



Engagement Report

Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27

22 May 2026



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Executive summary

Background

The Local Government Act (2019) requires Council to have an annual plan for its area. For City of Darwin, it is called the Municipal Plan.

The Municipal Plan presents the Lord Mayor and Elected Members' strategic resourcing decisions for the City of Darwin team to pursue across the 2026/27 financial year.

Through the document a set of commitments are made to the community, which will be reported in the Annual Report, to be published in November 2026. This annual plan outlines priorities to progress, service delivery, budget and the fees and charges booklet.

Elected Members developed a draft budget and plan between December 2025 and May 2026.

Under the Local Government Act, City of Darwin is required to exhibit the Draft Municipal Plan as part of a 21-day engagement process.

A draft of the Municipal Plan was released for public engagement between 30 April - 20 May 2026.

Engagement

A total of 56 submissions were received during the 21-day engagement period.

Using the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) principles, the engagement was conducted at the level of consult.

City of Darwin employed a range of tactics to gather feedback, including an online survey on the Engage Darwin website, paper surveys at each of the four Libraries and Customer Service at the Civic Centre, social media promotion, direct correspondence with stakeholders, corflute signage, print advertising and proactive media engagement. We also hosted in-person engagements at 3 community markets and one shopping centre.

Sentiment was mixed but largely positive when it came to the overall direction and priorities of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27, with 46.4 per cent in support, 35.7 per cent against and 17.9 per cent uncertain or supporting only some aspects of the plan.

Sentiment on the proposed 2026/27 rates increase was predominantly negative, with the majority of respondents not supporting the proposed 5.5% increase. Key concerns centred on cost-of-living pressures, the rate rising above CPI and a desire for Council to demonstrate internal savings before passing costs to ratepayers. A smaller proportion of respondents acknowledged the need for rate adjustments, with several indicating support provided increases remain in line with CPI.

Feedback in support of the plan highlighted the importance of investing in green spaces and tree planting, upgrading parks and recreational facilities, improving cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and strengthening environmental and climate resilience measures across the city.

Those opposing aspects of the plan raised consistent concerns about the Civic Centre development, the adequacy of the community safety budget relative to waste management spending, the level of capital investment in sporting facilities, and a perceived lack of transparency in capital works reporting.

Mixed feedback was received on CBD connectivity and accessibility spending, arts and community grants, and the balance between new infrastructure investment and maintenance of existing assets. Respondents also raised specific suggestions including wet-season exercise infrastructure at key ovals, a dedicated Bagot Road cycleway, increased native tree planting, and improved pedestrian access at several key locations across the city.

Communication recommendations

Based on the feedback received, it is recommended that:

- The feedback outlined in this engagement report is used to inform Elected Members on the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27.
- City of Darwin should undertake a communication program to inform the community, businesses and key stakeholders of Council's decision as to how feedback has been incorporated into the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27.
- City of Darwin make the engagement report available to the community and stakeholders on the Engage Darwin website.

Methodology

Goals and objectives

The goal of this process was to ensure that key stakeholders and the broader community had the opportunity to have their say on the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27.

The objectives were to:

- Educate the community, local business and key stakeholders about the purpose, scope and proposed direction of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27. This includes ensuring transparency around the planning process, priorities, budget allocation and strategic goals.
- Collect input, concerns and ideas from the community to ensure the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 reflects the needs, aspirations and values of the community. This helps shape a more inclusive, locally relevant plan.

Level of engagement

City of Darwin has a policy on community engagement with a commitment to open, transparent and responsive community engagement.

Using the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) principles that guide meaningful community engagement, this engagement was conducted at the level of consult.

City of Darwin provided the public with balanced and objective information to assist understanding of the project allowing the community to provide relevant and informed feedback.

Approach

The engagement approach for the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 included tactics such as a survey on the Engage Darwin website (with opportunities to engage in physical locations including the libraries and Civic Centre), social media content, signage, advertising (print and radio), four community pop-up stalls and a media release to seek feedback from the community and key stakeholders.

Resourcing

Alongside external support from True North Strategic Communications, City of Darwin led this engagement through internal staffing from the:

- Communications & Engagement Officer
- Senior Communication & Engagement Officer
- Manager Marketing, Communications and Engagement
- Executive Manager Marketing, Communications and Engagement

with internal support from:

- Executive Manager Corporate and Customer Services
- Executive Manager Finance and General Manager Corporate

Tools and tactics

A combination of tools and tactics were used to support the engagement process, as summarised below.

Internal engagement	Community and stakeholder engagement
Media Brief for Elected Members	Media release
CEO newsletter (City of Darwin digital newsletter to City of Darwin staff) and Elected Members	News article on City of Darwin website
	Website updates - Draft Municipal Plan page
Talking points (FAQs) for Customer Service and Library staff	Engage Darwin project page and survey
Intranet article	Email to key stakeholders (outlined on page 10)
	Vibrant newsletter (City of Darwin digital newsletter to the community)
	Social media - organic and paid
	Digital displays at Libraries, Pools and Civic Centre customer service
	NT News print advertisement
	NT News digital ad
	Flyers at the City of Darwin Seabreeze Festival stall, Jingili Water Festival and Families Week events.
	A0 coreflute displays at libraries and customer service.
	4 x pop-up stalls at Nightcliff markets, Parap markets, Rapid Creek markets and Northlakes shopping centre.
	Paid DOOH digital displays at Casuarina Square
	Paid radio ads on Mix FM and Territory FM
	A2 Posters displayed in community spaces / noticeboards across the municipality

Internal engagement

A clear and coordinated internal engagement approach was essential to ensure consistent, transparent and effective communication during the consultation for the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27.

Tailored communication tactics including talking points for Elected Members, FAQs for Customer Service and Libraries and dedicated CEO newsletters to both staff and Elected Members helped to align internal understanding and messaging.

These tools equipped City of Darwin staff with the knowledge and language to confidently engage with the public, address queries and reinforce key messages.

Additionally, an Intranet article provided an accessible central reference point for staff, fostering a sense of shared purpose and awareness. This unified approach informed City of Darwin staff and aligned our messaging and understanding of the plan across the organisation. Aligned messaging builds trust and encourages participation, supporting our communications with members of the community. This supports informed engagement with the community, resulting in more meaningful feedback that will be reflected in the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27.

Community and stakeholder review and feedback

An effective external engagement approach was critical to ensuring broad community awareness and participation in the engagement process for the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27.

By leveraging a diverse mix of communication tactics - including a media release, website news article and updates to the Draft Municipal Plan and Engage Darwin web pages - City of Darwin has been able to provide timely and accessible information across multiple platforms.

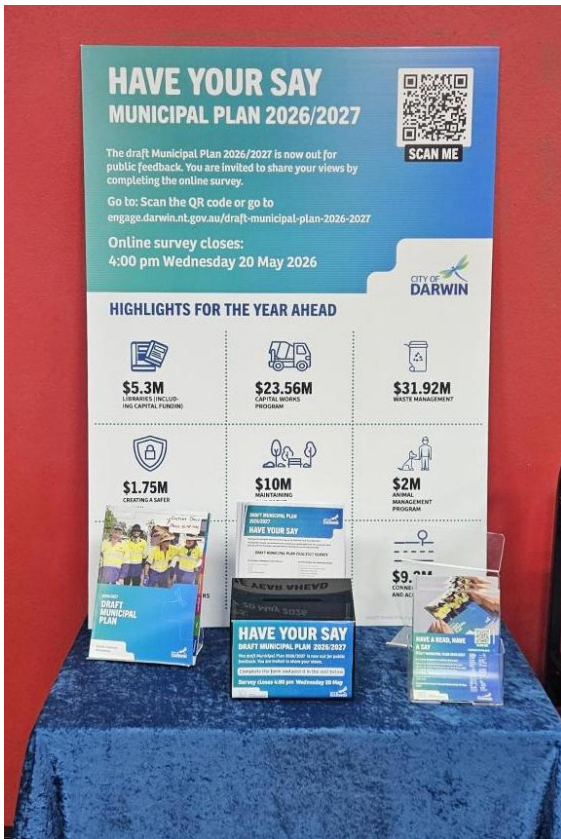
The inclusion of a public survey on Engage Darwin, email outreach to key stakeholders, and a feature in the Vibrant newsletter has ensured that the community has been both directly informed and invited to have their say throughout the engagement period.

Complemented by social media (both organic and paid), digital displays and print advertising in the NT News, this multifaceted engagement strategy has ensured coverage across traditional and digital channels.

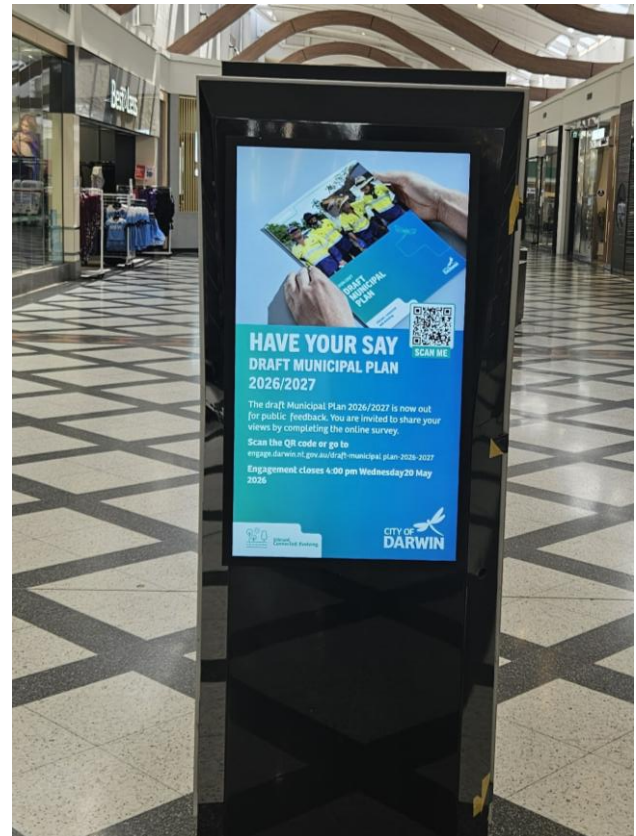
This year, several new tactics were used to promote the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 engagement in alignment with Elected Members commitment to furthering engagement efforts and delivering a more transparent process. These tactics included:

- Paid radio ads
- DOOH digital displays at Casuarina Square
- An A2 poster campaign across the CBD and wider municipality
- Four community pop-ups attended by the Executive Manager Marketing, Communications and Engagement and independent community engagement consultants. The consultant, True North,

delivered an engagement report on the face-to-face interactions from these community pop-ups which can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 display at Civic Centre Library



Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 DOOH screen at Casuarina Square



Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 poster display at Albertos Café, Cavenagh Street



Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 poster display at Nightcliff Woolworths

Communication Materials

Stakeholder letter / emails

Key stakeholders were emailed a link to the Engage Darwin webpage with an invitation to discuss or provide feedback, and an email was deployed to Engage Darwin's subscriber database of 1,770 subscribers.

Key stakeholders included:

- **Government**
 - Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations NT
 - CSIRO
 - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 - NT Department of Logistics and Infrastructure
 - NT Department of Tourism and Hospitality
 - NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
 - NTEX
 - Power and Water Corporation NT
 - Local Buy NT
 - Darwin Waterfront Corporation
 - Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro
 - Minister for Local Government Steven Edgington
 - CEOs of all NTG departments, plus NT Planning Commission
 - Members of the Legislative Assembly
- **Business**
 - Masterplan NT
 - Australian Institute of Landscape Architects UDIANT
 - Chamber of Commerce NT
 - Waste and Recycling Industry NT
 - Charles Darwin University
 - Music NT
 - Tourism Top End
 - Civil Contractors Federation NT
 - Darwin City Retailers Association
 - Hospitality NT
 - Property Council NT
 - Planning Institute of Australia
 - Professionals who work in Darwin
 - CEOs of Local Government bodies
- **Not for profit**
 - Amateur Fisherman's Association NT
 - Larrakia Nation, Larrakia Development Corporation, Gwalwa Dariniki Association
 - Larrakia Cultural Centre

Target audience:

- Residents and ratepayers of the Darwin municipality

Engage Darwin

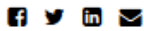
Engage Darwin is a community engagement platform used by City of Darwin, designed to give residents and stakeholders a way to have their say on local projects, policies and initiatives. The platform helps City of Darwin make more informed decisions by gathering input and feedback from the community.

The Engage Darwin platform engage.darwin.nt.gov.au/municipal-plan-2026-27 was used for this engagement process and contained the following information:

- Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27
- Infographic summaries of the highlights for the year ahead, priority projects and capital works program
- FAQs
- Submission portal (for survey submissions).

As well as the online survey on Engage Darwin, physical copies of the survey, as well as printed copies of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 were available at Customer Service at the Civic Centre and all four public libraries located across the municipality.

Draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027



City of Darwin is proud to present our draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027 for public feedback.

This year's draft Municipal Plan is focused on a reset; it is a purposeful recalibration, prioritising essential infrastructure, asset renewal and long-term sustainability to ensure the city is operating at its best.

We have committed to enhancing quality of life for residents through an operating expenditure of \$158 million, which will deliver services, programs and initiatives that directly benefit the community.

Highlights of the Municipal Plan include:

- \$23.56 million on capital works program
- \$2.05 million investment in sports and recreation facility, including stage 2 of the Waters Ward Multigenerational Recreation Space, playground and softfall refurbishment and a land-based fishing platform at Bundilla
- \$5.3 million for libraries (including capital funding)
- \$31.92 million in waste management
- \$10 million for maintaining our parks, including \$3.3 million for tree planting and maintenance
- \$2 million for animal management
- \$1.6 million on supporting our community through sponsorship, grants and in-kind support
- \$1.75 million in creating a safer Darwin, including the Safer Cities program and the public places and suburban ranger programs
- \$9.2 million to support connectivity and accessibility, including road and path networks

Have your say

You are invited to have your say on the draft 2026/2027 Municipal Plan, with public feedback open until **4:00 pm Wednesday 20 May 2026**.

Please complete the online survey below to share your views.

You can read the draft municipal plan here: [Draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027](#)

Physical copies of the survey, as well as printed copies of the draft 2026/2027 Municipal Plan are available at Customer Service Centre of the Civic Centre, Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin and all four public libraries located across the municipality at:

- City Library, Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin
- Casuarina Library, Bradshaw Terrace, Casuarina
- Nightcliff Library, Pavonia Place, Nightcliff
- Karama Library, Kalymnos Drive, Karama

We will also be available at various markets throughout the engagement period. Visit us at:

- Nightcliff Market - 9:00 - 11:00 am on Sunday 3 May 2026
- Parap Market - 8:30 - 10:30 am on Saturday 8 May 2026
- Rapid Creek Market - 8:30 - 10:30am on Sunday 9 May 2026

For more information, please contact 0930 0300 or email engage@darwin.nt.gov.au

SURVEY

Draft 2026/27 Municipal Plan Survey

Take Survey



Page last updated: 01 May 2026, 12:24 PM

Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27

 Draft Municipal Plan 2026-27 (6.45 MB) (pdf)

Key Dates

Engagement Opens
30 April 2026

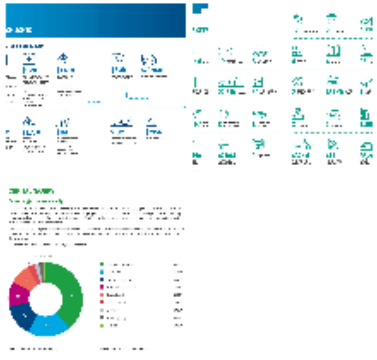
Stall at Nightcliff Markets
03 May 2026

Stall at Parap Markets
09 May 2026

Stall at Rapid Creek Markets
May 2026

Engagement Closes
20 May 2026

Photos



FAQs

How much will rates rise in the 2026/2027 Draft City of Darwin Budget?

How much in rates is City of Darwin proposing to collect this year?

What do ratepayers get for their money?

How much will City of Darwin spend on its operations this year?

How will City of Darwin be spending its budget this year?

What is the capital program for the year?

What about kerbside waste collection costs?

When you combine the increase in general

Media

Media Type	Detail
Proactive outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page Turner: On Thursday 30 April, media were invited to a page turner event with Lord Mayor and CEO. • Media release: This was supported by a media release: City of Darwin Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 open for community feedback sent at 10:30 am. • NT News monthly column: Lord Mayor Peter Styles column reminded readers to have their say.
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x1 NT News article (online, and print page 14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Syndicated to 8 online outlets nationally, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adelaide Now ▪ Cairns Post ▪ The Courier Mail ▪ Daily Telegraph Australia ▪ Geelong Advertiser ▪ Gold Coast Bulletin ▪ Herald Sun ▪ Townsville Bulletin • x1 ABC Online (from the ABC TV) • NT News monthly column: Lord Mayor Peter Styles column reminded readers to have their say.
Radio and TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • x4 radio mentions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ABC Radio Darwin ○ MIX 104.9 • x1 TV mention (interview with LM and CEO): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ABC TV
Coverage Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 pieces of coverage achieved across print, online, and radio: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 x newspaper print article (NT News column) ○ 10 x online articles (including syndications) ○ 4 x radio mentions ○ 1 x TV

Please see iSentia [Media Report – draft 2026/27 Municipal Plan](#) for further details.

Darwin lord mayor defends proposed 5.5 per cent rates rise but no new major projects on the cards

By Roxanne Fitzgerald | Government | Thu 30 Apr



Lord mayor Peter Styles says the council has kept rates low. (ABC News: Pete Garrish)

City of Darwin ratepayers hit with 5.5 per cent rates increase in council budget

City of Darwin ratepayers have been hit with an above cost-of-living rates rise. Read what it's funding.

Camden Smith
Reporter

@CamdenSmith1 | 2 min read | April 30, 2026 - 2:31PM

Listen to this article | 4 min



Darwin ratepayers hit with \$105 hike



Camden Smith
City of Darwin ratepayers will pay an additional 5.5 per cent on their council rates in 2026-27.

Council's draft municipal plan recommends shifting ratepayers above the consumer price index as council upgrades stormwater and roads infrastructure and completes the Cyclone Fina clean-up.

Council estimated the average household increase would be \$184.99 a year, or about \$2.02 per household per week.

The NT's consumer price index rose 4.9 per cent in March 2026 on the previous 12 months.

The NT's consumer price index rose 4.9 per cent in March 2026 on the previous 12 months.

The increase builds on last year's 2.5 per cent rate hike, and meets the council's long-term financial target of a 4 per cent annual growth.

The budget has increased from \$428m to \$538m and will post a \$12.4m deficit after last year's \$11.5m loss.

Lord Mayor Peter Styles said in response to road damage from the Territory's biggest ever wet season, and Cyclone Fina, City of Darwin would invest \$1.5m on roads resurfacing and around a \$16m increase on the previous financial year.

It will invest \$4.5m in 2026-27, a \$2.2m increase in stormwater upgrades, \$1.4m upgrading Shiel Bay waste dump and \$4.4m on road re-

construction. Council will spend \$540,000 upgrading Yarrula Drive, \$400,000 each on Vandellia Drive service road and Narrows Road and \$262,000 for Gardens Hill Crescent.

Lee Point Road between Clemons and Fishburne streets will become an urban crossing with drainage along with street lighting installed and electronic traffic controls at the Lee Point Rd and Dakota Turn.

A total of 11 sites have been identified for upgrades in Darwin's 420km stormwater drain network including at The Narrows, Jagth and Gardens Hill Road.

New playgrounds on playground renewal will take place in Malak, Fannie Bay and La-

ruyah. Council will spend \$3.3m on tree replanting in its 970ha green space assets in the wake of the thousands of trees lost during Cyclone Fina in November.

Lord Mayor Peter Styles said a higher rate was originally discussed before council settled on the 5.5 per cent increase.

"We've got costs we can't control," Mr Styles said. "The cost of living is under pressure and we've got to maintain those assets because if they don't they deteriorate and then we'll have people coming in to ask about the road and the potholes."

"There's a whole range of things that we have to maintain and do but we've kept it as low as possible so that it has a minimal impact on people. We are aware that the cost of living pressures are on people, so we've kept it down. We came down to 5.5 per cent because we're aware of the cost pressures on people."

The budget will post a \$12.4m deficit after last year's \$11.5m loss, a consequence of asset depreciation.

City of Darwin chief executive Simone Saunders said council's spending this year had an eye on the future.

"What we're trying to do is get the renewal rate up so we make sure we're funding our assets in line with how they're declining," Ms Saunders said.

"What the balance tells us is our assets are degrading more quickly than we can maintain them in this environment, and unless we invest in them, there's going to be a significant problem in the future for future generations."

"Maybe not in the next five to 10 years, but maybe 20 years from now, so council in this budget with the 5.5 per cent figure prioritised future generations in my view and it might not be the most popular decision, but it really does support future assets and getting on that path to ensuring our assets are a performance for future generations."

Day to mark service of fireys

Staff writers

International Firefighters' Day, an opportunity to recognise the dedication and service of firefighters across the Northern Territory and around the world, will be commemorated Monday.

The day honours and pays respect to volunteer and career firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty, as well as those who have died while being an active service member.

It recognises current and former firefighters for their extraordinary commitment, courage and service to the community.

Observed annually on May 4, the day coincides with the great day of St Florian, the patron saint of firefighters.

Commemorative services will be held at:

- Rankine NT Headquarters, Anson Hill - 5pm, Friday, May 1
- Darwin Constable - 8am, Monday, May 4
- Alice Springs Fire Station - 8am, Monday, May 4

NT Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Andrew Watkinson said International Firefighters' Day was an important opportunity to reflect on the service and sacrifice of firefighters.

"In recent months our people have been moved from supporting communities through severe weather and flooding straight into preparations for bushfire season, the heat."

"It has been an incredibly demanding period, and I want to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication shown by our firefighters and staff across the agency."

"On IFDD we pause to honour those who have lost their lives in the line of duty and those who have died while being a service member."

NT Fire and Rescue Service and Rankine NT crews will also take part in the annual Sound Off on Sunday at midnight. During the tribute, fire appliances across sound for 30 seconds before crews observe a minute's silence in memory of firefighters lost in the line of service.

Radio

Radio spots were placed on Territory FM and Mix 104.9 Darwin for the duration of the Draft Municipal 2026/27 Public Display.

Network	Spots	Engagement
Territory FM	46	Third most listened station with a weekly audience of 44,000 Target audience over 30 years of age Number one radio station for males 40+ and women 40+
Mix 104.9 Darwin	27	Second most listened station with a weekly audience of 61,100 50-50 male/female audience

Social media

There were six social media posts and two social media reels promoting the engagement process, a summary is provided below:

Date	Topic	Comments	Likes & Reactions	Shares	Reach/ Views	Engagement (Link Clicks)
Facebook						
1 May	Post: Draft Municipal plan (boosted)	0	13	7	3383	11
1 May	2 stories: Draft Municipal Plan Pop-up stall at Nightcliff market		1		694 372	
8 May	Reminder Reel	0	0	2	714	7
8 May	Story: Pop-up stalls at Parap and Rapid creek markets		1	1	1151	
15 May	Feedback closing soon	2	5	3	1411	4

Date	Topic	Comments	Likes & Reactions	Shares	Reach/ Views	Engagement (Link Clicks)
Instagram						
1 May	Post: Draft Municipal Plan	0	5		1054	
1 May	2 stories: Draft Municipal Plan Pop-up stall at Nightcliff market		3 2	1	434 499	
8 May	Reminder Reel	0	1	0	460	
8 May	Story: Pop-up stalls at Parap and Rapid creek markets		9		689	1
15 May	Feedback closing soon	0	1	1	523	
LinkedIn						
1 May	Post: Draft Municipal Plan	1	5	1	582	81
8 May	Reminder	1	13	1	356	8
15 May	Feedback closing soon		4		232	4

Facebook/Instagram posts

City of Darwin
Published by Clem Pro · 1 May at 12:28 · 🌐

🔥 City of Darwin is proud to present the draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027 for public feedback.

💡 From community infrastructure, waste services and safer neighbourhoods - explore where we're proposing to invest for the financial year ahead.

👉 Check out the highlights in our graphics and review the full plan online.

📅 Feedback is open until 4:00 pm Wednesday 20 May 2026.

Your voice matters, help shape Darwin's future by completing the survey today.

🌐 Visit <https://engage.darwin.nt.gov.au/draft-municipal-plan-2026-27> to learn more. See less



City of Darwin
Published by Clem Pro · 8 May at 15:26 · 🌐

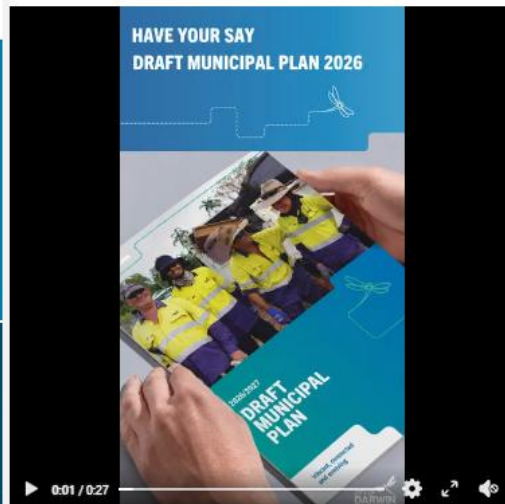
🔥 Reminder: Have your say on City of Darwin's draft Municipal Plan 2026/27.

💡 From community infrastructure and waste services to safer neighbourhoods and parks, the draft plan outlines where we're proposing to invest for the year ahead.

Come chat with us at our pop-up stalls or visit <https://engage.darwin.nt.gov.au/draft-municipal-plan-2026-27> to learn more and complete the survey.

Parap Markets - Saturday 9 May | 8.30am-10.30am
Rapid Creek Markets - Sunday 10 May | 8.30am-10.30am
Northlakes Shopping Centre - Wednesday 13 May | 12.30pm-2.30pm

📅 Community feedback closes at 4:00 pm on Wednesday 20 May 2026. See less



City of Darwin
Published by Clem Pro · 5d · 🌐

🔥 Closing soon: Draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027

The City of Darwin is seeking final community feedback on the draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027.

We encourage the community, stakeholders and residents to review the draft plan and share feedback to help shape the future priorities of our city.

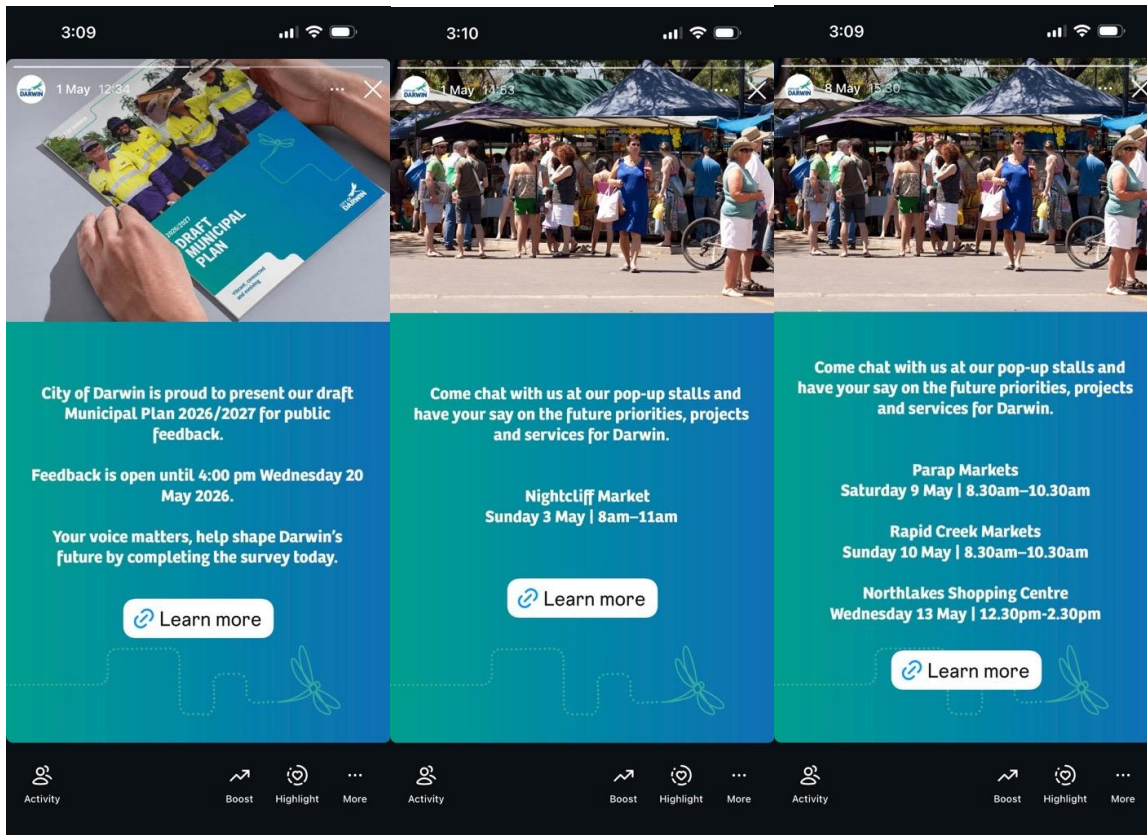
📅 Feedback closes 4:00 pm Wednesday 20 May 2026

View the plan, explore the highlights, and complete the survey before feedback closes.

🌐 <https://engage.darwin.nt.gov.au/draft-municipal-plan-2026-27> See less



Facebook/Instagram stories



LinkedIn

City of Darwin
9,953 followers
2w • Edited

City of Darwin is proud to present our draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027 for public feedback.

This year's draft Municipal Plan is focused on a reset; it is a purposeful recalibration, prioritising essential infrastructure, asset renewal and long-term sustainability to ensure the city is operating at its best.

We are now extending an invitation to the Darwin community, stakeholders and broader audience to review the draft and provide feedback.

Your input plays an important role in shaping the final plan and ensuring it reflects the needs and priorities of our city.

Feedback is open until 4:00 pm Wednesday 20 May 2026.

Read the draft plan and have your say via the online survey. Copies are also available at our Civic Centre and public libraries.

Visit <https://lnkd.in/g9HD9Yt4> to learn more and have your say.

City of Darwin
9,953 followers
5d •

Closing soon: Draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027

The City of Darwin is inviting final feedback on the draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027. The plan outlines proposed priorities for the coming financial year, including community infrastructure, waste services, and safer neighbourhoods.

Feedback closes 4:00 pm Wednesday 20 May 2026.

This is your final opportunity to review the plan and provide input before consultation closes.

Learn more and complete the survey here:
<https://lnkd.in/g9HD9Yt4>

\$5.3M WATER	\$9.2M WASTE SERVICES & REFINANCING
\$21.92M INFRASTRUCTURE	\$23.56M ASSET RENEWAL
\$10M WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	\$2.05M WASTE SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE
\$2M WATER SERVICES	\$1.65M WASTE SERVICES
\$1.75M CIVIC CENTRE RENOVATION	\$295K WASTE SERVICES RENOVATION
+2 PERFORMING AND RECREATION FACILITIES	

City of Darwin
9,953 followers
1w • 🌐

Reminder: Give your feedback on City of Darwin's draft Municipal Plan 2026/2027.

This year's draft plan focuses on a reset, prioritising essential infrastructure, asset renewal and long term sustainability to ensure Darwin continues operating at its best.

We encourage the community, stakeholders and residents to review the draft plan and share feedback to help shape the future priorities of our city.

Come chat with us at our pop-up stalls or visit <https://lnkd.in/g9HD9Y14> to learn more and complete the survey.

Parap Markets - Saturday 9 May | 8.30am-10.30am
Rapid Creek Markets - Sunday 10 May | 8.30am-10.30am
Northlakes Shopping Centre - Wednesday 13 May | 12.30pm-2.30pm

Feedback closes at 4:00 pm on Wednesday 20 May 2026.

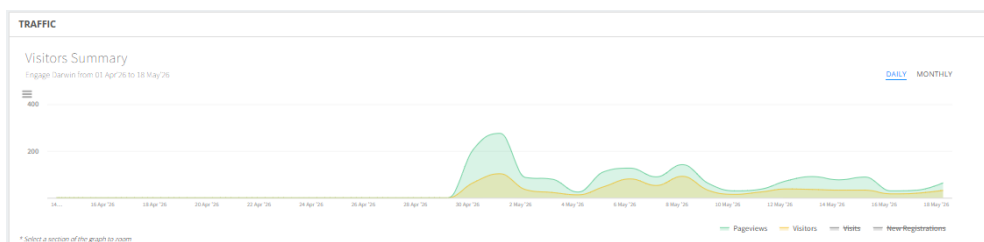


Digital media – Engage Darwin

Visitors' summary

During the engagement period, the project page received a total of 882 visits, with a peak of 103 visitors recorded in a single day. Of these visitors, 709 were considered aware visitors, meaning they remained on the page for a meaningful amount of time and actively viewed the content. A further 301 visitors were classified as informed visitors, having explored additional content such as FAQs, links or document downloads. Overall, 44 visitors progressed to become engaged visitors by actively participating in the engagement process through completing the survey or providing feedback.

Visits	Max visitors per day	Engaged visitors	Informed visitors	Aware visitors
882	103	44	301	709

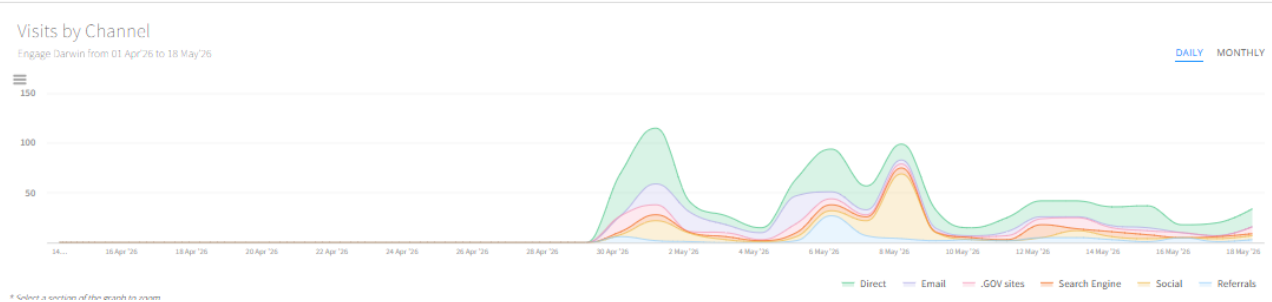


Visits by channel

Visitors to Engage Darwin clicked through from a variety of information sources.

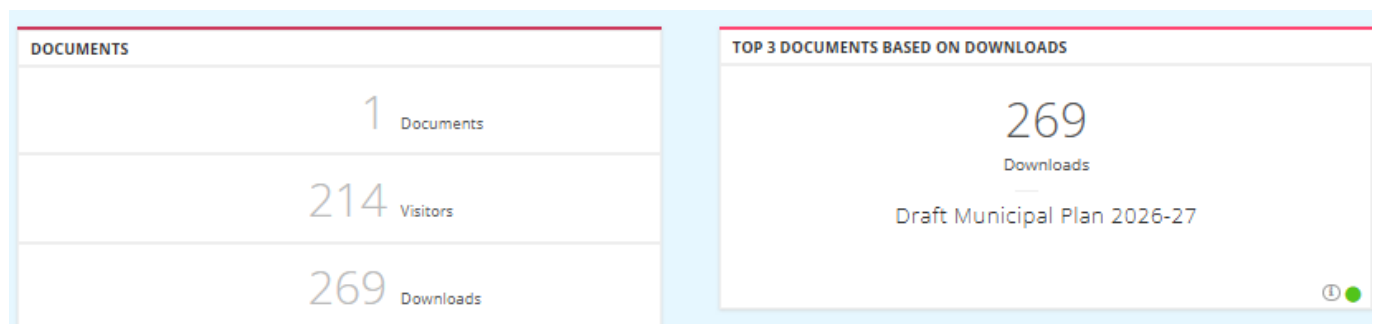
Type	Aware visits	Informed visits	Engaged visits
Direct: via QR code or typing the URL into a search bar	375	138	13
Email: Clicked through a hyperlink in their email	115	55	11
.gov sites: clicked through a hyperlink from a .gov site	97	65	3
Search: clicked through from a search engine	65	45	3
Social: clicked through from a social media hyperlink	151	43	11
Referrals: clicked through from another website	79	12	3

SOURCES OF TRAFFIC



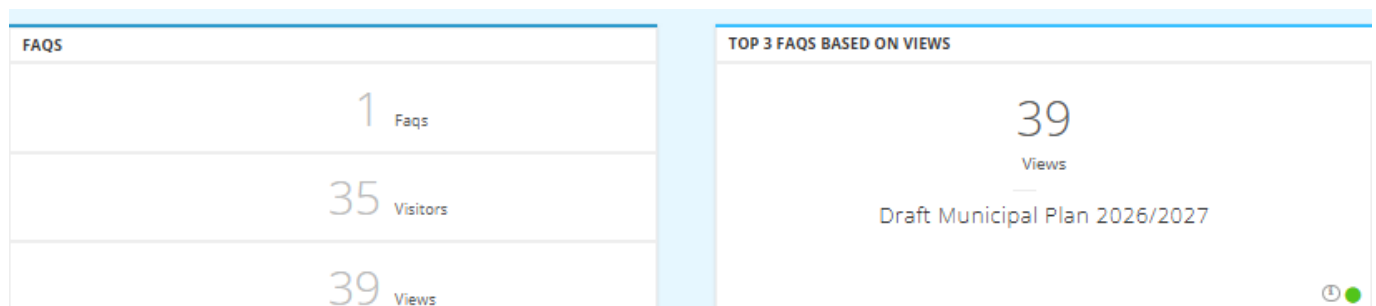
Document downloads

269 downloads, 214 visitors.



FAQs

39 views



Digital – Staff Intranet

Views	Active users	Total number of interactions
33	32	107

Digital – Electronic Direct Mail (eDMs)

eDMs through Engage Darwin - City of Darwin’s community project subscribers:

Sent	Opened	Clicks
1,777	874	69

Media release to stakeholders through Mailchimp - City of Darwin’s media and stakeholder subscribers:

Sent	Opened	Clicks
156	36	3

Community Pop-up stalls

City of Darwin, supported by True North Strategic Communication, held four community stalls during the consultation period. The stalls provided an opportunity for local community members to view a physical draft copy of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27, provide feedback and to ask questions.

Community stalls were held as below:

Date and time	Location
3 May 2026 8:30am - 10:30am	Nightcliff market (Chan Ward)
9 May 2026 8:30am - 10:30am	Parap market (Lyons Ward)
10 May 2026 8:30am - 10:30am	Rapid Creek market (Chan Ward)
13 May 2026 12:30pm - 2:30pm	Northlakes Shopping Centre (Waters Ward)

At each stall the community were able to:

- view 2 x coreflute signs outlining budget information
- take flyers containing information about the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 including other ways to be involved in the consultation (i.e., scan a QR code to complete the survey)
- complete the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 feedback survey via an iPad
- read physical copies of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27
- speak with a City of Darwin executive team member, who was able to answer questions and provide additional information as required.

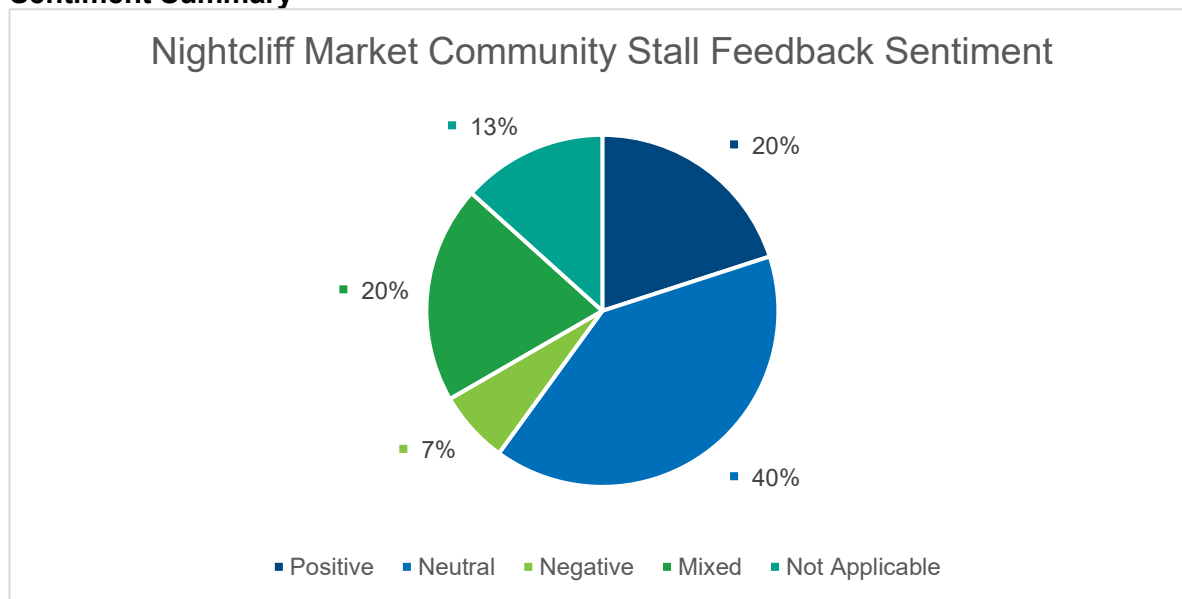
Across the four stalls a total of 48 stakeholders were engaged within an adult or senior age demographic, 56% of whom were women. No stakeholders within a youth demographic engaged with the community stalls.

Overall, stakeholder feedback and community sentiment was generally neutral to positive. While some concerns were raised regarding the proposed rate increase, broader Council expenditure and specific local issues, feedback was largely constructive and centred on community priorities, service delivery and opportunities for improvement. Many stakeholders expressed support for continued investment in infrastructure, maintenance and community facilities, particularly where tangible benefits for residents and neighbourhood amenity could be demonstrated.

Feedback summary - Nightcliff market (Chan Ward)

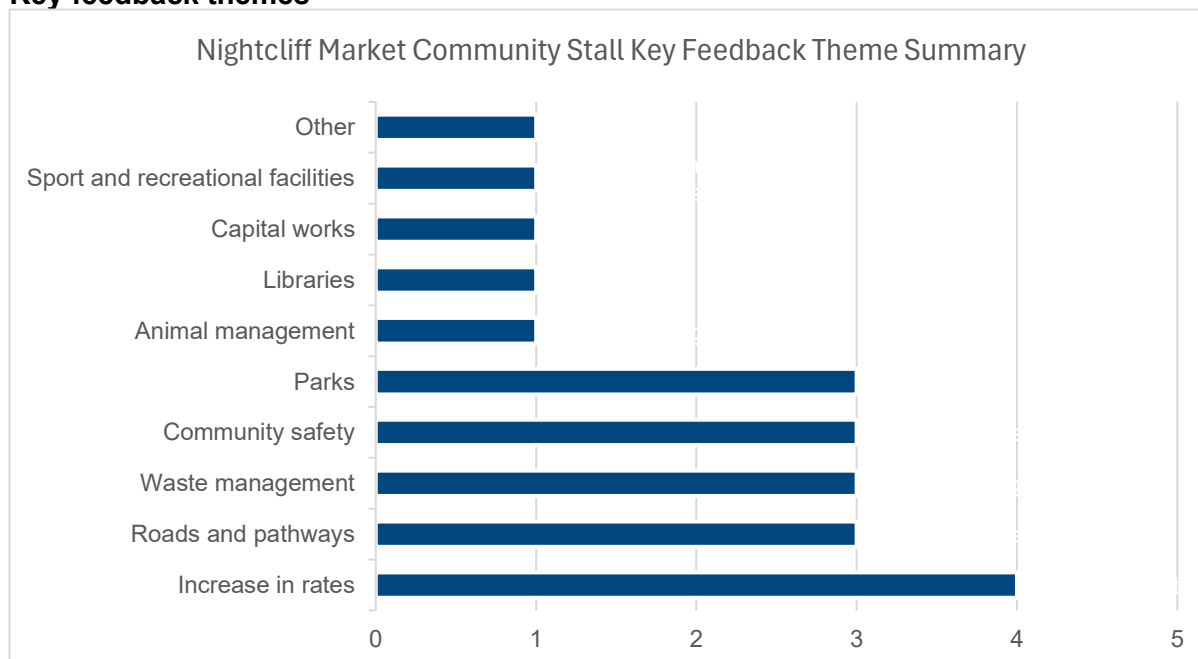
In total, 15 people attended the stand, the majority of whom were female within an adult age bracket.

Sentiment Summary



Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Key feedback themes

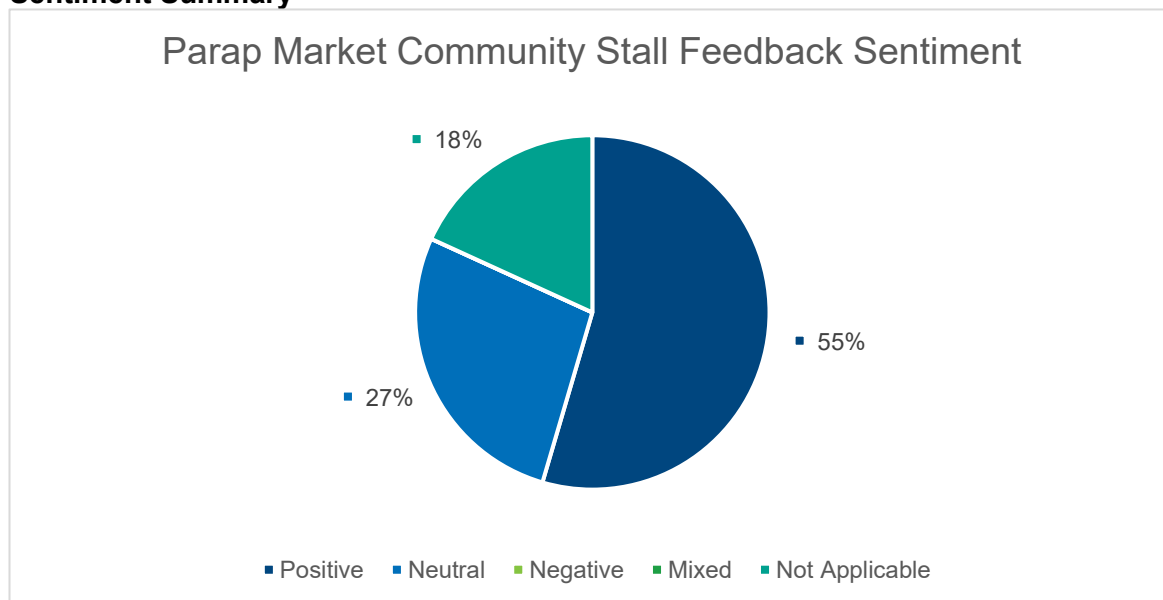


Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Feedback summary - Parap market (Lyons Ward)

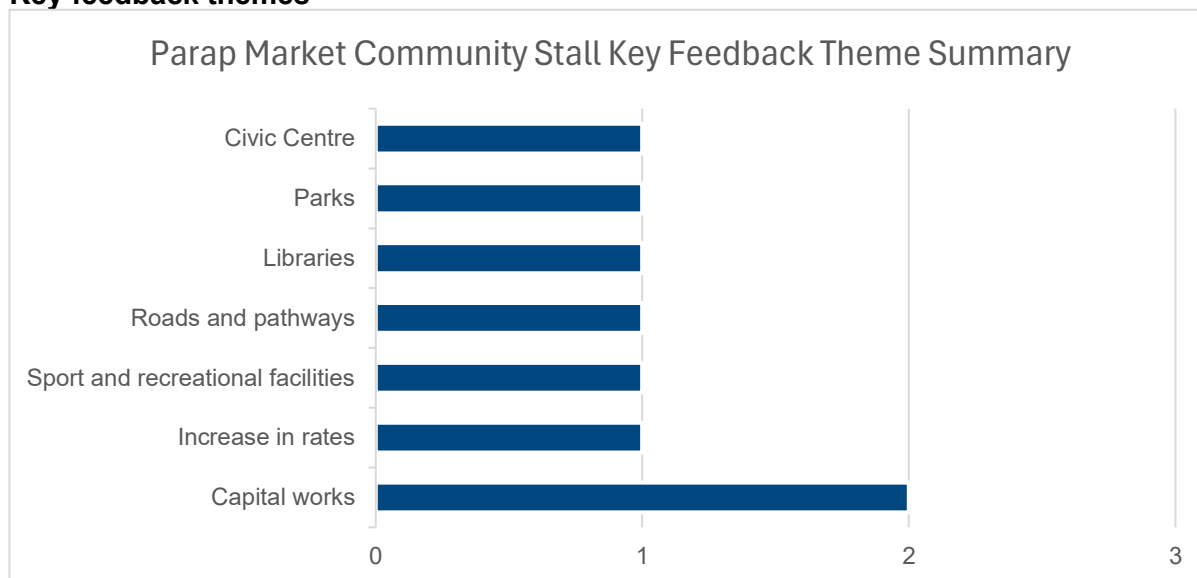
In total, 11 people attended the stall and engaged with materials, the majority were adult females.

Sentiment Summary



Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Key feedback themes

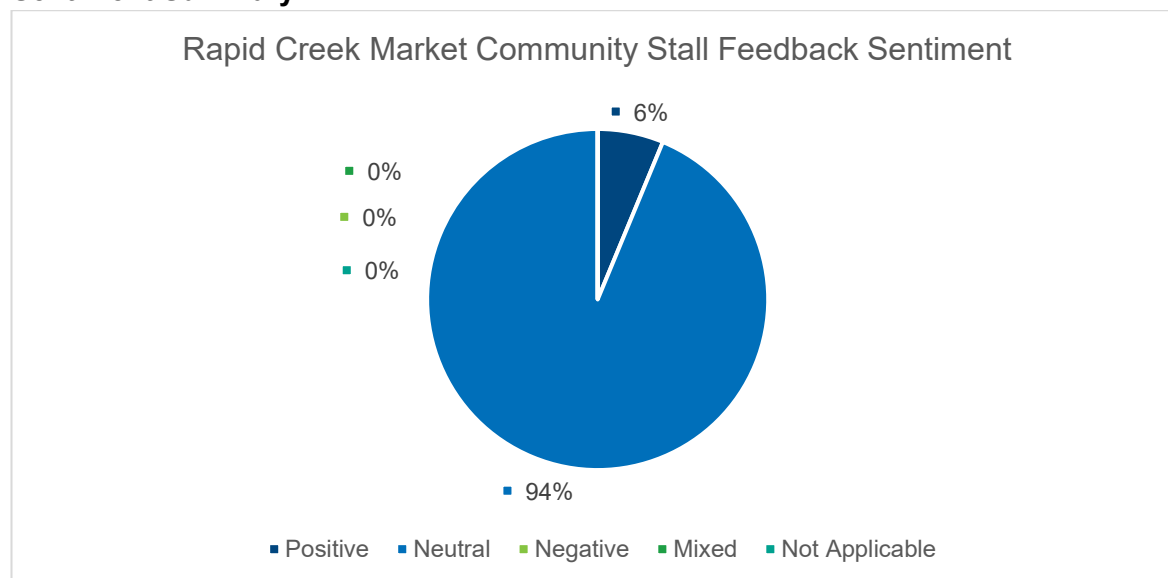


Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Feedback summary - Rapid Creek market (Chan Ward)

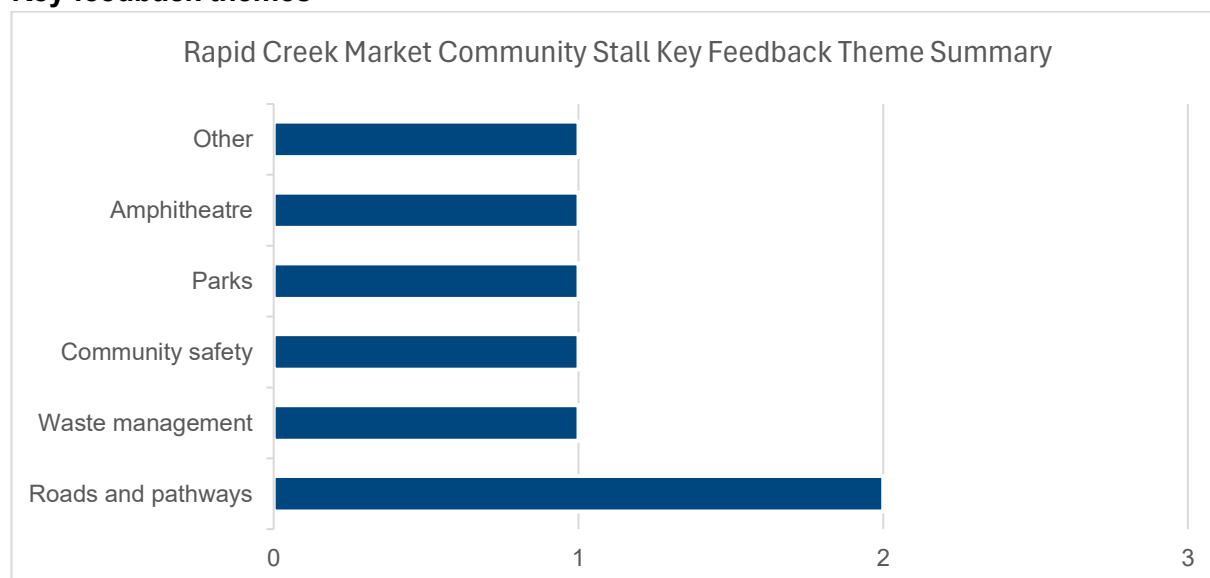
In total, 18 people attended the stand and engaged with materials, over 50% were adult females.

Sentiment Summary



Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Key feedback themes

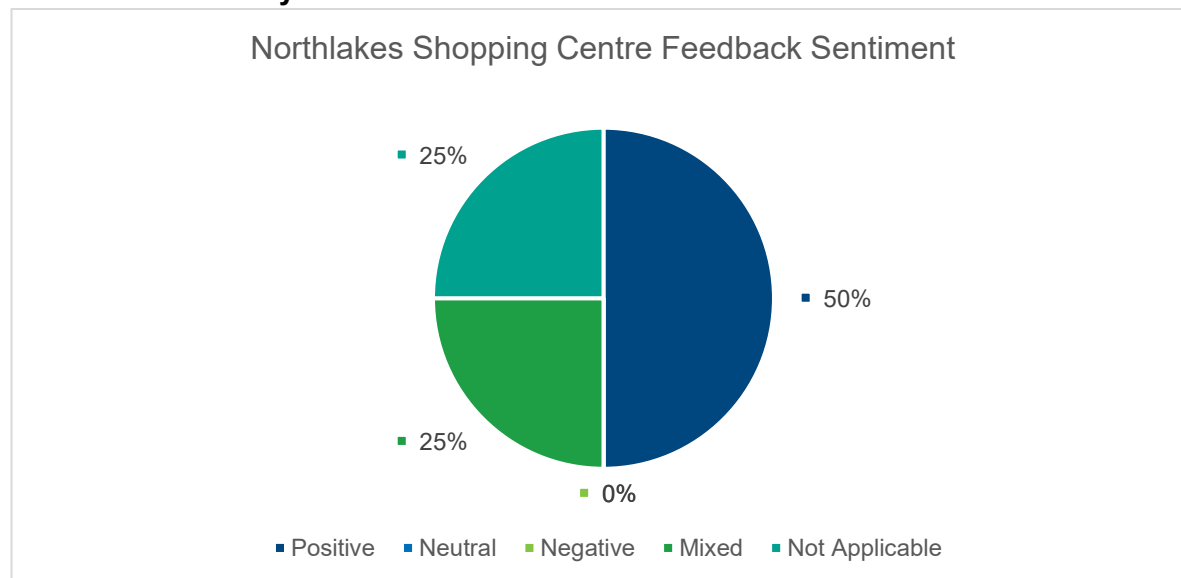


Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Feedback summary - Northlakes Shopping Centre (Waters Ward)

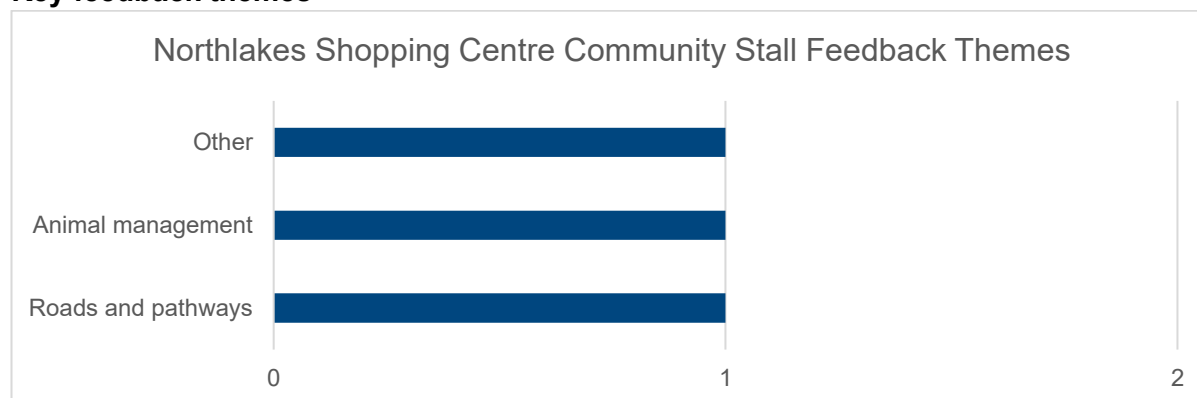
In total, 4 people attended the stand and engaged with materials, the majority were senior females.

Sentiment Summary



Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Key feedback themes



Please see Appendix 1: *True North consultation feedback summary report* - for the full report

Engagement

Snapshot

The following is a snapshot of the way in which people engaged and provided feedback:

Community and Stakeholder feedback

- 47 online survey submissions to Engage Darwin
- 9 in-person written survey submissions at libraries and Civic Centre customer service
- No email responses

882 people visited Engage Darwin

- 709 people aware
- 301 people informed
- 44 people engaged

Social Media

- Facebook – 2 posts, 2 stories and 1 reel that reached a total of 6574 people
- Instagram – 2 posts, 2 stories and 1 reel that reached a total of 3659 people
- LinkedIn – 3 posts that generated 1170 impressions

Community pop-up stalls

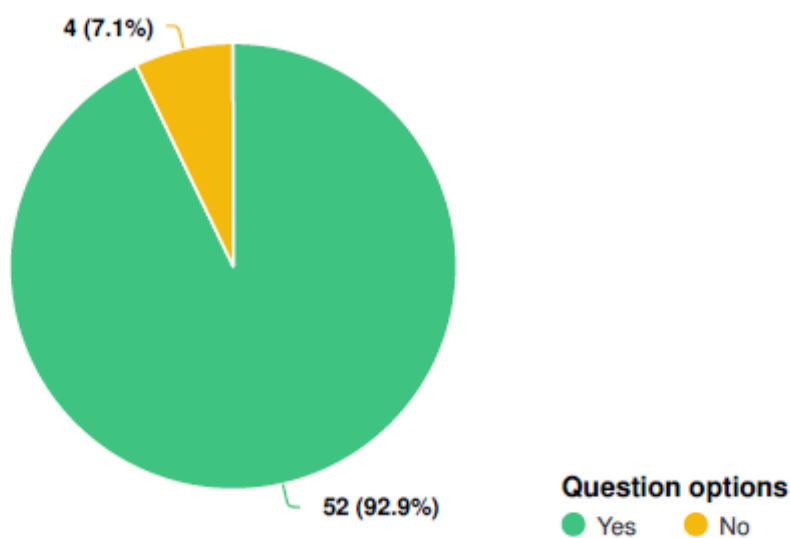
- 48 people engaged

Engagement feedback

The data below sets out the feedback on the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 engagement by stakeholders and the community during the engagement period 30 April - 20 May 2026.

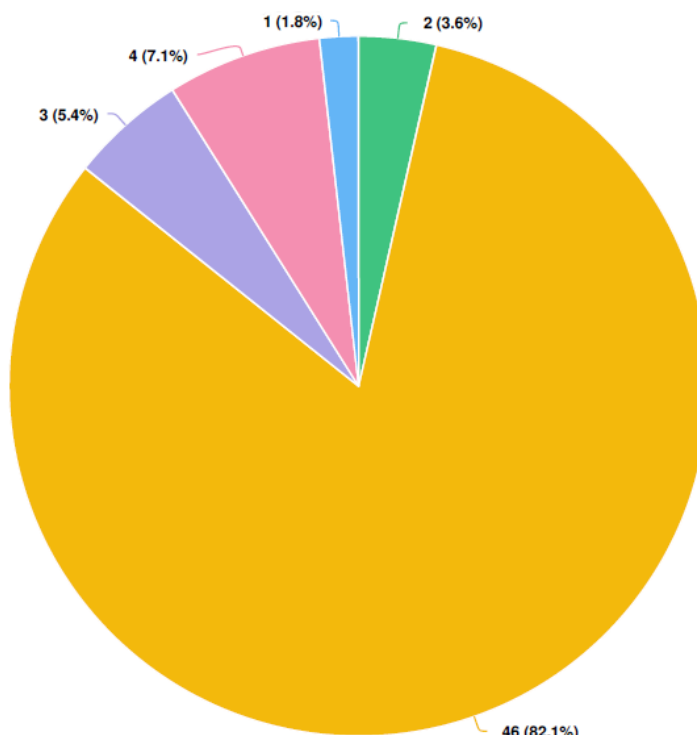
Refer to **Appendix 2** for detailed Engage Darwin survey results.

Are you a ratepayer in City of Darwin?



The pie chart shows that most respondents (92.9 per cent) that participated in the survey are ratepayers in the City of Darwin, while 7.1 per cent are not. This indicates that the vast majority of respondents that participated in the survey have a direct financial stake in the municipality.

Which best describes you?

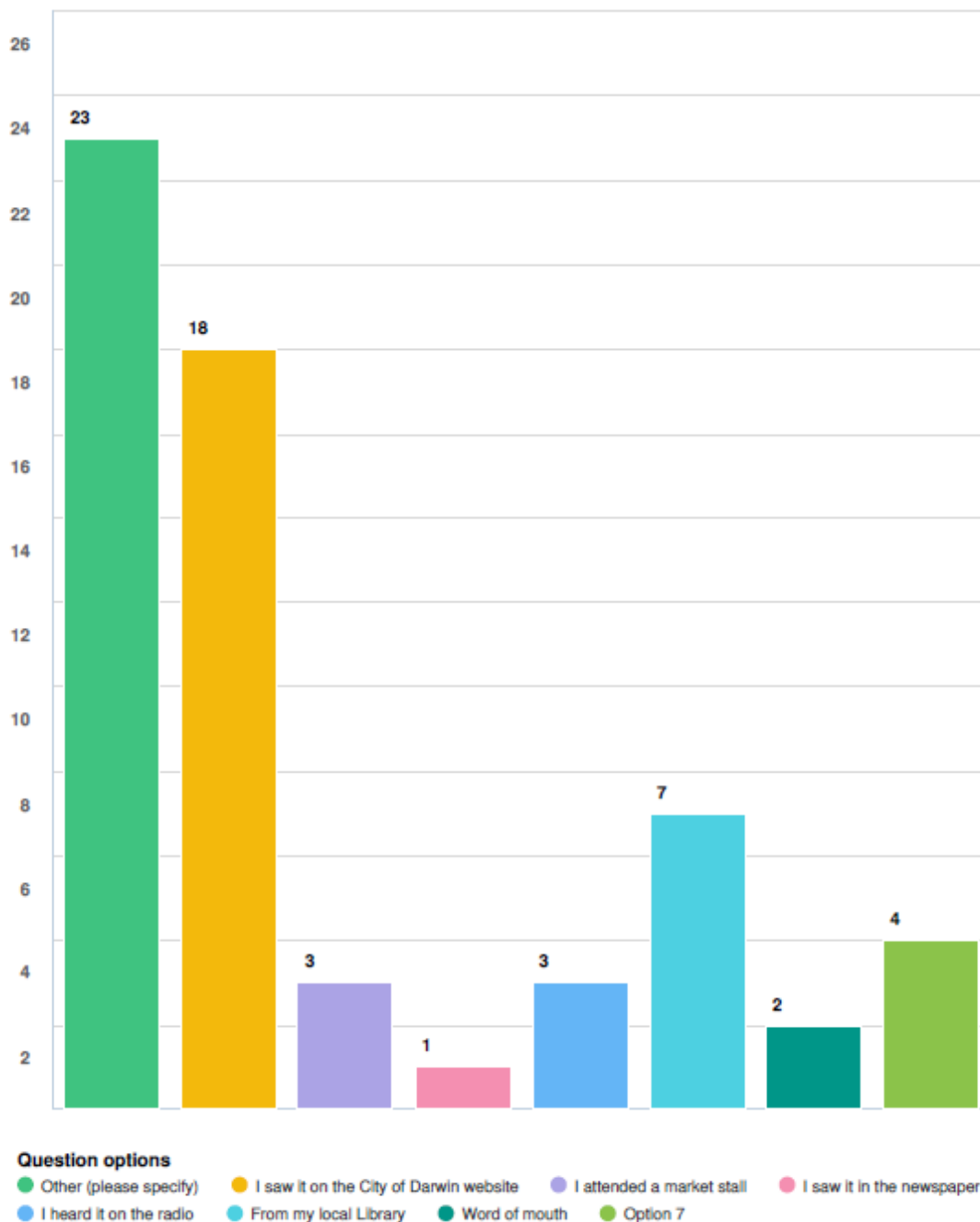


Question options

- Other (please specify)
- I own a residential property in Darwin and live in it
- I own a residential property in Darwin but live elsewhere
- I live in the Darwin municipality as a tenant / renter
- I live in another local government area in the NT but work in the Darwin municipality

Of the 47 survey respondents, 89.2% identified as Darwin residents, while the remaining 10.8% either work within the Darwin municipality but reside in another local government area, or own a residential property in Darwin but live elsewhere. This strong residential representation indicates the feedback collected is largely reflective of the lived experiences of those directly impacted by Council's services, infrastructure and decisions.

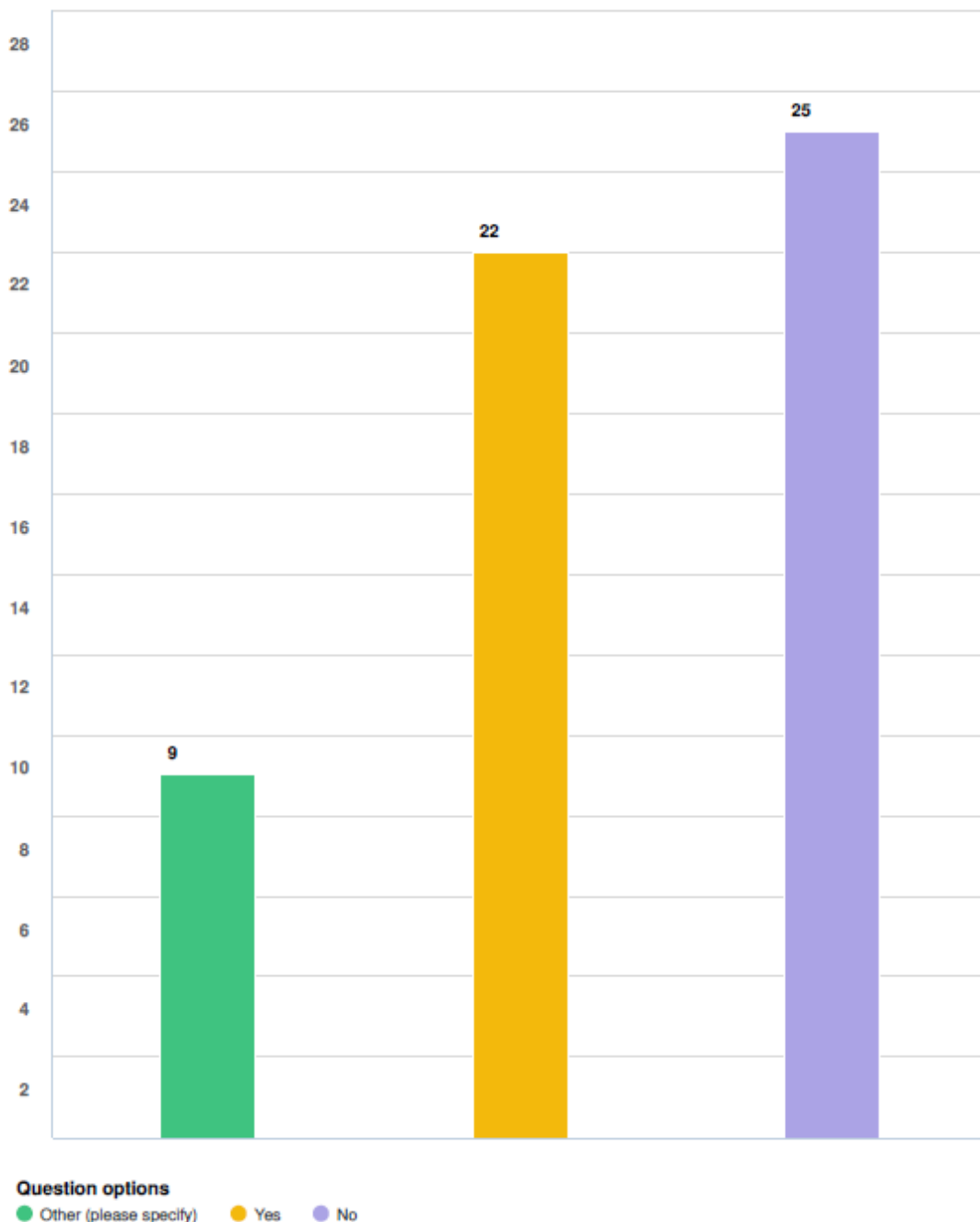
How did you hear about this survey?



The bar graph illustrates the communication channels that drove awareness and participation in the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 engagement. The largest proportion of respondents (44.7%) became aware of the survey through a combination of e-newsletters, posters, flyers and postcards, highlighting the effectiveness of direct community communication materials. A further 36.2% accessed the survey via the

City of Darwin website, demonstrating strong engagement through Council-owned digital platforms. Smaller proportions of respondents heard about the engagement through traditional media and in-person activation channels, including radio, newspaper coverage, market stalls and word-of-mouth referrals (14.9%). Social media contributed 8.5% of survey traffic, suggesting it played a supporting rather than primary role in driving participation.

Are you supportive of this approach for the 2026/27 rates?



The bar graph illustrates community sentiment toward the proposed 2026/27 rates approach. Of the 47 respondents, 39.3% expressed support for the proposed rates, while 44.6% indicated they do not support the approach. A further 16.1% expressed uncertainty or indifference. The majority opposition to the rates increase reflects broader community concern about cost-of-living pressures and a desire for Council to demonstrate value for money and internal savings before passing increases on to ratepayers.

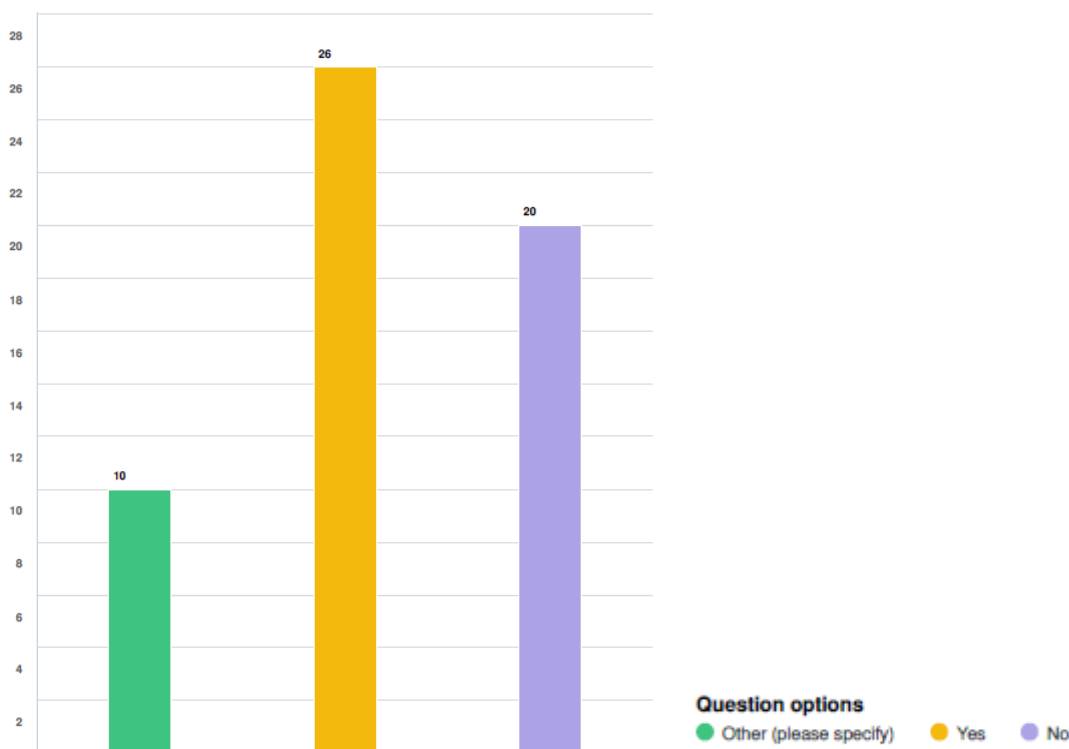
Do you have any additional feedback on the proposed rates?

While some respondents understood the rationale behind the proposed rate increase, those who did not support the proposed rates for 2026/27 expressed concerns they were already too high, with concerns focused on the current cost-of-living crisis.

Key themes from those opposed included:

- The 5.5% rate increase was above inflation and not justified given current cost-of-living pressures.
- Council should identify internal savings and efficiencies before passing costs to ratepayers.
- Past spending decisions (e.g., CBD beautification, decorative street furniture) were seen as wasteful and should have been avoided.
- Elected Member allowances and travel expenditure were raised as areas where savings could be found.

Do you support the overall direction and priorities outlined in the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27?



The chart illustrates community sentiment toward the overall direction and priorities of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27. Of the 47 respondents, 46.4% expressed support for the plan's direction, while 35.7% did not support it and 17.9% were mixed or unsure. Those expressing uncertainty acknowledged merit in parts of the plan but indicated a preference for greater focus on other priorities, including community safety, environmental investment and active recreation infrastructure.

Those who did not support the plan direction primarily cited:

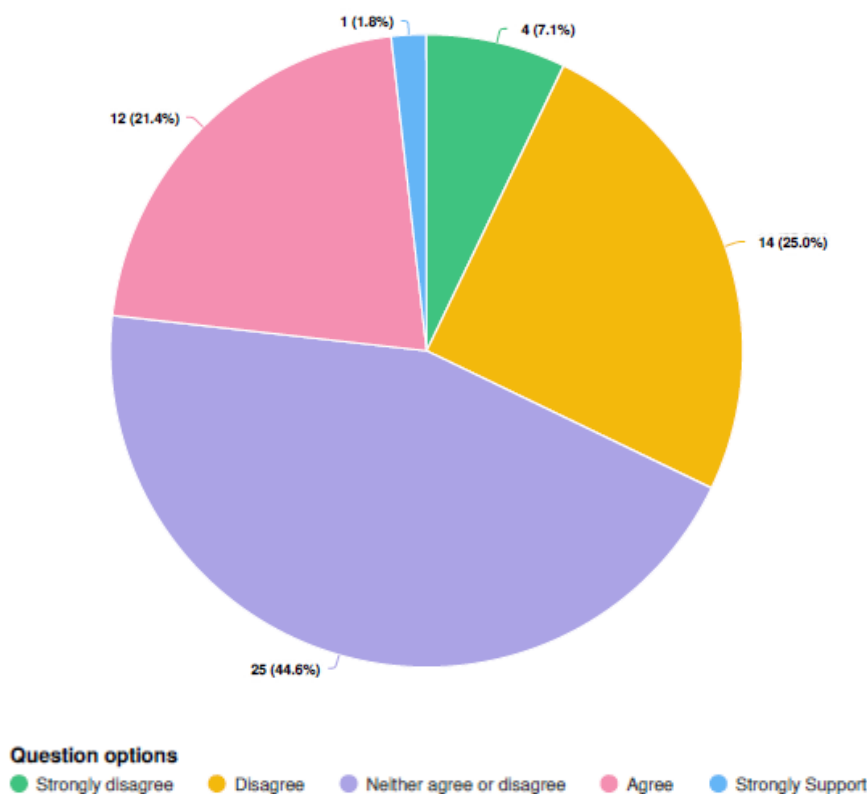
- The \$9.2 million connectivity and accessibility spend was opposed by at least one respondent.
- Inadequate detail provided in the plan to make an informed assessment.
- The plan's focus was seen as misaligned with core service delivery priorities.
- Concern that council's response to the recent cyclone was inadequate and not properly addressed in the plan.

Do you have any feedback on the priority projects?

The feedback relates to priority projects, demonstrated consistent themes:

- Improve parking and existing infrastructure
- Prioritise shade and greening of public spaces
- Increase the amount of street and walkway lighting in the suburbs to improve safety.

How supportive are you of how we're investing in our city over the coming year?



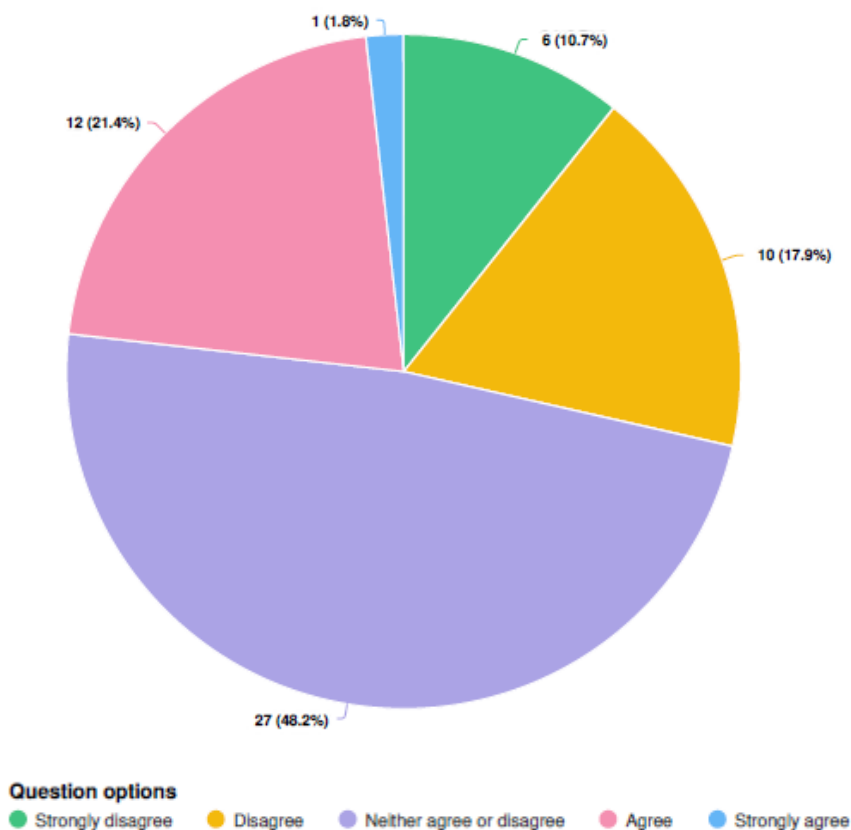
The chart illustrates community sentiment toward how Council is investing in the city over the coming year. Of the 47 respondents, 44.6% held a neutral stance on the overall investment approach, while 28.5% expressed support and 26.9% did not. The notably high proportion of neutral responses suggests that many residents are not actively opposed to the direction of investment. The relatively even split between supporters and opponents further reinforces the importance of ongoing engagement to build confidence and transparency around how ratepayer funds are being prioritised and deployed.

Do you have any additional feedback?

The main themes centred around:

- Prioritise street lighting, CBD activation and public space management to make Darwin safer for everyone.
- Increase the shared paths and cycling budget to match usage demand and fix known pedestrian safety gaps.
- Ensure arts and grant allocations deliver genuine community value and are balanced against core service priorities.
- Increase the environmental budget to meaningfully deliver on Darwin's climate commitments through tree planting, shade and renewable energy.
- Confirm how library funding will support service growth and meet the needs of Darwin's growing communities.

To what extent do you agree with our approach to capital works funding?



Do you have any feedback on the Capital Works Program?

The top five categories of feedback for the Capital Works Program centred on:

- Concerns regarding the cost, aesthetic, value and purpose of the proposed Civic Centre.
- Asset maintenance and basic infrastructure should be more heavily prioritised (roads, footpaths, street lighting, general maintenance).
- Recurring suggestions to prioritise climate resilience, increase environmental funding and improve waste management.
- Community strongly values sporting ovals and facilities as essential infrastructure for youth, health and wellbeing, and would welcome increased capital investment across the 19 sites.
- Mixed views: some support community grants but recommend distributing it differently and supporting Small and Medium Businesses.

Please submit any feedback you would like Council to consider on the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27.

Further feedback included Council considerations for:

- Look at Council process efficiencies and savings to combat the rate rise.
- Increase investment in street lighting, public space activation and CBD safety to reflect community priorities and create a safer, more welcoming city.
- Review and strengthen the environmental budget to match Council's Climate Strategy commitments and provide clear reporting on tree planting versus maintenance spend.
- Request to deliver wet-season-resilient exercise infrastructure at key ovals and extend Marrara Athletics Track hours to support year-round healthy and active lifestyles.
- Work with sporting organisations to identify priority improvements and increase the capital budget across Darwin's 19 ovals to better serve community health and youth outcomes.
- Partner with government and community to expand cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, including a Bagot Road cycleway, through genuine consultation and co-design.
- Improve transparency by disaggregating roads and pathways reporting to give residents a clearer picture of where capital investment is being directed.
- Explore diverse recycling and organic waste collection options to reduce costs, improve sustainability and respond to strong community appetite for circular economy initiatives.

Feedback analysis

The sentiment from survey responses was mixed but largely positive for the proposed 2026/27 rates, with 46.4 per cent of respondents supporting the direction, 35.7 per cent against and 17.9 per cent uncertain or supporting only some aspects of the plan.

Although some respondents acknowledged the reasoning behind the proposed 2026/27 rate increase, those who opposed the increase largely expressed concerns regarding affordability and the ongoing cost-of-living pressures impacting households. A recurring view among respondents was that the proposed 5.5% increase exceeded inflation and was therefore considered difficult to justify in the current economic climate.

Several respondents suggested that Council should place greater emphasis on identifying internal efficiencies and operational savings prior to increasing the financial burden on ratepayers. Concerns were also raised regarding previous expenditure decisions, particularly projects perceived as non-essential, such as CBD beautification initiatives and decorative infrastructure. In addition, some respondents identified Elected Member allowances and travel-related expenses as potential areas where cost reductions could be explored.

Feedback from those uncertain or opposed primarily reflected concerns around the scale and prioritisation of investment, limited detail within the plan, perceived misalignment with core service delivery priorities, and dissatisfaction with Council's response to recent cyclone impacts.

Key feedback on the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 centred around:

- Community safety and antisocial behaviour within the CBD.
- Greater investment in environmental sustainability, tree planting and climate adaptation.
- Concerns regarding the proposed new Civic Centre development.
- Requests for stronger investment in active transport, parks and recreational infrastructure.
- Expectations for improved cost management and fiscal responsibility.

Respondents expressed mixed views about:

- The balance between long-term infrastructure investment and current cost-of-living pressures.
- The prioritisation of spending across connectivity, beautification and community infrastructure projects.
- Council's current investment approach to capital works and CBD activation initiatives.
- Whether proposed expenditure aligned with core community service delivery priorities.

Other key suggestions to Council included:

- Increasing street lighting and public safety initiatives.
- Expanding tree canopy coverage, shade infrastructure and renewable energy initiatives.
- Improving cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, particularly shared path networks.
- Reviewing Elected Member Allowances, travel expenditure and operational efficiencies.
- Redirecting expenditure from non-essential projects into community-focused infrastructure and maintenance programs.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received during the engagement process, it is recommended that:

- The feedback outlined in this engagement report is used to inform Elected Members on the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27.
- City of Darwin should undertake a communication program to inform the community, businesses and key stakeholders of Council's decision as to how feedback has been incorporated into the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27. Tactics should include but not be limited to:
 - Updating the Engage page for the project
 - Placing a notice of rates declaration in the NT news
 - Updating the City of Darwin website
 - Updating the City of Darwin intranet
 - Publishing physical copies of the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27 for display in libraries and at the Civic Centre customer service.
- City of Darwin make the engagement report available to the community and stakeholders on the Engage Darwin website.
- City of Darwin respond to survey respondents who provided contact details with a copy of the engagement report as well as the outcomes from council that will inform the Final Municipal Plan 2026/27.

Legend

o mentioned by 1 participant

+ mentioned by more than 2 participants

++ mentioned by more than 6 participants

+++ mentioned by more than 10 participants

++++ mentioned by more than 14 participants

Discussion Topic	Rating	Approx. Mentions
Common Consensus on the 2026/27 Rates Increase		
Rates increase too high / above CPI	++++	>14 mentions
Cost-of-living pressures cited	+++	>10 mentions
Council should find internal savings first	+++	>10 mentions
Rate increase above inflation rate (5.5%)	++	>6 mentions
Rates capped at CPI / previous year's low rates acknowledged	+	>2 mentions
Councillor salaries / travel should be reduced	+	>2 mentions
Common Consensus on the Priorities of the Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27		
Opposition to new Civic Centre / Council office spend	++++	>14 mentions
Support for parks, green spaces, and community facilities	+++	>10 mentions
Concern about community safety / antisocial behaviour	+++	>10 mentions
Environmental sustainability / tree planting priority	+++	>10 mentions
CBD activation and amenity improvements needed	++	>6 mentions
Opposition to \$9.2M connectivity / accessibility spend	+	>2 mentions
Support for library and cultural investment	+	>2 mentions

Request for more detail in the plan document	+	>2 mentions
Common Consensus on the Capital Works Program		
Sporting facility capital allocation too low	+++	>10 mentions
Shared paths / cycling infrastructure underfunded	++	>6 mentions
Non-roads capital works budget too high	++	>6 mentions
Civic Centre / new office is largest capital concern	++++	>14 mentions
Waste management spend too high relative to other services	++	>6 mentions
Greater disaggregation of capital works reporting requested	+	>2 mentions
Bundilla Beach investment supported	+	>2 mentions
Cyclone resilience in infrastructure planning needed	+	>2 mentions
Common Feedback / Suggestions by Respondents		
More tree planting / greening Darwin requested	++++	>14 mentions
Wet-season exercise infrastructure (rubber paths, track hours)	++	>6 mentions
Improved pedestrian and cycling access / safety	+++	>10 mentions
Shade provision across public spaces	+++	>10 mentions
Increased street lighting for safety	++	>6 mentions
Better recycling / waste reduction options	+	>2 mentions
Soup kitchen / social services support in Darwin	+	>2 mentions
Indigenous community services / supermarket in CBD	+	>2 mentions
Esplanade prioritised as usable public space	+	>2 mentions
Internet / energy grid investment requested	o	1 mention
Bougainvillea / roadside planting along CBD streets	o	1 mention
Gardens Golf Course lighting funding requested	o	1 mention

Appendix One – True North Consultation Summary Report

(See attachment B - City of Darwin Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 consultation summary report)

Appendix Two – Survey Results

(See Attachment C – *Survey Responses – Draft Municipal Plan 2026/27 report*)