

# Maroondah Vegetation Strategy

## Summary of feedback received from August/September 2019 Public Exhibition Period

### Why did we consult?

The Draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy proposed desired outcomes, key directions and priority actions for vegetation and habitat in Maroondah. Consultation sought feedback on what was being proposed, and to gauge support for the various parts of the Strategy.

### How did we consult?

The Draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy was made publicly available on the Maroondah Your Say website from the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019. The public consultation period for the Strategy closed on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019. Hard copies of the Draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy were also made available at Council's three main customer service centres (Braeside Avenue, Ringwood; 7 Civic Square, Croydon; and Realm Library, Ringwood Town Square), as well as five community houses (Arrabri Community House, Bayswater North; Glen Park Community Centre, Bayswater; Central Ringwood Community Centre, Ringwood; North Ringwood Community House, Ringwood North; and Yarrunga Community Centre, Croydon Hills).

Feedback on the Draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy was sought through a feedback survey form available online and in hard copy form. The feedback survey questions sought feedback from community on:

- Their level of support for the overall vision (and reasons if they did not fully support)
- Their level of support for each of six key directions and their reason for choosing their response
- The extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the package of actions under each key direction
- Their suggestions for any addition, change, or deletion of actions under each key direction

A number of submissions were also received that did not directly respond to the feedback questions.

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Emails were also sent to a total of 322 different email addresses (e.g. collected through the community symposium registration and attendance records).

Invitations to provide feedback were promoted via Council's social media platforms:

- Facebook page on August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 - with a total reach of 6079 and 204 engagements
- Twitter account on August 29<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> with a total of 1017 impressions and 2 engagements
- Instagram on September 10<sup>th</sup> with a total reach of 434 and 8 likes

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### What did people tell us?

Submissions were received from 28 submitters:

- 21 provided responses to the survey questions
- 7 provided feedback as general comments (*including some that also responded to the survey questions*)

Some feedback received was directed at one or more of the Outcomes for which there were no specific questions.

#### Outcome 1

- *A more 'liveable Maroondah' depends on understorey and forest areas, not just trees. I understand biodiversity matters come under Outcome 2 but the document makes it seem as though only trees matter to people. One way of dealing with this would be to rename Outcome 1 to 'Trees for a more liveable Maroondah' and deal with the importance of the full range of vegetation to liveability to Outcome 2.*
- *In general the last part of the draft document is very encouraging and there are also many supportive components within the draft document. However, we feel a more outward looking approach to commercial and private property and the creation of the same policies, frameworks and protections for commercial and private land, is of at least as great importance as it is to look after the reserves, parks, street trees and council and facilities environment.*

#### Response:

- **Retain the emphasis on liveability in Outcome 1 and associated key directions and actions. Expand references to the range of contributing vegetation to be all 'beneficial' vegetation.**
- **Unchanged. The types of actions that Council can take in relation to commercial and private property are different to those it can take on public land under its management. The strategy provides a balanced mix of actions for both private and public land**

#### Outcome 2

- *I would like Outcome 2 to provide a strategy and actions in support of preventing indigenous plant species dying out in Maroondah. The problem is discussed in the early parts of the draft document but there appears to be no associated*

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*actions. I have recommended a number of supporting actions in 'Biodiversity in Maroondah, Volume 1'.*

### Response:

- **Incorporated the intent of many of these recommended supporting actions into one or more of the Strategy's actions. The recommendations around changes to the planning scheme (changes to local policy and schedules) will be considered in the context of the actions proposing to amend specific aspects of the planning scheme (Actions 1.1(a), 1.2(a), 1.3(a), 2.1(a), 2.3(b)) and preparation of the new Maroondah Municipal Planning Strategy (Action 3.3)**

### Outcome 3

- *The most important aspect of this strategy is that it must be incorporated into the internal operations of Council to ensure that it is implemented. Too often these strategies are ignored or unknown to operational staff and their supervisors and become meaningless.*
- *Native regrowth must be protected from internal operations such as mowing spraying and cultivation. This protection and enhancement of this regrowth is critical. This natural regrowth is resilient, adaptable and critical to the succession of native species and protects the indigenous gene pool.*

### Response:

- **Added a new action "Review, and adapt where appropriate, park maintenance practices, where there is remnant or planted indigenous vegetation patches within Council parks".**

### A focus on fauna

- *20 vertebrate species, four insect species and not a single plant species. I think that's totally unjustified. Managing for the focal fauna species might well help other fauna species but it is not a rational way to protect threatened flora. Unless I'm missing something, this draft vegetation strategy offers no measure to improve the lot of flora species that are threatened locally or more widely.*

### Response:

- **Added a new action "Work with experts and interested community members to identify a suite of indigenous plant and animal species and vegetation communities that can provide a focus and profile for restoring and creating new habitat in Maroondah".**

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### Feedback questions

Q: **What is your level of support for the overall vision for the draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy?**

“Fully Support”	15
“Partially support”	6
“Do not support”	0
“Undecided”	0
Left blank	0

Q: **If you chose ‘Partially support’ or ‘Do not support’, can you tell us why?**

Those that said “**Partially support**” above, mentioned the following:

- *More flexibility for tree species choice on private land*
- *Doubts about data truly reflecting current state of vegetation and rate of change in biodiversity throughout Maroondah*
- *Provided the “abundant and diverse” vegetation is mainly indigenous and not environmental weeds*
- *Too ‘ordinary’ and lacks courage to really make a difference*
- *The vision statement should be reworded to explicitly mention “indigenous plants and native animals” and “diverse indigenous vegetation” and a ‘sustainable balance’ and not specifically explicitly mention “more people” or “reaping” - i.e. to “In 2040, people, indigenous plants and native animals living in Maroondah are deriving the health, habitat and well-being benefits from an improved naturally diverse vegetation and sustainable environment”*

### Response:

- **Provides flexibility of tree species choice within frames of meeting specific objectives for different parts of Maroondah (e.g. maintaining tree canopy cover, providing habitat)**
- **Proposes the establishment of reliable and cost-effective methods for ongoing monitoring of tree and shrub cover, and habitat extent (Actions 3.5, 3.6)**
- **Modified the vision statement to read “In 2040, more people are deriving the health and wellbeing benefits, and more plants and animals are deriving the habitat benefits, from abundant and diverse vegetation in Maroondah”. Retention of the word “more” implies an increase from now, the Strategy covers more vegetation than just indigenous, and the benefits are not limited to those living in Maroondah.**

One that said “**Fully support**” added the following:

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- *Monastery Ridge Group unequivocally endorses draft Maroondah Vegetation Strategy in its totality.*

Q: **To what extent do you support Key Direction 1.1: Strengthen protection of existing tree canopy cover?**

<b>“Fully Support”</b>	16
<b>“Partially support”</b>	5
<b>“Do not support”</b>	0
<b>“Undecided”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: **Can you please tell us why you chose this response?**

Those that said **“Partially support”** above, mentioned the following:

- *Support strengthened protection of canopy cover but feel SLOs are currently effective.*
- *Should be very strict and controlled guidelines for designating a tree as notable*
- *Council should work more closely with property owners to modify the trees and re-plant more suitable tree to the area.*
- *Provided it focuses on more indigenous species*
- *Trees are important however don't support protection of invasive species, trees too close together or to a house, especially in bush fire risk areas.*

Q: Four actions have been identified to address Key Direction 1.1. **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?**

<b>“Strongly agree”</b>	15
<b>“Agree”</b>	6
<b>“Neither agree nor disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Strongly disagree”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: **Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)**

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Suggested changes to actions under Key Direction 1.1

- *Strengthening of penalties for breaches of planning laws (5 mentions)*
- *More follow up to ensure compliance (3 mentions)*
- *Forums for discussing concerns (Council, owners, developers, objectors) (1 mention)*
- *More clarity about how Council will work with community around Notable Trees (1 mention)*
- *Identify precincts where avoiding development is preferred (1 mention)*
- *Suggestion to reduce individual property rates based on a dollar value of the tree canopy a property provides (1 mention)*
- *Concern with Notable Trees action - there should be very strict and controlled guidelines for designating a tree as notable (1 mention)*
- *Proposal to reduce or waive permit fees for removal of environmental weeds (1 mention)*

### Response:

- **New actions added:**
  - **“Work with other Councils to advocate to the Victorian Government for the setting of appropriate penalties that present a major discouragement of the removal of trees protected by planning schemes”**
  - **“Prepare a business case to enable monitoring of ongoing compliance with landscaping and tree replacement requirements”**
- **Referenced the need to establish clear categories and contemporary criteria for ‘notability’ before engaging community in identifying candidate trees**
- **Referenced the fact that precinct-scale planning can better protect areas where restricting development is preferred**

**Q: To what extent do you support Key Direction 1.2: Ensure the health and longevity of existing tree canopy cover?**

<b>“Fully Support”</b>	17
<b>“Partially support”</b>	4
<b>“Do not support”</b>	0
<b>“Undecided”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

**Q: Can you please tell us why you chose this response?**

Those that said **“Partially support”** above, mentioned the following:

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- *More integration of need for permeable surfaces and WSUD in ALL types all land, private and public. Not just “if possible” as then money will guide actions - expect its use throughout*
- *Council should work more closely with property owners to modify the trees and re-plant more suitable tree to the area.*
- *Provided the trees are suitable.*
- *Redevelopment would need to remain commercially viable and not impacted by unreasonable retention or protection requirements.*

Q: Five actions have been identified to address Key Direction 1.2. **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?**

“Strongly agree”	14
“Agree”	4
“Neither agree nor disagree”	1
“Disagree”	0
“Strongly disagree”	0
Left blank	0

Q: **Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)**

Suggested changes to actions under Key Direction 1.2

- *Assist residents with covering the costs of removal of dead stringybark trees (2 mention)*
- *Encourage the incorporation of WSUD in private developments (1 mention)*
- *Extend provision of information to landholders to include non-canopy tree indigenous vegetation (1 mentions)*
- *Encourage local residents to 'adopt' their street trees (1 mention)*
- *Examine ways of enhancing the health of indigenous street trees by surrounding them with small plantings of indigenous ground cover plants (1 mention)*
- *Encourage/allow residents to plant more/extra street trees where practicable (1 mention)*
- *Include specific information regarding the economic value of trees in the information to landholders (1 mention)*



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### Response:

- **Modified action 1.2(c) to include other vegetation**
- **Does not propose to allow residents to plant more/extra street trees, but does reference the fact they can request a street tree**
- **Does not propose to assist with the costs of removing dead trees**
- **Already has actions that encourage WSUD in private developments (actions 1.1(d), 3.3)**
- **Already has an action to evaluate the potential for nature strips to contribute to habitat corridors (Action 2.3(e))**

Q: ***To what extent do you support Key Direction 1.3: Increase tree canopy cover in key locations?***

<b>“Fully Support”</b>	19
<b>“Partially support”</b>	2
<b>“Do not support”</b>	0
<b>“Undecided”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: ***Can you please tell us why you chose this response?***

Those that said **“Partially support”** above, mentioned the following:

- *Don't just evaluate options for Green Roof and Wall incentives - apply them as so many places in the world have.*
- *Council should work more closely with property owners to modify the trees and re-plant more suitable trees to the area.*

Q: Seven actions have been identified to address Key Direction 1.3. ***Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?***

<b>“Strongly agree”</b>	15
<b>“Agree”</b>	6
<b>“Neither agree nor disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Strongly disagree”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: ***Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)***

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### Suggested changes to actions under Key Direction 1.3

- *Green roofs and walls are proven initiatives, look into implementing them not evaluating and procrastinating (3 mentions)*
- *Include Aerial bundling of electricity cables as another option (2 mention)*
- *Have a problem with the word 'incentivise'. Green roofs and walls should be mandated on all high density developments (1 mention)*
- *Would like to see Council take more care over the selection and location of roadside tree planting so driver vision is not affected (1 mention)*
- *How will green roofs and walls be maintained and enforced once the developer has moved on? (1 mention)*
- *Include VicRoads, Melbourne Water and Crown Land to increase tree planting (1 mention)*
- *Tree planting in Parks and Reserves is not occurring at present and needs to be resumed (1 mention)*
- *In favour of 'bush kinders', but need to ensure they don't damage important indigenous flora (1 mention)*
- *Agree with requiring provision of canopy trees, but also need ongoing monitoring to ensure the trees /plants are still there in 2,3 or 4years time (1 mention)*
- *Do not agree with it being in and around schools and kindergartens (safety concerns) (1 mention)*
- *Increasingly important to ensure the re-planting of large canopy trees situated in and amongst the new developments, not just public areas (1 mention)*

### **Response:**

- **Referenced aerial bundling cabling as an option**
- **Not changed the approach to green roofs and walls - still need to demonstrate their viability in the Maroondah context**
- **Not changed the approach to increasing tree planting - still identify locations where benefits are most needed, including parks and reserves and public land managed by others**
- **Not changed in relation to selection of locations for bush kinders as this is already happening**
- **Added a new action "Prepare a business case to enable monitoring of ongoing compliance with landscaping and tree replacement requirements"**

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Q: **To what extent do you support Key Direction 2.1: Strengthen protection of existing habitat?**

<b>“Fully Support”</b>	18
<b>“Partially support”</b>	3
<b>“Do not support”</b>	0
<b>“Undecided”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: **Can you please tell us why you chose this response?**

Those that said **“Partially support”** above, mentioned the following:

- *I understand that Trust for Nature is no longer interested in additional bush properties the size of those in Maroondah.*
- *Permission to remove Canopy Tree Environmental Weeds should not incur a fee to the landowner.*

Q: Three actions have been identified to address Key Direction 2.1. **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?**

<b>“Strongly agree”</b>	17
<b>“Agree”</b>	4
<b>“Neither agree nor disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Strongly disagree”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: **Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)**

Suggested changes to actions under Key Direction 2.1

- *Rate subsidies for improving the quality and complexity of habitats, and/or for involvement Land for wildlife / Gardens for Wildlife programs (1 mention)*
- *Strengthen laws re pet ownership especially the containment of cats in the owner’s property (1 mention)*
- *Support for existing actions:*
  - *Removal of BMO (2 mentions)*

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- *Protection/acquisition and restoration of remnant vegetation (2 mentions)*
- *Application of ESO (1 mention)*
- *Use of native plants on nature strips (1 mention)*
- *Continued monitoring of Sites of Biological Significance (1 mention)*

### Response:

- **Not changed any actions under Key Direction 2.1**
- **Referenced the fact that placing a conservation covenant with Trust for Nature in Maroondah may involve a cost**
- **Already references options including rate subsidies and Gardens for Wildlife under Key Direction 2.3**
- **Does not specifically mention exemptions to permit requirements for environmental weeds, but these will be considered as part of the proposed planning scheme amendments**
- **Does not propose the strengthening of pet ownership laws as this is considered beyond the scope of a vegetation strategy**

Q: ***To what extent do you support Key Direction 2.2: Ensure the health and longevity of existing habitat?***

<b>“Fully Support”</b>	18
<b>“Partially support”</b>	2
<b>“Do not support”</b>	0
<b>“Undecided”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

Q: ***Can you please tell us why you chose this response?***

Those that said **“Partially support”** above, mentioned the following:

- *Not sure I totally agree with offsets being used to shift vegetation?*

Q: Six actions have been identified to address Key Direction 2.2. ***Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?***

<b>“Strongly agree”</b>	15
<b>“Agree”</b>	5
<b>“Neither agree nor disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Strongly disagree”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

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**Q: Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)**

Suggested changes to actions under Key Direction 2.2

- *Although I agree with the proposed actions, I think 2.2(f) should begin with the words, 'With due attention to groundwater levels' (1 mention)*
- *Maroondah to support and be involved in an overall management committee for the management of the whole of the Mullum Mullum Linear Park - from its source to the Yarra - with Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Whitehorse Council, Manningham Council and with community groups. (1 mention)*
- *Reduce light spill, cut back on the trend to use brighter street lights (1 mention)*
- *A more co-ordinated arrangement of the environmental teams of Council (1 mention)*
- *WSUD should be mandated for all developments (1 mention)*

### Response:

- **Incorporated the words “with due attention to groundwater levels” into actions 2.2(f) (now 2.2(h) in the final strategy), and 2.3(f)**
- **Encourages involvement in collaborations such as the Mullum Mullum Linear Park and coordinated arrangement of Council environment teams in action 3.1**
- **Does not propose reducing light spill as this is considered beyond the scope of a vegetation strategy**

Q: Seven actions have been identified to address Outcome 3. **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions proposed?**

<b>“Strongly agree”</b>	14
<b>“Agree”</b>	6
<b>“Neither agree nor disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Disagree”</b>	0
<b>“Strongly disagree”</b>	0
<b>Left blank</b>	0

**Q: Are there any actions you would add, modify, or remove? (Please specify which action/s you are commenting on)**

Suggested changes to actions under Outcome 3

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- *Extend the support and training for statutory planners to include councillors, gardening staff, engineering staff etc. (1 mention)*
- *Make "Gardens for Wildlife" a priority of Council. (1 mention)*
- *Make education programs, similar to the seminars / walks run by Manningham, a priority of Council. (1 mention)*
- *Create and promote a detailed pre-European EVC vegetation map of Maroondah, to guide education and revegetation. (1 mention)*

### Response:

- **Not proposing to extend the support and training for statutory planners to others. Will be focussed on applying new planning controls**
- **Already includes an action to evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of the Gardens for Wildlife program as one of the options for providing habitat on private land within habitat corridor routes (Action 2.3(i))**
- **Already has an action to prepare a business case to resource the provision of community events and activities focussed on biodiversity (Action 2.2(c))**
- **Does not specifically propose the creation of an EVC map, but such an idea is not precluded in the Action 2.2(c)**

### Other feedback comments

A number of other comments were made that did not relate to specific components of the draft Vegetation Strategy:

- Hope the vegetation review doesn't become a coffee table item due to the lack of implementation of the findings and recommendations

### Response:

- **A new action added "Prepare an Implementation Plan for the actions in this strategy and annually monitor progress and prepare accompanying achievement reports. Complete a mid-term review of progress towards the strategy outcomes and adapt the actions and Implementation Plan as required" (Action 3.8)**
- Concerns with the timeframe difference between the canopy cover analysis (2011-2016) and the biodiversity assessment (2019)

### Response:

- **Both pieces of work were commissioned at the same time (2017). The canopy analysis required comparative analysis of aerial imagery already collected. The most recently available (2016), was compared to 5 years earlier (2011). The biodiversity assessment required field work to gather new data that has taken a considerable amount of time to collect. The only available comparable dataset to provide a baseline was that collected for the 1997 Sites of Biological**

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**Significance in Maroondah report. Hence the two could not follow the same timeframes.**

- Concern that the Maroondah target for tree canopy and shrub cover is to be based on a 2015 baseline as set out in the Urban Forest strategy.

### **Response:**

- **The strategy proposes that a Maroondah target for tree canopy cover be based on an equitable contribution to the regional targets set in the Living Melbourne document which uses a 2015 figure as its baseline. Maroondah's 'equitable' contribution will be based on the best available data on Maroondah's tree canopy cover.**
- Concerns that the review does not indicate how Council will manage, implement or measure any actions to alleviate or reverse the Biodiversity and habitat loss

### **Response:**

- **The strategy states many actions to alleviate biodiversity and habitat loss under Outcome 2 "More nature throughout Maroondah", as well as actions 3.6 and 3.7 that are focussed on monitoring habitat and biodiversity.**
- Concern that the past program of growing endangered plant species for planting into reserves has been discarded

### **Response:**

- **The strategy has added in specific reference to the planting of threatened plant species under action 2.2(e)**
- Include planning provisions to require the planting of native gardens including local endangered flora

### **Response:**

- **The strategy has added in reference to 'and other beneficial vegetation' in action 1.3(a), however requiring the use of local endangered flora will need further consideration as they are typically difficult to source, and need to be planted into situations where their survival chances are highest**
- Scepticism that the action focussed on the Notable Trees register will be implemented

### **Response:**

- **A new action (Action 3.8) includes annual monitoring of progress with implementation that will enable scrutiny of any actions not being implemented for any reason.**

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- Extend the VPO and SLO coverage to areas adjacent to the existing coverage to provide a buffer

### Response:

- **The strategy proposes the introduction of the ESO to provide buffers for sites of biological significance where appropriate.**
- There is little indication on how the outcomes will be achieved and how they will be measured over any timeframe

### Response:

- **The Strategy has set a 10 year timeframe for the Strategy and a new action (Action 3.8) includes reporting on achievements against an implementation plan.**
- Providing habitat close to where people live work and play may not be acceptable to the birds and for fauna that live in the trees

### Response:

- **Acknowledge that not all fauna may be suited to using habitat in close proximity to people, but that many species are.**
- Canterbury Road median strip, which looks ugly and neglected

### Response:

- **The Strategy does not go into this level of operational detail.**
- Total tree and shrub canopy 2040 aspirational target of 50% for Maroondah should be mandated

### Response:

- **Given the uncertainty about the impact of future climate on our canopy cover, and the cause of eucalypt dieback, mandating a cover target is not appropriate.**
- Biodiversity also warrants a 2040 mandated target of 50%

### Response:

- **The Strategy proposes evaluation of options for monitoring biodiversity which needs to be determined before targets can be considered.**



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- I could not see any mention of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in the draft

#### **Response:**

- **The strategy now references CPTED in the preamble for Action 1.3(c).**
- There should also be responsibilities imposed on schools, businesses and shopping centres to maintain the vegetation in the vicinity of their establishments and to replace trees or shrubs that reach the end of their life

#### **Response:**

- **These establishments already have responsibilities for maintenance of the vegetation on the land they own, but much of the vegetation in and around many of these is on public land and therefore the responsibility of Council or other public land managers.**