

More Voices, Better Insights: Campbelltown City Council's Ongoing Engagement Journey

OVERVIEW

Campbelltown City Council's goal was to ensure residents from across the local government area had meaningful opportunities to stay informed, contribute to data-driven decision-making, and shape the future of the community. The Engagement team used insights from annual benchmarking reports and support from Granicus experts to transform its **Over to You Campbelltown** platform — powered by **Granicus Sentiment & Feedback** (EngagementHQ). What began as a consultation tool, evolved into an ongoing community engagement and communications channel. The result was stronger participation from more areas, laying the groundwork for future feedback that better represents the diversity of the community.

> "It's really rewarding to see how far we've come. This year's results have been particularly encouraging. Having that tangible evidence means we can share our progress with decisionmakers, demonstrate the value of investing in engagement, and identify where to focus next."
>
> Stephanie Roberts, Community Engagement Specialist, Campbelltown City Council

MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

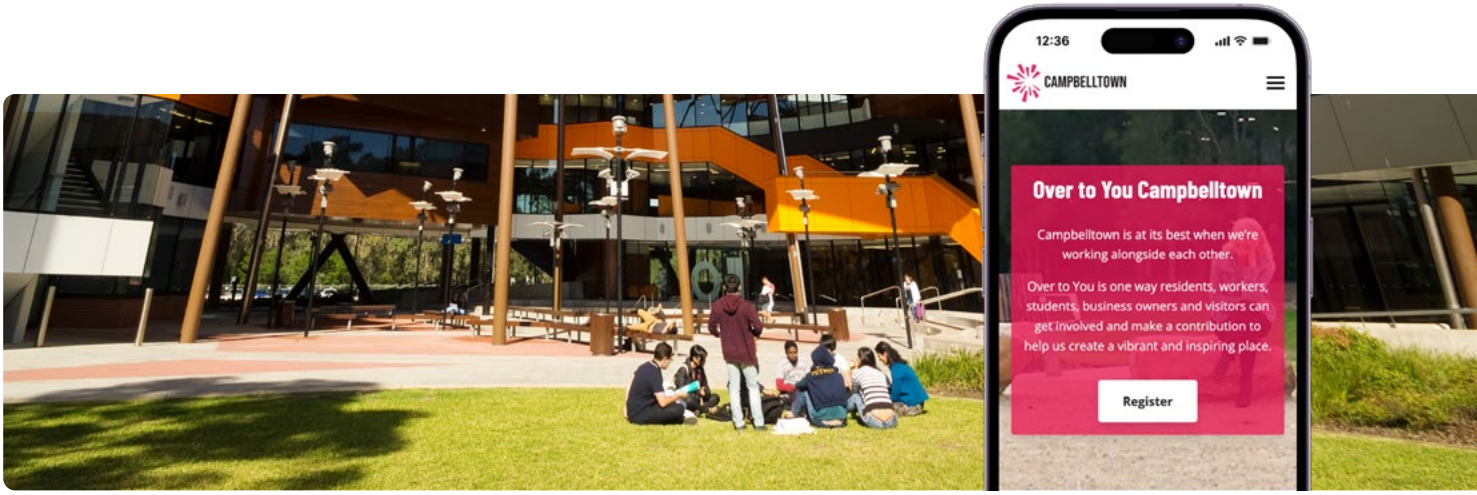
Granicus Sentiment & Feedback

2x more engaged participants

68% increase in registrations

73% increase in suburb representation

44% growth in site visits



SITUATION | FROM CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Campbelltown City Council serves a large and diverse community spanning more than 34 suburbs, each with its own character, priorities, and needs. Council's goal was to ensure their engagement was informed by data, and shaped by a broader range of community voices, rather than feedback from a small number of participants.

Other priorities of the project included:

- Strengthening representation across suburbs and diverse community groups.
- Understanding how different groups prefer to receive information and what matters most to them.
- Identifying whose voices were missing and creating more equitable opportunities to participate.
- Making engagement an ongoing conversation with the community, rather than a series one-off consultations.

SOLUTION | COMBINING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMMUNITY-CENTRED ENGAGEMENT

Annual benchmarking provided by Granicus helped identify opportunities to strengthen both platform performance and broader engagement practices. The reports gave the team a baseline for measuring progress, practical recommendations for improvement, and a way to compare performance against best practice and peer organisations.

"I received our first benchmarking report during my very first week in this role, so it helped shape our approach to online engagement from the outset," said Stephanie Roberts, Community Engagement Specialist at Campbelltown City Council. "It gave us a clear picture of what we were doing well and where we needed to focus our attention."

Roberts went on to explain that the team recognised it needed to rethink its definition of providing engagement opportunities. Having a platform where people could contribute was only half the story," she explained. "The other half was making sure they knew how, when, and where to get involved. If people don't know a consultation is happening, they can't take part."

To address this challenge, the Council introduced a regular community newsletter featuring project updates and direct links to active consultations. Newsletter communications were supported by social media promotion — helping residents stay informed and creating additional opportunities to subscribe and engage





The team also invested heavily in community outreach. Staff attended local markets, open days, schools and community events, using simple activities to spark conversations about engagement and understand how residents preferred to receive information. Branded "Over to You" tote bags, flyers, and QR codes directed residents to the online platform and made it easier to participate.

"Accessibility and inclusion start with people knowing the opportunity exists," said Roberts. "We can put a lot of effort into creating a great online experience, but that only has value if people know where to find it."

At the same time, the Council expanded how it used its engagement platform. Rather than limiting activity to consultation periods, project pages became an ongoing source of information throughout the project lifecycle — helping residents stay informed beyond the consultation period.

Along the way, partnership with the Granicus services team helped the Council translate benchmarking insights into practical next steps, build confidence in its approach, and respond quickly when challenges arose.

"Working with [our Granicus Experience Partner] Melissah has been a game changer for us," explained Roberts. "The support she provides is responsive and practical; she takes the time to understand our particular challenge and helps us find solutions that work for our team and community. When you're close to a project, it can be difficult to see where a different approach or a small change could make it stronger. Having someone who understands both the platform and our goals gives us practical ideas we can put into action."

RESULTS | BETTER REPRESENTATION, STRONGER INSIGHTS, AND A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

Over the 2025 and 2026 reporting period, the Council's engaged participants nearly doubled, while dramatically increasing registrations, daily contributors, and newsletter activity. Geographic representation also expanded, with a significant increase in participating suburbs.

More importantly, they gained richer and more representative community insights. "The increase in participation has given us a fuller picture of what matters to our community," said Roberts. "Hearing from more people helps us identify recurring themes and better understand where views differ. It also allows us to look beyond the overall results and explore differences between suburbs, age groups, and other parts of our community."

With greater representation across suburbs and demographic groups, project teams were able to make decisions with greater confidence and a stronger evidence base. The Council can now identify both shared priorities across the local government area and unique needs within individual communities. This ultimately unlocked more informed planning of services, programs, and public spaces.

Several more recent projects demonstrated the success of this approach, including the Council's Library Strategic Plan and Events & Festivals Plan. These initiatives combined digital engagement tools with face-to-face participation opportunities and clearly showed residents how their feedback would influence outcomes.





Today, Campbelltown City Council is reaching more residents and using stronger community insights to inform the decisions that shape local services, spaces, and programs. The Council has built a future-proofed model for how local governments can strengthen participation and make better-informed decisions for the communities they serve.

BRIGHT IDEA: BUILDING A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT FROM WITHIN

One of Campbelltown City Council's most effective engagement improvements started inside the organisation. "My advice for other agencies would be to prioritise internal buy-in," said Roberts. **"We found that as our leaders and teams across Council developed a stronger understanding of the value of community engagement, our engagement outcomes improved too."**

To build that understanding, the team launched an internal campaign designed to make engagement simple, visible, and approachable. They held lunchtime pop-ups in busy walkways, created signage explaining what engagement is and why it matters, and presented at team meetings with examples tailored to each group's work.

"We wanted colleagues to know what our team does, how we can support their work, and why public participation matters," said Roberts. That internal effort helped shift engagement from a central team responsibility to something more departments saw as part of good planning. More business units began coming forward with engagement opportunities — giving the Council more chances to involve residents earlier and more meaningfully.

"Improving engagement starts within the organisation by building understanding, relationships and a shared commitment to giving the community a voice," said Roberts.

Interested in finding out how Granicus can work for your community?

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