# Community Engagement Policy Workshops 3&4
## Members of Advisory Committees to Council

## Overview of the two advisory committee workshops

To assist Council to understand the expectation of the community in regard to community engagement, two workshops were held via Zoom with members of Council's advisory committees and community ambassadors. The first workshop was held on 9 June in the morning and the second was held on 16 June in the evening. Members of staff who liaise with the groups helped recruit the 40 participants who volunteered their time for the two hour sessions.

The groups represented are:
> Disability Advisory Committee
> Environmental Advisory Committee
> Gender Equity Advisory Committee
> Monash Youth Committee
> Multicultural Advisory Committee
> Positive Ageing Reference Group
> Community Ambassadors
> Age-friendly Ambassadors
> Youth Ambassadors

The groups participated in two activities that employed deliberative techniques which had the groups engaging in discussion, hearing diverse ideas and producing outputs based on a level of consensus.

The workshops were planned and facilitated by MosaicLab, with responses recorded via google docs. The outputs are analysed as follows. Where there was a large amount of text, proportions are provided to indicate the strength of sentiments. Several statements covered more than one theme.

### Activity 1: Future visioning

Participants were divided into small groups and asked to consider the principles of community engagement set out in the Local Government Act 2020 and discuss what they imagine this may look like in practice. With these questions in mind:

If Monash followed these principles - what would you and others be seeing and doing?
What would you be contributing to and how often?
What would make it enticing for our City of Monash community members to participate?

The groups captured these aspirations in an activity to describe an ideal future state for how Monash meets these principles. The text outputs produced two broad themes. The first theme (60% of comments) reflects expectations of Council and is summarised as:
> *Council delivers community engagement in a way that is targeted and inclusive, with the resources to engage appropriately and well.*

The second theme (40% of comments) reflects an engaged community:
> *We are well-informed and understand our level of influence. Our needs and aspirations are well understood by Council and reflected in a transparent way in the outcomes.*

The broad themes are underpinned by sub-themes illustrated by visions of the future below:

| Community expectations of Council | What an engaged community looks like |
|---|---|
| **Community engagement is inclusive in every way (40%)**<br><br>Those who are directly impacted by anything, (ie. a policy or decision) are allowed and encouraged to participate within the process.<br><br>There were no barriers to being involved in the consultation - there were multiple sessions that community members could attend that varied in time, and the information was distributed in multiple languages in an accessible way. | **Community is well-informed (47%)**<br><br>Everyone understands what it's about.<br><br>Information made available in accessible formats, e.g. different languages, multiple ways to participate.<br><br>Convey information in short articles or video, dynamic and engaging.<br><br>More accessible council updates (eg. Project reports). |
| **Council has the time and resources to engage well (38%)**<br><br>Council allows time and resources to enable participation for everyone.<br><br>Council will go to the community affected, not expect the community to come to Council.<br><br>Extensive participation by the community has helped Monash Council redesign and implement the needs of the community.<br><br>Generous time given for residents to analyse the information and form a thoughtful response. | **Community's needs and aspirations are understood and reflected in outcomes (33%)**<br><br>More attractive to live in a Council that engages well with community.<br><br>Initiatives with community backing could happen more quickly.<br><br>Changes to Council Plans based on Community feedback. |
| **Building engagement capacity to build community (22%)**<br><br>Time to change, to do things differently for specific needs for the older age group.<br><br>We are all coming back together to celebrate and review our work (because our relationships are solid - we understand each other).<br><br>Networks between the community and council. | **Community's level of influence understood and reported back (20%).**<br><br>Critical to let the community know the results of the engagement and how they impacted the outcomes.<br><br>The community are super clear how our comments and the work they did in balancing out diverse viewpoints has impacted on the final result.<br><br>News about how much council has consulted with community and high compliance with new policies and programs. |

## Activity 2: What needs to be in the charter?

In this activity, participants reviewed some examples of community engagement charters and discussed what was most important to them and the communities they represent. The feedback was largely along two main themes: The charter should reflect transparency and accountability by Council (52%) and encourage participation and inclusion (48%). Examples of comments are displayed below:

| Transparency and accountability | Participation and inclusion |
| --- | --- |
| Honesty, transparency and accountability as principles.<br><br>Needs to be clear how it will be shared with the community.<br><br>Feedback is important - needs to be visible.<br><br>Legal rights of residents to have their say, it's in law, not just tick the box.<br><br>How are Council going to measure themselves against this charter and rate how they are doing?<br><br>Research and data used for evidence base to help make balanced/good decisions. | Diversity of community needs to be acknowledged.<br><br>Use graphic representation of the languages, potentially an infographic by a communication expert.<br><br>Being able to ask questions - forums, so you can keep asking questions and feedback being important.<br><br>Communication in lots of different formats to ensure it is accessible to all.<br><br>Presentation and sharing of all information in a way that it is usable for the public. |

# Summary

The main objective for this workshop was to understand the expectations of the Monash community with regard to community engagement and how this should be reflected in the community charter. Representation of the community was provided by the members of the advisory groups who are familiar with engagement processes and the needs of the communities they represent.

The results reflect a community that wants to see participation welcomed by Council. This would be demonstrated by the effort Council makes to include diverse groups; by building capacity in the community to engage with Council; and providing enough information, including the level of influence to expect, time, and choice of methods to encourage participation. They also want to see Council accounting for the way results of their participation influence Council decisions, by being transparent with the decision process and closing the loop with participants by reporting back to them and evaluating and improving their outcomes.