

Make an Impact on Community Engagement

What we Heard from You

Thank you to everyone who participated in this engagement and shared their experiences, ideas, and feedback. Your contributions have provided valuable insights into how people connect with our sites, what they value most, and how we can continue to improve our services and spaces.

This report provides a summary of the key themes and messages we heard from our community.

Understanding Our Community

Participants represented a diverse range of people connected to SMCT. Many identified as community members who regularly engage with our sites and services, while others participated as visitors, community and faith leaders, or representatives of partner organisations.

The feedback highlighted that SMCT's sites are valued by a broad cross-section of the community and play an important role in people's lives for a variety of reasons.

How People Engage With Us

Many participants described having an ongoing and regular relationship with SMCT. For some, this connection comes through visiting friends and family, attending funerals and memorial services, participating in programs and events, or simply enjoying the open spaces and facilities available on site.

The feedback suggests that our sites are not only places of remembrance but also important community spaces that support wellbeing, connection, learning, and reflection.

Preferred Ways to Stay Informed

Community members expressed a strong preference for receiving information through direct communication channels, particularly digital formats such as email and our online engagement platform, Engage with SMCT.

Participants also noted the importance of maintaining a mix of communication methods. While digital communication is valued for its convenience and accessibility, in-person engagement opportunities, printed information, and community events continue to provide meaningful ways for people to connect with SMCT.

The feedback reinforced the importance of using multiple channels to reach different audiences and ensure information is accessible to the broader community.

Opportunities for Participation

Participants expressed interest in a range of engagement opportunities, with particular enthusiasm for community events, workshops, educational activities, online engagement opportunities, and one-on-one conversations.

The feedback suggests that people value opportunities to learn, connect with others, contribute ideas, and participate in activities that strengthen community understanding and involvement.

How Our Sites Are Used

Community members described using SMCT sites in many different ways. While funerals and memorial-related activities remain an important reason for visiting, participants also spoke about using the spaces for recreation, social connection, learning, cultural activities, and accessing facilities such as the café and gardens.

Many people view the sites as places where they can spend time outdoors, connect with nature, learn about local history, participate in community activities, and take time for quiet reflection.

This feedback highlights the diverse role that SMCT's sites play within the community.

What People Value Most

Several common themes emerged when participants were asked what they value most about SMCT's sites and services.

People spoke positively about:

- The gardens, open spaces, and natural environment
- Biodiversity and environmental initiatives
- Quiet places for reflection and remembrance
- Memorialisation services and funeral planning support
- Community programs and engagement activities
- Project Cultivate and gardening initiatives
- Historic records and heritage features
- Walking paths and opportunities to enjoy the landscape
- Visitor facilities and amenities
- Opportunities to connect with others in the community

Overall, participants value the unique combination of remembrance, nature, heritage, community connection, and wellbeing that our sites provide.

Feeling Welcome and Included

Most participants described feeling welcome and included when engaging with SMCT.

Positive experiences were frequently linked to the professionalism, kindness, and respect demonstrated by staff. Community members also highlighted positive experiences through customer service interactions, gardening groups, community programs, the café, children's services, and educational activities.

Many participants shared that they appreciate the caring and respectful environment that exists across our sites.

Comments included:

"Every time I have contacted customer service by phone or in person I've always been treated with respect, had my questions answered and been given helpful and appropriate advice."

"Timely, helpful and friendly interactions with staff at Springvale."

These comments reflect the importance of compassionate customer service and meaningful community connections in shaping positive experiences.

Opportunities for Improvement

While participants shared many positive experiences, they also identified areas where improvements could further enhance visitor experiences.

Common suggestions included:

- Planting more trees and enhancing green spaces
- Improving wayfinding and signage
- Making grave locations easier to find
- Increasing communication about services and activities
- Enhancing safety and accessibility
- Improving visitor facilities and amenities
- Supporting dedicated spaces for cultural and spiritual practices
- Providing self-guided tours and interpretive information
- Expanding on-site support for visitors
- Maintaining lawn graves and surrounding landscapes

These suggestions reflect a desire for sites that are easy to navigate, culturally inclusive, environmentally rich, and welcoming to all visitors.

Additional Community Feedback

Many participants reflected on the broader importance of SMCT's sites to the community.

Common themes included:

- The value of preserving open space
- Celebrating multiculturalism and cultural diversity
- Protecting local history and heritage
- Expanding volunteer opportunities
- Continuing meaningful community engagement
- Improving environmental sustainability practices
- Recognising the sites as important community destinations

One participant shared:

“I love the cemetery for its history, its multiculturalism, its glorious spaces”

This quote captures many of the themes that emerged throughout the engagement, highlighting the strong connection people feel to these places and the many ways they contribute to community life.

What Happens Next

The feedback received through this engagement will help guide future planning, programs, communication activities, and service improvements.

The key messages we heard were clear: people value welcoming and respectful experiences, beautiful and well-maintained open spaces, opportunities for community connection, and places that celebrate history, culture, and nature.

We thank everyone who participated and shared their perspectives. Your feedback will help us continue to create meaningful spaces that support remembrance, reflection, connection, and community wellbeing for all.