Sustainable, Natural and Built Environment

Resilient and Safe Banyule

Planning and management of the natural environment protects and enhances local biodiversity and ensures the health and sustainability of natural resources and assets, including local food systems. Natural assets and ecosystems are also understood, valued and cared for by everyone in the community.
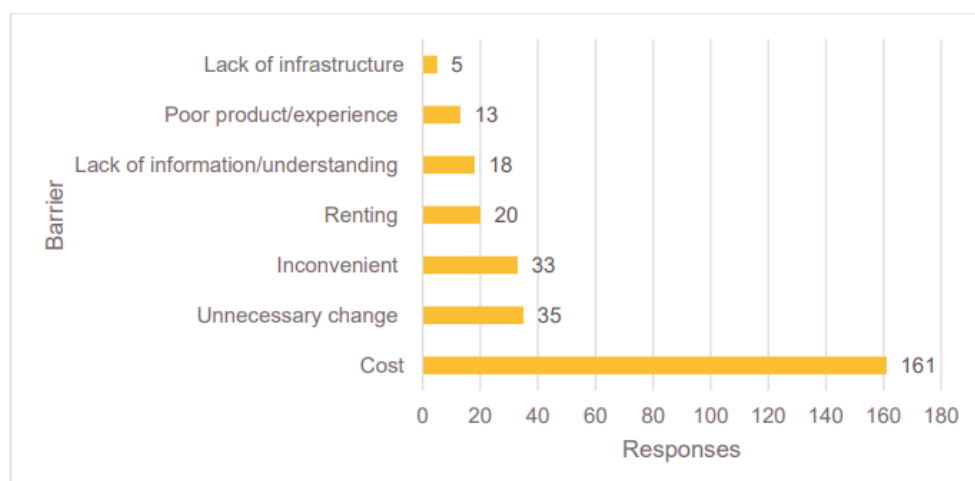
What we have heard

2023 Liveability Survey

66% of residents selected 'Access to the natural environment (e.g. rivers, beaches, forests, parks, green spaces)' as an important attribute when considering what makes somewhere a good place to live, making it the 2nd most important liveability aspect for City of Banyule residents overall. Residents rated their experience of 'Access to the natural environment (e.g. rivers, beaches, forests, parks, green spaces)' in their local area 7.7 out of 10, on average, making it the 1st most positively experienced attribute of 16.

Sustainable living in Banyule

The 2022 Banyule Household Survey found that the most common barriers to implementing sustainable living changes such as installing solar panels, purchasing electric vehicles, upgrading appliances etc. were the upfront costs (31.9%) and lack of information (17.8%).

This result was supported by the findings of the 2019 Emissions Reduction Plan where cost was the most common barrier identified by participants. Cost was cited as a barrier to all actions and was the most frequently cited barrier across all the actions except for 'choose other modes of transport'. Participants most frequently identified cost as an issue when asked about high-cost actions such as replacing vehicles, installing triple glazed windows, and roof and wall insulation. One participant responded that cost was a barrier to choosing alternative modes of transportation, and the cost of public transport was discussed in focus groups. Other barriers are shown in the table below.

The 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey found that 70% of residents believe environmental sustainability is important, a significant decrease from the 2022 result of 78%. This survey revealed that community rated Council's environmental sustainability performance at 66.

Experiencing climate change

The 2019 Emissions Reduction Plan consultation found participants most frequently cited hotter and drier weather as how they were experiencing climate change. Some participants made general references to changes in weather, while others more specifically commented on heatwaves during summer months. Participants also commonly referenced health impacts, both mental and physical. This was generally reflected in people feeling anxious about the future, for themselves and their children, as well as physical health impacts such as asthma, hay fever and heat exhaustion. While most participants reported having personal experiences, some responses noted that although they had noticed climatic changes, they felt shielded from many effects and felt that more effects would be experienced in the future. There were also a small number of participants that said they had not experienced changes.

Banyule Economic Development Strategy

The stakeholder engagement that initially took place in May 2022 for the Banyule Economic Development Strategy revealed priorities which related to the Sustainable Natural and Built Environment was a key consideration by stakeholders. Both consideration of how to improve sustainable businesses practices within the local business and industry community, and the possible future impacts of climate change on employees and the growing local health industry.

- Increase awareness and build industry capacity to improve sustainable business practices and use of green technology including renewable energy usage, recycling opportunities, waste recovery, and other circular economy initiatives.
- Ensure the health industry can continue to grow sustainably in Banyule. Austin Health is forecasting significant growth (particularly in the mental health space) and indicated labour shortages and climate change are key challenges.
- Ensure economic development initiatives acknowledge the importance of environmental and social outcomes.

Leading Council strategies

- Community Climate Action Plan
- C40 Framework
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Public Open Space Plan
- Sustainable Buildings Guidelines