

# Economic Development Strategy Community Engagement Summary

Public consultation: 25 January - 10 March 2023

Local Economies



BOROONDARA

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## Executive Summary

The draft Economic Development Strategy ('the draft Strategy') outlines priorities, strategic objectives and actions to support and facilitate the maintenance and growth of a thriving economy in Boroondara. The Strategy will contribute positively to Boroondara's liveability and help grow the visitor economy into the future, ensuring the area remains a great place to live, operate a business, work, study and play.

The draft Strategy is informed by and aligned to the overall vision of the Boroondara Community Strategy (BCP) 2021-31, including 'Local Economy' (Theme 6) and its five strategies.

Two stages of community consultation informed the development of the draft Strategy prior to the third and final stage of consultation between 25 January - 10 March 2023.

Findings from the Stage 3 consultation are the subject of this report.

During the Stage 3 consultation, key stakeholders including businesses, traders' associations, residents, visitors, community organisations and groups as well as visitors to Boroondara were invited to provide feedback on the draft Strategy via the [Engage Boroondara](#) platform by:

- Ranking the four priorities of the draft Strategy in order of importance to them:
  - Priority 1: Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts
  - Priority 2: A Productive and Supported Business Community
  - Priority 3: An Environmentally Sustainable, Circular and Smart Economy
  - Priority 4: A Desirable Destination for Visitors
- Contributing comments on the draft Strategy and priorities.

The majority of the 96 respondents to the survey on Engage Boroondara were residents (76%), followed by owners/operators of a business (10%). Just over half of respondents were female (51%) and most were born in Australia and local to Boroondara, with one-fifth living in Hawthorn and just under half aged between 50 - 69 years.

Of those that responded to the survey, 43 respondents provided feedback which included comments, suggestions or concerns relating to the draft Strategy or specific locations within Boroondara (Surrey Hills, Canterbury, Camberwell and Glenferrie). Feedback was also received via email. **Appendix 1** includes details of this feedback and Council's response.

The majority of feedback received indicated general support for the draft Strategy, with most comments and suggestions relating to the four priorities and strategic objectives/focus areas.

Half of the respondents ranked 'Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts' as the most important of the draft Strategy's four priorities. In addition, just under half of the comments and suggestions related to this priority, with feedback including the importance of providing ongoing maintenance, enhancements and activations; a diverse range of services and products, as well as areas where people can meet; more green spaces; and more outdoor dining to facilitate increased vibrancy and visitation to shopping precincts. Increased support to, as well as activation and promotion of the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping precinct was also highlighted by a number of respondents.

'A Desirable Destination for Visitors' was another topic raised by approximately one-third of respondents. Most feedback relating to this area highlighted Council's role in leveraging Boroondara's parks, walking trails, history, heritage character and shopping precincts to attract visitors as well as improving how public spaces, including parks and carparks are utilised for markets and community events.

The importance of streets which are pedestrian friendly and well serviced by a range of transport modes was also raised, along with a small number of concerns about the perceived lack of car parking, including restrictions as well as the 40km/h speed limits zones.

'A Productive and Supported Business Community' was another key topic, with respondents highlighting the role of Council in attracting and supporting local businesses, along with assisting the growing number of employees working from home and those facing barriers to employment.

Facilitating 'Environmental Sustainability and the Circular Economy' was also highlighted by respondents as a key factor to consider when developing Boroondara's economy into the future.

# Introduction

## Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings of the Stage 3 consultations undertaken between 25 January and 10 March 2023 to develop the draft Strategy. The report provides an overview of both the engagement activities undertaken to promote the consultation and the feedback received.

## Background

The draft Strategy outlines priorities, strategic objectives and actions to support and facilitate the maintenance and growth of a thriving economy in Boroondara. The proposed Strategy will contribute positively to Boroondara's liveability and help grow the visitor economy into the future.

The draft Strategy is informed by and aligned to the overall vision of the Boroondara Community Strategy (BCP) 2021-31, including 'Local Economy' (Theme 6) and its five strategies. In addition to the BCP, there are also several Council strategies, Strategies and policies which inform economic development and visitor attraction locally, including:

- Boroondara Community Strategy 2021–31
- Healthy Ageing in Boroondara 2019
- Arts Strategy 2015–2018
- Children and Young People in Action Strategy 2021
- Climate Action Strategy 2021
- Disability Action Strategy 2018–2022
- Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan 2022 (draft)
- Glenferrie Road Place Strategy 2021(draft)
- Maling Road Place Strategy 2020
- Multicultural Action Strategy 2019–2023
- Shopping Centre Improvement Strategy 2011
- Placemaking Framework 2019
- Boroondara Planning Scheme - Local policies
- Boroondara Housing Strategy 2015
- Boroondara Neighbourhood Centres and Commercial Corridor Guidelines 2014
- Boroondara Open Space Strategy 2013.

Prior to the consultation between 25 January - 10 March 2023, two stages of community consultation had informed the development of the draft Strategy and the following four key priorities and strategic objectives:

- Priority 1 - Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts. Activate and enhance shopping precincts across Boroondara to ensure they offer vibrant places to meet and be entertained, access to job opportunities and green spaces, as well as meet the diverse shopping, social and service needs of residents, workers, businesses and visitors.

- Priority 2 - A Productive and Supported Business Community. Promote business growth and investment in Boroondara that capitalises on existing industry specialisations and achieves successful economic and employment outcomes.
- Priority 3 - An Environmentally Sustainable, Circular and 'Smart' Local Economy. Encourage a flourishing local economy that embraces innovative models of business and supplies sustainable goods and services to our community.
- Priority 4 - A Desirable Destination for Visitors. Support the growth of the visitor economy by attracting non-local (i.e., Melbourne residents from outside Boroondara), regional and interstate visitors and increasing visitor spend.

### Stage 1:

Stage 1 involved community consultations between December 2020 and April 2021, including a review of:

- 5,070 comments about our local economy, collected from 4,723 community members during the BCP consultation,
- Boroondara conversations workshops with 149 participants,
- BCP workshop with young people, and
- BCP workshop with local business owners.

During Stage 1, feedback on what matters to residents and the community more generally, including businesses, focused on the following points:

- 'Your Local Shops and Businesses' was the third ranked theme for Council to focus on over the next 10 years
- 45% of survey respondents put 'Your Local Shops and Businesses' as a top 3 priority for Council (18% increase since 2017, ranking third in 2021, up from sixth in 2017).
- 'Having shops nearby' (8% in 2021) and 'supporting local business and employment' (6% in 2021) were topics which mattered the most to people under this theme.



*Figure 1: What matters to the community - local shops and businesses*

*Source: BCP consultation findings on local businesses and shopping centres 2021*

## **Stage 2:**

Stage 2 occurred between March - October 2021 and involved consultations with:

- Boroondara's 10 traders' associations through a focus group (please note that since this consultation, there are now 11 traders' associations in Boroondara),
- Boroondara's businesses (the majority representing Boroondara's main industry sectors by number of registered businesses: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Financial and Insurance Services; Retail Trade which includes hospitality/food retailing; Health Care and Social Assistance) through:
  - four focus groups, including one specifically focused on home-based businesses, involving 34 businesses in total,
  - two online surveys, with 191 responses in total, one of which was focused specifically on understanding business involvement and interest in initiatives to become more environmentally sustainable,
- local partners and representatives from relevant regional networks/partnerships across Victorian and Australian Government, including the Local Jobs Program of Inner Melbourne Employment Region (Department of Education, Skills and Employment), the Inner South-East Metropolitan Partnership (Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions) and the Department of Transport, along with Swinburne University through one-on-one interviews, and
- staged consultations across the whole of Council through one-on-one interviews. Key areas included Arts and Culture, Community Planning and Development, Library Services, Health and Wellbeing Services, Asset and Capital Planning, Capital Projects, Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces, Facilities, Waste and Infrastructure, Traffic and Transport, Civic Services, Statutory and Strategic Planning, Placemaking, Transformation and Technology and the Chief Financial Office.

Key priorities identified for Boroondara's business community and local economy more generally during Stage 2 consultations were:

- Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts;
- Business Development and Support;
- Workforce Development;
- Environmental Sustainability; and,
- Tourism.

## **Stage 3:**

The third and final stage of community consultation to develop the draft Strategy was undertaken between 25 January and 10 March 2023. Engagement activities undertaken during this stage of consultation, along with the feedback provided, are summarised in the following pages, with a summary of respondents' comments and Council's response outlined in Appendix 1.

## Engagement activities

The draft Strategy was available for public consultation between 25 January and 10 March 2023.

To ensure a broad cross section of the community was reached, the consultation was promoted via a variety of channels to a diverse group of stakeholders.

Across all channels, the community was invited to provide feedback on the draft Strategy via the [Engage Boroondara](#) platform which included key information on the draft Strategy, the survey and contact details for further questions. Instructions on how to access translation and interpreting service was also included. A hard copy of the survey on Engage was available at Council's Camberwell Customer Service office.

The purpose of the consultation was for Council to confirm if the draft Strategy's four priorities resonated with the local community and to determine whether there was anything missing in the draft Strategy which might inform future actions to facilitate economic development and visitor attraction in Boroondara (beyond FY 23/24).

Key stakeholders targeted for the consultation included businesses, traders' associations, residents, visitors, community organisations and groups and visitors to Boroondara.

Respondents were invited to rank the four priorities of the draft Strategy in order of importance to them. They were also given the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Strategy and priorities. Key demographic information was also asked of respondents, including their relationship to Boroondara (for example - whether they were a resident, business manager/owner, visitor, student, involved in a traders' association), as well as their age, location and country of birth.

The consultation was promoted on a number of Council channels, including:

- February and March Boroondara Bulletin (both print and online)
  - 75,000 printed copies distributed each month - 72,000 to letterboxes, with a further 3,000 distributed via post, libraries and customer service centres,
  - eDM (Electronic Direct Mail) delivered to 38,000 subscribers;
- Social media (both City of Boroondara and Boroondara Life (Local Business) channels):
  - City of Boroondara:
    - Posts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram (total 34,130 people reached), generating over 800 clicks to the Engage webpage.
  - Boroondara Life (Local Business)
    - 1 post on Facebook (total 10,692 people reached);
- A range of Council eDMs targeting different segments of Boroondara's community (including local businesses, community organisations/groups as



well as residents with interests in environmental sustainability, community development, arts and business); and

- Council's website.

To ensure the local business community were informed of the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Strategy, Boroondara's 11 traders' associations were supplied with a 'communications pack' containing assets they could use to promote the draft Strategy to the businesses/traders within their shopping precincts. This included suggested key messages and images to include on their website, and in social media posts and emails.

Those that had contributed to the preliminary consultations to inform the draft Strategy were also notified of the public consultation.

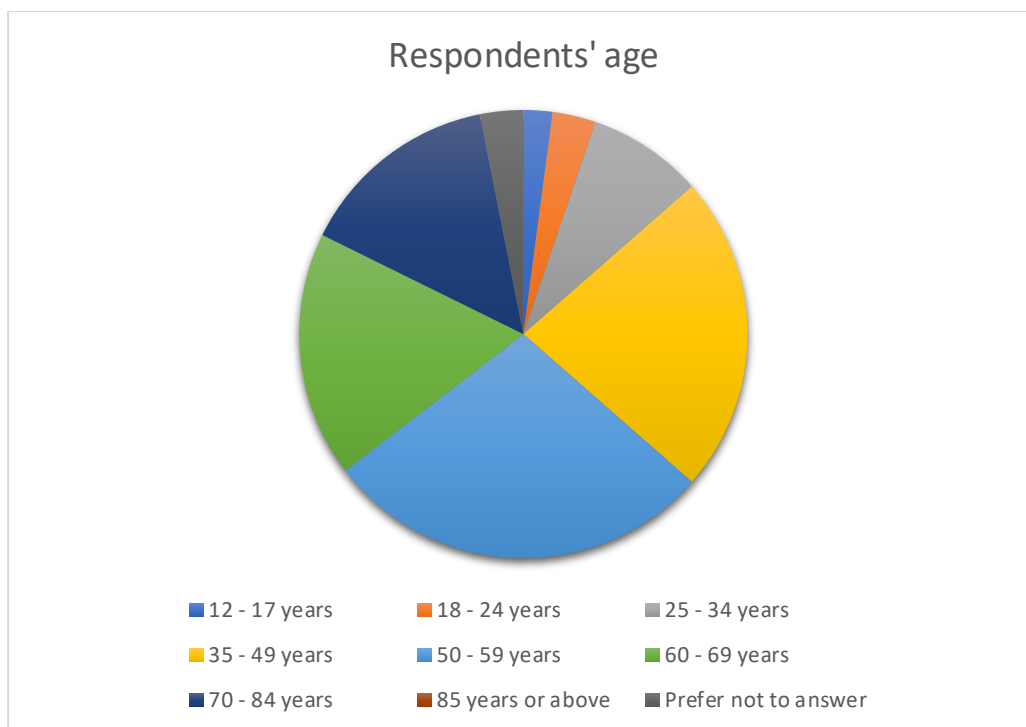
Short video interviews ('vox pops') were also developed of five business owners/managers who each spoke to one of the draft Strategy's four priorities. This content was disseminated on social media and email to raise the profile of the consultation. The social media posts featuring the video interviews had 1,942 views.

## Participants

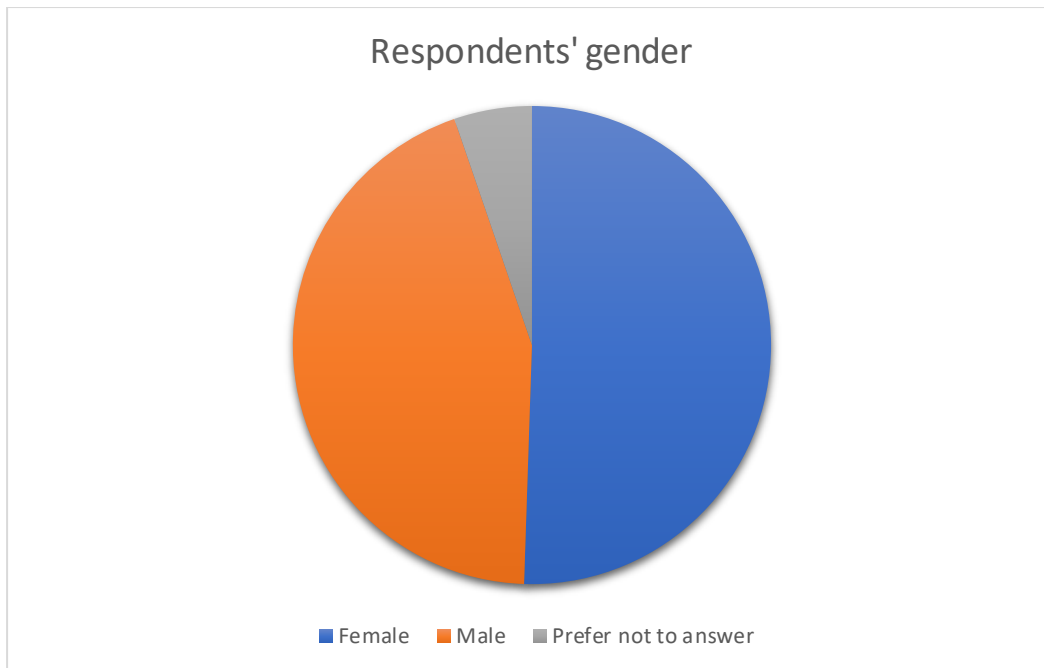
During the consultation period, the Engage webpage promoting the consultation attracted 1,085 page visits, with 96 people providing contributions.

Key demographics of survey respondents are depicted in Figures 2-5 below. In summary:

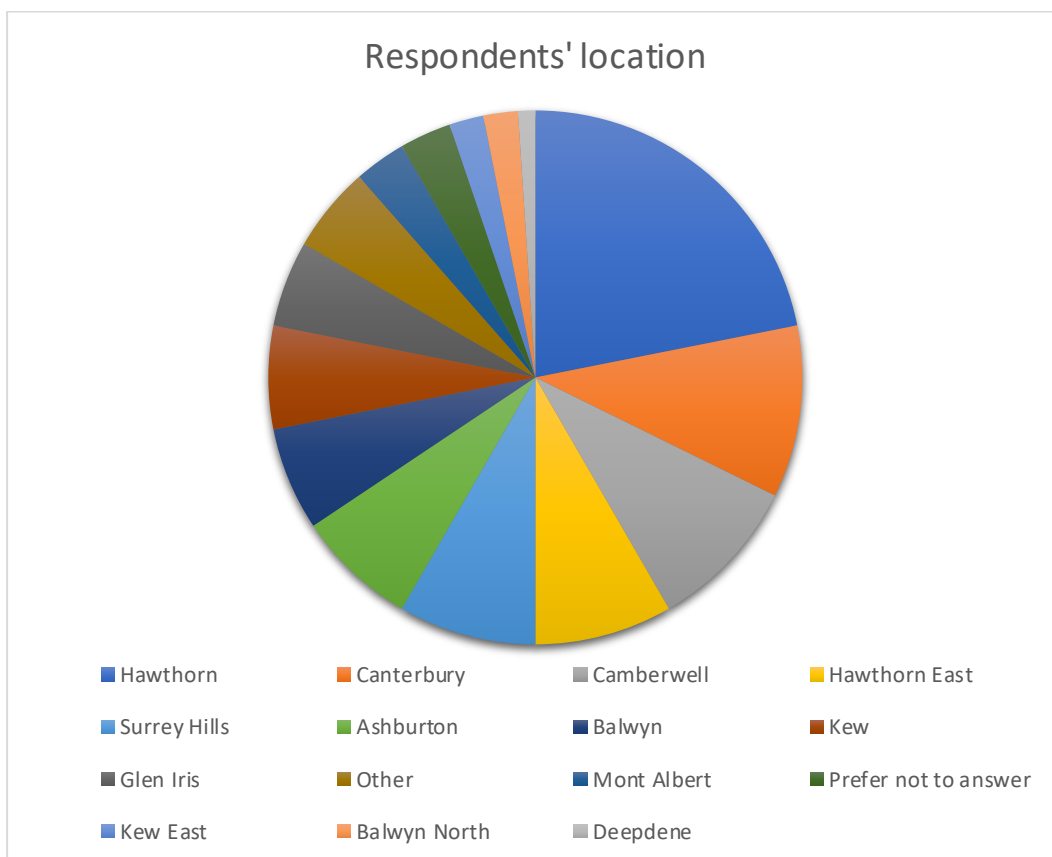
- The majority (76%) were residents, followed by owners/operators of a business (10%). The remainder were mainly visitors to Boroondara or involved in a local traders' association, and
- Just over half of respondents were female (51%) and most were born in Australia and local to Boroondara, with one-fifth living in Hawthorn and just under half aged between 50 - 69 years.



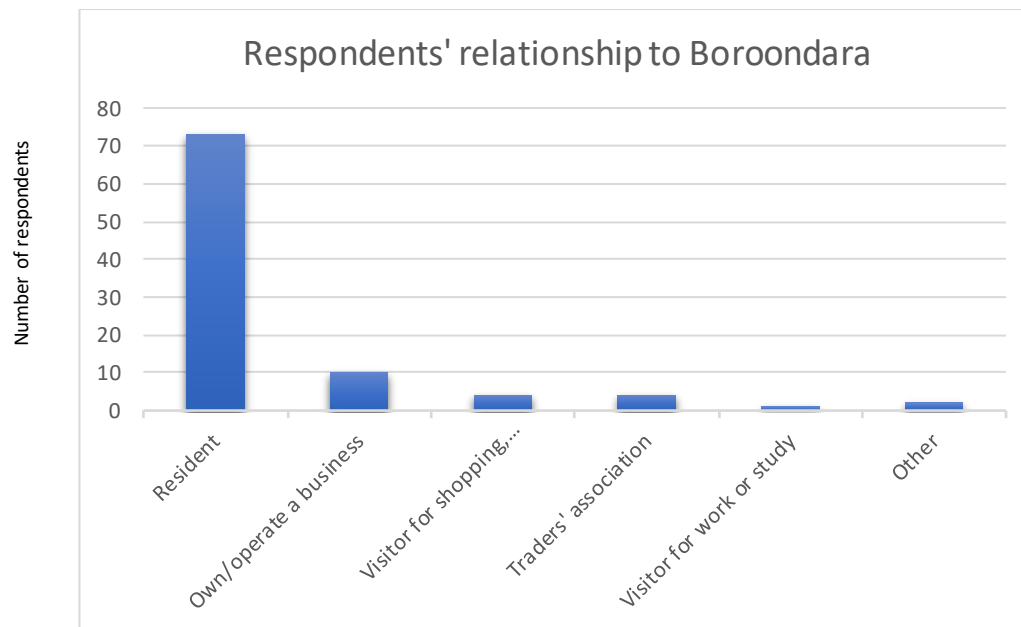
*Figure 2: Age of survey respondents*



*Figure 3: Gender of survey respondents*



*Figure 4: Location of survey respondents*



*Figure 5: Relationship respondents have to Boroondara*

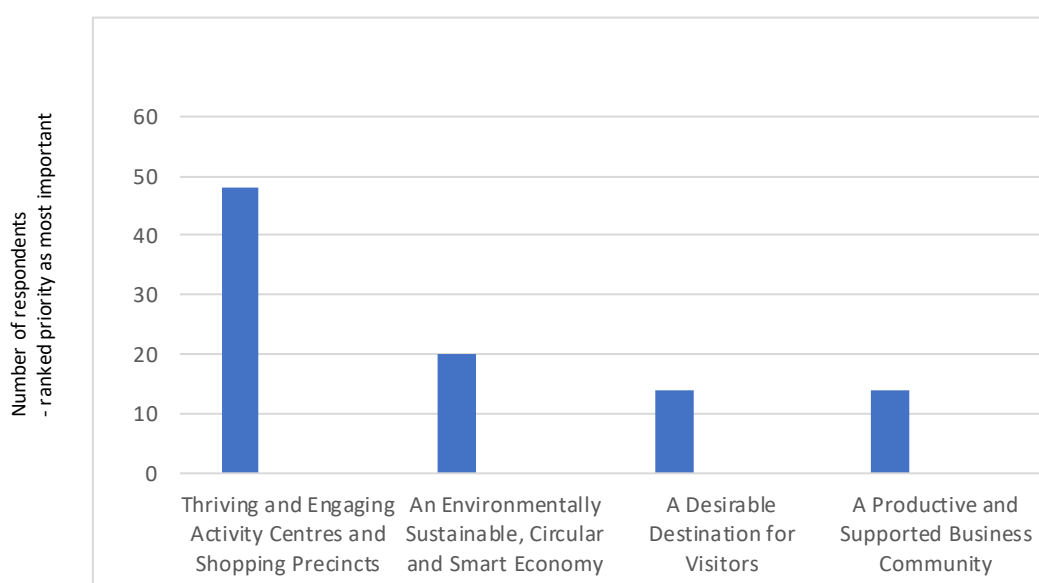
## Findings

During the consultation period, feedback was provided by the community, including businesses and traders' associations via Engage Boroondara and email.

The survey on Engage was completed by 96 people.

### Ranking of the draft Strategy's four priorities

As shown in Figure 6, when asked to rank the four priorities of the draft Strategy in order of importance to them, half of the respondents (48) indicated 'Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts' was the most important. Just over one-fifth of respondents (20) rated 'An Environmentally Sustainable, Circular and Smart Economy' as number one, with the same number of respondents (14) each rating 'A Desirable Destination for Visitors' and 'A Productive and Supported Business Community' as the most important.



*Figure 6: Ranking of the draft Strategy's four priorities*

### Summary of feedback provided in comments

Of those that responded to the survey, 43 respondents provided feedback which included comments, suggestions or concerns relating to the draft Strategy or specific locations within Boroondara (Surrey Hills, Canterbury, Camberwell and Glenferrie). Feedback was also received via email. Appendix 1 includes details of this feedback and Council's response. Table 1 below outlines the number of comments in relation to each general topic and Table 2 below summarises the sentiment of these comments.

**Table 1: Number of comments for each general topic**

Topics comments related to	Number of comments in relation to this topic
Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts	21
A Desirable Destination for Visitors	14
A Productive and Supported Business Community	7
An Environmentally Sustainable and Circular Economy	6

**Table 2: Sentiment of comments**

Type of comment	Number of comments
Constructive/positive comments related to the Strategy's four proposed priorities	34 comments
Neutral comments, out of scope comments or concerns about specific locations (Surrey Hills, Canterbury, Camberwell Junction and Glenferrie)	8 comments
Negative comment related to the Strategy's four proposed priorities	1 comment
<b>Total</b>	<b>43 comments</b>

As shown in Table 2, the majority of feedback received indicated general support for the draft Strategy and its priorities, with most comments and suggestions relating to the four priorities and strategic objectives/focus areas, as shown in Table 1.

The following two quotes are indicative of this sentiment:

*All of the 4 key priorities are important. It was hard to rank them as each is critical. I applaud the council for engaging in this process.*

-Business owner, Ashburton

*These are appropriate priorities to support and grow the economic success of Boroondara. It is also vital that there is a clear plan and vision so businesses, existing and new, can work towards the same goals.*

-Traders' association

The negative comment about the Strategy stated that none of the priorities are of importance to ratepayers in Boroondara and made reference to rates being too high and their concerns about the presence of graffiti.

Just under half of the comments and suggestions related to 'Thriving and Engaging Activity Centres and Shopping Precincts (21 respondents).' In some instances, feedback provided by respondents covered a number of areas, including the importance of providing ongoing maintenance, enhancements and activations (9 respondents); a diverse range of services and products, as well as areas where people can meet (3 respondents); more green spaces (2 respondents); and more

outdoor dining areas (2 respondents) to facilitate increased vibrancy and visitation. Increased support to, as well as activation and promotion of the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping precinct was also suggested (4 respondents).

*To have an engaging precinct, we need diversity. The shopping strips need to have something that lures people to the space, not just food outlets. It also needs more cultural areas where people can meet.*

-Resident, Mont Albert

'A Desirable Destination for Visitors' was another topic raised by approximately one-third of respondents (14 respondents). Several suggestions were put forward within this topic, including opportunities to better leverage Boroondara's parks, walking trails, history, heritage character and shopping precincts to attract visitors (5 respondents) and improve how public spaces, including parks as well as carparks are utilised for markets and community events (3 respondents).

*A Desirable Destination for Visitors is key to making the other 3 priorities successful. Boroondara's destinations have so much to offer tourists whether they live in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia or overseas. The Yarra walks, our heritage streets and neighbourhoods, our parks, shopping strips, restaurants.*

-Resident, Camberwell

*By creating a sustainable, exciting shopping/event/arts destination people will come and businesses will be supported.*

-Business owner, Surrey Hills

Another topic raised was the importance of streets which are pedestrian friendly, and well serviced by walking, cycling and public transport routes, in order to create and maintain thriving precincts which are desirable to visitors (7 respondents).

*Dedicated, safe and connected active transport infrastructure - is critical to attracting visitors and locals to activity areas - as are pedestrian only/priority shopping areas and high quality landscapes.*

-Resident, Canterbury

Traffic congestion, the perceived lack of car parking, including restrictions as well as the 40km/h speed limits zones were raised as impediments to a thriving local economy with a strong visitor base (4 respondents).

Creating an enabling environment for 'A Productive and Supported Business Community' was also a key issue (7 respondents). Within this, feedback from respondents raised a number of points, including Council's role in attracting and supporting local businesses (4 respondents) and assisting the growing number of employees working from home (3 respondents), including those who face barriers to employment (2 respondents).

*Supporting local businesses is the most important element to ensure a vibrant and successful community.*

-Resident, Camberwell

Another key topic was the importance of 'An Environmentally Sustainable and Circular Economy' (6 respondents).

*A base in sustainability is the most important area to focus on. People will always find a way to make their business run but might not always prioritise the planet and people over profit.*

-Resident, Hawthorn East



## **Appendix 1: Council's response to feedback on the draft Strategy**

The following is a summary of feedback received via Council's Engage platform and direct email during the consultation period. The feedback is themed according to the four priorities of the Strategy.

### **Thriving Shopping Precincts**

Just under half of the comments and suggestions related to 'Thriving Shopping Precincts (21 respondents).' Feedback on this topic included the importance of the following in facilitating increased vibrancy and visitation, with some respondents noting one or more of the following:

- Provide ongoing maintenance, enhancements and activations (9 respondents)

#### **Council's response**

In recognition of the important role shopping centres play in our community, Council invests in, as well as supports their maintenance, development, enhancement, activation and promotion through the development and implementation of a range of plans and strategies as well as diverse support services spanning all Council directorates. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Oversight and administration of eight special rate and charge schemes in eight key shopping centres which facilitate marketing and business development
- Development of the Maling Road Place Plan, the draft Glenferrie Place Plan and the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan to create and improve public spaces for people to stay, play and belong
- Development of Structure Plans to guide the development of specific commercial areas and networks
- Development and implementation of Shopping Centre Improvement Plans in specific shopping precincts
- Proactive maintenance including cleaning.

In addition, Council undertakes the following:

- Liaises with, and provides support to, traders' associations to optimise business development and marketing in key shopping precincts, and assist applications for permits and grants to deliver events and other activities.
- Provides advice and support to trader groups to incorporate (leading to the creation of new traders' associations)

- Delivers the annual City-wide Christmas decorations in Boroondara program.
- Provides a range of grants to fund the delivery of events and festivals
- Promotes the 53 shopping precincts within Boroondara on Council's website
- Investigates and delivers initiatives to activate vacant commercial properties in shopping precincts, such as the Bare to Beautiful vacant shopfront and Street Sounds music programs.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

Strategic objective 1:

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

#### ***Focus areas for action:***

- Create a unique 'Sense of Place'
- Encourage diverse retail, hospitality and personal service sectors
- Support and enable traders' associations to activate and enhance shopping precincts
- Facilitate investment in the maintenance, renewal and further development of shopping precincts to support resident liveability.

#### ***Relevant actions within:***

- BCP Theme 1: Community, Services and Facilities
  - BCP Theme 2: Parks and Gardens
  - BCP Theme 6: Local Economy
  - BCP Theme 7: Leadership and Governance.
- Diverse range of services and products, as well as areas where people can meet (3 respondents)

## **Council's response**

The Maling Road Place Plan, the draft Glenferrie Place Plan and the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan include a focus on facilitating increased retail diversity to enhance vibrancy and attract increased visitation, as well as creating memorable places and spaces for people to meet and recreate.

The last round of community engagement in relation to the draft Glenferrie Place Plan took place in March/April 2023 for the purposes of Council gaining: (a) feedback on the need to relocate carparking from the street to a nearby location and (b) an understanding on community preferences for how this relocation should be undertaken. This draft Plan will undergo a final round of updates to reflect community feedback and Council adoption prior to its adoption in the second half of 2023.

To date, two rounds of community consultation have shaped the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan's strategies and objectives as well as recommended initiatives and actions. This draft Plan is currently being finalised and is expected to be shared with the community for feedback and direction in the second half of 2023.

In partnership with relevant external stakeholders such as Rotary, Council also supports and promotes Boroondara's markets – Camberwell Sunday Market, Hawthorn Craft Market, Camberwell Fresh Food Market and Boroondara Farmers Market - which provide a diverse range of products and services to the local community.

Council also undertakes a range of activities to showcase and promote the diverse range of products and services offered by businesses in Boroondara, including through the delivery of the:

- Boroondara Love Local Life website/directory which lists the diverse range of products and services provided by local businesses
- Boroondara Life social media channels
- Boroondara Business e-newsletter.

A range of Council grants, both one off and recurrent, are provided to traders' associations and other community organisations, including Neighbourhood Houses to fund the delivery of events and festivals and other initiatives which facilitate social connections.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

Strategic objective 1:

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors

*Focus areas for action:*

- Encourage diverse retail, hospitality and personal service sectors.

*Priority 2: A supported business community*

Strategic objective 2:

Promote business growth and investment in Boroondara that capitalises on existing industry specialisations and achieves successful economic and employment outcomes.

*Focus areas for action:*

- Encourage business investment and attraction
- Facilitate the development of a diverse business mix in Boroondara through supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones to the municipality.

*Relevant actions within:*

- BCP Theme 1: Community, Services and Facilities
  - BCP Theme 2: Parks and Gardens
  - BCP Theme 6: Local Economy
- More green spaces (2 respondents)

**Council's response**

The Maling Road Place Plan and the draft Glenferrie Place Plan include a focus on planting new street trees and landscaping to improve the overall amenity of the street, as well as provide additional shade. The draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan includes a focus on investing in the environment and landscaping to create a green and inviting precinct that will attract people to live and work.

The last round of community engagement in relation to the draft Glenferrie Place Plan took place in March/April 2023 for the purposes of Council gaining: (a) feedback on the need to relocate carparking from the street to a nearby location and (b) an understanding on community preferences for how this relocation should be undertaken. This draft Plan will undergo a final round of updates to reflect community feedback and Council adoption prior to its adoption in the second half of 2023.

To date, two rounds of community consultation have shaped the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan's strategies and objectives as well as recommended initiatives and actions. This draft Plan is currently being finalised and is expected to be shared with the community for feedback and direction in the second half of 2023.

Council has recently undertaken several projects to add greenery into our shopping precincts, such as at Highfield Road/ Hunter Road shops in Camberwell and at Yerrin St/Whitehorse Road in Balwyn. We will continue to create more spaces for trees and gardens where we can in our shopping areas. This includes an additional six trees along Union Road, Surrey Hills as part of upgrades to the Surrey Hills Shopping Centre which commenced mid 2023.

Council is working towards increasing the number of street trees from 66,000 up to 80,000 by 2030 to grow our urban forest. We are also working on developing an Urban Greening Strategy which will be likely available for community consultation mid 2023.

When undertaking shopping centre improvement works, Council endeavours to increase greenery (including trees and/or garden beds). Site conditions, including built form, as well as the need to provide for car and pedestrian access influence how much greenery can be installed.

One of the five key themes of Council's Climate Action Plan, which aims for Council to be net carbon neutral by 2022 and for Boroondara to be net carbon neutral by 2035, is biodiversity and trees. Among other things, the Climate Action Plan gives significant consideration to how we can protect our existing canopy cover and improve on current levels. Relevant actions within BCP Theme 6: Local Economy.

- More outdoor dining areas (2 respondents)

### **Council's response**

The Maling Road Place Plan, the draft Glenferrie Place Plan and the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan include a focus on facilitating more and improved outdoor dining opportunities.

Council's recent adoption of the Outdoor Trading Policy and Parklet Guidelines will also assist to facilitate further outdoor dining spaces in Boroondara.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

Strategic objective 1:

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

*Focus areas for action:*

- Create a unique ‘Sense of Place’
- Activity centres and shopping precincts are activated and lively destinations.

*Priority 4: A desirable destination for visitors*

Strategic objective 4:

Support the growth of the visitor economy by attracting non-local (i.e., Melbourne residents from outside Boroondara), regional and interstate visitors and increasing visitor spend.

*Focus areas for action:*

- Enhance visitor amenity, infrastructure and services
- Enhance the visitor experience and provide opportunities to generate increased visitor spend.

Relevant actions within BCP Theme 6: Local Economy.

- Increased support to, as well as activation and promotion of the Union Road, Surrey Hills shopping precinct (4 respondents)

### **Council’s response**

In the lead-up to, as well as during the works to remove the level crossing in Surrey Hills, Council offered a range of supports to the traders located in Union Road, Surrey Hills. This included:

- Providing advice and support to apply for Council grants, as well as information about other available grants
- Facilitating the development of the Union Road Surrey Hills Traders’ Association, as well as providing ongoing support to the president and the committee
- Providing information and support to traders impacted by the works, including weekly to fortnightly visits (from February 2023) to check-in regarding any support they might need and to assist with any issues they are experiencing (where Council can influence)
- Advocating to the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) authority (state government) on behalf of the traders, including regularly meeting with LXRP representatives to pass on feedback and requests.

As part of Council's regular Shopping Centre Improvement Program (SCIP) works, upgrades to the Surrey Hills Shopping Centre commenced from mid-2023 (when the LXP's major works were completed and access was available). Community members were initially informed and consulted about the upgrades in 2019, however works were put on hold due to the planned level crossing removal works. The upgrades aim to improve the Centre's appearance and include refreshing the footpaths, garden beds, and forecourt of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. We are also planting six new trees and installing furniture along Union Road.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

Strategic objective 1:

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

#### ***Focus areas for action:***

- Create a unique 'Sense of Place'
- Encourage diverse retail, hospitality and personal service sectors
- Support and enable traders' associations to activate and enhance shopping precincts
- Facilitate investment in the maintenance, renewal and further development of shopping precincts to support resident liveability.

#### ***Priority 2: A supported business community***

Strategic objective 2:

Promote business growth and investment in Boroondara that capitalises on existing industry specialisations and achieves successful economic and employment outcomes.

#### ***Focus areas for action:***

- Promote business recovery and resilience

Relevant actions within BCP Theme 6: Local Economy.

## **A Desirable Destination for Visitors**

'A Desirable Destination for Visitors' was another topic raised by approximately one-third of respondents (14). Several suggestions were put forward within this theme, with some respondents providing feedback on a range of areas, as outlined below.

- Opportunities to better leverage Boroondara's parks, walking trails, history, heritage character and shopping precincts to attract visitors (5 respondents)

### **Council's response**

Council has a number of strategies and plans in place and undertakes a range of activities to highlight and showcase its unique assets and features, including its parks, walking trails, heritage character and shopping precincts.

The Maling Road Place Plan, the draft Glenferrie Place Plan and draft Camberwell Place Vision include a focus on promoting and showcasing Boroondara's well known and loved shopping precincts, as well as preserving and enhancing the heritage features within each one to reinforce the existing sense of place, history and community.

Council supports Boroondara's six historical societies, many of which organise events, displays and talks which showcase and promote local history.

Boroondara Open House Melbourne provides residents and visitors with the opportunity to visit Boroondara's diverse range of iconic and historical buildings, including the Hawthorn Arts Centre, Kew Court House, local churches, Hawthorn former tram depot and Villa Alba Museum.

Council offers a myriad of resources on its website for those interested in Boroondara's history, local events, along with 26 parks and gardens, including:

- Guides to help residents learn about the history of their house, family and local area
- Information on local parks and walking trails, including those of historical significance, some of which are further promoted on external websites
- A listing/directory, promoting events, festivals, exhibitions, programs and other initiatives delivered by Council, residents and community organisations.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:



*Priority 4: A desirable destination for visitors*

Strategic objective 4:

Support the growth of the visitor economy by attracting non-local (i.e., Melbourne residents from outside Boroondara), regional and interstate visitors and increasing visitor spend.

*Focus areas for action:*

- Enhance visitor amenity, infrastructure and services
- Enhance the visitor experience and provide opportunities to generate increased visitor spend.
- Support activation of key tourism assets
- Leverage and enhance the City's assets to drive visitation.
- Enhance the marketing and promotion of Boroondara as a visitor destination
- Deliver initiatives that position Boroondara as a desirable visitor destination.

*Relevant actions within:*

- BCP Theme 1: Community, Services and Facilities
- BCP Theme 2: Parks and Green Spaces
- BCP Theme 5: Moving Around
- BCP Theme 6: Local Economy

Feedback on this topic will also inform the development of future Council departments' business plan actions beyond FY 2023/24 and will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.

- Improve how public spaces, including parks as well as car parks are utilised for markets and community events (3 respondents)

**Council's response**

Council's Placemaking Framework outlines our approach to improving public spaces and how we can enhance the utilisation of Boroondara's key activity centres and shopping precincts.

The Maling Road Place Plan, draft Glenferrie Place Plan and draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan outline how Council, often in partnership with other stakeholders, *will re-imagine and activate spaces to create vibrant, memorable and social places and precincts where people feel a sense of belonging*. This has been evident through a range of activations through

Glenferrie and Maling Roads, some of which have been funded by Council, including the annual AutoClassico car show and Kristkindl events, and other pop-up initiatives such as decals on the pavement.

By providing funding and a range of in-kind supports, Council also facilitates the delivery of a range of activations delivered by traders' associations in public spaces, including seasonal events such as Halloween and Easter Egg hunts as well as the Surrey Hills Music Festival, Ashburton Festival and Glenferrie Festival.

Council's regular Shopping Centre Improvement Works Program outlines Council's approach to improving shopping centres in Boroondara, including how the assets within centres are utilised.

Council also utilises public land and carparks to deliver a number of regular initiatives in partnership with external stakeholders, such as the Boroondara's Farmers Market and the Camberwell Sunday Market.

Council's Street Sounds program which involves performers and roving musicians performing across Boroondara's public spaces to create a sense of vibrancy and attract visitation is also another example of how Council uses public spaces.

When Council creates a new public space, consideration is given during the planning stage to how it can be utilised for events and other activations.

Feedback on this topic will also inform the development of future Council departments' business plan actions beyond FY 2023/24 and will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 4: A desirable destination for visitors***

Strategic objective 4:

Support the growth of the visitor economy by attracting non-local (i.e., Melbourne residents from outside Boroondara), regional and interstate visitors and increasing visitor spend.

#### ***Focus areas for action:***

- Enhance visitor amenity, infrastructure and services
- Enhance the visitor experience and provide opportunities to generate increased visitor spend.
- Support activation of key tourism assets
- Leverage and enhance the City's assets to drive visitation.

- Enhance the marketing and promotion of Boroondara as a visitor destination
- Deliver initiatives that position Boroondara as a desirable visitor destination.

*Relevant actions within:*

- BCP Theme 1: Community, Services and Facilities
- BCP Theme 5: Moving Around
- BCP Theme 6: Local Economy

A number of respondents raised the impact of the following in relation to 'Thriving Shopping Precincts' and 'A Desirable Destination for Visitors':

- Importance of streets which are pedestrian friendly and well serviced by a range of transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport routes (6 respondents)

**Council's response**

The Maling Place Plan, the draft Glenferrie Road Place Plan as well as the draft Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan outline actions planned by Council to improve the accessibility of Maling, Glenferrie and Burke Roads, including making them more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists and advocating to state government to improve public transport. For instance, one of the key projects in the Maling Road Place Plan includes improvements to the walkability and amenity of the street with generous footpaths and public spaces, safe crossings, places to sit and greenery which shades the street, as well as optimising the precinct's accessibility to visitors of all ages and modes of travel including walking, cycling, car and public transport.

The Boroondara Bicycle Strategy sets out the framework to improve bicycle infrastructure and increase mode share in the City of Boroondara and includes a series of initiatives and actions to provide better active transport links to shopping precincts, including provision of new and upgraded off-road paths, on-road cycling infrastructure and improved wayfinding.

***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

Strategic objective 1:

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

*Focus area:*

- Facilitate investment in the maintenance, renewal and further development of shopping precincts to support resident liveability.

*Relevant actions within:*

- BCP Theme 5: Moving Around
  - BCP Theme 6: Local Economy.
- The perceived lack of car parking, including restrictions as well as the 40km/h speed limits zones were raised as impediments to a thriving local economy with a strong visitor base (4 respondents)

**Council's response**

The Camberwell Junction Shopping Precinct, one of many shopping centres in Boroondara, is currently served by a significant parking supply with a mix of short-term (1 hour) and medium to long-term parking spaces (predominantly 2 hours). One hour parking spaces are generally located along arterial roads with two hour or longer-term parking available in side streets and off-street car parks.

The one hour parking restrictions, typically on Burke Road, Riversdale Road, Camberwell Road and in a section of Prospect Hill Road and Railway Parade are subject to a fee.

The fee with the one hour time restriction aims to ensure that these prime, convenient spaces would be available for the benefit of as many visitors/shoppers as possible throughout the day.

These spaces are highly utilised with a good level of turnover providing opportunities for shoppers/visitors to access these prime spaces.

Compliance with the one hour restrictions is also good with past studies showing that 80% of all shoppers/visitors stayed for 45 minutes or less.

Shoppers and visitors parking for longer durations are typically utilising the two hour off-street parking areas on either side of Burke Road.

In summary, the paid parking in any of the shopping precincts aims to encourage turnover of prime spaces to improve parking availability for the benefit of shoppers/visitors. The spaces are well used and the ticket machines offer a range of payment options. There are no intentions to remove the paid parking at this stage in time.

Consistent with its Road Safety Strategy, Council supports lower speed limits in high pedestrian activity areas such as shopping strips on main roads and at schools and has several applications with the Department of Transport & Planning (DTP) seeking approval for lower speed limits in several shopping precincts, including Whitehorse Road at the Deepdene Shopping Centre. Through Council advocacy, a number of strip shopping centres in Boroondara have been reduced to time based or permanent 40km/h speed limits. This includes Whitehorse Road in Balwyn, all three legs of Camberwell Junction (Burke Road, Camberwell Road, Riversdale Road), Auburn Road in Auburn Village, Glenferrie Road in Hawthorn, High Street in Kew, Toorak Road in Burwood Village and High Street in Ashburton. Lower speed limits at 40km/h are also in the final stages of being installed in Doncaster Road at Greythorn Shopping Centre and Toorak Road in Hartwell.

Reduced speed limits along high pedestrian activity areas such as strip shopping centres are aimed to improve the level of safety for all road users, especially vulnerable users including pedestrians and cyclists. This is also welcomed by local businesses and traders where they continue to provide support and advocate Council and the State Government for reduced speed limits along strip shopping centres.

The last round of community engagement in relation to the draft Glenferrie Place Plan took place in March/April 2023 for the purposes of Council gaining: (a) feedback on the need to relocate carparking from the street to a nearby location and (b) an understanding on community preferences for how this relocation should be undertaken. This draft Plan will undergo a final round of updates to reflect community feedback and Council adoption prior to its adoption in the second half of 2023.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 1: Thriving shopping precincts***

##### **Strategic objective 1:**

Activate and enhance activity centres and shopping precincts across Boroondara to support diversity of uses and meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

##### ***Focus area:***

- Facilitate investment in the maintenance, renewal, and further development of shopping precincts to support resident liveability.

Relevant actions within BCP Theme 5: Moving Around.

## **A Supported Business Community**

‘A Supported Business Community’ was another key topic (7 respondents). Respondents made one or several suggestions, as outlined below.

- Council’s role in attracting and supporting local businesses (4 respondents)
- Assistance to the growing number of employees working from home (3 respondents)

### **Council’s response**

Council provides a range of programs and services to attract and support local businesses, including:

- Advice and support to businesses through the Boroondara Business Network, including training workshops and events, networking opportunities and mentoring services,
- Programs to support the transition to a circular economy and become more environmental, sustainable such as the Go Full Circle and Plastic Free programs,
- Oversight and administration of eight special rate and charge schemes in eight key shopping centres which facilitate marketing and business development,
- Resources and information, including a regular business e-newsletter and a dedicated Business Hub on Council’s website with information on a range of supports and resources,
- Love Local Life website and directory (consumer and business subscriber base)
- Boroondara Life Facebook and Instagram channels to showcase and promote local businesses and visitor attractions,
- Advocacy to local, regional and state bodies, including government,
- Provision of economic data and analysis on Council’s website about Boroondara’s local economy, including labour force trends and key business industries
- Initiatives to encourage local residents and businesses to support and buy local, including buy local campaigns,
- Business Support Service to provide advice and guidance on setting up a business, including information on Council permits,
- Initiatives to activate vacant shopfronts such as the Bare to Beautiful program.

Throughout September - October 2022, Council undertook a consultation on a dedicated coworking space / shared office space to understand the community's interest in and support for the concept, and to help us investigate the viability of providing a dedicated community coworking space in the future.

Following a recent review of Council's role in facilitating training and job outcomes, including for those facing barriers, Council is currently investigating opportunities to:

- Improve the capability and motivation of local employers to provide employment opportunities for people with a disability,
- Support the local social enterprise sector,
- Increase Council spend with local businesses and social enterprises.

In the second half of 2023, Council will undertake a public consultation on its new Disability and Access Inclusion Plan which will include actions related to improving employment opportunities for people with a disability and promoting the benefits of doing so.

### ***Strategic objectives, focus areas and actions***

The following strategic objectives and focus areas, as well as actions within the draft Strategy indicate the importance Council places on this topic:

#### ***Priority 2: A supportive business community***

Strategic objective 2:

Promote business growth and investment in Boroondara that capitalises on existing industry specialisations and achieves successful economic and employment outcomes.

#### ***Focus areas for action:***

- Create a conducive environment for 'Small' and 'Home-Based' businesses
- Encourage business investment and attraction
- Promote business recovery and resilience
- Assist to facilitate employment and training outcomes.

#### ***Relevant actions within:***

- BCP Theme 1: Community, Services and Facilities
- BCP Theme 6: Local Economy.

Feedback on this topic will also inform the development of future Council departments' business plan actions beyond FY 2023/24 and will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.

## **Sustainability and Circular Economy**

The importance of promoting environmental sustainability and the circular economy was another key topic (6 respondents).

### **Council's response**

Council's commitment to environmental sustainability is outlined in the Climate Action Plan, which aims for Council to be net carbon neutral by 2022 and for Boroondara to be net carbon neutral by 2035. The Climate Action Plan which has five key themes (energy efficiency and renewable energy, biodiversity and trees, water and waterways, transport and circular economy) aims to achieve sustainable economic growth in Boroondara, in line with federal and state objectives, which will have implications for local economic development practices and future investments.

Council delivers a range of initiatives to support local businesses to become more sustainable and transition to a circular economy. This includes the Go Full Circle training program to support local businesses to leverage the circular economy to drive stronger financial, environmental and social outcomes for their business and the Plastic Free program to support businesses to reduce and eliminate single use plastics in their operations.

Council also provides sustainability information and resources through its website and via workshops and webinars.

### *Priority 3: A sustainable, circular and 'smart' local economy*

Strategic objective 3:

Encourage a flourishing local economy that embraces innovative models of business and supplies sustainable goods and services to our community.

### *Focus area for action:*

- Support the development of a sustainable and circular 'green economy'

Relevant actions within BCP Theme 3: The Environment.