
Consultation Report – Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-2024

This report provides information on the various consultation methods used, and the data that has fed into, in the development of the Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-2024 (the Strategy). Engagement and consultation occurred via a range of initiatives throughout 2019-2020.

1. Review of relevant Yarra City Council consultations

Over recent years, the Community Partnerships branch conducted engagement around a number of strategies whose data fed into the LGBTIQ+ Strategy; this ensured a One Yarra approach in responding to the needs of the community.

Extensive community consultation has occurred in the last few years in the development of the following:

- Yana Ngargna Plan 2020-2023
- Multicultural Partnerships 2019-2023
- Yarra Homelessness Strategy 2020-2024

Yarra's whole of Council approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion intersects with these strategies and consultations.

Officers also conducted a large scale consultation called 'Inclusive Yarra', which invited participants to share their stories and ideas around inclusiveness.

Consultations conducted in the development of the above strategies included engagement with hard to reach groups, were extensive and widely diverse, and provided a rich resource and valuable information with application to the Strategy.

2. Communications and Engagement

A range of communication and engagement activities were undertaken to inform, consult and involve participants across the community.

Yarra City Council's Community Partnerships, Arts & Culture, Family & Middle Years, Youth Services, Library Services, Aged & Disability Services, Leisure, Diversity & Inclusion and LGBTIQ+ identifying staff have contributed to the development of the Strategy.

Council's LGBTIQ+ Working Group, QnA, played a key role.

Representation was also sought from the wider LGBTIQ+ community, and a number of key advocates, services, organisations, and businesses including the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Equality Portfolio), Rainbow Families Victoria, Bent Twig Alliance, St Vincent's, The Drum, Queer Space, Minus 18, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Thorne Harbour Health, Transgender Victoria, Eagle Leather, The Laird, the Peel, Vaud d' Vile, Hares & Hyenas, Melbourne Rubber, The 86, and Sircuit/Mollies.

Broad promotion of the public engagement opportunity was through a range of corporate communication channels and community networks including:

- distribution of consultation postcards at Midsumma Carnival 2020
- corporate communications including Council's website
- social media promotion via Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to direct people to the Your Say Yarra project page
- Yarra Life e-newsletter, distributed to over 10 000 subscribers
- formal and informal email networks and e-newsletters.

Engagement and consultation occurred across three key periods.

Officers had a stall at Midsumma Carnival in January 2020, a key event on the LGBTIQ+ calendar attended by thousands of people.

People attending the stall were asked to fill in a consultation postcard with the question 'How can your Council be more LGBTIQ+ inclusive?'

The second consultation period consisted of one on one meetings with key internal and external stakeholders.

These two consultations fed in the development of the draft Strategy.

The third consultation period occurred over the public exhibition period where the draft Strategy was presented to the wider community. Engagement and consultation occurred primarily throughout June-July 2020 and included the following:

a. Online

Your Say Yarra

The Your Say Yarra website (yoursayyarra.com.au/LGBTIQyarra) invited participants to comment on key areas of the Strategy.

The engagement activity was predominantly to gauge whether or not participants agreed with the priorities, goals and actions in the Strategy, and offered an additional forum for further comments.

b. In person

One on one meetings

One on one meetings were held with key stakeholders

As per the project plan, key stakeholders were approached to review the draft Framework. Officers organised one on one meetings with key stakeholders who were keen to provide feedback.

Some key stakeholders opted to provide feedback via email rather than in person.

Over 180 stakeholders were engaged across a range of methods, offering almost 1000 ideas. A summary of engagement is listed in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1: Engagement summary

	Method	How we engaged	Who we engaged
Online	Your Say Yarra Online portal <i>June – July 2020</i>	yoursayyarra.com.au/ LGBTIQyarra	- 57 people engaged participants - >650 comments
	Written Submissions	Open at any time during the public engagement period	- 3 submissions via email - 57 comments
In Person	Midsumma Carnival	Distribution of consultation postcards	- 109 participants - >109 comments
	Key internal stakeholders	Meetings with relevant internal stakeholders	- 7 participants - 13 comments
	Key external Stakeholders	One on one meetings were held with key stakeholders	- 10 participants -104 comments

Consultation Results

The engagement process attracted feedback from a cross-section of both Yarra’s LGBTIQ+ community and the wider community. Collation and analysis of the data fed into three key priorities identified through the initial consultations. These priorities form the basis of Council’s future work for the next four years:

- Welcoming and celebrating diversity
- An Inclusive Yarra
- Supporting, Participating and Connecting.

Under these priorities sit a number of strategic goals. The Strategy also includes a Year 1 Action Plan.

Appendix 1: Examples of Qualitative Responses

“Intersectionality would be great. I always find that representation is always the G in LGBTQ+. Reach out to those who identify as Bi, Trans, Queer. Another big thing is First Nations representations. This is something so important”

“Good balance of community-based objectives and internal organisational culture targets”

“Great to see the arts included, this nurtures diverse cultures, celebrates our differences and helps the arts industry”

“What sort of costs does this project have? Why wasn't the community consulted first on whether they even wanted this plan? Looks to me like decisions have already been made, and anyone not supporting it will not be listened to anyway”

“The website-related actions are a particularly good idea - providing useful, practical resources for LGBTQ+ locals and significantly increasing community awareness of LGBTQ+ existence and issues (providing the resources are kept up to date)”