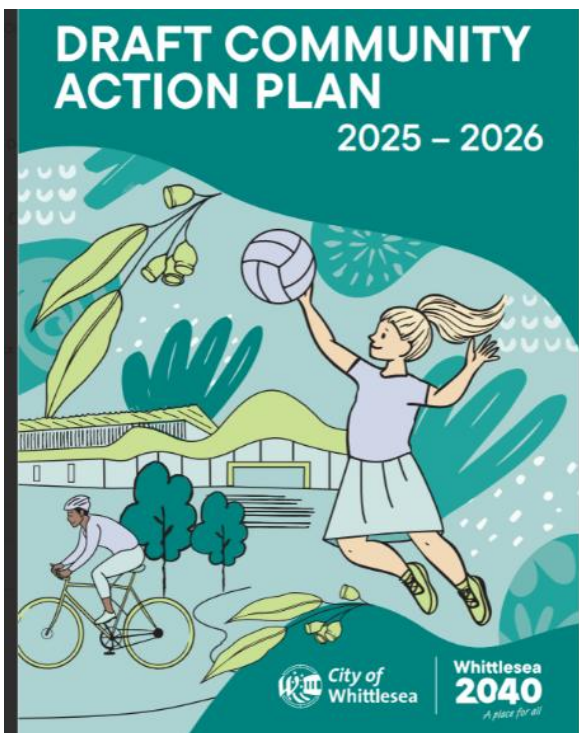
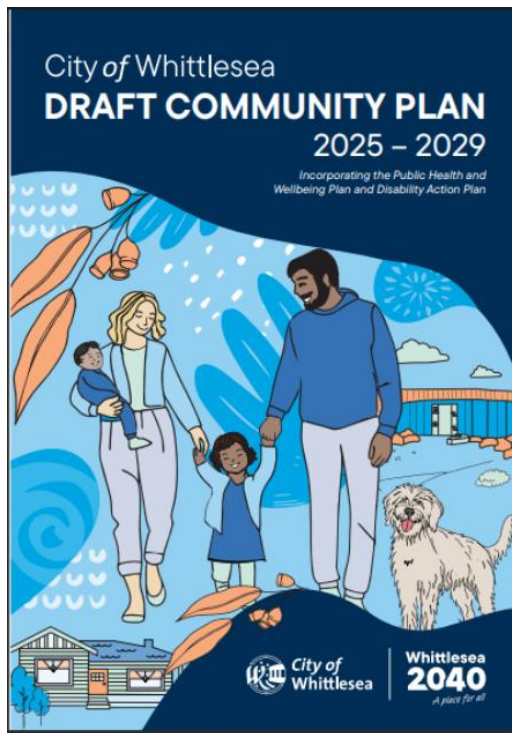




COMMUNITY PLAN 2025-2029 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025-2026 PHASE 4

Engagement Summary

24 July – 31 August 2025

Introduction

Between 24 July and 31 August 2025, the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2026-2026 was presented for feedback.

The draft Community Plan 2025-2029 is built around 12 themes that reflect different aspects of community life which we highlighted to the community throughout the consultation period. These 12 themes form a blueprint for how we will work with the community to make the City of Whittlesea a more connected, inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant place for all.

There are 55 strategic priorities that Council have committed to delivering over the next four years. The Community Action Plan 2025 - 2026 shows the priorities Council will focus on in the first year. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan have been embedded into these 55 strategic priorities to ensure community health and wellbeing is at the core of our work. Community had the opportunity to read the documents in full (online or printed copies available) or refer to key highlights presented on the project *Engage Whittlesea* page and information boards at a series of 14 community-based pop-ups.

Council also invited previous community focus group participants to join us to delve deeper into the draft plans at a Community Focus Group held on 31 July at the Civic Centre. Twenty community members spent 2.5 hours discussing in detail the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-2026.

Project promotion

The opportunity to participate in the community engagement was promoted through a variety of channels to ensure widespread reach across the municipality including:

- Council's digital engagement platform *Engage Whittlesea*
- Six posts on Council's social media channels
- *Engage Whittlesea* campaign to 1500 platform users
- E-newsletters or personalised email with direct link to the project page was sent to:
 - 80 registered senior clubs & 485 contacts of registered multicultural groups
 - Over 3000 contacts on the Ageing Well database
 - Over 70 registered sports and aquatic clubs
 - Youth Services network
 - 200 Library and community hubs regular user group
 - 176 subscribers to the Whittlesea Disability Network newsletter
 - First Peoples network
- Promotion on screens at Civic Centre, libraries and recreation facilities.

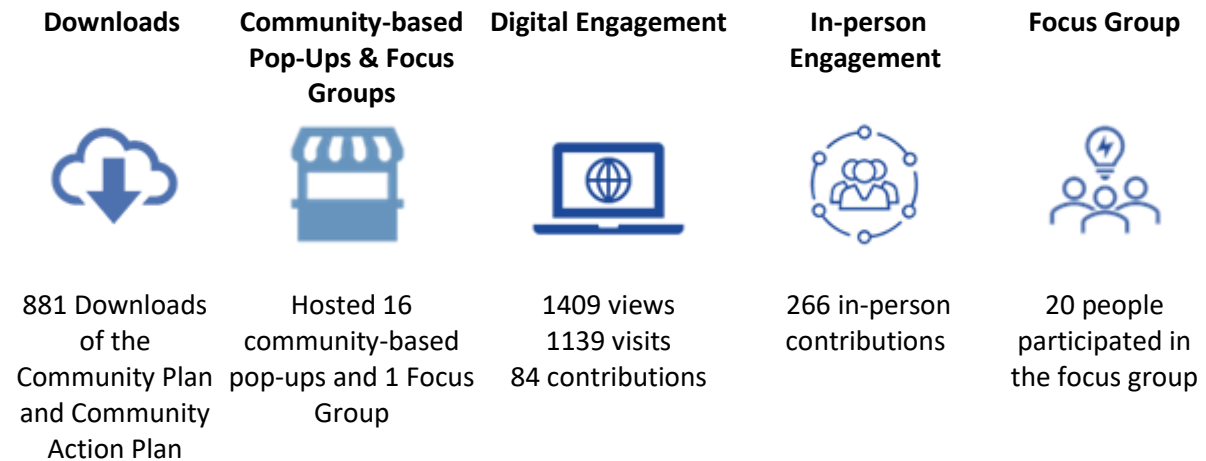
Social Media Summary

A total of six social media posts were published with 3 on Facebook and 3 on Instagram that generated:

- A total of 15,072 views
- A reach of 5,450 accounts resulting in 224 interactions and 18 clicks to links provided

Participation

Snapshot of community participation



Snapshot of demographics

Below is a snapshot of the diversity of participation in the community engagement, which is broadly representative of our community:

Gender Identity



60% Female, 38% Male

Age



All age brackets participated with the most represented being 36-45 years (25%), over 65 (21%) and 26-35 years (16%)

Suburb



Participants came from 15 suburbs across the municipality, with the highest participation coming from Mill Park (14%), and Epping (11%).

LGBTIQA+ community



Multicultural community



People with disabilities



6% of participants identified as members of the LGBTIQA+ community

34% of participants spoke English as a second language

11% of participants were people with a disability and or carers

How we engaged you

The community engagement to inform the Community Plan 2025 -2029 was delivered in phases as below:



We are here

Community Focus Group

Council invited previous focus group participants to join us to delve deeper into the draft plans at a Community Focus Group that was held at the Civic Centre, South Morang, Thursday 31 July, 6.30pm to 9pm.

The focus group was designed to facilitate deliberative discussions around the twelve themes featured in the Community Plan. Participants of the focus group completed two activities, one of which focused on the key themes and the other activity provided the opportunity to reflect. (refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for full information about the activities)



Above: participants at community focus group.



Broader community consultation

The wider community were encouraged to share feedback on the draft Community Plan

2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2026 by visiting the project page on the *Engage Whittlesea* platform or at one of the community-based pop-up stalls. Participants were asked if they supported the draft plans and were invited to add further comments if they selected no as a response to either of the questions. Those who participated in the online survey were asked additional questions in relation to the themes and strategic priorities featured in the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and whether the health and disability priorities were adequately met.

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.

To inform community and to hear from a diverse range of community members Council hosted 16 in-person engagement activities across the municipality as below:

Date	Time	Where	Address/location
Thursday 24 July	10am-1pm	Whittlesea Services Hub (street front)	63 Church St, Whittlesea
Thursday 24 July*	10am-12pm	Lauries Field	1W Gosford Crt, Doreen
Friday 25 July	2.30pm-4.30pm	Mill Park Stables SC	314-360 Childs Rd, Mill Park
Wednesday 30 July	9am-12pm	Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre	52 Main St, Thomastown
Thursday 31 July	10am-1pm	Mill Park Library	394 Plenty Road, Mill Park
Friday 1 August*	2.30-4.30pm	Doreen Laurimar Woolworths	95 Hazel Glen Rd, Doreen
Saturday 2 August	10am – 12.30pm	Shared Cup Cafe	995 Donnybrook Rd, Donnybrook
Tuesday 5 August	10am-1pm	Westfield Plenty Valley	415 McDonalds Road, South Morang
Friday 8 August	10am -12pm	Galada CC (Immunisation)	10a Forum Way, Epping
Friday 8 August	2.30pm-4.30pm	Laurimar Woolworths	95 Hazel Glen Rd, Doreen
Tuesday 12 August	10am-1pm	Lalor Library	2A May Rd, Lalor
Wednesday 13 August	11am-2pm	Coles Uni Hill	224 Plenty Road, Bundoora
Tuesday 19 August	1.30pm-4.30pm	Mernda Town Centre	180 Riverdale Blvd, Mernda
Wednesday 20 August	5pm-7pm	Kirrip CAC (Immunisation session)	135 De Rossi Blvd, Wollert
Thursday 28 August	10am-1pm	Mill Park Lakes	The Promenade, South Morang
Saturday 30 August	6pm – 9pm	Walking Thomastown	Main Street Recreation Reserve, Thomastown

*Co-located with Lauries Field Master plan consultation, flyers to promote the project were made available.

Note – Caretaker Period of Lalor By-Election 24 June to 2 August 2025.

We also presented the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-2026 to 81 representatives of 48 registered Seniors Clubs that attended their Club Liaison meeting on Tuesday 12 August 2025.

Online, participants were asked to identify which of the themes presented in the Community Plan they identified with and if the strategic priorities Council have committed across the themes reflect what the community told us through previous engagements that they wanted us to work towards. They were also asked if the health and disability priorities are appropriately addressed in the Community Plan. Participants were then asked to identify overall whether they supported the Community Plan 2025-2029 and Community Action Plan 2025-2026. If they responded that they did not support one or both plans they were prompted to provide a reason for their response. There was a free text section where they could add any other feedback they had about the draft plans.

In person, participants were asked to identify overall whether they supported the Community Plan 2025-2029 and Community Action Plan 2025-2026. There was a free text section where they could add any other feedback they had about the draft plans. Refer to Appendix 1 to see the dot boards used at in-person engagement activities. Details of the community-based pop-ups are below:



Above: Images of project staff at pop up stalls

What our community told us

What we heard at the focus groups

Twenty community members participated in a Community Focus Group on 31 July 2025 at the Civic Centre. Through the first activity Council was able to delve deeper into each theme and understand what participants liked about each as well as parts they found confusing or unclear. This was achieved through a red pen, green pen exercise.

Participants found many parts of each theme clear and easy to understand, welcoming the content.

Theme 1: 'The deliver home support services paragraph provides concrete examples of the services, very good!'

Theme 7: 'This is an important theme and simple to understand'

Theme 11: 'Ability to show how Council has improved the daily lives.'

The focus group provided feedback on opportunities to make the language clearer in relation to the theme titles. It was also recommended that some of the language used require more explanation and or examples to assist them to better understand.

Theme 7: Under the responsibility of others – 'Change the word and approach from enforcing to preventing'

Feedback was captured in the second activity through a reflections and evaluation survey. What we heard through that survey was:

- 90% of participants could see themselves in the plan
- 100% of participants commented on the themes they could identify with, meaning that each identified with at least one theme
- 85% agreed the strategic priorities reflected what community told us we should work towards during this four-year period
- 85% of participants felt health and disability priorities were appropriately addressed in the draft Community Plan 2025-2029
- 100% of participants supported both the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-2029

Council also presented the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-2026 to 81 community members representing 48 seniors' clubs at the Seniors Club Liaison meeting on Tuesday 12 August 2025 at Civic Centre. There was strong overall support for the draft Community Action Plan 2025-2026, with the document well received. Although some found the draft Community Plan 2025-2029 too wordy and detailed as many attendees were from culturally diverse backgrounds, which made it challenging for them to follow certain parts of the plan and engage with it. They appreciated the visible alignment of the Community Action Plan with Council's vision and goals, finding it more relatable and engaging than the four-year Community Plan. The group felt the strategic priorities could be clearer in outlining our intended actions in the Community Plan 2025-2029.

What we heard at the Youth Council

On the 4 August 2025, Youth Council broadly endorsed the strategic direction and presentation of the Draft Community Plan 2025–2029. They highlighted strong alignment with youth values in areas such as early years support, youth engagement, and inclusive transport and safety initiatives. The structure and layout of the document, including the use of community quotes and visual elements, were seen as effective in communicating key messages and enhancing accessibility and engagement.

Key areas for improvement mentioned enhancing clarity, relevance, and accessibility for diverse audiences. Feedback included simplifying technical language, including visual aids of infrastructure, and ensuring youth-specific content is more prominent across all themes. Youth councillors also recommended reducing repetition to improve readability and provide clearer information around program access and eligibility.

What we heard from the broader community consultation

We heard from 350 community members as part of the broader community consultation, with feedback captured from 266 people in-person and 84 people online.

Do you support the draft Community Plan?



88% Yes



9% No

A total of 3% of participants did not answer with 17 participants who answered no stated the main reasons being a lack of information on how it will support LGBTIQ+ community, road cyclists, opportunities for people with ADHD and Autism, housing, community safety and supporting infrastructure upgrades.

'Lack of information on how Council is supporting and improving the lives of LGBTIQ+ community and individuals'

'It is not inclusive towards road cyclist.'

'More opportunities for people with ADHD and Autism'

'Areas such as housing diversity are lacking in ambition.'

'We do not feel safe in our community'

'Need a dog park in Hawkstowe.'

Do you support the draft Community Action Plan?



89% Yes



8% No

A total of 3% of participants did not answer with 13 participants who answered no stated the main reasons centred around actions that are missing in the strategic priorities, funding infrastructure and actions that will bring the community together.

'There are no actions associated with SP1, which is relevant to me as someone in their 50s'

'The facilities at Kelynack Reserve are far below what is acceptable'

'It really does not aim to bring the community together it just encourages more splinter groups; we need strong community leaders to step forward and work together to build a community of inclusiveness.'

Participants who completed the online survey were asked additional questions as follows:

Do you identify with one or more of the themes presented Community Plan? Select the themes you identify with.

A total of 84 participants responded with only one participant stating that they didn't identify with any of the themes.

Themes 5 and 7 were the themes that most participants (73%) identified with and themes 6 and 12 had (69%) of participants identify with.

Theme 9 had the least number of participants identify with only 9%

Do the strategic priorities reflect what the community told us they wanted us to work towards during this period?



78% Yes



22% No

A total of 19 participants who answered no stated a lack of community safety, funding request for sports infrastructure, lack of action in Donnybrook, lack of LGBTIQ+ references, environment and lack of actions to address family and health services

'Our streets are not safe; we have assaults and even deaths regularly in the streets and shopping centres'

'The plan does not include any functionality or accessibility upgrades for the sports facilities at...'

'The strategic priorities does not have any impact to the community in Donnybrook'

'What are you doing about LGLBTIQ+ community'

'Not enough focus on the green wedge'

'Not enough actions about drug addiction and elder abuse...'

Do you feel the health and disability priorities are appropriately addressed in the Community Plan?



76% Yes



24% No

A total of 20 participants who answered no were asked what is missing in relation to health and disability with their main items being more actions for dementia, free to low-cost health and recreation initiatives, accessibility in the community and access to health services.

'More can be to reduce the stigma of illness like dementia...'

'Other councils have free gym & pool membership for over 60's'

'There are still places in the City of Whittlesea that residents on crutches or wheel chairs can not get around...'

'More required for mental health'

Is there anything else you would like to feedback about the Community Plan 2025-29 and Community Action Plan 2025-26?

We heard from 42 community members online who stated that the themes make the document difficult to understand. Other comments centred around more transport, gender equity more safe places for youth, more health and wellbeing services, maintaining and keeping our neighbourhoods clean and more accessibility in built environments

I would like to see Bus Route 357 to get extended into Lyndarum North

'Great to see gender equity and prevention of gender-based violence included within the community action plan.'

'More supports and services for disabilities, especially neurodiverse community members.'

'I believe there should be more community facilities for adolescents offering a safe place to socialise in a safe environment.'

'Accessibility built into the physical environment: insisting that footpaths are required on both sides of every street.'

We also captured 152 comments from community at our pop up stalls. The comments centred around the need for more public toilets, improving safety in the community, maintenance of parks, roads and footpaths, more services for the elderly and youth, rubbish in the community, social connection ideas and more health and wellbeing services.

'Wollert has no public toilets at parks.'

‘Light up the pedestrian crossings at night’

‘Footpath on Donnybrook Rd near train station is a must’

‘Dementia needs more help’

‘Rubbish on the side of the street’

‘More seats for socialising’

‘Aged services, Occupational Therapist wait time too long’



There were also 15 comments supporting Councils actions

‘Well-connected and lots of venues,

‘Impressed by the parks and gardens, local services for seniors and tree planting’

‘Love the parks in Doreen and appreciate Council engagement – looking forward to Hill Top Park’

‘Like the rubbish taskforce, impressive! Love the family services MCH’

‘Good projects I have seen this year’

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who shared feedback either in-person at a community-based pop-up, online through the *Engage Whittlesea* platform or as part of our Community Focus Group.

We are finalising the Community Plan 2025 -2029 and Community Action Plan 2025-2026 that will be presented to Council for consideration and adoption at the Council meeting scheduled for 7 October 2025. We will share the final documents and encourage you to follow the project Engage page (engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/communityplan25) to be kept up to date as these are finalised.

Appendix 1: activity boards used at in-person engagement activities



Let's talk

DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN 2025 - 2029

This Community Plan is for everyone - no matter your age, background, or stage of life. Whether you're growing up, raising a family, running a business, or enjoying retirement, it's about helping you live well in the City of Whittlesea.

We've shaped the plan around 12 themes that reflect what matters most to our community: feeling safe and connected, getting around easily, enjoying our environment, and being part of local life. Our hope is that everyone can see themselves in this plan, and feel supported to thrive, belong, and be part of something bigger.

THE 12 THEMES THAT MATTER TO OUR COMMUNITY:

Ageing well

Family and Children Services

Health, recreation and wellbeing

Climate change and environment

Waste management

Parks, playgrounds and open spaces

Community safety

Housing diversity and affordability

Local business support

Community health and wellbeing

An informed and engaged community

Citizens and stakeholders reimagining of future roles

DO YOU SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY PLAN?

YES	NO

FURTHER COMMENTS



Let's talk

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025-26

The Community Action Plan 2025-26 sets out the actions Council will focus on delivering in the first year of the Community Plan 2025-29. The Community Action Plan 2025-26 is the first annual supplement to the Community Plan 2025-29. It articulates the community and internal facing outcomes that set our strategic direction and these actions are prioritised for delivery in the financial year 2025-26. The Action Plan plays a pivotal role in working towards the vision and strategic direction embedded in Whittlesea 2040 and the Community Plan 2025-29.

OUR WHITTLESEA 2040 GOALS AND THE KEY DIRECTIONS

K21: A socially cohesive society
K22: A healthy and safe community

K23: Smart, connected, transparent networks
K24: Well designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres
K25: Shaping for climate needs

K26: Increased local employment
K27: Decentralised, innovative local businesses

K28: Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity
K29: Climate ready
K30: Liveable in cities, sustainable living

K31: Driving better community outcomes
K32: More informed council decisions
K33: More collaborative and engaged workforces

DO YOU SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN?

YES	NO

FURTHER COMMENTS

Appendix 2: Focus Group Activities

Activity 1 – Key Themes

You have been provided a key theme from the Community Plan as well as a list of actions that relate to the strategic priority areas identified in the theme.

- Using a green highlighter identify the parts of the key theme that you find clear and easily understood.
- Using a pink highlighter identify the parts of the key theme that you may find confusing.
- Identify anything you feel should be included



Activity 2 – Reflections

1. Do you see yourself in the plan – do you identify with one or more of the themes presented in the Community Plan? Which themes do you identify with?

Select one answer only
☐ Yes
☐ No
Identify any themes you identify with and provide any other comments related to your response.

2. Do the strategic priorities reflect what the community told us they wanted us to work toward during this period?

Select one answer only
☐ Yes
☐ No
Please comment on your answer.

3. Do you feel health and disability priorities are appropriately addressed in the Community Plan?

Select one answer only
☐ Yes
☐ No
Please comment on your answer.

5. Overall, do you support the Community Plan?

Select one answer only
☐ Yes
☐ No

6. Do Overall, do you support the Community Action Plan??

Select one answer only
☐ Yes
☐ No

Activity 3 - Focus Group Evaluation

7. How clear was the purpose of Focus Group?

On a scale between 1 and 5, and in increments of 1, provide your rating below.

8. How did you find the structure and flow of the session?

Select one answer only

☐ Very comfortable, flowed well
☐ Comfortable
☐ Was ok
☐ Could have been better
☐ Confusing, didn't flow at all

9. Can you tell us why you felt that way?

Please comment on your answer.

10. How comfortable did you feel contributing throughout the session? Rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 5 being very comfortable.

On a scale between 1 and 5 and in increments of 1, provide your rating below.

11. How engaging did you find the facilitator/s to be?

Rate on a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 being "Not engaging at all" and 5 being "Very engaging".

On a scale between 1 and 5, and in increments of 1, provide your rating below.

12. Would you like to tell us more about your experience with the facilitator/s?

Please comment on your answer.

13. How likely would you be to participate in future Focus Groups run by City of Whittlesea?

Select one answer only
☐ Will definitely participate again
☐ Very likely to participate again
☐ Likely to participate in future
☐ Unsure
☐ Would not participate again

14. Would you like to share or add any other comments about the Focus Group session or activities?

Please comment on your answer.
