

Inclusive Ballarat engagement summary

The Inclusive Ballarat consultation engagement process was open from early April until early May 2022. This engagement process was designed to inform the following plans:

- Inclusion Framework
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan
- Ageing Well Strategy
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Intercultural Plan

The engagement process was a two-phased engagement which attempted to engage the general community (particularly regarding general inclusion sentiment) and to target the specific groups for which the plans listed above apply. Therefore, there are a greater proportion of respondents from each of those target groups that would normally be seen for an engagement process targeted at the general community.

A range of methods were employed including a survey, community-led conversations, a mapping tool, a community poll and interactive activities. Engagement methods were chosen to allow inputs from people in written word, spoken word, through drawings, identifying places on a map and in a range of languages.

Consultation findings were analysed using a combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative thematic analysis, grouping responses into overarching themes that shaped priorities.

Demographics

Eight hundred and eighty-six (886) people provided input to the Inclusive Ballarat engagement process with the online survey and community-led conversations proving to be the most popular avenues for engagement (Table 1).

Table 1: Engagement by method

| Inclusive Ballarat tools | Number of people providing input |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Surveys* | 256 |
| Conversation Kits | 269 |
| Interactive boards | 74 |
| Town planning activity* | 25 |
| Mapping tool | 17 |
| Activity sheets* | 29 |
| Written submissions | 1 |
| Quick poll | 70 |
| First Nations school group consultation | 15 |
| Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Postcards | 19 |
| Internal RAP workshops | 30 |
| Internal RAP survey | 102 |
| Total number of people providing input | 886 |
| *Town planning activity and activity sheets were both completed by a class of 21 school students. This number has only been counted once in the final sum. One survey was submitted on behalf of 20 people. | |

Demographic information is only available for the online survey, which accounts for approximately 29 per cent of respondents. This is a trade-off between gathering full demographic data and the provision of a range of methods requiring different levels of input to encourage the broadest possible engagement across the community.

Two-hundred and thirty-six survey respondents that provided demographic information as summarised in Table 2:

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

| Characteristic | Proportion of survey respondents |
|---|--|
| Gender | 58.9% woman 27.5% man 7.2% non-binary 2.5% self-described 4.2% prefer not to answer |
| Age group | 12-17 years: 0.8% 18-24 years: 3.8% 25-34 years: 9.3% 35-49 years: 34.6% 50-59 years: 19.4% 60-69 years: 17.7% 70-84 years: 11.4% 85+ years: 0.4% Prefer not to answer: 2.5% |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person | 4.6% |
| Person with disability | 25.3% |
| LGBTIQA+ person | 24.5% |
| Cultural background other than Australian | 25% |
| Parent to a child/children aged 17 years or less | 30.4% |

Key Findings

Presented here are the general inclusion results from the Inclusive Ballarat engagement. Summaries have also been prepared in relation to feedback relevant to the:

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan
- Intercultural Plan

Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a range of statements. Results are summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Survey respondent agreement with inclusion statements

| Statement | Proportion of survey respondents that 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' with the statement |
|--|--|
| Ballarat is an inclusive city | 57% |
| I feel accepted and valued in Ballarat | 58% |
| I feel safe in Ballarat | 58% |
| I don't feel welcome in Ballarat | 21% |
| I have experienced discrimination in Ballarat | 50% |
| Council services are inclusive | 50% |
| Council sport and recreation facilities are inclusive | 43% |
| Council is an inclusive workplace | 21% (42% did not know) |
| Council information is accessible and inclusive | 48% |
| Council buildings are inclusive | 43% |

People were asked several questions about inclusion. The key responses are outlined below:

When I am included, I feel...

- Respected and valued
- Safe, supported and cared for
- That I belong
- That I am seen, heard and my needs are considered
- That I can be actively involved and contribute to my community

"When I am included, I feel that I am being heard and I am making a difference."

Community survey response

When people were asked how they felt when they were included, they frequently commented that they felt valued and respected. A sense of safety was often raised, along with feeling supported and cared for. They felt that they belonged in the Ballarat community. Many people commented about feeling as though they had been seen and heard, with their needs considered, when they were included. Comments were also made about feeling like they could contribute to the community when they were included.

Inclusion means...

- Everyone has the opportunity to contribute and participate
- That I am accepted as I am
- That I can have a say and that I am listened to
- That I am respected and valued
- That I feel safe

"Inclusion means a safe space where I can be who I am without fear, I feel valued and can contribute to the best of my abilities to make everyone feel welcome and feel the same."

Community survey response

When asked what inclusion means to them, respondents overwhelmingly commented that it means that all people have the opportunity to contribute and participate. For a lot of people, inclusion means being accepted as they are and that they can voice their ideas and opinions. Feeling respected, valued and safe were also common responses.

Inclusion is important because...

- It creates a more cohesive, vibrant and safer community
- It makes people feel valued and is important for good health
- There are serious individual and community consequences when people are excluded
- All people have the right to feel safe, welcome and accepted in their community

"Inclusion is important because it strengthens the community by giving as many people as possible opportunities to be involved in society and in decision making. It helps foster social responsibility, confidence and wellbeing."

Community survey response

When asked why inclusion was important, the most common response was about the positive societal impacts of an inclusive community. Following the same train of thought, many people made comments referencing the positive impacts on individuals when they are included. The negative impacts on individuals and the broader community (such as mental health impacts) were also cited as reasons why inclusion is important.