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Community Engagement Policy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

29 January 2026

Prepared by Global Research Ltd

For

CITY OF YaRRA

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Project overview

Introduction

Yarra City Council's Community Engagement Policy has recently been revised after more than four years of the previous policy. This revision was carried out to align with the Yarra Council Plan 2025-2029, the Community Vision 2036, other legislative requirements and current best practice engagement. Yarra City Council is committed to meaningful engagement with the community and transparency on the level of influence the community has on decisions. There are five principles in the *Local Government Act 2020* that guide community engagements, two additional principles were added to guide engagement in priority areas over the next four years.

The two new principles that the community were asked to review are:

- Principle 6 – Participants in community engagement must include harder-to-reach communities who may face additional barriers to participation.
- Principle 7 – Community engagement reporting must be presented in a way that best enables Council to make decisions on behalf of the Yarra community.

Community engagement on the draft policy ran between 14 November to 9am on 15 December 2025.

Engagement questions asked

Below is a list of questions that were asked as part of this engagement in the online/paper survey. In person feedback from various stakeholder groups was also collected in answer to these questions.

- For Principle 6, help us to create a commitment statement by telling us how you think we could put this principle into practice.
- For Principle 7, help us to create a commitment statement by telling us how you think we could put this principle into practice.
- How do you prefer to provide feedback?
- How should Council let you and your local community know about engagement opportunities?
- Which of the following topics would you be interested to provide feedback on? (age and disability, arts and culture, business and local economy, community health and wellbeing, families, children and young people, governance etc.)
- Do you think there is anything missing in the draft Community Engagement Policy that should be included to improve the way we engage at Yarra?
- Demographic information collected: connection to Yarra; age; gender; suburb; and diversity information.

Children who interacted with a library-based engagement for children were asked the following questions:

- What issues matter to you most?
- How would you like to share your ideas?
- What's the best way for grown-ups from Council to share information with children?

There was an event held during Children's Week in which participants were asked the following:

- Draw what makes you feel safe and happy when in the community.
- How do you like to share ideas? (Dotmocracy)

Gold Street Kinder ran a workshop with children at Bush Day Kinder:

- What would you like to see in the community?
- What does community mean to you?

Objective

The purpose of this consultation is to give the Yarra community an opportunity to comment on the draft version of Yarra City Council's Community Engagement Policy. The purpose of this policy is to guide best practice in community engagement across all Council projects. Having community feedback on how and when Council engages with the community is important to effectively hear and incorporate the voices of community members into future Council initiatives.

Community Engagement outline

Community engagement objectives

The purpose of this consultation was to undertake community engagement surveys and targeted in person events to get feedback on Yarra City Council's new draft Community Engagement Policy.

Information received

This engagement was conducted via a survey on the Your Say Yarra website alongside in-person targeted events and pop-ups. In total, there were 225 participants:



Online survey	Paper survey	Stakeholder groups feedback	Children-adapted surveys	Drawings/ Dotmocracy	Oracle CMS requests	1-on-1 discussions
51 Responses	**78** Responses	**9** Groups	**42** Responses	**51** Responses	**3** Responses	**1** Discussion

Note that one of the Oracle CMS requests was a duplicate of an online survey response, the other two have been treated as unique submissions. Paper surveys were data entered into the Your Say Yarra website online form.

Engagement reach

Extensive efforts were made to engage with communities via the provision of online and hard copy information, stakeholder outreach and in-person information and engagement sessions. While much of the engagement was in person, people and groups were channelled to the main data gathering tool utilised by this project: the Your Say Yarra website. This site was where members of the public could find information about the project and complete the online survey. The survey was promoted using a wide range of digital channels as well as being advertised at in person events and appropriate locations.

Emails were sent to:

- Secretariats of all 13 Community Advisory Committees with an invitation to attend advisory committee sessions
- 9 community resident groups with offer of one-one-one sessions
- Email newsletters reaching 16k+ subscribers

Other communication channels used to promote the draft Community Engagement Policy included:

- News item on Council website
- Yarra Life magazine (formerly Yarra News) reaching 60k+ people
- Social media posts (paid and organic) reaching 13k+ people
- 20 Council buildings including Town Halls through use of postcards, A1 posters and digital screens
- 3ZZZ community radio advertisement
- Yarra Housing Estates – DFFH newsletter
- Ward e-newsletters sent to Councillors to help promote the engagement

The engagement was also promoted to Bridge Road Traders Association and Co-working spaces, and at the end of a Learning Bank computer session participants completed the online survey as part of their class.

These are the in-person events/groups at which hard copy surveys or group feedback was gathered:

- Children's Week Event at CTH
- Yarra Youth Centre
- Learning Bank
- Greek Senior Citizen's District of Richmond
- Empower +
- Empower – Richmond
- Empower – Collingwood
- Willowview Centre
- Yarra Chinese Women's Group
- Pop up #1 – Barkly Gardens
- Italian Pensioners Club of North Fitzroy
- Advisory committee session – in person
- Vietnamese women's group – Collingwood Neighbourhood house
- Pop up #2 – Bargoogna Nganjin (outside Library)
- Disability Advisory Committee – in person – Richmond Town Hall
- Community Grocer market – Fitzroy

- Community Grocer market - Richmond
- Emergency services
- Libraries (School children)
- Gold Street Kinder
- BLO led outreach (including Yarra housing estates)
- Advisory committee session – online
- Resident groups
- Oracle CMS requests

Between Friday 14 November and 15 Monday December 2025, the project page on Your Say Yarra received:

- 1,045 views (the number of times any page on the site was viewed)
- 726 visits (the number of times the site was visited by a single visitor)
- 571 visitors (the number of unique visitors to the site – each visitor is only recorded once, even if they visit the site several times).

Analysis and reporting methodology

Qualitative analysis

The written comments received through the Your Say Yarra website, hard copy surveys at in person events targeted sessions were combined for analysis. All written feedback was read and coded (sorted) by analysts into themes and topics, synthesised, and discussed in the following section of this report. This is divided into five parts as follows:

- Principle 6: Participants in community engagement must include harder to reach communities who may face additional barriers to participation
- Principle 7: Community engagement reporting must be presented in a way that enables Council to make decisions on behalf of the community
- Anything missing in draft Community Engagement Policy
- Library based engagement with children
- Group representatives from Emergency services agencies

Themes and topics have been discussed in order of most to least frequently mentioned in each section.

To consistently present the number of comments received on each topic, the following key was used to describe relative amounts:

Key for comment numbers	
3 comments	A few
4–7 comments	A small number
8–14 comments	Several
15–24 comments	A moderate number
25–49 comments	A considerable number
50–74 comments	A substantial number
75–99 comments	Sizeable

Quantitative analysis

Six option-selection questions were asked of those who submitted feedback via the Your Say Yarra survey:

- Feedback preferences
- Ways to inform about engagement opportunities; topics to provide feedback on
- Important issues to children
- Ways to share ideas to Council; ways to share ideas (dotmocracy).

There were five additional questions that asked about survey participants:

- Participants connection to Yarra
- Age groups
- Gender
- Identity
- Suburb that participants live.

Frequency analysis was completed on the responses received. These results have been presented as charts at the beginning of relevant report sections. The information about those who completed the survey is presented at the end of the report in charts followed by descriptions, starting from page 31.

Analysis of results

Principle 6: Participants in community engagement must include harder to reach communities who may face additional barriers to participation

Participants were asked: *For Principle 6, help us to create a commitment statement by telling us how you think we could put this principle into practice. Within your response you can include ideas on how we can improve participation of harder-to reach communities such as people living with a disability, people from multicultural backgrounds, renters, children and young people.*

What participants said...

Section summary

Comments from individual survey participants

- Connecting more with existing services and community groups for greater reach was the most prominent suggestion articulated by a quarter of participants. Having a greater physical presence was the key sentiment within these comments and was sometimes paired with having more pop ups in various frequently visited public spaces and within established community groups.
- Improving accessibility and equity was highlighted by a fifth of participants as being a key way to improve participation in harder to reach communities. The main sentiment expressed in these comments was the need for translation, bicultural workers, and interpreters.
- Just under a fifth of participants discussed the ways in which consultation advertising materials plays an influential role in engaging with harder to reach communities if messaging is simple and clear, with some participants preferring letters delivered to their addresses.
- Broad requests for community events were also offered, as well as other commentary surrounding in person engagement, with the importance of 'Focus Groups' and greater liaison with community group leaders and for engagement to be face to face.
- Highly specific suggestions were also offered for how Yarra City Council can improve its processes with staff training, more liaison with advisory committee groups, and survey design.

Comments from stakeholder groups

- The most prevalent commentary from stakeholder groups regarding improving engagement with harder to reach communities was council attendance at group meetings and ability to provide group feedback directly. On the contrary, some stakeholder groups wanted to know if some members of their groups could provide anonymous feedback out of fear of harassment and stigma.
- Accessibility and equity was also a priority for Multicultural stakeholder groups, who wanted consultation materials to be translated into different languages.

Comments from individual survey participants 152 comments

Ways to engage 144 comments

The majority of participants discussed various ways in which Yarra City Council can engage with harder to reach communities who may face additional barriers to participation. Connecting more with existing services and community groups, accessibility and equity, consultation advertising materials, and calls for more community events and meetings are each analysed separately below.

Connect more with existing services and community groups 33 comments

A considerable number of participants emphasised the importance of linking with established community groups and services in the area for greater reach. Suggestions for greater presence within communities was wide ranging and often broadly mentioned connecting with existing community groups, markets, schools, neighbourhood houses, parks, libraries and supermarkets. A small number of respondents specifically called for pop ups in various locations above and for these to be at varied times.

Having more in-person pop ups in a variety of local areas and using groups which already exist to talk to people such as libraries, Neighbourhood Houses and other groups.

You could have portable kiosk set up at events through out the year. like an ipad station set up at Gledell St Market. or at the social housing have 1 set up for a week so people have the opportunity or a some kind of van set up that goes and visit libraries, schools, shopping centres, bunnings on weekends.

Accessibility and equity 27 comments

A considerable number of participants expressed points pertaining to accessibility and equity being a key feature for engaging with harder to reach communities. The most prominent point discussed was the need for interpreters, bicultural workers, and more translation materials. This was often paired with propositions for spaces to be culturally safe, respectful, non-judgemental, as well as specifically requesting that communication from Officers embody these qualities. A small number of participants also expressed equitable access (both physically and digitally) for disabled people, as well as older people.

Friendly staff, willing to answer questions from community. Show respect to people in different cultures. Inclusive everyone.

Insure all information is provided in an electronic format is compatible with "text to speech software". This is important for people with site or reading disabilities (including people with an acquired head injury).

Consultation advertising materials 25 comments

Various points in relation to consultation advertising materials were also discussed by a moderate number of participants. Participants who discussed mainly the content of advertising materials, called for "simple", "clear", and "colourful" materials. Of those who mentioned specific materials, physical letters delivered to home addresses, as well as posters were most discussed. Other mentions included text messages, Whatsapp, phone calls, noticeboards, dots and stickers and the need for materials to emphasise people's lived stories.

Flyers and bulletin boards and notes in lifts. In schools. Keep language short and sweet and colourful.

Community events and meetings 19 comments

A moderate number of participants offered various suggestions for community events, or broadly supported for more in person community engagements to take place. A small number of participants requested for interpreters to be present at community events and meetings, for activities to be offered for children, for events to be close to public transport, more multicultural events, and out of hours consultation events.

Having more Yarra events, community trust of Yarra staff and happy to share issues and ideas.

Other commentary about in person engagement 16 comments

A moderate number of participants articulated other points in support of in person engagement to improve participation of harder-to reach communities. The importance of "Focus Groups" in various suburbs and community groups was highlighted by a small number of participants. Another sentiment expressed by a few participants was the need for greater liaison with 'Group or Peer leaders' in community groups, street meetings, general desire for engagements to be face to face and home visits.

You could run focus groups made up of people from hard to reach cohorts. Give them lunch and listen to their views.

Other specific suggestions Yarra City Council could implement 16 comments

Diverse commentary was provided by a moderate number of participants who offered highly specific suggestions that Yarra City Council could implement to improve participation of harder-to reach communities. A small number of participants discussed various points relating to the employees of Yarra City Council. These included better customer service with responding to requests; hiring staff with a relevant background and be qualified experienced professionals; and ensuring each harder to reach community has a representative employed by Council. A few participants also discussed better preparation for community engagement team by receiving advice from Council's specific advisory committee groups and for greater liaison with community group leaders.

Other suggestions included: greater focus for younger groups and to focus on participants employment status, retirees, age; to engage with those who do not belong to a community group; offer out of hours sessions for events; events to be engaging, relevant and transparent; and collecting data to see how many people participated in each hard to reach group.

Online 9 comments

A small number of participants highlighted the importance of online platforms in reaching communities, particularly referencing social media platforms.

Other concerns 6 comments

A small number of participants expressed a desire for cleaner and safer streets, free parking, better footpaths, and relocating the Medically Supervised Injecting Room. Two participants also questioned the rationale behind engaging with children and to narrow the focus, and expressing displeasure for mandatory answers in the online survey.

Positive commentary 2 comments

Two participants took the opportunity to express their gratitude for being part of a positive group, in addition to Yarra City Council doing a great job (with the caveat to bring back noticeboards).

Comments from stakeholder groups

Ways to engage

The majority of stakeholder group feedback pertained to ways communities could be engaged with to contribute to public consultations.

Group attendance and feedback

The most prevalent feedback from stakeholder groups regarding engaging communities that face additional barriers or are considered hard-to-reach (Principle 6) pertained to council attendance at group meetings, and the ability to give group feedback. Stakeholder groups wanted representatives from council to either attend their meetings or host information sessions to present relevant information to the group in question. This feedback was most prominent in senior and multicultural groups, who have strong ties and support networks within their respective groups.

Access to senior groups will help multicultural communities feel more engaged.

A couple of stakeholder groups described their preference for giving feedback as a group, and that they would like more opportunities to do so. This aligns with members' regular schedules as they already attend group meetings which could include an opportunity to provide and collate relevant feedback for council.

More opportunities for in person group feedback. It works best for the older italian community to provide feedback in person at the Social Club as a group.

There was one comment from the online advisory committee session held suggesting greater utilisation of networks such as the North Richmond Consultative committee which connects with various multicultural groups in the community.

Translation

Multicultural stakeholder groups suggested that materials regarding public engagement should be translated into different languages to improve accessibility. The Greek Senior Citizen's District of Richmond wished for updates translated into Greek, while the Vietnamese women's group at Collingwood Neighbourhood house suggested more translation in general on public engagement materials.

Anonymous participation

A couple of stakeholder groups mentioned that members want to know that they can give anonymous feedback on community engagements. This specifically came from the Disability Advisory Committee who suggested that members of the older CALD community may fear reprisal for participating due to stigma, and also members who attended the online advisory committee session, who highlighted that some people are reluctant to engage online or in public consultations due to fears of retaliation or harassment.

Should be some scenarios where people who usually prefer to remain silent can have their voices heard, not the people who are the loudest.

In-person community events

Connecting in with a variety of community events to collect feedback for council was proposed by a couple of stakeholder groups. It was suggested that events in public spaces were easier for younger, senior, and people living with disabilities to access and engage with.

Other specific suggestions

There were a small number of groups who gave unique suggestions for Council to enact Principle 6 of the policy document. This included a suggestion to co-design consultations with First Peoples, in accordance with First Peoples policy.

Meet with them and ask how they would like to provide feedback, assisting financially and logistically to provide support to participate.

Another suggestion was to continue improvements of the website and its accessibility (clarity, conciseness, minimal links etc.). Other ideas included making sure to 'close the loop' and get back to those who have provided feedback, and one suggestion to better utilise social media to connect with younger people.

Critiques and comments of barriers to inclusion

There were a small number of critiques and comments on barriers faced in the community from groups in answer to this question. These covered how older people may find it harder to search for information such as public consultations, that some people do not want to engage online, and that there is often a gap between intentions and statements about being inclusive, and how this is practiced in reality.

Principle 7: Community engagement reporting must be presented in a way that enables Council to make decisions on behalf of the community

Participants were asked: *For Principle 7, help us to create a commitment statement by telling us how you think we could put this principle into practice. How can officers improve the way we report back to Councillors and the community at the end of each consultation?*

What participants said...

Note that the community commented on a couple of different aspects when answering this question – firstly how reporting of engagements could be improved to help Council decision making, and additionally how to improve the way Council reports engagement outcomes back to the community.

Section summary

Comments from individual survey participants

- Just under two thirds of participants commented on a variety of mediums, to improve ease of access and understanding for how Officers improve the way they report back to both Councillors and the community.
- The most prominent medium was in person engagement, with a focus on regular, responsive, clear communication from officers, in addition to more bicultural liaison officers. There was also a desire to see greater collaboration between community leaders and Yarra City Council Councillors.
- Digital mediums (emails, social media, text messaging, website, online newsletter) were slightly more preferrable than physical mediums (letters delivered to address, newsletters in public locations). Accessible formats were also important to some participants, particularly having access to translated materials.
- Just over one fifth of participants discussed improvements could be made by being more transparent and accountable with consultation results and processes.

Comments from stakeholder groups

- A few stakeholder groups mentioned that their members found the Yarra Life Magazine a helpful way to keep informed with latest developments. A suggestion for a printed report was also made.
- Council responsiveness was also noted by some stakeholder groups by means of providing acknowledgement or a report that reassures participants feedback has been received. In person engagements, particularly for group meetings was also mentioned.

Comments from individual survey participants 138 comments

Variety of mediums to improve ease of access and understanding 83 comments

Just under two thirds of participants who answered this question discussed a variety of mediums to improve ease of access and understanding for officers to report back to Councillors and the community at the end of each consultation. The most prominent point raised was in person engagement, followed by digital and physical mediums, having an accessible format, and other points relating to improving ease of access and understanding. Each point is analysed separately below.

In person engagement 29 comments

There were a lot of points about how in person engagements could be the most influential format to improve the way officers report back to Councillors and the community. Several participants emphasised regular, succinct, communication and responsiveness from officers was essential in improving ease of access and understanding. Calls were also made for more bicultural officers and interpreters to be present in any meetings. Another key sentiment expressed was the desire to see greater collaboration and more meetings with community leaders and Yarra City Council Councillors.

Digital mediums 21 comments

A moderate number of participants asserted that the use of various digital mediums was the best way to improve reporting back to Councillors and the community at the end of each consultation. Emails were the most frequently noted medium, in addition to social media, text messaging, website, online newsletters, QR codes, and podcasts.

Physical mediums 19 comments

The most requested physical medium to improve ease of access and understanding was letters being delivered to home addresses, which was often paired with being in the recipient's spoken language. Other physical formats mentioned included newsletters (Yarra & Ward newsletters), with the caveat that these are available at multiple public locations.

Accessible format 8 comments

Several participants highlighted the need for accessible formats, irrespective of whether they are digital or physical. The main points raised for greater accessibility were translation, enlarging fonts, utilising visual infographics, using as many different formats and types as possible to ensure greatest reach, and text to speech format.

Other mediums 4 comments

A small number of participants also expressed wanting to be notified of updates, current issues and events, as well as meetings that can be recorded (if people feel comfortable).

Transparency and accountability 29 comments

A considerable number of participants emphasised transparency of consultation results and processes by citing words such as *"trust"*, "*tell the truth*", and "*honest feedback"*. Participants articulated wanting a clear understanding as to what Council can and cannot achieve, how feedback from consultations influences recommendations, as well as wanting to see actionable proposals and steps made by Council. A small number of participants also highlighted demographic questions are too narrow and need to be expanded upon to ascertain a clearer picture of engagement.

Tell the truth what you can and can't do. Build trust to community is important.

Engagement data should be broken down into income, age, sex and gender to ensure there is equality of voice.

Other ways to improve community feedback 11 comments

A few participants offered points relating to the working partnership between Officers and Yarra City Council. These included that Officers sometimes offer alternative recommendations stipulated by Council; Councillors have been known to change recommendations during a meeting; an issue that needs to be resolved between Officers and Councillors; as well as better working pathways between Council and its own community advisory committees. A couple of participants claimed data from consultations are unrepresentative, with particular mention from one participant that younger people and renters need to be represented. Suggestions for surveys were also offered by a couple of participants – that there should be more consistency by means of

including feedback from previous surveys; utilise more free text responses; and one proposition to use AI to support analysis of survey results.

Not sure what this means in terms of Yarra community - it seems to be an issue between councillors and their officers?

Support for current process 2 comments

Two participants took the opportunity to offer praise for engagement and reporting back to the community.

Comments from stakeholder groups

Suggestions to improve feedback process

The majority of responses from stakeholder groups to this question were suggestions on how improve the feedback process post-public consultation.

Printed media/Yarra Life Magazine

A few stakeholder groups mentioned that their members found the Yarra Life Magazine a good way to keep people informed and connected with the latest updates. The Italian Pensioners Club of North Fitzroy suggested a printed report should get mailed out, and that it should be translated into Italian.

The Yarra Life magazine is a good way to keep people informed.

Other suggestions to improve community feedback

A couple of groups stated that council should make sure to get back to those who have responded to community engagements with acknowledgement and a report - to 'close the loop' and reassure individuals or groups that their feedback has been received. Other suggestions included in-person updates at group meetings, and translation into different languages.

Support of current processes

A couple of comments were made in support of the current process – that Council do a great job of connecting and engaging with people, and one comment in which the ability to participate in the current consultation via Teams was praised, as it has enabled greater accessibility.

Consultation survey critiques

A small number of stakeholder groups responded to this question with a critique of the public consultation surveys that are used to collect data for Council. Points covered include that surveys are often unrepresentative of the community, and consequently biased; and that they can feel too narrow in scope without enough free-text options to expand upon ideas.

Anything missing in draft Community Engagement Policy

Participants were asked: *Do you think there is anything missing in the draft Community Engagement Policy that should be included to improve the way we engage at Yarra?*

What participants said...

Section summary

Comments from individual survey participants

- Just under one third of participants expressed that **nothing else needed to be included** in the draft Community Engagement Policy, with most people simply stating "*no*".
- Of those who offered suggestions to improve the policy, the most prominent points were from those who had **highly specific suggestions and provided diverse commentary**. The main sentiment from these comments were suggestions to improve relating to survey design; greater physical presence; and Council to utilise expert advisory committees.
- **Equal representation** by means of ensuring there are multiple participation options, as well as ensuring reach to underrepresented communities and overall representation.
- **Council responsiveness** was considered to be another key element that was missing from the Policy, as well as some participants discussing **accessibility and equity,** mainly for people with a disability and older people.

Comments from stakeholder groups

- The participants at the in person advisory committee session suggested **committees should be consulted earlier** in the engagement process, as well as suggesting **greater utilisation of technology**, mainly social media and screens on public transport used to capture feedback on Councils the initiatives.
- Suggestions were also made for **greater outreach to multicultural groups,** with particular mention of Vietnamese and Chinese communities.

Comments from individual survey participants — 60 comments

Nothing to be included — 17 comments

A moderate number of participants made the point that nothing is missing in the draft Community Engagement Policy, most people simply stated "*no*", or stated they have not yet read the draft policy. One participant stated that nothing needs to be added as they are satisfied with the policy as it is.

Specific suggestions to improve policy — 11 comments

Several participants offered specific suggestions to improve the draft Community Engagement Policy. A couple of participants mentioned the survey design should be less biased, with more free text boxes for participants to elaborate further. The notion of bias was extended by one participant who stated they were not in favour of Councillors being present at pop up events. Further, two participants expressed a desire to see more physical presence and engagement, especially in public housing communities, as well as collaboratively working alongside communities to design activities. One participant wanted to see Council utilise its own expert advisory committee. A couple of participants discussed the importance of understanding context, with one requesting a statement at the beginning of policies which encourages readers to look beyond individual interests and to focus on the communities' interests at large.

Taking not account, my recommendation above, to embed involvement of the council's own expert advisory committees, a recommendation is that the role and responsibilities of the committees be included in the draft update.

Equal representation and better engagement 10 comments

Several participants discussed both improving engagement and thus having a broader, more representative consultation. A few participants called for multiple participation options and at a greater frequency, with one participant stating this is imperative for underrepresented communities (CALD; renters; younger people; and local businesses). A couple of participants also vocalised concern that organised advocacy groups are overrepresented.

Yes, massively. Future consultation should be more representative, using methods such as broad-based polling and deliberative bodies chosen by sortition. This prevents biased small sample sizes of those with the time, money and energy for the large amounts of community consultations that Yarra has. It also prevents the issue of certain groups feeling under represented (e.g. CALD or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples).

Council responsiveness 8 comments

Several participants made various repoints about Council's responsiveness and improvements to be made. A couple of participants requested Council could be more responsive by simply updating the community with current information about the Policy and meetings in real time, with one participant requesting to have Council's agenda released a week prior to any meetings. Further, two participants stated any policy should be finalised once Council has reported back to the Community about decision making and how community feedback shaped policy.

Always review, tell community how "community input" made a difference into the decision making / improve the way to community engagement policy.

Accessibility and equity 7 comments

A small number of participants requested more support and focus for mainly older people and people living with disabilities. There was one mention of First Nations initiatives and for there to be a greater focus on people experiencing homelessness.

Other commentary 7 comments

Other concerns and propositions were made from a small number of participants which included: moving the "injection room" (Medically Supervised Injection Centre); concerns about crime, safety and drug issues; correspondence from Yarra Leisure being too slow; more financial assistance for children to pay for sports fees; and concerns with the arrival of new big shops on Smith Street.

Comments from stakeholder groups

Suggestions for the policy

In answer to this question, stakeholder groups gave a wide array of responses. Participants from the in person advisory committee session suggested that committees should be consulted at a high level, earlier in the engagement process.

Committees should be consulted at a high level and earlier in the engagement process. Maybe advisory commitees should have more meetings or online processes in between meetings like out of sessions where views are sought from advisory committee members.

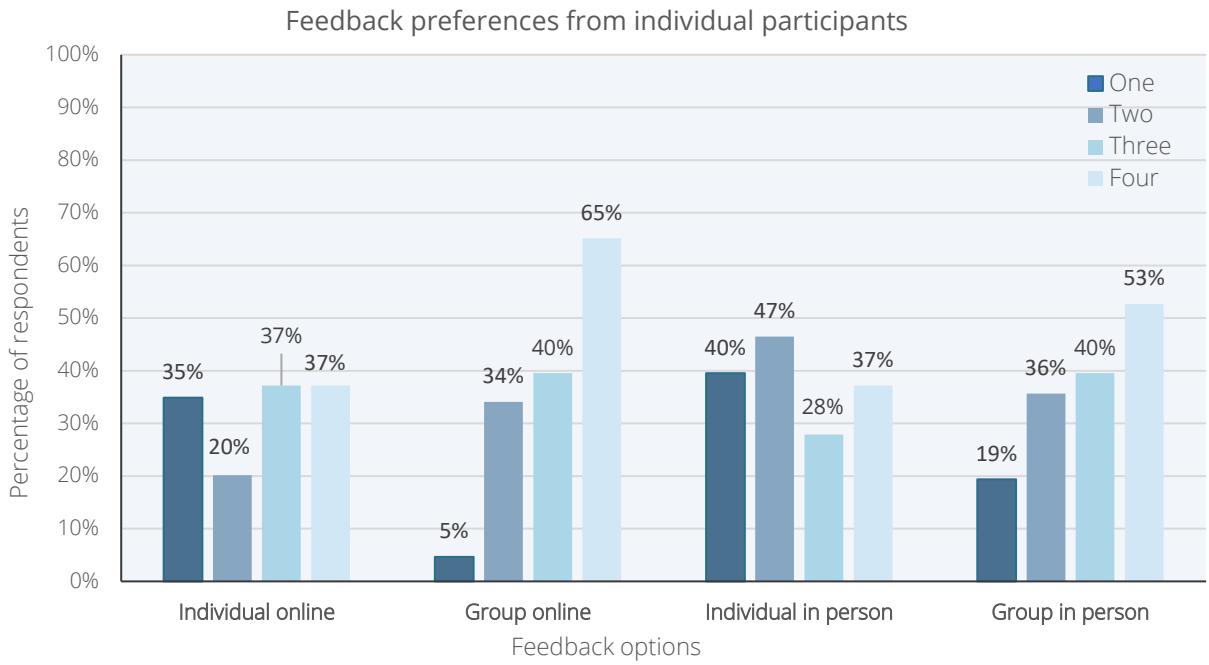
The online advisory committee suggested that technology like social media and apps should be utilised more to gather data for public engagements. They also suggested screens of trams should be utilised to capture feedback on Council initiatives whilst commuting.

Other suggestions included greater outreach to multicultural groups such as the Vietnamese and Chinese communities, and a specific request from the Greek Senior Citizen's District of Richmond to be consulted regarding parking related engagements.

Feedback preferences

Participants were asked: *How do you prefer to provide feedback? (rank this list of methods from most to least favourite 1-4, rank at least one)*

Response options: Individual online, Group online, Individual in person, Group in person



n=129

Results from individual survey participants:

- 'Individual in person' was the most popular option to provide feedback, with 40% of participants selecting this as their favourite method. Additionally, 47% of participants also selected this option as their second most preferred method of feedback.
- 'Group online' was the least preferred method for providing feedback, with 65% of participants ranking this method a 4 (least favourite).
- The second to least favourite ranking (3) was assigned to both 'Group online' and 'Group in person' feedback options, with both scoring 40%.
- Overall, the above indicates that participants have a preference for individual feedback options, compared to group settings. Combining the top highest ranking scores of individual options (online and in person) and comparing this to group options (online and in person), individual options scored 75%, compared to 24% (groups).
- **Note** these are relatively small numbers and it was individuals that completed these surveys, so they are likely to have a tendency towards preferring individual options.

Stakeholder groups

Of the five stakeholder groups who responded to this question, the majority (three groups) ranked 'Group in-person' as their number one option, followed by 'Individual in-person'. The 'Individual online' method of connection was ranked as the least preferred option for each of these groups. Note that all of these groups were multicultural and/or seniors.

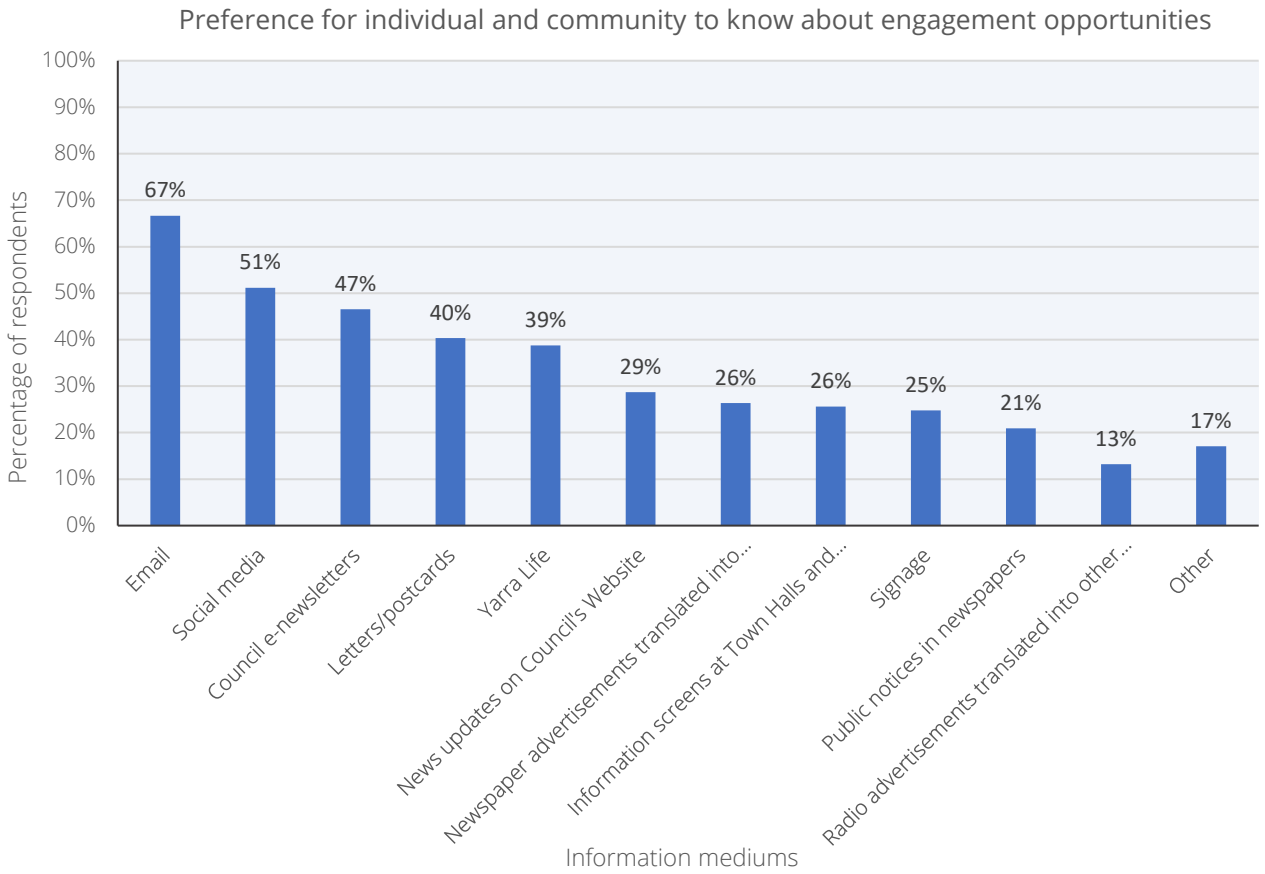
The Empower group (disability fitness class) was the only one to rank 'Individual online' as their top option. The participants from the in-person advisory committee session suggested Council tailor the method of engagement based on the target audience.

Ways Council should inform the community about engagement opportunities

Participants were asked: *How should we let you and your local community know about engagement opportunities? Select all that apply.*

Response options:

- Email
- Council e-newsletters
- Yarra Life (publication delivered to households), Social media
- Information screens at Town Halls and Council service centres
- News updates on Council's Website
- Public notices in newspapers (where required)
- Signage (where relevant), Letters / postcards (about a specific engagement)
- Newspaper advertisements translated into other languages
- Radio advertisements translated into other languages
- Other



n=129

Results from individual survey participants:

- 'Email' was the preferred medium for participants to be notified about engagement opportunities with 67% of participants selecting this option.

- 'Social media' and 'Council e-newsletters' both were mediums selected by around fifty percent of participants (51% and 47% respectively).
- 'Letters / postcards' and 'Yarra Life' both were mediums selected by just over a third of participants (40% and 39% respectively).
- The least preferred medium was 'Radio advertisements translated into other languages', with only 13% selecting this medium.

Other comments (30)

A considerable number of participants offered various ways in which local community can obtain knowledge about engagement opportunities. The preferred option was for text, with particular mention of utilizing WeChat. Letters being sent to home addresses, as well as information being provided in various community newsletters was also mentioned. In person events, engagement and through connecting with program leaders were also discussed. Public signage was in the form of posters and noticeboards was also important to participants, in addition to materials or communication via text being available in multiple languages (mainly Chinese).

As above, reach out to schools, businesses etc and ask for information to be included in their regular newsletters to staff, families, students etc.

Stakeholder groups

Attend group meetings

Stakeholder groups suggested that officers should attend their scheduled meetings to communicate engagement opportunities. This was especially prevalent for senior groups and multicultural groups. The Vietnamese Women's Group suggested engagement material is sent to them a week before the meeting in question (and that the material has been translated into Vietnamese).

Yarra Life Magazine

There was relatively high support amongst stakeholder groups for information about upcoming community consultations to be included in the Yarra Life Magazine.

Letters and Postcards

Another prominent option was DL Postcards and letters that were translated into the relevant language for each group.

DL postcards – good with translations

Other options

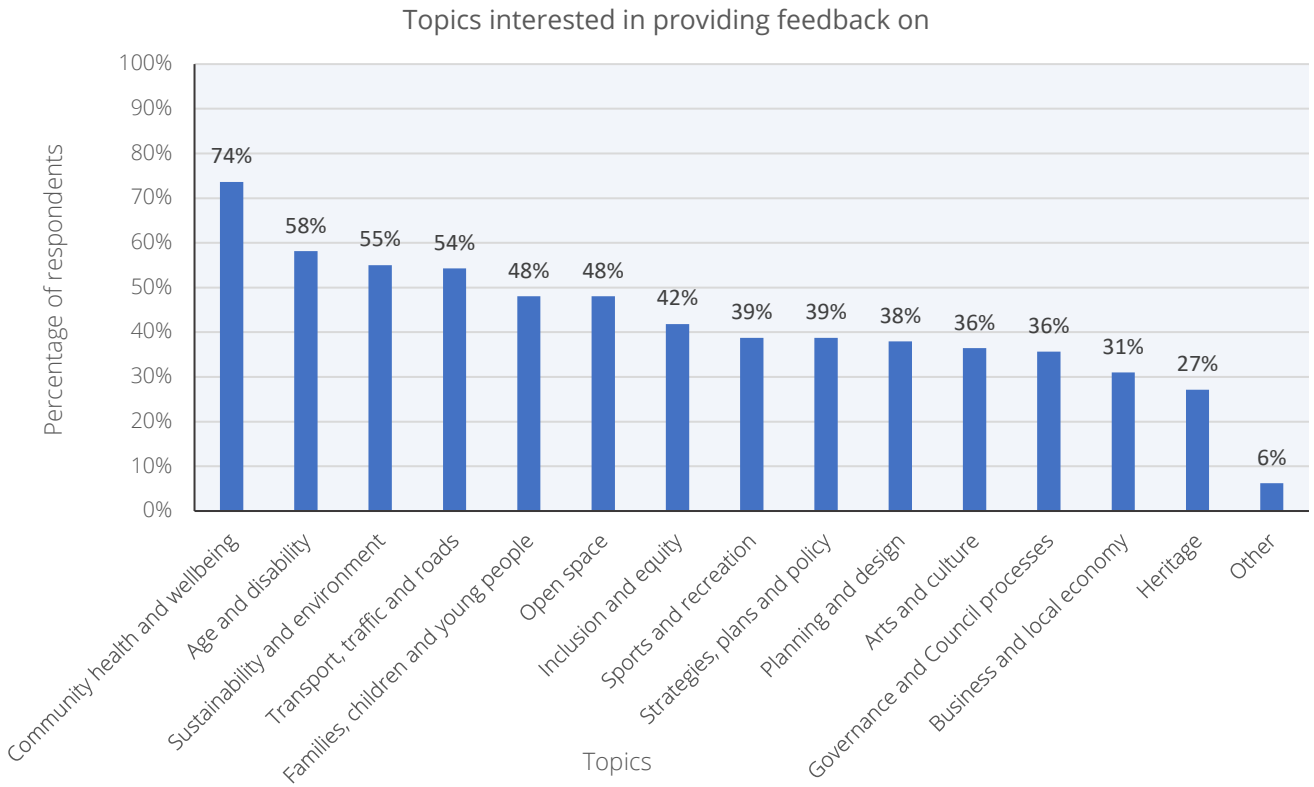
Other ways of connecting with the public about community engagements that were suggested by stakeholder groups included email, social media, the Yarra City Council website, via phone call, community noticeboards or newsletters, and information left at specific locations (leisure centre, doctor surgeries, supermarkets).

Emergency Services Agencies

A conversation was had with a group of representatives from four emergency services agencies. The purpose of this conversation was to understand how, when, and for what kind of Council consultations/projects EM services want to be involved in. A key insight was that EM services wanted to be involved early in projects, particularly those that involve disruptions or changes to traffic flow to ensure they can effectively deliver emergency services at all times.

Topics to provide feedback on

Participants were asked: *Which of the following topics would you be interested to provide feedback on? (age and disability, arts and culture, business and local economy, community health and wellbeing, families, children and young people, governance etc.)*



n=129

Results from individual survey participants:

> 'Community health and wellbeing' was the topic that held the most interest to provide feedback on from participants, with just under three quarters of participants selecting this topic.

> Just over the fifty percent mark, participants were also interested to provide feedback on topics pertaining to 'Age and disability', 'Sustainability and the environment', as well as 'Transport, traffic and roads'.

> 'Families, children and young people', as well as 'Open space' were topics that were selected by just under 50% of participants.

> The least important topic selected by participants, with under 30% of participants selecting this option, was "Heritage'.

Other comments (8)

Several participants selected "Other' and elaborated upon their topics of interest, relevant comments are written verbatim below:

> Walkable footpaths

> Community safety and crime

> Parking permits for residence Despite living in a 100 year-old house, I am not eligible for a parking permit because the house was retitled less than five years ago. 2. Don't put age and disability together as one option. They are too different issues, although there is some overlap.

- Training, employment and upskilling
- Housing management
- All of the above
- Housing

Stakeholder groups

Stakeholder groups specified which topics they were interested in providing feedback on, as detailed below:

- Age and disability (3)
- Community health and wellbeing (3)
- All topics (2)
- Arts and culture (2)
- Inclusion and equity (2)
- Planning (2)
- Single-mentioned topics: sport and recreation; transport, traffic and roads; parking; service changes and proposed reduction of services; open space; graffiti; maintaining heritage; sustainability and environment.

Children-based engagements

Three separate engagements aimed at understanding what is important to children in the community were run and included in this community consultation. There was a library-based engagement run across multiple locations over November and December 2025; a Children's Week event; and an activity run as part of Bush Kinder day for children attending Gold Street Kinder.

Section summary

Library-based engagement:

- **Safety**, **environment**, and **fairness** were considered important to participants. **Relationships** with friends and family, **play**, **animals**, and **food** also came through as important issues to children.
- **Videos**, **online surveys**, and **art** were the most popular ways participants wanted to express their ideas to the Council.
- **Face-to-face** communication from the Council had the most support as a way for adults at the Council to communicate their ideas to children.

Children's Week event:

- **Nature** came through as a key thing that made children feel safe and happy in the community through their drawings.
- **Drawing** and **painting** was the most popular way to share ideas in the dotmocracy, followed by playing, and listening to music and dancing. None of the participants chose talking as a way they liked to share their ideas.

Gold Street Kinder:

- **Nature**, **place**, and **space** were key themes that made children feel safe in their community.

Library-based Engagement

Council ran an activity across November and December for school children (5 -12 years old) to provide feedback on this consultation at various libraries. **Participants were asked:**

What issues matter to you most?

- Playground
- Environment
- Safety
- Fairness
- Other (drawing interpretation)

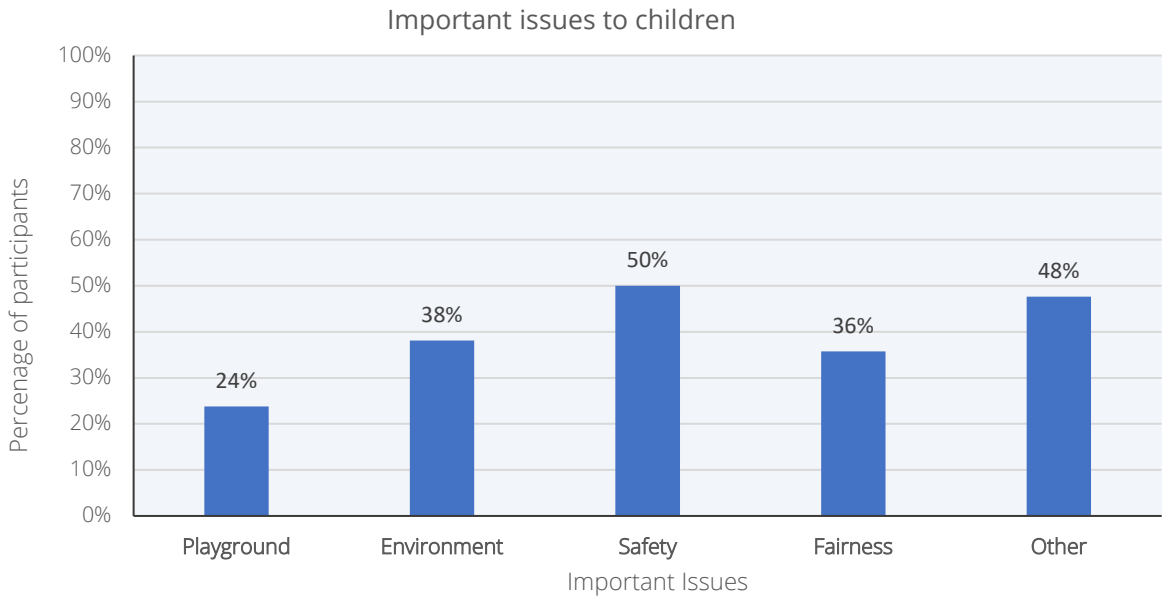
How would you like to share your ideas?

- Online survey
- Group discussion
- Art
- Video
- Other (drawing interpretation)

What's the best way for grown-ups from Council to share information with children?

- Free text

Important issues to children



n=42

Results:

Note that participants could choose more than one option, hence why the percentages add up to over one hundred.

- 'Safety' and 'Other' were selected as important issues to participants by around half of participants (50% and 48% respectively).
- Issues of 'Environment' and 'Fairness' had a relatively similar percentage of participants select them as important (38% and 36%).

Other comments (20)

Of the 20 participants who selected 'Other' and opted to draw their thoughts, there were a wide array of responses. Relationships were a key theme across these responses – including with parents, siblings, and friends.

Hugging with my parents

Walking with my friend

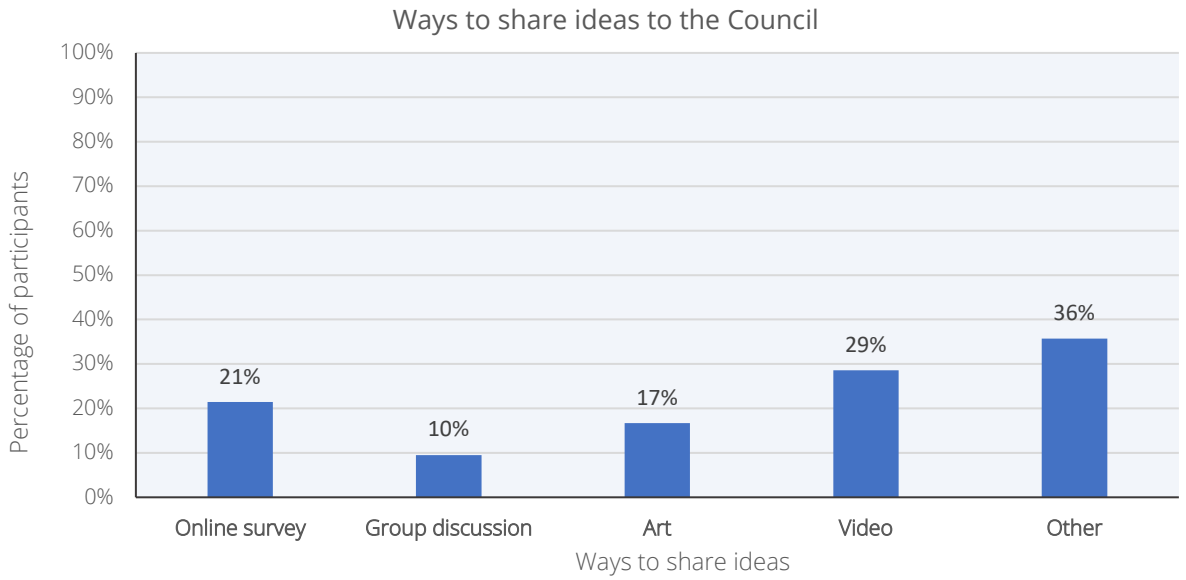
Play in a variety of forms was also considered important by these participants. There were multiple comments about swimming pools, water slides, playgrounds, sports facilities and the freedom to engage in these activities.

Playgrounds and slides near Carlton Library.

Cardboard maze and disco party for kids only. Pool and water slide. Water gun fight. Ice skating rink.

Food, animals, nature and creativity were the other prominent themes from these responses. Participants mentioned cats, dogs, and capybaras more than once. Plants and trees were also considered important.

Ways to share ideas



n=42

Results:

- Just over one third of participants selected 'Other' and gave a unique idea of how they would prefer to share ideas with Council.
- Communicating via video was the next most popular option, chosen by 29% of participants. Group discussions were the least popular method of communication, with 10% of participants choosing this option.

Other comments (15)

'Writing' was offered by 3 different participants as another way to share ideas. A few participants wanted to express themselves through games, including one who wanted to design a talking video game character. Talking in class, telling parents, friends, or taking photos were other options participants provided.

Best way for Council to communicate ideas with children

Responses from participants regarding how Council could best communicate with children were as follows:

- Face-to-face (6)
- Art (3)
- Send information (2)
- Tell Dad
- Tell teacher
- Make a YouTube video
- Website
- Something interactive
- Data presented at school

Note that one of the participants who requested information is presented face-to-face specified that they wanted to be spoken to 'kindly'.

Children's Week event

Children had the opportunity to contribute to this engagement by participating in an event held during Children's Week. This event was mainly attended by children under 5 years of age.

Participants were asked: *Draw what makes you feel safe and happy when in the community.*

They also had the opportunity to partake in a dotmocracy, where participants could put stickers on options they aligned with in answer to the question:

Participants were asked: *How do you like to share ideas?*

Options in the dotmocracy were:

- Drawing and painting
- Talking
- Playing
- Storytelling
- Choosing from options
- Listening to music and dancing

Drawing interpretation

There were two drawings provided as a sample from the Children's week event representing what made participants feel safe and happy in the community. Both were relatively abstract, possibly referring to nature and the ocean respectively. In total, 24 children engaged in this activity, below are examples.

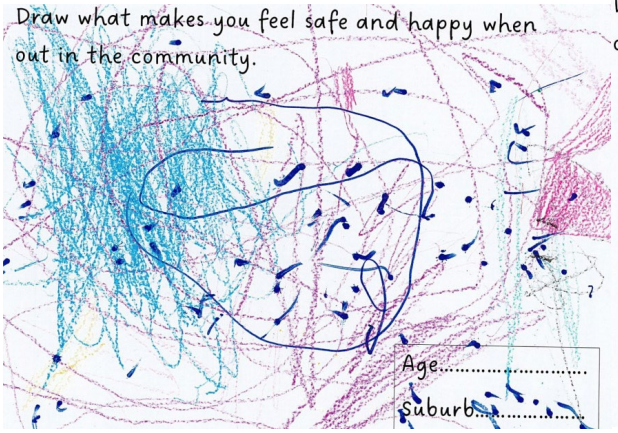


Figure 1

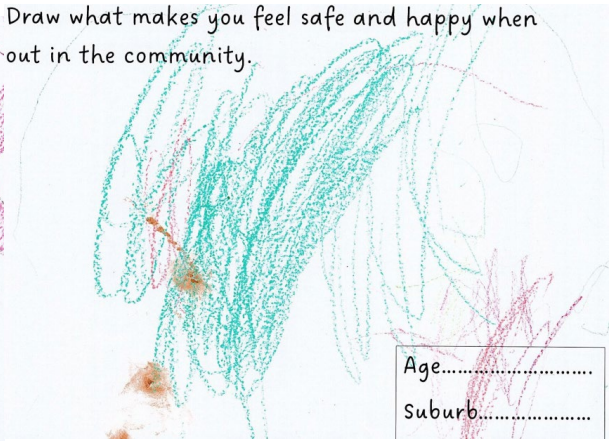
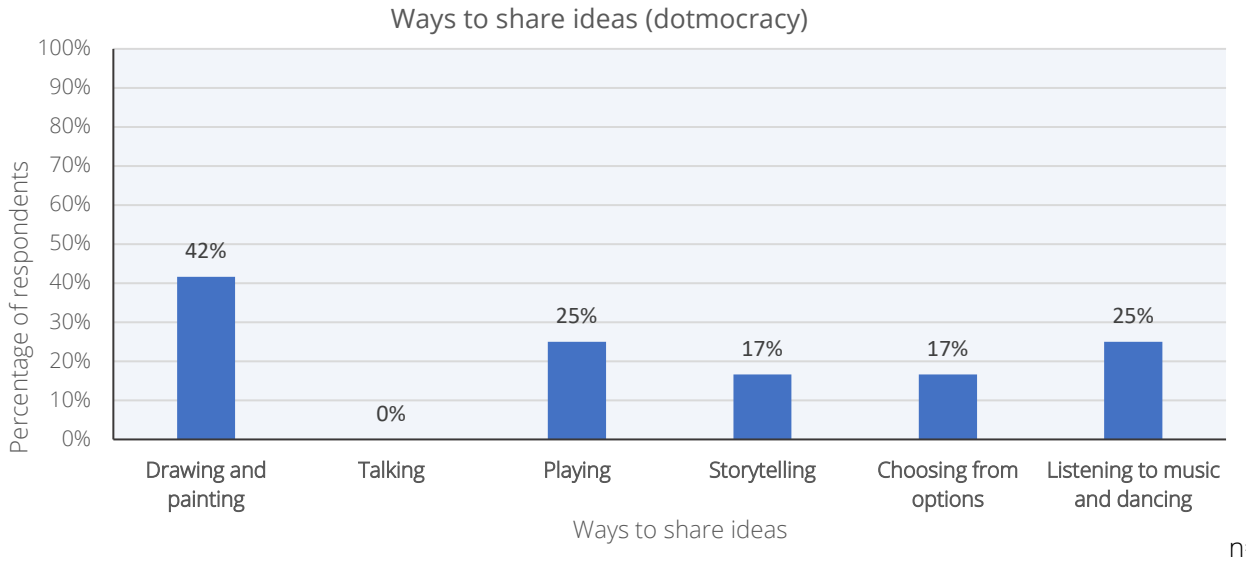


Figure 2

Ways to share ideas (dotmocracy)



n=12

Results:

- Drawing and painting was the most popular option with 42% of children participants choosing this as a way they like to share their ideas.
- Both 'Playing' and 'Listening to music and dancing' were chosen by a quarter of children participants.
- Interestingly, none of the children participants chose 'Talking' as a way they like to share ideas.

Gold Street Kinder Children Engagement

Participants were asked: *What would you like to see in the community? What does community mean to you?*

Children attending Gold Street Kinder contributed to this engagement as part of their 'Bush Kinder Day'. Surrounded by nature at the Bush Kinder site, 15 children answered the above questions through drawing and responding to images. The Bush Kinder site provided opportunities for discussion and invitation to connect with the wider community.



Figure 3

Outcome of engagement

Figure 3 is an example of a drawing that was drawn as a response to these questions. Overall, children's responses strongly highlighted nature, place, and space, which led to discussions about community walks, being on Country, and learning through being outdoors. In terms of the overall experience, feedback suggested that it worked well and was engaging for the children involved.

There is an opportunity to extend the concept of community over a longer period, drawing on a Reggio Emilia approach across the year to explore what community truly means to children, to create a meaningful consultation. Originally there were more questions planned as part of this engagement, however not all of these were used; simplifying the approach and following children's ideas proved effective. More drawings from this engagement can be found in Appendix One.

Descriptions of participants and in-person events

Section summary

Survey participants:

- The majority of participants owned or rented houses in the Yarra region
- 70-84 years was the age range with the most respondents (24%)
- Women made up 63% of participants
- Just under half the participants spoke a language other than English at home (44%)
- Richmond and Fitzroy were home to the highest proportion of participants (34% and 33%).

Stakeholder groups:

- Members of stakeholder groups included Greek, Italian, and Vietnamese language speakers.
- Some groups did not specify members' age, but of those who did, ages ranged from 50-85+
- People living with disabilities were members of certain stakeholder groups.
- Representatives of advisory committees covered:
    - Heritage and planning
    - Transport
    - Environment
    - Multicultural

Participant descriptions

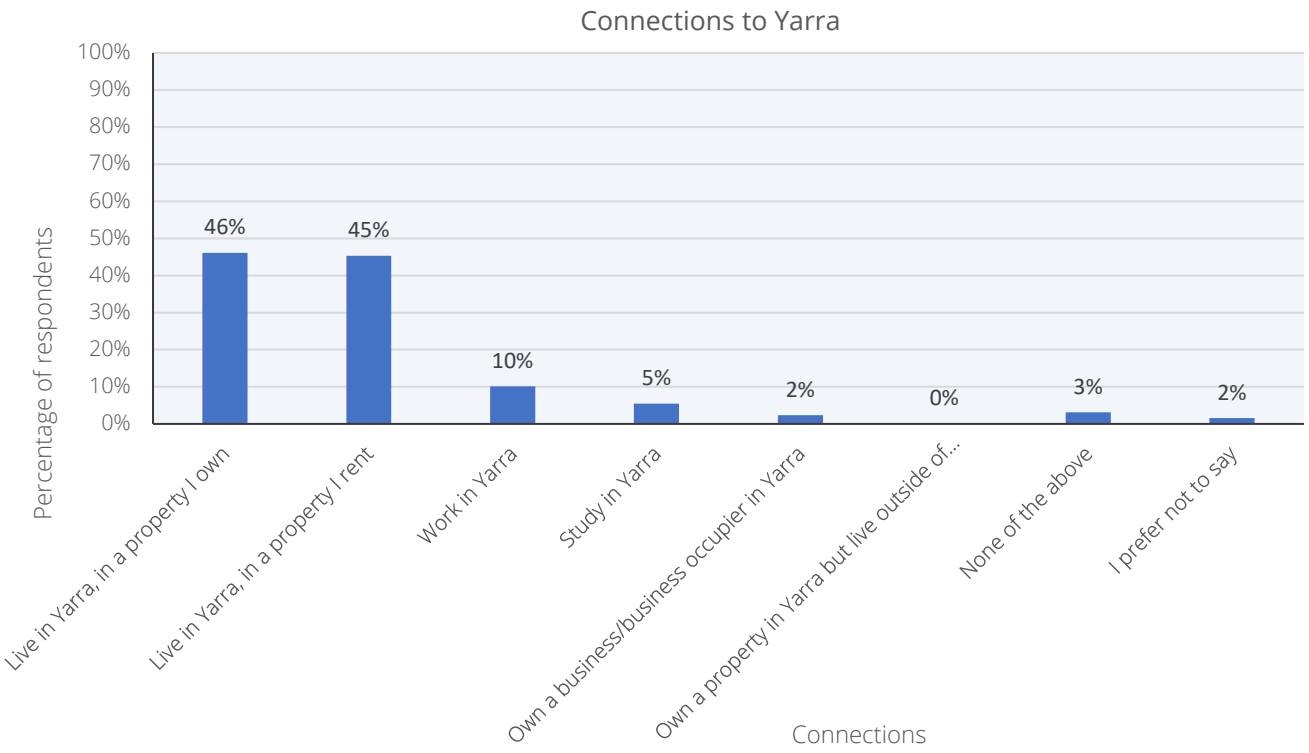
The following charts contain demographic information from participants who completed the survey (online and hard copy).

Connection to Yarra

Participants were asked: *What's your connection to Yarra?*

Response options:

- Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)
- Live in Yarra, in a property I rent
- Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra
- Work in Yarra
- Own a business/business occupier in Yarra
- Study in Yarra
- None of the above
- I prefer not to say



n=129

Results:

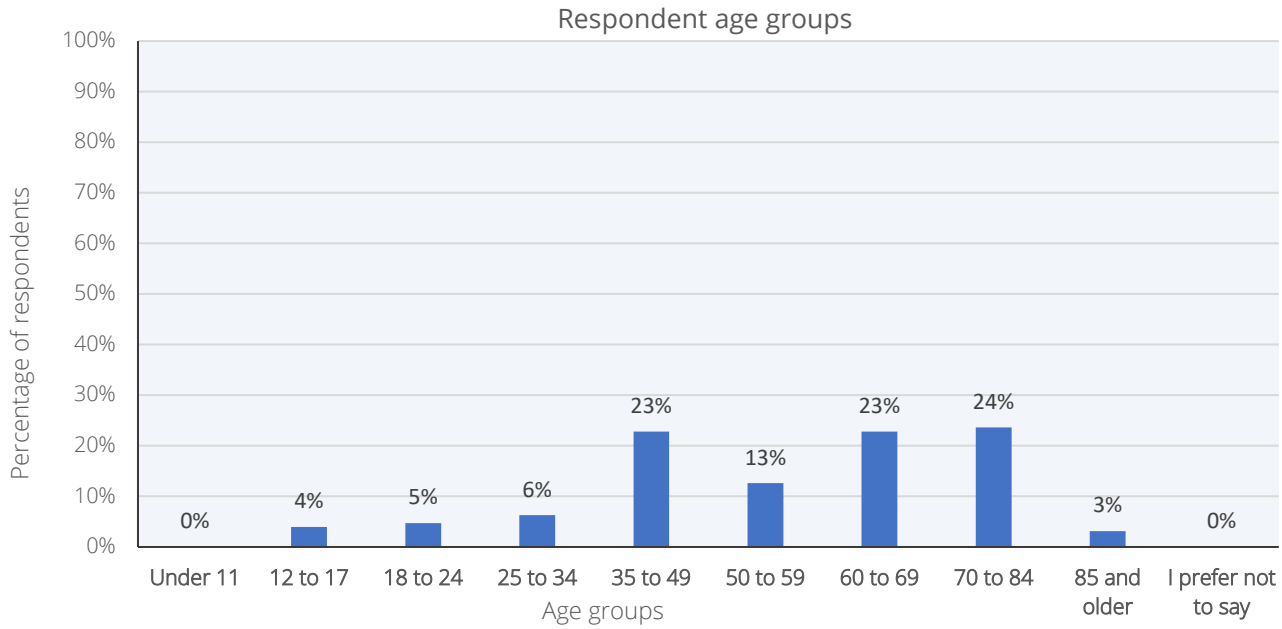
- The most commonly selected option to describe how participants are connected to Yarra were both living in Yarra, either owning a property or renting a property (46% and 45% respectively).
- Only two percent of participants selected 'I prefer not to say', in addition to zero participants selecting 'Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra'.

Participant age groups

Participants were asked: *What is your age range?*

Response options:

- Under 11 years
- 12-17 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70-84 years
- 85 and older
- Prefer not to say



n=127

Results:

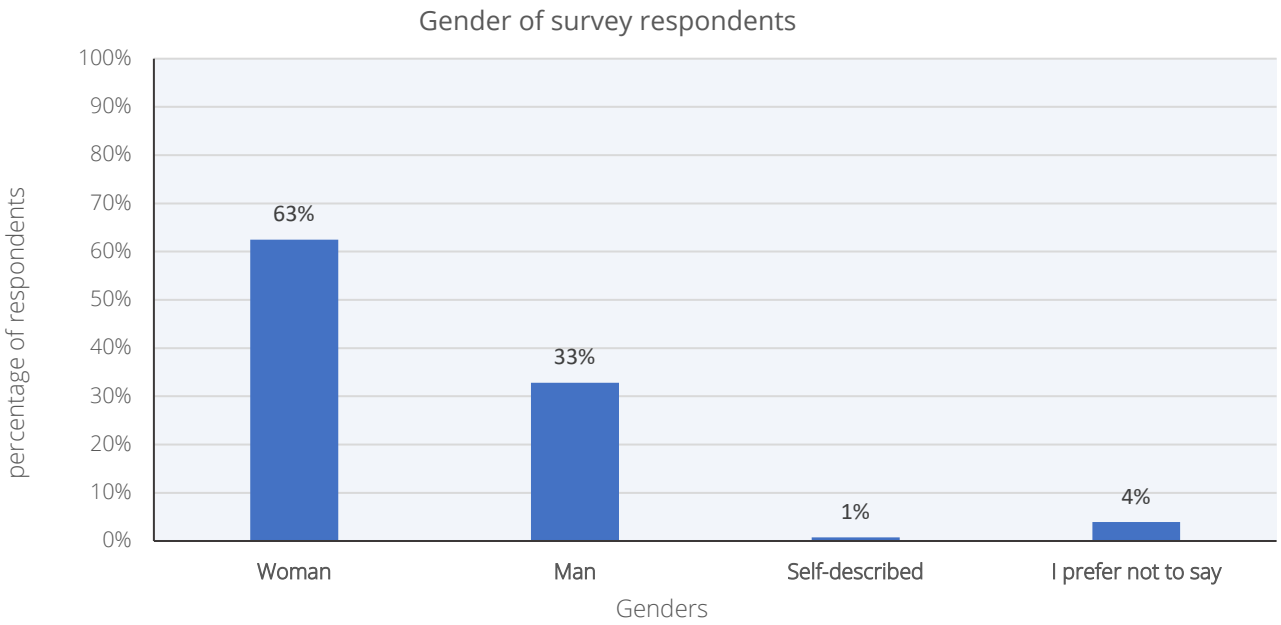
- The most common age groups surveyed were 70-84 years (24%), closely followed by two more age groups 35-49 years (23%) and 60-69 years (23%).
- The least responses came from under 11s, by which no participants responded from this age group. Of the age groups whereby participants responded, 85 and older was the least common age group (3%).
- Fifty percent of participants were in the age groups of 60 years and above and the remaining were 60 years and below.

Participant gender

Participants were asked: *What gender do you identify as?*

Response options:

- Man
- Woman
- Self-Described
- I prefer not to say



n=128

Results:

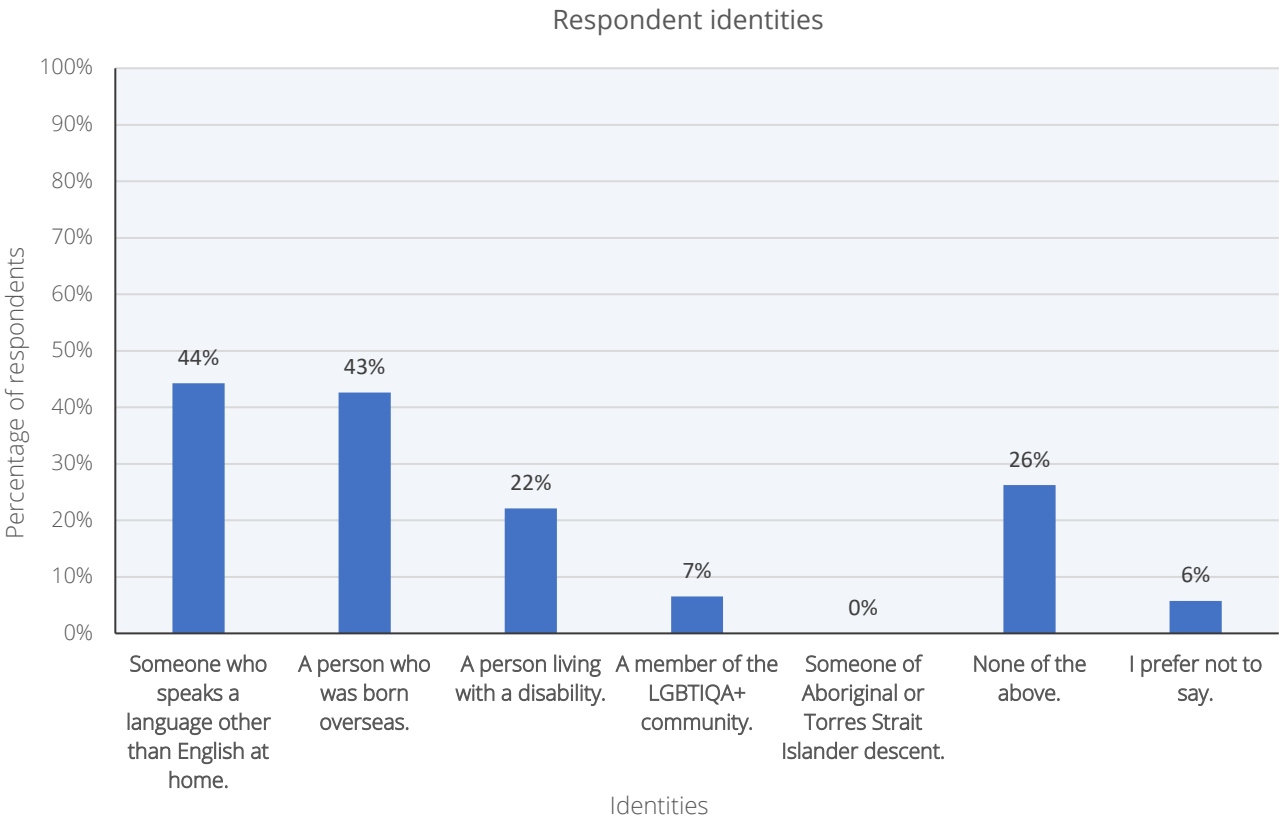
- Women were nearly twice as likely to participate in the survey than men, with 63% engaging as opposed to 33% men.
- Only 1% of participants identified as 'Self-described'.

Participant identity

Participants were asked: *Select all that apply. I am...*

Response options:

- Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.
- A person who was born overseas.
- A person living with a disability.
- A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.
- Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.
- I prefer not to say.
- None of the above.



n=122

Results:

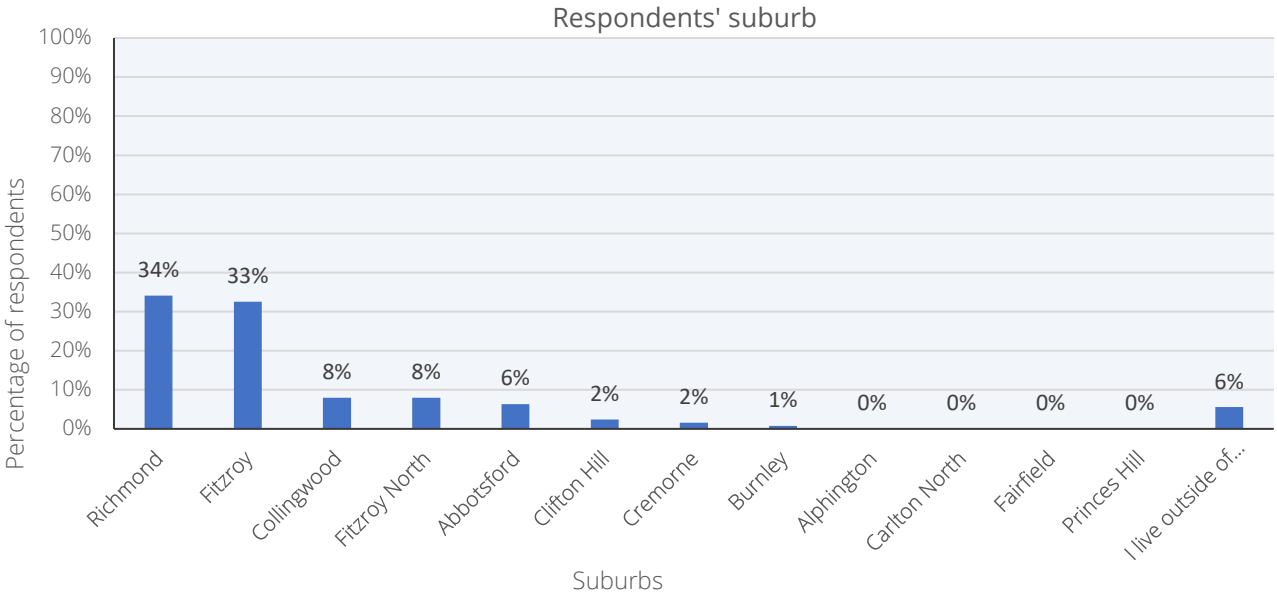
- The most commonly selected identities were 'Someone who speaks a language other than English at home' and 'A person who was born overseas' (44% and 43% respectively.)
- Just over a quarter (26%) did not identify with any of the listed groups.
- Just under a quarter (22%) of participants identified as "A person living with a disability'.
- Under one tenth of participants identified as 'A member of the LGBTIQA+ community' (7%), as well as those who selected 'I prefer not to say' (7%).
- No one who identified as 'Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent' answered the survey.

Suburb that participants live

Participants were asked: *What suburb do you live in?*

Response options:

- Abbotsford
- Alphington
- Burnley
- Carlton North
- Clifton Hill
- Collingwood
- Cremorne
- Fairfield
- Fitzroy
- Fitzroy North
- Princes Hill
- Richmond
- I live outside of Yarra



n=126

Results:

- The most popular suburbs that participants lived in were 'Richmond' (34%) and 'Fitzroy' (33%).
- 16% of participants resided in both 'Collingwood' and 'Fitzroy' (8% each).
- Six percent of participants selected 'I live outside of Yarra', in addition six percent of participants who also lived in Abbotsford.
- No participants resided in "Alphington', 'Carlton North', 'Fairfield', and 'Princes Hill'.

In person events and stakeholder groups

Different groups were connected with at the following events held around the city. Those who provided group feedback have been outlined below – these group responses make up the stakeholder group sections of the report. Hard copy surveys that were received from these events have been analysed as part of the individual responses. Events that were cancelled have not been included in this table.

Event / Group	Suburb	Audience / Demographics	Attendees	Type of feedback
Children's Week Event at CTH	Collingwood	Children (under 5)	30	12 dotmocracy and 24 colouring pages.
Yarra Youth Centre	Fitzroy	Young people (12 – 17)	17	10 hard copy surveys.
Learning Bank	Richmond	CALD	10	2 hard copy surveys.
Greek Senior Citizen's District of Richmond	Richmond	CALD – Greek community 7 men and 16 women. Ages 60 – 85+	23	Group feedback.
Empower +	Richmond	People with disability	5	2 hard copy surveys, but feedback included in stakeholder groups.
Willowview Centre	Collingwood	Ages 60 – 84 All home-owners across suburbs in Yarra	7	Group feedback.
Pop up #1 – Barkly Gardens	Richmond	General Yarra community	20	6 hard copy surveys
Italian Pensioners Club of North Fitzroy	North Fitzroy	CALD – Italian community Women of Italian background, Italian language speakers. Ages 70 – 85+	9	Group feedback

Event / Group	Suburb	Audience / Demographics	Attendees	Type of feedback
Empower	Richmond	People with disability Group exercise class at the Richmond Leisure Centre.	2	Group feedback
Advisory committee session – in person	North Fitzroy	2x Heritage and planning advisory committee members 1x multicultural advisory committee member	3	Group feedback
Vietnamese women's group – Collingwood Neighbourhood house	Collingwood	CALD – Vietnamese community 3 men and 11 women Ages 50 – 85+ Vietnamese language speakers 4 members living with a disability	14	Group feedback
Empower	Collingwood	People with disability	3	1 hard copy survey
Yarra Chinese Women's Group	Fitzroy	CALD – Chinese community	16	2 hard copy surveys
Pop up #2 – Bargoogna Nganjin (outside Library)	North Fitzroy	General Yarra community	45	7 hard copy surveys
Disability Advisory Committee – in person – Richmond Town Hall	Richmond	Disability Advisory Committee members	8	Group feedback
Community Grocer market - Fitzroy	Fitzroy	Public housing residents	16	6 hard copy surveys

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Event / Group	Suburb	Audience / Demographics	Attendees	Type of feedback
Emergency services	Various	Emergency services	4	Group feedback (included in separate section of report)
Libraries (School children)	Various	Children (5-12)	42	42 adapted survey responses
Gold Street Kinder engagement	Collingwood	Kindergarten children	15	15 drawings
BLO led outreach (including Yarra housing estates)	Fitzroy	Public housing tenants	100	41 hard copy surveys
Advisory committee session – online	Online	Advisory committees – 1x Heritage and Planning; 2x Transport; 1x Environmental advisory committee members	4	Group feedback
Community Grocer market - Richmond	Richmond	Public housing tenants	20	4 hard copy surveys
Resident groups	Richmond	Yarra resident's collective	1	One-on-one session
Oracle CMS requests	N/A	N/A	2	2 responses via Council's Customer Request System (Oracle). One included in individual analysis, and in stakeholder group analysis (Streets Alive Yarra).
Totals			385	78 hard copy surveys; 9 group feedback; 42 adapted surveys (for children); 12 dotmocracy responses; 24 colouring pages; 15 drawings, 3 Oracle responses; 1 one-on-one response 184 total responses from in-person events

Appendix One

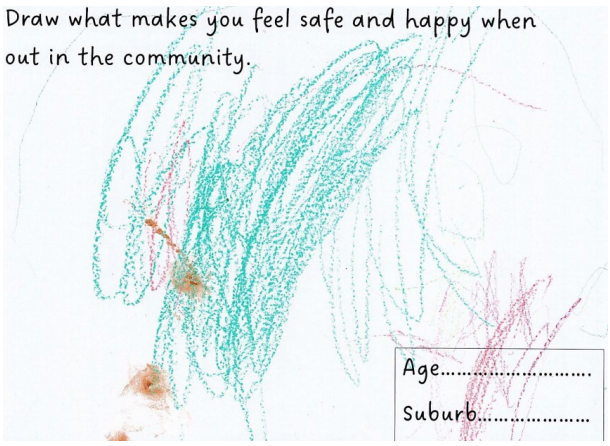
Below is a compilation of drawings and responses from the Gold Street Kinder engagement.



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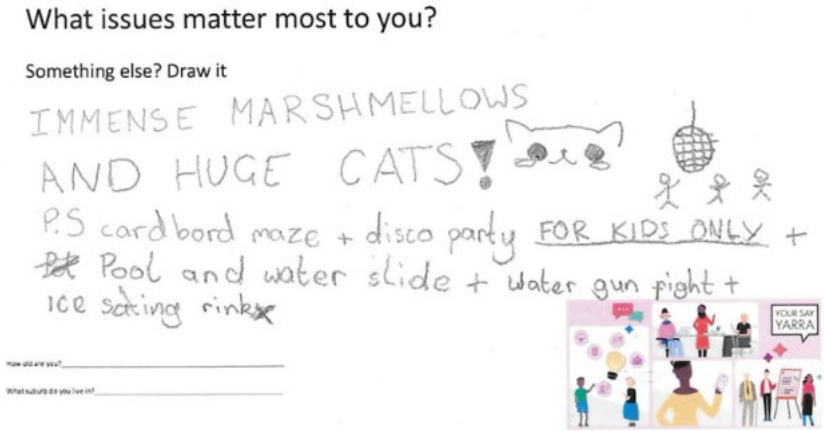
Below is a compilation of drawings from the children's week event



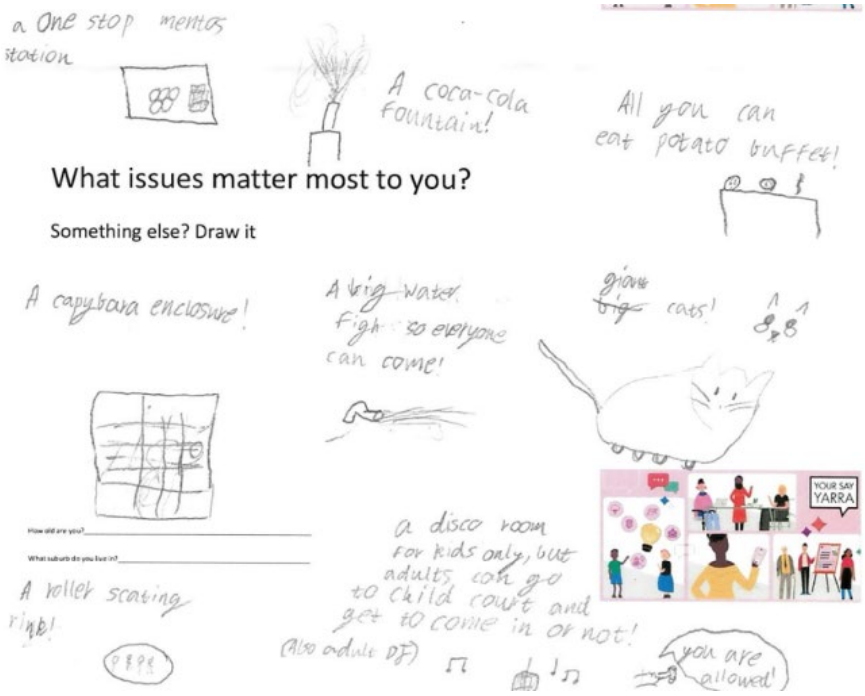


Below is a compilation of drawings from school children from the libraries after school program

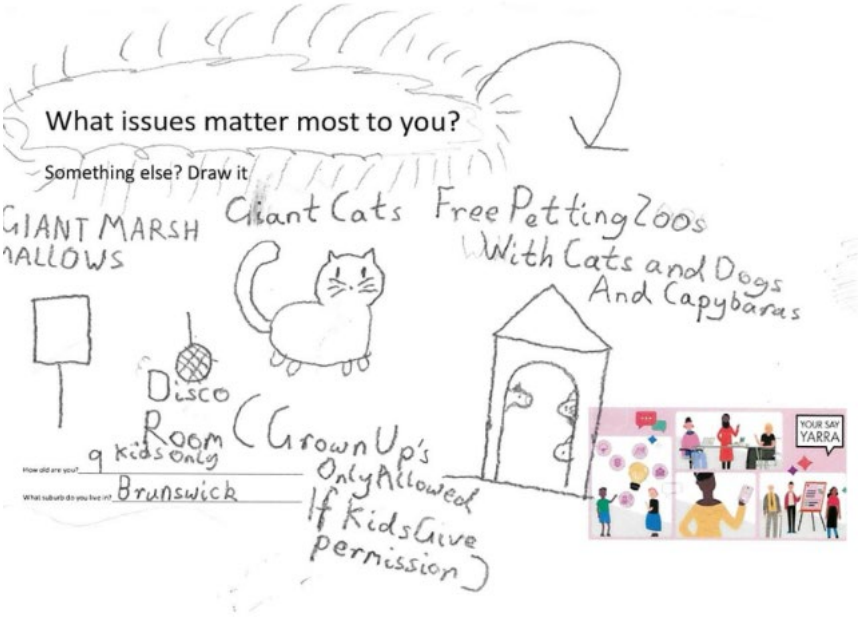




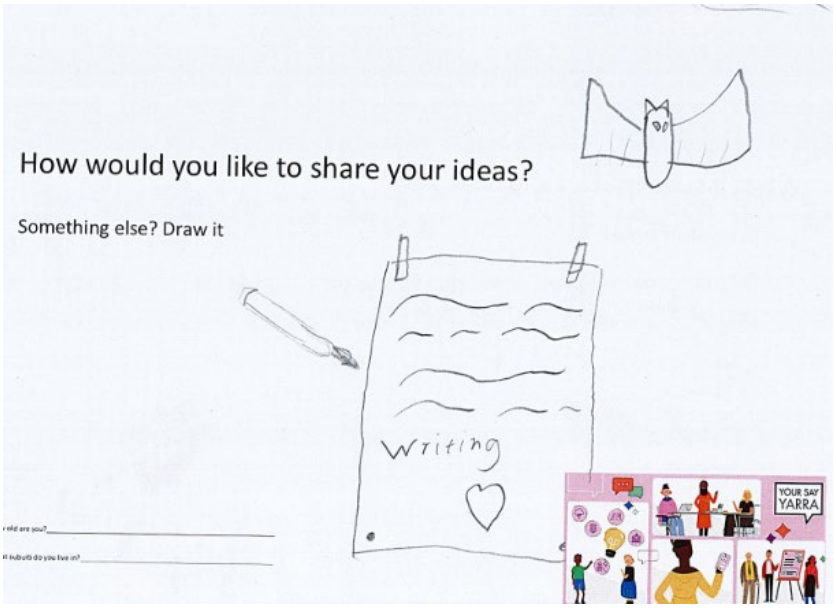
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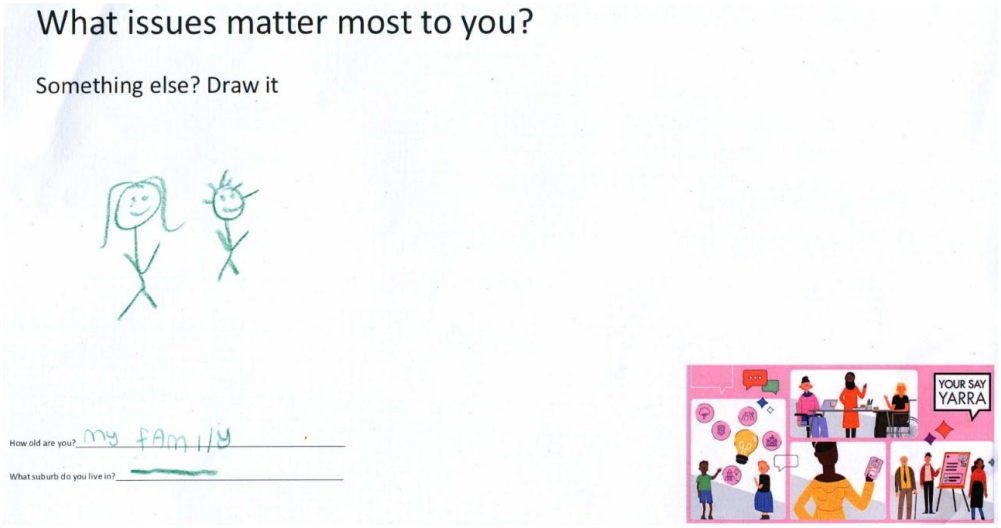


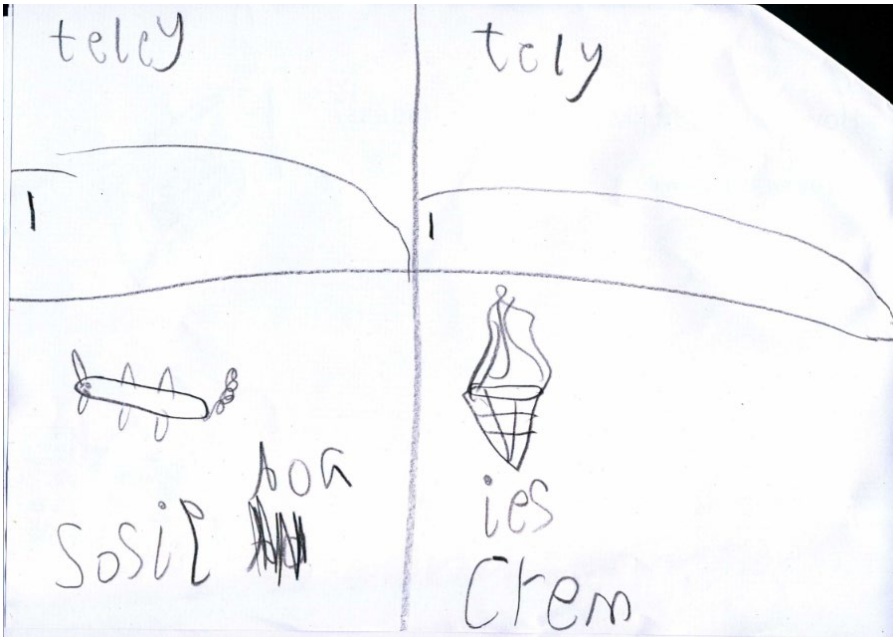




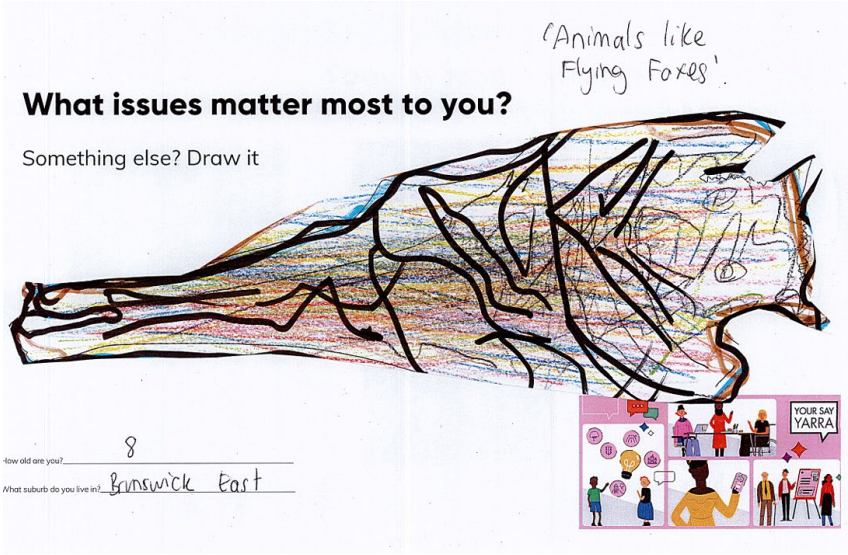
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What issues matter most to you?

Something else? Draw it

'Walking with my friend'



How old are you? 8

What suburb do you live in? Collingwood



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