

Shaping Banyule member newsletter survey

Findings Report 2026



Executive summary

This report summarises feedback gathered from Shaping Banyule members about their experience of the **Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter**.

The newsletter has been running for almost a year, and we invited members to share their thoughts to help make future editions more useful, relevant and easy to read.

We asked members how often they read the newsletter, how useful and easy it is to use, which content they find most valuable, whether engagement opportunities and outcomes are clearly communicated, and what improvements they would like to see.

Consultation was open from **15 June to 31 July 2026** and received responses from **92 community members** through an online survey.

Overall, the findings show that the newsletter is performing well among respondents.

- **87%** read every edition or most editions.
- **85%** rated the newsletter as very useful or somewhat useful.
- **99%** said it is easy to read.
- **96%** said it is easy to navigate.
- **86%** felt the current length is about right.

The findings do not indicate a need for a major redesign or significant reduction in content. Instead, they point to targeted improvements that would strengthen local relevance, transparency and reporting back.

The most valued content was **project updates and consultation outcomes**, while the most common improvement requests are listed below.

- More updates on what happened after consultation closed.
- More information about projects in respondents' local area.
- Clearer explanations of how feedback was considered in decision-making.
- Easier access to information about next steps, responsibilities and outcomes.

Based on these findings, recommended actions include:

- introducing a consistent **"You said, we did, what happened next"** feature
- grouping or tagging content by suburb or ward where possible
- maintaining the newsletter's current format, readability and length
- improving navigation and direct links to project information
- providing clearer information on participation levels, project progress and decisions.

Results should be viewed as indicative rather than representative of the broader Banyule community, as respondents self-selected and the survey sample skewed older, with **60 respondents aged 60 years or over** (65%) and **one respondent under 35 years of age** (1%).

Project background

The ***Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter*** is a quarterly email newsletter that provides updates on community engagement activities, projects and consultation opportunities across Banyule.

It helps members stay up to date on:

- opportunities to have their say on Council projects and plans
- project updates and consultation outcomes
- how community feedback has influenced decisions
- the ways Council is connecting with the community.

Since the launch of the ***Shaping Banyule website in 2016***, community members have been able to subscribe to receive newsletter updates when registering as a member. Subscription is optional and available through a tick box on the registration form.

To further understand the value of communications about engagement activities, we also reviewed feedback from previous engagement projects which highlighted a strong desire for:

- regular project updates, including progress and next steps
- clear reporting back on outcomes and decisions
- multiple ways to receive updates and information
- more visible promotion of engagement opportunities
- easier access to clear, concise information.

While the review did not identify strong evidence that residents wanted a dedicated community engagement newsletter, it did identify consistent demand for regular project updates, clearer reporting back, more visible engagement opportunities, and information delivered through multiple channels, including newsletters. Together, these findings support the newsletter's role as part of Council's broader engagement communication.

The first edition of the ***Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter*** was launched in September 2025. After almost a year of publication, Council sought feedback from subscribers to understand how the newsletter is being used, what content readers value most, and where improvements could be made.

The newsletter is currently distributed to more than **2,700 subscribers**, with membership continuing to grow as new community members join the platform. Content is created and distributed directly through the Shaping Banyule website. The newsletter is performing strongly, with around 50% of recipients opening each edition and around 5% clicking through to further information. The click rate should be considered in context, as the newsletter is designed to be informative on its own, giving readers useful project updates, outcomes and opportunities without always needing to visit another page.

The newsletter plays an important role in keeping the community informed, encouraging participation in engagement opportunities, and demonstrating how community feedback helps shape Council decisions and outcomes.

Engagement Overview

Objectives

Objective 1	Understand how subscribers use and value the newsletter Assess readership, usefulness, readability and ease of navigation.
Objective 2	Identify the content that matters most to subscribers Understand which topics and sections members find most useful and engaging.
Objective 3	Gather ideas for improving future editions Identify opportunities to make the newsletter more relevant, informative and valuable to subscribers.

Method

Shaping Banyule was the only engagement platform used for this consultation.

Key information available on the Shaping Banyule page included:

- An online survey
- Project team contact information

Community members were invited to complete the online survey through a direct link in the Shaping Banyule members newsletter. The project was not published or promoted via the Shaping Banyule homepage.

Participation

During the consultation period (1 June to 31 July 2026), the Shaping Banyule page received **179 visits**, resulting in **92 completed surveys**.

Key demographic insights from the survey are presented in the following figures:

- Figure 1 highlights variations in engagement across gender and age group.
- Figure 2 highlights variations in engagement across suburbs in Banyule.
- Table 1 highlights variations in engagement across access and equity attributes.
- Table 2 highlights variations in engagement across relationship to Banyule.

Figure 1 – Survey participants – contribution by age and gender

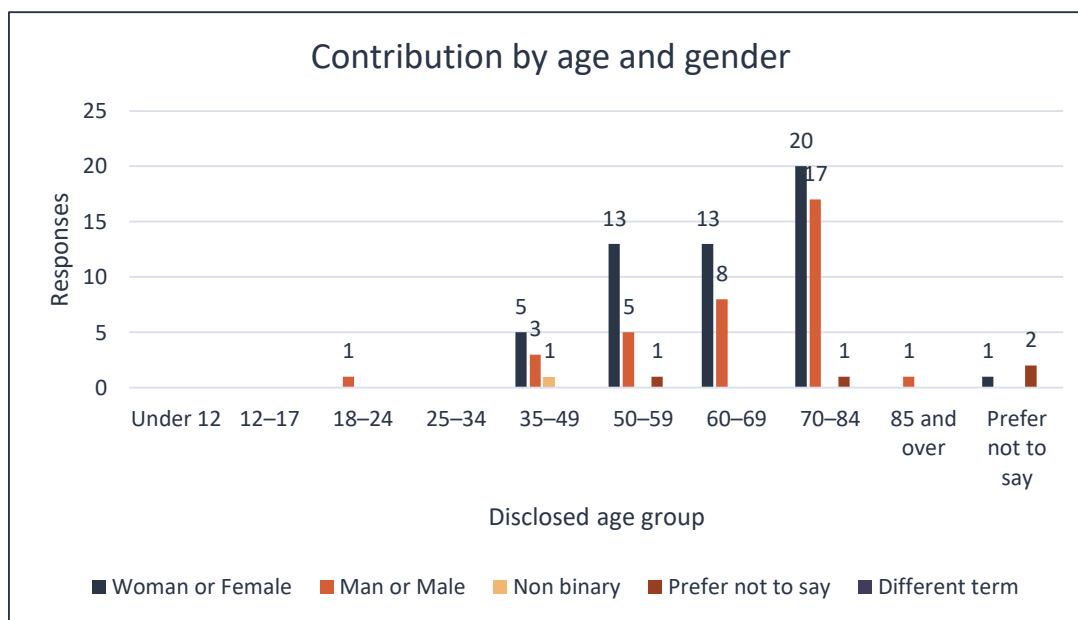


Figure 1 shows that survey participation was highest among older community members and women. Most respondents were aged 60 years or over, which represents 65% of survey respondents, while only one respondent was under 35. Women made up the largest share of responses (52 responses, 57%), followed by men (35 respondents, 38%). This means the results provide useful feedback from newsletter subscribers, but may not reflect the views of younger community members or the broader Banyule community. This is not surprising, however, as young people are typically less likely to participate in Council's online engagement activities, and more likely to participate in face-to-face activities.

Figure 2 – survey participants – survey by location

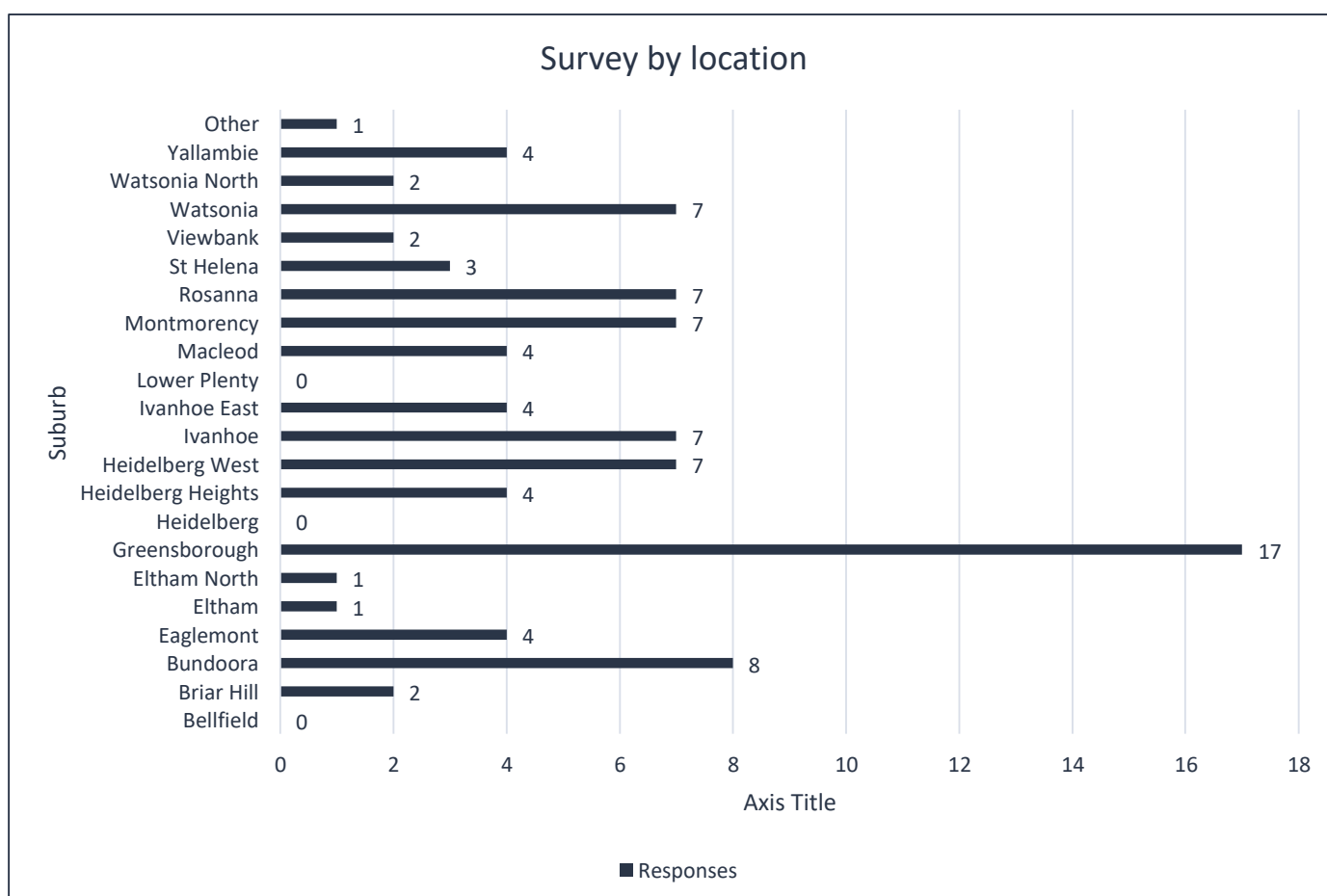


Figure 2 shows where survey participants live across Banyule. Responses came from a range of suburbs, with Greensborough the most represented suburb (17 respondents; 18.5%), followed by Bundoora (8 responses, 9%). Some suburbs had no respondents, so location-based findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative of all areas.

Table 1 – survey participants – access, equity and inclusion

<i>Response option</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Disability / mental illness</i>	14	15%
<i>Carer</i>	7	8%
<i>LGBTIQA+</i>	3	3%
<i>English as second/other language</i>	3	3%
<i>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</i>	1	1%
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	4	4%
<i>None of the above</i>	67	73%

Table 1 shows that 67 respondents (73%) did not identify with the listed access, equity and inclusion groups. The largest identified group was 14 people (15%) living with disability or mental illness, followed by carers with 7 respondents (8%). Smaller numbers of respondents identified as LGBTIQA+, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or spoke English as a second or other language. Multiple selections were allowed to respond to this question.

These results show that the survey captured feedback from people with different lived experiences, but the small numbers mean findings should not be treated as representative of all access, equity and inclusion groups.

Table 2 – survey participants – relationship to Banyule

<i>Response option</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Live</i>	87	95%
<i>Work</i>	14	15%
<i>Study</i>	3	3%
<i>Other</i>	6	7%

Table 2 shows that most survey participants have a strong connection to Banyule because they live in the area. A total of 87 respondents (95%) said they live in Banyule, while smaller numbers said they work, study or have another relationship with the area. Multiple selections were allowed to respond to this question.

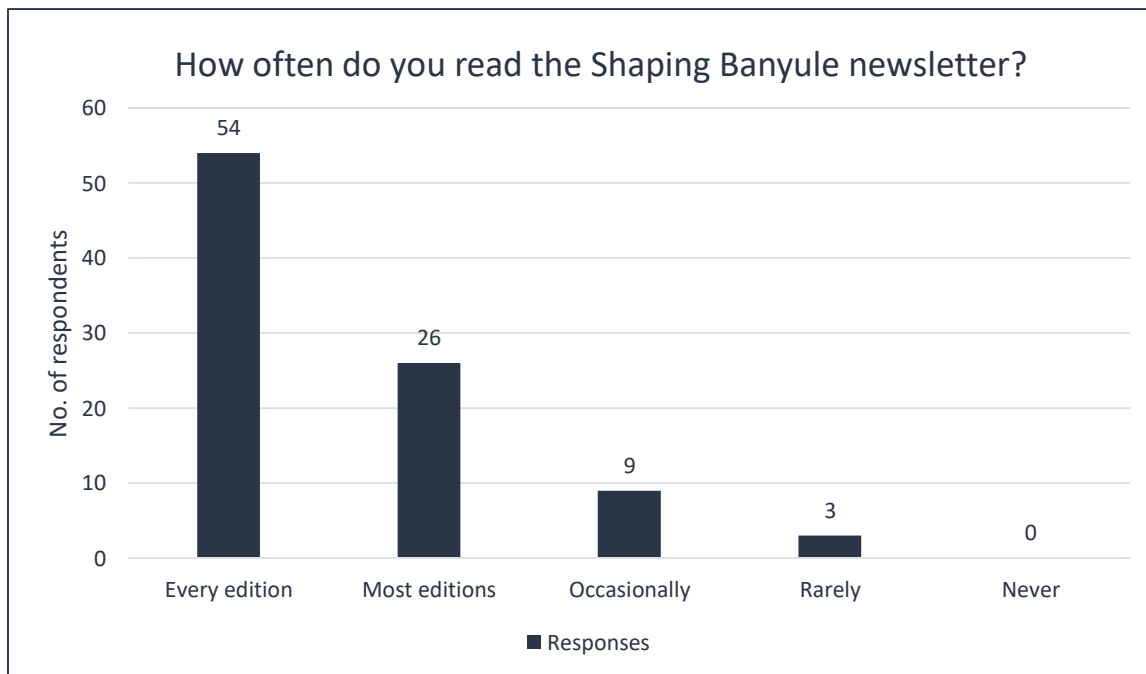
Responses show that feedback received mainly reflects views of local residents, as well as some input from people connected to Banyule in other ways.

Survey results

Q1. How often do you read the Shaping Banyule newsletter?

Most respondents regularly read the newsletter.

- 59% read **every edition** (54 respondents).
- 28% read **most editions** (26 respondents).
- 10% read it **occasionally** (9 respondents).
- 3% read it **rarely** (3 respondents).
- No respondents selected **never**.



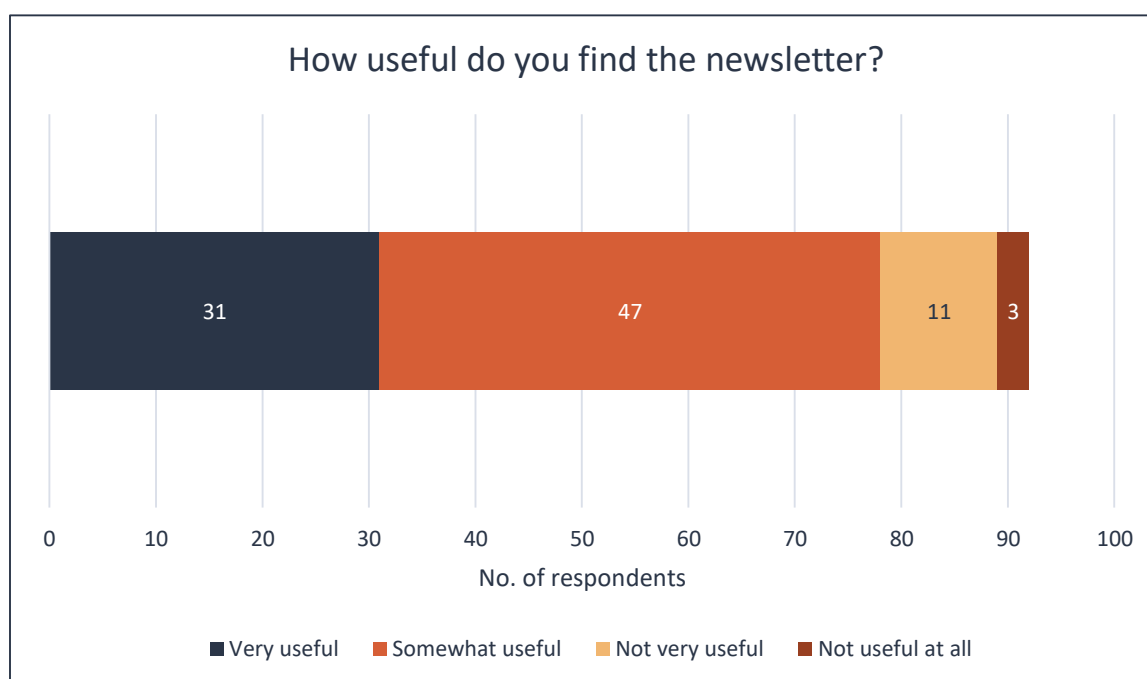
What we heard

The results indicate that the newsletter has a highly engaged readership. Only three respondents provided written feedback about their reading frequency. Comments suggested a preference for more concise, factual content and some confusion about which Banyule publication the survey referred to. One response expressed broader dissatisfaction with Council rather than explaining newsletter readership. Given the small number of comments, these views should be interpreted cautiously.

Q2. How useful do you find the newsletter?

Most respondents find the newsletter useful.

- 34% found it **very useful** (31 respondents)
- 51% found it **somewhat useful** (47 respondents)
- 12% found it **not very useful** (11 respondents)
- 3% found it **not useful at all** (3 respondents).



No follow-up question was asked.

Q3. What type of content do you find most useful? *(Respondents could select more than one option.)*

The most useful content for respondents was:

- **Project updates and outcomes** - 73 respondents
- **What's on / Have your say opportunities** - 59 respondents
- **Local project opportunities** - 48 respondents
- **You said, we did** updates showing how feedback influenced decisions - 34 respondents
- **Engagement explained** content - 18 respondents.

What we heard

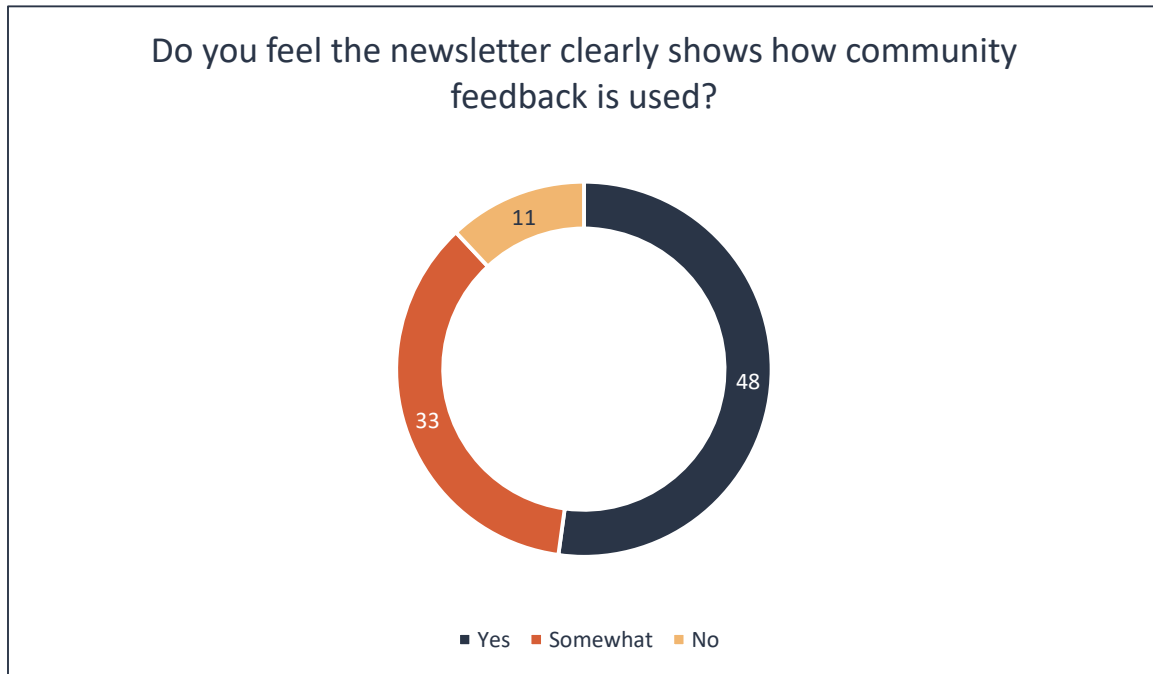
Respondents showed strong interest in practical updates about projects, outcomes and current opportunities to have a say. Written comments found that respondents want more locally relevant information on projects near where they live, including ward-based opportunities, bylaws and how rates are being spent. Environment protection, wildlife, conservation and gardening were also identified as useful topics.

A small number expressed dissatisfaction with content they perceived as overly promotional and wanted more substantive information about Council activities and outcomes. Nine written responses were received in total.

Q4. Do you feel the newsletter clearly shows how community feedback is used?

Most respondents felt the newsletter does a reasonable job of showing how feedback is used.

- 52% selected **Yes** (48 respondents)
- 36% selected **Somewhat** (33 respondents)
- 12% selected **No** (11 respondents).



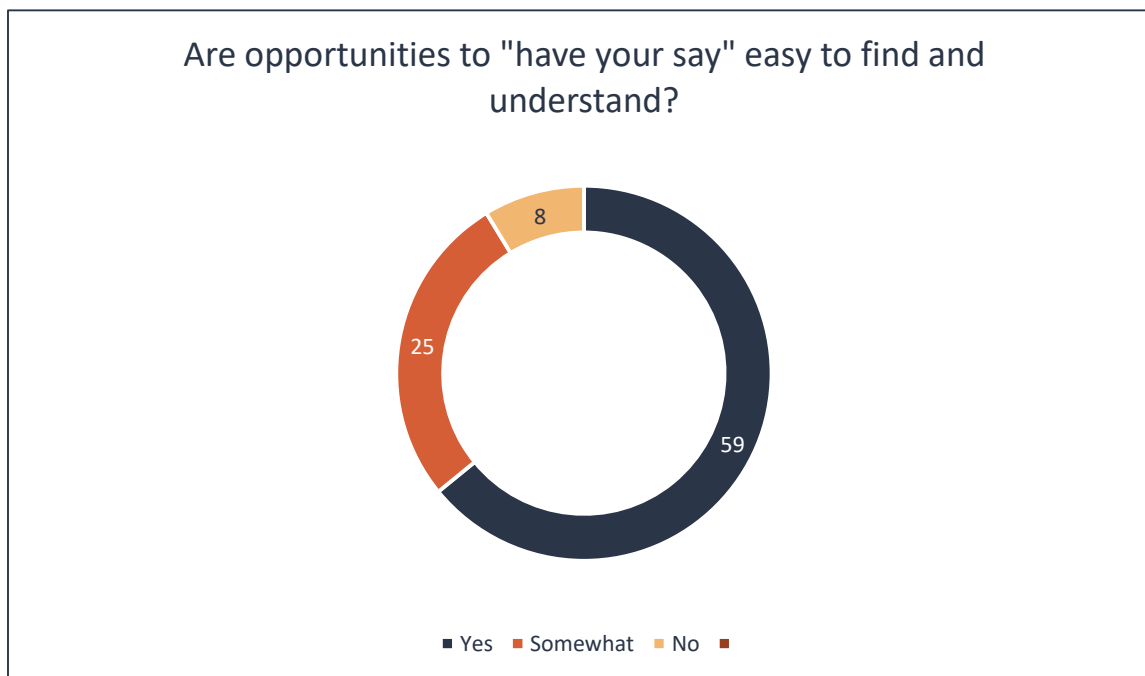
What we heard

Respondents want clearer evidence that community feedback influences Council decisions and project outcomes. Many felt the newsletter acknowledges feedback but does not consistently explain what changed, why decisions were made or what happened next. Some questioned whether the feedback presented represents the broader community and requested response numbers, greater transparency and more detailed reporting on local priorities. Several also wanted less promotional content and stronger follow-through on commitments. Twenty-eight comments were received in total.

Q5. Are opportunities to "have your say" easy to find and understand?

Most respondents said consultation opportunities are easy to find.

- 64% selected **Yes** (59 respondents)
- 27% selected **Somewhat** (25 respondents)
- 9% selected **No** (8 respondents).



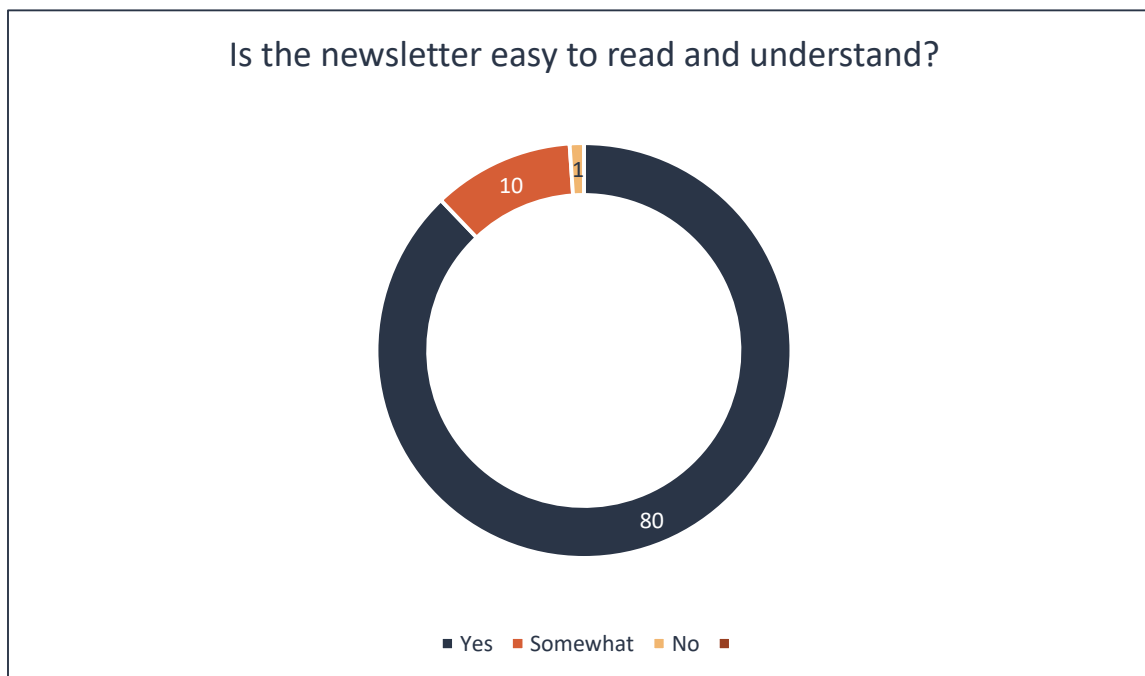
What we heard

Most respondents said consultation opportunities are easy, or somewhat easy to find and understand. Written comments identified practical improvements that could make them easier to use, including fixing broken or outdated links, making it easier for participants by reducing the need to repeatedly provide demographic information, simplifying information and improving maps for mobile devices. Some respondents also wanted opportunities to focus more clearly on practical local matters such as infrastructure and planning. A number of comments were unclear or reflected broader dissatisfaction with Council rather than the accessibility of engagement opportunities. Thirteen comments were received.

Q6. Is the newsletter easy to read and understand?

Most respondents found the newsletter easy to read.

- 87% selected **Yes** (80 respondents)
- 11% selected **Somewhat** (10 respondents)
- 1% selected **No** (1 respondent).



What we heard

Respondents said the newsletter is generally clear and easy to follow. Only three respondents provided written feedback. Comments suggested that information can sometimes be difficult to find and that frustration with the content may discourage readers from continuing to the end. One comment expressed general dissatisfaction with Council rather than addressing readability.

Q7. How easy is it to find your way around the newsletter?

Most respondents found the newsletter easy to navigate.

- 66% said it was **very easy** (61 respondents)
- 29% said it was **somewhat easy** (27 respondents)
- 1% said it was **not very easy** (1 respondent)
- 3% said it was **not easy at all** (3 respondents).

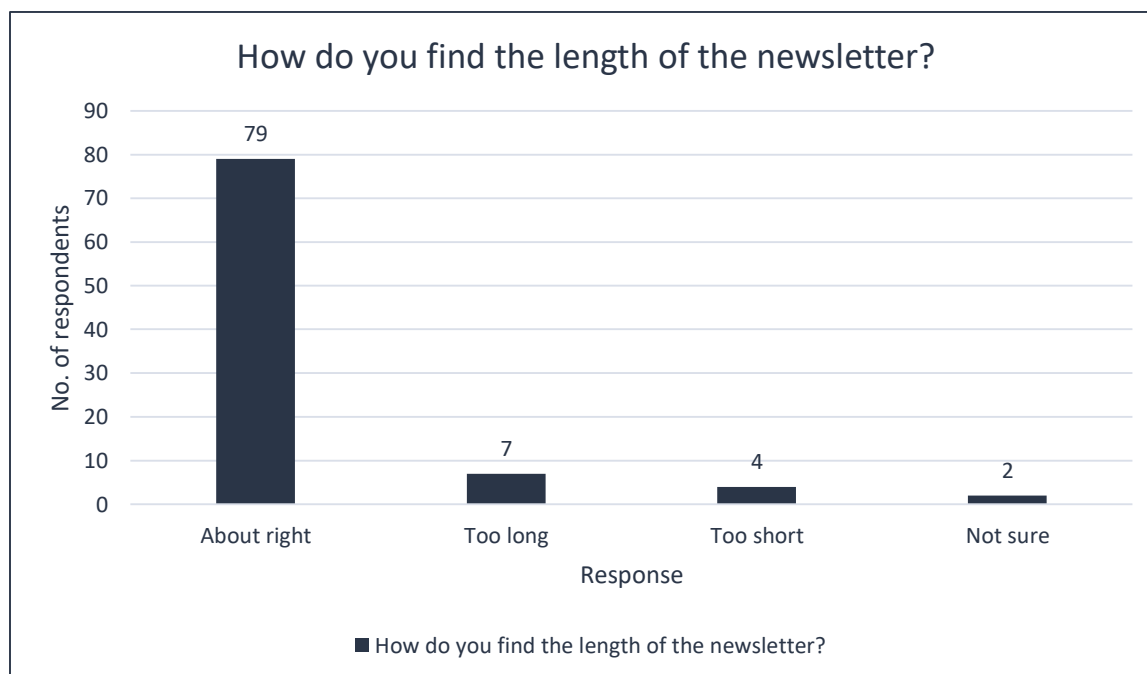
What we heard

Most readers said they can find their way around the newsletter. Written comments were more mixed. Some respondents found it easy to scroll through and locate information, while others described the layout as busy or said specific topics were difficult to find. Suggested improvements included a summary or contents list at the beginning, navigation anchors, direct links to detailed information and grouping content by suburb or local area. One respondent also noted possible compatibility issues across devices or computers. Thirteen comments were received in total.

Q8. How do you find the length of the newsletter?

Most respondents felt the newsletter length is appropriate.

- 86% said it is **about right** (79 respondents)
- 8% said it is **too long** (7 respondents)
- 4% said it is **too short** (4 respondents)
- 2% were **not sure** (2 respondents).



No follow-up question was asked.

Q9. What would you like to see more of? *(Respondents could select up to two options)*

The most commonly requested content included:

- more updates on outcomes and what happened after consultation
- more information on local projects and projects near respondents' homes
- more opportunities to have a say
- more community stories and local highlights
- shorter, more concise content
- more maps, visuals and location information
- more information about infrastructure, maintenance and planning matters
- more environmental and sustainability-related content.

What we heard

A small number of respondents suggested they would like to see more information about local conservation, gardening, plants and wildlife, as well as practical Council services such as pothole repairs, road upgrades, street cleaning and footpath maintenance. While this feedback highlights the broader information needs of some readers, these topics sit outside the main purpose of the Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter, which is focused on community engagement activities, consultation opportunities, project updates and reporting back on outcomes. Council uses other communication channels, such as the Banner, NFON and E-news to share broader updates about Council services, initiatives and general community information. One respondent did not request any additional content. Four comments were received in total.

Q10. What would make the newsletter more useful for you? *(open comment answer)*

Several common themes emerged,

- Increased transparency about how decisions are made.
- More reporting on project outcomes and completed actions.
- More suburb-specific information.
- Clearer project locations and maps.
- More practical information about Council services and infrastructure projects.
- Improved navigation and links to additional information.
- Greater focus on issues that directly affect residents.

What we heard

Many respondents were satisfied with the current newsletter format. However, respondents wanted the newsletter to provide more locally relevant, practical and transparent information. They asked for suburb or ward-based updates, clearer coverage of major projects and Council services, and stronger reporting on what Council heard, what was decided, why decisions were made and what happened next.

Some preferred shorter summaries with links to more detailed information, while others wanted greater depth, clearer maps and locations, and fewer promotional images, more community voices, more timely distribution, email updates and hard-copy options.

Several respondents were satisfied with the newsletter as it is, showing that improvements should build on the existing format rather than replace it. Fifty-four comments were received in total.

Conclusion

The survey results show that the Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter is a valued communication channel. Most respondents read the newsletter regularly, find it useful, and feel it is easy to read and navigate. The newsletter is helping members stay informed about Council projects and opportunities to have their say.

While feedback was largely positive, respondents identified opportunities to improve the newsletter by providing more localised content, clearer updates on project outcomes, and stronger reporting on how community feedback has influenced decisions. Many respondents also wanted more information about what happens after consultation closes and the progress of projects over time.

Overall, the findings suggest the current format is working well and does not require significant changes. Future improvements should focus on strengthening transparency, highlighting outcomes, and helping members better understand the impact of how their feedback has informed Council decisions and actions.

Recommendation: Continue the ***Shaping Banyule Member Newsletter*** as a key engagement and communication tool, while making targeted improvements that respond to what members said they value most. This should include a stronger and more consistent focus on "You said, we did" reporting, clearer updates on project outcomes and next steps, and more localised content that helps members find projects and opportunities relevant to their suburb or ward. The current format, readability and overall length should be maintained, as most respondents were satisfied with these elements.