



Waste and Recycling Strategy 2030

What We Heard Report

October 2025

**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**



Executive summary

Between 1st and 31st August 2025, we conducted a comprehensive community engagement process to inform the development of the Waste and Recycling Strategy. Through online and paper surveys, focus groups, pop-up events, and social media outreach, over 1,400 individuals and organisations shared their views on current waste services and future priorities.

Key findings

- Environmental sustainability emerged as the top priority across all groups, followed by convenience and cost-efficiency.
- Most residents are confident using the four-bin system, though some confusion remains around public bin use and waste separation.
- There is strong support for weekly green bin collections in summer, expanded drop-off points, and repair/reuse initiatives.
- Illegal dumping and litter are major concerns, with calls for increased enforcement, faster clean-up responses, and better infrastructure.
- Businesses and community organisations expressed interest in more flexible waste services, especially for green waste and bulk disposal.
- Education is seen as the preferred method for addressing bin misuse, but enforcement is supported for repeat offences.

This feedback provides a clear mandate for us to develop a strategy that is environmentally responsible, community-focused, and adaptable to changing needs. The next phase will involve translating these insights into practical actions and service improvements that support a cleaner, more sustainable Hobsons Bay.

Engagement snapshot



The community engagement overview

From 1st August to 31st August 2025, we sought feedback from the community to capture how our current waste and recycling services are working for them, what we can do better and any ideas they might have. The project was advertised on our social media platforms on the 6th and 12th of August.

Both in-person and online engagement activities were offered, including:

- An online survey on Participate Hobsons Bay.
- Paper surveys were sent to ratepayers with the most recent delivery of Rate Notices. The paper survey was slightly shorter than the online survey (fewer questions) due to space constraints. Therefore, the results are recorded separately from the online survey.
- Two focus group sessions, each lasting two hours, were held and attended by 16 participants.
- 6 In-person pop-ups:

Business Networking event, 6 th August 2025, 05:30 pm to 07:00 pm - Civic Centre	Laverton Community Centre, 12 th August 2025, 11:30 am to 01:30 pm	Altona North Library, 13 th August 2025, 09:30 am to 11:00 am
Business workshop, 13 th August 2025, 10:00 am to 11:30 am - Civic Centre	Altona Meadows STEAM Centre, 16 th August 2025, 09:30 am to 01:00 pm	New to you Market, 17 th August 2025, 10:00 am to 03:00 pm

In-person pop-ups

As part of our consultation on the Waste and Recycling Strategy 2030, six pop-up survey stalls were held in August 2025. A total of 122 people participated in the ball vote, including 99 residents, 10 businesses, and 13 not-for-profit and community organisations.

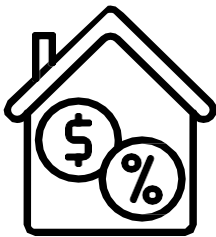
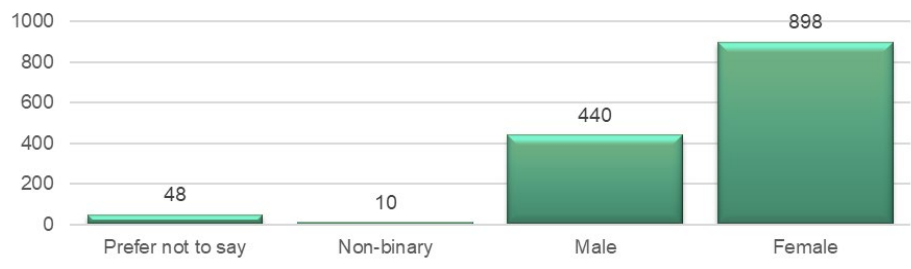
For residents, the most important factor for us to consider in developing the new Waste and Recycling Strategy was the environment (68.7%), followed by convenience (16.2%) and cost (15.1%). Among businesses, the majority (80%) supported introducing a more flexible waste and recycling service, even if it costs more, while 20% were unsure. For community and not-for-profit organisations, 54% supported a more flexible service (even if at a cost), with 38% unsure and 8% opposed.

Dates		Wednesday, 6 August 2025 – Tuesday, 26 August 2025	
Number of events		6	
Interactions			
Ball vote participants – residents		99	
Ball vote participants – businesses		10	
Ball vote participants – NFPs & community organisations		13	
Ball vote - Residents			
What’s most important for Council to consider when planning the waste and recycling service?			
Environment	Cost	Convenience	
68	15	16	
68.7%	15.1%	16.2%	
Ball vote - Businesses			
Should Council offer a more flexible waste and recycling service for businesses, even if it costs more?			
Yes	No	Maybe	
8	0	2	
80%	0%	20%	
Ball vote – Community and not-for-profit organisations			
Through Council, NFPs get the same waste and recycling service as households for free. Should Council offer a more flexible service for NFPs (e.g. bigger bins, more or fewer collections), even if it cannot be offered for free?			
Yes	No	Maybe	
7	1	5	
54%	8%	38%	

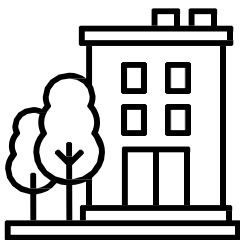
Online Survey - Who we heard from

The survey engaged approximately 1.5% of Hobsons Bay’s population, with responses distributed across all suburbs. Most areas achieved a participation rate between 1–2%, while smaller suburbs like Seaholme (3.45%) and Williamstown North (2.96%) were particularly well represented. This breadth of engagement, combined with behavioural insights, shows that we heard from a diverse cross-section of the community, not just those already active in sustainability programs. Respondents varied in their confidence with the four-bin system, expressed mixed habits around waste disposal, and showed strong interest in practical future services such as repair workshops and soft plastics recycling. Overall, the survey captured voices from across the municipality with differing levels of environmental awareness and everyday practices, providing a robust foundation for planning inclusive waste and recycling initiatives.

What is your gender?



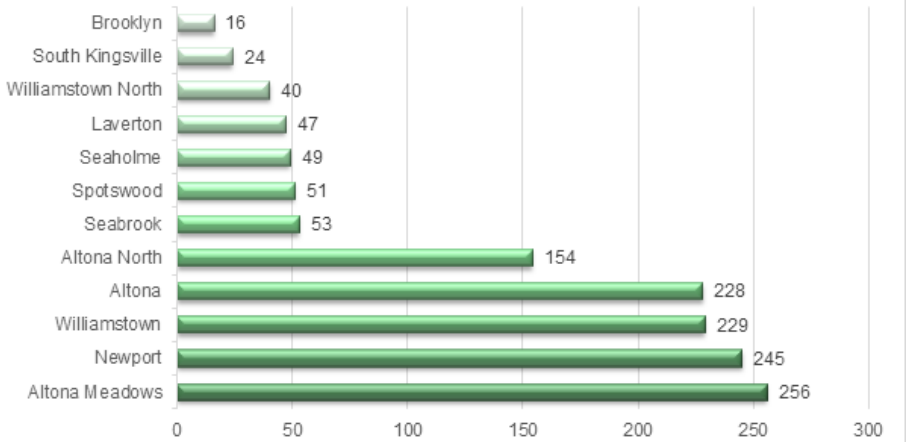
90% of respondents own their home, as opposed to renting



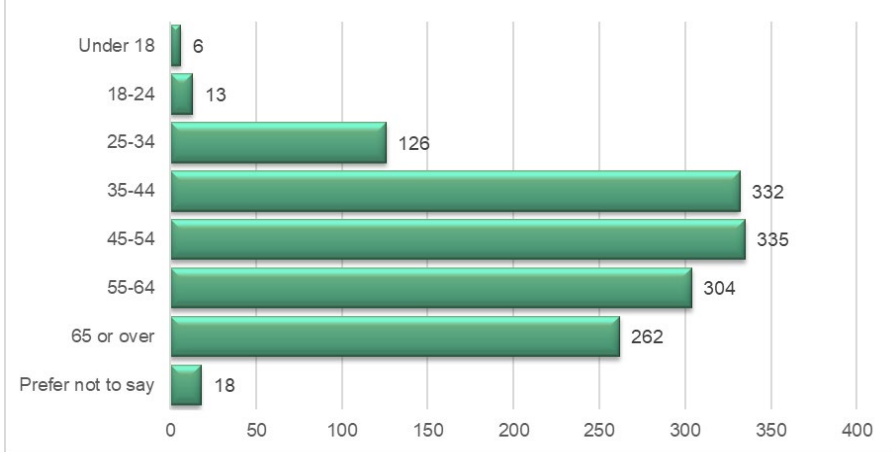
73.5% of respondents live in a house

26% live in a unit, townhouse, or apartment

What suburb do you live in?



Which age group do you belong to?



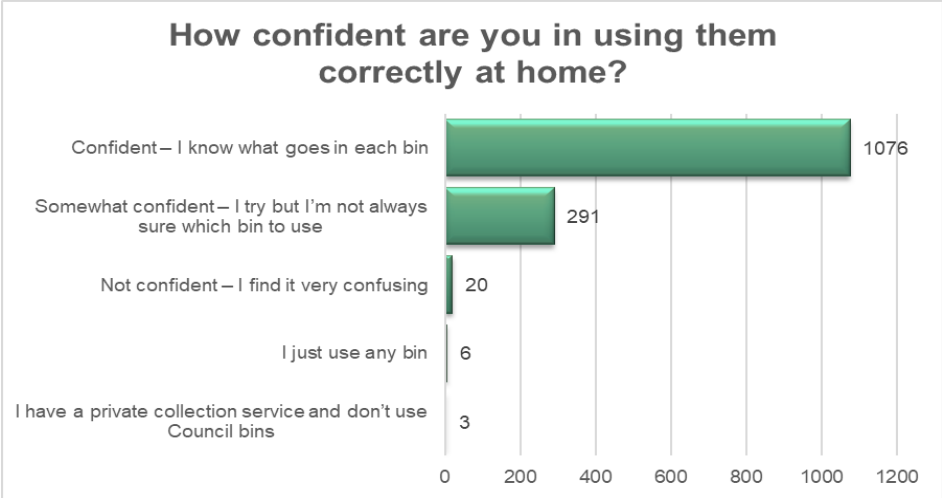
99% of respondents live in Hobsons Bay,

1% were businesses or organisations

Online Survey - What we heard

Confidence in using the four bin system at home.

Most respondents reported being confident in using the four-bin system correctly, indicating strong awareness of waste separation practices. However, a small portion expressed confusion or uncertainty.



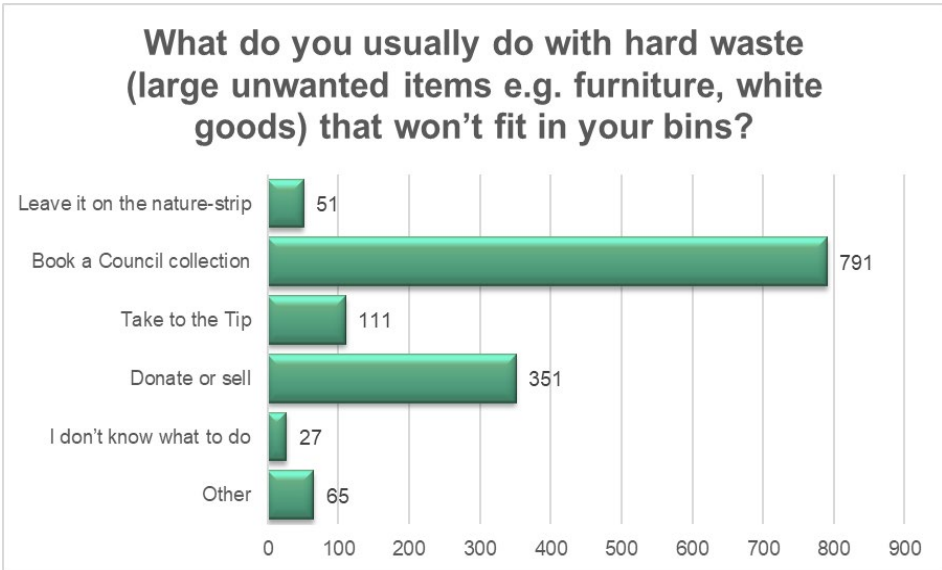
Confidence in using public litter bins

Most participants felt confident using public litter bins, though a few noted confusion about which bin to use for specific items.



Disposal of hard waste

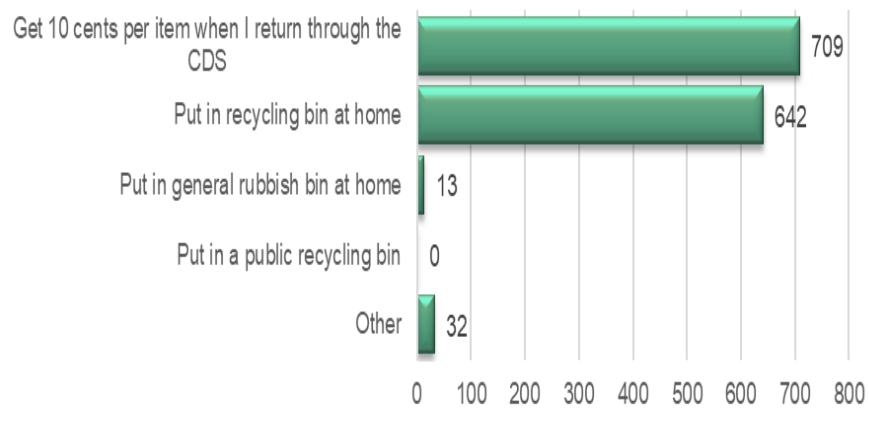
Most residents book a Council collection or take items to the Tip, but a notable minority leave items on the nature strip. Where people have selected 'other', there is a mixture of people stating that they haven't had to dispose of hard waste before or that they do a mixture of all.



Disposal of small bottles and cans

The Container Deposit Scheme is widely used, with many residents returning items for a refund. Others rely on home recycling bins, indicating a mix of convenience and incentive driven behaviour. Where 'other' has been selected, people collect the bottles and cans to give to family, friends, or neighbours.

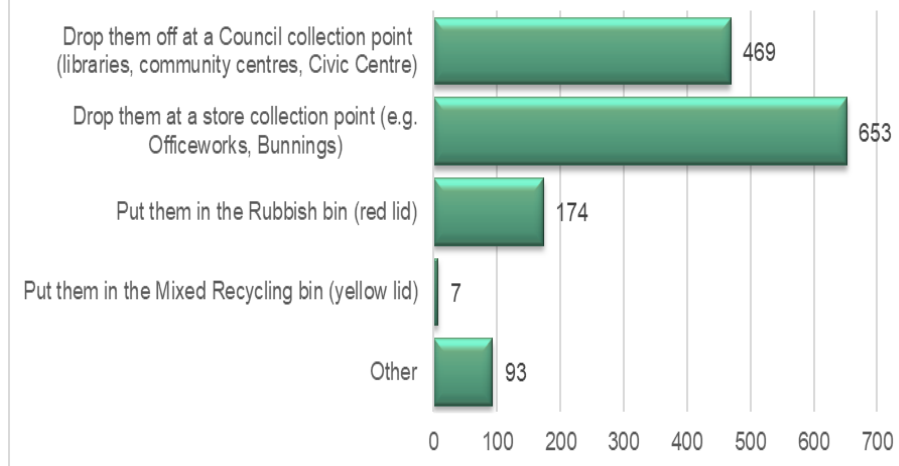
What do you usually do with small bottles and cans?



Disposal of batteries and electronics

Most respondents drop off e-waste at Council or store collection points, though some still dispose of these items in General Rubbish. Where people have selected 'other', they indicated they have not had to dispose of any batteries or electronics, take them to work to dispose of or a mixture of all the options.

What do you usually do with old batteries or electronics?



Participation in Council programs

Most people have not participated in any Council programs relating to waste and recycling. The drop-off recycling days are the most popular of all the programs.

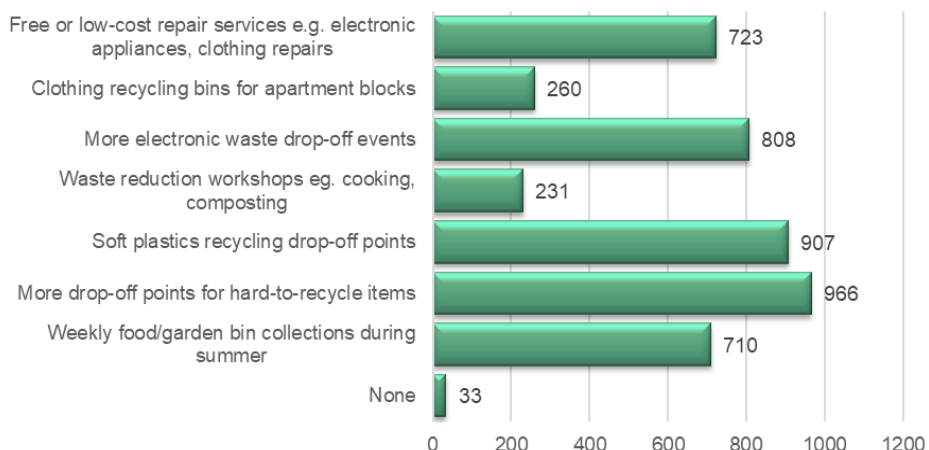
In the last year, have you used/participated in any of these programs?



Services residents would use if offered

There was strong interest in repair services, and more drop-off points for hard to recycle or dispose of items. Weekly food/garden bin collections during summer were also popular, indicating seasonal needs and a desire for waste reduction support.

What services would you use if offered?



Priorities for waste and recycling services

Environmental benefits were the top priority for most respondents, followed by convenience and cost efficiency. This reflects a community that values sustainability but also expects practical and affordable services.

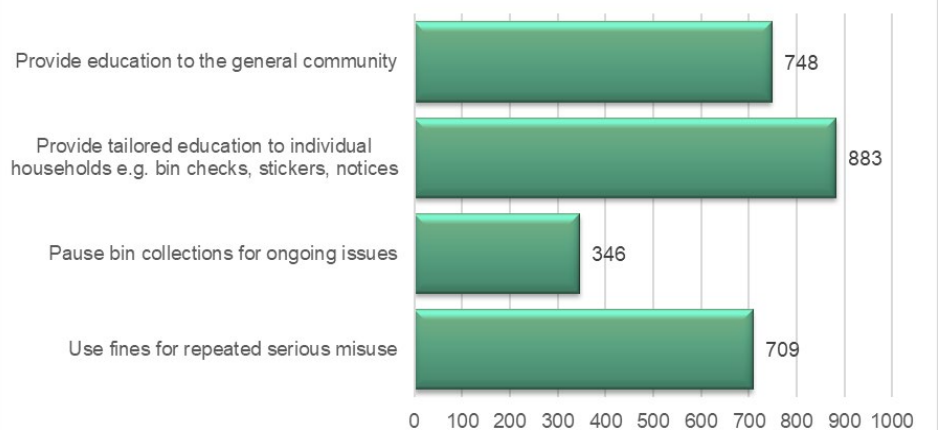
What's most important for Council to consider when planning waste and recycling services?



Response to incorrect bin use

Education was the preferred approach for addressing bin misuse, though some supported tailored interventions and fines for repeat offenders. This suggests a balanced community view favouring education first, with enforcement as a backup

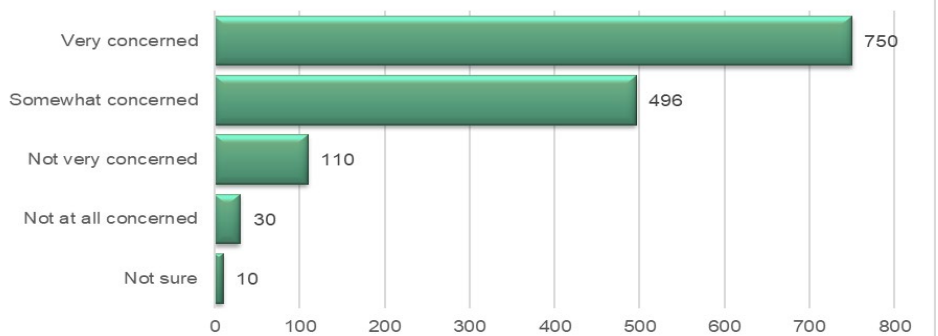
What should Council do about residents who keep using their bins incorrectly?



Concern about dumped rubbish

Residents expressed high concern about illegal dumping, mentioning its environmental and visual impact. The issue is seen as persistent and costly, reinforcing the need for proactive measures

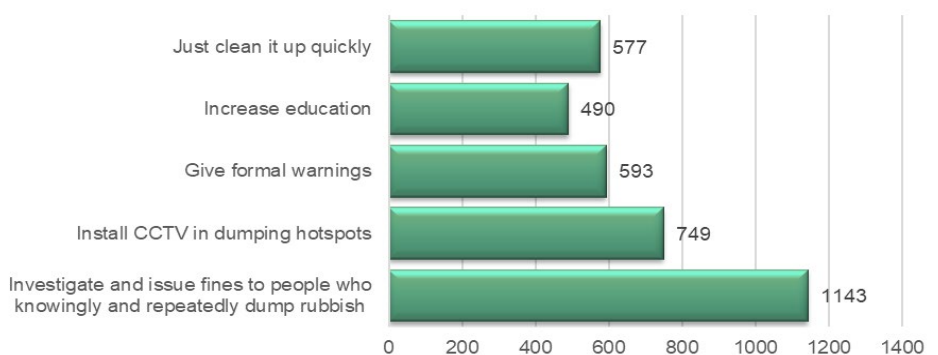
How concerned are you about dumped rubbish?



Council actions on dumped rubbish

The most supported approach was to investigate and issue fines to people who knowingly and repeatedly dump rubbish, indicating a clear preference for accountability and deterrence. In contrast, the least supported strategy was to increase education, suggesting that while education is valued, it may not be seen as immediately effective in addressing the issue

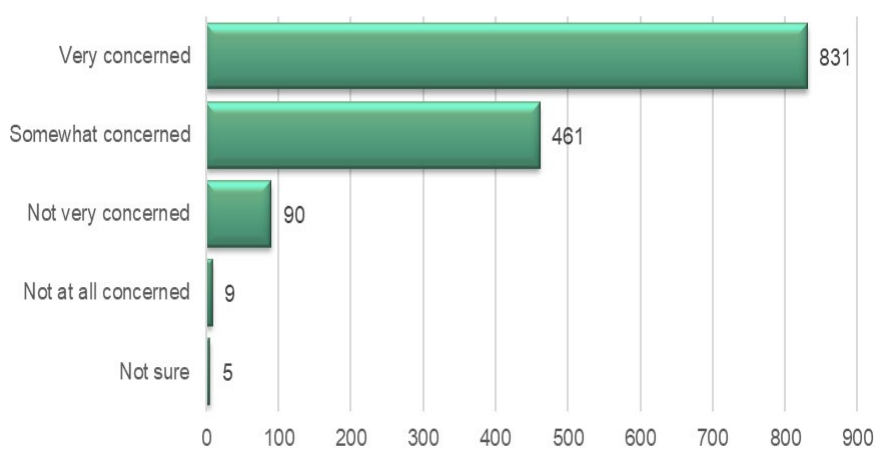
What should Council do about dumped rubbish?



Concern about litter in public spaces

Litter in streets, parks, waterways, and beaches is a major concern. Residents want more bins, better maintenance, and stronger community education to address this issue

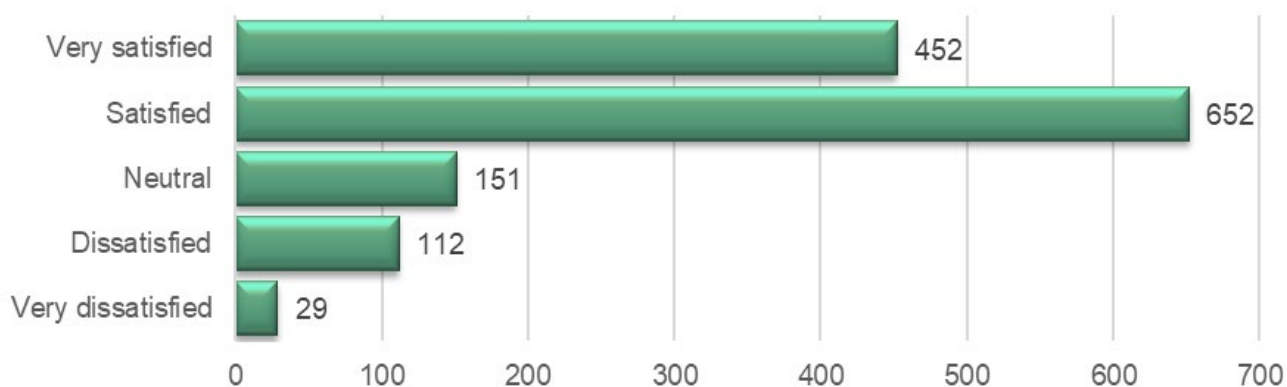
How concerned are you about litter on the streets, parks, waterways and beaches?



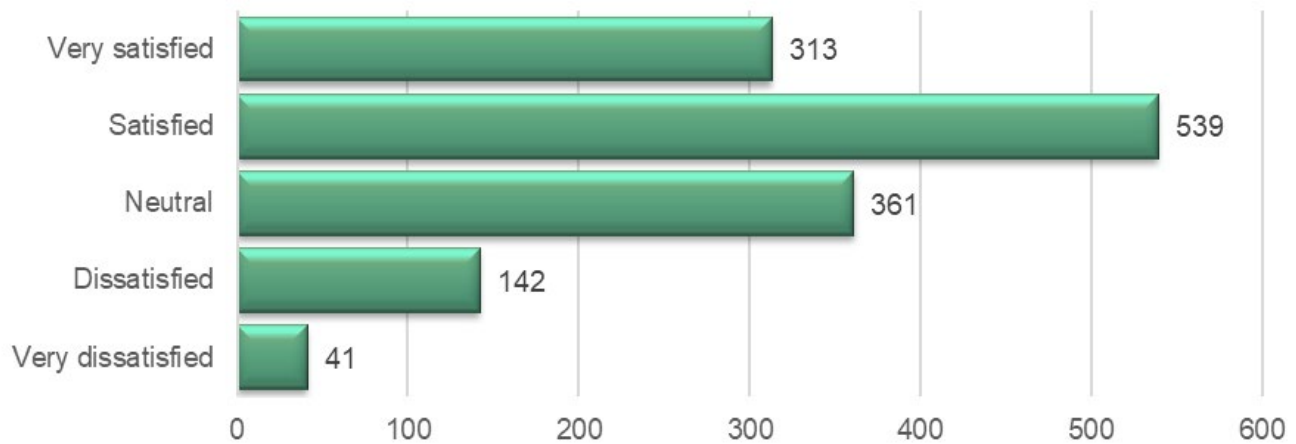
Satisfaction with services

Most respondents were satisfied with the four-bin system, hard waste collections, public litter bins, and street sweeping services. Respondents were less satisfied with our response to dumped rubbish, and open-ended feedback revealed dissatisfaction with bin frequency and street cleanliness.

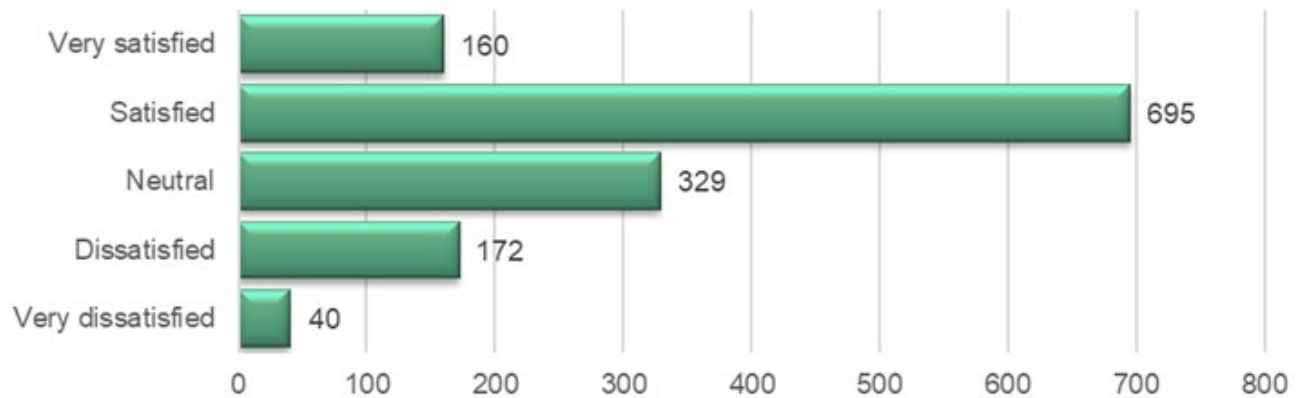
Four bin waste and recycling system at home



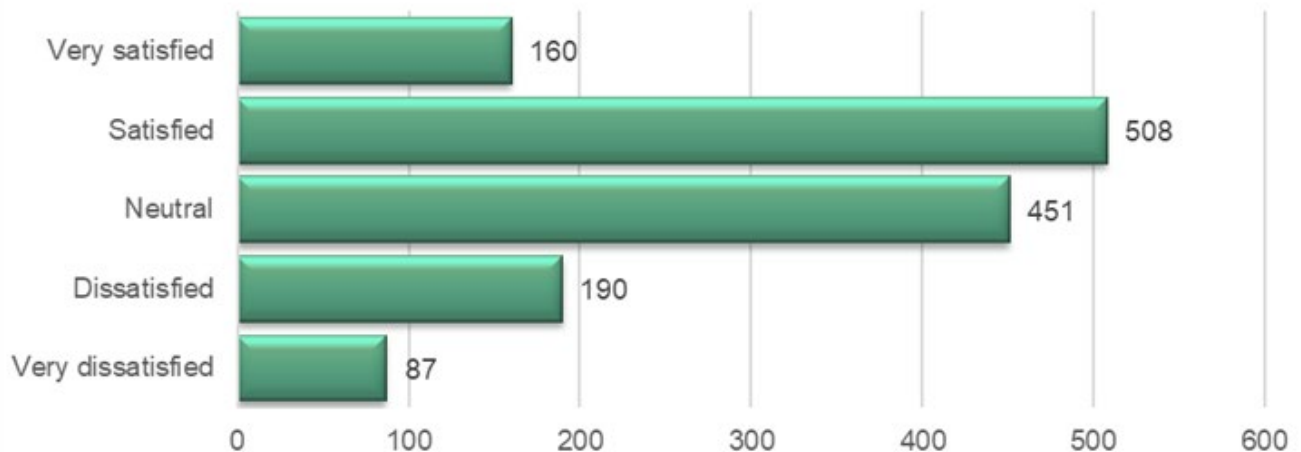
Hard waste collections



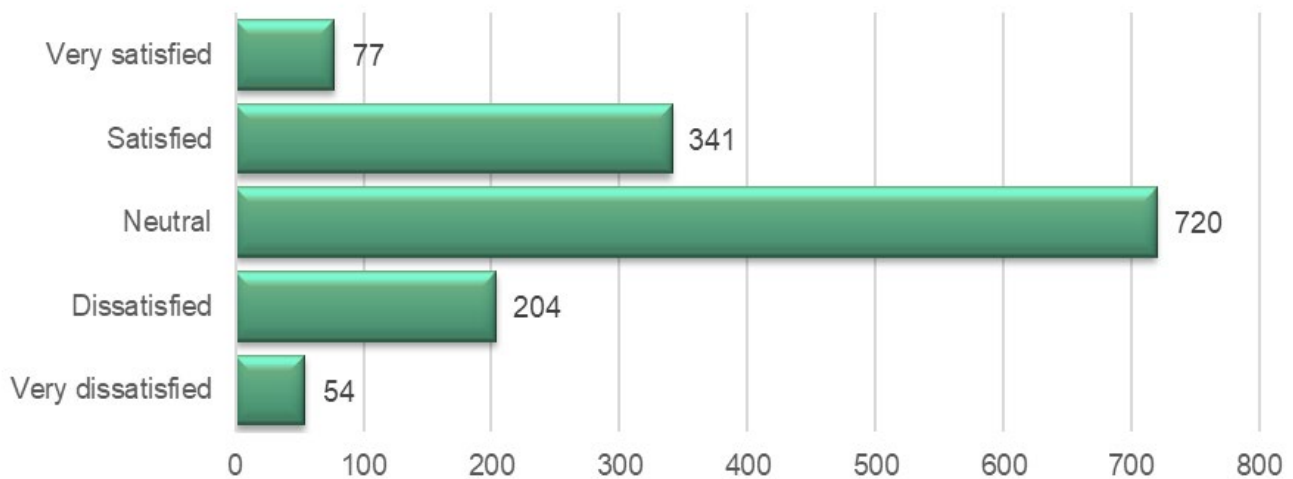
Public litter bins



Street sweeping



Dumped rubbish response



Online Survey - Summary of open-ended questions

Themes	Feedback
Waste collection preferences	Strong support for weekly green bin collection, especially in warmer months, due to hygiene concerns (odours and pests). Preference for fortnightly red bin collection to encourage better recycling habits. Requests for more frequent hard rubbish collections (at least twice a year) and tip vouchers to reduce illegal dumping.
Recycling and disposal practices	Need for more public recycling bins, especially in parks, beaches, and high-traffic areas. Calls for soft plastics recycling and more e-waste drop-off points. Suggestions for centralised collection points for glass and paper to reduce bin clutter at home.
Public cleanliness and infrastructure	Complaints about overflowing public bins and infrequent street sweeping, especially in areas with parked cars. Requests for better scheduling and notification of street sweeping. Concerns about dumped rubbish hotspots and slow council response times.
Education and communication	Calls for clearer bin labelling, better recycling instructions, and multilingual educational materials. Suggestions for school programs, social media campaigns, and creative content to promote proper waste disposal. Desire for more transparency about what happens to recycled materials.
Environmental and community initiatives	Support for community composting, reuse and repair programs, and 'library of things' initiatives. Advocacy for council procurement of recycled products and partnerships with charities to reduce landfill. Suggestions for reward systems for households that manage waste responsibly. Issues with bin size and number, especially in townhouses and apartments. Requests for biodegradable food waste bags and better bin maintenance. Concerns about dog waste, graffiti, and litter in commercial areas.
Additional comments	Frustration with bin misuse and contamination, especially in shared housing. Accessibility concerns for residents with disabilities or limited space. Strong demand for reinstating soft plastics recycling and advocacy to reduce packaging waste. Praise for reporting tools like Snap Send Solve, with suggestions for better follow-up.

Business survey

We received 14 responses to our online survey. Most respondents were from businesses in Hobsons Bay, with a small percentage from community groups/sports clubs/not-for-profits.

Half of the respondents operate from a retail/commercial shopfront or from home, with some also operating from office spaces, warehouses, industrial areas or community venues.

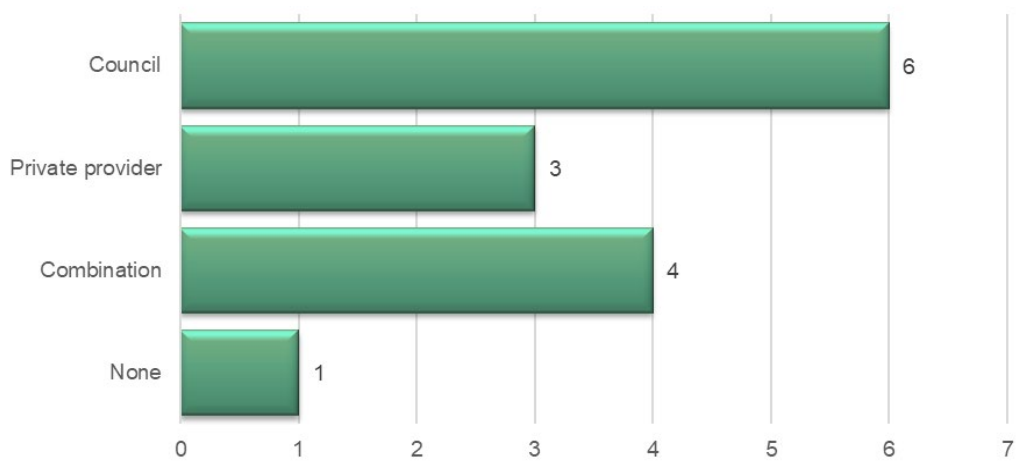
The majority currently receive waste and recycling services from Council, and many indicated they dispose of large items via Council's hard waste collection or by taking items to the Tip. The most valued aspects of the Council's service include its low cost, environmental benefits, and regular collection schedule.

When asked about potential service enhancements, a strong proportion expressed interest in more frequent collections and larger bins. There was a common concern about illegal dumping and litter, with many supporting increased education, enforcement, and surveillance measures.

Are you?



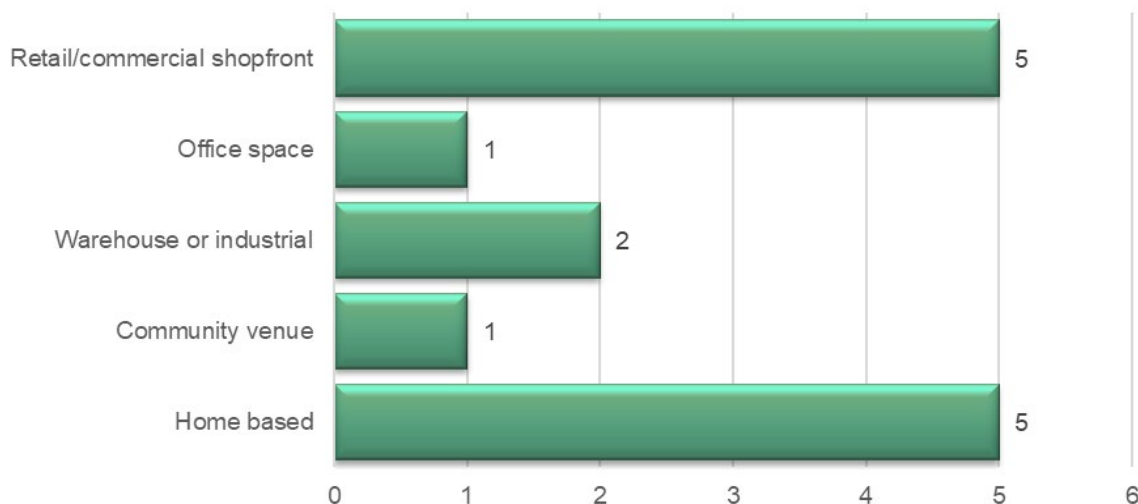
Do you currently receive waste and recycling services from?



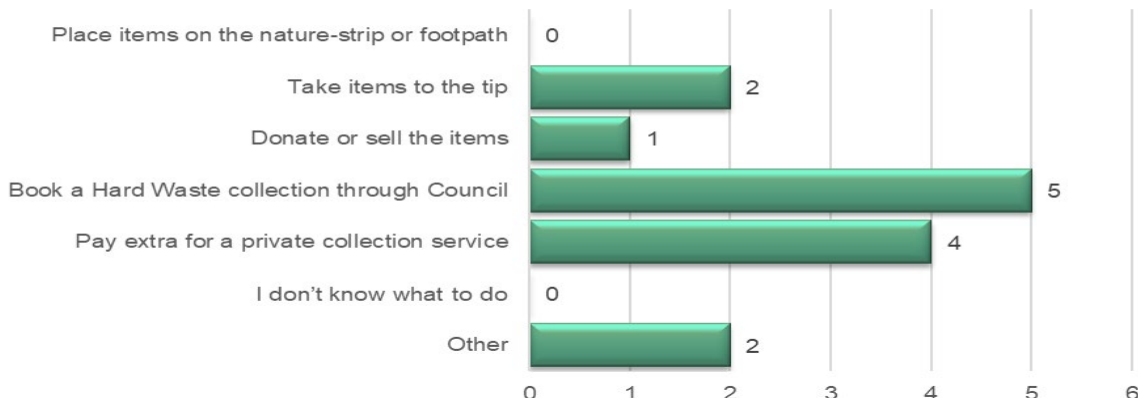
What are the positive elements of Council's service?



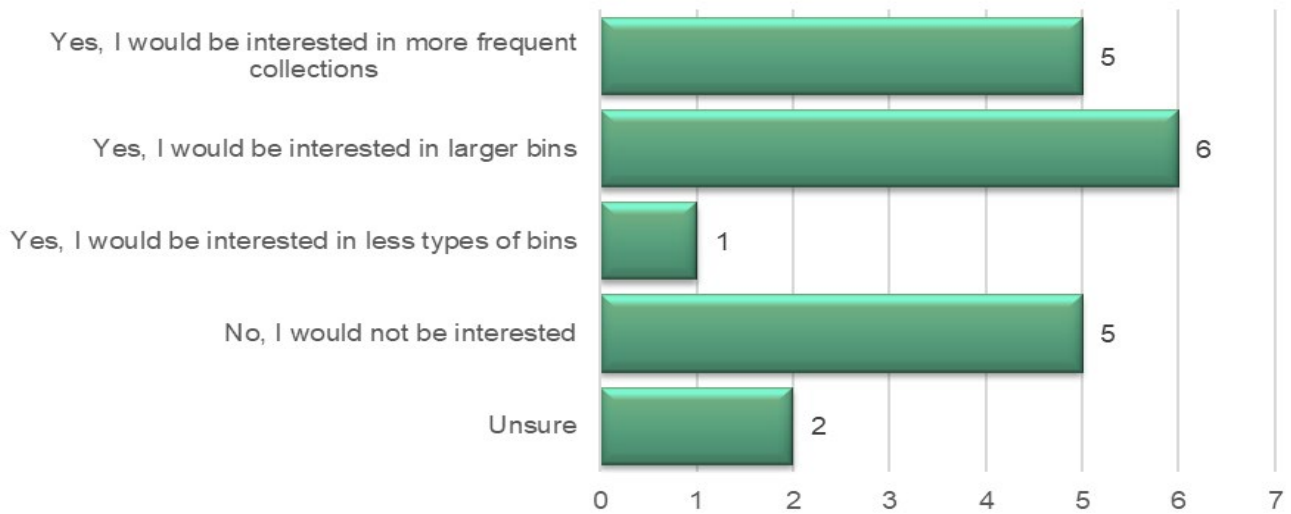
What type of premises do you use?



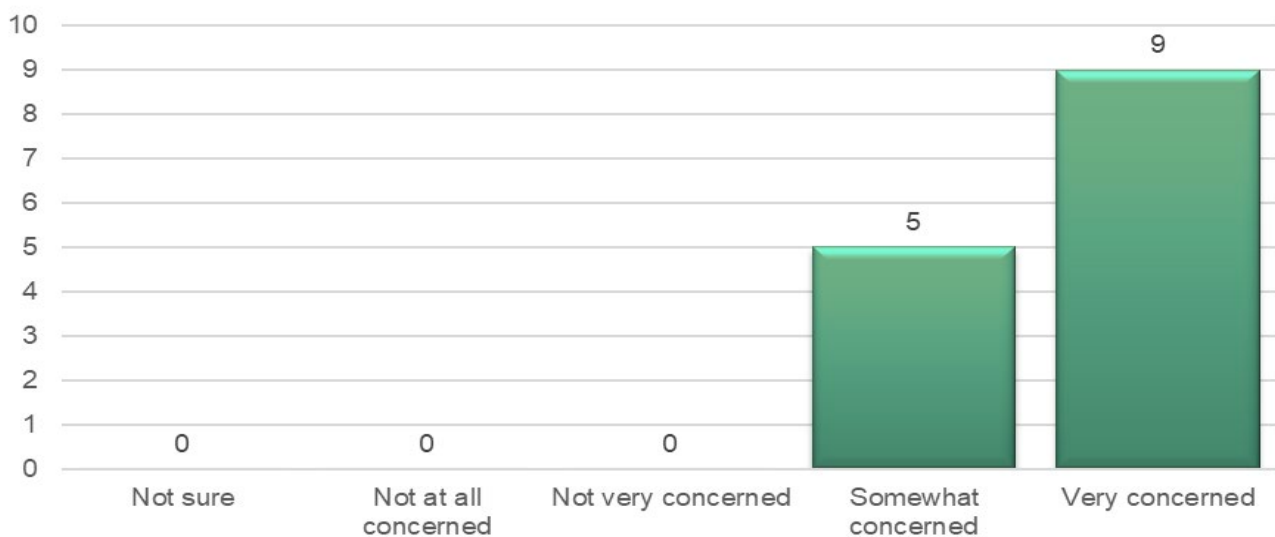
How do you get rid of large items or extra rubbish that doesn't fit in your bins?



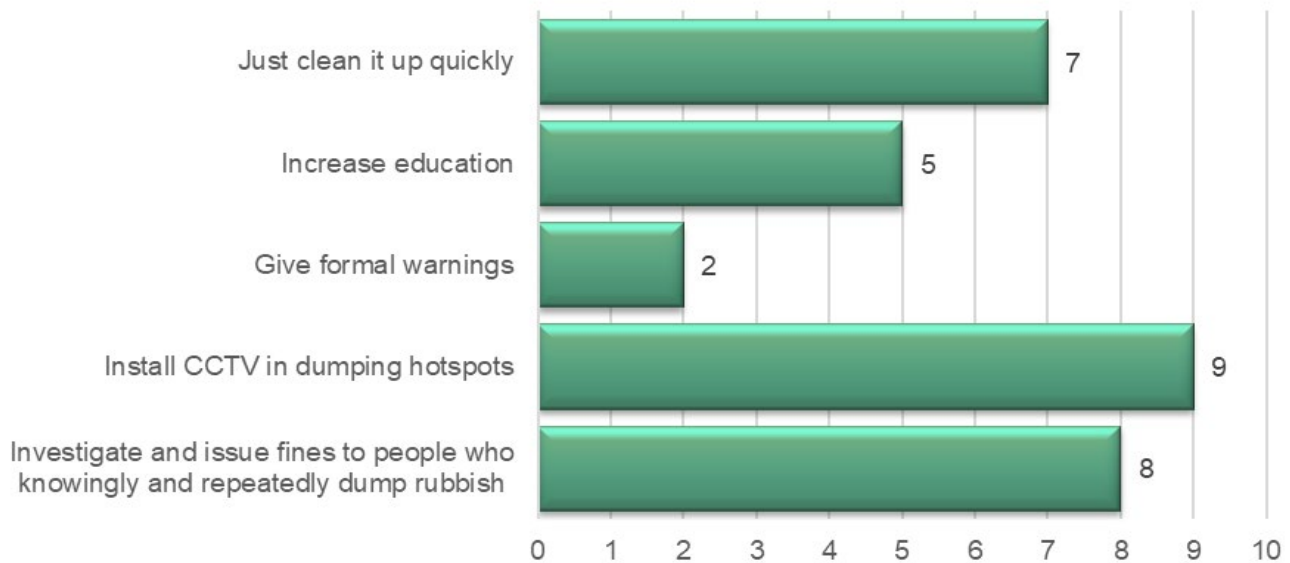
Should Council explore providing a service with more flexibility?



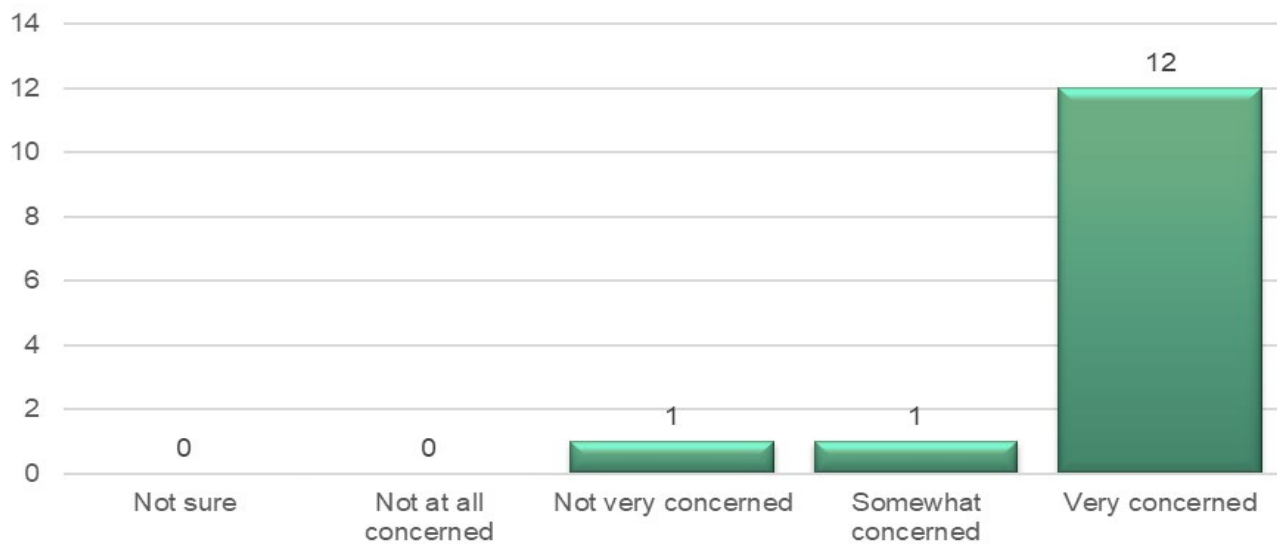
How concerned are you about dumped rubbish?



What should Council do about dumped rubbish?



How concerned are you about litter on the streets, parks, waterways and beaches?

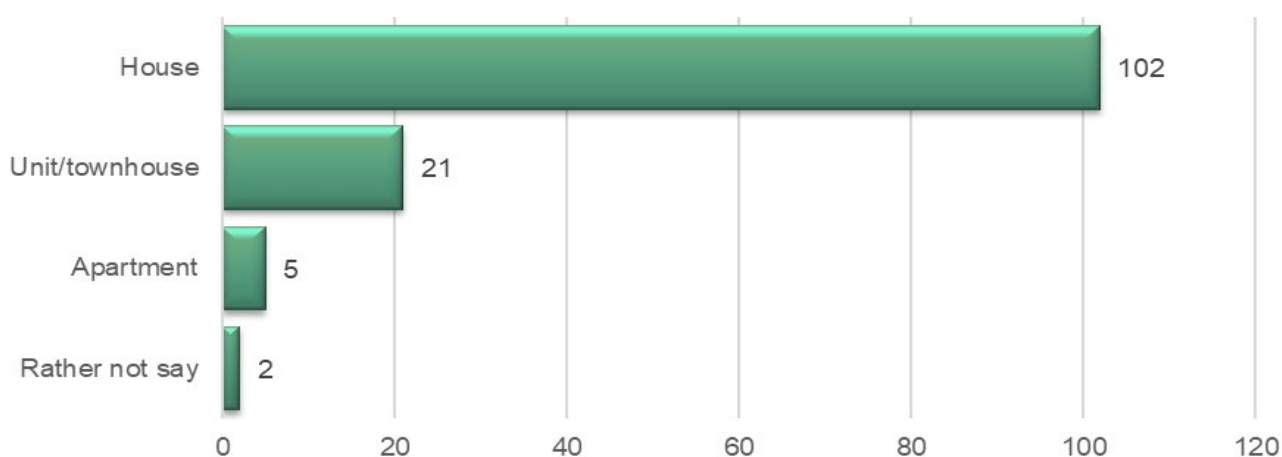


Paper surveys

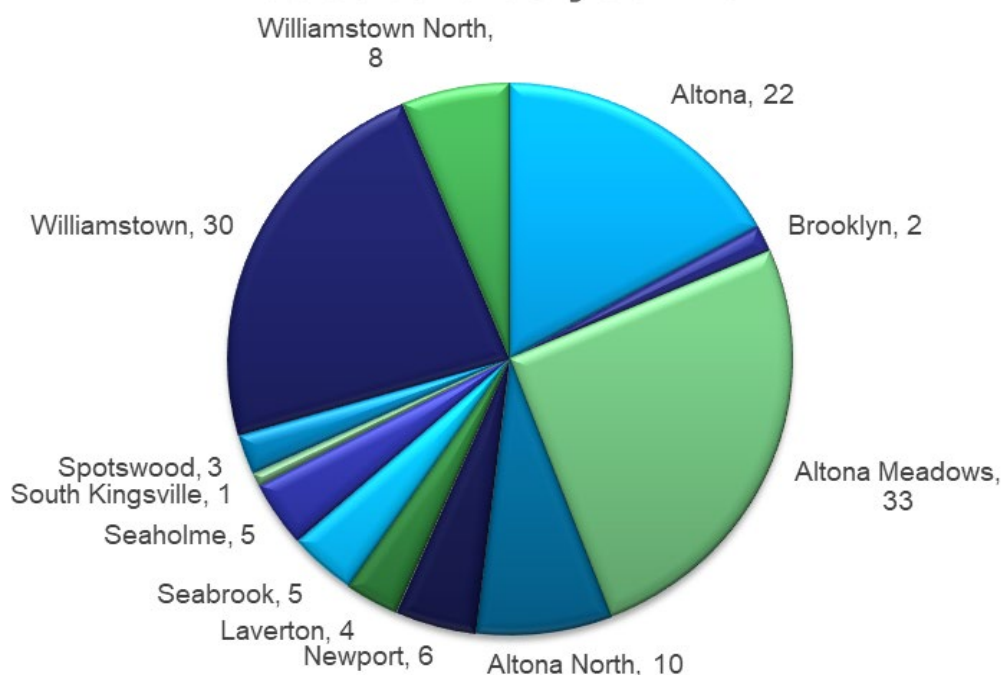
We received 130 paper survey responses, and like the online survey, they reveal strong concerns about waste management practices. Most respondents expressed high confidence in using both household and public bins, though some noted confusion and misuse, particularly in shared bin areas.

Key concerns included dumped rubbish, litter in public spaces, and the environmental impact of waste. Most participants had not engaged in Council programs. Drop-off recycling day and Recycling Made Easy cabinets were the most popular, and respondents showed interest in expanding services, including soft plastics recycling, repair workshops, and more frequent green bin collections.

What type of home do you live in?



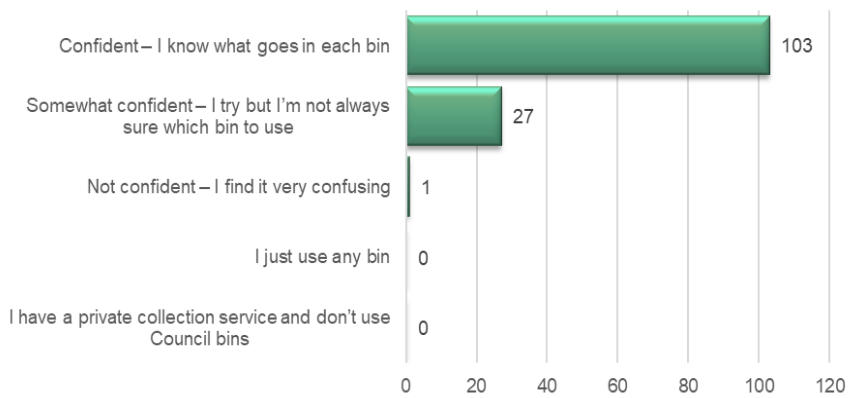
What suburb do you live in?



Confidence in using the four bin system at home

Most respondents reported being confident in using the four-bin system correctly, indicating strong awareness of waste separation practices.

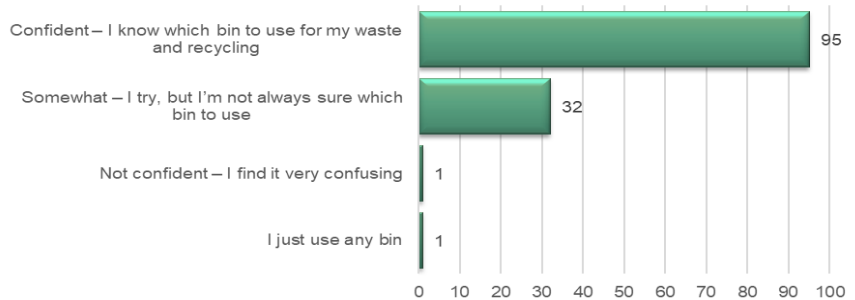
How confident are you in using them correctly at home?



Confidence in using public litter bins

Most participants felt confident using public litter bins.

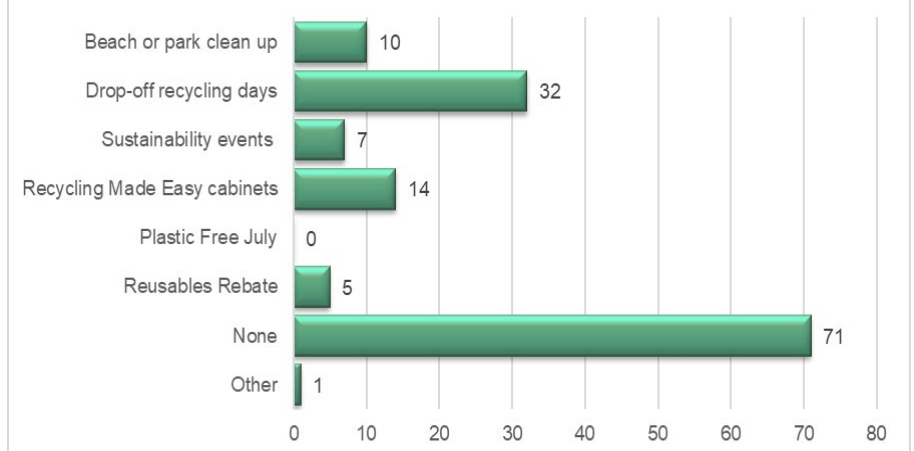
How confident are you using the different types of public litter bins in Hobsons Bay?



Participation in Council Programs

Most people have not participated in any Council programs relating to waste and recycling. The drop-off recycling days are the most popular of all the programs.

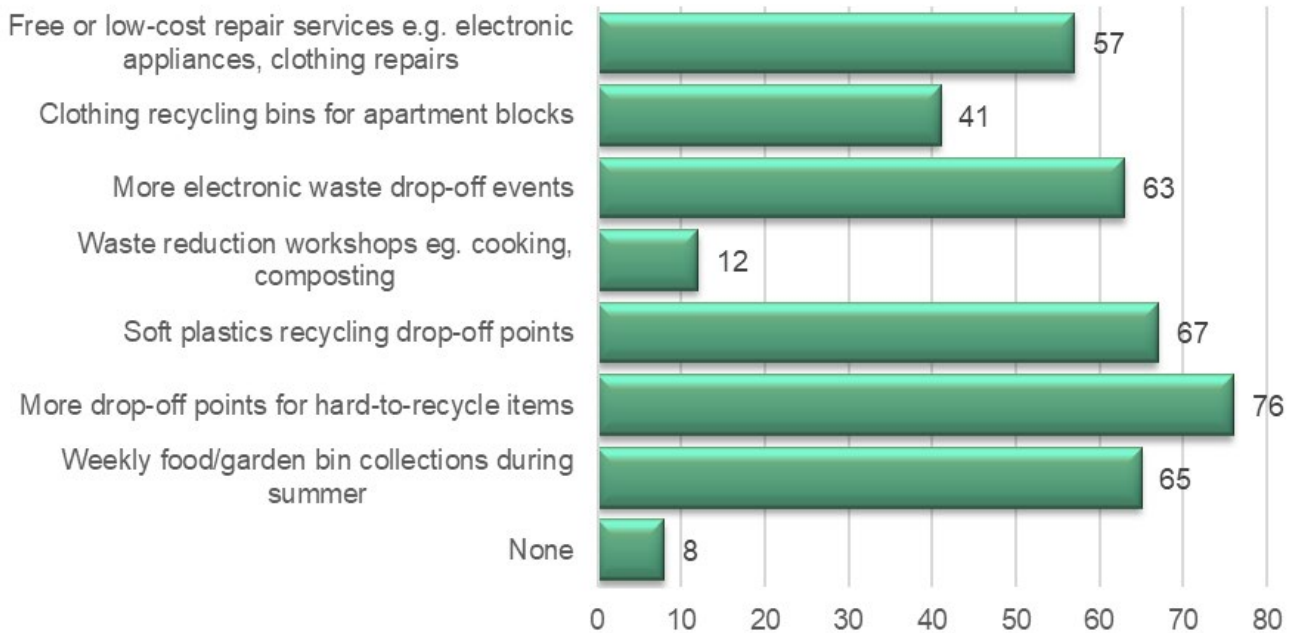
In the last year, have you used/participated in any of these programs?



Services residents would use if offered

There was strong interest in more drop-off points for hard to recycle or dispose of items such as soft plastics. Weekly food/garden bin collections during summer were also popular, as were free or low-cost repair services.

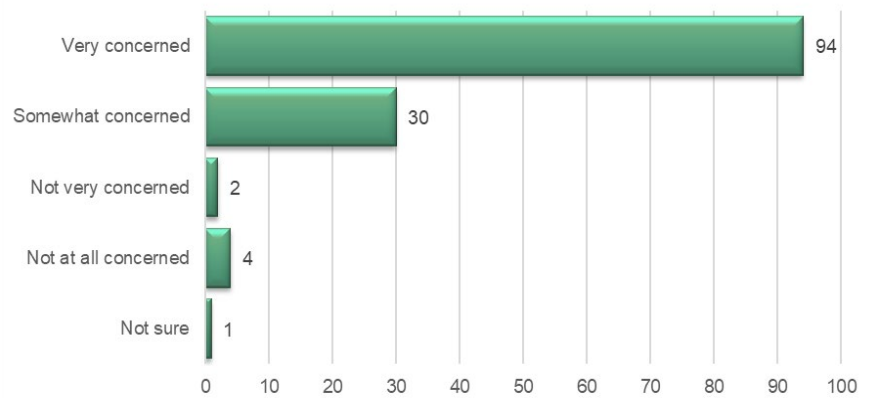
What services would you use if offered?



Concern about dumped rubbish

Residents expressed high concern about illegal dumping.

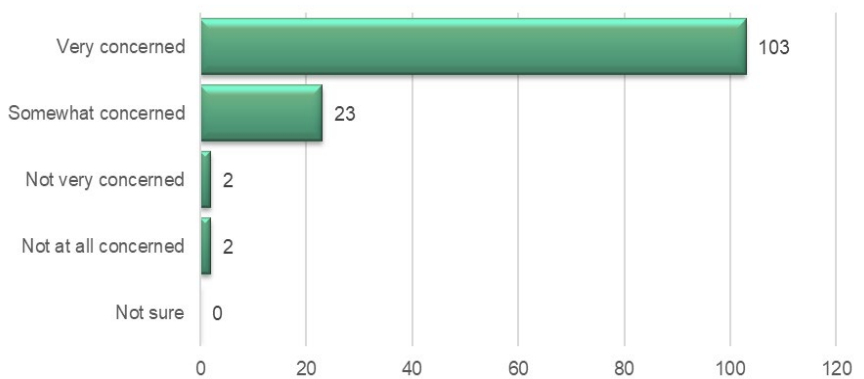
How concerned are you about dumped rubbish?



Concern about litter in public spaces

Respondents expressed significant concern about litter in public areas.

How concerned are you about litter on the streets, parks, waterways and beaches?



Priorities for waste and recycling services

Like the online survey, environmental benefits were the top priority for most respondents, followed by convenience and cost efficiency.

What's most important for Council to consider when planning waste and recycling services?



Conclusion

The feedback gathered through this engagement process highlights a community that is environmentally conscious, engaged, and eager to see improvements in waste and recycling services. Across all community engagement activities, participants indicated that environmental benefits should be the primary consideration in guiding Council's waste and recycling decisions; however, convenience and affordability are also very important considerations

Residents and businesses expressed strong support for enhanced services such as weekly green bin collections in warmer months, expanded drop-off points for hard-to-recycle items, and repair and reuse initiatives. Concerns about illegal dumping, litter in public spaces, and bin misuse were widespread, with many calling for a combination of education, enforcement, and infrastructure upgrades.

The comments also revealed a desire for clearer communication, better bin labelling, and more inclusive education efforts particularly for diverse households and shared living environments. Businesses highlighted the need for more flexible waste services.

This community input provides a clear direction for Council to develop a waste and recycling strategy that is responsive, inclusive, and future-focused. By aligning services with community priorities and addressing key challenges, Hobsons Bay can move toward a cleaner, more sustainable future for all.

Appendix One – Focus Group Insight Report

The report presents the findings of a focus group conducted by Perspicacious consultants. It explores resident attitudes, priorities, and reactions to two proposed initiatives: Reduction of Public Bin Waste Streams and Waste to Energy (WtE). The report presents an analysis of residents' feedback on waste and recycling priorities, revealing key insights into community sentiment and proposed solutions. The findings highlight a complex and frequently contradictory set of expectations, offering a guide for future strategic decisions.

Summary Report: Focus group findings

Introduction

As part of developing Hobsons Bay City Council's new Waste and Recycling Strategy, two community focus groups were held in August 2025. The sessions were facilitated by Perspicacious, an independent research and consultation agency. Participants were recruited to ensure demographic and geographic diversity, ensuring that feedback reflected a broad range of ages, backgrounds, neighbourhoods, attitudes and behaviours.

The focus groups aimed to support Council in making informed, community-focused decisions by:

- Gathering diverse perspectives from across the Hobsons Bay community (demographically and geographically) to ensure feedback is inclusive and representative;
- Exploring in-depth responses to the two concepts Council may explore as part of the new Strategy; and
- Providing actionable insights to directly inform the focus and strategic direction of the new Strategy.

Resident priorities

When asked what should matter most in Council's waste and recycling decisions, participants graded the following priorities according to their importance (averaged across individual responses):

- 45% – Environmental benefits
- 35% – Cost efficiency
- 20% – Convenience

There was no single "right answer" as every single participant weighed these priorities differently. However, across all groups, residents agreed that trust, transparency, and long-term thinking are key to building confidence in Council's waste and recycling decisions.

Concepts for consideration

In the focus groups, residents were asked about two key ideas:

1. Changes to the public bin waste streams – for example, removing recycling bins in public places where they're often misused or heavily contaminated.
2. Waste to Energy (WtE) – turning non-recyclable waste into energy.

Concept 1: Changes to public bin waste streams – According to the focus group findings, if Council were to explore this option, residents emphasised that alternatives to removing bins should be considered. Participants suggested enhanced public education and innovative technologies to reduce contamination or misuse.

Key findings:

- Mixed sentiment: The idea of reducing the number of recycling bins available in public places (e.g. in locations where they are often misused or heavily contaminated) received mixed; slightly leaning to negative; sentiment. Some residents recognise potential cost savings and transparency in the approach, while others are concerned it could be perceived as a step back for recycling and felt it sent the wrong message about the importance of recycling.
- Concerns about litter and overflowing bins: Any changes would need to ensure that removed recycling bins are replaced with suitable general rubbish bins.
- Alternative solutions: Many residents would prefer Council to pursue more innovative solutions like 'smart bin' and/or sensor technology. Participants also suggested options such as improved signage and public education.

Concept 2: Waste to Energy – According to the focus group findings, Waste to Energy (WtE) was received with cautious optimism. However, this support was conditional and hinged on assurances of transparency, safety, and strict regulation.

Key findings:

- Conditional support: Most people were open to WtE, if it can be demonstrated as being safe, transparent, and well-regulated.
- Perceived benefits: Residents viewed WtE as a bold, modern, and ambitious solution that could provide genuine environmental benefits by diverting waste from landfill and creating a new energy source. However, this is seen as a "big picture" solution that extends beyond just Hobsons Bay City Council.
- Health: Key concerns were around location of the WtE facilities and any associated air quality and health impacts.
- Transparency: People wanted clear assurances of transparency, safety, and strict regulation before backing it fully.
- Cost and collaboration: Residents recognised this kind of project would be expensive and need collaboration between councils and higher levels of government.

Next steps

Council will use insights from the focus groups, alongside feedback from other community engagement activities, to develop a new Waste and Recycling Strategy that reflects community needs and priorities.