

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

COUNCIL PLAN 2025-29

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

MAY 2025

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

The Council Plan 2025-29 Engagement Report provides an overview of the findings from the online and face-to face community engagement activities conducted July-September 2024 to inform development of the new Council Plan 2025-29.

The engagement aimed to gain a better understanding of the community's priorities for the municipality and to gather feedback on key planning considerations including health and wellbeing and future asset management.

In addition to the above engagement activities, a panel of community members was also convened to deliberate on what the priorities of the council should be. A separate report has been prepared for this process.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

To ensure a wide range of community members could participate, the engagement process provided multiple ways to get involved including:

- an online survey and deliberative funding activity
- face-to-face pop-up sessions
- hard copy (paper) survey on request

Participation opportunities were promoted through social media, media releases, and local newspapers.

KEY FINDINGS

The community's feedback highlighted several priority areas:

- **Environment and Climate Action:** Strong emphasis on tackling climate change and promoting sustainable practices.
- **Infrastructure and Public Spaces:** Need for better maintenance of parks, gardens, and improved cycling and walking infrastructure.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Focus on mental health, preventing violence, and reducing harm from alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- **Arts and Culture:** Desire for more support for arts and cultural activities, especially for youth.
- **Economic Development:** Support for local businesses and tourism to drive economic growth.

NEXT STEPS

The findings from this engagement inform the development of the Council Plan 2025-29.

Following Council endorsement, the draft plan will be available for community consultation allowing further input and refinement before final adoption.

Introduction

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings from the online and in person community engagement conducted July-September 2024 as part of the overall community engagement on Council Plan 2025-29.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In Victoria, a Council Plan is a four-year strategic document required by the *Local Government Act 2020*. It outlines a council's vision, objectives, and strategies based on community engagement and long-term plans like the Community Vision, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Asset Management Plan. The plan must be adopted by the October following a council t

ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of this engagement was to gain a better understanding of the community's priorities for the municipality and to gather feedback on:

- the Community Vision - Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future;
- Council's priorities over the Council Plan term;
- municipal public health and wellbeing, and;
- future asset management

Results will then be used alongside other data, including a deliberative community panel to inform the development of the draft Council Plan 2025-29.

How we engaged

The community were invited to provide feedback both online and face to face between 8 July and 15 September 2025. Opportunities to participate were promoted using the following methods:

- Social media posts
- Email to subscribers to the City’s online engagement platform, Have Your Say (HYS)
- Media releases and articles in local newspapers
- Promotion on screens the City’s Swim, Sport, and Leisure facilities.

HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE PLATFORM

The primary method of engagement, the City’s HYS platform online engagement platform, was designed to provide multiple options for community to submit feedback including a survey and a deliberative funding exercise.

Survey

The survey asked questions to:

- test the validity of the current Community Vision
- understand the community’s priority focus areas
- determine the health and wellbeing priorities of the community
- help determine the preferred approach to managing the City’s assets

‘Fund it’ exercise

The community was able to complete an exercise of prioritising the spending of an imaginary \$100 budget. Given each focus area could only have a maximum of \$20 allocated to it, respondents could choose up to five priority areas.

POP-UP CONVERSATIONS

Thirteen in person pop-up sessions were held across the four Council wards (in place at the time of delivering the engagement):

Locations
Brownbill Ward – Friday, 6 September 2024
Geelong West - Geelong West Town Hall, 153 Pakington St, Geelong West
Central Geelong – Westfield Geelong
Newcomb – Newcomb Central Shopping Centre, 71 Bellarine Highway (Aldi Mall)
Bellarine Ward – Saturday, 7 September 2024
Barwon Heads – Frank Ellis Reserve Playground, 2-60 Flinders Parade
Drysdale - Boronggook Drysdale Library forecourt, 2-8 Wyndham Street
Portarlington - Portarlington Rotunda, Newcombe Street
Kardinia Ward – Saturday, 27 July 2024
Belmont – Belmont Library forecourt, High Street
Highton – Highton Village shops, Belle Vue Avenue
Armstrong Creek - Armstrong Creek Shopping Centre, 40 Main Street
Windermere Ward – Saturday 27 July – Sunday 28 July 2024
Lara – Austin Park playground and skatepark, 5A Walkers Road
Corio Village - Corio Village Shopping Centre (City Customer Service Centre)
Hamlyn Heights - Vines Road shopping strip (outside IGA)
Lara - Lavender Drive Reserve, 2-28 Lavender Drive (Community Planting Day)

Who we engaged

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 73 responses to the 'Fund it' exercise were received.

A total of 192 responses to the survey were received. Of these respondents:

- 187 (97%) of respondents were local residents
- 49 (25%) were employed in the area

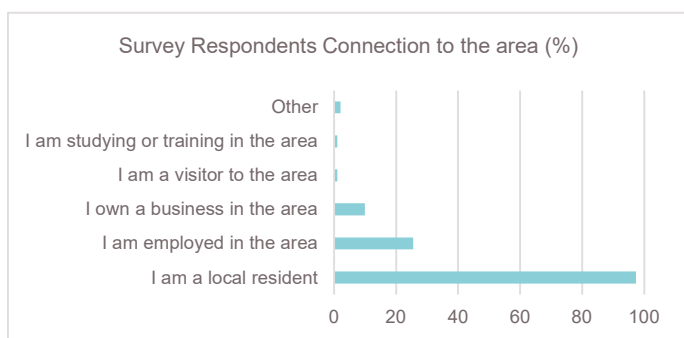


Figure 1 – Breakdown of survey respondents' connection to Greater Geelong (respondents could select more than one connection)

The largest proportion of survey responses were from those aged between 35-49 years (32%) and 60-69 years (28%):

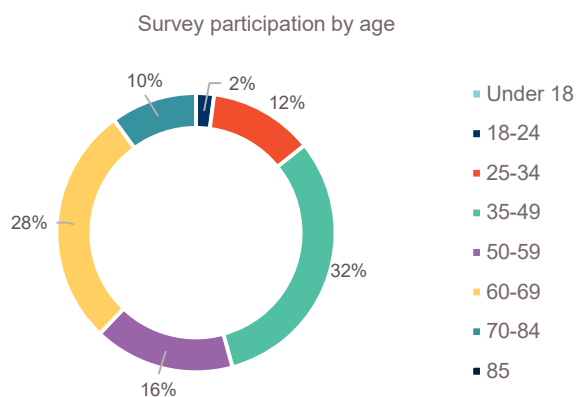


Figure 2 - Breakdown of survey participation by age

There was also a higher proportion of women than men:

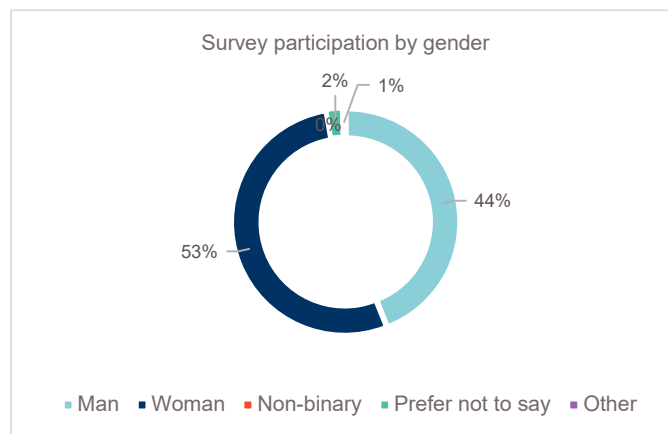


Figure 3 - Breakdown of survey participation by gender

The following provides a detailed breakdown of survey participation by identified groups, the highest being parent/guardian (34%), the migrant community (12%), and people with a disability (7%):

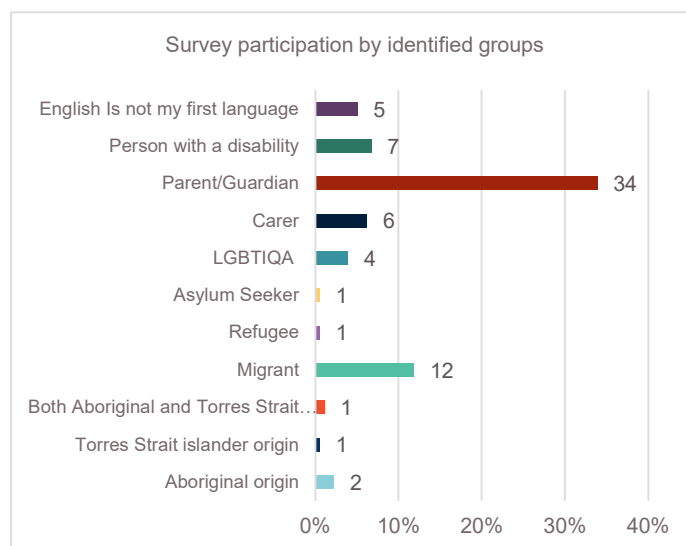


Figure 4 - Breakdown of survey participation by identified groups

The highest levels of response were from people who lived in the following suburbs:

- Geelong
- Belmont
- Highton

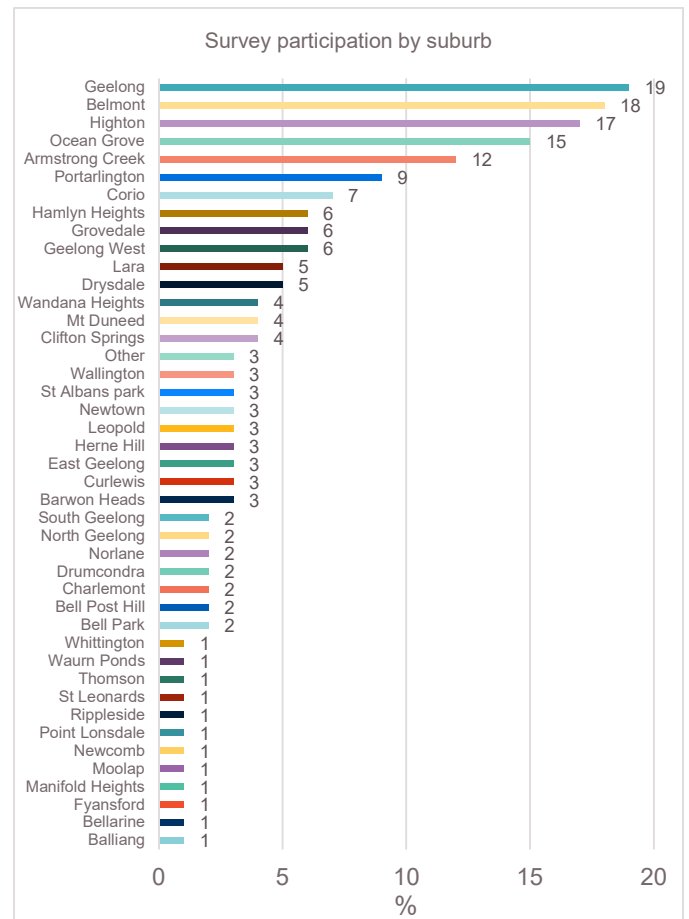


Figure 5 - Breakdown of survey participation by suburb

FUNDING PRIORITIES

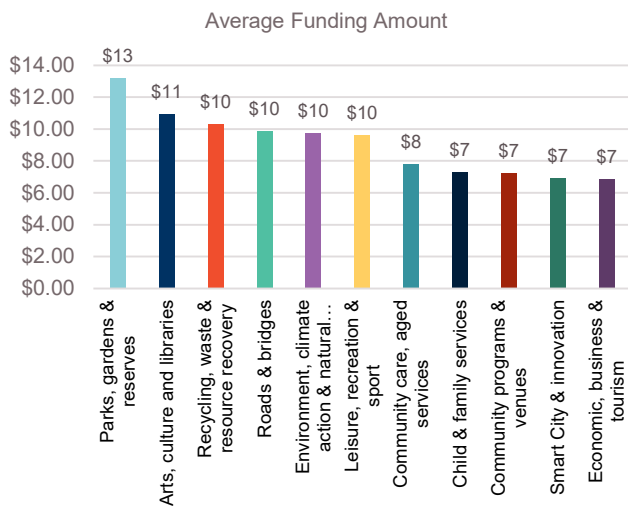


Figure 9 - Breakdown of funding allocation

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PRIORITIES

Tell us which five Victorian State Government health and wellbeing priorities you think should be a focus for Greater Geelong in 2025-2029 (% selected)

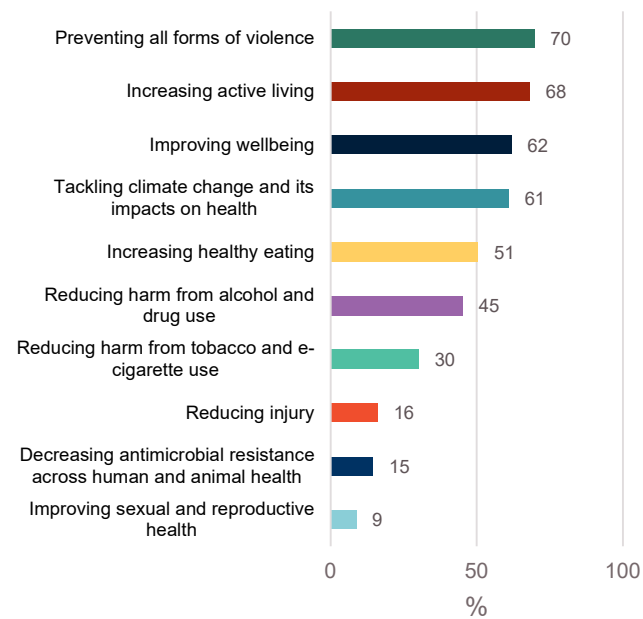


Figure 10 - Breakdown of health and wellbeing priorities

Do you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong programs?

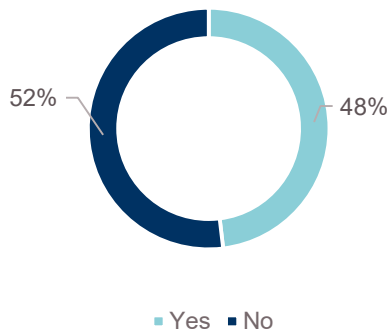


Figure 11 – Responses to “Do you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong programs?”

Why do you think you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong?

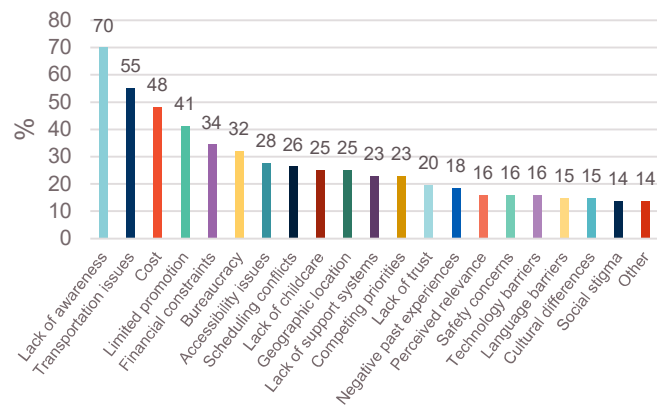


Figure 12 – Responses to “Why do you think you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong programs?”

Would you prefer us to renew existing assets or create new assets? (%)

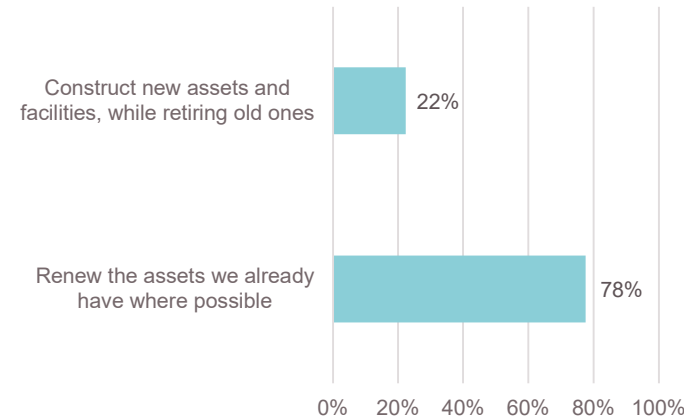


Figure 13 – Response to “Would you prefer us to renew existing assets or create new assets?”

Would you prefer Council provide more flexible, multipurpose buildings or more targeted, single purpose buildings? (%)

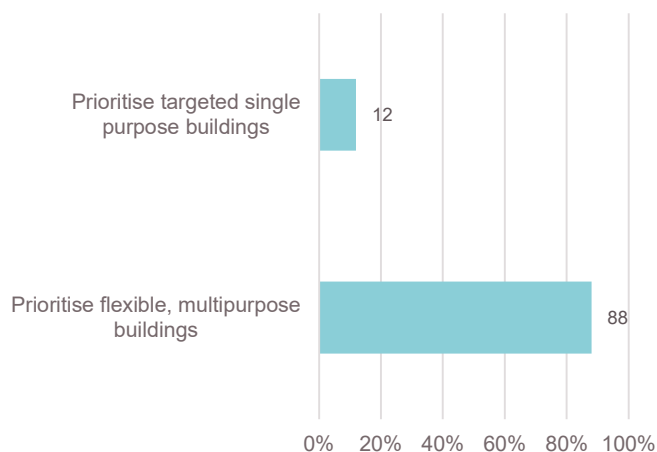


Figure 14 – Response to “Would you prefer Council provide more flexible, multipurpose buildings or more targeted, single purpose buildings?”

Would you prefer us to invest more in our natural assets or built environment assets? (%)

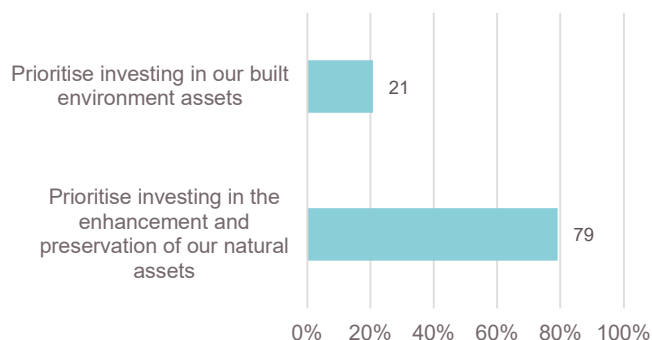


Figure 15 – Response to “Would you prefer us to invest more in our natural assets or built environment assets?”

Would you prefer higher quality assets that may be further away or standard quality assets that are closer to where you live? (%)

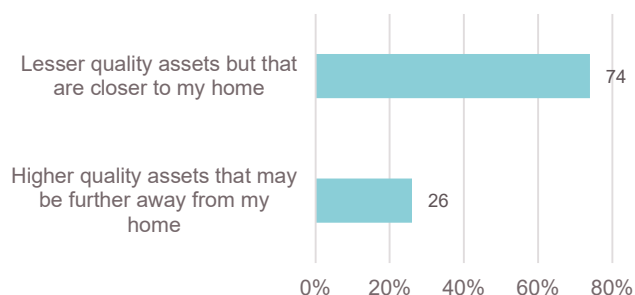


Figure 16 – Response to “Would you prefer higher quality assets that may be further away or standard quality assets that are closer to where you live?”

Which do you think is a better way of measuring how well council assets are performing? (%)

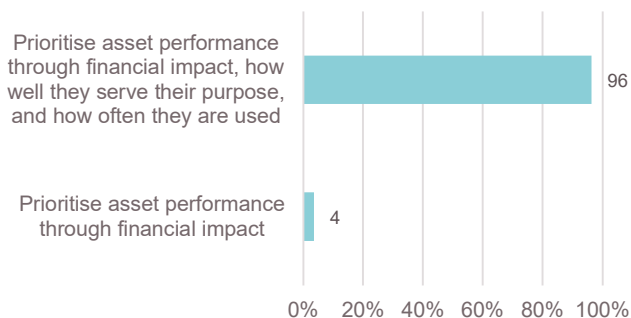


Figure 17 – Response to “Which do you think is a better way of measuring how well council assets are performing?”

Are there community facilities that do not exist in Greater Geelong that you believe Council should consider providing? (%)

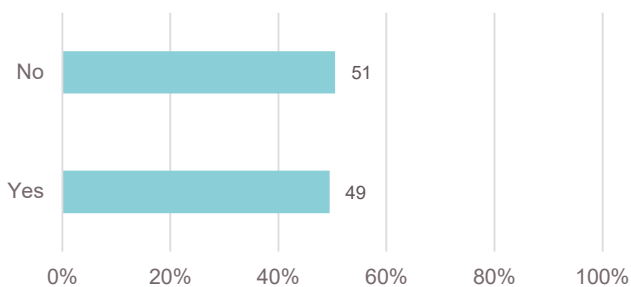


Figure 18 – Response to “Are there community facilities that do not exist in Greater Geelong that you believe Council should consider providing?”

What assets do you think Council should provide?

development and opportunities for improvement will be identified for future engagements.

Engaging with young people proved to be a challenge. Additional avenues to attract feedback from younger community members should be considered in future engagements.



Figure 19 – Responses to “What assets to you think Council should provide”?

“Enough basketball courts to house the growing population of kids who want to play basketball”

“A proper clean, green public transport system”

“Fenced dog parks”

“Outdoor undercover playground, outdoor undercover gym facilities”

“More live music venues :)”

FEEDBACK THROUGH INFORMAL CHANNELS

The engagement also attracted five comments on social media across two posts. These comments broadly reflected the sentiment and themes gathered through the formal engagement process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Attending areas of high pedestrian activity such as shopping centres yielded lower rates of engagement than expected. This is likely because the engagement phase covered such a broad concept and the entire municipality.

Higher rates of engagement from pop up and promotional activities are more likely to be achieved when the project is more specific to a location. Hosting in person sessions and promotional activities are still considered an important component of engagement on strategy

What we have done and next steps

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The findings from this engagement will be included in information provided to Council in the development of the Council Plan, its strategic direction and objectives.

NEXT STEPS

Following endorsement by Council, the draft plan will be available for a period of four weeks for community consultation.

Appendix A – Survey



COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 SURVEY

Help us refresh the Greater Geelong Vision and shape our Council Plan 2025-2029

Your reflections will help assess whether the 'Clever and Creative Future' Vision for Greater Geelong, established through community consultation in 2017, still aligns with the community's aspirations for 2047.

Your ideas will also provide advice into Council's major long-term plans for 2025-2029, including:

- 2025-29 Council Plan (including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- 2025-35 Financial Plan (including Revenue and Rating Plan)
- 2025-35 Asset Management Plan
- 2025-26 Annual Budget.

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and has 6 sections along with optional questions about you:

- Our Community Vision
- Council Plan 2025-29
- Health and Wellbeing
- Our Assets
- About you
- Contact Details

Your responses, which remain anonymous, will be aggregated and contribute to defining the priorities and aspirations of the Greater Geelong community.

Privacy Statement



HAVE YOUR SAY FOR THE NEW COUNCIL PLAN 2025-29

Introduction

1. Check this box to indicate that you have read, and agree to the privacy statement provided for this consultation (Required)

Yes

2. Do you agree to receive email updates about the Council Plan 2025-29 project?

(Required)

Yes please

No thank you

3. Which of the following best describes your connection to the area? (Required)

You can select multiple options.

I am a local resident

I am employed in the area

I own a business in the area

I am a visitor to the area

I am studying or training in the area

Other - Write In

Our Community Vision

SECTION 1 - OUR COMMUNITY VISION

This is the Greater Geelong Community Vision that was developed in consultation with the community in 2017:

By 2047, Greater Geelong will be internationally recognised as a clever and creative city- region that is forward looking, enterprising and adaptive and cares for its people and environment

The community said this meant Greater Geelong

- has business diversity that inspires a broad range of education and employment opportunities attracts start-ups, innovative businesses and a can-do attitude
- uses a variety of affordable technologies to provide universal digital access
- makes travel between suburbs easier through a network of pedestrian and cycle paths
- excites local and international visitors who are interested in its events, festivals, landscapes and food
- is designed to create an active street culture and vibrant public spaces
- has a strong sense of community and uplifts its vulnerable community members
- is designed around people and makes the best use of technology and sustainable living
- is devoted to research and encourages economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible solutions to its challenges
- has a global outlook and is connected to the world by technology
- recognises the uniqueness and significance of its natural environments.

The 9 aspirations within the Vision are:



A prosperous economy that supports jobs and education opportunities



A leader in developing and adopting technology



Creativity drives culture



A fast, reliable and connected transport network



A destination that attracts local and international visitors



People feel safe wherever they are



An inclusive, diverse, healthy and socially connected community



Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment



Development and implementation of sustainable solutions

4. Do you think the current Community Vision still reflects the Greater Geelong community and the direction we want to head? (Required)

Move the slider left or right with 0 being not at all and 10 being completely

0 _____ 10
No, not at all Yes, completely

5. We'd love to hear why you gave this response (optional)

SECTION 2 - COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029

Council will focus on several areas that work towards achieving our Community Vision.

6. When developing our Council Plan for 2025-29, which five of the following areas do you believe Council should place a higher priority on over the next four years? Required

Click on the blocks to select your preferences.



Arts and Culture

Celebrating diversity, improving cross cultural understanding and building social cohesion.



Community programs and venues

Creating opportunities to improve social and health equity, community connection and participation



Leisure, recreation and sport

Providing facilities that offer a diverse range of leisure opportunities to the community



Child and family services

Planning, developing and delivering services to families with young children



Roads and bridges

Managing and maintaining an extensive road and bridges network



Smart City and Innovation

Supporting Geelong to embrace smart technology and be innovative



Parks, gardens and reserves

Managing and maintaining a diverse range of outdoor assets



Economic, business and tourism

Supporting an environment that is attractive and conducive to business and investment



Recycling, waste and resource recovery

Managing our waste sustainably, recycling and reducing what we send to landfill



Community Care and Aged Services

Provides a range of home care services to older people which meet and support client's needs



Environment, climate actions & natural resources

Supporting coordinated and collective action to achieve net zero community emissions

Based on the focus areas you selected, what would you say are the top 3 priority programs, services or projects Council should invest in over the next four years?

7. Priority 1 (Required)

8. Priority 2

9. Priority 3

10. Do you have any final comments about the Community Vision or Council Plan that you would like to add?

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing

SECTION 3 - MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This section includes a list of health and wellbeing priorities identified by the Victorian State Government. Council is to select five State priorities that we believe best align to the health and wellbeing challenges in Greater Geelong.

The World Health Organisation defines health as:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

11. Tell us which five Victorian State Government health and wellbeing priorities you think should be a focus for Greater Geelong in 2025-2029 (Required)

For each priority you select, you will be asked if you have ideas about how Council or other Greater Geelong organisations could address the priority:

Improving sexual and reproductive health

Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use

Improving wellbeing

Increasing healthy eating

Increasing active living

Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use

Tackling climate change and its impacts on health

Preventing all forms of violence

Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health

Reducing injury

12. How can we make places (our environments) in Greater Geelong healthier?

Think about where you live, learn, work, study or play and consider the built, natural and economic environment.

13. Do you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong programs?

Programs could include youth programs, community grants, parenting programs, learn to swim etc.

Yes

No

14. Why do you think you or other people you know find it difficult to access City of Greater Geelong programs?

Please select all that apply.

Lack of awareness

Transportation issues

Scheduling conflicts

Language barriers

Accessibility issues

Cost

Cultural differences

Lack of childcare

Perceived relevance

Bureaucracy

Safety concerns

Social stigma

Lack of trust

Technology barriers

Financial constraints

Limited promotion

Geographic location

Lack of support systems

Competing priorities

Negative past experiences

Other

SECTION 4 - OUR ASSETS

The below questions have to do with how you would like us to manage our community assets and facilities.

Council assets are things owned by a local government or council that can include buildings, parks, vehicles, and equipment. These assets are used to provide services and support to the community.

Each of the following questions are designed to understand your preferred approach to our assets, when answering think about things like cost, proximity, equity and sustainability.

15. Would you prefer us to renew existing assets or create new assets? (Required)

Select one answer only

Renew the assets we already have where possible

Construct new assets and facilities, while retiring old ones

16. Would you prefer Council provide more flexible, multipurpose buildings or more targeted, single purpose buildings? (Required)

Prioritise flexible, multipurpose buildings

Prioritise targeted single purpose buildings

17. Would you prefer us to invest more in our natural assets or built environment assets? (Required)

Natural assets for example are waterways, coastal and land habitat, trees and reserves. Built assets for example are roads, drainage, footpaths and bridges.

Prioritise investing in the enhancement and preservation of our natural assets

Prioritise investing in our built environment assets

18. Would you prefer higher quality assets that may be further away or standard quality assets that are closer to where you live (Required)

For example, a large, state-of-the-art playground that is 5km away or a smaller, simpler playground that is 500m away

Higher quality assets that may be further away from my home

Lesser quality assets but that are closer to my home

19. Which do you think is a better way of measuring how well council assets are performing? (Required)

Prioritise asset performance through financial impact

Prioritise asset performance through financial impact, how well they serve their purpose, and how often they are used

20. Are there community facilities that do not exist in Greater Geelong that you believe Council should consider providing? (Required)

Yes

No

About You

Before you go, can you tell us a little bit about you? In this section we are asking for information about you to help us understand who we are hearing from in the community. Any information you provide will be de-identified (i.e. anonymous) from your survey responses and managed in line with the City of Greater Geelong Privacy Policy (<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/governance/documents/item/2c891c3b.aspx>)

21. Town or Suburb

Where you currently reside.

22. Age Group

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-49

50-59

60-69

70-84

85+

23. What is your gender?

This information enables us to consider the impact of Council service on people of different genders. This will help us to ensure that our services are equitable and meeting the needs of the Geelong Community

Man

Woman

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Self-described (please specify)

24. Do you identify as any of the following?

Please select all that apply

Aboriginal origin

Torres Strait islander origin

Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Migrant Refugee

Asylum Seeker LGBTIQ+

Carer Parent/Guardian

Person with a disability

English Is not my first language

None of the above

25. Are you a member of a City of Greater Geelong Advisory Committee or Council?

Contact details

Please complete this section if you said you'd like to be kept up to date about this project.

26. First Name

27. Last Name

28. Email (optional)

29. Best contact number

Thank you

Please click the "Submit" button at the end of the survey to ensure that the City receives your feedback.

Thank you for your time and feedback, both are valued.

SUBMIT