



# Community engagement report

Prepared by i.e. community for City of Stonnington

## Waste and Circular Economy Strategy

8 June 2022

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin Nation, including the Wurundjeri people of the Woiwurrung language group, as the first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this consultation was carried out.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and recognise the Kulin and all First Nations peoples' ongoing resilience and connection to land.

## **Privacy**

i.e. community and any person(s) acting on our behalf collects, manages and holds personal information in accordance with the Victorian Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles 2014.

Personal information collected from individuals, such as e-mail addresses, contact details, demographic data and feedback enable us to facilitate participation in, and report on, engagement activities. We follow a strict procedure for the collection, use, disclosure, storage and destruction of personal information. Any information we collect is stored securely and only disclosed to our client or the program team. Written notes from consultation activities are recorded digitally and disposed of securely.

We make every effort to ensure we capture participant feedback accurately, however, we cannot guarantee that every contribution is represented in this report. We are confident this report captures the breadth of views we heard through the engagement period.

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# About this report

This report provides the findings of engagement activities undertaken by i.e. community in relation to the City of Stonnington's draft Waste and Circular Economy Strategy. It provides an overview of the engagement activities conducted from 14 April to 29 May 2022 and a summary of the feedback received from participants.

The engagement activities were as follows:

- Pop-ups in public spaces around the City of Stonnington
- Workshops and conversations with youth and student leaders and key environmental stakeholders
- Social media posts on Instagram and Facebook
- Targeted surveys of key environmental stakeholders.

**A total of 266 members of the Stonnington community were engaged across all activities.**

# Considerations

The following considerations should be taken into account when reading this report.

- Promotion and recruitment for the engagement activities was undertaken by the City of Stonnington.
- Overall, there was limited interest in the community in providing feedback on the draft Waste and Circular Economy Strategy. The community was more interested in discussing and providing feedback on their experience of using waste services and their aspirations for reducing waste.
- Due to low levels of participation in the engagement activities, particularly the workshops and online information sessions, additional activities were conducted to provide further opportunities for the community to provide input.
- Additional activities included the stakeholder survey, engagement via social media, and the development of a community map showing the range of groups actively working to reduce waste and develop a circular economy in Stonnington.
- Demographic data was captured for the intercept surveys conducted at the pop-ups. It was not captured in the workshops, stakeholder survey or on social media.
- Around a quarter of the people we engaged with were visitors to Stonnington.
- Not all participants responded to all questions in the surveys (intercept and stakeholder). All responses for each question have been included in the findings of this report.
- In some instances, comments are paraphrased and quotes are used to illustrate community sentiment.

# Key findings

The focus of the engagement activities was to obtain feedback on Councils' waste services, to understand community behaviours regarding waste management, and to explore ways in which Council can work with the community to towards a circular economy.

A majority of residents are satisfied with Council's waste management services, in particular with the frequency and reliability of waste collection services, hard rubbish collection days and the opportunity to recycle old items, general cleanliness of public spaces and the availability of food and green organics (FOGO) collection services.

Residents experience multiple barriers to separating waste at home. The main barriers raised were:

- Not having the required knowledge or information about what materials to recycle and the correct recycling process
- Having a home environment, in particular living in an apartment, that made recycling or composting difficult
- The affordability, accessibility and contamination of bins.

A majority of respondents reported being active in reducing waste in their household, through actions such as reusing bags, jars and plastics containers, recycling and separating waste, composting or worm farming, and being more conscious of the items that they purchase.

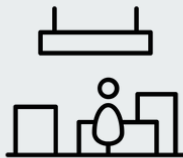
A small proportion of residents (about 1 in 10) report taking no action to reduce the amount of waste that they produce. The main reasons provided for not doing so are that they don't believe recycling that is collected is actually recycled or that it is too difficult to sort themselves.

Respondents highlighted that Council could help the community to reduce waste and recycle more by providing more information and education, providing additional targeted Council services, and providing incentives for residents doing the right thing, or penalties for residents who contaminate bins.

# How we engaged

## Pop-ups

**Purpose:** to engage a broad cross-section of the community and promote the online survey.



**5** pop-ups across Stonnington  
**203** people engaged

- Prahran Market
- Malvern Station
- Harold Holt Aquatic Centre
- Stonnington Waste Transfer Centre
- Victoria Gardens (Prahran)

## Workshops and conversations

**Purpose:** to have in-depth discussions around key issues, including the circular economy, recycling and recovery and waste avoidance.



**2** workshops were held  
**11** participants were engaged  
**4** one-on-one conversations with key environmental stakeholders

- Grattan Gardens Community Centre (youth and student leaders)
- Key environmental stakeholders invited by Council

## Social media

**Purpose:** to further expand the reach of the engagement process



As a trial, a post was developed by Council encouraging people to provide feedback in the comments.

**1016** people reached through promoted posts  
**28** interactions on social posts across Instagram and Facebook.

## Targeted survey

**Purpose:** to seek feedback from environmental stakeholders on current waste behaviours, barriers to waste separation and priorities for the Strategy.



**20** key environmental stakeholders responded.

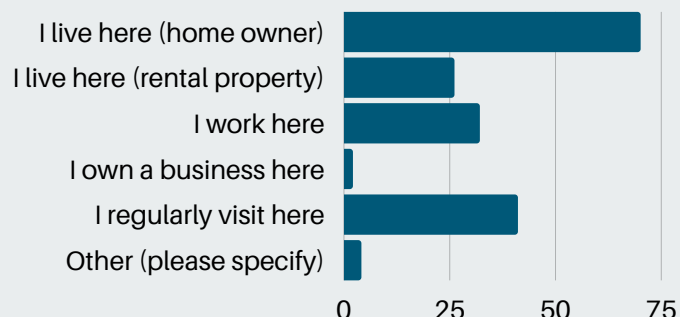
# Who we engaged

Demographic data was captured through the intercept surveys conducted at the pop-ups. It was not captured in the workshops, targeted survey or on social media.

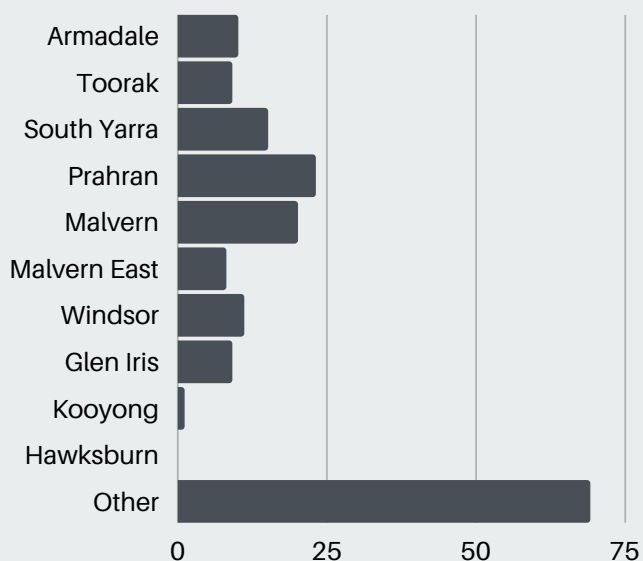
## 203

people provided  
demographic data

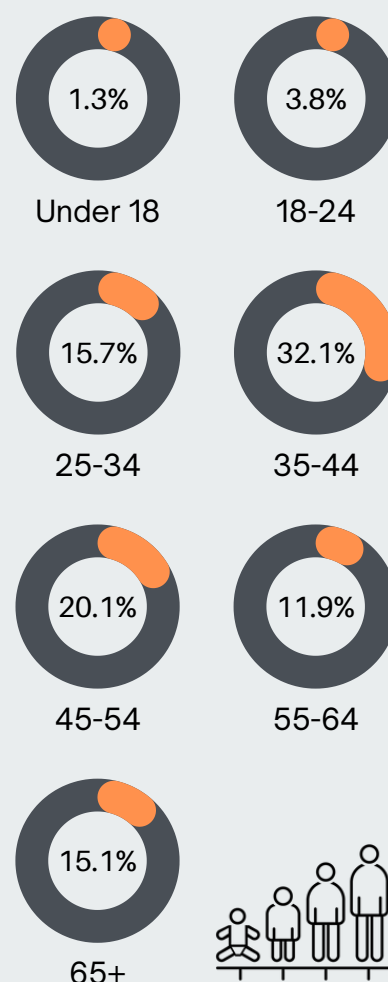
### Relationship to Stonnington



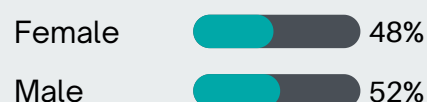
### Location



### Age (n=181)



### Gender (n=181)



# What we heard

## Satisfaction with current Council services

*"No rubbish on road, always collected on time, no issues."*

*"I love the hard rubbish collections."*

*"No issues - never noticed any issues with public bins or waste. City of Stonnington is generally always clean."*

*"Very impressed with food and green waste service plus compost discounts."*

When asked via intercept surveys how satisfied they were with the current waste management services provided by Council, the response was overwhelmingly positive. With 92 per cent of people we spoke to reporting they were *Completely, Mostly or Somewhat satisfied*. Only 8 per cent of respondents reported dissatisfaction with council services.

Respondents were asked why they provided their response. The key reasons provided for satisfaction with Council waste services were:

- Frequency and reliability of waste collection services
- Hard rubbish collection days were well regarded across the community, with many noting they enjoyed the opportunity to recycle old items and help items avoid landfill
- Cleanliness of public spaces
- Satisfaction that the council ran food and green organics (FOGO) collection services.

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# 92%

were satisfied with current waste management services.

# 8%

of respondents were dissatisfied with Council services.



## Dissatisfaction with current Council services

*"We have a small bin but we only fill it half way, people usually dump rubbish in our bin."*

*"Council don't allow creepers or vines in the burgundy green-waste bin, which I'm not happy about as I have to dispose of them by taking them to the tip, but sometimes I just use the general waste bin for them."*

*"I want a FOGO bin, would be good to have them free and accessible to all."*

*"I want a FOGO option in my apartment but there's nothing."*

The key reasons for dissatisfaction with Council waste services were:

- Contamination of bins by pedestrians and neighbours
- Lack of recycling and compost options and services in high and medium density housing
- Accessibility and collection frequency of FOGO service.

While the sentiment was positive overall, many respondents took the opportunity to note areas for improvement. The most frequent responses were:

- Greater options for recycling difficult items, such as soft plastics, glass and metals
- Free or more accessible FOGO options
- More frequent FOGO collections
- More frequent recycling collections.

## Barriers to separating waste at home

Across all engagement activities, those that reported facing challenges separating their waste at home identified the following main barriers:



### Knowledge or information

*"I sometimes don't know what can be recycled or what the rules are, I can't be bothered if it takes too much effort to look up and find the answer."*

*"Not knowing what can be recycled, packaging and soft plastics mostly, and if I need to wash jars before recycling."*

The key issues raised were:

- Knowing what materials can be recycled, and what has to be sent to landfill.
- Confusion around the correct recycling process, including what needs to be cleaned, separated or broken down before recycling (e.g. meat trays, yoghurt containers and tape on boxes).
- Understanding the different rules across different Councils, as many people work in a different local government area to where they live, or have previously lived or visit other areas.

### Home environment

*"Being in an apartment, I find it hard understanding the benefit in recycling, or if it actually gets recycled at all."*

*"Living in an apartment I have no food recycling or composting options, so I just use normal bins."*

*"Time, the soft plastics on meat trays and taking the tape of boxes, things like that can be annoying and easily overlooked."*

The key issues raised were:

- Challenges faced living in an apartment or high density housing, including only having options for waste and co-mingled recycling options in their building, not having access to compost options, not having enough room to adequately separate waste, and concern over contamination and amount of recycling going to landfill.
- Inconvenience of separating waste, many people find the time it takes to properly deconstruct and separate waste items a barrier.
- The sheer amount of waste produced from day to day practices, soft plastics and food packaging are hard to avoid.

## Affordability and contamination of bins

*"It costs over \$300 for a FOGO bin, so I just take my green waste to my daughter's house who has a free green waste bin with her council. That's very annoying."*

*"I guess not being able to identify easily what can be recycled. I also own two apartments and the tenants constantly put recycling in plastic bags which contaminates the recycling."*

The key issues raised were:

- Additional charges for FOGO bins presented a barrier for many residents, this was discussed a lot in workshops and direct conversations with community members and stakeholders, who noted the additional charge for FOGO collections turn many away.
- Contamination of bins, by people using the bins incorrectly, whether it be neighbours using each other's bins, family or household members or street bins was seen as a challenge.

### Key environmental stakeholders

The barriers identified by the key environmental stakeholders through our targeted survey, workshops and discussions reflected very similar findings to the intercept survey results. The findings in ascending order are as follows:

- Knowledge of what can be recycled, or the correct process of separating waste.
- Inconvenience of properly separating waste at home. Noting that it can be difficult to find the time to properly separate waste.
- Inaccessibility of FOGO options. The stakeholders noted that fees and the opt-in nature of FOGO in Stonnington creates barriers to the uptake of preferred behaviours.
- The lack of options in apartments. It was the opinion of the stakeholders that apartments lacked sufficient recycling and composting options for residents.

## Actions taken to reduce waste

There is increasing awareness in the community about the need to reduce waste and its impacts on climate change and our environment. The most prominent behaviours the community reported to reduce their waste are as follows:



*"We compost, and we also collect milk bottle lids to be remade into prosthetic limbs."*

*"I take my own bags to the supermarket, I buy in bulk and use redcycle for my soft plastics."*

*"The pandemic made it hard to change behaviour, but I have been trying to stop using soft plastics and stop generating any plastic waste at home."*

### Key environmental stakeholders

What we heard from key stakeholders around actions to reduce waste similarly reflected the feedback from the broader community. Key action reported included:

- Using reusable items (cups, containers, bags)
- Recycling, including taking soft plastics to recycling locations
- Taking hard to recycle items (e.g. e-waste, batteries, hard rubbish) to council drop off points
- Choosing plastic free options
- Composting and worm farms.

One point of difference was that respondents with a demonstrated interest in the environment reported taking hard to recycle items to drop off point more frequently than the general community.

# How Council can support the community to reduce waste and recycle more

Across all engagement activities, the community identified the following as key ways Council can help the community to reduce waste and recycle more:



## Information and education

*"Keep on advertising and educating the public."*

*"Show community the whole of recycling process, what happens with recycling and information on recycling facilities."*

*"Educating people on the circular economy and some of innovative solutions and products being made out of recycled items."*

Information and education was the most prominent theme across all the activities. The most common responses related to:

- Promotion of better waste practices, given many people are confused about what items can be recycled - ideas included stickers on bins, social media campaigns and better information online.
- Showing the circular journey of recycled products, demonstrating the innovative ways materials are reused.
- Working with businesses to address packaging and the use of plastics.

## Key environmental stakeholders

*"Have more people talk to the public to raise awareness. Nappy recycling - there is a business in Abbotsford that collects used nappies and recycles into cat litter. Stonnington could be more supportive of stuff like this."*

*"Put a sticker on the inside of the recycling bin saying what can be recycled. Educating the community about what happens to recycled materials once collected. A documentary? Many people do not recycle because they think it goes into landfill."*

*"Education and communication, education and communication."*

Much like feedback from the wider community, information and education was raised most frequently by the stakeholders. There was overwhelming support for Council to provide more education to the community around what can be recycled, how recycled products are used and environmental impacts of waste. Many stakeholders noted pro-environmental behaviour and sentiment in Stonnington was strong, but that this was disconnected from waste and consumptive practices.

- Stronger, more engaging and attractive advertising campaigns, many of the stakeholders were keen to see innovative and collaborative campaigns, a key example drawn on frequently was the 'Dumb Ways to Die' campaign run by Metro trains.
- Demonstrating the journey of recycled products and the innovative products made from recycled materials.
- Posters and flyers to educate people about preferred waste practices
- Stickers or magnets on bins with an easy guide to what can be recycled.

## Additional Council services

*"Better ways to recycle - more accessible options for the disposal of things like soft plastics, batteries and electronics."*

*"Provide free FOGO bins, friends in Stonnington are not happy to have to pay for them, it means they have chosen not to compost because they don't want to pay extras for them."*

*"Composting options for apartments or some local options for compost."*

*"It needs to be easy for people, obvious bins, notices and education. More availability of bin options, maybe modular bins in the street that can accommodate recycling, waste and compost."*

Many of the people we spoke to understand the complex nature of waste management, and are keen to see the council take a bigger role in providing services. The main services asked for are:

- More community drop off points for hard to recycle items, including e-waste, textiles, stationary and batteries. There was a sense that current drop off points for hard to recycle items were not very accessible or well known due to location, frequency and promotion.
- Dedicated council run soft plastic collections or drop off points.
- More accessible FOGO services, many of the people we spoke to were unaware of the opt-in option for FOGO in Stonnington, or hesitant to pay additional fees for this service.
- Composting and better recycling solutions for apartments.
- Street bins with smart tech to monitor contamination or modular bins with recycling and composting options on busy streets and public areas.

### Key environmental stakeholders

Feedback from key stakeholders showed a higher appetite for improved or additional council services to help the community reduce waste and recycle more. Similar to the wider community, the stakeholders shared a desire for:

- More community drop off points or solutions for hard to recycle items such as textiles, batteries, and e-waste. Some suggestions included an e-waste bin or box that could be collected at hard-waste time, or dropped off at council locations.
- Council provided options to recycle soft plastics, some suggested drop off points, while others suggested dedicated bins for soft plastics.
- Stakeholders are keen to see council work with the community to address the lack of options in apartments, through community composting options or more targeted measures directed at developers and private waste contractors.

## Key environmental stakeholders

*“Supporting a repair cafe might be helpful? More consistent access to drop off points? Information and potentially separate containers provided alongside hard rubbish collection about hard to recycle items like batteries?”*

*“Visit organisations such as the East Malvern Men’s Shed, see what we can do and then get local pre-schools, kindergartens and primary schools to contact us where we can assist”*

*“Promote, praise and profile local groups that already do this - Buy Nothing, Community Garden composting, Green Collect, Repair Cafe etc. The ABC Community Garden would love to host pop-up sustainability markets to promote these groups in the future.”*

*“Council workers should pick up rubbish before undertaking council mowing, once rubbish (mainly plastic) is mowed over it is shredded in to hundreds of microplastics. CCTV cameras should be used to fine people who are littering.”*

Additionally, stakeholders put forward suggestions for a broader range of actions from Council as outlined below:

- More support and activation of community groups. There are a number of community groups operating within or on the fringe of the waste space, who, with greater support could help Stonnington achieve their waste and circular economy goals. Based on the feedback received, the community see Council’s role in supporting these groups as a means of networking and funding. Connecting groups with areas of need and providing additional funding to bolster their impact.
- We heard suggestions for a repair cafe, a community based organisation dedicated to educating and engaging with the community on how to fix things and upcycle items. Some suggestions included partnering this service with hard waste to salvage items otherwise bound for landfill.
- Working with businesses to address waste at the source, providing education and resources to business owners to reduce their waste and switch to compostable and lesser packaging options.
- Incorporation of waste management into all aspects of Council, from park and gardening services to road works, stakeholders wanted Council to ensure litter is picked up prior to works being completed.



## Incentives and penalties

*"Incentives and stop taking contaminated goods, let people know what is incorrect."*

*"Education! And positive, incentive driven campaigns. People don't react well to negative campaigns."*

*"Education, new bin audit programme sounds like a good option."*

Through our conversations with the community, it was clear that there is interest in more incentives for people doing the right thing and penalties for repeat offenders who consistently contaminate bins. The main points raised were:

- Bin audits were mentioned as a way of nudging people in the right direction, using a traffic light rating system with flyers or stickers on bins.
- Some people also suggested not picking up consistently contaminated bins to send a message to residents to do the right thing.
- Many people discussed general incentives for the correct use of bins and pro-environmental waste behaviours.

### Key environmental stakeholders

*"Do an audit of bins collected from each property and then prepare a report for each individual property of their performance of using each bin successfully."*

*"Reward households, businesses, and the community by minimising (even slightly) their council rates for their reduction of: food waste when most of it is being composted, recycling items as they re-use them or avoid purchasing items in plastic (particularly businesses with boxes), green waste when it's re-used as mulch in the garden, clothes and other items when shared to be re-used by the community."*

*"Clearly define environmental goals, enunciate the pathway there in simple engaging ways, set a visible example and reinforce correct behaviour through reward & recognition. Unfortunately we may need to provide a financial incentive for reducing waste."*

The stakeholders shared the desire for more incentives for people to properly separate and reduce waste, as well as penalties for frequent contaminators. These incentives and forms of encouragement to properly recycle, separate and reduce waste are as follows:

- Bin audits and a traffic light system of ranking to nudge people in the right direction.
- Fines and other measures to address consistent contamination of bins and incorrect use of bins.
- Reduced rates for people using their bins correctly.

While there was an appetite amongst some for fines and punitive measures, many stakeholders expressed concern about the possibility of council fining or penalising people, given it would only serve to anger the community and drive a wedge between council and community.

## Other ideas and suggestions

We heard a lot of ideas about how Council can support the community to reduce waste and take up more pro-environmental behaviours.



Users of FOGO and green waste could receive bags of compost based on how much food and green waste they have disposed of.



Buy back programs for in demand recycled materials and household items.



Council workers and contractors incorporating litter pick up in their day to day, avoid shredding plastics with mower, and cleaning up along roads that aren't usually accessible.



New forms of creative job creation in Council, something to help address waste in innovative ways, support community groups and pick up litter.



Options to opt-in to smaller size bins or opt-out of collections.



Using the term 'resource' instead of the word 'waste' to emphasise the materials.



Making it a requirement of all new developments to have better waste management, compost and waste separation facilities.



Working with Sustainability Victoria to pilot new programs at the transfer station.



Using and converting local food waste to biofuel for local transport.



Drive through recycling pop-ups around the locality.



Nappy recycling programs.



Documentary showing what happens to waste when recycled.



Community maker spaces, places where people can borrow tools and learn how to fix things and upcycle items.



Neighbourhood shared bin options for difficult items or compost.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Pop-up poster (A-frame)

The poster used in an A-Frame for the pop-ups including a QR code to Councils online survey.



## Appendix B: Pop-up postcards

A postcard used at pop-ups used to capture community feedback as an alternative to intercept surveys.

# Talk to us about the future of waste in Stonnington

We value your feedback and encourage you to share your views on how we manage waste in Stonnington now and into the future.

Scan the QR code  
to have your say  
online:



For more information visit:  
<https://connectstonnington.vic.gov.au/wastestrategy>



City of  
STONNINGTON

What do you find most challenging  
about separating your waste at  
home?

What actions do you take to reduce  
the amount of waste that you  
produce?

If there was one thing Council could  
do to support the community to  
reduce waste, what would it be?

Suburb:

Age group:

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35  
☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65  
☐ Over 65 ☐ Rather not say

Gender identity:

- ☐ Woman ☐ Man  
☐ Rather not say ☐ Non-binary  
☐ I use a different term

## Appendix C: Social media post

A post run and promoted on the City of Stonnington Facebook page, asking users to post answers to the questions in the comments.



## Appendix D: Targeted survey

An online survey sent to all of Council's key environmental stakeholders

### Stonnington: Waste and Circular Economy Stakeholder Survey

\* 1. What do you think is the biggest barrier to residents and businesses correctly separating their waste at home or at work?

- ☐ Access to the right bins
- ☐ Knowing what can and can't be recycled
- ☐ Living in an apartment
- ☐ Cannot be bothered
- ☐ Nothing - people do separate their waste
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* 2. What actions do you or your organisation take to reduce and avoid waste?

- ☐ Recycling
- ☐ Collecting soft plastics and taking them to recycling drop off points
- ☐ Composting food scraps
- ☐ Choosing plastic free options when shopping or purchasing
- ☐ Fixing broken items instead of buying new ones
- ☐ Using community share-waste options
- ☐ Using reusable items (e.g. coffee cups, containers, shopping bags)
- ☐ Taking hard to recycle items (e.g. e-waste, batteries, hard rubbish) to council drop off points
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* 3. How can Council support households, businesses and the community to recycle items the right way, buy less, share items and repair goods?

4. Is there anything else you would like to share with Council about managing waste or working towards a circular economy?

## Appendix E: Intercept survey

A copy of the intercept survey used throughout the pop-ups

**i.e.**

### Stonnington Waste and Circular Economy Strategy pop-up survey

1. Which suburb do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your relationship to Stonnington? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How satisfied are you with Council's current waste services?

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely
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4. Why did you give this answer?

5. What do you find most challenging about separating your waste at home?

6. What actions do you take to reduce the amount of waste that you produce?

7. If there was one thing the council could do to support the community to reduce waste, what would it be?

8. What is your age group?

17 and under	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
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9. How do you describe your gender identity?

Man	Women	Non-binary	I use a different term (please specify)	I prefer not to say
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## Appendix F: Demographic data

Demographic data captured via intercept surveys at 5 pop-ups around Stonnington

### Age

Age group	Number of respondents	Percentage (n=179)
17 and under	2	1%
18-24	6	3%
25-34	31	17%
35-44	53	30%
45-54	36	20%
55-64	23	13%
65+	28	16%

### Gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage (n=180)
Woman	87	48%
Man	93	52%
Non-binary	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
Use different term	0	0



## Suburb

Suburb	Number of respondents	Percentage (n=175)
Armadale	10	6%
Toorak	9	5%
South Yarra	15	9%
Prahran	23	13%
Malvern	20	11%
Malvern East	8	5%
Windsor	11	6%
Glen Iris	9	5%
Kooyong	1	<1%
Hawksburn	0	0%
Other	69	39%

## Relationship to the City of Stonnington

Relationship to CoS	Number of respondents	Percentage (n=175)
Live here (home owner)	70	40%
Live here (renter)	26	15%
Work here	32	18%
Own business here	2	1%
Visit regularly	41	23%
Other	4	2%