

DIGITAL RATES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

From 14th of May 2025 to 20th of June 2025, the City of Greater Geelong conducted community engagement on project "Digital Rates". The aim of the project was to understand the opportunities to improve our customers' experience with digital rates notices. An improvement in this experience could help increase the number of customers opting to receive digital notices over paper ones. While providing customers with a simple and hassle-free experience, it can also help us reduce operational costs and reinvest those savings into the services and improvements that matter most to our community.



37 DAYS

of engagement



162

Number of
people who
shared feedback



17

People following
the project

HOW WE ENGAGED

We engaged with 162 customers through a 2-phase community engagement.

- **Phase 1: Qualitative engagement**
 - o In-person community engagement session on 14th May 2025 at The Nest Youth Hub at 17 Gheringhap Street: *Engagement with 3 customers*
 - o Have Your Say survey from 7th to 30th May 2025: *Responses from 9 customers*
- **Phase 2: Quantitative engagement**
 - o Have Your Say Survey from 30th May to 20th June 2025: *Responses from 150 customers*

WHAT WE HEARD

Summary

- Customers have an anxiety around missing rates notices, which is a significant barrier to going digital. Also, the awareness of the digital rates option can be improved.
- There is a high trust in physical notices and customers aren't ready yet to fully commit to digital notices. However, a hybrid model (digital + physical notices) is acceptable to many customers.
- Customers who currently use digital rates notices value the convenience it offers and believe that it is a more sustainable option.
- Most customers find the design of the rates notice effective and easy to understand.

Snapshot of survey results

- Question: Why do you prefer receiving your rates notice through hard copy over email?

Answer choices	Percent	Count
I'm not aware of the process of switching to email rates notices	21.54%	14
The process of switching to email rates notices is complicated	4.62%	3
It's a habit for me	15.38%	10
I trust physical documents more	29.23%	19
I don't trust digital systems	15.38%	10
I tried email rates notices, but I faced issues	3.08%	2
I fear that I may miss email notifications for rates notices	52.31%	34
I need paper notices for my record or for legal compliance	20.00%	13
I put them up (e.g on my fridge) so I don't forget to pay my rates	30.77%	20
Other	13.85%	9

- Question: How likely are you to consider switching to digital notices in the future?

Answer choices	Percent	Count
Very likely	16.92%	11
Somewhat likely	18.46%	12
Neutral	13.85%	9
Not very likely	24.62%	16
Not at all likely	26.15%	17
Total	100.00%	65

- Question: What might encourage you to receive email rates notices?

Answer choices	Percent	Count
If I was made more aware of the process of switching to email	9.52%	4
If the process of switching to email was simplified	2.38%	1
If I received some reassurance of privacy and security	11.90%	5
If I have the option of receiving both hard copy and email notices	50.00%	21
If I have the option of printing my email notices	9.52%	4
Nothing would change my mind	35.71%	15
Other	4.76%	2

- Question: Why do you prefer receiving your rates notice through email over hard copy?

Answer choices	Percent	Count
It's more convenient	77.65%	66
I want to reduce paper waste	65.88%	56
So I can receive notices even when I'm away	55.29%	47
It helps me stay organised	49.41%	42
I trust digital systems	16.47%	14
The sign-up process was easy	14.12%	12
Other	5.88%	5

- Question: How easy or difficult to understand do you find the rates notices?

Answer choices	Percent	Count
Very easy	46.00%	69
Somewhat easy	29.33%	44
Neutral	18.00%	27
Not very easy	3.33%	5
Not at all easy	3.33%	5
Total	100.00%	150

Verbatim customer responses

- “I'm not interested in receiving digital notices through email. I have had issues with emailed bills going to junk folders and easily forget about part emails. When I have a hard copy mailed, I'm less likely to miss it. My elderly parents also need a hard copy for their property.”
- “I didn't know I could have a digital notification. If I did switch, I would want to be assured that the notifications were actually sent out and received on time. I'm not confident after this year's pet renewal. I never received my invoice/renewal and didn't realise it was due until I received an overdue text. Not a good way to notify someone as it looked as if it could have been a spam. This would be very serious if it happened with a rates notice not being received.”
- “I'd love reminders, payment plans, accessing rates via the app – anything that makes the process a little less intimidating. Right now, I feel like I have to pay my quarterly repayment as soon as I receive the email, otherwise I might forget about it and miss the deadline, therefore having to switch to annual payment (which is too big a cross to bear). Rates payments are, for most households, their biggest annual payments of the year. We need more than just a form with a few radio buttons and a “pay now” button.”

NEXT STEPS

The insights have been valuable in understanding the current experience and expectations with rates notices. We will continue reviewing the feedback shared by our customers as we look to improve their experience. Any future changes will be considered carefully and informed by what we have heard from the community.