by a decision are consulted.

Influence – Ensure the community feels as though their opinions have been considered by Council.

4 Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement.

Your feedback 3.94/5 ★★★★★☆

THEMES:

Information – Council needs to be clear on the definition of language and terms used.

Timeline – Council needs to ensure that communication is accessible for the entire community, including the time of meetings and who is invited to attend.

Participants – Council should consider co-design engagement, taking in to account appropriate timelines and skill levels of participants.

5 Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision-making.

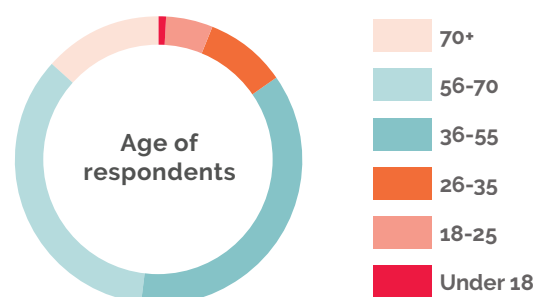
Your feedback 3.94/5 ★★★★★☆

THEMES:

Trust – Support given for Council's Commitment Statement.

Influence – Ensure that respondents know what they can and cannot influence.

Decision-making – Council should show the community how their feedback has influenced the final decision made. How will Council do this? Council should take a community vote/make a compendium of community views on an issue to consider in decision-making.



Which statement best describes your connection to Council decision-making?

I'm not the kind of person who comments on local issues or attends community consultations

10%

I would only comment on Council business that directly affects my household or my local neighbourhood

31%

I want to be more active in my community and would like regular updates on all Council projects and local issues

21%

I'm very interested in what Council does and have provided feedback and attended community consultations

36%

Gender



Is the language used in the policy easy to understand?

17% NO

83% YES

You want.....

- Engagement to be inclusive of all of the community
- Meaningful consultation
- Early engagement with the community to create inclusion
- An understanding of what can be influenced through engagement
- An alternative to online engagement – face-to-face and visual information at community venues and at times that suit the community
- A commitment to show compliance and performance, and how this will be measured and reported.

What's next?

Feedback has been considered and collated, with updates made to the draft policy.

Targeted engagement on the final draft policy will be undertaken ahead of Council's endorsement of the policy in March 2021.

LatrobeCity