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

Mid Precinct (Heidelberg, Macleod, Rosanna)

184 people participated in Mid Precinct engagement activities, including 120 who completed surveys and 64 who participated in pop-ups at Warringal Shopping Centre Heidelberg and Nets Stadium Macleod on 18 May and 15 June 2024.

Of the170 people who provided gender and age information, **Figure 22** shows that while there was some diversity in the gender of participants, people who identified as woman or female represented 63% of the total. Similar to age representation across this Banyule Futures engagement, **Figure 23** shows that people who are 35-49 years old are most represented.

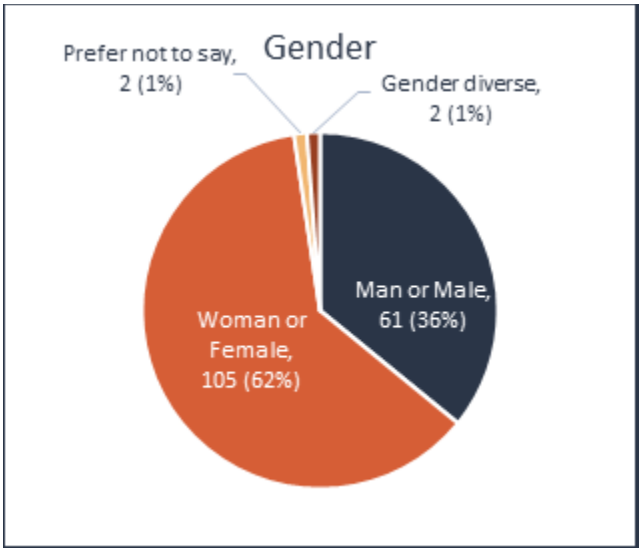


Figure 22 - Mid Precinct participant gender

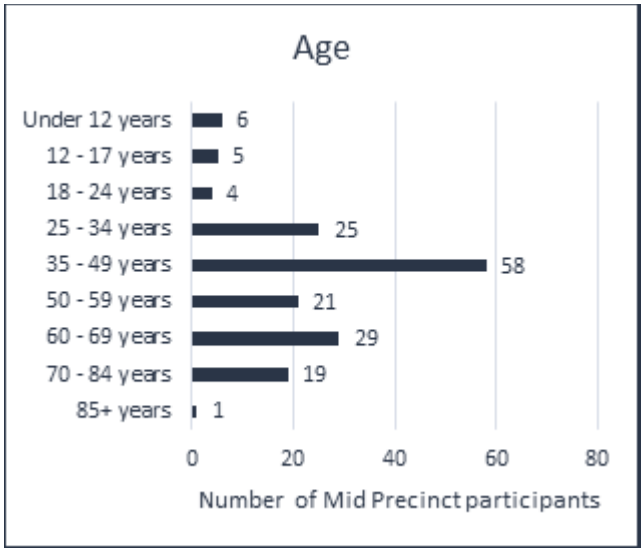


Figure 23 - Mid Precinct participant age

16 people who live with disability, **9** who identify as LBGTIQA+, **one** with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, **9** who speak English as a second or other language and **15** carers completed the Mid Precinct survey.

1. What do you love about Mid Precinct?

182 responses were received for the question 'What do you love about Mid Precinct (Heidelberg, Macleod, Rosanna)?' A number of themes were identified during analysis of these responses.

1. **Green spaces and parklands**

Trees, parklands, greenspaces, wildlife and indigenous plants were highlighted as things people love about Mid Precinct, with specific reference to Rosanna Parklands and Banyule Flats.

2. **Community and village feel**

There were a number of positive mentions about friendly neighbourhoods, community events and a strong sense of community and village atmosphere.

3. **Accessibility and convenience**

Being close and convenient access to public transport, shops, medical facilities, essential services, sporting facilities, cafes and schools was mentioned by respondents as something they love about Mid Precinct.

4. **Urban environment and development**

People comments on enjoying the balance between urban living and nature, with a preference for low density housing and natural spaces.

5. **Recreation and leisure**

The availability of playgrounds, walking and cycling trails and sporting facilities was noted as something people enjoy. It was said that spaces for children's play and dog walking were important features of the area.

2. Priorities

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

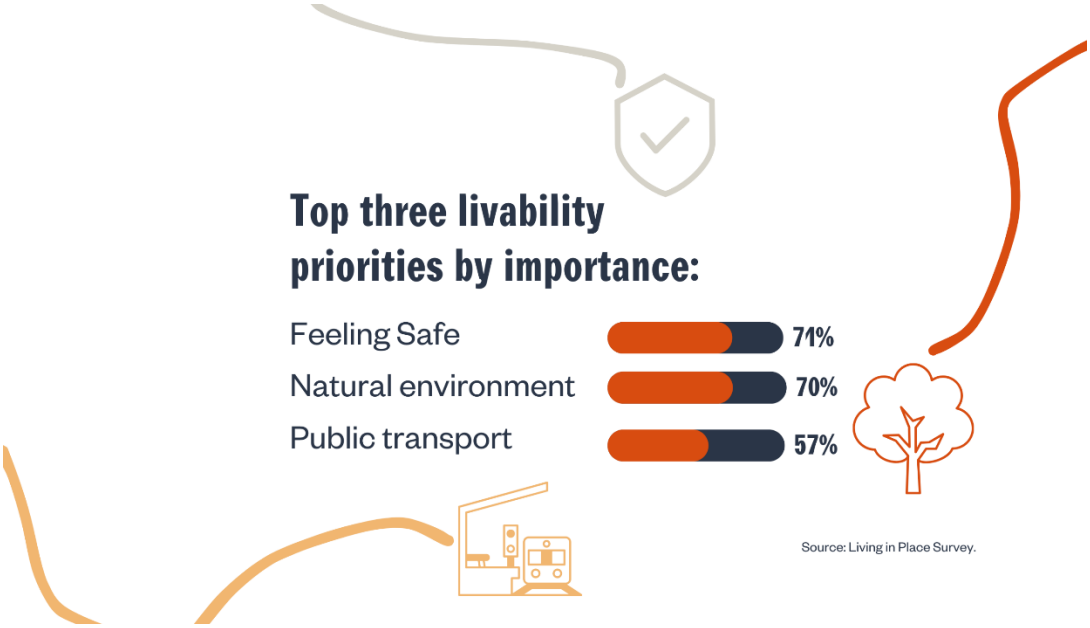


Figure 24 - Mid Precinct priorities

Of the 162 people that responded to this question, 76% (123) agreed or strongly agreed with these priorities for Mid Precinct, 23% (37) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 1% (2) said they did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	76% (123)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	23% (37)
Don't know/can't say	1% (2)

Figure 25 - level of agreement, Mid Precinct priorities

Agree or Strongly Agree

Amongst the 76% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed, there was a general sense that **safety** and **feeling secure** are important for many residents, with specific issues raised relating to the need for better street lighting, safety for women and children and concerns about drug use and some neighbours.

Aligning with people's responses for what people love about Mid Precinct, the **natural environment** and its preservation were noted as a priority, particularly in the context of a perception that urban development is encroaching on natural areas and the impact of development on neighbourhood character.

With regard to **public transport**, reliability, frequency and the need for better infrastructure was seen as important. Some people pointed to the need for more frequent bus services and improvements to existing train stations.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Of the 23% of respondents that disagreed or strongly disagreed with the Mid Precinct priorities, some said they felt safe in their neighbourhoods and that **safety** for them is not a priority. Others noted that safety can be politicised and can overshadow other important issues.

The **natural environment** was highly valued by respondents, with some saying that it should be higher than safety in the list. Similar to those that agreed and strongly agreed, there was general concern for eroding green spaces and the need to protect and manage them better.

In addition to the three priorities presented, concerns for **overdevelopment** were raised by people who disagreed or strongly disagreed, including the loss of green space and high-rise buildings negatively impacting the area's character. There was a general sense that urban development should be managed responsibly.

3. Concerns

The following concerns were presented to participants as part of the Mid Precinct survey and pop-ups to gauge people's level of agreement with what we understand are people's priorities in Mid Precinct.

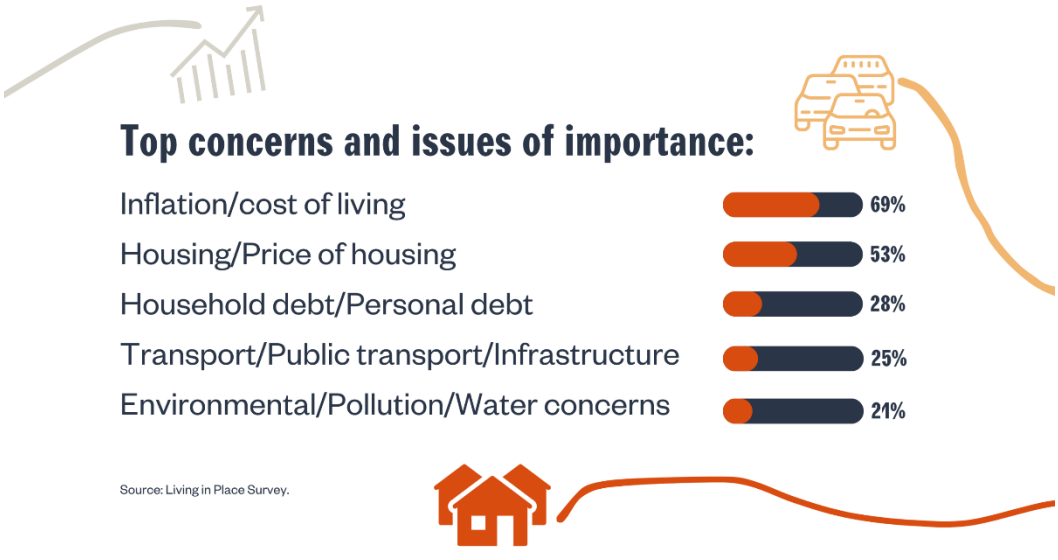


Figure 26 - Mid Precinct concerns

Of the 173 people that responded to this question, 54% (94) agreed or strongly agreed with these projects for Mid Precinct, 36% (62) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% (17) said they did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	54% (94)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	36% (62)
Don't know/can't say	10% (17)

Figure 27 - level of agreement, Mid Precinct concerns

Agree or Strongly Agree

Amongst the 54% of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed, the high **cost of living**, including struggling with rising prices and financial strain for people on fixed or single incomes, was identified as a real concern.

The relationship between **high living costs** and **personal debt** was noted, with suggestions that improving affordability would deal with this.

With regard to **transport**, it was said that better synchronisation of traffic lights could help to improve traffic flow, as well as general infrastructure improvements. There was a strong call for better **public transport** services to increase reliability, frequency and accessibility for people living with disability and older residents.

Similar to those that agreed with **environment** as a priority, a number of people also agreed that it is a concern, particularly the impact of **urban development** on green spaces, increased pollution, and a general desire from residents to preserve trees and address littering.

Some respondents noted that while they agree with the concerns, they would put them in a different order. It was also said that the concerns listed are **not areas that Council can directly impact**, and that Council should focus on the things it can change like environmental management and local infrastructure.

For some people, the importance of more **community amenities and services** such as playgrounds, sport facilities and recreation for young people was highlighted, as well as maintaining what we have.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Similar to those that Agreed, the 36% of respondents that disagreed with the concerns said that top concerns (cost of living, housing prices, personal debt) are **not within Council's direct control** and that emphasis should be on the things Council can change including the environment and providing green spaces.

Amongst those that disagreed, there was a general sense that the **environment** is a bigger concern than the list would suggest. Respondents noted concerns about destruction of tress and natural habitat due to **urban development**, and the importance of more sustainable development practices.

With regard to **transport**, people noted concerns relating to the impact of ongoing roadworks, such as the North East Link project. Public transport connectivity and the need for more bike lanes and safer roads were also identified as part of this concern.

While there was agreement that **cost of living**, **housing affordability, personal debt** and rent prices remain significant concerns, there were views that environment and transport concerns are more important and should be at the top of the list.

Concern regarding **community amenities and services** was felt to be missing amongst these respondents who pointed to the importance of more public spaces and recreational facilities, a sense that local retail and hospitality sectors need revitalisation and views that housing developments are not of quality.

Don't know/can't say

Amongst the 10% of respondents that said they did not know or could not say with regard to their level of agreement, comments confirmed that they did not have an opinion, or that they have a comfortable life and don't have these concerns or are new to the area so could not comment. Other comments related to reducing housing density and increasing investment in the environment and health.

4. Health and Wellbeing

To understand people's views on health and wellbeing in Mid 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 Mid Precinct?
2. What's one thing Council could do differently to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Mid Precinct?

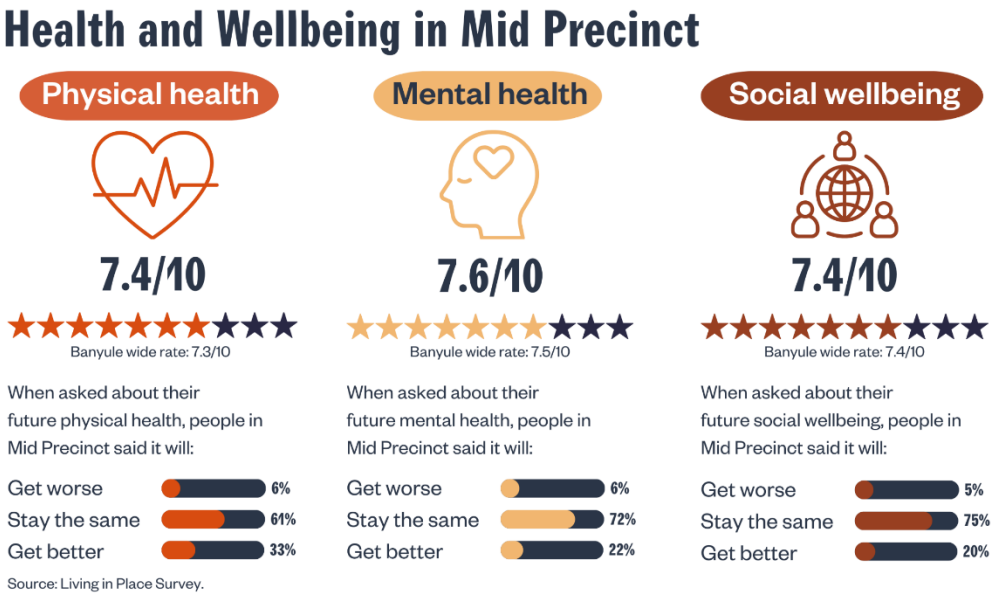


Figure 28 - Health and Wellbeing in Mid Precinct

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

1. **Physical environment including infrastructure**

- Mid Precinct residents believed that the physical environment had a significant impact on their health and wellbeing and highlighted concerns about climate change, daily living stress and the loss of green space.
- Access to parklands and green spaces is crucial for physical and mental health, with walking and cycling seen as beneficial activities. The connection to green spaces over the river is particularly missed, and a pedestrian bridge and proper paths to Heide would greatly enhance accessibility.
- Residents value the preservation and increase of indigenous vegetation in open spaces and gardens, recognizing its importance to mental health. Positive mental health is strongly linked to time spent in green spaces, and the community benefits from the wealth of tree canopy, natural spaces, parks and sports facilities available. Enhancing these areas with more exercise equipment, public toilets and a library would further promote physical activity and safety.

- Libraries and community events also play a crucial role in fostering social connection and community wellbeing, particularly for families with young children.
- Respondents also emphasized the importance of safe infrastructure such as lighting for safety at night on Wairoa Road, improving bike tracks for kids in Rosanna Parklands and dangerous traffic condition – e.g., turning from Rosanna Road into Banyule and Station Roads.

2. **Health care services**

- Residents of the area have identified access to healthcare services as a significant concern, with many highlighting the difficulty of securing timely appointments with GPs and allied health services due to high demand. There is also a call for more affordable and bulk-billing options, especially for mental health services.
- Responses demonstrated that the increase in the aging population reflects the rising need for more services catering to the elderly. The availability of comprehensive medical facilities is appreciated, yet there's a need for better awareness and information promoting existing services.
- Additionally, access to mental health services is a critical concern. The difficulty in accessing mental health services underscores the need for 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 more affordable activities to promote health and wellbeing and suggested Council make resources accessible to everyone, regardless of income level, ensuring broader community participation.
- Improving the connectivity and safety of walking and biking routes to shops and schools was included as another critical factor for promoting active transport, encouraging people to walk and cycle and reducing reliance on cars.
- There was a call for needing targeted programs for specific groups such as seniors, new mothers, and youth. Organizing low-fee activities for seniors, kids-friendly exercise classes for new mothers, and ensuring inclusivity in sports activities can address the unique health and social needs of these populations, promoting overall community wellbeing.

4. **Improving wellbeing**

- Improving mental wellbeing also emerged as one of the key concerns in Mid Precinct. Residents emphasized the need for more volunteer opportunities to support individuals with mental health issues, and increased focus on mental health post-COVID.
- The importance of open spaces, green areas, and nature for mental health was highlighted, along with the need for more mental health programs and support services.
- The community called for better planning and consideration of mental health impacts in development projects, increased signage to promote mental and social health awareness, and more social and creative spaces for connection.
- Suggestions also included community housing options to combat loneliness, improved access to mental health services, and activities for the aging population to reduce isolation.

5. **Social connection / community programs or spaces / events**

- Enhancing social connection, community programs, spaces, and events was a prominent theme in the consultation.
- Residents emphasised the importance of food relief, free events, and support for low-income earners, including assistance for those with pets.

- There was a strong call for more community-based physical activities, creative hubs, and social spaces to foster connection and improve health outcomes.
- Suggestions included the development of music groups, free workshops, and additional community events such as the revival of the Arty Farty Festival.
- The community also highlighted the need for inclusive programs for all ages and cultural backgrounds, more activities for children and seniors, and initiatives to alleviate loneliness. Libraries, walking trails, and communal activities like yoga were seen as critical to social wellbeing.

5. Projects

The following list of proposed advocacy, capital works and infrastructure projects to take place in Mid 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.

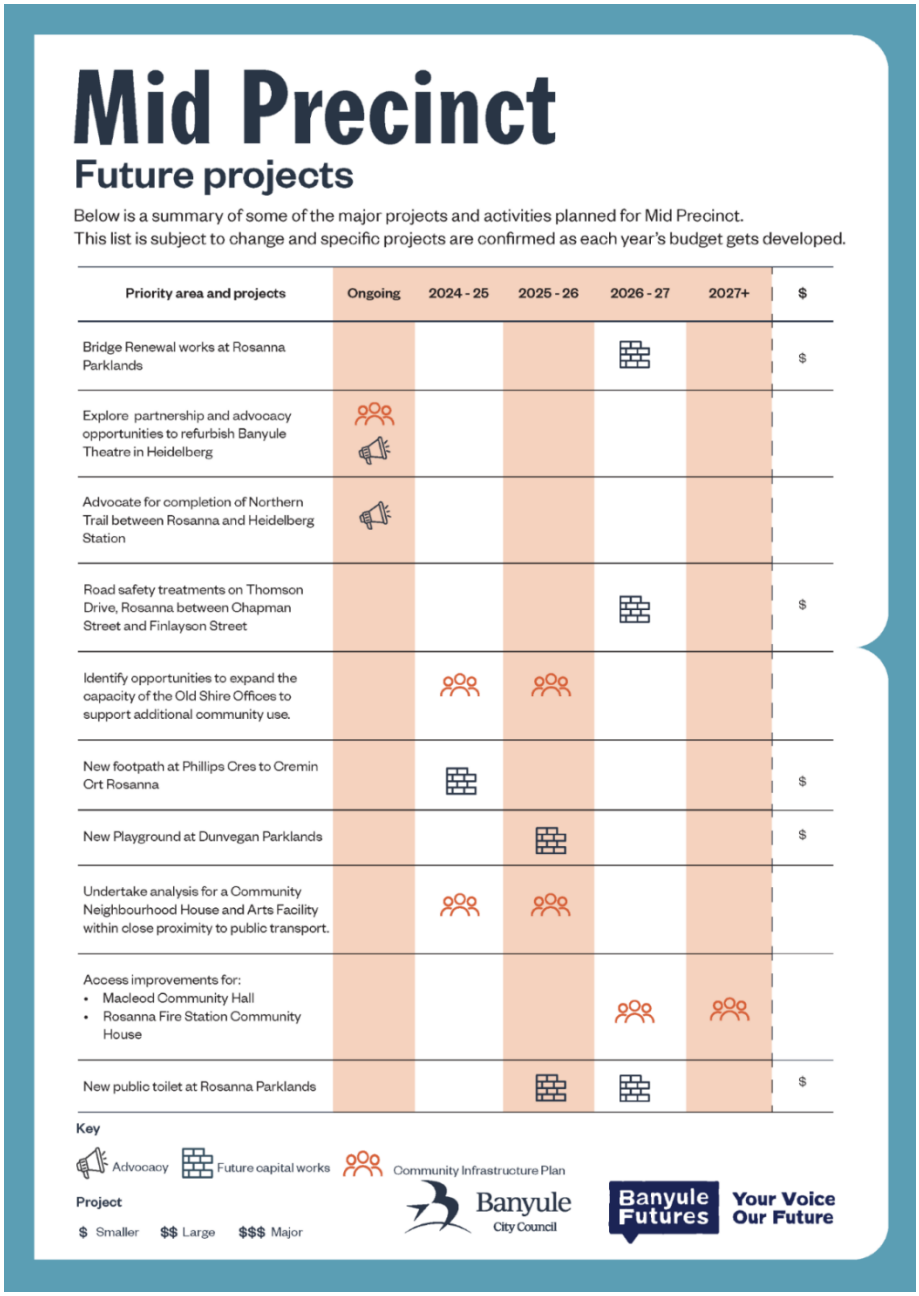


Figure 29 - Mid Precinct projects

Of the 171 people that responded to this question, 54% (93) agreed or strongly agreed with these projects for Mid Precinct, 30% (51) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 16% (27) said they did not know or could not say.

Level of agreement	Percentage (number)
Agree or Strongly Agree	54% (93)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	30% (51)
Don't know/can't say	16% (27)

Figure 30 - level of agreement, Mid Precinct projects

Agree or Strongly Agree

There is general support for the community focussed nature of the projects.

There is strong support for the **public toilet in Rosanna Parklands**, with requests also to reinstate the **public toilet at the Rosanna shops** and improve the **public toilet at Macleod shops**.

There is also positive reception of the idea of community hubs and improvements to existing facilities like the **Banyule Theatre** and the **Old Shire Offices**. There was general support for better use of underused buildings.

Suggestions were made to create more challenging outdoor spaces for teenagers, increase shade in playgrounds and add water taps in parklands. People also stressed the importance of bridge renewals, road widening, new bike paths and greater investment in **green spaces** and the **natural environment**.

A suggestion was made to add a **bridge linking Warringal Parklands to Banksia Park**.

General concerns were raised about traffic congestion and the need for better transport infrastructure, the importance of safer pedestrian crossings and improved maintenance of parks to ensure cleanliness and safety.

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

People who disagreed or strongly disagreed with these projects stressed the importance of **environmental preservation** and **green spaces**. They spoke to their concerns with development negatively impacting ecological linkages and the natural character of areas like Rosanna Parklands. A suggestion was made to **improve stormwater management** to reduce runoff and erosion in the Parklands.

While there were mixed views about the need for a **public toilet in Rosanna Parklands** due to potential vandalism and a desire to keep the Parklands natural, there was strong support for adding and improving **public toilets at Rosanna and Macleod shops** which are not on the project list.

Similar to people that agreed and strongly agreed, this group liked the approach to improve utilisation of existing facilities like the **Banyule Theatre** and the **Old Shire Offices**.

There was some concern about road widening, particularly on **Thomson Drive**, with a perception that this could encourage speeding. Contrastingly, there was a general desire to deliver infrastructure projects that improve connectivity, like off-road links between stations and the Main Yarra Trail, and which reduce the reliance on cars.

While there was support for projects proposed to improve access to, and increase numbers of, **neighbourhood houses** and **art facilities**, there were concerns that projects on the list may not have a significant overall impact. There was, however, general support for maintaining existing facilities over creating new.

Don't know/can't say

Of the 27 people that said they 'did not know' or 'could not say', 12 did not leave a comment or said they did not know enough to be able to agree or disagree. Other respondents felt that while the projects look good, they will not be affected by them. Similar to those that responded disagree and strongly disagree, there were calls for more projects that will preserve the environment and biodiversity.