

Activity Centre Program

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
PHASE 2

Engagement Report Epping

MARCH 2025

Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Peoples and their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living and continuous culture. The activity centres we are planning for are located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation and we acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and we acknowledge that they have never ceded their sovereign rights to lands and waters. We recognise their unbroken connection to Country, we celebrate their culture and history, and we honour their rights as custodians.

Introduction

This report details findings from Phase 2 engagement with the community on the Epping Activity Centre as part of the Victorian Government's Activity Centre Program. This follows on from Phase 1 engagement which took place earlier in 2024.

Overview of engagement approach

Feedback is presented in this report and other activity centre-specific reports, one for each centre. This report outlines who we heard from; what we heard; and the changes that have been made or other responses to key feedback received. This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the [Activity Centres Program Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report](#) which details the policy context and background as well as all the engagement activities to obtain community feedback.

The Engagement Summary Report details the processes followed and the methods that were used to consult the community. It also outlines what we heard from community and stakeholders regarding the Activity Centre Program overall, and the changes that have been made or other responses to key feedback received. This includes feedback gathered from all Engage Victoria pages and VPA engagement sources, including where feedback was provided on the program as a whole.

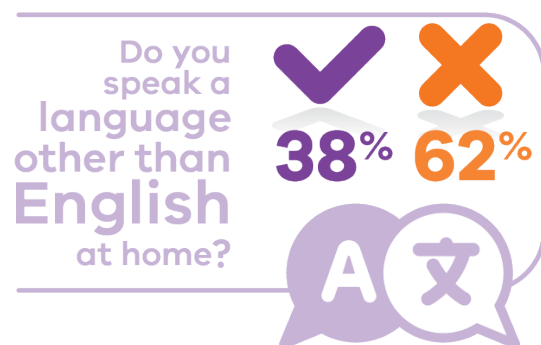
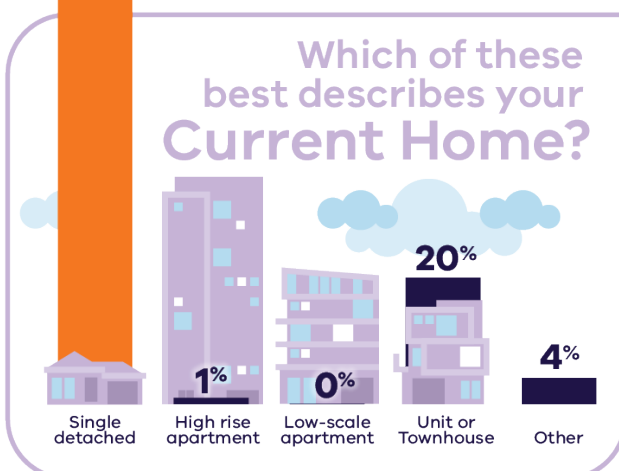
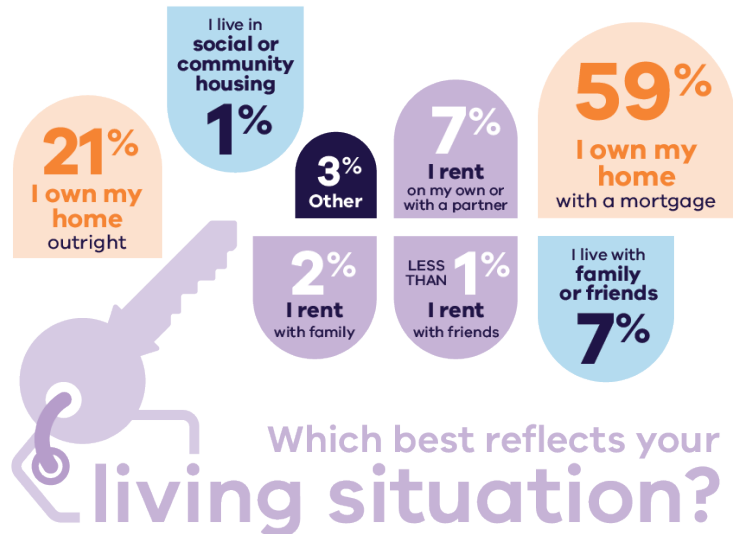
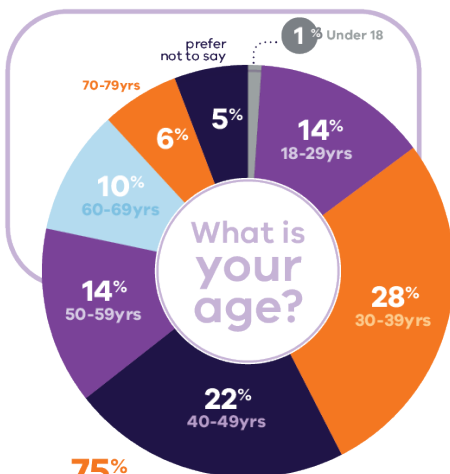
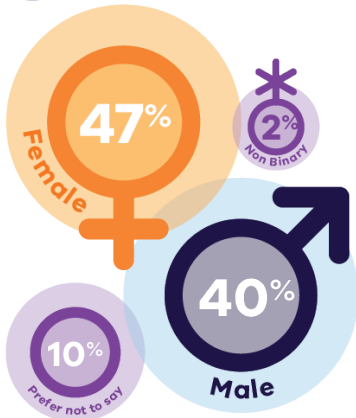
Contents

Acknowledgement	2
Introduction	2
Overview of engagement approach	2
Who we heard from	4
What we heard	5
Key themes	5
Traffic, transport, parking and congestion	5
Housing, property value and development	5
Parks and open spaces	5
Community services and infrastructure	6
Building heights and density	6
Public transport	6
Streamlined planning process	6
Walkable catchments	6
Safety and security	6
Key stakeholders	7
Community Reference Group	8
Next steps	8

Who we heard from

We asked respondents to provide us with demographic information to understand who in the community has engaged with our consultation. Below is an overview of who we heard from.

What is your gender?



What we heard

The Epping community showed strong overall support for the proposed Epping Activity Centre and the necessity for more homes to be delivered close to public transport, jobs, shops and other services. There was also strong support for the idea of making it a more walkable suburb and the proposed infrastructure improvements. Streamlined planning processes were also supported by most people who engaged with the project.

Key themes

The below are the themes we heard in the free text fields of the surveys as well as what community told us in their submissions.



Support for more homes housing within walking distance of the train station.

Need for improved walking and cycling infrastructure, including tree-lined paths and connections to the train station.

More parking is required, especially near Epping train station.

Traffic, transport, parking and congestion



More affordable housing options should be provided.

High-density dwellings will lead to overcrowding.

More specific housing needs such as disability-friendly accommodation

Background checks for affordable housing residents to mitigate anti-social behaviour

The potential for overdevelopment to drive down property prices.

Housing, property value and development



Increased more homes would have a negative impact on local wildlife.

Existing parks and green spaces to be protected and enhanced.

Parks and open spaces



Improved infrastructure, public transport, and community facilities are required.

Higher populations will strain healthcare services.

More local shopping facilities and small business.

Need for improved educational facilities including high schools and universities.

No taxpayer money to be spent on sport and recreation facilities.

Community services and infrastructure



Support for increased height limits to accommodate more homes near the train station and less homes in surrounding areas.

Concerns about "concrete jungles" and inappropriate development.

Concern that increased building heights and more homes will compromise the area's local amenity and streetscapes; heritage preservation is necessary.

Building heights and density



Bus services should better link to rail services.

Public transport



Necessary to increase housing supply and reduce costs, and sentiments that the current planning process is slow, costly, or ineffective.

Lack of community engagement and consultation; planning proposals should be publicly circulated.

Concerns about corruption, transparency, and the need for clear information.

Streamlined planning process



Support for high density housing within walking distance of the train station.

Need for improved walking and cycling infrastructure, including tree-lined paths and connections to the train station.

Walkable catchments



Concern about crime, traffic accidents, and the need for improved lighting and surveillance.

Feeling unsafe when accessing public transport and walking local streets.

Public, social and/or affordable housing would lead to an increase in crime.

Safety and security



Key stakeholders

The below is what we heard from the key stakeholder submissions for Epping. We received seven submissions from key stakeholders about the Epping Activity Centre.

City of Whittlesea

- Requested an extension of the consultation for the activity centres as there has not been enough communication or consultation.
- Requested more clarity around how the proposed planning rules will work for the activity centre and questions whether enough testing has been done.
- Desires to work more collaboratively with the state government in creating the activity centre.
- Wants to make sure that the activity centre is supported by appropriate infrastructure and that it is funded through the development of the activity centre.
- Objects to the 'deemed to comply' approach as they do not necessarily allow for detailed consideration of design and character of the buildings.
- Wants an emphasis on the need for open space and affordable housing in activity centres.
- Want to see the detailed technical assessments that support the Activity Centre Program.
- Wants more clarity around how affordable housing will be delivered through the activity centres.

Major landowners

- Want more clarity around how affordable housing will be provided.
- Support streamlining planning applications through the deemed to comply approach.
- Want flexibility in what can be developed at the ground floor level within activity centres rather than it being predetermined.
- Want clarity around the exact location of the Wollet Rail corridor and where it aligns.
- Suggest retail and commercial shops should be located centrally in the activity centres.

State agencies are being engaged separately from the public engagement process.

Community Reference Group

3 attendees

We reconvened Community Reference Groups as part of phase 2 engagement. A workshop was held to obtain community feedback and the below is what we heard:

Catchment controls

Catchment area considerations: Attendees suggested excluding the Peter Lalor Housing Cooperative estate from the catchment and questioned changes to single dwelling covenants.

Retail and mixed-use development: Proposed to add retail precincts and revitalising Epping shopping with examples of developments featuring 10 storey housing above retail.

Housing diversity and design: Calls for diverse, affordable housing with design compliance, including innovative models like co-housing with flexible layouts.

Community infrastructure

Parking solutions: Attendees called for improved parking in new developments to address the existing shortage.

Transport and connectivity: There was a push for better transport links, bike facilities, improved crossings on High Street and east-west routes, and safety upgrades on Cooper Street, along with future projects like the Wollert Rail extension, bus lanes, and traffic management improvements.

Public green spaces: Attendees emphasised the need for enhanced public green spaces with better lighting and passive surveillance for safety and accessibility.

Library and sports facilities: Attendees encouraged more library and sports facilities to meet the needs of the growing population.

Cultural inclusion: With significant growth in diverse communities, attendees suggested including places of worship, like a temple or mosque, in the Activity Centre Plan.

Next steps

Once the Epping Activity Centre plan is in place, landowners in the Epping Activity Centres will have clear new rules to follow if they want to build new homes on their land. Each landowner can decide if and when they want to apply for a planning permit (where required) to build new homes. If they don't want to change anything on a property, they don't have to. Landowners will have more opportunities to build more different types of homes on their property.

Over time there may be more homes being built in these neighbourhoods which also means more customers and opportunities for local businesses. It also means more Victorians will have the chance to find a home that's right for them.

The Activity Centres Program is now expanding to new activity centres near train stations or trams across Melbourne. This will support new homes to be built in areas with good existing transport capacity and leverage new capacity created through Victoria's Big Build investment in the Level Crossing Removal Program and Metro Tunnel project. Community feedback on the initial 10 draft activity centre plans has emphasised the importance of prioritising locations with good public transport. The new centres are well serviced by public transport, community facilities and shops and will support the supply of more homes across Victoria.

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