

Shaping South Melbourne Market Engagement Summary

May 2024



We talked to Market traders and the local community to assist us in planning for a safe, accessible and enjoyable market experience for years to come.

The following is a summary of the **Help Shape the Future of South Melbourne Market** community engagement - how we engaged, who we heard from and what we heard.

About the Market

South Melbourne Market was established in 1867 and is the oldest continuing market in Melbourne. Over time, the Market has undergone regular improvement and expansion to accommodate the growing needs of its traders and the local community, as well as to ensure it meets changing regulations.

The Market continues to thrive, despite ageing infrastructure, growing competition and a limited footprint. As it moves into the future, planning and investment will ensure it continues to deliver a sustainable, safe and inclusive market experience for years to come.

About the project

A community and trader engagement program ran from 3 November to 3 December 2023 with the aim to:

- Inform/educate the community about the required (non-negotiable) asset compliance works required at the Market. These projects are major infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to:
 - an increase in amenities (i.e. more bathroom facilities)
 - improved pedestrian gradients via aisle and footpath regrading works
 - compliant access to the rooftop carpark with two new lift and stair combinations (York and Coventry Streets).
- Seek community and trader feedback regarding public realm improvements and proposed initiatives to reduce congestion and improve flow.
- Seek community and trader feedback to contribute to a review of the South Melbourne Market's trading hours and days, to understand the need and desire for increased and/or amended trading hours.



St Kilda Town Hall, 99a Carlisle Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182
ASSIST Customer Service 03 9209 6777

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How did we engage?

	Project page held on Council's 'Have Your Say' website
	News article on South Melbourne Market website
	Surveys collected online and in-person
	Five in-person conversation session pop-ups
	Communications through Council and Market newsletters
	Social media posts and advertising
	8,550 postcards delivered to the local area
	Posters, signage and postcards positioned through the Market

Who did we hear from?

We received 863 survey contributions, chatted with 97 people at five community pop-ups and heard from 34 people in five focus groups. 1,914 people visited the 'Have Your Say' project page and our communications reached more than 36,000 people.

The demographics collected included participant gender, age and where they lived. We heard mainly from people living in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne, from more women than men, and more often from people aged 35-to-49 years old.

- Of the 80 participants who told us they were traders, 46 (57%) were South Melbourne Market (SMM) traders and 34 (43%) were local South Melbourne traders.
- 26% of survey participants told us that they live in South Melbourne and 19% were from Port Melbourne. Other key suburbs included Albert Park, St Kilda and Southbank.
- 61% of our survey participants identified as female, as did 58% of pop-up participants.
- The 35-49 age group made up almost one-third of survey participants, with almost one-third of pop-up participants aged 60-69.



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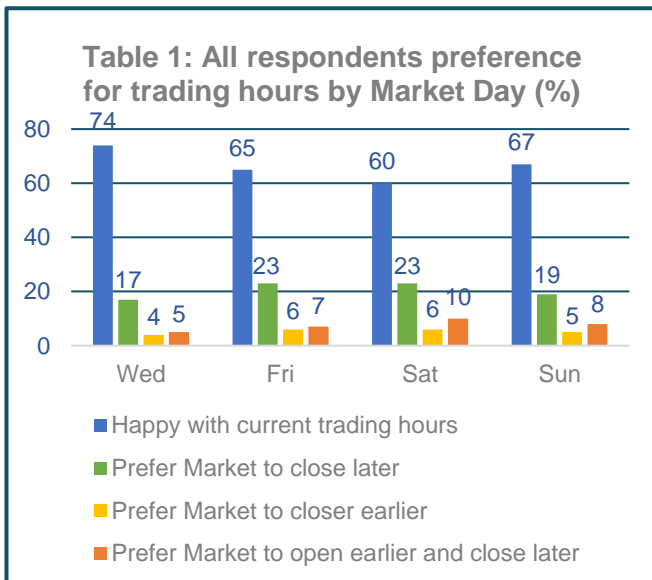
What did we hear?

Market trading hours/days

Existing trading hours

When asked if they were: Happy with current trading hours; Prefer Market to close later; Prefer Market to open earlier; or Prefer Market to open earlier AND close later, between 60% and 74% of respondents expressed they were happy with the existing trading hours for current Market days.

The table below shows responses across each Market day, with current trading hours being preferred across all categories. SMM Traders overwhelmingly preferred current hours with an average of 85% support across the week, with minor support for closing later on Saturdays (20%) and Sundays (15%).



Just over half of Local Traders were in favour of current trading hours (54%) yet had more support for opening later on Saturday (18%) and Sunday (26%) and were also more in favour of the Market opening both earlier and later (24%).

Over half of SMM Traders assessed the impact of the Market opening earlier as negative (52%), compared to Local Traders (18%) however the response rate from SMM Traders was low and so this may not represent the general view.

Closing earlier on Friday

The survey specifically asked about closing an hour earlier on a Friday as the Market currently closes at 4pm on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday and 5pm on Friday.

67% of SMM Traders assessed the impact of closing an hour earlier on a Friday as a positive change, whereas 73% of Visitors assessed a neutral impact and 28% a negative impact, and most Local Traders assessed a neutral impact (68%) or negative impact (32%).

Additional trading day

53% of Visitors and 62% of Local Traders were in support of the Market opening for an additional day. However, 63% of SMM Traders did not support the Market opening an additional day.

Thursdays were overwhelmingly preferred as an additional Market day by SMM traders (85%) if this was to progress. Visitors also preferred Thursdays (52%), as did Local Traders (45%) with Tuesday a second preference at 32%.

Impact of earlier/later hours

The survey also asked Local and SMM Traders to rate the impact to them should the Market open earlier or later.

Earlier: Local Traders were more likely to assess neutral (52%) or positive (26%) impact than SMM Traders, just over half of which assessed the impact as negative (52%).

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Later: Local Traders were more likely to assess neutral (53%) or positive (35%) impacts from the Market opening later. Again, just over half of SMM Traders (52%) assessed a negative impact.

Public realm improvements

Amenities for surrounding streets

Respondents were asked to assess the importance of a range of amenities for York, Cecil and Coventry Streets.

Public dining spaces, seating and the use of natural materials were the attributes rated as most important for public realm improvements.

The least important attributes were children's play areas and dog-friendly areas. This was consistent with opposition displayed in comments, often voiced by locals, about SMM becoming a destination for activities rather than focused on market/grocery shopping.

An improved connection to the South Melbourne Market tram stop also rated highly when respondents were asked about Coventry Street in particular.

Proposed change: carpark entry/exit ramp

Respondents were asked to assess the impact on them of the vehicle entry/exit ramp to the Market's rooftop carpark being moved from Coventry Street to York Street.

Most respondents (44%) anticipated neutral impacts, with 30% anticipating positive and 26% anticipating negative impacts.

The most common theme for positive (30%) or negative (26%) sentiment was that it would either improve traffic on Coventry Street or worsen traffic on York Street. Traffic and general congestion in the area was noted in both themes and appeared to be a key concern for both traders and market visitors navigating the area.

Proposed change: Cecil Street partial closure

Respondents were asked to assess the impact of a partial closure of Cecil Street (northbound lane closure between York and Coventry Streets).

31% of respondents anticipated a positive impact from the proposed partial closure of Cecil Street, while 30% anticipating a neutral impact and 40% anticipating a negative impact.

The most common positive benefit anticipated by those who provided further comment was safety for active transport users when navigating the area.

Many respondents who provided further comment expressed that the closure would increase congestion and worsen existing traffic issues.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback as part of this engagement. Our next steps are to:

- Present the engagement findings to Council.
- Report back to the community via the Have Your Say project page.
- Develop a draft Concept Plan for the Market and request community feedback in late 2024/early 2025.

To find out more about this project or to request a copy of the full report, [visit the project page](#).