# Greater Dandenong: Change Today, Shape Tomorrow

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT: STAGE 1

### March 2021

# Executive Summary

## Overview

Between September 2020 and February 2021, the City of Greater Dandenong carried out a community engagement program called *Change Today, Shape Tomorrow.* The project was designed to deliver an engagement program that met the legislative requirements of the new Local Government Act 2020 and helped to inform the later deliberative engagement process. Together this will review and test the current Community Vision and inform the Council Plan 2021 - 2025 and integrated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Engagement activities consisted of seven place-based community pop-ups, a targeted workshop, children's worksheet (distributed to schools and available online), online community survey and an online ideas wall. Members of the general public were also encouraged to run their own conversations and were provided a community conversations presentation and workbook.

Additional activities run by Council were a Health Stakeholders Workshop (run in conjunction with facilitators from Mosaic Lab), and a discussion with the CALD Disability Network. Although data from these activities has not been analysed by Conversation Caravan in this engagement summary report, these activities are made reference to in this document for completeness.

There are three engagement phases in this project. Each stage builds on the previous stage, both in the data collected and the level of specificity of engagement. The three stages of engagement are:

- Stage 1 Wider community engagement
- Stage 2 Deliberative engagement
- Stage 3 Council Plan development

Stage 1 community consultation was focused on five key questions:

- Is the Community Vision for 2030 still relevant? What is still needed to make this happen?

- What changes are needed to improve the health and wellbeing of our community?

- What helps you feel more connected, or would make you feel more connected to your community?

- How can Greater Dandenong celebrate its diversity?

- What is your biggest worry for the future?

- What services do you, your family or community need?

## Key Findings

A total of 1082 contributions were received from people who live, work, study or visit Greater Dandenong who participated in various engagement activities.

- Conversations around the Community Vision were focused on the gap and work needed to realise this vision, 87% of participants in the online survey still supported the vision and its relevance to the community.

- In order to improve the health and wellbeing of our community, opportunities to celebrate diversity, improve social inclusion and increase physical activity were considered priorities to create a healthier community.

- Events, activities and places to gather helps people to feel more connected, while services aimed at young people, new parents and new residents would help people feel more connected to their community.

- Overwhelmingly events were seen as positive ways to celebrate the diversity of Greater Dandenong.

- The Greater Dandenong community felt that Council services which could provide the community with the most support were physical infrastructure improvements and a focus on greening Greater Dandenong.

Data collected was analysed and grouped into eight themes. Clear priorities emerged which are shown by theme in Table 1.

**Table 1: Top three priorities by theme**

| Theme | Priorities |
|---|---|
| Diversity and Inclusion | <ul><li>Accessible services and facilities (including libraries, community centres and other public access council infrastructure).</li><li>Diversity, access and inclusion.</li><li>Activities, events, markets and festivals to celebrate our diverse culture.</li></ul> |
| Health and Active Living | <ul><li>Access to sport/recreation facilities and open space.</li><li>Social connection, social support and feelings of safety (including staying connected digitally).</li><li>Activities to promote active participation.</li></ul> |
| Attractive and Vibrant | <ul><li>A safe public realm (safe and attractive design, street activation and street art).</li><li>Perceptions of safety and positive reputation.</li><li>Affordable housing/Housing mix.</li></ul> |
| Connected Places | <ul><li>Connected by walkability, bike tracks and walking tracks.</li><li>Safe and accessible public transport services.</li><li>Connected by road networks and vehicle movement.</li></ul> |
| Natural Environment | <ul><li>Planting trees including street trees for increased canopy.</li><li>Enhancement/increase of parks and green space.</li><li>Increase of greenery.</li></ul> |
| Sustainable Initiatives and Development | <ul><li>Sustainability initiatives.</li><li>The effects of personal behaviours on the environment.</li><li>Climate change and use of renewable energy.</li></ul> |
| Education and Employment | <ul><li>Ability to find meaningful employment close to home, or find employees.</li><li>Lifelong learning (including access to quality schooling).</li><li>Tertiary education.</li></ul> |
| Leadership and Investment | <ul><li>Transport infrastructure, investment and advocacy.</li><li>Council leadership and collaboration.</li><li>Industry innovation, local business and investment, entrepreneurism, flexible workplace and a diverse economy.</li></ul> |

## Here are some direct community comments:

"To learn to put differences aside. I like our Aussie song - 'we are one but we are many'. Embrace our differences."

"Kids activities for under 5s and the kids' school holiday program are fantastic. We would like the library to run more kinds of programs."

"Less time on devices, some more playgrounds so I can play."

"My biggest worry is the future and current climate adversities we will face. We need to spend great focus and money on localising our food source via open space, community gardens that are accessible to all. Not only will we secure a food source but great community connections will be made."

"More support for people near or at risk of homelessness."

"My kids could be targets for bullying at and outside of school as they are not white."

"People are not more aware about global warming. We need to face reality and increase knowledge about it."

"If we leave our cultures disconnected and don't celebrate we won't understand each other; the next generation won't maintain a peaceful co-existence."

"Encourage voluntary work by mixing volunteering with fun for kids and young adults."

"A more strategic look at what it was about the pre-COVID-19 community that is not where we wish to return."

"Affordable rent for hiring unused council facilities."

"Working with the environment in mind to ensure that tomorrow is possible for us to live in."

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# 1. Introduction

Conversation Caravan was engaged by the City of Greater Dandenong to design and support the delivery of their wider consultation program to consult the community about their needs and priorities to inform the Council Plan 2021 - 2025 and Integrated Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

**Purpose of the engagement was to:**

- Seek input from the community and stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the key local issues that are important to the community along with the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.
- Gain honest and meaningful feedback from a cross-section of the community.
- Gain insights in order to assess, test and refine the Community Vision.

## 1.1 Process to engage across Council's key plans

There are three engagement phases in this project. Each stage builds on the previous stage, both in the data collected and the intensity of engagement. The three engagement stages are:

- Stage 1: September 2020 - February 2021: Broader Community Engagement (Mixed Method)
- Stage 2: April - May 2021: Deliberative Panel
- Stage 3: May - October 2021: Council Plan development

This report summarises the key themes from Stage 1 community consultation.

The findings from this report will be used to inform the work of the Deliberative Panel in Stage 2 of the project. It will also be released to the broader City of Greater Dandenong community including those that participated previously.

## 1.2 What we knew before we started

Prior to consulting on this project, a review of the plans, strategies and associated research was reviewed to identify community issues and priorities.

The following documents were reviewed:

- Council Plan 2017-21
- Community Plan 'Imagine 2030' and Phase 2 Summary Report 2016

- Community Wellbeing Plan 2017-21
- Community Safety Plan 2015-22
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2014-19
- Sustainability Strategy 2016-30
- Waste and Litter Strategy 2015-20
- Urban Tree Strategy 2018-28
- Greater Dandenong Profile of Health and Wellbeing 2019
- Population Forecasts - Greater Dandenong 2018
- Digital Strategy 2016-20
- Climate Change Community Consultation Draft Summary Report 2019
- Open Space Strategy - Councillor Summary 2020
- Mission Australia Youth Survey 2019
- 2017 Population Health Survey
- Greater Dandenong City Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2020
- Council Plan 2017-21 engagement - Feb 14 Community Workshop

This review provided the project team with an understanding of the priorities already in consideration going into this engagement program. These resources were used to create a Discussion Guide please refer to Attachment 1 which will be referred to in Stage 2: Deliberative Panel.

# 2. Methodology

Stage 1 engagement activities were designed online around current COVID-19 safety advice. The period of engagement was extended given the ability to do outreach engagement in the community.

**Timeframe:** 1 September 2020 to 11 February 2021

**Purpose:** To explore what matters most to the community to identify the community's needs and priorities. To invite interest in the project and raise curiosity, and to profile why this project is important and ways to participate.

**Key Input:** Key Council strategic plans and previous research to inform our understanding.

**Desired Outcome:**
- Engagement Summary Report providing an analysis of the community engagement.
- Data and high-level community themes to inform the Deliberative Panel.
- Interested members for the Deliberative Panel.

**Engagement Method:**
- Online Survey
- Community pop-ups (7)
- Targeted conversation (1)
- Online engagement through Ideas Wall tool
- Children's worksheet
- Community Conversations presentation and workbook

**Key Engagement Questions:**
- Is the Community Vision for 2030 still relevant? What is still needed to make this happen?
- What changes are needed to improve the health and wellbeing of our community?
- What helps you feel more connected, or would make you feel more connected to their community?
- How can Greater Dandenong celebrate its diversity?
- What is your biggest worry for the future?
- What services do you, your family or community need?

## 2.1 Engagement method detail

Detailed below are the engagement techniques used for Stage 1.

### Survey
The survey was provided online and promoted via the Social Pinpoint project page, and also made available in hard copy format. The first set of questions asked the participants to reflect on the relevance of the community vision and allowed a free text response.

The second set of questions asked what services or support do the participants still need from Council for their families and communities. Participants were asked what changes were needed to improve their health and wellbeing, and how they could be supported during COVID-recovery. The survey asked participants for some demographic identifiers including gender, age, place of residence, country of birth, and connection to Greater Dandenong.

### Community Pop-ups
Seven place-based community pop-ups were held across Greater Dandenong at different locations and at different times. Pop ups were held at the following locations and chosen because of their community appeal:
- Dandenong Market (2 times)
- Springvale Community Hub (2 times)
- Keysborough South Shopping Centre
- Noble Park Aquatic Centre
- Noble Park Skate Park.

Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions. In line with COVID-19 safety advice, an option was provided to scan a QR code and complete an online Google Form survey, which reflected the same questions as were displayed on posters at the pop-ups.

### Targeted Conversation
A targeted conversation was held with staff and clients from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and was designed to obtain feedback on the main engagement questions listed above. This targeted conversation was facilitated over Zoom by Conversation Caravan and City of Greater Dandenong project staff.

Participants were provided information about the stages of the project and a presentation from Council staff outlining demographic information about the City

of Greater Dandenong currently and predictions for 2030 in terms of population, housing and growth areas.

### Social Pinpoint Ideas Wall
Participants were invited to post a response to abbreviated versions of the four key engagement questions. These posts appeared on a wall of ideas where others could up/down vote or enter a discussion by commenting on a response.

### Children's Worksheet
A worksheet was designed to ask primary school children to draw a picture of what they wished the City of Greater Dandenong would look like in 2030. They were also asked what they, their family and their community needed; if they were in charge, what they would do to create the best community for children; and how would they know if their actions had been successful. The worksheet was available to download from the Social Pinpoint project page, and Council staff promoted the activity to primary school students at a children's forum held on 29 October 2020 as part of Children's Week

### Community Conversations presentation and workbook
Recognising the connections that community members have, a slideshow presentation was prepared that was able to be run by community groups to their members. This presentation covered an overview of the Council Plan and Community Vision, an overview of Greater Dandenong, and asked participants to complete a workbook online on Google Forms, about community priorities.

### Health Stakeholders Workshop
On Tuesday 17 November, Greater Dandenong in conjunction with facilitators from the community engagement company MosaicLab, hosted a Health Stakeholder workshop to inform and support the development of the City of Greater Dandenong's next Council Plan 2021-25. The workshop sought feedback and collated information from a diverse range of over 25 local stakeholders representing a range of key health priority areas. Participants collaboratively explored how Council and partner organisations can continue to work together to engage our community to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and explore how Council and local health stakeholders can work together to engage diverse community groups about their health and wellbeing priorities.

The top 5 issues as voted by participants at the Health Stakeholders Workshop were:

- Homelessness, housing access and affordability, and housing density/overcrowding.
- Affordable physical activities to access and participate in as cost/affordability affects choice (particularly now with reduced incomes due to COVID-19); more non-structured physical activity that is affordable, as there is too much focus on structured activities that cost too much.
- Social isolation and anxiety, including post-covid anxiety.
- Access to affordable, fresh, culturally appropriate food.
- Promoting existing programs that are already on offer in the community.

### CALD Disability Network

On Tuesday 16 February the CALD Disability Network hosted a member of the project team to discuss key local issues and test the current Community Vision. Many ideas and comments were shared regarding what is important and how Council can support the community to address their challenges. These included:

- COVID-19 recovery options.
- Building connections back into community and how these can be inclusive of CALD community members and those living with a disability.
- Prioritising the commitment to making change.
- Digital isolation through COVID-19.
- Bilingual support.
- Computer literacy programs.
- Communicating key messages to the community.
- Ensuring community members are aware of their right to have a say and removing barriers to support this.
- Council services and supports are inclusive of people with a disability and their carers, and bridge gaps for those not eligible for NDIS.

## 2.2 Strategies to support participation

Community participation was supported through the following initiatives:
- **Communications Campaign:** run through the City of Greater Dandenong. Included promotion on Council's corporate channels and social media as well as signage in customer service centres, libraries and maternal and child health centres.
- **Dedicated Project Page:** a dedicated project page was created on both Council's corporate website and via Social Pinpoint, a consistent location

for the community to access information and participation via the engagement activities (survey, ideas wall).

- **Hard copy surveys:** community members could contact Council to be sent a physical copy of the survey.
- **Leveraging Council's Connections:** Council Officer connections and existing networks were used to increase uptake and participation in the project.
- **Incentivisation:** Incentives were used in the form of a prize draw for participants completing a survey, and vouchers for participants at pop-ups.
- **Going to where people enjoy gathering**: pop ups were held at locations across the City of Greater Dandenong where they typically attract a crowd and cross selection of the community.
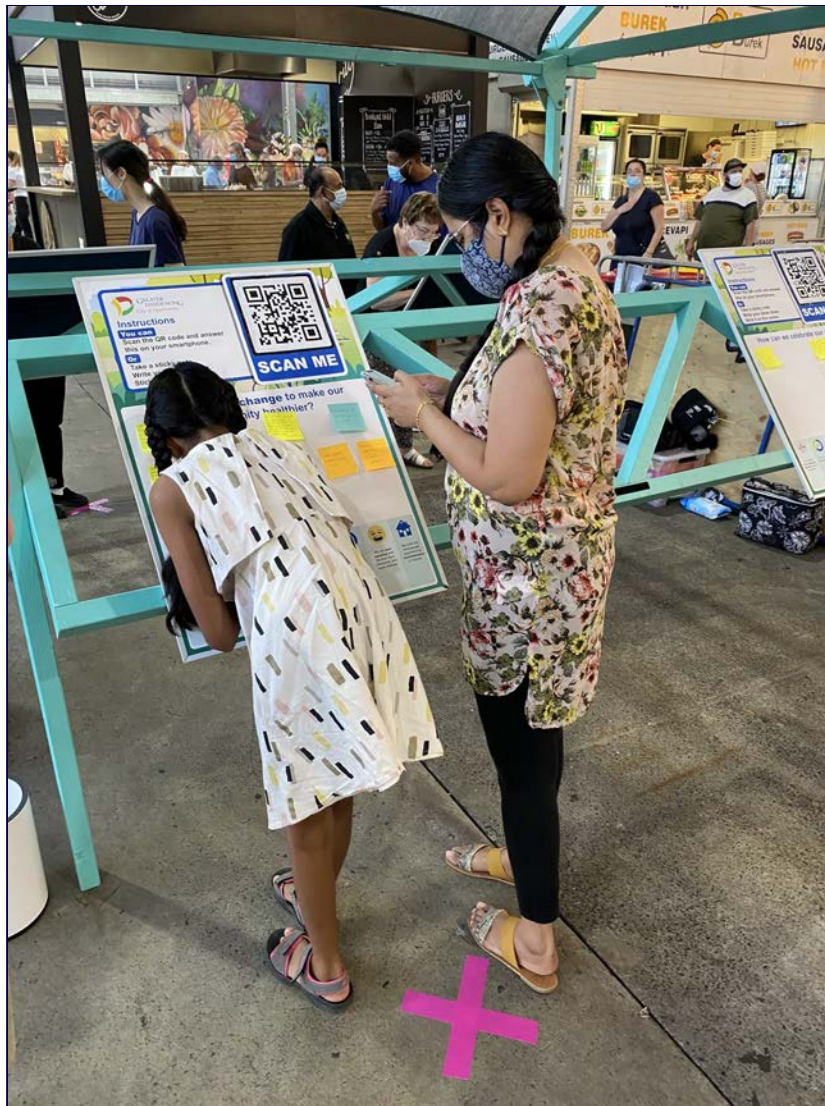
# 3. Who Participated?

Demographic data such as gender, age, and place of residency was not obtained across all engagement activities. Participants had a choice to provide or not provide this information. Where it was collected and recorded, it is presented. This decision was made by the City of Greater Dandenong as a way to remove potential barriers to participation.
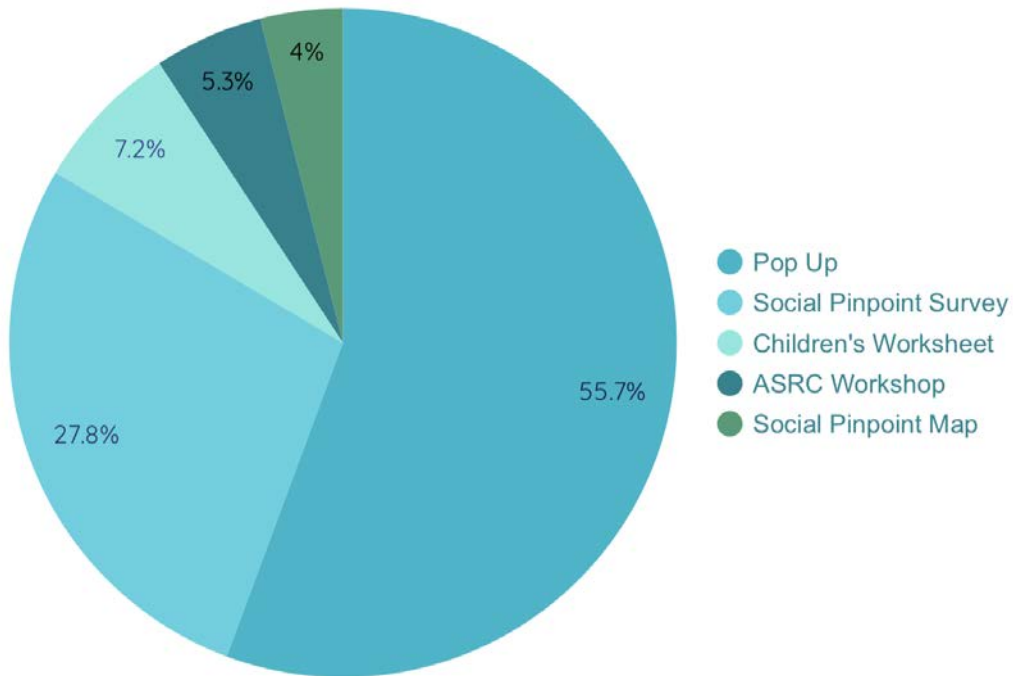
## 3.1 Participation

A total of 1082 comments were received in Stage 1 of this project. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of participation and reach across the engagement activities. We can conservatively estimate that 500 people participated in this stage of engagement. We have no means of tracking duplication in participation, that is where someone might have attended a pop up and then completed an online survey and provided an idea on the wall.

**Figure 1: Participation and Reach Across Stage 1**

| Online Survey | 1 Targeted Conversation | Children's Activity | 7 Community Pop-ups |
|---|---|---|---|
| 107 surveys completed | 9 participants<br><br>60 comments received | 78 worksheets received | 250+ participants<br><br>1006 unique comments received |
| **Ideas Wall**<br><br>43 ideas contributed | **Social Pinpoint Page**<br><br>1889 total visits<br>521 unique users<br>44 comments received | **1 Community Conversations Workbook**<br><br>1 community group<br>4 comments received | |

Figure 2 presents the number of individual comments received across the consultation activities and presents where the majority of data was collected from Community Pop-ups and Social Pinpoint Surveys.

**Figure 2: Comments collected from consultation activities.**

## 3.2 Age and Gender

Across the consultation 247 participants identified their gender, with 133 (53.8%) identifying as female, 104 identifying as male and 3 self-identifying. This is roughly reflective of the demographics of the CGD municipality, with 49.0 % females and 51.0% males (2016 Census Quick Stats: Greater Dandenong). Participants from the targeted conversation and the Ideas Wall were not asked their age or gender. See Figure 3.

Participation from the 35 – 49 years age bracket was highest with 84 participants (34.0%), and this age bracket makes up 19.6% of the Greater Dandenong population (2016 Census Quick Stats: Greater Dandenong). Participants aged between 18 – 24 years had the lowest participation in the survey at 4.0%. See Figure 4.

**Figure 3: Demographics – Percentage of Identified Gender of Participants**
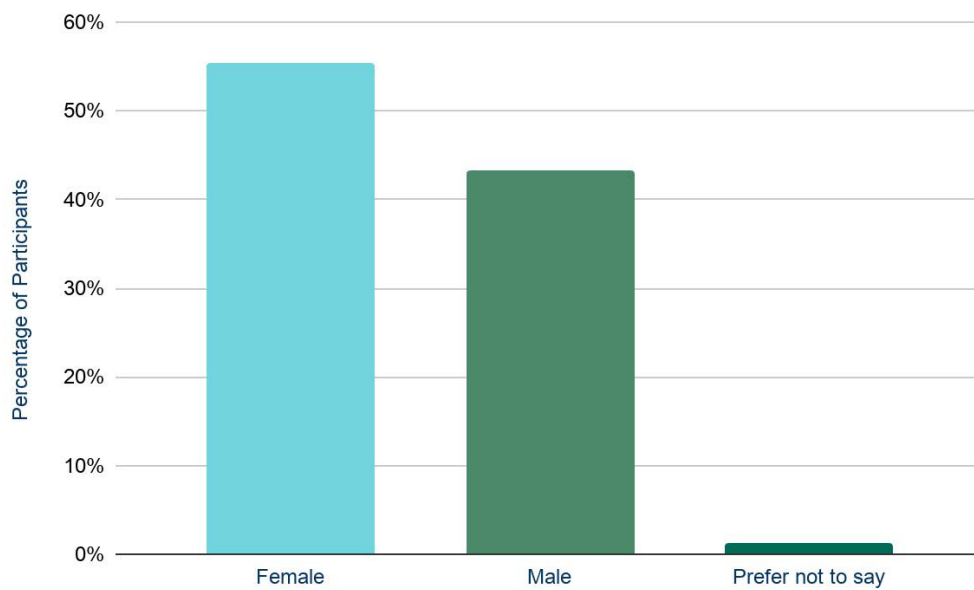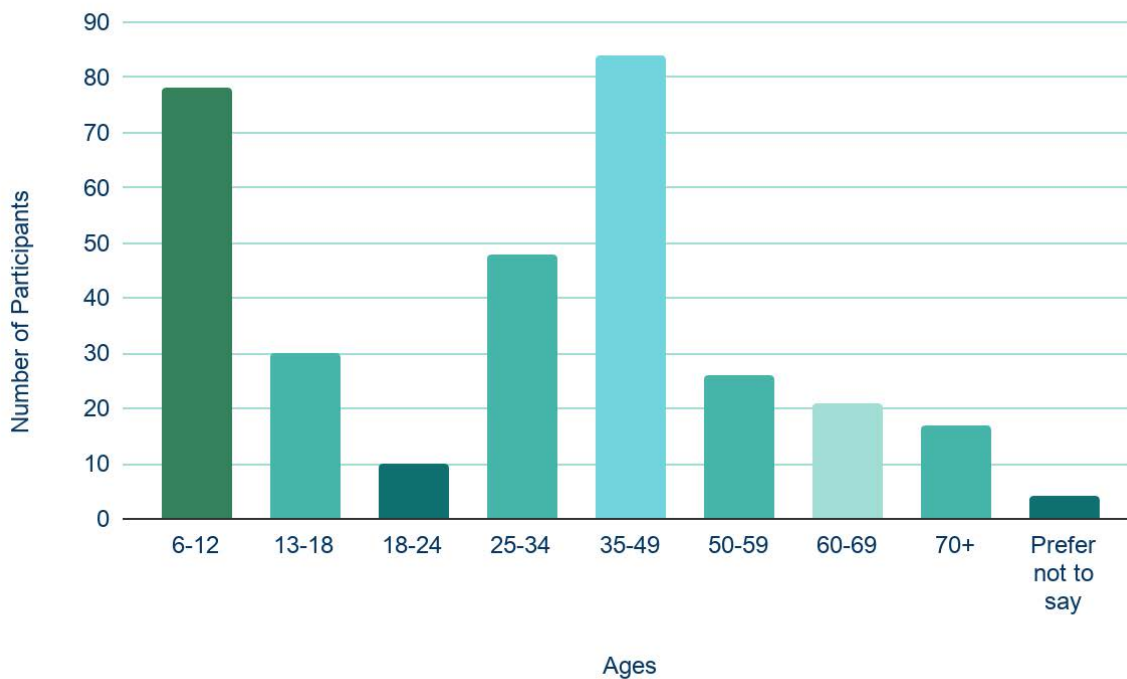
**Figure 4: Demographics – Number of Participants Identified in Each Age Group**



## 3.3 Other Demographic Identifiers

A range of additional demographic identifiers were asked during engagement activities. It should be noted that there was not a uniform delivery of these demographic identifier questions across each engagement activity, which limits their applicability across the entire cohort.

**Demographic Identifiers**

The following information about demographic identifiers was sought at the respective activities:

- Community pop-ups: Age, gender, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Speak a language other than English at home, LGBTQIA+ community, Living with a disability, Experiencing homelessness.
- Children's worksheets: Only age and gender were requested.
- Social Pinpoint survey: Age, gender, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Speak a language other than English at home, Living with a disability, I am a Carer.

Figure 5 shows a tally of the demographic identifiers collected across the engagement activities. Participants can express to identify with none or more than one demographic.

**Figure 5: Number of Other Demographic Identifiers Indicated by Participants**
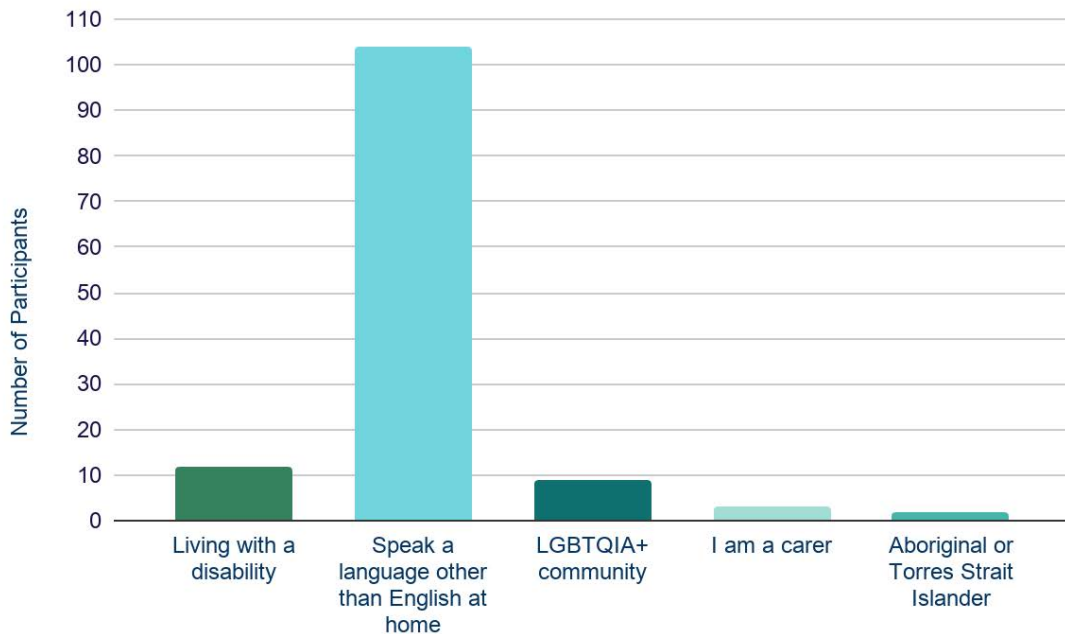


### Place you Live

Participants of the Social Pinpoint Survey were asked where they lived. Figure 6 shows the places participants reported living; these are shown in Figure 7 in map form, where the size of the bubble indicates frequency of response. The majority of participants were from Dandenong, Keysborough or Noble Park. Seven participants reported that they lived outside of the City of Greater Dandenong.

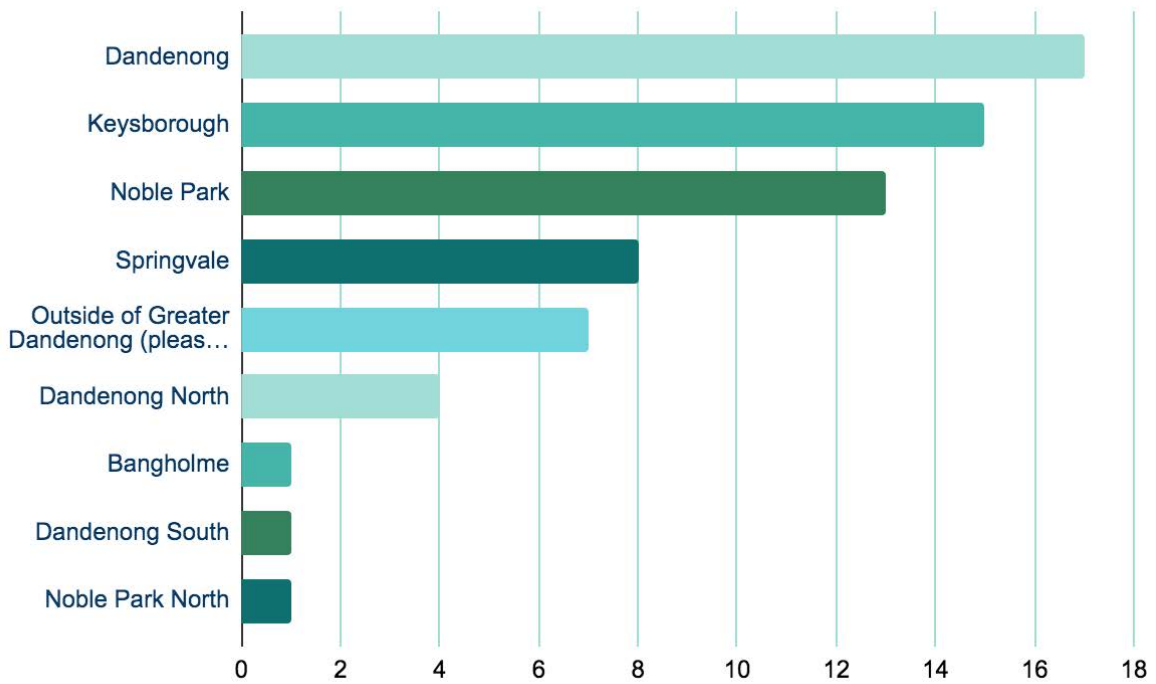**Figure 6: Place you Live - Social Pinpoint Survey Participants**



**Figure 7: Place you Live - Number of Social Pinpoint Survey Participants in Living in Each Suburb - Map**

### Country of Birth

Participants of the Social Pinpoint Survey were asked their country of birth. As shown in Figure 8, 36 participants reported they were born in Australia, followed by 5 participants from India, 3 from Sri Lanka, and one participant in every other identified country of birth.
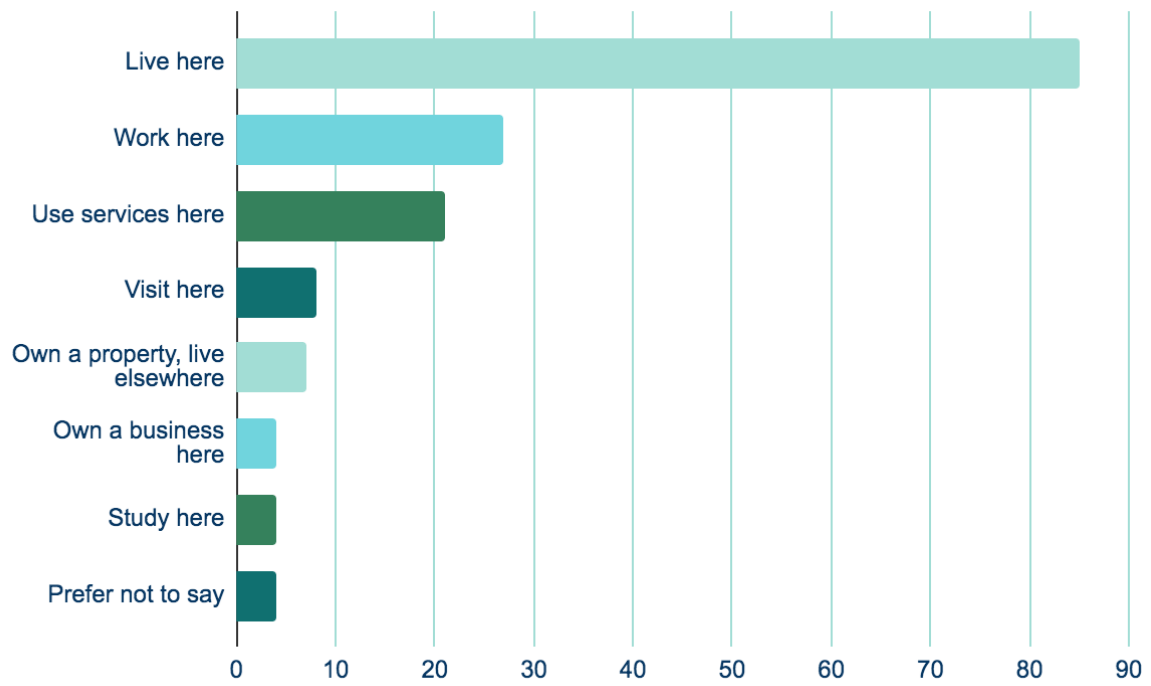
**Figure 8: Country of Birth - Social Pinpoint Survey Participants**
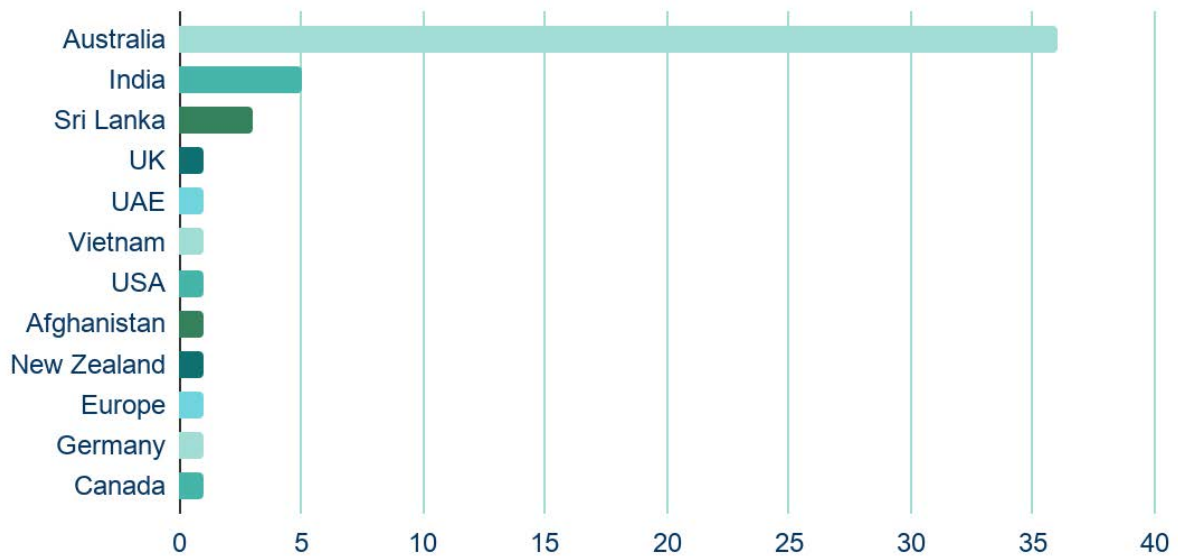


## 3.4 Connection to Greater Dandenong

Survey participants were asked about their connection to the City of Greater Dandenong. Participants could report multiple ways they connect with the community. Out of 106 respondents, 85 lived in Greater Dandenong and 7 lived in other areas. This may indicate interest in the project from visitors or people who travel to work in Greater Dandenong. 4 respondents reported that they had a business based in Greater Dandenong. Figure 9 shows this connection.

## Figure 9: Connection to Greater Dandenong



A horizontal bar chart titled "Connection to Greater Dandenong" with the following approximate values:

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Live here | 85 |
| Work here | 27 |
| Use services here | 21 |
| Visit here | 8 |
| Own a property, live elsewhere | 7 |
| Own a business here | 4 |
| Study here | 4 |
| Prefer not to say | 4 |

# 4.  Community Priorities

Community feedback is presented within four key areas of focus, each focus area includes two themes.

The basis for the themes were taken from the City of Greater Dandenong's Imagine 2030 Community Vision which described three key priority areas: People, Place and Opportunity. Environment was added to reflect the growing acknowledgement of the importance of the natural environment, climate change and sustainability by Council and the wider community.

All comments from the community consultation have been coded into these eight themes:

**People**
1. Diversity and Inclusion
2. Health and Active Living

**Place**
3. Connected Places
4. Attractive and Vibrant

**Opportunity**
5. Education and Employment
6. Leadership and Investment

**Environment**
7. Natural Environment
8. Sustainable Initiatives and Development

Community feedback is presented by focus area and theme. Responses are also shown as they relate to each question by focus area.  Where a number is shown in brackets it indicates the number of responses for that theme or sub-category. For example, open space (n=144) means there were 144 responses related to open space. Feedback provided by children is included within each theme and is also analysed and presented separately.

## 4.1 Data Analysis

Figure 10 shows the eight themes listed in priority order, based on the number of comments tagged under that theme.

**Figure 10: Findings by theme in priority order**

| Theme | Inclusions |
|---|---|
| **1.** Health and Active Living<br><br>513 comments | This theme includes feedback related to social connection, feelings of support and security; respectful relationships, prevention of family violence, positive aging, health and food security, as well as council services, facilities and activities. |
| **2.** Diversity and Inclusion<br><br>309 comments | This theme includes feedback about accessing council services and facilities, cultural heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders recognition and activities that celebrate our diversity |
| **3.** Attractive and Vibrant<br><br>234 comments | This theme includes feedback about living in a community and neighbourhood. It includes housing, access to services, facilities and entertainment; moving in and around the community; and positive reputation. |
| **4.** Sustainable Initiatives and Development<br><br>149 comments | This theme includes feedback related to sustainability initiatives, climate change and renewable energy, and personal impacts on the environment such as recycling. |
| **5.** Natural Environment<br><br>114 comments | This theme includes feedback relating to creating, sustaining and managing the natural environment, natural parks and gardens and Council's protection of native flora and fauna. |
| **6.** Education and Employment<br><br>96 comments | This theme includes feedback related to ability to find meaningful employment, access to quality schooling, and providing education. |
| **7.** Leadership and Investment<br><br>94 comments | This theme includes feedback about local business and investment. It includes public infrastructure, council advocacy, investment in local businesses and collaboration with community groups in decision-making; |

| | Sub-category | Inclusions |
|---|---|---|
| 8. | Connected Places<br><br>88 comments | This theme includes feedback related to safe and accessible public transport, road networks and vehicle movement, walking and bike tracks. |

Each theme was then further separated into sub-categories to provide closer detail of the data. Figure 11 lists the top ten sub-categories and their inclusions. These are listed in priority order based on the number of comments tagged under that subcategory. The themes they sit under are shown in brackets.

**Figure 11: Findings by sub-category in priority order (top ten)**

| | Sub-category | Inclusions |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Access to sport/recreation facilities and open space (Health and Active Living)<br><br>137 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to providing, utilising and improving recreation facilities; including skate parks, children's playgrounds and aquatic centres. |
| 2. | Social connection (Health and Active Living)<br><br>133 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to staying connected to community, providing social support and feelings of safety, volunteering, and council communication It also includes feedback related to participation in community activities, support for the disadvantaged, reducing criminal activities and council communication and transparency. |
| 3. | Open space and protection of biodiversity (Natural Environment)<br><br>114 comments | This sub-category includes feedback relating to creating, sustaining and managing the natural environment, natural parks and gardens and Council's protection of native flora and fauna. |
| 4. | Safe and attractive public realm (Attractive and Vibrant)<br><br>109 comments | This sub-category includes feedback about living in a community and neighbourhood. It includes housing, access to services, facilities and entertainment; moving in and around the community; and positive reputation. |
| 5. | Healthy lifestyle (Health and Active Living)<br><br>94 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to nutrition, physical activities, mental health, drug use and response to COVID-19 |

| 6. | Activities to celebrate our diverse culture (Diversity and Inclusion)  87 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to events, markets, festivals and community groups that celebrate diverse cultures. |
|---|---|---|
| 7. | Accessible services and facilities (Diversity and Inclusion)  77 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to libraries, community centres and other public access to council infrastructure. It also include comments on fees and promotion of council services |
| 8. | Sustainability Initiatives (Sustainability Initiatives and Development)  76 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to climate change, use of renewable energy, waste and recycling |
| 9. | Activities to promote active participation (Health and Active Living)  74 comments | This sub-category includes feedback about activities and events organised by the council as well as community groups; frequency and activity mix, communication and costs of community activities. |
| 10. | Diversity, access and inclusion (Diversity and Inclusion)  70 comments | This sub-category includes feedback related to accessibility and equal opportunities for all demographics; reducing ability, language, and cultural barriers. |

Figure 12 shows feedback relating to the four Community Vision pillars as discussed by consultation activity. This reflects the difference in priorities of specific target groups in comparison with the general public. In particular, participants of the Children's Worksheet are more concerned about the Environment pillar than the general public, and participants in the ASRC Workshop place more emphasis on People over other pillars. These differences will be discussed further below.

**Figure 12: Community Vision Pillars as discussed by consultation activity**
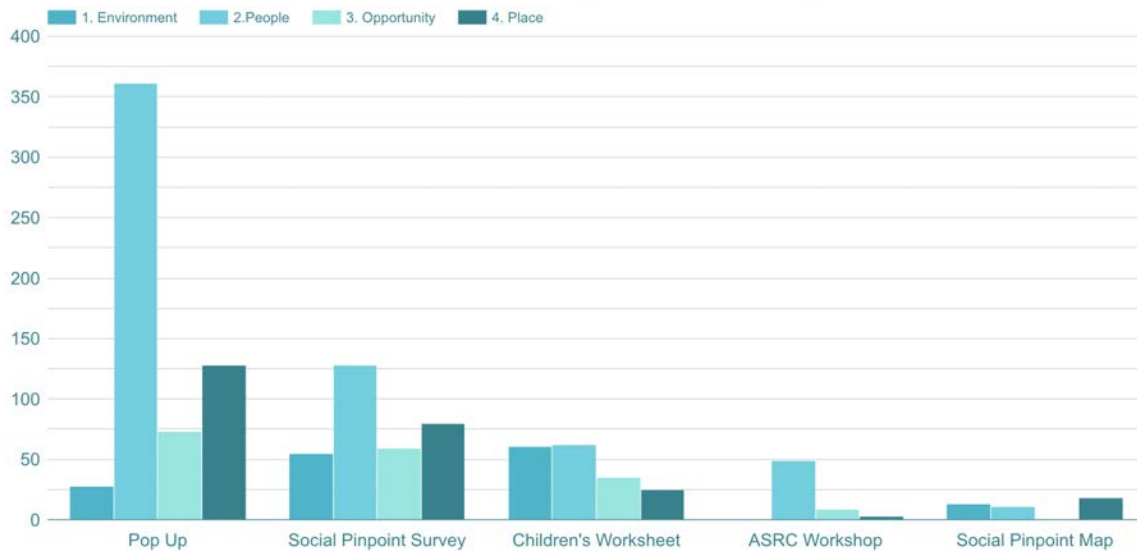


## 4.2 Community Priorities by Question

Summarised below are the key findings by question type. Wordings of questions were altered across the engagement activities to better suit each audience - all versions of these questions have been included below.

### Vision for 2030 (n=248)

Participants across all activities were asked to reflect on the vision's relevance and what was needed to address gaps in achieving the vision. On the survey directly asked level of support for the vision, with 87% of participants supporting the current vision and its remaining relevance

Questions:
- What's your vision for Greater Dandenong and what do we need to do in the next four years to move closer to it?
- Is the vision still relevant? What still needs to happen to achieve this vision?
- Is this vision still relevant to you? What do we still need to do to make it happen?
- What is your vision for our city and how can we make this happen?
- What are the opportunities for Greater Dandenong in the future?

Across all engagement activities the top five response topics to questions about the Vision were:
1. Social Connection, social support and feelings of safety (45) 18%.
2. Safe and attractive public realm (28) 11%.
3. Access to sports and recreation facilities (21) 8%.

4. Natural open space and protection of biodiversity (17)7%.
5. Perception of safety and positive reputation (17) 7%.

## Health and Wellbeing (n=208)

Questions:
- What changes are needed to improve the community's health and wellbeing?
- What needs to change to make our community healthier?
- What changes are needed to improve your health and wellbeing?

Across all of the engagement activities the top five response topics in response to health and wellbeing questions were:
- Healthy Lifestyles (51) 25%.
- Access to sports and recreation facilities (30) 14%.
- Safe and attractive public realm (29) 14%.
- Social Connection, social support and feelings of safety (21) 10%.
- Natural open space and protection of biodiversity (15)7%.

## Community Connectedness (n=150)

Questions:
- What can we do to make our community feel more connected?
- What helps you feel more connected?

Across all of the engagement activities the top five response topics to community connectedness questions were:
- Social Connection, social support and feelings of safety (24) 16%.
- Activities to promote active participation (24) 16%.
- Access to sport and recreation facilities (18) 12%.
- Activities, markets, events and festivals to celebrate diversity (15) 10%.
- Diversity, access and inclusion (14) 9%.

## Diversity (n=118)

Question:
- How can we celebrate our diversity?

Across all of the engagement activities the top five response topics to questions about diversity were:
- Activities, events, markets and festivals to celebrate our diversity (37) 31%.
- Cultural safety, cultural heritage and inclusion (25) 21%.
- Diversity, access and inclusion (24) 20%.
- Social Connection, social support and feelings of safety (11) 9%.
- Activities to promote active participation (10) 8%.

## Worries (n=83)

Participants at community pop-ups and those who completed the Community Conversations workbook were asked about their biggest worries. The data collected in response to this question is therefore only representative of these two engagement activities.

Questions:
- What is your biggest worry for your future? What can we do to help?
- What are the challenges for Greater Dandenong in the future?

The top five topics in response to these questions were:
- Healthy lifestyles (12) 14%.
- Ability to find meaningful employment (11) 13%.
- Social connection, social support and feelings of safety (8) 10%.
- Sustainability initiatives (7) 8%.
- Early childhood development and experiences (7) 8%.

## Council Services (n=193)

Data collected about Council services was gathered from Social Pinpoint, the Community Conversations workbook and the Children's Worksheet. Feedback to this question is therefore only representative of these three engagement activities.

Questions:
- What do we need to do in the next four years to make the City of Greater Dandenong... Safer, happier, healthier, greener or other.
- What services do you, your family or business need from Council?
- What services or support does your community need?
- Here are some of the ways Council is helping Greater Dandenong get back on track after COVID, is there anything else you would like to see?
- What do you need? What does your family need? What does your community need?

The top five response topics in response to questions about Council services were:
- Safe and attractive public realm (33) 17%.
- Accessible services and facilities (24) 12%.
- Access to sport and recreation facilities (22) 11%.
- Social Connection, social support and feelings of safety (17) 9%.
- Activities to promote active participation (14) 7%.

## 4.3 Community Priorities by Theme

Following is all of the data collected from across the engagement program as it relates to each of the eight themes. Responses to each question are listed under each focus area.

Figure 13 shows the percentage breakdown of engagement responses by theme. Comments related to health and active living featured highly with the community.

**Figure 13: Responses by Theme**



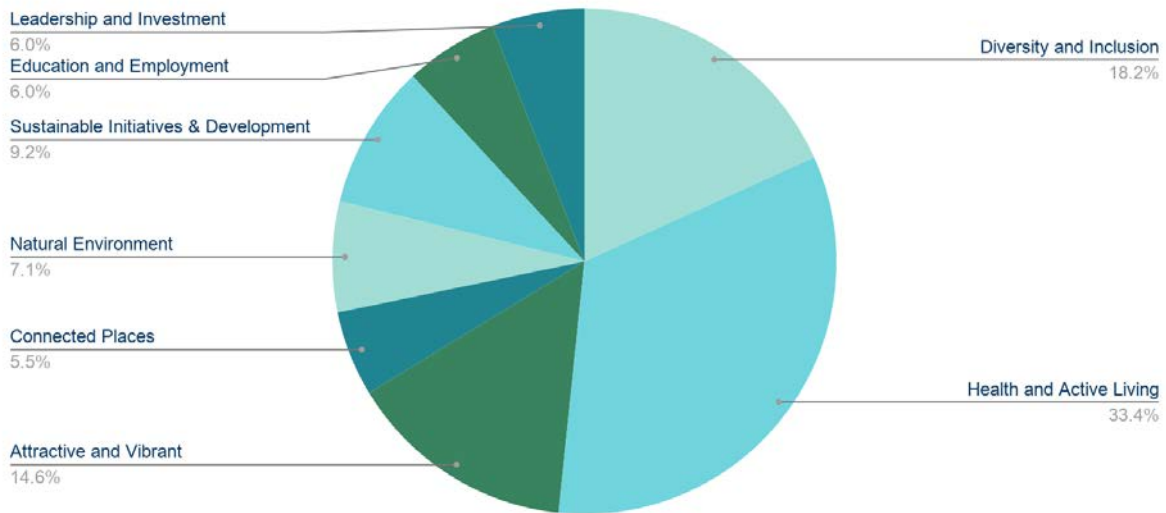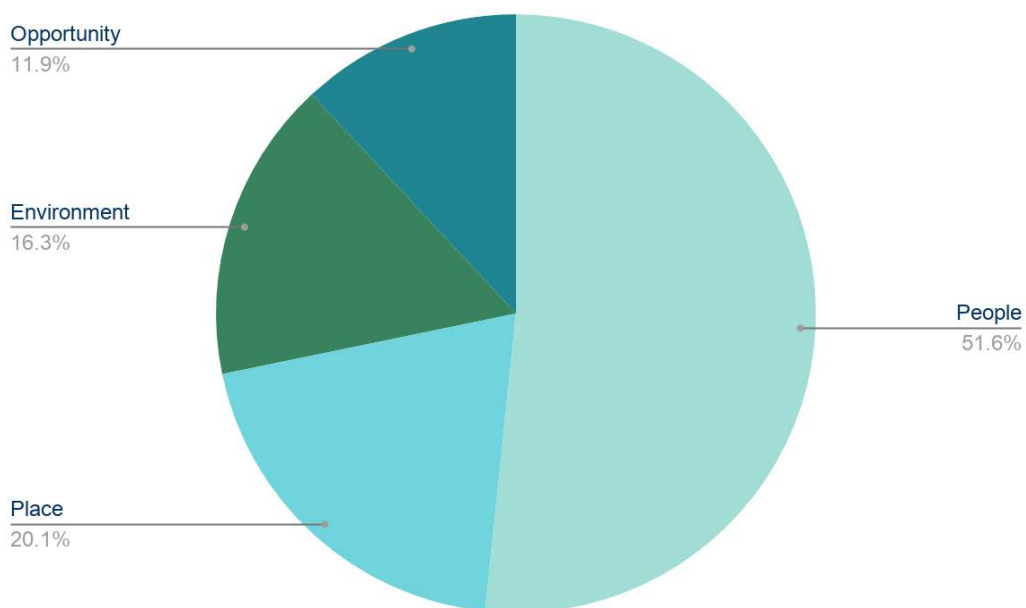Figure 14 shows how these engagement responses fit under the four Community Vision pillars. Feedback related to People attracted the most interest.

**Figure 14: Responses by Community Vision Pillar**

# People

People is one of the three key pillars of the Community Vision 2030 and includes the two themes of Diversity and Inclusion, and Health and Active Living. This pillar accounts for 51.6% of responses which mentioned at least one of the two People-related themes, making it the top priority pillar across the engagement responses.

## Theme 1: Diversity and Inclusion

The City of Greater Dandenong has the most culturally diverse population in Australia, with residents from 157 different countries. Feedback under this theme accounted for 18.2% of responses, making this the second-highest mentioned theme across the engagement.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Activities, events, markets and festivals to celebrate our diverse culture
- Diversity, access and inclusion
- The transition to adulthood
- Cultural safety, cultural heritage and cultural inclusion
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition and reconciliation
- Accessible services and facilities (including libraries, community centres and other public access council infrastructure).

Feedback related to accessible services and facilities and diversity, access and inclusion accounts for over half of the responses received relating to Diversity and Inclusion, and 10% of the total feedback received.

## Theme 2: Health and Active Living

A healthy community has access to quality health services and an active lifestyle, no matter their ability or circumstance.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Active/positive ageing
- Social connection, social support and feelings of safety (including staying connected digitally)
- Healthy lifestyles (nutrition, physical activity, mental health, drug use, addiction, access to medical services)
- Access to sport and recreation facilities and open space
- Food security (access, affordability and availability)
- Respectful relationships (prevention of family violence, gender equity)

- Activities to promote active participation
- Early childhood development and experiences.

Feedback relating to Health and Active Living accounted for 33.4% of responses, making this the highest-mentioned theme across the engagement. Access to sport and recreation facilities and open space and opportunities for social connection, and social support made up just over half of the responses received relating to Health and Active Living.

## Feedback by question related to People

In this section, responses that relate to the focus area of People are explored.

### Vision for future Greater Dandenong (n=143)

Comments relating to the Vision that talked about social connection, social support and feelings of safety were the most frequent responses across all pillars (n=45) at 18%. The third-highest priority mentioned about the Vision was access to sports and recreation facilities (n=21) making up 8% of responses to Vision questions.

For some participants, their vision for the City of Greater Dandenong reflected a community where diversity was celebrated and inclusivity was practiced. For some it reflected an increase in community-based activities, particularly those for young people and children.

Priorities to achieve a culturally diverse and celebrated future were:
- Investing in joint community activities participated in by diverse CALD communities.
- Prioritising the needs of children into considerations around services and infrastructure.
- Addressing the isolation of asylum seekers' through activities to encourage social inclusion, including sport and volunteering.
- Increasing young adults' awareness of services provided by the Council.
- Recognising our Indigenous connections and furthering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recognition and reconciliation.
- Respecting the experiences and contributions of all ages and ensuring community engagement with all age groups.
- Promoting a culture of respect for each other and joint celebrations to reflect this.

Direct feedback to shape the vision: the term 'vibrant' was ambiguous, and perhaps 'empowered' could be considered. A suggestion was made for a vision statement: *A city of the future providing for all through diversity, inclusion and prosperity.*

Some of the key gaps in achieving the current vision were identified:
- Addressing homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Assisting people on the breadline, and providing more food support such as a community kitchen.
- Addressing drug addiction and drug trafficking issues, and anti-social behaviour caused by boredom.
- Literacy, both digital and language, and numeracy required better support to ensure community members are able to participate:
  - Consider teaching literacy and numeracy in first languages rather than always in English to make participants feel more supported.
  - Digital literacy and greater access to technical resources - only 10-12% of ASRC clients currently have access to WiFi and laptops, with many using their children's equipment from school.
- Addressing safety as the hidden key to access and inclusion, and that access and inclusion in turn lead to opportunity.
- That stamping out racism and not having equal opportunity for all was a double standard which needed to be addressed.

## Health and wellbeing (n=145)

Comments relating to healthy lifestyles (n=51) made up 25% of responses to this question. Access to sports and recreation facilities (n=30) totalled 14%, and social connection, social support and feelings of safety (n=21) totalled 10% of responses.

Participants said their health and wellbeing and that of the community could be improved through:

- Multicultural and environmental festivals to celebrate all people and cultures.
- More community facilities, more groups and clubs, and more places that people can socialise, upskill and express themselves creatively.
- Youth, Indigenous and elderly officers to connect people to their community.
- Accessible and reliable stable mental health resources, particularly for young people and those from CALD backgrounds.

- Support for vulnerable communities, promote access to food and access to emergency warm overnight accommodation and showers for those experiencing homelessness.
- Assistance for people with visual impairment.
- Belonging and Inclusion initiatives.
- A more proactive approach to supporting the local LBGTQIA+ community.
- Female-only sport activities to address cultural barriers to physical activity.
- Work with existing culturally diverse and connected groups to communicate with diverse populations through innovative delivery modes such as audio-visual formats to provide cultural and social context to information.
- Innovative responses to provide health and wellbeing services where digital literacy, access and social isolation are a concern or for health and wellbeing concerns not able to be addressed over Telehealth delivery.

Participants identified these needs relating to community-building:
- More opportunities for young people including life skills workshops.
- More family-friendly open spaces.
- Establishing a timetable for community activities so people know what is happening.
- Creating a community which supports families, students, older residents and people with a disability.

Others prioritised the need for well-designed suburbs to achieve positive health impacts:
- Cleaner suburbs with energy efficient housing.
- Increasing tree canopy to combat heat sinks in urban areas.
- Policy to minimise replacement of grass and garden with concrete.
- Increasing green space and more native flora.
- Fitting bus stops with bus shelters to encourage use, and making public transport safer.
- More playgrounds and the establishment of community gardens.

### Community connectedness (n=136)

The top three responses to this question were about social connection, social support and feelings of safety (n=24) at 16%, activities to promote active participation (n=24) at 16%, and access to sport and recreation facilities (n=18) at 12% across the engagement.

Celebrating diversity through activities, markets, events and festivals (n=15, 10%) and enhancing diversity, access and inclusion (n=14, 9%) were the fourth and

fifth-highest priorities to address community connectedness. Other suggestions to address community connections included:

- Programs for children to connect with local Indigenous people and history, and people of all cultures.
- Making sure activities are language accessible to all.
- Addressing the participation barriers: confidence, language and disconnection.
- Initiatives to address racism in the community.
- Support for street parties and programs to forge stronger neighbourhood connections.
- Celebrating local people who have made a contribution to their community.
- More community centres or halls to rent for activities.
- Better access to toilet facilities at community centres.
- Creation of a makerspace area in Greater Dandenong to engage young adults and disadvantaged community members in practical skills.
- Better promotion of the youth program.
- Innovative ideas to engage young people, especially teens, and compete against technology distractions.
- Developing a phone app with map-based games similar to Pokemon Go to engage young adults and children in volunteering such as collecting rubbish, planting trees and visiting seniors.

Mental health and connectedness were a priority for some, prioritising:
- Better access to mental health services and well kept low income housing
- Provision of facilities for people facing homeless to access, such as showers and laundry, to help maintain mental health and enable people to go for job interviews with these basic needs addressed
- Prioritising community safety to increase mental health wellbeing
- Increasing a sense of belonging and interconnectedness
- Giving the community a voice and holding more opportunity for conversations
- Promoting and supporting involvement in volunteering
- Identifying more places where second languages can be supported
- A community which is free of drugs, alcohol, and anti-social activities, and which has more police presence.

### How we can value our diversity (n=122)

Activities, events, markets and festivals to celebrate our diversity (n=37) accounted for 31% of responses within this question. Cultural safety, cultural

heritage and inclusion (25) totalled 21%, and diversity, access and inclusion (24) totalled 20% of responses.

Participant priorities to celebrate diversity were:
- Educating our children about diversity and respect.
- Language development programs for older residents.
- Celebrating harmony and unity events.
- Celebrating different events like Diwali.
- Everyday acknowledgement of diversity in shops, schools and services.
- Inclusion of Indigenous Australians and Indigenous culture in activities, music, art and place names.
- More support for our Indigenous community members.
- Organising walks in small groups of 10 or less at nearby trails for people with different ethnicities to encourage racial unity.
- More patience within Greater Dandenong with multilingual communities
- Including community leaders from different nationalities to further engagement with diverse communities.
- Recognising that some venues can be perceived as 'white'; having more events in public locations such as parks to ensure they are inclusive.
- Better access to toilet facilities for older residents.
- Address assumption that people know how to deal with diversity and engage with other cultures just because Greater Dandenong is multicultural.

## What the community is worried about (n=51)
Worries related to health and active living were focused on healthy lifestyles (n=12) making up 14% of responses and social connection, social support and feelings of safety (n=8) at 10%. Worries related to diversity and inclusion were around racism and inequality.

Participants said they were worried about:
- Discrimination still taking place amongst our community in future.
- School bullying due to racism.
- Public safety.
- Equal opportunity for girls and young people.
- Leaving our cultures disconnected and not celebrating them; "if this occurs we won't understand each other and the next generation won't maintain a peaceful coexistence".
- Councillors not being global enough and not representing residents.
- The need to put our differences aside and embrace our differences.
- Funding for mental health services.

- Mental health issues and drug and alcohol abuse.
- Safety concerns when exercising at night.
- Family violence.
- School bullying.
- How we're shaping the community for our kids.

## What Council services the community needs (n=234)

Feedback about accessible services and facilities (n=24, 12%) was the second-most frequent response to questions about Council Services across all pillars. Responses about access to sport and recreation facilities (n=22, 11%), social connection, social support and feelings of safety (n=17, 9%) and activities to promote active participation (n=14, 7%) made up the third, fourth and fifth-most frequent responses to questions about Council Services.

Service requests specific to health and active living and diversity and inclusion were:
- Ongoing family support and activities to support , such as new parents (especially dad) networks or classes and child health services, and a cloth nappy subsidy.
- Promotion of and support for volunteer opportunities.
- Financial hardship support services, food relief and essential groceries for vulnerable groups.
- An arts festival to celebrate the strength of community in getting through COVID.
- A youth disability group.
- Additional services for CALD residents.
- English support, digital literacy and computer access groups.
- A neighbourhood event as part of Neighbour Day.
- More Indigenous trail markers and names indicating the history of the area.
- Improve consultation and communication process with all residents in multiple languages.
- Community education sessions in first aid, crime prevention, CPR, fire safety and friendly neighbour relations, in a community venue.
- Establish a community space in the Uniting Church site on Chapel Road or the stockyards precinct.
- Outreach of library services.
- Upgrade to outdoor netball courts at Greaves Reserve including resurfacing and lighting.
- Access to programs that assist older people to remain in their homes safely.

- Case management support for vulnerable families who do not qualify for commonwealth services.
- Stricter stance on drug and alcohol use and gang violence.
- Safer access to the skate park across the road - children currently cut across the road.
- Utilise Dandenong basketball stadium for other sports.
- Advocacy for residents who require pathways into rehab services.
- More services for young people experiencing mental illness, including group activities.
- Free ongoing mental health services.
- More information about senior services and what services we can use in our homes.
- More free tai-chi classes and a community boxing gym.
- More cricket grounds & pavilions especially cricket nets & turf wickets.
- Park and playground revitalisation.
- Better promotion of free health and active living services to include and activate low income households.
- Activate newly developed and refurbished public spaces with youth-friendly activities.
- More child care services to help socially isolated parents participate in more activities

## Place

Place is one of the three key pillars of the Community Vision 2030 and includes the two themes of Attractive and Vibrant, and Connected Places. Creating a clear sense of place in our local area can help us shape how we feel about where we live, work, visit and play and accounted for 20.1% of responses.

### Theme 3: Attractive and Vibrant

Making Greater Dandenong an attractive and vibrant place has benefits for residents and visitors alike. It can make people proud to live, work and play here, as well as bringing in further tourism and business. A future vibrant Greater Dandenong that 'works' for all, is safe for all, and is inclusive of the diverse community that live here. This can be influenced through locations, amenities, streetscaping and events that acknowledge the varied population needs within.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Affordable housing/housing mix.
- Lifestyle and proximity (shopping and cafes).
- A diverse and vibrant arts culture.
- A safe public realm (safe and attractive design, street activation, street art).
- Perceptions of safety and positive reputation.

Feedback related to Attractive and Vibrant accounted for 14.6% of responses, making this the third-highest mentioned theme across the engagement.

### Theme 4: Connected Places

A connected Greater Dandenong has flow-on effects with many benefits for our community. Building a Greater Dandenong with connected places helps our community to be healthy and active, feel safe, and feel connected to other community members and to places of significance. Connection can be increased through roads, public transport, bike lanes and walking tracks, and through clever design of community assets, through accessibility, and connection to our significant places through signage, awareness and placemaking.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Safe and accessible public transport services.
- Connection through walkability, bike tracks and walking tracks.
- Connection through road networks and vehicle movement.

Feedback related to Connected Places accounted for 5.5% of responses, making this the least mentioned theme across the engagement.

## Feedback by question related to Place

In this section, responses that relate to the focus area of Place are explored.

### Vision for future Greater Dandenong (n=86)

Comments relating to the Vision about a safe public realm were the second highest priority mentioned (n=28). Perception of safety and positive reputation (n=17) was the equal fourth-highest priority mentioned across the engagement making up 7% of responses to Vision questions.

For many participants, their vision for the City of Greater Dandenong was one where the community feels safe, where crime is low and people feel proud to say they live in the Dandenong area.

Gaps to create a more attractive, vibrant and connected Greater Dandenong were:

- An increase in the amount of open space in the older areas of Greater Dandenong for children to play in.
- More cameras and more police presence.
- More active and public transport links to make it easier for people to study, work and shop locally without getting in the car.
- More infrastructure built for cycling giving consideration to connecting the bicycle track between Railway Parade and Bennet Street Bridge for safety.
- Dog walking areas that are accessible without the necessity to drive.
- A safer environment especially around train stations to encourage use.
- Addressing sexual harassment and aggression towards female residents.
- Building a better reputation for Greater Dandenong.
- Revitalising Noble Park and Dandenong shopping strips.
- Homelessness and better support systems.
- Upgrade of streetscaping and general infrastructure maintenance.
- Utilising vacant blocks in the inner west of Dandenong near the station and Pickett Street as a temporary park.
- Encouraging boarding houses and real estate agencies who operate ethically and offer safe, high quality, sustainable housing for our vulnerable citizens.
- Giving Noble Park shopping centre strip on Douglas Street a facelift.
- Setting up a small stage permanently somewhere for live music.

- Stimulating small enterprises.
- Providing incentives for businesses to trade later along Lonsdale St in Dandenong to bring a sense of security to main street Dandenong.
- Supporting creative industries development and creative expression in public places through arts and music festivals, live music in public places, temporary and permanent public art and public performances, filling the streets with local cultural expression.

## Health and wellbeing (n=54)

Having a safe, attractive and connected Greater Dandenong contributed greatly to a healthy community. Participants focused on cycling and walking paths, with safety, maintenance, quantity and shade a priority. Accessibility of public transport was mentioned as having an effect on health and wellbeing. A safe and attractive public realm was the third-highest priority mentioned across the engagement (n=29) making up 14% of responses to Health and Wellbeing questions.

Participants' suggestions were:
- Bike track through the cemetery.
- Outdoor gyms along a fitness trail.
- More trees along walking and bike paths.
- Access to bike rentals so people who can't afford bikes aren't excluded.
- Bike trails that link all green corridors within Greater Dandenong.
- Access to affordable healthy grocery stores.
- More parks with exercise equipment like the one in Rowville (opposite Aldi).
- A disability playground and park for Noble Park could be innovative and draw unique visitors.
- Promote local fitness and sports clubs.
- More hard rubbish collections to address illegal dumping which attracts rodents.
- More bins in public areas.
- Address used needles and syringes in the community and in waterways.
- More shade in the skatepark.
- More CCTV and street lighting.
- Implement a snap and fix system to upload photos of problems in public spaces and report concerns on the phone.
- Fruit trees on nature strips for the community to eat.
- Discourage further gambling venues and provide supports for those impacted.
- Footpath repairs and widening.

- Improvements to road at Springvale Community Hub to address safety concerns about water collected on the road.

## Community connectedness (n=29)

Ways in which participants thought community connectedness could be improved by ensuring an attractive, vibrant and connected city were:

- Limiting development within the CBD to retain the village feel.
- More locations with a community focus in Keysborough, where community members are able to participate in programs and meet more people.
- A cinema or similar entertainment in Keysborough South shopping centre.
- Ensuring technology does not replace social interaction.
- Paths for riding and walking to local parks that are away from the roads.
- More disability parking needed especially at Dandenong Market.
- Better bike lanes and more public transport in Keysborough and Keysborough South.
- Advocate for increased public transport on weekends.

## How we can value our diversity (n=14)

Some participants acknowledged the value in showing the diversity of Greater Dandenong through our city features, such as:

- Make our diversity more commercial and publicise it throughout Melbourne.
- Giving outer Greater Dandenong residents reasons to come in and see why inner Dandenong can be so great.
- Displaying cultural artefacts, performances of traditional arts, dance and music, and providing opportunities to learn and participate.
- Showcasing diversity through everyday acknowledgement in our shops, services and schools.
- Free public transport to encourage interaction with people of different cultures.

## What the community is worried about (n=18)

Concerns were mostly around safety, congestion and the stigma Greater Dandenong carried around safety. Additionally, the quality of housing stock and the vibrancy of the area. Participants reported feeling worried about:

- Personal safety while walking in public or in their homes, and the feeling of not being able to feel safe in your own area.
- Safety on roads and walking tracks and the need for cameras and better lighting.
- Safety concerns at night at Dandenong station.

- The speed limit around Noble Park Skate Park with concerns it should be lower to minimise injury to young people and children.
- Traffic congestion, particularly in Noble Park due to apartments without adequate parking, and traffic noise.
- The need to maintain and enforce stricter guidelines on development to ensure a good standard of housing stock with adequate open green space for residents.
- Dandenong offers a great mixed bag of diverse culture, clothes, sports, religions and food, and even an LGBT event, but there's a need for more lifestyle options like cafes for brunch or bars for drinks with friends.

### What Council services the community needs (n=123)

Comments about a safe and attractive public realm (n=33, 17%) were the most frequently received responses to questions about Council services. Participants want better connected public transport that is more user-friendly, and safer cycle and pedestrian access including crossings, paths and street lighting.

Specific services mentioned by participants were:
- Advocacy to State Government for better connected and more frequent public transport services, for example route 709 Noble Park to Mordialloc.
- Shelter at the bus stops in particular the route 345 to Narre Warren.
- Better pedestrian access on the footpath at the back of the Dandenong Market carpark.
- Better traffic safety for pedestrians with more zebra crossings and speed humps to stop roads being used as rat runs.
- Footpaths that help people cross the road easily and make parking accessible for those with prams.
- Increased street lighting such as solar lighting to make our streets safer to encourage walking and cycling.
- A traffic light instead of a roundabout for central Noble Park.
- Pedestrian crossing at Parkmore shopping centre along Kingsclere Ave.
- Consideration of toilet facilities along walking paths to encourage access to people who require them.
- Remarking existing cycle paths on roads, creation of more shared paths, bike paths, and promotion of bike path locations so people know where they can ride safely in the area.
- More open, green spaces to encourage meeting outdoors.
- Open pathways for walking in central Noble Park with more trees and chairs to enjoy the outdoors in front of the restaurants.
- Ensure new landscaping is maintained and that capital works have an adequate maintenance budget.

- Address shop fronts that look aged or dirty.
- Regular Council cleaning of strip from Springvale road to Police Road.
- Maintenance and repair of driveways to private properties.

## Opportunity

Opportunity is one of the three key pillars of the Community Vision, and responses about opportunity are grouped in two themes - Education and Employment, and Leadership and Investment. Opportunity accounted for 11.9% of responses making it the fourth priority pillar across the engagement responses.

### Theme 5: Education and Employment

Skills and experience within a population can be one of a community's biggest strengths. With our wide-ranging and diverse population comes wide-ranging and diverse skills and experience, and a future Greater Dandenong where we can grow these skills even more.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- The ability to find meaningful employment close to home, or find employees.
- Lifelong learning (including access to quality schooling).
- Tertiary education.

Feedback related to Education and Employment accounted for just under 6% of responses, making this the equal seventh-highest mentioned theme across the engagement, along with Leadership and Investment.

### Theme 6: Leadership and Investment

To shape our shared future and steer us in the direction of a healthy, prosperous and inclusive community, leaders like Council need to engage with community groups, organisations, individuals and the business community.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Transport infrastructure, investment and advocacy.
- Council leadership and collaboration.
- Industry innovation, local business and investment, entrepreneurism and flexible workplace (diverse economy).

Feedback related to Leadership and Investment accounted for just under 6% of responses, making this the equal seventh-highest mentioned theme across the engagement, along with Education and Employment.

## Feedback by question related to Opportunity

In this section, responses that relate to the focus area of Opportunity are explored.

### Vision for future Greater Dandenong (n=45)

The majority of feedback about the Vision in relation to education and employment focused on providing more support to certain sections of the community. Participants value leadership from Council, and want to see more of it to help shape a great future for Greater Dandenong.

Where leadership is needed to harness the opportunity of living in Greater Dandenong participants prioritised:

- More educational programs for young people.
- Supportive employment services to help young people feel comfortable finding and attending work.
- More help for primary and secondary schools and those from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- More support for children to be ready for future jobs in STEM, and more technical studies at school.
- More tertiary education opportunities locally.
- More opportunities for employment for disadvantaged community members such as refugees or asylum seekers.
- More jobs offered to migrants with no Australian job experience.
- More development of infrastructure, while retaining heritage buildings.
- Balancing Council resources more fairly across the suburbs.
- Keeping up good levels of community engagement and participation through all sections of the community.
- Providing more opportunities for stakeholders to participate in planning for services in the community.
- Advocacy and lobbying where there are issues that are beyond Council's responsibility, for instance social housing.
- Greater diversity of Councillors, in age, profession and interests.
- Consideration of a two-term limit for Councillors to retain energy and interest.
- Greater leadership from Councillors in demonstrating effective teamwork.

Direct feedback to shape the vision: There was a suggestion to add *'study, work and play'* to the Vision statement.

### Health and wellbeing (n=19)

The health and wellbeing impacts of education, employment, leadership and investment were raised by several participants. Priorities noted were:

- Providing good education and employment opportunities for our new immigrants.
- More technical studies available in school curriculums.
- Increased job opportunities.
- Addressing the impact of drugs on education and employment.
- Assistance for small businesses in identifying available local workers.
- More positive role models for young people with a key focus on education and employment.
- Acknowledgement of the connection between improved employment opportunities and a healthier community.
- Continuing the library-run 'literacy help' programs.
- Providing information to children at school level which flow on to educate their families as well.
- Making Council processes easier for the community to understand.
- Council gaining community members' trust that the community's needs are considered to be important.

### Community connectedness (n=15)

Participants said that community connectedness could be achieved through education, employment, leadership and investment by having strong community engagement and boosting skills literacy.

Ideas put forward were:

- Informal conversations and consultations with the community to seek input.
- Council to attend community meetings, regular activities and programs run by different community groups.
- Improving digital literacy and supporting equal access to technology.
- Organising app, web and digital development classes at no charge through the library service.
- Inviting more community members to engage with and provide training to younger people in STEM learning.
- Community being active in decision-making in Greater Dandenong.
- Continuing to hold community pop-ups in areas such as Keysborough.

- Having Councillors who listen and represent the community, and directors who listen to the community.
- Providing opportunities for participation in community decision making such as panels, community action groups and reference groups.

## How we can value our diversity (n=6)

Several participants suggested ideas to value diversity in Greater Dandenong, through education, employment, leadership and investment, through:

- Highlighting our diverse residents by hiring them throughout the Council organisation.
- Setting up an events organisation headed by Council that community members are partners in.
- Encouraging the opening of restaurants, especially in the city centre.
- Advocating for better education opportunities for all.
- Working to reduce instances of discrimination in education and employment.

## What the community is worried about (n=26)

The ability to find meaningful employment (n=11, 13%) was the second-highest priority mentioned in response to questions about worries. Participants outlined their worries around:

- The quality of schools in Greater Dandenong.
- Limited educational options, and lack of a state secondary school in the Keysborough South vicinity.
- Lack of opportunity in schools for computing and technical knowledge.
- A need to provide more STEM learning to prepare for upcoming careers.
- Concerns from young people about being able to find an eligible job when finishing school.
- Job security, economic prosperity and more local jobs.
- Concerns that manufacturing and related industries will not return to Dandenong post-COVID-19.
- A need for diversification of industry and an opportunity to upskill our large migrant community.
- Underemployment through a lack of ongoing work and the casualisation of work.
- More assistance to link sponsors and internships to address education and employment complications with permanent residency.
- A perceived lack of concern about the environment, sustainability and each other in Greater Dandenong.
- A need to do more to protect heritage features in the area.

**What Council services the community needs (n=81)**

Specific services needed to realise Greater Dandenong's potential:

- Review of Council's processes to make dealing with Council easier (enquiries, complaints, applications) and more approachable.
- More regular maintenance of public parks and quick response to community requests and complaints.
- Appropriate development and forward-thinking planning decisions.
- Retaining our green wedge areas.
- Providing a business startup service.
- More job seeker services for those who are under-experienced and starting out or getting back on their feet.
- Supporting a pop-up economy in vacant spaces and continuing to revitalise areas where shops are closing.
- Accessible learning technology for school children.
- Support for non English speakers to manage (engage, renew, change) fire safety and service providers such as telephone, electricity and gas.
- Investment in areas of Greater Dandenong that appear tired.
- Rate rebates and deferred payments to support businesses to reopen after COVID-19.
- More funding opportunities and financial grants for community groups.

# Environment

Environment was added as a result of community feedback and growing acknowledgement of the importance of the natural environment, climate change and sustainability to the community. This pillar includes two themes: Natural Environment and Sustainable Initiatives and Development. This pillar accounts for 16.3% of responses, making it the third highest priority pillar across the engagement responses.

## Theme 7: Natural Environment

The natural environment of Greater Dandenong consists of wetlands, eucalyptus open woodland and native grassland, and 29% of its land area forms part of the South East Green Wedge. Within Greater Dandenong there are 600 hectares of parks and reserves supporting many plant and animal species.

This theme includes feedback relating to natural open space and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity (flora and fauna).

Feedback related to Natural Environment accounted for 7.1% of responses, making this the fifth-highest mentioned theme across the engagement.

## Theme 8: Sustainable Initiatives and Development

Greater Dandenong is a growth area of Melbourne. With this growth comes an opportunity to make choices about sustainable planning and good environmental design.

This theme includes feedback relating to:
- Sustainability initiatives
- Climate change and use of renewable energy
- The effects of personal behaviours on the environment.

Feedback related to Sustainable Initiatives and Development accounted for 9.2% of responses, making this the fourth-highest mentioned theme across the engagement.

## Feedback by question related to Environment
In this section, responses that relate to the focus area of Environment are explored.

## Vision for future Greater Dandenong (n=38)

Comments relating to the Vision that talked about natural open space and protection of biodiversity (n=17) were the equal fourth-highest priority, making up 7% of responses. There was recognition about the need to increase the green credentials and features of Greater Dandenong, and sustainable initiatives and development focused on the use of policy to think strategically and engage community and partners.

Participants suggested ways to realise a green future by:

- Planting more trees on nature strips, upgrading parks and installing garden beds, vertical gardens and plant boxes in central areas.
- Installing nature playgrounds include boulders, tree stumps and trees in the design instead of plastic.
- Developing greening neighbourhoods to protect private trees and green wedge protection.
- Building a greener, healthier, cooler city by protecting existing trees and planting new ones, increasing canopy cover and providing water for trees using Water Sensitive Urban Design methods.
- Supporting animal shelters to accept injured native animals.
- Developing riparian corridors linked to garden wildlife and reserves, and planting natives, grasses and sedges on street verges.
- Building a sustainable city that seeks to grow biodiversity and nurture the flora & fauna around us.
- Making Dandenong a centre for green living.
- Start engaging the residential and business community when making environmental decisions concerning parks, reserves and nature strips.
- Educating, and fining, community members in relation to responsible domestic animal management.
- Rehabilitating creek areas with natural landscaping and removal of cement.
- Increasing community education on biodiversity and sustainable transport, house construction, waste disposal and climate change strategies.
- Increasing environmental protections of green spaces, local bird and wildlife and protected trees through an improved biodiversity policy.
- Getting traction with Council's Urban Forest Strategy and wider Sustainability Strategy.
- Continuing to ensure Council is playing a role in reducing our carbon footprint.
- Reducing the number of cars parked on side streets due to development of townhouses with one car garages.

- Supporting schools to increase the engagement of students with environmental protection activities.
- Finding innovative ways to deal with food waste better.
- Supporting more environmental awareness activities, particularly for CALD communities.
- Providing more recycling facilities, and advocating for outlets that sell beverages in disposable containers to install recycling stations for those containers.
- Creating more environmental protection of our beautiful green spaces, local bird and wildlife, and protected trees.
- Highlighting developers who are prioritising sustainability.

## Health and wellbeing (n=26)

Natural open space and protection of biodiversity was the fifth-highest sub-category mentioned across the engagement (n=15,7%) in response to Health and Wellbeing questions. Participant priorities focused on the provision of green space, and of Council taking a key role in supporting community action through incentives and education.

Suggestions from participants included:
- Initiatives and incentives to support a sustainable and healthier community (community gardens, veggie gardens, education on waste and recycling).
- Integrating more greenery into the built environment (planned green spaces in every suburb, working with landowners and developers to plant trees and vegetation).
- More Council support for environment activities in schools.
- Better education on diverse ecosystems from wetlands to bush areas including awareness not to damage or remove animals or plants from these areas.
- Education surrounding removing dog waste from park areas.
- More forms of voluntary community service surrounding sustainability, and more activities to activate the community - "People need to get involved with the most pressing issue of our time".
- Better promotion of our natural environment, build on the experience of COVID and community's reliance on and enjoyment of public open space.

## Community connectedness (n=4)

Responses were focused on increasing community connection through activities that protected the natural environment and increased level of awareness.

Suggestions were:

- Creating a natural environment for residents where they can reconnect with nature and each other.
- Educating the community about the environment, waste reduction and the locally grown food would help us connect.
- Increased education and programs to inform the community about what biodiversity is.
- Development of community gardens and activities based on sustainability (worm farms, compost bokashi, compost buckets, reusing jars and containers).
- Promotion of community projects with a sustainable bent to bring the community together and help forge connections.

### How we can value our diversity (n=3)

Participant feedback focused on forging connections with each other through nature:

- A 'multicultural arboretum' for Ross Reserve with trees representing major ethnic groups.
- Ensuring Indigenous Australian culture is shown in activities, music, vegetation and art.

### What the community is worried about (n=15)

The majority of worries related to living sustainably, protecting green spaces and the need to address climate change through climate action.

Participant worries were:

- Lack of community awareness about global warming, and the need to face reality and increase knowledge about it.
- The need to become a green, low waste community and localise our food sources.
- The depletion of natural resources.
- Maintaining a good environment in future as it will be the biggest support for future generations.
- The future and current climate adversities we will face.
- Wanting Greater Dandenong to take more climate action, and more *passivhaus* standard buildings and solar power.
- Littering and noise pollution.
- Green space being lost to developers.
- Retaining our 'lungs of Melbourne' to keep our air clean.
- Concern about the potential environmental impacts of the *Waste to Energy Plant* in Dandenong South.

- Unlawful fishing in our wetlands.
- Making sure children continue to have green space to play with their friends and wildlife has a home.

## What Council services the community needs (n=177)

The Greater Dandenong community wants to see better strategic planning around the natural environment and sustainability, with protection and care of existing environmental features. Specific Council service suggestions focused on:

- More street trees for increased canopy.
- More low plantings to encourage natural fauna and insects.
- Protection of significant trees on private land and trees with heritage and cultural value, especially redgums.
- Engagement with developers to plant trees at front and rear of newly built houses.
- Greening of industrial estates and better environmental features in walkways in-between landlocked estates such as installation of garden beds and seating.
- Creation of more green space and environmental features, particularly in new development areas.
- More green space and strategic planning around the types of green space, for instance native and Indigenous plant reserves, forests, wetlands and sanctuaries (not just grassed sports fields).
- Access to community gardens and locally grown food.
- Better care of existing features from pocket parks to district reserves.
- Environmental regard to animal impact such as dogs off lead, cats (feral and pet), foxes and rats.
- Investment into Water Sensitive Urban Design systems such as tree pits, swales, rain gardens and passive irrigation to capture stormwater run-off and irrigate newly planted trees.
- Recognition of the positive mental health and wellbeing impacts of being surrounded by nature instead of concrete, particularly in the older areas of Dandenong.
- Educating community members about the value of green spaces and trees.
- Support and advocacy for cheaper electric cars and solar power in homes, and support to access solar and wind energy deals for those in apartments.
- Diversification of recycling facilities for food, plastics and technological materials.
- Making Council buildings energy efficient with more green energy, solar panels, efficient lighting and insulation.

- Council roll-out of drinking fountains at all parks and council facilities to refill drink bottles.
- Litter trap at Patterson River.
- More investment from Council into renewable energy, technology and infrastructure.
- Nature strip gardening incentives.
- Support the removal of hazardous or invasive plants.
- Leadership from Council on adapting to climate change, and on dealing with increased temperatures and stronger storm events.
- Ensuring industrial areas have clean air and meet EPA requirements.
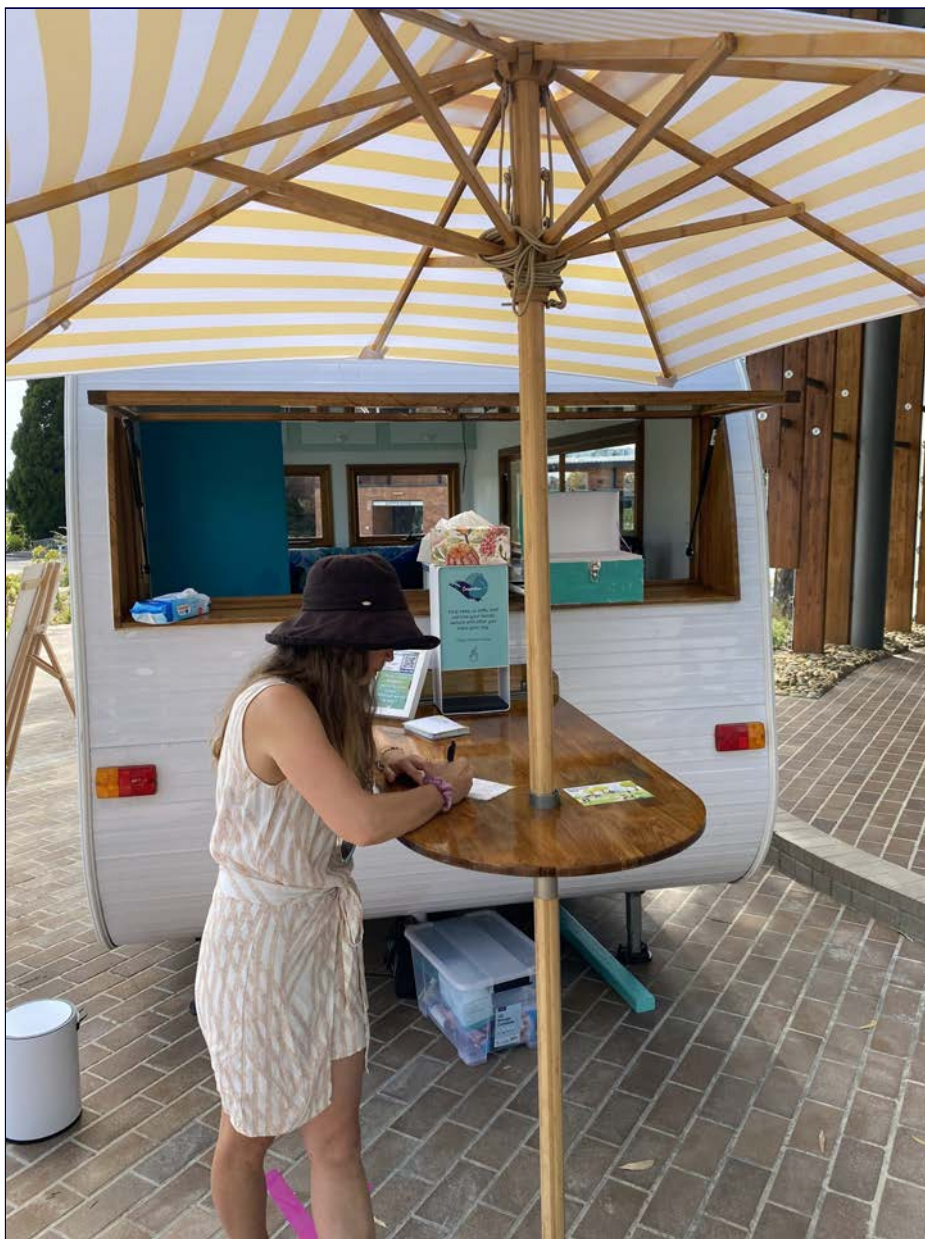
## 4.4 Children's Priorities

The priorities of children and young people have been included in the overall data analysis to ensure their opinions are included as part of the community of Greater Dandenong. However, this next section separates out the priorities of primary school children in order to better highlight the priorities of those who will most likely experience change in Greater Dandenong in the future, and who will actively shape the community by 2030. A selection of comments and drawings from children received in responses to the Children's Worksheet activity have also been included.

Figure 15 shows the age of participants. Figure 16 shows the responses received from the Children's Worksheets by themes.

**Figure 15: Percentage of Age of Participants - Children's Worksheets**
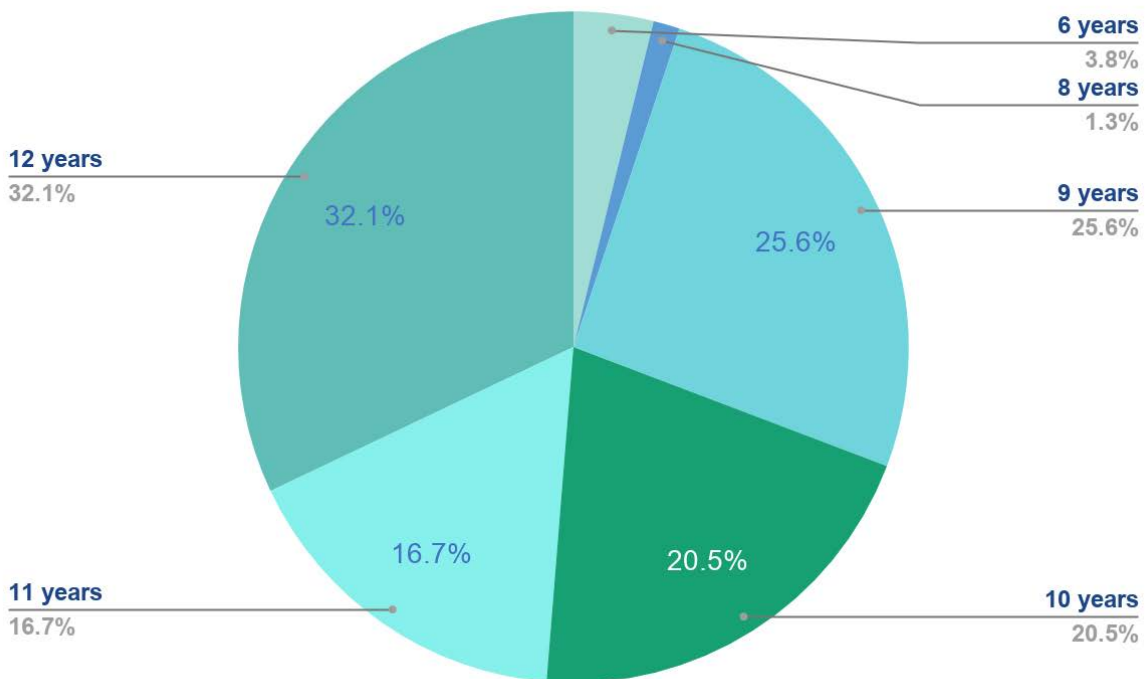


**Children's Worksheets (n=78)**

Questions:
- What do you, your family and your community need to live their best life?
- If you were in charge what would you do to create the best community for children?
- How would you know if your actions had been successful? You might see something different, or have different experiences yourself.

Drawing activity:
- What do you, your family, and your community need to live their best life? Draw your response!

Across the children's worksheets, the eight themes in descending order of responses received were:
1. Health and Active Living
2. Sustainable Initiatives and Development
3. Natural Environment
4. Education and Employment
5. Attractive and Vibrant
6. Leadership and Investment
7. Connected Places
8. Diversity and Inclusion

**Figure 16: Percentage of Children's Responses by Theme - Children's Worksheets**
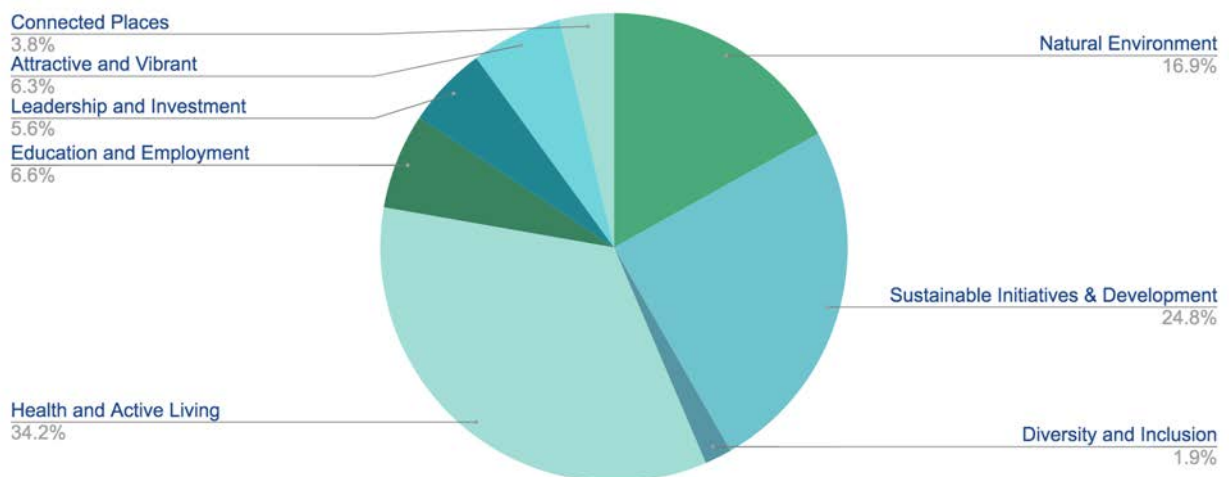


Across the children's worksheets, the top five response topics were:
1. Natural open space (54) 17%
2. Sustainability initiatives (46) 14%
3. Access to sport/recreation facilities (40) 13%
4. Food Security (29) 9%
5. Effects of personal behaviours on the environment (24) 8%.

## Here are some direct comments from children:

"Happy and healthy world with chances for kids and adults to share their ideas."

"Having more greenery, having solar power in every house."

"A child protective place."

"Plant as many plants as I can and everyone at least has to have a plant at their house."

"More food so we don't starve at home."

"Be happy, help poor people, give homes to homeless, give food to hungry people."

"No more mining for coal."

"Every child gets a free entrance for every indoor playgrounds and pools."

"I would add gardening areas for kids."

"Cheap and affordable food that's grown around us."

"Safer play areas."

"More animals and indigenous animals, can help animals and welcome it to their native backyards."

"Create a little club to teach children how to take care of native plants and trees."

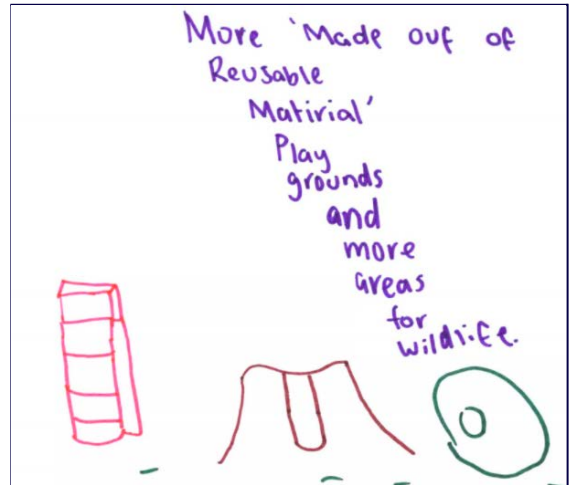"More access to the outdoors to explore and lay down for peace."

"Meeting local inventors and discussing children's ideas for new inventions."

"Someone to actually care about your desires, and the chance to share my ideas to an important person."

## Here are a sample of drawings from the worksheets:

These drawings respond to the question, "What do you, your family, and your community need to live their best life?"

More space!



More 'Made out of Reusable Matirial' Play grounds and more areas for wildlife.





houses

using empty spaces for people to live in

using empty spaces



My family needs atleast a week work

My community urgently requires Less pollution because most of the an are suffering via climate change pollution.

FOOD!

coffee cup
water bottl
← wrapper



STOP!

STOP

**Drawings from worksheets**
*(continued)*

# 5. Next Steps

Engagement on this project has created significant interest and aspirations for the Community Vision 2030 from participants. Additionally, from the number of people that walked past a pop up or read a post online.

Goodwill has been created between the Council and the residents, community groups and organisations who have taken their time to provide feedback on the project. As a courtesy to participants Conversation Caravan recommends the following next steps:

### Thank Participants

Issue a statement and update the Social Pinpoint page thanking participants for participating in the project and for sharing their ideas and contributions to the project. Thank the participants of the deliberative panels, organisations and community groups that participated in 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. Report what is important to the community that will help shape the Community Plan 2030. Release some photos for public enjoyment.

### 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.

Tell them, share what you are working on, dates of the Council Meeting and keep them informed with next steps. For example communicate the *'why'* behind the:

- Deliberative Panel
- Draft Community Vision