

Banyule Futures - Survey and pop-up findings report by precinct

East Precinct (Lower Plenty, Viewbank, Yallambie)

68 people participated in East Precinct engagement activities, including 48 who completed surveys and 20 who participated in the pop-up at Lower Plenty Shopping Village on 13 June 2024.

While one question, 'What do you love about East Precinct?', was asked at the pop-up, the activity acted as a communications exercise for people to complete the survey at home and go in the draw for one of 20 x \$50 gift cards. Postcards were handed out to passers-by to promote the opportunity. Other questions relating to local priorities, concerns and proposed projects were not asked at the pop-up.

Of the 48 people who provided gender and age information, **Figure 13** shows that people who identified as woman or female represented 63% of the total, which is consistent with other activities that took place as part of this broad engagement. **Figure 14** shows that people who are 35 - 49 years old were the most represented.

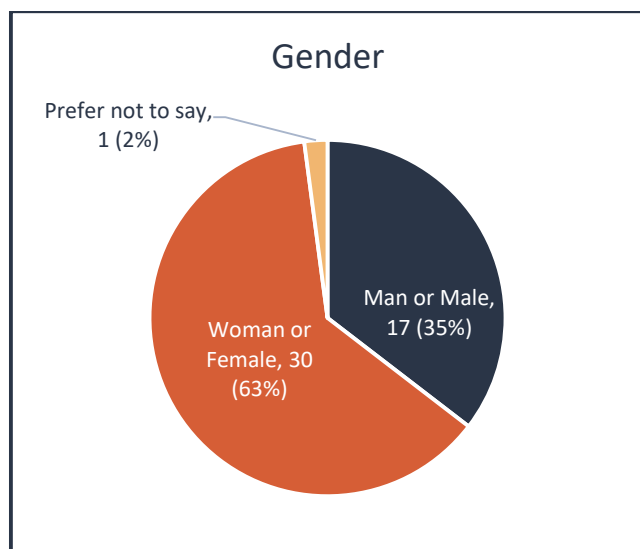


Figure 13 - East Precinct participant gender

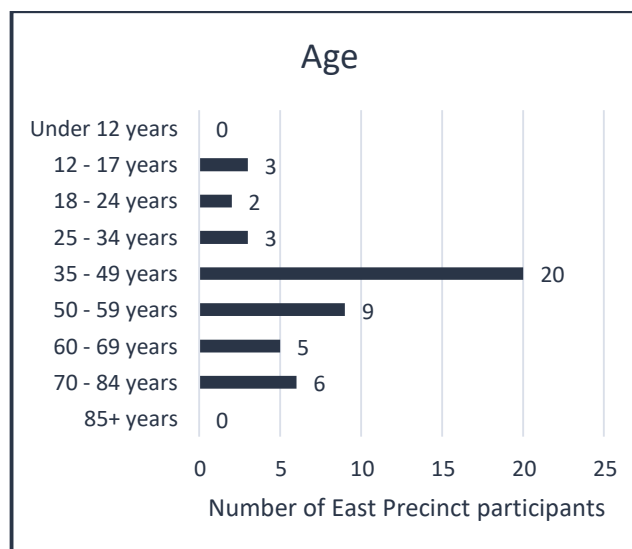


Figure 14 - East Precinct participant age

6 people who live with disability, **3** who identify as LBGTIQA+, **6** who speak English as a second or other language and **3** carers completed the East Precinct survey. There was no participation from people who identify as having Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island background.

1. What do you love about East Precinct?

67 responses were received for the question 'What do you love about East Precinct (Lower Plenty, Viewbank, Yallambie)?' While there were some calls for more footpaths, improved traffic management and signage and more community events, three main themes were identified during analysis that talk to the positive attributes of East Precinct.

1. Nature and green spaces

Respondents' love for parks, trees and open spaces came through strongly in responses to this question, as did an appreciation for walking trails, bike paths and wildlife. There was a strong desire to preserve the natural and rural feel of the area.

2. Community and safety

People spoke about people in the area being friendly and a strong community spirit. It was also said that the area is safe, quiet, family-friendly and a great place to raise children.

3. Convenience and amenities

People like that the area is relatively close to the city but still maintains a rural character. Respondents also spoke positively about the proximity to shops, schools, medical clinics, transport and playgrounds.

2. Priorities

The following priorities were presented to participants as part of the East Precinct survey to gauge people's level of agreement with what we understand from the Living in Place survey data.



Figure 15 - East Precinct priorities

Of the 47 people that responded to this question, 87% (41) agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for East Precinct and 13% (6) disagreed.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	87% (41)
Disagree	13% (6)

Figure 16 - level of agreement, East Precinct priorities

Agree or Strongly Agree

Amongst the 87% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities, people agreed that **safety** is an important priority, particularly personal safety, street lighting, concerns about crime and the need for safe walking environments.

There was a strong sense that the **natural environment** is a priority, with an emphasis on the overall 'greenness' of the area the need to preserve and maintain our green spaces and bushland. There was general appreciate for the natural beauty of the area.

With regard to **shopping, dining and leisure**, there was support for local businesses and the sense of community that local shopping fosters. It was noted that larger shopping centres which are close by cater for most needs. This priority was considered less important than the environment.

Disagree

Of the 13% that disagreed, they agreed that the **natural environment** is important and should be above other factors. It was also said that liveability and the natural environment can coexist.

While **safety** concerns were raised, some people felt that the media exaggerates the extent of safety issues.

It was said by one person that they have a small **shopping** precinct would be of value, while another said that a priority for them is improved public transport to get around more easily.

3. Concerns

The following concerns were presented to participants as part of the East Precinct survey to gauge people's level of agreement with what we understand from the Living in Place survey data.

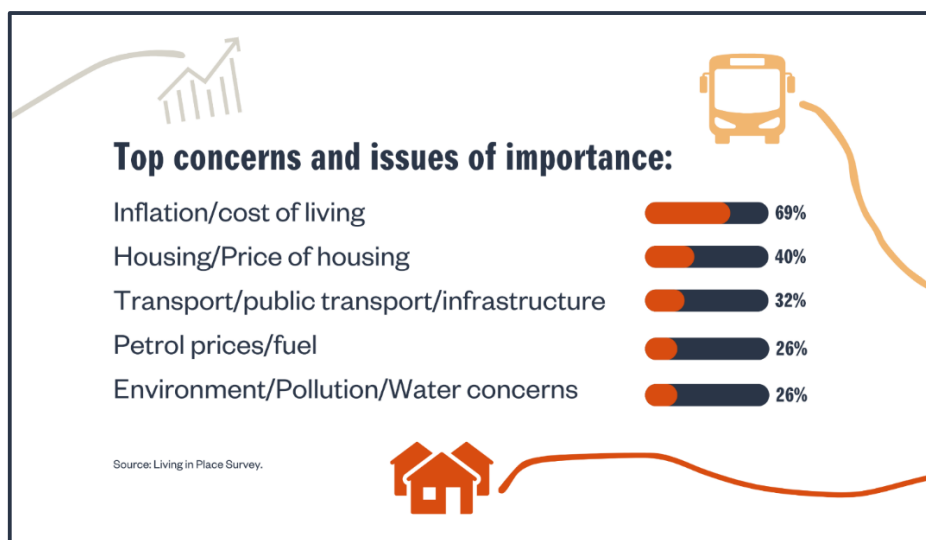


Figure 17 - East Precinct concerns

Of the 48 people that responded to this question, 73% (35) agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for East Precinct, 19% (9) disagreed and 8% (4) did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	73% (35)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	19% (9)
Don't know/can't say	8% (4)

Figure 18 - level of agreement, East Precinct concerns

Agree or Strongly Agree

Respondents to this question agreed or strongly agreed that **inflation** and **cost of living** is a concern, including food, electricity and people's ability to maintain their quality of life.

With regard to **public transport**, there was a general sense that the precinct needs better transport connections and that the existing services and **infrastructure** are inadequate and need improvement. Better connection to Box Hill, Doncaster and Balwyn were mentioned.

While people agreed that the state of the **natural environment** is a concern, some respondents feel that it should be balanced with other existing pressures and put it up the list.

It was said that **housing** affordability and rental availability are a key concern and that buying a house for many families and prospective homeowners is becoming untenable.

An additional concern noted by respondents was **Council rates** and a sense that the services provided by Council do not align with the rates paid. There were general calls for improved services including roads, green bins and weed control.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

For some respondents, it was felt that the **environment** was a greater concern and should be put up the list. The climate emergency and pollution, including noise pollution from the North East Link, were noted as part of this concern.

There was a sense that in East Precinct, **transport** and **public transport** are a greater concern than presented in the data. Greater connectivity is important for areas like Yallambie and transport infrastructure was seen as important by respondents.

For some respondents, **housing** was seen as a fundamental need and the most important issue. It was also said, however, that this is a State and Federal Government issue, rather than a local one.

While **cost of living** was noted as an important concern that should be addressed, particularly petrol, it was seen to be outside of Council's control.

Don't know/can't say

Two people who said they could not state their level of agreement with the East Precinct concerns did not leave a response, one said they did not know enough and the other asked who responded to the survey, with a view that people in East Precinct are relatively affluent and that the respondents must not have been these people.

4. Health and Wellbeing

To understand people's views on health and wellbeing in East Precinct, we presented the following data from the Living in Place Survey and asked two questions:

1. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the health and wellbeing of people in East Precinct?
2. What's one thing Council could do differently to improve the health and wellbeing of people in East Precinct?

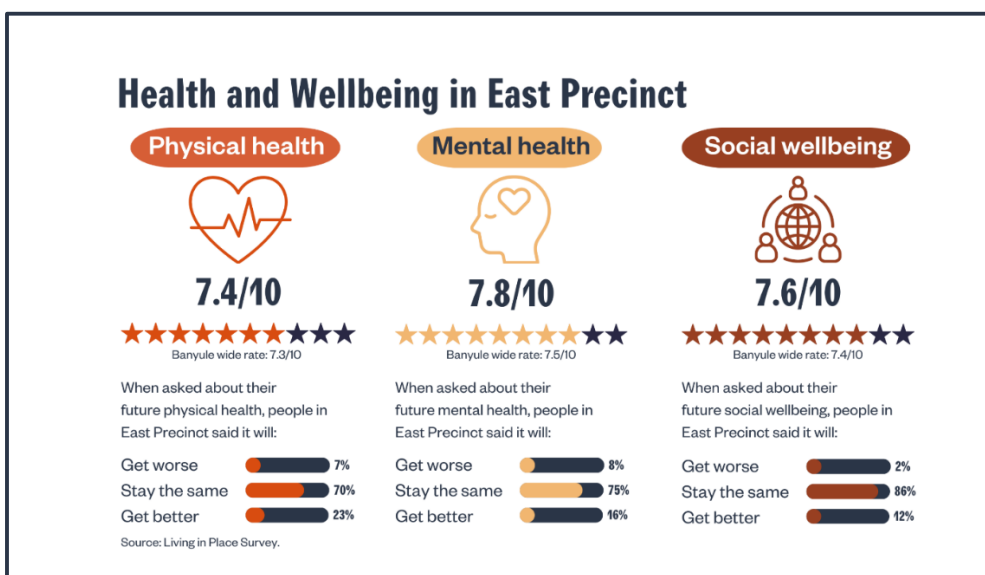


Figure 19 - Health and Wellbeing in East Precinct

Responses for East Precinct have been analysed and highlighted these health and wellbeing themes:

1. Physical environment including infrastructure

- The respondents highlighted the importance of well-maintained green spaces and connected walking tracks for overall mental, social, and physical health.
- Furthermore, responses suggested that upgrading infrastructure across the precinct could significantly benefit promoting physical activity among all age groups, with particular reference to enhancing recreational facilities at Banyule Flats and nearby parks by improving bike tracks, jumps and walking trails.
- People also expressed that securing safety could impact on the health and wellbeing of the community by redirecting bike traffic from hazardous areas to dedicated paths, widening roads for bike lanes and creating overtaking areas for safe passing.
- Additionally, installing gym equipment in parks would encourage outdoor exercise, while increasing the number of bins and public toilets would promote active transport and benefit for all age groups to enjoy outdoor activities.

2. Health care services

- Responses highlighted that access to mental health services is a significant concern. The difficulty in accessing bulk billing GPs and mental health services underscores the need for better healthcare infrastructure and more readily available mental health programs.

3. Increasing active living

- Respondents emphasised that 'increasing active living' is crucial for overall health and wellbeing. They also highlighted the need for better-connected walking tracks and bike lanes to improve active transport. Moreover, there are also suggestions that upgrading public parks with more bins, dog-friendly enclosed ovals and public toilets would help to accommodate for all age-groups during outdoor walks and exercise.
- Providing rebates for fitness programs and organising cost-free outdoor events would help to combat the rising cost of living.

4. Social connection / community programs or spaces / events

- There was a strong emphasis on the need for more community-based physical activities and outdoor training classes as a low cost solution to build social connection, reduce isolation and improve mental and physical health.

5. Projects

The following list of proposed advocacy, capital works and infrastructure projects to take place in East Precinct was included in the survey and presented to people at pop-ups to ask the level to which they agreed that the projects would have a positive impact on livability, health and wellbeing.

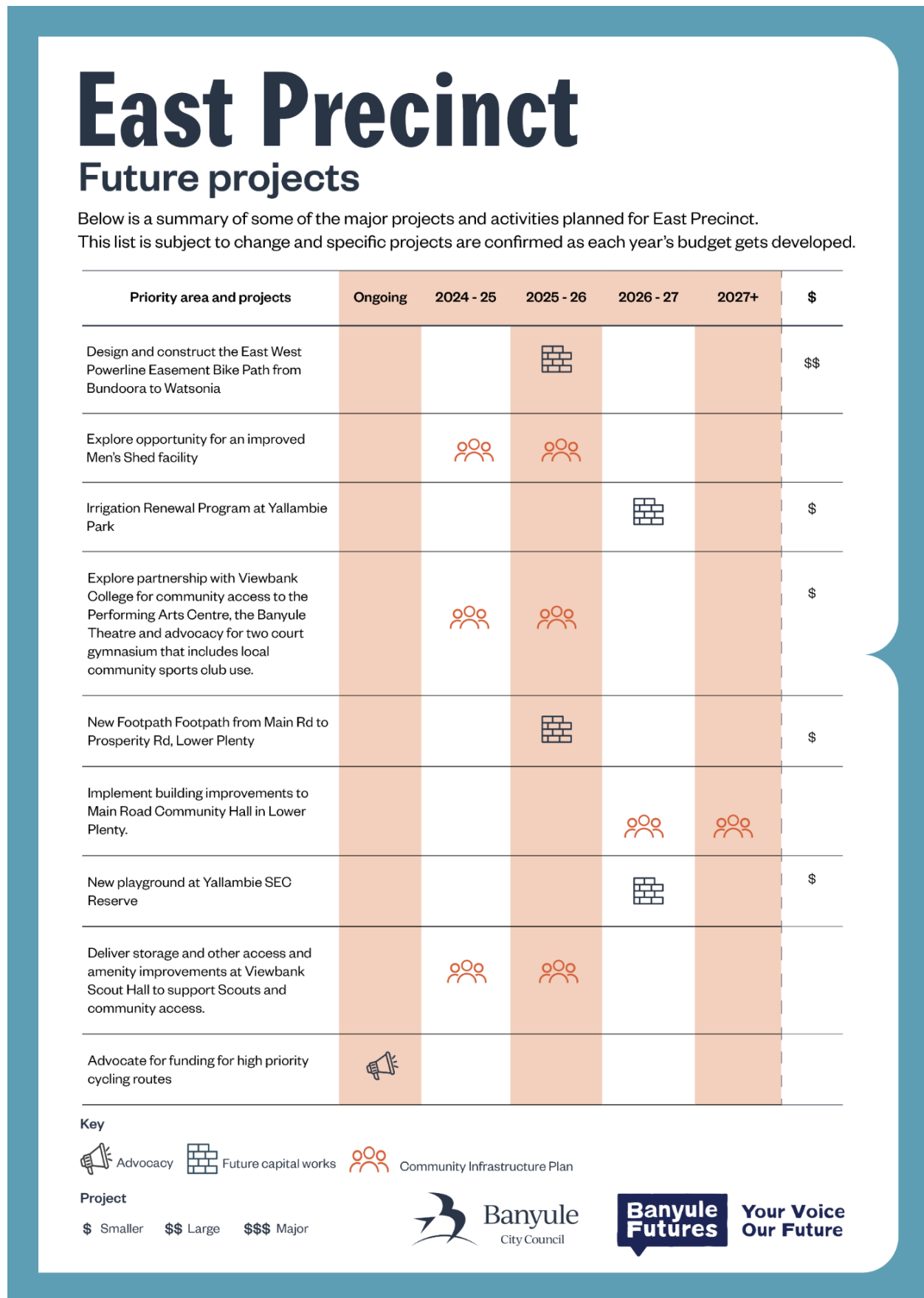


Figure 20 - East Precinct projects

Of the 48 people that responded to this question, 69% (33) agreed or strongly agreed with these projects for East Precinct, 21% (10) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% (5) said they did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	69% (33)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	21% (10)
Don't know/can't say	10% (5)

Figure 21 - level of agreement, East Precinct projects

Agree or Strongly Agree

There was support for all proposed projects amongst the 69% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed.

People said that they were happy to see more support for delivering and advocating for **footpaths** and **bike paths** in the precinct.

They were also happy to see projects that will enable greater social support and participation, such as the **Men's Shed** and access to the **Viewbank College Performing Arts Centre**.

Amongst responses, there were suggestions that **environmental initiatives** are missing from the list and would be good to consider projects such as community gardens, tree planting and waste reduction programs.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

There is some sentiment amongst these respondents that **East Precinct is neglected** compared to other precincts. It was noted that the project with the biggest budget, the bike path from Bundoora to Watsonia, will not impact East Precinct, reinforcing one respondent's sense of neglect.

There was also some critique that some of the proposed projects, **footpaths** for example, are localised and will only affect a small portion of the population.

People made suggestions for other projects which they said would be more impactful including improved **waste services**, **lowering rates** and **fixing traffic lights**. There was also a call for an additional **dog park**.

Don't know/can't say

People that said that they did not know or could not say their level of agreement either did not know project locations or did not see themselves benefitting from the projects. There was, however, acknowledgement that some people's lives will improve because of these projects.