

Oakleigh Art Trail: Engagement Summary Report

Executive summary

Monash Council has been awarded a \$250K grant under the Business Victoria Multicultural Business Precinct Revitalisation Program to deliver the Oakleigh Art Trail. Scheduled for 2027, the trail will feature murals, lightboxes, and a major artwork, designed to meet the grants objectives of revitalising multicultural business precincts.

Monash Council's Creative Industries Team facilitated community engagement, asking local residents and visitors 'What do you love most about Oakleigh?' as well as 'What story or theme about Oakleigh deserves to be celebrated?'. Responses captured help identify key themes that will inform the murals and major artwork that will feature along the trail.

The engagement took place to ensure the artwork reflects what our community loved most about Oakleigh.

Key findings

We received 108 responses from the community through Shape Monash and in-person session.

Key themes identified were:

- Food as culture
- Greek heritage and migration.
- Community, gathering and village atmosphere
- Multiculturalism, many communities
- History, trade and local identity

Next steps

Council will invite established and emerging artists who live in Monash, or show a connection to Monash, to submit an expression of interest to develop the murals and major artwork.

Community themes will be provided to artists as part of this process, to be used as inspiration during the creative development of murals and the major artwork.

Background

The trail is funded by the Victorian Government's Multicultural Business Precinct Revitalisation Program and Monash Council to highlight the precinct's strong multicultural business identity, uplift and improve key precinct areas, and support increased visitation and economic activity for Oakleigh businesses.

The trail will feature new projections, lightboxes, murals and a major artwork.

How we engaged

Community engagement was conducted from 8 May - 7 June 2026.

The Oakleigh community and visitors to Oakleigh were invited to add to an online vision board or to email us *"What they loved about Oakleigh"* and were invited to add any stories they may like to share about Oakleigh. These ideas and stories were developed into community themes and used to inspire artists as they create the murals and major artwork that will feature along the trail.

Shape Monash vision board was promoted through social media, and flyers were distributed in the Oakleigh area in English and Greek. A letter to traders was hand delivered to over 180 public facing businesses within the Oakleigh Activity Centre and emailed to members of the Oakleigh Traders Association.

Two in-person drop-in sessions were held. One on the 28 May at Oakleigh Library, and a second in Eaton Mall on Saturday 30 May. In person responses were collected through audio recordings (vox pops) and as drawings and comments on a large paper banner.

Feedback

Who we heard from

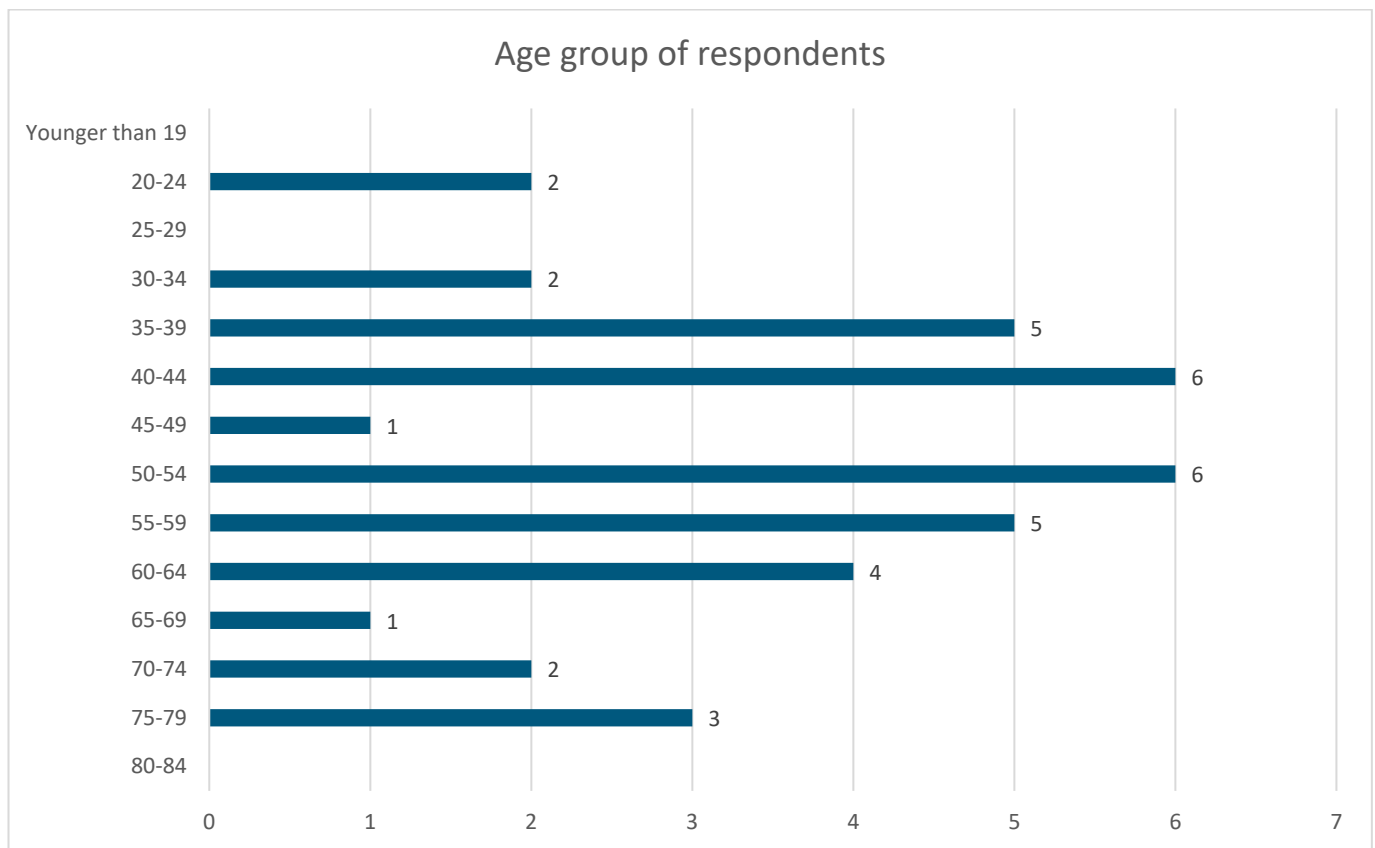
We received 108 responses during the consultation period:

- 42 responses through Shape Monash
- 50 audio responses through in-person sessions in Oakleigh Library and Eaton Mall
- 22 written responses / drawings in person
- 4 email responses

Demographic data showed a good response across gender and age groups. Survey / vision board respondents that provided a response to their gender:

- 62.5% identified as female
- 18.75% identified as male
- 18.75% preferred to self-describe/ not to say.

Survey / vision board respondents who provided their age:



What we heard from the community

Many community responses had multiple themes within one answer. The overall identified themes and frequency are listed below, along with the theme descriptions. The top five themes will be used to inform the mural and major artwork along the trail.

Theme	Frequency	Key words:
Food as culture.	23 Responses – 21.30%	Outdoor dining Greek food Fresh produce Sunday Rotary Market Cafes
Greek identity and migration stories.	22 Responses – 20.37%	Migration stories Family sacrifice Greek philosophy
Community, gathering and village atmosphere.	21 Responses – 19.44%	Eaton Mall Cafes Parks

		Sunday markets Family gatherings
Multiculturalism, many communities.	15 Responses – 13.8%	Greek Italian Chinese Korean First Nations Migration
History, trade and local identity.	13 Responses – 12%	Historic buildings Drummond Street Railway history Quarry and brickworks Old Oakleigh Motel Cemetery
Nature and biodiversity.	8 Responses – 7.4%	
Public art and community involvement.	7 responses – 6.4%	
Sport and recreation	6 responses – 5.5%	
Artwork maintenance and longevity	5 responses – 4.3%	
First Nations recognition	4 responses – 3.7%	
Streetscape improvements	4 responses – 3.7%	
Education and interpretation (QR codes and storytelling)	3 responses – 2.7%	
Youth and future identity	2 responses – 1.8%	
Critical project feedback	2 responses – 1.8%	

Food as culture

Respondents repeatedly mention the culture around food and hospitality in Oakleigh. Greek food, the souvlaki, pastries, cakes and sweets, the coffee culture and the fresh produce, and the sensory café culture experience of Eaton Mall. The traders tell the story of culture, migration and gathering.

Representative comments:

"It's just the Greek vibe all about, it's a fabulous place to come and eat - we live on the other side of Melbourne, and we come over to visit -we catch up regularly with our friends over a meal, have a laugh, have a drink - why not? / It's a good vibe."

"My most favourite part about Oakleigh is passing by its cafes, and watching the older residents sitting together, enjoying their coffees. I would love to see these scenes captured by art."

"Oakleigh has such a lovely village feel and food culture! Not many places in Melbourne like it! There is obviously a strong Greek influence in the many eateries there that I love, and although I don't live in Oakleigh myself, I frequently travel there to stock up on meat, veg and continental goods at the markets there as it is such great value and quality. A great foodie destination in Melbourne's southeast!"

"Food & Celebration — Iconic imagery of Greek festivals, dance, and communal dining reflects the warmth and hospitality that defines Oakleigh's streetscape today. Such a mural would beautify the precinct, draw visitors, foster community pride, and ensure Oakleigh's Greek heritage endures for future generations. I respectfully urge the Committee to honour a community that has given Oakleigh its heart and soul."

Greek Identity and migration stories

Many respondents said they value Oakleigh due to the large migration of Greeks to the area and its unique Greek diaspora culture and community of Oakleigh.

"Must reflect the Greek migration story. At the time Greek youth came out here and helped build Melbourne and Australia - their work, their sacrifices and their contribution must be included and celebrated."

"Respondents strongly associate Oakleigh with Greek community identity and businesses, Greek migration history and the Little Athens or European feel in Eaton Mall. Many sentiments described being able to be transported to Greece without leaving Melbourne."

"A taste of Greece in the Antipodes."

"Oakleigh has been one of Australia's most vibrant Greek cultural hubs for decades. From the 1950s onward, Greek migrants settled in Oakleigh, transforming it into a community renowned for its cuisine, atmosphere and culture. Eaton Mall and the surrounding precinct remain a living expression of that legacy — one that deserves to be permanently honoured."

"...should reflect the progressive Greek influence of the many thousand proud hardworking Greek migrants who descended on this central location to continue and share their special and unique traditions with the broader community"

"Proudly home to one of Australia's largest Greek communities."

"Depicting the journey of Greek families to Australia acknowledges the sacrifice of those who built this precinct and affirms their contribution to Australian multicultural life."

Multiculturalism, Many Communities

Respondents mention the contributions and history of many the many cultures connected to Oakleigh. Frequent mentions of Italian, Chinese and Korean communities, all having their own migration stories, alongside requests to include First Nations stories.

"It would be wonderful if the artwork could reflect Oakleigh's unique mix of cultures. The Greek culture is a defining feature of the community, and there are also the newer Korean and Chinese diasporas."

"As I have lived in Oakleigh for more than 60 years, and coming from Italian migrants, would like the artwork to recognise the contribution the Italian community has given to the precinct. Some beautiful Italian artwork would be great especially as Oakleigh has a large European background."

"As well as honouring the Greek culture that has shaped Oakleigh, we need to ensure we also acknowledge the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people in the artworks that are commissioned."

Community, gathering and village atmosphere

Responses described a strong sense of belonging and community, with comment on people gathering and the social atmosphere.

Representative comments:

"Community gathering in Eaton Mall."

"Culture - I think it is very vibrant, always booming with people regardless of what day you come in."

"What I love about Oakleigh is the community spirit, everyone comes here and gathers together to either see family or friends and it's just a place where everyone can feel comfortable and be themselves."

"Just the people and culture - it's one community and that's really nice."

"Well, the Greeks have given a lot to it over the past 20 odd years, and it has a really community feel and people come from all the way around Melbourne."

History, trade and local identity

Respondents expressed appreciation for the historic buildings and long running examples of trade in Oakleigh. Historic buildings and places of historic significance and the industrial development of the precinct were frequently mentioned:

"Maybe the art trail could include historical changes intime, starting with interpretation of landscape prior to white man's invasion. Local native flora and fauna. Then building of Quarry, Brickworks, train line to Gippsland, schools, golf courses settlement of village of Oakleigh. Arrival of Greek immigrants 1950's culture. Oakleigh a thriving hub for food shopping cafe culture markets music festival friendly faces etc."

"I love the mix of old and new. The historic cemetery and buildings and the vibrancy of the mix of cultures."

"I grew up in Oakleigh as did my Dad and many of my Uncles, Aunts and cousins. I love that the area opposite the town hall, the park, and the footy ground and the old buildings are still almost the same as they were 70 years ago when I was young. It's lovely to still have the old amongst the new."

"I love the mix of old and new. The historic cemetery and buildings and the vibrancy of the mix of cultures."

"I was born in South Oakleigh in the 1960's. There are several buildings that I fondly remember and are still there today. The Oakleigh Motel was considered very hip and will need to be featured, but I also remember being driven down Warrigal Road and just before the overpass at the train station you had the Sacred Heart Church on the right and the produce store on the left. I am not sure what it is about the produce store, maybe it was because I remember going in with dad to get feed for the chooks, maybe it was just because it was always so colourful, but it is still there!"

How we will consider your feedback (We listened)

Monash Council has consolidated and ranked responses to establish five themes:

1. Food as culture
2. Greek Heritage and waves of migration.
3. Multiculturalism, many communities
4. Community, gathering and village atmosphere
5. History, trade and local identity

These themes will help shape the mural and wall activations within the trail.

During the consultation Monash Council also received feedback about graffiti and maintenance of artworks and has factored this feedback into the project by:

- Ensuring anti-graffiti treatments are applied to the mural artworks.
- Undertaking cost feasibility and refurbishment scoping of the mentioned underpass works.
- Researching and updating current anti-graffiti policy within Public Art Framework.
- Cross department collaboration into anti graffiti maintenance and process.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who shared their stories and what they love about Oakleigh. We will use the key themes to invite artists to submit an expression of interest to develop the murals and major artwork.