



Hope Street Engagement Report



Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Overview.....	6
Previous Engagement.....	7
Results.....	8
Overview.....	8
Key themes	8
What we asked	12
What best describes you?	12
How do you most often travel on Hope Street	12
Do you think our concept designs will improve Hope Street?	13
How do you feel about our concept design for Hope Street?	13
Do you have any comments about our concept design	14
Is there anything else you'd like to add?.....	15
Who we heard from	16
How this feedback will shape the next design stage	17
Conclusion	17
Appendix.....	19

Acknowledgement of Country

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Executive summary

Consultation Process

Between 19 November and 15 December, Merri-bek City Council asked the community to provide their feedback about the Hope Street improvements concept designs.

We invited people to:

1. Review the concept designs
2. Share feedback on the concept designs

□

Platforms Used

- Online survey
- In person pop-up sessions

Consultation Process



271
Total surveys
Completed



12
Written
submissions



1
Pop-up sessions



60+
People interacted
with



20
Phone calls

What you told us

Community feedback highlighted the importance of Hope Street as both a movement corridor and a local destination. Key insights from the engagement include:

- **Safety:** Strong support for improved safety, especially for children, families, pedestrians, cyclists, and people with mobility challenges
- **Traffic and Speed:** Broad agreement on lowering vehicle speeds, introducing traffic calming, and creating safer crossings
- **Active Transport:** Enthusiasm for a continuous 'creek-to-creek' walking and bike riding corridor to support everyday travel
- **Streetscape and Amenity:** High levels of support for street greening, shade, and improved local amenity
- **Traffic Management Concerns:** Mixed support for reducing rat-running and mixed views on potential road closures, with concerns about access and traffic displacement
- **Design Expectations:** A desire for changes to be carefully designed, evidence-based, clearly communicated, and monitored over time

Overall, respondents largely support the concept design, especially improvements for safety, active transport, and greening, but highlighted the need to carefully manage traffic impacts and neighbourhood access.

Introduction

Community engagement for the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements was undertaken between 19 November and 15 December 2025, inviting feedback through an online survey on the Conversations Merri-bek website. During this period, community members were asked to review the draft concept design and share their views.

We're working to make Hope Street an easier, safer and more enjoyable street to navigate and use for residents, as well as all the people who travel through the area to get wherever they need to go, from creek to creek.

The proposed concept design aims to improve safety and amenity, reduce vehicle volumes and rat-running, and create a better-functioning streetscape that supports living, visiting and travelling through Hope Street.

This engagement represents the final opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the concept design before it is refined into a final detailed plan. Feedback received through this process will directly shape and influence changes made to the final design, ensuring it responds to local priorities, experiences and concerns.

Overview

This engagement report summarises community consultation undertaken for the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements Concept Design. The purpose of this engagement was to test key elements of the draft concept design and gather community feedback to inform further refinement before the project progresses to detailed design and required statutory processes.

The engagement specifically sought feedback on:

- Proposed traffic management and street layout changes, including measures intended to manage through-traffic, discourage rat-running, and improve how Hope Street functions as a local street
- Safety and accessibility improvements for people walking, riding, driving and accessing local destinations, with a particular focus on children, families and people with mobility needs
- Pedestrian and bike riding connections, including crossings, intersections and the creek-to-creek movement corridor
- Streetscape, greening and amenity improvements, such as trees, planting, shade and overall street character

Engagement was undertaken between 19 November and 15 December 2025 via the Conversations Merri-bek website. During this period:

- 271 people responded to the online survey
- Participants shared feedback on the draft concept design for Hope Street

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Understand community sentiment toward the proposed interventions
- Test support for measures to reduce rat-running and vehicle volumes and speeds
- Assess how well the concept creates a safer environment for walking, riding bikes, and driving

The project responds directly to priorities and issues raised by the local community during the initial engagement phase and has been informed by this feedback.

The feedback received during this round of community engagement will directly inform updates to the final Hope Street Streetscape Improvements plan. Community input will be used to refine the design and ensure it responds to local priorities and concerns.

Previous Engagement

The first round of community engagement for the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements was undertaken between 18 February and 18 March 2025. Engagement activities included an online survey, an in-person information and feedback session, and direct discussions with key stakeholders.

Participation

- 3,375 letters distributed to local residents and businesses
- 309 survey responses received
- 86 per cent of respondents lived on or within 400 metres of Hope Street, indicating strong local participation

Respondents primarily used Hope Street for active transport, with 36 per cent walking and 35 per cent riding, compared to 25 per cent travelling by car.

Key challenges identified

- Unsafe bike riding conditions and lack of protection from traffic
- High traffic volumes and vehicle speeds
- Narrow road width and congestion, particularly due to on-street parking
- Limited shade and tree canopy
- Pedestrian safety concerns, including crossing opportunities
- Poor road surface quality in some sections of the street

Desired improvements

- More trees and greenery (54% of survey respondents) to improve shade and streetscape amenity
- Traffic calming and speed reduction (33% of survey respondents)
- Removal of some on-street parking (25% of survey respondents) to improve safety and movement
- Dedicated bike lanes (17% of survey respondents)
- Road surface improvements (14% of survey respondents), particularly near AG Gillon Oval

Overall, the first round of engagement highlighted clear community priorities around improving safety for people walking and riding bikes, reducing traffic impacts, increasing greenery, and enhancing the overall quality of the street. These outcomes directly informed the development of the Hope Street concept designs presented in this report.

Results

Overview

A survey was provided to gather feedback on the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements Concept Design. This section will discuss the results of that survey.

During this engagement period, community members were invited to provide feedback on the proposed Hope Street Streetscape Improvements Concept Design. Participation included both online and in-person opportunities:

- Online survey: Hosted on the Conversations Merri-bek website, with a total of 309 responses.
- Pop-up engagement session: Held at Brunswick Football Club (133A Hope Street) on Saturday 22 November, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. 34 community members attended this session
- Written submissions: 18 submissions were received from the community.
- Over 30 phone calls were received

During this engagement, participants were asked to share:

- Their overall feelings about the proposed concept plan for Hope Street
- Any feedback, concerns, or suggestions for improving the plan

Overall, feedback reflected strong interest in improving Hope Street and broad support for the project's intent to create a safer, calmer and more people-friendly street. At the same time, respondents raised significant concerns about how specific elements of the concept design may affect traffic movement, safety and access for nearby streets.

The feedback highlights a desire for change that is carefully designed, clearly communicated and responsive to local conditions. Six key themes emerged from the engagement, which are outlined in the following section.

Key themes

Feedback from the online survey and in-person engagement highlighted the following key themes.

1. Traffic management and movement on Hope Street

Many respondents expressed support for changes that reduce through-traffic and discourage rat-running on Hope Street, particularly where this would improve safety and neighbourhood amenity. However, views differed on the most appropriate approaches, and traffic management changes were consistently described as a sensitive issue requiring careful consideration. There were different views expressed on what constitutes 'rat-running' and whether Hope Streets classification as a local street was appropriate for its function in the broader network.

Key points raised included:

- Mixed views on proposed road closures at the Upfield Line and Pearson Street as a solution to manage rat-running
- Concerns about traffic redistribution to nearby streets such as Albion, Newman and Victoria Streets, with potential impacts on safety and congestion
- Strong support for physical traffic-calming measures to manage vehicle speeds and behaviour, including:
 - Speed humps or cushions in locations prone to speeding
 - Narrowed carriageways, chicanes or raised sections

- Raised pedestrian crossings at key locations

This issue is important to the community because Hope Street is used daily by residents, families and school children, and vehicle speeds and traffic volumes strongly influence how safe and comfortable the street feels.

What this tells us:

The community supports efforts to reduce speeds and through-traffic on Hope Street, but expects traffic management changes to be carefully designed, clearly communicated and supported by physical measures to minimise impacts on surrounding streets.

2. Road closures

Proposed road closures were one of the most sensitive aspects of the concept design and generated strong feedback through both the survey and the in-person session.

Key points raised included:

- Strong opposition to the proposed Pearson Street road closure, with many respondents indicating it was not supported
- Concerns about traffic being redirected to surrounding streets, reduced local access, and safety impacts, particularly near schools and along Albion Street
- Feedback raised in the in-person session reinforced survey comments, with the proposed Pearson Street road closure frequently identified as a key concern by residents
- The proposed closure near the level crossing attracted less opposition, with some respondents expressing greater acceptance where safety benefits were clearer

What this tells us:

The community does not broadly support the proposed trial Pearson Street closure in its current form. While there is greater acceptance of a closure near the level crossing, any future trial road closures will need careful reconsideration, clear justification and attention to access and traffic impacts not just on Hope Street but the broader network.

3. Safety for people walking and riding

Improving safety for people walking and riding was one of the strongest and most consistent themes raised through the engagement. Many respondents described feeling unsafe under current conditions, particularly at intersections, roundabouts and in areas with high pedestrian activity, including near schools and the oval.

Key points raised included:

- Strong support for a 30 km/h speed limit, supported by physical measures to encourage compliance
- Requests for more frequent and better-located pedestrian crossings, including:
 - Zebra crossings at the Pearson Street roundabout
 - Zebra crossings by AG Gillon Oval
 - Raised crossings near schools, and parks
- Support for shared zones or lower-speed environments in areas with high pedestrian use
- Calls for greater protection for people riding bikes, including separated infrastructure where feasible, or traffic calming where separation is not possible

Safety was often discussed in relation to children walking or riding to school, families accessing local parks and sporting facilities, and the needs of people with mobility challenges.

What this tells us:

The community wants Hope Street to prioritise people over vehicles, with safety improvements that are visible, enforceable and appropriate for children and other vulnerable road users.

4. Connectivity and active transport

Respondents strongly supported Hope Street's role as a key east–west active transport corridor and welcomed the focus on improving walking and riding connections.

Key points raised included:

- Strong enthusiasm for the creek-to-creek walking and riding connection
- Recognition that east–west travel by bike is currently difficult and unsafe
- Desire for better connections to:
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Schools and local destinations
 - Bus stops and the new train station
- Requests for safer crossings and clearer links at major roads and intersections

This theme reflects the importance of Hope Street as part of people's daily travel, not just recreation.

What this tells us:

There is strong community support for Hope Street functioning as a safe, continuous and well-connected active transport corridor that supports everyday trips.

5. Streetscape, greening and amenity

Many respondents welcomed the focus on greening and improving the look, feel and usability of Hope Street as a public space.

Key points raised included:

- Strong support for increased tree planting, shade and greenery
- Interest in rain gardens, pollinator gardens and biodiversity-focused planting
- Requests for wider, continuous and more accessible footpaths
- Suggestions for seating, water fountains and places to rest and gather

Greening and amenity were often linked to comfort, climate resilience and quality of life, particularly during hot weather.

What this tells us:

The community sees Hope Street as more than a transport corridor and values improvements that make it greener, cooler and more inviting to spend time in.

6. Managing impacts and implementation

Across all themes, respondents emphasised the importance of how changes are implemented and managed over time.

Key points raised included:

- Concerns about safety and congestion on surrounding streets if traffic patterns change

- Identification of specific intersections and locations that require careful design attention
- Calls for monitoring, evaluation and the ability to adjust measures if issues arise
- Interest in clear communication about what is being trialled and why

This reflects a strong desire for outcomes that genuinely improve safety without shifting problems elsewhere.

What this tells us:

The community expects changes to be evidence-based, transparent and adaptable, with ongoing attention to safety impacts beyond Hope Street itself.

What we asked

What best describes you?

Figure 1 below shows how respondents interact with Hope Street, respondents were allowed to pick multiple options.

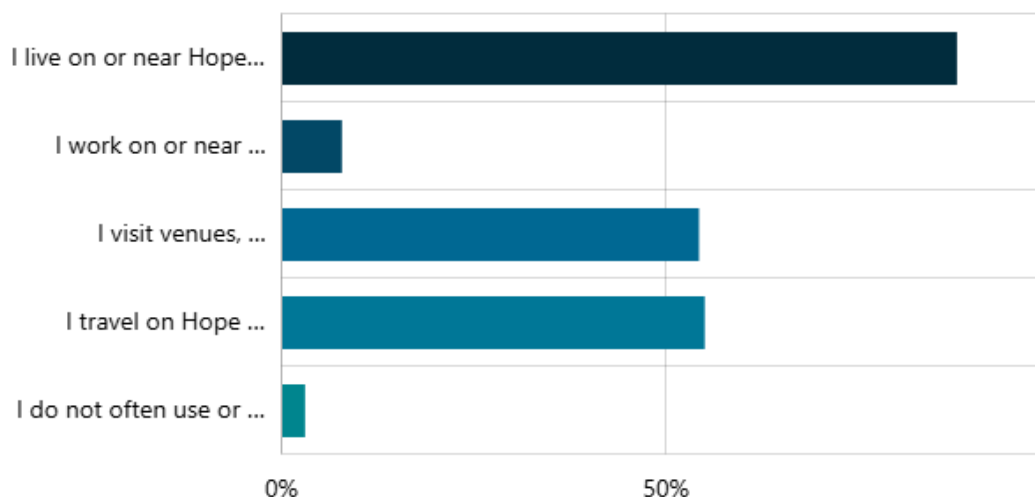


Figure 1 How respondents interact with Hope Street

Respondents were asked about their connection to Hope Street. Figure 1 shows that the majority of people who completed the online survey (88%) live on or near (within 400m) Hope Street, indicating that feedback was strongly informed by local residents directly affected by the project.

Figure 1 also shows that more than half of respondents travel across Hope Street (55%) or visit nearby venues, shops, parks, or businesses (54%), highlighting its role as both a key movement route and a local destination. Fewer respondents work near Hope Street (8%), and only a small number reported rarely using the street (3%). Overall, most of the gathered feedback came from people who regularly use and experience Hope Street.

How do you most often travel on Hope Street

Figure 2 shows how respondents generally travel across Hope Street

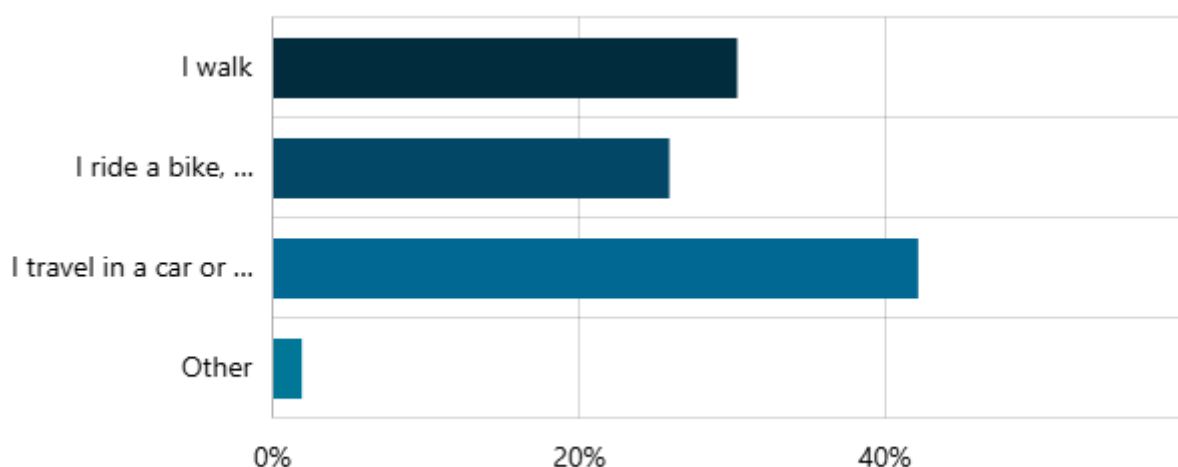


Figure 2 typical way of travelling on Hope Street

Figure 2 shows that the most common way respondents travel on Hope Street is by car (42%), followed by walking (30%) and riding (26%). While motor vehicles remain the most common mode, a substantial proportion of the community walk or ride, highlighting the importance of safe, active travel routes along the corridor.

Do you think our concept designs will improve Hope Street?

We asked respondents to share their thoughts about the Hope Street concept design and if they think the design will help improve hope Street

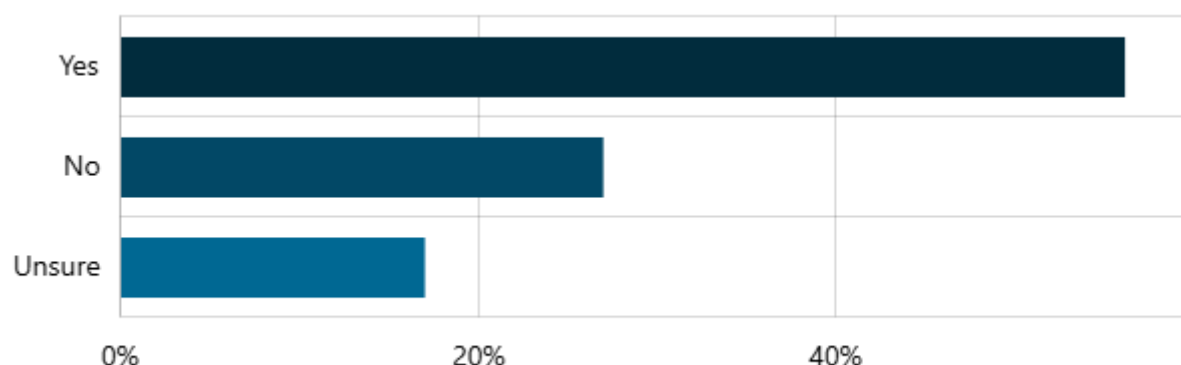


Figure 3 Respondents views on concept design improvements

Figure 3 shows that the majority of respondents (56%) believe the draft concept design will improve Hope Street and enhance safety. Just over a quarter (27%) disagreed, while 17% were unsure. This indicates support for the proposed changes, alongside some uncertainty that highlights the need to address community concerns in the final design.

How do you feel about our concept design for Hope Street?

Figure 4 shows how respondents feel about the concept design

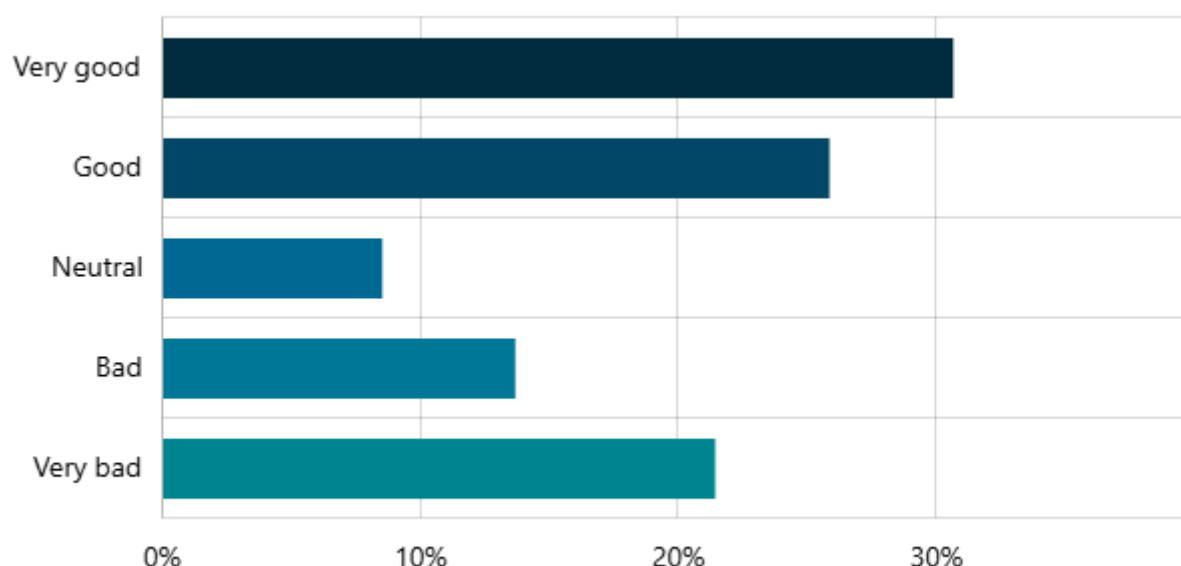


Figure 4 Respondents sentiment towards the concept design

Figure 4 shows that 56% of respondents expressed positive sentiment toward the concept design (31% very good, 26% good). Just over a third (35%) felt negatively (21% very bad, 14% bad), while

8% were neutral. This indicates that while overall support is strong, a significant portion of the community has concerns that need to be addressed.

Do you have any comments about our concept design

Figure 5 shows the most common comments and themes respondents provided about the concept design



Figure 5 Word cloud of comments

Overall, feedback showed strong interest in improving Hope Street, with many respondents agreeing that changes are needed to improve safety, reduce traffic impacts and enhance the street environment. However, views on how this should be achieved were often divided.

Many respondents expressed support for safety and streetscape improvements, particularly measures that slow vehicle speeds and create a more comfortable environment for people walking and riding.

- Support for reducing vehicle speeds, including a lower speed limit and physical traffic calming such as raised crossings and full-width speed humps
- Strong interest in improving pedestrian safety, particularly near schools, parks and key crossing points
- General support for increased tree canopy, greening, shade and improved street amenity

The proposed road closures, particularly at the Hope Street and Pearson Street intersection, attracted the most feedback and was the most contentious element of the concept design.

- Some respondents supported closures as a solution to reduce rat-running, lower traffic volumes and improve safety on Hope Street
- Many respondents opposed the closures, raising concerns that traffic would be diverted onto nearby residential streets such as Hall, Newman, Westbourne and Albion Streets
- Safety concerns were frequently raised about increased traffic near Brunswick North Primary School and along routes commonly used by children
- Respondents raised concerns about impacts on bus services, emergency access, parking availability and longer travel times

Several respondents felt the concept design did not sufficiently address traffic behaviour on Hope Street itself and instead risked shifting problems to surrounding streets.

- Suggestions included prioritising traffic calming on Hope Street, considering one-way traffic, reducing on-street parking, and introducing additional pedestrian crossings
- A number of respondents requested traffic modelling, clearer evidence of impacts and further consultation before any future closures are trialled

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Figure 6 shows any additional feedback respondents wanted to provide about Hope Street improvements.



Figure 6 word cloud of feedback we received

Community feedback highlighted a range of issues and priorities beyond the concept design:

- Support for resurfacing
 - Cracked or uneven surfaces, damaged areas near stormwater drains, and poor parking zones, particularly near Dew Drops Child Care, were frequently noted as safety hazards
- Traffic calming and speed reduction
 - Mixed support for 30 km/h zones, speed humps, and raised crossings, though some questioned the effectiveness of lower speed limits without enforcement
- Concerns about closures and access
 - Concerns raised that permanent or temporary street closures could increase traffic on neighbouring streets, reduce parking, have impacts on bus routes, and limit access to properties for residents, including older people and families
- Safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Requests for additional crossings, safer intersections (e.g., Pearson/Hope, Melville/Hope), and continued focus on east-west bike riding connections, including creek-to-creek and connections through parks
- Greening and amenity improvements
 - Support for more trees, shade, and pedestrian seating, provided these do not compromise visibility, traffic flow, or car parking
- Consultation
 - Respondents requested clearer information, access to traffic data, modelling of impacts, and opportunities for staged or alternative options before implementation
- Holistic precinct planning
 - Emphasis on considering surrounding streets, public transport access, and the broader neighbourhood to avoid simply shifting problems elsewhere

Overall, residents support improvements that enhance safety, access, and greening, but want changes to be balanced, evidence-based, and inclusive of the wider community.

Who we heard from

By responding to Council surveys through the Conversations Merri-bek web page, community members can create an account and fill out demographic information to help us understand who we are engaging with.

Figure 7 shows the age range of survey respondents.

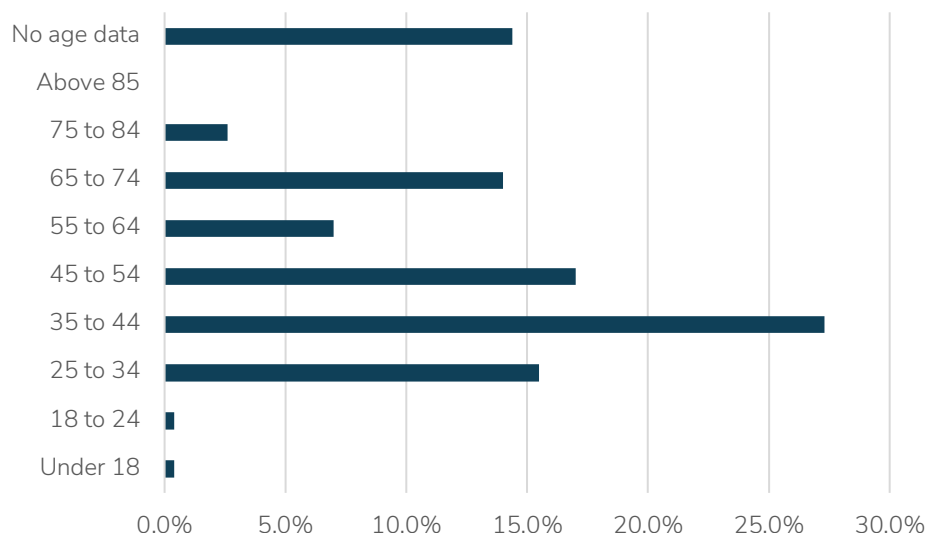


Figure 7 Age data of respondents

Most respondents were aged 25 to 54, with the largest proportion aged 35 to 44 (27.3%), followed by 45 to 54 (17.0%) and 25 to 34 (15.5%). Very few respondents were under 25 or over 75, and 14.4% did not provide age data.

Figure 8 below shows respondents nominated gender data.

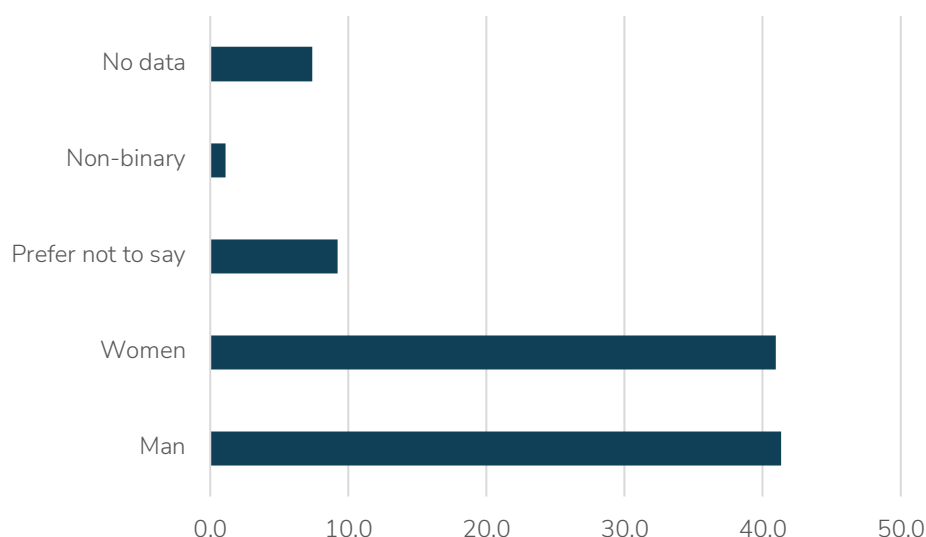


Figure 8 Gender data of respondents

Gender representation was relatively balanced, with 41 per cent identifying as men and 40 per cent as women. A further 1 per cent identified as non-binary, 9 per cent preferred not to say, and 7 per cent did not provide gender data.

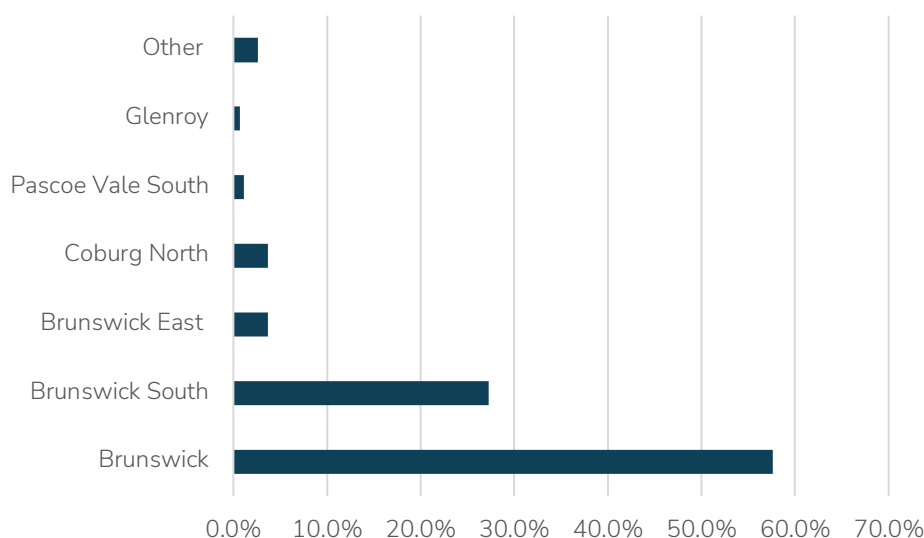


Figure 9 Location Data of respondents

Most respondents were local to the project area (shown in Figure 9), with 57.6 per cent from Brunswick and 27.3 per cent from Brunswick South. Smaller proportions came from nearby suburbs, while less than 2 per cent each were from outer or non-local areas, and 0.4 per cent had an unknown location.

How this feedback will shape the next design stage

Community feedback received through this engagement will directly inform the next stage of the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements project. Input from residents, visitors and people travelling through the area will be used to refine the concept design so it better responds to local priorities, safety concerns and neighbourhood impacts.

Several aspects of the concept plan will be reviewed. In particular, the proposed trial closures at Pearson Street and the Upfield rail line.

Some issues were raised that sit outside the scope of this project and will be addressed through other plans and work programs. Road safety near schools and on surrounding streets, such as Albion Street will be addressed separately with the community given further opportunity to engage on these topics.

Path to final design and delivery

- Your feedback will help create a final detailed design for the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements project
- The final design will be presented to Councillors at a Council meeting as a recommendation
- If endorsed, construction would occur in stages, subject to Council's design processes and required external approvals
- Level Crossing Removal Project works and other construction activity in the area may affect project timing or delivery
- Council will provide updates on any impacts as further information becomes available

Conclusion

Community feedback on the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements Concept Design shows strong support for making Hope Street safer, greener and more people-focused, while also highlighting areas that require careful consideration.

Key takeaways

The engagement shows that the community:

- Strongly supports improving safety, particularly for children, families, people walking and riding, and those with mobility challenges
- Agrees on the need for lower vehicle speeds, traffic calming and safer crossings
- Values street greening, shade and improved amenity
- Supports Hope Street's role as a creek-to-creek walking and bike riding corridor
- Holds mixed views on traffic management and potential road closures, identifying this as a sensitive issue that requires careful design, clear communication and monitoring

Appendix

Q1. What best describes you? (Choose all that apply) Required

1. I live on or near Hope Street
2. I work on or near Hope Street
3. I visit venues, shops, parks, or businesses on or near Hope Street
4. I travel on Hope Street to get to other places
5. I do not often use or visit Hope Street

Q2. How do you most often travel on Hope Street? (Choose one) Required

1. I walk
2. I ride a bike, scooter, skateboard or other wheeled transport option
3. I travel in a car or other motor vehicle as a driver or passenger
4. Other

Q3. Do you think our concept designs will improve Hope Street? Required

1. Yes
2. NO
3. Unsure

Q4. How do you feel about our concept design for Hope Street? Required

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Neutral
4. Bad
5. Very bad

Do you have any comments about our concept design?

Long text

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Long text