

Shaping our Places and Spaces - Engagement Results

October 2025

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Purpose

The purpose of the engagement was to engage with stakeholders and communities on the State of Play operational document which outlined what social infrastructure currently exists in each town across the Shire and what was planned for the next 5-10 years.

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken with State Government agencies, service providers, neighbouring Local Government Agencies and community organisations to discuss social infrastructure provision for the municipality.

We then asked the community to tell us what community places and spaces they use and value, along with what principles they would like Council to consider when prioritising investment in social infrastructure.

How we engaged

Internal engagement was undertaken with internal business units in January and February 2025.

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in June and July 2025. A wide range of stakeholder's were engaged in service and infrastructure provision discussions including Surf Coast's All Abilities & Positive Aging Advisory Committee's, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Department of Education, Department of Transport and Planning, Regional Development Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, Creative Victoria, Department Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Surf Coast Secondary College, Winchelsea Primary School, Anderson Roadknight Hall, Modewarre, & Deans Marsh Community Asset Committee, Deans' Marsh Cottage, Golden Plains Shire, Colac Otway Shire & City of Greater Geelong, Growing Winchelsea and Barwon Adolescent Task Force.

Broad community engagement was open from Tuesday 5 August to Tuesday 30 September. During this time, we collected the following engagement statistics:



86 days
of community
engagement



1,986
Your Say page
views



226
surveys completed



18
Your Say followers



4
In person pop ups



56
Social media
interactions

We received feedback from community via:

- an online survey on Council's Your Say page
- reactions to social media posts on Council's Facebook page.
- in person pop up sessions
- one on one meetings with a range of departments, organisations and clubs

To get the word out about the project and encourage feedback we prepared the following communications:

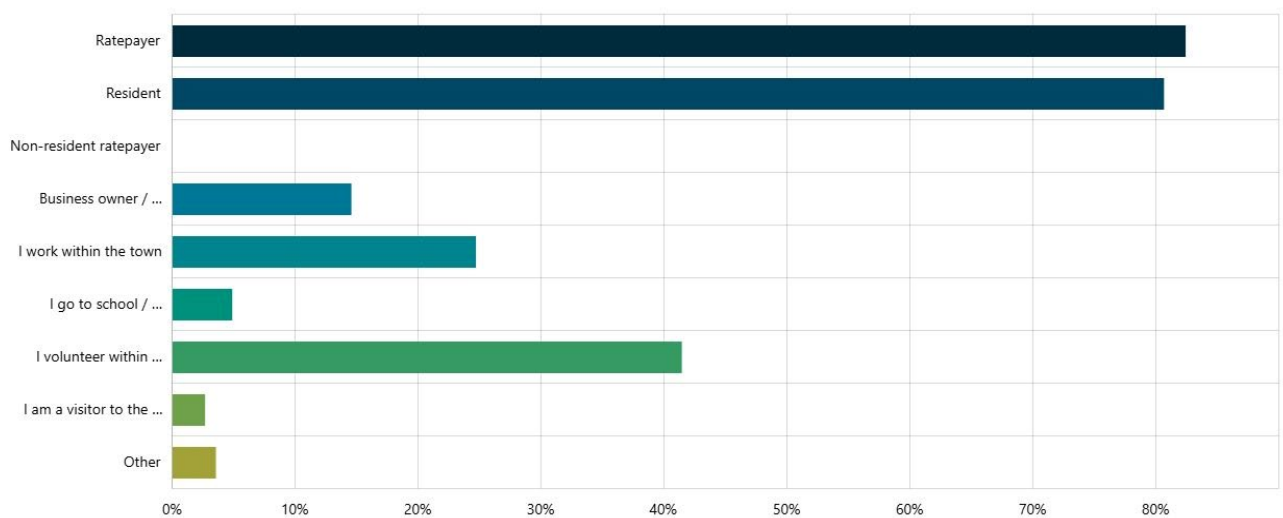
- Media release (Issued 6 August 2025).
- Social media posts: a primary post (6 August 2025) and a reminder posts (1 and 26 September 2025)
- Emails to a range of departments, organisations and clubs

The survey sought the community's input on some potential adjustments to our Social Infrastructure Plan. In some cases, feedback received via the open text boxes in the survey, while acknowledged, was outside the scope of this survey.

Your Say survey results.

We had 226 contributions to the survey. Most responses came from Torquay (61%), followed by Anglesea and Aireys Inlet (8% each). Smaller numbers came from Moriac, Jan Juc, Winchelsea and Lorne. Some towns like Bellbrae, Deans Marsh and Freshwater Creek had very few or no responses.

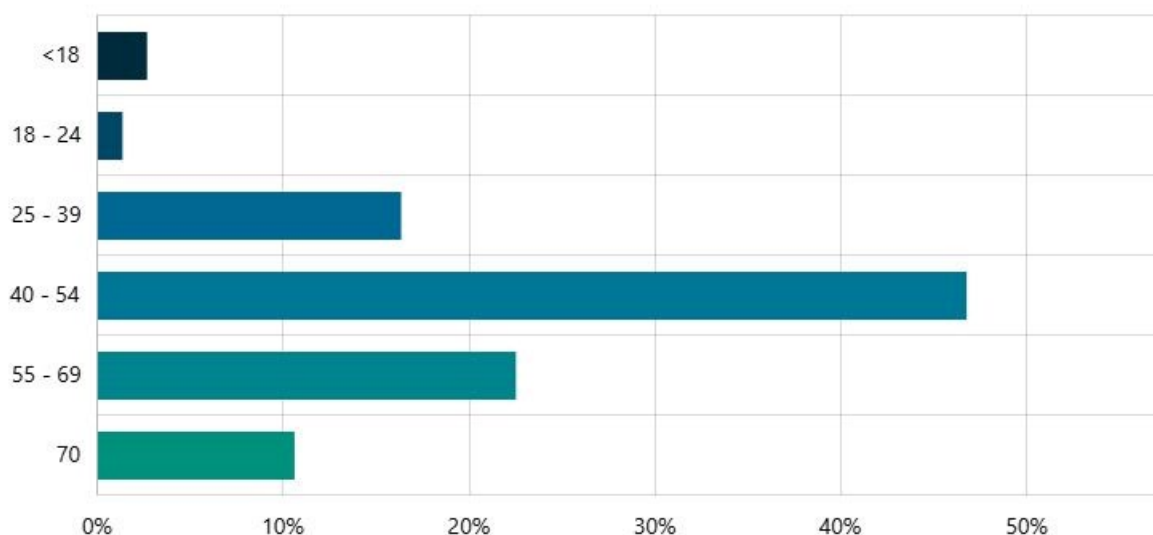
Responses when asked “What is your relationship to Council?”



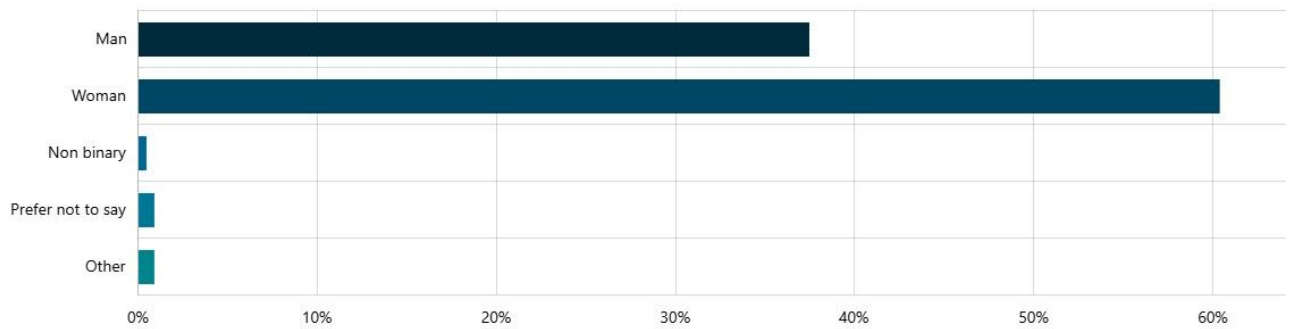
When asked “Is the Surf Coast your primary place of residence?”

92% of respondents indicated that the Surf Coast is their primary place of residence.

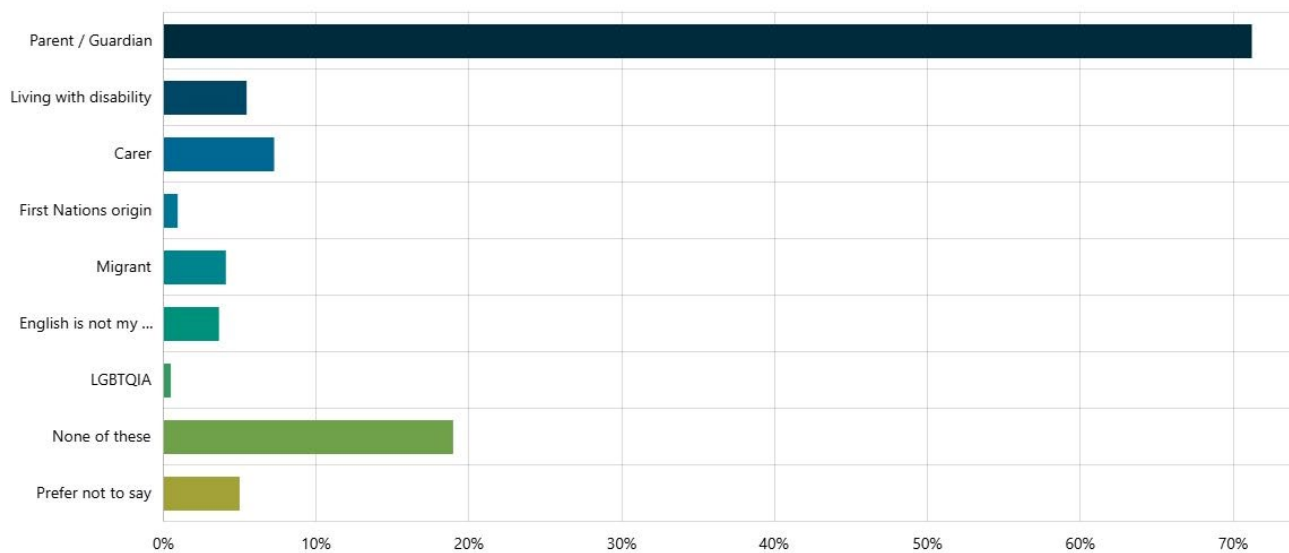
Age group



Gender



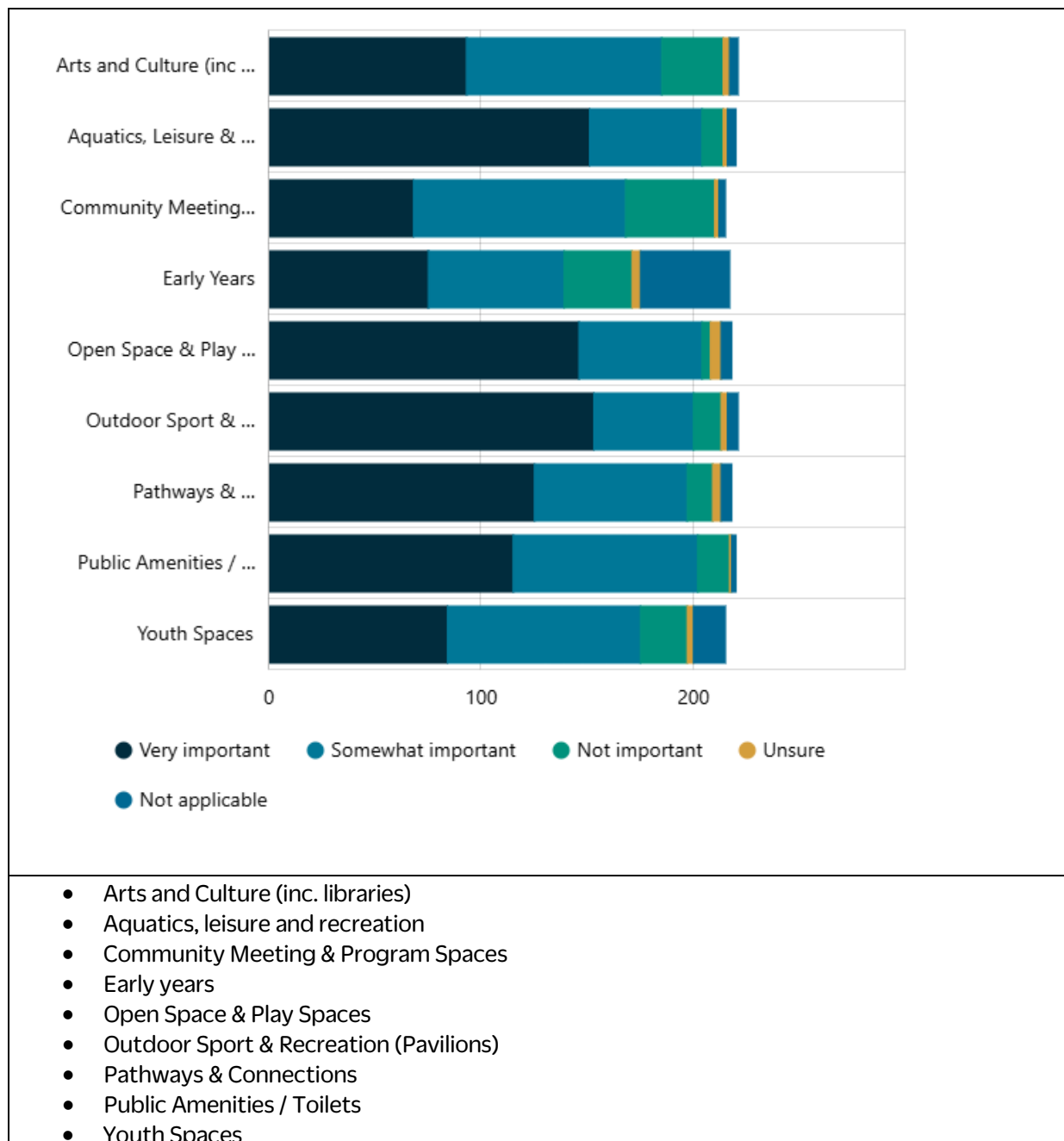
Responses when asked “Do you identify with any of the following?”



Survey Questions

Please let us know the community places and spaces you need to access and how important they are to you? This will help us understand each community's unique priorities.

Aquatics, leisure and recreation spaces were rated very important by nearly 70% of respondents. Outdoor sport and play spaces also ranked highly, with over two-thirds saying they're very important. Pathways and public amenities like toilets were important to most people. Arts and culture spaces, including libraries, were valued by over 80% of respondents, though with a mix of very and somewhat important ratings. Youth spaces and early years facilities received moderate support, with many rating them as important but fewer selecting “very important.” Community meeting spaces were seen as useful, especially for programs and local events. Sixty six percent of people access community places and spaces outside their town.



Please let us know the community places and spaces you travel to other towns for.

“Sometimes we might use the pools in other towns because Anglesea doesn’t have one. The lack of a good gym facility means having to go elsewhere.”

“Anglesea walking tracks and beach. Winchelsea river walk.”

Feedback shows strong regional use of shared spaces, but also gaps in access, especially for indoor sport and early years services. There’s a desire for more balanced investment across townships and facilities that reflect the needs of growing and diverse communities.

Many respondents travel to nearby towns like Geelong, Colac, and Armstrong Creek to access pools, gyms, libraries, and health services not available locally. Indoor sports

facilities, especially basketball and netball courts are in demand, with limited space in areas like Torquay North restricting participation, particularly for women and girls.

In Moriac, early years services and playgrounds are heavily used, supporting daily routines for families.

Libraries and learning spaces are valued across the region, with calls for improved facilities in Torquay. Armstrong Creek and Geelong libraries were called out as useful and many visited those libraries. Mobile libraries were seen as important in smaller towns.

Outdoor spaces and pathways are widely used from Lorne and Anglesea to Jan Juc and Bellbrae. Respondents said public amenities like toilets and seating need better maintenance, and community hubs such as Anglesea Community House and Winchelsea Shire Hall are seen as vital for local programs and events.

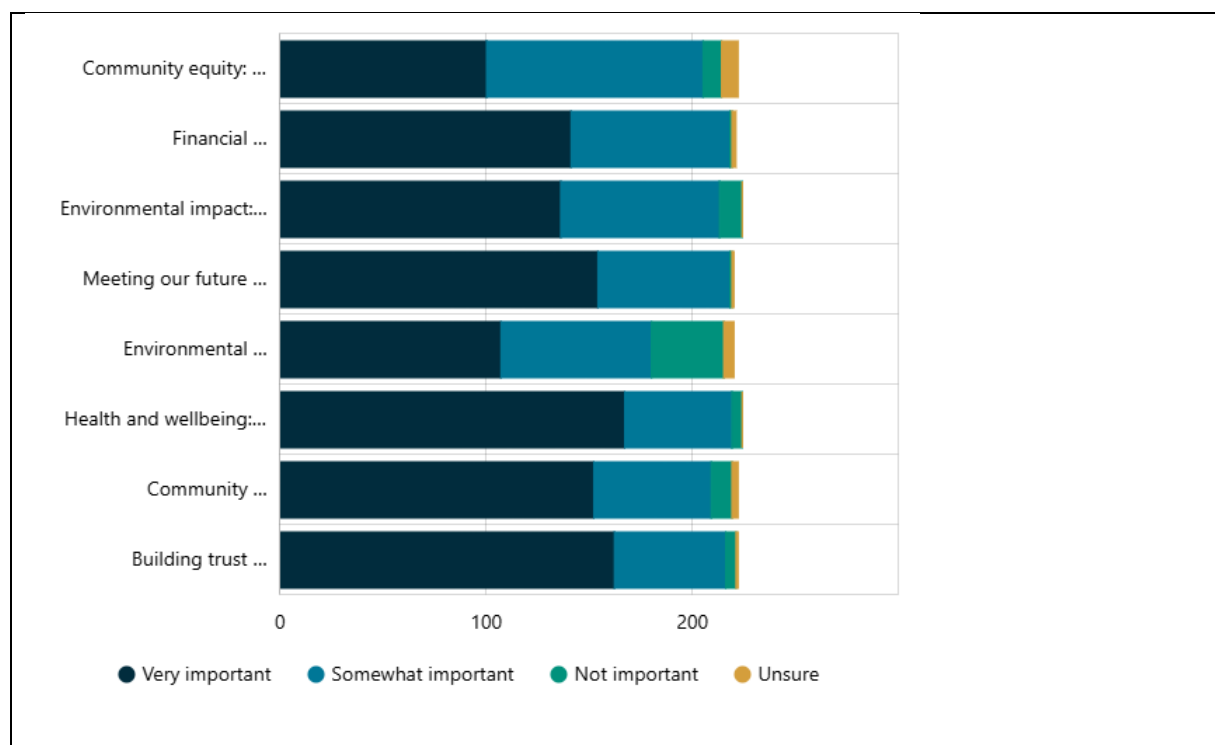
Help us understand the most important Community Principles for you?

The respondents want decisions that are transparent, inclusive, and focused on long-term wellbeing and sustainability.

223 people shared what matters most when it comes to guiding Council decisions. The top priorities were health and wellbeing, planning for future needs, and building trust through transparency, each rated “very important” by over 70% of respondents.

There was also strong support for community engagement, financial sustainability, and environmental impact, with most people wanting decisions to be fair, forward-thinking, and environmentally responsible.

Community benefit and environmental leadership were more mixed, with many rating them as important, but some unsure or concerned about trade-offs.



beaches and coastlines, and to ensure community spaces reflect the values and needs of the broader population, not just vocal minority groups.

Overall, the respondents want Council to act with integrity, listen widely, and balance growth with protection of what makes the Surf Coast Shire special.

Do you have any have any other feedback about community facilities or open spaces in your town?

“We need to ensure there is a healthy balance of facilities for all ages to encourage all to feel included and stay within the community.”

The respondents are calling for balanced investment across sport, arts, youth, environment, and infrastructure. There is a strong desire for Council to act transparently, consult widely, and deliver practical, inclusive, and sustainable solutions that reflect the region’s evolving needs.

“Please make it safer for children and others around community facilities by having permanent reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures.”

Pedestrian safety was raised as a concern across the Surf Coast Shire, especially in Moriac, Aireys Inlet, and Torquay North. Residents are calling for lower speed limits, zebra crossings, and traffic calming near schools, playgrounds, and bus stops. Disability access during construction was an area suggested for improvement.

Families want more gathering spaces along with small scale sports infrastructure for teenagers, such as bike parks and half courts. Moriac Pre-school was said to need expansion to meet growing demand. Respondents said volunteer run playgroups and toy libraries require larger, better supported spaces.

“Spaces should be shared equally. There is ongoing favouritism with certain sports such as indoor basketball. Other sports that are growing, such as futsal, do not get the opportunity to expand. Bookings are limited to 1 hour per week even after futsal became affiliated as per suggestion by the council. There needs to be a fair playing field.”

Basketball courts were thought to be in short supply, particularly in Torquay. Respondents said Wurdi Baierr Stadium is at capacity, forcing teams to train elsewhere. There is strong support for adding more indoor courts. Futsal and pickleball are growing rapidly but respondents said they struggle to access space.

“Provide shelter for the spring creek netball courts”

Feedback highlighted a need for shelters for players and officials at Spring Creek Netball Courts. Torquay is the only BFNL club without them. The football oval at Spring Creek requires elevation and drainage upgrades. Grandstands and infrastructure are needed to support growing participation in women’s football.

“Our open spaces in the vicinity of the Painkalac Creek Estuary along Inlet Crescent are being severely impacted by poorly managed and unregulated tourist buses.”

It was reported that Aireys Inlet’s limited open spaces are under pressure from unregulated tourism. Respondents want better management of tourist buses, protection of revegetated areas, and maintenance of gravel pathways. Tree planting in Lorne and action on river health, especially the Anglesea River, were also suggested priorities.

“... my dog loves the beach and parks too, and he’s essential for my mental health.”

A secure, fenced dog park in Torquay North is suggested. Survey respondents also want better lighting, bins, and toilets in parks and playgrounds across Jan Juc, Anglesea, and Aireys Inlet. There is support for a community battery in Lorne and affordable housing in Anglesea for essential workers.

Suggestions for additional recreation and outdoor facilities include beach volleyball courts, multi-use synthetic pitches, and rock-climbing walls. Bob Pettitt Reserve needs upgrades to its soccer pitch, basketball ring, and fencing. Feedback highlighted Grossmans Ridge and other estates lack playgrounds and safe walking access, suggesting this limits community connection.

“I would like to see the library improved because it is so important for all ages.”

“Provide more for the arts!”

There is strong demand for library upgrades in Aireys Inlet and Torquay, and more support for arts and cultural spaces. Respondents from smaller towns feel overlooked in planning decisions. Respondents are calling for data-driven infrastructure planning that reflects seasonal population needs and health indicators.

Survey responses indicate community want developers held accountable for including open space and amenities in new developments. There is support for affordable housing for essential workers, but their needs to be clearer communication about affordable housing. Planning documents need to better reflect socio-economic data and community priorities.

A TAFE campus is suggested to support flexible learning and local economic development. Barwon Park Mansion is suggested as a site for an innovation hub to attract knowledge tourism and support regional industries.

Social media results

We posted on Council’s Facebook and Instagram pages at the start of engagement (6 August), and towards the end of engagement (1 and 26 September). Community was encouraged to visit our Your Say page for information and to provide feedback via a survey.

We had 56 reactions across our Facebook and Instagram posts including shares to other Facebook pages.

“Build playgrounds with toilets please.”

In person pop up sessions

In persons sessions were scheduled at Anglesea, Lorne, Torquay and Winchelsea to offer another opportunity to capture feedback from community. Key themes raised across these sessions covered a strong desire to protect our natural environment and the health of the Anglesea River, support for a wide range of community services with particular focus on library improvements and the benefits of community house services, aquatics delivery, and provision of improved infrastructure for early years, arts and culture, public amenities, sport and pathways.

Youth Survey results were analysed and insights included in provision considerations. When considering social infrastructure young people wanted better access to sports and creative infrastructure.

Domestic Animal Management Plan received feedback on the provision of a fenced dog park for Torquay. The need for safe, fenced, off leash dog areas was rated as the No 6 Big Issue from respondents in the engagement report.

Next steps

We have considered the range of feedback we've received across the engagement process. This feedback has shaped the development of the draft Social Infrastructure Plan and will guide future investment in community places and spaces.

We want to ensure we can continue to sustainably plan and deliver these places and spaces where, when and how they are needed most.

The framework will consist of a policy position and plan to:

- Set clear, fair rules for how we decide what spaces to provide, based on evidence of community needs.
- Lay out a prioritised list of projects so everyone knows what's planned in their area.
- Make sure we can sustainably plan and deliver community places and spaces—where and when they're needed—within available budgets. Government funding will be required to realise our aspirations.

The "Our Places and Spaces - Social Infrastructure Plan" has been developed and will be considered at December Council meeting for endorsement.