

Urban Forest Strategy

Community Engagement
Summary Report

January 2022



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

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• Overview

Consultation on the draft Urban Forest Strategy took place between the 19th of August to 26 September, 2021. During this time the State of Victoria was following *Stay at Home Directions* issued by Victoria's Chief Health Officer. A total of 632 people participated in this project. Given the interest in this project participation numbers are an estimate, there is likely duplication in numbers due to participants participating in more than one engagement activity.

From the consultation it is clear that the need to increase tree canopy and coverage across the Bayside municipality is supported, with 89% (474) of participants in agreement that Bayside needs more trees (89%) and only 9% (48) participants in disagreement and 2% (13) unsure. Likewise, 51% of participants supported Council's target to increase tree canopy on public and private land from 16% to 25% by 2030 and a further 33% wanted the target to be more ambitious. Participants with this view were more likely to live in Cheltenham, where 54% (20) of 37 participants who live in Cheltenham felt that the target was not ambitious enough. Of these participants 15% (26) are in the 50-54 years old and 13% of them are 65-69 years old.

Where there are differences in opinion is in the speed and way in which they hoped Council would approach this.

Areas for focus:

- Planting additional trees, particularly in new large-scale developments was strongly preferred.
- Partnering with the State Government to increase tree and vegetation cover on state managed land, including schools, public housing, and transport corridors.
- Advocating for the State Government to fund the undergrounding of powerlines in priority locations (e.g. areas of extensive tree canopy).
- Providing a support service to help residents and communities to maintain trees on their property.

The majority of additional feedback provided by participations, related to Council's own operations and planning controls used to prevent the unlawful removal and damage to trees.

With regard to feedback in relation to the current Local Law permit system, the majority of participants supported a tree circumference size of less than 150-155cm as the trigger for this permit, and this measurement remaining 1m above ground. Introducing a reduced tree circumference size trigger would therefore see an increase in the number of tree removal applications being processed, with more slender trunked trees would requiring assessment.

This is complimented by the general consensus of participants wanting Council to use available controls, regulation and enforcement abilities to both bring the objectives of this Strategy to life and work with the community in a reasonable manner to green Bayside.

Following is a summary of the actions for Council's consideration:

- Council extends overlays (VPO and SLO) into areas where it is trying to increase the amount of vegetation, not just in green areas. Rather using it as a tool to increase tree and canopy cover.
- Cancellation of permits for wrongful activity.
- Advocating to increase powers of control and authority to prevent Council's decisions being overturned by VCAT.
- Harsher penalties and tougher fines given to people that wilfully cause damage to significant trees or vegetation.

- Put in regulations that help to address climate change while the tree canopy is catching up (light coloured roofs, WSUD, smaller mass size on blocks).
- Altering the permit system on construction sites to include monitoring trees on the subject property in addition to street trees.
- Extend the duration of landscape audits longer than 2 years to increase the survival rate of vegetation.
- Keep a photographic record to support landscape audits before the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy, with audits repeated at 2, 6 and 10 years.

Most participants want to know that Council is aligning its own operations to the objectives of the Strategy and that it is using all of its contractors, staff, activities and assets to achieve the target. Following is a summary of the actions for Council's consideration:

- Tightening their internal operations to match the delivery of the strategy.
- Making sure Council is maximising tree canopy coverage on its assets and within parks and gardens.
- Maintaining parks and gardens well, water and care for during summer and prune within reason.
- Consideration of where and what trees and vegetation are selected for sites, taking into consideration the expected height of trees and needs of the local community.
- Making sure all contractors and staff that have a responsibility for maintaining green spaces and areas understand Council's intent to increase canopy cover.
- Advocate, fund for power lines and cables to be put underground to reduce impact on tree canopy through pruning.
- Use nature strips more effectively to increase canopy cover.

○ **Next steps**

Council will consider this report on community and stakeholder feedback and the proposed Urban Forest Strategy at its 15 February 2022 meeting.

1. Introduction

An Urban Forest Strategy is being developed to enhance the level of tree canopy cover in Bayside. With the Urban Forest Strategy, Bayside City Council seeks to address issues such as air pollution, rising heat in urban areas and support ecosystem health following the actions set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025.

As part of its draft Urban Forest Strategy, Bayside City Council is consulting the community to assess community support for proposed actions. Consultation was delivered across two stages:

- Stage 1 Understanding the needs and aspirations to inform the development of the draft Urban Forest Strategy.
- Stage 2 Testing and strengthening the draft Urban Forest Strategy.

Stage 1 of the community consultation sought expressions of interest from residents and community organisations to bring local expertise and lived experience into the Strategy. The self-nominated residents were independently selected by Activate Consulting through a stratified process to broadly represent the Bayside population in terms of suburb, age and gender.

Participants from both focus groups were asked to consider a series of key challenges and opportunities that were identified in the draft Urban Forest Strategy Background Report and identify actions or approaches to address them.

Participants from Focus Group 1 (individual residents) identified a range of potential actions to support the achievement of the following four objectives:

Increase	Diversify	Monitor	Maintain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus efforts on public space for significant canopy gains • Community education and support for private land owners • Incentivising tree planting and retention on private land • Stronger regulation and enforcement of development • More flexibility in council guidelines • Focussing on all types of planting (trees and vegetation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to lead by example, set and monitor targets • Ensure a pragmatic approach and carefully consider appropriate species • Provide resources, support and incentives for the community • Diversify the available local tree supply • Greater regulation and enforcement for developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions around different methods of monitoring • Recommendations about the type of data to collect and how it should be used • Considerations for an effective Urban Tree Monitoring Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible approach to tree removal and replacement that is site specific • Education and support for the community • Greater enforcement capability coupled with incentives • Foster tree stewardship and pride

With regard to community organisation feedback, there was strong support and discussion for greater Council regulation and enforcement around development to protect, retain and replace trees. ‘Council needs to push harder to ensure design of development retains more trees’ and ‘ensure that appropriate space is provided to plant canopy trees and not just minimum landscaping/shrubs’ were two suggestions. Other suggestions proposed included:

- ‘Need to get the balance right – developers need to be prepared to consider a lesser yield in favour of the greening outcome’.
- ‘Tree canopy cover is a key element that needs to be integrated with development outcomes’.
- ‘Decks and pools should be considered part of the building footprint and not the open space component for planning permits’
- ‘Advocate for the removal of the VicSmart provisions’
- ‘Increase enforcement and issue appropriate fines for trees being lost in protected areas’ (vegetation Protection Overlay)

Another popular suggestion was for Council to put a financial value on trees, ‘put a \$ value on a tree to ensure that the financial element is considered.’

Together both stages of engagement will assist Council in identifying the actions needed to reach the goals within this Strategy, and measure the community’s support for key actions. The information gathered throughout both stages of community engagement may also influence other associated policies.

This report provides a summary of the analysed data from Stage 2 of this project, testing the draft Urban Forest Strategy.

○ 1.1 Methodology

The impact of this project is far reaching, its implementation requires working across all areas of Bayside. Therefore, consultation was open to all Bayside residents, property owners, community groups and agencies.

Consultation on the draft Urban Forest Strategy took place between the 19th of August to 26 September, 2021. During this time the State of Victoria was following *Stay at Home Directions* issued by Victoria's Chief Health Officer. Table 1 shows the consultation methods used and participation across each method. A total of 632 people participated in this project. Given the interest in this project participation numbers are an estimate, there is likely duplication in numbers due to participants participating in more than one engagement activity.

Table 1. Overview of engagement methods

Method	Description	Participation
Online engagement	<p>Via <i>Have Your Say</i>, Council's online engagement platforms.</p> <p>Tools included interactive maps to identify tree locations, an online survey that sought feedback on elements of the Strategy.</p>	<p>Online survey completed 534</p> <p>597 contributions made so far to the 'Plant a Virtual Tree' Map.</p>
Bookable meetings with the project team	Participants were invited to book a time with a project member.	Number of presentations given 2, with 16 members present at the Bayside Healthy Ageing Reference Group, and 8 members (and 2 Councillors) present at the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
Submissions direct to the project team (via post or email)	Community groups, businesses and agencies were invited to submit a submission.	Number of submissions received 11
Provision of printed surveys and consultation materials.	If requested, participants were posted copies of the survey and consultation materials to assist their participation.	There were no requests for printed surveys.

To analyse open ended questions and submission, responses have been coded into broad themes to categorise community engagement feedback. When reading this report you will

notice that numbers appear in brackets (x) this is to show the number of people or responses related to the area of discussion.

Throughout the document, quotes have been used to demonstrate the sentiment expressed by participants.

2. Definitions

2.1 Glossary

See Appendix 1 for definitions and a glossary of this project.

2.2 Related Council documents and consultations

- Draft Urban Forest Strategy 2021
- Bayside Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy (updated 2021)
- Bayside's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025

3. Participant Profile

Participation in this project was voluntary as such so was the collection of personal demographics. Personal information was collected via the online survey and through the submissions.

3.1 Online Survey Participant Profile

The online survey was the only engagement activity that collected personal information and characteristics about participants. Almost all 534 of survey participants provided at least their residential suburb and their connections to Bayside and only 2 participants preferred not to report. Moreover, 517 survey participants provided demographics information which are presented below.

Gender

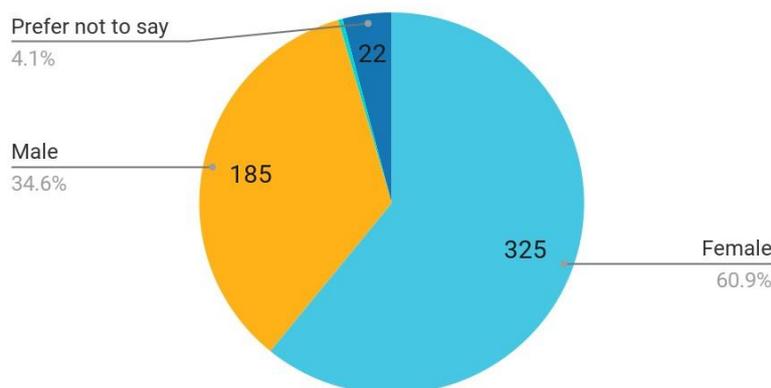
There seems to be an overrepresentation of female participants as a larger portion of the participants are female (61%) while 35% of the participants are male. This is common across online surveys. There are 22 participants who preferred not to identify their gender, while 2 participants identify as Non-binary. Table 2 and figure 1 presents the spread of participant gender across the engagement.

Table 2. Gender of participants

Gender	Bayside 2016 Census	Number of Participants	% of Engagement
Female	52.4%	325	60.86%
Male	47.6%	185	34.64%
Non-binary	-	2	0.37%
Prefer not to say	-	22	4.12%

Grand Total		534	100.00%
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Figure 1. Gender of participants



■ **Age**

Participants were asked to indicate their age range within five-year brackets and 517 participants responded to this question. The proportion of participants in each age group were compared with the 2021 population forecast for the Bayside area to assess the representation of community members of all ages in this project. Representation of an age group in this engagement is labelled accurate when it is less than 5% higher or lower than the population proportion. If the representation of a particular age group is more than 5% higher than the population forecast percentage, this suggests there is an overrepresentation of this age group in the engagement process. Likewise a representation of an age group that is more than 5% below the population proportion suggests an underrepresentation in this engagement process.

The 50-54 year olds age bracket make up the largest age group and accounted for 15% (81) of the total participants. Compared to the 2021 population forecast, this age group is overrepresented in this engagement. They are followed by the 65-59 year old age bracket who make up 12% (63) of total participants. Similarly this group is overrepresented in this engagement compared to the proportion of this age group in the population of Bayside. The third largest age-group was made up of the 60-64 year old age bracket with 11% (59) participants in this age-group.

Representation of each age group as a percentage is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Representation of Age Groups in the consultation process

<i>Age Groups</i>	Number of Participants	% of Engagement	% of Population	Representation (±5%)
10-14	1	0%	6%	underrepresentation
15-19	2	0%	7%	underrepresentation
20-24	11	2%	7%	underrepresentation
25-29	10	2%	5%	accurate representation

30-34	23	4%	5%	accurate representation
35-39	35	7%	5%	accurate representation
40-44	43	8%	6%	accurate representation
45-49	53	10%	7%	accurate representation
50-54	81	15%	8%	overrepresentation
55-59	52	10%	8%	accurate representation
60-64	59	11%	7%	accurate representation
65-69	63	12%	6%	overrepresentation
70-74	46	9%	5%	overrepresentation
75-79	25	5%	5%	accurate representation
80-84	11	2%	4%	accurate representation
85 and over	2	0%	2%	accurate representation
Prefer not to say	17	3%	3%	accurate representation
Grand Total	534	100%	-	-

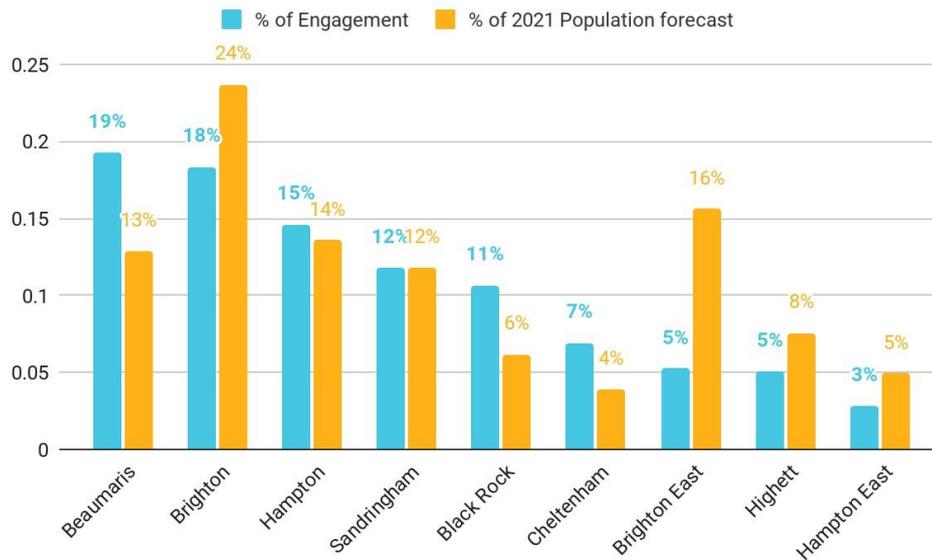
reference: forecast.id.com.au/bayside/population-age-structure

■ Residential Suburbs

Almost all (95%) of the participants reside in the suburbs of Bayside. The largest sub-group by residential suburb is 19% (103) of participants report that they reside in Beaumaris. A similar proportion of participants report that they reside in Brighton (18%) and Hampton (14%). A comparatively smaller proportion of participants report that they live in Sandringham (12%), Black Rock (11%), and Cheltenham (7%).

Only 4% (25) of the participants report that they reside outside of Bayside. Figure 2 shows the representation of participation by suburb in the engagement compared to representation of 2021 population forecast by suburb.

Figure 2. residential suburbs of participants



data

source: forecast.id.com.au/bayside/population-summary

Compared to the population forecast for the City of Bayside, there is overrepresentation of participants in Beaumaris as 19% of the participants live in Beaumaris while only 13% of Bayside population live in Beaumaris. Similarly there is overrepresentation from Black Rock participation from residents of Black Rock make up 11% of the engagement while 6% of the Bayside population is estimated to live in Black Rock. In Cheltenham there is 7% representation of the engagement participation, when 4% of the forecast population live in Cheltenham.

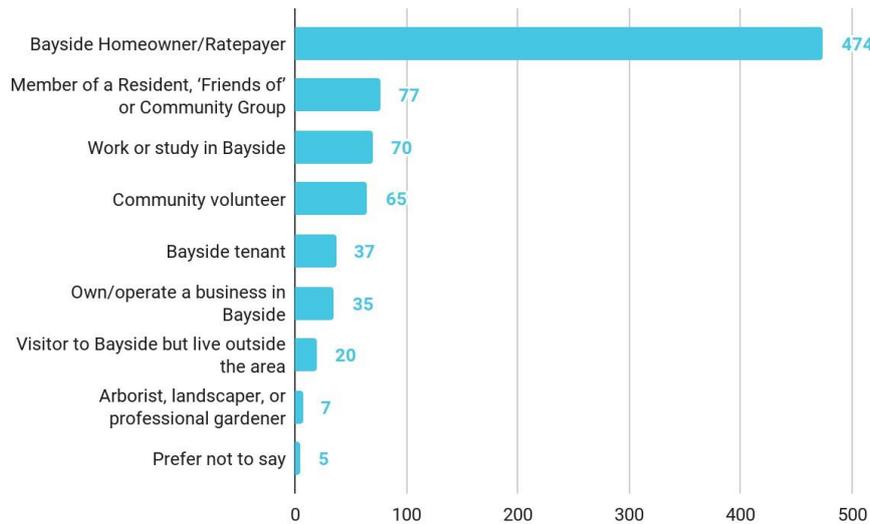
In contrast, there is underrepresentation in Brighton and Brighton East in this engagement. Participants who live in Brighton represent 18% of the participants when 24% of the Bayside population live in Brighton. Participants who reside in Brighton East make up 5% of the participation but a much higher 16% of the Bayside population is estimated to live in Brighton East.

■ Connection to Bayside

Participation from homeowners and ratepayers of Bayside City has the largest representation in the engagement, with 89% participants (474). Those renting made up only 7% (37) of participants.

Participants who are either community volunteers or members of community groups made up 14% (77) of the participants and business operators made up 6% (33) of the participants. It's important to note that participants can have one or more connections with Bayside and most participants reported more than one connection. A breakdown of the participants in each connection category is shown in figure 3.

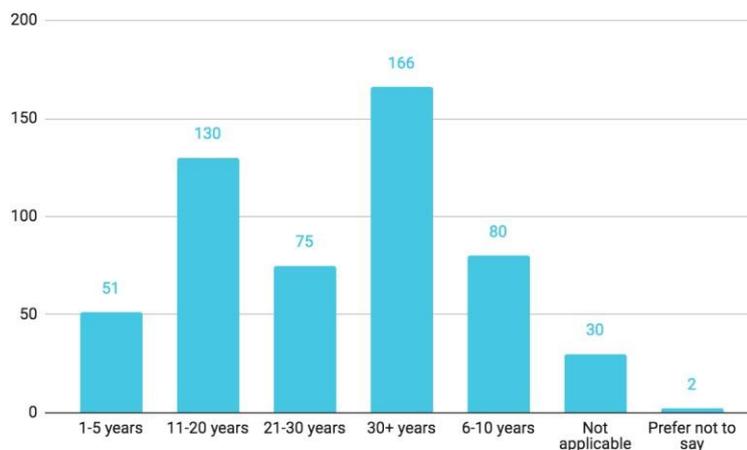
Figure 3. participants connections to this project



■ **Length of Residency**

Residents were also asked to report for how long they have lived in the Bayside area. This question was applicable to 504 participants. Participants who have lived in Bayside for more than 30 years represented the largest sub-group in this engagement, with 31% (166) participants. They are followed by 24% (130) of participants who reported that they have lived in Bayside for 11-20 years. The smallest representation was participants who had lived in Bayside for 1-5 years 10%. The breakdown of the length of residency is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4. Length of residency in the Bayside area



■ **Demographic Identifiers**

One of the participants identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person while 11 of the participants identify as having a disability or as a carer. This representation is below the population of Bayside.

■ **Community Group Membership**

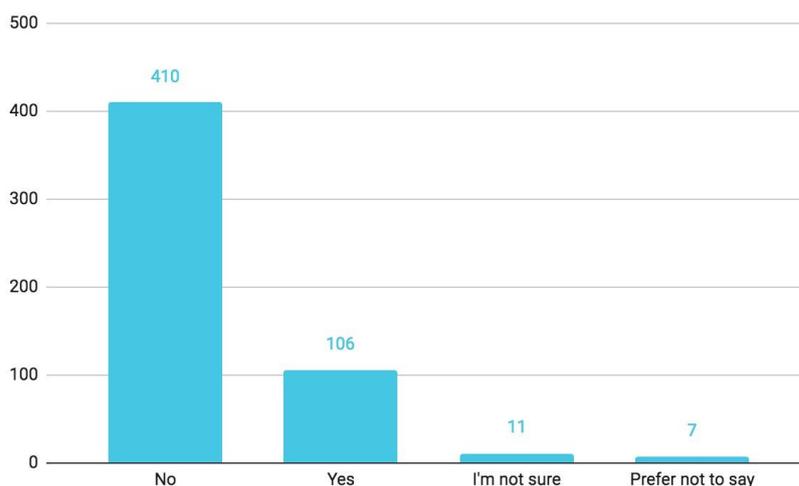
As revealed in their connections to Bayside, (65) of the survey participants are community volunteers in Bayside, and (77) of the survey participants are community group members. Participants were asked what groups they are members of. A total of 46 community groups were mentioned and many participants were members of more than one group. The largest group represented in this engagement is the Beaumaris Conservation Society with 7

members participating in the survey. The second largest group represented is Beaumaris Modern with 6 members participating in the survey.

■ Previous involvement with Council

Participants were asked if they had submitted a local law or planning application for tree removal, with 524 participants responding to this question. The majority of participants, 77% (410) had not submitted a local law or planning application for tree removal, 20% (106) had, 2% (11) were not sure if they had and 1% (7) preferred not to say as shown in figure 5.

Figure 5. Have you submitted a local law or planning application for tree removal?



Reason for Tree Removal

Participants that had submitted a local law or planning application for tree removal were asked to select a reason for the tree removal. While 106 participants advised they had submitted a local law or planning application for tree removal, 108 participants provided a reason for tree removal, this may have been due to a selection error on the participants behalf. The highest reason for tree removal was 'It was dead/an or an immediate hazard' with 45% (48), followed by 'It was causing structural damage' with 35% (38) as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Reason for tree removal

Reason for tree removal	Number of responses
It was dead and/or an immediate hazard	48
It was causing structural damage	38
Required for building/property development	13
Other reasons	6
Prefer not to say	3

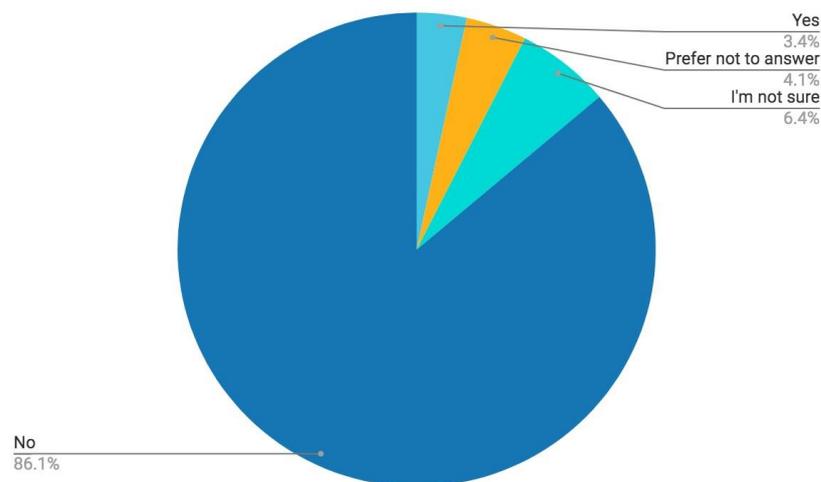
Application Process

Participants were asked to provide feedback on their experience of the permit application process. A total of 98 participants provided feedback, with 45% (44) advising the experience was negative, 'frustrating', 'lengthy', 'ridiculous' and 43% (42) reporting the process as 'easy', 'fine' and 'ok', 2% (2) were unsure of their experience as it was a long time ago.

Participation in focus groups

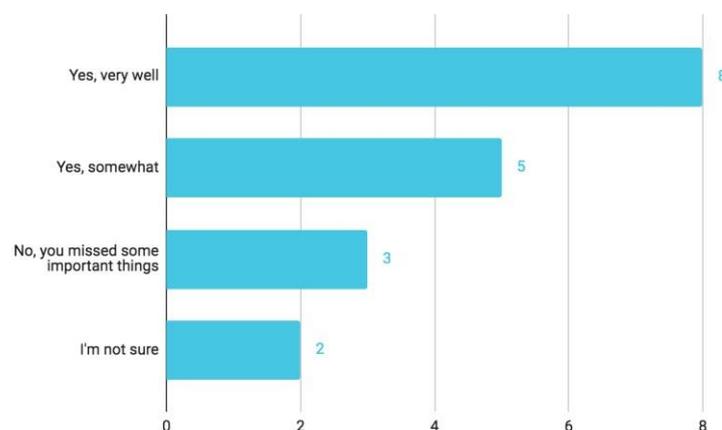
Participants were asked if they had participated in the focus groups on the Urban Forest Strategy held in June 2021, a majority, 86% (460) did not, 6% (34) were unsure, 4% (22) preferred not to answer and 3% (18) had participated in the focus groups. Figure 6 shows this breakdown.

Figure 6. Prior participation in focus groups



Participants who attended focus groups were asked if they felt the feedback they provided had been incorporated into the draft strategy. From the 18 participants who had participated in the focus groups, 44% (8) participants felt their feedback had been incorporated very well, followed by 28% (5) who reported feedback was somewhat incorporated into the draft strategy as seen in figure 7.

Figure 7. Have we incorporated feedback from your focus group into the draft Strategy?



○ 3.2 Submission Participant Profile

The majority of 11 submissions received were from community groups or organisations. Table 6 shows the profile of each submitter.

Table 6. Submitter Profile

Submitter Type and Interest	Name	Location of Operation	Level of support for draft Urban Forest Strategy
Community Organisation Biodiversity and native wildlife	Friends of Native Wildlife	Bayside	General support with recommendations
Not-for-profit community group Environmental Stewardship	The Port Phillip EcoCentre	Greater Melbourne Port Phillip Bay	General support with recommendations
Not-for-profit community organisations Climate change, biodiversity and sustainability	Bayside Climate Crisis Action Group (with support of the Beaumaris Conservation Society, Sandringham Foreshore Association and Marine Care Ricketts Point.	Bayside	General support with recommendations to change objectives under Key Directions
Livability, inclusiveness, sustainability	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, comments provided	Victoria	Identified need to have consistency between local and state initiatives
	by State Planning Services and the Cooling and Greening project team		
Resident Group	Pennydale Residents Action Group Inc.	Pennydale	General support with recommendations on timelines and budget

Resident	IB	Not specified	Not supportive of current draft, lacks detail
Resident, focus group participant	PR	Sandringham	General support, with recommendations
Community organisation Restore and enhance natural vegetation	Friends of Merindah Park and the Urban Forest - John de C. Douglas	Sandringham	General support
Resident Natural vegetation	LW	Bayside	General support

● 4. Consultation Findings

The overarching principle of the Urban Forest Strategy is to increase tree canopy and coverage across the Bayside municipality. From the consultation it is clear that the need for this work is supported, with 89% (474) of participants in agreement that Bayside needs more trees (89%) and only 9% (48) participants in disagreement and 2% (13) unsure. Likewise 51% of participants supported Council's target to increase tree canopy on public and private land from 16% to 25% by 2030 and a further 33% wanted the target to be more ambitious.

Where there are differences in opinion is in the way Council and community proposed approach to increase tree canopy and coverage, and the speed in which they hope to achieve the targets set out within the draft Urban Forest Strategy.

The consultation sought feedback on the draft Urban Forest Strategy, in particular the target and the approaches to reach this target. Findings from the consultation are reported in two sections:

- 4.1 Ways to increase tree canopy and coverage
- 4.2 Specific feedback on the draft Urban Forest Strategy.

○ 4.1 Ways to increase tree canopy and coverage

Participant responses and suggestions to increase tree canopy and coverage are reported under:

- Setting meaningful targets
- Increased planting, care and understanding
- Action through community partnership and advocacy
- Planning controls and regulation.

■ Setting meaningful targets

Council sought to understand the level of support for increasing tree canopy cover on public and private land from 16% to 25% by 2030 and if this was ambitious enough. Of the 532 participants that answered this question 51% (269) felt it was ambitious enough, while 33% (175) thought it was not ambitious enough. Table 7 shows the level of support for this target.

Table 7. Level of support for 2030 tree canopy cover target

	Yes	Too high	No	I'm not sure	Total
Number of Responses	269	16	175	72	532
% of responses	51%	3%	33%	14%	100%

There is an even spread of participants that live across Bayside who felt this target was too ambitious. In particular 9% (5) of those participants who live in Black Rock felt that the target was too high, while 20% of participants living in Black Rock felt unsure about the target. Across Bayside 75% (12) of those participants who found the target too ambitious were Bayside homeowners/ratepayers and 87% (14) of them are between the age groups 45-74. Reasons or concerns cited by this group:

- Timing is not right - "ridiculous to even set a metric in the middle of a pandemic!"
- Private land should not be included in the target (4) - "Stop trying to enforce what people do on private property! There are already too many rules made by the Bayside Council."
- Concerned this will make it tougher to remove dangerous trees (4) - "Council already has a too strict policy on removal of trees which are clearly a risk to public health from falling limbs."
- Target is not feasible with growth predictions - "Pushing for further trees on private property is not in line to density issues and land availability. For those who can afford to live in the suburb, even a small patch of grass is hard to come by in yards so to cover that with trees is unfair."
- Target is too ambitious for Metropolitan Melbourne - "Needs to be more sensible balanced management across what is an urban environment, 30% coverage would be greater than most farmland in Victoria."
- More trees hinder views and create mess - "I don't believe the types of trees we have on many of the streets are attractive. The leaves they drop, the views they inhibit, the pods and debris they drop is annoying and messy."

For 33% (175) participants this target was not ambitious enough. Participants with this view were more likely to live in Cheltenham, where 54% (20) of 37 participants who live in Cheltenham felt that the target was not ambitious enough. Of these participants 15% (26) are in the 50-54 years old and 13% of them are 65-69 years old. Reasons or concerns cited by this group are presented below.

Raising the target level (73)

Some participants felt that the target level should be increased, due to examples set by other councils, as well as unforeseen threats to overall coverage:

- "This figure needs to increase substantially. Melbourne's CBD already has coverage of 22% compared to Bayside's 16%. Melbourne City Council is looking to increase their Canopy Cover to 40% by 2040. I believe that we should match this figure."
- "2000 trees will be insufficient to add 10% extra overall coverage. You'll lose trees to development, trees to disease, trees to weather related events."

Maintenance, selection and placement of Existing Trees (68)

Another means to reach the target was consideration of the maintenance, selection and placement of existing trees to assist longevity:

- “One thing is planting trees, another is maintaining (watering, pruning) trees for the next few years. ● “Planting tall growing trees under power lines must stop, or put the power lines underground.”
- “Increase the % of canopy cover to 30% by 2030. Trees must be low allergy. There is no point planting more trees that will hurt the community with allergies and asthma.”
- “More canopy trees along nature strips and roads, streets, etc for sure. Think of leafy suburbs like Camberwell, Toorak, Brighton. ”
- “More planting in public parks and sporting areas, not only trees but shrubs around tree bases too.”

Climate-conscious land developments (26)

To reach the target participants suggested that the focus and pressure be on property developers and their responsibility to incorporate and protect trees and greenery into their project:

- “Don't allow property developers to completely clear blocks of land and make it mandatory that they plant trees.”
- “Put the burden on big developers, rather than single homeowners, to make sure they plant more trees than they remove. ... they should have to plant a tree for every bedroom they build.”
- “Resist pressure by developers to remove established trees and significantly fine those who ‘accidentally’ cause beautiful established trees to die.”

Working with households and community groups (17)

By leveraging partnership, Council could reach the target by working together, as a community to improve the provision of trees, and their caretaking:

- “Encouraging participation from the community could also fast track planting.” ● “(promote the savings households will make) saving in air conditioning required in cars and houses due to shade from trees; savings to the health systems due to the positive benefits of trees on mental and physical health; and increase in productivity due to the now well-documented impact of access to nature on cognitive functions.”
- “Subsidies or rate discounts for homeowners to plant native trees, specify varieties for nature strips and private yards.”
- “Schools, universities, charities and environmental groups could be asked to be involved thereby giving extra support (and hands) regarding planting and maintenance.”

Funding for Initiatives (7)

Several comments reference additional funding or incentives for the purchase of trees or uptake of actions included in the draft Urban Forest Strategy:

- “I would support financial incentives / penalties. I would also support changes to local planning laws requiring developments to include (and have an ongoing maintenance system for) the planting of trees.”
- “...Offer free shrubs with rates. Make donations towards tree costs tax deductible or simply ask for donations that will purchase a tree or shrub that gets acknowledged in the quarterly newsletter?”

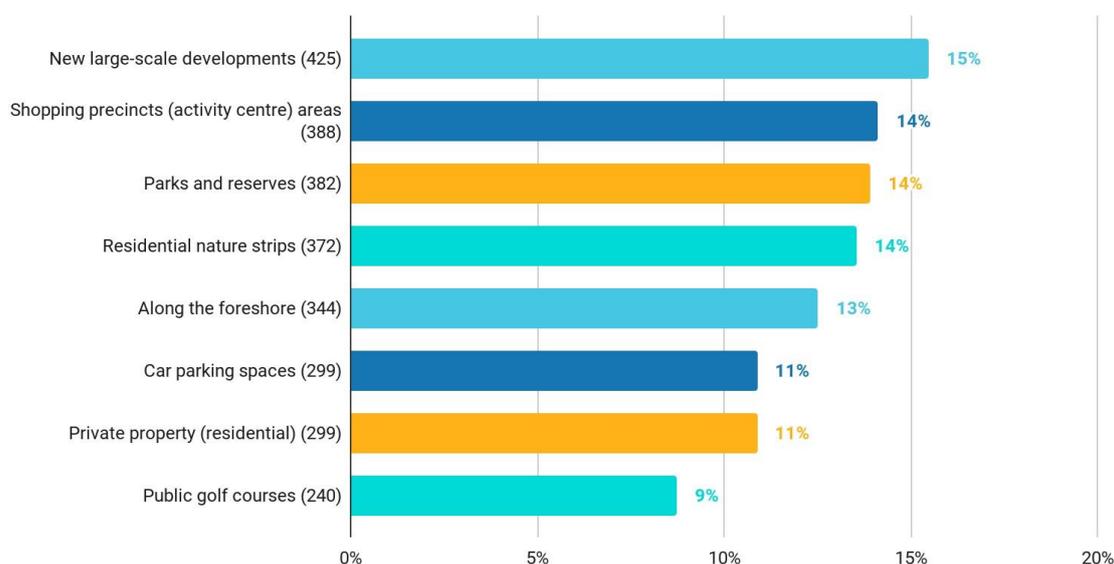
■ Increased planting, care and understanding

For 91% (487) of participants planting more trees was an obvious and immediate way to increase tree canopy and coverage in Bayside. From a pre-populated list, participants were invited to select locations where they would like to see more trees planted. Among the highest selected locations was new large scale development

(87%) 425 participants; within shopping precincts and activity centres (80%) 388 participants; and parks and reserves (78%) 382 participants. Figure 8 shows the results of this question.

Bayside City Council is inviting the community to suggest potential locations for more tree and vegetation coverage, through their *plant a tree* activity. This platform allows participants to search for the area in mind, place their own virtual tree and upload or name the particular tree they would like to see planted.

Figure 8. Locations to plant more trees



Participants were invited to suggest other locations for planting trees (shown in priority order):

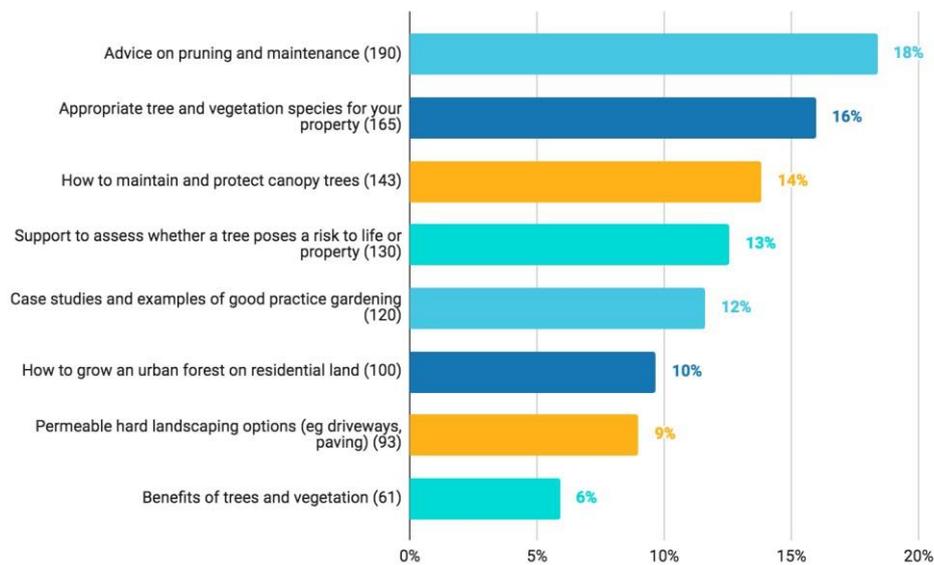
- Streets, roads and roundabouts (8) (e.g. Nepean Highway, North Road, Hodder Street Bluff Rd, Bay Rd and Beach Rd)
- Public buildings (5) (housing, schools)
- Sporting precincts (4)
- Residential houses, nature strips (4)
- Railway corridors and tram lined streets (4)
- Community buildings and halls
- Rooftop and wall gardens
- Reserves

- Elwood Canal.

Though the majority of participants did not need further information from Council on how to maintain trees, 45% (235) would like further information. Figure 9 shows the level of interest for Council identified topics of information. Other topics of interest are shown below using participant quotes:

- “Special trees that are rare or under threat that could be planted.”
- (how to select) “Trees and shrubs and flowers that attract pollinators...”; (trees for certain developments, or size constraints) “... selecting a tree that is not going to cost an arm and a leg in damages (in the future).”
- “Growing productive trees.” ● “How trees function as habitat.”
- “Nature strip planting - what is permissible and what can residents do to promote better nature strip planting.”

Figure 9. Level of interest in topics of information



■ Action through community partnership and advocacy

Council tested ideas to retain or increase trees coverage through advocacy and community partnership. All ideas received higher than 85% support for implementation and are listed in priority order:

- Partner with the State Government to increase tree and vegetation cover on statemanaged land, including schools, public housing, and transport corridors (95.29%).
- Advocate to State Government to fund the undergrounding of powerlines in priority locations (e.g. areas of extensive tree canopy) (94.86%).
- Offer free support service to help vulnerable residents maintain canopy trees, including pruning or clean-up of leaf litter (in partnership with community groups) (91.47%).
- Offer free advisory service to help residents avoid tree removal (85.61%).

Similarly participants were asked if they would consider volunteering to assist vulnerable residents to maintain trees and vegetation on their property so as to avoid tree removal. Responses were equally divided between yes (31%), no (34%) and unsure (29%). The most common reasons cited was a ‘lack of physical capacity’ or being older in age. Other reasons cited as reasons people could not volunteer were:

- Lacking in time or expertise
- Already dependant on maintenance support
- Identify as a vulnerable resident
- Disagree with Council's decision around tree management ● Believe it is not a ratepayers responsibility.

Council also tested the future use of a support service to help residents and community to maintain trees on their property. This service was supported by 43% (228) of participants, 25% (137) participants were unsure and would need further information and 27% (144) of participants would not use this service.

A majority of responses explained the current capability of garden or tree maintenance, however, a number of these participants were open to the help in future, should the need arise. Other responses outlined the lack of assistance required as a tenant, or due to having little to no greenery on their property. Some participants remained open to the idea as an option to learn and grow skills, or reduce safety risks.

Those that would appreciate a service, either for themselves or for others believed this future service was important to ensure residents benefited from expert service and advice offered by professionals. Other reasons this service would be important or useful are presented under the key themes below.

Expert assistance and advice (96)

Making sure residents benefited from expert advice or assistance was a key reason for wanting this service:

- "There is a lovely tree on the property which would benefit from TLC and maintenance advice."
- "Expert sympathetic advice would be helpful from time to time; also help with high trees."
- "I trust them to do such work safely and take away what is dangerous but to not take more than is necessary."

Age and physical limitations (35)

Aging or having physical mobility issues was cited as a reason for requiring this service:

- "We are no longer physically strong enough to do much."
- "It would be very helpful to have assistance in old age should they require maintenance."
- "We are in our mid 70's and finding it more difficult to maintain our large block and trees that we want to preserve."

Cost effective maintenance (32)

It was believed that the cost of engaging an Arborist or specialist might be off putting to some residents, and certainly those seeking this service believe that a Council-run service would likely be more affordable than a privately run service:

- "Having a specialist help you is valuable and if I have to pay for a specialist it is more likely to be in times of distress, not maintenance."
- "Arborist's services are often expensive and unreliable."
- "Expensive and difficult to maintain large trees by cutting back branches so they don't fall or land on the house."

Protection of environment and people (20)

Seeking specialist services was a way of protecting the community and property, through pre-emptive and remedial pruning:

- “We have some very large, significant trees on our property and we do not want them to ever be a danger to ourselves or our neighbours or people walking/driving past our property.”
- “I love trees, hate seeing them cut back by the council around the power lines.”
- “We have a lot of trees on our block and value them greatly for their environmental benefit and appearance.”

Necessary or convenient Service (16)

Others liked knowing that if they needed it, or others needed than this service would be available:

- “If it were available and I have the need for it, yes I would.”
- “I see value in having such a service.”
- “I need help to maintain the nature strip trees. They require more than the current two yearly maintenance program.”

Understanding and connection with Council (2)

Few viewed this as another way Council could be building a relationship with its community or providing education to people as they were conducting the service:

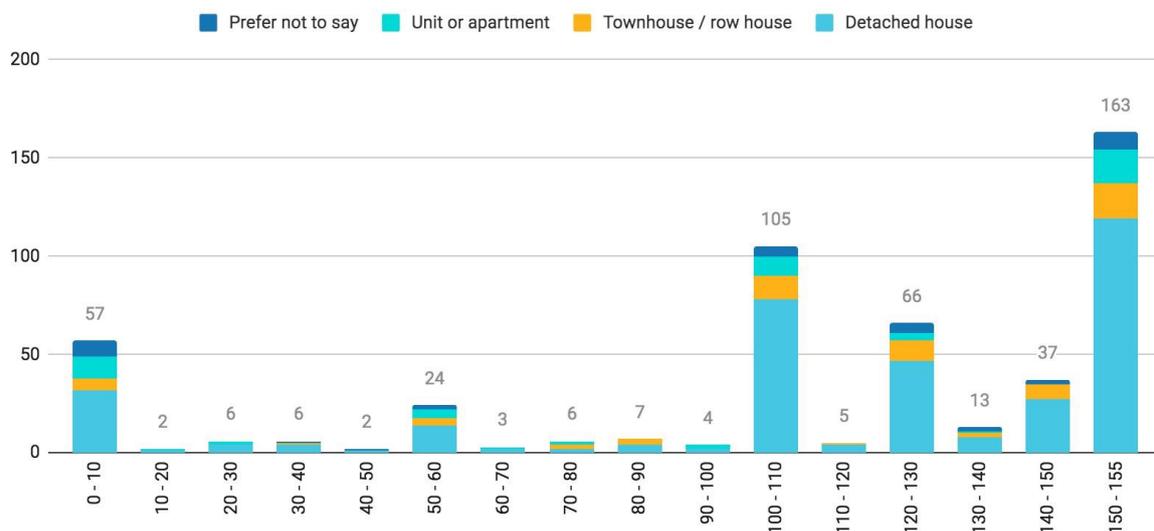
- “A council service is invaluable as firstly it shows the importance of the trees as it has direct council involvement.”
- “Because I'd like to know how the council is making decisions.”

■ Planning controls and regulation

Another way Council works to increase and maintain tree canopy cover is through enforcing rules and regulations around tree pruning and removal. Currently a Local Law permit is required if the tree has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 155cm measured at 1m above ground level. Participants were asked to nominate the tree circumference size needed for a tree removal permit.

32% participants supported retaining the current Local Law permit system to require a permit for the removal of trees with a circumference over 150cm, measures at 1m above ground. However, the majority of participants (67.8%) would like to see the requirement strengthened, by reducing the tree circumference size to be less than the current 150cm. Figure 10 shows the preference for tree circumference by housing type.

Figure 10. Tree circumference preference for permit by housing type

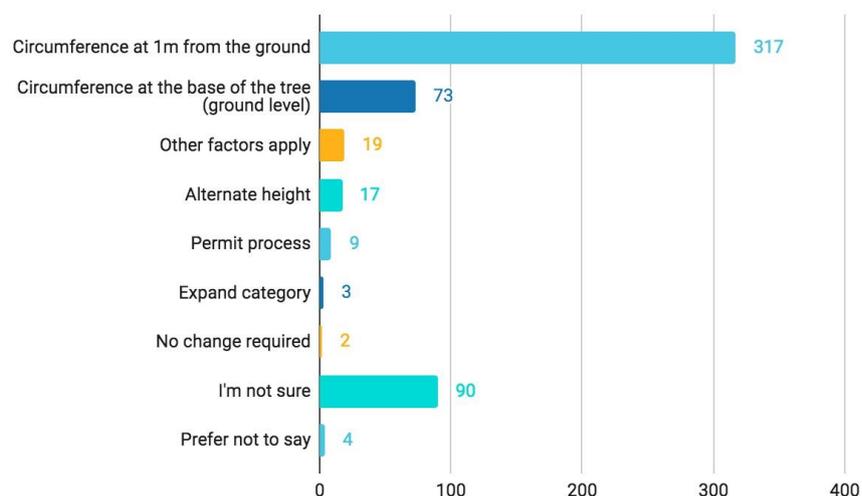


Participants were also asked where the circumference measurement should be taken from, currently the measurement is taken 1m from ground level. Two options were tested:

- At 1m from the ground
- At the base of the tree (ground level).

With participants able to add their own comments and criteria. Figure 11 shows the breakdown of coded responses from the consultation. Measuring the tree 1m from the ground is still preferred. While others had a few more suggestions about what needed to be considered.

Figure 11. Codes responses for removal permits



Following is more detail around the additional coded responses from the open ended 'other'.

Other factors apply

Some participants felt that looking at circumference alone was not a holistic assessment of the tree or the situation and that a range of factors need to be considered:

- "Every tree to be individually assessed based on request, replacement option, property owners reason for request."
- "I don't feel it should be based on circumstance. Some large trees are a hazard and therefore should be removed."

- “The trunk dimension of an individual tree is irrelevant to the goal of the policy.”

Alternate measurement provided

Some participants provided an alternative form of measurement, be that height, species or something else:

- “Diameter at breast height which is the standard.”
- “At the skinniest point of the trunk.”
- “It is not so much the circumference size but the overall height and size needs to be managed for safety.”

Permit process

Some participants expressed concern with the permit system and questioned Council’s jurisdiction on private property:

- “Stop imposing on residents private use of their property!”
- “Permits should not be required to remove trees over 8m high because of their potential danger.”
- “If on private land you should be able to remove any tree as long as suitable replacement is planted immediately and confirmed by council.”

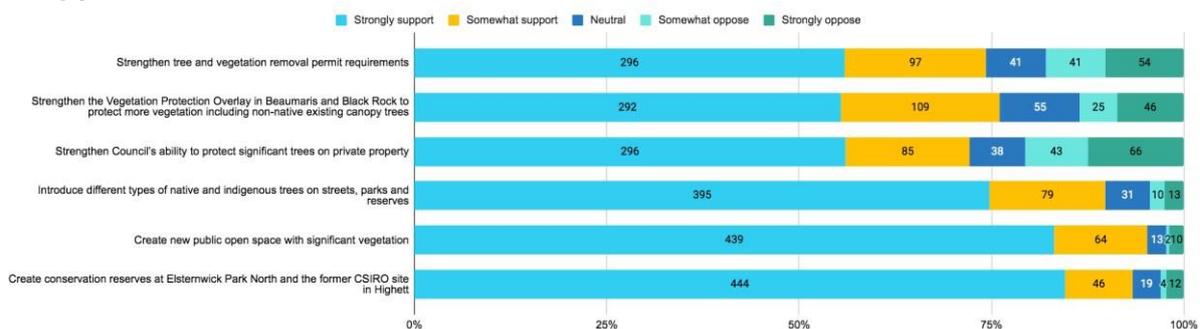
Expand category

Some participants felt the permit system should be expanded to include:

- “Any Native Shrubs...”
- Measures that prevent removal “Leave it in the ground unless it is a danger.”
“Developers should buy a property only with a clear understanding that trees are untouchable.”

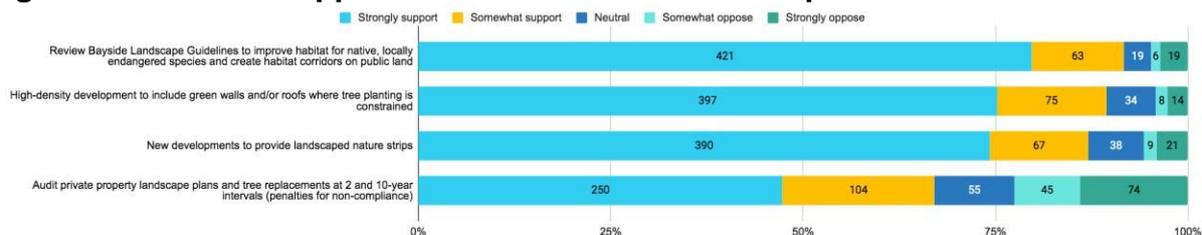
Council also sought to understand the level of support for planning controls that help to increase and protect tree canopy cover. Participants were asked to rate their level of support for policy changes. Figure 12 shows this level of support across the proposed changes.

Figure 12. Level of support for proposed changes to increase and protect tree canopy cover



Recognising the level of growth and development occurring across Bayside, Council tested potential new requirements for a variety of new developments again with the view to protect and increase tree canopy cover. Figure 13 shows the level of support for proposed changes.

Figure 13. Level of support for actions for new developments



4.2 Feedback on the draft Urban Forest Strategy

This final consultation phase was centered around testing the draft Urban Forest Strategy and seeking feedback to help strengthen its intended outcomes and make it easier for the community and Council to work together. This section includes feedback collected from the online surveys as well as the submissions received.

Participant feedback is divided into two themes:

- Additional actions to be considered
- General feedback to strengthen the draft Urban Forest Strategy
- Specific feedback to strengthen the actions within the draft Urban Forest Strategy.

Additional actions to be considered

Survey participants were invited to suggest additional actions that could be included or considered within the Urban Forest Strategy. A total of 207 (39%) participants provided an additional comment. While the majority of these comments (97%) were positive, 3% of comments received suggested Council was “wasting money and time” or “should not be interfering with private property” as a result of pursuing this strategy.

All comments were open ended and varied in length from a short sentence to longer paragraph. A coding frame was developed to categorise the response into key action areas. The coding frame consists of 10 themes, some comments have been tagged more than once, depending on the level of detail provided. Table 8 shows the themes and lists the type of topics covered by each theme and the count of comments for each theme.

Table 8. Action themes, type and number of actions

Action Theme	Topics/Issues	Count of comments
Council actions and operations (“A”)	Actions related to planting, plant selection, maintenance and care of trees. Also includes Council’s provision of open space and operations.	85
Planning controls/protection/ and enforcement (“B”)	Actions related to planning controls, enforcement and the applicant process.	73

Promotion of service and encouraging community uptake (“C”)	Actions related to encouragement of the Bayside community to participate in planting, incentivising and promoting activities relevant to the Strategy.	24
Improve biodiversity (“D”)	Actions related to Council or community planting that increases biodiversity value.	19
Improving tree canopy cover in specific places (“E”)	Actions related to increased planting in specific identified areas.	18
Partnerships and advocacy (“F”)	Actions related to partnerships with local community groups or state government in order to streamline the process or create opportunities related to the Strategy.	14
Infrastructure improvements and consideration (“G”)	Actions related to new or improved infrastructure to support increased tree canopy cover.	13
Action within the Urban Forest Strategy (“H”)	Specific feedback on an action within the draft Urban Forest Strategy.	10
Recognising the value of trees, recording them appropriately and valuing accordingly (“I”)	Actions related to detailing the value of trees due to their indigenous significance or carbon capture.	6
Additional services to explore (“J”)	Actions related to additional services, Council could consider adding to assist residents and developers.	4

Action type by suburb

Additional analysis was carried out to understand if there were major differences across the suburbs of Bayside. Figure 14 shows the concentration of comments by theme, by suburb.

The comments from particular suburbs are not significantly different across Bayside, with priorities centred around Council actions and operations (“A”), which made up 32% of comments across the engagement and Planning controls/protection/ and enforcement (“B”), which made up 28% of comments across the engagement.

Beaumaris

The highest number of comments came from participants who live in Beaumaris, with 52 responses to this question. 33% (17) of the participants of this suburb mentioned actions related to planning controls, enforcement and the application process. A similar number of

participants (12) from Beaumaris also commented that they would like to see more council actions and operations around planting. Six (12%) participants also mentioned promotion of service and encouraging community uptake. These comments suggest that there may be a priority for actions related to planning controls, enforcement and the applicant process in Beaumaris.

Brighton

The survey received 47 comments from participants who live in Brighton, of which 47% (22) are regarding council actions planting, maintenance and care for vegetation. Although 23% (11) of participants from Brighton also discussed planning controls and enforcement, this action appears to be less prioritised in Brighton than in Beaumaris. In comparison, participants who live in Brighton prioritised direct council actions.

Sandringham

A total of 43 comments were received from the participants who live in Sandringham. a majority of 33% (14) this suburb group discussed actions related to planting, plant selection, maintenance and care of trees. This is the most frequently discussed action amongst participants in Sandringham, which suggests a priority for direct actions similarly to Brighton. Comments around planning controls/enforcement made up 14% (6) of comments from this suburb and comments around biodiversity made up the same amount.

Hampton

Participants who live in Hampton provided 32 comments in this engagement. A 38% (12) majority of responses from this suburb discussed planning controls, enforcement and the applicant process which appears to be a priority. However, council actions related to planting closely follow as the second priority with 31% (10) of the responses. Around 16% (5) comments discussed promoting services or community incentives.

Cheltenham

Participants who live in Cheltenham provided 25 comments in this engagement. The priorities in Cheltenham are similar to those in Beaumaris. With 32% (8) participants of this suburb mentioned actions relating to planning controls. This is closely followed by 24% (6) of the comments discussing council actions around planting and 20% (5) comments discussing biodiversity value.

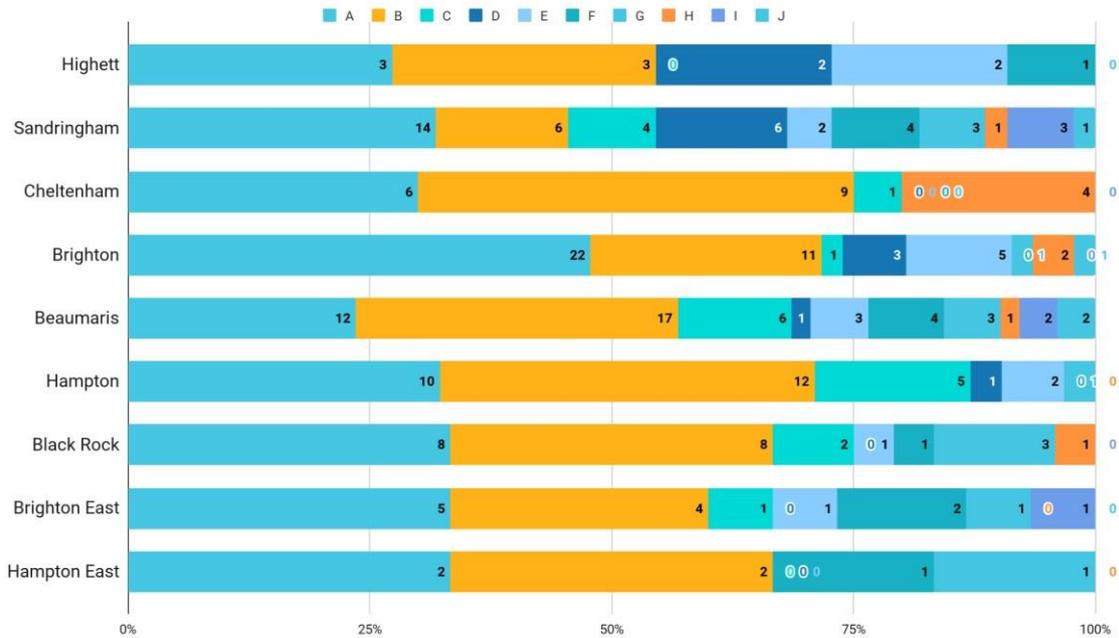
Black Rock

A total of 23 comments were received from participants who live in Black Rock, of which 35% (8) discussed planting actions and another 35% (8) discussed planning controls and enforcement. These comments suggest similar priorities as Bayside overall.

Participants from other suburbs also provided a small number of comments however these sub-groups may be too small to reveal true priorities for these areas:

- Brighton East: 16 comments
- Highett: 13 comments
- Hampton East: 6 comments.

Figure 14. Additional actions by suburb

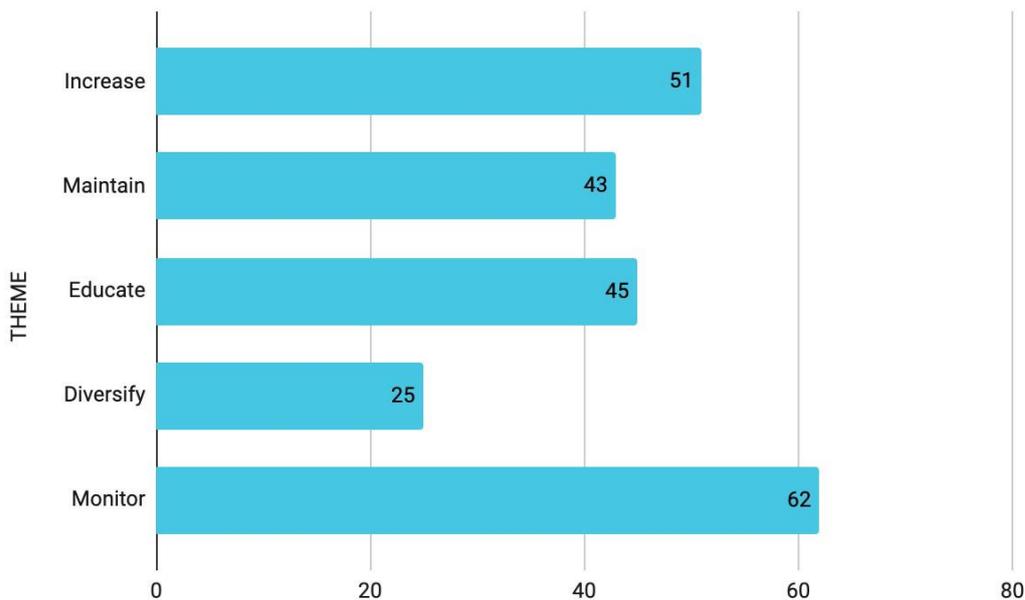


Number of suggestions by action theme

The suggested actions were also sorted into the themes offered for the actions in the

Urban Forest Strategy. These themes included: ‘Increase’, ‘Maintain’, ‘Educate’, ‘Diversity’, ‘Monitor’. The distribution of suggestions against these themes is shown in Figure 15. Participants were interested in actions related to ‘Monitor’ and ‘Increase’.

Figure 15. Distribution of comments by Strategy Theme



Detailed action suggestion by theme

Below is more detail around the feedback received in relation to the actions within the Strategy and addition of new actions. Actions are presented under the themes introduced in Table 8.

Council actions and operations

This theme focused on comments related to Council's own operations. Making sure all staff, contractors, activities and actions were aligned to the desired outcomes of the Urban Forest Strategy. Following is a summary of the actions for Council's consideration:

- Tightening their internal operations to match the delivery of the strategy.
- Making sure Council is maximising tree canopy coverage on its assets and within parks and gardens.
- Maintaining parks and gardens well, water and care for during summer and prune within reason.
- Consideration of where and what trees and vegetation are selected for sites, taking into consideration the expected height of trees and needs of the local community.
- Making sure all contractors and staff that have a responsibility for maintaining green spaces and areas understand Council's intent to increase canopy cover.
- Advocate, fund for power lines and cables to be put underground to reduce impact on tree canopy through pruning.
- Use nature strips more effectively to increase canopy cover.

Quotes

- "Stop reducing 'Public Open Space' and start maintaining the expanding vegetation which is reducing "our" open space."
- "Instruct Council arborists and planners to prioritise tree retention strategies. Push back on the term 'arboriculture value' in assessing vegetation, as it is a catch-phrase which talks to the landscaping value of the tree in a new development design, rather than the value of the tree for broader community amenity and towards our Urban Forest Strategy."
- "More native trees for nature strips and parks encourage native birds and animals." ● "Remove weed trees from the conservation plan. LillyPilly & Liquid Amber and any Pine should never have been planted in Beaumaris. Removal of these should be a Council priority."

“Trees to be planted along Beach Road and tougher penalties for people who trim trees for their view. Maybe erect huge signs similar to Sydney which block the view where a tree has been damaged to create a view.”

- “Decrease drastically the number of trees with air borne pollen.”
- “Adopt the more ambitious targets that Council flagged at its August 2021 meeting.” ● “Decrease drastically the number of trees which drop leaves and gum nuts constantly creating a walking hazard or difficult to use with wheelchairs and other walking aids.” ● “I think when it comes to annual pruning Council workers must be educated....we seem to take too much off the trees!”
- “Stop planting trees on nature strips under power lines. They did not get adequately pruned and resulted in a fire and blackout (of several days for some streets) in Beaumaris earlier this year.”
- “It is apparent that low ground storey vegetation (predominantly native) is being removed/thinned out around parks etc by Councils contractors Citywide. I am all for a safer environment and understand why this is being done, but the Council should be more transparent about this and disclose your obviously endorsed management plan.”

Planning controls, protection and enforcement

Comments in this theme related to Council using available controls, regulation and enforcement to both bring the objectives of this Strategy to life and work with the community in a reasonable manner to green Bayside. Following is a summary of the actions for Council’s consideration:

- Council issuing and following up on fines for illegal activities.
- Council placing greater importance on protection and increasing vegetation and significant trees in new developments.
- Council extends overlays (VPO and SVO) into areas where it is trying to increase the amount of vegetation, not just in green areas. Rather using it as a tool to increase tree and canopy cover.
- Cancellation of permits for wrongful activity.
- Some suggested giving private landowners more ability to maintain trees on private property.
- Advocating to increase powers of control and authority to prevent Council’s decisions being overturned by VCAT.
- Harsher penalties and tougher fines given to people that wilfully cause damage to significant trees or vegetation.
- Put in regulations that help to address climate change while the tree canopy is catching up (light coloured roofs, WSUD, smaller mass size on blocks).
- Altering the permit system on construction sites to include monitoring trees on the subject property in addition to street trees.
- Extend the duration of landscape audits longer than 2 years to increase the survival rate of vegetation.
- Keep a photographic record to support landscape audits before the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy, with audits repeated at 2, 6 and 10 years.

Quotes

- “Increase the span of the local law to include control preventing the removal of nonnative vegetation across the whole municipality.” ● “Increase local Council power to uphold and implement policies regarding protection, conservation and planting / reforestation efforts.”
- “...if the development is not carefully monitored over a long time, those ‘replanting’s’ can disappear. It is much more sensible to require that existing trees are not

- removed even if they are difficult to protect during building works and even if the design of the building may have to be changed to accommodate and preserve them.”
- "Monitoring and Protection of the existing urban forest must be the first priority on both private and public land, especially the foreshore, including giving Council greater resources to police this, including tightening of permits for removal and heavier fines for vandalism.”
- “Council (must) recalibrate their planning approach to ensure far less of our existing canopy on private land is reduced through planning applications.”
- “Much tougher penalties for unethical, criminal removal of trees. Developers just laugh at the paltry fines.”
- “Residential developments are reducing tree canopy. There appears to be no real regulation of tree retention. Developers put up the required protection fence to get their permit then the tree is removed later.” ● “Have a minimum of 30% garden on new houses.”
- ...overhaul the current (landscape) audit process and enforce (to include) follow-on audits be repeated at 2, 6 and 10 years after the initial compliance audit is verified with the support of a photographic record.”
- "Stop allowing the complete clearing of residential blocks when there are established trees, just to make it easier for builders and cut costs.”
- “All Bayside suburbs should have the same treatment and be given the same vegetation overlays. The urban forest strategies should apply equally to all of Bayside. Suburbs where the tree canopy is limited should be given priority to bring it up to the other suburbs rather than more money and effort just going to Beaumaris and Black Rock.”
- “Proper follow up and recourse with replanting. We see numerous buyers/ developers that never plant what they promised and never get fined for it!"

Promotion of service and encouraging community uptake

Some participants gave others the benefit of the doubt, and suggested that if more people knew about the importance of retaining and enhancing tree canopy there would be less vegetation removal and we could get to our tree canopy goal earlier. Following is a summary of the actions for Council’s consideration:

- Improve communication about the Vegetation Protection Overlay, what this means for residents and what can and cannot be done in an area within this overlay.
- Council incentivising activities that promote or encourage community participation and adherence to Strategy.
- Promotion of maintenance services and services that help retain mature trees.
- Find alternate ways to communicate the value of trees and vegetation through demonstrating the full lifecycle of the tree and finding ways to celebrate its contribution.
- Providing education to community members to select, plant and maintain appropriate trees for the location/situation.
- Update landscape guidelines to increase compliance and community uptake.

Quotes

- “Continue to communicate the key messages of the benefits of trees including the potential money savings for public health, recreation etc.”
- “Encourage residents to plant nature strips and front gardens with indigenous trees or fruit trees.”
- “Educate real estate agents and buyers - perhaps a flyer with every house sale that outlines the VPO and how it affects their property. I have overheard several agents telling prospective buyers/developers that they can 'get around' council in regard to the VPO.”

- "Consider the full life cycle of our trees. What happens when trees inevitably do need to be cut down for safety reasons? Let's not chip high quality timber. Let's find a better use for it and leverage the educational opportunities around the value of timber. See examples from Greater Dandenong and the City of Melbourne."
- "Education on where to plant trees and of what type. Often trees are planted without thought and this is why they become a problem. Something that looks nice when small but has no idea it'll grow to a certain size in 15, 30, 40 years."
"Educate about the need to increase canopy both from a global perspective but also from a local perspective... how clever planting can keep their homes cooler in summer and lead to an increase in amenity for the resident as well as providing much needed habitat for local fauna."
- "Showcase great examples of gardens that improve a property's value. ...a square rendered double story boundary to boundary volume build (compared to a) sustainable homes with appropriate greenery and drainage."

Improve biodiversity

Some participants wanted to see a greater link between vegetation and increased/retention of biodiversity values. Following is a summary of the actions for Council's consideration:

- Consideration of planting that promotes a healthy ecosystem, including areas for nesting and breeding and cross pollination of species.
- Proactively mapping wildlife corridors and intentionally creating new areas of tree canopy cover or parklands within Bayside.
- Planting more flowering and drought tolerant plants and flowers.

Quotes

- "... create a biodiversity corridor that connects Balcombe Park to Bay Rd Heathland Sanctuary along Reserve Rd, Tulip St and George St."
- "Grow trees that encourage native birds and animals, but discourage possums."
- "I would also like to see incentives for plantings with biodiversity value (as opposed to common architectural plantings favoured by developers)."
- "Plant native gardens around train stations could include drinking water stations for birds."
- "Identify which species of fauna (esp birds) are at greatest risk or benefit from habitat areas and corridors."
- "More plantings of species that produce high oxygen outputs and absorb more carbon - especially on dividing strips and footpaths on major roads."
- "Ensure that the area of concrete landscaping is not so extensive as to prevent moisture from getting down into tree roots."
- "Provide networks of small pocket parks with large trees and community gardens in activity centers and all areas with new high density developments."
- "Extend habitat connectivity on private lands, by encouraging green strips along back fences."

Improving tree canopy cover in specific places

Some participants highlighted specific areas of Bayside where there is a noticeable lack in biodiversity or tree canopy cover.

Quotes

- "I have been a Bayside resident for over 32 years and have seen the foreshore vegetation deteriorate over that time through over enthusiastic pruning or blatant vandalism for better views."
- "Strengthen the vegetation protection overlay in Pennydale."

-
- “Removal of non-indigenous trees from existing park lands and ovals (e.g. pine trees at Banksia Reserve and replacement with similar surrounding native trees.” ● “I do not enjoy the untidy overgrown look of our foreshore trails, particularly Sandringham. There needs to be more balance with open space - where we can enjoy the view of the bay.”
- "More trees in Pennydale, Cheltenham!" ● “Protect trees in Jack Rd on Laminex site. They are feeding so many birds (e.g. Yellow Crested Cockatoos) and they are losing food sources."
- “Greater canopy surrounding open spaces such as Duncan St oval. Similar to planting at Boss James reserve.”
- “Please plant trees in Sandringham village!!”

- “Protect open space such as the CSIRO site which offers an incredible valuable opportunity for new amenity.”
- “Highett has been systematically stripped of large canopy tree cover over the past 15 years. Council has actively aided the loss of large canopy trees to specifically advantage developers, negatively affecting local amenity. Having suffered significant loss of wildlife, Highett should become a priority.”
- “A little more concentration on the foreshore areas.”
- “I know we have had more trees planted in Elsternwick park but more need to be planted on the New Street side of the park.”
- “The Sandringham sand belt, stretching from Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary south to Long Hollow Heathland Reserve (Beaumaris) via Merindah Park, George Street Reserve, Tulip Street reserve, the golf courses and Balcombe Park, provides huge potential as a continuous habitat corridor that needs to be conserved.”
- “Bayside currently has eight bushland reserves, but only two are currently PCRZ. The other six should be prioritised for upgrading to this level of protection.” ● “Locally indigenous shrubs including Acacia, Banksia and Leptospermum genres are grown at Bayside Community Nursery, are largely drought tolerant and grow well in our bushland reserves. Their use should be expanded to parks and nature strips. Their lifespan may be shorter than some exotics and eucalypts, but their survival rate could be higher after planting.”
- “Remove concrete causeway on Elwood creek upstream from new street Brighton and regreen in the same manner as is now the case downstream from New Street to Point Ormond.”
- “You need to detail the value of indigenous trees as habitat and show a strong preference for them (at least south of South Road).”

Partnerships and advocacy

Comments in this theme are related to collaboration with other organisations to expand the influence of the strategies and increase community uptake. Under this theme were the suggestions for Council to partner with community organisations or the state government to achieve goals outlined in the Strategy.

Quotes

- “Work with the State Government to limit Vic Smart applications for tree removal.” ● “Engage the local Aboriginal population in educating the public by setting up practical workshops and meet-and-greet stations at council areas, parks and libraries with hands-on interactives, e.g. plants to discuss, bottlebrushes and banksia cones to feel.
- “Collaborate with other Councils to work with the State Government to have planning laws amended such that healthy trees on private property have greater protections, including provision for easily administered tree bonds of sufficient value to ensure adequate protection measures are implemented by developers.”
- “Living Melbourne coalition to investigate influencing large-scale levers for change, such as engaging with realtors, developers, VicTrack etc. ... investigate models from overseas to promote urban forestry career pathways”.
- “Incentivise home owners to plant suitable trees on nature strips. Subsidise natives from local native nurseries.”
- “BCC recycling to provide free mulch to ratepayers.”
- “Wondering whether to suggest that "Friends of Bayside Roads" might like to take some water with them on their summer clean-up runs?”
- “Residents may also be willing to 'sponsor' a significant public tree close to where they live (including new plantings) which does not have to require a personal

- financial investment, but may just include for example assistance with regular monitoring and watering."
- "Perhaps start this project through schools? Empowering young people is one positive way to help the environment & help alleviate climate change anxiety that many are feeling."
"Address the glaring issues with the Vic Smart fast track tree removal. The urban forest strategy will not be successful if owners/developers can sideline it and get around it with this system."
- "Give land management to micro communities such as streets or neighbourhoods and encourage native planting."
- "Pushing State Government and VicRoads to increase trees on their land should be an extremely high priority."
- "Moving to underground power lines should be a priority but must be in conjunction with nature strip planting to ensure possums and other fauna still have refuge and safe 'pathways' away from pets and vehicles."
- "Consultation with the Convenors and Friends Groups regarding any planting considered in any of Bayside's Conservation reserves (to align with action plans)".

Infrastructure improvements and consideration

Some participants made comments regarding ensuring that infrastructure is suitable for achieving the Strategy without compromising the quality of life. Under this theme were the following actions for consideration by Council:

- Renewal, improvement, or removal of power lines to support tree canopy cover and planting goals.
- Managing footpaths and walking tracks to ensure the community's safety and enjoyment of green spaces.
- Selection of trees to prevent uplifting of footpaths from tree roots.
- Watering infrastructure to support newly planted trees and trees experiencing heat stress.

Quotes

- "Look at removal of overhead power lines to allow for better street canopy, particularly HFC low cables as NBN now has the capability to have fibre to the curb in most of Bayside."
- "I would like to see a system to assist resident residents to water trees (on nature strips) from roof runoff, rather than letting it just drain to storm water. This is especially important as climate change will result in less frequent but larger rainfall events that will leave trees even more drought stressed."
- "Underground power lines are a must. Each year the palm trees within my boundaries (which attract native birds, parrots and bats) are butchered by United Energy."

Recognising the value of trees, recording them appropriately

Some people believed that increasing the positive perceptions of trees and educating the public about their significance would help to support the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy. Under this theme were suggestions on recognising the financial value, carbonoffset value or biodiversity value of specific plants.

Quotes

- "Adopt a mechanism for valuing trees in dollar terms as described by Dr Greg Moore and already adopted by some other Councils, to provide the tools needed to

- evaluate the benefit to the community of retaining mature trees threatened with removal and charge developers for such loss.”
- “Significant tree registry needs to be expanded to include trees on public land that meet criteria.”
- “Actions ... are needed to inform the community of the importance of trees and support their protection. Positive use of trees for forests, education, leisure activities, energy creation, co2 capture, groundwater filtration, community food production.”
- “Consider having a financial value placed on trees which takes into account those amenity benefits mentioned in the strategy.” “...which can be used to quantify the increase in the real estate value of a home, by offering shading in the summer months, creation of breezes, reduction in air conditioning ...”
“Placing an information notice on a tree estimating the amount of carbon it is capturing would be an encouragement for people to protect and respect the trees.”

Additional services to explore

Under this theme were specific mentions of additional services that may promote community uptake or strengthen actions in the Urban Forest Strategy. The focus is on Council’s role in minimising the barrier for households to protect and care for trees.

Quotes

- “Develop an advisory service for residents on tree maintenance; provide access to facilities to assist in tree maintenance.”
- “Water the street trees and park trees during heat waves to protect them.”
- “Increase interest in greening our environment by offering free or low cost bush kindergarten programs and education programs at indigenous community nurseries.”
- “Make the consultation with an arborist cheaper, that way you’ll get more compliance.”
- “If you want to protect large trees on private property, you should also be responsible for their regular maintenance or provide it at a reasonable cost.”

■ **General feedback to strengthen the draft Urban Forest Strategy**

Survey participants were invited to suggest improvements to strengthen implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy.

A total of 216 (40%) participants provided an additional comment. The majority of these comments (94%) were positive; 69 (32%) of these comments were congratulatory in nature “a credit to those who put so much effort into such a comprehensive paper.” This sentiment was often paired with comments (19%) urging Council to “get on with it”, “set aside a budget” for the actions and do it. Only 6% of comments received were considered negative in nature, concerned that the strategy would further restrict tree maintenance on private property.

All comments were open ended and varied in length from a short sentence to longer paragraph. A coding frame was developed to categorise the response into key action areas. The coding frame consists of six themes, some comments have been tagged more than once, depending on the level of detail provided. Table 10 shows the themes and lists the type of topics covered by each theme and the count of comments for each theme.

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Table 10. Suggestion themes, type and number

Suggestion Theme	Topics/Issues	Count of comments
Council needs to ensure its operations and practices align with this Strategy	Feedback related to Council providing detailed guidance regarding tree replacements plans, selections of species, and cost management of the plan.	53
Suggested areas where further research is required	This feedback relates to a desire for evidence that Council has taken a wide range of short-term and long term effects into planning. Or suggested future research to ensure the continued relevance of this Strategy.	28
Importance of creating a green Bayside through a	Considerations related to building green spaces for community activities such as	25

variety of initiatives	parklands and gardens. Ensuring all suburbs in Bayside are included in the initiative.	
Valuing community input and involvement	Feedback related to promoting support from the community through education and business incentives.	13
Balancing the needs of community and amenity preferences	Feedback related to aesthetics, safety and private property rights of residents.	12
Increase focus on the impacts of Climate Change	Feedback related to impact of climate change on heat island effects, physical and mental health.	7

Council needs to ensure its operations and practices align with this Strategy Some participants made comments about ensuring Council’s operations and practices align with the strategy. Under this theme were suggestions about the planning controls, enforcement of landscaping plans, tree replacement, selection of species and cost management.

Quotes

- “(Council) Designers of new or expanded facilities must be instructed to build within the urban forest, to incorporate existing mature trees within their plan and work around them with few exceptions, even when this may complicate building configuration (e.g Beaumaris Sports Pavilion and extension of Tulip St Basketball Centre).”
- “It is the council’s responsibility to protect the unique character of the area, including the lovely old trees. Please improve your performance in this area.”
- “Council (need to) review the common occurrence of demolishers totally 'moonscaping' every site before a rebuild takes place.... why can't they consider keeping vegetation/mature trees along each boundary line?”
- "Continual removal of foreshore vegetation by developers goes unpunished . Some councils have devised a strategy ...to disincentivise rogue developers from trying to increase property values by removing trees.”
- It is better to plan for a sustainable and healthy tree canopy in 20 years time, rather than worrying too much about cutting down some old trees.”
- "Maintenance of street trees overhanging private property is not done well ... the new tree plantings at Railway Avenue in Brighton are magnificent and should be used by Council as a case study to promote the benefits of tree planting.
- “If you are talking about wildlife corridors then the issue is multiple tree types regardless of sizes.”

Suggested areas where further research is required

While participants felt the strategy had ‘excellent ideas’ or was a good place to start some also felt there was more that could be considered, or future research to ensure the continued relevance of this strategy. Under this theme were suggestions on innovation, research and considering infrastructure changes.

Quotes

- “I would like to see research scientists (of all disciplines) appointed to form this strategy and council officers”
- “Look at the latest info and consider new ideas rather than relying on the usual ways of doing things.”
- “I believe there are some excellent ideas within this strategy, but it needs more.” ● “... (exploring) small tunnels under the major roads and freeways for animals to safely cross be constructed.”
- “(need to rethink development).” The fact that the canopy has been reduced between 2014 and 2018 is mortifying and, I am sure, as a result of the overdevelopment of properties to change microclimates with concrete walls.”
- “Adding more trees should also be (done) along with 'hazard' studies, to make sure that this wouldn't add to the (amount of) dangerous falling branches, collapsing trees, etc during storms and high winds.

Importance of creating a green Bayside through a variety of initiatives

Participants provided insight into their own area of Bayside, highlighting the importance of all suburbs being included in the initiative. There was support for Council to provide guidance around species selection and manage tree removal for housing development. Participants noted the importance of tree care, especially trees near powerlines.

Quotes

- “I would like the study to cover the whole municipality to include all trees, native and exotic. Every tree is important. We need more, not less. Each suburb has its own character which should be recognized and celebrated.”
- “Creating not only more spaces for trees, but creating some beautiful garden areas with many themes also including large and medium trees.”
- “These changes could be complemented by Council providing guidance on species selection that will thrive in Beaumaris/Bayside, and also encourage more diversity.”
- “Encourage street plantings that are of the correct size. Instead of butchering trees near powerlines, plant trees that do not grow so tall.”
- “Tree growth is one thing, tree care is another.”
- “This is a brilliant initiative because we are losing so many trees in my suburb Black Rock due to constant 'ground zero' unimaginative developments where every tree is removed.”

Valuing community input and involvement

Some participants were extremely excited about the Strategy offering suggestions for Council in regards to supporting community members to jump onboard with free planting advice, community gardens and vouchers for free native plants. Other participants highlighted the need for Council to continue consulting with the community and for individuals to take responsibility in understanding the importance of trees and the role they play.

Quotes

- “It's a fantastic initiative that deserves strong council, government and business community support. Encourage the Bayside community to get involved in as many ways as possible.”
- “Provide free advice, planning and seedlings to make it easier and more economical for residents to plant trees and vegetation... community vegetable gardens in each street to encourage community interaction between neighbours.”
- “Offer advice on what trees people in Bayside should plant for particular scenarios.”

- “A further action could be for Council to offer vouchers for free native trees (perhaps two per rate notice) to be supplied by the Council Nursery.”
- “Too much red tape and not enough community engagement and self responsibilities from individuals - need more 'education' on importance of trees in kindergartens, schools, private households - especially Developers!”
- “I'm very supportive and would like to see it work well. I'm concerned that this initiative will go the way of another great initiative which was railroaded by so-called consultation.” (reference to a masterplan gone wrong).
- “(need to communicate with residents on outcomes)I have submitted to several surveys conducted by Council in the past... I strongly feel that my suggestions were ignored, as I had no feedback as to why the suggestions were not considered a value add”.
- “... two consultation sessions with community members was insufficient. There needs to be a greater priority in Bayside toward initiatives such as the Urban Forest and the Climate Emergency rather than being so pro development”.
- “Super important. Would love to be involved.”
- “More consultation and notification to the residents prior to street tree planting, even if costly and time consuming, would be excellent public relations rather than simply planting a tree which could appear to the householder to be a random choice.”

Balancing the needs of community and amenity preferences

Participants felt they should have a right to remove a large tree from their private property without the need to apply for a permit for safety reasons. They felt it was unsustainable for home owners to be able to maintain large trees on their property. Some felt Council was able to remove large trees that they would be liable for, if they fell, but the same was not the case for private homeowners.

Quotes

- “Branch falls are a very significant danger to life and property and whilst the idea of a tree canopy has its merits, the challenges and costs for homeowners to safely maintain trees that are 10,20 or 30m high is unsustainable. Homeowners should have the right to trim or remove any tree on their property at any time with no permit whatsoever.”
- “There is enough council owned land, so please do as you please on that, but respect private property and the rights of homeowners to make decisions that keep people safe.”
- Old trees are big and do have an expiry date. Don't be foolish when it's time to cut them down, let people do it before someone is killed.
- “Council should concentrate on Public spaces and let private property owners manage their own trees.” ● “There needs to be an easier pathway for residents to seek removal of unsuitable trees on private property.”
- “My nature strip tree is too big. It is also the only species of tree of its kind in my street. Every other tree is uniform and the council will not even consider changing it. It has damaged the newly laid street and gutter already (within 6 months of the reasphalting) and still no consideration.”

Increase focus on the impacts of Climate Change

Some participants would like Council to further stress the importance and impacts of Climate Change. Seeing this Strategy as a call to action, and another reason Council prioritises this work. Recognising that trees take time to grow and start reducing carbon emissions and contributing to the community.

Quotes

- “Need to ensure that plantings are drought-resistant indigenous species endemic to the area, and are attractive to birds, bees and other wildlife.”
- “We are in a Climate Emergency which the Council has acknowledged and Climate Change is something that affects us all. ... (Council must have the) powers to increase that coverage is something that will help us all in the long run. ... (canopy trees) must be acknowledged as critical infrastructure and an asset that provides innumerable environmental and health benefits to the municipality.”
- “In neighbourhoods with a tree canopy of 30 per cent or more, adults had 31 per cent lower odds of developing psychological distress, and 33 per cent lower odds of rating their general health as “fair” or “poor” over six years. Urban green spaces with open grass rather than a tree canopy did not deliver the same benefits.”
- “Please act and vegetate ASAP. New intergovernmental report says global warming is happening. The plants need a chance to grow before it is too late”.
- “This is a critical initiative as an increased urban forest will directly decrease the “heat island impact” in our neighbourhood communities, absorb CO2 and result in cooler urban temperatures, all of which will reduce global warming.” ● “It is overdue to respond to climate changes whether they be cyclical or permanent. Local Government should be more forward-looking in managing urban land use as the lead times for any effective response is measured in decades.”

■ **Specific changes to the draft Urban Forest Strategy**

Feedback received via the survey and submissions made specific reference to elements within the strategy that needed changing, or further information. This is detailed in Table 11.

Table 11. Detailed feedback to strengthen the draft Urban Forest Strategy

Source	Feedback	Connection to Strategy	Response
SUB	Include “with reference to former local Ecological Vegetation Communities”.	Action 9	Inclusion of text in in this action has been made: ‘Identify open space areas that can be rezoned to the Public Conservation and Resource Zone, with reference to any existing or former Ecological Vegetation Communities on the sites. ’
SUB	Breakdown tree canopy coverage targets into public and private land for clarity.	Action 17	Canopy cover targets have been updated to reflect targets for public and private, with additional goals now relating to other critical parts of the urban forest, outside of tree canopy cover increase.

SUB	Reword to better explain the balance sought from lighting (personal safety, impact on wildlife).	Action 26	<p>Action table has been updated and this action in particular has been reworded to 'Ensure that visibility, including at night, for personal safety be a consideration in planting and vegetation management. Artificial lighting should be designed with the needs of both humans and fauna in mind.' A measure has also been provided being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption and implementation of the
			<p>Wildlife Friendly Lighting Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise the Best Practise Lighting Design principles for new lighting requests.
SUB	Add in Action to connect with state government initiatives Suburban Parks Program and Local Parks Program.	Action 39	<p>This action has now been reworded to reference the programs.</p>
SUB	Recognising ground cover, fungi and the different layers of vegetation to support habitat and biodiversity. Include within % total tree canopy (and shrubs).	Diversify	<p>Percentage cover is calculated using aerial imagery and does not identify fungi. We understand that this, alongside other types of vegetation, are important parts of the urban forest. As part of this Strategy, continuing to research and implement greater tools to identify different layers of the urban forest will change our approach to better reflect understorey outcomes.</p> <p>The importance of different layers of vegetation to support habitat and biodiversity has been made clearer throughout the Strategy.</p>

SUB	Add an action to retain mature trees with zero useful life expectancy, that are safe and can provide wildlife habitat.	Diversify	<p>Wording has been provided on page 20 of the Strategy, and within the Key Directions (page 47) section of the Strategy. Action has been added in ‘Maintain.’</p> <p>Council utilises the Tree Risk Assessment tool to assess trees for possible retention to provide habitat for fauna.</p>
SUB	Add an entry to describe how this plan interacts with the Biodiversity Action Plan.	Diversify	<p>A guiding principle and key theme of the Strategy is to improve habitat and biodiversity outcomes in Bayside. This will be achieved by building on the direction provided in Council’s Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Policy Context has been updated to clarify how the Biodiversity Action Plan aligns with the Strategy.</p>
SUB	Addition of intersectional meetings with officers with technical knowledge in water, biodiversity and planning. With the involvement of expert and community partners.	Educate	<p>Council will consider what the appropriate internal communications are to successfully implement actions of the Strategy.</p>
SUB	Add reference to the relevant Actions and Directions in Plan Melbourne, as well as other State level strategies and initiatives including Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy, Built Environment Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 20222026, and Protecting Victoria’s Environment: Biodiversity 2037 in the Appendix	Educate	<p>Reference to relevant Actions and Directions from State Government Policy Documents has been made in Appendix 2: Policy Context of the Strategy.</p>
SUB	Definition of Equity	Glossary	<p>New definition added in Appendix 3: Glossary</p>

SUB	Addition of WSUD infrastructure in public and private context.	Maintain	<p>Bayside's Integrated Water Management Plan is referenced in Appendix 2: Policy Context of the Strategy.</p> <p>Page 46 of the Strategy discusses the use of stormwater to irrigate Council managed trees in streets.</p>
SUB	Include reference to Method for Assessment of Tree Habitat Status in arboriculture Reports.	Maintain	<p>Council utilises the Tree Risk Assessment tool to assess trees for possible retention to provide habitat for fauna.</p> <p>Reference to the Assessment has been provided on page 20 of the Strategy, and within the Key Directions (page 47) section of the Strategy. Action has been added in 'Maintain.'</p>
SUB	Addition of a permit to carry out works within 2m of a canopy tree.	Maintain	<p>Council will investigate options through the Planning Scheme to strengthen protection for trees. Council will consider this addition through the planning scheme amendment process.</p>
SUB	Better explanation of the intended reporting mechanisms and cycles for both this Strategy and closely related plans.	Monitoring and evaluation	<p>The Action Plan has been updated to provide greater clarity to the timeframes and implementation of each action with measures (key</p>

			<p>performance indicators) now provided.</p>
SUB	Incorporate action to apply an economic value to canopy trees.	Monitor	<p>Council applies its own Tree Amenity Valuation Procedure through the Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2020 where tree removal is proposed to facilitate development. Action 26 has been added to review the application of this procedure.</p>

SUB	Aligning canopy targets to the Cooling and Green project to 10% for private land.	Target	Council has updated its canopy cover targets to apply for public and private land. The Cooling and Greening Project has not yet been finalised, and any impacts from this project will need to be considered and discussed with DELWP.
SUB	Add a figure that shows tree canopy cover in Pennydale within residential areas to more accurately reflect the cover in the area.	Strategy development	For the purpose of the implementation of the Strategy, Council has not separated Pennydale from Cheltenham. Precinct Plans will be created for suburbs, by which Cheltenham canopy cover and related demographic information will continue to be utilised.
SUB	Separating Pennydale from Cheltenham, using Profile Id category (Southland Activity Centre) to show an accurate reflection of canopy cover and SEIFA indexing.	Strategy development	For the purpose of the implementation of the Strategy, Council has not separated Pennydale from Cheltenham. Precinct Plans will be created for suburbs, by which Cheltenham canopy cover and related demographic information will continue to be utilised.
SUB	Align the intent of the strategy to the vision. Definition of forest is quite broad, however significant focus on tree canopy covered and not the other elements as defined.	Strategy development	Much feedback received outlined that there is too clear of a focus on tree canopy cover throughout the Strategy. Council officers have reviewed and edited the strategy to give greater inclusion to improving biodiversity. As improving biodiversity functions goes hand in hand with tackling climate change, we've incorporated more objectives, strategies and actions that seek to improve biodiversity and encourage more diverse species
			as food sources and understorey planting to encourage habitat connectivity. These changes have been made to support the alignment of the strategy to the vision.

SUB	Clearer outcomes (impacts and results) needed to determine if actions will help to deliver the objectives, goal and vision.	Strategy development	The Action Table (Appendix 1) in the Strategy has been updated to also outline how the action is to be implemented, what the outcome/goal it seeks to achieve and what the budget is (estimated financial and operational impacts).
SUB	Clearer definition and explanation about what the Strategy looks like in practice for different sites (e.g roadside curbs, single dwelling properties, dual occupancy properties, flats, parks).	Strategy development	<p>There are several existing policies and guidelines adopted by Council that outline where trees should be provided, what type should be provided, and how the trees should be provided from a technical lens.</p> <p>The Bayside Landscape Guidelines outlines example landscape requirements for new buildings (single dwelling, low density, medium density, and high density applications) in Table 3 on Page 18.</p> <p>For Council Managed Trees, Council has adopted the Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2020 as well as the Street and Park Tree Selection Guide 2016.</p> <p>As an action of the Strategy, Council will be seeking to review the requirements set in the Bayside Landscape Guidelines to ensure outcomes for different types of residential and nonresidential developments are strengthened and incorporated into the Bayside Planning Scheme.</p>
SUB	Clearer identification of the impacts of the Strategy on the various target groups, their needs and groups Council wishes to work more closely with.	Strategy development	Various challenges that residents face have been identified within the Strategy and Background Report. In response to these challenges, various actions have also been outlined in the ‘Celebrate & Learn’

			and 'Maintain' theme of the action table within the Strategy to further investigate how their needs will best be responded to.
SUB	Clearer representation of focus group involvement and information provided.	Strategy development	Council's consultant provided an Engagement Report detailing the feedback received during the Focus Group session. Information from this Report has been utilised within the Strategy to provide what is considered a clear overview of the focus group sessions and feedback.
SUB	Address equitable within Strategy through the provision of actions on private land.	Strategy development	The Strategy acknowledges the various challenges faced in relation to trees on private property.
SUB	Use of the word 'Educate' concerned it is patronising and implies the need to coerce the community. Suggest the word 'engage' or 'partner'.	Terminology	Council has updated the theme to read as 'Learn & Celebrate'. It was considered that these words depict the true objective, strategies and actions underpinned by the theme, and rather 'educate,' we will learn together with our community and key stakeholders. We will also celebrate our successes and build community sentiment and support through these celebrations.

OS	<p>Concern with the use of the word 'forest' in the Strategy, and the connotation that this might confuse some about Council's intent.</p> <p>"... By definition a forest has an interlocking canopy of trees ...the more accurate term... is 'woodland' rather than 'forest'. A woodland usually does not have that interlocking upper canopy because the trees are more widely spaced."</p> <p>"...forests or plantations belong in the rural/regional areas."</p>	Terminology	<p>"Urban Forest Strategies" have become popular throughout Australia and are being adopted by various Melbourne municipalities as a way to increase tree and vegetation canopy cover and cool the environment.</p> <p>The Strategy provides a definition for what an urban forest is, and Council does not consider this definition confusing or misaligning with the intent of the Strategy.</p>
SUB	Adding community buy in, into the vision.	Vision	<p>Changes to the Strategy have been made throughout to build on the value of community</p>
			<p>participation, sentiment and buyin, and to greater align this to the vision.</p> <p>Community buy-in is outlined as a key objective of the 'Learn & Celebrate' theme:</p> <p><i>The outcomes from this Strategy are not something that Council can deliver on its own – all Bayside residents will have a role to play in increasing, diversifying, and maintaining our urban forest and the role of education and support will continue to grow. Bayside has a strong network of volunteer organisations and can leverage their support to drive change across Bayside.</i></p> <p>Raising the level of community awareness and participation form part of the objectives, strategies and actions within the 'Learn & Celebrate' theme.</p>

OS	Concerns with suggestions regarding new developments, especially those surrounding 'landscape nature strips' - 'Don't restrict what people can plant on their nature strip unless you plan to come and mow it.'	Action 15	Noted. Wording in the Strategy has been updated to clarify that Council will only seek greater outcomes for landscaping on nature strip where new development proposals are constrained on-site and can only provide for minimal landscaping. Predominant nature strip landscaping would be encouraged where it is in keeping with the neighbourhood character and would enhance the development.
OS	'Council needs to provide support and real assistance to neighbours of people with very large trees who do not do any maintenance.'	Maintain	Council will consider what types of support could be provided in the future and is subject to further investigation.
OS	'A communications and engagement strategy is a bit over the top. But some of the specific actions listed here are good - e.g. advice on appropriate species selection. Keep it simple.'	Action 38	Noted. Council will further investigate the appropriate avenues to raise awareness through our communications as part of the implementation of the Strategy.
OS	'Harsher penalties for those who remove protected trees.'	Monitor	Action within the Strategy has been reworded to investigate to 'increase the number of Infringement Notice Penalty Units for unlawful tree and vegetation removal, pruning or lopping activity.' This will be undertaken as part of an Amendment to the Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2021.
OS	'Make consultation with an arborist cheaper, that way you'll get more compliance.'	Educate	As an action of the Strategy, Council will provide an advisory service to support residents when considering whether to cut down trees, and their options around pruning and maintenance that may avoid removal of the tree.

OS	'New developments should have to include trees in the front or back garden otherwise they shouldn't be approved'	Increase	<p>A key action of the strategy is to investigate options through the Planning Scheme to strengthen protection for trees.</p> <p>The application of and compliancy with the Bayside Landscape Guidelines will also be reviewed to ensure greater landscaping outcomes for new development.</p>
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SUB = Submission; OS = Online Survey

● 5. Project evaluation

An important part of our practice is to reflect on what elements supported participation and what elements may have limited participation. Online survey participants were invited to provide their feedback on the ease they were able to complete the survey.

Participants satisfaction and experience

A majority (77.7%) of participants found the information to be both easy to find and to understand (415), which exceeded the 75% target. This was followed by 64 participants stating they were unsure, and a further 14 participants considering the information to have been either hard to find or difficult to understand. Participants were invited to provide feedback in addition to their response, 10 people provided feedback:

- Disappointment about not being selected for focus group (2).
- Including extra methods to have your say “I would have felt more informed if I had been able to participate (focus group). A town hall type of consultation would have been optimal too.”
- More promotion, finding out about it through others (4).
- Online survey was “written with a political agenda in mind and not in an impartial or scientific manner.”

Participant reach and representation

Targets set for the reach, representation and participation, based on similar projects, were all exceeded.

While participants aged 50-54 years, and 65-74 years were overrepresented, those aged under 50 contributed 33% of the survey responses. Participant’s suburbs were also broadly representative of the Bayside population profile. Female participants were also slightly overrepresented, contributing 60.9% of the survey responses.

It was proposed that the engagement activities would attract at least:

- 5000 page views of the online engagement platform Have Your Say (exceeded, 5063 views).
- 200 contributions (exceed, 1,070 contributions)
- Representation from each identified stakeholder group (achieved)

It was proposed that the communication activities would achieve at least:

- Over 1,000 read news items (exceeded, 3850 reads from our eNewsletters)
- Over 15,000 reach on social media posts (exceeded)

- Over 200 Have Your Say surveys completed (exceeded, 534 survey respondents)

Overall, Council reached approximately 29,667 Bayside community members.

Engagement Plan Overview

An 'Engagement Plan Overview' (Appendix 2) was published as a subpage on the Have Your Say website as part the consultation on the Draft Urban Forest Strategy. The Engagement Overview page was viewed 43 times (32 visitors, 1.3%) during the consultation period with no comments or questions received.

Q&A tools

The Q&A forum received two questions, one which was responded to via e-mail, and another which was responded to within the stated timeframe and posted as an answer on the Q&A forum. The answer to the question was viewed by 2 individuals. The frequently asked questions on this page were viewed 35 times by 29 individuals.

● 6. Appendices

○ 6.1 Appendix 1 Glossary

Item	Definition
Biodiversity	All components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things (including fungi and microorganisms) across our land, rivers, coast, and ocean. It includes the diversity of their genetic information, the habitats and ecosystems within which they live, and their connections with other life forms and the natural world'. ¹
Canopy cover	Is the layer formed by the branches and crowns of plants or trees . The cover can be continuous, as in primary forests, or discontinuous - with gaps as in an urban area. Canopy is defined in Living Melbourne as vegetation above three metres in height. ²
Canopy tree	A tree which has, or at maturity is likely to have, sufficient height and canopy characteristics to make a positive contribution to local amenity, sense of place, microclimate and/or biodiversity. Minimum 8 metres in height x 4 metres in canopy width.
Climate change	Refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. ³
Climate Emergency	Refers to the catastrophic changes to the climate brought about by human activity that poses a dangerous threat to all life on the planet. ⁴

¹ The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 'Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037', 2017, Available at <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

² CID Bio-Science, 'Forest and Plant Canopy Analysis – Tools and Methods', 2019, Available at <https://cidinc.com/blog/forest-plant-canopy-analysis-tools-methods/>

³ Definition has been sourced from 'Bayside's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025 – Glossary', 2019, Available at https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/sustainability_and_environment/climate_emergency_action_plan_v1.2_140920_for_web.pdf

⁴ Definition has been sourced from 'Bayside's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025 – Glossary', 2019,

General Residential Zone (GRZ)	Is applied to land in areas where growth and housing diversity is anticipated. It is expected that the type of housing provided will evolve over time to provide more diverse forms of housing, but not at the expense of existing open garden character. ⁵
Habitat	All the physical and biological things that collectively make up the place where a plant or animal lives. ⁵
Habitat Corridor	A habitat corridor is a linear two-dimensional landscape element that differs from the surrounding vegetation, in both vegetation structure and form, and connects two or more patches of otherwise isolated habitat that have been connected in historical time; this is meant to function as a conduit for both plants and animals. ⁶
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	Is applied to land that has been identified as having specific neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape character values that distinguish the land from other parts of the municipality or surrounding area. ⁷
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	Is considered a substantial change area where medium density housing growth and diversity of housing types is encouraged for example townhouses and apartments around activity centres and close to train stations. ⁸

Available at

https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/sustainability_and_environment/climate_emergency_action_plan_v1.2_140920_for_web.pdf

⁵ Resilient Melbourne and The Nature Conservancy, 'Living Melbourne – Our metropolitan Urban Forest', 2019, Available at

https://resilientmelbourne.com.au/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/LivingMelbourne_Strategy_online.pdf

⁶ Definition as used in 'Corridors for Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation in the Act with Links to the Region' from 'The theory of wildlife corridor capability – in Nature Conservation 2: The role of corridors', 1991 by Soulé, M. E. and M. E. Gilpin, Available at

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/381077/PE_06_Environment_attach.pdf

⁷ Victorian Planning Authority, 'Using the residential zones – Planning Practice Note 91, Clause 32.09', 2019, Available at https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/445389/PPN91-Using-the-residential-zones.pdf

⁸ Victorian Planning Authority website, 'Frequently Asked Questions – What is a Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)', 2017, Available at <https://vpa.vic.gov.au/faq/berwick-residential-growth-zone-rgz/>

Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)	The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is the most appropriate planning scheme tool for protecting and managing significant landscapes. Its purpose is to identify significant landscapes, and conserve and enhance their character. The SLO can require a permit to construct a building or construct or carry out works, construct a fence, and remove, destroy or lop any vegetation. ⁹
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⁵Victorian Planning Authority, 'Reformed Residential Zones – General Residential Zone', 2017, Available at https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/103865/General-Residential-Zone.pdf

Significant Tree	Some trees, through age, size, and rarity of planting or association with historical events achieve a higher level of importance on private or public land. identifies the following categories used to define significant trees as scientific, social, historic, and aesthetic. ¹⁰
Tree Canopy	The uppermost trees or branches of trees in a forest, forming an almost continuous layer of foliage. The topmost layer of bioactivity in a forest setting. ¹¹
Urban Forest	All of the trees, shrubs, grasslands, and other vegetation – and the soil and water that support them. Urban forest incorporates vegetation in streets, parks, gardens, plazas, campuses, river and creek embankments, wetlands, railway corridors, community gardens, green walls, balconies and roofs.
Urban Heat Island Effect	The phenomenon of dense urban areas having significantly warmer air and land surface temperatures than surrounding rural areas.
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, resolves disputes and makes decisions related to planning matters.

⁹ Victorian Planning Authority, 'DPCD South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study – Regional Overview Report', 2013, Available at https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/94820/ROR-Chapter-5-Implementation-Part2.pdf

¹⁰ Bayside City Council, 'Significant Tree Management Policy 2020', 2020, Available at https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/trees_parks_and_beaches/significant_tree_management_policy_2020.pdf

¹¹ Resilient Melbourne and The Nature Conservancy, 'Living Melbourne – Our metropolitan Urban Forest', 2019, Available at https://resilientmelbourne.com.au/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/LivingMelbourne_Strategy_online.pdf

Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)	The VPO focuses on the protection of significant vegetation, including native and introduced vegetation in urban environments. The overlay can be applied to individual trees, groups of trees or areas of significant vegetation. It requires a landowner to obtain a permit to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in a schedule to the overlay subject to a list of exemptions. Some of those exemptions apply to particular types of vegetation and others apply to specific situations, for example, to clear vegetation from electricity lines and to ensure emergency access. ¹²
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Is a more sustainable approach to urban planning and design to make use of stormwater and reduce the harm it causes to our natural waterways. ¹³

6.2 Appendix 2 Engagement Plan Overview

Urban Forest Strategy: Community engagement plan overview

Project objective

Council is preparing an Urban Forest Strategy to provide clear direction for the protection, management, and planting of trees on public and private land, and to enhance the level of tree canopy cover across Bayside.

The Strategy is a key part of delivering urgent, meaningful action on climate change as set out in the *Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 – 2025* and seeks to promote ecosystem health and alleviate issues such as air pollution and urban heat island effect.

The Urban Forest Strategy will identify actions Council can take to improve how we monitor, increase, and retain tree canopy cover and enhance species diversification. We will also aim to educate our community about trees to encourage greater care and protection of the Bayside Urban Forest.

We are seeking community feedback in two stages to help us identify the actions needed to reach the overarching goals of the Urban Forest Strategy, and measure the level of community support for key actions.

The first stage of community engagement in May/June 2021 was the formation of two focus groups: one for individual members of the Bayside community (broadly representative to the Bayside population profile) and another for local community

¹² Victorian Law Reform Commission, '4. Planning law and regulation affecting trees on private land - Vegetation Protection Overlay, Available at <https://lawreform.vic.gov.au/content/introduction-34>

¹³ Melbourne Water, 'Introduction to WSUD', available at: <https://www.melbournewater.com.au/building-andworks/stormwater-management/introduction-wsud>

organisation representatives. The role of these groups was to understand a diverse range of perspectives on trees to set actions in a draft Urban Forest Strategy.

The second stage of community engagement in August/September 2021 is to measure broader Bayside community support for proposed actions in the Draft Urban Forest Strategy.

Information gathered through community engagement on the Urban Forest Strategy may also be used to in the review of associated policies, such as the Management of Tree Protection on Private Property Policy.

Project impacts

The Urban Forest Strategy is a key part of delivering urgent, meaningful action on climate change as set out in the *Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 – 2025*. The Strategy is committed to monitoring, retaining, and increasing tree canopy cover, and enhancing species diversification in Bayside.

Council aims to increase canopy cover across the City of Bayside to 25% by 2030, and to 30% by 2050. Council will be balancing a number of factors when considering its role and the actions within the Strategy.

Enhancing tree canopy cover and species diversification in Bayside will generate physical and mental wellbeing benefits, promote overall ecosystem health, and help to alleviate air pollution and urban heat island effect. Protecting and enhancing the urban forest will foster a healthier and more resilient Bayside now and into the future. Council plants over 1,400 trees each year. We also manage the tree population in Council owned streets, reserves and parks, and assess and undertake the issuing of permits to allow for tree and vegetation removal on private property.

A targeted and purposeful approach is required for Council's tree planting program to increase canopy over Council managed land. It also requires new canopy tree plantings on public and private land, while minimising losses and actively monitoring tree removal and replacement on private property.

Through an Urban Forest Strategy, Council has proposed actions to overcome the key issues and challenges that impact the Bayside Urban Forest to allow for the increase of tree and vegetation canopy cover.

What information do we need from the community?

We're consulting with the community in two phases: first to help us identify the actions needed to reach the overarching goals of the Urban Forest Strategy, and then to seek wider community feedback on the Draft Urban Forest Strategy.

What can the community influence?

- The overarching objectives and key actions of the Draft Urban Forest Strategy
- The protection and management of trees on private land
- Prioritising tree canopy plantings at particular locations
- Ways to support our vulnerable residents who are maintaining protected trees on their properties
- Education initiatives to support an increase of tree and vegetation canopy cover

What can't the community influence?

- The requirement for an Urban Forest Strategy
- Increasing the tree canopy cover as an action of the Urban Forest Strategy (2,000+ plantings each year across Council parks, reserves and streets)
- Increasing species diversity as an action of the Urban Forest Strategy
- Monitoring tree canopy cover as an action of the Urban Forest Strategy
- Retaining tree canopy cover as an action of the Urban Forest Strategy
- Service delivery and implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy

Stakeholders and community

This stakeholder assessment is a generalised understanding of sections of the community that have a connection to the project or matter. This information is used to understand the types of tools and techniques that will achieve the strongest and most effective outcomes for engagement and communication.

Impact: What level of change the stakeholder / community segment may experience as a result of the project / matter

Interest: What level of interest has been expressed or is anticipated

Influence: Reference to the IAP2 Spectrum

Community environmental organisations	M	H	Involve

Bayside 'Friends of' groups	M	H	Involve
Wildlife rescue/interest groups	M	H	Involve
Arborists & professional landscapers/gardeners	H	H	Involve
Community heritage organisations	M	M	Involve
Bayside Foreshore Recreational Council	M	H	Involve
Focus group participants	M	H	Involve
General Bayside community	M	L	Consult
Bayside home owner-occupiers	H	M	Consult
Residents in multiunit developments	L	L	Consult
Residents engaging with Council's planning permit process	H	H	Consult
Elderly residents (>75)	M	L	Consult
Residents with a disability	M	M	Consult
First Nations people / Traditional landowners	M	M	Consult

Young people	L	M	Consult
Bayside businesses and traders	L	L	Consult
Homeowner/occupants of properties adjacent to or with views of the foreshore and other areas of significance	H	H	Consult
Community members with lower discretionary incomes	M	L	Consult
Residents with an interest in environmental issues	M	H	Consult

Selected tools and techniques

The tools and techniques selected for this project are informed by the project content, stakeholders and type of feedback sought.

Key tools for communicating the project

Phase 1

- Email notification to Have Your Say members
- Council website and e-newsletter, This Week in Bayside
- Social media, especially sponsored posts to increase audience reach
- Direct email and/or addressed mail to key stakeholders

Phase 2:

- Have Your Say project webpage
- News articles on Council website and e-newsletter, This Week in Bayside
- Email updates to project subscribers and key stakeholder groups
- Article for inclusion in various special interest Council newsletters
- Social media, including sponsored posts to increase audience reach
- *Let's Talk Bayside* magazine

Key methods for gathering feedback

Phase 1

Expressions of Interest to join focus groups and participation in focus group sessions

Phase 2

- Online engagement through Have Your Say, including interactive maps, and opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback
- Drop-in or pop-up engagement sessions at major activity centres, reserves and playgrounds, and/or local community centres and events (subject to COVID restrictions)
- Bookable meetings with project team
- Liaison with community representatives, including Committees of Council, local interest and reference groups
- Printed survey and consultation materials available upon request

Project timelines

Project stage	Timing
Focus group sessions	May/June 2021
Consideration of focus group feedback	June/July 2021
Development of Draft Urban Forest Strategy	July 2021
Council endorsement of Draft Urban Forest Strategy	17 August 2021
Community consultation on the Draft Urban Forest Strategy	19 August – 19 September 2021
Consideration of community feedback	September - October 2021
Revision of the Draft Urban Forest Strategy	October 2021
Draft Urban Forest Strategy to be considered by Council	23 November 2021

Decision-making process

Council considered the Draft Urban Forest Strategy alongside the findings of the Stage 1 community engagement focus group sessions at its meeting on 17 August 2021. Following this, the second stage of community engagement commenced from 19 August 2021 and closed on 26 September 2021.

Council is expected to consider the findings of the second and wider phase of community engagement alongside the proposed Urban Forest Strategy at its meeting on 15 February 2022.

The agenda for this meeting, including a community engagement report and proposed Strategy, will be published on 25 January 2022 via Council's website. Project subscribers will be notified of the results of the engagement and the final Strategy at this time.

The 15 February 2022 Council meeting will be live-streamed via Council's website. Interested members of the community can ask a question of this meeting or request to be heard.

To receive updates on this project, press the blue 'subscribe' button at the top of the page.

More information

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