

Community Garden and Adopt-A-Park Policies

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



April 2024

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Members of the community often contact Council seeking to become more involved in the management of open spaces, either with a view to beautifying them or gardening in them.

Encouraging community members to establish or join Community Groups and to volunteer their time towards a parks management and beautification, or to the communal growing of food, enhances community connectedness and community resilience.

Two new Policies have been created that provide a framework for Council to determine when and how the Community can become more actively involved in open spaces.

Development of the Community Garden and Adopt-A-Park Policies is an important step in supporting sustainable practices and building connected communities in Wyndham. By providing guidance for community gardening initiatives, these policies aim to create spaces where people can come together, grow food, and enjoy the outdoors.

Consultation on the Community Garden and Adopt-A-Park policy occurred from March 18 to April 21, 2024. During the five-week consultation period the project loop page received **528** page reviews, **231** Visitors and **19** contributions.



METHODOLOGY:

The below table outlines the method and techniques used to engage with the community.

Community engagement activities / tools

Method / technique	Stakeholders engaged
The Loop project page	528 page views 231 visitors
Online Survey	19 contributions
Pop up engagement Greening the Pipeline Community Garden Saturday 6th of April, 12pm – 2pm Penrose Community Garden Saturday 13th of April, 12pm – 2pm	10 Attendees

Communications / marketing activities

Method / technique	Stakeholders engaged
Online promotion (social media)	Organic Post 1: Engagements: 33 Link Clicks: 12 Reach: 3,745 Organic Post 2: Engagements: 18 Link Clicks: 9 Reach: 2,578

WHO WE HEARD FROM:

The below tables highlight who we heard from in our community during our engagement process.

Age Group

30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
12.5%	12.5%	6.25%	6.25%	12.5%
55-59	60-64	65-69	75-79	80-84
25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%

Gender

Female	Male
62.5%	37.5%

Suburb

Laverton	Point Cook	Tarneit	Werribee	Werribee South
6.25%	31.25%	18.75%	12.5%	6.25%
Williams Landing	Wyndham Vale			
6.25%	18.75%			

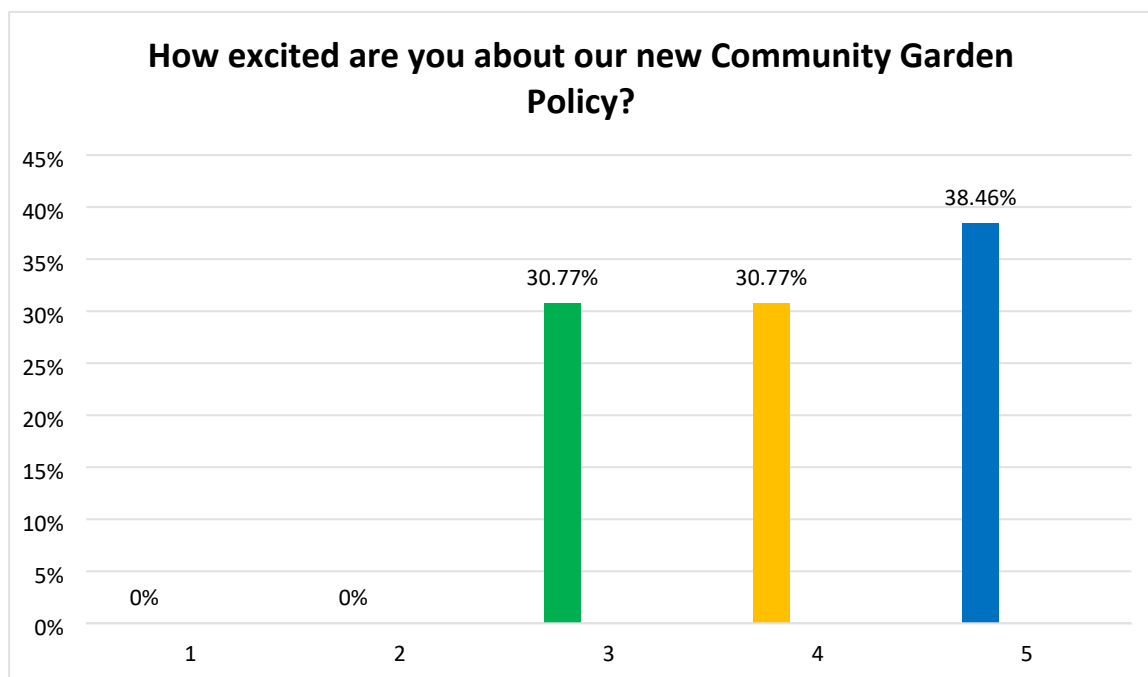
Do you speak a language other than English at home?

Yes	No
81.25%	18.75%

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK:

Community Garden Policy

The community average for the question “How excited are you about our new Adopt-A-Park Policy” was a 4.06 out of 5, indicating high enthusiasm for the policy and strong interest in the Community Garden Program.



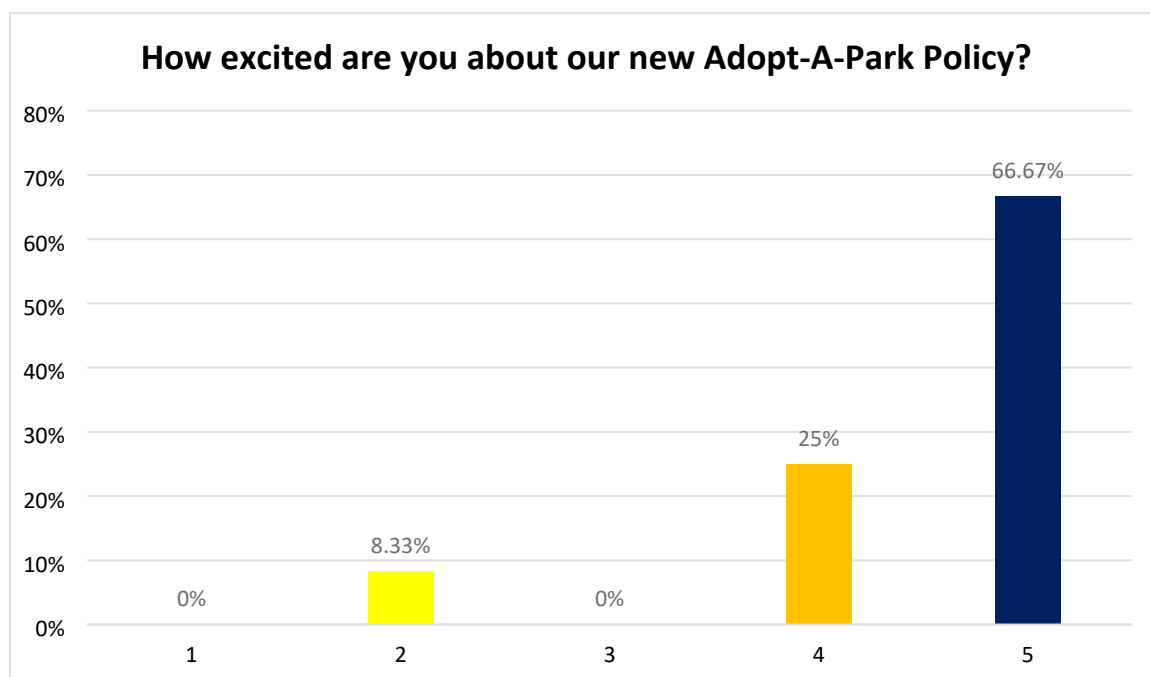
We Asked	You Said	We did
Is there anything we might have missed that you think should be included?	Case study or example of Penrose community garden can be more detailed with add photos	Case Studies of recent Community Gardens, including the Penrose Community Garden, will be provided on the website alongside the Policy once approved.
	It doesn't sound like council provide any funding - can the group apply for funding?	Community groups are encouraged to apply for grants through Wyndham's community grants program. This program facilitates financial support for not-for-profit organisations and community-based groups.
	Funds from the council might be nice as well. We do all pay our rates and the least they could do is put some of our money they obtain into it.	The community grants program can be accessed here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/volunteering-grants/community-grants-program
	The areas should be actively managed by volunteers to take care of these gardens. This can also in engaging with the community.	The Policy requires a Community Group (typically comprised of volunteers) to take on the management of the Community Garden via a long-term lease from Council.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about the Community Garden Policy?	Fantastic idea if we can include this with kinder kids' program	Comment Noted
	Look Great	Comment Noted
	Hopefully council will provide grants to community groups to help pay for building and maintaining garden beds (including irrigation systems), buying plants etc... Will council build the fences?	Community groups are encouraged to apply for grants through Wyndham's community grants program. This program facilitates financial support for not-for-profit organisations and community-based groups. The community grants program can be accessed here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/volunteering-grants/community-grants-program
	Would there be a Council grant available to help commence an appropriate incorporated group?	Community grants are available to groups that are not yet incorporated. The Open Space Team can provide interested groups and individuals advice on becoming incorporated, or auspiced by another organisation.
	It sounds like a big commitment for a community group to take on.	Managing a Community Garden is a significant commitment by any group that chooses to take it on. Experience has highlighted the importance of ensuring that groups formally sign a license or lease with Council that outlines the Group's and Council's expectations around the establishment and management of the garden. The Assessment and Approval Process will be rigorous to ensure that only groups that have enough members with sufficient interest and resources to ensure the long-term viability of the Garden are supported to establish them.

	Although not necessarily a requirement of the policy, there could be some reference to the framework and advocacy work to support newer areas to generate interest in creating incorporated entities with views to complete activities such as the Community Garden Policy and Adopt-A-Park Policy. As a resident of Tarneit, I was previously involved in the Tarneit North Residents Association, which is now wound down. I was also involved in the group trying to activate Tarneit, but this group was being run through a Point Cook association. Council could work to advocate for the activation of communities in newer estates to work on projects such as this.	Council officers, land developers and community members in newer residential areas will be able to use the Policy to develop Community Gardens as part of newer estates. Council will expect that land developers will fund the construction of new Community Gardens in these areas, and establish the incorporated Community Groups to manage them into the future.
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Adopt-A-Park Policy

The community average for the question “How excited are you about our new Adopt-A-Park Policy” was a 4.3 out of 5, demonstrating a high level of excitement for the new policy, showing strong support and interest in participating in the Adopt-A-Park program.



We Asked	You Said	We did
Is there anything we might have missed that you think should be included?	I like that the council and the group have joint responsibility for looking after the park	Comment Noted
	Provide opportunity for the adopted park to be matched with their local community centre as a way to advertise their activities in the community centre term guide.	The Adopt-a-Park Policy applies to all open space, not just those in close proximity to community centres. Community Groups will be encouraged to build relationships with the nearby community centres to better promote their work and attract interested individuals to become more engaged.
	I personally think it should mandate that native plants be used, to ensure new plants support the local ecosystem and ensure greater success in plantings, due to the hardy nature of natives.	The Adopt-A-Park Policy provides flexibility to allow the type of planting to be agreed between Council and the Community/Friends Group depending on the park chosen.
	The connectivity to the parks for kids to access and have safe spaces	Comment Noted

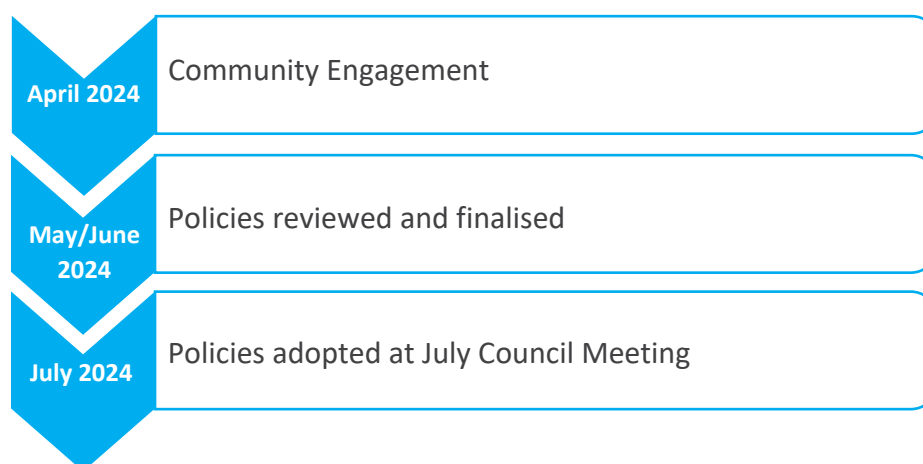
	to meet up or hang out with friends and family.	
	How will the people find out about these activities and how to ensure that these activities are safely conducted within our community groups?	Signage will be installed at parks adopted by Community Groups, and a list of adopted parks will be available on Wyndham's website for public reference and recognition.
	Exciting project	Comment Noted
Is there anything else you want to tell us about the Adopt-A-Park Policy?	I am more likely to get involved with this project.	Comment Noted
	This sounds like a great initiative, and at least council will provide something for this one	Comment Noted
	Although not necessarily a requirement of the policy, there could be some reference to the framework and advocacy work to support newer areas to generate interest in creating incorporated entities with views to complete activities such as the Community Garden Policy and Adopt-A-Park Policy. As a resident of Tarneit, I was previously involved in the Tarneit North Residents Association, which is now wound down. I was also involved in the group trying to activate Tarneit, but this group was being run through a Point Cook association. Council could work to advocate for the activation of communities in newer estates to work on projects such as this.	Please refer to the Community Garden summary for feedback on this comment.
	This comes across as council palming off their responsibilities for looking after our parks and open spaces. A lot of trust is put into group with minimal accountability or supervision by the council.	Adopted parks will be the joint responsibility of the Community Group and Council. The input of the Friends/Community Group will be on top of the existing Council maintenance of each park. Council will not make a saving on maintenance. Council will retain the responsibility for ensuring that the park's maintenance aligns with agreed service levels, thereby ensuring

		appropriate oversight and accountability.
	I hope it allows individuals to adopt and take care of areas. I personally would happily take care of an area on my own, as I love gardening.	The Policy requires a Community/Friends Group with at least 5 members, with a nominated Convenor, to enter into the MoU with Council. This is to ensure the best chance of long term success of the adoption, by spreading the work across a group of individuals. It will also encourage community members to get to know each other.

NEXT STEPS:

- Finalisation of Policies for Council endorsement.

STAGES OF THE PROJECT



HOW CAN PARTICIPANTS STAY INVOLVED/INFORMED?

Participants can stay informed by visiting the Loop page and selecting to “Follow” the project. Updates will be posted on The Loop and the project timeline will be updated to reflect project status.