

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

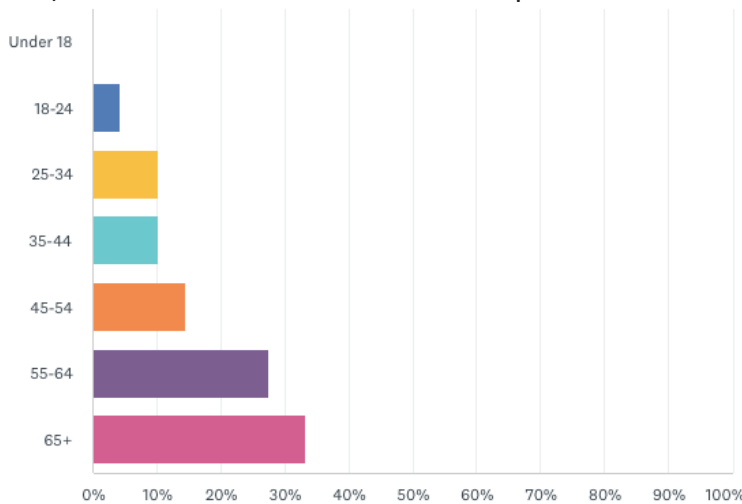
Engagement method

To support the development of this MES, Council has engaged with the local community. The purpose of this engagement was to test the strategic direction of the MES and get community input on the proposed actions and their priority level. This ensures that the MES is responsive to community needs and values.

The primary method of engagement was a survey that was open from early May to 17 June 2024. Respondents were encouraged to respond to the survey online, and paper copies were also made available. YSC advertised the survey through local newspapers, social media and at its service centres and transfer stations. YSC also conducted a series of in person engagement events to answer questions about the strategy development process and encourage responses to the community survey.

RESPONDENTS

The survey received 78 responses. About a third of the respondents live rurally, and the rest live in towns within the Shire. Most of the respondents were from older generations, with more than half of the respondents over the age of 55.



A large majority (84%) of respondents were homeowners, with the rest either renting or having other living situations.

RESPONSE TO SURVEY

The following scale was used to rate actions in the survey: 1 – no support; 2 – little support; 3 – not sure/neutral; 4 – some support; 5 – strong support.

WASTE, RECYCLING AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

There was a high level of support for most actions proposed in relation to waste, recycling and resource recovery. The average rating of support for actions in this category was 4.02. The actions receiving the most support included:

- Reduce what goes to landfill.
- Work with the agricultural industry to address difficult wastes.
- Investigate the feasibility of free transfer station drop offs.
- Avoid waste and use good waste management practices within Council's operations.
- Implement alternative options for rural waste collection.

The actions that received the lowest support levels included:

- Reviewing Council's glass collection service and consider if improvements and/or alternative options should be implemented.
- Promoting the EPA's Litter Report Line.
- Advocating to State government for consideration of alternatives to a mandatory FOGO fourth bin service for YSC.
- Support uptake of household and community practices that focus on reuse and recycling.
- Reduce contamination in recycling bins.

Many respondents provided additional feedback on the identified actions via comment boxes. Key points from these comments include:

- Some community members want a green waste bin introduced, whereas other don't have the need for such a service given they have their own existing methods to dispose of the waste stream such as home composting.
- The need to encourage and allow the reuse of valuable goods delivered to transfer stations.
- Glass collection should be reviewed in light of the container deposit scheme. Local collection could be considered instead.
- Council should support recycling for difficult wastes such as tyres, damaged clothing, commercial and electronic waste.
- Council should provide free hard waste collection.
- Council should focus on working with schools to educate students and parents.

Environment – water, land and biodiversity

Actions in the environment category received the highest level overall support. The average rating for the category was 4.14. The actions that received the highest level of support were:

- Ensuring recreational water is secured in the future.
- Continue to collaborate with catchment management authorities on projects addressing weeds and pests.
- Plant more public trees.

The actions that received the lowest level of support were:

- Enforcing biodiversity protection measures.
- Preserving and protecting Traditional Owner heritage values and culture.

Key themes that emerged in the written feedback from respondents included:

- The importance of selecting the right tree species for planting in the Shire, such as indigenous ones.
- The need to consider tree placement carefully to avoid adverse impacts.
- The need for more community education on biodiversity.

Climate Action – adaptation, mitigation and renewable energy

Although there was strong support for many of the climate actions, overall levels of support were lower for this category when compared to the others. The average support rating was 3.98. There was generally stronger support for adaptation-related actions, with the highest rated being:

- Ensure Council-managed infrastructure can be used to support staff and the community during emergency events.
- Maintain and further develop drainage to ensure it is effective during floods.
- Ensure all towns have cool places during extreme heat.
- Support bushfire risk reduction practices.

Mitigation-related actions generally received less support, and the lowest rated actions were:

- Investigate providing more charging stations for electric cars.
- Use emissions measurement as a basis for setting realistic emissions reduction targets.
- Start measuring, tracking and reporting Council emissions.
- Educate the community about opportunities to obtain renewable electricity.

Key themes from the community comments included:

- Concern about the cost of climate action.
- Varied levels of enthusiasm relating to technologies such as wind farms and electric vehicles – some community members are eager for Council to embrace this change while others are not.
- Support energy benefits in the community such as cheaper energy and more affordable batteries for home solar.