



Engagement Report: Community Engagement Framework Review (October 2025)

Introduction

This engagement report outlines the consultation undertaken to inform the draft Community Engagement Framework 2026 (draft Framework).

Project details

Background

On 28 June 2021, Council endorsed our current [Community Engagement Framework](#) (2021 Framework). The 2021 Framework contains guidance to implement the requirements of the Community Engagement Policy and reflect the community's needs for community engagement.

On 17 February 2025, Council adopted a revised [Community Engagement Policy 2025](#) (Policy). The Policy sets the commitments, values and Community Engagement Principles (Principles) that define Council's approach to community engagement, and which are consistent with the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

The 2021 Framework is now also being reviewed, to respond to changes in the Policy, and following extensive community engagement in 2024-2025, as detailed below.

Project purpose

The draft Framework aims to provide updated guidance to Council and community on:

- What community engagement is and is not.
- Council's commitments to community engagement.
- How Council complies with our Community Engagement Principles.
- When, where and how we engage with the community.
- The roles of staff, Councillors, stakeholders, and the community.

The draft Framework applies to the projects published on Council's Engage Frankston website and is guided by the Policy, sections 55 and 56 of the Act, and International Association of Public Participation ('IAP2') as the peak body for the community and stakeholder engagement sector.

Engagement purpose and scope

This project has three engagement stages:

1. Stage 1: Community engagement on Council services (2024-2025)
2. Stage 2: Community engagement to inform Framework (May-August 2025)
3. Stage 3: Community engagement on Draft Framework (October-November 2025).

This engagement report provides an overview of the outcomes of Stages 1 and 2.

Stage 3 is running between October-November 2025. This will involve community, stakeholder and staff review and feedback on draft Framework.

Following stage 3 engagement, the draft Framework will be presented to Council for adoption in February 2026.

Summary of engagement results

To inform the draft Framework, extensive community engagement was undertaken in 2024-2025. This included engaging with 2,152 community members over the following stages:

Stage 1: Community engagement on Council services (2024-2025)

Engagement with a total of 1891 community members.

There were three components of Stage 1, outlined as follows:

1. Broad community engagement in March-May 2024:

Community engagement in Stage 1 was part of a broader program of engagement to review the Frankston City Community Vision 2040, Asset Plan, Financial Plan and to develop a new Council and Wellbeing Plan.

The engagement comprised an online and hardcopy survey, community pop ups, stakeholder workshops, staff workshops and intercept surveys.

We engaged with 1400 diverse community members. Of the 1400, 247 responded to community engagement questions, and 61% wanted Council to 'focus more' on community engagement.

2. Community Panel in November 2024:

Council's Community Panel (44 residents recruited) met over 5 workshops in Sept-Nov 2024 to collaborate with Council on the revision of our Community Vision 2040, and inform our Council Plan, Asset Plan, Financial Plan.

In one of these workshops, we had a dedicated discussion with the Panel about what 'more focus' on community engagement could look like over next four years. This guided development of the Stage 2 engagement, and revision of the [Community Engagement Policy 2025](#) (Policy).

3. Customer Satisfaction Surveys in 2024 and 2025:

Each year, Council seeks community feedback on its performance under each service area, including community engagement.

Across 2024 and 2025, 1600 residents responded to Council's Community Satisfaction Survey and ranked their satisfaction with community engagement as 6.9 in 2024 and 7.0 in 2025, out of 10. This showed improvement from 6.3/10 in 2021.

Community comments were analysed to inform Stage 2 engagement, and revision of the Policy.

More detail on Stage 1 engagement outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.

Stage 2: Community engagement to inform Framework (May-August 2025)

Engagement with a total of 286 community members between May-August 2025.

Community shared engagement priorities and needs for the next four years. Multiple engagement methods were used, including:

- 8 in-person events
- Online survey
- Prioritisation tool
- Ideas board
- Opinion poll
- 2 Mini Frankston City focus groups
- 2 stakeholder workshops
- 4 staff workshops
- 1 written submission.

Key findings and recommendations from Stage 2 include that Council should:

1. Be more visible and accessible in our community engagement.
2. Only engage where there is influence, and we clearly explain what is negotiable.
3. Engage on both small (neighbourhood) and larger (municipal wide) projects.
4. Use a variety of methods, and prioritise in person engagement and online surveys/activities
5. Trial new engagement methods including via community organisations, community services, community hubs, stakeholder groups, youth groups.

6. Use a variety of comms to promote both active projects and outcomes, and prioritise social media, newsletters, newspapers, posters and signage.
7. Trial new comms methods including radio, SMS, evergreen flyers where people of diverse demographics gather (medical centres, shopping centres).
8. Revise our IAP2 spectrum and Principles to be more simple, accessible and accountable.

How has the community's input influenced the draft Framework?

The draft Framework has been drafted following Stage 1 and 2 engagements, and directly responds to the feedback and ideas received.

Key changes proposed in the draft Framework include:

1. Updating Council's commitment to community engagement

Council's commitment has been drafted as:

Council commits to having a planned, visible, inclusive process for how we provide our community with opportunities to influence Council decisions that affect their lives.

The updated commitment reflects our community's emphasis on the need for Council's community engagement practices to be visible and accessible, and that we engage only where there is influence.

2. Updating Council's definition of community engagement

The definition of community engagement has been drafted as:

Community engagement is based on the principle that people have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

The updated definition reflects a core value of IAP2, and the international recognition of community engagement as a human right.

3. Introducing an explanation of what is not community engagement the draft framework

This explanation includes that community engagement is not:

- **Stakeholder engagement** (as defined in the Policy and delivered by project teams).
- **Communications and education** (which are complementary, but different, to community engagement, and are delivered by the Communications team and other teams such as Waste Circularity and Community Safety).

- **Service evaluation feedback and complaints** (such as the Customer Satisfaction Survey and implementation of Council's Customer Service Promise).
- **Consultation and notifications required under other legislation** (such as Statutory Planning).
- **Empower level engagement** that is managed separately to the processes under this Framework (such as the Youth Council and Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)).
- **About everyone agreeing** to a decision or course of action.
- **About trying to convince people** that a pre-determined decision made by Council is correct.
- **About promoting conflict** or accepting abusive or antisocial behaviour.

4. Simplifying the Principles to improve understanding and accessibility

The Principles that guide how we deliver community engagement are re-drafted as follows, with the aim of improving accessibility without changing their meaning as defined by the Act and Policy:

- **Purpose:** We will clearly explain why we are asking for the community's input, and what is in and out of scope.
- **Influence:** We will explain clearly how community input will be shared with Councillors to influence their decision. We will not ask for your input if there is no opportunity for influence (we will communicate or educate community instead).
- **Representative:** We will make our projects visible and accessible so that we receive the diverse input that Council needs to make decisions in the interest of our community.
- **Supported and informed:** We will give you enough information and time for you to access and understand what you're providing input on.
- **Report:** We will keep you updated during our project stages, and explain what we heard from the community, and how it was used by Council in making their decision.

5. Explaining the importance of 'influence'

Influence is explained as meaning that the community does not become the decision-maker in community engagement projects, and instead will be given a specified level of influence in each project.

6. Proposing a new Frankston City interpretation of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The proposed Table 1 outlines five different levels of influence, and how Council will apply these levels to each project, and at various project stages.

Table 1 of the draft Framework revises the Spectrum, as suggested by community, to make it easier to understand and observe in practice, without changing its meaning.

The draft levels are re-defined as:

- **Communicate** (managed separately to community engagement): We will communicate Council decisions that the community cannot influence. We invite community to listen to our information and ask questions.
- **Ask:** We will ask for community input to help Council understand community sentiment before making decisions. We invite community to access our information and respond to questions.
- **Discuss:** We will involve community in conversations early to shape projects, and share ideas, needs and interests with Council to inform decisions. We invite community to participate in conversations and share ideas and needs.
- **Work together:** We will work together with community to develop projects and to provide Council with community advice and recommendations to inform decisions. We invite community to share and understand knowledge, experiences and needs.
- **Empower (managed separately to community engagement):** We will empower community to develop and deliver a project that meets community needs and interests. We invite community to lead the project without Council making decisions.

The existing Table 1 in the 2021 Framework is also updated with revised examples of:

- The type of engagement activities Council uses for different levels of engagement.
- Engagement and promotional methods. These confirm our existing practice of increasing the methods applied with the level of engagement (for example, a wider range of diverse methods will be used for 'medium/discuss' and 'high/working together' levels than for 'low/ask' level engagements).
- Projects that the five levels of engagement will be applied to. This reflects how the levels have evolved in application to engagement projects since 2021.

7. Updating the matrix that determines the need to engage

This matrix also aims to show which level of engagement will be applied to each project stage.

The draft new matrix includes a third category of 'how much influence can the community have' in addition to the existing two categories of who will be impacted and interested by the project.

8. Updating 'where we will engage'

The update to this section aims to remove specific examples of in-person engagement locations.

Instead, an adaptable approach of determining in-person engagement locations based on project need is proposed, reflecting more recent and better practice.

This draft section also commits Council to increasing promotion of both in-person and online engagement, including via Engage Frankston/Mini Frankston City members.

9. Updating the 'timing of engagement'

The proposed updates seek to provide more specific guidelines reflecting more recent and better practice.

This includes committing to engage for a minimum of 30 days for all projects, and not seeking to engage between mid-December and mid-January.

10. Updating the 'roles in community engagement'

The draft new roles aim to be clearer and reflect more recent and better practice. This includes:

- **The role of Councillors:** in understanding engagement results, considering them in good faith, ensuring they inform Council decisions as much as possible, and clearly explaining reasons for a decision and if and how it was influenced by community engagement.
- **The role of stakeholders:** in understanding that stakeholder engagement is different to community engagement, and Council hears submissions representing the needs of stakeholders separate to the input of the broader community.

How has this project complied with Community Engagement Principles?

Purpose

All community engagement projects must have a clearly defined purpose, objective and scope.

Why did we need community input into this project, and how has it been used?

- The purpose of this engagement is to:
 - o Seek feedback on Council's community engagement practices between 2021-2025.
 - o Understand community needs and expectations for community engagement, building on what we have already heard during the Community Vision/Council Plan engagement and Community Panel.
 - o Seek community input into the revised Community Engagement Framework (Stage 2).
- The community input will be used to:
 - o Develop the Framework (after Stage 1 and 2)
 - o Finalise the Framework (after Stage 3)
 - o Influence ongoing changes to community engagement practices, including planning, delivery and reporting.

What are the objectives?

- To 'involve' community in the development of the Framework, including understanding their needs and expectations for Council's community engagement (Stage 1 and 2).
- To 'consult' on the draft Framework (Stage 3).

What is the scope?

Aspects of the Framework that are NOT able to be influenced in this engagement include:

- Having six Community Engagement Principles, as adopted in the Community Engagement Policy (and based on the principles in the *Local Government Act 2020*).
- Statutory requirements that direct community engagement, including in the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, *Road Management Act 2004* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
- Definition of 'engagement', 'deliberative engagement', 'stakeholders' and other definitions, as adopted in the Community Engagement Policy.
- Decisions on communications - community needs and expectations assist Council to develop a suite of 'best practice comms' that will inform planning and decision-making for comms on individual projects. However, other organisation, political and social factors will also need to be considered.

Aspects of the Framework that ARE able to be influenced in this engagement include:

- Example activities, projects and decisions under each level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.
- What we will engage with our community on.

- Community impact/interest assessments.
- Who will we engage with.
- How will we engage.
- Where we will engage.
- Timing of engagement.
- Roles in engagement.
- Our engagement model: Plan, Do, Report, Review – there is an opportunity to better align this with Council’s new Project Management Framework if revised in time.

The ‘How has the community’s input influenced the draft Framework?’ section above outlines how the negotiable aspects of the Framework have been influenced in stages 1 and 2 of engagement.

Representation

We ensured participants are diverse and representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement by:

In our Engagement Plan, we aimed to achieve a participation target:

- Of approximately 1000 people, representing 25% of the 4,000 Engage Frankston members who have expressed interest in Council’s community engagement, 0.7% of the wider community.

We achieved participation in stages 1 and 2 of 2,152 participants, exceeding our target.

We achieved participation representative of the demographics in our community in the following ways:

Stage 1 involved participation from 1891 diverse participants as shown in the below components:

1. Broad community engagement in March-May 2024:

Of the 1400 community members engaged, 247 responded to community engagement questions.

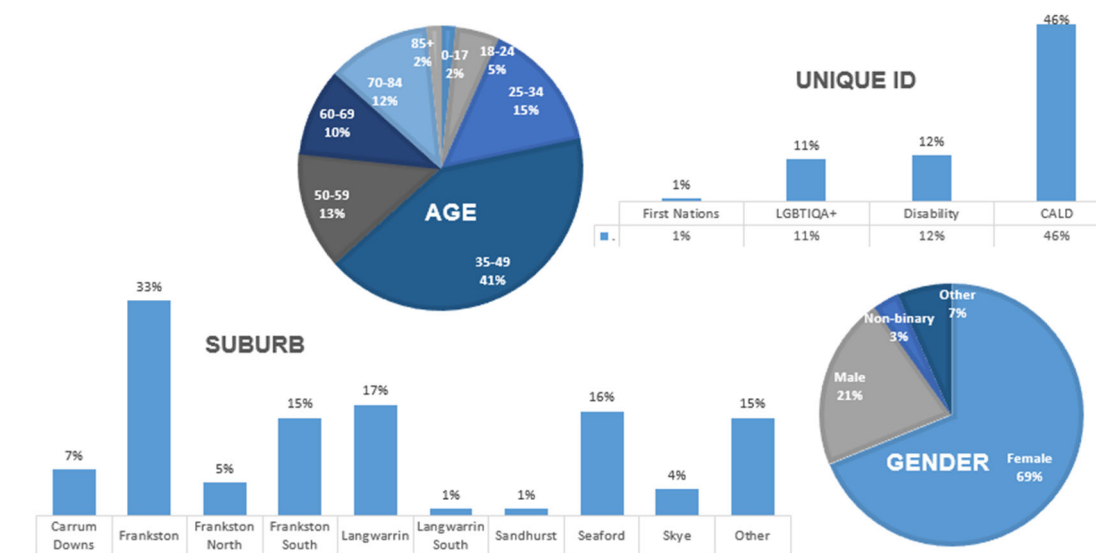


Figure 1: Stage 1 engagement as part of Community Vision/Council Plan engagement (n=247)

2. Community Panel in November 2024:

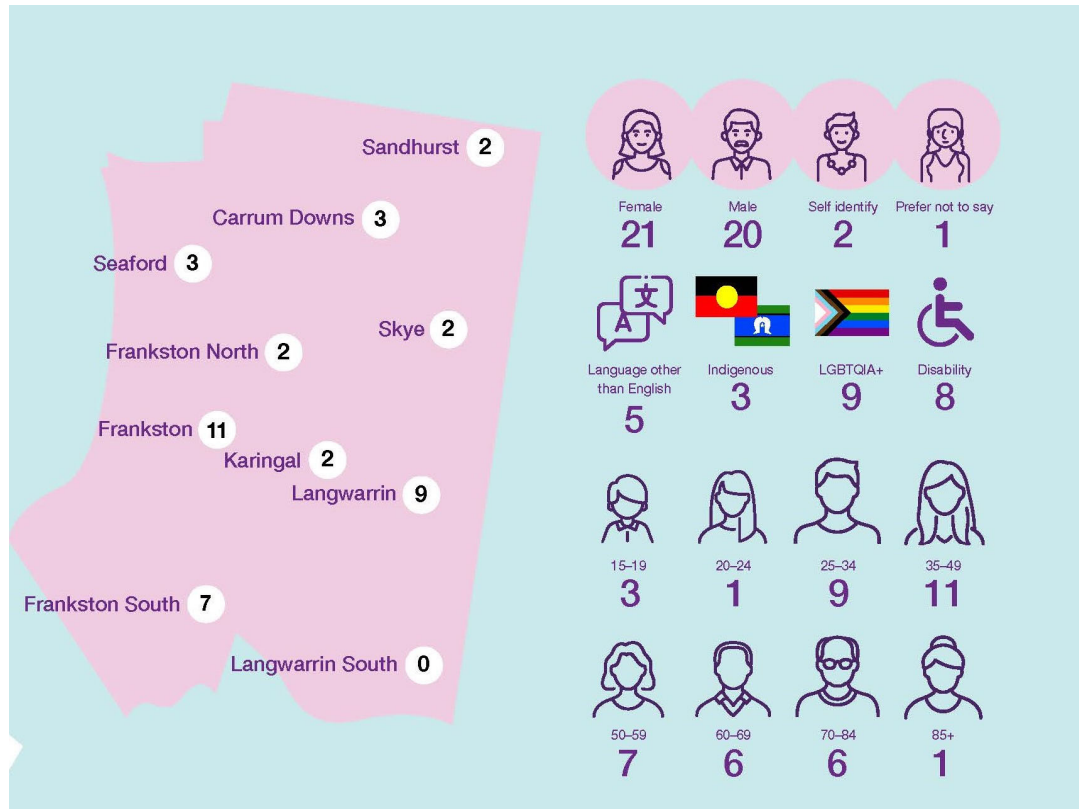


Figure 2: Community Panel (44 members recruited)

3. Customer Satisfaction Surveys in 2024 and 2025:

1600 residents participants, representing:

- All age groups (slightly under-represented in 18–34-year-olds)
- Gender: Male 48% | Female 52%
- CALD: 23% in 2024 | 12% in 2025
- Disability: 12% in 2024 | 9% in 2025
- LGBTQIA+: 2% in 2024 | 1% 2025
- First Nations: 1% in 2024 | 1% 2025

Stage 2 involved participation from 286 diverse participants:

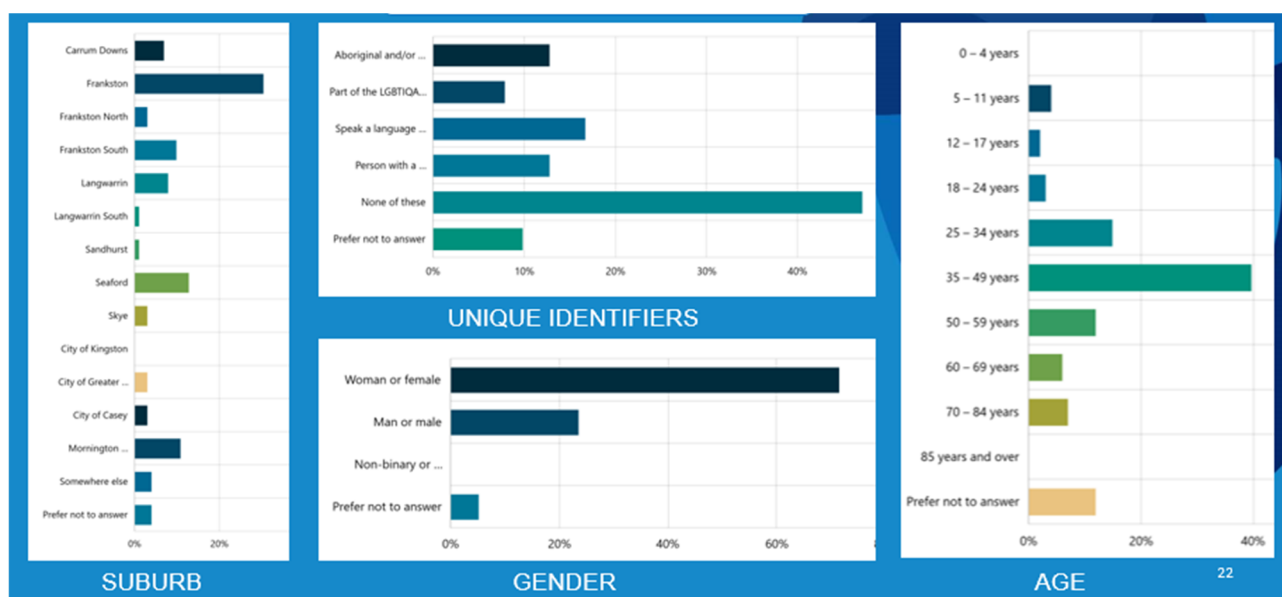


Figure 3: Demographics of 286 community members who engaged in Stage 2.

We achieved this participation in Stage 2 using the following methods:

Demographic	Specific group (or all)	What support was needed to ensure participation?
All suburbs and age groups	All	For suburbs and age groups that generally have lower online participation, we undertook in-person engagement at the following locations: 1. Party in the Park at Cruden Farm, Langwarrin (13 April) 2. Join the Dots event, Chisholm Institute, Frankston (29 April) 3. Reconciliation Week Event, Frankston Foreshore (31 May) 4. Tree planting day at Lloyd Park, Langwarrin (27 July) 5. RSPCA Youth Event, Youth Central, Frankston (31 July) 6. Ballam Park, Frankston (16 August) 7. Monterey Reserve, Frankston North (10 August) 8. Sandfield Reserve, Carrum Downs (20 August) Feedback boxes with a short survey were installed at: • Frankston Library • Frankston South Community Centre

		Karingal PLACE Neighbourhood House
Gender	All - particularly focusing on increasing input of women (GIA recommendation).	Engaging at family events, such as Party in the Park and playgrounds.
People with a disability or long-term illness	All	Stakeholder engagement with the SIAG at their July meeting. Encouragement via representation groups/organisations (including using advice received from the DAIC between 2021-2025).
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples	All	Encouragement via representation groups/organisations (via email notifications). Engaging at First nations events: 1. Join the Dots event, Chisholm Institute, Frankston (29 April) 2. Reconciliation Week Event, Frankston Foreshore (31 May)
People with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	All	Engage Frankston translation. Encouragement via representation groups/organisations (via email notifications to CALD network).
Relevant stakeholder groups	Internal staff	1x staff workshop. 2x CEO email and Intranet notifications.
	EMT	EMT meetings to review the engagement outcomes and draft Framework and encourage staff participation.
	Councillors	Council memo to inform Councillors of upcoming in-person engagement events Council briefing to review engagement outcomes and draft Framework
	Frankston Environmental	Attending FEFN and including engagement opportunities in FEFN Report in August 2025.

	Friends Network (FEFN)	
	Mini Frankston City (MFC)	MFC focus group met twice in August and September 2025.
	Community Groups	Engagement notifications in Community Group newsletter in July 2025.
	Women's groups / older residents	Positive Ageing newsletter

Supported

We provided participants with reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement by:

- Extending the length of Stage 2 engagement to run between May-August 2025 to cover as many promotional and supported engagement opportunities as possible.
- Seeking input into ideas, aspirations, needs before the Framework is developed to ensure genuine influence.
- Multiple methods of engagement across Stages 1 and 2, including:
 - o Broad engagement on Community Vision/Council Plan engagement.
 - o Community Panel.
 - o Online engagement (including survey, mapping tool, ideas board, Q&A).
 - o In-person engagement using pop-ups, drop-in sessions and intercept surveys.
 - o Enabling translation into any language on Engage Frankston.
 - o Engaging with stakeholder groups who have a particular interest in the project, including CALD network SIAG, DAIC, FEFN, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

Informed

We provided participants with access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation by:

- Simple explanations and images on Engage Frankston, and on any postcards, posters or signage.
- Promoting the engagement via a range of methods, as shown in Figure 4 below, including testing a variety of comms methods to reach new audiences, for multiple audiences including Frankston City News, online newsletters, email notifications to Engage Frankston members, social posts, pop-ups, Community panel workshops.
- Providing regular updates and a single point of contact for questions.
- Being transparent about possible future options, while also explaining that budgets may mean they are not happening immediately, to build trust and ongoing involvement.



Figure 4: Communications methods used to reach Stage 2 participants

Influence

This community engagement process has influenced Council decision-making in the following ways:

The community input was used to draft the Framework (following Stage 1 and 2 engagements).

Community input during Stage 3 engagement will be used to finalise the Framework.

Engagement outcomes will also influence ongoing changes to community engagement practices, including planning, delivery and reporting.

The 'How has the community's input influenced the draft Framework?' section above outlines how the negotiable aspects of the Framework have been influenced in stages 1 and 2 of engagement.

Report

We are reporting back to the community on how this engagement has influenced Council decision-making in the following ways:

Publishing an engagement summary and this Engagement Report on Engage Frankston.

By end February 2026, Council will report back to community on the final Framework and present it to Council for adoption.

Risk management

A strong community engagement framework is essential for Council to both comply with legislative obligations under the Act and meet growing community expectations for transparency and participation.

By providing clear, consistent, and accessible avenues for residents to be involved in decision-making, councils can build trust and demonstrate accountability.

Importantly, such a framework also serves as a risk mitigation tool in helping council anticipate and address concerns early, reduce the likelihood of conflict or misinformation, and protect organisational reputation by showing that decisions are informed, inclusive, and aligned with community values.

The following more specific risks were identified and mitigated in Stage 2 engagement.

Risk	Possible impact	Successful mitigation
Community may think their ideas won't be listened to	Community disengage from opportunities to provide feedback and inform Council decisions	We have engaged before drafting the new Framework, seeking early ideas, feedback and concerns provides community with greater influence. We have also provided regular updates to build trust. We have also explained how community feedback on earlier engagement (such as Community Vision/Council Plan engagement) is already being listened to and influences proposed ideas.
Low levels of participation	Framework does not represent the community's diverse needs and expectations	We have tested multiple methods of engagement so that community can engage in ways that suit them, and barriers to participation are lowered. The engagement has also been open for a long period of time (May-August 2025) to allow time for multiple methods and reminders. This also enabled participation gaps to be assessed and addressed during the engagement period. We have met diverse communities where they already are (at existing events and meetings) to make engaging easier, and not an additional thing they have to do.

Community cannot have influence over some aspects of the Framework	Lack of trust, and community disengage from opportunities to provide feedback and inform Council decisions that can be influenced	We have been transparent about negotiables/non-negotiables and providing genuine influence where possible.
Participation is not diverse, and equality is not considered	Lack of gender and other equality	A Gender Impact Assessment was developed and implemented in Stages 1 and 2. The key GIA recommendation was to develop a tiered engagement framework that identifies what intersectional inclusive engagement looks like for different project levels. The draft Framework includes a tiered engagement model in Table 1 that considers and recommends a range of options that can be tailored to the specific needs of the intended audiences. Table 1 also enables implementation of engagement delivery using templates and guidance that will be revised following Framework adoption. The framework also commits Council to evaluating its compliance with Community Engagement Principles after each project, which will include assessing compliance with 'representation', including how gender equality is being progressed.

Next steps

The next steps for this project are as follows:

- Stage 3 community engagement on draft Framework (Oct-Nov)
- Finalise Framework (Dec-Jan)
- Final Framework presented to Council for adoption (Feb)

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with us on this project so far, and we look forward to updating you further. To receive email notifications about this project, please 'follow' the Engage Frankston page at: engage.frankston.vic.gov.au/engagement-framework.

Appendix 1

Outcomes of Stage 1 engagement activities

1. Broad community engagement (March-May 2024)

[Stage 1 engagement results](#)

1361 community members engaged. 247 respondents answered whether Council should focus more, less or the same on community engagement in 2025-2029. 61% (152) said Council should focus **more**, 36% (88) said same, and 1% (3) said less.

152 comments relating to this service identified needs for more:

- Focus on things that interest and impact the community
- Engagement where the community can have influence
- Engagement leading to a clear outcome
- Engagement where the outcome is reported effectively
- Engagement that is visible and promoted more
- Honesty and transparency in Council decision-making
- Promotion of opportunities to engage
- Meaningful engagement
- 'Closing the loop'
- First Nations engagement that is accessible and safe in-person
- Representative participation

2. Community Panel deliberation (November 2024)

[Stage 2 engagement results](#)

A Community Panel of 40 members discussed community engagement needs and aspirations for 2025-2029.

The Community Panel recommended 'more focus on':

- Engagement programs reaching broader community.
- Comms and engagement when there are changes to community facilities.
- Promotion, transparency and communication on engagement projects across the whole demographic, at the start and end of projects
- Engagement in-person, including at public events
- Evidence of council reviewing its performance and trying to improve.

Panellists expressed sentiment towards:

- More open, honest, and transparent communication where the community is consulted, not just informed.
- Clear explanations about council decisions
- Clear communication, which is key to building trust and fostering a stronger connection between Council and community

- Diversifying modes of communication, improving the format and reach
- More initiatives like public events, festivals, and awards programs to foster community connection.
- More inclusive, regular, transparent community engagement with an emphasis on ‘closing the loop’, to bridge the gap between Council decisions and community interests.
- More direct engagement with Council, including regular community meetings, more surveys or engagement programs, and in-person sessions outside of business hours to allow wider participation
- Improved outreach to underrepresented groups, such as men
- Increased accountability from Council, with an emphasis on engaging the community more in decision-making processes.

Figure 10: Meaning of focus on community engagement

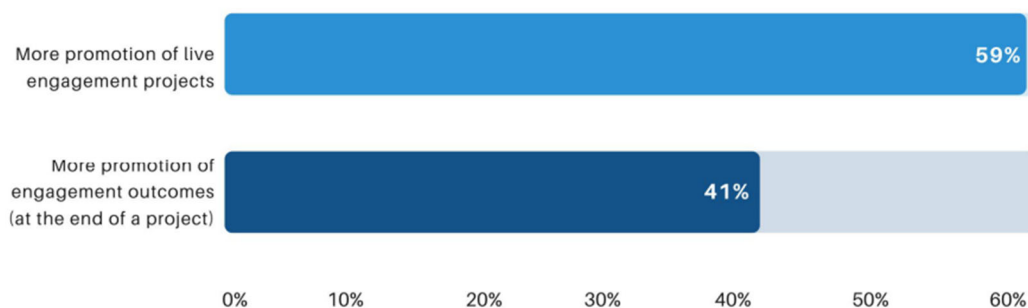


Figure 11: Representation of ‘more focus’ on community engagement

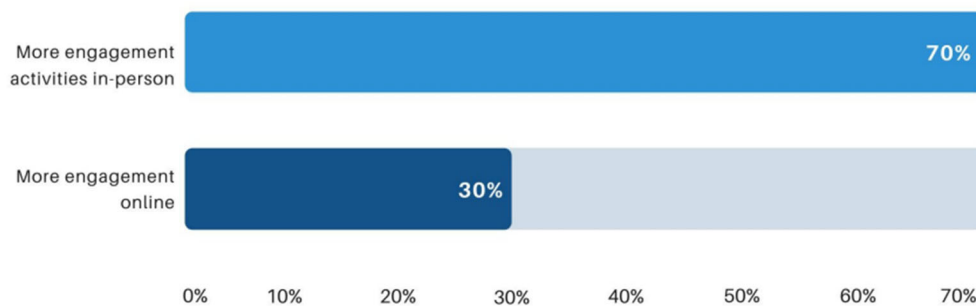
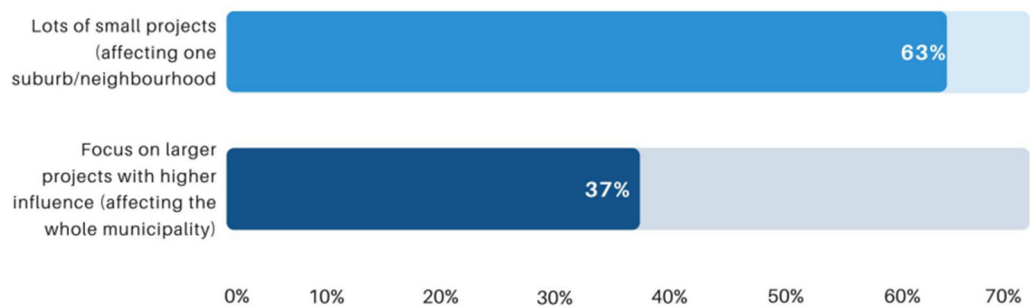


Figure 12: Representation of 'more focus' on community engagement



3. Community Satisfaction Survey results in 2024 and 2025

[Full Survey Results](#)

Community satisfaction with community engagement:

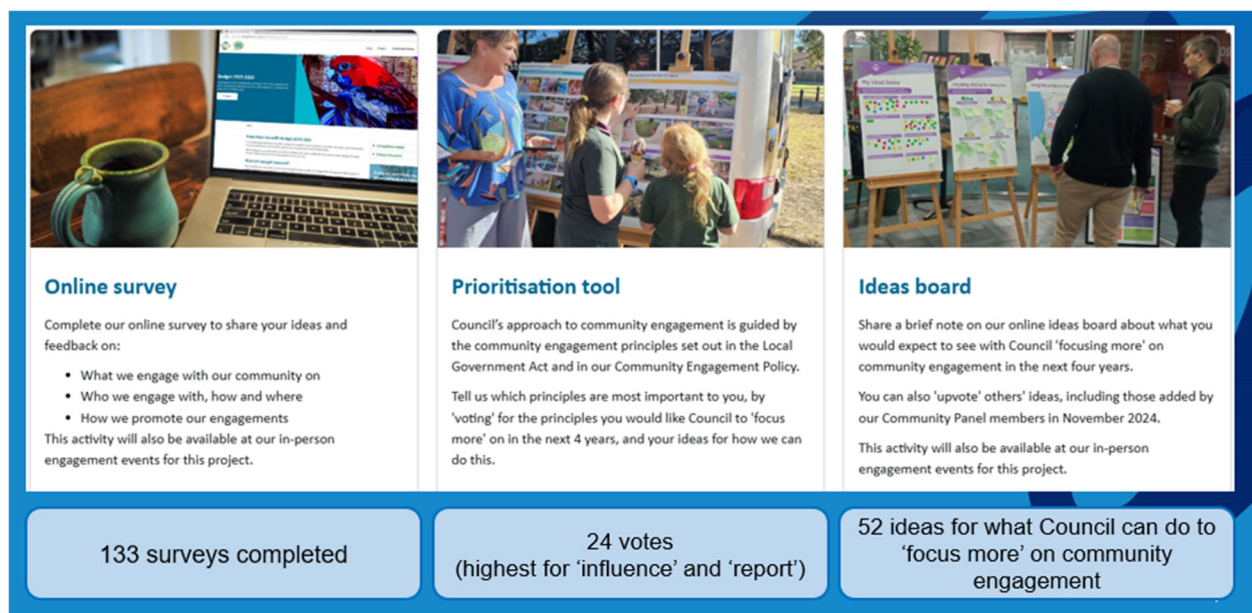
- 6.9/10 in 2024
- 7.0/10 in 2025.

Comments indicated a perceived lack of engagement and communication.

We re-tested these results in Community Engagement Framework review:

- Council making and implementing decisions in the interests of the community:
 - 6.82/10 (79 respondents)
- Council's performance in maintaining the trust and confidence of the local community:
 - 6.43/10 (76 respondents)

Outcomes of Stage 2 engagement activities



		
In-person engagement Review where we'll be engaging in-person for this project in our map. We also invite your ideas for events and locations we can engage at in future!	Opinion poll Share with us your preferred options for how and where we engage, what we engage on, and how we promote the engagement opportunities to you. This activity will also be available at our in-person engagement events.	Workshops We'll be running small-group workshops to have more in-depth discussions about the Framework review. For more regular engagement opportunities, including Community Panels, we invite you to join Mini Frankston City.
9 engagement pop ups/intercepts	51 votes	2 Mini Frankston City workshops 2 stakeholder workshops 4 staff workshops 1 written submission

1. Summary of results / recommendations:

- We only engage where there is influence, and we clearly explain what is negotiable.
- We engage on small (neighbourhood) and larger (municipal wide) projects.
- We use a variety of methods, and prioritise:
 - o In person engagement
 - o Online surveys and other activities
- We trial new engagement methods including via community organisations, community services, community hubs, stakeholder groups, youth groups.
- We use a variety of comms to promote both active projects and outcomes, and prioritise:
 - o Social media
 - o Newsletters (make more accessible with contents tables) / newspapers
 - o Posters and signage
- We trial new comms methods including radio, SMS, evergreen flyers where people of diverse demographics gather (medical centres, shopping centres).
- Revise our IAP2 Spectrum:
 - o Communicate | **Ask** | **Involve** | **Work together** | Empower
- Revise Principles to be simpler, for example:
 - o **Purpose:** We will clearly explain why we are asking for the community's input, and what is in and out of scope.
 - o **Influence:** We will explain clearly what community input Council will use to help make their decision. We will not ask for your input if there is no influence (we will communicate information instead).
 - o **Representative:** We will make our projects visible and accessible so that we receive the diverse input that Council needs to make decisions in the interest of our community.
 - o **Supported and informed:** We will give you enough information and time for you to access and understand what you're providing input on.
 - o **Report:** We will keep you updated during our project stages, and explain what we heard from the community, and how it was used by Council in making their decision.

2. Key engagement themes

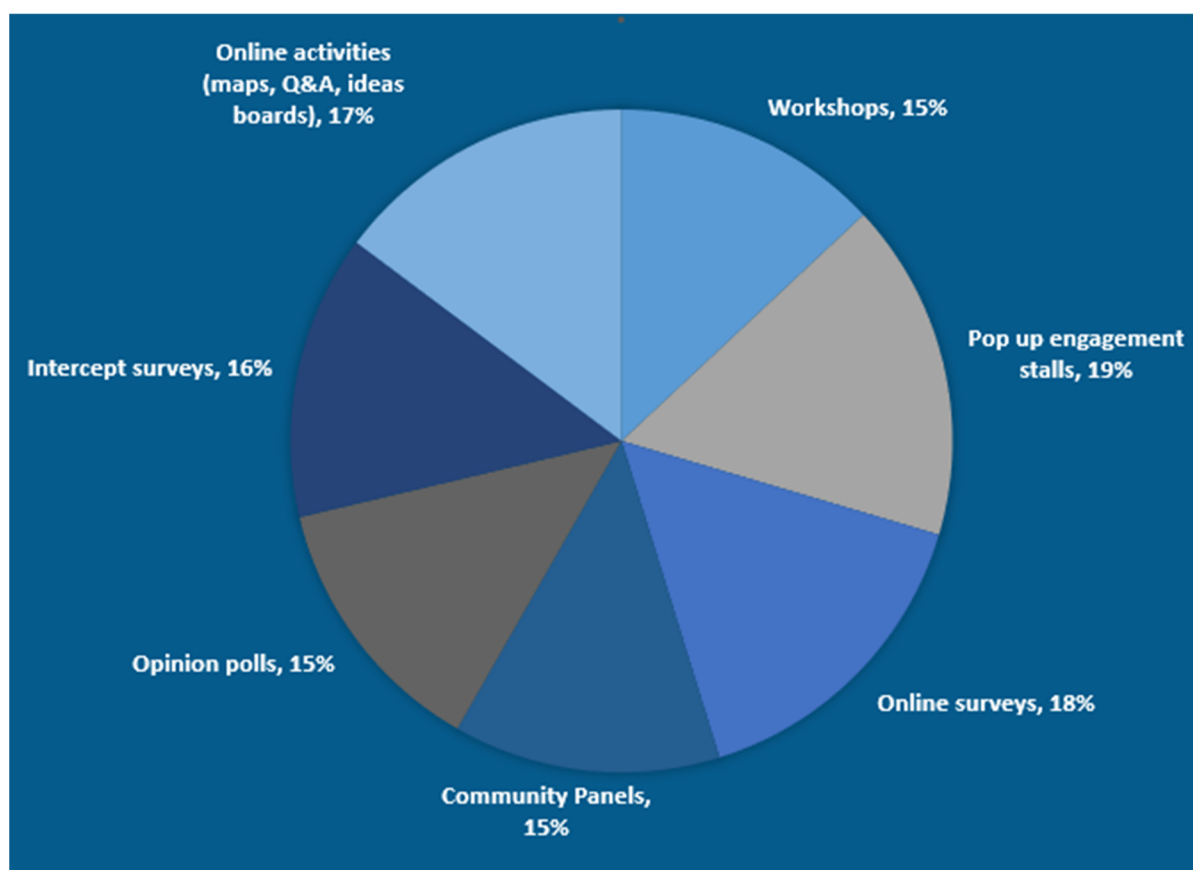


Figure 5: Preferred engagement methods



Figure 6: Other ideas and reasons for preferred methods

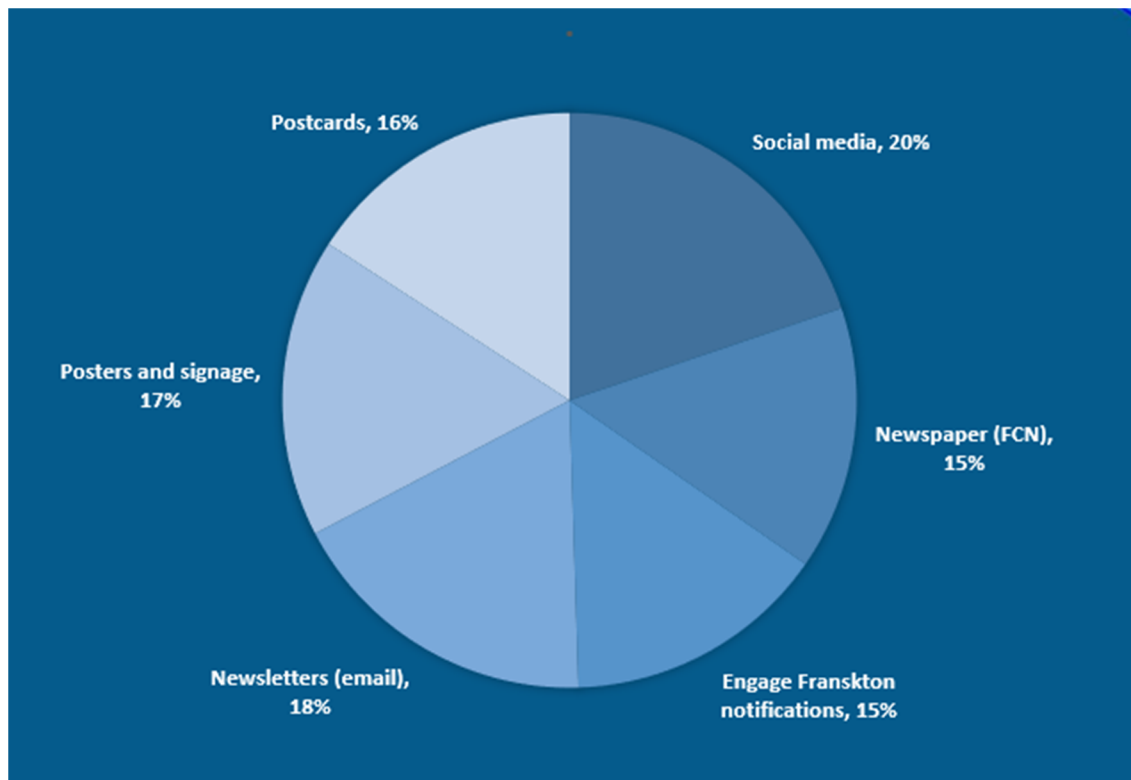


Figure 8: Other ideas and reasons for preferred promotional methods

3. Feedback on what the Engagement Principles mean to community (listed in order of importance to community)

Influence:

- “Genuinely listen, review and consider”
- “Clear statements how and when I can influence council decisions.”
- “I think it would be helpful if residents had a better understanding of what the council has control over and how our feedback influences decisions.”
- “It becomes irrelevant when groups are consulted and possibly Council Officers agree yet when the matter goes to a Council Meeting the Councillors vote on their own views.”
- “This means engaging early, before a document is drafted or concept plans are designed. It is harder to trust the process when a lot of work appears to be done already. This would look like asking for ideas for a

new playground instead of showing an already designed one and then not changing anything meaningful when people suggest changes.”

- “We need to avoid this being a box ticking exercise and evidence that...engagement has been considered or reasons why it has been adopted/disregarded.”
- “What does it ‘mean’ as an individual, how does my voice create/influence change. Hearing how it has contributed is important”

Purpose:

- “Make sure the community knows the purpose.”
- “Achievements towards community.”
- “Set expectations and communicate them.”
- “Have a timeline.”
- “Define the aims clearly...avoid fluffy words.”
- “There is a mismatch between what Council offers as the purpose and scope and what the community actually want the purpose and scope to be.”

Informed:

- “Non bias.”
- “Regular updates via email. Signs in the community”
- “Including adequate time to research.”
- “Share timelines of engagement and project turnover.”
- “This means trusting the community with what makes a project hard, or what the problem is that needs to be solved. This would look like engagement that goes for more than a few weeks, and where you can ask a question and get a response before the time runs out. It also means being notified when I'm interested in the topic.”
- “Information needs to be supplied in a way that common people without council work experience can understand”
- “Inaccessible language is a barrier to engagement, especially for young people.”

Representative:

- “So important to reach those that are experiencing disadvantage.”
- “Diversity - keep pushing until it is achieved.”
- “More events that have good feedback and inclusion.”
- “Consult involved external stakeholders for a change.”
- “Show how you are reaching out to everyone in the community Not just engaging during business hours to people that have time to contribute. Consider both parents are usually working.”
- “Truly representative samples may be difficult to achieve. Certain engagement approaches are more likely to allow for representative engagement. True representation will need us to challenge the underlying cultural and ableist biases about who can contribute and how.”

- “A range of views and hearing what the objectors thought as well as the majority. This also means trying to reach different genders, ages and abilities. This would like engagements that have over a certain number of responses, and allow people to express their views in their own words. It would look like results that show if particular groups had different results to the majority.”
- “Ensuring that those who are harder to reach have equal opportunity to engage e.g. people with limited English, lower SES residents, people with disabilities, older people less familiar with online engagement.”

Report:

- Clear simplified reporting.”
- “One page summary.”
- “You asked. We did. Or we didn’t, and this is why.”
- “Report back in the same way you promoted the engagement.”
- “I think this would be better framed as reciprocity that report. Report maintains a power imbalance, and also does not put emphasis on relationship and value. Reciprocity engenders respect, sharing, value and relationship, which I feel should be centred over reporting.”
- “This means seeing how my response compared to everyone else’s, and then seeing how everyone’s responses were used to make a decision. It also means being honest when things change and feedback isn’t used or a decision is made that goes against it. This would look like an honest explanation of how feedback was or was not used, in conversational language rather than sounding like a formal report or polished media release.”
- “Genuine input and adjustments made, and genuine acknowledgement. Report back via email and explain why decisions were made. Important for acceptance.”

Supported:

- “Easy read options.”
- “Support from different services to help people feel supported in engagement.”
- “Primarily, I’d like to see council consultation documents presented in different modalities, including Easy English, to promote the inclusion of people with communication disabilities or low literacy. I’d love to see some profiles of the experiences of people with support needs, too, to model to the community that engagement is for all.”
- “Support should not need to be requested. This means making engagement accessible so that participants don’t have to find their own support to participate. Online, this looks like short paragraphs, plain English, enlargable font, and image captions so I don’t have to read off an image.”

Appendix 2

Submission received



31 August 2025

Frankston City Council
Civic Centre, Davey Street
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Attn: Heather Hutchinson

Dear Heather,

Re: Engage Your Way

The six principles of engagement as set out in the Community Engagement Framework are: Supported, Purpose, Informed, Influence, Report and Representative. These principles and their explanations form a solid basis for the framework and general community consultation and feedback. However, they do not address how the expertise and accumulated knowledge of community groups is considered or prioritised in community consultation processes. Nor does it set out how these sources of valuable information are taken into account by different FCC departments regarding significant matters, before recommendations to Council are made and decisions approved at Council meetings.

A case in point is the approval of the Carlsberg Beach Club for the last Summer season. Two relevant and long-standing groups, Frankston Beach Association and Frankston Beach Patrol 3199 were not consulted, nor asked to provide relevant information to the Destination Frankston team, before this initiative proceeded onto Council for approval.

The significant concerns and complaints about this three month long event by these groups and FEFN were addressed after the event had occurred with a visit by staff from Destination Frankston to a FEFN meeting to explain what the intention of the Destination Frankston program is. Some questions emailed to them in advance by members of FEFN were answered in writing but not spoken to at the meeting.

One problem acknowledged by all present at this meeting is that this department had no knowledge or understanding about the relevance of FEFN or the assistance it could provide to them in their decision making and recommendations. Even so, despite the concerns expressed by members at this meeting and in writing, approval for the same event has been made for next Summer 25/26. It would appear that even when significant concerns were raised to Council Staff that no further action was taken by way of more consultation before the next decision was made.

As a matter of principle, consultation and community engagement by Council should include a provision that groups with relevant expertise should be notified about pending issues or events to be brought to Council and their input specifically sought out. There is no such provision in the current framework and we highly recommended that this important opportunity for community input is incorporated going forward. In practice this could mean that a group that has shown a long term or vested interest in an important issues involving disability, environment or seniors for example would be invited to a briefing by Council Officers about the subject being consulted on, at the beginning of the consultation so that their feedback could be considered in informing the rest of the consultation period and how it is managed.

We are very pleased Council is reviewing its Community Engagement policy to ensure our community's views are well represented in its future decision making and hope to see that community group expertise and experience will play an important part in Council consultations going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Response to submission

Thank you for sending through the FEFN's submission to the Engage your Way project. We really appreciate your thoughtful input into this project. We also acknowledge the challenges that the FEFN has had with previous projects, such as the Carlsberg Beach Club project referenced, and we aim to improve how you are engaged on projects of interest such as this one.

Council considers our engagement with interested networks and committees such as the FEFN as 'stakeholder engagement', which we consider as separate to community engagement. Under the adopted Community Engagement Policy 2025 (attached), and also in the draft Community Engagement Framework 2026 (attached):

- Stakeholder engagement is delivered separately to Community Engagement by Council teams. In the case of the FEFN, our engagement with you is undertaken by the Environmental Policy and Planning Team.
- Community engagement focuses on seeking input from individual people who live, work or visit Frankston City, who represent their own individual interests.
- Stakeholders are defined in the Community Engagement Policy as any organisation, political entity, committee, advisory group, individual or group of community members that has a particular interest or stake in the outcome of a decision.
- Council engages with stakeholders separately to the broader community, so that Council hears submissions representing the needs of stakeholders separately. This process is managed by Council teams under the Council Meeting submission process, which can run alongside, but is separate to community engagement.
- Council encourages stakeholders, such as the FEFN, to make submissions to Council on topics of interest, and Council commits to keeping stakeholders and advisory committees informed of relevant projects to ensure submissions can be made (via your key contact). FEFN members are also encouraged to participate in community engagement projects as individual residents of Frankston City.

Please let us know if you would like further information about our response, or to discuss in a FEFN meeting. We also invite the FEFN's continued engagement, either as individual residents or via further stakeholder submission, in the '[Engage Your Way](#)' project, and the draft Community Engagement Framework is now available for review and feedback on Engage Frankston.