



Image Artist impression

**Eastwood Leisure Complex
Community Engagement Summary
July 2023**



Executive Summary:

The redevelopment of the existing Eastwood Leisure Complex to a new contemporary community hub provides an opportunity for generational change in the heart of the Ballarat Central Business District. The project will create a contemporary meeting and activity facility, including flexible program spaces.

Since May 2021 planning for the Eastwood redevelopment project has been a co-design initiative primarily between the City of Ballarat, the management committee of the Eastwood Leisure Centre and approximately 100 local community organisations who use the facilities. The latest community consultation process is an important next phase for the Eastwood Leisure Complex Redevelopment Project, providing a further opportunity for community comment and a build-up of evidence to inform and align with the detailed design process that commenced in July 2023.

The process consisted of a project consultation video, 4 community drop-in sessions, a static exhibition at the centre with paper surveys and an online survey campaign all of which ran throughout the month of July 2023.

In total 256 visited Council's My Say online space with 180 contributors and 200 survey responses, 184 of which were anonymous. Approximately 50 people attended the four drop-in sessions retesting the initial concept plans, having conversations with Council staff members and contributing comments to the static exhibition displays.

Community feedback from the process was clear.....

- Eastwood is a great community space that is much loved.
- The key to the success of the centre is its location and its staff.
- The building is old and tired, particularly the toilet facilities.

The directions from this process are clear.....

- This is an important and well supported redevelopment project.
- Improving access in and around a new facility is a real priority.
- Planning of multi-functional areas and space is crucial for future success.

Background Context:

Planning for the redevelopment of the Eastwood Leisure Complex to a new contemporary community hub in the heart of the Ballarat CBD has been underway since May 2021. During this time City of Ballarat has worked closely with the Eastwood Leisure Complex management committee, stakeholders and user groups on the development of a comprehensive set of plans to transform the centre.

Since project inception the redevelopment proposal has been featured widely both at the Complex, in management committee discussions and in the broader Ballarat media. The project was showcased in Council's *OurBallarat* Spring edition in 2022 which is distributed to every household in the Ballarat and has regularly been showcased in Council's online communications plus in the broader print form media such as the Ballarat Times Newspaper, the Ballarat Courier and the Ballarat East Community News.

Over the course of the project's development concept plans have changed and evolved to reflect changing community needs and expectations. This involved four versions of the concept plans being worked up in conjunction with Council Officers and management committee representatives. Council has always been committed to a co-design process acknowledging the importance of getting the thinking and planning for this project right.

Throughout the concept plan evolution the Project Steering Group recognised the importance of again connecting in with stakeholders, users and local residents to share with them the latest thinking on the project and provide an opportunity to for further feedback and comment.

As part of the engagement process, the project team again reaffirmed the project non-negotiables as:

- It is a new building project rather than an upgrade to the existing.
- The building footprint is to remain as per the agreed concept plans.
- Significant upgrades to the basketball stadium and court remain outside the project scope.

The community consultation directly aligns with a detailed design process that commenced in July 2023.

The Consultation Process:

The July consultation process comprised of the following activities:

- A static information display in the foyer of the Eastwood Leisure Centre
- A consultation video featuring existing Eastwood leaders and users
- X4 community drop-in sessions (at a range of agreed peak times)
- An online survey (via City of Ballarat's My Say Engagement Webpage)

Three consultation collection methods were used to capture community and stakeholder ideas, thoughts and feedback:

- Online Survey Responses
- Paper Survey Responses
- Comments added onto exhibited Concept Plans

What We Asked:

In shaping the engagement design process, the COB team acknowledged the importance of getting survey contributions from those that actually use the facility. For this reason, questions were included around respondents' connection to the centre and about what they value about the facility.

Eastwood Leisure Complex survey 159 responses

This community survey is to understand current visitation and usage of Eastwood Leisure Complex, and to identify priorities and ideas for the facility in the future.

Findings of the survey will be used to inform the detailed design phase of the project which will commence in the coming months.

The survey has 9 questions and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

[TAKE SURVEY](#)

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- How much do you use the Complex?
- What's your connection to the Complex?
- What do you love or value about the Complex?
- What's important for you in the redevelopment?
- Tell us what program and services you want to see in the new facility?
- Profile questions about who's responding?
- Which suburb you live in?

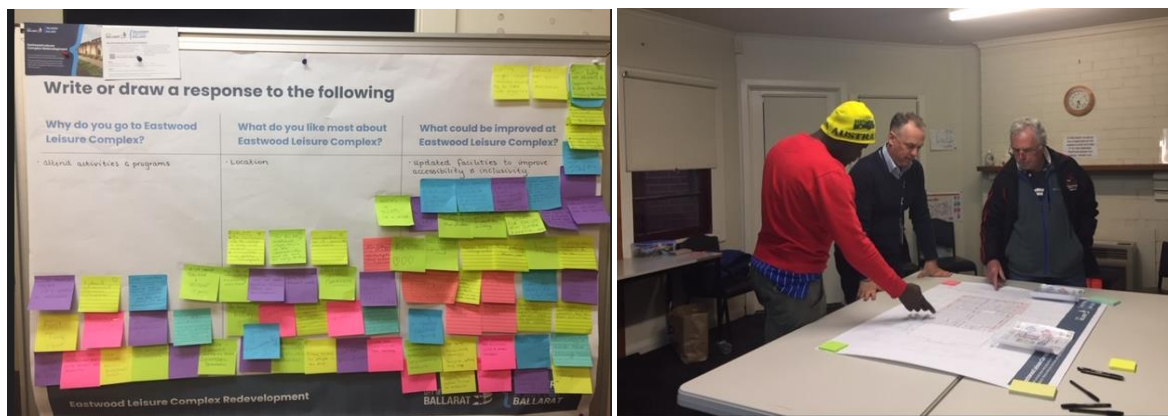
The Feedback:

The face-to-face drop-in sessions were held during peak times when programs and activities were being held throughout the week. Whilst recognising many participants would be busy attending their respective sessions, the team acknowledged that there would be a good chance to connect with parents, family members and carers doing pick up and drop offs.

Approximately 50 people attended the four drop-in sessions.

- Tuesday 11 July (9.00am to 11.00am)
- Monday 17 July (9.00am to 11.00am)
- Monday 17 July (4.30pm to 6.30pm)
- Wednesday 26 July (5.00pm to 7.00pm)

The sessions focused on re-testing the initial concept plans prior to the detailed design process, having conversations with Council staff members about key issues and opportunities, and contributing thoughts to the static displays as showcased via the images below.



In total 200 survey responses were received, 90% of which were received online via City of Ballarat's *MySay* engagement platform. In total 256 visited Council's My Say online space with 180 contributors. As part of the process City of Ballarat staff worked with members from the Eastwood Management Committee to proactively get feedback from venue users. This included going directly into program areas to explain about the project and collect feedback from participants.

Who We Heard From:

- 73% of survey responders were female.
- The highest age cohort of responders was in the 40-44 age bracket.
- Peak response age cohorts represented were between 30 and 74.
- Only 7.5% of responders were under the age of 25.
- Only 3% of responders were over the age of 75.
- The highest response cohort was from those who used the Centre on a weekly basis.

It was also noticeable to identify significant levels of contribution from family members or carers living with a young person, those financial vulnerable (earning less than \$650 a week) and persons with a disability. These cohorts are consistent with an underlying community ethos of the Eastwood Leisure Complex, in providing affordable programs for often marginalised or underrepresented groups.

Eastwood clearly plays a role providing community facilities for many residents who live relatively close to the existing complex. Over a quarter (27.9%) were local residents from the Ballarat CBD or adjoining suburbs of Ballarat East and Golden Point. Many responses were also received from other neighbourhood areas within a 2-4 km radius from the complex in areas such as Ballarat North, Mount Clear, Sebastopol, Soldiers Hill, Alfredton and Canadian.

Whilst these figures reinforce that the Eastwood Leisure Complex plays an important role servicing many local neighbourhoods and community areas, it also highlights that many patrons of the existing facility reside in recognised areas of disadvantage. The nearby areas of Golden Point, Mount Pleasant and Canadian (974.8), Ballarat East (948.6) and Sebastopol (882.2) are below average ranks for Australia, Victoria, Country Victoria and the City of Ballarat (985.7) in terms of Socio-Economic Index For Areas from the 2021 Census.

The residential figures also demonstrate that Eastwood plays a role across the city and the region more broadly with facility users listed from multiple community areas across the City of Ballarat municipality and beyond, with resident responses received from numerous other Local Government Areas including Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire and City of Geelong.

In designing the engagement process it was acknowledged that gaining a high proportion of feedback from regular and occasional users (75.5%) was important in getting appropriate and informed responses. Whilst appreciative of broader community input, the contributions of infrequent users and those who had never used the facility was considered as less relevant.

The majority of survey respondents were regular users of the centre, either using the centre multiple times per week (20%) or on weekly basis (34%). Regular users are able to offer important insights into the conditions, spaces and functions of the facility based on their experiences over many visits. 21.5% of respondents were listed as occasional users, meaning that they had some insight into the building and that they were still able to offer feedback based on their experiences.

Over half (65.5%) of survey respondents either actively participated in programs or activities at the centre or were connected via a family member participating there. It was also great to capture feedback from trainers, coaches, facilitators and teachers at the centre (18.5%). This contribution is important as they will arguably see the venue and its facilities in a different context from users and participants.

What we Received:

What do you love about Eastwood: responses to this question:

The top 3 responses were.....

1. Location, Location, Location.
2. The diversity of groups and activities provided.
3. The fantastic staff team.

What's most important to you in this redevelopment:

Out of 188 responses, the top 10 responses were.....

1. Improve accessibility for all users.
2. Make it warm and welcoming.
3. Develop new modern toilet facilities.
4. Create planned multi-functional spaces.
5. Upgrade dance studios.
6. Upgrade basketball facilities.
7. Ensure internet connections / Free Wifi options.
8. Review parking arrangements.
9. Better acoustics and sound proofing.
10. Consider safety lighting in car parks and outside areas.

What programs and activities are most important to you in a new Centre:

The Top 10 responses were.....

1. Activities and programs to support social connections.
2. Events spaces for hire by community groups for events and activities.
3. Spaces to participate in sport and physical activity.
4. Programs to promote lifelong learning.
5. Dance and the arts.
6. Spaces for youth.
7. Training room for learning and further education.
8. Support group meetings.
9. Maker space for arts and craft activities.
10. Exhibition space for arts, heritage and history.

Responses to both of the *most important to you* questions will be prominent throughout the detailed design process. It is noted that significant upgrades to basketball facilities are outside the scope of works. This is an agreed non-negotiable.

Closing the Engagement Loop:

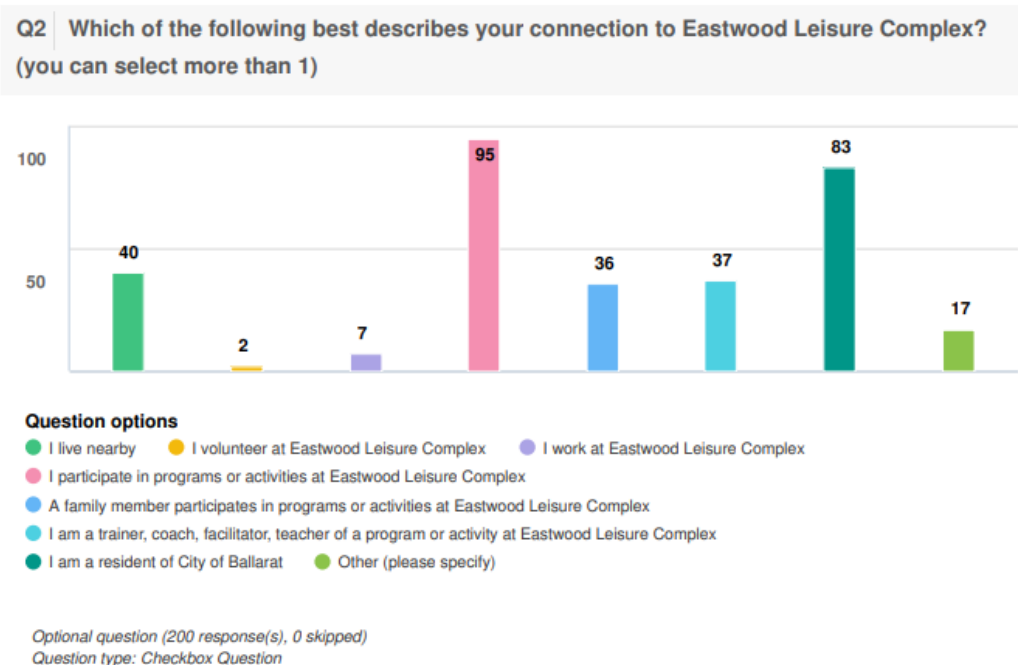
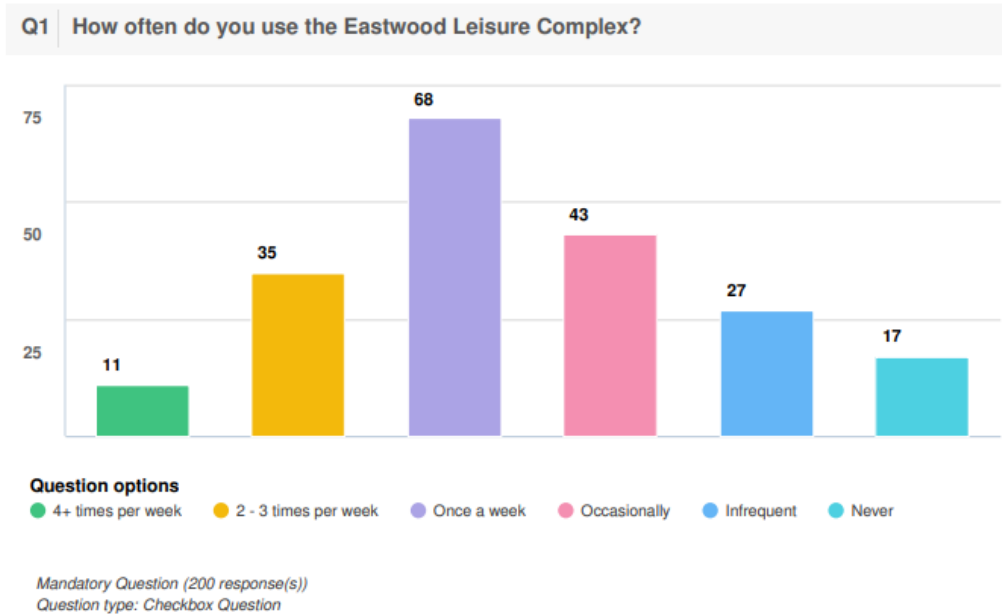
The following actions will be implemented to close the loop with community members and stakeholders following the engagement process. The community engagement summary report will be showcased and available via:

- The COB Website - Eastwood Projects Page.
- COB's *My Say* monthly engagement bulletin received by over 5,000 subscribers.
- The Eastwood Management Committee.
- A future briefing to City of Ballarat Councillors and Executive Team.

The project will now move through the Detailed Design process. This will involve further consultation opportunities with the Eastwood Leisure Complex management committee and stakeholders.

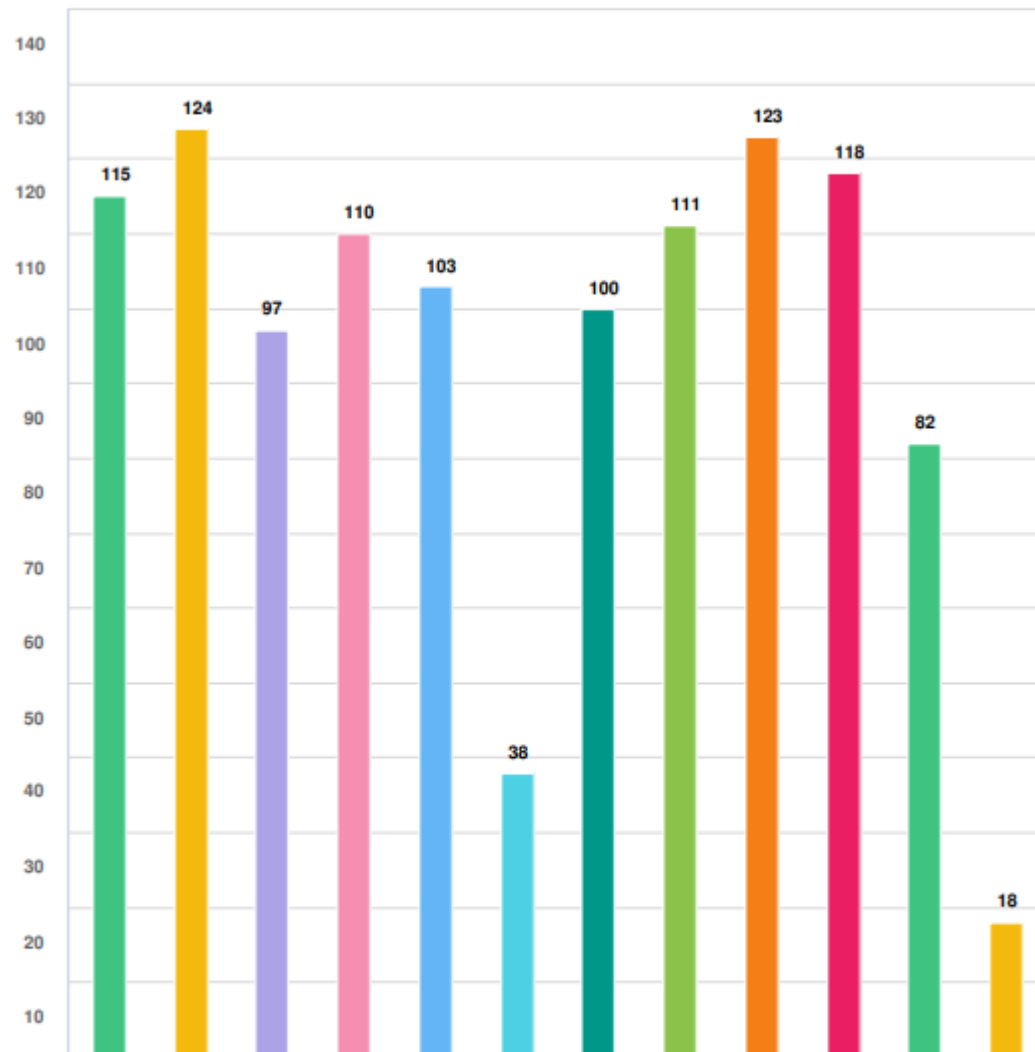
Appendix:

Survey Data:



***Please note responses to Questions 3 and 4 were opened ended questions captured within the engagement summary report.**

Q5 We invite you to tell us what types of programs and services you would like to see in the new facility



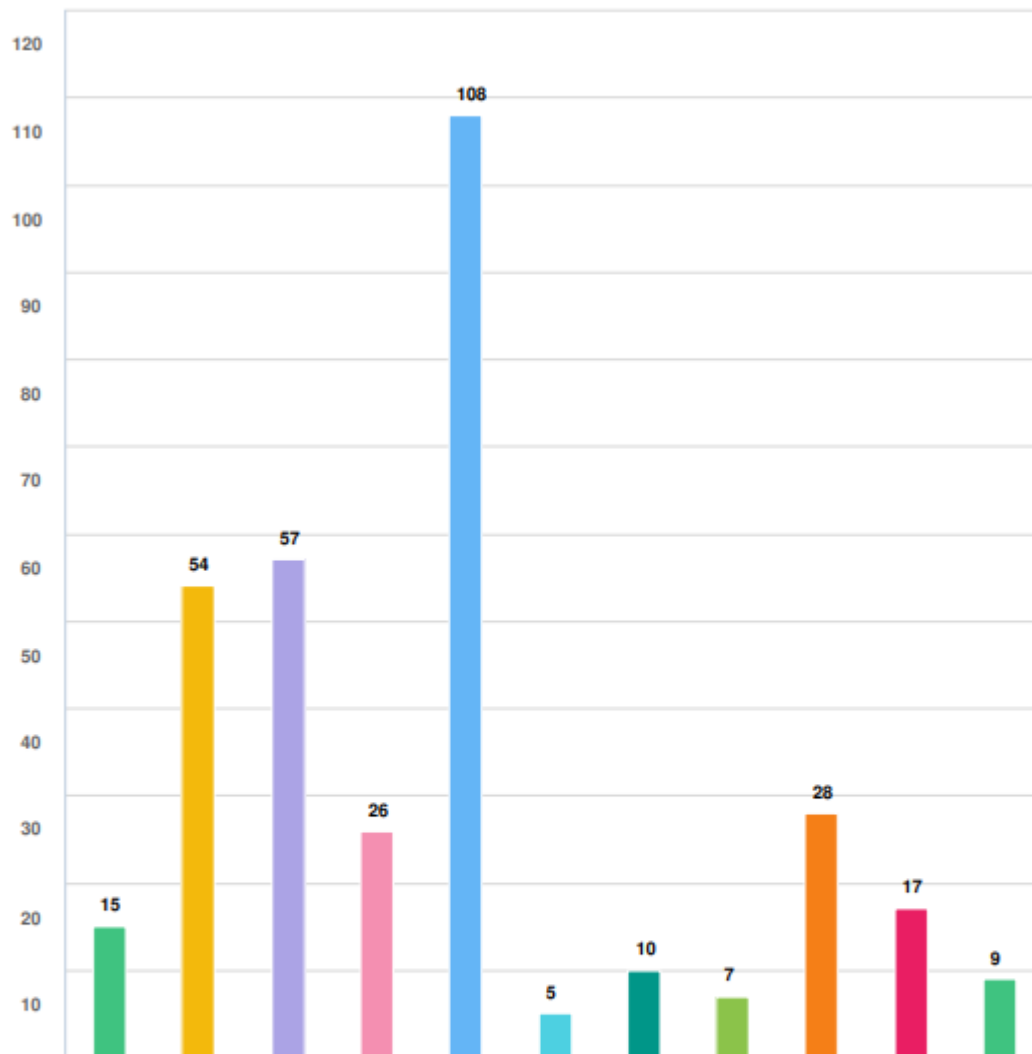
Question options

- Programs to promote lifelong learning
 ● Activities and programs to support social connections
- Maker space for arts and craft activities
 ● Spaces for youth
 ● Training rooms for learning and further education
- Spaces for faith and spirituality
 ● Support group meetings
 ● Dance and the arts
- Event spaces for hire by community groups for events and activities
 ● Spaces to participate in sport and physical activity
- Exhibition space for arts, heritage and history
 ● Other (please specify)

Optional question (198 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q6 To help us understand who we are hearing from please select all that apply to you



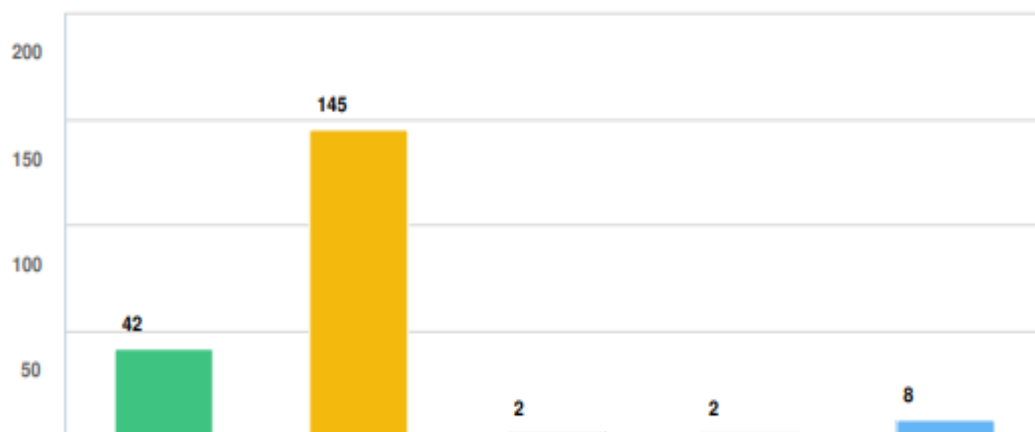
Question options

- A young person (aged between 12 to 25)
- Family or carer living with a young person
- Older person (aged 60+ years)
- Financially vulnerable (earn less than \$650 a week)
- Women (identify as a woman)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- LGBTIQ+
- A diverse cultural or religious background (born overseas or practice a faith different from the majority of the community)
- A person with a disability
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

Optional question (197 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q7 | I am:



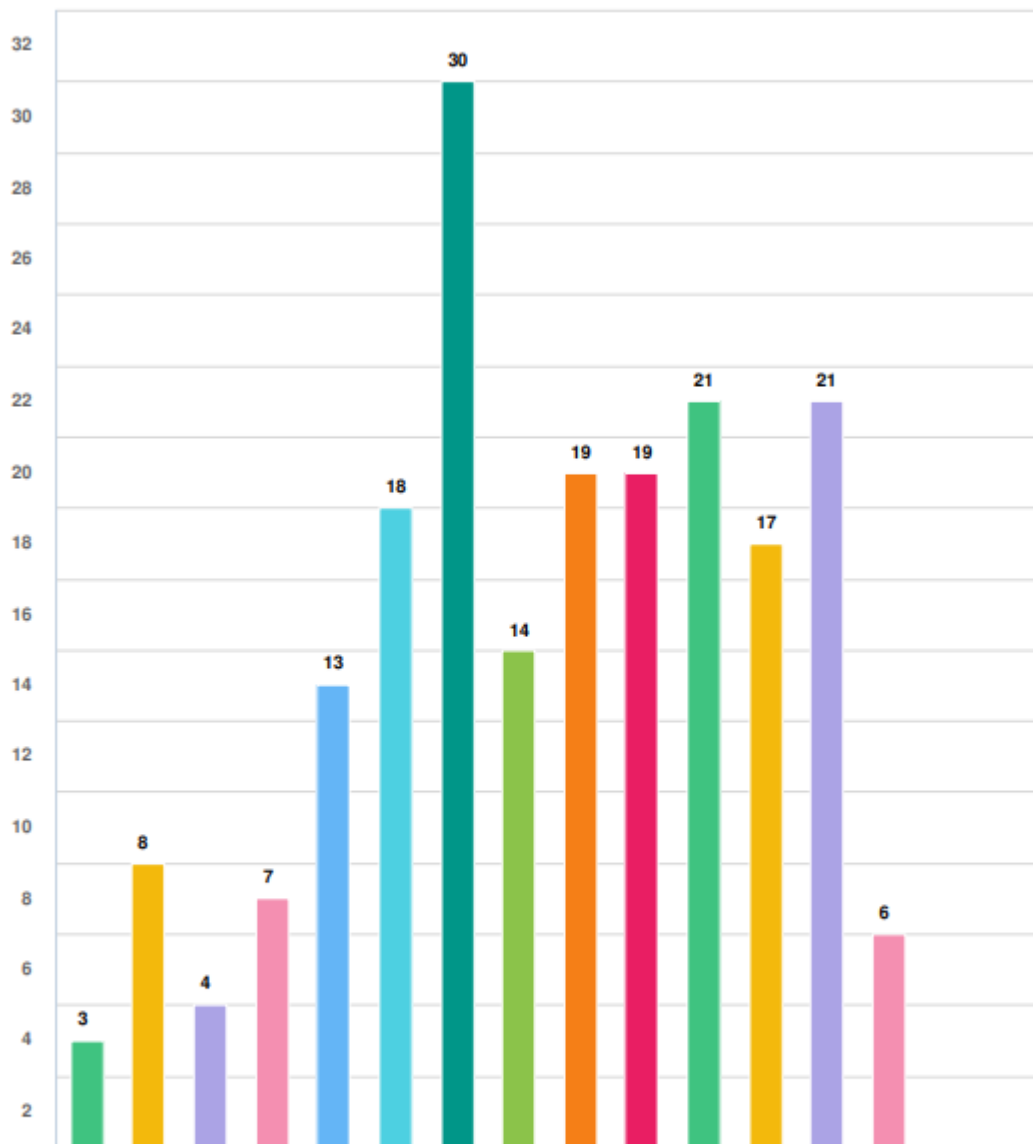
Question options

☒ A man ☒ A woman ☐ Non-binary ☐ i prefer to self-identify ☐ Prefer not to say

Optional question (199 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q8 I am:



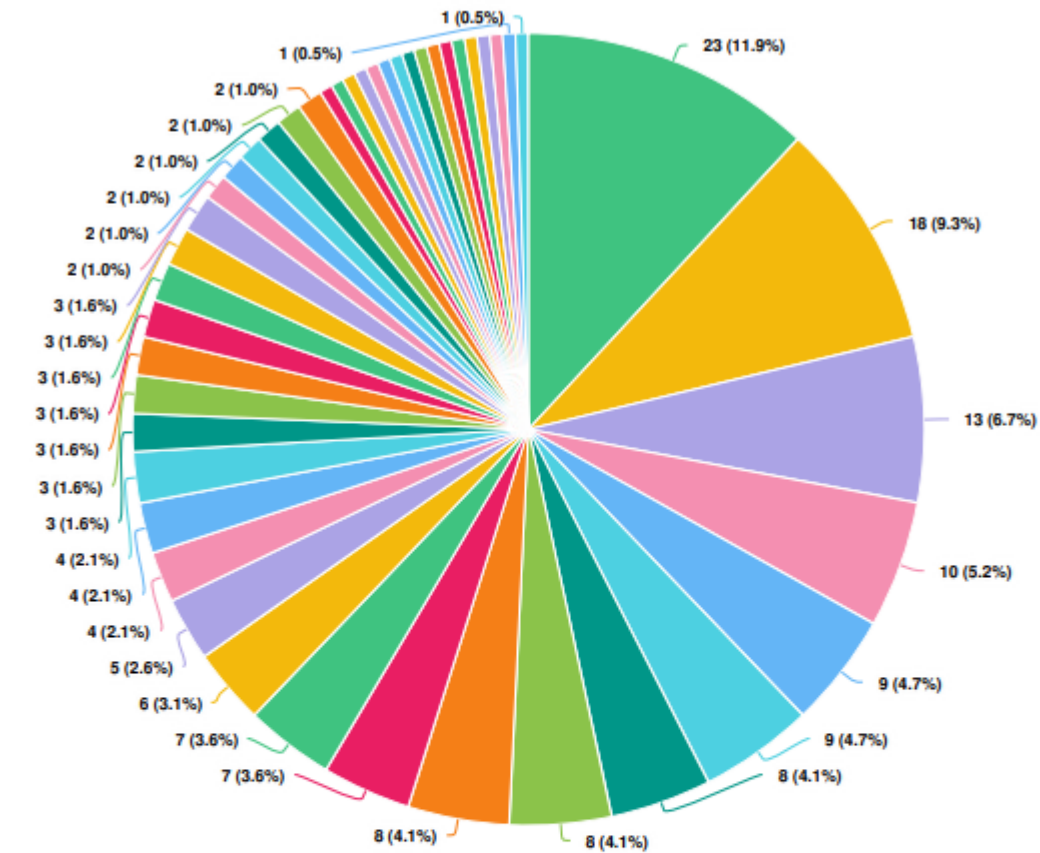
Question options

Under 15 15 - 19 20 - 24 25 - 29 30 - 34 35 - 39 40 - 44 45 - 49 50 - 54
55 - 59 60 - 64 65 - 69 70 - 74 75 - 79 80 - 84 85+

Mandatory Question (200 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q9 Please select your suburb



Question options

- BALLARAT CENTRAL, VIC BALLARAT EAST, VIC GOLDEN POINT, VIC BALLARAT NORTH, VIC
- MOUNT CLEAR, VIC SEBASTOPOL, VIC ALFREDTON, VIC SOLDIERS HILL, VIC CANADIAN, VIC
- LAKE WENDOUREE, VIC WENDOUREE, VIC BROWN HILL, VIC MOUNT PLEASANT, VIC
- BLACK HILL, VIC REDAN, VIC LUCAS, VIC BAKERY HILL, VIC NEWINGTON, VIC
- BUNINYONG, VIC SMYTHES CREEK, VIC SKIPTON, VIC MINERS REST, VIC
- WINTER VALLEY, VIC GORDON, VIC DELACOMBE, VIC CARDIGAN, VIC DAYLESFORD, VIC
- MAGPIE, VIC SMYTHESDALE, VIC LINTON, VIC BO PEEP, VIC BONSHAW, VIC
- ROSS CREEK, VIC FOSTER, VIC GEELONG, VIC CARDIGAN VILLAGE, VIC CRESWICK, VIC
- INVERMAY PARK, VIC GEELONG WEST, VIC NAPOLEONS, VIC MITCHELL PARK, VIC
- RESERVOIR, VIC CLUNES, VIC SEBASTIAN, VIC MOUNT HELEN, VIC NERRINA, VIC

Optional question (193 response(s), 7 skipped)

Question type: Region Question

Media Coverage:

Ballarat East

Community News

Edition 13 July 2023 Connecting people in Bakery Hill, Ballarat East, Canadian, Eureka, Golden Point, Mount Pleasant and Warrenheip

Community input sought on future of Eastwood Leisure Complex

Community feedback is now being sought by the City of Ballarat on draft concept plans for the redevelopment of the Eastwood Leisure Complex, Ballarat Central. A major transformation is planned to deliver high quality, accessible infrastructure for current and future users of the facility.

Concept designs for a new facility have been created based on consultation with the managing committee of the Complex and key users and stakeholders.

Now, the City of Ballarat wants to hear from as many members of the public as possible to help shape detailed designs to be created during the 2023/24 financial year.

The current concept designs outline a plan to demolish and redevelop the existing Complex, into a new community hub to provide an opportunity for generational change in the heart of the Ballarat.

The existing structure of the basketball stadium at the rear of the complex would be retained but would also undergo upgrades.

It is proposed that the multi-purpose hub would be redeveloped to accommodate up to 200 people at one time, including a medium-sized conference and community event space, ten meeting rooms, two multipurpose activity rooms and access to a kitchen providing a home for community celebrations, cultural events and meetings.



Artist's impression of the Eastwood Community Hub.
Image supplied by the City of Ballarat

City of Ballarat Mayor, Cr Des Hudson encouraged as many community members as possible to give feedback to identify priorities and ideas for the facility in the future.

"We know the building is outdated and we are really excited about what is in store for the future, but we want the community to be involved in the journey," Cr Hudson said.

"We want as much input as possible to make this facility the best it can possibly be and make it a gem in the very heart of Ballarat.

"The more people engage with us, the more it helps us create a facility that most benefits the community."

An online survey has been established on the City of Ballarat MySay page:

mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/eastwood-leisure-complex-project

with feedback sought from the wider community on the draft concepts to inform updates to concept plans and the development of detailed designs.

The survey will remain open until 11.59pm on **Sunday, 30 July**.

As part of the public consultation, there will also be drop-in sessions at the Complex, where community members can see the designs in detail and also have face-to-face discussions with City of Ballarat officers.

The sessions will be held at the following times:

- Monday 17 July, 9.30 am–11.30 am
- Monday 17 July, 4.30 pm–6.30 pm
- Wednesday 26 July, 5.00 pm–7.00 pm

The Eastwood Leisure Complex Redevelopment project was identified as a high priority in the City of Ballarat's Community Infrastructure Plan 2022 – 2037. It is currently used by about 100 different user groups and attracts more than 1000 weekly visitors.

The City of Ballarat is continuing to actively seek Victorian and Federal Government support to help deliver the project.

Council Updated

Eastwood Leisure Complex redevelopment detailed design phase begins as City of Ballarat seeks funding

KG

By Kirra Grimes
Updated July 11 2023 - 10:28am, first published 4:00am

0 Comments



Ballarat residents have until August to help shape the future of a well-used community facility as the multi-million dollar Eastwood Leisure Complex redevelopment progresses to the detailed design stage.

The City of Ballarat is seeking feedback on draft concept plans developed last year, aiming to identify priorities and ideas for what should replace the more than 70-year-old facility if and when the required \$13.7 million [state and federal government funding](#) is secured.



📷 Concept plans were unveiled in 2022.

The council plans to demolish the existing building – excluding the [basketball stadium](#) at the rear of the site – at 20 [Eastwood Street](#) in Ballarat Central due to its age and condition.

About 100 [groups](#) and 1000 weekly visitors use the multipurpose facility, and the rebuild is considered necessary to improve its quality and accessibility.



"The more people engage with us, the more it helps us create a facility that most benefits the community," Cr Hudson said.

An online survey is available via mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au until Sunday, July 30.

Drop-in sessions where community members can view the designs will take place at the complex on July 11, 17, and 26.

Feedback will inform detailed designs to be developed during the 2023/24 financial year, with hopes construction could start in the 2024/2025 financial year.

Suggested under the draft plans – created in consultation with the complex's managing committee, key users and stakeholders – are a medium-sized conference and community event space; 10 meeting/training rooms; and activity rooms.

The project was identified as a high priority in the council's 2022-37 Community Infrastructure Plan.

Mayor Cr Des Hudson said in a media release the building was "outdated" and the council wanted as much input as possible to make it a "gem" in the heart of Ballarat.

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Community input sought on future of Eastwood Leisure Complex

🕒 10 July 2023 9:22am



Community feedback is now being sought on draft concept plans for the redevelopment of the Eastwood Leisure Complex, with a major transformation planned to deliver high quality, accessible infrastructure for current and future users of the facility.

Concept designs for a new facility have been created based on consultation with the managing committee of the Complex and key users and stakeholders.

Now, the City of Ballarat wants to hear from as many members of the public as possible to help shape detailed designs to be created during the 2023/24 financial year.

The current concept designs outline a plan to demolish and redevelop the existing Complex, into a new community hub to provide an opportunity for generational change in the heart of the Ballarat.

The existing structure of the basketball stadium at the rear of the complex would be retained but would also undergo upgrades.

It is proposed that the multi-purpose hub would be redeveloped to accommodate for up to 200 people at one time, including a medium sized conference and community event space, 10 meeting rooms, two multipurpose activity rooms and access to kitchen providing a home for community celebrations, cultural events and meetings.

City of Ballarat Mayor, Cr Des Hudson encouraged as many community members as possible to give feedback to identify priorities and ideas for the facility in the future.

“We know the building is outdated and we are really excited about what is in store for the future, but we want the community to be involved in the journey,” Cr Hudson said.

“We want as much input as possible to make this facility the best it can possibly be and make it a gem in the very heart of Ballarat.

“The more people engage with us, the more it helps us create a facility that most benefits the community.”

An online survey has been established on the [City of Ballarat MySay](#) page, with feedback sought from the wider community on the draft concepts to inform updates to concept plans and the development of detailed designs. The survey will remain open until 11.59pm on Sunday, 30 July.

As part of the public consultation, there will also be four drop-in sessions at the Complex, where community members can see the designs in detail and also have face-to-face discussions with City of Ballarat officers.

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The City of Ballarat is continuing to actively seek Victorian and Federal Government support to help deliver the project.



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Eastwood Community Hub

We are redeveloping Eastwood Leisure Complex, located at Eastwood Street Ballarat Central into a new community hub

On this page

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Community consultation

City of Ballarat has worked extensively with Eastwood Leisure Complex committee of management and user groups to develop concept plans for the redevelopment.

In July 2023, further feedback on these concepts was sought from users and local residents through a series of four drop in sessions on site at Eastwood and an [online survey on mySay](#).

Community and stakeholder feedback is important, and this feedback will inform detailed designs to be developed during the 2023/24 financial year.

Project Timeline

Date	Project Milestone
2021-2022	Development of concept plan with key stakeholders
July 2023	Eastwood Leisure Complex Redevelopment Community Survey and drop-in sessions
August 2023	Expression of interest submitted to Federal Government's Growing Region's program
August/September 2023	Review community feedback and final community consultation report
August/September 2023	Architect procurement
October 2023 - May 2024	Design development
2024/2025	Construction expected to commence

Project Contacts

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