

Consultation Report – Yarra Social Justice Charter

This report provides information on the various consultation methods used, and the data that has fed into, in the development of the Yarra Social Justice Charter (the Charter). Engagement and consultation occurred via a range of initiatives throughout 2018-2020.

1. Review of relevant Yarra City Council consultations

Over recent years, branches across Council have conducted engagement around a number of strategies which align with the development of the Charter; as such it made sense not to reinvent the wheel. These branches shared data from their consultations, which ensured that there is a One Yarra approach to responding to the needs of the community.

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

- Active Healthy Ageing Strategy 2018 – 2024
- Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018 – 2024
- 0-25 Plan
- Council Plan 2017 – 2021 (including the Municipal Public Health Plan)
- Re-Imagining Victoria Street

The use of these consultation results is an efficient and effective use of resources and also avoids “consultation fatigue” of participants.

Council has historically been proactive in addressing a number of areas that are high on the national and international human rights agenda, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum, LGBTIQ+ rights, gender equity, and access and inclusion for people of all abilities.

Council recognises that these groups (amongst others) are more likely to face issues related to social justice.

Additionally, the Community Partnerships unit conducted extensive consultation and engagement for the following strategies:

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

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 Social Justice Charter.

2. Communications and Engagement

A range of communication and engagement activities were undertaken to inform, consult and involve participants across the community. Broad promotion of the public engagement opportunity was through a range of corporate communication channels and community networks including:

- distribution of postcards directing people to Your Say Yarra
- corporate communications including Council’s website

- advertising of process via posters at Council venues
- social media promotion via Twitter and Facebook
- Yarra News & Yarra Life articles
- formal and informal email networks (including the Yarra Housing & Homelessness Network, Aboriginal Advisory Group, Yarra Multicultural Advisory Group and Yarra LGBTIQ+ Network) and e-newsletters.

Engagement and consultation occurred across two key periods. The first consultation – *Inclusive Yarra* – fed in the development of the draft Charter. The second consultation period – *Social Justice* – occurred over the public exhibition period and sought feedback on the draft.

a. Online

*Inclusive Yarra – October-November 2018 **

** Engagement was conducted early so it could feed into a number of strategies, including the Charter*

The Your Say Yarra website (<https://yoursayyarra.com.au/InclusiveYarra>) invited participants to share their stories of

- where they've seen or experienced inclusiveness in Yarra that they think should be celebrated
- ideas for improving inclusiveness in Yarra and what's inspired them.

These stories fed into the Charter, guiding Council's continuing support for human rights, diversity and inclusiveness.

Social Justice – December-January 2020

The public exhibition period for the draft Charter was launched at a Council event celebrating Human Rights Day on 10 December 2019.

The Your Say Yarra website (<https://yoursayyarra.com.au/socialjustice>) invited participants to comment about a time they felt their human rights were protected or not protected, and what Council can better do to better protect their human rights.

b. In person

Inclusive Yarra

Opportunities to provide face to face feedback were aligned with the Inclusive Yarra web page in the form of three 'Story Pods' set up at the Peel St Festival, Atherton Gardens Community Day and the Richmond Library. The Story Pods are a tool for collecting information whereby community members are able to share their stories in a Story Pod, with video gathered, analysed and edited for use in the development of the Plan.

The engagement approach encouraged creative contributions of narratives and examples via video and / or storytelling.

At these pop-up sessions, community members were also encouraged to complete a hard copy form if they did not want to participate in the Story Pod.

Social Justice

In developing the Charter, Officers held two workshops across Council with key internal stakeholders, including representatives from Community Partnerships, Arts & Culture, Aged & Disability, Family Youth & Children's, Leisure, City Works, Parking & Compliance, Social Policy and Information Services.

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to consider:

- How they use social justice principles in their work
- What policies / guides they use currently
- What is the best way of embedding the Charter across Council

Once the Charter had been drafted, Officers held one on one meetings with the same internal stakeholders to provide feedback on the internal application of the Charter.

3. Consultations Results

The engagement process attracted feedback from a cross-section of Yarra's community, although respondents were predominantly residents. An analysis of the data revealed that the community was largely concerned with the following themes:

- Welcoming diversity
- Community connectedness
- Participation & inclusion
- Safe & liveable spaces.

These themes feed into the four principles of social justice: access, equity, rights, and participation.

The Charter does not include an Action Plan as it will be a guiding document for Council. It provides the rationale for policy direction and the commitment to serving the whole community, including those groups who are disenfranchised or not traditionally represented in matters of governance.

The Charter also includes practical examples of how social justice plays out through Officers' work, and how Officers can incorporate social justice principles in their work.

Once the final Charter has been endorsed, Officers will work across Council to develop branch implementations plans as a means of imbedding its use, and highlighting the work that Council does in the social justice space.