



People Place Future
Public Exhibition Engagement Report
September 2021



Contents	Page
Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Community Vision + principles	4
Council Plan + Health and Wellbeing Plan	8
Themes	8
Strategies	10

Reference Documents / Materials

The following information and data sources have been used to develop the community engagement report:

On-line survey published at

<https://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/About-us/Your-Say/People-Place-Future> between 3 August and 24 August.

Version Control

9/09/2021 – A Hooper – People Place Future Public Exhibition Community Engagement Report V1.

Introduction

What is People Place Future?

People Place Future is the engagement program – concluded with this report - that has been led by Council to inform the development of a suite of strategic documents, including a four-year Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan, ten-year Community Vision, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The People Place Future community engagement program was designed to encourage broad participation, seek a diverse range of community views, and foster considered deliberation on key issues and dilemmas. Input from three phases of engagement has influenced the development of the four integrated strategic plans.

Council's Community Engagement Policy recognises engagement as: 'a planned process with the specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape decisions or actions... in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome' (IAP2).

The Policy outlines Council's commitment to working with Surf Coast communities to enhance decision making. The Policy specifically notes the Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan as significant documents requiring tailored engagement.

In addition, the Local Government Act 2020 mandates the use of deliberative engagement processes in the development of these key strategic documents.

Council worked with a selection of specialised community engagement consultants to oversee and deliver this program of engagement and provide a level of independence to the process.

1. Participatory phase

Phase 1 focused on broad, participatory engagement, seeking diverse perspectives and helped to provide the deliberative panel with an understanding of community views and priorities

2. Deliberative phase

Phase 2 brought together a representative random sample of people from across the Surf Coast Shire to sit on the People Place Future Community Panel. The panel deliberated on the challenges and opportunities that we face as a community, setting a long term vision and identifying key principles and recommendations to inform the Council Plan incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial and Asset Plans.

3. Review phase

Phase 3 invited community members, businesses, networks and organisations to provide feedback on the community vision and principles, the themes and strategies of the Council Plan incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan and Financial and Asset Plans.

This engagement report will focus on the methodology and findings of the third phase of engagement, the review or public exhibition phase of the People Place Future project.

Methodology

The engagement approach was made up of three interactive phases:

1

Participatory Phase

JANUARY – MARCH 2021

Methodology: online surveys, submissions, targeted contact with stakeholders, in person discussions

Influence and commitment: Consult – Involve. Informing community about challenges and opportunities and working with community to understand and consider community concerns and aspirations.

Outcome: 1193 surveys completed, 20 submissions received, 180 conversations at pop-up stalls.

Outputs: Discussion Paper, Community Engagement Report March 2021

2

Deliberative Phase

MARCH – MAY 2021

Methodology: Open Expression of Interest (Eoi) facilitated by the Sortition Foundation, 239 Eois were received. 35 people were randomly selected and invited to be a member of the panel. Panel members were representative of our population by location, gender and age.

Influence and commitment: Involve – Collaboration. On 19 January 2021, Councillors committed to a 'collaborative' level of influence for the development of the Community Vision and the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. This meant Council would accept panel recommendations 'to the great extent possible'. The level of influence for the Financial and Asset Plans was set at 'involve'. Facilitation experts, Mosaic Lab, were contracted to independently convene the panel who met for a total of 33 hours on seven occasions to consider key inputs and deliberate issues.

Outcome: The Community Panel developed a long term community vision, 10 principles and 35 recommendations.

Outputs: Background report, Community Panel Recommendations Report, Panel Vox Pops, Process Report (Mosaic Lab).

3

Review Phase

JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2021

Methodology: Following a series of workshops with Councillors and staff to develop the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan and Financial and Asset Plans, the draft documents were exhibited for three weeks for public comment via submissions and an online survey.

Influence and commitment: Inform – Consult. Council provided information about the process to develop the strategic plans and sought feedback on whether the resultant plans reflected community input and represented a reasonable program of work that would contribute to the achievement of the community vision and priorities.

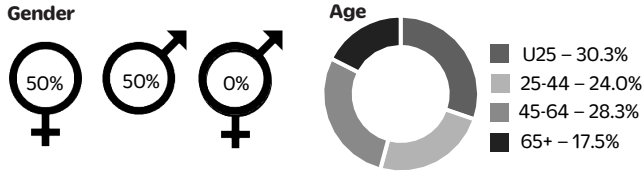
Outcome: 46 Surveys completed. Four submissions

Outputs: Public Exhibition Community Engagement Report.

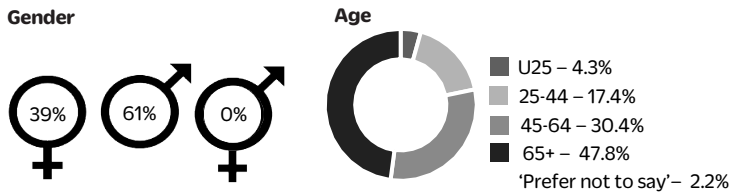
About the respondents

Gender and age profile of respondents in comparison to the 2016 ABS census

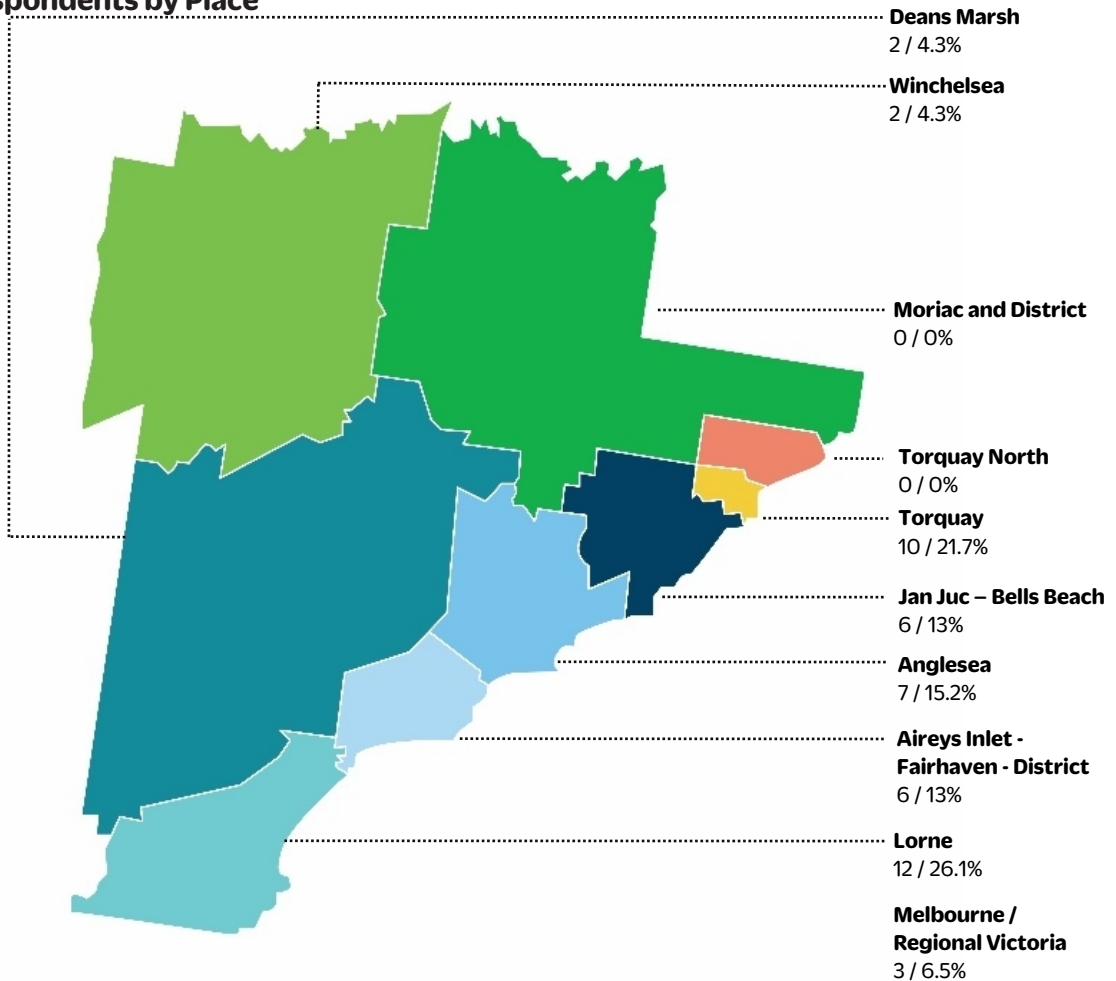
2016 Census Federal Government ABS data (2016) n = 29,397



Community Engagement (2021) Survey data (n=46)



Respondents by Place



Community Vision and Principles

The first part of the survey asked respondents to rate and comment on the Community Vision and the ten principles that underpin it.

Community Vision

From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it.


Principles


1. Protect, conserve and restore our natural environment
2. Planning for growth
3. Sharing Our Home with the World
4. Identify and Maintain our Community Identities
5. Equitable delivery of Community Services
6. Tackling Climate Change and Implementing Climate Resilient Strategies
7. Accountability through timely, consultative and transparent communication about proposed council decisions
8. Commitment to a community that promotes cultural and recreational activities
9. A place to nurture, acknowledge and promote innovation, the creative arts and industries
10. Respectful Engagement and Consultations with First Nations

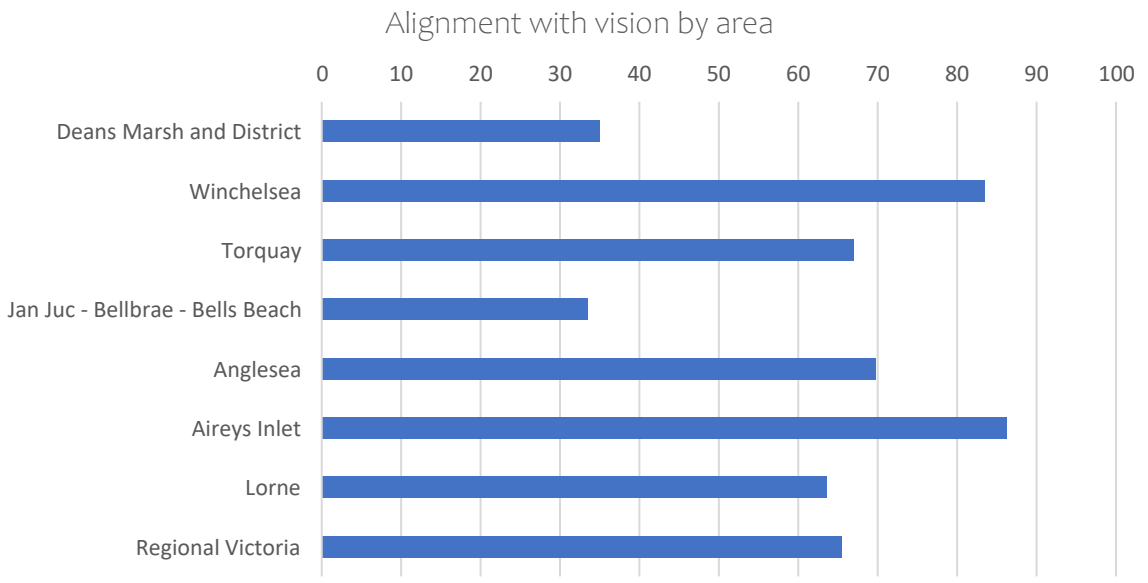
Results

Community Vision

Respondents were asked to rate out of 100 the extent to which the Community Vision aligned with their own vision. The following chart breaks down responses by gender, area and age (n = 29).

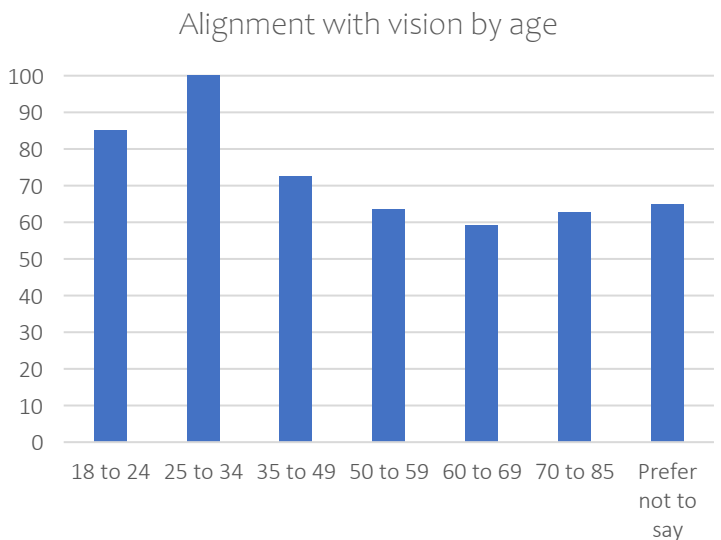

 Women respondents indicated a greater level of alignment, 71 out of 100, compared to 63.





Aireys Inlet and District (86.25) and Winchelsea (83.5) respondents indicated the greatest alignment with the Community Vision. Deans Marsh and District and Jan Juc – Bellbrae – Bells Beach indicated the lowest (33.5).

Younger cohorts, 18 – 24 and 25 – 34 indicated the greatest alignment with the Community Vision (85 and 100 respectively).



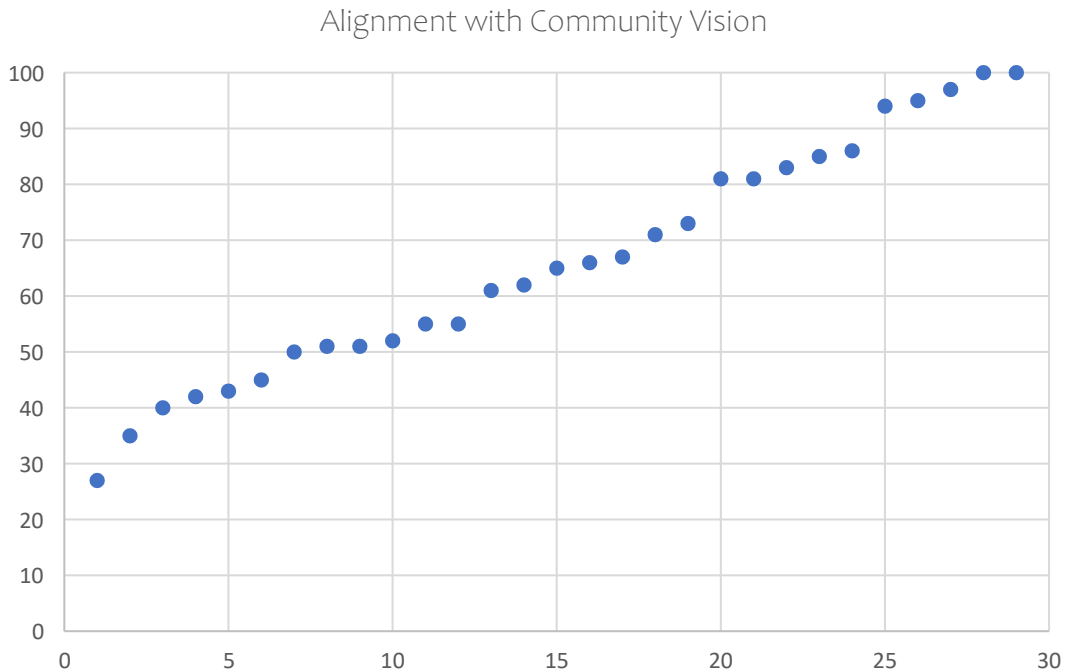
Results (Continued)

Community Vision

Overall, the average rating for alignment with the community vision was 66.

Nineteen free text comments were made in reference to the Community Vision.

The level of support for the vision as indicated by the comments were relatively consistent with the scores out for 100, with 7 supportive comments, 7 unsupportive and 5 neutral or uncertain.



As indicated by a couple of comments, it can be difficult to connect with a statement that is by nature high level.

“It is very good and inclusive. It works for me.”

“... intent and fine words do not necessarily drive and/or achieve outcomes. The outcome is all that matters.”

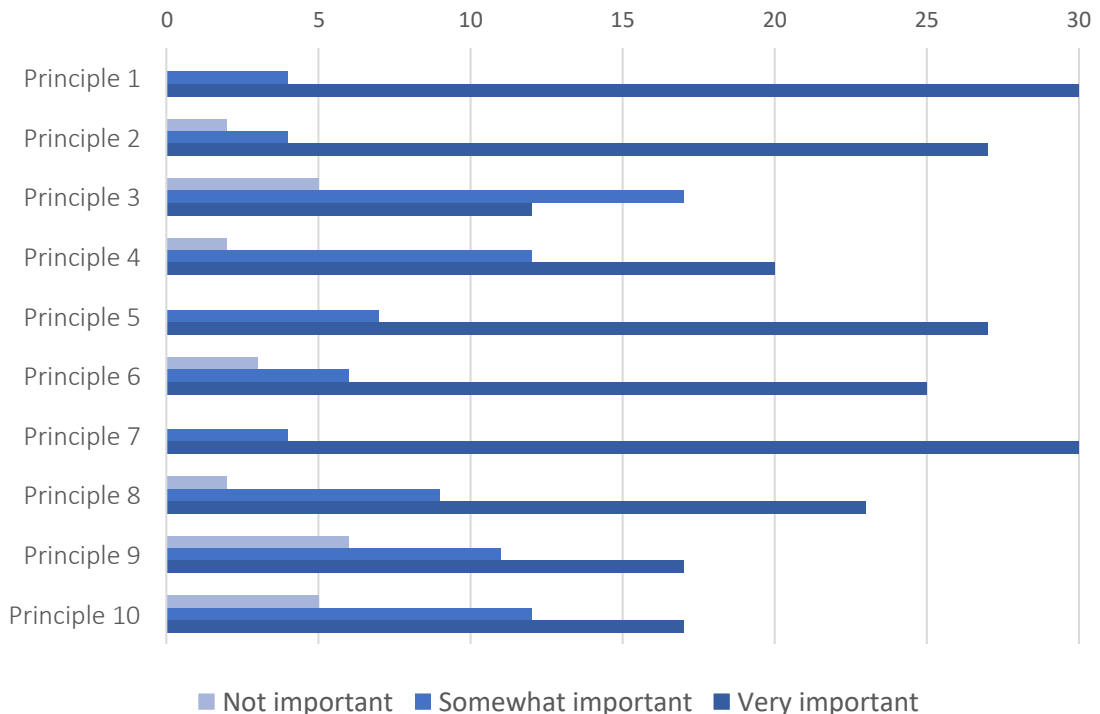
“Instead of all this airy fairy “vision”....could you please be a bit more specific as to what you’re on about??”

Results (continued)

Principles

Respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered each of the 10 principles to be. Respondents could select ‘Very important’, ‘Somewhat important’ or ‘Not important’ (n = 34; as indicated by the top axis). Principles 1, 5 and 7 received the greatest show of support, with 100% of respondents indicating those principles were ‘somewhat’ or ‘very important’.

In addition to according with the Community Panel’s work, support for these principles concerning the protection of the natural environment, equitable access to community services, and transparency and accountability of communications and decision-making, is in line with the findings from the first phase of engagement.



Of the 24 comments, 9 were supportive, 11 were unsupportive and 6 were neutral or uncertain

‘Progress with balance of preserving the place of natural beauty and history.’

“Totally agree with community panels recognition of environment being vitally important”

“... not enough focus on providing real infrastructure needed for a small city we have become”.

Council Plan incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan

The second part of the survey asked respondents to rate and comment on the Council Plan themes and strategies.

Themes

1. First Nations Reconciliation

Our goal: Reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration

2. Healthy Connected Community

Our goal: To foster a thriving, connected, healthy community

3. Environmental Leadership

Our goal: Protect our environment and help our community to thrive through environmental leadership

4. Sustainable Growth

Our goal: Growth is not at the expense of environmental values or the unique heritage and character of our townships

5. A Robust and Diverse Economy

Our goal: Our economy is sustainable and supports a diversity of local enterprises and people

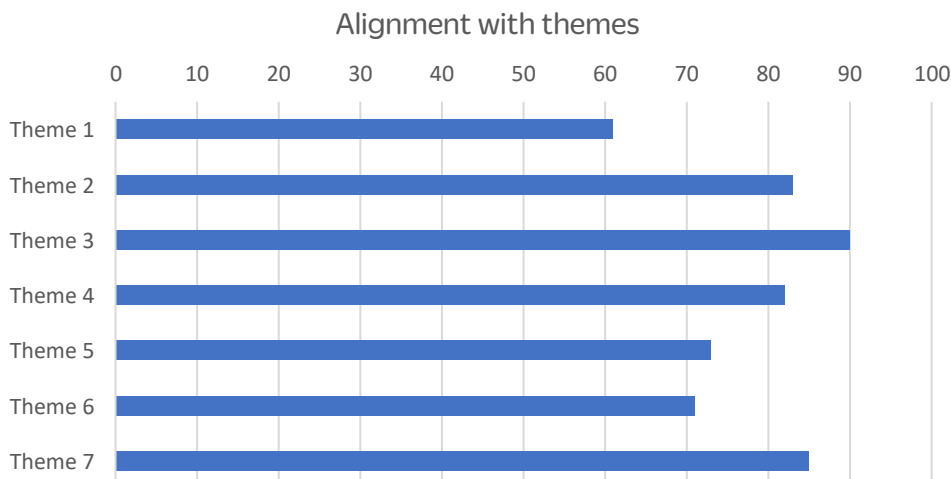
6. Arts and Creativity

Our goal: Acknowledge the value of arts and creativity and nurture their growth

7. An Accountable and Viable Council

Our goal: Council has financial capacity to deliver services now and into the future and decision making is informed by community views

Results



Results (continued)

Themes

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each theme out of 100 (n = 25 – 28).

Respondents indicated that theme 3 was the most important to them, with an average score of 90. Theme 7 scored an average of 85 and theme 2's average rating was 83. Support for themes concerning the protection of our natural environment and action on climate change, the accountability and viability of Council and Social infrastructure, open space and community services is consistent with the high level of support shown for principles 1, 5 and 7.

Somewhat inconsistently, principle 10 'Respectful engagement with first nations' was seen as 'somewhat important' or 'very important' by 85% of respondents. Respondents alignment with theme 1, 'First Nations Reconciliation' was rated 61 out of 100.

Similarly principle 9 'A place to nurture, acknowledge and promote innovation, the creative arts and industries' was considered 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to 82% of respondents. Respondents rated their alignment with theme 6 Arts and Creativity 71 out of 100.

While most comments indicated a high level of support, some of the comments regarding the themes suggest an uncertainty about the role of local government, as opposed to state or federal government, in arts and creative industries and Reconciliation. The comments seem to indicate that respondents are concerned that a focus on these themes would cause a redirection of resources away from other things they hold to be important, Or, perhaps, that efforts to grow creative industries or progress Reconciliation would not benefit all community members equally.

Theme 1.

"Not if it adds unreasonable cost"

"Continue with engagement and collaboration, but remember to make decisions for all the community, and give all the community the opportunity the have input into the decision."

"....not ONE word about the appalling state of infrastructure in the shire.

Theme 6.

"Arts tourism is acknowledged as encouraging longer stays and more thoughtful visitors."

"The Arts always need subsidy, all over the World. But don't make for economic growth

Nice if it can be afforded - its in the realm of not a priority compared to basic services

Strategies

The next part of the survey asks respondents to consider the strategies that sit under each theme. Respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each strategy to them and to the delivery of the theme goal. As with previous questions, respondents could select 'very important', 'somewhat important' or 'not important' in rating each strategy. The 19 strategies are listed below.

1. Work with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to achieve reconciliation
2. Ensure Council decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge
3. Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and open space to enable healthy lifestyles
4. Improve access to local services and programs that support people to be healthy and well
5. Make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars.
6. Enable communities to strengthen their social connections and participate in community life.
7. Protect significant habitats, landscapes and biodiversity
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change
9. Divert more material from the waste stream
10. Adapt to a changing climate
11. Protect heritage and township character
12. Improve access to affordable residential accommodation
13. Support tourism and events that encourage people to stay longer and appreciate and care for this place
14. Enable people to run successful local businesses that grow and create jobs in our changing economy
15. Foster an environment that enables businesses to operate according to ethical, social and sustainable principles
16. Foster an environment where people with clever and creative ideas can make a difference in their communities
17. Increase support for creative industries and arts
18. Establish a sustainable financial position.
19. Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement

Results

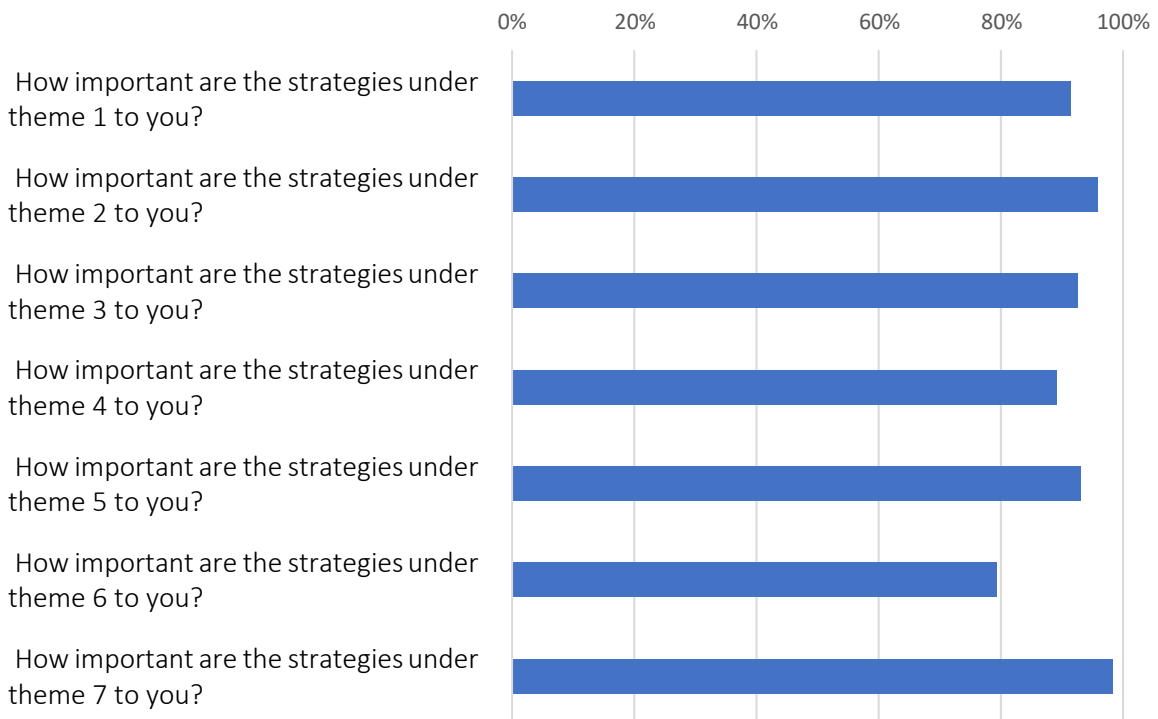
Overview of the support for strategies.

Respondents (n = 27-30) were asked to indicate how important they considered each strategy. The below chart aggregates these responses under their respective themes, ie, responses to strategies 1 and 2 have been aggregated under 'how important are the strategies under theme 1 to you?'. Responses to strategies 3, 4, 5 and 6 are included in 'how important are the strategies under theme 2 to you?', and so on. Pages 13 – 19 below disaggregate the data for each strategy.

This overview indicates a high level of support for the strategies under each of the themes, with more than 79% respondents considering the strategies under all themes to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important'.

Strategies under theme 7 'Accountable and Viable Council' were the most important to respondents (n = 29), with 98% indicating that strategies 18 and 19 were 'somewhat important' or 'very important'.

Ninety-six percent of respondents considered the four strategies under theme 2 'Healthy Connected Communities' to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. Ninety-three percent of respondents rated the strategies under 'A Robust and Diverse Economy' to be 'somewhat' or 'very important'. Ninety-one percent of respondents considered the 'First Nations Reconciliation strategies (1 and 2) to be 'somewhat' or 'very important'.



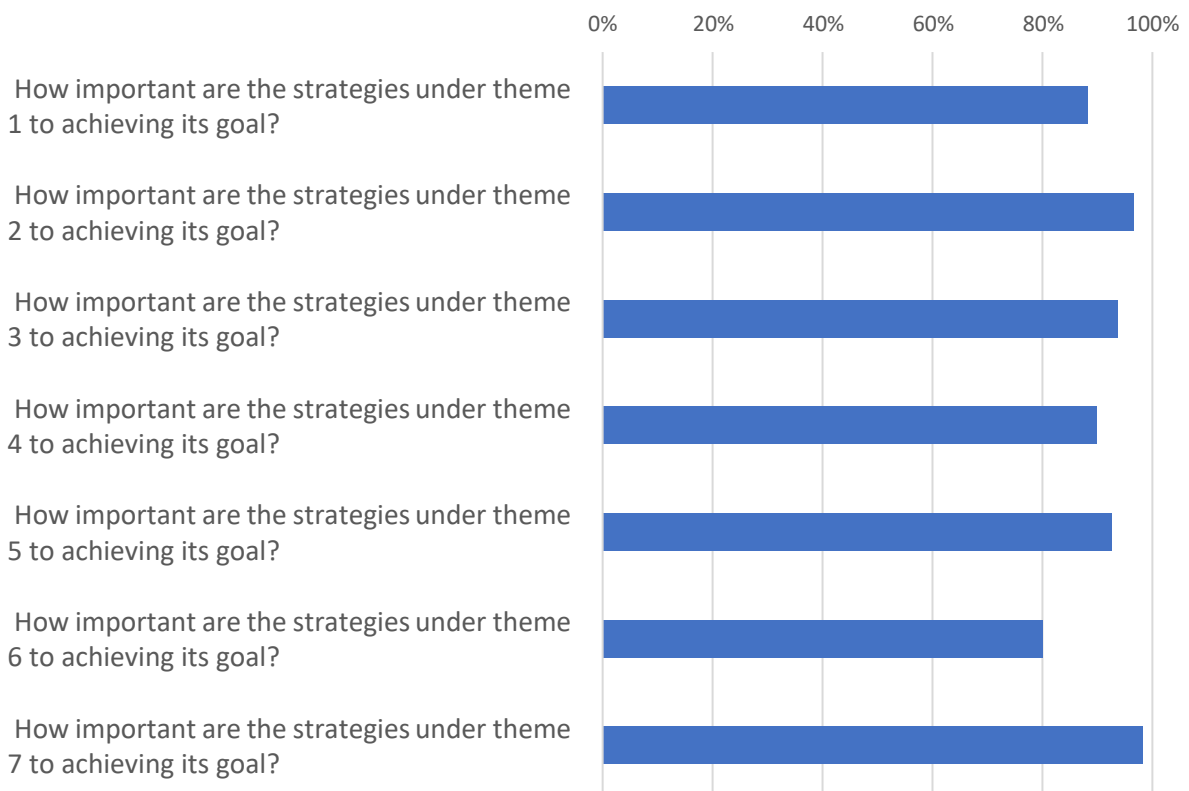
Results (continued)

Respondents (n = 25-30) were asked to indicate how important they considered each strategy to be for the delivery of the theme goal. Again, the below chart aggregates these responses under their respective themes. And, like for the 'part a' of this line of survey questions, responses to, for example, strategies 7, 8, 9 and 10 have been aggregated under 'how important are the strategies under theme 3 to achieving its goal?' Responses to strategies 11, 12 and 13 are included in 'how important are the strategies under theme 4 to achieving its goal?', and so on. Pages 13 – 19 disaggregate the data for each strategy.

The majority of respondents consider the strategies to be important to achieving the respective goals of the themes that they sit under.

Strategies under theme 7 'Accountable and Viable Council' were the most important to respondents (n = 29), with 98% indicating that strategies 18 and 19 were 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to achieving the goal of theme 7.

Ninety-four percent of respondents considered strategies under theme 2 to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to achieving the goal of Healthy Connected Communities'. Ninety-four and 93% of respondents rated the strategies under theme 3 and 5 as 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to achieving their respective theme goals. Ninety percent of respondents thought theme 4 strategies would be efficacious in achieving the goal of the theme. For theme 1 and theme 6 the efficacy rating was 88% and 80% respectively.



Results (continued)

The following pages provide a breakdown of responses to the twin questions of ‘how important is this strategy to you?’ and ‘how important is this strategy to achieving the goal of the theme?’

Theme 1 strategies

Ninety-three percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategy 1 to be ‘somewhat important’ or ‘very important’. Ninety percent of respondents (n = 30) consider strategy 1 to be important to the achievement of the goal of theme 1.

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategy 2 to be ‘somewhat important’ or ‘very important’. Eighty-seven percent of respondents (n = 30) consider strategy 2 to be important to the achievement of the goal of theme 1.



‘Strategy 1.

“This is such an important goal. Our community exists as if it’s popped out of thin air, with very little public awareness, conversation or acknowledgement of our collective history. To return to history and learn how to reconcile with it, and walk forward together with T.O groups, will build a healthier, resilient community.”

‘Strategy 2.

“The First Nation people have a lot to offer our community. Listening to them is important.”

Results (continued)

Theme 2 strategies.

Respondents indicated a high level of support for the strategies under theme 2. One hundred percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategy 4 to be important to them and important in achieving the goal of 'Healthy Connected Communities'. Ninety-seven percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategies 3 and 5 to be important to them and important in achieving the theme's goal.

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 30) considered strategy 6 to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. And 93% of respondents (n = 29) consider strategy 6 to be important to the achievement of the goal of 'fostering a thriving, connected, healthy community'.



Strategy 3.

“A no-brainer in a regional coastal community. The open space is already there. This strategy should not be used to justify additional infrastructure.”

Strategy 4.

“More support for mental health.”

Strategy 5.

“Walking tracks and links for longer trekking important.”

Strategy 6.

“Access to year round public transport, essential for the elderly, infirmed and youth.”

Results (continued)

Theme 3 strategies

Ninety-seven percent of respondents (n = 29/30) considered strategies 7 and 9 to be 'somewhat' or 'very important' to them. Respondents (n = 28/29) rated the importance of these strategies to the delivery of the goal of theme 3, 96% and 97% respectively. Eighty-seven percent of respondents (n = 30) considered strategy 8 to be important and 89% (n = 28) considered it important to the theme's goal.

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 30) considered strategy 10 to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. And 93% of respondents (n = 28) consider strategy 10 to be important in the work to 'protect our environment and help our community to thrive'.



Strategy 7.

“Need proper greenspace and wildlife corridors and to protect existing remnant vegetation.”

Strategy 8.

“Promote use of public participation into this infrastructure.”

”

Strategy 9.

“Products need to be made to last and repaired - we must stop the endless “throw away mentality.”

Strategy 10.

“Adapting to climate change won't help protect the environment.”

Results (continued)

Theme 4 strategies

Ninety-three percent of respondents (n = 29/28) considered strategy 11 to be both important to them and important in achieving the goal of the theme. Eighty-nine percent of respondents (n = 28/29) rated the importance of these strategies to the delivery of the goal of theme 3, 96% and 97% respectively. Eighty-seven percent of respondents (n = 28) considered strategy 12 to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important'.

A higher proportion (92%) of a lower number of respondents (n = 25) considered strategy 12 to be 'somewhat important' or 'very important' in the delivery of the goal of the theme. Eighty-five percent of respondents (n = 27) consider strategy 13 to be both important to them and important to goal of upholding the 'environmental values and unique heritage and character of our townships'.



Strategy 11.

“Much has already been destroyed and lost at Lorne; however the Pier precinct is an example of an area needing sympathetic upgrade without destroying the history of what this area is and was all about.”

Strategy 12.

“Discourage Holiday home and Vacant house and land by implement a levy on these type of properties.”

Strategy 13.

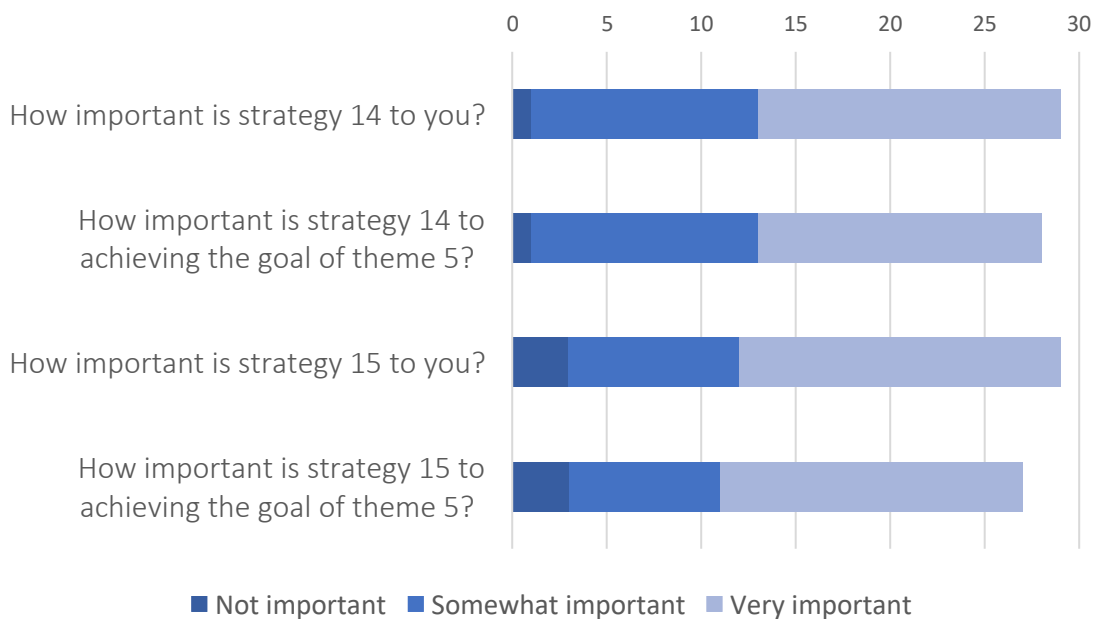
“Tourism clearly matters though the post -COVID period may see changes in tourist needs that we cannot yet appreciate.”

Results (Continued)

Theme 5 strategies

Ninety-seven percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategy 14 to be ‘somewhat’ or ‘very important’ to them. Ninety-six percent of respondents (n = 28) considered strategy 14 important to the delivery of the goal of a sustainable economy that supports a diversity of local enterprises and people.

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 29) saw strategy 15 as being ‘somewhat important’ or ‘very important’ to them. A slightly lower percentage – 89 (n = 28) thought that strategy 15 was important to the achieving the theme’ goal.



Strategy 14.

“need major employers, not just small business in order to be sustainable with the population projected.”

Strategy 14.

“Geelong is a big centre to provide employment. Surf coast should remain low key small business.”

Strategy 15.

“We like innovation too, not just cottage industries. We need more job opportunities on the Surfcoast.”

Strategy 15.

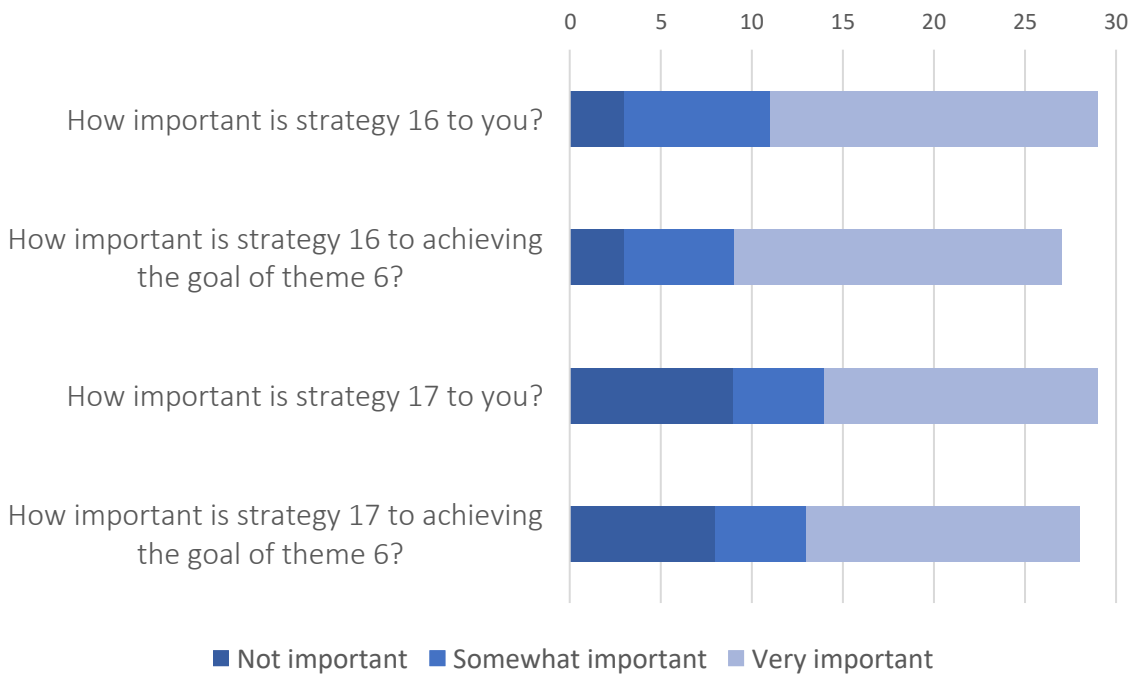
“Support Green Local businesses.”

Results (continued)

Theme 6 strategies

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 29) considered strategy 16 to be 'somewhat' or 'very important' to them. Eighty-nine percent thought that strategy 16 was important for the delivery of the theme's goal.

A lower percentage – 69% (n = 29) considered strategy 17 to be important to them and 71% (n = 28) considered the strategy to be important in achieving a community that 'acknowledges the value of arts and creativity and nurtures their growth'.



Strategy 16.

“So hard to measure, but intangibly vital for a healthy society.”

Strategy 16.

“Support local ventures, but must be enviro sustainable.”

Strategy 17.

“Don't waste time on this, creatives will just move to Melbourne”.

Strategy 17.

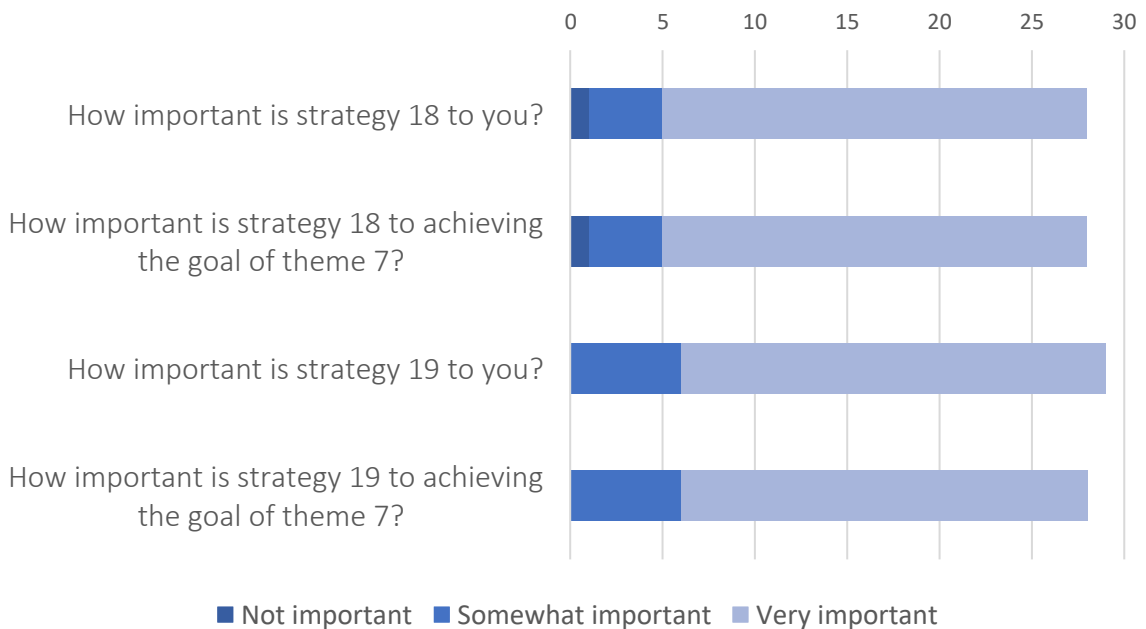
“Not at the expense of health and other facilities which will benefit the whole community.”

Results (continued)

Theme 7 strategies

There was a high level of support for the strategies that sit under theme 7. Ninety-six percent of respondents (n = 28) considered strategy 18 to be both important to them and to achieving the theme goal which is, 'Council has financial capacity to deliver services now and into the future and decision making is informed by community views'.

One hundred percent of respondents (n = 29) identified that strategy 19 was 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to them. The same percentage (100), though there was one fewer respondents (n = 28), considered the strategy to be important in achieving the goal for the theme.



Strategy 18.

“Essential this occurs. Current indications are not encouraging with Council spending beyond their means.”

Strategy 18.

“Would like to have a long term sustained effort to keep the budget in surplus.”

Strategy 19.

“Opinion of residents from the entire Shire must be sought not just Torquay and when feedback is received it must be respected.”

Strategy 19.

“This is an area where listening to and acting on community feedback speak louder than Vision and Strategy documents.”