

Maroondah City Council

General Local Law Review Report on Consultation

July 2022



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Introduction

In Victoria, section 71(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 empowers councils to make local laws 'for or with respect to any act, matter or thing in respect of which the council has a function or power'. Councils typically make local laws to address local issues and respond to the needs of their communities.

In Maroondah, the General Local Law is a key mechanism used by Council to protect local amenity, improve community safety and regulate activities on Council controlled land and roads.

Unless revoked or renewed, local laws last for ten years. This helps to ensure local laws are kept up to date, are working as intended, and are responsive to new issues and changing community needs.

To help inform the next review of Maroondah's General Local Law, Council has undertaken a series of consultation activities with the aim of identifying issues relevant to the General Local Law that are important to residents, as well as opportunities to improve the operation of the General Local Law.

This report presents the outcomes of these activities, as well as community input gathered by Council during other consultation activities that will help to guide the General Local Law Review.

Our Community Vision

Maroondah 2040 – Our future together (Maroondah 2040) was endorsed in 2014 and is Council's peak strategic document.

Maroondah 2040 reflects input and ideas from thousands of community members that reflect what residents love about their community; what they would like to see change; and the key factors influencing Maroondah's future.

The long-term strategic vision established in Maroondah 2040 is for *"...a vibrant and diverse city with a healthy and active community, living in green leafy neighbourhoods which are*

*connected to thriving and accessible activity centres contributing to a prosperous economy within a safe, inclusive and sustainable environment."*¹

As shown in Figure 1, Maroondah 2040 identifies eight future outcome areas to provide a roadmap for community, Council and governments to partner together in creating a future that enhances Maroondah as a great place to live, work, play and visit.

Some examples of the contribution Maroondah's General Local Law makes to the achievement of these outcomes are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1 - Maroondah 2040 – Our future together identifies eight future outcome areas.

¹ Maroondah City Council, *Maroondah 2040 – Our future together*, 2014 (revised June 2021).



**Safe, healthy
and active**

Maroondah is a safe, healthy & active community with local opportunities provided for people of all ages & abilities to have high levels of social, emotional & physical wellbeing.

The safety of public places in Maroondah is greatly enhanced by the General Local Law.



**Prosperous
and learning**

Maroondah is a thriving centre of economic activity & opportunity within the eastern region where the sustainability & growth of local businesses is supported. All community members, groups, education providers & local businesses have access to a wide range of quality learning resources & facilities.

Maroondah's General Local Law helps to regulate activities in economic centres, including activities on roads and footpaths, signage, shopping trolleys, clothing bins, smoking and antisocial behaviour such as drinking and smoking in public places.



**Vibrant and
culturally rich**

Maroondah is a creative cosmopolitan community recognised for its celebration & promotion of arts & culture. There are a broad range of engaging entertainment options, diverse cultural activities & the creation & display of traditional & contemporary forms of art.

The use of municipal reserves and roadways for cultural celebrations such as festivals, parades and street parties is regulated by Maroondah's General Local Law.



**Clean, green
and sustainable**

Maroondah is a green leafy community with high levels of waste diversion & sustainable approaches to infrastructure development, urban design & management of natural resources. Our community is resilient & has the knowledge, capacity & resources to make sustainable lifestyle choices.

In Maroondah, the General Local Law helps Council to regulate some pests, noxious weeds, pets and waste management.



**Accessible
and connected**

Maroondah is an accessible community for all ages & abilities with walkable neighbourhoods, effective on & off-road transport networks & access to a range of sustainable transport options.

The General Local Law helps to keep traffic moving and footpaths free from obstructions.



**Attractive, thriving
and well built**

Maroondah is an attractive community with high quality residential & commercial areas incorporating infrastructure that meets the needs & aspirations of all ages & abilities. A diverse range of housing options are available & thriving activity centres provide a broad range of facilities & services to meet community needs.

Maroondah's General Local Law protects neighbourhood amenity by regulating animals, derelict and vacant land, building sites and waste management, as well as keeping traffic moving and supporting activities in commercial areas.



**Inclusive
and diverse**

Maroondah is an inclusive community where social connections are strong across generations & diversity is embraced & celebrated.

The General Local Law in Maroondah works to ensure equitable, orderly and enjoyable use of community facilities by all.



**Well governed
and empowered**

Maroondah is an empowered community that is actively engaged in Council decision making through processes that consider the needs & aspirations of all ages & population groups. Council provides strong & responsive leadership, ensures transparency, while working with the community to advocate for & 'champion' local needs.

Maroondah's General Local Law works to protect our neighbourhoods and respond to the needs of our community. It provides fair and natural justice principles for compliance.

Figure 2 – The General Local Law contributes to outcomes established in Maroondah 2040 – Our future together.

Local Law Consultation

Between April and June 2022, Council conducted a series of consultation activities in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy to help inform its review of Maroondah's General Local Law.

These activities included:

- Face-to-face community consultation at pop-up listening posts.
- Targeted meetings with Community Advisory Committees and emergency services, such as Victoria Police.
- Workshops with Council staff.
- An online survey through Council's *Your Say Maroondah* website.

Each activity was aimed at finding out what is important to Maroondah residents and identifying issues that are impacting neighbourhood amenity, community safety and the use of community spaces.

Council's *Your Say Maroondah* survey and pop-up consultation sessions were promoted through online and social media, reaching thousands of residents as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Promotional reach using online and social media.

	Posts	Engagements	Interactions
Facebook	6	8083	334
Instagram	4	849	14
Twitter	4	349	13

	Number	Audience	Open rate
eNews	2	7,176	52.6%
Your Say newsletter	2	7,666	44.4%

Homepage banner	8 to 16 May
Article	74 page views



Community Listening Posts

A series of five listening posts was run by Council:

- Civic Square Shopping Centre, Croydon.
Wed 11 May 2022 – 10:15am to 1pm.
- Realm Customer Service Centre, Ringwood.
Thurs 12 May 2022 – 10am to 1pm.
- Main Street, Croydon.
Wed 18 May 2022 – 10.30am to 1.15pm.
- Railway Avenue, Ringwood East.
Wed 25 May 2022 – 10.30am to 1pm.
- Realm Customer Service Centre, Ringwood.
Wed 1 June 2022 – 11am to 1pm.

At each listening post, participants were asked to identify issues of concern to them that related to neighbourhood amenity, community safety and the use of community spaces.

Council staff also provided promotional cards with information about the General Local Law Review and online survey to more than 170 residents.

Key issues

Relevant to the General Local Law Review, listening post participants identified issues related to:

- Pedestrian safety and footpath hazards, including cyclists riding on footpaths and overhanging foliage.
- Waste management, including green waste disposal and burning off.
- Animal management, including pet registration, cat curfews and barking dogs.
- Regulation of construction sites, including noise control and impacts on neighbouring properties.
- Graffiti removal.
- Noise abatement in residential areas.



Advisory Committees & Emergency Services

Maroondah City Council has a number of committees that provide advice and recommendations to on matters relating to the delivery of strategies, services and activities. During May and June 2022, Council Officers conducted targeted meetings with relevant committees, including the Maroondah Liveability, Safety and Amenity Committee; the Maroondah Liquor Accord; and the Maroondah Disability Advisory Committee, as well as with emergency services such as Victoria Police.

These groups include community and stakeholder representatives, as well as Councillors and Council staff. In total, more than 70 participants provided input to inform the General Local Law Review.

Key issues

The groups consulted by Council identified the following key issues relevant to the Local Law Review:

- Graffiti in public places and the impact this has on community amenity and feelings of safety.
- Waste management issues, including hard waste collections.
- Footpath obstructions, including overhanging foliage and temporary fencing around construction sites.
- Animal management issues, including requirements for dogs to be on leads in many parks and reserves and the need to ensure owners pick up after their pets.
- Litter in streets and community spaces.
- Antisocial behaviour, especially related to alcohol consumption in public places.

- Noise abatement issues and the impacts of excessive noise on neighbours.
- While not proposed for inclusion in the General Local Law, participants discussed the need to ensure local law enforcement accounts for issues of mental health.

Council Service Areas

The views of Council service areas including Engineering, Building, Local Laws, Health and Assets and the Open Space Working Group were sought during briefing sessions conducted in April and June 2022.

These sessions afforded staff from across Council the opportunity to share their views about Maroondah's current General Local Law and issues for consideration as part of the General Local Law Review.

Key issues

Council service areas raised the following issues relevant to the General Local Law Review:

- Waste management issues including hard rubbish collection.
- The impacts of litter in public places.
- The need to ensure local law enforcement practices are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged residents and visitors to Maroondah, including developing appropriate special circumstances provisions.
- Ensuring adequate consideration is given to gendered issues through the Local Law Review.
- Animal management issues, including the need to ensure owners pick up after their pets and dog lead requirements in reserves are made clearer and appropriately enforced.

Community Survey

As a major component of the General Local Law Review consultation, Council conducted an online community survey through its *Your Say Maroondah* website.

The survey sought input in relation to:

- Council's role in monitoring the use of public land.
- Issues and activities that should be addressed by the General Local Law.
- Council's role in monitoring activities related to neighbourhood amenity.
- The role of Council in monitoring issued that may impact community amenity more broadly.
- The reasons why people live, work, play or study in Maroondah.

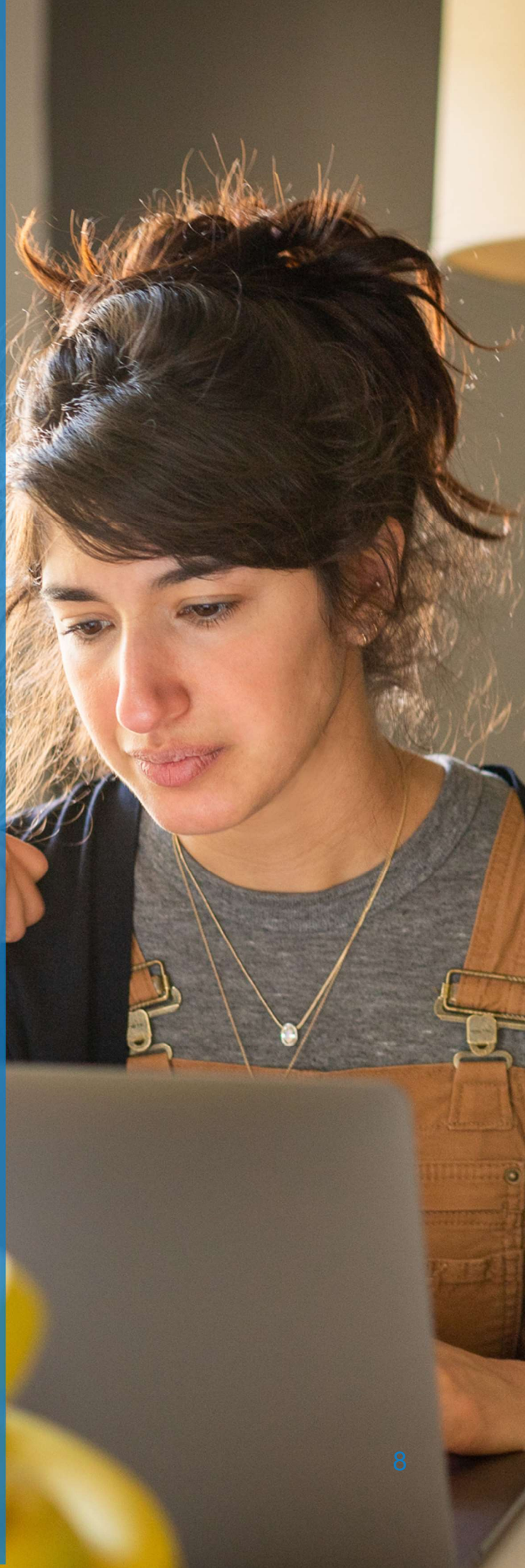
Survey Response

The survey website attracted a total of 391 visitors and 137 survey responses between 2 May and 5 June 2022.

Respondents were 58.4 percent female and 38 percent male. Just over half of all respondents (51.1 percent) were aged 35 to 54 years.

"Smoking and drinking should be banned in public places..."
- Thomas, Croydon North.

"It just seems like there's hard rubbish everywhere, all year..."
- Neil, Ringwood.



Use of Public Land

Survey participants were asked to rate the importance of Council monitoring different types of public land use – from ‘Not at all important’ to ‘Very important’.

The activities surveyed are currently subject to regulation by Maroondah’s Local Law no 11.

As shown in Figure 3, survey participants reported an ‘important’ to ‘very important’ role for Council in monitoring each of the activities surveyed.

Respondents also expressed the very strong view that Council’s role was most important in relation to keeping walkways, footpaths and nature strips

free from obstructions such as overhanging branches, visual obstructions and stored goods.

“There are far too many trailers and vehicles occupying nature strips...”

– Clark, Heathmont.

We walk a lot and there are always overhanging shrubs, trees and other obstacles requiring a move to avoid...”

– Anonymous

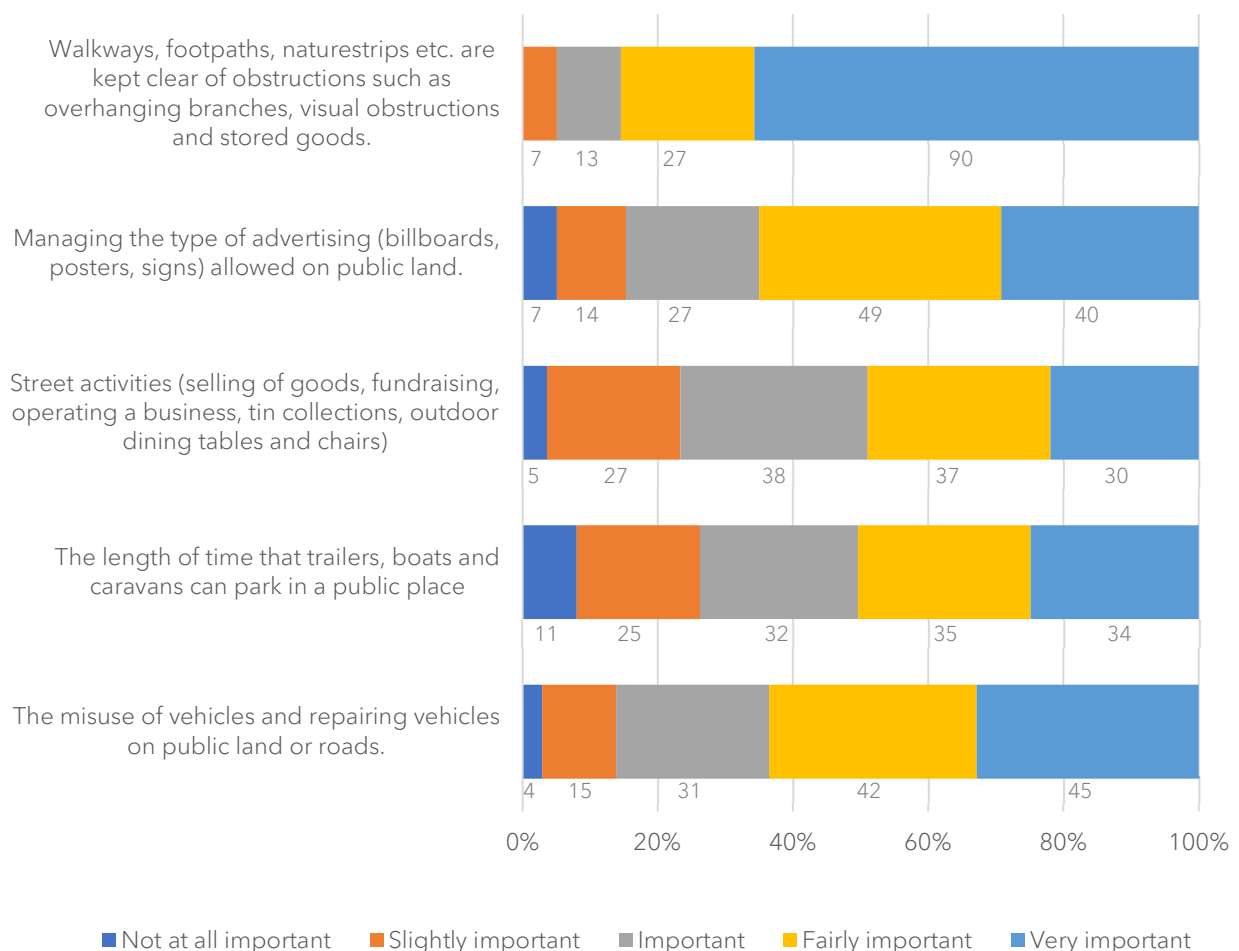


Figure 3 - Importance of Council monitoring public land uses

Community Safety

Respondents were asked to rate how important it is to them – from ‘Not at all important’ to ‘Very important’ – for the General Local Law to address public safety issues associated with a range of different activities that occur on Council land and roads.

As Figure 4 shows, more than half of survey participants believed it was ‘very important’ for the General Local Law to address the safe use of bicycles, scooters and skateboards, as well as extending smoking bans to more public places in Maroondah.

Just over 45 percent of survey respondents reported that it was ‘very important’ for the General Local Law to address alcohol consumption in public places.

“There are more motorised bikes and scooters being used on paths and roads, I think this is an area that needs to be addressed in the local law...”
– Nadine, Ringwood.

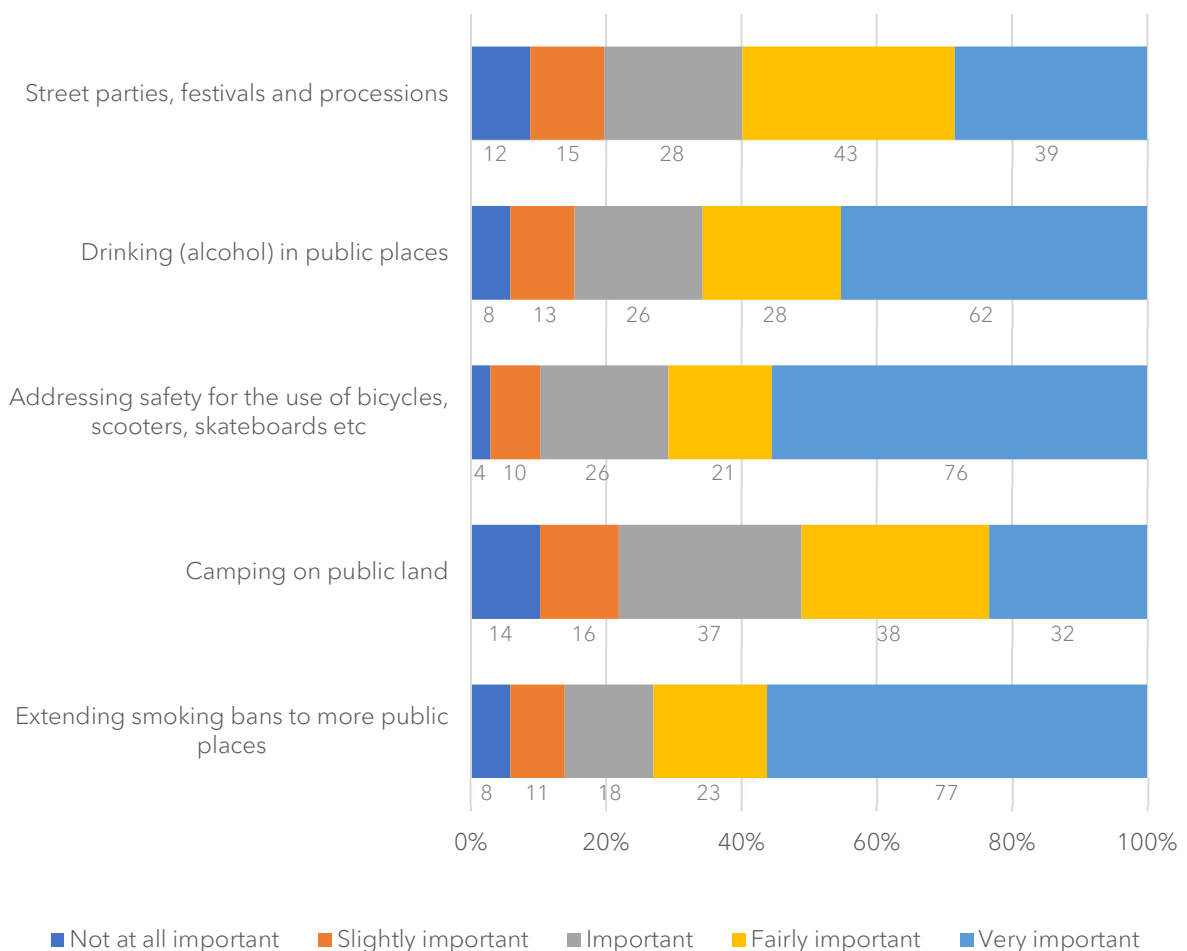


Figure 4 - Importance of addressing public safety issues

Neighbourhood Amenity

Survey participants were asked to rate the importance of Council monitoring a range of activities that may impact neighbourhood amenity – from 'Not at all important' to 'Very important'.

While survey participants identified a role for Council in monitoring each of the activities surveyed, this role was perceived as less important in relation to burning of solid fuels outdoors and the

use of tents and caravans on private land, as Figure 5 illustrates.

"I think the rubbish that is in our streets, freeways, parks really needs to be looked at..."
– Mary, Ringwood East.

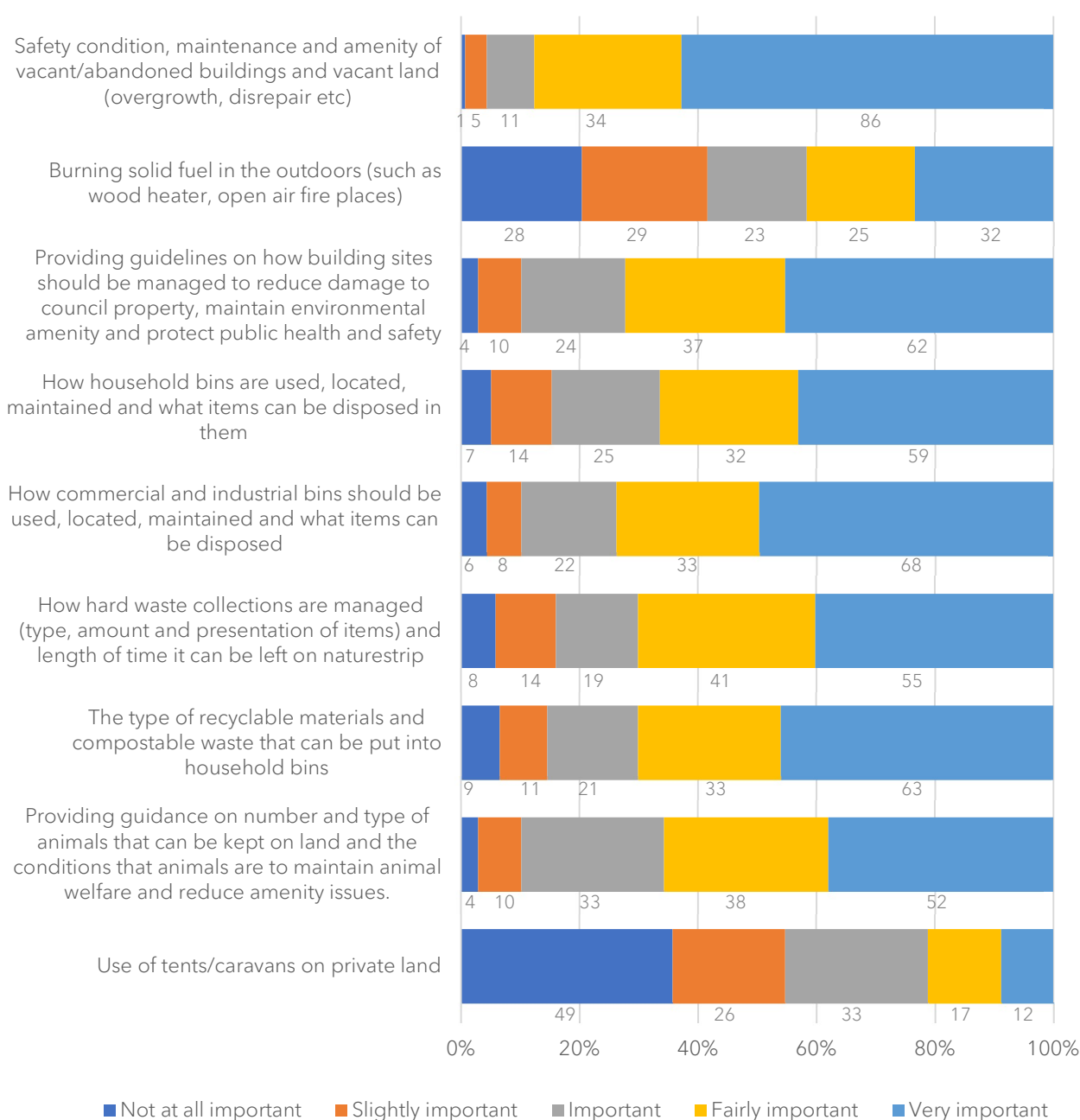


Figure 5 - Importance of monitoring neighbourhood amenity

Community Amenity

Survey respondent rated the importance of Council's role in monitoring activities that may impact community amenity more broadly – from 'Not at all important' to 'Very important'.

Each of the activities surveyed is currently regulated by Council through the Maroondah General Local Law (Local Law no.11).

Respondents identified an 'important' to 'very important' role for Council in monitoring the impact on community amenity associated with each of the activities surveyed.

As Figure 6 shows, more than half of respondents reported that the role of Council in relation to responsible

removal of animal faeces from Council land by pet owners was 'very important', underscoring the strong community sentiment towards this issue.

"Abandoned shopping trolleys are at epidemic proportions..."

- Anonymous, Ringwood.

"Charity bins in particular are in a terrible state..."

- Jenny, Ringwood East.



Figure 6 - Importance of monitoring broader community amenity

Character of Maroondah

Survey participants were also asked to identify the top three reasons for them choosing to live, work, play or study in the City of Maroondah.

Relevant to the current review, responses to this question help Council to identify aspects of Maroondah's unique character that are important to the community and should be addressed by the General Local Law.

Figure 7 highlights the importance of protecting our attractive open spaces and suburbs, as well as community safety, opportunities to develop healthy and active lifestyles, and a clean environment.

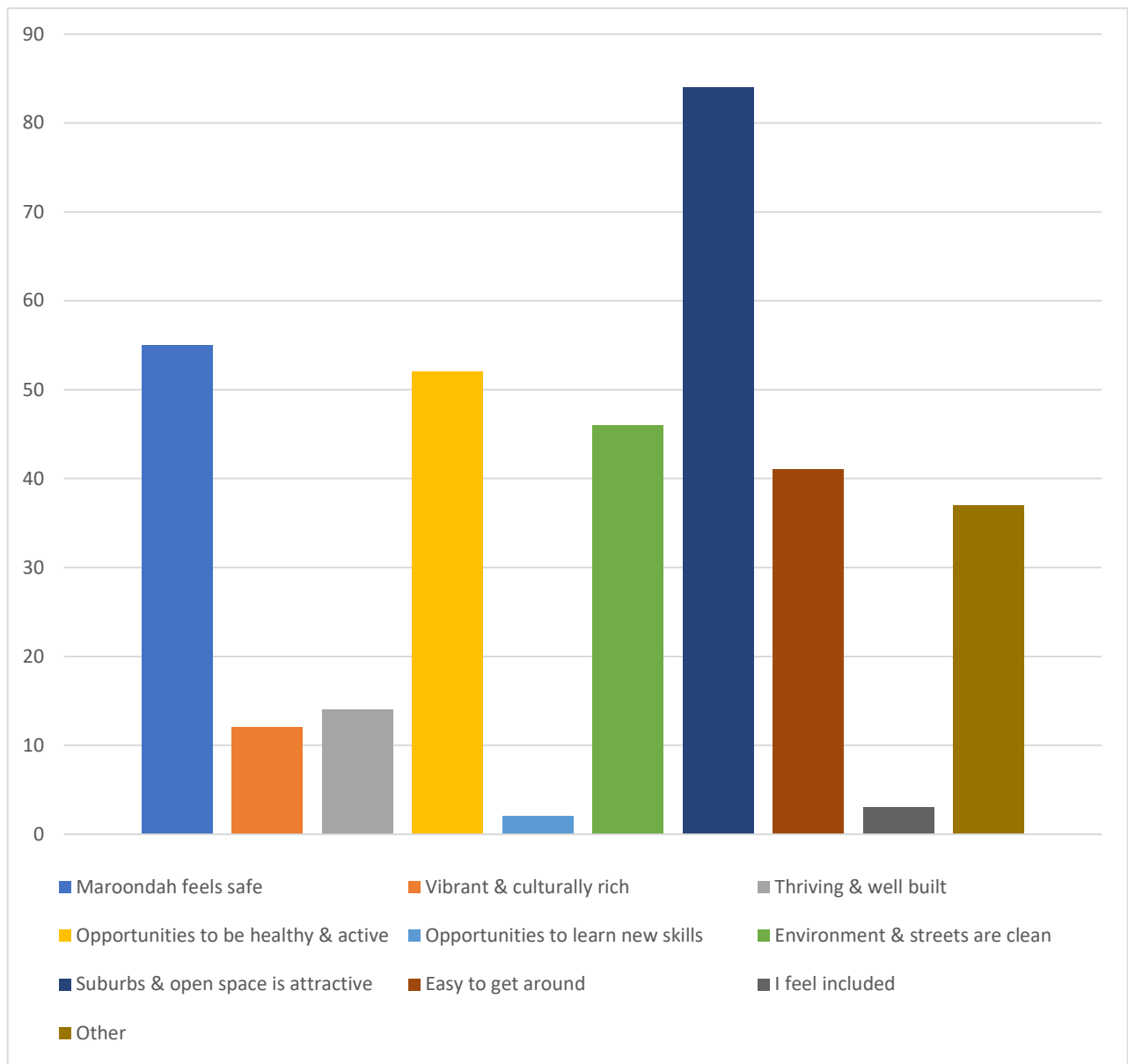


Figure 7 - Reasons why people live, work, play and study in Maroondah

Key Themes

An analysis of comments provided by survey respondents identifies key themes in relation to the issues addressed by the General Local Law and the role of Council.

Animal Management

Animal management issues were the most common issues raised by survey respondents. Comments provided by survey participants identified the need to ensure pet owners are aware of their responsibilities and for rules related to responsible pet ownership – especially picking up after pets in public places – to be enforced by Council.

The need for better signage in relation to the use of dog leads in parks and reserves was also identified.

Respondents were supportive of Council's role in managing nuisance animals, particularly cats straying from their own property and noisy dogs.

Public Safety and Amenity

Survey responses highlighted the importance of measures to promote public safety, particularly the safety of pedestrians on footpaths and in public places.

Issues identified included overhanging vegetation blocking footpaths, as well as the use of bicycles, e-scooters, skateboards and electric buggies/scooters.

The presence of litter, rubbish, weeds, lack of street lighting and graffiti were identified as detracting from feelings of safety in public places, as was alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour.

Other concerns such as maintenance of nature strips, median strips and footpath

access around building sites were also raised.

Waste Management

Survey responses highlighted the need for ongoing enforcement of rules related to the proper disposal of household waste, litter in public places and the use of bulk waste bins (skip bins).

Parking

Numerous respondents identified issues with access to parking in parts of Maroondah. Areas most frequently associated with parking problems were schools, shopping centres, recreational reserves and building sites.

While parking generally is not related to the Local Law, respondents were supportive of Council continuing to monitor parking issues and enforcing parking restrictions to address impacts on neighbourhood amenity.

"Public areas need to be available for all to feel safe to use..."
– Margaret, Croydon.

"Quambee Reserve oval is not a dog park they don't pick up faeces on the oval..."
– Brian, Ringwood North.

"Vandalism/graffiti to road signs is an ongoing problem..."
– Wendy, Croydon South

Other Consultations

Maroondah's *Community Engagement Policy 2021* confirms Council's commitment to ensuring municipal plans, strategies and activities reflect the views of our community.

To help ensure the General Local Law Review is responsive to Maroondah's needs, Council has considered the broad range of community views gathered during the development of Maroondah 2040, as well as input into other strategies and plans with a direct relationship to the General Local Law including:

- Waste, Litter and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2030.
- Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025.
- Maroondah Liveability, Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-203.
- Maroondah Vegetation Strategy 2020-2030.
- Smoke Free Ringwood Town Square and Croydon Town Square consultation reports.
- Maroondah Disability Action Plan 2022-2026.
- Relevant master plans and precinct plans.

Key issues

A review of Council consultation data identified the following issues for consideration through the General Local Law Review:

- The need to ensure the equitable enjoyment of parks, reserves and community spaces.
- Waste management issues, including the need to address littering, illegal dumping, careless waste disposal practices and business practices that

contribute to the proliferation of litter in community spaces.

- The role of the General Local Law in improving wellbeing by facilitating equitable access to community infrastructure, enhancing community safety and addressing social harms.
- The General Local Law should work to protect the things residents love about living in Maroondah, the municipality's unique character and the quality of our community facilities.

"It would be great if councils undertook more surveillance of buildings works next to public footpaths. Debris, muds and trip/fall hazards are extremely common."
- Anonymous, Ringwood

"Burning off can be bad for the environment and smoke can impact neighbours..."
- Anonymous, Ringwood East.

Shaping the General Local Law

Information gathered by Council through its pop-up community listening posts, workshops, meetings and the online survey will be considered alongside existing consultation data to inform the review of Maroondah's General Local Law.

Next steps

Council will now prepare a draft of its new General Local Law, which will be reviewed by a legal expert.

Further comments and feedback will be sought from the Maroondah community on the draft of the new General Local Law.

Further details about progress developing the new General Local Law can be found at:

yoursay.maroondah.vic.gov.au/local-law

