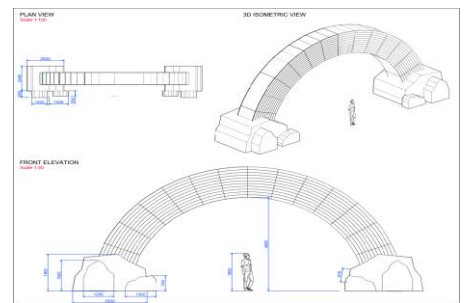
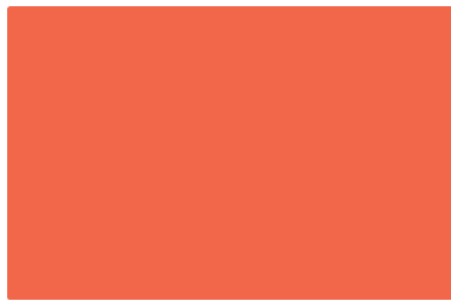


Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

BIG RAINBOW LOCATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

January 2023



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Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.

We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore.

We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

Our Vision

Hepburn Shire - an inclusive rural community in Dja Dja Wurrung Country where all people are valued, partnerships are fostered, environments protected, diversity supported and innovation embraced.

Our Diversity

We are proud of our Shire's diversity. We are enriched when all people, regardless of background or identity, are embraced and supported to participate and contribute to the life of their community.

1 Introduction

The Big Rainbow is a colourful feature that will be both a visitor attraction for Daylesford and a symbol of pride and inclusion for the LGBTIQ+ community of Hepburn. It offers opportunities to grow our local visitor economy, strengthen Council's reputation for championing diversity, and build community partnerships.

More than 20 potential locations were explored by the Big Rainbow Project Control Group against a wide range of criteria. Four options were identified to go forward to community engagement to help select the best location: Lake Daylesford, Lost Children's Memorial Park, Victoria Park and the Skate Park. Advice was sought from the Public Art Advisory Committee, the Mineral Springs Reserve Advisory Committee and the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee.

2 Invitation for Community Engagement

A notice foreshadowing the community engagement process was published in June 2022 and details of how to participate were announced in subsequent months. The invitation was also publicised on the Council's Facebook page, Participate Hepburn website and in the Hepburn Life newsletter. Social media posts on the topic were shared by local organisations. Media reporting included ABC Radio and WIN TV.

The survey was open from 5-30 October 2022 on the Participate Hepburn website and also by 'hard copy' from Customer Service desks. Some emails were received, and an unsolicited submission was made by the Victorian Pride Lobby. 383 survey responses were made on the Participate Hepburn website and five surveys were submitted in hard copy. This is a high level of community engagement, compared with other Council surveys.

This report outlines the feedback received from the survey and other sources between 5 October and 31 October 2022.

3 Participate Hepburn Project Report

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| I identify as: | (n=387) |
| Female | 58% |
| Male | 29% |
| Non binary | 4% |
| Prefer not to say | 9% |
| | <hr/> 100% |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| What is your age? | (n=387) |
| 0-19 | 2% |
| 20-39 | 20% |
| 40-59 | 52% |
| 60-79 | 26% |
| 80+ | 1% |
| | <hr/> 100% |

| | |
|---|------------|
| What part of the Shire are you from? | (n=387) |
| Birch Ward | 63% |
| Cameron Ward | 2% |
| Coliban Ward | 5% |
| Creswick Ward | 8% |
| Holcombe Ward | 11% |
| Ratepayer, live out of shire | 4% |
| Work/partic. in Shire, live outside | 4% |
| Represent LGBTIQA+ org | 1% |
| None of the above | 2% |
| | <hr/> 100% |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Do you identify as any of the following? | (n=387) |
| Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander | 2% |
| Person with disability | 8% |
| LGBTIQA+ | 29% |
| Parent/guardian of <18 yr old | 25% |
| English not 1st language | 1% |
| None of the above | 35% |
| | <hr/> 100% |

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Nearly 14% of respondents gave every location the lowest possible score of 1 out of 5. This group oppose the project entirely and oppose the Big Rainbow coming to Hepburn Shire. Their opinion is acknowledged in this report with the moniker “Never ever”.

The remaining 86% of respondents, who contributed their local knowledge to assist Council to choose the best location, expressed diverse views. Lake Daylesford attracted a highly polarised range of opinions (either very unsuitable or very suitable), whereas Victoria Park had the most even spread of scores. The Skate Park and Lost Children’s Park were between these two extremes.

THEMES FROM COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

OVERALL

Process – Some questioned why the community was not asked if they wanted the Big Rainbow at all. As mentioned above, 53 out of 388 survey respondents gave the lowest possible score to all 4 sites. Respondents also questioned why Council agreed to the project without an initial round of consultation.

Tinder – Some questioned the merit of aligning with Tinder because of negative connotations with online dating generally, or corporate advertising.

Special treatment – Some questioned why the LGBTIQ+ community should have a ‘special’ symbol of Pride, with Council supporting only one section of the community.

Children – Some linked this symbol of LGBTIQ+ Pride to paedophilia. (This outdated belief is extremely offensive to LGBTIQ+ people.) The two sites associated with children (Lost Children’s Memorial Park and Skate Park) were strongly opposed for this reason. However, as several supporters said, children love rainbows.

Tourism opportunities – Some put forward a case to locate the Big Rainbow at an existing popular site with many visitors and good facilities (“putting on the best show”), whilst others argued for the opportunity to enhance under-visited sites that would benefit from improved facilities (“spreading the load around town”).

Visibility – The site most visible to traffic (Lost Children’s Park) would be an effective ‘gateway’ to the town. Most tourists visit Lake Daylesford, so it would be visible there too.

Synergies – Many respondents appreciated the potential for the Victoria Park location to reinforce the annual ChillOut Festival and the Pride Cup rounds of sporting teams.

LOCATIONS

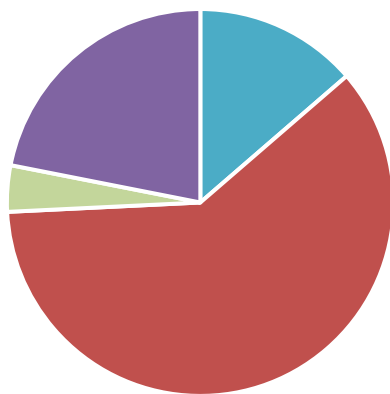
Lake Daylesford – Some suggested that the Big Rainbow would compromise the tranquil environmental qualities at Lake Daylesford and add to parking problems in the area. Others thought it was a valuable addition to an existing high-profile tourist destination, showing Daylesford in its best light.

Lost Children's Memorial Park – Some suggested that it was disrespectful to the Lost Children's history. Despite the proposed site being located far from the monument, the association with death was distasteful. Others saw this as a location that could be developed as an additional attraction, helping to spread tourists to another part of town.

Victoria Park – Some thought this was too far out of town and would be hard to find. Others liked the association with the annual ChillOut Festival and the availability of facilities nearby.

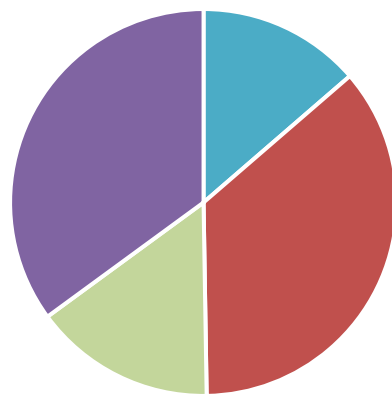
Skate Park – Some respondents thought the association with a youth space was distasteful. Another negative was lack of parking. However, others thought the colourful arch would be enjoyed by young people.

Lake Daylesford



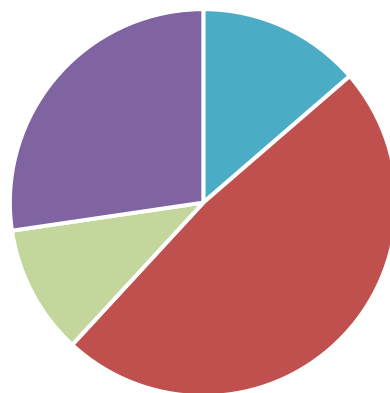
■ Never ever ■ Unsuited ■ Neutral ■ Suitable

Victoria Park



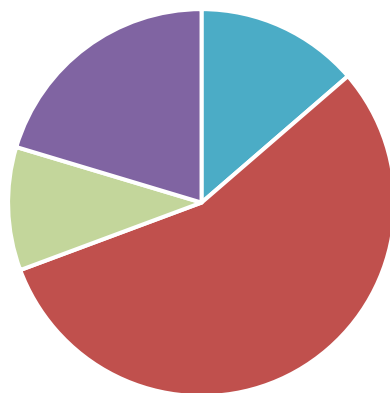
■ Never ever ■ Unsuited ■ Neutral ■ Suitable

Lost Children's Park



■ Never ever ■ Unsuited ■ Neutral ■ Suitable

Skate Park



■ Never ever ■ Unsuited ■ Neutral ■ Suitable

4 Stakeholder Engagement

The **Mineral Springs Reserve Advisory Committee** acknowledge and support the principle of the Big Rainbow but do not support the proposed site at Lake Daylesford as it does not comply with the general amenity and ambience of the area.

The **Public Art Advisory Committee** do not support the Skate Park or Lost Children's Memorial Park locations. They saw Victoria Park as an obvious option and thought Lake Daylesford would be a braver option.

The **LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee** were divided between Lake Daylesford and Lost Children's Memorial Park as the 'best' location. Victoria Park has some support. However, the Skate Park is considered an unsuitable location.

Unsolicited submissions were received from the **Victorian Pride Lobby** (an advocacy group for LGBTIQA+ rights) and the **Daylesford and District Historical Society**.

Almost 30% of the survey respondents self-identified as LGBTIQA+. Further analysis of feedback from this group, who are community stakeholders and a key audience for this project, shows their highest level of support is for Victoria Park. 32% scored it as 'suitable' and 19% 'unsuitable'. At the other end of the scale, they ranked the Skate Park as the least favoured location (16% 'suitable' and 30% 'unsuitable').

An external stakeholder is the donor and project funder, who suggested that the Lost Children's Park presents a 'mixed message', and the youth-focussed Skate Park not a good fit for their 'over 18' brand image. The donor could see positive reasons for locating the Big Rainbow at Lake Daylesford or Victoria Park.

5 Conclusion

The community has responded to the engagement survey in large numbers. The project has raised strong emotional responses, positive and negative, including criticism of the initial process and the intended purpose.

There is an opportunity to raise community awareness and correct some of the hurtful misinformation about LGBTIQA+ people that was expressed by a minority of respondents.

Council thanks all the community member who contributed their comments. This has allowed Councillors to debate the options and make a well-informed decision.