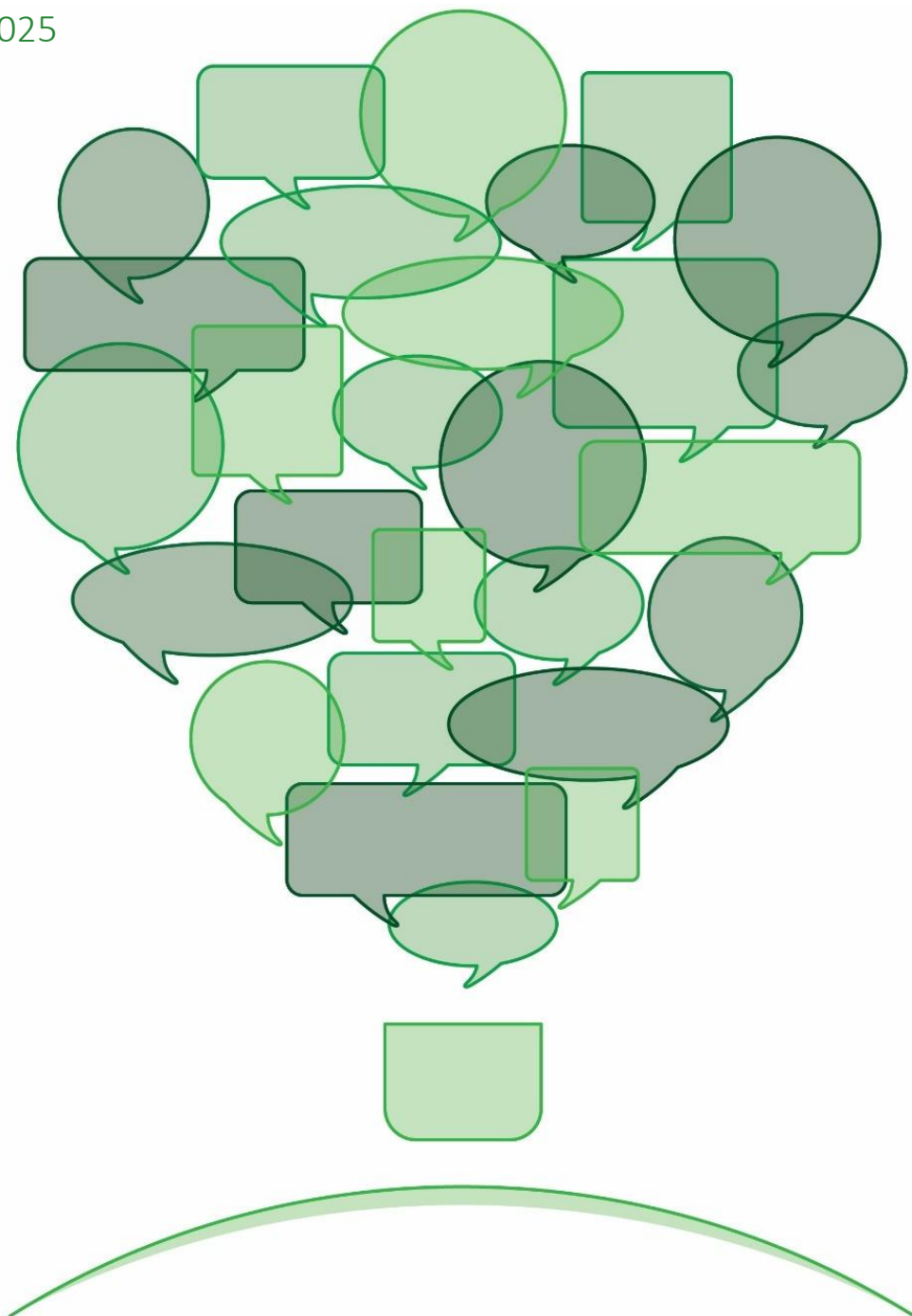


# WARRNAMBOOL FUTURES: a long-term land use planning strategy

## ENGAGEMENT REPORT

June 2025



This report has been prepared for Warrnambool City Council as a summary of the community engagement undertaken March – April 2025. Foxtrot & Echo has taken all due care in the preparation of this report to accurately reflect the opinions and ideas shared by the community. However, Foxtrot & Echo are not liable to any person or entity for any actions that may be taken or not taken in respect of any representation, statement, opinion, or advice referred to herein.

Foxtrot & Echo acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and the lands on which this project focuses. We recognise their ongoing connection to the land and waters and that sovereignty was never ceded.

This report does not include the engagement with the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung People of the Eastern Maar Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. This is conducted separately as part of the on-going relationship between Warrnambool City Council and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

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## Executive Summary

Warrnambool City Council is developing a new long-term land use strategy, Warrnambool Futures, which will guide sustainable and balanced growth throughout the municipality over the coming decades. The municipality is expected to gain a further 2,700 homes over the next two decades, while the city's population is on track to reach approximately 41,000 residents.

Warrnambool Futures will not just examine housing. It will also explore the land use needs for a growing economy, transportation and moving around Warrnambool, infrastructure from utilities to community buildings and spaces, and the natural assets, hazards and resources of the area.

Phase one of the community engagement for this project was undertaken between March and April 2025, to ensure Warrnambool Futures understands the community's future vision of Warrnambool and their needs, desires and knowledge in regards to housing, business, transport and community spaces.

An online project page was developed to provide an opportunity for community members to engage with the project. It contained information about the project, including the State of Warrnambool Report, an online survey, and an invitation to join one of two community workshops where participants could learn more about the project and provide their input.

142 people completed the online survey and 17 people attended the community workshops. Four submissions were also received.

Demographics were collected in the survey and the results indicate a good mix of age groups participating. As expected, most respondents reside in Warrnambool, but 12% came from the surrounding small towns in the municipality or from the surrounding Moyne Shire.

### Key Findings:

#### Housing

- Clear support for new housing to be built within the existing residential areas, including the CBD, both as infill and on vacant land.
- Support for the preservation of farmland and rural areas rather than more development
- Very strong support for future housing to be a diverse mix of single family homes, social housing, senior living, apartments and townhouses.
- Many concerns were raised about the current lack of affordable housing, including rental options. Discussion focused on the housing needs of key workers (particularly medical workers) and students and young people.

#### Economy

- The cost and availability of housing was cited as the biggest barrier to attracting and retaining staff across all businesses
- Investing in infrastructure and public transport was considered to be the top way to support business in Warrnambool and providing enough land for business expansion was the lowest ranked idea
- Tourism is seen as both important and a positive for Warrnambool, allowing the local economy to be supported and recognising the benefit to residents in having businesses that can afford to operate all year round.
- Suggestions for further support of tourism include an improvement to facilities and amenities, particularly along the foreshore, improved transport options, creating new

attractions at a range of price points and improvements and maintenance to many of the currently popular sites.

#### Natural Features and Hazards

- 79% of survey participants support balancing growth with protecting the natural landscape.
- Many landscape sites were identified for their features to be preserved or enhanced, such as the coastline, Merri and Hopkins rivers and the existing parks. A number of sites were also identified for the potential environmental hazards that could impact on land use planning, such as flooding risk and erosion.
- The coastline was seen as a natural asset that has more potential for enjoyment, businesses, facilities and amenities and tourism.

#### Transportation

- Transportation needs, links and services was one of the most popular topics in the survey comments and in workshops, with many expressing the desire for more options.
- Improving walking paths has very strong support, as well as cycle paths and lanes.
- Improving roads and traffic management was seen as important for any future growth, with some discussion also of a truck/freight by-pass to the north.
- The need for improved public transport was also very popular, especially in the workshops, with the need for connectivity, higher frequency, extended routes and extended running periods particularly at night and on weekends

#### Infrastructure

- High level of desire for more parks and green spaces as Warrnambool grows.
- Also identified was future needs for more sporting facilities, community hubs, arts venues.
- More medical facilities, childcare, schools, youth support and disability access were also identified.

Overall, the community have indicated a love for Warrnambool and a desire for its current coastal, country town feel to be preserved and the ability to be progressive and welcoming highly supported. There is support for the new growth that is to come, with a desire for a variety of housing options in a number of existing locations. Preservation of rural and farming land is well supported. Transportation and green spaces are the highest priority for infrastructure needs.

## Introduction

Warrnambool City Council is developing a new long-term land use strategy, Warrnambool Futures, which will guide sustainable and balanced growth throughout the municipality over the coming decades.

The City's most recent comprehensive land use strategy was prepared in 2004. Significant strategic work has been undertaken since then including new housing, open space, environment, and economic development strategies. Warrnambool Futures will update the land use strategy to both integrate the findings of these other strategies, and to account for growth, change, and new issues that have emerged since the previous strategy.. Warrnambool is expected to gain a further 2,700 homes over the next two decades, while the city's population is on track to reach approximately 41,000 residents.<sup>1</sup>

The first phase of community engagement was undertaken in March and April 2025 to ensure Warrnambool Futures reflects the needs and values of the community in new housing, businesses, transport, and community spaces. Further engagement will occur as the project develops, to test scenarios and draft plans.



*Image 1 Community workshop participants contributing their ideas*

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<sup>1</sup> State of Warrnambool report, SGS Economics and Planning, 2025. Access <https://www.yoursaywarrnambool.com.au/warrnambool-futures-long-term-land-use-strategy>

## Engagement Approach

### Approach

The first phase of engagement was conducted from 12 March to 21 April 2025 to gather community insights on key land use issues, including housing, economic growth, infrastructure and transportation.

The online Your Say Warrnambool project page for Warrnambool Futures was established, providing:

- Information about the project
- The State of Warrnambool report which provided an overview of existing growth plans and the changes in Warrnambool's demographic profile, health and wellbeing, housing affordability and the economy ([yoursaywarrnambool.com.au](https://yoursaywarrnambool.com.au))
- An online survey to gather preferences, ideas and local knowledge on a range of land-use planning topics including housing, the local environment, transport, infrastructure, economy and tourism. See appendix 1.
- Promotion of two community workshops that were held in late March to allow in-person participation and the opportunity to ask questions. See appendix 2.

To promote the engagement, a number of actions were taken:

- 200 flyers to major community hubs and community organisations in Warrnambool such as the library, Flagstaff Hill, Kiosk, Pavilion, Aqua zone, Archie Graham etc, outlining the project and providing the web address and a QR code for the survey
- An email to a stakeholder and developers list of approximately 17 individuals and groups that council thought may be interested, inviting them to attend the workshops
- Advertising in the local newspaper, The Standard.
- Several posts to Council's social media channels.

Phase 1 Engagement	
Online surveys	142
Workshop attendees	17
Written submissions*	4

\*Written submissions were sent unsolicited to Warrnambool City Council and have been included in this report as the submitters have each, separately, spent time and effort in producing detailed information regarding their ideas for future land use planning.

## Participants

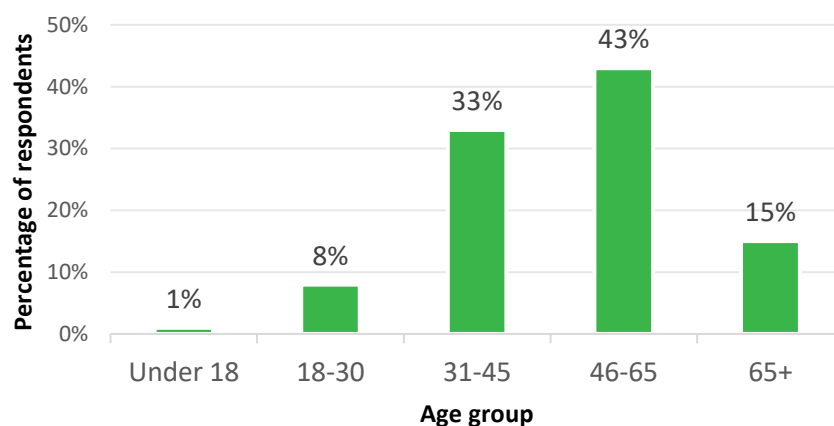
Seventeen community members attended the two workshops. No demographic details were collected from participants, but it was observed that there was a range of ages present, and several participants mentioned coming from surrounding towns within the municipality.

One hundred and forty-two people completed the online survey and were asked two demographic questions that would indicate the range of people participating.

17 workshop  
participants  
142 survey  
respondents

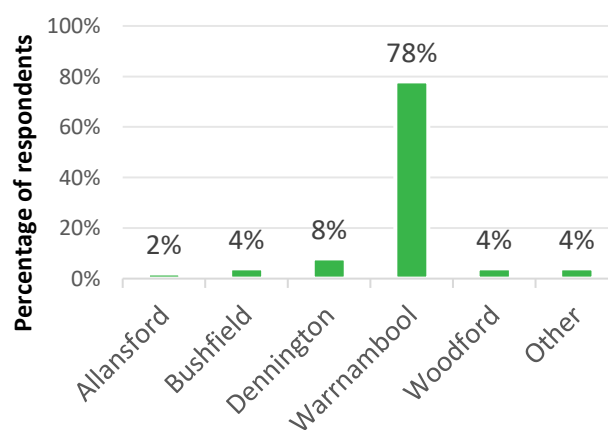
The survey received responses from a mix of age groups, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. Most respondents are in the 46-65 years old category (43%), followed by the 31-45 years old category (33%) and 65+ years old (15%). This does not mirror the population make-up of Warrnambool, which has a much higher percentage of residents aged 65+ (almost 30% of those over 18) and fewer aged 46-65 (approximately 33% of adults). This may be due to interest in the topic, comfort in using online platforms or other reasons.

Figure 1: Age of survey respondents (n=142)



Survey participants were also asked where they lived in the municipality. Unsurprisingly, 78% of participants were from the locality of Warrnambool. Other localities represented include Dennington (8%), Bushfield (4%), Allansford, Woodford and several from nearby towns within Moyne Shire.

Figure 2: Place of residence of survey respondents (n=142)





## Engagement Outcomes

This section presents a summary of the survey results and workshop comments combined, followed by the written submissions. The results have been organised into the key topics outlined in the survey which were also the key topics focused on in the workshops. The key topics were selected from the State of Warrnambool report produced by SGS Economics and Planning as part of the background research for the Warrnambool Futures project. Key topics were chosen for the value that would be gained by receiving community insights, preferences and ideas, which will assist in guiding the development of land use scenarios for further consultation as the project progresses. The topics were:

- Vision
- People and Housing
- Economy and Tourism
- Natural Features and Hazards
- Transport and Infrastructure

The survey was quite lengthy and involved a number of free text questions which may have taken participants some time to complete. To keep engagement in the long survey and not receive incomplete surveys, only the key demographic questions were mandatory, allowing participants to choose to answer only those questions that interested them. In the results following, participation numbers fluctuate from the maximum 142 participants, and these numbers are noted for each graph. The survey was broken up into the topics as listed above.

Workshop activities were a combination of individual reflection, group discussion and writing on post-it notes to annotate provided maps of Warrnambool.

Workshop conversations, post-it note comments and survey comments have been themed and summarised for this report. The written submissions have also been summarised. Some questions in both the workshop and survey received specific detail about places and issues. All of this information is retained by Warrnambool City Council and the consultants to use in the next stages of the project and has not been lost to the more general nature of the summaries in this report. For further details of verbatim comments, please contact the Planning Team at Warrnambool City Council.

## Vision

To understand the community's vision for the future of Warrnambool, several key questions were posed to both workshop participants and survey respondents to understand what they like about and value in Warrnambool now, to give a sense of what is important to remain and be encouraged in the future, their vision for the future of Warrnambool, and their highest priority is to ensure Warrnambool remains a great place to live.

## Currently

The best elements of Warrnambool now as identified by all engagement participants are:

- Coastal Location/Beaches
- Natural Environment/Green Spaces/Parks
- Sense of Community/Friendly People
- Small Town/Country Town Feel
- Feeling Safe/Low Crime/Clean
- Right Size and Everything we Need
- Family friendly and Retirement friendly

Some of the current challenges for Warrnambool's future land use planning were also identified by workshop participants in their conversations, which are:

- Conservative/Unimaginative/Limiting attitudes
- Huge potential but underutilised
- Infrastructure not keeping up with housing
- Homelessness
- Poor public transport

## The Future

Workshop participants were asked for their future vision of Warrnambool before land use discussions began, and some Council staff also participated in the exercise. Their responses are presented in full on the following page.

<i>City with opportunities for all ages, young, old, all. Mix of services and industry along with retaining its serenity.</i>	<i>Improved biodiversity in natural spaces. Healthy suburbs with a local green economy.</i>	<i>A city that combines the best of the city, country and natural environment, where residents have it all in their backyard.</i>
<i>Easy to get around without a car. Accessible and connected. Natural public open spaces.</i>	<i>Progressive, good investment, ready for growth opportunity.</i>	<i>Equitable, educated, personable, accessible, family friendly, affordable, strong.</i>
<i>People live where they work, where they recreate. Increased density is increased vibrancy. Satellite activity centres that make use of our natural assets.</i>	<i>Community focused. Diverse housing stock, accessible, many price points. Great, not big public spaces with higher density. Risk taking. 15 minute neighbourhoods.</i>	<i>Fresh air. The stars out at night. Not polluted, not overdeveloped. Trees all around with greenery. Linking public transport, great public transport. Good business networking.</i>
<i>A finely balanced place that both welcomes growth and change and protects what's worthwhile.</i>	<i>Regional centre. Community Hub. Biodiverse, culturally diverse, diverse in general. Supports everyone adequately.</i>	<i>More cultural diversity. Greener, trees. More living in the CBD. Reduce amount of crown land partnerships.</i>
<i>Cosmopolitan by the sea.</i>	<i>Regional city by the sea.</i>	<i>Sustainable, diverse, scenic, bike friendly, infill friendly.</i>
<i>CBD - better utilise not just Liebig St. Keep country living feel. Water?</i>	<i>Fully utilised to its potential, realising its potential. Transitioning confidently.</i>	<i>A big country town with an inclusive, happy, healthy and sustainable vibe.</i>
<i>Walkable and cyclable, good infrastructure and services. Less inequality, more third places like cafes, shops, activity hubs. More accessible community spaces more housing options.</i>	<i>Wealthy. Fast track development - infill and greenfields. Double in size. A centre of industry, education and health care. Agricultural epicentre of western Victoria. Affordable, creative, open, a hot pot of mixed nationalities.</i>	<i>Ideal for residents of all ages - elderly, uni students, international workers, young families. Enough resources for all residents – housing, services, businesses and natural areas. More accessible for disabled residents. Sustainable.</i>
<i>Emphasis on nature and climate change, protecting nature and sustainable, affordable housing. Housing options that are accessible. Thriving businesses. Business infrastructure. Third places - cafes, civic greens, things like the new library. Affordable rent. Utilising pre-existing spaces. Accessible and cyclable, pedestrian friendly. Continuous reflection and feedback.</i>	<i>2045 still friendly but maturing into a vibrant coastal city which attracts and is established in employment options. Full range of housing options to cater for every stage of life and affordable and available by consolidating land use already available rather than take from productive farm zone.</i>	

### Highest priority

Workshop participants and survey respondents were asked for their one top priority to ensure Warrnambool remains a great place to live. The themes were similar from all activities.

- **Control and Plan Growth/Prevent Overdevelopment:** Managing growth carefully to avoid the negative impacts of overdevelopment and preserve the town's character.
- **Medium density/Infill Housing:** Having housing close to amenities and a variety of housing types for different ages and stages of life.
- **Improve Infrastructure (Roads, Transport, Services):** The need to improve infrastructure, particularly roads and public transport, to keep pace with population growth and allow for more active transport options. Better connections for pedestrians.
- **Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment:** This theme emphasises the importance of preserving the area's natural beauty and addressing environmental risks such as flooding, erosion, bushfires and impacts of climate change.
- **More to do or look at:** For tourism and for locals, including community hubs, art spaces, improvements along the coastline, and events.
- **Accessibility**
- **Address Social Issues (Homelessness, Crime, etc.)**
- **Enhance the CBD/Shopping Precinct**
- **Promote Sustainable Practices**
- **Employment opportunities for future generations**
- **More industrial land available**
- **Once completed, don't change the Warrnambool Futures plan:** To give certainty to developers and investors.



*Image 2 Seal sculpture in Liebig St, Warrnambool*

## People and Housing

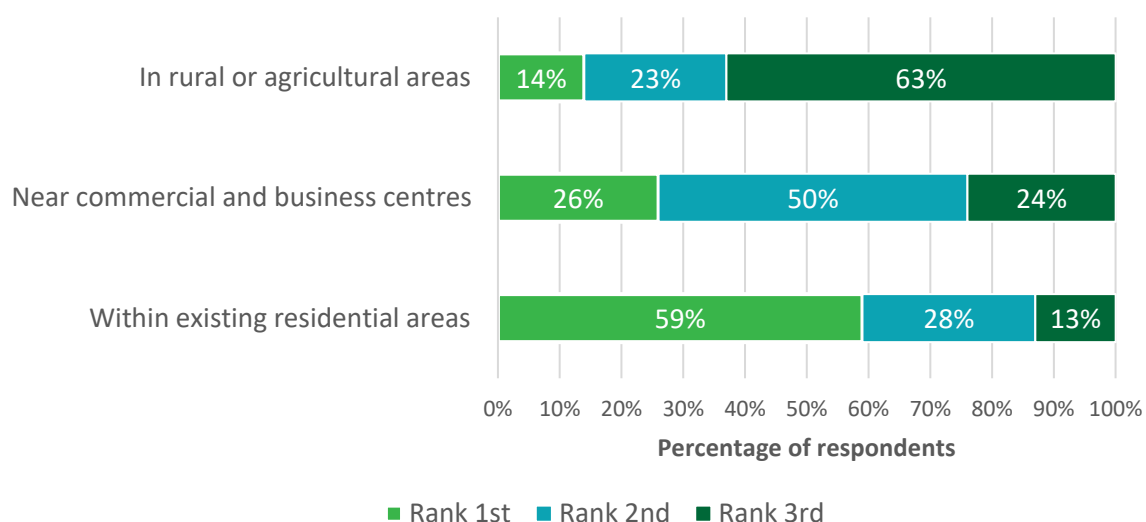
Warrnambool has had consistent growth in the past and is expected to need an additional 2700 homes by 2046. Housing was one of the elements of land use planning that was of greatest interest to workshop participants, judging by their discussions, and also received a lot of feedback in the survey. In both the survey and workshops, participants were asked about the location, type and diversity of housing options.

### Location

From the survey responses, there was clear support for new housing to be built within the existing residential areas rather than near commercial and business areas or in rural and agricultural areas (often referred to as greenfield sites).

Fifty-nine per cent (59%) of the responses preferred new housing to be built within the existing residential areas and another 29% of participants chose the existing areas as their second preference. Twenty-six per cent (26%) of the responses elected near commercial and business centres as their preferred location and 14% of the survey participants preferred the rural or agricultural areas. The rural areas were the least favoured option for 63% of participants.

**Figure 3 Where new houses should be built in Warrnambool (n=133)**



Survey respondents were asked about the pros and cons of increasing housing in the existing areas and of building on undeveloped land (likely to be rural land). Many of the participants were able to recognise that there were advantages and disadvantages of both options, which have been summarised on the following page.

Existing Areas	
Pros	Cons
<b>Efficient Use of Existing Infrastructure:</b> Utilising existing roads, utilities, and services, reducing the need for new investment.	<b>Strain on Infrastructure:</b> Existing infrastructure (roads, water, sewage) may be inadequate to handle increased demand.
<b>Proximity to Amenities:</b> Residents are closer to shops, schools, public transport, and other community facilities.	<b>Overcrowding of Services:</b> Schools, parks, and other community services may become overcrowded.
<b>Supports Local Businesses:</b> Increased population density can boost trade for existing businesses.	<b>Loss of Character/Amenity:</b> Can alter the character of established neighbourhoods, reducing green space and increasing noise
<b>Reduced Need for Transport:</b> Shorter distances can encourage walking, cycling, and less reliance on cars.	<b>Traffic Congestion:</b> Higher density can lead to more cars and greater traffic problems (identifying that this is already a problem in some areas).
<b>More Housing Options for Specific Groups:</b> Can create opportunities for smaller, more affordable housing for young people, seniors, and those on lower incomes.	<b>Parking Issues:</b> Increased density can exacerbate parking problems, especially if off-street parking is limited.
<b>Preserves Undeveloped Land:</b> Reduces the pressure to build on farmland or natural areas.	<b>Potential for Lower Housing Prices:</b> Some respondents feared increasing housing in existing areas would reduce housing prices.



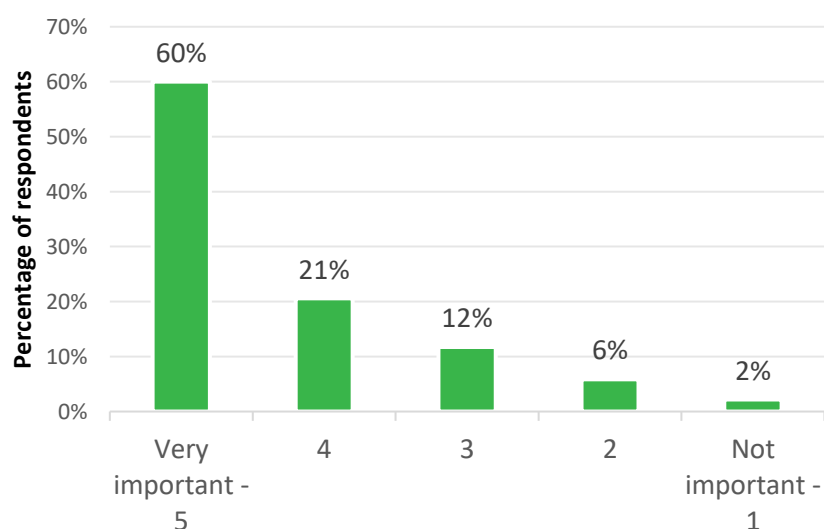
Image 3 Workshop map with post-it notes from participants

Undeveloped land	
Pros	Cons
<b>Opportunity for New Infrastructure:</b> Allows for the planning and implementation of modern infrastructure from the outset.	<b>Increased Infrastructure Costs:</b> Requires significant investment in new infrastructure (roads, utilities).
<b>Potential for Larger Blocks:</b> Can provide larger lot sizes, appealing to families and those desiring more space.	<b>Loss of Agricultural Land:</b> Converts productive farmland to residential use.
<b>Creation of New Communities:</b> Offers the chance to build new communities with a fresh identity.	<b>Potential for Isolation:</b> New developments may be isolated from existing communities and services.
<b>Can Boost Housing Supply:</b> Has the potential to increase the overall supply of housing, which some believe can improve affordability.	<b>Urban Sprawl:</b> Contributes to urban sprawl, increasing distances and reliance on cars.
<b>More Design Freedom:</b> Allows for more flexibility in home design and layout.	<b>Loss of Rural Character:</b> Erodes the rural or small-town feel of the area if it becomes a small-block housing estate.
<b>Opportunity to Incorporate Green Spaces:</b> With planning, can incorporate new parks and green spaces.	<b>Environmental Impact/Habitat Loss:</b> Destroys natural habitats and disrupts ecosystems.

### Type of Housing

Survey participants were asked about the importance of providing diverse housing options for residents at different ages and stages of life. 109 (81%) respondents thought it to be important (rated 4 – 21% or 5 – 60%).

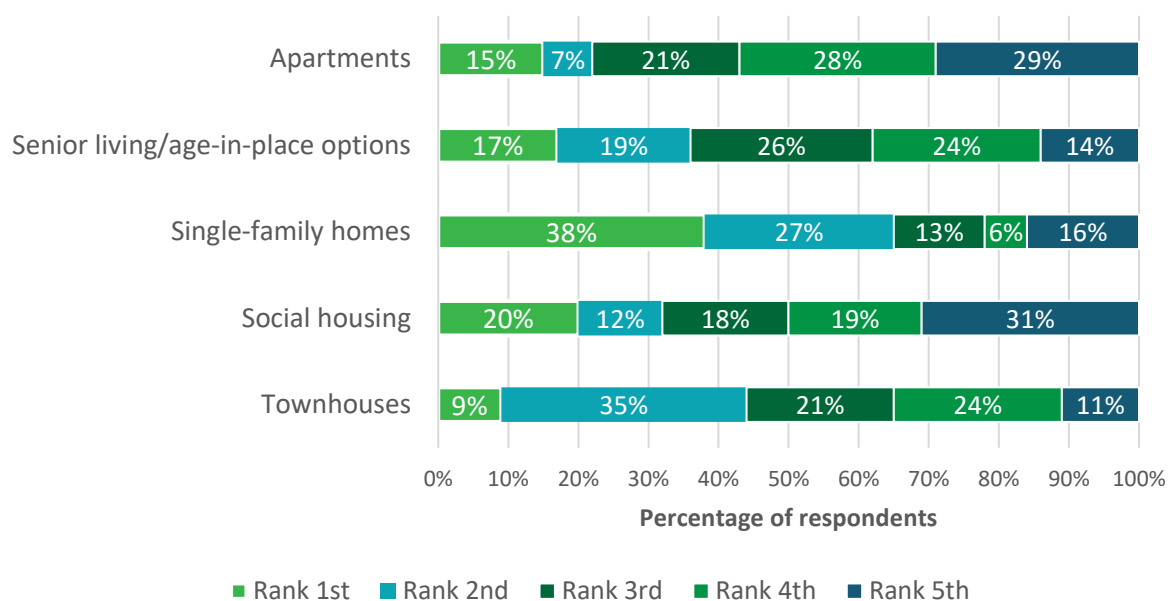
Figure 4 – Importance of providing diverse housing options (n=136)



Survey participants were also asked to put in order of preference the types of housing that should be prioritised. The results were in favour of family homes, with single-family homes ranked as the highest or second highest priority for 65% of respondents. Townhouses were not popular as the highest preference for many (9%) but were the most popular for respondents' second choice (35% chose townhouses as their second preference).

There was good support for social housing as a high priority (33% ranking it first or second) but it was also the lowest priority for 30% of respondents. Senior living was prioritised first or second by 36% of respondents.

**Figure 5 – Types of housing prioritised for future growth (n=136)**



Other types of housing that were suggested include:

- Tiny Homes
- Multi-Generational Housing, including granny flats
- Accommodation for key workers, especially medical/hospital workers
- Accessible/Disability-Friendly Housing
- Public Housing and programs to assist homeless
- Affordable Housing Initiatives, such as rent-to-buy
- Sustainable/Eco-Friendly Designed Homes
- Rent Controlled/Capped Rent Housing

Other feedback included concerns about losing big backyards, affordability of buying a home, housing for victims of domestic violence, the importance of a variety of rental options (particularly for key worker and student populations), low-income/entry level homes of good quality, support and affordability for older people to downsize, and that any construction should be of high quality and aesthetically pleasing.



## Economy and Tourism

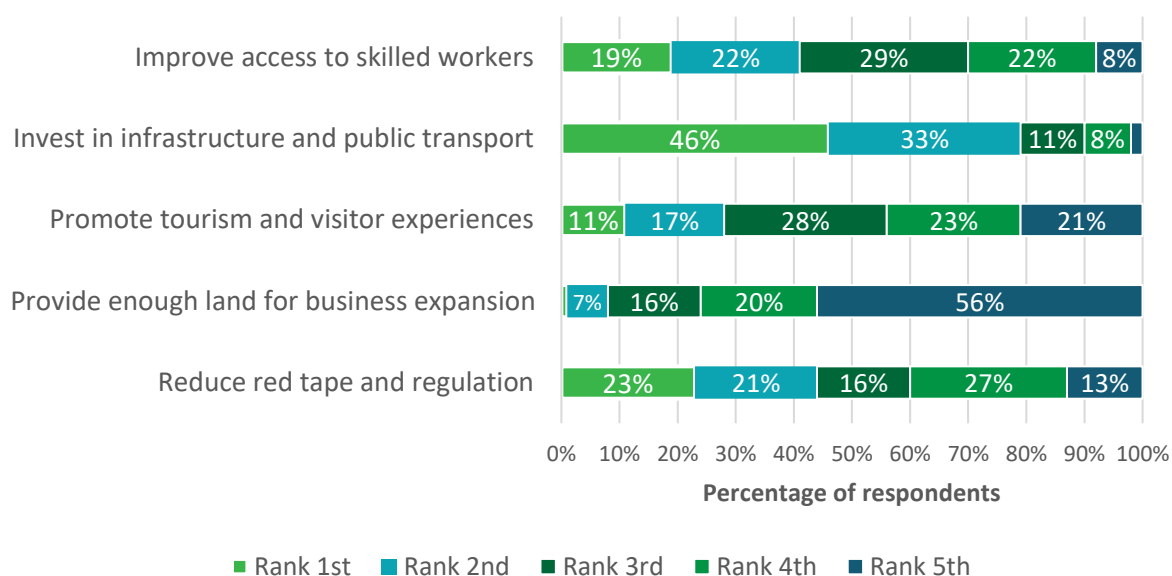
The State of Warrnambool Report has found that the Warrnambool economy is resilient, with low unemployment and diverse strengths. Both workshop participants and survey participants were asked for their ideas to support the economy and tourism. They identified the need for further growth in all business types to support the population growth, although many of their suggestions for support fall outside the purview of land use planning. Those ideas have been kept by council to help inform other work.

### Supporting business

Almost half of all survey respondents (46%) nominated investing in infrastructure and public transport as the top way to support business in Warrnambool, with a further 33% nominating it as the second-highest action to take. Reducing red tape and regulation (23%) and improving access to skilled workers (19%) were also high priorities.

Providing enough land for business expansion was the lowest ranked idea, with 56% of respondents selecting it last and a further 20% selecting it second-last.

Figure 6 – How Warrnambool can continue to support existing and key businesses (n=135)



Other ideas for supporting business, many outside the scope of this project, included:

- **Free or Discounted Parking:** Providing free or discounted parking for customers and workers in the CBD to attract shoppers and support businesses.
- **Attract Diverse Business:** Attracting small, independent businesses as well as well-known companies from different sectors.
- **Revitalise the CBD:** Improve the appearance, safety, and vibrancy of the central business district, including accessibility.
- **Reduce Council Rates/Fees/Rent:** This is the most popular theme, with many respondents suggesting that the council should lower rates, fees, or rents for businesses to help them thrive.
- **More Events and Activities:** Increase festivals, markets, and community events to draw crowds and boost spending, as well as tourist bus or similar.

- **Promote Warrnambool and Local Businesses:** Improving marketing efforts to attract tourists and locals to shop at local businesses.
- **Reduce Red Tape/Streamline Approvals:** Simplifying council processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles for businesses.
- **Grants and Financial Assistance:** Providing grants or financial assistance to help businesses with start-up costs, renovations, or marketing.

### New business

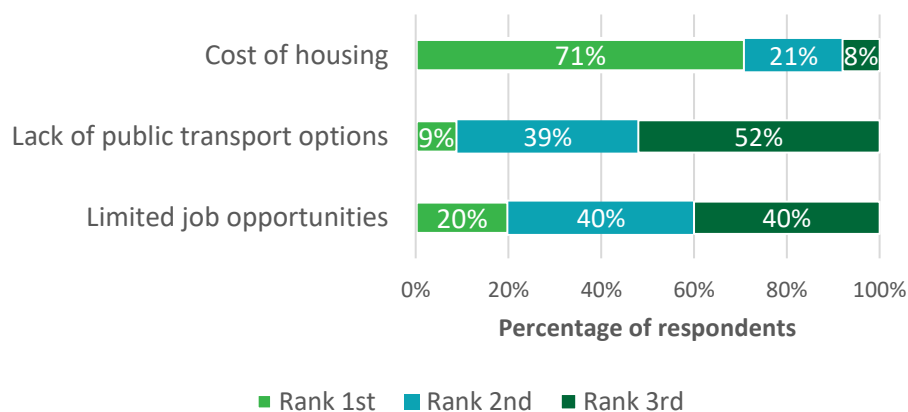
Ideas for new types of businesses from survey and workshop participants included:

- **Entertainment/Recreation Centres (especially for youth/families):** This includes suggestions like indoor play centres (Bounce, Latitude, etc.), laser tag, go-karting, and a larger, more modern cinema.
- **Clothing/Retail Variety:** Respondents desire a wider range of clothing stores, including larger chains like Big W and Target (with more variety), but also more unique, independent boutiques.
- **Restaurants/Eateries:** More diverse dining options were frequently mentioned, including specific cuisines (e.g., Mexican), more takeaway options, and more restaurants/cafes along the waterfront.
- **More Industry:** Ideas such as manufacturing, engineering, agribusinesses, tech-based and warehousing/logistics.
- **Medical Specialists:** More medical specialists to reduce the need to travel to Melbourne for care.
- **Sports/Recreation Facilities:** Such as basketball and a modern aquatic centre with slides, diving boards, and other water-based activities.
- **Arts/Culture Venues:** Several suggestions for more arts-related businesses, including art galleries, live music venues, and a small independent cinema.
- **Government Agencies/Community Support/Social Services**

### Employment

The survey asked participants for their ideas for attracting and retaining staff, and what the barriers might be. Of the 119 respondents who answered, over 70% nominated the cost of housing as the greatest barrier (both buying and renting), and a further 21% saw it as the second-highest barrier. Limited job opportunities and lack of public transport options were the other choices for this question, and there was a fairly even split as to which was second or third in priority.

Figure 7 - The biggest barriers to attracting and retaining workers (n=119)



Housing availability, available childcare, embracing the diversity of new workers (especially in medical fields) and options for social connection, cost of living and wages were also raised as significant issues.

## Tourism

When asked to rate the impact of tourism on Warrnambool, survey participants were very supportive, with 75% selecting a positive impact, and a further 18% selecting a neutral rating.

4.1★  
average rating

Benefits highlighted by participants included:



- Boost to the economy
- Atmosphere and vibe in summer months
- Allows visitors to consider a permanent move to the area (key workers)

Some of the challenges identified included:

- Traffic congestion
- Not having enough to attract tourists year round (wet weather)
- Sometimes feeling that tourists are catered to at the expense of locals
- Rise of Airbnb-type accommodation, removing potential long-term rentals from the market
- Rise in crime during summer period

When asked for ideas to better support tourism in Warrnambool, not all survey respondents thought that this was a good idea due to the impacts listed previously or because they were happy with the current tourism levels. Those that did have ideas suggested:

- **More Events/Festivals (especially in off-peak seasons):** Increasing the number and variety of events to attract tourists year-round.
- **Improve Foreshore/Beach Area:** Enhancing the main beach area with better facilities, cleanliness, and access.
- **Develop Flagstaff Hill:** Revitalising Flagstaff Hill as a more engaging and interactive tourist destination.
- **More Indoor Activities/Attractions:** Creating more indoor entertainment options to cater to tourists during inclement weather.
- **Improve/Maintain Existing Attractions:** Focus on maintaining and upgrading existing attractions like Lake Pertobe, Tower Hill, and the Botanic Gardens.
- **Increased Marketing/Promotion:** Better marketing and promotion of Warrnambool as a tourist destination, both regionally and nationally.
- **More/Better Accommodation Options:** Providing more diverse and affordable accommodation choices to cater to different budgets and preferences.
- **Transport:** Improving public transportation options specifically for tourists, such as shuttle buses or tourist-focused routes, more parking for buses and more parking generally, and improved train services to and from Warrnambool.
- **More/Improved Walking & Bike Paths:** Creating more connected and well-maintained walking and cycling trails.
- **Promote Natural Assets:** Focus on highlighting and protecting Warrnambool's natural beauty, such as the coast, rivers, and wildlife.

- **Support Local Businesses:** Encouraging tourists to support local businesses by promoting local products and experiences.
- **Disability Access:** In all public amenity and tourist hot spots.
- **Affordable Options:** Ensuring a wide variety of activities, as well as accommodation and eating options, to cater to tourists on all budgets.



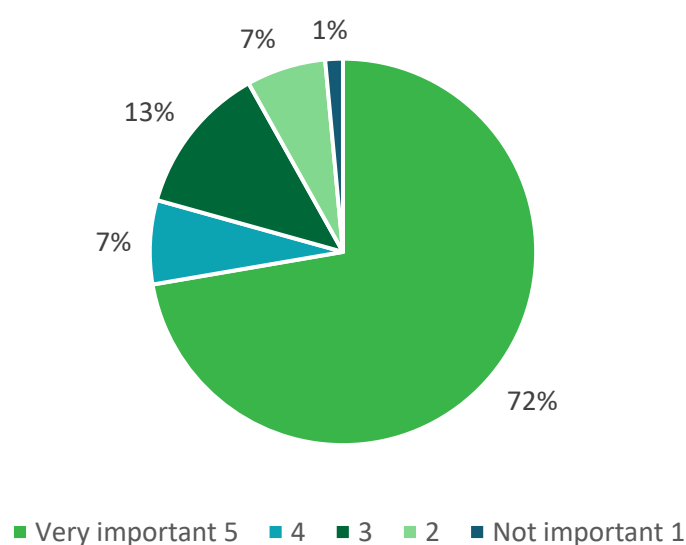
*Image 4 Participants making notes in the workshop*

## Natural Features and Hazards

From the State of Warrnambool Report: Warrnambool is favoured with natural features like coastlines, rivers and pristine agricultural land. Much of the municipality is constrained by risks like flooding, bushfire or coastal erosion. Not all areas are suitable for housing and intensification could exacerbate these risks as the effects of climate change become more pronounced.

Survey participants were asked about the importance of balancing growth with protecting natural landscapes. There was very strong support for finding that balance, with 72% selecting very important and a further 7% selecting important.

Figure 8 – Importance of balancing growth with protecting the natural landscape



## Features

Workshop participants and survey respondents were asked about their local knowledge of features and areas that will need to be considered during land use planning alongside the Victorian Government's updated flood mapping across the municipality. Council and their consultants have the detailed list of all comments for use, this report is a summarised list of the key features.

- **The Coastline/Beaches:** This is by far the most frequently mentioned feature. Responses highlighted the beauty, accessibility and recreational opportunities (swimming, surfing, walking) provided by the beaches. Some mention specific beaches like the main beach or those near certain landmarks.
- **Rivers (Hopkins & Merri):** Responses focused on the rivers' scenic value, wildlife (especially birds), walking tracks alongside them, and their importance for recreation (fishing, canoeing). The Hopkins River mouth was also singled out for its ever-changing landscape, the power of nature on display, and its importance for recreation and scenery.
- **Lake Pertobe:** Lake Pertobe and the surrounding parkland is viewed as a family-friendly space, a recreational area, and a beautiful environment.
- **Wildlife and Birdlife:** While often linked to specific locations like the rivers or Tower Hill, many responses simply mention the presence of diverse wildlife and birdlife as a special feature of the area.

- **Green Spaces and Parklands:** Many respondents simply mention the availability of green spaces and parklands as a valuable asset in Warrnambool, including the Botanic Gardens and dog-friendly locations.
- **Middle Island:** This is one of the landmarks that defines Warrnambool and is often frequented by tourists.
- **Lookouts and Views:** The panoramic views offered from locations like Cannon Hill and Granny's Grave were mentioned as a special feature. Logan's Beach for the scenic views and whale watching.
- **Rural Landscapes:** Some responses made reference to the enjoyment of the visual amenity of the countryside, seeing cows grazing and the feeling of space and openness.
- **Tower Hill:** This volcanic crater and wildlife reserve, located 18km from Warrnambool, was highlighted for its unique geological features, native wildlife, and walking trails.

## Risks

As with the identified features above, there is a detailed list of all survey and workshop comments to inform this project, held by council. Below is a summary of the common themes received from participants.

- **Flooding:** Many responses mention flooding as a concern, some without specifying a particular area. Others identified specific concerns about flooding along the Merri River, Dennington, the Riverland Estate, Allansford, mouth of Hopkins River.
- **Drainage:** As well as flooding concerns, drainage was mentioned as inadequate for new developments, often blocked and not maintained.
- **Erosion:** Coastal erosion identified by some as a natural process and not to be concerned about, others identified places such as Stingray Bay and Lady Bay that are badly eroded. Also riverbank erosion along the Merri due to flooding.
- **Bushfire Risk:** Concern about bushfire risk, often linked to dry grass and overgrown vegetation.
- **Effects of Development:** "A lot of the environmental risks are worse due to bad planning and run off from new estates. Need to plan not just for the houses but for the flow-on effect."

Survey participants also mentioned concerns that flood mapping was causing undue worry in the community, coastal vegetation blocking views and pathways, and that these risks have always existed and are part and parcel of living in Warrnambool. A long-term challenge discussed by workshop participants is that of water supply/water scarcity for the region, and the impact of further growth and demand for water.

## Transport and Infrastructure

Warrnambool's transport network, active transport options, and community infrastructure are all key elements to consider as part of a land use strategy. Survey participants and workshop attendees were asked about the ways in which they travel now, their observations of infrastructure elements that need improving now or in the future, and the types of transport infrastructure to be prioritised.

### Transport

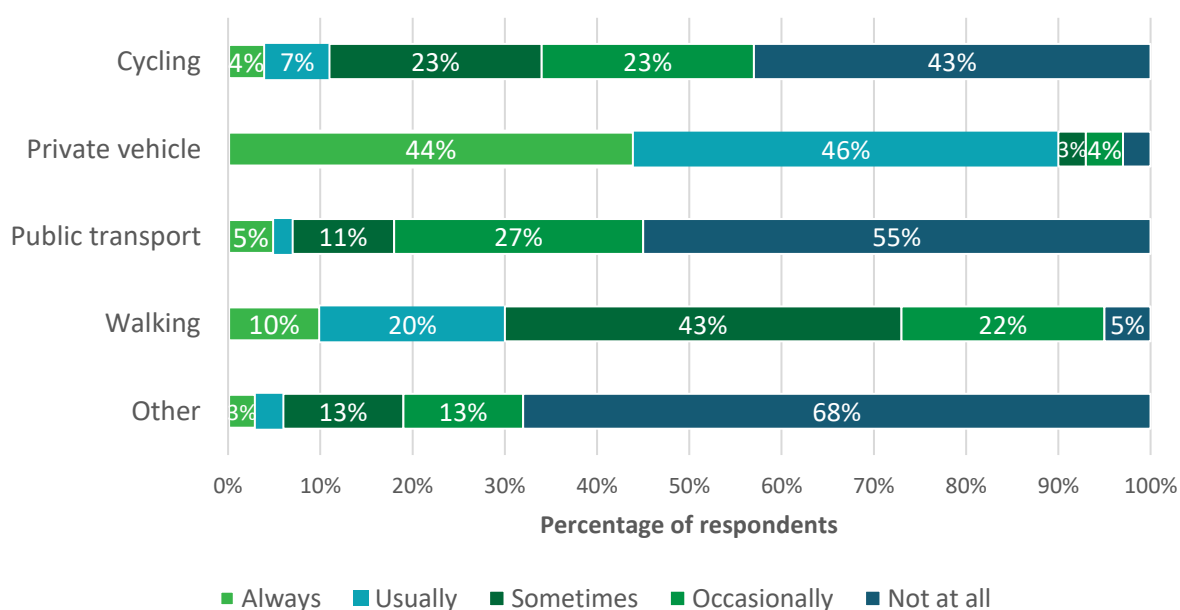
Private vehicle use is the dominant form of transport for survey participants, with 44% nominating it as their "always used" mode of transport and another 46% nominating "usually".

Walking and cycling are most likely to be used sometimes, public transport not at all by most (55%), or only occasionally. Participants in the survey and at workshops raised a number of issues with public transport, including:

- Lack of connectivity
- Limited reach of the routes available
- Need for more wheelchair accessible buses
- Infrequency especially on weekends
- Early finishing time of services that do not run into the evening

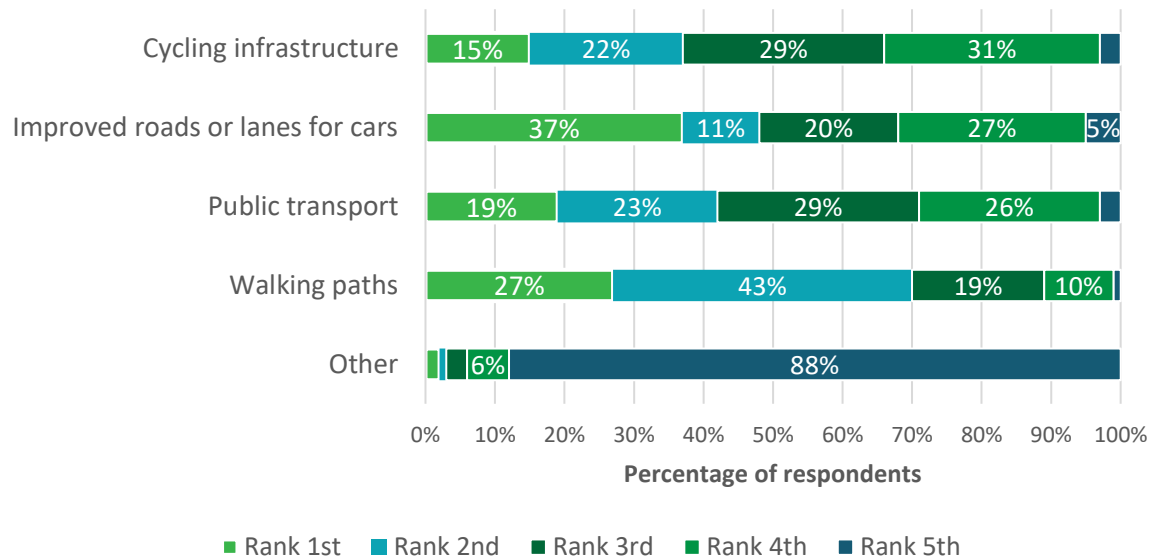
Survey participants also mentioned using carpooling, electric bicycles and scooters, the train (to and from Warrnambool) and mobility scooters to get around.

Figure 9 How survey participants get around in Warrnambool (n=140)



In considering the kinds of transportation infrastructure to be prioritised in the future, survey responses were fairly evenly divided across the options, with roads the highest priority for 37% of respondents. Walking paths were a clear priority when combining first and second preferences (70%).

**Figure 10 Ranking transport infrastructure priorities for future investment (n=133)**



In workshops, the need for cycling infrastructure and connectivity was raised a number of times, particularly by younger participants.

Other transportation-related issues raised at the workshops and in the surveys included a need for a truck/freight bypass road, traffic management (such as traffic lights or roundabouts) in busy areas such as Jamison street and Mortlake road, an upgrade to Sherwood Park station, and better frequency and timetabling of the V/Line train service for access to Geelong and Melbourne.

### Community Infrastructure

Workshop participants and survey respondents were also asked to identify other infrastructure that they thought Warrnambool would need in the future, and some that was already lacking.

- **Green Space/Parks:** This was the most popular theme. More parks, larger parks, more well-maintained green spaces. This also included improved public amenities in parks such as better toilets, shelters, seating, and BBQ facilities, more playgrounds and playgrounds undercover so they could be used year round, and better designated dog areas that are off leash.
- **Better Sports Facilities:** This encompasses a range of suggestions, from upgrading existing facilities (like the basketball stadium and pool) to adding new ones (soccer fields, etc.).
- **Community Hubs/Meeting Spaces:** A need for more community centres or hubs where people can gather, socialise, and participate in activities.
- **Indoor Recreation/Entertainment Facilities:** More options for indoor activities, especially for families and youth, such as play centres, skating rink.
- **Cultural and Art Spaces:** For exhibitions and classes, and outdoor public art.
- **Upgrades for the Foreshore:** car parking, picnic tables with a view of the water, toilets and other amenities.



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## Written Submissions

Written submissions were not part of the phase one engagement for the Warrnambool Futures project, although Council did receive four submissions from community members who wished to support the project and elaborate on issues relevant to them. These submissions will be considered alongside all other community engagement, and may also be used in later stages of the project where relevant.

One submission was a detailed view of a possible future vision for Warrnambool. It outlined four key areas of focus:

- Rewilding parklands and watercourses
- Reinvigorating the CBD, including growth in housing
- Satellite activity centres for other towns in the Warrnambool municipality
- Connecting trails in and around Warrnambool

Two submissions advocated for changes in planning zoning for land in several locations, to allow for:

- More housing to be built and rental properties becoming available if more housing built
- No loss of farming or environmentally sensitive land to housing needs
- Possible upgrading water and sewer services
- Possible better transport outcomes through traffic reduction and active transport uptake

One submission regarding infrastructure and transport:

- A new, larger hospital with plenty of parking
- Transport access (roads) to the city (Warrnambool) from the north, supporting the current new developments

## Appendix 1

### Warrnambool Futures Survey

The City of Warrnambool is undertaking a comprehensive review of its land use strategy to plan for sustainable and balanced growth over the coming decades. By 2046, Warrnambool is expected to grow by 2,700 homes. We want to ensure that new housing, businesses, transport, and community spaces reflect the needs and values of our community.

This survey is designed to gather your insights on key land use issues, including housing, economic growth, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. Your input is crucial in shaping Warrnambool's future.

### Demographics

**We ask these questions to check that we have heard from a variety of people of different ages and locations.**

1. What is your age?
  - ☐ Under 18
  - ☐ 18-30
  - ☐ 31-45
  - ☐ 46-65
  - ☐ 65+
2. Where do you live in Warrnambool?
  - ☐ Allansford
  - ☐ Bushfield
  - ☐ Dennington
  - ☐ Illowa
  - ☐ Warrnambool
  - ☐ Woodford
  - ☐ Yangery
  - ☐ Outside Warrnambool or other (please specify)

### People and Housing

**By 2046, Warrnambool is expected to grow by 2,700 homes.**

4. Where should new houses be built in Warrnambool? (Select order of preference)
  - ☐ Within existing residential areas

- Near commercial and business centres
  - In rural or agricultural areas
  - Other (please specify)
5. What do you see as the pros and cons of building on undeveloped land? (Open-ended)
  6. What do you see as the pros and cons of increasing housing in existing areas? (Open-ended)
  7. How important is it to have more diverse housing options for different ages and stages of life? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not important and 5 = Very important).
  8. What types of housing should be prioritised for future growth? (Select order of preference)
    - Single-family homes
    - Townhouses
    - Apartments
    - Social housing
    - Senior living/age-in-place options
    - Other (please specify)
  9. Is there anything else we should know about increasing housing in Warrnambool? (open ended)

## **Economy and Tourism**

9. How can Warrnambool (including Council and community) support existing and key businesses? (Select order of preference)
  - Improve access to skilled workers
  - Invest in infrastructure and public transport
  - Promote tourism and visitor experiences
  - Reduce red tape and regulation
  - Provide enough land for business expansion
  - Other (please specify)
10. What potential new industries (if any) could we attract to Warrnambool? Why would they be a good idea? (Open-ended)
11. What are the biggest barriers to attracting and retaining workers? (Select order of preference)
  - Cost of housing
  - Limited job opportunities
  - Lack of public transport options

- Other (please specify)

12. How would you rate the impact of tourism on Warrnambool?

- Largely positive.
- Somewhat positive,
- neither positive or negative,
- somewhat negative,
- largely negative.

13. Why did you choose that answer? (open ended)

14. What could be done to better support tourism in Warrnambool?

### **Natural Features and Hazards**

Warrnambool is blessed with natural features like coastlines, rivers, and pristine agricultural land. Much of the LGA is constrained by risks like flooding, bushfire or coastal erosion. Not all areas are suitable for more housing, and intensification could exacerbate these risks as the effects of climate change become more pronounced. State government has been producing updated flood maps across the LGA.

17. What natural features (such as coastlines, waterways and other features) in your area are unique and special, and why? (Open-ended)

18. What have you noticed about environmental risks such as flooding, bushfire, or coastal erosion in your area? Which area is this? (Open-ended)

19. How important is it to balance growth with protecting natural landscapes? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not important and 5 = Very important)

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

22. How do you and your family get around Warrnambool? (for each type, choose from always, usually, sometimes, occasionally, not at all)

- Walking
- Cycling
- Public transport (bus, taxi, rideshare)
- Private vehicle
- Other (please specify)

23. What transportation infrastructure should be prioritised for future investment? (Select order of preference)

- Walking paths
- Cycling infrastructure
- Public transport (buses, shuttles, etc.)
- Improved roads or lanes for cars
- Other (please specify)

25. What other types of infrastructure (systems or facilities - such as community buildings, green space) does Warrnambool need now or in the future? Where? (Open-ended)

### **Final Thoughts**

26. What do you love most about Warrnambool now? (open ended)
27. What is one thing Warrnambool should prioritise to ensure it remains a great place to live? (Open-ended)

## Appendix 2

Warrnambool Futures Community Workshop			
<b>When</b>	Thurs 27 March, 1pm – 3pm & 5.30pm – 7.30pm	<b>Where</b>	Reception Room, Civic Centre Warrnambool City Council
<b>Purpose:</b> Gain insight from community members on their vision for the future of Warrnambool, from a land-use perspective			
<b>Objective/s:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish <b>understanding of the WF project</b> - purpose and need, inputs, level of influence of the work</li> <li>2. <b>Gather ideas</b> for their vision of Warrnambool (the vibe)</li> <li>3. <b>Gather views</b> on appropriate land uses across Warrnambool LGA</li> <li>4. <b>Encourage information sharing</b> on natural features and hazards, infrastructure needs and other relevant community knowledge</li> </ol>			

### Agenda

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Connections and Introductions

Vision

1. How would you describe Warrnambool now?
2. How would you like it to be described in 20 years time?

Presentation – Project background, aims, opportunities

Q&A

Community input and knowledge collection – using maps

1. *Thinking of the long term, how should we decide where the different land uses go?*
2. *In light of the increase in population, what additional infrastructure might we also need to plan for and where?*
3. *What natural features and hazards do we need to know about?*
4. *Anything else we need to know?*

Final Reflections

Next steps for the project

Thanks