

WHAT YOU SAID!

Our Engagement Program for the Council Plan 2017-2021.

Our approach

Since October 2016, Councillors and Council staff have been working closely together to understand and plan for the challenges and opportunities for Banyule over the next four years.

From November 2016 to March 2017, we spoke with residents and business and community groups about what they love about Banyule and what they would like to see in the future as well as other topics. We used a range of ways to engage people including:

- Launching a new engagement website “Shaping Banyule”
- Speaking with people at events and activities, meeting with community groups and services and attending schools to get the thoughts of younger people.
- Presenting a Draft Plan and refining ideas at four community forums held during March.

Statistics

Over 4,500 people visited Shaping Banyule between November 2016 and March 2017. Over 1,500 people provided feedback on a range of plans, strategies and local issues.

We heard from over 1,100 people specifically about the new Council Plan via Shaping Banyule and our face-to-face engagement activities.

91 people attended four community forums to review and help refine the Proposed Council Plan.

Shared priorities for our future

We received some fantastic feedback about how we can keep Banyule a great place to live, work and play into the future. Below are some of the key priorities and themes that we heard from the community:

- Deliver quality services that offer value for money and respond to community needs
- Demonstrate responsible financial management and governance
- Prepare and plan for our growing City addressing development, transport and parking issues
- Maintain our public and open spaces and preserve neighbourhood character
- Embrace environmental sustainability and practices in partnership with the community
- Invest in infrastructure and facilities that service our community today and for future generations
- Engage and communicate with our community to ensure they are well informed and represented
- Encourage community participation and inclusion to provide opportunities for all

- Advocate for our community to improve services, infrastructure and social outcomes

In your words

A broad range of feedback was received during our engagement. People highlighted the many things they love about Banyule including its connection to local services and facilities, the greenery, quality parks and open spaces, and the strong community feel of Banyule's neighbourhoods.

People also identified things they wanted to see improved, such as improving transport connections, better quality design in housing and buildings, protecting the environment, and a Council that listens to and responds to community feedback.

Below are some examples of the feedback we received:

From the
Community Forums

"We rearranged our whole Saturday to attend and really loved to opportunity to give our feedback to Council. We really felt listened to and heard."

Face-to-face
feedback

"I like the secret, quiet parks where I can play and take time out and not be bored."

"Great place full of great diversity, customs, culture and people all having fun together."

"Better connectivity. The major roads are all barriers to movement by foot and bicycle."

Online feedback
from Shaping
Banyule

"You need to create specific targets and service level commitments which are measurable and use these to demonstrate how the council is delivering value for money."

"I am passionate about our buildings being of excellent standards of design and quality. It would be nice to think that in 50 - 100 years' time Banyule is noted for its fine architecture and construction quality..."

"I see a local government area where diversity is welcomed and celebrated."

Your priorities and the Council Plan

The rest of this report provides a summary of your feedback organised within the five areas of the Council Plan.

1. **People**
2. **Planet**
3. **Place**
4. **Participation**
5. **Performance**

We have also included a guide to show where the priorities that you raised are addressed within the Council Plan.

What you said about...

PEOPLE

1. Affordable events and activities that increase connection

- Events and festivals are important opportunities for everyone to gather and connect.
- Free/low cost family events (especially for children) are valued by many people.
- Community events create opportunities to celebrate diversity, arts and culture.
- Many people use and love their local libraries and leisure facilities.

2. Inclusive community spirit

- Many people love the community spirit and friendly people in Banyule.
- Desire for services and genuine inclusion for all people, including people with disabilities, aged, youth and diverse communities.

3. Safety

- Perceptions of safety are important to people in Banyule
- Safety concerns are about pedestrians, street lighting, public drug use, lack of police presence, crime, busy roads, bike lanes, and shady play spaces for children.
- The need for housing and employment security.

4. Health and wellbeing (recreation and arts)

- Desire for good quality facilities and spaces for recreation and leisure.
- More public exercise equipment in parks and parklands.
- Arts and culture contribute to community wellbeing. More arts projects could be used to solve local problems and unite communities.

5. Services for children and youth

- Concern over lack of activities for young people.
- Concern of access to childcare and long waiting lists.
- Desire to see good quality schools in the area to cater for growing population.

I. Affordable events and activities that increase connection

Many of you told us that Council festivals and events play an important role in developing a connected and happy community. Many people enjoy annual events such as movie nights, Carols by Candlelight, the Kids ArtyFarty Fest and multicultural celebrations. People also love visiting and using local community centres and libraries. Many said it was important that these events and services remain free or low-cost to be inclusive of all residents, especially young families.

People also said more activities and services should be provided to help residents connect including: food swaps; community gardens, parenting programs for dads; free learning programs targeting young people at places like libraries; and programs and activities for children on weekends and school holidays.

In your words...

“More family events like tonight with movies in the park.”

“Ivanhoe library programs for kids are fantastic - story times. Movies on the Move events and the Kids ArtyFartyFest. We go every year.”

“Bell Street Mall activities - the improved streetscape and events and activities that occur there. Banyule are making an effort to provide lots there.”

“I like that there is an awesome library with free activities you can do.”

“More community based activities through the year on weekends. Open movie nights, art, culture and colouring for whole families and teenagers too. More multicultural estivates –Eid, Chinese New Year, Holi etc.”

2. Inclusive community spirit

When we asked you what you loved about Banyule, many of you mentioned the friendly, community spirit. Some people expressed a desire for more opportunities to connect to their neighbours to enhance this sense of a united community.

Many people valued the diversity in Banyule, the multicultural events and celebrations, and the continued efforts of Council to make the area more inclusive to people of all ages, interests, backgrounds and abilities. Some people pointed to the need for more efforts towards accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities and more multicultural events and services, such as library books and storytime programs in other languages. Many mentioned a desire for people of different backgrounds and cultures to connect and learn more about each other.

In your words.....

“The people in Macleod are so welcoming and friendly and that includes the shopkeepers.”

“I love how the community sticks up for each other and helps fellow man. I volunteer in 3081. This would be the only place where I go to work with a smile on my face every morning. I love 3081.”

“Great place full of great diversity, customs, culture and people all having fun together.”

“More multicultural activities - for people to get together and share cultures.”

“Clearer accessibility information for deaf and/or vision impaired persons for events and community activities/opportunities.”

3. Safety

There was a significant reference to safety in the community’s feedback. While many people commented that Banyule is a family friendly place that feels safe, there were a number of areas of concern. Many of the ideas raised in relation to safety, such as the need for better bike and pedestrian amenities, are also mentioned in the PLACE “What you said” summary.

Specific safety concerns included:

- More police presence – people commented on the lack of police, especially in areas where hooning and public drug use occurs regularly.
- Better street lighting - in parks, walking paths and around train stations. People specifically recommended using solar lights.
- Address drug use – people did not feel safe using certain parks and public spaces due to the regular drug use occurring there.
- Pedestrian crossings – people felt that certain roads required pedestrian crossings, especially on busy roads near public transport and schools. Maintaining footpaths for safety and accessibility, especially for people with limited mobility, was also mentioned.
- Safe bicycle paths and lanes – many people use and love bike trails and parks, but commented on the need for a positive bike culture and more safe bike lanes.
- Improved drainage to prevent road hazards and flooding – a number of people wanted to see more regular maintenance of drains to reduce risks of flooding.

In your words!

“Family friendly. Safe area. Nice community for a single woman with a child.”

“More police presence in smaller streets (Heidelberg West area).”

“I am concerned about the safety of the area near Coles parking and Upper Heidelberg Road where it turns into Livingstone Street. For both cars and pedestrians...”

“I don't feel safe to walk near the shops at night in Greensborough.”

“It feels great seeing the police here at the Bell Street mall...”

4. Health and Wellbeing (recreation and arts)

Having access to good quality recreation and sport facilities and spaces was highly valued. Many people were happy with the availability and access to these spaces; however, there was a desire to ensure sports and recreation facilities and amenities were free or affordable.

The importance of providing female sporting and recreational opportunities was emphasised. Also expressed was the interest in providing more exercise equipment in parks and parklands that could be utilised by many residents, especially seniors.

There was also discussion around the positive role that the arts played in making the community more vibrant, connected and creative.

In your words!

“Cost of sports facilities - can be too expensive for single people or people on low income.”

“More money needs to be spent on the facilities at the netball stadium to assist in the expansion of girls sport in the area.”

“More arts being used to solve problems and bring community together...”

“Exercise machines in Rosanna parklands and more for older people. Health equipment for public use.”

“Male sport is well and truly covered in Banyule but what about female sport???”

5. Services for Children and Youth

Access to services for families with young children was a large concern. Many people spoke about the lengthy waiting lists for childcare services. Parents also mentioned a desire for more pre and post-natal exercise programs and swim lessons for parents and babies held on weekends for parents that work during the week.

It was felt that there was a lack of programs and services for teenagers in Banyule. Some residents suggested that providing more sports, arts and leisure programs and facilities would help engage teenagers, improve their wellbeing, and help reduce vandalism.

Other people thought adventurous playgrounds should be built and others suggested more drop-in services be made available across the municipality, ideally located in shopping centres. Families were generally happy with their access to good local schools, but some mentioned the need to increase the number of schools, especially secondary to address population growth in the municipality.

In your words!

“More activities for teenagers.”

“Not so much for teenagers from 15+ – they need somewhere to hang out, use Wi-Fi and be safe together...”

“Holiday programs for kids in the area. For young teenagers. A lot are stuck at home or with parents. A lot of that age group stay home and do nothing.”

“More schools to accompany growth, especially secondary.”

“More childcare services – waiting lists are too long”

“Better availability of child care. Improve quality of child care...”

How we are responding to what you said

We are responding to many of the issues you raised through the PEOPLE area of our Council Plan. Below is a table that highlights where our new Council Plan responds to the priorities you told us about. View the Council Plan for examples of specific initiatives and projects that we aim to implement.

Your priorities	2017 – 2021 Council Plan Reference
1. Affordable events and activities	PEOPLE 1.1 Support and promote health and wellbeing Focus Area 1.1.1 Develop and deliver recreation and leisure programs that provide opportunities for community connectedness.
2. Inclusive community spirit	PEOPLE 1.3 Support a connected, inclusive and involved community Focus Area 1.3.1 Work in partnership to increase connection and inclusion, and support opportunities for all people to be involved in community life.
3. Community safety	PEOPLE 1.4 Develop and promote safety and resilience in our community
4. Health and wellbeing	PEOPLE 1.1 Support and promote health and wellbeing
5. Services for children and youth	PEOPLE 1.2 Provide a range of services for people at important life stages

What you said about...

PLANET

1. Greenery

- The trees and greenery of Banyule are enormously valued
- Protect and maintain existing trees and increase planting
- Banyule's open green spaces are regularly used and loved by residents

2. Sustainability

- Desire to see more efforts towards recycling initiatives would be valued by residents
- More incentives for people to use green energy, public transport, and develop sustainability focused living
- Want to see sustainable development and housing

3. Wildlife and nature protection and education

- Protect wildlife habitats and local native wildlife
- Increase education and involvement of people with nature

1. Greenery and trees

With the abundance of green open spaces in Banyule, it's not surprising a significant percentage of people's first response to the question, "What do you love about where you live?" was the greenery and trees. Some even said that they had moved to the area because of the greenery. There was also a strong desire for Council to preserve and continue to improve the green aspect of Banyule.

Some people mentioned the importance of planting trees and shrubs that could reduce problems with pollen allergies and provide more shade and also line streets. There were also many comments about increasing planning of native flora. A number of people suggested tree varieties that easily shed bark and lost a high volume of leaves should be avoided or be better maintained.

In your words!

"Preserve the green nature! We're lucky to be in such an area."

"I like that Banyule is so green. It is well balanced with the nature and development."

“Banyule has done very well planting street trees the last two years...but please plant more trees. We need more shade in Rosanna.”

“Please, please more trees, anywhere, any size, and any type (of course natives are best in general).”

“I came to love Viewbank especially for its green open spaces...I find it quite contrasting the lack of trees in many nature strips, the council should look at planting more trees.”

2. Sustainability

Many of you commented that Council played a meaningful role in community education on sustainability and climate change issues. There was a call for Council to provide services and incentives for residents to make environmentally-aware lifestyle changes and choices. Many people also wanted to see better sustainability initiatives in town planning to make new housing more sustainable.

Other suggestions around sustainability included:

- More investments in renewable energy such as solar lighting in parks and subsidies for private solar installations, water tanks and composts.
- Focus on community education programs and services around recycling and waste management.
- More support for local gardens, farmers and fresh produce.
- Council to declare a climate emergency and plan accordingly,
- Encourage residents to plant native flora.
- Improve public transport and cycling amenities so that more people choose not to use private vehicles.

In your words!

“I'd like to see Banyule ahead on renewable energy, making it easier for ratepayers to go solar.”

“Vision: A vibrant and liveable community leading in sustainable technology and infrastructure.”

“Develop schemes for carbon neutrality. Greatly restrict high rise. Promote public transport.”

“I'd like to see some GoGet or car share options available in Banyule, which has none! This could encourage residents to reduce their reliance on private vehicles and use public transport or share car.”

3. Wildlife and environmental protection and education

Connected to the love of trees and greenery was an appreciation for the natural habitat and wildlife of Banyule. Feedback even paid homage to Banyule's bird songs! Many people wanted Council to preserve natural habitats for wildlife, including wildlife corridors and parklands. Some desired harsher penalties for people who litter or cut down protected trees without permits.

The importance of education for young people about our local nature and habitat was also mentioned. It was felt that increasing opportunities for people to connect with, learn about and enjoy nature were very positive things for the community.

In your words!

"The Plenty River has a \$2,000 penalty for whoever litters and that is great because our school topic was "what impact on nature"."

"Preservation of environment. We have community groups that plant natives - more would be great."

"The creek, wildlife and wildlife corridors are fantastic."

"Put up more bird houses and habitats. We need to protect bird life. The council could educate community on how to make their gardens bird friendly for native birds and encourage people to install bird houses."

"I'm also a local mum and agree...there is a HUGE need for facilitated nature play in our beautiful nature spots here in Banyule!"

"I would love to see council facilitating bush playgroups, bush school programs and kindergartens and see Banyule leading the way in this growing movement."

How we are responding to what you said

We are responding to many of the issues you raised through the **PLANET** area of our Council Plan. Below is a table that highlights where our new Council Plan responds to the priorities you told us about. View the Council Plan for examples of specific initiatives and projects that we aim to implement.

Your priorities	2017 – 2021 Council Plan Reference
1. Greenery	PLANET 2.1 Protect and enhance our natural environment
2. Sustainability	The whole Planet objective outlines Council's commitment to sustainability.
3. Wildlife and nature protection & education	PLANET 2.1 Protect and enhance our natural environment

PLANET 2.5 Act as environmental stewards

Focus Area 2.5.1 Support and educate the community to protect, enhance and experience the environment.

What you said about....

PLACE

1. Character and identity

- High value placed on heritage buildings and green character
- Strong desire for new developments to be sensitive to the character of the neighbourhood and of high quality
- Desire for diverse and vibrant shopping precincts

2. Access to services and facilities

- Proximity to local services and amenity (schools, hospital, shopping centres, city, nature) is strongly valued
- You desired good quality services and facilities like libraries and other public meeting places

3. Parks and recreational facilities

- Most people love and regularly access parks and green spaces.
- Desire for parks to be well maintained with good facilities

4. Transport, roads and parking

- Significant frustration and concern for residents with increasing traffic and concerns over parking
- Strong desire for integrated and improved public transport and cycling amenities

5. Public amenities and services

- Desire for good quality clean and safe toilets throughout Banyule
- Hard rubbish and waste services are valued but there is a desire for more hard rubbish collection
- Concern over the maintenance and appearance of nature strips
- Concerns over risks to flooding

1. Character and identity

Nearly everyone we spoke to said the green and leafy neighbourhood character of Banyule was one of their most loved things. A high value was placed on the heritage buildings that existing throughout Banyule and their retention. A number of people were concerned with the increasing density of development in certain areas and wanted to see responsible development that respected the existing character of Banyule.

Many of the comments Council received in relation to buildings expressed a desire for good quality design that was sustainable, aesthetically pleasing and would add value to the community over time. There was also frequent mention over concerns with increasing traffic and congestion resulting from increased development.

In addition to the character of residential development, people also spoke about wanting local shopping centres and precincts to be high quality with strong individual identity and good options for shopping and dining.

In your words!!

“No more apartments- we have enough now. Careful planning to retain neighbourhood character.”

“Apartments - should complement surrounding buildings in their character, features. There should be more community gardens attached to apartment buildings and they should be nicely designed.”

“Cape Street in Heidelberg there is so much development - the area now is full of traffic, trucks and construction. There's a lot more people moving into the area but it doesn't feel like there is the capacity in infrastructure and services ready.”

“Development sympathetic to aesthetics of the environment. Let's not block the green views or introduce the industrial look.”

“Losing character is bad for the area - don't want the area to be like High Street - Darebin. Good quality development is important.”

“Olympic Village has potential and development there should involve community engagement.”

“Main Street Greensborough could be improved with better shops and cafes down Main Street. Do it up!”

“Rosanna village tired looking, needs investment.”

“Renovating the Diamond Village shops to entice more business to the complex.”

2. Access to services and facilities

Many people appreciated the easy and convenient access to services, facilities, nature and the city that Banyule offers and wished for that to be protected and maintained. Council services and facilities, such as libraries and other meeting places, were valued highly and people wanted these facilities to be maintained and improved.

In your words!

“...Having a variety of local facilities within walking and cycling distance: shops, schools, library, public transport, parklands.”

“I love the convenience of Rosanna, accessibility to shopping centres and public transportation...”

“Great family orientated area with good facilities close by including recreational, shopping and basic needs.”

“The wonderful library and also shopping strips and diversity great gathering places...”

“Toilets at Olympic village. Park and mobile library visitors don't have toilets.”

3. Parks and recreational facilities

You frequently mentioned how much you love and appreciate Banyule's parks and recreational areas but for yourself but also for your pets! You mentioned a desire for better lighting in parks to make it safer to use at night and also wanted to see better equipment, shade and facilities with a particular mention of exercise equipment in parks.

In your words!!

“Playground equipment suitable for small children 1-3 yrs.”

“More covered parks so they are not exposed to sun all the time.”

“Sporting equipment and sports facilities in the parks. Only one basketball court in the area. Areas to play sport. Cost of sports facilities - can be too expensive for single people or people on low income.”

“I especially appreciate the new fenced dog park at Price Park Viewbank. Many dogs and their owners socialise after work at this park, however in winter months this is not possible to use the park with safety due to lack of lighting at the centre of Price Park.”

“Better landscaping maintenance and upkeep of council parks and recreation reserves. A lot of the local play equipment is disused as the grass surrounding them is so patchy and dry.”

“Keep parks clean - there is too much dog poo - have dog bags on parks”

“We also need exercise equipment in parks-there are very few around.”

“Windsor Park - Please update the water fountain. It can include a modern human fountain with a dog water fountain underneath. This park is a popular playground for dogs who need their refreshments!”

4. Transport, roads and parking

Some of the most recurrent themes were issues around traffic, transport and parking. Many people were concerned with increasing traffic coming from new developments across Banyule while others expressed frustration with the lack of parking around train stations.

There were mixed responses to parking meters with some people saying they didn't want parking meters and others asking for areas to be more frequently patrolled and infringements issued. Traffic on local roads was also a concern, in particular certain areas had become “rat runs” with drivers looking to avoid congested main roads.

In addition to car-based transport issues, there were considerable comments desiring better transport options in Banyule, including more regular public transport and a particular focus on cycling infrastructure.

In your words!!

“Problems with parking near Rosanna station - this is not policed and becomes dangerous especially around corners.”

Becoming very busy in Greensborough - managing traffic.

“It's already hard to find parking in the Greensborough shops area - might be worse after council moves there.”

“Traffic around Rosanna Rd and Banksia Rd is horrendous”

“More public transport with connecting services (buses and trains).”

“More local transport options, bike paths and safe lanes for cycling on/adjacent to roads.”

“Better train service. It's terrible that in this day and age trains only run every 20-40mins, and that it takes nearly an hour to get to the CBD when you're only 20kms out.”

“Despite the parking in the (Nets) stadium being limited to 4 hours there is always upwards of 20+ cars parked there from 7.00am to 6.00pm, and doesn't appear to be patrolled regularly so there are no repercussions.”

“Parking is a huge problem in the narrow streets. Consider how more people in the area means more parking.”

Traffic on Rosanna road. Desperate, don't feel safe on Rosanna road with speeding trucks. I don't feel safe to walk there with my child.

“Transport is an issue for elderly. There could be a community bus at peak times for elderly.”

“Get rid of the meter parking near Macleod and other stations.”

“Parking at train stations for residents of Banyule should be given at a minimum a rebate. You say you want to encourage public transport but your actions say otherwise.”

“The train station really needs to maximise the parking spaces in the new station, as train passengers are parking all over the place because the car park maxed out a long time ago.”

“Lead the way on active transport (walking/cycling/ public transport). This will result in better health, passive surveillance and a better sense of connectedness across the municipality.”

5. Public amenities and services

People placed a high value on Council's hard rubbish collection service and also wanted Council to take stronger action on illegal dumping.

There was frequent mention of keeping public facilities, such as toilets and footpaths, well maintained and clean. Many people expressed concern over poorly maintained nature strips that made local places feel untidy and not well looked after.

In addition, concern was raised over flooding, based on the flash flooding that occurred at the end of 2016.

In your words!!

“Need to take a stronger stance against residents who dump hard rubbish outside their homes without having a hard rubbish collection booked. Reduce costs for tip.”

“More bins around - especially near bus stops...”

“Bins are too small around Rosanna- we want to clean it up but the bins are often so full.”

“Maintain nature strips and public spaces (mow lawns, clean up graffiti)”

“General cleaning up of hard rubbish on nature strips - that is an eyesore. Maybe some people don't know how to dispose of those big items...”

“When we book in hard rubbish, we leave it out the front for collection and other people add to our pile. Perhaps an annual collection would be better.”

“General cleaning up of housing and Bell Street Mall. Cleaning up of hard rubbish from streets.”

“Improve storm water drainage at Watsonia Rd, between Weatherlake St and Rushworth St, Watsonia, to prevent road hazard and flooding...”

“Drainage - you need to spend more money on upgrade old and under capacity drainage system.”

“Inspect footpath cracks more often and fix them. Replace aged concrete footpaths that are trip hazards.”

How we are responding to what you said.

We are responding to many of the issues you raised through the **PLACE** area of our Council Plan. Below is a table that highlights where our new Council Plan responds to the priorities you told us about. View the Council Plan for examples of specific initiatives and projects that we aim to implement.

Your priorities	2017– 2021 Council Plan Reference
1. Character & Identity	PLACE 3.1 Preserve and improve Banyule as a great place to live, work and play.
2. Access to services & facilities	PLACE 3.4 Provide great public and open spaces Focus Area 3.4.3 Provide suitable spaces for the community to gather and look for opportunities for new and shared spaces and facilities.
3. Parks & recreational facilities	PLACE 3.4 Provide great public and open spaces PEOPLE 1.1 Support and promote health and wellbeing Focus Area 1.1.1 Develop and deliver recreation and leisure programs that provide opportunities for community connectedness.
4. Transport, roads & parking	PLACE 3.5 Support sustainable transport. The Focus Areas of initiatives of this area of PLACE outline the various ways Council plans to respond to Transport, road and parking issues.
5. Public amenities and services	PLACE 3.2 Renew and maintain Banyule’s public assets and infrastructure

What you said about...

PARTICIPATION

1. Community engagement and Participation

- Children and young people need avenues to be involved in their communities and future planning
- You want clear and timely community engagement methods

2. Communications

- You want Council events and activities to be more effectively promoted and advertised
- You value existing publications like the Banyule Banner
- You want Council to be proactive in seeking effective ways to improve communication

3. Service information education and advocacy

- Clearer information about what Council responsibilities are and what we do
- More community education about how our services work
- Lots of concern with issues outside out Council's control

1. Community engagement and participation

Many people said that there was a need to increase our community engagement and more clearly show how community input has shaped Council decisions. At the community forums we ran during March many residents said they enjoyed being involved in the development of Council's new plan. It was important to them that they had been consulted at an early stage in order to understand issues and contribute meaningfully.

People expressed the need for Council to clearly demonstrate how it involves the community in decision making. Even some of Banyule's younger citizens, suggested we set up a Junior Banyule Council for young people to participate more in consultation and planning the future of Banyule.

People said there should be a range of ways for the community to participate in Council decisions to accommodate different ways people like to communicate.

In your words!

“Kids need more opportunity to have a say!”

“Foster increased community input to decisions. Utilise online community voting for big decisions and council elections, supported by online presentations and forums.”

“Provide the community adequate time to respond to online surveys which are disseminated by email to rate payers and residents.”

2. Communications

Many people said Council needs to improve communication to make it more effective and promote full and active participation in the community. Some people suggested more presence on social media and improvements to Council’s website while others requested that information be sent to homes so that seniors and others who may not be as active online are more likely to be reached. There was a call for more promotion of local events and activities so the community could take advantage of what is available throughout the year, with some feedback proposing methods like SMS or email alerts/reminders. People thought communications needed to be inclusive for people who use English as a second language or those who require communication in different formats.

In your words!

“Banyule Banner is great! Really good idea.”

“Monthly newspapers that say activities for the month.”

“Alerts emailed/texted for specific programs/services/events of interest in Banyule (an email list you can subscribe to keep everyone better informed in areas that are relevant to them).”

“Better promotion of council activities and easy access to this information (better navigation on the website).”

“More information about council services sent for elderly people sent to their homes.”

“Clearer accessibility information for deaf and/or vision impaired persons for events and community activities/opportunities.”

3. Service information/education and advocacy

Another theme that emerged was a desire for Council to be more proactive in explaining its roles and responsibilities and how different services work. Some people felt that the responsibility of some public maintenance, tree removals, and housing and transport was not clear and didn’t know who was accountable or who they should contact. For many people, when we asked questions about what Council could do to make the local area better, it was hard for them to know exactly what Council was responsible for.

While not many people specifically asked Council to advocate on local issues, many of the issues raised were outside Council's direct control. Many people articulated the need for a North East Link and more schools, while others expressed concerns with Level Crossing removals. These are all examples where Council's hears from the community and can advocate on their behalf.

In your words!

"More info about responsibilities of fallen trees on a website..."

"Waste management improvements (more clarity on what can be recycled and what should not (more should be recycled))"

"More accurate and up to date info about public transport..."

"Traffic and roads in the area need to be looked at. Completion of Ring Rd improvements to flow of Heidelberg Rd and Greensborough Highway."

How we are responding to what you said

We are responding too many of the issues you raised through the **PARTICIPATION** area of our Council Plan. Below is a table that highlights where our new Council Plan responds to the priorities you told us about. View the Council Plan for examples of specific initiatives and projects that we aim to implement.

Your priorities	2017 – 2021 Council Plan Reference
1. Community engagement & participation	PARTICIPATION 4.1 Engage meaningfully with our community and encourage participation
2. Communications	PARTICIPATION 4.3 Communicate effectively with our community
3. Service information & Advocacy	PARTICIPATION 4.3 Communicate effectively with our community PARTICIPATION 4.2 Advocate for our community

What you said about...

PERFORMANCE

1. Financial management

- Desire to see Council effectively managing Council resources
- Some concern over rates increase particularly for pensioners and seniors

2. Customer service

- Appreciation of Council's customer service
- Desire for follow up when requests are made, regardless of the response

3. Transparency and accountability

- Want to see clearly how decisions are made and what budget is allocated to specific services
- Want to see clear evidence and measures of how Council is achieving its goals and plans for the future

I. Financial management

Generally people thought rates were set at a reasonable level, but wanted to ensure ratepayer money was spent wisely and all resources were responsibly managed. There was a desire for Council to have a balanced budget and reduce debt as well as plan better to lower rates. Some people were concerned about rate increases and suggestions were made around more rate concessions for pensioners.

There was acknowledgment of recent projects that benefitted the community, such as the Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre upgrades and improvements to parks and open space, but also the need to see equal investment across Banyule and evidence that Council was managing resources wisely.

In your words!

“Balance the council budget so our rates aren't being used to pay off interest on loans. Cut expenditure on unnecessary infrastructure...”

“The increasing rates is an issue for many people too.”

“Allocating more evenly where the Banyule Council spend rate payer’s money rather than focusing investment on other suburbs like Heidelberg and Ivanhoe.”

Things could not only be improved but greatly improved if the councils (all) started tightening their belt and started spending council money more wisely...”

“Can somebody explain why a pensioner still has to find over \$600 a term for rates when half the improvements paid for are never used by the elderly?”

“Manage your costs and investments better so that you can decrease rates rather than increase...”

2. Customer Service

Overall, people said they were pleased about their experiences with Banyule staff and customer service. Many had very positive feedback about the friendly and professional conduct of staff, and the responsiveness to their needs. However, a number of people had disappointing experiences in relation to reporting damage or maintenance issues and were unhappy with the lack of repairs or response.

Many of these requests were about tree, footpath and public amenity damages and maintenance. People said they wanted to be kept up to date and informed in a timely manner regardless of the outcome.

Some people also expressed a desire for local laws and fines to be more actively enforced, citing safety issues such as parking in no standing zones and dogs off leash in restricted areas.

In your words!

“Council is so responsive to our needs and everything gets attended to ASAP.”

“Staff at customer service are helpful.”

“Good customer service related to bin collection. E.g. when infrastructure is damaged or bins were missed - the staff at Banyule responded well.”

“I have reported it to council three times without any response from council - very disappointed.”

“The unkempt and unpruned trees on the nature strip in my Street is less than acceptable. No pruning in over 6 years although I have asked on several occasions.”

“When I report a broken footpath, no-one comes to fix it.”

3. Transparency and accountability

Some people expressed concern around how clearly Council communicates about where and how funding is used. They wanted to be better informed about what Council plans to do and receive progress updates with clear measures and targets made available for the community. Questions were also raised about why specific planning and spending choices were made. People also commented on the importance of transparency in relation to how ratepayer money was being spent.

There was also an expectance for Council to pursue a higher level of community consultation and active engagement so it could be more aware of local concerns and needs. This theme is also mentioned in the “What you said” PARTICIPATION summary.

In your words!

“Accountability and good governance are an absolute bare minimum. All of the information I could find on council performance is aspirational and vague.”

“...highlight progress made there so it can the forward of the new plan and people see how city plan works.”

“Funding is being disproportionately used. More education on where funding is going.”

“...more transparent reporting and updates on how council are using rate payers’ funds.”

How we are responding to what you said

We are responding too many of the issues you raised through the **PERFORMANCE** area of our Council Plan. Below is a table that highlights where our new Council Plan responds to the priorities you told us about. View the Council Plan for examples of specific initiatives and projects that we aim to implement.

Your priorities	2017– 2021 Council Plan Reference
1. Financial management	PERFORMANCE 5.2 Deliver best value services and facilities PERFORMANCE 5.3 Provide responsible financial management and business planning
2. Customer service	PERFORMANCE 5.1 Provide exceptional customer service
3. Transparency & accountability	PERFORMANCE 5.4 Provide good governance and be accountable