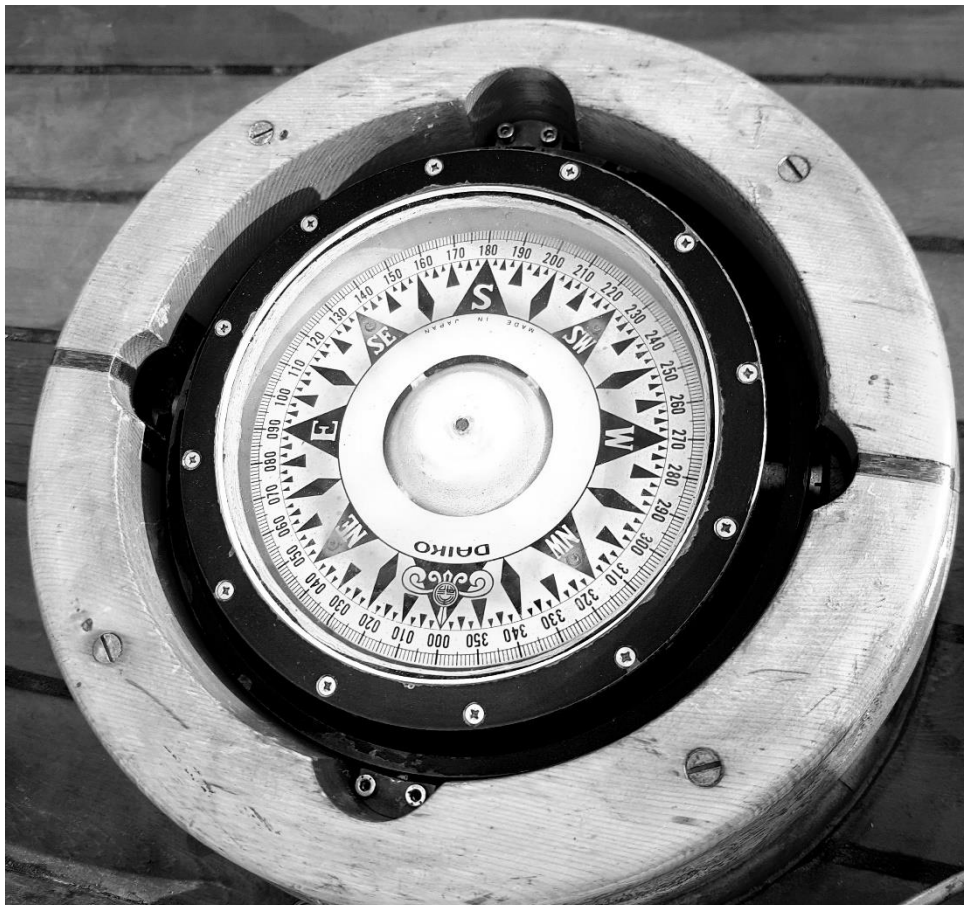# MORELAND CITY COUNCIL DRAFT CLIMATE RISK STRATEGY COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Outcomes Report July 2022

Contents

Disclaimer

Foxtrot & Echo take great care while transcribing participant feedback in consultations but cannot guarantee the accuracy of all notes. We are however confident that we have captured the full range of ideas, concerns and views expressed during our consultation activities.

Executive Summary

Council's draft Climate Risk Strategy has been developed in response to an independent audit finding that Council's current climate risk management and adaptation action is inadequate. With guidance from Council's Climate Resilience Integration Board (CRIB) the draft Strategy was developed with inputs from internal stakeholders, research and best practice and relevant community feedback from other projects. Following endorsement at the April 2022 Council Meeting, the draft Strategy was released for community and stakeholder consultation from 30 May 2022 to 1 July 2022.

Feedback on the draft Strategy was gathered via the online Conversations Moreland project page (50 responses), two stakeholder workshops with Advisory Committee members (10 attendees) and via an in person story gathering session with members of Council's Age Friendly Reference Group (5 relevant stories). Engagement was also experienced by 739 visits to the Conversations Moreland project page and 312 downloads of the draft Strategy.

The community response to the draft Climate Risk Strategy was overwhelmingly positive.

- 82% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the draft vision
- Each of the 5 goals were supported by over 80% of survey respondents

All participants demonstrated a good understanding of climate/weather changes and the impacts and risks of these changes through their responses. When asked to prioritise the key impacts and risks for Council to focus on:

- Physical health impacts and plants and animal loss/deaths both rated as the most important priority by survey respondents (36% each)
- Physical health impacts were also rated as the second most important (by those nominating another impact as most important) at 24%, along with mental health impacts (26%)
- Economic loss was considered least important of the impacts for Council to focus on by 52% of respondents.

Suggestions for additional priorities or focus areas included:

- Local food production
- Managing heat effects, particularly through shading and green space
- Accessibility
- Town planning mechanisms
- Social cohesion

Overall, the feedback indicates strong support for the draft Strategy. Participants were keen to see that the Strategy is funded and implemented properly, that Council incorporates climate risk into all new and existing strategies and work, and gets "quick wins" through immediate action. There was also a strong desire for an explicit focus on the more vulnerable members of the community, and to work with the passionate community groups and organisations in Moreland.

Introduction

Hotter and more extreme weather is already hurting people, places, plants and animals and will worsen in coming decades. Heatwaves are causing loss of life and other health impacts. Drier conditions, with more severe storms and rainfall events, put buildings and green spaces at risk. The Urban Heat Island Effect as well as bushfires and air pollution can make summer in Moreland hotter and less comfortable to live in.

Council is developing a Climate Risk Strategy to prepare Council and the community for climate impacts that are now unavoidable. It will guide Council's work to:

- manage climate risks
- adapt to climate change
- build resilience.

The draft Strategy is based upon research and internal consultation undertaken by Council as well as relevant previous engagement undertaken with the community for other projects. Considerable engagement was undertaken through Imagine Moreland to inform the Community Vision and Council Plan, as well as previous climate-relevant strategies including Zero Carbon Moreland, Nature Plan and Integrated Water Management Strategy.

To ensure that the draft Strategy reflects community priorities and concerns, community consultation was conducted 30 May – 1 July 2022, with the aim of:

- Gathering input and feedback about the draft Strategy from the community, stakeholders and experts, and
- Collecting lived-experience evidence of the impacts of climate change from the community.

The input was gathered through online and in-person meetings and via Conversations Moreland, Council's online engagement platform. It will be used to refine the final draft Strategy and inform planning for future community education and interventions to increase community climate-readiness.

This report presents the survey results and summarises the feedback received, by theme, from the survey and stakeholder workshops. It also provides the collected lived experience stories from the community. The report was compiled by Foxtrot & Echo who designed and facilitated the workshops and provided advice for the Conversations Moreland engagement.

Engagement Approach

The engagement was held from 30 May 2022 to 1 July 2022 to encourage feedback on the draft Strategy and to collect stories of the community's lived experience of climate change. It was promoted to the Moreland community via printed newsletters and across various digital platforms. Key communications channels were:

- Printed **Inside Moreland** newsletter: Reach 70k households
- **Conversations Moreland** follower email: Reach 3k Click through rate: 6%
- **Facebook** post: Reach 8k Engagement rate: 15%
- **LinkedIn** post: Reach 2k Engagement rate 33%
- **MyMoreland** eNews: Reach 1.3K Click through rate: 2.5%
- **Eco eNews**: Reach 1k Click through rate: 9.25%

Members of Council's newly established Advisory Committees and Reference Groups were invited to attend a targeted stakeholder workshop, either online or in-person (at the Glenroy Hub).

The project officer attended First Nations and Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee meetings to promote the engagement, as well as a story gathering session at the Age Friendly Reference Group meeting.

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Raise awareness of the local impacts and risks of climate change
- Inform community of the need for action to increase resilience of the community and Council (infrastructure and services)
- Seek community feedback on the draft Strategy
- Capture stories of the community's lived experience of climate change to date

Engagement methods

Online activities were predominantly chosen for ease of participation at times that suited the community and in respect to ongoing concerns about Covid-19, although face to face options were also available.

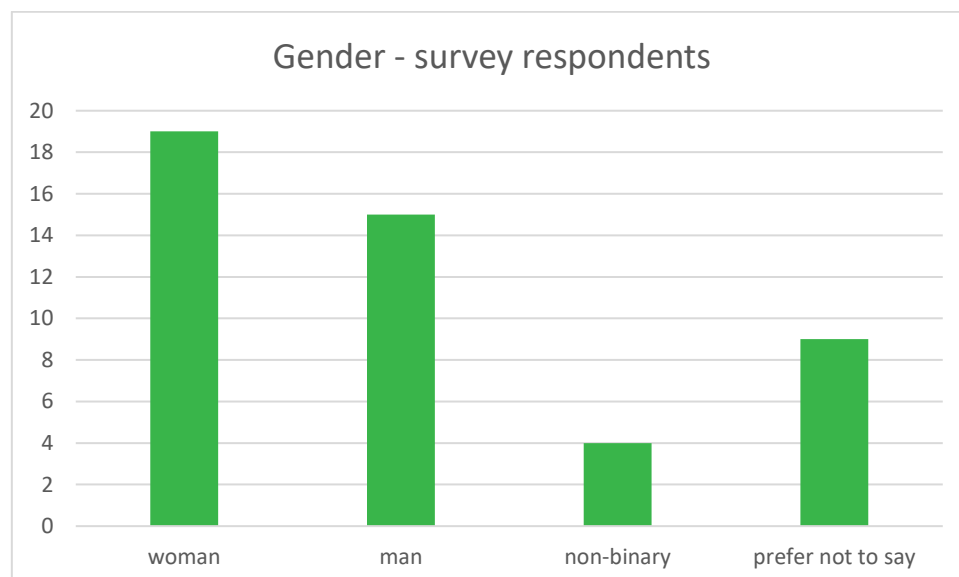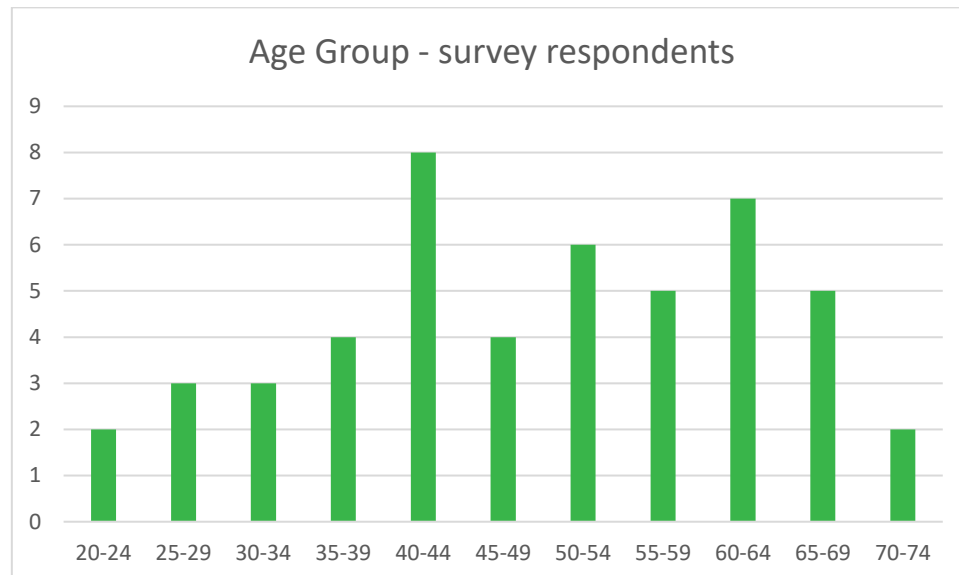| Engagement Methods					
Activity	Online survey	Online story gathering	Online stakeholder meeting	In person stakeholder meeting	In person story gathering
Participants	48 responses	2 stories	3 participants	7 participants	5 stories

- The online project page attracted 739 visitors during the engagement period (30 May – 1 July 2022). Over 42% of those visitors (312) downloaded the draft Strategy.
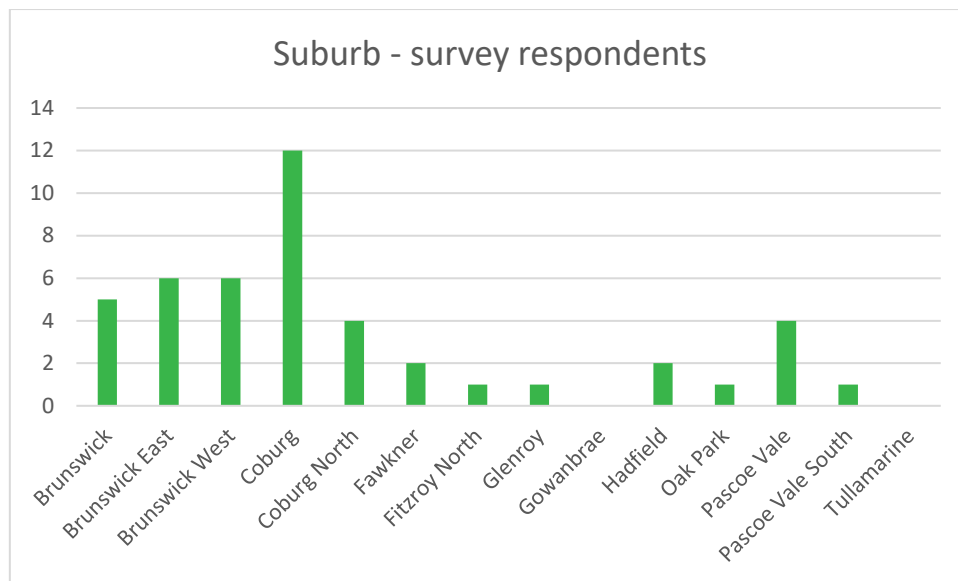
The online survey was developed to seek community feedback on key elements of the draft Strategy. Participants were encouraged to read the draft Strategy first, then answer the questions that were of interest to them.

Participants in the stakeholder workshops were also encouraged to read the draft Strategy first, and were given a short presentation from Council on the background to the draft Strategy in the workshop.

Participants

Community members completing the online survey were asked demographic questions about their age, gender and suburb of residence. The graphs below indicate that Council heard from a good range of residents across adult age groups, suburbs and genders.

Age Group - survey respondents

Age Group	Count
20-24	2
25-29	3
30-34	3
35-39	4
40-44	8
45-49	4
50-54	6
55-59	5
60-64	7
65-69	5
70-74	2

Gender - survey respondents

Gender	Count
woman	19
man	15
non-binary	4
prefer not to say	9

Suburb - survey respondents

Attendees of the stakeholder meetings came from several of Council's advisory groups; the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee, and Arts Advisory Committee. The in person story gathering came from Council's Aged Friendly Reference Group.

Engagement Findings

The engagement findings are a combination of:

- online survey results, including key themes from the free text questions included
- key themes and ideas from the two stakeholder workshops
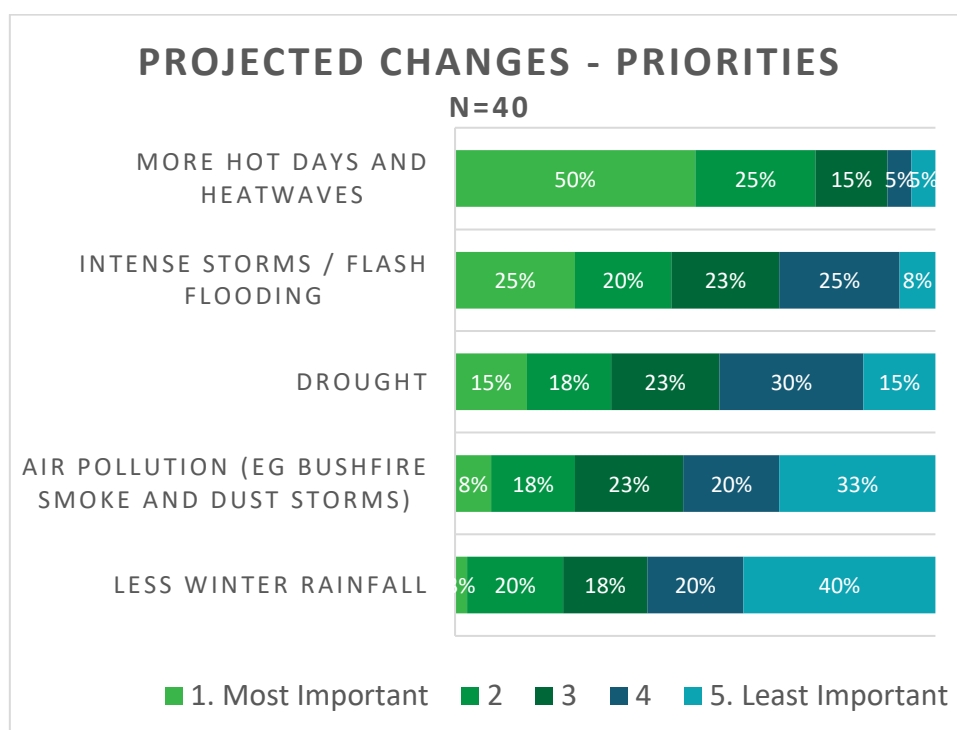- verbatim stories of the lived experience with climate change.

The verbatim written feedback and paraphrased verbal feedback is available from the MCC Sustainable Communities Unit.

Climate Risks

Projected Changes

The draft Strategy identifies a number of ways the climate and weather is expected to change in coming decades. Survey respondents were asked to rate projected changes in order of most to least concern to them.

- 'More hot days and heatwaves' was the most important to 50% of respondents, and the second most important for a further 25%.
- 'Intense storms or flash flooding' was the most important to 25% of respondents, and the second most important for another 20%
- The second highest priority was quite evenly divided between all potential changes.
- Several respondents made mention in the comments section that they believed all the changes were of equal priority.
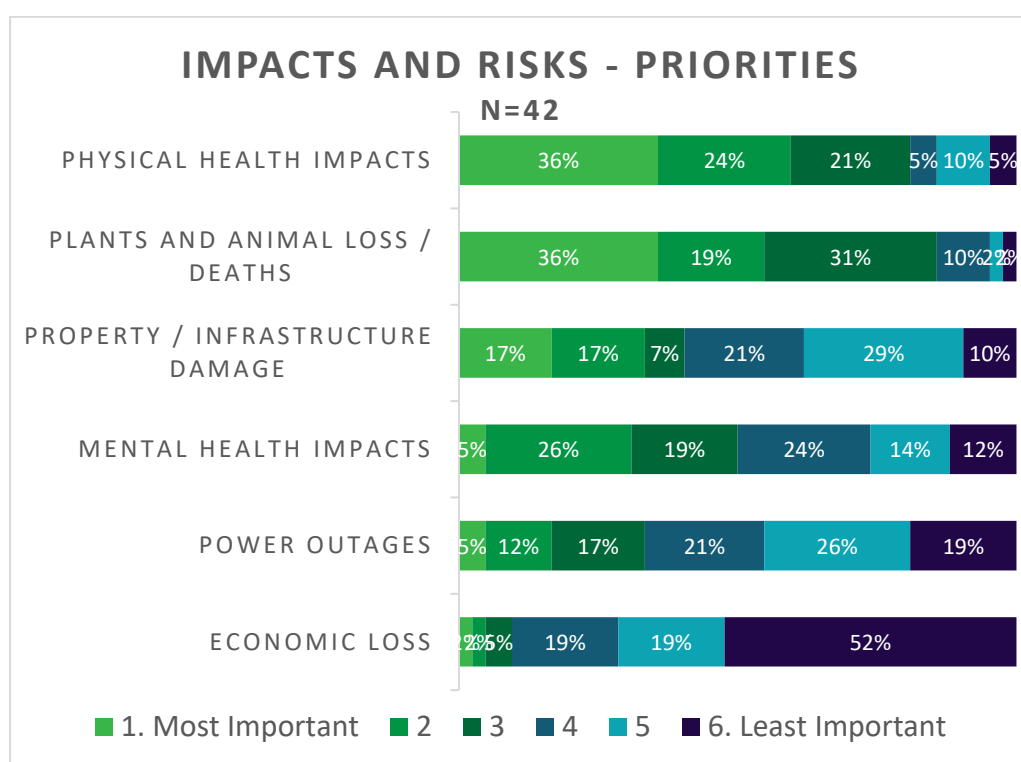

When asked if there were any other potential changes they were concerned would affect them, most survey participants thought more about the *impacts* of climate and weather changes. These responses have been included in the next question.

Climate Impacts

The draft Strategy identifies some local climate impacts and risks for community and Council. Survey participants were asked to consider Council's role and rate the listed climate risks in order of priority for Council planning and action.

- Equally most important to respondents were 'physical health impacts' and 'plants and animal loss/deaths' at 36% each
- 'Physical health impacts' were also rated as the second most important (by those nominating another impact as most important) at 24%, along with 'mental health impacts' (26% rated as second most important)
- Economic loss was considered least important by 52% of respondents

IMPACTS AND RISKS - PRIORITIES

N=42

	1. Most Important	2	3	4	5	6. Least Important
PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACTS	36%	24%	21%	5%	10%	5%
PLANTS AND ANIMAL LOSS / DEATHS	36%	19%	31%	10%	2%	2%
PROPERTY / INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE	17%	17%	7%	21%	29%	10%
MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS	5%	26%	19%	24%	14%	12%
POWER OUTAGES	5%	12%	17%	21%	26%	19%
ECONOMIC LOSS	2%	5%	19%	19%		52%

Workshop and survey participants were asked if there were any other impacts or risks that Council should focus on. A number of suggestions were made, including:

- **Food availability.** This included the impacts on local and home growers to be able to produce as well as the impact of disrupted national and global food supply chains and the need for more local suppliers
- **Cost of living**. Seen as separate to economic loss, several participants raised concern about the rising cost of living and in particular the greater and unequal impact on more vulnerable community members
- Breakdown of **social cohesion**
- **Accessibility.** Connected to property and infrastructure damage, several respondents raised the challenge of being able to access services, places and transport during extreme weather events, especially for the more vulnerable members of the community.

- Service delivery, in particular **emergency services**. This included "thunderstorm asthma" which had physical health impacts as well as the strain on health and emergency services
- Rising sea levels creating more residents in Moreland, and the associated impacts of this.

Participants did acknowledge that some of their suggested impacts and risks were not within Council's control but that they were important to consider. Advocacy and a change in Council's role were both raised as possible actions to combat this.

One suggestion was to consider changing *economic loss* to *economic change,* which would also capture changing job market and lifestyle.
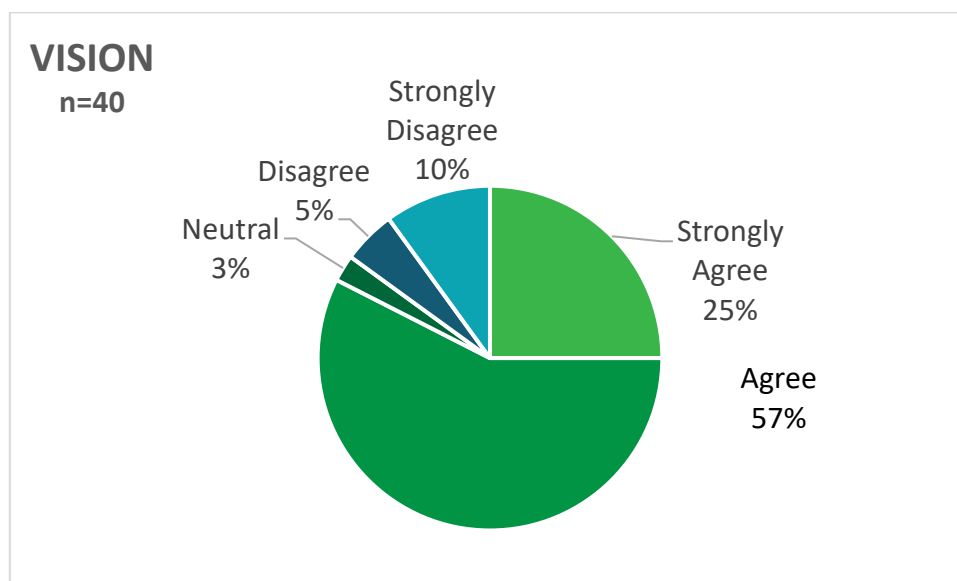
Vision

The draft Strategy's vision is:

By 2040, Council competently, accountably and responsively manages climate risk; Moreland is climate-resilient, leafy and liveable; with a climate-ready and resilient community.

Survey participants were asked their thoughts on the vision.

- 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the draft vision

VISION
n=40

Strongly Disagree 10%
Disagree 5%
Neutral 3%
Strongly Agree 25%
Agree 57%

When asked if there was anything that they would change about the vision, many respondents took the opportunity to suggest smaller, specific actions that should be included, which may be better suited to future implementation plans. Other suggestions included:

- A shorter timeline than 2040
- Clearer connection to Zero Carbon Moreland
- Addition of "social justice", "proactive", "greened", "safety"
- Change leafy to "more than human life"

Some comments also reiterated support of the vision or expressed hope for its successful delivery. Those strongly disagreeing with the vision were divided between those who thought it was not going far enough or quickly enough and those who believed the Strategy as a whole was not a good use of Council's time and resources.
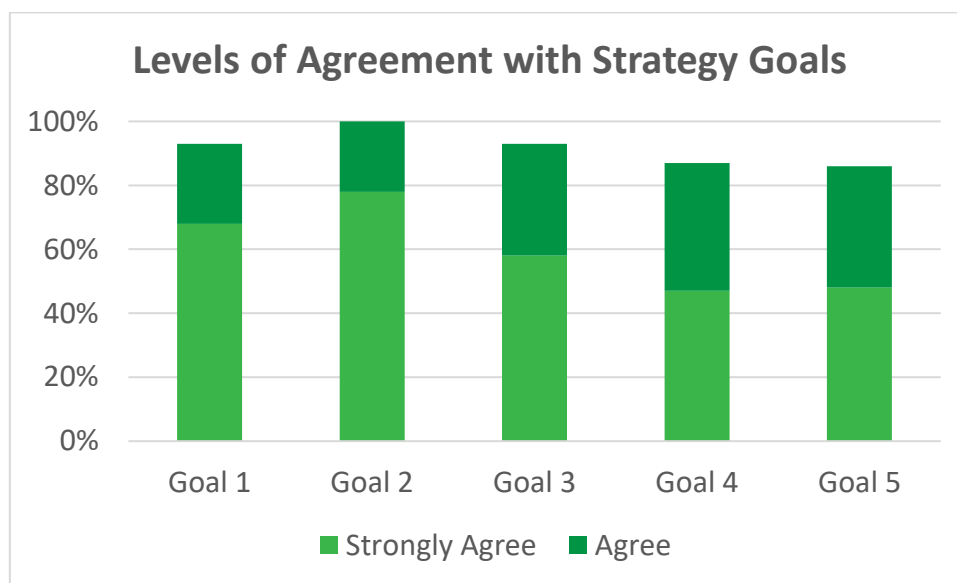
Goals

The draft Strategy contains five goals areas for Council to work towards:

- Goal 1 - Managing climate risk
- Goal 2 - Built and natural environments
- Goal 3 - Community services
- Goal 4 - Community and business
- Goal 5 - Partnership approaches

Survey participants were asked to rate each goal from very important to unimportant. The full results for each goal can be found in appendix 1.

- All goals were strongly supported

Both survey and workshop participants were asked for their thoughts and feedback on the five goals:

Goal 1 - Managing climate risk
- Include focus on waterways and WSUD
- Need for benchmarking both locally and globally and the level of achievement to aim for
- Need for related council policies referenced throughout Strategy to be readily accessible/available and easy to understand the connections between them all

Goal 2 - Built and natural environments
- Greater emphasis on need for green spaces and shading (e.g. Cooling the Upfield Corridor)
- Consider streets and footpaths in both built environment and open space
- Include influencing quality of rental properties
- Inclusion of transport (all kinds) as a focus, especially in regards to equity in the long term
- Decision on whether 20 minute neighbourhoods are still a policy/goal more broadly, and how this may influence much of this goal and the Strategy as a whole
- A Strategy to connect parks for wildlife connection/movement

Goal 3 - Community services
No additional comments were made

Goal 4 - Community and business

- Key focus should be getting people's attention before it is too late
- Consider how we will know if it has been effective
- Target specific risks/impacts e.g. health/cohesion rather than all areas to get wins
- Need for very practical help and resources, not just re-branding information and hoping people will do something
- Consider how Council can take advantage of bigger businesses starting to have bigger focus/effort on Corporate Responsibility/climate action (in light of change of federal government)

Goal 5 - Partnership approaches

- Risks in being involved include a potential lack of focus and the need to always be strategic
- Must ensure that the right partners are found, not just meet targets or expenditure
- Consider how we will know if it has been effective
- Need to learn from the community itself on how to best connect with migrant communities (in particular)
- Focus on stronger connections with schools

Missing from the goals

Survey participants were also asked if there were any key areas/goals missing from the draft Strategy, and if so, why they were important for Council to focus on. Respondents again took the opportunity to suggest smaller, specific actions which may be better suited to future implementation plans. Other suggestions included:

- Separate the built and natural environments to allow more focus on each
- More focus on green space/open space/ regreening
- Include town planning for the many ways it can influence outcomes such as building quality, shading, green space requirements and alternative dwelling types
- Local food production
- Climate justice and intersectional focus. Greater focus on goals that recognise that some groups and communities will be impacted more acutely and more often than others, and ensures their inclusion re: community adaptation and mitigation, and resilience.

Additional focus on goals 4 and 5

Goal 4 – Community & business: By 2030, Moreland residents and businesses have access to relevant and appropriate information and support from Council to take meaningful action to adapt and build resilience to climate change

Goal 5 – Partnership approaches: By 2030, Council influences a range of private and public sector partners to drive adaptation and build climate resilience in Moreland

As members of Council's advisory committees, workshop participants were asked to draw on their knowledge and experience of the Moreland community to take a more in depth look at the intention behind goals 4 and 5 and considerations for implementation once adopted.

Participants began by considering the pros and cons of Council putting time and resources into helping the community adapt to climate risks and in partnering with others (the intention of goals 4 and 5). Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive for Council's involvement in helping individuals, community groups and businesses. Participants noted:

- Need for Council's leadership and advocacy role
- Local understanding, connections and support that Council already has
- Council involvement could create a collaborative and collective movement

They also warned of the need for Council to remain strategic throughout their partnerships, choosing the right partners and the risks of spreading themselves too thin.

Barriers and challenges

Workshop participants were asked to draw on their knowledge and experiences to create a list of potential barriers and challenges in getting the community to take action to adapt, to assist Council in focusing their actions. In particular, they were asked to consider what Council might not know rather than the obvious and general barriers. Strong themes which emerged were:

- Climate change denial/misinformation/fear
- Action fatigue
- Fear of cost/change/opinions of others
- Low priority compared to more immediate, everyday concerns
- Lack of knowledge/understanding/money/resources/practical skill/time
- Too big a problem/not my problem/need for simple solutions
- Low influence/control e.g. renters and public housing tenants
- Information/actions are too generalised or not targeted
- Low community connections/support/encouragement/assistance

Existing adaptation actions

Workshop participants were asked about actions they knew of that were already occurring in the community to support adaptation. Participants were able to identify several programs from other levels of government, such as rebates on LEDs (which focus on emissions reduction rather that climate adaptation), as well as several local community group actions:

- Local food projects such as Fawkner Food Bowl, Fair Food events and Open Table
- Planting and shade creation via Upfield Urban Forest Group or Greening Spaces (laneways, nature strips and parklets)

Partnerships

Workshop participants were also asked for their suggestions of groups, services or organisations that Council could partner with (in support of Goal 5). Participants reminded Council of their existing relationships with organisations such as CERES, local neighbourhood houses and Oxygen (youth space), as well as a number of groups that participants had connections with:

- Hume Climate Action Group with intergenerational members and a number of older people. Provides advocacy channels.
- Facebook group in Brunswick – Good Karma Network which includes environmental activism, news sharing, etc.
- Brunswick Residents Network put out a good monthly information sheet and not only focused on development.

- FairShare have hundreds of volunteers and represent a great networking option
- CALD groups - through Neighbourhood Houses, Muslim community in Fawkner
- Joe's Garden with local mosque/church group
- Greater Metro Cemeteries – open space use/amenity/connection
- Regeneration Melbourne (regen.melbourne)
- Cultural industries as source of energy, insights in cultural community
- Multicultural youth centre/ASRC

Top priority

To complete the survey and workshops, all participants were asked for their final comments and top priority for the draft Strategy, to help guide Council. Comments included:

- Support for the Strategy
- Ensure the Strategy is funded and implemented properly
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation component, with more clearly worded indicators
- Incorporate climate risk into Council's existing strategies and work
- Get some quick wins, don't worry about "perfect"

Top priorities from participants were:

- Housing upgrades for vulnerable households who are impacted the most
- Education with community members who are still unaware. Be clear on the consequences of actions (or inaction)
- Trees and shade
- Focus on health, especially elderly and heat
- Something for smaller players to do to contribute
- Providing digestible information and actions
- The things that create heat build-up – buildings, concrete, asphalt, cars

Local Stories

These local stories of climate were captured to help understand the lived experience of Moreland residents who are already observing the impacts of climate change on their daily lives. These stories may be used in the final Strategy to 'bring it to life' and will also be used in future communications and engagement about climate risks and impacts.

The community (including members of the Aged Friendly Reference Group) was asked for stories of:

- When they had noticed the climate changing in Moreland
- How they are being impacted by warmer or more extreme weather
- Examples of local people or organisations that are acting now to prepare for more extreme weather

Extreme weather 1

We have noticed that there are more extreme weather events each year. Heavy rain, flash flooding, storms, very hot, fires... All these affect our residents who have complex medical needs and are aged and frail. They can also impact our staff, preventing them from making it to work or making it harder.

Shadeless streets

I have noticed that at the peak of summer, I tend to avoid streets that offer little shading/tree coverage. Temperatures are noticeable hotter on streets where there is less greenery.

There are so many streets in Moreland that are wide enough to have a lot more trees. We should prioritise funding for shade-giving, naturally cooling infrastructure.

Extreme weather 2

I've noticed a lot more hail and wind and extreme temperature.

Extreme weather 3

Vulnerable people in the community seem more concerned about extreme weather. They are worried about how to cope on extreme weather days.

Not just here but overseas - conversations are often about "preparing for" rather than "enjoying" the season.

Black Saturday

 I can recall my whereabouts on Black Saturday when the bush fires were on. I was at the Cramer Street Library in Preston. Of course, we were all expecting a horrible a day listening, to the weather forecast the day before. The library was full to the brink because of the air conditioning. There was standing room only. You could lie on the floor if you wanted to, but there were no seats available. There were announcements made over the speaker into the afternoon where how long and whereabouts the cool change was at the time.

I was only getting around on my push bike. As I was riding on the road, it was so hot that I feared my tyres were going to melt. I was perspiring so heavily by the time I crossed Merri Creek and got to Sydney Road, that was all I could take. Eventually I went into a shop that was air conditioned and I asked for a drink as an excuse to stay there.

It was almost like you could touch the hot air that was blowing from the West. It was wavy and almost had a body to it. There was a red glow and ash from the East where the fires were raging, and I'm sure everyone felt the same as me. We all thought we were going to burn if the cool change hadn't arrived in time. That day was really scary.

Green spaces and housing

I think one of the issues with Moreland, and particularly in Brunswick, which is where I live, is the large number of very tall buildings made out of concrete. Building developers seem to have no requirement for green spaces. For example, East Brunswick village. It's a huge development with no green space required of the developers. I think there's a need for more trees, more shade in Moreland, and the council really needs to push for that, especially to make requirements of all developers that they provide some green space.

I think that issue to do with older people feeling very hot in certain parts of summer and very cold in winter has been around for decades. It's not just climate change. Older people have always found it hard in the middle of winter and peak of summer. Also, if people are-- this is to the housing issue, if people are renters, they don't ask their landlords to insulate and draft resist and all that sort of stuff, because they don't want their rent to go through the roof. They just put up with shitty surroundings where they live.

Growing food at home

I come from the Pacific and our staple diet is taro, which is a good crop that grows under the ground. We eat it every day. It is our staple food with rice. We eat the entire plant – roots and leaves. We can't buy taro here in Melbourne, so people from Fiji grow it in their garden.

I've been growing taro in my garden here for 20 years. I've had very little problems, but I've noticed in the last four or five years, the leaves are now curling up and burning in the summer heat, so it's no use to me. In the Pacific, people depend on this for their staple diet. If this continues, people will have problems, and this is what's happening in my garden now. I had no problems and then suddenly I can't use it.

Hot houses

I know someone who was impacted by the warmer weather and it's of great concern to me. She was living in public housing, without any air conditioning and the windows didn't open well. The nature of the building also meant that it heats up and holds it. My friend had fans, but it wasn't enough. She usually would go out into the community a lot, but in the heat she wasn't able to go out at all. It restricted her to home in the hot environment.

She tried to apply for medically essential air conditioning, but her doctor didn't support her. That made her feel even worse, and it affected her mental health. Luckily she got some support to go back to the doctor with someone to advocate on her behalf. She eventually received the grant to get air conditioning but to go through that process when, to me, it was quite visible the impact that it was having on her, probably just made it worse.

Gardens and costs of adapting

About 25 years ago, I planted a cool temperate garden, and I grew vegetables and fruit. About 10 years ago the cool temperate garden was no longer working. Things were frizzling up. Things don't flower at the same time as they used to. They flower too late or too early in the wrong season. I'm changing to native indigenous plants, which is very expensive. There's a cost in managing climate change. Then I had to stop growing vegetables because to grow vegetable I had to have shade cloth and now, physically, I can't put shade cloth up every year or take it down.

While I was still working, I spent as much money as I could on heat and cold proofing my house. That's not much of an issue now because the State Government provides good support, councils provided good support. There's excellent information on local resources. I've always felt the cold, and I've never felt hot in summer, 35 degrees and I'm cruising. Not anymore, 45 degrees is way beyond anyone's tolerance.

I've weatherproofed my house, it just means I have to stay home in summer, which is when you want to be out gardening and walking. I'm grateful I won't get built out because I live in a conservation area. We've all got lots of trees and councils planted more trees in the park, which is brilliant, but it's not like that for everybody. It's a big and immediate issue, I guess, is what I'm saying. It has huge costs associated, which on an age pension, is no joke.
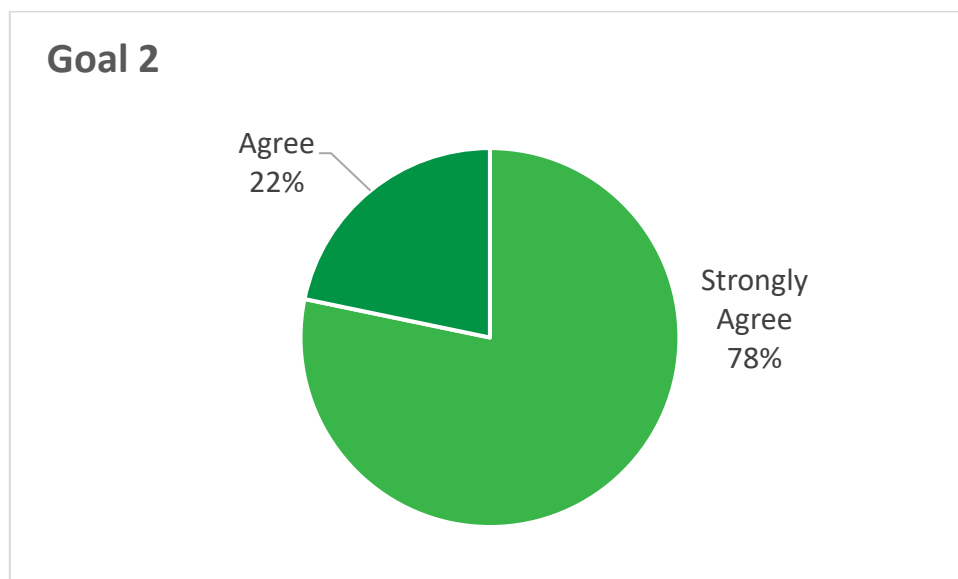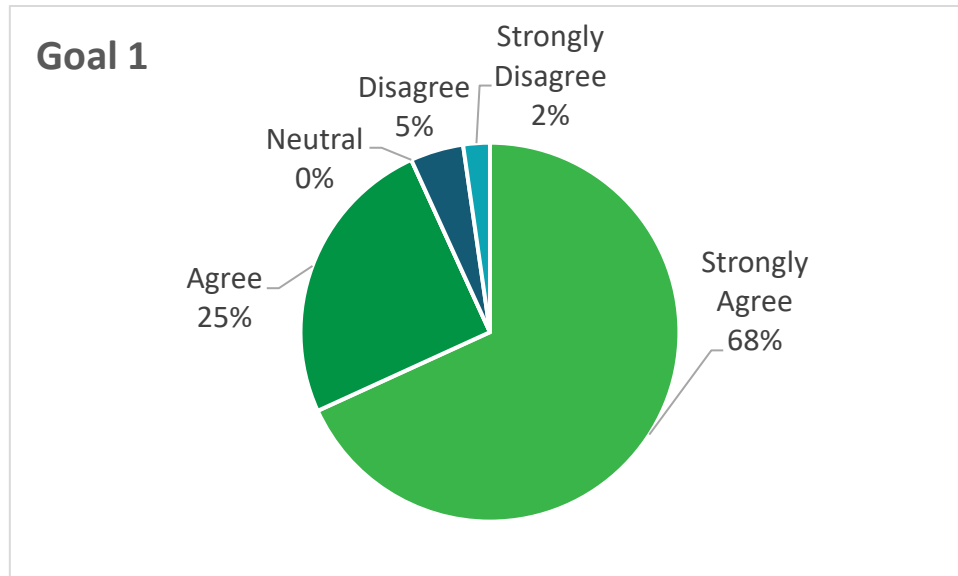
Next Steps

Engagement on this draft Strategy is a first step to informing and engaging the community on the topic of climate risk and action to boost Council and community climate resilience. To build on the momentum created by this project the following next steps are recommended:
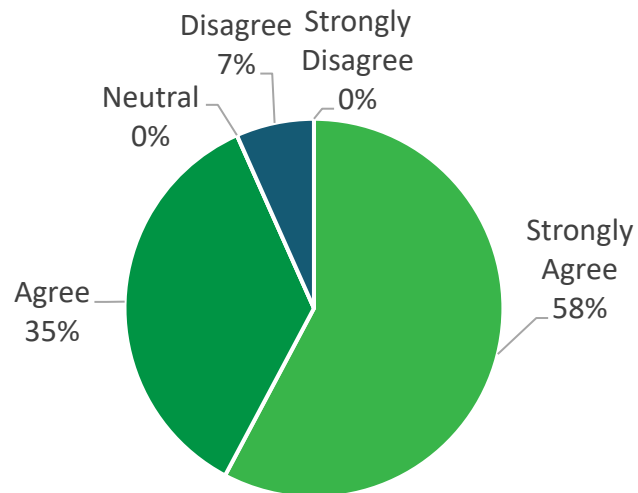
- Share the consultation outcomes with the Climate Resilience Integration Board (CRIB) and consider feedback in finalising the Climate Risk Strategy and related implementation plans/initiatives.
- Issue a project update (including access to this outcome report) to workshop participants and subscribers on the Conversations Moreland project page, thanking everyone for participation in the consultation.
- Keep the community informed via the Conversations Moreland website of what is happening to progress the Climate Risk Strategy.
- Follow up on discrete concerns / opportunities raised by residents with relevant areas of Council.
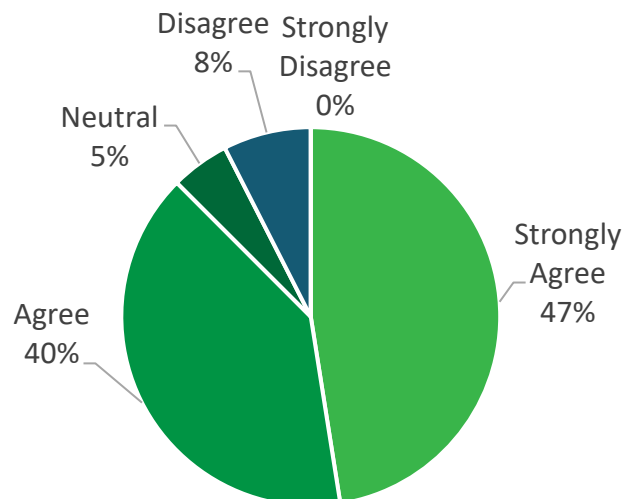
Appendix

Appendix 1 Levels of agreement with Strategy goals

Goal 1

Strongly Disagree 2%

Disagree 5%

Neutral 0%

Agree 25%

Strongly Agree 68%

Goal 2

Agree 22%

Strongly Agree 78%

Goal 3

Strongly Disagree 0%
Disagree 7%
Neutral 0%
Agree 35%
Strongly Agree 58%

Goal 4

Strongly Disagree 0%
Disagree 8%
Neutral 5%
Agree 40%
Strongly Agree 47%

Goal 5

Strongly Disagree 0%

Disagree 7%

Neutral 7%

Strongly Agree 48%

Agree 38%