

# Melbourne Showgrounds Master Plan Our Showgrounds, Our Future

# capire

We acknowledge and thank Capire Consulting Group for facilitating stakeholder and community engagement and in the preparation of this report

**Engagement Report – Phase 2 – Draft Vision** 

Consolidated Report, V2, February 2021





## Thank you for your contribution

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) is pleased to release the findings from the second phase of community and stakeholder consultation for the Melbourne Showgrounds draft vision – a blueprint to celebrate and strengthen Victorian agriculture, food and regions.

In this second phase of consultation, we sought to understand stakeholder and community opinions of the draft vision and the themes identified in the first phase of community engagement. A *Centre of Excellence* for Food and Agriculture was presented as a priority deliverable project to kick start the Vision. Participants were asked to provide their thoughts on programs and activities which could be delivered through a Centre of Excellence for Food and Agriculture.

This report summarises the findings.

Thank you to everyone who kindly contributed to the report. We received great insights and great ideas for shaping *Our Showgrounds*, *Our Future* and I thank all of you who took the opportunity to provide valuable feedback and suggestions.

There's no better time to showcase Victorian food and agriculture and the 30-year master plan will transform Melbourne Showgrounds into a commercially sustainable Centre of Excellence for Victoria's agriculture, food and beverage sectors and a year-round events, entertainment and commercial precinct.

In addition, the vision for Melbourne Showgrounds has many far-reaching benefits for the state of Victoria. It will secure the Showgrounds' position as a major cultural, social and economic asset and will enhance the site's historical role as the bridge between regional and metropolitan Victoria and the home of the Royal Melbourne Show.

Thank you once again for your interest in *Our Showgrounds, Our Future*. Your support and enthusiasm for the 30-year master plan vision for the Melbourne Showgrounds is very much appreciated.

I look forward to providing further updates on kickstarting the master plan vision in the future.



**Brad Jenkins**Chief Executive Officer
RASV





### **Definitions**

### Community

The term community refers to a group of people that has something in common such as identity, behaviours, interests or values. A community often share a sense of <u>place</u> in a given geographical area (e.g. a country, city, town, or neighbourhood) or in virtual space through communication platforms.

#### Stakeholder

The word stakeholder refers to individuals, groups or organisations with a stake or interest in the outcome of a decision. Stakeholders may also have the ability to influence the decision given their role or position.

#### Engagement

Engagement is defined as a planned process with the purpose of working with communities and stakeholders to inform decisions, share knowledge and strengthen relationships.





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### 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Background

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) is developing a master plan for Melbourne Showgrounds to shape *Our Showgrounds*, *Our Future*.

Our Showgrounds, Our Future will identify how the site can be improved to maximise its potential as a centre for agriculture, events, exhibitions, and wider community use. It will look at options to upgrade or replace ageing infrastructure and how to best integrate transport, exhibition, and accommodation facilities into the precinct.

A new plan for Melbourne Showgrounds will ensure the much-loved precinct can best serve the needs of Victorians now and for generations to come. It is time to create a new plan for its future, building on its legacy of creating enjoyable experiences and memories.

Our Showgrounds, Our Future is being delivered by RASV and with funding assistance from the Andrews Labour Government and the advice of consultancies including PwC, NH Architecture and Capire Consulting Group.

### 1.2 Purpose of this document

This document provides an overview of the activities undertaken in the second phase of stakeholder and community engagement and summarises feedback.

This document has been prepared to inform the project team and RASV Board.

This document builds on the previous engagement summary and focusses on the feedback received through this phase of engagement. The engagement sought to understand stakeholder and community opinions of the Draft Vision particularly in relations to the themes identified in the first phase of the community engagement. In addition, participants were asked to provide their thoughts on programs and activities which could be delivered through an Agricultural Centre of Excellence.

### 1.3 Report limitations

This report details the participant's perceptions, ideas and concerns, as expressed during the engagement activities. Capire is confident this report provides a true account of the feedback provided.

The following limitations were identified in relation to conducting and reporting on the engagement:

- Some participants may have participated in both face-to-face and online, therefore it is possible that some views may have been captured more than once.
- In some instances, participants did not answer all questions, this meant that some questions received fewer responses than others.





- A small number of participants chose not to provide demographic information therefore the demographic information is only representative of the information provided. Demographic information was not collected from workshop and interview participants.
- Engagement with some key stakeholders was ongoing at the time of writing. This will continue to be captured and provided to relevant technical and project teams.

### 2 Engagement approach

### 2.1 Engagement planning

The public and stakeholder engagement to support *Our Showgrounds, Our Future* will be delivered over three main phases as illustrated in Figure 1. This report relates specifically to activities included in Phase 2. Engagement with key stakeholders and government is ongoing throughout the life of the project.

Figure 1 Overview of engagement phases



In Phase 2, engagement had a dual focus. Firstly, the Draft Vison was presented to stakeholders and communities as a long-term future direction for Melbourne Showgrounds.

Secondly, an Agricultural Centre of Excellence was presented as a priority deliverable project to kick start the Vision.

Feedback was sought on how successfully the Draft Vision responds to the key themes identified in the first phase. Additionally, we sought ideas on the types of programs that could be delivered through an Agricultural Centre of Excellence.





### 2.2 Engagement Phases

Phase 2 of stakeholder and community engagement commenced 10 November 2020 with an update of the *Our Showgrounds Our Future* website and the invitation to participate in an online survey.

The updated included the Draft Vision and an online survey which also formed the basis of all engagement sessions.

This update was supported by an e-newsletter distributed to all RASV stakeholders as well as a notification to registered users of *Our Showgrounds Our Future* website.

This was supported by social media posts.

The engagement period concluded on Monday 30 November 2020.

#### **Timeline**



#### Project establishment

A team of specialists has been assembled and we have commenced consulting with stakeholders to understand the issues and opportunities that will be addressed through the master plan

April-May 2020



#### Stage 1: Community engagement

We want to hear about your memories of Melbourne Showgrounds, what you love about the current site and what could be improved

May-June 2020



#### Business case and draft master plan

Using your feedback, along with specialist studies, we will prepare a Business Case and a draft master plan

April-July 2020



#### Stage 2: Community engagement

We will present the draft master plan vision and ask for you for your feedback

November 2020



#### Final master plan

The final master plan will be released Early 2021

Figure 2 Overview of engagement phases (source: public webpage)





### 2.2.1 Engagement and COVID-19

In response to COVID-19 and the public health orders that significantly affected the ability to meet in person, the project engagement approach was adapted to ensure that it could continue whilst maintaining the safety of the public, staff and project team members.

COVID-Safe engagement adjustments included:

- A refocus to a dedicated online engagement website promoting 24-hour access, a single source of project information and interactive engagement tools for participation remotely
- Substituting in-person face-to-face community events and public workshops with digital alternatives via video conferencing platforms
- Increase focus on targeted promotion through social media and local community networks
- Using alternate forms of collaborative engagement including video and teleconference, public webinars and the use of collaborative data capture tools such as virtual Google 'jamboards' and polling technology

#### 2.2.2 Engagement questions

Engagement questions posed to stakeholder and community participants during this phase of engagement prompted them to reflect on the Draft Vision that had been presented as well as ideas around an Agricultural Centre of Excellence:

- What are your thoughts or reflections on the Draft Vision?
- Does it deliver on what is important to you?
- What are your thoughts or reflections on an Agricultural Centre of Excellence?
- What kinds of programs / activities would you most like to see delivered at an Agricultural Centre of Excellence?

### 2.3 Online engagement

The central engagement tool throughout the first and second phases of engagement was the *Our Showgrounds, Our Future* project website (<a href="https://future.melbourneshowgrounds.com/">https://future.melbourneshowgrounds.com/</a>).

All promotional material and communication directed people to this website to find out about the project, register for project updates, share their memories, and complete an online survey.

The website also included a timeline outlining project milestones and engagement phases as well as an email address for any direct questions or detailed submissions: <a href="mailto:future@melbourneshowgrounds.com">future@melbourneshowgrounds.com</a>.

Figure 3 shows a snapshot of the Our Showgrounds, Our Future landing page during phase 2 of engagement.

For this phase, the website was updated to include the Draft Vision with supporting materials, an updated timeline and an invitation to complete the survey or join a public webinar.





Figure 3 Snapshot of Our Showgrounds, Our Future project website – phase 2 update



The online survey was designed to reflect on the themes that emerged through the first phase of engagement and to test how well the Draft Vision responded to what is important to stakeholders.

While predominantly multiple choice, the survey also provided opportunity for participants to provide overall thoughts about the Draft Vision and possible programs that could be delivered through an Agricultural Centre of Excellence.





### 2.4 Face-to-face (virtual) engagement

In response to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and public health advice, all face-to-face sessions were held as video conferences.

There were no identified issues and all stakeholders successfully joined and participated in the workshops and webinar.

Two targeted stakeholder workshops and one public webinar were held using this approach:

- Vision Workshop #1, Tuesday 17 November 2020, 3.30pm 5.00pm
   Invitees included RASV members, competition committees and advisory group representative, commercial operators, venue clients and food and beverage industry representatives.
- Vision Workshop #2, Wednesday 18 November 2020, 2.30pm 4.00pm
   Invitees included local community, local government and state government representatives
- Public webinar, Wednesday 18 November 6.30pm 8.00pm
   Open to the general public.

Workshops were introduced by RASV CEO, Brad Jenkins and facilitated by Capire.

Participants were given a short presentation to introduce the Draft Vision and an Agricultural Centre of Excellence, as a priority deliverable project to kick start the Vision.

Following the presentations, participants were asked to contribute their thoughts and feedback.

Figure 4 shows an example of the materials prepared by NH Architecture which were incorporated into the engagement collateral and workshop presentations.

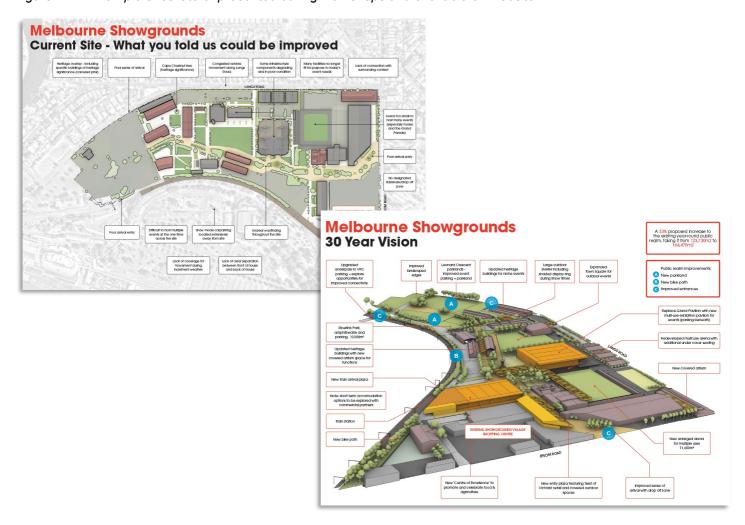
Representatives from NH Architecture and RASV were available to answer detailed questions during the workshops and webinar.

Collateral was highly visual with simple explanatory annotations to demonstrate proposed changes.





Figure 4 Example of collateral presented during workshops and available on website



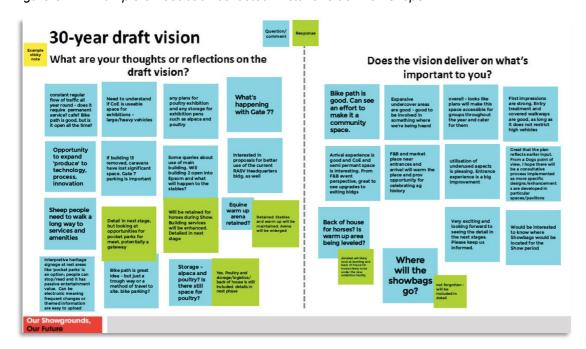
To replicate the typical collaborative element of face-to-face workshops, online discussions utilised the Google *jamboard* tool which enabled participants to place 'sticky notes' and pictures on a virtual board and see others' contributions in live time.





Figure 5 shows an example of feedback collected by Capire, via an online collaboration tool called Google jamboard. Participants added their comments, in real time, during the stakeholder workshops. The tool supported a collaborative and open discussion about the draft vision and allowed all participants to view the comments of others.

Figure 5 Example of feedback collected in stakeholder workshops



### 2.5 Supporting communications and promotion

This phase of engagement was promoted via a range of mechanisms including:

- Direct emails to RASV members
- Promotion of opportunities to 'have your say' via RASV News emailed to 16,000 stakeholders
- Email campaign to 130 people registered to the project website
- Emails and phone calls to local community facilities including Ascot Vale and Flemington Libraries, Wingate Avenue Community Centre, Ascot Vale West Primary School, Ascot Vale Leisure Centre
- Emails and phone calls to Mayors and CEOs of adjacent local governments and precinct organisations
- Social media and promotion through RASV and Melbourne Showgrounds social media accounts
- Promotion and links via RASV and Melbourne Showgrounds websites





### 3 Who did we hear from?

Overall, compared to the previous phase, Phase 2 of engagement saw fewer participants, but a more informed groups of stakeholders with a greater awareness of Melbourne Showgrounds allowing for targeted and detailed conversations. This is a common trend in engagement programs, as consultation progresses over time.

Table 1 Phase 2 Participation statistics

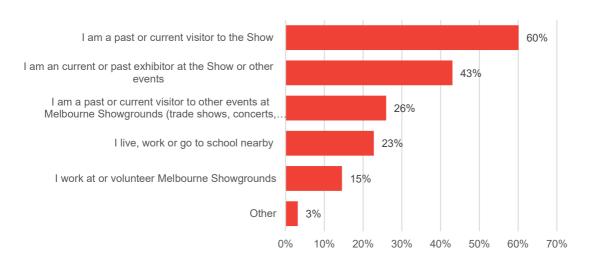
Online	Workshops and presentations			
• 2,800+ site visits, 1,300+ visitors	2 stakeholder workshops			
7 stories shared	1 public webinar			
158 surveys completed	30 workshop participants			
17 people registered for project updates	58 virtual sticky notes			
	1 follow up submission			
	Presentations including RASV staff, RASV Board and key stakeholders			

### 3.1 Community participants

When completing a survey, respondents were asked to provide some information about themselves to help us to understand who participated. When asked to describe their relationship with Melbourne Showgrounds, participants were able to select multiple answers.

Almost half of respondents (60%) identified as a past or current visitor to the Royal Melbourne Show (Show) or current or past exhibitor (43%) at the Show. A further 26% identified as a past or current visitors to non-Show events and nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents live, work or go to school nearby.

Figure 6 Survey respondents' relationship to Melbourne Showgrounds



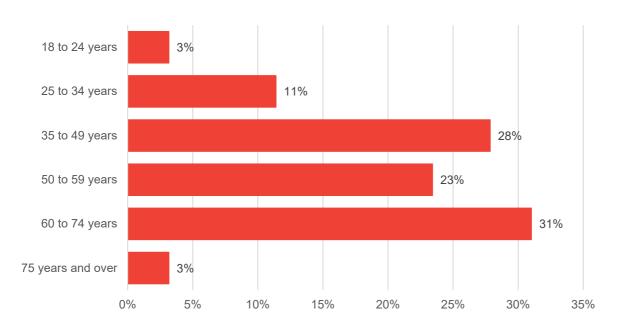




The majority of survey respondents were aged between 35 years and 74 years, with those aged 60 to 74 years comprising over a third of all respondents (31%). Young people (under 25 years) represented 3% of all respondents.

No survey participants were aged under 18 years in this phase of engagement.

Figure 7 Survey respondents' age



As with the previous round of engagement, most survey participants were from metropolitan Melbourne (70%), including a large representation from Ascot Vale (20%) or other postcodes within the Moonee Valley local government area (5%).

Regional Victorians residents accounted for 27% of all survey respondents.

### 3.2 Other Stakeholder consultation

In addition to the two stakeholder workshops, several smaller presentations and meetings were held with key stakeholders and near neighbours including:

- Victoria Racing Club
- Leaseholder of the Epsom Road retail precinct
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- RASV Staff
- RASV Board





# 4 Engagement highlights

### 4.1 Response to the Draft Vision

Overall, response to the Draft Vision was highly favourable from both workshop participants and survey respondents.

Workshop participants felt that the Draft Vision has addressed issues and opportunities that they identified in the previous phase of engagement, and felt that it presented positive change for Melbourne Showgrounds.

"First impressions are strong. Entry treatment and covered walkways are good as long as it does not restrict large vehicles" –workshop participant

"Great that the plan reflects earlier input... I hope there will be a consultative process implemented as more specific designs are developed. In particular, spaces and pavilions" –workshop participant

"Utilisation of underutilised aspects is pleasing" –workshop participant

"Thank you for asking for feedback before making changes. The downsizing and moving the main arena destroyed the Melbourne Show, so please ensure any changes only enhance the experience this time" – survey respondent

"Something needs to be done to attract people to use the facility & enjoy the experience. Go for it" – survey respondent "Great proposal. Taking the showgrounds into the future whilst preserving history" – survey respondent





Survey respondents were asked to consider how the Draft Vision performed against a series of themes and objectives. These are summarised throughout this section. Respondents were also asked to indicate the degree to which they agree about a series of statements relating to the Draft Vision overall. The data in Figure 8 shows that respondents mostly agree or strongly agree with all four statements.

Figure 8 Survey respondents' response to Draft Vision overall

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The draft vision is appropriate for the future of Melbourne Showgrounds	1%	3%	24%	36%	36%
The draft vision will contribute to promoting, stimulate and enhance Victoria's agriculture industry.	1%	3%	26%	34%	36%
The draft vision will create a vibrant event and entertainment precinct	1%	3%	26%	34%	36%
The draft vision will enhance public amenity and improve local liveability	3%	1%	27%	34%	31%

### 4.2 Concerns

Overall, there were very few concerns with regard to the Draft Vision and the proposed programs for an Agricultural Centre of Excellence.

However, some survey respondents reiterated the importance of ensuring that Melbourne Showgrounds and its events, particularly the Show, maintain a focus on agriculture and 'bringing the country to the city'.

"I am concerned as are many people that the animals are slowly being shoved out the side door. The A stands for agriculture..... not side shows!" survey respondent

"Concern about commercial businesses, rides and food outlets "taking over" too many spaces." survey respondent

Through the survey, some local residents continued to express concern regarding impact to local road networks as a result of an expanded event calendar. They would prefer to see a focus on public transport rather than vehicle drop off facilities.

"The showgrounds could be a prime event location. However, there is no regard at all for disruption to local residents and no effort over 20 + years to address the disastrous traffic and parking issues."

Survey respondent





"No high-rise towers and noise / traffic considerations for nearby residents (we live 3 streets away) especially for TV shows like Ninja Warrior able to do fireworks at 3am... Better communication to residents - have concerns on year-round events."

survey respondent

Some survey respondents expressed a lack of confidence that the proposed upgrades or improvements would be implemented.

### 4.3 Feedback themes

The following section summarises responses and feedback against the six key themes carried through from the first phase of engagement:

1. Creating an iconic site	Creating a year-round destination
2. Supporting the Show and events	5. Celebrating our agricultural legacy
3. Improving transport and access	Diversifying and upgrading spaces and facilities

### 4.3.1 Create an iconic site

Survey respondents overwhelming responded very positively to the Draft Vision with respect to creating an iconic site, strongly supporting all statements.

The data demonstrates that the Draft Vision is successful in protecting important heritage and maintaining and upgrading heritage.

Figure 9 Survey responses to create an iconic site

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Respecting and maintaining important heritage.			6%	13%	81%
Improving public entrances to create a safe and improved 'sense of arrival'.	1%	3%	15%	23%	59%
Providing an improved public realm and increased community access.	1%	1%	14%	27%	58%
Maintaining and upgrading the heritage value of the site.			10%	17%	73%
Showcasing archival collections and support niche events.	1%	1%	18%	24%	54%





Workshop participants told us that they believe that the Draft Vision offers benefits for the local precinct.

In particular, local representatives reacted positively to the greater precinct connectivity, such as the upgraded underpass to Flemington Racecourse and the bike path. The new Riverlink park and connections to the Maribyrnong River were also strongly supported. Some stakeholders noted the opportunity to build further on the precinct approach to support enhanced integration with Ascot Vale Estate.

Workshop participants noted that upgrades to the Epsom Road entrance and site boundaries of Melbourne Showgrounds would complement proposed future upgrades of the Epsom Road/Union Road intersection, the Union Road shopping precinct and Ascot Vale Estate renewal project.

#### 4.3.2 Supporting the Show and events

The Show was identified as the flagship event and was the touchpoint for many workshop participants and survey respondents.

Improved infrastructure, facilities and operations to support the Show and other events was mostly strongly supported by all stakeholder groups who saw this as an integral role for Melbourne Showgrounds.

Figure 13 Survey responses to supporting the Show and other events

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Providing a new and expanded arena and covered seating.	1%	3%	11%	18%	68%
Improving existing facilities and pavilions.	2%	1%	6%	13%	77%
Providing a Replacing the Grand Pavilion with a new multi-use exhibition pavilion.	6%	8%	25%	23%	37%
Improving back-of-house facilities and access for exhibitors.	2%		15%	21%	62%
Expanding the Town Square.	1%	1%	33%	33%	32%
Improving parking for visitors including better access to VRC parking during the Show.	4%	3%	18%	15%	58%

Survey respondents and workshops participants showed strong support for an expanded main arena and improved seating to enhance traditional Show activities as well as a space that could be used for other events throughout the year. The reduction in size of the arena has been a significant criticism of previous master plans.

While workshop participants were mostly supportive of the proposed expansion of the Town Square, survey participants felt less strongly about this idea. Reasons for this were not made clear.





#### 4.3.3 Improving transport and access

Transport and access have been key themes across all stakeholder and community consultations. It is recognised as an essential element to the functionality of the Melbourne Showgrounds site. Also important is the interface between the site's transport and access solutions and surrounding residential, businesses communities and public transport networks.

Figure 12 Survey responses to improving transport and access

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Improving site entrances for safe pedestrian and vehicle arrival including a new visitor drop-off and ride-share zone on Epsom Road.	2%	3%	10%	23%	63%
A new bike path parallel to the train line.	3%	5%	30%	27%	35%
Upgrading the train arrival platform.	1%	1%	22%	27%	49%
Improving pedestrian amenity including more covered walkways.	2%	2%	13%	27%	56%

Overall, survey participants were supportive of the proposed upgrades to transport and access. Survey participants were not as supportive of the proposed bike path compared to workshop participants.

All transport and access initiatives proposed by the Draft Vision were supported by all stakeholder groups. Participants expressed their desire for further improvements to public transport beyond the scope of the Draft Vision.

Entry treatments, access and drop-off zones were strongly supported by workshop participants, with stakeholders' keen to see upgrades to the nearby tram stop and tram services and consolidation of the Flemington Racecourse & Melbourne Showgrounds train stations.

Some local residents were concerned that an expanded event calendar would have a negative impact on local road networks. While improved vehicle drop-off facilities for Melbourne Showgrounds visitors were positively received, stakeholders felt that these should be incorporated with improvements to public transport.

The activation of the rail spur in a year-round capacity was strongly supported by many local residents and survey respondents and seen as an opportunity to enhance visitor access to the site as well as improving services to surrounding residential and business areas.

Councils and government stakeholders noted support for measures that would encourage better outcomes for sustainable transport.

Parking remains an issue for all stakeholder groups with visitors and exhibitors alike querying the provision of future onsite parking.





#### 4.3.4 Creating a year-round destination

Despite some local residents raising concerns regarding traffic impacts and noise from an expanded events calendar, survey respondents were largely supportive of the strategic directions and proposed elements to create Melbourne Showgrounds into a year-round destination.

Figure 11 Survey responses to creating a year-round destination

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Creating an experiential destination for Victorians.	1%	1%	15%	38%	45%
Encouraging more community use outside of major events.	1%	2%	14%	27%	56%
Building a new 'Centre of Excellence' as a hub for the promotion of agriculture.	1%	1%	16%	22%	61%
Constructing a new multi-use purpose-built exhibition building.	3%	2%	26%	28%	41%
Developing a new bike path and Riverlink Park.	3%	8%	32%	22%	33%

The survey respondents strongly supported the proposed Agricultural Centre of Excellence and encouraging more community use of the Melbourne Showgrounds site outside of major events.

More than half (55%) of survey respondents "somewhat" or "strongly" support the proposed new bike path and Riverlink Park, however, a third were neutral to this proposal (32%).

Workshop participants considered the bike path a strength of the Draft Vision particularly its ability to promote sustainable transport and better access to the site and throughout the precinct.

Workshop participants saw the benefit of expanded facilities and programming that can support a larger and diversified events calendar, however feedback from local residents in both workshops and through the survey, showed that some were concerned that year-round events would create more impacts on their local area with respect to parking, access and noise.

Supporting more events and creating a year-round destination was considered a positive outcome by workshop participants. This was thought to enhance the precinct as an event focused destination, including the adjacent Flemington Racecourse.





### 4.3.5 Celebrating our agricultural legacy

In all phases of engagement, the role of Melbourne Showgrounds in showcasing and celebrating agriculture has been important to many stakeholders. This is demonstrated in the strong support for these elements in survey responses. The highest response (91%) of survey participants, identified "enhanced facilities for agricultural competitions, the Show and for the promotion of Victorian producers" were important to celebrating our agricultural legacy.

Figure 14 Survey responses to celebrating our agricultural legacy

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Enhanced facilities for agricultural competitions, the Show and for the promotion of Victorian producers.		1%	8%	16%	75%
Building a new entry plaza on Epsom Road to showcase 'the best of the best' agriculture, producers and products.	2%	2%	16%	28%	51%
Constructing an expanded outdoor arena.	1%	2%	13%	27%	56%

Workshops participants representing competitions and the agricultural sector and survey respondents frequently emphasised the importance of Melbourne Showgrounds and the Show in bringing the country to the city and the desire for maintaining and protecting heritage elements of the site.

Workshop participants reiterated the importance of Melbourne Showgrounds and RASV in supporting the agricultural sector and producers. This was further emphasised in discussions regarding the idea of an Agricultural Centre of Excellence summarised in the next section.





### 4.3.6 Diversifying and upgrading spaces and facilities

Survey respondents were strongly supportive of proposals to upgrade, improve and diversify facilities.

While still positively received, the proposal 'encouraging a greater diversification of spaces including an improved Town Square and Riverlink Park' was not as strongly supported as other elements of the plan by survey respondents.

Figure 9 Survey responses to diversifying and upgrading spaces and facilities

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neutral	Somewhat support	Strongly support
Increasing the flexibility for indoor and outdoor facilities.	1%		14%	25%	60%
Encouraging a greater diversification of spaces including an improved Town Square and Riverlink Park	1%	1%	23%	39%	37%
More flexible outdoor spaces that can provide parklands, niche event spaces and car parking.		3%	17%	30%	49%
Improving covered outdoor spaces and seating for visitor comfort and all-weather appeal.		1%	11%	22%	65%

The improved facilities and amenity across the site were also well received and supported by workshop participants.

In particular, workshop participants highlighted the importance of exhibition space, storage, access and connections. Furthermore, the need for well-considered back of house (BOH) facilities was reiterated by Show competition exhibitors. Stakeholders were pleased to see BOH improvements included in the Draft Vision.

Stakeholders were keen to know more details of design strategies to improve the bump in/out processes.

Stakeholders remarked positively about the improvement to onsite pedestrian and visitor amenity, including covered walkways.

The upgrade of existing buildings and addition of new and improved event space was positively received by exhibitors and food and beverage stakeholders.





## 5 Agricultural Centre of Excellence

### 5.1 Response to an Agricultural Centre of Excellence

The concept of an Agricultural Centre of Excellence was widely supported in both workshops and through survey responses.

The opportunity to support producers and showcase technology and innovation in agriculture were identified and received strong support from workshop participants. Opportunities for education were also seen as highly beneficial.

"Good for Vic economy and producers.

Small producers would love a place like that" –workshop participant

"Accommodation on site as part of the centre would be beneficial" –workshop participant

"Centre of Excellence is a great idea and will build on the state government policies in many ways" –workshop participant

### 5.2 Concerns

It was evident that more information is required to allow further exploration of an Agricultural Centre of Excellence with stakeholders.

In particular, during workshops there were many questions about the use of an Agricultural Centre of Excellence. Participants sought assurance that the facility could be used as an exhibition and event space during the Show and other site wide events.

Some concerns were raised about how new activities in the Centre of Excellence would impact the character of Melbourne Showgrounds. Some survey respondents suggested that new facilities such as an Agricultural Centre of Excellence or a diversified program of events could detract from the role of Melbourne Showgrounds to promote and celebrate agriculture, and that it may allow for commercial businesses, retail and food outlets to take up too much space.





### 5.3 Programs

Both survey and workshop participants were asked to consider the types of programs or activities that could be delivered through an Agricultural Centre of Excellence.

Survey participants were asked to rank their three preferred options from a list of five program types. These five categories are listed below in order of overall preference by survey respondents.

- 1. Homegrown events and exhibitions such as regular community and trade events that celebrate agricultural producers and showcase rural and regional Victoria.
- 2. Agricultural heritage and interpretation focussing on conserving, curating and providing for public exhibition and interpretation of RASV's extensive heritage collection and celebrating Victorian agriculture and food culture.
- **3. Promotion of agribusiness** with a focus on improving and expanding the scope of RASV's food and beverage competitions, awards and promotional activities, and establishing a 'launch pad' for agricultural producers.
- **4. Education, training and workforce development** including onsite programs addressing specific industry skills shortages and increasing the focus on agriculture in primary and secondary school classrooms.
- **5. Industry and enterprise development** to provide support for new and emerging agribusinesses and food and beverage enterprises through onsite, set-duration enterprise programs.

The preference of survey respondents for 'homegrown events and exhibitions' as well as 'agricultural heritage and interpretation' is consistent with other survey responses and workshop feedback. This demonstrates that a greater emphasis is placed on the historical role of Melbourne Showgrounds and its importance as a connector between city and country.

Further to the survey responses, workshop participants were equally enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by an Agricultural Centre of Excellence. Workshop participants generally preferred, future focussed programs around the intersection of technology, agriculture and production, in addition to promote practical skills and opportunities for students and community cohorts.

"In terms of education, the centre could offer internships and placements for university students" – workshop participant "...opportunity to create social linkages, pathways, skills development for Ascot Vale Estate community" –workshop participant





Survey respondents and workshop participants had numerous suggestions for the types of programs that could be delivered through an Agricultural Centre of Excellence. These have been grouped below:

#### **Education and employment**

- Internships and placements for university students
- Training program for locals to gain casual employment
- Learning for all ages from kindergarten onwards including school holiday programs

#### Agricultural innovation and promotion

- Innovation in agriculture and technology
- Sustainable agriculture and biodiversity-based programs
- Promotion, display and uses of seasonal produce, e.g. fruit, vegetables, flowers, dairy

#### Connecting country and city

- A city farm which could be used to educate the city-based residents about agribusiness.
- Opportunity for competition winners to promote and celebrate their results through viable/measurable commercial
- Programs associated with pet care such as grooming and training
- Practical learning including all elements of farm life

#### **Industry connections**

- Links to agricultural groups in Victoria universities, CSIRO, AgVic and availability for spaces for meetings/conferences
- Agricultural conferences ie: Dairy Australia, Wagyu Beef Australia etc
- Offices for breeder societies/other relevant groups
- Complementary enterprises such as health and fitness and its relationship with high quality food and agriculture

#### Indigenous history and practices

- First Nations teaching and learning how did the Kulin nation use the land sustainably to produce food?
- Environmental program including a focus on climate change in relation to agriculture

### **Further information**

The formal consultation for *Our Showgrounds*, *Our Future* is now complete.

To continue to stay updated with the project, please register for updates via our website.

If you have any questions about the project, you are welcome to contact us via email: <a href="mailto:future@melbourneshowgrounds.com">future@melbourneshowgrounds.com</a>





Appendix A: Example collateral

# Appen Our Showgrounds, Our Future.

30 year vision for Melbourne Showgrounds





The consultants engaged for the master plan project:

- PwC Business Case and Commercial Advice;
- . NH Architecture Design, Planning and Technical; Capire Consulting Group - Stakeholder Engagement and Communications;
- · Ashurst Legal

November 2020







### 30 year vision for the Melbourne Showgrounds

#### Background

Melbourne Showgrounds has hosted the Royal Melbourne Show since 1883. Since then it has grown into a unique indoor-outdoor events and entertainment precinct.

To ensure that the precinct can best serve the needs of Victorians now and for generations to come, the Victorian Government provided funding to The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) to develop a master plan and business case to maximise its potential as a centre for agriculture, events, exhibitions and wider community use.

The vision for Melbourne Showgrounds is to build on its rich agricultural and built heritage to serve as a hub for excellence in agriculture, events, food and beverage and a platform to showcase Victorian produce to the

#### **Key Objectives**

Protect, enhance and stimulate Victoria's agriculture industry.

- · Attract more visitors to the State:
- Increase access to jobs and employment
- Create a vibrant event and entertainment precinct;
- Increase commercial and economic activity associated with the site through greater activation;
- · Improved liveability; and
- · Enhance public amenity.

### **Vision for Melbourne Showgrounds**

Four key design planks from Stakeholder Engagement Stage 1



#### Excellence in Agriculture

- A new Agricultural Centre of Excellence
- Showcasing 'best of the best' in food and beverage
- Strengthening RASV Awards



#### Celebrate Living History

- Build on the rich history of the site as an agricultural showground complex
- producers and product
  - Showcase heritage buildings and archival collection Rediscover foundational elements of the Showgrounds
    - Reinstate an endemic & productive landscape, particularly at site entrances
    - Upgrades to heritage Buildings
    - Creation of heritage precincts promoting agricultural legacy



#### A Unique Event Venue

- Support the Royal Melbourne Show
- Increased flexibility for indoor & outdoor facilities
- Greater diversification of
- spaces in the public realm
- A new purpose-built exhibition . Addressing street frontages



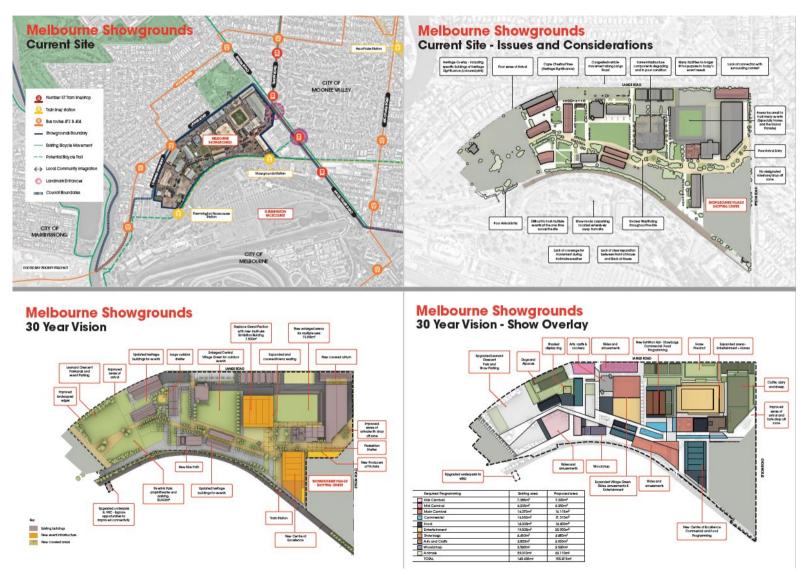
#### Invite & Engage Communit

- More opportunity for
- Welcoming & Iconic
- Active transport link to through new blke path





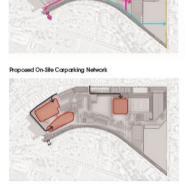
















### Appendix B: Organisations represented at workshops

- Australian Distilled Spirits Awards Advisory Group
- Australian Food Awards Advisory Group
- Australian International Coffee Awards Advisory Group
- Benson Trading
- Caravan & Camping Show
- City of Melbourne
- · Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Encore
- Equitana
- Food and Wine Victoria
- · Harry the Hirer
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Moonee Valley City Council
- RASV Competition Committee Alpaca
- RASV Competition Committee Dogs
- RASV Competition Committee Fleece
- RASV Competition Committee Horses in Action
- RASV Competition Committee Poultry
- RASV Competition Committee Sheep
- RASV Heritage Committee
- RASV Members
- Union Road Traders Association
- Victorian Racing Club

