Climate Emergency Plan 2024-2030 Community Engagement Report – Stage 2

This report details the specifics of the Climate Emergency Plan 2024-2030 community engagement and evaluates the participation. The second stage of consultation opened on Wednesday 10 April and was live until Monday 6 May.

Why we ran this consultation?

Yarra City Council's current and first ever Climate Emergency Plan is soon to expire. Since early in 2023, we have been preparing the work for the next plan which will underpin our response to the climate crisis in the years to come and ramp up our ambition.

We know that addressing the climate crisis is a top priority for the Yarra community and that they want us to do more. People in our community are suffering the impacts of more frequent and intense heatwaves and storms – and those most at risk are bearing the brunt of it.

That is why this Climate Emergency Plan has at its heart five key perspectives that inform the strategy, transformations, objectives and actions that will help us to meet the bold and ambitious targets. These perspectives are:

- Centering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and knowledges
- Fostering social justice and equity
- The rights of young people and future generations
- The rights of nature
- A commensurate climate emergency response.

Stage 1 consultation - 23 October to 4 December 2023

In late 2023, we asked the community for their feedback to help form the next Climate Emergency Plan. The methods we used included:

- Ideas board for people to add their ideas to the key themes using sticky notes online and in person
- Survey (YSY and hard copy)
- Pop up sessions
- Workshops with key stakeholders, both experts working in relevant fields and members of our community from targeted demographics (those at the greatest risk of climate impacts).

Stage 2 consultation – 10 April – 6 May 2024

For the second stage of the consultation, we shared the draft Climate Emergency Plan with the community and sought their feedback to understand if we have got the plan and objectives right and check if we have missed anything.

Objectives of this engagement

1. Informing the Yarra community and key stakeholders about the progress of the draft Climate Emergency Plan and closing the loop on the first stage of community engagement.
2. Checking in with the community and seeking feedback on key elements of the draft Climate Emergency Plan, including:

    - level of agreement with the objectives listed under each of the 7 transformations.
    - gaps in the draft Climate Emergency Plan and checking if we missed anything that the community think is important to include.
    - any other comments about the draft Climate Emergency Plan.

3. Understanding the community's level of support for the Climate Emergency Plan based on the above feedback.
4. Making sure that the voices of those most impacted by the climate emergency (groups identified in Stage 1 of the consultation) are given the opportunity to provide their feedback on the draft Climate Emergency Plan.

Level of Community influence

The community can influence:

1. The feedback from community can help shape the objectives for the final CEP.
2. The community can also provide feedback on the transformations, indicators, targets which will be taken into consideration as the final CEP is developed.

What did we ask?

Participants were asked:

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the objectives for Transformation 1 (repeated for each Transformation, covering all objectives)
2. Do you think there are there any gaps in the draft Climate Emergency Plan? Have we missed anything that you think is important to include?
3. Do you have any other comments about the draft Climate Emergency Plan?

Methods included:

- Your Say Yarra (promoted via social media, both paid and organic, email newsletters, and in person engagement opportunities)
- Public in person pop-up engagement events (two)
- Meetings and workshops with key stakeholders and targeted audiences (in person and online) (11)

<u>Additional promotional methods:</u>

- News item (corporate website)
- Postcards at pop up events and placed at reception at 19 Council buildings
- Poster with QR code at pop up events
- Digital screens in Customer Service centres
- Yarra News (March/April edition)
- Translated messages in CALD newspapers and radio advertising
- Bicultural Liaison Officers (BLOs) at in person events
- Stakeholder engagement sessions with targeted groups.

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was predominantly collected via online copies of the survey, but six hard copies of the survey were completed at one meeting with CALD participants and three were completed at one of the pop-ups.

Whilst the numbers of those who study in Yarra are low (5) we engaged with 46 young people who study in Yarra. This is because the numbers and percentages are for the surveys completed, and do *not* include the people we engaged with in targeted workshops and meetings.

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
I live in Yarra	58	92.06%
I work in Yarra	18	28.57%
I visit Yarra	10	15.87%
I study in Yarra	5	7.94%
I own a property or mortgage in Yarra	20	31.76%
I rent in Yarra	5	7.94%
I own a business in Yarra	4	6.35%
What gender do you identify as?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Man	32	50.79%
Woman	25	39.68%
Self-described	1	1.59%
I prefer not to say	5	7.94%
What is your age range?	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Under 11	0	0
12 to 17	2	3.17%
18 to 24	1	1.59%
25 to 34	9	14.29%
35 to 49	9	14.29%
50 to 59	16	25.40%
60 to 69	10	15.87%
70 to 84	11	17.46%

85 and older	0	0
I prefer not to say	5	7.94%
What suburb do you live in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Abbotsford	6	9.52%
Alphington	1	1.59%
Burnley	1	1.59%
Carlton North	5	7.94%
Clifton Hill	8	12.69%
Collingwood	6	9.52%
Cremorne	0	0%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	8	12.69%
Fitzroy North	5	7.94%
Princes Hill	2	3.17%
Richmond	15	23.81%
I live outside of Yarra	6	9.52%
Select all that apply. I am…..	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	8	12.70%
A person living with a disability.	5	7.94%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	5	7.94%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	1	1.59%
None of the above.	39	61.90%
I prefer not to say.	10	15.87%

Engagement Reach

Engagement and Communications Activity
2 x in person pop-up engagement sessions.
11 x workshops and meetings between project team and community members and key stakeholders.
Your Say Yarra (YSY) page • 1,565 views by 1,408 visitors • 448 total downloads of the relevant documents (Climate Emergency Plan, Actions, and Snapshot) • 63 contributions by 57 contributors.
700 Postcards distributed primarily across 19 Council-run facilities
CALD communications: • Translated messages in CALD newspapers and radio advertising • Bicultural Liaison Officers (BLOs) at in person events.
Social media posts and ads • 2 x campaigns (paid), with a total reach of 9,249 and 758 link clicks • 5 x posts (on Facebook and Instagram) with a total of 3.656 impressions, 223 engagements and 7 clicks.
Email newsletters • Yarra Life, Your Say Yarra email newsletters, (and emails to past participants) to a total of 13,050 subscribers, open rates between 60%-72%, and 88 clicks • Shared in Yarra Environment News, Yarra Leisure & Yarra Libraries email newsletters.
Targeted emails to stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement:

The Sustainability team engaged with these stakeholders and received feedback from them via email or in person:

- Active ageing Advisory Group
- Key climate stakeholder groups (e.g. from pre-engagement workshops and Yarra Climate Summit)
- Neighbourhood house network
- Multicultural Advisory Committee
- North Richmond Community Health
- Community Health Organisations (CoHealth & NRCH)
- Young adults 18–30-year-olds (meeting at ACU)
- High school students (online meeting with 13–18-year-old MGC & FHS students)
- Nature and biodiversity experts (YCAN, Universities etc).

What did we hear?

The online YSY survey started with a set of questions that asked people to indicate their level of agreement with each of the objectives listed under the 7 transformations. There was strong support for Council's objectives as stated in the draft Climate Emergency Plan with the majority of people agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of them.

The final 2 questions (question 8 & 9) were open response. In question 8 we asked the community to tell us if we'd missed anything or if there were any gaps in the draft CEP. Approximately half of people who completed the survey (52%) chose to answer this question.

Analysis of the answers to these questions, in a spreadsheet mapping the feedback from all sources against all objectives, is being used to further strengthen the CEP.

Transport – Electric Vehicles	
What did we hear	**Our response**
We received several comments expressing disappointment that our plan includes support for EVs (cars), though there was support for e-bikes, including the following two examples: • "I am also disappointed in the inclusion of EVs... EVs should not be included in the vision of Yarra - we should aspire for a future where private motor vehicles are limited" • "We're concerned that Action 4.3.1 proposes to allocate further resources (Officer time and Council budget) to support cars (and driving), including the designation (locking in) of public land for charging." • "I do not want to see any substantial resources devoted to promoting private electric vehicles... council-controlled parking bays should not be used for charging EVs. E-bikes, on the other hand, are a really promising avenue for reducing emissions. How will they be encouraged and what goals will be set? • "Offer subsidies for residents exchanging a car for an e-bike - schemes like this operate elsewhere." Conversely, we also received a few comments around the need for more EV charging infrastructure.	Much of the feedback is in line with the 10-year Transport Strategy, *Moving Forward*, which was adopted in July 2022. One might presume that many readers who commented on transport had focused on the Zero Carbon Transport section of Transformation 4, without noticing the transport relevant sections of Transformation 1 and Transformation 6. There is an action in Transformation 1 of the CEP around continuing to implement and evaluate the Transport Strategy. We will therefore add text to Transformation 4 of the CEP referring the reader to the relevant section of Transformation 1. We will also make changes to the text in Transformation 4 to make it clear that we are prioritising improving and increasing active transport and public transport over private cars, but that the private cars that do remain should be electric. We will also share the transport-related feedback for the CEP to the Transport team.

Transport – Active Transport	
What did we hear	**Our response**
We heard calls for better bicycle infrastructure: more direct routes to the city, separated bike lanes on major thoroughfares, and shade on these paths.	Again, much of the feedback is in line with the 10-year Transport Strategy, *Moving Forward*, which was adopted in July 2022. There is an action in Transformation 1 of the CEP around continuing to implement and evaluate the Transport Strategy.

	We will therefore add text to Transformation 4 of the CEP referring the reader to the relevant section of Transformation 1. We will also refer the reader to Action 6.3.1 under Transformation 6, which aims to "Ensure cool routes support active transport and walkability of Yarra in a changing climate..." We will also share the transport-related feedback for the CEP to the Transport team.

Housing	
What did we hear	**Our response**
We heard agreement for our support for renters and calls for further action in this space including more advocacy and more support for low-income earners in public housing. • "Support for renters to make buildings more energy efficient (e.g. draught proofing, double glazing, insulation). More advocacy on behalf of renters. Higher minimum standards for rented properties."	We will increase our advocacy for renters and residents of public housing. We will continue providing support for renters to make homes thermally comfortable and climate resilient, and we will add support for residents of public housing.

Access to biodiverse-rich spaces within a walkable distance from their home, workplace, or school	
What did we hear	Our response
This objective that received the highest level of support in the Your Say Yarra survey, with a score of 4.21 56.45% strongly agreed,19.35% agreed, and only 12.9% strongly disagreed (no one disagreed).	We know that we are on the right path with this objective.

"There is no climate emergency and Yarra City Council should stay in our lane"	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• A minority of respondents made comments that indicated a level of climate denial • Some other comments expressed the stance that Council should focus on rates, roads, and rubbish • Other negative comments were around the CEP being ideological, a waste of time and resources	These negative comments came from a small minority of people who gave feedback to the draft CEP. The comments either go against scientific evidence or are ill-informed. We also received many enthusiastic comments expressive gratitude, pride, and encouragement in the CEP and Yarra City Council.

Evaluating the engagement

Objective	Evaluation

Inform the community:
Informing the Yarra community and key stakeholders about the progress of the draft CEP and closing the loop on the first stage of community engagement.
	• We ensured that all information provided was relevant, timely, and accurate.
	• We re-contacted all groups, or representatives of groups, with whom we engaged in phase 1 to make sure that they could review the draft plan that they helped to inform and provide further feedback
	• The consultation was promoted through a variety of channels and methods to reach a wide audience as well as targeted groups in Yarra:
	  ○ Your Say Yarra page received 1,565 views across the 6-week consultation period (Target 1500+).
	  ○ Reached 3,656 people on our social media channels (target: 1500+)
	  ○ Reached 13,050 people through email campaigns (Target: 10,000+)
	  ○ 95 in-person conversations with community throughout the 2 pop up sessions (Target: 50+)

Understand community sentiment and seek feedback:
• Checking in with the community and seeking feedback on key elements of the draft CEP, including:
  ○ Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the objectives for Transformations 1-7
  ○ Do you think there are there any gaps in the draft Climate Emergency Plan? Have we missed anything that you think is important to include?
  ○ Do you have any other comments about the draft Climate Emergency Plan?
Understanding the community's level of support for the CEP based on the above feedback.
	• We received input from all target groups identified as at risk of severe climate impacts, in great part through organising workshops or meetings.
	• The survey contribution rate of around 3.6% on YSY page resulted in 63 contributions (Target: 5%)
	• There was active participation in both of our pop-up events.
	• Responses received related to the content and can easily be used by the project team to help finalise the Climate Emergency Plan.

Ensure that the engagement is accessible and inclusive: Make sure that the voices of those most impacted by the climate emergency (groups identified in Stage 1 of the consultation) are given the opportunity to provide their feedback on the draft CEP.	• The project team actively sought to remove any known barriers to allow all interested stakeholders to participate (including people most affected by climate change, CALD & people with disability). • We used plain English descriptions, Bicultural Laison Officers (BLOs) at pop ups and provided translated materials to help people understand how to participate. • We met people at the place most convenient to them, whether that be online or in person.
Share how feedback helped inform the draft plan.	• All feedback (from YSY, workshops, meetings, email submissions, etc) was mapped and organised in a spreadsheet against the CEP Objectives and other themes or issues, so that we could methodically analyse the feedback and act accordingly whilst refining the draft.

	• The Community Engagement Report will be uploaded to the Your Say Yarra page and content updated after the consultation concludes.