

Engagement report

Prepared by *i.e. community* for the City of Yarra

Victoria Street Revitalisation Project

June 2026

About this report

This report sets out what the community said during the engagement on the City of Yarra's draft Victoria Street Revitalisation Plan. It covers what people value about Victoria Street, what concerns them most, where there is agreement and where views differ, and what the community wants to see in the Plan.

The engagement was codesigned by the City of Yarra and i.e. community, with analysis and reporting conducted by i.e. community.

It is accompanied by an addendum prepared by the City of Yarra, being the formal record of the engagement process. The addendum sets out the engagement approach, methods and channels, promotional activities and reach, and the quantitative results from the Your Say Yarra platform.

The two documents are complementary. The City of Yarra's addendum documents what was done and who took part; this report analyses what the community said and what it means for the Plan.

Executive summary

Victoria Street matters deeply to the people who use it. The engagement drew a large response: 314 online survey responses (including 887 written comments) and 78 in-person conversations involving 110 participants across the precinct. Most respondents know the street well. 83% had visited in the week before responding, and more than three-quarters live on or near it. What they value most is the street's food and dining (72%) and its Vietnamese and multicultural identity (57%), the character they want revitalisation to protect and build on rather than replace.

That affection sits alongside real concern. Safety was the most prominent theme across every channel, raised by more than two-thirds of online respondents in their own words and dominating the in-person conversations. The visible drug activity around the Lennox and Victoria Street corner is at the heart of it. Most people described safety not as one priority among several but as the precondition. The single most-chosen description of the street was that it "does not feel welcoming or safe" (41%), and 3 in 4 respondents (74%) ranked a safe, vibrant and welcoming precinct as their first priority, well ahead of the other four.

Three further themes came through consistently. Economic decline, meaning vacant shopfronts, high rents and absentee landlords, was raised by around a third of online respondents when asked what they would most like to see changed, and was a central concern for business operators. Cleanliness, rubbish and graffiti were raised across all channels and age groups. And running through the online survey in particular was scepticism about whether the Plan will deliver. People asked for concrete, measurable targets and baseline data rather than broad aspirational language, and for safety to be named as a measure of success in its own right.

The community does not speak with one voice on every question. Views are divided on the Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR), raised unprompted by about a quarter of online respondents, with most calling for it to be relocated or closed and a clear minority defending its harm-reduction role. Neither position represents a community mandate. Opinion is similarly split on graffiti (removal versus commissioned street art), on Lennox

Square seating, on parking, and on development, where some welcome new investment and others fear it will price out the independent businesses and food culture that give the street its character.

Overall, there is support for the direction of the draft Plan. Around 7 in 10 respondents (69%) agreed that amenity, economy and pride are the right measures of success. That support comes with a firm condition: the Plan must confront safety directly and concretely to be credible. People were clear that greening, street furniture and events will be seen as cosmetic if the safety and drug concerns at the Lennox and Victoria Street corner are not addressed first.

Headlines

- Safety is the dominant concern, raised by more than two-thirds of online survey respondents in their own words and present in every engagement channel.
- The single most-chosen description of Victoria Street was that it "does not feel welcoming or safe" (41% of respondents).
- Three in four respondents (74%) ranked a safe, vibrant and welcoming precinct as their first priority, far ahead of the other four.
- Food and dining (72%), location and accessibility (61%) and Vietnamese and multicultural identity (57%) are what people value most, character to build on and restore rather than replace.
- Economic decline (vacant shops, high rents, absentee landlords) was raised by around a third of online respondents when asked what they would most like to see change, and was central for business operators.
- Cleanliness, rubbish and graffiti were raised consistently across all channels and age groups.
- Around 7 in 10 respondents (69%) agreed amenity, economy and pride are the right measures of success, but with a firm call for specific targets, baseline data, and safety as an explicit measure.
- Views on the Medically Supervised Injecting Room are divided. Among the roughly one-quarter who raised it unprompted, most called for relocation or closure while a clear minority defended its harm-reduction role.

Project background

Victoria Street is a culturally significant and economically important precinct, recognised for its strong Vietnamese connection and for the contribution of residents and business operators who give the street its character. But ongoing challenges related to safety, amenity and business confidence mean the precinct is not reaching its potential.

On 8 April 2025, Council endorsed the development of the Victoria Street Revitalisation Plan: Enhancing Amenity, Boosting the Economy, and Fostering Local Pride, as a local-led initiative aimed at delivering short, medium, and long term targeted interventions.

In response, a draft Plan was developed to revitalise Victoria Street and make it more vibrant, safer and better supported to thrive. The Plan has been shaped with input from residents, business operators and community members.

The Plan includes a series of actions across five priorities, which were developed with community input, including through a Community Reference Group. The draft Plan foregrounds the Vietnamese community's role in Victoria Street's cultural and economic identity and includes initiatives to enhance public spaces through practical safety interventions.

By implementing this plan, the aim is for Victoria Street to be a safe, vibrant and welcoming precinct celebrated for its food, creativity, culture and retail experiences. With inviting public spaces, accessible transport options, strong community connections and a resilient local economy, it is a place where people want to live, work and visit.

How the community engaged

The Victoria Street Revitalisation Plan was tested through a wide mix of engagement channels over the consultation period. Over 580 people engaged across all channels to provide feedback on the Victoria Street Revitalisation Plan. The table below summarises the high-level reach and participation.

Engagement and participation	
314 Your Say Yarra survey responses	76% live on Victoria Street, on a connecting street, or nearby; 83% own or rent in Yarra
Six in-person opportunities	Five events were advertised and extended to cover the Melba Ward meeting
Six targeted sessions / outreach	VSBA, Business Advisory Committee, partners, young people, Vietnamese seniors and the broader community
110 participants across 78 intercept conversations	Business operators, younger adults and Victoria Street users
Nine submissions, CRM queries and emails received	Including submissions from Yarra Streets Alive and Bakehouse Studios, individuals, and one landowner
Promotion and reach	
49,460 digital reach	48,662 subscribers reached via six e-newsletters; 798 people engaged with social posts
3,500 properties	Nearby residents and businesses received postcards
Six advisory committees	Were provided the opportunity to participate

Alongside the online survey, the project team ran in-person sessions and targeted outreach to make sure the people most involved in the precinct had a direct way to be heard. This included a walking tour of the street, conversations with traders and the Victoria Street Business Association, and dedicated sessions with two priority groups: young people and renters, and the Vietnamese community, whose long-standing presence is central to the street's identity. Intercept conversations on Victoria Street captured the views of people who may not otherwise have completed a survey.

The big picture

Three messages came through clearly across all engagement activities.

First, **safety is the thing almost everyone agrees on**, and it shapes how people see almost everything else about the street. The visible drug activity at the Lennox and Victoria Street corner is at the heart of it. Most people see addressing safety as the first thing that has to happen before anything else can work.

Second, **running almost as strongly are concerns about the local economy and the look of the street**. Empty shops, high rents and absentee landlords are mentioned consistently. Cleanliness, rubbish and graffiti were raised across all channels and all age groups. Beneath the concerns, however, there is real affection for Victoria Street. Food and dining and the street's Vietnamese and multicultural character are what people value most, and they want revitalisation to protect and restore what they value, not replace it.

Third, **people want to see the Plan deliver real, measurable change**. There is scepticism about whether this time will be different, and there are strong calls for specific targets, baseline data and clear outcomes rather than broad aspirational language.

Overall, there is support for the direction of the draft Plan. The clear message is that it must tackle safety directly to make a difference.

Key findings

The following key findings draw on all engagement activities analysed for this report, including the online survey, the face-to-face intercept conversations, the Youth Hub session and the written submissions. They reflect what came through most clearly and consistently across the engagement, presented in order from most to least prominent.

The quantitative results from the online survey are set out separately in the survey findings section. The key findings here focus on the themes that emerged from what people said, across both the survey open-text responses and the in-person conversations. Where the two channels produced different emphases, this is noted.

Safety is the thing almost everyone agrees on

Safety was the most frequently raised theme in the online survey and was prominent across the feedback, including the in-person conversations, the Youth Hub session, the Vietnamese-community sessions and the written submissions. The visible drug activity at the Lennox and Victoria Street corner is at the heart of the concern. Most people framed safety not as one priority among several but as the precondition, believing that until it is addressed, other improvements will not be effective.

On the question about how people currently see Victoria Street, the single most-selected response described it as not feeling welcoming or safe. On the ranked priorities, a safe, vibrant and welcoming precinct was the clear first choice, well ahead of the other four.

The safety concern was consistent across age groups, tenure and language backgrounds. The only variation was in emphasis and in what people thought should be done about it.

Vacant shops, high rents and absentee landlords

Alongside safety, a consistent picture of economic decline runs through the engagement. Vacant and boarded-up shopfronts, high rents and landlords leaving premises idle were raised across the online survey and in the in-person conversations. Business operators described the situation as directly affecting their livelihoods.

People drew a direct link between economic decline and safety. Fewer active businesses means fewer eyes on the street and less reason to visit. The economic and safety concerns were closely connected in how people described them.

Food, location and multicultural identity

In response to the question about what people value most about Victoria Street, food and dining came first by a clear margin, followed by location and accessibility, then Vietnamese and multicultural identity. In open-text responses, these themes appeared less often than safety or economy (people tend to write about problems) but when they did appear they were warmly expressed. People described the street's multicultural character as something to protect and restore, not just something of the past. The in-person conversations identified the same pattern. Together they show how central the street's identity is to the people who use and care about it.

Cleanliness, graffiti and the look of the street

Cleanliness and rubbish were raised consistently across every channel and all age groups, appearing across the open-text questions in the survey and in the in-person conversations. Graffiti and tagging were raised as a related but distinct concern, with most wanting it cleaned up promptly and a smaller group, particularly younger respondents, wanting it commissioned as murals and street art.

Trees, greening, seating and outdoor space were also raised throughout the feedback, though not uniformly. Some people focused on adding greenery and activation to the street; others focused specifically on the Lennox Square seating, where views differ between those who want the space activated and those who want it removed on safety grounds.

Trust in Council's follow-through

A recurring theme in the online survey, particularly prominent in the question about what people disagreed with or found missing from the Plan, was scepticism about whether anything will change. People described the Plan's language as too vague and aspirational, and asked for concrete, measurable targets, such as baseline data, specific KPIs and clear outcomes for safety, business activity and visitor numbers.

This theme was consistent across age groups and tenure in the survey. It was less prominent in the in-person conversations, where the focus was on practical changes to the street.

Differing views

The two main channels captured different groups and produced some different areas of emphasis. The online survey attracted a largely residential population and produced the strongest views on safety, drugs and

cleanliness. The in-person conversations captured more business operators and more people from the Vietnamese and wider multicultural community, and showed a stronger emphasis on food, identity and greening.

What people said about the draft Plan

Safety

People said the Plan must address safety directly and concretely to be effective. They asked for a visible and consistent presence at the Lennox and Victoria Street corner. They also asked for graffiti and tagging to be cleaned up promptly in the busiest areas. A consistent message across channels was that improvements to greening, street furniture and amenity would not make a real difference unless the safety issue was confronted first.

People in the in-person conversations also asked for better drug and homelessness support and outreach services alongside enforcement responses.

Economy and business

People asked for practical help to fill vacant shops, reduce barriers for new tenants and support existing businesses through rising rents. Business operators in the in-person conversations asked specifically for help with shopfronts, reductions in permit barriers and support to bring customers back to the street. Some respondents, particularly younger people and those who made written submissions, raised concern that revitalisation and new investment could price out the independent businesses and food culture that give the street its character.

The street's identity and character

People described the street's Vietnamese and multicultural identity as the foundation the Plan should build on. A Community Service Hub that supports the Vietnamese and multicultural community was received positively, particularly in the in-person conversations and the dedicated Vietnamese-community sessions. Some concern was expressed that rising rents and new development could displace the businesses that define the street.

Cleanliness, graffiti and the public realm

People asked for more frequent cleaning and maintenance across the whole street, at a consistent standard. On Lennox Square seating, views were split. Some asked for more seating, shade and activation at the corner; others asked for seats to be removed because the corner is where people gather and it feels least safe. On graffiti, most people asked for it to be cleaned up promptly; a smaller group, particularly among younger respondents and those at the Youth Hub, asked for graffiti to be commissioned as murals and street art rather than removed.

Success measures

Survey respondents were asked whether amenity, economy and pride are the right measures of success for the Plan. Most said they were. Among those who responded with concerns, the most common points were: that safety should be an explicit measure in its own right; that baseline data should be collected so progress can be tracked; and that the measures should be specific enough to be independently verifiable.

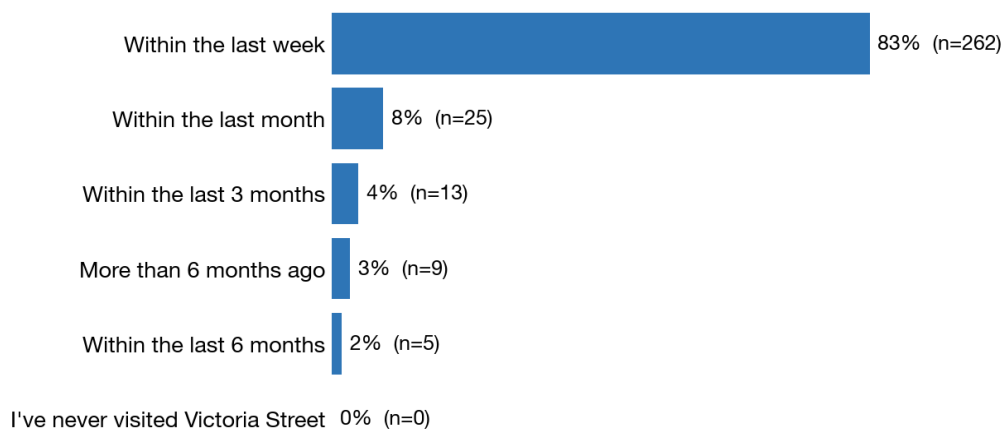
Some respondents said the word "pride" was too subjective to measure. People also asked Council to be transparent about its advocacy position and to keep the community updated on progress.

Survey findings

The online survey received 314 responses through the Your Say Yarra platform between 14 May and 7 June 2026. The following section describes the results for the multiple choice or response selection (quantitative) questions. Percentages are based on the number of people who answered each question, not out of all 314 respondents. The base for each chart is shown beneath it.

The open-text responses, where people described their concerns and ideas in their own words, are analysed separately in the "What we heard" section.

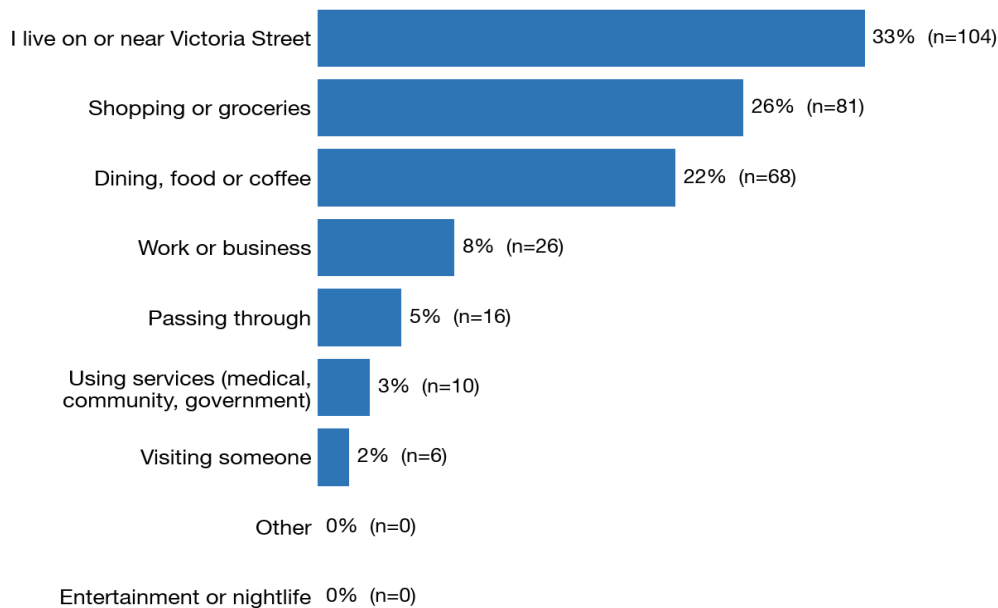
When did you last visit Victoria Street?



Base: the 314 respondents who answered this question.

The vast majority of respondents were recent, regular visitors: 83% had visited within the last week and a further 8% within the last month. Very few had visited more than three months ago, and nobody reported never having visited. This confirms the survey captured the views of people with direct, current experience of the street, regular users who know it well.

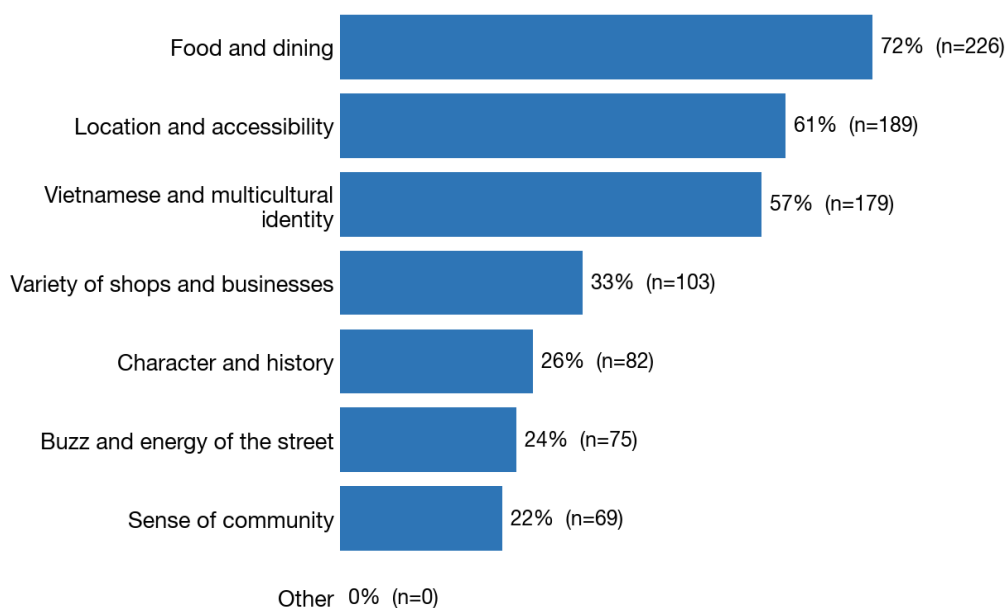
What was the main reason for your visit?



Base: the 314 respondents who answered this question.

The most common reason for visiting was living nearby. A third of respondents (33%) live on or near Victoria Street. Shopping or groceries was the main reason for 26%, and dining, food or coffee for 22%. A smaller proportion visited for work or business (8%) or were passing through (5%).

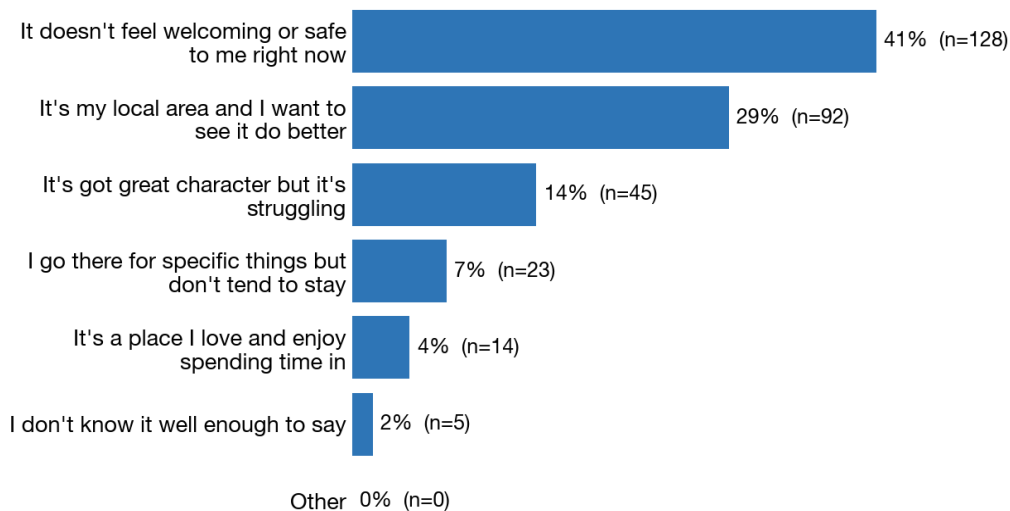
What do you value most about Victoria Street?



Multi-select question. Base: the 312 respondents who answered this question; bars show the share of them who selected each option, so they add to more than 100%.

Food and dining was the clear standout, selected by 72% of respondents. Location and accessibility was chosen by 61%, and Vietnamese and multicultural identity by 57%. These three came well ahead of the rest: variety of shops and businesses (33%), character and history (26%), buzz and energy of the street (24%) and sense of community (22%). The strength of the food and multicultural identity responses is significant. Together they point to a community that values the street first and foremost for its cultural and culinary character, along with its convenience or mix of businesses.

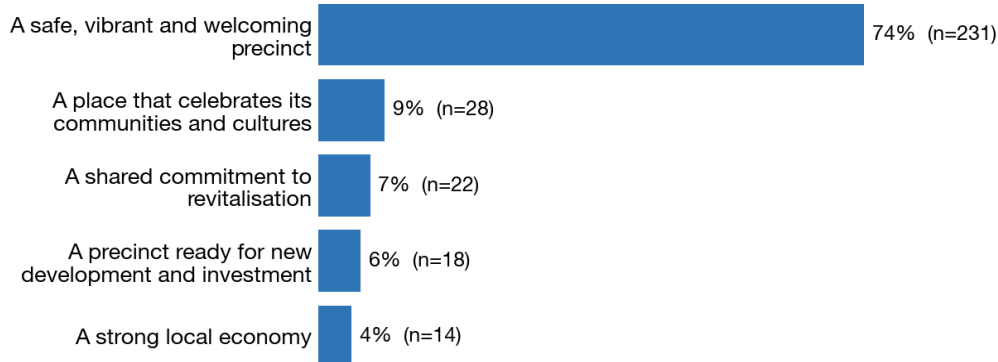
Which of these statements best describes how you see Victoria Street?



Base: the 312 respondents who answered this question.

The single most-chosen response, selected by 41% of respondents, was that Victoria Street does not feel welcoming or safe. A further 29% described it as their local area that they want to see do better, and 14% said it has great character but is struggling. Taken together, these three responses account for 85% of all answers, and all three reflect a community that cares about the street but sees it as falling well short of its potential. Only 4% described it as a place they love and enjoy spending time in. The fact that "does not feel welcoming or safe" was the single most common choice, ahead of even the "want to see it do better" response, underlines the depth of community concern about safety.

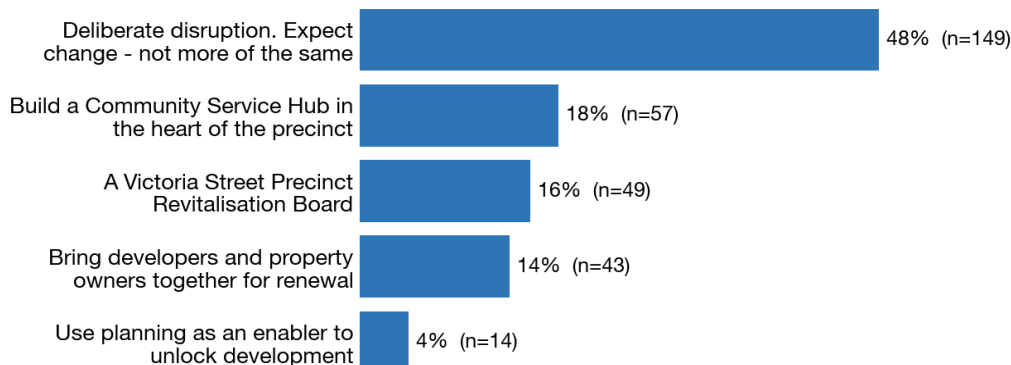
The draft Plan identifies five priorities. Please rank these in order of importance.



Base: the 313 respondents who answered the ranking question.

Safety dominated the response to this question: 74% of respondents ranked "a safe, vibrant and welcoming precinct" as their top priority. The remaining four priorities were relatively evenly spread. Celebrating communities and cultures was ranked first by 9%, a shared commitment to revitalisation by 7%, a precinct ready for new development and investment by 6%, and a strong local economy by just 4%. The comparatively low ranking of the economy is notable given how consistently economic concerns appeared in the open-text responses. It likely reflects that many people see safety as the precondition for economic recovery, treating safety as the first priority rather than economy as a separate goal.

The draft Plan includes five Game Changers. Which Game Changer do you think would make the biggest difference?

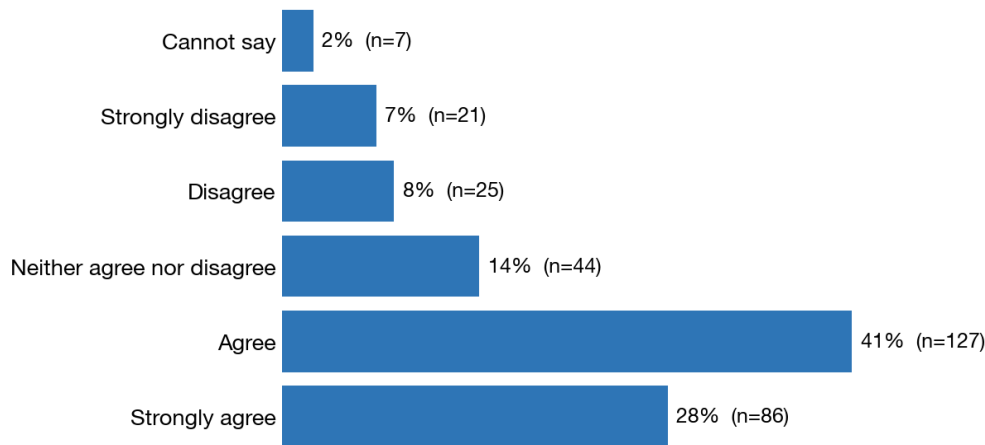


Base: the 312 respondents who answered this question.

The deliberate disruption was the standout choice, selected by 48% of respondents. The Community Service Hub came second at 18%, followed by the Revitalisation Board (16%) and bringing developers and property owners

together (14%). Using planning as an enabler attracted just 4%, well below the others, suggesting this approach is not well understood or did not resonate with the community.

Are amenity, economy and pride the right measures of success?



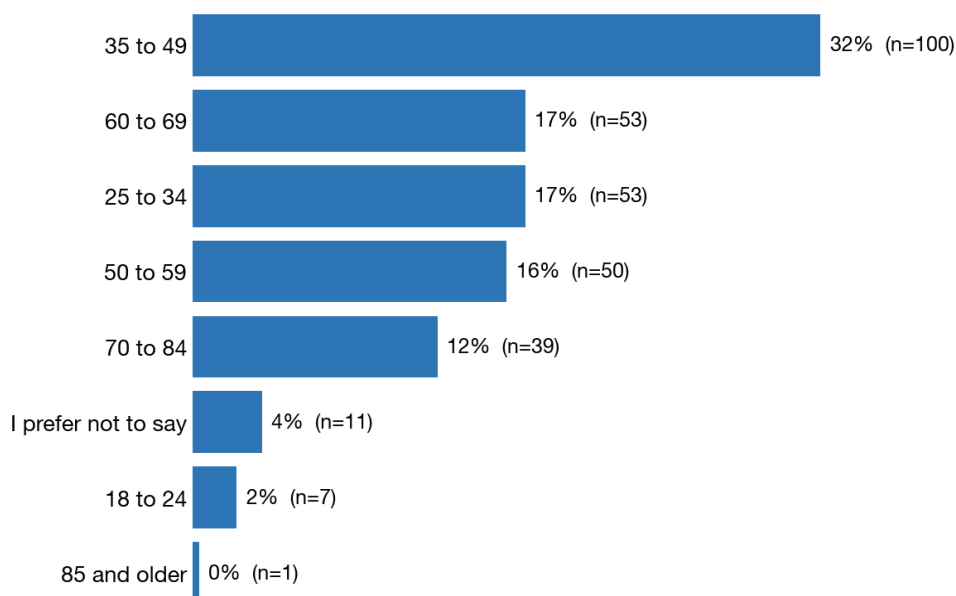
Base: the 310 respondents who answered this question.

Around 7 in 10 respondents (69%) agreed or strongly agreed that amenity, economy and pride are the right measures of success for the Plan (41% agreed, 28% strongly agreed). A smaller group, 15%, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Among those who disagreed or raised concerns in their written response, the most consistent message was that safety should be an explicit measure in its own right, that the current measures are too vague and aspirational, and that baseline data should be collected so progress can be tracked and independently verified. A number of respondents also questioned whether "pride" can be meaningfully measured.

Who responded

These two charts summarise the demographic profile of survey respondents.

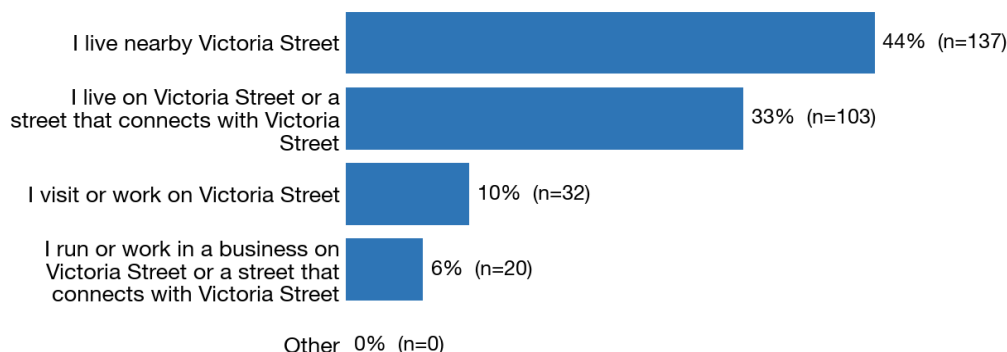
Age of respondents



Base: the 314 respondents who answered this question.

The survey skewed towards established, middle-aged and older residents. The largest single group was aged 35 to 49 (32%), and close to half of respondents were aged 50 or over. Younger adults were comparatively few, with only 2% aged 18 to 24 and none under 18, the gap that the Youth Hub session and other in-person outreach were designed to help fill.

Connection to Victoria Street



Multi-select question. Base: the 313 respondents who answered this question; bars show the share of them selecting each option.

Respondents were overwhelmingly local. The largest groups live nearby Victoria Street (44%) or live on it or a connecting street (33%). Far fewer responded as people who only visit or work there (10%) or who run or work in a business on the street (6%). This confirms the survey captured a predominantly residential voice, with the business and trader perspective coming through more strongly in the in-person conversations analysed elsewhere in this report.

What we heard — Online Survey

The online survey invited written responses to four open-text questions. Across the 314 respondents, these questions drew 887 written responses. Respondents could answer as many or as few of the four as they wished, so the number of responses varies from question to question. The themes below are presented in order of how often each was raised, with the most common first. All quotes are drawn verbatim from online survey responses only.

What would you most like to see change on Victoria Street

This was the survey's most substantive open question, and it drew the fullest answers. Respondents overwhelmingly described problems they wanted resolved rather than features they valued, and a handful of concerns recurred repeatedly. These were related to drug use, personal safety, the state of the shops, and the cleanliness of the street.

- **Drug use:** The single most frequently raised issue was the visible drug activity on and around Victoria Street, including open dealing, drug use, and drug-affected people in public space. Many respondents described this as the precinct's defining problem and the thing that most shaped how the street feels and who is willing to visit.

"Something needs to be done about the drugs. There so much open dealing, injecting and anti social behaviour. It just doesn't feel safe."

- **Safety and feeling unsafe:** Closely behind, and often woven through the same answers, was a felt sense of being unsafe. Many people said the street felt unwelcoming or intimidating, particularly at night, and that this kept them from lingering, shopping or bringing their families.

"Safety changes, I don't stay on Victoria Street for longer than I need to - I go home where it is safe"

- **Economic decline:** The state of the local economy was the next most common concern. A large number of respondents pointed to empty and boarded-up shopfronts, long-term vacancies, land-banking landlords, a lack of reasons to stop on the street, and called for the strip's small businesses to be supported and the vacant premises filled.

"More businesses take up vacant shop lots because this will bring more people to come shopping on Victoria St. There's been so many shops that's been vacant for many years."

- **Cleanliness and rubbish:** Many respondents wanted the street simply cleaned up. Rubbish, grime, dirty gutters and run-down, neglected-looking buildings were raised frequently, often alongside a sense that the precinct had been allowed to deteriorate.

"A cleaner & greener street. It looks very dirty & dodgy to me. Very unloved"

- **The Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR):** About 1 in 4 respondents raised the injecting room directly across the survey as a whole. Opinion on it was divided, though most who mentioned it wanted it moved from its current location. A smaller group wanted it closed altogether, and only a small number spoke in favour of keeping it where it is.

"Move the injecting room - at present, the open air drug market is thriving in the public space between the injecting room, along Lennox St, and along Victoria St."

"The safe injecting room needs to go. That is the long and short of it. I feel unsafe during broad daylight walking down Victoria street due to the people who "hang around" and how they are acting."

- **Graffiti and vandalism:** Graffiti and tagging were raised about as often as the injecting room. Most respondents wanted graffiti removed and kept on top of, frequently naming it as one of the most visible signs of neglect on the strip.

"I'd like to see it cleaned up, with graffiti etc. removed and no more drug dealing on the street, which must be off-putting for a lot of visitors."

- **Trees, greening and seating:** Around 1 in 10 people called for a greener, more comfortable street, with more trees, planting, shade and places to sit and stay a while.

"More trees and beautification to make it more attractive to spend time lingering and shopping."

- **Police and enforcement:** Around 1 in 10 respondents also wanted a more visible police presence and stronger enforcement, often tied to the drug scene and to feeling unsafe.

"Greater police presence and action on the drug epidemic. I don't feel safe walking with my children all the time. I never see any police around."

Beyond these, a range of further changes were each raised by a smaller number of respondents: more activity and atmosphere to give people a reason to visit; new development and housing; calmer streets with more room for walking and cycling; a stronger and more diverse food offer; better and cheaper parking; community and support services; brighter lighting; public transport improvements; concern for people sleeping rough; and protecting the street's Vietnamese and multicultural character.

Why did you rank that priority first?

Respondents had ranked the project's priorities, and this question asked them to explain why they placed one priority first. Because respondents were reasoning about whichever priority mattered most to them, the answers range widely, but safety was the most-ranked priority, and reasoning about safety dominates the written responses here accordingly.

- **Safety and feeling unsafe:** By a wide margin, the most common reason given was safety. Many respondents framed it as the precondition for everything else. Without people feeling safe, the street cannot attract visitors, support its businesses or come back to life.

"Safety and welcoming is key to creating a place you want to go to. I can't see investment happening here without a change in the social issues."

- **Economic decline:** The next most common line of reasoning concerned the local economy. Respondents argued that a healthy strip of occupied, thriving small businesses was the foundation everything else depended on, and several spoke warmly of the independent, multicultural businesses that give the street its character.

"A strong local economy is the path to the other options. More shop fronts and people will help all other stages"

- **Drug use:** Many respondents explained their priority by pointing back to the drug activity, arguing that until it was addressed nothing else could succeed.

"The drug issue has to be addressed and people need a reason to go there or nothing will change and it will be a waste of Council resources."

- **Vibrancy and activation:** Around 1 in 10 people prioritised bringing life and atmosphere back to the street, such as events, activity and a reason to come and stay, often expressed as a wish to return Victoria Street to what it once was.

"The only way to make Victoria street a 'go to place' is to make it attractive and fun place. Property owners should be given reduced rates to contribute to the revitalisation"

- **Vietnamese and multicultural identity:** About as many respondents put the street's Vietnamese and multicultural identity first, describing it as the thing that makes Victoria Street distinctive and worth protecting, and expressing concern that it could be lost.

"The history and cultural identity of the street is so important. I would hate to see the cultures that made and shaped the street be priced out, or for the area to become sanitised"

- **Development and planning:** A little less than 1 in 10 responded about development and planning. Views here were divided. Some saw new development and investment as essential to renewal, while others prioritised protecting the street's existing character from over-development and gentrification.

"I like the vibe and don't want it to be gentrified and made more expensive. I think if it was a bit cleaner and safer it would be perfect"

Smaller numbers of respondents mentioned the cleanliness of the street, the injecting room, the credibility of the Plan, policing, and the food offer.

If you disagreed with the proposed measures, why?

This question was only put to respondents who selected "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the Plan's proposed measures, so it captures the dissenting voice rather than the general view. Two strands run through it.

Respondents who felt the measures did not go far enough on the core problems, and respondents who doubted the measures could be delivered or meaningfully measured at all.

- **Safety and feeling unsafe:** The most common reason for disagreeing, raised by about a third of respondents, was that the measures did not deal squarely enough with safety. These respondents wanted a clearer focus on making the street safe and moving on threatening or anti-social behaviour.

"We need to move the threatening people away from the area and police the area so that people feel safe, especially older people."

- **Plan credibility and accountability:** Almost as often, respondents questioned whether the Plan could actually be delivered. They described the measures as objectives or aspirations without real yardsticks attached, and worried that progress could be claimed without anything genuinely changing on the ground.

"It's a great virtue to strive for but by no means can it actually be measured against. I fear we will get much of the same but be told things have improved"

- **Drug use:** A little under a third who disagreed pointed to the drug activity, arguing that the measures sidestepped the precinct's central problem and that nothing else would work until it was addressed.

"Until the crime, drug dealing & homeless issues are addressed, none of the other proposals will work."

- **Economic decline:** About 1 in 5 felt the measures did too little for existing local businesses or did not get to the bottom of why so many shops had closed.

"Identify why so many businesses have closed down. Rents too high? Customers going elsewhere? Lack of safety?"

- **The Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR):** Among those who disagreed, a little more than 1 in 10 raised the injecting room, most wanting it moved or removed and linking it directly to their sense that the area is unsafe.

"You need to get rid of the injection rooms. Everyone's perception is that it is unsafe. I would rather travel further to St Albans and Sunshine because it is safer there."

Any other considerations?

This closing question was a catch-all, and many responses restated themes already raised elsewhere, safety, the drug activity and the economy among them. What stands out here, more than in the earlier questions, is how prominently the injecting room and the future of development on the street come through.

- **The Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR):** The injecting room was the most frequently raised consideration here, more prominent in this open question than in any of the others. Opinion remained divided. Most who raised it again called for it to be relocated or removed, while a smaller number spoke firmly in its defence and asked that it be left where it is.

"Removing the safe injecting room from the area MUST be a priority and providing a significant police presence to clean up the area is paramount."

"Council must not |'move|' the MSIR. It is in the right place, associated with the NRCH. It is providing support and rehab options for people most in need. We are proud of it."

- **Drug use:** The drug scene again featured heavily, with many respondents returning to it as the issue they most wanted Council to confront.

"Just focus on safety and how the drug problem can be removed / controlled and half the job would be done - the rest would have a flow on effect and would not need any additional spending really."

- **Police and enforcement:** A larger share of respondents raised policing here than in the earlier questions, calling for a stronger and more visible police presence, often alongside the drug and safety concerns.

"More police presence in the area!! Drug users who hang around on the corner of Lennox st are intimidating and make everyone else feel unwelcome."

- **Development and planning:** Development came through far more strongly in this question than elsewhere, and much of it was cautionary. Many respondents used this space to warn against over-development, some mentioning a "cash grab" that would strip the street of its character, and to ask that any new building protect the existing facades, heritage and community.

"Don't allow developers to destroy the character of the street. Any development should be placed behind the existing facades"

- **Safety and feeling unsafe:** Safety remained a recurring consideration, with respondents reiterating that a street that feels safe is the basis for everything else the project hopes to achieve.

"I want Victoria Street to be iconic and have visitors from elsewhere without the deterrents of drug issues."

- **Economic decline:** Many respondents again pointed to the local economy, asking Council to work more closely with traders and to make it easier for shops and restaurants to operate.

"It should be a people, community and cultural first approach. Make it easier for shops and restaurants to trade, this will bring the people back to the street!"

- **Plan credibility and accountability:** Just over 1 in 10 used this final question to comment on the Plan itself, pressing for clarity, less "vision" language, and a focus on the root issues rather than surface improvements.

"Just be clear about what is changing and when. Less on the visionary blah speak. There are plenty of streets that are better. It's not rocket science."

Beyond these, smaller numbers raised calmer streets and better walking and cycling, cleanliness, greening and seating, parking, the street's Vietnamese and multicultural identity, community services, lighting and public transport.

What we heard — In-person conversations

Alongside the online survey, the project team spoke with the community in person across a series of sessions on and around Victoria Street. In total there were 78 in-person conversations involving 110 participants, spanning both business and trader voices and members of the general public.

What would you most like to see change on Victoria Street, and why?

This was the main open question, and almost everyone offered their view. Answers were short and direct, often listing two or three things, clustered tightly around safety, the look and cleanliness of the street, and the health of its businesses.

- **Safety and feeling unsafe:** Safety was the most commonly raised concern by a clear margin, and it ran through conversations with businesses and the general public alike. People spoke about crime, anti-social behaviour and simply not feeling safe on the street, and several framed safety as the precondition for anything else to work. The concern was especially prominent among business and trader participants, some of whom tied it directly to customers staying away.
- **Cleaner streets and graffiti removal:** The next most frequently raised change was a cleaner, better-kept street. Many participants wanted rubbish, grime and graffiti dealt with. These asks usually came together: a wish for the street simply to be tidied up and cared for. Calls for graffiti removal were common across both cohorts and often sat right alongside the request to clean the footpaths and gutters.
- **Support for local business and reversing decline:** Many participants wanted to see the street's businesses supported and its empty shopfronts filled. People spoke of vacant shops, struggling businesses, high rents and the cost of permits, and asked for help for existing businesses as well as encouragement for new ones to open. This was raised most strongly by business and trader participants, for whom it was often the central concern.
- **Drug use:** The visible drug activity was raised frequently, including drug use, dealing and drug-affected people on the street. For many it was bound up with how safe and welcoming the street felt, and it was raised by both business and general public participants, though business participants raised it more often.
- **Parking and traffic:** Parking and traffic were a recurring practical concern, raised fairly evenly across both cohorts. People asked to keep parking free, to extend parking time, and to ease congestion on the street.
- **The Medically Supervised Injecting Room:** Around 1 in 7 raised the Medically Supervised Injecting Room directly. Opinion was divided. The majority who mentioned it called for it to be relocated, and these voices came predominantly from business and trader participants. A smaller number valued it and wanted it kept, pointing to a difference it had made; these were general public participants.
- **More to do (vibrancy and activation):** Around the same number wanted more life on the street: events, activities, things to do at night, and a stronger sense of community and reasons to visit. This was raised roughly evenly by business and general participants.

How would you describe Victoria Street today?

Some participants added written comments describing the street as they see it now, rather than naming a change. These descriptions were brief and impressionistic, and most carried a mixed feeling. Affection for the street's character alongside a sense that it is struggling and run down.

- **Character, food and the things people value:** The most common positive note was the street's character and its food. Participants described its rustic, lived-in feel and its restaurants and dining as things worth holding onto, with Vietnamese food and the street's Vietnamese character frequently mentioned as part of that identity.
- **A street that is struggling:** Running alongside that affection was a strong sense that the street is struggling. Empty and closed shopfronts, businesses gone, and a place not as busy as it once was. Several people described it as run down or a shadow of what they remembered.
- **Drugs and feeling unsafe:** A number of descriptions returned to the drug scene and to feeling unsafe, with some saying they avoid parts of the street or won't stay after dark.
- **Affection despite the problems:** Even where people described the street's difficulties plainly, many qualified it with clear fondness, a sense of potential and attachment that sat beside the criticism. The injecting room was again mentioned here by a small number, this time by participants who said they were not opposed to it.

Submissions

In addition to the survey and in-person conversations, nine written contributions were received. These included a formal submission from an organisation, individual emails, queries logged through Council's customer request system, and input that includes Advisory Committee advice. These came from a mix of residents, businesses, a landowner and community organisations, several forwarded via Councillors.

The written submissions did not raise new themes so much as reinforce and sharpen those heard across the rest of the engagement. The recurring concerns were safety and the visible drug activity on the street; economic decline, vacant shopfronts and high rents, with one submission naming "land banking" by absentee landlords directly; and a concern, voiced most strongly by younger residents and some submitters, that revitalisation and new investment could price out the independent businesses and food culture that give Victoria Street its character.

Notable contributions included a submission from Yarra Streets Alive focused on the streetscape and movement through the precinct; a submission from Bakehouse Studios; an individual submission drawing a comparison between Victoria Street and the revitalisation of Crows Nest in New South Wales; and input from a local landowner.

Addendum – City of Yarra Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the **Draft Victoria Street Revitalisation Plan** project and reports on the engagement process. The consultation opened on Thursday 14 May 2026 and closed at 11.59pm on Sunday 7 June 2026.

Standard objectives (same for all consultations)

Engagement objective	Measure of success
Inform the community (and previous participants) about this project and let them know how they can share their feedback.	Reach is reported on at the end of the engagement and includes: - visitors on the Your Say Yarra page - people engaged on our social media channels (including ads), and - campaigns through Council's e-newsletters.
Placed Based: Reach out to directly impacted community members and invite them to participate and have their say.	- Postcards (with QR codes linking to the project page on Your Say Yarra) sent to residents and businesses within 200m radius of the location. - Identified stakeholders who are most affected and invited them to participate in the consultation.
Seek feedback from the community and receive valuable responses to the engagement questions.	- Approximately 5% of visits to the project page results in the user providing feedback. - Responses received relate to the topic and help finalise the project.
Make the engagement as accessible and inclusive as possible to allow everyone in the community an opportunity to participate.	- Officers sought to remove any known barriers to allow all those affected to participate. - Simple and inclusive language was used and interpreters (when required) and translated content (online and print) were offered. - An alternative feedback method was offered in addition to the online feedback method. - The physical locations for pop-ups were accessible to people with disabilities.
Share with participants how their feedback helped contribute to the final decision made by Council.	Community and stakeholders were updated on the outcome of the consultation and how their feedback helped inform the final decision.

- Engagement Report was published on the Your Say Yarra engagement website.

Engagement methods

- Online survey tool hosted through the Your Say Yarra platform (available in hardcopy at events)
- Intercept surveys for business operators and community members who preferred to complete shorter survey
- A total of five in person events were publicly advertised at the following times and locations:
 - Monday 18 May at Collingwood Town Hall (Langridge Ward Meeting)
 - Saturday 23 May at Gleadell Street Market in Richmond
 - Thursday 28 May at The Learning Bank - 124 Victoria St, Richmond*
 - Saturday 30 May at The Learning Bank - 124 Victoria St, Richmond*
 - Tuesday 2 June - facilitated walking tour along Victoria Street.

Designed to be accessible for people who prefer face-to-face engagement with Vietnamese and Chinese Bicultural Liaison Officers to help gather feedback from the community.

- The engagement period was extended to cover Saturday 6 June at the Learning Bank (Melba Ward Meeting).
- Targeted stakeholder engagement included:
 - Yarra's Business Advisory Committee – Wednesday 20 May
 - Victoria Street Business Association members – Wednesday 27 May
 - Key stakeholders for the precinct – Monday 1 June
 - Young people - Richmond Youth Hub – Tuesday 2 June
 - Younger adults/east of Church Street – National Hotel – Thursday 4 June
 - Business operators – visiting businesses on Victoria Street (various)
- In addition to the drop in sessions specific engagement with the Vietnamese community included
 - Australian Vietnamese Women's Association event Thursday 28 May
 - A community event held at BANH (Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House) – Friday 5 June

Engagement promotion

Highly impacted stakeholders	Promotion and reach
Nearby residents	Delivered postcards to approximately 3,500 residents and non-residential properties on or near Victoria Street.
Nearby businesses	- Delivered postcards to businesses on or near Victoria Street - Displayed posters in the windows of businesses on Victoria Street - Visited businesses on Victoria Street to invite business operators to participate.
People living with a disability (community of focus for 2026)	- Drop-in sessions were held at accessible locations - Printed materials and web content provided in easy language. - The project was shared with the Disability Advisory Committee and feedback was sought through officers as well as promotion of the opportunity to attend any of the sessions or complete the online survey.
Relevant advisory committees	Emails sent to the secretariats of the following committees to invite them to participate: - Arts Advisory Committee - Heritage Advisory Committee - Families and Children's Advisory Committee - Transport Advisory Committee - Business Advisory Committee

798 people engaged with the post on our social media channels (including social media advertisements)

Promoted through Council's e-newsletters, reaching 48,662 subscribers in total: Yarra Life (6,166), Yarra Business News (6,154), Yarra Leisure (15,492), Yarra Libraries (17,945), the Your Say Yarra e-newsletter (2,369) and the Your Say Yarra system email (536).

News story on Yarra City Council's website.

Postcards were displayed at 9 local Council venues in Richmond and Abbotsford

Digital screens displayed at Council buildings (town halls, libraries, leisure centres).

As part of Council's commitment to people who participated and provided their input into the various stages of the plan development – emails inviting participation in the Your Say Yarra survey were sent to:

- Attendees from the stakeholder workshops and community forum which informed the earlier context analysis work.
- Community Reference Group (CRG) members as well as unsuccessful applicants to the CRG.
- community members and business operators who recently raised issues about Victoria Street also asking them to pass on to their workers.
- the North Richmond Precinct Community Committee members who are representatives of the North Richmond Estate.

- the Victoria Street Business Association members list

In addition, the team delivered and engaged in a variety of methods

- Business visitations and personal
- Business operators who joined the planter box program and graffiti removal – roller door program.
- Request for Hive complex to share with tenants
- Flyers were delivered to the North Richmond Estate residents with the assistance of DFFH.
- Contact with landowners and real estate agents already who have recently contacted council.
- Hosting targeted sessions for key groups in various locations to ensure that a diversity of people were reached.

The opportunity to get involved in Yarra's projects (non-specific) was promoted via Yarra Life which is distributed to every household in Yarra (over 54,000 properties).

Your Say Yarra project page

- **Visitors** – The number of unique visitors that saw the page: 1,911
- **Responses** – The number of feedback responses that were submitted: 314

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the 314 hard and online copies of the engagement tool.

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)	212	67.73%
Live in Yarra, in a property I rent	49	15.65%
Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra	6	1.92%
Work in Yarra	56	17.89%
Own a business / business occupier in Yarra	23	7.35%
Study in Yarra	6	1.92%
None of the above	13	4.15%
Prefer not to say	7	2.24%
Total	372	N/A
What gender do you identify as?	Numbers	Percentage
Man	149	47.76%
Woman	148	47.44%
Self-described	8	2.56%
I prefer not to say	7	2.24%
Total	312	99.36%
What is your age range?	Numbers	Percentage
Under 11	0	0%
12 to 17	0	0%
18 to 24	7	2.23%
25 to 34	53	16.88%
35 to 49	100	31.85%
50 to 59	50	15.92%
60 to 69	53	16.88%
70 to 84	39	12.42%
85 and older	1	0.32%
I prefer not to say	11	3.5%

Total	314	100%
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What suburb do you live in	Numbers	Percentage
Abbotsford	112	35.67%
Alphington	0	0%
Burnley	2	0.64%
Carlton North	5	1.59%
Clifton Hill	2	0.64%
Collingwood	17	5.41%
Cremorne	0	0%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	6	1.91%
Fitzroy North	1	0.32%
Princes Hill	0	0%
Richmond	131	41.72%
I live outside of Yarra	38	12.1%
Total	314	100%
Select all that apply. I am....	Numbers	Percentage
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	81	25.88%
A person who was born overseas	94	30.03%
A person living with a disability.	24	7.67%
A member of the LGBTIQ+ community.	61	19.49%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	1	0.32%
None of the above.	117	37.38%
I prefer not to say.	23	7.35%
Total	401	N/A

What is your connection to Victoria Street?	Numbers	Percentage
I live on Victoria Street	103	32.91%
I run or work in a business on Victoria Street or a street that connects with Victoria Street	20	6.39%
I live nearby Victoria Street	137	43.77%
I visit or work on Victoria Street	32	10.22%
Other	21	6.71%
Total	313	99.68%