

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2025

## WHAT WE HEARD: SHAPING OUR FUTURE, DEVELOPMENT OF ASSET PLAN 2025-2035

### INTRODUCTION

During 2024 community members and stakeholders were invited to contribute to the development of the 2025 – 2029 Golden Plains Shire Council Plan (Council Plan), Asset Plan and Financial Plan through a range of engagement activities. Details outlining the engagement methods can be found in each the Council Plan Report and Youth Engagement Report which can be found on Councils 'Have Your Say' webpage.

This report consolidates all the data captured through these engagements, which will now be considered in refreshing the Asset Plan. There will be further opportunities for the community to provide feedback when the draft plan is open for public consultation.

### WHAT WE HEARD

The Shaping Our Future Together Survey, combined seeking feedback from the community on each The Council Plan, The Asset Plan, The Financial Plan and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Asset Plan asked the community, various asset related questions including:

- Would you prefer us to renew existing assets or create new assets
- Would you prefer Council provide more flexible, multipurpose buildings or more targeted, single purpose buildings
- Would you prefer higher quality assets that may be further away or standard quality assets that are closer to where you live

We received sixty-four (64) survey responses, including:

- 13 of 64 respondents would like higher quality assets that might be further away from home
- 51 of 64 respondents would like lesser quality assets that might be closer to home
- 3 of 64 respondents would prefer multipurpose buildings
- 57 of 64 respondents would like to see the utilisation of existing buildings prioritised
- 4 of 64 respondents would prefer single use buildings
- Overwhelmingly the community think that we should prioritise the fixing of older assets instead of creating new ones, and when creating new assets, ensure that they are multipurpose.

Participants also had the opportunity to provide feedback/comments, these included:

- Review some of the known issues with maintenance and work on longer term solutions. In the context of roads, review traffic volumes to justify where these dirt roads become sealed
- Provide more fitness stations at parks
- There needs to be a balance between maintaining and improving current assets and replacing the existing assets
- New assets should be multipurpose where possible
- Consultation with residents is important – to listen and learn, rather than just tell
- there needs to be a balance between building new assets and maintaining existing assets

The Youth Engagement Survey asked similar questions to the asset plan survey.

One-hundred and one (101) responses were received to the Youth Engagement Survey

- 66% of youth survey respondents would prefer that Council renews/updates assets that we already have where possible, while 32% would prefer Council to construct new assets and facilities while removing old ones. (2% of responses were blank).
- 84% of youth survey respondents would prefer Council to provide more flexible multi-purpose buildings, while 13% would prefer Council to provide more targeted single use buildings. (2% of responses were blank).
- 57% of youth survey respondents would prefer that Council provides higher quality assets at a high use location, that might be further away from their home, while 40% of respondents would prefer that Council provides lesser quality assets that might be closer to their home. (2% of survey respondents did not respond).

In order of priority, for youth survey respondents:

| %  | ITEM   |
|----|--|
| 37 | Prioritise replacement and fixing of existing assets instead of creating new ones  |
| 25 | Ensure facilities are multi-purpose, multiple services for a range of community user groups  |
| 18 | Prioritise constructing new assets, while retiring old ones (which will require removing some assets and potentially selling others) |
| 9  | Invest in alternative energy sources for existing Council assets   |
| 6  | Put climate emergency measures in place to protect Council assets from damaging weather events                                       |
| 4  | Prioritise construction of new assets and reduce the quality of the existing ones  |
| 2  | Blank  |

General feedback from the Youth Engagement Survey, regarding council assets:

- 7 respondents would like a community swimming pool
- 1 respondent would like a track and field area
- 1 respondent suggested more green areas
- 1 respondent suggested facilities should be more spread out over the shire
- 1 respondent suggested a basic park should be constructed in Batesford

### Community Think Tanks

While there was a small number of participants in the two Community Thinktanks (Smythesdale and Bannockburn) they understood the Council planning processes and provided invaluable input regarding;

- The importance of Council promotion of and mechanisms to engage, and
- Clearly reporting outcomes linked to the Council Plan priorities, budgets, and geographic locations over the lifecycle of the plan.

The Thinktanks also identified some key challenges to Council and local communities;

- Economic and social impact of 'bedroom' townships where residents commute to regional centres for work, childcare, schooling, shopping, sport etc and
- Engagement fatigue was also identified as a challenge.

A Thinktank sessions was also held on 30 January 2025, online to discuss and present the findings from the community engagement. This session was both a drop-in session and participants could register through the Customer Experience Team. Despite being widely promoted, one registration was received, with no participants logging in online on the night.

## NEXT STEPS

Regarding the Asset Plan development, the key actions and dates are:

February 2025

- Completion of Financial Modelling component of Asset Plan

March 2025

- Presentation of Financial Modelling to Asset Management Steering Committee
- Presentation of Financial Modelling to Finance Team

April / May 2025

- Internal deliberation of Financial Modelling (Finance Team)
- Finalisation of Financial Modelling based on adopted Financial Plan
- Incorporation of Financial Modelling in Asset Plan

June / July 2025

- Draft Asset Plan submitted to Council for adoption.

August 2025

- Asset Plan on Exhibition

September 2025

- Adoption of Asset Plan 2025-2035