



Community Voice Quick Poll April 2020 Summary Report

COMMUNITY VOICE QUICK POLL: COVID-19

This report presents findings from the Community Voice quick poll that ran from 23 April to 7 May 2020.

With the community facing challenges due to the onset of COVID-19 (coronavirus), Council sought to understand how it should engage with the Glen Eira community at this time. Aspects included: the continuation of engagement for business-as-usual projects during COVID-19 (coronavirus); acceptable methods to connect with people and levels and types of engagement that should be carried out during the pandemic.

Community Voice is an online panel of 582 residents who broadly represent the Glen Eira community in terms of age, gender and suburb. The survey had 224 respondents, a response rate of 38%.

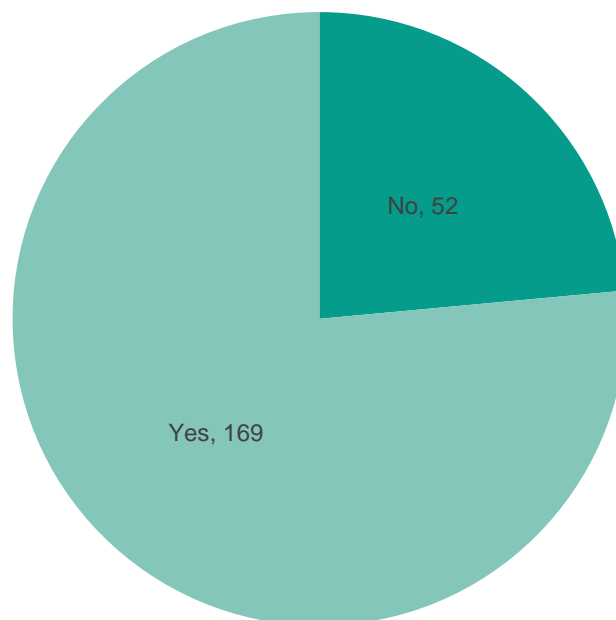
Key findings

- 169 respondents (76%) said they would be interested in participating in appropriate and safe community engagement activities during COVID-19.
- Online methods of engagement, 'online platforms like *Have Your Say*' (184 responses) and 'online gatherings like Zoom forums' (104 responses), were preferred with a total of 288 responses (53%).
- In an optional follow up question:
 - 23 responses indicated levels of engagement should stay the same during COVID-19.
 - 18 responses suggested engagement methods should be efficient.
 - 18 responses suggested engagement topics could cover 'changes and challenges due to COVID-19'.
- From 196 responses to the question of biggest concerns at the moment and biggest challenges in the coming 6-12 months, 89 (45%) indicated mental or physical health issues and 65 (33%) indicated financial issues, including economy and Council rate rises.

FINDINGS

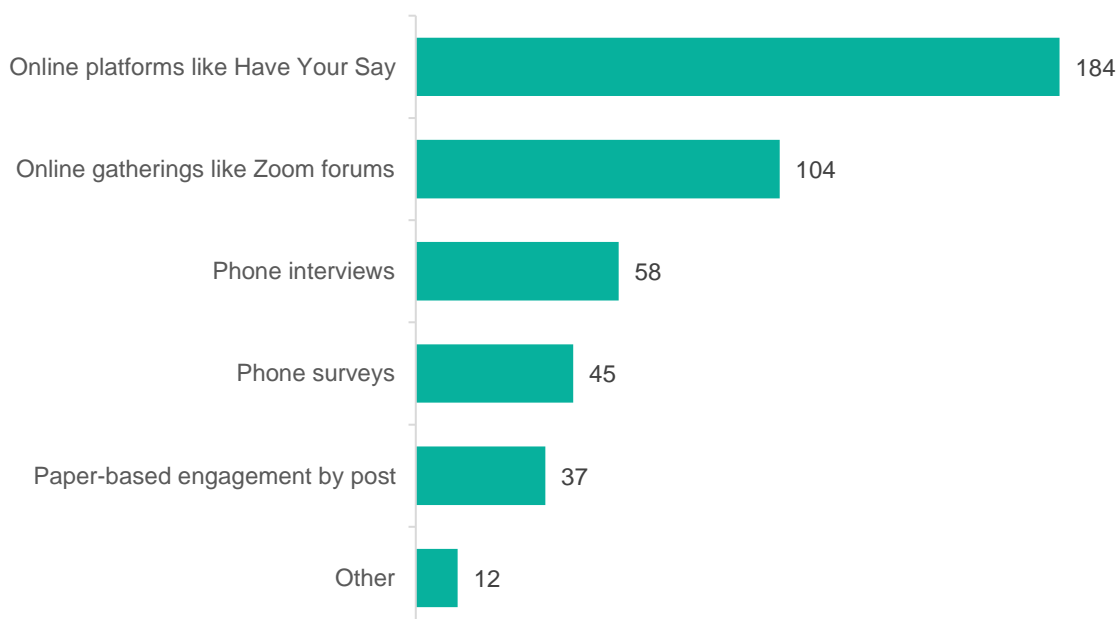
Q1 Would you be interested in participating in appropriate and safe Council community engagement activities given the current COVID-19 situation?

221 responses were provided for this question. Note, participants selected one option.



Q2 How would you prefer to engage with Council during this time?

221 responses were provided for this question. Note, participants could select multiple options.



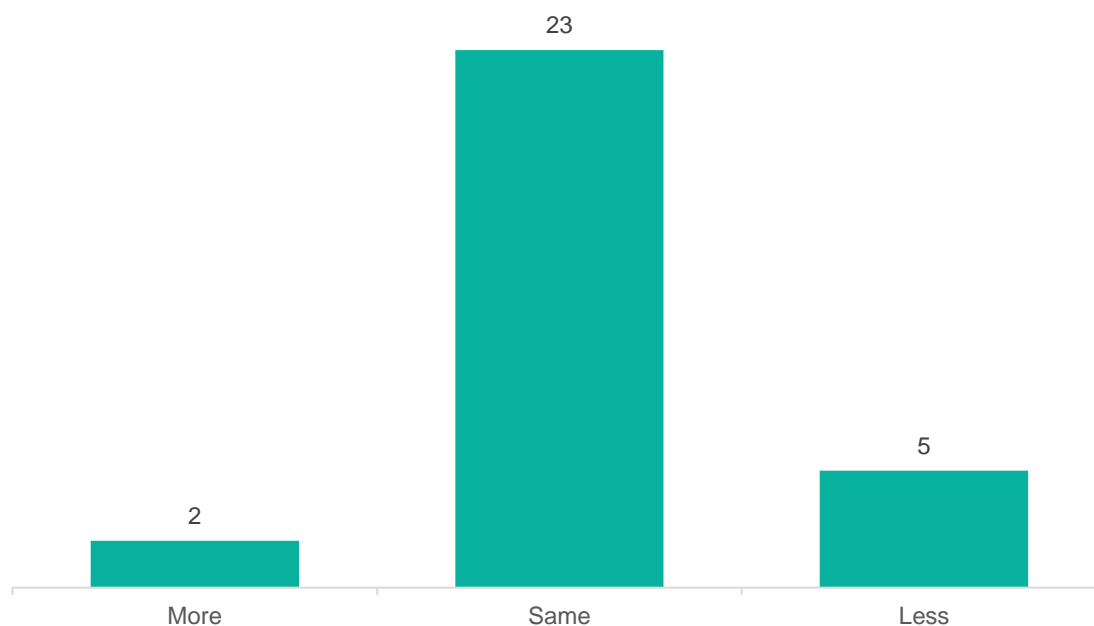
'Other' responses included: Online surveys, Live Forums on Facebook, Snap Send Solve, Skype, face-to-face with appropriate spacing and numbers at Council Chamber.

Q3 Please provide any further comments about levels and types of engagement you think we should undertake, and the reasons for your response to the questions above.

This question required participants to respond to four different topics – levels of engagement, types of engagement, and the reasons for their responses to questions one and two, and the topics they would broadly like to be engaged on. For this reason, the data has been analysed against these four topics.

a) Levels of engagement

30 respondents provided insight into their feelings about whether City of Glen Eira levels of engagement with the broader community should increase, stay the same, or reduce to only critical activities.



Illustrative quotes:

“I think it is important to continue - Council needs the input and we all need to develop our capability to engage in new ways” **(Female, 50-59, Carnegie)**

“There should be appropriate and safe measures put in place and follow the current Chief Health Officers guidelines. I strongly support the continuation of community consultation and engagement activities” **(Female, 60-69, Carnegie)**

“I believe communication and consultation should be ongoing, irrespective of what is going on.” **(Female, 50-59, Bentleigh)**

“Anything that isn’t considered a priority should not be conducted at this time.” **(Male, 25-34, Bentleigh)**

“I am already quite overwhelmed with the amount of screen time that I spend, and the work I am doing online instead of face-to-face. Less is more for me.” **(Female, 70-84, Elsternwick)**

“Cease all forward programs until Council can be certain of how the world will look on the other side of the current health / economic crisis.” **(Male, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"I think life should continue "business as usual" wherever possible, for economic and social reasons." **(Female, 25-34, Carnegie)**

"Always interested in participating in Council's decision-making process." **(Female, 60-69, Caulfield North)**

"We need to keep up contact with Council, so we know where Council is going and Council knows what the community needs." **(Male, 60-69, Caulfield South)**

"I do not think a high level of engagement is needed unless there are major changes the Council wishes to introduce, but a regular monthly check would be beneficial. It would allow time for any issues to arise and be properly documented before being introduced to Council." **(Female, 18-24, Caulfield)**

"Level of engagement should not change, however, engagement platforms necessarily need to change." **(Female, 35-49, Bentleigh)**

"Community concerns - with everyone being home more I feel the members of the community will have a better insight of what's happening on a day to day basis in the Council area." **(Male, 25-34, Bentleigh)**

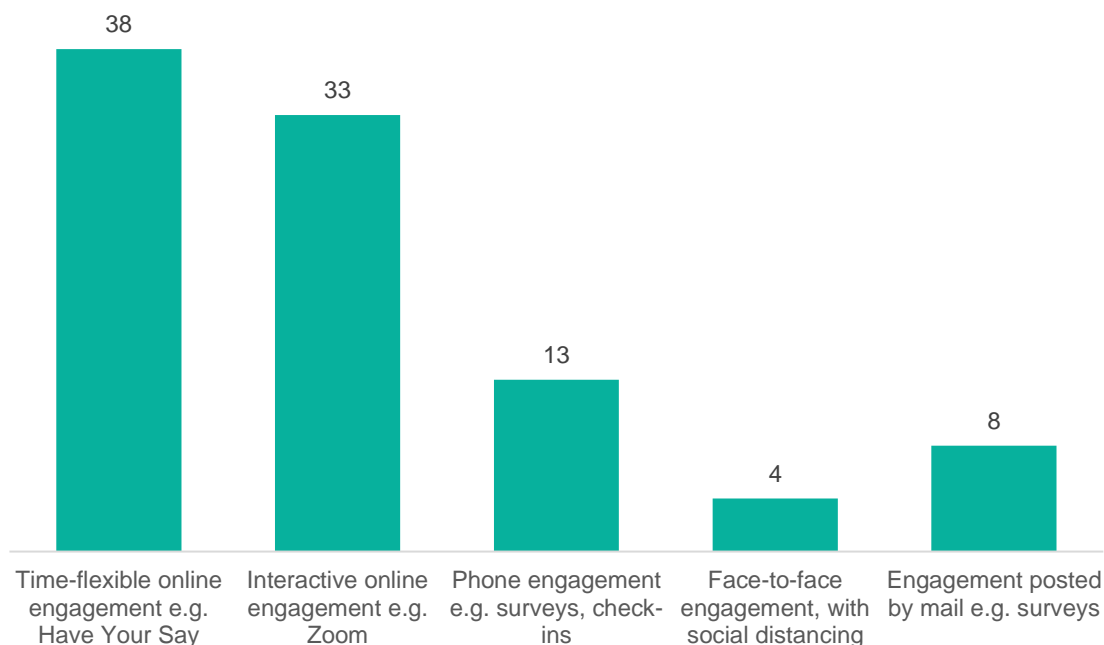
"I believe keeping the community engagement high is imperative as understanding how the community is currently affected will determine the pathways for the Council to take moving forward whilst also giving the community a greater sense of control in their environment at a time when our civil liberties are being curbed (for good reason)." **(Male, 25-34, Carnegie)**

"We need to keep things as normal as possible - find new (better!) ways of doing as much as possible as we've always done." **(Male, 35-49, Glen Huntly)**

"As long as staff are being paid and resources are available, and as long as appropriate protections are in place regarding Covid-19, I fail to see why your approach should be anything other than business as usual." **(Female, 50-59, Caulfield South)**

b) Types of engagement

There were 96 mentions by Community Voice members of their preferred method of community engagement during COVID-19. Note, members could indicate more than one method in their response.



Illustrative quotes:

“If anything, have more polls. Whilst people are at home in their neighborhoods and thinking more about their local area and the things to do etc.” **(Female, 25-34, Patterson)**

“There are other possible video platforms such as Google duo which is free, encrypted and supports eight participants. This online community app provides the necessary social distancing and reduces stress levels for every participant during this public health emergency situation.” **(Female, 60-69, McKinnon)**

“Engagement on online platforms such as this survey are superior and environmentally friendly.” **(Male, 18-24, Caulfield)**

“I have enough Zoom meetings going on at the moment. but online surveys and polls are handy and a good distraction sometimes.” **(Female, 25-34, Bentleigh)**

“There is no reason why all proposed engagements cannot be undertaken digitally with an allowance for phone or other non-internet-based connection for those who do not have that facility at home.” **(Male, 50-59, Carnegie)**

“Use Mentimeter with Zoom or Teams to make engagement more interactive. supported to be included.” **(Male, 35-49, Caulfield South)**

“Personally, prefer Have Your Say platforms/surveys. However, think that many people would more personal methodologies, such as the ones mentioned above. Assume that would more costly and complex.” **(Male, 35-49, Carnegie)**

“I think we should continue with the Have You Say work. It is important.” **(Female, 50-59, Bentleigh)**

“Have your Say and Zoom are very efficient and easy to use engagement tools.” **(Male, 70-84, Murrumbene)**

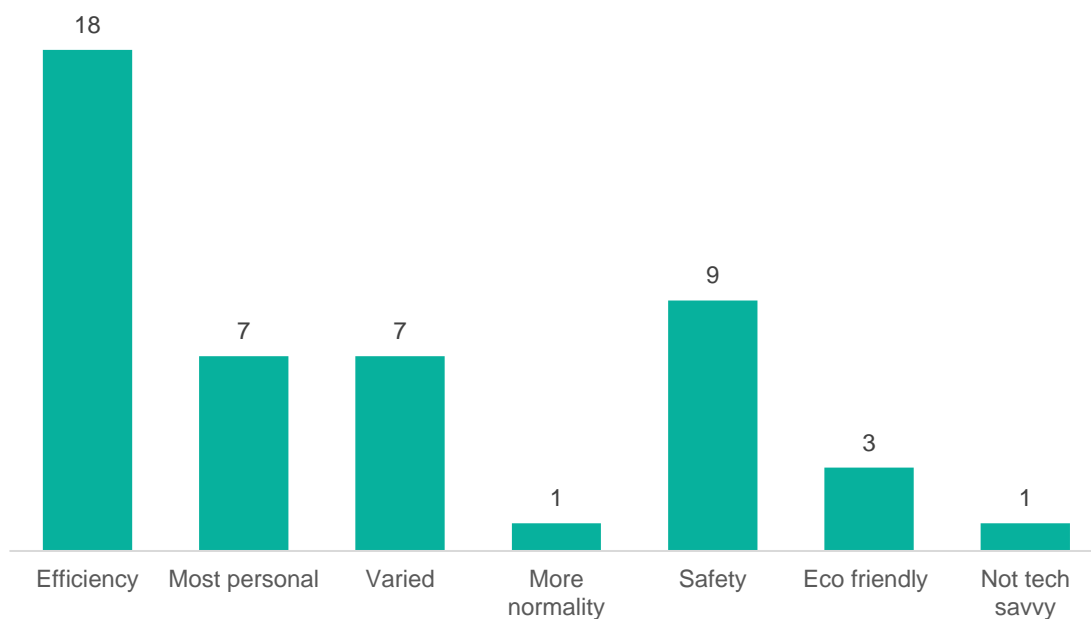
“I don't like to waste paper, so I would prefer online or phone engagement.” **(Female, 35-49, Caulfield South)**

“Points one and two (online modes) provide an efficient, timely and instant interaction. Phone surveys are often restricted to yes or no questions, and lack reliability. Paper-based questionnaires will most likely end up in the bin.” **(Male, 70-84, Elsternwick)**

“As we're nearly all online by now and using Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting etc., it's seems more efficient to conduct participation on digital platforms.” **(Female, 70-84, Elsternwick)**

c) Reasoning for preferred engagement method

There were 46 comments of why particular methods of community engagement were more appealing to them during COVID-19. Note, respondents could indicate more than one reason in their response.



Illustrative quotes:

“I want to minimise the flow of physical objects (including paper-based engagement) entering our home, to reduce buildup of contaminants. I think phone surveys are too vulnerable to quick emotional response, rather than carefully considered responses to Have Your Say approaches. Phone interviews still have a place, to capture personal stories. Zoom is a possibility, with pre-requisite of strong moderation & perhaps mandatory training module prior to participation.” **(Male, 50-59, Bentleigh East)**

“I think it's important to have a variety of options for people, I'm lucky I'm still working but having so many meetings and zoom forums, when away from work I would rather look at other options.” **(Female, 35-49, Gardenvale)**

“Online platforms which are not time constrained make it easy to contribute whenever it suits the individual. Online gatherings like Zoom require all to be available at a particular time but there are several advantages in the ability to interact verbally and visually.” **(Male, 70-84, Elsternwick)**

“See benefit in Council providing residents with an opportunity to exchange views via open online forums.” **(Female, 60-69, Caulfield North)**

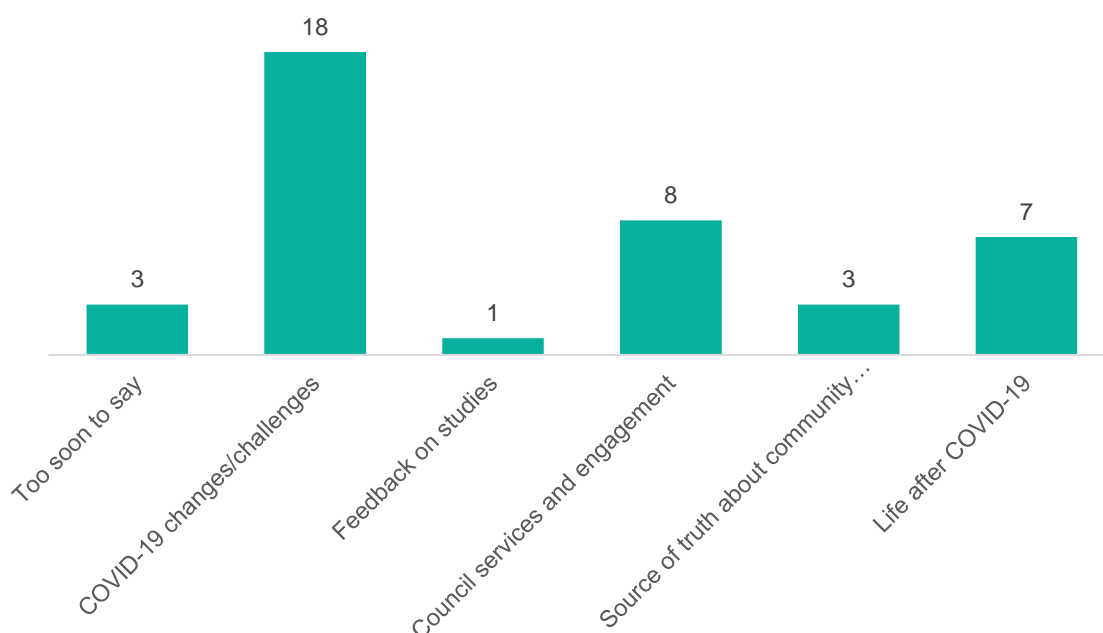
“I will be happy to engage in Council community engagement that is online or by phone, as these methods are safe.” **(Male, 60-69, Bentleigh East)**

“I think online questionnaires and polls are ideal, just because they don't require availability at a specific date or time, rather, people have a few hours/days to find time to respond - of course, this may not entirely work when needing to discuss results or 'next steps'.” **(Male, 35-49, Bentleigh East)**

“In my experience in emergency management (health-based) the right message is essential. The question is how often / frequently we send out the communication before people start switching off / lose interest. With regard to Zoom - I have helped a number of individuals set-up Zoom. It is not as easy as it may seem. We have developed a short check sheet for beginners.” **(Male, 60-69, Bentleigh East)**

d) Topics you would like to be broadly engaged on

There were 40 comments about topics City of Glen Eira could broadly engage with the community on. These have been ordered into themes.



Illustrative quotes:

"I think any engagement should focus separately on what people need in these areas, 1) health and access issues including obtaining medicines and needs for people with needs to still isolate, 2) local business support, 3) use of local public and retail spaces." **(Female, 60-69, Caulfield North)**

"As more of us are at home, I feel (and have felt for a long time) that Glen Eira should move to a Localism approach to decision making. This would require a limited vote to Council resolutions being put to this group prior to the Council making its decision. This is the ultimate level under the present legislation which Council could give to its community." **(Male, 50-59, Bentleigh East)**

"1. Promotion of what makes Glen Eira great. Celebrating our diversity. Recognising that everyone in Glen Eira is part of the community. (There's been an increase in anti-Chinese sentiment, which is terrible). There's strength in numbers and we need each and every person if we're going to get through this. 2. Stories about how different people are managing life and the new challenges differently - stories people can relate to (common difficulties) which may help people in feeling they aren't alone and other suggestions may be useful to them." **(Female, 35-49, McKinnon)**

"I think what the government is doing know is working. I'd love for all these health safety precautions like the clear shields at registers to continue. Everything is getting cleaner." **(Female, 25-34, Bentleigh East)**

"I think that it's hard to predict the next 6 - 12 months so Council should take a wait and see approach." **(Female, 60-69, McKinnon)**

"Too many unknowns with much more information required about cause and treatments." **(Male, 60-69, Murrumbeena)**

"I hope Council is supporting those community agencies who provide emergency relief and domestic violence support during this time. I think that is vital." **(Female, 50-59, Caulfield North)**

"How to support local business." **(Female, 35-49, Bentleigh East)**

"Group activities with instructions and a live feed video from a host such as "Crafty Tuesdays" where we learn how to make something using basic home supplies, "Mental Health Wednesday" to address mental health issues or concerns, "Clean Up Thursday" to motivate people to do a house cleaning chore, "Self Care Sunday" to do a yoga class etc." **(Female, 25-34, Carnegie)**

"I'm interested in ways we can help vulnerable people during this time, also what we can all do to maintain a sense of community." **(Male, 25-49, Bentleigh)**

"It is important that council is able to be a strong presence still in the community and provide positive leadership and support for any community activities." **(Female, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"The government Covid response has caused not only an economic but also a societal impact and the opportunity for change in the Council area. This is the time to identify what can, should and needs to be done." **(Male, 50-59, Bentleigh East)**

"Feedback on various studies: Outdoor activities in parks. Enquiries about builder activities in neighbourhood, Bulk waste collection." **(Female, 70-84, Caulfield North)**

“Opening the libraries and art galleries could be managed by limiting the numbers of people in the rooms. Otherwise I can't think of anything else that I might engage with.” **(Female, 50-59, Caulfield North)**

Q4 What are your biggest concerns at the moment and what do you foresee as your biggest challenges in the coming 6-12 months?

196 members responded to this question. From these responses, 20 different themes have been created to include the areas that each of these responses touched on. Note, one response could touch on multiple themes.

Key themes and topics	No. of references
Health issues, including mental & physical during COVID-19	89
Financial issues incl. Council rate rise, economy	65
Adapting to new ways of life	48
Retaining employment, or redeploying unemployed	39
Support for local & small businesses	20
Compliance with Govt imposed safety measures	19
Continuation of services, incl. maternal support	17
Uncertainty	15
Town planning matters, incl VCAT apps at this time	14
Environmental issues, incl. climate crisis	13
Future generation concerns, incl education and jobs	13
Social etiquette and manners during crisis	12
More of a divide of equality amongst society, incl. unemployment	11
Govt agenda	10
Juggling work and parent commitments	6
Crime incl. theft and domestic violence	5
No concerns	5
Council budgeting, cutting expenditure	4
Desire to help others	4
House prices	3

Illustrative quotes:

“Juggling my own full-time work and parenting /home schooling.” **(Female, 35-49, McKinnon)**

“Financial issues. Certainly with unemployment set to rise I don't think now is the time to increase rates as proposed previously with your green spaces initiative.” **(Male, 35-49, Caulfield East)**

“I think one of the biggest challenges will be ensuring small businesses do not permanently close in the community.” **(Female, 25-34, Glen Huntly)**

“If the situation stays as it is, internet is a concern, as well as utility prices as we need to use more heating. Glen Eira Council will need to budget strategically and should eliminate all unnecessary expenditure. I think that it's hard to predict the next 6 - 12 months so Council should take a wait and see approach.” **(Female, 60-69, McKinnon)**

“Uncertainty is the biggest concern. Council should make an effort to increase certainty. As one example, interim height controls should be introduced in all commercial areas as a matter of priority. As an example, what is happening in Caulfield South with the number of development applications is very concerning (i.e. VCAT, Supreme Court, objections etc).” **(Male, 50-59, Bentleigh)**

"I will be a new mother shortly and am concerned that I won't receive the support that I otherwise would have (eg from the maternal health nurse and other council programs)." **(Female, 25-34, Bentleigh)**

"I would really like to see the libraries re-open soon, even if they were to do a book delivery service or require bookings to attend the library to check out/return books in order to keep the numbers of people in the libraries limited at any given time." **(Female, 50-59, Elsternwick)**

"Reducing transmission of COVID-19 remains the biggest concern. The testing, provision of PPE equipment, quarantine and contact tracing remain preventive strategies. Until this virus has a treatment or vaccine then a combination of these previous measures with the draconian measures that involve social distancing are absolutely necessary to prevent transmission of this nasty virus to the over seventies with existing vital organ medical conditions and the very young." **(Female, 60-69, McKinnon)**

"The financial impact of this, it will be felt for generations to come." **(Female, 25-34, Bentleigh)**

"Creating new ways for our society to function, the move to homework., more dependence on locally sourced goods and services. Redeploying unemployed into projects and work that builds a stronger and more resilient society." **(Male, 70-84, Carnegie)**

"Seeing Outer Circle Railway paths and grounds finished." **(Male, 70-84, Murrumbeena)**

"Personally, my biggest concern is overdevelopment of the Carnegie pool and the potential for traffic chaos. However, more concerning is community economic recovery. Council must operate with transparency on any projects in the pipeline. It is imperative that Council continues good communication with the community and keeps us up to date. Council needs to get behind and promote local job initiatives to assist with employment." **(Female, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"I don't want the world to resume such a heavy reliance on coal and gas. I want us to really examine what we can do to combat the climate crisis." **(Female, 25-34, Caulfield South)**

"Staying positive for the moment and 6-12 months will be to reimagine a better world and community by drawing on the lessons we have learned in the lockdown such as shopping locally, taking more time with less urgency, reaching out to each other, welcoming wildlife back into our lives, all those little differences that we have noticed." **(Male, 60-69, Bentleigh East)**

"Rising unemployment leading to an increase in crime and thefts." **(Male, 35-49, Murrumbeena)**

"I miss community services such as libraries and gyms, pools not open. My concern is people with closed local businesses- cafes, restaurants & other or people who have lost work due to COVID-19, it will have a big impact to local community if they don't get back on their feet- could change the whole feel of the community." **(Female, 35-49, Gardenvale)**

"The inability to engage with community to respond to travesties like Glen Eira pursuing a rezoning to allow a city of high rise apartment that will destroy the idyllic lifestyle of Elsternwick." **(Male, 50-59, Elsternwick)**

"Recovery from ceasing work, that mortgage payments will immediately resume and we won't have recovered yet." **(Female, 35-49, Bentleigh)**

"I've just given birth so I'm worried about how many of the typical support services Council provide will be available to me if they're even available at all. How will I see the Maternal Child Health Nurse, how will my baby be vaccinated, it's there still a mother's group I can join that will meet remotely to start with? No one has contacted me yet." **(Female, 25-34, Murrumbena)**

"My concern is that we will drop our guard as it looks as though the virus has been checked. Winter is coming on, and the opportunity for widespread contagion will increase as people suffer from conventional colds and flu." **(Male, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"Mental health issues as people will have increased anxiety issues/ financial stress/ suicidal thoughts." **(Female, 25-34, Carnegie)**

"Public understanding and compliance with changing guidelines as we return to fewer restrictions." **(Male, 50-59, Carnegie)**

"I am lucky as I work for the government, so reasonably job secure, but for others I see the challenge is for equitable employment, sharing the work across all willing workers. Also, measures to allow people to keep their rental or mortgaged properties without huge debt at the end of this crisis." **(Female, 60-69, Elsternwick)**

"Lack of certainty. Unable to make plans or provisions for the future." **(Male, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"Making sure that governments are kept accountable for the decisions being made in emergency mode; maintaining my productivity for work and keeping my job; staying fit; accessing fresh, organic food, planting edible foods." **(Female, 35-49, Carnegie)**

"Once the "Health" aspects of the Virus are averted, the next challenge will be understanding the impacts on the family budget of increased taxes and charges at Federal, State and Local Levels - which are already forecast – it's said to repay the (depression level) debt." **(Male, 35-49, Caulfield South)**

"The reduction in Council services is a big concern, particularly the Arts, Culture, Library programs and services. These help to foster a sense of community and are highlights in the winter months." **(Female, 60-69, Carnegie)**

"The postponement of safer bicycle infrastructure. Low traffic is also the perfect time to do road work for planned works. Let's keep our contractors employed, let's get better infrastructure for all." **(Male, 25-34, Glen Huntly)**

"Community mental health, developing healthy coping strategies and particularly using this opportunity to develop resilience, cultivating adaptive mindsets and attitudes that will take us forward. Our youth are the future and they are particularly vulnerable, what we do now, how we model effective, adaptive coping will be the foundations for them. When we plant seeds, we hope for a strong and healthy plant. I hope my kids will have everything they need to continue building for a positive and sustainable future long after I am gone." **(Female, 50-59, Carnegie)**

"I believe that financial problems will be the worst ones. Can the Council function well when there will be a shortfall of money if residents cannot pay rates etc. because they have lost their jobs? Which works should be prioritised?" **(Female, 85 and over, Bentleigh)**

"I'm concerned that COVID-19 is having a detrimental effect on the environment. Cafes are returning to disposable coffee cups and containers, so their staff don't have to touch things

other people have touched. More take away food is creating greater plastic waste. I worry that COVID-19 is increasing domestic violence in the community, and women are less able to escape abusive relationships.” **(Female, 35-49, Caulfield South)**

“My biggest concern is the depressing effect of the inability to make future plans, both from a financial and social perspective. I'm concerned also that my local shopping centre, Elsternwick, may never recover it's vibrancy.” **(Female, 70-84, Elsternwick)**

“I would like Council to assist me in knowing what potentially I can do to assist others.”
(Male, 60-69, Carnegie)



Community Voice Quick Poll – April 2020

Welcome to a special Community Voice quick poll. With the challenges our community is facing due to COVID-19, we are interested to know from you how we should engage with the Glen Eira community at this time.

We are doing a range of things already to keep people informed and to connect with vulnerable community members. The focus of our activity to date has been on the health and wellbeing of the Glen Eira community; and to support our residents and business owners. Council recently endorsed a \$7.3 million [Response and Recovery Package](#) which provides immediate and ongoing financial support for individuals, community groups and businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19.

There is a lot going on, a lot to manage in this strange changed world and Council still has a commitment to deliver a range of projects and involve community members in conversations that will influence Council's decision-making. While some projects with community engagement activities, such as the proposed Classified Tree Local Law 2020 and Community Vision 2040, have been put on hold, engagement on other projects such as the draft Annual Budget 2020-2021, and Council and Community Plan 2020-2021 will continue.

This quick poll contains four questions. We hope your responses will help us to understand whether we should continue to engage on business-as-usual projects at this time and to determine acceptable methods we should use to connect with people. We also want to know if you have any thoughts on the levels and types of engagement we should undertake.

This quick poll will close at **5pm on Thursday 7 May 2020**. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with this vital feedback. We hope you and your families are safe and well.

Questions or feedback? Contact Community Voice Coordinator, Chris Soderstrom: communityvoice@gleneira.vic.gov.au.

[Click here to find out more about Council's Privacy statement/policy.](#)

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1. Would you be interested in participating in appropriate and safe Council community engagement activities given the current Covid-19 situation?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
2. How would you prefer to engage with Council during this time?:
 - ☐ Online platforms like *Have your say*,
 - ☐ Online gatherings like Zoom forums,
 - ☐ phone surveys,
 - ☐ phone interviews,
 - ☐ paper-based engagement by post
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
3. Please provide any further comments about levels and types of engagement you think we should undertake, and the reasons for your response to the questions above.

4. What are your biggest concerns at the moment and what do you foresee as your biggest challenges in the coming 6-12 months?



GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Glen Eira City Council
Corner Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield

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