GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

ATTACHMENTS

Under Separate Cover
Ordinary Council Meeting

6.00pm Tuesday 18 December 2018

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COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING STRATEGY 2019-2021

Creating better connections between Council and its communities

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

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1.0 About Golden Plains Shire

Golden Plains Shire boasts a population of over 20,000 people across 56 vibrant rural communities. Well positioned between two of Victoria's largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat, and within easy reach of the State capital, it's no surprise the Shire is among the fastest growing regional Local Government Areas in Victoria.

Golden Plains is wonderfully unique and steeped in gold mining history. Our sweeping landscapes, award-winning businesses and rugged bush landscapes combine with historic townships and growing communities to make for a wonderful place to live or visit.

Residents value the character of Golden Plains' small townships and communities, and are attracted to the area's rural lifestyle, affordable housing and proximity to the services and jobs available in the Shire, as well as those in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and the Surf Coast. Golden Plains offers many opportunities for businesses, investment, sustainable development and employment, especially in agriculture, construction and real estate. Golden Plains proudly produces a significant portion of Victoria's agricultural produce, including 21% of Victoria's eggs, 11% of poultry, 5% of Victoria's pigs as well as goat dairy.

For visitors, our more popular destinations are associated with food and wine, such as the amazing Moorabool Valley Taste Trail, bustling Golden Plains Farmers' Market and beautiful townships such as Inverleigh and Meredith. Day-trippers are often drawn to the Ballarat – Skipton Rail Trail and Golden Plains Arts Trail, as well as the natural beauty of the Brisbane Ranges National Park, Enfield State Forest and Moorabool River. The Meredith Music Festival and Golden Plains Festivals draw thousands of visitors to our region every year as well.

OUR DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Area:	2,701sqms
Population:	22,574
Median age:	39
Males:	50.8%
Females:	49.2%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders:	2018
Australian citizens:	19,839
Population density:	0.08
Number of dwellings:	8,342
Average household size:	2.8 people

2.0 Introduction to the Strategy

The Golden Plains Shire Council Communications and Marketing Strategy 2019-2021 ('the Strategy') aims to better connect communications and marketing efforts with the needs of the Council and of the community.

The Strategy will ensure communications to both internal and external audiences are aligned to the key priorities and Strategic Directions of the Council Plan 2017-2021.

The Strategy will also keep local residents, business-owners and other stakeholders better informed of Council activities and operations, and more engaged with what is happening in the Shire, by addressing key themes and feedback provided through community consultation.

2.1 Our objective

To help build a stronger connection between Golden Plains Shire Council and its diverse communities through informative, engaging communications and conversations that promote trust and support Council's vision of a 'healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community'.

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2.2 Our guiding principles

The communication and marketing activities outlined within the Strategy will be underpinned by our guiding principles:

Transparency	• We are open and honest in our communication efforts
Value	• We provide information that is useful to our audiences, in a useful way
Diversity	• Our communications reflect the diverse wants and needs of our diverse audiences
Simplicity	• We use straightforward, easy-to-understand language
Accessibility	• We communicate in different ways to reach as many people as possible
Listening	• We encourage two-way communications and foster opportunities for feedback and input
Considered	• We use our available resources in a purposeful way to achieve the best result possible

2.3 How we communicate

This Strategy recognises the critical nature of Council's communication obligations set out by relevant State legislation, which includes the development of Council Plans, Annual Reports, Budgets and other plans, policies and strategies. The development of these communication materials, and our efforts to share them with the community, are therefore a high priority.

We are also committed to ensuring the community is provided with regular, less formal updates about what is happening within the Golden Plains Shire, and kept informed about important Council services, activities and operations.

We communicate news and updates in a number of different ways, including through our website, print and online newsletters, social media, local media and more.

2.4 The importance of strong communication

Strong communication supports stronger connections between Council and its diverse communities. These connections help ensure the voice of the community is captured in Council planning and decision-making.

Making the community more aware of the important services provided by Council, and how to access these services, also helps to promote the overall health, safety and prosperity of the Shire and its residents.

Our efforts to deliver effective, timely and relevant communications to the community will help to:
- Promote social inclusion and community cohesion
- Increase community engagement and participation
- Improve Council decision-making and service delivery
- Increase resident, visitor and stakeholder satisfaction
- Build a positive reputation for the Shire
- Attract business and residents to the area
- Improve staff engagement and job satisfaction.

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3.0 What we heard from the community

To ensure the voice of the community was reflected in this Strategy, we undertook a six-week community engagement program. The purpose of the program was to identify how our audiences prefer to receive information; what types of information they value most; and how we could improve our future communications and marketing efforts.

The engagement program included the following engagement activities and participation rates:

- Community survey   51 participants
- Bannockburn and Smythesdale Conversation Posts   73 participants
- Staff survey   53 participants
- Staff workshops   38 participants
- Councillor briefing and workshop   6 Councillor participants
- Youth workshop   11 participants.

(Community workshops in the north and south of the Shire were planned but were cancelled due to no response.)

3.1 A demographic snapshot of survey participants
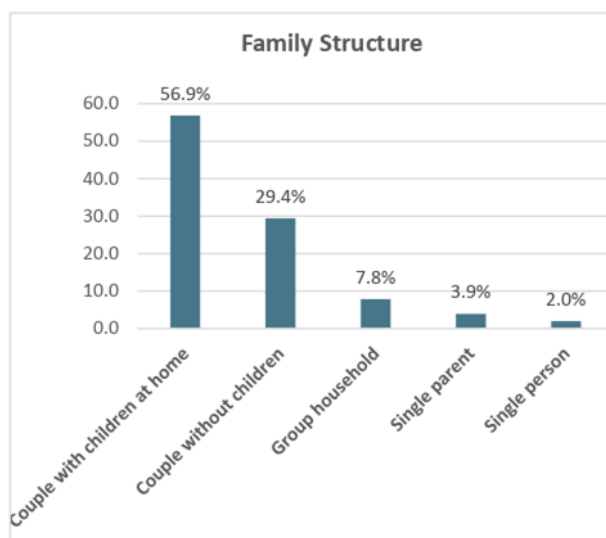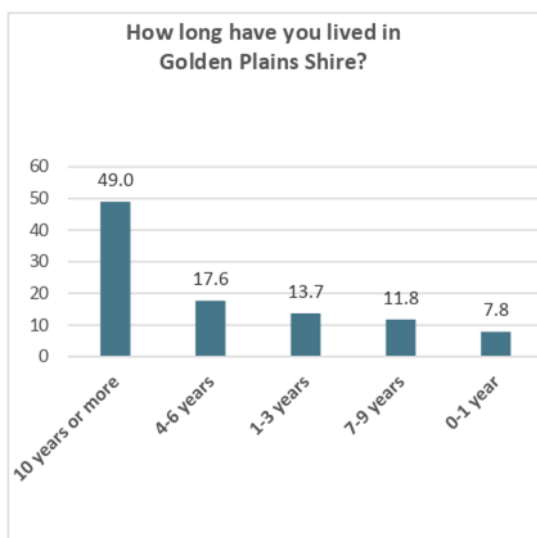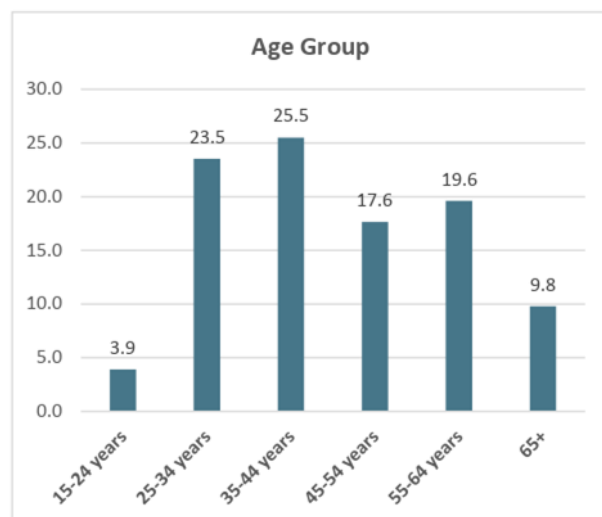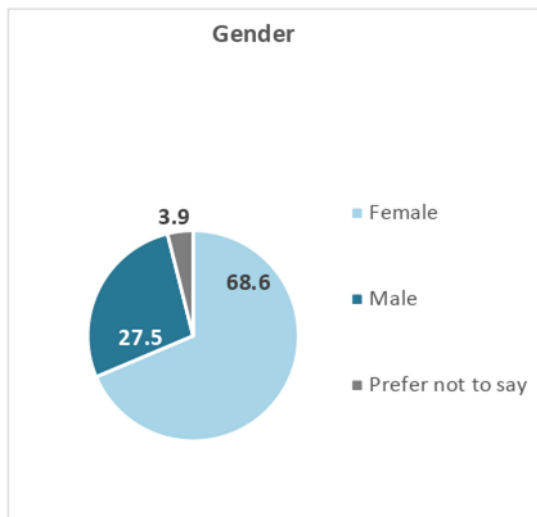
3.2 Key community findings

A summary of findings is outlined below, with a full Community Engagement report available from our website.

3.2.1. How the community wants to receive information

Most people we spoke to had fairly similar responses when asked which information channels were most important to them. Social media and the Gazette were in the top three choices for participants across all engagement activities, with friends and family also highly important sources of information for community members and young people.

Most community respondents read the Gazette, and they generally agree that six issues a year is about right.

Mixed feedback was received about the value of video content, however 61% of survey respondents did express interest in watching videos presented by staff subject matter experts.

Regional newspapers were consistently viewed as being of low importance, with the Miner (now the Golden Plains Times) being more important to participants we spoke to in our conversation posts than those who answered our community survey.

3.2.2. Where they find us on social media

Approximately 80% of all engagement participants (community, staff and Councillors) follow Council on one or more social media channel, with Facebook being the most popular platform.

According to our community survey, 80% of respondents follow the Golden Plains Shire Council Facebook page, and a further 41% follow the new Mayor Facebook page; showing the new page is valued, but has room to grow.

Council's LinkedIn and Twitter profiles were more popular with Council staff than with community members.

3.2.3 What they think of our website

Responses to the community survey, as well as recent website statistics (showing a 35% increase in website visits last year) indicate that the Council website is a well-utilised destination for news and updates, with around half the community visiting the website in the past month, and over 85% visiting in the past 12 months.

Around two-thirds of community survey respondents believe the Council website is informative and useful, however opinions were more divided when asked specifically about the useability of the homepage.

3.2.4 Types of information they value most

The following four items were consistently nominated as most important to participants across all engagements:

- Community events and activities
- Infrastructure news
- Community engagement opportunities and updates
- Council and corporate news.

The responses were slightly different for younger audiences, with youth respondents valuing information on career opportunities for young people, youth events, arts and culture and citizen recognition.

3.2.5 Suggestions for improvements

A key aspect of Council's engagement activities was asking for community suggestions for how we can improve our communication and information delivery efforts. Suggestions included:

- Improvements to website useability and navigation
- Additional digital resources, such as text, online chat, podcasts and video conferencing
- Providing more in-depth information, not just high-level news
- More information on rates and services, and opportunities for involvement and integration into the community.

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4.0 Strategic Pillars

4.1. Strategic Pillar 1: Using communications to build trust and increase Council's standing in the community

Strong, genuine connections are built on a platform of trust, and are reliant on honest and open communications. We want to foster these connections between Council and the community by being the source of truth for Council news and information, and by always communicating in a truthful and timely manner.

Link to the Council Plan 2017-2021

This Strategic Pillar will help support the Council's strategic objective of 'delivering good governance and leadership' and its efforts to 'increase trust, ensure open and transparent good governance and active engagement through Council planning and decision making in the long-term interests of the community'.

4.1.1 What we heard

Our engagement efforts showed that the Golden Plains Shire community wants us to:

- Be truthful and accurate when we talk to them
- Tell them the whole story, not just the highlights
- Show our faces more, and engage directly with the community
- Listen.

> **YOU SAID:**
> *"Do not hold the truth from the rate payers, we don't want to get the edited, popular edition."*

4.1.2 What we'll do

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMING
Show where and how we're listening to the community	Promote upcoming opportunities for community engagement	Ongoing
	Communicate where and when the community can access formal Council documentation that incorporates and/or demonstrates their feedback i.e. Council plans, strategies, reports	Ongoing
	Close the loop on community feedback, by showcasing where and how it has been used in planning and decision-making	Year 1
Be our own newsroom	Update the Council newsfeed on a regular basis to reflect what is happening in the Shire	Ongoing
	Promote the website news feed via other Council communication channels i.e. social media to drive visitation	Ongoing
	Establish the Council website news feed as the 'place to go' to find out what is happening in Golden Plains Shire.	Year 1 and ongoing
	Review and update the website home page to give prominence to Council news and search functionality	Year 1

Tell the whole story, warts and all	Provide honest, timely information to the community on matters of relevance to them, regardless of whether it is a 'good' or 'bad' news story	Ongoing
	Monitor social media and other feedback channels to identify potential areas of confusion or concern in the community, and address these in future communications	Ongoing
	Develop a Crisis Communications Plan to help facilitate prompt delivery of accurate, consistent information should an issue arise	Year 2
Build trust by showcasing Council expertise and capability	Develop case studies that showcase key Council operations and demonstrate how Council does what it says it will	Year 2
	Create short videos featuring Subject Matter Experts that explain complex and technical information	Year 3
	Profile Council staff in communication activities	
	Explore new opportunities to connect Council directly with the community i.e. interactive 'ask me anything' sessions on social media	Year 3
Develop strategic communications plans and campaigns	Increase understanding and appreciation of Council's lobbying and advocacy including role in G21 and Central Highlands Regional Partnership	Year 1
	Develop and deliver communications campaign on Priority Projects	Year 1
	Develop and deliver communications campaign on infrastructure and project delivery particularly works and sport and recreation	Year 2
	Develop and deliver communications campaign on Council services, particularly child services, aged services, youth services, health and well being	Year 2
Explore new ways to deliver information and connect the community with Council	Produce explanatory videos and podcasts (audio files) featuring Council subject matter experts	Year 2
	Facilitate time and cost-effective opportunities for Council staff to create videos and podcasts (audio files) on topics of interest and importance to the community	Year 3

4.3 How we'll know if we're successful

Key measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the above activities include:

MEASURE	GOAL	TARGET DATE
Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	Increase 'Community consultation' core measure score to 54 (up from 50 in 2018 and 48 in 2017)	2021
	Increase 'Advocacy' core measure score to 54 (up from 51 in 2018 and 46 in 2017)	2021
Website analytics and engagement metrics	Increase website visits by 30% (up from 323,755 page views for year ending 30 June 2018)	June 2021
Social media metrics	Increase to 2 million impressions across social channels (up from 1.6 million impressions across social channels in year ending 30 June 2018)	June 2021

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4.2 Strategic Pillar 2: Connecting people with the information they need (and want)

Our priority is to make sure we provide the best possible service and support to the community, and sharing information is a critical part of this. We want to connect with as many people in the community as possible, and believe the best way to do this is to meet them where they are, as much as we possibly can.

We know that information sharing is often a balancing act, and we want to get the balance right between telling the community what they need to know, as well as what they want to know. It is important that we also balance the needs of Council and of the community, so that together we can achieve the best result.

Link to the Council Plan 2017-2021

In connecting people with the information they need and want, we can help promote healthy and connecting communities – a key theme of the Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2017-2021.

What you **want** to know / What you **need** to know

Best value to the community

4.2.1 What we heard

People want us to deliver information that's relevant, in an easy, timely and useful way that's convenient to them.

In practice this means:

- Sharing information about what's happening in the community, what the Council is doing and how residents can get involved
- Delivering clear and concise information that is easily understood and easily consumed, and
- Using the community's preferred communication channels, such as social media (especially Facebook) and the Gazette.

YOU SAID:

"Let us know what is going on, keep us updated and let us be involved in decisions that impact our community."

4.2.2 What we'll do

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMING
Align content development to community feedback and insights	Review and develop content that is clear, consistent and accurate	Ongoing
	Continue to produce six issues of the Gazette each year	Ongoing
	Increase information shared about key topics of interest: community events and activities; Infrastructure news; community engagement opportunities and updates; and Council and corporate news	Year 1
Facilitate greater self-service of information	Promote Council's website and social media platforms as primary sources of community information	Ongoing
	Educate our audiences on where and how they can find the latest Council information	Year 1
Improve efficiency and effectiveness of digital channels	Build social media followers to ensure timely delivery of information to maximum online audience (Facebook as a priority)	Year 1
	Align social media focus to community preferences - consider retiring Twitter account; consolidating Golden Plains Shire and Visit Golden Plains Facebook pages; and refocussing LinkedIn engagement towards business and corporate stakeholders	Year 1
	Progress social media actions from 2017-18 digital communications report (internal document)	Years 1 and 2

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	Develop a social media content strategy aligned to community audience segments and channel and content preferences	Year 2
Incorporate current and future community feedback into resourcing decisions	Prioritise resourcing for digital content, especially the website	Ongoing
	Repurpose existing news stories for media, while maintaining quality standards for reactive media enquiries	Year 1
	Consider how comments received via social media can inform decision making	Year 2
Protect information accessibility by maintaining a balance of print and digital channels	Continue to respond to traditional media requests in a timely manner	Ongoing
	Complement the print version of the Gazette with a digital version	Year 2
	Run an opt-in email address campaign to facilitate direct delivery of Council news	Year 2

4.2.3 How we'll know if we're successful

Key measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the above activities include:

MEASURE	GOAL	TARGET DATE
Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	Increase 'Community consultation' core measure score to 54 (up from 50 in 2018 and 48 in 2017)	2021
Website analytics and engagement metrics	Increase website visits by 30% (up from 323,755 page views in year ending 30 June 2018)	June 2021
Social media metrics	Increase engagement across all platforms, including: @GoldenPlainsShire Facebook: increase to 5,000 followers (up from 2,846 at 30 June 2018) @GoldenPlainsMayor Facebook: increase to 3,000 followers (up from 356 at 30 June 2018) LinkedIn - Golden Plains Shire Council: increase to 1,500 followers (up from 318 at 1 November 2018)	June 2021
Content metrics	Year-on-year increase of at least 10% for: News posts (up from 350 in year ending 30 June 2018) Social media posts (up from 960 in year ending 30 June 2018) Items classified under 'most popular' content types (topics)	Year-on-year metrics
Email campaign engagement	Increase annual email newsletter campaign engagement measures including open and click-through rates by 15% (up from 615 subscribers, 1,605 opens and 230 clicks for Golden Plains Business News; and 4,142 opens and 319 clicks for Farmers Market Newsletter in the year to 30 June 2018)	Year-on-year metrics
Communications and Marketing Budget	Remain within our allocated budget for Communications and Marketing activities.	Year-on-year metrics

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4.3 Strategic Pillar 3: Celebrating and connecting local communities

Golden Plains Shire has so much to be proud of, and we want to showcase all that's on offer. We want to celebrate the best of Golden Plains Shire within our own community – not just with holidaymakers and day-trippers. We want to share local success stories with the neighbours, friends and families, and fellow business owners who have the privilege of enjoying and contributing to these successes each and every day.

Because Golden Plains Shire isn't just a great place for visitors to taste, see and explore; it's an even better place to live, work, visit and invest.

Link to Council Plan 2017-2021

This Strategy is a critical part of supporting Council's strategic efforts to enhance local economies, and to work with business, government and community partners to sustain a diverse, resilient, prosperous and socially responsible economy through investment attraction, supporting local business, and tourism development.

4.3.1 What we heard

- Residents of Golden Plains Shire like to feel connected to what's happening in their community, and want to hear about local events and activities
- They think Council has an important role to play in promoting, supporting and encouraging the local economy and tourism
- Younger people also value information about their local community, but they want this information to be tailored to their needs and interests. They are less interested in hearing about general business news, than they are about potential career paths and local job opportunities for young people.

> **YOU SAID:**
>
> *"[I want] more real connection and real community involvement - you feel disconnected from the community…"*
>
> *"Council can be very supportive of community spirit."*

4.3.2 What we'll do

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMING
Simplify opportunities for local and tourism-related social engagement	Integrate the 'Visit Golden Plains' Facebook and Twitter accounts into the Golden Plains Council accounts	Year 1
	Use hashtags and key words to make it easy for locals and visitors to search and share tourism-related information	Year 1
	Establish an Instagram account to support visual content, especially tourism-focussed, such as places to visit	Year 2
Share the stories that make Golden Plains Shire special	Increase content collection from internal and external sources by promoting opportunities to submit stories and streamlining process to do so	Year 1
	Prioritise stories about community events and activities, health and wellbeing, youth events and arts and culture to reflect community preferences	Year 1
	Improve content sharing capacity, by cross-promoting across different channels and audiences	Year 2
	Develop marketing and content campaigns to source, showcase and share local stories i.e. Local Love and Explore Your Own Backyard	Year 3
	Explore opportunities for user-generated content, especially at key tourism events and activities	Year 3

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Promote business opportunities and successes within the Shire	Showcase young people working in the Shire, and use as an opportunity to drive discussions regarding career pathways for young people	Year 2
	Source and/or develop Council or local business-focussed case studies, profiles and interviews for use on LinkedIn	Year 3
Confirm the Council's brand identity	Explore community appetite to refresh the Council's brand identity and logo to better reflect community aspirations	Year 3

4.3.3 How we'll know if we're successful

Key measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the above activities include:

MEASURE	GOAL	TARGET DATE
Website analytics and engagement metrics	Increase 'Visitor', 'Business' and 'Event Calendar' web page views by 30% (up from 1,453 'Visitor', 2,915 'Business' and 2,384 'Events' page views in year ending 30 June 2018)	June 2021
Social media metrics	Increase to 5,000 followers of @GoldenPlainsShire Facebook (up from 2,846 at 30 June 2018)	June 2021
Campaign metrics	Create engagement with #visitGoldenPlains hashtag and increase use at least 20%	Year-on-year metrics
	Content campaign engagement measures including open and click-through rates and response rates as appropriate	Determined by campaign dates

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CONNECTING WITH COUNCIL – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Communications and Marketing Strategy 2019-2021

Background

Council is developing a Communications and Marketing Strategy 2019-2021 ('the Strategy') to guide its communications and marketing activities over the next two years. We seek to improve our communications to better meet the needs of the community and support the Council Plan 2017-2021.

Participation

Community, staff and Councillor input will feed into the development of the Strategy. A six-week engagement program has been completed. Over the course of the engagement period, we heard from around 230 people through the following engagement activities (including internal engagement and research):

- Community survey: 51 participants
- Bannockburn and Smythesdale Conversation Posts: 73 participants
- Staff survey: 53 participants
- Staff workshops: 38 participants
- Councillor briefing and workshop: 6 Councillor participants
- Youth workshop: 11 participants.

(Community workshops in the north and south of the Shire were planned but were cancelled due to no response.)

Purpose

This report contains the results of the community engagement program. This engagement will inform the development of the Strategy through identifying:

- How our key audiences would like to receive information
- What types of information they value most
- Ways we can improve in the future.

Resident survey results: 'Connecting with Council'

The 'Connecting with Council' community survey aimed at finding out how Council can improve how we connect with our communities and making sure we're sharing important, useful information in the best way possible. In a five-minute survey we asked residents what they wanted to hear about and how. There were 51 responses to this survey.

5220 7111   PO Box 111, Bannockburn VIC 3331   goldenplains.vic.gov.au   enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

Communication methods

Q1: How do you find out about what's happening at Council?
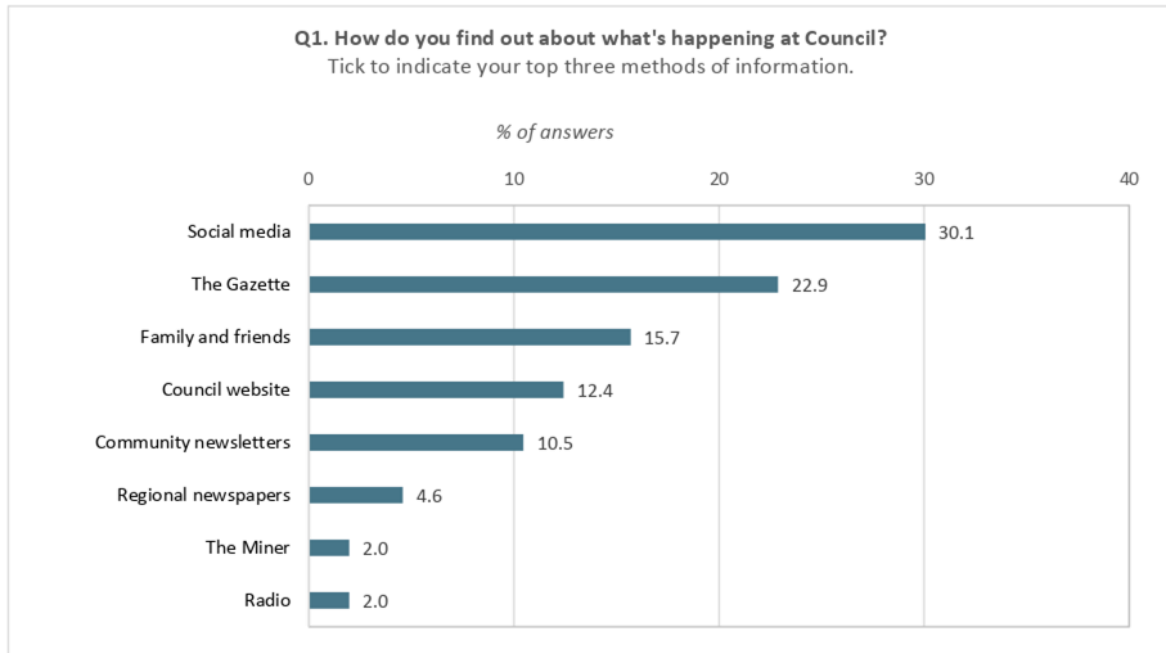
Q1. How do you find out about what's happening at Council?
Tick to indicate your top three methods of information.

% of answers

Method	%
Social media	30.1
The Gazette	22.9
Family and friends	15.7
Council website	12.4
Community newsletters	10.5
Regional newspapers	4.6
The Miner	2.0
Radio	2.0

Golden Plains Shire Council Gazette

Q2: Do you read the Golden Plains Shire Council Gazette?

Q2. Do you read the Golden Plains Shire Council Gazette?
(% of respondents)

- Yes: 78.4
- No: 21.6
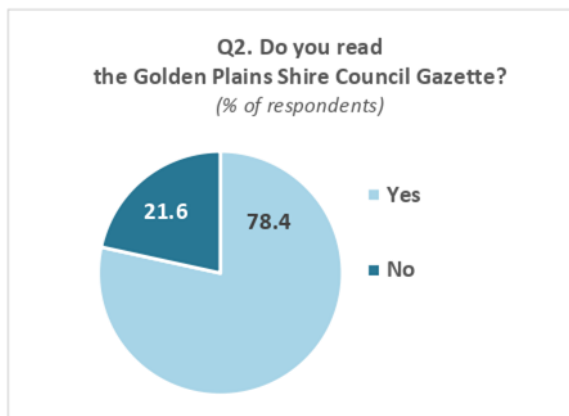
Q3: The Gazette is delivered six times a year; do you think this frequency is too much, about right or not enough?

Q3. The Gazette is delivered six times a year; do you think this frequency is:
(% of respondents)

Response	% of respondents
About right	69.8
Not enough	22.6
Too much	7.5

2
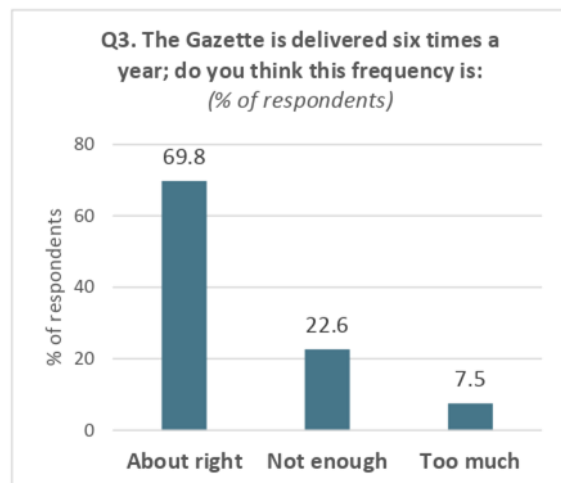
The Miner (now the Golden Plains Times)

Q4: Have you seen Council's fortnightly news item in The Miner (now the Golden Plains Times), which provides the latest Council news, information and opportunities? Did you find the information useful?

Interesting points:

- Only a fifth of respondents have seen Council's fortnightly news item in The Miner
- Of those who had seen it, the majority found it useful.

Q4. Part 1. Have you seen Council's fortnightly news item in The Miner, which provides the latest Council news, information and opportunities? *(% of respondents)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

7.8
19.6
72.5

Q4. Part 2. Did you find the information useful? *(% of respondents)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

17.6
5.9
76.5

Council Website

Q5 When did you last visit the Council website?

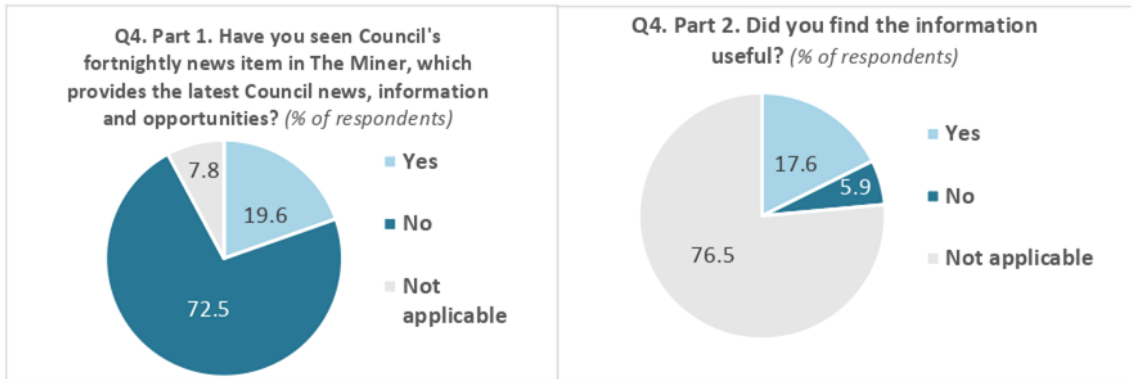Q5. When did you last visit the Council website?

% of respondents

| | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 |

Within the last month — 54.9
Within the last six months — 19.6
I haven't visited the website in the past year — 13.7
Within the past 12 months — 11.8

Q6: Please indicate if you have visited any of the following Council website pages in the last year.

Q6. Please indicate if you have visited any of the following Council website pages in the last year

% of answers

| | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 |

I don't remember visiting any of these pages. — 40.0
Council's online news feed — 25.0
Council's consultation platform (have your say) — 18.3
Council's Customer Service Portal (to make an... — 16.7

3

Q7. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

- **The Council website is informative and useful.**
- **The Council website Home page is useful to me (I can find what I'm looking for).**

Interesting points:
- Around two thirds of respondents strongly agree or agree that the Council website is informative and useful, while one third disagree or strongly disagree.
- Just over half the respondents agreed (49%) or strongly agreed (3.9%) that the Home page was useful (I can find what I am looking for).
- Just under half disagreed (29.4%) or strongly disagreed (17.6%) with the statement.

Q7. Part 1 The Council website is informative and useful (% of respondents)

4% Strongly agree
61% Agree
23% Disagree
12% Strongly disagree

Q7. Part 2: The Council website Home page is useful to me (I can find what I'm looking for) (% of respondents)

4% Strongly agree
49% Agree
29% Disagree
18% Strongly disagree
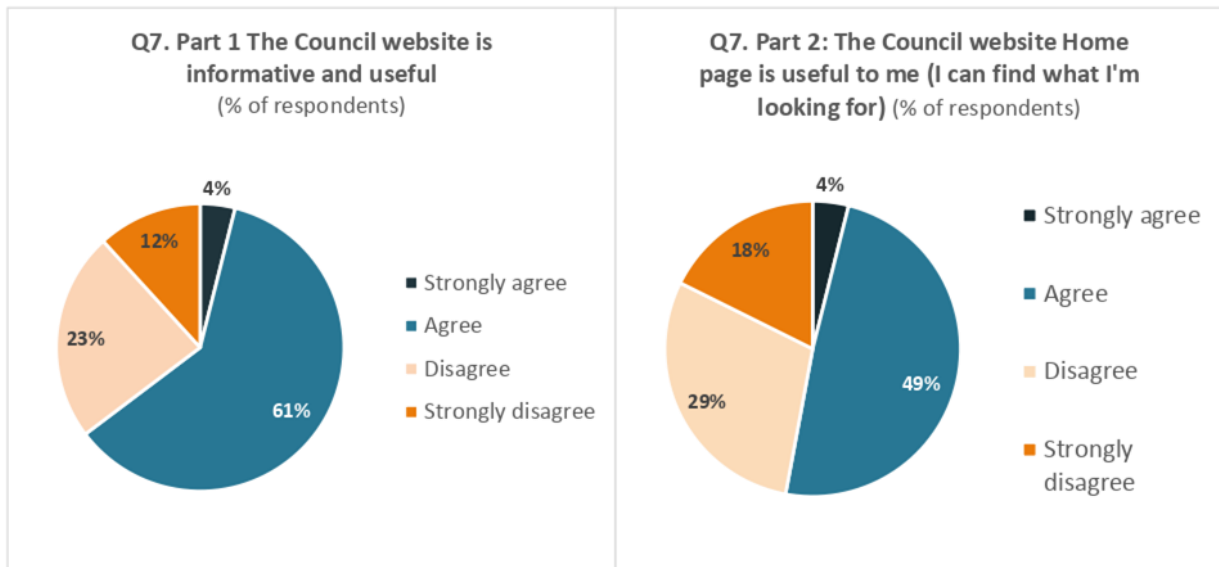
Social media

Q8. Tick to indicate which Council social media pages you follow.

Interesting points:
- 17.6% of respondents do not follow Council on social media
- Twitter was not identified by any respondents.

Q8. Tick to indicate which Council social media pages you follow

% of respondents

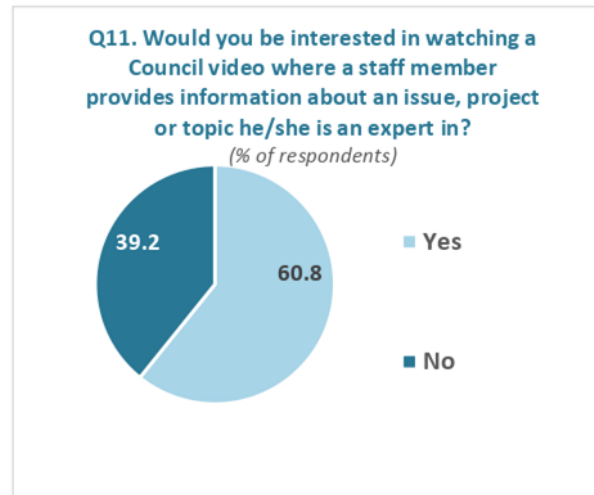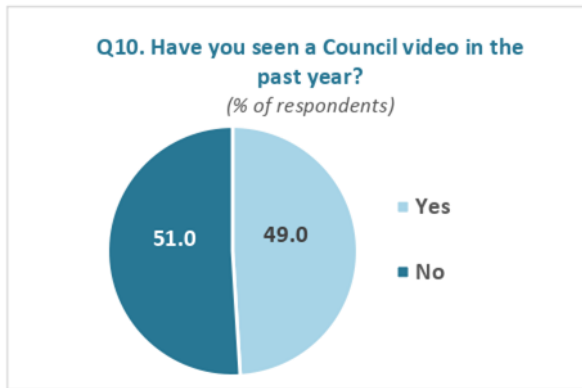|	%
Facebook (Golden Plains Shire Council)	80.4
Facebook (Golden Plains Mayor)	41.2
I don't follow Council on social media	17.6
LinkedIn (Golden Plains Shire Council)	3.9
Twitter (GPS Council News)	0.0

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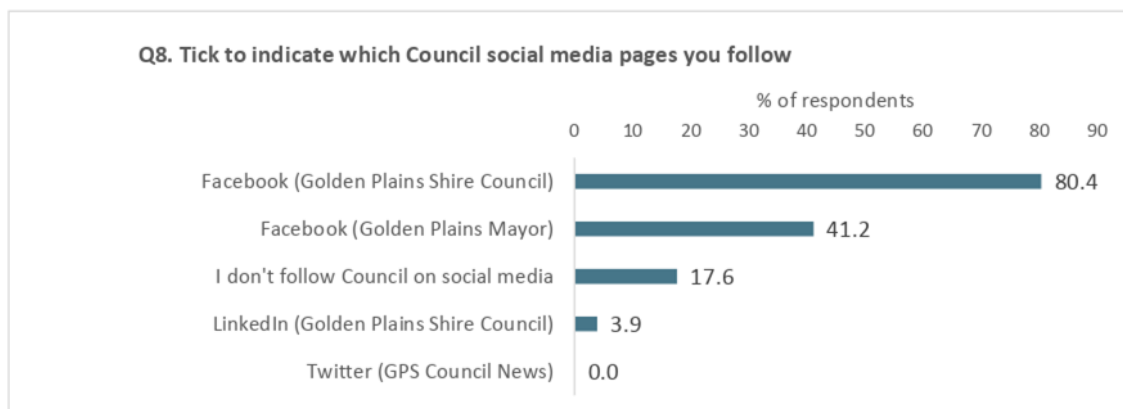
Q9. Would you like to see Council active on other social media channels? If yes please advise which one(s):

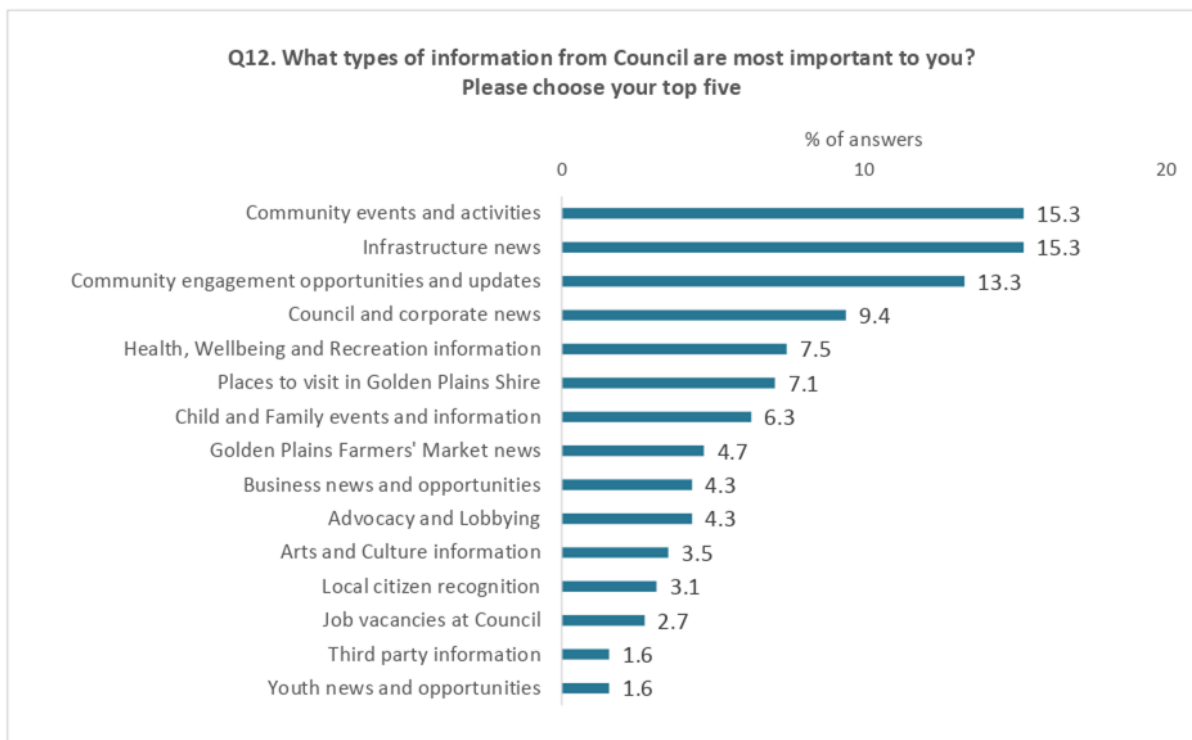There were 12 respondents who provided comments on this question.

- 6 people said "No"
- 2 people suggesting Instagram
- Concerns around it being a waste of money and that not everyone has access to the internet/computers.

Council videos

Q10. Have you seen a Council video in the past year?
(% of respondents)

- 51.0 No
- 49.0 Yes

Q11. Would you be interested in watching a Council video where a staff member provides information about an issue, project or topic he/she is an expert in?
(% of respondents)

- 39.2 No
- 60.8 Yes

Council information

Q12. What types of information from Council are most important to you? Please choose your top five

Q12. What types of information from Council are most important to you? Please choose your top five

% of answers

Type	%
Community events and activities	15.3
Infrastructure news	15.3
Community engagement opportunities and updates	13.3
Council and corporate news	9.4
Health, Wellbeing and Recreation information	7.5
Places to visit in Golden Plains Shire	7.1
Child and Family events and information	6.3
Golden Plains Farmers' Market news	4.7
Business news and opportunities	4.3
Advocacy and Lobbying	4.3
Arts and Culture information	3.5
Local citizen recognition	3.1
Job vacancies at Council	2.7
Third party information	1.6
Youth news and opportunities	1.6

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Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Respondents are fairly evenly split between strongly agreeing/agreeing and strongly disagreeing/disagreeing about information provided to me by Council being relevant. There is a similar split for information from Council being truthful and accurate.
- The majority of respondents strongly agree/agree that they like hearing about what Council is doing in my community/area.
- There is a significant proportion of respondents (64.7%) that strongly disagree/disagree that information provided by Council is timely.
- There is also a diversity of views about whether video content is a good way to stay up-to-date with an issue with 54.9% strongly disagree/disagree and 45.1% strongly agree/agree.

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
	Information provided to me by Council is relevant to me.	Information provided to me by Council is timely.	Information from Council is truthful and accurate.	I like hearing about what Council is doing in my community /area.	I find video content a good way to stay up to date with an issue.
Strongly agree	2.0%	3.9%	3.9%	**47.1%**	3.9%
Agree	**52.9%**	31.4%	**43.1%**	45.1%	**41.2%**
Disagree	35.3%	**43.1%**	29.4%	2.0%	39.2%
Strongly disagree	9.8%	21.6%	23.5%	5.9%	15.7%

Suggestions for improvements

- 34 respondents provided comments.
- Topics covered included methods of communication, listen, financial issues, communication topics of interest, truthfulness, survey issues and response time. Some respondents included more than one topic.
- Feedback not specifically relating to Council communications have been provided to the appropriate area of Council.

Q14. What ideas and suggestions do you have that could improve Council communications?

Q14. What ideas and suggestions do you have that could improve Council communications?		
Topic	Number of times raised	Comments
Methods of communication	15	• Ideas include Instagram, text chat rooms, video conferencing, Open Bulletin Boards with resident logins, podcasts from Council staff, webpage for residents, emails, more informative reports of Council meetings/committees • Improve the website – difficult to navigate • Conversation posts on more than one topic at once • Face to face, town meetings, meet the CEO, monthly meet and greet around the Shire • More contact and face to face in northern part of Shire including staff/Councillor contact, Councillors visiting the Well • Councillors speaking on issues • Mixed views on value of videos • The Miner is Ballarat focussed so not much value to use that • Communications improved in recent years.

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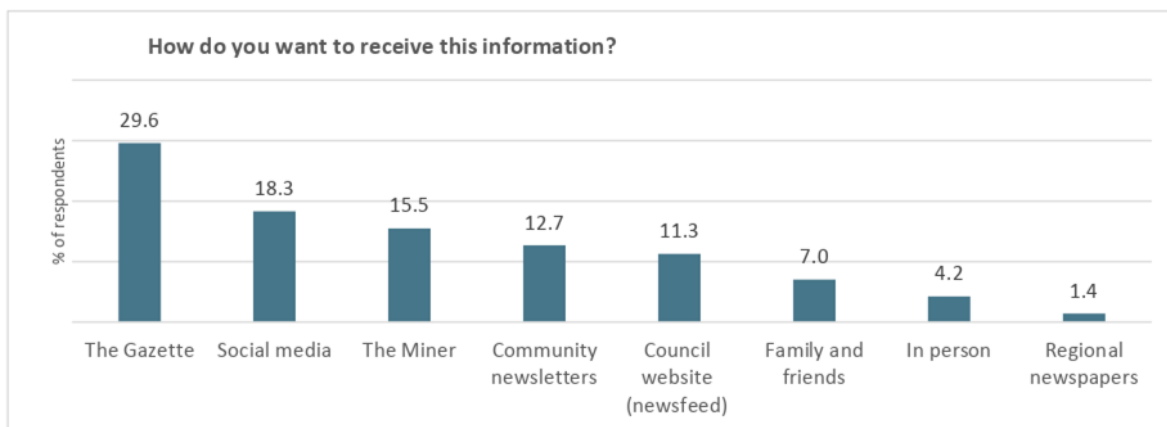| Listening	9	• More listening to ratepayers, the community, out of touch • Listen to community, don't just make decisions internally • Let CEO hear views of people • Listen about struggles with rates.
Financial/ cost of rates	7	• A number of matters considered a 'waste of money' • Some spending only benefits a few residents • Increased rates and reduced services/basic needs not being met e.g. rubbish.
Communication topics of interest	7	• Rates • Revenue, budget, expenses, cost of wages • Arts/culture/community events via regular email postings.
Transparency/ honesty in communications	6	• Let us know what is going on and let us be involved • More open transparent communication • Make information truthful, honest • Communicate the depth of issues, not an edited version.
Survey issues	6	• Comments on a couple of the questions' design • Minor omission in age bracket options identified • Similar survey previously had no follow up.
Response time	4	• Quicker response required when approached by community • Initial phone call response to explain process • Someone answering email enquires promptly.

Conversation post insights

Conversation Posts were held on 15 September 2018 at the Smythesdale Country Market and on 6 October 2018 in Bannockburn at the Golden Plains Farmers' Market. There were 15 attendees at Smythesdale and 58 in Bannockburn. A total of 73 people engaged.

Types of information

Key points:

- The top 5 topics of information respondents want to receive from Council were community events and activities (16.4%), Council news and Health, wellbeing and recreation information (both 12.1), Arts and Culture (8.6%) and equal fifth were Community engagement, Infrastructure, and Destinations and Places to visit in GP Shire (7.8%).
- The Gazette was the top way to receive information followed by social media and The Miner. Regional newspapers received the lowest support.

What information do you want to receive from Council? Please choose your top five

% of respondents

Community events and activities	16.4
Council news	12.1
Health, Wellbeing and Recreation	12.1
Arts and Culture	8.6
Community engagement	7.8
Infrastructure	7.8
Destinations and places to visit in GP Shire	7.8
Golden Plains Farmers' Market	6.9
Business	3.4
Youth	3.4
Recruitment	3.4
Third party information	2.6
History	2.6
Citizen Recognition	1.7
Child and Family	1.7
Advocacy and lobbying	1.7

How do you want to receive this information?

Channel	% of respondents
The Gazette	29.6
Social media	18.3
The Miner	15.5
Community newsletters	12.7
Council website (newsfeed)	11.3
Family and friends	7.0
In person	4.2
Regional newspapers	1.4

Next steps

Community input (gathered across the survey, conversation posts and previous community consultation information and data) will help Council to better understand how the community wants to connect with Council and guide how the new Communications and Marketing Strategy 2019-2021 sets out Council's future communications and marketing priorities and activities within our existing resources.

The new Strategy will be shaped by this vital community input, and will be reflected in the strategic direction and actions included in the final document.

The draft Strategy is expected to be released to the public for comment in January 2019. Following the release of the draft Strategy for comment, and community input will inform if any changes need to be made before the final Strategy is adopted by Council.

Timeline

	Date	Description
✓	3 September- 12 October	Online and hard copy community survey open
✓	15 September	North of Shire Conversation Post (Smythesdale Country Market)
✓	6 October	South of Shire Conversation post (Golden Plains Farmers' Market)
✓	16 October-2 November	Collate and analyse information and feedback from engagement activities
In progress	3 November-23 November	Develop draft Strategy
In progress	12 November	Provide a Strategy update to the community
	18 December	Draft Strategy goes to Council for approval to go on public exhibition
	1 January-14 February	Draft Strategy made available for community review and feedback
	15 February-8 February	Consider feedback and make necessary updates to draft Strategy
	26 February	Final Strategy goes to Council
	Early-mid March	Final Strategy release to public

This timeline is correct as at 12 November 2018. For up-to-date information about this process, visit our Have Your Say page.

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