



Q. Why is Council setting up a community panel?

Council want to involve the community in solving the problem of parking in Warragul; How can we make the most of our current parking and plan for future parking needs in Warragul CBD?

It is setting up a community panel of 40 community members selected to match the demographics of the municipality so that people of all ages, from all locations in the Shire and both genders are represented and take part in this discussion.

The panel will meet over several online sessions to learn about the parking situation, review key documents, to consider options and to make a recommendation to Council.

Q. What is a community panel?

A community panel puts the community affected by a decision at the centre of the decision and brings citizens closer to decision makers and the affairs of government. It's built around a number of principles:

- A random sample of people affected by the decision are selected to participate.
- Participants are provided with detailed, in-depth information from a range of sources that helps them to understand the issues and options associated with the decision.
- Participants are given the time and support they need to consider and discuss information and ideas, weigh up issues and options and agree on recommendations.
- Participants write their own report which is presented directly to decision makers. The recommendations in their report have a high level of influence over outcomes or decisions.

Q. What will the online sessions entail?

The panel will participate in interactive online sessions and work together with the support of professional facilitators to consider a wide range of information and perspectives, discuss the problem and determine their response. The panel will hold their meetings online.

The panel will have access to a background report provided by Council, a wider engagement report detailing community views and ideas, and a range of speakers who will speak to topics or areas relevant to the panel's topic.

The online meetings will be a mix of small group and large group discussions. The idea is that meetings will take members through a structured process of learning, discussion and decision making. The meetings will be facilitated by independent facilitators (not Council).

The panel's recommendations will be detailed in a report that panel members will create together and presented directly to Baw Baw Shire Councillors at a Council Briefing.

The panel will not be like a traditional public meeting where loud voices can dominate. This will be a genuine, open process where all participants will be valued and heard.

Q. Do I have to prepare anything in advance?

All panel members will be sent a background briefing paper to read in advance of the online sessions. There may also be some small tasks to be undertaken between meetings. A large part of the first day of the panel will be devoted to learning about the issues under consideration. Everything you need to know will be covered during the weekends.

Q. How will the panel be selected?

The community panel will be selected independently of Council, by the Sortition Foundation. Anyone 18 years and over living in Baw Baw Shire is invited to express interest in being on the panel. Council is widely advertising this opportunity via print, social media and radio.

The people who register their interest in being on the panel will be placed in a pool. A random 'stratified' sample will be selected from this pool to form a final panel of 40 people that broadly represents the community in terms of age, gender, and geography. This step takes place using a digital stratification tool – which reduces risk of any human interference or unconscious bias.

For the stratification step, the Sortition Foundation will use census data to determine key targets for the panel and randomly select a final panel that best meets these targets.

Baw Baw Shire Council have no influence over the selection process. They do not know who the panel members are before deliberations commence.

Q. Why is this selection process being used and what are the benefits?

An independently run, stratified random selection process is being used to ensure that the selection process is unbiased and results in a panel that is as representative of the community as possible.

It gives people from all walks of life and with diverse views and perspectives an equal opportunity to participate in the process.

Due to the open invitation process, everyone in the community has the opportunity of registering their interest and an equal chance (within their demographic) of being selected to be a panel member.

This type of selection approach helps to involve people that might not normally engage in an issue (but who are affected by the topic or interested in it) in the conversation.

The final panel will be representative of the broader community, based on census data. It is not perfectly 'statistically' representative, but it is much more representative of the wider community than a group that has been self-selected.

Q. Will panel members be paid?

Panel members who attend all sessions will receive \$250 to help cover costs associated with taking part and to recognise their significant commitment to the region and their community. This may ensure we avoid excluding participants who may find participation difficult through hardship.

Q. What if I can't attend all of the online sessions?

Panel members must be available to attend all sessions for each phase of the process in order to be eligible to receive the \$250 payment. We understand life happens and unforeseen circumstances may arise during the panel period. If this occurs, it will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

Q. How will the broader community and stakeholders be involved?

If you're not selected for the community panel, you can still take part in engagement process. Your input and ideas will be considered by the panel during its deliberations.

Prior to the panel meeting, all stakeholders and community members across the region have had an opportunity to have their say via a number of activities including a Have Your Say survey and online community discussion workshops.

Full details of the other engagement opportunities are available at www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/HaveYourSay

All input collated will be detailed in wider engagement reports that will be considered by the community panel.

Q. What will happen to the panels recommendation?

Once a consensus has been reached on a recommendation, the panel's recommendations will be:

- Presented directly to the Councillors at a Council Briefing
- Published, unedited, on Council's website
- Used to the greatest extent possible to develop Council's decision on parking in Warragul

Project timeline

1 Feb-Jun 2020 Community consultation 'Have Your Say' survey and workshops

Community members are invited to provide their feedback via an online and hard copy survey. Several community workshops will also be held for residents to find out more information, ask questions and provide feedback.

2 June 2020 Collate and review community feedback

Council officers will consolidate all feedback collected during the consultation period. An update will be provided to the community on the outcomes.

3 Jun-Jul 2020 Community panel appointment

To ensure fair and adequate representation of various community views and input, an independent panel will also be recruited comprising of a representative cross section of the community. The panel will assist to provide recommendations to Council.

4 Jul-Sep 2020 Panel deliberation/recommendations

Council officers will work with the panel to deliberate recommendations for parking in Warragul, including a potential funding model. Recommendations will be reviewed and presented to Council for feedback at a briefing.

5 Sep 2020 Council decision

A recommendation will be presented to Council for decision at a Council meeting. The meeting will be open to the community with all residents welcome to attend.

Q. Who will facilitate the process?

Baw Baw Shire Council has engaged the Sortition Foundation to undertake the expression of interest and community panel selection process.

They have also engaged MosaicLab, a team of experienced facilitators specialising in high influence engagement and deliberative democracy, to facilitate the panel discussions.

MosaicLab works on a range of facilitation principles including:

- Promoting informed discussion,
- Enabling everyone to have a chance to participate and contribute,
- Remaining neutral and not having a stake or interest in the content or outcome,
- Responding and adapting to the group's needs, and
- Guiding the process in a way that helps the participants to do their work and respond to the remit as effectively as possible.

