



Community Garden Policy Review

Community Engagement Summary Report
May 2023

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2 Background

This document provides a summary of stakeholder and community feedback on the Community Garden Policy.

The Community Garden Policy guides how decisions will be made regarding the establishment and management of community gardens. It aims to streamline the process to establish a community garden, define how applications will be assessed and clarify how Council will support community garden groups across Bayside.

The current Policy is due to be reviewed as part of Council's cyclical policy review and update program.

Changes proposed under the 2023 review, include:

- Demonstrating Council's commitment to encourage and assist community gardens throughout Bayside
- Introduction of a two-stage application and assessment process to streamline community garden requests
- Requirements for a Council-run community engagement process to be undertaken on all proposed community garden applications that progress to stage two of the assessment process.

Community engagement on the proposed changes was undertaken from 30 March – 5 May (inclusive) and received 54 survey contributions and 25 contributions suggesting locations for new community gardens.

Key findings

There was strong support recorded for streamlining community garden requests and for Council-run community engagement on new community garden proposals.

- 70% of respondents supported streamlining community garden requests through a two-stage application and assessment process
- 65% of respondents supported Council-run community engagement for new community garden proposals

Respondents also generally agreed that the policy is:

- easy to understand (87%)
- explains the process clearly (83%)
- sets out a consistent and fair approach (88%)
- demonstrates Council's commitment to encourage and assist community gardens (89%)

Next steps

Council will consider community feedback and draft Community Garden Policy for adoption at its 27 June 2023 meeting.

3 Consultation process

3.1 Consultation purpose

Engagement was conducted to understand the level of community support for proposed changes to the Community Garden Policy. The consultation was designed to provide stakeholders and the broader community with the opportunity to give feedback on the proposed policy amendments, as well as on the application, and decision-making processes to ensure they were clear and equitable.

Council sought feedback from the community on where they would like to see a potential community garden installed to gain a better understanding of areas where there is strong interest in community gardens.

Community engagement was conducted in accordance with Council's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy 2021. An engagement plan overview was published and is available to view on Council's [Have Your Say engagement website](#).

3.2 Consultation methodology

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

Key tools for communicating the project

- Website news story
- Council's e-newsletter, This Week in Bayside
- Emails to key stakeholders
- Social media
- Digital screens at the corporate centre and libraries

Key methods for gathering feedback

- Online engagement through [Have Your Say](#), including opportunity to provide feedback via survey or upload a written statement
- Contact email address and phone number of Council Officer provided for interested community members to ask for further information or provide feedback
- Printed information available, as required.

Details	Activity
30 March – 5 May 2023 640 visitors 79 contributions	Have Your Say website Project information, online survey and social map hosted on the engagement platform Have Your Say Online survey: 54 responses Social map: 25
30 March – 5 May 2023 0 questions	Question and Answer forum No questions were asked via the Q&A forum.
0 written statements/feedback	Correspondence Direct feedback provided through contacting the Project Officer for further information or to provide feedback over the phone or via email.

4 Participant profile

Demographic information was not requested from participants as it was not considered relevant to this engagement.

54 survey respondents responded to the question asking them to qualify their connection to the draft policy and to Bayside. All respondents had a connection to Bayside, with some identifying with multiple options:

- 3 said they were a current member of a community garden group
- 5 said they were a previous member of a community garden group
- 48 said they were a Bayside resident or ratepayer
- 2 indicated that they were a visitor to Bayside
- 8 said they work/own a business in Bayside
- 3 selected 'Other' as their connection to the policy and to Bayside: one said they were interested in joining or establishing a garden, one stated they live in Elwood close to the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve and one said they are a Bayside volunteer.

No one indicated they prefer not to say.

5 Consultation findings

The following section summarises the key themes which arose in community feedback on the Community Garden Policy review. 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.

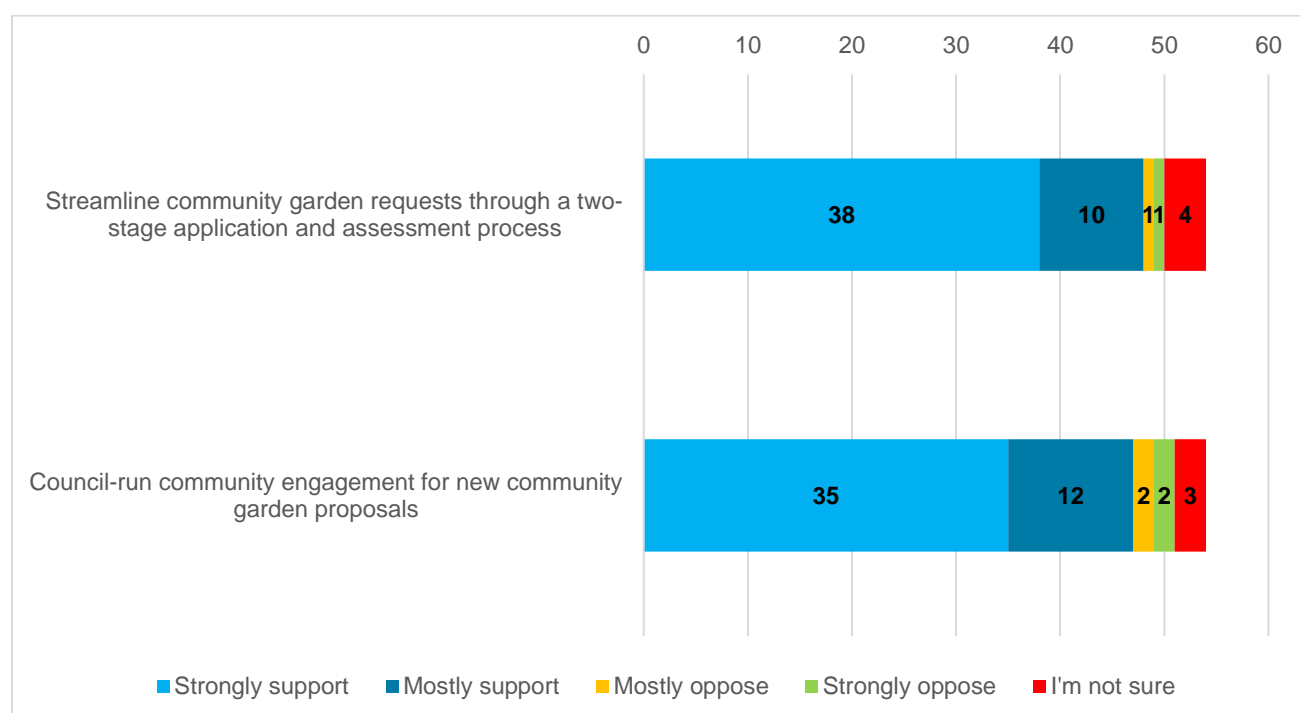
Participants were asked via an online survey to provide feedback on the draft Community Garden Policy including their reasons for supporting or not supporting the proposed changes.

5.1 Support for actions

All survey participants were asked the level to which they support a series of changes to the draft Policy, with 54 responses received.

There was a high level of support (70%) for Council to streamline community garden requests through a two-stage application and assessment process, and support (65%) was shown for Council-run community engagement for new community garden proposals.

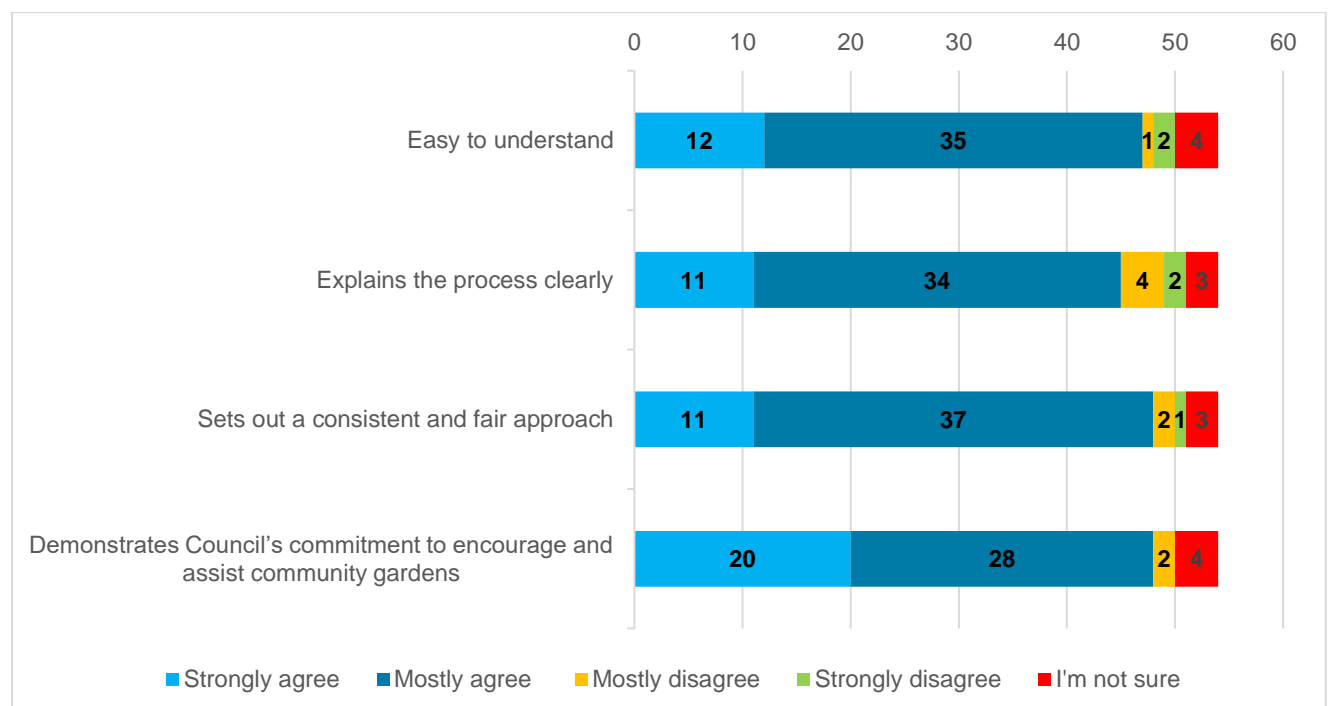
Figure 1: What is your level of support for the following proposed policy changes?



5.2 Level of agreement for statements about the Policy

Respondents were asked what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about the draft Policy. Most (87%) respondents agreed (22% strongly agree, 65% mostly agree) that the policy was easy to understand, and a further 83% agreed (20% strongly agree, 63% mostly agree) that the policy explained the process clearly. 88% of respondents agreed (20% strongly agree, 69% mostly agree) that the policy sets out a consistent and fair approach. Most respondents (89%) agreed (37% strongly agree, 52% mostly agree) that the draft Policy demonstrates Council's commitment to encourage and assist community gardens.

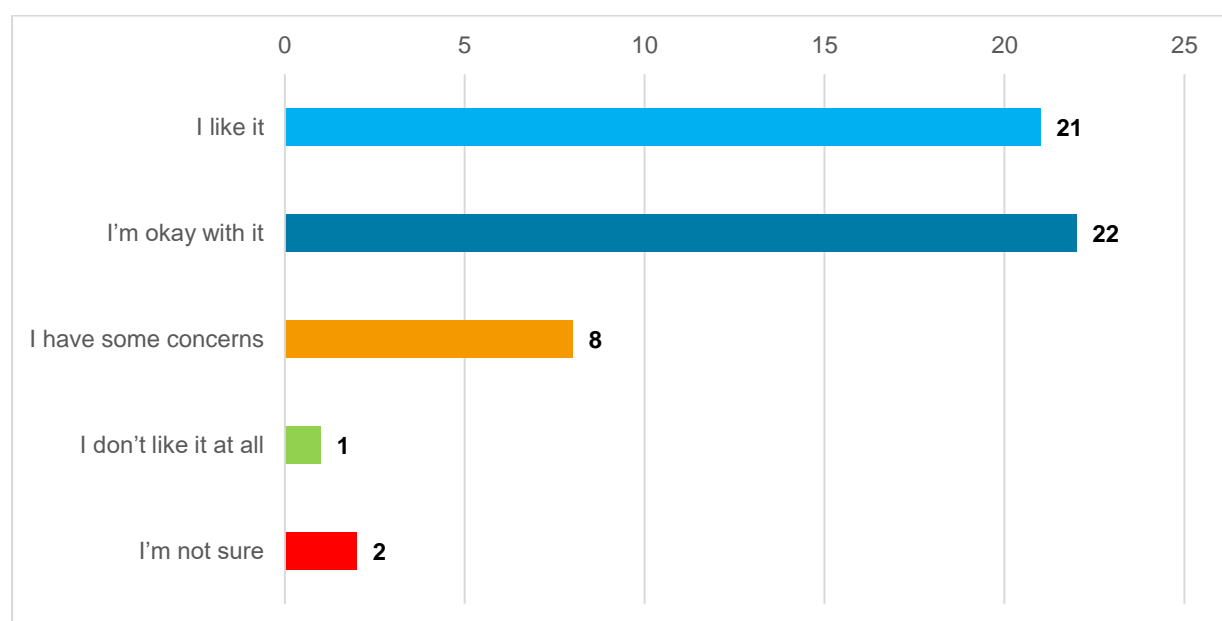
Figure 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below statements about the draft Policy?



5.3 Sentiment regarding the policy

Respondents were asked how they felt about the draft Community Garden Policy overall. Community feedback was supportive of the overall draft Community Garden Policy with 39% of respondents liking the overall policy and 41% stating it's OK. Some respondents (15%) expressed they had concerns and a few (4%) were unsure about the policy. One respondent did not like the policy at all.

Figure 3: How do you feel about the draft Community Garden Policy overall?



Respondents were also asked to provide written feedback about the reasons for their response. Comments provided by the 38 submitters are summarised by theme in the table below:

Table 1: Comments from respondents who expressed support or were neutral

Topic	Community feedback
Community gardens	<p>Need more community gardens (3 mentions)</p> <p>Would like to join a community garden (2 mentions)</p> <p>Great to increase green spaces</p> <p>Great to grow understanding and gardening skills</p> <p>Many in the community have knowledge, time and experience to help run and maintain these gardens</p> <p>Put a community garden close to all high rise buildings</p> <p>Support council's approach to establishing community gardens</p> <p>Like the different options of private and shared lots</p> <p>Like the idea of community gardening</p> <p>Would like to see a garden close to me</p> <p>Plant gardens on nature strips</p> <p>Community gardens should operate more on weekends</p> <p>Interested in how allotment selection would work</p>
Policy	<p>Great initiative (4 mentions)</p> <p>Support the policy (4 mentions)</p> <p>Explains a fair process (4 mentions)</p> <p>Clearly written</p> <p>Implies that council is committed to providing more land and resources for community gardens.</p> <p>Clear concise definitions and descriptions of what will be involved.</p> <p>Add more details on ways groups can suggest a community garden</p> <p>More info needed on weighting of assessment criteria</p> <p>Include circumstances Council would not support a proposal</p> <p>Great intentions</p> <p>Support streamlining application requirements</p> <p>Appears to make it possible for more community gardens to be established.</p> <p>Council appears genuine in its efforts to support gardens as well as make better use of Council land.</p> <p>Needs standard policies like extended access hours in summer.</p>

Community considerations	<p>Brings people together.</p> <p>Great way to connect</p> <p>Provides a recreational activity</p> <p>Encourages community spirit</p> <p>Adds value to the municipality</p> <p>Helps residents with their physical and mental health</p> <p>Great for people to become involved in the community</p> <p>Sites should be located near people who don't have their own garden</p> <p>Allotments should be given to people who don't have gardens</p>
Other comments/ questions	<p>See the value in this project.</p> <p>My expertise is in growing plants, not drafting policy documents.</p>

Table 2: Comments from respondents who were opposed or expressed concerns

Topic	Community feedback
Community gardens	<p>Not sure community gardens are relevant to Bayside.</p> <p>Gardens require a lot of continuous input. Gardens may have enthusiasm as first but then the gardens will become unused and uncared for.</p> <p>If gardens fail the reason they fail should be ascertained.</p> <p>Concerned about Glyphosate</p> <p>Closing an established garden should be a last resort.</p> <p>Ensure large numbers can be on site simultaneously</p>
Policy	<p>Policy is impenetrable so much government speak.</p> <p>Policy language is not friendly to average person.</p> <p>Too wordy and ambiguous, too political</p> <p>Policy too long and overly complicated.</p> <p>More detail needed on managing neighbours concerns.</p>
Community considerations	<p>A healthy and fair relationship between community and council needs to be established.</p> <p>Council should engage the community if considering closing a garden.</p>
Financial	<p>Council shouldn't direct the management group of a garden to bring about changes using their own finances or money. Community garden groups shouldn't have to fork out their own money.</p>
Other comments/ questions	<p>How many policies do we need?</p>

5.4 General comments for consideration about the Policy

Survey respondents were asked if they had 'any other comments about the draft Policy that you'd like Council to consider', with 29 comments received.

The feedback provided is summarised by theme in the table below:

Topic	Community feedback
Community Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should include water tank at all sites Should include fruit trees and other types of trees Should include Australian natives and floral displays Have wicking beds where possible Time consuming and will generally fail over time, so a bit of a waste of time Should consider nature strips for purpose of produce gardens Should only have communal plots not allocated plots No Glyphosate and use non-toxic weed killer alternatives Love to see these gardens popping up everywhere Very important to have more community gardens
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not easy to read More imagery instead of text Council should identify vacant land for development Important to have guidelines and suitable spots Shouldn't need a permit for a garden on Council land Include visual schematic examples of what each type of community garden might look like Include diagrams highlighting Council & user responsibilities. Concerned the policy procedure justifies the delay in getting a garden up.
Community considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be within walking distance of schools, kinders Should be close to public transport
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit costs should be waived Community gardens start with no financial resources A bit of a waste of money
Other comments/ questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have not seen the draft policy Where does the money come from for basic infrastructure? Less talk more action A real commitment to fairness, understanding of the value of community and volunteering, listening to

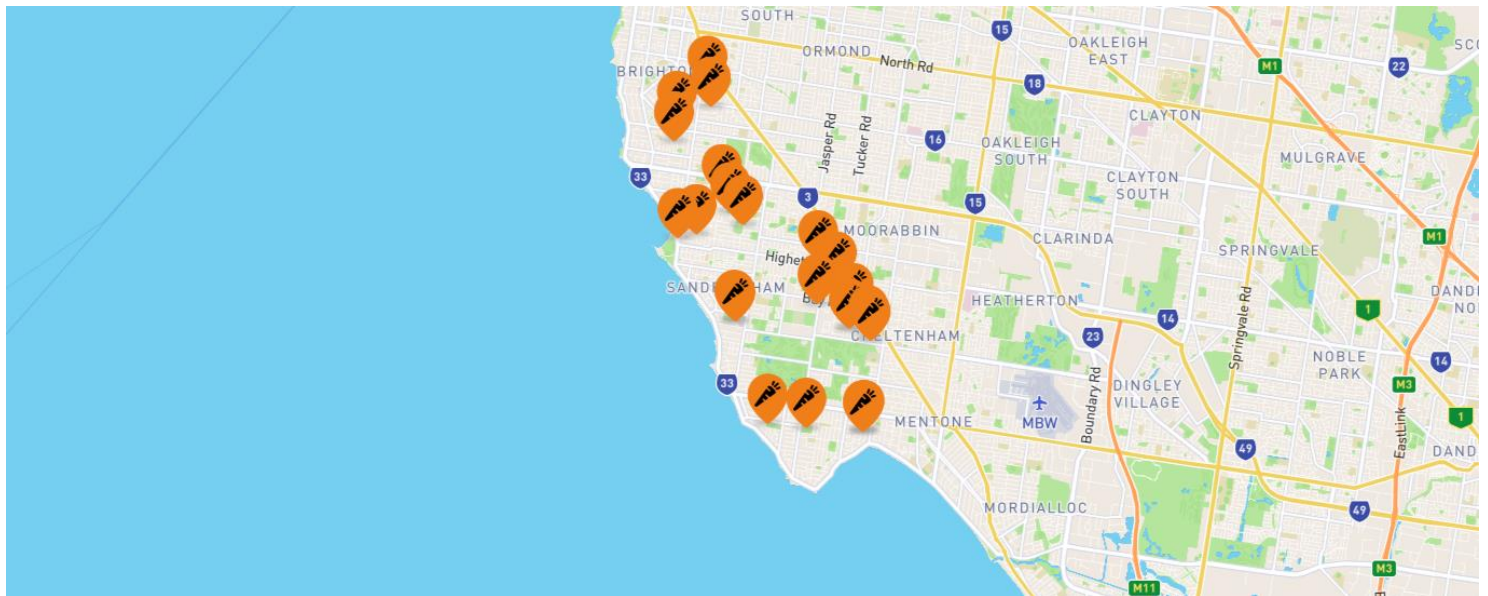
concerns and advice, and commitment to really working together

5.5 Areas of interest for community gardens

A social map was provided on **Have Your Say** as a way to understand the level of interest for community gardens across the municipality. The **additional activity** encouraged participants to plant a carrot on the map to indicate the locations in Bayside where they would like to see a community garden. Participants could also vote on the suggested sites, with a 'thumbs up' vote or a 'thumbs down' vote to show their support or concerns for the suggested garden sites.

25 planting contributions were received with distribution of the gardens widely spread across the municipality. 44 votes were received on the suggested sites with 36 'thumbs up' votes and 8 'thumbs down' votes. The below map highlights the areas where members of the community are interested in a community garden.

Figure 4: Where would you like to see a Community Garden pop up?



Top Contributions by Location

Top 10 most frequent postal/ZIP codes of posts submitted by participants.

Location	Total Contributions	% Contributions
3192, Cheltenham, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	6	24%
3188, Hampton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	5	20%
3193, Beaumaris, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	5	20%
3186, Brighton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	3	12%
3187, Brighton East, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	2	8%
3190, Highett, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	2	8%
3191, Sandringham, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	2	8%

5.6 Project Evaluation

This report presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback gathered during community engagement from 30 March – 5 May 2023.

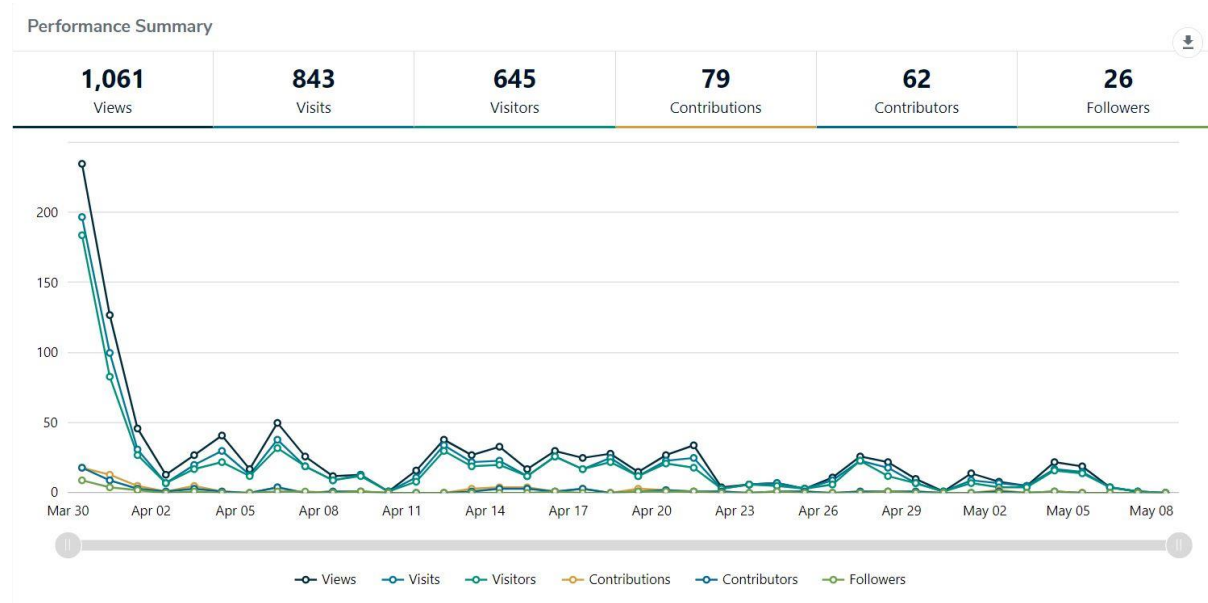
The consultation was promoted to key stakeholders including previous Have Your Say project subscribers, and members of community garden groups.

The website news story and This Week in Bayside e-newsletter also ensured the wider Bayside community was given the opportunity to provide feedback. The communications reached over 11,000 people.

The length of consultation was five weeks, with most responses received in the first two weeks.

The engagement program received a total of 79 contributions, including 54 online surveys and 25 social map contributions suggesting locations for community gardens completed via Have Your Say.

Figure 5: Have Your Say project page reach and participation.



Engagement targets for the Have Your Say webpages were that:

- 20% of visits would last at least one active minute (exceeded, 36.9%)
- 10% of visits would have at least two actions performed, such as moving around the project page or clicking on links (exceeded, 26.8%)
- 5% of visits had at least one contribution made (exceeded, 7.1%)

Satisfaction with engagement process

Most participants (81%) found the information was very or mostly easy to find and understand; 9% said they weren't sure and 6% said they found the information mostly hard to understand and 4% said they found the information very hard to find and understand. With the relatively small sample size, 4% represents 2 people.