Rainbow Policy - Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the Rainbow Policy project and reports on the engagement outcomes from Stage 1. The consultation opened on 17.01.2025 and closed at 9am on 17.02.2025.

Overview

Project background

At Yarra City Council, we believe that everyone has the right to freely express themselves and to feel safe doing so. We are historically a proud LGBTIQA+ precinct of Melbourne where 15% of residents identify as LGBTIQA+.

That's why we've made a commitment to work together with our community to form a Rainbow Policy that is relevant to the ongoing and emerging needs of the local LGBTIQA+ community.

We want our diverse LGBTIQA+ community to be involved in creating the Rainbow Policy every step of the way.

Our current LGBTIQA+ Strategy 2021-2024 has focused on welcoming and celebrating diversity and building an inclusive Yarra through supporting, participating and connecting with our diverse LGBTIQA+ community.

This strategy has already achieved some fantastic outcomes, including:

- The creation of a Rainbow Advisory committee and employment of an LGBTIQA+ specific community development officer role.
- The Rainbow Yarra visibility campaign, which includes a poster and video campaign and webpage to house LGBTIQA+ community happenings in Yarra.
- Updating the civic flag policy to fly the full spectrum of Pride flags on Council buildings on relevant days.
- Participating in Pride events and festivals such as Midsumma Carnival, Pride March and Victoria's Pride.
- Building the Queerways mural, the LGBTIQA+ historical walking tour of Yarra and recognising the heritage value of places and artefacts of social and cultural significance to the LGBTIQA+ community in Yarra.

Before consulting with the community we conducted benchmarking research, an audit of the current LGBTIQA+ programs at Yarra and reviewed the outgoing strategy, together with Yarra's Rainbow Advisory Committee.

Based on this review and an assessment of community needs we have identified 4 key themes which we believe the Rainbow Policy should focus on:

- **Heritage and Celebration** - We acknowledge and celebrate our history and support our LGBTIQA+ precinct and businesses.
- **Inclusion and participation** - We continue our advocacy for LGBTIQA+ people in Yarra. We foster community connection and work towards reducing social isolation.
- **Safer Spaces** - We promote LGBTIQA+ visibility and accessible LGBTIQA+ spaces.
- **Wellbeing** - We focus on improving mental health outcomes for LGBTIQA+ people, supporting young people, volunteering opportunities and promoting alcohol-free activities.

Now it's time to step up and start building the next ambitious Rainbow Policy to help guide our priorities and drive our actions in this space.

Objectives of this engagement

1. To reach the Yarra community and inform them that the current LGBTIQA+ Strategy is coming to end and that we are developing a Rainbow Policy.
2. To seek feedback and get ideas from Yarra's diverse LGBTIQA+ community as well as intersecting identities.
3. To identify the ongoing and emerging needs for LGBTIQA+ people living, working and playing in Yarra.
4. To consult with the diverse LGBTIQA+ community and get their input in building the Rainbow Policy by attending annual Pride Festival events – Midsumma Carnival (19/01/2025) and Victoria's Pride (09/02/2025).
5. To involve relevant Yarra-based LGBTIQA+ community groups and services to discuss ongoing and emerging issues for the LGBTIQA+ community.

Level of community influence

The community could influence:

1. The community can share their ideas and tell us what they think should be included in the Rainbow Policy, based on the key themes provided.
2. The community can tell us about their ongoing and emerging needs and influence the priorities of the Rainbow Policy.

The community could not influence:

1. Yarra City Council will have a new and ambitious Rainbow Policy
2. The community can only provide information that is relevant to local government remit (what we are responsible for).

Engagement methods:

- Online 'gather ideas board' and 'online survey tool' (which replicated the gather tool, but was a means for people to provide their feedback privately) on the Your Say Yarra engagement platform
- 2 in person pop-up engagement sessions were held at the following locations:
  - Midsumma Carnival at Alexandra Gardens, Melbourne on Sunday 19 January from 11am to 5pm.
  - Victoria's Pride Festival at Gertrude and Smith Streets in Fitzroy/Collingwood on Sunday 9 February from 11am to 5pm.
- Focus Groups
  - Six focus groups with Rainbow community groups across age groups, life stages and cultural diversity.
- Targeted outreach
  - Review of previous LGBTIQA+ Strategy 2021-24 with Rainbow Advisory Committee, identifying achievements and gaps.
  - Community touchpoints (libraries, Youth hubs, etc).

Engagement questions:

We need your help to make sure the Rainbow Policy represents the priorities of our diverse community.

When thinking about your idea, comment or suggestion, consider the following:

- **What are the ongoing or emerging needs for LGBTIQA+ people living, working and playing in Yarra?**
- **What are your ideas, suggestions or comments for actions that we can take in the next LGBTIQA+ Strategy?**

Select one of these 4 themes and share your ideas, suggestions and comments:

1. Heritage and celebration
2. Inclusion and participation
3. Safer spaces
4. Wellbeing.

Engagement reach

Engagement promotion:
Social media channels (including social media advertisements) reaching over **7,499** people.
Council email newsletters including Yarra Life, Your Say Yarra email newsletter, Yarra Business News, Yarra Leisure news and Yarra Libraries email newsletter. This reached a total of **61,546** subscribers.
Your Say Yarra 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
936	628	111

Engagement responses are broken down into 3 types:

- Survey tool results - 59
- Ideas board tool results - 29
- Comments on ideas board responses – 23

In person engagement opportunities:

In-person session (including date and location)	Approximate number of people we spoke to	Responses
Midsumma carnival on Sunday 19 January from 11am to 5pm.	200	NA
Victoria's pride on Sunday 9 February from 11am to 5pm.	300	NA

TOTAL	500	

Engagement results

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the online engagement survey tool and the 'idea board' tool. There were 88 contributions using these tools in total from 79 unique respondents. Please note: Respondents were encouraged to provide more than one response. The demographic data below is reflective of the 79 unique respondents.

Please note:

- Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. This can lead to a rounding error of 1-2%.
- People providing comments to responses on the ideas board were not required to provide demographic information

What's your connection to Yarra? *(Respondents could select more than one option)*	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
I live in Yarra	48	61%
I work in Yarra	21	27%
I visit Yarra	28	36%
I study in Yarra	0	0%
I own a property or mortgage in Yarra	18	23%
I rent in Yarra	3	4%
I own a business in Yarra	6	8%
What gender do you identify as?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Man	43	55%
Woman	25	32%
Self-described	9	12%
Prefer not to say	2	3%
What is your age range?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	2	3%

18 to 24	3	4%
25 to 34	18	23%
35 to 49	35	45%
50 to 59	5	6%
60 to 69	5	6%
70 to 84	8	10%
85 and older	0	0%
Prefer not to say	3	4%

What suburb do you live in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Abbotsford	4	5%
Alphington	2	3%
Burnley	0	0%
Carlton North	5	6%
Clifton Hill	3	4%
Collingwood	13	17%
Cremorne	2	3%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	10	13%
Fitzroy North	5	6%
Princes Hill	0	0%
Richmond	10	13%
I live outside of Yarra	25	32%

Select all that apply. I am…. ***(Respondents could select more than one option)***	**Numbers**	**Percentage**

Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	11	14%
A person living with a disability.	12	15%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	49	63%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	2	3%
None of the above.	15	19%
Prefer not to say	5	6%

Select all that apply. I identify as ... ***(Respondents could select more than one option)***	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Lesbian	11	14%
Gay	30	38%
Bisexual	9	12%
Pansexual / Multi-gender attracted	7	9%
Asexual	0	0%
Heterosexual (or straight)	14	18%
Queer	10	13%
Cisgender	3	4%
Transgender	8	10%
Agender	1	1%
Gender diverse	3	4%
Non-Binary	7	9%
Intersex	0	0%
I use other terms	8	10%

What did we hear?

The raw data collected through online and paper surveys, as well as focus groups, was collated and

thematically analysed to provide a comprehensive overview of the community's and key stakeholders' priorities and ideas. This feedback directly informed the development of the Policy's Framework's Priorities and Commitments. Furthermore, this feedback has been critical in developing the work program.

Below is a summarised overview of the key findings:

What's working well:

- Council presence at Pride events
- Rainbow Advisory Committee
- Rainbow Yarra Visibility - Posters and video campaigns
- Town halls flying the spectrum of Pride flags
- Queer history projects

What needs improvement:

- More alcohol-free spaces
- Intergenerational activities for youth and elders
- Mental health support
- Volunteer pathways
- Inclusion of intersectional identities (bi+, trans, CALD, neurodiverse)
- Cultural safety and accessibility for trans and gender diverse people
- Better promotion of existing services
- Lateral violence in the community