

UPGRADING TOILETS AT PORT MELBOURNE BEACH



Engagement Report

June 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Wominjeka. Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

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Introduction

Project background

City of Port Phillip is upgrading the public toilets at Port Melbourne Beach, adjacent to the Port Melbourne Life Saving Club. These public toilets are highly utilised, and in poor condition. The upgrades will transform the toilets into a modern, safe, and easy to use Changing Places toilet facility. This project is part of delivering on our Public Toilet Plan 2023–2033.

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of engaging with the community was to identify needs, preferences, issues or opportunities to address in our concept design for the upgraded toilet facility.

Our focus was on how the facility should look, including any artwork. Although construction standards and our public toilet plan limit how much we can change the functional aspects of the toilet facility's design, we also listened to feedback on practical issues stakeholders wanted us to consider.

About this report

This report outlines the feedback we received during the engagement program. It highlights key themes and ideas from community members. It will be used to support the project team by providing clear information and context as they deliver a concept design for the upgraded toilet facility.

Before reading this report

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- The findings are based on qualitative feedback from people who chose to take part. This means the views shared are not statistically representative of the whole community and may only reflect a portion of local voices.
- While we aim to include diverse perspectives, some community members may have faced barriers to participation, including people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Participants refers to everyone involved in the engagement; respondents refers to those who answered a specific question or activity.
- The report summarises what we heard. Feedback has not been independently verified, so some comments may be incorrect, unachievable or outside the project scope. Not all individual comments are shown; themes, quotes and numbers are used to reflect the range of views.
- Some people may have contributed more than once across different activities, which may result in unintentional double-counting.
- Demographic data was not collected consistently across all activities, which limits our ability to analyse differences between groups.
- Percentages are based on the number of responses we received on a given question or topic, and not necessarily on the total number of participants.
- The report covers Council-led engagement activities only and does not include community-run or third-party events, surveys or petitions.
- This report was developed through a combination of human analysis and artificial intelligence (AI). Human analysts conducted the primary data analysis. AI tools were used to process and analyse large datasets, identify trends, and generate some preliminary findings. Any AI-generated findings were
- subsequently reviewed, validated, and interpreted by human analysts with expertise in the subject matter. The final conclusions and interpretations presented in this report represent the considered judgment of these human analysts, even where AI contributed to the data processing.

What we did

Between 23 March and 3 May 2026, we delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about the toilet facility upgrade and collected feedback through a mix of engagement activities.

Communications activities

We used the following communications to inform community members of the engagement program and invite them to participate.



Signage

Signs were posted in three locations around the toilet facility. A poster was placed at each entrance.



Postcards x 399

Postcards were distributed to private properties near the toilet facility.



Emails

Emails were sent to the Port Melbourne Life Saving Club, Caffè di Lido, and community groups known to run activities near the toilet facility, including the Port Melbourne Icebergs.



Newsletters

The project was included in the March and April 2026 editions of *Diversity* and *Help Shape Our City* newsletters. Together the newsletters reached more than 14,000 recipients. This project received 168 clicks.



'Have your say' website

Council's dedicated engagement website, *Have your Say*, included a page for this project, with information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and opportunities to engage. There were 347 visitors during the engagement period.

Engagement activities

We used the following activities and channels to capture feedback from community members.



Survey

112 responses

Our survey asked for feedback on how the upgraded toilet facility should look, whether it should have artwork and what themes any artwork should reflect. It also gave participants the opportunity to share other things they would like Council to consider. There were 104 responses online and eight in hardcopy.



Upload

2 responses

In addition to the online survey, *Have Your Say* visitors had the option to upload feedback in the form of a documents, scans or image.



Neighbourhood pop-ups

28 respondents

We held two pop-ups outside Caffè di Lido near the toilet facility to engage community members who may not otherwise participate. The pop-ups were held on:

- 8 am to 10 am Wednesday 25 March
- 10 am to 12 midday Saturday 28 March

Participants were invited to hear about the project, discuss with a staff member, complete a survey or share their feedback via activity boards.



Emails

2 responses

Two people emailed us directly with their feedback.

Who we heard from

Participants who took our survey or uploaded feedback were asked about their connection to the area where the toilet is located and their demographic details. Pop-up respondents were usually not asked detailed demographic questions. Accordingly, most data in this section refers to survey or other online respondents.

Connection and usage

We asked survey and online respondents about their connection to the area around the toilet facility and what they do there.

Connection to the area

There were 111 respondents who told us about their connection to the area. Participants were invited to select any number of options.

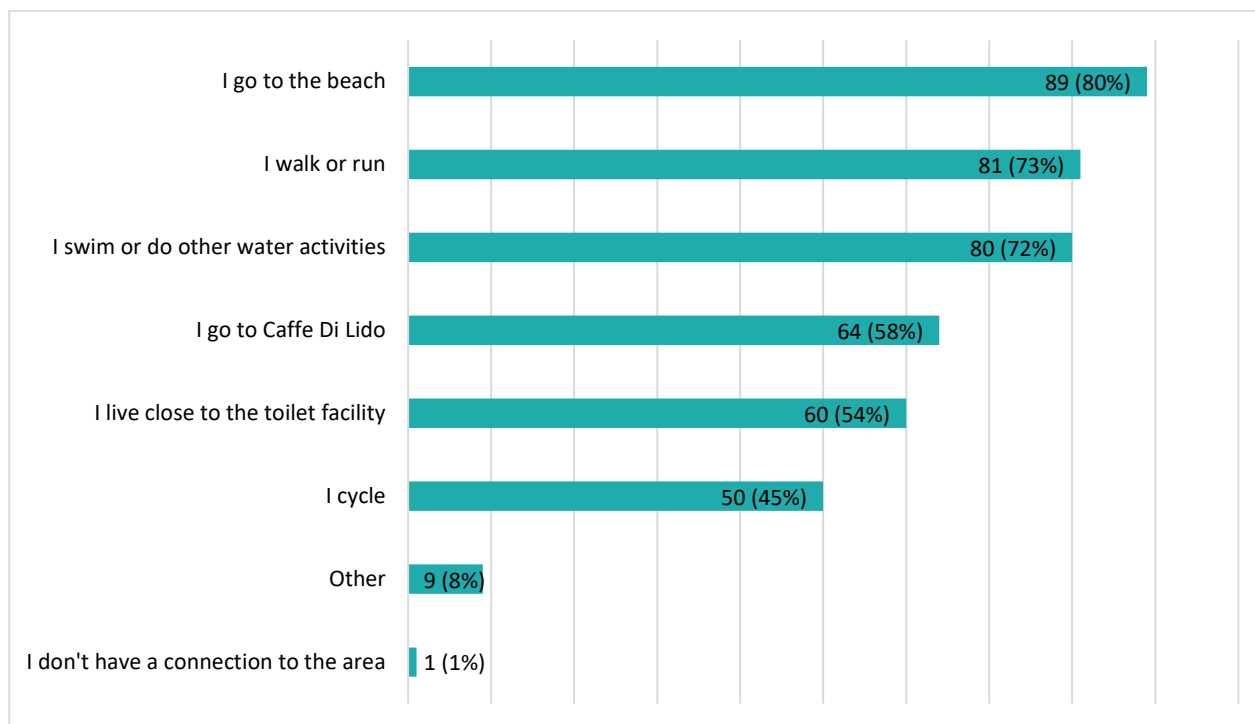


Figure 1: Responses to 'What is your connection to the area where the toilet facility is located?' (111 total responses)

Affiliation with local groups

There were 111 respondents who told us about their affiliation with local groups. Some participants were affiliated with more than one group.

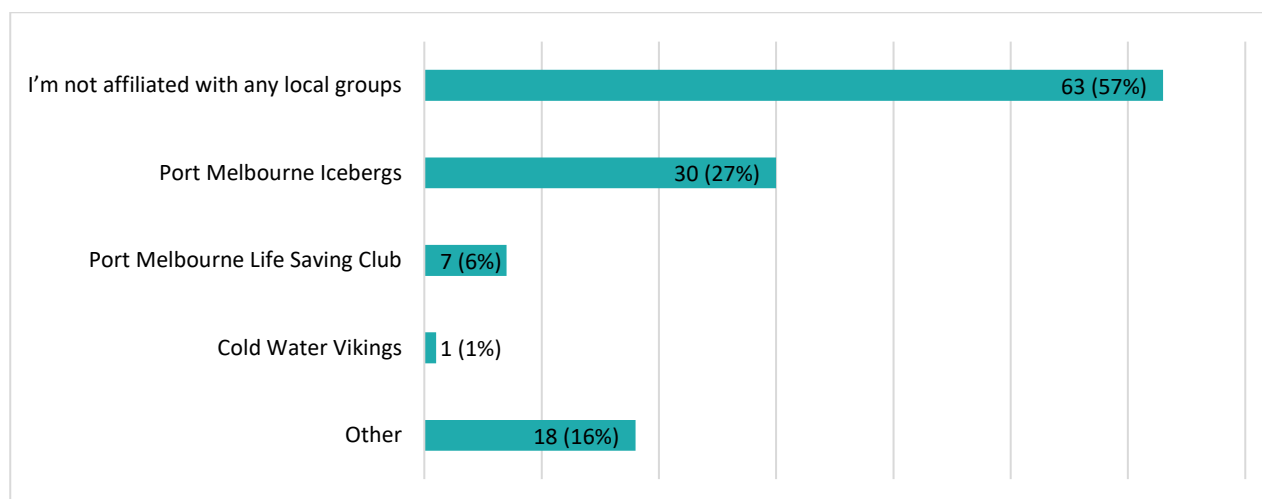


Figure 2: Responses to 'Are you affiliated with any local groups doing activities at Port Melbourne Beach?' (111 total responses)

'Other' responses included:

- 'Snappers' swim group
- Salt Sisters
- Other swim groups
- Melbourne Triathlon Club
- Port Melbourne Yacht Club
- BeachPatrol
- Love Our Street
- Ocean Martial Arts
- The Sea Dragons
- Pilates, yoga or walking groups

We also received feedback from the operators of Caffè Di Lido, near the toilet facility.

How often participants visit

There were 111 respondents who told us how often they visited the area.

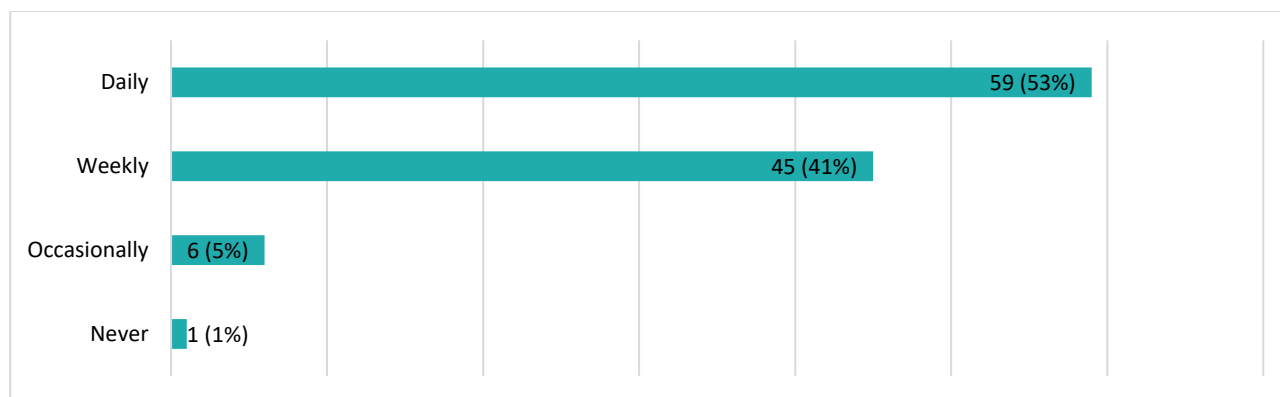


Figure 3: Responses to 'How often do you visit the area where the toilet facility is located?' (111 total responses)

How participants use the facility

There were 110 participants who told us what they use the toilet facility for. Participants were invited to select any number of options.

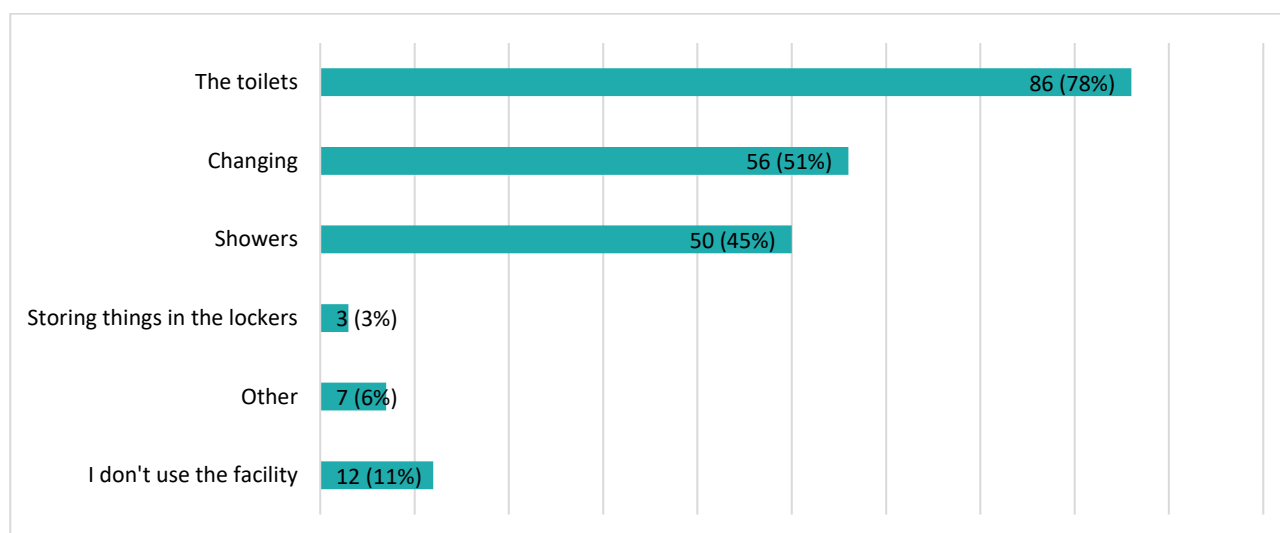


Figure 4: Responses to 'What do you use the toilet facility for?' (110 total responses)

'Other' responses included living nearby, going to the beach and avoiding using the facilities. Some participants commented that there are no lockers at the facility.

Demographics

We asked survey and online respondents about their demographic information.

Suburb

There were 112 participants who told us which suburb they live in.

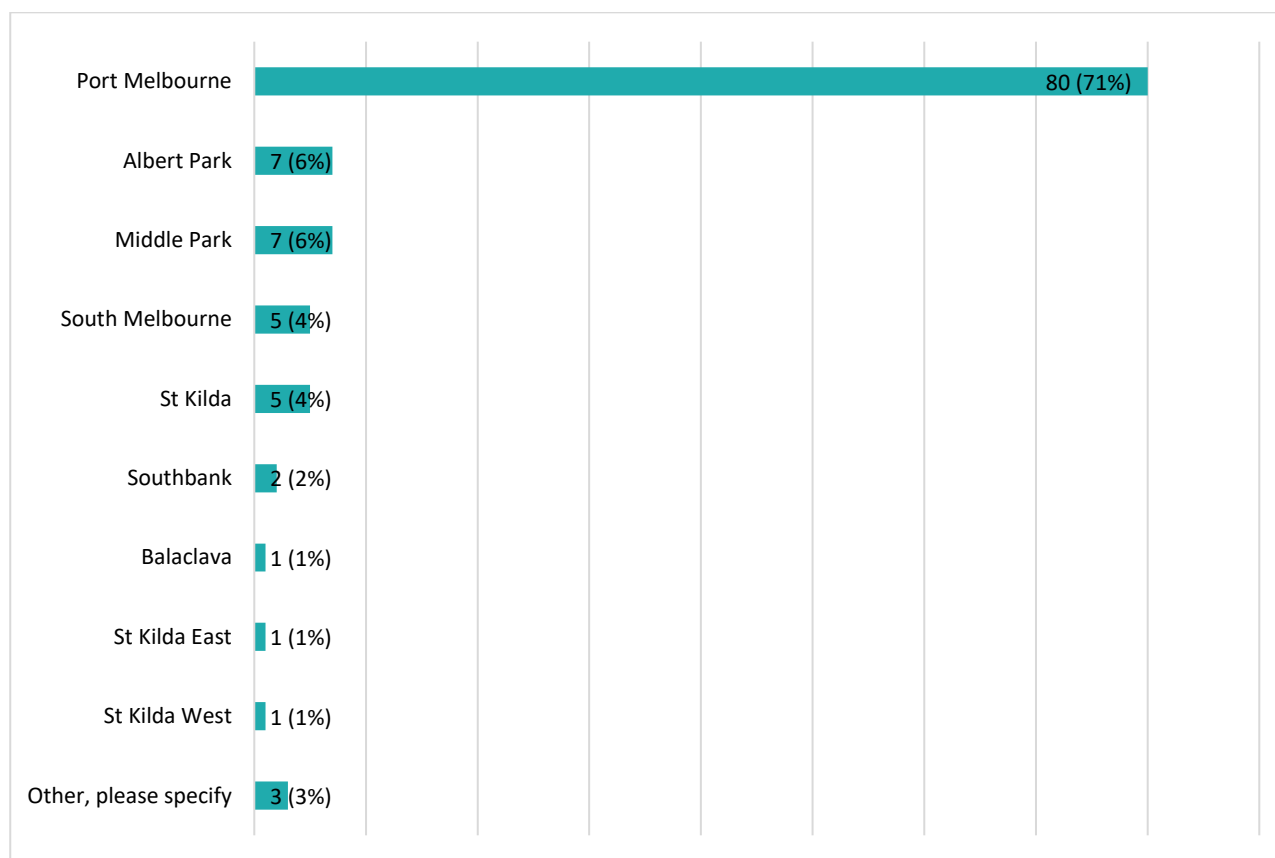


Figure 5: Responses to 'What is your residential suburb?' (112 total responses)

'Other' responses included Richmond, Brunswick and Northcote.

Age

There were 111 respondents who told us their age bracket. No respondents told us they were younger than 25 or older than 84.

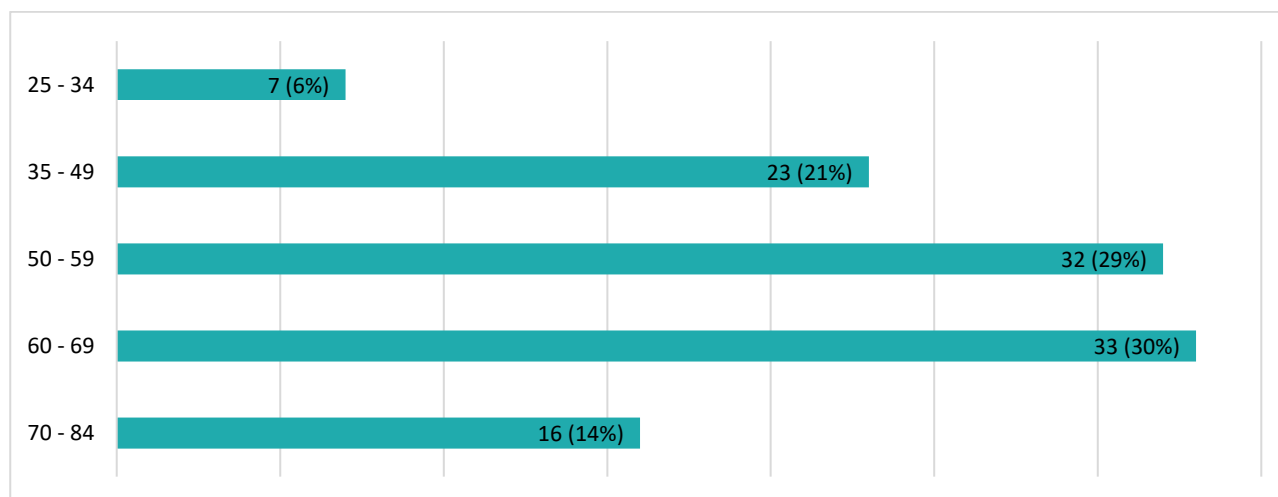


Figure 6: Responses to 'Please indicate your age group.' (111 total responses)

Gender

There were 111 participants who told us which gender they identify with.

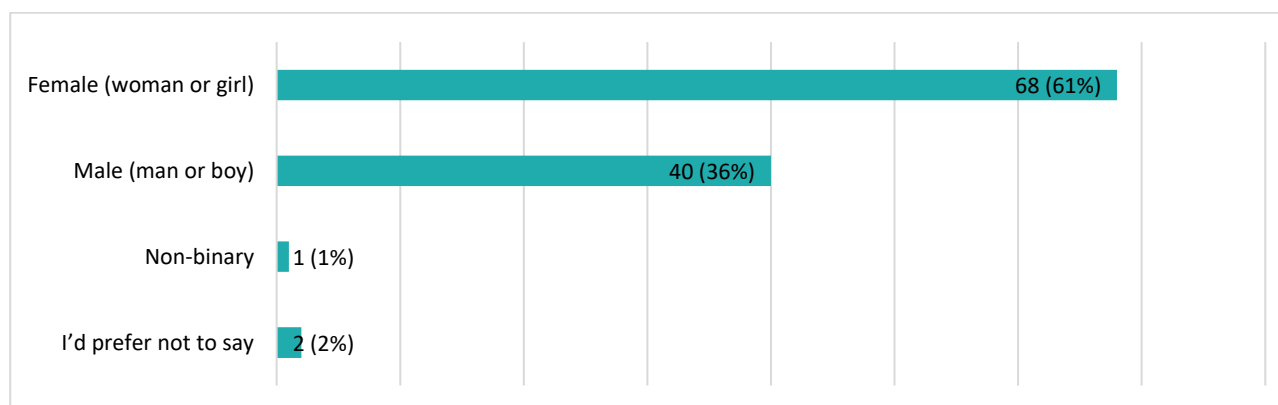


Figure 7: Responses to 'Which gender do you identify with?' (111 total responses)

Diversity and inclusion

We asked people if they identified with any of the following statements. The statements included:

- 'I speak a language other than English at home' (17 responses).
- 'I identify as LGBTIQA+' (8 responses).
- 'I am a person with disability' (7 responses).
- 'I am from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background' (2 responses).

To help us understand if we were engaging with new community members, we asked participants had provided feedback on any other Council projects in the past 12 months.

In total, 40 per cent of participants said they had provided feedback to Council in the past 12 months; 27 per cent of participants said they had not, 33 per cent were unsure or did not share this information.

What we heard

How the facility should look

We asked participants about the overall design character of the toilet facility and what artwork they might like it to have.

Overall design character

SUGGESTED OPTIONS

We asked participants, 'What is important to you in how the public toilet facility should look?' Participants could select any number of a few suggested options.

We received 122 responses (109 from survey respondents and 13 from pop-up respondents) to the suggested options, including an 'other' option in the survey question.

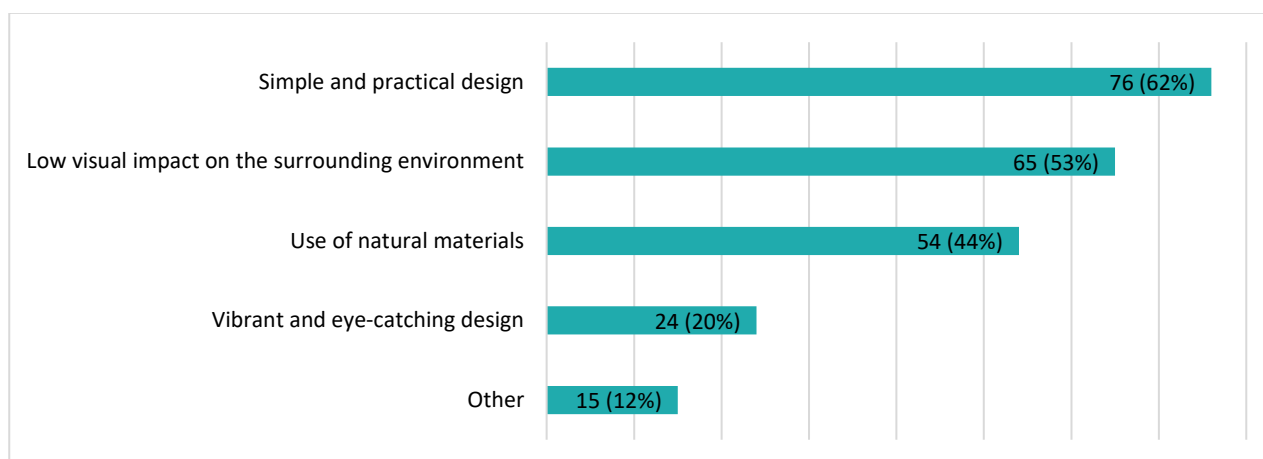


Figure 8: Responses to 'What is important to you in how the public toilet facility should look?' (122 total responses)

We analysed these responses by participant gender. Feedback from female and male participants followed a similar pattern. However, fewer females than males supported a vibrant and eye-catching design.

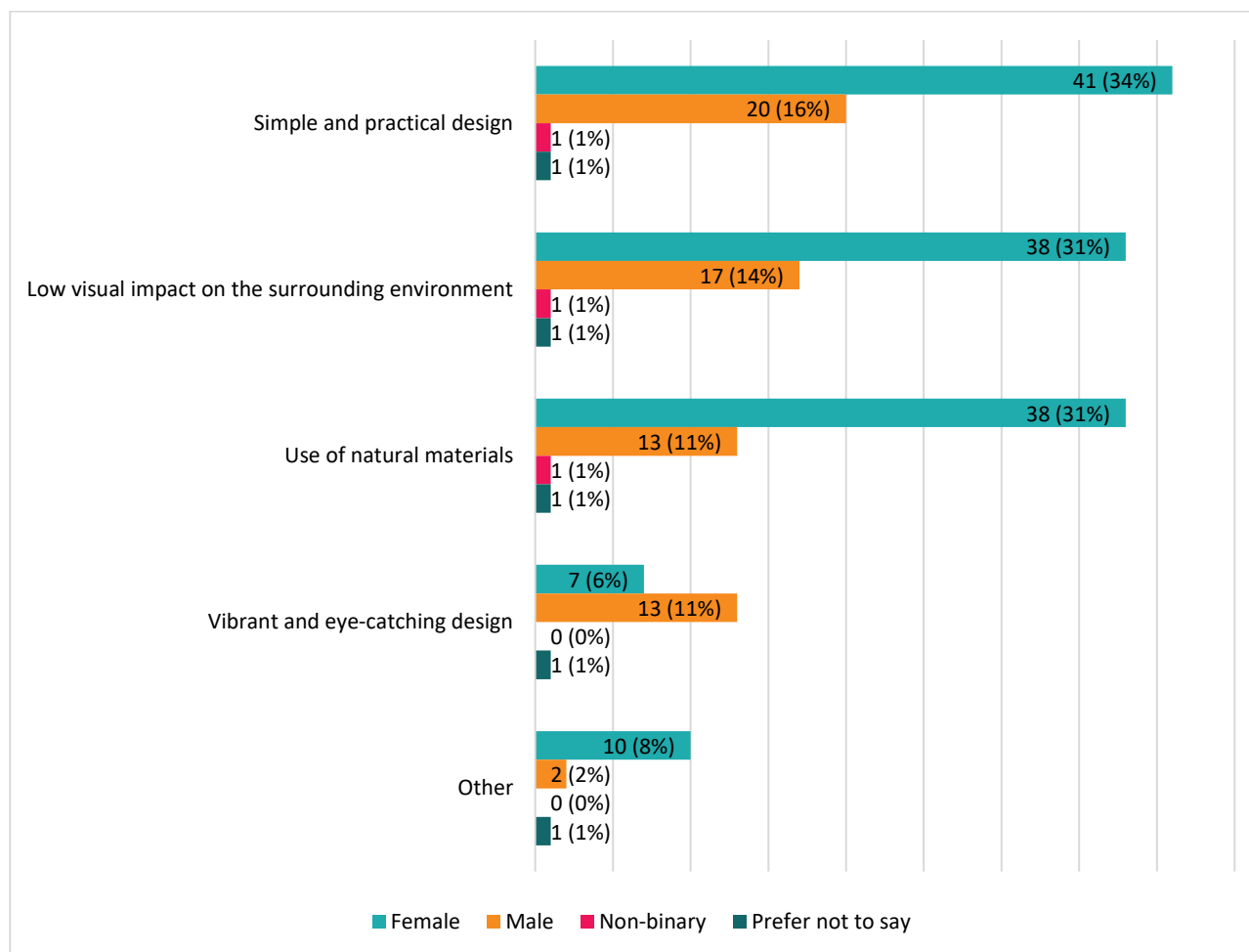


Figure 9: Responses to 'What is important to you in how the public toilet facility should look?', by gender. (122 total responses)

OTHER COMMENTS

Participants also shared feedback outside of the suggested options.

Across all our engagement activities we received 51 comments with feedback on the design character of the toilet facility. This includes the 15 'other' responses in the survey question above.

We identified common themes raised in these comments.

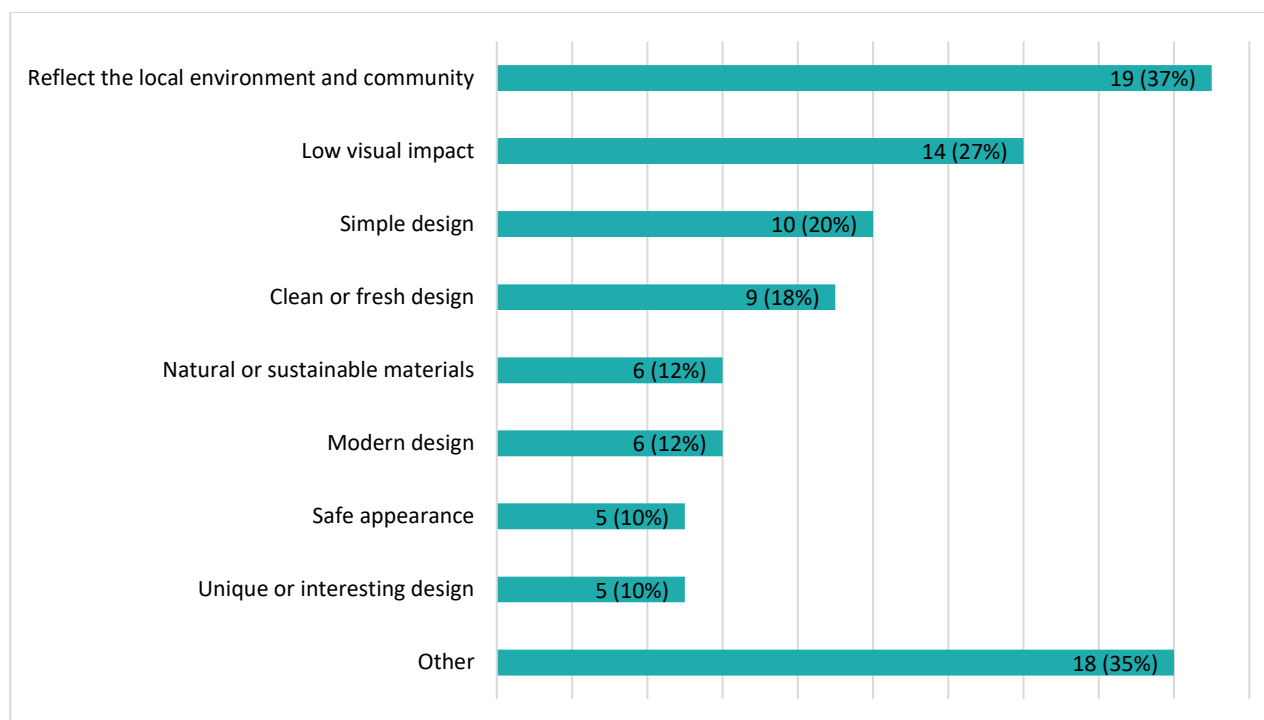


Figure 10: Number of comments on overall design character, by theme. (51 total responses)

Examples of comments we received on each theme are given below.

Theme	Example Comments
Low visual impact (14 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good facilities internally and minimalist low height architecture which does not detract from the natural surroundings, like the South Melbourne Life Saving Club. Low key design. Unobtrusive. Not gross like the present one. Simple Not to block view of beach from street i.e. not expand it from current
Reflect the local environment and community (19 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any of the above but in colours that match the environment and are not so bright and artificial. Current artwork doesn't match the landscape at all and sticks out like a sore thumb. Looks like an amusement park! Reflects our community & the local beaches - that is what's great about the existing facility Must reflect the heritage of port. No indigenous, too much of this already. A lot of migrants arrived in port by Ship,

including my family. Must reflect the history of the area that we can ALL relate too.

- *I'm not wedded to a particular focus .. more concerned that it complements and blends tastefully with the coastal location*

Simple design (10 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Albert Park LS club facility and toilets are ideal in low-key, simple, modern beach look, suggest replicating</i> • <i>Just keep a plain and simple at the moment it's a absolute I saw</i> • <i>Go with a low-tech, practical design to reduce cost.</i>
Clean or fresh design (9 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ease of access, clean and simple design</i> • <i>Remove the current unappealing and gloomy artwork, give the toilet a simple, fresh makeover</i>
Natural or sustainable materials (6 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use recycled material when possible. Sustainable, easy to maintain.</i> • <i>Please use natural materials- we don't want it standing out like the current building with artwork.</i>
Modern design (6 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Well lit, modern, clean, well ventilated, modern, environmentally low impact, smart design, accessible, safe - see the facilities at the new Brighton Life Saving Club.</i> • <i>Similar to the new facilities at South Melbourne! The whole club should be upgraded to look the same as the new south Melbourne development. Clean modern design! Lift the value of the area with a quality build - south Melb looks amazing</i>
Safe appearance (5 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clean design, a layout that helps you scan the space quickly and feel safe, a minimum suite of materials that are easy to keep clean</i> • <i>New facilities are cleaner and not scary to enter.</i> • <i>It needs to look a way that hat makes it feel safe.</i>

**Unique or
interesting
design
(5 responses)**

- *Interesting and artistic design*
- *This site here in Port Melbourne definitely needs a bespoke design not a Balaclava Carpark, Edwards Park, Shakespear Grove off the shelf design. Make it look like a paddle board. Paddle boards are cool.*

Other suggestions and requests we heard beyond these themes included:

- Use robust, long-lasting building and materials.
- Design the facility with a similar character to the current building.
- Design the facility to be light and transparent.
- Include timber decking like at the South Melbourne Beach toilets.
- Design the facility to be comfortable and practical.
- Add or improve garden areas around the toilets.
- Include a Colourbond roof to make the building look appealing from above.
- Make the facility open to the beach.
- Avoid using cold concrete.
- Prioritise function over form.
- Run a design competition for the new facility to support and encourage the local architect community.
- Engage a good architect and allocate enough money to build a quality facility appropriate for the significant location.

Artwork

We asked participants 'Would you like the facility to have artwork?' and 'If we proceed with artwork, what themes should it reflect?'

WHETHER THE FACILITY SHOULD HAVE ARTWORK

We received 110 responses to the question 'Would you like the facility to have artwork?'

Pop-up participants were not asked to select from these options. Instead, when we asked them about what themes artwork should reflect, they had an option respond with 'It doesn't need any artwork'. In addition to the 110 survey responses, two participants selected this option. They have been included in the 'No' responses below.

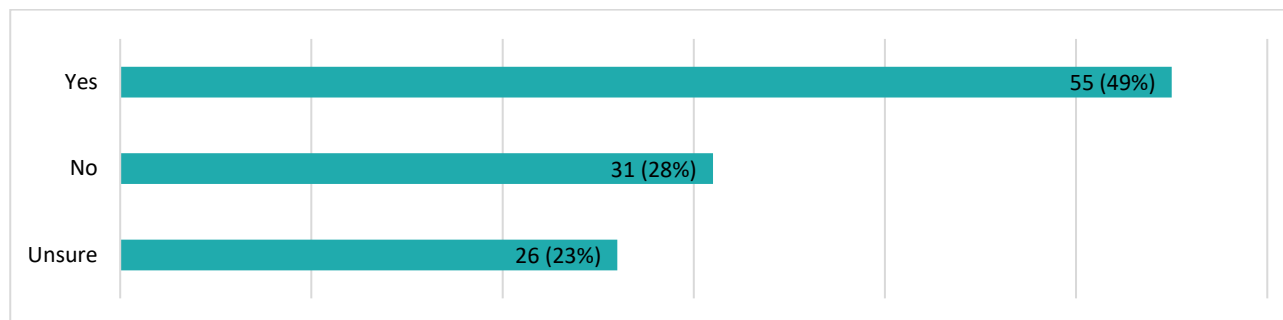


Figure 11: Responses to 'Would you like the facility to have artwork?' (112 total responses)

We analysed these responses by participant gender. For both females and males, the number of participants who selected 'yes' was nearly double the number who selected 'no'. Many more females than males selected 'unsure'.

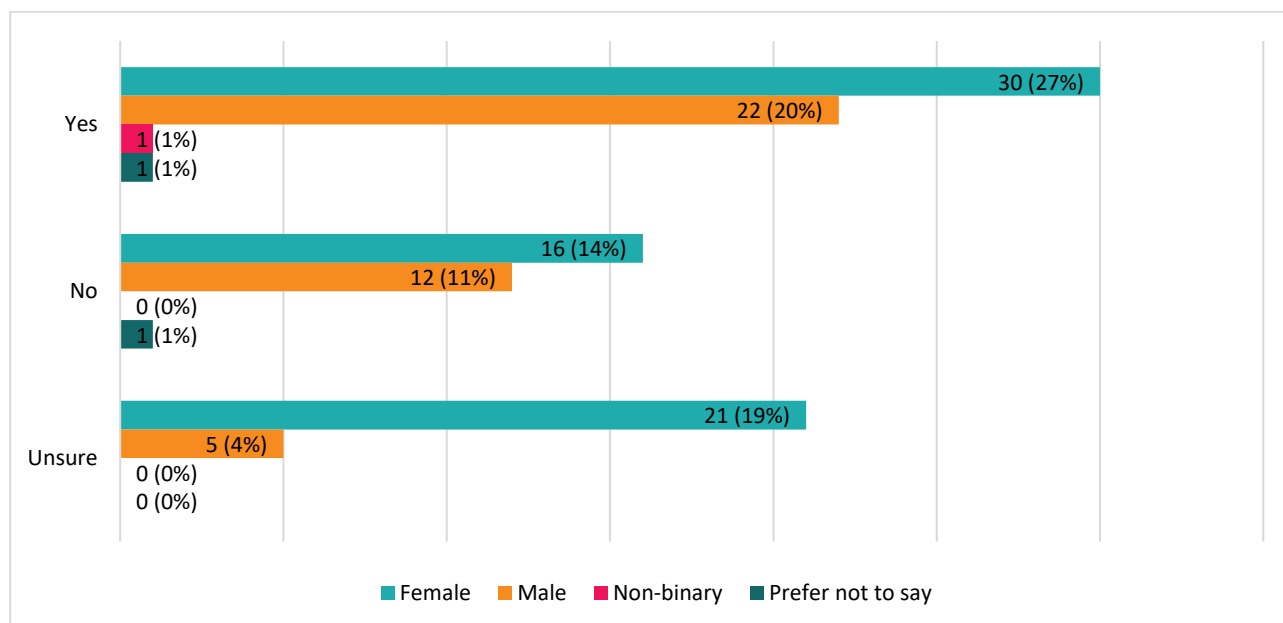


Figure 12: Responses to 'Would you like the facility to have artwork?', by gender. (112 total responses)

WHAT THEMES ARTWORK SHOULD REFLECT

We asked participants 'If we proceed with artwork, what themes should it reflect?' Participants could select any number of a few suggested options.

We received 118 responses (101 from survey respondents and 13 from pop-up respondents) to the suggested options, including an 'other' option.

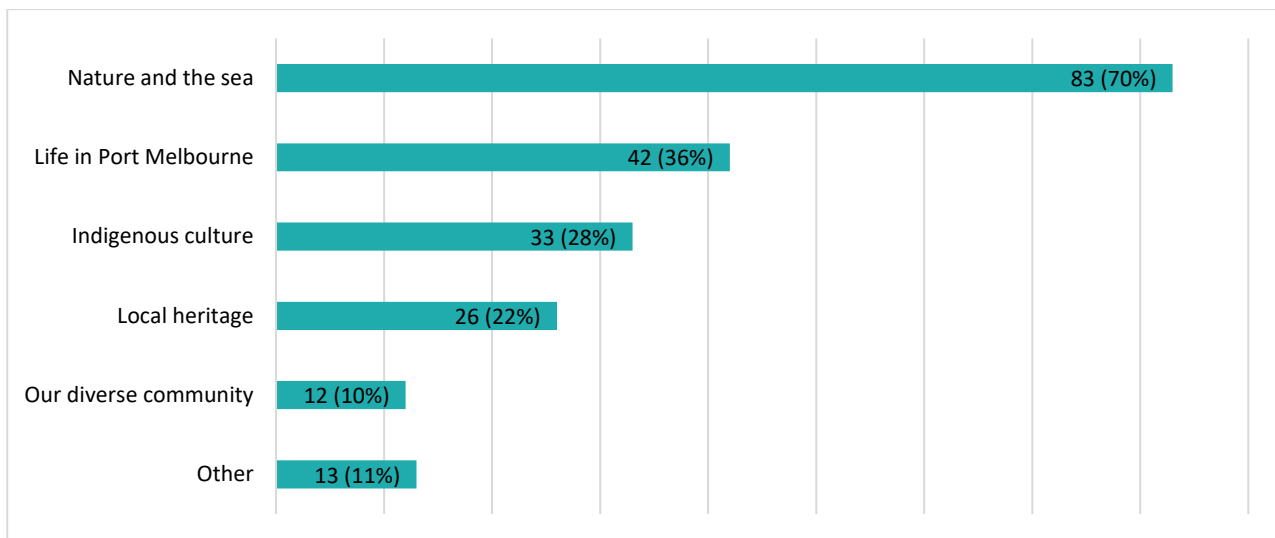


Figure 13: Responses to 'If we proceed with artwork, what themes should it reflect?' (118 total responses)

We analysed these responses by participant gender. Feedback from females and males followed a similar pattern. 'Nature and the sea' was the most selected theme for males and females, but its popularity was especially high with female participants.

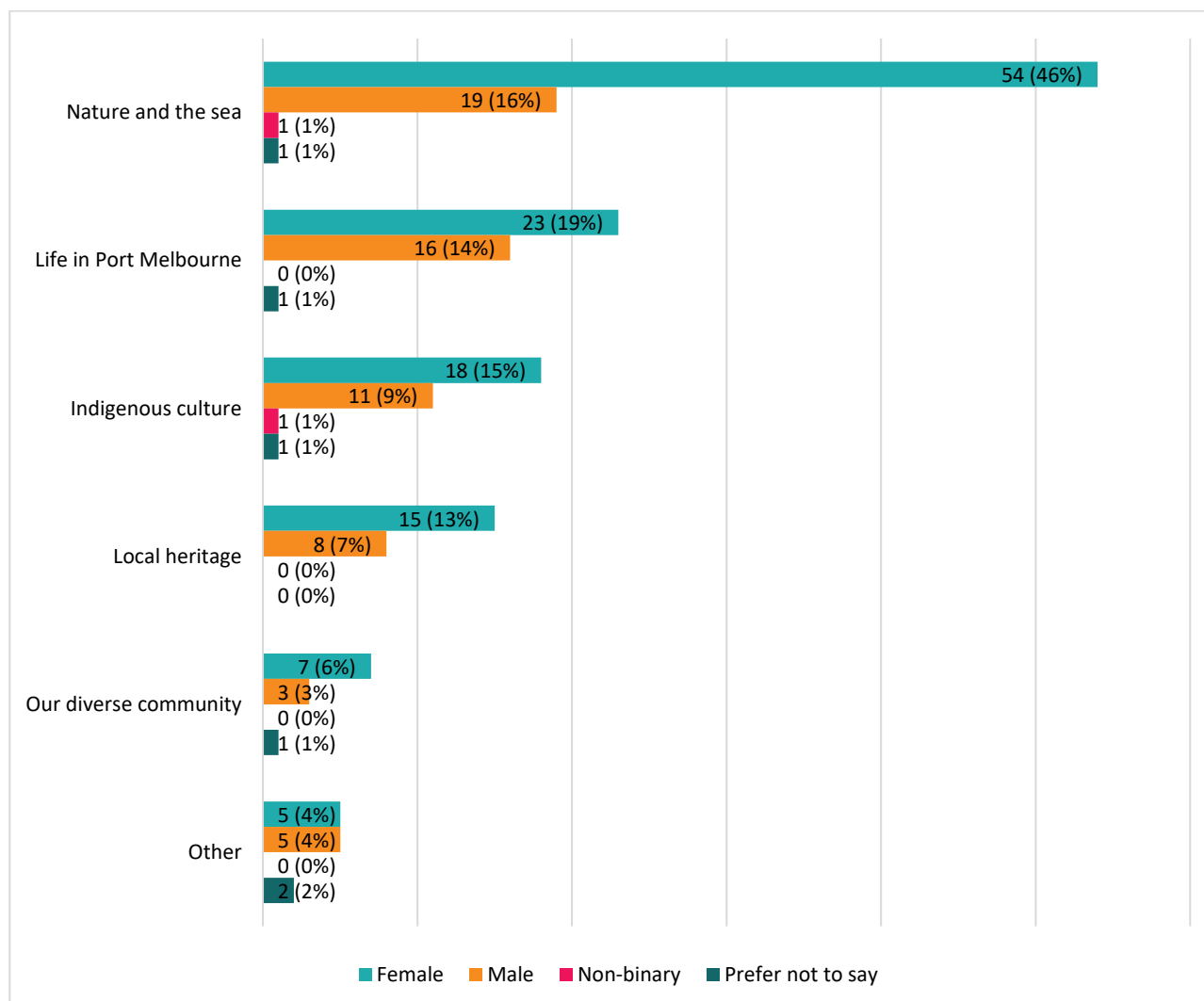


Figure 14: Responses to 'If we proceed with artwork, what themes should it reflect?', by gender. (118 total responses)

OTHER COMMENTS

We also received comments about participants' preferences for artwork. This includes the 13 'other' responses in the survey question above, verbal feedback from pop-up respondents and other written responses.

There were 27 comments indicating participants' level of support for artwork:

- Eight participants said they didn't want artwork at all.
- Eight said that artwork was not a priority for them, that they were neutral or that they supported artwork under certain conditions.
- Seven said they wanted the existing mural to be kept.

- Five said they supported new artwork.

There were five comments with the following additional suggestions relating to artwork:

- The toilet facility should complement or blend tastefully with the coastal location, regardless of artwork theme.
- The building could become an illuminated prism using solar power.
- The building could be a canvas for artwork that can be rotated, rather than being a permanent artwork itself. This would allow the theme to be changed.
- The art on the building should allow for street art.
- Port Melbourne schools should be able to use areas of the building as art walls for decoration.

How the facility should work in practice

We received comments on practical issues or opportunities community members wanted us to address in the design.

SHOWERS

Fifty participants provided feedback on shower facilities.

Thirty participants said they wanted warm showers. Two said that warm showers were not needed.

Nine participants said they supported having both external and internal shower locations.

Seven participants said they would like low-level showers to wash feet or fill buckets.

Other feedback we heard included:

- interest in external showers located close to the beach
- solar or energy-efficient hot water systems
- showers with good water pressure or timers
- supporting features such as lockers, drainage, cubicles and overall shower layout.

CHANGING AREAS

Fourteen participants provided feedback on changing facilities.

Ten participants said they preferred open changing areas to individual cubicles, as they allow groups of people to change together.

Two participants said they would like private change areas.

Other feedback we heard included requests for:

- changerooms with benches, shelving and hooks
- private all-gender changing spaces
- facilities that are safe and clean.

One participant said the changerooms are not currently used and are wasted space.

PRIVATE SPACES

Eight participants provided feedback on privacy within the facility.

Four participants said they preferred individual cubicles throughout.

One participant said there should be separate toilet and change room areas.

Other feedback we heard included the need to provide a range of privacy levels to accommodate different user preferences.

GENDERED AND ALL-GENDERED SPACES

Eleven participants provided feedback on gendered and all-gendered facilities.

Nine participants said they preferred gendered change rooms, showers and toilet cubicles. Some of these participants said they wanted to be able to change together with their groups rather than in individual cubicles.

Other reasons participants gave included:

- concerns about privacy, safety and cleanliness
- perceptions of inappropriate behaviour
- that most users are not non-binary.

Six participants said they supported the provision of all-gender cubicles.

STORAGE

Sixteen participants provided feedback on storage facilities.

Thirteen participants said they wanted secure storage for belongings when swimming, showering or changing.

Five participants said they would like increased provision of shelves and hooks.

Other feedback we heard included requests for:

- visibly located external lockers
- the ability to use individual padlocks
- storage options that keep belongings dry.

FITTINGS AND FIXTURES

Twenty-three participants provided feedback on fittings and fixtures.

Participants highlighted the importance of including essential amenities such as:

- toilet paper
- soap dispensers
- mirrors
- hand drying options
- drinking taps
- Benches
- good lighting.

There was also a strong focus on using durable, low-maintenance and sustainable materials and fittings.

Other suggestions we heard included:

- women's health vending machines
- towel provisions
- additional or enhanced features such as sauna facilities.

FUNCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Twenty-eight participants provided feedback on functionality and maintenance.

Eleven participants said they wanted regular maintenance of the facility, including upkeep of showers and toilet flushing.

Six participants said they preferred safe, durable and easy-to-clean materials.

Four participants highlighted the need for vandal-resistant design.

Other feedback we heard included requests for:

- functioning drainage systems

- hose access to support cleaning
- well-spaced basins
- practical design outcomes.

CLEANLINESS

Forty-nine participants provided feedback on cleanliness.

Thirty-six participants emphasised the importance of a design that supports cleaning and overall cleanliness.

Nine participants highlighted the need for regular cleaning.

Other feedback we heard included preferences for a clean design approach and maintaining clean shower facilities.

SAFETY

Twenty-three participants provided feedback on safety.

Eleven participants highlighted the importance of designing the facility to make occupants feel safe.

Five participants raised concerns about theft and the need for secure environments.

Five participants identified the importance of passive surveillance and visibility.

Four participants said they wanted safe, slip-resistant surfaces.

Other feedback we heard included:

- concerns about personal safety
- requests for good lighting and motion-sensor lighting
- the role of private cubicles
- requests for additional safety measures such as duress alarms and cameras.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Twelve participants provided feedback on accessibility and inclusion.

Four participants said the amenities should be accessible to all users.

Two participants highlighted the need for wide access to accommodate prams and mobility aids.

Other feedback we heard included requests

- clear wayfinding
- accessible cubicles
- suitable locking mechanisms for people with limited hand mobility
- warm water in accessible showers
- ensuring accessible amenities are available at all hours, including controlled access where appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Fifteen participants provided feedback about the facility's potential environmental impact.

Five participants said they supported environmentally low-impact design approaches.

Four participants highlighted the use of solar panels.

Two participants said they preferred the use of sustainable materials.

Other feedback we heard included suggestions for:

- smart design
- climate-responsive outcomes
- shower timers
- instantaneous hot water systems
- oyster shell recycling
- recycling of shower water.

LIGHT AND VENTILATION

Seventeen participants provided feedback on lighting and ventilation.

Fifteen participants highlighted the importance of increased natural light.

Six participants said they supported increased natural ventilation.

PUBLIC SPACE AROUND THE TOILETS

Seventeen participants provided feedback on how the public space surrounding the toilet facility could be improved in addition to upgrades to the toilets.

Eight participants said they supported the inclusion of shade sails.

Six participants highlighted the need for external seating.

Other suggestions we heard included:

- protection from wind and rain
- better surrounding landscaping
- tables and benches
- upgraded paving
- roofing treatments
- and additional features such as viewing platforms and exercise stations.

OTHER RESPONSES

Participants also provided broader feedback relating to project delivery, site use and additional features.

Nine participants commented on heritage and retention, with seven supporting retention of the existing structure and two suggesting the project remain within the current footprint.

Five participants gave feedback about the cost of the project.

Four participants noted the site is a highly used facility, highlighting the need to accommodate both peak and off-peak demand and ensure amenities remain functional year-round.

Four participants provided feedback on technology and automation, including features such as timers, electronic access and smart fixtures.

Other suggestions we heard included:

- improved communication about project changes
- facilities to support dogs such as drink taps and wash areas
- increased bike parking and storage provisions.

We also received an expression of interest to provide architectural services for the upgrade, and a student project report investigating safety, security and cleanliness solutions for public toilets in the City of Port Phillip.

Other public toilet facilities to learn from

We invited participants to tell us about other public toilet facilities around Melbourne that they would like us to take ideas from. The facilities we heard about are listed below. The things we heard about these toilet facilities and what participants liked or disliked have been included in the earlier sections of this report.

TOILET FACILITIES SHARED AS GOOD EXAMPLES

Forty-one participants told us about toilets they saw as successful in some way that they wanted us to copy.

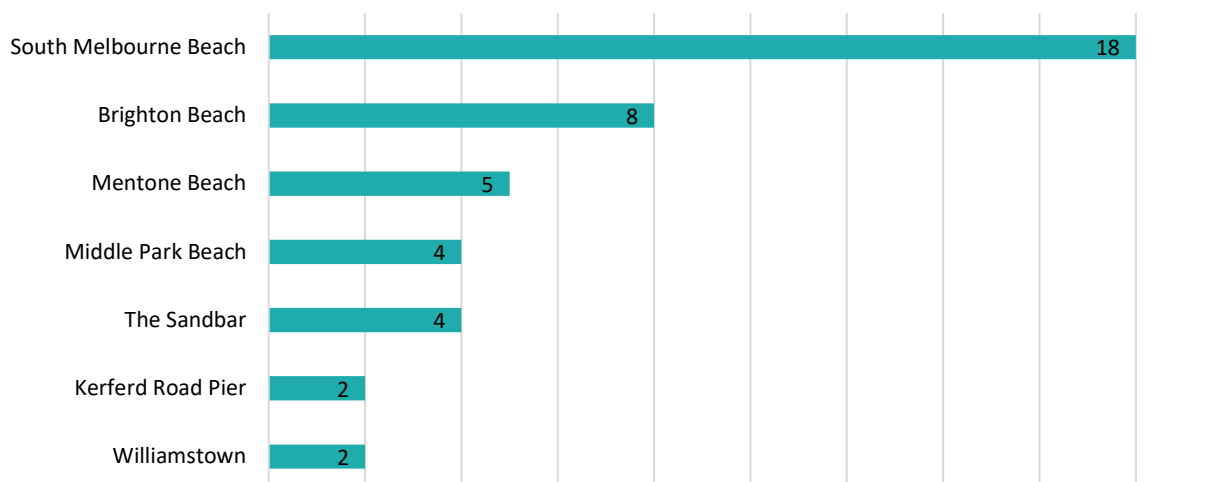


Figure 15: Toilet facilities shared as good examples by more than one participant.

Other suggestions each made by only one participant were:

- Bondi Beach, Sydney
- Burwood Brickworks
- Bronte Beach, Sydney
- Frankston
- Geelong foreshore
- Green Square Library, Sydney
- Liangzi Lake, China
- Mordialloc Life Saving Club
- Portsea Pier
- Prahran Market
- Surf Coast Shire Council office
- Winchelsea.

One participant shared an article on designer public toilets around Australia.

TOILET FACILITIES SHARED AS BAD EXAMPLES

Sixteen participants told us about toilets they believed had issues or wanted us to avoid emulating.

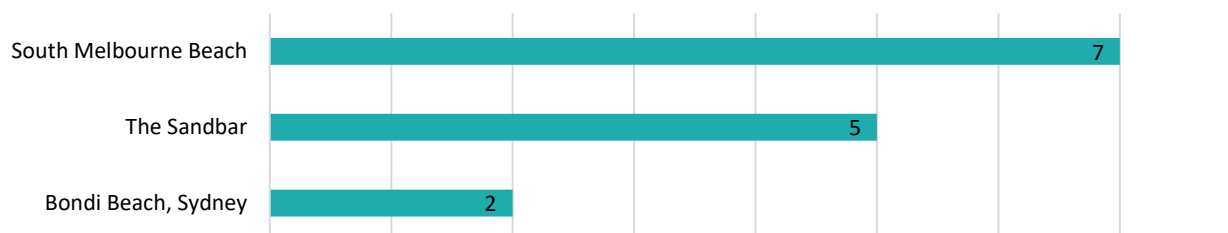


Figure 16: Toilet facilities shared as examples to avoid by more than one participant.

Other suggestions each made by only one participant were:

- Balaclava carpark
- Edwards Park
- O'Donnell Gardens.



Next steps

Next steps

Council will develop a concept design for the toilet facility upgrade with consideration for the feedback outlined in this report. We will then proceed to deliver the upgrades according to the design.

How this report will be used

This report will be used to help Council develop a concept design for the upgraded toilet facility, alongside other considerations. It will also be used to communicate the results of this engagement program to community members.