



GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Economic Development Action Plan 2024—2026

Engagement summary report

MAY 2024

BENTLEIGH

BENTLEIGH EAST

BRIGHTON EAST

CARNEGIE

CAULFIELD

ELSTERNWICK

GARDENVALE

GLEN HUNTLY

MCKINNON

MURRUMBEENA

ORMOND

ST KILDA EAST

Executive summary

Glen Eira City Council has developed a draft *Economic Development Action Plan 2024—2026* to guide the programs and services that Council offers to support local businesses and to develop a greater understanding of the current economic landscape in Glen Eira.

The community engagement program for the draft *Economic Development Action Plan 2024—2026 (Plan)* was held over a four-week period from 10 April to 8 May 2024. It informed and engaged our community in conversations about our local economy and on Council's strategic drivers for delivering economic development programs and services for the next two years.

Council regularly engages with the community to listen to their views on a range of issues, services, and infrastructure. This engagement's main goal was to present the draft *Plan* to the community to gauge their sentiments on the main themes and strategic objectives. The engagement provided broad scope for the whole community to provide their feedback and was mainly targeted to our local business networks and trader association groups.

The engagement was promoted through various communication channels including the Glen Eira Have Your Say platform, social media, newsletters, and other written correspondence. We also delivered in-person engagement with our trader associations and business networks, with four trader groups participating.

The targeted nature of this engagement has meant we have historically yielded low numbers of public participation, a trend that is consistent with this engagement. Other than meetings with trader associations, the rest of the engagement feedback was channeled through an online survey which received 27 survey submissions.

This report provides the results of the engagement and includes high-quality insights on the community's feedback on the draft *Plan* as well as the community's ideas on how Council can improve support to this sector and the local economy.

The engagement results are provided in detail in the body of the report. Below is a snapshot of the engagement findings.

What we heard

Conversations with trader groups

The Community and Economic Development department met with four of Glen Eira's Trader Associations including Carnegie, Elsternwick, Bentleigh and Glen Huntly and engaged a total of 22 members.

Traders revealed a high level of support for the *Plan* and contributed additional opportunities Council can consider to support local traders. Suggestions included:

- Greater communication and exploring more innovative ways to relay information to traders about things happening within their centres.
- Support for initiatives to address or activate vacant properties, including assistance working with property owners.

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- Support maintaining high levels of cleanliness and trader compliance within their centre to improve amenity.
- Providing information or training in flexible ways eg. online to make it more accessible for traders and delivering training to them wherever possible eg. holding sessions within activity centres.

Online Have Your Say survey findings

The results from the online survey identified that our community is broadly satisfied with the three themes of the draft *Plan*.



Theme one - Connected and supported places to work and do business, received a weighted satisfaction rating score of 3.2 stars out of 5 stars.



Theme two - Investment in vibrant and thriving places for our community, received a weighted satisfaction rating score of 3.5 stars out of 5 stars.



Theme three - Build our understanding and inform evidence-based practice, received a weighted satisfaction rating score of 3.6 stars out of 5 stars.

Our community identified their top three most important strategic objectives to be:

1	Our local activity centres are vibrant and thriving. (15 votes / 23 per cent)
2	Our community feels connected to their local activity centres (12 votes / 18 per cent).
3	Council supports local businesses to thrive (11 votes / 17 per cent)

The community's ideas on topics for future workshops, networking sessions and training that Council can implement to support local businesses is captured in the table below.

Training ideas
Cross marketing and promotion.
Understanding planning regulations and the permit process
By-laws and regulations for home-based businesses
Digital marketing
Think tank session with business and Council
Sustainability workshop
How to apply for grants and government contracts
Networking ideas
Connect local businesses with local school communities / sporting clubs for mutual benefit.

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The community provided some open feedback and commentary and the key themes emerging are captured in the table below.

Themes from open commentary
Rejuvenate and revitalise shopping strips particularly Glen Huntly Village shopping strip and Elsternwick Village shopping strip (both along Glenhuntly Rd).
Provide more focus and support to smaller shopping strips (e.g. Neerim Road and Murrumbeena Road)
Shopping precincts need support to provide amenity and sense of place.
Help businesses and local traders through reduced fees, incentives, and networking.

The engagement findings in this report have been used to inform Council officers to finalise the *Plan*.

Engagement report

Background

Glen Eira City Council provides a strategic and operational role in Glen Eira's local economy by creating a supportive environment and vibrant places to enable businesses to thrive.

Council's work in recent years has been driven by the *Local Economy and Placemaking Action Plan 2020—2025*, endorsed by Council in May 2020. This plan has provided high-level direction for Council's economic development work with a focus on creating local jobs.

As our economic landscape has continued to evolve, Council has more recently moved towards a place-based approach to economic development. By focusing on improving the amenity and vibrancy of our activity centres we have tried to create experiences and places for people to gather, not just transact. This has been increasingly important during and post-COVID as people seek a stronger connection with their local community.

Our first *Glen Eira Placemaking Strategy 2023—2027* was endorsed by Council in May 2023. It was developed to provide clearer guidance on placemaking and how we work with our community to reimagine and revitalise our public spaces in our centres and neighbourhoods. It includes a deliverable action plan for future placemaking activities.

The draft *Plan* has been developed to refresh and supersede the current *Local Economy and Placemaking Action Plan 2020—2025*. It provides a revised and more narrowed focus on our economic development approach and includes a deliverable action plan for our economic development programs and service delivery. The plan works alongside the *Placemaking Strategy 2023—2027* to support our local activity centres and broader business community.

Since 2020, several factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, along with a number of level crossing removal projects, have had a significant impact on businesses in Glen Eira, particularly activity centre-based businesses.

The combination of disruptions and the ongoing shift in retail and employment patterns has meant that some centres have and continue to experience a decline in visitation and patronage, generating high vacancy rates and reduced economic activity.

Alongside this, we have also seen more people working from home, an increase in home-based businesses and the rapid emergence of online purchasing and digital transactions. While Council has been responsive and agile in altering its service offerings to meet the needs of local businesses, it's time to reassess our traditional approach within this new context.

The refreshed draft *Plan* to support businesses and activity centres to continue to grow, adapt, and change to meet our community needs now and into the future. The actions identified within the draft *Plan* are designed to better understand behaviours and drivers of both local businesses and local shoppers, explore new opportunities and challenges while also assessing the impact of our existing programs and services.

Engaging the community

Council regularly engages with the community to receive feedback on a range of issues, services, and infrastructure. In this engagement, we sought to provide our local businesses and our broader community the opportunity to review and provide their feedback on the draft *Plan*.

The engagement program measured sentiment on the three key themes and the strategic objectives that are intended to direct Council's focus on economic development and business support over the next two years. The consultation was open for a four-week period from 10 April until 8 May 2024.

Communication activities

There were several communication channels used to raise awareness and engage the community in this engagement. The table below outlines the communication channels used and the reach for each activity.

Communication activities	Reach
Have Your Say project engagement page live Community Survey open 10 April – 8 May 2024	27 surveys completed 382 views 347 visits 51 document downloads
Social media post on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn promoting the engagement opportunity for community members to have their say during May. Note: Facebook postpaid boost	5,545 reached 53 reactions 10 comments 0 shares 331 clicks
Business e-News 6 May 16 April	7,577 recipients 48.3 per cent opened (3,586 recipients) 1 per cent clicked (76 recipients) 45 click throughs to engagement 4,514 recipients 47.2 per cent opened (3,545 recipients) 1.7 per cent clicked (124 recipients) 55 click throughs to engagement
Community Engagement e-newsletter April edition	4,438 recipients 2,338 opened 54 clicks through to engagement
Email promotion to Traders Association Groups	8 groups
Email promotion to Glen Eira Business and Economy Advisory Committee	9 members
Share to Glen Eira Business Women's Network Facebook Group	112 members

Engagement activities

The table below outlines the engagement activities and number who participated.

Engagement activities	# who participated
Online community survey	27
Emails	17
Glen Eira Business and Economy Advisory Committee (GEBEAC) presentation 22 February 29 February	4 community reps 7 community reps
Meeting with Elsternwick Traders Association (10 April)	6
Meeting with Bentleigh Traders Association (29 April)	2
Meeting with Carnegie Traders Association (30 April)	10
Meeting with Glen Huntly Traders Association Meeting (2 May)	4

Insights and analysis

The opportunity for our community to be part of the economic development conversation was an important process to help us finalise the draft *Plan*. Opportunities to engage were delivered both in person and online with most of the engagement feedback being channeled through a Have Your Say online survey.

The in-person consultation approach targeted engagement opportunities with our trader associations and local business networks. Members of our business network did not take up this engagement opportunity however 22 members of our trader's association provided feedback across four meetings during April and May 2024.

The targeted nature of this engagement has meant we have historically yielded low numbers of public participation, a trend that has remained consistent. Back in 2020 the engagement for the *Local Economy and Placemaking Action Plan 2020–2025* received 13 survey submissions. The engagement for this draft plan received 27 survey submissions, and although a better result than the previous engagement, still provides a small sample size of consultation feedback for our consideration.

The report outlines the communication activities used to promote the engagement and details the engagement findings from the trader meetings and the online survey. The results of the engagement are intended to help inform and assist Council officers to finalise *the Plan* to present to Council for adoption.

Trader engagement

Our Trader Association groups were central to our targeted engagement approach. This included invitations to meet with each of the eight trader group associations across Glen Eira and encourage feedback directly through consultation at meetings, as well as through the online Have Your Say survey.

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Four trader association groups took up this offer: Carnegie, Elsternwick, Bentleigh and Glen Huntly. The sessions were led by the Economic Development team and held during April and May 2024. A total of 22 people were engaged in a conversation to provide feedback on the plan and on Councils approach to support our traders and local businesses in the future.

In general, the engagement with the traders identified a high level of support for the draft *Plan* and the way that Council currently supports local traders. Feedback was also gathered on new ideas and further opportunities to support local traders such as:

- Greater communication about things happening within their centres. Noting that traders often don't check their emails so an innovative way should be explored to relay information.
- Support for initiatives to address or activate vacant properties, including assistance working with property owners.
- Support maintaining high levels of cleanliness and trader compliance within their centres to improve amenity.
- Providing information/training in flexible ways, e.g. online to make it more accessible to traders or taking the training to them where possible, e.g. holding sessions within activity centres.

Have Your Say online community survey

A community survey was developed and made available on Council's Have Your Say online platform for a four-week period from 10 April to 8 May 2024. A total of 27 surveys were submitted during this time frame.

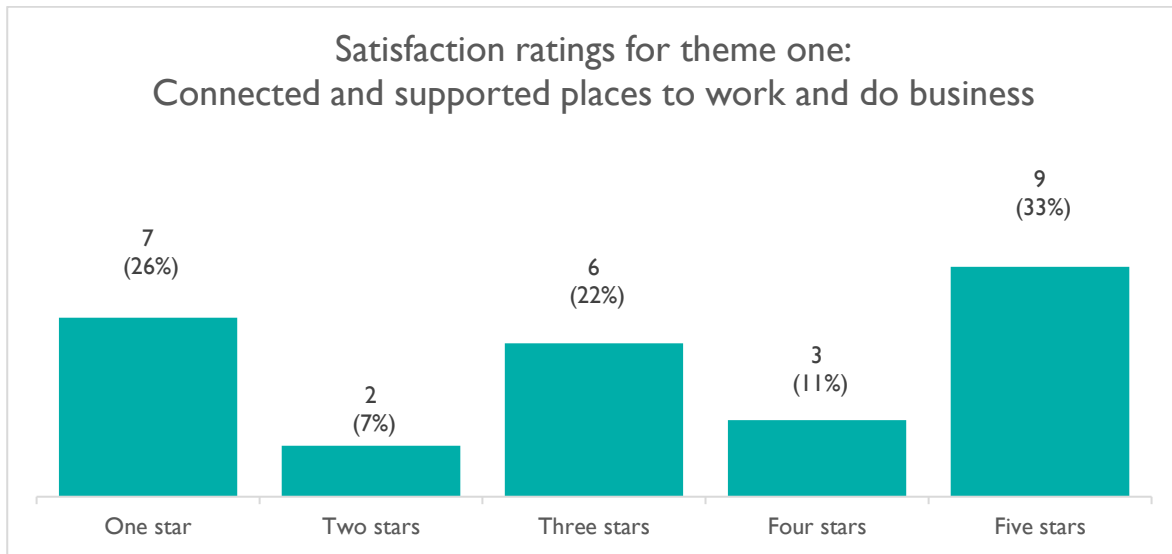
The survey provided a combination of both open and closed questions as well as several demographic questions. Results for each question are provided below. All open questions have been analysed and recorded according to common themes and categories.

Question one asked survey respondents to rate their satisfaction with the three themes of the draft *Economic Development Action Plan 2024-2026*.

The question provided a choice of one to five stars as the option for identifying respondents' satisfaction ratings. One star representing a low satisfaction rating, rising to five stars representing the highest satisfaction rating. All 27 survey respondents answered the question.

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Results for theme one – *Connected and supported places to work and do business.*



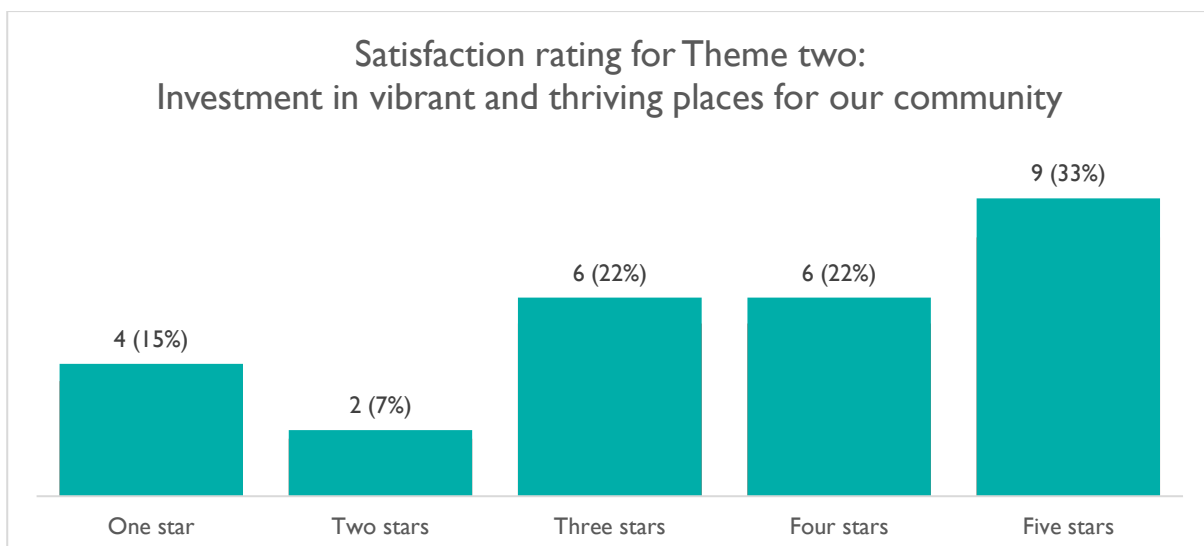
The weighted average of the survey results for theme one is 3.2 stars out of 5 stars.

44 per cent of survey respondents are satisfied with Theme One (33 per cent provided a five-star satisfaction rating and 11 per cent provided a four-star satisfaction rating)

22 per cent are somewhat satisfied providing a three-star satisfaction rating. The rest of the survey respondents, totaling 33 per cent were dissatisfied with theme one (26 per cent provided a one-star rating and 7 per cent provided a two-star rating).

Although the results for this theme are mixed the majority of survey respondents identify broad satisfaction with theme one.

Results for theme two – *Investment in vibrant and thriving places for our community*



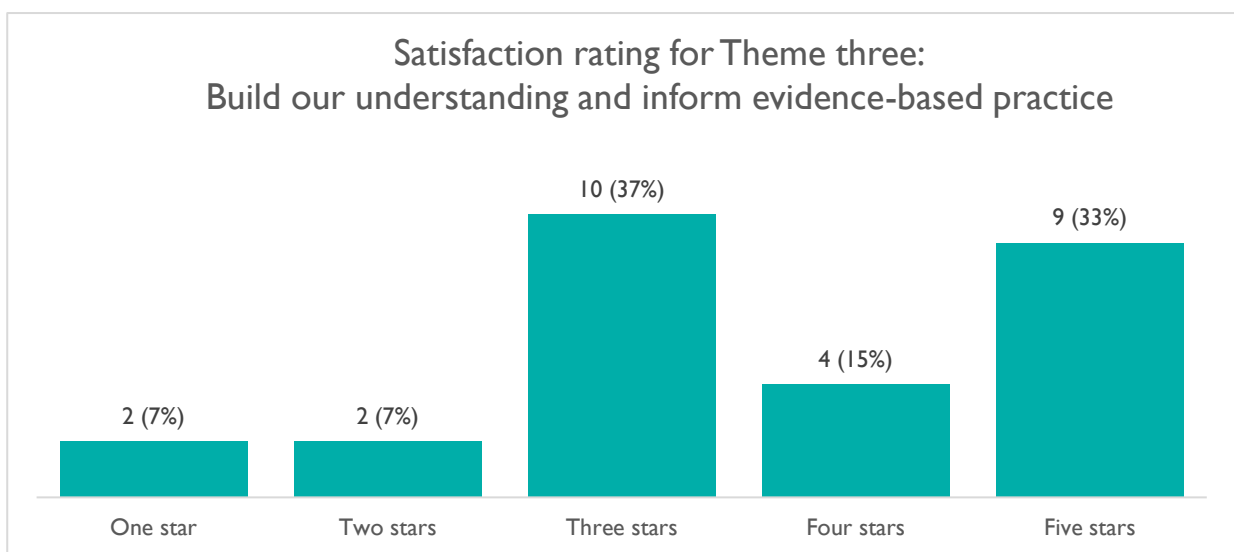
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The weighted average of the survey results for theme two is 3.5 stars out of 5 stars.

55 per cent of survey respondents are satisfied with Theme two (33 per cent provided a five-star satisfaction rating and 22 per cent provided a four-star satisfaction rating) 22 per cent are somewhat satisfied providing a three-star satisfaction rating. The rest of the survey respondents, totaling 22 per cent were dissatisfied with theme two (15 per cent provided a one-star rating and 7 per cent provided a two-star rating).

The results for theme two show that the majority of survey respondents identify broad satisfaction with theme two.

Results for theme three – Build our understanding and inform evidence-based practice



The weighted average of the survey results for theme three is 3.6 stars out of 5 stars.

48 per cent of survey respondents are satisfied with theme three (33 per cent provided a five-star satisfaction rating and 15 per cent provided a four-star satisfaction rating)

37 per cent are somewhat satisfied providing a three-star satisfaction rating. The rest of the survey respondents, totaling 14 per cent were dissatisfied with theme three (7 per cent provided a one-star rating and 7 per cent provided a two-star rating).

The results for theme three show that the majority of survey respondents identify broad satisfaction with theme three.

Question two asked survey respondent to select the top three strategic objectives that include actions that they view as most important.

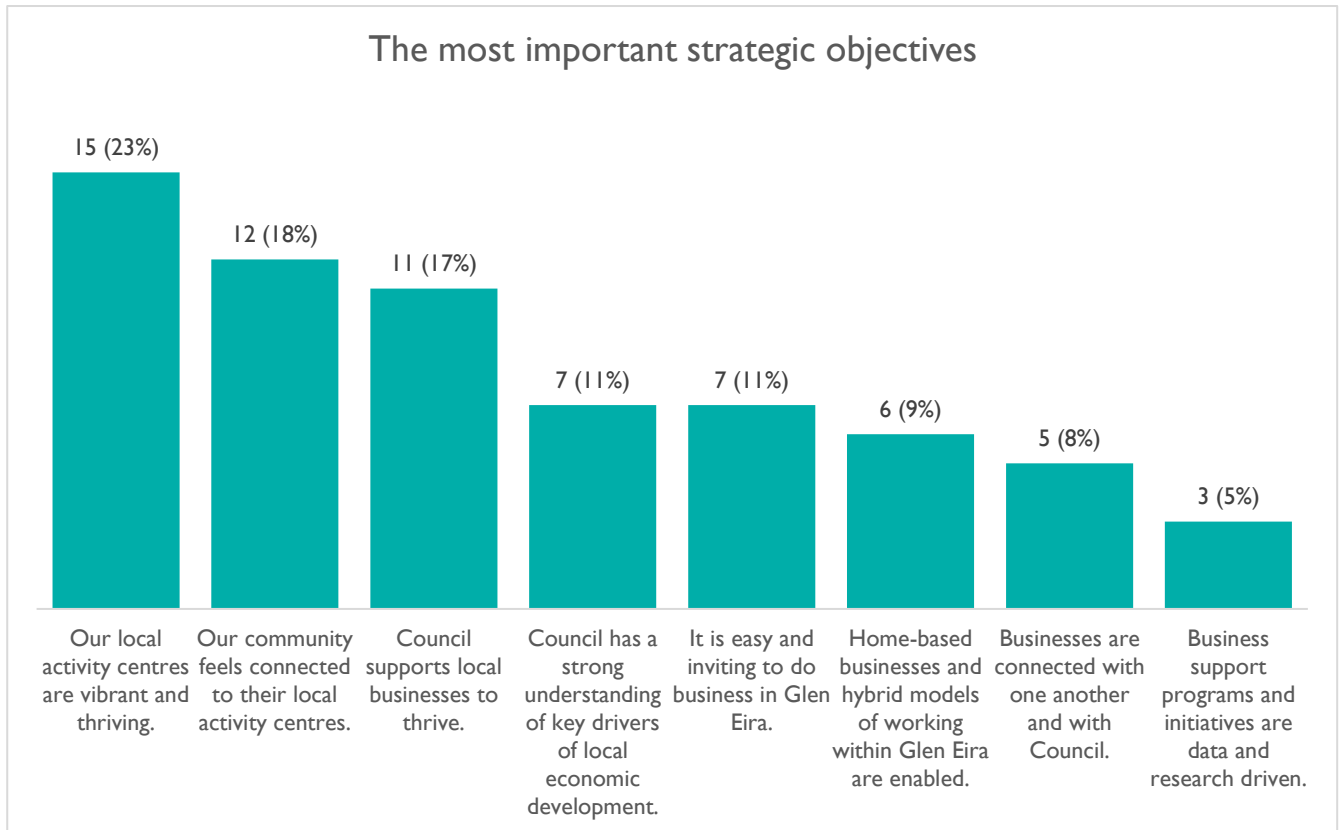
This question was answered by 22 of 27 survey respondents.

Each of the eight strategic objectives received votes from survey respondents as being one of their top three most important strategic objectives. The top three strategic objectives

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selected as the most important based on receiving the highest number of votes by survey respondents is:

1. Our local activity centres are vibrant and thriving. (15 votes /23 per cent)
2. Our community feels connected to their local activity centres (12 votes /18 per cent).
3. Council supports local businesses to thrive (11 votes /17 per cent)



Question three asked survey respondents whether they had any ideas on topics for future workshops, networking sessions and training that Council can implement to support local business.

This question was answered by 10 out of 27 survey respondents. There was a small range of diverse ideas suggested on workshops and network opportunities Council could implement as well as other ideas shared by survey respondents outlined in the table below.

Ideas for workshops	Ideas for network opportunities	Other ideas shared
Cross marketing and promotion.	Connect local businesses with local school communities / sporting clubs for mutual benefit.	Add electric vehicle chargers near neighbourhood activity centres to encourage more patronage in these areas.
Understanding planning regulations and the permit process.		
By-laws and regulations for home-based businesses.		Institute a minimum distance between like businesses and support legacy businesses.

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Digital marketing.		Improve the cleanliness, amenity, and broken foot paths of Glen Huntly Rd Elsternwick.
Think Tank session with business and Council.		
Sustainability workshop.		Fulfill your promises to support Glen Huntly shopping strip.
How to apply for grants and government contracts.		Rejuvenation projects that support art and interaction in vacant spaces.

Illustrative quotes

‘Simplified Planning Process Workshops: Workshops focused on simplifying the planning approval process for construction projects, including guidance on navigating planning regulations, streamlining permit applications, and reducing administrative burdens.’ (Male, Murrumbeena, 50-59)

‘Sessions on connecting local businesses with local school communities for greater local business interaction. E.g. how can businesses support local schools and sports clubs in fundraising and projects, and how can school/sport communities better promote/advertise local businesses to their communities.’ (Female, Murrumbeena, 50-59)

‘The council once ran a seminar on how to apply for grants and government contracts, if this is not still running it should be it was very informative.’ (Male, Caulfield, 50-59)

Question four asked survey respondents an open question on whether they have any other comments or feedback on the draft Economic Development Action Plan 2024-2026.

This question was answered by 13 out of 27 survey respondents. Many comments raised concerns for local businesses and shopping strips. This included comments around businesses closing down, high vacancy rates in commercial strips and lots of people struggling particularly in Glen Huntly Village who are identified as being more impacted by COVID and the removal of the railway crossing than other shopping precincts.

The main themes and comments have been summarised in the table below.

Theme area	Commentary
Rejuvenate and revitalise shopping strips particularly Glen Huntly Village shopping strip and Elsternwick Village shopping strip (both along Glenhuntly Rd).	- Both these shopping strips were described as tired, dirty, unwelcoming with lots of vacant shops and struggling traders. - Requests included adding new greenery, trees, and landscaping, fixing footpaths, providing new bins, new public toilets and cleaning up graffiti. - Variety of shops.

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Stop neglecting the smaller shopping strips (e.g Neerim Road and Murrumbeena Road)	• These shopping strips need assistance too. • Don't just focus on the major activity centres. • Smaller shopping strips tend to operate in isolation. Help integrate and include them in learning from the trader associations. • Planned footpath/landscape works never eventuated.
Shopping precincts need support to provide amenity and sense of place.	• Provide events and activities to attract local families. • Local artists to paint murals to reduce graffiti and cleaning costs. • Stop putting bike paths and improve car parking. • Install planter boxes, pop-up playgrounds and incentives for pop-up galleries and shops. • More outdoor dining.
Help businesses and local traders through reduce fees, incentives, and networking.	• Reduce fees for tenants of commercial properties. • Abolish the Elsternwick Village promotion fee. • Give incentives for businesses to set up here. • Listen to traders and community, don't do a survey. Host meetings in the community until you have a solid plan.

Illustrative quotes

'Historically Council hasnt offered much support to smaller shopping strips who tend to operate in isolation. Ways to bring these together and integrate and learn from traders associations would be great!...' (Female, undisclosed suburb, 50-59)

'Glen huntly has a lot of empty premises. It would be good to see incentives for businesses to set up here. The suburb is missing some key community shops like a good butcher and bakery. The footpaths also need to be redone. It would be nice to see more put door dining similar to carneige (Female, Glen Huntly, 18-29)

'Glen Huntly traders have been more impacted by COVID and the removing the rail crossing than other activity areas in Glen Eira. They need urgent assistance to stay afloat. The shopping strip itself is tired, dirty and unwelcoming....' (Female, Caulfield South, 40-49)

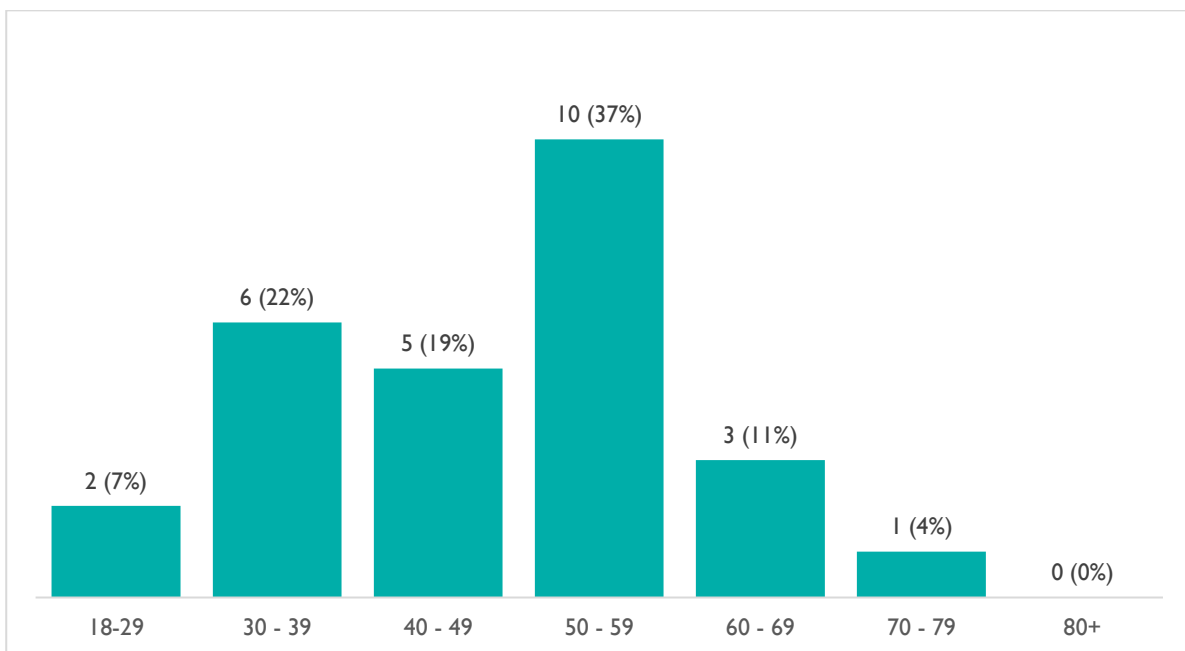
'I think that the area specifically in the Esternwich village could be improved with fresh and new greenery, some new paint, the bins replaced with new modern ones and the perhaps a public toilet in the public parks. This would do a lot to get this area an inviting and modern look, a simple face list would do wonders I think'. (Male, Elsternwick, 40-49)

Demographic profile of community survey respondents

All survey respondents provided information about themselves that is outlined below. Due to the small survey size, there are some gaps in representation throughout this data set.

Age groups

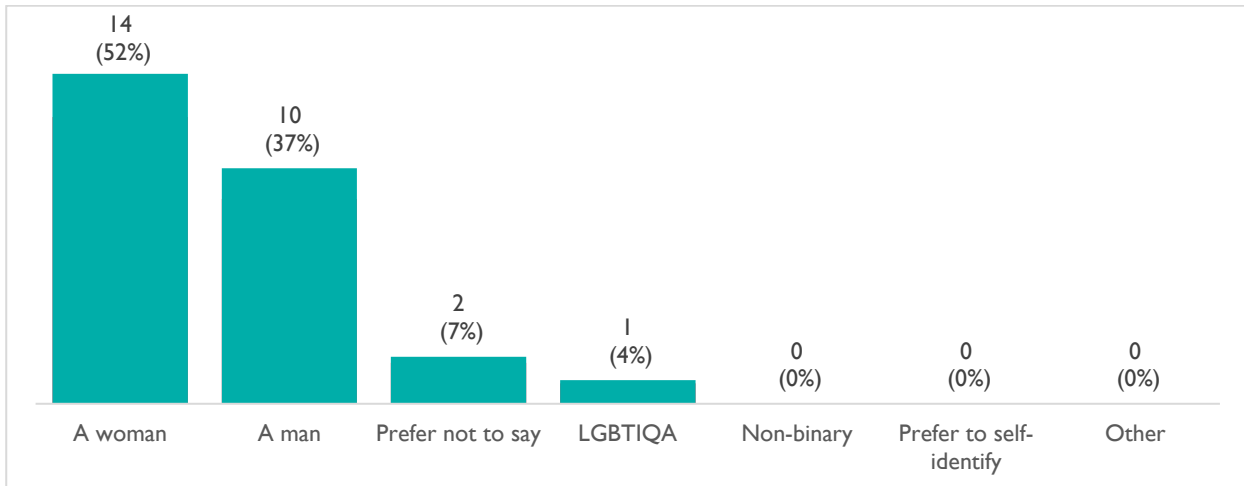
Age groups	Number of respondents
18-29	2 (7 per cent)
30-39	6 (22 per cent)
40-49	5 (19 per cent)
50-59	10 (37 per cent)
60-69	3 (11 per cent)
70-79	1 (4 per cent)
80+	0 (0 per cent)



Identity

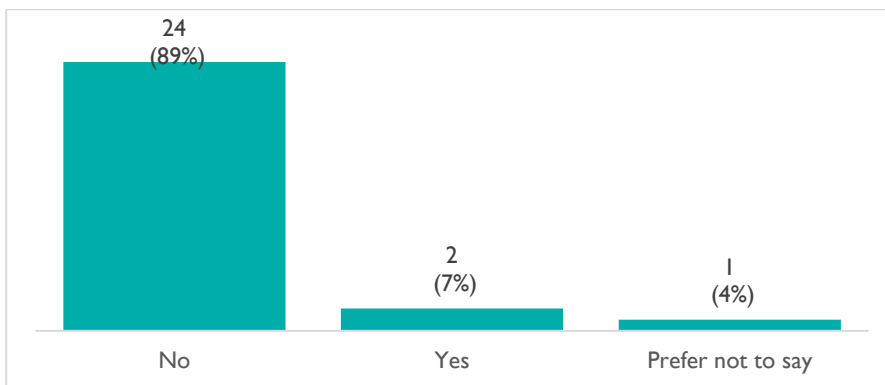
My identity is	Number of respondents
A woman	14 (52 per cent)
A man	10 (37 per cent)
Prefer not to say	2 (7 per cent)
LGBTIQA	1 (4 per cent)
Non-binary	0 (0 per cent)
Prefer to self-identify	0 (0 per cent)
Other	0 (0 per cent)

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Do you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

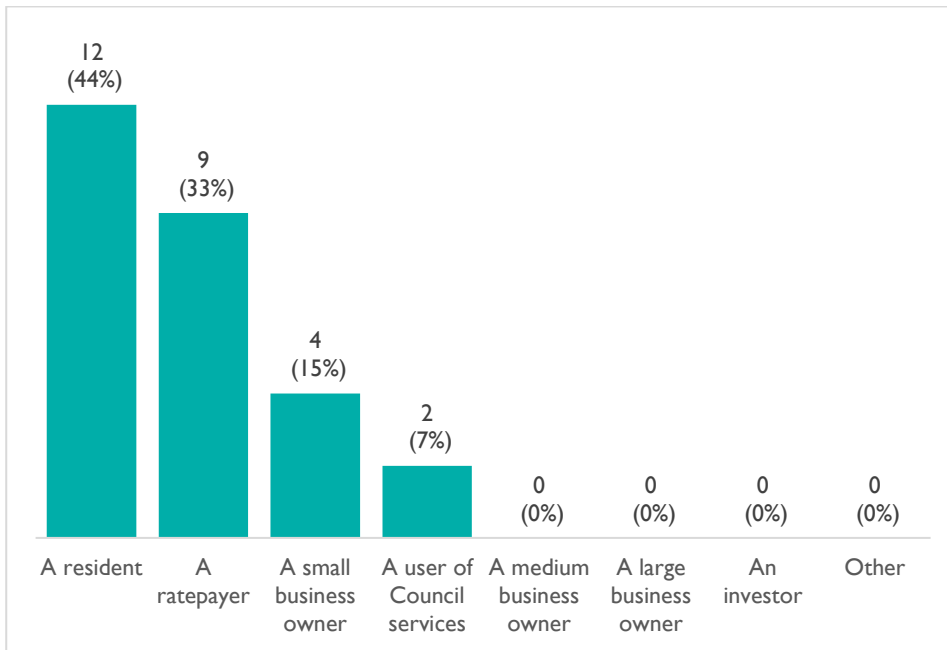
Response	Number of respondents
No	24 (89 per cent)
Yes	2 (7 per cent)
Prefer not to say	1 (4 per cent)



My relationship to Council:

Response	Number of respondents
A resident	12 (44 per cent)
A ratepayer	9 (33 per cent)
A small business owner	4 (15 per cent)
A user of Council services	2 (7 percent)
A medium business owner	0 (0 per cent)
A large business owner	0 (0 per cent)
An investor	0 (0 per cent)
Other	0 (0 per cent)

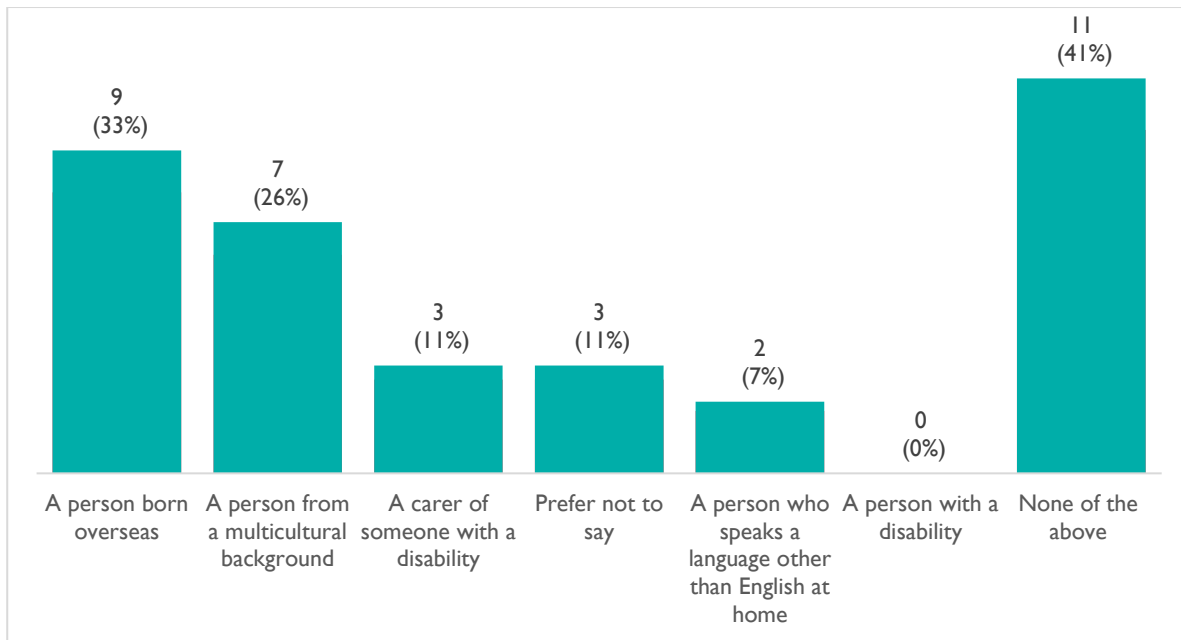
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I am:

Response	Number of respondents
A person born overseas	9 (33 per cent)
A person from a multicultural background	7 (26 per cent)
A carer of someone with a disability	3 (11 per cent)
Prefer not to say	3 (11 per cent)
A person who speaks a language other than English at home	2 (7 per cent)
A person with a disability	0 (0 per cent)
None of the above	11 (41 per cent)

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Suburb based in:

Suburb	Number of respondents
Glen Huntly	8 (30 per cent)
Elsternwick	4 (15 per cent)
Bentleigh	3 (11 per cent)
Carnegie	2 (7 per cent)
Caulfield South	2 (7 per cent)
Murrumbeena	2 (7 per cent)
Ormond	2 (7 per cent)
Caulfield	1 (4 per cent)
St Kilda East	1 (4 per cent)
McKinnon	1 (4 per cent)
Bentleigh East	0 (0 per cent)
Brighton East	0 (0 per cent)
Caulfield East	0 (0 per cent)
Caulfield North	0 (0 per cent)
Gardenvale	0 (0 per cent)
Other	0 (0 per cent)

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