

Active Stonnington Action Plan, Collaborative Engagement

Outcomes Summary

Version 5. August 2025

Active Stonnington

City of Stonnington

fourfold STUDIO

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00. Executive Summary

City of Stonnington (Council) is in the process of developing a renewed Active Stonnington Action Plan and associated Sports Infrastructure Plan. The Action Plan will support the growing Stonnington population to participate in organised sport and passive recreation activities with the goal of improving health and wellbeing across the Local Government Area (LGA). To support the development of the refreshed Action Plan, Council launched a two-pronged collaborative engagement process. This included broad public engagement through an online survey, supported through intercept survey sessions, along with Sports Club and participant workshops which delved into the detail of user experience including existing barriers and future opportunities. The Active Stonnington Action Plan, Collaborative Engagement Outcomes Summary (this document) presents the findings from the first phase of engagement including community sentiment around active recreation and opportunities for the future.

Project Process



How we engaged



What we heard?



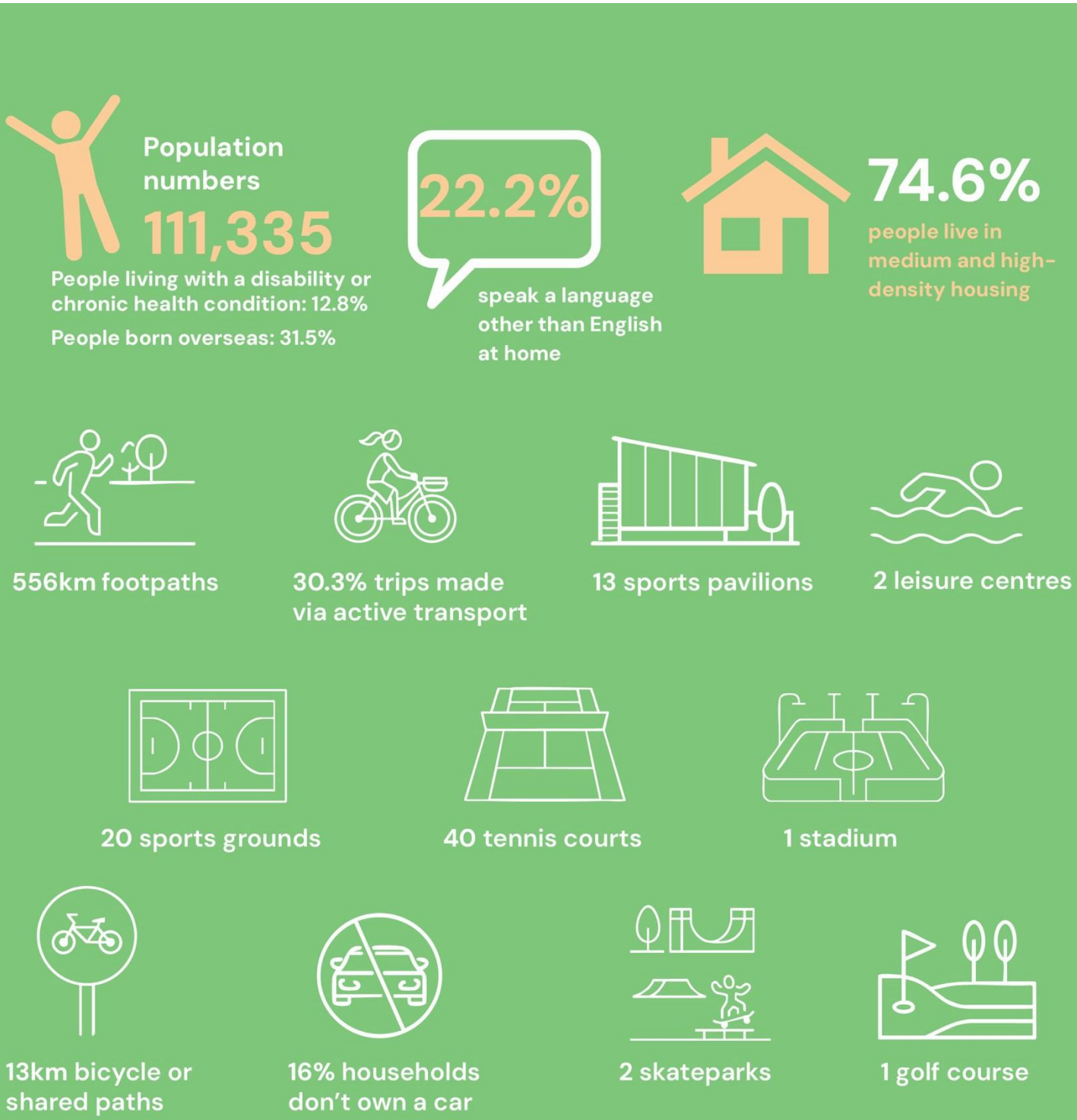
Action Plan Development

Key elements identified throughout engagement will directly inform the development of the Active Stonnington Action Plan.

1.0 Context

1.1 What is the context?

Over the next two decades to 2045, we're expecting our population to grow by 23% meaning 26,000 more people will choose to live, work and play here in the years to come. The renewed Active Stonnington Action Plan and Sports Infrastructure Plan presents an opportunity to develop a series of short, medium and long-term goals to encourage successful prioritisation of sports and recreation. This includes addressing barriers that currently limit participation from a broad range of community members. Figure 2 captures key insights from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy relevant to this scope of work.



1.2 Previous Framework + Strategic Alignment

The existing Active Stonnington Strategic Framework is due to sunset at the end of 2025 which has necessitated the requirement for a review. This review process has presented the opportunity to provide a more tangible approach to supporting participation rates in sport and recreation throughout the LGA. The previous strategy was successful in supporting internal and Club grant applications however, Council wishes to use the Active Stonnington Action Plan to more strategically leverage participation in sports and recreation across the LGA. This perspective was supported through engagement findings, with internal and external stakeholders currently having little awareness of the strategy, but there is a clear appetite for an action-oriented approach that will support their operations.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between policies, action plans and infrastructure and service delivery, encompassed by Strategic Direction 2: Inclusive and Healthy Community, within the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and subsequent Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

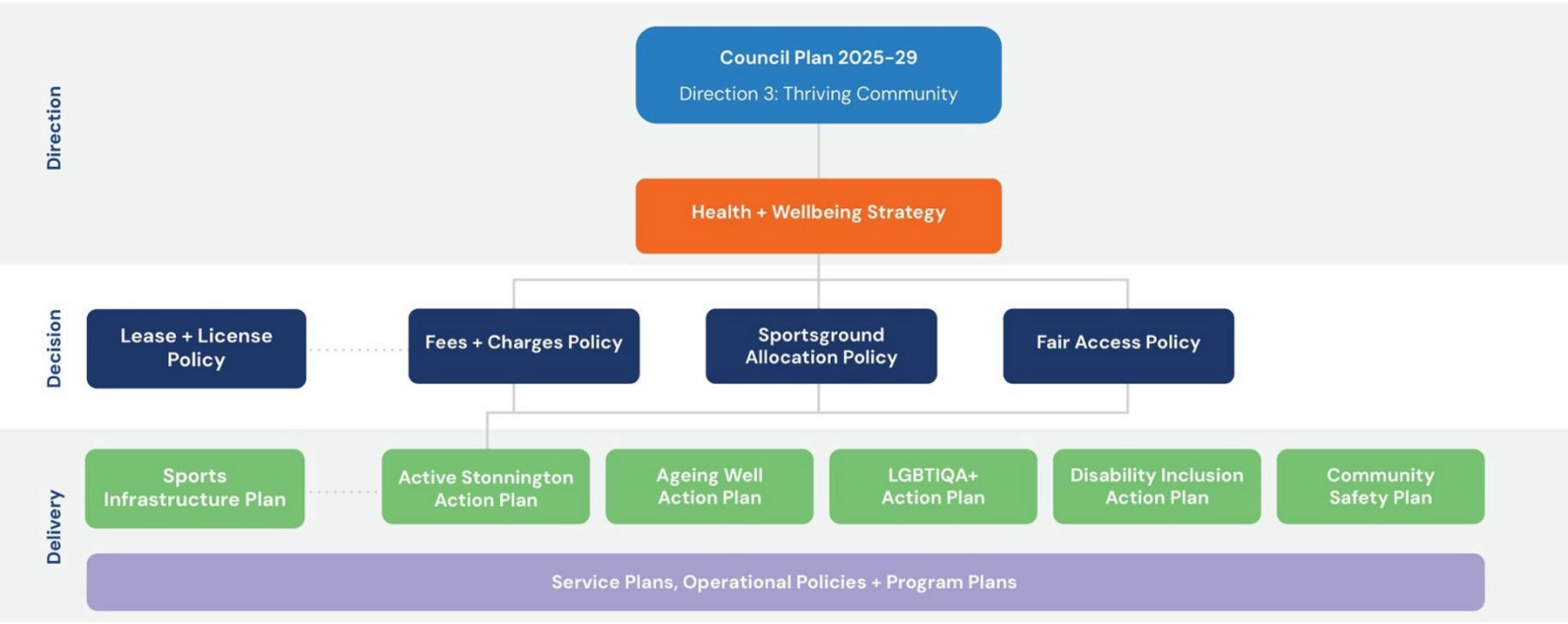


Figure 3. City of Stonnington Strategy Relationship

1.3 Project Timeline

Figure 4 outlines the key engagement activities undertaken as part of this scope of work. Findings from this phase will be used to inform a draft Action Plan, which will be shared back with stakeholders during a second phase of engagement prior to finalisation.



Figure 4. Engagement program

2.0 Active Stonnington Action Plan Engagement Process

Engagement for the Active Stonnington Action Plan took place from 12 February to 5 May 2025, seeking to grow awareness of the project and gather community sentiment and feedback.

The engagement program was strategically planned to address the following objectives:

- To gain an understanding of the **needs** and **aspirations** of sports participants, particularly those using Council's sports infrastructure.
- To gain an understanding of **active recreation** communities in Stonnington and capture their **needs** and **aspirations.**
- To gain feedback from the community on **accessing** and **engaging** with community sports and recreation opportunities around Stonnington.
- To gain an understanding of the access and participation **barriers women** and **girls** experience, and their **ideas** and **opportunities** to overcome those challenges.
- To create interest and buy-in for the project and bring community members on the journey to implement **equitable** and **fair** community sports and active recreation programs.

2.1 Who We Spoke To

To fully appreciate the broad range of views contained within the Stonnington community, the following stakeholders were informed and invited to provide feedback:

- Internal cross-departmental Council officers.
- Local sports and recreation club representatives.
- Women and girls.
- Local youth.
- Older adults.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse people.
- Broader community including those who live, work and play in the Stonnington LGA.

Figure 5 captures the number of people that participated in the project.



Figure 5. Engagement reach and participation

2.2 How We Engaged

The abovementioned stakeholders and community members were engaged via a variety of touchpoints both online and face-to-face.

Collaborative Workshops

Internal Council Officers

To kick-start the project, a series of workshops were facilitated with cross-departmental teams including Leisure Services, Community Development, Open Space, Planning, Placemaking and Environments. Seeking insights from internal stakeholders at the commencement of the engagement process allowed the project team to ensure that all relevant and supporting information was understood prior to undertaking external engagement. Additionally, the project team was able to refine the lines of questions and framing following internal input.

Local Sports + Recreation Club Representatives

Representatives from local sports and recreation clubs were invited to participate in a collaborative stakeholder workshop. The key stakeholder sessions were an opportunity to unpack barriers and opportunities to participation in sport and recreation across the LGA and to discuss how the Action Plan can support addressing these challenges. Ideas were shared through a range of hands-on workshop activities, guiding participants through the journey and encouraging collaboration across different sports and stakeholder groups.

Women + Girls

The City of Stonnington is committed to ensuring fair and equal access for all. As part of this commitment Council facilitated two targeted sessions with women and girls to understand the greatest barriers experienced by this group. This included a group of representatives from the Stonnington City Netball Association in addition to a broader session with women and girls who are part of clubs across the LGA. The two sessions were an opportunity to deep-dive into specific barriers for women and girls' participation in sports and recreation and emerging opportunities to support increased participation.

Local Youth

The perspective of local young people is often underrepresented through traditional engagement tools and tactics including online surveys. To ensure this important perspective was captured, a series of workshops were targeted at young people within the LGA where ideas for increasing participation in sport and recreation were shared. There were multiple engagement touchpoints that were aimed at unpacking the youth perspective including:

- Youth Advisory Group Workshop – 7 April 2025
- Youth Workshop – 7 April 2025
- Prahran High School Classroom Workshop – 5 May 2025
- HUB School Holiday Program – 1 May 2025
- Prahran High School Induction Day

Older Adults Session & Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Stakeholders

The project team understands the importance of increasing participation in sports and recreation amongst the older adult demographic. It is for this reason that a workshop was held on 9 April 2025 with older adults, many of whom were culturally and linguistically diverse, adding to the breadth of discussion.

Online Survey

A dedicated webpage on the City of Stonnington website served as a central point of information and communication for club representatives, key user groups and the broader community, showcasing the key objectives of the project. The website also included information around how user groups and community members can get involved and have their say on the project, both by providing a link to the online survey and displaying the various upcoming engagement touchpoints. To promote participation, a range of communication

tools including posters, postcards and digital display boards were utilised, examples of which have been captured below.





Intercept Surveys

Intercept surveys were facilitated by the project team to promote the online survey and ensure it reached a broad cross section of the community. They were undertaken during the week and over the weekend at key locations where community were participating in passive recreation including Toorak Park, Central Park, Princes Gardens and Prahran Square.

3.0 Engagement Outcomes

3.1 Internal Workshop

Internal workshops were held as the first engagement touchpoint to reflect on the process and outcomes of the previous strategic framework, identifying what worked well along with any learnings from its implementation.

Participants within the sessions were asked the following questions regarding the previous strategy to which they responded with the listed top answers:

What worked well?

- Pillars and objectives work well to support grant writing.
- The strategy was simple to read and easy to understand.
- Increased community awareness of Council's initiatives.
- More participation in casual sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Improved sports facilities and infrastructure.
- Outlined clear intentions and direction to provide community benefits.

What lessons were learnt?

- The strategy wasn't utilised or referred to often enough, both internally and externally.
- There is an imbalance of what clubs can achieve based on infrastructure and space.
- More direction is needed to optimise Council officer resourcing.
- Create a clear understanding of the role and purpose of the framework including how this could align with specific operational plans.
- Disconnect between everyday tasks and strategic outcomes.
- Increased public collaboration is essential.
- A method is needed for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This includes pulse checks during the delivery of the Action Plan to ensure Council is on the right track.

What should be done differently?

- Switch from a framework to an Action Plan, making it more tangible.
- Better linkages to other strategies, policies and plans.
- Inclusion of KPI's.
- More considered approach to tackling ageism.
- Greater focus on opportunities to include underrepresented groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community, people with a disability and First Nations people.
- Increased engagement and participation of young adults (particularly those graduating high school).
- More accessible activities i.e. for older people and those returning to physical activity and sport.
- Consideration for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and <me-bound (SMART) actions to support monitoring and evaluation.

Participants of the internal workshop were then asked to explore any barriers or emerging opportunities relating to participation in sports and recreation across the LGA.

Key barriers that were identified by internal workshop participants included the following:

- Safety concerns, particularly for women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Lack of space available, particularly as population continues to grow across the LGA.
- Increased associated costs, for clubs and participants.
- High expectations of users towards Council facility provisions.
- Lack of suitable and accessible activities.
- Focus on competitive sports with less regard for more social activities.
- Poor transport links.
- Lack of awareness of opportunities available.

The emerging opportunities that were discussed included:

- Increasing promotion and awareness of the opportunities available.
- Clearer communication channels.
- Supporting the uptake of active transportation.
- Providing passive outdoor equipment.
- Multi-purpose spaces to accommodate a range of different activities.
- Better education opportunities for clubs and their volunteers.
- Advocate for external funding streams as well as consideration for the Sports Infrastructure Plan during annual budgeting.
- Encourage cross-departmental collaboration to deliver aligned actions.
- Emerging opportunities to create a rigorous framework to support decision-making.
- Collaboration with schools to share sports infrastructure and ground space.
- The role of open space as a biodiversity and ecological asset.
- Embedding climate resilience into infrastructure to ensure it can serve as a community asset in crisis.
- Strategically positioning existing and future facilities to accommodate population growth, particularly in activity centres.

Towards the conclusion of the session, internal stakeholders were presented with the proposed program for targeted external engagement and asked to provide feedback of the process in a group discussion setting.

3.2 Online Engagement

Online Survey

An online survey was facilitated via Council's website from 20 March 2025 to 5 May 2025, gaining feedback from the broader community to inform the development of the Active Stonnington Action Plan. The survey received 464 contributions from a wide-ranging cross section of the community, the details of which are as follows:

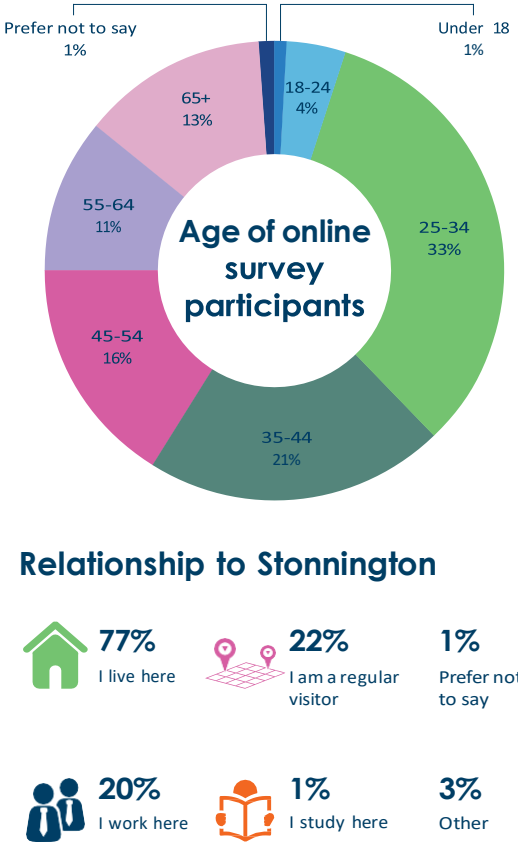


Figure 6. Online Engagement Participation

How are you currently active in Stonnington?

The first question of the survey identified the type of activity that respondents generally undertake to gain an understanding of how survey participants currently engage in activity in Stonnington.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the most prominent mode of engagement with active living in Stonnington was physical activity or exercise (76%) with over half of the respondents engaging in casual or social sports (53%).

Of the responses that indicated they engage in another form of activity (18%), the detailed responses referenced that they were either not active (2) or involved in activities such as walking, running, swimming, cycling, tennis and strength training.

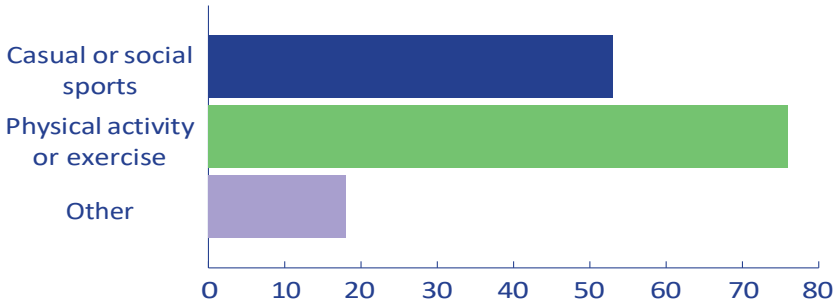


Figure 7. Type of Participation

What is Council doing well to support participation in sports and recreation?

Multiple Choice Results		
1	Maintenance and upkeep of facilities and sporting groups	62%
2	Providing high-quality facilities	53%
3	Promoting recreation facilities and programs	50%
4	Promoting sports clubs' services and events	31%
5	Inclusive and welcoming programs	31%
6	Capital investment in sports facilities and groups	26%
=7	Responding to community needs	20%

=7	Community and stakeholder consultation	20%
9	Prioritising and promoting access for women and girls	17%
10	Responsiveness and access to Council's sports and recreation officers	11%
11	Resourcing and education for sports clubs	10%

There were 25 open-ended responses provided which included the following key themes:

- Management of facilities and open spaces.
- Engaged walking community.
- Responsiveness to complaints.
- Booking system.
- Casual play options in parks and walking paths.

Additionally, a number of the open-ended responses related to the need for increased promotion and awareness of sport and recreation opportunities in Stonnington with respondents noting their lack of awareness regarding what's available.

Biggest barriers preventing participation in sports and recreation across the LGA

Multiple Choice Results		
1	Cost of participation	52%
2	Unaware of existing programs	50%
3	Lack of time	42%
4	Lack of suitable programs	21%
5	Being nervous to meet new people	17%
6	Travel distance, lack of transport	17%
7	Feelings of safety	16%
8	Lack of social sports and recreation opportunities	15%
9	Illness or injury	13%
10	Poor quality facilities	12%
11	Lack of interest	11%
=12	Caregiving responsibilities	10%
=12	Lack of opportunities for women and girls	10%
14	Too much competitive sports	8%
15	Lack of opportunities for people with disability	6%

There were 43 open ended responses received to this question. They included:

- Facilities including a lack of suitable facilities, poor maintenance and upkeep and a need for more multi-purpose facilities.
- Lack of accessible facilities and pavilions, especially for people with disability and / or mobility difficulties.
- Limited capacity of facilities and open spaces including overcrowding.
- Difficulty booking and registering.
- Safety concerns, particularly at night and in certain areas such as Chapel Street.
- Too much traffic and lack of parking.
- Lack of suitable amenities for women, girls and gender diverse people.
- Lack of confidence.
- Injury and mobility limitations.
- Poor management of facilities.
- Financial requirements to participate in organised sport.
- Lack of volunteers.
- Time constraints.

Biggest opportunities to encourage sports and recreation participation in Stonnington

The final question in the survey asked participants to share what they believe is the greatest opportunity to encourage greater participation in sports and recreation across the LGA. The following section provides an overview of the top qualitative results following a coding exercise of all feedback received.

- Increased advertising and promotion of opportunities.
- Beginner friendly opportunities such as 'come and try' events and enticer days.
- Increased Council funding, subsidised and free programs.
- Accessible activities that cater to specific target markets e.g. events for young workers in the evenings.
- Upgrades to existing facilities, additional facility maintenance and increased provision of new facilities including those that cater to multi-purpose use.
- Leveraging opportunities for enhanced social connections and interaction.
- Improved safety with better lighting and surveillance.
- Upgrades to active transport infrastructure.
- Low impact / low intensity exercises, particularly for the older adult demographic and / or those with limited mobility.
- Strategic co-location and co-scheduling of activities.
- Explore opportunities to increase participation in sports and recreation amongst women, girls and gender-diverse people including through the provision of suitable amenities.
- Parking improvements.
- More open space.
- Streamline booking and registration services.
- More communication between Council and local sport and recreation clubs.
- Provision of childcare services.
- Longer operating hours for facilities.
- Creative use of existing spaces such as car-free streets on weekends to allow for better active transport use and more open space for passive and active recreation.
- Partnerships between Council and local schools to increase youth participation.
- Council support in capacity building and education for local sports and recreation clubs.

Additional feedback

There were many respondents that used the additional feedback section of the survey to congratulate Council on the work that is currently being done, particularly relating to public exercise equipment, facility upgrades, maintenance and upkeep of public spaces and the website. Respondents also thanked Council for the initiative that has been undertaken to inform the development of the Action Plan. Additional responses provided specific suggestions for improvements to existing Council infrastructure.

Big Ideas Responses

In conjunction with the online survey that was facilitated via Council's Active Stonnington website, community members had the ability to provide responses to the question 'What do you believe is the greatest barrier to being active in Stonnington?'. Community members were also able to 'up vote' and 'down vote' responses. The following key themes were commonly repeated and 'up voted'.

- Increasing opening hours.
- Subsidisation of costs by Council.
- More outdoor exercise facilities and gyms.
- Free walking group and free gardening group for older adults.
- Better lighting in public spaces for improved safety.
- More social sports e.g. pickleball, table tennis and volleyball.
- Increase police presence, particularly along Chapel Street.
- Local advertising campaign to increase awareness about Council programs and initiatives.
- Incentives to support clubs and organisations in attracting and retaining volunteers.
- More fenced dog parks.
- Improved road surfaces and infrastructure for cycling.
- Provision of more parking is needed.
- Undercover and indoor sporting facilities.

3.3 Intercept Survey

During the delivery of the sessions the project team spoke to over 70 community members with the call to action being to complete the online survey. Many utilised the conversations with the project team to express support for Council and the current provision of sports and recreation infrastructure.

3.4 Local Sports & Recreation Club Representatives Workshops

Three workshops were held with representatives of local sports and recreation clubs between the 26 and 28 March 2025. The sessions were a chance for representatives to share key insights into the opportunities and barriers their clubs and networks face as well as how the Action Plan can best support them.

A synthesis of key insights relating to barriers included:

- Lack of flexible and / or free activities.
- Poor upkeep and maintenance of facilities.
- Lack of suitable amenities (particularly women and girls change rooms).
- Different sporting codes being given higher priority in funding opportunities.
- Management / administration requirements posing a significant burden on club volunteers.
- Lack of participation and interest in sports from the broader community, in large part due to lack of effective promotion.
- Inability to retain and attract volunteers due to a range of barriers including time and strenuous requirements asked of them with no training / education / upskilling opportunities.
- The high costs associated with running a sport or recreation club which are passed onto participants via higher registration costs.
- Anti-social / poor behaviour from spectators and broader community.
- Cultural and social barriers.
- Safety, particularly at night.
- Lack of confidence / skills preventing people from getting involved.
- Parking.
- Limited awareness / lack of effective marketing.
- Under-resourced and outdated facilities.

"Cost is a barrier for many adults + families" – Workshop participant.

"Knowing where to go to find info / who to contact / what options are available " - Workshop Participant

"Some facilities are not disability accessible or female friendly e.g. change rooms." – Workshop participant.

The most prominent feedback shared regarding opportunities included:

- Increased operational support from Council i.e. educational opportunities to upskill club volunteers.
- Offering more accessible sports and recreation opportunities to overcome both time and money barriers for participants (particularly for families and young adults).
- Increasing strategic advertising and promotion of clubs to the broader community.
- More communication between clubs and Council to facilitate increased resource sharing and greater consistency with communication channels and hierarchies.
- Facility upgrades.
- Enhanced social connection.
- Creative use of existing spaces.

"Streamline communication, especially via social media + Council communications to promote competitions, programs and activities to Stonnington residents." – Workshop participant.

"Increased integration with Clubs and schools + flexible sporting options." - Workshop participant.

"Developing programs that support existing communities e.g. parent fitness group when juniors are training." - Workshop participant

In identifying how the Action Plan can best support the work of local sports and recreation clubs, representatives responded with the following key insights:

- Greater support for advertising and promotion.
- Increased Council funding.

"Help with grant submissions. Support with governance compliance burden on volunteers" - Workshop participant.

- Upgrades to facilities and pathways.
- Facilitating resource sharing amongst clubs and organisations.
- Council support with capacity building and education opportunities.
- Communication between clubs and Council.
- Multi-purpose spaces.
- Accessible activities.
- Co-location and strategic scheduling of activities.

"Funding for child safety development."
- Workshop participant

"Encourage co-operation + communication among sports clubs sharing neighbouring facilities to their mutual benefit. i.e. create sporting communities around those facilities." - Workshop participant.

3.5 Youth Workshops

Youth Workshop 1. 7 April 2025

Barriers:

- Cost is a major barrier for young people. Alternative, low-cost programs are needed that are specifically targeted to this group.
- Outdoor gym equipment is good but there is no information on how to use it, QR codes or posters should be provided to demonstrate proper use of equipment.
- Representation in marketing material is not reflective of the actual community, particularly for young people.
- Facilitate skateboarding programs at local skateparks with qualified instructors.
- Have dirt jumps and pump tracks throughout the LGA for young people to use.
- It is dark and unsafe to walk / run in many areas at night.
- Lack of qualified people in gyms and sporting areas to teach young people about exercise or create targeted programs.
- Lack of convenient, low cost and / or free run clubs – Council charges clubs too much for lights.
- Lack of accessible sports that are easy to begin participating in, daunting nature of sports and recreation is a large barrier for beginners.
- Lack of youth specific Yoga and Pilates classes that are provided at a low cost.
- Changing priorities after school means that young people have less motivation, bigger financial burden and less time to get involved in sports and recreation.
- Stigma related to participation.

"I don't know where to walk / run at night and what areas are well lit – there should be information online about what areas can be used safely at night." – Workshop participant.

Youth Workshop 2. 7 April 2025

Barriers:

- Low physical literacy and confidence.
- Cost.
- Lack of awareness amongst young people.
- Social sports are often school, club or University based, can be hard to find where / be motivated to participate after leaving.
- Lack of booking availability on courts.
- Poor lighting and obstructions on pathways making them unsafe.
- Lack of friends participating in sports.
- Some park users and dogs can make people feel unsafe.

Opportunities:

- Free / low-cost activities for young people and young adults (Pilates classes & BMX pump tracks).
- Increased availability of experts / professionals to give health consults and advice.
- More public toilets.
- Gyms and classes that are safe, secure and private.
- Enhancing social connection with friends.
- Marketing needs to show all bodies and people rather than select body types.
- Programs that cater to beginners.

Prahran High School Engagement, 5 May 2025

Council Officers undertook a drop-in session with students and their parents from Prahran High School. Takeaways from this session consisted of a range of open-ended feedback which has been captured below:

- Large areas of Chapel Street are not well lit, better lighting, particularly near Prahran High School would make running, walking and other activities at night much safer.
- More playgrounds with better variety.
- More basketball courts in parks and outdoor locations as well as other multi-purpose courts (netball and soccer).
- More greenery and street trees, especially along Chapel Street.
- There needs to be less emphasis on being fit to motivate beginners to participate.
- Increased provision of social and casual sporting options.
- Limit e-bike impounding.
- More open and green spaces.
- The cost of sports and programs is a large barrier to many.
- Providing shorter casual sport sessions to provide for those with a busy schedule.
- More options for girls to participate in sport and awareness of these options via social media and flyers / posters in public spaces.
- Uniforms are often only designed for men; uniforms need to be made / provided for all body types.
- Sign-up sheets and posters in public spaces with locations and times of sport.
- Siloed teams and clubs with the same parents and children every year can feel quite exclusive.
- Lack of awareness.
- There are not enough women and girl's teams.
- Maintenance of toilets, fields and equipment needs to be improved.
- Funding for underprivileged children and families.
- Most clubs are so full that it's difficult to join at any level.
- Safety at night needs to be a top priority.
- It's very difficult to find out what's on.

3.6 Women + Girls Workshops

Stonnington City Netball Association Session

A workshop was facilitated with the Stonnington City Netball Association on 28 April 2025 prior to one of their social netball evenings to discuss barriers and opportunities related to participation in netball as well as in sports and recreation more broadly. The results are as follows:

Barriers:

- There is rarely a netball hoop in public places.
- 17-year-olds are the biggest demographic for drop-off in participation due to year 12 pressure, influence from parents to focus on study and timing of competitions.
- Access is a big barrier.
- Knowing where to go and who to play with post school.
- Clash with school sports on a weekend.

Opportunities:

- Utilise schools from an access perspective.
- Mixed netball competitions are becoming increasingly popular.
- Leveraging the social benefits when promoting the sport including friendship opportunities, community, forced switch-off.
- Host competitions on Tuesdays so they don't clash with school competitions.
- Provide casual shooting opportunities.
- Promote through social media.
- Have a player looking list where people can register to express interest in joining a social team.
- Promote opportunities for work experience and paid roles including for umpires and coaches for school and university students.

Women + Girls Session – 30/04/2025

A session was hosted specifically for women and girls associated with existing clubs either as a player or volunteer on 30 April 2025. The session followed a similar format including exploring specific ideas regarding how Council can best facilitate increased participation in sports and recreation amongst this demographic. The session primarily consisted of open-ended discussion from which the following insights emerged:

Suggestions:

- Share cleaning fee for service charge to clubs to find cleaners as it is often left to women in clubs.
- More information and assistance with managing child safety – a big issue that clubs often don't know how to deal with.
- Associated Public School (APS) sport vs Council sport – creates issues and results in young girls having a perception that they need to be at a certain level to participate.
- Workplace competitions could be beneficial.
- Better collaboration on social media with clubs is critical.
- Social media learning lessons for clubs.
- Show clubs how to promote / advertise effectively.
- Aiding clubs with volunteer management.
- Add running lanes to the exterior of Sir Zelman Cowen Park.
- Share female specific grants to female club members and representatives.
- Encourage the State Sporting Associations to pass on resources and / or help clubs build inclusivity.
- Provide data to clubs as part of the old report.

3.7 Older Adults Workshop

A collaborative workshop held on 9 April 2025 engaged 50 older adults to unpack barriers and opportunities to participation in sports and recreation with 50 older adults from the local community attending the session. The following insights emerged from this workshop:

Barriers:

- Lack of programs and materials for those that do not speak English as a first language.
- Cost.
- Access to public and private transport.
- Lack of time available.
- Programming / scheduling is not suitable, "Sports are too late for me." – Workshop participant.
- Existing injuries.
- Unsafe pathways, particularly due to tree roots and during construction works.
- Lack of parking.

Opportunities:

- Low impact exercise classes.
- More opportunities to walk safely.
- Group exercises to enhance social connections.
- Subsidised or free programs.
- More tours and visits at a subsidised cost.
- Parking ticket exemptions during select timeframes.
- Low-cost sessions with podiatrists, instructors and other professionals.
- Increased Council funding into programs.

4.0 Summary of Key Takeaways

There were a number of barriers referenced across all the engagement touchpoints. Cost was a major concern raised by multiple cohorts, including young people, older adults and local sports clubs, with participants calling for more subsidised or free programs to ease the financial burden. Access to suitable infrastructure was another frequently cited issue ranging from limited booking availability and outdated or poorly maintained amenities to a lack of change rooms for women and girls and facilities that cater to people with disability.

Safety also emerged as a critical concern, particularly for women, girls and gender-diverse participants. Inadequate lighting, poorly maintained footpaths and limited late-night visibility were seen to discourage active transport and outdoor exercise. Transport access and parking difficulties were noted to further complicate participation, especially for older adults and families. Awareness and promotion gaps were mentioned repeatedly with many participants noting they were unaware of what programs existed or how to access them. Finally, clubs reported difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers and highlighted the strain of administrative tasks and the need for better support from Council in this regard.

Regarding the opportunities that could be explored to overcome barriers to participation there was also a large array of ideas that emerged. Promoting greater awareness of existing programs was a priority across all cohorts including suggestions for more strategic and localised advertising, real-time online listings and QR codes in public spaces. Several stakeholders emphasised the importance of broadening the appeal of sport and recreation beyond traditional competitive models to include more social, beginner-friendly and inclusive options. This was echoed in youth, older adult and women and girls' sessions, all of which called for flexible, low-cost, and accessible options.

There was strong support for enhancing and activating public spaces through better lighting, passive recreation equipment, and multi-purpose designs. Clubs expressed interest in more collaborative relationships with Council, including streamlined communication, shared resources, and upskilling opportunities. Participants across sessions saw clear value in Council supporting inclusive design, co-located infrastructure and scheduling of activities and actions that build social connection through sport and recreation. There was also enthusiasm for exploring innovative partnerships with schools, workplaces and local organisations to expand reach and access. Underpinning many suggestions was a call for tangible, measurable actions embedded in an inclusive and transparent implementation framework.

5.0 Actions Framework



Figure 8. Key Engagement Takeaways

Within the Active Stonnington Action Plan, it is suggested that a framework is utilised to ensure a holistic approach to health and wellbeing is taken. This includes identifying opportunities to not only improve the hardware of place including the physical assets that encourage physical

activity, but also the software including supportive programs and initiatives. A three-pronged framework has been created defined as People, Process and Place. Draft definitions of the three ingredients have been included below which will be further developed within the Action Plan.

- **People**: How do people participate in activities, programs and events that encourage a healthy lifestyle? What are the barriers that people experience that prevent them from being physically active?
- **Processes**: How can Council establish processes that better support people to participate in health and wellbeing activities and remove barriers to make it easier?
- **Place**: How can we improve the physical assets of a place to encourage greater participation in organised and informal physical activity?

6.0 Next Steps

Following the conclusion of phase 1 of engagement, the project team will use the findings from community and stakeholders to underpin the development of a draft of the Active Stonnington Action Plan. Council will review the feedback to provide clear, prioritized actions aligned with strategic goals and community needs. Emphasis will be placed on creating a practical and measurable plan that builds on existing strengths while addressing the most pressing barriers identified, particularly those relating to cost, access, safety and awareness.

This work will include developing a series of short, medium and long-term actions that cater to diverse community groups, including young people, women and girls, older adults, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Council will also work internally and with cross-departmental stakeholders to ensure that the new Action Plan reflects principles of equity, inclusion and sustainability, while offering pathways for ongoing community input. As the Action Plan takes shape, there will be continued focus on aligning infrastructure upgrades, service delivery and program design with the guiding pillars identified through this engagement. The Action Plan will provide a foundation for collaborative implementation and ongoing evaluation, ensuring it remains a relevant and responsive tool for fostering an active, connected and healthy community in Stonnington.

Active Stonnington Action Plan, Collaborative Engagement

Outcomes Summary

Version 5. August 2025

Active Stonnington

City of STONNINGTON

fourfold STUDIO