

# Community Engagement Report - Budget 2023 - 2024



## Project Overview

Council seeks to develop and adopt the Draft 2023-2024 Budget (including Council Plan initiatives) that sets the strategic direction for Council with consideration to the needs and aspirations of the community. The purpose of this pilot engagement was to support Councillors and staff making decisions about the Council Budget and to build upon in future years.

### Objectives

- Build upon previous year's Budget engagement work and engage at any earlier stage in Budget development
- Trial a participatory budgeting online tool for engagement
- Engage a cross section of the whole community online and on paper copy
- Gauge interest level from the community on the Budget
- Provide community feedback regarding priorities to Council

## Quick Engagement Stats

### Stage 1 (16 February - 21 March 2023)

- 362 submissions received via Survey and Activity online and in person
- In person: Council organised 5 engagement drop-in sessions in local community centres. Staff spent 31.5 hours assisting community members to complete the Activity and/or Survey
- Online: the online portal was viewed 1,739 times with 1,304 Visits
- Social Media campaigns had a Reach of 50,118

### Stage 2 (4 April - 2 of May)

- Online: 14 submissions were received via Engage Frankston on the draft Budget. Submissions were primarily positive. The online portal was viewed 862 times with 534 visits
- 4 submitters chose to make verbal submissions to Council on 10 May
- Online: Social Media campaigns had a Reach of 50,118

## Community Consultation Process

- Engagement on the Budget and Draft was conducted online through Engage Frankston website and in-person at Community Centres.
- Paper copies of the Stage 1 Survey and Activity were available from 7 locations: 2 Service Centres (Civic Centre and Langwarrin), 2 Libraries (Frankston and Seaford) and 3 Community Centres (Frankston North, Ebdale, Karingal PLACE)
- The engagement was promoted through 8 Council newsletters: CALD Network newsletter, Sport and Recreation newsletter, Frankston Arts Centre eNews, Invest Frankston Business, eNews Youth Services, Mini Frankston City, Positive Ageing Together Newsletter, Foreshore Advisory Panel, Arts Advisory Committee
- Community Engagement staff attended Disability Access and Inclusion Committee seeking feedback
- Participants completed a Survey and/or an Activity in person or online on Engage Frankston (Stage 1). Feedback on the draft Budget (Stage 2) was submitted to Council on the Engage Frankston website.

## Summary of outcomes

Engagement data from midway through Stage 1 Engagement was presented to Councillors to inform the draft Budget. This engagement data showed similar priorities as voted by the community. One new initiative was added under the Sustainable Environment outcome; 'Develop and implement a formalised monitoring process for park tree maintenance', and funding was increased to support the initiatives of:

- Maintaining and improve natural and coastal reserves as well as Ensure operational resources align with growth in urban forest to address risk compliance and conduct an independent service review to ensure best practice levels of service are provided benchmarking against other Councils

In 2023-24, Council will also increase its support in the Community through promoting leadership and governance training opportunities for community members, as well as increasing participation in the culture change program for sporting clubs aimed at achieving greater gender equity in participation and membership.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Considering the responses made by community and other stakeholders, the following recommendations are presented for consideration:

1. Council to consider prioritising the following areas:
  - 'Getting back to nature' and 'Managing our waste' which aligns with Council Plan Outcome 3: Sustainable Environment and 'Assisting our most vulnerable' which aligns with Council Plan Outcome 1: Healthy and Safe Communities.
  - There would be greater benefit in seeking community input earlier in the Budget process to ensure ideas and priorities can shape the development of the Draft Budget.
  - In future years, integration of online vs on paper tools needs to be further developed.
  - Face to face community engagement is recommended. Community are generally responsive but not self-directed on complex and detailed documents like the Budget.
2. Further build upon previous year's engagement work and use community's ideas for next year's Budget and as a benchmark to compare the next data collection.