

Analysis of the Marrickville Festival survey

Introduction

This report analyses the responses of 100 participants in a handwritten survey conducted at Marrickville Festival on 21 October 2018 by volunteers of the residents' action group, Save Marrickville.

Save Marrickville had a corner stall in the Inner West Council marquee, and invited passers-by to participate in the survey. The questions were:

1. What do you love about Marrickville that you would like to preserve for the future?
2. What are you not so keen about in Marrickville that you would like to see changed?
3. Are there any examples of new developments that you like in Marrickville?
4. Are there examples of new developments that you don't like?
5. Anything else?

The random group of respondents who all live in Marrickville were from all walks of life and represented most age groups (but not many teenagers).

Survey results were transcribed and coded using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke 2012) to systematically identify patterns across the data. Common themes were identified by cross referencing the data with its overall importance in relation to the research questions, and issues identified by the Save Marrickville group.

Qualitative analysis identified likes, desires, fears, dislikes and other feedback as important themes. These are discussed in subthemes - community, character, development and affordability.

Community

The people of Marrickville feel a strong connection to their community fostering an interesting, creative vibe and energetic street life. Marrickvillians are often described as friendly people who are good neighbours, and the community is portrayed as multicultural. It is depicted as one where residents are happy to help each other out and they often attend large community events.

There is definitely a desire for more community consultation by the council, as well as more planning control. Developers are seen to be breaching environmental protections and overshadowing standards, and the council was accused by at least one respondent of 'selling out' the suburb.

One fear voiced about the future of Marrickville is the potential loss of community and culture from an increase in population.

**"Old houses, not so high rise.
We like having a garden!
It's multicultural, there's lots of
friendly people in our street.
Like the shops, community and
the library."**

Quote from Save Marrickville festival survey 2018

Culture

'Diversity' is the word that was most used to describe what respondents like about the people, businesses and buildings in this area. 'Village-like', 'quirky', 'queer-friendly' and 'artistic' were also mentioned.

The heritage and history of the area, including the architecture, is very important to the participants, as are the independent shopping strips and local businesses. Creative industries and the mix of residential and industrial use are considered good for the community.

Restaurants, live venues, pubs, small bars, breweries and community hubs like the Addison Road centre, the skateparks, bike tracks, library and churches are all highly valued. The proximity of Marrickville to the city is seen as a plus.

The respondents said they wanted 'better' shops, as well as more venues, bars and restaurants. They also want some pedestrian areas around the retail spaces and more provision for active transport, so there are less cars on the roads. Older respondents saw a need for more parking and would like broken footpaths repaired so that it is easier for them to walk around.

Residents have come to dread the traffic pressure, particularly in relation to with any new developments on Carrington Road. At present, respondents say that the streets are clogged with traffic and remain a continuing problem. A couple of people thought that the public transport system was good, with only one calling for any improvements.

Respondents love the amount of green space in Marrickville. They enjoy the Cooks River parklands, the golf course, parks with dog areas, as well as having their own gardens. They also want more parks for children, a public swimming pool and a clean-up of the Cooks River.

While a respondent acknowledged that that the council had been planting more trees, they remain anxious because they think there's not nearly enough green space.



Development

Most participants approve of low rise (3-5 storey) development that respects heritage and mixes old with new architecture. Examples of good development mentioned are: the three storey shop tops and the Wave on Illawarra Road, Arlington Flour Mills, the original façade on the building opposite the IGA at Dulwich Hill (but not the advertising), cafes and breweries in industrial areas, mixed housing in Frampton Street, apartments next to St Brigid's school and near the fire station, small blocks on Addison Road, town houses in Garners Avenue and the new library.

Affordability and environmental sustainability are important to residents who request that new developments must incorporate these principles in the design, use and waste management systems. Council's collection of hard waste was noted as an excellent initiative.

Most (99 out of 100) Marrickvillians in this survey are opposed to high rise development, as has been proposed for Carrington Road. The respondents are opposed to the destruction of heritage buildings to make way for 'badly designed' apartment blocks with 'investment' units, and 'spot' rezoning. While most agree that development is inevitable, developers are asked to be considerate of local culture and the increased noise levels endured by residents.

Overdevelopment of the area is a cause of alarm to the respondents. They are worried about the pace of development, overpopulation, increase in crime, fire hazards and losing the quiet streets of older houses. They also think that the new apartments aren't a good fit for families.

Bad development examples that were highlighted by at least 50% of respondents include Westconnex, the Metroline, the Revolution apartments, the dominance of the new library site, the Quarry on Illawarra Road and the apartments around Dulwich Hill station. Wolli Creek and the plans for 110 Addison Rd, Victoria Rd precinct and Edinburgh Road were also cited.

The fear of a lack of infrastructure to support a growing population concerns the respondents, especially a lack of schools and green space.



"Every time one residence is knocked down, twelve go up in its place."

Quote from Save Marrickville festival survey 2018

Affordability

One respondent remarked that 'Marrickville used to be affordable', and many others are keen to see low income housing included in any new development. The positive effect of the availability of affordable housing on the multicultural nature of the suburb deserves more research.



"Dulwich Hill end of Marrickville Rd & Canterbury Rd - the units are tastefully done except for the advertising."

Quote from Save Marrickville festival survey 2018

Conclusion

- Respondents want to preserve the community, character and heritage of Marrickville.
- Residents are apprehensive about overdevelopment, lack of green space and poor building design in the area.
- They want to see good quality low rise (3-5 storey) development in the area that respects heritage, mixes old with new architecture and includes provisions for enough infrastructure. They don't want high rise buildings in Marrickville.
- Participants want a level of low income housing to be available in the area.

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Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2012, 'Thematic analysis', *APA handbook of research methods in psychology*, vol.2, American Psychological Association, pp. 57-71.

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