
Community Engagement Policy renewal

Consultation report

August 2025

Table of contents

Table of contents	2
1 Executive summary	3
1.1 Key findings.....	3
2 Awareness campaign and participation	4
3 Who we heard from	5
4 What we heard	6
4.1 Key findings from consultation survey.....	6
4.2 Awareness of consultations.....	6
4.3 Participating in consultations.....	7
4.4 Analysis of comments relating to consultations	8
4.5 Analysis of comments relating to engagement more generally.....	10
Appendix 1 - Consultation questions	12
Appendix 2 - Consultation findings in detail	17
Appendix 3 - Awareness campaign	40

1 Executive summary

The City of Boroondara has a strong tradition of community involvement in decision-making and formalised a Community Engagement Policy as early as 2010. More recently, Victorian councils became required under the *Local Government Act 2020* to develop an engagement policy.

The current policy expires in February 2026. From 3 July to 11 August 2025, Council invited community feedback to understand the community's current needs and expectations, which will shape updates to the policy.

92 community members participated through 2 activities:

1. A **survey**¹ asked multiple choice, rating and ranking questions, complemented by open text questions. 86 people participated. About two-thirds of participants are signed up to the consultation website, Your Say Boroondara.
2. **Submissions** were invited and 6 submissions received.

We thank all the people who took the time to give their feedback on our approach to consultation and engagement and share their suggestions.

1.1 Key findings

In summary, the findings confirm community members expect Council to:

- consult them before making a decision impacting them
- grab their attention when inviting them to have their say
- give them the facts in everyday words
- give them different ways to have their say
- share the details of what we heard during the consultation
- show their views were considered during decision-making.

Key opportunities to better meet community expectations include:

- seeking **broadier participation** from across the community, particularly from younger people, and offering **more variety** in consultation activities
- addressing **perceptions Council doesn't listen**
- conveying the **level of influence** community feedback will have on each decision
- considering more ways and channels to update the community about **what we've heard** during consultation
- explaining **why and how decisions are made** following a consultation.

¹ The survey was on the Your Say Boroondara website. A paper version was displayed in key locations and was available on request, as it is with all Council consultations. All responses were received online.

Responses to the multiple choice and rating questions in the survey show:

- 83% of survey participants believe Council consultations are important and 82% have participated in a consultation in last 2 years.
- Participants' satisfaction levels with Council consultations were mixed, with 33% satisfied and 43% dissatisfied. Most participants shared their reasons, which are predominantly related to consultations generally, participation methods and the perception Council does not listen to the community.
- Less than half of survey participants (46%) are aware of what they can influence in a consultation, with the remainder unsure of what they can influence (28%) or unaware (26%).
- Participants are less aware of consultation outcomes compared to their awareness of new consultations.

The survey included 2 questions asking people to give reasons for their level of satisfaction with Council consultations and to make suggestions. Several comments contradict each other, indicating people's expectations sit on a spectrum and it is not possible to please all community members. Likewise, the decisions made after each consultation will satisfy some community members and not others.

Finally, the results of the survey questions demonstrate improvement across all aspects of community consultations compared to results in 2020 when the Community Engagement Policy was last updated.

2 Awareness campaign and participation

The consultation was promoted extensively to invite community participation.

Awareness campaign	Reach
Boroondara Bulletin - Have your say column (print edition)	74,000 households
Boroondara Bulletin - Have your say column (email edition)	33,282 recipients
Fortnightly Feed email - article	34,808 recipients 16,464 views 186 clicks
Views on social media - Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn	6,187 unique viewers 194 clicks at \$0.67 average cost per click
Email to members of the consultation website, Your Say Boroondara	1,630 recipients, opened by 57%
Posters/signs with QR code in libraries, community centres, neighbourhood houses, Kew Traffic School etc	15 locations

Other promotion included:

- emails to Kindergarten Committees of Management, Council's Public Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee and multicultural networks
- Council's e-newsletters - The Fuse (to community groups), Sports Clubs, Boroondara Families, Biz Bits (to local businesses), Sustainability
- mailing lists for Reconciliation, Early Years, Neighbourhood Houses, Aged Care, Trader Associations.

As a result, 529 individual people, excluding Council staff, visited this consultation on Your Say Boroondara on 635 occasions. **92 people** participated in the consultation activities.

Ways to participate	Active participants
Consultation survey (online or paper)	86
Submissions/comments	6

3 Who we heard from

Everyone who responded to the survey is connected to Boroondara in at least one way:

- 88% live here
- 45% own property here
- 27% work here
- 10% own/operate a business here
- 9% often visit
- 1% study here.

Participants came from all suburbs in Boroondara, except Mont Albert, with highest participation from:

- Hawthorn (18%)
- Kew (13%)
- Ashburton, Balwyn North, Glen Iris, Kew East, Surrey Hills (8% each).

Demographics of participants:

- 53% are women
- 41% are men
- 6% prefer not to say.

Background of participants:

- 19% of participants have a multi-cultural background
- 5% prefer not to say.

More older people than younger people participated:

- 18 to 34 years - 5%
- 35 to 49 years - 14%
- 50 to 59 years - 21%
- 60 to 69 years - 22%
- 70 to 84 years - 33%
- 85+ years - 1%
- Prefer not to say - 4%.

A full breakdown of demographics is on page 38 and 39.

4 What we heard

4.1 Key findings from consultation survey

Importance of Council consultations: 83% of participants reported Council consultations are quite important or very important to them. A minority of 5% said consultations are not important or quite unimportant to them. The remaining 11% are neutral on this issue.²

Awareness of consultations: 91% of survey participants have seen or heard about Council consultations in the last 2 years. 24% have seen or heard about 10 or more consultations. This is up from 86% in 2020, when we asked this same question.

Participation: 82% of participants have participated in one or more Council consultations in the last 2 years. 44% have participated in one or 2 consultations and 9% have participated more than 5 times. Participation is up from 2020, when 77% reported participating in one or more Council consultations.

Level of influence: 46% understood what they could influence in each consultation. 28% were unsure and 26% could not understand what they could influence.

Satisfaction levels: 43% are unsatisfied with Council consultations overall (compared to 46% in 2020), while 33% are satisfied (compared to 26% in 2020). Roughly a quarter (24%) are neither unsatisfied or satisfied (compared to 28% in 2020).

The full survey findings, including analysis of comments, are shown in [Appendix 2](#).

4.2 Awareness of consultations

- 63% of survey participants have visited the consultation website, Your Say Boroondara in the last 2 years and 62% have signed up to this website.
- People's **preferred ways** to find out about consultations are:

² Totals 99% due to rounding.

- an email when a new consultation opens (preferred by 79%)
 - the Boroondara Bulletin (60%)
 - Council e-newsletters such as the Fortnightly Feed (50%).
- Other preferred promotions (in order of preference) include seeing consultations listed on Boroondara's websites, posters in public spaces, letters/postcards into letterboxes and social media.
- People are **selective in their interest** in consultations. 59% of survey participants look out for consultation topics that interest them, while 31% do not actively look out for Council consultations. A minority of 10% look out for all consultations run by Council.
- The consultation topics ranked in order of importance to participants are:
 - issues affecting my local street (for example, on-street parking, street trees). This topic was selected by 85% of participants
 - urban planning (for example, proposed developments, heritage overlays), selected by 82% of participants
 - Council infrastructure, selected by 79%
 - Council's key strategy - the Boroondara Community Plan, 64%
 - other Council strategies (for example, Climate Action Plan, master plans, Tree Canopy Strategy), 64%.
- Least popular consultation topics are new local laws or governance rules (46%), rating or financial plans including budgets (39%) or something else (5%).

4.3 Participating in consultations

- The **most popular ways** of participating in consultations are:
 - online surveys (selected by 85% of participants)
 - emailing or writing to Council (selected by 55%)
 - workshops or advisory groups (51%)
 - alternatives to surveys such as posting a comment (42%)
 - speaking to Council staff at a pop-up stand or drop-in session (32%).
- Paper surveys are preferred by 27% and phone surveys are preferred by 20%.
- The **least popular** methods of participating are phoning Council (17%) and presenting to Councillors at a public meeting (11%).
- When asked to rate **information provided during consultations**, 45% said Council's information was clear or very clear, while 28% said it was neither clear or unclear. 28% rated Council's information as somewhat unclear or not at all clear.³
- Just under half of people (46%) reported they could understand what their feedback could influence. 28% could not understand while 26% were not sure.
- Most people have multiple **reasons for participating**. For most participants, these include:
 - wanting a better community and local areas, selected by 74%
 - issues I care about or directly affect me, 66%
 - frustration or concern about changes or issues that directly affect me, 52%.

³ Totals 101% due to rounding.

- Likewise, there are many reasons people don't participate in consultations. For the majority, these reasons include:
 - I don't think my voice will influence the decision, 58%
 - I don't think Council listens to or is interested in feedback, 55%
- Other reasons include:
 - I'm not interested in the topics, 32%
 - I don't hear about opportunities to participate, 27%
 - I don't think it's easy and quick to participate, 27%
 - I don't have time, 19%
 - I agree with what's Council's proposing, 14%
 - I generally trust Council to make good decisions, 12%
 - I don't know how to find opportunities to participate, 7%
 - I need supports that are not offered, 6%
 - something else, 4%.
- 47% of participants have seen outcomes of consultations only 1-2 times. 28% have never seen the outcomes, while 25% have seen the outcomes more than 3 times.
- In contrast, 59% of participants have seen more than 3 consultations open, demonstrating people are more likely to see a consultation open than they are to see the decisions made by Council following a consultation.

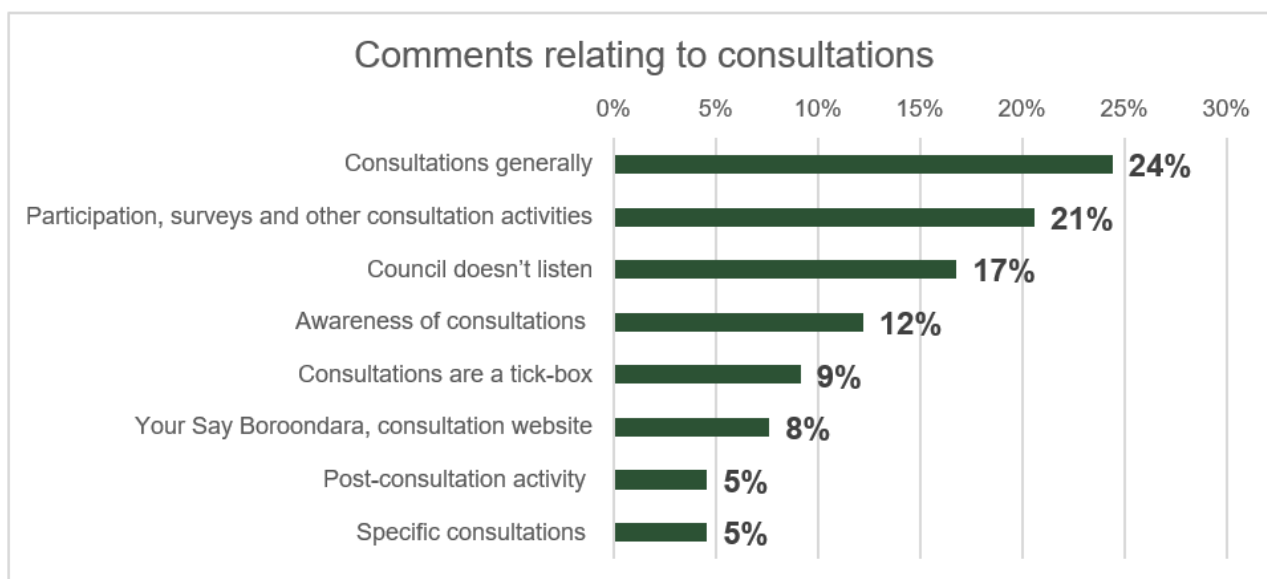
4.4 Analysis of comments relating to consultations

- Most survey participants left a comment explaining their level of satisfaction with Council consultations (Q18).
- Several people expanded on the point they were making when answering the question seeking "key points Council should consider when updating the Community Engagement Policy" (Q19).
- We also received 6 submissions from people who chose the "Leave a comment" consultation activity because they didn't have time for the survey or they wanted to upload an image.

All comments were analysed together to generate a full picture of community views. Most comments relate to consultations. Comments related to non-consultation matters are reported separately.

Many comments about consultations include views on more than one topic. These topics are grouped into 8 themes, listed below from most to least mentioned.⁴ The sentiment of each topic was categorised as positive, neutral or negative. Overall, 69% of comments are negative, 21% are positive and 10% are neutral in sentiment.

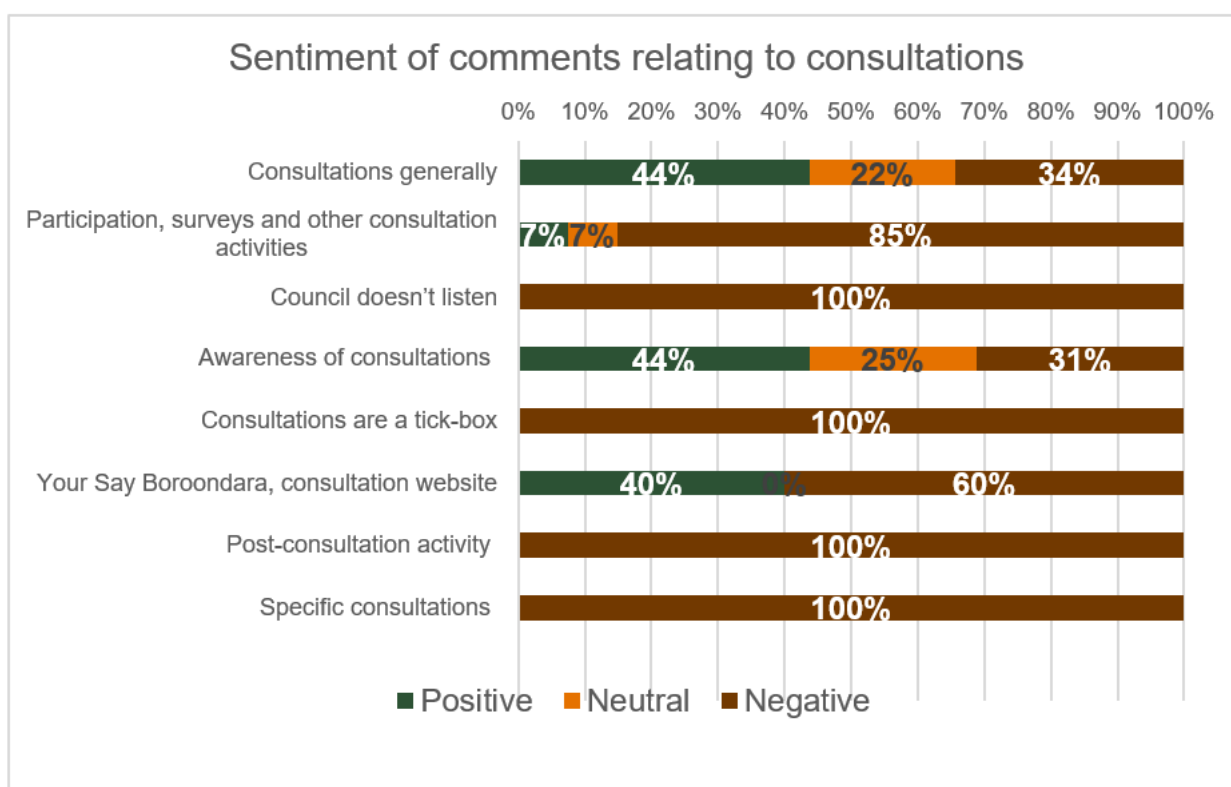
⁴ The breakdown of comments by theme is shown as 101% due to rounding.



"I think the consultation process is generally good and easy to respond to but feel that it's not made clear how much impact feedback will have on outcomes." Hawthorn resident, aged 50 to 59 years

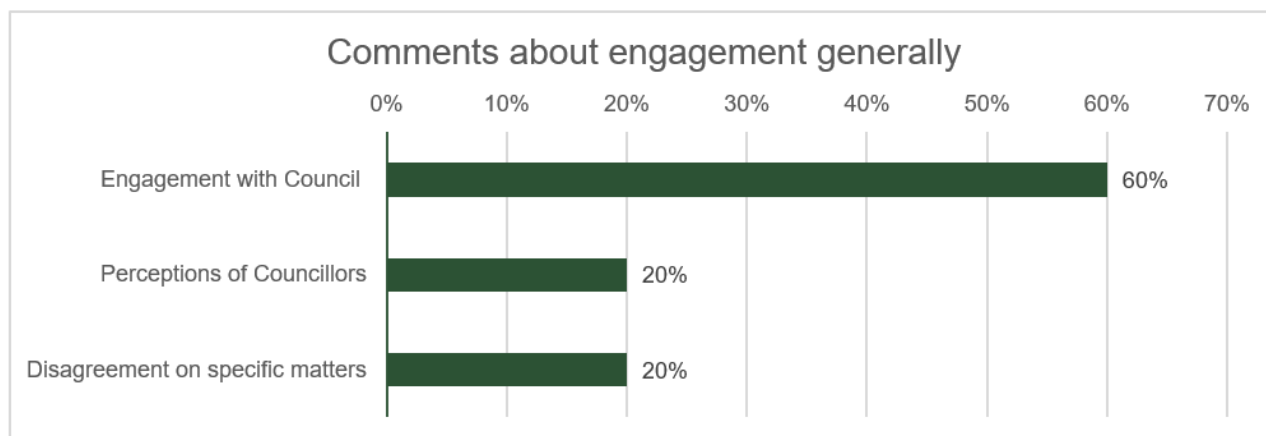
"The council needs to improve engagement to complete surveys & take onboard broader feedback." Resident in Balwyn North, aged 35 to 49 years

"Council doesn't listen to community and proceeds with their preferred outcome." Resident of Canterbury, aged 50 to 59 years



4.5 Analysis of comments relating to engagement more generally

A minority of comments are related to how Council engages them in situations other than consultations. The comments are grouped under 3 themes.

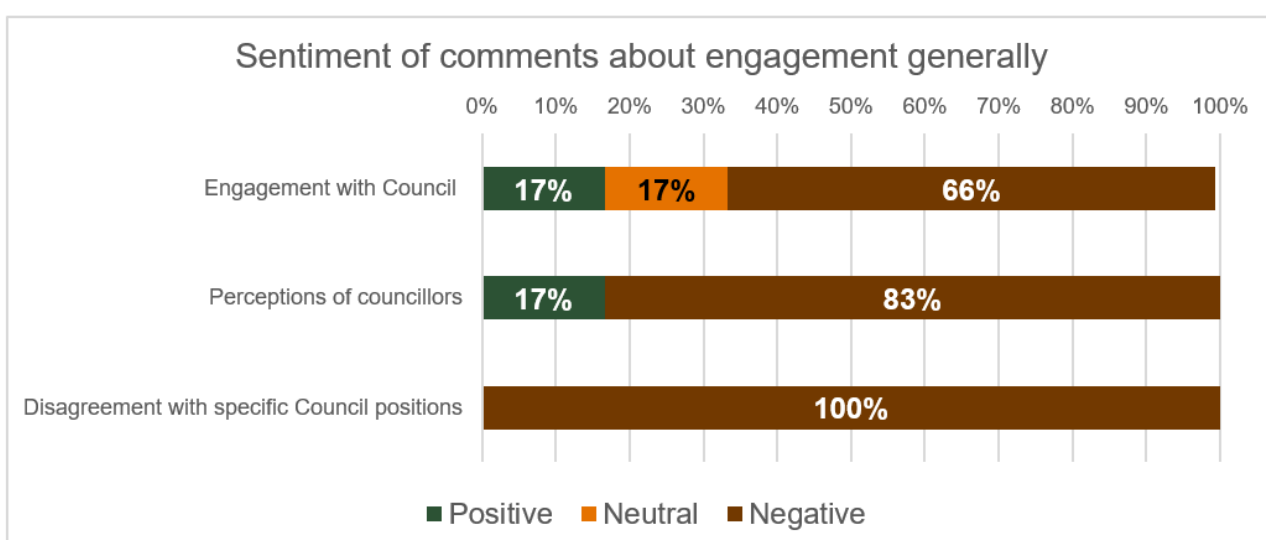


“Focus on reducing costs to rate payers and rubbish.” Business owner and resident of Kew, aged 50 to 59 years.

“Make it easy to get regular information and phone back when being asked for information.” Business owner in Boroondara, aged 60 to 69 years.

“There is nothing that I’m waiting to hear on from the council.” Resident of Kew East, aged 35 to 49 years.

The sentiment of each topic was categorised as positive, neutral or negative. Overall, 77% are negative, 13% are positive and 10% are neutral in sentiment.



Detailed analysis of the comments is in [Appendix 2](#).

5 Next steps

We thank all 92 participants who shared their feedback to help Council improve its approach to community consultation and engagement. Each point of view is being considered by Council staff in relation to the Community Engagement Policy. Several improvements to the policy are being considered, with an aim to continually improve the community's level of satisfaction with Council consultations.

These improvements include:

- including a commitment to promoting consultations with awareness campaigns across multiple channels to reach people most impacted or affected by a consultation topic. Developing awareness campaigns is current practice but has not yet been formalised in the policy
- strengthening our commitment to reach more young people with opportunities to have their say through consultations
- noting Council's ongoing commitment to reconciliation with Traditional Owners. Our consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has been regular and strong for several years, but has not yet been acknowledged in the Community Engagement Policy
- committing to providing more detail of what we heard and who we heard from after each consultation
- committing to providing more details of how decisions are made and whether the decision was made by Council staff or Councillors.

In response to the comments and suggestions of participants, changes to the consultation process will include:

- stating upfront if a consultation is a poll. In these cases, Council's decision will be based on the polling
- stating upfront if a consultation aims to hear a wide range of perspectives to help Council staff or Councillors to better understand different groups of community members and make a well-informed decision. In these cases, the decision may not reflect the views of most participants
- continuing to simplify the information provided in a consultation and providing a succinct overview of the consultation matter.

This report and a draft of the updated policy will be presented to Councillors. Councillors will decide whether to adopt the updated Community Engagement Policy 2025-29.

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

Have your say – consultation

Help us improve how we consult and engage you

Most questions are optional.

Section 1: Promotion of consultations

1. In the past 2 years, how many times have you seen or heard about Council consultations and opportunities to have your say?

- Never
- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- More than 5 times
- More than 10 times

2. How have you seen or heard about Council's consultations? Please select all that apply.

- The consultation website, Your Say Boroondara
- An email when a new consultation opens
- Councillor meetings you attend or watch online
- Posters in council buildings, libraries and other public spaces
- Letter/postcard in the letterbox
- Home page of Boroondara's website
- Boroondara Bulletin (Council's newsletter in your mailbox or emailed)
- Council e-newsletter, such as the Fortnightly Feed
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X or LinkedIn)
- Newsletters/social posts from community groups or schools/kindergartens
- Community petitions
- From Council staff
- Another way (please describe in a few words)

3. Which are your preferred ways to find about Council consultations? The ways consultations are promoted are listed below. Select between 1 and 5 answers.

- The consultation website, Your Say Boroondara
- An email when a new consultation opens
- Councillor meetings you attend or watch online
- Posters in council buildings, libraries and other public spaces
- Letter/postcard in the letterbox
- Home page of Boroondara's website
- Boroondara Bulletin (Council's newsletter in your mailbox or emailed)
- Council e-newsletter, such as the Fortnightly Feed
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn)
- Newsletters/social posts from community groups or schools/kindergartens
- Community petitions
- From Council staff

4. Have you visited the website, Your Say Boroondara, in the past 2 years? This consultation website was previously known as Engage Boroondara.

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

- 5. Have you signed up to the consultation website, Your Say Boroondara?** Signing up gives you the option to receive alerts about new consultations that match your interests and updates on consultations.
- Yes
 - No
 - I'm not sure

Section 2: Participating in consultations

- 6. Do you actively look out for Council consultations?**
- Yes - for all consultations
 - Yes - for the topics that interest me
 - No
- 7. In the past 2 years, how often have you participated in a Council consultation?** for example, about a Council proposal, a strategy, Council's focus areas or a matter affecting your street or neighbourhood.
- Never
 - 1-2 times
 - 3-5 times
 - More than 5 times
 - More than 10 times
- 8. Which ways to have a say in Council's decision-making do you prefer?** Select between 1 and 5 answers.
- Alternatives to surveys, such as interactive maps or post a comment
 - Doing online surveys
 - Doing paper surveys
 - Speaking to Council staff at pop-up stalls or drop-in sessions
 - Participating in workshops and advisory groups
 - Presenting to councillors at public meetings
 - Phoning Council
 - Emailing/writing to Council
 - Receiving calls for a phone survey
- 9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how clear was Council's information in the consultations you participated in?** Where 1 is not at all clear and 5 is very clear.
- 10. Could you understand what your feedback could influence?**
- Yes
 - No
 - I'm not sure
- 11. How important are Council consultations to you?**
- Not important at all
 - Quite unimportant
 - Neither important or unimportant
 - Quite important
 - Very important
- 12. Which consultations are important for you to be involved in?** Please select all that apply.
- Boroondara Community Plan (Council's key strategy based on the focus areas nominated by thousands of community members every 4 years)
 - Urban planning (for example, proposed developments, heritage overlays)
 - Council infrastructure (for example, parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, libraries, public toilets)
 - Council strategies (for example, Climate Action Plan, master plans for large precincts and open spaces, Tree Canopy Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan)

- Rating plans, financial plans and budgets
- New local laws and governance rules for Council
- Issues affecting my street (for example, on-street parking, street trees)
- Something else (please describe in a few words)

13. What are the main reasons you participate in a consultation? Select up to 4 reasons.

- Wanting a better community and local areas
- Knowing my feedback will make a difference and genuinely influence Council decisions
- Issues I care about or directly affect me
- Frustration or concern about changes or issues that directly affect me
- It's easy and quick to participate
- The supports offered for example, translations, paper surveys, face-to-face options, the accessible website
- All of these
- None of these

14. What are the main reasons you don't participate in a consultation? Select up to 4 reasons.

- I don't hear about opportunities to participate
- I'm not interested in the topics
- I don't think it's easy and quick to participate
- I need supports that are not offered
- I generally trust the Council will make good decisions
- I agree with what Council is proposing
- I don't have time
- I don't know how to find opportunities to participate
- I don't think Council listens to or is interested in feedback
- I don't think my voice will influence the decision
- Something else (please describe in a few words)

15. How often have you seen or heard about the outcomes of consultations you've been interested in?
This includes what Council heard from the community or how the consultation influenced Council's decisions.

- Never
- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- More than 5 times
- More than 10 times

16. In the past 2 years, have you watched any public meetings of Councillors, either in person at the Council Chambers or on Council's YouTube channel? Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings on Monday evenings. The agendas appear on Council's website 10 days before each meeting plus a link to the livestreamed video so you can watch in real time or after the meeting.

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Section 3: Overall comments

17. Overall, how satisfied are you with how Council consults the community? Choose a rating where 1 is not at all satisfied and 5 is very satisfied.

18. Can you explain why you gave this rating?

19. Are there any other key points you feel Council needs to be aware of when updating the Community Engagement Policy?

- 20. Council sometimes alerts the community to the Victorian Government's consultations if the issue impacts Boroondara. How important is this to you on a scale of 1 to 5? Where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important.**

Section 4: About you

We ask for personal information, including your name, address, gender and age group. This helps us understand if we are hearing from a diverse range of people in this consultation. We won't publish your name and any comments you share will be reported anonymously.

- 21. What is your name? Required**

- 22. What is your relationship to Boroondara? Select all that apply.**

- I live in Boroondara
- I own/operate a business in Boroondara
- I work in Boroondara
- I study in Boroondara
- I own property in Boroondara
- I often visit Boroondara
- None of these

- 23. What is your age? Required**

- 12 to 17 years (Do you have permission from an adult to complete this survey?)
- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 49 years
- 50 to 59 years
- 60 to 69 years
- 70 to 84 years
- 85 or above
- Prefer not to say

- 24. What is your gender? Required**

- Woman
- Man
- Prefer not to say
- Self described (please specify)

- 25. What is your street address? (for example, 8 Inglesby Road) Required**

- 26. Where do you live? Required**

- Ashburton
- Balwyn
- Balwyn North
- Camberwell
- Canterbury
- Deepdene
- Glen Iris
- Hawthorn
- Hawthorn East
- Kew
- Kew East
- Mont Albert
- Surrey Hills
- Prefer not to say
- Another suburb (please specify)

27. Are you from a culturally and linguistically diverse background?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

28. Would you like to receive updates about this consultation and the Community Engagement Policy?

Required

- Yes, my email address is:
- No

Appendix 2: Consultation findings in detail

Detailed findings for each consultation question follows. Most questions were optional and the number of people who answered each question is indicated by **n**.

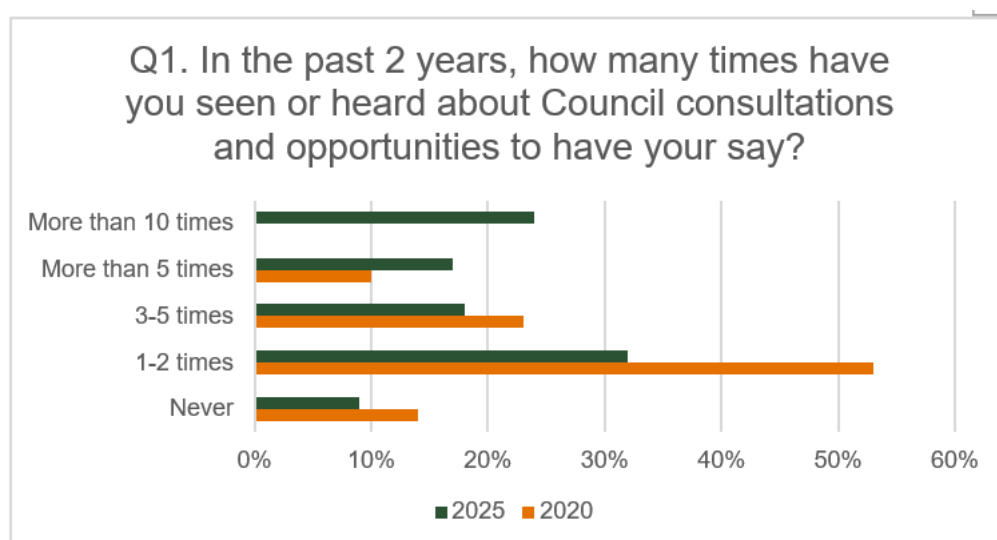
Where possible, comparisons are drawn with findings from questions asked in 2020 before Council last updated its Community Engagement Policy.

Q1. In the past 2 years, how many times have you seen or heard about Council consultations and opportunities to have your say? (n=78)

91% of participants have seen or heard about Council consultations in the last 2 years. Results were evenly distributed between people who had seen or heard about consultations once or more in the last 2 years, with 24% reporting they've seen more than 10 consultations. Roughly one in 10 participants (9%) had not seen or heard consultations being promoted by Council.

This question was asked in 2020. Comparison shows an increase of people reporting to have seen more than 5 consultations (10% in 2020, 41% in 2025) and a decrease in people reporting they haven't seen consultations (14% in 2020, 9% in 2025).

Response	2020	2025
Never	14%	9%
1-2 times	53%	32%
3-5 times	23%	18%
More than 5 times	10%	17%
More than 10 times	n/a	24%

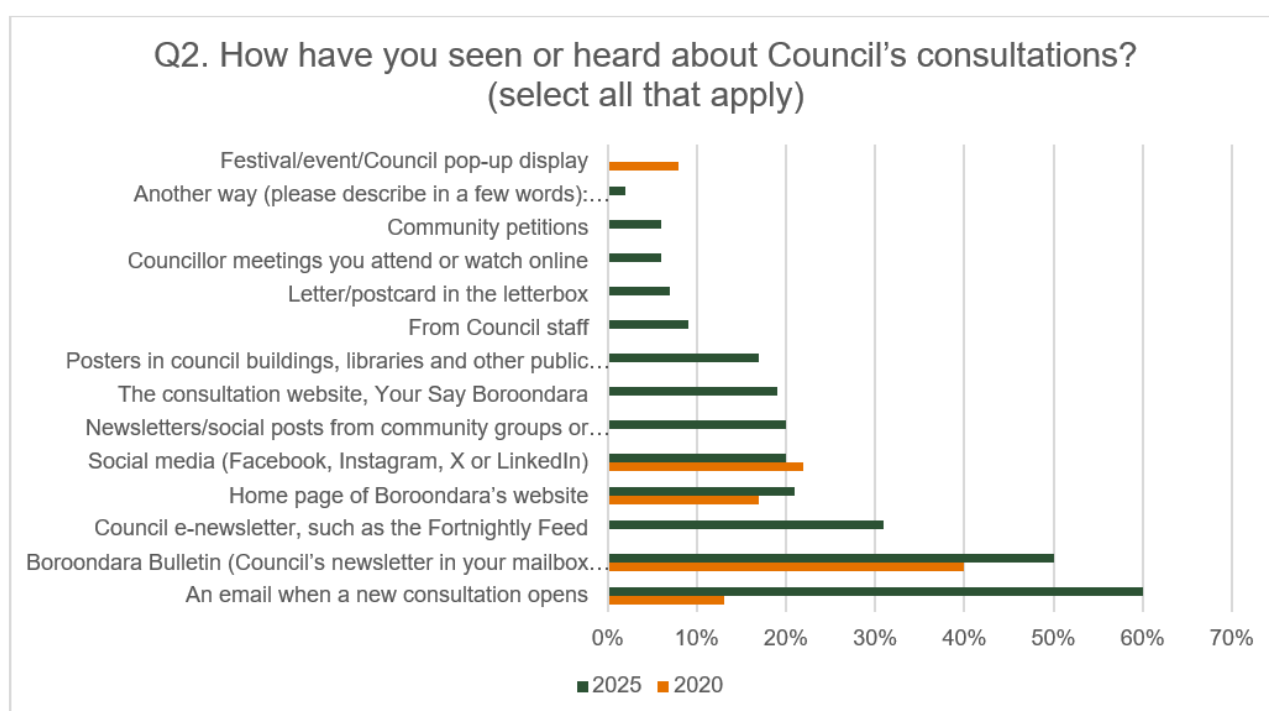


Q2. How have you seen or heard about Council's consultations? Select all that apply. (n=70)

The most frequently reported promotional channels were an email when consultation opens (60%) and the Boroondara Bulletin (50%).

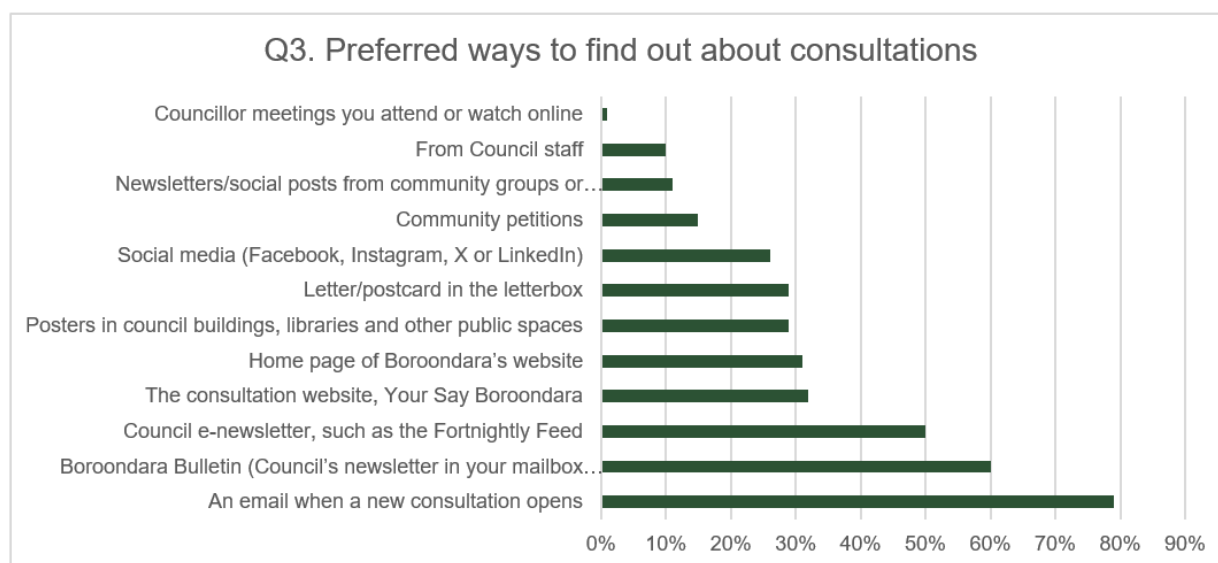
This question was asked in 2020. Since 2020, consultations have been promoted in more ways to reach more community members. This is reflected in the comparison over time, showing people have seen consultations promoted through more channels.

Response	2020	2025
An email when a new consultation opens	13%	60%
Boroondara Bulletin (Council's newsletter in your mailbox or emailed)	40%	50%
Council e-newsletter, such as the Fortnightly Feed	n/a	31%
Home page of Boroondara's website	17%	21%
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X or LinkedIn)	22%	20%
Newsletters/social posts from community groups, schools or kindergartens	n/a	20%
The consultation website, Your Say Boroondara	n/a	19%
Posters in council buildings, libraries and other public spaces	n/a	17%
From Council staff	n/a	9%
Letter/postcard in the letterbox	n/a	7%
Councillor meetings you attend or watch online	n/a	6%
Community petitions	n/a	6%
Festival/event/Council pop-up display/another way	8%	2%



Q3. Which are your preferred ways to find about Council consultations? The ways consultations are promoted are listed below. (n=72)

Response	%
An email when a new consultation opens	79%
Boroondara Bulletin (Council's newsletter in your mailbox or emailed)	60%
Council e-newsletter, such as the Fortnightly Feed	50%
The consultation website, Your Say Boroondara	32%
Home page of Boroondara's website	31%
Posters in council buildings, libraries and other public spaces	29%
Letter/postcard in the letterbox	29%
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X or LinkedIn)	26%
Community petitions	15%
Newsletters/social posts from community groups or schools/kindergartens	11%
From Council staff	10%
Councillor meetings you attend or watch online	1%



Q4. Have you visited the website, Your Say Boroondara, in the past 2 years? This consultation website was previously known as Engage Boroondara. (n=71)

Response	%
Yes	63%
No	24%
Not sure	13%

Q5. Have you signed up to the consultation website, Your Say Boroondara? (n=71)

Response	%
Yes	62%
Not sure	20%
No	18%

Q6. Do you actively look out for Council consultations? (n=78)

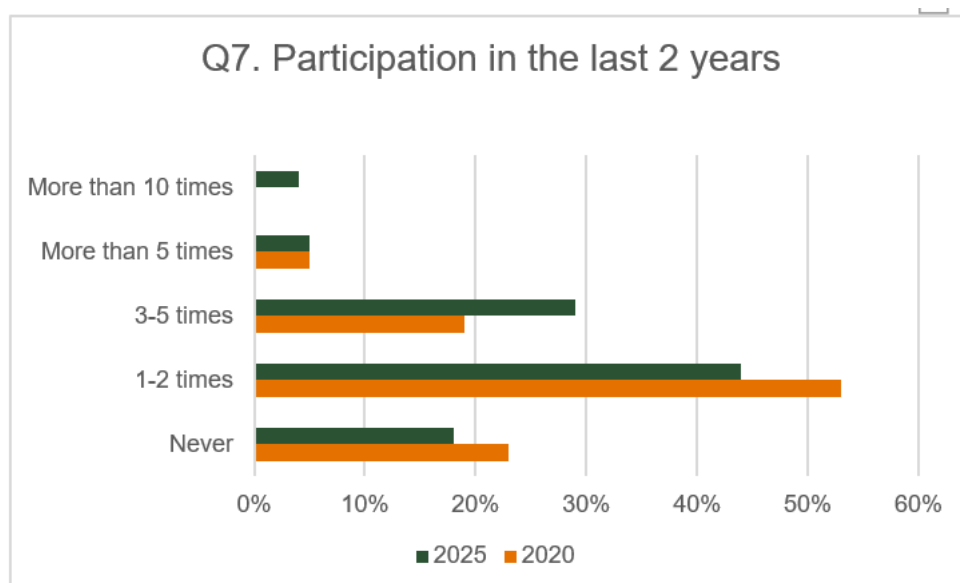
Response	%
Yes - for the topics that interest me	59%
No	31%
Yes - for all consultations	10%

Q7. In the past 2 years, how often have you participated in a Council consultation? (n=78)

82% of participants have participated in one or more Council consultations in the last 2 years. About half of these have participated in one or 2 consultations (44%) and 9% have participated in more than 5 times.

This question was asked in 2020. Overall, participation has increased from 77% in 2020 to 82% in 2025. Comparison shows an increase of people indicating they have participated in more than 3 consultations (24% in 2020, 38% in 2025) and a decrease in people indicating they haven't participated (23% in 2020, 18% in 2025).

Response	2020	2025
Never	23%	18%
1-2 times	53%	44%
3-5 times	19%	29%
More than 5 times	5%	5%
More than 10 times	n/a	4%



Q8. Which ways to have a say in Council's decision-making do you prefer? Select between 1 and 5 answers. (n=71)

Response	%
Doing online surveys	85%
Emailing/writing to Council	55%
Participating in workshops and advisory groups	51%
Alternatives to surveys, such as interactive maps or post a comment	42%
Speaking to Council staff at pop-up stalls or drop-in sessions	32%
Doing paper surveys	27%
Receiving calls for a phone survey	20%
Phoning Council	17%
Presenting to councillors at public meetings	11%

Q9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how clear was Council's information in the consultations you participated in? (n=65)

In summary, 56% found the information provided during consultations to be clear or very clear, 28% say it's been neither clear or unclear and 28% say it's been not at all clear or somewhat unclear.

Response	%
Not at all clear	14%
Somewhat unclear	14%
Neither	28%
Clear	28%
Very clear	17%

Q10. Could you understand what your feedback could influence? (n=74)

Response	%
Yes	46%
No	28%
Not sure	26%

Q.11 How important are Council consultations to you? (n=73)

In summary, consultations are somewhat important or very important for 83% of participants. Only 5% say Council consultations are not important or quite unimportant.

Response	%
Not important at all	1%
Quite unimportant	4%
Neither important nor unimportant	11%
Quite important	42%
Very important	41%

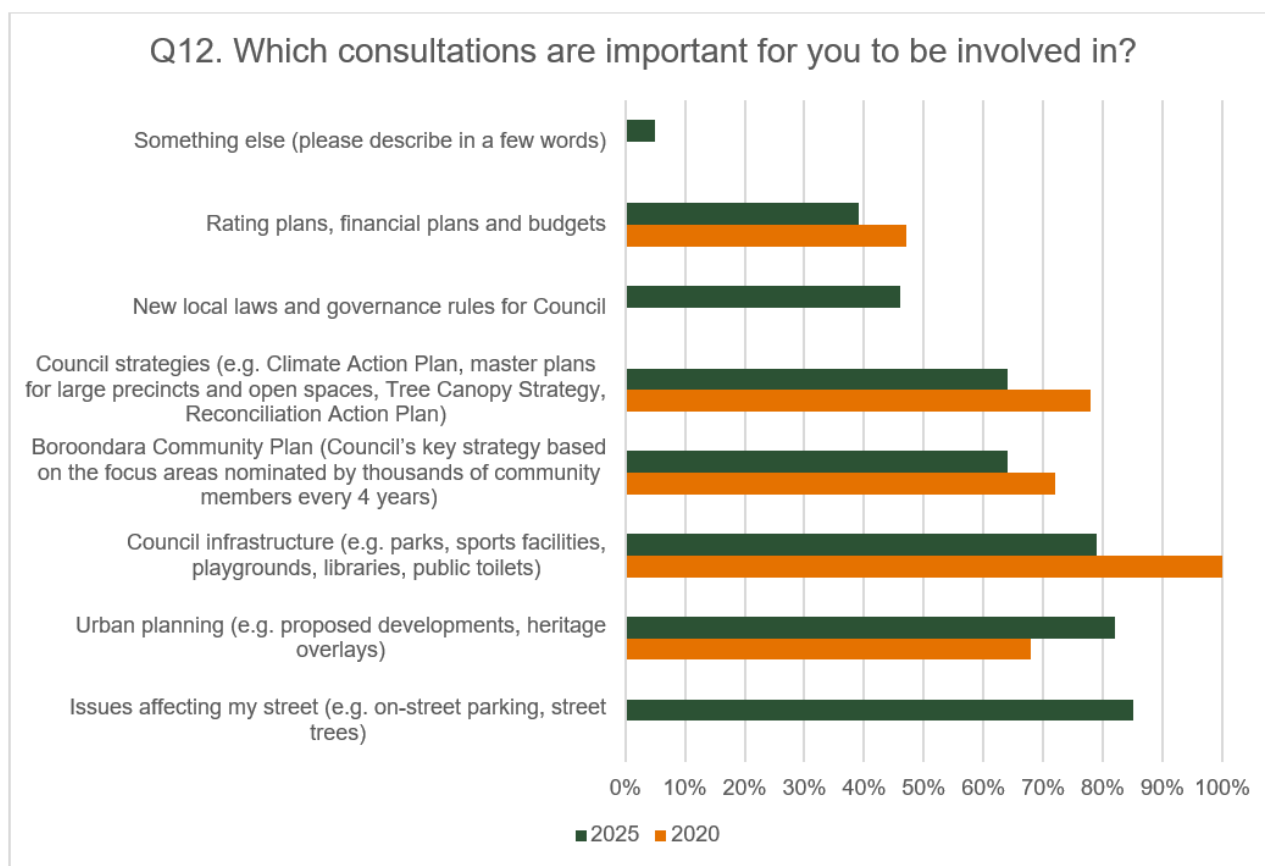
Q12. Which consultations are important for you to be involved in? Select all that apply. (n=73)

The consultation topics selected by most participants are:

- issues affecting my street (85%)
- urban planning (82%)
- Council infrastructure (79%)
- the Boroondara Community Plan (64%)
- Council strategies (64%).

A similar question was asked in 2020. Comparison shows less people say consultations about Council infrastructure are important to participate in (100% in 2020, 79% in 2025). More people say urban planning consultations are important to participate in (68% in 2020, 82% in 2025).

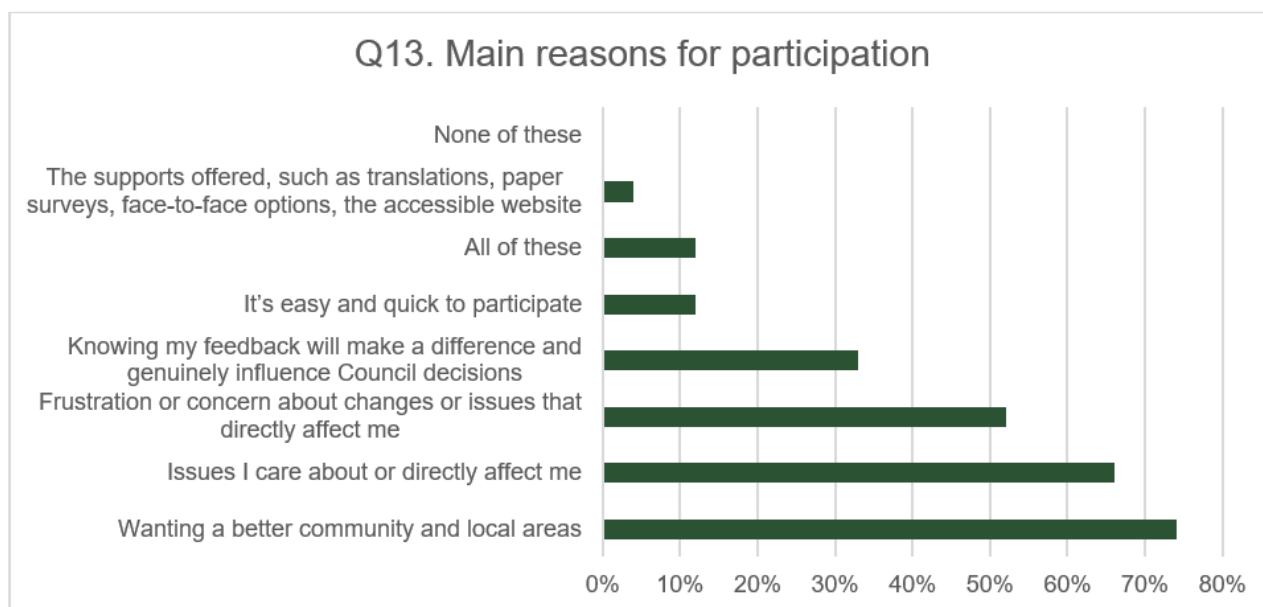
Response	2020	2025
Issues affecting my street (for example, on-street parking, street trees)	n/a	85%
Urban planning (for example, proposed developments, heritage overlays)	68%	82%
Council infrastructure (for example, parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, libraries, public toilets)	100%	79%
Boroondara Community Plan (Council's key strategy based on the focus areas nominated by thousands of community members every 4 years)	72%	64%
Council strategies (for example, Climate Action Plan, master plans for large precincts and open spaces, Tree Canopy Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan)	78%	64%
New local laws and governance rules for Council	n/a	46%
Rating plans, financial plans and budgets	47%	39%
Something else (People nominated dog parks, Victorian Government issues, public/active transport and community safety, parking near Coles on Whitehorse Road)	n/a	5%



Q13. What are the main reasons you participate in a consultation? Select up to 4 reasons. (n=73)

The reasons selected by most participants are wanting a better community and local areas (74%), issues they care about or directly affect them (66%), and frustration or concern about changes or issues that directly affect them (52%).

Response	%
Wanting a better community and local areas	74%
Issues I care about or directly affect me	66%
Frustration or concern about changes or issues that directly affect me	52%
Knowing my feedback will make a difference and genuinely influence Council decisions	33%
It's easy and quick to participate	12%
All of these	12%
The supports offered, such as translations, paper surveys, face-to-face options, the accessible website	4%
None of these	0%



Q14. What are the main reasons you don't participate in a consultation?

Select up to 4 reasons. (n=69)

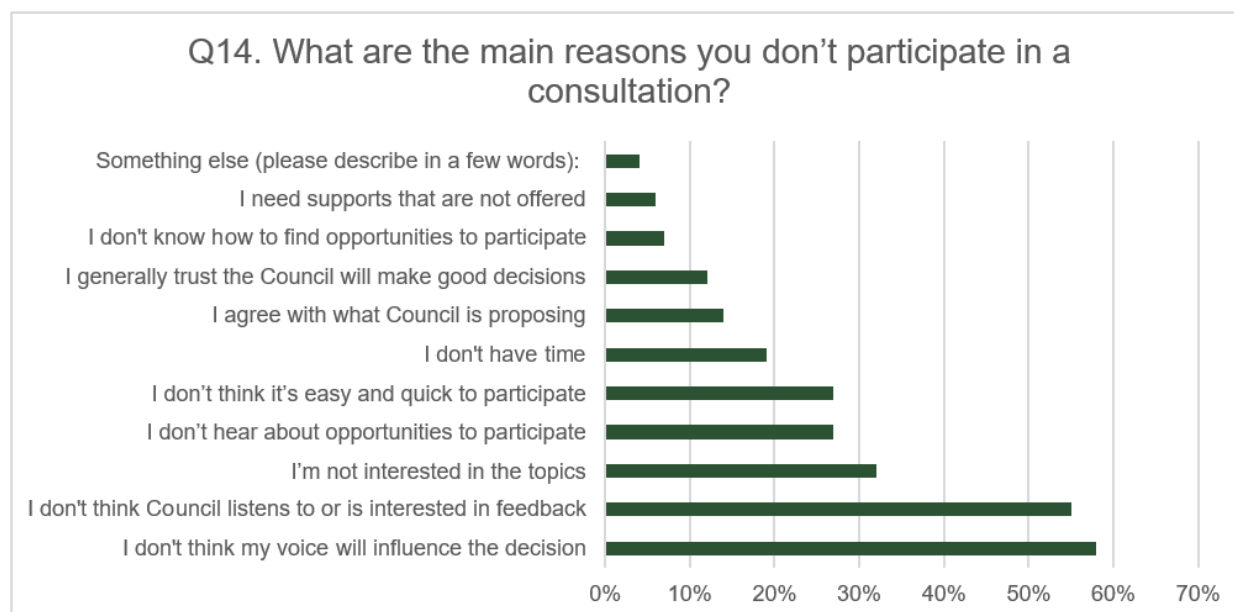
The reasons selected by most participants are:

- thinking their voice won't influence the decision (58%), and
- thinking Council won't listen or isn't interested in the feedback (55%).

A similar question was asked in 2020. However, it offered less options for people to select from and people were asked to select one reason only. For this reason, only general comparisons should be made with the 2 options selected most in 2020:

- More people think their voice won't influence the decision (34% in 2020, 58% in 2025).
- Less people report they don't know how to find opportunities to participate (21% in 2020, 7% in 2025).

Response	2020	2025
I don't think my voice will influence the decision	34%	58%
I don't think Council listens to or is interested in feedback	9%	55%
I'm not interested in the topics	3%	32%
I don't hear about opportunities to participate	2%	27%
I don't think it's easy and quick to participate	5%	27%
I don't have time	12%	19%
I agree with what Council is proposing	n/a	14%
I generally trust the Council will make good decisions	n/a	12%
I don't know how to find opportunities to participate	21%	7%
I need supports that are not offered	n/a	6%
Something else (People nominated a lack of ambition in Council plans, not knowing what to respond to, belief Council listens to retailers but not residents)	14%	4%



Q15. How often have you seen or heard about the outcomes of consultations you've been interested in? (n=72)

Response	%
Never	28%
1-2 times	47%
3-5 times	13%
More than 5 times	8%
More than 10 times	4%

This demonstrates people have selective interest in different consultation topics, as would be expected.

Q16. In the past 2 years, have you watched any public meetings of Councillors, either in person at the Council Chambers or on Council's YouTube channel? (n=73)

Response	%
No	67%
Yes	32%
Not sure	1%

Q17. Overall, how satisfied are you with how Council consults the community? (n=72)

Approximately one in three participants (34%) are quite satisfied or very satisfied with how Council consults the community. 43% are quite unsatisfied in not at all satisfied.

This question was asked in 2020. Comparison shows more people reporting they are quite satisfied or very satisfied (27% in 2020, 34% in 2025). Slightly less people report they are not at all satisfied or quite unsatisfied (46% in 2020, 43% in 2025).

Response	2020	2025
Not at all satisfied	30%	25%
Quite unsatisfied	16%	18%
Neither satisfied or unsatisfied	28%	24%
Quite satisfied	20%	21%
Very satisfied	7%	13%

Q18. Can you explain why you gave this rating? (n=58)

Q19. Are there any other key points you feel Council needs to be aware of when updating the Community Engagement Policy? (n=44)

Comments from these 2 questions were analysed together, along with the 6 comments submitted by people who chose not to complete the survey.

The comments relating to consultations are sorted by topic and sentiment below.

Consultations generally	Example comments
Positive 44%: • easy to access • regular opportunities on range of topics • Council makes an effort.	"I think the consultation process is generally good and easy to respond to." "Access to contribute is readily available." "There seems to be regular opportunities to provide [feedback] on a wide range of Council activities." "I think it genuinely values feedback from the community." "I took part in forming the current 5-year plan and felt that my thoughts were acknowledged."
Negative 34%: • volume and quality • a smokescreen for poor service • poor consultation on local street issues.	"I value Council's intentions regarding consultations ... HOWEVER (AND THIS IS A BIG BUT), the Council teams are too siloed and too inwardly focused on their own outcomes. So, despite good intentions, the vested interests operating within individual teams can undermine overall policies." "As a member of the community - I would like council consults to focus on the outcomes that the community wants." "Local consultation on local street issues is very poor. Council officers hide behind emails rather than face to face or video meetings."

	"For local issues, for example, issues in our street. Council officers come on site during business hours. This discriminates against working people and busy parents."
Neutral 22%: - ok but could be better, variable quality - engage and include First Nations in the policy - there's overlap with state or federal matters - consider timing overlaps - consider planning and building permits in the policy.	"I think Council tries fairly hard, but it is actually very difficult to achieve effective consultation with a good cross section of the community." "... ensuring there is a clear engagement policy for engaging with First Peoples." "Sometimes it seems to be very clear and consultation is good - other times not so good." "In the past Mary Drost was really good at advising issues that were important. Now she has passed I feel I have lost a sense of what I should respond to."

Participation, surveys and other consultation activities	Example comments
Negative 85%: - need to reach more of silent majority - need to reach more young people - feedback dominated by retirees - Council not really seeking participation - you should reach me individually not via a website - over-reliance on website & online surveys	"The Council needs to improve engagement to complete surveys and take onboard broader feedback." "We need to do a much better job of engaging young people. If our surveys are just the same bunch of wealthy white people, we keep getting the same results. Speak to our students, speak to people out in the community, listen to something other than the same conservative voices." "Seems Boroondara is not keen to get high numbers of participation." "This survey for example is very closed with many options I'd choose for answers not available."

• research new ways to increase promotion • in the past, no information in residents' languages • need more open questions • don't like multiple choice questions or rating questions • questions can seem superficial • mistrust online surveys - risk of abuse by foreign or outsider lobby groups • prefer anonymity when participating • get out on the streets to speak to people in person • use deliberative engagement methods for difficult issues such as housing or 10-year financial plan • should aim to run deliberative engagement over 3 to 5 days with community members selected randomly (not through an expression of interest).	"The use of 1-5 rating scales and non-operationally defined terms such as 'sometimes' 'often' etc indicate lack of training in survey design. There need to be fewer multiple choice and far more open-ended questions posed to respondents." "Council relies too heavily on online surveys which are open worldwide and can be completed multiple times by lobby-groups such as the Invasive Species Council, and developer groups." "From what I see from emails and the engagement website I expect that Council engages quite effectively at the 'consult' level on the IAP2 Spectrum, particularly on things like playground upgrades. However, I consider that its engagement at the Collaborate level is very poor and Council does not meet the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act</i> in respect to deliberative engagement."
Neutral 7%: • should limit to one response per IP address • send us one-time links	"Is open and transparent - but surveys should be limited to one survey response per IP address to avoid people "stuffing" the ballot box."

Positive 7%: • good it's open to all range of surveys, forums, focus groups responses can be weighted to better match population	"It's open and transparent" "Is open to all and can be weighted to ensure that the results are reflective of the population."
---	---

Council doesn't listen	Example comments
Negative 100%: • doesn't listen to community wants • perception community has no influence on decisions despite consultation • lack of ambition to make positive changes for the community • Council listens to some groups only (mentioned: traders, Teals) has asked Council to visit a local street and consult residents.	"The council follows its own agenda. In common with a lot of bureaucracies it wants the appearance of public participation without having to actually bother with any consequential external interference." "Often, when results of surveys are published, despite overwhelming feedback (either support or opposition) from residents, decisions are made which ignore the feedback. Council never seems to publish reasons why the feedback is ignored." "Community majority views are ignored in preference for what is the easiest thing for council officers to do." "It seems that Council has already made its decisions." "I think council officers think it is their job to control residents rather than to be informed by their views." "They lack ambition and won't change anything." "It appears that the minority are driving the decisions for the community & it does not meet the majority's expectations or needs."

Awareness of consultations	Example comments
Positive 44%: range of promotional channels several comments liking the email alerts, mentions in the Bulletin and consultation articles in Council newsletter	“I see Facebook, monthly newspaper and emails from Boroondara.” “I regularly receive emails plus the newsletter, both of which I read.” “Email alerts connecting to website forms to provide feedback works well.”
Negative 31% - didn't get notified - interested in local info only - should use email addresses to email everyone everything - Council hasn't consulted new Vic Planning Reforms start social media promotion for a consultation immediately to maximise time for participation	“A neighbour brought this state government planning matter to my attention which appears to render the council's planning authority irrelevant in regard to my property in Ashburton. Here is the council burning huge amounts of money on 'consultation' and yet has failed to bring attention to, much less encourage consultation on this matter.” <i>Council response: We're also concerned about the Victorian Governments planning reforms and have alerted resident via:</i> - A letter to all households in Boroondara (August 2024) - Email to people signed up to Your Say Boroondara (August 2024) - Articles in the Bulletin - In-person forum at Hawthorn Arts Centre (August 2024) - Article in the Bulletin - Media coverage of the Mayor responding in 2024 - Article in the Fortnightly Feed - Media coverage of the Mayor responding in 2025
Neutral 25%: suggestion envelopes for letterbox drops	“I think council staff try very hard but need more avenues to reach out to people.”

• more leaflets • make it easy to sign up for alerts • not everyone uses social media • research new ways to increase promotion.	“Identify letter drop envelopes more clearly, alerting residents to a local matter, rather than simply 'to the resident'.” “It seems that sometimes the consultation period is underway before council social media promotes it, thus shortening the response time.” “The council has the email addresses of most if not all rate payers. Why not provide opt in communication by default and provide an opt out for those who are not interested.” Note: Council must comply with the <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i>. This piece of legislation requires Council to use the personal information we collect for the reason we told the person at the time of collection. This could include the payment of rates or applying for a permit. For the majority of email addresses in our system we did not tell the person that we would also use their contact information for future community consultation and therefore we do not have their permission to use the information for this purpose.
---	---

Consultations are a tick-box	Example comments
Negative 100%: • Council has pre-determined outcomes • community doesn't have real influence on decisions • feedback is not examined closely • Council gave a tick-a-box response to State's housing policies or activity centres.	“Council consults to satisfy a requirement not to get genuine feedback. They have an entrenched position before they ask. It's a waste of time and resources.” “I do wonder whether or not Council officers/Councillors look seriously at the feedback.” “In many ways the council provides lip service to consultation. Consultation appears to be executed, so council can say they consulted.” “Overall, the surveys seem to be a process adopted by Council to 'tick that box' (so that it can be argued a survey was undertaken), but Council really don't take into account feedback from residents.”

• Wants Council to defy Victorian Government • Wants Council to cooperate with Victorian Government.	“The suburbs of Boroondara are under threat courtesy of the state government's housing policies and consultations must be more than a tick-a-box exercise or a presentation. Members of the community want government at all levels to listen to them and partner them in working together to achieve better outcomes.”
---	--

Your Say Boroondara consultation website	Example comments
Negative 60%: • quality of consultation information is poor • info too long or complex • superficial discussions • the website excludes some older people • too much reliance on a website.	“It is very difficult to understand and access the source material to give feedback. It will be useful to explain the key points of a document or a plan, plan for regular Q&A meetings” “Only issue is sometimes the content required to provide feedback on is too long/complex.” “An online portal is a lazy way to preach to the converted ... I pay rates - you do the hard yards and reach out to me to tell me directly what you are doing that I need to consult on.”
Positive 40%: • clear and easy to contribute • appropriate • works for me.	“I find it easy to contribute my thoughts and the website is easy to use and clear to understand.” “The consultation pages are intuitive to use.” “The "Your Say" feature is an appropriate method of engaging with stakeholders.”

Post-consultation activity	Example comments
Negative 100%: • want to see all or more detail of what people said • want analysis by segments (age group, suburb) • not enough updates • hasn't seen delivery of outcomes after a consultation, for example, Glenferrie Road improvements.	"Let us know the results of the surveys and feedback." "Reporting feedback statistics to survey participants is important." "Council rarely publishes the full results of surveys, including the dissection of feedback. Survey results should include a report of the feedback by area/suburb, resident type, owner/renter, age, etc." "Also don't just circulate the Council's analysis and conclusions based on the survey data - make the full data available to respondents so they can check the validity of the conclusions drawn."
Specific consultations	Example comments
Negative 100%	Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan: "My specific feedback not reflected in plans." Organised Sport Seasonal Allocation Policy: "...lack of promotion to the neighbours around sports fields." "Parking consultation for my street I was unaware of." "In Domestic Animals consultation I couldn't comment on barking dogs." Boroondara Community Plan: "The community workshops should have been held over more days to allow time for deliberation."

The comments relating to engagement more generally are sorted by topic and sentiment below.

Engagement with Council (not consultations)	Example comments
Negative 66%: - unsatisfactory response to emails/phone calls - scared for future of Camberwell and other activity centres due to Vic Govt reforms - vested interests within teams can undermine overall policies - should focus on cost reduction - lack of Council action (potholes, dogs not controlled).	"I ... have tried on many occasions to consult council by phone or email on local decisions and future planning that will impact our business and I never/rarely hear back from council?!" "For local issues, for example, issues in our street. Council officers come on site during business hours. This discriminates against working people and busy parents." "Rangers should fine owners of dogs soiling our footpaths, letting dogs walk or run without a lead. Potholes take a long time to be repaired."
Positive 17%: - I'm not waiting on a response - good interactions with Customer Connect team (customer service) - appreciation for recent laneway works.	"I always feel listened to by your Customer Connect Officers when I phone." "An excellent community responsive council!" "Thank you for fixing the lane between Dryden and Milton Sts in Canterbury. it was getting bad."
Neutral 17%: - seeks an information & discussion event about activity centres - suggests residents pitch ideas to editor of the Bulletin	"Why is there no opportunity for residents of Boroondara to contribute to the Boroondara Bulletin? Surely there should be a contact person for resident contributions that the editor can select to publish?"

query about ongoing care of heritage roses in Central Gardens.	
--	--

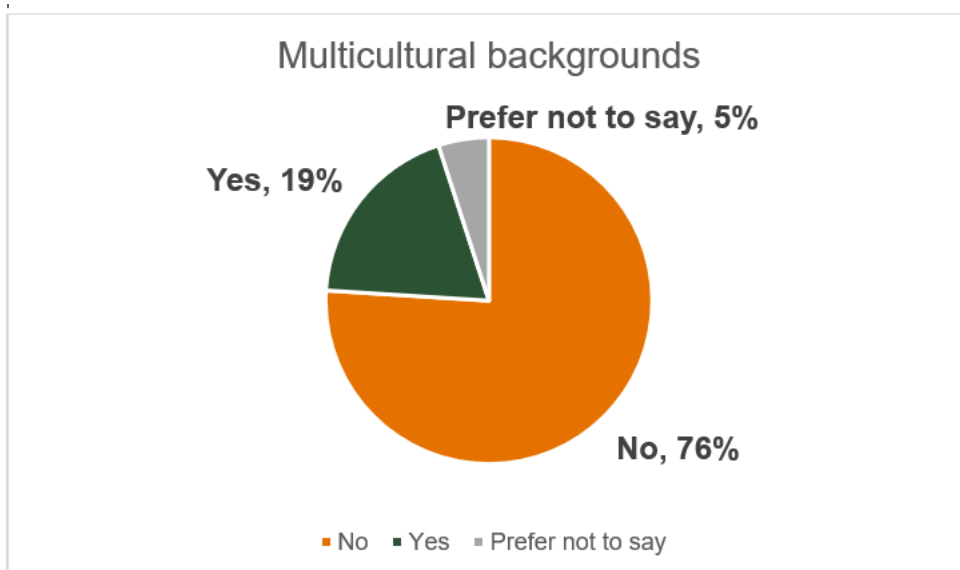
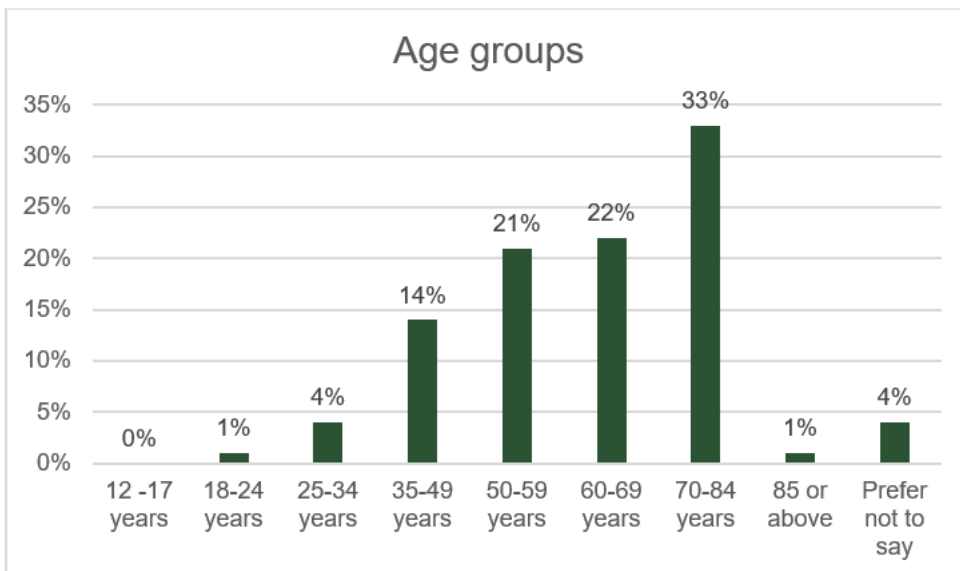
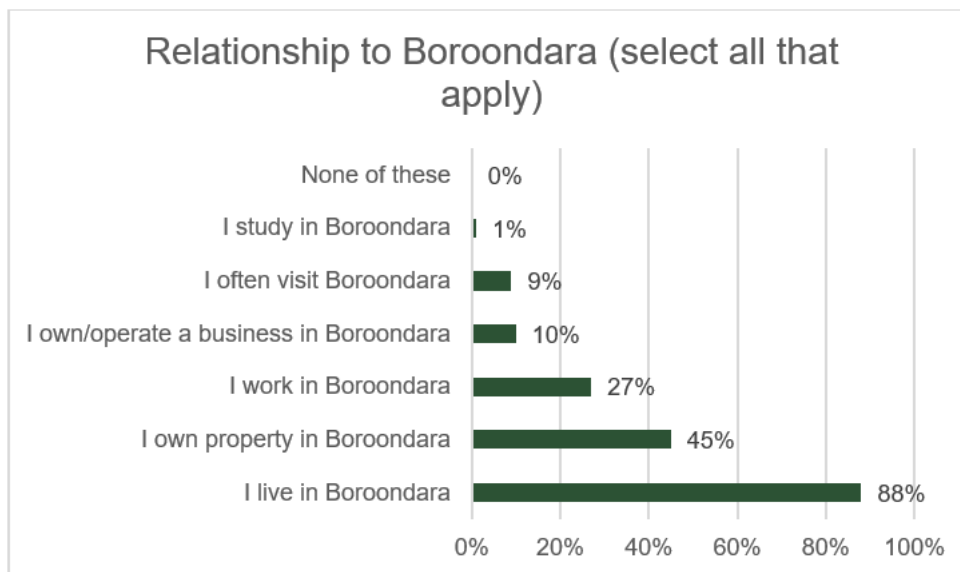
Perceptions of councillors	Example comments
Negative 83%: - focused on future political ambitions - dissatisfied with behaviour	“They lack ambition and won't change anything. Getting elected seems to be more important than doing the right thing for the community. So it's demoralising and a waste of time and expertise. Increasingly councillors are just launching a political career rather than bringing any expertise like urban design to the table.” “It would help if councillors were more accessible, engaged and responsive to community concerns.”
Positive 17%: generally positive	“I know and respect several Councillors.”

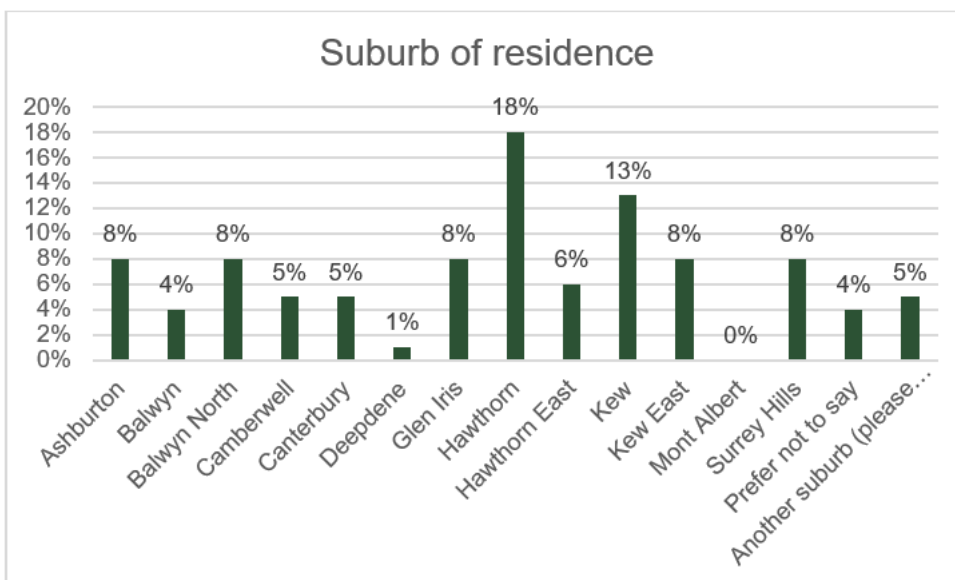
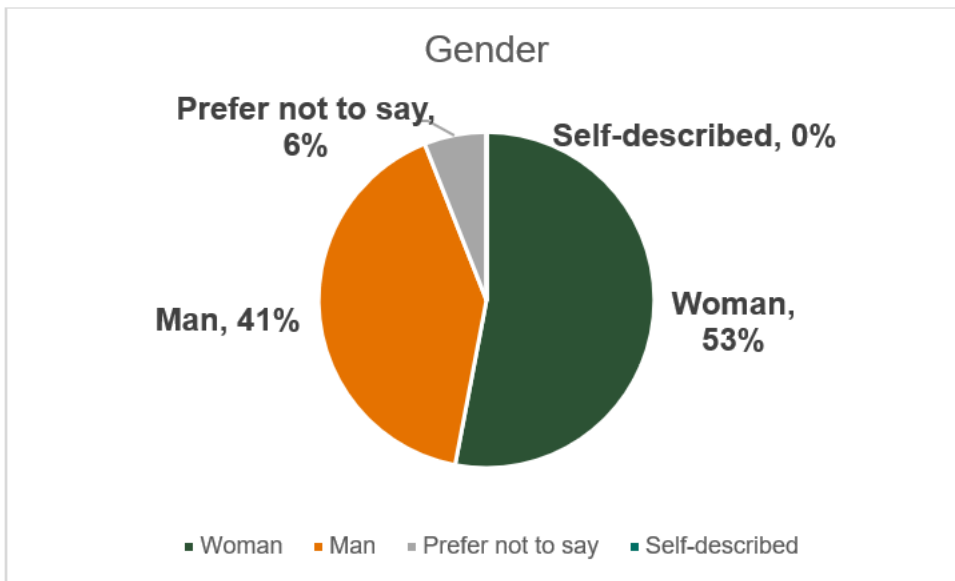
Disagreement on specific matters	Examples
Negative 100%	- concern about risk of overdevelopment/heights of new developments in Council's plans - unhappy but acknowledges Council is limited by State legislation - disagrees with promoting e-bikes and concern about lack of signs for riders to dismount on footpath - encourage mode shift away from cars, especially large cars - unfulfilled promise of new crossing on Abercrombie St.

Q20. Council sometimes alerts the community to the Victorian Government's consultations if the issue impacts Boroondara. How important is this to you on a scale of 1 to 5? (n=73)

Response	%
Not important at all	1%
Quite unimportant	1%
Neither important or unimportant	15%
Quite important	21%
Very important	62%

Demographics of survey participants





Appendix 3: Awareness campaign

Examples of posters, newsletter articles and social media posts to promote the consultation:

Poster and newsletter article



Social media posts

