



Global Research
Turning **Information** Into **Insight**

Ageing Well in Melbourne

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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Prepared by Global Research Ltd

For



CITY OF MELBOURNE

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Executive summary

Following the City of Melbourne's 2024 review of council funded healthy ageing programs, community engagement took place from April to May 2025 to better understand the local older population priorities in order to inform the design of the healthy ageing service model.

This engagement was conducted via a survey on the Participate Melbourne website alongside community group forums. In total, there were 599 survey participants (562 online and six paper; 31 targeted phone surveys, two focus group/round table participants, and two email submissions).

Snapshot of survey participants

The percentages below are for those who completed the Participate Melbourne Survey, a paper survey or a direct survey. A full description of participants commences on page 50.

- **Age groups:** all participants were required to explicitly state that they were over 55 years of age; slightly over half of participants were between 55 and 69 years of age—54%; Slightly under half of participants were over 69 years of age—45%
- **Gender:** women made up 70% of participants
- **Participant identity:** 32% of participants were born overseas; A small proportion were Aboriginal (0.7%) or Torres Strait Island people (0.3%)
- **Languages spoken at home:** the most common language spoken at home (other than English) was Spanish (2.2%). This was followed by Cantonese or Mandarin (3.8%) (see page 53 for further interpretation of this result)
- **Where participants live:** 69% of participants fully owned their own home without a mortgage; 19% were renting in public community housing or privately
- **Household composition:** 43% of participants live on their own, and it was estimated that around 40% of participants live with a partner (not a tick box option—further explanation of this result is provided on page 55).
- **Employment status:** 65% of participants were retired
- **Connection to City of Melbourne:** 77% were residents
- **Where participants live:** 16% of participants live in the CBD.

Key Findings

Feedback from across the Participate Melbourne survey, targeted phone surveys, emails, and focus groups were analysed, with the following key findings emerging. Note that the opinions expressed as percentages of participants below are the answers provided in the online, paper and direct survey, but not the emails or focus groups.

Planning for the future

- > 82 per cent of participants indicated that they were planning for their future.
- > Participants who elaborated upon their plans for their future provided diverse commentary. The most prominent theme discussed was planning for health and wellbeing, with particular emphasis upon: aspects pertaining to healthy lifestyles; participation in activities; maintaining social connections; and keeping an active mind active and general mental wellbeing.
- > Making medical and legal arrangements was also discussed by participants, specifically highlighting preparing wills and appointing power of attorney(s) as key aspects of planning for their future.
- > Financial planning and various aspects of people's living arrangements were also important topics.

Top priorities to live and age well in Melbourne

- > Participants most frequently selected 'Programs, activities or groups that interest me' as the top priority, with 19 per cent selecting it as the second top priority. These participants mainly highlighted the importance this had for their physical and mental wellbeing.
- > 'Information and access to support and services' was the next most selected priority, with 15 per cent selecting it as their top priority and 17 per cent as their second top priority. Participants who discussed this priority focused on the importance of knowing what services are available and/or any changes to services.
- > 'Feeling comfortable to get around the central city' and 'Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community' were the next most selected priorities. 'Volunteer opportunities' and 'Easy access to Council services' were the least selected priorities.

Most frequented council centres and facilities

- > The most frequented centres and facilities were Libraries, with City Library being the most attended library. Recreation centres were the second most frequented facilities, with Melbourne City Baths being the most attended. The least frequented facilities were neighbourhood centres and neighbourhood houses.

How these centres and facilities could be improved

- > Feedback on libraries focused on library programming, followed by general praise for the libraries and staff, and recommendations regarding accessibility, as well as flexibility for community group use were also made.
- > Feedback received about recreation centres and neighbourhood centres was mostly specific to certain facilities.
- > More broadly, participants were supportive of improving access to centres and facilities, especially in certain parts of the city without nearby centres. Some participants also noted that CoM facilities were not relevant or accessible to them, or that programming should be improved.

Opportunities liked to connect with Council and influence decision-making processes

- > Completing surveys was the preferred way to connect with the Council's decision-making process for 61% of participants. Attending community pop ups was the next most common at 37%.

Other things the Council could focus on

- > Enhancement of council run services was the most prominent suggestion from participants. Key points raised were: improving access to information; a number of niche requests for specific services; safety and accessibility suggestions, mainly pertaining to transport, parking and pedestrian friendly infrastructure; greater offering of recreation activities and improved council communications.

What City of Melbourne will do next

The feedback received through this engagement program will inform the City of Melbourne's design of the healthy ageing service model.

Project overview

Background

In 2024, the City of Melbourne reviewed council funded healthy ageing programs to get a better understanding of what was benefiting the community and what opportunities there were to improve service provision. The review looked at:

- Current services and programs and the people who use them
- The local population
- Trends in the sector
- Comparisons with other councils
- Feedback from inside council and local organisations and service providers.

The review identified these priorities:

1. Service navigation to support older people to navigate and access aged care services and local opportunities including City of Melbourne programs, community groups and local organisations.
2. Local service system development including community engagement, planning, sector development, shared impact measurement, support for community groups, collective action and advocacy to respond to issues and needs for older people.
3. Activation of community centres as places for information, advice and support for older people to connect with local services and opportunities, and venues for hire by community groups and local organisations to deliver programs.
4. Increasing reach by leveraging programs and facilities provided through the City of Melbourne and local organisations.
5. Involvement of older people in decision making regarding the future model of healthy ageing.

Community engagement ran from April to May 2025 to understand the local older population priorities to inform the design of the healthy ageing service model.

Objective

The purpose of this consultancy is to undertake community engagement surveys to understand the priorities of the local older population to inform the design of the healthy ageing service model. Community engagement will take place from April to May 2025.

Community Engagement outline

Community engagement objectives

The purpose of this consultancy was to undertake community engagement surveys to understand the priorities of the local older population to inform the design of the healthy ageing service model.

Information received

During this engagement, feedback was received through four methods:

- **Participate Melbourne online and paper survey** – 562 online and 6 paper surveys
- Newfocus, an independent contractor collected 31 targeted phone surveys of hard to reach groups
- two focus group/round table participants
- two email submissions.

Engagement reach

The main communication method utilised by this project was the Participate Melbourne website, where members of the public could find information about the project and complete the online survey. The survey was promoted at pop-ups at libraries, men's shed, Multicultural Hub, neighbourhood houses, peak bodies, public housing, recreation centres, resident groups, Carlton Harmony Day and South Yarra Neighbour Day.

Between Wednesday 30 March and Monday, 26 May 2025, the project page on Participate Melbourne received:

- 5,723 views (the number of times any page on the site was viewed)
- 4,598 visits (the number of times the site was visited by a single visitor)
- 3,782 visitors (the number of unique visitors to the site – each visitor is only recorded once, even if they visit the site several times)
- 562 online contributors (number survey completions) plus 6 paper surveys
- 37 followers (the number of visitors who subscribed to the project using the “follow” button).

Analysis and reporting methodology

Qualitative analysis

The written comments received through the Participate Melbourne website, paper surveys, transcripts, and written submissions were combined for analysis. All written feedback was read and coded (sorted) by analysts into themes and topics, synthesised, and discussed in the following section of this report. This is divided into five parts as follows:

- Active planning for the future
- Top priorities to age and live well
- Neighbourhood centre – libraries - recreation centres – neighbourhood houses – that you have attended
- Opportunities to connect with Council and influence decision-making processes
- Other comments.

Themes and topics have been discussed in order of most to least frequently mentioned in each section.

To consistently present the number of comments received on each topic, the following key was used to describe relative amounts:

Key for comment numbers	
3 comments	A few
4–7 comments	A small number
8–14 comments	Several
15–24 comments	A moderate number
25–49 comments	A considerable number
50–74 comments	A substantial number
75–99 comments	Sizeable
100–149 comments	A large number
150+ comments	A very large number

Quantitative analysis

Four option-selection questions were asked of those who submitted feedback via the Participate Melbourne survey: Active planning for the future; top priorities to age and live well; neighbourhood facilities attended; opportunities to connect with Council. There were eleven additional questions that asked about survey participants, such as age, gender, connection to the city.

Frequency analysis was completed on the responses received. These results have been presented as charts at the beginning of relevant report sections. The information about those who completed the survey is presented at the end of the report in charts followed by descriptions, starting from page 50.

Analysis of results

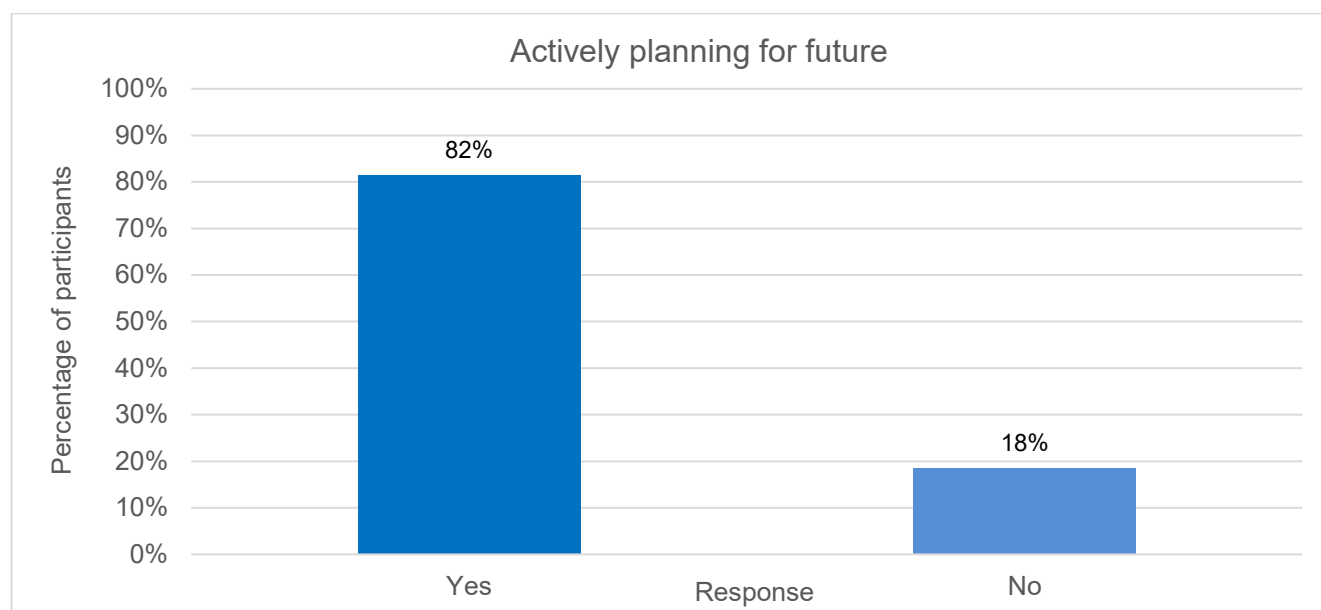
Active planning for the future

Participants were asked: *Are you actively planning for your future?*

Response options (participants could select one option):

- > Yes
- > No

n=595



Result:

- > 82 per cent of surveyed participants were planning for their future
- > 18 percent of surveyed participants were not planning for their future.

What participants said...

Participants were asked: *Describe how you are planning for your future:*

Section summary

- > The most prominent topic discussed with regard to planning for the future was **planning for health and wellbeing**, with a large number of participants specifically discussing aspects of healthy lifestyles. A substantial number of participants also highlighted participation in activities as integral to their healthy lifestyle plans, in addition to developing and maintaining social connections. A moderate number of participants highlighted the importance of proactively acting to support mind and mental health, often emphasising lifelong learning and happiness.
- > Making **medical and legal arrangements** was considered another key element in planning for the future, with a large number of participants discussing preparing a will, as well as a substantial number of participants discussing appointing a power of attorney(s).

- > Diverse commentary also focused on **financial planning**, specifically: intending to financially plan and manage their retirement, often alongside a financial advisor, as well some participants discussing how they plan to be mortgage / debt free.
- > A very large number of participants discussed various points pertaining to **planning for or modifying living arrangements**. The most discussed aspect was a generalised consideration of future living arrangements; intending to downsize; intending to make modifications in their current home; to relocate closer to the city's amenities; and to move to a retirement village or aged care home.
- > Commentary was also provided on the following: general retirement planning; end of life and other health planning; family discussions and / or support; seeking support or information; working considerations; death and funeral considerations; supported at home; and other niche comments.

Planning for health and wellbeing

265 comments

The majority of participants commented that focussing on their health and wellbeing is one way they are planning for their futures. Healthy lifestyles, participation in activities, social connections, and mental health are each analysed separately below, however, participants tended to comment on these aspects together due to their interrelated nature.

Healthy lifestyles

137 comments

When asked how they were planning for their future, around half of the participants discussing health and wellbeing focused on the idea and importance of being proactive to maintain health. More specifically, participants described how they maintain their health with regular exercise, health checks, and eating well. For example:

...taking part in healthy ageing courses, activities, keeping fit, eating well.

Participation in activities

63 comments

Participants whose planning was focussed on health and wellbeing also mentioned their participation in activities, or their intention to participate in more activities following their retirement. Activities referenced included membership in community groups (e.g. U3A); attending classes and courses; volunteering, sometimes discussed as a transition from working life; and planning trips including international travel. Participants also expressed a desire to learn new skills and take up new hobbies when they retire.

I would like to keep fit and healthy so I can go most of the community centres to join the activities, learn new skills, dancing, exercises and meet people, so i can live an active life and be independent.

Developing and maintaining social connections

46 comments

A considerable number of participants commented on the importance of developing and maintaining social connections as part of their plan for the future. Participants mentioned a variety of social engagements, ranging from meeting up with friends to volunteering in their communities. Some participants also discussed the barriers they face to developing and maintaining social connections, such as English as a second language and living alone after a spouse passes away.

2.connect with our community, attend more activities in the community 3.attend on line English courses to improve my English. It can enable me to better integrate into the mainstream society.

Proactively acting to support mental and mind health

19 comments

A moderate number of participants made comments about how they planned to keep their minds active and support their mental health. Commentary tended to centre around lifelong learning and happiness, including via staying mentally alert through social connections and learning new skills in fields such as IT or languages.

Making medical and legal arrangements

192 comments

A key sentiment expressed by participants when asked how they are planning for their future was to make medical and legal arrangements, with participants discussing preparing a will as a key element, alongside power of attorney planning.

Preparing a will

125 comments

Just over two thirds of participants who made comments regarding medical and legal arrangements focused on preparing a will. Commentary included participants who explicitly expressed they have already prepared their will, in addition to participants who were actively in the process of rewriting their will.

Trying to be more organized about finances etc, but a lot more work to do on wills, health plans etc

Power of attorney planning

62 comments

Participants also discussed appointing power of attorneys as an important aspect of planning for their futures. Participants elaborated further by suggesting that a power of attorney had either already been appointed or that doing so was on their to do list.

General medical and legal arrangement comments

5 comments

The remaining comments from participants here were more general in nature, in addition to other comments such as needing to see a solicitor with their family.

Financial planning

177 comments

Diverse commentary was provided by participants who indicated that financial planning was an important aspect of planning for their futures. The most common point articulated by participants was that they were generally intending to financially plan and manage their retirement and superannuation, often by means of consulting with a financial planner/advisor. Some participants provided more specific commentary, including that they wanted to be mortgage/debt free before they retire and have savings; wanted to sell property to supplement their retirement fund; were reviewing investments; were transitioning from full time work to reduced hours; will continue to work; and were budgeting for increased cost of living.

we have a Financial Planner,

Goal is to own apartment outright with enough money for retirement in next 4 years.

Still working full-time at 71 building a financial legacy for my family.

How to spend less money so I can pay my bills because of the cost in living increase and low interest rates on savings.

Planning for or modifying living arrangements

157 comments

Participants gave a range of commentary around planning for or modifying living arrangements. Just over one third of participants discussed changing their living arrangements, often with the intention to downsize, as well as participants intending to remain at home and modify accordingly. Participants also discussed finding suitable living arrangements in a more generalised sense, as well as planning to move into a retirement village or aged care home.

Changing or modifying housing

66 comments

A substantial number of participants discussed various intentions for changing or altering their current housing. Downsizing to smaller, more manageable housing that was single storey was frequently discussed. Participants also described ways in which they would modify their current housing to accommodate for future

accessibility needs. The desire to relocate closer to the city's amenities was often discussed alongside the idea of downsizing. A few participants also commented on relocating to a different area or alternative living arrangements due to the increase in rental prices.

Plans to adapt our house for future mobility issues.

Moving to city to take advantage of public transport and accessible activities and events

Last week I had a \$50 / week rent rise after last year`s \$1000/ month rent rise.(Discontinuation of NRAS Scheme). I will have to relocate as can no longer afford to live here)....

Finding suitable living arrangements

61 comments

Commentary from participants around finding suitable living arrangements were often general in nature, and included blanket statements like "living/and or retirement arrangements". Some participants elaborated by stating that they are actively considering options for future living arrangements in the long term including where to retire. A small number of comments from participants included concerns regarding social housing affordability and rental security, in addition to a couple of participants stating they want to be able to buy a house.

considering the appropriate accommodation longer term

Social Housing is not affordable – the new term is "affordable rental", but it is not affordable. It is not clear why some people get rental assistance and why the rent goes up. It is complicated and different housing organisations read it differently.

Planning for retirement community and/or aged care facilities

19 comments

Participants discussed planning or actively being in the process of going to a retirement village or an aged care home. A few comments from participants also specifically stated they had contacted My Aged Care and are awaiting a response.

Planning and pursuing independent living

11 comments

Several comments from participants emphasised the desire to live independently in their own homes as opposed to residing in a retirement village or an aged care home.

Generally planning for retirements

108 comments

A large number of participants made blanket statements pertaining to retirement, including that they have already retired or are simply planning for their retirement. Of these, a considerable number of participants discussed making a plan for their future in a more general sense, without mentioning retirement. A common thread throughout the commentary was that participants were either planning for their retirement or they noted that they have already retired from fulltime work.

thinking a and talking through options for the future.

Talking about the possible scenarios of the future

End of life and other health planning

43 comments

A considerable number of participants discussed health care as part of their plan for the future. More specifically, participants mentioned their advanced care and end of life plans. Some in the process of this discussed their options, while others noted that they already had healthcare plans in place.

Trying to be more organized about finances etc, but a lot more work to do on wills, health plans etc

I'm retired. I have an advanced care plan in place for when life needs help

Family discussions and/or support

19 comments

A moderate number of participants mentioned their family when asked to describe how they plan for the future. Talking with family was part of the planning process for some, while living close to family was an important consideration for others. The remaining comments were general statements about family support.

Seeking support or information

19 comments

A moderate number of participants discussed the barriers they face to accessing information about the support available to them. Participants discussed the challenge of figuring out where to go for information regarding support, noting barriers including technological literacy, relying on word of mouth, and difficulties understanding language on government websites. Suggestions to improve access included locating information services in Neighbourhood houses and providing the opportunity to talk to someone who can understand their situation fully and offer tailored information. Other commentary touched on the issue of volunteers "filling the gap" where the government should be providing support.

It's all out there if we want it, but finding out how to get it is the issue (get services or food support). Living in Stonnington, so can get access to food, meals, vouchers. The biggest thing is finding out where to go. The Helping Out guide is very helpful. The first time you go for welfare is soul destroying but once you get over that shame, things are out there – welfare organisations and supports services. Finding out from word of mouth. Sometimes it is too much information – and the print it very small for oldies.

Working considerations

9 comments

Several participants made various comments regarding their employment situation, with most stating the need to continue working for financial reasons. A couple of participants noted that they worked part time, alongside other activities and volunteering.

Death and funeral considerations

8 comments

A small number of participants commented on pre-paying and planning for their funeral. A few participants also mentioned arrangements had been made for their organ donation to Melbourne University.

Supported at home

7 comments

A small number of participants commented on arranging home help support, including some who noted that they are currently in the process of doing so.

Other comments

19 comments

A moderate number of participants made niche comments that did not fit into the above sub themes. A few participants highlighted the need to simplify their lifestyle, including reducing their number of cars and overall possessions. Participants also commented on issues pertaining to safety, whether it be online scams or feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood or on public transport; navigating public transport in general; and the cost of living.

Public Transport – can't get onto the buses, trouble getting into trains. Frightening for people of our age. People standing in front of grab rails so I can't step into the train over the gap easily.

Thinking about how to get to shops or other services without car. Thinking about two factor authentication on matters requiring identity check. Safety from intruders.

Top priorities to age and live well

Participants were asked: *What is your top priority to live and age well in the City of Melbourne?*

and

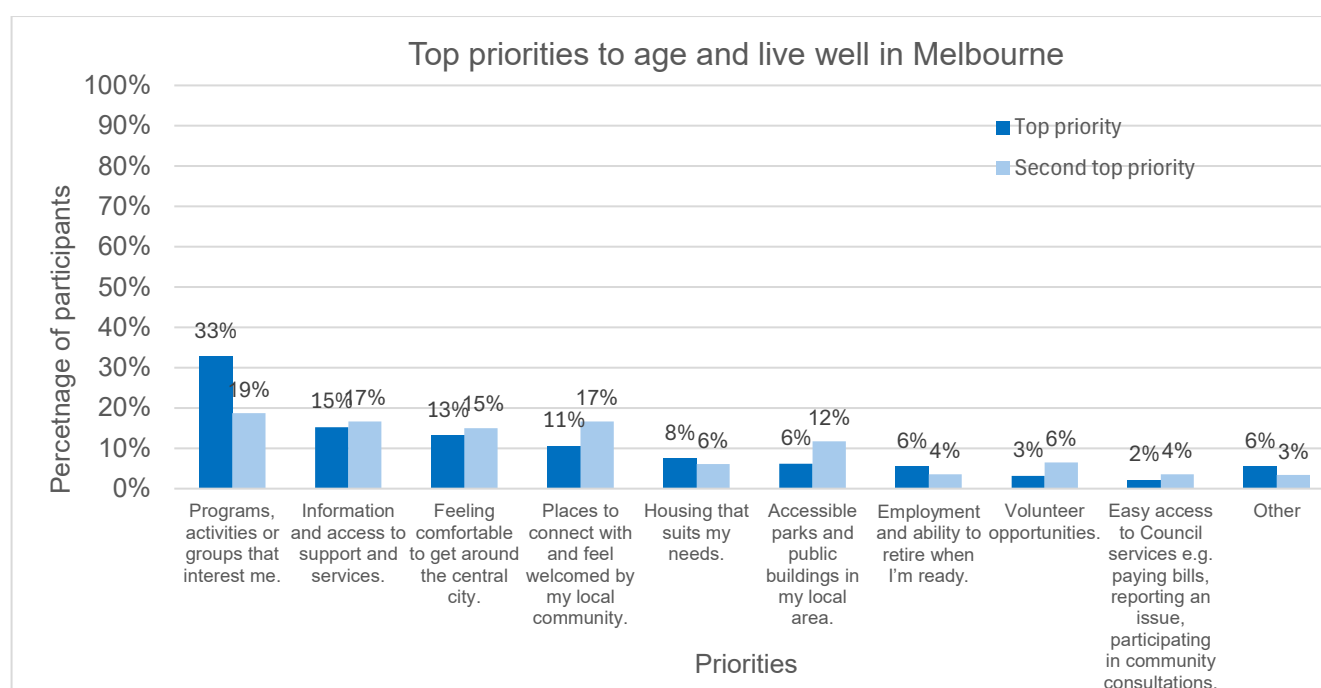
Participants were asked: *What is your second priority to live and age well in the City of Melbourne?*

Response options (participants could select one option for each question):

- > Information and access to support and services.
- > Programs, activities or groups that interest me.
- > Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community.
- > Employment and ability to retire when I'm ready.
- > Volunteer opportunities.
- > Easy access to Council services e.g. paying bills, reporting an issue, participating in community consultations.
- > Housing that suits my needs.
- > Accessible parks and public buildings in my local area.
- > Feeling comfortable to get around the central city.
- > Other

Top priority n=609

Second top priority n = 599



Result:

- > 33 per cent of survey participants selected 'Programs, activities or groups that interest me' as the top priority, with 19 per cent selecting it as the second top priority.
- > 'Information and access to support and services' was the next most selected priority, with 15 per cent selecting as their top priority and 17 per cent as their second top priority.
- > 'Feeling comfortable to get around the central city' and 'Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community' were the next most selected priorities.
- > 'Volunteer opportunities' and 'Easy access to Council services' were the least selected priorities, with 3 per cent and 2 per cent selecting them as a top priority respectively.

What participants said...

Participants were asked: *Tell us why you chose this as your top priority.*

and

Participants were asked: *Tell us why you chose this as your second priority.*

Section summary

- > Below is a summary of what participants comments regarding each priority, ordered according to the most frequently **selected** priority.
- > Participants who discussed **programs, activities, or groups of interest** mainly focused on the benefits these provide to their physical and mental wellbeing, closely followed by the importance of social connection. Remaining comments consisted of highly specific suggestions or complaints, and general comments about the importance of programs, activities, or groups of interest.
- > A very large number of participants discussed **information and access to support services**. These participants typically stressed the importance of knowing what services were available and/or any changes to services. This was followed by comments in which participants wanted to know that they could easily access available services, followed by requests for specific supports.
- > Participants who spoke to **feeling comfortable to get around the central city** most commonly expressed the importance of this; or that they otherwise would not visit the city if they were not comfortable doing so. Participants emphasised how important safety was to them, and less frequently mentioned that they were dissatisfied with their existing level of comfort getting around the central city.
- > **Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community** were discussed by a large number of participants, who mainly referenced friendship or stressed the importance to them of staying connected to the community.
- > Participants who spoke to **housing that suits my needs** discussed their changing housing requirements as they age, often indicating that their current accommodation was already, or would become, unsuitable. In smaller numbers, participants discussed availability and affordability of suitable housing.
- > **Accessible parks and public buildings in my area** were commented on by a sizeable number of participants, who most commonly discussed the benefits of these facilities to health and wellbeing.
- > The least frequently discussed priorities were **employment and ability to retire when I'm ready; volunteer opportunities; and easy access to Council services**.

Programs, activities, or groups of interest

215 top priority comments
117 second priority comments

Those who discussed programs, activities, or groups mainly highlighted the importance this had for their physical and mental wellbeing, with nearly half of comments made centring on this theme. Most of these were short statements about the wellbeing benefits of keeping active and busy. This was followed by comments in which it was suggested that programs, activities, or groups increased social connection.

Importance and benefits for physical and mental wellbeing in retirement and ageing

Slightly more than one third of participants who discussed programs, activities, or groups focused on the benefits these offer to their physical, mental, or spiritual wellbeing. The majority of participants offered brief

comments in which they expressed desire to keep their brains or bodies active, busy, or stimulated. Some participants emphasised the importance of age-appropriate interest-based groups for connecting with similarly aged or like-minded people. A small number of participants linked participation in programs, activities, and groups with perceived benefits to the ageing process, such as maintaining mobility and preventing dementia.

I want to keep active and engaged as that will slow down the medical procedures and processes that will inevitably become my future. The more programs/activities/groups you provide me with to engage the less I will be a drain on the government services.

Importance of social connection

A sizeable number of participants identified social connection as one of their top two priorities. Participants typically communicated the importance of social connection using short statements with key phrases or words including 'meeting people', 'connections', or 'community'. Less frequently, participants reasoned that social connection was important because they were concerned about being or becoming isolated in their retirement or as a result of living alone, or not having family close by.

I like doing activities in a group. Participating in group activities makes me feel connected by a common interest. Although the connection may be temporary, it still feels beneficial.

Specific activities and outcomes

A considerable number of participants identified specific activities they would like to partake in, or have more easily accessible to them. Outcomes sought included free or low-cost programs, and either more local, accessible opportunities for social connection or assistance (such as free transport) accessing social activities. Specific activities or amenities suggested by participants included: arts and cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, theatre, shows); dance, yoga, and exercise classes; an exercise park for seniors; computer and technology lessons; swimming and hydrotherapy sessions for seniors; tai chi; ten-pin bowling; craft groups; and bus trips out of the city. Existing facilities and programs were praised or used as examples of what participants wanted to see supported going forward including: U3A; SYSSC; North Melbourne pool; Probus interest groups; and the makerspace at the library. Further current CoM offerings praised by participants included those offered at the MCB and the Melbourne Library and the prime exercise program.

Dissatisfied with current provisions

Several participants were dissatisfied with the current activities and programs on offer, with a few indicating a general lack of opportunities without specifying the type or area they felt was lacking. A few participants also noted that cost of participating could be prohibitive. Two participants took issue with the way ageing was described or treated, suggesting a lack of programs for those that did not fit the typical definition of a "senior citizen" or lived alternative lifestyles. A couple of participants felt that more could be done to support U3A to provide opportunities. Southbank and Yarra's Edge were each identified by one participant as lacking programs, activities, and interest groups. One participant stated that traffic dissuaded them from participating in activities outside of their home suburb.

General statements

A substantial number of participants made general comments about the importance of programs, activities, or groups of interest. Reasons given included that they promote happiness or provide something to do; they provide something to look forward to participating in in the future and promote active retirement; and that they were generally deemed important. Participants often highlighted how the general quality, variety, and cost of activities acted as motivation to their current or future participation.

Information and access to support services

81 top priority comments
84 second priority comments

Participants who spoke to information and access to support services mostly stressed the importance of knowing what services were available and/or any changes to services. This was followed by comments in which participants wanted to know that they could easily access available services, followed by requests for specific supports. These included domestic, financial, healthcare, and visitation supports.

Information about support services

A considerable number of participants emphasised that having information on support services is important in general. Specific reasons included: that information enables access to services; helps with future planning; and helps identify what support one is entitled to. Several participants stated that they currently did not know what was available for them. Terms such as “confusing” and “hard to find” were used to describe current information. A few participants requested that information should be provided in an accessible format for older people, such as on paper (rather than digitally) or a mailing list that is easily accessed.

Ability to access what is needed

General accessibility to support services was noted as a concern by a considerable number of participants. The majority of these participants wanted to know they would be able to access support in general, while some were specifically seeking reassurance that they would be able to access support if they lived alone; needed medical care; or had a disability.

As I live on my own, I want to know that there are services available for when I may need some assistance and support as I age or as I recover after Medical interventions and I'm able to look after myself Post surgery or Post medical conditions

Access to public transport and health services were highlighted, as was ensuring that support services are within walking distance/in the participant's local area.

Specific support suggestions

A considerable number of participants gave suggestions of specific areas requiring support. These included: help with shopping; attending appointments; navigating online services; healthcare/hospitals; general housework; maintaining social connections; gardening; exercise/mobility; and support for their partner's health.

Support to remain independent in own home

Several participants noted that they wanted support to help maintain their independence for as long as possible. Some participants worded this as “avoiding aged care”.

Feeling comfortable to get around the central city

92 top priority comments
90 second priority comments

One third of participants who discussed feeling comfortable to get around the central city made general statements about how important this was and/or that they otherwise would not visit the city if they were not comfortable doing so. Just under one third indicated that safety was important to enable them in getting around, while a quarter of participants described how they were dissatisfied with the current situation. The remaining tenth of participants added commentary on the impact public transport has on their ability to access the city.

Importance of safety

A substantial number of participants highlighted that safety is important for them to feel comfortable getting around the central city. Many of these participants generally stated that they wanted to feel safe in order to leave their homes and connect with the community. Others were concerned with the current climate in the city in which they did not feel safe, some feeling threatened by homeless or mentally ill individuals. Some participants spoke about increased feelings of vulnerability as they got older, and how this made feeling safe a higher priority.

I used to be able to walk around but with advanced age I realise I'm a target for crime as I clearly can't defend myself as well as I used to be able.

A few participants were happy that e-scooters have now been banned, although some of these participants found e-bikes and cyclists hazardous.

Dissatisfaction with the current situation

A considerable number of participants were generally dissatisfied with their levels of comfort getting around the central city. Just under half of these specified that they did not feel safe in the city, due to the prevalence of crime; alcohol and drug use; protests; and a lack of security.

The CBD is currently a very unsafe place to visit with homeless people, drug affected and mentally impaired people roaming the streets threatening shoppers. Also, the large amount of beggars in the city makes the CBD an unwelcome place to visit.

There were several participants who were dissatisfied with the infrastructure in the city. Some of these participants suggested that the footpaths were a hazard and in need of maintenance; that infrastructure needed cleaning; as well as one suggestion for more comfortable seating for pedestrians. Several participants described a combination of pedestrians, e-bikes, and scooters that made navigating the streets feel unsafe and difficult. Finally, a small number of comments were made pertaining to trams. These participants suggested that decreasing the number of tram stops has created accessibility issues for older people; that there should be more security on trams; that they are overcrowded; that low floor trams are better for older people with mobility issues; and that there were problems with accessibility and tram stops on tram number 57.

Discussion of public transport

A moderate number of participants generally emphasised that public transport was important for them to feel comfortable getting around the city. Some of these participants mentioned how losing vision or mobility restricted them from driving, hence easy-to-access public transport was a priority for their quality of life.

I have given up driving but still need to get to the shops (local and in the city), bowls, market (Queen Vic.), airport, etc. Public transport is very important.

A small number of participants had criticisms about Melbourne's public transport which centred on difficulties getting on and off the trams. These participants suggested low-floor trams to mitigate this. There were also a small number of participants who were positive about public transport in Melbourne: that there are lots of options, it is an excellent service, and that the free trams are great.

General comments about the importance of feeling comfortable to get around the city

A substantial number of participants commented that it is important to them to feel comfortable getting around the city. Reasons included: to access services and events; to keep active and healthy; to be independent; to feel safe; and to generally be able to get out and about. Participants suggested they would not go into the city if they did not feel comfortable getting around.

Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community

59 top priority comments

82 second priority comments

Participants who discussed this priority mainly referenced friendship or stressed the importance to them of staying connected to the community, with three quarters of comments here relating to this subtheme. The remaining comments included requests or recommendations for improved places to connect, with some referring to existing facilities.

Friendships and connections to others

A large number of participants generally stated that having social connection was important to them. Many of these participants suggested that community and social connections improved their quality of life, general wellbeing, mental health, and provided them with important social support.

I like the feeling of belonging to a community where I can be myself and not judged by age and abilities.

Some participants expressed fears of isolation and loneliness, particularly living in a big city without a partner or family close by.

Recommendations for places to connect

Of the participants who gave recommendations for places to connect with others, there was significant support for centralised hubs and community centres. Participants had suggestions regarding specific centres and locations including: a request for a gathering place in East Melbourne; access in evenings and weekends to Fawkner Park Community Centre; more U3A lectures; more community gardens such as the one that used to be part of the Boyd Hub complex; and a men's shed in Docklands. Other unique suggestions included more opportunities to socially connect as an immigrant and more activities designed with men in mind. Comments were also made on the lack of spaces to meet and connect with people as a senior in Melbourne.

Housing that suits my needs

51 top priority comments

31 second priority comments

Participants who spoke to this priority discussed the need to consider their changing housing requirements including as they age. A moderate number of participants suggested they were dissatisfied with the current situation. Over a quarter of provided comments in which they stressed the importance of housing, and just over a tenth raised concerns about housing affordability.

Consideration for changing suitability for need and ageing

A considerable number of participants discussed changing suitability of housing as they age, with a majority indicating that they would eventually need to move into more accessible, lower maintenance accommodation. Some participants expressed their concerns with these changes as they liked living in their current accommodation and wanted to make sure they would live somewhere with access to necessities.

I will need to downsize from my current home. The location and amenity of my future home close to services, recreation and friends will be the foundation for my successful aging.

There were several comments in which participants expressed that they wanted to remain independent for as long as possible, rather than moving into a retirement home.

Dissatisfaction with the current situation

There were a moderate number of participants who were unhappy with the housing climate in Melbourne for older people. Most of these participants highlighted how there is a lack of accessible and safe housing for them

to consider moving into when the time comes. Participants were mostly critical of high-rise buildings, suggesting they are isolating, inaccessible, and that they do not want to live in them. Some participants wanted access to social housing, but wanted this to be for over 55s only, to feel safe and able to connect with a community.

Most people are just put in housing, and you have limited say about where or who with, making it harder to form community.

Housing affordability

Several participants suggested rent prices are too high to be affordable for a pensioner. Some comments were made where participants suggested retirement was not an option for them because of the price of rent.

General importance of housing

A moderate number of participants commented generally that housing and access to housing is important. Participants noted that housing is a necessity to feel safe and secure.

Accessible parks and public buildings in my local area

33 top priority comments

66 second priority comments

Participants who commented on this priority either discussed the benefits parks and public buildings had to health and wellbeing, requested more provisions to aid accessibility, or made generalised comments in support of such facilities.

Benefits to health and wellbeing

Just under half of participants who chose accessible parks and public buildings as a first or second priority mentioned the important benefits these have for their health and wellbeing. Many of these comments pertained to the importance of green space, and that it has a range of positive benefits including a sense of freedom; connection to the environment; encourages healthy activities such as walking; or allows them to get some fresh air. Many participants noted that spending time in green spaces is one of their simple pleasures in life. Access to public buildings such as libraries were acknowledged as important because they are places where important social connections take place.

I am 81 and need to use a walking stick - I have very few other health issues. I am a people person and ease of visiting parks and public buildings is really important to me in order that I can undertake activities such as Chair Yoga at the local Community Centre and Book Club at the local library. These activities are also important in terms of social interaction and I would like to be able to continue for as long as I'm able.

Requests for more provision

A moderate number of these participants requested either that there should generally be more accessible public spaces (mostly green spaces) or gave specific suggestions to improve accessibility. Suggestions included: more toilets; more benches to rest; a wider free tram zone extending to the War Memorial and Botanic Gardens; more areas for unleashed dogs; and a request to retain small businesses such as dentists, butchers, and bakeries that are easily accessible via walking.

General comments about local parks and public buildings

There were a considerable number of participants who made more generalised comments about the importance of accessible parks and public buildings in their local area. Most of these comments centred around how much participants enjoy walking or using public spaces, and that these spaces are an important

part of their lives. Participants tended to prefer bush and green spaces over the need for more sporting facilities.

Every item on the list was important, so I chose this one because I believe that everyone would benefit from accessible parks and public buildings.

Employment and ability to retire when I'm ready

30 top priority comments
20 second priority comments

Over half of the comments received concerning this priority related to considerations about employment that were not strictly financial, focusing on other benefits participants get from work. Financial considerations made up the rest of the comments, with participants mainly sharing their personal financial situations, or highlighting the need for financial security.

Employment considerations other than financial

A considerable number of participants gave other reasons for prioritising employment and autonomy over retirement as they age. Reasons included: that they felt they had more to give to society; that work was still important to them; for social interaction; and because working kept their mind healthy and agile. There were several mentions of "ageism" and that participants felt discriminated against when seeking work due to being an older person. Participants discussed how this was a loss to workplaces as well as negatively impacting their ability to support their families.

I've discovered that ageism is the most invisible and unacknowledged form of discrimination. For example, Victoria Health does not include ageism on its site, despite listing the others. This makes employment extremely difficult. But if I can remain employed for as long as possible, then I am active and contributing, and not drawing on government resources. I would love to be able to find an employment agency that linked older people with businesses that are willing to employ them, rather than looking down on them.

Financial considerations

A moderate number of participants mentioned financial reasons for prioritising employment and the ability to retire. Some of these participants were working towards a comfortable retirement, while others noted that cost of living, mortgages, or limited superannuation will require them to either delay retirement or continue some form of employment as they age.

Volunteer opportunities

16 top priority comments
39 second priority comments

Participants who spoke to this priority either highlighted the importance of contributing to the community or noted that volunteering improved their wellbeing.

Importance of contributing to the community

A considerable number of participants emphasised the importance of contributing to their community through volunteering. These participants spoke to the importance of giving back, using their skills, and how volunteering keeps them integrated in the community.

I'm so happy to work as a volunteer in my retirement. It will be fun for me and help for our community.

Impact of volunteering on wellbeing

Several submitters expressed how volunteering helps them stay well, encompassing mental and physical health. Some mentioned the sense of purpose it provides that they initially lacked post-retirement, and how this is key to a healthy mind.

General volunteering comments

There were several comments about volunteering in general, predominantly participants expressing that this is something they would like to do, that volunteering is important, or that they want to help people.

Easy access to Council services e.g. paying bills, reporting an issue, participating in community consultations

17 top priority comments
17 second priority comments

A small number of participants commented on this priority, with mixed perspectives on the current accessibility of Council services.

Dissatisfaction with access to Council services

Around half of participants were not satisfied with their ability to access Council services. Problems included: that the council is unresponsive; it takes a long time to process requests; long wait times; acts without consultation; and that the telephone system takes too long.

Satisfaction with access to Council services

Satisfaction with the Council services was expressed by a small number of participants. This was mostly general praise for the services, as well as one participant who was happy with the Council's graffiti removal service.

General comments about access to Council services

These comments were from participants who generally wanted more information or support to access Council services.

Neighbourhood centres, libraries, recreation centres, neighbourhood houses attended

Participants were asked (four questions): *Select the - neighbourhood centre – libraries - recreation centres – neighbourhood houses – that you have attended*

Response options

Neighbourhood centres n=591

- > Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre
- > Kensington Neighbourhood Centre
- > South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre
- > None of the above

Libraries n=592

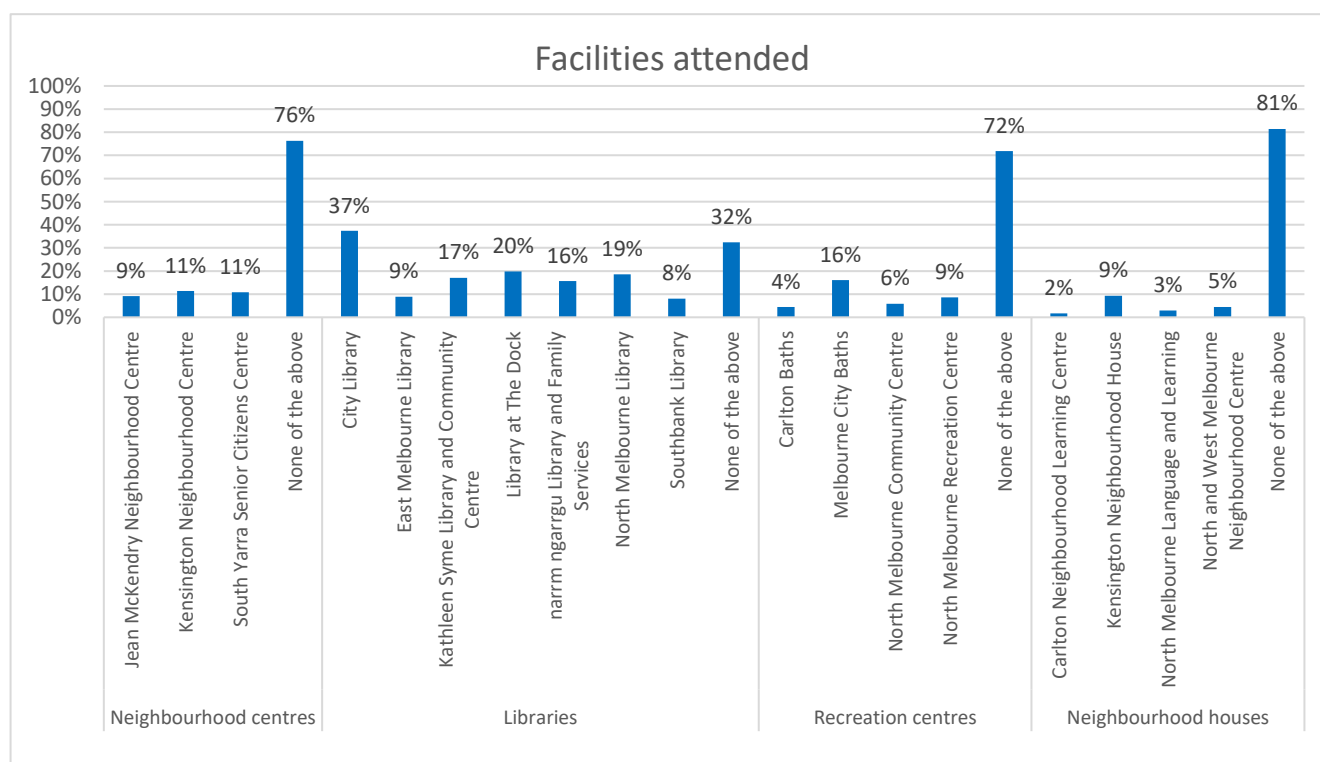
- > City Library
- > East Melbourne Library
- > Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre
- > Library at The Dock
- > narm ngarrgu Library and Family Services
- > North Melbourne Library
- > Southbank Library
- > None of the above

Recreation centres n=580

- > Carlton Baths
- > Melbourne City Baths
- > North Melbourne Community Centre
- > North Melbourne Recreation Centre
- > None of the above

Neighbourhood houses n=576

- > Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre
- > Kensington Neighbourhood House
- > North Melbourne Language and Learning
- > North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre
- > None of the above



Result:

- > City Library was the most attended library with 37 per cent of participants making use of this facility, followed by Library at the Dock with 20 per cent.
- > Melbourne City Baths was the most attended recreation centre with 16 per cent of participants making use of this facility.
- > Neighbourhood centres and neighbourhood houses were the least used facility types.

What participants said...

Participants were asked: *Provide any feedback on how your experience could be improved at these centres:*

Note on the analysis approach: *Feedback was analysed according to the CoM facilities outlined in the previous question. Participants often did not explicitly state which facility they were referencing when providing feedback. In these cases, to understand what facility their feedback was targeted at, analysts reviewed participants' responses to the previous question (where they selected the facilities they attended), and coded their feedback to one or all of the facilities that they had selected.*

For example, if the participant selected that they attended City Library and Kensington Neighbourhood House, and their feedback did to specify a location though stated the need for an improved book selection, analysts would code this feedback to the City Library commentary.

Section summary

- > Most participants' comments about **Libraries** were positive regarding current facilities. There were suggestions for more programs/activities across all libraries, as well as general calls for them to be accessible via public transport. Points regarding specific libraries are outlined in the full discussion below.
- > Comments on **Recreation Centres** were predominantly positive. Specific suggestions included: Melbourne City Baths need more staff; North Melbourne Recreation Centre and Carlton Baths should be open year-round; and participants were generally looking forward to the opening of the Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre.
- > Participants who commented on **Neighbourhood Centres** generally praised the facilities. There was considerable support for the Chatty Café, although some participants suggested the aesthetics could be improved at the Kensington facility. Extending the scope and scheduling was suggested for South Yarra Neighbourhood Centre, while more activities were requested for the Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre.
- > Comments on **Neighbourhood Houses** were also mainly positive. Praise was for both facilities and staff, and suggestions/criticisms were specific to each centre (although for Neighbourhood Houses these were minimal). Some participants suggested they did not have access to neighbourhood houses in their areas (East Melbourne, Southbank, the CBD, Docklands, and Parkville).
- > General comments about these facilities included: that accessibility should be prioritised; participants were unaware these facilities existed; general requests for more programming; certain locations (East Melbourne and Southbank) did not have access to as many facilities.

Libraries

111 comments

Most of the commentary about specific libraries contained positive feedback. The most prevalent suggestion across all facilities was to increase the number of programs run that older people can attend. Participants noted that these programs were of significant value to them. Feedback for individual libraries is outlined below.

Libraries are fantastic; staff are lovely well informed and prepared to solve most problems.

City library

25 comments

The majority of feedback related to City Library was on programming, with participants requesting for this to be increased and/or more specific in nature. Suggestions here included: book clubs; learning activities; and events specific to seniors. There were several participants who generally praised the library and its staff. The need for better public transport options was raised by a few participants. Increased flexibility around library spaces for

community group use was requested. One participant suggested that the City Library should acquire some new books to update their collection.

More frequent programs would be great- often fill up quickly.

Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre

23 comments

Participants were generally positive about the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre, mentioning helpful staff, comfortable facilities, and an accessible location. One participant requested a newsletter or email about upcoming events at the centre.

Libraries are fantastic; staff are lovely well informed and prepared to solve most problems

Narm Ngarrgu Library and Family Services

17 comments

Participants suggested that this library was a good venue for literary events, with well-informed staff. One participant requested a better set-up of the tables for computer use (ergonomically). Another suggested hard copy information about groups and events would be useful to get more senior citizens to participate.

North Melbourne Library

15 comments

Participants described the North Melbourne Library positively, using words such as “excellent” and “good”. Unique points included one participant who stated parking was difficult, and another who was appreciative of the selection of Chinese magazines and news.

Library at the Dock

11 comments

Library at the Dock was described positively, including regarding the facility and services provided there. Calls for improvements included more programs run later in the day, as well as lowering the cost for local groups to use the Community Hub.

East Melbourne Library

9 comments

Participants were highly supportive of the East Melbourne Library, from the programs to the staff members. Suggestions included more frequent programs, more/varied opening hours, and one request for a protected seating area outside.

The EM library is good for meeting community members.

Southbank Library

4 comments

Participants suggested that Southbank Library could be bigger. Another participant had safety concerns about aggressive behaviour around the area at night-time.

General library suggestions or comments

7 comments

Several participants made a range of comments about libraries in general. One participant argued there is too much noise in libraries now they are “neighbourhood hubs” which discourages writers. Another suggested large groups of students and tourists should be reduced due to noise concerns.

Public libraries should aim to reduce the noise made by groups of tourists and young students. Likewise, the use of the libraries by university students in large numbers should be discouraged. Universities should provide their own library services.

Recreation centres

99 comments

Feedback received about recreation centres was mostly specific to certain centres and is grouped according to each CoM recreation centre as per below. There was further commentary not specific to the existing CoM centres, which is discussed below under ‘General recreation centre commentary’.

Melbourne City Baths

33 comments

Those who provided feedback for the Melbourne City Baths predominantly gave praise to the facility and its programming, describing it using words such as “good”, “perfect”, and “fantastic”. Accessibility was raised by several participants as a concern, predominantly suggesting that the facility was oversubscribed. Staffing issues were also mentioned, with some references made to a reduction in availability of trainers and a reliance on casual staff. Programming specific to older people was also suggested by a few participants.

Keeping permanent staff at MCB -over reliance on casuals, and seniors not really well catered for with few classes / difficult to book as heavily over-subscribed

North Melbourne Recreation Centre

26 comments

Those who provided feedback on the North Melbourne Recreation Centre mostly either gave praise or requested enhanced programming and/or facilities at the centre. Participants described the centre as: important; well utilised; friendly; and as having responsive and active management. The main request here was that the centre be open year-round, with other requests including that there should be an extended schedule of classes. A small number of participants made one-off requests for enhancements to the facilities, including: extended parking hours; maintenance of the pilates and yoga facility; and landscaping around the pool.

NMRC needs greater support and overview from council. Re cleaning, range of options, communication with Prime members. [sic] is doing a good job but we need more support from council.

Carlton Baths

10 comments

A few participants who provided feedback on the Carlton Baths requested that the facility be open year-round. The remainder made one-off requests including that there be: improved staffing of facilities; increased classes during the day; cheaper access; and better parking options. One participant offered the following praise:

Carlton baths - accessible, clean and friendly and welcoming customer services

North Melbourne Community Centre

8 comments

Feedback provided on the North Melbourne Community Centre mostly gave general praise to the centre, including that it was “great”, “excellent”, and “perfect”.

General recreation centre commentary

22 comments

A moderate number of participants provided commentary not specific to the above facilities. A common topic was the Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre, with participants noting they were looking forward to this opening. Others discussed their experiences of recreation centres outside of the CoM area. A few made one-off requests for CoM recreation facilities including: that pickleball be available; that increased low-cost programming be available for the elderly; that prices were too high; that the temperature of pools were too cold; and that recreation centres should have drop-in sessions for grandparents and grandchildren to socialise at.

Most of the community facilities are north of the city and I live south of the city. There are very few facilities in the South Yarra area

Neighbourhood centres

83 comments

Feedback received about neighbourhood centres was mostly specific to certain facilities, therefore this feedback has been grouped according to each CoM neighbourhood centre as per below. There was further commentary not specific to the existing CoM centres, which is discussed below under ‘General neighbourhood centre commentary’.

Kensington Neighbourhood Centre

25 comments

Feedback on the Kensington Neighbourhood Centre was mostly in the form of praise for the facility, with its Chatty Café program commonly receiving positive mention. Several participants made one-off suggestions for improving the facility, including calls for: increased funding; a bathroom update; more activities; and having the facility be more welcoming.

Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre

23 comments

Feedback on the Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre mainly included either praise for staff or suggestions for improvements. A couple of participants suggested that the centre needed to be more welcoming, and a further couple suggested there needed to be more activities. The remaining suggestions were one-off in nature and included: a call for better infrastructure; increased support for “neglected” people; later opening hours; and more drawing classes in Chinese.

South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre

18 comments

Feedback on the South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre mainly contained suggested improvements to the facility. A small number of participants requested that the programs be extended in both scope and scheduling, with all other comments one-off in nature. These included enhanced communications around what's on, increased access by bus, connecting with other centres, and rebranding to be more inclusive of other ages. A small number of participants offered praise for the centre, with a couple specifically praising the Tai Chi instructor.

General Neighbourhood Centre suggestions

21 comments

A moderate number of participants provided commentary not specific to the above facilities. A small number of participants here noted that such centres were lacking in their neighbourhood, including specific reference to a lack of options in East Melbourne, Southbank, and the CBD. A few noted that travelling to these centres was a barrier, and a further few suggested that they had no need to use such centres. Improved communication about what these centres provided was also suggested by a few participants.

Residents could be provided with further information on activities and services available at Neighbourhood houses and community centres.

Neighbourhood houses

52 comments

Feedback received about neighbourhood houses was mostly specific to certain facilities, therefore this feedback has been grouped according to each CoM neighbourhood house as per below. Further commentary not specific to existing CoM houses is discussed below under ‘General neighbourhood house commentary’.

Kensington Neighbourhood House

17 comments

Most participants who discussed Kensington Neighbourhood House were in praise of the staff at this facility, describing them as friendly and helpful. The remaining comments included criticisms or suggestions for improving the facility, and were all unique in nature. These included: the need for larger rooms; a bathroom update; improvement to the hall; suggestion that the program was expensive; a request for bus outings; a request for more drawing classes in Chinese; and a suggestion that the house was more aligned with the needs of women and children rather than men.

North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre

6 comments

A small number of participants provided feedback on the North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre, the majority of which was praise. A couple of participants made unique suggestions including that more information be provided, and that there be better infrastructure.

North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre

5 comments

Feedback on the North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre was mainly positive, with only two one-off suggestions given. One of these was for later opening hours, and the other was for pilates classes.

North & West Melbourne. I've only been a few times & had a good experience.

Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre

4 comments

A small number of participants offered feedback on the Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre, of which most was positive. Suggestions included more financial support, continued upgrading of the facility, and more courses in the afternoon and evening.

I love CNLC

General Neighbourhood House commentary

20 comments

Through the remaining feedback, participants mostly provided praise for the existing neighbourhood house facilities. A small number of participants noted that there were no neighbourhood houses in their area, including in East Melbourne, Southbank, the CBD, Docklands, and Parkville, with some suggesting this was a gap. A small number of participants expressed that they were unaware of neighbourhood houses, or suggested that there could be more information on the services and activities available. A couple of participants also highlighted that Ross House had not been included in the list. One-off suggestions included outdoor exercise equipment and air conditioning.

These neighbourhood houses are all outside the CBD yet there is a growing population of older people living within the CBD who don't have cars. Having access to a Neighbourhood house in the CBD would be great.

General suggestions on neighbourhood centres, libraries, recreation centres, neighbourhood houses

80 comments

A substantial amount of commentary was provided that could not be clearly assigned to one specific facility or type of facility. The most commonly raised suggestion was that certain parts of the City of Melbourne did not have access to facilities, while another key theme was that CoM facilities were not relevant to the participant or accessible. A moderate number of participants highlighted that they had not heard of or engaged with the facilities before. Requests for improved programming were also raised in several comments, while a small number of participants referred to their attendance of U3A groups, suggesting these should be taken into account.

Specific geographic need for facilities

17 comments

Most of the comments about areas that specifically needed facilities were about East Melbourne. These participants suggested that the library is their only resource, and that the area is lacking community/neighbourhood centres. There were a couple of comments suggesting that Southbank could also do with more facilities.

I live in East Melbourne and there is NO dedicated community/neighbourhood centre and I see that as a huge gap.

Not accessible or relevant, or other facilities closer

16 comments

A moderate number of participants commented that the listed facilities are not relevant or accessible to them. Some participants mentioned that they use other facilities provided by neighbouring councils, while others noted that if there was better advertising they would come and give more places a go.

None of these are local to me but maybe some "come and try" sessions advertised more broadly to see what is available.

Not heard of or used facilities

15 comments

These participants commented that they had not heard of or had never used the listed facilities. Some were still working full time, so did not have the time to access them. Others wanted better information about them and were unsure how to find out more.

More programming requested

15 comments

There were a moderate number of participants who requested more programs that they could participate in. Ideas included: dancing; general social events; exercise programs; cooking classes; craft classes; drop-in IT support; and mentor/mentee connections with young people. Participants wanted the social interaction that comes with these opportunities.

More activities such as walking groups, coffee groups, exercise that is free or low cost.

Accessibility to facilities

4 comments

A small number of participants commented on the accessibility of facilities, that they should be easy to access via public transport. One participant called for an extension of the free tram zone for seniors.

University of the third age

4 comments

A small number of participants argued that the U3A should have been included alongside the listed facilities/community offerings. These participants expressed that this is an organisation they highly value, and that it has an extensive range of programs that could do with more spaces to run programs.

I'm a member and volunteer of Melbourne City U3A. We need access to rooms to run our extensive programs. The lack of classrooms is our main limiting factor.

Other comments

9 comments

Several participants offered unique comments that did not fit into the above categories. Specific points included: a request for support for older working people who feel older than everyone else in their workplace; request for more water taps at council centres; and a few participants offered general praise for libraries, a multicultural hub, and an arts centre.

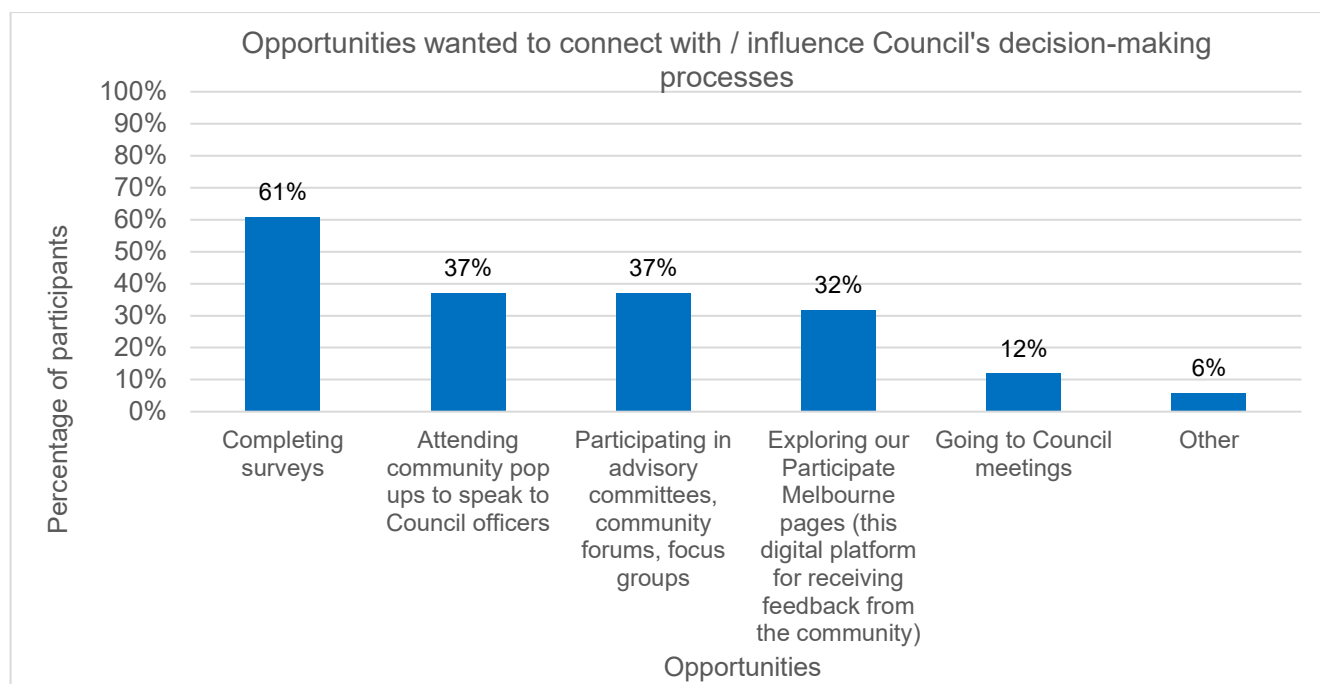
Opportunities liked to connect with Council and influence decision-making processes

Participants were asked: *What opportunities would you like to have to connect with us and influence Council's decision-making processes?*

Response options (participants could select one option for each question):

- > Completing surveys
- > Attending community pop ups to speak to Council officers
- > Exploring our Participate Melbourne pages (this digital platform for receiving feedback from the community)
- > Participating in advisory committees, community forums, focus groups
- > Going to Council meetings
- > Other *Top priority*

n=547



Result:

- > Completing surveys was the preferred way to connect with the Council's decision-making process at 61%
- > Attending community pop ups and participating in advisory committees were the next most common at 37%.

Other things the Council could focus on

What participants said...

Participants were asked: *Describe anything else the City of Melbourne could focus on in the next four years to support you to live and age well.*

Key themes emerged from participants' responses here. They are analysed below.

Section summary

- > Enhancements to City of Melbourne **services** was the most common theme to emerge from suggestions for how council could focus its attention. Improved access to information was a key concern, alongside a number of niche requests for specific services to be added to the council's offering.
- > The second largest theme amongst suggestions was **safety and accessibility**, and included calls to ensure pedestrian friendly infrastructure, accessible transport, and accessible parking.
- > An enhanced and/or expanded offering of **recreation activities** and improved **council communications**, mainly centred on the importance of continued engagement with residents, were other key requests to come out of participants' suggestions for focus areas.

Services

99 comments

A sizeable number of comments were received in which services were requested or discussed. A moderate number of participants made highly specific suggestions such as: request for services that could assist older people with basic home maintenance; more accessible parking; more opportunities to share knowledge and skills such as urban forest programs and time bank initiatives. A moderate number of participants also discussed access to information about services and support, as well as making requests for informative local programming. Several requests were made for more support for the U3A program. Transport and housing services were also raised by several participants, with reference to the specific needs of the elderly. Requests for face-to-face staff in support of council services was raised in several comments.

Clear information on how to access support services in the area eg meals, social outings, exercise programs.

A dedicated person to deal with at council for older residents.

Safety and accessibility

97 comments

A sizeable number of comments were made that pertained to safety and accessibility concerns. Pedestrian friendly infrastructure was a key request. Concerns were raised about the presence of cyclists and electric scooters on footpaths. Participants were in favour of continued improvements to cycling and walking routes specifically keeping footpaths clear and in good condition to allow access for wheelchair users and mobility devices. A moderate number of requests were made for greater availability and accessibility of transport including public transport. Safety was highlighted in a moderate number of comments, mostly generalised though with a few specific requests including improved lighting. Several comments were made relating to parking, with participants requesting that parking availability be improved, specifically disabled parking spots.

Focusing on the condition of footpaths to remove trip hazards would be most beneficial. More enforcement of bike riders to not use footpaths because of injuries to people who walk would be really appreciated.

The City of Melb has done a wonderful job with cycle paths but there is always room to expand and improve the network.

Upgrade all trams to accessible trams. The older ones are very dangerous with steep steps.

Recreation

85 comments

A sizeable number of requests were made for a focus on recreational activities. The main activities participants wanted to see centred on exercise, including: general exercise classes; Tai Chi; dance; pickleball; self-defence; and dance. This was followed by requests for a general increase in activity options, with some specifically calling for them to catered to the needs of elderly people (such as programs for seniors e.g. 'Linking Neighbours' and programs that aid in the transition to retirement). A smaller number of requests were made for educational activities such as short courses and seminars on to improve technological literacy, and healthy living.

Participants also discussed the significance of activities that foster social connection. Other specific activities mentioned included: arts; card games; and community gardens. Suggestions were made to improve access to existing activities, e.g. facilitating older peoples access to the Comedy Festival and reducing prices for the arts centre. A further small group of comments were received in which requests were made for pools to have extended opening hours.

Activities that suits any age but with special adaptation. E.g. running can be marathon for under 40 but walking for 65+ on the same activities

Keeping older people engaged with the community through activities for, eg, dementia patients. This is helpful for the partners as well who get a bit of a rest!

It would be great to have more events or programs that help people meet and talk to each other. This could help reduce loneliness and bring people together.

CoM communication, engagement, planning

84 comments

A sizeable number of comments related to the Council's communication, engagement, and planning. The main sentiment here was that engagement with residents was important and needed to either be improved or continued. Participants requested that Council Officers offer better customer service and attend gatherings of community groups. Planning was also raised as an important theme, with participants highlighting planning considerations such as affordable quality housing; environmental protection; better signage; the reduction of dense and high-rise housing; and more sheltered seating. Several participants also highlighted the importance of addressing ageism and improving attitudes to aging.

True CoM connection with residents prior to decisions implemented. Transparency of survey results and review decisions made.

Make more user friendly seating and open but sheltered spaces - for example Fed Square is totally unsuitable to visit as it has no canopy to protect from harsh sun or winds. And trying to walk around is unnerving because there is nowhere to rest and catch one's breath.

Create an ambassador program that celebrates the strengths, wisdom and creativity of older residents and showcase the contributions that older people make to the city. This will go a long way to start addressing the pervasive ageism that creates barriers for older people.

Importance of green space and the natural environment

27 comments

Green space and the natural environment were discussed in a considerable number of comments, with participants highlighting the importance of green spaces and parkland. Participants highlighted the benefits of additional greenery and greenspaces, including an increase in open public spaces for socialisation and

exercise, aesthetic improvements, and additional shade for those walking in the city. A few participants also emphasised the importance of cleanliness, safety, and accessibility in these green spaces. Community involvement in gardening and tree planting was also suggested, with the added benefit of opportunity for intergenerational social interactions. One participant commented on the need to maintain the health of existing central city trees.

With increased density of population open spaces become increasingly important. Access and safety in parks and gardens is very important to an aging population.

Some public parks in the Docklands precinct are needed. I used to live in Southbank which had Kings Domain, Treasury Gardens, Botanic Gardens, Alexandra Gardens, Queen Victoria Gardens. - Docklands has nothing that compares.

Aesthetic and cleanliness

24 comments

A moderate number of comments pertained to the aesthetics and cleanliness of the city, with the majority of these comments generally calling for improving cleanliness, particularly in the CBD. Specific suggestions offered by participants included: ensuring that public toilets are kept clean and well maintained; installing more rubbish bins; and ensuring that rubbish is frequently collected. A third of these comments specifically argued that there should be greater attention given to removing graffiti. One participant requested investment in better Christmas decorations.

Please make the City tidier by reducing graffiti and rubbish on the pedestrian walks.

Cleaning and tidying up the city. It is currently looking dirty, tired and worn. Especially the CBD. Take a leaf out of Japan's book. Their cities are scrupulously clean.

Requests for affordable or no-cost activities

24 comments

A moderate number of participants were in support of more affordable activities. Participants suggested reducing the cost of activities, or making activities free, particularly for older people. Affordable recreation and exercise classes and memberships were frequently mentioned by participants, as well as social events and healthcare options. A small number of participants also suggested that public transport for seniors should be more affordable or free. Other suggestions to enhance affordability included food discount vouchers and affordable community housing.

Increase the number of pensioner priced events available - there are many events/exhibitions which are out of reach of anyone who has to live on a age pension

This includes offering affordable fitness options like aqua aerobics or gentle movement classes, improving access to mental health support, and helping reduce isolation by encouraging community connection — especially for people from multicultural backgrounds

Addressing homelessness

16 comments

Calls to address homelessness in the city were made by a moderate number of participants, who frequently raised concerns about safety, crime, and substance abuse in public. While participants argued that the presence of homeless people should be reduced, they also highlighted a need to provide accommodation and other forms of support for people experiencing homelessness.

Clean and safe streets is my number one. Council should facilitate a joint effort with VicPol and charities such as Salvos to work to reduce rough sleepers.

Attention to or additional facilities

12 comments

Several comments were made regarding improving and adding facilities, with participants arguing that accessible community centres with frequent community events would encourage socialisation and reduce loneliness.

A good network of community centres that are available for meetings/community programs , highly accessible by public transport for mobility impaired residents, that operate 7 days per week and outside business hours.

Other comments

28 comments

A substantial number of participants made niche comments, including broad comments that they were currently satisfied, or that improvements could be made. Specific points made include the following: greater police presence; better organisation of community events and programs that also cater to the diversity of needs and interests of older people; language barriers impacting people's engagement; preserve buildings of historical significance; more job opportunities; and a greater commitment into green energy.

Focus on more visible police on streets, crime has increased. Criminal acts in my apartment building were not responded to by police until next day...too late.

More free things. Stop considering people in the over 55 age group as near death. I run half marathons, and do not (yet) need chair yoga! Give us some credit. We are not all crocheting booties

Subpopulation perspectives

Participants' responses were analysed according to subpopulations to understand whether there was a difference in perspectives between the overall population and the groups, they were:

- > People with a disability
- > Women compared to men
- > Multicultural communities;
- > People living alone;
- > Private renters;
- > Renters in public housing;
- > Older workers;
- > Aboriginal communities;
- > Carers
- > LGBTQIA+
- > Homeless communities
- > Unemployed people looking for work.

Thematic analysis of the above subpopulations were analysed for the opinions they expressed in the option selection questions and the broader, top-level themes identified in their written comments.

Note that due to the small numbers of participants in many of the groups, the results should be treated as a general indicator of the opinions held, and any decisions based on this information should be made cautiously. Additionally, while respondents identified as being a member of particular groups they may not have necessarily considered their answers to the survey questions from the perspective of that group.

People with a disability

51 participants (9%) identified as a person with a disability

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** There was no meaningful difference in the percentage of people with a disability who were planning for their future and all participants – 80% stated they were actively planning for their future.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - o 'Information and access to support and services' was either top or second priority for 45% of people with disabilities (compared to 32% of all participants).
 - o 'Housing that suits my needs' was also more likely to be either top or second priority for people with disabilities (25%, compared to 14% of all participants).
 - o People with disabilities were less likely (39%, compared to 52% of all participants) to select 'Programs, activities, or groups that interest me' as either their top or second priority.
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - o There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for any of the facility types listed below.
 - **Neighbourhood centres** – 29% had attended a neighbourhood centre.
 - **Libraries** – 65% had attended a library.
 - **Recreation centres**– 35% had attended a recreation

- **Neighbourhood houses** – 25% had attended a neighbourhood house.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - People with disabilities were more likely to want to connect with Council by **participating in advisory committees** (47%, compared to 37% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - **Health and wellbeing:** This was commented on slightly more than other topics, and were predominantly generalised comments about improving health and wellbeing.
 - **Living arrangements:** Most of the content was generalised, although there were a few points about housing that facilitates a lack of mobility (wheelchairs; less stairs; moving to the city for accessibility reasons).
 - **Financial planning:** There were a moderate number of general comments about the importance of finance from people with disabilities.
 - **Medical and legal arrangements:** People with disabilities exclusively commented on organising wills and preparing Powers of Attorney.
- > **First priority to live and age well**
 - **Information and access to support and services:** Most commented on theme for people with disabilities in this section. Participants wanted to know about supports for complex needs; how to access places if they had mobility challenges; and access to disability services, including for vision impairments.
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** These comments centred on staying stimulated; not getting bored if at home all day; and the importance of meeting new people.
 - **Housing that suits their needs:** People with disabilities commented on housing, predominantly generally stating that it is important.
 - **Access to Council services:** Although only a few participants commented on this, one relevant point made was the excessive time it took to get a disability parking permit.
- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** People with disabilities predominantly commented on the community and social connections made by participating in activities.
 - Similar to above, there was a focus on access to services and knowing what is available for support.
- > **Community facilities** – There were no common themes under this question made by people with disabilities, aside from general praise for facilities.
- > **Any other suggestions** - People with disabilities commented on parking (particularly disabled parking), and accessibility of public infrastructure (e.g footpaths and public transport), specifically the accessible of trams for people with mobility challenges.

Women compared to men

416 participants (69%) identified as women, while 168 (28%) identified as men. A further one per cent preferred not to say. Due to this, analysis based on gender was deemed to offer the most insight by comparing between women (the majority) and men (the minority).

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Women were slightly more likely than men to be actively planning for the future: 83% of women indicated they were, compared to 78% of men.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - o **'Programs, activities, or groups that interest me'** was the most commonly selected top or second priority for both groups, although women selected it more often (56%, compared to 40% of male participants).
 - o The next most selected top or second priority for women and men differed between groups. While 33% of women (compared to 28% of men) selected **'Information and access to support and services'**; 31% of men (compared to 27% of women) selected **'Feeling comfortable to get around the central city'**.
 - o While 25% of women and 19% of men selected **'Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community'** as either a top or second priority, men were more likely to select **'Accessible parks and public buildings in my local area'** (22% men, compared to 16% of women).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - o **Neighbourhood centres:** There was no meaningful difference between groups' attendance of neighbourhood centres. 24% of women and 25% of men had attended a neighbourhood centre.
 - o **Libraries:** Women were slightly more likely to have attended a library (70%, compared to 63% of men).
 - o **Recreation centres:** Women were more likely to have attended a recreation centre (34%, compared to 22% of men).
 - o **Neighbourhood houses:** There was no meaningful difference between groups' attendance of neighbourhood houses. 23% of women and 19% of men had attended a neighbourhood house.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - o Men were slightly more likely to want to connect with Council by **going to Council meetings** (17%, compared to 8% of women).

What they said...

There were very few thematic differences between men and women to emerge from participants' commentary.

- > **Planning for the future** – Men and women shared similarities in terms of their focus areas for planning for the future, though with slightly different sentiments within these focus areas.
 - o **Health and wellbeing:** Men and women both had this as the most common focus of their planning, and there was no thematic difference in terms of what they said within this.

- **Financial planning:** Men and women also shared this as their next most common way of planning. Comments differed slightly – women spoke more often of organising their will, whereas men were focussed more on managing their retirement funds and investments.
- > **Priorities to live and age well** – Men and women shared similarities in terms of the priorities they chose to discuss. They were as follows:
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** This was the most discussed priority for both men and women. There was no thematic difference in terms of the sentiment of their comments.
 - **Feeling comfortable to get around the central city:** Men were more likely to discuss this theme than women. A key difference was that women were more likely to express a desire to feel safe.
 - **Places to connect with and feel welcomed by local community:** Women were more likely to discuss this theme than men, though there was no thematic difference in terms of the sentiment of their comments.
- > **Community facilities** – Men and women shared similarities in terms of the types of facilities they chose to discuss. They were as follows:
 - **Recreation centres:** this was the most discussed facility type for both men and women. There were no discernible thematic differences in terms of the sentiment of their comments.
- > **Any other suggestions** – Suggestions pertaining to services was most frequently commented on by both women and men. Both groups discussed more support, services and information for older people; more housing; and support for U3A program. Women tended to discuss suggestions pertaining to transport more often than men, particularly referencing the need for community buses.

Multicultural communities

223 participants (37%) were multicultural: either born overseas (191, 32%) and/or speak another language at home (88, 15%).

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** There was no meaningful difference in the percentage of multicultural participants who were planning for their future and all participants – 79% stated they were actively planning for their future.
- > **Priorities to live and age well:** There was no meaningful difference in the percentage of multicultural participants' top and second priorities and those of all participants – The 3 most commonly selected were 'Programs, activities or groups that interest me' (56%); 'Information and access to support and services' (31%); and 'Places to connect with and feel welcomed by my local community' (30%).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** Multicultural participants were slightly more likely to have attended a neighbourhood centre (33%, compared to 24% of all participants).
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** Multicultural participants were slightly more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (27%, compared to 19% of all participants).
 - There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for the facility types listed below:
 - **Libraries:** 65% had attended a library.
 - **Recreation centres:** 33% had attended a recreation centre.

> Opportunities to connect with Council

- Multicultural participants were slightly less likely to want to connect with Council by exploring the Participate Melbourne pages (25%, compared to 32% of all participants).

What they said...

> Planning for the future

- **Health and wellbeing:** Multicultural communities generally commented on staying healthy. Comments unique to this group included a desire to travel and a few participants who wanted to take courses to improve their English.
- **Financial arrangements:** Multicultural communities made broad commentary pertaining to planning for their financial futures.
- **Living arrangements:** Commentary from multicultural communities was diverse pertaining to living arrangements. Participants discussed living arrangements in a generalised sense, in addition to: planning to move into aged care facilities; and to live at home independently.

> First priority to live and age well

- **Programs, activities or groups:** This was the most prominent priority for multicultural communities, mainly focused on the importance of the social connection.
- **Information and access to support and services:** Multicultural communities also prioritised knowing what support services are available and ensuring these are easily accessible. There were a couple of criticisms highlighting there is currently not enough information and is difficult to find.
- **Places to connect and feel welcomed by local community:** Commentary from multicultural communities broadly discussed the importance of local community, connecting with others and making friends. A few participants also mentioned loneliness.

> Second priority to live and age well

- **Programs, activities or groups:** Multicultural communities second priority was engagement in programs, activities and groups, emphasising again, the importance of social connectedness and being active.
- **Places to connect with and feel welcomed by local community:** Multicultural communities discussed similar sentiments in their commentary for this being their first priority also.

- > **Community facilities** – Neighbourhood centres were most frequently discussed facility type by multicultural communities. Praise was given to multiple centres, in addition to some suggestions for more activities being offered. Multicultural communities also offered general suggestions for facilities, commenting on suggestions for enhancing general infrastructure or activities on offer.
- > **Any other suggestions** - Multicultural communities tended to discuss suggestions for recreational activities the most, often calling for more an expanded offering. Further, multicultural communities also called for greater communication and engagement between CoM and residents, in addition to safety and accessibility concerns.

People living alone

255 participants (43%) live alone.

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Participants living alone were slightly less likely to be actively planning for the future: 78% of participants living alone said that they were, compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - Participants living alone were slightly less likely (48%, compared to 52% of all participants) to select **'Programs, activities, or groups that interest me'** as either their top or second priority, though it was still the most selected priority for the group.
 - Those living alone were slightly more likely (36%, compared to 32% of all participants) to select **'Information and access to support and services'** as either their top or second priority.
 - **'Housing that suits my needs'** was also slightly more likely to be either top or second priority for participants living alone (18%, as opposed to 14% of all participants).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** Participants living alone were slightly more likely to have attended a neighbourhood centre (28%, compared to 24% of all participants).
 - **Recreation centres:** Participants living alone were more likely to have attended a recreation centre (34%, compared to 28% of all participants).
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** Those living alone were more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (27%, compared to 19% of all participants).
 - **Libraries:** There was no meaningful difference between this group and all participants for library attendance. 68% had attended a library.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - Participants living alone were less likely to want to connect with Council by **completing surveys** (54%, compared to 61% of all participants) and by **participating in advisory committees** (32%, compared to 37% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - **Health and wellbeing:** People living alone often discussed healthy lifestyles in a generalised sense, in addition to focusing on physical health; participation in activities; and the importance of developing and maintaining social connections.
 - **Medical and legal arrangements:** Participants also discussed intentions to prepare a will as part of their planning for medical and financial arrangements for the future.
 - **Financial planning:** Participants also made generalised comments about managing their finances, often discussing planning for the future or managing their finances more closely at present.
 - **Living arrangements:** Participants simply mentioned they are considering their living arrangements, as well as commenting on modifications to improve independent living, or moving closer to the city.
- > **First priority to live and age well**

- **Programs, activities or groups:** Participants living alone often discussed the importance of social connectedness that programs, activities and other groups of interest bring.
- **Information and access to support and services:** Generalised comments were offered with participants wondering how to access support, in addition to some participants who offered critiques regarding current information is confusing. Participants living alone also made specific suggestions for requesting more support for activities of daily living, mobility and vision concerns.
- **Feeling comfortable to get around the central city:** Commentary on this theme centred around the importance of public transport in general and participants referenced the word “safety” frequently.
- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** Participants living alone discussed the importance of programs, activities and other groups of interest as important for various reasons: community participation and engagement; social connectedness; exercise; and keeping active.
- > **Community facilities** - People living alone were more inclined to give general suggestions, that were not clearly assigned to specific facilities stipulated in the survey. Commentary was diverse, which discussed: suggestions for neighbourhood centre in CBD; better infrastructure; more funding for neighbourhood centres; and praise for all of the centres. Regarding suggestions for other facilities, neighbourhood centres was more broadly discussed than libraries, recreation centres and neighbourhood houses.
- > **Any other suggestions** – Participants living alone were more inclined to make suggestions for ways in which the services could be enhanced. Participants tended to discuss suggestions pertaining to housing and accommodation; more public transport; continue to fund groups such as U3A.

Private renters

51 participants (9%) were private renters.

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Participants renting privately were less likely to be actively planning for the future: 63% of private renters said that they were, compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - Private renters were slightly less likely (47%, compared to 52% of all participants) to select '**Programs, activities, or groups that interest me**' as either their top or second priority.
 - The next most selected top or second priority for private renters was '**Housing that suits my needs**'. Private renters were much more likely to select this priority when compared to all participants (29%, compared to 14% of all participants).
 - '**Information and access to support and services**' was selected as either a top or second priority by 27% of private renters, as opposed to 32% of all participants.
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Recreation centres:** Participants renting privately were slightly less likely to have attended a recreation centre (24%, compared to 28% of all participants).
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** Private renters were more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (27%, compared to 19% of all participants).
 - There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for the facility types listed below.

- **Neighbourhood centres:** 24% had attended a neighbourhood centre.
- **Libraries:** 69% had attended a library.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - Participants renting privately were slightly more likely to want to connect with Council by **going to Council meetings** (20%, compared to 12% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - **Medical and legal arrangements:** Private renters most often commented that preparing a will was part of their plan for the future.
 - **Financial arrangements:** Private renters made generalised comments about preparing their finances.
 - **Living arrangements:** Comments from private renters were specific to their rental arrangements, with the majority of comments on rent increases, and how renting is unsustainable long term.
- > **First priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** This was a top priority for most private renters, who expressed a desire to connect with others and stay active.
 - **Housing that suits their needs:** The second most common priority for private renters was housing that suits their needs, many of these participants suggested that affordable accommodation is challenging to find in Melbourne.
 - **Places to connect and feel welcomed by their local community:** Comments about this from private renters centred on feeling lonely, and how this is a challenge when you do not have family or close connections in a big city.
- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** When asked their second priority to live and age well, private renters most often commented that they wish to participate in activities that enable them to connect with others.
 - **Feeling comfortable to get around the central city:** Private renters also commented on the accessibility of the city, especially for those with physical disabilities.
 - **Places to connect and feel welcomed by local community:** Some private renters commented that meeting neighbours was a priority for them.
- > **Community facilities** – Suggestions included before or after work activities for older workers; community access to activities by bus; more funding so community facilities don't have to constantly re-apply for funding.
- > **Any other suggestions** – Private renters most frequently commented on information services; safety and accessibility; and recreation.

Renters in public housing

55 participants (9%) were renters in public housing.

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Renters in public housing were less likely to be actively planning for the future: 67% said that they were, compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - o Renters in public housing were less likely (33%, compared to 52% of all participants) to select **'Programs, activities, or groups that interest me'** as either their top or second priority, although it remained as one of the two most selected priorities.
 - o Also selected as either a top or second priority by 33% of renters in public housing was **'Housing that suits my needs'** (selected by 14% of all participants).
 - o Renters in public housing were less likely to select **'Accessible parks and public buildings in my local area'** as either a top or second priority (only 7%, compared to 18% of all participants).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - o **Neighbourhood centres:** Renters in public housing were much more likely to have attended a neighbourhood centre (44%, compared to 24% of all participants).
 - o **Libraries:** Renters in public housing were less likely to have attended a Library (51%, compared to 68% of all participants).
 - o **Recreation centres:** Renters in public housing were more likely to have attended a recreation centre (38%, compared to 28% of all participants).
 - o **Neighbourhood houses:** Renters in public housing were considerably more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (45%, compared to 19% of all participants).
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - o Renters in public housing were less likely than the general population to want to connect with Council by **participating in advisory committees** (20%, compared to 37% of all participants) and by **exploring the Participate Melbourne pages** (16%, compared to 32% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - o **Health and wellbeing:** Renters in public housing most frequently made generalised comments pertaining to health and wellbeing, with a few participants also mentioning travel and holidays.
 - o **Living arrangements:** Participants also discussed plans pertaining to living arrangements, the key focus was regarding moving into aged care.
 - o **Medical and legal arrangements:** Equally discussed, was commentary pertaining to retirement in a generalised sense.
- > **First priority to live and age well**

- **Information and access to support and services:** Public housing renters most often commented that information and access to support services, and housing that suits their needs were their top priority to live and age well in Melbourne.
- **Suitable housing:** Public housing renters equally discussed the importance of housing that is affordable, suitable and available long term.
- **Feeling comfortable to get around the central city:** This was followed by comments about feeling comfortable getting around the central city which mainly centred around safety and public transport.
- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities, or groups:** The most common second priority for renters in public housing was the availability of programs, activities or groups that interest them, highlighting the importance of being active and contributing to the community.
 - **Suitable housing:** Participants commented on the importance of comfort, affordability, and security in regard to housing. Some comments were directly related to ageing, one participant expressed concern that they won't be able to manage stairs in the future.
- > **Community facilities** – Renters in public housing most often made comments praising neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood centres and libraries, with the Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre commonly praised amongst their comments. Other commentary mostly included suggestions to continue upgrading existing facilities; provide bus outings; and organise more activities. One participant commented that they do not know anything about the neighbourhood centres and houses, indicating that information about these facilities should be more accessible.
- > **Any other suggestions** – Other suggestions by renters were most often related to services, recreation and CoM communication, planning and engagement, with requests for enhanced planning being a particular focus.

Older workers

111 participants (19%) were older workers: those who indicated that they worked either part time (52, 9%) or full time (58, 10%).

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** There was no meaningful difference in the percentage of older workers who were planning for their future and all participants – 82% stated they were actively planning for their future.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - Older workers were more likely (21%, compared to 9% of all participants) to select '**Employment and ability to retire when I'm ready**' as either their top or second priority.
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** Older workers were slightly less likely to have attended a neighbourhood centre (19%, compared to 24% of all participants).
 - There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for any of the facility types listed below.
 - **Libraries:** 66% had attended a library.
 - **Recreation centres:** 26% had attended a recreation centre.
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** 17% had attended a neighbourhood house.

> Opportunities to connect with Council

- Older workers were more likely to want to connect with Council by **participating in advisory committees** (47%, compared to 37% of all participants).

What they said...

> Planning for the future

- **Financial planning:** This was the most mentioned topic by older workers. Comments were mainly about financial planning for the near future.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Part-time workers in particular focused on the importance of community for their health. Physical health (keeping fit) was important for older workers in general.
- **Retirement:** Older workers discussed retirement as an important part of planning for their future. Comments were centred on how participants are planning for retirement, and figuring out how to start winding down their work hours, while planning for an active retirement.

> First priority to live and age well

- **Programs, activities and groups:** This was the most prominent top priority for older workers, and comments tended to be about the importance of activities to plan for an active retirement. Older workers wanted a retirement in which they were 'active' and 'connected'.

> Second priority to live and age well

- **Places to connect with and feel welcomed by local community:** This was the most commented on second priority for older workers. Comments were generally about the importance of being connected for wellbeing and fulfilment.

> Community facilities, suggestions

- **Neighbourhood houses:** Older workers commented on neighbourhood houses more than other community facilities. They gave a variety of comments; many were requests for more activities to be held in these spaces.

> Any other suggestions – There was no discernible difference in comments in this section from this group and all participants.

Aboriginal communities

What participants said...

Only **one participant (0.2%)** identified as Aboriginal. This participant made one comment, in relation to planning for the future:

Looking to down size and to single level property without stairs.

Carers

49 participants (8%) in the survey were carers.

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Carers were slightly more likely to be actively planning for the future: 88% of carers said they were, compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**

- Carers were more likely (27%, compared to 14% of all participants) to select '**Housing that suits my needs**'.
- '**Feeling comfortable to get around the central city**' was less frequently a top or second priority for carers (20%, compared to 28% of all participants).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** Carers were slightly more likely to have attended a neighbourhood centre (31%, compared to 24% of all participants).
 - **Libraries:** Carers were slightly more likely to have attended a library (76%, compared to 68% of all participants).
 - **Recreation centres:** Carers were more likely to have attended a recreation centre (47%, compared to 28% of all participants).
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** Carers were more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (37%, compared to 19% of all participants).
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - Carers were slightly more likely to want to **complete surveys** (69%, compared to 61% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - **Living arrangements:** Carers most frequently commented that their plan for the future included reviewing their living arrangements. Participants' comments included plans to review accessibility around their house; plans to seek supported accommodation; and plans to downsize.
 - **Medical and legal arrangements:** Carers most frequently discussed organising their will, with power of attorney planning commented on less frequently.
 - **Health and wellbeing:** Carers also discussed healthy lifestyle in a generalised sense.
- > **First priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** Was the first priority for carers, with commentary focusing on the importance of hobbies and social connectedness. One participant criticised the current offerings for not being inclusive.
 - **Suitable housing:** Was also a priority for carers, with commentary highlighting the importance of housing being affordable and safe.
 - **Accessible parks and public buildings:** Carers discussed the importance of accessing parks and green space with ease.
- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** Carers' second priority to living and aging well was to be involved with activities that are purposeful and provide opportunities for learning.
 - **Information and access to support and services:** Carers also discussed the importance of knowing what services and support to access when needed.
- > **Community facilities–** Comments made by carers regarding community facilities tended to focus on recreation centres, followed by libraries.

- > **Any other suggestions** – Other suggestions made by carers were most often related to recreation followed by safety and accessibility.

LGBTQIA+

44 participants (7%) identified as LGBTQIA+.

Participants opinions

- > **Planning for the future:** Participants who identified as LGBTQIA+ were slightly less likely to be actively planning for the future: 73% answered 'Yes', compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - As with all participants, LGBTQIA+ participants' most selected top and second priority was '**Programs, activities or groups that interest me**', although to a lesser extent (34%, compared to 52% of all participants).
 - LGBTQIA+ participants were more likely to select '**Employment and ability to retire when I'm ready**' as either a top or second priority (23%, compared to 9% of all participants).
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** LGBTQIA+ participants were less likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (9%, compared to 19% of all participants).
 - There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for any of the facility types listed below.
 - **Libraries:** 61% had attended a library.
 - **Recreation centres:** 23% had attended a recreation centre.
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** 18% had attended a neighbourhood centre.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - LGBTQIA+ participants were more likely to want to **participate in advisory committees** (50%, compared to 37% of all participants).

What they said...

- > **Planning for the future**
 - **Living arrangements:** Commentary from this group tended to include discussion about changes to living arrangements.
 - **Financial planning:** Participants who identified as LGBTQIA+ also commented on the need to evaluate their financial situation as they made plans for the future. Participants mentioned their financial goals, from saving on a low income to investing in EFTs.
 - **Health and wellbeing:** Participants also noted their plans to stay active, eat healthy and meet new people.
- > **First priority to live and age well**
 - **Programs, activities or groups:** Staying connected through programs and activities was a top priority.
 - **Feeling comfortable to get around the central city:** Comments discussed the need to feel safe in the city, especially for those reliant on walking and public transport.

- > **Second priority to live and age well**
 - **Information and access to support and services:** The most common second priority for LGBTQIA+ participants was the availability of information to help them access services they may need.
- > **Community facilities**
 - **Libraries:** Varied commentary, from praise to complaints about noise and parking. One comment particularly relevant to this subgroup was a request for lesbian specific groups.
 - **Recreation centres:** Requests for cheaper access, extended hours, and for the Kensington pool to be reopened.
- > **Any other suggestions** – comments covered broader societal themes such as ageism, jobs for older people and accessibility around the city.

Homeless communities

5 participants (1%) were experiencing homelessness.

What they said...

- > As there were so few participants experiencing homelessness it is difficult to accurately observe common themes across this group. There was one relevant comment regarding **housing** as a priority to live and age well, where the participant referred to their lack of home as a barrier to health and the first thing they need to tackle.

Unemployed and looking for work

31 participants (5%) in the survey were unemployed (14, 2%) or looking for work (17, 3%).

Participants' opinions...

- > **Planning for the future:** Participants who were unemployed or looking for work were less likely to be actively planning for the future: 65% answered 'Yes', compared to 82% of all participants.
- > **Priorities to live and age well**
 - Participants who were unemployed or looking for work were most likely to select '**Employment and ability to retire when I'm ready**' as either their top or second priority (42%, compared to 9% of all participants).
 - The next most selected top or second priority for unemployed or work seeking participants was '**Programs, activities or groups that interest me**', although this was selected less often than it was by the general survey population (42%, compared to 52% of all participants).
 - '**Housing that suits my needs**' was selected as either a top or second priority by 29% of unemployed/work seeking participants, as opposed to 14% of all participants.
- > **Community facilities attended**
 - **Recreation centres:** Participants who were unemployed or looking for work more likely to have attended a recreation centre (39%, compared to 28% of all participants).
 - **Neighbourhood houses:** Unemployed/work seeking participants were more likely to have attended a neighbourhood house (39%, compared to 19% of all participants).

- There was no meaningful difference between the total population and this group for the facility types listed below.
 - **Neighbourhood centres:** 23% had attended a neighbourhood centre.
 - **Libraries:** 71% had attended a library.
- > **Opportunities to connect with Council**
 - Unemployed/work seeking participants were more likely to want to connect with Council by **participating in advisory committees** (55%, compared to 37% of all participants); but less likely to want to **complete surveys** (39%, compared to 61% of all participants).

What they said...

- > Because there was a small number of participants who were unemployed and looking for work, it was not possible to analyse themes across each section and topic.
- > However, across the survey, **financial matters** were a priority. Participants generally commented on a lack of money and the challenges that come with this. Calls for more support as a result of the cost-of-living was mentioned by this group.

About the survey participants

Participant age groups

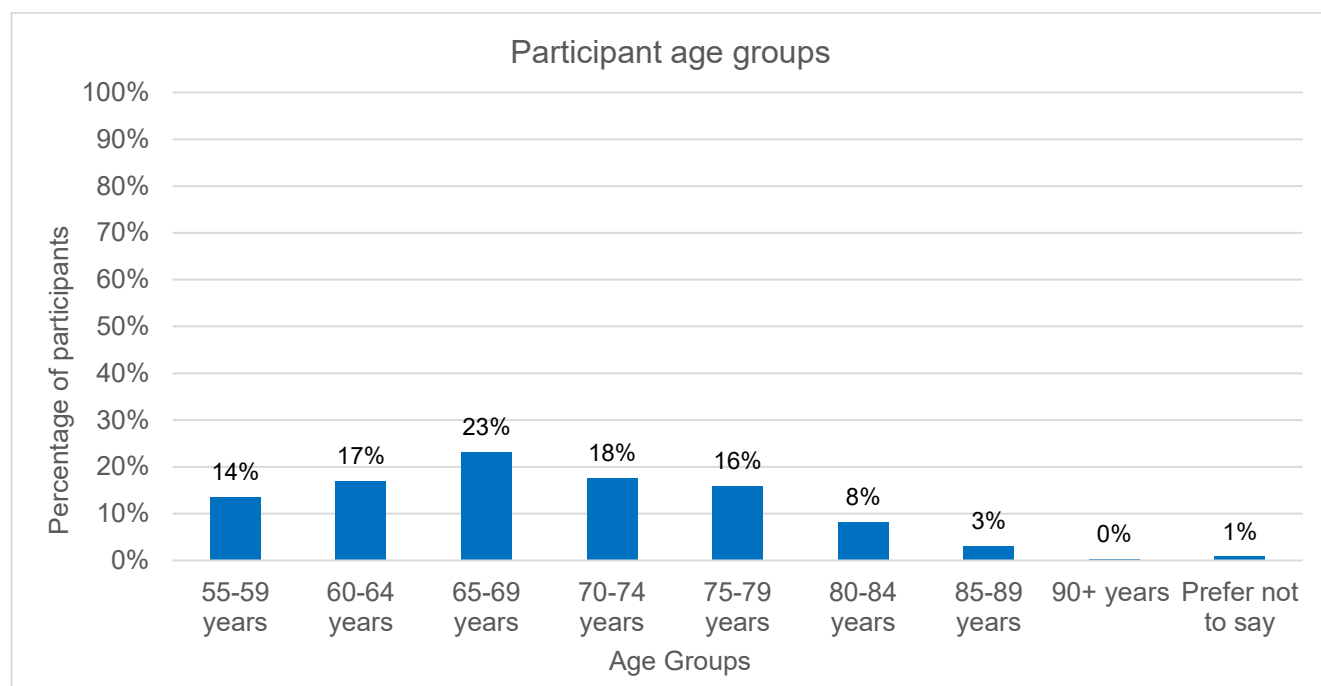
Participants were asked: *What is your age?*

Response options:

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| > Under 15 years | > 40-44 years | > 70-74 years |
| > 15-19 years | > 45-49 years | > 75-79 years |
| > 20-24 years | > 50-54 years | > 80-84 years |
| > 25-29 years | > 55-59 years | > 85-89 years |
| > 30-34 years | > 60-64 years | > 90+ years |
| > 35-39 years | > 65-69 years | > Prefer not to say |

Note: participants were required to state that they were 55 years or older to complete the survey.

n=594



Result:

- > The most common age groups surveyed were 65-69 years (23%) old and 70-74 years (18%)
- > The least responses came from 90+ years, who were less than 1% of participants (two participants)
- > Just over half of participants were between 55 and 69 years of age—54%
- > Just under half of participants were over 69 years of age—45%.

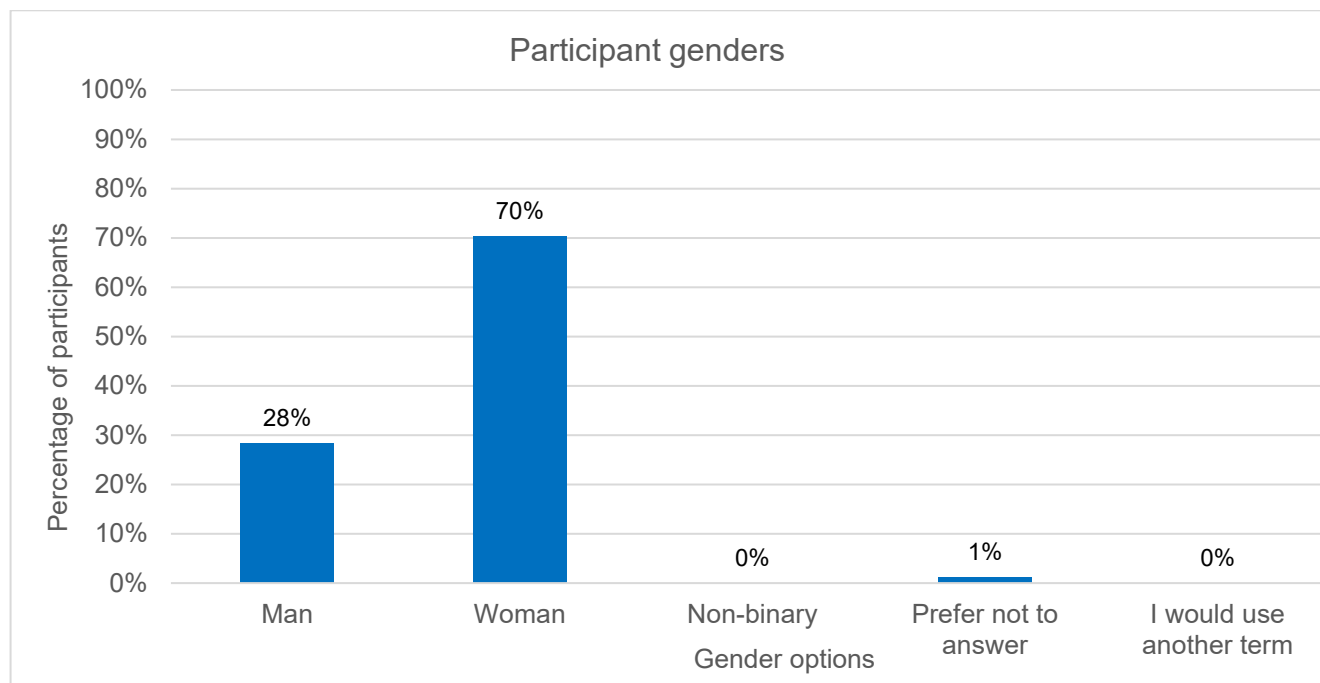
Participant genders

Participants were asked: *How do you describe your gender?*

Response options:

- > Man
- > Woman
- > Non-binary
- > Prefer not to answer
- > I would use another term

n=591



Result:

- > 70 per cent of participants identified as women
- > 28 per cent of participants identified as men
- > Zero participants identified as non-binary or would use another term.

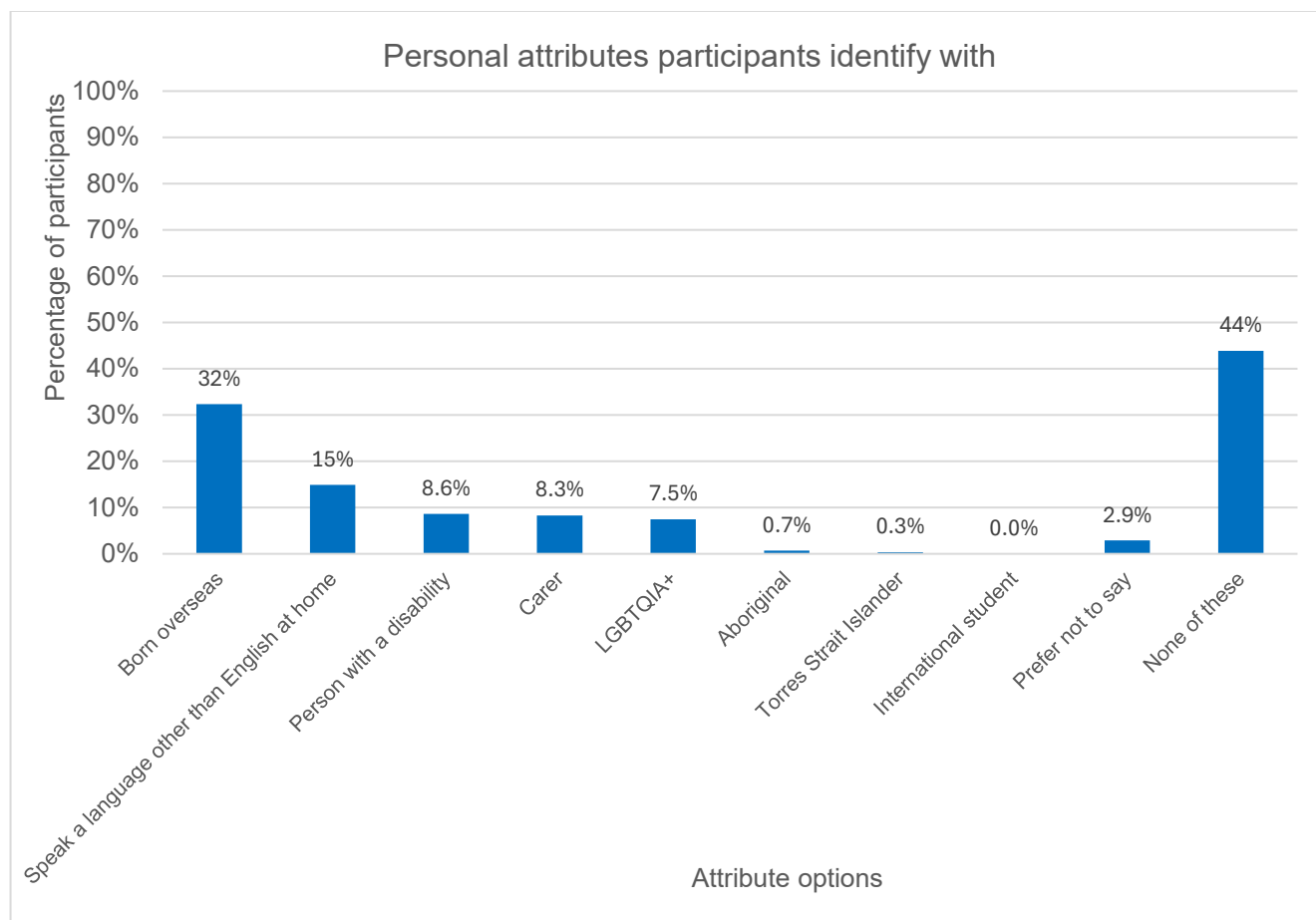
Participant identity

Participants were asked: *Do you identify with any of the following?*

Response options:

- > Aboriginal
- > Torres Strait Islander
- > Person with a disability
- > Carer
- > LGBTQIA+
- > Speak a language other than English at home
- > Born overseas
- > International student
- > Prefer not to say
- > None of these

n=590



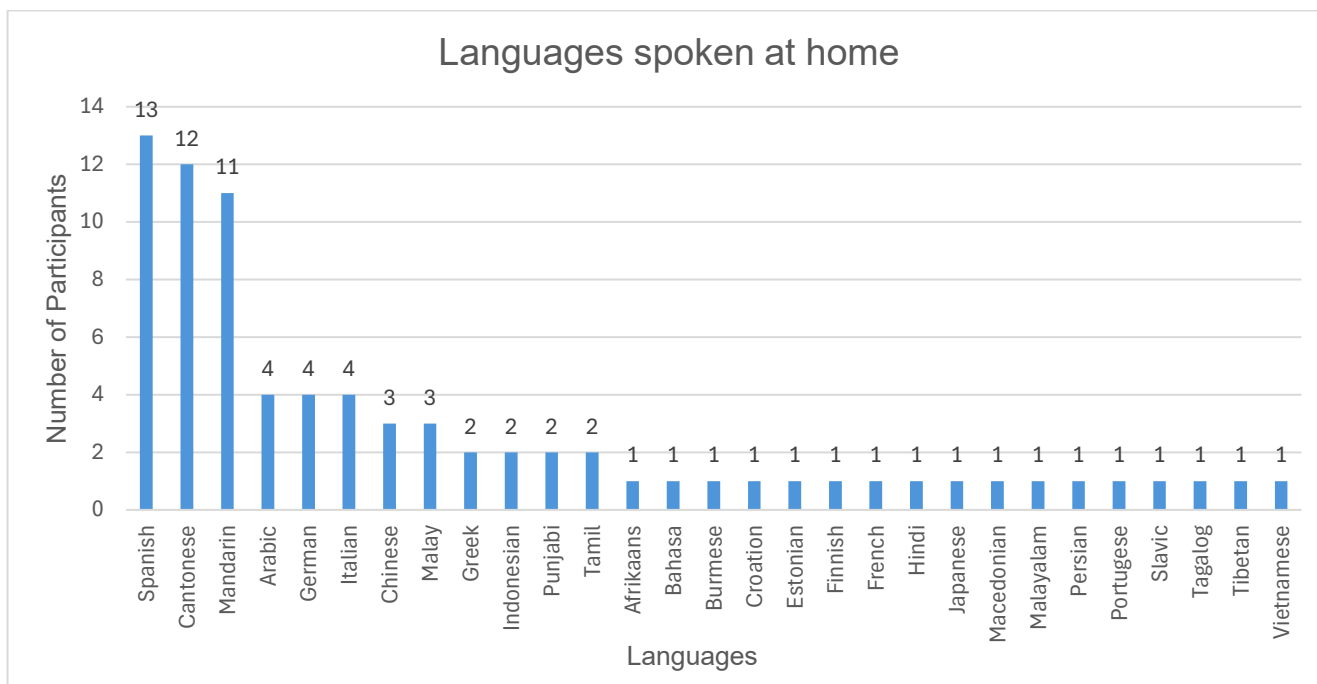
Result:

- > The largest group of participants were those born overseas—32% of participants.
- > 15% of participants speak another language at home (see next question for which languages).
- > Just under one tenth of participants have a disability (8.6%) or are a carer (8.3%).
- > Around 8% identified as LGBTQIA+ (7.5%).
- > Aboriginal (0.7%) and Torres Strait Islanders (0.3%) each had four and two participants respectively.
- > No international students answered the survey.
- > Nearly half of participants did not identify with any of the listed groups (44%).

Languages spoken at home

Participants were asked: *What language do you speak at home?*

Participants wrote these answers (number of participants follows each language)



Result:

- > The most common language spoken at home was Spanish, spoken by 13 participants, or 2.2%.
- > Cantonese was spoken by 12 participants (2.0%).
- > Mandarin was spoken by 11 participants (1.8%).
- > Arabic, German and Italian were spoken by 4 participants each (0.7%).
- > Other languages were spoken by three participants were fewer were: Chinese (3), Malay (3), Greek (2), Indonesian (2), Punjabi(2), Tamil (2), Afrikaans (1), Bahasa (1), Burmese (1), Croatian (1), Estonian (1), Finnish (1), French (1), Japanese (1), Latin (1), Macedonian (1), Malayalam (1), Persian (1), Portuguese (1), Slavic (1), Tagalog (1), Tibetan (1), Vietnamese (1).

Further explanation of this result: While Spanish was the main language other than English spoken at home, this is likely due to the strong representation achieved during the Chatty Café pop-up at Kensington Neighbourhood Centre, where a significant number of surveys from Spanish-speaking participants were collected.

However, it's worth noting that during several of our pop-ups as well as through returned translated print surveys, the "language spoken at home" question was at times left unanswered. Despite this, the engagement team is confident that a portion of the participants were Mandarin-speaking, based on the translation support provided. As a result, the current data likely underrepresents Mandarin-speaking residents.

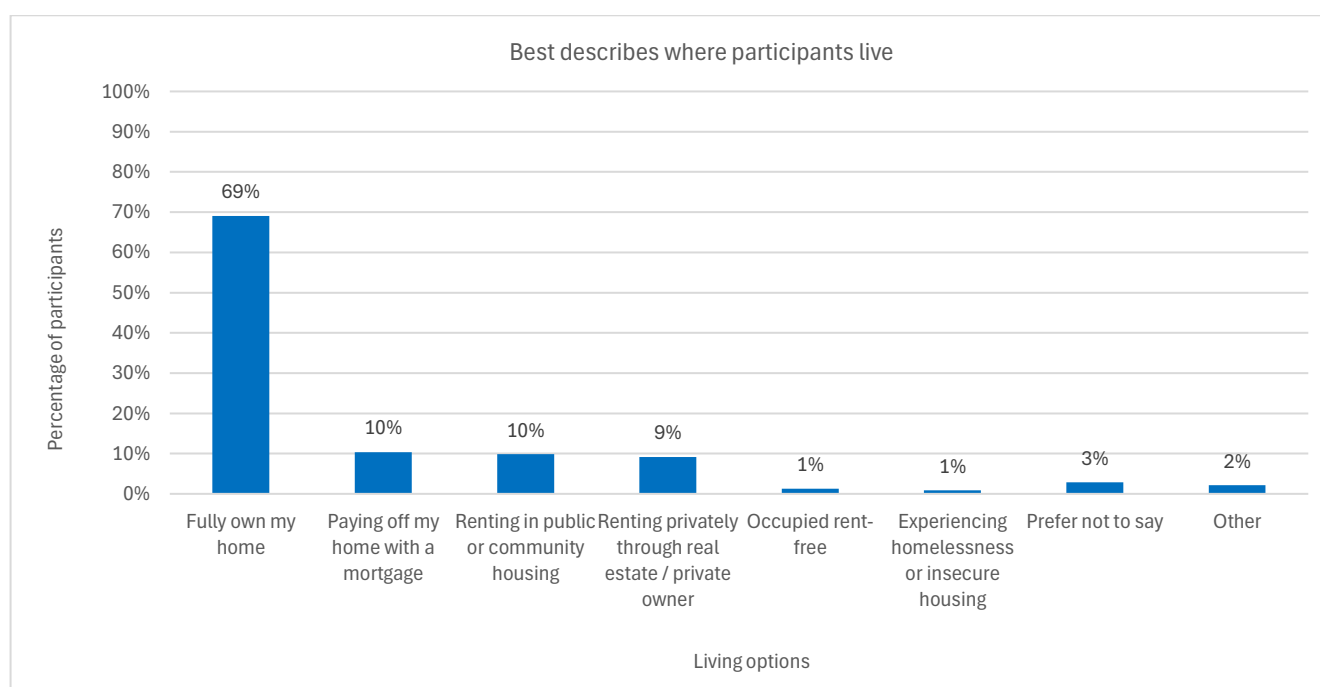
Where participants live

Participants were asked: *Which of the following best describes where you live?*

Response options:

- > Fully own my home
- > Paying off my home with a mortgage
- > Renting privately through real estate/private owner
- > Renting in public or community housing
- > Occupied rent-free
- > Experiencing homelessness or insecure housing
- > Prefer not to say
- > Other

n=590



Result:

- > Over two thirds of participants own their own home without a mortgage (69%)
- > Just under 10 percent own their home with a mortgage (10%) or rent in public or community housing (10%).
- > Slightly fewer were renting privately (9%).
- > Fewer than 1% of participants occupied rent-free (7 participants), or were experiencing homelessness or insecure housing (5 participants).

Other written responses (2%) were: Living with a family member (5), Bedsit or apartment (3), Retirement village/ community (2), Overseas (1).

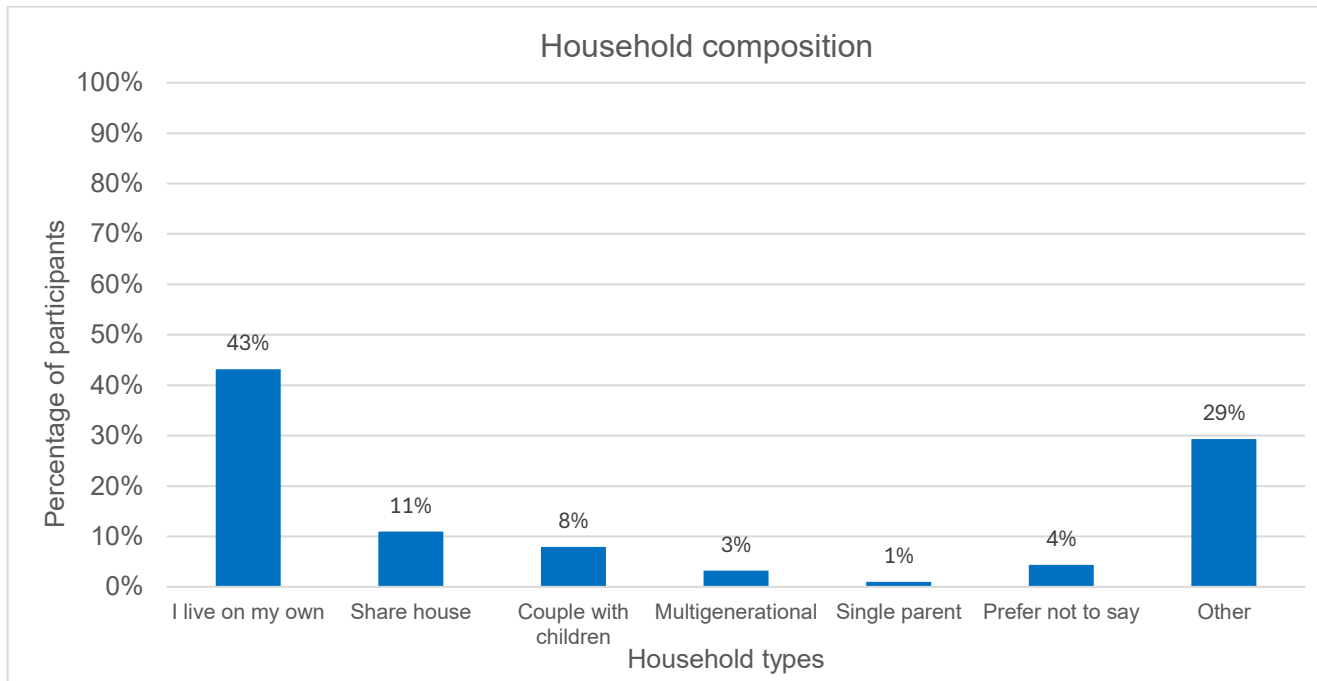
Household composition

Participants were asked: *What is your household composition?*

Response options:

- > I live on my own
- > Share house
- > Couple with children
- > Single parent
- > Multigenerational
- > Prefer not to say
- > Other

n=593



Result:

- > Just under half of participants live alone (43%)
- > Just over one in ten live in a shared house (11%)
- > Just under one in ten were a couple with children (8%)
- > A small proportion were multigenerational (3%) or a single parent (1%).
- > It is likely that around 40% of participants lived with a partner, but this was not included as an option for participants to select. This is explained further below.

Other written responses (29%) were: 13% of participants to the question indicated that they lived with a partner, such as a couple or similar, often indicated as husband or wife; 2% lived with another family member such as a sibling or child, 0.3% lived with a friend or similar.

Further explanation of this result: “Living with a partner” was not included as a multiple-choice response option. So even though this response was collected in the ‘other’ comments, it was likely under-represented in the results. Related to this, the reported 11% figure for “share house” should be interpreted with caution, as it may be capturing participants who actually live with a partner. Combining both of these factors, ‘living with a partner’ was likely closer to 40% of participants.

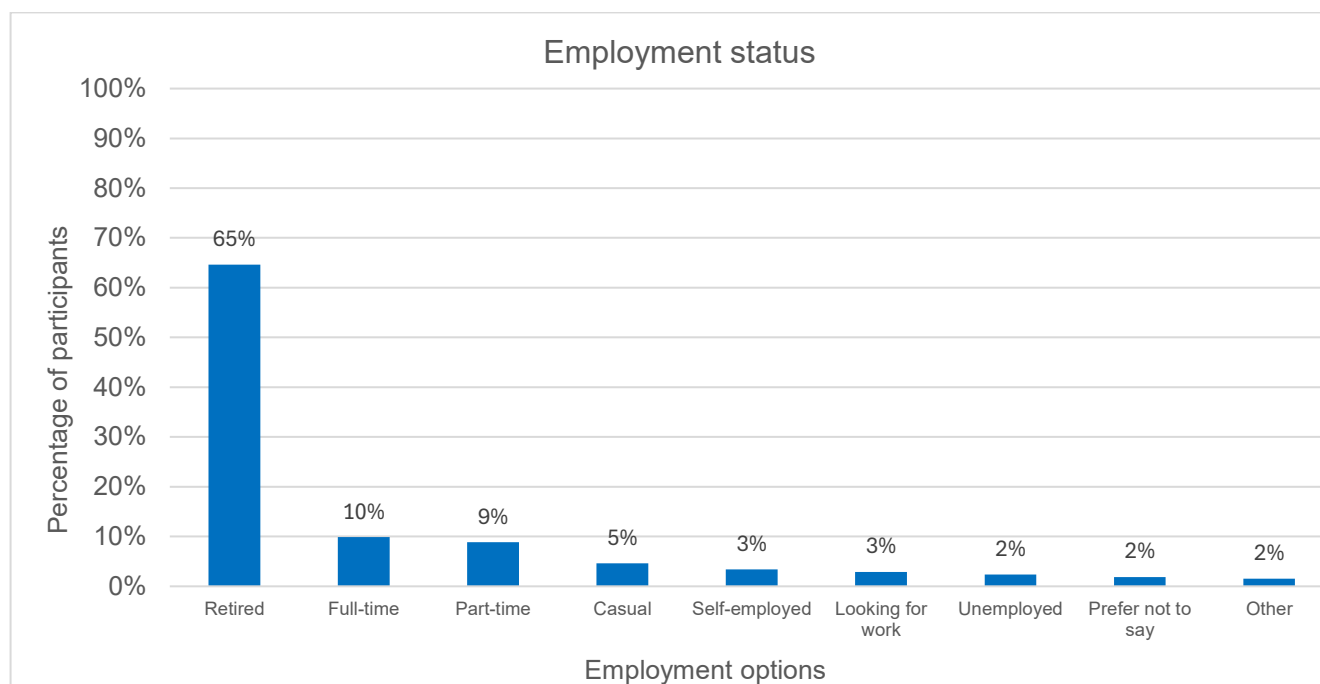
Best describes current employment status

Participants were asked: *What best describes your current employment status?*

Response options:

- > Part-time
- > Full-time
- > Retired
- > Unemployed
- > Self-employed
- > Casual
- > Looking for work
- > Prefer not to say
- > Other

$n=588$



Result:

- > Over two-thirds of participants were retired (65%).
- > 10 percent were employed full-time and 9% were employed part-time.
- > A small proportion of people were casual (5%), self-employed (3%), looking for work (3%), or unemployed (2%).

Other written responses (2%) were: Semi-retired (2); On disability support pension (1); Freelance (1); Not employed (1); Retired doing volunteer work (1); Carer (1).

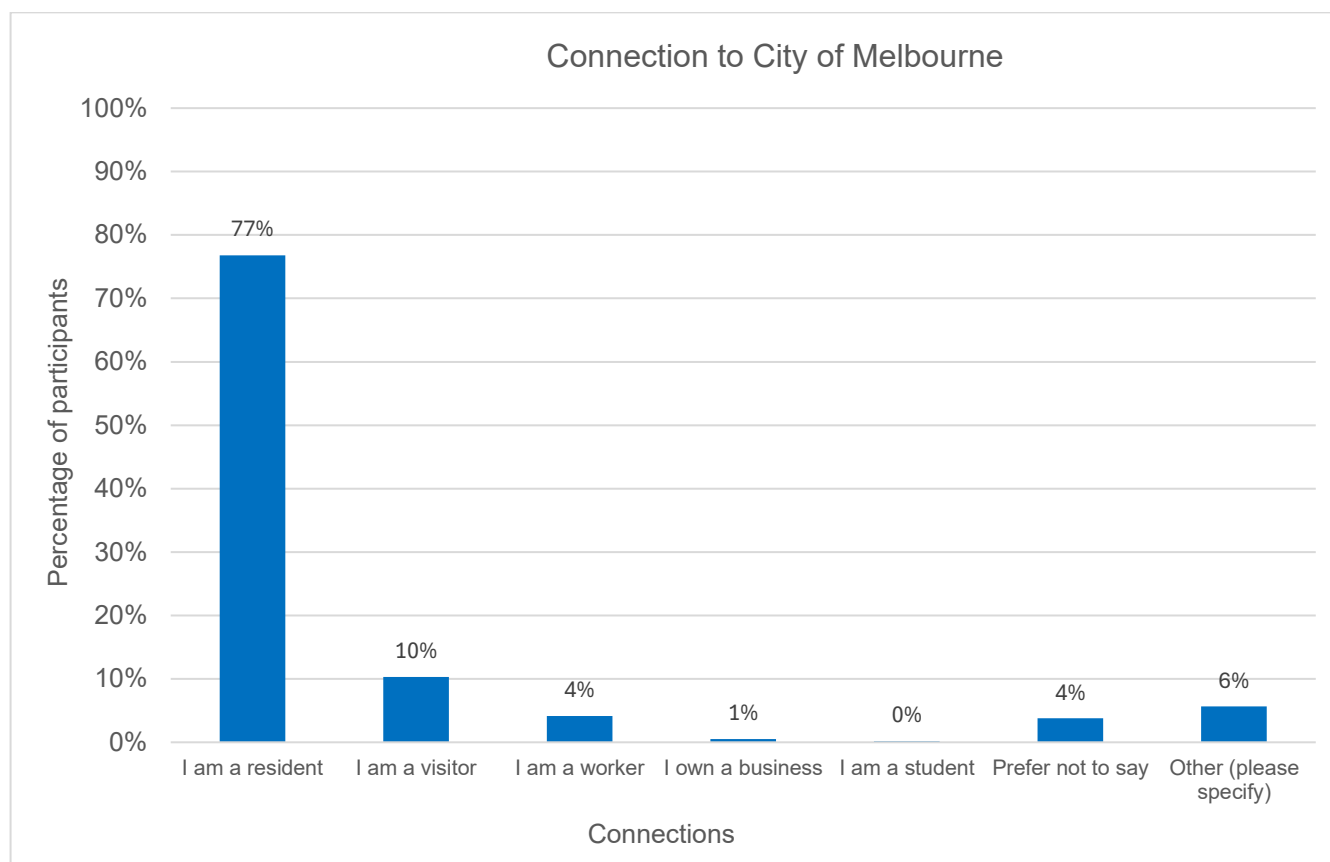
Best describes Connection to City of Melbourne

Participants were asked: *Which of the following best describes your connection to this City of Melbourne project?*

Response options:

- > I am a resident
- > I am a student
- > I am a worker
- > I am a visitor
- > I own a business
- > Prefer not to say
- > Other (please specify)

n=590



Result:

- > Just over three quarters of participants were residents (77%)
- > One in ten were visitors (10%)
- > A small proportion were workers (4%), or own a business (1%)
- > One participant was a student.

Other written responses (6%) were: Frequently in the city/living nearby/not living in CoM (13); Attend a community group (4); Volunteer (3); Moving to the city (2); Participate in CoM activities (2); Live part time in Melbourne (1); Property owner (1).

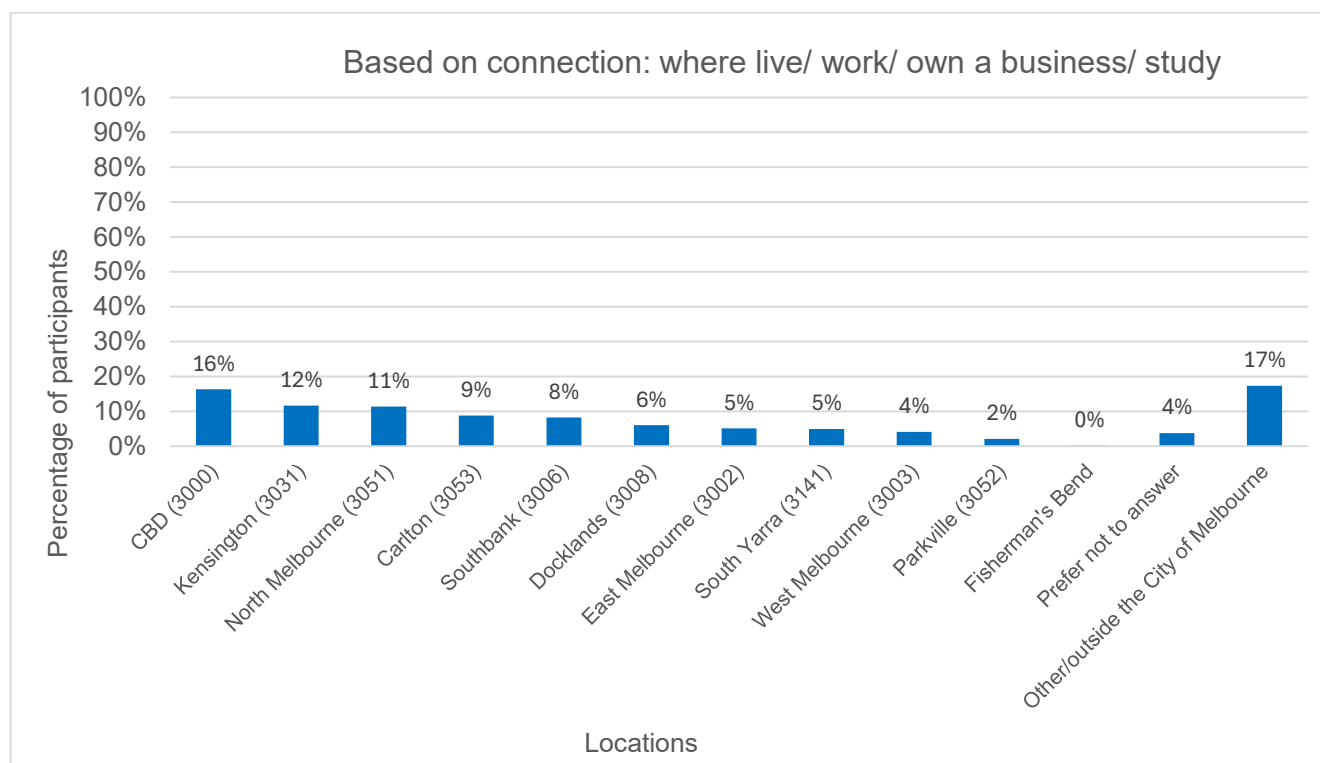
Based on project connection, where: live/ work/own a business/study/visit

Participants were asked: *Based on your connection to this project, where do you live/work/own a business/study/visit?*

Response options:

- > Carlton (3053)
- > CBD (3000)
- > Docklands (3008)
- > East Melbourne (3002)
- > Kensington (3031)
- > North Melbourne (3051)
- > Parkville (3052)
- > Southbank (3006)
- > South Yarra (3141)
- > West Melbourne (3003)
- > Fisherman's Bend
- > Prefer not to answer
- > Other/outside the City of Melbourne

n=582



Result:

- > Just under a fifth of participants were based in the CBD (16%)
- > Just above one in ten were in Kensington (12%) or North Melbourne (11%)
- > Under one in ten were in Carlton (9%), Southbank (8%), or Docklands (6%)
- > A small proportion were in South Yarra (5%); East Melbourne (5%), West Melbourne (4%), or Parkville (2%).

The most common other written responses (17%) were: 3004 (6 responses), 3032 (4 responses), 3181 (3 responses). 3012, 3013, 3039, 3056, 3057, 3065, 3067, 3068, and 3182 all had 2 responses.

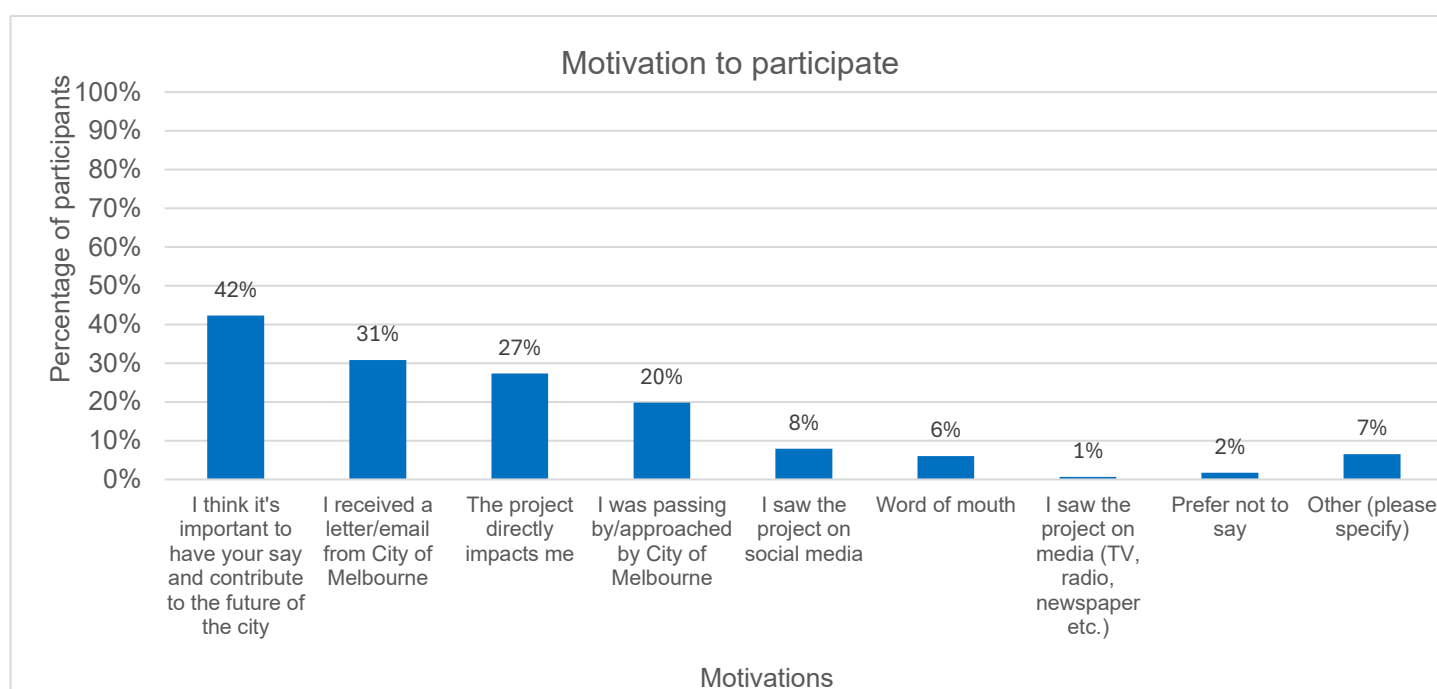
Motivation to participate

Participants were asked: *What motivated you to participate in this consultation today?*

Response options:

- > I was passing by/approached by City of Melbourne
- > The project directly impacts me
- > I think it's important to have your say and contribute to the future of the city
- > I received a letter/email from City of Melbourne
- > I saw the project on social media
- > I saw the project on media (TV, radio, newspaper etc.)
- > Word of mouth
- > Prefer not to say
- > Other (please specify)

n=581



Result:

- > Less than half of participants stated that it was important to have their say (42%)
- > Just under a third of participants received a letter or email from CoM (31%), or were motivated as the project directly impacts them (27%).
- > Just over one in five participants were passing by/approached by CoM (20%).
- > A small proportion participated because of word of mouth (6%); saw the project on social media (8%)
- > One percent of participants saw the project in the media (4 participants).

Other written responses (7%) were: Through a community center/group (21); Poster/flyer (6); Subscribe to participate/newsletter or direct COM email (4); Spend time in the city (2), and 5 other reasons such as like doing surveys, or to get information.

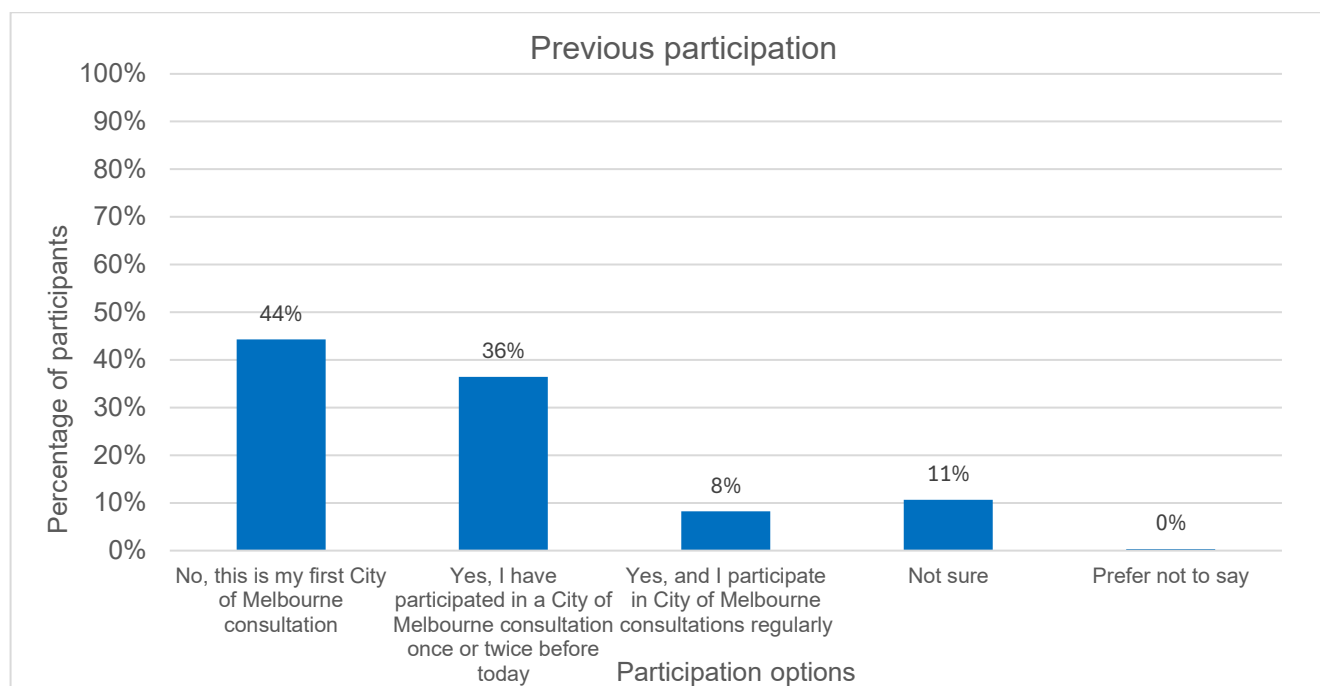
Previous participation

Participants were asked: *Have you participated in a consultation with City of Melbourne before?*

Response options:

- > No, this is my first City of Melbourne consultation
- > Yes, I have participated in a City of Melbourne
- > Yes, and I participate in City of Melbourne consultations regularly
- > consultation once or twice before today
- > Not sure
- > Prefer not to say

n=582



Result:

- > This was the first CoM consultation for less than half of participants (44%)
- > Over a third of participants participated in a CoM consultation once or twice before (36%).
- > Just under one in ten participants regularly participated in CoM consultations (8%).
- > Just over one in ten participants were not sure (11%).

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