

Your Say, Your Way

Community Engagement Outcomes Report

November 2025



Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

We are developing a Community Engagement Framework that will guide the way we undertake community engagement activities across the Hills. We asked for our communities help us to understand what is most important to feature in this framework.

Through the creation and implementation of the Community Engagement Framework, we aim to:

- **Improve** the way we engage with our community.
- Set **priorities** for the way our community would like to be engaged and involved in Council decision-making.
- Build **trust and transparency** between Council staff, Elected Members and our community.
- Increase staff **confidence** in undertaking community engagement activities.
- Share knowledge about Council **decision-making** processes.
- **Remove / reduce barriers** to engagement participation.
- Manage community **expectations** by being transparent about what our community can expect and how they can **influence** decisions or outcomes.

From the 15 September to the 26 October 2025, we invited feedback from our community around:

- What good community engagement looks like
- How we can improve the way we engage with our community
- Any barriers to current participation
- Feedback on current / previous engagement experiences
- How our community would like to be involved in Council decision-making.

During the engagement period we undertook a range of face-to-face activities with our community members seeking their ideas and input to develop our draft Community Engagement Framework. These activities included:

- 3 staff workshops
- 5 resident / community association meetings
- 2 meetings with key stakeholders
- 4 engagement pop-ups (libraries, markets)
- 3 community forums

Feedback received was collected via: an online and hardcopy feedback form, online ideas submission tool, notes taken by staff during engagement pop-ups and meetings with stakeholder groups, and written submissions received via email.

We had a total of 167 engagement interactions during the engagement period. You can see the full spread of engagement participation activities below in *Table 2: Participation Source*.

This report presents feedback received during the engagement period and will be presented to Council and made available to those who participated in the consultation on Council's Engagement Platform.

2. Summary of Engagement

Engagement approach

The purpose of the engagement was to assist us to understand our community's priorities for how we undertake community engagement processes and involve community members in Council decision-making.

A community engagement plan was developed, and community engagement was undertaken between 15 September and 26 October 2025.

Our engagement approach aimed to provide detail about what community engagement is, what we are looking to achieve through developing a community engagement framework and ask a range of questions and provide a range of interaction opportunities to enable our community to share their ideas about what is important and valuable to them.

Questions were asked to determine participants feedback and ideas around good community engagement and any current barriers to engagement participation as well as asking them to prioritise the factors that are most important in a community engagement processes and any additional feedback or comments.

A feedback form was developed and provided online and in hardcopy format. It contained both closed and open style questions.

Feedback could be provided via any of the following options:

- Online - complete our online feedback form or share an idea using the 'visionary' tool.
- Hardcopy feedback - collect a hardcopy feedback form from any of our libraries or customer service centres or print your own from the Document Library.
- In writing - submit ideas or feedback in writing via email (engage@ahc.sa.gov.au) or via letter addressed to 63 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.
- Face to face - drop in to one of our engagement pop-up activities.
- Invite us to a meeting - we offered members of community or residents' groups, to invite us along to one of their regular meetings.

Distribution and promotion

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted through the following channels:

- Notices posted on Council's website and engagement platform
- Courier Advertisement on 17 September 2025
- Hills Voice E-newsletter
- Email to engagement subscribers with relevant categories of interest
- Email to relevant community and stakeholder groups
- Information and hardcopy feedback forms available at libraries/customer service centres at Gumeracha, Stirling, Norton Summit and Woodside
- Social media promotion
- Engagement pop-up activities throughout September and October.

Email and social media promotion statistics are presented below:

Table 1 Promotional statistics

Media	Number of posts / emails / Newsletter	Reach	Engagement (reaction, comment, share or opening link)
Adelaide Hills Council Facebook	3 posts	14,700 views	52 interactions, 62 link click
Campaign Monitor	1 email	508 emails sent, 246 opened	4 email clicks
Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub email	3 emails	2,454 emails sent, 1,144 emails opened	134 email clicks
Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub page	NA	308 views, 206 visitors	22 contributors, 4 followers

Supporting engagement data is available in Appendix A.

A copy of information provided on Council's Engagement Platform and feedback form is available in Appendix B.

All verbatim online and hardcopy feedback responses are provided in Appendix C.

All written submissions (emails and letters) are provided in Appendix D.

All e-newsletters, advertisements and social media posts are provided in Appendix E.

3. Participants

This section provides details about participation during the engagement period and demographic information about respondents.

Participation source

The following table displays how participants provided feedback or were involved in discussions, during the engagement period.

Table 2 *Participation source*

Feedback / engagement activities	Number Participating
Online feedback form submissions	6
Hardcopy feedback form submissions	7
Online Visionary tool	7 (1 also submitted email feedback)
Written response – email, letter	4
Engagement pop-ups and activities	25 (1 also completed online tool)
Stakeholder meetings	39
Forums	61
Staff workshops	20
Total participation across all streams	167

Participation characteristics

Table 3 *Participant suburbs - formal engagement contributors (surveys, emails and meetings)*

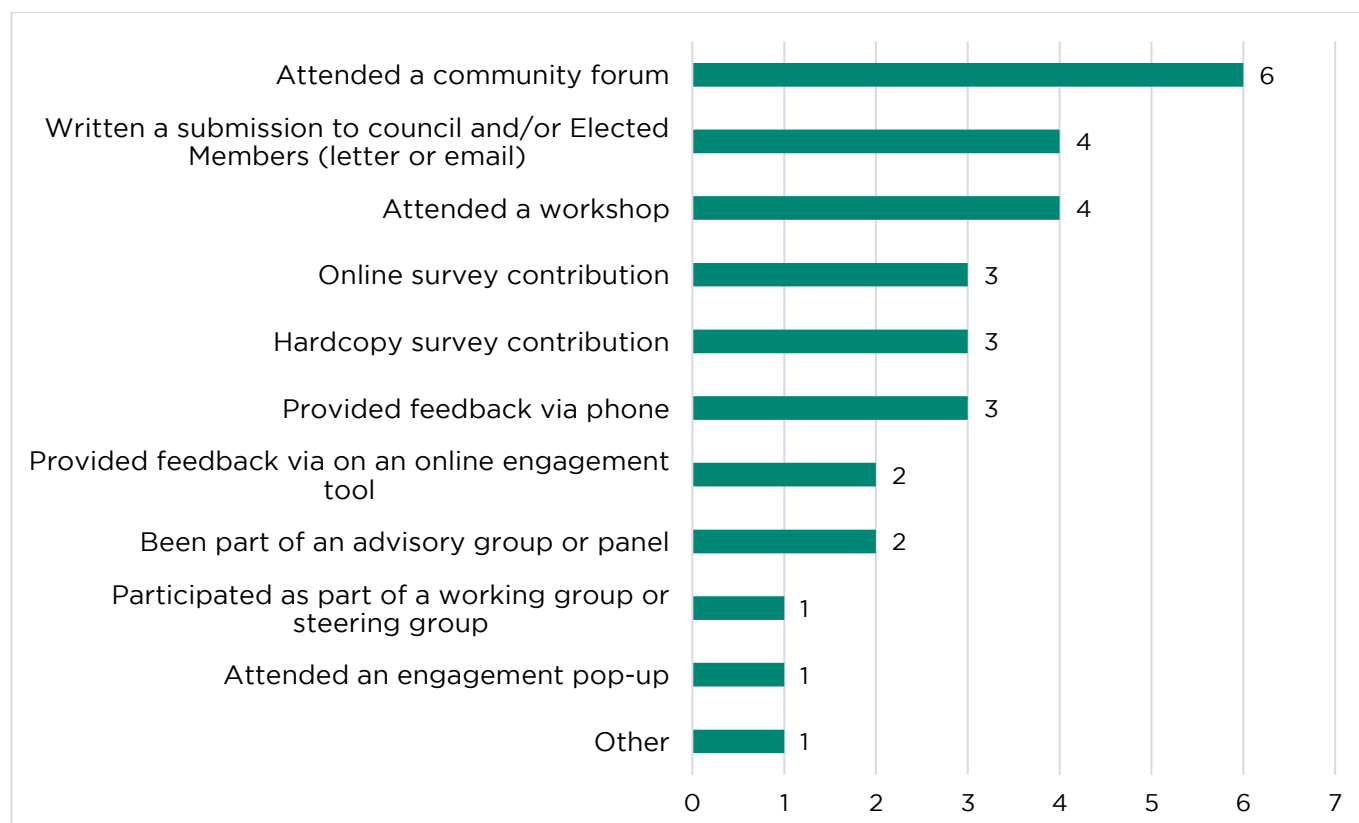
Suburb / Township	No. of Respondents	% of Participants
Woodside	16	28.6%
Mount Torrens	7	12.5%
Gumeracha	6	10.7%
Woodforde	6	10.7%
Bridgewater	2	3.6%
Oakbank	2	3.6%
Paracombe	2	3.6%
Aldgate	1	1.8%
Balhannah	1	1.8%
Basket Range	1	1.8%
Kersbrook	1	1.8%
Lobethal	1	1.8%
Teringie	1	1.8%
Upper Hermitage	1	1.8%
Upper Sturt	1	1.8%
Uraidla	1	1.8%
Unknown or outside AHC	6	10.7%
Total	No. 56	100%

4. Online and Hardcopy Feedback

Previous engagement participation

Respondents were asked if they had participated in any forms of community engagement with AHC and provided with a list of activities to select from. This was an optional question completed by 11 respondents and the responses are shown in the graph below.

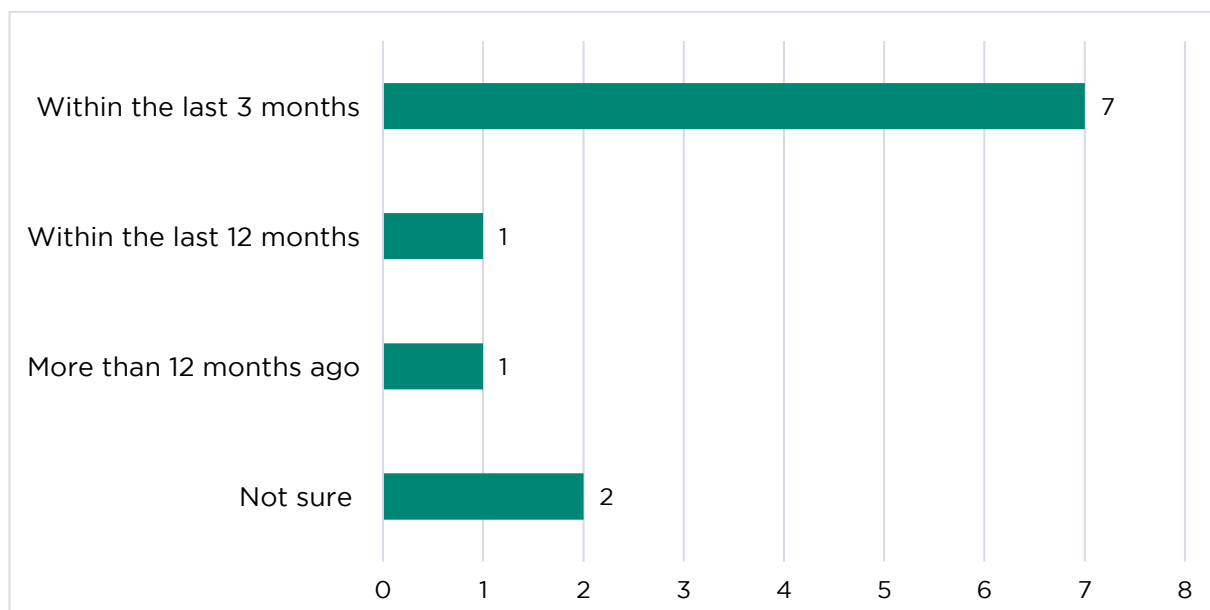
Graph 1 *Participated in Adelaide Hills Council community engagement activities*



Last engagement participation

Respondents were asked when the last time was that they had participated in an AHC engagement. This was an optional question completed by 11 respondents and the responses are shown in the graph below.

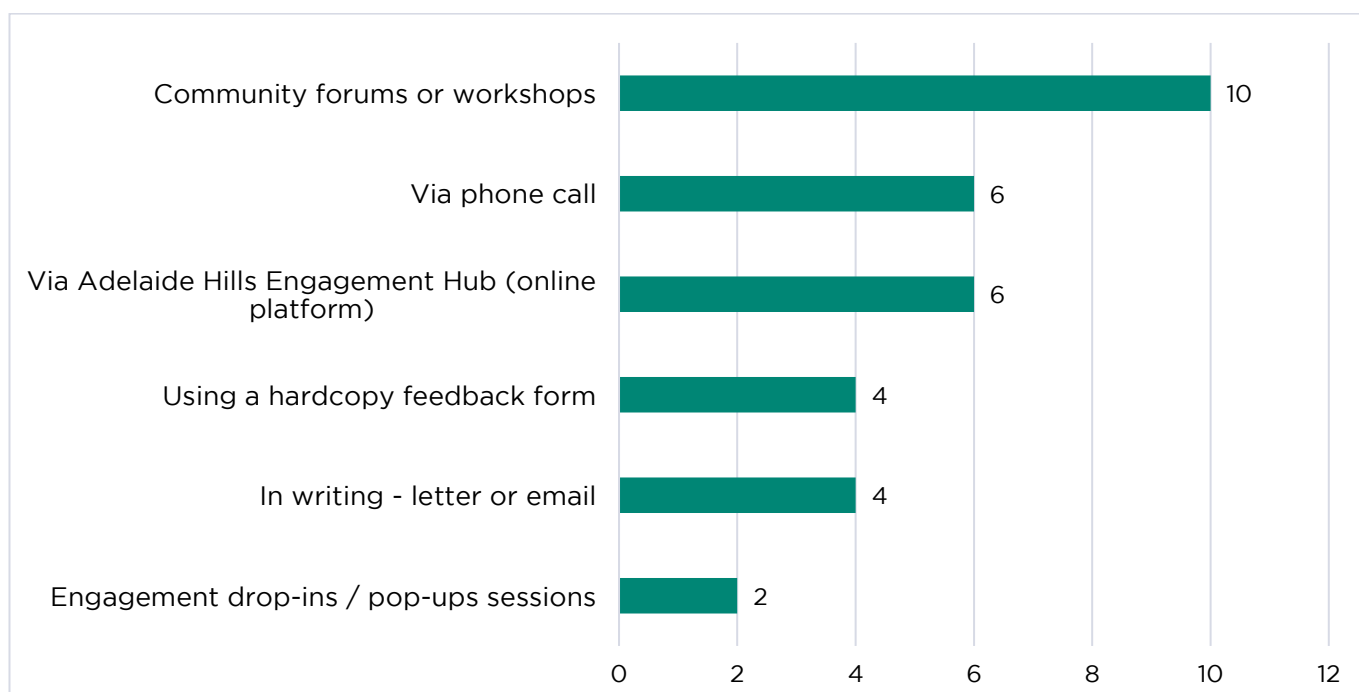
Graph 2 *Last engagement participation / interaction*



Preferred engagement methods

Respondent were asked what their preferred method or methods were for engaging with council on topics and issues of interest to them. This was an optional multi-choice question completed by 13 respondents and the responses are shown in the graph below.

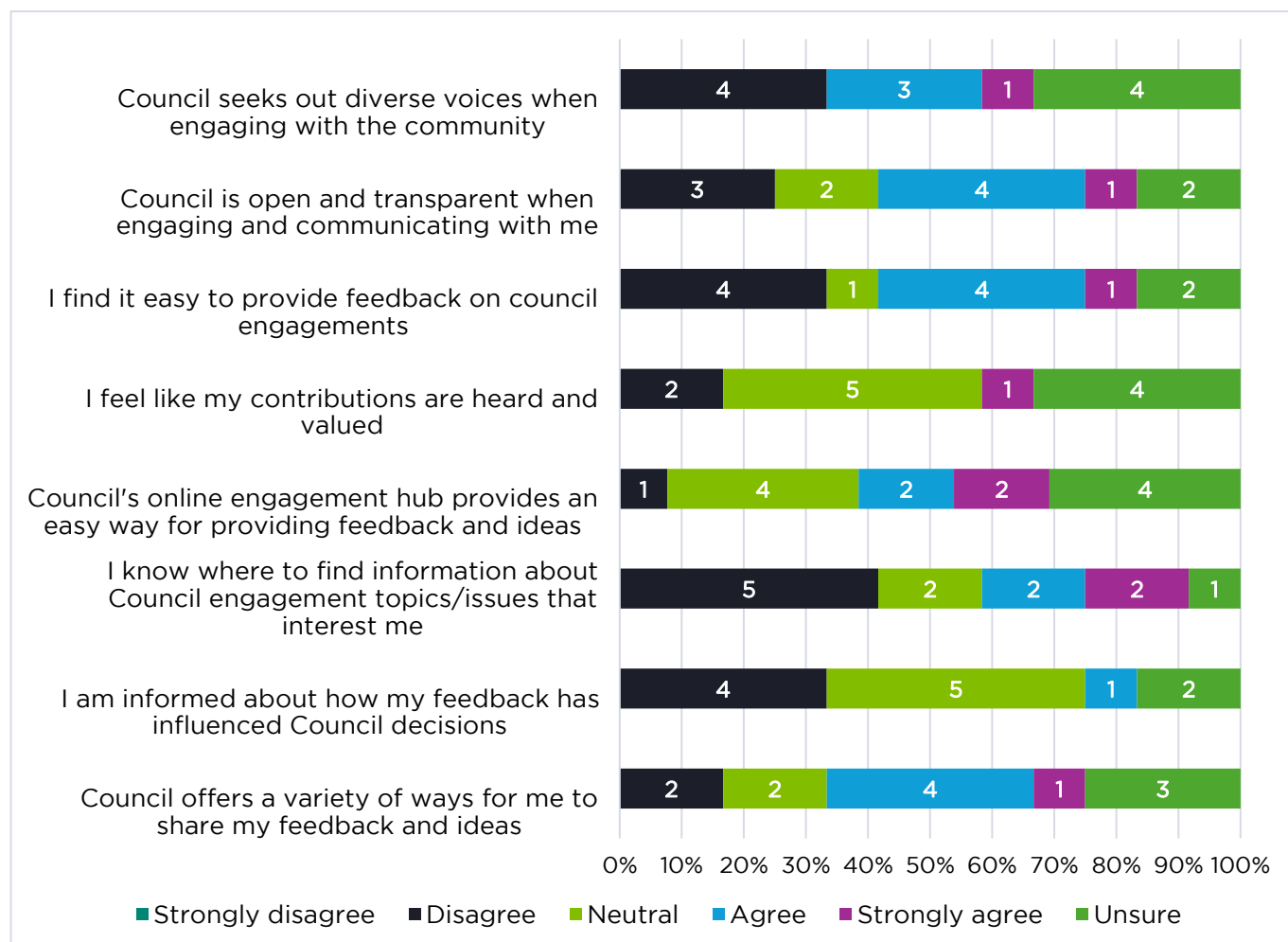
Graph 3 *Preferred method/s of engagement*



Current engagement experience

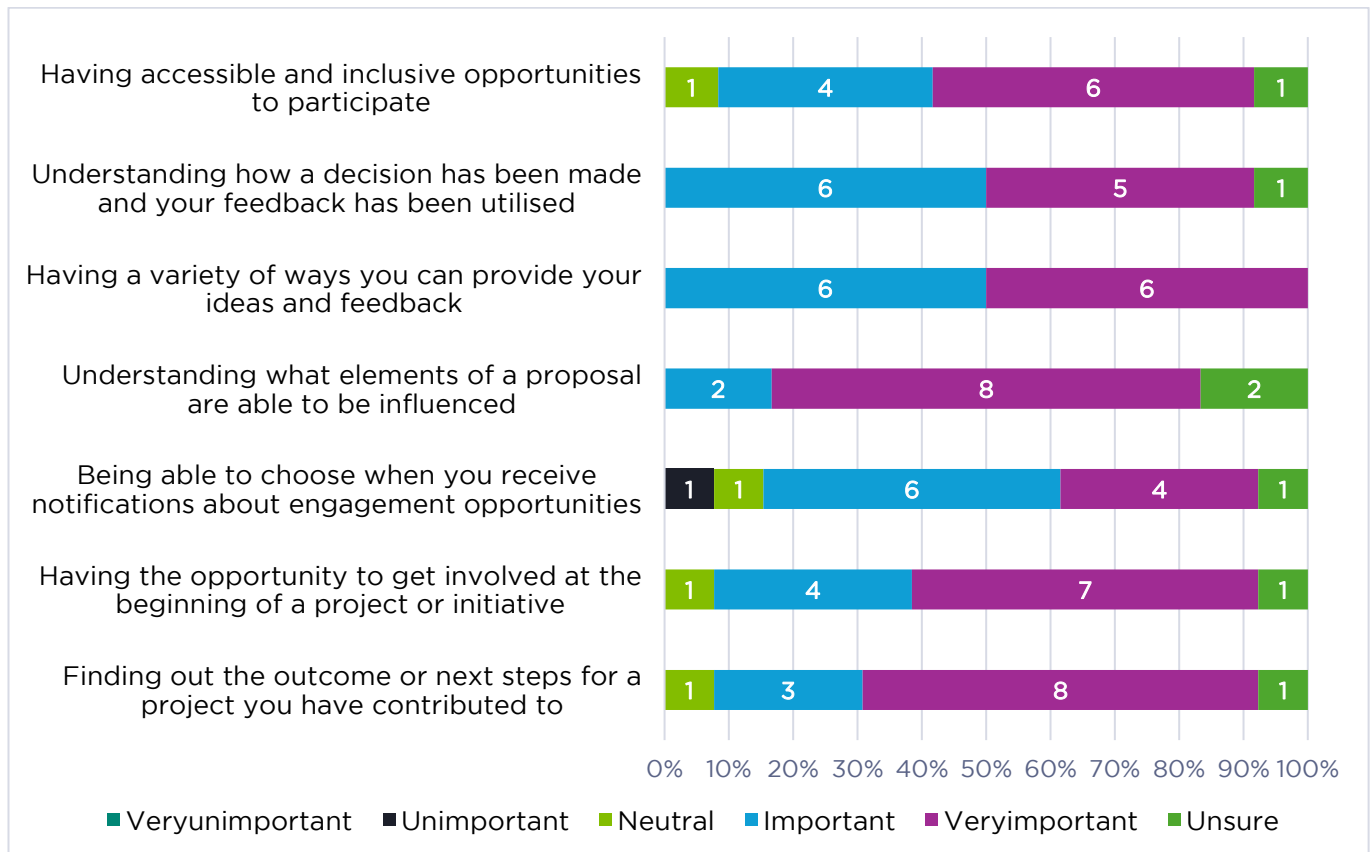
Respondent were provided with a range of statements about their current experiences engaging with AHC and asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. This was an optional question completed by 13 respondents and the responses are shown in the graph below.

Graph 4 *Current engagement experiences*



Engagement Priorities

Respondent were provided with a range of statements about aspects of engagement processes and asked to rate these elements based on which that thought were the most important to them on a scale of 'very unimportant' to 'very important'. This was an optional question completed by 13 respondents and the responses are shown in the graph below.



Engagement aspirations

As part of the feedback form, respondents were asked three open text questions about what good community engagement looks like, how we can improve the way we engage and if they would like to share their experiences around community engagement. These questions were also replicated on the online platform using the 'Visionary Tool'. The below tables show key themes of feedback shared via the feedback form and visionary tool relating to these three questions.

Good community engagement

Respondent were asked "What does good community engagement look like to you?". This was an optional open text question that was answered by 11 respondents as part of the feedback form and 6 people via the visionary tool. The key themes of comments can be seen in the table below.

Table 4 *Good community engagement*

Key themes of comments / feedback	No. of Respondents
Good engagement loop - receiving a response / update from council staff / Elected Members within a reasonable timeframe, continuing connection.	4
Effort is made to engage with community members via a variety of methods	2
Engagement reaches all areas of council	2
Community members feel their ideas are considered and valued	2
Transparent information	2
Inclusive engagement opportunities	2
Collaborative engagement opportunities / co-design	2
Face-to-face engagement opportunities are offered	1
Community members are involved from the beginning / inspection	1
Verbal feedback is given at the time by staff / Elected Members	1
Feedback about the visual representation of our decision-making model	1
Staff are patient and calm	
Feedback is recorded	1
Less interference from Council in daily lives	1
New residents pack for people moving into the area with important information	1
General council complaint	2

Improving the way we engage

Respondent were asked “How could we improve the way we engage with our community?”. This was an optional open text question that was answered by 11 respondents via the feedback form and 1 via the visionary tool. The key themes of comments can be seen in the table below.

Table 6 *Improving the way we engage*

Key themes of comments / feedback	No. of Respondents
Suggestions / comments about increasing promotion of engagement opportunities e.g. newsletter, less emphasis for online	4
More opportunities to take part in collective community meetings	1
Every comment or piece of feedback is replied to, in a timely matter and is actioned	1
Haven't had a bad experience or faced barriers	1
Enough warning / time to participate in the engagement is provided	1
Sometimes money assigned to a project doesn't align with community involvement and priority	1
People are time poor	1
General council complaint	1
Share case studies of how community feedback has changed decision making	1

Examples of engagement experiences

Respondent were asked “Do you have an example of a great engagement experience you'd like to share?” This was an optional open text question that was answered by 7 respondents via the feedback tool and 1 via the visionary tool. The key themes of comments can be seen in the table below.

Table 7 *Examples of engagement experiences*

Key themes of comments / feedback	No. of Respondents
Shared a good engagement experience	4
Lack of understanding about how decision was made and why	1
Haven't had a good engagement experience with council / poor experience shared	2
Support for community forums	1
Engagement needs to be authentic	1
Staff and Elected members need to be ready and open to listening to community ideas not just talking at the community	1

5. Written and Verbal Feedback

Four feedback responses were received via email during the engagement period. Two emails were received directly by staff, and two emails were received via the online email submission form.

Email / letter 1

Question about whether the framework would replace the Public Consultation Policy which is overdue for review.

Feedback that the draft Community Engagement Framework proposed Objectives are sound, relevant and appropriate.

Feedback provided that the decision-making model shared as part of the engagement could be improved. Concern that a 'circle' can give the community the wrong impression, it could be implied that no decision is ever being made, as things 'are going round in circles'. An option to alleviate this concern, with a more community-centred decision-making model was shared.

Email 2

Feedback from President of a resident association around communication between council staff and the group coming in waves but that the group fails to see any real action. Getting it right would be both parties following through on what they agree to. Councilors need to be more informed about group communications and be part of decision-making processes.

Email 3

Feedback around the importance of explaining the scope and perimeter of a project so community members can provide relevant feedback and offering community opportunities to prioritise projects they would like Council to focus on.

Email 4

Complaint about lack of sidewalks / footpaths through Adelaide Hills Council and the safety risk this presents to residents.

6. Community Meetings and Drop-in Sessions

Stakeholder Meetings

Leading into the engagement, emails were sent to resident and community associations across the Adelaide Hills as well as the Peramangk and Kaurna Aboriginal Corporation and other key community organisations.

These emails promoted the upcoming engagement and included a request for a staff member to attend a meeting to discuss the framework and speak to the group about what was most important to feature in the framework.

Six community / resident association accepted this offer as well as the Peramangk Aboriginal Corporation and Mission Australia Hills Branch. We received written responses from one further resident group and received assistance with promotion of the engagement from Adelaide Hills Tourism and Stirling Business Association.

Groups / stakeholders that staff met with:

- Peramangk Aboriginal Corporation
- Mount Torrens Districts and Community Association
- Love Woodside
- Woodside Commerce
- Gumeracha Community Association
- Imagine Uraidla
- Woodforde Residents Association
- Mission Australia Hills Branch

Summary of feedback

Below is a summary of the key themes of feedback we received through discussions with resident and stakeholder groups. Feedback was requested under three key questions or topics which are shown below.

What does good engagement look like?

Early involvement and communication

- Engage community groups and residents before ideas are fully developed.
- Avoid presenting pre-determined plans, offer opportunities for the community to influence the outcome / next steps.
- Ensure communication is clear, early, and inclusive.
- Avoid one-way conversations / presentation of information, encourage two-way participation.

Transparency and feedback

- Report back on how community feedback influenced decisions and celebrate positive outcomes from engagements.
- Be honest when a project can't proceed and explain why.
- Engagement is successful when both council and community follow through.

Consistency and stability

- Maintain consistent contacts within council to avoid loss of history and trust.
- Embed engagement and communication practices across all departments and projects.

Accessibility and inclusion

- Recognise that not everyone is comfortable or able to engage online.
- Offer in-person meetings / engagement opportunities as well as online or phone communication.
- Informal engagement settings (e.g. shopping centres, schools) help build trust and uncover deeper insights by getting out into the community.
- Provide physical newsletters, promotional materials and welcome packs for new residents.

Empowerment and recognition

- Remunerate cultural knowledge and lived experience.
- Ensure councillors are informed and actively involved in engagement processes.
- Utilise community groups to reach members out in the community.

How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

Improve communication channels

- Identify key council contacts for community groups / resident associations to communicate with.
- Direct emails to community groups and leaders is preferred over social media or engagement platforms.
- Mail homeowners and tenants to ensure broader reach for location specific projects.
- Use Facebook Groups for ongoing updates and informal engagement.

Increase transparency and trust

- Clearly explain decision-making processes and outcomes.
- Be honest about what can and can't be done, and why.
- Close the loop by updating communities after feedback is received.
- Address perceptions of “pet projects” and rebuild trust through openness.

Make engagement more accessible

- Offer face-to-face opportunities and attend local events.
- Use videos and informal conversations to reach more people.
- Provide low-effort online check-ins and yearly engagement touchpoints.
- Recognise that traditional methods may no longer suit modern lifestyles.

Strengthen relationships

- Assign consistent staff contacts for community groups.
- Reduce staff turnover to maintain continuity.
- Encourage Elected Members to attend events and do their own community research.

Support and empower communities

- Help with grant applications and understanding funding processes.
- Offer services and events that bring people together (e.g. active aging, art exhibitions).
- Support advocacy efforts with third parties on behalf of residents.

Be present and proactive

- Engage outside formal consultation to gather local knowledge.
- Use pre-engagement to understand community context before formal processes.
- Consider co-design and focus groups for deeper engagement with smaller groups.

Share resources and learnings

- Collaborate with other councils to pool resources and share knowledge.
- Use Customer Request Management systems to track engagement and service request history and identify gaps.

Do you have any feedback about your experiences engaging with Adelaide Hills Council?

Positive Experiences

- By-laws engagement: Council listened to feedback and revised the by-laws before re-engaging.
- Stirling Lawns co-design: involving community advocates led to stronger support and better communication.
- Boundary reform forums: Council showed interest in hearing from the community.
- Staff attendance at meetings: appreciated when council staff attend community meeting.

Challenges and frustrations

Communication issues

- Engagement often starts too late or without proper notice.
- Lack of follow-up after feedback is given; no “closing the loop.”
- Inconsistent contact due to staff turnover or use of personal emails.
- Information (e.g. green waste days) not easily accessible or clearly communicated.

Decision-making and responsiveness

- Community ideas often feel dismissed or unsupported.
- Decisions made without consulting locals who know the area best.
- Projects (e.g. water fountain, shelter at Woody Trails) face long delays and lack of updates.
- Council sometimes perceived as having a negative outlook toward community suggestions.

Engagement process

- Limited transparency around grants and funding decisions.
- Too many departments involved in events, making coordination difficult.
- No consultation on timing or relevance of works (e.g. Uraidla Institute closure).
- Lack of action after meetings or forums, leading to lost trust.

Community Drop-in Sessions

Over the six weeks of engagement, there was a range of engagement pop-up activities held across our Hills community. These activities were an opportunity to spread the word about the community engagement and what we are looking to achieve through the development of our Community Engagement Framework.

Engagement pop-up activities were held on the following dates and locations:

- 10am to 11am, Monday 22 September – Woodside Library
- 10am to 11am, Thursday 2 October – Stirling Library
- 9am to 2pm, Saturday 11 October - Oakbank Markets
- 10.30am to 11.30am, Wednesday 15 October – Gumeracha Library

Summary of community feedback

What good engagement looks like

- Ability to influence decisions, even in small ways.
- Multiple, easy ways to participate.
- Engagement that happens when a project is ready to proceed, not still uncertain / unfunded.
- Friendly, informal community discussions (e.g. resolving issues without escalation).

Positive experiences

- Playgrounds and libraries (Charleston Hall, Gumeracha, Woodside) are valued community assets.
- Community forums are appreciated for direct interaction with Council staff.
- Road works notifications are working well.
- Local traditions and identity (e.g. world flags in Gumeracha) foster pride and connection.
- Youth involvement in civic events like ANZAC Day builds confidence and community spirit.

Suggestions and opportunities

- Increase Gumeracha Library hours and offer adult learning programs.
- Support Town Hall initiatives like movie nights, live sports screenings, and monthly markets.
- Explore shared management models for community spaces (e.g. Op Shop run by different groups).
- Promote big events like Fringe in regional towns (e.g. Guitars and Bars).

- Provide funding support for insurance, fire safety, and maintenance at community halls.
- Simplify engagement activities (e.g. voting) to encourage participation.

Community responsibility

- Residents acknowledged the need to actively seek out engagement opportunities, sign up for updates, and contribute feedback.

Community Forums

Three community forums or information sessions were held during the engagement period. These sessions were opportunities to invite community members to have more in-depth discussions about the objectives of the Community Engagement Framework and their feedback and ideas for inclusion in the document.

Upper Sturt Community Forum

Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall – 6pm to 8pm, Tuesday 30 September

The forum was attended by 23 community members and included a range of presentations and discussions from council representatives and community leaders. Community members had the opportunity to participate in a range of engagement activities with council staff and Elected Members at the forum as well as provide their feedback about the forum. Feedback has been categorised into questions and themes and summarised below.

What does good engagement look like?

- Agree that Council decision making processes need improved transparency - not many of us understand this, even when we are engaged in community activities.
- Engage early – before ideas are fully formed or set.
- Beyond surveys – other opportunities for engagement. Flexible engagement opportunities.
- Use community groups and grassroots networks to engage beyond the usual suspects.
- Come back to community with results and also transparency about Council process. E.g. If we submit to the Annual Budget process – how are those submissions considered?
- Need to keep up communications with community e.g. Uraidla playground consultation wondering where that process is up to?
- Direct phone calls (if possible).
- Respecting cultural sensitivities.
- Inviting First Nations to speak / engage with Council.

How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

- Supporting community to learn about new technology engagement opportunities and replicate with physical / face to face opportunities.
- Is there a problem with community engagement now? When a ratepayer phones: listen and respond.
- You don't necessarily have to do what they want, it's ok to say no if there is a good reason.
- Shape the way Council responds to rate payers – make it as simple as possible.
- Have an open ideas week where residents phone in with a suggestion. Big or small – simple point of contact.
- Would love a welcome pack to the area.

Do you have any feedback about your experiences engaging with Adelaide Hills Council?

- Only hear from Council on Facebook – but miss things.
- Things want a say on:
 - Lack of footpaths (Crafers)
 - Connection from Upper Sturt to Crafers
 - Need more walkable connectivity between townships.
- Engagement:
 - Like the ability to prioritise issues of importance.
 - Good communication and notification leading into Upper Sturt Community Forum.
 - Interactive maps great tool for engagement especially if paired with physical maps for face to face opportunities.
- Staff are friendly when phoning or attending desk at library.

Karra Watta Café

The Summit – 11am to 1pm, Wednesday 24 September.

The lunch was attended by 19 adults from the local community and 6 students from Norton Summit Primary School.

Themes of conversations with adults:

- Using engagement as a social interaction tool not just a tool to receive feedback (two-way transaction).

- Making sure promotion of engagements isn't only online - couple uses activities like today's lunch as an opportunity to find out what is going on around your area.
- More opportunities to connect with Elected Members and get to know them.
- Very lucky to have The Summitt Community Centre still in community hands - building is very important to the local community.
- Importance of knowing / understanding Council's vision, reason for undertaking a project.
- Talking to people at their level - finding out what is important to them, what are their motivators - being truthful transparent.

Themes of conversations with students:

What is important for Council to think about when engaging on a new project?

- Ask the people who are going to use it e.g. the park, the skate park, the building - speak to the people who know it the best.
- Come to school to chat with students (best way to connect with students).
- Bring example pictures / ideas of similar projects, great spaces in other areas etc.
- How could it affect the school and students? This is important to know.
- Where is the project going to be and how big will it be e.g. dimensions etc.
- We would like to find out about projects from parents and teachers.

Your Say, Your Way Lunch

Woodside Positive Aging Centre - 11.30am to 12.30pm, Tuesday 21 October

The lunch was attended by 13 community members who are part of the My Aged Care programs offered at Woodside Positive Aging Centre or reside in the local community.

What does good engagement look like

- Spreading the word about the programs / opportunities available.
- Each individual has to take care of their own environment and community and find best way for you to communicate with council.
- New residents from suburban suburbs receive info pack about bushfire risks and how to become bushfire ready.
- Should council involve organisations to spread the word / process.
- Council champion about an issue - nominated champion so issue doesn't get lost.
- Education of rate payers to understand at higher level who is responsible for what.

How could we improve the way we engage with our community

- How do you easily determine what is a state road and what is a council road and who to report issue to?
- Getting to where program or activity is happening (community transport).
- Residents don't have family support around to provide support they used to like transport.
- If I have a question or comment I send to council, I want to receive a response within a designated timeframe about what is happening next or why something can't happen. I want to have a set timeframe rather than question going into the void.
- Explain reasons why something can't happen, so people are aware.

Feedback on previous engagement with AHC

- Response rate to clean up illegal dumping very slow, can be month/s.
- Fitness programs offered through my aged care really important to the community.
- Road work at the bottom of hill – no communication to the community around works and the required detour (DIT project).
- Trying to provide / input a request when it's always a different agency or different process – very frustrating.

Preferencing activity

Across the different engagement pop-up activities and forums, there was the opportunity for community members to participate in an interactive activity where they could prioritise what council should focus on when undertaking community engagement activities.

40 people participated in this activity across 4 events and the voting preferences can be seen in the graph below. Each person could vote for up to three preferences.

Graph 6 *Preferencing activity*



7. Staff workshops

Three staff workshops were held at different offices across council with staff who are regularly involved in community engagement projects and processes. The workshops were an opportunity for council's Community Engagement Coordinator to explain the development of our Community Engagement Framework and seek ideas, feedback and input from staff around our current community engagement processes and our engagement aspirations.

What is working well?

Targeted engagement

- Connecting with the right people, such as those with relevant experience (e.g. biodiversity volunteers), enhances the quality of engagement.

Effective tools and platforms

- Use of multiple platforms and apps supports diverse engagement needs.
- The Engagement Hub is valued for centralising information and making it accessible to both staff and community.

Personalised communication

- Including face, name, and contact details of staff in engagement materials adds a personal touch and builds trust.

Team collaboration

- Sharing the load across teams improves efficiency and morale.
- Teams are successfully keeping the community informed about project steps and outcomes.
- Library and community centre staff are providing valuable support by hosting engagement activities.

Flexible engagement approaches

- Ability to scale activities based on project size and complexity is seen as a strength.

Social media

- Exposure through social media is helping to reach broader audiences.

What could be better?

Process and planning

- No consistent processes for conducting community engagement, reporting outcomes, and closing the loop.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities. Early planning is needed to define who does what and set expectations.
- No timeframe for closing engagements and reporting on outcomes. Delays in reporting and decision-making frustrate both staff and community.

Communication and transparency

- Poor communication around delays and decisions. Staff and community are often left in the dark.
- Data management gaps, unclear where engagement data goes and how it's shared across council.

Support and culture

- Staff on the same page / sharing the same messages as leadership and Elected Members to feel aligned and empowered.
- Negative community feedback can be emotionally taxing, offensive comments are hard to manage.

Inclusivity and reach

- Timing of forums excludes parents, especially mothers.

- Underrepresentation of Aboriginal and CALD communities, feedback weighting needs careful consideration.
- Large parts of the community not being reached, especially through informal or front-facing interactions.

Tools and resources

- Need a central hub for engagement resources, templates, and data.
- Digital engagement is strong but needs to be replicated in face-to-face settings.
- Better displays of engagement materials in libraries and community centres.

Project challenges

- Scope creep due to political or community pressure.
- Funding constraints limit what can be done and create tension with community expectations.

Where do we want to be?

Strategic and purposeful engagement

- Engagement activities should be well-scoped, with fewer but more targeted options.
- Clear purpose and scope must be communicated. Consultation is part of a process, not a promise to act.
- Survey questions should be short, focused, and designed to gather actionable insights.

Resourced and supported

- Adequate funding for engagement should be built into project budgets.
- Use of consultants to support facilitation, analysis, and reporting when needed.
- Engagement scope should be manageable for staff while remaining authentic and meaningful.

Inclusive and Accessible

- Offer multiple ways to participate, both online and in person.
- Use tools like the mobile library van and community venues to reach more people.
- Ensure engagement is accessible to all, with diverse formats and options.

Interactive and human-centered

- Prioritise face-to-face engagement to build trust and foster constructive conversations.
- Make activities interactive and engaging, avoiding yes/no questions and using solution-focused language.

- Help community members feel heard and valued, not just like a number.

Effective use of feedback

- Feedback should be incorporated into project planning and shared with relevant staff.
- Ensure feedback loops are closed—clearly communicate what was asked, what was heard, and what happens next.
- Avoid duplication by sharing feedback internally, so people don't have to repeat themselves.

Collaborative and connected

- Encourage collaboration with community groups to co-design and co-fund projects when appropriate.
- Elected Members and staff should be aligned in messaging and approach.

How can we get there?

Systems and processes

- Create a central location for engagement data accessible to all staff.
- Develop clear procedures for handling feedback, complaints, compliments, and out-of-scope comments.
- Ensure transparency in engagement findings and outcomes.
- Include engagement budgets in overall project planning.
- Provide clean, clear information on platforms about how to engage vs. make customer requests.

Training and support

- Offer staff training in:
 - De-escalation and managing difficult interactions.
 - Using engagement platforms and apps.
 - Understanding decision-making processes.
- Introduce engagement inductions for new staff.
- Empower staff to share community feedback they receive informally.

Leadership and culture

- Ensure commitment from leadership, Elected Members, and staff to a unified engagement approach.
- Promote a shared responsibility mindset in engagement language.

- Be willing to make unpopular decisions when necessary and communicate the reasoning clearly.

Accessibility and inclusion

- Provide childcare or kids' activities at forums to support parent participation.
- Vary timing and format of forums to suit different community needs.
- Include engagement information in welcome packs for new residents.

Data and insights

- Overlay engagement results with ABS statistics to identify underrepresented groups.
- Involve customer service staff in collecting feedback from diverse demographics.
- Encourage inter-team transparency about upcoming projects to avoid duplication and improve collaboration.

Tools and communication

- Promote awareness of engagement opportunities across the community.
- Allow space for informal engagement approaches where appropriate.

8. Conclusion

This section provides a summary of feedback themes received from across all streams of engagement participation during the months of September and October 2025. Feedback has been categories under the three broad questions that were asked across all engagement activities:

- What does good community engagement look like?
- How can we improve the way we engage with our community?
- Do you have any feedback about your previous experiences engaging with Adelaide Hills Council?

What does good community engagement look like?

When asked what good community engagement looks like, community members and stakeholders provided responses that sit under the key categories below:

Timely and ongoing communication

- Prompt responses and updates from Council staff and Elected Members.
- Continuous connection / communication and follow-through on engagement efforts.
- Clear, early, and inclusive communication.

Inclusive and accessible engagement

- Multiple ways to participate e.g. online, in-person, phone, informal settings.

- Recognise barriers to online engagement and offer alternatives.
- Use community venues, mobile library vans, and physical materials (e.g. newsletters, welcome packs).

Transparency and trust

- Share how feedback influenced decisions.
- Be honest about project limitations, delays or cancellations.
- Avoid pre-determined plans, allow community to shape outcomes.

Collaborative approaches

- Engage community from the beginning.
- Involve community groups and residents before ideas are fully developed.
- Co-design and co-fund projects with community input when possible.

Human-centered and interactive engagement

- Prioritise face-to-face interactions to build trust.
- Use interactive formats and solution-focused language.
- Avoid one-way communication; encourage dialogue.

Strategic and purposeful engagement

- Clearly define the purpose and scope of engagement.
- Use short, focused surveys for actionable insights.
- Ensure engagement is part of a broader process, not just a promise.

Effective use of feedback / engagement data

- Record and share feedback internally to avoid duplication.
- Close feedback loops: communicate what was asked, heard, and done.
- Incorporate feedback into planning and decision-making.

Consistency and stability

- Maintain consistent contacts within Council to preserve trust and history.
- Embed engagement practices across departments and projects.

Empowerment and recognition

- Remunerate/compensate cultural knowledge and lived experience.
- Ensure councillors are informed and involved.
- Enable community influence, even in small ways.

How can we improve the way we engage with our community?

When asked how we could improve that way we engage and reduce barriers to engagement, community members and stakeholders provided feedback that sit under the below key themes:

Promotion and communication

- Increase visibility of engagement opportunities through newsletters, mail-outs, and physical materials.
- Reduce reliance on online-only promotion; use direct emails and Facebook Groups for updates.
- Provide clear, timely communication and adequate notice for participation.

Accessibility and inclusion

- Offer face-to-face engagement at local events and informal settings.
- Include childcare or kids' activities at forums to support parent participation.
- Vary timing and formats of forums to suit different lifestyles.
- Use videos and physical welcome packs to reach broader audiences.

Responsiveness and transparency

- Respond to comments or feedback within a set timeframe.
- Clearly explain what can and can't be done, and why.
- Close the loop by updating communities on outcomes and decisions.
- Address perceptions of bias or "pet projects" through openness.

Relationship building

- Assign consistent staff contacts to community groups to maintain continuity.
- Reduce staff turnover and encourage Elected Members to engage directly.
- Support community-led initiatives and advocacy efforts.

Empowerment and support

- Help residents with grant applications and understanding funding processes.
- Provide services and events that foster community connection.
- Encourage residents to take responsibility for engaging and staying informed.

Systems and processes

- Create a central location for engagement data accessible to all staff.
- Develop clear procedures for handling feedback and complaints.
- Include engagement budgets in project planning.
- Clarify how to engage vs. make customer service requests.

Training and culture

- Train staff in de-escalation, engagement tools, and decision-making processes.
- Introduce engagement inductions for new staff.

- Empower staff to share informal community feedback.
- Promote a shared responsibility mindset across Council.

Strategic use of data

- Use ABS data to identify underrepresented groups.
- Involve customer service staff in collecting feedback.
- Encourage inter-team transparency to avoid duplication.

Do you have any feedback you'd like to share about your experiences engaging with council?

Community members and stakeholders were asked if they wanted to provide feedback about their previous experiences engaging with council or about a good engagement experience they had been a part of. Feedback received sits under the following categories:

Positive Experiences

Authentic engagement

- Council revised By-laws after community feedback.
- Stirling Lawns co-design involved community advocates, improving support.
- Boundary reform forums showed genuine interest in community views.

Valued community assets

- Libraries, playgrounds, and Charleston Hall are appreciated.
- Fitness programs through My Aged Care are important to residents.
- Youth involvement in civic events (e.g. ANZAC Day) builds pride.

Effective communication

- Road works notifications are working well.
- Interactive maps and personalised communication (face, name, contact) build trust.
- Good communication leading into Upper Sturt Community Forum.

Staff and team support

- Friendly staff at libraries and community centres.
- Staff attendance at meetings is appreciated.
- Team collaboration helps keep community informed.

Tools and platforms

- Engagement Hub is valued for centralising information.
- Social media helps broaden reach.

Challenges and Frustrations

Communication gaps

- Engagement often starts too late or without notice.
- Lack of follow-up after feedback; no “closing the loop.”
- Inconsistent contact due to staff turnover or personal emails.
- Information (e.g. green waste days) not easily accessible.

Decision-making issues

- Community ideas feel dismissed or unsupported.
- Decisions made without consulting locals.
- Delays and lack of updates on projects (e.g. Woody Trails shelter).
- Limited transparency around grants and funding.

Process and planning weaknesses

- No consistent engagement processes or clear roles.
- Delays in reporting and decision-making.

Support and culture

- Negative feedback from community can be emotionally taxing.
- Ensure commitment from leadership, Elected Members, and staff to a unified engagement approach.

Inclusivity and reach

- Forum timing excludes parents, especially mothers.
- Underrepresentation of Aboriginal and CALD communities.
- Large parts of the community not reached through informal channels.

Tools and resources

- Need for a central hub for engagement resources and data.
- Digital engagement strong but needs face-to-face replication.
- Better displays of materials in libraries and centres.

Project challenges

- Scope creep due to pressure.
- Funding constraints vs. community expectations.

Summary of engagement process priorities

The below data provides a summary engagement process priorities shared by community members across drop-in sessions, online and hard copy feedback form and at community forums. 53 people participated in the prioritisation activity.

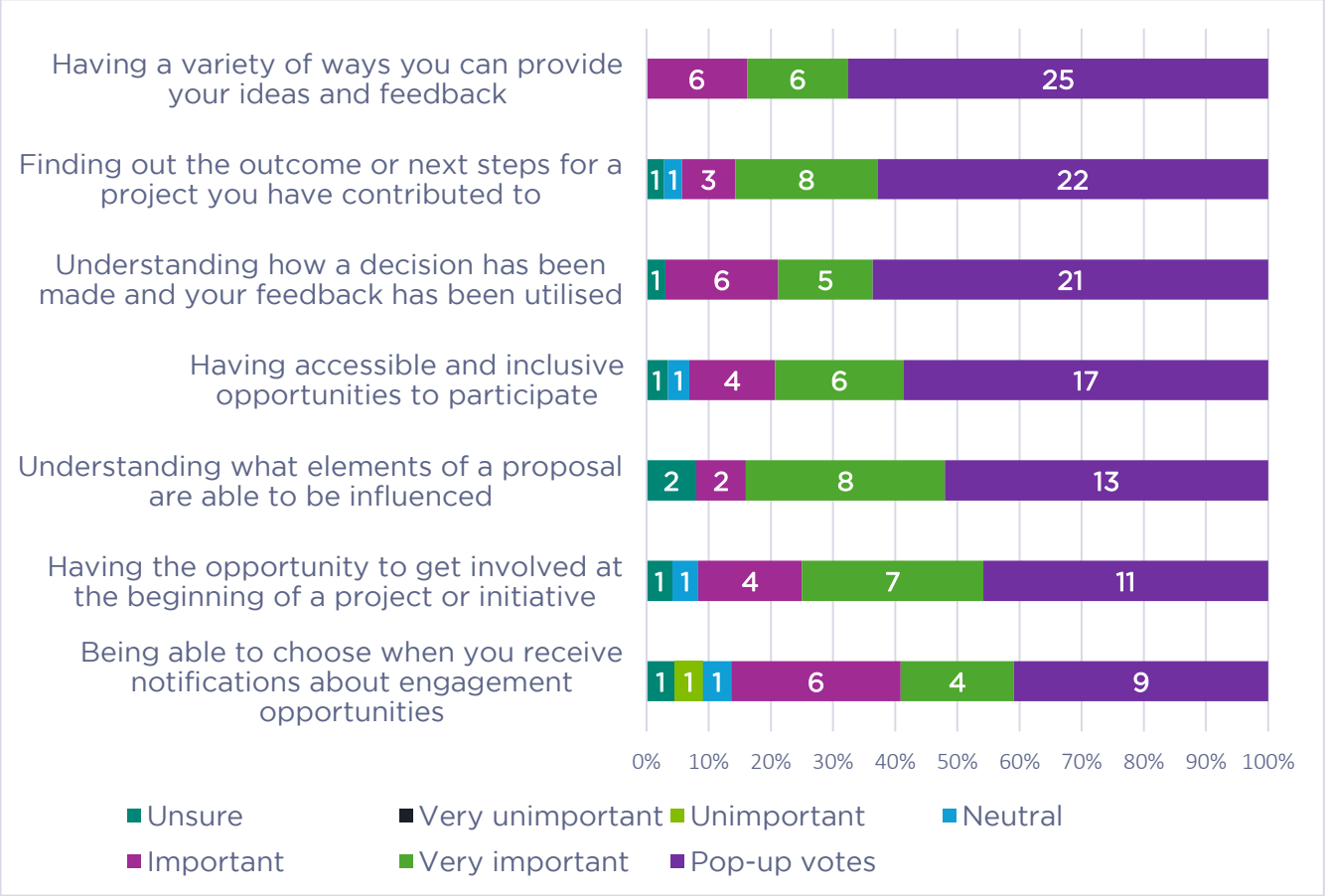
Respondent were provided with a range of statements about aspects of engagement processes and asked to either rate these elements based on which that thought were the most important to them on a scale of 'very unimportant' to 'very important'. Or vote on the three priorities that were most important to them.

'Variety of ways to provide feedback' came through as the strongest priority from community members closely followed by 'finding out about the outcomes or next steps for a project' and 'understanding how a decision has been made'.

Priorities are listed in order of voting priority from our community:

1. Variety of ways to provide your ideas and feedback: 6 very important, 6 important, 25 pop-up votes = 37
2. Finding out the outcome or next steps for a project: 8 very important, 3 important and 22 votes = 33
3. Understanding how a decision has been made: 5 very important, 4 important, 21 votes = 30
4. Accessible and inclusive participation opportunities: 6 very important, 4 important, 17 votes = 27
5. Understanding what elements of a proposal can be influenced: 8 very important, 2 important, 13 votes = 23
6. Getting involved at the beginning of a project: 7 very important, 4 important, 11 votes = 22
7. Being able to choose when you receive notifications about engagement opportunities: 4 very important, 6 important, 9 votes = 19

Graph 7 Summary of element process priorities



9. Appendices

Appendix A – Other supporting data - 2025 Community Survey

Adelaide Hills Council undertook our biannual Community Survey between 30 April and 9 June 2025. 467 survey responses were received. There was a section of the survey focused on satisfaction with Council's performance. Within this section, three questions were asked that provide valuable feedback towards the creation of our Community Engagement Framework. The main themes of data received under these three questions can be seen below. TSA Riley was appointed to analyse all survey feedback submitted as part of the 2025 Community Survey to provide a level of independence to the analysis.

How can we improve our communication with you in the future?

The analysis of responses to "How can we improve our communication with you in the future?" shows a clear preference for more accessible and consistent digital communication methods. The most common theme was email and digital newsletters, mentioned in 23% of responses, suggesting that many residents value receiving direct, curated updates. Respondents often cited this method as efficient, non-intrusive and easy to reference, especially when newsletters are well-structured and timely. This highlights an opportunity for Council to expand or refine its existing e-newsletter offerings to ensure residents stay informed and engaged.

Print communication was the second most mentioned theme (20%), reflecting the ongoing importance of physical mail-outs, particularly for residents who may be less digitally connected. This group includes older populations or those in areas with unreliable internet access. Similarly, 14% of respondents suggested improving or increasing use of social media, indicating that these platforms are valuable for quick updates, event announcements and visual storytelling, especially among younger or more mobile residents. Notably, 19% indicated that no changes were needed, suggesting a baseline of satisfaction but also reinforcing the importance of maintaining current standards and reliability.

Other themes, such as direct contact or alerts (6%) and public meetings and engagement (5%), reveal that some residents want more personalised or face-to-face interaction. These methods could be particularly valuable during high-impact consultations or in response to localised issues. While only a small number of respondents mentioned website and online updates (3%), this may reflect a desire for improvements to the website's functionality, rather than a preference for it as a primary channel. Overall, these findings show the need for a multi-channel approach that balances digital reach with inclusive accessibility.

Thinking about how Council engages with the community, how satisfied are you with the opportunity to engage with issues that affect your area?

This question about community views on Council consultation revealed a broad mix of satisfaction, neutrality and calls for change. The most common sentiment was general satisfaction, expressed by 38% of respondents, with a further 4% indicating they were very satisfied. This means that 42% of respondents feel there are adequate opportunities to engage with issues affecting their area.

However, this still leaves a majority who either saw room for improvement or were undecided. Almost one-quarter (24%) believed “a lot of improvement is needed”, while 17% noted “one or two things that bother me”, indicating mild to moderate dissatisfaction. In addition, 9% of respondents selected “I don’t really have an opinion” and 7% felt they lacked enough information to respond.

These results suggest that while there is a foundation of satisfaction with engagement, a significant proportion of the community remains ambivalent or concerned. Strengthening visibility, accessibility and responsiveness in engagement processes will be critical to lifting overall satisfaction and improving trust.

How would you like to participate or be more involved in local issues and Council decision making in the future?

Question asked how participants would like to be more involved in local issues and Council decision-making. One-third of respondents (33%) indicated they were content with the current level of engagement or expressed no interest in further participation. This sentiment suggests a cohort that either feels adequately informed, is disengaged from Council matters or prefers to delegate responsibility to elected representatives. While this may reflect satisfaction in some cases, it also highlights a potential gap in civic engagement that could be addressed through more tailored or accessible outreach.

For those who do wish to be more involved, online surveys or feedback mechanisms were the most preferred method (30%). This preference reflects a growing demand for low-barrier, convenient and time-efficient forms of engagement that align with modern lifestyles. A further 25% expressed interest in community forums or meetings, showing that in-person, dialogue-driven engagement still has strong relevance, particularly for those who value discussion, relationship-building or more detailed exchanges with Council representatives. Less common but still important were options like advisory groups or committees (7%) and participatory budgeting or voting (4%), which appeal to residents seeking more active or decision-making roles. These findings point to a diverse mix of engagement preferences and support the need for a flexible, multi-modal approach to community participation.

Appendix B – Information Provided and Feedback Form

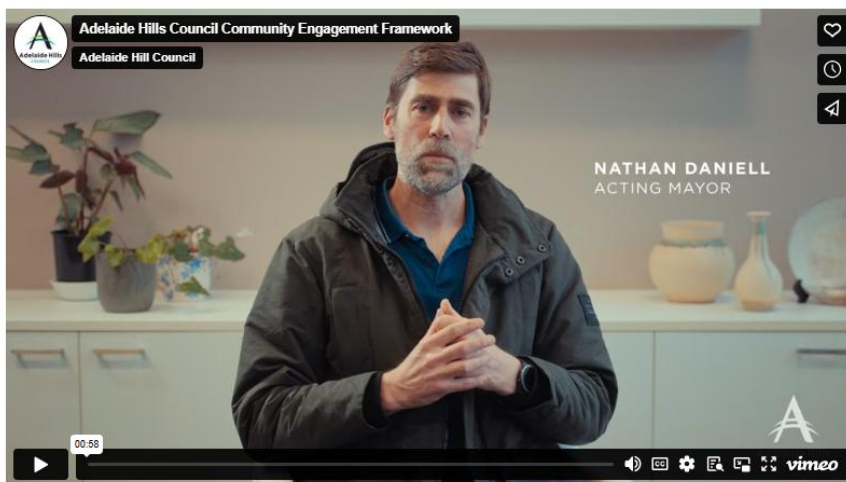
[Home](#) / [Your Say, Your Way](#)

What's happening

We want your help to shape the way we engage in the Adelaide Hills!

We are developing a Community Engagement Framework that will guide the way we undertake community engagement activities and we'd like you to help us to understand what's most important to feature in this framework.

What does good community engagement look like to you? What level of involvement would you like to have in Council decision-making?



Timeline

★ Community Engagement - Phase 1

15 September and 26 October 2025.

Vision and guiding principles.

Review Engagement Findings

Review of engagement outcomes and preparation of draft Community Engagement Framework and Policy.

Unit: Community Engagement Framework and Policy.

Council Report - February 2026

Endorsement of draft Community Engagement Framework and Policy for community engagement.

Community Engagement - Phase 2

February and March 2026.

Feedback on draft Community Engagement Framework and Policy.

Council Report - May / June 2026

Endorsement of Final Community Engagement Framework and Policy.

Closing the Loop

Share final framework and policy with engagement contributors and followers.

Start implementation of framework.

[See less](#)

Community Engagement Framework Objectives

Through the creation and implementation of the Community Engagement Framework, we aim to:

Improve the way we engage with our community.

Increase staff **confidence** in undertaking community engagement activities.

Remove / reduce barriers
to engagement
participation.

Set **priorities** for the way our community would like to be engaged and involved in Council decision-making.

Share knowledge about Council **decision-making** processes.

Manage community **expectations** by being transparent about what our community can expect and how they can **influence** decisions or outcomes.

Build **trust and transparency** between Council staff, Elected Members and our community.

Document Library

Feedback Form - Your Say, Your Way

PDF (194.49 KB)

Easy Read Feedback Form - Your Say, Your Way

PDF (4.90 MB)

Poster - Community Engagement Framework

PDF (1.37 MB)

Factsheet - Your Say, Your Way

PDF (1.37 MB)

Community Engagement Decision Making Model

PDF (73.50 KB)

FAQ

? What is community engagement?

? What is a community engagement framework?

Providing your feedback

There are a variety of ways that you can provide your ideas and feedback on what should be included in the draft Community Engagement Framework.

- **Online** - complete our online feedback form below or share an idea.
- **Hardcopy feedback** - you can collect a hardcopy feedback form from any of our libraries or customer service centres or print your own from the Document Library.
- **In writing** - submit your ideas or feedback in writing via email (engage@ahc.sa.gov.au) or via letter addressed to 63 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.
- **Face to face** - drop in to one of our engagement pop-up activities. You can see all of the available dates and locations via the 'Face to Face' tab below.
- **Invite us to a meeting** - if you are part of a community or residents' group, please invite us along to one of your regular meetings so we can discuss your ideas and feedback.

Phase 1 of engagement closes on Sunday 26 October 2025. We will be seeking further feedback on the draft framework in 2026.

If you need assistance to provide your feedback, please email engage@ahc.sa.gov.au or call 8408 0400.

Register / sign-in to participate

To complete the online feedback form below, you will need to be registered for Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub. Registration allows us to ensure we can close the loop with you about engagement outcomes and project next steps and helps us to understand who we are receiving feedback from.

Signing up for Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub is as simple as choosing a username and password and entering your email and residential suburb/township. There are other demographic questions you can choose whether you'd like to complete as part of the sign-up process.

If you are an existing member visiting the new platform for the first time, you will need to reset your password before you can sign-in. To reset your password, click the '**Log in / Join**' button in the banner at the top the page. Then click the '**Forgot password?**' link.

You will be asked to enter your email address. Click the '**reset and email password**' button and we will send you instructions to reset your password.

[Share an idea](#)

[Feedback form](#)

[Face to face](#)

[Share an idea](#)

[Feedback form](#)

[Face to face](#)

What does good community engagement look like to you?

Use / list words that describe what a good engagement environment looks like to you. Your idea will pop-up below along with your username. (max 140 characters).

Tell us your idea

You have 140 characters left

Postcode

[Moderation Policy](#)

Submit

? What is a community engagement framework?

? What factors form part of Council's decision-making processes?

Who's Listening

Melissa Clarke

Community Engagement Coordinator, Adelaide Hills Council

Phone: 8404 0400

Email: mclarke@ahc.sa.gov.au

Open

</> Embed

Do you have a question?

Do you have a question or would you like to submit a completed feedback form? You can do so here.

Start

Community Engagement

Community Engagement



15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - Finding unique ways to share / celebrate your town and community."

0 0

15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - Offering / creating opportunities for people to represent their community from a young age."

0 0

15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - being realistic about what is possible and what is a priority."

0 0

13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Come

13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Use

13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Norton Summit Primary -

How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

List any ideas for improvement or current barriers to participation. Your idea will pop-up below along with your username. (max 140 characters).

Tell us your idea

You have **140** characters left

Postcode

[Moderation Policy](#)

Submit

15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - Community members have a role to play in seeking engagement opportunities and sharing their ideas and feedback."



15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - importance of having cohesion within Council (staff and Elected Members) "



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Have an open ideas week where residents phone in with a suggestion. Big or small - simple point of contact."



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Supporting community to learn about new technology engagement opportunities and replicate with physical / face to face."

13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Karra Watta Cafe - Importance of knowing / understanding Council's vision, reason/s for undertaking a project."

13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Karra Watta Cafe - Making sure promotion of engagements isn't only online. "

Do you have any feedback about your experiences engaging with AHC?

Tell us your idea

You have **140** characters left

[Moderation Policy](#)

Submit

15 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Gumeracha Library - Library is a great space / resource for the community to access information and free resources."



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Interactive maps great tool for engagement especially if paired with physical maps for face to face opportunities."



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Upper Sturt Forum - Only hear from Council on Facebook - but miss things."



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Shared at Oakbank Markets - Road works notifications work well"



13 October, 2025

AHC Engagement says:

"Shared at Oakbank Markets - Good to have community forums - opportunity to speak to Council managers and hear from community groups."



Key Dates

Come along and have a chat to project staff on any of the below dates and times.



Monday 22 September 2025 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Woodside Library

26 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Woodside



Wednesday 24 September 2025 11:00 am to 01:00 pm

Karra Watta Cafe @ The Summit

The Summit Community Centre

4 Crescent Drive, Norton Summit



Tuesday 30 September 2025 06:00 pm to 08:00 pm

Upper Sturt Community Forum

Come along to the [Upper Sturt Community Forum](#) to share your ideas on the development of our Community Engagement Framework.



Thursday 2 October 2025 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Stirling Coventry Library

63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling



Saturday 11 October 2025 09:00 am to 02:00 am

Oakbank Markets

Oakbank Soldiers Memorial Hall, 210 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Oakbank.



Wednesday 15 October 2025 10:30 am to 11:30 am

Gumeracha Library

45 Albert Street, Gumeracha



Tuesday 21 October 2025 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

Woodside Positive Aging Centre

36, Nairne Road, Woodside

Your Say, Your Way

Feedback Form



Help shape our new community engagement framework

This submission form is also available online at engage.ahc.sa.gov.au.
Please submit your feedback by Sunday 26 October 2025 to an
Adelaide Hills Council library or customer service centre or mail to 63
Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.

Current engagement experience

01. Have you participated in any of the below forms of community engagement with Adelaide Hills Council (AHC)?

Select all that apply
☐ Hardcopy survey contribution
☐ Online survey contribution
☐ Provided feedback via on an online engagement tool
☐ Attended a workshop
☐ Attended a community forum
☐ Written a submission to council and/or Elected Members (letter or email)
☐ Participated as part of a working group or steering group
☐ Been part of an advisory group or panel
☐ Provided feedback via phone
☐ Attended an engagement pop-up
☐ Other

08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
ahc.sa.gov.au



02. If you have participated in an engagement activity with AHC before, when was the last time?

Select one answer only
☐ Within the last 3 months
☐ Within the last 12 months
☐ More than 12 months ago
☐ Not sure
☐ Other

03. Are you aware of the AHC Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub website (engage.ahc.sa.gov.au)

Select one answer only
☐ Yes, I visited the website before
☐ Yes, I've heard of the website
☐ No
☐ Not sure

04. What are your preferred method/s of engaging with council on topics and issues of interest to you?

Select all that apply
☐ Via Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub (online platform)
☐ Using a hardcopy feedback form
☐ Engagement drop-ins / pop-ups sessions
☐ Via phone call
☐ In writing - letter or email
☐ Community forums or workshops

Current engagement experience

05. Please rate your level of agree with the following statements about your experiences engaging with AHC:

Council offers a variety of ways for me to share my feedback and ideas	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
I am informed about how my feedback has influenced Council decisions	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
I know where to find information about Council engagement topics/issues that interest me	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
Council's online engagement hub provides an easy way for providing feedback and ideas	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
I feel like my contributions are heard and valued	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
I find it easy to provide feedback on council engagements	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree

Continued - Please rate your level of agree with the following statements about your experiences engaging with AHC:

Council is open and transparent when engaging and communicating with me	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree
Council seeks out diverse voices when engaging with the community	
☐ Strongly disagree	☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree

Engagement priorities

06. Thinking about community engagement opportunities and processes, how important are the following things to you?

Finding out the outcome or next steps for a project you have contributed to	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important
Having the opportunity to get involved at the beginning of a project or initiative	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important
Being able to choose when you receive notifications about engagement opportunities	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important

Continued - Thinking about community engagement opportunities and processes, how important are the following things to you?

Understanding what elements of a proposal are able to be influenced	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important
Having a variety of ways you can provide your ideas and feedback	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important
Understanding how a decision has been made and your feedback has been utilised	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important
Having accessible and inclusive opportunities to participate	
☐ Very unimportant	☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral	☐ Unsure
☐ Very important	☐ Important

Engagement aspirations

07. What does good engagement look like to you?

In a sentence or two, describe what a good engagement environment looks like to you.

08. How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

List any ideas for improvement or current barriers to participation.

09. Do you have an example of a great engagement experience you'd like to share?

About you

10. Name

11. Your suburb, township or locality

12. Age range

Select one answer only	
☐ 14 years or under	☐ 15 to 24 years
☐ 25 to 34 years	☐ 35 to 44 years
☐ 45 to 54 years	☐ 55 to 64 years
☐ 65 to 74 years	☐ 75 years or above

13. Your gender

Select one answer only
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Non-binary
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Prefer to self-describe

Thank you for providing your feedback!

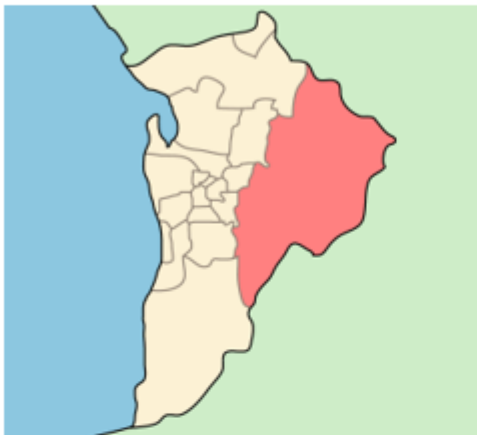
Your feedback will be considered by the project team. You can find out more about this project and register to become an engagement subscriber of our Adelaide Hills Engagement Hub at: engage.ahc.sa.gov.au.

08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
ahc.sa.gov.au



Your Say, Your Way

Easy Read Feedback Form



We would like your help to create our new community engagement framework.

What is a **community engagement framework**?

A community engagement framework is a document that helps guide the way we talk to our community about important projects and new ideas.

Adelaide Hills Council is creating a community engagement framework.

The framework will help us to make sure that everyone in our community can share their ideas and feedback about things that matter to them.

Please call council on 8408 0400 if you need any assistance.



What does good engagement look like to you?

Examples to help you:

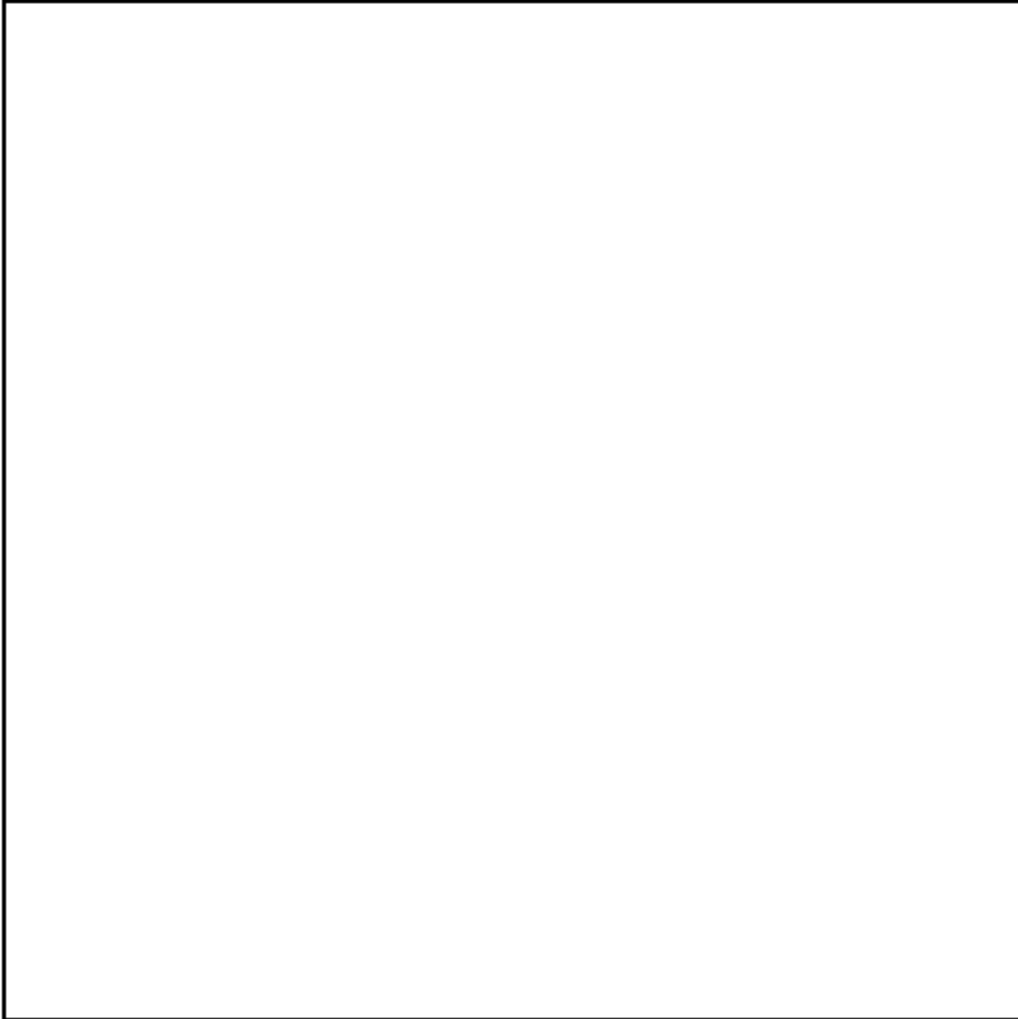
Think about how it makes you feel when engagement is done well.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their examples and feelings about good engagement.

How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

Examples to help you:

This could include any barriers to sharing your ideas and feedback.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question about improving community engagement.



Your name

Your suburb or township



**Your email or phone
number**

If you would like to stay in the loop.



Thank you for your feedback.

Please hand your completed form to staff at an Adelaide Hills Library or Customer Service Centre, by Sunday 26 October 2025.

Or you can mail your form to Adelaide Hills Council at 63 Mount Barker Road, Stirling SA 5152.

Your Say, Your Way

Help Shape Community Engagement in the Adelaide Hills



***We're creating a new
framework to guide how we connect
with our community and we want your input.***

- What does good community engagement look like to you?
- How would you like to be involved in Council decisions?

Share your ideas by Sunday 26 October and help us build a better way to engage!



Scan to find out more

 engage.ahc.sa.gov.au
 mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
 8408 0400



Your Say, Your Way

Help shape our new community engagement framework



We want your help to shape the way we engage in the Adelaide Hills!

We are developing a community engagement framework that will guide the way we undertake community engagement activities, and we'd like you to help us to understand what's most important to feature in this framework.

What is a community engagement framework?

A community engagement framework is a guiding document that describes a consistent and coordinated engagement approach for community engagement activities undertaken by Council.

It is a public facing document that explains our engagement purpose and principles (our commitments to our community) and how our community can contribute to Council decision-making processes.



What are we looking to achieve through the development of a community engagement framework?

Through the creation and implementation of the Community Engagement Framework, we aim to:

- Improve the way we engagement with our community.
- Set priorities for the way our community would like to be engaged and involved in Council decision-making.
- Build trust and transparency between Council staff, Elected Members and our community.
- Increase staff confidence in undertaking community engagement activities.
- Share knowledge about Council decision-making processes.
- Remove / reduce barriers to engagement participation.
- Manage community expectation by being upfront about what our community can expect and how you can influence decisions or outcomes.

08 8408 0400
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
ahc.sa.gov.au



Your Say, Your Way

Help shape our new community engagement framework



How can I get involved?

There are a variety of ways that you can provide your ideas and feedback on what you'd like to see included in the draft Community Engagement Framework.

- Online - complete our online feedback form at engage.ahc.sa.gov.au or via the QR code below.
- Feedback form - you can collect a hardcopy feedback form from any of our libraries or customer service centres or print your own from the Document Library.
- In writing - submit your ideas or feedback in writing via email (engage@ahc.sa.gov.au) or via letter addressed to 63 Mount Barker Rd, Stirling SA 5152.
- Face to face - drop in to one of our engagement pop-up activities.
- Invite us to a meeting - if you are part of a community or residents' group, please invite us along to one of your regular meetings so we can discuss your ideas and feedback.

This engagement closes Sunday 26 October 2025.

If you need assistance to provide your feedback, please email engage@ahc.sa.gov.au or call 8408 0400.



Face to face engagement opportunities

During September and October there are a range of opportunities to chat to project staff at community events and locations. See the list below:

- 10am-11am, Monday 22 September - Woodside Library
- 11am-1pm, Wednesday 24 September - Karra Watta Cafe at The Summit Community Centre
- 6pm-8pm, Tuesday 30 September - Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall
- 10.30am-11.30am, Thursday 2 October - Stirling Library
- 9am-2pm, Saturday 11 October - Oakbank Markets
- 10.30am-11.30am, Wednesday 15 October - Gumeracha Library
- 11am-12noon, Tuesday 21 October - Woodside Positive Aging Centre

08 8408 0400
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ahc.sa.gov.au



Appendix C - Verbatim comments from online and hardcopy feedback responses

What does good community engagement look like to you?
Councillors should have to pass common sense and personality tests. I would like to see less interference in rate payers lives. Bushfire pamphlets should be given to new residents with policies and procedures on safe last resort refuges etc.
Face to face engagement to ensure a resident understands the particular issue.
My comments would be recorded, I would get a reply (soon) about any action, or reasons for lack of action.
More workshops like this one we came too. Very informative and enjoyable.
Written response from the Council employee who has responsibility for the matter in question or under discussion. Verbal feedback at time of engagement. Very good communication skills from Melissa Clark who attended a session at the PAC on 21/10/2025. She was patient and maintained a calm approach in what was likely to be a difficult situation.
Ownership with feedback
The community has opportunities to be involved in decision-making and projects from their inception. Members feel their ideas are considered and valued, even if not ultimately implemented. The council makes efforts to engage with the community on many levels.
Ensuring you reach all areas of the community, not just the 'tourism' locations.
Information given to all, not just people seeking it, at the beginning of project. That was people know and can decide if they want to be kept informed.
Good engagement has an excellent feedback 'loop' so that people who contribute feel really connected, rather than just being part of a policy (i.e. something that Council 'has to do' rather than wants to do)
Transparency is very important. offering multiple ways to engage.
Will provide improvements. Inclusive. Supportive, Collaborative, Positive, Transparent, Respectful, Encouraging. Community are listened to.
More co-design with local communities

Well I only stumbled across this
Is there a better graphic for the Community Engagement Model? A circle implies 'it goes around in a circle' and no decision is ever reached!
How about you lot start thinking of the future of our country areas natural vegetation for your kids kids kids? Disgusting. What is wrong u
A hub must be inclusive, available to all as a matter of course. With input from community members with lived experience of disability.

How could we improve the way we engage with our community?

The rubbish dump should be free. This would stop people dumping rubbish in rural areas. The council has to pay workers to pick up this rubbish and that cost is significant to council.
More opportunities to engage on collective community meetings.
Ensure that every comment, question, criticism from a ratepayer is listen to, replied to very quickly, and acted upon.
by newsletters - (not everyone has technology or forums for individual towns)
I have not encountered any barriers because every time I have engaged with Council personal I have had positive responses.
Promotion
Some projects seem to emerge quite suddenly—often at the last minute—making it difficult for the community to engage meaningfully. In some instances, the amount of money spent appears disproportionate to the level of community involvement. While there may be ways to access more information, these avenues are not always clear or easy to navigate.
Workshops at local community locations spread across the council area.
Initially, need to inform residents how and where they can have their say. Not many people look at your website on a regular basis. Information needs to be put in front of people i.e. mailout, with rates bill
Perhaps some people feel disconnected due to the huge focus on online communications. A large cohort of 'older older' people are possibly excluded from engagement.
many people are time poor.
Flag examples of engagement changing Council ideas. Elector Representation Review, Annual Business Plan and Strategic Plan consultation etc.

Do you have an example of a great engagement experience you'd like to share?

My neighbour and I worked hard to raise \$30,000 and purchased a bushfire water storage tank. This was a gift to council at no cost. When a bushfire incident happens electricity is switched off meaning pumps at anstey station do not work. EG no water to our area. We wished to put this tank next to the CFS station on council land. A CFS spokesperson addressed council saying they had better facilities now. Stating (bombers) These can not fly at night or in high winds. More facilities for rate payers and farm fighting would have been a good thing. We had no right of reply! This was bad community engagement process in my mind! Councillors voted to reject our GIFT! I still can't work out why!!

Participation in the activity on Clean Up Australia Day. People feel proud of the effort they have made and the roadsides look cleaner and cared for.

No, I have never had a great engagement experience with the Hills Council.

1. A very prompt response to illegally dumped rubbish. 2. Prompt response to concern about a Telecom trap door in the footpath and how to refer to a neighbours complaints about it being a danger to them. 3. Excellent help, when I booked into a session, where I was helped with my computer, phone and laptop.

I think the community forums are fantastic. They give people a voice and help us connect with our councillors. In my local area, we were disappointed when the issue of greatest concern wasn't initially acknowledged. It took considerable determination and follow-up to gain council support. While some support has now been received, it required a huge local effort—and we're still working hard to keep the momentum going.

The engagement in relation to the Stirling library lawn began really well in my opinion, but it 'fell over' when the sessions became bogged down in design details. There were some former Councillors and other members who dominated some discussions to the point where it was difficult for some other members to contribute their thoughts. I stopped attending for that reason. Engagement opportunities need to be authentic-Council needs to genuinely want the opinions of residents, and be willing to take on board what is wanted. Otherwise don't ask.

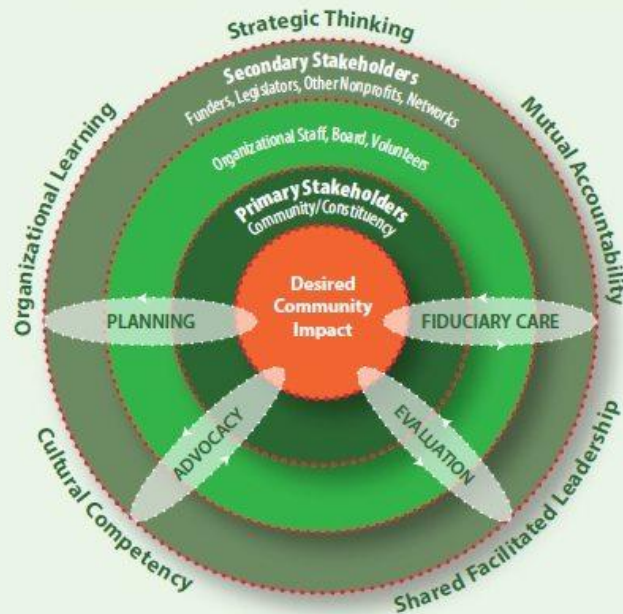
Disaster Relief Australia is a good example of engaging volunteers.

Loving the more positive, bridging the gap between council and community.

Letter / email 1	Feedback on Adelaide Hills Council Draft Community Engagement Framework – October 2025 – [REDACTED] In relation to this current round of consultation, please refer to my comments below – - It is still not clear to me whether or not this overall proposed framework will replace this quite out of date Public Consultation Policy (<u>COUNCIL POLICY</u>), or whether the review of that is a separate process - The Draft Community Engagement Framework proposed Objectives are sound, relevant and appropriate - In terms of the Draft Community Engagement ‘decision making model’ (below), I believe it could be improved. Whilst I know many decision-making models do have a circular format, given current levels of community concern with Council’s operation, combined with recent leadership and elected member changes, I think that a ‘circle’ can give the community the wrong impression. That is, it could be implied that no decision is ever getting made, as things ‘are going round in circles’. An option to alleviate this concern, with a more community-centred decision-making model is the one below – ‘Figure 1 – Community Engagement Governance Framework’ - <u>Community-Engagement Governance™: Systems-Wide Governance in Action - Non Profit News Nonprofit Quarterly</u>. Whilst this is a trademarked model from overseas, AHC could take some learnings from it, namely – - o A reminder that desired community impact is the reason for Council existing and thus is the primary purpose of governance - o The community is at the absolute centre of the decision-making process - o The concentric circles show all stakeholders working collaboratively in decision-making - o Linkages across the circles show transparent communication and engagement across the stakeholder circles, relating to multiple facets of governance, and not having community engagement just as a tick box - o The model also shows the ‘two-way street’ nature of key aspects of local government – that is – ▪ Fiduciary/financial – both Council and the community have the responsibility to respect each other, operate within the legislative frameworks and manage finances appropriately – one such example is the community want increased Council services, yet want lower rates – under this framework, a two-way conversation would occur about Council spending and service levels (and what takes priority) – rather than the current arbitrary process of Elected Members setting an annual budget, then it being
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- Strategic Planning – the community often is faced with strategic planning in a single dimension that simply doesn't make sense, nor interest, the average community member – rarely is it presented as a wholistic, appealing, multi-dimensional view. Whilst AHC's Strategic Planning cycle leads to regular community engagement, one comment I often hear is that the contents of these documents often just aren't tangible to the average community member, and rather are merely seen as motherhood statements. Likewise, the LTFP often appears to be presented as a standalone document during the Annual Business Plan consultation – there's opportunity for Strategic Planning to be more transparent, and more 'real' for the community. Also, a more 'multi-dimensional' view to Strategic Planning, and collaborating more with external bodies (RDA, State and Federal) would be beneficial – there's numerous strategies the State Government consults on. Using the suggested diagram below as a starting point, it would ensure Council engaged more directly with the community when it is involved in engagement itself (e.g. when Council is providing a submission to a State Government strategic planning exercise, rather than just submitting the views of administration and Elected Members, it would also seek community input through various means, depending on time constraints).
- Advocacy – local residents often advocate to Council on various matters, however it is not transparent as to what Council advocates on our behalf – rarely can I recall a time the community were engaged about something Council was advocating on e.g. at the RDA, LGA, ALGA etc.
- Evaluation – at present there is little, if any, publicly available evaluation of Council's services to any great degree – whilst quantitative data is often presented e.g. customer requests related to tree pruning were on average resolved in X days, or development applications were on average approved in X days, there is seemingly no overall evaluation or 'rich' data (e.g. qualitative) that details how the community feels about the service. It is all well and good for the tree to be pruned in that time, but did anyone explain the process to them, were they given notice of the tree pruning etc. This may simply be a case of Council being more transparent with the data it holds, or consider new and innovative ways of evaluating the impacts and benefits that its decisions and services have on the community.

Figure 1: Community-Engagement Governance™ Framework



LEGEND

Desired community impact = primary purpose of governance

Concentric circles = stakeholder groups engaged in shared governance

The circles represent the different layers of engagement in governance, with the primary stakeholders (the constituency/community) serving as active participants in meaningful decision making.

Dotted lines between circles = open communication flow and transparency

Elliptical circles = governance functions

The diagram identifies four governance functions: planning, advocacy, evaluation, and fiduciary care. The circular arrows represent the engagement continuum. Within each governance function, the extent to which each stakeholder group (constituents, staff, board, other stakeholders) is engaged in shared decision making may vary; leadership responsibilities within these functions may also vary among the stakeholder groups, depending upon the organization.

The four governance functions are the following:

- Planning functions range from whole-system strategic direction setting and coordinated planning to input on trends and priorities;
- Advocacy functions range from joint decisions about policy and distributed advocacy activities to participation in needs assessment;
- Evaluation functions range from shared participation in design and implementation, and lending resources and expertise, to feedback on quality; and
- Fiduciary care activities range from stewardship and resource development to defining resource needs.

Labels outside of circles = governance competencies

Competencies intertwined with all areas of effective governance



AHC Community Engagement Draft Decision Making Model

Email 2

A FB Group would be helpful as many don't or cannot attend meetings
 I have found communications with TRA Inc comes in "waves" but have failed to see any action result from discussions eg a meeting at the Norman Cole reserve tennis courts last year suggested clean-ups roof and surrounding area but maybe I missed any action as it looks the same But I haven't followed through either
 Getting it right would be to both parties follow through eg TRA & AHC
 There was most success when Louise Pascale was an active councillor but sadly she resigned disappeared without a word Very disappointing for us residents
 Councillors need to be informed of group communications and be part of decision-making processes
 Regards

	President / Secretary 62
Email 3	when can we expect to see sidewalks on AH Corporation's streets ? The ONLY way that your corporation could ensure that residents and visitors can survive the onslaught of mad drivers (an elderly woman was killed near to our home) will be to make ALL streets one-way until the paved side-walks are emplaced. i have taken pictures of families being forced to push their prams down the middle of the streets, of hooligan drivers screaming around blind corners where there are only thorn-scrub and trees in which pedestrians can take refuge. i am calling for all residents to stop paying your taxes until such time as the sui-sidewalks have been removed and properly PAVED side-walks, that conform to international standards, have been built.
Email 4	Important when consulting with community Council doesnt come with impression of skys the limit/unlimited budget- Council does have a budget to balance , could include asking what Council could do with support of community/in partnership. And if there is already things that will impact on consultation declaring them to the community ie if other projects will be competing with project consulting on. Important that ideas are ranked in order of priority so Council can achieve some of the highest within the local area and also across Council. Connecting back with community is appreciated the outcome of consultation.

Courier Ad – 15 September 2025

Your Say, Your Way
**Help Shape Community Engagement
in the Adelaide Hills**



*We're creating a new
framework to guide how we connect
with our community and we want your input.*

Share your Ideas by Sunday 26 October.

Scan to find out more:

-  engage.ahc.sa.gov.au
-  mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
-  8408 0400



Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL



Adelaide Hills Council
September 17 at 11:40 AM · 🌐

...

"Your Say, Your Way" 🗨️ We're creating a new framework for how we connect with our community, and we want your input to shape community engagement in the Hills.

■ What does good community engagement look like to you? ■ How would you like to be involved in Council decisions?

Share your ideas by 📅 Sunday 26 October and help us build a better way to engage! Visit 🙌 <https://ow.ly/X62U50WXltk>

Your Say, Your Way

Help Shape Community Engagement in the Hills



 1

2 shares

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 Comment

 Share

 Write a comment...



 **Adelaide Hills Council**
September 22 at 12:10 PM · 🌐

We'd love your help on developing a new Community Engagement Framework. 🗣️ We want to understand how best to engage with you.

- What does good community engagement look like to you?
- How would you like to be involved in Council decisions?

Share your ideas by  Sunday 26 October and help us build a better way to engage! Visit  <https://ow.ly/2jMI50WXVmy>



  You and 14 others

6 comments 4 shares

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