

Engagement Findings Report

Expanded Outdoor Dining Trial Evaluation The Terrace, Ocean Grove



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This report summarises the community feedback on the expanded outdoor dining trial that was established in The Terrace, Ocean Grove on Monday 7 December 2020.

The expanded outdoor dining trial in The Terrace, Ocean Grove was established to support businesses in Ocean Grove and maximise economic recovery from COVID-19. The project aligned with the support and direction from the State Government to enhance outdoor activities in a COVID safe manner.


ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The three-week (21 day) consultation period allowed time to reach stakeholders across the community, including traders who own/operate businesses locally on The Terrace, other Ocean Grove business owners and other operators, residents, the general public and visitors.

Business owners located in The Terrace were consulted with directly by way of a targeted survey. A street survey was also undertaken to capture views from visitors and the general public. In addition to the surveys, we promoted the online feedback page on 'Your Say' platform on Geelong Australia. This feedback page was able to capture feedback from others who may have an interest in the project.



21 DAYS
of engagement



94
Online feedback
submissions received via
Council's 'Your Say' page.



20
Street surveys



49
Trader
surveys

HOW WE ENGAGED

HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE PORTAL [YOURSAY.GEELONGAUSTRALIA.COM.AU](https://yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au)

An online feedback page was designed to share information and invite submissions from the community on the evaluation of the expanded outdoor dining trial in The Terrace, Ocean Grove.
The online page opened on Monday 11 January 2021 and closed 5pm on 1 February 2021. The page had 229 online visitors and 94 submissions were provided.

TRADER SURVEY (IN PERSON & OVER THE PHONE)

Business owners located in The Terrace were contacted and asked to complete a one-on-one survey to record their individual experiences with the initiative.

STREET SURVEY (IN PERSON)

Street surveys were undertaken in-person at locations along The Terrace to capture and record responses from the general public, and visitors to Ocean Grove.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

Business owners/operators located in The Terrace were hand delivered a notification about the engagement, on Friday 8 January 2021. We also followed up with phone calls, emails and in-person contact to all businesses located on The Terrace throughout the consultation period, ensuring that all business owners were aware of the engagement.

Efforts were made to follow up directly with every business located in The Terrace. However, one business declined to participate in the survey and one business owner could not be reached.

In addition to the direct contact provided to the businesses located in The Terrace, the City also used social media to promote the engagement. Footpath decals (stickers) were also installed throughout The Terrace to promote the engagement.

The communications outlined are only those managed by the City. Many business owners also promoted the engagement with their customers and other stakeholders.

SOCIAL MEDIA

7,700

Reach/Impressions



225

Actions (Clicks, reactions, shares, comments etc.)



51

Printed notifications hand delivered to businesses in The Terrace.



51

Business owners contacted directly about the engagement.



5

Footpath stickers installed in The Terrace to promote the engagement.



287

Online feedback page visits.

WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

During the engagement period (11 Jan to 1 Feb 2021) there were 163 contributions.

Of these, 94 (58%) of the contributions were online and 69 (42%) were received directly in-person or over the phone.

Direct participation/engagement included the 49 trader surveys and 20 street surveys.

Online contributions included six submissions made by business owners and/or operators located in The Terrace, one submission from a business owner and/or operator located outside The Terrace, 62 submissions from residents in Ocean Grove, 19 submissions from residents outside Ocean Grove, five submissions from the general public and/or visitors, and one submission from someone that identified as other, which was someone that was a permanent caravan owner.

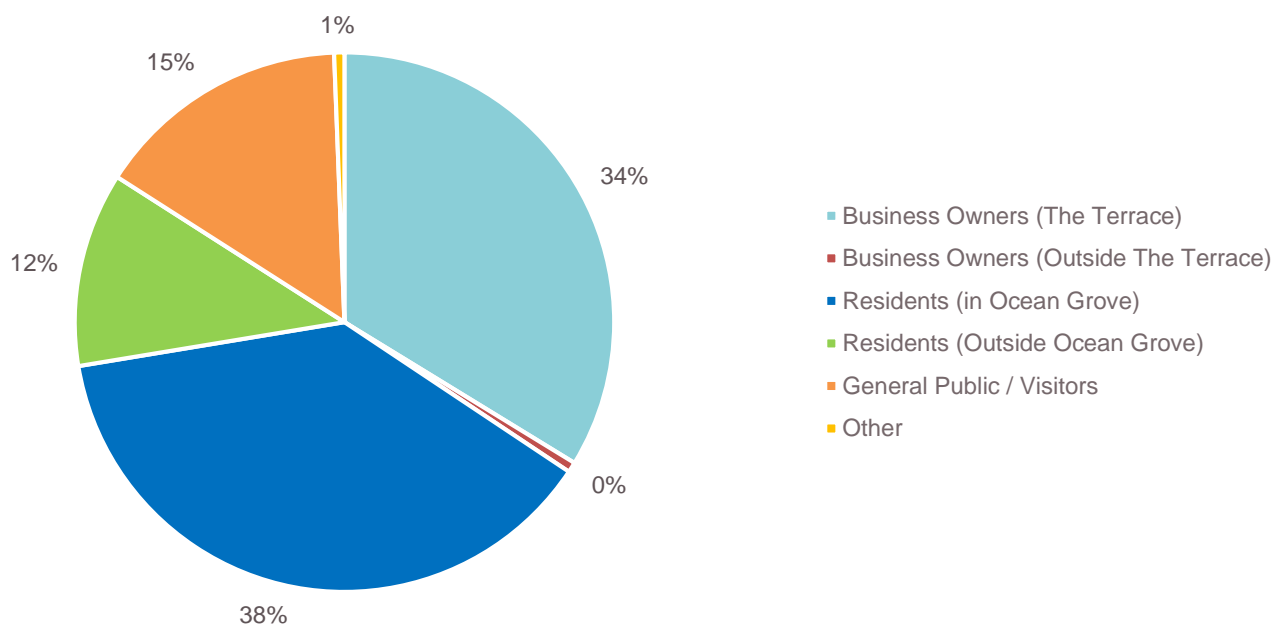


Chart 1: Overall Participation (Online and Survey)

WHAT WE HEARD

OVERALL SENTIMENT

To summarise the overall feedback that has been provided, the following key findings are noted:



Most respondents (77%) have indicated that they support the expanded outdoor areas that has been established in The Terrace.



Most businesses (65%) in The Terrace have told us that they had an overall positive experience with the expanded outdoor dining trial.



Most of the traders (61%) in The Terrace have told us that they would like the initiative to continue beyond the trial end date of 8 March 2021.



Most businesses (63%) in The Terrace have told us that the expanded outdoor dining spaces have increased activity in the street.

In considering all 163 contributions to the engagement, 126 (77%) were positive in terms of overall sentiment, and 29 (18%) were negative. There were also eight (5%) of the contributions that were considered mixed or neutral.

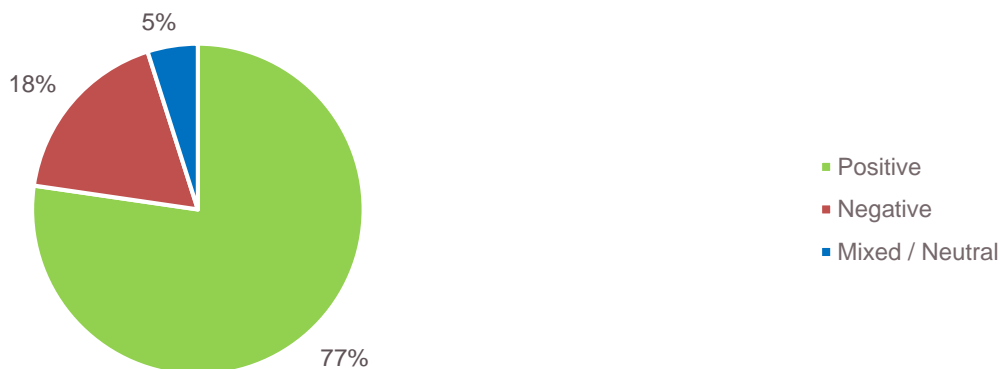


Chart 2: Overall Sentiment (All Stakeholders)

TRADER SENTIMENT

32 (65%) business owners/operators located in The Terrace who completed the survey, responded that they had an overall positive experience. 12 (25%) business owners/operators responded that they had an overall negative experience. Five (10%) business owners/operators were either unsure or neutral.

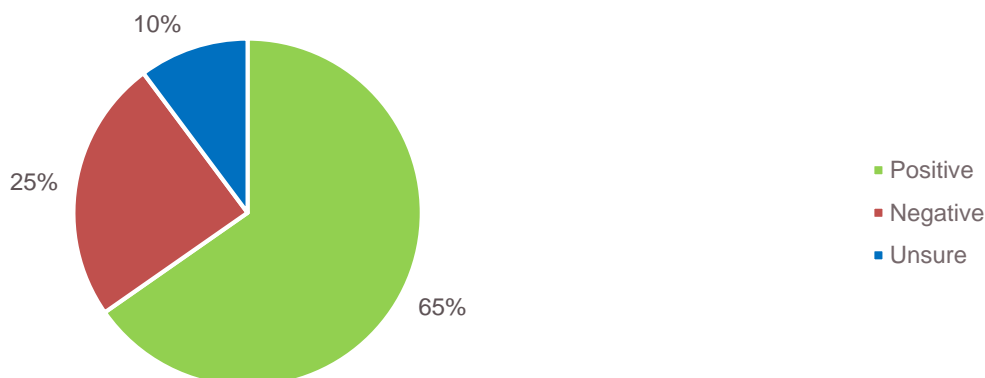


Chart 3: Trader Sentiment (Surveys)

ONLINE FEEDBACK SENTIMENT

There were a total of 94 online submissions received. In analysing the sentiment provided in the submissions, 74 (79%) of the submissions were positive, 17 (18%) were negative, two (2%) were considered mixed and one (1%) considered neutral.

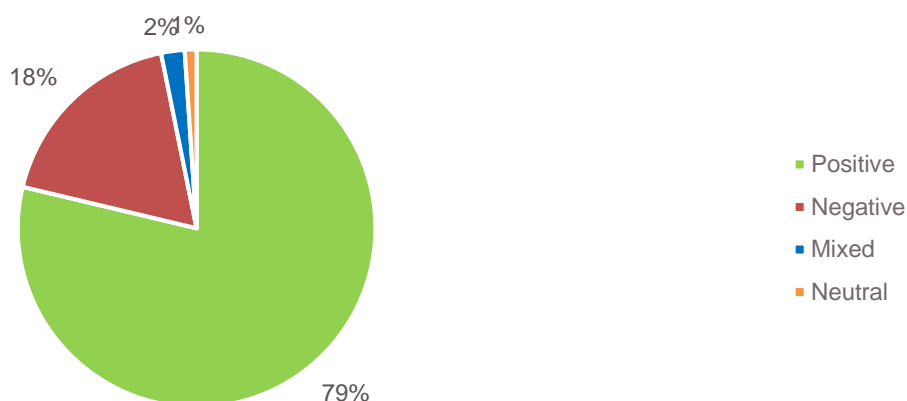


Chart 4: Online Feedback Sentiment

KEY FINDINGS & THEMES

TRADER SURVEY RESULTS

The purpose for the trader survey was to provide a way to engage directly with each individual business owner and to ensure that the views of all businesses located in The Terrace were considered.

The traders were asked the following questions:

1. *Do you believe that you have had an overall positive or negative experience with the expanded outdoor dining areas installed in the street?*
2. *Do you believe that the expanded outdoor dining areas provided through this initiative have improved the look and feel of the street?*
3. *Do you believe that the expanded outdoor dining areas have helped to increase activity on the street?*
4. *Would you like the trial to end and the expanded dining areas removed on 8 March 2021, or would you like the initiative to continue?*

Key findings from the trader survey are noted below:

- The majority (65.3%) of traders (32) indicated that they had an overall positive experience with the expanded outdoor dining areas in the Terrace. 24.5% of traders (12) indicated that they had an overall negative experience, and 10.2% of traders (5) were neutral or unsure.
- The traders who overall had a positive experience, gave as their key reasons:
 - Great for customers/positive feedback from customers
 - Improved atmosphere, street beautification and enhanced visibility for businesses
 - Increased visitation.
- The traders who overall had a negative experience, gave as their key reasons:
 - Access issues for cars – traffic congestion, reduced car parking
 - Not beneficial for non-hospitality businesses

- Expanded outdoor dining areas are underutilised, particularly after 4pm.
- Could be higher quality with more durable plants
- Consultation process and management of the works.
- The majority (79.6%) of traders (39) indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have improved the look and feel of the street. 16.3% of traders (8) indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas didn't improve the look and feel of the street, and 4.1% of traders (2) were unsure.
- The majority (63.3%) of traders (31) indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have helped to increase activity on the street. 24.5% of traders (12) indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have not helped to increase activity on the street, and 12.2% of traders (6) were unsure.
- The majority (61.2%) of traders (30) indicated that they would like the expanded outdoor dining trial to continue beyond 8 March 2021. 26.5% of traders (13) indicated that they would like the trial to end on 8 March 2021, and 12.2% of traders (6) were unsure or undecided. Some traders suggested that the expanded outdoor dining areas should be installed on a seasonal basis (Melbourne Cup until Easter) and removed during the colder months.

There were differing views amongst the traders. Some traders received positive comments from their customers about the expanded outdoor dining areas, while other respondents commented that their customers complained about access and parking. Similarly, some traders attributed an increase in sales to the expanded outdoor dining areas, while others attributed a decline in sales to the parklets.

STREET SURVEY RESULTS

The purpose of the street survey was to provide a "pulse check" style survey with the general public in the street over the busy tourist period on 31 December 2020.

The data collected is a sample only but is helpful to provide an understanding of general public and visitor sentiment regarding the expanded outdoor dining areas at this time.

There were 20 surveys in total conducted, with 10 collected from individual diners using the expanded outdoor dining spaces at the time of the survey, and 10 collected from pedestrians walking past the outdoor dining spaces. All surveys were undertaken in-person and were anonymous.

The general public/visitors were asked the following questions:

1. *Do you believe that the expanded outdoor dining areas have improved the look and feel of the street?*
2. *Do you believe that the expanded outdoor dining areas have helped to increase street activity?*
3. *Would you like the trial to cease and the expanded dining areas removed on 8 March 2021, or would you like the initiative to be continued?*

Key findings from the street survey:

- All respondents (100%) to the street survey indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have improved the look and feel of the street. The main reasons respondents gave for feeling this way were due to the feeling of more space, no cars and more accessible for pedestrians.
- The majority (90%) of respondents to the street survey indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have helped to increase street activity. No (0%) respondents indicated that the expanded outdoor dining areas have not helped to increase street activity, however two (10%) of the respondents were unsure. Whilst there were no consistent themes as to why respondents felt there was increased street activity, individual responses included, increased variety of dining options and less footpath congestion.
- All respondents (100%) to the street survey indicated that they would like the expanded outdoor dining trial to continue beyond 8 March 2021.

- Some respondents indicated that they believed that The Terrace required more dining options to make it more attractive for visitors.
- One respondent commented that the outdoor dining spaces should be re-purposed when not used for dining, such as for buskers and live music.
- Some respondents commented that they believed that The Terrace was now a more inviting place for people, due to the expanded outdoor dining spaces that had been provided.

ONLINE FEEDBACK

The purpose for the online feedback page was to ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to provide feedback on the expanded outdoor dining trial, in an open text format. The majority (66%) of the online respondents were people who reside in Ocean Grove.

As outlined on Page 4, there were a total of 94 online submissions received, with 74 (79%) of the submissions being overall supportive about the initiative, 17 (18%) submissions overall not supportive, and three (3%) mixed or neutral.

A representation of some of the themes raised via the online feedback are noted below in the form of quotes from individual respondents:

“The initiative has been a great experiment in improving the amenity and accessibility of the Ocean Grove shopping strip.”

(Ocean Grove Resident)

“I like that the cafes can safely open and serve customers during COVID - makes me feel more protected with the additional space.”

(Ocean Grove Visitor)

“...It has changed the look and feel of a car centric town centre which is now more inviting...”

(Ocean Grove Resident)

“We went through a couple of weeks ago, and it was just as busy as ever and didn’t notice too many missing car parks. The outdoor seating was busy and didn’t have any problem driving through.”

(Ocean Grove Visitor)

Increased traffic congestion as a result of narrowing The Terrace. One car stops to park and it stops the whole street.

(Ocean Grove Business Owner)

“It has provided hospitality businesses on the strip an opportunity to bounce back after a year from hell.”

(Ocean Grove Resident)

“Love the expanded dining areas. Found I have spent more time in the OG shopping precinct because of the more pleasant atmosphere”

(Ocean Grove Visitor)

“It’s sick keep it!”

(Ocean Grove Business Owner)

NEXT STEPS

The engagement findings report provides an essential step in helping us to understand all stakeholder views regarding the expanded outdoor dining trial that has been established in The Terrace.

These findings will inform the evaluation of the initiative, and to help us determine whether the trial should continue beyond Monday 8 March 2021.

The final decision will be made in advance of the trial end date and will be communicated to all respondents who have provided the City with an email address. Businesses in The Terrace (between Presidents Avenue and Hodgson Street) will be notified directly.