



Croydon Women's Safety Walk

Key Findings

Online Walk

Wednesday 9 September 2020



Women's Health East acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of Maroondah City Council or Women's Health East.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations - Main Street

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider apartments above shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased natural surveillance More activity in and around Main Street Larger customer base for retail shops
Activate Main Street and laneways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase perceptions of safety Attract broader customer base
Improve interface between railway station and back of shops on north side of Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase perceptions of safety Attract people to use car park at rear of shops Reduce traffic cruising Main Street for a park Reduce traffic safety issues in Main Street with distracted drivers 'rubber necking' for a car park

Recommendations - Town Square

Recommendation	Benefit
Encourage quality retail/hospitality venues to occupy shops adjoining Town Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased natural surveillance - 'eyes on the street' The area is used in more pro-social ways than present Attract a greater customer base Commuters will stop to/from transport
Increase artwork in and around Croydon and Croydon Town Square including street art and an art trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less graffiti Art can be how Croydon is defined and will attract people to the area Good way to engage with the diverse community around Croydon
Ensure footpath and other decorative surfaces are disability friendly and compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures safety of disabled or older persons Eliminates risk of falls
Consider 'living walls' to beautify blank brick walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigates climate change Creates cooler, greener urban spaces Reflect a Council commitment to climate change Positive impact on people's health and wellbeing

Recommendations - Laneways

Recommendation	Benefit
Encourage windows in buildings that are adjacent to laneways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural surveillance - 'eyes on the street' Improve perceptions of safety
Install art work or furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase usage and traffic in laneway Increase natural surveillance
Provide alternative signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct pedestrians to safer routes
Review potential 'entrapment' locations in existing laneways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrians feel safer Encourage greater use of laneways
Ensure vegetation does not provide concealment locations/opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrians feel safer Vegetation does not hide potential perpetrators
Ensure that predictable routes such as laneways are clearly visible from the surrounding area and provide potential alternative routes for avoidance or escape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased perceptions of safety

Recommendations - Railway Station / Bus Interchange

Recommendation	Benefit
Create a well-signed and well-lit 'safe waiting area' on both sides of the railway line for passengers awaiting pickup from the train or bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuters feel safer • More use of train/bus transport
Activate lower floor of multi-storey car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activity at ground level helps people to feel safer
Review transport route of buses coming to Croydon railway station, especially along Pierson Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pedestrian safety • Few traffic incidents
Review entry/exit of buses and cars in station car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian and driver safety
Consider ways to make the space more visually appealing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small shrubbery, plants, artwork

Recommendations - Skate Park / Play Space

Recommendation	Benefit
Determine need, and increase activation of girls at skate park if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for girls will increase their skateboarding confidence and potential for using this space as active participants

Recommendations - Pedestrian Crossings, intersections and footpaths

Recommendation	Benefit
Review length of timing at pedestrian crossing across Mt Dandenong Road at Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety for pedestrians who are crossing • Eliminate need for people to wait on narrow island in middle of road until next opportunity to cross • Eliminate need for people to rush across Mt Dandenong Road • Especially important with development of Croydon Community Precinct and increased usage of this area
Traffic calming in Mt Dandenong Road approaching Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow traffic down • Enable safe entry for cars into Arndale Shopping Centre
Review entry/exits to Arndale Shopping Centre and consider 1 exit and 1 entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve entry/exit to shopping centre • Reduce incidents/confusion with drivers • Improved traffic flow
Create wider 'island' in Mt Dandenong Road at Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer place for pedestrians to wait for change of lights
Consider flashing lights to alert drivers to pedestrian crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be more 'visible' to drivers than static neon pedestrian sign
Create streetscapes that are appealing to pedestrians and cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise physical activity • Increase surveillance and activity on the street

Recommendations - Aquahub

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider making Aquahub and other public buildings in Croydon more visually appealing through the use of murals, artwork, flags, projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More attractive vibrant spaces • Encourage use and participation • A way to be more inclusive and welcoming
Review lighting in Aquahub car parks, especially 'cone effect' of existing lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers feel safer, particularly women and female staff • More night time usage • More of car park can safely be used for parking
Review entrances and exits to Aquahub car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less confusion for drivers and pedestrians • Improved traffic flow • Reduced incidents
Review corridors/exits to ensure clear line of sight for pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure personal safety of staff/patrons using Aquahub

Recommendations - Croydon Library and surrounds

Recommendation	Benefit
Trim vegetation along pathways around the lake to ensure that vegetation does not provide concealment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians, especially women and those working at Aquahub, will feel safer • No opportunity for concealment or entrapment
Ensure buildings are orientated to face parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure passive surveillance • This recommendation would be equally applicable to the Croydon Community Precinct and other proposed developments in Croydon
Encourage fencing between residential allotments and any adjoining open space to be visually permeable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise natural surveillance • Increase perceptions of safety and deter crime

Recommendations - Arndale Shopping Centre

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider implementing some form of traffic calming on Mt Dandenong Road for traffic travelling south towards Ringwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will avoid rear end collisions as cars slow down to enter Arndale car park
Consider revising entrance/exits into Arndale car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid cars entering Mount Dandenong Road into oncoming traffic • Smoother traffic flow into and out of Arndale Shopping Centre
Increase lighting at Arndale Shopping Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoppers, particularly women, will feel safer

Recommendations - Tarralla Creek Trail

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider creating separate paths for pedestrians/prams/dog walkers and cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer pedestrian experiences • More use of Tarralla Creek Trail
Alternatively, consider widening shared pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids clash of cyclists and pedestrians • Safer for everyone
Consider whether lighting the path would be appropriate, safer and/or increase usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased usage of Tarralla Creek Trail
Consider ways to increase natural surveillance of this trail eg less dense shrubland between path and pony track/Eastfield Park, backyards more open to trail, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase perceptions of safety • Pedestrians won't feel so 'enclosed' or isolated • Provide clear sightlines to others
Create small parks or viewing platforms along Tarralla Creek Trail, along with picnic/barbeque facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase activation of Trail • Encourages more visitors, who stay longer • Increase perceptions of safety along this Trail

Introduction

Public spaces play a significant role in community life. They provide a space for people to foster social connections, engage in sport and physical activity and access green spaces. Being able to occupy public space can positively impact on social, mental and physical health and wellbeing.

There is, however, inequality in who can access and use these spaces safely. Women's experiences and perceptions of public spaces differs to men and it is important to take these differences into account when planning and designing spaces for the community.

The evidence shows that women are more likely than men to feel unsafe in public spaces and can also feel as though a space is not designed with them in mind. This is particularly true for women who experience other intersecting forms of marginalisation, such as those who identify as LGBTIQ, women from migrant backgrounds, older women, Aboriginal women and women with a disability.

Process - how it worked

Funding

Women's Health East successfully applied for funding from the State Government 'Gender Equality Capacity Building Micro Grants Program' to run a pilot women's safety walk in both Maroondah City Council and Monash City Council in 2020.

Determining a site

In consultation with Maroondah City Council, it was determined that one of the key strategic urban planning projects being undertaken at present is the preparation of the Croydon Structure Plan. This area includes the town centre and surrounding areas which is identified as one of the Major Activity Centres in Maroondah as it provides a suburban focal point for services, employment, housing, public transport and social interaction.

Since the structure plan for the area was developed in 2006, the area has undergone significant changes in demographics and employment, with a number of strategic projects underway. A review of the 2006 Croydon Structure Plan is currently in progress as part of the process to prepare a revised Croydon Structure Plan.

The aim of the structure plan is to plan for and develop a shared vision for the Croydon activity centre, and to identify the type and scope of change projected within an activity centre over time. It is also a tool to help manage, influence and facilitate change in the Croydon Major Activity Centre.

One of the areas to be considered during the review of the Plan is the connectivity and safety of the community while navigating the public realm. Findings from the Croydon Women's Safety Walk will help inform this area of the plan.

Engagement

The Croydon 'Women's Safety Walk' was piloted on 9 September 2020. The walk was conducted online via Zoom due to COVID restrictions. This process was more successful than anticipated. It enabled a wide range of women to participate - all of whom were familiar with Croydon - and the online process facilitated more engagement, conversations and discussions within the group.

Participants

A diverse group of women were recruited primarily by Maroondah City Council, through networks and contacts - 18 women registered for the walk, 14 attended, as well as Council representatives from Strategic Planning, Community Planning, Assets Management and a consultant. Women who participated in the walk were from the following groups:

Young people 18-22	4
University of the Third Age/seniors	2
Croydon Aquahub	3
Croydon Library	2
Croydon Main Street Traders	1
Women's Health East advocate	1
Local resident	1

Aim

The aim of the walk was to elevate and utilise the lived experience of local women to inform a gendered approach to planning and design of public places. All the women who attended either lived/worked or visited Croydon for recreational purposes. They were very familiar with the site chosen for the walk and some had lived there all their lives. Two of the women had lived in Croydon more than 30 years.

Method

The online session was held from 10.00am to 11.30am. A short outline of the session is attached. For ease, following introductions and explanations, the group was split into two 'rooms' to discuss either the north side of Mt Dandenong Road or the south side of Mt Dandenong Road.

By sharing images of local landmarks, the women were 'walked' through these public spaces and asked to identify:

1. What is your opinion of this area (good or bad) and why?
2. Would/do you come here during the day?
3. Would/do you come here during the night?
4. How can we make this place safer/more friendly/more inclusive?

The women gave their permission for the session to be recorded to enable accurate capture of their feedback - which appears in the following pages. Notes were also taken.

Safer by design


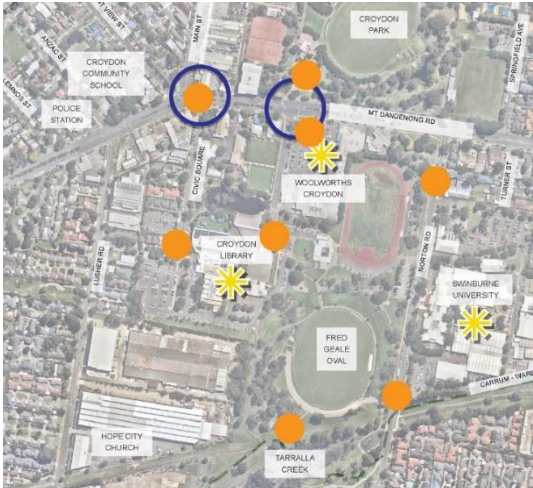
Consideration of design to create safer places is one of the key elements in the preparation of the Croydon Structure Plan. The key to safer places is to improve the quality of the environment, minimise the opportunity for crime and promote accessible and liveable places that encourage feelings of safety and community participation. The *Safer by Design Guidelines, Victoria* identified the following principles to promote safer places:

Surveillance	Maximise visibility and surveillance of the public environment
Access, movement and sightlines	Provide safe movement, good connections and access
Activity	Maximise activity in public places
Ownership	Clearly define private and public space responsibilities
Management and maintenance	Manage public space to ensure that it is attractive and well-used

It is expected that these principles will help structure the key findings from this session for consideration in the preparation of the Croydon Structure Plan

Key Findings and Recommendations

After introductions, familiarisation with the Croydon Structure Plan site and some background to the work currently being done in this space, the group was split into two ‘rooms’ to discuss either the north side (of Mount Dandenong Road) or the south side. Area maps and key features of those sites are outlined below.

North side	South side
	
Key features discussed	Key features discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Railway Station • Bus transit area • Car parking • Main Street • Croydon Town Square • Laneways • Pedestrian crossings, intersections and footpaths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Library • Aquahub • Swinburne University • Tarralla Creek Trail • Pedestrian crossings/intersections • Y-Space Skate Park • X-Space Regional Play Space

Common theme – safety at night

Regardless of the area of Croydon that was being discussed, women **consistently reported feeling unsafe in public space at night**, which ultimately meant that they chose not to frequent the Croydon area at night-time. This correlates with wider evidence that demonstrates an unwillingness by women to be in public spaces at night time, especially when on their own.

Some participants expressed a dislike of the car parking area between Main Street and the railway station/bus interchange, and the laneways between these areas which they would not frequent at night. There was also a lot of discussion about the lack of activity and people in Main Street at night, which contributed to perceptions of this location being unsafe.

- *I don't mind the area in the day time, but I certainly don't like the areas around the back of the shops (facing the station) including the laneways, that whole area - you wouldn't get me walking there at night.*
- *I just don't walk at night - it's not what women do.*
- *Never go there during the night.*

Main Street



In general, and in non-COVID times, Main Street is viewed as a vibrant area enlivened by a thriving café culture. Unfortunately, during COVID a significant number of cafés and shops have closed (some permanently) so it is difficult to project what post-COVID Main Street will look and feel like.

Feedback

There were some comments about the emptiness of Main Street, particularly on Sundays when most shops are closed. Some participants expressed feeling unsafe at these times. It was also acknowledged that COVID may play a role in this emptiness. One participant had lived in Croydon 32 years and expressed feeling 'very uncomfortable' around Main Street and Town Square on a Sunday recently. She had never felt like that before. Many of the women commented about the lack of 'activation' of Main Street at night, which can contribute to it feeling empty and unsafe.

- *I love the tree lined streets, the old-fashioned lights, it's a pretty street daytime and night-time.*
- *I would feel safe coming at night only in limited capacity. I would park near the shop or restaurant and go straight back to car, I wouldn't linger.*
- *There is not a lot of activation of the street at night. Restaurants open...but not a lot of activity that spills out onto the street. Can feel empty.*
- *Activation of a space has an impact on perceptions of safety – the end of main street that has cafes spilling onto the street feels safer.*
- *I never go there during the night. During the day I feel pretty safe, but there are a small number of laneways that are more secluded...not many people. This doesn't feel as safe as Main Street*
- *Lack of parking [on Main Street] can push you to the back car parks and forces you to go off the beaten track to access Main Street*
- *Croydon is so vibe-y during the day but at night it just shuts down.*

When asked how they felt about having apartments above the shops, this suggestion was positively received (also see Town Square section for more feedback on apartments).

- *I think it [apartments] could work.*
- *I have family that live in inner Melbourne above shops, and it's constantly bustling.*
- *It's good to have apartments over shops and not taking up valuable green space.*

Recommendations - Main Street

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider apartments above shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased natural surveillance • More activity in and around Main Street • Larger customer base for retail shops
Activate Main Street and surrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase perceptions of safety • Attract broader customer base
Improve interface between railway station and back of shops on north side of Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase perceptions of safety • Attract people to use car park at rear of shops • Reduce traffic cruising Main Street for a park • Reduce traffic safety issues in Main Street with distracted drivers 'rubber necking' for a car park

Town Square



Croydon Town Square was opened in April 2019 and creates an attractive public open space between the railway station and Main Street, replacing a narrow laneway once there.

There are features of Town Square - existing or missing - that the women commented on.

Feedback

- *Go there often and walk through there often.*
- *Sometimes gatherings of wrong kind of people at night time.*
- *Town Square is a vast improvement...pedestrian connection through to the station is great.*
- *Shame about big blank wall...be good is we could activate that space...but out of council control*
- *Negative feedback has been received about safety of new toilet block at night and early morning from residents. Feedback from Police about the safety of those toilets [unsafe].*
- *People will step straight out in front of your car without looking. It's like they still think they are in a park [coming out of Town Square]. Better signage to indicate they are crossing a road. Lamp post might be obscuring vision for pedestrians.*
- *Don't use it super often [young person], but I like it with the greenery and open space...it's a nice place to get something to eat and have somewhere to sit during the day. Some of the benches are dirty with graffiti and gum which is a bit of a negative.*
- *I have real issues with Town Square. I provided a lot of input through the Disability Advisory Committee about pavement surfacing for people. I have severe balance issues. I have great problems using Town Square because of the pavement surfacing on those smaller tiles - it's just too rough and too uneven for me. I can trip very easily.*
- *If you could get little cafes on the edge [of Town Square] that would give it a completely different feel.*
- *We'd like to see more art and murals around - from local artists!*

What do you think of the look and feel of Town Square? Is it too different from the feel of Main Street?

- *I like it. Used to be very closed. Widened open area, and a bit of greenery in there which is nice. Not disconnected to style in Main Street at all. It has a modern feel.*

How would you feel about having apartments above Main Street shops and Town Square?

- *Nice to have people living there, create foot traffic and people going to shops and cinema – better safety.*
- *Don't want multi-storey apartments as don't want to block sunshine to Main Street. One or two storeys would be okay.*
- *I think this would add to feeling of safety. But is there enough parking for people (most houses are two car households). Need appropriate parking.*
- *In any situation, the more people around the safer I feel, especially at night. Having the security of knowing there are more people, and eyes on the street.*

- *When you live in an area, you are more invested in what's going on. More likely to intervene if you hear anything happening, more aware what's happening on the street. It's not a bad idea [to have living quarters above].*

There were multiple comments about how to beautify Town Square and Main Street

- *It would be awesome to have a mural or a living wall. Further discussion - if owners agree, the wall can be used. An example of this is the bra shop at the end of James Kerr Way. We had some young people do a mural along the laneway wall there, with permission from the owners. It was a private building.*
- *I've seen that wall with the mural and it looks really good. Something decorative would look much better. Preventative - other taggers leave it alone*
- *Stencils on the back wall of Ronald King are really good*
- *We'd like to see more art and murals around - from local artists!*
- *You could do an art competition or something like that. It would be an attraction and might bring people to Croydon. The former Marketing Coordinator wanted to an art trail, maybe historical, but it would be good to involve young people too.*
- *Last year Main Street had a multicultural festival and that was really well received so why can't we have multicultural artists doing art works? That would be really inclusive. It would reflect who the community encompasses really. It wouldn't just be another Aussie, because we're not just an Aussie city. We've got a huge multicultural community. I really enjoyed that event and seeing all the costumes and reading about their cultures.*
- *Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place is in Croydon too so maybe some indigenous art.*
- *We seem to have quite a few Chin people too and a lot of Indian people too. I'm sure there is heaps of talent around*
- *"Croydon - melting pot of culture" - that's what we could call it.*

Recommendations - Town Square

Recommendation	Benefit
Encourage retail/hospitality venues to occupy shops adjoining Town Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased natural surveillance - 'eyes on the street' • The area is used in more pro-social ways than present • Attract a greater customer base • Commuters will stop to/from transport
Increase artwork in and around Croydon - including street art and an art trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less graffiti • Art can be how Croydon is defined and will attract people to the area • Good way to engage with the diverse community around Croydon
Ensure footpath and other decorative surfaces are disability friendly and compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures safety of disabled or older persons • Eliminates risk of falls
Consider 'living walls' to beautify blank brick walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigates climate change • Creates cooler, greener urban spaces • Reflect a Council commitment to climate change • Positive impact on people's health and wellbeing

Laneways



Feedback

Laneways are a prominent feature off Main Street. Generally, laneways provide access to Main Street from car parks behind the shops. They also connect Main Street to the playground and Skate Park.

While relatively common in urban spaces, laneways provide 'entrapment opportunities' and are 'movement predictors' when viewed from a CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) lens. Due to the unchangeable route or path, laneways offer no choice of alternative routes for pedestrians. Entrapment locations within laneways eg recessed doorways, gaps between buildings, etc can provide concealment for perpetrators.

Feedback from the women was that they avoided laneways in general, both during the day and at night.

- *I tend to avoid the laneways. It's a safety thing, I feel like I'm enclosed. I tend to avoid them all together.*
- *I agree. I tend to avoid them just because some of them are quite shadowed, narrow and can feel unsafe, especially as a young girl.*
- *I would use St Carlos walk because it has a sense of being more open and you've got shops and windows facing into you. The other has flat brick wall.*
- *Trees can tend to make it feel unsafe, hiding spot*
- *CCTV down the laneway to the station? Or even a mirror where you can see if there is someone behind me, or someone around the corner?*
- *If CCTV cameras were monitored live, then this would make the laneways safer. But would have to be monitored and acted on.*
- *Surface of concrete on some of the laneways is uneven. This can be a problem for people with mobility issues or prams or wheelchairs. Uneven concrete can make it quite nasty.*
- *I would use during the day but absolutely no way I would use it at night time by myself.*
- *[In regards to the] skinny laneway near the station carpark, you need to stop to let someone else through. You are relying on people being courteous to use that safely during the day.*
- *They're ok but I would only use them during the day time. I don't have cause to be there at night. They could be a bit confronting at night. Particularly the lanes coming from the station car park, through to Main Street, because you can't see what's at the end when you get there.*
- *I'm not sure of what the lighting is like in the lane that goes through Collins Book Shop - San Carlos Way.*
- *I use the laneways 90% during the day time. I always park at the back of the stores on the left side and I don't have any issues with day time accessing the shops that way. It's better than going up Main Street.*

- *The laneway near Collins and Westpac is quite nice really [San Carlos Walk]. That always seems pleasant. It looks more open, whereas a lot of the other laneways are like a brick wall and a narrow laneway. They are ok in my personal opinion in the day time but not at night. Once you're in them, you're stuck.*
- *Furniture or art would not help in my opinion.*
- *I would not recommend going down a laneway at night - because unless there is a café or there is a shop with a window facing onto the laneway - you don't have natural surveillance.*
- *San Carlos does have a café at the end of it. It's open day times.*

Recommendations - Laneways

Recommendation	Benefit
Encourage windows in buildings that are adjacent to laneways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural surveillance - 'eyes on the street' • Improve perceptions of safety
Install art work or furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase usage and traffic in laneway • Increase natural surveillance
Provide alternative signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct pedestrians to safer routes
Review potential 'entrapment' locations in existing laneways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians feel safer • Encourage greater use of laneways
Ensure vegetation does not provide concealment locations/opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians feel safer • Vegetation does not hide potential perpetrators
Ensure that predictable routes such as laneways are clearly visible from the surrounding area and provide potential alternative routes for avoidance or escape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased perceptions of safety

Railway Station/Bus Interchange



Croydon Railway Station and Bus interchange is a heavy traffic area. It also includes car parking, which is often used as a 'overflow' when Main Street car parking is at capacity. A multi-storey car park is planned for this location.

Feedback

- *I find it a really ugly area. Patch of dirt...not a particularly attractive area. My least favourite part of Croydon because it's just so unappealing.*
- *The surface in the station carpark where you park your car to shop in Main Street...bumpy, gravel everywhere, car spots are close together. Quite unpleasant. Elderly people with frames or sticks and Mums with pram – the uneven surface can be dangerous.*
- *Wider parking spots are needed*
- *When I walk across the tracks to Centro, I rarely see anyone. I find it quite unnerving. Would walk all the way from Aquahub to Centro and would see only one or two people out of Main Street.*
- *I would feel safer if I saw more people.*
- *Disconnect between Centro and Main Street. [Most people] ...choose one or another.*
- *Perception that Croydon Station is an unsafe place. Does the data support that? I certainly don't feel unsafe there. It's an ugly spot (feels like back of house). Lots of different types of people, but they don't make me feel unsafe.*
- *When it's not the pandemic I use the train. I use public transport a lot.*
- *I wouldn't like to be waiting around the train station too long in the evening that's for sure.*
- *Coming back from the city, on the other side, I always make sure there's someone to meet me there.*
- *I always get picked up in Wicklow Avenue - if I have to wait it's not great*
- *On the other side, my biggest concern is the pedestrian crossings across 2 there you are constantly watching for buses and cars and things and if I move suddenly I can fall, so I have to be careful.*
- *If I use the train I try and park at the station, it's a dreadful issue, but it is at every station.*
- *I can see the buses going around and around are a big issue*
- *Having a multi-storey car park can also bring safety issues.*

Recommendations - Railway Station/Bus Interchange

Recommendation	Benefit
Create a well-signed and well-lit 'safe waiting area' on both sides of the railway line for passengers awaiting pickup from the train or bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuters feel safer • More use of train/bus transport • Better environmentally
Activate lower floor of multi-storey car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activity at ground level helps people to feel safer
Review transport route of buses coming to Croydon railway station, especially along Pierson Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pedestrian safety
Review entry/exit of buses and cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian and driver safety
Consider ways to make the space more visually appealing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small shrubbery, plants, artwork

Skate Park/Play Space



The Y-Space skate park and X-Space regional play space were viewed very positively by most participants. People generally loved this area and loved the fact that it was well utilised by young people, children and families especially.

Feedback

- *Since the playground has been redeveloped [there have been] a lot more younger kids*
- *80% male 20% female - perhaps consider programming for girls*
- *I use the pathway from Hewish Road to Mt D Road instead of using Main Street. The path is fine, there are seats, lots of activity eg at tennis*
- *It's a very well activated space which contributes to feeling safer*
- *Having the playground close by means there are a lot of family groups and that helps the safety aspect because you just don't have 'boys' in groups. It's not just boys, but because the playground is there it creates a family situation which is a good mix of people.*
- *Overall, I think the skate park is dominated by males. That's ok because it keeps them off the street.*
- *I haven't walked through there at night time.*
- *I don't feel concerned walking through there during the day.*
- *I used to think this space was quite intimidating, but now I work close by and in the youth sector and I think it's a great space and I love how intergenerational it is and I've heard all ages navigate the space really well and I've seen teens and people in their early 20's share the area with toddlers who are on their scooters. But I also wouldn't walk through there at night time, particularly on my own.*
- *The addition of the children's play area helps people moderate their behaviour.*
- *Colleagues at work report that the older kids are quite respectful towards the younger children.*
- *I don't mind during the day but I wouldn't use at night. The end near the skate park can attract quite a few undesirables.*
- *It's very well used - I mostly drive past it. It must be of great benefit to a lot of families.*
- *Outside of this conversation - we have a lot of trouble with after-hours use of this area plus lots of alcohol related litter. Lighting is on until quite late.*
- *Visibility is good, quite open*
- *Accessible toilets are good to have near the skate park*

Is there any way to make the skatepark area safer?

- *I'm not sure what the improvement would be because it's such a huge open space and I feel very exposed to walk through it and you realise everyone can see you. Some people walking at night might not want to be seen at all.*

- *Skate park is close to Mt Dandenong Road, but if you're coming from Hewish Road there's not much lighting at that end, whereas there's much more lighting at the skate park end.*
- *The path near the football pavilion is much darker.*
- *Facilities that are close to main roads are better because you might feel safer being closer to the road than if the eg skate park was in the middle of the park somewhere.*
- *I just don't walk at night - it's not what women do.*

Recommendations - Skate Park / Play Space

Recommendation	Benefit
Determine need, and increase activation of girls at skate park if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for girls will increase their skateboarding confidence and potential for using this space as active participants

Pedestrian crossings, intersections and footpaths



There was quite a lot of discussion about pedestrian links in central Croydon as well as driver experiences.

Feedback

Drivers

- *Coming down Main St towards Mt Dandenong Road - drivers don't see people at pedestrian lights*
- *Cars coming down Mt Dandenong Road and turning left into Main Street are inattentive. They are not watching for pedestrians, don't see them on zebra crossing.*
- *The problem is the drivers - they are looking around or trying to get through [the lights] before the pedestrian steps off the curb, you're almost touching the bonnet of their car*
- *As a P plate driver, I definitely look out for and notice the pedestrian crossings with the flashing lights, it really makes you look out for pedestrians and slow down a bit more*

Pedestrian Crossings - timing of lights

- *Flashing lights at the pedestrian crossings especially at the opening of Main Street would be helpful as that is one of the main spots that I am most concerned about crossing.*
- *I use that intersection [Mt Dandenong/Civic Square] often as it's close to where we work and timing is a definite issue especially going across Mt Dandenong Road. You've got limited time to get across to the island and over to the other side and a lot of people [drivers?] try to beat that light as well.*
- *The timings need to be longer, would definitely be an improvement there. I know you've got the option to stop but most people won't, they just keep going even if it's turned red. People need more time to cross.*
- *There are services on the south side of Mt Dandenong Road that are for older people or young children. I've seen lots of people on mobility scooters too who really struggle. It would be good to consider adjusting the timings of the pedestrian lights here (Mt Dandenong Road/Civic Square).*
- *Maybe this could be looked at when the Croydon Community Hub is developed - the crossing will be busier.*
- *Buses are also an issue as well. If I've ever seen a near miss it's going to be with a bus, especially near crossings.*
- *Roads are very big and busy to cross.*
- *Pedestrian crossings are really tricky, especially across Mt Dandenong Road at Main Street and Arndale. The one at Arndale can be tricky. It's easy to use, I use it a lot, but the timing is a bit short. It depends on how fast you are walking. For fast walkers, it cuts out/starts flashing just after you get off the middle*

island. When it flashes, you do have enough time to complete your walk, but for someone who is really slow or using a walker they would be stuck in the middle of the road. Which is not ideal because it's a very busy road.

Islands in middle of road

- If you're stuck in the middle of the road you feel unsafe because it's very narrow and traffic is turning into and out of Civic Square there.
- And especially too if you get stuck on that island, you feel quite exposed to traffic as well.
- If it's possible to make the island wider that might help. If you didn't have to stop in the middle it wouldn't be an issue (Mt Dandenong Road/Civic Square)

How do you feel at night crossing the road?

- Note from conveners: No comment, complete silence - no women from the group go out at night.

Recommendations - Pedestrian Crossings, intersections and footpaths

Recommendation	Benefit
Review length of timing at pedestrian crossing across Mt Dandenong Road at Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety for pedestrians who are crossing • Eliminate need for people to wait on narrow island in middle of road until next opportunity to cross • Eliminate need for people to rush across Mt Dandenong Road • Especially important with development of Croydon Community Precinct and increased usage of this area
Traffic calming in Mt Dandenong Road approaching Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow traffic down • Enable safe entry for cars into Arndale Shopping Centre
Review entry/exits to Arndale Shopping Centre and consider 1 exit and 1 entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve entry/exit to shopping centre • Reduce incidents/confusion with drivers • Improved traffic flow
Create wider 'island' in Mt Dandenong Road at Civic Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer place for pedestrians to wait for change of lights
Consider flashing lights to alert drivers to pedestrian crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be more 'visible' to drivers than static neon pedestrian sign
Create streetscapes that are appealing to pedestrians and cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise physical activity • Increase surveillance and activity on the street

Aquahub



Feedback

Aquahub (aquatic and leisure centre) generated a lot of discussion by participants, some of whom worked there and others who were regular or past users. While feedback on the venue itself was positive, many women expressed safety concerns/barriers that would impact their use of this facility.

Carpark

- *Walking to your vehicle, there are a lot of cars coming/going/reversing so you have to be careful. Drivers not concentrating*
- *Going from someone who used to drive to work and now walks to work (Aquahub) every day via Birdwood Ave, the car park entrance on Birdwood Avenue isn't very wide and the path goes straight across it. There's no signage about who should give way. I think it should be either an exit or an entrance. As a driver I've had cars cut me off - and as a walker I've had cars run through that area without checking what I'm going to do. That's the only area for me where there are safety issues.*
- *The car park at night is very different to day time. There are lights around but it isn't well-lit and if you park towards the back end of the car park I don't personally feel safe then. If I'm working at night I make a point to park up closer to the building so I don't have to walk too far into the car park.*

Building safety

- *I walk past Aquahub every day to get to Tarralla Creek, if I'm walking alone I'm definitely on a higher alert.*
- *There's an entranceway a bit further down towards the car park area, sort of like emergency exits when you're in the building, but they are sort of like corridors on the outside and they are really dodgy, and I always try to have a little sneak peak to see if there's someone in there - it's uncomfortable. They're dirty, cluttered with debris from trees, etc.*
- *Back of Aquahub - parking here is not safe. You also have to navigate around this part of the car park to reach the Tarralla Creek Trail.*
- *I used to frequent Aquahub as a kid. I always found it really open and clear. I never had any trouble navigating the space. It has good clear pathways, I never felt that anything was indirect, and it was easy to find your way around here.*
- *I really like how clear it is, it is so bright and inviting (no shadows/shade)*
- *Generally, it feels pretty safe*
- *It is very open and easy to find the entrance*

Would lighting help?

- *I feel like the main issue is the lighting, because although there are definitely lights there, it doesn't seem light enough and it can be a problem to find your car.*
- *Lighting needs to be reviewed. Because car park is relatively new, there was an assumption the lighting would be illuminated at appropriate levels.*
- *The space is great during the day - but it transforms at night.*
- *The lights that are in the car park are basically like cones, so if you park right under the light you are fine but if you're parked anywhere else it's a problem.*
- *When I used to use it, it was good. Accessibility and ramps were good.*

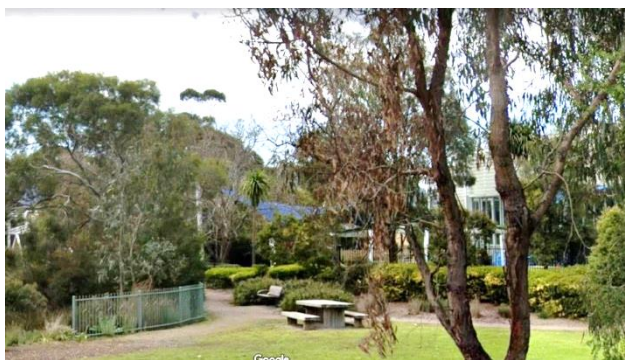
How can Aquahub look more welcoming to more people?

- *More colour at the entranceway would be helpful. More paint/artwork to give the building a friendly vibe.*
- *Plants would also be a lot more welcoming.*
- *Art or signage to show that Aquahub is inclusive of people of all backgrounds. Maybe LGBTIQ+ flags, multicultural flags, commissioned art works.*
- *Making a building visually appealing really makes a difference. Attracts people. Makes them feel more excited about going there.*

Recommendations - Aquahub

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider making Aquahub and other public buildings in Croydon more visually appealing through the use of murals, artwork, flags, projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More attractive vibrant spaces• Encourage use and participation• A way to be more inclusive and welcoming
Review lighting in Aquahub car parks, especially 'cone effect' of existing lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers feel safer, particularly women and female staff• More night time usage• More of car park can safely be used for parking
Review entrances and exits to Aquahub car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less confusion for drivers and pedestrians• Improved traffic flow• Reduced incidents
Review corridors/exits to ensure clear line of sight for pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure personal safety of staff/patrons using Aquahub

Croydon Library and surrounds



Croydon Library is a well-used and well-loved community facility. It's proximity to Main Street and a wide range of community facilities including Aquahub, the Bowls Club, Arndale Shopping Centre, Occasional Care, Senior Citizens Centre, Maternal and Child Health, etc makes it a 'destination with benefits'.

While the facility is well-patronised, there was considerable discussion about night time use and comments about the pathways around the library, particularly the one around the lake, from the Library to Aquahub where a number of participants reported feeling unsafe.

Feedback

- *I really dislike the path around the lake from Aquahub/Occasional Care because you feel so isolated and alone and the shrubbery hides you from other peoples' vision.*
- *While the gardens are nice, you can't see who might be coming on the path from another direction.*
- *In winter there is a lot of water on the pathways and it's very muddy.*
- *People don't feel safe at night when there are events at EV's and gather around the lake. People using the library don't feel safe.*
- *We've got a 24-hour return chute at the library and they won't come down to return books at night because of people who might be hanging around the duck pond.*
- *A lot of employees at Aquahub, we walk around the lake a lot to buy lunch at Arndale. I've done it with people and I've done it on my own and I definitely feel uncomfortable on my own. It's nice the green and foliage, etc but it's quite enclosed, quite a tight space, especially if you walk past someone else you are quite close to someone and there isn't really an area to step to the side and get out of people's way.*
- *That's an area I'm very cagey about using. You can't be seen when you're travelling along that path.*
- *After a lot of years going to the library with my mum during the day, you have to wear closed toe shoes because there is almost always glass in the Arndale car park. We park here to return books. There's glass around the pathways at the back of the library. It's always a danger, always a hazard. There are shards of glass (smashed bottles) on the ground and it's always concerning to me.*

Recommendations - Croydon Library and surrounds

Recommendation	Benefit
Trim vegetation along pathways around the lake to ensure that vegetation does not provide concealment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians, especially women and those working at Aquahub, will feel safer • No opportunity for concealment or entrapment
Ensure buildings are orientated to face parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure passive surveillance • This recommendation would be equally applicable to the Croydon Community Precinct and other proposed developments in Croydon
Encourage fencing between residential allotments and any adjoining open space to be visually permeable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise natural surveillance • Increase perceptions of safety and deter crime

Arndale Shopping Centre



Feedback

Participants reported several concerns at Arndale Shopping Centre. These concerns related to safety at night as well as traffic issues when trying to enter the car park from Mt Dandenong Road.

- *I find the car park quite horrendous.*
- *Coming down Mt Dandenong Road and turning into the car park is quite dangerous as cars are coming up behind you very fast.*
- *Don't feel safe at night in the car park.*
- *It would be much better if Woolworths had their shopfront facing the car park eg with big windows. It would be so much brighter and you would feel so much safer.*
- *I tend not to go there at night.*
- *If it got a cosmetic lift and a few more lights it could be transformed and made a really vibrant place.*
- *I park in the Arndale car park when I go to the library - it's closer.*

Recommendations - Arndale Shopping Centre

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider implementing some form of traffic calming on Mt Dandenong Road for traffic travelling south towards Ringwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will avoid rear end collisions as cars slow down to enter Arndale car park
Consider revising entrance/exits into Arndale car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid cars entering Mount Dandenong Road into oncoming traffic• Smoother traffic flow into and out of Arndale Shopping Centre
Increase lighting at Arndale Shopping Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoppers, particularly women, will feel safer

Tarralla Creek Trail



Feedback

- *This area has the potential to be really inviting/beautiful with some work*
- *The footpaths are not that flat, which is fine for me, but parents with prams or walking with heels is difficult*
- *There's a lot of dumping of stuff in Tarralla Creek - it used to be a drain*
- *Walking paths both sides - when I walk I choose the gravel side because you're less likely to come into contact with cyclists.*
- *I walk my dog on this track every day. I love it during the day and I really enjoy the nature aspect of it. I agree with the point about cyclists, especially when it's busy. It's just a case of people not ringing their bells when they're passing.*
- *My dog likes to veer around while walking - so what I generally do is the first half of the walk on the gravel and then circle back to Eastfield Road. There's no lighting on it, there's been a few times when I've had to run the track rather than walk it because it's getting dark and I don't feel comfortable doing it by myself because it feels like you are in the middle of nowhere. I know I'm not, but it just feels like it.*
- *Safety-wise some more lighting might be helpful*
- *There is no natural surveillance because the houses back onto the track but there's no one overlooking the path/trail*
- *We make sure when we have our dog we go on the trail where there's no bikes. We feel safer.*
- *It seems share paths don't work that well for pedestrians - make sure we provide both options. I think older people would also feel safer away from cyclists.*
- *Gravel paths are usually not too much of a problem. We often park our car at Arndale and go walking along the Tarralla Creek trail and part of that is gravel.*
- *I personally wish the bike/pedestrian paths were separate. It's too difficult with cyclists, walkers, dogs, prams competing to share the space. Plus terribly hard with little people riding bikes, scooters who are going all over the place.*

Recommendations - Tarralla Creek Trail

Recommendation	Benefit
Consider creating separate paths for pedestrians/prams/dog walkers and cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer pedestrian experiences • More use of Tarralla Creek Trail
Alternatively, consider widening shared pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids clash of cyclists and pedestrians • Safer for everyone
Consider whether lighting the path would be appropriate, safer and/or increase usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great use of Tarralla Creek Trail
Consider ways to increase natural surveillance of this trail eg less dense shrubland between path and pony track/Eastfield Park, backyards more open to trail, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase perceptions of safety • Pedestrians won't feel so 'enclosed' or isolated • Provide clear sightlines to others
Create small parks or viewing platforms along Tarralla Creek Trail, along with picnic/barbeque facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase activation of Trail • Encourages more visitors, who stay longer • Increase perceptions of safety along this Trail

Lessons Learned

1. The online platform worked well for the following reasons:
 - a. A broader area could be 'walked' in the given timeframe
 - b. More women could participate than would have been possible in person
 - c. All participants' voices and experiences could be heard
 - d. Women with a greater diversity of abilities could participate
 - e. The session kept to time
 - f. Session could be recorded (with permission)
2. Engaging a broad range of local women
 - a. It was useful and easy to tap into a range of networks through Maroondah Council
 - b. People were keen to participate
 - c. There were still certain groups of women that were hard to reach
 - d. Participants came to the workshop with a prior knowledge of the Croydon area
 - e. An additional session was run for women who could not attend the main workshop
3. Workshop process
 - a. Workshop facilitators had a good local knowledge of Croydon
 - b. Prior to the session, participants were emailed some general information about the workshop process and what to expect
 - c. Following an introduction to the session, the group was split into two smaller breakout rooms to focus on two specific areas of Croydon
 - d. Some participants expressed a desire to spend more time in the smaller groups because they were enjoying the discussion
 - e. It was beneficial for strategic/urban planners from Maroondah Council and the project consultant to attend the workshop as they were able to observe the process, hear feedback directly from women and ask clarifying questions

Next steps

1. Recommendations from the safety walk will be presented to Maroondah City Council strategic/urban planners and consultants engaged in the Croydon Structure Plan, for their consideration and incorporation into the Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper on the Croydon Major Activity Centre.
2. The process and findings of the safety walk will be shared with relevant networks to encourage and support the implementation of women's safety walks in other areas of Maroondah, and in other local government areas of the Eastern Metropolitan Region and beyond.
3. Sharing the findings of the safety walk with relevant academic institutions, students and publications to demonstrate practical application of applying a gender lens in urban planning.

Session Outline

9:30-9:50am	Preparation & Set up Zoom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide with agenda
9:50-10:00am	Admit, welcome etc.
10:00 Welcome	Welcome and introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of Country • Welcome and thank everyone • Write your favourite part of Croydon in the chat as you arrive • Introduce speakers/moderators to guests • Zoom etiquette and chat function • Session is being recorded - check ok • Women's safety – we have included support numbers in the chat • Overview of the session and how it will work • Tell the group that we are going to start the recording
10:10 Background and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of country • Background to gender walk • Overview of why women and importance of women's voices
10:20 Croydon Structure Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief overview of the Plan
10:30 Discussion and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show map of Croydon and explain the two areas we are looking at • Break out into two groups • Ask for a volunteer from for each group to take notes and feedback to the wider group. <p>Prompts for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your opinion of this place (good or bad) and why? • Would/do you come here during the day? • Would/do you come here during the night? • How can we make this place safer/more friendly/more inclusive
11:05 Wrap up Questions	<p>Come back together as a group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask each group to feed back their thoughts on the spaces they looked at to the wider group • Any other comments or questions?
11:25	<p>Wrap up and where to from here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation
11:30am	Finish