

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

CONSULTATION
SUMMARY 2021



اتصلوا بالرقم 9280 0720
للحديث مع مبرمجين حول كيفية مشاركتكم بشكل أكبر
في عمليات التخطيط واتخاذ القرارات التي تقوم بها الحكومة



0725 là nơi chuyển với thông dịch viên chuyên nghiệp và cộng đồng Chaoay
nhiều hơn vào các quyết định và của chính quyền địa phương



CITY OF MELBOURNE



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to our reconciliation journey, because at its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for the benefit of all Victorians.

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August 2021

Cover Image: Students participating at pop-up kiosk. Photo credit: Fiona Darling.

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THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts, time and experiences with us to help shape the Community Engagement Policy. We met with you over many months to seek your involvement and participation in conversations, activities and workshops about what makes good community engagement. We appreciate your interest and openness and look forward to creating better outcomes for Melbourne together. To find out more about the community engagement policy consultation visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community-engagement-policy



INTRODUCTION

Local government responsibilities span so many aspects of community life, from planning and rubbish collection to community services, libraries, sport and recreation and much more. We work best when we involve the community and listen to what you have to say on the projects and issues that impact you.

Between October 2020 and February 2021 the City of Melbourne asked people what they thought about community engagement. Building on what we'd previously heard, we spoke to lots of people to develop a policy to guide our commitment and approach to community engagement.

We wanted to:

- invite conversations about the purpose of community engagement
- inspire people to think about the roles and responsibilities of local government and the community in shaping Melbourne
- reflect on the principles, barriers and enablers of community engagement
- define deliberative engagement
- offer accessible, relevant, and timely opportunities for participation
- activate and involve networks, leaders, and experts from across the community
- reach and support those not familiar with engagement processes so they can contribute in meaningful ways
- ensure a high level of involvement from councillors and staff.

This summary has been created as a snapshot of what we did, what we heard, and what actions we identified for further policy development. The feedback we received has been shared with councillors and Council staff.

Community engagement is a planned process. It aims to encourage people and groups to get involved and be active in decisions that affect them or are of interest to them.

Did you know...

each year, we typically engage with the community on more than 50 projects, reaching around 135,000 people through our online and face-to-face activities.

Did you know...

Council has a Community Engagement Framework that supports the organisation's capacity and capabilities to deliver excellent engagement.





DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR MELBOURNE

Across a five month period we spoke to over 1200 people across the municipality to help with the development of the Community Engagement Policy. These conversations revealed high levels of support for public participation, and a range of key themes which led to the draft Community Engagement Policy being endorsed on 23 February 2021. The policy outlines four pairs of principles that guide our work:

- Accountable and Transparent
- Inclusive and Accessible
- Trust and Respect
- Place-based and Community Development.

The Community Engagement Policy supports the delivery of six strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and our commitment to ongoing dialogue, connection and empowerment of our communities to be part of the evolution of the municipality.

The policy seeks to foster an ongoing culture of deeper public participation, delivering sustainable outcomes through shared problem-solving, open dialogue and meaningful participation.

The policy is also supporting Council's work to progress the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 10, SDG 11 and SDG 16 call for the empowerment and inclusion of all to ensure decision making is representative, participatory and responsive -- and that we remain accountable and transparent for the decisions we make. Effective community engagement is fundamental to fulfilling the central promise of the UN SDGs to "leave no one behind" and has a key role to play in fostering strong, sustainable communities.

This report is a summary of what we heard during the consultation. The policy and the full Consultation Report can be found on the Participate Melbourne website at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community-engagement-policy

To contact the community engagement team, email communityengagement@melbourne.vic.gov.au or call 9658 9658.



95% of people agreed that:

“Public participation in Council planning leads to better decisions and more sustainable solutions. Our different perspectives and experiences are valuable, and we all have a right to be involved in decisions that affect where and how we live”.



HOW WE ENGAGED



Between October 2020 and February 2021 our engagement included:

- meetings with Traditional Owner groups
- face-to-face and online interviews with community representatives and key stakeholders
- facilitated conversations with young children and educators
- communicating with business precincts, resident associations, neighbourhood networks, youth forums and community groups
- workshops with councillors, management and staff
- survey, accessible online via Participate Melbourne and in printed form
- pop-up kiosks across seven neighbourhoods
- online community workshops
- virtual 'Big Ideas wall'
- options for providing feedback via email, phone and language interpreters.



ON THE GROUND ENGAGEMENT

We hosted 13 pop-up consultation kiosks across the city.



HOW WE PROMOTED

We promoted the opportunity to get involved through multiple channels and formats, including:

- social media
- local newspapers
- newsletters
- direct emails
- community networks
- postcards
- translated materials in community centres
- email signatures
- frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- QR codes.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

As our city continues to recover and adapt we want the community to be at the centre of decision making.

We need your help and local knowledge when we have big decisions to make – we call this community engagement.

Tell us what is important for you to see in our new Community Engagement Policy.

What helps you to participate and get involved in the issues that matter to you?

Visit
participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community-engagement-policy

Have your say by
**Wednesday
3 February 2021.**



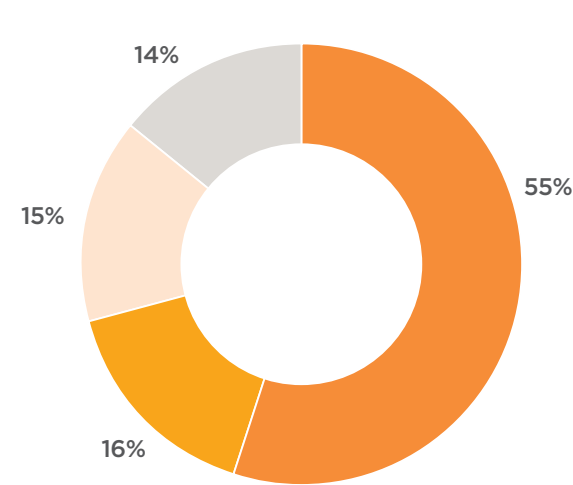


OUR RESULTS AND REACH

We heard from a diverse mix of voices during the consultation, with participants aged from four years through to 91 years. We spoke to Traditional Owners as well as councillors, management and staff. The majority of people who

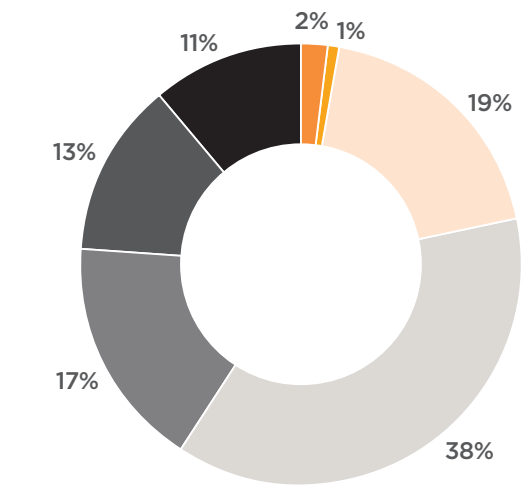
participated lived in the municipality; we heard from more females than males, and those aged between 26 and 45 were the most widely represented age group. More details about who we reached can be found in the full Consultation Report.

Who contributed



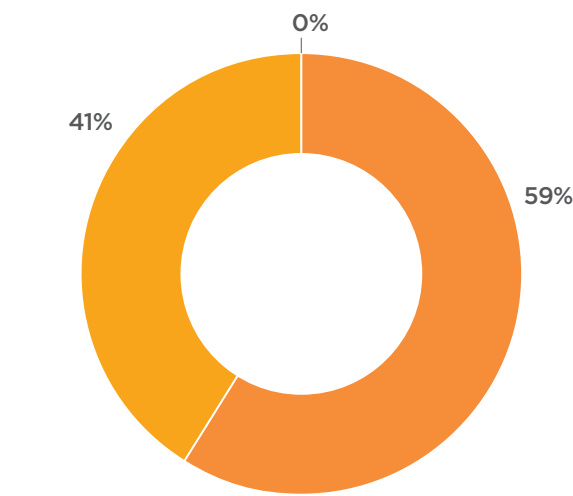
Connection to the municipality

- I live here
- I work here
- I visit here
- I study here



Age

- Under 10 years
- 10-15 years
- 16-25 years
- 26-45 years
- 46-55 years
- 56-65 years
- Over 66 years



Gender

- Female
- Male
- Prefer to self-identify

OUR RESULTS AND REACH

Contributions



1200+
people
participated



686
face-to-face
contacts



517
surveys



83
workshop
participants



53
social media
comments



30
targeted
interviews



19
virtual
wall ideas

Reach



39,489
recipients received
newsletter or email
communication



1,683
visitors to the
Participate
Melbourne page



190
new subscribers
to Participate
Melbourne



179,000+
views of the social
media posts

Fun fact

The most common way that people heard about the consultation was 'in person'.

Did you know?

More than 1200 people shared 2975 comments about community engagement for this policy.

WHY PEOPLE GOT INVOLVED

We heard

- a deep love and care for Melbourne
- a desire to help shape the future of the city
- valuing public engagement and being able to have a say
- face-to-face engagement and a warm invitation from City of Melbourne staff
- needing to improve public engagement processes at the City of Melbourne
- being encouraged through personal or social networks
- alignment with their work, volunteering activities or interests
- wanted to discuss a specific issue.

“I love Melbourne, I want to see it continue to blossom and grow in the important things.

Whether it be in lifestyle, business. We must seek to keep our city safe, strong, clean and beautiful for everyone.”

“Because it’s important to have a say in the future of Melbourne

Hoping that the present way of decision-making can be changed if enough people speak up.”

“I had time, and changes in Melbourne matter to me.”

“I live here and want to be involved in decisions that affect me.”



TRADITIONAL OWNER INSIGHTS

We met with Traditional Owner groups and asked:

Why is it important for people to get involved in government decision-making processes?

What are the most important elements of deliberation?

How can the relationship between citizens and local government be strengthened?

What are the barriers and enablers to participation in their communities?

We heard:

- People's voices are their power and allow them to shape their own narrative. These voices add value that cannot be found within government alone.
- Aboriginal people are under-represented in government structures, and public engagement is one way to remedy this.
- Effective deliberation requires enough time and notice for people to consider the topic.
- City of Melbourne must ask the right questions in the right way and listen deeply to what people have to say.
- Strengthening relationships requires acknowledging historical wrongs and subsequent feelings of mistrust or hurt.
- Strong relationships require respectful conversations and long-term investment where both parties learn about and value the other.
- Traditional Owners are more than just one of many stakeholders – their views must be given appropriate weighting in conversations.
- Aboriginal people need to feel comfortable to contribute – smaller, closed groups are preferable to larger, diverse groups.
- Reaching out to people at events or activities can encourage engagement.

“People want to feel confident that they are part of something that will have a legacy.”

“Aboriginal people have been very active. We have a history of activism and we're not going away or going to stop. We can be active and influential. We are agents of change, and we need to help people find and value their voice.”

“We've seen this with recent elections; people want to be heard, to know that their ideals matter.”

“Both camps need to be learning more about each other. For the relationship to be meaningful we need to know more about each other.”

“Globally we are a more informed population. But we need to start trusting the systems.”

“Group discussion—small cohorts. Don't lump people together, build solutions with people with diverse experiences. There will be frustrations and conflict, and you can't please everybody.”



KEY THEMES WE HEARD

We received and reviewed close to 3000 comments about community engagement during the consultation period. We collated these comments into four key themes, reflecting the most consistently received findings.

<p>It's important to increase promotion about consultation. Early and wider communication through a range of methods is needed to ensure people are aware of projects and have time to contribute.</p> <p>A mix of engagement options – online, offline, and in-person – would provide flexibility and ensure people can engage in ways and at times that suit them.</p> <p>The community values the presence of Council staff in neighbourhoods. It's seen as essential in building better relationships, and supporting effective community engagement.</p>	<p>All voices must be heard and valued</p> <p>Melbourne is a diverse city, but people feel this is not often fully represented in community engagement. Diverse groups, or those often excluded from government communications, must be included in the participation process.</p> <p>Different groups have different needs and preferred modes of communication. Council must understand the diverse needs of its communities and engage with them in ways that are appropriate.</p>
<p>People need to feel comfortable to participate</p> <p>People wanted to feel they were actively welcomed and "invited" to participate.</p> <p>Increased support from City of Melbourne or opportunities to participate in more informal environments could help people feel more comfortable.</p>	<p>Consultation must be genuine, transparent and clearly linked to action</p> <p>Greater transparency and accountability are needed from City of Melbourne to reassure communities that their participation is not tokenistic or a box-ticking exercise.</p> <p>Being clear about how people's input influences decisions and what impact consultation has on outcomes is important.</p>



KEY THEMES WE HEARD



WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT

The principles of community engagement

Our principles of engagement guide our approach and are our promises to you. Looking at the eight principles, is there anything that you think is missing or unclear?



We heard

Lots of people told us nothing was missing, and some people told us the principles could be clearer, and more effective by:

- improving overall communication
- supporting accessible and inclusive engagement opportunities
- ensuring that council processes reflect the principles and uphold the value of the community's opinions.

The importance of engagement

Many of you told us that the people who live and work in Melbourne will be most affected by Council decisions, and need to participate in how the municipality develops.

“Public participation brings views into the discussion which may be missed or ignored otherwise.”

“Government needs to go above and beyond in its efforts to represent the views of Aboriginal Australians, and be really open and sincere about that.”

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT

What prevents you from participating

It's important everyone feels supported and comfortable to have their say in Council decisions. What might prevent you to participate?

We heard

- lack of information or awareness of opportunities to consult
- not having knowledge of the issue or council processes
- time constraints
- feelings of not having the required skills or knowledge to participate
- intimidating consultation environments
- lack of trust that feedback is valued and listened to
- feelings that consultation is 'token' and that decisions have already been made on outcomes
- feeling that some voices are "louder" than others and a lack of representation in consultation.

"We don't see results from surveys and consultations. It falls on deaf ears so why bother. There are many people very cynical about consultation, we're sceptical, it can be tokenistic."

"Not feeling like it is my place, not thinking it matters or that anyone will listen."

"Social, political, economic inequity. Some groups need to be met face-to-face. Basic respect for human beings. Breaking down them/us cultures."

"You don't think it will make a difference - I guess that sounds cynical but it's also pretty real feeling to me."

"Often the nature of the information being presented is complex. It's too much to draw people's interest in."

"Lack of culturally appropriate forums in order to feel comfortable to speak up is a barrier."



WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT

What encourages you to participate

It's important everyone feels supported and comfortable to have their say in Council decisions. What might prevent you to participate?

We heard

- clear information that is accessible, easy to understand and widely available
- good promotion of council projects and consultation opportunities
- understanding the benefit of their contribution
- feeling comfortable, welcomed, valued and included
- when an issue is relevant or directly impacts on a person
- place-based, fun activities that help build trust and relationships in local communities
- rewards or incentives.



“The community needs to be made better aware when there is the opportunity to attend and participate in such things. Where do you advertise, how does the local community hear about these forums?. These are important questions, because a lot goes on that is not advertised enough and therefore many have missed the opportunity to attend.”

“We have a diverse community, in terms of culture, language, education, time, expertise...a strong mix of strategies to cater for this diversity should be available and communicated as broadly as possible.”

“You need to make it clear what is in it for people - why would they engage, how does it impact them, what contribution can they make that will affect any change.”

“Timing. After work is important. Digital enables participation without needing babysitting.”

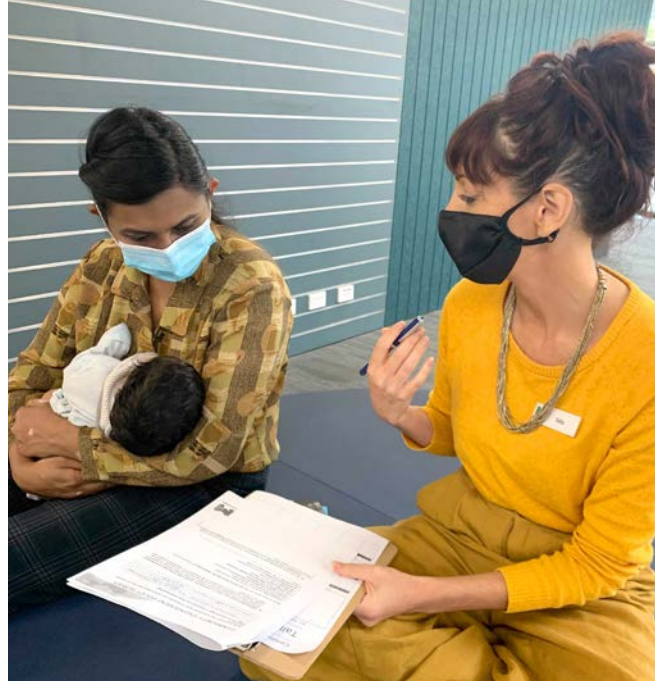
WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT

Deliberative engagement

Deliberation generally refers to intentional, careful and unhurried consideration of an issue. In the local government context, this type of deep thinking is applied to complex issues or planning that we must tackle across our municipality. It requires locals, experts, and council employees to be engaged in a meaningful process that leads to a decision. What do you think are the top three elements for deliberation?

We heard the top elements are
(in order from high to low):

1. that evidence and background information is analysed
2. a real mix of voices are represented
3. the people most affected are highly involved
4. various options are explored
5. the purpose of the engagement is clear
6. enough time is given to think deeply on the topic
7. independent facilitation of the conversation
8. group discussion and debate
9. co-design of the process
10. other



Deliberative engagement is a process used to reach an outcome or decision for complex issues. It typically occurs over a period of time and requires informed discussions by a diverse range of people in our community, including those most impacted by the decision.

“I think it’s important. Council gets bashed a lot in the media and people need to be educated about council’s role, and the trade-offs that are entailed with tough decisions.”

“Participating through group activities is key, gives people a chance to hear other views, which may challenge their own position.”

“Allow more time during engagement. These conversations and creating a culture take time and shouldn’t be rushed.”

“Hearing different views is so important, not just the usual suspects.”

“Purpose is paramount, it tells people if the issue is relevant to them.”

IDEAS WALL

We asked people to share their ideas on Participate Melbourne for easy and interesting ways to have a say on Council projects and decisions. We heard ideas about improving community engagement, as well as specific ideas for the municipality in general.

Ideas for community engagement



proper process
before works



collaboration
with local
residents



deliberative
engagement focusing
on the people impacted



council's social media
platforms - more
attention to
residents matters



City of Melbourne
mobile app to improve
complaints process



platform for
connecting businesses
and community in
neighbourhoods



citizens' councils,
resident panels or
Citizen Juries



create a register
of local community
groups for
communications



advance notice
of upcoming
engagements.

Ideas for the municipality



solar panels



soft plastic
recycling



food waste



Harbour Esplanade &
Sheds redevelopment
Docklands



off leash
dog park for
Docklands



community space for
East Melbourne



pedestrian
only areas



opportunities for
aspiring entrepreneurs

HOW YOUR FEEDBACK WAS USED

In addition to informing the Community Engagement policy, the City of Melbourne has developed a number of actions that respond to the feedback and findings from the policy consultation. We are committed to strengthening engagement practices and experiences for all. We will continue to actively involve our community in the decisions that shape the future of the municipality. You can stay up to date with consultation activities on our Participate Melbourne website participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au or contact the community engagement team on communityengagement@melbourne.vic.gov.au or on (03) 9658 9658.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHAT WE WILL DO
The community wants to hear more about council projects and consultation opportunities, and ways they can have their say.	<p>Review current communication strategies and channels used for consultation activities, and identify ways to increase reach.</p> <p>Consider how to build awareness and understanding of Council's engagement touchpoints, including participating in council meetings, using Participate Melbourne, and subscribing to newsletters.</p> <p>Undertake research and integrate improvements from 'user testing' of Participate Melbourne platform and other channels.</p>
The community wants more accountability and transparency around community engagement outcomes, including what impact and influence consultations have.	<p>Review the Community Engagement Framework and identify areas to improve accountability and transparency, including reporting mechanisms and closing the loop guidelines.</p> <p>Increase annual performance measures for community engagement including number of contributions, engagement reach and community satisfaction in Council decision-making.</p>
There needs to be greater inclusion, participation and representation from diverse voices.	<p>Continue to foster best-practice engagement with Aboriginal communities through the Aboriginal Community Engagement Protocols.</p> <p>Increase access to consultation opportunities for all and, through the new Inclusive Melbourne Strategy, provide supports that encourage participation.</p> <p>Develop inclusive engagement resources for staff and promote inclusion strategies through training and mentoring programs, Council intranet and engagement planning.</p> <p>Promote protocols on Plain English, online accessibility, translation and interpreter use, and identify areas for improvement.</p>
The community values the presence of Council staff in neighbourhoods. It's seen as essential in building better relationships, and supporting effective community engagement.	<p>Establish a new Community Development branch that will work with communities to strengthen local networks and relationships, and develop neighbourhood plans that respond to the evolving aspirations of the community.</p> <p>Identify events, programs and other opportunities to increase on-the-ground engagement with local communities to promote current projects, initiatives and consultation activities.</p>

How to contact us

Online:

melbourne.vic.gov.au

In person:

Melbourne Town Hall - Administration Building
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne
Business hours, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

Telephone:

03 9658 9658
Business hours, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

Fax:

03 9654 4854

In writing:

City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia



Interpreter services

We cater for people of all backgrounds
Please call 03 9280 0726

03 9280 0717	廣東話
03 9280 0719	Bahasa Indonesia
03 9280 0720	Italiano
03 9280 0721	普通话
03 9280 0722	Soomaali
03 9280 0723	Español
03 9280 0725	Việt Ngữ
03 9280 0726	عربي
03 9280 0726	한국어
03 9280 0726	हिंदी
03 9280 0726	All other languages

National Relay Service:

If you are deaf, hearing impaired or speech-impaired,
call us via the National Relay Service: Teletypewriter (TTY)
users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 9658
9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (Public holidays excluded)

melbourne.vic.gov.au



CITY OF MELBOURNE