

Upper Sturt Community Forum

30 September 2025

Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall

Community Forum Overview and Outcomes Report



Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

Purpose

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Community Forums are held throughout the year in community facilities around the Hills. They provide an opportunity for council and local residents to communicate directly with each other about emerging issues, services and Council initiatives.

Our most recent Community Forum was held in Upper Sturt and had a focus on community engagement and the creation of our new community engagement framework:

- Location: Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall – Upper Sturt Rd, Upper Sturt
- Date: Tuesday 30 September 2025
- Time: 6pm to 8pm



Shape the way we engage with you

The forum included a range of presentations and discussions from council representatives and community leaders. We began the evening with an opportunity to connect with each other, council staff and Elected Members, the chance to have a drink and a bite to eat.

Presentations kicked off at 6.30pm and we heard from the following presenters:

- Acting Mayor Nathan Daniell spoke about the recent supplementary Council elections, the review and finalisation of our By-laws, the upcoming 2026 Tour Down Under and community engagement across the Adelaide Hills.
- Jess de Campo, Chair of Imagine Uraidla, provided an overview of the role Imagine Uraidla plays in their community including how they engage residents and business in local projects and decision-making and shared their secret sauce to success.

- Dylan Russell, Secretary of Friends of Reconciliation Adelaide Hills, discussed the formation of community reconciliation groups, the struggle to remain sustainable, and their collective role in building trust, fostering connection, and driving change in their community.
- Dr. Ann Herraman, Chair of Mount Lofty Historical Society, shared the of the Mount Lofty Historical Society as they are approaching their 50th anniversary of the organisation and spoke about the book release they are currently working towards “Beyond Mount Lofty”.
- Melissa Clarke, AHC’s Community Engagement Coordinator, spoke about the development of council’s new community engagement framework and asked forum participants to get involved in sharing their ideas about what good community engagement looks like, where there are areas for improvement in our current processes and to provide feedback about previous engagement experiences with council.

Following presentations, there was a 40-minute break out session where participants could speak to presenters, staff and Elected Members about the presentation topics, share their ideas and feedback around the development of our community engagement framework and discuss local ideas and issues. You can view a summary of what we heard and what was discussed below.

Summary of what we heard

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.

Walking / active travel:

- Need for / requests for walking trails and / or shared use pathways between Upper Sturt and Crafers and Stirling to enable access to these areas without use of a vehicle.
- Discussions around existing pathways no longer being in a safe state to use or not existing which is forcing residents to use the shoulder of road. This is dangerous due to traffic and because the shoulder switches from one side to the other and there is no signage.
- Enjoyed bicycle network engagement that was run during 2024, especially the ability to add information to a map. Where is this engagement up to? [We have used the information that was gathered during this engagement to inform our submission to state government on the Public Transport Strategy. We are investigating ways we can use the feedback provided to inform local projects and planning.](#)
- Acquiring land to create trails / pathways along narrow road stretches and / or improving existing trails. Some of these may be on crown land.
- Native reserve / conversation site (crown land). Currently no paths and no maintenance, steep and full of rubbish. Who maintains these spaces? [As this land is owned and managed by state government, council has no authority to maintain or conduct work on this land.](#)

- Requests for a bus service that runs morning and afternoon along Upper Sturt Rd to support youth and people who do not drive / have a vehicle.
- Question about community bus service and where it currently runs / what the current routes are. Council supports the community bus service run through The Hut Community Centre at Aldgate and the timetable is available on their website www.thehut.org.au. The Hut operates two council-owned community buses on behalf of our team and the CHSP program. These services, including the door-to-door outings and shopping shuttles, are specifically for passengers who have identified transport needs, have been referred to and are registered with our program.
- Diverting traffic from Upper Sturt Road to Sheoak Rd. Is this still something that is being investigated? Sheoak Road is a Council Road jointly managed by AHC and Mitcham. Upper Sturt Road is the arterial road managed by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. Council is not aware of any proposal to redirect traffic from Upper Sturt Road to Sheoak Road.

Recreation, youth and community connection:

- Where are the opportunities for community connection in Upper Sturt? E.g. events, meet-ups. Could this be at the tennis club or at the Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall? How do we build a sense of community feel, not just living next to one another when there is a low number of shops / sports clubs.
- Could council's Mobile Library van come out to Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall or the Upper Sturt Tennis Club? There is a running schedule of where our mobile library will be at different times throughout the week on council's website (www.ahc.sa.gov.au). On dates outside of this schedule, if staff are available and with prior notice given, we can organise to attend a specific event or venue on request. The van currently visits Upper Sturt Primary School once a month.
- Could we repurpose the "Upper Sturt dog park" into playground - bottom of Whitewood. E.g. create a pickle ball court. Mylor has built a pickle ball court on an old tennis court that was not in use. Could this be done in Upper Sturt and we could try to build an inter-town pickle ball competition.
- Tennis courts on Upper Sturt Road – who is managing them? Is there potential to add a basketball hoop / court at this site? Our Director Environment and Infrastructure is meeting with the Upper Sturt Tennis Club management group to discuss their future use of this site.
- Engage with kids / young people in their space e.g. school assembly. How can we encourage more young people along to community forums?
- Use of primary school grounds outside of school hours e.g. courts / playground – is this something the community are allow to / welcome to do?

Other:

- Elections - Is it possible to run any forums for people to meet and discuss candidates and talk to them? (found it hard to understand priorities in recent elections).
- Development application (fences) - Inspector focused on fences but not compliance of balconies (challenge with compliance of builders) – too narrow a focus.
- Trees / Biodiversity - Hard to find information about what you can do with trees.

- Agree that Council decision making and process transparency needs improvement / promotion – 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.
- Use community groups and grassroots networks to engage beyond the usual suspects – we are happy to help connect and act as a conduit.
- 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? **We have finalised the concept design for the new Uraidla Play Space and are currently working on detailed designs and costings to enable us to go out to tender for the play space construction.**
- Direct phone calls (if possible).
- Many residents hard to reach.
- Flexibility
- Respecting cultural sensitivities.
- Are First Nations invited to speak / engage with Council seek advice on issues?

Engagement - 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.
- 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.

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

- Would love a welcome pack to the area.
- 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.

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Please provide any feedback you have about the format or content of this community forum:

- Well organised and interesting speakers, great to hear from community groups.
- Having time to share our thoughts was a great opportunity.
- Slightly long for a weeknight but good to hear from community groups.
- Request for posting of the forum agenda online before the events.

What did you enjoy the most about the community forum?:

- Speaking to other locals and council members.
- Networking and some of the guest speakers.
- Food and drink were great!
- Good to have diverse voice and opportunity to engage via break outs.
- Presentations and discussions
- Meeting Council staff and hearing from local leader
- The presentations were great.

What do you think we can improve on for future forums?

- "whats on" information
- I think it would be good to find speakers that are more relevant to the area. Possibly open it to local town members?
- More creative engagement
- It was good the way it is

What topics would you like Adelaide Hills Council to discuss at the future forum?

- Local resources e.g. dog park, national park, tennis courts and town centres.
- Energy and climate change adaption, resilience and long-term future vision.
- Improving pathways and public transport
- Community energy
- Bushfire resilience and climate action
- Time travel to our best possible local future
- Community Gardens
- Have a running update of progress in projects that have been raised

Please provide any other feedback:

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- We value being part of the Upper Sturt community. We are a tight group but find it difficult to remain connected without a town centre and being divided by a major road at the edge of Council boundaries. Imagine Uraidla is inspiring but is hard to compare when our towns are so different.
- The snacks were great.

Next Steps

Feedback and ideas discussed during the forum will be shared with Elected Members and staff across council to be consider for integration into upcoming works and future planning, including:

- The development of our new Community Engagement Framework
- Planning for future community forums and activities
- Support the development of our 2026/27 Annual Business Plan
- Ongoing works and maintenance around Upper Sturt and our wider council area

Thank you

We would like to say a big thank you to our presenters from Imagine Uraidla, Friends of Reconciliation Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty Historical Society and to the Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall for hosting us and putting on an amazing spread.

Thank you very much to all participants for getting involved in this community forum. We had a great time meeting with community members and hearing about your ideas and interests. We appreciate your feedback, and we look forward to seeing you at the next one.

If you would like to view our event article and photo gallery from the event, please visit our [AHC website](#).



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