

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STURT RIVER GREENING PROJECT – SHANNON AVENUE



Photo credits: Strategic Matters @ taken at the on-site Community Drop in event (November 2023)

NOTE consent was obtained from attendees for the use of their images.

Prepared by Strategic Matters

For the City of Holdfast Bay | December 2023

Contact: Leanne Muffet

E: lmuffet@strategicmatters.com.au



strategic matters
people + planning

Contents

Project Overview: Sturt River Greening Project	1
PROCESS	2
Key messaging	2
Opportunity for community input.....	2
Community Drop In (November 2023)	3
FINDINGS	4
Data Collection:	4
Timing of responses.....	4
Qst 1. Please tell us how you use the reserve on Shannon Avenue.....	4
Qst 2. Please tell us what you value about the reserve on Shannon Avenue	5
Qst 3. Please choose what best describes you.	5
Qst 4. Please select your preferred garden bed design.....	6
Qst 5. Are you satisfied with the number of native plants and trees in your local area?	6
Qst 6. Are you satisfied with the number of birds, butterflies, and insects / bees in your local area?.....	7
Qst 7. Any other comments?.....	7
Qst 8. Would you like to be involved in the community planting day in winter 2024?	8
Summary.....	9

Project Overview: Sturt River Greening Project

In the global movement toward cultivating 'green' cities, where urban landscapes are embracing the regeneration of trees, plants, and parks for health, comfort, biodiversity, and psychological well-being, the City of Holdfast Bay is a leading participant. At the forefront of this endeavour is the Sturt River Greening Project, known to Kaurana as *Warriparri*.

The project originated from a *Biodiversity Baseline Data Study* undertaken in 2018 which revealed low levels of biodiversity in Glenelg North. This prompted the creation of the *Warriparri (Sturt Creek) Biodiversity Corridor Site Plan* which identified strategic locations for planting, ensuring that over 50% of each site remains open for recreational activities. Commencing with the regreening of Bob Lewis Reserve in 2019, followed by Stewart Avenue (2020) and Fordham Reserve (2021), community members, along with the Friends of Sturt River Landcare Group, residents, and contractors, have played pivotal roles in these green initiatives. The concluding phase focuses on the reserve at Shannon Avenue.

This report outlines the community engagement outcomes for the Shannon Avenue regreening project, funded equally by the City of Holdfast Bay and the Green Adelaide Landscape Board.

To support the initiative's independence, the council contracted the stakeholder engagement and strategy firm: [Strategic Matters](#). Throughout the process, Strategic Matters collaborated closely with Sam Buxton Stewart, (City of Holdfast Bay Project Lead), and members of the council's *Communications and Engagement Team*.

The community engagement period spanned from 9 November to 29 November 2023 (inclusive). During this time, sixteen (16) individuals submitted questions and/or completed surveys, offering practical insights into community preferences.

While the number of responses received was modest, the rich data supplied has provided a foundation for informed decision-making and future developments. The findings reveal several key points:

1. The preference between Design A and B was not strongly leaning towards either, with detailed feedback for both.
2. There is a notable interest in ensuring safe access and egress to the reserve, especially concerning the road and fast traffic.
3. The community desires additional infrastructure at the reserve, such as seats, a fenced area for dogs, and measures to prevent children from running onto nearby roads.
4. Concerns revolve around perceived land use imbalances, emphasising the ongoing loss of vegetation in the area.
5. There is a call for a larger park or more parks in the vicinity.
6. The community expressed a desire for increased native plants and trees, advocating for expanded bird, possum, and insect habitats to advance a balanced coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Further to this, the findings underscore a sense of community urgency for project implementation, together with expressions of gratitude and support for the council's ongoing biodiversity initiatives.

PROCESS

This report highlights the outcomes derived from the community engagement process pertaining to the reserve at Shannon Avenue, marking the conclusive phase of the Sturt River Greening Project.

The primary objectives of community engagement were as follows:

- Foster meaningful community engagement
- Collect valuable insights from residents
- Encourage active participation
- Inform the community about opportunities

These objectives collectively guided the community engagement process, ensuring a purposeful and inclusive approach while inviting residents to play an important role in shaping the final stages of the Sturt River Greening Project. Engagement opportunities were advertised through the *Your Holdfast* platform, on-site signage, letterbox drop to nearby residents, Facebook post, Holdfast News e-newsletter, news article on the council website and a feature article on the home page of *Your Holdfast*.

Key messaging

The initial phase of the project centred on formulating key communication messages, primarily disseminated through the Council's website, which hosted a dedicated project web page. (<https://www.yourholdfast.com/sturtrivergreeningproject>).

The web page served as a central hub for comprehensive community information and engagement throughout the community engagement period. It featured the following elements:

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Sheet:** A resource document with well-defined answers to common questions.
- **Online Survey Access:** A platform for active community participation and sharing of perspectives.
- **Project Timeframes:** Timelines outlining project stages for community awareness.
- **Council Contact Details:** Transparent sharing of contact information within the council, providing residents with a direct avenue for queries and feedback.
- **Community "Drop-In" Event:** An inclusive and welcoming in-person gathering held on a Saturday 11 November at the reserve on Shannon Avenue.

Opportunity for community input

The period for community input on the project spanned from Thursday 9 November to the close of business on Wednesday 29 November 2023.

Four channels were provided for community input on the project, as outlined below:

- 1) Drop-in session at Shannon Avenue on Saturday 11 November 2023
- 2) Online <https://www.yourholdfast.com/sturtrivergreeningproject>
- 3) Mail Reply paid 85436, PO Box 19 Brighton SA 5048
- 4) Email mail@holdfast.sa.gov.au with the subject header: *Sturt River Greening Project*

Community Drop In (November 2023)

On Saturday 11 November 2023, a community “drop-in” event took place at the reserve on Shannon Avenue. Facilitated by City of Holdfast Bay staff and personnel from Strategic Matters, this session provided residents with the chance to connect with the project team, gain further insights and offer suggestions for the proposed garden beds and planting at the reserve on Shannon Avenue.

As an important collaborator in the greening initiative, the Friends of Sturt River Landcare (FoSRL) worked with the Council ahead of the event, providing knowledge and insights to support the greening efforts. While originally planning to attend the event, illness unfortunately hindered the FoSRL participation.

The day experienced favorable weather conditions, bringing together a modest yet consistent group of approximately 20 residents - accompanied by two dogs - for the community session. Additionally, the event drew the attention of several passersby.

During the session, participants engaged in discussions covering key topics, including the aspects they value about the reserve and their satisfaction levels regarding the proposed new garden beds. An unexpected but appreciated aspect of the community event was the residents' enjoyment of the opportunity to connect with both familiar and unfamiliar neighbors. This added social dimension contributed to the overall positive atmosphere of the gathering.



Photos Source: Strategic Matters ©. Taken on site at the Community *Drop in* event (11/11/23)

FINDINGS

Data Collection:

Community input on the project was principally received via the survey.

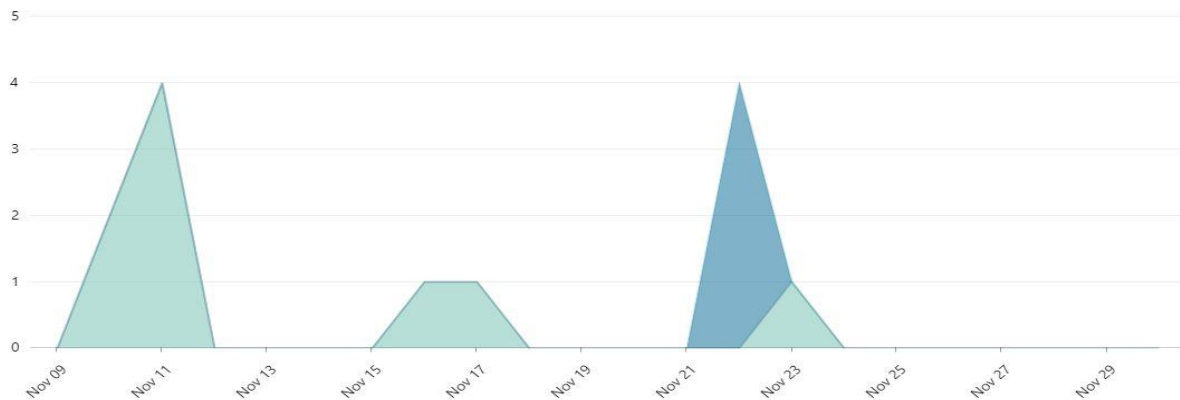
The survey was made available three ways for the community:

- **Tablets:** Available at the community drop-in event
- **Hard Copies:** Handed out exclusively at the community drop-in event.
- **Online Copies:** Accessible through the project website for the entire engagement period.

A total of thirteen (13) completed surveys were received with three additional questions asked online, two of which were of the same subject matter.

Timing of responses

As illustrated below, responses were received throughout the duration of the engagement period, with peaks in activity both when the project went live on *Your Holdfast*, and in the week prior to the engagement period closing.



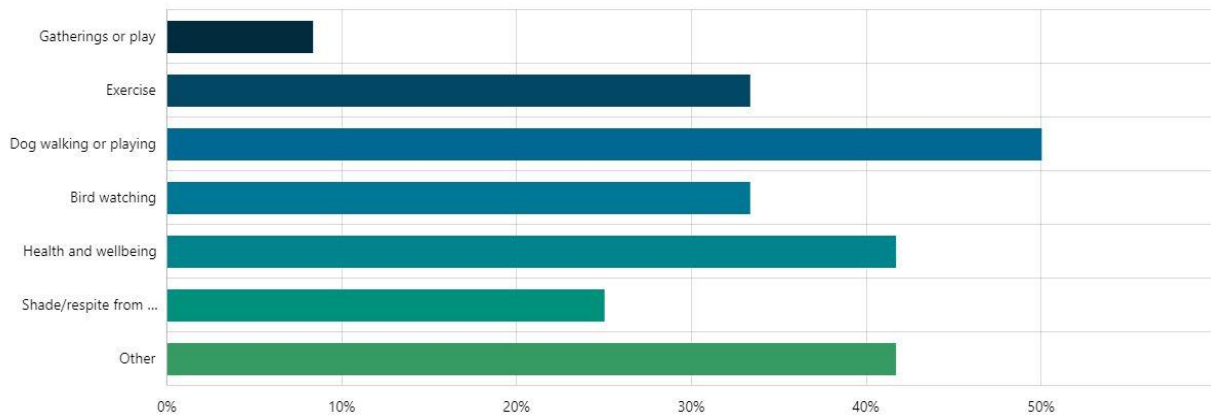
Qst 1. Please tell us how you use the reserve on Shannon Avenue

In the initial question, respondents were prompted to disclose their usage patterns of the reserve on Shannon Avenue. The results indicate a diverse range of activities:

Dog walking or playing: This emerged as the most prevalent use of the reserve, securing 50% of the votes, indicating a strong preference among respondents.

Health and wellbeing, and "other" category: Both categories garnered the second-highest number of responses, with just over 40% of participants choosing these options, showcasing considerable engagement in activities related to health, wellbeing, and other unspecified uses.

Exercise and bird watching: Exercise and bird watching represented the next highest categories, with 33% of respondents choosing these activities with the reserve. This indicates a notable interest in both physical activity and nature observation within the community.



Qst 2. Please tell us what you value about the reserve on Shannon Avenue

Key findings have been clustered into broad categories as shown below:

Green space & biodiversity: The reserve is valued for its green space and trees. The space serves as a haven for wildlife, offering a refuge for birds and other creatures. Concerns were expressed about decreasing wildlife habitats on the plains due to human activities and development. The community appreciates and values the open green space for its intrinsic qualities and the positive feelings it elicits.

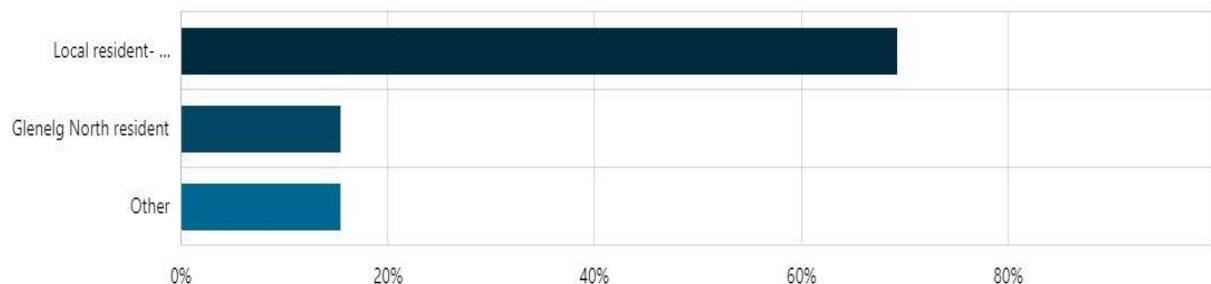
Cooling Effect and Climate Protection: The reserve's open space is currently perceived to lack shade and canopy cover, contributing to heat-related stress. Planting tall shade trees and native species was seen as a strategy to mitigate the effects of heat and provide protection against climate-related issues.

Traffic speed mitigation: The reserve was perceived by one respondent to be a deterrent to speeding traffic in the area.

Limited Human Disturbance: The reserve is valued for its quietness and not attracting large crowds, allowing natural wildlife, especially birds, to enjoy the space undisturbed.

Qst 3. Please choose what best describes you.

The diagram below illustrates that over 65% of respondents were local residents. Just over 15% of respondents reside within the local area of Glenelg North with the remaining respondents (15%) residing elsewhere.



Qst 4. Please select your preferred garden bed design.

In response to Question 4, which sought resident preference for garden bed designs, the survey yielded a balanced distribution of choices between Design A & B:

Garden Bed Design	Respondents (<i>n</i> = 13)
Design A	6 (46%)
Design B	7 (54%)

To delve into these preferences further, a breakdown of respondent comments regarding each garden bed design is provided below:

What respondents liked about Design A:

- Perceived to be more formal.
- Appreciation for the design, featuring two garden beds at the front and one at the back.
- Noted as a nice leading view with good aesthetics.
- Positive references to a similar implementation seen interstate, described as "beautiful."
- Concerns expressed about too much garden bed potentially detracting from open spaces, emphasising the importance of ample walking and exercise areas.

What respondents liked about Design B:

- Seen as requiring less maintenance compared to Design A.
- Described as having a wider garden bed, deemed visually pleasing and contributing to an enhanced ambiance.
- Appreciation for the layout, with one garden at the front creating a better overall look.
- Provision of a decent-sized garden area suitable for wildlife habitation.
- Noted that wildlife would benefit more from the denser gardening option in Design B compared to the narrower option in Design A.

Qst 5. Are you satisfied with the number of native plants and trees in your local area?

Key response numbers are provided below together with supplementary commentary.

YES (<i>I am satisfied</i>)	NO (<i>I am NOT satisfied</i>)
3	9

Findings reveal a variety of views regarding this question. Respondents, while acknowledging council efforts, expressed a desire for more native vegetation, encapsulated by the sentiment "could always have more." Participants emphasised the wide-ranging benefits of greenery, including shade, wildlife habitat, and climate mitigation.

The findings reveal a desire for specific types of plantings, including low but dense foliage for bird life and understorey planting with local native grasses, herbs, and wildflowers. The plantings at

Fordham Reserve (part of the Sturt River Greening Project) were cited as a success story of biodiversity in the council area.

One respondent commented about Plane Trees’ potential links to asthma. While this report is not able to comment on the veracity of the statement, this comment introduced a health-related dimension to the survey findings, which could be a factor influencing overall satisfaction with tree species’ selection.

Participants advocated for more red gums and non-eucalypt local natives to diversify eucalypt canopy cover. Considerations for ecological impact on local bird and small mammal populations, like possums, were also noted. These insights reflect a thoughtful community perspective on the local environment’s ecological composition.

Qst 6. Are you satisfied with the number of birds, butterflies, and insects / bees in your local area?

Numbers and supplementary commentary are provided below.

YES (<i>I am satisfied</i>)	NO (<i>I am NOT satisfied</i>)
3	9

The findings reflect a genuine affection for local wildlife, with a particular fondness for birds, bees, and possums. The results highlight a shared commitment among respondents to support wildlife through ongoing planting initiatives.

Some participants expressed the sentiment that there can never be too much foliage for birds, emphasising the significance of vegetation for bird habitat. This extended to a request to protect nests from potential threats like dogs and cats. Suggestions include discreet protective wiring in some parts of the reserve.

Support for the planting of additional native species specifically attracting bees and butterflies was noted, underlining the importance of catering to the needs of local pollinators.

Concerns arose regarding the perceived imbalance in land use, with a plea to set aside more land for wildlife and habitats. Participants stress the importance of keeping humans and pets out of these areas for the survival and enjoyment of local wildlife.

Some participants perceived that the current park size is insufficient, prompting a call to consider the broader environmental impact of development and maintenance of green space.

Qst 7. Any other comments?

The findings reveal a diverse range of comments and concerns, reflecting the varied needs and preferences of the community. A recurring theme is the desire for improved infrastructure, such as the request for the bike path to join up with Pine Ave and Warren Ave.

Participants requested additional amenities, including dog poo bags, bins, and fenced areas for small children and dogs. These suggestions extend beyond the immediate ‘re greening’ focus of this project. They may be considered in the future as part of a more comprehensive strategy at the reserve.

Although not directly connected to the engagement for the greening of Shannon Avenue, some respondents expressed a desire to receive more updates on proposed walking and bike track extensions in the area, demonstrating the community’s interest in staying informed about planned developments.

Concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety emerged in this survey responses. A few participants advocated for infrastructure improvements to enhance safety and accessibility, particularly for children attempting to cross busy roads.



Photos Source: Strategic Matters ©. Taken on site at the *Community Drop in* event (11/11/23)

The urgency expressed in the comment “THIS PROJECT IS VERY OVERDUE” suggests a desire for prompt action and implementation of proposed initiatives.

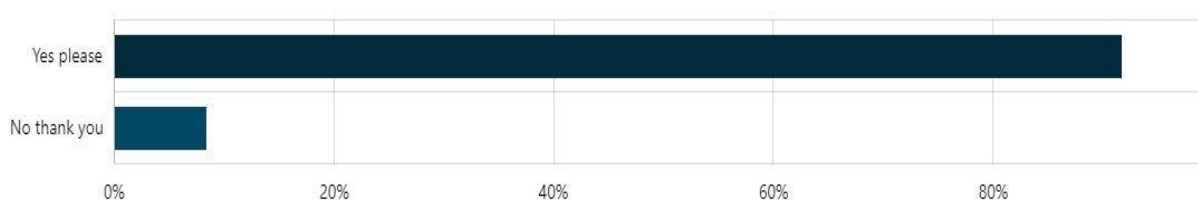
Expressing gratitude for the survey opportunity, one respondent acknowledged the challenges of supporting biodiversity in urban areas and commends the efforts being undertaken.

Respondents acknowledged the project’s positive impact on wildlife and advocated for the maintenance of green spaces that can be enjoyed safely by both for human and local flora and fauna species.

Qst 8. Would you like to be involved in the community planting day in winter 2024?

The last question enquired whether respondents would be interested in participating in the community planting day scheduled for winter 2024 at the reserve. The results are presented below.

YES	NO	NOT Answered
11	1	1



Summary

This report illustrates the outcomes of the community engagement process for Shannon Avenue. The community engagement period, spanning from 9 November to 29 November 2023, included a community drop-in event that assisted direct connections between residents and the project team, as well as fostering community connections.

The community engagement process yielded insights from sixteen individuals. While the number of responses was modest, collectively they shed considerable light on the community's perspectives on the project and aspirations for that locality. The findings provide a foundation for future decision-making, including that the reserve is cherished for its greenery, contribution to wildlife conservation, climate-related benefits, and its role in providing a quiet space for the community.

While respondents emphasised the 'openness' of the reserve as a key feature they would like to see retained, they also expressed enthusiasm for Council's plans for additional plantings including river red gums and local native species to support biodiversity.

The findings on reserve usage patterns reveal a diverse range of activities, with dog walking or playing emerging as the most prevalent use. Respondents value the reserve for its greenery, wildlife habitat, and cooling effects, expressing desires for more trees and biodiversity.

Preferences for garden bed designs were balanced between Design A and Design B, with detailed feedback on each. Respondents expressed nuanced satisfaction with native plants and trees, desiring more vegetation for various benefits.

Findings revealed a shared affection for wildlife, with a desire for increased greenery to support habitats. Concerns about land use imbalance and suggestions for more significant park sizes reflect a thoughtful and ecologically responsible community perspective.

The collective findings articulate a call for enhanced care, attention, and an increase in native plants and trees, with a desire to add additional bird, possum, and insect habitats, fostering a more balanced coexistence between human and wildlife spaces.



The report concludes with a diverse range of comments and concerns, highlighting the community's desire for improved infrastructure, additional amenities, and updates on proposed developments. Concerns about traffic safety, urgency for project implementation, and expressions of gratitude and support for biodiversity initiatives round out the detailed community feedback.

Photo Source: Strategic Matters ©. Taken on site at the *Community Drop in* event (11/11/23)

... ends ...