

# Hume Community Panel Panel Outcomes Report

May 2025



Success. Mapped.



# Contents

|                                         |           |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                     | <b>3</b>  |
| Project background                      | 3         |
| Report purpose                          | 3         |
| Engagement limitations                  | 4         |
| <b>Hume Community Panel</b>             | <b>5</b>  |
| Promotion and selection                 | 5         |
| Panel demographics                      | 6         |
| Deliberative engagement process         | 10        |
| <b>Panel outputs</b>                    | <b>13</b> |
| Revised Community Vision and Principles | 13        |
| Financial Plan and Asset Plan           | 17        |
| <b>Panel evaluation</b>                 | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Next steps</b>                       | <b>22</b> |



Success. Mapped.

# Introduction and project background

## Introduction

Under the Victorian Local Government Act 2020, councils are required to undertake a deliberative engagement process every four years to inform the development of its Community Vision and Council Plan. This deliberative process also informs the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

## Project background

In October 2024, Hume City Council (Council) undertook this deliberative process by bringing together a community panel, a group of community members who represent the diverse make-up of the Hume community. Council engaged the community panel to review the Community Vision, and asked to consider how well the draft 2025-29 Council Plan responds to the reviewed Community Vision.

In 2021, a Hume Community Panel wrote a 10-year Community Vision for Hume. While over the last four years Council has worked towards the aspirations outlined in this Vision, it felt that the Vision could be refined to be more descriptive, allowing Council to better respond to the community needs and aspirations into the future. As such, the 2024-25 Hume Community Panel was tasked to reflect, review and update the Hume Community Vision.

The panel was also asked to provide guidance to Council on the Financial Plan and Asset Plan, to ensure Council delivers projects and priorities that matter most to the Hume community, while addressing financial sustainability pressures and managing assets within financial constraints.

To guide their work, the panel was provided with a problem statement, intended outputs, and Council's promise on how their inputs would be applied (see page 10). Throughout the process, the panel provided additional data and feedback, which have all been provided to Council for their review and consideration.

## Report purpose

This report provides a summary of the Hume Community Panel process and outcomes as well as an evaluation of panel member feedback. The report has been prepared by Insync, Council's independent partners of the process.

Council will use the feedback included in this report, as well as additional feedback to develop its Council Plan (incorporated with the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan), Asset Plan and Financial Plan. These documents will be shared with the community for their feedback in a final stage of engagement, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Community engagement stages

# Engagement limitations

There are limitations regarding the engagement methodology and outcomes that should be considered when reading this report. These limitations are outlined below.

- The Hume Community Panel was selected to match the demographic profile of the Hume community, however final membership is not a statistically accurate match to the targets due to people not responding to invitations, member drop-off, or limited EOIs in some target areas.
- Not all demographic criteria can be met in a panel selection process. A select set of demographics, aligned to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data, was developed by Insync and confirmed by Council in advance of the EOI process commencing.
- A total of 54 EOI applicants were sent an invitation to join the panel, and 47 people accepted a position on the panel. Over-recruitment is a common practice and allows for natural drop-off.
- The EOI forms sought demographic information from respondents. The information provided in the respondent EOI forms was accepted to be provided truthfully and in good faith.
- One panel members formally dropped out of the process after the process had commenced, and a further 17 people did not attend enough sessions to be counted in the process. The final panel of 29 participants is counted as those who attended three of the four sessions.
- It is normal for participants to drop out of a process like this. Reasons for dropping out may include health changes, the process not being what they expected, or conflicting commitments.
- The panel engagement extended over four months between October and April. The prolonged duration may have impacted participation. All efforts were made to keep the panel engaged including regular contact through emails, and additional activities planned during breaks.
- Where drop-offs have affected the diversity of representation in the panel, Council will seek to hear from those demographics that have poor representation.
- While the panel provided a cross-section of views, it cannot be guaranteed that the community's complete set of views was represented through this engagement. The panel was provided information about the Hume community, and reminded that they were there to represent the whole of the community, and to consider what was best for Hume as a whole.
- Panel session discussions and outputs were largely participant-led. Some participants may have chosen to contribute more robustly in some activities and not others.
- Responses reflect participant ideas or aspirations and may not be factual or practicable.
- Participation at each session varied; as such, a varied number of recorded responses were recorded by activity. Where there is a difference in participants responding to a question, the number of respondents is noted as (n=). A difference in the number of respondents must be considered when reviewing results, as averages can be impacted by a smaller respondent pool.
- Panel evaluation illustrates changing perceptions of a number of panel participants. However, some people who completed the pre-panel survey may not have completed the post-panel survey and vice versa.
- Some demographic groups were over or underrepresented on the panel. Panel members were invited to undertake engagement to hear from underrepresented groups between sessions 2 and 3. Through the wider engagement process, Council will undertake targeted engagement with underrepresented groups outside of the panel.
- Engagement undertaken by panel members was accepted to be provided truthfully and in good faith. Panel participants received guidance in completing the engagement, however results may have been influenced by the views or bias of the panellists.
- The scope of engagement and panel outputs were revised as the deliberative program unfolded. As such, the panel provided feedback to Council on aspects of the Asset Plan and Financial Plan, but did not view draft documents.
- Data in some Figures does not equal 100%, this can occur due to rounding, or the Figure may present multiple factors where participants could select more than one response

# Hume City Council’s Community Panel

The following pages outline how the opportunity to join the community panel was shared with the community, the panel selection process and panel demographics.

## Panel promotion

A public Expression of Interest (EOI) was undertaken to attract interest from the Hume community. The EOI was open from 9 September to 16 October 2024. Below is how the EOI process was promoted.

Table 1: EOI promotion methods

| Promotion methods                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A Participate Hume webpage hosted a link to the EOI form and all project information                                                                                                                                    |
| Digital displays on e-noticeboards at Council offices and facilities                                                                                                                                                    |
| Digital displays on e-noticeboards at Council offices                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 4 paid digital ads on Facebook and Instagram with a total reach of 16,091 and 2 organic social media posts                                                                                                              |
| 75 posters and 660 paper EOIs distributed to Council locations including customer service centres, learning centres, seniors centres, leisure centres and sports facilities, community centres and neighbourhood houses |
| Digital flyer press release                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Hume e-News article on 16 September 2024                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Emails to community groups and Council’s community networks                                                                                                                                                             |
| Mailout to 5000 resident addresses (random selection stratified by suburb)                                                                                                                                              |

## Selection process

Panel members were selected to closely represent the diversity of the Hume community. A set of demographics and participant targets was defined, as aligned with ABS Census data. This was developed by Insync and confirmed by Council. The selection process was completed by Insync and was independent of Council involvement.

The EOI form was designed to collect the following information:

- Suburb
- Relationship to Hume (live in; work in; study in; own a business in)
- Age
- Gender
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- People living with a disability and those caring for someone living with a disability
- Household type and tenure
- Language spoken at home
- Engagement with Council in the past 12 months
- Potential conflicts of interest (e.g., work for Council or an elected representative).

EOI respondents were also asked to tell us why they were interested in joining the community panel and whether there was anything they needed to support them to participate in the panel (e.g., an interpreter, transport, hearing or sight accommodation, etc).

A total of 158 EOIs were received, and 54 panel members were randomly selected to match the target demographics as detailed on pages 6-8.



# Panel demographics

## Target panel size

The target panel size was 45 participants, a trusted number for deliberation processes such as these. This is a group size that is large enough to allow for a good diversity of views to be represented and to encourage healthy debate. The aim is to reach a 'descriptive match' of the population, where community members can identify a likeness to themselves represented in the panel.

The panel selection was made to match, as closely as possible, to an agreed criteria. The criteria was informed by 2021 ABS Census data. A total of 47 people accepted a position as a panel member. The final panel, counted as those who attended three or more of the four panel sessions, consisted of 29 participants.

## Panel demographics

Every effort was made to select a representative panel. However, divergences in representation due to drop-off in the final panel are noted below.

- Gender – more women than men participated in the panel; no one on the panel identified as non-binary or as a self-described gender
- Age – there was a slightly higher representation of people aged under 18, 50-59 and 70-84 years, and a slightly lower representation of people aged 25-34 years; no one on the panel was aged 18-24 years
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were not represented on the panel
- Relationship to Hume – there was an underrepresentation of people who work in Hume, and an underrepresentation of people who study in Hume

- Household makeup – one parent families and couples with children were underrepresented on the panel, whereas couples without children were slightly overrepresented
- Housing tenure – people who fully owned their homes were overrepresented on the panel, and people who rent were underrepresented
- All other demographic criteria were close to or on par with panel targets.

Panel target demographics and final panel demographics are presented in Figures 2 though 8.



## Gender

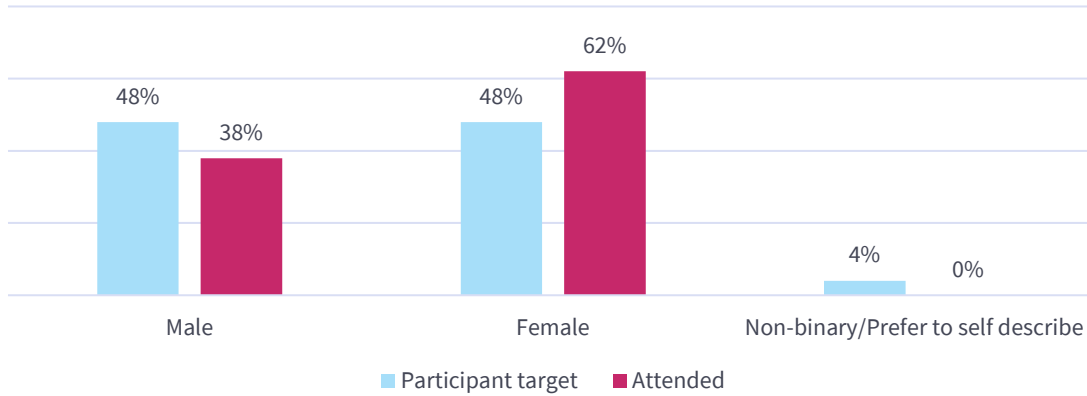


Figure 2: Panel member gender

## Relationship to Hume

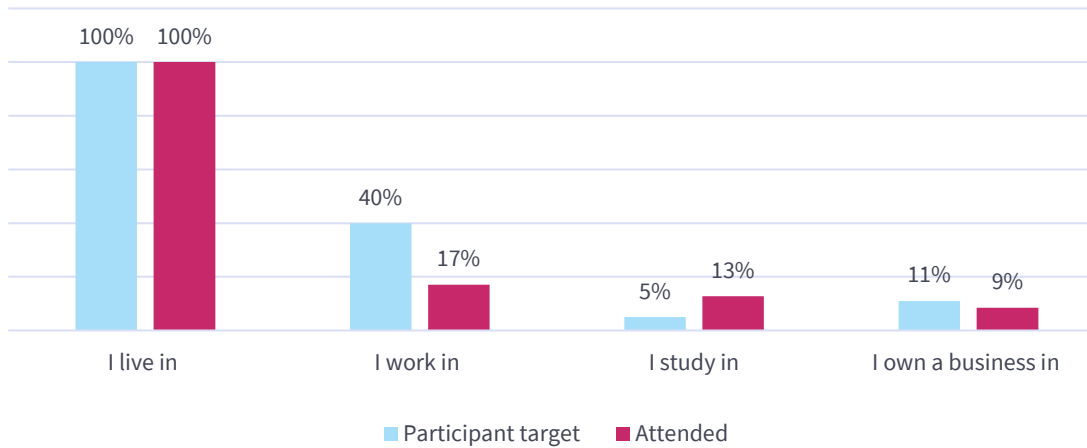


Figure 3: Panel relationship to Hume

## Age

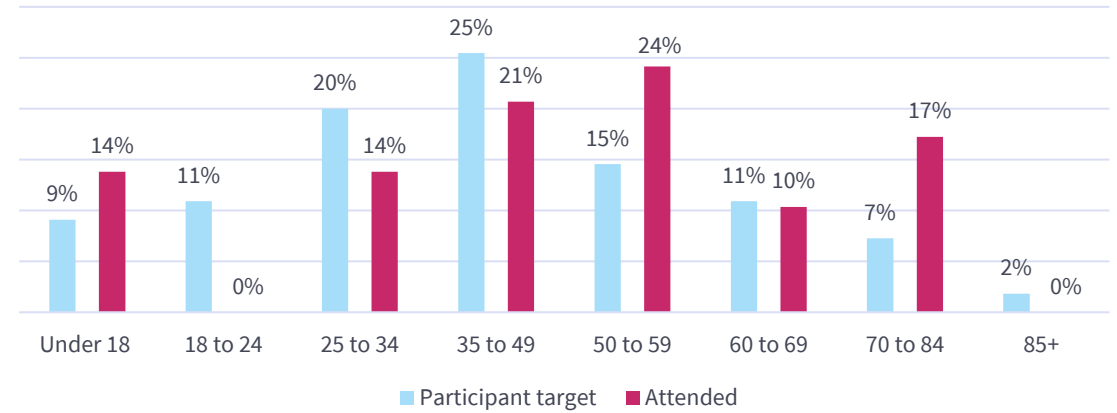


Figure 4: Panel member age

## Diversity and representation

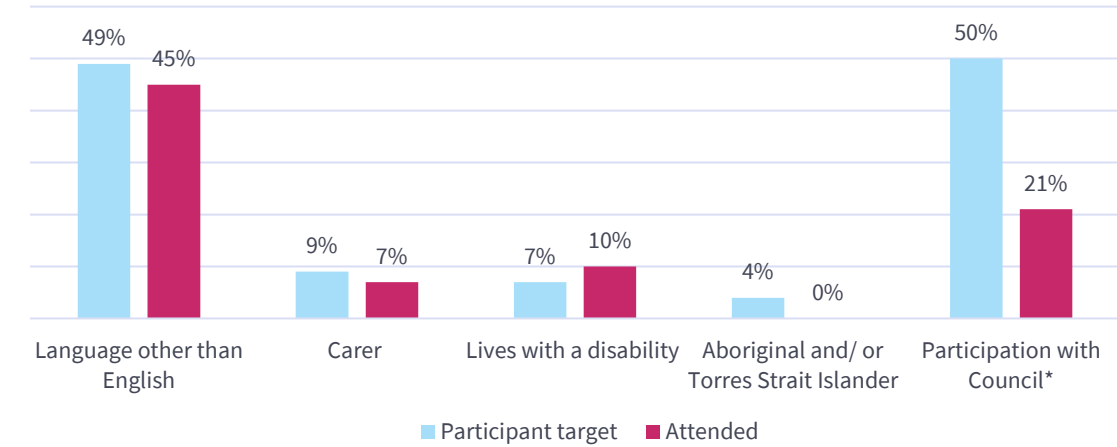


Figure 5: Panel diversity and representation

\*A target of up to 50% was set for panel members who were engaged with Council in the previous 12 months.

Household makeup

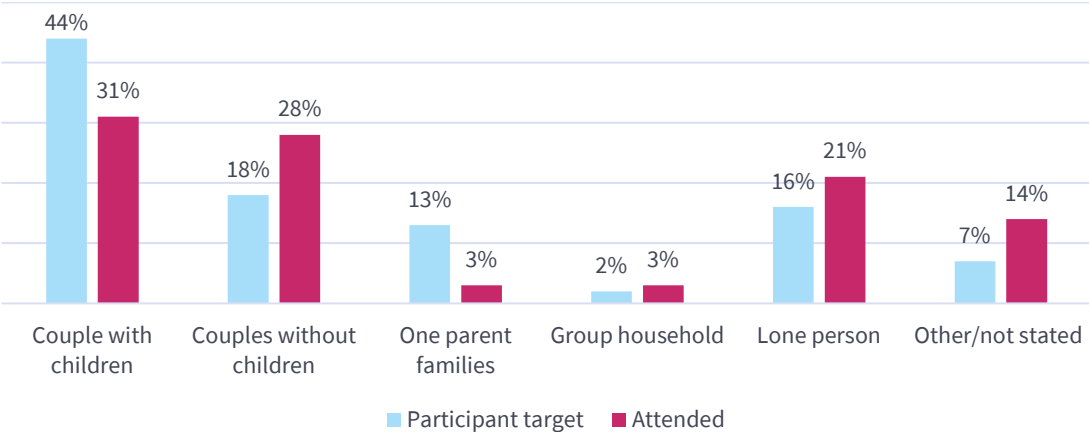


Figure 6: Panel household make-up

Household tenure

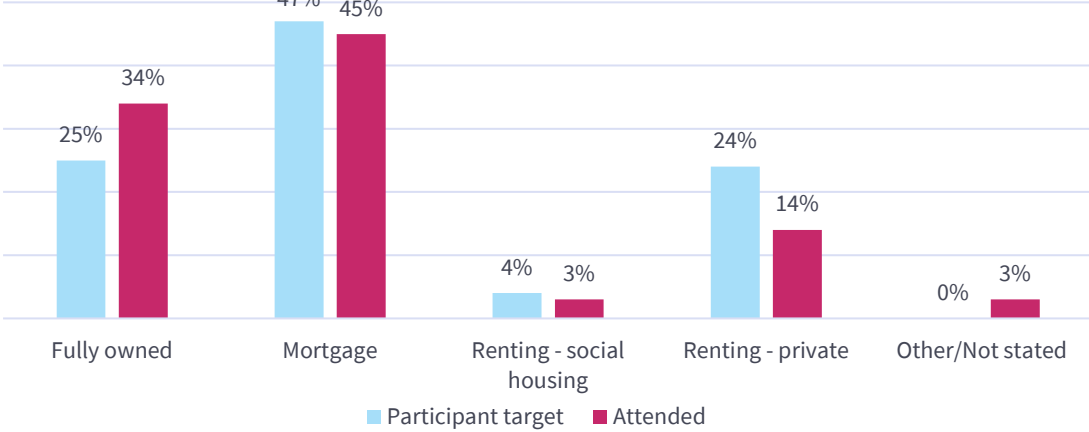


Figure 7: Panel member household tenure

Suburb\*

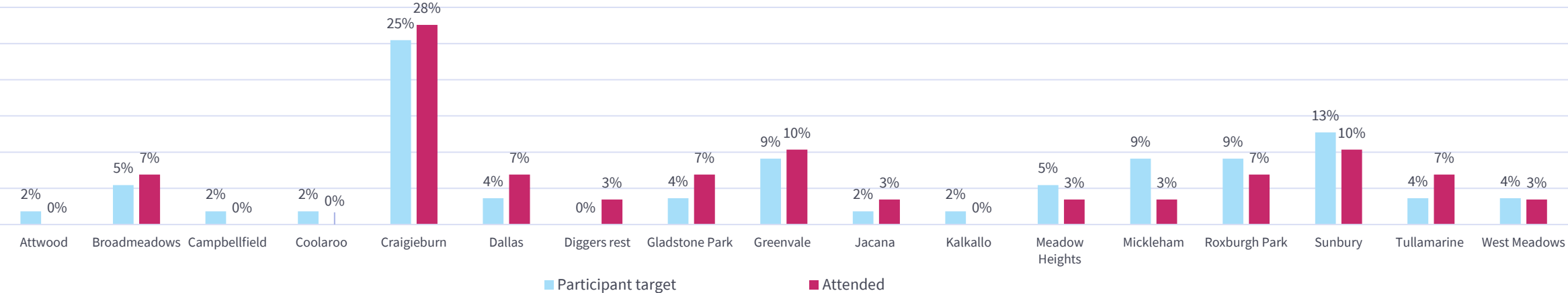


Figure 8: Suburb

\*Bulla, Clarkefield, Fawkner, Keilor, Melbourne Airport, Oakland Junction, Summerton, Wildwood, Yuroke were all identified as Hume suburbs (or parts thereof) with low populations. They were set with a participant target of 0, and 0 attended.

# Why people wanted to join the panel

In a pre-panel survey, panel participants were asked why they were motivated to join the Community Panel. Many people shared that they wanted to listen and share ideas, and to advocate for and to contribute to their community. A snapshot of their comments are presented in Figure 9, below.



Figure 9: Why people wanted to join the panel

# Deliberative engagement process

## Problem statement and outputs

The panel were asked to consider the following problem statements:

Since 2021, our community has continued to grow and because of the pandemic, how we live and what we value may have changed.

As this Community Vision was written as a 10-year Vision, we're asking the Panel to review it to ensure this Vision continues to reflect the community's aspirations.

Increasing economic pressures are impacting Council's financial sustainability, therefore we must ensure we deliver the projects and priorities that matter most to our community, while managing our budget responsibly.

Considering this, how well does the draft Council, Asset and Financial Plans respond to the Community Vision?

In responding to the problem statement, the panel were asked to consider several questions to develop specific outputs. The outputs, along with Council's promise on how the panel's outputs would be used are presented in Table 2.

Council's promise to the panel was aligned with the IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation and inline with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Table 2: Panel outputs and Council's promise

| Panel outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Council's promise                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A reviewed and updated Community Vision                                                                                                                                                                             | Empower: The Community Vision will be received and endorsed as the panel provides it. We will continue to work in partnership with our community to see this Vision achieved.                             |
| Development of supporting themes to align with updated Vision                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Feedback to Council on how well the draft Council, Asset and Financial Plans* responds to the Community Vision, including any changes that could be considered before each draft plan is shared with the community. | Involve: The panel's advice will be strongly considered and reflected where possible in strategic documents.<br><br>Council will provide feedback on how the panel outputs have influenced the documents. |

\* Due to changes in project timelines, panel members were invited to provide feedback to Council on managing finances and assets, but not on the draft Financial Plan or Asset Plan.

The panel's feedback will be used by Council to inform the development of the Financial Plan and Asset Plan. Council will share drafts of these plans later this year to seek community feedback before they are finalised and adopted by Council in October 2025.

Panel material and information

Panel members were given material and information to support them in undertaking their role – these materials are outlined below.

Welcome Pack

Panel members were provided with a Welcome Pack before starting with the panel. The pack included information about the panel process, what they would work on, and what to expect as a panel member. It included links to all relevant plans and strategic documents as well as an overview of the panel sessions. The pack also included information about the role of local government and the legislated requirements for engagement.

Presentations

Expert speakers from Council presented information on Council, the municipality and the community. Presentations included the role of local government, details on Hume’s population, economy, and growth, as well as health and wellbeing, an overview of the Council Plan, Asset Plan, and Financial Plan, and challenges and opportunities for the Council.

Council support

Council officers attended each session to support the panel, provide information and answer questions.

Worksheets, workbooks and examples

The panel was provided with worksheets ad workbooks to guide the completion of tasks. They were also given handouts in session, which included examples of Community Visions, style guides and information about Hume such as maps and demographics.



Figure 10: Pages from the Panel Welcome Pack

Panel session overview

The panel process was delivered over four in-person sessions at the Craigieburn Global Learning Centre, 75-95 Central Park Ave, Craigieburn. Outlined below are the details of each panel session, including the date, session format and overview, and attendance.

Table 3: Session details

| Session    | Date/time                                    | Session overview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Attendees |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Session #1 | Wednesday 30 October 2024<br>5.30pm – 9.00pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation: Panel role and task</li><li>• Activity: Creating group agreements/ways of working together</li><li>• Presentation: Current Community Vision and 2021 engagement process</li><li>• Presentations: Council services and functions; Hume challenges and opportunities; Missing voices</li><li>• Activity: Reflections on the Community Vision and focus areas</li></ul>                                                             | 41        |
| Session #2 | Saturday 9 November 2025<br>9.30pm – 4.00pm  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation: Focus areas for Community Vision</li><li>• Presentations: Community Vision and Council planning ; Hume’s current and future population</li><li>• Presentations: Hume’s health and well-being ; Hume’s built and natural environment</li><li>• Activity: Refine Vision themes and identify aspirations</li><li>• Activity: Develop future aspiration statements</li><li>• Activity: Seeking feedback from the community</li></ul> | 39        |
| Session #3 | Wednesday 29 January 2025<br>5.30pm – 9.00pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations: Panel journey and Council Plan; Community engagement methodology and findings</li><li>• Activity: Finalising Vision themes and statements</li><li>• Activity: Draft Community Vision (sub-group)</li><li>• Activity: Finalise the Vision</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                              | 25        |
| Session #4 | Wednesday 2 April 2025<br>5.30pm – 9.00pm    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation: Community Vision and alignment to Council Plan</li><li>• Activity: Individual review and feedback on draft Council Plan inclusions</li><li>• Presentation: Financial Plan and Asset Plan</li><li>• Activity: Finance People’s Poll</li><li>• Activity: Financial and Asset Plan table discussion</li></ul>                                                                                                                       | 22        |



# Panel outputs and process

Over the four panel sessions, the panel developed three primary outputs: a confirmed Community Vision, Themes and Statements to guide the development of the Council Plan; guidance for Council on managing finances, to inform the Financial Plan; and guidance on managing assets, to inform the Asset Plan. The following section details the panel outputs.

## Community Vision, Vision Themes and Statements

In 2020, members of the Hume Community came together in a deliberative engagement process to write Hume's first Community Vision. This Vision was developed as a 10-year vision.

Over the last four years, Hume has continued to experience significant growth and change, which combined with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the way people live and what they valued may have changed. As such, Council wanted to confirm that the Vision still reflects the community's aspirations for the future of Hume City.

Council also noted the opportunity for the Vision to better inform Council decisions and provide greater guidance for Council's work. The panel was therefore asked to review and refresh the Community Vision with supporting themes and statements that describe, in more detail, what the future aspirations looked like when they were achieved.

An eight-step process was undertaken in panel sessions #1 through #3 (see Figure 11). The visioning process was designed to encourage group members to work collaboratively, reflect on the vision, deliberate and share ideas for a reviewed and updated vision. As they undertook this process, the panel was given opportunities to learn from Council and each other, to build their understanding about Council and its operations, the Hume community, and challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. An outline of the process and feedback is included on the following pages.

Panel members presented their refreshed **Hume Community Vision 2045** to Council at a briefing session on 3 February 2025, and it was adopted at the Council meeting on 10 February 2025.

At session #4, the panel had the opportunity to review how their work had influenced the draft Council Plan.



Figure 11: Community Vision Process

# 1

## Review Vision, add anything that's missing, describe aspirations

The panel reflected on the 2021 vision and in small groups, responded to questions.

*Q. What parts of the community vision still seem important or useful after hearing new information?*

Overall, the panel felt the existing vision made sense but sought clarity and definition on some words. For many, several words needed more description for clarity including “sustainable”, “resilient” and “education”. Some also questioned what was meant by these words and what Council’s role was in delivering. They also noted increasing focus on representation, inclusion and diversity.

*Q. What parts of the community vision seem old or not quite right with the new information?*

The panel noted that there was a lack of clarity on “connection”, questioning if this was human connection or infrastructure. They also noted concerns about the words “resilient” and “thriving”, suggesting that this indicated struggle over success and were not adequately aspirational.

*Q. What aspirations are not reflected in the community vision?*

Gaps in the vision were identified including safety, the natural environment, climate change and climate crisis, accessibility (transport), community pride, sustainable growth, culture and history.

*Q. We're in Hume City and it's the year 2045. What does it look like? What does it feel like?*

The panel noted seven focus areas for consideration in the development of the Community Vision. They included: Council accountability/responsibility, education/training/employment, infrastructure, health and wellbeing, potential/sense of belonging/pride/diversity, safety, sustainability/environment.

The panel were asked to take their reflections on the 2021 Vision and their 2045 aspirations forward as they began to draft vision themes and statements. A summary of notes from this activity was made available to panelists and council.

# 2

## Start to write the draft Vision theme statements

Reflecting on the feedback from the first step, the panel was asked to work in small groups and looked for overlap in ideas bringing their thinking and ideas together to create five draft vision themes and statements. They were under the headings of:

- Environmentally centred community
- A well-connected and well-serviced city
- Equality, equity and inclusion
- Belonging and connection
- A responsible, well-governed and respected Council .

# 3

## Give feedback on the draft statements for each Vision theme

Each theme and statement was then shared with the whole panel, and all panel members reflected, shared thoughts and asked questions of clarification.

# 4

## Revise the draft statements based on panel feedback

The panel members then returned to their small groups to revise the draft statements using the feedback collected at step 3.

5

### Confirm what you want to get feedback on from the community

The panel reflected on who was underrepresented on the panel and what feedback they would like to seek from the wider community. This discussion was used to inform the development of a Wider Engagement Workbook that panel members could use to seek feedback from other members of the Hume community.

6

### Seek feedback from the community on the draft Community Vision

All panel members were asked to engage with three members of their community and were provided with printable workbooks, or a digital engagement tool replicating parts of the workbook.

Panel members undertook this task between 12 November 2024 and 22 January 2025. A total of 39 people participated in the wider engagement. The panel was successful in hearing from people who were identified underrepresented on the panel, including people aged 85+, people who lived in Yuroke, Attwood and Bulla, and people who are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Participants were asked to reflect on the Vision themes and statements and identify if it was “Spot on”, “It’s almost there”, or “Something important is missing”, and provide comments.

7

### Revise the draft Community Vision based on community feedback

The panel was sent an engagement report to review before coming together in session #3. They used this feedback to further refine their vision themes and statements down to four topics. Working in small groups, they refined the language, seeking to use simple language and reduce repetition and overlaps in themes.

The small groups then came together to view the themes and statements as a whole and to make final refinements. Concurrently, using draft themes and statements for guidance, a sub-group of five panel members created the overarching vision statement.

8

### Finalise and ‘adopt’ the Community Vision

The sub-group presented the vision to the panel, and panel members asked questions of clarification to the sub-group. They were then asked to vote on the vision, with the options of:

- Yes I can live with it
- I have mixed feelings, but I can live with it
- No, I cannot live with it.

The panel accepted the Vision, achieving a supermajority of 80% support. The **Hume Community Vision 2045** was adopted by Council on 10 February 2025. The final vision is on the next page.

#### Providing feedback on the draft Council Plan 2025-2029

Following the adoption of the Community Vision, Council used it as a starting point to development the next Council Plan. Through an extensive internal engagement process with Councillors and Council staff, draft priorities, strategic objectives, strategies and strategic indicators were developed to form a draft Council Plan. This Plan will guide Council’s work, advocacy and decisions over the next four years to work towards the Community Vision.

In session #4, the panel was invited to review the draft Council Plan and provide feedback on how well it has responded to the Community Vision and note if there was anything missing.

Much of the participant feedback in session #4 noted that the priorities directly aligned to the Community Vision themes and that their desired aspirations had been understood and well articulated in greater detail through the strategic objectives and strategies in the draft document.

The panel provided more feedback on the strategic indicators. They frequently asked questions of clarification on measurements and responsibility for delivery of actions. They suggested actions that they believed would assist in the successful achievement of the draft Council Plan.

All feedback has been provided to Council for consideration as they continue to refine the draft Council Plan. Any suggested actions will be considered in the development of subsequent Council Annual Action Plans (CAAP).

# Adopted Community Vision



## Community Vision themes:



### Well connected and well serviced city

Residents and visitors have easy access, in a timely and efficient manner, to amenities, services and transportation options.



### Environmentally centred

Our decisions are grounded by all aspects of our environmental impact, through the protection, conservation and expansion of our native flora, fauna, parklands and waterways.



### Equality, equity and inclusion and connection

Everyone in Hume has equal opportunities and resources to fulfil their potential. Hume recognises that people have different needs and provides different levels of support to achieve fairness. Hume is a welcoming, inclusive community, centred around empowerment, resilience, and respect of diversity, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, safe and has a sense of belonging.



### Responsible and well governed city

Council continues to be transparent, well governed and accessible. It responsibly engages with community, and strategically advocates to meet the future needs of Hume.

# Financial Plan and Asset Plan

In session #4, the panel was provided with information on the development of the Financial Plan and Asset Plan, and the financial pressures that Council is facing. The panel asked questions of the subject matter experts and then considered and deliberated on three questions.

## Fair and balanced decisions

Panel members were asked, “How can we ensure Council's decisions are fair and balanced across different community needs?”

The panel noted that the community needs to trust Council to undertake the required community consultation and to provide information to residents, while others suggested an increase in consultation. They suggested increased transparency in decision making, better promotion of Council meetings, and ensuring that the information provided to community was suited to the audience.

The panel suggested to apply data and quantitative measures, such as economic measures, to assess community needs and priorities. Others suggested that decisions be measured against the Community Vision.

The panel noted that Council is not impartial and are politically aligned, with some suggested increasing independent reviews of Council decision making, such as through an Ombudsman, others thought that community feedback should play a role in keeping Council accountable.

The panel noted that Council should consider the needs of Hume as one community with different needs, and not as different communities.

## Using data, information and community feedback in decision making

The panel considered, “What role should data and information play in decision making, versus community feedback or requests?”

In responding to this question, the panel often tried to quantify their response, with most prioritising data slightly above community feedback at a 60%/40% split. It was suggested that a 50%/50% assessment could be misleading as community members may not be informed enough to understand and contribute.

The panel suggested that community feedback can be problematic because “negative feedback seems to speak louder” and that community feedback alone is unlikely to be representative or provide a full picture of the community. Many noted that community feedback was important and valuable as it provides context, feelings and sentiment to the data. It may also help to identify future community needs. They also noted that relying on data alone may not provide a full picture, and numbers can be used to tell only part of a story.

Rate rises or service cuts

Panel members were asked “If you had to choose between Council rate rises above the state legislated rate cap to maintain local services, or cuts in Council services to save money, what would you choose?” Participants indicated their preference between a “Rate rise to maintain services” and “Service cuts to save money.”

In the first instance, the panel members were asked to stand as near to their preference as they liked. They could stand as close to or anywhere between the two choices, indicating a stronger preference or confidence at the ends, or indecision or uncertainty in the middle. The result of this activity showed a wide range of preference across the panel.

The panel members then repeated this activity in a table-based discussion, and in the individual discussions, slightly more panel members identified a preference for rate rises (8) than service cuts (6), with the remainder choosing to indicate their preference near the middle of the line, noting that they needed more information to inform their response.

Panel members provided insights into why they made the choice they did.

Those that preferred rate rises to maintain services stated that it was a good for society and the building of community to have access to services. They also noted that everything was increasing in costs, noting inflation and construction costs. They did not want to see a cut to services or the quality of services, and others expressed concerns that if there were cuts that those services would be lost forever. They also noted that services help young people thrive and some were concerned that some people would not have access to services if they had to pay.

Those that preferred service cuts to save money immediately identified that they either did not need services (personally) or a desire to save money because of housing affordability issues. They noted that people with mortgages were already facing considerable financial pressures with rate rises and cost of living pressures and may not be able to pay more. They noted that no cuts should be made to essential services and agreed that services be prioritised, rationalised, and level of service be considered (based on impact to community), rather than services being cut altogether.

When Council staff explained how the loss of \$20 would impact Council’s budget, some panel members noted that they had changed their position and would prefer rate rises.

Other comments made by the panel included that there might be other options for Council to consider, and that the two options were likely insufficient. They suggested Council should spend responsibly, could look to cut expenses like operational costs, or taking on debt to maintain services without having to raise rates.

Activity: People poll

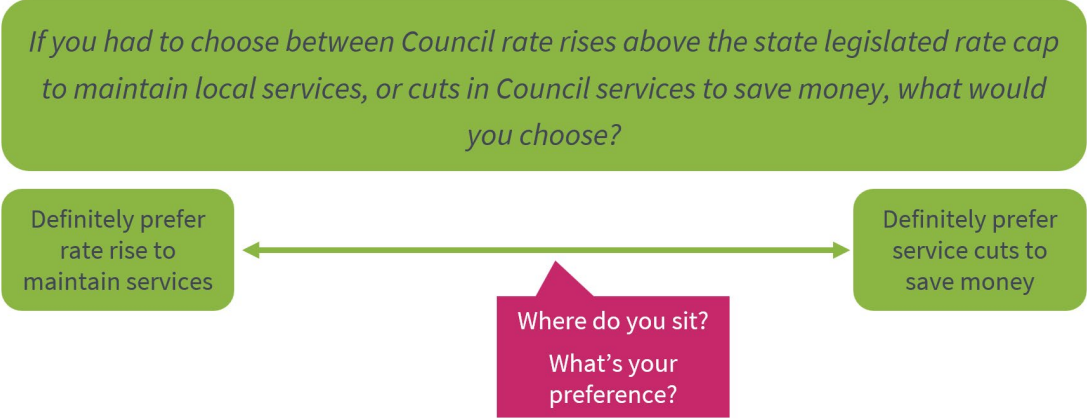


Figure 12: Panel members undertaking a People Poll

# Panel evaluation

Before the start and at the close of the panel, we asked participants to reflect on their own expectations and experiences as panel members, as well as their trust and confidence in Council, knowledge of Council planning processes, and community participation in government decision-making. A total of 36 participants completed the pre-panel survey, and 29 completed the post-panel survey. A comparison of pre and post panel survey responses follows.

## Trust and confidence in Council

Two questions were asked to test for change in trust and confidence in Council. There was a slight decrease in confidence that Council would honour the outcomes of this process (-3%), and an increase in trust that the Council supports community involvement in decision-making (+7%). The results are in Figures 13 and 14.

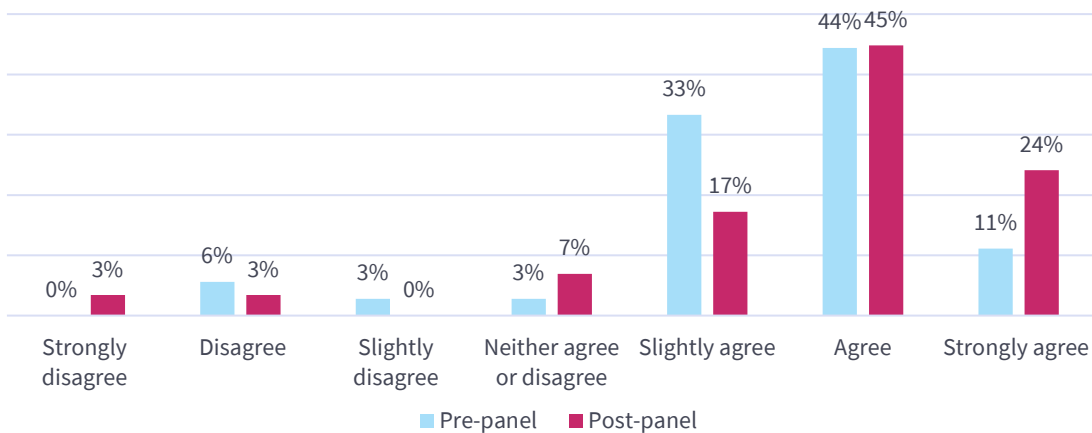


Figure 13: Confidence that Council will honour the outcomes of this process

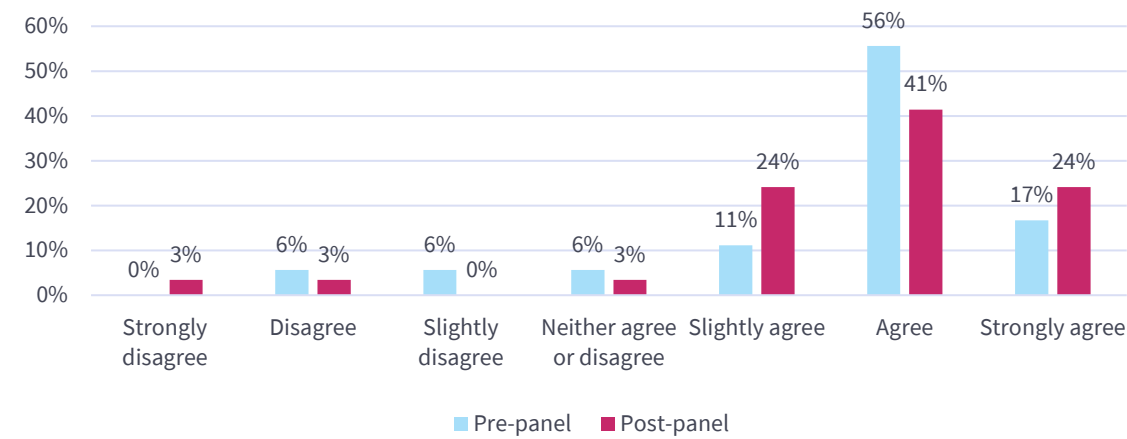


Figure 14: Trust that Council actively supports community involvement in decision making

Panel members trust that Council supports community involvement in decision making increased by 7%

Knowledge and understanding of Council processes

Panel members’ positive perception of Council regarding the long-term planning of the municipality increased by 25%. All panel members agreed that they completed the panel with an understanding of what is within Council’s control and influence. Their understanding of the broader challenges/issues impacting planning in Hume increased by 25% and understanding of economic challenges increased by 33%. See the results in Figures 15 through 18.

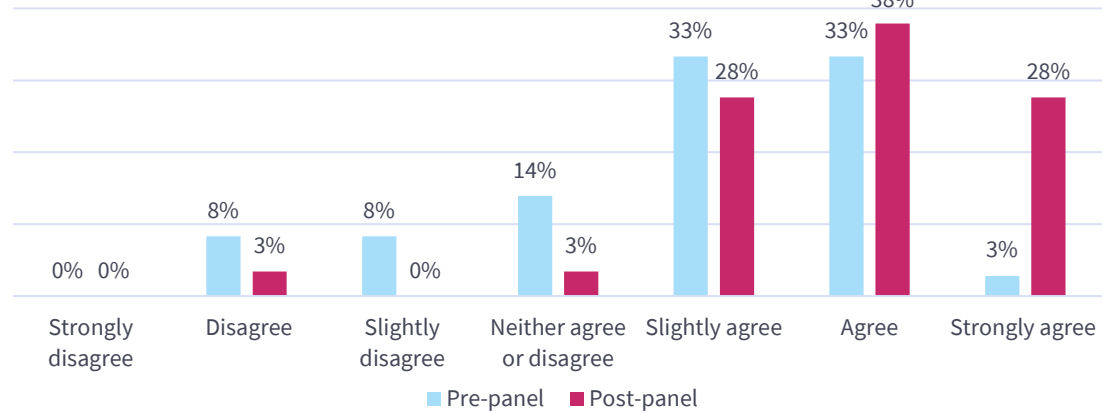


Figure 15: Panel perception of Council regarding the long-term planning of the municipality

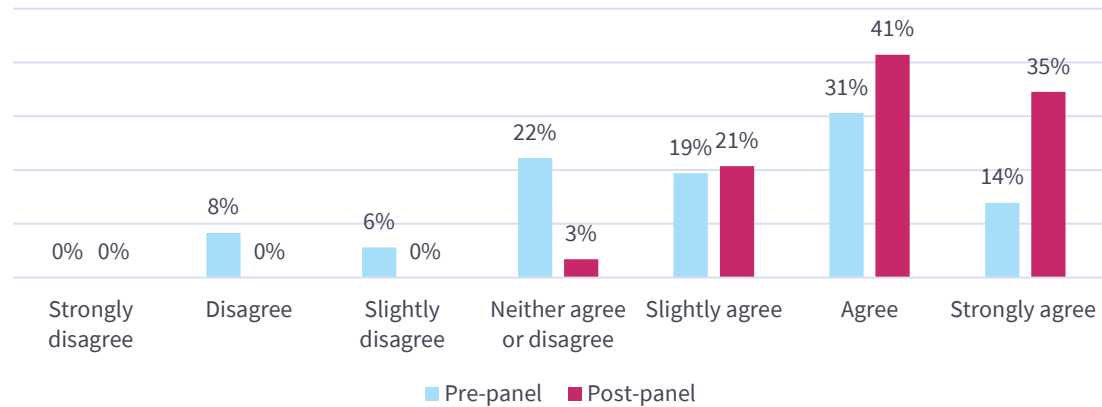


Figure 16: Panel understanding of economic environment

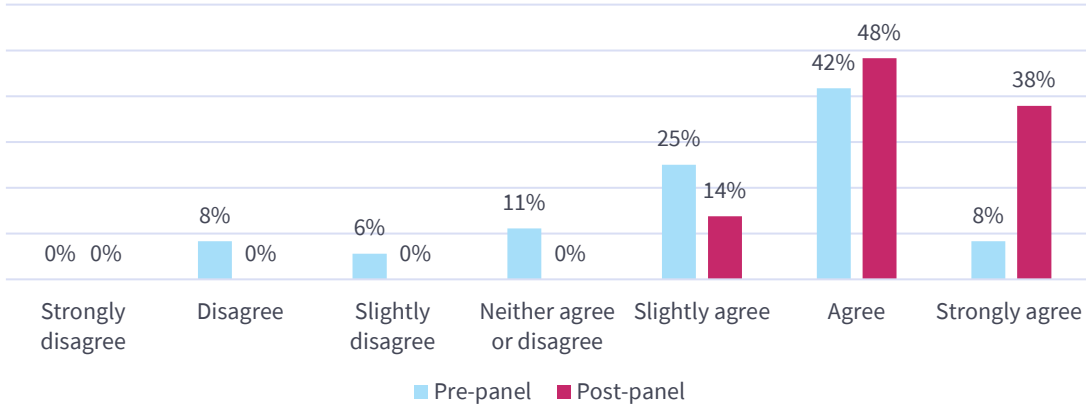


Figure 17: Panel understanding of what decisions are within Council control and influence

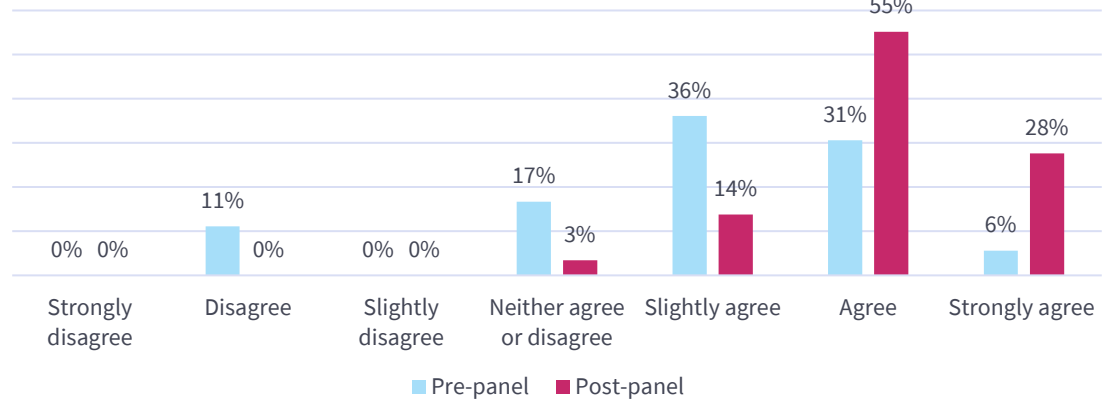


Figure 18: Panel understanding of broader challenges/issues impacting planning in Hume

Panel members’ knowledge and understanding of Council processes increased in all categories

Personal knowledge, confidence in engaging, and working together

Panel members provided a self-assessment of their own knowledge and skills (see Figures 19-21). The panel grew in confidence in the panel’s ability to work together (+13%). There was minimal change in panel members’ confidence in having the skills and knowledge to contribute to decision-making or in their confidence in engaging in civic decision-making.

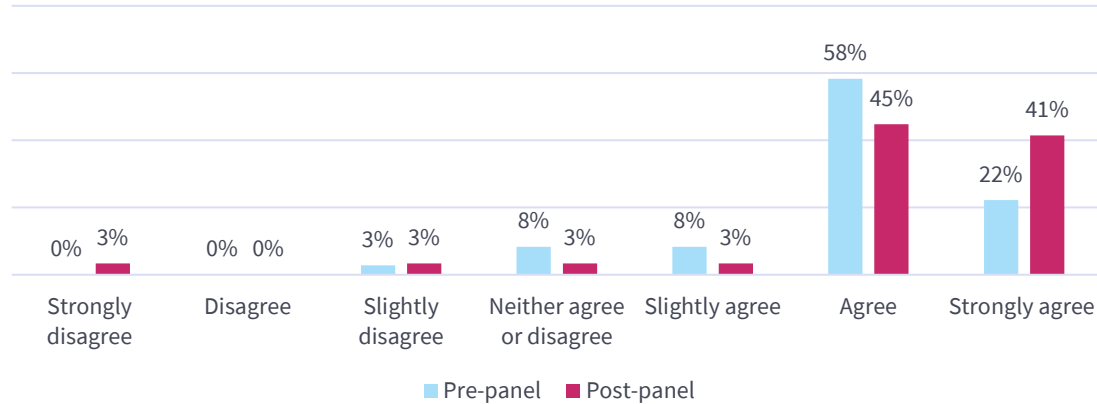


Figure 19: Panel’s confidence in engaging in civic decision-making processes

Panel members’ confidence in working together grew 13%

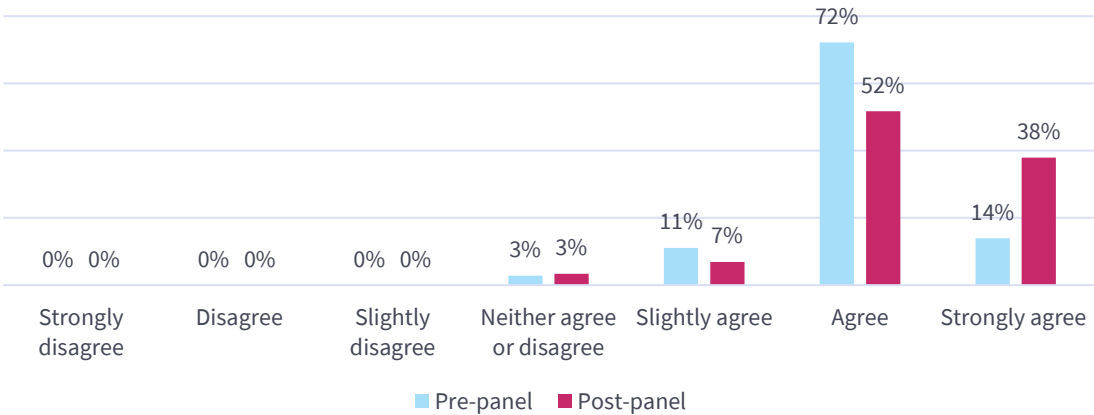


Figure 20: Panel feeling they have the skills and knowledge to contribute to decision-making processes

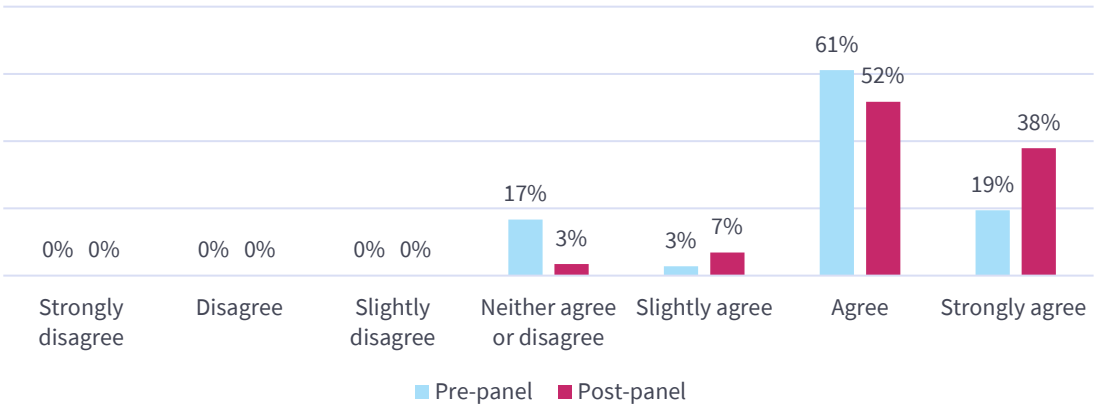


Figure 21: Panel confidence in working together through the process

# Next steps

Council continues to develop their draft Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The draft Council Plan and proposed 2026/26 Budget (that will fund Council's work for the first year of the draft Council Plan) will be made available to the wider community for feedback in early May. Panel members will be notified of the opportunity to engage, and this feedback will assist Council finalising both documents for adoption in June 2025.

The draft Financial Plan and draft Asset Plan will go out for community consultation in August 2025 before being adopted in October 2025.

Council is greatly appreciative of the contributions of the panel and for the developed of a community vision that sets clear aspirations for the future of Hume City.



*Thank you*



Success. Mapped.

Melbourne | Sydney | Brisbane | Gold Coast

[insync.com.au](http://insync.com.au)