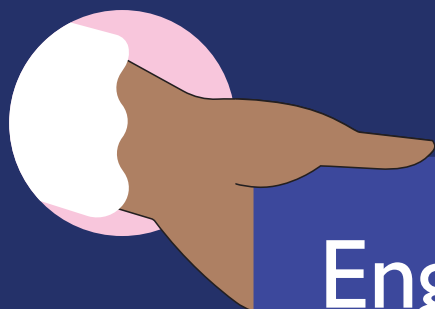
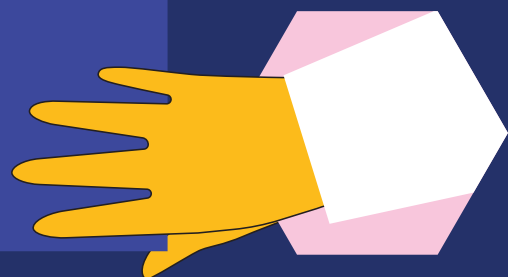


BANYULE 2041

**SHAPING
OUR
FUTURE**



**Engagement
Findings
Report**



The following definitions apply to this report.

COMMUNITY

A group of people, members who reside in the same geographical area or have a shared background, interest, affiliation or membership.

STAKEHOLDER






Individuals or organisations which affect or can be affected by project decisions.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is defined as genuine process of working with people to build understanding, strengthen relationships and inform decisions.



Table of contents

	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
	INTRODUCTION	6
	1.1 Report purpose	6
	1.2 Project background	6
	ENGAGEMENT APPROACH	7
	2.1 Communication activities	7
	2.2 Engagement activities	8
	2.3 Limitations	9
	FINDINGS	10
	3.1 Participants	10
	3.2 Values	13
	3.3 Aspirations	18
	3.4 Focus areas	25
	3.5 Council financial management	32
	Council revenue	32
	Council expenditure	36
	Capital works spend	40
	Delivering quality services, infrastructure, and support	41
	3.6 Evaluation	42
	NEXT STEPS	44



Executive summary

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In accordance with the *Local Government Act (2020)*, Banyule City Council is engaging with the community and stakeholders driven by principles of deliberative engagement, to inform the development of the Banyule Community Vision 2021-2041, Council Plan 2021-2025, Financial Plan 2021-2031, Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan.

The first stage of engagement ran from 30 November 2020 to 31 January 2021, asking the community to imagine Banyule in 2041 and what areas Council should focus on to achieve that vision. The engagement sought to build community and stakeholder awareness of Banyule's current and future needs and build and strengthen community and stakeholder relations and capacity to shape their local municipality, now and into the future.

Capire Consulting Group supported Council to deliver the engagement and this report presents a summary of the key findings. The second stage planned for March to May 2021 - will involve the establishment of the Community Working Group to draft Community Vision and work through strategic priorities for the Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan. In July we will check back in with the community to get their feedback before public exhibition of the documents in September 2021 and Council adoption in October 2021.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The Stage 1 engagement approach was developed in collaboration with community and Banyule's elected representatives and in alignment with Local Government Victoria Guidance material. Throughout the engagement period, Council sought to inform as many people as possible about the project and to encourage participation. Communications material included posters, postcards, emails, video, social media and factsheets. Council informed the community about the project and promoted engagement opportunities, encouraging people to visit the Shaping Banyule website for more information about the project.

The Council provided many ways for people to participate and contribute including Shaping Banyule, workshops, phone and hardcopy surveys and submissions online and postal submissions. Over 4,100 people engaged with the project information and resources provided on Shaping Banyule. Approximately 1,329 individuals actively participated in engagement activities.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

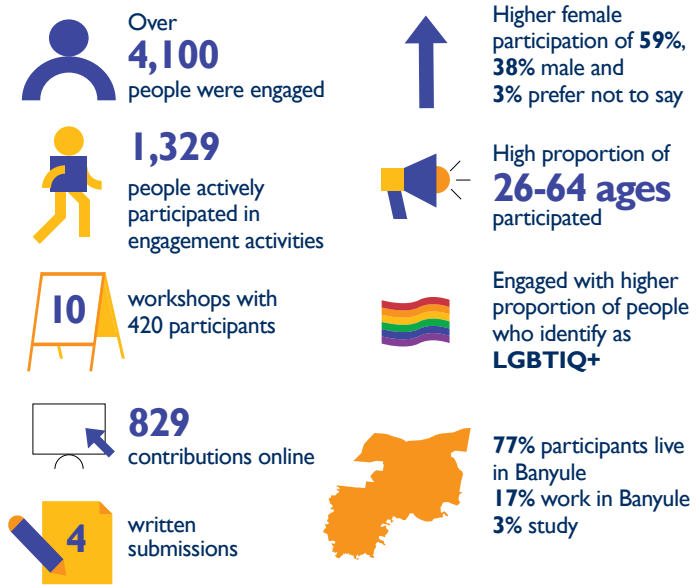
Participants were broadly representative of the Banyule population with some slight variance against ABS 2016 Census data. When compared to the Banyule population a higher proportion of females, people aged between 26-64, residents from Heidelberg West-Bellfield and St Helena-Eltham North-Eltham, and people who identify as LGBTIQ+ were engaged.



30 November 2020 to 31 January 2021

KEY FINDINGS

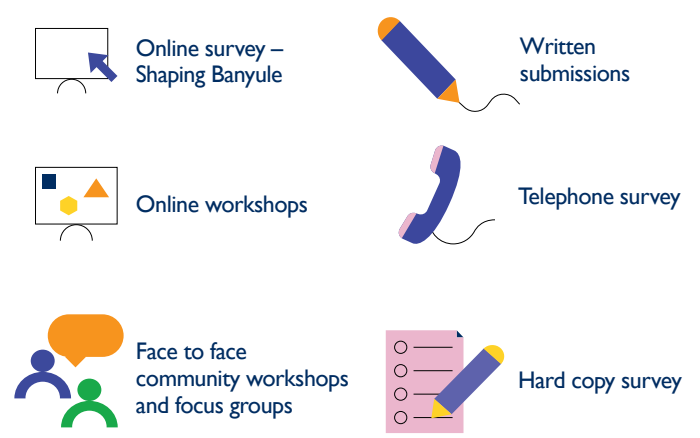
The results



How we engaged

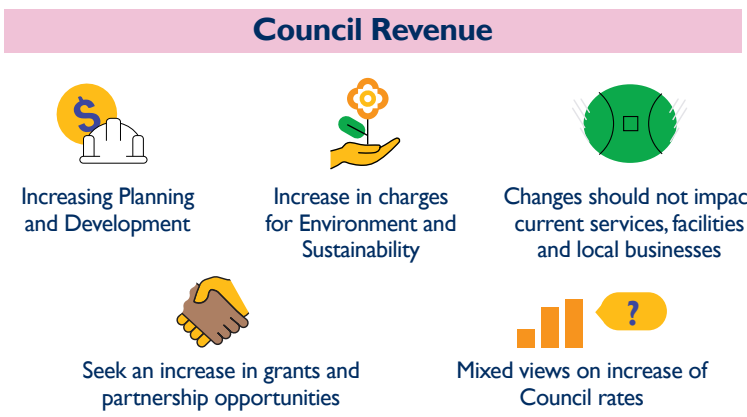


How you participated



Financial sustainability

Participants support that council revenue can be altered by



Council Expenditure



Capital Works



What Community Value about Banyule



The community aspirations for Banyule for the Future



Focus areas for Council in the immediate and long term



NEXT
STEPS

MARCH TO MAY 2021

Establishment of a Community Working Group to over a series of workshops, draft the Community Vision and identify draft strategic priorities for inclusion in the Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan (TBC approval on remit/promise).

JUNE TO JULY 2021

Wider community consultation to check back with the community.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Public exhibition of draft Community Vision, Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan.

OCTOBER 2021

Adoption of Banyule Community Visions, Council Plan and Long Term Financial Plan.

Introduction

1

1.1 REPORT PURPOSE

This report presents a summary of the key findings from the first phase of engagement for the Banyule 2041 Shaping Our Future project. The findings in this report will help Council understand community aspirations and views to create the new 20-year Community Vision 2041 and 4-year Council Plan (2021-2025), inform Council's long-term Financial Plan (2021-2031) and Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan. The findings in this report will also be used to design the next stage of the community engagement, enabling the community to deliberate Stage 1 findings. The report will also be used to provide transparency and accountability around Stage 1 findings and analysis.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Local Government Act (2020), Banyule City Council is engaging with the community, driven by principles of deliberative engagement, to inform the development of the Banyule Community Vision 2041, Council Plan 2021-2025, Financial Plan 2021-2031, Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan.

The aim of the project is to develop an innovative, aspirational and co-designed Community Vision that guides Council's work in enhancing the municipality of Banyule over the next 20 years. Through a robust engagement program Council and community will work together to inform the:

- Community Vision that captures how the community want Banyule to be in 2041
- Council Plan that sets out how Council is working toward that vision every 4 years
- Long term Financial Plan that will guide how Council will remain financially sustainable while supporting the Community Vision and the Council Plan.
- The Budget and the Revenue and Rating Plan that defines how revenue is generated through various sources

The first stage of engagement ran for just over eight weeks from 30 November 2020 – 31 January 2021, asking community and stakeholders to imagine Banyule in 2041 and what areas Council should focus on to achieve that vision. Engagement activities were designed to reach a broad cross-section of the community and stakeholders including Council's eight Advisory Committees and young people. The engagement sought to build community and stakeholder awareness of Banyule's current and future needs and build and strengthen community and stakeholder relations and capacity to shape their local municipality, now and into the future.

The second stage planned for March to May 2021 - will involve the establishment of the Community Working Group to draft Community Vision and work through strategic priorities for Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan. In July we will check back in with the wider community to get their feedback before public exhibition of the documents in September 2021 and Council adoption in October 2021.



Engagement approach

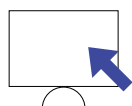
2

2.1 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout the engagement period, Council sought to inform as many people as possible about the project, encourage participation and provide resources to assist with enabling informed participation. All communications material informed the community about the project and promoted engagement opportunities, encouraging people to visit the Shaping Banyule website for more information about the project. All material developed included and promoted the opportunity for access to translation services should it be desired.

Over 4,100 people engaged with the project information and resources provided on the project webpage, Shaping Banyule. The following promotional activities were used to inform the community about the project.

↓ Figure 1. Activities used to inform people about the project



The project website was hosted on Council's Shaping Banyule page (shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/Banyule2041). The page had information about the project, including a document library with five project factsheets, promoted engagement opportunities, and provided a workshop RSVP function. During the engagement period a total of 4,018 people visited the website.



Posters were displayed in 10 bus stops and real estate boards at 6 locations throughout Banyule.



Postcards were available at 10 locations and included information about the project and a phone number to call to complete the survey over the phone.



Facebook and Instagram were used to promote the project and encourage participation. There were 11 posts on Facebook with a reach of 25,062 resulting in 596 clicks; eight posts on Instagram with a reach of 3,638.



Approximately 20,000 emails were sent to residents, traders, agencies, sporting clubs, support services, community organisations, clubs, associations, interest groups and networks.



Flyers for the workshops were sent emails and social media and used to promote the workshops and provide details about how to RSVP.



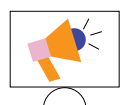
Five factsheets were prepared that outlined information on Banyule's community, environment and key activities and services. The factsheets were available on Shaping Banyule and emailed to every participant ahead of the workshops.



Project information was included in the Banyule Banner which was delivered to 55,000 residents and businesses.



The project was promoted on Council's webpage (banyule.vic.gov.au/Home)



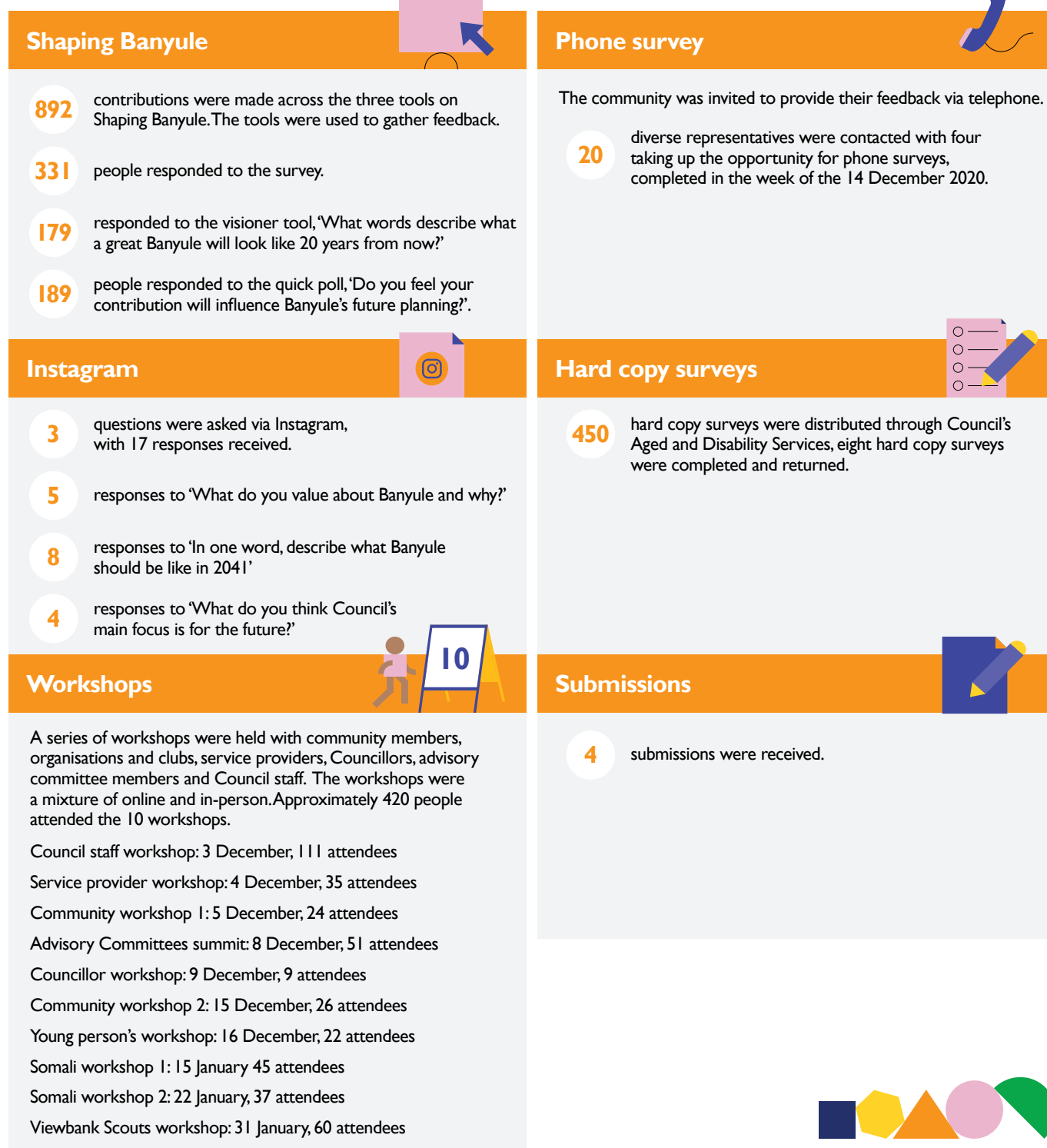
Phone calls were made as part of initial communication and promotion and throughout the engagement period, as a planned approach to mitigating any statistical gaps in relation to representative participation.



2.2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Council provided many ways for people to participate and contribute. The following engagement activities were used to hear the views and feedback from the Banyule community.

↓ **Figure 2.** Activities used to receive feedback



2.3 LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the engagement process have been acknowledged and outlined below.

- Some people may have taken part in multiple engagement activities, for example completed the survey and attended a workshop. Their views may have been captured more than once.
- In some instances, participants did not respond to all questions, this meant that some questions received fewer responses than others.
- Whilst opportunity for random and stratified participation in the engagement program were provided, promoted and encouraged, individual participation is not enforceable nor exclusive i.e. we would not exclude a participant because they may identify as belonging to a cohort that statistically could be considered over represented in the engagement activities.
- People who participated in the engagement self-selected to take part. As such, whilst every effort has been made to gather the views of a statistically validated sample of the community the information in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of a representative sample of the community. We have not been able to identify individual comments from participants at the workshops as feedback provided was not attributed to individuals. Where possible quotes from participants who completed the survey include the suburb they live, work or study in.
- This report includes quotes from participants to illustrate sentiment. Quotes from the workshops/summit are referenced with the title of the workshop the participant attended (e.g. community workshop). Quotes from the surveys are referenced with the suburb a survey respondent was from (e.g. Rosanna).
- In some instances, participants used the opportunity to provide feedback that was not related to the Banyule 2041 project. This feedback has not been included in this report however all data collected has been provided to Council for their review and consideration.
- Participants who attended workshops were presented with information and had opportunity to ask questions, whereas participants who responded to the survey did not. This limitation was most apparent in the ability to answer the finance questions, where survey responses were based on personal opinion rather than in consideration of information.
- Participants indicated the finance questions as particularly difficult to provide a response with some feeling they were unqualified or not informed enough.
- Finance questions and post-workshop evaluation responses were not collected at the Councillor, Somali community, or Scouts workshops due to time constraints and focused conversations on values, aspirations and priority areas.
- While submissions were not requested as part of the engagement process, two submissions were received. These have been reviewed and are included in the analysis of this report.
- Some participants who responded to the delivery of quality services, infrastructure question highlighted that the question appeared biased with some options duplicated.
- In the months immediately prior to commencement of the Banyule 2041 Stage 1 Engagement Program, Council's Youth and Family Services undertook a comprehensive engagement program with primary and pre-school aged children to inform the development of the Banyule Child Youth and Family Plan. This engagement program, via various methodologies, captured the views of children around what they feel the Recipe for a Good Life is. Rather than immediately duplicate engagement with this cohort, findings from the Recipe for a Good Life Engagement Program will be utilised in moving to Stage 2 of the Banyule 2041 Project and resultant drafting of the documents in scope of the Banyule 2041 Project. A copy of the Children's Recipe for a Good Life Engagement Analysis Report is included in the appendix of this report.



Findings

3

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

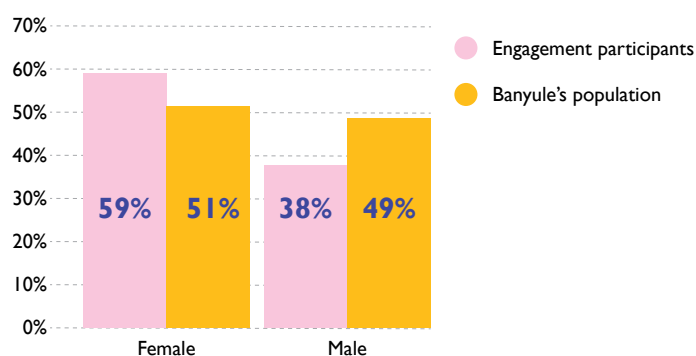
During this first phase of engagement approximately 1,329 people provided their feedback to the project through the work of Capire, Council officers and community leaders. The following findings represents the data collected through the range of engagement activities.

To understand who was reached through the engagement, we asked a series of demographic questions including age, gender, suburb and relationship to Banyule.¹ We sought this information to ensure we heard the views, experiences and aspirations of the range of community members that make up Banyule. When planning for the future of the municipality, it's important to hear from Banyule's diverse community to understand a range of experiences including those who speak a language other than English at home, identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and those who live with a disability.

Age and gender

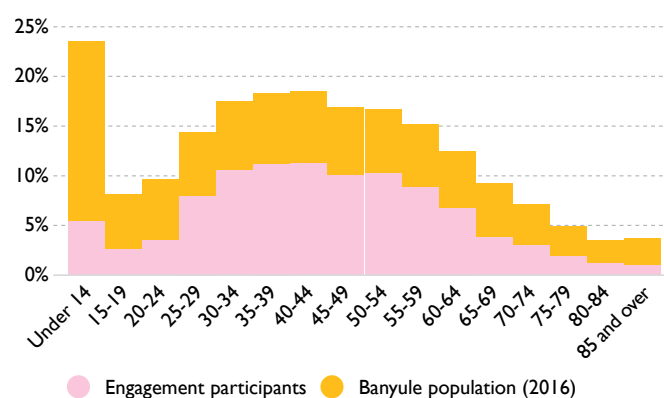
As shown in Figure 3, of the 589 participants that provided a response to their age, 59% were female and 38% male. A total of 2% of responses chose not to say and 1% identified as non-binary or fluid. Presented below is a graph showing the gender of participants alongside the gender of Banyule's population according to 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data.² We engaged a slightly higher proportion of females and slightly lower proportion of males than the Banyule population.

↓ **Figure 3.** Participant gender (n=589)



As shown in Figure 4, of the 564 participants who provided a response to their age, the highest were aged 40-44 years (11.3%), followed by 35-39 years (11.2%). Presented below is a graph showing the age of participants alongside the age of Banyule's population according to 2016 ABS census data.³ We engaged with a higher proportion of people aged between 25 and 64 years⁴.

↓ **Figure 4.** Participant age (n=564)



³ See profile.id.com.au/Banyule

⁴ These numbers do not include participants involved in the 'Recipe for a Good Life' project, focused on engaging with primary school aged children. Outcomes of this project will be integrated with Banyule 2041 – Shaping Our Future project (see the appendix)

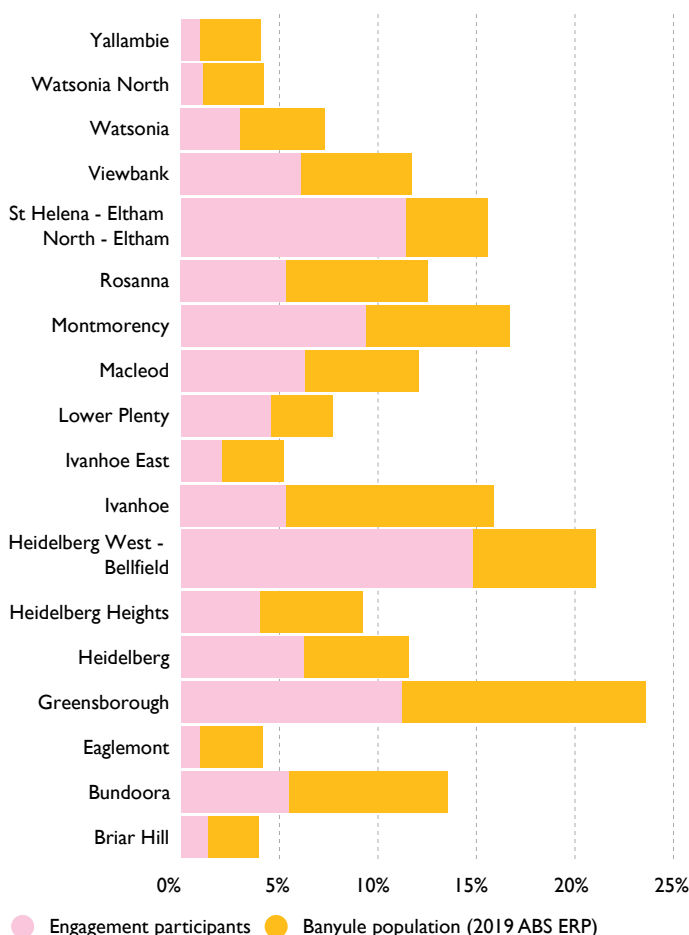
¹ In the demographic questions' participants were given a range of options to choose from, with some questions allowing the option for 'I identify as' and 'Prefer not to say'.

² See profile.id.com.au/Banyule

Suburb

Of the 525 participants who provided a response, the highest proportion lived in Heidelberg West-Bellfield (11.6%), Greensborough (11.2%) and St Helena-Eltham North-Eltham (11%), followed by Montmorency (9.4%). Figure 5 shows the responses along with Banyule's population per suburb. Against the 2016 ABS data, we engaged with a slightly higher proportion of people from Heidelberg, Heidelberg West-Bellfield, Lower Plenty, Macleod, Montmorency, St Helena-Eltham North-Eltham and Viewbank and lower proportion from Ivanhoe.

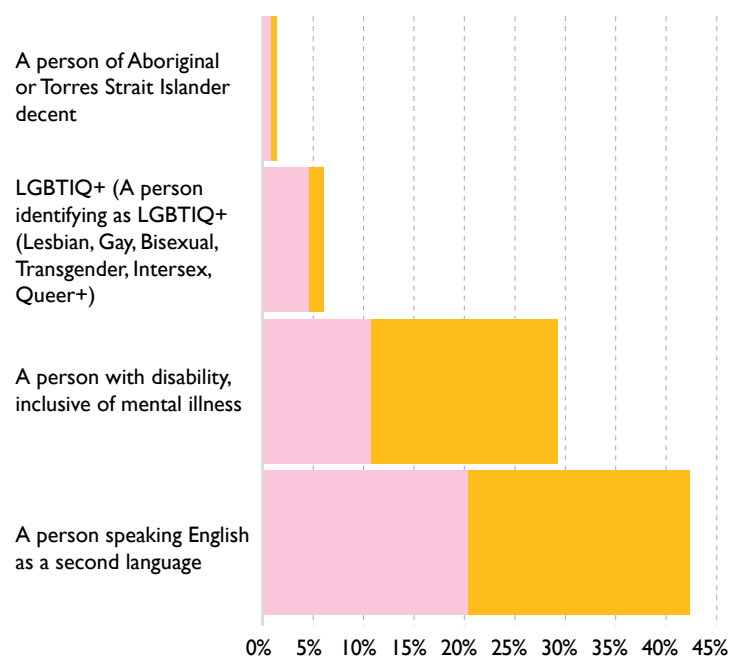
↓ **Figure 5.** Participant suburb (n=525)



Access, inclusion and equity

We asked participants if they were a person living with a disability, inclusive of mental illness; a person identifying as LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer+); a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent; and a person speaking English as a second language. A total of 457 participants responded to this question.⁵ Presented in Figure 6 is the participant's responses alongside data correlating to Banyule's population according to the ABS 2016 census data.⁶ We engaged with a higher proportion of people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

↓ **Figure 6.** Participant diversity (n=457)



⁵ This question also included the option of responding 'None of the above' and 'I would prefer not to say'.

⁶ A person speaking English as a second language is based on 2019 ABS data; a person with disability, inclusive of mental illness is based on 2015 ABS data; A person identifying as LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer+) is based on 2017 ABS data; a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent is based on 2016 ABS data.



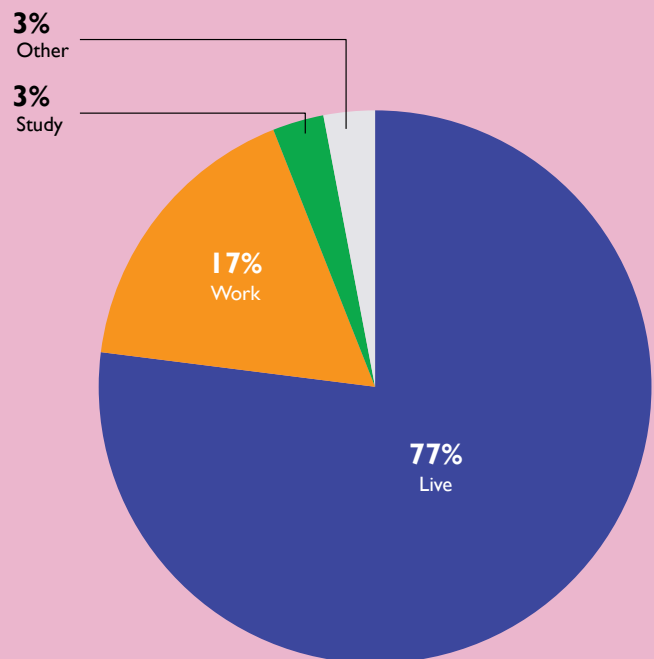
We also asked those participants who said they speak English as a second language to indicate their first language. First languages spoken by participants include:



Relationship to Banyule

Of the 556 participants that answered this question, a total of 77% said they lived in Banyule, 17% said they work in Banyule and 3% said they study in Banyule.

→ **Figure 7.** Relationship to Banyule (n=556)



3.2 VALUES

We wanted to understand what is important to the community and asked participants, 'What do you value about Banyule and why?'. This question was included in the workshops⁷ and in the survey. Presented below is a thematic analysis of the feedback received, in order of the most frequently raised themes, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment.

Open spaces and natural environments



Most consistently valued were Banyule's open spaces and natural environments

Participants often remarked on the benefits of living amongst public open green spaces, referencing the positive mental and physical health benefits, opportunities to exercise and to spend time with family and friends. There were many comments appreciating the amount of green spaces, some direct comments included valuing:

'The green corridors and parks through Banyule' (Macleod) and 'Our green and large open spaces are great for mental health. (community workshop'

Participants said that they valued living close to nature and open spaces with some praising Council's commitment to improving and maintaining open spaces.

A significant number of participants highlighted their value for the natural environment and shared their appreciation for Banyule's waterways and parklands. Comments expressed an appreciation for the maintenance, care and preservation of local bushland, biodiversity, native trees and Banyule's wilderness spaces.

One participant said, 'The big expanses of parkland are amazing and precious and the flora and fauna are being cared for' (community workshop) another said they valued 'the Lower Plenty rolling hills and massive native trees' (community workshop).

Participants from the Scouts workshop also highlighted how safe and relaxed they felt in Banyule's parks and how the bushland and open spaces encouraged them to go outside and be active.

'Banyule has some great places to hang out with family and friends, whether for a picnic or hike' (young person's workshop)

'Greenery amongst hilly vista, the environment is so important for mental health' (Montmorency)

'Bushland so we have space to appreciate our natural environment' (community workshop)

'The beauty and nature of our parklands and open space, the Yarra River and its many tributaries' (Heidelberg)

'The open areas with all its biodiversity, parks, street plantings, the "wilderness" of our area. It is not a manicured inner-city suburb' (Briar Hill).

⁷ Note, participants at the workshops were able to submit multiple responses to this question.





Banyule's location

It is easy to get to everywhere you need to

Participants said that Banyule's location is convenient, accessible, and close to all places that people want to visit. Many valued how convenient and accessible their community and local services are including hospitals, shops, parks, and playgrounds. Frequently raised was the idea of the '20-minute neighbourhood' where everything you need is located within a twenty-minute walk, cycle or drive.

Comments included:

'The convenience of everything close by, quality schools, excellent parks, good bars and restaurants' (Ivanhoe) and 'I really like the contrast between really convenient stores and shopping areas to the really nice parks and library' (young person's workshop).

When commenting on Banyule's location, its proximity to the city was valued awhile appreciating that it maintains an outer suburban feel. Comments included:

'Easy to get into Melbourne and easy to get out of Melbourne' (advisory committee summit) and 'I like its proximity to city and vibrant areas like Fitzroy and Collingwood' (community workshop).

The provision of accessible and convenient public transport available in Banyule was also valued. There were frequent mentions of the trains that provide direct access to and from the city. Some comments highlighted Banyule's great walking and cycling paths with participants noting that they encourage people to cycle and walk more frequently.

'The proximity to the Yarra and Plenty River' (community workshop)

'Banyule has very convenient public transport and it is very easy to use trains' (young person's workshop)

'The proximity to the city but still feels that we are further away' (Heidelberg West)

'A 20-minute commute' (Rosanna)

'I can walk easily to a park, walk my dog. COVID has helped me find new walking and cycling trails' (community workshop).

The school crossing supervisors, kids loved extra crossings (Scouts workshop).



Strong sense of community



A strong sense of community and the family friendly nature of Banyule

We heard that people value community mindedness, community safety and social connection. Participants often mentioned that there is a great sense of community and connection amongst Banyule residents. Banyule was described as a place where:

'People still say hello in the street!' (service provider workshop) and another said, 'There is a sense of community; people look out for one another and people are safe' (Macleod).

There were numerous comments expressing an appreciation for the diverse cultures, community groups, ages and people that make up Banyule. Support for Council's commitment to diversity and inclusion was expressed:

'I value Banyule's diversity and the township orientated areas; each providing for and catering specifically for the demographic living there' (Greensborough).

The role and impact community groups play in the wider community with one participant saying they valued:

'Community groups who put their heart and soul into the community' (councillor workshop). Many commented on the great community festivals and events for all ages and the opportunity for 'community interactions through festivals' (Heidelberg).

Feedback indicated that public spaces are viewed as safe and engaging for children.

'Love the community, it feels safe. Lots of street lighting and community activities' (Scouts workshop) and 'The community areas, especially those with activities for kids such as playgrounds' (Macleod).

'A great sense of community, love the connection which everyone shares' (young person's workshop)

'Banyule is a liveable and vibrant family friendly suburb' (Greensborough)

'Opportunities to participate via community organisations (not for profit), sports, interest groups' (community workshop)

'The diversity of our community' (advisory committee summit)

'Safety, community and family friendly vibe' (Ivanhoe).



Accessible facilities, services, and infrastructure



Banyule's facilities, services, and infrastructure that are accessible to diverse user groups

There were a range of facilities, services and infrastructure that were regularly highlighted by participants including neighbourhood houses, libraries, swimming pools, schools and universities, hospitals, playgrounds, skate parks and sporting facilities.

Comments included:

'I value our libraries, community centres, playgrounds, and all our fantastic services that support and enrich the lives of people living in Banyule' (Macleod) and 'I value the services and support that Banyule provides to our less fortunate community members' (Heidelberg Heights).

Many shared similar sentiments, expressing that local services and community facilities support and address the need of diverse user groups including members of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

'Amazing local services' (service provider workshop)

'Innovation in services offered to the community' (service provider workshop)

'The libraries, for community and access to resources' (young person's workshop)

'In my experience, appreciate queer youth spaces. I ran queer, straight alliance, preparing for pride. I valued Banyule Council's involvement in helping to create spaces for queer young people' (Watsonia)

'There are lots of choices of places to go and types of places (Scouts workshop).





Genuine commitment from Council

Council's genuine commitment to their community was valued

We heard that participants felt that there is a genuine commitment from Council to involve everyone's voice and opinions in decision making. Participants at the Advisory Committee summit valued the establishment of the Advisory Committee's as a way to work with diverse community groups and another participant said that Council is:

'Open and willing to listen to local residents and community groups' (community workshop).

We also heard that participants value the opportunities and events that council facilitates for the community, especially the variety of opportunities.

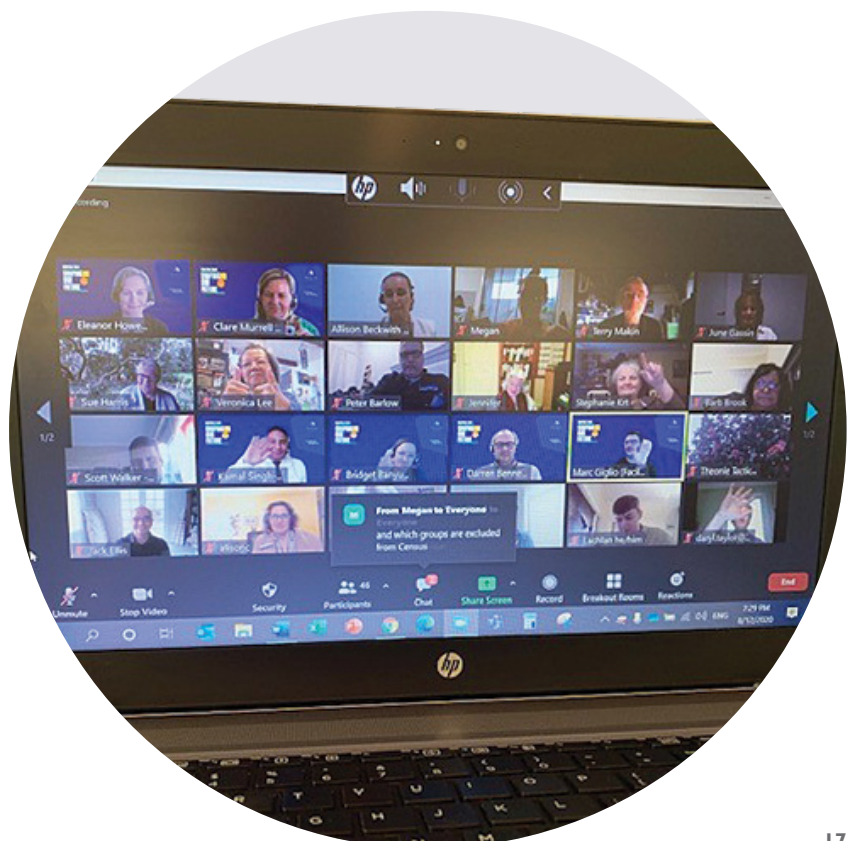
'There's lots of opportunity to get involved even if you never have before and you don't have to go into the city for great events' (Watsonia).

'The Council taking a strong stance on climate change, and leading by example' (community workshop)

'The commitment of improving the public open space' (community workshop)

'Strong local communities that can provide feedback to council on important issues (Ivanhoe)

'This event! Being able to share our voices. Local government listens more – this has never happened' (Scouts workshop).



3.3 ASPIRATIONS

We wanted to know about the aspirations people have for Banyule for the future. We asked this question in different ways depending on the engagement activity.

Twenty years from now, what would a great Banyule look like?⁸

What three words come to mind when thinking about what a great Banyule will look like in 20 years from now?

What words describe what a great Banyule will look like 20 years from now?

One of these questions were included in the workshops, in the survey and the sharing station on Shaping Banyule. Presented below is a thematic analysis of the feedback received, in order of the most frequently raised themes, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment.

A sustainable future



A sustainable future that has resilience to the effects of climate change and protects Banyule's natural environment

Most consistently, we heard people want a Banyule with a healthy and sustainable environment. Many expressed a desire to create a resilient community, as they recognised the impact climate change could have if action is not taken. Environmental and sustainability descriptors were frequently used when describing what a great Banyule will look like in 20 years from now. When answering this question participants used words like green, environmentally friendly, conservation, sustainable, nature, leafy, trees and parks.

More transparency is needed to show where funding was being spent to mitigate climate change in a tangible way. One comment was:

'Prepare financially for the severely increased and ongoing climate change related damaging weather events that will affect everything from trees on the road to buildings' (Montmorency).

Leadership and action on climate change, from all levels of government, and collaboration with community was considered a priority. Community education was often mentioned to build awareness of climate change and help understand the challenges ahead and the benefits of acting now. Participants said they also wanted to have a direct role in driving the climate responses and protecting the environment suggesting better recycling, waste management processes and residential development designs.

⁸ Note, participants at the workshops were able to submit multiple responses to this question.



A sustainable future (continued)

We heard that an important part of the climate solution is to invest in solar, wind and electric car infrastructure. Many expressed a medium-term aspiration for more electric car/bus infrastructure and more investment in energy efficient buildings. An attendee at the Scouts workshop suggested to work with neighbouring Councils or it won't be sustainable.

A prominent theme was the long-term protection of local biodiversity, particularly indigenous plants and encouraging local food production through urban farming. It was suggested sustainability practices that aim to reduce waste and encourage recycling and food and garden organics (FOGO). Aspirations included:

'Undertake urban farming initiatives with a dedicated Council appointed urban farmer' (community workshop) and 'Identify Council owned land for food production' (community workshop).

We heard that investment in native vegetation reserves in public and private land is needed, to protect existing ecosystems and encourage more local biodiversity. There was a recurring hope that Banyule would maintain its open areas and sense of wilderness.

'Climate change and sustainability initiatives to be stepped up e.g. banning use of plastic bags that are non-biodegradable, use of plastic straws in local businesses should be banned, increasing drives to zero waste and composting, green energy, better internet / Wi-Fi capabilities' (Rosanna)

'Lots of trees to maintain the fresh air, otherwise we wouldn't be alive (Scouts workshop)

'Review of residential development to include things like shared gardens, shared electric cars run on solar power, veggie patches, natural temp control (shade from tree planting, living rooms facing north etc.)' (Montmorency)

'Council must change over to electric vehicles, including bus services' (Heidelberg Heights)

'We believe Banyule has the capability and imagination to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040' (submission).



A diverse and inclusive community



A diverse and inclusive community where everyone has a say in decision-making

A recurring theme that emerged across a wide range of demographic respondents, particularly at the workshops, was the aspiration for a diverse and inclusive Banyule. Linked to this theme was the opportunity for everyone to be engaged and participate in decision-making. Key words included good governance, resilient, flexible, prepared, leaders, participation and community engagement.

Frequently mentioned, was the desire to embrace multiculturalism and seek to engage with and understand the needs of diverse communities within Banyule. Participants wanted opportunities for the wider community and vulnerable groups and sought Council to lead and strengthen connections with local organisations.

‘Need to enact the Reconciliation Action Plan in an authentic way and give them a voice. This is the same for all minority groups’ (advisory committee summit)

‘Council should undertake grass root needs analysis with whole Somali Community, understand the real issues that impact various parts of the community and then build programs’ (Somali workshop)

An engaged community



An engaged community where everyone has a say in decision-making

Participants said they wanted Council to have consistent and transparent decision-making processes. We heard that having a fair, accessible, and culturally aware municipality was important and many aspired to ensure that minority groups had a voice in decision making. Comments included:

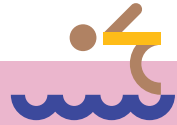
‘Some people are not at the decision-making table – it needs support and opportunities created for people to be present and heard’ (advisory committee summit)

‘Understanding where we can decide, and where we can advocate. Bringing our community with us and representing their views’ (internal workshop)

‘Face-to-face engagement is still important’ (community workshop)

‘More accessible and better education in the area – if everyone has the opportunity then more people would come and stay here’ (Scouts workshop)

‘Inclusion of all communities in planning, management and participation’ (Ivanhoe).



An active community

An active community that chooses active transport and is connected to public transport

A common theme that emerged, was an aspiration for a sustainable future that discourages car use and encourages active and sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling. There was hope for transport options to be progressive, green, and making use of modern technologies such as driverless vehicles and facilities to charge electric cars. There was aspiration to have a Banyule that is connected, active and has walkable and cycle friendly spaces. One participant said they aimed for:

‘Improved active transport options so we don’t add more cars to local roads’ (Briar Hill) and another participant wished that they could have ‘More access to natural areas where we can connect with the environment and that support active transport – like off road cycle ways in our parks’ (Heidelberg Heights).

Frequently mentioned was a desire for accessible public transport options that allow people of all abilities to travel without having to rely on a car. Some feedback included:

‘Improve physical accessibility to public space for those less mobile’ (Heidelberg Heights) and ‘Make all shopping centres accessible for those who don’t drive, disabilities, even consider for those who do drive, sensible parking’ (community workshop).

Linked to this was ensuring future development was in key locations to ensure people don’t have to travel long distances to access services. For example:

‘Concentrate development to our activity and neighbourhood centres and along public transport routes promotes sustainability and reduces the distances people need to travel to access jobs, goods and services’ (internal workshop).

Some hoped that Council would be a strong advocate for the community to gain positive outcomes from large developments, often mentioning the North-East Link Project.

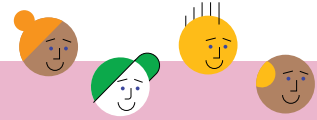
‘Better and more regular public transport’ (Montmorency)

‘An ability to travel round Banyule by electric power or bikes’ (Heidelberg Heights)

‘Bike paths completed, not just dirt – and going to good locations (Scouts workshop)

‘Ensuring the new freeway is benefiting local residents’ (Watsonia).





A healthy community

A healthy community with strong connection that focuses on wellbeing

There was a strong desire to encourage community connection and create safe and comfortable places with access to services. At the service providers workshop, it was suggested that Council could play a role in achieving this with one participant stating:

'Council is perfectly placed to take a co-ordination role for action. Council's links to community and local organisations is huge, so the opportunity to do good and make a real difference is huge' (service provider workshop).

Participants considered the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of the community as vital aspects for the future of Banyule. A key theme was aged and disability services, with feedback that these areas should have sufficient funding to adequately support the industry. Comments included:

'More aged care services in the area' (MacLeod) and 'making access to services for those who are not eligible for aged care easier - especially getting information about what is on offer' (Lower Plenty).

Another key theme was supporting the young people in Banyule, particularly at the Somali workshop. One comment was:

'The youth and even the younger children need more social events, opportunities, and mental health assistance' (Somali workshop)

Another gap was the digital divide with participants often commenting that the impacts of COVID-19 has widened the divide:

'Digital inclusion is very important so that we don't leave behind people who are not tech savvy' (service provider workshop).

Frequently mentioned was the affordability of gyms with many stating that Council should provide programs for the community that are affordable and allow opportunities for all to participate.

'Gym rates are too high anyway; exercise should be kept affordable for all as it is necessary for mental and physical health' (Greensborough).

'Make health and wellbeing part of our brand and our purpose' (internal workshop)

'Open community, know your neighbours through street parties, community events (Scouts workshop)

'Support groups should be provided for the parents who have silently been doing all they can to help their children. The support group can help the parents share ideas or just have their concerns and cries heard so they can support each other' (submission)

'I believe community fees can sometimes be quite high already (e.g. gym) so in the community's interest I would keep that lower' (Watsonia).

A strong local economy



A strong local economy that embraces innovation and supports local businesses and supports young people to find employment

Participants who commented on this theme often said that innovation and technology advancements are a major part of any future solution. A modern vision for Banyule was described with words such as innovative and tech savvy. Zero emission vehicles and digital applications to run businesses and connect people were often mentioned, along with the entrepreneurial opportunities of renewable energy applications.

Supporting small local businesses and communities to recover from the global pandemic was noted by many as an immediate aspiration, including more opportunities for local employment. It was suggested that Council provide grants, mentoring and coaching to support diversity of businesses and ensure representation of different cultures in Banyule. One participant commented on the existing processes for support and suggested ways to improve:

'Make the application form for business support grants more user friendly and easier to complete and provide support for people to fill these in' (community workshop).

Frequently imagined was a future where youth was supported to find employment and made the following suggestions:

'Create career pathways for university graduates – opportunities to work with Council. Jobs available in close proximity to public or active transport options' (service provider workshop) and 'Council to support local employment, include disadvantaged and youth for the future' (community workshop).

Additional feedback included:

'It's hard for young people to get experience when workplaces will only hire experienced workers' (young person's workshop)

'Build more local community initiatives for people to shop and live locally' (Macleod)

'Employment, arts and culture in our local areas to encourage more focus on neighbourhoods, rather than travelling to the city' (Greensborough)

'Establish employment hubs' (Ivanhoe)

'Partnering with business and education to provide opportunities and real-life vocational experiences for young people. Developing the educational capital and vocational outcomes for the future' (Heidelberg West).



Accessible and diverse housing choices



Accessible and diverse housing to match the population

Often mentioned were aspirations related to housing and development. When describing Banyule's future development opportunities participants used words such as more housing and units, convenient, walkability, cafe-culture, not over-developed and low-density. Some comments focused on protecting the heritage of Banyule for future generations, for example:

'Heritage architecture, it's beautiful and provides a sense of history' (Ivanhoe).

There were comments about finding the balance between climate resilient housing developments and retaining natural environments. A need for diverse housing options, with the variations supporting opportunities for home ownership and adequate community and affordable housing was frequently mentioned. It was also mentioned that housing designs should be flexible and inclusive to people with disabilities and should be located close to services.

'We need housing for all life stages including first home buyers. We also need good rental stock and heard about how difficult it can be for people with a disability to secure suitable rental properties' (Councillor workshop)

'Lack of housing security is very stressful for youths' (young person's workshop)

'Ensure the cultural and historical heritage of Banyule is protected. Maintain and protect the Historical Overlay precincts that we have now' (Eaglemont)

'I think there might be lots of high-rise housing, lots of convenience stores, games arcades, restaurants. Brings more architecture and diversity' (Scouts workshop).



3.4 FOCUS AREAS

We wanted to know what the areas of focus should be for Council both in the immediate and long term. The question was asked at the workshops⁹ and in the survey in the following ways:

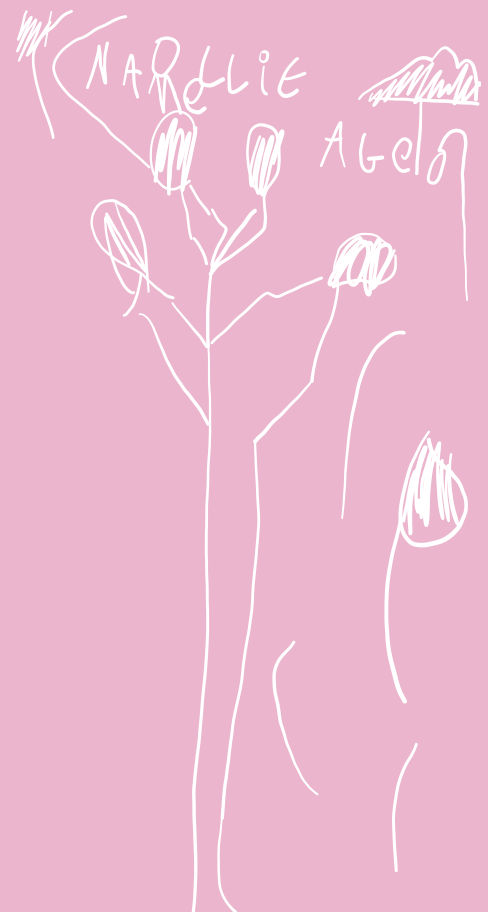
What do you think are the key focus areas for Council in the coming years?

Why do you see this as a key focus area for Council?

What do you think Council and community should be doing about this?

In the immediate/medium term (1-4 years); In the long term (5-10-20 years).

Presented on the following pages is a thematic analysis of all feedback received, in order of the most frequently raised themes, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment.



⁹ Workshop participants were also invited to choose one theme to discuss in detail in a group discussion based on the top themes in their workshop.





Environment and sustainability

Environment and sustainability are the most important focus areas for Council

Addressing climate change was often mentioned and repeatedly cited waste management, protecting trees, supporting food security, community gardens and urban farming, biodiversity and encouraging more sustainable behaviours including transport modes.

It was often said that Council should take action but also focus on enabling and supporting action and behaviour change within the community, volunteers and households. Participants would also like to see greater advocacy for and promotion of the many great initiatives that Council and community undertake. This included utilising existing networks, for example neighbourhood houses and sporting clubs, to educate and inform the community. One participant said:

‘Educate people so that instead of having 1% of people doing 100% of the work, have 100% of people each doing 1% of the work’ (advisory committee summit).

Immediate areas of focus included increasing awareness of activities already happening, providing more grants for sustainable activities and Council being a leader and an example for others. For example:

‘Walk the Talk – we tell people to do the right thing but then we don’t enable it, for example no recycling bins at sporting clubs. We need to be consistent and enabling’ (internal workshop).

In the longer term (5-10-20 years) we heard that Council needs to invest now, to see benefits for the future. This included maintaining and enhancing trees and green canopy, protecting established biodiversity, focusing on indigenous plantings, and creating urban forests.

‘Protecting tree cover and ensuring that suburbs such as 3081 do not become concreted with intensifying heat island effect – something of great significance to poor populations’ (Bellfield).

‘Action to mitigate climate change should be the major focus for every local government right now’ (Rosanna)

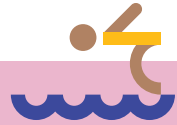
‘Introduce a farmers market in Banyule, where people can buy and sell local produce and reduce food transport activity’ (community workshop)

‘Help the community to increase their awareness of sustainable practices and help and encourage households to become more sustainable by providing information and making sustainable options accessible through subsidies and grants’ (Greensborough)

‘Advocacy for better public transport so we make it easier for people to leave their cars at home’ (Briar Hill)

‘Be proactive and show leadership in sustainable energy initiatives’ (Lower Plenty)

‘We support FOGO and also see as crucial, education and incentives for residents to take on the responsibility of composting their own food waste which will in turn reduce pressure on Council waste services’ (submission).



Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing where everyone is included and feels safe

Issues of diversity, inclusion and accessibility, safety, mental health, and resilience were discussed within this theme. We often heard the important role of Council in providing linkages and coordination across services and addressing where people fall through the gaps. Participants often referred to the many Council services that promote positive health and wellbeing including sports, neighbourhood houses and events. One participant said:

'Local government is uniquely placed to understand and connect with smaller communities to promote health and wellbeing' (internal workshop).

We heard many comments associating positive health and wellbeing outcomes with inclusion and diversity. Public safety and mental health were often cited, which was of particularly important to the Somali community and young people who participated. A comment included:

'Public places should be more inclusive, gender-neutral (and) welcoming to different cultural groups' (young person's workshop).

It was suggested that Council staff could be trained to better interact with diverse community including people who speak English as a second language and people with disabilities. There were also suggestions to diversify Council representatives and workforce to ensure the workplace reflects the diversity of cultural groups in the community. Feedback included:

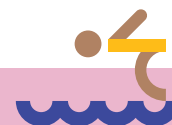
'More community outreach programs in relation to disabilities and invisible disabilities such as Auslan, blind or low vision, making spaces and Banyule more inclusive for people with disabilities' (Watsonia).

Many considered how a COVID-19 recovery plan is essential to the health and wellbeing of the community. There was acknowledgement on how the global pandemic has had a significant impact on health, wellbeing, business, local mobility, and the economy. Participants considered the importance of preserving existing services and ensuring that no funding cuts will interfere in the operation of health and wellbeing service provision. One comment was:

'Government will want to cut back hard in the next few years after COVID-19, Council must not reduce services, maintain at least what we currently have now people must not fall through the gaps' (young person's workshop).



Health and wellbeing (continued)



There were many ideas for how Council and the community could improve the health and wellbeing of the community, these included:

‘Increase and advocate for safe sex education and gender equity’ (young person’s workshop)

‘Provide more free activities and opportunities to build connections in the community and build community spirit’ (Watsonia)

Focus on ageing population via accessible, diverse and responsive support provision (service provider workshop)



‘Council to involve the elderly in programs so their years of experience are valued by the younger people in our community’ (Rosanna)

‘Maintain the existing health and wellbeing services’ (community workshop)

‘Protect and nurture vulnerable women, children and older or disabled persons... Set up community hub for at-risk women and children’ (Bundoora)

‘Support for struggling families, job opportunities, food donation points’ (Scouts workshop).



Accessible and diverse housing

Council should support accessible and diverse housing that supports growth whilst protecting the natural environment, open spaces, and liveability

This theme included housing affordability and types, transport and the provision and maintenance of local streets. Immediate areas of focus for Council included increasing the walkability in the municipality and creating more public open spaces. Comments included:

‘Enhance walkability to enable more people to walk safely to and from schools, shops, trains, buses in daytime and evenings’ (Montmorency) and ‘Create more open spaces, as so clearly valued by everyone this year, for not only exercise but socialisation and mental health aspects’ (Rosanna).

There was frequent mention of optimising the opportunity that developments such as North East Link (NEL) could provide.

In the longer term, many considered the planning and development of housing and surrounding public spaces as important areas for Council to focus on. We heard that it was important to achieve balance between building and infrastructure with increased green spaces, tree coverage and street shade. One participant said:

‘We are in for ‘medium density’ housing given our location to the CBD, we need to ensure there are parks, open space and community gathering places to foster community and connection’ (advisory committee summit).

Overall, participants would like to see an increase in considered and diverse housing options to cater towards the housing needs of the community. We often heard that it was important to moderate developer responsibilities and accountabilities, ensuring that housing developments meet environmental and accessibility standards. Concern was expressed about overdevelopment and the impacts on local character and the quality of open space. There were some suggestions to ensure developments have design guidelines to assist preserving local character, while also maintaining good public spaces with shared footpaths.

There was a desire for increased provision of affordable housing in Banyule to support those experiencing stresses associated with housing insecurity, particularly young people. One comment highlighting:

‘Not many affordable housings/ for middle- and low-income families’ (Heidelberg Heights).





Good governance, accountability, and leadership

A key focus area for Council should be good governance, accountability, and leadership

Participants often mentioned the need for collaboration between Council and the community, with a particular mention of how Council should work with the local community and Advisory Committees. We heard that it was important to listen to the community and provide genuine opportunities for people to shape their local communities. Some considered how to start the conversation with those who are not highly engaged in their community and decision-making processes. One comment suggested that Council should:

'Find ways to give them a voice as it is important' (community workshop) and another saying that Council should 'Through every engagement consistently aim for diverse representation' (advisory committee summit).

There were some mentions regarding the need to enact the Reconciliation Action Plan in an authentic way and give members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities a genuine voice. Participants also considered the need to include young people, older people and other minority groups into council decision making processes.

Council's community engagement was often mentioned with some recommendations to focus on the whole community engagement cycle and in doing so, provide transparent and consistent feedback on what has been heard. It was suggested that the Shaping Banyule website could be used more effectively to engage and interact with the community. One comment said that improving Shaping Banyule and other Council websites would:

'Help to create an informed community, provide access to information to help empower community and for community to understand the roles of different levels of government' (Councillor workshop).

Additional ideas to achieve good governance, accountability, and leadership included:

'Consistent approaches (and governance) to projects such as processes on consultation, notifications, advertising, on-site / website interactions' (Rosanna) and 'Develop and publish a complaints procedure' (Heidelberg).



Local jobs and the local economy



Council should focus on local jobs, the economy, and education (including pathways to employment for youth), especially to support COVID-19 recovery

A number of comments suggested this as a focus area for Council and commented on supporting local businesses and providing opportunities for specific cohorts such as young people and the Somali community.

We often heard that partnerships between Council, educational institutions and local employers would help establish local job opportunities. Participants provided ideas for how Council can increase the local economy, these included:

'Reinvigorate local shopping areas affected by rail and road changes' (Viewbank)

'Provide volunteering opportunities to build skills and connections' (young person's workshop)

'Make application form for business support grants more user friendly and easier to complete and provide support for people to fill these in' (community workshop)

'Supporting business to employ new people coming in' (Scouts workshop).

Often linked to this theme was the importance of focusing on innovation and technology. Participants saw the benefits of this including seeing improved access and inclusion, a more efficient Council (innovations within the organisation) and improving the tech literacy of the community. One comment suggested:

'Partner with private and public sector organisations to leverage technology and innovation' (service provider workshop).



3.5 COUNCIL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

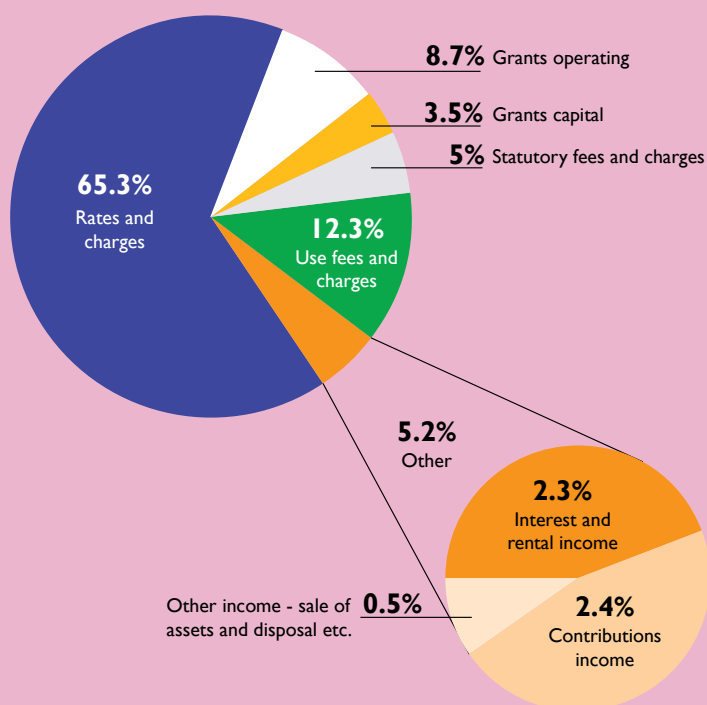
We wanted to understand the community's current views on Council's financial management to help understand the long-term planning of Council services and facilities. Participants were shown graphs depicting how Council generates revenue, spends this revenue including the percentage allocated to different services and how Council spends on capital works.¹⁰

COUNCIL REVENUE

We wanted to know what participants thought about Council's current revenue streams including rates and charges, user fees and charges, grants and other sources (see Figure 8) and asked if there was anything they think should change and if so, what and why. This question was included in the workshops and in the survey.

Presented below is the graph presented and a thematic analysis of the feedback received, in order of the most frequently raised themes, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment. Of those who responded, there were a range of areas that participants considered when prompted to consider how Council generates revenue.

↓ **Figure 8. Council revenue**



¹⁰ Note, the question about capital works was asked at the Advisory Committee summit and through the Shaping Banyule survey only.



Planning and development costs

Change the costs associated with planning and development such as increasing charges for developers

Participants shared ideas related to planning and development in Banyule, primarily focused on increasing costs associated with development. Specific suggestions included:

'Increase developer fees and charges at all points of the application process for any developments over three units replacing one house' (Heidelberg Heights)

'Increase developers' contribution to Council revenue' (Heidelberg)

'Use income generated from new developments and ratepayers to beautify the municipality and manage traffic' (Heidelberg Heights)

'Any strategic land purchases must have the aim of improving the area' (community workshop)

'Add yearly parking charge into rates, create all day free parking with the Council to increase the use of public transport' (community workshop).



Environment and sustainability



Council's approach to the environment and sustainability should be reflected by increasing some charges and retrofitting Council buildings

Many had ideas relating to the environment and sustainability focusing on changes for ratepayers and ensuring Council income reflects its climate action initiatives. Some ideas included:

'Reward ratepayers who implement sustainable initiatives' (community workshop)

'Gain commercial income from indigenous plant nurseries' (Bellfield)

'Develop a local energy plan, where Council can store and sell electricity, this can be another source of revenue' (Ivanhoe)

'Empower community to take more responsibility for their waste' (community workshop)

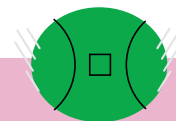
'Divest from investment in banks, insurers, superannuation and investment companies that are still putting that money into coal and other polluters. It is really important that the interest income and banking costs are not indirectly funding climate negative activities' (Heidelberg West)

'Implement a green tax for high polluting industry' (advisory committee summit).

There were also suggestions to improve Council buildings, assets, and the street scape, to make them more environmentally friendly and save on costs, these included:

- Implementing 'Environmental initiatives, more solar energy panels, more recycling, retain and enhance green spaces, planting appropriate trees' (Ivanhoe)
- Encourage the use of 'Sustainable energy, solar, wind to cut energy costs and save the environment' (Lower Plenty).

Current services and facilities



Any changes to the way Council generates revenue should not affect current community services and facilities nor impact local business

There were some suggested changes related to community services and facilities including low to no costs for groups to hire rooms and not increasing rates without demonstrating value in services. The following suggestions were proposed:

Weigh up 'the cost of supplying facilities at a reduced or zero cost to service group against the value created by volunteers' (Greensborough)

'Encourage and support local community groups' (Ivanhoe)

'Do not increase rates unless services improve' (Heidelberg Heights)

'Do not increase fees on business. Small business is always a struggle and a juggling act' (service provider workshop).



Support local business



Council should seek an increase in grants to support the local business and community

When reflecting on the Council revenue graph, participants often recommended Council explore an increase in grants to provide more support to local business, economy, leisure, and community activities. Suggestions included:

'Applying for increase of grants by Council and schools and credits to new and expanding businesses' (Watsonia North)

'More capital grants should be applied for - successfully! We have a fantastic environment and that should attract more government grants to keep it that way' (Ivanhoe)

'Maybe aligning the council's investments/ spending closer to state government priorities and initiatives would result in more grants being available' (Rosanna)

'A bigger percentage for grants - I think it's a pretty straight forward way to increase income and opportunity, not sacrificing community money' (Watsonia)

'There needs to be more grant applications so that budgets can increase in preserving, health, aged services, parks and gardens and family services' (Watsonia)

'Consider Banyule crowd funding of community projects' (Greensborough).

Partnership opportunities



Council should consider partnership opportunities where possible

Participants considered the benefit in Council optimising partnership opportunities such as between levels of government, with businesses, and with housing providers. The following suggestions were made:

'Partnerships between Council and local business in the areas' (advisory committee summit)

'Partnership funding with other levels of government' (service provider workshop)

'Business partnerships for some infrastructure such as public/private housing' (service provider workshop)

'Engage with more corporates for sponsorship of events' (Heidelberg West).

Rate increases



There were mixed views as to whether Council revenue should be increased through an increase in rates

Of those who commented on rates, there were differing opinions regarding an increase in rates. While some considered an increase in rates as important to deliver excellent community services, others felt that current rates are excessive and not justified. Many noted that rates should be relative to an individual's income and wealth, for example:

'Ensure charges for services are sensitive to personal income/wealth' (advisory committee summit) and 'Raise rates for those who can afford them' (advisory committee summit).

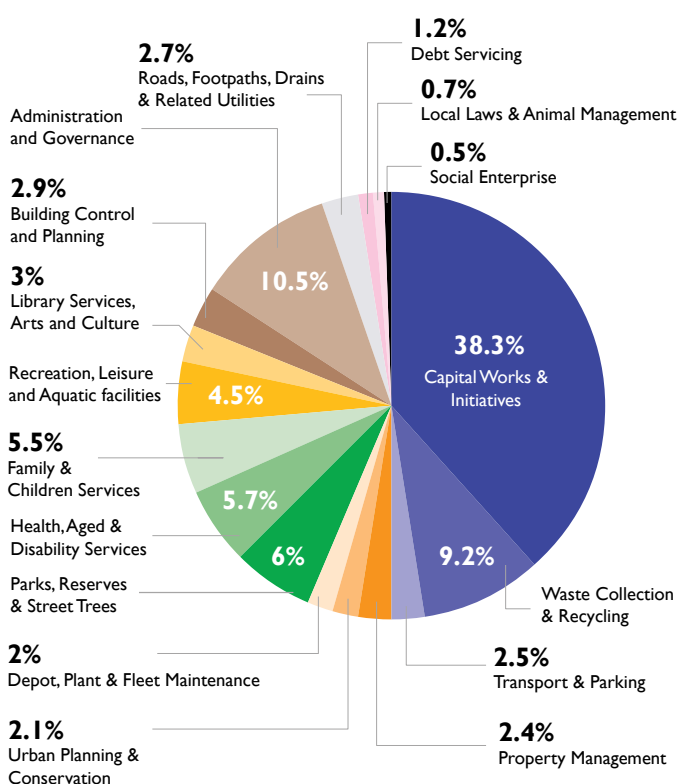


COUNCIL EXPENDITURE

Participants were shown the graph in Figure 9 and asked to consider how Council spends revenue to deliver on the range of community services, programs and assets and were asked 'When considering Council expenditure, is there anything you think should change and why?' This question was included in the workshops and in the survey.

Presented below is the graph and a thematic analysis of the feedback received, in order of the most frequently raised themes, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment.

↓ **Figure 9.** Council expenditure



Sustainability initiatives and waste management



Sustainability initiatives and waste management require an increase in Council spending

An important element was ensuring that Council is meeting environmental requirements to adequately address the impact of climate change. Participants said they would like to see more spent on sustainability initiatives such as climate change actions and community education. While waste management was viewed as an important area of expenditure, it was also seen as an opportunity to reduce costs, if local waste reduction, recycling and repurposing could be increased. Comments included:

'We should aim to spend almost nothing on waste – aligns with our goals' (internal workshop)

'Spend more on sustainability education and engagement at festivals' (community workshop)

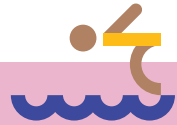
'Fund a council job for a Local Food Security Environment Officer' (community workshop)

'Encourage huge conversation on waste reduction/ sustainability' (community workshop)

'A greater amount of the budget will need to be spent on getting us climate change ready' now. The more we can do now, the more we will be a leader in this space, and the more we will avoid putting money to future-redundant items' (community workshop)

'I would love to see more spent on developing recycling technologies and products' (Macleod)

'Urban planning and conservation deserve a much greater share of the budget considering our cities are projected to rise by four degrees in the next 80 years' (Macleod).



Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing initiatives require an increase in Council spending and investment

Initiatives that foster community connection were highlighted as areas that needed an increase in Council spending. Participants also suggested an increase was needed for programs for specific cohorts such as early years or older residents, as well as facilities that support all the community.

The provision of cycling and walking infrastructure to encourage healthy behaviours was also listed as an area that needed additional investment. There was also a desire to see an increase in spending on arts and culture. Feedback included:

'Invest in creative community connection initiatives' (internal workshop)

'Invest in early childhood and families – this area is the building block for community economic and social prosperity' (internal workshop)

'Early years investment to make change where it has the biggest impact' (advisory committee summit)

'More money should go towards free services for underprivileged people who can't afford said services such as mental health support. Especially now with coronavirus, people have lost jobs and are struggling with their mental health-can't afford care' (young person's workshop)

'Fund the use of community facilities as meeting rooms for informal or small groups' (community workshop)

'Life hacks book to be expanded for everyone' (young person's workshop)

'I think we need to encourage bicycle commuting by investing in safer bicycle paths and crossings... Young people are settling here; they ride bikes and they want to be safe' (Rosanna)

'I think it looks very diverse, but would like more to be spent on the arts' (community workshop)

'Art and culture could use a percentage boost – we should create a major event for the calendar year e.g. Banyule Arts and Music Festival' (Montmorency).



Funding to support local businesses



More funding to support local businesses and encourage local employment opportunities

There was strong support for Council to provide opportunities for social enterprises. There were comments on the positive impacts social enterprises can foster and emphasised that they support local opportunities and often assist young people in finding employment. Feedback included:

'Increase social entrepreneurship and arts and culture. This is where future ideas and initiatives begin' (Heidelberg)

'Social enterprise gives opportunities for people to connect to community and have valued roles' (service providers workshop)

'Seek out, support and encourage local social enterprises that can fill a gap e.g. a biodigester for local restaurant precincts' (community workshop).

Spending on capital works



There were mixed views about how much Council spending should be allocated to capital works

Comments on capital works expenditure was mixed with some participants in support of the current amount and others emphasising the need to focus on maintaining existing assets, rather than building new. Participants suggested Council buildings and assets should be built and retrofitted to be sustainable into the future. There was concern that some areas of the municipality were better serviced than others. Comments included:

'Capital works are very important to keep Banyule Councils' facilities in good working order. Consider partnerships in undertaking capital works' (service providers workshop)

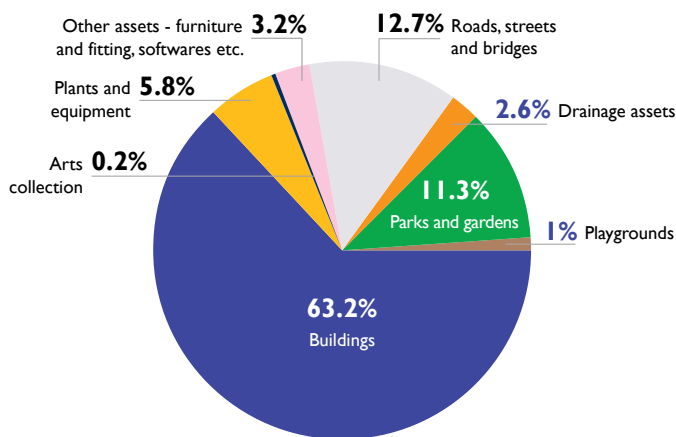
'We need to upgrade our buildings so that they are sustainable into the future, (start to use less energy and water, thus reducing ongoing costs), but it needs to be balanced with the needs of people and all the great points people are making about playgrounds etc. Spending more upfront for less costs later might need to be considered' (advisory committee summit)

'Some suburbs aren't as maintained as well as others. Can we redistribute the spend so all the suburbs in the municipality have a similar standard?' (community workshop).

CAPITAL WORKS SPEND

Participants in the Advisory Committees Summit and the Shaping Banyule survey were shown the graph in Figure 10 and asked to rate how Council spends revenue on capital works. Participants had the option to choose 'spend more', 'spend the same' or 'spend less' against current budget allocation.

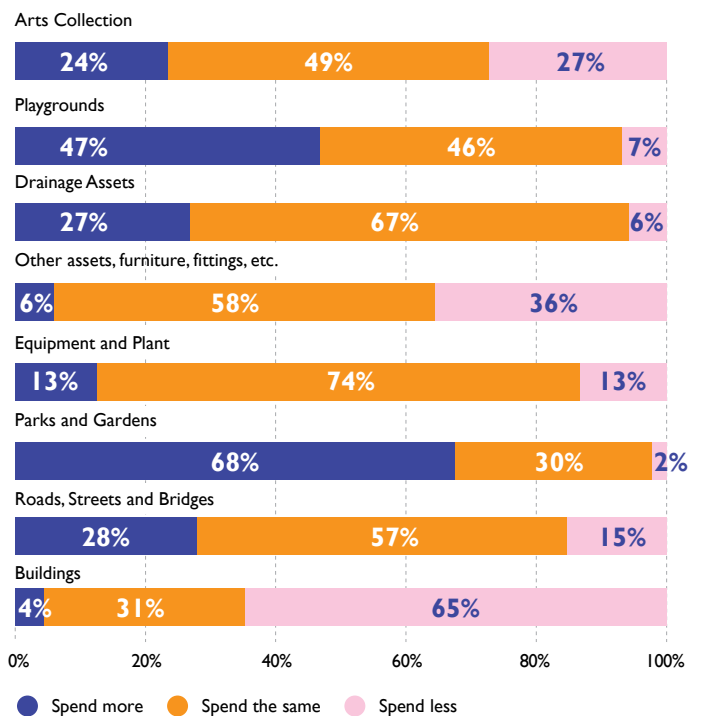
↓ **Figure 10.** Council's capital works spend



Presented below in Figure 11 are the responses to the question 'When considering how Council spends on Capital works, do you think Council should spend more, the same or less?'. A total of 320 responses was received for this question.

Overall, participants would like to see Council spend more on parks and gardens. We heard that Council should spend the same on equipment and plants, drainage assets and other assets, furniture and fittings and the arts collection and that Council should spend less on buildings.

↓ **Figure 11.** Participant response to Council spend on capital works (n=320)



DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SUPPORT

Participants were asked to rank how they think Council 'can continue to deliver quality services, infrastructure, and support to a growing municipality, without greatly increasing costs'¹¹. Six options were provided, and respondents were asked to rank the options: 1 for most preferred through to 6 for least preferred. A total of 217 responses were received for this question.

Figure 12 below demonstrates the ranking preference of the six options and a thematic analysis of the feedback received, has also been included, with direct quotes used to illustrate sentiment.

↓ **Figure 12.** Participant response to deliver quality services, infrastructure and support (n=217)

Increase income from community fees and charges to be applied with a balance between affordability and cost recovery e.g. hall hire



Increase income from commercial fees and charges by charging market rates e.g. gym memberships



Borrow funds to build new infrastructure



Increase investment in assets that generate income e.g. commercial and residential leases



Secure external grants to build new infrastructure



Spend more on fixing existing infrastructure than building new

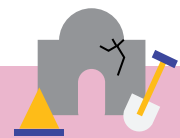


0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%



Most ----- Least

Fix existing infrastructure



Most preferred was to spend more on fixing existing infrastructure rather than building anything new

The most preferred option was to 'Spend more on fixing existing infrastructure rather than building new', followed by 'Secure external grants to build new infrastructure'. When asked to provide further comment as to why this was preferred, participants said it is common sense to make the most of existing resources, this option has the least impact on residents and Council is well placed to advocate to State and Federal level for increased funding, having a good understanding of community needs.

'We are still pretty lucky living in Banyule, and I think we have great community assets, lets maintain them properly' (Rosanna)

'In these tough financial times it is probably best keep using existing facilities' (Watsonia)

'If grants can be sourced, it would be preferable to raising costs of service' (Heidelberg)

'External sources better as they reduce impact on residents' (Ivanhoe).

¹¹ This question was included in the survey only.



Don't borrow funds

Least preferred was to borrow funds to build new infrastructure

The least preferred option was to 'Borrow funds to build new infrastructure', followed by 'Increase income from community fees and charges to be applied with a balance between affordability and cost recovery'. When asked to provide further comment on why this was the least preferred option, it was often said that the option would not have enough impact or be effective enough for the negative impacts it may have. It was also said that Council has a role and responsibility in ensuring equity and access for all residents and encouraging participation and connection rather than inhibiting, and strong sentiment against going into debt or living above our means.

'Council's business is not to make money but to sustainably provide ongoing and viable services for the community' (Heidelberg)

'Low interest rates probably won't last forever. Borrowing just puts the cost off to the next generation, who will with everything else going on at the moment, will have a lot of debt dumped on them already' (Watsonia)

'Council has a responsibility to support those most in need. When you increase fees and charges to commercial rates, you immediately disadvantage those people in the community who are most in need of services and can least afford to pay' (Rosanna).



Find efficiencies

Council should find efficiencies to reduce costs and fully utilise existing assets

Participants were asked to specify any other options. Comments included finding efficiencies to reduce costs, acquisition of assets rather than new build, focus on existing rather than new, affordability for those who need support and user-pays for those who can, seek further state and federal government grants, living within our means, charging high developer fees and making the most of the assets that exist. Comments included:

'I believe that you borrow as last resort, not everything needs to be new all the time' (Ivanhoe)

'I believe that council should seek to ensure that future major projects are co-funded via Grants or collaboration with interested parties' (Greensborough)

'Increase developer fees for applications and make them pay for what we need to support the growth they make happen' (Heidelberg Heights)

'Ensure all buildings are multi-purpose / flexible / adaptable rather than for benefit of single user group' (Rosanna)

'I feel the key role of Council is to help those in the community most at need. Fees and charges could be structured to help those in most need and those who can pay should pay more' (Briar Hill).



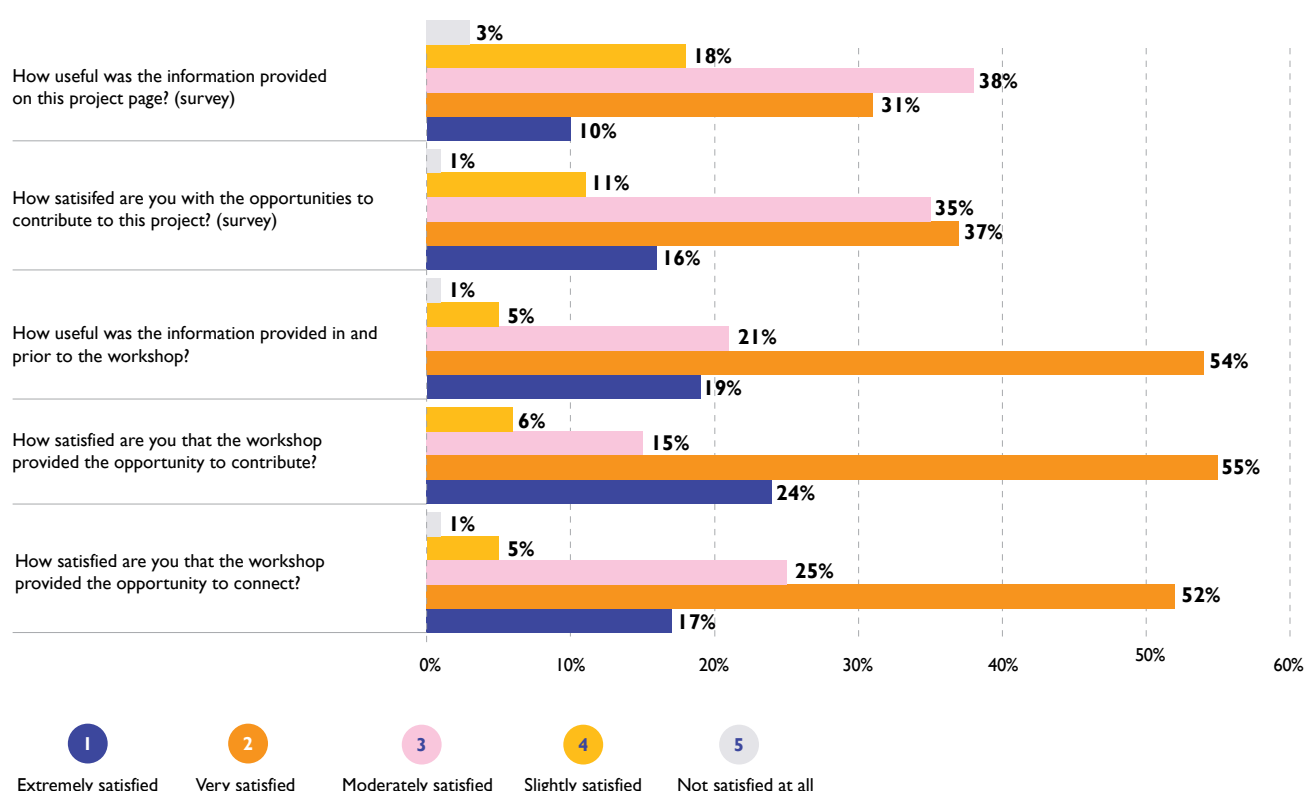
3.6 EVALUATION

Information provided to participants, opportunity to connect and contribute

Participants were asked for feedback on their experience participating in the workshops and completing the survey. Questions focused on the information provided to participants and their opportunity to connect and contribute at the workshops. A total of 493 responses were received; 162 completed by workshop participants at the end of the workshop, and 331 participants completed the question as part of the survey.

As shown in Figure 13, overall participants were satisfied with the opportunities provided to contribute to this project with 79% choosing 'Extremely' or 'Very satisfied'. Of survey respondents, just under half, 53% chose 'Extremely' or 'Very satisfied'. Participants were satisfied with the information provided in the workshops and on the project page. A total of 73% of workshop participants chose 'Extremely' or 'Very satisfied' however, a higher proportion of survey participants, 38% chose 'Moderately satisfied'. Workshop participants were offered the opportunities to engage and ask questions which may explain the difference in satisfaction levels.

↓ **Figure 13.** Participant response to evaluation (n=493)

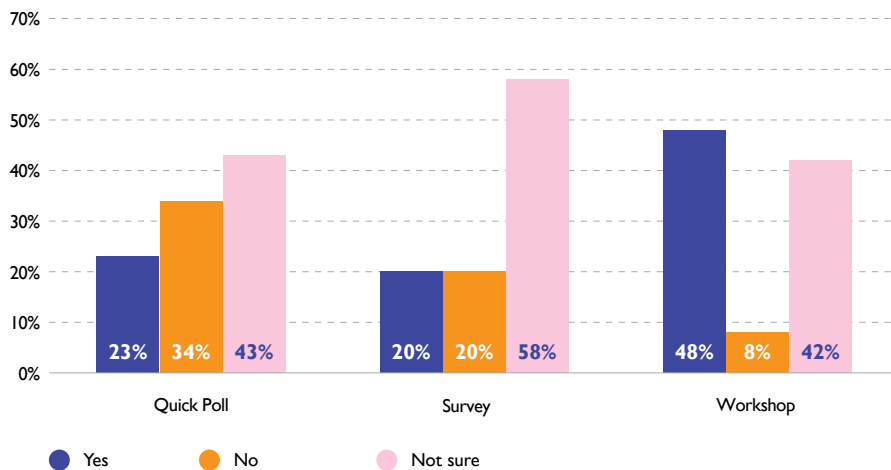


Influencing Banyule's future planning

Participants were asked 'Do you feel your contribution will influence Banyule's future planning?' with a total of 582 people responding to the question. There were 182 responses on the landing page of the project website via the Quick Poll, 331 people responded to the question in the survey and 69 workshop participants responded.

There were mixed responses to the question. The result was split for workshop participants with 48% responding 'Yes' and 42% responding 'Not sure' regarding whether they felt their contribution would influence Banyule's future planning. Over half of the survey respondents were unsure if their contribution would influence Banyule's future planning with the Quick Poll results showing a similar sentiment.

↓ **Figure 14.** Responses to influencing Banyule's planning (n=582)



Next steps

4

The next steps for the project are outlined below.

March to May 2021:

Establishment of a Community Working Group to over a series of workshops, draft the Community Vision and identify draft strategic priorities for inclusion in the Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan. (TBC approval on remit/promise)

June to July 2021:

Wider community consultation to check back with the community.

September 2021:

Public exhibition of draft Community Vision, Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan.

October 2021:

Adoption of Community Vision, Council Plan and long-term Financial Plan.

