Collection Policy Refresh - Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the Collection Policy Refresh project and reports on the engagement outcomes. The consultation opened on 11/07/2025 and closed at 9am on 11/08/2025

Overview

Project background

Yarra City Council's Collection was founded in 1994, based on the range of artworks and cultural artefacts that the City of Yarra inherited when the municipalities of Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy amalgamated.

Council's Civic Art and Heritage Collection (collection) comprises over 1,030 items and consists of indoor and outdoor items divided into three main categories: Civic (500 + items); Art (450+ items); and Public Art (80 items). The collection was last valued at over $8 million (2022) and is re-valued every five years.

Yarra City Council's Collection Policy 2020-2024 (policy) sets out the principles and practices that guide decision-making about Council's art and heritage collection. This includes how the collection is developed, documented, conserved, interpreted and made accessible to the Yarra community.

We recognise importance of documenting Yarra's local cultural heritage and the city's unique history and people. The collection aims to reflect the artistic, cultural, social, environmental, and historical context of the City of Yarra.

We've created a draft Collection Policy 2025-2029. Now it's time for the community to provide feedback which will help us to finalise the draft Policy ahead of seeking endorsement from Council.

Objectives of this engagement

1. To inform the community that Yarra City Council's Collection Policy has been updated and is now ready to be reviewed before it is taken to Council for adoption.
2. To give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Collection Policy 2025-2029, specifically regarding collection development and access.

Level of community influence

The community could influence:

1. Collection development and acquisition (what we collect)
2. Collection access – how the community can view the collection (online/in person). Noting that this is a limited influence within available resources. Many indoor Collection items are located in non-public areas within council buildings, limiting community access.

Engagement methods:

- Online survey tool on Your Say Yarra (and in hard copy)
- 1x in person "pop up" engagement session at Bargoonga Nganjin, (North Fitzroy Library) on Saturday 19 July from 1.30pm to 3.30pm
- Targeted stakeholder engagement session (focus group) with arts organisations and businesses on Sunday 26 July (afternoon, 90 minutes).

Engagement questions:

- Please indicate your level of agreement with these statements about Yarra City Council's draft Collection Policy 2025-2029 (scale from Strongly disagree to strongly agree)
    - The draft Collection Policy supports a diverse and representative art collection that reflects our local community
    - The draft Collection Policy clearly communicates its purpose and priorities
    - The draft Collection Policy clearly indicates how the public can access Yarra City Council's Collection.
- Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve access to Yarra's Collection? (free text box)
- Do you have any other comments on the draft Collection Policy 2025-2029? (free text box).

Engagement reach

Engagement promotion:
Social media channels (including social media advertisements) reaching over 3,300 people.
Council email newsletters including Yarra Life, Your Say Yarra email newsletter, Yarra Business News, Yarra Environment News, Yarra Leisure news and Yarra Libraries email newsletter. This reached a total of 8,800 subscribers.
Promoted via Yarra News which is distributed to every household in Yarra (over 60,000 properties).
News story on Yarra City Council's website.
Postcards and other printed collateral available at events and postcards were distributed to 19 Council venues. These include town halls, neighbourhood houses, seniors' centres, libraries and leisure centres.

Your Say Yarra project page:

The success of the Your Say Yarra page is tracked against the following metrics:

- **Views** - The number of times the page was seen.
- **Visitors** – The number of unique visitors that saw the page.
- **Responses** – The number of feedback responses that were submitted.

Views	Visitors	Responses
261	184	5

In person engagement opportunities:

In-person session (including date and location)	Approximate number of people we spoke to	Responses
Saturday 19 July at Bargoonga Nganjin	10+	No surveys completed but handed out several postcards.

Targeted stakeholder engagement

- Targeted stakeholder engagement session (focus group) with arts organisations and businesses on Sunday 26 July (afternoon – 90 minutes).

Engagement results

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the 5 responses to the online engagement tool (form).

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)	4	80%
Live in Yarra, in a property I rent	1	20%
Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra	0	0%
Work in Yarra	0	0%
Own a business / business occupier in Yarra	0	0%
Study in Yarra	0	0%
None of the above	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Total	5	100%
What gender do you identify as?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Man	2	40%
Woman	3	60%
Self-described	0	0%
I prefer not to say	0	0%
Total	0	100%
What is your age range?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	0	0%
18 to 24	0	0%
25 to 34	0	0%
35 to 49	0	0%
50 to 59	0	0%
60 to 69	3	60%
70 to 84	2	40%
85 and older	0	0%

I prefer not to say	0	0%
Total	5	100%
What suburb do you live in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Abbotsford	0	0%
Alphington	0	0%
Burnley	0	0%
Carlton North	2	40%
Clifton Hill	1	20%
Collingwood	0	0%
Cremorne	0	0%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	1	20%
Fitzroy North	1	20%
Princes Hill	0	0%
Richmond	0	0%
I live outside of Yarra	0	0%
Total	5	100%
Select all that apply. I am….	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	0	0%
A person who was born overseas	2	40%
A person living with a disability.	0	0%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	2	40%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	0	0%
None of the above.	1	20%
I prefer not to say.	0	0%
Total	5	100%

What did we hear?

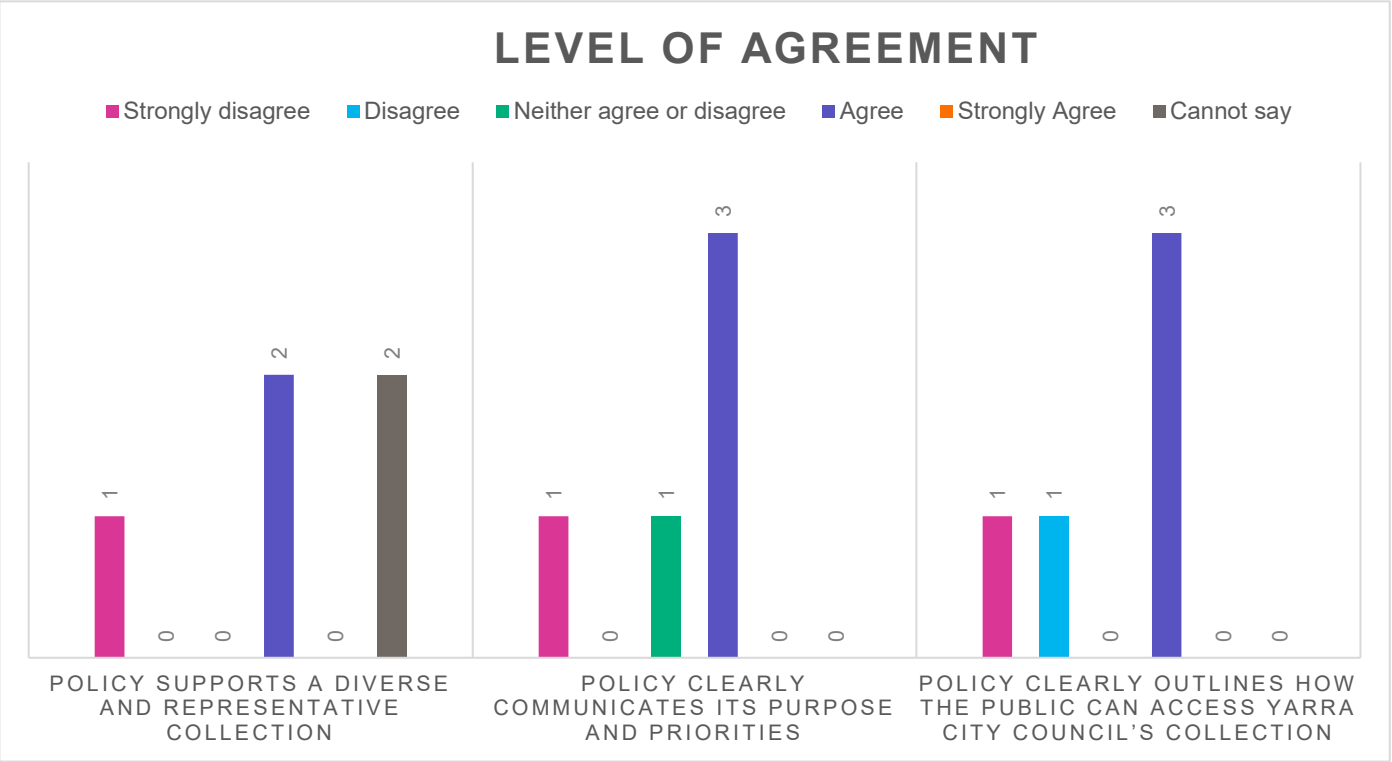
This section contains an analysis of the engagement results. We used a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions to get an understanding of how the community perceived Yarra City Council's draft Collection Policy 2025-2029 and if they had any suggestions for how it could be improved.

Question 1:

The first question was quantitative. We asked the community to indicate their level of agreement with these statements about the draft Collection Policy (scale from Strongly disagree to strongly agree)

- The draft Collection Policy supports a diverse and representative art collection that reflects our local community
- The draft Collection Policy clearly communicates its purpose and priorities
- The draft Collection Policy clearly indicates how the public can access Yarra City Council's Collection.

The results for question 1 are shown in the chart below:



Questions 2 and 3:

The final 2 questions were open ended / qualitative. In the table below, feedback from the community is matched with a response from officers, indicating if/how the feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Collection Policy. Of the 5 people who contributed, 1 person chose not to answer these questions.

Question 2: Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve access to Yarra's Collection?	
What did we hear	**Our response**
Amend 3.8.3 as follows: Insert an opening sentence along these lines: A deaccessioned item may be disposed of after de-registration. In the list of options, include an additional option: Retained by City of Yarra for educational purposes.	Deaccessioned items will be disposed of in accordance with the options outlined in section 3.8.3 of the draft collection policy. Council will consider the most appropriate outcome in the best interest of each deaccessioned item, with no time limit imposed on implementing a disposal option.
As a resident I'm unclear about exactly what is in the collection, how and where items can be seen or studied either in-person or online. Improve communication and whereabouts of exhibits with community, highlight items in newsletter and website, rotate exhibits, if possible, have exhibitions, and tours. Make new content/acquisitions -inclusive of our diverse and thriving community. For example, encourage school	Sections 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the draft collection policy comprehensively outline the collection's purpose and scope, development, management, and access strategies, including opportunities for public engagement and inclusivity.

tours and artistic contributions to the collection from children and young people - it's their community and they are part of living history.	
DO NOT waste anymore of our rates on art collecting!!! Support businesses and fill our desolate shopping strips so they become again the vibrant safe places they once were	This concern falls outside the scope of the draft collection policy, which specifically addresses how the collection is developed, managed, cared for, and accessed by the community.
Set up a collection fund so we can put money into commission works across Yarra. Also maybe work on a fund whereby we could leave money from our estates when we die.	Section 3.2 of the draft collection policy outlines acquisition funding sources, including Council budgets, external grants, partnerships, and community contributions such as donations, bequests, and gifts. The policy also references the Australian Federal Government's Cultural Gift Program as a mechanism for such contributions.

Question 3: Do you have any other comments on the draft Collection Policy 2025-2029?

What did we hear	Our response
The statement about what can be done with "any money raised from the sale of a deaccessioned item" in opening paragraph of 3.8 is contradicted by a statement in 3.8.3. The wording in 3.8 ("used for care and development of the Collection") is preferable to the wording in 3.8.3 ("must be redirected towards new acquisitions").	Agreed. The wording in Section 3.8.3 has been revised from "must be redirected towards new acquisitions" to "used for the care and development of the collection," with development understood to include acquisition and growth. This amendment ensures consistency with the opening paragraph of Section 3.8.3
Repeating you have no, or limited, financial resources to maintain or expand the collection seems negative and sounds defeated - if this is the situation be more positive about what you can do and ask community for their ideas: • e.g. can you update the rules and fundraise for an acquisition from the community • e.g purchase contemporary art you have already supported to the collection for permanent display such as the Doomsday clock. Unclear where your committee and this policy sits in relation to your Arts branch. The language of the draft Collection Policy seems formal and outdated, and it reads like you have just updated an existing document.	Section 3.2 of the draft collection policy addresses acquisition funding, identifying potential sources including Council operational and capital budgets, external grants, industry and private sector partnerships, community partnerships, donations and bequests (including via the Australian Federal Government's Cultural Gift Program), and funds from the sale of deaccessioned collection items. This document is a renewal of the Collection Policy (2020-2024).