



# Yarra Junction Place Plan

Consultation and Engagement Report  
December 2024

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

**Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.**

**We pay our respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.**

**We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.**



# Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan

## Consultation and Engagement Report

Council has been working with the community of Yarra Junction over the past 12 months to develop the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan. Place planning is a collaborative, long-term approach to building thriving communities. The Draft Place Plan aims to:

- Articulate a shared vision;
- Describe the issues and opportunities for Yarra Junction and Council's strategic intent;
- Create a foundation for design plans such as a Township Design Framework, which can in turn be used to seek funding for projects to be delivered;
- Identify an Action Plan for Council;
- Provide an evidence-based advocacy platform for Government and investment.

This report provides a summary of consultation and engagement activities that took place to develop the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan, and feedback received from community regarding the Draft Plan.

Associated documents:

- Yarra Junction Place Plan - Engagement and Directions Paper - December 2023
- Draft Yarra Junction Plan Plan - June 2024

Published by Yarra Ranges Council 2024.

This document and associated documents are available on our website.

Hard copies are available on request at any of our five Community Links. To request a copy, email or phone our Customer Service Centre using the details below:

[yarraranges.vic.gov.au](https://yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

[mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 368 333

# How We Engaged

The Yarra Junction Place Plan project team has focused on ensuring extensive community engagement, by providing a broad range of opportunities for community to have their say.

## Phase One Engagement



A two month Consultation and Engagement period opened the place plan conversation with community (running August to October 2023).

Community were asked three open questions:

- What do you love about Yarra Junction?
- Where do you see opportunities for improvement?
- What do you want to see for the future?



A letter was mailed out to over 1,000 households in Yarra Junction to inform the community of the project and explain how to provide feedback.



Advertised drop in sessions were held at the Yarra Junction Family Centre with Council staff available to provide information and collect feedback.



1,895 people who registered their interest in Yarra Junction received an email notification regarding Council's Shapping Yarra Ranges engagement page. Two months of social media promoting ways to engage.



Flyers were placed in some shops and signage was placed around the activity centre, as well as radio interviews discussing the project and engagement opportunities on 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.



Council officers attended meetings and had interviews with community groups, sports clubs, service providers and schools.



268 face to face interviews and written submission were received.



112 quick submissions with 568 votes, and 16 detailed submissions with 13 votes were recorded on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page.



Engagement with Council's Disability Advisory Committee, including a township accessibility assessment with Disability Advisory Group members, demonstrating lived experience of moving around the centre of Yarra Junction.



A peer led youth workshop was held at Upper Yarra Secondary College.



Council officers spent time talking to community by visiting businesses, spending time at the shops, library, Yarra Centre, school drop off zones, and attended community events including the Halloween Street Party, Teddy Bears Picnic and Over 50's Friendship Group Lunch.



An Engagement and Directions Paper summarising community feedback was published (April 2024).

# Community Workshops

## Phase Two Engagement



Five workshops were held with a [Community Representative Group](#), involving 22 representatives including local business owners, service providers, community groups and residents.



In these workshops our Community Representative Group explored the community feedback received in Phase One Engagement and developed a [Community Vision](#) and [Action Plan](#) to sit within the Place Plan.

# Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan

## Phase Three Engagement



Four weeks [community consultation](#) on the Draft Place Plan (running August to September 2024).



[Hard copies](#) of the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan were made available at Yarra Junction Family Centre / Community Link.



Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page was visited by [762 visitors](#), with [38 contributions](#) to an activity designed to prioritise the action items, and [13 quick poll contributions](#).



An [online video](#) presentation explaining the process of developing the Draft Place Plan and the Action Plan was available on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page.



[Advertised drop in sessions](#) were held at the Yarra Junction Family Centre with Council staff available to provide information and collect feedback.



[1,895 people](#) who registered their interest in Yarra Junction received an [email notification](#) regarding Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page. [1 months of social media](#) promoting the Draft Place Plan and ways to engage.



[Signage](#) was placed around the activity centre, adverts in school newsletters and [radio interview](#) discussing the project and engagement opportunities on 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.



Council officers attended [Yarra Junction Market](#) to talk with community and promote the Draft Place Plan.



Council [Advisory Committees](#) were provided details on how to review and provide feedback on the draft. Officers attended a [Disability Advisory Committee](#) meeting to receive in person feedback on the draft.



[52 face to face interviews and written submissions](#) were received.



[Consultation and Engagement Report](#) summarising engagement phases and community feedback on the Draft Place Plan was published (December 2024).



# Responding to community feedback

Community feedback was generally supportive of the draft Place Plan. Many submissions and conversations recognised the key issues responded to in the Draft Action Plan.

The Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan was open for community feedback for four weeks, offering many opportunities for people to share their thoughts both in person and online.

The feedback mainly focused on the priorities in the Action Plan, indicating that the Place Plan was generally well-received. The extensive consultation and collaboration with the community during the first two rounds of engagement ensured that the Draft Place Plan reflected community views.

This Consultation and Engagement report summarizes the key feedback provided by the community about the Draft Place Plan. Much of this feedback will be used to inform adjustments to the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan, which will be finalised and put forward for Council consideration for adoption in early 2025.

If the Place Plan is adopted by Council, a Township Design Framework will be created to turn the vision into actual designs. Projects can then seek funding for delivery. Progress on actions and projects will be reported annually.

We've received some feedback regarding the document's format. Specifically, we've been asked to simplify the Place Plan and refine the Action Plan to ensure that actions have a clearer impact, eliminate any overlap, and include timeframes and measures.

We'll review the Place Plan with this feedback in mind. This document sets the direction and priorities for the Council at a high level, and funding for actions hasn't been committed yet. Therefore, while we can't confirm exact timings, the final Plan will indicate short, medium, and long-term goals, as well as ongoing commitments.



## Priority Actions

Community were asked to rate the actions in the Draft Action Plan. The following five actions were the highest supported actions, for each priority area.

- **Road maintenance & safety**
- **Develop township identity and character**
- **Community infrastructure**
- **Health & support services**
- **Development of retail/hospitality sector**

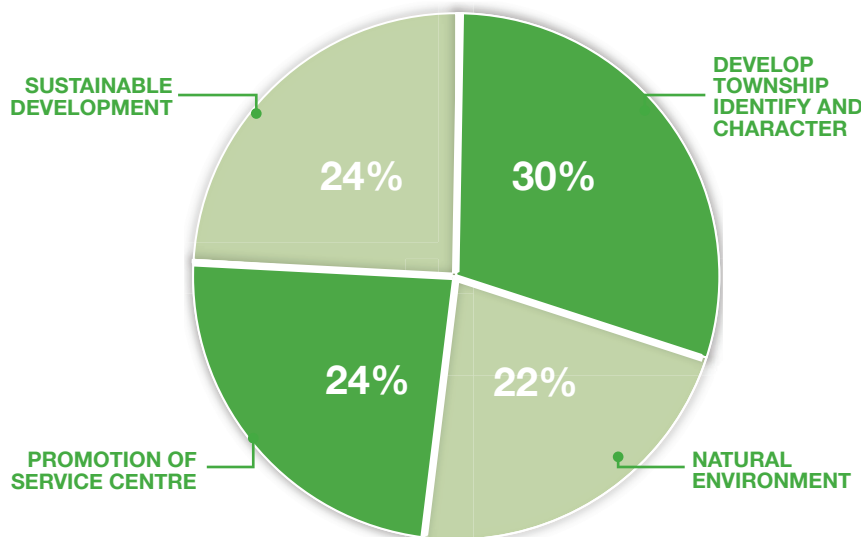
The ratings were widespread, with no significantly high responses for any given action. This indicates that the action list effectively addresses the many priorities important to the community. However, a few actions rated quite low and may be reconsidered when refining the action list for the final Plan.

Community feedback requesting a focus on key priorities in the draft Action Plan will be carefully considered in the final Place Plan. We'll ensure that the intent of any actions is not lost during this refinement process.



# Priority 1 - Culture and Character

Yarra Junction's community values it's township identity and character, the natural environment and it's role as a service centre to the Upper Yarra community.



"Yarra Junction is a small regional town, most people live here for that reason. You should put more effort into maintaining the existing infrastructure."

"We are already seeing development in some areas and the infrastructure such as drains and roads aren't coping. We need the infrastructure to catch up with development"

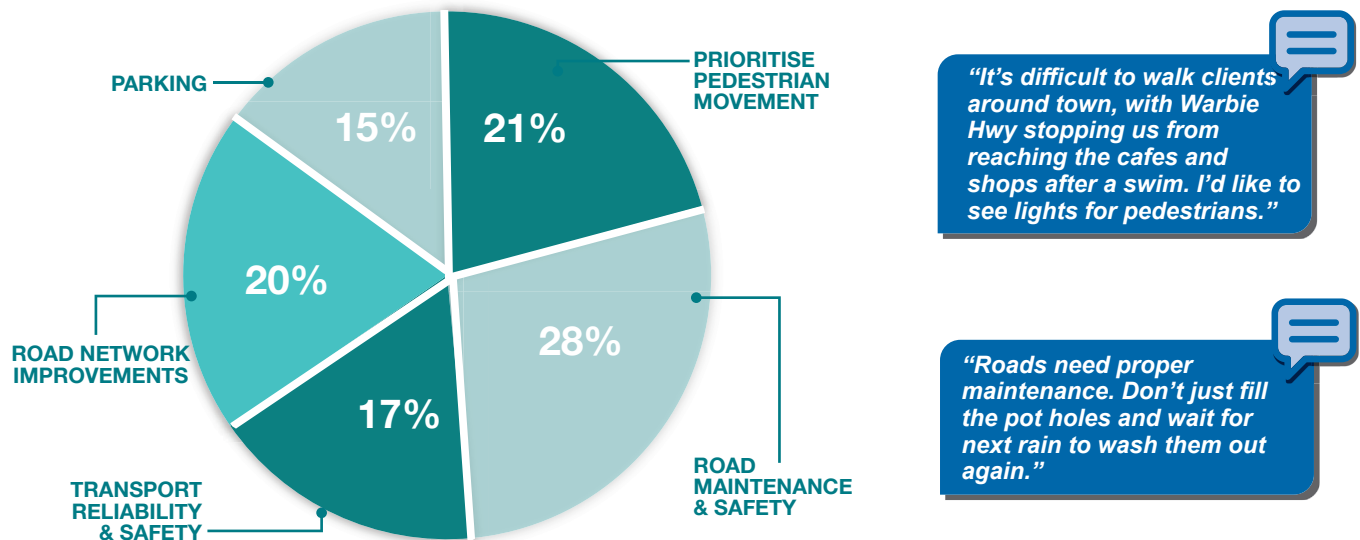
\* Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK	
Action 1.1 Develop township identity & character	The history of the region and character of the community are highly valued by the people of Yarra Junction.
	People felt that acknowledging the heritage of the region would increase community pride.
	Young people agreed that township heritage is important, but also want to see acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage for the area as well.
Action 1.2 Natural environment	Support was given to maintaining and protecting the natural assets in the area.
	Many people commented that the natural assets are a key reason for loving Yarra Junction.
	The Yarra and Little Yarra River were highlighted as important features of the township, as well as the surrounding views and trails.
Action 1.3 Promotion of service centre	Some would like better access to the rivers, allowing for recreational use, whilst still protecting the environment.
	Community acknowledged that Yarra Junction has always been the service centre for the Upper Yarra and plays an important role in emergency response.
	This action could be incorporated as part of the township identity action item (1.1).
Action 1.4 Sustainable development	Community support maintaining focus on the local service centre role, rather than prioritising tourism.
	There were many concerns raised by community as to what this meant and whether updates to the Planning Scheme would cause unacceptable growth.
	People generally accepted that some growth and increased diversity in housing is necessary, but do not want to loose the neighbourhood character of the township.
	Some people felt that this response is too late and are unhappy with developments that have already taken place around the activity centre. Requesting more control in decision making in future.



# Priority 2 - Transport and Accessibility

The community want Yarra Junction to be a safe and accessible town to move around, with a strong pedestrian focus, quality roads and public transport infrastructure.

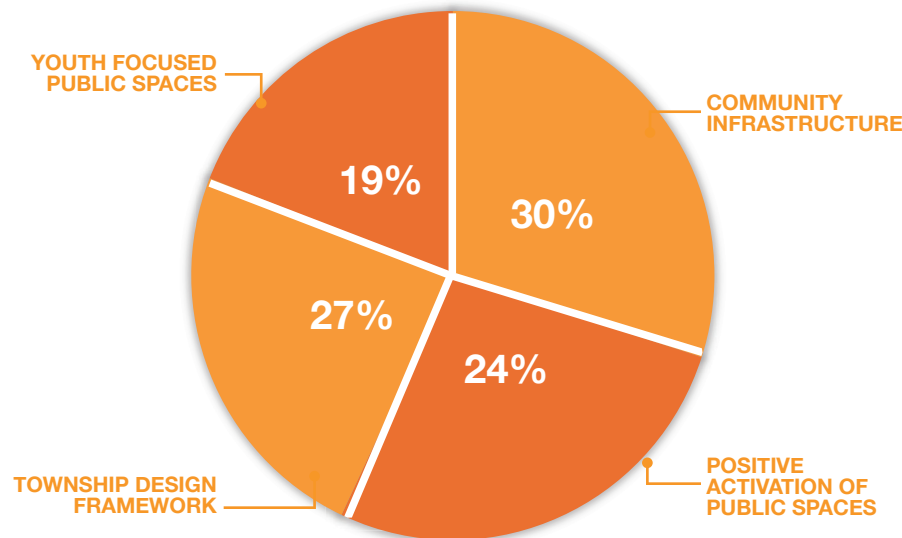


\* Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK	
Action 2.1 Prioritise pedestrian	There was strong support to improve accessible movement around the activity centre. Feedback included identifying hazards and areas that pedestrian focused interventions could be put in place.
	Some felt that this is a vehicle dependent community.
Action 2.2 Road maintenance & safety	Strong support came in for improved maintenance and safety in the road network, with many comments focusing on the safety of Warburton Highway.
	A large amount of feedback focused on the ongoing maintenance of local roads and Warburton Highway. Some requests were made for a review of the maintenance program and better solutions for dealing with recurring potholes.
	Some concerns were raised about the loss of funding for sealing local dirt roads in the area.
Action 2.3 Transport reliability & safety	The community wants more frequent transport service available, suggestions were made about increased bus services, flexiride, or ride share services in the area.
	Safety concerns around bus infrastructure, including safe bus shelters, accessible paths to bus stops and pedestrian crossings near bus stops.
Action 2.4 Road network improvements	Suggested were made for infrastructure improvements to better manage traffic around the activity centre and alleviate traffic in the main street.
	This action should be considered with the road safety actions (2.2).
	There is some nervousness as to how roads will manage high levels of movement in an emergency situation.
Action 2.5 Parking	There was a lot of feedback the poor condition of the private shopping centre car park.
	Community would like to see improvements to accessible parking around the centre.
	Some would like to see parking restricted or removed from Warburton Highway in areas of the activity centre to provide better vision and safety on the Main Street.

# Priority 3 - Community Infrastructure

Community would like integrated and accessible spaces that celebrate the natural environment, support positive health outcomes, and increase social connections.



\* Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

*"Revitalise the streetscape to make more attractive and help businesses."*

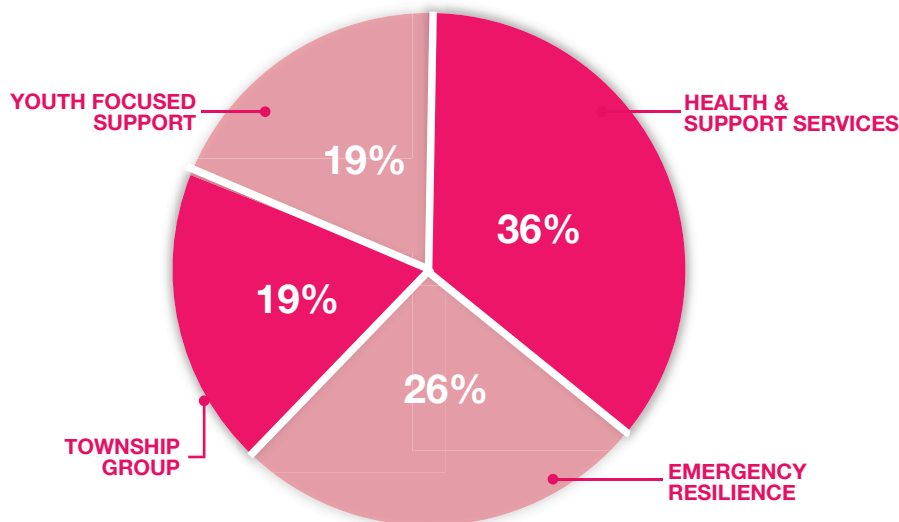
*"A hydro therapy pool is absolutely necessary at the Yarra Centre. There is an ever increasing ageing population in the area and no facility for a warm pool for therapy."*

*"It's great to see investment in Yarra Junction's future, but it needs to be balanced and appropriate."*

FEEDBACK	
Action 3.1 Community Infrastructure	Community Infrastructure is ageing and not meeting communities' expectations.
	Community would like to see Council committed to maintaining and upgrading current infrastructure, to allow for better accessibility, technology and functionality.
	The Yarra Centre is highly valued by community and people would like to see further investment in maintaining and upgrading this centre, with particular interest in a hydrotherapy pool.
Action 3.2 Township Design Framework	Community wants to see Council progress with planning and delivering township improvements.
	Many detailed suggestions were provided during all phases of consultation, which will be considered in developing the Township Design Framework. Focus areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian movement and accessibility</li> <li>• Town aesthetic and beautification</li> <li>• Public spaces</li> <li>• Shopping centre precinct</li> <li>• Recreational spaces &amp; connections to trails network</li> <li>• Signage, public art and heritage influences</li> </ul>
Action 3.3 Positive activation of public spaces	Community would like to see infrastructure established that can allow for more community events.
	People would like to see increased activity outside the shopping centre including outdoor dining, artwork and lighting, creating a safe and positive atmosphere.
Action 3.4 Youth focused public spaces	Many people support the development of youth focused spaces.
	Young people should be included in the planning of youth focus spaces and public artworks.
	Some felt this action could be considered as a priority for the Township Design Framework (3.2).

# Priority 4 - Partnerships

Working towards a resilient and connected community with a shared vision. With strong health and social services networks that supports the needs of all community.



*"Ambulance is not always an option when emergencies occur. Need to drive to the hospital which is hard. Need to prioritise emergency health"*

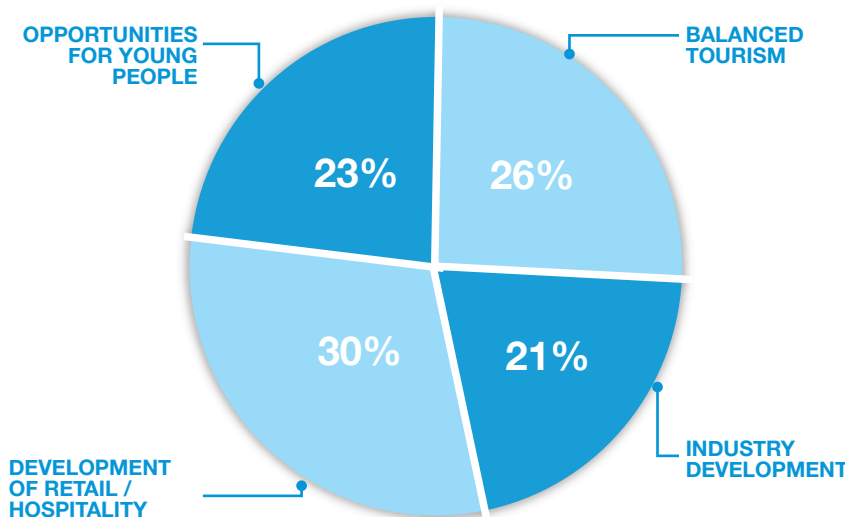
*"More emphasis needed on lobbying state government for improvements to Warburton Highway traffic flow. Needed due to extreme bush fire risk."*

\* Actions as ranked in the Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK	
Action 4.1 Health & Support Services	Community would like to see additional resources for emergency healthcare and other health services in the centre.
	Many people accept that they need to travel "down the line" to reach specialist health care services.
	People commented that they are happy with the services available locally. They would just like to see them available more consistently.
Action 4.2 Emergency Resilience	Community acknowledged that emergency resilience must remain a priority in Yarra Junction.
	There are some concerns about the reliability of infrastructure to support communication and the road network supporting mass evacuation, in times of emergency.
	The role of community in emergency resilience is important, with many feeling confident that Yarra Junction as a community would support each other in times of emergency, with reflections on this being part of the town character and heritage.
Action 4.3 Township Group	There was support towards the role of a township group for Yarra Junction, and the important function they would play in community.
	Some acknowledged that this action is already taking place, with the newly formed Yarra Junction Township Group.
Action 4.4 Youth focused support	Some want to see more support services for youth including out of school activities and training opportunities.

# Priority 5 - Business & Employment Opportunities

Community want to see increased opportunity to prosper and thrive as the town grows, with a diverse and sustainable economy that supports local jobs growth.



\* Actions as ranked in the Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

*"Please put local residents before tourists."*

*"We need to provide more opportunities for young people to work and live in the town. Industry, trades and affordable housing so young people can stay here."*

FEEDBACK	
Action 5.1 Balanced Tourism Development	There is inconsistent opinion on the role of tourism in Yarra Junction. Some people feel that too much emphasis is placed on tourism infrastructure in the Upper Yarra area and would like to see Council concentrate investment on infrastructure for the local community.
	Some people believe that Yarra Junction could better attract users of the local trail network to ensure economic benefit for the local community.
	Suggestions to support tourism included signage to direct visitors, improved township aesthetic and outdoor dining, as well as better parking and movement options in centre. There were some suggestions of tourist attraction activities, the most popular being based around heritage and nature based tourism.
Action 5.2 Industry Development	Community would like to see development of light industry and creative industry opportunities in Yarra Junction.
	There was community concern about the closure of the native timber industry and what new industries may be developed to reinvigorate the economy in the broader Upper Yarra area.
Action 5.3 Development of Retail / Hospitality sector	Community would like to see the retail centre reinvigorated, with improved aesthetic, outdoor activation, revitalised streetscape and diversity in businesses.
	Many people would like to see a stronger night-time economy, providing more local jobs for young people and positive activity in centre.
Action 5.4 Opportunities for Young People	Many would like to see more opportunities for local training and employment in skills based jobs for young people, including development of local light industry, creative industries and hospitality.



# Next Steps

The Yarra Junction Place Plan establishes Council's long term strategic intent. No funding is currently allocated to the delivery of actions in this Plan. These key next steps will ensure the Place Plan progresses towards the delivery of real projects and community outcomes over time.

## Yarra Junction Place Plan Consideration of Adoption by Council

Yarra Junction Place Plan considered for adoption by Council, and aligned to delivery of key strategies. Actions to be included in Council's annual Corporate Action Plan.

## Township Design Framework and potential short term projects

A Township Design Framework to be developed to translate the principles into actual designs and projects prepared for delivery. Solutions that can be readily delivered will be designed and costed in order to seek funding for construction.

## Yarra Junction Place Plan Action Plan, Reporting and Review

The Actions will be integrated into Council's annual business and project planning with specific actions allocated to directorates and teams for delivery. Progress on actions and projects will be reported annually.

The Yarra Junction Place Plan will be reviewed and evaluated over time to ensure it is current, relevant and adapted to any changes that have arisen. Performance and monitoring will be publicly available through Council's on-line channels.



