Community Consultation and the ‘Hard to Reach’
City of Boroondara Case Study Report
Camberwell and Kew Structure Plans

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The Hard to Reach Project is a collaborative research venture with eight Victorian local councils, the Victorian Local Governance Association and researchers from Swinburne University of Technology. The three year project is jointly funded by the Australian Research Council and partner organisations.

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At the point of submitting this case study report, Stages 4-7 of the community consultation, and Boroondara Council’s endorsement of the final Kew Structure Plan, are yet to be completed. The Institute for Social Research, in agreement with City of Boroondara staff, has tracked the process of community consultation in Stages 1 and 3 which cover the key stages of consultation for the purpose of informing draft reports on urban development at Kew Junction. Evaluation of further consultation with the local community on refining the final draft report on the Kew Structure Plan, which would involve the consultants re-engaging with focus groups, would require further research by the Institute for Social Research.
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Introduction

This report is part of a series of case study reports for the Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach research project. The project is investigating how community consultation is currently practised by Victorian councils, especially in relation to multiple publics and groups that councils can find hard to reach.

The Hard to Reach project is a collaborative research venture, with eight Victorian local councils, the Victorian Local Governance Association, and researchers from Swinburne University of Technology. The three year project is jointly funded by the Australian Research Council, the Cities of Boroondara, Darebin, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moreland, Port Phillip and Whittlesea, and the Shire of Nillumbik. The eight participating councils comprise inner city as well as city fringe locations, homogenous and highly ethnically and culturally diverse populations, economically advantaged and disadvantaged areas, well established and newly developing areas, municipalities with a long-standing commitment to community consultation as well as those which are still developing their policies and practices. While the councils chosen may not be statistically representative, the range of contexts and socio-demographic characteristics reflect the attitudes and practice of community consultation as it is currently taking place in Victoria.

As part of this research, a detailed case study is being conducted with each partner council. In order to gain a balanced insight into current practice, case studies were matched to provide examples of a range of levels of consultation:

- high level strategic planning
- place based issues
- service reviews
- issue based consultations
- consultations aimed at involving specific hard to reach groups
- community development.

The matched case studies will assist the greater Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach project to provide some useful resources for each of the partner councils, as well as a broader commentary and analysis of the challenges faced when councils attempt to consult with or engage their communities.

Why the case study was chosen

The Camberwell and Kew Structure Plans were chosen as an example of a consultation about a high level strategy or plan which affects the whole community. Consultations associated with the development of future-oriented high level strategic documents, such as Structure Plans, are usually considered particularly difficult in terms of attracting community interest and contribution from participants who are broadly representative of the community. People tend to be reluctant to get involved, due to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of some strategy
documents. It is difficult to persuade them to see the immediate impact of a policy or strategy, or the relevance to their own lives. Involving a wide range of community members in such planning exercises involves considerable time and resources and it is often felt that, in such cases, everyone is hard to reach.¹

The Victorian Government’s strategy for urban consolidation, *Melbourne 2030* (Department of Infrastructure 2002), nominates ‘activity centres’ for development throughout the city. Metropolitan councils are required to produce a Structure Plan for principal and major activity centres by 2010.

Boroondara is preparing four structure plans concurrently (Camberwell, Kew, Glenferrie and Balwyn) and whilst the methodologies for each differ, there are opportunities for community input at various milestones in each structure plan. This is evidence of Council’s commitment to structure planning and to community engagement.

While the State Government stipulates that structure planning must involve consultation with the community, design of specific methodologies for engaging stakeholders is left to individual Councils. Boroondara Council has taken structure planning as an opportunity to strengthen its consultation processes to engage a diverse range of local people and provide them with evidence that their input has made a difference.

As part of the case study methodology, Ivan Zwart, a researcher at Swinburne University, attended some of the community workshops and liaised closely with Council staff and the consultant for the Camberwell Structure Plan.

Katrina Gorjanicyn, another Swinburne researcher, attended community workshops and street displays for the Kew Structure Plan and interviewed Council staff from the areas of strategic planning and social research, as well as consultant planners.

¹ Compare Brackertz, Zwart et al. (2005).
Who is hard to reach and why?

In the context of local government, ‘hard to reach’ is a term sometimes used to describe those sections of the community that are difficult to involve in public participation. It is useful to take a step back and look at the usage of the term in the literature more generally, as many of the issues raised there are also applicable to local councils.

Problems with hard to reach terminology

There is a lack of clarity about what exactly is meant by hard to reach and the term is employed inconsistently; sometimes it is used to refer to minority groups, such as ethnic, gay and lesbian, or homeless people; other times it may refer to broader segments of the population, such as old or young people or people with disabilities (Jones and Newburn 2001: vi). In the service context, hard to reach often refers to the ‘under-served’, namely, minority groups, those slipping through the net, and the service resistant (Doherty 2004). An alternative term for hard to reach used in the sampling context is ‘hidden populations’ (Atkinson and Flint 2001; Duncan, White et al. 2003) – as in they are hidden from the point of view of sampling. Hidden populations may also actively seek to conceal their group identity, as for example in the case of illicit drug users, gays and lesbians and sexually active teens (Duncan, White et al. 2003).

The problem with using the term hard to reach is that implies a homogeneity within distinct groups which does not necessarily exist. Thereby ‘it defines the problem as one within the group itself, not within your approach to them’ (Smith 2006). This sentiment is echoed by Murphy (2006).

From what has been discussed so far, it is not surprising that hard to reach is a potentially stigmatising terminology. Freimuth and Mettger (1990: 323) offer an illustrative summary of prejudices:

*Hard-to-reach audiences have been called obstinate, recalcitrant, chronically uninformed, disadvantaged, have-not, illiterate, malfunctional, and information poor.*

Origins and usage of hard to reach

Hard to reach is often used in the context of social marketing (Beder 1980). The aim of many social marketing initiatives, especially in the field of health, is to affect change in behaviour using marketing tools and techniques adopted from the private sector (Walsh, Rudd et al. 1993). Social marketing is a consumer focused approach that believes nobody is impossible to reach; it just depends on the approach taken. Paul Vittles commented that ‘no-one is hard to reach, just more expensive to reach. It is important to put more effort and creativity in reaching these groups’ (Wilson 2001: 1).

This is borne out in medical and health research where hard to reach often appears in relation to the ability of health services to reach out to certain
difficult to contact (or difficult to influence using existing techniques) segments of the population (Freimuth and Mettger 1990; Walsh, Rudd et al. 1993; Faugier and Sargeant 1997; Burhansstipanov and Krebs 2005). Here hard to reach are also equated with the under-served, which can mean that either there are no services available for these groups or, more often, that they fail to access the services that are available (Earthman, Richmond et al. 1999; Burhansstipanov and Krebs 2005).

The reasons hard to reach are of such concern in the medical and educational fields is that they tend to have poorer health and educational outcomes, which is of particular concern to those working with young people and in youth services (Earthman, Richmond et al. 1999; The Reading Agency 2006).

Who is identified as hard to reach?

With the renewed emphasis on governance and community engagement, councils are now also focusing on those population segments that do not usually participate. Many organisations, but councils in particular, identify hard to reach populations using demographic definitions (young people, rural people, people with disabilities, ethnic groups), but it is important to acknowledge that attitudinal aspects are a contributing factor. For example, people could be hard to reach because they think council does not care about them, that council does not listen or even that it is irrelevant to them (Wilson 2001). It is these attitudes that can be even harder to overcome than demographic aspects.

In addition to demographic and attitudinal characteristics, there are also practical reasons why some people are hard to reach. In the medical context, the most frequently reported barriers to participation in the US Head Start programme were prior commitments and schedule conflicts (Lamb-Parker et al. 2001 as cited in Barlow, Kirkpatrick et al. 2005). This is of relevance for scheduling public participation processes in councils as well.

Interviews and focus groups conducted with the partner councils identified culturally and linguistically diverse communities, indigenous, young, elderly, disabled and homeless people as hard to reach. Others groups included drug users, sex workers, those on low incomes, high rise apartment dwellers, faith-based communities, businesses (traders), single parents, newly arrived residents, gays and lesbians, homeless, problem gamblers and residents of hostels and boarding houses. Some rural populations were considered to be hard to reach, while some groups of people (in particular, those who were asked to regularly respond to service reviews) were becoming over-consulted and increasingly reluctant to participate. To this illustrious list should be added persons who would like to have a say in local issues but do not know how to access council processes; Also identified were unresponsive people, such as the time-poor (who are in full-time work and/or who work outside the area); persons with a low commitment to the
area or no vested interest in local issues (e.g. renters); and disengaged people who are disillusioned with, or feel disconnected from, the political process.

However, a list of groups is not necessarily a useful tool to identify and establish relationships with hard to reach, all the more because certain groups may be hard to reach in some contexts or locations and not in others. It is more fruitful to identify characteristics of hard to reach groups and link these to successful approaches to contact or involve them (Brackertz 2007; Health and Safety Executive 1994; Jones and Newburn 2001). The wide connotations associated with and imprecise usage of the term ‘hard to reach’ calls into question its utility. A number of groups and population segments have traditionally been underrepresented in councils’ public participation. But in reality, few are hard to reach if the right approach is used.

Common to many writings is the recognition that those wishing to involve hard to reach need to overcome their own prejudices about the people they wish to contact, while at the same time having to work to address the preconceptions (often misconceptions) of those with whom they wish to consult (Freimuth and Mettger 1990; Barlow, Kirkpatrick et al. 2005; Burhansstipanov and Krebs 2005). An alternative way to view the ‘disinterest’ or ‘lack of motivation to contribute or become involved’ often associated with hard to reach groups is by emphasising differences rather than deficits. The difference thesis suggests that when people are motivated to acquire information and when that information is functional in their lives, they will make use of this. This notion has import for the sampling of hard to reach.

**Sampling hard to reach**

The term ‘hard to reach’ is used frequently in relation to the need to include certain population segments to obtain a representative sample (Messeri, Aidala et al. 1995; Rhodes, Kling et al. 2004). In relation to participatory practice in councils, representativeness is linked to the need to include all those affected by a particular issue to secure democratic legitimacy. The method and tool of public participation used will affect the representativeness of those participating. The degree to which particular groups are hard to reach is context specific and depends on the population targeted, the participation method used and the issue consulted upon.

Van Meter (1990 cited in Faugier and Sargeant 1996) distinguishes extensive and intensive data collection methodologies. Descending methodologies (quantitative strategies executed at the level of general populations) require highly standardised questionnaires, population samples and traditional statistical analysis. These quantitative methods rely on ‘representative’ sampling strategies to make inferences about the whole population. Survey studies in the general

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2 Discussions here relate to the inclusion of blacks, HIV positive people, drug users etc.
population that rely on closed questions are inherently limited by the data obtained and may yield little understanding of the phenomenon under study, which is particularly limiting when exploring new or sensitive areas (Hendricks and Blanken 1992 as cited in Faugier and Sargeant 1996).

Ascending methodologies, on the other hand, use qualitative sampling designs and are usually non-generalisable, but provide a high degree of insight into a social process. Typical methodologies use snowball sampling, life histories and ethnographic monographs with analysis adapted to suit the specific techniques employed (Faugier and Sargeant 1996). Snowball sampling is an example of a special technique that was developed to attempt to include hard to reach and hidden populations (Atkinson and Flint 2001). It is a link-tracing methodology that is used most often for qualitative research. In essence it relies on a series of referrals that are made within a circle of people who know each other or are loosely connected. The respondent is asked to name other persons who fit the criteria described by the researcher. These are then interviewed and in turn asked to nominate others who fit the criteria, and so on.

In councils, involving the hard to reach is usually done through a combination of targeting public participation tools and reaching out to communities in ways which they are likely to respond to. The case study described below examines how this was played out in relation to Boroondara Council's public participation problem (i.e. involving a representative portion of the local community in a discussion on a high level consultation on strategic issues) and the outcomes that resulted from the choices made.
Legitimacy of the participation process

To give political legitimacy to decisions made and priorities set on the basis of what the community says, it is necessary to be able to show that those involved in the consultation are representative of the municipality’s population. Otherwise, results are open to criticism and complaint and can be subject to challenge on the basis that they do not reflect the interests of the wider community.

In the context of councils’ public participation processes, ‘representative’ means those affected by the issue consulted upon. In the case of the Kew and Camberwell Structure Plans, the entire community is affected, therefore representation in the strictest sense would require inclusion of all residents of the municipality. Clearly this is not practicable. The alternative is to aim to consult with a sample that mirrors the spread of age groups, genders, language and cultural groups, socio-economic status, levels of education and employment and interests of residents. This, too, is no mean undertaking, as it is time, skill and resource intensive to involve a wide spectrum of people in consultation on complex issues.

This is why consultations that require wide representation are often advertised publicly, thereby (at least in theory) providing everyone with an equal opportunity to participate. In reality, those who respond are usually people who read council publications or the local paper, are politically aware or have a vested interest in the issue. While the participants in a publicly advertised consultation – sometimes called ‘the usual suspects’ – are not necessarily representative of the wider community, at least the argument can be made that others, if they felt strongly enough, could have become involved and raised their concerns.

The problem is that it is not easy to involve a large number of people. Surveys are perhaps the preferred means of eliciting information and opinion from a large sample. They appeal also because they can be quantified, thereby lending scientific validity and confidence to the responses received. However, especially where complex, future oriented and abstract planning is concerned, surveys are limited because they impose simple options on complex choice questions.

Workshops, meetings and other group-based face to face consultation methods tend to be resource intensive and difficult to do well. Their success depends on the quality of the participants and the skill of the facilitator. The value of these forms of community consultation is that they provide deliberative forums that can be used to elicit qualitative information and cast light on why opinions are held and decisions are made. They also help Council listen to people and provide assurance to participants that they are being heard.

Surveys and face to face methods are often used in conjunction. The difficulty lies in balancing the need for representation with the ability to gain deeper understanding and insight.
It is often hard to decide how much weight should be given to a workshop, which provides in-depth information, as opposed to a survey, which has greater numbers of participants.

**Democratic legitimacy of public participation**

The problem with open invitation workshops is in evaluating their place, scope and effectiveness. They attract varying levels of attendance and, in terms of representation, their profile is patchy. Theoretically this dilemma can be framed using two key dimensions of democratic legitimacy: procedural legitimation and the ability of political institutions to provide outcomes.

Procedural legitimation refers to the way in which democratic processes are conducted to secure the consent of the governed (Klausen and Sweeting 2002). The notion is linked to the fundamental tenets of representative democracy where general acceptance of political decisions is predicated on the principle that each vote counts equally when electing representatives and that, beyond elections, everybody has the same right to attempt to influence political decision making through lobbying and advocacy. In the case of public participation in local government decision making, procedural legitimation is closely linked to issues of representativeness and opportunity to become involved. Consultations may not require full inclusion, but should at least aim to involve a representative sample of the municipality’s population. In reality, due to their complexity, consultations on major policies and strategies that affect the entire municipality (e.g. corporate plan, strategic resource plan, or municipal strategic statement) are often carried out involving only a small number of community members who are often not representative of the broader demographic. Consultations that relate to a service review or an operational matter are usually aimed at a subset of the municipality’s population and do not usually require full inclusion (though they may benefit from it). However, even in these instances only a small proportion of the affected citizens take part in the consultation process.

The other key dimension of democratic legitimacy is the effectiveness of political institutions which hinges upon the ability to deliver outcomes and address emerging issues and needs as they arise (Hanssen, Klausen et al. 2003; Klausen and Sweeting 2002). Here it is not so much the representativeness of public participation that counts (although representation remains an issue), but the outcomes that result.

While the two dimensions of democratic legitimacy are a useful test of the validity of public participation, decisions about doing and using the results of consultation are inevitably tempered by practical considerations. As outlined in an earlier report for the Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach project (Brackertz, Zwart et al. 2005), something can be learned about the desired level of community involvement in decision making from pluralistic and purpose based models of public participation.
Models of public participation
As outlined by Brackertz, Zwart et al. (2005), there are numerous ways in which community consultation, participation and engagement can be conceptualised and evaluated. Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation is a model that has shaped thinking about community engagement. It describes community engagement from the perspective of a community activist and places participation on a continuum of activity depending upon the range of influence that citizens have over decision making. For writers such as Arnstein, participation should involve a transfer of power from the council to the community, and ensure that final decision making is left in the hands of the various stakeholders. Arnstein argues that community engagement processes that do not make a genuine attempt to consider the views of citizens may be tokenistic or even a form of manipulation that will lead to a greater degree of cynicism from the public. Assuming that open and transparent processes will automatically lead to an empowered citizenry is problematic, however, as it raises the question of where authority should lie in a system of representative democracy. It also ignores the issue of who is likely to participate and how decision making will be improved, given that providing opportunities for participation may simply increase the power of those who already have it. Nevertheless, Arnstein rightly points out that governments should be open about why they engage the public, and should not use consultation processes to simply justify a decision that has already been made.

An example of a more pragmatic and pluralistic model, which views public participation as an activity that should be shaped by the policy problem at hand, is the influential International Association for Public Participations (IAP2) Spectrum, <http://www.iap2.org.au/spectrum.pdf> (Table 1). The model outlines the choices that organisations have when doing public participation, depending on the degree to which citizens are expected to be actively involved in the decision-making process. The IAP2 Spectrum is particularly useful for local authorities, because it combines the goals of public participation (such as to obtain feedback or work directly with the public) with the implicit promise this approach holds for the community (e.g. information, consultation or empowerment), thereby directing organisations to think through the public implications of their participation processes.

This shows that a genuine commitment to engage the public does not necessarily involve handing over power to those who take part. The IAP2 spectrum takes on board the concerns of Arnstein but does not subscribe to her normative emphasis to transfer power to citizens.

The spectrum demonstrates a variety of options that organisations have when engaging their communities. At one end of the spectrum, organisations can choose to simply inform their citizens of a decision that has or will be made. At the other, they can delegate decision making to the public. The IAP2 spectrum also suggests a small
range of techniques that can be used depending upon the level of involvement required of citizens, although it should be noted that some techniques can be used for a range of engagement levels. The IAP2 spectrum is useful for thinking about the degree to which organisations want citizens to contribute to decision making, and emphasises the need to be clear about the messages provided to the public. Nevertheless, it does little to address a range of other issues that are important to consider when undertaking community consultation. Among these is the manner in which ‘the public’ is invited to participate and how information from the process is used in decision making.
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<tr>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Participation Goal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions</td>
<td>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions</td>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered</td>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</td>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the public</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promise to the Public</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will keep you informed</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced that decision</td>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision</td>
<td>We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible</td>
<td>We will implement what you decide</td>
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<td><strong>Example Techniques to Consider</strong></td>
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<td>• Fact sheets</td>
<td>• Public comment</td>
<td>• Workshops</td>
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<td>• Delegated decisions</td>
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Background to the consultation

During 2006 and 2007 the City of Boroondara undertook a series of community consultations as part of its structure planning process. The consultations consisted of reference group meetings, street displays, feedback forms, focus groups and public workshops and were intended to ascertain community preferences about the development of structure planning in Camberwell and Kew.

In order to understand the implications of the case study from the point of view of representativeness, especially in relation to hard to reach groups, it is necessary to consider the demographic characteristics that shape the Boroondara community.

Boroondara profile summary

The City of Boroondara covers an area of 60 square kilometres and is located five kilometres east of Melbourne’s CBD. It includes the suburbs of Ashburton, Balwyn, North Balwyn, Camberwell, Canterbury, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East, Kew, Kew East and parts of Glen Iris, Mont Albert and Surrey Hills. The city incorporates residential and commercial areas as well as education precincts. The population of the City of Boroondara surpasses 154,450\(^3\). The community is characterised by low levels of scattered disadvantage, high levels of employment, relatively high incomes and a high proportion of home ownership.

\(^3\) Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2006 Census.
Demographic Indicators

Social and Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

Boroondara’s high rankings on the SEIFA Indexes show that the municipality has the highest levels of advantage and lowest levels of disadvantage compared to the Melbourne Statistical District (MSD).

The Index of Advantage/Disadvantage, which is a continuum of advantage to disadvantage and takes into account variables relating to income, education, occupation, wealth and living conditions, ranks Boroondara first out of 31 Melbourne LGAs. This indicates that overall, Boroondara has high numbers of skilled workers, low unemployment, and households with relatively higher incomes compared to the MSD.

While the City of Boroondara emerges as the most advantaged municipality in the MSD, levels of affluence vary across the suburbs that constitute Boroondara. As shown by the Index of Disadvantage by Local Government Area, Ashburton, parts of Hawthorn and Balwyn North have the highest levels of disadvantage, while Glen Iris, Kew, Canterbury and Surrey Hills are the least disadvantaged.

According to the Index of Economic Resources, compared to MSD, the majority of households in Boroondara have relatively high incomes (41% in the highest income quartile compared to 25% for MSD) and home ownership is high. Mostly there are high mortgage repayments, a larger proportion of people who own their house outright, and scarce availability of low rental properties. The Index of Economic

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Out of 31 Melbourne Local Government Authorities

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4 Unless otherwise indicated, information is based on 2001 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
5 For a more detailed discussion of the SEIFA indexes, see Brackertz, Zwart et al. (2005).
Resources by Local Government Area indicates again that Camberwell, Canterbury and Kew are more affluent than Ashburton, Kew East, Balwyn and parts of Hawthorn. While overall income and work levels are high across Boroondara, residents are likely to be time-poor, with a higher proportion working very long hours than in the MSD.

On the Index of Education and Occupation, compared to MSD, Boroondara residents have high levels of education and a large proportion are in professional occupations. However, the Index of Education and Occupation by Local Government Area shows that residents in Ashburton, Kew and Balwyn have lower levels of education, work in lower skilled jobs or may be unemployed.

Distribution of age groups in Boroondara mirrors that in the MSD, except for a greater proportion in the 75 and older age cohort. Young people in Boroondara cluster near Swinburne University in Hawthorn, while higher densities of older people reside in parts of Burwood, Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell.

While the population of Boroondara is not culturally diverse, immigration has shaped the composition of the community. Most migrants living in Boroondara come from English-speaking countries. The largest non-English-speaking groups are Chinese and Greek. The proportion of Chinese people living in Boroondara is double that in the MSD.

Who is hard to reach in Boroondara?
The demographic profile presented above shows that Boroondara has a relatively homogenous community with low levels of disadvantage overall. Nevertheless there are pockets of the population that are potentially hard to reach based on their social and demographic characteristics:

- people who live within less advantaged areas as identified by the SEIFA indexes, primarily Ashburton, Kew East, Balwyn and parts of Hawthorn
- time-poor residents who work longer hours than the MSD
- young people, who make up a large section of the community in Hawthorn and who are difficult to engage unless targeted specifically using appropriate methods.

Recent research reveals that despite Boroondara being one of Melbourne’s wealthiest municipalities, there are individuals and families suffering social exclusion who are ‘hidden’ in the community. This is linked to a combination of factors: low household income, unemployment, mental illness, lack of suitable and affordable housing, racism, family violence and breakdown, being a sole parent family, and having a drug addiction. More than 12% of Boroondara’s children live in poverty, and welfare agencies are overstretched (Stanley, Eadie et al. 2005; Stanley, Ng et al. 2007).

The degree to which these population segments are hard to reach depends on the issues consulted upon, the
consultation tools used and the way in which they are asked to contribute to the process. Some may be reached if the right tool and approach are used, while others are willing to attend if special provisions are made for them (e.g. offering childcare or transport).

Consultations on strategic issues, such as urban planning, face additional complications because of their abstract and future oriented nature, which means that many residents may be disinclined to become involved as they do not see the relevance to their own lives or feel that they have anything to contribute. The endemic problem is that it is just these high level strategic issues that affect the entire community, adding weight to the requirement that participants be representative of the municipality’s wider population so that all voices can be heard, providing a legitimate basis for decisions made as a result of community input.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ method of public participation. Rather, a combination of consultation methods is needed to engage different segments of the community, including those unlikely to become involved unless targeted.

**Melbourne 2030**

The State Government’s *Melbourne 2030* plan affects many planning and development issues in local government and continues to divide the community on many related issues.

*Melbourne 2030* aims to drastically alter the traditional pattern of Melbourne’s urban development by nominating principal and major mixed use activity centres in the existing metropolitan area, and introducing a legislated urban growth boundary. The existing metropolitan area is nominated to contain 70% of the planned 620,000 new dwellings by 2030, with the remainder located in development corridors on the urban fringe. The new dwellings will constitute a 50% increase on the current 1.2 million dwellings, three quarters of which are detached.

Implementation of the plan will result in a large increase in the number of new dwellings in activity centres, from 24% to 41% by 2030 (Buxton and Tieman 2005: 141).

Despite the massive urban consolidation envisaged, the plan says this will occur without detriment to the character or amenity of established residential areas due to the application of *Rescode*, the medium density housing code.

*Melbourne 2030* identifies metropolitan Melbourne as having a network of around 1,000 activity centres of various types and sizes. According to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (2006b), they are focal points for the community and meet a wide range of needs. Within Boroondara, Camberwell Junction is identified as a principal activity centre and Kew Junction and Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn as major activity centres.

All metropolitan councils are required to prepare structure plans for each of their principal and major activity centres by 2010. These are intended as local planning strategies to assist in the local implementation of *Melbourne*
by setting the guidelines for land uses of any future development, whilst considering movement and accessibility conditions.

Whilst methodologies for each structure plan differ, all have provided opportunities for community engagement and feedback at key milestones. This level of consultation on strategic planning represents a challenge for any municipality, and in the case of Boroondara has provided important learning opportunities, and has been successful in stimulating community debate about the future of activity centres.

The consultation described in the following sections of the report took place as part of this structure planning. Because of the broad implications and future oriented nature of structure planning, it is vital that a representative section of the community is involved in the process.

Structure planning: NIMBYism and inner city councils

*Melbourne 2030* aims to create a more compact city and provide benefits through the maintenance of social, economic and environmental initiatives, such as ‘green wedges’, rural land, reduced car use, shorter commuter times and reduced pollution. However, this entails significant changes to existing inner suburbs which will have to accommodate new development and higher density living. Substantial compromises must be made to allow the aims to be met, leading to a backlash in some areas:

*Recent stoushes over Camberwell Station, Kew Cottages and Tooronga Village have led to some planners speaking derisively of what they call the ‘Boroondara Syndrome’. This is code for the highly organised, highly effective resistance from residents with a lot of time and money in the eastern suburbs. The view from planners is that Councils won’t rein these residents in for political reasons, so an ‘independent umpire’ is crucial (Fenton and Kidd 2006: 21).*

In some areas, well organised residents’ groups have formed to protest proposed planning and development. In Boroondara they attempt to influence the structure planning process through organised protests, websites, media publicity and use of celebrity campaigners. This political activity and vocal opposition to structure planning can make community consultation on urban planning particularly challenging.

Boroondara provides a dynamic case study of how councils, and particularly planners, approach the task of balancing local opposition to urban development with the need for inclusive community participation practices which deliver key objectives of *Melbourne 2030*.

State Government guidelines for community engagement in structure planning

The State Government has not developed specific measures to assist councils with community participation in structure planning. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) website provides the following guidance:
• The structure planning process must involve key stakeholders such as the community, landowners and infrastructure providers.

• Consultation and stakeholder input is essential to ensure community understanding and support for the strategic vision.

• Stakeholders should be identified during the initial scoping of the project. There should be a clear understanding of what their interests are and how they can participate throughout the different stages of the project.

• The aim of the consultation is to identify community values. All consultation programs should clearly detail from the outset, what decisions will be based on the results of the consultation (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2006a).

Further to this, the department advises councils to consult the VLGA’s Consultation and Engagement website, <http://www.vlgaconsultation.org.au>.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (2003: 3) provides more specific guidance on structure planning in a document titled *Structure Planning for Activity Centres*:

*Community engagement is a key element at all stages of preparing a structure plan … Each stage will need specific stakeholder engagement and community consultation mechanisms.*

A seven stage process is proposed:

1. *Preparing to plan*
2. *Analysing the centre and its context*
3. *Vision and objectives statement*
4. *Develop and test options*
5. *Framework plan*
6. *Implementation program*
7. *Monitoring and review.*

The Camberwell and Kew structure plans broadly follow this process.
Camberwell structure plan

In 2004 the City of Boroondara embarked on its first structure planning process in relation to *Melbourne 2030*. In October two ‘Good Ideas’ workshops were held, followed by two community workshops in July 2005 where members of the community provided feedback on urban design principles and had input into the development of draft options for the plan. In addition, there were focus group workshops with specifically targeted groups, for example a youth round table forum and a workshop with community service providers. While Boroondara Council is committed to undertaking structure planning as a regular part of its business, the last structure plan had not been updated since it was endorsed in 1993.

Community Reference Committee

A community reference group was chosen as one mechanism of community consultation to assist the Planning Department to develop the plan. This was based on a Council decision to conduct consultative processes concerning strategic planning by bringing together 10 to 15 people who were representative of the community and local interests, and providing them with opportunities to work through the issues under consideration.

The role of committee members was to assist in guiding the preparation of the Structure Plan Review process.

Recruitment was through advertisements in the local paper.

Interested persons were then interviewed by strategic planning staff to determine their suitability and ensure representative composition of the group.

The community reference group comprised representatives from:

- elected representatives (councillors) (three)
- traders (two)
- resident representatives from Camberwell (two)
- resident representative not from Camberwell (one)
- commercial land owner from Camberwell (one).

Recruitment was complicated by the fact that there were highly organised and vocal public interest groups who opposed the structure planning process as they contested the aims and nature of *Melbourne 2030*. Their aim was to influence the outcomes of the structure planning process.

Members of these groups were well aware that a committee was being formed and put themselves forward as community representatives. Consequently a number of committee members held strong anti-development. This created a complex situation for Council, as the committee was hampered on a number of occasions in fulfilling its role of preparing advice and guidelines for structure planning, because some committee members did not want such advice to be forthcoming and blocked the process.
Community workshops

In addition to the Reference Committee, which was the primary mechanism for eliciting community ideas and preferences for the Camberwell structure plan, two ‘Good Ideas’ workshops were held in October 2004. These were intended to broaden participation, educate the community about the plan and seek feedback. From Council’s point of view, they provided opportunities for the community to ‘articulate its vision’.

The workshops were structured to include a one-hour presentation followed by one-hour small discussion groups.

In July 2005, a further two community workshops were held. These workshops aimed to elicit community feedback on urban design principles that were endorsed by Council, and to obtain input into the process of developing draft options for the plan, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning/planning_projects_and_strategies/camberwell_junction/draft>.

Members of the public were invited to register for one of the two workshops that were held on 27 and 28 July at the Camberwell Civic Centre. Attendance at both workshops was high, with the first attracting 60 people, the second 40.

However, like the community advisory group, the community workshops were also influenced in their process and outcomes by participants who represented the interests of the anti-development community groups.

Many at the first workshop were of the opinion that structure planning should not take place and were very vocal about their position.

The meeting became difficult to manage as people talked over the top of each other, detracting from the presentation. When the planners proposed that the large group divide into small groups, some participants objected to the idea. Four groups were eventually formed. Because each of the four smaller groups also had representatives from the anti-development community interest groups who were intent on disrupting proceedings, some viewpoints could not be adequately conveyed, for example, one committee member’s concern about accessibility issues. Some participants were clearly intimidated by these events, with one commenting outside of group discussion: ‘These people are so negative. We should be dealing with these issues’ (pers. comm. with Ivan Zwart).

In addition to the community workshops, Council officers also obtained community feedback from focus groups, including a youth round table, a workshop with community service providers, and a workshop with local trader groups. The draft structure plan for Camberwell Junction was finalised by Council in February 2008.

Lessons for Council

The consultation processes used for the Camberwell Junction Structure Plan placed emphasis on a Reference Committee, supplemented by other community workshops and focus group consultations. The protracted timeframe for delivering final policy indicates that consulting local communities, in which views on urban planning are polarised, is a complex task that needs to be managed carefully. This is complicated by the fact that many community members can be reluctant to become involved in consultations on complex future oriented issues. Consequently it is often those persons who are already politically active who participate in such consultations.

The dominance of vocal interest groups in consultation processes is a common problem for all councils and can hamper their ability to conduct representative consultation.

The use of robust consultation processes and careful participant selection with an emphasis on representativeness of wider community views can mitigate some of the difficulties outlined above.
Kew Structure Plan

The strategy for public participation used for the Kew structure planning process has been a deliberate move away from the Reference Committee model used in Camberwell. The process is represented in figure 2.

In an attempt to mitigate the influence of vocal local groups with entrenched interests, Council engaged external consultants for the planning aspects of the Kew structure plan and sub-consultants for the community consultation component of the process. The consultants worked with Council from 2006 until 2007 to elicit community responses to the preparation of a Kew structure plan through a series of measures including distribution of information and updates about the development of Kew Junction, street displays, feedback forms and community workshops.

Table 2: Public consultations for the preparation of the Kew Structure Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-street interviews</th>
<th>February 2006; weekday and weekend hours; held at Kew Junction; 259 people interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Update Bulletin and feedback form</td>
<td>February 2006; distributed to approximately 10,000 households in Kew and East Kew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward councillor briefing</td>
<td>February 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community scoping workshops</td>
<td>6 and 8 March 2006; QPO Bar and Bistro; High Street; Kew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth roundtable discussion
March 2006; 11 participants

Social provider workshop
12 Apr. 2006; facilitated by Council’s consultant social planner

Street displays
9 Nov. 2006, 9am-12noon; and 11 Nov. 2006, 10am-1pm; Walpole and Brougham Streets, Kew; facilitated by: Boroondara Council officers (two) and external consultants); attended by 25-30 people and 50-60 people (estimated by Council officer)

Community Update Bulletin, No. 2
Oct. 2006; distributed to approximately 10,000 households in Kew and East Kew

Community workshops
28 Nov. 2006, 12noon-2pm, QPO Bar and Bistro, High Street, Kew, nine attendees
29 Nov. 2006, 7pm-9pm, Jubilee Hall, Holy Trinity Church, cnr High and Packington Sts, Kew, 11 attendees
Facilitated by external consultants and Council staff
Figure 2: The Kew Structure Planning Process

- **Stage 1**
  - Public Consultation
    - Project Inception
    - Background Information
    - SWOT Analysis
    - Principles Generation

- **Stage 2**
  - Technical Reports
    - Existing Conditions
    - Emerging Directions

- **Stage 3**
  - Focus Groups
    - To test Emerging Directions
    - Cross representation (resident, trader, land owner, Agency, DSE)

- **Stage 4**
  - Structure Plan Options
    - Draft Structure Plan Options
    - Draft Implementation Actions (DSE Consultation)

- **Stage 5**
  - Community and Stakeholder Consultation
    - Re-engage with Focus Groups
    - Community & Govt Agency

- **Stage 6**
  - Draft Report
    - Review Community Feedback

- **Stage 7**
  - Final Report
    - Release to Public

- **Council Endorsement of Emerging Directions**
  - EMG
  - CB&D
  - UPSC

- **Council Endorsement of Draft Plan**
  - EMG
  - CB&D
  - UPSC

- **Council Endorsement of Final Plan**
  - EMG
  - CB&D
  - UPSC

- **Ward Councillor Briefings**

- **Buildings**
  - built form
  - heritage
  - neighborhood character
  - ESD
  - key sites
  - dwelling mix

- **Access**
  - public transport
  - pedestrians
  - bicycles
  - car parking
  - ESD
  - infrastructure

- **Activities**
  - land use mix
  - key sites
  - social / community planning
  - ESD

- **Spaces**
  - passive / active
  - private / public
  - key sites
  - user groups – youth / elderly
  - accessibility

ESD = Environmentally Sustainable Development
Stage 3 of the Kew Junction structure plan

Stage 3 of the Kew structure plan process included a number of public consultations (workshops and site displays) as well as a separate report collecting responses from service providers in the Kew Junction area. The *Emerging Directions* report, which outlines possible options for Kew Junction and is based on contributions from Council staff and community consultations conducted for Stage 1 of the structure planning process, was used as the starting point for the Stage 3 consultations.

The consultation strategy for Stage 3 of the Kew Junction structure plan was successful in avoiding the process being dominated by vocal community groups as had been the case in Camberwell. A key point to emerge from this part of the case study is an identified need for Council to be proactive in reaching out to a broadly representative section of the community.\(^6\)

The methodology for Stage 3 was to:

- disseminate information about proposed developments to Kew Junction
- update and inform the local community on the consultation process
- obtain further feedback from the community on how planning might progress
- garner community responses to the *Emerging Directions* report.

Emerging Directions report

For Stage 3 of the Kew Junction structure plan, community views were sought in relation to the *Emerging Directions* report. The document was prepared by external consultants and endorsed by Boroondara Council. The purpose of the *Emerging Directions* report was to stimulate community feedback on the initial findings and options which might be reflected in a draft structure plan. The *Emerging Directions* report was released for public distribution in October 2006 and made available on Council’s website, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning/planning_projects_and_strategies/kewjunction/emerging>.

The report contains a draft vision for Kew Junction in 2016 based on a summary of feedback provided by the local community in previous public consultations. Points of emphasis in the vision statement include:

- creating a variety of shops and community facilities to cater for an array of people
- expanding business and employment,
- enhancing neighbourhood character through building design and preservation
- improving infrastructure

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\(^6\) This finding is not unusual and is consistent with observations made about other councils’ consultation processes during the wider Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach research project.
• fostering community interaction.
The *Emerging Directions* report organises community feedback on the development of Kew Junction into four key categories, and public consultations were structured accordingly:

- buildings (heritage, neighbourhood character, and housing and business configurations)
- access (development of infrastructure, community movement around the local area by car, public transport or as pedestrians)
- activities (different ways in which land can be utilised, including the interconnection between land and social planning)
- spaces (public sites and the degree to which they are accessible to different groups within the local community).

**The consultation process**
From February 2006 Council employed a range of conventional techniques to inform the local community of planning issues at Kew Junction and upcoming public consultations. A combination of posters and information displays, a *Community Update* bulletin, notices in the local press, mail-outs, street displays and information on Council’s website were used to promote the consultation process and invite the community to participate. Information posters were placed in the vicinity of Kew Junction, in Council buildings, community organisations, shops and other strategic places. This was complemented by a public information display in the foyer of the Kew library.

Council began its consultations by conducting on-street interviews with shoppers and visitors in Kew Junction in February 2006. A total of 259 people were interviewed over a spread of weekday and weekend hours. During the same month, a Ward Councillor briefing session was held to provide local Councillors with information about the community consultations for development of the Kew Structure Plan which Councillors could pass on to their constituents.

The major public launch of the project took place on 6 and 8 March with two community scoping workshops, both held at the QPO Bar and Bistro, High Street, Kew. Council invited people on a stakeholder list, as well as various individuals and organisations, to attend these workshops.

A youth roundtable discussion was also conducted in March. This was facilitated through Council’s Youth Services Officer who provided a list of high school students who expressed interest in the project or had been involved in similar projects before. Eleven students participated in the discussions.

**Service provider input**
Service providers in the Kew Junction area were consulted for the *Social Infrastructure Assessment Report* (Collaborations 2006) which was conducted by Council’s consultant social planner. The report produced for this part of the consultancy, which was based on a user group survey (through
Community Consultation and the ‘Hard to Reach’ City of Boroondara Case Study Report

the Boroondara Community Voice), was carried out separately from the community workshops and uploaded onto the Council’s website on 13 December 2006.

Service providers and hard to reach members of the community were seen to have participated in consultancy through the Social Infrastructure Assessment Report (pers. comm., consultant, 30/11/06), even though the sub-consultant’s investigation of service standards constituted a separate exercise to the workshops.

In October 2006 Council sent a newsletter about the progress of the structure plan to householders in close proximity to Kew Junction. Community Update No. 2 (Appendix 2) contained information about the project and invited residents to participate in the consultation process.

The planning process was also promoted in the Progress Leader and the Boroondara Bulletin. Council staff knew that this was an effective means of informing the community. An earlier survey of local residents’ readership of the Progress Leader newspaper had shown that 85% of respondents were aware of the Boroondara Bulletin, 70% knew that Council’s community notices appeared on page nine of the Progress Leader, and most became aware of Council services and activities through the Progress Leader, the Boroondara Bulletin and the Post.

As a means of boosting participation, Boroondara Council also targeted specific individuals and groups. It assembled a stakeholder list which consisted of local organisations, land owners and people who regularly attend the monthly ward meetings. Individuals and organisations with an apparent interest in planning issues were actively recruited to community workshops. For example, Council issued an invitation to VicRoads, which has an obvious interest in the development of physical infrastructure. Additionally, people who had recently emailed Council were sent personal invitations to attend (pers. comm., Council officer, 01/12/06).

Street displays
Two street displays were held on 9 and 11 November 2006. These were located in the pedestrian walkway between the rear of the High Street shops and the Safeway supermarket car park, between Walpole and Brougham Streets (Appendix 3).

The purpose was to inform the local community of proposed changes to Kew Junction and to outline the feedback about planning issues that had emerged to date at public consultations. Information boards exhibited summaries of key points from the consultants’ reports and included supporting information such as maps of the areas under review. Two Council staff and two consultants were present to speak with passers-by and to distribute copies of the Emerging Directions report and feedback sheets which people could fill out and send into Council at a later stage (Appendix 4).
The street displays attracted considerable interest. A Council staff member estimated that 25 to 30 people stopped by on 9 November, and 50 to 60 on 11 November. At times, all staff members present were engaged in discussion with members of the public. The display on Saturday 11 November attracted more shoppers, and generally people appeared to be more relaxed and with more time to spare than on the Thursday (pers. comm., Council officer 08/05/06). However, a few simple measures could have greatly increased the impact of the displays.

The map (Appendix 3) shows the location of the display behind a supermarket in a narrow area adjoining the car park. One advantage of the site location was that it was on the pedestrian path running between the two key retail anchors (Leo’s and Safeway’s supermarkets) within the centre. However, it is questionable whether the choice of site maximised opportunities for public engagement. There was some signage indicating to the public that the Council had organised a street display. However, a more clearly identifiable, imaginative presentation may have captured the attention of more passers-by and drawn them into discussion of planning issues.

A degree of active outreach by staff and consultants may have also been successful in targeting a wider range of people not usually inclined to participate. For example, consultants could have gone to Kew Junction and asked passers-by to come to the display.

In summary, better communication between Council staff and consultants, a more easily identifiable and busy location, a more engaging presentation, better marketing and active community outreach could have greatly broadened the number and range of people drawn into discussing planning issues at Kew Junction.
Stage 3 community workshops
Two community workshops were held as part of the consultative process; the first on 28 November at the QPO conference room from 12 noon to 2pm, and the second on 29 November at the Jubilee Hall, Holy Trinity Church, from 7pm to 9pm. To recruit participants, in October 2006 Council’s Strategic Planning Department sent invitations to local community members who were already on a Council mailing list (Appendix 5). Details about both the street displays and the community workshops were circulated around the Kew Junction area by means of posters which informed people that the Emerging Directions report was available for comment and further information was available at Kew Library, Council’s website, by emailing or phoning the Department of Strategic Planning, and by visiting Council’s Hawthorn and Kew customer service centres (Appendix 6).

The workshops were attended by nine and 11 people respectively. However, due to work commitments, some left the afternoon workshop before it finished. Attendees consisted of local residents, traders, professionals and representatives from public authorities (such as the police) and public organisations (such as VicRoads).

The workshops commenced with general introductions and a summary of the consultation process which included details of the street displays and the Emerging Directions report. Participants were seated at small tables and were provided with an overview of the aims of the workshops. They were informed that details of the progress of the planning process and a report would be made available through the Council’s website and media reports.

The workshop format was very structured and tightly controlled by the consultant facilitator. The agenda (Appendix 7) was set by the consultants and there was little scope for participant-led agenda setting. Participants were then divided into two small groups for the purpose of discussing the key four areas of the Emerging Directions report: buildings, access, activities and spaces. Two topics were allocated to each table. Question sheets (Appendix 4) and maps were circulated in order to generate debate. The facilitator asked for a volunteer from each group to write notes on butchers’ paper and report back to the full group. When no participants volunteered for this task, a staff member filled the role. The workshops concluded with the facilitator providing a summary of each group’s discussion points.

The combined results from the Stage 3 public consultations (workshops, site displays, service provider information) were used to inform the Community Consultation Summary, Stage 2: Directions and Options, Kew Junction Structure Plan (Planisphere Consultants 2007). Further community consultation is taking place in 2007, further informing the final draft of the Kew Structure Plan.

Participant evaluation of the community workshops
To evaluate how participants perceived the workshops, they were asked to complete a questionnaire as part of the case study process. The
questionnaire was adapted from the framework developed by Rowe, Marsh and Frewer, (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Rowe, Marsh et al. 2004) and asked about the suitability of the workshop format as a forum in which all have an equal chance to contribute and be heard. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) used a set of key criteria to assess multiple dimensions of the participation process. Table 3 summarises the key criteria and questions used.

Participants were asked to respond to the questions by circling preferences on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’).

Of the 20 persons who attended, 11 returned a completed questionnaire, giving a response rate of 55%. The low response rate may have resulted because participants did not receive sufficient information on the evaluation procedure and therefore did not understand the value of that process.

Three women who attended the evening workshop filled out their forms; however, all the participants who by-passed the opportunity to evaluate the evening workshop were male, which might indicate that gender was a factor in the response to evaluation.

The afternoon workshop was attended by eight men and one woman, and the evening workshop by nine men and three women. The evaluation forms completed by afternoon workshop attendees show that two were aged 35-44, two were aged 45-54, one was aged 55-64, and two were over 65. In the evening workshop, four respondents were aged 35-44, two were aged 45-54, and one was over 65.

This makes it clear that workshop attendees were not representative of the broader community in terms of age and gender. While a youth roundtable had been held at an earlier stage of the consultation, no-one under 35 was present at the workshops.

Women were not adequately represented, which meant that issues specific to their experiences of and views on urban planning were not central in agenda setting. Only 27% of survey respondents were female. This is supported by observations made during the workshops by the Swinburne researcher, for example, only one woman attended the afternoon workshop, contributing little to the discussion. Three women attended the evening workshop. One was the traders’ representative; another was politically astute and demonstrated detailed knowledge of planning issues, which suggested that she might be a local activist or at least a very engaged stakeholder. All three took part in the discussion.
Table 3: Criteria and questions for participant evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>The participation exercise should be held at a time and in a location that makes it easy for participants to attend.</td>
<td>The location of the workshop was convenient for me (e.g. public transport available, disability access, safety, parking, etc.). The timing of the workshop made it easy for me to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief.</td>
<td>Information at the workshop was presented in a clear and understandable way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task definition</strong></td>
<td>The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.</td>
<td>I am clear about my role in the consultation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured decision making</strong></td>
<td>The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.</td>
<td>The recommendations that came out of the workshop reflected the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity to contribute</strong></td>
<td>Participants should have the opportunity to express their views and concerns and all participants should be given a fair hearing during the consultation process.</td>
<td>At the workshop there was enough time for participants to have their say. At the workshop I was given enough opportunity to make a contribution and voice my concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representativeness</strong></td>
<td>The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.</td>
<td>I think everyone affected by the issue consulted upon has a fair opportunity to participate in the consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way.</td>
<td>I thought the workshop was well facilitated. The workshop was run in an unbiased way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence</strong></td>
<td>The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.</td>
<td>I think council will listen to community views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.</td>
<td>I am clear about the purpose of the workshop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on information provided during introductions at the beginning of the workshops, participants consisted of the articulate – lawyers, traders, politically motivated residents – and those with a conscious vested interest in the outcome of turning Kew Junction into a major activity centre.

Analysis of the questionnaire shows that, overall, participants were satisfied with how they were consulted, although they had some reservations about the ability of everyone present to contribute equally and successfully to the process.

Participants in both workshops indicated that they were satisfied with
the consultation. Their responses conveyed above-average approval for purpose of the workshops, clarity about participants’ roles, presentation of material, convenience of location and timing. Issues of sufficient time, conducting the workshops in an unbiased way and confidence in Council listening to community views ranked lower on the scale of response.

Consultant and staff perceptions of the community workshops
Council staff from the Department of Strategic Planning, and the external consultants, saw workshops as a successful means of eliciting a community response to the development of Kew Junction as a major activity centre. Planning staff thought that their structure allowed for a channelling of views:

Participants felt included … butchers’ paper and reporting back to the group is an inclusive process … splitting into workshops could allow people to express their points … feedback forms for follow-up enable further input.

Consultants thought that the participants were ‘quite representative’ of the community, though there was acknowledgment that not everything had been done to facilitate access by more marginalised community members.

While completed evaluation forms enable Boroondara Council, the consultants and Swinburne researchers to gauge an idea of the success of the workshops, they reveal nothing about the responses to urban planning from socially disadvantaged and/or time-poor members of the local community who did not participate.

Discussion of the Stage 3 consultation process
Community engagement in Stage 3 of the Kew Structure plan was facilitated using a traditional approach consisting of community workshops, site displays and stakeholder feedback. It was successful in involving some sections of the community, but outreach could have been broadened both in terms of the number participating as well as in terms of representativeness.

Recent literature and practice suggests numerous techniques suited to educating a broad cross-section of the community about planning issues and encourages a more informal exchange between the community, local government and external consultants (Albrechts 2002). This does not mean that publicly advertised workshops are unsuitable as a means of consultation; however, in the interests of broadening representativeness, a number of supplementary methods could have been added. For example, certain sections of the community may be more likely to participate if they are consulted one-on-one or in an environment that is familiar to them (Albrechts 2002).

Charettes are another method of consulting communities in a personal and effective way. The underlying idea is to engage communities over a concentrated timeframe, usually no less than two consecutive days, using techniques that involve collaboration, intense reflection and generation of ideas. Generally, experts from
multidisciplinary backgrounds facilitate charettes and refine participants’ contributions to produce a feasible plan for consideration. While charettes are a relatively new phenomenon in Australia, they have been embraced at some level, for example, the City of Darebin. Internationally, they are proving a popular means of consulting communities in regard to urban design. The history, purpose and effectiveness of charettes have been documented by organisations with experience in using this form of community consultation, such as the National Charette Institute, <http://www.charretteinstitute.org/charrette.html>, the National Parks Service of Philadelphia, <http://www.nps.gov/phso/rtcatoolbox/gatherings_charrettes.htm> and the University of Louisville’s Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods program, <http://louisville.edu/org/sun/planning/char.html>.

Workshop format
The way that consultation workshops are conducted influences the quality of the outcomes and whether participants feel their contribution is valued. Designing community workshops to generate discussion and to ensure that attendees have sufficient opportunity to participate in group activities is fundamental to their success. For example, the workshops for the third stage of the Kew Junction structure plan were very specific in terms of the content that the consultants aimed to cover, to the exclusion of other issues which community members wished to raise. Topics were chosen from the Emerging Directions report which focuses on buildings, access, activities and spaces, and the workshop questions were based around these issues. The rationale for this was that discussion topics had emerged from issues raised in prior stages of the consultation and that Stage 3 workshops simply added another layer to the process. The State Government’s vision for major activity centres, as outlined in Melbourne 2030, also affected which questions needed to be asked.

In pre-setting particular questions for debate, the consultants placed parameters around the scope of workshop discussion. A well structured workshop format that sticks to certain time lines and ensures that all participants have the opportunity to have a say is desirable. However, a degree of flexibility to incorporate unanticipated contributions is also beneficial. Academic (Sarkissian, Perlgut et al. 1986) and Council (Walsh, Sarkissian et al. 2001) sources provide a range of innovative techniques on how workshops can be designed to accommodate diverse participants.

Access
The location of public consultations is a significant factor in their success and significantly impacts on whether certain community groups are included or deterred from attending. Council sought to undertake consultations in available local venues within Kew, rather than in civic facilities at Camberwell. However, the type of venue selected, including who and what it represents, requires further consideration by Council. While the venues chosen for the Kew workshops – the QPO and Jubilee Hall, Holy...
Trinity Church – may have suited many people in terms of location, familiarity and access, this would not necessarily be the case for others. The QPO, for example, is a bistro/restaurant with a front entrance that is accessible from the street only by a flight of stairs. A driveway ramp at the rear entrance is not fully compliant with the accessibility standards of Council (due to its historical standing, the building was granted special exemption by the Victorian Government’s Building Appeals Board). Patrons with disabilities can ring a bell at the rear entrance and staff will assist with entry. This set-up makes the venue hard to access by people with disabilities, elderly people and parents with prams.

The alternative access entrance for the QPO location was not publicised by Council to members of the local community. Attention to promotion of alternative access appears to have been lost in Council’s process of issuing invitations to attend the workshops. The public was instructed to register attendance by phoning the Department of Strategic Planning prior to attending. Upon registering, people were provided with the venue details.

The other venue, a church hall at the the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, is a spectacular bluestone building of Norman architecture, built in 1863. However, this venue may intimidate some community members who are socially dislocated or unaccustomed to this setting or may prevent persons of a different religious background from attending. In future, Council might make use of Council-owned facilities to run community workshops. For example, existing venues such as neighbourhood houses, sporting facilities, and health and welfare centres would be more neutral and accessible places.

Representativeness
The obvious lack of women’s presence in urban planning consultation rendered the workshops unrepresentative of the local community. The gender issues addressed above require further consideration if a more representative sample of the population is to be consulted as part of Council’s commitment to consulting the community about policy decisions. Significantly, urban planning – as a profession and as an issue for the community – traditionally has been dominated by men (Beall 1996). This situation needs to be considered and accommodated from the outset of preparing for consultation processes relating to planning, and possibly in relation to other policy issues that require local feedback. The effect of planning on women cannot be adequately assessed without equal input from women to that of men.

Similarly, seeking out the views of people that Council can find hard to reach also needs to be seen in this context. Many community groups are unlikely to accept open invitations from Council and consultants to attend workshops and other public forums. These are the people who need to be actively sought out, provided with tailor-made methodology and consulted within familiar environments (Albrechts 2002). This methodology would require consultants to step into the surroundings of different groups
within the local community, rather than place the onus on hard to reach community members to step out of their customary quarters.

Inclusion of these community members in the structure planning process is especially important as many of them greatly benefit if their requirements are taken into consideration during urban planning.

**Discussion**

Boroondara Council’s consultation with the local community in the area of Kew Junction for Stage 3 of the Kew Structure Plan project has been largely a considered and transparent process. The consultations undertaken to date provide a strong foundation for the completion of the remaining stages leading into the final report. Moreover, the preparation for and implementation of consultation for Stage 3 contribute to the development of some useful methods for tapping into community opinion and help to establish a culture of consultation within Council. Efforts have been made by Council and consultants to provide regular feedback to the community on views and processes relating to the formation of a structure plan.

As stipulated in *Melbourne 2030*, structure planning should include community and stakeholder engagement at each step of formulation. To some extent this was achieved by Boroondara Council. There was a clearly established consultative process that was advertised quite broadly through the local press, community facilities and the direct approach of people already on Council’s files. Council made a concerted effort to circulate mail-outs to residents and traders and to assemble a contact list of stakeholders that included local organisations, public authorities, interested people and prior attendees of community consultations.

Stage 3 of the Kew Junction planning consultation avoided the situation of stacking of meetings by residents’ groups. However, the workshops were top heavy with traders, white-collar workers and activists. There was not a clear process for determining what constitutes ‘the community’ and how to define ‘the hard to reach’. Council succeeded only in drawing in the ‘usual suspects’ who are inclined to accept invitations to partake in public consultation. A lack of representation from groups that are less visible or dominant and less predisposed to engage in public dialogue through formal workshops has been a recurring problem in Council’s community consultations.

Individuals and groups within the community that are not proactive in becoming involved in consultative processes were not actively sought out or accommodated by Council in the consultations for the *Emerging Directions* report. The issue of whether a service provider hub at Kew Junction would meet the needs of residents across the community, particularly the hard to reach, generated extensive debate within Council, indicating awareness of whether planning measures relating to service delivery were appropriate for Kew residents.

Implementation of such an approach as part of the consultancies around the Kew Structure Plan would have
provided a more balanced view of the physical, social and economic development of Kew Junction for the next 10 to 15 years.
Findings

Involving the community in decision making and planning on long-term future oriented issues is a difficult undertaking for most councils. The need for councils to reach out proactively to the community emerges in the findings from all of the case studies conducted for the greater Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach project.7 There is no one perfect model of community engagement and it is necessary to continually improve and finetune processes used to reach out to the wider community. The Camberwell and Kew structure planning consultations are proof of this. A number of steps can be taken to assist Council to more easily navigate this difficult terrain.

Improving representativeness

The representativeness of the consultation is important because it provides the democratic foundation for the legitimacy of the process as well as ensuring that Council has the best possible information about the issue under consideration, thereby enabling it to make informed decisions. Representativeness requires a cross-section of the community to be involved that reflects the demographic and socio-economic make-up of the wider municipality. To implement such a whole of community approach to consultation, Council must actively seek to involve even those community members who are not usually inclined to participate. Broadening consultation in this way has the added benefit of mitigating the effects of vocal interest groups.

Council’s experiences in approaching community consultation through a Community Reference Committee, as was the case in Camberwell, and community workshops, as organised in Kew, raise important issues regarding representation. While a Community Reference Committee has the advantage of achieving continuous engagement with issues, it runs the risk of being dominated by those who are politically and strategically organised and therefore able to dominate agenda setting. The different approach adopted in Kew which involved street displays, workshops and consultants was a means of overcoming the risk of a dominant interest group shaping structure planning. However, there were limitations in ensuring that a cross-section of the community was consulted. A strategy that combined multiple approaches with active outreach could have been more successful in consulting a range of community members on the development of a major activity centre.

Future criteria for selecting consultants would need, therefore, to expect them to engage members of the community who are reached through non-traditional means.

To implement a whole of community approach to consultation, Council must identify those members of the community that it can find hard to

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7 For details on further case studies and summary reports, refer to http://www.sisr.net/cag/projects/community.htm.
reach. It is then up to Council to discover and implement strategies that will enable them to participate in the consultative process.

Existing research on planning has illuminated the issue of how dominant members of communities and evolved interest groups have ready access to consultative processes while other members of the same community who are affected by urban restructuring, but unaware of their relationship to urban design and without political skills, have no voice. The solution to this inequity is education of the whole community in urban planning and participatory rights, as well as strategies for reaching out to those who otherwise would be excluded from contributing to public debate (Healey 1997; Albrechts 2003).

A Council consultancy framework plan for more representative inclusion of community segments could be developed from the outset of, and throughout, consultative processes. This would facilitate a process of including all sections of the community into the design of methodology for consultation. A community-driven approach would give groups that are traditionally hard to locate an opportunity to participate in articulating views that inform policy formulation.

**Identifying and contacting hard to reach groups**

Council’s Community Planning Department’s Business Plan, which sets out four year actions 2006-2010, recognises that community consultation needs to target marginalised people. It highlights the need to: support Council to adopt a broader range of community consultation techniques which are inclusive of marginalised groups and which adequately inform our policy, planning and service delivery functions (City of Boroondara 2006: 16).

Council’s position on community consultation requires an explicit methodology to ensure that hard to reach groups are included in future consultations.

The first step to broadening representativeness is to identify which sections of the community Council can find difficult to contact.

Demographic and attitudinal profiling can assist Council to find which have traditionally been absent from or underrepresented in their consultation processes.

Consultation processes have to be matched with understanding of community attitude and knowledge about how the local community operates if Council is to successfully reach out to a range of people.

Methods of public participation that take the initiative in identifying and locating people whom Council consider to be hard to reach require training and development of expertise in consulting across the whole of local community.

One means by which Boroondara Council might target groups of people from whom they have not had a response in relation to consultancy workshops is to develop strategies for accessing the views of young people, students, parents who frequent
maternal health centres, counselling services such as Kew Cam Care, and local rooming houses.

Council could consider more innovative ways of approaching individuals and groups who do not usually volunteer to contribute to public consultancies. Flyers promoting community consultation could be sent to school principals, sports clubs such as Oz Kick and neighbourhood houses for distribution. These are groups and organisations to which Council has relatively easy access; therefore a rich resource of links into the community already exists (pers. comm., Council officer, 08/12/06). The use of key contacts and community leaders can also be a successful way of approaching certain community groups and building trust.

Allowing people to familiarise themselves with key issues and embrace the public consultancy process requires nurturing over a period of time:

*We don’t ever give the community enough time to get to know the issues before we ask them to comment or become involved. They need time to be ‘warmed up’, but we try to push things through too quickly* (Council officer).

Active promotion of consultation outcomes to the wider community also could play a part in fostering receptiveness to Council’s shift toward a more consultative approach to policy formulation. Regular media releases and circulation of positive outcomes of public consultation could contribute to how the community views how Council and community can work together in shaping policy decisions (pers. comm., Council officer, 06/10/06).

Technology can be another way of involving the community. The City of Boroondara contains the second highest number of residents connected to the web in Melbourne (second to the City of Melbourne), presenting an ideal opportunity to establish a process of online consultancy. Developing this as a means of complementing traditional forms of community consultation is underway through the establishment of ‘Boroondara Community Voice’, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/community/information/commvoice>.

Boroondara Council’s community research confirms that online consultancy could provide an effective means of tapping into the views of residents who are unable to attend conventional public forums. When Council surveyed the community for a 2005-06 Community Research Program, it found that while only 2% of the sample acquires information about Council and local issues by means of email, 13% would prefer this method of communication in the future (City of Boroondara, Community Planning Department, 2005-2006). Since 22 Feb. 2006, 45 emails have been sent to Council, via the Council website, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/planning/planning_projects_and_strategies/kewjunction>, enquiring about or commenting on the Kew Structure Plan project. Most were requests to be added to the project mailing list in order to receive updates on the process. Some include comments about the project and the services and facilities in Kew (pers. comm., Council officer, 08/05/07).
Consulting young people

Consulting children and young people about their perceptions of their neighbourhood is another means of achieving a whole-of-community approach to urban planning. Council’s project brief to the consultants to conduct the structure plan process identified young people as a distinct target group, given the large number of schools in the Kew area. This was, however, addressed in only a tokenistic way by means of a roundtable discussion to which young people were invited in the early stage of the consultation process. Adequate consultation of young people requires a greater effort than invitation to a formal consultancy, which is a measure adapted from a conventional methodology developed for adults. More interactive consultative processes with children and young people are likely to extract more relevant and inspired feedback. The wellbeing of the whole community requires input from children and young people who have specific social needs in their local environment and will be the next generation of adults to be affected by long-term policy decisions on urban planning. Conferring with children about their perceptions of their current and future relationship to their local community, urban space and resources requires implementation of a methodology that does not merely replicate that of adults. A children’s story-writing competition orchestrated by the Blue Mountains City Council in New South Wales, which required children to visualise they were adults in 2025 and write about how they pictured their home and city, is one example of how consultation methods that target age-specific groups can be achieved (Cunningham, Jones et al. 2003).

Likewise, young people need to be accommodated in public consultancies in ways that recognise diversity in experience and place-making in public and private realms. Often young people are constructed as problematic in how they use their leisure time within their local environment, and therefore are not included in community consultancies pertaining to urban planning. Consultancies with young people on how they view and use their local area often are perfunctory and further alienate them from participatory processes. The Australian Growing Up in Cities project, based on a UNESCO program devised in the 1970s, provides an example of how young people can be actively and respectfully included in community consultation through a process of participatory research and peer-led investigation. Methodology that brings researchers and planners into young people’s space and activities, rather than expecting them to participate in public forums, enables young people to guide consultation processes (Malone 1999). There is, therefore, apt methodology available to Boroondara Council for development of productive and sensitive consultation of young people.

Evaluating the consultation process

Building formal evaluation into every consultation strategy is an important means of receiving direct feedback from the local community about the
success of the consultation and presents an opportunity for Council to learn from mistakes made or opportunities missed. However, effective evaluation of each consultation process needs to take into account not only the feedback from workshop attendees on their experiences of participating in formal consultation. It also requires consideration of which groups Council might have overlooked in conducting public consultations. In order to capture the views of these groups, Council could draw more substantially on social research relating to diversity in socio-economic circumstances of the local community.

Internal communication

While community participation in urban planning currently receives broad respect and acceptance by Boroondara Council staff, the consultative process has been hampered by a lack of communication and co-ordination between staff from different departments and consultants. Council staff’s initial lack of input into the early stage of review of reports on Kew Junction did not augur well for an interdepartmental approach to strategic planning policy. This situation was partly redressed by the creation of a distinct process for acquiring staff feedback.

Perhaps the biggest problem we have had with all of this is that there wasn’t enough involvement of other Council managers and staff – so we have put this in as a separate stage in our processes now. Getting internal agreement is crucial to this, and we probably didn’t realise how long it takes sometimes to get that (Council officer, 06/10/06).

Council’s Community Planning Department Business Plan 2006/2007 addresses the issue of both internal and external collaboration, providing an inroad to greater communication and partnership between Council departments. In line with a commitment to continuous improvement it recommends:

Other Areas of Council:

What opportunities exist for collaboration? What other areas of Council have similar processes to us? How can we link with these areas? Why do we provide this service? Could the service be provided by someone else? What opportunities exist for external partnerships?

Extensive opportunities exist for collaboration with other departments. Good relationships have already been established with key departments such as Business Development, Strategic Planning, Economic Development and other departments in Community Development. Opportunities exist to develop and strengthen interdepartmental projects (City of Boroondara 2006b: 14).

Council processes and guidelines

A policy framework already exists for Boroondara to create an appropriate methodology for recognising and including the hard to reach in public consultations. Its Consultation Charter is clear on the underlying expectations:
• Ensure that the community is given an opportunity to comment on issues of importance
• Include people of all abilities

Ensuring that the practice of consultation meets Council’s commitments, as outlined in the Boroondara Consultation Charter and State Government policies relating to consultation and the development of activity centres, requires staff to accept and own consultative techniques. Improving communication and internal processes within and between departments at Boroondara Council are integral to achieving an organisational cultural shift to consolidate acceptance of and planning for community consultation.

However, in considering how to arrive at best practice, strategies for connecting Council staff across departments for the purpose of wide-ranging contribution into development of methodology for public consultation and policy design need to be revisited. While Council now has an integrated planning group, providing a forum for information sharing, the Kew Structure Plan process does not appear to have benefited from this assemblage of Council staff. Further to this, consideration needs to be given to how social planning across departments, as outlined in Council’s Business Plan, will be implemented and evaluated by the Strategic Planning Department (pers. comm., Council officer 08/12/06).

The difficulties that Boroondara Council experienced, and still needs to confront in trying to include and engage in dialogue staff across departments, is indicative of the problems councils often encounter in striving for organisational cultural change in the process of introducing new methods in policy development (see other case studies on the ‘Hard to Reach’ website). In reflecting on the constitutive elements of best practice, the effort and dexterity required to develop a collaborative approach within Council on projects with a public consultancy component stand out as prime issues warranting further deliberation.

**Staff training and organisational culture**

One means of creating a cultural shift within Council would be to extend the current framework for training staff in community consultation. Training staff across all departments in social research skills would enable a common understanding of the demographics and characteristics of the local community to be understood and factored into the creation of methodology for public consultations. Potential for development of a close link between Council departments already exists, with urban planners keen to develop a relationship between strategic planning and social research. There is, therefore, opportunity for more collaborative planning within Boroondara Council for future community consultations.
Timelines and resourcing

Establishing realistic timelines that respect how long communities need to understand complex issues, such as development of a structure plan, is another significant issue Council could address. Furthermore, the investment of time and resources required to consult broadly within the City of Boroondara requires consideration. Reaching out to groups traditionally sidelined in public consultations is bound to take extra time, energy and knowledge. Boroondara’s Consultation Charter emphasises ‘appropriate timing’ as one of its commitments to the local community:

- Allow enough time for consultations, including sufficient notice of consultations
- Ensure that the community is given an opportunity to comment on issues of importance, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/council/consultations/charter>.

However, these statements have not greatly influenced practice to date. The initial timeline for the public consultation process on the whole Structure Plan was approximately six months; it now appears that the process will take closer to 18 months. Underestimating the time needed to complete Kew Structure Plan consultations provides instructive lessons for Council:

What we have learnt is about timelines – clearly stuff can’t be done in six months. We’re also using a new methodology; this is a big test for Boroondara as it’s something that hasn’t been done before. We’re using some new methods, additional steps (such as the need to consider management’s views from across the organisation), which all adds time to the process (Council officer 22/11/06).

In reviewing the issue of establishing appropriate timelines for community consultation, Council would need to reflect on how it might liaise with external consultants to ensure that there is a common approach to methodology. In order to create best practice around timelines and to ensure that Council fulfils its commitments to implement a whole-of-community approach to public consultation in line with the Boroondara Consultation Charter, Council would need to strike agreement with external consultants about the duration and scope of projects (pers. comm., Council officer, 22/11/06).

Devolving decision making

Allowing the community greater input into the consultation process and establishing ongoing relationships is another factor in generating trust between Council and the community. Good connections between Council and community members also serve to educate staff and the community and make it more likely the community members are willing to contribute to future consultations.

New methodologies that might be introduced to include hard to reach groups in community consultations could change the dynamics between external consultants and Council. If Council were to develop strategies for
consulting segments of the population that do not usually participate in public forums, would private consultants be equipped to conduct a socially sensitive dialogue with a wide cross-section of the community? This is a significant point to consider, given that typically planners have responded to social problems in urban Australia in terms of physical design rather than from the perspective of social wellbeing. Usually planners hand over issues of social responsibility to community workers rather than integrate social assessment into planning design (Ziller 2004). A new methodology for accessing groups perceived as hard to reach might involve on-site visits to community centres, building rapport with local communities over time, and understanding unique social situations of local residents, such as homelessness, mental health issues, unemployment and various forms of social disadvantage. This would raise issues of how private consultants might be briefed by Council and included in consideration of what constitutes best practice in conducting consultancies with members of the community who do not fit the mould of traditional consultancies.

Use of planners to conduct community consultation

A body of literature focusing on the practice of consultation around urban planning in Australia argues that engaging local communities in public discussion is more formality than reality: experts appear to be implementing inclusive practices but, in fact, consultancies remain stage-managed, top-down processes (Nelson, Babon et al. 2006; Lahiri-Dutt 2004).

There is an assumption by many Council officers that consultants in who are experts in topic areas are also experts in consultation and facilitation. This is not necessarily the case. Generally, planners do not have a background in social science disciplines or community work, and therefore are not well positioned to understand the demographic and social dynamics of local communities. Council officers should address this particular skill set when checking references and assessing potential consultants.

A solution to this problem would be for planners, community development workers and social researchers within Council to forge a closer professional relationship (Abrechts 2002), which might involve facilitating community consultations in conjunction with each other.

Summary

Boroondara Council’s approach to the formation of structure plans for major activity centres indicates a willingness to develop initiatives to include local communities in decision making about urban planning. Given that structure plans will shape the social, economic and environmental aspects of areas nominated by the State Government as major activity centres, community input is an essential element.

In moving away from the advisory Reference Committee model, to the use of street displays, community workshops and feedback forms,
Council has developed a means of encouraging the wider community to participate. To some extent, this methodology circumnavigates the problem of well-organised interest groups dominating community consultation processes.

However, in order to progress community consultation in ways that ensure a more inclusive and representative approach to seeking views from all stakeholders, Council needs to develop methods that employ outreach. Hidden individuals and groups within the Boroondara community who are unlikely to present at public events and formal venues need to be identified and accommodated in consultation processes. This requires: knowledge of the socio-economic profile of Boroondara; skills in engaging with hard to reach groups in familiar surroundings, in a timely manner, and using appropriate discourse and feedback measures; co-ordination and communication across all Council departments about who and how to consult in the community; and employing external consultants whose core business includes skills in facilitation of community consultation with a range of stakeholders.

While the demographic profile of Boroondara indicates that most residents are wealthy in comparison with other municipalities in Melbourne, pockets of poverty and experiences of social exclusion exist. A high number of residents are time-poor, which suggests that Council needs to keep developing measures such as online consultancy. Lack of attendance at community consultations by women and young people suggests a need to consider gender-specific and age-specific methods of targeting certain groups so that genuine representation of the community is achieved.

While the complexity of creating structure plans, and the overlay of State Government policy on urban planning, has complicated the process of community consultation, the case studies of Camberwell and Kew present the Boroondara Council with a wealth of lessons to consider that will benefit a range of other consultations. The greatest challenges are how to change the culture within Council so that community consultation becomes accepted practice, and how to create methodological tools for converting ‘hard to reach’ groups into ‘easy to reach’ citizens.
Recommendations

The findings and recommendations arising from this case study of the City of Boroondara Camberwell and Kew Structure Plans are consistent with the findings from the greater Community Consultation and the Hard to Reach research project\(^8\) and highlight the complexity of the processes and difficulties faced by councils in attempting to engage a representative sample of their constituencies.

Recommendations for progression of Boroondara Council’s review of community consultations include:

- Targeting of specific individuals and groups within the local area beyond the ‘usual suspects’ to ensure that a cross-section of the community is consulted.
- Design of a methodology that employs a clear strategy to target hard to reach groups rather than only the usual, articulate and self-motivated stakeholders.
- Consideration of what constitutes active and inclusive community consultation.
- Reflection on the practice of community consultation in relation to the Boroondara Consultation Charter, particularly in regard to the time required to ensure that members of the local community have acquired knowledge of key issues under review and to ensure that Council consults the community effectively.
- Commitment to an integrated approach within Council to community consultative measures, including greater communication across departments and co-ordination of departmental staff in the planning of and reflection on community consultation.
- Consideration of resources, in the form of staff time, available venues and money required to consult.
- Communication between and co-ordination of Council departmental staff, consultants and researchers and/or evaluators to be set out clearly from the outset of each consultation.
- Clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of consultants as regards community engagement and preferred processes for achieving this.
- The need to brief consultants on the processes and purpose of research on community engagement/consultation evaluation when undertaken.
- Development of a checklist for best practice and a criterion for

\(^8\) For details on further case studies and summary reports, refer to http://www.sisr.net/cag/projects/community.htm.
establishing how it can be evaluated.

- Consideration of appropriate and accessible venues for consultation in line with Council guidelines, such as the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2003-2006).

- Choosing clearly identifiable locations and arranging inviting presentations of Council's public displays, for example by using face painting for children or a community barbeque to attract the interest of passers by.
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Appendix 1

Participant evaluation of the consultation process
Participant evaluation of the consultation process

Boroondara Council invites your feedback as part of an evaluation of the consultation process. The evaluation is being undertaken by the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University.

Below are some statements about the consultation process.

Please circle your preferred response, from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

A score of 3 means ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) I am clear about the purpose of this workshop.</td>
<td>... 1 ......... 2 ............ 3 ............ 4 ........... 5 ....</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) I am clear about my role in the consultation process.</td>
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<td>C) Information at the workshop was presented in a clear and understandable way.</td>
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<td>D) At the workshop there was enough time for participants to have their say.</td>
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<td>E) At the workshop I was given enough opportunity to make a contribution and voice my concerns.</td>
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<td>F) I thought the workshop was well facilitated.</td>
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<td>G) I think everyone affected by the issue consulted upon has a fair opportunity to participate in the consultation.</td>
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<td>H) This workshop was run in an unbiased way.</td>
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<td>I) The recommendations that came out of this workshop reflected the discussion.</td>
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<td>J) I think Council will listen to community views.</td>
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<td>K) The location of the consultation was convenient for me (e.g. public transport available, disability access, safety, parking etc.).</td>
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<td>L) The timing of the consultation made it easy for me to attend.</td>
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FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW

As part of the project evaluation, researchers from Swinburne University may want to contact you to ask some follow up questions, either in person or on the phone. If you are willing to answer some follow up questions, please provide your contact details below. All responses will be confidential.

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<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<td>Address:</td>
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<td>Email:</td>
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<td>Phone:</td>
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M) How did you hear about this consultation?
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................................................................................................................................................

N) I know of others who would have liked to attend the consultation but weren’t able to for the following reasons…
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O) Is there anything else you would like to say about the consultation?
........................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

P) I am ☐ male ☐ female

Q) My age group is
☐ under 18
☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ over 65

R) I mainly work
☐ Full time
☐ Part time / casual
☐ Unemployed
☐ Retired
☐ Student
☐ Full time parent

S) Do you speak a language other than English at home? If yes, please specify the MAIN language you speak at home.
........................................................................................................................................................

T) What is your postcode? .................................................................

Thank you !!!!
Appendix 2

Community Update No. 2
As you may be aware, Council has commenced preparation of the Kew Junction Structure Plan. This project presents an exciting opportunity to get involved in shaping the future of Kew Junction for the next 10 to 15 years.

In response to community feedback and analysis on the existing conditions of Kew Junction, Council has identified possible ways to make Kew Junction a safer and more attractive place to visit, work and live – now and in the future. These ideas are detailed in an Emerging Directions Report which is structured around four themes: access, spaces, buildings and activities. Council is seeking to test the ideas contained within the Report and invites you to get involved and provide feedback during the consultation period – see below for further details.

The Emerging Directions Report including a feedback form is available on Council’s website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au. A summary of some of the issues contained in the Report is overleaf.

**HOW YOU CAN HAVE YOUR SAY**

The Emerging Directions Report including a feedback form is available on Council’s website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au.

**Street displays**

The main ideas and progress on the project will be on display at staffed sessions at the Junction on the following dates:

- **Thursday 9 November**, 9am–12pm
- **Saturday 11 November**, 10am–1pm

The display will be located in the pedestrian walkway between the rear of the High Street shops and the Safeway car park (between Walpole & Brougham Streets).

**Community Workshops**

Community workshop sessions will be held to discuss the key emerging directions for Kew Junction. To find out more about these sessions please call Christine Renkin or Craig Birch of Council’s Strategic Planning Team on 9278 4534.

**Further information**

If you would like further information on the Kew Junction Structure Plan, have any questions about the project or would like to join a mailing list for regular updates, visit Council’s website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au or call 9278 4534.

Copies of the Emerging Directions Report including feedback forms will be available at the Kew Library, and Council’s Hawthorn and Kew Customer Service Centres.

Please ensure your feedback reaches us by Friday 8 December, 2006
Below are some of the ideas contained within the *Emerging Directions Report* for your consideration. For a full copy of the Emerging Directions Report including a feedback form please visit Council’s website at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au.

**Activities**
- Maintain the role of Kew Junction as a local shopping centre.
- Focus retail activity in the heart of the centre, at the western end of High Street and Cotham Road. Provide for additional retail floor space and expansion of supermarket floor space in this area.
- Consider the long-term viability of the light industrial area around Denmark Street to the south of the Junction.
- Facilitate the development of a ‘health and well-being centre’ within the heart of Kew Junction. This could include family and social support services, space for group activities, and a community health service.
- Provide new housing in and around Kew Junction that accommodates different household types.
- Key development sites identified.

**Access**
- Manage the road network to enhance local access and circulation, while recognising the function of the arterial roads.
- Enhance pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport networks and facilities.
- Improve the appearance and efficiency of car parks, and provide real-time signage on the availability of parking spaces.
- Promote walking as the principle means of circulation, particularly for the streets within or connecting to the main shopping strip and the library.
- Support the Tram 109 central platform option for High Street and facilitate the provision of necessary infrastructure.
- Adopt lower speed limits in the heart of the centre, and around schools and community facilities.
- Create a pedestrian friendly environment in main streets and laneways to create a vibrant and active street scene.
- Ensure buildings contribute positively to the pedestrian environment by providing active ground level frontages and weather protection.
- Car parks north of High Street could accommodate plaza spaces to take advantage of the northern sunlight, with shops opening at the rear to create a more active open space.

**Buildings**
- Maintain the character of the retail core, particularly the narrow shopfronts and heritage facades.
- Encourage higher built form within the centre at appropriate locations.
- Ensure development respects the amenity of adjoining residential areas.
- Improve the quality and appearance of buildings at the five-ways junction.
- Preserve significant historic buildings, and ensure the re-use and refurbishment of these valuable heritage assets.
- Ensure new commercial or mixed use buildings are well articulated and where appropriate, provide attractive landscaped setbacks.
- Encourage the use of shop-top spaces for new offices or housing, including additional levels above single-storey shops.
- Develop a signage strategy for Kew Junction to enhance the local identity of the centre and provide additional community information.

**Spaces**
Appendix 3

Street display
Appendix 4

Planning Our Place: Kew Junction feedback sheet
Planning Our Place: Kew Junction

Feedback Sheet

Name

Address

Phone

email

Please tell us what you think about the emerging ideas for Kew Junction.

1. Do you think the guiding principles provide a good sense of direction for the future of Kew Junction? Are there any principles you would change?

2. Would you like to see more supermarket space or speciality shops within Kew Junction and, if so, should they be located in the ‘retail core’ area?

3. What kinds of community and health services would you like to be able to use when you visit the Junction? Where do you think these should be located?

4. What do you think would improve the role of the library in the future and make it a real focus for people in the local area and those who visit the Junction?

5. What parts of the Junction could to be improved with some outdoor space, shade or seating to provide places for people to meet and relax?

6. How do you think the local parks and open spaces could be improved or better used?
7. What do you think of the idea of making better use of the land currently occupied by the car parks close to High Street, by introducing well designed buildings with shops, offices or houses (assuming that all the car parking spaces would be replaced in the new development)?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

8. What do you think of the ideas to introduce more housing into the centre to cater for the needs of different households?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

9. Do you like the idea of introducing well designed new buildings around the five ways junction (that are designed to protect existing heritage buildings, open spaces and amenity) to act as local landmarks and support more activity within the heart of the centre?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

10. Do you agree with the aim of reducing the number of cars in the centre? If so, how do you think people could be encouraged to walk, cycle or take public transport?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

11. Any other comments or ideas?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Attach additional comments overleaf.

To let us know your views and/or make additional comments please do one of the following:

- Use this feedback sheet and the reply paid envelope
- email us at kewjunction@boroondara.vic.gov.au,
- fax comments to 9278 4802
- write to us at Kew Junction Structure Plan, City of Boroondara, Private Bag 1, Camberwell 3124
Appendix 5

Kew Junction workshop invitation
Dear Sir/Madam,

PLANNING OUR PLACE: KEW JUNCTION STRUCTURE PLAN – HAVE YOUR SAY

As you may be aware, the City of Boroondara has commenced preparation of a Structure Plan for Kew Junction. A Structure Plan is a planning tool that will guide future land use and development of Kew Junction for a 10 to 15 year timeframe.

As a result of your initial feedback on the project, further community input and technical investigations of the existing conditions at Kew Junction, an Emerging Directions Report has been prepared. The Report is structured around four themes: access, spaces, buildings and activities. Council is seeking to test the ideas contained within the Report in a series of workshops in order to inform the development of a draft Structure Plan for the Junction.

You are encouraged to review the Emerging Directions Report and to participate in theme based discussion at one of the workshops:

**Workshop 1**  
Tuesday 28 November, 12pm – 2pm  
Q.P.O Bar & Bistro, 186 High Street, Kew

**Workshop 2**  
Wednesday 29 November, 7pm – 9pm  
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, cnr. High and Pakington St, Kew

Please register to participate in a workshop by contacting Christine Renkin or Craig Birch of Council’s Strategic Planning Team on 9278 4534. Details about the Kew Junction Structure Plan project are also available on Council’s website located at www.boroondara.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Ian Gibb  
Acting Manager Strategic Planning
Appendix 6

Kew Junction street displays and community workshops flyer
Kew Junction Structure Plan
Street Displays and Community Workshops

The City of Boroondara’s Structure Plan for Kew Junction will guide land use, building, provision of services and open space over the next 10 to 15 years.

Council is seeking your views on a Directions Report for Kew Junction – a report detailing the emerging directions of activities, buildings, spaces and access – which will contribute to the Structure Plan.

Street Displays

Learn more about the project and provide feedback by visiting the staffed street displays in the walkway between the rear of the High Street shops and the Safeway car park.

Street Display 1  Thursday 9 November, 2006
10am – 2pm

Street Display 2  Saturday 11 November, 2006
9am – 12pm

Community Workshops

For a more detailed discussion, you can also register to participate in one of the community workshops at

Workshop 1   Tuesday 28 November, 2006   QPO Bar & Bistro, corner High Street and Cotham Road, Kew.
          Wednesday 29 November, 2006   Jubilee Hall, Holy Trinity Anglican Church cnr High & Pakington Sts, Kew

To register to attend a workshop, please contact Council’s Strategic Planning Department on 9278 4534.

Further information on the project can be found at:
- A display & by reading the report at Kew Library;
- Council’s website: www.boroondara.vic.gov.au;
- By emailing: kewjunction@boroondara.vic.gov.au;
- By phoning Strategic Planning on 9278 4534; or
- By visiting Council’s Hawthorn and Kew Customer Service Centres.

Please ensure your feedback reaches us by Friday 8 December, 2006
Appendix 7

Emerging Directions Community Workshop Agenda
Kew Junction: Planning Our Place

Emerging Directions Community Workshop, November 2006

Questions for focus group activity

Activities

1. Do you think more supermarket space or speciality shops are required? If so, what is the preferred location for these?
2. What do you think of providing more housing in the centre, such as the use of shop top spaces or housing near the centre for the elderly or young singles?
3. Would you like to see redevelopment of the light industrial areas to the south of the junction or are these services valuable to the function of the centre?
4. Do you like the idea of the new 'health and well-being centre' in Kew Junction? If so, where do you think this could best be located?
5. What do you think of the proposed expansion to the role of the library to become a learning and information centre?
6. What types of entertainment or after hours activity would you like to see in the centre?
7. What do you think of the ideas for key sites in the centre, listed on the map?

Buildings

1. Would you like to see improvements to the car parks south of High Street through redevelopment?
2. Do you like the idea of focussing well designed taller buildings around the five ways junction to act as local landmarks and introduce more street activity to the area?
3. How can new buildings be designed to respect the character of the centre?
4. Do you agree with making better use of available space by encouraging upper levels to single storey buildings in the centre?
5. How could land at the rear of shops be better used?

Access and Movement

1. How can traffic and parking be better managed in the centre?
2. How can people be encouraged to walk or cycle to or around the centre?
3. What are the most important pedestrian routes in the centre and how can they be improved?
4. What do you think about the new pedestrian crossing point and central tram stop in High Street?
Spaces

1. How do you think the local parks and open spaces could be improved or better used?

2. Would you like to see a new plaza within the heart of the junction? If so, where do you think would be a good location?

3. Would you like to see more public seating or amenities? If so, where should they be located?

4. What do you think of the suggested improvements to open spaces listed on the map?