

Community Engagement findings

This report summarises the insights gathered through community engagement activities undertaken to inform the development of Inclusive Banyule 2026-33.

Engagement process undertaken

A series of engagement activities were undertaken to inform the development of Inclusive Banyule 2026-33. These activities included:

- Review of 12,883 points of feedback collected from 13 consultations to identify key themes and reoccurring needs in the community.
- Establishment of an Inclusive Banyule Working Group with 9 members of the Connected Communities Advisory Committee who met regularly to:
 - Review the preliminary achievements and evaluation findings of Inclusive Banyule 2022-206,
 - Contribute to Gender Impact Assessment and Report
 - Provide insights, advice, and lived experience perspectives aligned with adopted priorities and support the development of actions to achieve agreed outcomes
 - Provide advice on alignment with legislation, national/state and local priorities and evidence and data on local needs and best practice.
- Shaping Banyule survey and pop-up sessions to capture diverse perspectives across the community and organisation:
 - 51 survey responses received via Shaping Banyule
 - 14 community conversations undertaken at pop-up sessions
 - Responses from 24 representatives across key local organisations, including neighbourhood houses, libraries, sport and recreation centres, health services, disability providers and sporting clubs.
- Banyule City Council staff inclusion survey undertaken to understand staff knowledge, experience and confidence in working with Banyule's diverse communities, and to identify areas where further support or capacity building may be required.
 - 79 responses received

This report provides a high-level overview of the key findings from the consultation process, drawing together the perspectives shared across all engagement activities. It identifies common themes and areas of strong alignment, while also highlighting differences in experiences, priorities and needs across community members, stakeholders and staff.

Inclusion in the Banyule community

- Belonging: feeling welcome, safe, respected and able to be yourself
- Equity: fair access to opportunities, services and spaces
- Participation: the ability to influence, contribute and be involved
- Representation: seeing yourself reflected in places, programs and decisions

- Responsiveness: Council listening and acting on community needs

Barriers to inclusion

- Affordability and financial exclusion
- Accessibility including physical, sensory, digital and access for people with hidden disabilities.
- Access to transport and movement around Banyule
- Communication and awareness of opportunities and information
- Safety and discrimination
- System and process barriers
- Structural and systemic disadvantage

Themes across community engagement responses

- **Shared understanding of inclusion:** belonging, safety, fairness, participation and representation
- **Core barriers are the same:** Cost and affordability, accessibility (physical, social, digital), transport and connectivity, communication and awareness
- **Safety and discrimination are critical issues:** Experiences of racism, exclusion and lack of cultural safety impact participation
- **Communication is a major system weakness:** Information not accessible, consistent or reaching people and there is an over-reliance on passive communication
- **Co-design and genuine engagement:** Progress beyond consultation to shared decision-making and embed lived experience early and throughout
- **Build trust and transparency:** community want to see how their input influences decisions and better process to close the feedback loop.
- **Local, low-barrier social connection:** Informal, accessible, community-led activities

Differences across community engagement responses

The differences across the community engagement responses were primarily about perspective and level of detail, rather than disagreement. A very small proportion of responses included comments that were inconsistent with the Community Vision 2041, indicating a lack of support for focusing on the needs of diverse communities.

Community members consistently spoke about tangible, lived experiences of inclusion, such as feeling safe in spaces, affordability, accessibility and experiences of discrimination or belonging. In contrast, the Working Groups and partner organisations framed these same issues at a system level, identifying the need for structural changes such as universal design standards, improved engagement processes, and stronger coordination across services. This difference was the result of a targeted focus on systems level change and maturing of understanding developed over a series of working group sessions. The Working Group and partner organisations also emphasised that achieving inclusion requires shared responsibility across Council and the broader service sector, including adequate resourcing, collaboration, and consistent approaches.

Staff insights sit between these perspectives, highlighting the practical challenges of delivering inclusion, including capability, confidence, and the need for more tools and guidance. Together, these perspectives provide a complementary picture from lived experience through to system design and delivery.

Inclusive Banyule Planning Environments

Inclusive neighbourhood places and spaces

The community told us that:

- spaces are critical to belonging, connection and participation
- experiences vary significantly by location and identity.

What is needed

- Design of places and spaces must go beyond universal design and minimum compliance
- Cultural safety and visible representation
- Better maintained and activated spaces
- Community co-design across project lifecycle
- Affordable or free access for community groups

Inclusive services, programs and events

The community told us that:

- cost and affordability barriers to participation
- people don't know about participation pathways
- there are gaps in service provision, especially for people aged 25–60
- programs not designed for diverse needs.

What is needed

- Inclusion embedded as standard practice
- Co-design with lived experience from the start
- Stronger cultural safety and representation
- Variety and choice to meet different needs

Inclusive Civic participation

The community told us that:

- there is low trust in the impact of community engagement
- perception that engagement does not lead to change.

What is needed

- Deliberative, equity-led participation models
- Stronger feedback loops “you said xxxx, we did xxxx”
- Clear representation targets and accountability
- Pathways into leadership, governance and employment

Social connection and community life

The community told us that they want:

- informal, low-pressure, local activities
- interest-based and intergenerational connection
- “Come and try” opportunities
- hyper-local events and neighbourhood activation.