

Draft Community Local Law

Phase 2 Engagement Summary: 29 June – 13 August 2023

Introduction

The current Local Law (General Municipal Law 2014) is due to expire in 2024 and needs to be renewed and updated to incorporate changes in legislation and to reflect current and future issues within the municipality.

As required under the *Local Government Act*, the Local Law is comprehensively reviewed every ten years and accordingly, this is an important opportunity for the community to participate in consultation and raise any concerns for consideration as well as consider current and future issues.

Local Laws are designed to secure community safety, protect public assets and enhance neighbourhood amenity. The objectives of the proposed new Community Local Law will provide for:

1. Protection of community safety and neighbourhood amenity
2. Protection of public assets, infrastructure, and the built and natural environment
3. Enhanced use, access, and enjoyment of public places for the community's benefit
4. The administration of Council's powers and functions
5. The revocation of Council's General Municipal Law 2014.

How we engaged you

The *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government Act 2020* require Council to consult with the community when it proposes to exercise certain prescribed powers, including the review and adoption of a Local Law.

In accordance with the Local Government Act, Council developed an engagement approach guided by our *A voice for all Community Engagement Policy*. The engagement plan considered the project's complexity (language, options, level of understanding, change, impact, and potential reputational risks) and the tools and techniques employed were informed by project content, stakeholders and the type of feedback sought.

Community engagement to inform the development of the Community Local Law 2024 was undertaken in two phases as seen in the project timeline below.



Phase 1 Community Engagement – new ideas

From 20 January to 20 March 2023, Council undertook an eight-week community engagement process to capture community and stakeholder organisation feedback on nine key ideas as well as the existing Local Law. A total of 1,707 people participated in the community engagement through an online survey, detailed emails, and community-based pop-ups. The nine key ideas presented for feedback were:

1. Broadening reference to ‘smoking’ to include vapes and e-cigarettes (92% of community supportive of the proposal)
2. Allowing the recreational use of firepits (86% of community supportive of recreational use)
3. Enhancing existing nature strip clauses to enable strengthened enforcement of unmaintained nature strips (85% level of community support)
4. Preventing long-term parking of trailers, caravans, and boats on Council land by setting a time limit (73% of community supportive of introducing a time limit)
5. Preventing the dumping of hard rubbish outside of booked collections by making it illegal (91% of community supportive of making dumping rubbish illegal)
6. Managing derelict and dilapidated buildings by extending the current law to include both buildings and land (95% of community supportive of extending the current law)
7. Strengthening the current local law to enforce collection of dumped or abandoned shopping trolleys (96% of community supportive of strengthening enforcement)
8. Strengthening dog attack laws to include attacks through, over or under a fence or gate (94% of community supportive of proposed new dog attack laws)
9. Managing the impact of dogs on sporting grounds by no longer allowing dogs on the ovals/pitches (89% of community supportive of new law preventing dogs from being on sporting grounds).

Most participants supported or strongly supported the nine ideas presented. Feedback from Phase 1 community engagement, legal advice and local government benchmarking was used to draft a proposed Local Law.

The proposed Local Law was also reformatted to remove any complicated language and legal jargon and presented in a simple, easy to understand and accessible format.

Phase 2 Community Engagement –*draft Community Local Law 2024*

For the second phase of engagement on the draft Community Local Law 2024, the level of community influence was assigned at the ‘Consult’ level on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. Council designed a two-way communication process that aimed to obtain feedback on the draft Local Law to inform its decision-making. At this level on the spectrum, Council commits to keeping the community informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. Community feedback from phase 1 engagement was used to inform the development of the *draft Community Local Law 2024*, which

was the subject of phase 2 consultation. The phase 1 engagement summary, is available on the project Engage page – engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/LocalLawReview.

Between 29 June and 13 August 2023, Council undertook a five-week community engagement process to gather community and stakeholder feedback on the draft Community Local Law 2024. The community engagement was open to all those that live, work, study, play, visit or run a business within the City of Whittlesea.

Community feedback was sought online through Council’s Engage Whittlesea platform, through emails to community networks and key stakeholders including First Nations service providers as well as through face-to-face engagement activities that included community-based pop-ups, roadshows, and targeted meetings with registered Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community groups. The CALD community groups engaged during his phase were Punjabi Men’s Group, Citi North-West African Community Group, Somali Men’s Swim Group, and participants of the English conversation class at Mill Park Library.

During the consultation, Council shared the key recommendations of the draft and asked the community whether they supported the draft Community Local Law 2024. Feedback was captured through a survey on the project Engage page that enabled participants to indicate their support of the draft using a rating scale from ‘I like it a lot’ to ‘I don’t like it at all’ with five possible options.

Participants were also asked whether they thought the draft met the needs and values of the community with the choice of ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘partially’ or ‘not sure’ response options. There was opportunity for participants to provide comments to identify why they didn’t support the draft, whether the draft didn’t meet the needs and values of community as well as if we had missed anything in the draft.

The Engage Whittlesea platform utilises an in-built translation tool to ensure that the information provided can be translated into the audience’s preferred language.

The draft *Community Local Law 2024* and a detailed FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section was also included on the project Engage page to provide the community with all relevant project background.

Council hosted five Community Local Law and Safer Communities Roadshow events at which the opportunity to participate in the community consultation was encouraged. The details of the roadshow events are:

Community Local Law and Safer Communities Roadshow		
Location	Precinct	Date/Time

Brookwood Community Centre	Doreen	6 July 2023 6 – 8pm
Galada Community Centre	Epping	9 July 2023 1 – 3pm
The Great Hall, Civic Centre	South Morang	12 July 2023 11am – 1pm
Whittlesea Community Activity Centre	Whittlesea	13 July 2023 6 – 8pm
Barry Road Community Activity Centre	Thomastown	16 July 2023 10am – 12pm

The project team hosted 14 community-based pop-ups in high-foot traffic locations across the municipality. The detail of the community-based pop-ups are:

Community-based pop ups		
Location	Precinct	Date/Time
Olivine Park and Café	Donnybrook	19 July 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
Mernda Junction Shopping Centre	Mernda	20 July 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
Westfield Plenty Valley	South Morang	20 July 2023 3.30pm – 5.30pm 25 July 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
Kirrip Community Centre	Wollert	25 July 2023 1.30 – 4pm
Church Street Shopping Precinct	Whittlesea	26 July 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
Mill Park Village, the Lakes Boulevard	South Morang	26 July 2023 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Aurora Shopping Centre	Epping North	27 July 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
Lalor Library	Lalor	1 August 2023 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Hazel Glen Shopping Centre	Doreen	1 August 2023 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Thomastown Recreational Aquatic Centre	Thomastown	2 August 2023

		9.30am– 11.30am
Bundoora Square Shopping Centre	Bundoora	4 August 2023 9.30am – 11.30am
The Stables Shopping Centre	Mill Park	4 August 2023 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Mill Park Leisure Centre	Mill Park	5 August 2023 5.30pm – 6.30pm

The project team, supported by bilingual aides also held four targeted pop-ups at key CALD community group meetings. These groups were identified as the ones with the lowest level of proficiency in English and the least likely to be able to access the digital consultation or spoke a language the page wasn't translated into. The details of these pop-ups are:

CALD Community Groups		
Location	Precinct	Date/Time
Punjabi Men's Group	Wollert	27 July 2023 11.30am - 12.30pm
Citi North-West African Community Group	Mernda	30 July 2023 12pm-1pm
English conversation class at Mill Park Library	Mill Park	31 July 2023 9.30am - 11.30am
Somali Men's Swim Group	Thomastown	5 August 2023 5.30pm- 6.30pm



Above: The Safer Communities and Community Local Law Roadshow at the Brookwood Community Centre in Doreen.



Above (L – R): The project team engaging with the community at Westfield Plenty Valley and Mernda Junction Shopping Centre.

Participants at each roadshow, community-based pop-up and meeting with registered CALD community groups were presented with the opportunity to view and read through the draft *Community Local Law 2024* and offered the opportunity to provide in-person feedback on large activity boards.



Let's talk 

Draft Community Local Law 2024

Fire safety, animals, property, vehicles and public behaviour are just some of the themes addressed in the new draft Community Local Law 2024 which has been released for community consultation. The new Law has been informed through community feedback.

The Law addresses issues which have emerged in recent years including the use of recreational fires, nature strip maintenance, managing long-term parking of trailers/caravans/boats on Council land, dumping of rubbish, managing derelict and dilapidated buildings, dumped/abandoned shopping trolleys, managing dogs on sports fields and strengthening dog attack laws.

Key community feedback included in the draft Community Local Law 2024 include:

- Formatting and language** we have removed complicated language and legal jargon and are presenting it in a simple, easy to understand and accessible format.
- Property** stronger regulations to address issues like dumped rubbish will ensure the safety, attractiveness and maintenance of the municipality.
- Fire safety** new and revised provisions have been added to set the requirements for fire prevention and other activities that may affect the environment.
- Animals** better regulations provide for the responsible care, ownership and management of animals with enhanced dog controls.
- Vehicles and roads** provisions have been added that aim to enhance the appearance of streets and public places with rules about long-term parking and vehicle storage.
- Building management** stronger controls for activities around buildings also address dangers, noise, waste and other disturbances caused by building works.
- Public behaviour** stronger controls for how we interact with one another in public spaces and on Council land.

Let's talk **CITY OF WHITTLESEA Draft Community Local Law 2024**

1. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE DRAFT COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW?

I LIKE THEM A LOT	I LIKE THEM	I CAN LIVE WITH THEM	I DON'T LIKE THEM	I DON'T LIKE THEM AT ALL

2. DO YOU THINK THE DRAFT COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW REFLECTS THE NEEDS AND VALUES OF OUR COMMUNITY?

YES	NO	PARTIALLY	NOT SURE

3. IS THERE ANYTHING WE HAVE MISSED IN THE DRAFT COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW?

Above: Information board and dot board activity used at the in-person engagement opportunities.

Feedback was also received through submissions made via email. These submissions directly responded to localised issues, enforcement, or out-of-scope issues and have not been captured as part of the community engagement.

The community engagement was promoted utilising a wide range of tactics including:

- Postcards distributed at community-based pop-ups
- Notification to members of the Engage Whittlesea platform
- Social media – we share posts across Council's channels and utilised targeted boosted posts to increase visibility and performance of the post across key demographics
- Information/Educational video housed on the project Engage page explaining key changes proposed in the draft Community Local Law 2024
- Signage throughout Council buildings and facilities
- News stories on Council's website
- Articles and advertisements in Council's quarterly print publication Local Scoop and Rural News magazine

- Email to key stakeholder groups including the Business Advisory Panel, Youth Advisory Committee, Sporting Clubs, and key stakeholder groups
- Email to First Nations service providers contacted during Phase 1 community engagement.

Participation

A total of 403 contributions were made online or in-person throughout the community engagement period.

A snapshot of consultation activities and community participation is below, and a breakdown of project key stakeholders is included in Appendix 1.



530 people attended 23 community-based pop-ups and roadshows



1012 visitors to the project Engage page



349 in-person contributions



54 digital contributions

Participant demographic highlights



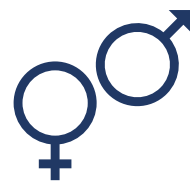
1 Early Learning Centre
2 Aboriginal Child and Family Services
1 First Nations Medical Service
1 Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Service



29% registered CALD community group members



23% aged over 65
25% aged 36-45
9% aged under 16



50% Female
50% Male

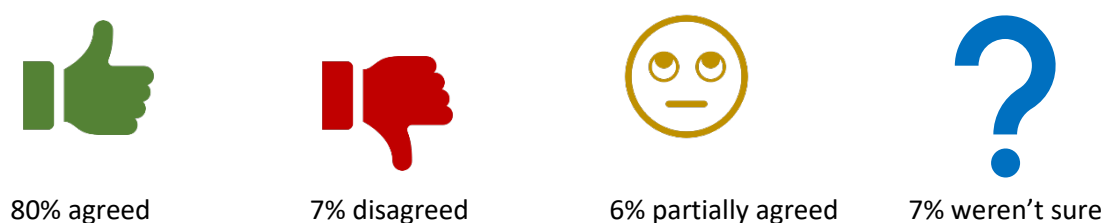
What we heard

A total of people 403 provided feedback on the *draft Community Local Law 2024*, 349 were captured at in-person activities and 54 were received through the projects Engage page.

When asked what they think about the draft Community Local Law, majority of participants liked it or liked it a lot (80% combined).



Participants were also asked if the draft Community Local Law meet the needs and values of the community. Majority of participants agreed that it does (80%)



Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of the feedback captured at each of the community-based engagement activities and events.

Participants that provided feedback through the digital consultation were also presented with three additional questions they could respond to; however, these questions were not compulsory. The additional questions asked were:

- What don't you like about the draft Community Local Law?
- Why don't you think the draft Community Local Law reflects the needs and values of the community?
- Is there anything we have missed in the draft Community Local Law?

What don't you like about the Draft Community Local Law?

Of the 54 participants that provided feedback through the digital consultation, 22 opted to provide additional comments on what they didn't like about the draft Community Local Law.

- Eight participants provided feedback on section 9.8a, related to flying drones at parks. They indicated that this clause is not necessary as it is adequately covered by CASA regulations. *"9.8a seems to include drones, which are already adequately covered by CASA regulations. Why should there be a further requirement to seek a permit as well?" Community member.*
- Three people provided feedback that recreational firepits in back yards shouldn't be allowed due to the pollution they cause. *"Fire pits should not be allowed. They have a huge impact on the quality of air for residents - brain development delays in children, asthma, lung disease and Alzheimer's. Those who*

choose not to burn are forced to breathe in dangerous particulate matter. The council should be focused on helping residents convert to efficient electric heating appliances.” Community member.

- Three people commented about dogs not being allowed on sporting grounds, one of which agreed that this was a good idea. The other two participants disagreed with the proposed law commenting that dog should be allowed on sporting grounds.
- Other comments provided centred around general dissatisfaction with any type of law.

Why don't you think the Draft Community Local Law reflects the needs and values of community?

Twenty-one participants responded to this question by providing context to why they didn't think the draft Community Local Law reflects the needs and values of community.

- Five participants felt section 9.8a related to flying drones at parks is not necessary.
- Three participants felt that there had not been enough community consultation in the development of the draft Community Local Law.
- Seven participants indicated that the draft laws are unfair and/or unnecessary
- Two participants commented that they disagree with allowing the recreational use of fire pits.
- Other comments captured included the need for more information, for laws to be regularly reviewed and for them to be enforced. One participant also suggested that consideration should be given to the elderly and people with disability in regard to nature strip maintenance.

Is there anything we have missed in the Draft Community Local Law?

Twenty-six participants provided additional comment about things we may have missed in the draft Community Local Law.

- Six comments related to Environmental considerations
- Four comments identified areas Council should take more responsibility in (i.e.: road maintenance, grass maintenance and rubbish removal).
- Four comments related to Council's enforcement of the Local Law.
“Hope it gets implemented strictly, consistently and with proper supervision.” Community member.
- Two comments were from participants who commented that they are happy with the draft Community Local Law.
“Love the fire pits use !!!!! Perfect for family fun, connection and breaking screen time for children in winter. Would love more community gardens potentially at the redeveloped Yan yeon reservoir - local farms market for Doreen. Assisting with locally sourced foods, nutritious food and improving social connections. Also, I want to work with your team :) pretty please love this progressive thinking” Community member.
- Other comments related to the Community Local Law having more clarity on specific laws (i.e.: chicken coups and loud car noise).
“Chicken poultry ownership is not clear..what distance is the coop allowed to be from boundaries. Also EPA loud hoon cars and engine noise of cars..is there local laws on these.” Community member.

Next steps

Amendments to the draft Community Local Law 2024 will be considered in response to submissions and feedback captured through the second stage of consultation.

A revised proposed draft Community Local Law 2024 will be presented for consideration at the Council meeting on 21 November 2023.

Once endorsed the new Community Local Law 2024 will be shared with the community through digital communications, direct contact with stakeholders, and updates on the project Engage page. The project team will then develop a transition plan that aims to raise awareness of the new Community Local Law 2024 across the municipality.

Appendix 1

This overview is a generalised understanding of sections of the community that have a connection to the project or matter. This information was used to understand the types of tools and techniques required to achieve the strongest and most effective outcomes for engagement and communication. Due to the wide-ranging impacts, individual groups have not been named but listed in categories below:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups
- Animal owners
- Arborists
- Associations and trader groups
- Stage 1 (January – March 2023) community engagement participants
- Builders and developers
- Businesses
- Commercial businesses/ property owners
- Environmental groups/conservation societies
- Event permit holders
- Gardeners
- General community
- Homeowners/property owners (urban and rural)
- Hospitality premises
- Owners and operators of boats, caravans, trailers, trucks and vehicles
- Residents
- Smokers
- Sporting clubs and community associations
- Tenants of Council buildings
- Users of solid fuel outdoor appliances
- Victoria Police
- Victorian Building Authority.

Appendix 2

Below is the breakdown of feedback captured through each in-person opportunity and online.

Question: What do you think of the Draft Community Local Law?

Location	I like them a lot	I like them	I can live with them	I don't like them	I don't like them at all	Total
Online	11	12	9	14	8	54
Road Shows	36	24	1	0	0	61
Olivine Shared Cup Café Donnybrook	8	11	3	0	0	22
Mernda Junction Coles	7	9	4	0	1	21
Westfield Plenty Valley	6	17	2	0	0	25
Westfield Plenty Valley	3	13	3	3	0	22
Kirrip Community Centre	15	9	5	0	0	29
Church St IGA	3	8	6	1	0	18
Mill Park Village the Lakes Boulevard Coles	5	10	1	0	0	16
Aurora Village Galada Shops	2	11	2	0	0	15
Galada Punjabi Men's Group	3	3	1	1	0	8
Citnorth – West African Cultural Group	31	0	0	0	0	31
Mill Park Library	5	6	3	0	0	14
Laurimar Shops	0	2	4	0	0	6
Lalor Library	2	2	2	0	0	6
TRAC	6	12	0	0	0	18
Bundoora Square	4	10	2	0	0	16
Stables Mill Park	0	7	0	0	0	7
Mill Park Leisure Somalian Swim Group	5	6	3	0	0	14
Total	152	172	51	19	9	403

Question: Do you think the Draft Community Local Law reflects the needs and values of the community?

Location	Yes	No	Partially	Not sure	Total
Online	25	10	11	8	54
Road Shows	56	0	3	2	61
Olivine Shared Cup Café Donnybrook	19	0	0	3	22
Mernda Junction Coles	19	0	0	2	21
Westfield Plenty Valley	22	0	3	0	25
Westfield Plenty Valley	19	0	0	3	22
Kirrip Community Centre	29	0	0	0	29
Church St IGA	13	3	1	1	18
Mill Park Village the Lakes Boulevard Coles	11	2	1	2	16

Aurora Village Galada Shops	2	11	2	0	15
Galada Punjabi Men's Group	3	3	1	1	8
Citinorth – West African Cultural Group	31	0	0	0	31
Mill Park Library	14	0	0	0	14
Laurimar Shops	5	0	1	0	6
Lalor Library	6	0	0	0	6
TRAC (Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre)	18	0	0	0	18
Bundoora Square	13	0	0	3	16
Stables Mill Park	6	0	0	1	7
Mill Park Leisure Somalian Swim Group	11	0	2	1	14
Total	322	29	25	27	403