Council & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
Community Consultation Report
Phase One and Phase Two (2020-2021)

Contents

Report context

This report covers the consultation with the City of Melton community to inform the development of the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.

This feedback forms part of a broader consultation process in the development of the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25. Other consultation included input from:

- A 40 member randomly selected Community Panel made up of residents, business owners, landlords and tenants in the City of Melton
- City of Melton Councillors
- Engagement with external stakeholders who provide services or programs in the City of Melton
- Melton City Council Executive, Managers and Council officers.

The feedback gathered from the City of Melton community took place over two separate phases. This feedback forms the basis of this report.

Phase One occurred between 12 March 2020 and 31 May 2020. Phase One of the community consultation process consisted of a survey that gathered some preliminary data about community priorities. This was included in a larger survey for the update of the Community Vision 2041. This data was also used to frame early discussions about the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25. It was a key input into Council and Wellbeing Plan workshops.

Phase Two occurred between 15 February 2021 and 9 March 2021. Phase Two of the community consultation process consisted of a dedicated and more in-depth survey about community priorities for the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. The community feedback via this survey was one input used to develop strategies for the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 so that it reflected community priorities.

Phase Two engagement also included input from the Community Panel who helped prioritise strategies created by City of Melton Councillors that occurred in a separate engagement process. A summary report of this engagement is also available.

Please note that only data relating to the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 is included in this report. Data for the Community Vision 2041 – The City We Create is held separately.

Engagement with the City of Melton community – Phase One (2020)

Methodology

Initial plans for Phase One of engaging the City of Melton community included a significant amount of face to face engagement at the *My City My Say* listening posts, attendance at events, and planned community forums. These engagement events were planned to sit alongside an online survey. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions meant the face to face events needed to be cancelled, except for attendance at 2020's Harmony Day event. This means the engagement with the community for Phase One largely comprised of the community survey.

The online survey was launched on Thursday 12 March 2020 and distributed at Harmony Day on Saturday 14 March 2020, prior to the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions. The initial engagement with the survey was very low as residents adjusted to new ways of living and working. The combination of time and increased promotion meant that the survey gradually gathered momentum but meant the planned closing date had to be extended until 31 May 2020. The survey closed with 515 responses.

Demographics of survey respondents

Gender

The survey collected responses from a fairly even gender split with 44.4% of males and 55.6% females. The option was given to select a gender category other than male or female, however no respondents selected this.

Figure 1: Gender of respondent (n=381)
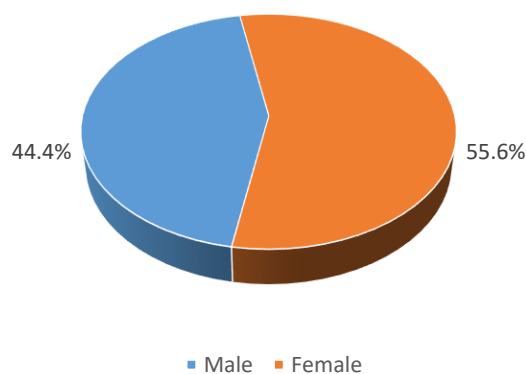
44.4%   55.6%

■ Male   ■ Female

Age

The survey recorded responses from all age groups in broadly representative proportions.

More than half of all respondents were aged between 25 and 44 years (56.7%). The lowest proportion of respondents was from those aged 18 to 24 years (7%); however, this is only marginally below that recorded in the 2016 Census for this age group (8.9%).

Figure 2: Age of respondent (n=384)
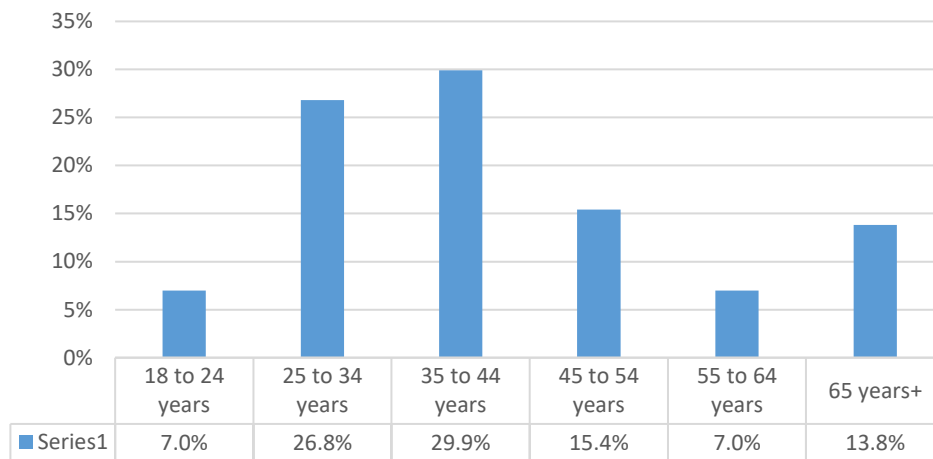
	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years+
Series1	7.0%	26.8%	29.9%	15.4%	7.0%	13.8%

Suburb

There was good representation from across the Melton municipality. The highest proportion of respondents came from Diggers Rest (19.7%), followed by Melton South (10.1%) and Brookfield (8.8%).

Figure 3: Suburb of respondent (n=385)
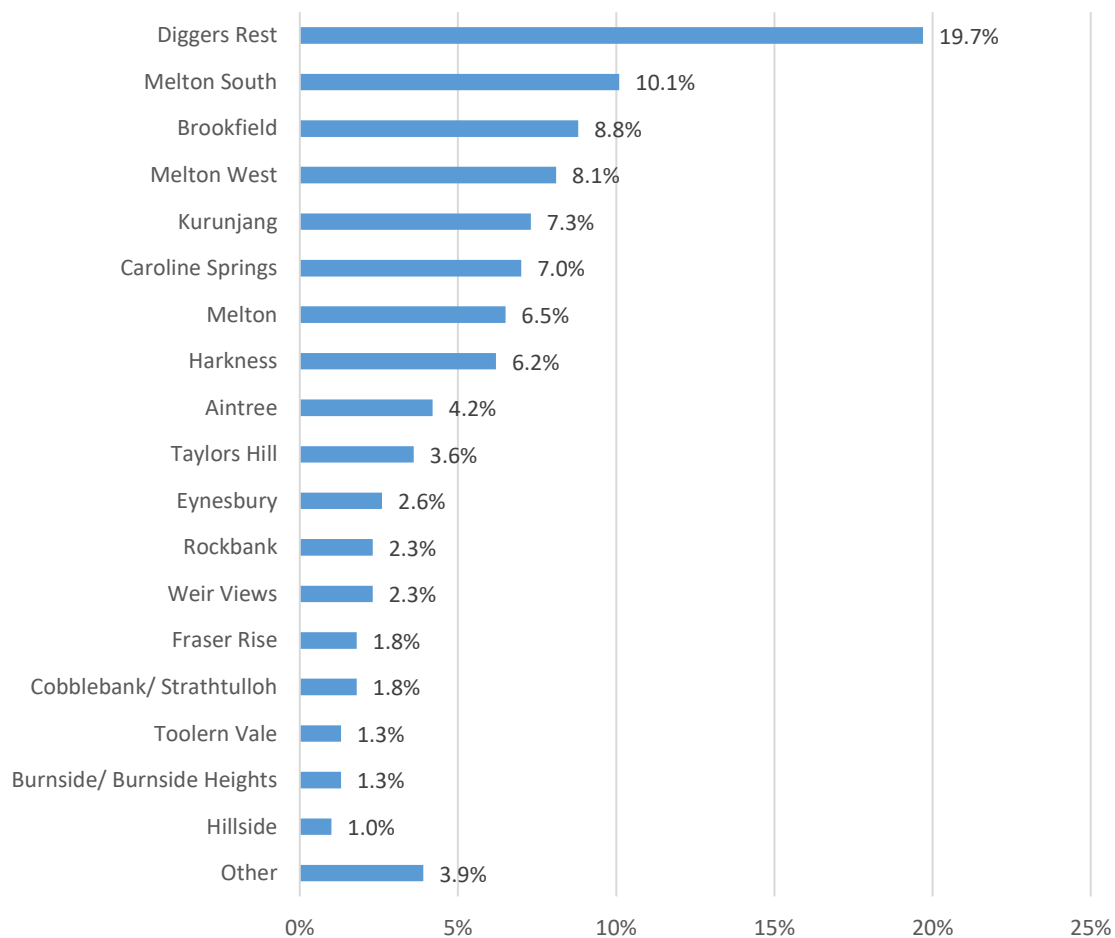
Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The survey gathered responses from a small proportion of people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (3.9%); however, this is significantly higher than the proportion recorded for Melton LGA in the 2016 Census (1.0%).

Figure 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of respondent (n=381)

96.1%

3.9%

■ Yes ■ No
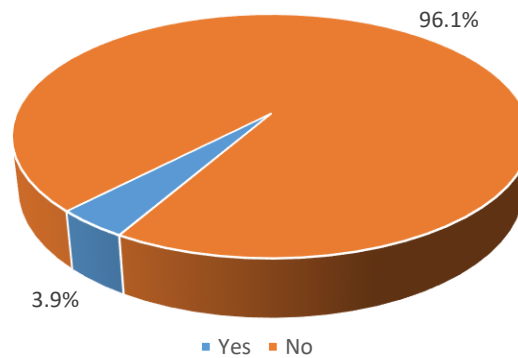
Language other than English spoken at home

Two-thirds of the survey respondents (66.0%) spoke English only, while one-third of respondents (34.0%) spoke a language other than English at home, which is a similar proportion (32.1%) recorded in 2016 Census data.

Figure 5: Language other than English spoken at home (n=382)

34.0%

66.0%

■ No ■ Yes
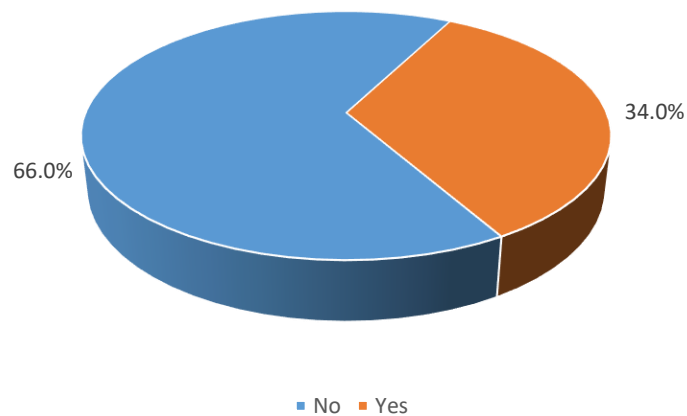
The most common languages of survey respondents were Urdu, Punjabi, Malayalam, and Hindi.

Council and Wellbeing Plan consultation data – Phase One

Phase One of the community consultation process consisted of a survey that gathered some preliminary data about community priorities. This was included in a larger survey for the update of the Community Vision 2041. Following the survey section on the Community Vision, respondents were then asked what they would like Council to focus on in the next four years to help achieve the Community Vision. 243 respondents completed this section.

The survey asked a series of open-ended questions, focussed on the four themes of the Community Vision, with an additional internally focussed theme relating to Melton City Council. The Community Vision themes were:

- A Safe and Socially Connected City
- A Well-built City
- A String Local Economy
- A Thriving Natural Environment.

The internally focussed them is:

- A High Performing Organisation.

Community Vision Theme 1: A Safe and Socially Connected City

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years to implement Theme 1, safety was the dominant focus, with some aspect of safety cited by 59% of respondents.

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. A larger/stronger police presence in the city (21.8%)
2. A focus on safety and security generally (20.1%)
3. Crime prevention/ reduction (19.8%)
4. Encouraging greater community connection and social cohesion. This particularly emphasised Council increasing the opportunities for the community to come together and connect and promote social harmony. (19.6%) Other ideas below were also focussed on achieving creating social harmony
5. Increasing focus on youth activities, connection and engagement. (8.9%)
6. Holding more community events, especially those that encourage social connection and/or celebrate diversity (8.9%)
7. Increasing access to community services and programs, especially those that support physical health, mental health, and emotional wellbeing (8.2%)
8. Increasing opportunities for greater community participation, including opportunities for volunteering and active (7.8%)
9. Proactive efforts to heal divisions in the community. This was particularly focussed on preventing racism and xenophobia (7.4%)
10. CCTV cameras employed across the city (6.2%)
11. More community programs that educate and promote understanding (5.1%)
12. Community programs and resources available online to increase accessibility (3.8%)

Please note: many respondents gave more than one aspect; therefore, results reflect the number of responses in relation to respondents.

Community Vision Theme 2: A Well-built City

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years to implement Theme 2, the focus was on improvements to public transport (19.8%).

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. Public transport improvements. This related to the frequency, connections and schedules of all public transport options. The lack of connection between the different public transport modes was noted as a particular problem for Melton. It was acknowledged that this was not an issue that could be resolved by Council and was therefore considered an important advocacy issue. (19.8%)
2. Improving road connections across the city. This was most frequently focussed on improving road networks and connections to highways. These were typically roads controlled by VicRoads, however, were noted as potential advocacy issues. A smaller number of respondents referred to the lack of connecting roads in new estates, or to other parts of the municipality. (18.8%)
3. Improving infrastructure, especially in new developments and suburbs. In particular, the focus was on ensuring adequate infrastructure was provided before residents moved into news estates, along with ensuring infrastructure matched population growth. (18.4%)
4. Access to health services, including a public hospital. Although this was overwhelmingly the number one issue in this theme for the Community Vision, again it was acknowledged that delivery was outside Council's control, but that it should remain a key advocacy issue. (16.7%)
5. Reducing traffic congestion. This was primarily focussed on duplication of the Western, Calder and Melton highways, and again, acknowledged as an advocacy issue. (15.1%)
6. Improving the planning of the city. This focus related to some of the comments in issue 3 about infrastructure planning for future growth; however, it also included issues such as planning with sustainability features and the social determinants of health in mind (e.g. good pedestrian access, cycle lanes, renewable energy, sustainable building designs etc.). (14.2%)
7. Improving the road quality. Roads were a dominant feature through this theme. These comments related solely to the physical quality of the roads and focussed on improving and maintaining them. (11.2%)
8. More open space and parks in the city. (6.1%
9. Affordable housing. (5.3%)
10. Improvements to shopping precincts, particularly beautification and cleanliness. (4.8%)

It should be noted that, four out of the top five issues for Council to focus on are outside of Council's direct control and are advocacy issues.

Please note: many respondents gave more than one aspect; therefore, results reflect the number of responses in relation to respondents.

Community Vision Theme 3: A Strong Local Economy

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years to implement Theme 3, the focus was overwhelmingly creating local jobs (34.9% of respondents), with an additional 8.4% wanting a specific focus on jobs for young people (43.3% in total).

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. Creating local jobs (34.9%)
2. Encouraging business growth that would in turn create local job opportunities (14.1%)
3. Creating local economies by encouraging residents to buy local (8.8%)
4. Better shopping precincts in local areas (8.8%)
5. Encourage greater investment in the western region, especially of government agencies and larger businesses (8.8%)
6. Greater diversity of businesses and employment options (8.4%)
7. Creating jobs for young people. This was considered separately from those who only mentioned more general job creation. People in this category wanted a particular emphasis on helping younger residents gain employment (8.4%)
8. More restaurants and cafes (7.6%)
9. More support for businesses (7.6%)
10. More tourist attractions (5.3%)

Please note: many respondents gave more than one aspect; therefore, results reflect the number of responses in relation to respondents.

Community Vision Theme 4: A Thriving Natural Environment

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, the focus was the retenetion of existing local natural habitats (21.3%)

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. Retaining and protecting local natural habitats (21.3%)
2. More parks and gardens (17.5%)
3. Greater maintenance, cleanliness and beautification of existing natural areas (10.7%)
4. More trees, especially street trees (10.7%)
5. Planting more native trees (10.4%)
6. Measures to respond to climate change (9.8%)
7. Manage development so it does not encroach on natural habitats (9.4%)
8. Protect the biodiversity of the area (8.8%)
9. More efforts to prepare for bushfires (8.6%)
10. Establish minimum standards of environmental considerations in new developments, such as sustainable designs, renewable energy, water recycling, and minimum green space requirements (7.5%)

Please note: many respondents gave more than one aspect; therefore, results reflect the number of responses in relation to respondents.

Community Vision Theme 5: A High Performing Organisation

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years to implement Theme 5, the focus was improving customer service (11.8%).

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. Improve customer service. This included faster responses and greater resolution of issues. (11.8%)
2. More community consultation and engagement (11.3%)
3. Increased and improved communication with residents, particularly across a diverse range of methods to ensure accessibility. Ensuring a combination of traditional and digital communication (11.3%)
4. Improve the use of financial resources, especially through business improvements and innovation. (10.9%)
5. Listen to the community. This is strongly related to the focus on community engagement; however, this aspect emphasised Council acting on the feedback from the consultation process (9.8%)
6. Greater transparency about decision-making, especially in terms of communicating how and why decisions are made (8.8%)
7. Greater collaboration with other agencies/stakeholders to deliver infrastructure and services (8.6%)
8. Ensure decision are evidence-based/ use of evidence to drive policy (8.0%)
9. Adopt a place-based approach to localised needs (7.6%)

Please note: many respondents gave more than one aspect; therefore, results reflect the number of responses in relation to respondents.

One thing to be achieved by Council in the next four years

The final survey question asked respondents to specify the one thing they wanted to see achieved at the end of the next four-year Council term.

One in five respondents (20%) chose a local hospital as the one thing they wished to achieve within four years. This was significantly higher than any other issue listed.

The main comments that received from the highest proportions of respondents are listed below in descending order:

1. A local public hospital (20%)
2. A more cohesive, connected and inclusive community (8.2%)
3. A greater number of local jobs (6.4%)
4. A greater focus on the infrastructure and service needs of specific local communities within the Melton LGA (6.4%)
5. Public transport improvements (6.2%)
6. More open spaces and parks (6.0%)
7. A reduction in crime within the city (6.0%)
8. Better road connections and networks (6.0%)
9. More beautification of the city (5.8%)
10. More activities and engagement with young people (5.8%)
11. An improved reputation for Melton (5.6%)
12. Improved safety (5.6%)
13. Better management of population growth and development (5.6%)
14. Improved traffic management (5.5%)
15. Improvements to major highways, especially duplication (5.3%)
16. More community consultation and engagement (5.3%)
17. Places of worship for all faiths (5.3%)
18. Improvements in infrastructure, especially in new developments (5.0%)

Engagement with the City of Melton community – Phase Two (2021)

Methodology

With COVID restrictions still in place within Victoria in 2021, engagement with the community continued online for Phase Two of the Council and Wellbeing Plan engagement.
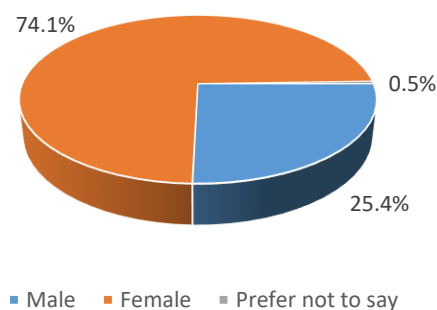
A community survey was launched on Monday 15 February 2021 and closed on Tuesday 9 March 2021. The survey closed with 476 responses.

Demographics of survey respondents

Gender

The survey collected responses from a lower proportion of males (25.4%) than females (74.1%). Two respondents did not want to identify their gender.

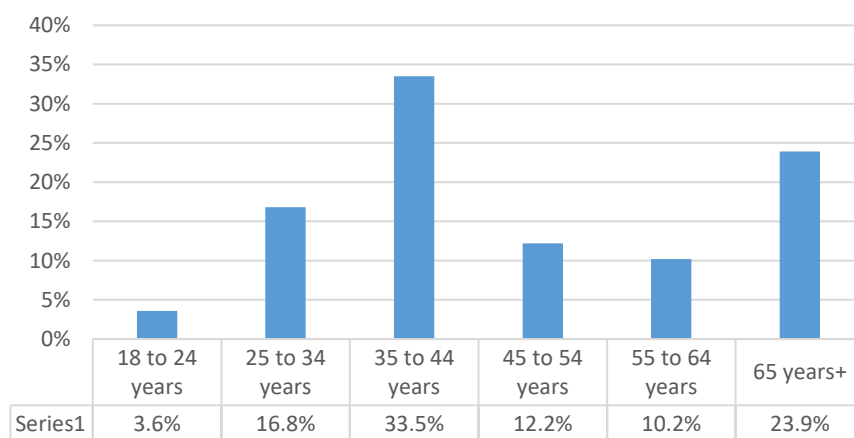Figure 6: Gender of respondent (n=476)

Age

The survey recorded responses from all age groups in broadly representative proportions.

More than half of all respondents were aged between 25 and 44 years (50.3%). The lowest proportion of respondents was from those aged 18 to 24 years (3.6%). A higher proportion of respondents aged 65+ years (23.9%) was recorded than that noted in the 2016 Census.

Figure 7: Age of respondent (n=476)

	18 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years+
Series1	3.6%	16.8%	33.5%	12.2%	10.2%	23.9%

Suburb

There was good representation from across the Melton municipality. The highest proportion of respondents came from Kurunjang and Brookfield (both with 13.1%), followed by Melton South (12.1%) and Melton (10.1%).

Figure 8: Suburb of respondent (n=476)
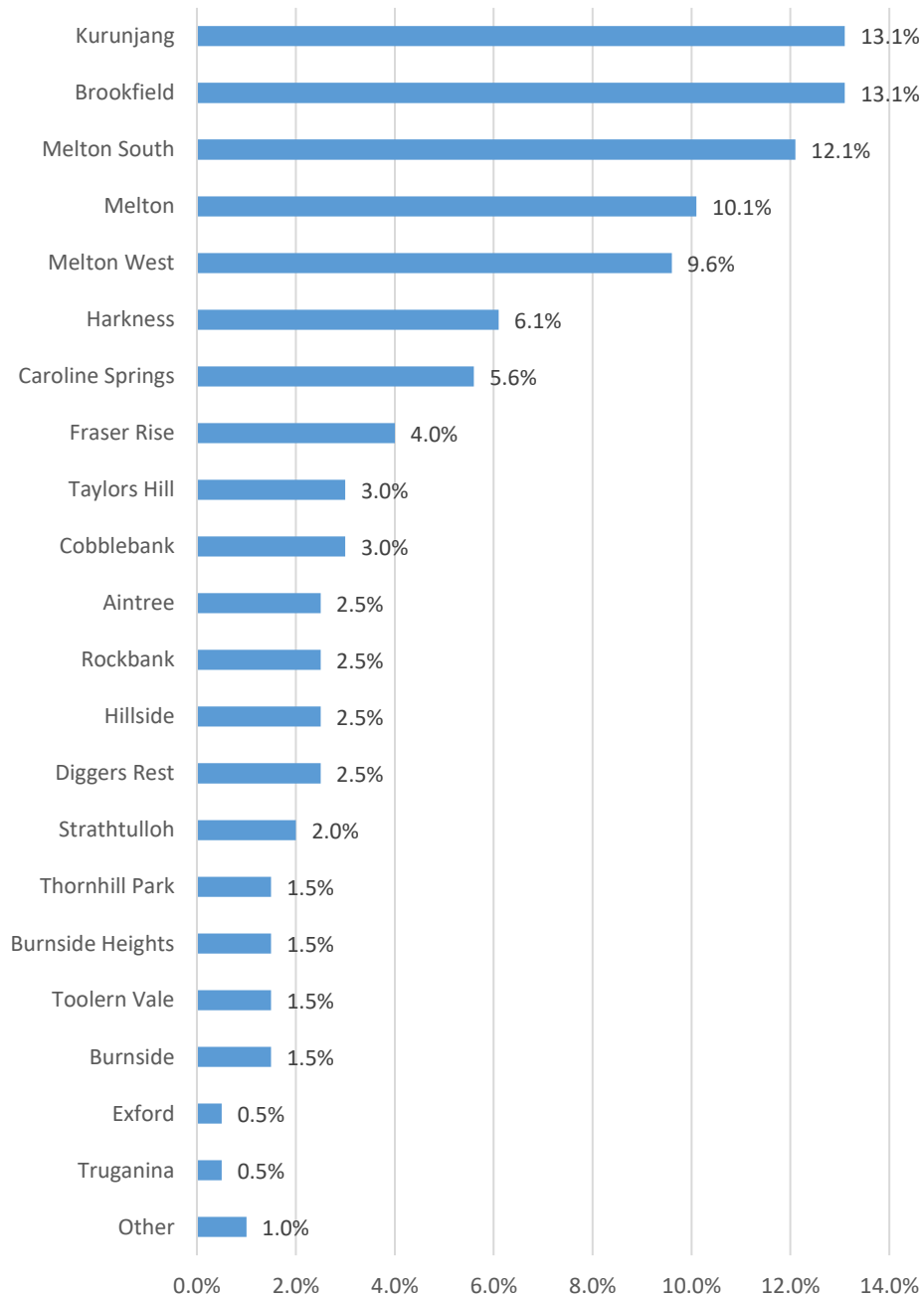
Identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The survey gathered responses from a small proportion of people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island 2.6%); however, this is significantly higher than the proportion recorded for Melton LGA in the 2016 Census (1.0%).

Figure 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of respondent (n=476)

- Yes - No
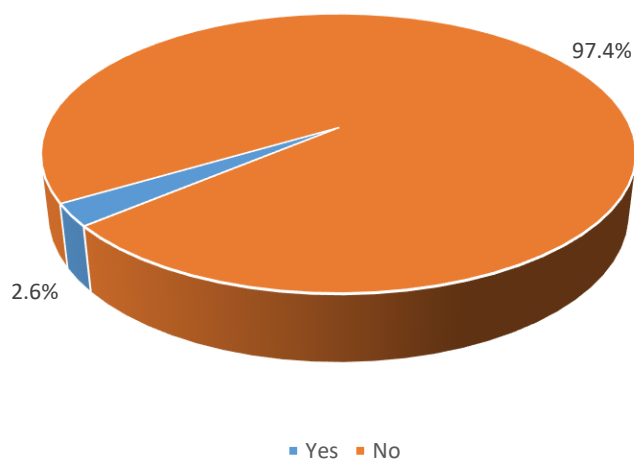
Language other than English spoken at home

Three-quarters of the survey respondents (75.9%%) spoke English only, while one-quarter of respondents (24.1%) spoke a language other than English at home, which is a slightly lower proportion (32.1%) recorded in 2016 Census data.

Figure 10: Language other than English spoken at home (n=476)

- No - Yes
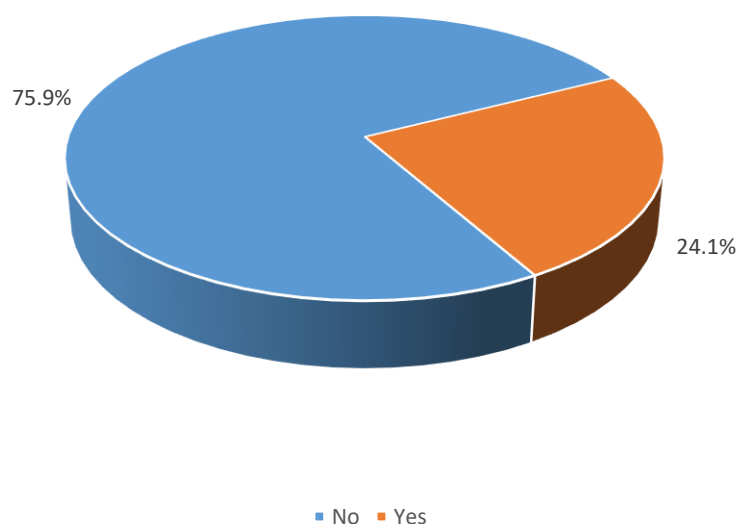
The most common languages of survey respondents were Punjabi, Hind, Arabic, Tagalog and Spanish.

Council and Wellbeing Plan consultation data – Phase Two

In the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 it is legislated that all Council Plans must be informed by an updated Community Vision. The update of the City of Melton's Community Vision began in 2020. By the time Phase Two of the engagement for the 2021-25 Council and Wellbeing Plan, a draft Community Vision had been written.

In the updated draft Community Vision, the 'Our Safe and Socially Connected City' theme had been changed to 'Our Socially Connected City. The update also saw the addition of a new theme of 'Our Actively Engaged People. The Council and Wellbeing Plan also includes an internally focussed theme of 'Our High Performing Organisation'. These changes were reflected in the Phase Two survey.

The five themes of the draft Community Vision were:

- Our Socially Connected City
- Our Well-built City
- Our Strong Local Economy
- Our Thriving Natural Environment
- Our Actively Engaged People.

The Internally focussed them is:

- A High Performing Organisation.

Community Vision Theme 1: Our Socially Connected City

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, safety was the focus of this theme, with facilitating a safe community cited by 54.5% of respondents. This was followed by a community where people feel welcome, included and accepted (41.1%).

Figure 11: Priorities for Our Socially Connected City (n-476)
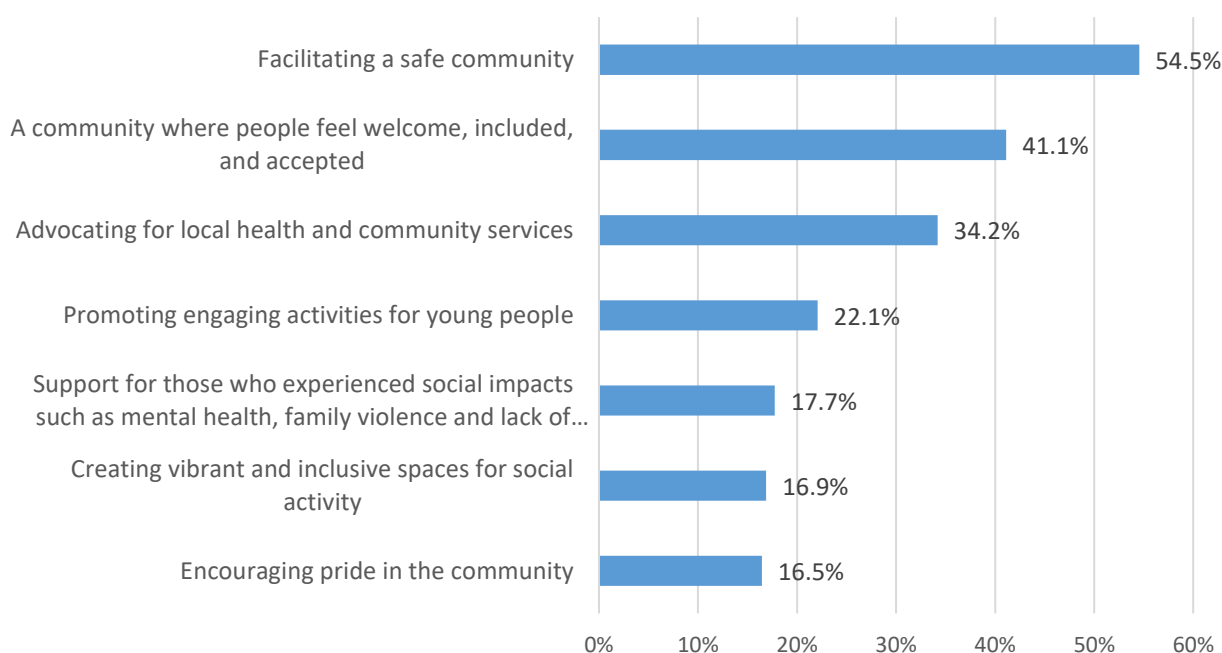
NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%
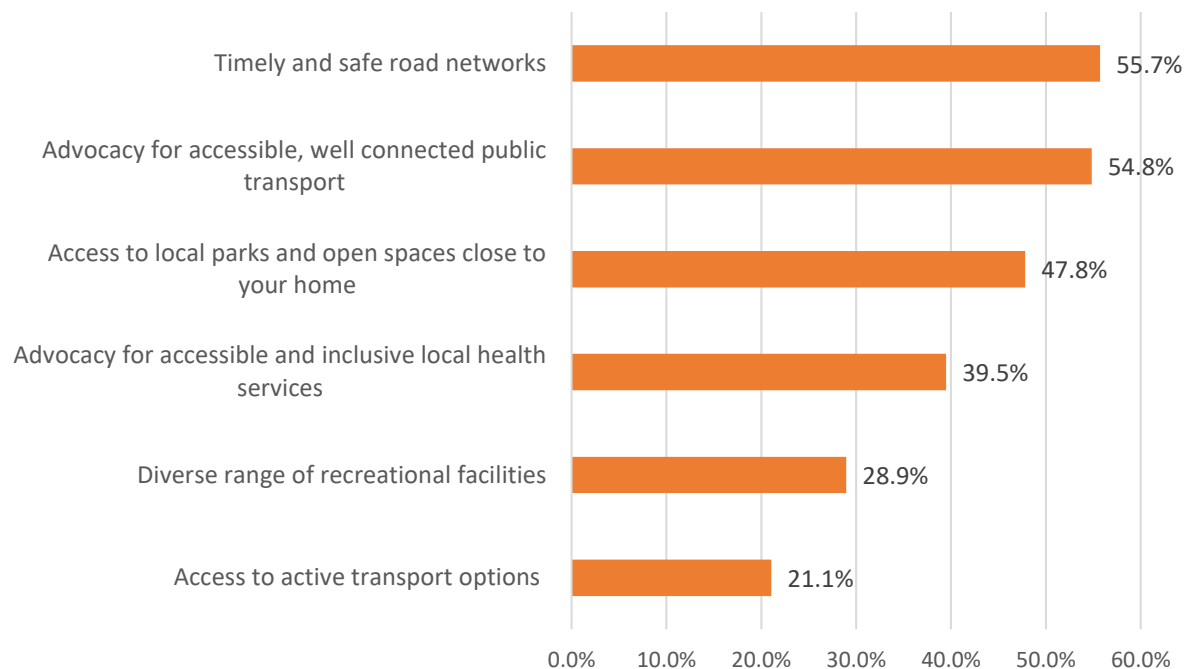
Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. Safety (27.2%)

2. Cultural acceptance/inclusion (14.8%)

3. Promote/enhance community connectedness generally (9.5%)

4. Hospital/health services (7.4%)

5. Increasing focus on youth activities, connection and engagement. (7.4%)

Community Vision Theme 2: Our Well-built City

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, more than half of respondents (55.7%) chose timely and safe road networks, and advocacy for accessible, well connected public transport (54.8%). Access to local parks and open spaces close to home was chosen by 47.8% of respondents.

Figure 12: Priorities for Our Well-built City (n-476)

NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%
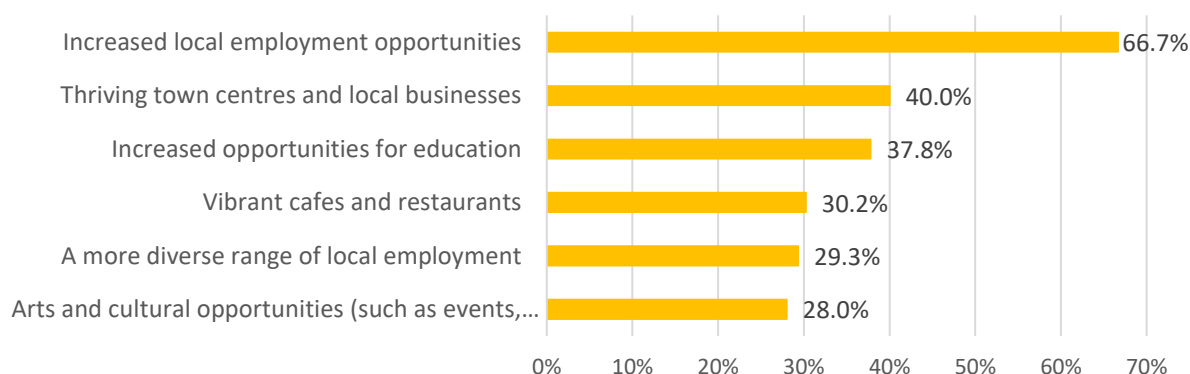
Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. Public transport improvements. (19.8%)

2. Improving road connections across the city. (15.3%)

3. More parks and open space (8.5%)

4. Access to health services, including a public hospital. (7.3%)

5. Improving the quality of roads (5.7%)

Community Vision Theme 3: Our Strong Local Economy

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, the focus was overwhelmingly increasing local employment opportunities (66.7% of respondents), with an additional 40% wanting thriving town centres and local businesses.

Figure 13: Priorities for Our Strong Local Economy (n-476)

NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%
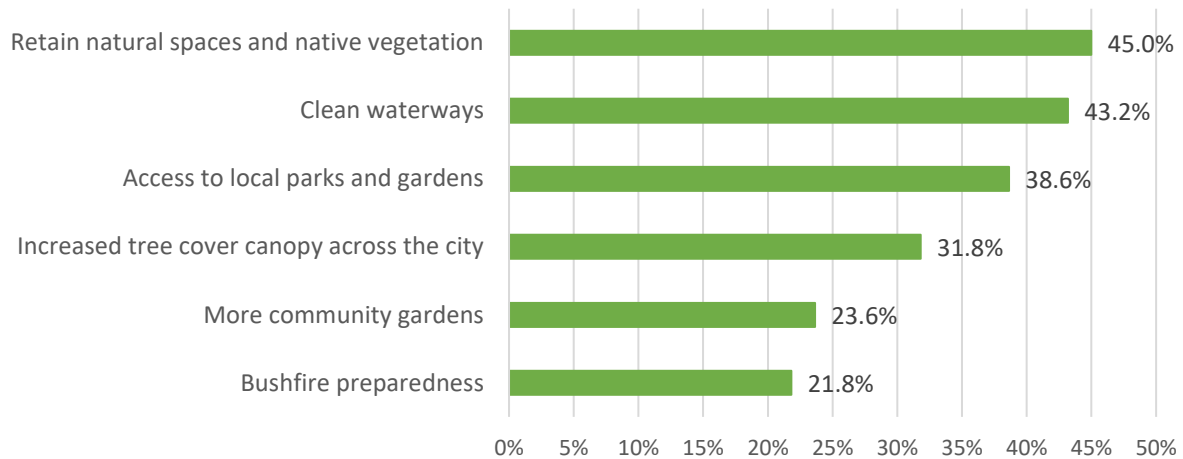
Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. Creating local jobs ((31.4%)

2. Developing an arts and culture focus for the city (10.3%)

3. Better shopping precincts in local areas (9.0%)

4. Encourage educational opportunities e.g. university/TAFE/vocational training (7.7%)

5. Assistance with COVID impacts/ recovery for residents/ businesses (7.7%)

Community Vision Theme 4: Our Thriving Natural Environment

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, the greatest focus was retaining the existing local natural spaces and vegetations (45%), followed by clean waterways (43.2%).

Figure 14: Priorities for Our Thriving Natural Environment (n-476)

NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%
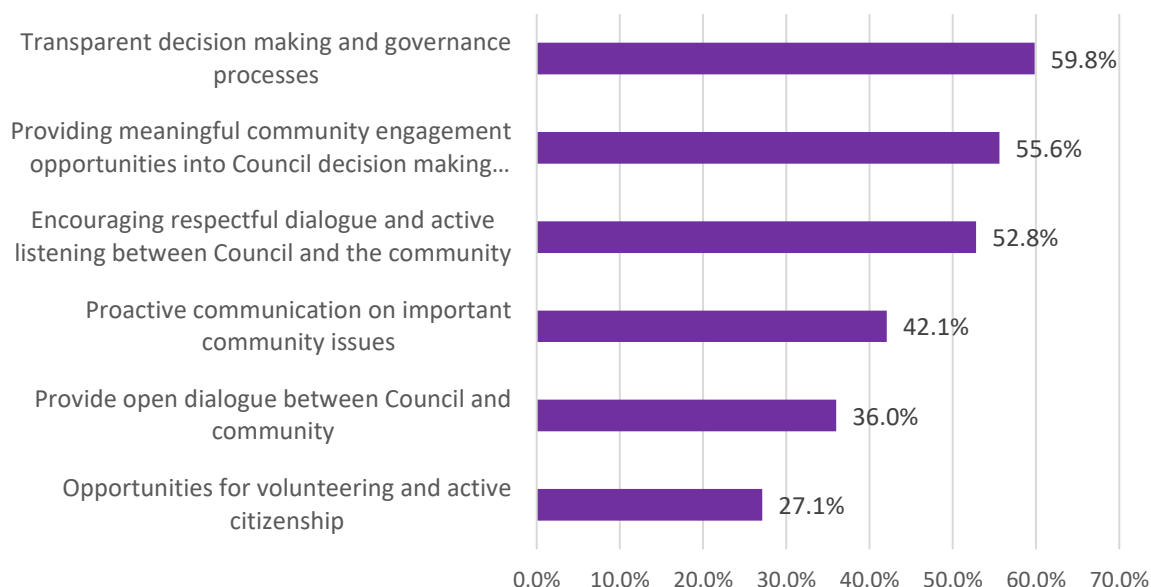
Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. More parks/ gardens/ open space (13.5%)

2. Greater maintenance, cleanliness and beautification of existing natural areas (13.5%)

3. More trees, especially street trees (12.4%)

4. Cleaner waterways (8.2^)

5. Emphasis on environmental education (6.5%)

Community Vision Theme 5: Our Actively Engaged People

In this new theme, respondents were asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years. Three out of four respondents (59.8%) chose transparent decision making and governance processes, while 55.6% want Council to provide meaningful community engagement opportunities into Council decision making processes,

Figure 15: Priorities for Our Actively Engaged People (n-476)

NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%

Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. Increase meaningful engagement opportunities (24.8%)

2. Transparency around decision making (17.0%)

3. Proactive communication about what's happening in the city (16.3%)

4. Encouraging respectful dialogue and active listening between Council and the community (14.4%)

5. Increasing opportunities for volunteering and civic participation (7.2%)

Our High Performing Organisation

This internally focussed theme forms part of the Council and Wellbeing Plan and is additional to the five themes of the Community Vision.

When asked what Council's focus should be for the next four years, the greatest focus improved communication with residents (54.1%), efficient and effective customer service (47.8%).

Figure 16: Priorities for Our High Performing Organisation (n-476)
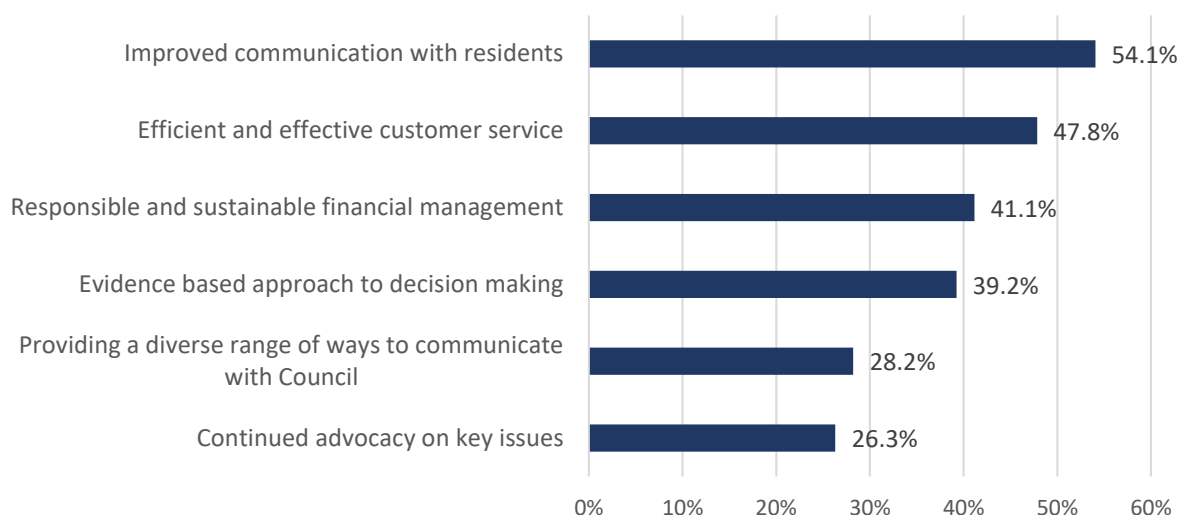
NB: Respondents were asked to choose their three most important aspects under this theme; therefore, results do not total 100%

Respondents were then asked to identify the most important thing for Council to achieve under this theme in the next four years. Below are the top 5 issues stated.

1. More/ better communication (28.0%)

2. Responsible and sustainable financial management (10.5%)

3. Improved customer service (9.8%)

4. Focus on innovation and creativity (8.4%)

5. Greater accountability around decision making (8.4%)

6. Focus on evidence-based decision making (8.4%)

Summary

The data outlined in this report for both Phases One and Two were important inputs for the development of the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. This data was used to frame the discussion in workshops with the Community Panel, City of Melton Councillors and Council staff to better understand what issues were important to the City of Melton community. This feedback was also used in the development of the themes, objectives and strategies that formed the structure of the Council and Wellbeing Plan.