



CITY OF MOONEE VALLEY

Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct Master Plan Phase 1 Consultation Report

SBP – NOVEMBER 2021



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Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land that the City of Moonee Valley is situated on, the Wurundjeri people, and recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.



Project Context

The City of Moonee Valley has appointed SBP and its project partners, The OCD and OCM to develop a Master Plan for the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. The purpose of this project is to guide the design, development and management of the site over the next 15 years. The precinct currently includes netball courts, tennis courts, a driving range, golf course, mini golf course, restaurant, car park and high ropes course.

The delivery of the Master Plan will ensure a multi-purpose community space that enhances the character, functionality and safety of the precinct. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Develop a master plan that delivers on the vision for the precinct, 'A place that promotes safety, recreation and sport, and is welcoming to the community'.
- Develop a master plan that supports the seamless management of multiple sporting and recreation infrastructure on the site.
- Address safety issues for multi-use sporting and leisure activities, in particular golf (driving range and golf course).
- Undertake community engagement to build stakeholder understanding and support for future development of the site – including identifying existing and future possible service levels for facility/ infrastructure asset condition
- Ensure ease of access and connectivity across the site.
- Increase community usage and visitation to the precinct.

This document is one of the key deliverables for Stages 2 and 3 and contains the findings from the consultation with the community and stakeholder groups.







Who We've Spoken To

In developing the Master Plan, the consultation process has involved:

- In-depth interviews with user groups including:
 - Netball Victoria
 - Golf Australia
 - Tennis Victoria
 - EDNA
 - St John's Netball Club
 - Ascot Vale Tennis Club
 - LMS
 - Riverside Essendon Golf Club
 - Essendon 9-Hole Golf Club
 - Victoria Police
 - PGT Programs
- An online survey with the community and local residents, which had a total of 420 complete responses.
- Project information on Council's YourSay page, which resulted in 769 total visits to the site, and 91 contributions to the question regarding the Vision for the site.

Executive Summary

The following is an overall summary of the key findings that have emerged from the consultation. More detailed findings are provided over the following pages.

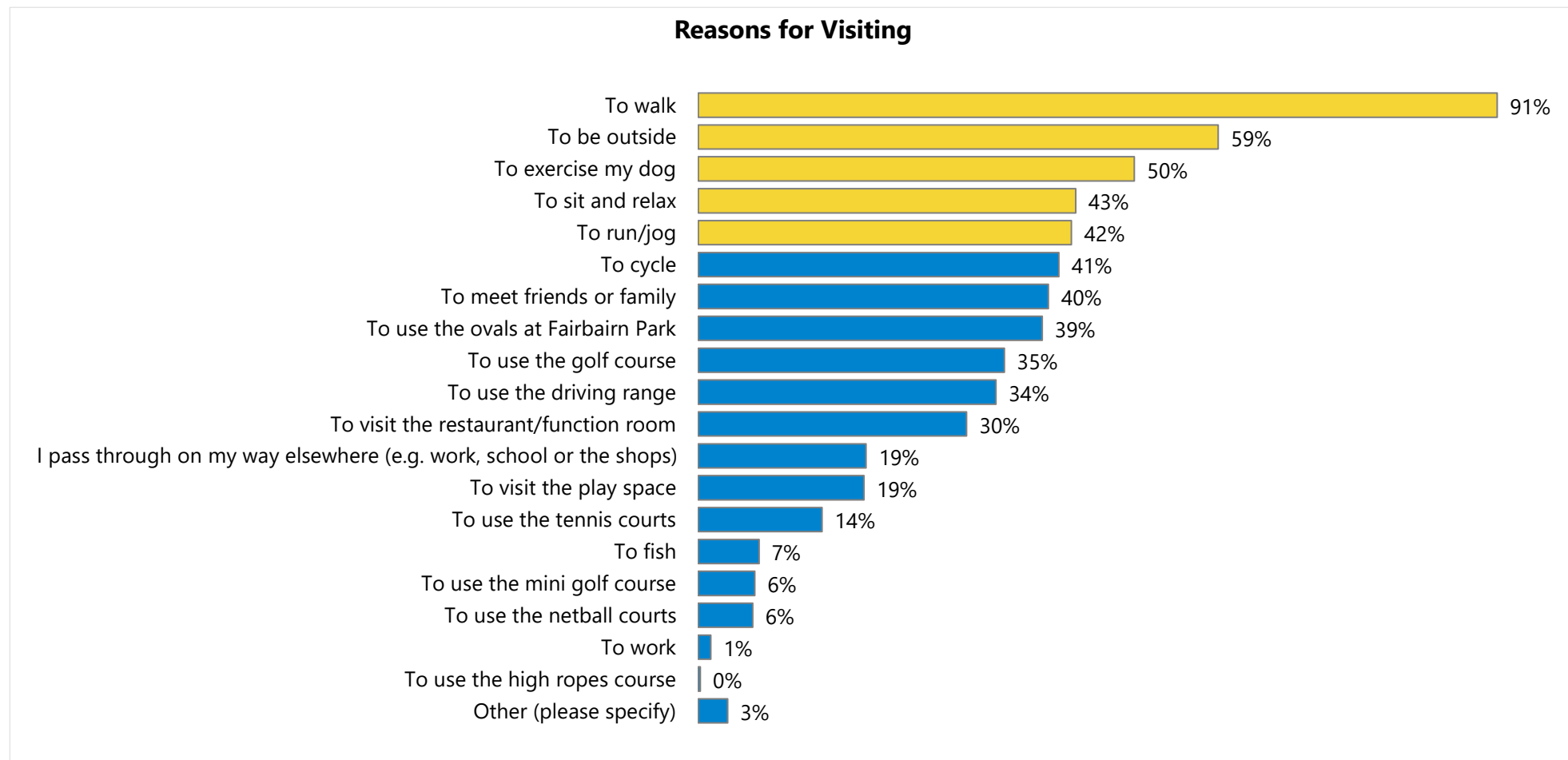
 Strengths	 Areas for Improvement	 Key Improvement Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large precinct with green open space and sport offerings close to the city • Environmental amenity, natural biodiversity and peace and quiet • Recreation trails and connections • Diverse appeal and opportunity for everyone • Accessibility for a broad catchment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site layout and integration of existing infrastructure • Signage, wayfinding, and congestion on paths • Inconsistent condition of sports facilities • Community safety issues with golf/paths/courts • Mini-golf and high-ropes are underutilised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and strengthen the site's environmental amenity and sustainability • Investigate complementary amenities – cafe, public toilets, play spaces • Improve community safety and congestion issues • Improve flow and navigation across the site • Provide additional seating options and rest areas
 Top 5 Reasons for Visiting	 Top 5 Barriers	 Top 5 Improvement Suggestions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To walk (91%), 2. To be outside (59%) 3. To exercise my dog (50%) 4. To sit and relax (43%) 5. To run/jog (42%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The facilities are outdated and ageing (36%), 2. Not enough rest areas/seating options (32%) 3. The driving range is not open at suitable times (26%) 4. Lack of female friendly toilets, change rooms and amenities (21%) 5. Safety concerns about stray balls from the driving range (15%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing a café/restaurant/function facility (65%) 2. Improving the sites environmental values (55%) 3. Ensuring new or upgraded facilities are environmentally sustainable (54%) 4. Upgrade the existing golf clubhouse to provide better community facilities (49%) 5. Reduce car movement within the site and improve cycling/walking access (47%)

Community Survey Findings



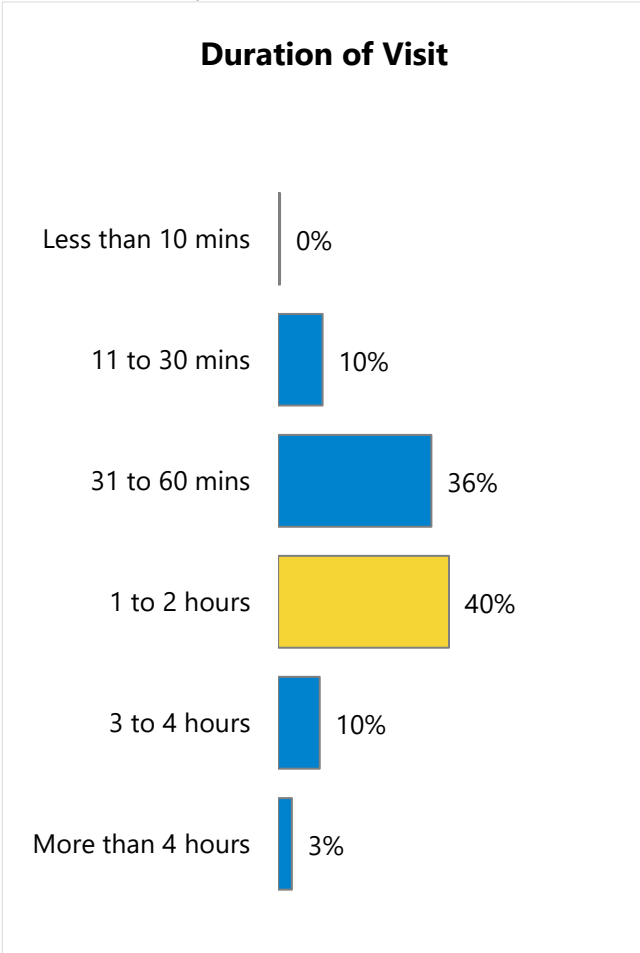
Reasons for Visiting

Respondents were asked to nominate their main reason for visiting the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. As shown below, the top five reasons are; **to walk** (91%), **to be outside** (59%), **to exercise my dog** (50%), **to sit and relax** (43%) and **to run/jog** (42%). This demonstrates the open space value of the precinct to the local residents, and that it is used by a broad portion of the community – not just sport participants.

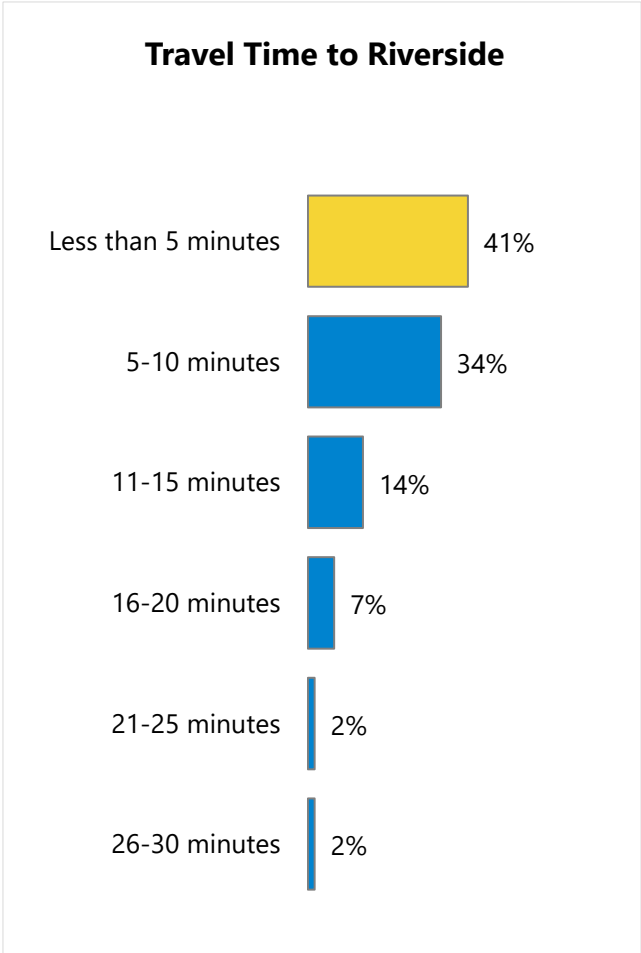


Q6. What are the main reasons you visit the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? (Please select all that apply). Base=420

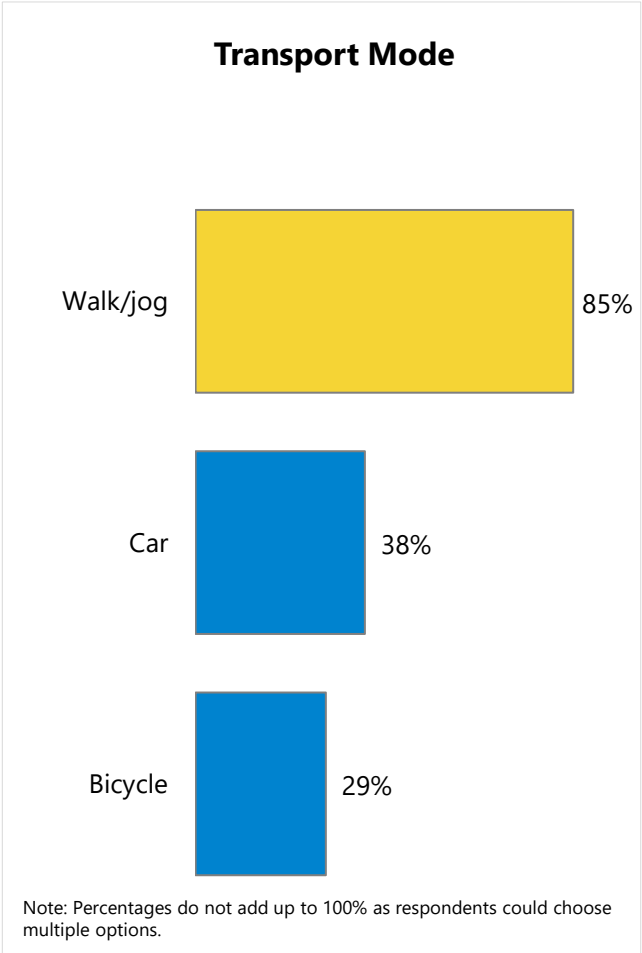
People generally spend a fair amount of time at the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct, with 50% staying between 1 and 4 hours. As demonstrated below, most of the respondents (85%) walk or jog to the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct, and for 75% of respondents it takes them 10 minutes or less to get there. It should be noted that given households within the immediate local area of the Riverside Precinct received an letter inviting them to participate in the survey, this may have skewed responses.



Q7. When you visit the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct, how much time do you typically spend there? Base=420



Q11. How long does it take you to get to the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? Base=420



Q10. What is the main mode of transport you use to travel to and from the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? Base=420

Strengths of the Precinct

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended comments regarding the key strengths of the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged, with selected verbatim comments provided to the right.

- Large green open spaces and proximity to the river in an inner-city location
- Beautiful natural environment and greenery
- Trees and vegetation that provides habitat for birds and wildlife
- Great walking trails and wide/multiple paths for running, walking and cycling
- Well-utilised by dog owners
- Variety of offer and activities – golf, tennis, netball and open space
- Good family friendly area, with lots of activity options
- Quiet and accessible
- Limited traffic flows through the precinct, making it quiet and reducing pollution
- The site has great potential to be improved and enhance community value

"The big open spaces along the river, it's a lovely place to escape the urban jungle. It provides a safe, clean environment for exercise for all ages. Free from traffic, it's a unique space."

"Great location, close to the city and has huge potential, as a well functioning multi-sport facility."

"It provides a large space with active recreation facilities. It's connection to the walking/cycling trail, and it's capacity to provide access to food, beverage and cafe."

"We bought our home nearby to enjoy the outlook and the proximity to the river, the golf course, the tennis, walking tracks and the view to the city. We love the cafe at the golf course and can't wait for it to re-open."

"It's a large outdoor area where you can be away from traffic while exercising. The river is a nice break from the built-up areas. Lots of different users can enjoy the space (i.e. not a single purpose for people of limited interests only)."

"Family friendly access to golf facilities - driving range, course and mini golf. Open green space that can be used for local family recreation. Having a good local cafe/restaurant was great when it was operating."

Q8. What are the key strengths or best things about the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? Base=420

Areas for Improvement

Respondents were asked to provide open-ended comments regarding specific areas for improvement within the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged, with selected verbatim comments provided to the right.

- Improved signage and way-finding
- Address the poor condition of the golf course
- Improve the condition of the buildings on site
- Ensure the driving range, tennis and netball courts can all operate simultaneously
- Upgrade/re-develop the mini golf course
- Separate the bike and walking paths to improve safety
- Cover the open drain/channel
- Have an operational cafe

"The overall look, feel and maintenance. Maintenance of the golf course and the golf related facilities. Opening the cafe to provide service to the community. Opening the driving range to a fully operational timeframe."

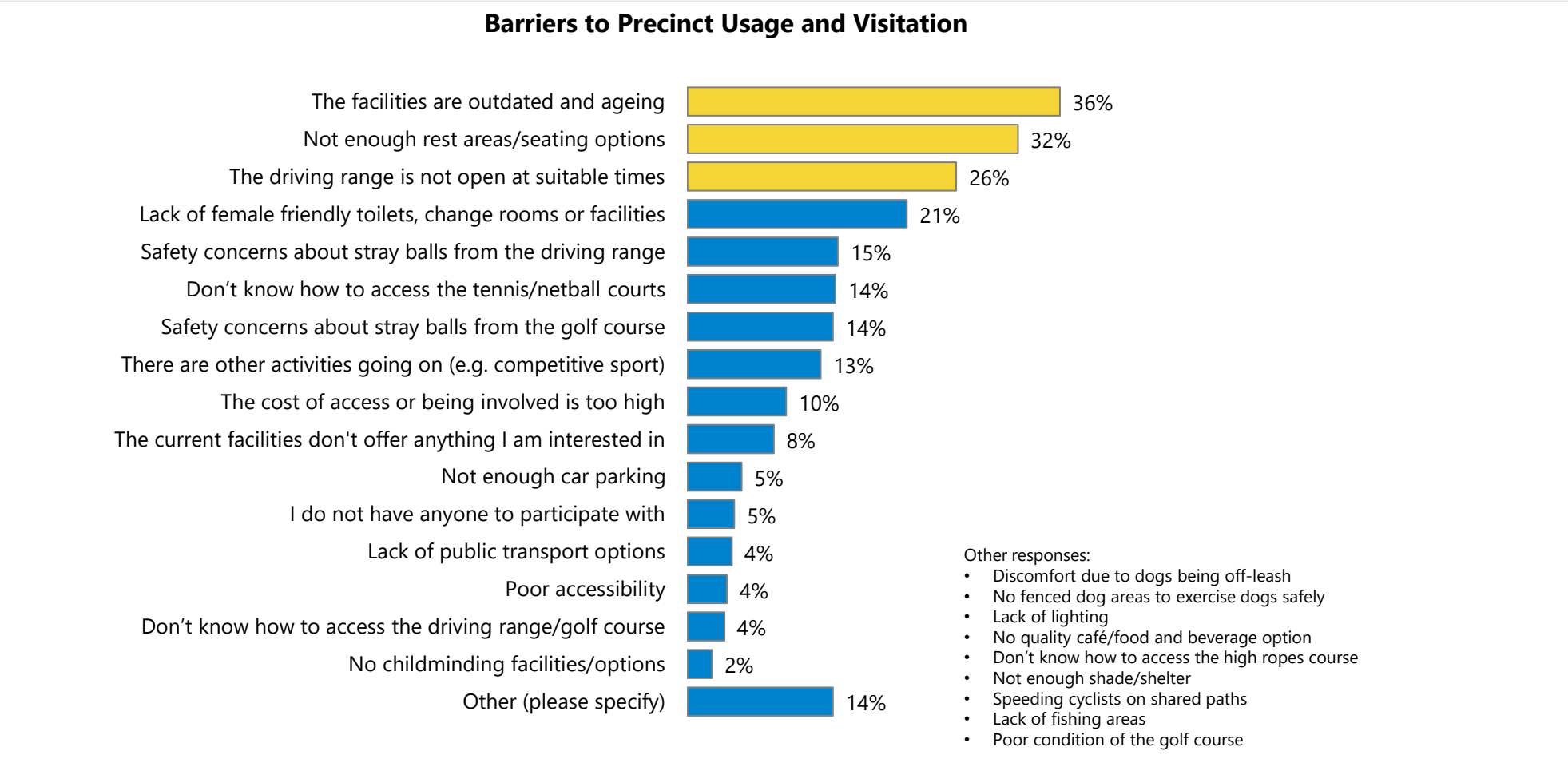
"The driving range needs better technology and lighting so that it can be used for longer periods. Segregation of the driving range and the netball courts so that they can open independently. Course condition needs significant improvement."

"More reminders for cyclists to slow down (or add speed humps to the walking path along the river). Improved lighting. It does not come on when it is dark - the timing sensors are all wrong. More fencing between the edge of the golf course and the walking track along the river - it can be hazardous walking along with golf balls flying."

"Areas around the pathways could be better maintained or re-done to reduce the need for maintenance while improving the overall aesthetic. The drainage that runs between the golf course and driving range could be improved so it's not such a visual impairment of the area and physical barrier. The driving range could be better maintained. The driving range could offer improved/extended hours so it could be better utilized. There may be opportunities to make this into a more efficient operation. There are several areas where more trees could be planted. The golf clubhouse could be improved and offer more food and drink services."

Q9. What are some of the things that need improving at the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? Base=420

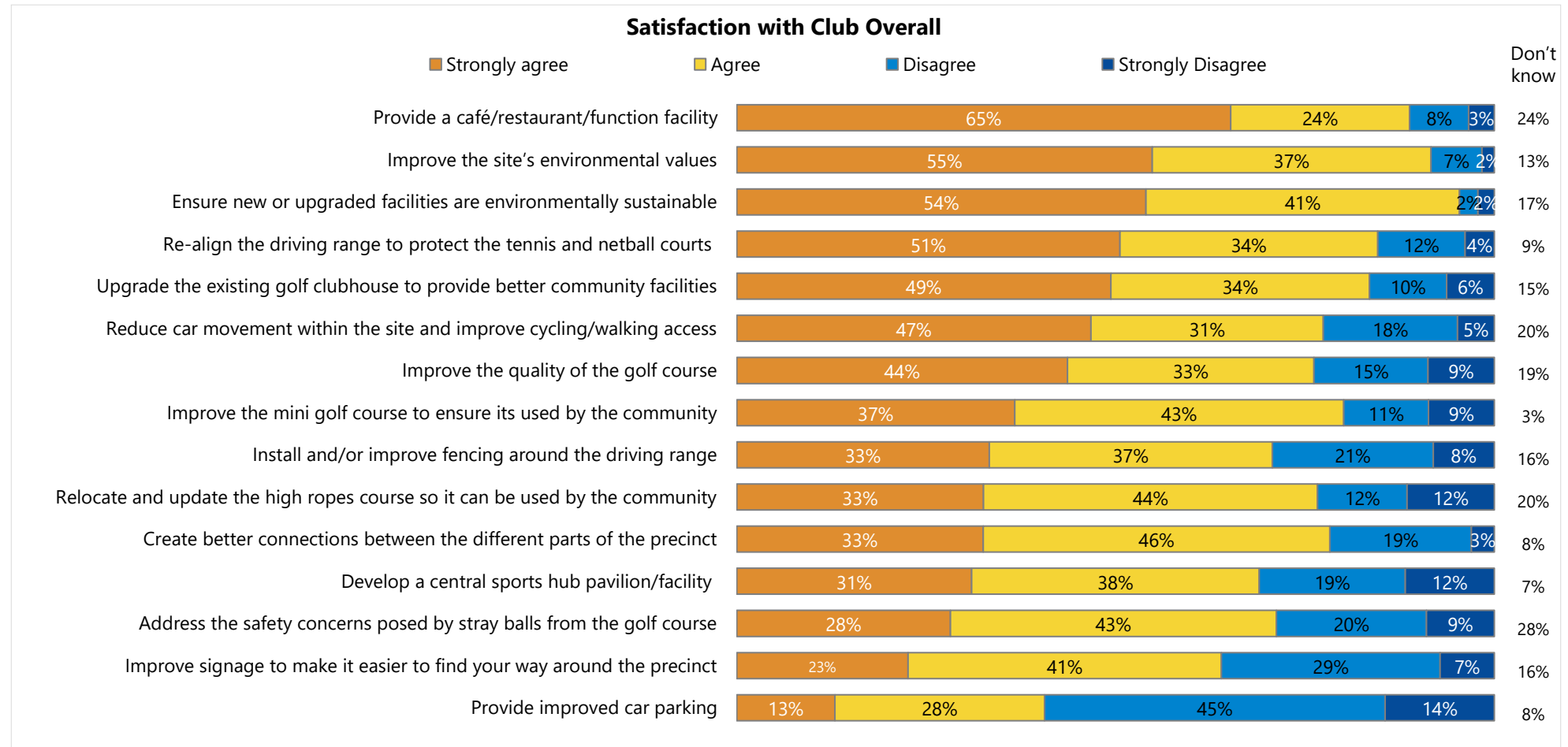
Respondents were asked to nominate whether there were any reasons which may prevent them from using the precinct more often. As shown below, the three stand out reasons are; **the facilities are outdated and ageing** (36%), **not enough rest areas/seating options** (32%) and **the driving range is not open at suitable times** (26%).



Q12. Please tell us whether any of the following reasons may prevent you or other members of the community from using the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct more often? (Please select all that apply). Base=420

Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents were asked to rate particular suggestions for improving the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. As shown below, the top three suggestions are; **providing a café/restaurant/function facility** (65%), **improving the sites environmental values** (55%) and **ensuring new or upgraded facilities are environmentally sustainable** (54%).



Q16. How much do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for enhancing the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct? Base=420. Don't know has been excluded from the calculations.

Changing the Precinct Layout

Respondents were asked to think about if they could plan the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct from scratch, whether there is anything they would change. Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged, with selected verbatim comments provided to the right.

- Improved signage and way-finding
- Address the poor condition of the golf course
- Re-instate the driving range
- Upgrade/re-develop the mini golf course
- Separate bike and walking paths to improve safety
- Cover the open drain/channel
- Have an operational cafe

"Better interface with Fairbairn Park and the waterfront. Improved activation of waterfront - e.g. a cafe."

"More native trees would provide shade during summer. The high ropes course is a nice idea but seems impractical. The recently installed bouldering wall in Footscray can be used without booking or supervision which means it is a highly used facility in comparison to the high ropes course which I have never seen in use."

"Resolve safety issues caused by poor planning of new courts such that the courts and the driving range are both free to operate during whichever hours best suit them. The high ropes area currently seems to be poorly maintained and under-utilised."

"Definitely need more bins and I'd add a toilet facility closer to the river along the bike path as well as access to drinking water around the walking/cycling path. I would like to see street parking reduced and only allow parking on the Street, just inside the park 'street' and carparks... I'd plant more trees/bushes, landscape areas along the perimeter to shield residents from noise and lights."

"It's a large outdoor area where you can be away from traffic while exercising. The river is a nice break from the built-up areas. Lots of different users can enjoy the space (i.e., not a single purpose for people of limited interests only)."

Q14. If you could plan the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct from scratch, is there anything you would change about the precinct layout? Base=420

Respondents were asked to think about the draft Vision for the precinct and whether this reflected their aspirations. There were mixed opinions about the draft Vision statement, and the following provides a high-level summary of the feedback received.

- Ensure there is also a strong focus on the environment/sustainability
- Focus on providing fun and family friendly areas
- Incorporate social elements and social interaction
- A thriving hub for families to sit, relax and unwind
- Some feedback that the word 'safety' is not required in a Vision statement

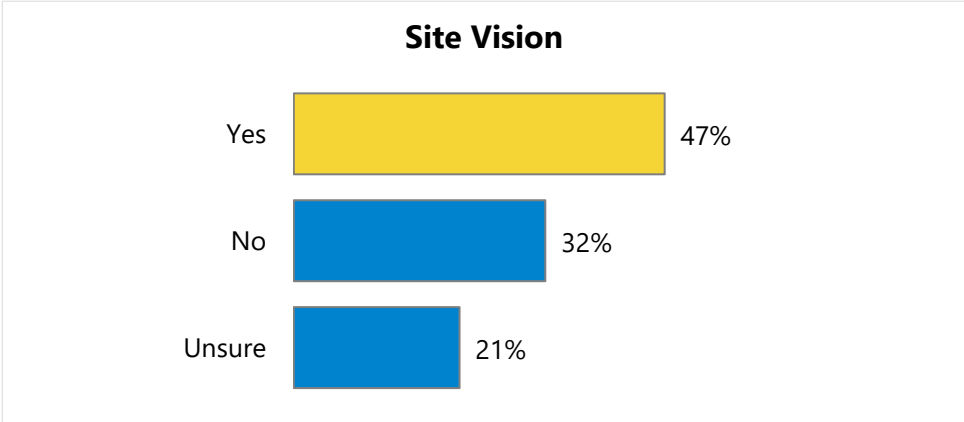
"Not really. It is very generic. Safety is important, but is that its first purpose? Would you put recreation and sport first, followed by 'safe and welcoming to the community'? Maybe along the lines of 'A place that provides opportunity to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity and a safe and welcoming environment'..."

"It does not reflect the natural environment, the wildlife, the peaceful riverside setting, the plants, the scenic beauty of the valley."

"It would be nice if there was an explicit commitment to protecting the biodiversity and environmental value of the park, too. Humans aren't the only ones who use it, and a healthier ecosystem makes for a more attractive park anyway."

"The area is also great for families. The restaurant area was great to visit on the weekend and bring kids along to use the bouncy castle. The outdoor wood fired pizza oven was also excellent. It should be an area for friends, family, leisure, sport, relaxation and enjoying food/drink."

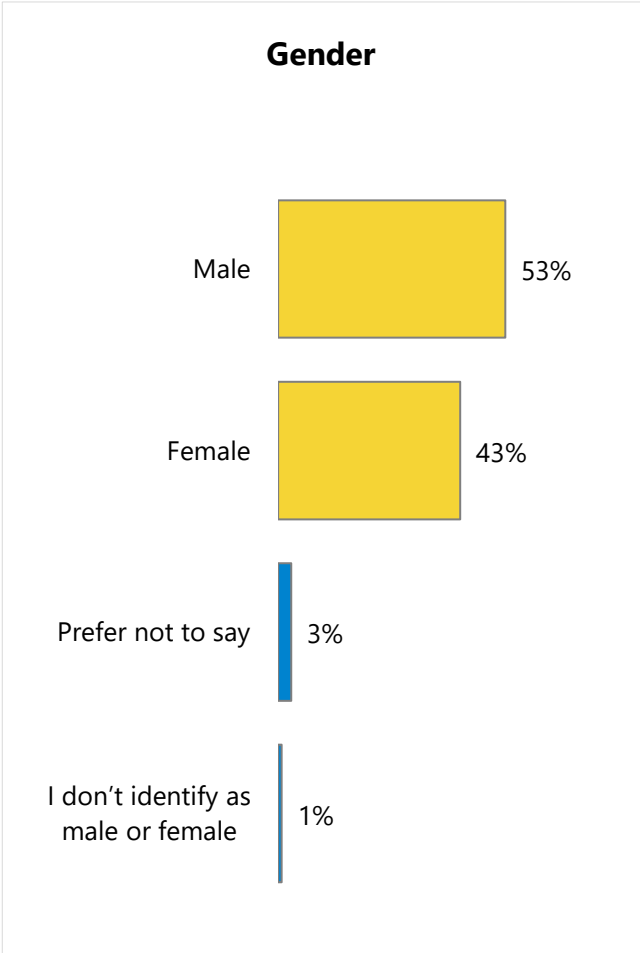
"Yes - to be shared by everyone, sports, dog people, walkers, bike riders, kids, families picnicking."



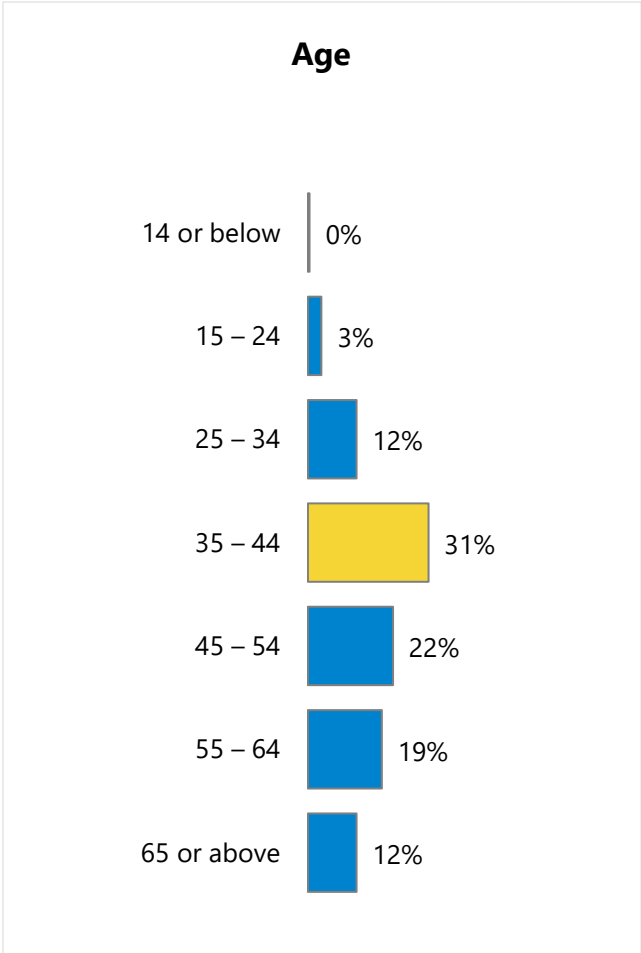
Quick Poll: Do you like our draft vision 'A place that promotes safety, recreation and sport, and is welcoming to the community' for the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct?

Respondent Profile

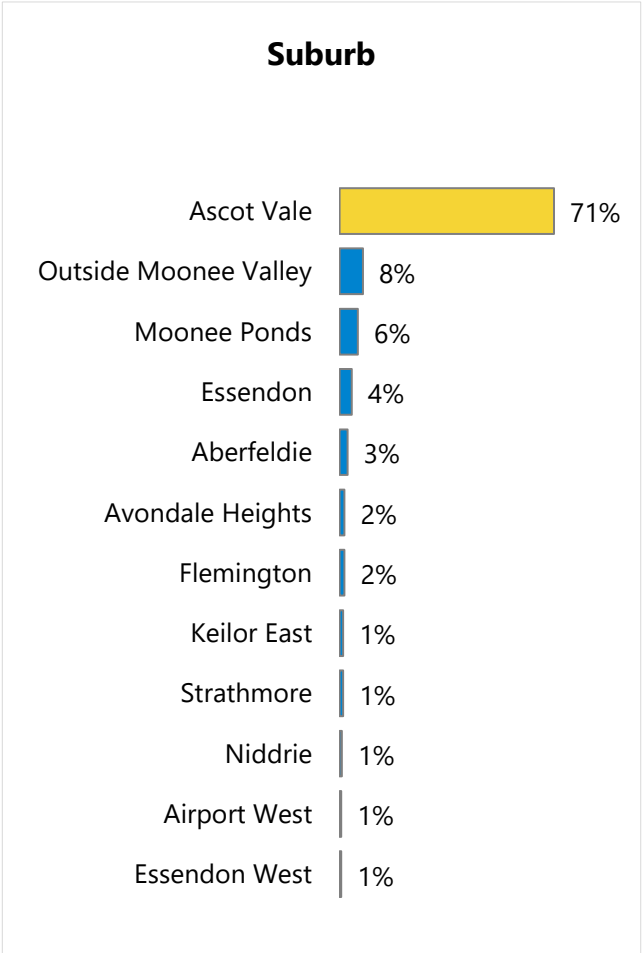
As demonstrated below, most respondents (71%) live in Ascot Vale and are local to the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct. 8% live outside of Moonee Valley, while the remaining 21% live in various suburbs within the LGA. 53% of respondents are male and 43% are female, with most (53%) aged between 35 and 54 years of age.



Q1. What is your gender? Base=420



Q2. What is your age? Base=420



Q4. What suburb do you live in? Base=420

Interview Findings



The following provides an overview of the key findings from the consultation with **golf** stakeholders at the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct.



Strengths

- Amongst the golf fraternity at Riverside, there is a strong connection to the course, and it is highly valued by golf participants.
- The 9-hole, compact layout means it is well-suited to golfers of varying abilities and age groups.
- The driving range is highly utilised after work hours and on the weekends.
- The co-location of the course and the driving range enables golfers to practice, and provides a training and development opportunity for junior golfers. It also provides an additional revenue stream for the operator.



Areas for Improvement

- Fragmented site, with an ad-hoc layout of buildings and supporting infrastructure. There has been a “piece meal” approach to facility development in the past (i.e. the upgrade of the tennis and netball courts) and the site needs to be looked at holistically.
- The inability to operate the driving range and the tennis/netball courts simultaneously has been a major issue for the golf operator, and the club has lost many junior players as they are unable to use the range as a teaching facility at the required times.
- Ultimately one contractor should be looking after everything, and better management is required until the issues with the driving range and tennis/netball courts are resolved.
- If the range isn’t making money the course is not sustainable – green keeping and water is the biggest expense. As a 9-hole course, golf itself does not generate enough income to pay its way in terms of water and requirements.
- Parts of the course have been poorly maintained and require attention, and there are a number of trees that are diseased and require replacement.
- There are safety concerns associated with the course, with one stakeholder reporting that errant balls are hitting people “all the time”. The golf club pay for Public Liability insurance and medical insurance for members due to the unsafe nature of the course.
- The precinct is highly utilised – and if all user groups are active simultaneously, there are traffic flow issues across the site, and parking is limited.



Key Priorities

- Address the safety and operational issues associated with the driving range.
- The course requires urgent re-planting of trees to replace the dead and diseased trees – each fairway should be lined with trees for safety. This would assist in addressing some of the safety issues as well by using selective tree plantings.
- A central pavilion/hub area with tennis, netball and golf that services everybody would work well.
- Improve pathways and way-finding signage is required to improve traffic flow across the site and to attempt to delineate where people cross the golf course to reach the trail.

The following provides an overview of the key findings from the consultation with **netball** stakeholders at the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct.



Strengths

- Netball stakeholders are very complimentary of the Riverside precinct, and it is highly valued by the netball community – with good fences, gates, seats and shading.
- The on-court facilities at Riverside are excellent and very high quality. The facilities are classified as ‘regional’ level by Netball Victoria.
- Netball has high participation numbers and is continuing to grow in the region, which leads to high utilisation of the facilities at Riverside. There are approximately 1,000 players that play in primary competition, and on Saturday afternoon around 2,500-3,000 people would come through the venue.
- St. John’s Netball Club is the biggest netball club in the EDFNL region, with approximately 220 members/players across 20 teams.



Areas for Improvement

- There is no home for netball in the region. EDNA is ‘based’ out of Bowls club next to Aberfeldie Primary School, and the school has control over the courts. Autumn EDNA competition run at Aberfeldie and the spring competition runs at Riverside.
- Biggest issue for netball is not having pavilion access, and no transparency around what rights and access arrangements may be.
- Netball needs dedicated access to a central hub – can’t be a seasonal agreement.
- Most netballers drive to the facility and parking is a major consideration. In combination with the parking on Wood Street, at the moment the provision is adequate.
- The driving range also causes issues, impacting the usage and operation of the courts. Ideally it would be re-aligned. There are some soil contamination issues that may have an impact on the ability to put netting up.
- In terms of golf, the course layout is a bit tight, and has always felt a bit risky on the hole nearest the river – players can accidentally hook the ball onto the river or onto the walking path. “Amazed somebody hasn’t been clocked on the head!”



Key Priorities

- A home for netball/women’s sport in Moonee Valley/ the broader region, and a dedicated netball pavilion and headquarters.
- A quality café/restaurant which services the precinct users and appeals to local residents. It would be great to see a café/restaurant become more of a feature.
- Would be good to improve the access points – Epsom Road and Maribyrnong Road – especially if precinct is used to its full potential. Traffic management needs to be progressed.

The following provides an overview of the key findings from the consultation with **tennis** stakeholders at the Riverside Sport and Recreation Precinct.



Strengths

- Great precinct for the community and is highly utilised by local residents. The whole precinct was very activated during the COVID lockdown – people would have seen the tennis courts being used.
- Overall, the venue serves tennis well, however there are some areas for improvement.
- The courts are in decent condition, with a few cracks but these are minor and have been raised with Council.
- Lighting system is excellent and the Book-a-Court system is a great tool, but needs better instructions.



Areas for Improvement

- The biggest issue is the driving range – it seems like it has fallen apart. The infrastructure is dated and can't operate at the same time as tennis and netball.
- Not having nets for the driving range is a real issue, especially when some people on the driving range don't abide by the rules and go out on the range to practice there while tennis is going on.
- In addition, tennis and netball courts do not operate well at the same time due to the two different etiquettes – netball is team sport, and revolves around a lot of noise, whistles blowing, and sirens going every quarter. A lot of tennis members have left the Club as a result, as it is too noisy and chaotic, and they don't want to play when the netball is there.
- The bleachers between courts go nearly the whole length of the court, so you have to walk all the way around the benches to get to the other side. Having a gap between the benches to enable free-flowing traffic would be ideal.
- There is also a lack of benches and seating for watching sport and around the precinct in general.



Key Priorities

- Installing windscreens and privacy screens to prevent distractions.
- Creating separation between the netball and tennis courts – 4 courts lined specifically for netball, 4 for tennis and multi-lined for the rest. Keeping the tennis courts at the front to reduce noise and light spill into the homes of local residents.
- Tennis are looking for a dedicated pavilion space, as in the instances where tennis and netball are on at the same time, there is much more dominance from netball. However, if there was one large pavilion with dedicated and separated areas for each of tennis and netball this could work.

