

Community Consultation Report

Results from public consultation on Banyule's Draft Special
Charge Scheme Policy 2025

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Background

Sometimes residents ask Council to seal or upgrade roads, or fund the construction of new infrastructure like drainage, kerbs, channels and footpaths. To manage these requests, Council uses a **Special Charge Scheme (SCS)**, as outlined in the Local Government Act 1989. Through the SCS, property owners who live next to the upgrades help pay the costs. Council contributes to the cost when there is Council/crown land abutting the location of the proposed works, and when the works are seen to benefit the broader community.

The draft SCS Policy provides a strategic framework for implementing a SCS to fund new infrastructure projects in Banyule City Council, including road sealing, drainage, and the construction of kerbs, channels, and footpaths. These initiatives aim to support the municipality's growth and development by creating a connected infrastructure network that meets the needs of the expanding community.

The draft Policy aims to:

- make sure the process is clear and fair for everyone
- ensure equal opportunities and consistency when applying the Special Charge Scheme
- adapt the scheme to suit the community's needs
- encourage residents to get involved and share their views
- use Council resources effectively for investigating and setting up the scheme.

1.2 Engagement activities

A survey was conducted on Shaping Banyule during the consultation process.

An article was posted in the May 2025 edition of the Banyule Banner to encourage community participation in the survey, and residents that contacted Council about infrastructure upgrades during recent years were contacted directly to advise of the opportunity to provide feedback.

1.3 Participation

Council received feedback from **65** community members, with the majority of respondents answering all questions. More than 50% of the feedback came from residents living in Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East. 94% of participants were 35 years or older.

1.4 Summary of Feedback

60% of respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of the Special Charge Scheme Policy, including the calculation of community and Council contributions.

The majority of respondents (66%) do not support contributing to the construction costs, while 34% are supportive or somewhat supportive.

69% of respondents support or somewhat support Council's financial contribution to the Special Charge Scheme, whereas 31% do not. Comments suggest that many expect Council to contribute a larger share.

18% of respondents reported receiving a letter from the Council regarding a Special Charge Scheme in the last couple of years.

2. Project Overview

Special Charge Schemes are used to fund the construction of roads (including footpath and kerb and channel) and drainage infrastructure when a particular group of residents directly get benefit from these improvements.

Council's Asset Management Team is developing the Special Charge Scheme Policy, which requires community feedback on the Policy, Council's contributions and the level of community support. The Asset Management and Community Engagement Teams are leading this consultation process.

3. Engagement Objectives

Three objectives were identified for engaging community on this project.

Objective 1

To increase community awareness of Council's approach to implementing Special Charge Schemes, which help fund the construction of new infrastructure assets within the municipality through a strategic framework.

Objective 2

To assess the level of community support for Council's approach to Special Charge Schemes.

Objective 3

To consider community feedback on perceptions of Council's contribution to Special Charge Schemes.

4. Engagement and communications methods

4.1 Shaping Banyule survey

A community survey was delivered as part of this project and was complemented by communications activities.

Shaping Banyule Online Survey

Audience: Banyule community members and general public

16 April to 15 May 2025

A project page was created on Shaping Banyule and included content to inform the community about the Special Charge Scheme Policy, an online survey, the draft policy document and contact details for the Asset Management Team, should people want to talk with someone directly about the project.

The screenshot displays the 'Shaping Banyule' website. At the top, there's a header with the Banyule City Council logo, the site title 'Shaping Banyule', a search bar, and navigation links for 'Home', 'The Artwork', 'Login', and 'Join'. The main content area features a large image of a tree-lined path. Below the image, a section titled 'Improving local infrastructure: Special Charge Scheme' introduces Council's draft policy. A 'Follow' button is visible. To the right, a 'Timeline' section lists 'Analysis of community feedback' for May-June 2025. Below the timeline is a 'Contact Us' section with details for Mohammad Rashid, Asset Management Coordinator, including phone and email. A 'Document Library' section shows the 'Draft Special Charge Scheme Policy' PDF. At the bottom, a 'Thanks for getting involved' message thanks users for their feedback and provides a 'Start' button for the survey.

Improving local infrastructure: Special Charge Scheme
Council's draft Special Charge Scheme Policy, outlines residents' contributions for improving local infrastructure.
[+ Follow](#)

In Banyule there are 24 unsealed roads, covering over 5 km.

Sometimes residents ask Council to seal or upgrade roads, or fund the construction of new infrastructure like drainage, kerbs, channels and footpaths. To manage these requests, Council uses a **Special Charge Scheme (SCS)**, as outlined in the Local Government Act 1989. Through the SCS, property owners who live next to the upgrades help pay the costs. Council contributes to the cost when there is Council/crown land abutting the location of the proposed works, and when the works are seen to benefit the broader community.

Special Charge Scheme Policy
This is the first time that Council will have a formal policy for the SCS. The draft Policy aims to:

- make sure the process is clear and fair for everyone
- ensure equal opportunities and consistency when applying the SCS
- adapt the scheme to suit the community's needs
- encourage residents to get involved and share their views
- use Council resources effectively for investigating and setting up the scheme.

Thanks for getting involved
Thank you for telling us what you think about Council's approach to the Special Charge Scheme. Your feedback will help us finalise the [draft document](#).
Feedback is now closed. If you'd like to stay up-to-date on the project, click '+ Follow' at the top of the page.

Timeline
★ **Analysis of community feedback**
May - June 2025

- Analysis of feedback received from the community
- Revisions to draft Policy based on feedback received

[See more](#)

Contact Us
Have questions or want to learn more about a project, contact us below:

👤 **Name:** Mohammad Rashid, Asset Management Coordinator
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✉ **Email:** assetmanagementteam@banyule.vic.gov.au

Document Library
📄 **Draft Special Charge Scheme Policy**
PDF (481.00 KB)

Special Charge Scheme Policy
Thank you for your feedback on Council's [draft Special Charge Scheme Policy](#), which outlines residents' contributions towards improving local infrastructure. Feedback is now closed!
[Start](#)

Participation on Shaping Banyule was boosted by a feature article in the May 2025 edition of the Banyule Banner. Residents that have contacted Council over recent years with regard to infrastructure upgrades were contacted directly to advise of the opportunity to provide feedback.

5. Participation

Participation by suburb, age and access and equity attributes can be seen in the below graphs.

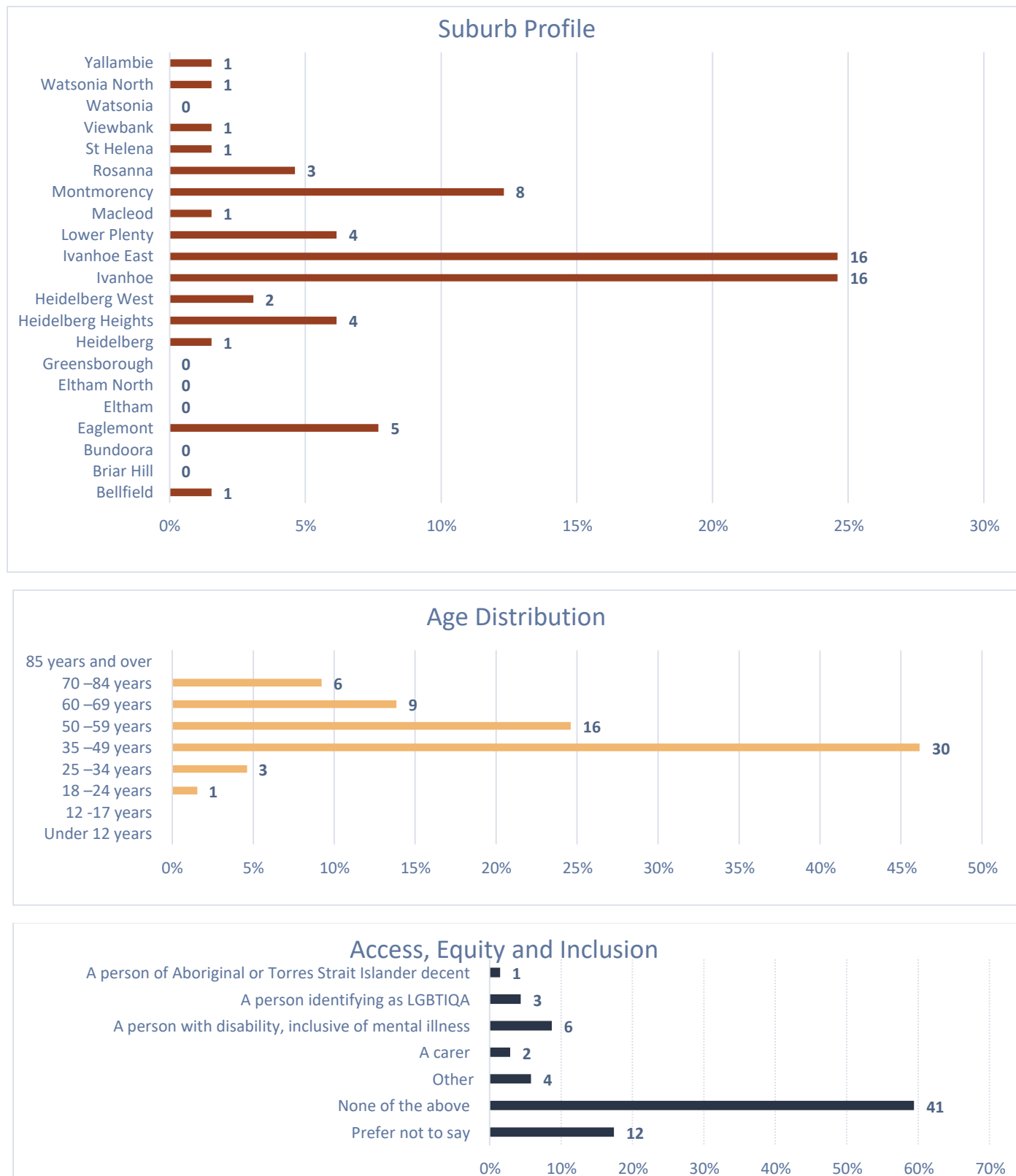


Figure 1 – Overview of Consultation Participation

65 responses were received through the online survey. Almost half (49%) of the responses came from Ivanhoe (16) and Ivanhoe East (16). The age group with the highest participation was 35 to 49 years, followed by 50 to 59 years. All access and equity attributes were represented amongst respondents.

6. Consultation feedback

6.1 Shaping Banyule Feedback

Feedback received from the Shaping Banyule online survey is summarised in this section.

Question 1 - Tell us what you think of Special Charge Scheme Initiation Process

Figure 2 shows that 60% of respondents have clearly understood the Special Charge Scheme Policy and the calculations behind community and Council contributions to the scheme. The remaining 40% said that they don't understand it and that it needs clarification.

Verbatim comments from those that said 'I don't understand it and I need clarification' suggest that the process appears complicated, that it's unclear how many people are needed for a petition and that it's unclear how much further consultation would take place after initiation.

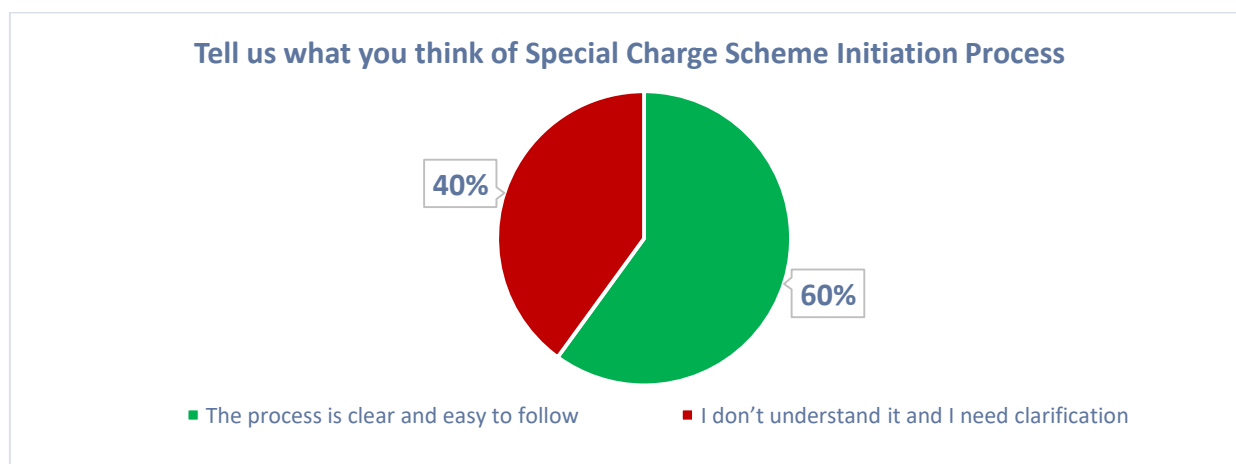


Figure 2: Feedback on Special Charge Scheme Process

Question 2 – Do you support the considerations for sharing construction costs on basis of benefit?

Figure 3 presents the support received by the community for sharing construction costs on the basis of benefit. Survey results show that the majority of respondents (66%) do not support contributing to the construction costs, while 34% of respondents either support or somewhat support.

Verbatim comments suggest that residents who are not supportive of the sharing construction costs on basis of benefit are not happy with Council considering area and frontage of the property as factors for cost contributions.

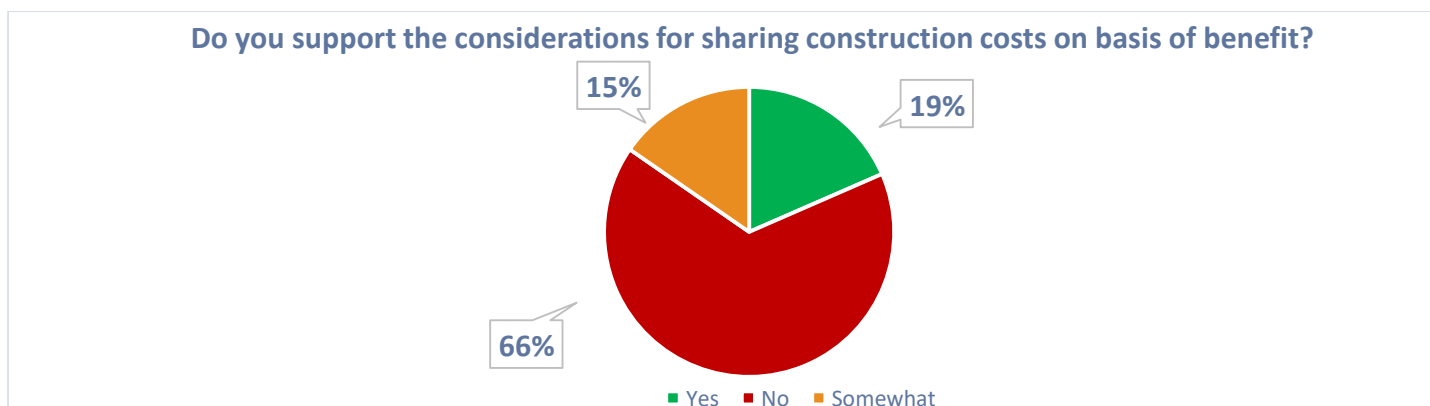


Figure 3: Feedback on Cost Sharing

Question 3 – Do you support the considerations for Council contributions?

Figure 4 indicates that 69% of the respondents are supportive or somewhat supportive of Council contributions to the Special Charge Scheme. 31% of the respondents are not supportive. However, according to the comments received, a majority of the respondents expect Council to contribute more towards schemes.

Verbatim comments suggest that majority of residents who said “No” or “Somewhat” supportive to the Council contributions mentioned that they are not happy with current Council contribution levels and the requirement is for Council to contribute a major portion or the full amount to the Special Charge Scheme construction costs.

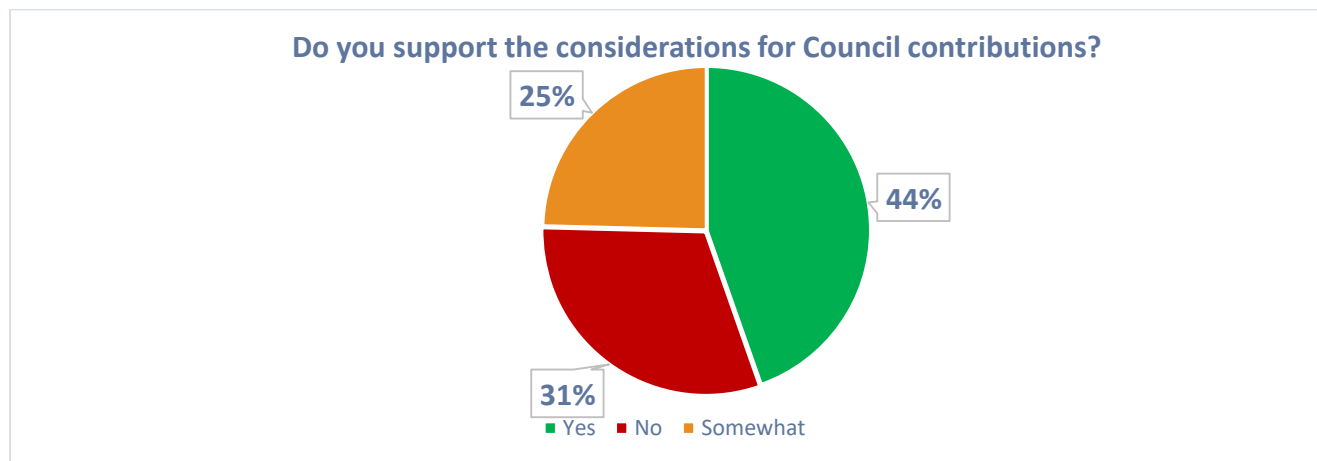


Figure 4: Feedback on Council Contribution

Question 4 – Have you received a letter from Council over the past two years or so about infrastructure improvements through a Special Charge Scheme?

The final question of the survey was asked to give an indication of how many of the respondents were involved in a special charge scheme request or survey in the past (on an unsealed road etc.).

18% (or 12) of the respondents received a letter from Council regarding a Special Charge Scheme in the past. The majority of them were from Montmorency and Lower Plenty, where Council undertook an initial survey in recent years for a special charge scheme for upgrading unsealed roads.

It is noted, however, that the majority of survey respondents (almost half, 49%) were from Ivanhoe or East Ivanhoe, where there has been no consultation with residents in recent years in regard to the implementation of Special Charge Schemes.

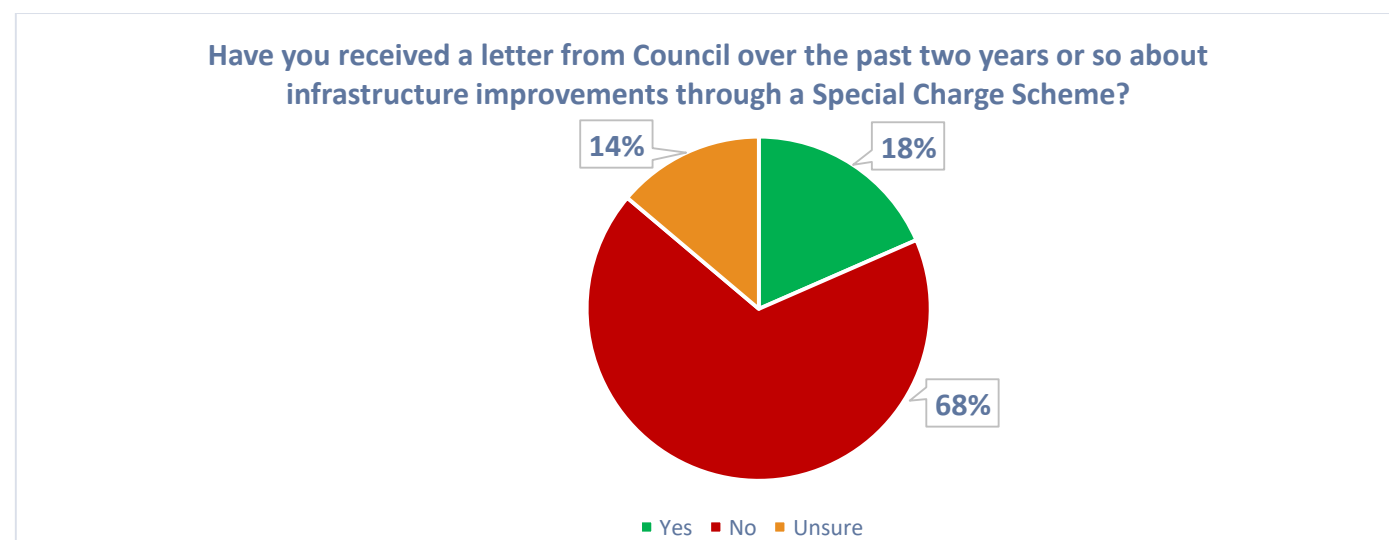


Figure 5: Residents Involved in Special Charge Scheme Survey in Past

7. Feedback Summary

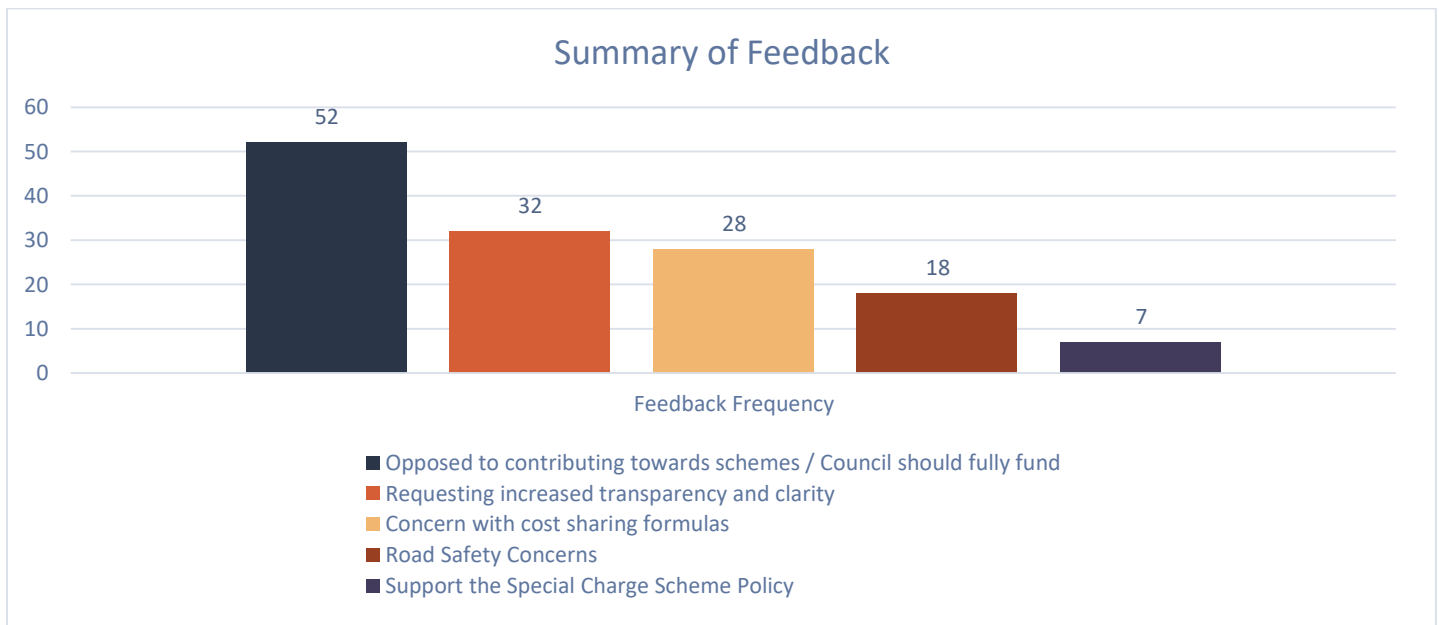


Figure 6: Feedback Summary

Figure 6 reflects the key themes summarised from the feedback, including comments received. Most feedback opposed resident contributions to schemes, or requests greater clarity/transparency of the process. Supportive feedback was minimal, indicating the Policy may need further review or community engagement to address concerns. Further information on each theme is provided below:

Opposed to contributing towards schemes / Council should fully fund

Respondents think that Council should fully fund works due to broader community benefits (e.g. emergency access, reduced maintenance) and strongly oppose extra charges, arguing infrastructure costs should be covered by existing council rates. Moreover, households (especially retirees/young families) stress inability to afford additional charges due to the current cost of living pressure. 52 respondents (80%) were opposed to scheme contributions or demanded Council to contribute more towards construction.

Requesting increased transparency and clarity

Some residents find the scheme initiation process confusing, with unclear thresholds (e.g. petition requirements) or insufficient consultation, or have requested detailed cost breakdowns, clearer definitions of "community benefit" and examples of contribution calculations. 32 respondents (49%) requested more transparency.

Concern with cost sharing formulas

The formulas for apportioning costs (based on property frontage/size/CIV) is seen as complex, unfair, and lacking transparency. 28 respondents (43%) disagreed with the cost sharing formulas.

Road safety concerns

Complaints about unsafe conditions on unsealed roads (e.g. erosion, dust, potholes), especially in Geoffrey Court (Lower Plenty). 18 respondents (28%) had road safety concerns. There were also a few residents who raised concerns about The Boulevard (Ivanhoe), Stephens Street (Montmorency) and Elmo Road (Montmorency).

Support the Special Charge Scheme Policy

Positive feedback on the policy was given by 7 respondents (11%).