

## Background

In 2018, Council signed up for a three-year membership to the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme under which member cities are tasked with setting up an intercultural support group to review their urban policies from an intercultural perspective and to integrate them into a comprehensive strategy.

As part of delivering on this task, in 2019, Council teamed up with Ballarat and Melton city councils to host the Intercultural Cities Australasia Summit resulting in the 'Taking it to the Streets' event.

A Think Tank Round Table event and online survey were also hosted followed by a series of stakeholder workshops to understand aspirations for an intercultural city, ways Council could achieve this and to help review themes to support the development of a draft Strategy.

The draft Strategy was endorsed for engagement in June 2023. Recognising the community had not been involved in the development of the document, this initial conversation would run for an extended period of six weeks.

## Methodology

The community was invited to share feedback and ideas on the draft Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023-2026 over a six-week period from Friday 25 August to Sunday 8 October 2023. This included a hybrid engagement approach of online feedback channels and in-person discussions.

The Your City Your Voice project page offered two channels to provide feedback, the form and gather tool. There were also **nine** in-person engagements providing opportunity for residents to talk directly with the project team and share feedback via a questionnaire. These activities were listed on the project page and promoted on social media.

The engagement also featured, along with a postcard insert, in the spring edition of Council's tabloid magazine, Maribyrnong Messenger, which was delivered to 38,000 households. Translated information appeared on the front of the postcard with a single broad question on the back. The languages used were Vietnamese, Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, Greek and Spanish.

Posters inviting the local community to provide feedback and ideas were displayed at local libraries and community centres with messages also shared on their e-newsletter and social media channels. The project was further promoted via a media release, an e-newsletter to the Maribyrnong Matters Panel and social media posts across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

A vox-pox style video was also produced, featuring community members who reflected on the importance of Maribyrnong's diversity. This was hosted on YouTube and shared via Your City Your Voice and social media to promote the project and encourage participation.

**Two** emails were also sent to key stakeholders introducing the project, inviting them to share with their networks and encouraging feedback.

## Overall response

**244** contributions were received, including:

- **128** hard copy questionnaires completed at in-person events
- **28** surveys (form tool) completed online via Your City Your Voice
- **two** contributions through the Your City Your Voice gather tool and **four** votes
- **81** postcards
- **one** email sent to the Community Engagement mailbox.

## Your City Your Voice

The project was viewed **448** times by **215** visitors who made **368** visits leaving **30** contributions (**six** via the gather tool and **28** via the form tool) and **five** people also followed the project page.

The draft Strategy was downloaded **45** times.

Interest in the project peaked immediately following the project launch promoted through Maribyrnong Messenger distribution (25 August), and following social media posts (14 and 19 September) and a follow-up email to stakeholders (3 October).

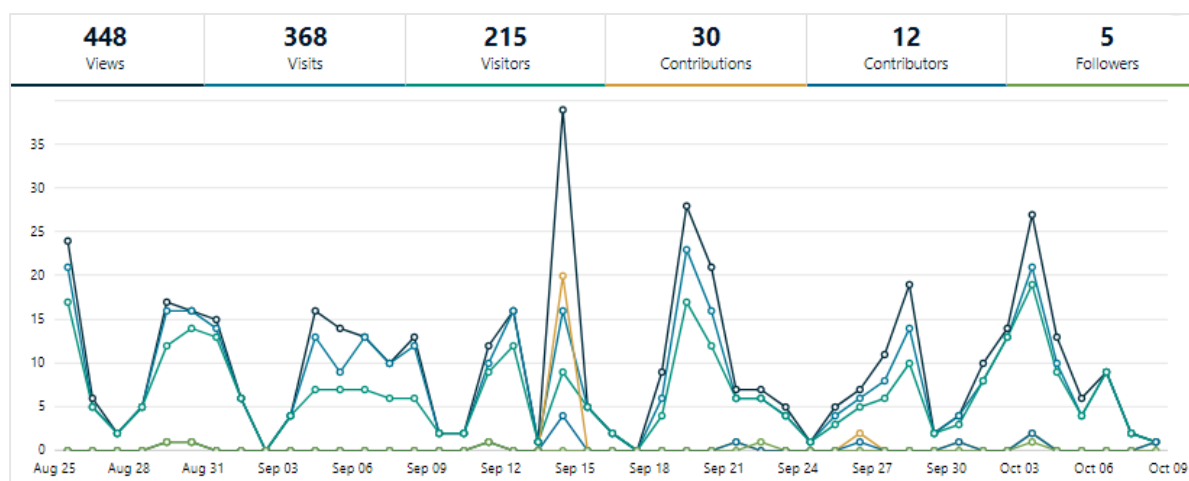


Figure 1. Your City Your Voice project page activity during the engagement period

Nearly half of the **215** individual visitors (**40.2%**) were active on the project page for at least one minute.

## In-person events

The in-person events provided the opportunity for community members to discuss the draft Strategy, ask questions and share their feedback and ideas on interculturalism in Maribyrnong directly with project team members.

A hardcopy questionnaire could also be completed online with supplied iPads. The questionnaire was a modified version of the fuller survey hosted on the Your City Your Voice page, recognising the vagaries of the different mediums and specifically the inability to provide the same access to information available online in the face-to-face setting to support participants to meaningfully respond to the full suite of questions.

**Nine** in-person engagements were held at a variety of locations across the municipality between 14 September and 6 October 2023:

- Thursday 14 September, 3pm to 7pm at Maribyrnong Community Centre
- Tuesday 19 September, 10:30am to 12pm at Central West Shopping Centre
- Saturday 23 September, 2:30pm to 3:30pm at Footscray Library
- Tuesday 26 September 4pm to 5:30pm at Maribyrnong Library
- Wednesday 27 September, 12:30pm to 2pm at Footscray Market
- Thursday 28 September, 11am to 12:30pm at Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC)
- Wednesday 4 October, 9am to 11:30am at Maidstone Community Centre
- Thursday 5 October, 10:45am to 11:40am at Braybrook Community Centre
- Friday 6 October, 12:30pm to 2pm at Footscray Library.

Approximately **650** community members interacted with Council staff at these sessions. **128** hardcopy questionnaires were completed at the sessions (one for every five persons spoken to).

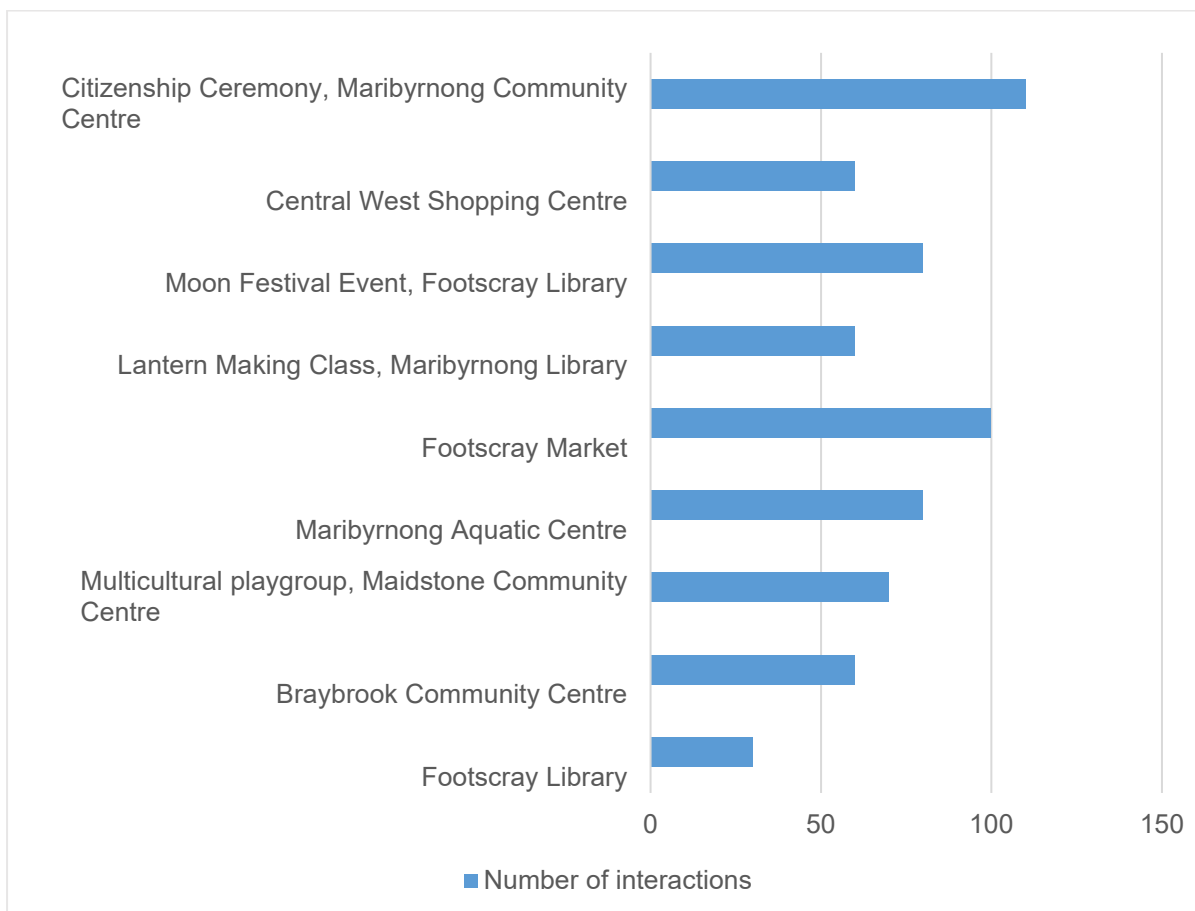


Figure 2. Interactions with community members by event

### Postcards

**81** postcards were received responding to the question: *What do you think Council can do to ensure everyone feels safe, included and empowered?*

### Email

**One** email was sent directly to the Community Engagement mailbox expressing support for the work Council is doing in the cultural space.

## Findings

Engagement was premised on gathering feedback on three areas:

- what Council can do to ensure everyone feels safe, included and empowered in the municipality
- which of the eight proposed actions in the draft Strategy the community considered the most important
- the community's ideas to achieve actions 1.3, 1.4 and 3.2 specifically.

### **Questionnaire (for in-person events)**

This was a modified version of the online survey, recognising less access to the draft Strategy and information around interculturalism in-person, compared to online, to support meaningful responses to specific questions inside the draft document.

**Question: Do you have any general thoughts on the things Council can do to ensure everyone feels safe, included and empowered in our municipality?**

The **118** responses were defined by five key themes, with a sample of the associated comments provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Safe spaces	36	30.5%	<i>"In parks more lighting especially in aeroplane park. There is no light after 7pm, and we are unsure if it is safe to stay."</i>
Community programs	31	26.3%	<i>"Open mics, classes specific for immigrants for example - coping with cultural shock strategies."</i>
Community-wide events	27	22.9%	<i>"Organise Multicultural activities where diverse groups participate and not just watch."</i>
Promotion and representation	22	18.7%	<i>"Include diverse peoples in all Council advertising, images, etc., on websites and materials."</i>
Happy with Council services	19	16.1%	<i>"I think the Council is pro-active in the management of safety and inclusivity of people in the municipality."</i>

*Table 1. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged*

**Question: The draft Strategy identifies several proposed actions including promoting opportunities for our community to celebrate and share cultural experience and expertise. Do you have any ideas on how you think we might do that?**

The five key themes identified by the **105** responses support broadening opportunities for connection and sharing, with community-wide events and programs again featuring. A sample of associated comments is provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Community-wide events	63	60%	<i>"Hold a yearly cultural festival with different pavilions for different cultural groups to share food, music, dance etc."</i>

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Opportunities for cultural expression	40	38.1%	<i>"Art collaborations from diverse communities to come together to create and showcase intercultural performance."</i>
Community programs	29	27.6%	<i>"Bicultural spoken word poetry and bicultural story time for kids hosted by seniors from the CALD community."</i>
Happy with Council services	15	14.3%	<i>"I like what Maidstone Community Centre does."</i>
Advocacy	6	5.7%	<i>"Council needs to offer avenues of support for volunteer groups already doing this work."</i>

Table 2. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: We also believe it is important we encourage our community to share stories. Do you have any thoughts on ways we might do that?**

There was some alignment with the five key emerging themes from the **95** respondents including community-wide events and programs. Some associated comments are provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Promotion and representation	34	35.8%	<i>"Set up QR codes in popular meeting spots where people can scan to hear the story of someone. Let people add their story in their own words that is translated for everyone."</i>
Community programs	30	31.6%	<i>"Sharing circles to preserve the practice of sharing stories."</i>
Opportunities for cultural expression	18	18.9%	<i>"If there isn't already, a community theatre group where individual/groups present plays, comedic stand-up, poetry."</i>
Community-wide events	11	11.6%	<i>"I like the art event where people shared photos that were posted on walls for all to see."</i>
Community spaces	10	10.5%	<i>"People's portal where people of the same cultural background can meet."</i>

Table 3. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: What ways can Council stand up to racism?**

Four key themes were identified by the **91** respondents with training and education and greater promotion being the most common, and with community programs again noted. Some of the associated comments are shared below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Training and education	27	29.7%	<i>"Talks in schools to educate from young."</i>
Greater promotion	22	24.2%	<i>"Have prominent displays put up around to take a stand against racism."</i>
Community programs	16	17.6%	<i>"Festivals, cooking classes and demonstrations from different cultures."</i>

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Advocacy	15	16.5%	<i>"Balance of races/genders on committees to get a shared voice."</i>
Other	12	13.1%	<i>"Monitor racist rhetoric on social media and delete."</i>

Table 4. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: Do you have anything else you would like to say about interculturalism in Maribyrnong?**

Of the **50** responses:

- **20% (10)** expressed support for the draft Strategy
- **14% (7)** said that diversity is a strength of the City of Maribyrnong
- **14% (7)** had no further comment.

Other responses reinforced the importance of education, intercultural events, community connectedness and safety.

### **Postcards**

The postcards asked one single and broad question.

**Question: What do you think Council can do to ensure everyone feels safe, included and empowered?**

Community sentiment varied, with almost half (**44.5% or 36**) considered to be neutral. **24.7% (20)** negative, **18.5% (15)** positive and **12.5% (10)** mixed.

Common themes that emerged from the **81** postcards returned included:

- safer spaces – establishing measures to ensure the community feel safe in public spaces, with specific mention of street lighting, addressing alcohol and drug use, homelessness and the presence of law enforcement
- street appearance – evoking pride in the look and feel of streetscapes by ensuring general upkeep and maintaining the removal of rubbish and graffiti
- community-wide events – hosting and supporting a range of events and activities that are open to all members of the community.

A sample of associated comments from the top four emerging themes is provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Street appearance	23	28.4%	<i>"Clean off graffiti in a more timely manner around the City. We need a culture of pride in our city – not of 'no one cares'."</i>
Community-wide events	22	27.2%	<i>"More events where culture is shared like the Mai festival, especially events where the most marginalised communities share their culture."</i>
Safer spaces	17	20.9%	<i>"Ensure gardens (public) are well lit and with access to communication to contact police."</i>
Promotion and representation	14	17.3%	<i>"With arts and events, it would be great to know what's happening within the community."</i>

Table 5. Top four tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

Of the comments provided by **15** respondents, **18.2%** fell outside of the scope of this project.

### **Your City Your Voice – Online Questionnaire**

The Your City Your Voice form asked respondents to reflect on the draft Strategy and to provide ideas to implement the proposed actions effectively.

**Question: Do you have any general thoughts on things Council can do to ensure everyone feels safe, included and empowered in our municipality?**

With the exception of ‘safe spaces’, four of the five key themes identified by the **17** respondents largely align with those from the in-person questionnaires – with advocacy included by online respondents.

A sample of associated comments is provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Community programs	52.9%	9	<i>“More activities to support LGBTIQA+ communities.”</i>
Promotion and representation	23.5%	4	<i>“Celebrate culture months e.g. July Indigenous month, February Vietnamese month, October Indian month.”</i>
Community-wide events	17.7%	3	<i>“Multicultural events are always welcome and help to break cultural barriers and stigma.”</i>
Happy with Council services	17.7%	3	<i>“Council is doing a great job to keep the community safe.”</i>
Advocacy	17.7%	3	<i>“Maribyrnong Council must take a stand on supporting bilingual education within the council area in the languages that are spoken in the council area.”</i>

Table 6. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: Have you had a chance to review the draft Intercultural Maribyrnong Strategy 2023-2026?**

Of the **27** responses, **25.9%** (**7**) had reviewed the draft Strategy and **74.1%** (**20**) had not.

**Question: Are there any comments you would like to make generally on the draft?**

Of the **12** responses, **five** asked for:

- collaboration with community leaders
- collaboration with schools
- ensuring the draft Strategy reflects and serves all members of the community
- supporting language diversity within the community
- addressing language discrimination
- refining the statements in the draft Strategy to be bolder.



**Question: Council has identified eight proposed actions to deliver on the draft Strategy. Please rank them in order of importance to you by selecting the two most important.**

A total of **15** responses were received, of which the most highly ranked was: 1.3 - Connect and promote opportunities that enable the community to celebrate and share cultural experience and expertise.

The next highest ranked was: 3.2 - Design and conduct research into the impact of Council's anti-racism signage, including gathering local experiences of racism.

Three others ranked almost equally:

- 1.1 - Identify and profile Council programming that celebrates and enables diversity
- 1.2 - Conduct cultural competency training for staff and Councillors
- 1.4 - Design community cultural exchange project enabling the community to share stories. Project to be delivered in future years

The lowest-ranked actions were:

- 2.1 - Leverage Council's community leadership programming and build pathways for the participation of diverse communities
- 2.2 - Collaborate in the design and development of Council's intersectional statement
- 3.1 - Audit and activate networks that link service providers, partners and communities; were lowest ranked.

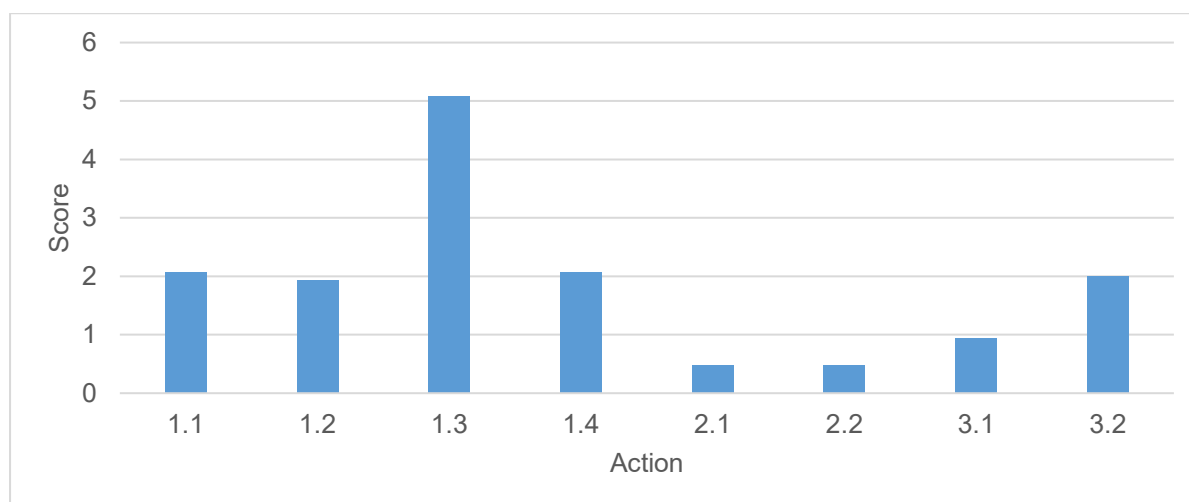


Figure 3. Total score of ranking per action<sup>1</sup>

**Question: Please share your thoughts with us on the proposed eight actions.**

Of the **13** responses, over **60%** (**61.5%** or **8**) supported the proposed actions and additionally shared comments seeking to ensure:

- the draft Strategy's statements are actionable and have an impact on everyone
- collaboration with service providers
- more volunteer opportunities
- increased representation of diversity generally

<sup>1</sup> Scores are calculated by the sum of the weight of each ranked position, multiplied by the response count for the position choice and divided by the total contributions.



- comprehensive cultural training for Council staff
- creation of an evaluation framework for all programs
- prioritising community engagement and interaction.

**Question: Action 1.3 is about promoting opportunities for our community to celebrate and share cultural experience and expertise. We're keen to hear any ideas you may have on ways we might do that.**

Of the comments from **16** respondents, community-wide events again featured, topping the five emerging themes below, including a sample of associated comments.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Community-wide events	9	56.3%	"Screenings of films made in Maribyrnong by culturally diverse communities."
Advocacy	6	37.5%	"Shadowing councillors and leadership training (maybe a spin-off of the Vietnamese program?)"
Community outreach	4	25%	"Integrating communication initiatives for the community that help in the understanding of the projects and gain interest."
Community programs	4	25%	"Use VU [Victoria University] as a platform to have discussions and experts around multiculturalism and racism, getting experts to speak."
Opportunities for cultural expression	3	18.8%	"Use young people to present their ideas in all forms, artwork, festivals, music and dance.....use schools to connect with this. Have them present ideas to Council and provide funding."

Table 7. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: Action 1.4 is about encouraging our community to share stories. Do you have any thoughts on ways we might be able to do that?**

Of the **14** responses received, common themes previously noted featured among the top five, with a sample of associated comments provided below.

Tag	Count	Percent	Sample quote
Promotion and representation	6	42.9%	"Sharing stories is good but making them visual will help them learn more."
Opportunities for cultural expression	5	35.7%	"Share stories the way THEY want to share stories. Using art, story-telling, music, spoken word or writing, allow this to be presented within the community."
Community programs	4	28.6%	"Cultural storytelling nights on weekends."
Community-wide events	2	14.3%	"Story-telling festivals."
Community outreach	1	7.1%	"Combination of digital tools and popups in public spaces to give people the opportunity to share stories."

Table 8. Top five tag data – number, percentage and sample of themes tagged

**Question: Action 3.2 is about understanding the impact of Council's anti-racism signage. We'd be keen to hear your experiences of racism, if you are happy to share them here.**

11 respondents shared experiences of racism, which occurred in the following settings:

- on public transport
- by law enforcement
- while shopping
- by members of the public in conversations.

**Question: Do you have anything else you would like to say about interculturalism in Maribyrnong?**

Of the **10** responses, nearly half (**40%** or **4**) expressed delight in living in the City and **two** (**20%**) specifically supported the draft Strategy. The remaining called for:

- greater collaboration between organisations
- more listening to communities
- culturally-specific programs (in this case, Brazilian)
- current intercultural events to continue.

### **Your City Your Voice – Gather Tool**

**Two** written responses to the gather tool were received, providing ideas to achieve the proposed actions, and attracting a total of **four** votes. They were titled:

- Connecting our community (**one** up-vote)
- Community leadership and active citizenship (**three** up-votes).

### **Demographics**

**125** respondents to the in-person questionnaire and the Your City Your Voice survey provided demographic information.

- **57.6% (72)** identified as male, **55.2% (69)** as female and **three** preferred not to say.
- The most common age brackets were 30-34 (**20.1%** or **27**), 35-39 (**17.2%** or **23**) and 40-44 (**11.9%** or **16**).
- **84.3% (70)** identified as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), **13.3% (11)** as LGBTIQ+, **4.8% (4)** with characteristics not listed and **2.4% (2)** as living with a disability.
- The majority (**76.4%** or **107**) live within the municipality, **16.4% (23)** work in the municipality and **8.6% (12)** visit the municipality.<sup>2</sup>
- The most popular cultures were Australian (**15.9%** or **20**), Indian (**9.5%** or **12**), Chinese (**8.7%** or **11**) and Vietnamese (**7.9%** or **10**).

Of the **26** respondents to the Your City Your Voice survey who also provided information about their residence and country of birth:

- **23.1% (6)** reside in Footscray, followed by Yarraville and locations outside of the municipality (both **15.4%** or **4**).

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<sup>2</sup> Respondents could select all that apply.

- Respondents reported having been born most commonly in Australia and India (both **16.7%** or **4**), followed by Vietnam, the United Kingdom and Iran (all **8.3%** or **2**).

## Gender

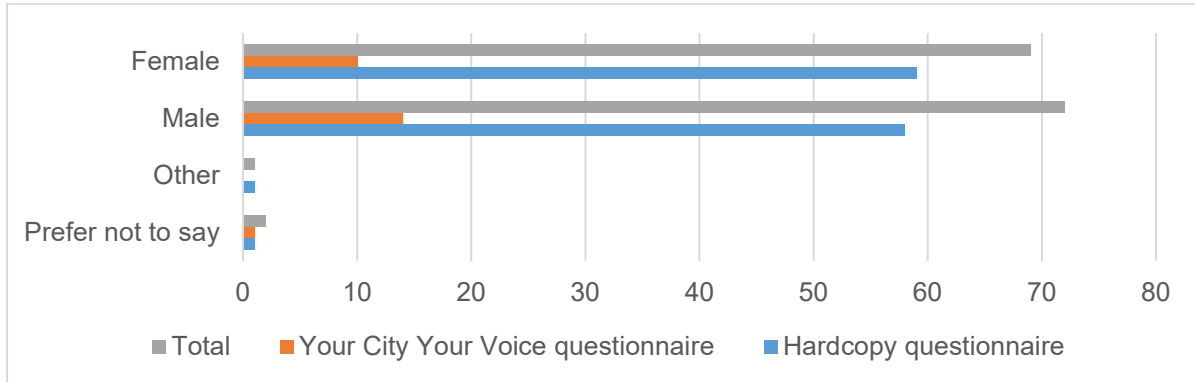


Figure 4. Gender of respondents by method

## Age

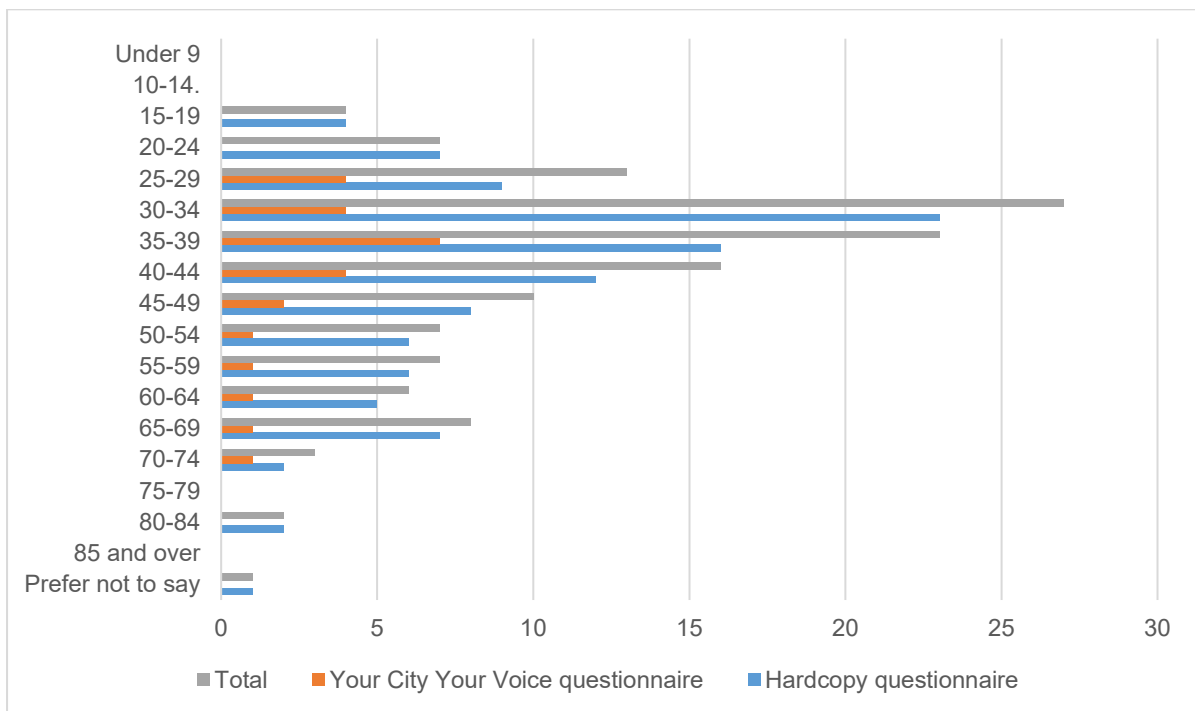


Figure 5. Ages of respondents by method

## I identify as:

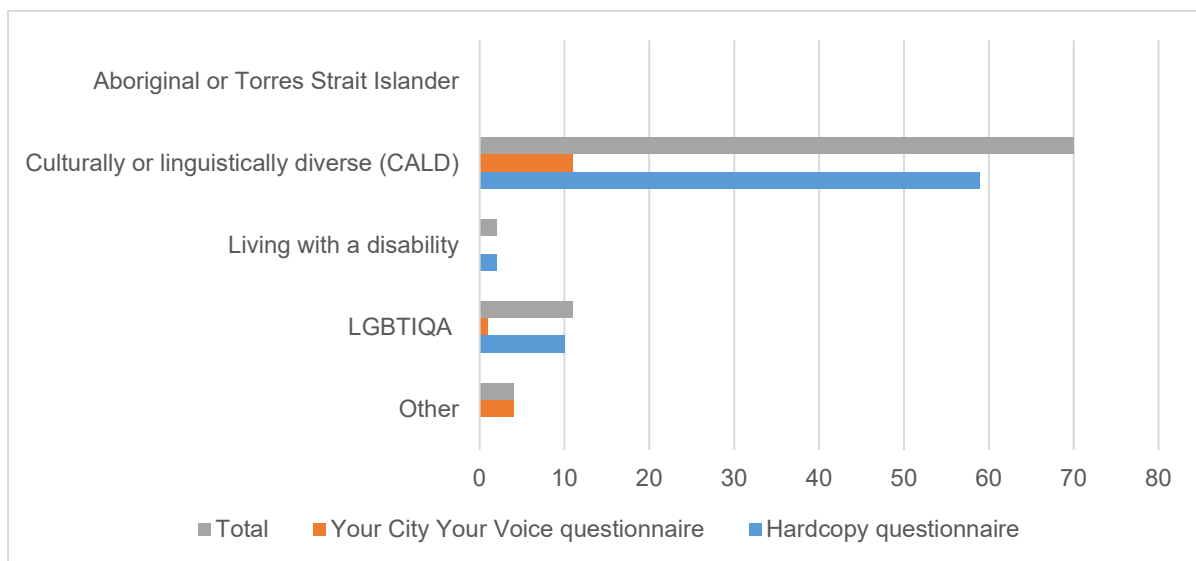


Figure 6. Respondents' diversity characteristics by method

## Relationship to Maribyrnong

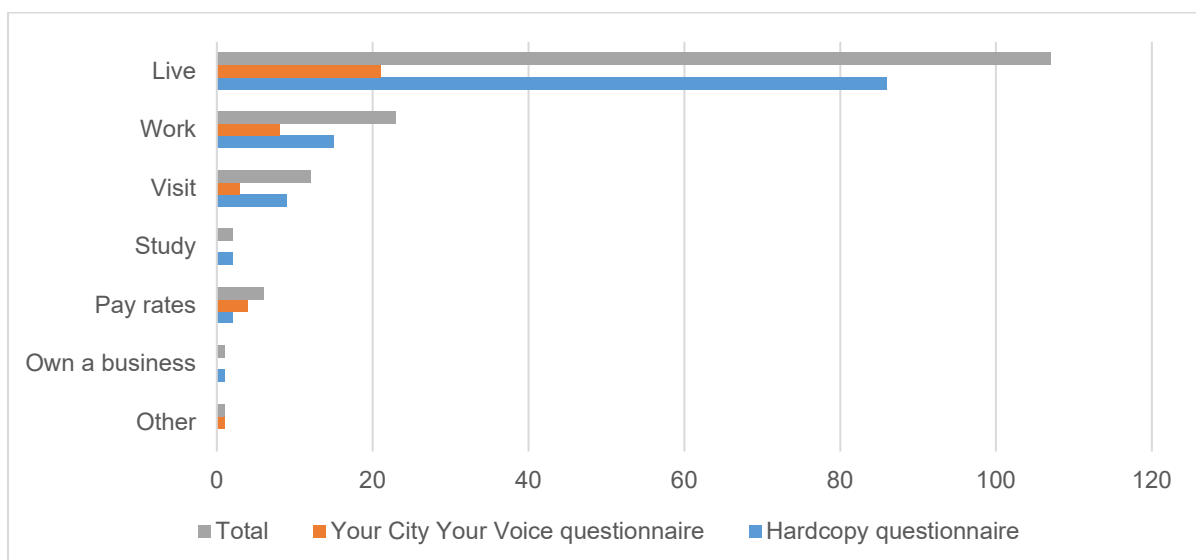


Figure 7. Respondents' relationship to Maribyrnong by method

## **Cultures I identify with**

Of 166 cultural affiliations identified by respondents, the most common were:

- Australian (**15.7% or 20**)
- Indian (**9.4% or 12**)
- Chinese (**8.7% or 11**)
- Vietnamese (**7.9% or 10**)
- New Zealander (**4.7% or 6**).

## **Suburb**

The 26 respondents to the Your City Your Voice survey reside in:

- Footscray (**23.1% or 6**)
- Yarraville (**15.4% or 4**)
- Other – outside of the municipality (**15.4% or 4**)
- Maidstone (**11.5% or 3**)
- Maribyrnong (**7.7% or 2**)
- Braybrook (**7.7% or 2**)
- Seddon (**7.7% or 2**)
- West Footscray (**7.7% or 2**)
- Kingsville (**3.8% or 1**).

## **Country of birth**

Of 24 respondents to the Your City Your Voice survey, countries of birth include:

- Australia (**16.7% or 4**)
- India (**16.7% or 4**)
- Vietnam (**8.3% or 2**)
- United Kingdom (**8.3% or 2**)
- Iran (**8.3% or 2**)
- Italy (**4.2% or 1**)
- Colombia (**4.2% or 1**)
- Mexico (**4.2% or 1**)
- Philippines (**4.2% or 1**)
- El Salvador (**4.2% or 1**)
- Nepal (**4.2% or 1**).