

Shaping Our Future – Stage One

Community Engagement Report

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In recent months, Murrindindi Shire Council has been engaging with the community and stakeholders to inform the development of our Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025, as part of the Shaping Our Future project. This Community Engagement Report details the different ways we have engaged with community, the demographics of the participants and the various community engagement tools we used to capture feedback and input from community members.

Community engagement for Stage One of the Shaping Our Future Project took place between 10 March and 24 April 2021. Council would like to thank everyone who participated and provided input. Your thoughts and ideas have been used to help us refresh our Community Vision for the next ten years and develop related strategic documents that will help shape the future of Murrindindi Shire.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Our approach to community engagement is guided by Murrindindi Shire Council's Community Engagement policy, the *Local Government Act 2020* and is informed by the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

Throughout the engagement period, Council sought to inform and engage as many people as possible and to encourage wide participation. Our communications activities and material helped inform the community about the Shaping Our Future project and promoted ways the community could get involved and share their thoughts and ideas. We encouraged people to visit our new online engagement platform, Dindi – In The Loop (the Loop), as well as Council's website for more information about the project. We also encouraged people to give Council a call or drop in to one of our Library and Customer Service Centres if they needed more information or wanted to participate.

The community engagement tools included a detailed online survey via the Loop. This survey encouraged informed participation by sharing current information such as key statistics and details about Council expenditure, before participants responded to questions. The long survey was also available in paper form at our Library and Customer Service Centres. We also hosted a series of pop-up kiosks at local events, markets and community spaces, where Councillors and Council staff were able to chat to community members about their ideas and opinions. A short survey was available online at the pop-up kiosks also using the Loop. An Easy English version of the short survey was developed to improve access for those with low literacy levels.

The following promotional activities were used to inform the community about the project:

Activities used to inform people about the Shaping Our Future project



The project was hosted on Council's Shaping Our Future project page (theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/future). The page had information about the project, including a supportive information library with seven project factsheet, promoted engagement opportunities by listing pop-up kiosks dates and venues, and provided a workshop registration function. During the engagement period a total of 1,065 people visited the website.



Posters were displayed in our Library and Customer Service Centres in Yea, Alexandra and Kinglake, as well as on the Mobile Service. Posters were also displayed in various cafes and community noticeboards across the Shire.



Flyers were included in The Alexandra Eildon Marysville Standard and The Yea Chronicle and available at our Library and Customer Service Centres, pop-up kiosks and included information about the project and a phone number to call to complete the survey over the phone.



Facebook was used to promote the project and encourage participation. There were three posts on Facebook with a reach of 6,932 and 418 engagements.



Approximately 2,500 emails were sent to residents, traders, agencies, sporting clubs, support services, community organisations, clubs, associations, interest groups and networks.



A Health and Wellbeing factsheet was prepared that outlined information on Murrindindi Shire's community. We also provided access to COVID-19 Business and Community Recovery Plans. These documents were available on The Loop.



Information about the project was included in Council's March quarterly newsletter, which was delivered to over 10,000 residents and businesses.



The project was promoted via Council's website (murrindindi.vic.gov.au)



The project was promoted in The Alexandra Eildon Marysville Standard and The Yea Chronicle and The Local Paper. It was also promoted in The Mountain Monthly, Triangle News, The Granite News and Flowerdale Flyer.



The Easy English survey was promoted via direct email to a database and hard copy surveys were distributed through community houses and aged and disability service providers by the Access & Inclusion team.

PARTICIPATION

During the consultation period, there were many ways for people to participate and contribute. The majority of participation occurred online via the Loop. We also found that Council officers and Councillors were assisting community members to complete the online survey via iPads at the pop-up kiosks. A high number of people also stopped by at our pop-up kiosks to raise issues or give feedback but chose not to complete a survey. This provided Councillors and Council staff an opportunity to chat with community members and talk through issues raised.

A paper version of the long survey was made available to support participation by people who were not able or did not want to engage online. Ten paper surveys were returned to Council, which staff recorded on the Loop. The Loop was used as a central place to capture and record all of the data we collected.

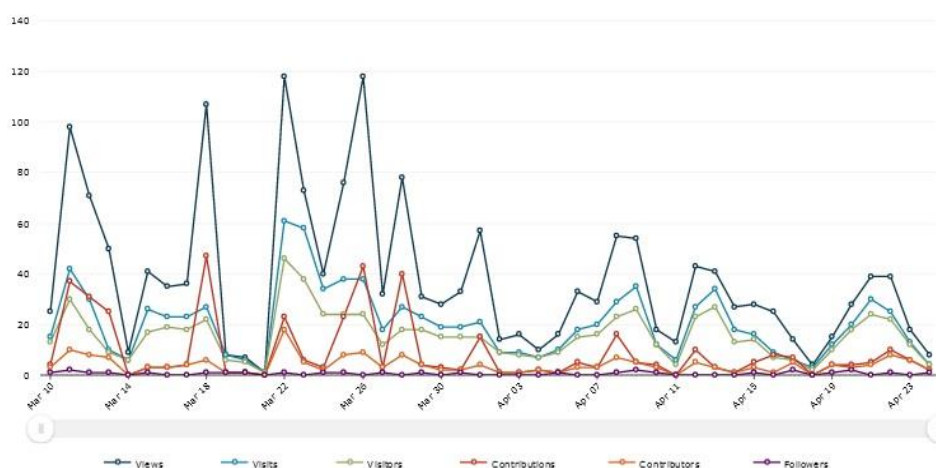
Over **500** people participated in Stage One, providing their thoughts and ideas in a survey, ideas board, or in person at one of our pop-up kiosks. In total we had the following number of responses:

- **434** responses on The Loop, including
 - o 134 responses to the **long survey** online
 - o 10 responses to the **long survey** in paper form
 - o 4 responses to the **long survey** via phone interviews with a Council Officer
 - o 195 responses to the **short survey** at pop-up kiosks, often with Council staff assisting with entering the responses
 - o 91 people posted ideas on the online **Ideas Board**. Further, more than 300 votes (for and against) were submitted for these 91 ideas.
- **28** responses to the Easy English version of the **short survey**
- Many people talked with Councillors and Council staff and shared their thoughts and feedback informally

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The Loop is Council's new online platform for supporting community engagement and was launched with Shaping Our Future. There were more than 1800 page-views throughout the campaign as well as the 434 contributions. Thirty one people "followed" the project, opting in for any updates about Shaping Our Future and ways to keep engaging. We are aiming to further raise awareness of the Loop in the coming months to increase overall participation in community engagement. The Loop is a great way for community members to stay informed and get involved.

The table below shows online activity across the life of the campaign.



POP-UP KIOSKS

A series of 'in-person' pop-up kiosks were held throughout Murrindindi Shire, where Councillors and Council staff engaged with community members.



We estimate that around 300 people (including those who completed surveys) stopped by for a chat at our pop-up kiosks, which were held at the following locations:

- Alexandra – Foodworks, Thursday 11 March
- Yea – Cattle Sale, Friday 12 March
- Alexandra – Music in the Park, Saturday 13 March
- Yea – Foodworks, Thursday 18 March
- Eildon – Foodworks, Thursday 25 March
- Taggerty – Twilight market, Friday 26 March
- Kinglake – Market, Sunday 28 March
- Marysville – in courtyard, Thursday 1 April
- Kinglake – Foodworks, Thursday 8 April
- Alexandra – Rotunda, Saturday 10 April
- Yarck – Market, Saturday 17 April

PAPER SURVEYS

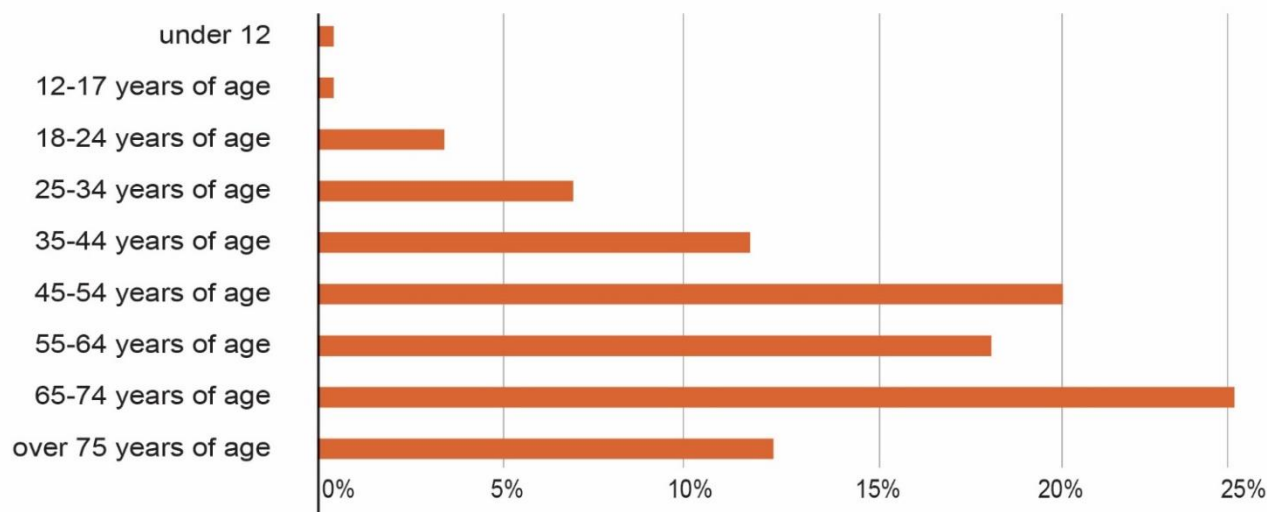
There were 40 paper surveys distributed to our Library and Customer Service Centres in Alexandra, Kinglake and Yea, and through our Mobile Service, and to our community houses across the Shire. A total of ten paper surveys were completed and returned. We also developed an Easy English survey to make participation easier for community members with low literacy and people who use English as a second language. This survey was distributed to around 50 people through local aged and disability service providers and community houses, with 28 completed and returned.

PHONE SURVEY

We provided an opportunity for community members to give Council a call to provide their thoughts and ideas. We received calls from four people, who we assisted to complete the long survey online.

DEMOGRAPHICS

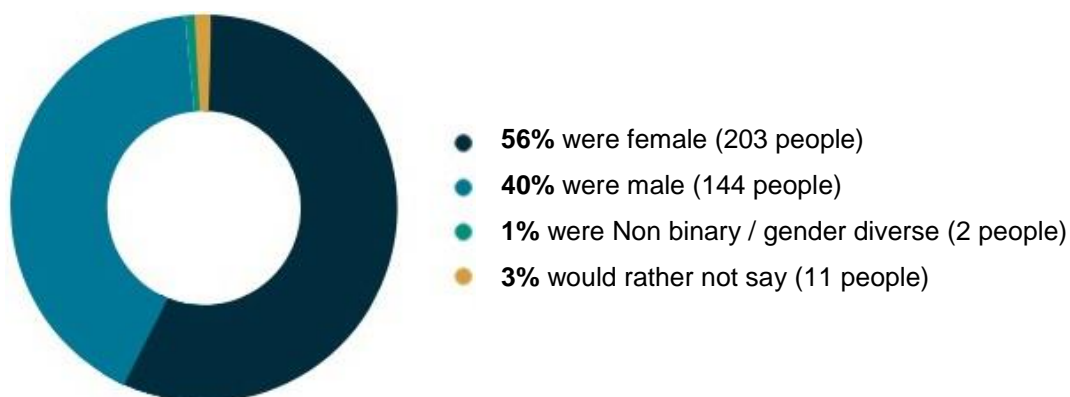
Age-groups of participants



As shown in the graph, of the 368 participants who voluntarily provided their age-group, the majority were aged between 45 and 74 years of age (62%). Feedback was low for those under 17 years of age completing the survey. However, we were able to capture some contributions from children and teenagers using our online Ideas Board and at our pop-up kiosks across the Shire.

Gender information of participants

As shown in the graph below, of the 360 participants who chose to provide their gender, 56% of participants identified as female.



Access, Inclusion and Equity

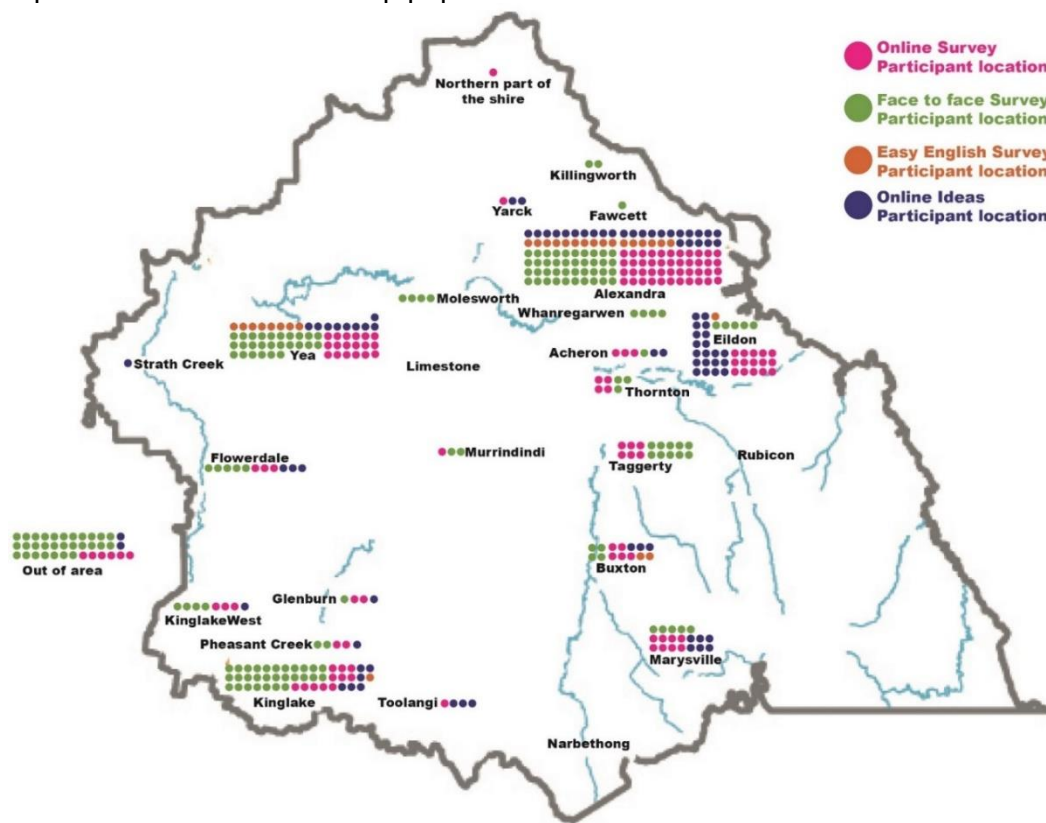
Two additional questions were included in the long survey, allowing us further insight into the demographics of our participants. Of the 146 participants who chose to answer these two additional questions

1.5% of respondents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

8% of respondents identify as living with a disability.

Where did participants come from?

As shown in the map, of the 383 participants who provided details of where they live, we received a good spread of survey respondents from across the Shire. In most cases, the numbers were approximately representative of the township populations.



Acheron	2%	6 people
Alexandra	29%	110 people
Buxton	3%	11 people
Eildon	10%	40 people
Fawcett	0.25%	1 person
Flowerdale	3%	11 people
Glenburn	1%	4 people
Killingworth	0.25%	2 people
Kinglake	11%	43 people
Kinglake West	2%	8 people
Marysville	5%	19 people
Molesworth	1%	4 people
Murrindindi	1%	3 people
Northern part	0.25%	1 person
Pheasant Creek	1%	5 people
Strath creek	0.25%	1 person
Taggerty	5%	19 people
Thornton	2%	7 people
Toolangi	1%	5 people
Whanregarwen	1%	3 people
Yarck	1%	3 people
Yea	14%	53 people
Out of area	6%	24 people

Total responses 383 people