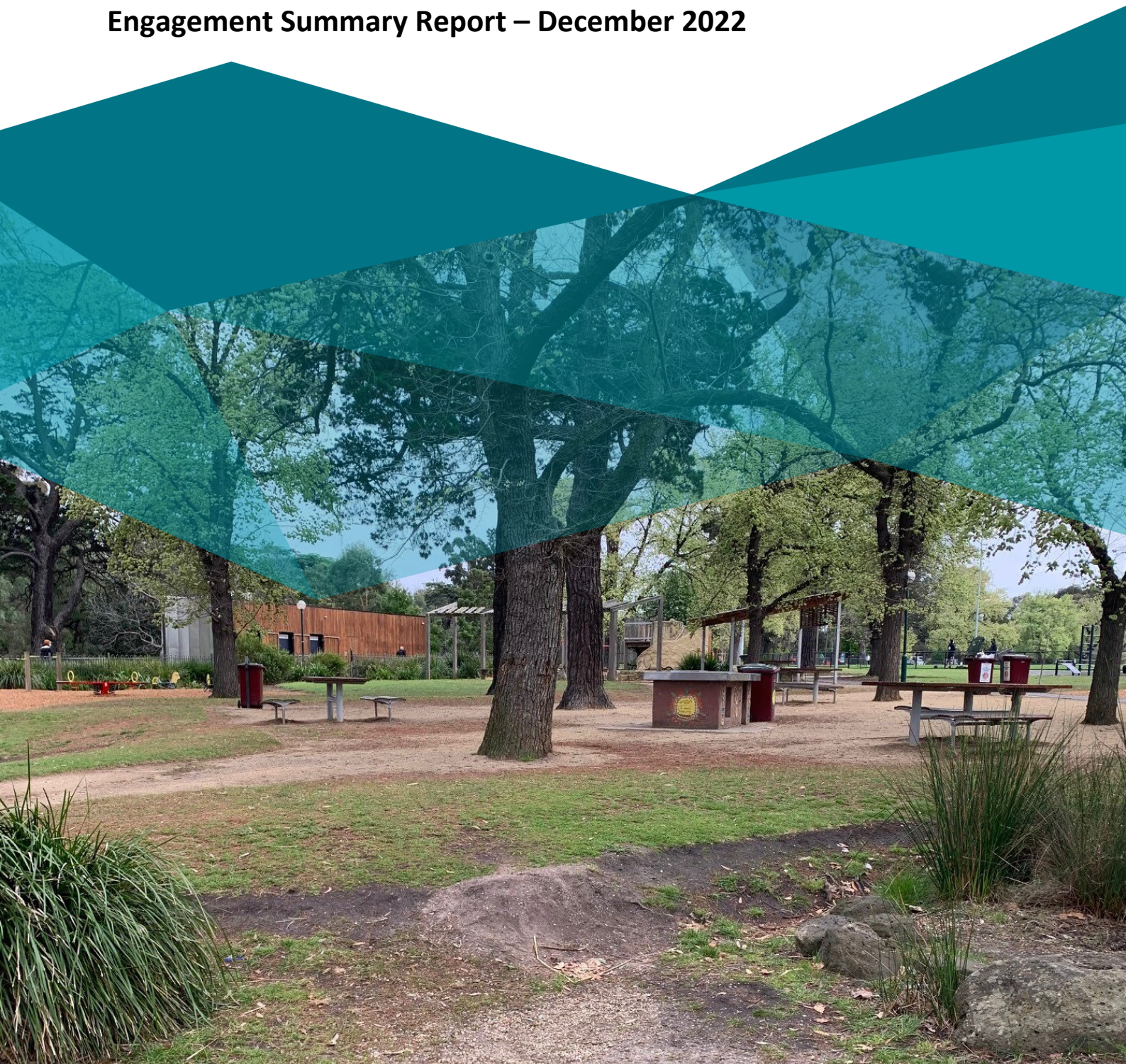




Alma Park East Upgrade

Engagement Summary Report – December 2022



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Executive summary

This Engagement Report has been compiled following the conclusion of the concept phase of community engagement for the Alma Park East Upgrade. The engagement process included delivery of project postcards in the local area, site signage and Have Your Say website with a survey. A meeting with the representative of the Alma Park Friends Group and the Project Manager also took place on site.

The information received during the engagement period will be used to update the concept plan as the project moves toward detailed design in early 2023. The updated concept plan will be advertised on the project website.

Every effort has been made by the authors of this document to represent accurately participant feedback and insights.

Project background

The Alma Park play space is situated within Alma Park East. It is bordered by Dandenong Road to the North, Alma Road to the south and Westbury Street to the east. The play space is situated at the southern end of the park.

Alma Park provides open space opportunities to a growing population in the local area with the area expected to grow by almost 9% by 2041. The neighbourhood has a diverse community with a higher proportion of young children and young workers.

This location around Balaclava/East St Kilda requires new and upgraded open spaces which provide the opportunity for children's play, as well as a mix of uses for young families and adults. Alma Park East is an existing city-wide/ municipal public open space. It is adjacent to Alma Park West, separated by a rail line. Alma Park East has the following existing infrastructure and uses:

- Play space
- Outdoor fitness station
- Public toilets
- Picnic tables
- BBQ facilities

In 2020, Council officers undertook an assessment to determine possible locations for a project as part of DELWP's Park Revitalisation Grants Program. It was determined that the Alma Park play space project met the aims of the program to:

- Increase recreation and socialising opportunities for local communities.
- Enhance the amount of usable open space to meet expected urban population growth.
- Promote the number of park visitors for recreational and social purposes by improving and upgrading park amenities.
- Help increase safety and enhance accessibility for diverse user groups.

The agreed project scope includes the following items:

- Upgrade of park amenities such as BBQ, drinking fountain and picnic tables
- Provide new seating, bike hoops, upgrade soft fall to existing slide, new slide, sealing and painting of existing shelter and picnic table beneath the shelter all via the Minor Capital Works program
- Improve access and circulation
- Improve existing wetland to create a nature base playground that caters for a variety of age groups and abilities
- Opportunity for succession planting with trees for the future
- Community consultation
- Detailed design and documentation
- Full tender process
- Construction delivery

A concept plan was developed by Council in mid-2022. This document has been compiled following the conclusion of the first phase of community engagement for the Alma Park East

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Upgrade (26 October – 16 November 2022). Over the engagement period, 59 responses were received through the City's online engagement platform - Have Your Say Port Phillip. Respondents provided recommendations and comments on what they like about the existing reserve and what they would like to see in the future. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide input on new seating locations, paving colour and planting types to be included in the design.

Following this round of engagement, the draft concept plan will be updated and advertised on the project website.

Engagement approach

The community was informed about the engagement process in the following way:

- Signage displayed in the reserve
- Project postcard sent to nearby residents, schools and businesses
- Council's 'Have Your Say' webpage
- Council's social media pages (Facebook and Instagram)

Stakeholders were informed about the engagement in the following way:

- Consultation session with Friends of Alma Park (18 November)
- Email notification to Alma Road Community House (3 November)

Engagement findings

Have Your Say Response

Information relating to the engagement was posted on Council’s Have Your Say site. The page received **614** views, with **59** users contributing to the post. A total of **5** users chose to follow the page. A total of **32** comments were made by contributors. The comments covered a range of topics.

These responses have been categorised into the following themes;

- Playground design /upgrades,
- Accessibility/paving
- Park design/amenity/toilets
- Safety
- Dogs
- Planting/habitat
- Council process management.

These themes have been explored in the table below:

Theme	Responses	% of total	Comment
Playground Design /Upgrades	16	36%	<p>A range of playground upgrade issues were discussed in the comments.</p> <p>38% of the 16 responses related to playground upgrades and upkeep of the space. These included: request to fix the monkey bars (3), adding more equipment for older children (2), upgrading the flying fox (1), replacing the slide (1), commenting on poor general upkeep of the playground units (1).</p> <p><i>“When will the monkey bar equipment be fixed that was removed”.</i></p> <p><i>“General maintenance of the equipment is also quite poor, it takes a very long time whenever anything needs fixing”.</i></p> <p>25% of the 16 respondents commented that waterplay is a good addition to the park (4).</p> <p><i>“Love the water play idea”.</i></p>

			<p>13% of 16 respondents wanted the unique character of Alma Park to be maintained with any upgrades.</p> <p><i>“Don’t upgrade and replace with items that lose character of the park.”</i></p>
Accessibility/ paving	7	16%	<p>57% of 7 respondents raised issues relating to accessibility. Areas of discussion included providing accessible paths for people with disability (4), connecting the play areas with an accessible path (1).</p> <p><i>“As a parent with a disability who has fallen over in this park a few times, please ensure the pathways are not made of loose materials and do not have trip hazards.”</i></p> <p>(3) respondents commented on paving colour, suggesting light colours to assist thermal cooling.</p> <p><i>“It (paving) needs to be a cooling surface that reflects heat and light for the harsh warm spring/summer seasons”.</i></p> <p>(1) Respondent suggested the park should have less paving.</p>
Dogs	6	15%	<p>All six comments related to requesting a fenced dog enclosure.</p> <p><i>“A fenced area for small dogs and puppies to run off lead. For the safety of both animals, children and drivers on boundary roads”.</i></p>

Safety	5	11%	<p>(4) respondents requested a new fence between the playground and Alma Road for child safety. (1) comment requested a new pedestrian crossing on Alma Road and Raglan Street.</p> <p><i>“Fencing off the road would also make things much easier for the parents of small children”.</i></p>
Park design/amenity/toilets	4	9%	<p>Respondents requested an increase in seating throughout the park (1) and seating that could accommodate large groups (2).</p> <p><i>“Seating areas that can accommodate kid’s parties as this park is commonly used for that purpose”</i></p> <p>Respondents asked about the progress of the toilet block project (3).</p> <p>(1) Respondent requested a bike repair station for the park.</p>
Planting/habitat	4	9%	<p>9% of respondents commented on issues relating to increasing planting and habitat opportunities in the park.</p> <p>(1) Respondent had concerns for tree removals, (1) respondent was interested to see mixed planting sizes and habitat opportunities in the new design.</p> <p><i>“Older trees provide vital habitat, and pathways across the canopy for protected species, so they are not forced to travel on the ground”.</i></p> <p><i>“I would welcome some hardy native grasses to replace big portions of lawn already there”.</i></p>

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Respondents were asked the following questions in the online survey:

Question 1 - What plant sizes and types would you like to see around the park?

Question 2 - What paving colour would you like around the park?

The following responses were received.

Question 1:

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Grasses	8.3%	4
Low Groundcovers	31.3%	15
Medium Shrubs	37.5%	18
Medium - Large Shrubs	22.9%	11
Total	100.0%	48

Question 2:

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Light mix	35.3%	18
Brown mix	39.2%	20
Dark mix	25.5%	13
Total	100.0%	51

Respondents were also asked to map their preferred locations for new seating and bike hoops.

(6) seating locations and (9) bike hoop locations were mapped by a total of 9 respondents.

Who we heard from

The majority of participants said they live in Port Phillip. Of these, the majority of respondents are from St Kilda East and Balaclava.

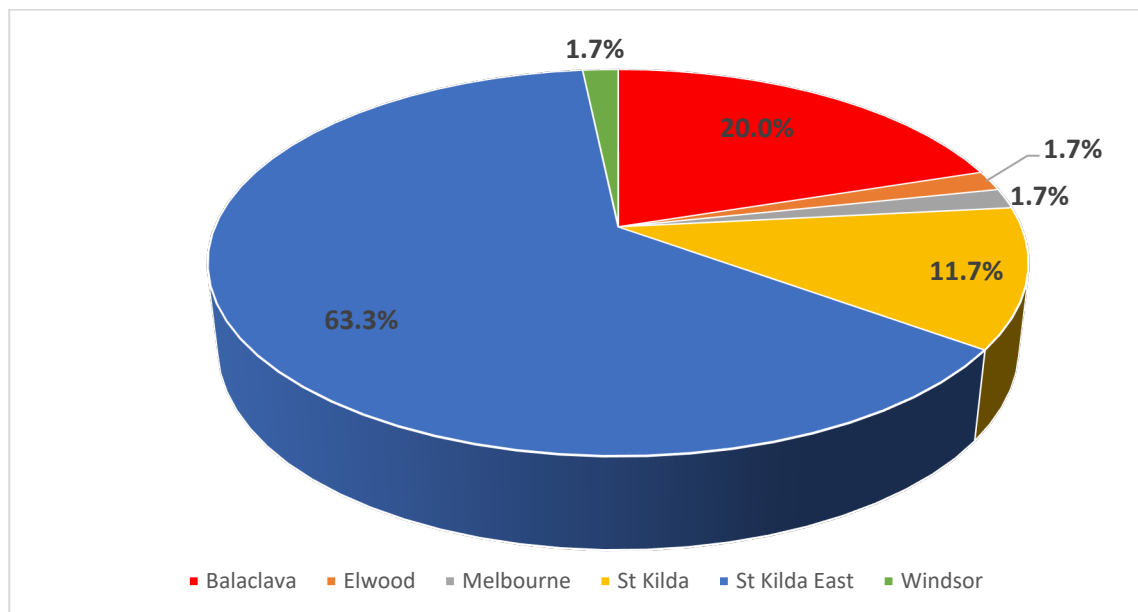


Figure 1. Residential suburb

The largest representative age group was respondents aged 35 to 49 followed by respondents aged 25 to 34.

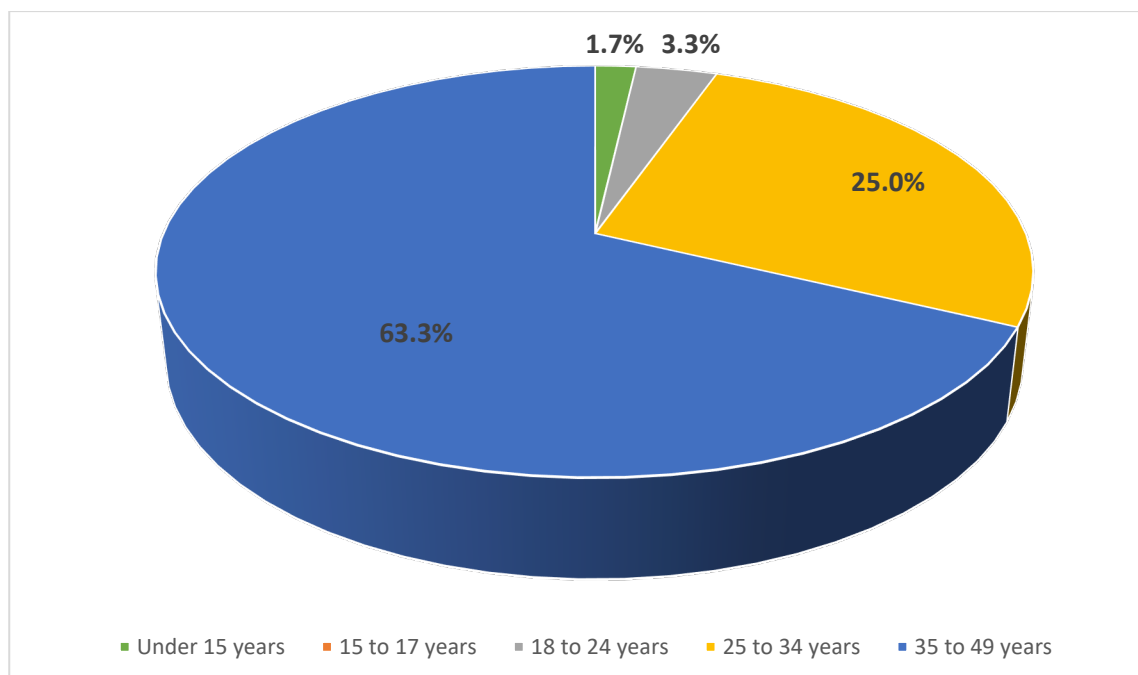


Figure 2. Age group

The majority of responses were from couples with children (48.3%), followed by couples without children (23.3%).

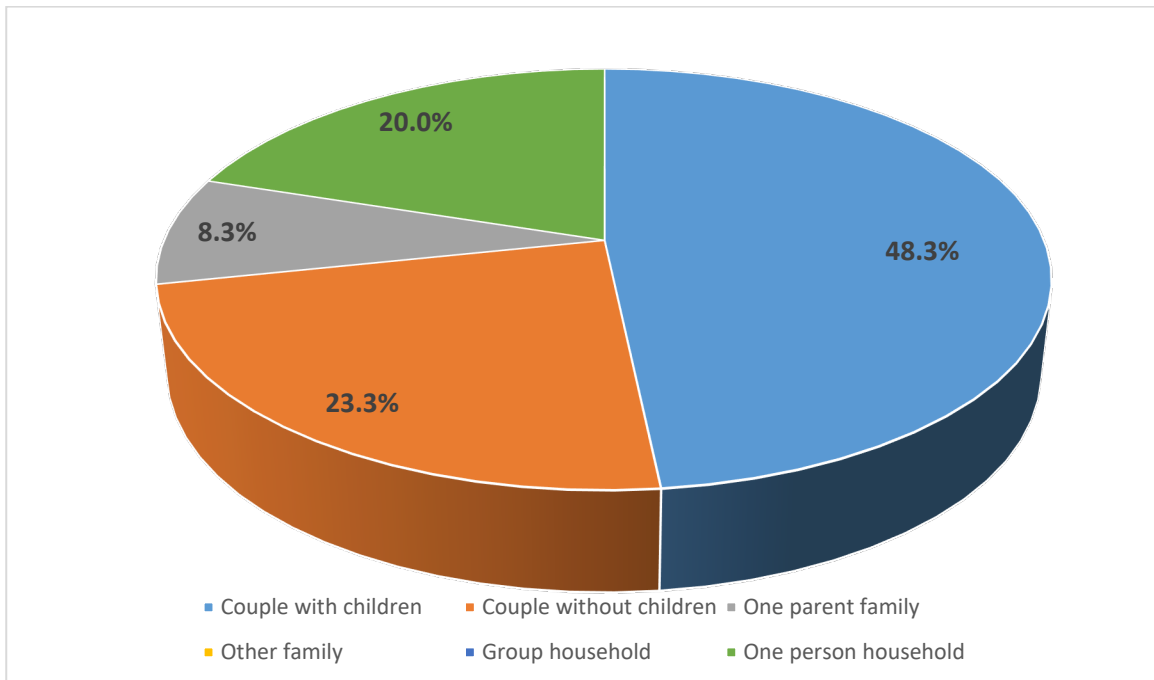


Figure 3. Household type

The parents of young children (babies and pre-schoolers) were the majority of respondents at 72.7% followed by parents of primary school aged children at 48.5%.

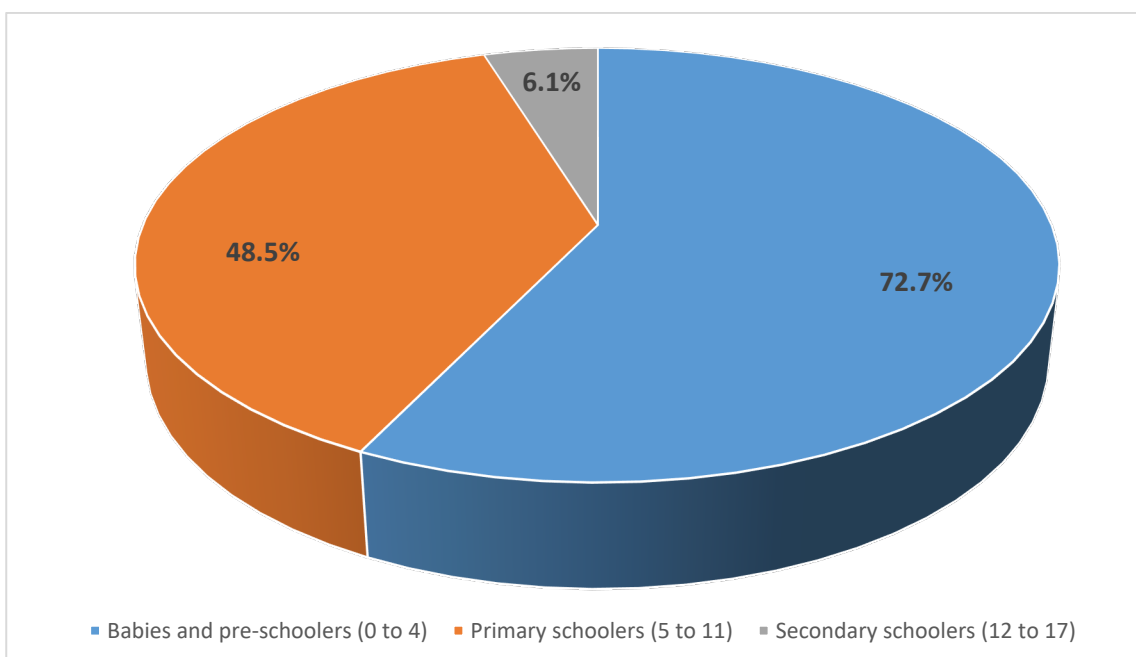


Figure 4. Age of children