

Engagement Findings Report

Dandenong Community Hub

December 2022

About this report

This report comprises raw feedback received from the Dandenong community through the consultation period. It summarises the findings of activities hosted by Conversation Co.

Information obtained via this public consultation and summarised in this document will be presented to Council in January 2023 to determine next steps.

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Project Background	3
Engagement Purpose and Scope	3
Methodology	3
Engagement Activities	3
Online Survey	4
Community pop-ups	4
Intercept surveys	4
Engagement Questions	4
Who participated?	8
Participation by engagement method	8
Key Findings	9
Option 1	9
Option 2	10
Option 3	10
Exclusions	11
Proposed service interest	12
Considerations for future engagement	13
Recommendations	13
Project evaluation	14

Introduction

Conversation Co. was engaged by the Greater Dandenong City Council to deliver an engagement program to better understand the community's preferred design option for the proposed Dandenong Community Hub as well as the reason for their preference.

Project Background

Greater Dandenong City Council is planning for a community hub in central Dandenong. Community hubs are multi-purpose community facilities providing a range of complementary services in a single accessible location and generally have a range of shared facilities and functions for the community, groups and organisations.

The Council had previously engaged the community in May and June of 2021 to understand the local community's vision for the Hub, asking participants what sort of facility the community wanted, facilities to be included in the hub, and the preferred location for the hub. Architects then developed three concept designs based on community feedback.

Engagement Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the engagement was to understand the community's preference of the three concepts design and the reasons for their preference. The differences in design for the three options relate to the size of the building, the number of storeys, and the amount of public outdoor space available.

Topics that the project stakeholders could influence and inform (negotiables) were:

- Selecting one of the three options they preferred best.
- Their reasons for the selection.

Topics not open for discussion (non-negotiables) during the engagement were:

- Funding of the facility.
- The services to be included within the hub.
- Variations to the design on the three concepts.

Methodology

A mixed-method community engagement program consisting of online and face-to-face activities was used to reach participants from various levels of interest in the project.

Engagement Activities

Table 2 lists the community engagement activities delivered as part of this project.

Table 2: Community engagement activities

Activity	Purpose
Community pop-ups (2 sessions)	Provide an opportunity for the community to learn about the project and provide their preference while going about their day.
Online survey	Receive feedback from the community on their preference.
Intercept surveys (2 sessions)	Provide an opportunity for the community to learn about the project and provide their preference while going about their day.
Dandenong Civic Centre Customer Service Display	Provide an opportunity for hardcopy submissions into a physical collection box

Online Survey

The online survey was promoted via the Greater Dandenong City Council Have Your Say project page. Participants could register to receive updates on the project.

Community pop-ups

Two place-based community pop-up events were held on different days and times. Times were chosen to ensure maximum engagement from community members going about their day-to-day business.

Pop-up dates, locations and times:

- Saturday November 12, 2022 - Dandenong Market 10am – 1pm
- Thursday November 17, 2022 – Dandenong Library 11am – 2pm

Intercept surveys

Two days of intercept surveys were carried out following the community pop-ups.

Intercept locations and times:

- Saturday November 12, 2022 – Dandenong Plaza 2.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday November 17, 2022 – Dandenong Oasis 3.15pm – 4.15pm

Engagement Questions

Participants were invited to review the three concept designs before responding to the following questions:

- Which Dandenong Community Hub design is your favourite?
- Why do you like it the most?

Participants were also asked to provide their first and last name and email address.

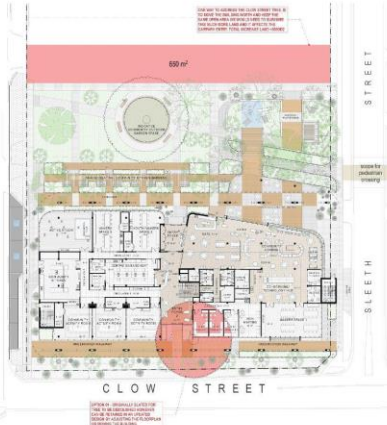
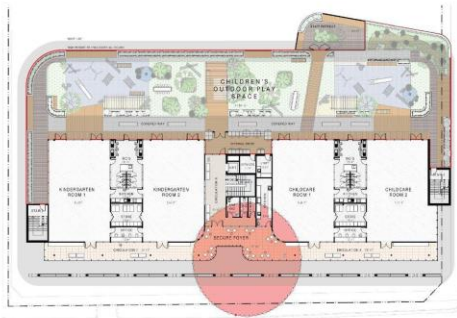
Images: Concept Designs



Option 1

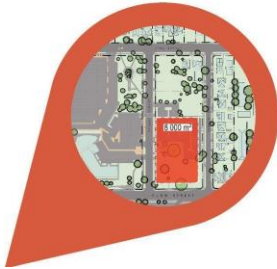
Key design points

- Two storey building
 - ↳ Ground floor - community activity rooms, maternal and child health and cafe
 - ↳ First floor - Kindergarten and child care
- Building size - 4,850 square metres (sqm)
- Community outdoor space - 1,400sqm*
- Childcare outdoor play space - 1,100sqm*
- Large tree to stay



Key design points

- One storey building - all services together
- Building size - 8,000 square metres (sqm)
- Community outdoor space - 760sqm*
- Community garden - 300sqm*
- Childcare outdoor play space - 1,100sqm*
- Large tree to stay



Option 2



Key design points

- One storey building - all services together
- 6,599 square metres (sqm)
- Community outdoor space (including community garden) - 450sqm*
- Childcare outdoor play space - 1200sqm*
- Large tree will be removed



Option 3



Strategies to Support Participation

Community participation was supported through the following initiatives:

- **Dedicated project page:** A dedicated project page was created on Council's *Have Your Say* website, to provide a consistent location for the community to access information and participate in the survey and obtain details about the community pop-ups.
- **Going to the community:** Pop-ups and intercepts were held in the Dandenong community so participants could participate whilst going about their day-to-day business.
- **Variety of engagement methods:** multiple methods were offered, allowing participants to participate in their own time through the online survey or as they were going about their day at a pop-up or intercept. The multiple methods encouraged community members with different time commitments, locations, and interest levels to provide feedback and find out about the project.

Potential barriers to participation

- **Lack of translated material:** A small number of participants found the process difficult due to language barriers. Translated and printed materials could have benefitted these participants.
- **Inability to suggest variations:** Some found the process difficult as they wished to suggest variations to the design or layout. All hard copy submissions from an advocacy group included out-of-scope suggestions or requests.
- **Not residing in Dandenong:** During in-person engagements, a number of users of the spaces explained that they live outside of the area for consultation. This could be linked to the pop-up and intercept survey locations as visitors from other suburbs frequent them. These users were often found to be visiting the market or attending the shopping centre.
- **Lack of awareness of the project:** Participants without internet access, access to the locations where pop-ups and intercept surveys were held, or a need for early childhood services may not have been aware of the project.

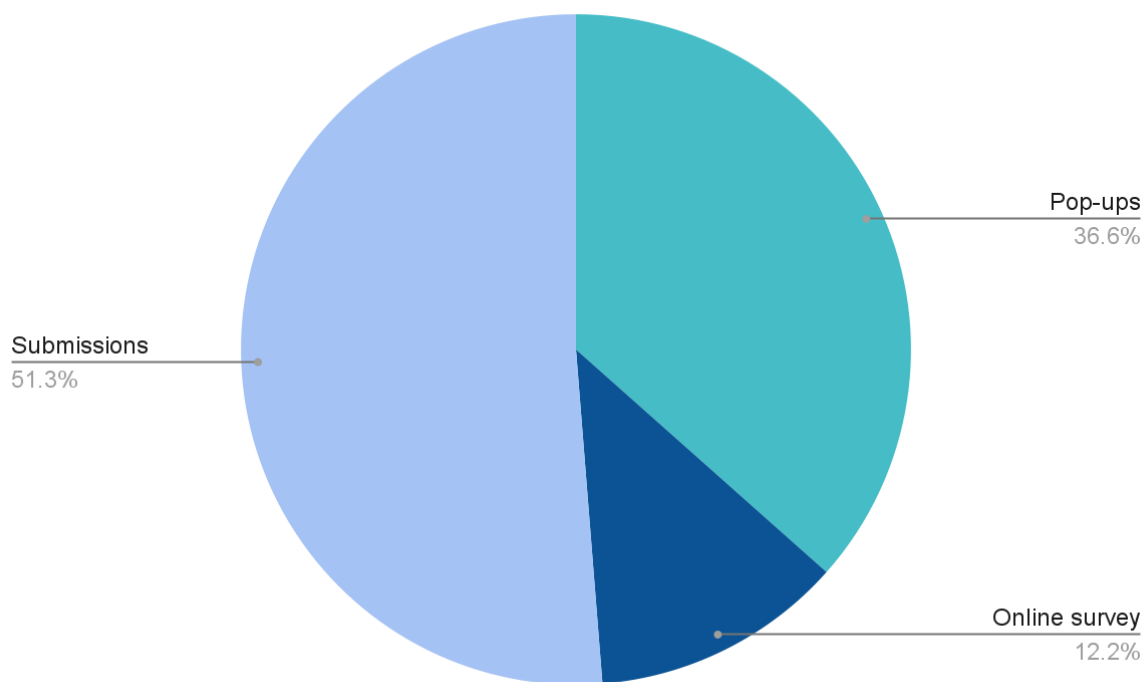
Who participated?

A total of 238 people participated in this engagement program. Two participants made a selection of more than one concept design. Due to issues with duplication, these selections have been excluded from the findings by concept and are found in the Exclusion section. The following section details participation in the project by engagement method and via the online portal.

Participation by engagement method

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of participation and reach across the various engagement methods. The majority of responses to the engagement program were received via hard copy submissions, with 122 responses (51.3%). Participation via place-based community pop-ups contributed 87 responses (36.6%), and 12.2% of responses were received via the online survey.

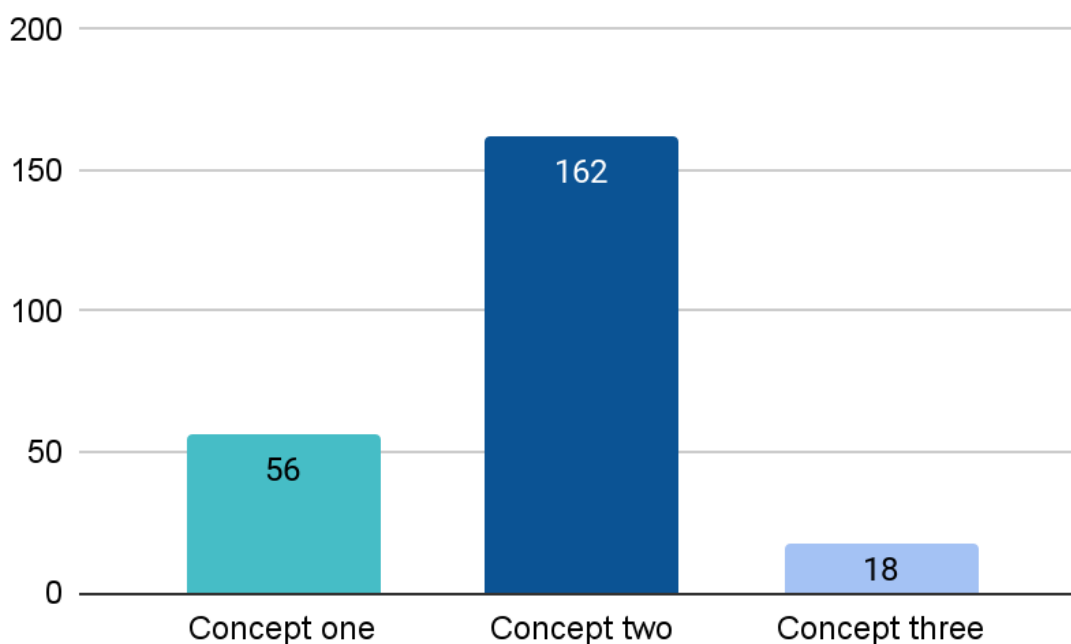
Figure 1. Participation across engagement activities



Key Findings

The key findings outlined in the following section are presented by concept design and provide an overview of the levels of support for each option. These selections were supported by a variety of reasons presented from each participant, which have been grouped into themes below.

Figure 2. Overall support for each concept design



Option 1

The second highest selection among all engagement participants was option 1, with 56 total selections making up 24% of participants. Themes with the most number of mentions are children being located on the second floor (21), followed by the retention of a large tree (20), with best use of space and size and location of green space having an equal number of mentions (11).

Here are some direct community comments.

- Children located on second floor (21)
 - “Like the children's space on the second floor. Contained, still able to connect in community.”
 - “The children are safe and secure and away from prying eyes, space is more private.”
- Retention of a large tree (20)
 - “Don't remove the tree, the more green space the better.”
 - “I like the fact that the tree is kept.”
- Best use of space (11)
 - “I like this as it utilises the space the best with lots of outdoor space.”
 - “Better use of land, open space is always excellent.”

Option 2

The majority of participants selected option two as their preferred concept design, with 162* selections out of an overall total of 236 counted votes (69%).

Themes with the most number of mentions are the retention of a large tree (24), followed by the size and location of a community garden (15), and comments relating to the children's outdoor play space (14).

Here are some direct community comments.

- Retention of large tree (24)
 - "Retention of the big tree. We should be looking to keep our older growth rather than remove it."
 - "The tree is very important."
- Size and location of community garden (15)
 - "Gardens and trees are important - environment/sustainability."
 - "Like the central garden it will provide light and greenery for more rooms."
 - "A community garden is a nice idea as long as it doesn't take away from the small businesses that are the fabric of Dandenong Market."
- Children's outdoor play space (14)
 - "Appreciate larger outdoor garden, children should have large space to play."
 - "Larger outdoor space for the community and kids."

*The project team received 122 photocopied responses that were part of a collection box based at Dandenong Civic Centre Customer Service. We believe a community member may have door-knocked residents in surrounding streets and a retirement village, based on some addresses provided. Given the similarity in responses, we suspect that participants of this engagement were provided with a 'how to respond card' and asked to select from pre-populated responses. This number includes those 122 votes.

Option 3

Option three is the least favoured option, with 18 selections (8%).

Themes with the highest number of mentions are unaffected by tree removal (4), Perceived financial or time-related benefits (4). A further six themes received an equal number of mentions (3), these are

- More space for children
- Location and size of children's outdoor play space
- Access-related issues
- Best use of space
- Positive use of ground area
- Just like one storey

Exclusions

Participants selecting multiple options have been excluded from this count, however, their text responses have been categorised within the overall reasons behind selections. Feedback that is considered out of scope, or to be detailed at a later stage of the project are not reported within this report, however, will be referred to at later stages of the project.

Further information on these responses is found below.

Duplicate responses

Participants that selected two or more options on the same postcard were excluded from the results to avoid any duplication.

There were only two participants that responded this way, and their selections are:

- One participant selected options one and two
- One participant selected all three options.

Out of scope information

There were 122 responses that provided variations, requests or responses to be considered later in the project. These responses consisted of 13 typical responses:

1. Community activity rooms and community kitchen should be together on the Stuart St side
2. Community kitchen should serve out into the community activity rooms (like Keysborough South Community Hub)
3. Centre Management should be much smaller
4. No need for staff retreat - they can mix with the community
5. Changing places should not be in foyer - should be closer to playground or outdoor areas
6. Increase space for public playground so that it is a large playground with equipment for both smaller and older children of 2,500 square metres (same size as Keysborough South Community Hub). Current small playground proposed (around 200 square metres) will be a white elephant that will not attract users to the hub
7. Have children's services connected to the rest of the building so it isn't a separate building just bolted on which the design seems to indicate at the moment. This will mean a foyer is needed in front of the community lounge so the foyer connects to all parts of the building like the Keysborough South Community Hub
8. Design the building so the community lounge can be open 7 days a week, 12+ hours a day - this informal space needs to be open when the rest of the building is open as space that does not need to be booked will make the hub a success. This may mean flipping the cafe and the community lounge around.
9. Preserve all medium - large trees on site, including the ones on the house just purchased, consistent with the local law about protecting trees that the Council want to introduce
10. Have bigger gallery space so there can be displays of the people and history of the array. Currently one is just a nook.

11. All Maker's spaces should have sinks
12. Definitely the hub should be single storey so it is an integrated design
13. Overall hub should take up more of the Clow St/Stuart St/King St, Sleeth Avenue site

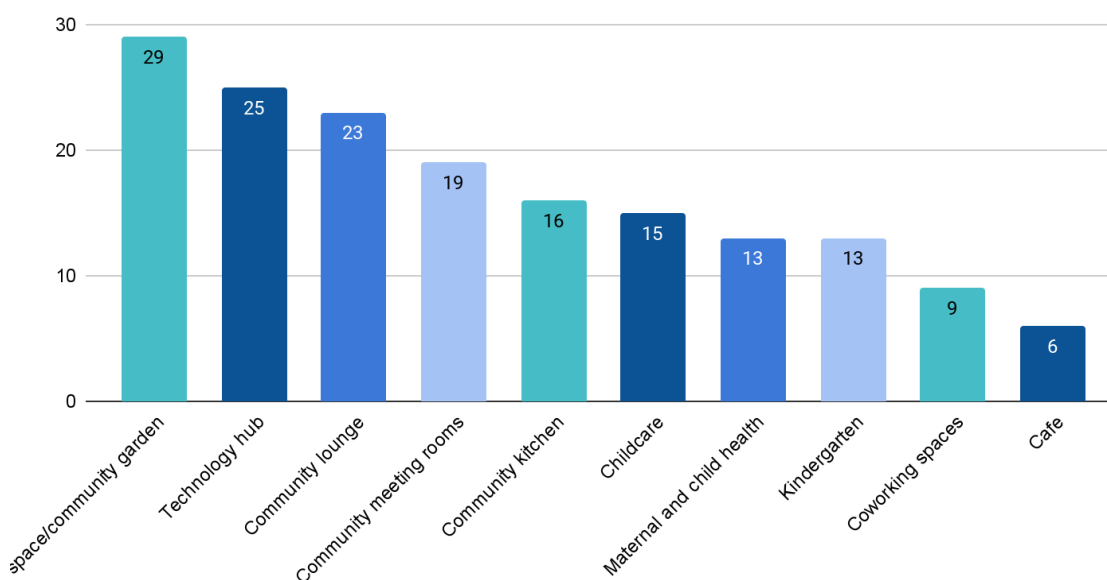
While these text responses have been excluded, their preferred concept design has been included in the overall results.

Proposed service interest

Participants were asked to select one or more services that they would be interested in from a pre-populated list. An additional category (cafe) was added during in-person engagements due to the frequency with which it was suggested.

The majority of participants selected outdoor space/community garden (29), followed by the technology hub (25) and community lounge with 23 selections.

Figure 3. Level of support for proposed services



Considerations for future engagement

Amendments to design to improve inclusivity

One response questioned why the concept designs included a foot washing station but failed to include a prayer room.

In further engagement with the community on the finer details of the Community Hub, it may be suitable to include details that address the needs of the diverse community of Dandenong.

Demonstrate the need for the hub and its services

Some respondents questioned or made mention of the need, or lack thereof for the services included in the Hub. Where possible it may be beneficial to demonstrate the process behind determining the need for these services.

Increased communications

To improve participation and awareness of the project, it may be beneficial in future stages to seek out more opportunities to promote the project. This could be in the form of a letterbox drop or online information sessions that allow for different communication needs in the community.

A letterbox drop was undertaken with 2,000 flyers delivered to the area surrounding the proposed hub location.

Recommendations

The following section provides our recommendations based on conversations with the community and key stakeholders and the feedback they provided.

Issue of locating children upstairs is divisive: Prior to commencing the project engagement, it was known that a number of community members were concerned with the possibility of locating children's services on the second floor. However, through the findings, it is noted that a majority of participants considered safety and security to be improved by this design. Consideration should be given to the weight of reasons given for the location of children.

Delivering public value: during the consultation 'who this project is serving', was a common concern or question raised. This project brought under question the lack of need for more early children's services in conjunction with appropriate uses of funding. Consideration needs to be given to recent birth rates and the number of existing services in the surrounding area.

Strong connections to green and open space: Green and open space is a strong theme outlined in this consultation. While all concept designs incorporate gardens and open areas, it is important to consider the availability of green space in the immediate and surrounding areas.

Process recommendations

Engagement on this project has already created significant interest and aspirations for the Dandenong community, for those who participated, read a post online or were engaged at a pop-up or intercept.

- **Keeping people updated:** Issue a statement and update the Council project page thanking participants for participating in the project and for sharing their ideas. As we move into the next phase of the project we need to keep the broader community updated about the progress of this project.
- **Share the data:** We have collected a substantial level of data that may be used by other departments to plan the delivery of services. Consider ways you can share this data such as creating a snapshot of the engagement data, to bring the data to life with infographics to help participants digest the information in an easy form.

Project evaluation

The project Engagement Plan established several measures of engagement success, as shown in Table 1.

In terms of stakeholder reach, the number of participants fell slightly short of the minimum target of 250. A clear preferred design concept has been obtained through the consultation. Participants provided feedback through all engagement activities, both online and face-to-face.

Table 1. Project Evaluation - Measures of Success

Measure of success	Data Source	Result
Target of 250 participants minimum	Pop up and intercept surveys, online survey, hardcopy submissions	238 total participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Market 39 ● Plaza 13 ● Library 24 ● Oasis 11 ● Online survey 29 ● Advocacy group
Clear design outcome	Feedback from the online survey, pop-ups	Target met - There is a strong preference for design option 2.
Participants provide feedback within engagement activities	Data collection, online export data	Target met- Participants provided feedback through both the online survey and face-to-face activities; the community pop ups and intercept surveys.