

RRLUS and UGS Community Panel

Outcomes Report



Strathbogie Shire Council

17.03.25

capire

Giving every person a voice.

Capire Consulting Group

The Commons,
Wurundjeri Country
36-38 Gipps Street,
Collingwood VIC 3066
(03) 9285 9000

info@capire.com.au
capire.com.au

Capire acknowledges
and deeply respects the
Wurundjeri people and
the Traditional Owners
of the Victorian land.



capire

Privacy

Capire Consulting Group and any person(s) acting on our behalf is committed to protecting privacy and personally identifiable information by meeting our responsibilities under the Victorian Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles 2014 as well as relevant industry codes of ethics and conduct.

For the purpose of program delivery, and on behalf of our clients, we collect personal information from individuals, such as e-mail addresses, contact details, demographic data and program feedback to enable us to facilitate participation in consultation activities. We follow a strict procedure for the collection, use, disclosure, storage and destruction of personal information. Any information we collect is stored securely on our server for the duration of the program and only disclosed to our client or the program team. Written notes from consultation activities are manually transferred to our server and disposed of securely.

Comments recorded during any consultation activities are faithfully transcribed however not attributed to individuals. Diligence is taken to ensure that any comments or sensitive information does not become personally identifiable in our reporting, or at any stage of the program.

Capire operates an in-office server with security measures that include, but are not limited to, password protected access, restrictions to sensitive data and the encrypted transfer of data.

For more information about the way we collect information, how we use, store and disclose information as well as our complaints procedure, please see www.capire.com.au or telephone (03) 9285 9000.

Consultation

Unless otherwise stated, all feedback documented by Capire Consulting Group and any person(s) acting on our behalf is written and/or recorded during our program/consultation activities.

Capire staff and associates take great care while transcribing participant feedback but unfortunately cannot guarantee the accuracy of all notes. We are however confident that we capture the full range of ideas, concerns and views expressed during our consultation activities.

Unless otherwise noted, the views expressed in our work represent those of the participants and not necessarily those of our consultants or our clients.

VERSION	AUTHOR	AUTHORISED	DATE
1	Eliza Knox	Denise Francisco	11/03/2025
1	Eliza Knox	Denise Francisco	17/03/2025

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Background	4
2. Community Panel overview	5
2.1. Scope of the Community Panel	5
2.2. Community Panel process	5
2.3. Information provided	6
2.4. Engagement limitations	7
3. Selection and participation	8
3.1. Recruitment	8
3.2. Members	8
4. Community Panel outputs	9
4.1. Recommended principles	9
4.2. Township based recommendations	12
4.3. Level of support comments	20
5. Other considerations	22
6. Reflections and evaluation	23
7. Councillor reflections	29
8. Next steps	31

1. Introduction

This report details the deliberative engagement process and outputs of Strathbogie Shire Council's (Council) Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) and Urban Growth Strategy (UGS) Community Panel. It summarises the Community Panel process, recruitment, members, outputs, reflections, evaluation and Councillor feedback.

Capire Consulting Group (Capire) was contracted by Council as an independent consultancy to facilitate and report on the Community Panel.

1.1. Background

The Strathbogie Shire community has expressed their desire for overarching directions for how land will be used in the future. As outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025, Council are developing two new Strategies: a RRLUS and an UGS. Together, these Strategies will guide land use planning decisions within the Strathbogie municipality for the next 15 to 30 years. These strategies will work together in directing development across the municipality with the aim of maximising amenity for residential uses while not compromising the ongoing viability of agricultural, industrial, commercial businesses or future opportunities.

A multi engagement approach for both strategies were endorsed by Council at its ordinary Council Meeting on 16 July 2024. Council undertook broad engagement with the Strathbogie community in November and December 2024 consulting on the UGS and RRLUS issues and opportunities reports.

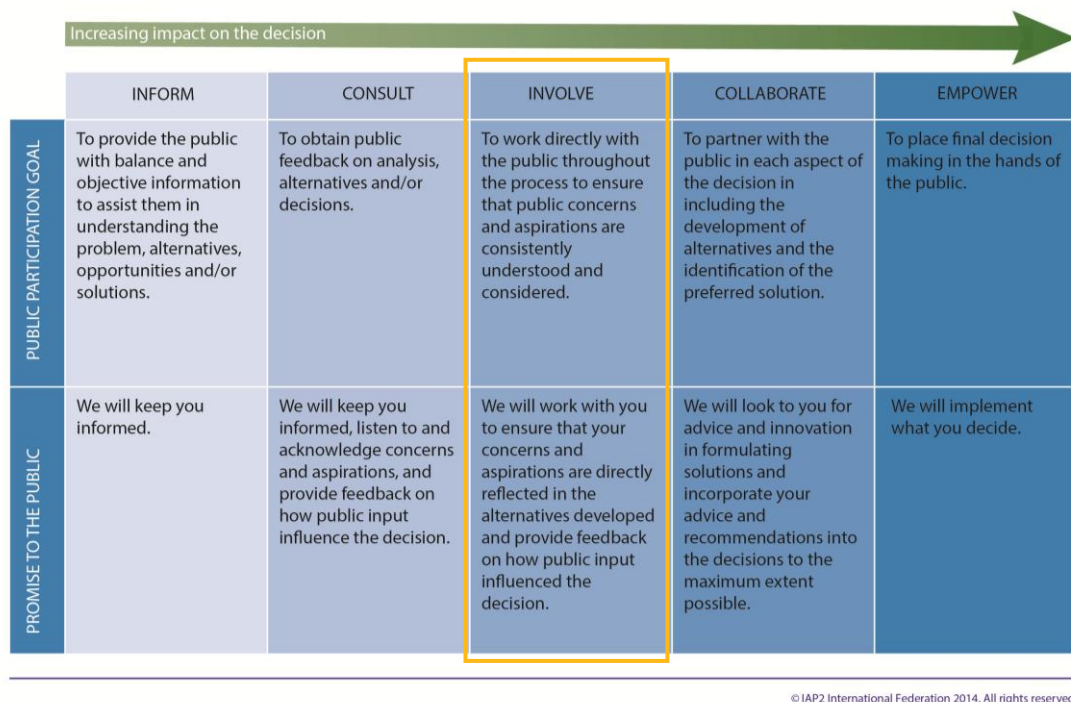
During the broad engagement, recruitment for a Community Panel, to participate in a deliberative engagement process was undertaken. The Community Panel is a group of randomly selected people that generally represent the diversity of the Strathbogie Shire community. Panel members looked at the issues and opportunities information to help inform direction in the preparation of the RRLUS and UGS. The recommendations of the Panel were presented to Council after Session Three of the Community Panel and initial feedback provided.

2. Community Panel overview

2.1. Scope of the Community Panel

2.1.1. Level of influence

The Community Panel sits at the 'Involve' level of influence of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum (see Figure 1). This means Community Panel members developed and presented recommendations to help Council draft the RRLUS and UGS. These strategies will guide land use planning decisions within the Strathbogie municipality for the next 15-30 years.



Increasing impact on the decision

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balance and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influence the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

© IAP2 International Federation 2014. All rights reserved.

Figure 1: IAP2 engagement spectrum and where the Community Panel sat for level of influence

2.1.2. The Remit

Community panels address a challenge or a 'remit' which defines the scope of the engagement and frames the conversations. The remit for the Community Panel was:

How should Council guide the growth in urban and rural residential development while continuing to protect other uses and values important to Strathbogie Shire's economy and liveability?

2.2. Community Panel process

The Panel came together across three sessions, nine hours in total, to develop the following recommendations to help Council draft the RRLUS and UGS:

- Recommended principles
- Recommendations for six townships: Avenel, Euroa, Longwood, Nagambie, Strathbogie, Violet Town:
 - Recommended township status
 - Township boundaries reflecting locations for urban development
 - Recommend locations for Rural Living Zone relevant to townships
 - Any additional recommendations.

Table 1 provides an outline of each session including session objectives, and number of attendees.

Table 1: Overview of sessions

SESSION	OBJECTIVES	ATTENDEES
Session 1: Introduction and scene setting Thursday 13 February 5:00pm – 6:30pm	To enable Community Panel members to: • understand and be confident with the process and remit • have an improved understanding of the Strategies • understand the principles, broad engagement feedback and proposed changes for discussion • be comfortable and agree on principles to work together.	21
Session 2: Drafting recommendations Saturday 22 February 9:00am – 3:00pm	To enable Community Panel members to: • ask any questions in relation to the Strategies • review, refine the principles related to the UGS and RRLUS • develop recommendations regarding township statuses for accommodating future growth • develop recommendations regarding township boundaries reflecting locations for urban development • develop recommendations regarding locations for Rural Living Zone (RLZ) relevant to townships • make additional recommendations in response to the remit.	19
Session 3: Finalising and presenting recommendations Thursday 27 February 5:00pm – 6:30pm	• To provide an opportunity for any additional suggested recommendations. • To finalise recommendations including: ○ Recommended principles ○ Recommended Township status for each township ○ Township boundaries reflecting locations for urban development ○ Recommend locations for rural living zone relevant to townships. ○ Additional recommendations.	19

2.3. Information provided

2.3.1. Pre-Panel information

One week prior to Session one, the Community Panel were emailed pre-panel information for reading prior to Session one. This consisted of:

- Welcome from Council and Council Overview
- Welcome Pack from facilitators
- Issues and Opportunities Engagement (broad engagement) Summary Report
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Glossary of terms
- Key principles that were tested during the Issues and Opportunities engagement (broad engagement).

In the same email, Community Panel members were sent the details of Session one and a Welcome Survey. See Section 6 for the results of the Welcome Survey.

2.3.2. Private Share Strathbogie page

A private webpage was set up on Council's Share Strathbogie website for Panel members to share questions, comments, and to interact with each other and Council between sessions.

Additional resources that were emailed to the Community Panel between sessions were also added to the Share Strathbogie webpage.

2.3.3. Session summary reports

A summary report was provided to Community Panel members after each session to outline the session process and outputs, and to support Community Panel members to prepare for the next session. These reports were added to the Share Strathbogie webpage and may be read in conjunction with this overarching report.

2.4. Engagement limitations

All engagement processes have limitations. The following points highlight the limitations that should be considered when reading this report.

- It was assumed in good faith that the information provided by participants in their Expression of Interest (EOI) forms about their demographics was accurate, along with any declared perceived conflicts of interest.
- Capire independently selected Community Panel participants to represent Strathbogie Shire's diversity as much as possible, from the EOIs received. The final Panel membership can't be deemed a statistically accurate sample of the municipality.
- Some Community Panel members withdrew from their roles during the process, which is common between selection and delivery of sessions. Consequently, the number of participants varies across sessions. The reasons for withdrawal were due to unexpected personal commitments and reasons.
- While Community Panel members delivered a cross-section of views from across the municipality, it cannot be guaranteed that the community's complete set of views were represented.
- Strategic planning is complex and whilst nine hours of workshop time was resourced for the Community Panel process, the time allocation was limited and impacted the ability of panel members to deeply explore the issues identified.

3. Selection and participation

3.1. Recruitment

The Community panel recruitment process was independently managed by Capire with promotion and communication undertaken by Council. Recruitment took place through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, which was promoted through a project page on Council's Share Strathbogie website:

share.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/RRLUS-and-UGS/community-panel

The EOI was open for 10 weeks including during the broad engagement in November and December 2024, from Monday 11 November to Monday 20 January 2025.

Promotional activities undertaken by Council, included:

- Facebook posts
- Website promotion
- Paid Facebook and paid newspaper advertising
- Promotion in print newspapers and local newsletters
- Invitation to participate via email to Council's community directory contact list.

The EOI form included questions designed to help Capire assess the applicants and determine their suitability for the Panel. The form aimed to identify:

- demographics to enable selection against targets using Australian Bureau of Statistics data for the municipality
- availability to attend all three sessions.

3.2. Members

A total of 44 people expressed their interest in participating in the Community Panel. A group of 29 were randomly selected to become Community Panel members, confirmed their commitment and received an Information Pack prior to Session one. Multiple selected and confirmed Community Panel members needed to withdraw from the process due to unexpected personal commitments and reasons. This is anticipated and common for a deliberative engagement process. Consequently, the number of Panel members at all three sessions was lower than the selected number.

4. Community Panel outputs

By the end of Session three, the Community Panel developed the following recommendations to help Council draft the RRLUS and UGS:

- Recommended principles
- Recommendations for six townships: Avenel, Euroa, Longwood, Nagambie, Strathbogie, Violet Town
 - Recommended township status
 - Township boundaries reflecting locations for urban development
 - Recommend locations for Rural Living Zone relevant to townships
 - Any additional recommendations.

This section details these key outputs in addition to Panel members level of support with the recommendations.

4.1. Recommended principles

Issues and opportunities reports for the RRLUS and UGS identified some principles to guide the strategies. These principles were combined to test during the broad engagement.

The Community Panel were provided the principles, and explanation as to why they are important and the broad engagement feedback. During, between and after Sessions two and three, the Community Panel reviewed the principles, suggested updates, voted on their level of comfort on updated principles, updated them to create recommended principles and voted on their level of support for the recommended principles.

Table 2 outlines the recommended principles at the end of Session Three.

Table 2: Recommended Principles at the end of Session Three

RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES
1. Provide clear strategic direction on the spatial distribution of urban growth, taking into account the provision of services and infrastructure required to service this growth within the Shire.
2a. Contain growth within identified locations across the municipality.
2b. Manage the release of new growth subject to infrastructure, facilities and services (including emergency services) to deliver in a timely and efficient way without affecting existing provision, levels or services. Note: Existing services and infrastructure should remain unimpacted by new development/growth
3. Monitor and review population growth, housing demand, existing infrastructure and adjust boundaries or urban areas as required. Note: The detail in the strategy should reflect what should be undertaken every five years (after census results published) or if there is an unprecedented growth rate.
4. Protect visual, environmental, economic, and infrastructure qualities by minimising impacts of residential development on rural areas with consideration of township character and heritage values.
5. OPTION 1: Discourage new, additional and increased housing supply in locations with bushfire and flooding hazards, to avoid risk to life, property and environmental systems. To do so, require hard edges to urban areas to prevent and meet best practice fire management.
5. OPTION 2: Discourage new, additional and increased housing supply in locations with flooding hazards, to avoid risk to life, property and environmental systems. To do so, require hard edges to urban areas to prevent and meet best practice fire management. Encourage management of bushfire hazard to avoid risk to life, property and environmental systems for locations of new, additional and increased housing supply in locations
6. Maintain an adequate supply of residential land, ensuring housing diversity meets housing needs for everyone across the Shire. Note: This includes accommodation types to support families and young people

RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES

7. Encourage housing diversity in existing townships and growth areas, with an emphasis on varied housing types, connectivity and accessibility.

Note: This includes young families.

8. Advocate to increase the supply of affordable and social housing within townships that is well designed, accessible and meets the needs of the community and economy.

(Note that changes in Farming Zone have allowed for increased accommodation for farm workers)

11. Sustainably use existing natural resources, including productive agricultural land and water.

Figure 2 outlines the Panel members' level of support with most of the recommended principles.

4.1.1. Principle 9 and 10

Prior to Session Three, the draft recommended principles 9 and 10 were:

- **Principle 9:** Avoid conflicts between farming and other land uses, particularly by protecting productive agricultural land and directing growth to non-productive or marginal areas. Elsewhere: Define "productive agricultural land".
- **Principle 10:** Protect farmland and farming industries of significance.

During Session Three, Group 3 had a preference to not accept principles 9 and 10. They felt there hasn't been adequate discussion to enable a decision. They would like the opportunity to have further discussions regarding:

- dwellings in the farm zone.
- to define the land uses for agricultural land and investigate further what is non-productive or marginal land?

Following Session Three, Community Panel members were asked to share their level of support with these principles based on this. Figure 3 shows the result of this.

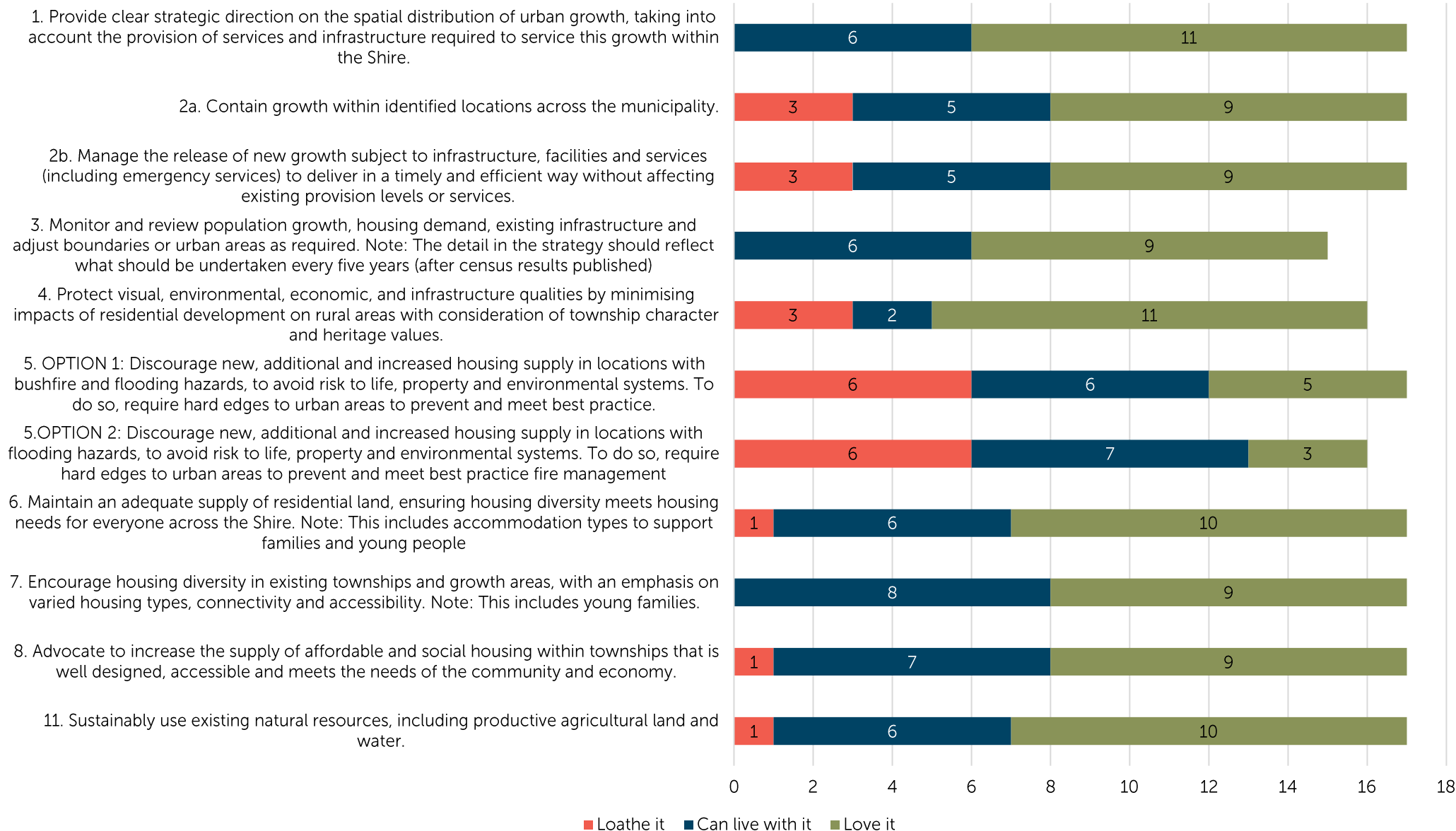


Figure 2: Result of the online level of support vote for the updated Principles (n=17)

Principle 2b includes - Note: Existing services and infrastructure should remain unimpacted by new development/growth

Principle 5 Option 2 also includes - Encourage management of bushfire hazard to avoid risk to life, property and environmental systems for locations of new, additional and increased housing supply in locations

Principle 8 includes - (Note that changes in Farming Zone have allowed for increased accommodation for farm workers).

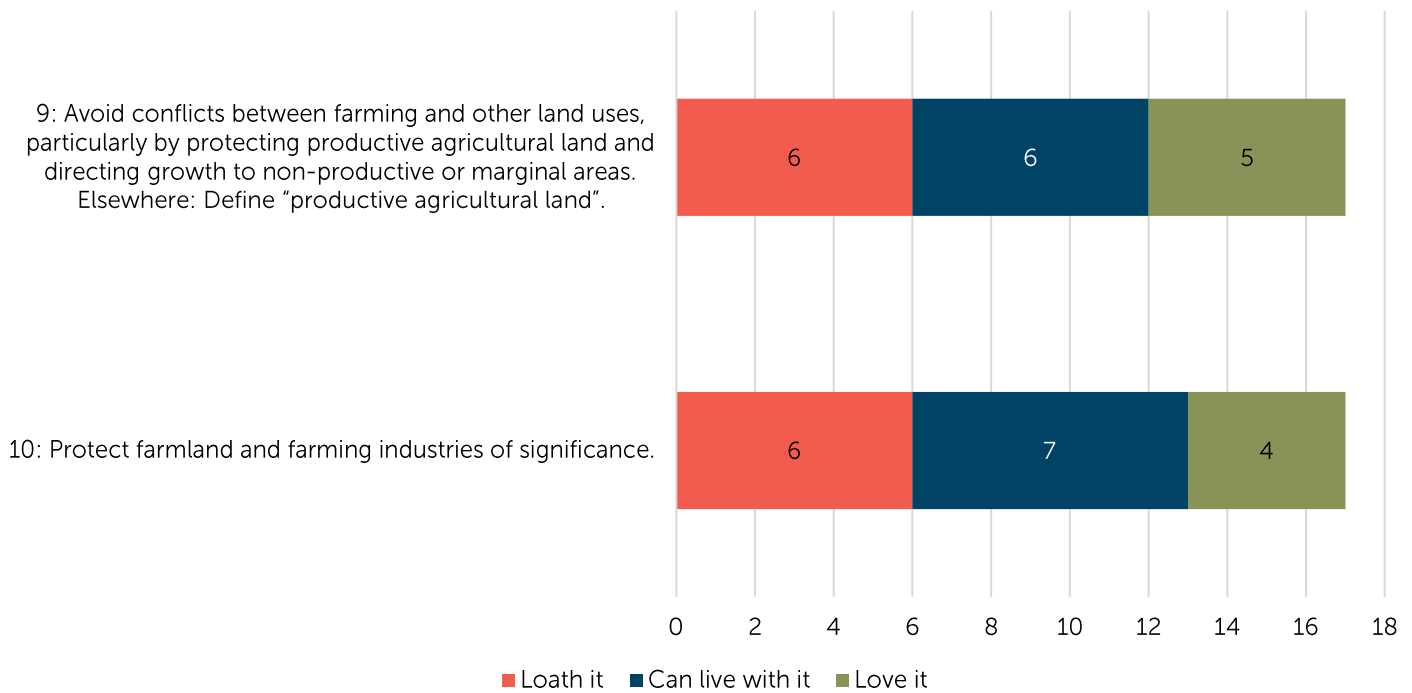


Figure 3: Result of the online level of support vote for Principles 9 and 10 given Group 3 in Session 3 recommend to not accept the Principles (n=17)

4.2. Township based recommendations

The Community Panel developed recommendations for six townships: Avenel, Euroa, Longwood, Nagambie, Strathbogie, Violet Town. These recommendations included:

- recommended township status
- township boundaries reflecting locations for urban development
- recommend locations for Rural Living Zone relevant to townships
- and any additional recommendations.

This section displays the recommendations per township in addition to the Community Panel’s level of support for these recommendations.

4.2.1. Avenel recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- Keep Avenel identified for moderate growth.
- Consider the potential pressure for high growth given pressure from surrounding townships such as Nagambie.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- No expansion required, utilise the existing boundary.
- Understand the three Natural boundaries:
 - Freeway
 - Hughes Creek.
- Address noise concerns in specific areas before confirming boundary expansions.
- Assess the feasibility for potential commercial opportunities (e.g., service centre) further.
- Further investigate the capability of certain areas, particularly regarding waterway constraints and topography.

- Factor in community preference for a mix of lot sizes and types into planning decisions.
- Monitor the Mangalore Airport Environment Overlay in case a future Masterplan alters development opportunities.

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- No immediate expansion of the RLZ. Existing areas should be prioritised for development first before considering further expansion.
- Review, wait and watch the land with Bushfire Management Overlay depending on the capacity of the RLZ land to the east of the settlement boundary, and the purpose for larger rural land.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review capacity and planning for rural living further out east.
- Review the extent of the existing RLZ.
- Note within the UGS that Avenel should be closely monitored if there is a shift in lot 'take-up'.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

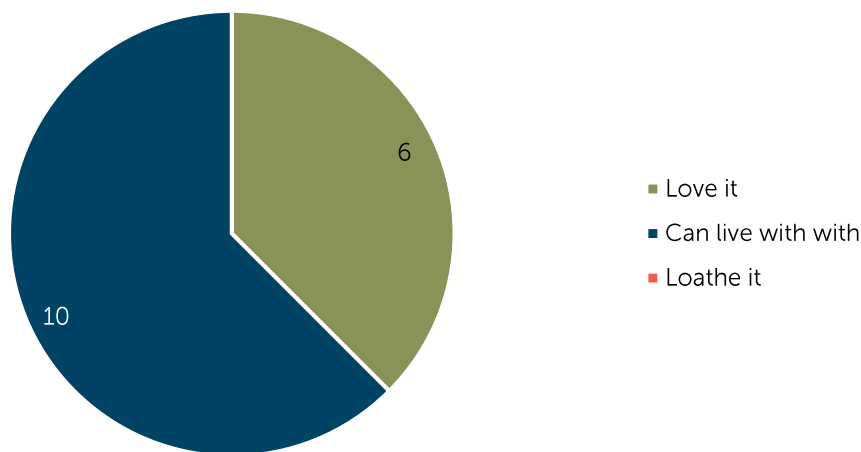


Figure 4: Result of the online level of support vote for the draft Avenel recommendations (n=16)

4.2.2. Longwood recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- Retain Longwood's designated recommendation as a low-growth township.
- Investigate a streamlined approach to the subdivision process to encourage appropriate development.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Maintain the township boundary but investigate the potential to extend to the east.
- Encourage housing including affordable housing due to nearby employment and industrial activities but consider the reluctance of existing generational farmers to convert agricultural land for residential purposes.
- Consider a township strategy that can address conflicts of use.

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- Desire for rezoning the land to the east, south of Avenel-Longwood Road where lower-service amenities are expected.
 - The primary desire is for 20-acre lots, although there are concerns about what constitutes a manageable size as it is dependent on lifestyle choices.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

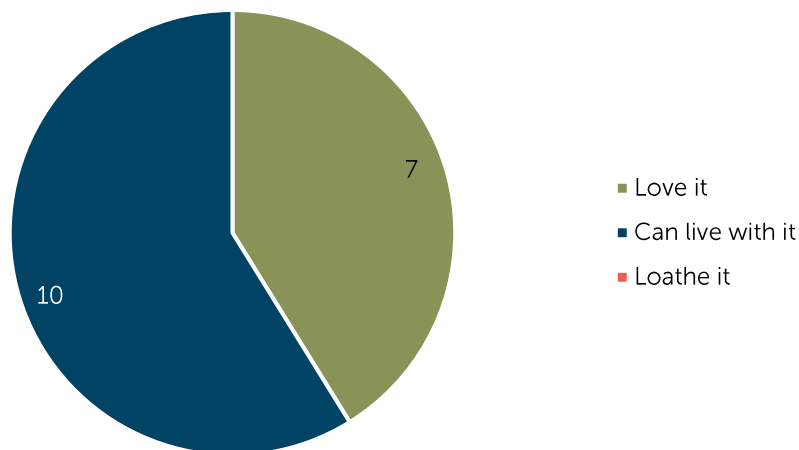


Figure 5: Result of the online level of support vote for the draft Longwood recommendations (n=17)

4.2.3. Strathbogie recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- Designate as a low-growth township, though the terminology could be reconsidered. This aligns with the view of the current level of infrastructure and services while acknowledging a desire for some population growth.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Keep the existing township boundaries unchanged.
- While there is interest in reducing the minimum lot size to allow for smaller rural residential properties, growth should primarily be directed toward other townships with existing services.

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- Direct the RLZ near the golf course (Brookleigh Road area), where land is already functioning as rural residential.
 - This area is seen as having fewer constraints and would provide opportunities for residents seeking lifestyle properties.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There was some conjecture over development in Farm Zones: Undertake further engagement to better understand opportunities for rural living in Farm Zones.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

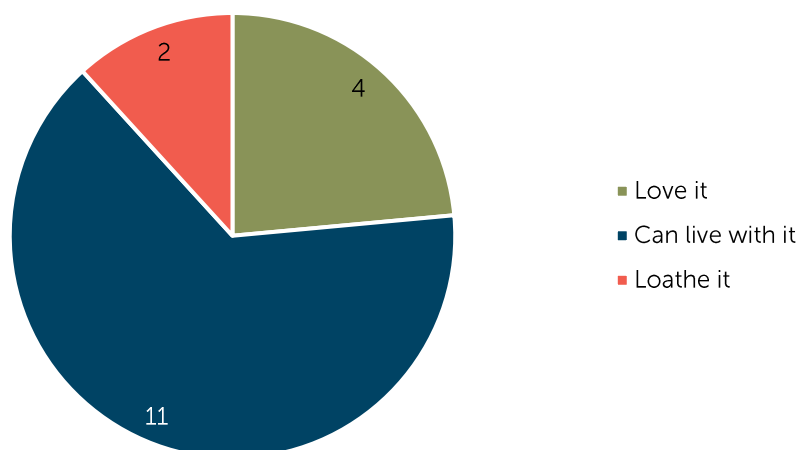


Figure 6: Result of the online level of support vote for the draft Strathbogie recommendations (n=17)

4.2.4. Violet Town recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- Support as a moderate growth township. There is some uncertainty about data and the implications for demand, vacant lots and the need for potential additional zoned land is suggested.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Test and explore additional land north and west of Shadforth Reserve (highlighted in blue hatched areas in Figure 7) to accommodate residential growth, including housing for health sector employees, noting other areas were identified by some Panel members.
- Undertake further research into appropriate housing types, what is required to maintain appropriate service levels, and the feasibility of infill development.

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- Revisit and review the need for RLZ, however, multiple potential areas of interest were identified in all directions.
- Explore the settlement patterns of surrounding areas such as Harry's Creek and Long Gully to understand whether there is capacity for rural living.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Review the data to identity and match housing types with housing needs.
- Further investigate and discuss rural residential opportunities.

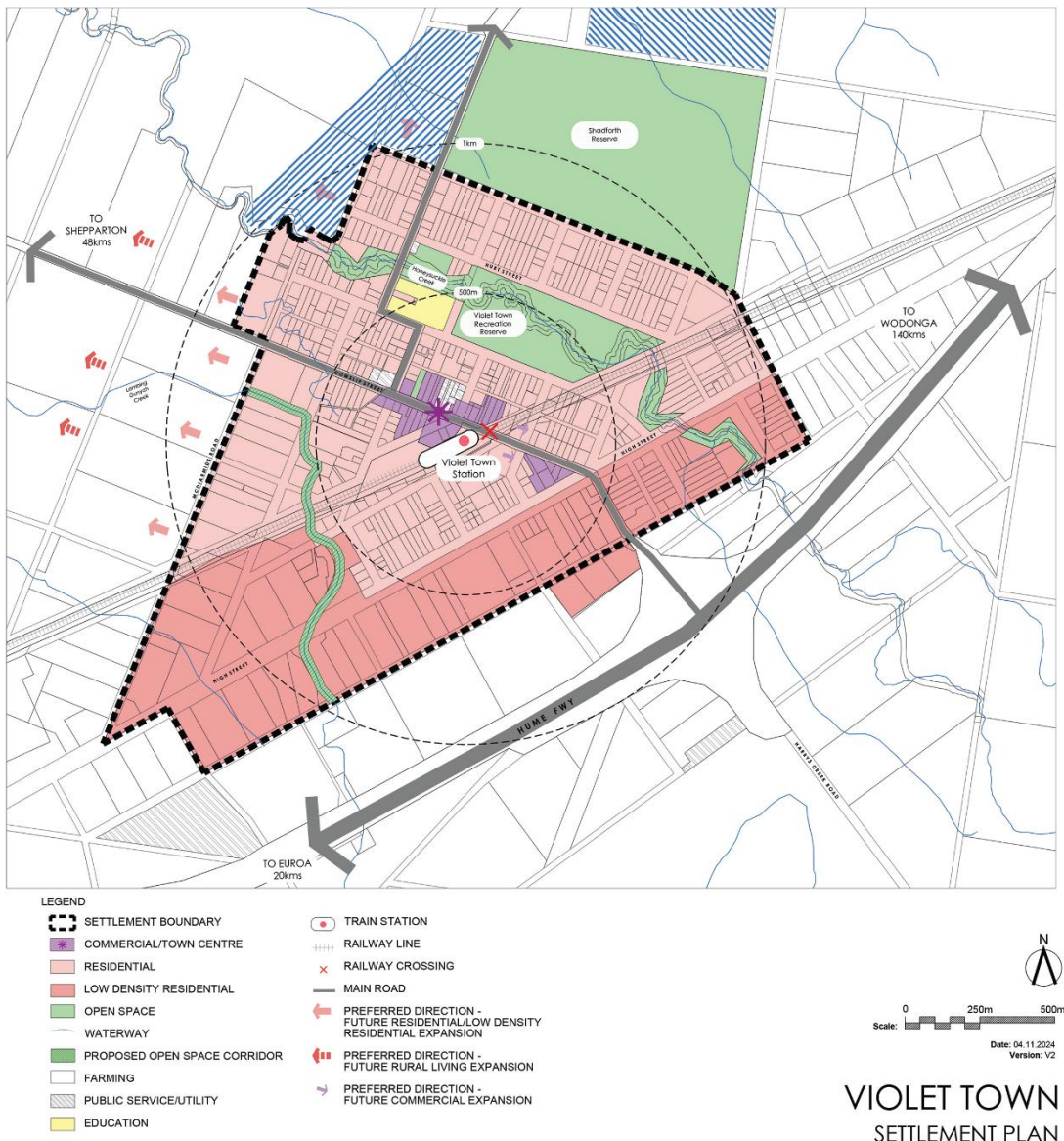


Figure 7: Recommended area to test and explore to accommodate residential growth including housing for health sector employees in Violet Town

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

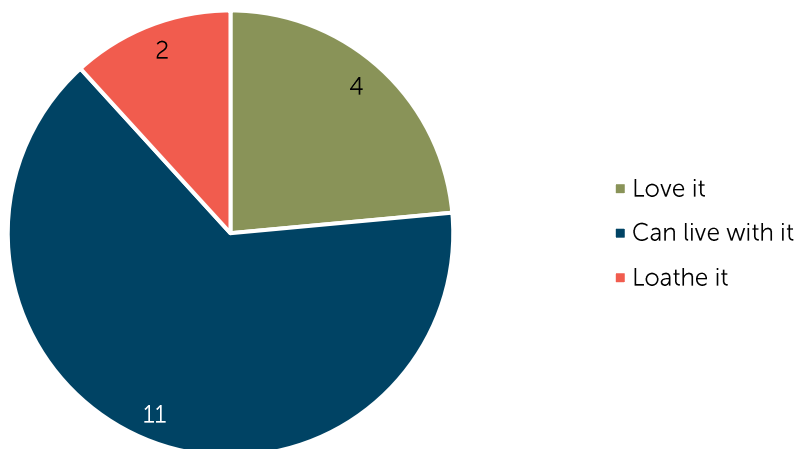


Figure 8: Result of the online level of support vote for the draft Violet Town recommendations (n=17)

4.2.5. Euroa recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- Retain it as a moderate-growth township, aligning with community expectations, despite its current 0.48% growth rate.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Retain the residential boundaries, with no further residential growth beyond existing allocations.
- Investigate the need to allocate land for industrial use.

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- Provide RLZ in Euroa.
- Undertake further investigation into the potential for RLZ identified (highlighted in the pink hatched area in Figure 9). The area just south of Euroa is a more viable option due to fewer drainage and flooding concerns.
- Do not investigate the northern area of Euroa as it is unsuitable due to flooding issues.
- Investigate the potential to re-zone some additional land for industrial use.

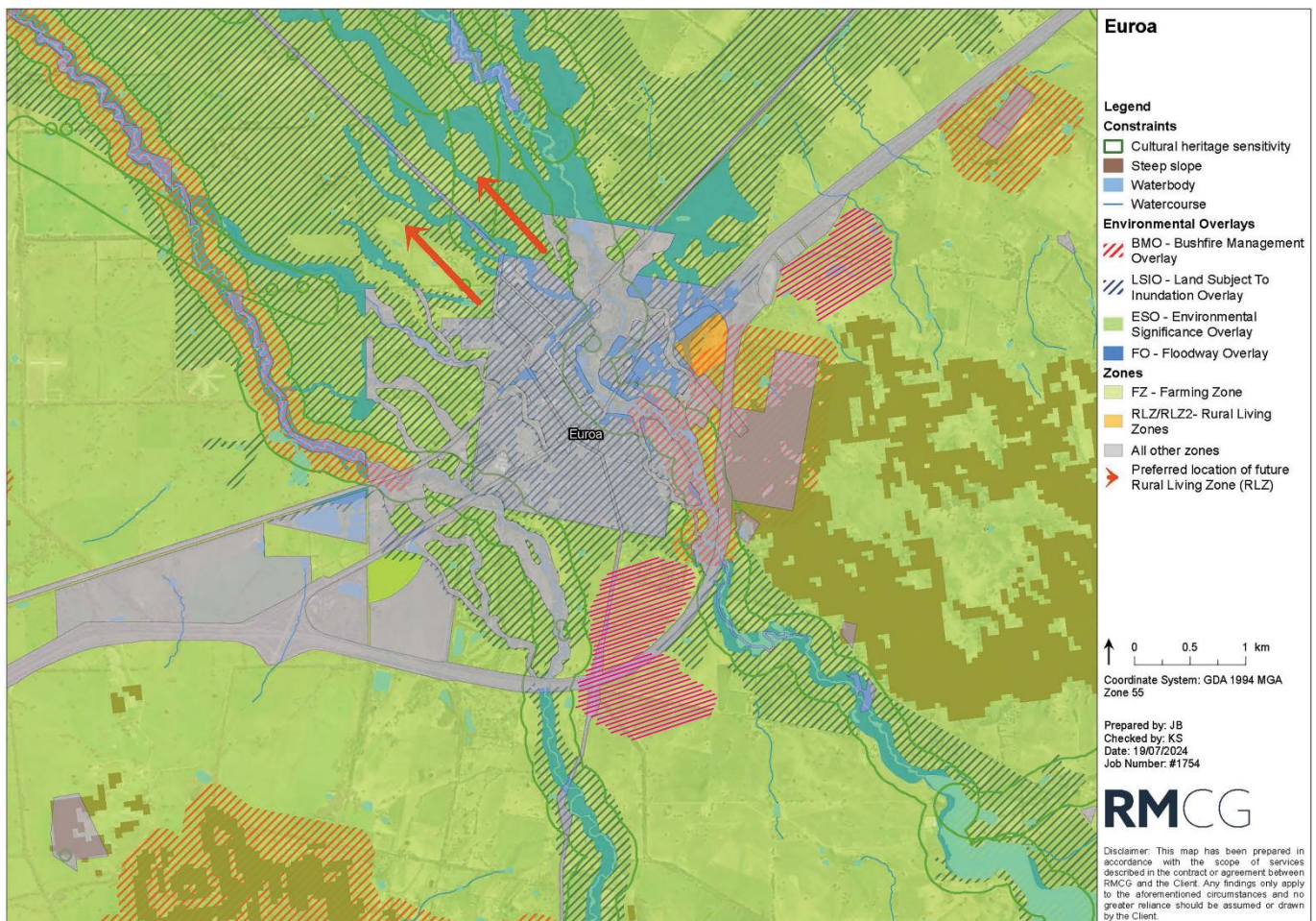


Figure 9: Suggested areas for RLZ in Euroa in purple

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

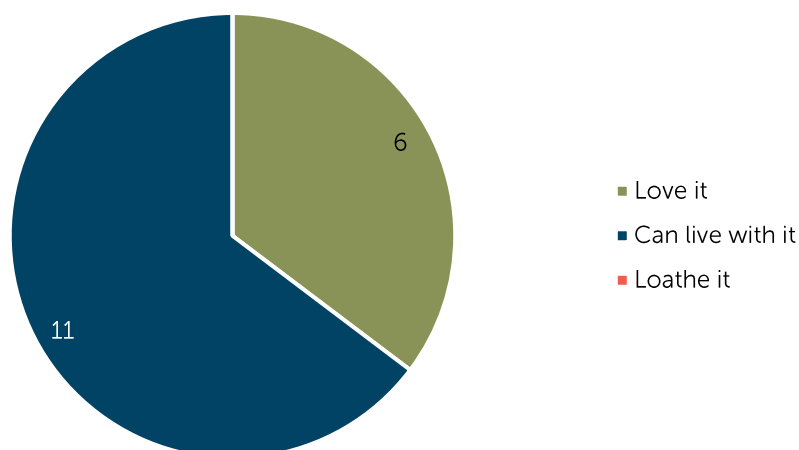


Figure 10: Result of the online level of support vote for the updated Euroa recommendations (n=17)

4.2.6. Nagambie recommendations

TOWNSHIP STATUS

- General support to identify Nagambie as a high-growth township. Note that there are concerns about insufficient infrastructure and the ability to sustain local businesses that contribute to a desire for moderate growth.

TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

- Remove the 'wedge' north of Racecourse Road (see pink hatched area on Figure 11).
- Remove south and north (to the lake) of Vickers Road from any investigations due to existing land fragmentation (see pink hatched area on Figure 11).
- Proceed with the potential employment investigation area south of Racecourse Road to Cemetery Lane. This area should not be residential in any manner. Leave anything east of railway as employment/industry - no residential (see purple hatched area on Figure 11).

LOCATIONS FOR RLZ IN THE AREA

- To provide diversity of residential options, consider five-acre lots.
- Investigate RLZ expansion in the north, north of Racecourse Road (see green on Figure 11).
- Do not proceed with the proposed Rural Activity Zone, as it is viewed as unlikely to be developed as intended and would likely be converted into residential land.

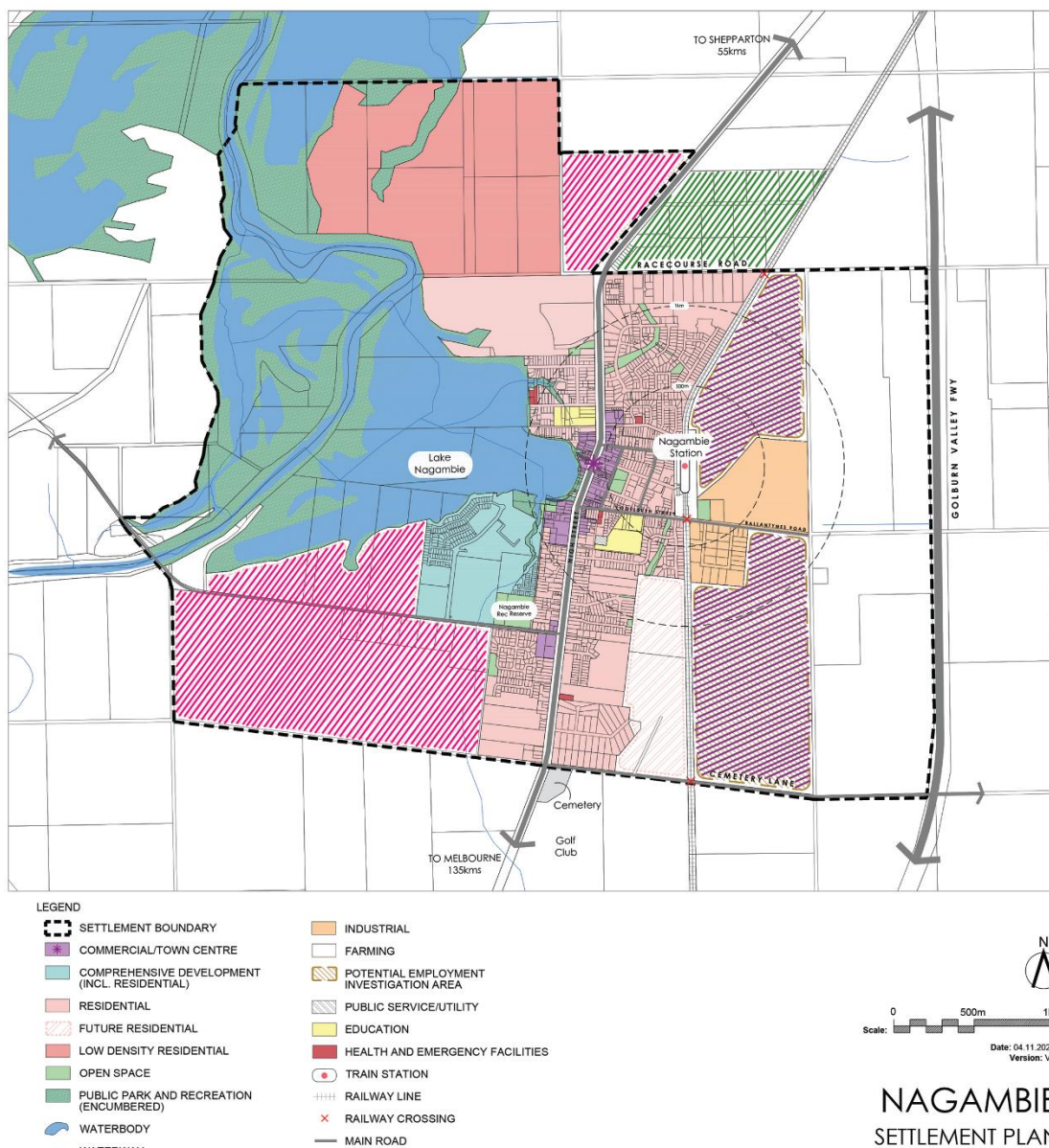


Figure 11: Areas of suggested changes in Nagambie (see recommendations for details)

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

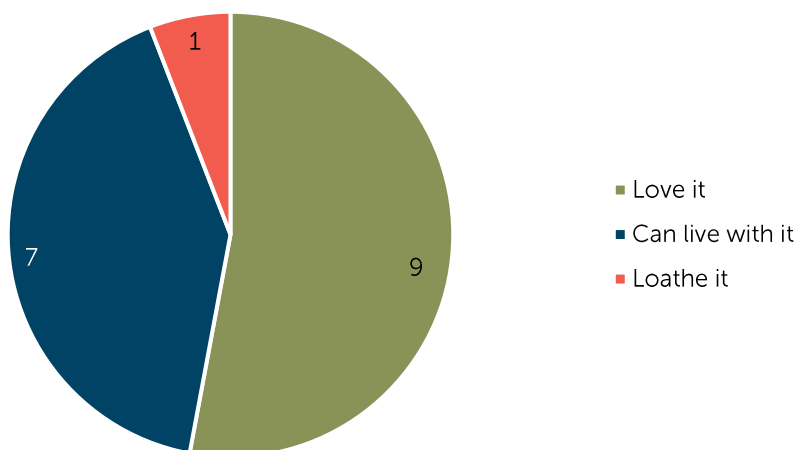


Figure 12: Result of the online level of support vote for the draft Nagambie recommendations (n=17)

4.3. Level of support comments

When asked for any comments at the end of the level of support online vote, the following provides an overview of Panel members' comments:

- *In general, a job well done.*
- Concerns raised included:
 - *No where near enough time to do this justice!!!*
 - *Ruffy not included yet can significantly be impacted by a potential REZ.*
 - *The ability of the CFA to influence and /or veto a planning application needs to be examined if any development in the Shire is to take place.*
 - Principle 2:
 - *This is far too wordy and is not grammatically correct. This would also imply that in areas that require additional infrastructure, land will not be considered for growth.*
 - *Principle 2b seems ungrammatical to me. Would be better to replace 'to deliver' with 'to be delivered' or 'to be supplied'.*
 - Principle 4
 - *This needs to be specific to urban growth and township character needs to be protected despite the desire for people to build more modern houses. Schedule needs to be put in place to prevent urban growth that is consistent with metro Melbourne rather than rural living E.g. minimum setbacks/not allowing 3 story houses.*
 - *The change in wording to 'with consideration of' diminishes the importance of township character and heritage values identified in the 2010 neighbourhood studies. Heritage values are an important tourist drawcard needed for economic growth (old buildings still in use, museums, art galleries in restored buildings, streetscape, memorials). Township character is predominantly 1-storey homes with some and 2-storey buildings (CBD and some homes) and needs protection by designating new subdivisions as NRZ (Neighbourhood Residential) and not GRZ (General Residential) where protection against 3 storeys is not possible through overlays or schedules. Protecting these two important elements of our townships will not impede 'creativity' in house design or diversity of houses.*
 - Principle 5
 - *While I agree that life should be protected, I also believe that this will be used against anyone who is intending to build anywhere outside the township zone. There are many houses on small acreage allotments that make up current rural settlements, allowing dwellings on marginal land in between these could reduce load/environmental risk due to clean up efforts and would not inhibit CFA further. This should be the individuals choice and responsibility if choosing to live in rural areas.*
 - *Principle 5a is too convoluted and not clear.*
 - Principle 8
 - *I do not agree with forcing social housing to towns with more infrastructure/services. Social housing is required everywhere, and residents should not be forced out of their town due to a lack of social housing. If council assisted more people to build, more rental homes would also become available however the only land for sale is in the farming zone. RURAL LAND/FARMING ZONE HOUSING NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED FURTHER AND THE COMMUNITY PANEL NEEDS TO MEET AGAIN ON THIS TOPIC.*
 - Principles 9, 10 and rural living in the farming zone
 - *Define productive agricultural land*
 - *Understand the requirement to obtain a result but object to the technique of divide to conquer. Clearly more time is required to provide a suitable response especially in regard to*

Rural Residential. This is why I went negative with principles 9 and 10 as I do not have the full context provided by the group 3 so have to support their findings.

- *'Random' rural living decisions in the Farming Zone should be avoided on farming for reasons of fire and flooding risk, biosecurity and weed management and to maintain future opportunities for farm consolidation.*
- *Principle 10 needs to have 'productive' included before 'farmland'.*
- *The productive farmland definition should be public and a standard, so buyers and sellers clearly know their options. It should not be up to the council to determine what is productive and what is not.*
- *Greater focus on RLZ and the impact of these on farmland rather than the other way around. Farming should always be the priority - prioritising RLZ residents extends the wealth gap and prices out people who manage and care for land and is a cost to people's livelihood. One person's vista should not trump ones enterprise or livelihood.*
- *Certainly, more work and community discussion needs to be had on putting housing in the Farming Zone, particularly around Nagambie (which is where the near term pressures are likely to be). There just was not enough time dedicated to this aspect as part of this process and Council should ensure they circle back to this before formally adopting the recommendations*
- *Avenel*
 - *Avenel and the current status of the Service Station is detailed as "potential commercial opportunities (e.g., service centre)". This has been misrepresented as firstly the current operating conditions and the impact on the major arterial route needs to be addressed.*
- *Strathbogie*
 - *Township boundaries - On all of the tables I sat at. The idea to redirect to other towns, away from Strathbogie, was never mentioned. I strongly disagree with this.*
- *Violet Town*
 - *The Violet Town recommendations should include a specific reference to investigating a LDRZ (Low Density Residential Zone) in suitable land adjacent to the existing border as lots here over 4000sqm don't need sewerage infrastructure. There is existing defacto LDRZ housing on large unsewered blocks within the township zone already and a new LDRZ would be an extension of these and would be preferable to a RRZ so close to town. RRZ areas need to be further out. VT also needs a designated commercial centre expansion zone to allow for business growth opportunities.*
- *Nagambie*
 - *I 100% support the purple industrial zone; I support the green zone; I highly object to the red zone, especially the area north and south of Vickers Rd.*

5. Other considerations

During Session 3, the facilitator invited discussion for any other considerations or recommendations to be shared. Council representatives responded to questions and comments where required.

The below summarises verbal and written comments by Panel members noting they are connected to commentary shared regarding Principles 9 and 10 shown in Section 4.1.1.

- There was desire from multiple Panel members for further discussions around housing and dwellings in rural and farming zones:
 - It was noted that work has been done to date on the townships but not housing in rural zones.
 - Multiple Panel members agreed that housing could be built on certain areas of the farming zone that would not impact anyone (for example, east of the freeway). Desire for provision of exceptions was shared.
 - There is a need to clarify what is productive agricultural land e.g. good wool-growing country is still very valuable agricultural land.
- There were questions and comments regarding next steps including about if additional work that isn't budgeted for won't happen unless community members advocate.

6. Reflections and evaluation

This section details the results from the Community Panel evaluation. Evaluation occurred over two self-completion surveys.

- 1. The Welcome Survey was distributed to the Community Panel one week before Session One. It asked Community Panel members to identify their level of agreement on content and knowledge, trust and accountability, in addition to motivations to join the Community Panel and what is most valuable about community engagement process like this. A total of 22 Community Panel members completed the survey (n=22).
- 2. The Evaluation Survey was distributed to the Community Panel after Session Three. It asked Community Panel members to identify their level of agreement on content and knowledge, trust and accountability, the engagement process, in addition to what could be improved in future processes and what is most valuable about community engagement process like this. A total of 16 Community Panel members completed the survey (n=16).

CONTENT AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Community Panel members rated their level of agreement with five statements regarding understanding of the strategies, land use planning, Council and broader challenges impacting land use planning.

Figures 13 to 17 display the results. Overall, there was an increase in agreement with all statements. The lowest increase was regarding the Community Panel members' level of understanding about how Council makes decisions.

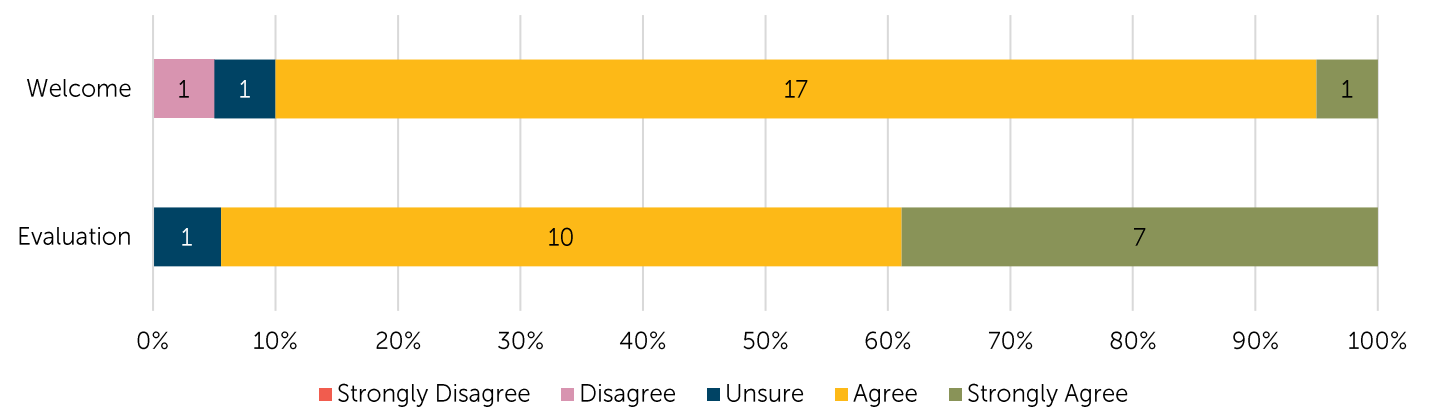


Figure 13: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I understand the role of the Rural Residential and Land Use Strategy and Urban Growth Strategy.'

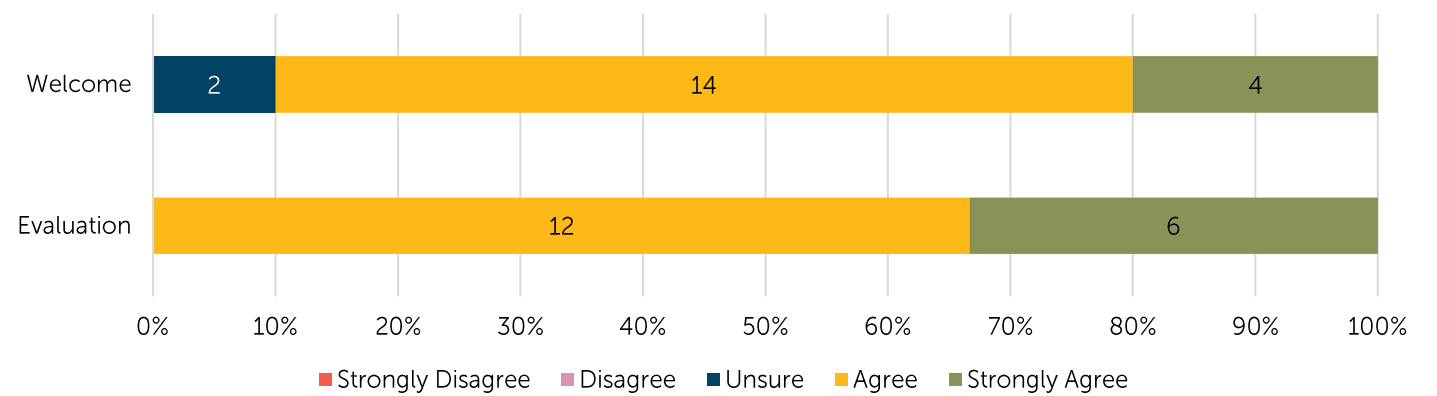


Figure 14: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I understand Council's role in land use planning.'

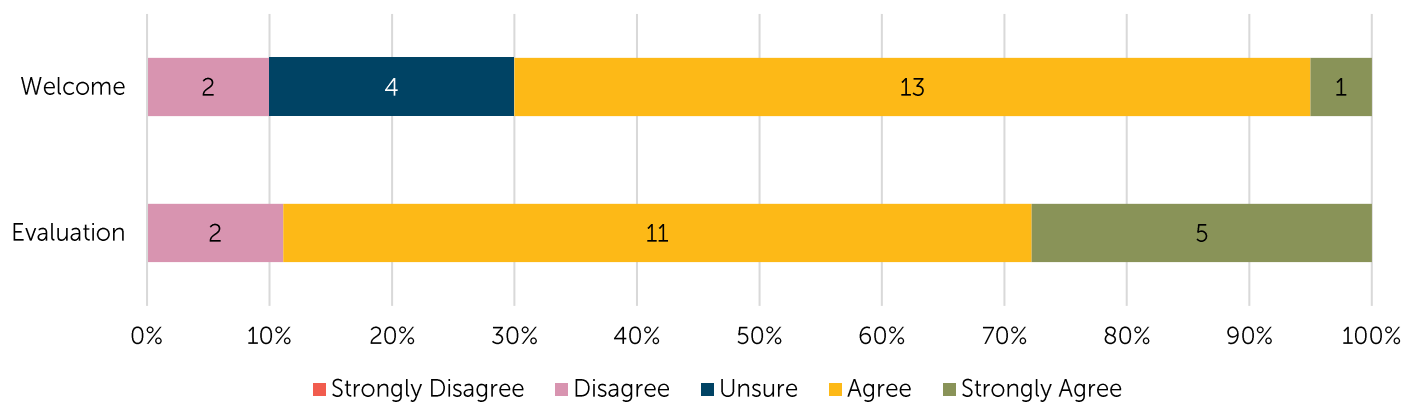


Figure 15: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I understand the broader challenges impacting land use planning in Strathbogie Shire.'

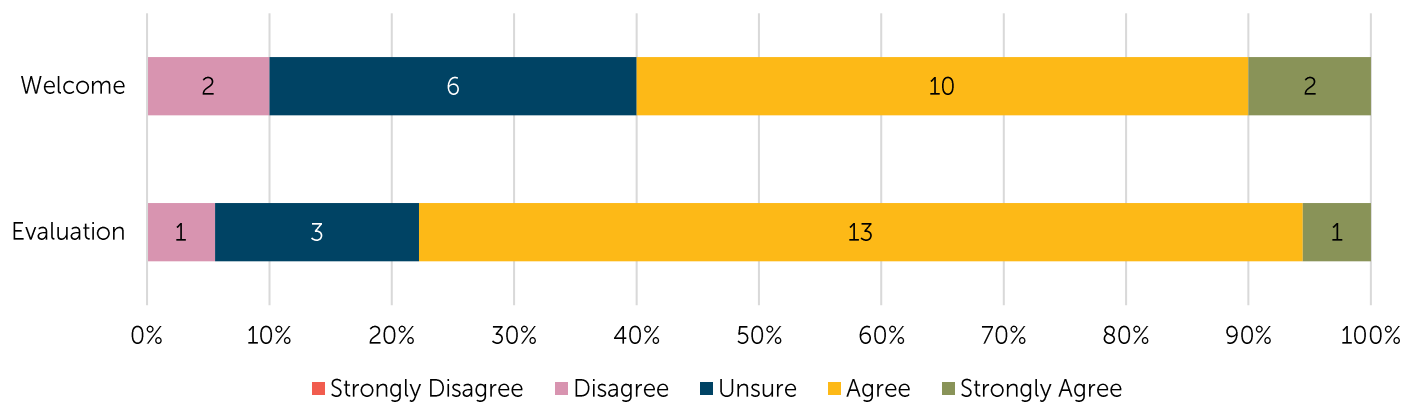


Figure 16: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I understand what decisions are within Council's control and influence.'

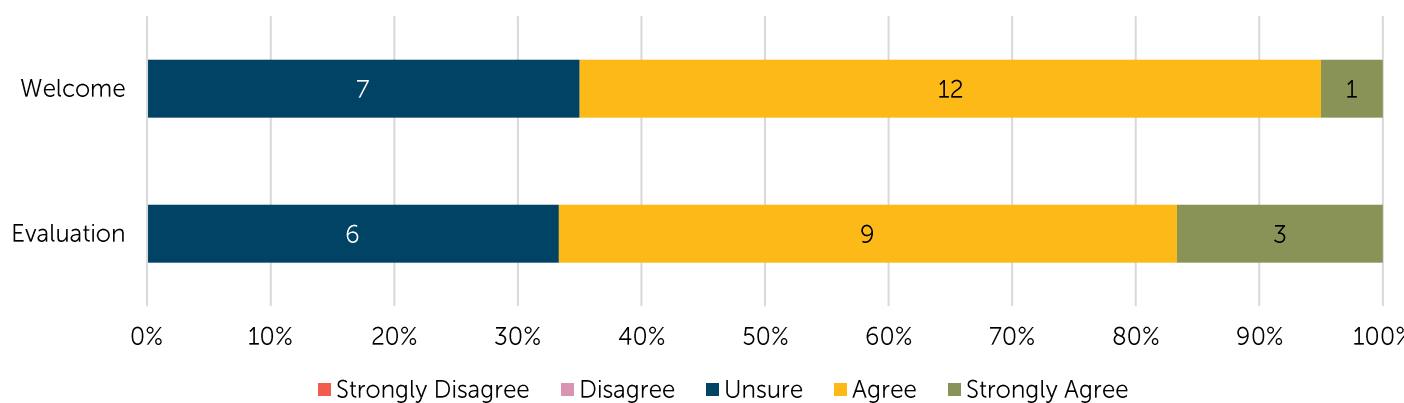


Figure 17: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I understand how Council makes decisions.'

TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Community Panel members rated their level of agreement with five statements regarding their trust in Council and the process.

Figures 18 to 22 display the results. Overall, the main change is one to two more people disagreeing with all the statements, thus showing a minor decrease in trusting Council and the process. The level of agreement and neutrality across all the questions varies.

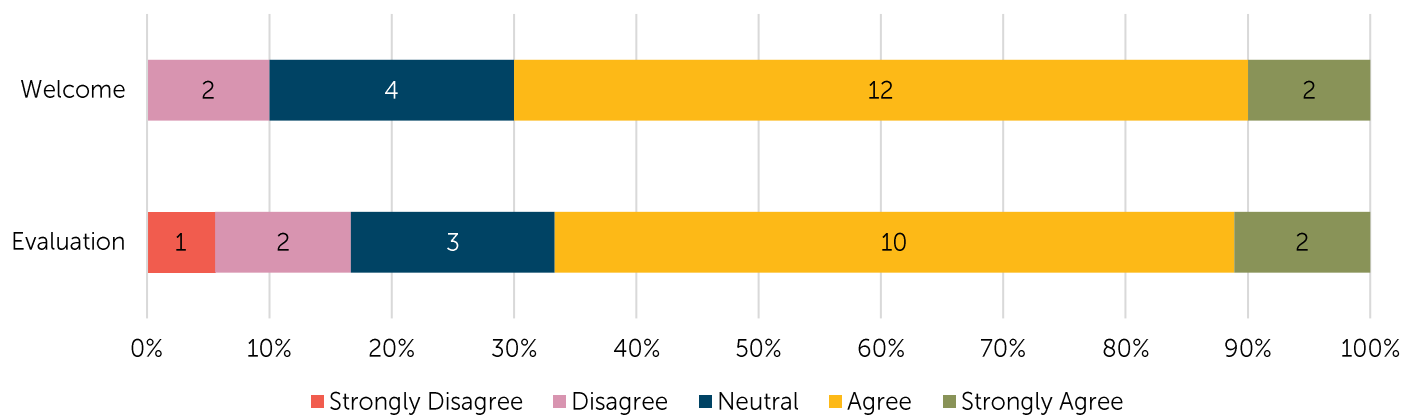


Figure 18: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I believe Council is planning for the long-term future of the Strathbogie Shire.'

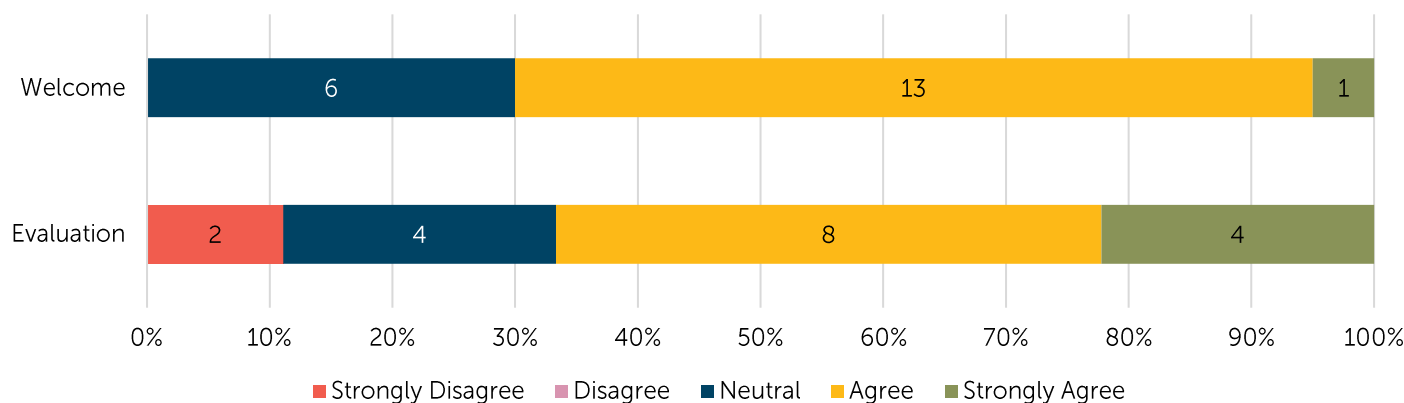


Figure 19: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I have a positive relationship with Strathbogie Shire Council.'

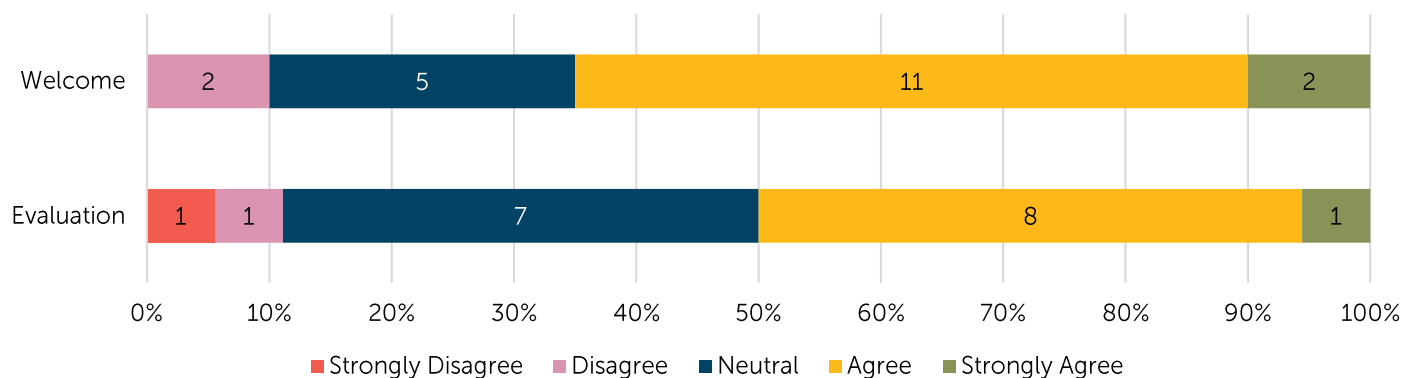


Figure 20: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I trust that Strathbogie Shire Council actively supports community involvement in making decisions.'

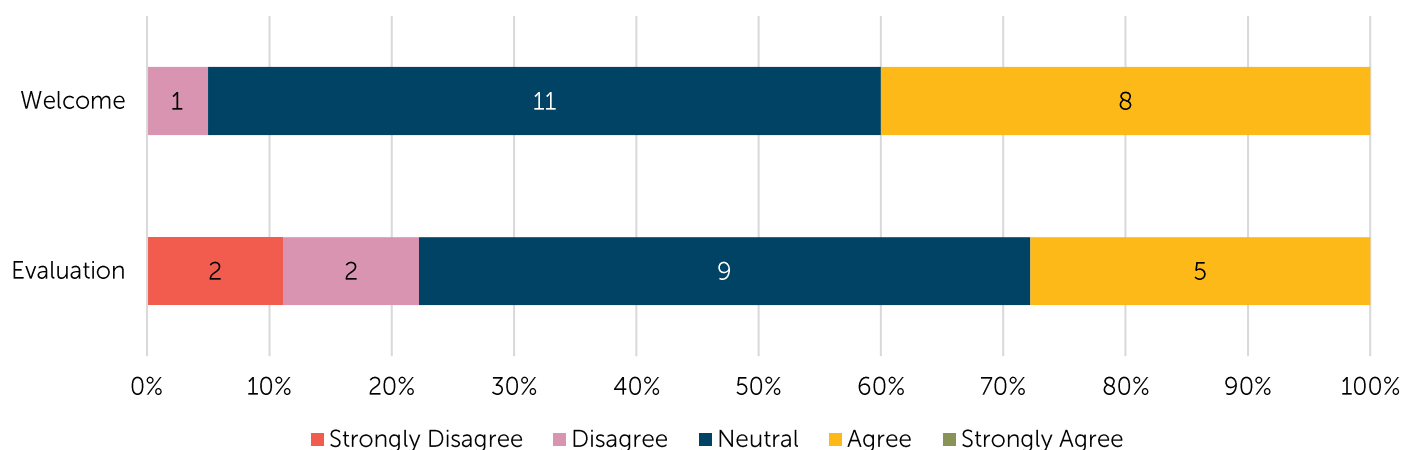


Figure 21: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I am confident that Strathbogie Shire Council will honour the outcomes of this process.'

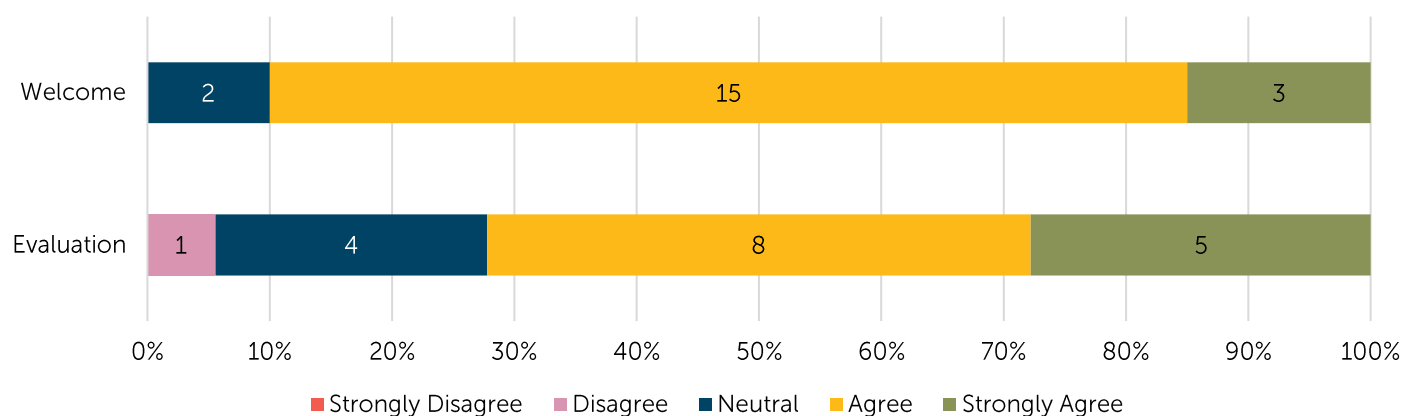


Figure 22: Welcome and Evaluation survey responses to the statement 'I had the skills and knowledge to contribute to Strathbogie Shire Council's decision making processes.'

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In the Evaluation Survey Community Panel members rated their level of agreement with five statements regarding their experience in the engagement process.

Figure 23 displays the result. Overall, there is high level of agreement with the exception that the quality of information assisted Community Panel members to form and opinion.

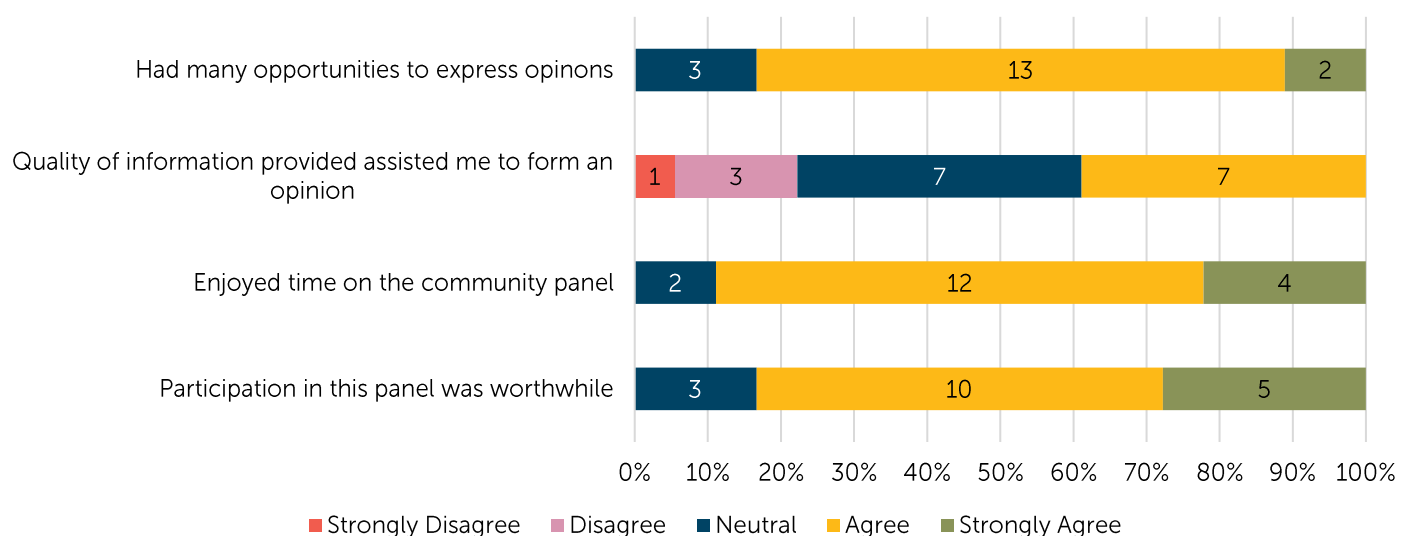


Figure 23: Evaluation survey responses to statements regarding the engagement process.

MOTIVATIONS TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY PANEL

The following is a summary of what motivated respondents to join the Community Panel before Session one:

- understanding decisions made through the process will impact Strathbogie Shire residents and wanting to partake in these decisions
- acknowledging or supporting a growing population whilst wanting to protect rural areas or prime agricultural land, see the area flourish, and minimise negative impacts
- interest in what Council is currently thinking and planning for including locations for growth and use of planning controls
- believing community engagement is essential in land use planning decisions and wanting to contribute to a beneficial outcome for the land and people
- interest or experience in the challenges and importance of strategic planning and wanting Council to make sustainable decisions with integrated outcomes
- understands community concerns about the quality, relevance and implementation of strategic planning including the lack of infrastructure to support development
- desire to provide a viewpoint as a new or young Strathbogie Shire resident
- concerns about the impact from energy targets on unique landscapes, biodiversity, areas of significance and rural residents
- belief that the existing strategies have not evolved over time to meet community needs and changing land use patterns.

I have lived and worked in the area for nearly 40 years, with strong involvement with both Landcare, CFA, and farming groups. I acknowledge our environment and have an understanding of it and also recognize the need for growth and sustainability. I also own land zoned Rural Living.

I have a great deal of community involvement working for the CFA, and also a lot of respect to the land we are living on. Having input from community is a wonderful thing to do, and working toward outcomes which benefit both the land and people was my motivation.

VALUES OF DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

In both the Welcome and Evaluation Surveys, Community Panel members were asked about what they found most valuable about engagement processes like this (deliberative engagement processes).

The below summarises responses from the Welcome Survey before the Evaluation Survey.

Welcome Survey

The following is a summary of what Community Panel members found most valuable about engagement processes like this before Session one:

- meeting interesting and different people which enables the Community Panel members and Council to hear and understand a variety of thoughts, opinions and views
- hopefully leading to an outcome and strategies that benefits and serves Strathbogie Shire residents
- actions and frameworks for growth that are based on diverse case studies, storytelling, discussions and community sentiments
- enables community members to understand the challenges, context and examples of land use planning including the use and need for different land use zones
- opportunity to contribute positively to the future land use of Strathbogie Shire
- acknowledging it is a collaborative and inclusive approach in the planning process that builds community confidence and genuine relationships.

Community engagement informs the Council, as the planning authority, about community priorities. Community engagement also serves to inform the community about the needs and priorities for the future management of the Shire.

The framework for any growth needs to be flexible and robust. Having diversity in ideas and opinions and importantly an environment that promotes genuine and meaningful discussion.

Evaluation Survey

The following is a summary of what Community Panel members found most valuable about engagement processes like this after Session three:

- An opportunity to bring together people with varying experiences to understand different views and opinions.
- Being able to share experiences and views to inform decision making processes.
- Hearing from planners about their rationale whilst also sharing local problems with them.
- Unsure until the final outcome is seen and enacted as actions speak louder than words.
- It assists Council and planners to understand and wants and needs from those who will be impacted the most by the long-term strategies.
- Independent facilitation so the process is respectful and does not become a political forum from alternative tangents.

It, grassroots democracy in action. It enables members of the community to express their views on decisions that will have a long-term impact on their community's future. It's also great to meet the planners and hear their perspectives and rationales.

Gaining the perspectives of a wide range of people who come to the meetings with different lived experiences and knowledge about their community, towns, rural areas and what is important to them, their families and neighbours.

I'm not sure a community panel with all its built in bias is the best way to land on the best strategic land use decisions. I think a panel of independent consultants / professionals - who drew on the local knowledge and community sentiment - would be better placed to make a judgements - dismiss the red herrings - and put appropriate weight to the various options.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY PANEL PROCESSES

In the Evaluation Survey, Community Panel members were asked what could be improved in future Community Panel processes. The following summarises their responses:

- More time is needed during and between sessions as it felt rushed and pressured. This would enable more conversations about housing in the rural and farming zones, more time to collaborate on larger townships, adapt to issues that arise in earlier sessions, being able to hear for-and against views on issues, help make decisions, understand long reports and more time to vote.
- More accurate and up to date information to inform decision making was needed including updated flood overlay maps, planning rules, regulations, zones and history in addition to non-planning speak about what the strategies are hoping to achieve.
- A better process to make decisions given the last group had greater influence on the recommendations.
- An earlier check-in with panel members about whether the process is meeting their expectations and understanding of the Panel's purpose.
- A clearer explanation about the commitment needed to consider materials and vote on decisions.
- Clearer outcomes.
- Less clunky online forms.

I understand this is a balancing act, but more time dedicated to the more contentious issues. If these issues are identified in the early sessions, they should be nimble enough so that the remaining sessions can be changed to accommodate more discussion.

More information regarding current planning rules and regulations, about the various zones and what they all mean. Some history would also be good.

7. Councillor reflections

On Tuesday 4 March 2025 during a Councillor workshop, Capire presented an overview of the Community Panel process before Capire, Council, Shannon Davies from SD Planning and two Community Panel members presented the outputs and preliminary level of support votes (13 voters) and comments to Councillors.

Councillors were invited to share reflections. These are summarised related to the principles and township recommendations below.

PRINCIPLES

- Councillors observed that 65% of the Community Panel members can live with principles 1,2,3 and 4 and there still was not consensus for the two Principle 5 options.
- Councillors appreciated the Community Panel members' sharing their experience and thoughts on prime agricultural land, rural living, land care, townships and bushfires.

AVENEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the level of support votes were preliminary (13 votes before a total of 17 voters in the end) and there were only 12 voters for the Avenel recommendations, it was questioned why there were discrepancies in the numbers reported.

STRATHBOGIE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Councillor asked if there were any comments on the Loath it.
- It was questioned if people wanted more growth in Strathbogie. Following confirmation by a Panel member that people want more rural residential, a Councillor raised the consideration for rural living east of the golf course along Brookleigh Road.

VIOLET TOWN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Councillor asked if there were constraints on the Rural Living Zone and specifically if there is an impact on agriculture and land with lots of sheep, for land that is changed from Rural Living Zone.
 - After the question was answered that the main restriction is to lot sizes, there was clarification asked around if high intensity farming is excluded, as high intensity farming is the only possible thing on a small block.

EUROA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Councillors clarified details including zoning and adequate storm water needed on the Euroa map (Figure 9).
 - After Council officers responded, it was stated there is still potential flooding concerns for the areas identified for further investigation for the Rural Living Zone.
- Questioned what the availability of industrial land noting the Euroa growth strategy and estimated growth.
- One Councillor questioned the growth data for Euroa, suggesting some population data might not have been accounted for.

NAGAMBIE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Councillors clarified and questioned the different areas on the map (see Figure 11).
 - A Councillor thought the recommendations for removing current highlighted areas were short-sighted and not very visionary but understood the removal of the township boundary north of Vickers Road.
 - A couple of Councillors agreed about removing the area south of Vickers Road to increase the value to the land.

- Councillors discussed residential next to the railway line. One Councillor questioned who would want to live next to a railway line whilst another shared that downsizers do.
- It was commented that wording regarding 'do not' recommendations need to be thought about when undertaking amendments to the planning scheme.
- It was highlighted that there is a need to consider future stages of growth and development in Nagambie and acknowledge the information and the data available. A Community Panel member commented that the Community Panel highly valued the heritage of the core in Nagambie and not wanting to detract from that.
- Once Councillor acknowledged that heritage and tourism are important and need to be protected but questioned that the process did not comment on the need for hospitals and areas such as industry and how this should be linked to appropriate locations for growth.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON OUTPUTS

- It was commented that the recommendations were routine and relevant to planning for what is happening now, rather than planning for communities and building a 25-to-50-year strategy.
 - It was stated that it will be interesting to see if Council can address the planning related issues.
- There was acknowledgement around concern for growth in different areas and asked if there was anxiety about that and where the description for 'growth' is.
 - A Councillor acknowledged that potential growth will surprise some people and that we need to be ready for that, especially as Nagambie and Avenel have unlimited water support but the other townships do not.
 - One Councillor questioned that if growth is directed to one township for example, Nagambie, does that mean that investment in infrastructure, for example water, will not be made in other townships where it is needed for example, Euroa.
- Infrastructure
 - It was shared that Nagambie has freeway access and is more liveable being 15 minutes closer to Melbourne where the difference is noticed.
 - One Councillor shared that we need to take the opportunity with what is happening in Nagambie to fight for better infrastructure and use the momentum to focus on growth in other areas too.
 - Two Councillors agreed with the need of connecting infrastructure and intelligent planning including connection to good infrastructure in existing developments rather than possible developments that don't currently have developers.
 - There was discussion regarding rough roads and the chicken and egg situation of infrastructure before or after developers arrive. It was stated that advocacy and data help with this.
- It was shared that farming and housing is still a big complex conversation and that these stories need to be shared.
- There were comments regarding bushfires, specifically hard boundaries between townships and rural land. The need for an enforceable boundary was questioned.
- With respect to concern around heritage and not rezoning near railway lines, it was commented that heritage can still be respected and potentially protected but it is about creating ambience and a township culture. The Seymour Police Station was given as an example of an old building that was maintained with a new police station next door.

PROCESS QUESTIONS

- There were questions regarding the number and involvement of the Community Panel members and any perceived conflicts of interest.

8. Next steps

The next step is drafting the RRLUS and UGS before the draft strategies are shared with the community for comment. Additionally, the township strategies will be updated.

Capire Consulting Group

The Commons,
Wurundjeri Country
36-38 Gipps Street,
Collingwood VIC 3066
(03) 9285 9000

info@capire.com.au
capire.com.au

Capire acknowledges
and deeply respects the
Wurundjeri people and
the Traditional Owners
of the Victorian land.



capire