

Public Consultation Summary Report – Draft Urban Agriculture Strategy 2019-2023

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the details and findings of the public consultation process the Council's Draft Urban Agriculture Strategy (UAS) 2019-2023.
- 1.2 This is the second stage of community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the new Council UAS 2019-2023. The first consultation (preliminary consultation) occurred in May – June 2018 and informed the development of the draft document that was taken out to public exhibition during the second round of consultation.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 The council put the draft UAS on public exhibition between 11 February and March 11 2019. This exercise was undertaken to seek feedback on the vision and objectives of the draft UAS as well as the four year action plan contained within it. Respondents were invited to answer a survey containing six questions comprised of a mix of yes/no and open-ended questions, including:
 1. *Do you agree with the vision?*
 2. *Do you have any further comments about our vision?*
 3. *Do you support these objectives?*
 4. *Do you have any further comments on our objectives?*
 5. *What do you think of the activities outlined in the action plan?*
 6. *Do you have any comments about our draft Urban Agriculture Strategy?*
- 2.2 The consultation was conducted online via Your Say Yarra page, with an embedded survey.
- 2.3 The consultation was advertised through the Urban Agriculture Newsletter, the Yarra Life newsletter, the Yarra Environment Newsletter, and Council's social media channels.

3 Analysis of consultation responses

- 3.2 In total, 39 responses were received throughout the consultation period.

Vision and objectives

- 3.3 Overall there was a high level of support for the vision and objections of the draft UAS 2019-2023. In response to question 1 regarding the vision for the UAS, 95% respondents agreed with the vision set out. Similarly, 95% respondents when asked if they supported the objectives of the strategy (question 2) responded 'yes'.

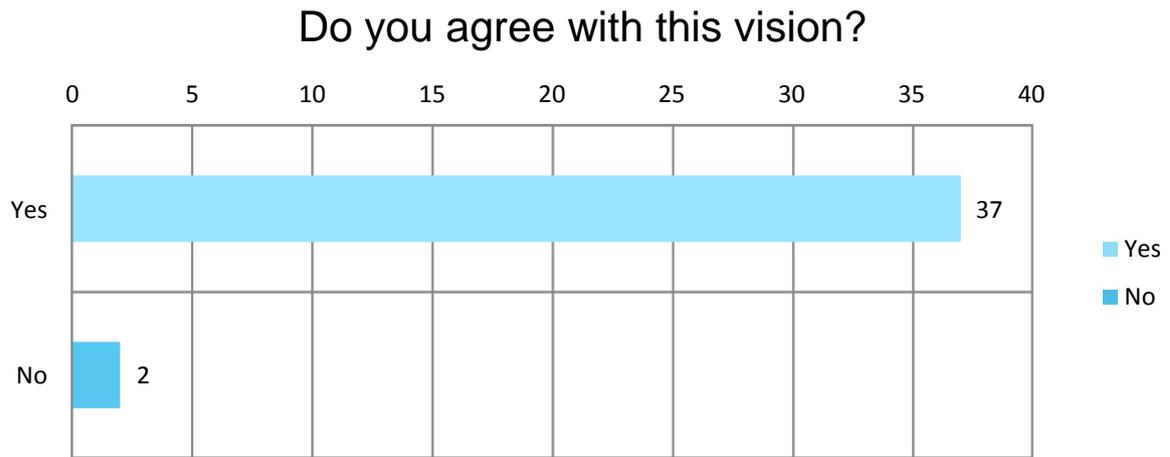


Figure 1: Graph showing the proportion of persons agree with the draft vision

3.4 Similarly, 95% respondents agreed with the four objectives outlines in the strategy.

Action Plan

3.5 Respondents were asked to provide feedback on the proposed four year action plan.

3.6 A summary of the respondent’s feedback is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Table of consultation responses and officer commentary

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES (AS INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS)	NO.	OFFICER RESPONSE
Question 1. Do you agree with the vision?		
Yes	37	N/A
No	2	N/A
Question 2. Do you have any further comments about of vision?		
Increased standard of living and access to land:		
In need of Action plan	1	A four year action plan is contained within the UAS
Clear, easy to understand vision for community	1	Noted
Design to consider disabled members of community	1	Noted, this will be considered as part of Action 1.2.1
Space concerns for garden due to population growth	1	Noted, Actions 1.1.1 - 1.8 are focussed on increasing access to land for food production
Urban planning structures to have specified heights around gardens to avoid overshadowing	1	Noted, Action 4.6 will investigate this issue
Provide services:		
Moderated space for workshops to share/ swap produce	1	Noted, Council is in a position to support these community issues through our channels and networks, which is reinforced by Action 2.1.
Review success of using planter boxes	1	Noted, Action 4.5.2 covers this
More compost collection points	3	Noted, actions 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 have been updated to include community composting, as well as action 2.1. These actions are further supported by actions in the Waste Minimisation and Resource Recovery Strategy 2018-22 which closely aligns with the work of this strategy particularly with regard to food waste and nutrient cycling.
Gives apartment dwellers access to produce	1	Apartment dwellers will have access to council facilitated programs and community facilities in the same way as all residents do. Action 4.3 will provide guidelines to encourage opportunities for food growing to be included in new developments
Workshops and market stalls	1	Noted, Council supports community initiatives, reinforced by Action 2.1.

Education:

Identify seasonal produce	2	Noted, Action 2.2 and 2.5 are focussed on increasing food skills and knowledge in the community
Simplify plant growing process for residents (ie. use of young plants rather than seedlings, best ways to use/cook after harvest)	2	Noted, Action 2.2 and 2.5 are focussed on increasing food skills and knowledge in the community
Identify edible plants outlined	1	Noted, Action 2.2 and 2.5 are focussed on increasing food skills and knowledge in the community
Market inefficiency to create community gardens	1	Noted, however community gardens have a wider value to the community than food production, such as building sense of community, social interaction, skill sharing
Sustainable & sense of community	1	Noted

Question 3. Do you support these objectives?

Yes	37
No	1
Not sure	1

Question 4. Do you have any further comments on our objectives?

Improve waiting list times gardens	2	Noted, operation and expansion of community gardens and community growing spaces in Yarra are supported by Actions 1.12, 1.2.2 and 1.3.
Workshops	1	Noted, Action 2.2 will provide an annual workshop program
Easier access to space	1	Noted, objective 1 is focussed on facilitating access to land so far as the areas Council has an ability to influence
Improve community planter boxes	1	Noted, Action 4.5.2 will address this
Education regarding growing plans, soil health and seasonal meals	3	Noted, Action 2.2 and 2.5 are focussed on increasing food skills and knowledge in the community
Ban toxic weed killer	1	Noted
Improvement of rooftop gardens for apartments living (solar programs, planter boxes)	1	Noted, Action 4.3 will provide guidelines to encourage opportunities for food growing to be included in new developments
Consider resources needed for successful project	1	Noted
Rushall community garden to educate on successful garden practices	1	Noted, 3.4.1 addresses community education and partnerships

Sponsorship from Rushall community garden & NFCG	1	Noted, action 3.2 addresses supporting community groups to access funding
Incentives from council wanted	1	Noted, it is not clear what incentives are being suggested beyond those facilitated through the draft action plan
Realistic & clear objectives	2	Noted
Composting and food minimisation spaces	1	Noted, objective 2.1 covers these spaces
Question 5. What do you think of the activities outlined in action plan?		
Push to be implemented sooner than posed	1	Noted, action 4.2 addresses timeline of strategy
Solution to space availability	1	Noted
Good establishment of community gardens & possible sites	1	Noted
Not in favour of rate payment funding & laneway inspections	1	Noted
Stronger push for amendments to Yarra Planning Scheme mechanisms such as density bonusing & vertical zoning to facilitate space for growing	1	Noted, Action 1.4 and 4.3 will investigate opportunities/best practice for integration of UA opportunities in new development.
Information for residents of location of gardens for use currently	1	Noted, this information is provided on Yarra website
Outlines 3.1, 4.2, 1.6.1, 1.6.2 ,2.5, 4.2 & 2.3.2 are common time constraint & space concerns	3	Noted
Push to start in inner city that has been drought effected	1	Noted, Action 1.6.1 addresses review of council owned space for possible use
Review of effectiveness existing 170 planter boxes	1	Noted, Action 4.5.2 addresses reviewing of planter boxes in Yarra
Question 6: Do you have any comments about our draft Urban Agriculture Strategy?		
Improved management of existing gardens (eg. Carlton N)	1	Noted, Action 1.1.2 provides support to existing community growing spaces, however most of these facilities are independently governed by community garden groups
Indigenous food practices	1	Noted, Action 3.4.3 is to work with Indigenous groups to identify opportunities for indigenous urban agriculture projects
Strips, laneways and roundabouts to be considered for use	1	Noted, Action 1.6.1 & 1.6.2 will consider these opportunities
Need for compost drop off points for apartment dwellers	1	Noted
Timely process for Strategy	1	Noted

Information on successful gardening, soil health & testing as well as seasonal plants	2	Noted, Action 2.2 and 2.5 are focussed on increasing food skills and knowledge in the community
Development of relationship with community members who wants to start gardens	1	Noted, Action 1.2.2 addresses support to potential new projects proposed under relevant guidelines, this support will be accessible by individuals as well as groups
Further discussion about Yarra's existing open spaces for gardens	1	Noted, action 1.6.1 addresses the consideration of opportunities to use council owned space for food growing
Urban designers, park team and strategic planners to collaborate	1	Noted, undertaken during strategy development and further reinforced through Action 4.4

3.7 Residents were asked to answer demographic questions in order to provide the Council with an understanding of the characteristics of the community members that were engaged throughout the consultation process. The answers are shown graphically below:

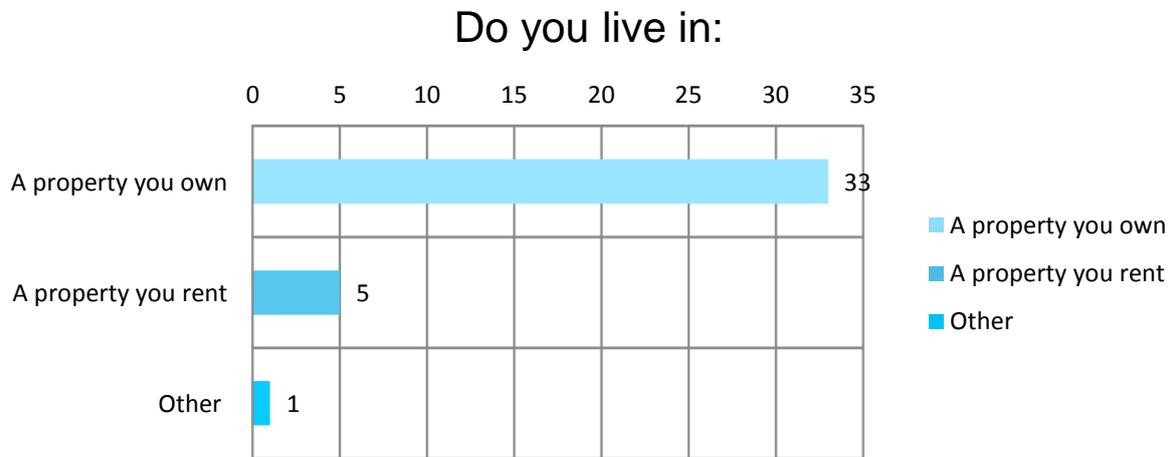


Figure 1: Graph showing the proportion of persons that responded by housing tenure

3.8 Figure 1 shows the predominance of respondents residing in a property they own. Yarra’s demographic data indicates approximately 50% of people in Yarra reside in rental accommodation, which highlights an ongoing challenge for achieving representative views from the community.

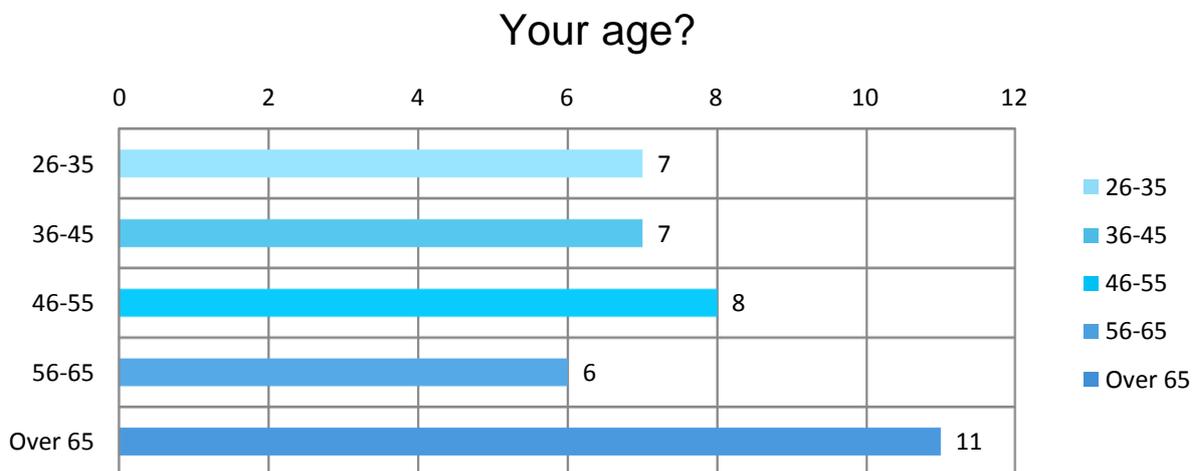


Figure 2: Graph showing the age of persons that responded

3.9 Figure 2 shows a fairly even distribution across age brackets between 26 and 65, with over 65 age bracket having the biggest participation rate. It is notable that there were no responses received by persons under the age of 26, which highlights a further challenge going forward in terms of achieving representative views from the community.

3.10 Themes emerging from the consultation analysis:

1. Strategy will assist to improve the liveability of the city
2. Strategy is ambitious, further resources will be required to deliver it
3. Strategy is realistic and proactive
4. More community garden space capacity/availability
5. Need to review effectiveness of planter box program
6. Community Growing Space processes are too bureaucratic
7. Run more workshops and vary the skill levels for these
8. Integrate composting and nutrient cycling into the strategy
9. Information on food plant selection for nutrition
10. Food planting in open space and the public realm
11. Support a network of UA spaces in support of food resilience
12. More accessible and wheelchair friendly community gardens

4 Next steps

- 4.1 Overall the feedback from the consultation was very supportive of the draft strategy. A number of minor changes have been made to the draft action plan to respond the feedback provided. These are listed in Table 1.