



Merri-bek
City Council

Place Based Community Outreach Pilot in Merri-bek North

Summary Report 2024-25



To achieve the goals of the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Plan, Kerbside Waste Reform and Circular Economy Strategy, we need to engage and change the behaviour of residents, including multicultural communities. The Place-based Community Outreach Pilot was established to test a dialogue model of engagement in Fawkner. The pilot focused on priority Sustainable Communities issues, to achieve longer term behaviour change.

Communicating with multicultural and underrepresented communities is essential for building climate resilience, as these groups often face disproportionate impacts and possess unique local knowledge that can inform effective adaptation strategies. Inclusive engagement ensures that solutions are equitable, culturally relevant, and widely supported, fostering stronger community trust and cooperation during transitions. Without their voices, resilience efforts risk being incomplete or ineffective.



Why?

- Grounded sustainability engagement in Fawkner, Merri-bek's most disadvantaged suburb, with strong multicultural identity.
- Traditional Council channels weren't reaching key communities; a localised, face-to-face model bridged this gap.
- By grounding efforts in the lived experiences and knowledge of local community members, especially in diverse or underrepresented areas, solutions become more relevant, sustainable, and impactful.



**Place-based outreach
helps bridge equity gaps
in climate transition.**

Community Outreach

Provided community education on various sustainability topics, including energy upgrades, zero waste, climate resilience and active transportation by visiting multicultural community groups that regularly meet either in Fawkner or Glenroy. Community members received the information, asked questions and received support.



12

community groups have been visited and a few of them have been visited more than once upon their request



560

community members have received focused community education



89%

reported new knowledge about energy upgrades



76%

reported increased knowledge about zero waste practices



62%

reported increased understanding of active transport options, such as learning how to ride a bike through the Wheel Sisters program



"We lack information round council's subsidies like the energy subsidy in our community and it's been a really informative session to attend."

Community Workshops

Hosted a range of workshops and information sessions that were designed in collaboration with our Inclusive and Sustainable Working Group to ensure they were tailored to the needs of our diverse communities and reflected cultural competence throughout. These included:

- Zero-food waste workshops in Fawkner and Glenroy.
- Composting for Beginners Workshop in Fawkner.
- Inclusive Information Session on Sustainability in Fawkner.
- 2 heat health workshops for young mothers and carers of babies in Fawkner.



6

workshops



160

culturally diverse community members from Fawkner and Glenroy attended



"My friend and I really enjoyed this workshop. Great tips for using food leftovers and food scraps. Please keep us in the loop for similar workshops in the future."

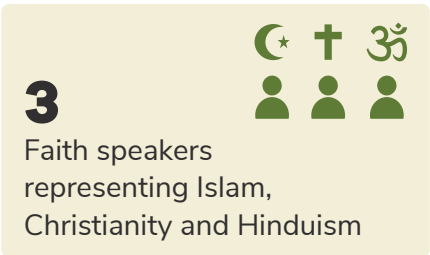
"I've learned a lot from the community composting workshop and now I compost at home and teach my grand daughters and my senior neighbours too."

Tickets to the Fawkner heat health workshops were sold out in 2 days after promoting the sessions, compared to the same workshop in Brunswick.



Community Events

In June 2025, an Environment Day Event for Multicultural Communities was held to celebrate and promote sustainability through diverse cultural and community perspectives. A Welcome to Country, provided by Uncle Andrew, spoke about the deep connection between Indigenous people and their local environment and lands, followed by engaging discussions on sustainability from three different faith leaders. A panel of community speakers shared practical examples of sustainable living, such as using solar and reducing energy at home, riding a bike as a mode of transport, supporting businesses to reduce waste and environmental responsibility from a sporting and community perspective.



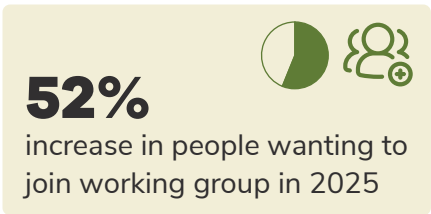
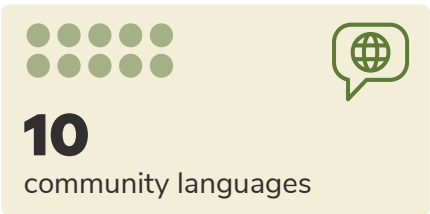
“Thank you for sharing tips and creative ideas that empower us to make sustainable choices every day. We really enjoyed hearing from the Imam about sustainability in Islam.”

“What a great event! We enjoyed the Hindu speech so much!”

“It was great hearing from community members on the panel. It’s really encouraging and many of us will join the programs, like the Wheel Sisters.”

Sustainable Communities Working Group

Recruited a group of community volunteers to provide community insights to help shape engagement to be culturally appropriate, inclusive and relevant to local multicultural communities. Members speak languages including Arabic, Assyrian, Chaldean, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Dari, Farsi, Nepali and Spanish. Members became ambassadors of sustainability, sharing knowledge with friends, families, and neighbours.



“Although I’m very active in my community, I was unaware of council’s sustainability subsidy programs, let alone someone who is isolated, until joining our working group, which has since equipped me to share this information with others.”

“This group didn’t only help me connect with people from other cultures, but it also made me feel more connected to Fawkner and its beautiful landscapes and made me aware of our local environment issues.”

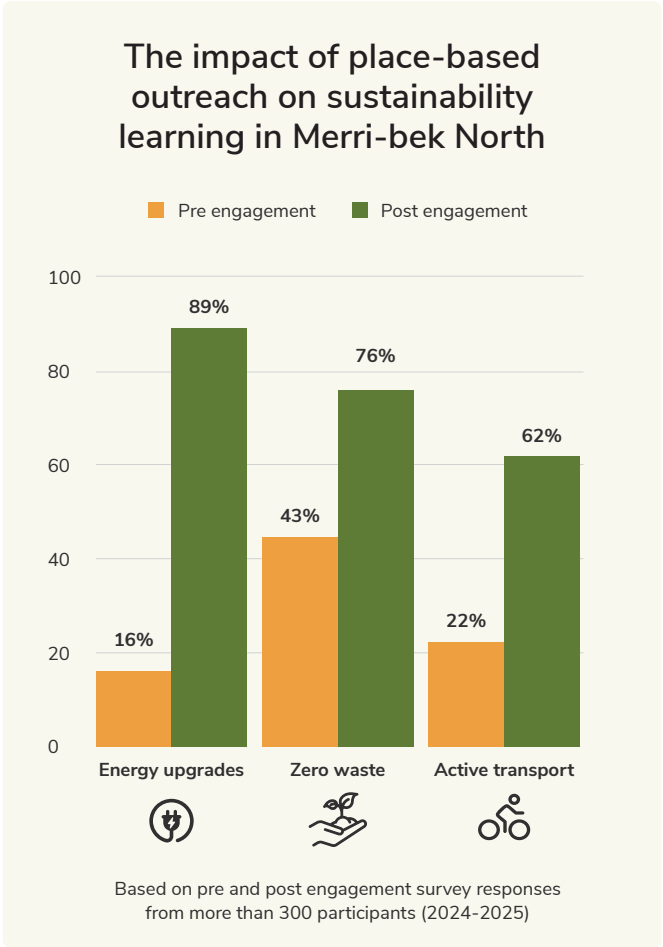
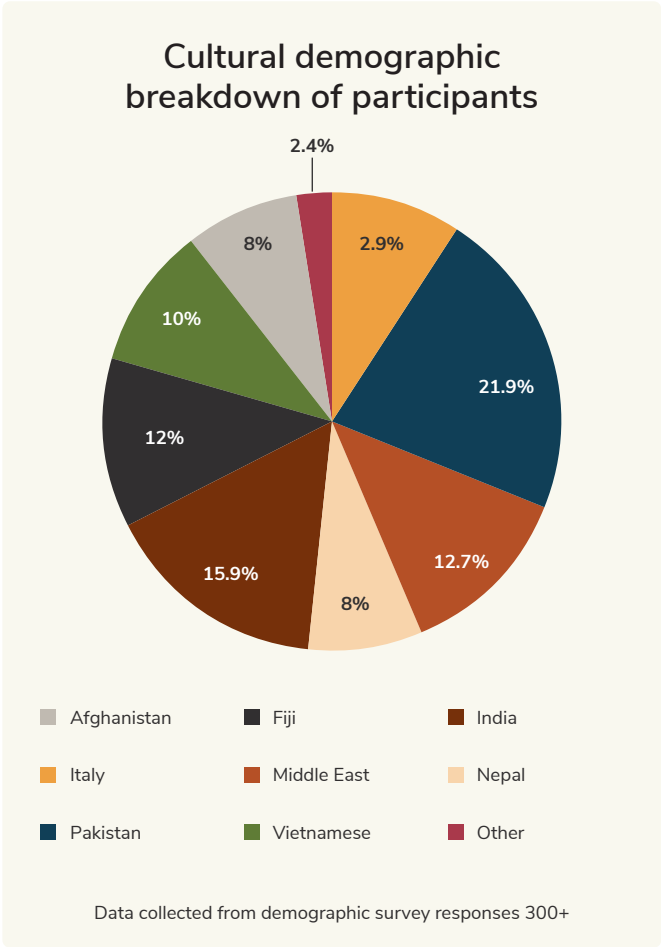
Community pop up stalls

Regular monthly community information stalls were hosted in Fawkner during times of existing community events at the Merri Food Hub.

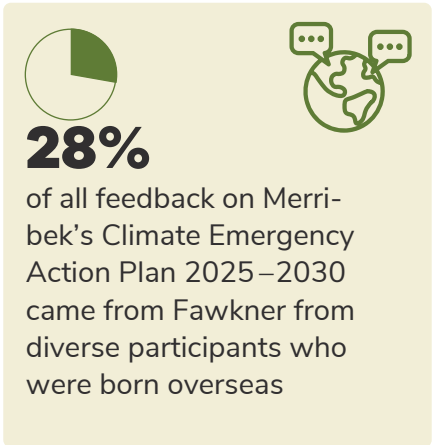
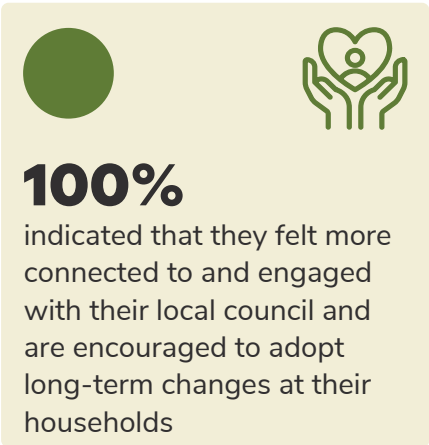
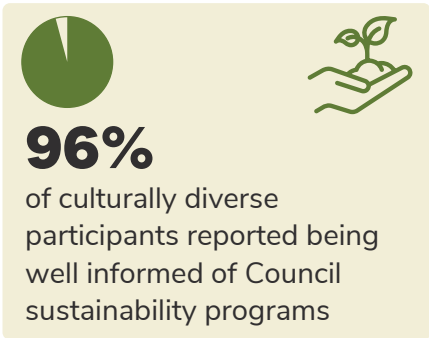
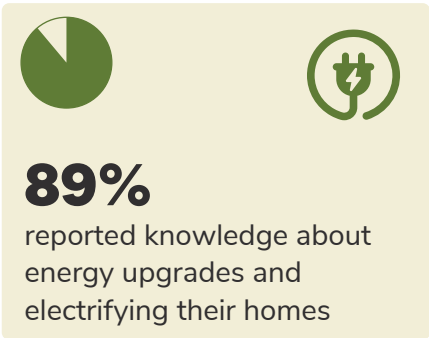


Pilot outcome and impact

Pre- and post-engagement surveys were conducted, yielding over 300 responses in total.



Place-based Community Outreach Impact
Sustainable Communities



“It’s very important for our community to come together to share the care for our environment and learn from each other’s experiences through these events run by Council.”

“I have learned extensively about sustainability and energy efficiency through my previous experience as a member in the sustainable communities working group and that’s why I applied to rejoin.”

EQUITY • CAPACITY • BEHAVIOUR CHANGE • COLLABORATION AND TRUST

For more information go to zerocarbonmerri-bek.org.au



Download the Outcomes Report

