City of Whittlesea

City of Whittlesea Household Survey Highlights Bulletin

August 2019

Metropolis Research

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1. Introduction

The Research team of City of Whittlesea commissioned Metropolis Research to conduct this, the 22rd *Household Survey*, the first being completed in 1997.

The survey provides a meaningful and reliable snapshot of the population of the City of Whittlesea. It provides a timely update to the *ABS Census of Population and Housing,* and can function as Council's major source of data on the community for inter-censal years.

The *Household Survey* includes an extensive range of questions on the characteristics, behaviours, needs, and expectations of the City of Whittlesea community. Whilst a significant proportion of the questions included in the *Household Survey* have remained consistent over time to ensure that time series analysis can be provided, the range of questions included in the *Household Survey* is continually evolving to ensure the research provides the range of information best suited to the current requirements of Council and the other core users of the data.

The 2019 *Household Survey* provides some insight into the following:

- ***Demographic profile*** – including age, gender, country of birth, language, household size, household structure, income, disability, and carers.
- ***Education*** – including attendance at educational institutions and qualifications.
- ***Employment*** – including employment status, occupation, industry, employment location, satisfaction with current employment situation, barriers to finding employment, and working from home.
- ***Transport*** – including journey to work and study, commuting times, ease of transport methods, frequency of, time spent, and reasons for using public transport, factors to encourage additional use of public transport
- ***Health and recreation*** – including undertaking moderate to vigorous physical activity and the use of local open spaces.
- ***Housing*** – including dwelling structure, number of bedrooms, reasons for choosing dwelling type and number of bedrooms, housing situation, housing payments, period of residence, and potential emigration.
- ***Living in the neighbourhood and community*** – including importance of and satisfaction with aspects of location, services, and lifestyle in the decision to live in the neighbourhood.
- ***Health and human services*** – including access to and barriers to accessing health services, human and other services, and educational services in the City of Whittlesea, and access to suitable local education options.
- ***Environment*** – including current and potential future environmental actions.
- ***Community*** – including agreement with statements about the local neighbourhood and community, civic participation and engagement, and perception of safety in public areas of the municipality.
- ***Current issues*** – including the top three issues for Council to address in the coming year.

This *Highlights Bulletin* has been prepared to provide a brief overview of the results, with an emphasis on key findings, variation across the municipality, and change over time.
Readers are encouraged to refer to the *Municipal Report* for a detailed discussion of all results from the survey, and to contact the Community Building and Planning Department,

City of Whittlesea directly to discuss the application of the data presented in this report to specific situations.

1.1 Methodology

The *City of Whittlesea – 2019 Household Survey* was designed in the style of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Census of Population and Housing*, with some changes in emphasis and the inclusion of a wide range of questions designed specifically to meet the information needs of Council and the City of Whittlesea community.

The 2019 *Household Survey* was a self-assessment survey distributed primarily via a drop-off and pick-up methodology over a number of weekends in April and May 2019. All survey drop-offs were conducted during the weekends, and the pick-ups were completed during the weekdays. A mail-out and reply-paid methodology was used for households within the Rural North precinct, due to occupational health and safety and efficiency reasons.

A total of 1,909 surveys were distributed using the drop-off and pick-up methodology in the ten urban precincts of the City of Whittlesea, and 500 were distributed to the Rural North precinct using a mail-out and reply paid service.

An approximately equal number of surveys were distributed in each of the 10 urban precincts of the City of Whittlesea in order to maximise the statistical strength at the precinct level, particularly for the smaller precincts. Results were then weighted by precinct population and number of households to ensure that each precinct contributed proportionally to the municipal results.

Responses were obtained from every individual in the household for 35 questions, including children where appropriate, as well as responses from the household as a whole for 18 blocks of questions (comprising 188 individual questions). The 2019 *Household Survey* therefore included a total of 223 separate questions.

Additional details are available in the *Municipal Report*.

1.2 Metropolis Research

The Research team of the City of Whittlesea commissioned Metropolis Research to conduct the *City of Whittlesea – 2019 Household Survey*. Metropolis Research worked collaboratively with the Research team to review and revise the questions included in the survey to ensure that the 2017 survey was relevant to the current information needs of Council.

Metropolis Research prepared both this *Highlights Bulletin* and the *Municipal Report* under instructions from officers of the City of Whittlesea.

1.3 Explanatory notes and glossary of terms

The following are explanatory notes regarding the presentation of the results in this report.

1.3.1 Geography

In addition to a municipal overview for the City of Whittlesea, analysis of precinct level differences is included throughout the report. Precinct areas are defined based on the City of Whittlesea's Internal Place-based Geographic Planning Framework, which was introduced in 2016. The term 'precinct' is used by Metropolis Research to describe the results broken down for small areas as used in Council's *Census* profile.

The eleven precinct areas presented in this report include:

- Bundoora
- Doreen
- Epping
- Epping North
- Lalor
- Mernda
- Mill Park
- Rural North
- South Morang
- Thomastown
- Whittlesea Township

These precinct areas may or may not have the same boundaries as suburb areas. Some precinct areas fall within or cross over suburb boundaries. Refer to the *Municipal Report* for additional details.

1.3.2 Definitions

Measurable / statistically significant

A measurable difference is one where the difference between or change in results is sufficiently large to ensure that they come from different samples, i.e. the difference is statistically significant. This is due to the fact that survey results are subject to a margin of error or an area of uncertainty. They do not describe or define whether the result or change is of a sufficient magnitude to be important in the evaluation of performance or the development of policy and service delivery. Statistical significance is calculated based on the 95% confidence interval as outlined in Section 1.5 of this report.

Significant result

Metropolis Research uses the term *significant result* to describe a change or difference between results that Metropolis Research believes to be of sufficient magnitude that they may impact on relevant aspects of policy development, service delivery and the evaluation of performance. Some results may be significant but not measurably different, and in some other cases a result may be both measurable and significant, and both terms may be used.

Subjective terms

Metropolis Research uses a range of other subjective terms to describe data in this report. This includes most often statements such as “somewhat, albeit not measurably”. These terms describe results that may not be statistically significant due to sample size or a range of other factors, but which nonetheless may well be meaningful to readers, and which Metropolis Research consider worthy of note in the analysis of the data. The term “marginal” is also used in some instances, where readers’ attention is drawn to an interesting result that is not statistically significant, but worthy of note.

Satisfaction categories

Metropolis Research typically categorises satisfaction results to assist in the understanding and interpretation of the results. These categories have been developed over many years as a guide to the scores presented in the report and are designed to give a general context.

These categories are designed to be indicative of the level of satisfaction, and are based on a satisfaction scale from zero (very dissatisfied) to ten (very satisfied), where five is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. They are generally defined as follows:

- ***Excellent:*** Scores of 7.75 and above are categorised as excellent
- ***Very Good:*** Scores of 7.25 to less than 7.75 are categorised as very good
- ***Good:*** Scores of 6.5 to less than 7.25 are categorised as good
- ***Solid:*** Scores of 6 to less than 6.5 are categorised as solid
- ***Poor:*** Scores of 5.50 to less than 6 are categorised as poor
- ***Very Poor:*** Scores of 5 to less than 5.50 are categorised as very poor
- ***Extremely Poor:*** Scores less than 5 are categorised as extremely poor.

Other categories

A range of other categories are used in this report relating to average agreement, average ease of access, and average importance. The other categories used in this report do not conform to the same ranges as the satisfaction scores, are more general in nature, and are discussed in more detail in the relevant sections.

1.4 Response rate

In 2019, a total of 2,409 household surveys were distributed. Of these 1,909 were distributed in person to selected households across the urban precincts of the municipality, and 500 were mailed to residents in the Rural North precinct.

Of these 2,409 distributed surveys, a total of 1,083 were ultimately returned for inclusion in the research, comprised of 3,083 individual respondents. This is a gross response rate of 45.0%, similar to the 48.3% recorded in 2017.

1.5 Statistical strength

The total sample for the 20149 *Household Survey* was 1,083 households comprising 3,083 individual respondents.

The 95% confidence interval (margin of error) of these results varies for each individual result, but is broadly stated as follows:

- Municipal person results (of all respondents) – plus or minus 1.7% at the 50 percent level.
- Municipal household results – plus or minus 2.9% at the 50 percent level.
- Precinct person results (of all respondents) – plus or minus 5.7% at the 50 percent level.
- Precinct household results – plus or minus 9.5% at the 50 percent level.

In other words, if a yes / no question asked of every individual obtains a result of fifty percent yes, it is 95% certain that the true value of this result is within the range of 48.3% and 51.7%. The confidence interval is smaller the further the result is from the 50 percent level.

These figures are based on a total sample size of 1,083 respondent households and 3,083 individual respondents, and an underlying population of the City of Whittlesea of 66,529 households and 207,881 persons.

2. Key findings

The 2019 *Household Survey* included a total sample of 1,083 households comprising 3,083 individual respondents. The survey has consistently obtained a sample that reflects well the underlying population of the City of Whittlesea community.

When compared to the 2016 *Census*, the *Household Survey* reported a slightly higher median age, a lower proportion of one-parent families and group households, and non-English speaking respondents. These variations are due mostly to the voluntary nature of the *Household Survey* compared to the *Census*. In almost all other comparable questions, the *Household Survey* reported results very similar to those recorded in the *Census*.

The demographic profile of the respondents remained largely similar to that recorded in recent years.

The City of Whittlesea community has a relatively large household size (2.92), with almost half of the households being two-parent families, particularly younger two-parent families with young and school-aged children. These households live almost exclusively in three and four bedroom separate detached homes. The household structure does vary across the municipality, with the growth area precincts having a higher proportion of young families, whilst the Whittlesea Township and the Rural North in particular are defined by larger proportion of older residents, often living in couple and sole person households. This is also the case to some extent in the south-western precincts of Lalor and Thomastown, although these areas have a more diverse demographic and household profile.

The City of Whittlesea community remains a very diverse community. The survey found that more than one-third (38.7%) of respondents were born overseas, mostly but not exclusively in mainly non-English speaking countries (28.7%). As has been reported over time, there has been an increasing proportion of respondents born in southern Asian countries, and a decline in the proportion from southern European countries. This is most evident in Epping North where more than 10 percent of respondents were born in India.

The languages spoken at home reflect the countries of birth, with southern Asian languages (8.2%) the most commonly spoken, followed by southern European (3.8%), and southeast Asian (3.3%) languages. These results also varied substantially across the municipality, with Epping North and Mernda respondents more likely to speak southern Asian languages, Lalor respondents more likely to speak southern and eastern European languages, and Thomastown respondents more likely to speak southern European languages and southeast Asian languages. Respondents from Whittlesea Township and Doreen were measurably less likely to speak a language other than English at home.

Respondents continue to report relatively modest personal and household incomes, with the median household income in 2019 of $74,570, up 4.6% on the 2017 median. The personal median income of full-time and self-employed respondents was $58,188 this year, up 2.2% on the 2017 median. It is noted that employed female respondents earned 9.6% less than their male counterparts, whilst employed non-English speaking respondents earned 12.7% less than their English speaking counterparts.

The education and employment profile of the City of Whittlesea community continues to change over time. Consistent with the age and household structure, the proportion of respondents attending educational insitutions continues to increase, with 33.8% in 2019 attending an educational institution.

One of the key findings over the 23 years of the *Household Survey* program has been the significant improvement in the proportion of the City of Whittlesea community with a post-secondary school qualification. Whereas in 1997 the *Household Survey* found that 57.5% had no post-secondary school qualification, this has dropped substantially over time to be 27.8% in 2019. The proportion of respondents with trades and certificate qualification has remained relatively stable over time, however the proportion with a university degree has increased substantially.

In line with this improving educational profile, the employment profile of respondents has also changed substantially over time. The proportion employed as professionals has increased from just seven percent in 1997 to almost one-quarter (23.9%) this year. Over the same period, the proportion employed as labourers and related workers has halved from 18.5% in 1997 to 9.5% this year. The industries of employment have also changed significantly over time, with the most common industry in 2019 being healthcare and social assistance (13.2%), construction (11.6%) and retail trade (10.4%). In 2019, just 8.6% were employed in manufacturing, down from 13.8% in 2012.

The private motor vehicle continues to dominate the transport choices of respondents, with 78.4% of employed respondents travelling to work by car. This result has declined only marginally in recent years, down from 82.4% in 2012.

The use of public transport for the journey to work has increased only very marginally since 2015, up from 15.7% to 16.8%.

Commuting times have remained relatively stable in recent years, with one-third (34.0%) taking less than half an hour to commute to and from work each day, and almost one-sixth (15.5%) taking 90 minutes or more.

Approximately one-sixth (17.9%) of respondents reported that they use public transport, (other than for the journey to work or study), at least once a week, whilst almost half (45.7%) never use public transport, up from the 34.7% recorded when the question was last included in 2015.

These transport choices are reflected in the degree to which respondents consider it easy to travel to local places as needed by various forms of transport. The ease of travel to locations by car was 8.06 out of 10, compared to 6.72 for train, 5.95 for cycling, and 5.38 for walking. Respondents from South Morang tended to rate it somewhat easier to get to local places as needed by walking, bicycle, train and bus. By contrast, respondents from Whittlesea Township and the Rural North rated it significantly more difficult to get to local places as needed by walking, bicycle, train, and tram.

Open spaces remain of significant importance to the City of Whittlesea community. Respondent households frequently (weekly or fortnightly) use walking / cycling paths (70.7%), playgrounds (38.4%), sporting reserves (31.5%), informal open grassed areas (28.8%), dog off-leash areas (15.0%), picnic facilities (10.9%), and skate facilities (3.4%). Associated with this use of open spaces 40 percent (39.8%) of respondents did between one and less than five hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity in the last week, and one-quarter (24.7%) spent five hours or more.

A little less than half (42.6%) of respondent households owned their home outright, whilst 38.1% were purchasing their home, and 18.1% were renting privately. These results have proved quite stable over time.

Housing costs have also remained relatively stable in recent years, with the median mortgage in 2019 being $436 per week, whilst the median rent was $358 per week. Whilst the community is relatively stable, it is noted that one-third (33.7%) of respondents had lived at their current address for less than five years. Naturally this result is higher in the growth area precincts such as Mernda (49.8%) and Doreen (43.7%), but was also significant across the municipality, with 37.2% of respondents from Thomastown and 28.9% of respondents from Mill Park having lived at their current address for less than five years.

Most respondents that had lived at their current address for less than five years, moved to their current address from within the City of Whittlesea (44.5%) or the northeastern region of Melbourne (25.1%). The northeastern region is the region containing the City of Whittlesea.

The most important factors in the decision to live in the neighbourhood were safety of the neighbourhood (8.56), access to local shops and supermarkets (8.52), affordable lifestyle (8.24), convenient location (8.23), attractive neighbourhood (8.23), friendly and welcoming for children and families (8.22), leafy, treed and green neighbourhood (8.16), and access to quality parks and open spaces (8.11).

On the whole, respondent households were very satisfied with the aspects of living in the neighbourhood that were important to their decision to live in the neighbourhood.

Particular attention is drawn to the fact that satisfaction with many of these 21 aspects (covering location, accessibility of services and spaces, and lifestyle) increased measurably this year compared to when this question was last included in the survey in 2017.

Some of the neighbourhood aspects to record the largest increases in satisfaction included access to walking / cycling paths (up 12.3%), access to major roads and freeways (up 11.5%), access to public transport (up 10.5%), access to entertainment, cafes, restaurants (up 8.0%), and the safety of the neighbourhood (7.6%).

Access to health services in the City of Whittlesea improved this year compared to 2017, including access to doctors, dentists, hospitals, and mental health services. It is noted however that ten percent of respondents reported that they required access to, but could not access locally a health service, with doctors (4.1%) the most commonly required but not accessed locally.

Respondents considered it extremely easy to access a public library (8.05 out of ten), however they rated it moderately easy to access aged care services (6.57 up from 6.16), and mildly easy to access a Centrelink office (6.01), financial and legal support services (5.98), disability support services (5.97), respite services (5.65), a Medicare office (5.13), and other social services (5.46). Again, approximately 10 percent of respondents were unable to access locally one of these services, with Centrelink (4.2%) and Medicare (4.2%) offices the most common services that respondents could not access locally.

Consistent with the household structure profile of the municipality, one-third (35.2%) of respondent households accessed at least one education service in the last 12 months, with primary schools (20.4%), secondary schools (13.9%), and childcare (9.5%) the most common. Respondent households rated it extremely or very easy to access primary school (8.18), secondary school (7.66), 4 year old kindergarten (7.39), and childcare (7.09). Attention is drawn to the fact that just 2.2% of respondent households reported that they required but could not access locally any of these educational services. Consistent with this, respondent households were on the whole in agreement that there were suitable education options available locally that meet their household's needs.

In relation to participation in a range of environmental / sustainability actions, there was a measurable increase between 2016 and 2019 in participation in installing energy efficient lighting (69.7% up from 64.3%), purchasing sustainable products (43.6% up from 37.0%), installing solar panels (23.1% up from 17.4%), and the use of sustainable transport (20.1% up from 9.2%).

Civic engagement was included in the survey, however respondents are referred to the *City of Whittlesea – 2018 Community Attitudes and Liveability Survey* for a more detailed examination of civic participation in the City of Whittlesea. The *Household Survey* found that a little more than one-quarter (28.5%) of respondents had engaged in at least one civic participation activity in the last 12 months, with completing a survey (17.3%), signing an online petition (10.1%), and participating in a meeting or workshop (9.4%) the most common activities.

Respondent households were asked to rate their agreement with 11 statements about their local neighbourhood and community. Of the 11 statements included in the question, 10 were included in 2015, and of these the average agreement with eight increased measurably this year compared to 2015.

There was “strong” agreement that “I feel proud to live in my neighbourhood”, with an average agreement of 6.94 out of 10. There was mild to moderate levels of agreement with most of the other statements, however respondents were “neutral” in relation to “people in my neighbourhood get involved in local issues” and mild disagreement that “I / we participate in community activities and events”.

These results suggest a relatively solid and improving sense of community in the City of Whittlesea as a whole, although there was a degree of variation observed across the municipality. The results do however highlight the fact that a significant proportion of the community do not feel that the community is engaged in local issues, community activities and events. This is consistent with the civic participation results.

There was a small increase in the perception of safety in the public areas of the City of Whittlesea both during the day and at night observed in 2019 compared to 2016 (when the question was last included in this format in the survey). It is noted however that 12.2% of respondents felt unsafe in the public areas of the municipality during the day and 44.4% felt unsafe in public areas at night. These results did vary across the municipality, with respondents from Bundoora (57.8%), Lalor (52.2%), Mill Park (49.8%), and Thomastown (49.7%) the most likely to feel unsafe in the public areas of the municipality at night. It is also noted that 52.8% of female respondents felt unsafe at night compared to 35.4% of male respondents.

When asked to identify the “top issues for Council to address”, the four most commonly raised issues this year were traffic management (45.9%), safety, policing, crime and drugs (15.8%), road maintenance and repairs (14.5%), and public transport (14.0%).

There were measurable increases this year compared to 2017, in the proportion of respondent households raising issues of road maintenance and repairs (14.5% up from 3.3%), public transport (14.0% up from 8.8%), and health and medical services (5.6% up from 1.4%).

When compared to the metropolitan Melbourne averages (as recorded in Metropolis Research’s *Governing Melbourne* survey), respondents in the City of Whittlesea were significantly more likely to raise traffic management (45.9% compared to 20.3%), safety, policing and crime (15.8% compared to 6.8%), road maintenance and repairs (14.5% compared to 10.0%), public transport (14.0% compared to 5.0%). These results highlight the importance of these issues to the City of Whittlesea community, with a particular emphasis on transport related issues, including commuting times, access to major roads and freeways, and access to reliable and efficient public transport.

In relation to traffic management in particular, it is noted that respondent households from Epping North (63.3%) and Mill Park (56.9%) were measurably more likely than average to raise these issues, although they were raised by a significant proportion of respondent households across the municipality.

3. Demographic profile

3.1 Age and gender

- The median age of respondents to the 2019 *Household Survey* was 40 years, the same as recorded in 2017. This result has proved very stable over time.
- This result is higher than the 2016 *Census* result of 34 years, which reflects the higher engagement of older residents compared to younger residents in completing voluntary surveys.
- The median age was measurably higher in Whittlesea Township (57 yrs), the Rural North (52 yrs), and Bundoora (47 yrs) and lower in the growth area precincts of Epping North (35 yrs) and Mernda (35 yrs).
- The *Household Survey* obtained close to a 50 / 50 split between male (49.5%) and female (50.5%) respondents. There were no respondents that identified as non-binary or were self-describe. There was no meaningful variation in gender observed across the municipality.

3.2 Household size and structure

- The average household size in 2019 was 2.92 persons per household, almost identical to the 2016 *Census* average of 2.93.
- The average household size was measurably higher in South Morang (3.20) and Epping North (3.18), and lower in Bundoora (2.63), the Rural North (2.63), and Whittlesea Township (2.02).
- Approximately half (49.9%) of respondent households were families with children, comprising mainly two-parent families (44.8%), but also a small proportion of one-parent families (5.1%). Whilst the proportion of two-parent families has varied marginally from year to year, the proportion of one-parent families has declined somewhat from 9.1% in 2002 to 5.1% in 2019.
- A little more than one-quarter (27.7%) of respondent households were couple households without children, which is consistent with the results recorded in previous years. The couple households without children were comprised of 4.0% young couples (aged 15 to 35 years), 8.5% middle-aged couples (aged 36 to 60 years), and 15.2% older couples (aged 61 years and over).
- A little more than 10 percent (13.8%) of respondent households were sole person households, a result that has remained relatively stable over the last 15 years. The sole person households were comprised of 1.0% young persons, 5.2% middle-aged persons, and 7.6% older persons.
- There was significant variation in the household structure observed across the precincts, including a measurably higher than average proportion of two-parent families in Epping North (63.0%) and South Morang (54.3%), couple households without children in the Rural North (41.5%) and Thomastown (39.3%), and sole person households in Whittlesea Township (38.4%).

3.3 Diversity

- A little more than one-third (38.7%) of respondents were born overseas, with most of these (28.7%) born in a mainly non-English speaking country. A little less than two-thirds (61.3%) were born in Australia, a result which is marginally higher than the 2016 *Census* (58.4%).

- There was measurable and significant variation in this result observed across the City of Whittlesea:

    - Respondents from Thomastown (47.1%), Lalor (43.9%), Mernda (42.6%) and Epping North (41.0%) were measurably more likely than average to be born overseas. Most of these respondents were born in mainly non-English speaking countries.

    - Respondents from Mill Park (29.3%), South Morang (28.5%), and Doreen (19.5%) were measurably less likely to be born overseas, and of those that were the majority were born in mainly non-English speaking countries.

- The most common countries of birth (excluding Australia) were India (6.6%), Macedonia (2.7%), and Italy (2.7%).

- Consistent with the results recorded in previous years, less than one percent (0.6%) of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This result is almost identical to the 2016 *Census* result of 0.8%.

- Approximately one-third (32.9%) of respondents prefer to speak a language other than English at home. This result is consistent with results recorded in the last three *Household Surveys*. It is noted that senior citizens (aged 75 years and over) were measurably and significantly more likely than average to prefer to speak a language other than English at home (44.4%).

- This result is however lower than the 2016 *Census* result of 44.1%. Voluntary surveys such as the *Household Survey* will under-represent non-English speaking residents, due to reasons which are discussed in more detail in the *Municipal Report*.

- Respondents from Lalor (55.6%), Thomastown (49.0%), and Epping North (43.7%) were measurably more likely than average, and respondents from Doreen (11.3%), and Whittlesea Township (3.8%) were measurably and significantly less likely to prefer to speak a language other than English at home.

- In 2019, the languages most commonly spoken at home (excluding English) were southern Asian languages, which include mainly Indian languages (8.2%), southern European (3.8%), and southeast Asian (3.3%) languages.

- There was measurable and significant variation in the languages spoken across the municipality, including a measurably higher than average proportion of southern Asian languages spoken in Epping North (18.6%) and Mernda (17.1%), southern European languages in Lalor (7.6%), and Thomastown (6.9%), southeast Asian languages in Thomastown (10.7%), and eastern European languages in Lalor (9.2%).

3.4 Income

- The median personal annual income (from all sources) of respondents aged 15 years and over was $31,148, an increase of less than one percent on the 2017 median of $31,044, and 38.9% higher than the 2007 median of $22,412.

- This result was 1.3% higher than the 2016 *Census* median income of $30,732, which is a result that reflects very well on the reliability of the *Household Survey*.

- The median personal income (from all sources) varied substantially across the municipality, with respondents from South Morang, Mernda, and Epping North reporting a measurably higher median income, and respondents from the Rural North, Whittlesea Township, Lalor and Thomastown reporting a measurably lower median income than the municipal median.

- The median personal annual income of full-time and self-employed respondents aged 15 years and over was $58,188 in 2019, an increase of 2.2% on the 2017 median of $56,940. Since this result was included in the report in 2014, the median income of full-time and self-employed respondents has increased by 12.7%.

- There was measurable and significant variation in the median income of full time and self employed respondents observed by gender and language spoken at home:

    - ***Gender*** – the median annual income of full-time / self-employed females was 9.6% lower than that of male respondents. This gender pay gap of 9.6% in 2019 was slightly lower than the 12.5% from 2017.

    - ***Language spoken at home*** – the median annual income of full-time / self-employed non-English speaking respondents was 12.7% lower than that of English speaking respondents. This is down substantially on the 21.8% differential recorded in 2017.

3.5 Disability and carers

- The proportion of respondents that identify as having a permanent or long-term disability increased measurably this year, up from 11.6% in 2017 to 14.8% this year.

- The 2019 survey included “permanent or long-term medical conditions” as one of the 10 response options, which may be a factor in the increase this year.

- The most common forms of disability in 2019 were “permanent or long-term medical condition” (6.8%), mental health (4.0%), and hearing impairment (2.9%).

- There was a clear relationship between the respondents’ age and their likelihood to identify as having a disability, from a low of 0.6% of young children (aged 0 to 4 years) to a high of 51.3% of senior citizens (aged 75 years and over).

- Respondents from Whittlesea Township (35.7%) were measurably and significantly more likely to identify as having a disability, whilst respondents from Mernda (9.6%), Epping North (9.1%) and the Rural North (8.3%) were measurably less likely.

- In 2019, a little less than half (41.1%) of respondents with a disability reported that they needed assistance with their disability. The main forms of assistance were help with daily tasks (25.1%), emotional support (21.1%), and social participation (13.8%).

- More than ten percent (11.7%) of respondents aged 15 years and over reported that they care for someone to allow that person to stay in their own home, a measurable increase on the 8.6% recorded in 2019.

- Approximately one-third (33.5% up from 32.4%) of respondents aged 15 years and over reported that they spend any time caring for a child / children aged under 15 years without pay, with most of these (21.7%) caring for their own children, or their own grandchildren (9.6%).

- Adults (aged 36 to 45 years) were measurably and significantly more likely than other age groups to care for a child or children without pay (mostly their own children), with more than half (57.6%) caring for a child or children.

- Respondents from Mernda (28.4%) were measurably more likely to care for their own children, and respondents from Lalor (71.4%) and Whittlesea Township (73.8%) were the most likely to not care for a child or children.

4. Education and employment

4.1 Education

- The proportion of respondents currently attending an educational institution increased slightly this year, up from 31.6% in 2017 to 33.8% this year, after holding essentially stable from 2014 to 2017. Prior to 2014, this proportion had been steadily increasing from a low of 17.0% recorded in the first *Household Survey* in 1997.

- A little less than 10 percent (6.9%) of respondents attending an educational institution were attending preschool / kindergarten, approximately one-quarter primary school (25.5%) and secondary school (24.8%), a little more than 10 percent (11.8%) TAFE / similar institutions, and approximately one-quarter (24.2%) were attending university.

- Despite a small decrease this year, the proportion of respondents attending university has increased substantially over time, from an average of around 12 percent over the period 1997 to 2012, to an average closer to one-quarter in recent years.

- There was measurable variation in the educational institutions attended by respondents observed across the municipality:

    - *Primary school* - Epping North (35.4%), and Mernda (34.4%) respondents were measurably more likely to attend primary school.

    - *Secondary school* - Whittlesea Township (32.5%) respondents were measurably more likely to attend secondary school.

    - *TAFE / similar institutions* - Epping (17.5%), Whittlesea Township (17.5%), and the Rural North (17.6%) respondents were measurably more likely to attend TAFE / similar institutions.

    - *University* - Bundoora (31.8%) and Lalor (34.2%) respondents were measurably more likely to attend university.

- Over the course of the *Household Survey* since 1997, the proportion of respondents aged 15 years and over with no post-secondary school qualification has declined significantly, halving from a high of more than half (57.5%) in 1997 to a little more than one-quarter (27.8%) in 2019. This is the lowest proportion of respondents with no post-secondary school qualification recorded by the *Household Survey*.

- The likelihood of having a post-secondary school qualification declines with the respondents age group, from 83.8% of young adults (aged 20 to 35 years) to 30.0% of senior citizens (aged 75 years and over). However, as the proportion of the population attending higher education continues to increase, the older age groups in the City of Whittlesea are becoming more likely over time to have a post-secondary school qualification.

- There was interesting variation in these qualification results observed by gender and language spoken at home:

    - ***Gender*** - Female respondents (28.4%) were somewhat more likely than males (25.4%) to have a bachelor or higher degree, whilst male respondents (46.0%) were measurably more likely than females (36.3%) to have a certificate or diploma.

    - ***Language spoken at home*** - Non-English speaking respondents (38.6%) were measurably more likely than English speaking (20.9%) to have a bachelor or higher degree, whilst English speaking (46.7%) were measurably more likely than non-English speaking (30.7%) to have a certificate or diploma.

- There was measurable variation in the qualifications profile of respondents across the municipality, with respondents from Lalor (40.9%) and Thomastown (34.4%) measurably more likely to have no post-secondary qualification, and respondents from Epping (18.1%), Whittlesea Township (26.9%), and the Rural North (21.2%) measurably more likely to have a certificate or diploma.

4.2 Employment

- the labour market participation rate of respondents aged 15 years and over was 67.3% in 2019, almost identical to the 67.6% recorded in 2017. This result was comprised of full-time / self-employed (40.8%), part time / casually employed (18.9%), employed and studying (3.0%), and unemployed (4.7%).

- These employment profile results have remained relatively stable over the course of the last six years.

- Respondents from Whittlesea Township (41.1%), the Rural North (33.6%) Bundoora (21.8%), Lalor (19.4%), and Thomastown (19.4%) were measurably more likely than average to be retired, whilst respondents from Mernda (45.9%), Epping North (44.2%), and South Morang (40.8%) were more likely to be employed full-time.

- Consistent with the results recorded in recent years, respondents were most likely to be employed as professionals (22.9%), clerical / administration workers (18.1%), and technicians / tradespersons (15.0%).

- Over the 23 years of the *Household Survey* program there has been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents employed as professionals (from seven percent in 1997 to 22.9% in 2019), and a significant decline in the proportion employed as labourers / related workers (from 18.5% in 1997 to 9.5%).

- There was measurable variation in the occupation profile of respondents across the municipality with respondents from Bundoora (28.7%) more likely to be employed as technicians / tradespersons, Lalor (20.2%) and Epping (15.6%) more likely to be employed as labourers and related workers, Thomastown more likely to be employed as community / personal service workers (17.7%), sales (11.5%) and labourers and related workers (14.6%), Doreen (31.6%) more likely to be employed as professionals, Whittlesea Township more likely to be employed as technicians / tradespersons (28.3%) and machinery operators / drivers (11.7%), and Rural North (16.2%) more likely to be employed as other occupations.

- Consistent with previous surveys, the top three industries of employment were healthcare / social assistance (13.2%), construction (11.6%), and retail trade (10.4%).

- Healthcare and social assistance has been the most common industry of employment in each of the last five *Household Surveys*. This is a significant change in the City of Whittlesea, as manufacturing was the most common industry of employment recorded in the *Household Survey* in five of the six years prior to 2012.

- There was relatively little measurable variation in the industries of employment results observed across the municipality. Respondents from Epping (15.2%) and the Rural North (14.7%) were more likely to be employed in transport, postal and warehousing, whilst respondents from Whittlesea Township were more likely to be employed in construction (32.0%) and utilities and waste (5.7%).

- A little more than one-third (34.2%) of employed respondents were employed in the City of Whittlesea, a result that has been reasonably consistent over the last six years, but which has grown from around one-quarter recorded back in 1997.

- Respondents from Mill Park (40.0%), and Whittlesea Township (48.0%) were more likely to be employed in the City of Whittlesea, respondents from Bundoora (36.3%) more likely to be employed in the inner Melbourne region, respondents from Lalor (16.9%) and Epping North (16.4%) more likely to be employed in the north western Melbourne, respondents from Whittlesea Township (4.0%) more likely to be employed in regional / rural Victoria, and respondents from Lalor (14.6%), and the Rural North (24.1%) more likely to be employed in “various locations” (e.g. tradespersons that move from job to job).

- Approximately three-quarters (71.4%) of employed respondents were satisfied with their current employment situation. Respondents from Epping North (78.9%) and the Rural North (81.4%) were measurably more likely to be satisfied, and respondents from Lalor (60.2%) measurably less likely to be satisfied. 7.4% were dissatisfied due to the commute time being too long, 5.1% due to working “too few hours”, 4.5% due to working “too many hours”, and 3.7% due to skills and experience don’t match the job.

- Almost five percent (4.7%) of respondents aged 15 years and over were unemployed, and the most common barriers to finding employment were a lack of availability of jobs (47.4%), health issues (32.0%), and discrimination (28.9%).

- Less than five percent (3.4%) of employed respondents had a home-based business, a result that has been relatively stable since it was first included in the *Household Survey* program in 2013.

- A little less than one-quarter (23.1%) of employed respondents worked from home (other than in a home-based business), with sometimes working from home (19.2%) the most common form. Respondents from Mernda (29.3%), Bundoora (28.7%), and Doreen (28.7%) were measurably less likely to at least sometimes work from home.

5. Transport

5.1 Journey to work

- Consistent with the results recorded over the course of the *Household Survey* program, approximately four-fifths (78.4%) of respondents either drove or were driven to work by car.

- There was measurable and significant variation in the method of journey to work based on the location of employment, with half (50.8%) of respondents employed in the inner Melbourne region (the CBD and inner suburbs) travelling to work by a method that includes a form of public transport, mainly train (32.3%) and multiple public transport (12.5%).

- There was only marginal variation in this result observed across the municipality, with respondents from Whittlesea Township (90.6%) more likely to drive to work.

- A little more than one-third (34.0%) of employed respondents took less than half an hour to commute to and from work each day (two-way combined) and almost one-sixth (15.5%) took 90 minutes or more.

- The commuting times varied dramatically by both the method of journey to work and the employment location. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that respondents driving to work by car (37.5%) were measurably more likely to take less than 30 minutes to commute to and from work per day, compared to those travelling by multiple public transport modes (21.0%), car and public transport (11.8%), or by train (3.9%).

5.2 Public transport

- A little less than one-quarter (21.2%) of respondents regularly (at least fortnightly) use public transport to get to destinations, with 6.4% using daily, 6.4% two to three times per week, 5.1% weekly and 3.3% fortnightly, and a little less than half (45.7%) of respondents reported that they never using public transport for non-work or study related trips.

- Adolescents and young adults (aged 13 to 34 years) were measurably more likely than average to frequently use public transport for non-work or study related trips, whilst middle-aged and older adults (aged 45 to 74 years) were measurably less likely to frequently use public transport.

- There was relatively little meaningful variation observed amongst respondents at the precinct level, however respondents from South Morang (10.0%) were measurably more likely than average to use public transport on a daily basis, respondents from Lalor (11.6%) and Doreen (11.7%) were measurably more likely than average to use it on a monthly basis, and respondents from Whittlesea Township (32.3%) measurably more likely to use it less than monthly.

- Of the respondents that used public transport for non-work or study related trips, a little more than two-thirds (69.3%) reported that they typically spent less than one hour in an average week waiting for or travelling on public transport, and less than five percent (3.3%) typically spent 10 hours or more per week.

- The top three reasons for using public transport, other than for the journey to work or study, were to visit entertainment venues (43.9%), sporting events (30.5%), and shopping (28.3%).

- When asked how easy it was to get to local places when needed by six different types of transport, on average respondent households rated the ease of getting to local places measurably easier by car (8.06 out of 10 up from 7.82) than any of the other methods of transport, including bus (7.05), train (6.72), bicycle (5.95 up from 5.83), walking (5.38 down from 5.72), and tram (3.50).

- The three most common factors that may encourage respondents to use public transport more frequently were more frequent services (25.3%), car parking at stations (25.1%), and lower cost (21.5%).

6. Health and recreation

6.1 Average time spent doing moderate to vigorous physical activity

- The results for respondents' level of moderate to vigorous physical activity have remained relatively stable over the last five surveys. Approximately one-third (35.5%) of respondents spent less than one hour in the past week doing moderate to vigorous physical activity, approximately 40 percent (39.8%) spent between one and less than five hours, and approximately one-quarter (24.7%) spent five hours of more.

- Young children (aged 0 to 4 years) and senior citizens (aged 75 years and over) measurably less likely to have spent any time doing moderate to vigorous physical activity than other respondents.

- There was also some variation based on respondent gender and language spoken at home, with male respondents measurably more likely than female respondents to have done five hours or more moderate to vigorous physical activity in the past week, and English speaking respondents measurably more likely than non-English speaking respondents to undertake some activity.

- Respondents from Doreen (63.9%), Bundoora (63.0%) and Whittlesea Township (62.3%) were measurably more likely than average to have spent less than five hours doing moderate to vigorous physical activity in the past week.

6.2 Use of local open spaces

- In 2019, approximately two-thirds (70.7%) of respondent households frequently (weekly or fortnightly) use walking / cycling paths, a little more than one-third frequently visit playgrounds (38.4%), a little less than one-third frequently visit sporting reserves (31.5%), and informal open grassed areas (28.8%), less than one-sixth frequently visit dog off-leash areas (15.0%) or picnic facilities (10.9%), and 3.4% frequently visit skate facilities.

- There was little measurable variation in the use of local open spaces observed across the municipality, with details provided in the *Municipal Report*.

7. Housing

7.1 Dwelling type, housing situation, and payments

- The *Household Survey* program has consistently recorded approximately ninety percent of respondent households living in separate detached houses (91.2% in 2019).

- Respondent households in Epping (84.2%), Epping North (85.0%) and Whittlesea Township (83.3%) were measurably less likely than average to live in a separate detached house.

- The overwhelming majority (94.7%) of respondent households were living in dwellings that had three (54.1%), four (37.2%), or five (3.4%) bedrooms. Almost all (94.1%) respondent households would prefer a dwelling that had three, four or five bedrooms.

- Most respondent households were living in a dwelling with their preferred number of bedrooms. Most four, five or more person households would prefer to live in a four, five or more bedroom dwelling, including those currently living in a three bedroom dwelling.

- The main reasons why respondent households prefer the type of dwelling and number of bedrooms that they do related to their need to accommodate their family (25.1%), that the housing / number of bedrooms was adequate for their needs (13.0%), and that they require a spare bedroom / visitor bedroom (11.1%).

- The overwhelming majority of respondent households either owned their home (42.6%) or were purchasing their home (38.1%), with 18.1% renting their home privately. Despite a little variation from year to year, over time these results have proved quite stable.

- There was measurable variation in the housing situation observed across the municipality:

    - ***Home owners*** - respondent households from Lalor (52.2%), Whittlesea Township (60.4%) and the Rural North (61.6%) were measurably more likely to own their home.

    - ***Mortgagees*** - respondent households from Mernda (57.7%), South Morang (50.4%), and Doreen (47.1%) were measurably more likely than average to be purchasing their home.

- The median weekly housing cost of respondent households in 2019 was $389, a decrease of one percent on the $393 recorded in 2017.

    - The median weekly mortgage payment was $436 per week in 2019, an increase of less than one percent on the 2017 median of $432.

    - The median weekly rental payment was $358 per week in 2019, identical to the 2017 median, and an increase of 4.1% on the 2016 median of $344.

7.2 Period of residence and potential emigration

- Consistent with the results over the course of the *Household Survey* program, approximately one-third (33.7% in 2019) of respondents had lived at their current address for less than five years, and approximately two-thirds (66.3%) for five years or more, and almost half (47.4%) had lived at their current address for 10 years or more.

- Respondents from Mernda (49.8%) and Doreen (43.7%) were measurably more likely to have lived at their current address for less than five years.

- Of the respondents who had lived at their current address for less than five years, approximately half (44.5%) had previously lived in the City of Whittlesea, and a further one-quarter (25.1%) had previously lived in the northeastern region of Melbourne (the region containing the City of Whittlesea). This has been a very consistent result recorded over the 23 years of the *Household Survey* program.

- A little more than 10 percent (10.8%) of respondents expect to definitely (3.1%) or possibly (7.7%) move from their current dwelling in the next 12 months.

- Young adults (aged 20 to 34 years) (17.9%) and adults (aged 35 to 44 years) (15.7%) as well as young children (aged 0 to 4 years) (22.9%) were the most likely to potentially move from their current address in the next 12 months. The young children are clearly the children of the young adults and adults who may be potentially moving.

- It is important to note that the *Household Survey* program has consistently found that older adults (aged 60 to 74 years) (2.9%) and senior citizens (aged 75 years and over) (1.4%) were the least likely to potentially move from their current address in the coming 12 months.

- A little less than two-thirds (61.5%) of respondents potentially moving from their current address in the next 12 months will potentially remain within the northeastern region of Melbourne (the region containing the City of Whittlesea), with more than half (51.3%) potentially staying in the City of Whittlesea, and a further 10.2% staying within the north eastern region.

- Of the respondents potentially moving from their current dwelling in the next 12 months, approximately one-quarter (27.3%) may potential move because they are purchasing a home, and almost one-fifth (19.5%) were upgrading.

8. Living in the neighbourhood

- Respondent households were asked to rate both how important each of 21 aspects were to them in their decision to live in their neighbourhood, and how satisfied they were with each. These aspects have been broken down into three groups for ease of analysis, relating to location, access to services and spaces, and lifestyle related aspects.

- Respondent households were asked to rate their agreement on a scale from zero (very unimportant) to 10 (very important), where five is neither important nor unimportant. Satisfaction was asked on the scale from zero (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) where five was neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.

8.1 Location

- The average importance of each of these eight aspects in the decision to live in the neighbourhood can best be summarised as follows:
  - ***Very High Importance*** – respondent households on average considered a convenient location (8.23) to be of very high importance.
  - ***High Importance*** – respondent households on average considered access to major roads and freeways (7.90), proximity to family and / or friends (7.85), access to public transport (7.83), proximity to schools (7.75), access to walking / cycling paths (7.58), and proximity to work (7.50) to be of high importance.
  - ***Moderate Importance*** – respondent households on average considered proximity to University / TAFE / similar institutions (6.67) to be moderately important.

- On average respondent households were more satisfied this year than in 2017 with all eight location-related aspects in relation to their neighbourhood, and can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Excellent*** – for convenient location (7.77 up from 728).
    - ***Very Good*** – for proximity to family / friends (7.66 up from 7.20), proximity to schools (7.63 up from 7.37), access to walking / cycling paths (7.58 up from 6.75), and access to public transport (7.47 up from 6.76).
    - ***Good*** – for access to major roads and freeways (6.89 up from 6.18), and proximity to work (6.57 up from 6.05).
    - ***Solid*** – for proximity to University / TAFE / similar institutions (6.39 up from 6.10).
- There was measurable and significant variation in both the importance and satisfaction of location aspects observed across the municipality, with full details available in the *Municipal Report*. Average satisfaction with many of these aspects tended to be lower in Mernda, Doreen, Whittlesea Township and the Rural North.

8.2 Accessibility of services and spaces

- The average importance of each of the six aspects related to the accessibility of services and spaces within their local neighbourhood can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Very High Importance*** – respondent households on average considered access to local shops and supermarkets (8.52) and access to quality parks and open spaces (8.11) as of very high importance.
    - ***High Importance*** – respondent households on average rated access to entertainment / cafes and restaurants (7.73), and access to sports and recreation (7.03) to be of high importance.
    - ***Moderate Importance*** – respondent households on average rated access to childcare / kindergarten (6.67), and access to community centres (6.55) to be of moderate importance.
- Respondent households were on average more satisfied this year than in 2017 with most of these aspects, and can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Excellent*** – for access to local shops and supermarkets (8.37 up from 8.07).
    - ***Very Good*** – for access to quality parks / open spaces (7.69), and access to entertainment / cafes and restaurants (7.44 up from 6.89).
    - ***Good*** – for access to childcare / kindergarten (7.05 up from 6.65), access to community centres (6.84 up from 6.68), and access to sports and recreation (6.83).
- There was measurable and significant variation in both the importance and satisfaction of the accessibility of services and spaces aspects observed across the municipality, with full details available in the *Municipal Report*. It is noted that respondent households from the Rural North were measurably less satisfied than average with all of these aspects.

8.3 Lifestyle

- The average importance of each of the seven lifestyle related aspects of living in the neighbourhood can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Very High Importance*** – for safety of the neighbourhood (8.56), affordable lifestyle (8.24), attractive neighbourhood (8.23), friendly and welcoming for children and families (8.22), and leafy, treed, and green neighbourhood (8.16).
    - ***High Importance*** – for affordable housing choices (7.97) and friendly and welcoming for people with a disability (7.90).
- Respondent households were on average satisfied with each of these aspects, and can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Very Good*** – for the neighbourhood being friendly and welcoming for children and families (7.54), friendly and welcoming for people with a disability (7.35 up from 6.83), and affordable lifestyle (7.25).
    - ***Good*** – for safety of the neighbourhood (7.10 up from 6.41), leafy, treed, and green neighbourhood (7.01), attractive neighbourhood (7.09), and affordable housing choices (6.92 up from 6.48).
- There was measurable and significant variation in both the importance and satisfaction of the lifestyle aspects observed across the municipality, with full details available in the *Municipal Report*. It is noted that respondent households from Doreen tended to be somewhat more satisfied than average with many of these aspects.

9. Health and human services

- Respondent households were asked a range of questions around accessibility of selected health and human services. Respondent households were asked to select all the services that members of the household had accessed / used in the last 12 months, then to select all the services that they required but could not access locally and the reasons why they could not access these services, and were then asked to rate the accessibility on a scale from zero (very difficult) to 10 (very easy).
- The services included on the survey form have been broken into three groups: five health services; eight human and other services; and five educational services.

9.1 Health services

- There was a small but measurable variation in the average ease of access to these five health services results observed between 2017 and 2019.
- The average ease of accessing these five services can best be summarised as follows:
    - ***Extremely Easy*** – respondents rated access to doctors (8.22 up from 7.95) as on average extremely easy.
    - ***Very Easy*** – respondents rated access to dentists (7.75 up from 7.43) and other health services (7.45 up from 6.94) as on average very easy.

  - ***Moderately Easy*** – respondents rated access to hospitals (6.90 up from 6.53) as on average moderately easy.
  - ***Mildly Easy*** – respondents rated access to mental health services (6.01 up from 5.34) on average as mildly easy.

- The overwhelming majority (86.7%) of respondent households had accessed at least one of the five listed health services, with doctors (83.2%) the most commonly accessed health service and mental health services (8.8%) the least accessed service.

- A little more than 10 percent (10.1%) of respondent households reported that they required but could not access at least one health service, with doctors (4.1%) the most commonly required but not accessed.

- There was some variation in the ease of accessing some health services observed at the precinct level, with details available in the *Main Report*.

9.2 Human and other services

- There was a small but measurable variation in the average ease of access for these eight services observed between 2017 and 2019.

- The ease of access to the eight human and other services can best be summarised as follows:

  - ***Extremely Easy*** – respondent households rated access to a public library (8.05) as extremely easy.
  - ***Moderately Easy*** – respondent households rated access to aged care services (6.57) as moderately easy.
  - ***Mildly Easy*** – respondent households rated access to a Centrelink office (6.01), financial and legal support services (5.98), disability support services (5.97), respite services (5.65), a Medicare office (5.13) and other social services (5.46) as mildly easy.

- Almost half (48.0%) of respondent households had accessed at least one of these eight human and other services in the last 12 months, with public library (25.3%) and a Centrelink office (23.0%) the most commonly accessed.

- Almost 10 percent (9.3%) of respondent households reported that they required but could not access at least one of the eight human and other services in the last 12 months, with a Centrelink office (4.2%) and a Medicare office (4.2%) the two most commonly required but not accessed.

- There was some variation in the ease of accessing some human and other services observed at the precinct level, with details available in the *Main Report*.

9.3 Educational services

- There was no measurable variation in the ease of accessing these five educational services observed between 2017 and 2019.

- The ease of accessing these educational services can best be summarised as follows:

    - ***Extremely Easy*** – respondent households on average rated the ease of accessing primary (8.18) as extremely easy.

    - ***Very Easy*** – respondent households on average rated the ease of accessing secondary schools (7.66), 4 year old kindergarten (7.39) and childcare (7.09) as very easy.

    - ***Moderately Easy*** – respondent households on average rated the ease of accessing post secondary school education (6.44) as moderately easy.

- A little more than one-third (35.2%) of respondent households had accessed at least one of these five educational services in the last 12 months, with primary (20.4%) and secondary (13.9%) schools the most commonly accessed.

- Less than three percent (2.2%) of respondent households reported that they required but could not access at least one of these five educational services in the last 12 months, with secondary schools (1.0%), childcare (1.0%) and post-secondary school education (1.0%) the most commonly required but not accessed.

- There was some variation in the ease of accessing some education services observed at the precinct level, with details available in the *Main Report*.

9.4 Suitable local education options

- This question relating to suitable local education options was included for the first time in the *Household Survey* program in 2019. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement that there are suitable education options available that meet their household's needs.

- These results can best be summarised as follows:

    - ***Strong Agreement*** – that there were suitable primary (7.49) and early years (7.30) education options available.

    - ***Moderate Agreement*** – that there are suitable secondary (6.67), TAFE (6.12), and University or similar (6.07) education options available.

    - ***Mild Agreement*** – that there are suitable adult (5.77) education options available.

- Respondent households from Bundoora were more likely than average to agree that there are suitable university and similar education options available, whilst respondent households from Epping were less likely than average to agree that there are suitable secondary school options available.

- The three most common reasons why respondents believe that there were no suitable local education options available were that there were no TAFE or universities or suitable courses in local area (51 responses), there is a need for more good public secondary college and primary schools in the local area (30 responses), and it is difficult or lengthy journey to get to other places for education (22 responses).

10. Environment

- Respondent households were asked whether they were currently doing, considering doing within 12 months, or not considering doing a range of environmental actions and initiatives. This set of questions was last included in the *Household Survey* program in 2016.

- There was some measurable variation in these results observed between 2016 and 2019, as follows:

    - ***Measurable increase in current participation*** – in the proportion of respondent households who had installed energy efficient lights (69.7% up from 64.3%), installed solar panels (23.1% up from 17.4%), purchase sustainable products (43.6% up from 37.0%), and use sustainable transport (20.1% up substantially from 9.2%).

    - ***Measurable increase in potential participation within 12 months*** – in the proportion of respondent households that were considering installing solar panels (14.2% up substantially from 7.1%), have a low water garden (8.0% up from 5.1%), and use sustainable transport (7.9% up from 3.5%).

    - ***Measurable decrease in current participation*** – in the proportion of respondent households that currently use water efficient showerheads (61.9% down from 67.0%), re-use grey water (15.7% down from 20.1%), and have a low water use garden (50.1% down from 56.1%).

11. Community

11.1 Civic engagement

- A little more than one-quarter (28.5%) of respondents aged 15 years and over reported that they had participated in at least one civic engagement activity.

- The three most common forms of civic participation respondents were most likely to have engaged in the last year were completed a survey (17.3%), signed an online petition (10.1%), and participated in a meeting or workshop (9.4%).

- Adults (aged 35 to 44 years) were measurably more likely than average to have completed a survey (23.6%) or signed an online petition (17.0%), senior citizens (aged 75 years and over) were less likely to have completed a survey (7.4%), signed an online petition (3.0%), or participated in a meeting or workshop (4.4%).

- There was also some variation based on respondent gender and language spoken at home, with female respondents (12.5%) measurably more likely than male respondents to have signed an online petition, and English speaking respondents measurably more likely than non-English speaking respondents to have completed a survey (19.5%) or signed an online petition (11.9%).

- Respondents from Mill Park (14.9%) and the Rural North (23.2%) were measurably more likely to have participated in a meeting or workshop, and respondents from Doreen (13.4%), Whittlesea Township (13.9%), and the Rural North (11.6%) were measurably more likely to have signed a paper petition.

11.2 Sense of community

- Respondent households were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with 11 statements about their local neighbourhood and community. This was last included in the *Household Survey* program in 2016.

- The average agreement with these 11 statements can best be summarised as follows:

  - ***Strong Agreement*** – that "I feel proud to live in my neighbourhood" (6.94).

  - ***Moderate agreement*** – that "I / we have adequate time to spend with friends / family" (6.81), "people in my neighbourhood are accepting of people from other cultural / religious backgrounds" (6.79), "I / we could turn to the neighbours for help" (6.61), "I / we often stop and chat with someone from my local community" (6.41), "most people in my local community can be trusted" (6.38), and "the community has a distinct character, it is a special place" (6.24).

  - ***Mild agreement*** – that "my / our neighbourhood has a strong sense of community" (5.93) and "I / we feel part of the local community" (5.47).

  - ***Neutral*** – that "people in my neighbourhood get involved in local issues" (5.09).

  - ***Mild disagreement*** – that "I / we participate in community activities and events" (4.74).

- Respondent households from Whittlesea Township and the Rural North tended (in some but not all cases) to be more in agreement with these statements than the municipal average, whilst respondent households from Mill Park, Lalor and Epping tended (in some but not all cases) to be less in agreement than average.

11.3 Perception of safety in the public areas

- In 2019, there was a small but measurable increase in the proportion of respondents who felt safe during the day (75.3% up from 68.5% in 2016), and a small increase in the proportion who felt safe at night (35.7% up from 33.4%).

- There was some variation in the perception of safety results observed by respondent profile, with young children (aged 0 to 4 years) (64.5%) and older adults (aged 60 to 74 years) (69.4%) measurably less likely than average to feel safe during the day, and female respondents measurably less likely than male respondents to feel safe in the public areas during the day.

- There was measurable variation in the results observed across the municipality, with respondents from Whittlesea Township (90.1%) and Doreen (84.9%) were measurably more likely than average to feel safe during the day, whilst respondents from Epping (18.6%), Bundoora (19.5%) and Thomastown (22.2%) were measurably less likely than average to feel safe.

- There was significant variation in the perception of safety in the public areas of the City of Whittlesea at night observed by respondent profile, with older adults and senior citizens (aged 60 years and over) measurably less likely than average to feel safe at night, and female respondents measurably and significantly less likely than male respondents to feel safe in the public areas at night.

- There was measurable variation in these results observed across the municipality, with respondents from Doreen (53.2%) and South Morang (43.6%) measurably more likely than average to feel safe at night, whilst respondents from Bundoora (57.8%), Lalor (52.2%), Mill Park (49.8%) and Epping (49.4%) were measurably more likely to feel unsafe in the public areas at night.

12. Current issues for Council

- Respondent households were asked (as an open-ended question) to identify the top three issues for Council to address in the coming 12 months. The open-ended responses have been broadly categorised for ease of analysis and time series comparison. The verbatim comments received from respondents are available on request from Council.

- The top four issues identified by respondent households in 2019 remain the same as in 2017 and include traffic management (45.9%), safety, policing, crime and drugs (15.8%), road maintenance and repairs (14.5%), and public transport (14.0%).

- Particular attention in 2019 is drawn to the measurable and significant increase in the proportion of respondent households nominating road maintenance and repairs (14.5% up from 3.3% in 2017), public transport (14.0% up from 8.8% in 2017), and health and medical services (5.6% up from 1.4% in 2017).

- There was also a new category created this year relating to wildlife issues, which was nominated by 1.9% of respondents. This includes issues such as the number of kangaroos and other wildlife, including interactions with these animals on the road. Some respondents talked about the need to cull these animals, whilst some referenced the need to protect wildlife in the municipality.

- There was some significant variation in these results for the City of Whittlesea compared to the 2019 metropolitan Melbourne averages as recorded in the Metropolis Research *Governing Melbourne* research project:

    - ***More common in Whittlesea*** - issues that are significantly more commonly identified in the City of Whittlesea than the metropolitan Melbourne average include traffic management (45.9% compared to 20.3%), safety, policing and crime (15.8% compared to 6.8%), road maintenance and repairs (14.5% compared to 10.0%), public transport (14.0% compared to 5.0%), health and medical services (5.6% compared to 0.4%), and education and schools (3.7% compared to 0.7%).

    - ***Less common in Whittlesea*** - issues that are significantly less commonly identified in the City of Whittlesea than the metropolitan Melbourne average include parking (6.0% compared to 10.4%), building, housing, planning and development issues (4.3% compared to 7.3%), provision and maintenance of street trees (2.5% compared to 6.5%), lighting (2.3% compared to 6.5%), and footpath maintenance and repairs (1.9% compared to 6.5%).

- There was measurable and significant variation in the top issues for Council to address observed across the municipality, with attention drawn to the following:

    - ***Traffic management*** – respondent households in Epping North (63.3%), and Mill Park (56.9%) were measurably and significantly more likely than average to identify traffic management.

    - ***Safety, policing, crime and drug related issues*** – respondent households from Whittlesea Township (29.3%) were measurably more likely than average to identify safety, policing, crime and drug related issues.

    - ***Road maintenance and repairs*** – respondent households from Doreen (27.9%), and Whittlesea Township (23.2%) were measurably more likely than average to identify road maintenance and repairs.

    - ***Public transport*** – respondent households from the Rural North (24.4%) were measurably more likely than average to identify public transport.