

Annual Budget 2022–23

Community engagement
summary report

May 2022

1 Overview

This document provides a summary of community and stakeholder feedback on the proposed Annual Budget 2022-23.

The proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 outlines the services and initiatives to be funded for the next financial year. The proposed Budget is informed by community priorities set out in the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and Financial Plan 2021-22 – 2030-31.

Engagement process

Community consultation on the Annual Budget was conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy 2021](#).

Community members and project stakeholders were encouraged to provide their feedback on the proposed Budget between 27 April and 17 May 2022 for the consideration of Council.

There were 12 participants via two methods: 11 online surveys and 1 written statement, which were submitted via Council's Have Your Say engagement website.

Community and stakeholder feedback

Survey feedback on the proposed budget (11) was varied, with the most common response (4) opposition to an increase in rates citing cost of living pressures and Council's budget surplus. The increase to the waste charge was also opposed by one participant, given forthcoming changes to the bin collection schedule.

Other submissions covered a broad range of topics including:

- Wholesale charges for Bayside Community Nursery display pots
- Dog registration fees amended so Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-26 actions can be implemented earlier
- Prioritising the upgrade of lighting in Landcox Park, Brighton
- Replacing motorised Council assets with electric equivalents
- Prioritising maintenance of the Bay Trail given increased use
- Lack of sporting pavilions in the budget.

One written statement received provided detailed feedback on funding and actions for the Hihett Grassy Woodland.

All feedback is included in Section 4.

Next steps

Council will consider feedback from the community, including this community engagement report, before adopting a proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 at its meeting on 28 June 2022. Interested community members can also request to be heard at this meeting.

The Local Government Act 2020 requires each Council to adopt an annual budget by 30 June each year.

2 Consultation process

2.1 Definitions and scope

Engagement was conducted to gather community and stakeholder feedback on the proposed Annual Budget 2022-23.

The table below informed the scope and was published as part of the consultation.

Table 1: Scope of influence

Negotiables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Annual Budget 2022-23 - noting that funding priorities have been set by the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and Financial Plan 2022-23 – 2031-32.
Non-negotiables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legislative requirement for Council to adopt Annual Budget 2022-23 by 30 June 2022Council operations, resource allocation and projects Council has resolved to deliverWaste charge: Direct cost recovery due the increase in the State Government landfill levy, an increase in hard waste collections, increased recycling processing costs, and increased green waste and garbage collection and disposal costs.

Table 2 lists the community members and stakeholders identified as having an interest in the Annual Budget 2022-23 to be considered in the consultation.

Table 2: Community and stakeholder assessment

Stakeholder / community	Impact	Interest	Influence
General Bayside community	L	L	Consult
Individual community members with broad interests in the business of Council and governance	L	H	Consult
Organisations/groups/individuals affected by rescheduled projects	H	H	Consult
Stakeholders with new projects financed through Annual Budget 2022-23	H	H	Consult
Stakeholder groups/associations/organisations	L	M	Consult
Local businesses/traders	L	M	Consult

Level of engagement

Engagement on the Annual Budget 2022-23 was assigned at 'Consult' level, noting limitations on influence because funding priorities are informed by the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and Financial Plan 2021-22 – 2030-31. These plans were subject to extensive, deliberative community engagement programs.

2.2 Consultation methodology

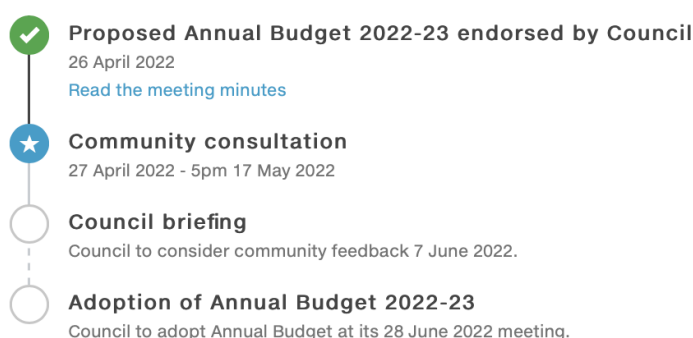
Community engagement on the Annual Budget 2022-23 was designed to provide stakeholders and the broader community with opportunities to provide feedback on the proposed Budget. The engagement process was open to all members of the City of Bayside municipality between 27 April and 17 May 2022.

Digital engagement tools (websites, online survey and written statement submission form, question and answer forum) were used to deliver the engagement program and assessed as meeting the needs of interested community members and stakeholders.

Project information and engagement materials were available in print, as required/requested.

Communications via print and digital Council channels and targeted advertising were undertaken to ensure community members and project stakeholders were aware of the consultation and encouraged to participate.

Figure 1: Timeline and phases for engagement on the proposed Budget



2.2.1 Engagement activities

The following engagement activities were undertaken:

- Project information on Council's Have Your Say digital engagement website, including opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback via a survey or upload a written statement.
- Phone, post, and email correspondence.

Table 3: Engagement activities and participation

Details	Activity
27 April – 17 May 2022 12 contributions 12 contributors 7 project followers	Have Your Say engagement website <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey form (11 responses)• Written statement form (1 submission) <i>A further submission received was a copy of Bayside's Council Plan Action Plan which is assumed to have been uploaded in error and not included in this report.</i>• Provision of feedback by post or anonymously (0 submissions)• Question and answer forum (0 participants)
Email 0 submissions	0 submissions were received via email to the Have Your Say email inbox or project manager.
Social media	Three social media posts (including one sponsored advertising) were published referencing the consultation on the budget. There were no comments on these posts.

Communications activities

It is estimated that communications via Council channels reached more than 20,000 community members. Sponsored social media advertising was particularly effective in raising awareness of the consultation, especially among Bayside residents who may not subscribe to Council communications channels.

Table 4: Communications tools and reach activities and participation

Details	Activity
Have Your Say engagement website 521 views 390 visits 318 visitors	yoursay.bayside.vic.gov.au/annual-budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project information on proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 and alignment with Council Plan 2021-2025 (304 visitors) Annual Budget 2022-23 (downloaded 124 times) Your feedback subpage (41 visitors) Question and answer forum (4 visitors) Engagement Plan Overview (2 visitors)
Council website 516 views	News item: Steadfast budget looks to the future Page views 267, time on page 2 min 55 secs
Direct email 13,939 recipients	Have Your Say project subscribers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council budget and strategic plans; all suburbs subscribers Sent 28 April 2022: 4,312 recipients, opens 2,294, clicks 173 This Week in Bayside e-newsletter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 April 2022: 9,540 recipients, 5,183 opens 5 May 2022: 9,565 recipients, 5,292 opens 12 May 2022: 9,627 recipients, 5,459 opens
Social media 6,666 reach	Facebook post promoting consultation 9 May 2022: 1,207 reach, 0 comments 10 May 2022: 5,459 reach, 0 comments (sponsored advertising)
Print 41,000 reach	Let's Talk Bayside magazine April – May 2022 issue page 11

Media coverage

There was no media coverage of the proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 consultation.

3 Participant profile

Participant profile data was recorded in survey responses (11) only. Representative participation was not considered achievable for this consultation due to the historic low level of participation in Budget consultations. To encourage participation there was no requirement to provide personal information or to register/sign-in to provide feedback.

All participants were aged between 45 and 74 years, with 55% female and 45% male. All Bayside suburbs were represented except Beaumaris, Hampton East and Highett. Most (82%) said they had the information they needed to provide feedback on the Budget and it was very (36%) or mostly (45%) easy to find and understand.

Connection to Bayside

All survey participants selected they were a Bayside homeowner/ratepayer, and one was also a member of a local sporting club. Steps to ensure participants are part of the Bayside municipal community include communications through Council channels and geographic restrictions on sponsored social media posts.

4 Consultation findings

The following section includes the feedback received on the proposed budget.

4.1 Community feedback

4.1.1 Rates and charges

The proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 will be funded by a rate increase of 1.75%, which is in accordance with the Victorian Government's rate cap. The waste service charge incorporating kerbside collection and recycling (not subject to the rate cap legislation) will increase 13.8%. These increases mean the average Bayside ratepayer's bill will rise by \$81.50. All responses referencing rates (4) were opposed to the increase.

Table 6: Feedback on rates and charges

Topic	Community feedback
Rates increase 4 survey submissions	<p>"There is no justification for such a steep rate increase while Council is forecasting a huge surplus and as the community deals with rising cost of living pressures."</p> <p>"I object to the proposed increase to Bayside rates in the 2022-23 budget. It is unjustified in light of successive annual surpluses (historical and projected) and an existing waste fee increase."</p> <p>"Rates should not be going up at all, especially considering you separating out waste and increasing this by 13% as well. It's daylight robbery. In recent years Council have recorded an annual surplus between \$10m to \$20m year after year. Consequently you have accumulated reserves of just over \$100 million. In 2023/24 Council forecast a surplus of \$32.9 million. How about spending some of your reserves for once. Not everyone is bayside is extremely rich and many people are going to struggle with all these increases. We just seem to pay and pay and pay and yet I'm not sure bayside services provide value for money. It just appears to be an overcomplicated behemoth which is in the back pockets of developers."</p> <p>"It's hard to see how Council can justify increasing residential rates for the 2022-23 financial year. Council has over \$100 million in reserves and has forecast a \$19.4 million dollar surplus, followed by a \$32 million dollar surplus in 2023-24. Council already benefits from a cumulative increase in the number of rateable properties each year as more dwellings are constructed, which is forecast to continue for many years to come, plus an additional annual windfall in open space levy contributions from the developers who are subdividing properties. Council has also been pledged additional millions of dollars from both Labor and the Coalition parties in the lead up to the general election. In the April Council meeting the CEO, Mick Cummins acknowledged there was a misconception that everyone in Bayside is wealthy. Unlike Council staff many residents have seen no wage growth in recent years and now face the prospect of spiralling increases in the cost of living including mortgage interest rate increases which will push some residents close to the brink of insolvency. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BE INCREASING PROPERTY RATES WHEN IT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY."</p>

Waste charges

1 survey submission

"In relation to the general waste collection, we reduced our bin size to the smaller bin a year ago which was still going to be collected weekly. Now we have the smaller bin which is now going to be collected fortnightly? That's a further reduction in general waste collection of 50%? Why should there be an increase in collection fees? Surely the council is receiving some reimbursement from the recycling bins, and the garden/food collection bins which are turned in compost?"

4.1.2 Other feedback on specific projects / items

Topic	Community feedback
Bay Trail maintenance 1 survey submission	<p>"One of the greatest assets that Bayside has is the sand/gravel walking path above the cliff tops along the foreshore. During Covid literally thousands of people have used the path and even though lockdowns are over it is still in heavy use. The path needs attention with tree roots sticking up and many minor landslides. Rather than millions spent of new facilities I'd like to see some of the budget allocated to the path that is a huge but neglected asset."</p>
Dog registration fees 1 survey submission	<p>"The Annual DAMP recommends to review Registration fees in Y2 of the plan, however given this budget is a proposed budget, please amend the income stream for Dog Registration fees in the FY22-23 budget so that the DAMP recommendation can be implemented in Y1 of the plan."</p>
Landcox park lighting 1 survey submission	<p>"Upgrading the Landcox Park lights is an absolutely critical activity that directly relates to the safety of the local community and visitors to the park. The lights regularly don't work and require intervention from contractors to 'switch' them back on. Whenever it rains you can almost guarantee they won't work, however they have regularly not worked when there has been no rain at all. Having the park in complete darkness presents a significant safety risk, particularly when there is an unfenced lake involved. With attacks and muggings occurring in nearby parks, and drownings of adults and children alike in park lakes around the State (thankfully not often), it is fundamentally important that the council reduces the risk of these incidents occurring in Landcox Park by upgrading the lighting and prioritising the funding and works in 2022/23."</p>
Community Nursery charges 1 survey submission	<p>"On page 86 of the Proposed Annual Budget 2022 2023 (Fees and Charges) for the Community Nursery, the 150ml special display pots proposed price is listed as \$12.95 retail. There has not been to date a wholesale price set for these pots, but as wholesale customers are buying them and they have to be sold at the price of an ordinary 150 ml pot, \$7.25, could there be a realistic wholesale price set for them too please?"</p>
Replacement of motorised assets with electric 1 survey submission	<p>"Propose replacing all motorised gardening equipment (typically 2 stroke or 4 stroke internal combustion) with electric equivalents (battery powered). Set a time frame to replace all equipment. Require contractors to move to electric (no more internal combustion engines for gardening). Propose replacing council vehicular fleet with electric motor vehicles."</p>

General feedback on pavilion renewal

1 survey submissions

"There does not appear to be any sporting pavilions in the budget. Has the pavilion renewal strategy been put on hold? Sport plays a crucial role in contributing to our overall health, well-being and resilience. This is of particular importance following 2 years of lockdown. The renewal strategy was developed to provide female friendly change facilities. What are the plans to reactivate this strategy so our females do not have to accept 2nd best?"

Highett Grassy Woodland

1 written statement from Friends of the Highett Grassy Woodland

As you know, we will soon see the long-awaited transfer of the Highett Grassy Woodland to Bayside Council. This follows over 20 years of near-intolerable delays since we, started our campaign, joined by the Council, that successfully led, in 2013, to the Federal Government deciding that three hectares of the Highett CSIRO site would be dedicated to conserving the Woodland, with one hectare to be provided as a general Public Open Space.

In the next financial year Council will have control of the site with Citywide and, possibly, Friends able to start to care for and restore the significant and threatened vegetation.

The draft Action Plan for 2022/23 includes, in 3.1.1, 'Commence development of the Highett Grassy Woodland Masterplan'. We consider that the action would be better included under 1.2 because the aim is to protect biodiversity. More importantly, the Action should have added to it "and conservation of the vegetation".

For several years no one has been able to care for the vegetation that includes locally rare plants, with an abundance of weeds threatening them. Similarly, the wonderful appearance of native plants, such as Running Postman, that on new sandy areas, has similarly gone untended.

In the proposed Budget one of the two relevant items is covered under Major Initiatives (p28) "Commence development of the Highett Grassy Woodland Masterplan (CSIRO site) \$114,000". In the Capital Works program, p66, this is joined by "Site Investigation & Fencing 126,000".

We support both these items (that have appeared in previous budgets) although there have not been increased in response to inflation and they could, again, be included under a more appropriate heading.

More importantly, there is no allocation to support the essential, skilled work of caring for and restoring the Grassy Woodland, especially in the first few crucial years.

Our estimate in the past was that this would require about \$250,000 for staff and support services, disregarding the extra work for the Community Nursery functions in future years. Council staff suggested a lower, but not dissimilar figure.

In the 9 months or so in 2022/23 when the site is owned by Council ownership, our estimate would require \$180,000 that is not covered by the current open space/bushland contract.

Some years ago we were promised by senior managers that the necessary work would be done.

Councillors might wish to assure themselves that sufficient funds would be available this financial year to ensure all the plant identification, weeding, mapping, and other work will be done to conserve this urban wonderland, or to secure the funding by including an extra amount in the budget.

Hoping for a favourable response *[redacted personal details]*
Michael Norris for the Friends of the Highett Grassy Woodland

5 Project Evaluation

5.1.1 Participation

The low number of submissions received (12) through the consultation process is broadly consistent with previous years: 2021: 67 submissions (predominantly regarding a pavilion deferral), 3 requests to be heard; 2020: 7 submissions, 1 request to be heard; 2019: 6 submissions, 5 requests to be heard; 2018: 7 submissions, 6 requests to be heard.

5.1.2 Engagement

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

- 500 views of the Have Your Say project webpages (achieved; 521)
- 10 contributions via the Have Your Say online survey or written statement form (achieved; 12)

In terms of conversion, the goals for Have Your Say webpages were that:

- 25% of visits would last at least one active minute (achieved, 28%)
- 20% of visits would have at least two actions performed, such as moving around the project page or clicking on links (not met, 18%)
- 2% of visits would have at least one contribution made (achieved, 3%)

Satisfaction with the information provided to survey participants was high. Of the 11 survey participants who responded to the question: 'Did you have the information you needed to provide your feedback on the Budget?', 82% selected information was very (36%) or mostly easy (46%) to find and/or understand; 18% said it was mostly or very hard to find and/or understand.

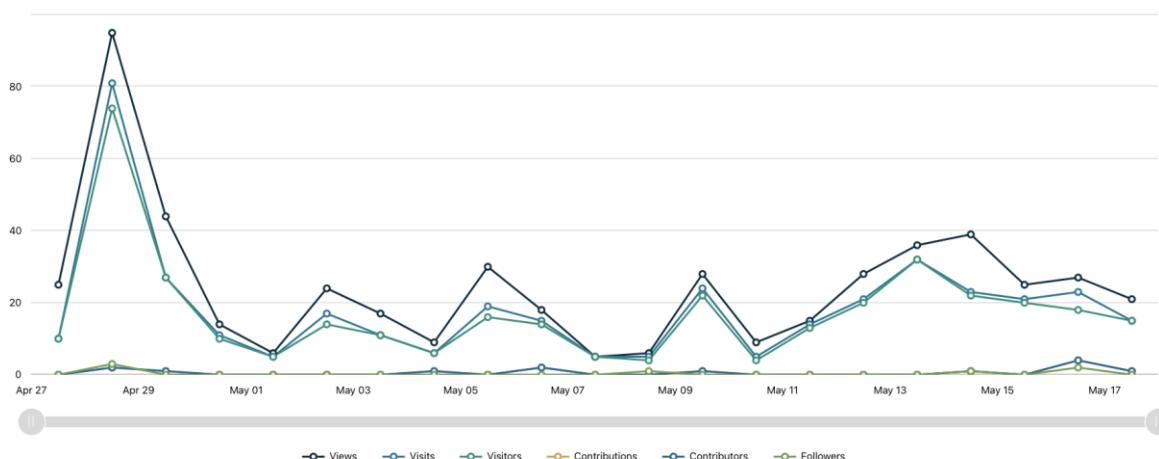
Community consultation on the Annual Budget, under the Local Government Act 2020 (Section 63), requires Council to develop its Annual Budget in accordance with its Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy. The principles of this Policy were met, including the publication of an Engagement Plan Overview (appendix 6.2).

5.1.3 Communications

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

- 15,000 community members (exceeded, 20,000)
- All correspondence and submissions were received via Council channels

The chart below shows the spikes in visitation to the Have Your Say engagement webpages when the consultation was promoted via email on 28 April; a news story and e-newsletter on 5 May and 12 May; and sustained interest from 11 May driven by social media advertising.



6 Appendix

6.1 Have Your Say online survey

Participants were provided with an option to complete a survey or upload a written statement. Items with an asterisk were required.

Your feedback

Please provide your feedback on the Annual Budget 2022-23*

- I understand that written feedback submitted is not confidential and may be published in a Community Engagement Report and/or in relevant meeting agendas on Council's website.*

About you

This section contains optional questions to help us understand the sections of our community that have provided feedback. The information you provide is confidential and non-identifiable.

Connection to Bayside

- Do you identify as any of the following? Please select all that apply.
- Bayside homeowner/ratepayer
- Bayside tenant
- Own/operate a business in Bayside
- Visitor to Bayside but live outside the area
- Member of a community group or organisation
- Person with a lived experience of disability or their carer
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

Age Group [drop-down list]

Gender [drop-down list]

Suburb [drop-down list]

Did you have the information you needed to provide your feedback on the budget?

- Information was very easy to find/understand
- Information was mostly easy to find/understand
- Information was mostly hard to find/understand
- Information was very hard to find/understand
- I'm not sure

6.2 Community engagement plan overview on Have Your Say

Project objective

The Annual Budget 2022-23 outlines the services and initiatives to be funded for the next financial year.

Following Council's in-principle approval of the proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 on 26 April 2022, community members and project stakeholders are encouraged to provide their feedback on the proposed Budget between 27 April and 17 May 2022 for the consideration of Council.

Public consultation on Council's Annual Budget was formerly a Section 223 process under the Local Government Act 1989. Community consultation on the Annual Budget is now conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy 2021](#).

Project impacts

Council's [proposed Annual Budget 2022-23](#) is informed by the [Bayside 2050 Community Vision](#), the [Council Plan 2021 – 2025](#) and [Financial Plan 2022-23 – 2031-32](#). The Budget funds services and initiatives Council has committed to deliver.

The proposed \$155.6 million budget commits Council to action in four key areas over the next 12 months:

- **Our Planet** – leading better, smarter and sustainable futures
- **Our People** – nurturing all people and thriving healthy communities
- **Our Place** – fostering Bayside's liveability, open spaces and exceptional places
- **Our Promise** – promising open and accountable civic leadership.

The ambitious agenda delivered by this budget will be funded by a rate increase of 1.75%, which is in accordance with the Victorian Government's rate cap. This rate increase is essential for the continuation of our community services and capital investment.

The waste service charge incorporating kerbside collection and recycling is not subject to the rate cap legislation and will increase by 13.8% driven largely by the increase in the State Government landfill levy, an increase in hard waste collections, increased recycling processing costs, and increased green waste and garbage collection and disposal costs.

Around half of the proposed budget is earmarked to deliver important community infrastructure via \$69.5 million in capital works. This continues Council's multi-year program to address historic under-investment and is enabled by continuing strong financial management.

Highlights

- Investment in our Aged Care Services so we can expand to the delivery of Home Care Packages to meet the increasing needs of our ageing community.
- Delivering the Urban Forest Strategy to make Bayside even greener than before and our Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction target takes action on Climate Change.
- Continuing the transformation of Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve into a natural urban oasis to benefit thousands of Baysiders and visitors for years to come.
- Upgrades to footpaths, roads and drainage, foreshore and parks, and sports pavilions to support accessibility, recreation, and liveability in Bayside.

What key initiatives are included in this year's budget?

The Annual Budget 2022/23 includes the following key initiatives:

- Expansion of delivery of Home Care Packages
- Switching our bin collection schedule to weekly food and green waste and fortnightly garbage
- Working with the community to reduce Bayside's carbon emissions
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- Dendy Street Beach Pavilion
- Warm Water Pool design and feasibility
- Beaumaris Arts Studio
- Tulip Street Basketball Courts
- Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve

Deferred projects

There are no significant deferrals of plans, programs or capital works in this year's proposed budget.

In response to community feedback and condition of the infrastructure, the pavilion renewal at Peterson Reserve has been brought forward and design is expected to commence in 2023/24.

What information do we need from the community?

We are engaging with our community to seek feedback on Council's Proposed Annual Budget 2022-23.

What can the community influence?

- Annual Budget 2022-23 - noting that funding priorities have been set by the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and Financial Plan 2022-23 – 2031-32.

What can't the community influence?

- Legislative requirement for Council to adopt Annual Budget 2022-23 by 30 June 2022
- Council operations, resource allocation and projects Council has resolved to deliver
- Waste charge: Direct cost recovery due the increase in the State Government landfill levy, an increase in hard waste collections, increased recycling processing costs, and increased green waste and garbage collection and disposal costs.

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

Stakeholder / community	Impact	Interest	Influence
General Bayside community	L	L	Consult
Individual community members with broad interests in the business of Council and governance	L	H	Consult
Organisations/groups/individuals affected by rescheduled projects	H	H	Consult
Stakeholders with new projects financed through Annual Budget 2022-23	H	H	Consult
Stakeholder groups/associations/organisations	L	M	Consult
Local businesses/traders	L	M	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.

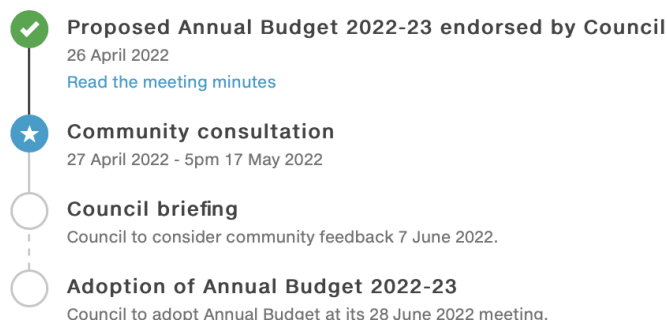
Key tools for communicating the project

- Email notification to Have Your Say members, including those who subscribe to projects affected by this year's budget.
- Council website and e-newsletter, *This Week in Bayside*
- Social media
- Video and/or infographics
- Digital screens in Corporate Centre and libraries

Key methods for gathering feedback

- Have Your Say project webpage, including feedback forms and opportunities to ask questions
- Post, phone and email correspondence.

Project timeline



Decision-making process

The Annual Budget 2022-23 is informed by community priorities articulated in the [Bayside 2050 Community Vision](#) and [Council Plan 2021-2025](#).

Following the close of community engagement at 5pm on 17 May 2022, community and stakeholder feedback will be considered and amendments made to the proposed Budget, if required.

Council will consider a report on community engagement on the Budget on the 7 June briefing and adopt the proposed Annual Budget 2022-23 at its meeting on 28 June 2022.

The agenda for this meeting will be available to [view here](#) when published. Interested community members will also have an opportunity to [request to be heard](#) at the Council meeting on 28 June 2022 and speak to Council at the meeting or provide a written statement which will be published in the meeting agenda.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, Council must adopt an annual budget by the 30 June 2022.

More information

For more information about this project please contact Bill Shanahan, Finance Manager, on 9599 4340 or bshanahan@bayside.vic.gov.au