

Pakenham Golf Course and Deep Creek Reserve

Community engagement
outcomes report



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Introduction

Site history

In the 1970's, the Shire of Pakenham proposed a scheme to set aside land along Ryan Road and the Princes Highway for recreation, drainage, and roads. Surrounding landowners transferred parcels of land to Council, with the understanding that the land would remain as public space and a recreation area. The Pakenham Golf Club and clubhouse was established in the early 1980s, under a long-term lease with Council due to expire in 2034.

In 1999, the Cardinia Planning Scheme reserved the land as Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ). Attempts to rezone parcels for redevelopment were refused in both 2004 and 2016, with application assessments citing inadequate justification for change and the need to protect public open space.

In 2010, Council adopted a masterplan that provided for environmental improvements, a new golf clubhouse and community facility, all-abilities play space, wetlands, trails, and a plant nursery at Deep Creek Reserve. This masterplan was fully realised, demonstrating Council's commitment to balancing golf operations with wider community use.

Golf course closures and financial challenges

The golf course has faced two major disruptions in recent years. In May 2023, the Pakenham Golf Club went into voluntary administration with \$1.2 million debt. Council worked with administrators to manage the facility until, in October 2023, private enterprise GSM was appointed as operator under a 15-month agreement with an option for a further 12 months. In June 2024, GSM understood that it would be faced with operational losses due to the poor condition of the greens, and in September 2024, a contractor estimated that \$1.7 million would be needed for upgrades to replace the irrigation system and upgrade tees and fairways.

In December 2024, Council officers met with Council to negotiate a further lease, however investment for and upgrades would be required by Council. Council would not commit to further investment without a clear strategic understanding of the future of golf course at Deep Creek. As such, GSM confirmed it would end the agreement on 31 March 2025. The course has since remained closed.

Feasibility Study

In January 2025, Council commissioned Nova Ratio to undertake a [Feasibility Study](#) into future land use, focusing on the viability of golf. Golf Australia and WellPlayed Golf Business Consultancy provided specialist insights to the study. Their findings concluded that golf remains viable at Deep Creek Reserve, provided there is investment and a sustainable management model.

The Feasibility Study presented three potential options for Council, and considers balancing financial implications, infrastructure renewal, and community needs. These options included reestablishment of golf, creating active open space or passive open space.

Requirements for community engagement

The Victorian State Government has established clear [requirements for golf course redevelopment](#). This framework requires that in investigating a conversion of golf course land:

- the viability of golf must first be tested,
- if not viable, other open space uses must be considered, and
- only if no open space use is appropriate, can land be considered for sale, with proceeds reinvested in public benefit.

The Guidelines requires robust community engagement, as does Council’s [Community Engagement Policy 2025 – 2029](#), which outlines that community engagement should occur when a proposed change:

- will significantly affect the community,
- is likely to generate community concern,
- requires additional information for Council to make a decision, or
- is subject to legislative requirements that set out specific community engagement processes.

The Feasibility Study outlines its alignment with this framework and a pathway for community engagement. Engaging the community on the options for the land as outlined in the Feasibility Study ensures that local voices are considered in shaping decisions about the reserve’s future.

Engagement purpose

The purpose of this engagement was for Council to understand how the community prefers to use the site and what the community thinks about the options when considering all factors, including financial implications for rate payers, community benefits, and potential impacts. Council must now carefully consider community views and the findings of the Feasibility Study to determine the most sustainable future for Deep Creek Reserve.

Figure 1 outlines the timeline for the project.

Report purpose

This report provides a summary of the engagement process and key findings for Pakenham Golf Course and Deep Creek Reserve.

It has been prepared independently by Insync, an engagement consultancy. Insync provided strategic advice to Council on the development of the engagement and compiled this report as an impartial assessment. All data and feedback collected through the engagement are available to Council for review and consideration.

Council will use the feedback in this report, alongside many other sources of information, including costs and financial feasibility, risks, benefits, community needs and impacts , to decide the future of this site. Community feedback is one source that will help guide the decision.

Figure 1: Timeline



Engagement approach



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Methodology

This section outlines the engagement purpose and objectives, and the approach taken to gather insights and feedback from the community.

Engagement purpose and objectives

The engagement purpose was to invite community feedback for Council to review and consider as it investigates the options for the future use of Pakenham Golf Course. The objectives of the engagement were to:

- promote the engagement opportunity widely so people hear about the project and know how to provide feedback
- ensure an accessible and inclusive engagement that hears from the range of community groups and cohorts with an interest in the site’s future
- raise awareness of the site’s limitations and opportunities, and ensure the community understands the rationale and process for engagement and planning
- understand community sentiment about how the site is used now, and to seek feedback on the options, and
- collect feedback from the community that is useful for Council to inform decisions.

Engagement approach

A range of engagement methods and promotional tools were used to ensure diverse voices and perspectives were represented. A stakeholder analysis was undertaken and followed. The methodology included both quantitative and qualitative techniques, combining a structured survey ([Appendix A](#)) with more interactive conversations and targeted outreach.

All participants attending a pop-up event were asked to complete a survey, if they had not already done so. The pop-up event at Pakenham Marketplace was not only focussed on Pakenham Golf Course but was part of a wider engagement for *Cardinia on the move* and promoted many Council engagement projects. Council officers circulated the site during pop-ups to discuss the project with passers-by, and these are recorded as intercepts.

Engagement activities and participation are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of engagement activities

Activity	Date	Participation
Online survey – hosted on Creating Cardinia webpage (see Appendix A)	19 August – 17 September 2025	532 completed surveys
Deep Creek Reserve pop-ups	Wednesday, 27 August 2025 4.00pm – 6.00pm	25
	Friday, 5 September 2025 10.00am – 12.00pm	30
	Saturday 6 September 2025 1.00pm – 4.00pm	10 attendees; 10 intercept
Pakenham Marketplace pop-up	Tuesday, 9 September 2025 (1.00pm- 4.00pm)	20 intercept
Hard copies of survey provided to local council facilities and made available by request.	19 August and restocked as needed	7 (included in online surveys)

Promotion

The following page details how the opportunity to engage was shared with the community. The promotion included digital and print media, and targeted communication with community groups including: the golf community, Pakenham community groups and sports clubs, Women and Girls Sports Participation Network, Pakenham primary schools and secondary schools and student leaders, Pakenham Probus, Men’s Shed, Rotary, Cardinia businesses, and Council’s Advisory Groups.

A total of 4,448 letters were sent to properties near the site, including residents, businesses, shopping centres, primary schools and secondary school and faith groups. The letter included:

- a link to the online survey and details on how to access paper surveys
- a link to the Feasibility Study
- an invitation to talk with staff at pop-ups, and
- details of translation services and National Relay service for people who are deaf or require speech assistance.

Figure 2: Targeted promotional Connect + e-news



Pakenham Golf Course

Help shape the future of Pakenham Golf Course at Deep Creek Reserve. Share your feedback on how you currently use Deep Creek Reserve and how you'd like to see it used in the future. We're also keen to hear your thoughts on the options identified in the independent Feasibility Study for the Pakenham Golf Course.

Have your say

A summary of all promotional activity is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Promotion methods

Promotion methods
A Creating Cardinia webpage hosted project information – the site had 3,947 views and 3,623 unique visits, 484 downloads of the Feasibility Study
A digital banner promoting the project featured on the main Council webpage for 4 weeks
Media release on 18 August 2025 was shared in local print media and provided to community groups to share in electronic newsletters.
Posters delivered and displayed at Pakenham library, Cardinia Life, Pakenham community sports clubs, businesses on Racecourse road.
6 corflutes signage and 6 posters displayed at Pakenham Golf Course Function centre , Cardinia Environment Coalition, playground, toilet block, walking trail and car park
Facebook post with a reach of 7,163 with direct and other clicks 1,151
Connect + e-news electronic newsletters included promotion of the project
4,448 letter drops to all addresses with 1 kilometre of the golf course
Emails sent to community groups, local schools and Council’s advisory groups
Eight internal emails were sent to inform staff to share the opportunity and encourage feedback



Limitations

The engagement methodology was designed to be robust and inclusive. There were, however, limitations that should be acknowledged in reading this report. These are outlined below.

- Until 26 August, the question “How do you currently use Deep Creek Reserve?” was mistakenly available as a *select one* response rather than the intended *select all that apply*. A total of 228 participants responded as a *select one*. After this date, the question was changed to a *select all that apply* response. Data prior to 26 August was not available in this analysis.
- Until 28 August, respondents could not enter their age, affecting the first 264 survey responses.
- Survey age brackets do not fully align with ABS 2023 categories. Where exact matches were unavailable, Cardinia’s population was estimated by distributing people evenly within each ABS bracket (for example, if ABS data showed there were 1,000 people in the 15-19 bracket, it was assumed that there were exactly 200 15-year-olds, 200 16-year-olds, etc.).
- Due to rounding, some charts may not sum to 100 and some items with only one respondent may be rounded to zero.
- Participants self-selected to participate. Overall, there was participation from a broad range of community members; however, participants are not considered to be statistically representative of the Cardinia community.
- Participants could self-describe as nearby residents; the survey set no boundaries on what qualifies as nearby.
- A higher proportion of survey responses came from Pakenham. Additional local interest in this project was expected but should be kept in mind when interpreting results.
- For some questions, respondents could select one or many options, which may inflate counts. In these questions, the total number of responses can exceed total number of participants.
- Feedback received through engagement and has been summarised and presented as key themes in this report. It does not provide a quantitative analysis of all feedback provided.
- The analysis of engagement data was undertaken by Insync’s team of consultants. As research practitioners, Insync apply sophisticated AI tools to assist in data analysis. All AI analysis is undertaken in line with Insync’s AI policy, which can be found [here](#).
- Even with a thorough quality assurance process there may be a small margin of error due to individual interpretation. Every effort is made to summarise feedback accurately and comprehensively. Where responses are open-ended, interpretation is required, and assumptions are made in the analysis.
- This report focuses on the results of the survey. All pop-up participants were asked to complete a survey. Additional insights from conversations at pop-ups are available to Council for consideration.
- Four submissions were received with some including suggestions that were outside the scope of this engagement. This feedback has been included in summary form, and all submissions have been provided to Council for consideration.
- Participants may have completed more than one survey. All responses have been reviewed for duplication. The risk of the duplicates impacting the findings is low.
- Participants assumed that options 1a, and 1b for golf would require a reduction of the current 18-hole golf course. This was not stated in the Feasibility Study or survey.
- Some quotes have been condensed or had minor spelling errors corrected. The meaning of the statement has not been altered.
- Demographic localities have been grouped for the purpose of reporting.

Participants

The following pages outline who participated in the engagement. It includes an overview of the demographic mix of participants as compared to local demographic statistics. Though there was a reasonable demographic mix, some demographics were over or underrepresented in the engagement.

- In total 532 people completed the survey. Not all participants answered every question.
- The median age of respondents is between 45-49, while the median age of Cardinia residents is 34. Despite the difference, this is a fair representation of Cardinia residents who could reasonably be expected to respond. If excluding young children, the median age of Cardinia residents over the age of 15 is between 40-44.
- Men were over-represented (62%), and women were under-represented (33%).
- Most participants lived in Pakenham (76%). The next most common location within Cardinia was Officer and Officer South (6%), and 8% of respondents were from outside of Cardinia.
- Approximately three quarters of participants (77%) described themselves as nearby residents.
- Slightly more than half of participants play golf either occasionally or regularly at the site. Golf Australia estimates that about 19% of adult Australians played golf in 2023/24 (see [Feasibility Study](#)).
- Half of participants also responded that they visit the site either occasionally or regularly.

Figure 3: Gender

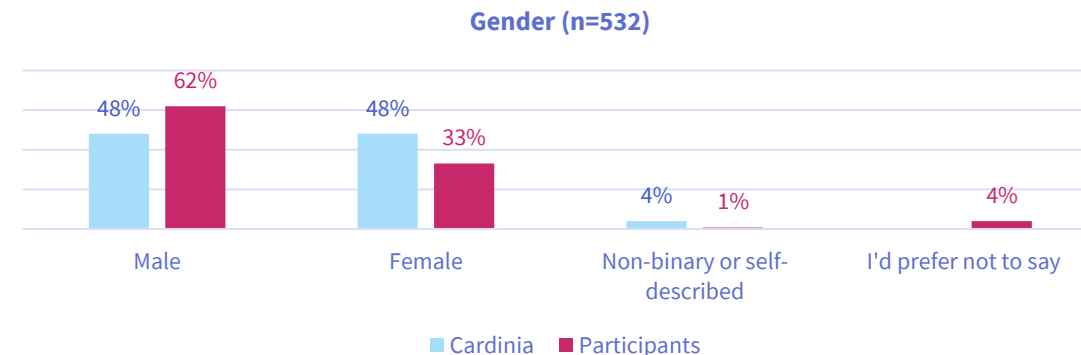


Figure 4: Diversity

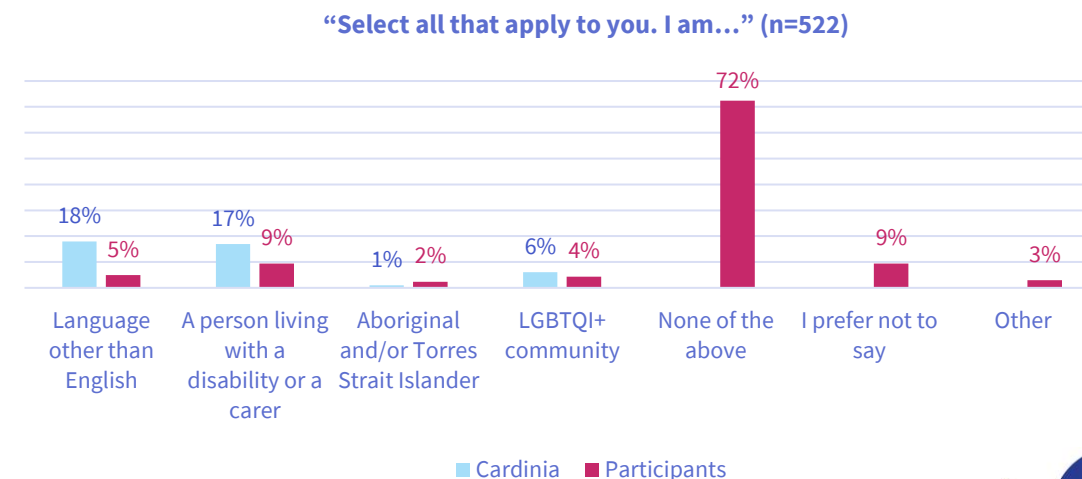


Figure 5: Connection to the site

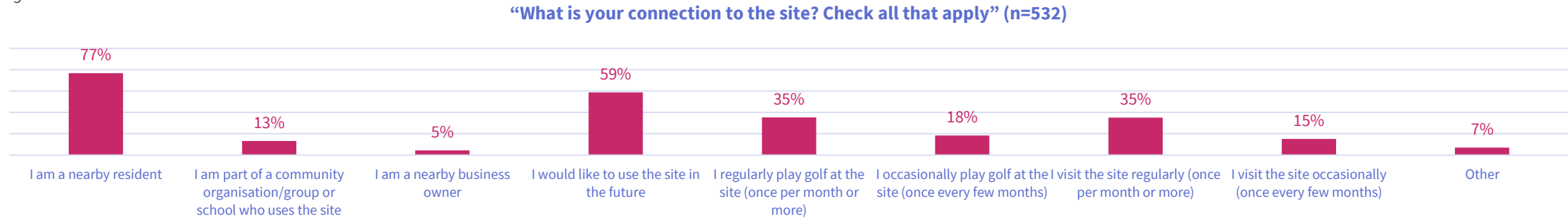


Figure 6: Age

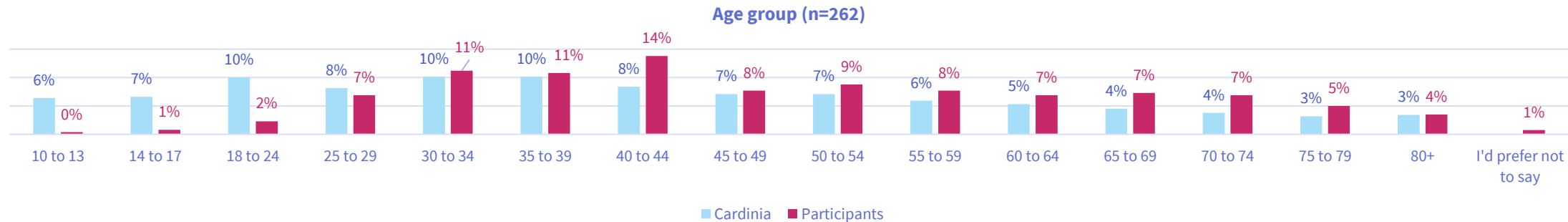
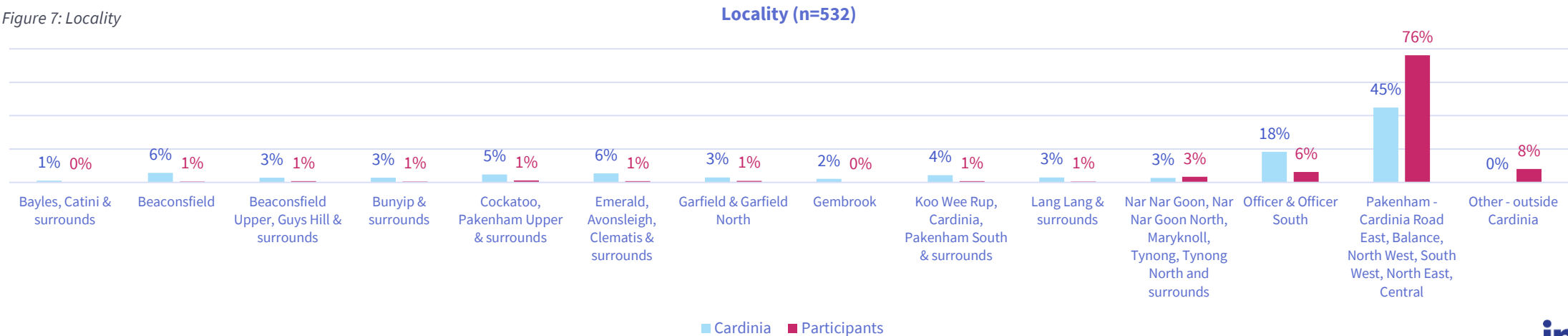


Figure 7: Locality



Key findings

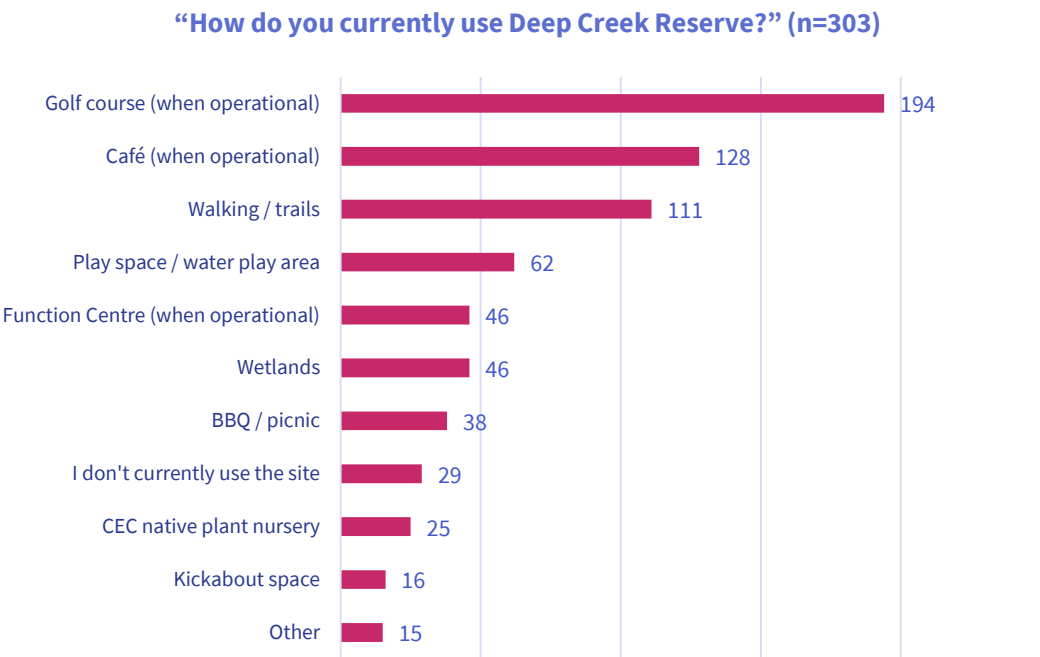


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How people use the site and what they value

Participants were asked, “How do you currently use Deep Creek Reserve?” and were provided with a list of options to answer the question. They could select as many options as applicable*. Most respondents selected the *Golf course (when operational)*, the *Café (when operational)*, and for *Walking/trails* (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: How participants use Deep Creek Reserve



*Please note limitation on page 8 of this report.

Respondents were asked, “What do you value about the site?”

The majority of participants valued the site for the golf course. These respondents often simply said “Golf”, “The Golf Course”, or similar. They noted the importance of maintaining local access to golf, the sport’s appeal for all ages, and the social and health values of playing golf.

Many see the site as important to wellbeing and social benefits. Many participants see the site as important to their overall wellbeing, valuing the site as a place for physical exercise, relaxation, seeing friends and family, experiencing nature, and visiting the café and bistro. They noted the site is accessible for families and residents of all ages.

Participants valued the site for its natural environment. Participants valued the site because it provides habitat for wildlife, scenic value to the community, and opportunities for environmental education. Some of these participants also noted the importance of protecting the site as undeveloped green space.

Other recreational values were frequently highlighted. Participants noted using the play spaces and open greenspace for play, walking trails and dog walking. A smaller number valued the site as an opportunity to include other sports facilities.

- “...playing games and after game comradeship with fellow golfers. Establishment of long-term friendships ... park amenities , exercises, enjoying nature.”
- “A golf course is an asset not a liability... once lost it will never be recovered. These courses provide for birds and animals as well, like an oasis in a human jungle. And promotes health as well.”
- “I walk my dogs daily on the golf course, it’s the most beautiful serene place to walk. Our favourite place is to sit at the top of the dam and watch the pelicans before roaming freely over the course.”

Options for the site

Participants were presented with details on each of the three options for continuing golf on site, and an option to convert the site to open space. For each option, participants then responded to the question: “What do you like about this option?” and “Do you have any concerns about this option?” The options and a description is in the table below.

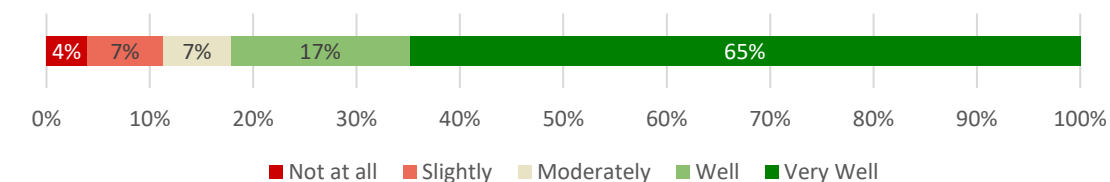
Table 3: Options for the site

Option	Description
Golf option 1: Business as usual with aim to re-establish the existing course with initial investment only in maintaining the current offering.	This option has the lowest financial investment (estimated \$1.9M) of the golf options. It will require Council to invest, however, it may be inviting for a partnership (i.e. private investment). This approach may attract lower participation, and lower impact to neighbouring communities.
Golf option 1a: Limited investment in off-course facilities (e.g. mini golf, driving range, simulators) to boost participation and generate some income for Council.	This option balances sensible financial investment (estimated \$2.8M) with increased participation, and potential revenue for Council. It may be more inviting for partnership, reducing how much funding Council would need to contribute. Increased participation may impact neighbouring communities.
Golf option 1b: Greater investment (estimated \$5.9M) in off-course facilities to maximise participation and greater financial revenue for Council.	This option will require a greater partnership investment and will take a longer time to deliver. This option potentially has a major impact on neighbours through increased traffic and noise.
Open space including passive and/or active open space at Deep Creek Reserve.	If golf is not found to be the best option to meet community need or not a good financial investment, then we will explore other options as outlined in the Feasibility Study, including passive or active open space. Active open space could include redeveloping approximately 20 hectares into an active sports park to meet a range of community needs and address the under provision of active sports facilities in Pakenham. Active open space would require an estimated \$20M investment and may have impacts on neighbours and result in loss of significant vegetation. Passive open space with an emphasis on nature conservation and could include improvements like additional trails and seating. This option has a lower financial investment (estimated \$1M) and impacts to neighbours are expected to be less than the current use for golf.

Exploring options for continuing golf

Participants were asked to consider the needs of the local community and respond to the question “How well do you think continuing with golf would meet the needs of the community?”. Most participants (82%) thought that golf met community needs *Well* or *Very Well*.

Figure 9: How well does golf meet the needs of community



Participants were then asked, “Why did you choose that option?”. Respondents who thought golf would meet community needs *Well* or *Very Well* mostly noted:

Most respondents spoke about meeting the local demand for golf. They said that golf already has a strong user base in the Shire, and that population growth would increase demand. Some noted limited alternative courses in the area, while others spoke about the importance of local access for young players to take up the sport.

- “Not enough golf courses in the area. Golf is a growing sport. Especially for young people and women.”
- “Pakenham population is growing rapidly, and the course is centrally located with easy access.”

Participants shared the recreational, health and wellbeing benefits of golf. These participants spoke about the long-established community involved with the golf club, the social and mental health benefits to playing golf, and physical wellbeing benefits. For them, the site provided valuable recreation programs and amenities, as well as opportunities for families and the wider community to participate.

- “Golf is a lifelong, positive lifestyle activity which also preserves a near natural environment.”
- “It is a big part of the community a lot of people have been going there for years, and a lot of new people have joined it, give people who enjoy golf a place to make new friends and connect with old ones.”

Many respondents suggested the golf course was viable. Participants suggested the area should remain dedicated to golf. They thought golf was financially viable, and well used. It was described as an accessible, and inclusive activity. They also saw the course as the only available facility in the area, noting that other courses were too far away.

- “Because our rates have helped this golf course be established. For little cost the course could be used more. Marketing and a couple of bloody signs.”
- “Golf provides a way for the community to come together young and old to enjoy nature. Great for mental and physical health.”
- “There is nothing else close to Pakenham for present and future golfers.”

Views that golf would not meet community needs

The 11% of respondents who thought golf would meet community needs *Slightly* or *Not at all* held opposing views, saying that golf is in decline and has few players locally. They pointed to nearby courses, which they thought adequately serviced golfers in the area, and noted limited access for other sports facilities. They also doubted the course’s financial viability.

- “I think that the golf course is good for the community, however, with not many people in the community that play golf, I believe that it could be used for something better!”
- “There are golf courses everywhere and limited options for other sports.”
- “It’s not very popular and because its closed twice in the past it doesn’t seem viable.”

Options for continuing golf – option 1

What participants liked about option 1

Most participants liked that this option would preserve local access to golf. These participants thought that option 1 would provide a relatively quick and low-cost way to reopen the course. Some participants noted that, while they supported this option, they would prefer other golf options with greater investment.

- *“Probably being the cheapest good for ratepayers.”*
- *“I like this option as it gets the course repaired and open to the public again but would prefer higher investment to ensure the longevity and quality of the course.”*

Participants valued maintaining community access and connectivity – for many participants having golf nearby was important, with some noting that people chose to live in the area because of the course. They suggested that reopening the course would encourage social connection while others liked this option but stressed the importance of maintaining community access to facilities such as walking trails.

- *“Okay provided public access is still maintained and that the community has access to the course for walking. If golf is the continued direction needs to be expanded to new audiences.”*
- *“To see it once again being used for golf and to socially have the bar services available with meals for local families to enjoy.”*

Participants supported a simple, lower-cost approach to reopening the site. They liked that this option would limit the financial burden on ratepayers. Some also suggested Council should consider partnerships with private investors to improve the quality and appeal of the site.

- *“I like the keep it simple approach.”*
- *“This needs more oomph this space has a lot of potential with very little effort. It needs to be more inviting and vibey. Private interest is definitely a must to give this space a better twist.”*

Concerns participants had with option 1

More than a quarter of participants expressed no concerns with option 1. Those that expressed concerns noted the following:

Many participants were concerned about funding and maintenance. They thought this option wouldn't allow for adequate course upkeep or potential improvements. They thought that while it would minimise costs in the short-term, it would not lead to the best long-term outcomes for the course. This sentiment was expressed most often by people who play golf.

Participants who do not play golf were also concerned with funding. This group's concerns related to the financial viability of the course and the potential return on investment. They expressed skepticism that golf would be sustainable given past failures.

- *“Not enough funds for maintenance or improvements for the course.”*
- *“I don't value this option as it's too short sighted. Golf is an Australian institution with massive earning potential; if you're going to have a golf course, make it a great one.”*
- *“My suspicion is that of the three options, it has the least likely long-term viability and, as such, we would likely be revisiting the issue of golf being retained in a few more years, with the kicker of having spent \$2 million in the process.”*

Other participants were concerned about ensuring the site remained inclusive. These participants thought the option would cater to the interests of a few people who play golf at the expense of most other residents. This sentiment was most prevalent among participants who thought continuing with golf would meet community needs *Slightly* or *Not at all*.

- *“Yes. It's not a fair use of this space. The community deserves an area that all generations can enjoy, not those with expendable income.”*
- *“Yes, I believe there is a better community use for this great parcel of land.”*

Options for continuing golf – option 1a

What participants liked about option 1a

Participants liked that option 1a would retain the golf course as its primary function.

“Respondents commented that this course upgrade would ensure the course could be maintained and financially sustainable by increasing revenue options. They noted the benefit of this option as improving the course, without overextending resources.

- *“Cost is recovered, higher rates not charged, green space maintained.”*
- *“Good idea. Additional facilities create additional revenue streams.”*

Many liked the proposed alternative activities. Participants described how off-course facilities could make the site attractive to a broader range of people year-round, which they thought would generate revenue and attract investment. They proposed indoor activities, such as simulators, facilities that are protected from the weather.

- *“Off-course facilities contribute to broadening the participant user base, create more social settings to connect, and can generate income to be a financial sustainability community asset.”*
- *“Being able to access and use when it’s dark or the weather isn’t the best will open up more opportunities. Also, the club house is nice and could easily hold events.”*

Participants noted access for young families. Many respondents commented that this option offered more family friendly activities such as mini-golf and liked the idea of attracting younger people to the sport.

- *“It’s an excellent diversification option, particularly if there are all-weather facilities like an indoor simulator or even a mini golf course for kids to play. Let’s make this more than just another vanilla golf course.”*
- *“More costly but may be a better option for families.”*

Concerns participants had with option 1a

Approximately half of participants said they had no concerns with this option.

Respondents were concerned about impacts to the course. Participants worried that the existing 18-hole course would be reduced to accommodate new activities. They also thought that investment in additional off-course facilities would be better spent on improving the course itself.

- *“You’re fixing something that’s not broken, we don’t need the extras – as it is absolutely fine. Obviously, you need to invest in maintaining but nothing more.”*
- *“The main concern would be if upgrades to off-course facilities took priority over the much-needed rejuvenation of the course.”*

Participants were concerned about site management and funding. They thought the site had been mismanaged in the past, and worried about achieving a sufficient return on investment in the future, and the reliability of private partnerships. They were also concerned that this option relied on the greater investment, with some noting increases to ~~would~~ rates or course fees.

- *“The cost of providing specific extra facilities and the return they would generate would need to be carefully considered. Private investment would need to be part of the funding rather than increasing Council rates.”*
- *“If a private investor/operator is brought onboard, the costs to the public may outprice locals and beginners from participating.”*

Participants worried about impacts. Respondents noted concerns about increased noise and traffic congestion, and the importance of having strong evidence about demand for facilities if there would be impact to neighbours. Participants also noted that this option increased development and may impact on the environment, green space, and available space for other uses. Nearby residents were slightly more likely to make comments on this topic.

Options for continuing golf – option 1b

What participants liked about option 1b

Participants thought that investing in off-course facilities would expand its appeal. It was highlighted that investing in off-course facilities would attract more diverse users. There were comments on inclusivity and that new facilities could make the site more attractive to people who might otherwise not use the site, such as families. Comments included increasing the site's use could help generate additional revenue.

- *“That it won't just be a 'men's club' this will be inviting to all people including families.”*
- *“Anything that encourages community participation is great. More and improved facilities would be wonderful as long as 18-hole golf course, driving range and bistro are part of it.”*
- *“Diversified uses would encourage more use of the area and, depending on how these are managed, could increase revenue.”*

Participants supported prioritising golf for long-term success. They thought that this option would see a greater investment in the golf course and would attract greater patronage to the course. They said that this increased investment could strengthen the course's competitiveness and financial sustainability.

- *“Maximum investment into the course will provide a better ROI in my opinion...”*
- *“Long term investment with long term commitment.”*
- *“I think this is the best of the 3, golf is so much more enjoyable on a beautiful course, and the deep creek has the potential it just needs a bit of funding to get it there.”*

Some participants requested clarification. A smaller number of respondents thought that this option could be feasible but needed more information on the level of investment and what would be included for that investment. This was most prevalent in option 1b.

Concerns participants had with option 1b

Participants questioned whether the project would deliver value for money. They expressed doubt about whether Council had the resources to manage the investment properly, and worried that the costs could outweigh the benefits.

- *“Yes, maybe risky investment that may not generate the returns required.”*
- *“Yes lots, if council has not the funds to develop the project by themselves it shouldn't be touched.”*

Participants were concerned about neighbourhood impacts. They often spoke about increased traffic and noise, saying it would affect their lifestyle and change the character of the area. Participants who self-described as nearby residents were slightly more likely to raise these concerns. Others noted the importance of addressing these impacts directly with the affected community.

- *“Yes, the impact on the local environment for people, traffic, vegetation and wildlife far outweighs the benefits.”*
- *“Concern for the residents in the immediate area is a priority. Consultation about the possible negative impact on their area should be considered.”*

Participants were concerned about protecting community access to nature. Many respondents questioned whether the option would remain affordable and inclusive and often stressed the need to protect local amenity and opportunities for passive recreation. These respondents were also concerned about impacts to wildlife and the natural environment due to increased development of facilities.

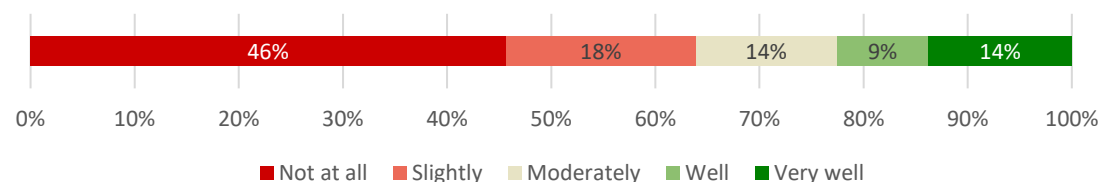
- *“Option 1b would be a major impact on the environment, wildlife and the existing community”*
- *“Yes. Peoples park being highjacked by profit making interests!”*

Exploring options for open space

After reading a brief description about options for open space, including active open space and passive open space, respondents considered the needs of the local community and answered, “How well do you think the option to replace golf with open space would meet the needs of the community?”

A total of 23% of participants thought that open space met community needs *Well* or *Very well*, while most participants (64%) responded *Not at all*, or *Slightly*.

Figure 10: How well does open space meet the needs of community



Participants were then asked, “Why did you choose that option?” Participants who thought open space would meet community needs *Well* or *Very Well* commonly spoke about:

It was often noted that open space would serve the whole community whereas golf would cater only to a small portion of the community. Those who preferred passive space noted that walking trails and green space could be enjoyed by all residents, while those who favoured active space suggested that increased sporting and recreation facilities would better suit the needs of young families.

- *“I think there are more non players of golf than players so this option has the possibility of servicing a greater percentage of the community.”*
- *“Because we need more sports in the area, not just golf. Bike tracks, hockey fields, soccer fields, and things to keep our kids busy...”*

Participants shared a desire to protect nature. Participants valued the site’s biodiversity, open landscape, and opportunities for passive recreation in nature. They also stressed the importance of protecting these qualities from development.

- *“Passive open space to preserve wildlife habitats and all that amazing nature would be my ideal.”*
- *“I don't agree with active space, but passive space would be an asset to the area. There are very few places to walk and enjoy nature currently within Cardinia that do not involve parkrun groups, or masses of bikes/scooters.”*

Views that open space would not meet community needs

Of the 64% of participants who thought open space would meet community needs *Slightly* or *Not at all*, they most frequently noted:

Many participants reiterated their interest in retaining golf. They commented that the golf course was viable, and the site should remain as is. They noted that golf was a growing sport, that there were limited other nearby options for golf, and that open space and sports facilities were already plentiful in the area.

- *“Why change something that is already viable?”*
- *“I don't believe that the area in question is under-served by areas for passive or active outdoor recreation. Without this golf course though, there will be nowhere else to play golf.”*

Many thought active space was high in cost and impact. Participants thought that the open space option (in reference to active space) was too costly and would have higher impact on the community and the environment.

- *“We do not want a loss of vegetation in this area. We do not want increase of traffic down Cameron Way. We do not want spending of \$20 million for increased facilities.”*

What participants liked about the option of open space

Most participants said they liked nothing about the open space option. Of those who did like the open space option, they noted:

Many participants were supportive of passive, low-impact uses including walking and cycling trails or multi-use paths and protecting wildlife. Some said they thought this option would protect the site from potential future development, which was important to them. They also noted the option for passive open space could serve a wider community and range of low-impact activities. These participants often noted that low impact open space uses such as walking trails were compatible with golf, and that the site was already used this way.

- *“Preservation of fauna and flora and support the well-being of people using the space for walking, biking etc.”*
- *“Assuming it is redeveloped for conservation and the environment I feel this would benefit the community further through interactions with other community groups. This could include scouts, school, kindergartens and much more.”*
- *“I am not saying golf should be replaced. Golf can co-exist with walking/bike riding...”*

Other participants supported active open space. A smaller number of participants spoke about the benefit and need for sports facilities. They noted specific organised sports such as hockey, football, basketball, cricket, soccer, and other play opportunities for kids such as bike tracks.

- *“I think it’s a great idea and will only provide more sporting opportunities for people in our community.”*
- *“As a non-user, the opportunity for future potential to turn the site into active recreation for many different active sports.”*

Concerns participants had with option open space

Most participants were concerned about retaining the golf course. They firmly opposed any conversion of the site.

- *“Pakenham Golf Course should remain a golf course.”*
- *“... what an insult to the community this proposal is.”*

Many participants were concerned about value for money. Participants questioned whether the community needed additional open space. They worried that this option would add unnecessary operating and maintenance costs for Council and not increase revenue.

- *“I don’t think it is a good option given the open spaces and number of sports facilities in the area.”*
- *“So, the council want to make revenue from the golf course but are willing to spend more and make nothing from an open space...”*

Participants were also concerned about neighbourhood and environmental impacts. They commonly spoke about traffic, parking, and noise, as well as impacts to wildlife and vegetation from new development and more intensive use.

- *“Impact on the residents nearby. Increased traffic. Noise. Impact on nature and sustainability.”*

Many participants were concerned about safety. They thought that providing open space would encourage anti-social behaviours, which many considered an ongoing issue.

- *“Yes, we already have problems with public drinking, rubbish dumping and antisocial behaviour and I feel an empty space is just inviting further abuse of green space”*

Additional feedback

At the close of the survey, participants responded to the question, “Is there anything else you would like to share?”. It is beneficial to include an open question; in case the scope of previous survey questions missed a relevant subject for consideration. In this instance participants did not raise new ideas in this section, instead, they mostly reiterated their earlier positions.

A summary of key additional feedback is below.

- Most participants spoke about preserving and enhancing the golf course. These participants outlined the benefits of golf to the wider community, the financial viability of golf, the history of golf at the site, and their personal connections to playing golf at Deep Creek Reserve.
- Some participants spoke about hybrid or open-space alternatives. They saw value in exploring mixed-use options that could combine golf with other facilities to make the site more inclusive and/or more profitable.
- Others spoke about preserving the natural environment. These comments focused on protecting local ecosystems and ensuring that development does not undermine biodiversity or green corridors.
- A small group highlighted non-golf community sports needs. They stressed that new sporting infrastructure would provide benefits to a wider range of people including families and young people.

Submissions

Submissions were not invited during the engagement period however four submissions were received.

Two submissions were received in support of the reestablishment of golf on site, and highlighted benefits to community health and wellbeing. They noted interest in having the café reopened, options for improving safety and access to the site, and for the natural environment at Deep Creek to be well considered and restored. One submission also noted protecting the site from housing development and noted the environmental value of the golf course.

One submission was provided to Council suggesting rezoning the land for housing. Rezoning of the site for housing is not being explored. This submission is outside of the scope of engagement and is not being considered by Council.

One submission provided a separate survey conducted by a local community group with a focus on golf. The line of questioning is beyond the scope of this engagement, and results of this survey cannot be validated. Council has not considered the views shared in this survey at this time.

Council is appreciative of all contributions and submissions provided and will continue to engage with stakeholders as the project moves forward.

Next steps

Council will now review the engagement results and consider other data and research in deciding the outcome and next steps for the Pakenham Golf Course and Deep Creek Reserve. Council will provide an update on the [Creating Cardinia webpage](#). Council is expected to communicate next steps at a Council meeting in late 2025.

Council is grateful to everyone who expressed their views through this engagement.



Appendix A: Survey

The paper survey replicated the online survey, apart from the age question which was eliminated from the online survey until 26 August 2025.

Share your feedback.

Your relationship to Deep Creek Reserve

I understand that written de-identified feedback is not confidential and may be published in a council report and/or in relevant meeting agendas on Council's website. **Required**

☐ Yes

1. How do you currently use Deep Creek Reserve? **Required**

Select all that apply

- ☐ Walking / trails
- ☐ Wetlands
- ☐ BBQ / picnic
- ☐ Golf course (when operational)
- ☐ Play space / water play area
- ☐ Kickabout space
- ☐ Cardinia Environment Coalition (CEC) native plant nursery
- ☐ Café (when operational)
- ☐ Function Centre (when operational)
- ☐ I don't currently use the site
- ☐ Other

2. What do you value most about Deep Creek Reserve? **Required**

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Continue with golf at Deep Creek Reserve

The feasibility study found that golf at Pakenham Golf Course is still in demand and can be economically viable. It identified three possible options for the continuation of golf – all three options have financial, and community benefits and impacts to consider.

We want your feedback on these options.

3. When assessing each option, we need to consider the needs of the local community. How well do you think continuing with golf would meet the needs of the community? **Required**

Select one answer only

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Well
- ☐ Very Well

4. Why did you choose that response? **Required**

Option 1: Business as usual with aim to re-establish the existing course with initial investment only in maintaining the current offering.

This option has the lowest financial investment (estimated \$1.9M) of the golf options. It will require Council to invest, however, it may be inviting for a partnership (i.e. private investment). This approach may attract lower participation, and lower impact to neighbouring communities.

5. What do you like about this option? **Required**

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6. Do you have concerns with this option? **Required**

Option 1a: Limited investment in off-course facilities (e.g. mini golf, driving range, simulators) to boost participation and generate some income for Council.

This option balances sensible financial investment (estimated \$2.8M) with increased participation, and potential revenue for Council. It may be more inviting for partnership, reducing how much funding Council would need to contribute. Increased participation may impact neighbouring communities.

7. What do you like about this option? **Required**

8. Do you have concerns about this option? **Required**

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Option 1b: Greater investment (estimated \$5.9M) in off-course facilities to maximise participation and greater financial revenue for Council.

This option will require a greater partnership investment and will take a longer time to deliver. This option potentially has a major impact on neighbours through increased traffic and noise.

9. What do you like about this option? **Required**

10. Do you have concerns about this option? **Required**

Open space including passive and/or active open space at Deep Creek Reserve

If golf is not found to be the best option to meet community need or not a good financial investment, then we will explore other options as outlined in the Feasibility Study, including passive or active open space.

Active open space could include redeveloping approximately 20 hectares into an active sports park to meet a range of community needs and address the under provision of active sports facilities in Pakenham. Active open space would require an estimated \$20M investment and may have impacts on neighbours and result in loss of significant vegetation.

Passive open space with an emphasis on nature conservation and could include improvements like additional trails and seating. This option has a lower financial investment (estimated \$1M) and impacts to neighbours are expected to be less than the current use for golf.

11. When considering options, we need to consider the needs of the local community. How well do you think the option to replace golf with open space would meet the needs of the community? **Required**

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Select one answer only
☐ Not at all
☐ Slightly
☐ Moderately
☐ Well
☐ Very well

12. Why did you choose that response? **Required**

13. What do you like about the option to replace golf with open space at Deep Creek Reserve? **Required**

14. Do you have concerns with the option to replace golf with open space at Deep Creek Reserve? **Required**

15. Is there anything else you would like to share? **Required**

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Demographics.

This helps us to know whether we are reaching a broad range of community affected by this project.

1. What is your connection to the site? Check all that apply **Required**

Select all that apply
☐ I am part of a community organisation/group or school who uses the site
☐ I am a nearby resident
☐ I am a nearby business owner
☐ I visit the site occasionally (once every few months)
☐ I visit the site regularly (once per month or more)
☐ I occasionally play golf at the site (once every few months)
☐ I regularly play golf at the site (once per month or more)
☐ I would like to use the site in the future
☐ Other

2. Postcode **Required**

If you are responding on behalf of a business, please use your business address.

Maximum of 4 characters

3. Suburb **Required**

4. Age Group

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Select one answer only
☐ 0-9 10-13 14-17 18-
☐ 24 25-29 30-34 35-
☐ 39 40-44 45-49 50-
☐ 54 55-59 60-64 65-
☐ 69 70-74 75-79 80+
☐ I'd prefer not to say
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

5. Gender **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Non-binary
☐ Self-described
☐ I'd prefer not to say

6. How did you hear about this survey? **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Social media
☐ Council website

☐ Flyer/brochure
☐ Connect magazine
☐ Word of mouth
☐ QR code poster
☐ Digital advert
☐ Letter from council in the mail
☐ Newspaper
☐ Signage in the community (VMS boards, etc.)
☐ Other (please specify)

7. Select all that apply to you. I am... **Required**

Select all that apply
☐ A person living with a disability or a carer
☐ Someone who speaks a language other than English at home
☐ Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
☐ A member of the LGBTIQA+ community
☐ None of the above
☐ I prefer not to say
☐ Other

8. Would you like Council to get in touch with you about this consultation?
This is optional. **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Yes - I'd like to provide my contact details.
☐ No- I'd prefer not to be contacted

9. Please leave your name and contact details below.

