Community Engagement Framework

Acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners

Frankston City Council respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Boon Wurrung and Bunurong in this special place now known by its European name, Frankston.

We recognise the contribution of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to our community in the past, present and into the future.

VICKI THOMAS

Born in Hobart, Tasmania
Palawa woman
Children, 2, grandchildren, 8
Resident of Langwarrin for 30 years

Member of Frankston City Council Community Panel

ABOUT THE PAINTING:

The Gathering Place.

Where all mobs can gather to yarn, dance, eat, laugh.

A safe place, a restful place.

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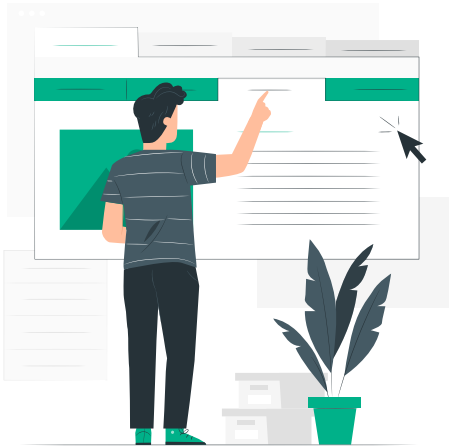


Our Vision for Community Engagement

Good community engagement is an essential foundation of an active and involved community.

It promotes an exchange of information and ideas between Council and the community on issues and decisions that the community are affected by, and are interested in.

Frankston City Council's Engagement Promise

Frankston City Council is committed to engaging and collaborating with our diverse local community, to understand and include people's different views, experiences and expertise.

Council is committed to genuinely listening and learning from the local community to ensure community feedback influences Council's decisions and project outcomes.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement means involving local people in decisions that interest and/or impact them.

Engagement can take many forms. From simply sharing information to getting local people directly involved in making Council decisions, it's about helping the community to influence decisions that affect Council services, activities and plans.

When our community are engaged, they can see how their contributions make a difference to a decision, and to long term outcomes in their local neighbourhoods and wider municipality.

Why engagement matters

- Community members can influence decisions that directly affect them and their interests.
- Council can better understand and respond to the needs of the community, and provide better services.
- Decisions made by Council can be better understood by the community.
- Council can demonstrate transparency, integrity and trust in decision-making and processes.
- Helps build shared ownership and accountability between Council and the community for implementation of decisions.
- Good community engagement can strengthen communities, and support social equity and democratic governance.

Our Engagement Principles

Our Community Engagement Policy was adopted by Council on 1 March 2021. It sets Council's commitment for how we will engage our community on decisions that impact and affect them.

A community engagement process must have a clearly defined purpose, objective and scope.

Participants must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation.

Participants must be diverse and representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement.

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

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

Participants are informed of how their input has influenced Council decision making.

The Policy includes five Engagement Principles set out in the new *Local Government Act 2020*:

1. **Purpose**
2. **Informed**
3. **Representative**
4. **Supported**
5. **Influence**

It also includes a **sixth Principle** based on community engagement about the Policy, relating to the need for Council to report back following engagement activities, and once decisions are made:

6. **Report**

Community Engagement Framework

This Community Engagement Framework:

- Uses our Engagement Principles to develop a consistent and coordinated approach to community engagement.
- Introduces our new Engagement Model – Plan, Do, Report, Review.
- Describes how Council will do community engagement, including when, who and how we will engage our community for different matters.
- Explains how we will report back to the community after engagement activities.
- Shows how we will implement and evaluate this Framework.

The Framework demonstrates Frankston City Council's commitment to:

- Developing a consistent and coordinated approach to community engagement.
- Increasing participation and involvement in Council decisions and projects, and moving towards collaboration, wherever possible.
- Improving awareness of community engagement as central to Council decision-making, including understanding the importance of listening and improving understanding of Traditional Owners and other community members needs
- Providing guidelines and a toolkit for planning and delivering community engagement.

The Framework applies to the projects and decisions you find on Council's Engage Frankston! website and is guided by Council's Community Engagement Policy and Section 55 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

How we developed the Framework

This Framework was developed with key input from our community and Frankston City Council staff.

Community input

We consulted widely across the municipality on people's preferences for community engagement. In May-June 2021, we engaged with over 250 local community members through the following engagement activities:

- A series of face-to-face community pop-ups
- An online survey
- Council social media posts
- Meetings and forums

We also incorporated feedback previously received on the Community Engagement Policy.

Many community members that Council engaged with hadn't been actively engaged in Council decisions and projects. However, there was a general willingness and interest in participating in future engagement opportunities.

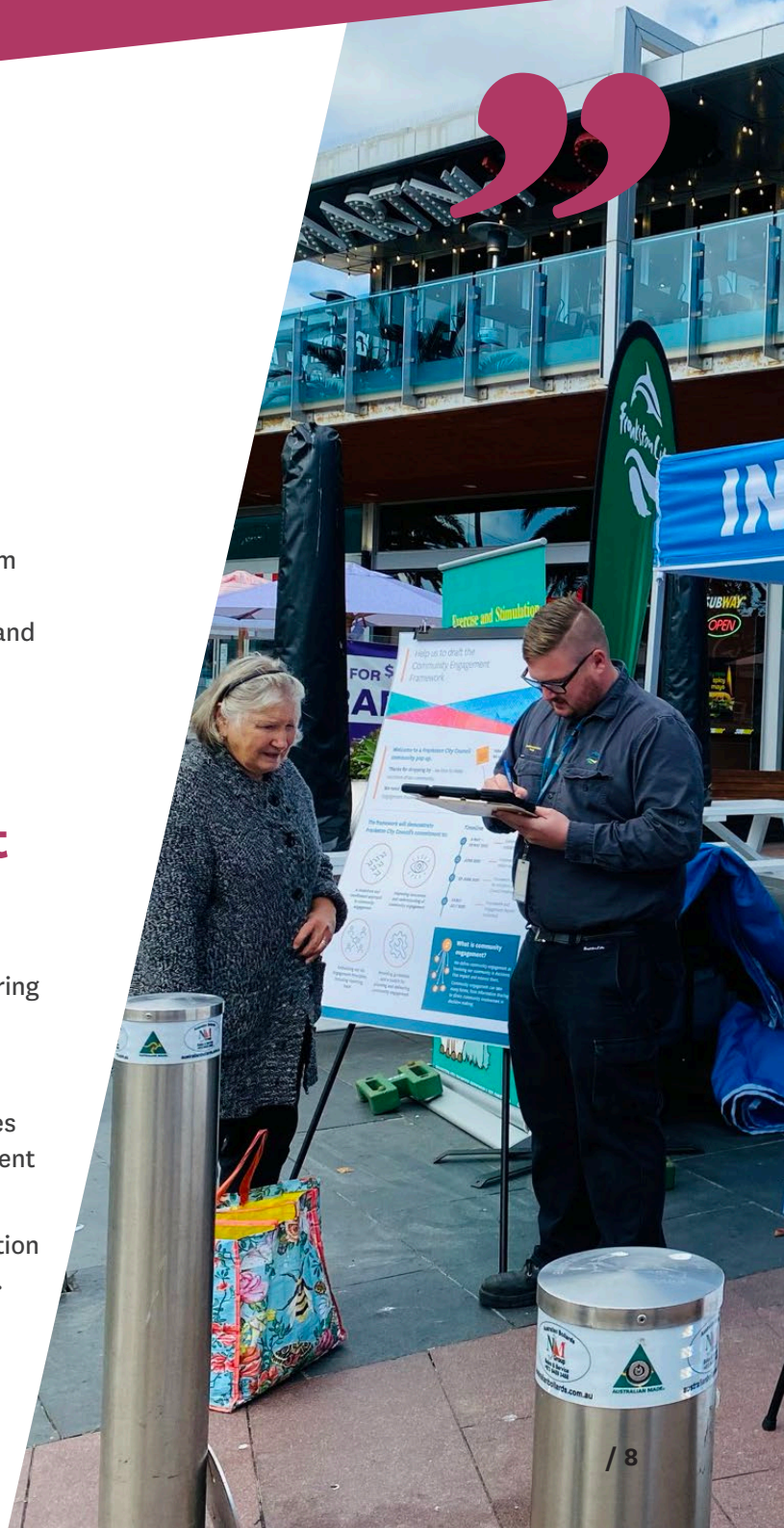
Staff input

Community engagement practitioners across Council advised the Community Engagement Team on the content of the Framework. They have provided guidance and feedback on their existing and future community engagement priorities and needs.

Our approach to community engagement

Council's approach to community engagement has been informed by:

- Engagement with our community and staff during the development of this Framework
- Our Community Engagement Policy
- The Local Government Act 2020 which requires transparent decision-making in local government
- The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), an international organisation advancing the practice of public participation.



How we developed the Framework

IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a Spectrum of Public Participation that is recognised as community engagement best practice.

The Spectrum helps us determine the level of engagement and the extent to which community and stakeholders can influence a decision. Generally, the more complex a decision, the higher the level of engagement.

We have used the Spectrum in Table 1 to identify the role our community will likely play in Council decision-making. It shows that different levels of community participation are required depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and levels of concern in the decision being made.

Community engagement may include multiple levels of public participation, both at different stages of the process, and because different stakeholders will choose to engage at different levels.

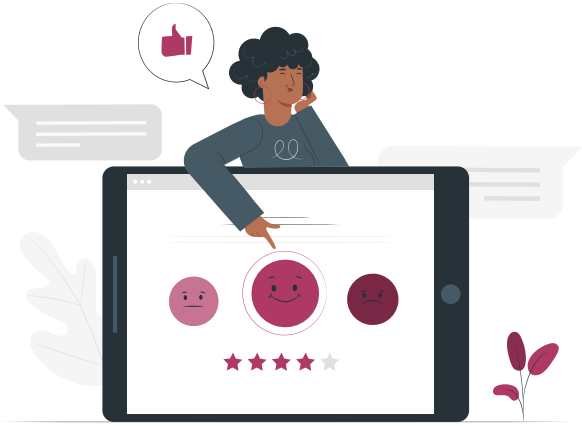
Statutory requirements

Some elements of community engagement are directed by statutory requirements. Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council has an obligation to develop a long-term Community Vision, Financial Plan and Asset Plan, as well as a four-year Council Plan.

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Council has a statutory requirement to develop a four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

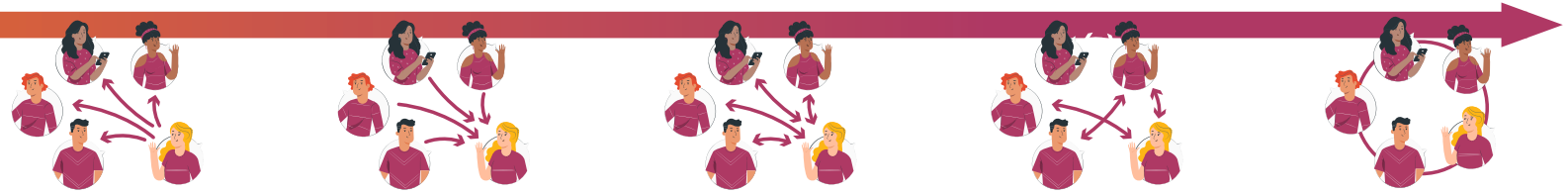
Council will meet its statutory obligations by ensuring the community has an opportunity to participate in deliberative engagement practices in the development of these plans.

For projects that are subject to statutory requirements for community engagement (e.g. land-use planning, and formal public submission processes), Council will engage the community in accordance with all statutory requirements.



Frankston City Council Community Participation and Engagement Levels

Table 1



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Commitment to community	Council will keep you informed	Council will listen to and acknowledge your concerns throughout the process	Council will exchange information, ideas and concerns with you, ensuring these are reflected in the decisions made	Council will seek to include you and incorporate your ideas in the decisions being made, as much as possible	Council will implement or support what the community decides
Community role	**Listen**	**Contribute**	**Participate**	**Partner**	**Partner or Lead**
Example activities	• Website updates • Frankston City News • Letterbox drops • Fact sheets • Social media • Information signage	• Surveys • Drop-in sessions • Ideas boards • Online mapping tools • Walking tours • Field trips	• Community pop-ups • Stakeholder meetings • Focus groups • Drop-in discussion • Working groups • Deliberative polling	• Community panels • Advisory committees • Partnership groups • Steering groups • Workshops	• Ballots • Delegated decision-making • Independently governed groups
Engagement type	**Consultative** The community provide feedback on alternatives, draft documents or decisions.		**Deliberative** The community are provided with sufficient time and information to consider and prioritise options, as part of a decision-making process.		
Example projects and decisions	Projects where there are no opportunities for the community to influence the decision (e.g. if Council is not the decision-maker or Council is undertaking emergency works or providing public health notifications)	**Statutory projects:** • Land-use planning • Hearing of submissions **Low impact/interest projects:** • Single tree installations • Small scale traffic projects (e.g. speed bumps) • Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey • Council Policy (community-based)	**Medium impact/interest projects:** • Upgrades to local park • Public renewal/art projects • Upgrades to local road/ bike path **High impact/interest projects:** • Council Budget • Making of Local Laws	**Projects requiring community deliberation:** • Council Plan • Long Term Financial Plan • Community Vision • Asset Plan **High impact/interest projects:** • Major public space upgrade • Major infrastructure project • Master plan • Strategic action plans	• Youth Council projects

What we will engage with our community on?

We will:

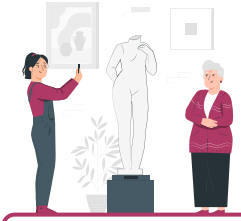
- Assess the level of community impact and interest to determine when to engage;
- Apply the IAP2 level of engagement that is appropriate to each project, as assessed as low, medium or high;
- Consider previous engagement, risks and public value; and
- Always engage when legally required, and in accordance with any relevant public health requirements.

We asked 234 community members about the types of projects and decisions they are interested in engaging with us on, and they said...

Projects mentioned

- Road Maintenance
- Events
- Local traffic improvements
- Road Closures

Interest 26%



- Art/sculpture projects
- Bike path upgrades
- Walking path upgrades

18%

- Land-use planning

18%

- Shopping strip upgrades
- Sporting facility upgrade
- CBD revitalisation
- Community park upgrades
- Playground upgrades
- Action plans (e.g. Climate Change)
- Council Budget

32%

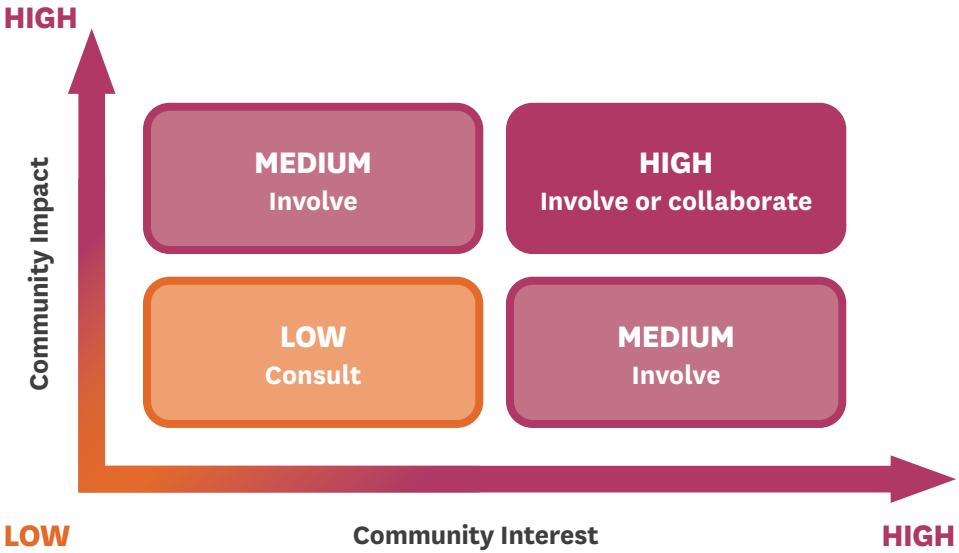
- Service improvements or changes

5%

Community impact/interest assessment

For all non-statutory engagement, Council will assess the need to engage by looking at two factors:

- the level of community impact,
- the level of community interest.

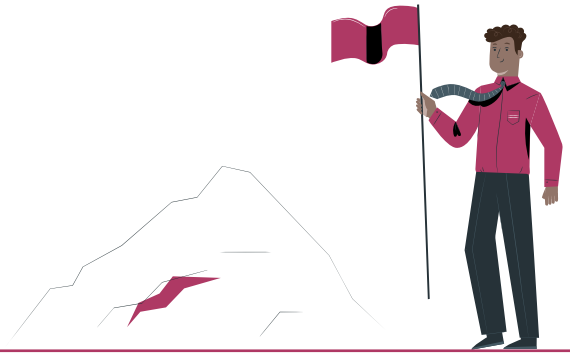


The projects listed in Table 1 are examples of how this assessment can be applied.

Defining purpose, scope and objectives

We will clearly define the purpose, objectives and scope of a community engagement program. To do this, we will consider:

- The levels of engagement proposed at varying stages of the project, based on the community interest/impact assessment
- The benefits of seeking community input into a project
- Feedback we have already gathered through other recent and relevant engagement programs
- What the community can meaningfully influence
- Roles and responsibilities, including decision-makers and approval requirements
- Whether the likely costs of engagement represent good value for ratepayers given the scope and scale of the decision
- Opportunities to combine projects that seek to engage with the same stakeholder groups, and
- Background research, previous data analysis, studies and other supporting materials.



Who will we engage with?

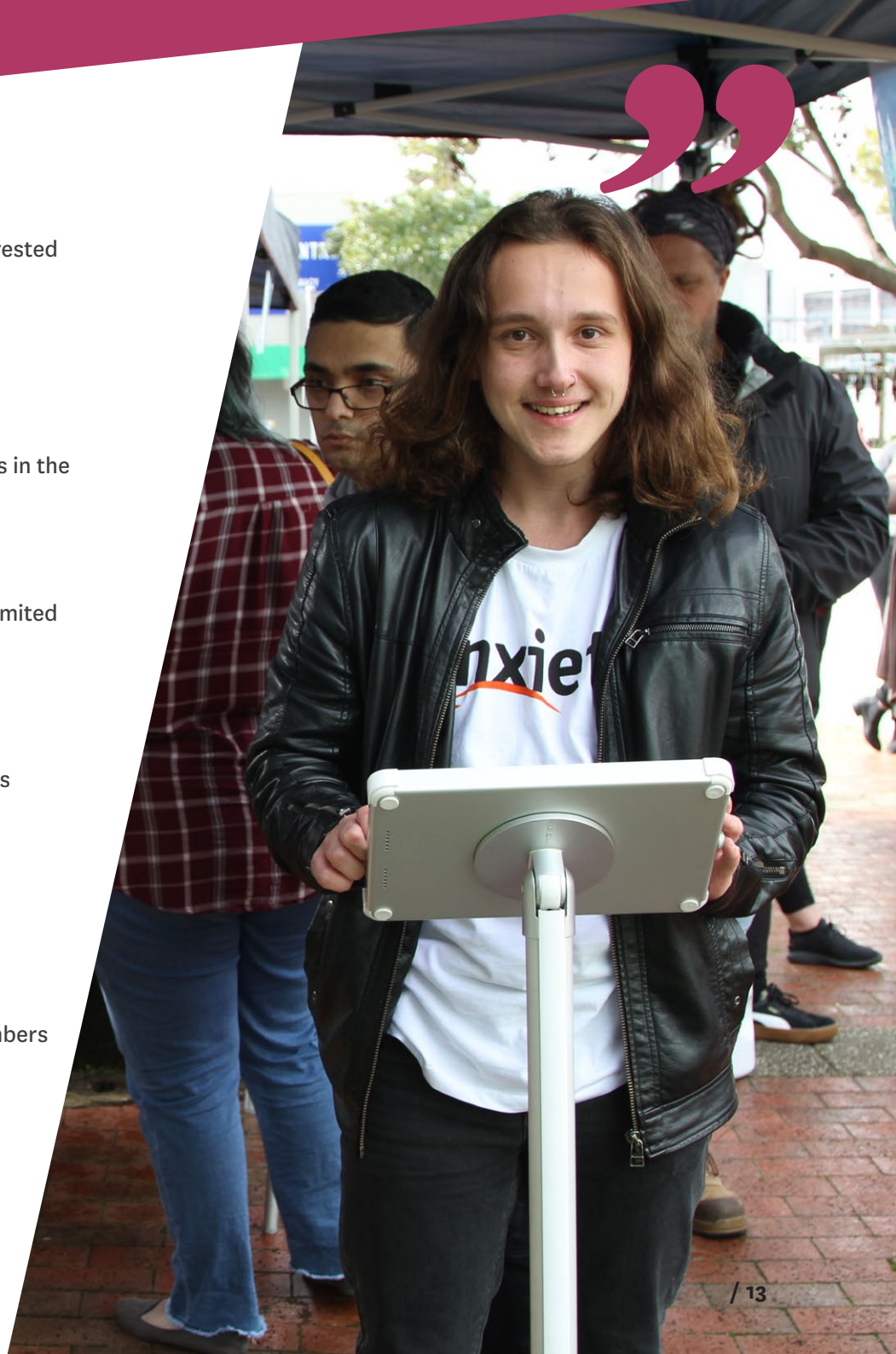
As part of developing an engagement plan, Council will identify who is impacted or interested in a local issue, the best ways to seek their feedback and any barriers to them engaging.

Council will:

- Provide anyone affected or interested with the opportunity to participate
- Clearly define the level of influence people will have
- Carefully consider how Council can include a representative and diverse mix of voices in the engagement process, and
- Proactively seek out the views of hard-to-reach communities.

Examples of community stakeholders that we seek to engage with include, but are not limited to, the following groups:

- Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
- Business owners and operators
- Children and young people
- Community advocacy groups
- Council service users
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities (CALD)
- LGBTIQ+ community
- Neighbourhood Houses and community centres
- Non-resident ratepayers
- Not-for-profit groups
- Older people
- Owner occupiers/ratepayers
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with disability
- Renters
- Schools, kindergartens and childcare groups
- Special interest groups
- Sports and recreational club members
- Students
- Visitors
- Vulnerable people and those with a mental illness.



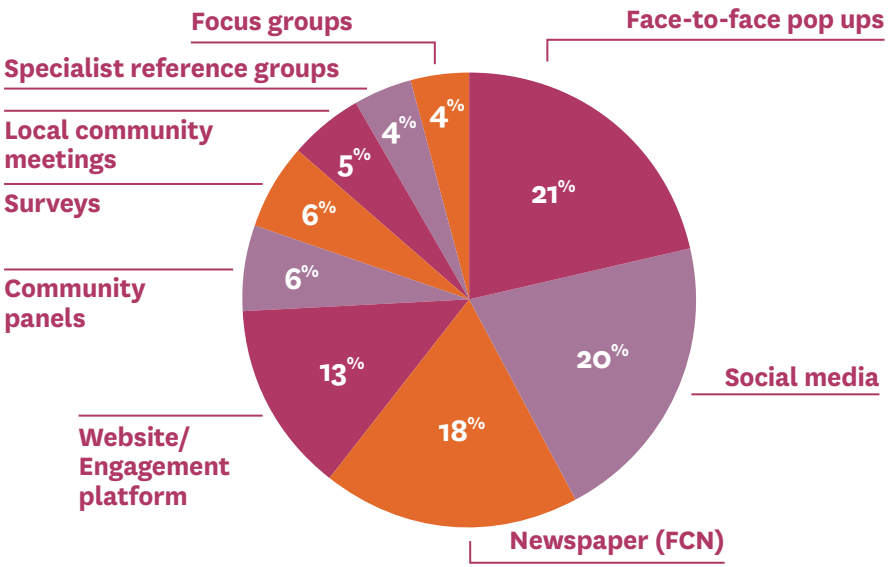
How will we engage?

The ways we engage with people can greatly affect who can participate and how Council receives feedback from the community. Council is committed to providing a range of engagement methods for each project.

Given the diversity of the Frankston City community, and the mix of methods preferred at different times and for different projects. This includes, where possible, providing:

- online and face-to-face engagement options for each project
- hard copy and online accessible documents and information, and
- a balance between smaller workshops/meetings/reference groups and broader scale engagement methods to diversify the voices heard.

We asked 234 community members and heard that the top nine engagement methods the community wants Council to use include:



Council projects will apply different engagement methods at different stages, when this suits our community and project needs. For example, Council might collaborate with the community to gather ideas at an early stage of a design project (such as a concept plan for a playground), and then involve the community to finalise priorities and details.

Council will:

- Tailor engagement activities to the project, stakeholders and resources available;
- Provide a diverse mix of activities, with a range of accessibility options, to increase participation;
- Ensure people are provided with information and support to meaningfully contribute; and
- Ensure our activities are accessible and inclusive.

Examples of the types of engagement activities Council uses for different levels of engagement are shown in Table 1 (page 10).

Where we will engage

The Frankston City community has identified the following locations as good face-to-face engagement locations:

Local shops/ shopping centres

- Langwarrin Shops
- Karingal Hub
- Carrum Downs Shopping Centre
- Local Shopping strips
- Seaford Shopping strip

27%

Parks/Outdoors

- Ballam Park
- Belverdere Park
- Frankston Market
- Kananook Area
- Little Beauty Market
- Playgrounds
- Farmers Markets
- Beach Area

22%

Suburbs

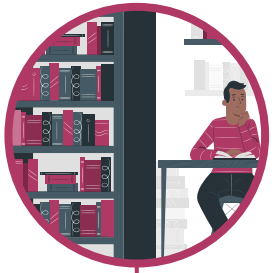
- Langwarrin
- Frankston CBD
- Sandhurst
- Langwarrin South
- Frankston North
- North West Ward

17%

Community Centres/Hubs

- Lyrebird Community Centre
- Seaford Community Centre
- Frankston North Community Centre
- Local Men's Sheds
- Karingal Community Centre
- Sandhurst Club House

15%



Library/School

- Carrum Downs Library
- Patterson River Secondary School
- Seaford Library
- Seaford North Primary School
- Frankston Library

14%

Events/Festivals

- Municipal Events
- Pines Festival
- Local Events

10%

Timing of engagement

For projects where community engagement is to be carried out in accordance with specific statutory requirements, such as land-use planning processes for example, the timing and type of engagement will be informed and limited by statutory requirements.

For non-statutory projects, Council will apply the following timing guidelines:

- Engage interested and impacted communities as early as practicable, preferably at the earliest design and concept stages.
- We will consider the timing of significant social and cultural dates, to avoid, where possible, any conflict if they will impact on the ability of community members to participate.
- We will have regard and sensitivity to current social issues, trends and significant matters when engaging the community. For example, by engaging communities with sensitivity during public health emergencies.
- Registered Aboriginal Parties are the primary source of advice and knowledge on matters relating to Aboriginal places or Aboriginal objects in their region. This can take as much time as needed for the Registered Aboriginal Party to fully explore.
- Where stakeholders or impacted people emerge later in an engagement process, we will strive to respond flexibly, and do our best to support their participation within the limitations of our projects.

Roles of people in engagement

Community

- Become informed and involved in community engagement opportunities that interest and impact you
- Review materials of engagement opportunities
- Be open to all ideas and respectful of other people
- Adhere to the process and timeframe provided
- Understand that the outcomes may not be as you desire.

Councillors

- Support the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy and Community Engagement Framework
- Uphold Council's Engagement Principles
- Be open to all ideas and respectful of other people
- Help to identify issues that would benefit from community engagement
- Review and comment on community engagement plans
- Promote participation in engagement activities
- Review the findings of community engagement programs
- Consider the results of community engagement in forming opinions and making decisions.

Staff

- Uphold the Engagement Principles
- Consult communication and engagement staff about the need for engagement before initiating work or making decisions
- Partner with communication and engagement staff to design a genuine and meaningful process
- Allow enough time to properly plan and implement the program
- Ensure decision-makers review and approve the engagement plan
- Ensure enough time for people to learn about and participate in engagement activities
- Ensure people have the information they need to participate effectively
- Encourage discussion and understanding of all viewpoints, and try to be as objective as possible
- Execute community engagement as transparently and effectively as possible
- Document and report findings to Council and the community
- Fully consider findings of the engagement program and ensure they are reported and reflected in the recommendations
- Evaluate projects and continuously build skills.

Our Engagement Model

We have developed a new Engagement Model, adapted from IAP2. It provides an approach to preparing and delivering community engagement in Frankston City.

The model features four phases: Plan, Do, Report, Review.

Prepare an engagement plan

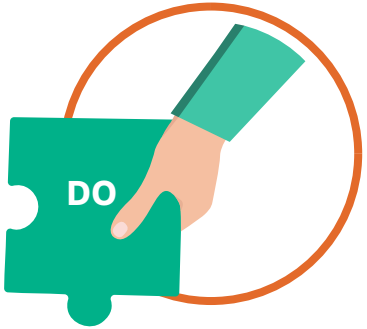
The Engagement Model has a strong emphasis on planning, as this stage ensures the process is comprehensive and guided by our Principles.

Adequate planning also allows Council to deliver the engagement to required timelines, as efficiently as possible, and to allocate sufficient budget and resources to the process.

We plan as early and as strategically as possible, considering previous engagements, future needs, and links with other Council projects, services and activities.

During this stage we will determine:

- The purpose, objective and scope of community engagement
- What the community can influence or provide feedback on
- How feedback will be used to influence the outcome
- Who in the community Council will seek to engage with
- What types of engagement activities will be used, and
- When and where the engagement will take place.



Implement the engagement plan

The next step is to deliver engagement that is genuine and respectful, so that it builds and maintains trust in Council's engagement processes.

During the stage we ensure that:

- Activities are inclusive and accessible
- The engagement is clear about the purpose and level of influence
- The community are listened to and understood
- We respect the diverse views and experiences of our community, and
- Engagement Plans are monitored and adjusted if needed.

Inform decision-making and report back

At this stage, a report is prepared for Council detailing the outcomes of the community engagement to inform the decision or draft document. An opportunity for further feedback may be provided.

We will:

- Plan how we will 'close the loop' and report back at the start of the engagement process;
- Review and consider feedback received;
- Report back the findings and decisions in a timely and accessible way; and
- Use findings to influence decisions, or advocate where we do not have the authority to make decisions.

Evaluate community engagement process

In this stage Council will review the engagement process and what has been learnt during implementation of the Engagement Plan. We will assess what worked well, what could be improved, and document any learnings.

Community feedback (positive and negative) on Council's engagement activities is welcome at any time. This can be provided directly to the team managing the engagement process or via Council's Community Engagement Team.

This provides Council with an opportunity to improve understanding of our community and build skills and knowledge for future engagement processes.

We will:

- Welcome and listen to community feedback at any time;
- Plan our evaluation at the start of the engagement process;
- Take a holistic approach that considers more than just numbers, and includes feedback collected through interviews, focus groups or open-ended surveys; and
- Document and share lessons learnt.

Thank you

We wish to acknowledge and express our gratitude to all the members of the community who have participated in our engagement activities to help inform our Community Engagement Policy and Community Engagement Framework.

We would also like to thank the many government agencies and Councils whose community engagement documents provided insights for the content of our policy and framework.

Your privacy

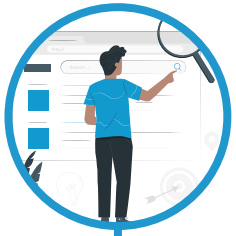
We are committed to protecting your privacy when engaging with you. You will always have a choice about what level of involvement you wish to have in engagement activities and can unsubscribe from mailing lists and panels at any time.

You may contribute your views and ideas anonymously for some consultations, however for others, you may be required to provide your name and contact details. We may also ask for demographic information about you to ensure that we are engaging broadly across the community. When you participate in person at Council workshops or events or in online forums via the Engage Frankston! website, your contributions and identity may be public.

Generally, public reports on community engagement will include de-identified summary information. They may include your comments, but you will not be identified. For formal submissions however, the full submission, including the submitter's name, may be required to be publicly reported. Your personal and sensitive information will only be used and disclosed as authorised by law, including the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Ways to get involved

- Join the Online Community Panel
- Visit Council's Engage Frankston! website to give feedback on current engagement opportunities and subscribe to projects that interest you
- Attend public Council meetings or watch them live online
- Encourage local children and schools to participate in projects that are important to them
- Subscribe to Council's social media channels and sign up for newsletters.



Further information

Visit the Engage Frankston! website to find out more about the Council's current community engagement opportunities.

For more information:

- **Go to:**
  Engage Frankston!
- **Email:**
  engagement@frankston.vic.gov.au
- **Phone:**
  1300 322 322

Frankston City

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