

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:

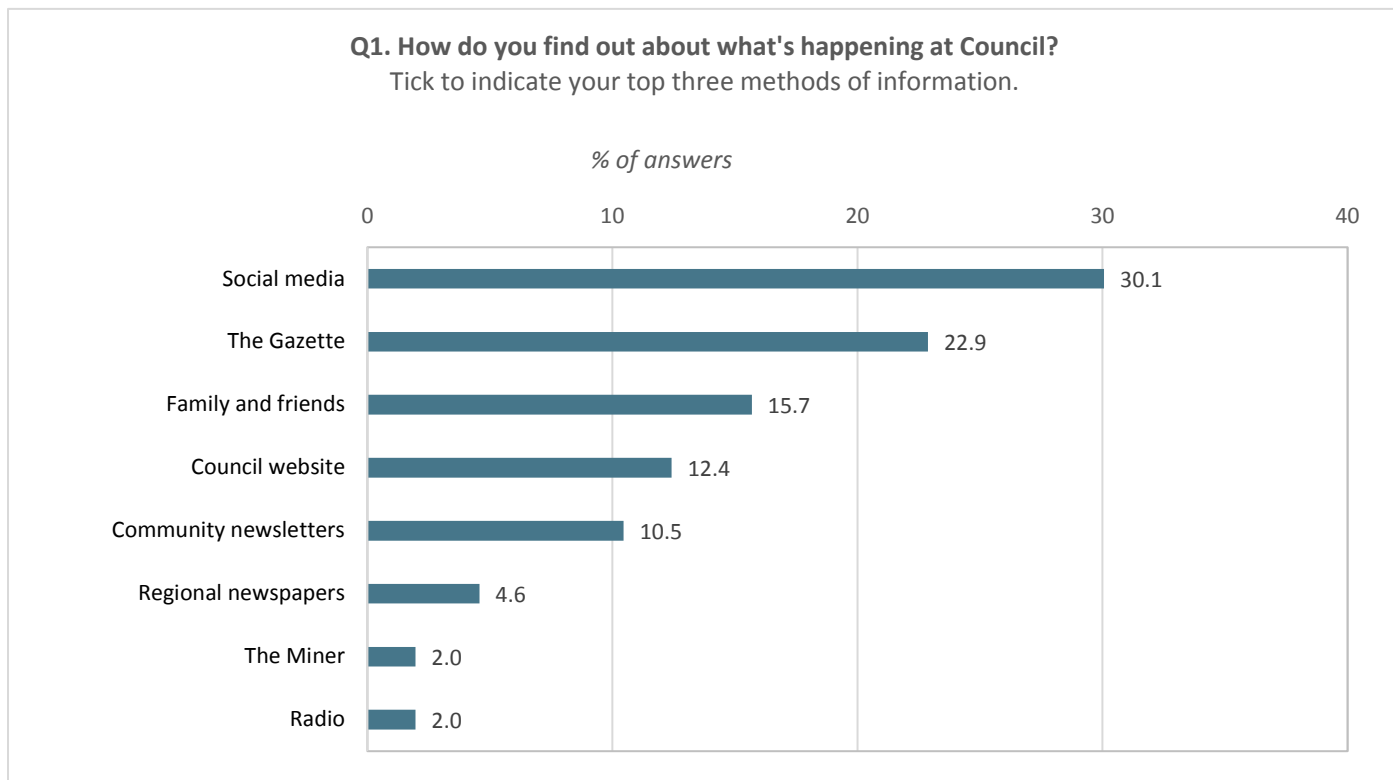
- How our key audiences would like to receive information
- What types of information they value most
- Ways we can improve in the future.

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.

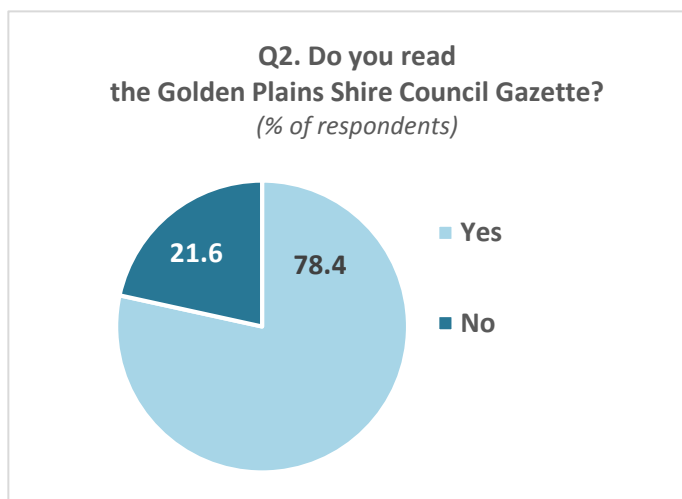
Communication methods

Q1: How do you find out about what's happening at Council?

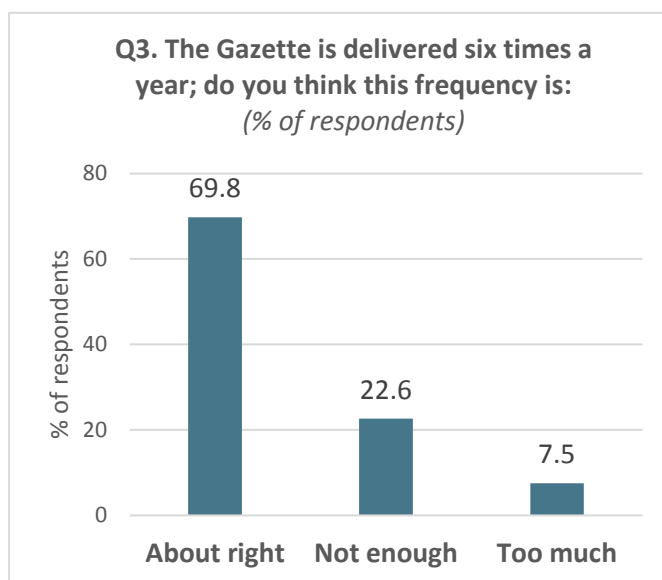


Golden Plains Shire Council Gazette

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



Q3: The Gazette is delivered six times a year; do you think this frequency is too much, about right or not enough?

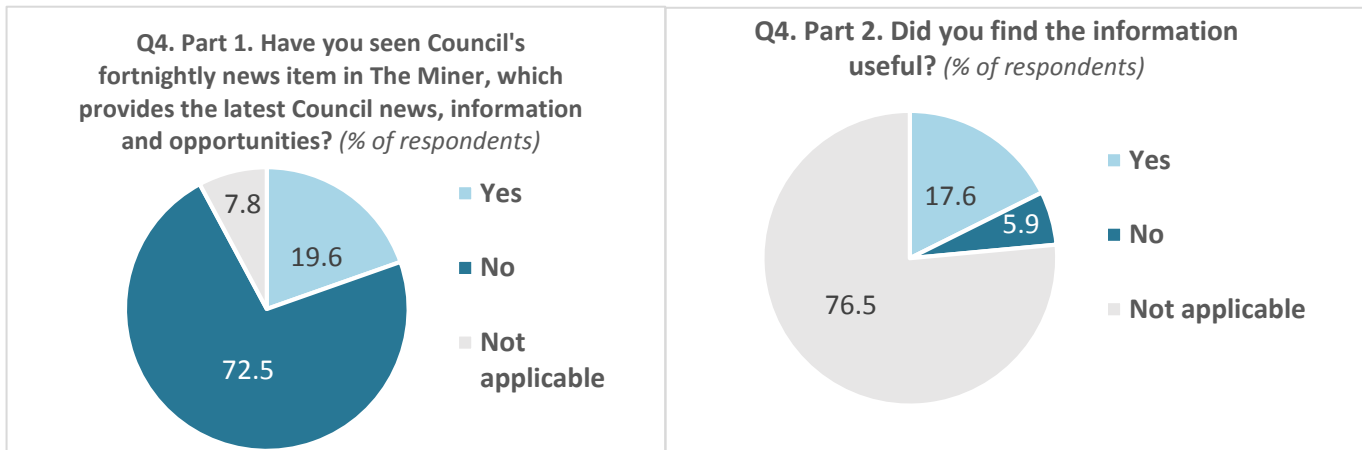


The Miner (now the Golden Plains Times)

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.

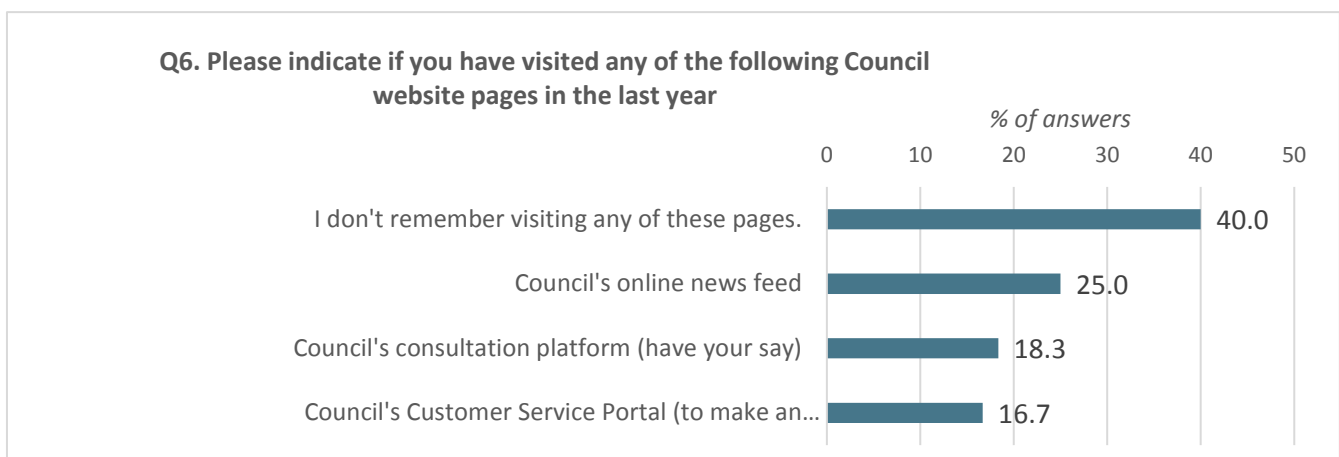


Council Website

Q5 When did you last visit the Council website?



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

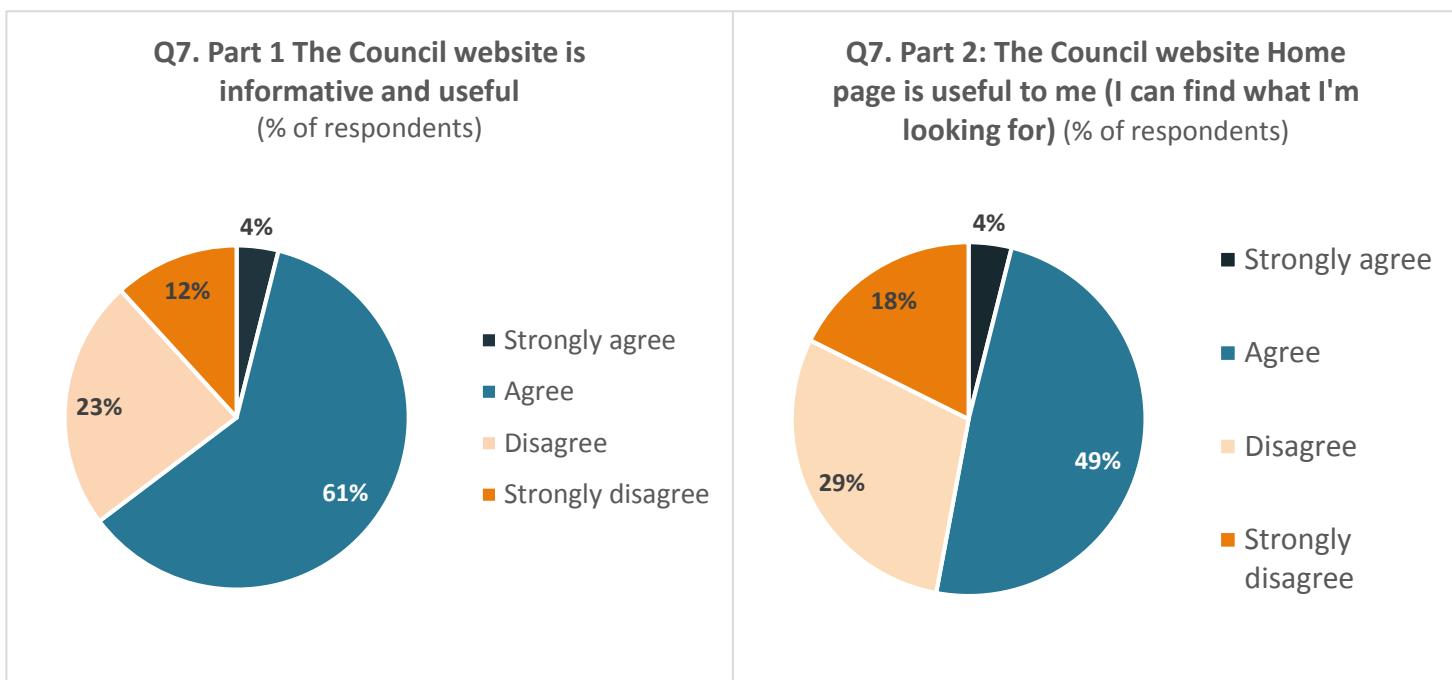


Q7. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

- 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.

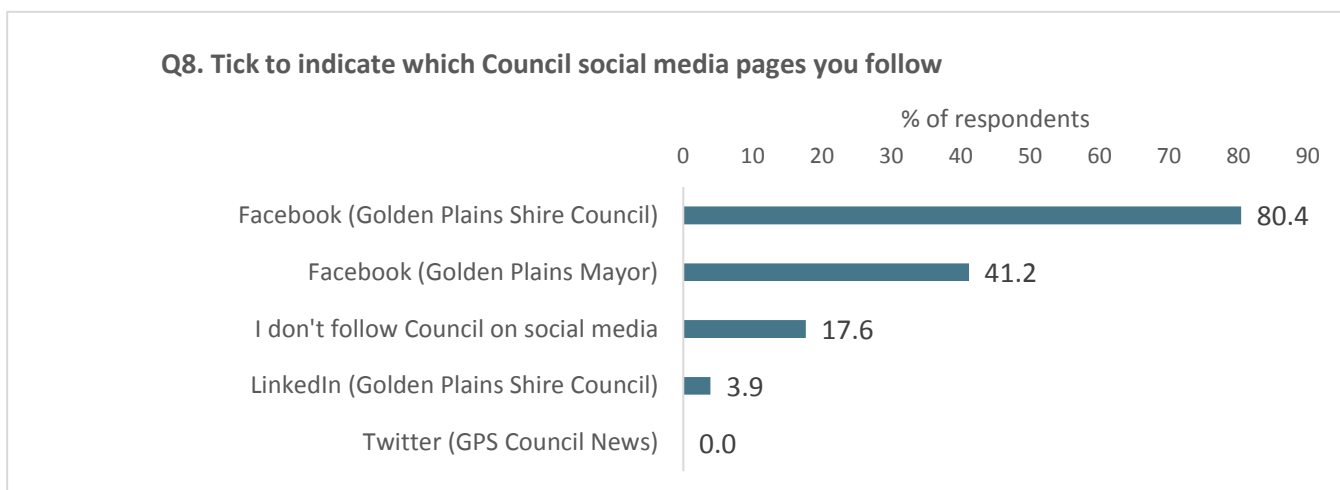


Social media

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.



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

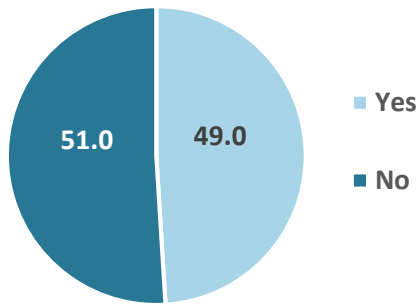
There were 12 respondents who provided comments on this question.

- 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

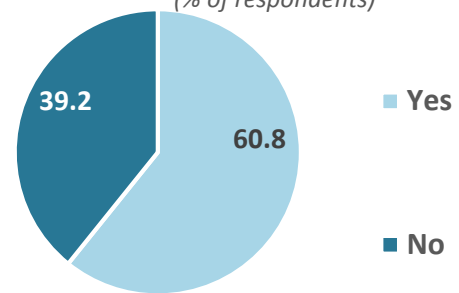
Q10. Have you seen a Council video in the past year?

(% of respondents)



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)

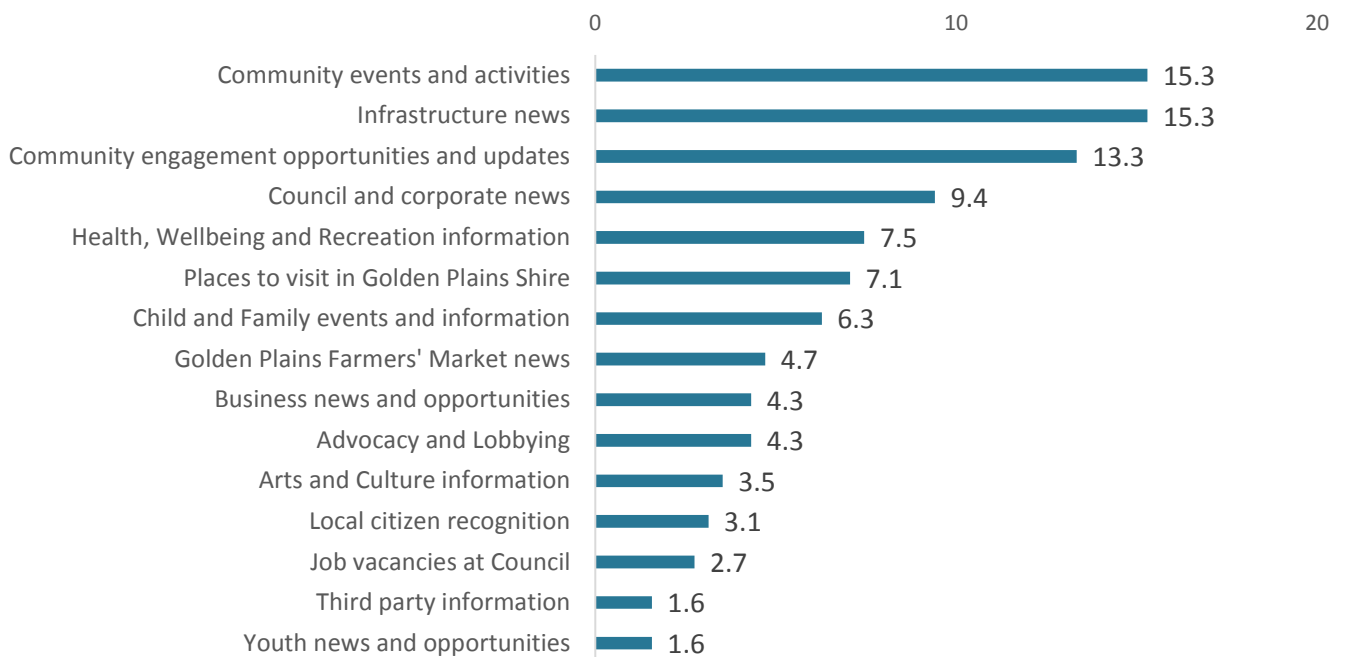


Council information

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

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% of answers



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?

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Topic	Number of times raised	Comments
Methods of communication	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Listening	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates • Revenue, budget, expenses, cost of wages • Arts/culture/community events via regular email postings.
Transparency/ honesty in communications	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quicker response required when approached by community • Initial phone call response to explain process • Someone answering email enquires promptly.

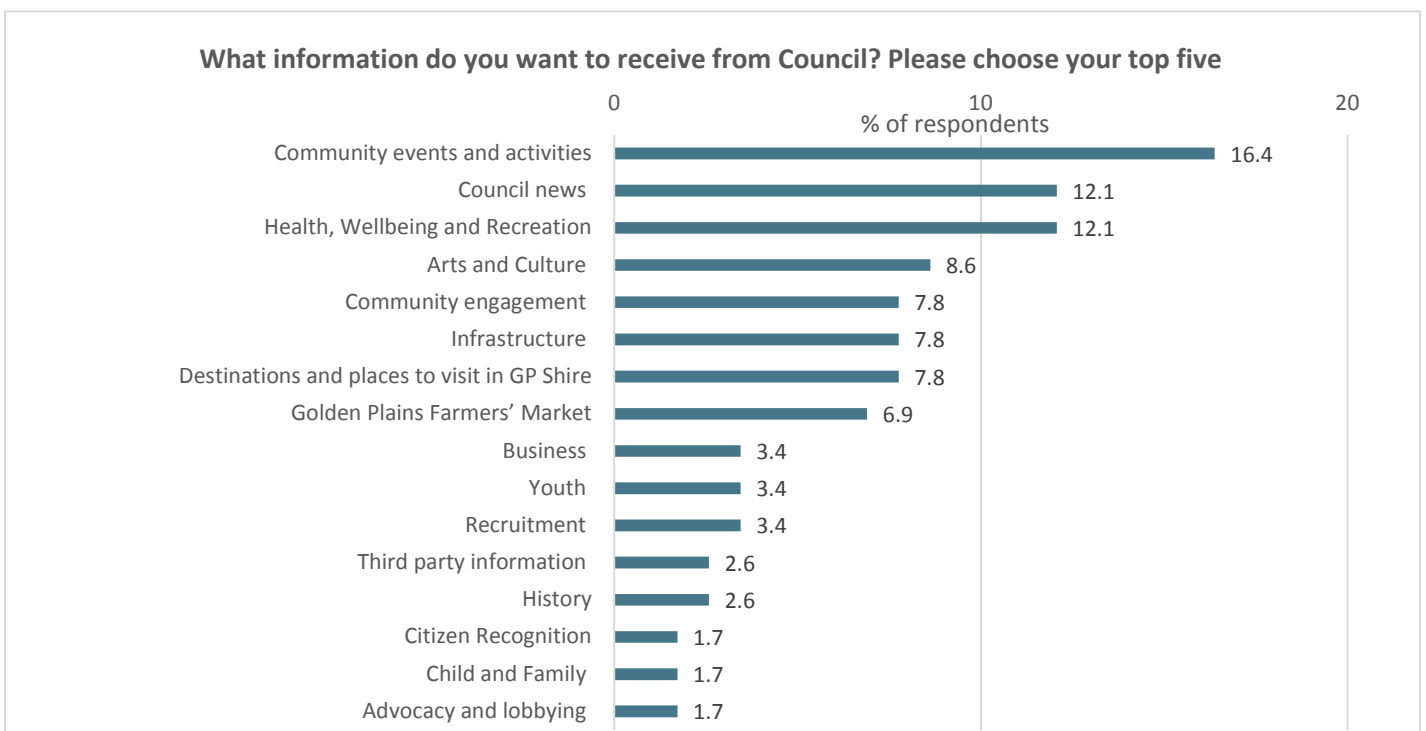
Conversation post insights

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.

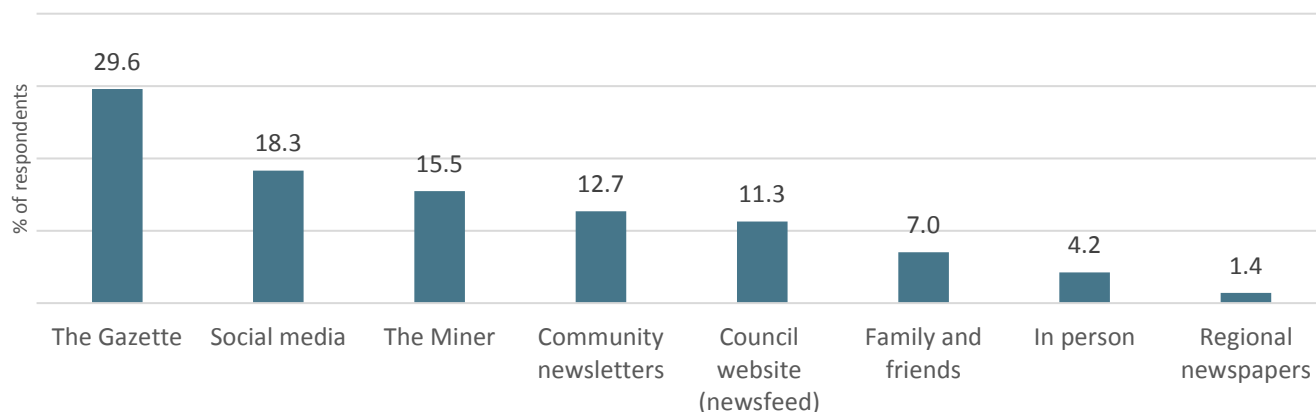
Types of information

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.



How do you want to receive this information?



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

	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](#).