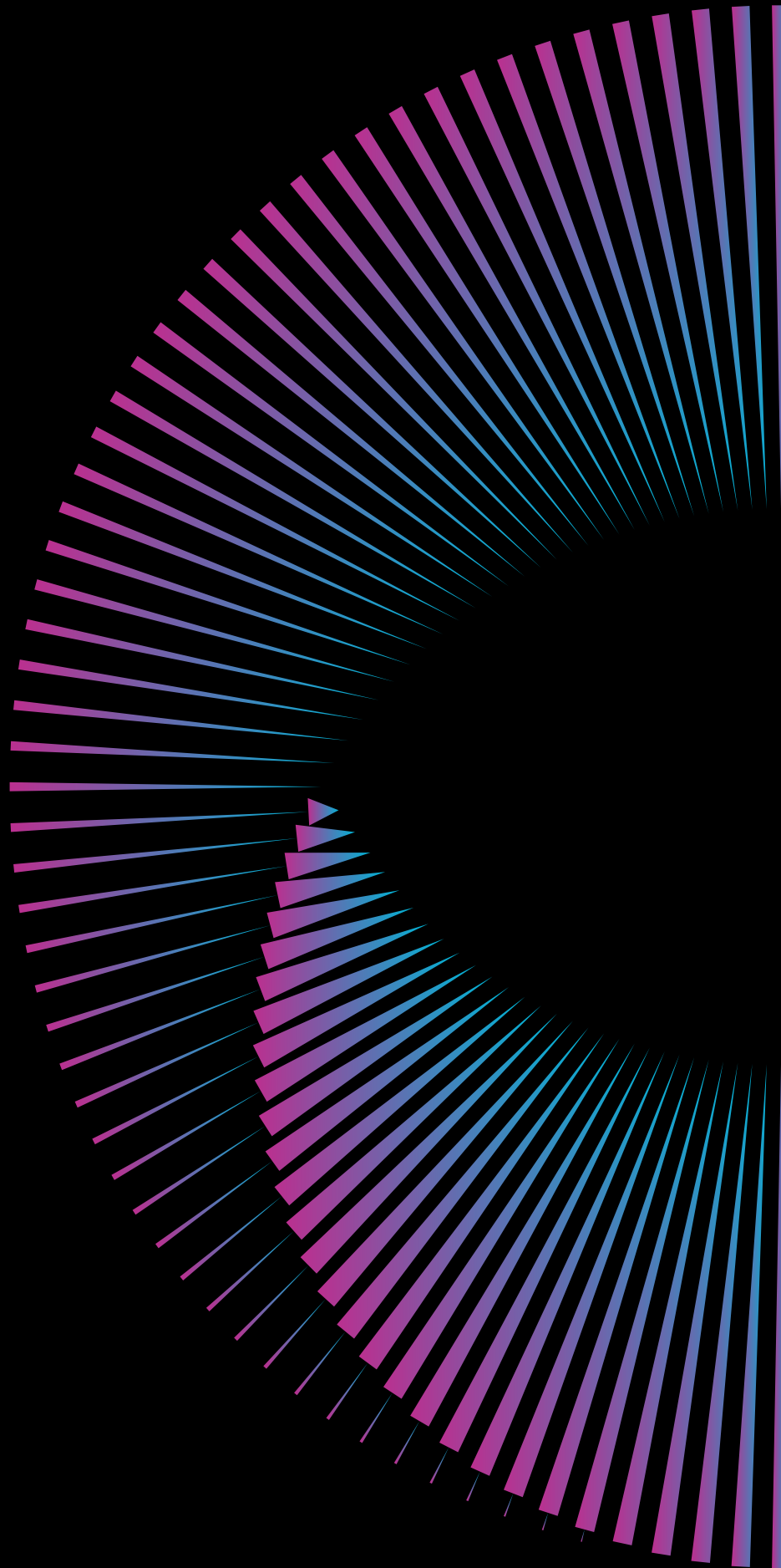


# M2050 Summit Report





# Help shape the kind of city we want to be by 2050



## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations. We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.





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11 July 2025

Cover image: M2050 Summit held in May 2025. Photo credit: Dijana Risteska

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# Foreword



The Melbourne 2050 Summit brought together Melburnians from across the community to share their ambitions for our city's future.

**When Melbourne is at its best, we are the greatest city on Earth. Our shared vision for Melbourne is a belief that we can create a city that is bigger, better and fairer.**

Greater Melbourne will grow – it is projected to have nine million citizens by 2050, roughly the size of London today. We must ensure that this expansion improves our quality of life by adding to our city's liveability, vibrancy, energy, culture, environmental sustainability, and scientific capabilities.

We will build an economy that is outward looking, competitive, highly skilled and that generates opportunity and growth for all.

We will achieve this by building on Melbourne's existing strengths: the land we share with the traditional owners; our founding democratic heritage as the 'Athens on the Yarra'; our institutions of culture and learning; our beautiful gardens and spectacular bay; our joyful, multicultural community; our literature, music, sport and major events. And most of all, our welcoming and friendly nature.

Melbourne stands out for our liveability. For our stability. For our famed culture and events.

Melbourne gives people fulfilling lives, full of dignity and purpose. The Melbourne dream will give people a quality of life second to none. We will protect this at all costs.

Great cities are not built overnight. They are built over generations. Each big decision and mighty effort builds on what came before.

At the Melbourne 2050 Summit, we asked ourselves: What should Melbourne be like in the year 2050?

We discussed and debated the big ideas and the bold initiatives that will secure Melbourne's place at the top of the world league tables.

We want to build a city that delivers on our city's economic potential, our willingness to innovate, our joy for life, our responsibility to our planet, and our democratic values – a city where we can connect with each other, know each other, care for each other, love and respect each other. A city that is truly the best and fairest.

*Nick Reese*

**Lord Mayor of Melbourne**  
Nick Reese

Thank you to the City of Melbourne Council for supporting the M2050 Summit including: Deputy Lord Mayor Roshena Campbell, Councillor Andrew Rowse, Councillor Rafael Camillo, Councillor Dr Olivia Ball, Councillor Davydd Griffiths, Councillor Dr Owen Guest, Councillor Mark Scott, Councillor Gladys Liu, Councillor Kevin Louey, and Councillor Philip Le Liu.





# Overview

## Talking about Melbourne’s future.

When we look to Melbourne’s future, we see a city that is poised for growth and transformation. A city with a population that is set to soar past 9 million by the 2050s.

As we plan for the next 25 years in Melbourne, we have an opportunity to shape the city so that it is the best place to live work and play.

We need to think big. We need to look beyond the horizon, play to the city’s strengths and prepare for the unexpected. Most of all, we need to make sure the community is at the heart of our plans.

How do we want to feel as Melburnians as we approach 2050? How do we achieve the best possible future for ourselves and generations to come?

We are consulting widely as we prepare a community vision that will steer us through the decades to come. We call it the Melbourne 2050 Vision or M2050 Vision.

## Creating a community vision together.

The M2050 Vision outlines the community’s priorities and ideas for the future. It places the community’s aspirations at the core of our planning. This community vision will guide all our planning and inform our key decisions and strategic documents over the coming decades.

To create the M2050 Vision, we need to understand what matters most to all Melburnians. What do we want to be known for? What will make us one of the world’s most liveable cities for generations to come?

Ready to listen to as many voices as possible, we invited Melburnians to share their big ideas for the city’s future by taking part in the M2050 Summit. We also heard from the community through the People’s Panel, a Youth Roundtable, a First Nations Roundtable and an online survey.

What we learn along the way creates a collective impression of Melburnians’ priorities and ideas for the future. They will guide us as we prepare our M2050 Vision. and the next Council Plan.



# About the M2050 Summit

## The M2050 Summit was a major moment for Melburnians to share their big ideas for the city’s future.

More than 700 people from all walks of life came together for the day-long summit at Melbourne Town Hall in May 2025.

1,450 people were directly invited to attend and we ran an expression of interest process open to all Melburnians, with more than 1,000 members of the community putting their hands up to come along.

The decision to run the M2050 Summit was made through a council resolution at the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on 10 December 2024.

### Diverse voices

In the room we had representatives from peak bodies, sector leaders and experts, First Nations People and Traditional Owners, our partners in state and federal government and elected members.

Also attending were small and big business owners, entrepreneurs, residents, ratepayers, and workers, and a group of 80 young people - school students and youth leaders - as well as international students, came along to provide their unique perspective.

We also heard from more than 850 people who couldn’t make it on the day via our online M2050 Vision survey.

### What we heard

Attendees gathered to dream up and discuss big ideas across six themes. Together, participants refined more than 550 priorities.

In this report we explore the common themes and top priorities emerging from these discussions. Read on or delve into the details from page 13.





# What happens next

We're analysing the priorities and ideas captured at the M2050 Summit to understand what matters most to Melburnians about their future.

These values – alongside feedback from the M2050 Vision Survey, the People's Panel, a First Nations Roundtable and a Youth Roundtable – will be used to prepare a draft vision for community consultation later in 2025.

We will also be informed by data and evidence that shows how our city is changing, and the wider and global trends we'll need to respond to, so we are ready for our future.

Later this year, Council will consider the draft M2050 Vision and a Council Plan. If approved, those drafts will be shared for community consultation.

Once we have received community feedback on the draft documents, refined versions will be presented to Council at its Future Melbourne Committee meeting for endorsement.

# Preparing for our future

What will our future hold?

Melbourne in 2050 may look, feel and operate in ways that are different from today. Many possible scenarios and paths are ahead of us. By bringing Melburnians together to create the M2050 Vision, we have an opportunity to pause and examine the way we live. It's a chance to look at our world today and identify the trends we think will affect us tomorrow. It's also a way to show what is important to us.

When we understand what we value as a community, it's easier ask whether decisions made today will lead us to our best possible future for generations to come. Every decision matters. The more we are involved in decision-making as Melburnians – caring about our future and speaking up where things need to change – the more we can shape the outcomes we want.

Meanwhile, the world around us is constantly evolving. Some changes we can predict, while others catch us off-guard or move more quickly than we anticipated. By watching for emerging trends and understanding how they might affect the city, we will find ways to grow with the world around us as.

The M2050 Summit is an important moment in an ongoing conversation about how we want our city to feel, and our hopes for the future in the decades ahead.





# Tomorrow starts with us

## Questions from the Youth Roundtable.

**Young Melburnians are the people who will choose to live work and play in this great city 25 years from now.**

Ahead of the M2050 Summit, we convened a three-hour Youth Roundtable at narm ngarrgu Library, bringing together 25 participants aged 16 to 25.

Here, young people created a set of principles to be displayed at the M2050 Summit.

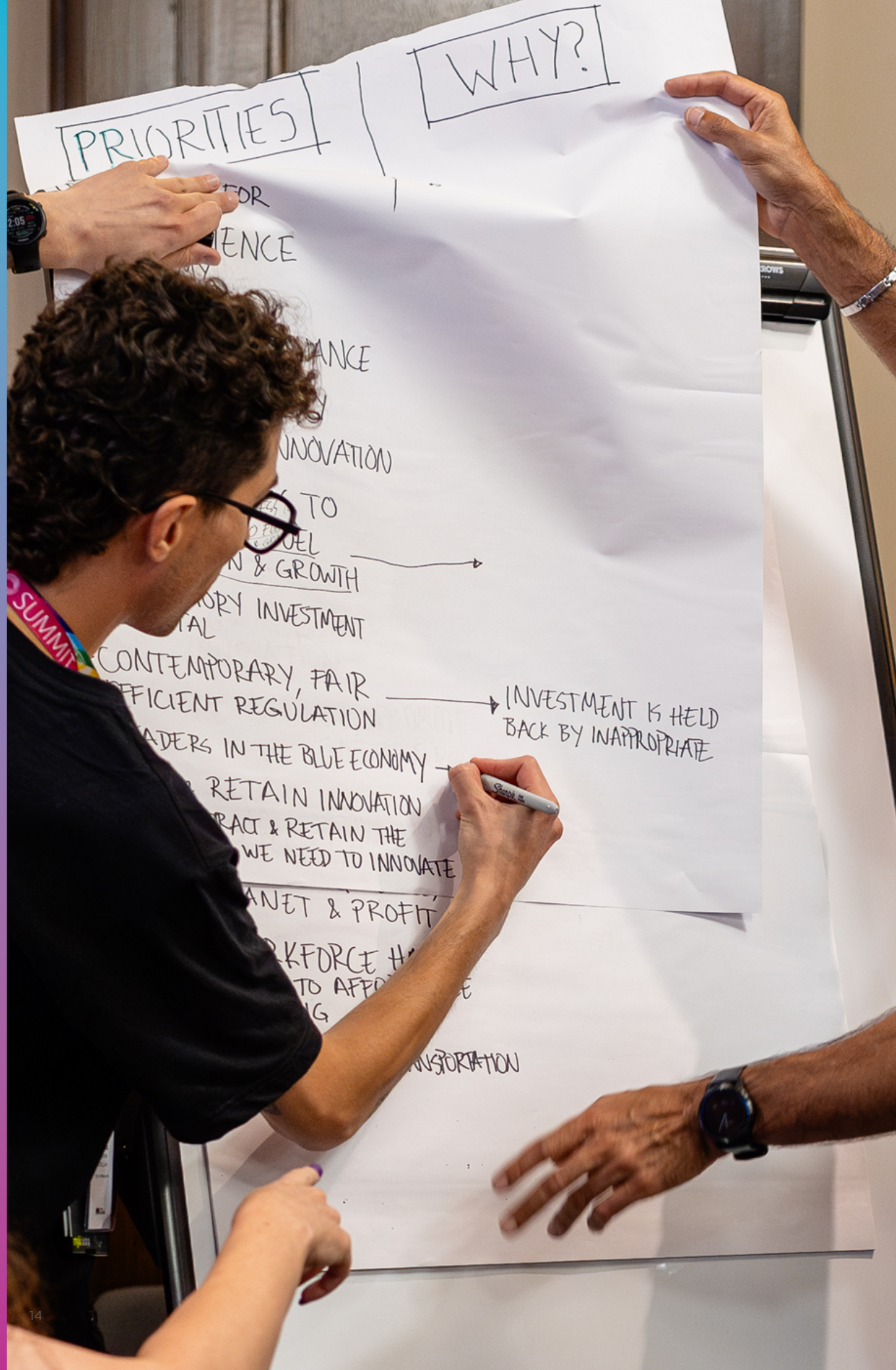
Framed as questions, these principles were designed to challenge participants at the M2050 Summit as they discussed the future of our city.

### We ask you to think about whether your ideas:

- Create a future more inspired by hope than fear?
- Enable Melburnians to feel a sense of belonging within the city? Respecting and nurturing their identity, culture and values?
- Ensure transparent and community-driven policies which lead to positive, long-term and measurable impact?
- Increase economic stability and sustainability in the long run?
- Affect our relationship with other countries?
- Create something that can be easily improved or changed into the future?
- Intersectionally acknowledge the climate emergency and employ transparent accountability in all actions?
- Promote equity and opportunity for groups including youth, vulnerable communities, small businesses, migrants and First Nations people?
- Create a positive impact on our planet and opportunities for everyone?







# Summit snapshot

The feeling in the room was electric as all sorts of people with a deep connection to Melbourne arrived for the M2050 Summit.

City-shaping luminaries set the tone with a morning of speeches that reflected on the many paths that have shaped the Melbourne we know and love today, and our common desire to pave the way to a future city where everyone feels welcome.

Participants broke out into groups and talked through 1,000 big ideas and shortlisted different priorities.

To help frame the conversation we grouped these priorities into six themes. Participants then refined these ideas until they agreed on five clear priorities for each theme.

The following pages outline the themes and the top five priorities that emerged as well as the big ideas that came up in discussions.

The top 50 big ideas were shared in a summary at the end of the day. Go to the appendix on page 30 to read what it said.

## Six themes at the M2050 Summit

- Liveability and wellbeing
- Economy and innovation
- Knowledge and creativity
- Climate and environment
- Movement and infrastructure
- Democracy and leadership





# Liveability and wellbeing

## Our longlist of priorities

The idea of inclusion and connection came up often amid discussions about liveability and wellbeing. Participants wanted to see Melbourne as a friendly, welcoming city with connected communities, where no one is lonely.

People wanted to see spaces suitable for all ages, background and life stages: “create spaces for young and old people to come together,” and “enabling Melburnians (no matter who they are) to feel welcome and a sense of belonging.” Intergenerational fairness, mental wellbeing and a sense of belonging were also highlighted.

Housing affordability and accessibility was a key priority with a goal that Melbourne takes a “human-led approach to homelessness” and that no-one is without a home by 2050. A city where we have a “spectrum of housing in all neighbourhoods to meet needs,” and where we have “higher density affordable housing so more types of people can live in the city.”

Participants considered affordability impacts on key workers: “workers need to be able to afford to live in the city, so they have time to participate in life of the local community,” and “frontline workers who can’t by definition do hybrid work need incentives and local housing.”

Access to green spaces and safety and activation of public spaces were common points of discussion. There was a desire for accessibility and inclusion embedded in all policies, planning, city design and services. This included working with people with a disability and young people. The notion of inclusion extended to a desire to develop a “more child-friendly culture” in Melbourne.

When speaking about city safety and public space, priorities included that we will need “community spaces that foster safety, happiness and inclusivity,” where the city is “a living and playing space at all times of the day, and how to activate the city at different times.” Some suggested that to achieve city vibrancy, we prioritise walking and riding on our streets, improve connections between public transport modes.

Participants discussed green open spaces and environmental sustainability and a CBD that prioritises biodiversity. Or that we could “use green space to grow your own food,” and be a “city known for its green rooftops.”

### Curate and cultivate community in all places

#### Priorities for liveability and wellbeing

- Prioritise the development of affordable, accessible homes
- Create more connected, accessible green spaces
- Promote a clean, safe city
- Ensure accessibility and inclusion is embedded in city design
- Provide accessible services for every stage of life

#### Ideas to help us achieve these priorities

- Adaptive reuse of buildings for affordable housing
- A 24/7 city – light, bright, activated, with retail, hospitality and community facilities open later at night
- 15-minute neighbourhoods
- Planning permit to require additional greening for new developments
- Introduce Developer Contribution Plans for social contributions and services
- Create multipurpose buildings to enable intergenerational uses and services
- Green bridges that connect high-rise buildings
- Pedestrianise the CBD
- The Big Swim - the Birrarung will be a safe, healthy, swimmable, accessible waterway
- Evolve how we use community spaces like libraries, childcare centres, and sports facilities, with longer opening hours

## Big ideas for liveability and wellbeing

People’s ideas for liveability and wellbeing considered building inclusive communities and neighbourhood hubs, with pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure. Some people felt services and community spaces should be more accessible, no matter the time of day.

Common threads included having flexible spaces for people from all backgrounds, and people feeling welcome and included in the city. When thinking about our way of life in 2050, ideas about more greenery – on walls, along streets and as a way of providing food in the city – often came up.

People want to live sustainably and embrace new ways of doing things: having a robust circular economy with 100% recycling and green policies, fewer cars in the CBD, and local spaces where most of the services and facilities we need are close by.

“Enabling Melburnians, no matter who they are, to feel welcome and a sense of belonging.”

## Youth voices on liveability and wellbeing

in the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 4 themes emerged around liveability and wellbeing:

- housing and homelessness
- mental health
- safety and accessibility
- harm reduction and support services.

Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:

- an abundant supply of affordable housing
- accessible, affordable and well-built spaces
- investment in services
- international student support
- better accessibility and inclusion for youth with mental health issues.

Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:

- more resources for youth homelessness
- accessible urban design
- more inclusive educational support.

### Affordability and options

A common theme across all discussions in the Youth Stream was the importance of young people being able to afford the basics and meet their aspirational needs.

Our younger participants emphasised the need for:

- “affordable housing”
- “more resources for homelessness such as immediate housing support, self-care resources”.

### Safety and wellbeing

Another common theme in the Youth Stream emphasised that our communities in future will be supported for safety and mental and physical wellbeing.

This looks like:

- “accessible city - information in more languages”
- “more inclusive facilities in public spaces”
- “improve disability support services”
- “intersectionality and lived experience support”
- prevent “gendered violence and family violence”.



# Economy and innovation

## Our longlist of priorities

Over 180 priorities for the economy and innovation were generated at the M2050 Summit, before being refined to the top five. The notion of Melbourne as a “global leader in innovation known for supporting emerging industries” came up frequently. There was a desire for Melbourne to be seen as: “the number one city for innovation in the Asia-Pacific,” a “global hub of open innovation, with precincts to connect talent, capital and markets.” For this, we might need to be the “preferred home for PhDs in the world – the most educated people.”

Conversations around Melbourne’s economy and innovation often came back to our people and institutions as critical strengths for our city’s success. There was an ambition to better support startups and incubate business - ‘build human capital by training, attracting and retaining highly skilled talent. Many of these priorities spoke to our skills and ability to collaborate. Highlighting opportunities to position Melbourne globally as a place for technological innovation and sustainable economic models.

A dimension of this talent attraction was seen to be making sure Melbourne is an attractive place for business headquarters: to be “the HQ capital of Australia for industry, research and business.” This extended to the brand and identity of Melbourne itself, where there is a need for “creating a brand that attracts talent.” There was also an understanding that we would need to leverage new technology and our liveability to “attract big companies to be here in Melbourne.”

Another dimension of liveability that would support Melbourne’s economy related to the times we work, visit and enjoy the city. Around the concept of a 24-hour city, people wanted to see a city that was “safe and accessible,” with an “iconic brand, smart and mixed-use buildings, and transport that supports anyone, anywhere.” We might aspire to be a place where, “the sun is always up,” recognising many people already come into the city at all times, whether for work or entertainment.

Ideas about using precincts and clusters came through strongly. For example: encouraging the arts and creative sectors to cluster with technology so that Melbourne might become the “creative centre for Australia.” There was a desire for Melbourne to “punch above its weight in AI and robotics,” to be forward-looking and focused on future industries and technology, with innovation precincts supporting us to “future proof new tech.”

### The startup and innovation capital

#### Priorities for the economy and innovation

- Become a global leader in innovation known for supporting emerging industries
- Become a globally iconic 24-hour city
- Build human capital by training, attracting, retaining and reintegrating talent
- Become the HQ capital of Australia for industry, research and business
- Cement our reputation as a world leader in health, medical research and technology

#### Ideas to help us achieve these priorities

- Create a network of innovation districts that brings together startups, researchers, creatives and ambassadors globally. Create an ecosystem focused in areas where Melbourne already leads
- Create a super hub for innovation, incubation and collaboration. Establish a global talent visa, skills passport and “no visa zone” to allow people with key skills to migrate to Melbourne
- Supporting future talent at home by reimagining our education systems. Better integrating pathways, starting in early childhood and continuing to higher education and career transitions within the city
- Implement “24-hour by design” to make Melbourne safe, affordable and accessible
- Use technology to increase access and connection to the global market – physically and virtually
- Deliver and partner for creatively designed, dynamic and accessible infrastructure
- Partner to create an economically just Melbourne with fair opportunities for all
- Create a “talent concierge” to attract and support global talent to Melbourne, including incentives, peer-to-peer networking and job matching

## Big ideas for the economy and innovation

Many ideas for Melbourne’s future economy focused on leveraging innovation, especially in sectors where we are strong already: around creativity and sustainability. People flagged a mandate to prepare for a world marked by technological disruption and generative artificial intelligence (AI).

There was a want to do things differently, by harnessing the “blue economy” on our waterways, establishing “nature as a shareholder,” and “building upon the care economy and wellbeing, to export to the world.” How we market ourselves globally to achieve our ambitions was a part of this: “what’s on our postcard – brand? Landmark? Mascot?”

People spoke of new capital streams for economic development. Examples of this were to unlock: “super funds and direct this into local investment and economic development,” or “future fund to invest in startups and unicorn companies.”

Some people felt visa rules should be relaxed, to attract more talent and create “business innovation” districts akin to those seen overseas. Building on this, strong themes emerged around supporting startups, attracting capital and talent to support those businesses, and nurturing cultures of innovation between businesses, including by “integrating businesses onto university campuses.”

There was appetite to expand our leadership within specialised sectors, and to use technology to our advantage. For example, leaning into more “smart city” solutions, and looking at the ways our space functions: creating more “multi-use spaces, with flexible infrastructure.” Other suggestions encourage ongoing conversion of office spaces for other functions, from both a sustainability, and a community-housing standpoint.

Ideas to boost activity or vibrancy included, “coffee late at night,” more “linger spaces,” “permanent daylight savings,” and different transport options, including driverless, shared, on-demand and future-ready vehicles.

“A global leader in innovation known for supporting emerging industries.”

## Youth voices on the economy and innovation

### In the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 4 themes emerged around the economy and innovation:

- housing and homelessness
- education and employment
- inclusive spaces
- harm reduction and support services.

### Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:

- a set rental rate freeze
- repurposed underused infrastructure
- lower student debt and HECS
- fairer allocation of support and resources across the public and private education sector.

### Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:

- more affordable housing
- more youth startup hubs
- affordable accessible education
- increased funding for schools.



# Knowledge and creativity

## Our longlist of priorities

**This breakout room discussed a city rich in culture capital, life-long learning and knowledge transfer. There was a desire to see financial stability and opportunity in the creative sector, and to be “a cultural exporter.”**

Priorities around knowledge overlapped with thoughts about our economy - a Melbourne that is the “number one choice for higher education” and the “easiest place to do business for the knowledge economy.” From a community and culture perspective, there was a focus on Melbourne as “the renaissance capital of the world.”

In line with city being home to two major, world-renowned universities, this group wanted to see Melbourne as a “city with the highest participation in knowledge, creativity and culture in the world.” There was a lifelong learning dimension to this: both in access to creative and cultural spaces, but also in “opportunities and access for all to participate or work in the creative sector.”

The place-making dimension to this discussion included that we should be a “city designed for creativity and a sense of belonging,” with “public spaces that foster creativity, for identity and access.”

“Pathways of talent into creative industries for all – ecosystem.”

### A city for lifelong learning, creative connection

#### Priorities for knowledge and creativity

- A world-leading city designed for knowledge, creativity and a sense of belonging
- Embed creative connection across government, business and community in local places
- A city with the highest participation in knowledge, creativity and culture in the world
- An accessible and inclusive city built on life-long learning and knowledge sharing
- Melbourne cultivates, preserves and promotes its distinctive creative intercultural identity and history

#### Ideas to help us achieve these priorities

- Set a vision as the creative capital of the world underpinned by a Chief Creative Officer for Melbourne (Champion) to lead creative collaboration and delivery across everything we do as a city
- Embrace AI to help streamline education and create innovation and research hubs to capitalise on new technology
- Culture Pass and access to arts venues and experiences for every child
- A creative accord prepared by key partners including private and public sectors and the community
- Capture and share cross-generational and intergenerational knowledge and transform education into an immersive and inclusive experience

## Big ideas on knowledge and creativity

“Melbourne’s identity: distinctive, creative, intercultural.”

Our education system in 2050 could be remade to ensure “contemporary content,” to embrace “play-based learning.” We might even “co-design our education system for the future.” There was a focus on equity: that “money is not a barrier to access knowledge,” and that “education is a human right.” A dimension of this focused on tertiary education being more accessible and affordable to all, and to international students – to “increase diversity and opportunities, and improve interculturalism” across Melbourne.

There was a desire to see First Nations knowledge “sharing in everything we do,” and an interest in “capturing, sharing and using traditional knowledge.” Participants discussed ways to support data sovereignty, create knowledge hubs and dreaming libraries to support Elders’ knowledge. There was a desire to expand the leadership role already played by First Nations people, where for example Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations are willing to engage and teach. This could allow First Nations people to be more deeply involved in “medical and climate benefits, art and science, embedded in the education system for the next generation.”

As a way of working, some priorities were about being creative in what we do, for instance acknowledging that small businesses “help make the city unique ... understand and celebrate the hidden gems, leverage what we have.”

This room focused on sustainability and governance support for and promotion of Melbourne’s creative sectors. Priorities arose around leveraging creativity to support innovation, learning and business development, with fellowship models or a “Chief Creative Officer” as potential leaders in that space.

There were also ideas about exploring new funding models and looking to more ongoing funding (“like sports”) to “free knowledge and creativity from economics.” There was acknowledgement of the important relationship between the way creative sectors spark or enhance creativity and joy, and the vibrancy of our city life. This extended to the need to support creative professionals if we want this to continue: “empower, pay and support artists,” and “launch an ‘IP’ respect award to protect their ideas.”

With a lens on local government, there was commentary around access to creative practice: calling for universal access to build community connection and participation. A desire to allow “everyone to participate in community arts, connect people who wouldn’t normally meet,” and “redefining models of participation” including “every Victorian school student receives free access to arts venues,” as well as the idea of engaging with creative arts from birth and at every stage in life.

## Youth voices on knowledge and creativity

**In the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 3 themes emerged around knowledge and creativity:**

- education pathways
- funding for skills and ideas
- youth innovation and business support.

**Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:**

- more knowledge and opportunities for political and socio-cultural education
- local industry partnerships to secure employment and networks.

**Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:**

- partnering with local cultural experiences to encourage more excursions and exploration in the city
- more internship opportunities.

### Education and economic opportunities

Young people indicated strongly in all discussions that they wanted to feel supported with education and employment pathways.

**Our younger participants emphasised the need for:**

- “Increasing the opportunity for all young people to take part in higher education regardless of cost”
- “More paid industry placement opportunities”
- “More youth startup hubs”.



# Climate and environment

## Our longlist of priorities

Discussion around the climate and environment was underpinned by a desire to “change culture and practices” in Melbourne. This included engaging with “First Nations knowledge, regenerative economies,” including understanding and aligning with local seasons, and “connecting with Country physically and spiritually.” Others described this as, “recognising Country as a living entity guiding transformation of our city.”

People imagined a future where “Melburnians are at home in the best, thriving natural ecosystem in the world.” Priorities around how we might live included that we might become a “water-positive” city, where there are “clean, healthy, swimmable waterways”. Meanwhile, a safer, more accessible city with better air quality would encourage more people to move around the city by walking and riding. Suggested approaches included to “normalise regenerative design across services and infrastructure,” and to have “place-based neighbourhood resilience, action and empowerment.”

The vision for neighbourhoods or precincts is that they would be “green, socially inclusive” places, with “strong, resilient, visible, diverse green spaces embedded into streets,” with “improved infrastructure to support our green spaces.”

“Home in the best, thriving natural ecosystem in the world.”

### A regenerative and Country-first future

#### Priorities for the climate and environment

- Our community is connected and empowered to care for our regenerative future.
- Everything absorbs or generates to deliver a climate positive city
- We are a Country-first city
- Melbourne is a natural wonder
- Melburnians thrive on a localised, equitable, healthy and dignified food system

#### Ideas to help us achieve these priorities

- “From car-first streets to community and Country first corridors, all people spend time on regenerative actions”
- “Country-first decision-making,” where “the needs of our land are recognised with the needs of our people”
- Integrated food production in all residential dwellings and social infrastructure
- All new infrastructure and buildings must generate a positive environmental impact”
- “Our material choices absorb our waste’

## Big ideas for the climate and environment

A longlist of 130 big ideas was generated from the discussion about our climate and the future of our environment.

Our future city will need to function differently, according to the big ideas shared in our climate and environment breakout room: “we have created a re-use economy at all scales (from local to city-wide),” and we have a “zero-waste circular food economy.”

New systems of governance and integrated decision-making frameworks were suggested, with a “Country mindset embedded in economic decisions – evidence based.” This breakout room also raised “governance and decision-making led by First Nations self-determination.” Intergenerational fairness and notions of stewardship were also themes: “voices of non-human species and future generations must be considered in all policy, business and governance decisions,” and we have “intergenerational / interspecies justice embedded in city policy.”

Many ideas came from discussions about the way we use space in our city. Ideas included using buildings, parks and open spaces, growing food and expanding greenery, reallocating road space to nature and “Country-first corridors where people spend time on regenerative actions.”

To incentivise change, people suggested that we have “government-issued Community Regenerative Bonds that become more valuable as impact increases,” aiming to reduce food waste and food miles per person, and create volunteering credit schemes for climate-positive behaviours or even have an “Annual Regenerative Games.”

“Everyone has access to nature / green space / biodiversity within 300 m” was a goal to integrate more nature and biodiversity into the city. Around systems change, it was suggested that a “net gain to nature is considered every time there is development.”

In design, there were suggestions that buildings do more heavy lifting around their own impact: that “every building has food growing capacity to sustain its residents, and integrated food waste,” and that “all buildings and footpaths must absorb excess energy and onsite filtration of water (a closed loop).” Another way of thinking of this was to have “distributed local water and electricity infrastructure across the city.”

Around community infrastructure, other suggestions included to “innovatively fund community regeneration hubs where community share, connect, recharge and grow,” and “each neighbourhood has a climate hub which enables a share economy, houses neighbourhood batteries, safe spaces for cooling.”

## Youth voices on the climate and environment

### In the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 4 themes emerged for climate and environment:

- green spaces and activities
- civic engagement
- sustainable development
- action on climate change.

### Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:

- stronger civic participation towards climate reform such as installation of solar panels on city buildings.

### Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:

- having stronger enforcement and info about recyclables and their disposal
- prioritising native vegetation when planting.

### Green rising

All discussions in the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit pointed to the need for collaboration with government on climate action.

### Our younger participants emphasised the need for:

- “for every amount of land used for concrete buildings, same amount of land to be dedicated to greenery”
- “stronger civic participation in climate related issues e.g. solar panels”
- “address spatial inequity in areas with limited green spaces”.



# Movement and infrastructure

## Our longlist of priorities

According to this breakout room, Melbourne in 2050 should be the “most accessible city in the world,” with “no barriers to access the city.” Fundamental to this accessibility was that we have a “Melbourne designed for people.”

The layout of our neighbourhoods was also considered: that we make sure people have access to the services and spaces they need locally: “integrated, complete, connected neighbourhoods,” and “5-minute neighbourhoods” came up as priorities. There was also a desire to have consistent approaches to neighbourhood planning across local government boundaries, and to break down barriers between those boundaries to achieve a “unified and connected city.”

People are seeking a reliable, connected, affordable and “anywhere to anywhere at any time” public transport network. There is integration between modes of transport, so that you can seamlessly curate your own journey through the city. Priorities included “24-hour accessible public transport,” “extended tram lines,” building “airport rail and other missing links,” and having “public transport that matches the rhythm of the city.”

How we plan our space was another key theme, with a focus on “taking cars off the streets” and “reallocation of road space into public space.” A desired outcome of this was that we “design for the people in movement,” transforming car-dominated spaces into people-focused public spaces.

Supporting transport choices was important. People wanted to see Melbourne as a leader in “micromobility”: with “more safe protected bike lanes” and “dedicated space for bikes,” and “safe, secure walking opportunities (broader footpaths and separate bike lanes).”

“Most accessible city in the world.”

### Melbourne: a city of living streets

#### Priorities for movement and infrastructure

- Melbourne is a well-connected, intermodal city: a city of movement and active transport
- Melbourne is designed for people, including the public realm. A universal-designed city, where everyone can access and move through the city
- Micromobility capital of the world
- Well-serviced, integrated and connected neighbourhoods
- A unified and connected city that has no boundaries. Consistent and aligned decisions across local government boundaries

#### Ideas to help us achieve these priorities

- Rethinking how we use public space. Create space for pedestrians and cyclists. Fast water buses, SkyBus and elevated walking tracks. Air space for deliveries. Safe continuous paths – bikes and walking paths. Car-free zones (times, private vehicles etc). Convert office buildings to schools and aged care facilities
- Urban structure: Melbourne is the garden capital, 10-minute walkability city, build our rail corridor for green space and housing
- Seamless mobility: anywhere to anywhere at any time (intermodal continuous experience), one ticket for bike, car and ride-share schemes as well as train, tram, bus and more.

## Big ideas for movement and infrastructure

When discussions turned to car traffic in the CBD, participants offered a wide range of ideas at the M2050 Summit, including looking to international examples for inspiration (London, Amsterdam, Paris).

Around walking, riding and public transport, there were also many calls to learn from international best practice around the design of bike lanes, cost and continuity of public transport, and to put people of all ages and abilities first when allocating street space.

On walking, discussions about people-centred design, “city streets are places for people,” “prioritise pedestrians when crossing the road,” and principles for city design: “safe, equitable and inclusive networks that grant agency to those of all ages, abilities, identities, genders and backgrounds.”

The safety and design, connectivity and continuity of bicycle lanes was a recurring theme, as was the encouragement to look for innovative bicycle storage solutions, such as the approaches taken in Amsterdam and Japan.

For public transport, many ideas added up to principles around lower or no-cost public transport and better coverage across and beyond central Melbourne: “an inter-connected, multimodal, free, well-coordinated transport network.” Other ideas flagged timetable frequency that would enable “anywhere to anywhere at any time” movement around the city. The idea of alternative transport modes was raised, that we might “use the waterways for transport” and “celebrate the Birrarung (Yarra River) as an icon of the city that facilitates movement.”

As well as safe and well-designed infrastructure, ideas about movement at the M2050 Summit highlighted that people are keen to have easy access to the services and shops they need to meet their daily needs. On local access, we were challenged to become not a “15-minute city,” but a “5-minute city,” with the direction to “ensure land-use planning meet the needs of communities – foster micro-precincts.”

## Youth voices on movement and infrastructure

In the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 3 themes emerged for movement and infrastructure:

- inclusive transport systems
- affordable and accessible transport
- youth friendly city design.

Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:

- improved the public transport system by lowering the fees for youth, less transfer time, and understanding PTV officers.

Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:

- more work opportunities for youth
- lived experience advocacy for youth and people living with a disability.

### Social inclusion and connection

Themes of social inclusion and connection were common across all discussions in the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit.

Our younger participants emphasised the importance of Melbourne being a city where people feel welcome, included and connected to Country, culture and community.

This looked like:

- inclusive transport systems
- affordable and accessible transport
- youth-friendly spaces and city design
- support for marginalised groups
- civic participation.



# Democracy and leadership

## Our longlist of priorities

**Who has a say in our democratic future?**  
**At the M2050 Summit, the longlist of priorities included to expand democratic rights to everyone including young people (under 18 years old), renters and international students. There was a want to generate “collective pride for our city” by enhancing civic participation and “having a shared narrative.”**

Discussions around democracy and leadership in Melbourne highlighted that we are a vibrant city, known for its democracy and the quality of our civic institutions. A city for the people, where we “respect and celebrate differences” and where our “civic participation and collective pride in our city is part of our shared narrative.”

There was a desire to see “technology-forward” governance supported by “community engagement embedded in all decision-making.” Cohesion in governance and broader institutions, as well as collaboration between various tiers of government and other institutions were raised as priorities.

Imagining our future, there was a priority around “more cohesion, integration of voices and ideas in democratic life.” Diversity and inclusion featured strongly. Participants wanted more ways to “enhance diversity in the pipeline of leaders,” and “celebrate our intercultural, not just multicultural city.”

Concerns were flagged around the rise of misinformation and disinformation, and the impact this has on democracy. Participants showed an interest in “building trust and optimism.”

Some opportunities to lead were highlighted, around “piloting new ways of being productive” and “piloting new paradigms” such as the four-day working week.

“Community engagement embedded in all decision-making.”

### Melbourne: the most optimistic city

- Priorities for democracy and leadership
- Enhancing deliberative and participatory democracy
  - Building trust, optimism and hope
  - Celebrating our intercultural city, not just multicultural city
  - Expanding democratic rights to everyone
  - Cohesion in governance and broader institutions

- Ideas to help us achieve these priorities
- Use technology (short videos, virtual reality) for short, quick engagement
  - Consistent framework across councils for what community can influence through deliberative engagement
  - Having a strategy to make Melbourne the most optimistic city, with examples including KPIs for happiness
  - Our leadership models optimism and inspires a culture of good news stories
  - Celebrating all cultural festivals and building shared ownership
  - Redefining values from “tolerance” to knowledge, appreciation and understanding
  - Expanding civic education programs
  - Ensuring we always use multiple languages to communicate
  - First principles discussion on the responsibilities of tiers of government
  - Bring back local issues to local government, with examples including grants decision-making

## Big ideas for democracy and leadership

“Trust, transparency, ‘it’s the secret sauce – essential for getting things done. Performing well builds trust.”

Building trust was characterised alongside accountability and openness, where it was expected that there would be “assurance on what community can influence and stick to it!”

Many ideas about democracy and leadership focused on the potential to broaden civic participation, for instance: “lower the voting age to 16 or 14 years?”, “embed deliberative democracy in all aspects of City of Melbourne,” and “bringing citizens into decision-making processes around hard decisions.”

Other ideas to enable engagement included leveraging technology, to “inform and educate about City of Melbourne matters.” The challenge of engaging with complex information could be addressed by using technology “like virtual reality to make it easier to see, touch and understand decisions.”

Around leadership, a Youth Roundtable principle to “create a future more inspired by hope than fear” seemed to inspire discussions, with ideas about a shift to having “KPIs for happiness,” “leadership modelling optimism,” and “Melbourne: the most optimistic city – government sets the narrative.” This was supported by ideas that we need to “elevate good news stories.”

The shape of government was discussed, including to “work more collaboratively with different layers of government.” Questions of current government boundaries and scale were raised – for example, whether Australia should abolish one level of government, merge smaller council areas, or the need for a “clear mechanism to make metropolitan decisions.”

For our democratic future, there were suggestions that we need to “redefine the value of multiculturalism beyond tolerance,” and to have “more porous boundaries between cultures.”

## Youth voices on democracy and leadership

**In the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, 4 themes emerged for democracy and leadership:**

- education access
- civic participation
- political rights
- policy reform.

**Young people hope that by 2050, Melbourne has:**

- educated under 18s on elections and politics
- political knowledge shared through schools and social settings
- Council coming to communities to prioritise First Nations voices, ensuring youth feel heard and acknowledged.

**Big ideas that could help us achieve these priorities:**

- leadership pathways for young people
- statewide school democracy forums.

### Empowerment and voice

Across all discussions in the Youth Stream at the M2050 Summit, young people made it clear that they wanted to feel valued and included in decision-making.

**In their words, this means:**

- “empowering young voices”
- “nothing about us without us”
- “supporting youth led ideas”
- “co-design workshop on policy development.”





# Common threads

Some themes came up no matter where you were at the M2050 Summit.

## Economic innovation

Melburnians called for leadership in the economy, creating more opportunities and a pipeline for businesses, workers and students.

- “Become a global leader in innovation known for supporting emerging industries”
- “City with the highest participation in knowledge, creativity and culture in the world”
- “Melbourne cultivates, celebrates, preserves and promotes its distinctive creative intercultural identity”

## Physical connectivity

Melburnians called for a city connected 24/7 by a ‘turn-up-and-go’ transport system.

- “Well-serviced and connected neighbourhoods (Integrated and complete connected neighbourhoods)”
- “Melbourne designed for people (universally accessible)”
- “Safest and cleanest city in the world”
- “Building and enabling faster and more efficient infrastructure”

## Environmental leadership

Melburnians called for us to take action on climate, regenerate Country and strive for net zero.

- “Our community is connected and empowered to care for our regenerative future”
- “A zero waste circular food economy”
- “Resilient, visible and diverse green spaces embedded into streets”
- “Clean, healthy, swimmable waterways”
- “A garden city famed for its parks, green walls and roof tops — where no one is more than 300 metres from green space and neighbourhood streets become green corridors.”

## Social inclusion

Melburnians called for community wellbeing to be at the heart all planning.

- “Melburnians thrive on a localised, equitable, healthy and dignified food system”
- “Place-based neighbourhood resilience, action and empowerment”
- “Green, socially inclusive precincts and neighbourhoods”
- “An accessible and inclusive city built on lifelong learning and knowledge transfer”
- “Accessibility and inclusion embedded in city design”

## Democratic governance

Melburnians called for cohesion at all levels of government and decision-making informed by Country.

- “Cohesion in governance and broader institutions”
- “We are a Country-first city”
- “Change culture and practices (First Nations knowledge, regenerative economies)” including understanding and aligning with local seasons
- “Connecting with Country physically and spiritually”
- “Civic participation and collective pride in our city is part of our shared narrative”
- Enhance the role of Indigenous knowledge — such as aligning with traditional local seasons and incorporating regenerative economic practices



# Appendix

## M2050 Summit Communiqué

Held at Melbourne Town Hall on Friday 9 May 2025.

The Melbourne 2050 Summit has brought together Melburnians from across the community to share their ambitions for our city in 2050.

Our shared vision for Melbourne is a belief that we can create a city that is bigger, better and fairer.

We find ourselves at an historic juncture. We have had some challenging years, a once-in-a-century crisis. But we are a city that does comebacks better than anyone. We did it in the 1890s and the 1990s. Now we will do it in the 2020s. The future begins now.

Greater Melbourne will grow – it is projected to have 9 million citizens by 2050, roughly the size of London today. We must ensure that this expansion improves our quality of life by adding to our city’s liveability, vibrancy, energy, culture, environmental sustainability, and scientific capabilities.

We will build an economy that is outward looking, competitive, highly skilled and that generates opportunity and growth for all.

We will achieve this by building on Melbourne’s existing strengths: the land we share with the traditional owners; our founding democratic heritage as the ‘Athens on the Yarra’; our institutions of culture and learning; our beautiful gardens and spectacular bay; our joyful, multicultural community; our literature, music, sport and major events. And most of all, our welcoming and friendly nature.

Melbourne stands out for our liveability. For our stability. For our famed culture and events.

When Melbourne is at its best we are the greatest city on Earth.

Melbourne gives people fulfilling lives, full of dignity and purpose. The Melbourne dream will give people a quality of life second to none. We will protect this at all costs.

Great cities are not built overnight. They are built over generations. Each big decision and mighty effort builds on what came before.

Today we asked ourselves: What should Melbourne be like in the year 2050?

We discussed and debated the big ideas and the bold initiatives that will secure Melbourne’s place at the top of the world league tables.

**This Summit calls for city-wide renewal across six areas.**

- **Improving the liveability and wellbeing of our city and its citizens** – by ensuring our neighbourhoods, streets and buildings are planned, designed and administered with people in mind, and that our public services are high quality and accessible to everyone.
- **Making our economy more vibrant, diverse, resilient, inclusive and innovative** – by becoming a home of entrepreneurship and commercialisation, so we can attract investment, businesses and talent, while addressing the world’s needs for new technologies and services.
- **Building on our reputation as a global education city and a city of knowledge and culture** – to attract the people of the world, create a future for our homegrown creative talent, and to provide greater meaning to our lives.
- **Showing the way forward for global cities in an age of climate change** – by reducing energy use and emissions, expanding green spaces, adjusting to new climate realities, and setting the pace for the cities of the world because all cities share the same world.
- **Helping our citizens move around more efficiently** – by investing in modern transport infrastructure backed by better planning and regulation.
- **Keeping our democracy strong** – because a strong civic democracy means better leadership, open and transparent government, trust, inclusiveness, social cohesion and better decisions that benefit everyone.

By pursuing these broad strategies, by 2050 we can create a city that truly reflects our city’s economic potential, our willingness to innovate, our joy for life, our responsibility to our planet, and our democratic values – a city where we can connect with each other, know each other, care for each other, love and respect each other – while feeling connected economically and culturally to the world.





## How to contact us

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### Interpreter services

We cater for people of all backgrounds  
Please call 03 9280 0726

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### National Relay Service:

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users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 9658  
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