



# **Community Engagement**

Framework 2016

# Introduction

**The Community Engagement Framework 2016 outlines City of Ballarat's commitment to engage the local community to the best of its potential.**

Drawing upon many thousands of conversations and building on its significant history of engagement across many platforms, the City of Ballarat is renewing its whole of Council commitment to the process of genuine and authentic community engagement. In striving for improvement and advancement, there are opportunities for more effective and inclusive participation in the decisions that affect the lives of all residents.

Community engagement is not a single activity; it is a way of working. It is about inclusion and involvement, input and influence. Engagement comes with an equal need for responsibility and accountability, and a willingness to work with others towards a common goal.

The production of this document is a milestone point. The City of Ballarat and Ballarat City Council view community engagement as important in building a better relationship between, and a stronger understanding of, communities in Ballarat. Through the production and implementation of the Framework 2016, the aim is to raise the profile, improve the quality and achieve better coordination of the City of Ballarat's community engagement.





# Community Engagement Objectives

The City of Ballarat's objectives for community engagement are designed to genuinely involve community members in the work of local government and the future of the city, with opportunities for participation across traditional methods and new digital platforms.

From large projects that will redefine the city to important neighbourhood-based initiatives, the City of Ballarat aims to capture and consider the interests and views of our residents, employees, visitors, community groups and businesses.

## The City of Ballarat's Community Engagement Objectives

Deliver engagement opportunities for our community to participate in the City of Ballarat's decision-making processes ensuring outcomes that benefit our community and reflect its input.

Provide a strong foundation for understanding and working with our community – promoting a shared responsibility for decisions and trust in the decision-making process.

Strengthen collaborations, partnerships and new ways to involve and empower the community.



M.A.D.E - Sharing viewpoints





# Ballarat Imagine

**In 2013, the City of Ballarat conducted its largest ever community conversation: Ballarat Imagine.**

A diverse range of community engagement options were employed to involve and motivate all residents. Simple Ballarat Imagine postcards with free postage were sent to every home and business asking:

- **What do you love about Ballarat?**
- **What do you imagine for our city's future?**

With the philosophy of “go to the people,” staff attended local events including the Ballarat Begonia Festival, Ballarat Heritage Weekend and local farmers’ markets to chat with the community. Brightly coloured balloons, T-shirts and drawing placemats attracted large interest at sites including university campuses, shopping malls, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

This campaign was supported by a strong media and communications campaign, and submissions on the City of Ballarat website and social media.

## The Ballarat Imagine Conversation

**The most popular ‘things I love about Ballarat are...’**

- Our heritage
- Our lifestyle and sense of community
- Lake Wendouree
- Ballarat Botanical Gardens

**The most popular ‘things I imagine for Ballarat are...’**

- More events
- Entertainment and tourist attractions
- Better transport networks
- Improved economy
- Shopping and jobs

**Key themes identified in Ballarat Imagine:**

- We are proud of our unique and beautiful city, including its heritage and Lake Wendouree.
- We love the Ballarat lifestyle – country benefits including a great sense of community with city-standard facilities, events and services.
- We want the benefits that growth can bring, like better sporting community facilities and more entertainment options.
- We are concerned about growth, for example the way it could increase traffic congestion and retain our ability to get around easy.

## The Results

- **1,000 conversations with the Ballarat community**
- **More than 6,500 completed responses**
- **98 residents volunteered to join the Community Reference Group.**

Ballarat Imagine informed the new Council Plan 2013-2017, the City of Ballarat 2013/14 Budget, and The Ballarat Strategy.







# Community Engagement Principles

The Framework 2016 principles are informed by the International Association of Public Participation's core values and reflect the City of Ballarat's organisational values of Leadership, Excellence, Loyalty and Outcomes.

Whilst engagement does not replace the final decision-making power of Councillors or the City of Ballarat, it is critical to strengthening the City of Ballarat's capacity to make well-informed, acceptable and sustainable decisions.

## The City of Ballarat's Community Engagement Commitment

Engage community members before developing a new strategy or plan.

Seek out and encourage contributions from people who may be affected by or interested in a decision.

Provide relevant, timely and balanced information so people can contribute in a meaningful way.

Provide a variety of appropriate ways for people to have their say.

Actively listen so that people's ideas and input assist the final decision.

Consider the needs and interests of all people in the decision-making process.

Tell the community about the final decision, and how their input was considered.

Review and evaluate with the community the effectiveness of its engagement strategies.





# Ballarat Strategy

**The Ballarat Strategy is the City of Ballarat's innovative vision for 2040. It clearly and confidently represents the ideas, aspirations and vision of the Ballarat community. The Strategy proposes a long-term future for a greener, more vibrant and connected Ballarat.**

## The Ballarat Strategy Conversation

Significant investment into community consultation and engagement was the key to developing a vision reflective of, and embraced by, the community. The final Strategy presents 10 key concepts including 'The 10 Minute City,' liveable neighbourhoods, housing Ballarat, sustainable transport, jobs of the future and the urban forest.

## The Results

Building on the many thousands of community conversations in Ballarat Imagine, 10 Game Changing Questions and the Preliminary Ballarat Strategy, the final Strategy attracted 725 visitors on myTownHall. All respondents were satisfied with the overall strategy and provided great contributions and thoughts for future, more detailed strategies.





# myTownHall

In 2015, a new interactive platform was created on the City of Ballarat website: myTownHall.

## The Conversation

### myTownHall is...

- ... open all hours, seven days a week
- ... a direct line to your elected Ballarat City Councillors
- ... free and accessible to all residents

With all City of Ballarat surveys and engagement opportunities, including draft strategies and plans seeking community feedback on one site, residents are encouraged to visit myTownHall to have a say about what's happening in Ballarat and engage with the Council.

## The Results

March 2015 to February 2016

- **More than 2,062 residents registered with myTownHall**
- **22,400 total visits**
- **7,475 informed participants**
- **16,586 aware participants**
- **More than 2,000 contributions to online versions of surveys/polls**





## Nature Strip Policy

- 1700 visitors
- myTownHall responses: 218
- 40% believe that continuity of streets is important in heritage overlay areas.
- 63% supported vegetable gardens or ground plants.

Highest areas of feedback were:

**Ballarat East, Ballarat Central and Sebastopol.**

## Community Engagement Initiatives

**Community engagement is a broad concept encompassing a wide range of activities and initiatives. The style and level of engagement is selected and adapted based upon the process or project.**

Traditional community engagement opportunities include face-to-face consultation, question time at Council meetings and official membership of the City of Ballarat's advisory committees.

Technology and online tools continue to close the gap between organisations and the community, broadening the reach and providing opportunities for all levels of engagement. Many of these new options are free, accessible and open all hours to all residents.

Acknowledging the value of traditional, in-depth consultation, the City of Ballarat has embraced contemporary information and engagement tools including social media, websites and interactive platforms such as myTownHall to involve and engage a greater community audience. Tools include the use of open data and innovative visual and virtual interpretations.

The need for community engagement to adapt to the fast pace of information provision and opportunity, outcomes and feedback is aligned with how the community wish to engage. There is a need for instant responses, updates and actions; quick decision-making; and conclusive outcomes.

The practice and purpose for constant improvement in community engagement is to adapt to change and develop techniques that fit the type of engagement that is appropriate.

The contemporary model decision-makers have also transformed; the capacity to share the lead on engagement is more acceptable and not necessarily the domain of the responsible organisation. Activities can be presented by a wide range of parties, all of which may have an interest but are not accountable for project delivery or outcomes. Organisations and the community cooperate to develop and deliver key outcomes for both, with a focus on decision making, contribution and project delivery.

Furthermore, engagement is not always about an end decision, it can be about building relationships, capacity building, problem solving, behavioural change and community connectedness.



## Inform, Consult and Participate

The Framework 2015 builds upon the International Association of Public Participation's levels of community engagement with its scale ranging from providing information (low level of engagement) to active participation (very high level of engagement).

### The City of Ballarat's Community Engagement Initiatives

**Inform:** Information is circulated to assist in understanding a project/strategy or decision that is going to happen or has already happened.

**Consult:** Seeks input, feedback or advice before part of the project/strategy or decision is progressed.

**Active Participation:** Community or specific stakeholders are engaged to establish what needs to be done and to develop solutions that are incorporated into decision-making.

All City of Ballarat Community Engagement must inform; most involve a level of consultation and some will seek active participation.



## FACTS & FIGURES

### Victoria Park Masterplan

- myTownHall responses: **200 online**
- More than **250** residents attended a community consultation on the future of Victoria Park in May 2015.
- Love: Landscape and open spaces **75%**
- Passive Recreation opportunities **72%**
- **89%** were supportive of planting more trees in Vic Park
- **86%** want more walking and bike paths
- **60%** would like to see more events at Victoria Park





# NEWS

NEWS BUSINESS VIDEO PHOTOS OPINION JOBS TRAVEL



## The latest trends in your community

News + Buzz

- Is this the fastest way to end loneliness?
- New communities are getting ready
- Hurricane could head for U.S.

# COMMUNITY

BREAKING NEWS

## Changes in our community

How people are opening up to new ways of living

LIVE updates | Photo | Exchange Rate | Currency Data | Global Sources | Simple integration



## EXCHANGE RATE

Simple integration of financial data

FX

Simple integration

## Social Media

In 2012, the City of Ballarat made a commitment to strengthen and develop its social media channels as a primary news channel for all residents. With the decline in traditional media, these free social platforms are contemporary sources of information and interactive platforms for community engagement.

### The Social Media Conversation

The City of Ballarat social media includes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts with:

- Primary City of Ballarat (COB) pages
- City of Ballarat events pages including Harmony Fest, Begonia Festival, Heritage Weekend
- Associated sites including Art Gallery of Ballarat, Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre, and Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Social media is open all hours, seven days a week, and is free and accessible to all residents. All City of Ballarat community engagement opportunities including traditional consultation and surveys are promoted on social media, with direct links to myTownHall and the City of Ballarat website.

### The City of Ballarat Social Media

	2012	2015
Facebook 'likes' on COB pages	3,100	24,122
Twitter followers	1,012	4,800
Website users	206,000	344,000

More than 50,000 City of Ballarat website sessions have been generated by social media.

## INFORM

Direct Mail  
myBallarat Magazine  
City of Ballarat Website  
Online Engagement (myTownHall)  
Online Community Engagement Calendar  
Social Media  
Customer Service  
Public Exhibitions  
Organisational Relationships



## Budget Priority Projects Survey

In preparing the City of Ballarat 2015/16 Budget, Ballarat City Council sought resident feedback on a list of 16 new and popular community projects. For the first time, the community had important input before the completion of the Draft Budget.

The Budget Priority Projects Survey asked the residents to choose which proposed projects were most important in deliver in 2015/16.

## The Conversation & The Results

A total of 638 residents completed the simple questionnaire – 335 online at myTownHall and 303 paper surveys.

Further community engagement including traditional face-to-face consultation and written feedback on the Budget was conducted following the completion of the Survey.

With an investment of \$4.7 million, Council funded 11 of the 16 projects in the City of Ballarat 2015/16 Budget.

### CONSULTATIVE PARTICIPATION

Open House Drop-In Feedback Sessions  
Online Engagement (myTownHall)  
Community Meetings and Events  
Written Submissions  
Social Media  
Online and Paper Based Surveys  
Opinion Polling  
Customer Service

# Empowering Communities

When it comes to prioritising projects, no one knows better what is needed at the local level than the locals. That's the philosophy behind the City of Ballarat's Engaging Communities Program.

In the past four years, Ballarat Council has invested significantly in this neighbourhood-based program. With emphasis on quality face-to-face engagement within the community, important partnerships have been developed with local community groups and businesses to develop plans and fund new projects, strengthening these communities.

## The Empowering Communities Conversation

- Local meetings to engage and collaborate with local groups and businesses
- Surveys of all residents
- Neighbourhood or community panel advisory groups
- Social media pages unique to each neighbourhood, encouraging all access
- Community celebrations and open days
- Support partnership groups to develop and fundraise new projects

## The Results

**Buninyong:** Town Centre Redevelopment; new Youth Activity Space with parkour and BMX track; redeveloped skate space; new Buninyong Men's Shed; Buninyong Bowling Club; Buninyong Swimming Pool upgrade; Desoza Park Masterplan; Mt Innes improvements.

**Miners Rest:** Revitalisation to Miners Rest Community Park; Relocation of War Memorial and planting of new Avenue of Honour; New Town Entrance Signage.

**Learmonth:** Learmonth's Pathway to Growth including Lake Learmonth foreshore, signage and bird watching hide, community shelter and BBQ, seating and public art; Learmonth Netball Club Development; Avenue of Honour Restoration; Learmonth Cemetery upgrade; and Learmonth Football Club upgrade.

**Warrenheip:** Warrenheip Community Hall upgrade; new BBQ; Warrenheip Community Blitz; Warrenheip Primary School speed controls; community tree planting.

**Lake Esmond:** Lake Esmond Natural Playspace; new pathways and park signage; improved park entrance.

**Cardigan Village:** Cardigan Village Community Centre Upgrade; Open Day; Children's Centre upgrade; kindergarten and playgroup; new public toilet facility.

In 2015/2016, Sebastopol and Brown Hill joined the Engaging Communities Program with the following projects in the works:

**Sebastopol:** Sebastopol Library redevelopment; new Vickers Park water play space; new netball court at Marty Busch; equipment improvements at Sebastopol Men's Shed.

**Brown Hill:** Brown Hill Kindergarten upgrade; Neighbourhood Survey; Progress Park improvements; Russell Square Kitchen Upgrade; new community newsletter.





Canadian Lead Primary School – September 2014



Lake Esmond – September 2014



Warrenheip – September 2014

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Open House Drop-In Project Planning Sessions  
 Advisory & Section 86 Committees  
 Community Project Reference Groups  
 Community Workshops and Summits  
 Stakeholder Meetings  
 Engaging Communities Program  
 Community Action Teams  
 Participatory Budgeting

# City of Ballarat

## Community Engagement Resources



### **Staff Guide to Community Engagement**

A step-by-step practical advice for City of Ballarat staff detailing the selection and use of the most appropriate tools for an engagement process, with support from the Survey Operations Group and Community Engagement Panel.



### **Engaging Children in Decision-Making**

A practical ideas guide for engaging children up to the age of 12 years in effective decision-making. It outlines a range of opportunities to consult with children and issues to consider as part of best practice.



### **Training**

Training will be provided to City of Ballarat staff to increase knowledge of its engagement process and to build internal capacity to deliver robust, inclusive activities.



### **Inclusive consultation & communication with people with a disability.**

Developed by the Department of Planning and Community Development, this guide to accessible communications is an essential engagement resource.



## Community Events & Engagement

Community engagement at City of Ballarat's community events is very popular. Every year, more than 100,000 enjoy these public events including the Ballarat Begonia Festival, Ballarat Heritage Weekend, Summer Sundays, Harmony Fest, Christmas and Australia Day.



### Engagement Planning Calendar

The City of Ballarat resource will assist in planning engagement activities to avoid duplication of processes and opportunities for combined consultation with the community



### Online Engagement Tools

Launched in February 2015, myTownHall offers the Ballarat community a single online source for all consultations conducted by City of Ballarat. It sets a standard online interface and style for all projects and allows individuals to register and provide feedback on any live projects.



### Social Media

As of May 2015, the City of Ballarat has a base Facebook and Twitter audience of more than 17,000 people. As both an informative and consultative mechanism, all consultations will continue to be advertised through this medium and this platform used to return results of polls and surveys back to the community.



### myBallarat Magazine

Printed seasonally, the myBallarat magazine is delivered to every home and business in the City of Ballarat. According to online polls as at May 2015, myBallarat is the number one source for the community to keep updated with local projects and events.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

Community engagement activities will be reviewed in an annual Community Engagement Framework Council Report. Activities will be monitored for effectiveness through qualitative and quantitative measures including:

	<b>Customer Service (Enquiry Types and Statistics)</b>		<b>Consultation and Participation</b>
	<b>Public Engagement Events</b>		<b>Online Engagement Activity Reports</b>
	<b>Community Engagement Panel and Survey Operations Group</b>		<b>Independent Community Satisfaction Reports</b>

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Public Toilets Review

- myTownHall responses: **106**
- The worst issues with public toilets are:  
Unattractive facilities (**78%** rated public toilets poor)  
Accessibility (**56%** rated facilities poor)
- **62%** of respondents satisfied with opening times
- Priority for locations of new toilets:  
Large Parks/Playgrounds followed by CBD/Shopping areas.



# Community Engagement Frameworks

## Statutory Framework

There is no overarching legislation addressing community consultation and engagement processes for local government.

The Local Government Act 1989 is inclusive of any site specific planning matters, the annual budget process and other statutory processes such as special charge schemes.

The Local Government Amendment (Performance Reporting and Accountability) Act 2014 requires that, from July 2015, each local government authority must report on the existence and application of community engagement policies and guidelines.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 details the procedures for preparing and amending planning schemes, obtaining permits and enforcing compliance with planning schemes, and other administrative processes. The Act sets overarching notification requirements, however, in some instances planning scheme amendments and planning permit applications may be exempt from notification requirements.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 outlines expectations for local councils planning for the health and wellbeing of their communities. Under section 26(2)(c), a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan must provide the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan.

### References :

IAP2 Australasia 2014, Certificate of Engagement.

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) [www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au)

IPAA (2013) Stakeholder Engagement Manual

The City of Sydney (2013) Community Engagement Strategy

The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Strategy (cited 2015)

The City of Hobsons Bay (2015) draft Community Engagement Policy

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Outdoor Dining and Busking Guidelines

- 105 visitors
- myTownHall responses: 23

Most popular items people to activate the CBD:





**Tables**  
**Chairs**  
**Heaters**

---

## CONNECT WITH US

Customer Service: 5320 5500  
National Relay Service Telephone:  
133 677 (Quote 5320 5500)

Customer Service Email:  
ballcity@ballarat.vic.gov.au

 [fb.com/ballaratcity](https://www.facebook.com/ballaratcity)  
 [@cityofballarat](https://twitter.com/cityofballarat)  
 [@cityofballarat](https://www.instagram.com/cityofballarat)  
 [www.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au)

In person: Customer Service Centre  
The Phoenix, 25 Armstrong Street South,  
Ballarat

---

This Framework was compiled by the City of Ballarat Community Development and Strategic Communications business units.

For further information, contact City of Ballarat at 5320 5500 or visit [www.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au)

City of Ballarat respectfully acknowledges the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work.

City of Ballarat acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

Printed 2016.