Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner
Community Engagement Report

This report details the specifics and evaluates participation rates in the community engagement in the Gertrude and Brunswick Streets Corner project. The consultation opened on 20 November and was live until 9am on 18 December 2023.

Why we ran this consultation?

We have created a design for a vibrant new public space at the northeast corner of Gertrude and Brunswick Streets.

This idea was raised during our consultation for the Brunswick Street Streetscape Masterplan and there was strong community support for a new public space at this location (over 80%).

The new public space will provide seating, trees and greenery, an improved tram shelter, lighting and embedded words/text (which will be integrated in the surfaces of the space such as seating, tram shelter and paving) that reflect the significance of the area for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Part of the site is located on Atherton Gardens, which is owned by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). The use of this land as a public space will require formal approval, with negotiations currently taking place with DFFH and Homes Victoria.

The new proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design will also complement other initiatives in the surrounding areas, including the upcoming installation of the Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter statues in Atherton Gardens.

We will be having separate discussions with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to understand how the space is significant for them, so that this can be incorporated into the design as part of an integrated piece for the space.

The Yarra community were given an opportunity to view the concept design and have their say from 20 November to 9am on Monday 18 December 2023. There were also two in-person pop up sessions held on Thursday 30 November and Saturday 9 December at the northeast corner of Gertrude and Brunswick Streets.

Objectives of this engagement

1. To inform the community about the proposed plans to create a new public space at the north-east corner of Gertrude and Brunswick Streets.
2. To present the draft concept design and seek feedback from the community on the proposed design and layout of the space, how they would use the space, and any issues to consider.
3. To ensure there is feedback received from the range of people that use the space (Atherton Gardens residents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, tram passengers, local shops, residents and visitors).

Level of Community influence

Negotiables

The community could influence:

1. the design, layout and components of the proposed new public space.
2. the type, location and orientation of seating and other fixtures.
3. the justification for street furniture on footpaths and the introduction of new elements i.e., lighting and bike hoops.

Non-negotiables

The community could not influence:

1. the size of space as it is set, particularly within DFFH land.
2. TPZs and SRZs. Certain trees may not be removed to make space for facilities.
3. signalised crossings at the intersection as that will not change.
4. the footpath function as it must be retained.
5. the budget as that is set.

6. the content of embedded words/text in the space – targeted engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community will be carried out about the Aboriginal history and continued significance that help inform this element of the design.

What did we ask?

Participants were asked:

- What do you like about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?
- What do you think could be improved about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?
- How would you like to use the space? Select all that apply.
    - Eat lunch or drink coffee
    - Meeting up with a friend
    - Using the tram stop to board or get off the tram
    - Socialising with a group of people
    - Ceremonies
    - Enjoying the bar/restaurant scenes
    - Passive recreation (e.g. watching the world go by)
    - Relax and recharge
    - Walk through on my way somewhere
    - Other (please specify)

- When do you usually like to visit the area? Select all that apply.
    - Weekday morning
    - Weekday lunch break
    - Weekday afternoon
    - Weekday evening
    - Weekend morning
    - Weekend afternoon
    - Weekend evening

- Do you have any other comments about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?

Methods included:

- Online survey on Your Say Yarra webpage
- Paper surveys
- Pop-up events on site
- Informal in person engagement at key locations nearby

Participation

- 105 survey responses in total
- 2 individual responses (email/Oracle)
- At the two pop-up sessions we engaged with approximately 70 people overall. This included either handing out postcards and directing people to the survey, or having more detailed discussions with individuals.

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected from 105 survey contributions (online and paper copies).

- Most people who completed this survey (76.9%) live in Yarra. 43.3% indicated that they own a property or mortgage in Yarra and 38% work in Yarra.
- The most common age range for people who completed this survey was 35-49 (29.8%) closely followed by 50-59 (26.9%).
- More women (54.8%) than men (33.7%) completed this survey, with the remaining people self-described or preferring not to answer this question.
- Our key target groups were well represented in the survey results:
    - Person who speaks a language other than English – 10.6% (slightly below average)
    - Person with a disability – 11.5% (above average)

- Member of the LGBTIQA+ community – 28.9% (more than double our average)
- Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent – 7.7% (around 7x average)

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
I live in Yarra	80	76.9%
I work in Yarra	39	37.5%
I visit Yarra	22	21.2%
I study in Yarra	6	5.8%
I own a property or mortgage in Yarra	45	43.3%
I rent in Yarra	6	5.8%
I own a business in Yarra	2	1.9%
What gender do you identify as?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Man	35	33.65%
Woman	57	54.8%
Self-described	4	3.85%
I prefer not to say	8	7.7%
What is your age range?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	0	0%
18 to 24	5	4.8%
25 to 34	17	16.4%
35 to 49	31	29.8%
50 to 59	28	26.9%
60 to 69	12	11.5%
70 to 84	7	6.7%

85 and older	0	0%
I prefer not to say	4	3.8%
What suburb do you live in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Abbotsford	5	4.8%
Alphington	0	0%
Burnley	0	0%
Carlton North	2	1.9%
Clifton Hill	5	4.8%
Collingwood	15	14.4%
Cremorne	0	0%
Fairfield	1	0.96%
Fitzroy	52	50%
Fitzroy North	5	4.81%
Princes Hill	1	0.96%
Richmond	2	1.9%
I live outside of Yarra	16	15.4%
Select all that apply. I am…..	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	11	10.6%
A person living with a disability.	12	11.5%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	30	28.9%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	8	7.7%
None of the above.	46	44.2%
I prefer not to say.	11	10.6%

Engagement Reach

Engagement and Communications Activity
Your Say Yarra page set up with information about the project and link to the online survey.
Postcards distributed to local residents and businesses.
Posters displayed in the Atherton Gardens residential buildings and DFFH office.
Two corflutes displayed at the site.
Email sent to internal and external stakeholders to share with their networks.
Email sent to people who contributed to the Brunswick Street Streetscape Masterplan consultation, which had included a proposal for this site.
Information published on Council's Yarra Life and Your Say Yarra email newsletters
Information circulated on Yarra Estates Update email newsletter
Social media posts and ads
Posters and postcards displayed at Fitzroy Library, Connie Benn Centre and Fitzroy Youth Centre.
Visit to Fitzroy Learning Centre to speak with morning tea visitors and distribute posters and postcards.
Postcards distributed to Atherton Gardens Community Grocer and Atherton Gardens Community Market.
Two in-person pop-up events on site, with information about the project and a physical model of the proposed design.



In-person pop-up event on Saturday 9 December 2023

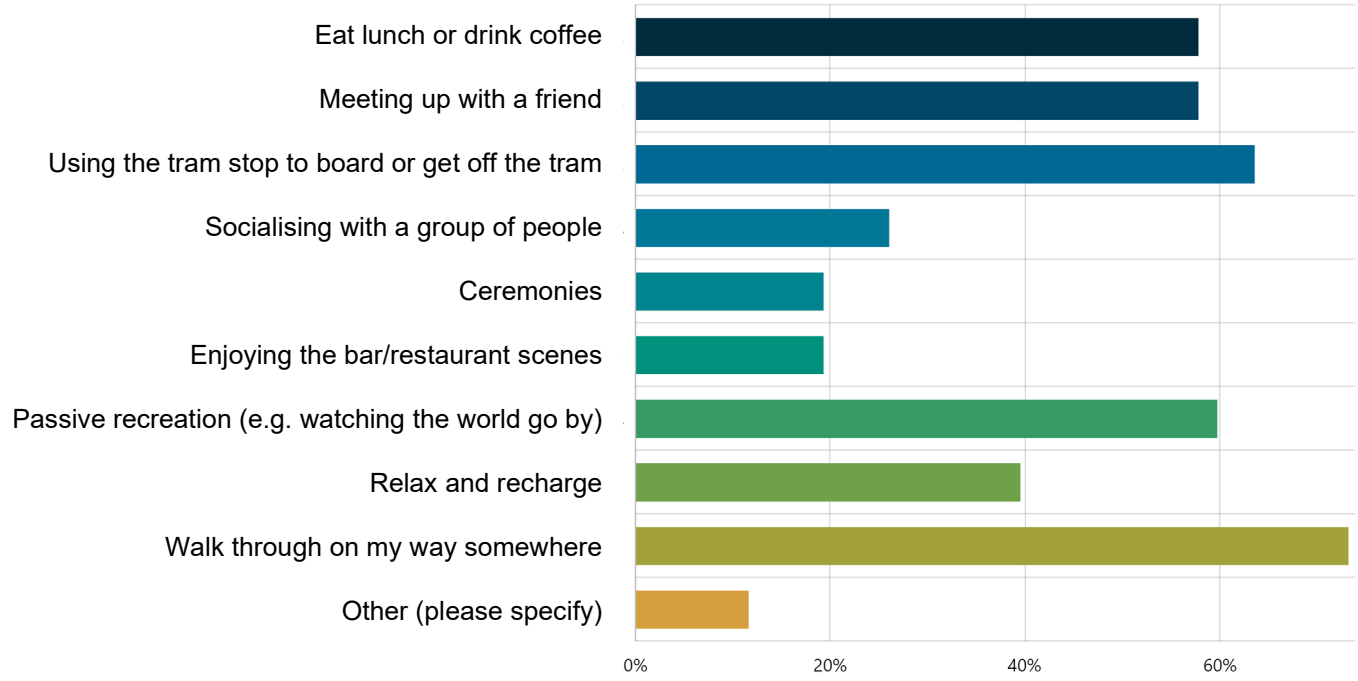
What did we hear?

The consultation asked a number of open ended and multiple-choice questions.

In terms of the multiple-choice questions, results are as follows:

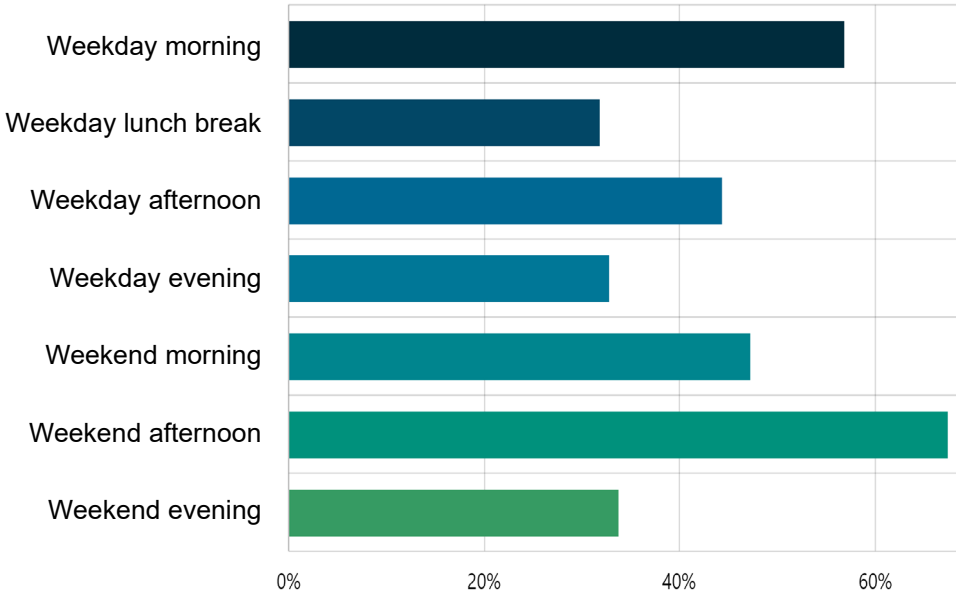
How would you like to use the space? Select all that apply.

People's responses showed that they would like the space to be used in a variety of ways, however the most common responses were 'Walk through on my way somewhere' (73.1%), 'Using the tram stop to board or get off the tram' (63.5%), 'Passive recreation (e.g. watching the world go by)' (59.6%), 'Meeting up with a friend (57.7%)' and 'Eat lunch or drink coffee (57.7%)'.



When do you usually like to visit the area? Select all that apply.

Responses were varied showing that the space will need to cater for use during the day and evening, and through the week and weekend. The main responses (over 40% each) were weekend morning and afternoon and weekday morning and afternoon.



A number of open-ended questions were asked. The text from these responses was analysed and broken down into key themes below.

What do you like about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?

Council received lots of positive feedback about the proposal. Many people felt that the design was an improvement of the space and liked that the space is more open, is public space and has trees and greenery.

Creating a more open space (27% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Love how it's open to the streets and creates a community space.* • *The openness of the design.* • *I like that it opens up the corner and adds seating and trees.* • *I like the open concept design and the amount of seating.* • *I like the way that it opens up the corner of the street to make it usable and communal - it integrates Atherton Gardens with the sidewalk nicely.* • *The design opens out what is at present a dirty and poorly maintained corner of Yarra city.*	This feedback is noted. The open nature of the design improves access and views through the space, and provides a space that has better passive surveillance.
Improving the use of the space and upgrading the area (23% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Making use of land that is currently wasted.* • *Using this space that's been empty for so long.*	This feedback is noted.

• *Turning a under-utilised space in to a new more accessible public space.* • *Love it! Makes such better use of this important and prominent corner. Will be a real "welcome to Brunswick street".* • *A much better and more appealing use of the space.* • *Removal of the dire planting. Refresh of a tired area.* • *Looks great - the current site is often used to store rubbish in the trees and is not appealing at all.* • *Looks great! This area of Gertrude Street really needs upgrading and will make it a fantastic social space.* • *I like the beautifying of the corner, as it's quite drab and un-Inviting at the moment.*	The design will improve the amenity of the area and create a place that fosters social connections and more liveable spaces.
Providing a public space for people (20% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Safe visible seating for people waiting for transport/friends.* • *Another green space for community to enjoy.* • *Open social gathering place.* • *It seems like a way of enabling people to stop and spend time in this location.* • *I like that it is a friendly, social space, and encourages people to stop and relax at this spot.* • *It looks to be an inclusive shared space. A gathering place.*	This feedback is noted. The design will provide an improved and flexible public space for people to enjoy.
Providing trees and greenery (20% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *More open, green space.* • *I like the increased planting to green Fitzroy and the opening up of the intersection as an urban node.* • *Lots of green space and trees is always welcome.* • *I like the greenery.* • *The open space and trees.*	This feedback is noted. The design removes the dense shrubs and provides improved garden bed areas with new trees to offer improved amenity for people using the space. Some additional feedback was provided in response to the second question below, requesting more trees and suggesting particular plant species. Please refer to response to these points on pages 9-10.
Provision of seating (16% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Various seating options.* • *It will provide some seating area for people.* • *Tiered steps for sitting and viewing street life.*	This feedback is noted. A variety of seating options have been provided and changes will be made to the design to provide greater

• *Love the concept, especially the amphitheatre style seating.* • *I really like the steps facing the intersection as well as the rocks.* • *Safe visible seating for people waiting for transport/friends.* • *Green space, integrated seating with shade. Tiering.*	seating options to allow people to enjoy different views, including into Atherton Gardens and along Brunswick and Gertrude Streets.

What do you think could be improved about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?

More trees, greenery and shade needed (15% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *The proposed design should comply with Yarra's street tree policy for shading the heat absorbing surfaces of pavements with appropriate plantings that provide necessary tree canopies. Four trees on the south are manifestly insufficient to shade the sitting area from the northern sun.* • *I would like to see more shrubs, trees to provide shade that people can lie on/under.* • *More shade. The main seating/steps are completely exposed. Either plant shade trees within the tiered area or provide shade sail structure to protect people from UV.* • *I think some kind of shading for people would be useful. It would be great in summer to be able to seek shade.* • *The opening of the space has significant reduced greenery. The area has reduced biodiversity and very little options for growth.* • *Given our warming climate, I believe the dominance of exposed hard surfaces and the fact that the tiered seating is without any shade means that in warm weather those seats will be hot and people will get sunburnt.* • *There needs to be more trees - there are a lot of hard surfaces in the plan.*	It's noted that while some respondents supported the trees and greenery in the design, others wanted more trees (and shade) and greenery. In terms of trees and shade: • We have considered the future shade that would be cast over the space, and agree that some more shade could be provided, particularly to protect the space over the afternoon period. In finalising the design, we will consider opportunities to provide additional trees in the space particularly where there is seating. • It is noted that due to the orientation of the site and proximity to the traffic lights, it is difficult to plant trees directly west of the new public space. • The new tree planting will provide suitable sized trees that complement the eucalypt planting within Atherton Gardens and allow for better view lines. It's considered that the existing shrubs and smaller trees in the corner are too dense and create visibility issues and hiding nooks close to the footpath and tram stop. The existing vegetation is unable to be pruned to an appropriate shape/size. The existing plantings at the corner are of low arboriculture value, the majority are exotic species, and they offer little amenity value. In terms of greenery: • We agree that the space could offer more greenery to support the character of the area and provide environmental and biodiversity benefits. • In finalising the design, we will look to expand the garden bed areas further into the space and reduce the extent of hardscaped areas, whilst still providing places to sit. In addition, the design will explore the feasibility of a water fountain in the space to provide further amenity and comfort during hotter periods.

Suggestions for different plant species (15% of responses)

What did we hear	Our response
• *I think that the "new garden with salvaged rock" areas need to include rich pollinator food sources and dense-cover insect habitat since, given the urban location, we mustn't further limit these scarce resources.* • *Plant fruit trees.* • *I think including native plants should be a top priority.* • *I think having deciduous tree species as the primary planting for the new trees would be a great choice.* • *Some flowers or native plants on the hill to add some colour or connection to nature.* • *Remember the site is windy so plantings need to take that into consideration.*	The responses show that people have a variety of preferences in relation to plant species on site. The species selection is yet to be finalised, but the following approach is proposed: • For new trees: – Supplement/strengthen the Atherton Gardens Eucalypt 'Forest' tree planting. – Focus on native tree species to acknowledge Aboriginal history and connection. Note that there are no endemic tree species at present, however we will consider use of local species. – Canopy heights will be reviewed with the intent to allow access to winter light whilst providing shade in summer. • For the garden bed planting: – Focus on Indigenous 'wildflower' embankments with salvaged basalt rocks. – Provide flowering shrubs, grasses, and groundcovers (prostrate to 500mm high) to maintain open/visible sightlines. – Select species that are robust and aligned with future use and maintenance of the space. – Focus on native plant species to acknowledge Aboriginal history and connection. Palette to draw from endemic species that would have been found on site prior to colonisation. – Provide variety of species that contributes to local biodiversity and supports spaces and habitat for fauna and pollinators. – Ensure planting design considers seasonal change.

Anti-social behaviour, graffiti, skating, litter (14% of responses)

What did we hear	Our response
• *Ensure the landscaping and trees aren't of a scale that hides/facilitates antisocial behaviour.* • *There is a danger that this area could attract antisocial gatherings.* • *It needs to be skate proof.* • *If your design is to encourage people to linger and sit etc you need rubbish bins otherwise it will end up being squalid.* • *Syringes are a concern.* • *My only concern is vandalism and graffiti tags.*	It's noted that the space is located at a busy intersection and has good passive surveillance, which will support people using the space. The following measures will be considered through the design process to help improve the function of the space and help deter anti-social behaviour: • The existing dense shrubs will be removed and new planting will maintain clear view lines – planting to be prostrate (flat) to approximately 500mm high. • Design will consider integrated measures to deter skating. • Lighting design to provide adequate and ambient lighting at night.

	• Design will consider appropriate graffiti protective coating to be applied to furniture. • Design will consider opportunity for an additional bin here if required.

Ensure design reflects the significance of the area and provides education and acknowledgement of Aboriginal history and connection (11% of responses)	
What did we	**Our response**
• *Important place for Aboriginal community and Parkies, especially Stolen Generations.* • *First Nations (Native) garden and plants and local Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung designs incorporated into the space. Will complement stolen generation marker and Archie Roach & Ruby Hunter statue.* • *More connection with local Aboriginal history and stories. Fitzroy is so significant.* • *I'd love to see some first nations public art here too given the history of the area.* • *More Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung education. Also audible so anyone or age can be educated.*	As part of the design, it is proposed to integrate words and text that reflect the significance of the area for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. These words would be embedded into the space, for example on the surfaces of the seats, paving and tram shelter. The content and design of this will be informed by targeted engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a connection with Fitzroy, due to be carried out over March 2024. There is also the opportunity to install an additional sign to complement the suite of signs that extend through Atherton Gardens towards the Meeting Place. The final design will consider the feasibility of a sign and how this can be integrated in the new public space to draw people in at this prominent corner. In finalising the design, we will also consider how the layout and orientation of the space can be improved so that it: • strengthens views into Atherton Gardens (including the meeting place, Stolen Generations Marker and future Uncle Archie Roach and Aunty Ruby Hunter Statues) and other key places such as Charcoal Lane; and • provides better flow between the street and Atherton Gardens, so that they are not seen as separate spaces.

Accessibility (11% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *consider how mobility impaired people and wheelchair users and carers would be able to use the space. There are lots of steps - this is immediately off-putting. Consider integrating some ramps / walkways to maximise access/enjoyment for all.* • *The hill and stairs creates a barrier to seeing and entering the green public space beyond and is not accessible for many.* • *Not sure about the accessibility for people with disabilities.* • *Also the steps are a barrier for me and for my friends in the local area who use wheelchairs. Providing other seating options with back*	The new public space is located at the corner of Gertrude and Brunswick Streets next to a busy intersection. The site itself does not form a path or cut through to Atherton Gardens, and it's noted that there are pathways directly next to the site from both Gertrude Street (towards the Meeting Place) and Brunswick Street. Furthermore, the existing space is small and constrained, and there is approximately 1m level difference between the footpaths and the back fence. However, we acknowledge the feedback received and agree that some changes are needed to make the space feel more inclusive.

support and less stairs would increase accessibility. • *Accessibility for wheelchairs and prams - the design does not seem to have a ramp.*	In finalising the design, we will explore the potential for a ramp leading up to the top of the space to allow people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the space. This will require some changes to the seating and layout of the design. The final design will also look to ensure that: • there is more generous footpath space at the corner of Brunswick and Gertrude Streets next to the busy intersection and pedestrian crossings; • there are various seating options, including some with arm and back rests; and • the space caters for a range of users, including people waiting for a tram or a friend, passersby, and people wanting to spend more time in the space.

Suggestion for Uncle Jack Charles statue (10% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Honour Uncle Jack! Great opportunity!* • *Would love to see a sculpture of Uncle Jack Charles installed at this significant site.* • *Would love to see something to honour the late Uncle Jack Charles.* • *A tribute to Uncle Jack would be great! He was such a charismatic and much loved person.* • *Would be deadly to have a statue of Uncle Jack Charles in this space.*	We acknowledge that several respondents suggested the late Uncle Jack Charles as a prominent local figure and noted the opportunity to recognise his contributions by providing a statue of him within the space. We note that the installation of a statue is not currently part of the scope of the project. The design proposes to embed words and text that reflect the significance of the place for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This is currently being developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a connection with Fitzroy. However, we appreciate the feedback about honouring Uncle Jack Charles and this has been passed onto relevant teams, should there be any future feasible opportunities in this area or other suitable locations.

More shelter needed (9% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *More seating under cover.* • *Some all weather cover for the tram stop.* • *The corner will be heavily exposed to Melbourne's inclement weather and would benefit from a semi-enclosed shelter over the steps to protect people from the sun, rain and hail.* • *There is very little cover for people from the rain and sunshine. This will limit the usefulness.* • *More shelter from the sun and rain.*	The proposed new public space will include a tram shelter and trees. In response to the feedback about providing more shelter and protection we will consider opportunities to provide more trees to achieve more shade for the seating and footpath areas, particularly during the afternoon. The design does not provide an additional larger shelter (such as a custom shelter over the seating or a larger tram shelter). It is considered that natural shade is more appropriate and will complement the landscape character within Atherton Gardens. A physical shelter would further obstruct views into Atherton Gardens and may inadvertently encourage rough sleeping, storage of belongings and anti-social behaviour, therefore is not considered appropriate.

	If more shelter is required for people waiting for the tram in future, a second tram shelter could be explored further north along Brunswick Street.

Add play space or features for children (9% of responses)	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• *Playground for children.* • *Include updating the play area for kids from the flats.* • *Non-traditional/sculptural play options.* • *- If intended to be a space for socialising, would be good to have some kid friendly elements like a small gated playground.* • *The space should incorporate activities for children.* • *Kids are going to want to climb over the rocks on either side of the seating so consider designing them with this in mind.*	It is noted that this new public space is small in size, is located directly next to a busy signalised intersection, and is approximately 50 metres from an existing playground within Atherton Gardens. For these reasons it is considered that traditional play equipment is not appropriate for this space. However, the design will provide informal play opportunities: • The seating and salvaged rocks will allow children to climb and play while their carers use the space. • The embedded words and text element of the design will be playful and engaging in nature, and will provide the opportunity for children and people of all ages to find, read and discuss these words.

Do you have any other comments about the proposed Gertrude and Brunswick Streets corner design?

The responses to these generally repeated previous comments or raised other opportunities for improvement. These have been incorporated into the above themes for the previous questions.

Other feedback

Targeted engagement sessions were held in March 2024 about the embedded words/text element of the design, inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a connection with Fitzroy to share their connections to the space and consider what sentiments the words/text element could reflect. Through these sessions some feedback was raised about the design of the space. This included the following:

- Design needs to improve accessibility of space, in particular to upper part of tiered seating.
- Orientation of space should be revisited so that it does not turn its back on the gardens.
- Design needs to better support the flow and energy of this space and how it relates to other elements in Atherton Gardens (space is fluid like a river system).
- Views are important, including to trees, meeting place, Stolen Generations Marker and to the future statues of Uncle Archie Roach and Aunty Ruby Hunter.

Some of these issues were also raised through the public consultation and are captured in the themes above. In response to these points raised, the final design will investigate how accessibility in the space can be improved, including the potential for a ramp leading to the upper part of the space. The design will also revisit the orientation and layout of the space to improve visual connections to Atherton Gardens and important sites as well as make the transition between the street, this new public space and the gardens, more fluid.

Evaluating the engagement

Objective	Evaluation
To inform the community about the proposed plans to create a new public space at the north-east corner of Gertrude and Brunswick Streets.	The consultation provided a wide outreach to inform the community about the project. In addition to the online survey, in-person events were carried out in the local area and information was displayed at the project site which is next to a busy intersection and tram stop.
To present the draft concept design and seek feedback from the community on the proposed design and layout of the space, how they would use the space, and any issues to consider.	The draft concept design was presented for feedback. This included online images as well as posters and a physical model at the in-person events. The consultation received 105 responses. The turnout at the two in-person pop up events on site was slightly lower than expected given the wet weather on the day (and inability to reschedule at late notice). However, officers used the time to distribute postcards to engage people about the project and encourage them to respond to the survey.
To ensure there is feedback received from the range of people that use the space (Atherton Gardens residents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, tram passengers, local shops, residents and visitors).	Feedback was received from a range of respondents who use the space. It is not clear exactly how many Atherton Gardens residents responded to the survey, however officers carried out additional engagements within Atherton Gardens to help promote the project and encourage people to respond to the survey. From the online surveys, 7.7% of respondents are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, 11.5% live with a disability, 28.9% are from the LGBTIQA+ community. These figures are higher than what we receive for similar consultations, and likely reflect people who have a connection with this part of Fitzroy and use local services in the area.