



**Draft Public Toilet Plan – Phase 2
Engagement Summary
24 April – 10 May 2026**

Introduction

Good public toilet provision supports active communities in their use and enjoyment of public places. It improves local comfort and convenience and can increase active participation in recreational, social and commercial activity. We acknowledge there are different local community needs across our municipality, and the Public Toilet Plan sets out a framework for making accessible and inclusive public toilets available throughout all areas of the City of Whittlesea.

To inform the development of the draft Public Toilet Plan, Council sought feedback from the community during the first phase of community engagement undertaken in mid-2025. The updated Public Toilet Plan considered community feedback and built it into the plan, including:

- additional space and accessibility for all cubicles and facilities as a whole
- more family-friendly and gender-neutral facilities
- stronger guidelines on safety and siting
- strong decision-making framework, informed by community insights, to help prioritise upgrades and future locations
- four key principles to guide what we provide and where
- Thirty-four new priority actions to improve our facilities.

Council shared the updated Public Toilet Plan with community for feedback from 24 April to 10 May 2026. This report focuses on the second phase of community engagement.

How we engaged you

The second phase of community engagement on the draft Public Toilet Plan was conducted online through Council's *Engage Whittlesea* platform.

The *Engage Whittlesea* platform utilises an accessibility add-on ensuring that it is as accessible as possible for all users. The platform also has an in-built translation tool to mitigate any language barriers to participation, allowing the page to be translated into the top fifteen languages spoken within the municipality.

Project promotion

The opportunity to participate in the community engagement was promoted through a range of channels to have a widespread reach across the municipality:

- a dedicated project page on Council's digital engagement platform *Engage Whittlesea*
- *Engage Whittlesea* campaign to 1,681 registered users who have expressed interest in the topic or location
- one hundred A4 posters with a QR code to participate in the project were distributed to council owned/managed public toilets across the municipality including Community Activity Centres.
- digital screens at all council run community centres (10 active screens)
- direct email sent to key internal staff to distribute to their networks including the Whittlesea Disability Network.



Above L–R: Poster/flyer erected at all council managed public toilets (approx. 100), digital screen on display at all council managed centres with a digital screen (approx. 10) and Highlights from April Council meeting reel that highlighted the Public Toilet Plan community engagement received 1,560 views, 36 interactions and 8 shares on Instagram and 5,365 views, 31 interactions and 1 share on Facebook.

Participation

Below is a snapshot of the demographics of participants that made a submission in the community engagement.

Snapshot of community participation



A total of 48 people contributed online via the *Engage Whittlesea* platform from 631 views and 551 visits to the page

Snapshot of participant demographics

Gender Identity



Participants identified their gender as female (63%), male (27%), and non-binary (2%), with 8% preferring not to answer.

Age



All age brackets were represented, with the largest groups being 65–74 years (27%), 55–64 years (23%), and 45–54 years (17%).

Suburb



The highest level of participation came from Doreen (33%), followed by South Morang (11%) and Mernda (11%).

LGBTIQA+ Community



8% of participants identified as members of the LGBTIQA+ community.

First Nations Community



6% of participants identified as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

Multicultural Community



19% of participants spoke English as a second language.

Community members living with or caring for someone with a disability



27% of participants identified as living with a disability or as an unpaid carer for an older person or a person living with a disability.

What we heard

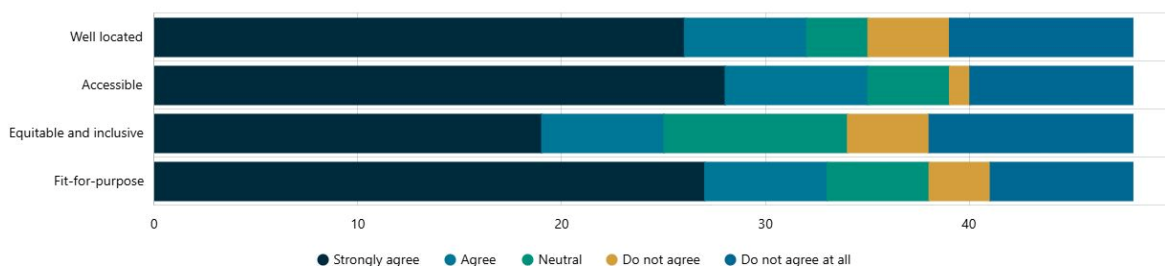
Community members were invited to read the updated draft Public Toilet Plan and share their views on what they value about the plan including proposed principles and where improvements could be made.

The following summarises what we heard from the community across the engagement activities. Additional comments provided through surveys have been themed, with selected quotes included to highlight common views and experiences. The comments captured in this report are a snapshot of those provided. All comments will be provided to Council to assist in finalising the plan.



Do you agree with the four key principles?

The survey results indicate strong overall support (60%) for the four key principles outlined in the draft Public Toilet Plan. *Well located* and *Accessible* received the highest levels of agreement, with most participants either strongly agreeing or agreeing that these principles are important. *Fit-for-purpose* also received strong support, while *Equitable and inclusive* attracted slightly more neutral responses compared to the other principles, though overall agreement remained high. Only a small proportion of participants disagreed with any of the principles, demonstrating broad community support for the proposed approach to public toilet provision across the municipality.





Do you feel the four key principles meet your community needs?

The graph below shows community responses to whether the four key principles of the draft Public Toilet Plan meet community needs: *Well located*, *Accessible*, *Equitable and inclusive*, and *Fit-for-purpose*. Responses are grouped into three categories: meets needs, somewhat meets needs, and does not meet needs.

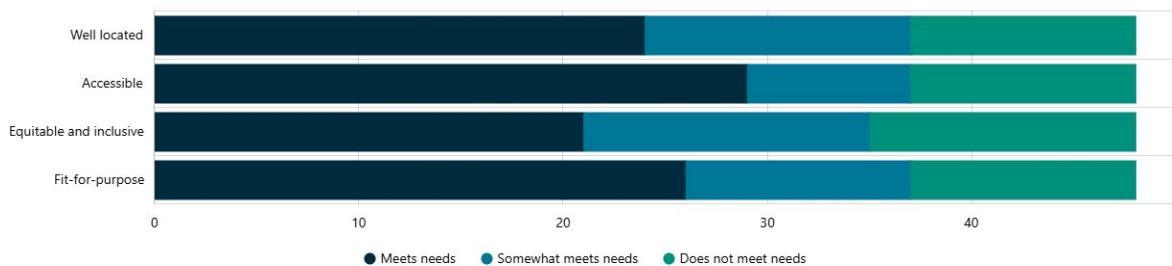
Overall, the results are generally positive across all four principles, with majority of respondents indicating that each principle meets needs.

Accessible performs the strongest, showing the highest level of agreement, with most respondents indicating it meets needs and relatively fewer selecting “somewhat” or ‘does not meet needs’.

Well located and *Fit-for-purpose* also show strong support, with a clear majority of responses in the ‘meets needs’ category, alongside a moderate proportion indicating they are partially meeting needs.

Equitable and inclusive records the lowest level of strong agreement compared to the other principles, with more respondents selecting ‘somewhat meets needs’ and ‘does not meet needs,’ suggesting this is the area with the most room for improvement.

In summary, the feedback suggests the principles are generally viewed positively, particularly in relation to accessibility, while equity and inclusion may benefit from further consideration or clarification.



Is there anything you think we are missing from this Public Toilet Plan?

Feedback reflected a mix of support, concern, and opposition depending on location and perceived community priorities.



Planning priorities and future growth needs

A strong combined theme reflects concerns about competing infrastructure priorities and long-term planning. Around a quarter of participants felt public toilets are not a priority compared to other infrastructure such as a swimming pool in Mernda, and suggested funding should be redirected. Some feedback also

showed a concern about the lack of futureproofing in regard to public toilets in rapidly growing outer northern suburbs, particularly Donnybrook and Woodstock, with calls for these areas to be proactively planned for given predicted population growth.

“There appears to be no future proofing of Donnybrook and Woodstock with expected population growth.”

“We don’t need more public toilets, we want a pool in Mernda...”

“Money needs to be diverted into a local pool facility instead of park toilets.”



Safety, security, and amenity design requirements

Across responses, there is strong emphasis on the need for safe, secure, and well-designed facilities. Suggestions made included improved lighting, CCTV, panic alarms, and safer access during low-use periods. Some respondents preferred separate male and female toilets, while others emphasised inclusivity and accessibility needs.

There were also comments on internal design features, including baby change facilities, disability access, hygiene improvements, and better layout (i.e.: hand dryer placement, hooks, cleanliness etc).

“Safety such as lights and access to panic alarms for users in quieter times.”

“Number of toilets and crucial safe areas for women, women with children and children.”

“Disabled people or babies and toddlers need space to lay down for an actual nappy change.”



Location suitability and integration into existing precincts

Respondents raised concerns about where toilets are located and how well they integrate into existing environments, particularly commercial areas. A key issue was the lack of toilets inside shopping centres, with preference for internal placement due to safety and vandalism concerns.

There were also concerns that toilets located externally in shopping strip locations are unsafe, poorly supervised, and prone to vandalism, reinforcing the importance of appropriate placement of public toilets.

“We need public toilets inside the Doreen / Laurimar shopping centre... outside is not safe and easily vandalised.”

“Council should have required developers to include toilets inside the Woolworths precinct.”



Operational considerations

Respondents took the opportunity to share practical suggestions to improve sustainability and operational efficiency, including water reuse and design improvements for maintenance and hygiene.

“Water tanks attached to sports grounds could help with cleaning and use.”

“Public toilets are a major cost and often become dirty and vandalised.”



Lauries Field – consultation concerns and opposition

Several respondents from Doreen who completed the online survey, as well as three residents who contacted Council via customer service and/or emailed their local Councillor directly (Cr Gunn) indicated that they did not support the draft plan as they did not want public toilets included in Lauries Field. It is worth noting that these residents have misinterpreted the Engage website’s pin drop appendix map included in the consultation materials. This map was intended to show locations identified by participants during the first phase of community engagement undertaken 2025 as suggested sites for future public toilet facilities.

It is important to note that these locations were provided by the community and have not been endorsed or confirmed by Council. The draft Public Toilet Plan sets out guiding principles to inform the planning and delivery of new and upgraded facilities, rather than identifying or committing to specific final locations. Final site selection will be subject to further assessment, investigation, and decision-making processes.

As noted in the [Lauries Field Master plan Community Engagement summary](#): a public toilet WILL NOT be provided at Lauries Field. Feedback opposing a toilet at this location and lack of consultation is therefore not relevant to the current draft Public Toilet plan being engaged on.

Would you like to add any further comments?

Feedback highlighted a mix of support and concern, with several clear themes emerging. These included views on appropriate locations for new toilets, safety and amenity considerations, design and maintenance expectations, and broader priorities for community infrastructure.



Support for additional toilets in high-use recreational areas

Many respondents supported the provision of toilets in key open space areas, particularly around lakes, playgrounds, walking trails, and mixed-use recreation precincts. These comments emphasised the importance of accessibility for families, older people, and children, particularly where alternative facilities are not within reasonable walking distance. There was also recognition that toilets should align with areas of high visitation and activity.

“Strongly support the addition of toilets near the lakes... far to walk to other options, particularly with children or elderly.”

“Public toilets at LAURIMAR is ESSENTIAL.”

“Noticed that some suburbs have no or very few public toilet facilities, such as Wollert.”



Safety, security, maintenance, and design quality expectations

A strong theme focused on ensuring toilets are safe, well-lit, visible, and well maintained, with suggestions including CCTV, clear sightlines, and regular cleaning (especially in high-use periods such as summer). Respondents also highlighted the need for better design features, such as baby change shelves, accessibility improvements, and facilities suitable for a range of users.

“Please ensure they are made well with every effort to reduce vandalism and consider CCTV outside.”

“Toilets need cleaning more than once a day, particularly in summer.”

“I have had to lay my son on the ground to change his nappy when facilities are unavailable or unsuitable.”



Design preferences, inclusivity, and user experience

There were mixed views around gender-inclusive design, with some respondents supporting choice-based provision (gendered and inclusive options), while others strongly opposed gender-neutral facilities. Additional comments focused on the need for clear rules of use, cultural considerations, and user comfort, as well as concerns about appropriateness for children.

“Gender neutral is fine as long as gendered toilets are also provided.”

“We need gender specific cubicles... many people have trauma concerns.”

“Don’t make indoor gender inclusive toilets.”



Service gaps, operations, and existing facility improvements

A smaller but consistent theme highlighted existing gaps in provision and operational issues, including inadequate numbers of toilets, maintenance concerns, and accessibility limitations in current facilities. Some respondents also suggested improvements to cleaning regimes and infrastructure upgrades at existing sites.

“Public toilets in Whittlesea are too few and often busy or out of order.”

“Some toilets are not accessible or are poorly maintained and smelly.”

“Toilets in Beech Street Whittlesea have 10-minute timers on them that automatically open after this time, which is concerning if you are not finished”.

“Hot water is needed for proper cleaning at existing facilities.”

Next Steps

Thank you again to everyone who contributed to this community engagement by sharing comments, feedback, sending emails to the shared mailbox or speaking to project staff directly.

The feedback captured will help inform and finalise the Public Toilet Plan. We encourage you to follow engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/toilets to keep up to date on the progress of this project.

Community feedback captured may also support the development of other key Council plans, strategies and projects, contributing to the vision of making Whittlesea *A Place for All*.