

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

GEELONG WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

DECEMBER 2025

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Summary: | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| How we engaged | 5 |
| How we engaged | 5 |
| Stage 1 Engagement (April–May 2023) | 5 |
| Stage 2 Engagement (Aug–Oct 2025) | 5 |
| Who we engaged | 5 |
| Stage 1 Engagement (April–May 2023) | 5 |
| Stage 2 Engagement (Aug–Oct 2025) | 5 |
| What we asked | 5 |
| What we heard | 6 |
| Stage 1 Engagement – Survey & Workshops KEY THEMES | 6 |
| Stage 2 Engagement – Survey, Pop-ups & Social Media | 6 |
| Stage 2 Survey Results: | 6 |
| Stage 2 Face to Face results | 9 |
| Stage 2 STATE AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS | 9 |
| Next Steps | 10 |
| Master Plan refinement | 10 |
| Next Steps | 10 |
| Appendix 1 – Draft Master Plan Full Survey Quantitative Questions | 11 |

Executive Summary:

The City of Greater Geelong is updating the 2011 Geelong Waterfront Master Plan to address ageing infrastructure, climate challenges, and future urban renewal opportunities. The plan aims to create a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable waterfront that balances heritage, environmental protection, recreation, and activation.

Engagement Overview

Community and stakeholder engagement was conducted in two stages:

- Stage 1 (Apr–May 2023): Workshops, surveys, pop-ups, and interviews to identify community values and priorities. Key priorities included recreation, public spaces, heritage and environment, connectivity, and activation.
- Stage 2 (Aug–Oct 2025): Tested the draft plan through an online survey, pop-ups, social media, and stakeholder meetings to confirm alignment with Stage 1 priorities and gather feedback on proposed actions.

Participation

- Stage 1: 361 survey responses, 165+ participants at listening posts, 2 deep-dives with residents, businesses, and community groups, 13 interviews with key stakeholders and thousands reached via social media and a Have Your Say project page.
- Stage 2: 117 survey responses, 50+ face-to-face participants, 6 stakeholder meetings, and thousands reached via social media and a Have Your Say project webpage.

Key Findings

- Stage 1 feedback highlighted a strong community desire for a more accessible, sustainable, well-connected and activated waterfront, with better recreation opportunities, upgraded amenities, cohesive design, cultural recognition, and reduced car intrusion.
- Stage 2 feedback confirmed strong overall support for the draft plan (average support score 88/100), including the vision, public spaces, connectivity, recreation, heritage protection, and activation.

Stage 2 feedback highlighted priorities for upgrades at Creativity and Convention Precinct, Western Beach Precinct and Limeburners Precinct. Face-to-face engagement provided detailed perspectives from long-term visitors and residents, highlighting enduring community values and opportunities for improvement.

What we have done

- Refined the implementation section to clearly reflect community and stakeholder priorities.

Next Steps

- Present the Waterfront Master Plan to Council for adoption.
- Publish final documents online and issue media updates.

Introduction

The Geelong Waterfront is an iconic place on Wadawurrung Country. With the current 2011 Master Plan due for review, the updated plan will guide the next phase of transformation. It will address ageing infrastructure, respond to climate challenges, and support future urban renewal, while coordinating the ambitions of Council, State agencies, leaseholders, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, and the community.

Stage 1 engagement (Apr–May 2023) focused on community priorities and insights, while Stage 2 (Aug–Oct 2025) sought feedback on the draft plan.

Purpose of this report

- Summarise community and stakeholder engagement findings from both stages.
- Inform the community, councillors, and stakeholders about key feedback and themes.

Engagement Purpose

The engagement aimed to:

- Gather community and stakeholder feedback to guide Council decision-making.
- Build awareness and understanding of the draft plan.
- Strengthen relationships with Traditional Owners and the community.
- Provide opportunities for community input into the waterfront's future.

How we engaged

HOW WE ENGAGED

Stage 1 Engagement (April–May 2023)

- Methods: Deep-dive workshops, on-site pop-ups, interviews, paper/online survey and social media.
- Purpose: Capture broad input on waterfront values, priorities, and issues.

Stage 2 Engagement (Aug–Oct 2025)

- Methods: On-site pop-up, stakeholder meetings, paper/ online survey and social media,
- Purpose: Gather targeted feedback on draft proposals, validate Stage 1 priorities, and capture informal sentiment.

WHO WE ENGAGED

Stage 1 Engagement (April–May 2023)

- **Stage 1:** 361 survey responses, 165+ participants at listening posts, 2 deep-dive with residents, businesses, and community groups, 13 interviews with key stakeholders and thousands reached via social media and a Have Your Say project page.

Stage 2 Engagement (Aug–Oct 2025)

- Stage 2: 117 survey responses, 50+ face-to-face participants, 6 stakeholder meetings, and thousands reached via social media and a Have Your Say project page.
- Face-to-face sessions captured detailed perspectives from long-term visitors and residents who have experienced the foreshore over decades.

WHAT WE ASKED

- **Stage 1:** Focused on waterfront vision, priorities for infrastructure, amenities, recreation, and connectivity.
- **Stage 2:** Focused on feedback on draft plan proposals, including pathways, public spaces, recreation, heritage and environmental protections, activation, and commercial opportunities.

What we heard

STAGE 1 ENGAGEMENT – SURVEY & WORKSHOPS KEY THEMES

A full summary of Stage 1 engagement results can be found in the [Stage 1 Engagement Report](#). Key themes included:

- Recreational amenity improvements (playgrounds, open space, shade)
- Environmental stewardship (protection of biodiversity and water quality)
- A range of commercial offerings and improvements to attract tourists.
- Connectivity to Central City and surrounding precincts.

STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT – SURVEY, POP-UPS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Stage 2 engagement consisted of:

- Quantitative survey feedback: Participants rated and ranked proposed master plan design concepts, with strong support for all proposals.
- Qualitative survey feedback & pop-ups: Residents suggested improvements for parking, maintenance of existing infrastructure (bollards, pathways, beach access), and opportunities for cultural or family-focused activities.
- Social media feedback: Key themes mirrored survey findings, with additional suggestions and examples from other cities or international waterfronts. Comments ranged from enthusiastic support *“Such exciting plans for the waterfront!”* to critical suggestions regarding maintenance, accessibility, and city-wide connectivity.

STAGE 2 SURVEY RESULTS:

Q1. Vision for the Waterfront

Average support score 86/100 (Strong majority support, with most respondents indicating alignment with the proposed vision)

Key Themes from Comments:

- Broad support for a world-class, vibrant waterfront that balances public access, heritage, and environmental protection.
-

- Emphasis on recognising First Nations culture alongside post-colonial history, some respondents highlighting the importance of visible interpretation and integration in public space.
- Emphasis on Western Beach, Rippleside, and Limeburners Point as areas requiring more attention and activation.
- Desire for family-friendly, safe nature-based play spaces and increased recreational opportunities.
- Suggestions for enhancing year-round use through events, cafes, and public amenities.
- Calls for innovative and iconic features (e.g., swimming lagoons, water play, art installations) to create a signature destination.
- Some concerns about overly formal design, wanting the informal open character preserved.

“I love the idea of a world-class waterfront that everyone can enjoy, while keeping our heritage and environment safe.”

Q2. Protecting and Enhancing the Waterfront Environment & Ecology

Average support score: 89/100 (Very strong support — respondents overwhelmingly value improving environmental health and natural character)

Key Themes from Comments:

- Strong community expectation to restore and protect the natural environment, with focus on Western Beach, Limeburners and coastal cliffs.
- High support for native planting, biodiversity enhancement, and improved water quality.
- Desire for more shade and greening, balanced with preserving coastal views and open character.
- Environmental resilience and Care for Country seen as central to the waterfront’s future.
- Support for nature-based solutions. (e.g. habitat restoration, coastline protection)
- Concern that action may not go far enough or be targeted effectively.

“Continuous rejuvenation of the natural environment is essential, not just for today but for future generations.”

“There’s a definite lack of greenery; this is a fundamental opportunity for us to support what matters.”

Q3. Pathways & Connections

Average support score: 84/100 (Very strong support, with most respondents indicating alignment with the proposed pathways and connections)

Key Themes from Comments:

- Strong support for wider, safer, and more accessible pathways for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with mobility aids.
- Emphasis on improving connections between Western Beach, Rippleside, Central and Eastern Beach, and linking to the Central Geelong and regional trails.
- Desire for paths that balance safety and usability with preserving the informal, open character of the waterfront.
- Importance of lighting, signage, and clear wayfinding to enhance safety and usability, including at night.
- Concerns about pathway conflicts with boating operations at Western Beach Boat Club and other active work areas.
- Support for pathways that encourage active transport, recreation, and tourism, while remaining inclusive for all ages and abilities.

“Just the need for continually improving access and facilities really, having connected and accessible pathways ensures more people can enjoy our space.”

Q4. Family-Friendly Spaces & Activities

Average support score: 96/100 (Very strong support, with most respondents strongly backing upgrades and new opportunities for families)

Key Themes from Comments:

- Strong support for enhancing playgrounds, picnic areas, skateparks, and outdoor recreation spaces along the waterfront.
- Emphasis on Eastern Beach playground upgrades and ensuring facilities are accessible, safe, and suitable for all ages, including prams and mobility aids.
- Desire for family-friendly amenities such as shaded seating, feature lighting, restrooms, and tables to encourage longer visits and comfort.
- Integration of cafés, casual dining, and cultural activities is welcomed, but with careful management of litter, heritage values, and visual impact.
- Some concerns about safety near active work areas, gradients, and trip hazards; ongoing maintenance and security considered essential.
- Suggestions for creative enhancements such as half-court basketball areas, small water play zones, and inclusive play equipment to meet diverse community needs.

“The more inviting spaces, the more people will come to the waterfront and enjoy them. Assisting current venues as well as providing new facilities will make this area a true community asset.”

Q5. New Business & Commercial Opportunities

Average support score: 81/100 (Strong support, with most respondents seeing potential for waterfront activation through dining, cafes, and commercial activity)

Key Themes from Comments:

- Strong support for new cafés, restaurants, bars, pop-up markets, and small-scale commercial activity to increase vibrancy, tourism, and economic benefit.
- Emphasis on careful integration so businesses complement public spaces without reducing access or overcrowding key areas.

- Support for activating underutilised areas such as Western Beach, Rippleside, and along the Convention and Creativity Precinct, drawing inspiration from successful waterfront precincts elsewhere (e.g., Manly Wharf, Newcastle Honeysuckle).
- Desire for high-quality, locally owned, and inclusive offerings across price points, with consideration of operational hours to ensure consistent activation throughout the day.
- Some caution about over-commercialisation or encroachment by large-scale venues; balancing public and commercial uses is key.

“Yes! This would be so great for our region to have. Anything that promotes growth for our local business, helps locals be employed and draws outside visitors & spending in our region!”

Q6. Changes to Parking on the Waterfront

Average support score: 80/100 (Moderate support, with diverse opinions reflecting competing needs for access, public space, and active transport)

Key Themes from Comments:

- High demand for parking, especially during peak times, events, and for families, with priority for disabled access to key destinations
- Support for reconfigurations or multi-level parking to increase capacity while preserving green space.
- Recognition that car access must be balanced with safe pedestrian, cycling, and public transport connections.
- Some support reducing parking to encourage active transport and create more open public space, provided alternatives are available.
- Safety concerns around mixing cars, pedestrians, and cyclists near activity hubs, and the need to protect heritage and recreational values.

“More parking is ace! As a family with young kids, being able to get a carpark makes the waterfront accessible. We can't

ride there and we'd never make it there by public transport.”
“Less parking, but the parking needs to go somewhere so people can still drive and not spend all day finding or paying for parking, but I like less parking so we have more grass space. If we also have less parking, we need better public transport, and to make the bus terminal safe for everyone.”

Q7 Additional comments.

Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments on the draft plan. Feedback highlighted a range of considerations not captured in the structured questions, reflecting local knowledge, practical concerns, and ideas for enhancing the waterfront experience.

Key Themes from Comments:

- **Traffic and Access:** Need for improved traffic management along key roads, safe pedestrian crossings, vehicle access for deliveries and emergency vehicles, and park-and-ride options to reduce congestion.
- **Amenities and Infrastructure:** Calls for additional toilets, bins, seating, shade, and safe bike storage; suggestions for heated pools, water access points, and family-friendly facilities.
- **Heritage and Environment:** Desire to protect heritage features such as bollards, Lime Kilns, and coastal cliffs; emphasis on restoring natural environments, native planting, and incorporating water-sensitive urban design.
- **Activation and Attractions:** Suggestions for bold, signature projects including swimming lagoons, water play, BMX tracks, art installations, cultural spaces, and café/restaurant activation to create a year-round destination.
- **Broader Waterfront Connectivity:** Opportunities to extend paths, connect Rippleside, Limeburners, and Eastern Beach more effectively, and integrate with regional trails and recreational areas.

Overall, the comments reflect strong community engagement, a desire for a vibrant, safe, and accessible waterfront, and an appetite for innovative ideas that balance heritage, ecology, and activation.

STAGE 2 FACE TO FACE RESULTS

Face-to-face engagement provided valuable qualitative insights, with participants often drawing on their long-term experience and personal history with the foreshore. Many had lived, worked, or recreated in the area for decades and were able to provide detailed perspectives on how the waterfront has evolved over time, highlighting both enduring community values and opportunities for improvement.

This feedback broadly reflected the themes and priorities identified through the survey, reinforcing the consistency of community views across engagement methods.

Participants shared practical and cultural examples that highlighted local priorities including:

- Playground mulch moving onto surrounding paths, indicating a need for design solutions that keep play areas and pathways distinct and safe.
- Steep step pathway in the Western Beach Restoration precinct, which were difficult to navigate for some users, highlighting the importance of improving accessibility.
- Heritage features at Eastern Beach, including steps, lighting fixtures, and fencing, which the community strongly valued and wanted maintained to preserve the precinct's character.

These examples demonstrate that the community values both practical improvements and everyday use and careful maintenance of heritage and cultural features, providing clear guidance for the master plan recommendations.

STAGE 2 STATE AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Key state agencies and stakeholders acknowledged the strong vision and the cultural, ecological, and urban context of the draft Master Plan.

They emphasised the need to balance bold design ambition with practical, culturally sensitive, and ecologically responsive implementation.

Opportunities highlighted included enhancing pedestrian, cycle, and public transport connections; integrating commercial and built form to protect views and heritage; embedding coastal adaptation and ecological restoration; and coordinating streetscape and activation to create a vibrant, seamless city-to-waterfront experience.

Next Steps

MASTER PLAN REFINEMENT

Key refinements to the plan include:

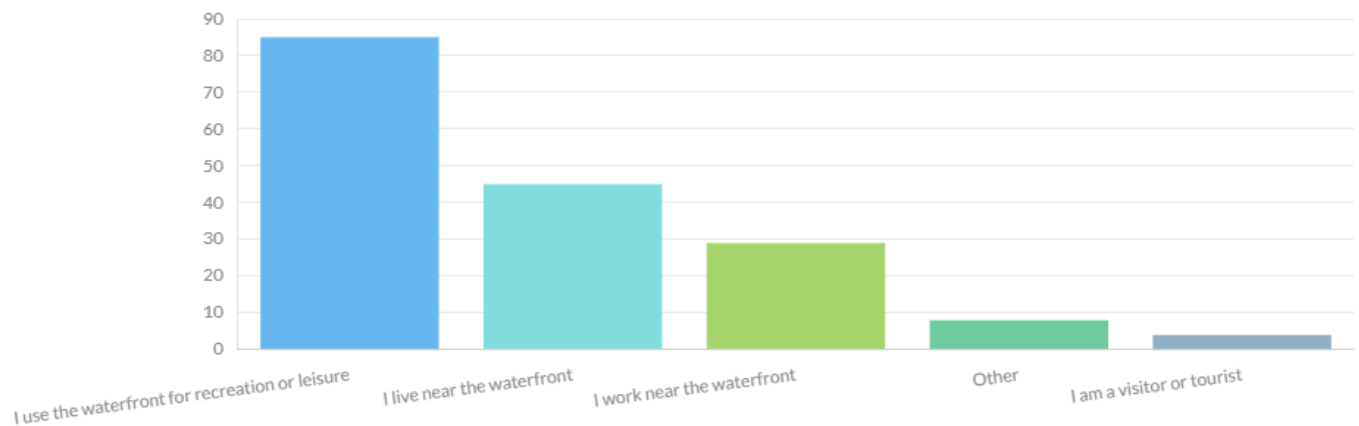
- Refine the implementation section to clearly reflect council and community priorities.

NEXT STEPS

- Present the final Waterfront Master Plan to Council for adoption.
- Once formally adopted publish final documents online and issue media updates.

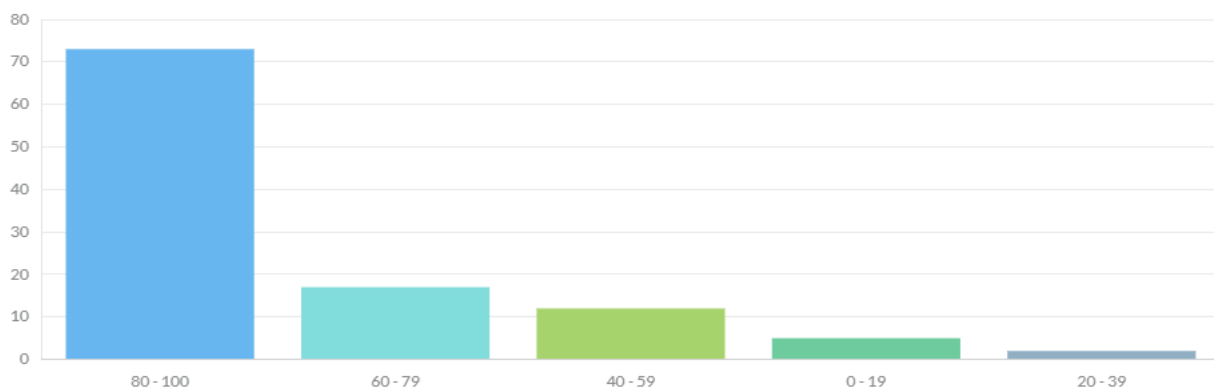
Appendix 1 – Draft Master Plan Full Survey Quantitative Questions

What is your main reason for taking part in this consultation?



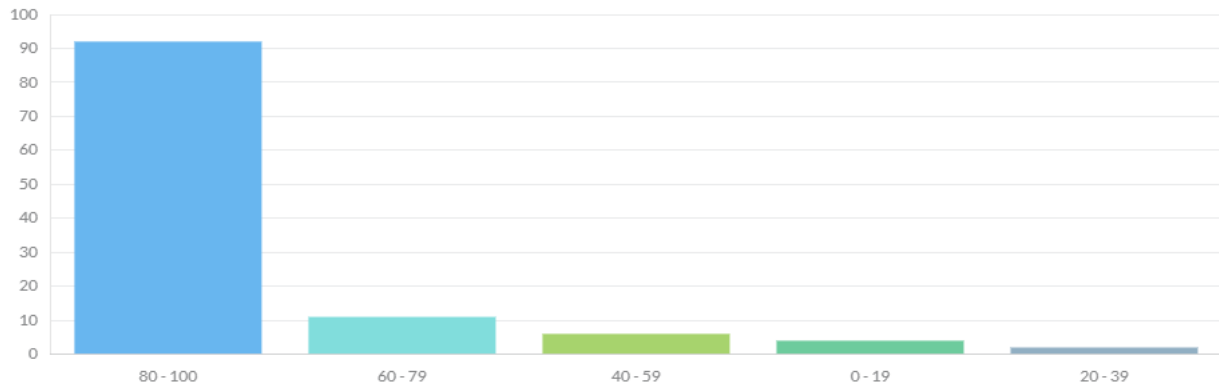
| | RESPONSES | RESULT % | |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| ● I use the waterfront for recreation or leisure | 85 | 49.7% | <div style="width: 49.7%;"></div> |
| ● I live near the waterfront | 45 | 26.3% | <div style="width: 26.3%;"></div> |
| ● I work near the waterfront | 29 | 17.0% | <div style="width: 17.0%;"></div> |
| ● Other | 8 | 4.7% | <div style="width: 4.7%;"></div> |
| ● I am a visitor or tourist | 4 | 2.3% | <div style="width: 2.3%;"></div> |

Do you support the vision?



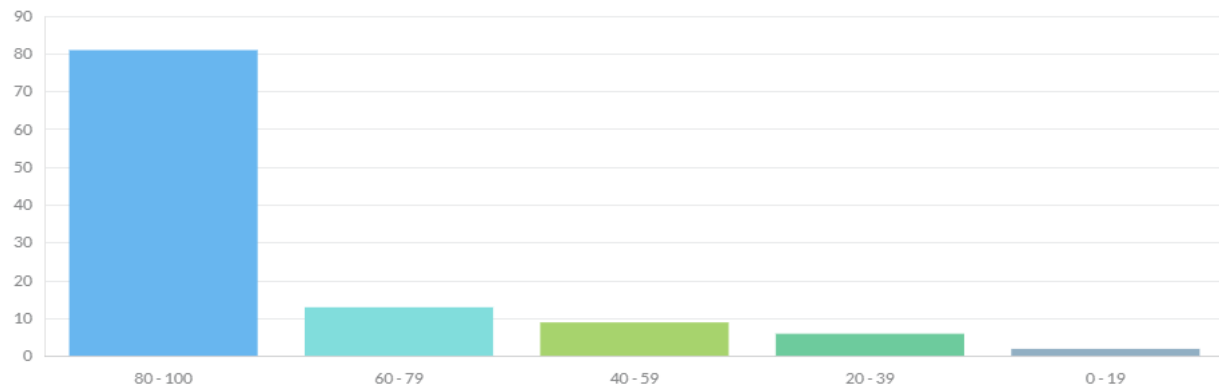
| | RESPONSES | RESULT % | |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| ● 80 - 100 | 73 | 67.0% | <div style="width: 67.0%;"></div> |
| ● 60 - 79 | 17 | 15.6% | <div style="width: 15.6%;"></div> |
| ● 40 - 59 | 12 | 11.0% | <div style="width: 11.0%;"></div> |
| ● 0 - 19 | 5 | 4.6% | <div style="width: 4.6%;"></div> |
| ● 20 - 39 | 2 | 1.8% | <div style="width: 1.8%;"></div> |

Do you support the ideas for protecting and enhancing the waterfront's environment and ecology?



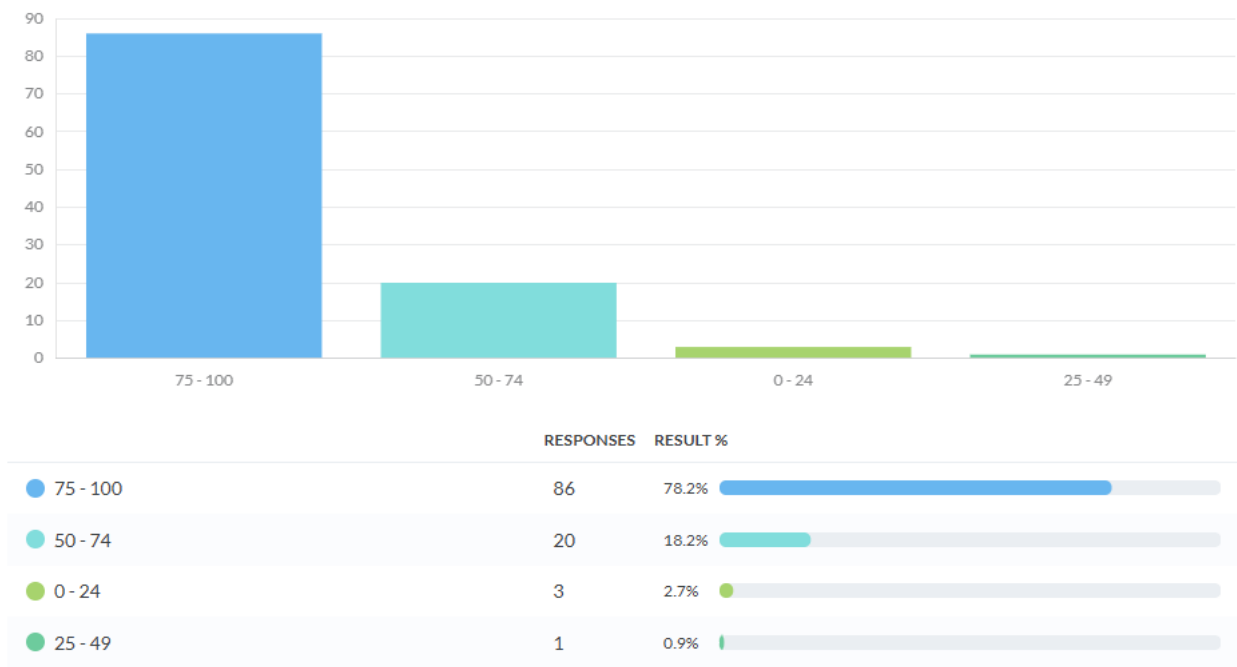
| | RESPONSES | RESULT % | |
|----------|-----------|----------|------------------------|
| 80 - 100 | 92 | 80.0% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 60 - 79 | 11 | 9.6% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 40 - 59 | 6 | 5.2% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 0 - 19 | 4 | 3.5% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 20 - 39 | 2 | 1.7% | <div><div></div></div> |

Do you support the proposed pathways and connections?

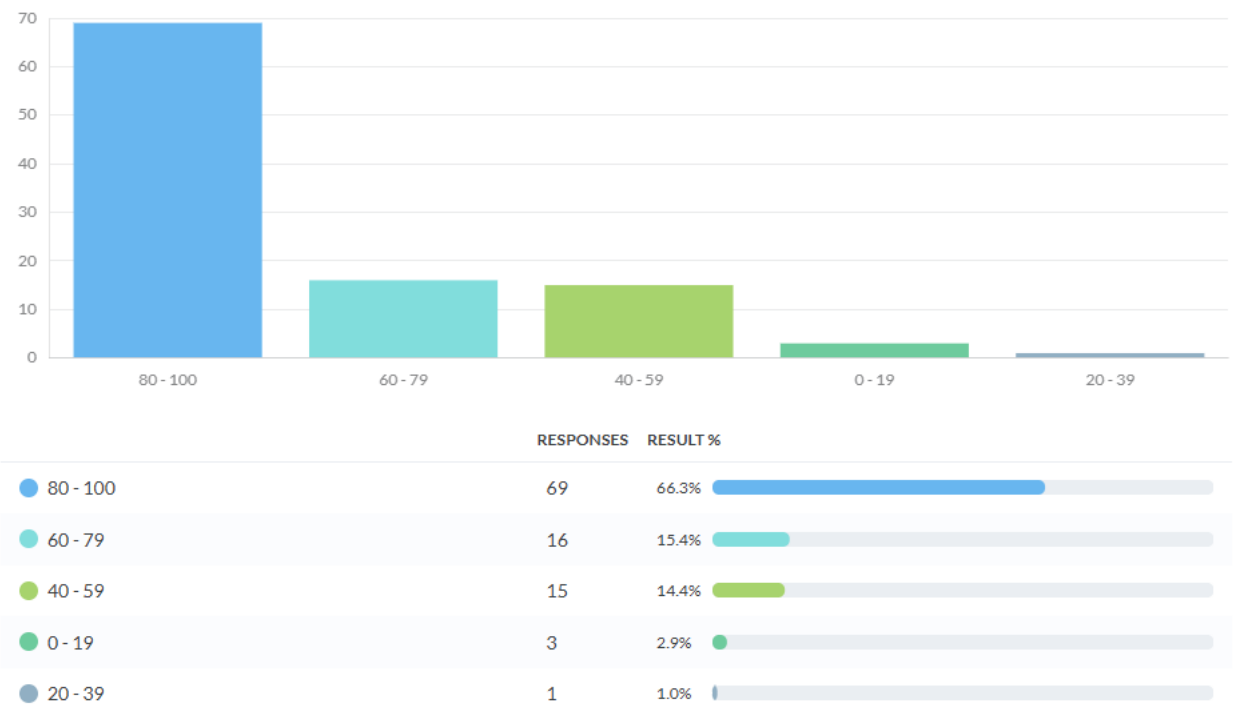


| | RESPONSES | RESULT % | |
|----------|-----------|----------|------------------------|
| 80 - 100 | 81 | 73.0% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 60 - 79 | 13 | 11.7% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 40 - 59 | 9 | 8.1% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 20 - 39 | 6 | 5.4% | <div><div></div></div> |
| 0 - 19 | 2 | 1.8% | <div><div></div></div> |

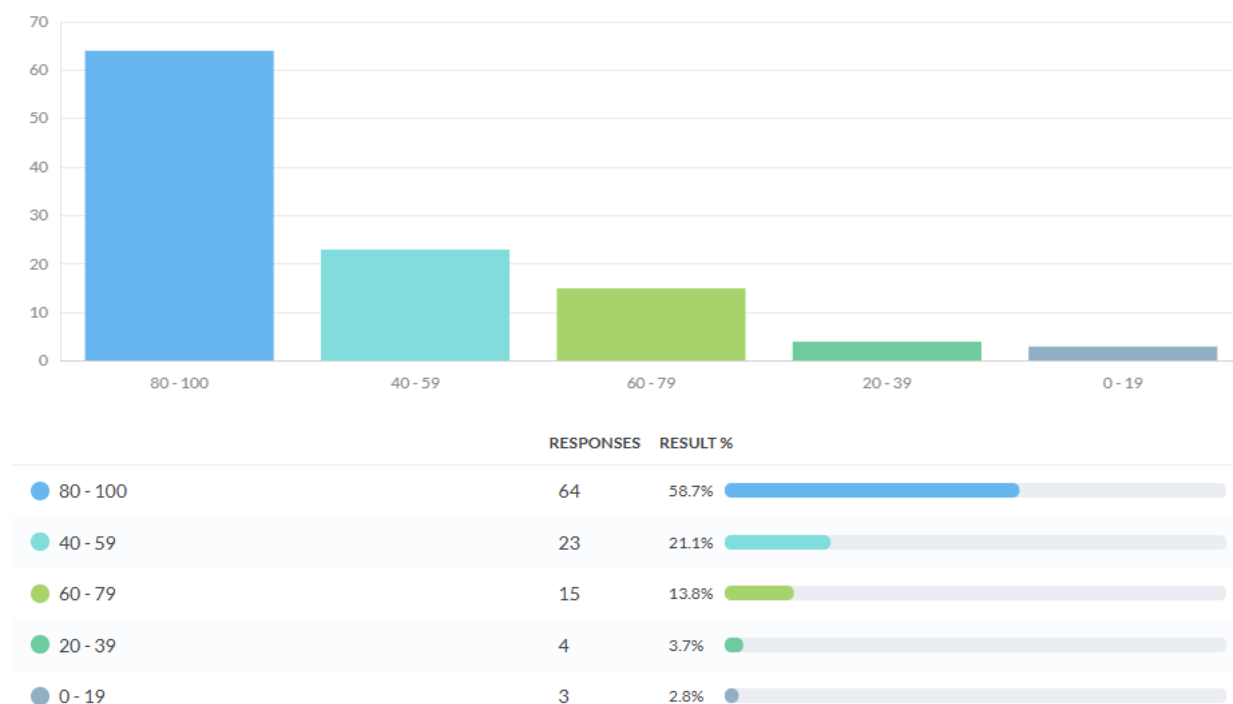
Do you support the ideas for family-friendly spaces and activities?



Do you support the ideas for new business and commercial opportunities on the waterfront?



Do you support the ideas for changes to parking on the waterfront?



Which of the following best describes your connection to Greater Geelong?

