



Review of Temporary Outdoor Dining Parklets

Engagement Summary

Prepared by Conversation Caravan for the
Bangyule City Council

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the community engagement conducted with Banyule traders, residents and shoppers regarding their views and experiences of the temporary outdoor dining parklets installed in the municipality.

In September 2020, the Victorian Government announced its Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package for local councils and businesses to make widespread outdoor dining safe and practical as the community recovers from COVID-19. Banyule City Council launched a Rediscover Local marketing campaign to support local businesses through COVID-19 recovery.

As part of this initiative, seven temporary outdoor dining areas (or parklets) that used parking bays in front of business shop-fronts were set up in three locations - Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe; Burgundy Street, Heidelberg; and Silverdale Road, Eaglemont. Eleven of the twelve parklet traders were hospitality businesses ranging from predominantly take-away food, cafes, one hotel and one fine dining restaurant.

In April 2020, Banyule City Council engaged Conversation Caravan to conduct a community engagement program to inform Council's pending decision on the future of the temporary outdoor dining parklets. Feedback was sought from parklet traders, non-parklet traders located nearby, parklet visitors and shoppers, local residents and Councillors.

The community engagement activities conducted by Conversation Caravan were telephone interviews with parklet traders, telephone interviews with a random selection of traders located near to the parklets, six community pop-up sessions at the three parklet sites, Councillor survey and optional follow-up video interview, and an online stakeholder survey. A total of 308 participants were involved in the engagement activities.

Overall support for the parklet program

Overall, there were high levels of support for the parklets with 85% indicating support to keep the parklets (16% with no changes and 69% with some changes) and 12% supporting the removal of the parklets.

Table 1: Opinion on pending Council decision

Stakeholder	Remove parklets	Keep parklets and no changes	Keep parklets and make changes	Other
Traders (online survey)	18	1	20	2
Community (online survey)	26	17	118	8
Community pop-up sessions	8	42	152	0
Parklet Traders (interview)	0	8	4	0
Other Traders (interview)	1	1	4	0
Total	53 (12%)	69 (16%)	298 (69%)	10 (2%)

Feedback from Parklet Traders

Key findings from engagement with the parklet traders were:

- Eight of the 12 traders had successfully applied for the State Government \$5000 grant;
- The economic impact of the parklets was difficult to estimate for some traders whose parklet had only recently been installed;
- Half the traders had invested between \$1000-\$5000 'out of pocket' on decorations, equipment and furniture;
- Some traders had noticed new and/or different customers (cyclists, school kids, families, older people) using the parklets;
- Positive impacts of the parklets were the increased numbers of pedestrians and shoppers, the feeling of community/connection in the neighbourhood, personal health and safety during COVID-19 and supporting local businesses to keep open;

- Traders believed that the availability of parking on the main street/road or behind/near the shopping centres had stayed the same during the parklet program;
- Majority view was to keep the parklets open and allow more time given their recent installation;
- Some traders wanted the parklets to remain open but some infrastructure changes (eg heating and shelter for winter);
- Traders were supportive of other businesses or organisations sharing their parklet space;
- Traders were supportive of the parklets remaining open over winter;
- Mixed views about the best way to cover the costs of the parklet program with some traders willing to contribute a percentage of the costs of the parklets, whereas others said they weren't in a financial position to contribute; and
- Majority wanted a Council review of the parklet program after a period of 12 months or more.

Feedback from Other Traders

Key findings from engagement with other Banyule traders were:

- Positive impacts of the parklets were the increased numbers of pedestrians and shoppers and supporting local businesses to keep open;
- Negative impacts of the parklets were the availability of parking (particularly on-street);
- Traders had mixed views about the parklets' impact on the feeling of community/connection in the neighbourhood;
- Half of the traders located in the surrounding area indicated that the parklets had a negative impact on both their own customer numbers and their revenue, attributing this to the reduced number of on-street parking spaces;
- Majority view was that the parklets should be removed on the basis that on-street parking was reduced and it was inequitable to support one business sector only;
- Traders who were located nearby the parklets were more supportive of the parklet program and wanted them retained with some changes made (eg heating and shelter for winter) ; and

- Believed that any future costs of the parklet program should be fully funded by the businesses who benefit from the parklets, and that Council should also seek further grant funding to cover costs.

Feedback from the Banyule community

Key findings from engagement with the Banyule community were:

- A high percentage of residents (73%) had personally visited one or more of the parklets in the previous six months;
- The two shared parklets on Upper Heidelberg Road and the Eaglemont Cellars Wine Bar were the most visited parklets, as recalled by survey respondents;
- Residents and visitors used the parklets because they wanted to support local business during COVID-19, it was a day/night to be outdoors and the parklet was convenient/close to home.
- Nearly half had visited weekly or one-two times a week;
- A similar percentage of parklet visitors and residents travelled to the parklets using sustainable transport, or by motor vehicle.
- Positive impacts of the parklets were the increased numbers of pedestrians and shoppers, the feeling of community/connection to the neighbourhood, personal health and safety during COVID-19 and supporting the local businesses to keep open;
- The negative impact of the parklets was the availability of parking on the main street/road;
- Majority view was to keep the parklets open and equip them during winter to make customers comfortable; and
- Suggested improvements to the parklets were heating, protection from the weather and decorations.

Key Findings

Based on the feedback outlined in this report, Conversation Caravan makes the following suggestions:

- Given the level of support expressed through the community engagement program, an extension of the parklet program should be considered by Council.

- If the parklet program is continued in some form, that Banyule City Council audit each parklet to ensure compliance with accessibility and occupational health and safety requirements.
- If the parklet program is continued in some form, that Banyule City Council conduct further research and analysis of the economic benefits of the parklet program.
- That Banyule City Council continue to monitor car parking and consider parking issues more broadly as part of the municipal car parking strategy.
- That Banyule City Council initiates a visual promotional campaign about the parklets, including customer and trader testimonials.
- That Banyule City Council liaises with its trader association members to communicate the benefits of the parklets program.

1. Introduction

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, the conversion of car parking and some public space to outdoor dining provided relief and hope to hospitality businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19 venue capacity constraints. Funding for the 2020/2021 year was available from the State Government's *Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package*.

Outdoor dining parklets have the potential to provide another space for community to gather, to activate streets faster than a streetscape improvement, and may be a part of a transition to using more active transport. Many councils are now reviewing the impacts of the temporary outdoor dining parklets, to determine the future of the program.

Conversation Caravan was engaged by Banyule City Council to plan and deliver the engagement approach to seek feedback on the temporary outdoor dining parklets installed in the municipality.

1.1. Project Background

In September 2020, the Victorian Government announced its *Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package* for local councils and businesses to make widespread outdoor dining safe and practical as the community recovers from COVID-19. Funding was made available to hospitality businesses both unlicensed and licensed, such as restaurants, cafés, pubs/taverns, bars, clubs and takeaway food venues.

Banyule City Council had launched a *Rediscover Local* marketing campaign to support local businesses through COVID-19 recovery. As part of this initiative, seven temporary outdoor dining areas (or parklets) that used parking bays in front of business shop-fronts were set up in three locations:

- Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe;
- Burgundy Street, Heidelberg; and
- Silverdale Road, Eaglemont.

In April 2020, Banyule City Council engaged Conversation Caravan to conduct a community engagement program to inform Council's pending decision on the future of

the temporary outdoor dining parklets. Feedback was sought from parklet traders, non-parklet traders located nearby, parklet visitors and shoppers, local residents and Councillors.

1.2. Engagement Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the research and engagement phase was to:

- Understand current usage of the parklets (by the assigned traders, by users)
- Understand user experience of the parklets including walkability, active transport impacts
- Understand visitor/shopper experience of the areas surrounding the parklets
- Traders' views on impact of parklets on their business operation
- Traders' views on future provision of parklets and/or models of operation
- Traders' views on expansion to other traders/purposes
- User and traders' views on reconfiguring/altering spaces during colder months
- Understand Councillors' views.

The project stakeholders were defined as existing parklet businesses, other surrounding businesses in activity centre/strip, activity centre visitors/shoppers, parklet users, residents living in the immediate area and the relevant Ward Councillors. To assist with decision-making, the engagement findings in Section 4 of this report have been organised by the different stakeholder groups.

Topics that the project stakeholders could influence and inform (negotiables) were agreed as follows:

- The future of each parklet and the overall program post June 2021 - flexible based on stakeholder feedback (some may stay, some may cease);
- Level of investment by parklet trader (hospitality only);
- Future funding models for parklets (eg interest in exploring user funded, Council funded, seeking grants);
- Use of parklets outside of existing parklet trading times (eg buskers, fashion show); and
- Businesses allocated time and use of the parklets (not just the original hospitality businesses).

Topics that were not open for discussion (non-negotiables) during the engagement were:

- Council's future role (by Council decision only);
- Interim changes to the seven parklet locations (determined by safety and accessibility requirements);
- Addition of any other parklet locations in future; and
- General COVID-19 recovery issues for businesses (revenue, staffing, future viability).

Prior to commencement of the engagement phase, Council had determined that the businesses/traders would have the most influence on the decision regarding the parklet program (60%), followed by the general community (40%). The ultimate decision would be made by Council.

1.3. Parklet Locations

Table 1 shows the seven dining parklets locations in Ivanhoe, Eaglemont and Heidelberg (and across two Council Wards - Griffin and Chelsworth). Eleven of the twelve parklet traders were hospitality businesses ranging from predominantly take-away food, cafes, one hotel and one fine dining restaurant.

Table 2: Parklet Locations

Suburb	Parklet #	Location	Traders	Parklet installation date
Ivanhoe	1*	187 – 209 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe	Caffe Strada, Woodfire Pizza, Pizzami (plus Andiamo fashion, Tobacconist)	Late February 2021
Ivanhoe	2	227-235 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe	Souva So Good, Gotham Doughnuts, Cosi Duci Gelateria	Mid-April 2021
Heidelberg	3	92 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg	Sir Henry Barkly Hotel	9 April 2021
Heidelberg	4	138 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg	The Alleyway (plus Mamo Mens Clothing, Studio 144	Early April 2021

Heidelberg	5	57 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg	Elia Greek Tavern	19 February 2021
Heidelberg	6	48 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg	Little Black Pig & Sons	February 2021
Eaglemont	7	82/84 Silverdale Rd, Eaglemont	Eaglemont Cellars Wine Bar	Mid-March 2021

* It should be noted that Parklet 1 is located in front of two non-dining retailers.

A site visit was conducted of each parklet location to understand street layout, availability of car parking, surrounding features and nearby residential locations. This information was included in the Information Kit for Conversation Caravan staff (including site maps).

2. Methodology

2.1. Engagement Plan

The research and engagement approach was to gather information about the parklet program from the key stakeholders, both directly and indirectly impacted. It was acknowledged that there is likely to be contrary views amongst the community about the parklets - with the supporters noting the positive financial impacts for traders and enhanced community atmosphere; whilst the detractors noting increased congestion, less car parking or loss of trade.

In order to meet project timelines, Conversation Caravan recommended a wider online engagement program in addition to the place-based engagement with traders, activity centre visitors/shoppers and parklet users.

A community engagement and communications plan was prepared to document the agreed scope of the project, the project stakeholders and the key tasks of the information gathering stage (social research and community engagement).

Key messages and basic project communications material was prepared by Conversation Caravan, for implementation by Banyule City Council. The Banyule Business website was the central reference point for project information. Project information was also included in the Banyule Business e-newsletter and the relevant Traders' Associations e-newsletters.

The key communications objectives were to:

- Invite interest and participation in the project across the methods and primary stakeholders
- Invite interest and participation from individuals in the residing communities to share their experiences and behaviours towards the parklets
- Invite businesses/traders along the shopping strip to share their experience/usage of the parklets
- Attracting a minimum of 200 participants across all stakeholders.

2.2. Engagement Activities

Table 2 lists the community engagement activities conducted by Conversation Caravan.

Table 3: Community Engagement Activities

Activity	Method	Timeline	Roles
Parklet Trader Interviews (13 interviews)	Telephone interview (pre-arranged)	11-20 May 2021	<p>Council: Provide trader contacts details. Advise 13 traders by email of project, and other project promotion.</p> <p>Conversation Caravan: make initial contact, book and conduct interviews, documentation of feedback</p>
Other traders/ business interviews (12 interviews)	Telephone interview (pre-arranged)	11-20 May 2021	<p>Council: Provide trader association business directory links. Project promotion</p> <p>Conversation Caravan: make initial contact, book and conduct interviews, documentation of feedback</p>
Community pop-up sessions (6 sessions)	Personal vox-pop/ activity	Thursday 13 May 2021: (3 sessions) Saturday 15 May 2021: (3 sessions)	<p>Council: Project promotion.</p> <p>Conversation Caravan: Plan and conduct pop-up activities, documentation of feedback (Refer to Information Kit for pop-up locations and time periods)</p>
Councillor survey/ follow-up interview on request	On-line survey, video interview	Survey: 3 - 18 May 2021 Interviews: 18 May 2021	<p>Council: Inform Councillors of project. of Councillors at pop-ups.</p> <p>Conversation Caravan: Conduct survey and interviews, documentation of feedback</p>
Community/ Stakeholder survey	On-line survey	3 - 19 May 2021	<p>Council: Project and survey promotion.</p> <p>Conversation Caravan: Develop and implement survey, analysis of feedback</p>

Image 1: Community pop-up session - prior to start time (Location: Gotham Doughnuts)



Image 2: Community pop- session in progress



3. Stakeholder Participation

3.1. Participants

Table 3 shows the total number of participants in each of the community engagement activities. Some participants may have attended or contributed to more than one type of activity (e.g. completed a survey and attended a community pop-up session). Commentary is provided in Table 3 about any barriers to participation experienced during the engagement period. The total figure of participants exceeded the original target of 200 participants.

Table 4: Total Participants by Engagement Activity

Engagement Activity	Number of participants	Barriers to Participation
Parklet Trader Interviews	12	One trader did not answer the business telephone number (was not a hospitality business).
Other traders/ business interviews [#]	6	Located nearby the parklets. Three traders declined an interview as they had no contribution or views about the parklets. Two traders initially agreed to an interview but then could not be contacted at the agreed time.
Community pop-up sessions participants	137	Weather - temperatures during sessions (both days) was 11-13 degrees with intermittent rain. Traders report that they expect reduced foot traffic under these circumstances and even though pop-ups were installed under shelter, the weather hinders community members' willingness to attend pop-ups.
Councillor survey and follow-up interviews	5 surveys (2 interviews)	Four Councillors did not complete the short feedback survey.
Online survey respondents	148	
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	308	

[#] To involve a small sample of nearby non-parklet traders, the business directories for the three shopping centres were used to determine interest in participating in an interview. From this list traders were randomly selected and contacted a second time to book an interview. The six traders located near

the parklets were from a range of businesses - a vacant shop soon to be occupied by a food business, a restaurant, two beauty salons, a clothing boutique and a pharmacy.

Main Interest in Project

Participants in the online survey and the community pop-ups were asked “What is your main interest in this project?” Local residents made up the largest sub-group of participants, with 158 participating in either the online survey or the community pop-ups. The five Councillors, some of the traders and many of the parklet “visitors” were also Banyule residents. A conservative estimate of the total number of Banyule residents participating in the engagement activities - based on residential postcode location - is at least 196 persons (including the five Councillors).

Table 5: Participants’ Main Interest in Project by Engagement Activity

Main Interest	Interviews	Online Survey	Community Pop-up Sessions	TOTAL
Local residents	na	67	91	158
Parklet visitors	na	40	15	55
Other interested persons	na	9	14	23
Traders	18	32	14	64
Councillors	5	na	na	5
Interest not stated	na	na	3	3
TOTAL	18	148	137	308

Residential Location

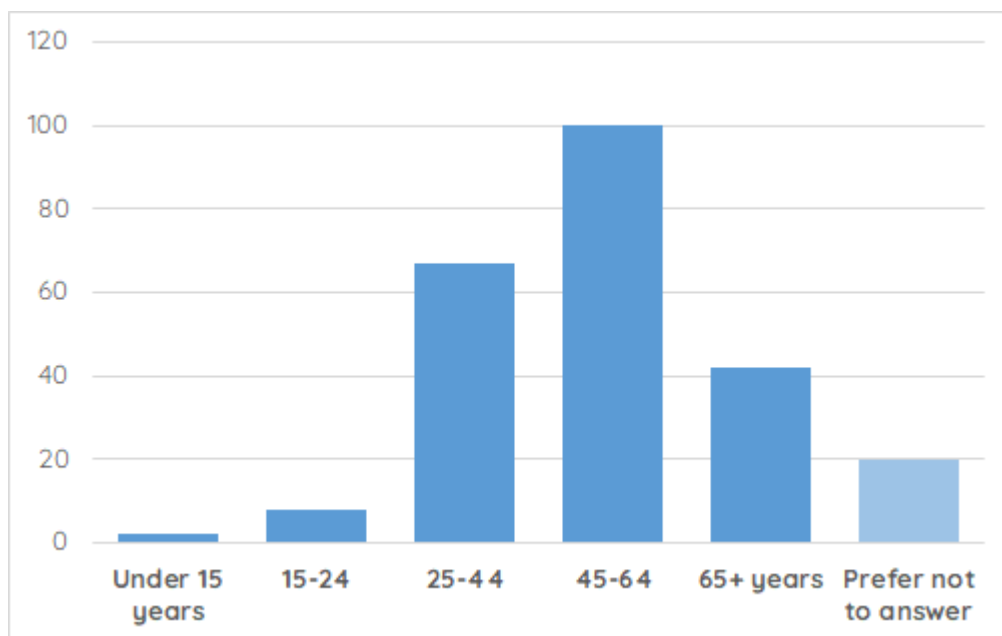
In the online survey some demographic information was collected for those who identified themselves as residents, visitors or other interested persons (but not for traders). Out of these 116 survey respondents 26% lived close to the parklets, 47% lived in the surrounding suburbs of Ivanhoe/Heidelberg/Eaglemont, 12% lived in other suburbs in Banyule and 6% lived outside the Banyule municipality (the remaining 9% did not state where they lived).

At the community pop-up sessions, postcode information was collected from all attendees including traders. Out of these 137 attendees 32% lived in postcode 3084 (Eaglemont), 26% lived in postcode 3079 (Ivanhoe), 15% lived in other Banyule postcodes and 17% lived outside the Banyule area (the remaining 7% did not state their postcode).

Age Group

The age profile of participants who identified themselves as residents, visitors or other interested persons is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Age Group of Participants (Residents, Visitors, Other persons)



Language spoken

Survey respondents who identified themselves as residents, visitors or other interested persons were asked to indicate the language they speak at home. Out of these 116 survey respondents, 22 (19%) spoke a language other than English at home.

3.2. Supporting participation

As part of our practice we like to reflect on what supported participation and what may have limited participation in the project.

Variety of engagement methods

A variety of engagement methods were utilised to engage traders, local residents and visitors to the area. This included: online survey for traders and the general community; interviews with traders connected to outdoor dining parklets as well as randomly selected businesses nearby; pop-up engagement activities (see Table 3). The multiple methods encouraged community members with different time commitments, locations, and interest levels to provide feedback.

Communications campaign

Opportunities to provide feedback were promoted widely via Banyule City Council and Conversation Caravan. This included a direct letter to those living within walking distance to an outdoor dining area, direct notification to businesses connected to outdoor dining areas as well as a social media platform. To increase engagement, the use of Banyule's online engagement platform would have helped to capture people without time to participate in the project whilst out on the street.

Incentivising participation

Participation in the project was incentivised with three \$50 gift vouchers, randomly drawn for participants who attended the community pop-up sessions.

Site selection

The following times and locations supported participation:

- Site 1 - The Alleyway: the time and location provided a steady stream of people getting their morning coffee. Overall this was the most successful site.
- Site 2/5 - Eaglemont Cellar: both pop-ups at this site had low attendance, locals noted that since COVID-19 foot traffic had reduced due to not as many people catching the train from this location. In addition a few shops in the strip eg IGA, Butchers had closed down and were for lease.

- Site 3 - Gotham Doughnuts: The weather impacted foot traffic as it was raining fairly steadily and very cold. The footpath was very narrow and although we were able to set up under the marque over the parklet (supplied by the businesses) it made it hard to get anyone walking past to see the boards before they had almost strolled past them. Weather was a very big issue.
- Site 4 - Caffe Strada: the busiest of all the pop-ups on Saturday 15th May. May have been better earlier in the morning to catch the morning coffee rush at 11am. Although the cafe was full, people were sitting down inside for a meal which reduced the volume of turnover.
- Site 6 - Little Black Pig & Sons: foot traffic to the area was limited due to the weather and location of the site nearby to the undercover carpark. Perhaps a better location may have been within the shopping plaza.

3.3. Traders

Traders could participate in the community engagement activities in the following ways:

- participate in an telephone interview if a parklet trader;
- participate in an telephone interview (randomly selected traders from same activity centres);
- complete an online survey; and
- attend a community pop-up session.

Table 4 in section 4.1 of this report shows the number of traders who participated in each engagement activity.

Trader Location

The 18 traders interviewed were either assigned a parklet or had a business near one of the parklets (refer to Table 1). The 14 traders who attended the community pop-up sessions also had a business near one of the parklets.

The 32 traders who completed the online survey were located mostly on Upper Heidelberg Road close to the parklets (19 traders), with seven traders in Burgundy Street close to the parklets and three traders in Silverdale Road. Another two traders had a business in Ivanhoe Parade and in St Helena.

3.4. Residents

Local residents could participate in the community engagement activities through completing an online survey; and/or attending a community pop-up session. Based on their stated interest in the project, a total of 158 residents participated, with 91 attending one of the community pop-up sessions and 67 residents completing the online survey (refer to Table 4). However as previously noted the five Councillors, some of the traders and many of the parklet “visitors” were also Banyule residents.

3.5. Activity Centre Visitors

Visitors to the activity centre could participate in the community engagement activities if they were visiting whilst a community pop-up session was in progress. Some visitors may have completed the online survey if they were alerted via social media posts. Based on their stated interest in the project, there were 55 parklet “visitors” (refer to Table 4).

3.6. Councillors

Banyule City Council has nine wards. The seven parklets are located in the southern part of the municipality, in the Griffin and Chelsworth Wards. A short survey seeking feedback about the impacts of the parklets was sent to the nine Councillors. Five completed the survey and, two of those five requested a follow-up interview (the relevant Ward Councillors where parklets are located).

4. Stakeholder Feedback

4.1. Visitation to Parklets

Of the 97 survey respondents who identified as residents, 49 (73%) had personally visited one or more of the parklets in the previous six months. Almost all of the 40 survey respondents (32 or 80%) who identified as “visitors” had personally visited one or more of the parklets in the previous six months. The remaining eight respondents reported that they did not visit the parklets or did not answer the questions suggesting that they did not accurately answer one of these survey questions.

Table 6 shows that the two shared parklets and Eaglemont Cellars Wine Bar were the most visited parklets, as recalled by the survey respondents. This may be due to a number of factors including the available opening hours across the week.

Table 6: Visitation to Parklets in Past Six Months

Suburb	Parklet Traders	By Residents (No.)	By Visitors (No.)	TOTAL
Ivanhoe	Caffe Strada, Woodfire Pizza, Pizzami (plus Andiamo, Tobacconist)	27	13	50
Ivanhoe	Souva So Good, Gotham Doughnuts, Cosi Duci Gelateria	17	11	28
Eaglemont	Eaglemont Cellars Wine Bar	19	8	27
Heidelberg	The Alleyway	12	11	23
Heidelberg	Sir Henry Barkly Hotel	8	2	10
Heidelberg	Little Black Pig & Sons	4	1	5
Heidelberg	Elia Greek Tavern	3	1	4
na	Visited one/some but can't recall	2	3	5

	location			
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Reasons given by survey respondents for visiting the parklets were:




- Wanted to support local business during COVID-19 (30% of responses);
- It was a nice day/night to be outdoors (28% of responses);
- Convenient/close to home (26% of responses);
- Had already decided to visit cafe and was seated outside (10% of responses); and
- Was shopping nearby and decided to try them (6% of responses).

Both the participants at the community pop-ups and resident/visitor survey respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their visits to the parklets. Nearly half of the 221 participants had visited weekly or one-two times a week (48%), 14% had visited on a monthly basis and 25% had visited one or two times since the parklets were installed (maximum of four months). A further 13% did not answer the question.

Mode of Transport to Parklets

Based on their stated interest in the project, 67 residents and 40 visitors answered the online survey question about how they usually travelled to the parklets. Slightly more visitors and residents travelled to the parklets using a sustainable transport option - 37% walked or cycled and 2% used public transport. Travel by car was still a popular option with 36% travelling by car/motorcycle, and a relatively high percentage of survey respondents did not answer this survey question (25%).

Figure 2: Mode of Transport to Parklets

	40 respondents (37%)
	38 respondents (36%)
	2 respondents (2%)

When the car drivers/passengers were asked to compare the availability of parking compared to pre COVID-19 conditions, these survey respondents reported:

- There was no change in parking availability/time to find a park (49%);
- Found parking availability better than pre-COVID-19 conditions (2%); and
- Found parking availability worse than pre-COVID-19 conditions (25%).

Again a relatively high percentage of survey respondents did not answer this survey question (24%).

The 20 survey respondents who answered that parking was “worse” were asked to specify a location or circumstance - 10 mentioned on-street parking, 7 mentioned a general reduction in availability, 2 mentioned off-street parking and the remaining comment was about the difficulties encountered during the Library redevelopment.

4.2. Impacts of the Parklets

A key question for the future of the parklet program is: what impacts have the parklets had on the activity centres? Stakeholders were asked to nominate if they had seen positive, negative or no changes since the parklets were installed. Tables 7a-7g show their responses to either interview or survey questions from the different stakeholders. Traders answering the online survey were asked slightly different questions, pertinent to their situation. Where applicable, these survey questions are shown as notes at the bottom of each table.

Overall, there was strong agreement across all stakeholder groups that the parklets have a positive impact on the community feel of the shopping centres (54% of total participants), and have supported local businesses to stay open (64% of total participants). Traders and the general community generally agree that there is a negative impact on parking availability, however a handful of parklet traders expressed that the negative impact is negligible.

As shown in Table 7a, 46% of the respondents indicated they have experienced negative change in the parking availability on the main road, while 39% respondents experienced no change and 8% experienced a positive change.

Table 7a: Impacts of the Parklets on Parking Availability - On Main Street/Road

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	0	10	2	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	0	2	3	-	5
Traders (online survey)*					
Community (online survey)	9	32	47	8	96
TOTAL	9	44	52	8	113

* Specific question not asked of traders in the online survey. The question “availability of parking on the main street/road” was only asked during the trader interviews and community online survey.

Table 7b shows that 41% of respondents experienced negative impacts in parking availability behind shopping centres, 41% of respondents experienced no change whilst 9% experienced a positive change.

Table 7b: Impacts of the Parklets on Parking Availability - Behind/Near Shopping Centre

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	0	11	1	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	0	3	2	-	5
Traders (online survey)*	2	5	22	2	31
Community (online survey)	11	40	34	10	95
TOTAL	13	59	59	12	143

* Question asked was "Availability of parking for shoppers".

Table 7c shows that 49% of respondents indicated that they noticed more pedestrians since the installation of the parklets. 22% respondents indicated that they noticed less pedestrians and 20% noticed no change.

Table 7c: Impacts of the Parklets on Pedestrian/Visitor Numbers (on footpaths, in shops)

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	8	4	0	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	2	2	1	-	5
Traders (online survey)	7	6	16	2	31
Community (online survey)	53	17	14	12	96
TOTAL	70	29	31	14	144

Table 7d shows that 61% of respondents indicated that they found the parklets to have had a positive impact on their feeling of community, while 20% indicated no impact and 13% indicated it had a negative impact on the feeling of community.

Table 7d: Impacts of the Parklets on Feeling of Community/Connection

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	10	2	0	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	4	1	0	-	5
Traders (online survey)	10	11	5	5	31
Community (online survey)	64	15	13	4	96
TOTAL	88	29	18	9	144

Table 7e shows that 54% of respondents indicated that the parklets had a positive impact on being COVID-safe , while 30% indicated no impact and 9% indicated it had a negative impact on being COVID-safe.

Table 7e: Impacts of the Parklets on Personal Health and Safety During COVID-19

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	9	3	0	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	2	2	1	-	5
Traders (online survey)	6	17	5	3	31
Community (online survey)	59	21	7	7	94
TOTAL	76	43	13	10	142

Table 7f shows that 64% of respondents indicated that the parklets had a positive impact on supporting local businesses to keep open while 15% indicated no they found no impact and 13% indicated it had a negative impact on the local businesses.

Table 7f: Impacts of the Parklets on Supporting Local Businesses (to keep open)

Stakeholder	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	10	2	0	-	12
Other Traders (interview)	4	1	0	-	5
Traders (online survey)	10	7	9	3	29
Community (online survey)	67	12	10	7	96
TOTAL	91	22	19	10	142

Customer Comments

Both the parklet traders and the other (nearby) traders were asked to comment in their interview about their customers' response to the parklets, specifically what their customers had said to them.

The majority of these 17 traders reported they had received positive comments from their customers (13 traders). The customer feedback they quoted included *“needs to be bigger/more vibe Customers really like it, a place to hangout ... get large groups sitting there on Fridays after school, Friday and Saturday nights ... shame they didn't do in summer - how nice! ... good atmosphere... we have seen new couples that we haven't seen before that are just discovering the local bar ... have offered to start a petition to retain parklet ... want it kept forever ... gives the streets a European vibe.”*

In contrast four of the 17 traders were very concerned about the loss of parking for both their customers, and local workers. One non-hospitality trader who has a parklet outside their shop believed their customers were not stopping at their shop due to lack of parking availability outside. Another trader who is located near to a parklet said *“Disabled parking and parking for elderly have been replaced by coffee tables for young people. There is no parking that is within walking distance for these people to get to the pharmacy.”*

Impacts of the Parklets on Own Business

As previously noted, 32 traders from the surrounding area completed the online survey (located mostly on Upper Heidelberg Road close to the parklets, Burgundy Street close to the parklets and in Silverdale Road). In the online survey, these traders were asked two additional questions about the impact (if any) of the parklets on their own business. Table 7g shows that 50% of respondents indicated that the parklets had a negative impact on both the number of customers and their revenue - the majority believed the lack of on-street parking was the reason.

Table 7g: Impacts of the Parklets on Own Business

Business Indicator	Positive impact	Stayed same	Negative impact	Don't know	TOTAL
Number of customers using my/our business	5	7	15	3	30
Our business revenue and/or profitability	5	8	15	2	30
TOTAL	10	15	30	5	60

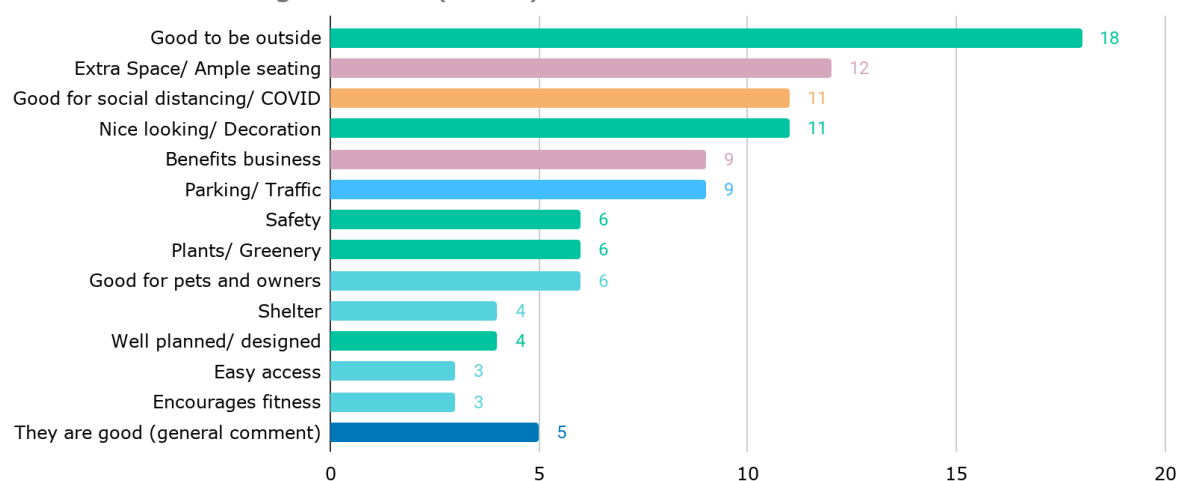
Pop-Up Participants

Participants at the community pop-ups were asked to name some positive and negative impacts they have experienced since the installation of the parklets. In total 90 comments were received regarding the positives, while 26 comments were received regarding the

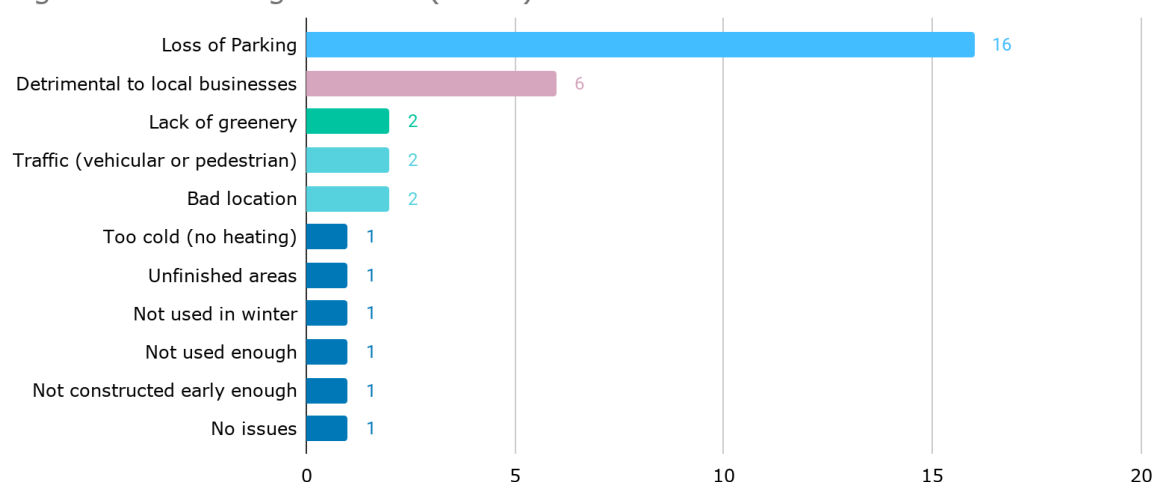
negatives. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of responses to the question “Have there been any positive or negative impacts due to the introduction of these outdoor dining areas?”

Figure 3: Positive and Negative Impacts (from community pop-up sessions)

Positives of Dining Parklets (n=90)



Negatives of Dining Parklets (n=26)



Other Comments Regarding Impacts

All stakeholders were given the opportunity to expand on their answers in the online survey or interviews, regarding the impacts of the parklets. Their comments are summarised by sentiment in Table 8:

Table 8: Other comments regarding impacts

Positive impacts (46 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a good community vibe/feeling (21 comments) • General positive comments (16 comments) • More pedestrians around (6 comments) • Accessibility - footpaths now have more room, nursing mothers use parklet • Customers prefer outdoor area COVID-safe
Neutral/mixed (7 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions to move parklets to different spot in the street/road • Suggestions to expand parklet into car-free mall or make bigger
Negative impacts (50 comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of on-street parking - some traders reported customers are unhappy, others said customers park in bigger carparks behind their business. Slower winter trade means parklets are used less so parking loss is highlighted. Impacts taxis, Uber drivers and businesses relying on customer pickup. Impacts more on day-time only businesses (26 comments) • Road safety and visitor safety - obscures view when turning out of side streets, cars too close to diners and cyclists, Ivanhoe carpark is too dark so don't use it, difficulty crossing road (10 comments) • Inequity for other businesses - unfair for other hospitality businesses in other locations, not justified if restaurants only open in evenings or closed Mondays-Tuesdays, unfair for hospitality sector to be advantaged over others, favours licenced venues (9 comments) • Aesthetics - plastic marquee/canopy looks unattractive, blocks view to across the road, should be smoke-free, dislikes Council branding (4 comments) • Other - 2 comments

Number of respondents = 89. Multiple issues may be raised in one comment.

4.3. Future of the Parklets

The ongoing future of the parklet program is the key engagement question for Council, with the project negotiables documented in the engagement plan. Survey and interview questions were developed to seek stakeholder feedback on their preferred outcome (retain, remove, change parklets), options for future funding and potential shared use of parklet spaces.

For the telephone interviews with both trader groups (those with parklets and those located nearby), traders were asked an open question about the future of the parklet program and additional questions about sharing parklets spaces and options for winter. Opinions were mixed with nine traders wanting the program retained with no changes, and eight traders wanting the program retained with some changes.

Table 9a: Trader Opinion on Pending Council Decision

Stakeholder	Remove parklets	Keep parklets and no changes	Keep parklets and make changes	TOTAL
Parklet Traders (interview)	0	8	4	12
Other Traders (interview)	1	1	4	6

Interview question was “Banyule Council will soon be making a decision about the future of these parklets. What do you want Council to do?”

As part of their answers about Council’s decision, the traders mentioned the following points:

- Keep the parklet program as is (8 comments) - recent installation of parklets means they have had only 1-3 months of operation, need to give them another summer, generally positive about parklets;
- Keep parklets with changes/enable winter use (4 comments) - safer ramps needed, heating, cyclist bike storage and bike rack
- Remove/relocate the parklets (3 comments) - put alfresco seating elsewhere eg footpaths, in larger car parks, choose different locations;
- Remove during winter (1 comment).

Sharing the Parklet Spaces

The potential to share the parklet spaces when they are not being used by the hospitality traders was welcomed - of the 17 traders who responded to the survey question, twelve agreed that sharing the parklet space was a good idea. A few traders had already made plans to offer acoustic live music on the weekends. Two of the traders did not want

parklet space shared and two said it was not applicable in their situation (parklet used all day/night, clothing stores cannot use the space).

Some of their verbatim comments are listed below:

“Anything that helps attract business is a positive ... We don't open in the morning so we're fine with someone else using it during that time and give it back to us when we open ... The businesses in the village do a lot of cross-marketing anyway ... encourage anyone to come and sit without having to buy something, be a part of the community”.

Use of Parklets During Winter

Both trader groups (those with parklets and those located nearby) were asked if the parklets should remain open or be closed for the winter months. Fourteen of the 16 traders wanted the parklets to remain open during winter and five of those also made comments about the need to invest more funds in heating and other infrastructure. The non-hospitality trader wanted the parklets closed during winter. One of the non-parklet traders wanted only some of the current parklets open during winter.

In the online survey, the question about the future of the parklet program was expanded with additional implementation options for respondents to consider. Survey respondents - both local traders and the community - were able to tick multiple options.

Table 9b: Opinion on Pending Council Decision - options for future implementation

Stakeholder	Remove parklets	Keep parklets and no changes	Keep parklets, equip for winter	Keep parklets, close for winter	Keep parklets, share use	Expand parklet program	Other action	TOTAL
Traders (online survey)	18	1	8	1	Re-negotiate permits: 5	6	2	29
Community (online survey)	26	17	55	13	Share use: 20	30	8	105
Community pop-up sessions	8	42	93	14	Share use: 24	21	-	137

TOTAL	52	60	156	28	49	57	10	
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Survey respondents and pop-up participants could select more than one option.

To supplement their answers about Council's decision, the survey respondents mentioned the following points:

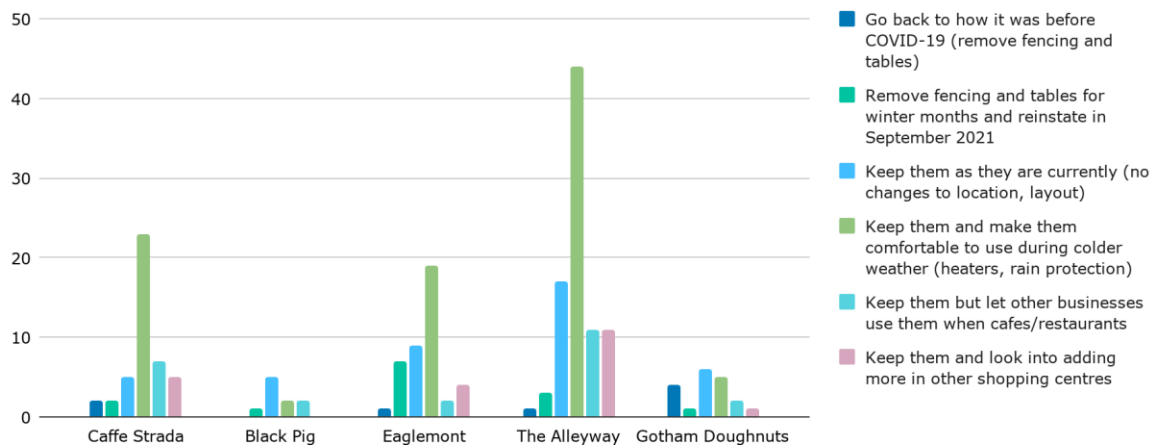
- Remove the parklets (13 comments) for reasons previously mentioned eg parking, inequity;
- Keep parklets with changes (4 comments) - share spaces to other businesses, make more attractive like Darebin, add more greenery;
- Safety concerns (4 comments) - sightlines obscured, diners too close to cars;
- Other comments unrelated to parklets (5 comments);
- Keep the parklet program as is (3 comments);
- Relocate/expand the parklets (2 comments) - put alfresco seating elsewhere, choose different locations so other businesses can use; and
- Disagree with Council subsidising businesses (2 comments).

Pop-Up Participants

Participants were asked to indicate their preference regarding the Council decision on the parklets. The options and total number of comments are shown in Table 7b.

Participants were asked to which parklet was this decision made in relation, however only 57 participants made an indication (refer to Figure 4). Based on conversations at the pop-ups, most discussions are in relation to the parklet where the corresponding pop-up is located.

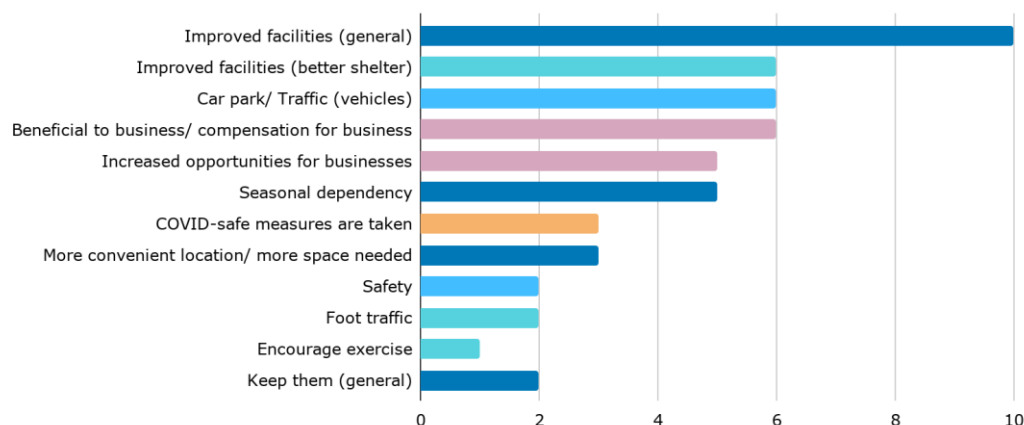
Figure 4: Preference for Council Decision - by pop-up locations



Note: Pop-up question was “Banyule Council will soon be making a decision about the future of these outdoor dining areas. What would you like to see happen after June 2021?”

Participants were also asked, under what conditions would they support keeping the parklets and 35 responses were received (refer to Figure 5). As this was an open-ended question, responses were grouped into categories such as “general improvement to facilities” (10 respondents) and “support business opportunities” (6 respondents).

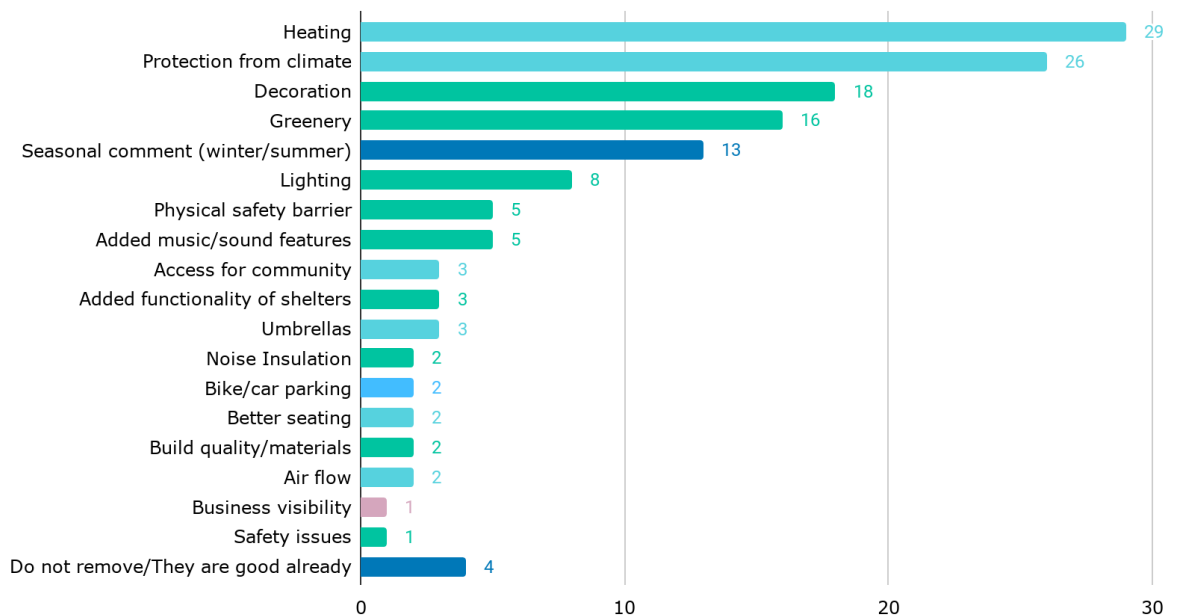
Figure 5: Conditions to Support Keeping the Parklets



Pop-Up Participants

Participants of the pop-ups were also asked to nominate any improvements they would like to see on the parklets in the future and 79 comments were received (refer to Figure 6). Suggested improvements were grouped into themes such as heating (29 comments), protection from weather (26 comments), decorations (18 comments) and other topics.

Figure 6: Suggested Improvements to Parklets



4.4. Current and Future Investment in Parklets

Grant Funding and Current Investment - Parklet Traders only

Of the 12 parklet businesses interviewed, nine were open for some table/bar service and takeaway, while two were open for takeaway only. One trader (non-hospitality) was closed earlier in 2020 and was not able to re-open until November-December 2020.

The traders were asked if they had applied for and received the \$5000 grant under the State Government's *Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package*. Eight of these traders successfully applied while three hospitality traders did not apply. The remaining trader was not a hospitality business and so was not eligible.

When asked to estimate how much they had invested in the parklets above the State Government grant, three traders had spent less than the grant funding and three traders had spent less than \$1000 'out of pocket'. Three traders had spent between \$1000-\$3000 on decorations and furniture and three traders had spent between \$3000-\$5000 including canopies/shelters.

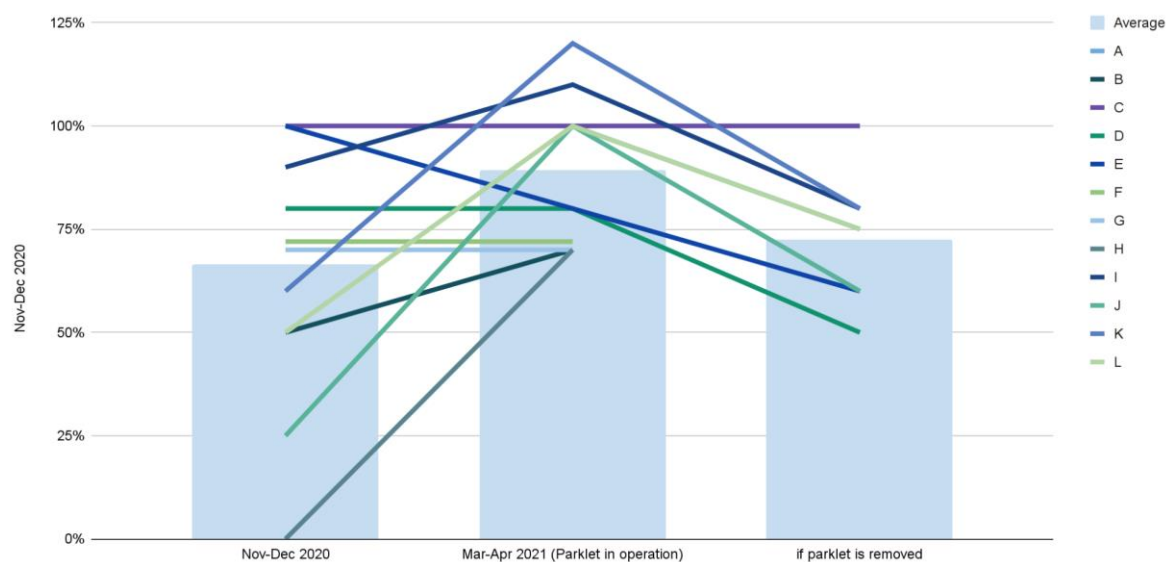
Estimated Business Capacity Over Time

During their interview, the parklet traders were asked to estimate their business capacity before, and after, the installation of parklets. Estimates (in percentage terms) were requested for the months of November-December 2020, the first month of the parklet's operation, during March-April 2021, and predicted operating capacity if their parklet was to be removed.

It should be noted that for five of the traders, March-April 2021 was the first month of the parklet's operation. Given that these traders had only a short time for which the parklets were in operation and the seasonal changes, some traders were not able to predict their potential operating capacity if the parklets were removed.

Figure 7 demonstrates a general increase in estimated trading capacity in line with the parklet introduction and a predicted decrease if the parklet is removed.

Figure 7: Estimated Trading Capacity Over Time



Parklet traders made some comments regarding the impact of the parklets on their business capacity:

- Reliance on JobKeeper prior to parklet installation (3 traders);
- Parklet installation has meant different customers/customers coming at different times (2 traders);

- Business capacity is lower than pre-COVID but improving slowly with parklets (2 traders);
- Improved turnover, parklets should have been installed earlier, staffing cuts will happen if parklet removed, parklet is assisting with indoor seating restrictions, improved cash flow, customers feeling more COVID-safe (all single comments).

Future Investment if Parklets Remain - Parklet Traders only

Parklet traders were asked to consider what would be the most sustainable way to cover the costs of the parklet program if it continued. Six traders expressed that they were willing to contribute a percentage of the costs of the parklets, whilst five traders expressed that they are not yet in a financial position to contribute. The non-hospitality trader was unwilling to contribute to the cost of the parklet but considered it fair if businesses with parklets shared the costs with Council.

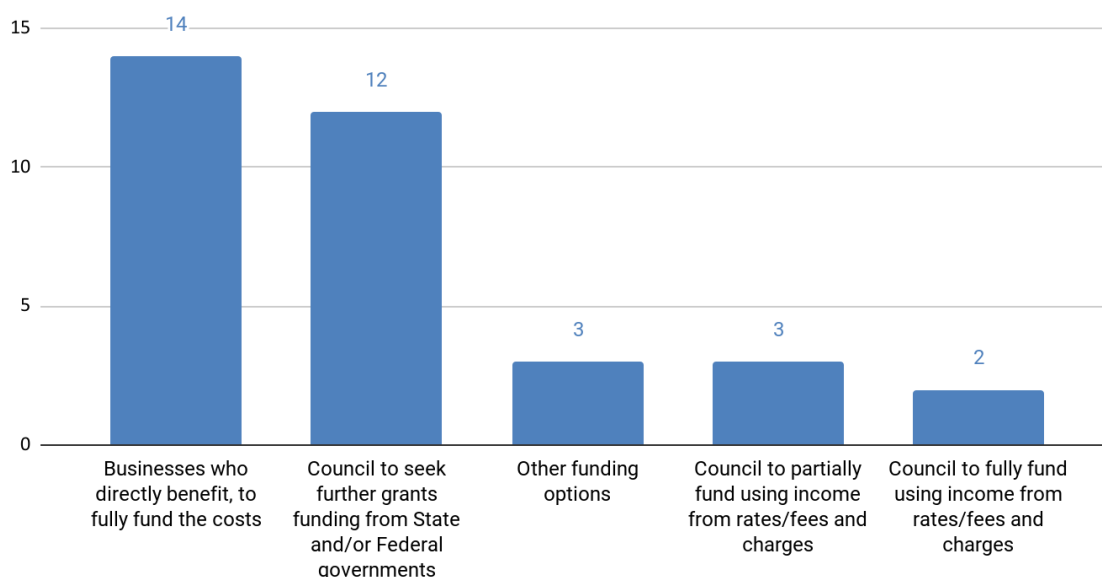
Future Investment - Other Traders (located nearby parklets)

Only four of the six traders answered the question and all nominated a 50%/50% contribution from the parklet traders and Council, to fund the costs.

Future Investment - Traders (online survey)

In the online survey 27 of the 32 traders answered the question about the most sustainable way to cover the costs of the parklets (noting that multiple options could be selected). Figure 8 shows their responses with the most common preference being that businesses who benefit would fully fund the parklet costs.

Figure 8: Other Traders Views on Cost Sharing



Next Council Review - Parklet Traders only

Three traders preferred a review by Council after a period of more than 12 months saying that *“stay as long as possible ... needs to continue for another 12 months to 2 years, there will be more COVID restrictions/lockdowns coming ... definitely need to retain for Christmas 2021 trading - community vibe and buzz only will increase at that time”*.

Eight traders wanted a review after 12 months to capture the Christmas 2021- New Year summer trade. The remaining trader wanted a review after six months or after every season.

Next Council Review - Other Traders (located nearby parklets)

Only four of the six traders answered the question - two traders nominated 6 months and two traders nominated that Council should review after 12 months.

4.5. Councillor Feedback

The five Councillors’ online survey feedback is summarised below:

Table 10: Councillors online survey feedback

Survey Questions	Councillors’ Responses (combined)
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Observed positive impacts of parklets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people on the street, liveliness and street vibrancy. Increased trade. More emphasis on 'people' space for access and exchange, less priority on vehicles • No impact heard from my community • A terrific feature, really encouraging people to dine locally • Increased activity. Good for business. Looks good • Better outdoor spaces for people to meet and share
Observed negative impacts of parklets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From non-hospitality traders: loss of parking and perceived loss of trade but questioning if accurate • Nil impacts from my community • It removes road space for cars and bikes • Blocking other (shop) frontages • Loss of parking
Any impacts expected but did not occur/not observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of trade by some traders - is this the case? • No (2 comments) • Loss of car parking spaces (not mentioned)
Future of the temporary outdoor dining areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in COVID-related restrictions: valid to continue the parklets until the end of the year (at least). Inquiries re: how they can be extended across the street in the clearway area (Friday afternoon to Sunday evening) • Changes don't affect my Ward/don't have information to add (2 comments) • Maintain them where we can • Careful implementation program for the longer term • Overall a positive thing that should be continued in popular spots

Two Councillors participated in follow-up interviews. Additional points raised during the interviews are listed below:

- Positive impacts - people are lingering longer in activity centre not just purchasing and moving along, busier feel, vibrancy to area
- Negative impacts - concerned about visual amenity with addition of canopies and marquees, consider use of umbrellas instead. Parking demand is still down due to COVID.
- Issues for Council to consider - assessment of sufficient/insufficient parking availability, addition of more vegetation near parklets, safe pedestrian movement, energy usage of portable heaters, encouraging attractive use of parklets by other

traders, future investment in updated infrastructure (more seating, more attractive ramps), activation of night-time economy, activation of centres with new high density dwellings, promotion of parklet benefits to other traders who don't witness usage at night/other peak usage.

5. Key findings

Based on the feedback outlined in this report, Conversation Caravan makes the following suggestions:

- 5.1. Given the level of support expressed through the community engagement program, it is suggested that an extension of the parklet program is considered by Council.

- 5.2. If the parklet program is continued in some form, that Banyule City Council audit each parklet to ensure compliance with accessibility and occupational health and safety requirements.
- 5.3. If the parklet program is continued in some form, that Banyule City Council conduct further research and analysis of the economic benefits of the parklet program.
- 5.4. That Banyule City Council continue to monitor car parking and consider parking issues more broadly as part of the municipal car parking strategy.
- 5.5. That Banyule City Council initiates a visual promotional campaign about the parklets, including customer and trader testimonials.
- 5.6. That Banyule City Council liaises with its trader association members to communicate the benefits of the parklets program.

6. Next Steps

Engagement on this project has created interest and aspirations for the future of the outdoor dining parklets. As a courtesy to participants, Conversation Caravan recommends the following next steps:

Thank Participants

Issue a statement and thank participants for participating in the project and for sharing their ideas and contributions to the project. Consider ways to recognise their involvement from the higher levels of the Council for example a thank you letter or email from the CEO or Mayor.

Share the data

Provide the community with a snapshot of the engagement data; bring the data to life with infographics to help participants digest the information in an easy form.

Close the Loop

Keeping participants informed in engagement and the project is called 'closing the loop', the information loop is currently open. Participants have shared their ideas and their feedback through the engagement process and are waiting for what happens next.

7. Appendices

Available on Request:

- Engagement and Communications Plan
- Banyule map showing approximate parklet locations
- Stakeholder Survey (questionnaire)
- Trader Interview Script
- Councillor Interview Script
- Pop-up Information Kit for Conversation Caravan staff (including site maps)
- Pop-up Activity Plan and Resources