

# LITTLE BRIGHTON RESERVE COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Community Engagement Summary



May 2022

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## 1 Background

This document provides a summary of stakeholder and community feedback on the Little Brighton Reserve Community Garden proposal.

In response to community sentiment in the local area, Council looked to establish a community garden in a section of open space in Little Brighton Reserve, west of the playground. Little Brighton Reserve is located on Union Street, Brighton East VIC 3187.

For this type of project to be successful, the support of the local community is needed to achieve the best possible outcomes. Council engaged community garden experts 'Cultivating Community' to assist in the design and engagement process.

Council notified neighbouring residents of the proposed community garden in Little Brighton Reserve online via Have your Say, on-site face-to-face consultation in collaboration with 'Cultivating Community' and Council officers, and a letter box drop to 100 properties immediately adjacent to the proposed community garden site.

## 2 Consultation process

### 2.1 Consultation purpose

Consultation was conducted to establish local need, support, and approval of the proposed community garden design. It was an opportunity for stakeholders and the immediate local community to provide input on the establishment of a community garden, the proposed design, whether there was support for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of a community garden if a garden was established, and further plantings to improve the reserve.

Council sought community feedback on four key engagement questions:

- If there is local community support for Council to install a community garden at the proposed site
- Community sentiment on the design of the proposed community garden
- If there are local community members with interest, commitment and/or skills and experience to offer in the ongoing operation and management of the proposed community garden, including formation of an incorporated community group
- If there is local community support for Council to install additional indigenous plantings in the reserve.

### 2.2 Consultation methodology

Details	Activity
Thursday 31 March to Monday 25 April. Online <b>49 Contributors</b> <b>405 Views</b> <b>335 Visits</b>	<b>Have Your Say Page Survey</b> Advertised in Council outlets e.g. This Week in Bayside, Have Your Say subscribers in East Brighton, Sustainable Living e-newsletter
Wednesday 6 April, 4-6 pm Little Brighton Reserve <b>Attendees 10 -15</b>	<b>On site Community Information Session</b> Advertised via Letterbox drop & Have your Say Page

Saturday 9 April,  
9.30-11.30 am

Little Brighton Reserve

**Attendees 10 - 15**

### On site Community Information Session

Advertised via Letterbox drop & Have your Say Page

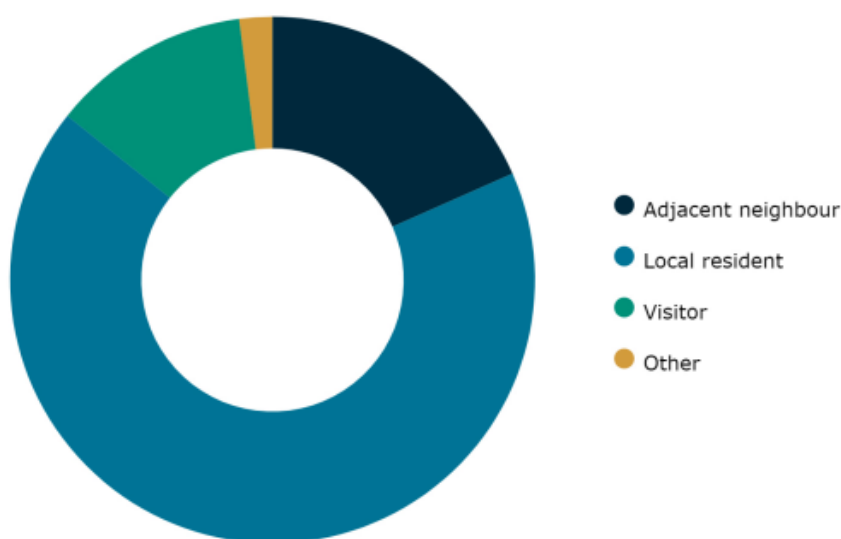


*On-site sign promoting Information Sessions and Have Your Say page. Note: letter from local resident taped to sign.*



### 3 Participant profile

49 community members completed survey online via Have your Say.



Of the 49 unique participants, 9 reported living directly adjacent to the Reserve, 33 were identified as local residents, 6 identified as visitors to Bayside and 1 identified as other (Other text: "Bayside resident and ratepayer").

There were also approximately 30 community members that attended the 2 onsite engagement workshops and provided feedback directly to Council staff and the Cultivating Community representative.

### 4 Consultation findings

The following section summarises the key themes which arose in community feedback on the Little Brighton Reserve Community Garden Proposal. In the interest of stakeholder and community privacy, individual quotes have not been included within this public document. Where there was more than one mention of a topic or item, the number of mentions has been specified in brackets and italics.

#### 4.1 Support for actions

##### 4.1.1 Do you support a community garden being established in Little Brighton Reserve?



There were 49 respondents to the online Have Your Say page survey, made up of adjacent neighbours, local residents, and visitors to the area. 31 (63%) were supportive with 9 commenting how great this idea was and would love to see more community gardens in Bayside.

15 participants (31%) were not supportive and raised a number of concerns which are highlighted in the following sections of this report (4.2: Item-specific feedback). Of note, 9 of the total number of respondents are adjacent to the proposed community garden space and 6 of these were opposed to establishment of the garden.

Two nearby Aged Care Residences, Oak Grange and Vasey RSL in Hawthorn Road were contacted to understand if their management would support potential activities for their residents if a community garden was established in the reserve. Support from these residences has implications for the provision of greater accessibility in the design and location of the garden beds (i.e., adjacent to a concrete footpath in the reserve) enabling less physically mobile locals to contribute to and enjoy the garden (e.g., from a wheelchair). A representative from Oak Grange Retirement Village confirmed they completed the online Have Your Say survey.

#### **4.1.2 On-site engagement**

The on-site engagement sessions attracted local residents mostly in favour of a community garden as an asset for the area. There were approximately 30 people engaged over the 2 engagement sessions. Some residents understood the design to be as per a proposal from a local resident, and not the proposal developed for Council by 'Cultivating Community'. Any confusion on the 2 differing proposed designs was able to be clarified at the engagement sessions.

The local resident also submitted a collection of over 70 signatures supporting her proposed design for a community garden. While it is unclear if some of these local residents also engaged Council via the Have Your Say page, this 'petition' signed by mostly East Brighton residents demonstrates a strong level of local support for the community garden.

#### **4.1.3 Proposed design of the garden**



20 online respondents (40.8%) supported the proposed Council design for the garden, and 15 (30.6%) did not support the proposed Council design. 14 respondents (28.6%) were unsure.

#### 4.1.4 Community involvement in the established garden

In terms of community involvement, out of the 30 people that attended the on-site engagements, 8 said that they would commit to being involved in a community garden. From the 49 contributors to the online survey, 17 (35%) said 'Yes' to being involved, 21 (43%) said 'No' and 11 (22%) were 'Not Sure'.

The above results show that while respondents generally support the concept of a community garden in the Reserve, there is less commitment to be involved in the ongoing management of the garden as a community project.

#### 4.1.5 Indigenous Plantings

34 respondents (69.4%) reported wanting to see more indigenous planting in the Reserve. 6 respondents (12.2%) reported not wanting more indigenous planting in the Reserve and 9 (18.4%) were unsure.

All the 30 people who attended the on-site engagement were supportive of more indigenous planting along the strip, most people mentioned Thomas and Wheatly St as a good example of what they would like.

## 4.2 Item-specific feedback

### 4.2.1 Concern for governance of the space

A strong theme from those engaged who did not support proposed garden (15 respondents) was the concern over what happens if the garden is established and, due to lack of maintenance and community support, it becomes unsightly.

A range of specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding this item:

Topic	Community feedback
Overgrown Beds	Eyesore

Rodents and Foxes	Attracting pests and vermin to the area
Compost	Rats and Flies become an issue
Not in keeping with the area	Untidy, unruly, brings the area down etc
Safety	Noise
Upkeep	Council to maintain and monitor the space if garden goes ahead

#### 4.2.2 Inappropriate use of space

A range of specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding this item:

Topic	Community feedback
Already being used well	Playground, Open space, bike paths etc
Is this really needed?	Happy with how the space works
Better ways of improving current space	Extended playground, better spaces for older kids, gym equipment for the elderly, better bikes paths, replacing gravel with harder surfaces, more indigenous planting, improve the Crossing etc

#### 4.2.3 Design

A range of specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding the proposed community garden design:

Topic	Community feedback
Layout	Happy with number of beds proposed but design should include seating areas, tables to work at, small shed & notice board
Garden Beds	A range of different size beds to accommodate kids, elderly, disabled etc
Location	Ensure the gardens are not too close to the playground

### 4.3 Project Evaluation

This project has good local community support overall, with more positive feedback received than negative feedback. Most people engaged directly on-site were positive about the proposed change in use of the space.

Those engaged online, particularly those that are residents of properties adjacent to the site, raised concerns about this project going forward. Council will continue to work with adjacent residents in regard to any works undertaken at the site.

Council had difficulty engaging with 3 key adjacent properties, despite two direct letter drops. It is understood that the closest resident is elderly (in his 90s) and may need family assistance to understand what is proposed in the Reserve. This feedback is still sought and may influence the outcome of this project.

Of the 79 people that were engaged online and onsite, 60 were interested in the community garden proposal going ahead with some minor changes to the design. Of these respondents, 25 expressed a commitment to be involved regularly. The additional 'petition' from local residents supporting a community garden demonstrates there is strong support in the local community.



A methodology of starting small, building community involvement, and 'scaling up' was communicated and understood by most of the community engaged to be a good starting point for this project.



*Images of the proposed community garden site at Little Brighton Reserve.*