

## Community Engagement Summary Report

**Project title:** Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy

This summary report outlines the engagement process that was undertaken to inform the Waste and Recycling Strategy, and the key themes identified by participants. The report also provides the outcome of the engagement.

**Prepared by:** Climate Emergency and Environment Strategy team, Climate Emergency and Sustainable Transport

**Date:** April 2020

### **Background:**

Council previously adopted the Darebin Waste and Litter Strategy 2015-2025. Significant challenges in the recycling industry and our declaration of a climate emergency have required Council to rethink and adjust its approach.

The Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy sets a long-term policy direction as well as actions identified to take place in the immediate term, short-term and long-term. This policy approach enables Council to undertake both clear long-term planning and clear short-term action planning at the same time as building in the flexibility and responsiveness that it needs given the current uncertainty in the waste and recycling sector, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While many core objectives such as reducing overall waste to landfill and community education remain a key focus, the Draft Strategy shifts Council's focus to cutting emissions from waste, advocacy to state and federal government and challenging now out-dated approaches to waste and recycling.

In December 2019, Council endorsed the release of the Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy for community consultation and requested a report outlining community feedback.

## Stage 1 engagement

Date	Time	Location	Type of engagement <i>(i.e. meeting, workshop, pop-up stall, drop-in session, survey)</i>
10 January 2020 – 16 February 2020		Online	Your Say – Let’s Talk Rubbish

### Snapshot of engagement

On 10 January 2020, a YourSay page was launched, providing the community with a portal in which to engage with the Draft Strategy and to provide feedback on the Strategy’s key objectives.

The YourSay page, titled ‘Let’s Talk Rubbish – Waste and Recycling’ included:

- a summary of the waste review and Strategy process so far
- a project timeline
- a document library, which included the Draft Strategy, the previously adopted Waste and Litter Strategy 2015-2025, and summary documents of the Strategy in 12 languages
- information regarding two pop-up sessions
- officer contact information

The community were encouraged to share their views on the Draft Strategy, especially in relation to the Key Objectives of the Strategy. The community were asked which objectives they agreed were key to the Draft Strategy, if there were any objectives they would change and why, and whether they felt there were any missing objectives. The Key Objectives are:

- Address waste in the context of Climate Emergency
- Value resource productivity
- Design out waste and pollution
- Maintain the value of products and materials
- Innovate new solutions for resource efficiency
- Create new circular economy jobs
- Foster behaviour change through education, regulation and engagement

When the community consultation closed on 16 February, Let’s Talk Rubbish had recorded 1,100 total visits to the Your Say page. 31 community members had submitted feedback through the Q & A survey form or by directly emailing the Environment Support address provided on the page. 23 of these community members requested that a Council officer provide a response to them. The Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy was downloaded 289 times.

### Key themes identified

Key themes in the feedback were primarily centred around proposals to improve services, or issues with current services. Community members primarily requested an increase to the frequency of food and green waste collection (weekly) in order to reduce smells and issues with pests, requests for a separate glass recycling service, concerns about dumped rubbish, and requests for greater education and compliance.

YourSay feedback was recorded in Objective and tracked in the ‘Waste Strategy Consultation – Community Feedback Tracker’.

### **Stage 2 engagement:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of engagement (i.e. meeting, workshop, pop-up stall, drop-in session)</b>
1 February 2020	10am – 12pm	Preston Market	Pop-up Stall
8 February 2020	10am – 12pm	Northcote Plaza	Pop-up Stall

### Snapshot of engagement

The pop-up sessions were informal face-to-face sessions held in busy public spaces on a Saturday. Council officers had approximately 35 conversations at the Preston Market pop-up session, and approximately 30 conversations at the Northcote Plaza pop-up session.

The Draft Strategy’s Key Objectives were written on sheets of butchers’ paper, and community comments were recorded on post-it notes next to the relevant objective. Community members could choose to take home a hard copy of the Draft Strategy to review in their free time, or to take a copy of a flyer which directed them to the Your Say website. Laptops were also available at each pop-up session to record comments in real time if people preferred.

### Key themes identified

The key themes identified in the two pop-up sessions were similar to those that were identified in the Your Say feedback. Key themes were primarily centred around proposals to improve services, or issues with current services. Requests to change the food waste collection from fortnightly to weekly was most common – residents are supportive of diverting food waste from landfill but find that their green bin becomes very smelly over the course of two weeks. The community’s concerns about current and potential waste services were diverse, and members of the public touched on issues like increasing education, the difficulties of recycling a broad range of materials like polystyrene, supporting people to reduce plastic use, the introduction of a container deposit scheme, changes to the hard waste collection service and the provision of waste and recycling collection services to people in multi-unit developments.

Pop-up session feedback was recorded on post-it notes, with these comments then added to the attached 'Waste Strategy Consultation – Community Feedback Tracker'.

### **Cultural Considerations**

In order to ensure that the Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy was accessible to Darebin's diverse cultural and linguistic groups, the Your Say page included a summary of the Draft Strategy, translated into 12 languages other than English. These languages are widely spoken in the Darebin municipal area. These 12 summary documents were included in the 'Let's Talk Rubbish' document library, and each summary document included contact details for Darebin's interpreter service. Printed copies of these summary documents were also taken to both pop-up sessions.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

The community were invited to read the Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy and to provide feedback to Council, letting us know if there was anything that the Draft Strategy missed, and providing comment on the Key Objectives. As mentioned in the 'Snapshot of Engagement', key themes in the community feedback primarily centred around proposals to improve services, or issues with current services. These gaps in services have been identified in the Draft Strategy and are particularly evident in the Strategy's Action Plan.

Overwhelmingly, Darebin residents who responded during the consultation are concerned about the frequency of the food and green waste service. While these residents are supportive of the service, they would prefer a weekly collection of food and green waste rather than fortnightly in order to reduce odour and potential problems with pests. The Action Plan includes the consideration of collection frequency changes in order to increase the uptake of the food and green waste service.

Council officers did not receive any requests to change the Key Objectives of the Draft Strategy and were not made aware of any concerns regarding the changed strategic approach. Given the strong alignment of the community's concerns with the objectives and actions in the Draft Strategy, no changes to the Draft Strategy in response to the community consultation are proposed.