# New Open Space on Mater Street: Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the **New Open Space on Mater Street** project and reports on the engagement outcomes. The consultation opened on 20/3/26 and closed at 9am on 13/4/26.

## Executive Summary


The purpose of this engagement was to inform the community about the proposed design and delivery of a new open space on Mater Street, Collingwood, and to seek feedback on the draft Concept Design to understand priorities, concerns and suggested improvements before finalising the design.

Engagement was undertaken using a mix of online and in person methods, including an online survey hosted on Yarra City Councils Your Say Yarra page, two onsite pop up engagement sessions at the corner of Mater Street and Wellington Street, and targeted engagement with key stakeholders.

The engagement reached the community through several communication channels, including postcard distribution to 1,772 nearby residences and businesses, promotion through Council's social media channels (approximately 10,000 views), and inclusion in the Your Say Yarra newsletter, which was distributed to 2,382 subscribers.

To ensure underrepresented groups were included, targeted engagement was undertaken with Yarra City Council's Disability Advisory Committee, and the online survey was designed to be accessible.

A total of 163 people provided feedback during the engagement period, including 160 online survey responses and 3 written email submissions. In addition, officers spoke directly with approximately 24 community members during the in-person pop-up sessions.

Overall, feedback showed strong support for creating new green open space, with priorities including increased tree canopy, greenery, shade, accessibility, and seating. Key concerns related to the scale and type of active recreation, safety near Wellington Street, parking impacts, and residential amenity. Council will respond by refining the concept design to reduce hard surfaces, strengthen greening outcomes, improve safety and accessibility, and ensure the park's features are appropriately scaled to its neighbourhood context.


## Engagement approach

### Project background

Yarra City Council is proposing a new open space for the recently acquired land parcel at 364–368 Wellington Street, in Collingwood.

In addition, a road discontinuance process is underway, which will see a section of road adjacent to this land parcel closed off to enable a larger open space, park expansion.

Creating new open space for residents and future populations in this gap area will improve access to green space and winter sunlight, house additional tree planting to further mitigate urban heat island effect, strengthen biodiversity, and expand on social gathering provision.

The Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020 (YOSS) identifies that Collingwood has low open space provision (0.3% of the total precinct area is open space) with a forecast of substantial population increase.

In 'Collingwood A Precinct', the Strategy recommends investigating the expansion of open space size at Alexander Street Reserve and McNamara Reserve, to increase capacity to provide more facilities. These options are not currently viable.

As an alternative, Council has recently acquired a parcel of land (from the Salvation Army) at the corner of Wellington Street and Mater Street to address this gap (east of Wellington Street).

We undertook light touch sentiment testing with the community in the local area from Monday 15 September to Monday 6 October 2025 seeking community views on the concept of expanding this land parcel/proposed open space into the road reserve through a statutory road closure process. Overall, 82% of the 56 total participants, supported the proposal to close the road and create an expanded new open space.

Earlier this year Council proposed a road discontinuance at this location and sought further community feedback. The results showed strong support for the proposal and, at the Council Meeting on Tuesday 10 March, Council resolved to discontinue a section of Mater Street.

The proposed road closure at the intersection of Mater Street and Wellington Street, adjacent to the acquired land parcel, will increase the new Small Local open space area from 290m2 to approximately 800m2, further benefiting existing and forecast community, as well as high visitor numbers attracted to the nearby Smith Street activity centre and local restaurants, pubs, and bars (located on Wellington, Gold and Johnston Streets).

### Level of community influence

1. Community feedback helped us to understand which proposed park features are the most important to include as we finalise the draft Concept Design.
2. Community feedback identified any other concerns or suggestions to be considered as we finalise the draft Concept Design.

### Engagement objectives

1. Inform the community about the proposal to design and construct a new open space in Mater Street, Collingwood.
2. Seek feedback from the community on the draft Concept Design to understand which design elements are most important, to identify any concerns and understand suggested improvements and any other comments about the project.
3. Reach and engage with directly impacted community members so they can have their say on the draft Concept Design.

### Engagement methods:

- Online survey on YSY
- 2x in Person “Pop up” events at the corner of Mater Street and Wellington Street on:
    - Wednesday 8th April from 4pm to 6pm
    - Saturday 11 April from 10am to 12pm
- Targeted stakeholder engagement with the following groups:
    - Yarra City Council Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) on Tuesday 24 March 2026
    - Salvation Army Representatives located on Mater Street on Thursday, 8 January 2026.

# Engagement promotion

| Highly impacted stakeholders | Promotion and reach |
|---|---|
| Nearby residents and businesses | • Postcards with QR codes distributed to 1772 occupiers of residences and businesses in the area surrounding Mater Street in Collingwood.<br>• Mail outs of letters to owners of residences and businesses in the area surrounding Mater Street in Collingwood.<br>• Signs (A1 corflutes) displayed on site at the corner of Mater and Wellington Streets in Collingwood. |

| Engagement promotion |
| --- |
| 10,000 views and 67 people engaged with the post on our social media channels |
| Your Say Yarra email newsletter, reaching a total of 2,382 subscribers. |
| Promoted via Yarra Life which is distributed to every household in Yarra (over 60,000 properties). |
| News story on Yarra City Council's website. |
| Postcards displayed at Council buildings in Collingwood |
| Digital screens displayed at Council buildings (town halls, libraries, leisure centres). |

# Engagement results

### Your Say Yarra project page

- **Visitors** – The number of unique visitors that saw the page.
- **Responses** – The number of feedback responses that were submitted.

| Visitors | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| 636 | 160 |

### In person engagement

Two in person events were held on site at the corner of Mater and Wellington Streets in Collingwood.

| In-person event | Approximate number of people we spoke to | Responses |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wednesday 8 April | 20 | 0 |
| Saturday 11 April | 4 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | 24 | 0 |

### Email responses

- A total of 4 responses were received by email. While these responses did not directly address the engagement questions, responses will be considered alongside responses provided to the online survey.

### Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected from 160 responses to the online survey.

Of the 160, 10 responses were flagged by the system as potential duplicates. These responses were submitted from the same IP address (computer, phone or tablet) but by different contributors with different emails and demographics so they were determined not to be duplicate responses.

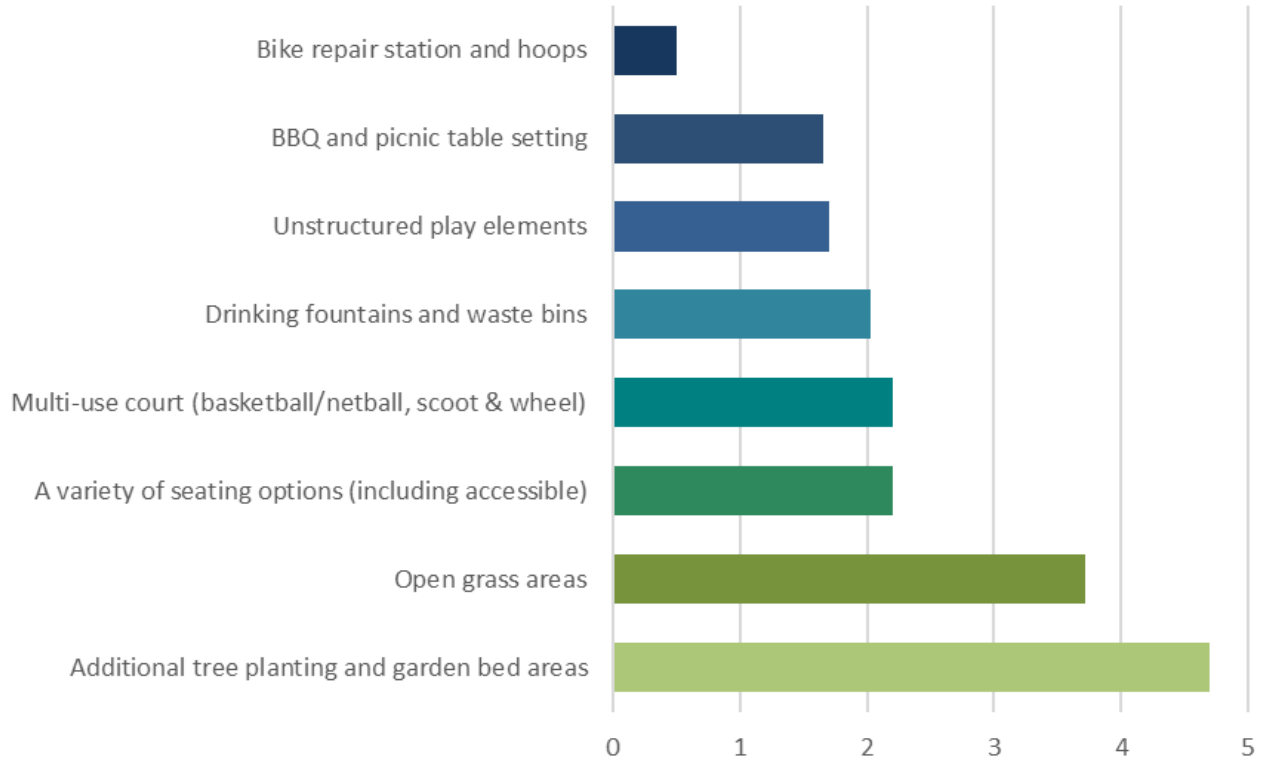
| What's your connection to Yarra? | Numbers | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage) | 119 | 74.38% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Live in Yarra, in a property I rent | 25 | 15.63% |
| Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra | 2 | 1.25% |
| Work in Yarra | 30 | 18.75% |
| Own a business / business occupier in Yarra | 4 | 2.5% |
| Study in Yarra | 6 | 3.75% |
| None of the above | 3 | 1.88% |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 1.88% |
| **What is your connection to Mater Street?** (if more than 1, please select the option that best describes your connection) | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| I live on Mater Street or on a street that intersects with Mater Street | 63 | 39.38% |
| I own or run a business on Mater Street or on a street that intersects with Mater Street | 1 | 0.63% |
| I work on Mater Street or on a street that intersects with Mater Street | 6 | 3.75% |
| I study on Mater Street or on a street that intersects with Mater Street | 0 | 0% |
| I travel through the location to access another destination | 26 | 16.25% |
| I visit local shops, schools, parks or access services near the location | 48 | 30% |
| Other | 16 | 10% |
| Total | 160 | 100% |
| **What gender do you identify as?** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| Man | 68 | 42.50% |
| Woman | 83 | 51.88% |
| Self-described | 4 | 2.5% |
| I prefer not to say | 5 | 3.13% |
| Total | 160 | 100% |
| **What is your age range?** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| Under 11 | 0 | 0% |
| 12 to 17 | 0 | 0% |
| 18 to 24 | 9 | 5.63% |
| 25 to 34 | 45 | 28.13% |
| 35 to 49 | 59 | 36.88% |
| 50 to 59 | 27 | 16.88% |
| 60 to 69 | 12 | 7.5% |
| 70 to 84 | 5 | 3.13% |
| 85 and older | 0 | 0% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I prefer not to say | 3 | 1.88% |
| Total | 160 | 100% |
| **What suburb do you live in** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| Abbotsford | 5 | 3.13% |
| Alphington | 1 | 0.63% |
| Burnley | 0 | 0% |
| Carlton North | 2 | 1.25% |
| Clifton Hill | 4 | 2.5% |
| Collingwood | 113 | 70.63% |
| Cremorne | 0 | 0% |
| Fairfield | 1 | 0.63% |
| Fitzroy | 14 | 8.75% |
| Fitzroy North | 5 | 3.13% |
| Princes Hill | 0 | 0% |
| Richmond | 6 | 3.75% |
| I live outside of Yarra | 9 | 5.63% |
| Total | 160 | 100% |
| **Select all that apply. I am….** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| Someone who speaks a language other than English at home. | 13 | 8.13% |
| A person who was born overseas | 26 | 16.25% |
| A person living with a disability. | 13 | 8.13% |
| A member of the LGBTIQA+ community. | 31 | 19.38% |
| Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. | 1 | 0.63% |
| None of the above. | 84 | 52.5% |
| I prefer not to say. | 14 | 8.75% |

## What did we hear?

**Question 1. Which of the following park features do you feel are most important to include as we finalise the draft Concept Design? Please rank the top 3 that are most important to you.**




## Key Themes

Council received a wide range of valuable feedback. The following themes have been identified through review of all community feedback.

| **Feedback Theme 1: Additional trees and green space** | |
|---|---|
| **What did we hear** | **Our response** |
| The survey results highlighted a clear desire for additional tree planting and expanded grass areas, with a strong preference for increased greening and reduced hard paving.<br><br>Increased canopy cover:*"more shade"*<br><br>"*eucalyptus for bird and wildlife habitats."*<br><br>"*More deciduous trees"*<br><br>Request for location appropriate trees i.e. *"trees under powerlines".*<br><br>*"I'd like to see more grass, and as many shade trees as possible - some deciduous ones would be great too so that we can still soak up some winter sun."* | Council will investigate further greening outcomes by increasing:<br>• Tree planting: species will be suitably selected, consideration given to canopy size, shade provision, seasonal comfort and resilience, whilst responding to site constraints such as above and below ground services;<br>• Garden bed and grass areas; and<br>• Reducing hard pavement wherever possible whilst balancing accessibility requirements and climate and comfort outcomes.<br><br>Opportunities for water sensitive urban design (rain gardens, permeable paving, improved soil volumes) will be further investigated to strengthen tree health and reduce flooding. |

| | |
|---|---|
| "*I am concerned that the current design relies too heavily on hard surfaces, with too much concrete and exposed aggregate paving. This feels inconsistent with the stated goal of greening the area."* | |

| **Feedback Theme 2: Dog use and management** | |
|---|---|
| **What did we hear** | **Our response** |
| Survey results included some requests for an off-leash fenced dog area. There were also requests for a signage blade (to include dog rules), dog waste bag dispenser and bags, as well as dog bowls.<br><br>"*Make a section of the park for dogs, preferably off-leashed!"*<br><br>*"Designated fenced area for off leash dogs since there's no fenced parks in the area that allows dogs. Plenty of dog owners locally."*<br><br>*"Can you make sure there are dog bags provided & signs letting dog owners know it's a lead only area."*<br><br>"*The water bubbler should have a dog bowl catchment so people walking their dogs can stop for a drink."*<br><br>Some residents noted that dogs and owner behaviour would need to be managed to minimise conflict with other park users and prevent lawn deterioration.<br><br>*"Realistically, this park is going to be a bit of a dog toilet for all the apartment doggies so would be good to have as much green grass as possible..."* | Under the City of Yarra's Council 10A and 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, dogs must be kept on a leash in public places unless the area is a designated off-leash reserve.<br><br>Additionally, dogs are required to be kept on-leash:<br>• Within 10 metres of unfenced playgrounds, BBQ and picnic facilities, exercise facilities and on shared pathways; and<br>• Within 5 metres either side of shared pathways.<br><br>Therefore, the proposed new open space is not suitable for off-leash dog activities due to its limited size and the potential safety and accessibility impacts on other park users. It is also inconsistent with existing local laws.<br><br>Council Officers will review opportunities to provide:<br>• One dog bowl (fixed to drinking fountain proposed on the Wellington Street alignment); and<br>• A minimum of one signage blade, noting dog management requirements (amongst other park rules).<br><br>Dog waste bag dispensers and bags are not supported here. |

| **Feedback Theme 3: Recreation and Play** | |
|---|---|
| **What did we hear** | **Our response** |
| Survey results clearly indicated that respondents were not in favour of the basketball court with only a few in support.<br><br>*"No basketball court, it is not green at all."*<br><br>"*I love the basketball court but think that it's too much hard surface."*<br><br>"*The basketball facility is not suitable for a small park. It is incompatible with nearby residential properties."*<br><br>"*The basketball half court is fantastic."*<br><br>Some respondents (14 in total) expressed support for the inclusion of active recreation provision such as table tennis, scoot & wheels, soccer goals, fitness equipment, as well as BMX/skate.<br><br>Requests (13 in total) for structured play equipment such as swings, see-saw, slides and climbing elements were also received. | Council will review the proposed park feature in relation to play type, location and scale to ensure it minimises potential impacts on neighbours and provides further balance for all park users whilst allowing for further greening.<br><br>The basketball court will be replaced with another structured play element. Council Officers will further investigate play that is tailored to all ages and encompasses active and playful opportunities.<br><br>Council's Draft Play Space Strategy identifies the need to address gaps in play type provision through a network approach.<br><br>Play equipment for younger children is currently provided for in the Collingwood Precinct at McNamara Reserve (very nearby) as well as Cambridge Reserve. Council aims to avoid duplication of this provision at Mater Street Park.<br><br>The design will also maintain a focus on strengthening integrated unstructured play opportunities that not only |

| | |
|---|---|
| | supports imaginative play and exploration but also green character and flexible use. |

| **Feedback Theme 4: Access and safety** | |
|---|---|
| **What did we hear** | **Our response** |
| Survey results highlighted concerns about safety for children, pedestrians, and wheelchair users.<br>Participants made reference to the following points:<br>• Requests for a fence or barrier along Wellington Street to protect against traffic;<br>• Traffic calming measures to manage conflict between cyclist and pedestrians;<br>• Requests for a "bike path on Mater Street east to west" or a dedicated bike path;<br>• Request to remove the informal bike route access to the north of the site; and<br>• Requests for sufficient lighting to ensure appropriate safe levels; whilst also considering light spill levels, disturbance to neighbours and avoiding encouragement of night-time activity/gathering/anti-social behaviour. | Safety will remain a key consideration, with refinements to paths, edges and layout to support all abilities.<br><br>Council Officers will investigate additional protective park barrier (landscaping or low fencing) / edge treatments at the Wellington and Mater Street interfaces to improve safety and comfort.<br><br>The layout will aim to reduce potential conflicts between different park users.<br><br>Bicycle hoops will be relocated to the periphery of the open space to discourage cyclists from entering the park.<br><br>A varied surface treatment to delineate the designated informal cycle route, as well as encourage slower speeds, will be investigated further in the design development stages.<br><br>A lighting strategy, included integrated light fixtures/features, will be developed further during detailed design. |

| **Feedback Theme 5: Park features and amenities** | |
|---|---|
| **What did we hear** | **Our response** |
| Mixed comments were received on the selection and number of park elements and features proposed.<br><br>Some residents felt the park included too many features for its size, reducing green space.<br><br>Alternatively, we heard:<br>*"Great mix of grass area, multi-use court, seating, and other community elements like BBQ"*<br><br>There was strong support for more seating, particularly located under shade provision:<br>• There was some preference for standard benches and picnic tables rather than sculptural or lounge style seating; and<br>• Requests for accessible seating and tables that work for wheelchair users and older residents.<br><br>There were a small number of requests for the inclusion of elements such as:<br>• Artwork;<br>• A community vegetable/herb garden;<br>• Simple/durable/low maintenance features that support everyday use; and<br>• Irrigation, small retention basin, and water sensitive urban design. | Providing a range of features where appropriate is encouraged as it benefits/supports Yarra's diverse high-density community. Council Officers will review the layout to ensure an appropriate balance. The design will prioritise further greening.<br><br>A range of proposed seating types will be retained in the design. Their placement will be carefully considered to minimise conflicts with active areas, while also balancing shade provision, visibility, and opportunities for passive surveillance. All furniture will comply with DDA requirements.<br><br>During the design development stage, the engagement of an artist will be investigated further. The proposed dynamic sculptural seating element will serve as a distinctive, bespoke feature within the park.<br><br>Unfortunately, a community garden is not feasible at this location due to the ongoing demands of maintenance, management, and water use.<br>Where feasible, options for irrigation or passive water retention, such as a small basin, will be explored. |

| **Feedback Theme 6: Parking & vehicle access** |
|---|

| What did we hear | Our response |
|---|---|
| A small number of participants expressed concern about loss of on-street parking, traffic displacement and the need for adequate turning and manoeuvring space.<br><br>There were some requests for permit parking in Charlotte and Mater Streets.<br><br>There was clear support to retain an existing disabled parking bay (even though non-compliant) outside 50 Mater Street.<br><br>There was one request (by permit holder) to relocate existing disabled bay adj. to 370 Wellington Street, in Mater Street, alongside bay outside 50 Mater Street. | Council Officers will investigate opportunities to retain as much on-street parking as possible; however, some loss of parking is unavoidable due to the location and footprint of the park upgrade and the approved road closure.<br><br>Council passed a resolution at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10th March "As part of any works associated with the discontinuance, Council conducts a review of parking restrictions in the surrounding area including to investigate the potential implementation of permit parking."<br><br>Council Officers will investigate retaining the disabled parking bay outside 50 Mater Street.<br>Council Officers will also investigate relocating the second disabled bay located adj. to 370 Wellington Street, in Mater Street - alongside bay at 50 Mater Street.<br>It is noted that the two existing bays do not meet current standards and the proposed relocated bay to outside 50 Mater Street will not meet standards.<br>The proposed two compliant DDA bays within the draft concept design will be removed from the proposal.<br><br>Officers will continue to assess traffic displacement and ensure adequate turning and manoeuvring space is maintained to meet Australian Standards. |

**Requests for items that cannot be addressed in the scope of this project:**

- EV charging points / Community battery systems
- Toilet facilities

**Summary**

Community feedback showed overall support for creating new green open space, alongside clear concerns about how the draft concept functions in a small, residential setting. Many respondents said the park should feel simpler and greener supporting more passive recreation, with more trees, grass, shade and permeable surfaces and less hard paving.

The basketball court attracted significant feedback, with a clear majority opposing it due to concerns about noise, safety, proximity to homes, and loss of green space, while a smaller group supported it for its active recreation opportunities.

Approximately 13 respondents requested structured play equipment pieces, whilst approximately 14 respondents requested alternative active recreation elements. There were also consistent concerns about noise, late-night impacts, safety near Wellington Street, parking loss (including disabled parking), traffic displacement and accessibility for wheelchair users and older residents. Overall, the feedback emphasised that while people value increased open space, they want a design that prioritises greenery, residential amenity, safety and everyday usability, with activation carefully scaled to suit the neighbourhood context.

# Segmented engagement results

Demographic information will be analysed and, when there are less than 75% of respondents who are Yarra residents, reports will be segmented so that separate results are provided for responses by Yarra residents.
Over 90% of respondents indicated that they live in Yarra, either in a property they own or rent. Given the high percentage of responses from Yarra residents' segmentation is not required for this consultation.
Additionally, we asked contributors to indicate their relationship to Mater Street. 40% said that they either lived on Mater Street or ran a business on or nearby the location.