

Cardinia Shire Council

Engagement summary report

Festival and Events Funding Policy

February 2026

Contents

1	Executive summary	2
2	Community consultation	2
2.1	Objectives and purpose	2
2.2	Engagement promotion	3
2.3	Who we heard from	3
3	Engagement findings	4
3.1	Survey data	4
4	Decision making	6
5	Evaluation	6
5.1	How the results shaped the outcome	6
6	Appendices	7
6.1	Appendix 1 - Consultation survey	7
6.2	Appendix 2 - Consultation data and analysis	10
6.3	Appendix 3 - Promotion of the engagement	12

1 Executive summary

Council is developing a key document to guide the future of cultural activity across the shire: the Festivals and Events Funding Policy, which outlines how Council supports and funds festivals and events, which sets the framework for planning, creating, and managing festival and events within the community. This policy aims to strengthen and coordinate Cardinia Shire's cultural life, ensuring that festivals, and events are delivered in a way that reflects community needs, enhances public spaces, and contributes to a vibrant and connected municipality.

As part of this work, Council sought input on community priorities relating to cultural activity. The consultation invited feedback on the types of festivals and events most valued, preferred locations for cultural activity, and how Council could best support a diverse and sustainable cultural environment across the shire.

Community members were able to participate in several ways. An online survey was made available for those wishing to provide feedback on one or both policies, with printed copies offered on request. Additional engagement opportunities included contributing to online discussion forums, using an interactive map to identify preferred locations for festivals and events, and attending community popup sessions held throughout the consultation period. These activities were designed to ensure broad and accessible participation as Council worked to shape the future of cultural engagement in Cardinia Shire.

2 Community consultation

The festival engagement feedback reflects a strong and consistent community desire for connection, local identity, cultural expression, and grassroots-led experiences. Over 79% of participants regularly attend local festivals, and more than 40% are involved in producing/organising them in some capacity. Sentiment was largely positive, with recurring emphasis on belonging, inclusion, and the need to support small volunteer-run festivals through better funding and structures.

2.1 Objectives and purpose

The purpose of this engagement was to gather community insights to inform the development of Council's Festivals Policy. The engagement sought to understand community priorities, identify the types of festivals and events most valued, and explore how Council could best support a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable program of cultural activity across Cardinia Shire.

Key objectives included:

- Determining community preferences regarding festival and event themes, formats, and scale.
- Identifying gaps and opportunities in the current festival and events landscape.
- Understanding expectations about Council's role in supporting and funding these activities.
- Ensuring the resulting policy reflected community needs and supported equitable cultural participation.

2.2 Engagement promotion

A range of promotional methods and engagement activities were employed to encourage broad participation across the shire.

Engagement opportunities were promoted through Council's digital channels, existing networks, community newsletters, and local platforms to maximise reach.

Community members were invited to participate through:

- **Online Survey:** An accessible survey that allowed respondents to provide feedback on festival and event priorities, and comment on Council's role and funding approach. Printed surveys were available on request.
- **Online Discussion Forums:** Participants shared ideas and discussed what types of festivals and events they valued.
- **Interactive Mapping Tool:** Users identified preferred locations for festivals and events and highlighted opportunities for future activation.
- **Community Pop-Up Sessions:** Face-to-face engagement sessions were held across various locations throughout the consultation period, enabling informal discussions and direct feedback.
- These activities were designed to ensure that a wide cross-section of the community could participate in a way that suited their preferences.

2.3 Who we heard from

The engagement attracted steady community interest throughout the consultation period. Website analytics indicate that the project page received 658 page views, resulting in 520 visits from 316 unique visitors.

These insights show that the engagement reached a broad cross-section of the community, with multiple visitors returning to the project page to explore information or participate in the survey, map, or forum activities. While demographic and location-based data were not captured within the visitation dataset, the volume of unique visitors suggests that awareness of the project extended across a diverse range of community members.

The engagement approach—including online tools, interactive features, and in-person pop-ups—supported participation from residents with varied interests, accessibility needs, and levels of familiarity with Council processes. The number of return visits also indicates sustained curiosity and ongoing engagement with the development of the Festivals and Events Funding Policy.

3 Engagement findings

Community feedback highlighted several recurring themes that informed the development of the policy. The key themes included:

1. Celebration of Local Culture and Diversity
2. Participants expressed strong interest in festivals and events that celebrate the shire's cultural diversity, local stories, and community identities.
3. Family-Friendly and Inclusive Activities
4. There was a desire for events that are welcoming, accessible, and suitable for all ages, with emphasis on affordability and inclusivity.
5. Geographic Distribution and Accessibility
6. Feedback indicated the importance of ensuring events are spread across the shire to improve accessibility for residents in both growth areas and rural townships.
7. Support for Local Creatives and Organisations
8. Community members identified opportunities for Council to further support local artists, performers, and community groups through funding, training, and partnership opportunities.
9. Vibrant Public Spaces and Local Activation
10. Many respondents highlighted the value of activating parks, town centres, and community precincts through festivals and events that bring people together and enliven public spaces.
11. Sustainability and Long-Term Planning
12. Community input emphasised the importance of environmentally responsible event delivery and supportive structures that allow festivals to be sustainable and continue year-to-year.

3.1 Survey data

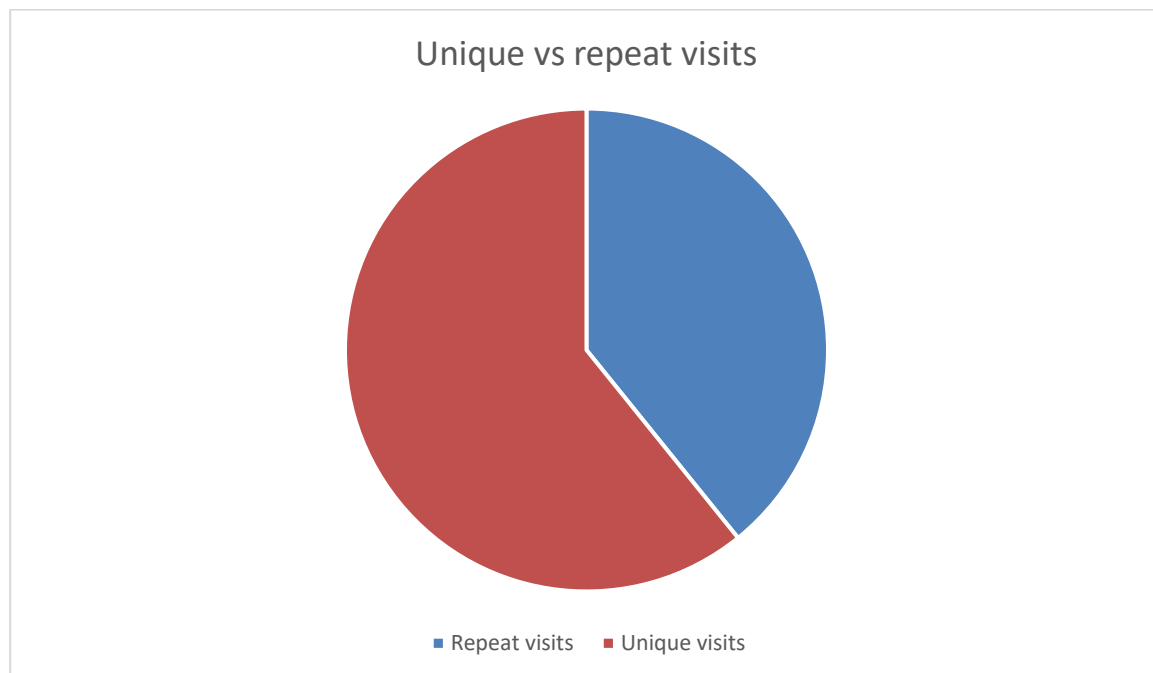


Figure 1: Unique vs repeat visits: 316 first-time visits vs 204 repeat visits which means 60.8% unique, 39.2% repeat

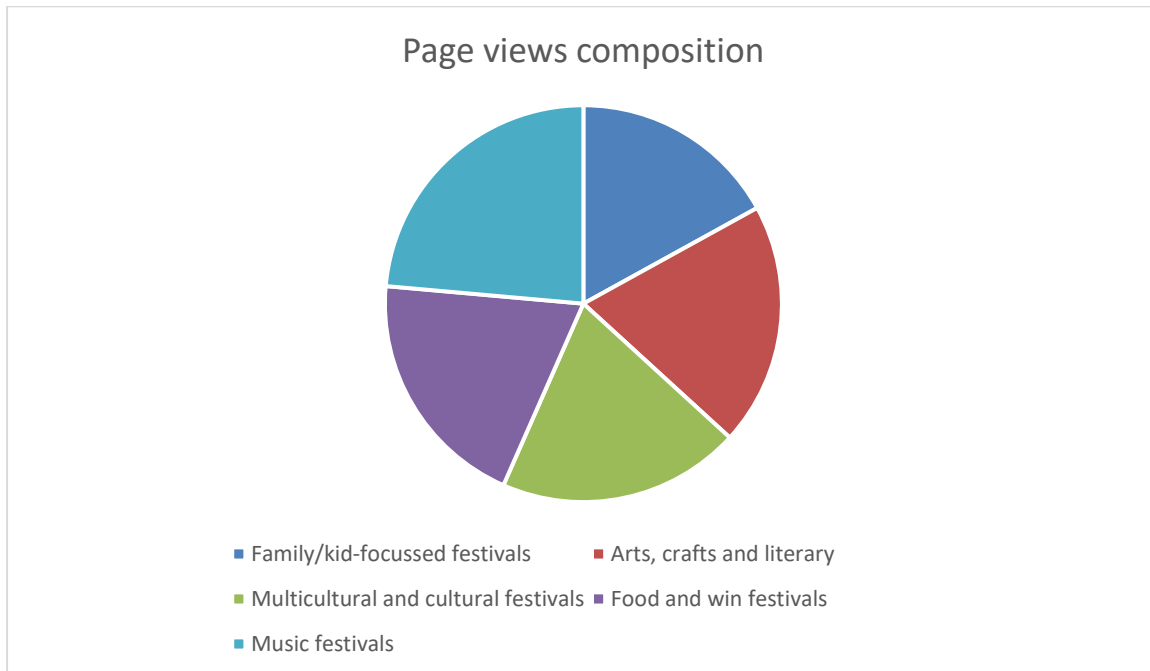


Figure 2: Page views composition: 520 baseline page views (1 per visit) vs 138 additional page views meaning 79.0% baseline, 21.0% additional.

What this means

- Design for families & access: Calls for inclusive, affordable, all-ages programming feature strongly.
- Balance the map: Requests to distribute festivals beyond growth nodes into smaller townships and rural areas.
- Back local makers: Support (funding, skills, partnerships) for local artists, producers and volunteer groups.
- Program the favourites: Music, food & wine, multicultural and arts-led festivals top the list of desired activity.

The community emphasised the importance of supporting grassroots and community led festivals, identifying this as the top ranked priority in the survey results. They also expressed a strong desire to increase multicultural and inclusive festivals that reflect Cardinia Shire's growing diversity, alongside calls to expand festival activity across rural, hills, and growth area townships, rather than concentrating primarily in major centres.

Feedback highlighted the need to grow youth and family friendly festival content, including safe and engaging nighttime activation, while also recognising the pressure on volunteer run festivals and the need to strengthen volunteer sustainability through improved funding pathways, training, and shared resources.

Respondents also voiced interest in seeing more live music and creative arts festivals that showcase and elevate local talent, and underscored the importance of building accessible, free or low-cost festival experiences to ensure all community members can participate-led festivals, identifying this as the top-ranked priority in the survey results.

They also expressed a strong desire to increase multicultural and inclusive festivals that reflect Cardinia Shire's growing diversity, alongside calls to expand festival activity across rural, hills, and growth-area townships, rather than concentrating primarily in major centres.

Feedback highlighted the need to grow youth and family-friendly festival content, including safe and engaging night-time activation, while also recognising the pressure on volunteer-run festivals and the need to strengthen volunteer sustainability through improved funding pathways, training, and shared resources. Respondents also voiced interest in seeing more live music and creative arts festivals that showcase and elevate local talent, and underscored the importance of building accessible, free or low-cost festival experiences to ensure all community members can participate.

4 Decision making

The findings from the consultation will directly inform the development of Cardinia Shire Council's Festivals and Events Funding Policy. Community feedback has highlighted clear priorities including geographic equity, youth-focused programming, cultural diversity, accessible grant processes, and regular local activation.

These insights will guide Council's decisions around funding allocation, grant program design, event location targeting, and investment planning, ensuring that future policy directions are evidence-based, community-led, and responsive to the needs of residents across the full breadth of the shire — from growth areas to rural and hills communities.

5 Evaluation

The engagement was successful in reaching a broad cross-section of the community, attracting 316 unique visitors to the project page and generating meaningful qualitative and quantitative feedback across multiple participation channels.

The combination of online surveys, discussion forums, interactive mapping, and in-person popup sessions ensured that residents with varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs could contribute.

The high rate of return visits suggests sustained community interest in the policy development process. Future engagement processes may benefit from capturing demographic and location-based data to better understand the geographic spread of participants and identify any gaps in reach.

5.1 How the results shaped the outcome

Community feedback will play a central role in developing the Festivals and Events Funding Policy. The strong community desire for grassroots and volunteer-led festivals directly informed the inclusion of a dedicated policy principle supporting accessible and proportionate funding pathways for community-run organisations.

Calls for greater geographic distribution of events influenced the policy's commitment to supporting festivals across rural, hills, and growth-area townships, not just major centres. The emphasis on inclusivity, affordability, and multicultural programming shaped the policy's eligibility and assessment criteria.

Feedback regarding volunteer sustainability led to emphasise in-kind support as a recognised co-contribution, and the need for simplified processes and officer guidance for smaller organisations. Together, the engagement findings ensured the resulting policy is grounded in genuine community need and reflects the cultural aspirations of Cardinia Shire residents.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 - Consultation survey

Click or tap here to enter text.

Survey

Your feedback will help us create two new policies for Arts, Culture and Events in our shire. Please take 10 minutes to complete our quick survey and share your thoughts!

01. I understand that any written de-identified feedback provided by me is not confidential and might be published in council reports or relevant meeting agendas available on the Council's website. ^{Required}

☐ Yes

02. Which policy/policies are you interested in providing feedback on? ^{Required}

Select one answer only

☐ Festivals and Events Funding Program

☐ Public Art Policy

☐ Both

Section 1: General Cultural Engagement

03. How do you currently engage with our community's cultural life? (Select all that apply) ^{Required}

Select all that apply

☐ Attend festivals/events as a visitor

☐ Organise or produce festivals/events

☐ Create or commission public art

☐ Perform/exhibit at festivals/events

☐ Volunteer at cultural activities

☐ Work in related industries (hospitality, tourism, creative)

☐ View/interact with art (including public art)

☐ Other

04. What is your connection to Cardinia Shire? ^{Required}

Select one answer only

☐ I live in Cardinia Shire

☐ Events that showcase local talent

☐ Other (please specify)

Select all that apply

☐ Professional artists and curators

☐ Community members

☐ I live in Cardinia Shire

☐ I work in Cardinia Shire

09. What criteria should be used when assessing festivals and events funding applications? (Rank the importance of each option: drag your most important choice to the top and your least important choice to the bottom) ^{Required}

Select 5 answers

☐ Artistic/cultural merit

☐ Community engagement and accessibility

☐ Economic impact

☐ Environmental sustainability

☐ Cultural diversity and inclusion

☐ Innovation and creativity

☐ Track record of applicant

☐ Partnerships and collaboration

☐ Long-term sustainability

☐ Alignment with community needs

☐ Other (please specify)

Section 3: Public Art Policy

Public Artwork is Artwork that is displayed in public spaces, typically (but not limited to) outdoors, and accessible to everyone. Public art can be permanent or temporary. It's impact goes beyond aesthetics, contributing to cultural expression, community engagement, civic pride, placemaking and revitalisation, and economic and tourism development.

10. What do you value most about public art in our community? (Select all that apply) ^{Required}

Select all that apply

☐ Beautifies public spaces

☐ Reflects community identity/culture

☐ Creates meeting points and gathering spaces

☐ Supports local artists

☐ Tells stories about our history

☐ Durability and maintenance considerations

☐	Environmental sustainability
☐	Cultural diversity and inclusion
☐	Innovation and creativity
☐	Artist qualifications/experience
☐	Connection to place/community
☐	Safety and universal design
☐	Budget and value for money
☐	Other (please specify)

Further comments

15. Is there anything else you'd like to share about arts, culture, festivals, or events in our community?

Maximum of 500 characters

Demographics

This section contains questions to help us understand those within our community that have provided feedback. The information your provide is confidential and non-identifiable.

16. Are you responding to this survey as an individual or on behalf of a group, committee, or organisation? Required

Select one answer only
☐ As an individual
☐ On behalf of a community group
☐ On behalf of a committee

☐ On behalf of an organisation
☐ Other

17. If you are responding on behalf of any group, committee, or organisation, please provide its name and contact details

18. Select all that apply to you. I am.... Required

Select all that apply
☐ A person living with a disability or a carer
☐ Someone who speaks a language other than English at home
☐ Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
☐ A member of the LGBTQIA+ community
☐ None of the above

19. Age Group Required

Select one answer only
☐ Under 9
☐ 10-14
☐ 15-19
☐ 20-24
☐ 25-29
☐ 30-34
☐ 35-39
☐ 40-44
☐ 45-49
☐ 50-54
☐ 55-59
☐ 60-64
☐ 65-69

☐ 70-74
☐ 75-79
☐ 80-84
☐ 85 and over

20. Gender Required

Select one answer only	
☐ Male	
☐ Female	
☐ Non-binary	
☐ Self-described	
☐ I'd prefer not to say	

21. Postcode Required

Maximum of 4 characters

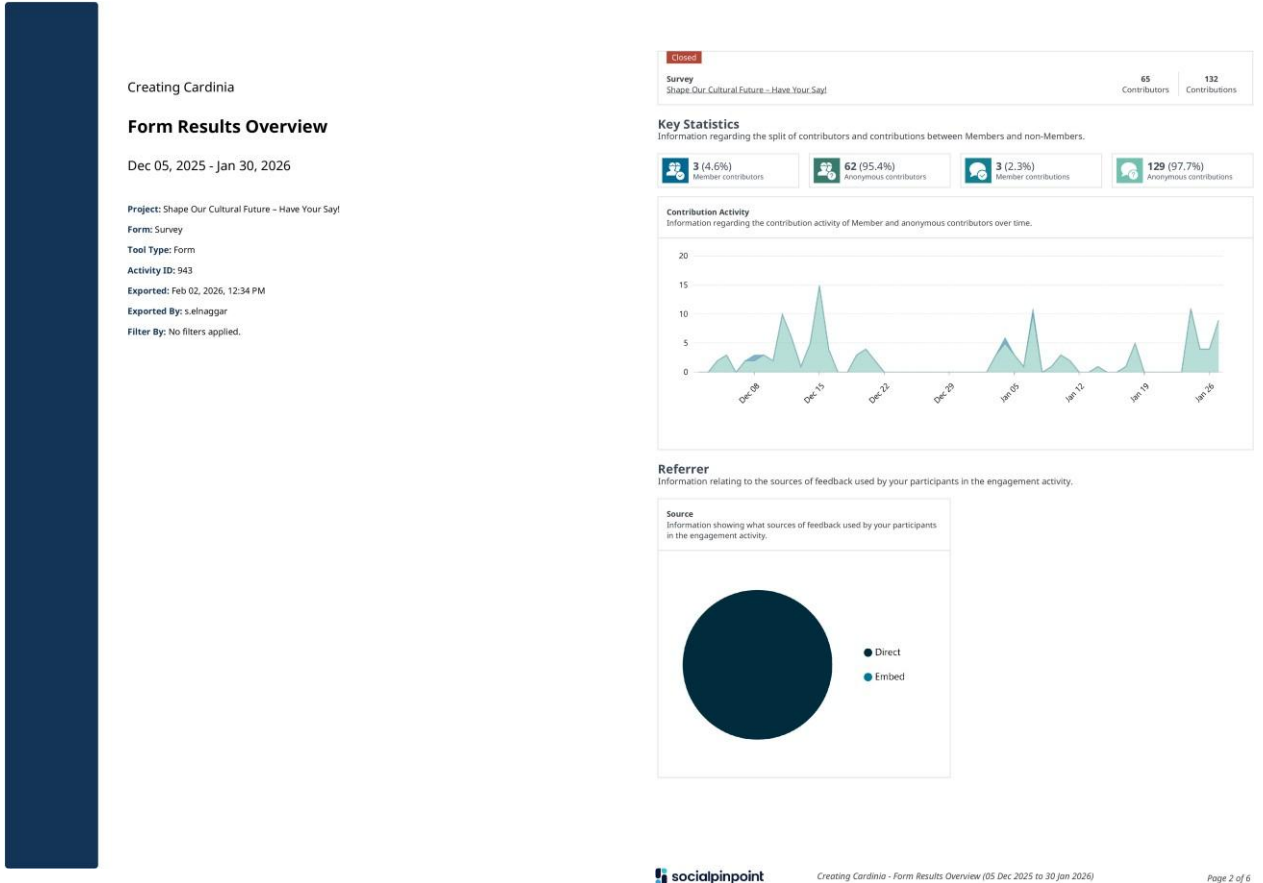
22. How did you hear about this survey? Required

Select one answer only	
☐ Social media	
☐ Council website	
☐ Flyer/brochure	
☐ Connect magazine	
☐ Word of mouth	
☐ QR code poster	
☐ Digital advert	
☐ Letter from council in the mail	
☐ Newspaper	
☐ Signage in the community (VMS boards, etc.)	
☐ Other (please specify)	

6.2 Appendix 2 - Consultation data and analysis

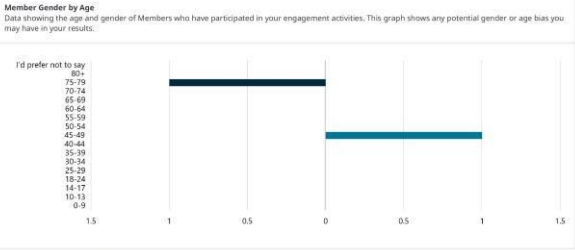
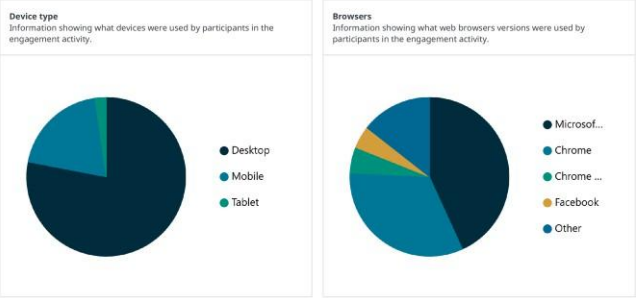
[1.C 2026-02-02 Form-Results-Overview Shape-Our-Cultural-Future.pdf](#) .

[1.D 2026-02-02 Form-Results-Summary- Shape-Our-Cultural-Future——.pdf](#)



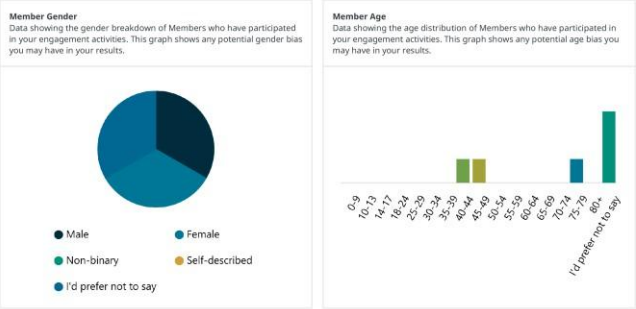
Technology

Information relating to the types of technology used by your participants in the engagement activity.



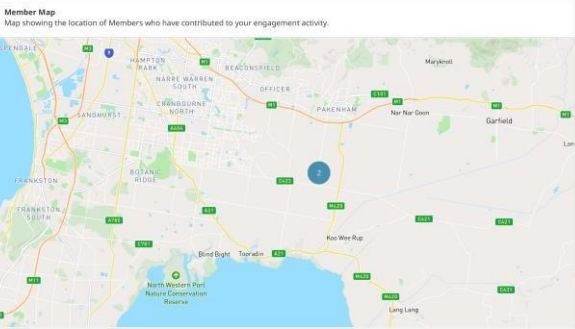
Member Demographics

Information regarding the demographic characteristics of the Members who have participated in your engagement activities.



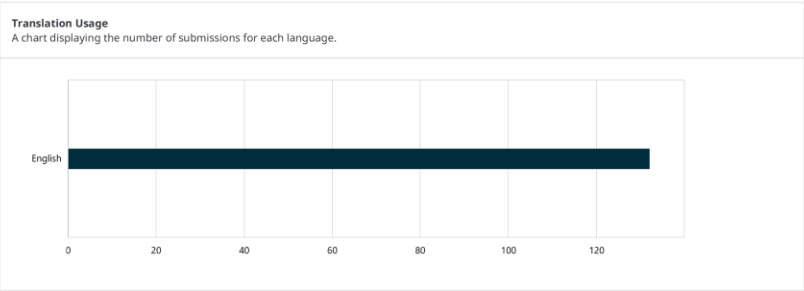
Member Locations

Information regarding the geographic location (e.g. postcode) of Members who have contributed to your engagement activity.



Translation

Information regarding the number of submissions associated with each language.



Member Contributions by Location
Information regarding the location of Members who have made contributions in your engagement activity.

Location	Postcode	Contributors	Contributions		
Cockatoo	3781	1	1		33%
Rythdale	3810	2	2		66%

6.3 **Appendix 3 - Promotion of the engagement**
[Shape Our Cultural Future – Have Your Say! | Creating Cardinia](#)