



Goldenfields
Water



Community Engagement Strategy

2025



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From the Chairperson

Alan White



It is my pleasure to introduce the Goldenfields Water Community Engagement Strategy 2025.

Goldenfields Water County Council is committed to fostering meaningful engagement with our diverse communities. This Community Engagement Strategy outlines how we will involve stakeholders in the decision-making processes that impact their lives. As a region with a wide range of communities, from urban centres to rural areas, and including Indigenous, culturally diverse, youth, senior, and disability groups, it is crucial that we provide everyone with the opportunity to participate.

Community engagement is the ongoing conversation between Council and stakeholders, built on transparency, collaboration, and mutual respect. This strategy will ensure that we share information effectively, consult with you regularly, and provide opportunities for active participation in decisions that shape our services and policies.

We recognise that our communities have unique needs, experiences, and expertise. By engaging with you, we ensure that decisions reflect these diverse perspectives and are inclusive, fair, and well-informed. Whether through surveys, workshops, or direct communication with your Councillors, we are committed to making engagement accessible and meaningful for all.

As we move forward, we encourage you to take part in this process and contribute to the future of Goldenfields Water. Your input is vital for the success of this strategy and for shaping decisions that benefit everyone.

Councillor Alan White

Chairperson, Goldenfields Water County Council

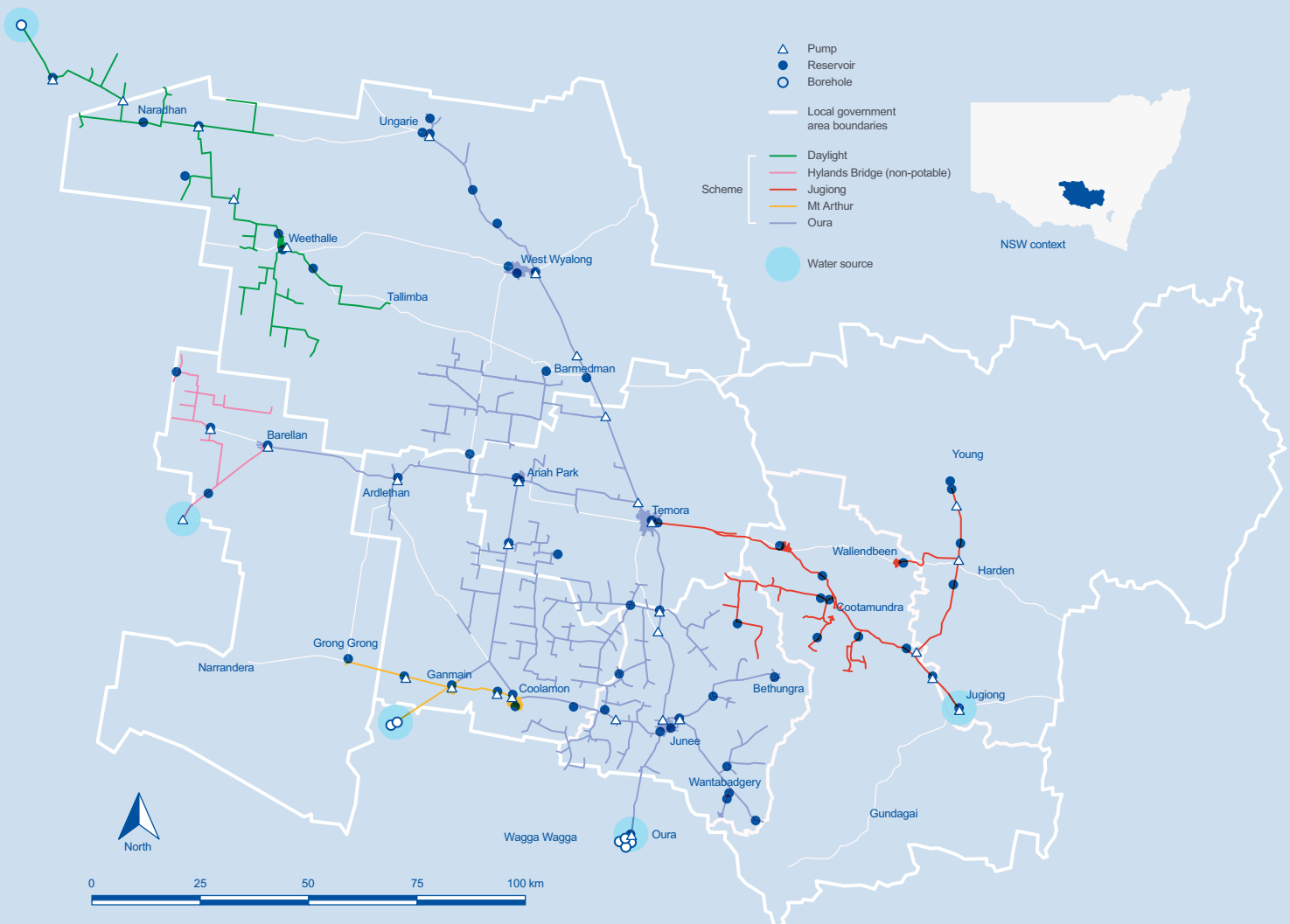


Introduction

About us

Goldenfields Water County Council was proclaimed under the NSW Local Government Act on 24 April 1997, and, from 1 July 1997, became responsible for water supply functions within the local government areas of Bland, Coolamon, Harden (now part of Hilltops), Junee, Temora, Young (now part of Hilltops) and part of Cootamundra (now part of Cootamundra-Gundagai) and Narrandera.

Our Network



Mission, Vision and Values



Strategy Overview

The background of the slide features two large, cylindrical industrial water towers. The towers are made of metal and have walkways with railings around their upper sections. The sky is a clear, bright blue. In the foreground, there is a soft, out-of-focus area of green and yellow foliage, likely trees or bushes, which adds a natural element to the industrial scene.

We recognise our customers and community play a vital role in shaping our future, and only through engaging in meaningful conversations can we understand and achieve our mutual goals.

Goldenfields Water's Community Engagement Strategy aims to:

Improve Goldenfields Water's understanding of our community needs, priorities, and experiences.

1

Ensure the considered involvement of a broad cross-section of Goldenfields Water's communities when planning and making decisions.

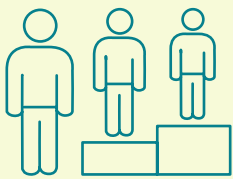
2

Proactively inform customers, communities and other relevant stakeholders about Goldenfields Water's actions, projects, and programs to ensure any issues are mitigated as early as possible.

3



Engagement Principles



Equity

There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.



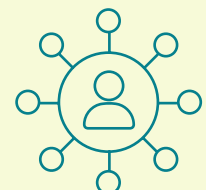
Participation

Everyone should have the opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.



Rights

Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.



Access

Everyone should have fair access to services, resources, and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Levels of Engagement

The public participation spectrum forms the basis for activities of engagement by Goldenfields Water with our communities and stakeholders.

The International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum of public participation was designed to assist with the level of participation selection that defines the public's role in any public participation process.

IAP2's public participation spectrum shows the possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities. The spectrum also shows the increasing level of public impact.

Increasing impact on the decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board Members

Goldenfields Water's board consists of eight members, made up of councillors from Goldenfields Water's seven constituent councils. These members are elected to the board by their council peers. As in their roles at their respective councils, they each play a vital role in community engagement by understanding the voice of the community and ensure this voice is properly represented when they meet as a board to make resolutions.

General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for maintaining key relationships with constituent councils, and key stakeholders. Maintaining these key relationships and open lines of communication allows for effective representation in the decision-making process.

Goldenfields Water Staff

Goldenfields Water staff members involved in community engagement are responsible for organising, facilitating, and documenting discussions. They provide feedback, assess the engagement process, and take the communities perspectives into account when making recommendations.

Goldenfields Water Community Education and Engagement Officer

Our dedicated Community Education and Engagement Officer (CEEO) plays a vital role in connecting Goldenfields Water and the communities it services. The CEEO is responsible for creating and implementing effective communication and community engagement programs and activities.

The CEEO offers expertise and guidance on communication strategies and engagement methods, collaborating with relevant staff to ensure effective results, keeping our communities informed, engaged and actively involved.

Our CEEO can be reached by calling 02 6977 3200 or via communityengagement@gwcc.nsw.gov.au

Our Community



Over 46,000 farmers, residents, and business owners across the South West Slopes and Riverina regions of NSW depend on Goldenfields Water for their essential water supply services each day.

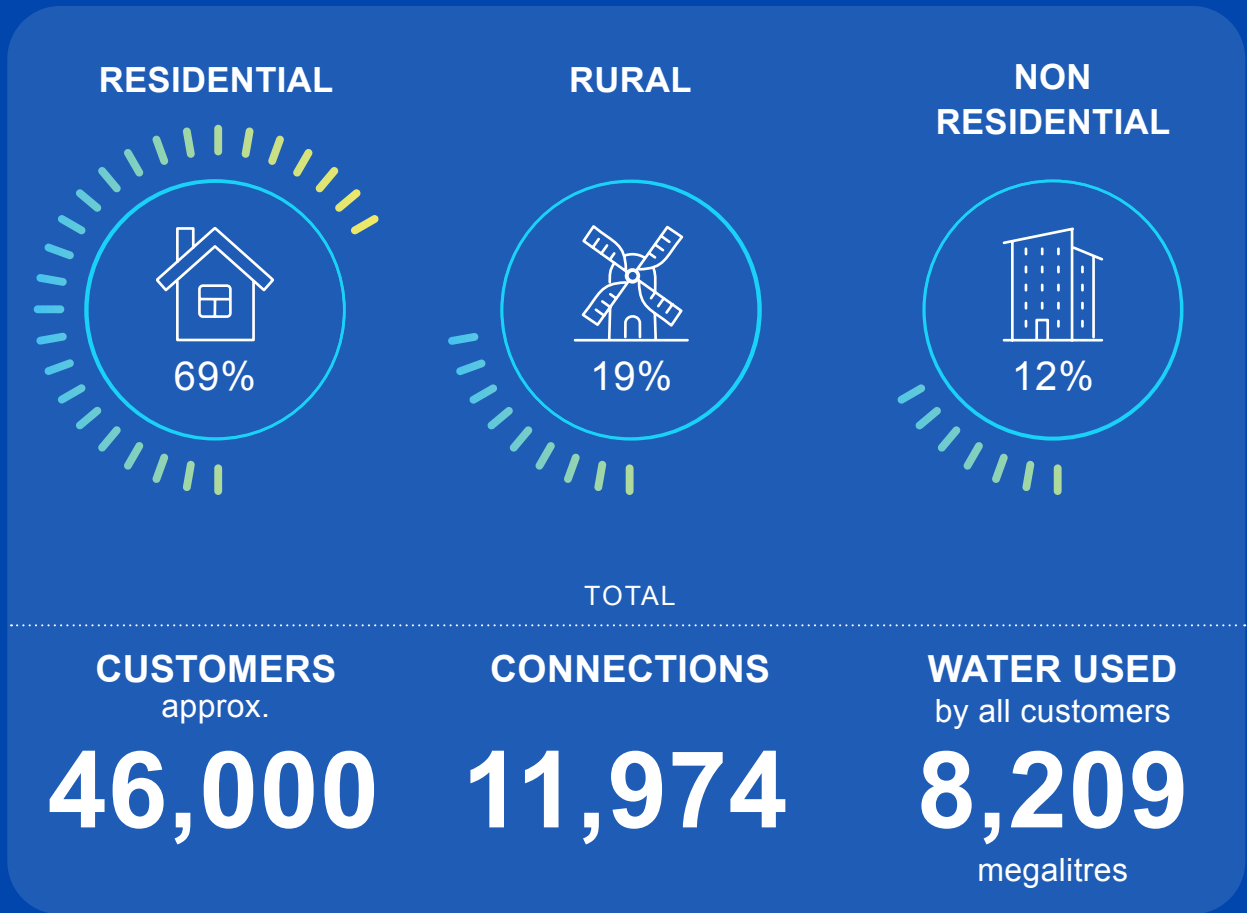
We have approximately 11,974 properties connected directly to our drinking water supply network in Bland, Coolamon, Junee, Temora and parts of Cootamundra-Gundagai and Narrandera.

Residential and rural customers use around 88 per cent of the water supplied by Goldenfields Water. Business, commercial, and industrial customers, as well as other institutions (such as schools and TAFE campuses) use the remaining water supplied.

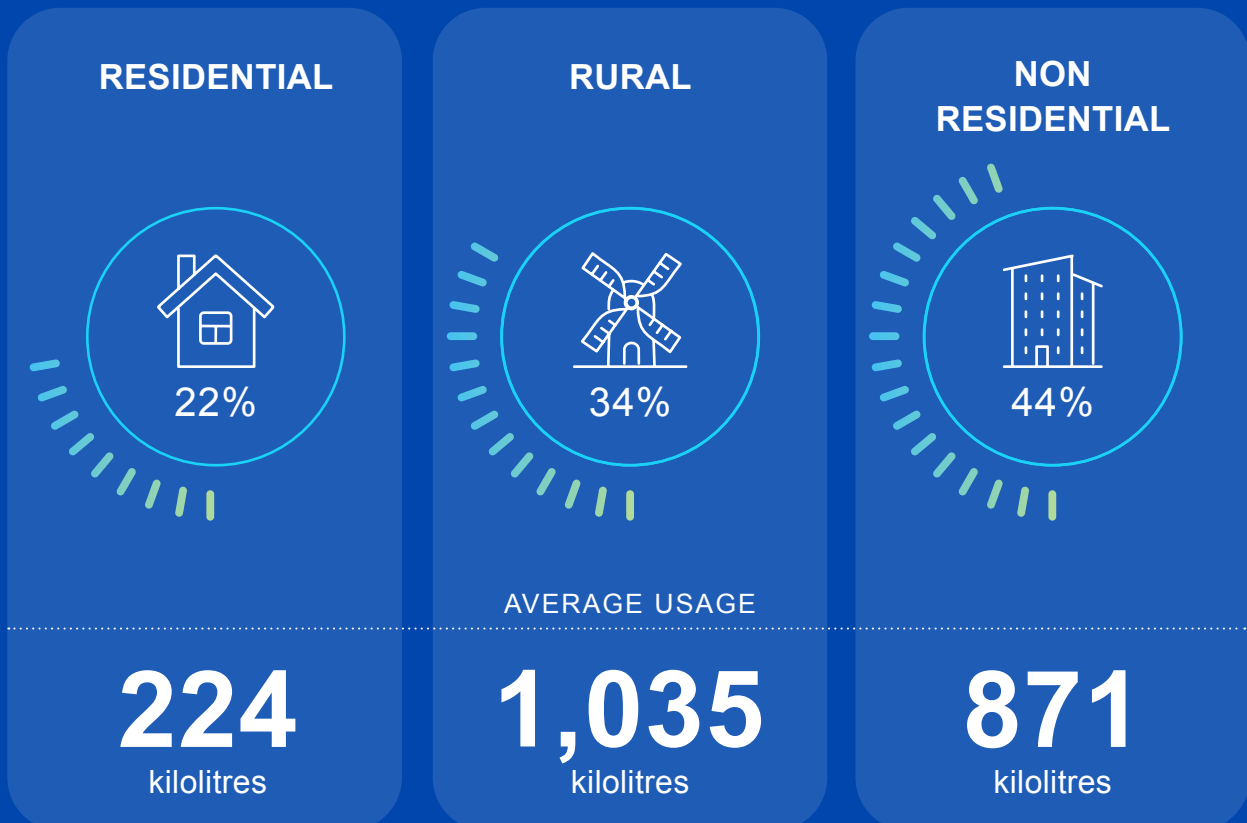
Goldenfields Water also supplies:

- ◆ Non-potable water (Untreated water for non-drinking purposes) directly to 250 rural, residential, commercial, and industrial properties from the Hylands Bridge Scheme
- ◆ Water in bulk to Cootamundra-Gundagai and Hilltops councils, then distribute water directly to their residents (except those supplied directly by Goldenfields Water in parts of Cootamundra-Gundagai).
- ◆ Water in bulk to Riverina Water County Council

CUSTOMER MIX 23/24



USAGE 23/24



Community & Stakeholders

Our engagement activities provide opportunities to hear from a broad range of our communities and stakeholders including those that are vulnerable and hard to reach.



Community

Broadly refers to any specific group of people who share similar location, interest, or affiliation with Goldenfields Water. These include but are not limited to residents of constituent councils, customers, business owners and operators, workers, students, visitors, including tourists, government establishments, community organisations, including clubs, churches, and charity groups.

Vulnerable and hard to reach populations

Considered within our Community Engagement Strategy are those individuals and groups whose voices are often under-represented in the community engagement processes. These include people with disabilities, aboriginal communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people, people within geographically isolated areas, single parents, and the elderly.

Stakeholders

This refers to a person, group of persons or organisations that have or feel they have an interest or can affect/be affected by an issue or decision.

Engagement activities

A young girl with wet hair, wearing a light blue swimsuit, is smiling and looking towards the camera while in a swimming pool. In the background, a woman wearing sunglasses and a colorful patterned shirt is crouching down, holding a baby who is also in a light blue outfit. The scene is outdoors with green foliage in the background.

Identifying how, when & where stakeholders will be engaged



Activity 01

Meetings with Constituent Councils

We engage with each of our constituent councils to:

- Determine priorities identified within each council's own Community Strategic Plan
- Agree on service levels provided by Goldenfields Water
- Discuss appropriate levels of resources and their allocation potential

Schedule	Activity
Ongoing	General Manager to conduct meetings with constituent councils



Activity 02

Customer Surveys

We undertake annual customer surveys aimed at:

- Establishing a baseline for customer satisfaction with water quality and service delivery
- Analysing and understanding our customer's experience when contacting GWCC
- Identifying future priorities and improvement areas
- Measuring the ideal price point for potential future upgrades

Schedule	Activity
September 2025-27	Conduct annual online community survey (via Survey Monkey) promoted via social media, website and newspaper advertisements
September 2028	Conduct a formal survey of randomly selected customers supplied directly by Goldenfields Water
Ongoing	Simple social media polls on subjects such as water quality and water service



Activity 03

Social Media

We embrace the modernisation of our approach to communication via social media platforms:

- Maintain a presence for Goldenfields Water on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn
- Direct users to engagement opportunities, for example, encouraging click through to surveys
- Invite comments and feedback

Schedule	Activity
Ongoing	Consistently provide information to customers and encourage feedback
Ongoing	Simple social media polls on subjects such as water quality and water service



Activity 04

Goldenfields Water App

In 2019 we became the countries first water utility to launch a free consumer app allowing us to:

- Gather data on issues experienced by customers within our network
- Refine localities of common concern

Schedule	Activity
Ongoing	Extract and review data collected from the Goldenfields Water app to develop common concerns and localities



Activity 05 Other Media

We will continue to use more traditional methods to communicate with our communities, including:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Newspaper editorials
- Quarterly newsletter mailed direct to our customers, with an online version available at www.gwcc.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/Publications

Through these mediums we will provide relevant information to our communities and encourage our communities to provide commentary

Schedule	Activity
September 2025-28	Advertising in local papers to promote completion of online community survey
Annually	Advertising to encourage sign up to the Goldenfields Water app to obtain further data from customers
Quarterly	Updates in Goldenfields Water customer newsletter mailed directly to our customers
Ongoing	Provide timely media releases on current activities to local media outlets

Other Engagement Methods

Online

Goldenfields Water's website provides a platform to keep the community informed on the progress of projects, proposals, and outcomes – gwcc.nsw.gov.au

The 'Have Your Say' page on Goldenfields Water's website details documents on public exhibition and provides details on how to provide feedback – gwcc.nsw.gov.au/Community/Community-engagement/Have-Your-Say

Current news and updates about Goldenfields Water activities and projects are regularly published at gwcc.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/Publications/Media-Releases

Telephone

Goldenfields Water is available 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) on 02 6977 3200. In case of a water supply concern or emergency, call 1800 800 917 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Email

Community members can contact Goldenfields Water at any time by emailing gwcc.office@gwcc.nsw.gov.au

Community groups

Community groups, associations and committees play a crucial role in providing feedback on a range of issues. With consideration given to the issues only select groups may be consulted. Goldenfields Water will consult directly with community groups on an as-needed basis.

To request a meeting with Goldenfields Water on behalf of a community group please call 02 6977 3200 and ask to speak with our CEO.

Addressed Letters

Personally addressed letters will be sent to households directly affected by planned works or proposals. These letters will outline the relevant issues and invite feedback, with clear guidelines for the provision of comments and further feedback.

Site Visits

Site visits provide Goldenfields Water staff or board members with vital insight into the issues or concerns raised by community members, or to engage with stakeholders in their environment.

Evaluation & Reporting



Evaluation of Engagement activities

Ensuring the effectiveness of engagement activities is a vital part of the Community Engagement Strategy.

Goldenfields Water staff undertaking engagement activities will ensure evaluation is included as part of this process and look at the three evaluation categories:

- **Can you see it?** – data collected via observation e.g. reading body language and behaviour.
- **Can you ask it?** – post activity follow up including interviews, surveys, and polls.
- **Can you find out indirectly?** – Information that already exists, e.g. social media posts, feedback provided to constituent councils.

These methods of collecting feedback on engagement activities will be tailored to the situation and audience.

Reporting on Engagement activities

The Community Engagement Strategy is a principal activity detailed in Goldenfields Water's Delivery Program.

As such, progress in implementing the strategy's key activities and achieving its key objectives will be reported as part of the delivery program's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework requirements.

Requirements include:

- **Progress Report**

At least every six months, a progress report must be produced that provides the community with Goldenfields Water's progress with respect to the principal activities detailed in its delivery program.

- **Annual Report**

At the end of each financial year, an annual report must be produced that provides information to the community about Goldenfields Water's achievements in implementing its delivery program and the effectiveness of the principal activities in meeting the objectives of its Business Activity Strategic Plan and the Community Strategic Plans of each of its constituent councils.



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**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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