

# **Community Engagement Framework**

## **Closing the loop**

February 2022

## Purpose

This report describes the community consultation undertaken to inform the development of Greater Western Water's Community Engagement Framework. It outlines why and how we engaged with the community and summarises the feedback we received. It also advises how that feedback helped shape our final framework.

This report 'closes the loop' by reporting back to the community and sharing what you told us.

The community's input during this consultation period helped to shape the negotiable aspects of this framework. This report will:

- Outline the analysis of the feedback received.
- Document the themes that emerged.
- Provide an analysis of who participated in the process.
- Document the communication channels used reach our community.
- Clearly define how the feedback helped shape the final Community Engagement Framework.

## Background

There is increasing recognition by government and the community of the value of public participation in decision making. Community engagement helps guide our decisions as we can draw on community insights and ideas in addition to our own expertise. Community engagement also helps our community understand the decision-making process, which leads to increased trust.

To support our ambition to involve community in the way we work to make better decisions together, in 2021, we developed a Draft Community Engagement Framework. The framework was based on extensive research and benchmarking activities to determine what best practice and effective engagement looked like.

In the initial stages we asked our people for their insights on the definition and principles to determine what good engagement means to Greater Western Water. We then asked the community for their views on the draft framework.

## Engagement objectives

In keeping with step 1 of our engagement process, we identified our engagement objectives. These are described in our communications and engagement plan and include:

- Adopt an 'involve' approach on the IAP2 level of engagement spectrum (see Figure 1).

- Provide the community with a clear understanding of the negotiable and non-negotiable aspects of the consultation.
- Increase community understanding of what community engagement means to Greater Western Water.
- Identify broad engagement methods that are inclusive and minimise barriers to participation.
- Develop a good understanding of what our communities' concerns and aspirations are around the framework through varied feedback methods.
- Evidence-based evaluation and reporting.

Level of engagement	Public participation goal	Promise to the public
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Figure 1. (c) International Association for Public Participation [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)

## Engagement tools – how we engaged

Before we finalised our engagement process and tools, we took the time to understand our community and identify groups that would be interested and/or affected by the framework. We used statistics from the ABS 2016 Census and data collected from previous engagement and insight activities to build a picture of our community. This guided the selection of tools that would maximise community participation and help us collect meaningful feedback.

We created two YourSay webpages:

1. a main Draft Engagement Framework feedback webpage, and
2. a secondary Easy English webpage for people with low English literacy.

The webpages asked the community to consider the draft framework and tell us what they thought we got right and what they thought needed to change.

Both webpages offered a variety of methods to access the framework and provide feedback.

The four-week feedback period was from 25 October to 22 November 2021.

### Main YourSay page

The Draft Community Engagement Framework document was provided as:

- Full Draft Community Engagement Framework document
- Summary: Draft Community Engagement Framework document
- Easy English summary document
- Summary: Draft Community Engagement Framework document, in six languages:
  - Arabic
  - Italian
  - Mandarin (Chinese simplified)
  - Punjabi
  - Turkish
  - Vietnamese.

People were able to respond through various methods:

- a quick poll
- a survey
- written feedback in English and other languages
- voice recording in English and other languages
- Good engagement: Tell us about your good engagement experience.

### Easy English YourSay page

This was a simplified version of the main YourSay page. The Draft Community Engagement Framework document was provided as an Easy English summary document. Clear steps were included on how to provide feedback.

People were able to respond through:

- a short survey
- a quick poll
- voice recording in English and other languages.

## Communications – who we reached

We used a range of communication methods to reach our diverse community members and directed them to the main YourSay webpage and the Easy English webpage to access the draft framework and provide their feedback.

Over the four-week consultation period, our broad communications activities included:

- Emails to key stakeholders
- Organic and paid social media posts
- News article on the GWW website
- Electronic newsletter to our regional community panel database
- Article in five regional newspapers:
  - *Gisborne Gazette*
  - *Riddell Roundup*
  - *Romsey Rag*
  - *Woodend Star*
  - *Lancefield Mercury*
- Text message burst to metropolitan hardship customers
- Electronic newsletter to metropolitan hardship customers
- Post on the Victorian Government Innovation Network, public engagement community of practice.

Outlined below is a summary of communication methods and reach.



### **Regional newsletter**

over 56,000 people



### **5 Regional newspaper articles**

over 18,500 people



### **Text message burst**

181 people



### **Metro hardship newsletter**

933 people



### **Stakeholder newsletter**

82 recipients



### **Vic Gov Innovation Network**

929 engagement professionals



### Facebook

#### Post 1 (9 Nov)

19,778 people reached  
51 engagements\*

#### Post 2 (15 Nov)

921 people reached  
15 engagements

#### Post 3 (22 Nov)

734 people reached  
8 engagements

\*Likes, comments, shares and click throughs



### Instagram

#### Post 1

131 accounts reached  
13 content interactions\*

#### Post 2

13 accounts reached  
18 content interactions

#### Post 3

101 accounts reached  
3 content interactions

\*click throughs and profile visits



### Twitter

#### Post 1

119 impressions\*  
9 engagements\*\*

#### Post 2

115 impressions  
9 engagements

\*the number of times a tweet appears to users. \*\*user interaction with a tweet



### LinkedIn

#### Post 1

1086 organic impressions  
4 shares  
19 reactions

## Engagement outcomes – what you told us

Seventy-two surveys and 21 quick polls were completed during the engagement period. This feedback helped us to sort and group information into themes and analyse emerging trends and points of difference in responses.



### **Main page on YourSay**

1,128 views  
1,026 visits - 96% were first time visitors



### **Easy English page on YourSay**

300 views  
278 visits - 92% were first time visitors



### **Online survey**

48 contributors



### **Easy English online survey**

24 contributors



### **Quick poll**

17 contributors



### **Quick poll**

4 contributors

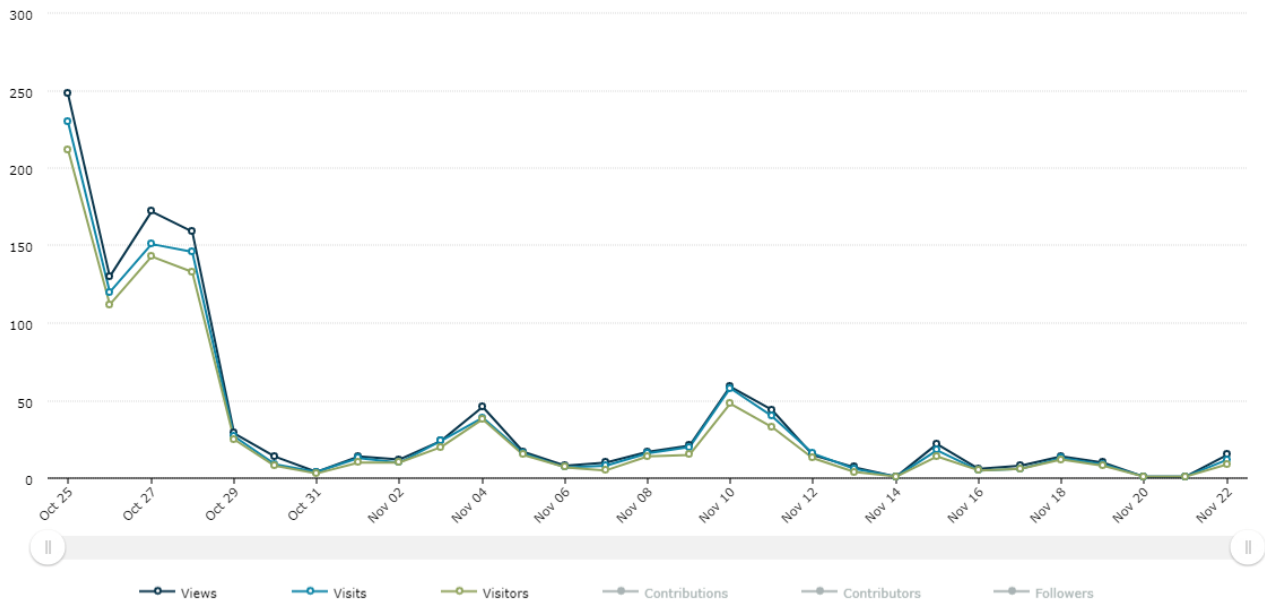


### **Good engagement experience - share your story**

0 contributors

## YourSay interactions

### Main YourSay page



1,128 views

1,026 visits

846 visitors

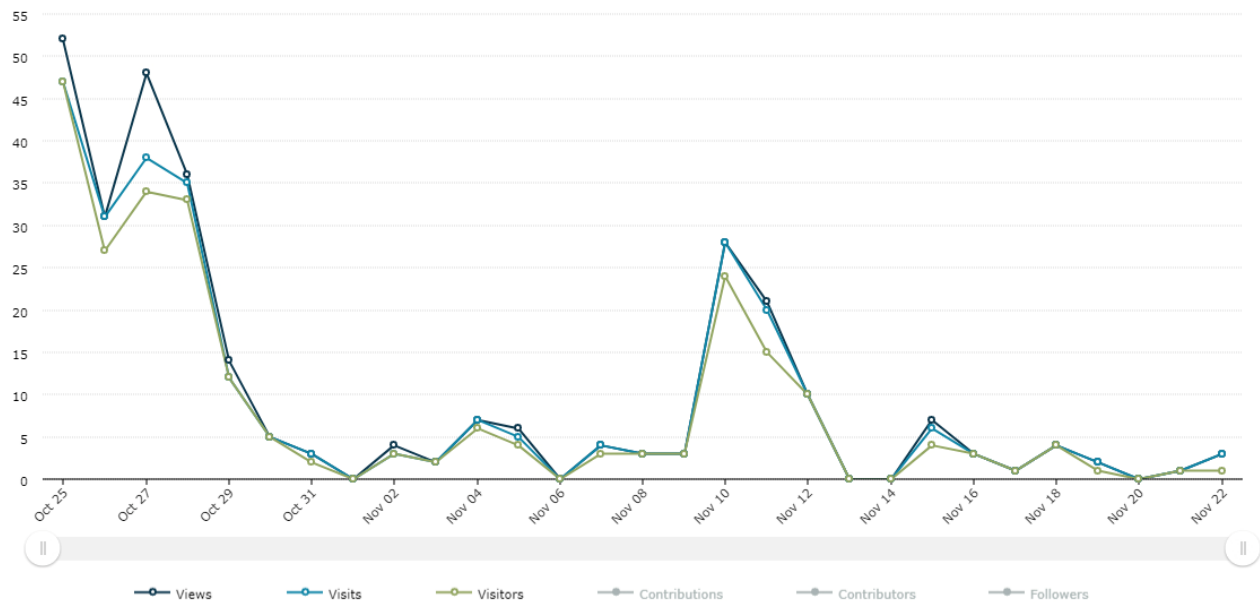
Views: total number of times a user viewed the page

Visits: individual browsing sessions

Visitors: unique users that visited the site



## Easy English YourSay page



298 views

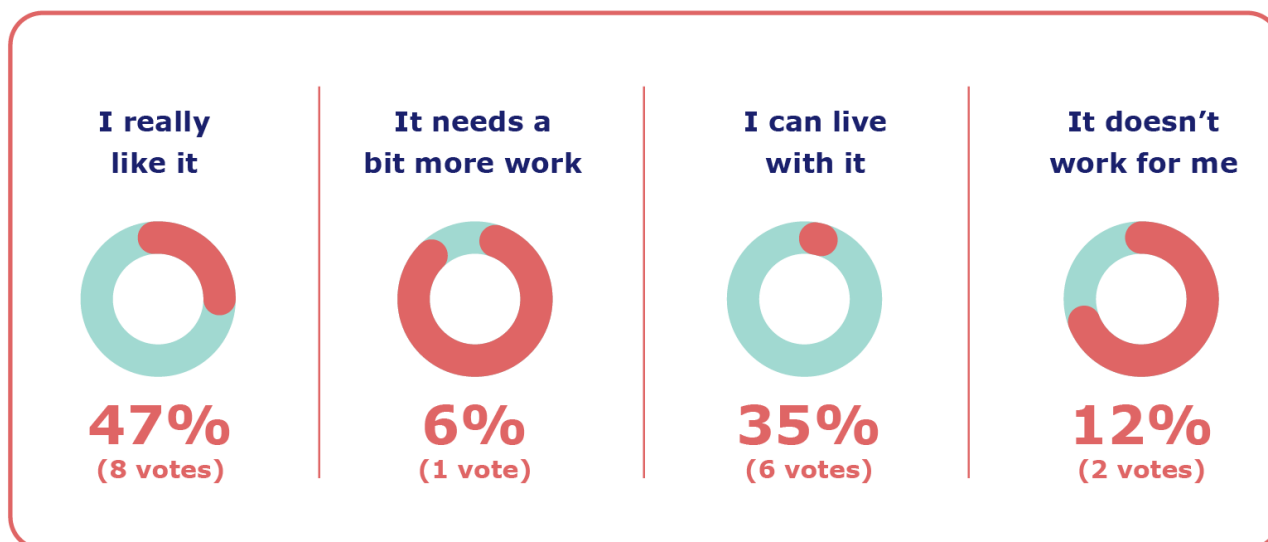
276 visits

231 visitors

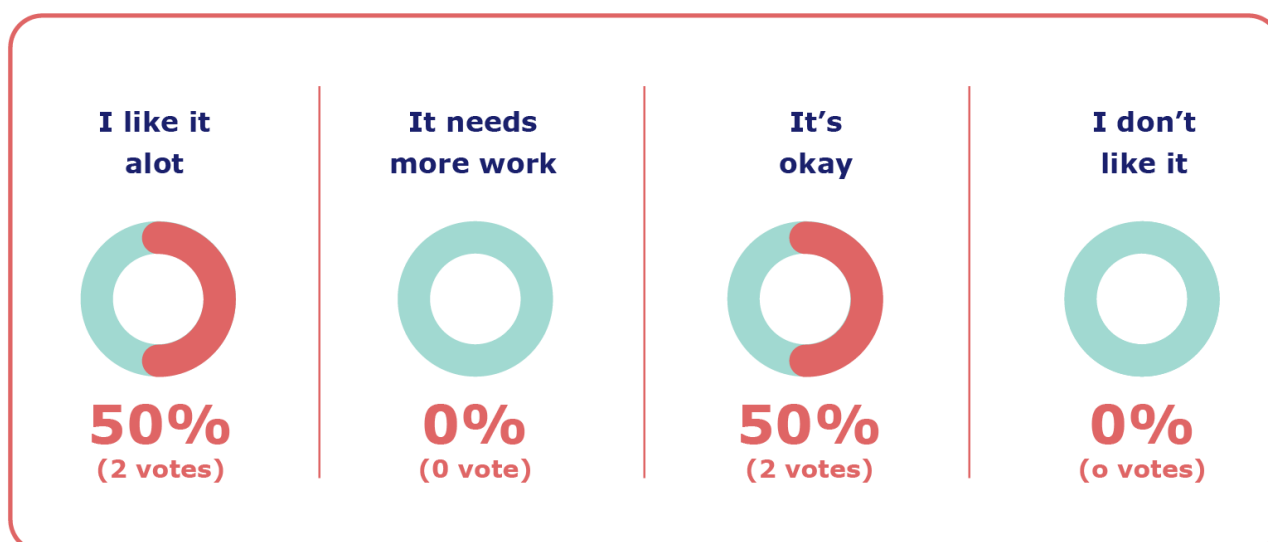
## Quick poll results

The quick polls asked respondents to select their response to the question:  
Overall, what do you think of the Draft Framework?

### Main YourSay page



### Easy English YourSay page



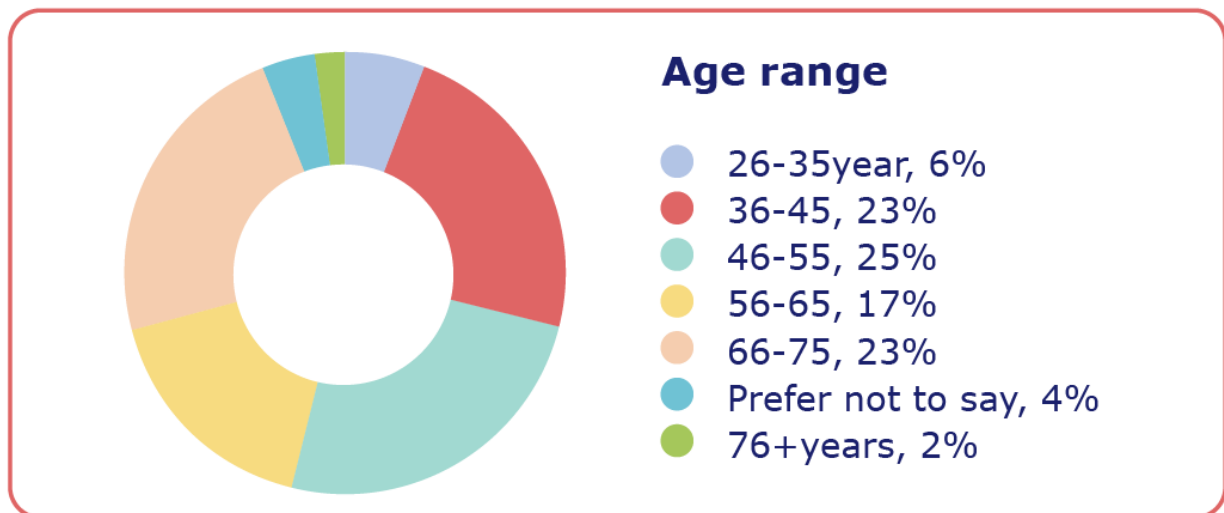
## Survey analysis

### Demographic information

Promotion of our engagement activities were planned with our diverse community front of mind. We considered the following demographics:

- Age
- People with English as their second language
- Low English proficiency
- People with a disability
- Vulnerable communities
- LGBTIQ+ communities
- First Nations people

### Participants by age

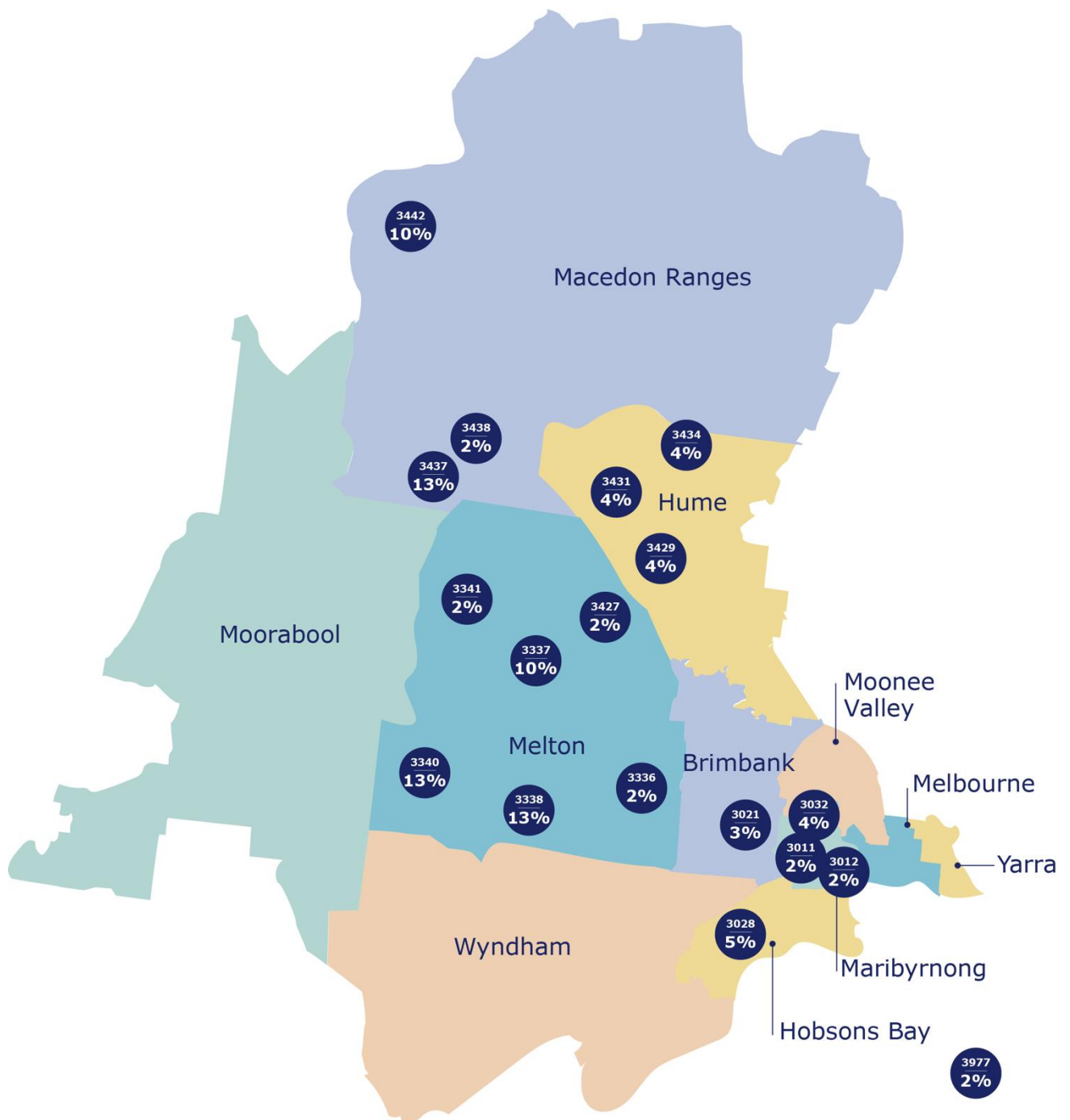


### Participation of diverse group



 People who speak a language other than English **Yes: 13%**

## Participants by location (postcode)



## How your feedback influenced the framework

The following table summarises the key themes gathered from community feedback and indicates the changes applied to the definition, principles, process steps and overall framework as a result of the feedback.

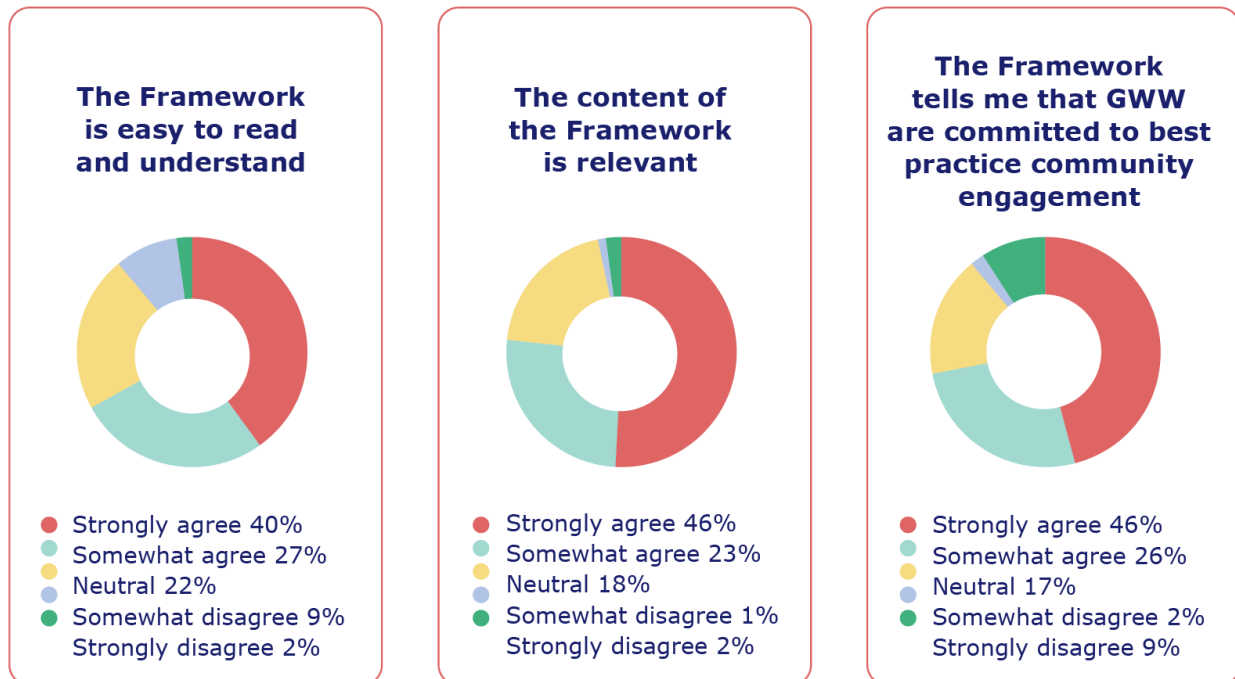
To maintain privacy, individual quotes have not been included. Where applicable, the number of responses or references to a topic is specified in brackets. Themes identified in the feedback are presented as statements and represent of the blending of several responses.

We asked	Quantitative data/key themes	Action taken
<b>Does this definition have meaning for you?</b> <i>An ongoing partnership with our diverse community to plan and deliver our services</i>	Yes 63% No 23% Unsure 14%	No action required.
<b>Is there anything missing from the definition, or would you like to make some comments about it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership is not the right word, maybe collaboration (8)</li> <li>GWW to be accountable for/committed to this definition (5)</li> <li>Well thought out (3)</li> <li>Embed this across all GWW engagement work (2)</li> <li>Engagement is not acceptance of all ideas</li> </ul>	The definition has been changed to: <i>A commitment to collaborate with our diverse community to plan and deliver our services</i> In response to embed across all work, this is addressed in the next section.
<b>Would you like us to make changes to these principles or add new principles?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement is unnecessary for a water provider (2)</li> <li>GWW to be accountable for these principles (6)</li> <li>Communicate regularly and be personable with your communication (3)</li> <li>It doesn't respect regional (2)</li> <li>They look great (3)</li> <li>Record feedback accurately and without bias</li> <li>The process step graphic was great (2)</li> </ul>	In response to GWW being accountable, we have changed the wording in the lead-in paragraph to the principles to: <i>We are guided by the following principles when designing and delivering our engagement activities and are committed to embedding them across all engagement programs organisationally.</i> In response to recording feedback accurately and without bias, we have changed the wording in the Integrity principle to:

We asked	Quantitative data/key themes	Action taken
		<p>We are accountable for engaging early, protecting people's privacy and addressing concerns or questions along the way. We report on the engagement outcomes accurately and without bias and share the impact of the community's input on the decision.</p> <p>In response to communicating regularly we have changed the wording in the Respect principle to:</p> <p>We acknowledge the expertise, perspective and needs of customers, community and stakeholders and communicate with them at key milestones.</p>
<p><b>Do you think we got it right?</b></p>	<p>Yes 45% Mostly 35% Unsure 6% Not really 4% No 10%</p>	<p>No action required.</p>
<p><b>Do you have any further feedback?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing a step to undertake the work (4)</li> <li>• Get better at closing the loop (4)</li> <li>• Well thought out (4)</li> <li>• Need flexibility in the process for organisational growth</li> <li>• Agree that purpose should be first but who does this? (2)</li> <li>• Recommend more traditional methods of engagement such as letterbox drops and face to face</li> <li>• GWW should be proud of this work. I've not come across this level of engagement with any of my other service providers</li> <li>• Add the LGBTIQA+ acronym to the definitions table and use the words 'these communities' as there are many</li> </ul>	<p>In response to missing a step to undertake the work, we have included an extra step:</p> <p><b>Deliver engagement</b></p> <p>We will use the plan to guide our delivery of meaningful and inclusive engagement. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the diverse needs of our community and aim to reduce barriers to participation.</li> <li>• Creating opportunity for broad participation.</li> <li>• Engaging early to bring our community along on the journey.</li> <li>• Factoring in lessons learnt from previous engagement activities.</li> <li>• Planning around the purpose of engagement, for example the level of engagement and the negotiables to increase transparency.</li> </ul>

We asked	Quantitative data/key themes	Action taken
		<p>In response to GWW getting better at 'closing the loop' we have changed the wording in the Analyse and Report step to:</p> <p>We analyse the findings of engagement activities and document these to communicate the findings back to participants, known as 'closing the loop'.</p> <p>In response to clarifying 'who' agrees on purpose we have changed the wording in step one to:</p> <p>GWW will define the purpose of the engagement, what we are seeking to achieve and what can or cannot be influenced through the process.</p> <p>In response to the LGBTIQA+ feedback we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed the wording in the planning for engagement activities table to: Identify community leaders or peak organisations to connect with to engage with members of these communities.</li> <li>• Added the LGBTIQA+ acronym to the definitions:</li> </ul> <p>LGBTIQA+ An acronym used for an umbrella of communities who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual.</p>

## The following questions were optional



The responses show broad support for the draft framework content.

## Conclusion and next steps

Greater Western Water's Board Committee endorsed the Community Engagement Framework in December 2021. The final framework document has been released with this consultation report to community on our YourSay site.

We will take steps to embed this framework internally, to ensure that our commitment to community is clear and consistent in all engagement projects across the organisation.

We will begin work to identify how and when we will check-in with you to measure our success against the framework.