Collingwood Town Hall affordable key worker housing Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the Collingwood Town Hall Precinct project and reports on the engagement outcomes. The consultation opened on Monday 17 November and closed at 9am on Monday 15 December 2025

Overview

Project background

Council is interested in facilitating the development of affordable housing on some Council-owned land off Eddy Court in Abbotsford near Collingwood Town Hall.

To complete this, Council would need to make this portion of land available for lease or sale to a development partner who would take on responsibility for the design, planning permit, construction, and operation of the housing.

Sections 114 and 115 of the Local Government Act require Council to undertake a community engagement process before considering the lease or sale of land.

If the lease or sale of the land is approved, and following the appointment of a development partner, Council's role would shift to updating the community on the overall progress of the project.

Objectives of this engagement

1. To inform the nearby residents and the broader community of Council's intent to lease or sell the land and its intent to use the land for affordable housing.
2. Provide space for community members to provide comments on the proposed project in line with Sections 114 and 115 of the Local Government Act.
3. Understand whether community would prefer for Council to lease the land, sell the land or have it remain as is.
4. Understand concerns for community members on the potential development of affordable housing in the area.
5. To make the engagement as accessible and inclusive as possible to allow everyone in the community an opportunity to participate.
6. To share with participants how their feedback helped contribute to the final decision made by Council.

Level of community influence

Community feedback helps the Council understand the community's preference on which of the following options to proceed with:

- Lease the land
- Sell the land
- Not lease or sell the land which would result in the project not continuing

Engagement methods:

- Online survey tool hosted through Your Say Yarra engagement platform
- 2 x place-based pop-ups at the following locations:
    - Saturday 29 November 2025 from 10am to 12pm at Gahan Reserve
    - Tuesday 2 December 2025 from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Collingwood Library

Engagement questions:

All respondents

Do you support the proposed lease or sale of land located at Eddy Court in Abbotsford (pictured above) for the development of affordable housing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If respondent chose "yes" in response to the question "Do you support the proposed lease or sale of land located at Eddy Court in Abbotsford (pictured above) for the development of affordable housing?"

Which of the following options, would you prefer Council consider for the land?

- Lease the land for the development of affordable housing
- Sell the land for the development of affordable housing
- No preference between selling or leasing the land for the development of affordable housing

[LOGIC if the following options were selected "Lease the land for the development of affordable housing" OR "No preference between selling or leasing the land for the development of affordable housing"]

Why do you support leasing the land for the development of affordable housing? Please select up to 3 reasons.

- Housing affordability is an important issue to me
- Housing affordability is an important issue for my business in attracting and retaining staff
- Housing affordability is an important issue to my family and/or friends
- I am happy to see Council using this land for a different use to parking
- I think a development will improve the look and feel of the area
- I think a development will improve the use of the area
- I like that Council is trying new things
- I want people to be able to live close to where they work
- I like that Council is setting conditions for the development as it will ensure a better outcome for everyone
- I don't have any particular objection to this proposed option
- Other – please explain [FREE TEXT]

[LOGIC if the following options were selected "Sell the land for the development of affordable housing" OR "No preference between selling or leasing the land for the development of affordable housing"]

Why do you support selling the land for the development of affordable housing? Please select up to 3 reasons.'

- Housing affordability is an important issue to me
- Housing affordability is an important issue for my business in attracting and retaining staff
- Housing affordability is an important issue to my family and/or friends
- I am happy to see Council using this land for a different use to parking
- I think a development will improve the look and feel of the area
- I think a development will improve the use of the area
- I like that Council is trying new things
- I want people to be able to live close to where they work
- I like that Council is setting conditions for the development as it will ensure a better outcome for everyone
- I don't have any particular objection to this proposed option
- Other – please explain [FREE TEXT]

If respondent chose "no" in response to the question "Do you support the proposed lease or sale of land located at Eddy Court in Abbotsford (pictured above) for the development of affordable housing?"

Why don't you support leasing or selling the land for the development of affordable housing? Please select up to 3 reasons.

- I prefer the site to remain as car parking
- I do not think Council should be involved in housing development
- I do not think Council land assets should be leased or sold
- The building will be too tall
- I have to pay market rent and other people should too
- The development will increase traffic in the area
- The focus should be on using State and Federal government land for housing, not using local government land
- There is already too much subsidised housing in the area
- I am concerned about the impact on the views to the Town Hall
- I am concerned about the impact on the Djerring Centre
- Other – please explain [FREE TEXT]

If respondent chose "unsure" in response to the question "Do you support the proposed lease or sale of land located at Eddy Court in Abbotsford (pictured above) for the development of affordable housing?"

Why are you unsure about whether you support leasing or selling the land for the development of affordable housing? Please select up to 3 reasons.

- I need to see exactly what the building would look like before I can decide
- I need to understand more about the legislation and process for use of council land before I can decide
- I need to know more about who would live in the building before I could decide
- I am just not interested in this project
- Other – please explain [FREE TEXT]

All respondents

Do you have any comments about the proposal to use this land as affordable housing in the future?

[FREE TEXT]

Engagement reach

Engagement promotion:
Social media channels (including social media advertisements) reaching almost 37,000 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 more than 32,000 subscribers.
News story on Yarra City Council's website and promoted on homepage.
Postcards and other printed collateral available at Collingwood Town Hall and Collingwood Library.
Postcards distributed to 935 occupiers of residences and businesses in within 200m of the proposed site.
Mail outs of postcards to 289 owners of residences and businesses in within 200m of the proposed site who did not live at the address.
7 x A3 corflutes (signs) available at key locations around the proposed site.

Engagement with harder-to-reach community cohorts:

Harder-to-reach community cohort	Engagement promotion and activities
Children, young people and families	• Promotion through Libraries email newsletter and promotional channel • Coordination of pop-up information session during Collingwood Library Storytime session
Public housing residents	• Promotion through the Yarra Estates and Department of Families Fairness and Housing communications • Postcard delivery to 360 letterboxes within the Collingwood Public Housing Tower on Hoddle Street
Older community members	• Engagement outreach activity through Djerring Centre to engage with community members, many of who spoke a language other than English, using the support of a Bicultural Liaison Officer.

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
2,714	1,629	313

Note that one of the responses was identified as a “double up” that is two responses likely submitted by one person. For the analysis in the “What did we hear?” in the next section, one of the responses has been removed.

In person engagement opportunities:

In-person session (including date and location)	Approximate number of people we spoke to	Responses
Saturday 29 November 2025 from 10am to 12pm at Gahan Reserve	15	1
Tuesday 2 December 2025 from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Collingwood Library	20	0
TOTAL	35	1

Engagement results

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the 305 hard and online copies of the survey.

Please note: 8 respondents did not provide demographic data as part of their hard copy responses, so their details are not reflected in the tables below.

What's your connection to Yarra? *Please note: Respondents could select multiple options.*	Numbers	Percentage
Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)	229	75.08%
Live in Yarra, in a property I rent	39	12.79%
Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra	8	2.62%
Work in Yarra	54	17.70%
Own a business / business occupier in Yarra	22	7.21%
Study in Yarra	7	2.30%
None of the above	7	2.30%
Prefer not to say	4	1.31%
What is your connection to the Collingwood Town Hall precinct and surrounding area? *Please note: Respondents could select multiple options.*	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
I live nearby	216	70.82%
I work nearby	56	18.36%
I run a business nearby	13	4.26%
I visit the area	94	30.82%
I attend programs at Willowview or the Djerring Centre	13	4.26%
What gender do you identify as?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Man	146	47.87%
Woman	144	47.21%
Self-described	4	1.31%
I prefer not to say	11	3.61%
What is your age range?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	0	0%
18 to 24	7	2.30%
25 to 34	55	18.03%
35 to 49	96	31.48%

50 to 59	58	19.02%
60 to 69	51	16.72%
70 to 84	29	9.51%
85 and older	0	0%
I prefer not to say	9	2.95%
What suburb do you live in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Abbotsford	116	38.03%
Alphington	1	0.33%
Burnley	1	0.33%
Carlton North	8	2.62%
Clifton Hill	14	4.59%
Collingwood	40	13.11%
Cremorne	3	0.98%
Fairfield	3	0.98%
Fitzroy	29	9.51%
Fitzroy North	20	6.56%
Princes Hill	3	0.98%
Richmond	36	11.80%
I live outside of Yarra	31	10.16%
Select all that apply. I am…. *Please note: Respondents could select multiple options.*	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	35	11.48%
A person who was born overseas	53	17.38%
A person living with a disability.	27	8.85%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	55	18.03%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	2	0.66%
None of the above.	142	46.56%
I prefer not to say.	35	11.48%

What did we hear?

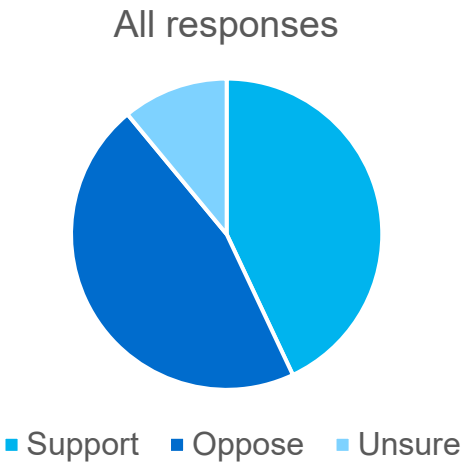
With more than 300 survey responses, and just over half of them from people living in Abbotsford and Collingwood there was a good level of interest and engagement from the local community.

We have provided a snapshot of the results below. The percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The numbers in brackets are the number of responses received.

We asked people: *Do you support the proposed lease or sale of land located at Eddy Court in Abbotsford for the development of affordable Housing?*

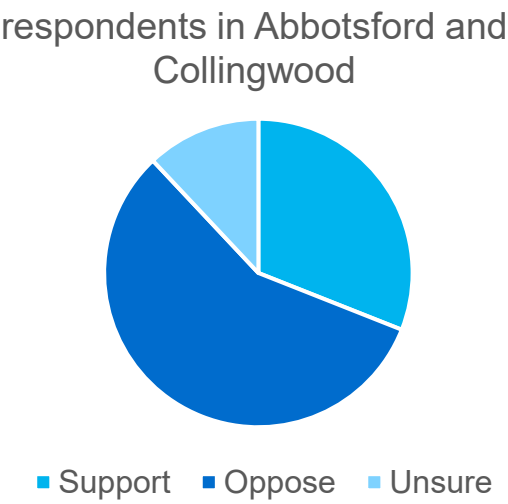
Across **all the responses** (312 responses) the results were:

Support	Oppose	Unsure
43% (133)	46% (144)	11% (35)



Looking at responses just for people **living in Collingwood and Abbotsford** (144 responses), the proportion of people opposing the project was higher (compared with the results across all surveys):

Support	Oppose	Unsure
31% (44)	57% (83)	12% (17)

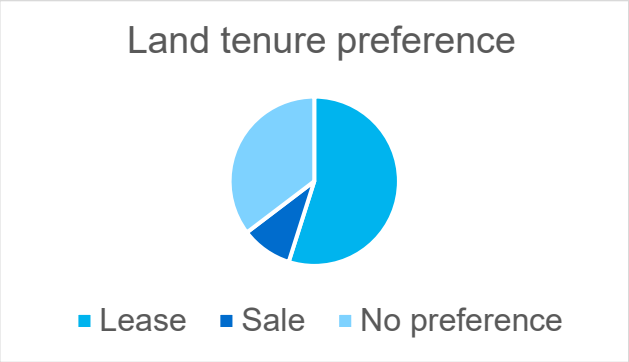


We asked people: *Do you prefer the lease or sale of the land or have no preference?*

People who supported the project were asked if they had a preference for the lease or sale of the land for development of affordable housing.

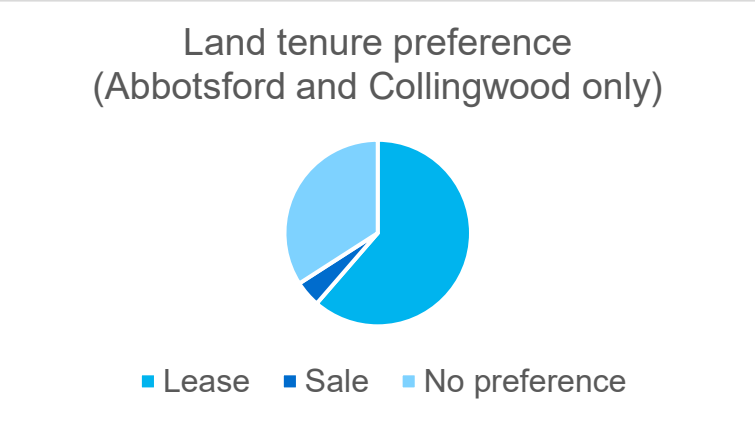
Across **all the responses** (133 responses) the results were:

Lease	Sale	No preference
55% (73)	10% (13)	35% (47)



For respondents **living in Abbotsford and Collingwood** (44 responses), the proportion of people who preferred lease over sale increased:

Lease	Sale	No preference
61% (27)	5% (2)	34% (15)



We asked people: *Why do you support leasing / the sale of land for affordable housing?*

Respondents who selected a preference for the **lease of the land** (73 responses) and people who indicated no preference (47 responses) were asked to identify the reasons they supported the lease of the land for affordable housing. People could select up to three options from a list of 11 options – one of which was an "other" and free text option. The following were the five most popular responses:

- Housing affordability is an important issue to me (90)
- I am happy to see Council using this land for a different use to parking (71)
- I want people to be able to live close to where they work (69)
- I like that Council is setting conditions for the development as it will ensure a better outcome for everyone (45)
- I think a development will improve the use of the area (26)

Respondents who selected a preference for the **sale of the land** (13 responses) or who selected no preference (47 responses) were asked to identify the reasons they supported the sale of the land. People could select up to three options from a list of 11 options – one of which was an "other" and free text option. The following were the five most popular responses:

- Housing affordability is an important issue to me (45)
- I want people to be able to live close to where they work (35)
- I am happy to see Council using this land for a different use to parking (31)
- I like that Council is setting conditions for the development as it will ensure a better outcome for everyone (18)
- Housing affordability is an important issue to my family and/or friends (11)

We asked people: *Why don't you support leasing or selling the land for the development of affordable housing?*

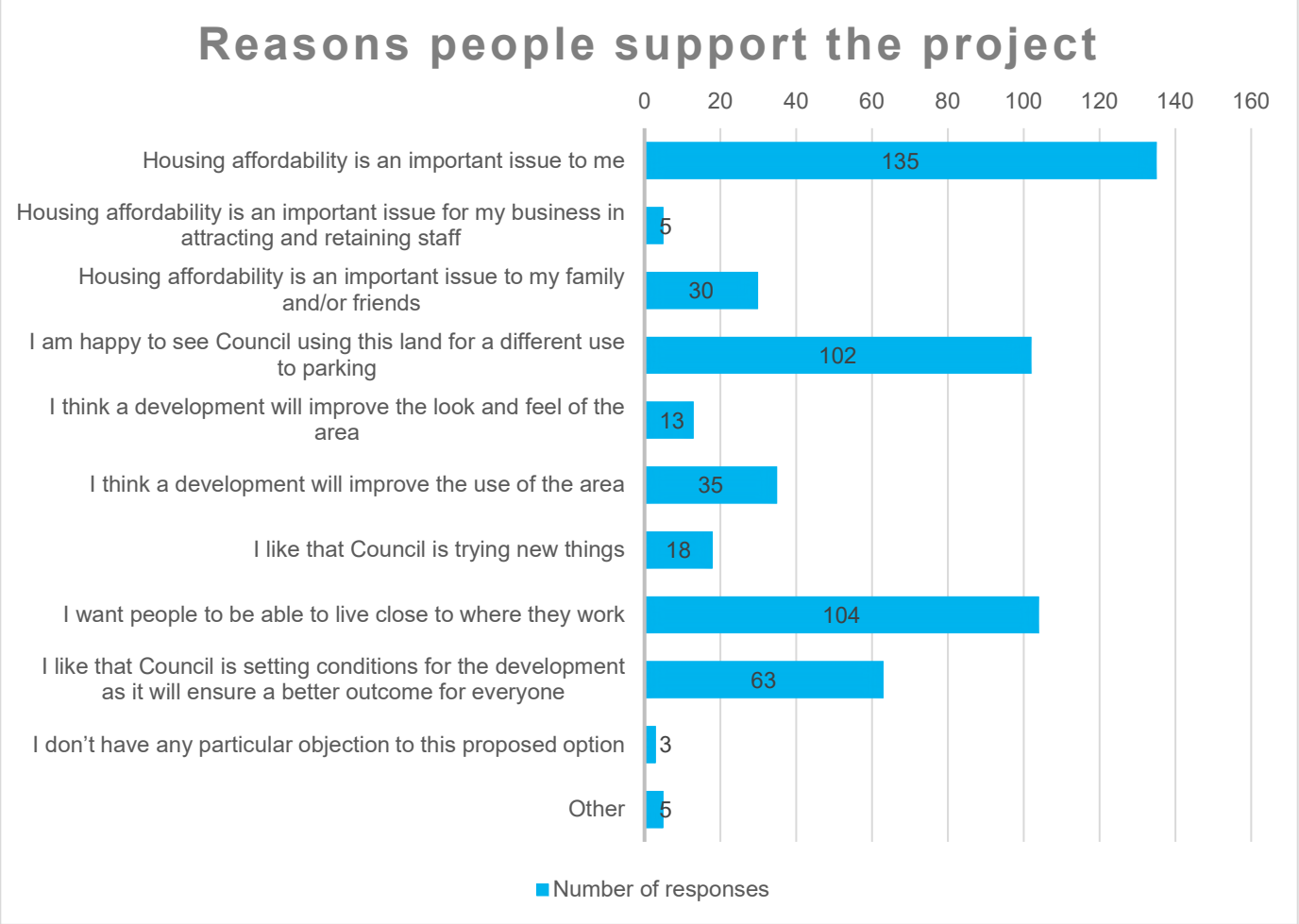
Respondents who indicated they did not support the proposed lease or sale of the land (144 responses) were asked to identify reasons they did not support leasing or selling the land. People could select up to three options from a list of 11 options – one of which was an "other" and free text option. The following were the six most popular responses:

- I do not think Council land assets should be leased or sold (63)
- I do not think Council should be involved in housing development (53)
- The building will be too tall (46)
- The focus should be on using State and Federal government land for housing, not local government land (41)
- There is already too much subsidised housing in the area (38)
- The development will increase traffic in the area (37)

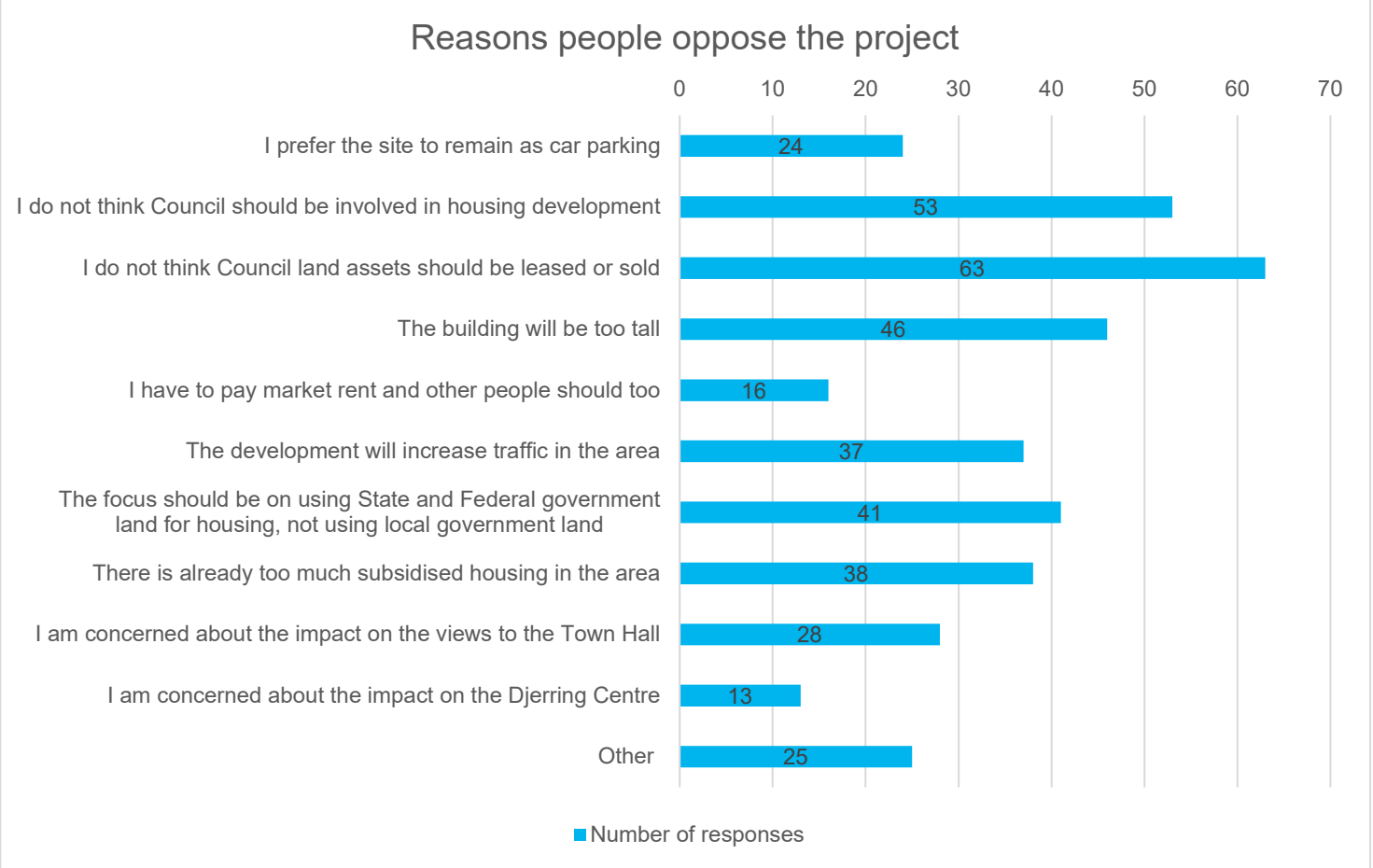
Respondents who indicated they were unsure about the lease or sale of the land (35 responses) were asked to identify reasons they were unsure. People could select from five options, including an "other" option with free text. The responses were:

- I need to know more about who would live in the building before I could decide (20)
- I need to see exactly what the building would look like before I can decide (17)
- I need to understand more about the legislation and process for the use of council land before I can decide (15)
- Other (11 responses)
- I am just not interested in this project (0)

The following graph lists all the options people could select when indicating support for the project and shows the number of times each reason was selected combining people who indicated they had a preference for **lease, sale, or no preference**.



The following graph lists all the options people could select when indicating their opposition to the project and shows the number of times each reason was selected for people who indicated they **opposed** the lease or sale of the land for affordable housing.



People also provided comments in “free text” boxes on the survey. Those comments have been provided to Councillors as a confidential attachment. The comments are reflected in the analysis below.

The table below provides a summary of feedback (grouped into themes) that was received as part of the community consultation. The themes are based on officer review of the free text comments in response to the question "*Do you have any comments about the proposal to use this land as affordable housing in the future*?" and the feedback received during the community engagement pop-ups. Officers have provided option/s for addressing the points raised and have identified the impact of those options.

Feedback Theme 1 – Building height	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Respondents raised concerns about the height of the building (8 storeys) and the potential impact on the heritage values of the surrounding area, especially the Collingwood Town Hall.	The height of the building could be reduced. A 6-storey building could accommodate 50 dwellings. That would reduce the number of affordable housing dwellings that can be provided. It would also reduce the cost of the project, meaning that the Development Facilitation Program may no longer be available as a planning pathway – the DFP requires a minimum construction cost of $50m. It may discourage some potential development partners who need a greater number of dwellings to make the project viable.
Feedback Theme 2 – Parking	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Respondents noted that there was already significant parking pressure in surrounding streets, particularly when there were events on at the Town Hall. They were concerned that an additional 50 – 80 dwellings would increase the pressure on street parking.	To help address concerns about parking Council could reduce the number of dwellings in the project by reducing the height to 6 storeys. The impact of this would be fewer affordable housing dwellings that can be provided. Another option is to require one or more on site car spaces for every dwelling. This would significantly impact on the cost of the project. It would also impact on the yield of the project. Basement parking is unlikely to be viable given the proximity to the railway line and so the additional parking would take up one or more storeys that would otherwise have been apartments.
• Respondents were concerned about the impact from tradespeople on street parking during construction.	Council could: • Review existing permit zones and whether they need to be extended • Require parking for trades to be addressed as part of a Construction Management Plan for the building (as a condition of the lease or sale of the land) This would require staff resources to undertake the review and/or additional enforcement.

Feedback Theme 3 – Land tenure	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Respondents raised concerns about the sale of council land.	Council could decide that it will only make the land available through lease, not the sale of the site. It will be less expensive for Council to make a leasehold site available as it does not require a subdivision of the existing site. But some potential development partners will only be interested in a freehold, not leasehold site as it is easier to secure finance and better aligns with their growth strategy.
Feedback Theme 4 – Role of council	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Some respondents noted that affordable housing was not core business for local government.	Council could refocus its advocacy efforts to encourage State government to use State government land within the City of Yarra for a key worker affordable housing project. Council would have less influence on the timeframes and delivery of a project on State-government land, and the project may not go ahead.
• Respondents commented that council land should be used for developments or activities that were available to a greater number of people e.g. community gardens, community infrastructure.	Council has resolved that there needs to be a public walkway through the project which will provide some public use of the site. Trying to include community infrastructure into the project will increase the cost of the development making an affordable housing project unviable without additional funding for the community infrastructure. Including additional community infrastructure on the site could also delay the project while the particular needs and funding for the community infrastructure is confirmed.
Feedback Theme 5 – Impact on existing uses	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Respondents were concerned about the loss of the garden on the part of the site occupied by the Church and used by people from Willowview / Djerring Centre	Council could include a requirement for community gardens to be included on the site to replace the gardens that will be impacted by the development. Providing some community gardens at ground level should be possible without reducing the number of dwellings if agreement can be reached on managing the public/private interface.

• Respondents raised concerns that the project will impact on bus pick up / drop off and bus parking and noted that the loss of parking spaces would limit some people's ability to participate in activities at Willowview/Djerring Centre.	Council can include requirements that the affordable housing project provide for bus pick up and drop off and a publicly available accessible parking space. The interface between the leaseholder, Council, and public would need to be actively managed and clearly set out through the lease, development agreement, or other contracts. This would not address the loss of public parking. Requiring the project to include public parking would reduce the amount of resident parking and/or reduce the number of apartments as an additional storey of parking may be required. It would also increase the cost of the project.
Feedback Theme 5 – Support for the project	
What we heard	**Options and impacts**
• Respondents supported the idea of an affordable housing project on council land.	Council can continue to an Expression of Interest (EoI) process to identify a development partner. This will test the market to see if there is interest in the project and whether the project can be financially viable. Alternatively Council could resolve to identify other site/s within the municipality that could be used for affordable housing. Proceeding to an EoI will require existing staff resource to be allocated to that process and so a review of other potential sites could not happen until later in the year or early 2027.
• Respondents identified the need for public and/or community housing to ensure the rents were lower and the dwellings were affordable to more people.	Providing public housing is the responsibility of the State government and if Council were to make its own land available for public housing that would essentially be a cost-shift from State government. Council could revisit the project and decide to proceed with social housing rather than affordable housing. This may provide some opportunities for funding streams (e.g. Victoria's Social Housing Growth Fund). Note that the small size of this project (fewer than 200 dwellings) means the project is not eligible for HAFF Round 3.