

Developing the Council Plan/Health Plan 2021-2025

Phase One Community Engagement Report   
April 2021

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# Executive Summary

Moonee Valley City Council must produce a Council Plan. This will involve significant community engagement in 2021 to:

* gain insight and understanding around the impacts of COVID-19 on the community
* understand community priorities, including health and wellbeing priorities
* identify what role Council can play in recovery from COVID-19
* build and strengthen relationships with community to help Council to achieve MV2040
* identify actions to include in the Council Plan (integrating the Health Plan)
* pilot and evaluate a deliberative engagement process with the community
* create broader community awareness around Council’s vision to create a healthy city
* build awareness of MV2040 and the Council Plan process
* build awareness of the need to move from an action-based to an outcomes-based planning approach.

This report summarises the findings from community engagement completed in March and April 2021. Over the coming months we will be reaching out further to residents and stakeholders, to further define community priorities and actions to deliver the 2021-2025 Council Plan/Health Plan.

## What we did

The first phase of engagement for the 2021-2025 Council Plan was carried out over five weeks from 8 March through to 11 April. A variety of tools were used to engage the community and understand their priorities for the next four years as we commence the next chapter in delivering our long-term Community Vision: MV2040, to provide a healthy city for all.

An online Your Say survey was developed to promote the project and provide community with an opportunity to share their experiences during the pandemic, and what was important to them in recovery. The survey was promoted through a variety of communication channels such as Your Say Moonee Valley ­e-newsletter, Council website, Council social media platforms, service-based e-newsletters, stakeholder emails and delivered to all households through the Valley View magazine. Council received almost 500 responses the Your Say survey – the most Council has ever received through an online engagement survey!

To make sure we heard from residents who may not have had the time, ability or access to complete an online survey, we interviewed representatives from community and support groups, service organisations, healthcare providers and peak bodies. We also met with school students to understand the priorities of young people and met with Wurundjeri Elders to make sure reconciliation is embedded in our Council Plan.

## Emerging community priorities

Through our conversations with the community, a number of items emerged as priority areas for Council to explore in more depth in the next stage of the community engagement process. These focus areas fell across all five of the themes of our Community Vision: MV2040.

### Fair

**Prevention of family violence and violence against women**

Several community agencies and stakeholders observed a significant increase in family violence reporting during the pandemic. Notably, reports of family violence would rise as lockdowns eased, with stakeholders sharing that victim/survivors often felt unable to report while in lockdown, due to communication, privacy and safety concerns in reporting from home. Different forms of coercion emerged, with some reporting that women were isolated from their usual support networks, were told not to go out as they might contract COVID-19, and were closely monitored by their partners. Many agencies are now reporting that much work needs to be done to connect women to services and support, and to continue promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women.

*“There has been a big increase in Family Violence referrals - and we are also seeing young people in families feel unsafe”* - interview participant

*“With students studying from home, we saw a huge decline in family violence reporting - students were unable to report. Coming out of lockdown, we then saw a huge increase in support service access”* - interview participant

*“Vulnerable communities were already disadvantage and have been further impacted by COVID-19. Key areas of focus need to be around prevention of violence against women, employment and International students and unpacking these challenges”* - interview participant

**Provide support to improve mental health and build social connection**

Overwhelmingly, community members and service providers reported negative impacts to mental health as a result of the pandemic. In addition to the impact of their movements being restricted, their feeling of connection to their friends, family and community was diminished. As well as providing access to mental health support groups and practitioners, community members (especially young people) are also looking for Council to facilitate opportunities for the community come together through festivals and events.

*“Create opportunities for people to connect in their local communities by doing things that sustain and build relationships, or support what is already happening in communities. I live in ascot vale and there are some fabulous community leaders who have created things like the free pantry, started the repair cafe, started environmental initiatives - this work should be built on, supported and expanded” –* community member

*“Create opportunities for people to connect and get back to a new normal as soon as possible. Provide opportunities for outdoor events and festivals etc. that get people out of their homes and promote positive personal well-being and social connection”* *–* community member

*“We as a family found many neighbours were isolated due to age and lack of connection. Perhaps Council can provide more ways for neighbours to connect and help each other”* *–* community member

*“Mental wellbeing is now at the forefront of people's minds - and it needs massive investment - matched with the physical health investment of COVID. General mental wellbeing wasn't good prior to the pandemic and it has only gotten worse. We need to invest in good mental health support so that communities bounce back from this"* *–* community member

### Thriving

**Support local businesses**

Community members are concerned about the impact that lockdowns have had on their local shopping strips with shops and restaurants forced to close. Due to the pandemics 5km travel restrictions, community have spent a lot more time shopping locally and feel a greater connection with the businesses in their neighbourhood. Business owners are asking for help in adapting to an online environment, and suggest direct support in the form of grants and campaigns to encourage residents to keep shopping locally.

*“Support local business and initiatives to encourage residents to shop locally. Sad to see the number of shop fronts along Keilor Road that are empty, and businesses struggling” -* interview participant

*“Actively assist businesses, be flexible about bylaws and plan to create a vibrant community where local businesses can survive and thrive”* - interview participant

*“Encourage community members to support local businesses. Many shops have closed and we want to see our area recover”* - interview participant

*"Social inclusion and underemployment need to be a priority" (Interview participant)*

*“Industry support is critical, need additional resources for economic development in the next year. Critically important to stop businesses closing. Help kick start businesses to get back on their feet. More businesses mean more jobs. Take advantage of local spend.”* - interview participant

*“Prioritising community groups as part of the recovery (i.e. those impacted the most), business recovery support shouldn't be the priority but we need to target investment to those that have impacted the most – community members who were already vulnerable and are now really struggling.”* - interview participant

**Building a Highball Stadium**

While community members were generally supportive of providing new sports facilities and upgrading existing ones, the majority of comments in this area were asking for a dedicated highball stadium. The main reason that was provided to support this was a lack of options for children to play basketball or netball over the lockdown period.

*“Moonee Valley is in need of indoor basketball stadium. Avondale Heights stadium is dated and small. Local clubs don’t have places to train and kids are missing out on physical activity”* – community member

*“Provide more sporting venues for children to became more active and connected to the community. This will also provide social inclusion for children and adults - basketball stadium, netball stadium, tennis courts, football and soccer ovals”* – community member

*“Playing basketball and being part of the basketball community was something our family really missed during the lockdowns. We would like to see a basketball stadium and/or facilities in Moonee Valley, as this sport is one of the most popular among young people.”* – community member

### Green

**Responding to the impacts of climate change**

While residents were supportive of Council taking action on climate change in general, Council received a number of email submissions with specific issues and suggestions. A number of submissions asked for more detail on how Council will deliver its endorsed targets for community emission reductions by 2040. There also seems to be a lack of clarity or consensus in the community in regards to where Council can directly influence a reduction in community emissions, where it can influence, where it does not have control, as well as whether Council should focus efforts on climate change mitigation, adaption, or both.

*“Genuinely attempt to support the city to draw down its carbon emissions and integrate some interim targets which will make the Green plans achievable”* – community member

*“My kids are concerned that COVID 19 pandemic is just the start of the world unravelling. They understand climate change and its impacts more than any other section of the community. Yet what they see happening in terms of change in their communities is non-existent”* – community member

*“We need to rebuild better for a better future, focussing on reducing emissions at the same time of building tighter communities and more resilient businesses. Climate action is often seen as a separate budget line and has thus far received minimal funding. But it should underpin everything the Council does”* – community member

### Connected

**Provide safe walking and biking trails**

With exercise and physical activity providing one of the only ways that community members could get out of the house during lockdown, there has been a noticeable increase in the use of walking and bike trails, and support for expanding and improving our active transport network. Residents were concerned about the safety of existing paths with the increased levels of use, especially for families.

*“Focus on bike paths. So many people would bike for local trips, especially families with kids, if it were safer and required less time on roads. I have young teenagers who are too old to ride on the footpath but too scared to be on roads with no bike lanes which is the only way to get anywhere around town that’s not a path next to a creek or river.”* – community member

*“Repair and expand development of the bike trail especially the Avondale heights section which has been damaged by wet weather multiple times in the past. The Thompson reserve access path is too steep and dangerous.”* – community member

*“Ensure accessibility for elderly and disabled on footpaths (reduce obstructions), encourage the covid led increase in cycling with bike paths/bike parking, especially for children who need footpaths clear of obstructions like advertising signs etc.”* – community member

*“learn from the COVID experience and fix the safety and bottlenecks on our walking and cycling paths. We also need to recognise that doesn't happen overnight, need to plan to fix them.”* - interview participant

### Beautiful

**Provide parks and green space for everyone**

The 5km travel restrictions during the extended lockdown in 2020 led to community members spending more time in their local neighbourhoods. As a result, there has been a greater appreciation for the importance of open space for maintaining both physical and mental health. Community members are asking for more open space to be provided and for improvements to existing parks and reserves.

*“Promote opportunities for community connection and neighbourliness. Encourage residents to take advantage of the fantastic open spaces we have in our municipality. It was great to see families, friends and individuals enjoying our green spaces and walking tracks during covid lockdown”* – community member

*“Ensure local spaces are well maintained, attractive and encourage people to get out and use open spaces and the outdoors enjoyably and safely - good for both physical and mental health”* – community member

*“I work as a Nurse and 2020 was difficult. Walking in my neighbourhood was my haven and how I would daily recover mentally, it was also a wonderful place to socialise & meet others from my neighbourhood”* – community member

*"Moonee Valley is blessed with parks, streets are safe to walk on, spring to autumn is a great time. Council doesn't have to spend lots of money on this. It's just a matter of campaigns to talk people into exercising in their neighbourhoods"* - interview participant

## How Council can respond to emerging community priorities

In addition to communicating *what* community wanted Council to focus on, there were some clear messages on *how* respondents wanted Council to take action.

**Help residents and community groups to identify and access the support and services they need**

Community members are asking for Council’s help in identifying and accessing the support and services they need. Language and digital literacy can be barriers for community members in determining what support is available is to them, and in navigating application systems and processes. Through this engagement, and consistent across other Council engagements, significant numbers of community have made suggestions asking for Council to provide services that Council already provides, or that are outside of its scope/responsibility. This further highlights the need for Council to provide community with a clear understanding of where it can provide support both directly and indirectly i.e. though advocacy.

*“By providing accessible services that can help residents in Moonee Valley feel they can get help when they need it. For example, Grants are great but they need to be marketed to people that may need it so people can access it. You can’t get help if you don’t know it is there.”* – community member

*“I think the City of Moonee Valley has an opportunity to be the trusted source for community members. Commit to communicating well, simplifying information and engaging meaningfully”* – community member

*“Council needs to proactively communicate to their community the services that are available and what these entail and how they can best stay informed in relation to new initiatives”* – community member

**Facilitate and create opportunities for community members to take the lead on initiatives, build social connections, and support community organisations and groups to connect**

Community members raised that importance of community themselves taking the lead on recovery and initiatives that impact them. They know their community and needs best. It was also raised that Council can play a really important role in building social connections, facilitating networking between organisations, and connect community with community groups and organisations. Many raised that Council doesn’t need to duplicate services, though can help facilitate connections and encourage more collaboration across existing services already active in Moonee Valley.

*“The lockdown of Flemington Public Housing had a significant impact on community. We learnt that communities need to lead on priorities…. Communities themselves need to lead on issues, not only in crisis”* - interview participant

*“Things that are important in recovery include community led approaches, enhancing sense of community and sense of place, mental wellbeing. These need to be in place”* - interview participant

*“Trying to navigate mental health sector is hard and it is really good to keep up with what other organisations are doing. We need to collaborate and know what is going on in local area. The network meetings are really good to know what is going on. It is really important not to duplicate, but connect with other organisations and refer people to programs”* - interview participant

*"Council can integrate, rather than duplicate. Council plays a really important role in helping to bring people together. For example, the Sport and Leisure industry could come together to service every area of the community - Everyone gets an opportunity to get active.”* - interview participant

## Summary of Phase One Community Engagement tools and participation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PURPOSE OF PHASE ONE** | |
| The purpose of Phase One Community Engagement for the 2021-2025 Council Plan was to understand COVID-19 impacts on community and help to identify focus areas for recovery. The objectives of the Phase One Community Engagement were as follows:   * To understand the impacts that COVID-19 had on the community * To identify the community’s priorities for recovery * To identify what role Council can play in driving recovery from COVID-19 * To create broader community awareness around Council’s vision to create a healthy city * To build and strengthen relationships with community to help Council to achieve MV2040 | |
| **WHAT DID WE ASK?** | |
| *Excerpt from Your Say online survey* | 1. Over the past 12 months how has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the community’s every-day life/been impacted? 2. Have services/ organisations had to change operations to respond to community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic? 3. Are there any gaps in services that are being offered to support community recovery in Moonee Valley? 4. What services are less or more important to help the community recover from the COVID-19 pandemic? 5. The importance of the MV2040 themes over the next 4 years as the community recovers from COVID-19 pandemic. 6. What aspects of community health and wellbeing do you think Council should focus on? 7. How can Council support our community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and what role does it play? |
| **WHO DID WE TALK TO ON YOURSAY MOONEE VALLEY?** | |
| **Gender:** 33% Male | 62% Female | 4% Preferred not to say | .8% Other  **Age:** 1% >17 | 3% 18-25 | 29% 26-40 | 38% 41-55 | 18% 56-65 | 10% 66-80 | .4% <80  **Suburb:** 20% Essendon | 19% Moonee Ponds | 15% Ascot Vale | 7% Strathmore | 6% Keilor East | 5% Avondale Heights | 4% Aberfeldie | 4% Niddrie | 4% Flemington | 3% Essendon North | 2% Airport West | 2% Essendon West | 1% Travancore  *Please note all % are rounded to the nearest number* | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HOW DID WE INVOLVE COMMUNITY IN THE CONVERSATION?** | |
| **Online Engagement** | YourSay Moonee Valley is the digital platform for all online engagement by Moonee Valley City Council. Over the duration of the Phase One Engagement the platform received over 3.5k visits including:   * 490 engaged in the survey * 911 informed (clicked to view documents/FAQ/external links) * 2,410 aware (single visit with no further action) * 22,784 people reached through the Council Facebook page where 1,005 people clicked onto the Your Say Moonee Valley page (including 196 young males and 95 from CALD community) * 81 comments on Council Facebook page and 14 shares * 2 comments on Council Instagram and 5 shares |
| **Targeted Engagement**  Image | A number of communications and engagement activities were delivered to targeted groups and stakeholders including:   * 18 stakeholder interviews * 1 cultural consultation with 2 Wurundjeri Elders * 1 consultation session with 30 young people * Valley View Magazine article distributed to 52,000 households * Council e-newsletters distributed to over 22,000 people * 800 emails sent to service users, networks and community groups * 5,609 people reached through Council services social media platforms |
| **HOW WILL WE USE THE INFORMATION?** |  |
|  | Community feedback through Phase One is being used to identify community priorities that align with our long-term Community Vision MV2040. We will continue to work with community to do a deeper dive into the priority areas identified which will then contribute to the actions delivered over the next four years to build a healthy city. |
| **WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?** | |
| <https://yoursay.mvcc.vic.gov.au/councilplan>  Chris Currie | Corporate Planning Coordinator | 9243 1003 | [ccurrie@mvcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:ccurrie@mvcc.vic.gov.au)  Shelley Tait | Health Impact Officer | 9243 1739 | [stait@mvcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:stait@mvcc.vic.gov.au) | |

# Key Insights Report

## Council Plan/Health Plan Phase One Engagements

Detailed summaries and analysis for these engagements are available in the Appendix of this report. These being:

* [Appendix One: Your Say Survey March – April 2021](#_Toc69470232)
* [Appendix Two: Stakeholder Interviews March-April 2021](#_Toc69470233)
* [Appendix Three: Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Consultation March 2021](#_Toc69470234)
* [Appendix Four: Youth Engagement and Consultation March 2021](#_Toc69470235)
* [Appendix Five: Youth Consultants Project Consultation November 2020](#_Toc69470236)
* [Appendix Six: Moonee Valley Sports Clubs Consultation March 2021](#_Toc69470237)
* [Appendix Seven: Email submissions March – April 2021](#_Toc69470238)
* [Appendix Eight: Social Media Responses March – April 2021](#_Toc69470239)
* [Appendix Nine: Business in Moonee Valley during COVID-19 Survey September 2020](#_Toc69470240)
* [Appendix Ten: Supporting ageing and people with a disability in Moonee Valley Survey February 2021](#_Toc69470241)
* [Appendix Eleven: Summary of community engagement with Arts and Culture representatives in the City of Moonee Valley in 2020 and 2021](#_Toc69470242)

## Online Your Say Survey Results

### Emerging community priorities

**Impacts of Covid**

* Respondents to the survey indicated an increased their connection with where they lived over the pandemic period by walking or biking in their local neighbourhood, spending time in their local parks and green spaces. They also were more likely to support local businesses and source food locally. This is not surprising given the 5km limits that the majority of residents were subject to.
* Residents also reported an increase in importance of digital technology for work or study, keeping in contact with friends and family and accessing services. For some residents this resulted in higher household bills.
* A significant number of respondents reported feeling more socially isolated or lonely and worried about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of those around them.

**Priorities for action**

* Significant numbers of respondents to the survey wanted to see an expansion and improvement of Open Space including: more parks, playgrounds and recreational green spaces, more walking and bike trails and increasing the city’s tree canopy.
* Residents felt that it was very important for Council to act to prevent and respond to family violence, violence against women and gender equity as well as working to prevent racism and discrimination.
* Another priority was helping local businesses to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, either through direct support or making improvements to local shopping streetscapes and amenity.
* Finding ways to fight climate change and its impacts on the community were also important to respondents, especially supporting and encouraging the update of renewable energy.
* Respondents also wanted Council to increase the level of support for older people.

**Health Priorities**

* A majority of respondents believe that Community Safety and Physical Activity are the main areas that Council should focus on from a health perspective.
* Mental Health, the health impacts of Climate Change, Social Connection and the prevention of family violence and violence against women were also supported by a majority of respondents.
* Social inclusion, safe and affordable housing, employment and preventing discrimination and racism were areas that had strong support.

**Open Questions**

* Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on Councils priorities for the next four years. Of the 318 comments received, the majority fell into five areas: supporting local business, open space, delivering a highball stadium, addressing mental health and social connection and climate change.

## Stakeholder Interviews

### Emerging community priorities

**Mental health**

* Many organisations reported that COVID-19 and the lockdowns have seen a large decline in mental wellbeing in the community. There was particular concern for people already vulnerable and isolated due to job loss, digital exclusion, language barriers, financial hardship and/or poor housing. Many reported that this was an issue prior to COVID-19 and the past year has only exacerbated mental wellbeing issues in our community.
* Exercise, staying socially connected, programs and groups that keep people socially connected were all seen as important in supporting the community’s mental wellbeing.
* Council should focus on linking people with existing services to support mental health. This was mentioned by some respondents directly but also came through in the significant number of people who were asking for services that Council already provides.

**Prevention of family violence and violence against women**

* Women have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 with more women losing jobs, many more taking on caring roles and greater impacts on financial and mental health
* Support services for women quickly became overwhelmed during the pandemic and there continues to be a large backlog of people waiting on a response.

**Climate change**

* Those more vulnerable to climate impacts need to be supported to build their resilience and capacity to respond i.e. culturally and linguistically diverse communities, young children, older adults and people living with a disability or chronic conditions.

**Recreation and keeping people active**

* Council should be encouraging people to take part in a variety of options for keeping active including: organized sport, group fitness or simple leisure activities close to their home such as walking and cycling. This includes connecting new communities to leisure opportunities, particularly those communities who may face barriers to participate in traditional leisure or sports settings.
* Council could play a role in helping encourage and promote walking and cycling including through programs such as Walk to School and Ride 2 School, as well as broader community through promotional activities.
* Council also plays a role in providing safe, attractive walking and cycling routes and needs to invest in these to encourage people to be active.

**Social connection**

* With the shift to online services and programming during COVID-19, the digital divide became stark. Many organisations talked about the challenges of connecting with people that might not have the internet, a computer or the skills to connect online. This limited these people’s ability to access support services and participate in online education and social connection activities.
* Services noted that families of young children were very isolated during COVID-19 and that there has been a challenge in reconnecting with families. Rebuilding these connections is vital in supporting children, particularly those that are more vulnerable.
* Supporting new parents was also seen as important to ensure their wellbeing. Being isolated during COVID-19 would have been very challenging emotionally so finding ways for families to continue connecting with their communities will be critical for their and their child’s wellbeing.
* Council can play an active role in connecting with more vulnerable or isolated community members such as people who don’t qualify for government support payments and other target populations such as women, young people, those who speak a language other than English, digitally isolated, carers, older people, people living with a disability and people living in public housing.

**Employment**

* Many businesses continue to be impacted by COVID-19 and Council can continue to support and encourage local spending. It was suggested that Council should complement and not duplicate state government support.
* Large business shouldn't be the priority for support, target investment to those that have been impacted the most e.g. small businesses and sole traders.
* Social inclusion and addressing barriers to employment were seen as critical to reduce unemployment.
* Underemployment was noted as a critical issue and supporting local investment was seen as vital in addressing this.
* Supporting new social enterprises was seen as an opportunity including opening up empty spaces for them to work in and providing seed or grant funding to help them get started.

**Council’s role to build networks, connect organisations and community**

* Many organisations suggested that there are already many services and organisations operating and that Council shouldn’t duplicate services. Council should instead collaborate and support specialist organisations to provide these services and enhance communications across the municipality.
* Council has and should continue to be the connector that brings organisations together to network and help connect the community to these organisations.

## Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Consultation with Elders

* Supporting communities impacted by ceasing of the JobKeeper payments.
* Supporting businesses impacted by COVID-19 including those recovering and trying to stay afloat.
* Looking at how the Reconciliation Plan currently in development will align with the Council Plan/Health Plan, as a lot of work has gone into the development of the Reconciliation Plan 2021-25 and this will reflect Council’s reconciliation work moving forward.
* The Elders have also offered to provide additional language and artwork to further embed reconciliation in the Council Plan.

## Consultation with young people

* Overall, young people identified mental health as their top priority, followed by prevention of violence against women, physical activity/physical health, climate change and quit smoking.
* The majority of young people described negative impacts to their mental health and wellbeing. Many students described being stuck at home during the pandemic and experiencing feelings of a lack of motivation and freedom, depression, increased anxiety and paranoia, as well as reduced sleep and reduced social interactions with friends.
* Overwhelmingly, students described an interest in seeing more carnivals, festivals, concerts and events in their community as restrictions ease to aid in social connection.

## Social media comments

Residents who responded to social media posts highlighted their concerns or requests for Council action to:

* improve traffic congestion and driver, pedestrian and bike user safety
* reduce the impacts of higher density living and multiple dwellings on traffic, parking and street flow
* deliver more car parking including accessible car parks among busy shopping areas and along congested streets
* enhance park facilities such as shelter, bins, toilets and tables (specifically at Queens Park)
* enhance tree canopy and deliver a plan to achieve zero net emissions by 2030.

## Email / written submissions

* Email submissions mostly fell into the following themes; climate change, community connections, support for community groups, and recreation and arts.

## Supplementary Engagements

### Healthy Aging and Disability Support Consultation - February 2021 (197 people participated)

* Residents accessing aged care and disability support services want council to provide more hours and a higher level of support in the home.
* Respondents requested assistance in identifying and accessing services, particularly those providing opportunities for social connection.

### Business in Moonee Valley during COVID-19 Survey - September 2020 (194 responses)

* Strong support for Council to promote and support local business through their website and communication channels.
* Businesses asked for support in adapting your business to the new operating environment i.e. taking their business online.
* Many respondents asked support in areas where Council is already active indicated that more needs to be done to ensure business is easily able to identify and access the services and support it needs.

### Moonee Valley City Council Sports Clubs Consultation - March 2021 (86 sports and recreation clubs participated)

* Increasing overall participation in sports club activities, particularly from CALD groups, women and young people
* Council to facilitate communication between sports groups to promote knowledge sharing
* Better lines of communication between sports clubs and Council to ensure mutual understanding of stakeholder needs and facilitate codesign of solutions.

### Youth Consultants Project Consultation - November 2020 (22 young people participated)

* Many young people expressed that they were able to enjoy exercise, going to the park, creative activities, family time and study during lockdown.
* Many young people reported being able to stay connected to family and friends and the local community during the pandemic via zoom, online and social media. However, a couple of respondents reported that they hadn’t stayed connected with anyone or with very few people.
* Nearly a quarter of survey respondents rated their level of mental health as 1 (worst its ever been).
* Young people suggested improvements for prevention and response to mental health, including:
  + specific services for young people that are free and have short waitlists
  + addressing the causes if ill-mental health such as financial stress placed on young people and those living in unsafe or inappropriate housing as well as young people who might be isolated.
  + Promoting, supporting and encouraging young people to make social connections in their communities.
  + Promoting good mental health and reducing the stigma around poor mental health.

### Arts and Culture Consultation with stakeholders – July/August 2020 and March 2021 (6 community organisations and 22 community members participated)

* Arts, music and performance groups were not able to meet in person during lockdown, impacting on rehearsals and scheduled performances, and many reverted to phone and online communication.
* Groups expressed concerns around membership retention and financial viability of their organisation after heavy losses during lockdown, with performances postponed or cancelled.
* Audience capacity and physical distancing limitations directly impacted the ability of performing arts organisations and groups to resume business as usual.
* Groups suggested a number of opportunities for Council to support them in recovery, including:
  + Free or reduced venue hire costs
  + Financial support for productions including in-kind marketing and advertising support
  + Delivering smaller events and technical workshops through Council facilities to generate participation and income
  + Supporting community members as creators of art rather than just as consumers of art.
  + Support collaboration opportunities among artists to enhance arts and cultural offerings and their reach.
  + Supporting positive mental health among the arts and culture sector
  + Skill building, professional development and industry training
  + Mentoring for women in the arts
  + Infrastructure as well as project-based grant opportunities.

# Appendix One: Your Say Survey March – April 2021

**Your Say Survey**

**Methodology**

An online engagement page was developed on Your Say Moonee Valley to provide information about what the Council Plan is and how we would like the community to be involved. Community and stakeholders were invited to participate in a Recovery Survey from 8 March to 11 April whereby 490 people participated. The survey was promoted through a variety of channels including Valley View magazine, Council website, Council social media, Council e-newsletters, Facebook ads, and emails directly to service users/networks/stakeholders.

**Your Say survey questions**

1. Over the past twelve months how has the COVID-19 Pandemic changed your everyday life? (Pick all that apply)
   1. Spent more time in local parks and green spaces
   2. Walked or biked around my local neighbourhood more
   3. Got to know my neighbours better
   4. Supported more local businesses in my neighbourhood
   5. Learnt new skills or hobbies
   6. Learnt and used more digital technology
   7. Accessed more online arts and entertainment
   8. Accessed more online Council services
   9. Accessed more services either online or via the phone i.e. telehealth, counselling, fitness sessions
   10. Developed closer relationships with or maintained relationships with friends and family via the phone and/or online
   11. Experienced increased relationship and/or family stress
   12. Felt more socially isolated and/or lonely
   13. Felt more burnt out, helpless or a lack of resilience/ability to cope
   14. Worried more about my wellbeing or the wellbeing of those around me
   15. Experienced worse poor mental health
   16. Accessed more professional mental health support i.e. spoke to my doctor, visited a counsellor/psychologist/psychiatrist or other
   17. Experienced more discrimination due to my age, race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy or breastfeeding status, religion and/or other factors
   18. Became more aware of family violence in my local community
   19. Accessed family violence services for myself or to support a friend/family member i.e. counselling, refuge or housing support, legal or police services
   20. Increased my use of alcohol and/or drugs during the pandemic
   21. Accessed alcohol and/or drug support services
   22. Had a change in my living arrangements i.e. sold house, moved, found/couldn’t find a new housemate
   23. Experienced homelessness or accessed housing support services
   24. Experienced more employment or job stress
   25. Closed my business for a period of time or indefinitely
   26. Studied or worked from home for a period of time
   27. Sought to work from a shared space /co working hub
   28. Household members studied or worked from home for a period of time
   29. Took more time off work or reduced my work hours to provide care-giving i.e. look after young children, sick or elderly, provide home-schooling
   30. Noticed an increase in power bills i.e. water, gas, electricity, internet, phone
   31. Experienced delays or barriers in accessing healthcare i.e. my local clinic closed, my pharmacist ran out of my medication, my surgery was delayed due to COVID-19, I felt too at-risk to go into public and visit my doctor
   32. Ran out of food and/or accessed food relief
   33. Sourced more food and supplies locally
   34. Started growing my own food
   35. Generated more packaging waste as a result of online shopping
   36. Other (please specify) (free text)
2. Over the past 12 months the way we go about our everyday lives has changed. For each of the following actions, please indicate which you feel will be less or more important to help the Moonee Valley community to recover from the pandemic and build a healthy city. Choose one of the following for each action (Far less important; Less important; About the same; More important; Far more important; Not sure)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action # | Action |
| 1 | Provide more parks, playgrounds, recreational green spaces |
| 2 | Provide improvements to local shopping streetscapes and amenity |
| 3 | Provide more linked bike paths and safer cycling options |
| 4 | Provide more or enhance existing walking trails |
| 5 | Provide more opportunities for inclusive sport and recreation |
| 6 | Provide more activities and events in my local neighbourhood |
| 7 | Deliver new events and festivals |
| 8 | Install more public art |
| 9 | Provide more arts and culture content |
| 10 | Advocate and support the availability, affordability and suitability of low-income housing |
| 11 | Support local businesses to trade under a range of covid-safe restrictions |
| 12 | Increase support for adult and community education services |
| 13 | Support the local employment economy with local job opportunities and training |
| 14 | Provide further opportunities for volunteering, leadership and decision making |
| 15 | Provide inclusive spaces for co-working and study |
| 16 | Enhance access to public Wi-Fi |
| 17 | Provide technology borrowing/loans through libraries i.e. laptop, tablet, webcam, printer etc |
| 18 | Provide more kindergarten and childcare services |
| 19 | Provide more family and children’s services including support for home-schooling |
| 20 | Provide expanded youth mental health services |
| 21 | Provide further opportunities for social connection (including online and face-to-face) |
| 23 | Increase support for older people |
| 24 | Further action to prevent and respond to family violence, violence against women and gender equity |
| 25 | Take further action to prevent racism and discrimination |
| 26 | Take further action on climate change |
| 27 | Increase tree canopy |
| 28 | Support and encourage the uptake of renewable energy |

3. Our MV2040 Strategy is guided by a vision of ‘A Healthy City’, where together we enjoy positive health and wellbeing. In consideration of this, which do you feel are the most important over the next four years as the community recovers from Covid19? (Not very important; Somewhat important; Very important; Extremely important; Prefer not to say)

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Fair - Creating a city that is fair where everyone in our community feels included and has opportunities to succeed |
| Thriving - Creating a city that is thriving with jobs, places to learn and things to do and see |
| Connected - Creating a city that makes walking, cycling and public transport an easy choice |
| Green - Creating a city that is green, environmentally responsible and sustainable |
| Beautiful - Creating a city that is beautiful and respects local character and identity |

4. What aspects of community health and wellbeing do you think Council should focus on? (Pick all that apply)

* 1. Mental health
  2. Healthy eating
  3. Food security and/or food relief
  4. Physical activity
  5. Social connection
  6. Employment
  7. Safe and affordable housing
  8. Prevention of family violence and violence against women
  9. Gender equity
  10. Community safety
  11. Discrimination and racism
  12. Social inclusion
  13. Prevention of harm from gambling
  14. Prevention of harm from drugs and/or alcohol
  15. Quit smoking
  16. Early childhood development and/or school readiness
  17. Climate Change

Other (please specify)

Add note – all target populations will be considered in development of services and programs

5. How can Council support our community to recover from COVID-19?

(Free text response)

**Summary of Responses**

**Q1. Over the past twelve months how has the COVID-19 Pandemic changed your everyday life?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Top 10 Items** | **Number of Responses** |
| Walked or biked around my local neighbourhood more | 363 |
| Spent more time in local parks and green spaces | 353 |
| I or household member studied or worked from home for a period of time | 303 |
| Supported more local businesses in my neighbourhood | 294 |
| Worried more about my wellbeing or the wellbeing of those around me | 223 |
| Developed closer relationships with or maintained relationships with friends and family via the phone and/or online | 201 |
| Noticed an increase in power bills i.e. water, gas, electricity, internet, phone | 198 |
| Accessed more services either online or via the phone i.e. telehealth, counselling, fitness sessions | 189 |
| Sourced more food and supplies locally | 179 |
| Felt more socially isolated and/or lonely | 175 |

**Summary**

Respondents to the survey indicated an increased their connection with where they lived over the pandemic period by walking or biking in their local neighbourhood, spending time in their local parks and green spaces. They also were more likely to support local businesses and source food locally. This is not surprising given the 5km limits that the majority of residents were subject to.

Residents also reported an increase in importance of digital technology for work or study, keeping in contact with friends and family and accessing services. For some residents this resulted in higher household bills.

A significant number of respondents reported feeling more socially isolated or lonely and worried about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of those around them.

**Q2. Over the past 12 months our everyday lives have changed. For each of the following, please indicate the level of importance for Moonee Valley community’s recovery and wellbeing/health**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Top 10 Items** | **Number of Responses** |
| Provide more parks, playgrounds, recreational green spaces | 274 |
| Further action to prevent and respond to family violence, violence against women and gender equity | 237 |
| Support local businesses to trade under a range of covid-safe restrictions | 231 |
| Take further action on climate change | 225 |
| Provide more or enhance existing walking trails | 224 |
| Support and encourage the uptake of renewable energy | 220 |
| Increase support for older people | 218 |
| Provide more linked bike paths and safer cycling options | 214 |
| Increase tree canopy | 208 |
| Take further action to prevent racism and discrimination | 199 |
| Provide improvements to local shopping streetscapes and amenity | 192 |

**Summary**

Significant numbers of respondents to the survey wanted to see an expansion and improvement of Open Space including: more parks, playgrounds and recreational green spaces, more walking and bike trails and increasing the city’s tree canopy.

Residents felt that it was very important for Council to take action to prevent and respond to family violence, violence against women and gender equity as well as working to prevent racism and discrimination.

Another priority was helping local businesses to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, either through direct support or making improvements to local shopping streetscapes and amenity.

Finding ways to fight climate change and its impacts on the community were also important to respondents, especially supporting and encouraging the update of renewable energy.

Respondent’s also wanted Council to increase the level of support for older people.

**Q3. Our MV2040 Strategy is guided by a vision of ‘A Healthy City’, where together we enjoy positive health and wellbeing. In consideration of this, which do you feel are the most important over the next four years as the community recovers?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Most Common Response** | **Number of "Extremely Important" Responses** | **Percentage of "Extremely Important" Responses** |
| **Fair - Creating a city that is fair where everyone in our community feels included and has opportunities to succeed** | Extremely Important | 217 | 51% |
| **Thriving - Creating a city that is thriving with jobs, places to learn and things to do and see** | Extremely Important | 219 | 52% |
| **Connected - Creating a city that makes walking, cycling and public transport an easy choice** | Extremely Important | 276 | 65% |
| **Green - Creating a city that is green, environmentally responsible and sustainable** | Extremely Important | 259 | 61% |
| **Beautiful - Creating a city that is beautiful and respects local character and identity** | Extremely Important | 222 | 52% |

**Summary**

A majority of respondents believe that all of the MV2040 themes were important to deliver the MV2040 vision of a healthy city.

Connected, focussing on how we can move healthily and safely around the city, was the theme that respondents felt was the most important for the next four years. Green, focussing on combatting climate change and increasingly the sustainability of our city was also very important.

The remaining themes, Fair (diversity, health and inclusiveness), Thriving (strong economy, learning, arts, events and facilities) and Beautiful (Open Space and heritage) were equally important.

**Q4. What aspects of community health and wellbeing do you think Council should focus on?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Top 10 Items** | **Number of Responses** |
| Physical activity | 280 |
| Community safety | 277 |
| Mental health | 247 |
| Climate Change | 236 |
| Social connection | 229 |
| Prevention of family violence and violence against women | 224 |
| Social inclusion | 195 |
| Safe and affordable housing | 193 |
| Employment | 187 |
| Discrimination and racism | 166 |

**Summary**

A majority of respondents believe that community safety and physical activity are the main areas that Council should focus on from a health perspective.

Mental health, the health impacts of climate change, social connection and the prevention of family violence and violence against women were also supported by a majority of respondents.

Social inclusion, safe and affordable housing, employment and preventing discrimination and racism were areas that also had strong support.

**Open Questions**

**Themes identified**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Total Comments |
| Supporting Local Business | 60 |
| Open Space | 55 |
| Highball Stadium | 36 |
| Mental Health / Social Connection | 32 |
| Climate Change | 19 |

**Summary**

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on Councils priorities for the next four years. Of the 318 comments received, the majority fell into five areas: Supporting local business, open space, delivering a highball stadium, addressing mental health and social connection, and climate change.

**Comments**

The following comments[[1]](#footnote-1) are representative of the responses that community provided for each area.

**Supporting Local Business**

* “Support local business and initiatives to encourage residents to shop locally. Sad to see the number of shop fronts along Keilor Road that are empty, and businesses struggling”
* “Actively assist businesses, be flexible about bylaws and plan to create a vibrant community where local businesses can survive and thrive”
* “Encourage community members to support local businesses. Many shops have closed and we want to see our area recover”

**Open Space**

* “Promote opportunities for community connection and neighbourliness. Encourage residents to take advantage of the fantastic open spaces we have in our municipality. It was great to see families, friends and individuals enjoying our green spaces and walking tracks during covid lockdown”
* “Ensure local spaces are well maintained, attractive and encourage people to get out and use open spaces and the outdoors enjoyably and safely - good for both physical and mental health”
* “I work as a Nurse and 2020 was difficult. Walking in my neighbourhood was my haven and how I would daily recover mentally, it was also a wonderful place to socialise & meet others from my neighbourhood”

**Highball Stadium**

* “Moonee Valley is in need of indoor basketball stadium. Avondale Heights stadium is dated and small. Local clubs don’t have places to train and kids are missing out on physical activity”
* “Provide more sporting venues for children to became more active and connected to the community. This will also provide social inclusion for children and adults - basketball stadium, netball stadium, tennis courts, football and soccer ovals”
* “Playing basketball and being part of the basketball community was something our family really missed during the lockdowns. We would like to see a basketball stadium and/or facilities in Moonee Valley, as this sport is one of the most popular among young people.”

**Mental Health / Social Connection**

* “Create opportunities for people to connect in their local communities by doing things that sustain and build relationships, or support what is already happening in communities. I live in ascot vale and there are some fabulous community leaders who have created things like the free pantry, started the repair cafe, started environmental initiatives - this work should be built on, supported and expanded”
* “Create opportunities for people to connect and get back to a new normal as soon as possible. Provide opportunities for outdoor events and festivals etc. that get people out of their homes and promote positive personal well-being and social connection”
* “We as a family found many neighbours were isolated due to age and lack of connection.” Perhaps Council can provide more ways for neighbours to connect and help each other”

**Climate Change**

* “Genuinely attempt to support the city to draw down its carbon emissions and integrate some interim targets which will make the Green plans achievable”
* “My kids are concerned that COVID 19 pandemic is just the start of the world unravelling. They understand climate change and its impacts more than any other section of the community. Yet what they see happening in terms of change in their communities is non-existent”
* “We need to rebuild better for a better future, focussing on reducing emissions at the same time of building tighter communities and more resilient businesses. Climate action is often seen as a separate budget line and has thus far received minimal funding. But it should underpin everything the Council does”

# Appendix Two: Stakeholder Interviews March-April 2021

**Stakeholder Interviews**

**Who did we talk to?**

A total of 18 one-on-one interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on our target populations, health and wellbeing priorities for the Council Plan (integrating the Health Plan) and opportunities for recovery. This included interviews with representatives from:

* + cohealth
  + Inner North West Primary Care Partnership
  + North West Primary Health Network
  + Women's Health West (2)
  + Alliance for Gambling Reform
  + Moonee Valley Legal Service
  + Moonee Bike User Group (BUG)
  + Belgravia Leisure
  + Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network
  + Farnham St Neighbourhood Learning Centre
  + Kangan TAFE
  + Volunteering Victoria
  + Volunteer West
  + Caroline Chisolm
  + Assembled Threads
  + Council’s Disability Advisory Committee
  + Carer’s Victoria.

**What did we ask?**

The questions used to frame each interview were similar to those of the online Your Say survey and altered slightly to speak to external stakeholder agencies and groups.

Question 1: What communities do you primarily work with?

Question 2: How have these communities been impacted by COVID-19 in the last year?

Question 3: Have you had to change the way your organisation operates to respond to community need in the last year?

Question 4: Do you think there are any gaps in what services are being offered to support recovery in Moonee Valley?

Question 5: As mentioned, the Council Plan integrates the Health and Wellbeing Plan. This provides an opportunity to work with partners to address health and wellbeing priorities in Moonee Valley. What aspects of community health and wellbeing do you think Council should focus on?

Question 6: What role do you think Council can play to support the community to recover from the impacts of COVID-19?

Question 7: Do you have any other comments?

**Emerging community priorities from the interviews:**

| **Theme** | **Insights** |
| --- | --- |
| **Mental wellbeing and social connections** | **Social connections**   * Many organisations reported that COVID-19 and the lockdowns have seen a large decline in mental wellbeing in the community. There was particular concern for people already vulnerable and isolated due to job loss, digital exclusion, language barriers, financial hardship and/or poor housing. Many reported that this was an issue prior to COVID-19 and the past year has only exacerbated mental wellbeing issues in our community. * Council are encouraged to take a prevention and inclusion lens to support community mental wellbeing e.g. looking at the determinants of poor mental wellbeing which could be exclusion from employment, racism and discrimination, lack of transport or digital access. * Exercise, staying socially connected, programs and groups that keep people socially connected were all seen as important in supporting the community’s mental wellbeing. Some suggested Council could run more programs, others suggested Council could play a bigger role in supporting agencies or community groups to do this e.g. through partnerships, while some suggested there is already lots on offer and it’s about supporting people to connect with these existing programs.   **Connecting community to organisations, services**   * Council was seen as having important connections with the community and playing a critical role in connecting community to the number of services on offer. * It was also noted that navigating the mental health sector can be difficult and Council could help with network meetings and keeping organisations connected. * Volunteering was seen as one such area where Council needs to recognise the value of volunteers and in supporting volunteers, particularly in improving mental wellbeing and health and wellbeing outcomes.   **Young people, older people and those not connected to the internet a priority**   * Mental health among young people was seen as a concern, with some noting the lack of services available to young people and schools being overwhelmed. * It was suggested that Council could support schools and also advocate for more in-school support. * Other priority groups that require extra support include people more likely to have been vulnerable or isolated prior to the pandemic. |
| **Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence Against Women** | **Council can play an important role**   * Council was seen as an important leader in this space with much work already underway. * It was raised that women have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 with more women losing jobs, many more taking on caring roles and greater impacts on financial and mental health * It was noted that the Gender Equality Act will have a significant impact for local government (along with other state government agencies).   **Prevention of violence against women**   * Violence against women was raised as a particular issue that increased significantly with COVID-19. Organisations noted an initial drop in reporting, though this was largely due to challenges in reporting. However, services quickly became overwhelmed and there continues to be large numbers of reporting and response required. * Violence against women was particularly exacerbated with women isolated in their home and not able to access their usual supports. |
| **Climate Change** | **Climate change a priority**   * It was noted that climate change will impact the health and wellbeing of our community and that community resilience and preparedness is very important in this. * It was also noted that those more vulnerable to climate impacts need to be supported to build their resilience and capacity to respond i.e. culturally and linguistically diverse communities, young children, older adults and people living with a disability or chronic conditions. |
| **Recreation and keeping people active** | **Important for physical and mental wellbeing**   * Recreation, open space and leisure were noted as important for both physical and mental wellbeing. * This included encouraging a variety of options for people including organised sport, group fitness or simple leisure activities close to their home such as walking and cycling. This includes connecting new communities to leisure opportunities, particularly those communities who may face barriers to participate in traditional leisure or sports settings.   **Providing recreation opportunities for communities in their neighbourhoods**   * Cycling and walking were seen as critical for people’s physical and mental wellbeing as this is free and in people’s neighbourhoods. * Council could play a role in helping encourage and promote walking and cycling including through programs such as Walk to School and Ride 2 School, as well as broader community through promotional activities. * Council also plays a role in providing safe, attractive walking and cycling routes and needs to invest in these to encourage people to be active.   **Safety of cycling and walking**   * Safety on bike paths and shared paths were raised as important to encourage more people to cycle or walk. This included dedicated bike lanes on roads as well as shared pathways without blind spots and with good maintenance e.g. no overhanging branches. It was also suggested that further education be provided to the community around shared pathways as some people don’t follow ‘walking on the left’ rules to allow bikes to safely pass.   **Public toilets**   * It was also noted that safe and well-designed public toilets were needed in more places to encourage more walkers. Suggestions were made for these to be co-located with new sports pavilions though remain accessible to the public i.e. situated near pathways and visible to the public. |
| **Employment** | **Support local businesses**   * Many businesses continue to be impacted by COVID-19 and Council can continue to support and encourage local spending. It was suggested that Council should complement and not duplicate state government support. * Some also noted that large business recovery support shouldn't be the priority, and to target investment to those who have been impacted the most e.g. small businesses and traders who have been impacted the most.   **Young people, women, newly arrived, and people who speak a language other than English**   * Social inclusion and addressing barriers to employment were seen as critical to support people into employment who might find it hard to gain employment. * Underemployment was noted as a critical issue and supporting local investment was seen as critical to address the issue of people needing more work. * Supporting social enterprises was seen as an opportunity including identifying empty spaces or providing seed or grant funding to help social enterprises start up and sustain themselves. |
| **Intersectional lens on inclusion** | **Look at the multiple barriers people face**   * Intersectionality refers to the multiple and intersecting identities people have and therefore the multiple barriers or oppressions people may face in being included in social and civic life. People don’t live singular lives, for example a young woman of colour living with a disability may face multiple challenges seeking employment. * It was felt that Council could acknowledge and address intersectionality through the many programs and services offered. |
| **Digital connections** | **The digital divide became strong during COVID-19**   * With the shift to online services and programming during COVID-19, the digital divide became stark. Many organisations talked about the challenges of connecting with people that might not have the internet, a computer or the skills to connect online. A lack of digital access and skills to connect online impacted on client’s ability to access support services and participate in online education and social connection activities. * Some organisations noted that supporting access to and providing education around using computers and the internet will continue to be a priority, including upskilling people to be able to navigate online services such as MyGov and Centrelink. |
| **Connecting with families** | **Families isolated during COVID-19 puts children at-risk**   * Services noted that families of young children were very isolated during COVID-19 and that there has been a challenge in reconnecting with families. These connections with families provide an important opportunity to support children, particularly those that are more vulnerable. * New parents were also seen as important in continuing to support their wellbeing. Being isolated during COVID-19 would have been very challenging and finding ways for families to continue connecting with their communities will be critical for their and their child’s wellbeing. |
| **Connecting with target populations** | **Council can play an active role in connecting with more vulnerable or isolated community members**   * Those impacted most by COVID-19 were people who were already vulnerable or isolated pre-pandemic due to a range of factors.There were also considerable impacts on those who didn’t qualify for government support payments including international students, newly arrived people, people seeking asylum or those with refugee status. * Other target populations or those that are more vulnerable/isolated include women, young people, those who speak a language other than English, digitally isolated, carers, older people, people living with a disability and people living in public housing. * Council can play an active role in supporting and connecting with these groups, and facilitating connections to services and programs. |
| **Council’s role to build networks, connect organisations and community** | **Don’t duplicate services**   * Many suggested that there are already many services and organsiations operating and that Council shouldn’t duplicate services. Council should instead collaborate and support specialist organisations to provide these services and enhance communications across the municipality.   **Play a role in bringing people together**   * It was also suggested that Council has and should continue to be the connector that brings organisations together to network, though also to connect community to these organisations.   **Volunteers**   * Council can play an important role in supporting volunteers and connecting volunteers to programs. The Volunteering Victoria initiative, We Volunteer, could be a great opportunity for collaboration when it gets underway. |
| **Community Engagement** | **Continue to engage all voices**   * Some raised that it is important that the voices of those impacted by decisions are at the forefront of the Council Plan. * It was also suggested to look at the learnings from the Flemington public housing estate hard lockdown, and that community members need to be at the forefront of decisions that impact them, and they are the best leaders and experts in their communities. * It was noted that community members themselves, particularly those most impacted by COVID-19 need to have an opportunity to tell their story and shape what recovery could look like. |
| **Other issues** | **Gambling harm**   * It was noted that the COVID-19 lockdowns saw Pokies venues close resulting in more money being available for families to spend locally. However, since the lockdowns lifted, venues have re-opened and losses are higher than pre-COVID levels. * Council can continue to play an advocacy role in supporting campaigns to prevent the harmful impacts of gambling on the Moonee Valley community. Other response options include: advocacy to State and Federal Governments, raising community awareness through engagement, providing a range of alternative recreation opportunities to community, and continuing to enforce planning requirements and respond to venue and electronic gaming machine applications as they arise. |

# Appendix Three: Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Consultation March 2021

**Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Consultation with Elders**

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders Aunty Gail Smith and Aunty Julieanne Axford were consulted during the 30 March 2021 Cultural Consultation. The Elders suggested that Council could play an active role in:

* Supporting communities impacted by ceasing of the JobKeeper payments
* Supporting businesses impacted by COVID-19 including those recovering and trying to stay afloat
* Looking at how the Reconciliation Plan currently in development will align with the Council Plan/Health Plan, as a lot of work has gone into the development of the Reconciliation Plan 2021-25 and this will reflect Council’s reconciliation work moving forward.

In terms of the design, the Elders suggested including Woi Wurrung language (translate key themes and words) and images (e.g. those developed by Ash Firebrace for the Reconciliation Plan) throughout the document. The Elders also noted that further engagement in Stage 2 with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Council would be welcomed and the Council Plan Team could also engage with the Reconciliation Working Group and other Wurundjeri Elders as well as broader Aboriginal groups e.g. the Maribyrnong Local Aboriginal Network.

# Appendix Four: Youth Engagement and Consultation March 2021

**Youth Engagement and Consultation March 2021**

**Who did we talk to?**

During the Stage 1 engagement period it was noted that only a small percentage of Your Say survey participants were young people. In an effort to provide accessible and tailored engagement opportunities for young people, a number of initiatives were implemented over March and April.

This included survey promotion through:

* Valley Youth Update e-news, reaching 120 Valley Youth members
* Presentation to Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School, reaching 70 students
* Valley Youth Facebook page reaching 41 young people
* Young People’s Committee members reaching 27 young people
* Valley Youth Grassroots Group reaching 16 members
* Valley Youth Instagram achieving 20 likes

In addition to targeted Your Say survey promotion, a face-to-face lunchtime consultation session was held with students of Essendon Keilor Secondary College in March. A total of 30 students from across Years 10-12 (aged 15-18) and representative of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, participated in the lunchtime session.

**What did we ask?**

During the consultation session we asked students two open-ended questions and a third question where students were asked to identify their top three health and wellbeing priorities, as similar to the online Your Say survey. The questions were as follows:

1. Over the past year, how has the covid-19 pandemic changed your everyday life?

2. Now that restrictions are easing, what would you like to see in your community or neighbourhood?

3. Which aspects of health and wellbeing are most important to you?

**Emerging priorities from the consultation session**

**Question 1: Over the past year, how has the covid-19 pandemic changed your everyday life?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Insights** |
| **Mental health** | The majority of students described negative impacts to their mental health and wellbeing. Many students described being stuck at home during the pandemic and experiencing feelings of a lack of motivation and freedom, depression, increased anxiety and paranoia, as well as reduced sleep and reduced social interactions with friends.  *“I’m always tired now”* – Student  *“depressing times”* – Student  *“it’s harder to do everyday activities”* – Student  One student shared that the pandemic *“made me acknowledge my mental illness”* and another described feelings of sadness *“[the pandemic] made me sadder and down making life a bit difficult”.*  *“The pandemic made my mental health go down affecting my every day life making me realise how quick life can change”* – Student |
| **Physical health** | Students also talked about how the pandemic significantly reduced their opportunities to engage in sport, outdoor recreation and work, with one student describing *“[the pandemic] made me unfit and unhealthy”.*  *“you can’t go outside”* – Student  *“can’t go for nature walk”* – Student  *“no work no sport”* – Student  *“no excursions”* – Student |
| **Social and emotional wellbeing** | Several students reflected on the positive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying enhanced connections with family, appreciation and gratefulness for the simple and everyday things in life.  *“…I am closer with my family as we were all home”* – Student  *“I feel more appreciative of things and I am more grateful of every day things”* – Student  One student shared that the pandemic gave them an opportunity for enhanced self-reflection and that they *“worked on myself over the pandemic”.* |

**Question 2: Now that restrictions are easing, what would you like to see in your community or neighbourhood?’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Insights** |
| **Festivals and events** | Overwhelmingly, students described an interest in seeing more carnivals, festivals, concerts and events in their community as restrictions ease, as well as performancesand *“more music into the school”.*  *“concerts, getting back to together to enjoy social events”* – Student  *“more communal events like drive ins and carnivals etc”* – Student |
| **Social gatherings, inclusion and local businesses to open** | Several students shared that they would like to see more people interacting, gathering and communicating now that restrictions are easing. Specifically, students highlighted inclusion, cultural gatherings and support for local businesses as important for their community as restrictions ease.  *“more inclusion”* – Student  *“more cultural gathering”* – Student  *“more inclusion and more businesses (mainly local) to open”* – Student |
| **People experiencing homelessness** | Several students expressed their concerns for the wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness and talked about the need for further support and assistance for this group.  *“homeless cared for”* – Student  *“homeless help”* – Student  *“I* *would like to see more food for the homeless”* – Student |
| **Green spaces** | Students shared their interest in enjoying *“more greenery”* and *“natural areas”* now that restrictions are easing. |
| **Hygiene** | Students mentioned that *“People caring about hygine and environment more”* and *“People wearing mask*” as important to them as restrictions ease. |

**Question 3: Which aspects of health and wellbeing are most important to you?**

Overwhelmingly, students identified prevention of violence against women as their top priority (17 responses), followed by mental health, climate change and quit smoking (11 responses each). These were closely followed by physical activity (10 responses), discrimination and racism (9 responses) and safe and affordable housing (8 responses).

The table below presents the students ratings of importance for each health and wellbeing focus area for Council.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Health and wellbeing focus area** | **Number of responses by students as a priority area for Council** |
| Prevention of violence against women | 17 |
| Mental health | 11 |
| Quit smoking | 11 |
| Climate change | 11 |
| Physical activity | 10 |
| Discrimination and racism | 9 |
| Safe and affordable housing | 8 |
| Healthy eating | 7 |
| Prevention of harm from drugs or alcohol | 7 |
| Employment | 6 |
| Gender equity | 5 |
| Community safety | 5 |
| Social connection | 3 |
| Social inclusion | 2 |
| Food security and/or food relief | 0 |

**Summary**

Reflecting on student responses to all three questions of the lunchtime consultation session, it is observed that students consider the following areas of health and wellbeing as important to their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic (in order):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Health and wellbeing focus area** | **Total number of responses by students as a priority area for Council (from all three engagement questions)** |
| **Mental health** | 25 |
| **Prevention of violence against women** | 17 |
| **Physical activity**  **Physical health** | 10  6 |
| **Climate change** | 11 |
| **Quit smoking** | 11 |
| **Events and festivals** | 9 |
| **Discrimination and racism** | 9 |
| **Housing and homelessness**  Safe and affordable housing  Support for people experiencing homelessness | 8  4 |
| **Social gatherings and inclusion** | 7 |
| **Prevention of harm from drugs and alcohol** | 7 |

# Appendix Five: Youth Consultants Project Consultation November 2020

**Youth Consultants Project Consultation: Survey Response Summary**

Moonee Valley’s Youth Consultants project involved five young people who designed a mental health and wellbeing program for young people. As part of this project, the young people delivered a survey in November 2020 to better understand how young people’s mental health was impacted by COVID-19 and strategies they used to stay connected. A total of 22 young people from Moonee Valley aged 15 to 25 took part in the survey. The following provides a snapshot of the findings:

* Many young people reported being able to stay connected to family and friends and the local community during the pandemic via zoom, online and social media. A couple of respondents reported that they haven’t stayed connected with anyone or with very few people.
* Young people did express that they were able to enjoy exercise (68%), going to the park (60%), creative activities (55%), family time (45%) and study (45%) during lockdown.
* However, nearly 23% rated their level of mental health right now as 1 (worst its ever been) with a further 14% at 2 and 41% at 3. No young person rated their mental health as 5 (best it’s ever been).

In the survey, young people were asked what they think needs more attention when promoting overall good mental health and wellbeing. Their suggestions included:

* Specific services for young people that are free and don’t have long waitlists – e.g. therapy, places for people to talk, triage services. Many services have long waitlists or aren’t accessible.
  + *“Free and easily accessible [counselling] services. They're so helpful but there's a stigma, difficulty accessing and a long wait time”*
* Looking at some of the causes including financial stress placed on young people, those living in unsafe or inappropriate housing as well as young people who might be isolated.
* Building social connections and promoting, supporting and encouraging young people to make connections in their communities
  + *“Connection to the community. Also, keeping your mind occupied with positive activities.”*
* Promoting good mental health and reducing the stigma around poor mental health. By normalising talking about people’s mental health, young people will feel encouraged and safe to open up. It was also raised that we need to recognise that it is a long-term process to improve mental wellbeing and that there is no quick fix.
  + *“There is awareness but still the said feeling of “shame” in saying u have a mental illness needs to be more in focus. The awareness of it being okay.”*
  + *“That there is no quick fix for good mental health. Mental health is an ongoing process. There are bad days and there are good days. But I think that it needs to be brought to attention that people should be putting in the effort consistently to take care of their mental health”*

# Appendix Six: Moonee Valley Sports Clubs Consultation March 2021

**Moonee Valley City Council Sports Clubs Consultation March 2021**

**Introduction**

Moonee Valley City Council have a long and important relationship with sporting clubs in the municipality. This engagement project provided an opportunity for Council and the clubs to meet and discuss how the relationship was progressing and what could be improved.

The engagement was delivered in three stages:

* Two online workshops - broad engagement where clubs could raise issues of concern and their hopes for the future.
* An online survey based on the discussions from the workshops to broaden understanding of the issues
* Two online workshops based around the key themes that came out of the survey.

This report outlines the results of each stage of the engagement. These are presented in three separate sections; each section builds from the previous one.

**Who we heard from**

There are more than 100 community clubs and groups that use Moonee Valley’s sport and recreation facilities for organised activity. This consultation invited participation from all groups via a number of email invitations. Below are the numbers of groups that participated, and the sports/activities they represent.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Consultation Type** | **Date** | **Number of Groups** | **Sports/Activities represented** |
| Online Workshop | Dec-20 | 19 | AFL, athletics, baseball, cricket, dance, dog obedience, golf, hockey, netball, soccer, tennis |
| Online Survey | Dec 20 - Jan 21 | 44 | AFL, athletics, baseball, cake decorating, cricket, dance, dog obedience, fishing, golf, hockey, judo, lawn bowls, netball, soccer, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, trugo. |
| Online Workshop | Feb-21 | 23 | AFL, athletics, cricket, dance, dog obedience, golf, hockey, netball, soccer, tennis. |

**December workshops summary**

On 14 December 2020, two workshops, each of one-hour duration, were held to gain a sense from clubs of what is working well, what the current challenges are, and what the clubs are planning and hoping for in the future. Participants were asked to think beyond or outside of the impacts of Covid-19.

**Plans and dreams for the future**

* On-field success and players going on to top level competition
* More diverse membership (gender, CALD, all abilities, social disadvantage) and connection with the community
* Growing membership, and the facilities and grounds to serve all the members
* Increase in junior and female participation
* Masterplans and completed works for their facilities

**February workshops ideas**

Two online workshops were held in mid-February 2021, each of two hours duration. The workshops began by presenting the survey results. Participants in both sessions found the results interesting and were unsurprised by the results and key themes. A few mentioned their disappointment that more clubs had not participated.

**How could Council support you in the interim [until facilities are built/upgraded], and help alleviate frustrations?**

* Regular updates on what is happening, including long-term masterplans, how projects are chosen/funded, how MV2040 plan works and what is in it
* Help alleviate the feeling that clubs have to drive the agenda against a defensive Council and that it is every club for themselves
* Help the ‘less popular sports’ (e.g. cricket) to access funding, and ensure all sports are receiving a fair share, not just the most popular. Potential to support small clubs to merge to ensure their survival
* Flexibility for urgent needs such as change rooms, especially with women’s teams
* Try different approaches such as clubs able to update facilities for more use, have a co-contribution option, more autonomy to clubs for small fixes such as painting, in-kind contribution from clubs if they have the in-house skills to make small fixes.
* Review of procurement to discover why is it so expensive when Council do it
* Review of some rules, such as not letting food trucks get close to grounds when grounds have no facilities for food and drink
* Use space efficiently. Such as not having the dance group in the sports hall, low grade cricket at the top facilities [these examples were not the views of everyone in attendance]. Also, a more demonstrated consideration of all user needs in multi-purpose facilities
* Get it right first time so that clubs can use facilities properly and avoid issues down the track.
* Better maintenance such as pruning trees that shade tennis court

# Appendix Seven: Email submissions March – April 2021

**Email submissions**

**Engagement**

Council received a total of 12 email submissions during the engagement period.

**Summary**

Email submissions mostly fell into the following themes: climate change, community connections, support for community groups and recreation and arts. Some emails were regarding specific miniatous and repair issues and were directed to the relevant council officers for action.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Insights** |
| **Climate change** | * A need for Council to focus on cost effective emissions reductions (mitigation), rather than adaption to climate change.   *“Reducing emissions has to be our priority.*” – community member   * An emphasis on the need for community mobilisation in regards to climate change, rather than community engagement i.e. survey questions   *“We don't need community engagement, we need community mobilisation.”* – community member |
| **Community connections** | * residents expressed a need for Council support for all community groups providing a function of social connection.   *“I think the Pandemic has shown up the need for Community Connections for all sectors of our community! Where people don’t feel connected they begin to suffer feelings of isolation leading to depression…”* – community member |
| **Support for community groups** | * Residents highlighted the need for access to community spaces to store equipment and run community group activities   *“Hopefully with 100 mostly elderly people connecting each month through this club Council will find a way to assist us volunteers to find somewhere…from where we need to type our newsletters and generally run the business for the club!!”* – community member |
| **Recreation and Arts** | * Residents highlighted the value in local walking trails, recreation spaces and public art   *“...the Green Spine Walk has been a spectacular addition to our community with so many more people inspired to walk it daily and exchange pleasantries with those they pass.”* – community member  *“Great to see the Para Rd end with somewhere for basketball practice, handball games etc and the mural remains absolutely beautiful two years on!”* – community member |

# Appendix Eight: Social Media Responses March – April 2021

**Social media responses**

**Engagement**

Council received a total of 83 comments in response to social media posts promoting the Your Say survey across Council’s Facebook and Instagram pages during the engagement period.

**Summary**

On the whole, residents who responded to social media posts highlighted their concerns or requests for Council action to:

* improve traffic congestion and driver, pedestrian and bike user safety
* reduce the impacts of higher density living and multiple dwellings on traffic, parking and street flow
* deliver more car parking including accessible car parks among busy shopping areas and along congested streets
* enhance park facilities such as shelter, bins, toilets and tables (specifically at Queens Park)
* enhance tree canopy and deliver a plan to achieve zero net emissions by 2030.

**Key insights from social media comments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Insights** |
| **Traffic, driver, bike and pedestrian safety** | **Traffic congestion and safety measures**  Residents suggested:   * the need to ease traffic congestion around Buckley St/Garnet St at school drop off and pick uptimes (9 likes). * removing the righthand turn from Rosehill Rd into Hoffman’s Rd at peak times to ease congestion, particularly around school times (3 likes). * installing traffic lights at the intersection of Hoffmans Rd and Rosehill Rd to enhance safety and to help prevent road accidents (8 likes). * installing electronic speed signs to reinforce speed limits along Clarks Rd, noting speeding cars near to Keilor Heights Primary school.   **Pedestrian safety**  Residents highlighted:   * the need for installation of pedestrian crossing lights for St Bernards and Rosehill students wanting to cross Buckley St after getting off buses (9 likes). * One resident highlighted the need for a pedestrian crossing at Fullarton Rd near Grange Rd, to access the bridge safely (5 likes). * One resident highlighted the need for footpath upgrades (3 likes).   **Bike lanes**   * One resident highlighted the need for bikes lanes to enable children and young people to ride safely to school, specifically along Buckley St and Hoffman’s Rd, noting there are six schools in the area between Essendon station and Rosehill Rd (2 likes).   *“It would be great to have bike lanes that our kids could use safely ride to school…With 6 schools in the area between Essendon station and Rosehill road I would think we can do better.”* – community member |
| **Higher density living** | **Higher density living and traffic**   * Residents noted the impacts of higher density living on traffic conditions, suggesting that parking could be limited to one side of the street to allow buses and cars to pass through, or that nature strips could be used to provide more car parking and free up street space. * One resident suggested Council cease the building of multiple dwellings (9 likes).   *“Or the council should stop approving all the unit developments which results in cars parked on the street. Ryder St in Niddrie is a nightmare to navigate these days.”* - community member  *“…many of our streets have become impassable for cars let alone buses!”* - community member |
| **Car parking** | **More carparking and accessible carparking**  Residents noted:   * the need for more carparking amongst busy shopping precinct areas (specifically Puckle St). * the need for more nature strips to be developed into parking bays (7 likes), specifically along Grange Rd to respond to traffic congestion. |
| **Parks** | **Enhance park facilities**   * One resident highlighted the need for more tables, shelter, toilets and repairs throughout Queens Park (5 likes).   *“Please give more attention to the beautiful heritage Queens Park…”* – community member |
| **Climate** | **Tree canopy and net zero emissions**   * Residents highlighted the need for more tree canopy to protect our city from worsening climate conditions (3 likes).   *“Net zero emissions by 2030 and a plan to get there, must be included in the Council Plan.”* – community member |
| **Funding and resources** | **Allocation of funding and resources**   * One resident noted the need for a fairer distribution of funds, allocating more resources to operational needs rather than capital i.e. enhance maintenance of existing infrastructure and respond to other key issues for the municipality (2 likes).   *“too much has been spent on sporting facilities etc…”* – community member |
| **Public Transport** | **Bus services**   * one resident highlighted the need for a bus service around San Remo Drive in Avondale Heights.   *“When are we going to have a bus service around san Remo dr. Avondale heights area been waiting over 40years”* – community member |
| **Services and infrastructure to support people living with a disability and carers** | **Car parking and services**  Residents noted:   * the need for more carparking among busy shopping precinct areas (i.e. Puckle St) and including more accessible car parking for people living with a disability. * the need to extend 10-minute parking bays to 15 minutes to allow adequate time to access local services, especially as a carer. * the need for more services and assistance for people over 65 years.   *“I’m a carer & current assistance services below average needs vast improvement compared to other councils.”* – community member |
| **Bins** | **Managing appropriate use of bins and litter**   * Residents suggested supplying rubbish bins with a lock and key to avoid people misusing bins. * One resident expressed the need for bins along the parking opposite East Keilor RSL to manage litter from nearby fast food outlets. |
| **Your Say survey design** | **Improvements to survey design**   * Residents shared feedback around improvements to the survey design (6 likes). |

# Appendix Nine: Business in Moonee Valley during COVID-19 Survey September 2020

**Business in Moonee Valley COVID-19 Survey**

This was a survey of businesses in Moonee Valley and took place from 2 September to 16 September 2020; much of this period was during Stage 4 restrictions. The survey sought to understand to understand:

* the impacts on businesses during the Stage 4 restrictions
* the proportion of businesses that had accessed assistance from different levels of government
* how Council could help in the recovery

There were 194 responses to the survey. Highlights included:

* About 40 per cent of businesses responding to the survey were closed during Stage 4 restrictions.
* Over 90 per cent of businesses reported a decrease in revenue.
* About three-quarters of businesses had accessed assistance from either State or Federal Governments.
* Businesses in Accommodation and Food Services as well as in Retail Trade and Other Services had large decreases in revenue during the period.

**Suggestions for Support from Council**

While respondents were split in their degree of support for most of the initiatives there was clear support for “promotional profiling of your business offerings” and “campaigns aimed at connecting business with local communities e.g. Shop Local”.

**Ideas for future grants**

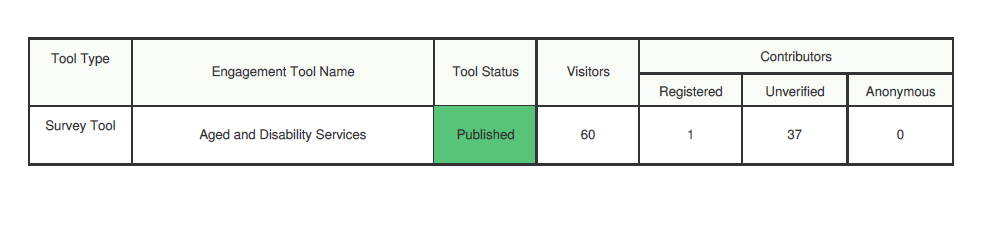
While some respondents supported the suggestions for future grants, only “Adapting your business to the new operating environment. For example, taking your business online” gained a majority (56%) of responses. As this is an existing grant category, Council needs to increase awareness of their availability and better understand the needs of these businesses in moving online to be able to provide targeted support other than grants.

# Appendix Ten: Supporting ageing and people with a disability in Moonee Valley Survey February 2021

**Supporting ageing and people with a disability in Moonee Valley Survey February 2021**

**Overview**

* This survey took place from 8 February to 5 March 2021 whereby 197 people participated. The survey was promoted and facilitated via Your Say Moonee Valley, social media, phone interviews, paper forms, letter mail out and emails. The survey sought to understand to understand:
* the impacts on ageing population and people with a disability during Covid-19 lockdowns
* understand community needs to develop appropriate programs to support community to remain independent in their home and community
* how Council can best support the community’s health and wellbeing during recovery



While the purpose of this survey was to get a baseline understanding of the needs of residents receiving aged care and disability services, several questions were asked about potential areas of improvement that can help inform the Council Plan.

**(In which areas) would an increase in hours of care provided by us assist you in remaining independent?**

The majority of respondents indicated that additional assistance in the home, either with direct domestic assistance or maintenance, was the main area where council could increase hours of care.

**What should Council’s service and supports for people aged over 65 years look like into the future?**

A majority of respondents indicated that increased services in the home were the main area that they would like Council in invest in into the future. Social connection programs and health and wellbeing programs were also important.

**What do you need to age well in Moonee Valley?**

A significant number of respondents indicated that they need increased support and information to access services to age well in Moonee Valley. A majority indicated that increased access to transport and social activities were also important – it is possible that these are linked as respondents may need assistance in getting transport to social activities

# Appendix Eleven: Summary of community engagement with Arts and Culture representatives in the City of Moonee Valley in 2020 and 2021

**Summary of community engagement with Arts and Culture representatives in the City of Moonee Valley in 2020 and 2021.**

1. **Community consultation with performing arts organisations**

A series of interviews were undertaken with performing arts organisations during COVID-19 lockdowns through July and August 2020. These interviews were to better understand the challenges of COVID-19 and ways Council and the Clocktower Centre could assist in recovery. Some of these suggestions have been actioned by Council.

Of the 9 groups invited to be consulted, the following groups participated:

* Essendon Symphony Orchestra
* Moonee Valley Brass
* Western Arts Theatre Company
* Flemington Theatre Company
* Essendon Choral Society
* West Melbourne Schools Orchestra

Key findings from this consultation are summarised below.

**Challenges the covid-19 lockdowns created:**

* None of the groups were able to meet in person, and all but one group have not been able to rehearse in ANY sense since March.
* All of the groups expressed concern about the impacts of COVID lockdowns on their membership retention despite the fact that all of the groups are maintaining some level of interaction with members via phone/online.
* Some of the groups expressed concern over their financial viability, citing heavy losses as a result of the lockdowns. Some groups have had performances postponed or cancelled.
* Many groups cited audience capacity and physical distancing limitations as indicators of when they would be able to begin functioning viably again.

**Ideas for how MVCC/the Clocktower could assist them to recover:**

* Free or reduced venue hire – this included the Theatre and Pascoe room, as both rehearsal and performance spaces, but also as spaces in which to do sound and video recordings
* Financial support for productions
* In-kind marketing and advertising support
* Running smaller events at the Clocktower or other spaces such as ‘come and try’ days or workshops on performance/technical theatre
* Better communication from Council in regards to the use of their facilities as we come out of lockdown
* Providing a better performance space in the Flemington area
* Use of council venues/facilities for set/equipment storage
* More of a focus from Council on community members as CREATORS of art rather than just CONSUMERS of art
* More involvement/attendance from Councillors
* Greater/more equilateral use of groups at Council run events such as Carols/MV Festival.

1. **Creative reconnections: Artist networking night**

The Creative reconnections Artist networking night was held 22 March 2021 with 22 people attending including individual artists and arts groups across a number of arts disciplines. While this session wasn’t a consultation session for the Council Plan, participants raised ideas for future events / programs that will be considered in the development of the Council Plan. These included:

* **Artistic introduction events:** Getting to know other peoples’ practice and planning future events where they can collaborate. For example, learning about other local singers who might like to join you for a gig, thereby making a 20-minute set into a 40-minute set.
* **Collaboration nights:** Testing out potential partnerships on small-scale projects over a couple of hours.
* **Other support for artists beyond COVID-related relief:** 
  + Mental health
  + Skill building and industry training (e.g. podcasting, streaming platforms, etc)
  + Masterclasses/talks from experienced artists.
  + Writers’ block.
* **Open mic nights:** These events might have a theme unifying the works presented.
* **Online networking/classifieds:** A network of company/group profiles to share with the community, whether social media or otherwise, and a What’s On directory for upcoming shows.
* **Specific mentoring for women in the arts.**
* **Grant simplification for future initiatives**: a participant asked for grants that are not project-based but instead are centred on infrastructure.

1. Some minor grammar and spelling edits have been made to increase readability [↑](#footnote-ref-1)