Port Melbourne Light Rail Linear Parks Plan

Engagement Summary Report

Updated March 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present and future.

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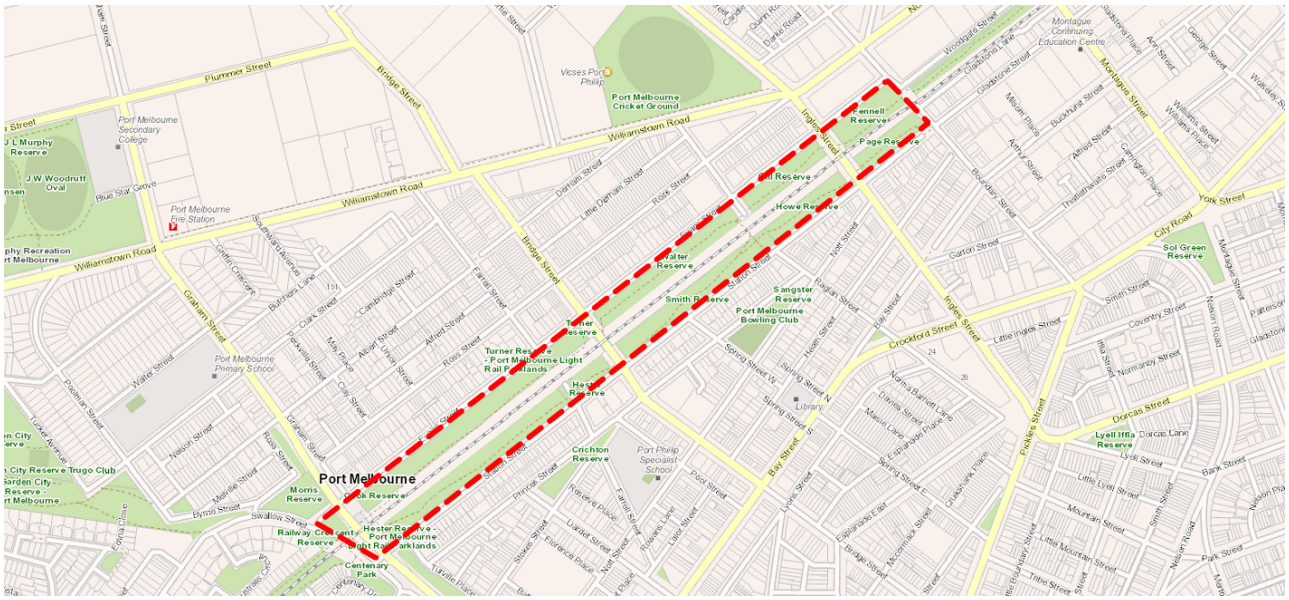
Introduction

Project background

A Master Plan is being prepared for nine reserves along the Port Melbourne Light Rail Corridor. This Master Plan will increase the diversity of unstructured recreation and social facilities across these reserves, protect mature trees and strengthen the indigenous vegetation values along the light rail corridor.

The Port Melbourne Light Rail Corridor is a one-kilometre linear park which offers a variety of informal recreational activities, including a commuter trail connecting City of Port Phillip (CoPP) residents to Melbourne's CBD.

The Master Plan will include Cook, Fennell, Gill, Hester, Howe, Page, Smith, Turner and Walter Reserves in Port Melbourne.



What we set out to achieve

During this first stage of engagement, we wanted to understand how the local community currently uses the reserves and their future hopes for these spaces. This engagement was carried out using mostly online engagement methods, with one face-to-face community pop-up. This feedback will be combined with other information, factors and advice to develop a draft Master Plan for the reserves. Further engagement will be carried out later in 2025, where we will be asking the community for their feedback on the draft Master Plan.

About this report

This report outlines how Council has engaged to date on this project and summarises what we have heard from the community during Stage 1 of engagement. A final report will be produced which will incorporate the findings of Stage 2 of engagement after this is undertaken later in 2026.

Before reading this report

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- The information in this report is based on qualitative research and does not necessarily reflect the views of a statistically representative sample of the community.
- City of Port Phillip strives to include diverse voices in our engagement activities. We acknowledge, however, that some people are likely to have experienced barriers to participation in the activities that are outlined in this report – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, multicultural communities, older people, and others.
- The information and views presented in this report are a summary of the opinions and feedback heard from across the engagement activities. The feedback has not been independently validated. As such, some information may be factually incorrect, unfeasible or outside of the scope of this project.

- This report summarises key feedback from participants and does not preclude the project team from considering community feedback in its original format.

Acknowledgement and thanks

We would like to acknowledge and thank the community members who contributed feedback on this project.

What we did

Between 8 March – 11 April 2025, a range of communications and engagement activities were carried out to inform the community about this project and to seek their feedback, including the following:

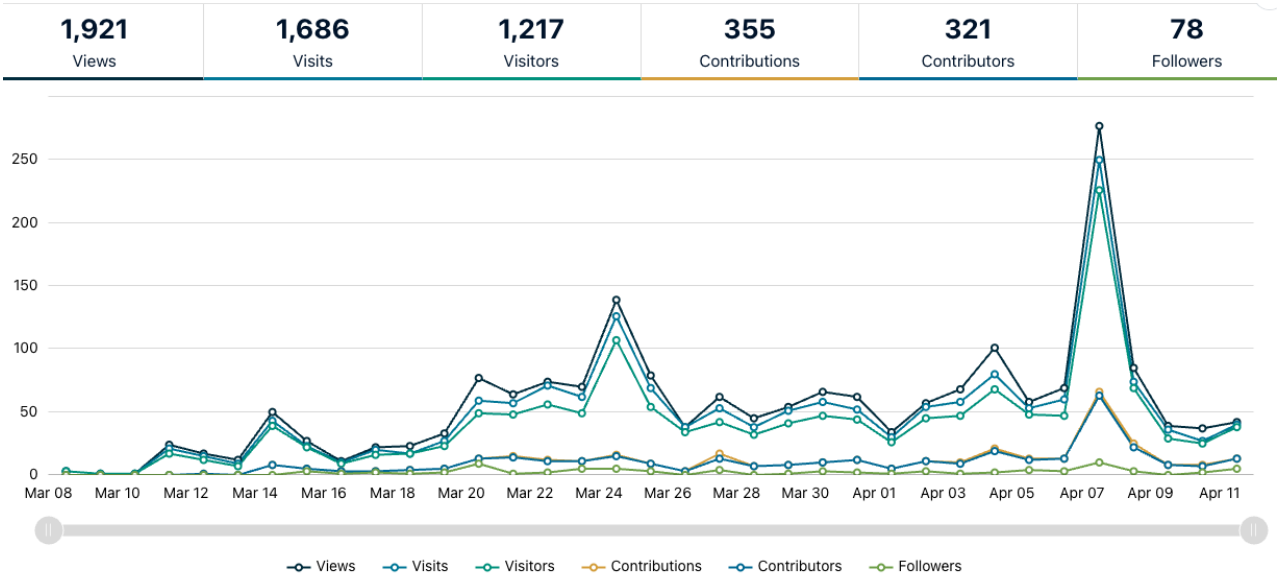
	***Have Your Say* website and survey**	A project page on Council's *Have Your Say* engagement website provided information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and a survey.
	**Corflute signage x 14**	14 corflute signs were installed on 19 March at each of the reserves.
	**Letters x 130**	Letters notifying the community about the project were posted to residences directly adjacent to the identified sites on 13 March.
	**Emails x 35**	35 emails were sent to stakeholders such as the Port Phillip Community Group and other local community groups including greening groups, walking and cycling groups, and Balaclava/St Kilda East community groups, notifying them about the opportunity to participate in the project.
	**Newsletter x 1**	Information about the opportunity to engage on this project was included in the *Have Your Say* March 2025 newsletter, delivered to over 3,300 subscribers on 14 March.
	**Face-to-face activities x 1**	A 2-hour community pop-up was held at Waterfront Place, Port Melbourne, on 29 March, 10am - 12pm (28 participants).

Table 1 Communications and engagement activities carried out across the project

Project reach and participation

At least 3,300 people have heard about this project to date, via the *Have Your Say* newsletter and Council's social media. The chart below shows an overview of online interactions with the *Have Your Say* project page during the engagement period - where 1,217 unique visitors visited the project page.

During this engagement process we received 386 responses, including 355 contributions via the online survey, 28 participants attending community pop-ups, and 3 community members sending feedback via email.



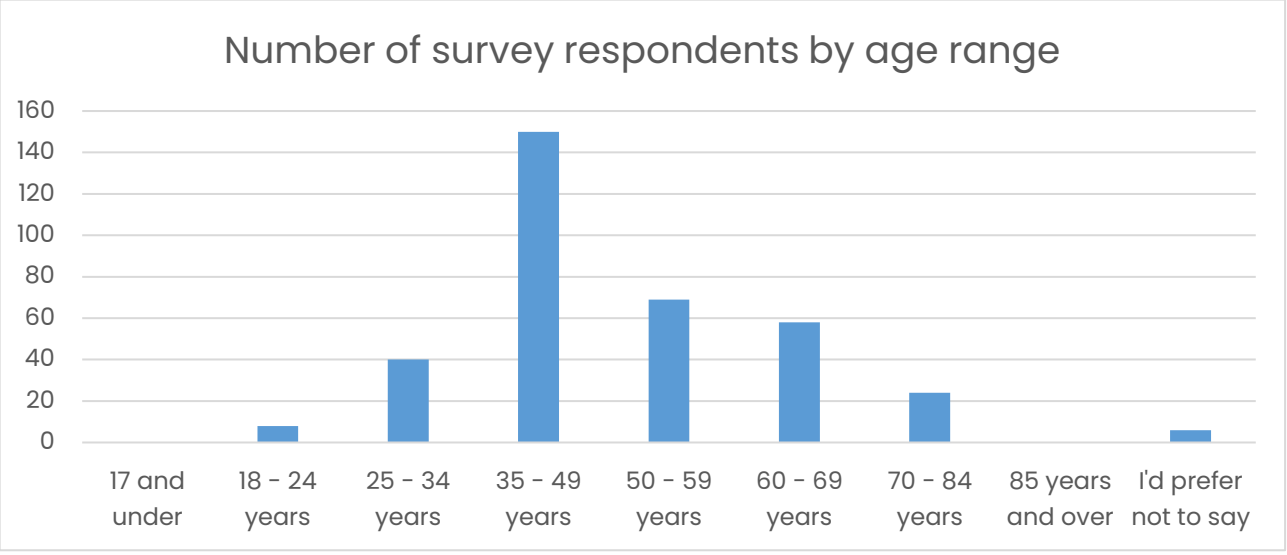
Project page overview, "Port Melbourne Light Rail Linear Parks Plan" (Have Your Say, 11 April 2025)

Who we heard from

Demographics

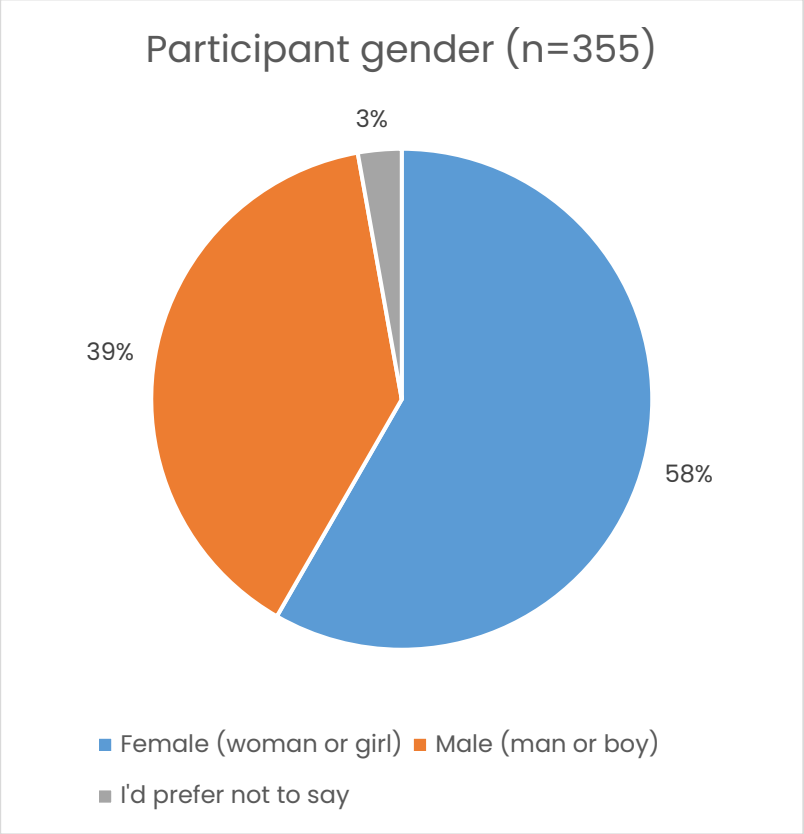
Age

Participants at the pop-up and via the survey were asked to provide their age. In total, 355 participants provided their age. The age bracket that the most participants selected was 35 to 49 years (150, 42 per cent). When compared to the breakdown of ages across the municipality, participant ages were more skewed towards 35 to 69 years. This aligns with the age groups of Port Melbourne residents, who are also skewed towards 35 years and over.



Gender

In total, 355 participants responded to this question. **More than half (207, 58 per cent) of responses identified as female.** This is unsurprising given that females are generally more likely to participate in engagement. A further 138 responses (39 per cent) identified as male, and 3 per cent preferred not to say.



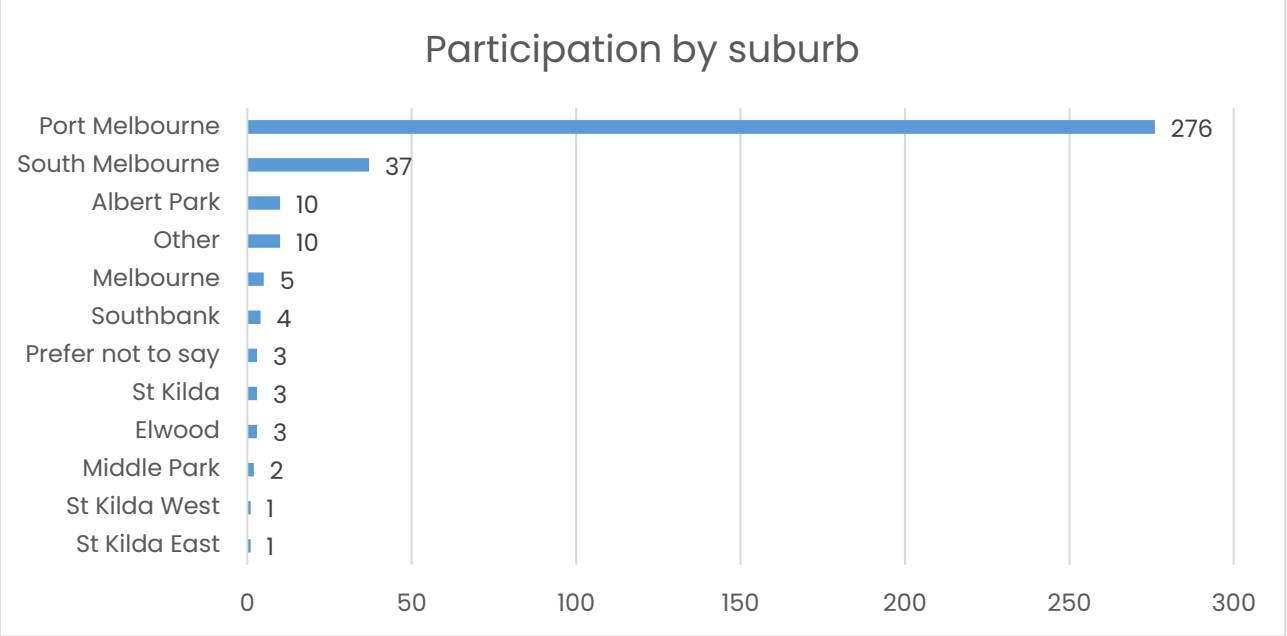
Diversity statements

Survey participants were asked to indicate if they identified with a series of statements to understand participant diversity and were able to select as many statements as applied to them. From most to least common, these were:

- "None of these apply to me" (253, 67%)
- "I identify as LGBTIQA+" (33, 9%)
- "I am a person with disability" (17, 4%)
- "I speak a language other than English at home" (29, 8%)
- "I'd prefer not to say" (28, 7%)
- "I am from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background" (7, 2%)

Suburb

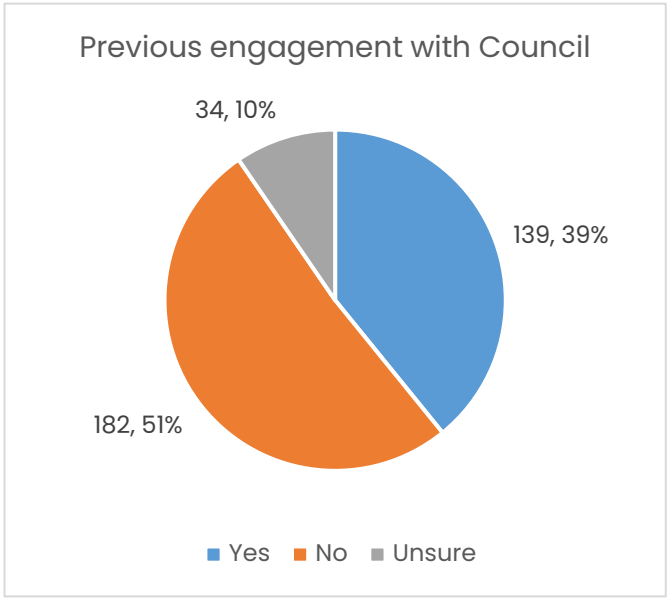
355 participants told us which suburb they lived in. Overwhelmingly, participants selected Port Melbourne (276, 78 per cent). The second-most represented suburb was South Melbourne, with 37, 10 per cent of responses. The high response rate from Port Melbourne residents is due to the location-specific nature of the project.



Prior feedback on Council projects

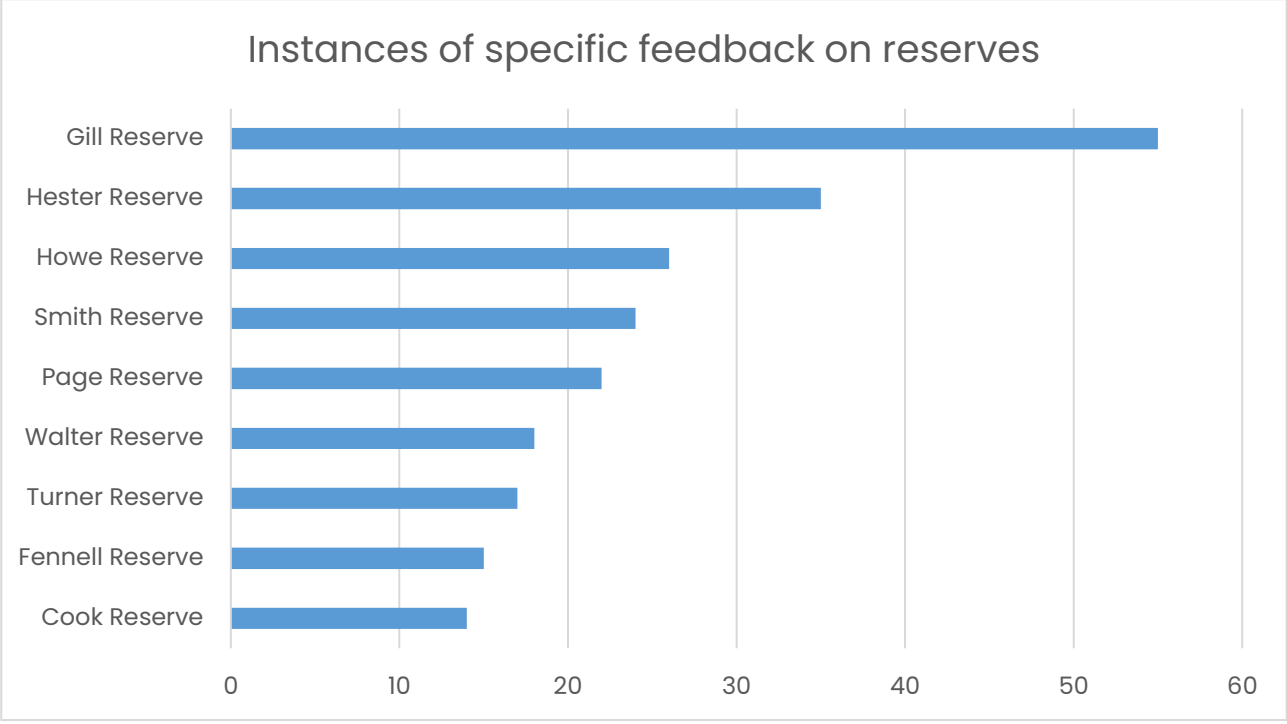
We asked participants if they had provided any feedback on other Council projects in the past 12 months. 355 participants answered this question.

Of these, 51 per cent (182 responses) said 'no', 39 per cent (139 responses) said 'yes', and 34 responses (10 per cent) said they were 'unsure'.



What we heard

Survey respondents were invited to talk about the entire light rail corridor or to choose specific reserves to provide feedback on. While most (241) survey respondents gave us broad feedback, we had 101 instances of specific feedback about particular reserves. We also received one email response on the entire light rail corridor, two email responses on specific reserves and a variety of comments from pop-up participants. Participants commonly provided feedback on two or more reserves. Gill Reserve was the most selected reserve for specific feedback.

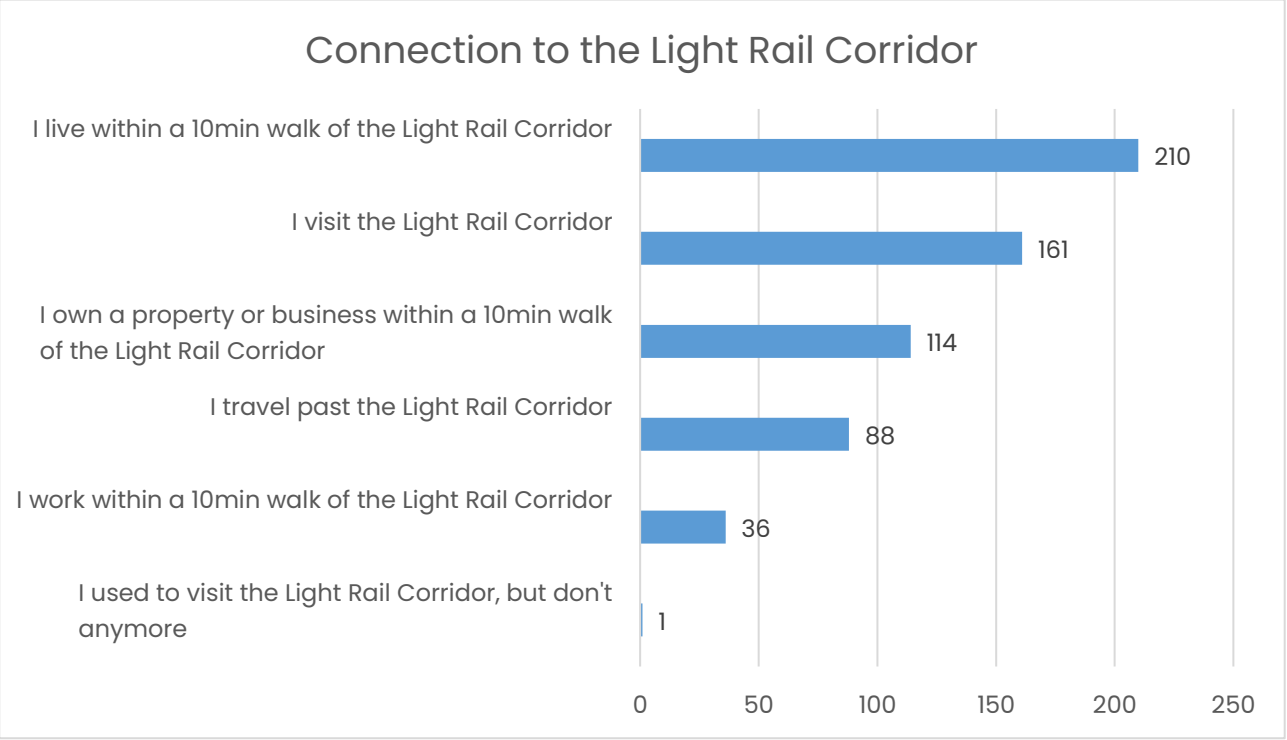


Overall feedback about the Light Rail Corridor

The following explores participant feedback about the linear parks overall.

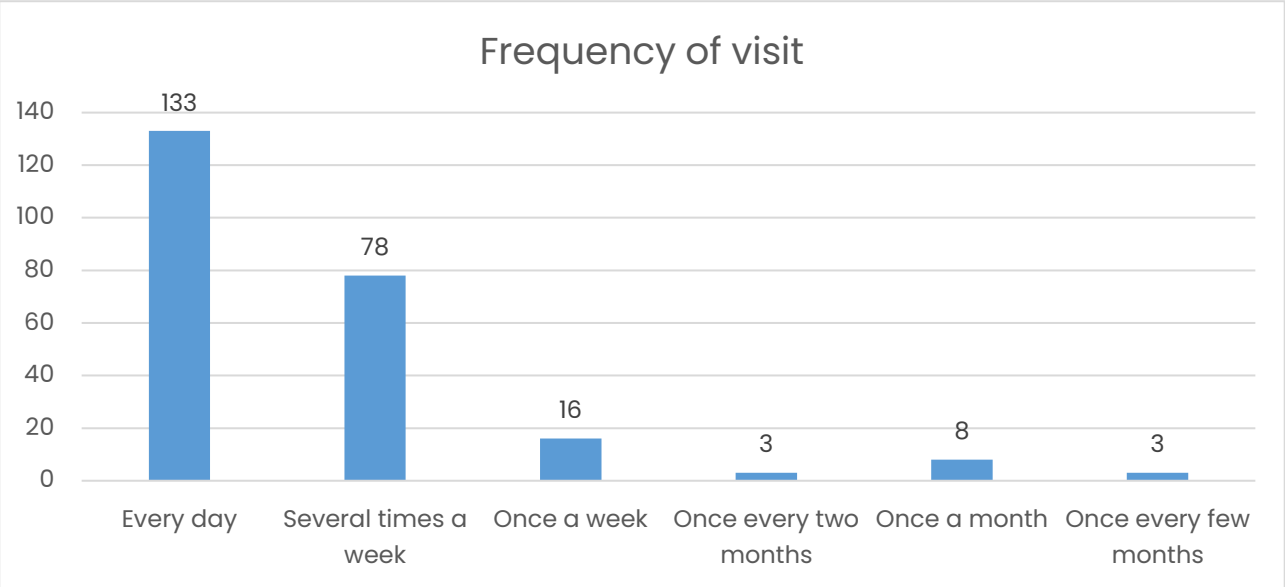
Connection to the Light Rail Corridor

Participants were asked about their connection to the parks and were able to select as many responses as applied. The average participant selected two or more of the available options. The most common response was from participants who live near the Corridor (210 participants). This was followed by participants who visit the Corridor (161 participants), those who own property of a business near the corridor (114 participants), and those who travel past (88 participants), or work near the Corridor (36 participants). Gender was largely evenly distributed across the options.



Visit frequency

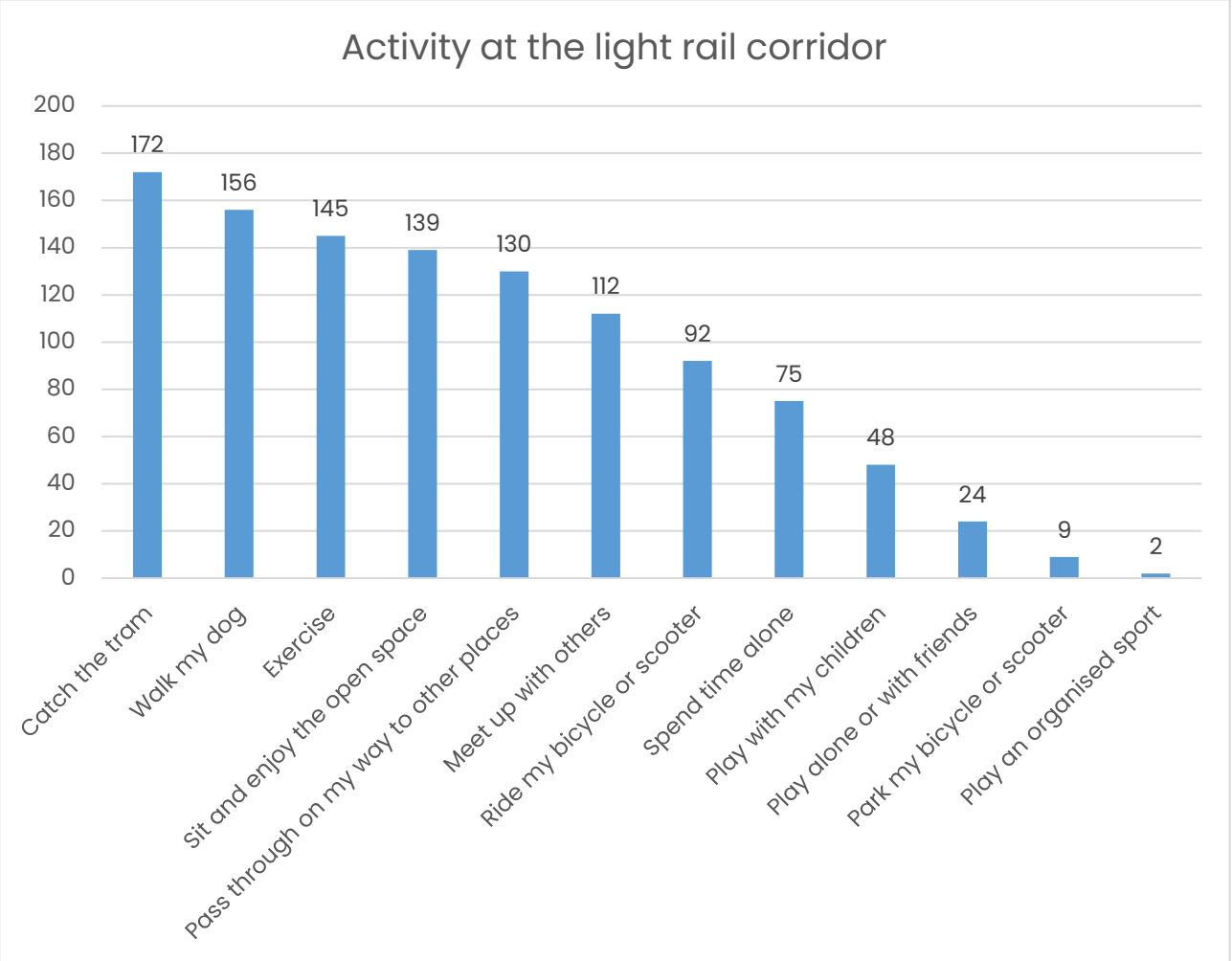
We asked participants how often they visit the Light Rail Corridor. Of the 241 responses to this question, most said that they visit the Light Rail Corridor daily (133, 55 per cent), or several times a week (78, 33 per cent).



Activities at the Light Rail Corridor

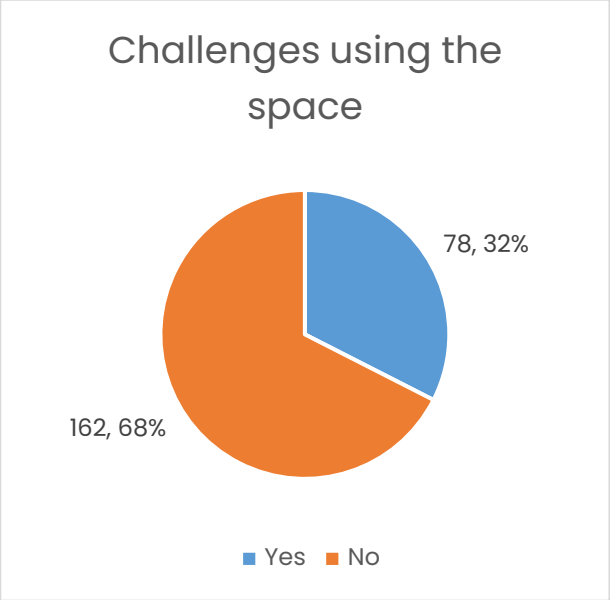
We asked participants what activities they do in the area. Participants were able to select multiple activities. On average, participants selected four of the available activities. The most common activities included:

- Catching the tram (172 participants)
- Walking my dog (156 participants)
- Exercising (145 participants)
- Sitting and enjoying the open space (139 participants)

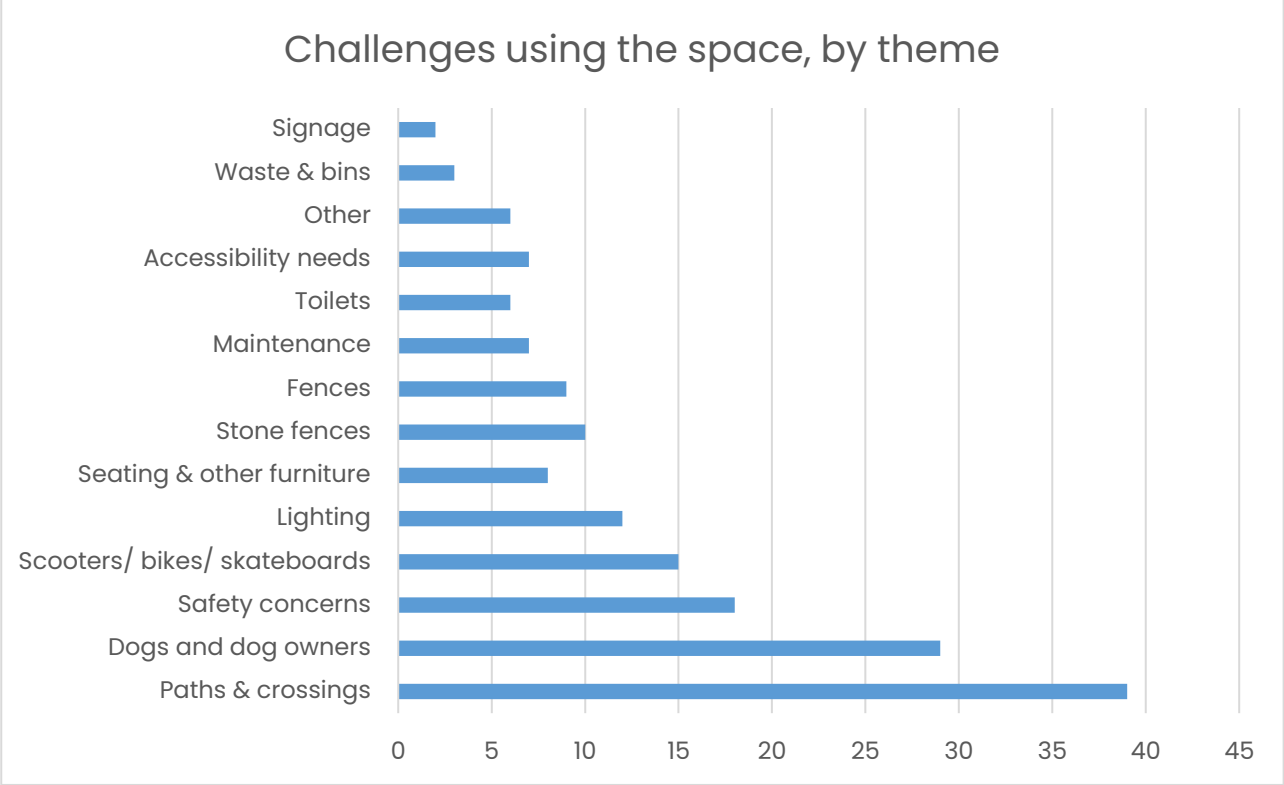

Activity at the light rail corridor
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
172
156
145
139
130
112
92
75
48
24
9
2
Catch the tram
Walk my dog
Exercise
Sit and enjoy the open space
Pass through on my way to other places
Meet up with others
Ride my bicycle or scooter
Spend time alone
Play with my children
Play alone or with friends
Park my bicycle or scooter
Play an organised sport

Challenges to using the Corridor

We asked participants whether there was anything that made the space in Light Rail Corridor harder for them to use. Of the 239 participants who answered this question, approximately two-thirds (162, 68% per cent), told us there was nothing about the Corridor that made it harder to use. One third of responses (78, 32% per cent) said there were challenges.



Participants who answered 'yes' were invited to share more about their response. The comments of the 76 participants who shared more were broken into themes, shown below.



The **'Paths and crossings'** theme made up the most comments (23 per cent), with comments largely concerning the shared use of paths by walkers, prams, scooters and cyclists, for example.

> *"The shared bike/pedestrian lanes. There are often e-bikes and scooter riders going very fast. This is a hazard bringing my child to these areas." (Female, Port Melbourne resident)*

Access for those with walkers, or prams, was also raised:

> *"Access onto the pathway going across grass is difficult but easy at tram stop points. The parks in the east side are wet after rain and the paths are muddy for my walker/rollator." (Female, Port Melbourne resident)*

Specific sites were also mentioned in comments such as:

> *"The low brick wall that are at the intersections of Ingles and Bridge Sts on south side of rail, where the pathway comes to an abrupt end with no path around to footpath to cross road is just weird." (Female, Albert Park resident)*

> *"The entrance to Hester & Smith Reserves, from Bridge Street is dangerous being unable to enter the park from the footpath. Since I use a walker, it would be great if the footpaths were not so bone jarring. As a senior person, toilet facilities would be welcome. I'm sure the campers would appreciate it. At the moment they defecate among the bushes which is extremely unpleasant." (Female, Port Melbourne resident)*

'Dogs and owners' was the second-most common theme, making up 17 per cent of the comments. Comments largely related to owners not having effective control, not staying in designated areas, and not picking after their pets.

> *'When picnicking quietly on a blanket, dogs not controlled by owners eat my food. Not everyone picks up after their dog.' (Port Melbourne resident)*

> *'Too many dogs on the "non dog" side of the tracks make it hard with little kids.' (Male, Port Melbourne resident)*

Women more commonly talked about **'safety concerns'** than men - 89 per cent of comments were from females. Safety commonly related to the first two themes, namely, separation of bikes, scooters and pedestrians, better fencing and spaces for dogs. Comments also talked about wanting better lighting to enable more use of the corridor in the early morning or evenings.

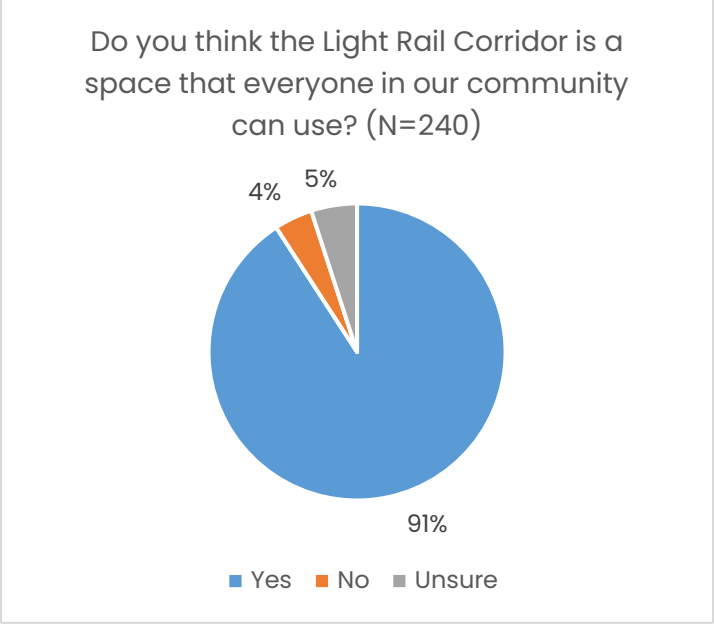
> *'Lighting for the corridor is poor. The area around the light rail stops are great but I choose not to walk through the park in the evenings either to dog walk or to walk home from the tram. Prefer to*

stick to the streets. More lighting would mean the park area can be used for longer - particularly on shorter winter days.' (Female, Port Melbourne resident)

Other themes included better seating and infrastructure, and general maintenance issues:

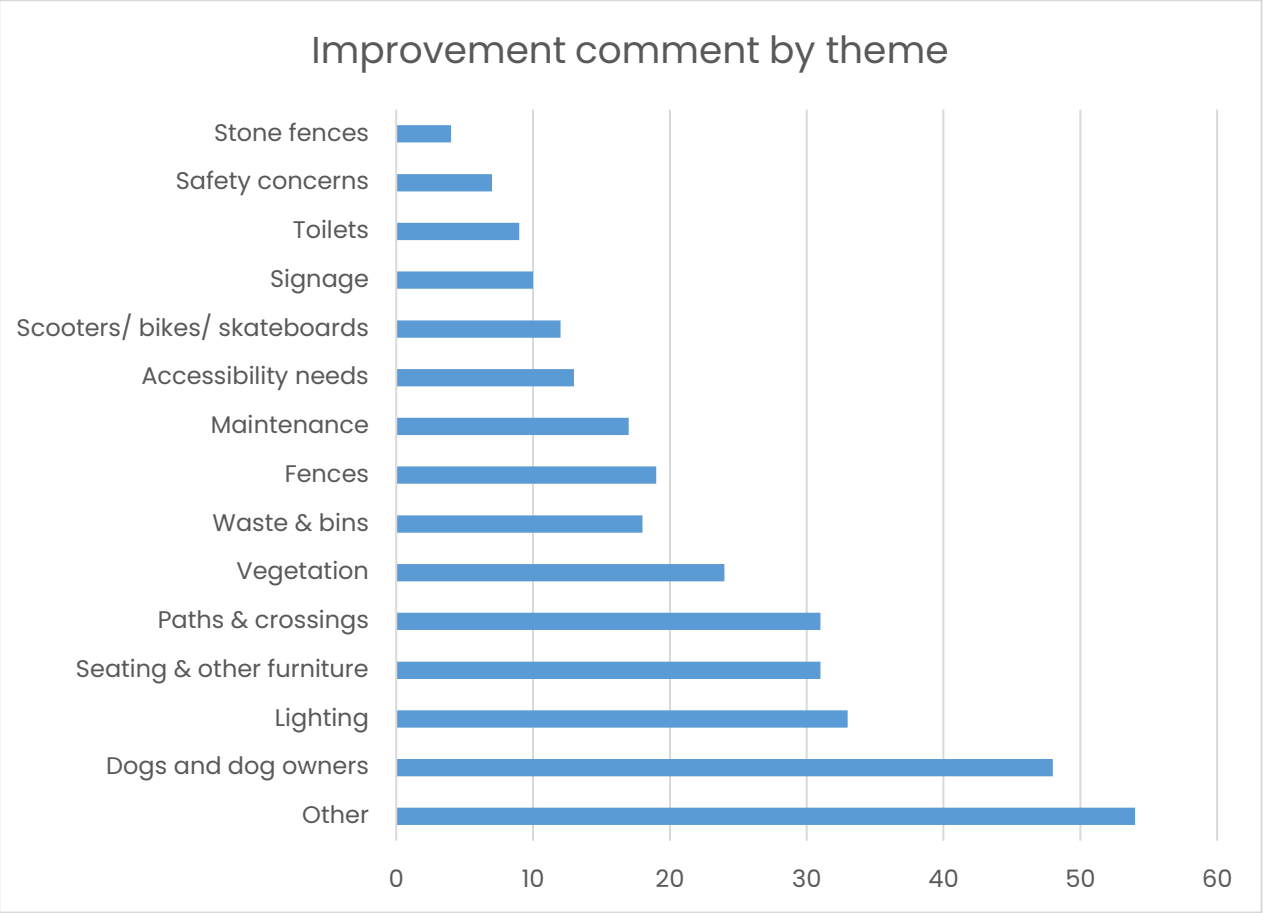
- *'More shaded areas more undercover tram stops, water stations, bike repair and pump hubs.' (Female, Port Melbourne resident)*
- *'Lack of public toilets, need for bench seating with tables, [and] better seating for those with mobility issues, arms on seats.' (Female, Port Melbourne resident)*
- *'...Secure fencing - around playgrounds - to keep the little kids off the path would be appropriate.' (Male, South Melbourne resident)*
- *'Potholes. Broken boom gates at every crossing make it less safe. Poor visibility of people crossing main path to city under the huge tree at North Port on the Evans St side, between the tram stop and car park. This is very dangerous.' (Male, Port Melbourne resident)*

Participants were asked a follow-up question, which received 240 responses. Most respondents feel the Light Rail Corridor is a space the whole community can use, with a large majority answering yes (218 people, 91 per cent). Only a small number said no (10) or were unsure (12), suggesting overall confidence in its accessibility and inclusiveness.



Improving the Corridor

We asked participants what types of things could be done to improve the Light Rail Corridor. We received 167 responses on Have Your Say, one email response and comments from pop-up participants. These have been themed and graphed below and many of the participants' comments cross over multiple themes.



Opportunities for improvement mostly focused on dog-related spaces, including fencing for dog areas and better management of dogs in the open spaces. Other priorities for improvement included infrastructure such as bins, toilets, seating, and lighting, and planting trees that can provide shelter from the rain and shading in summer.

Differences in sentiment by gender; Improving the Corridor

Across the feedback received on possible improvements to the Corridor, 101 women provided feedback and 61 men provided feedback. They who chose not to provide their gender are not reflected in the gender breakdown below.

What women emphasised

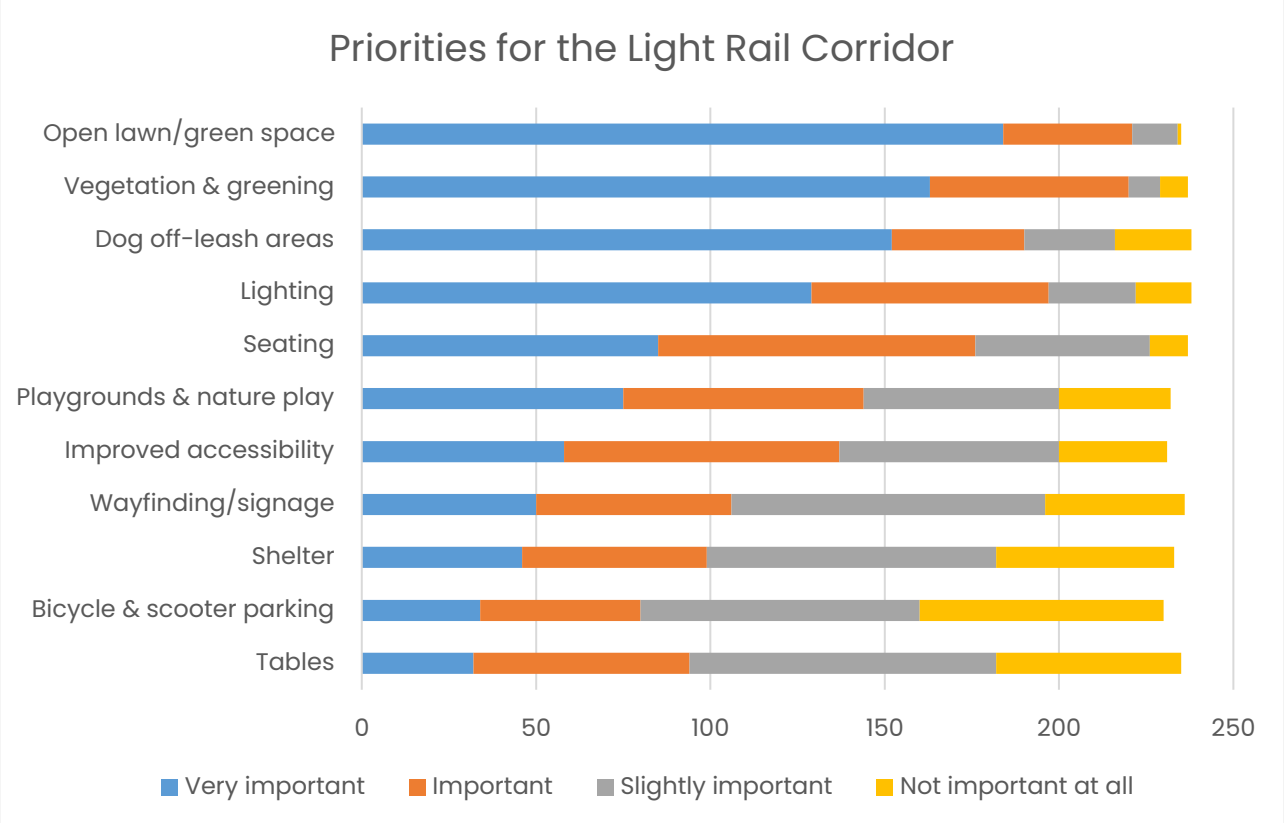
- **Personal safety and gentle lighting,** particularly around tram stops, with several asking not to over-light areas used by wildlife. Example: *"Better lighting so it's safer at night. Especially near tram stops."*
- **Dog-related amenities** and safety such as fencing, poo-bag dispensers, bins and better dog water bowls. Example: *"As a dog owner I would like to see fencing along the off leash areas. The roads are busy…"*
- **Nature and biodiversity** with requests for native plantings, bird and bat boxes, and canopy protection. Example: *"I don't want any additional lighting… native flowering shrubs for the pollinators… Maybe add bird and bat boxes."*
- **Anti-social behaviour concerns** in a few places, including seasonal camping and safety after dark. Example: *"In the summer… there are frequent campers & camper vans… campers going to the bathroom in bushes along light rail."*

What men emphasised

- **Path function and separation** for bikes, e-scooters and pedestrians, plus safer crossings. Example: *"Wider path, or better still separate paths for cyclists/scooters and pedestrians… Better road crossings…"*
- **Core amenities** like toilets and lighting near tram stops. Example: *"24 hour Public Toilets near the Tram stops at Graham Street and North Port would also be nice…"*
- **Dog infrastructure** (including a fenced area), dog bowls and off-leash areas. Examples: *"One section that is a fenced in dog area would be great…"* and *"A plaque or tribute dedicated to each person each reserve was named after."*
- **Biodiversity** also featured, often framed as broader planting diversity. Example: *"A greater diversity of shrubs and trees… One word: biodiversity."*

Priorities for the Light Rail Corridor

Participants were asked to rank a series of priorities for the Corridor from not important at all, to very important. A total of 340 people responded to this question via the online survey. People place the highest priority on open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, dog off-leash areas and good lighting, with seating and improved accessibility also highly valued. Wayfinding and signage, shelter, bicycle and scooter parking and tables are seen as lower priorities overall.



Turner, Cook and Hester Reserves

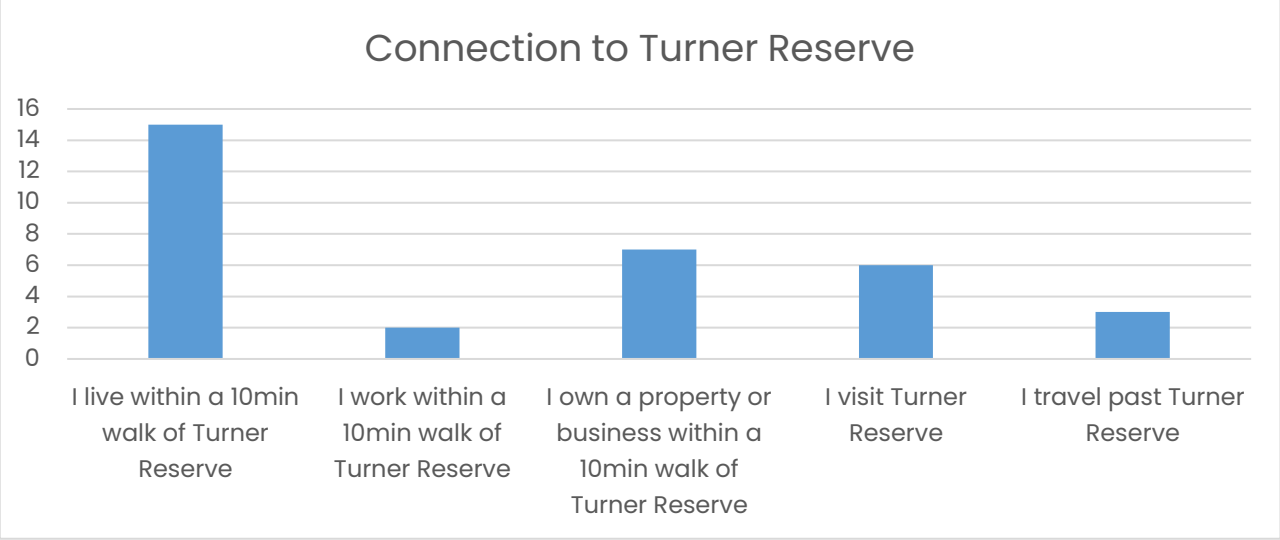


Connection to the Reserves

People who provided feedback on the reserves were asked their connection to the reserve and were able to choose multiple responses.

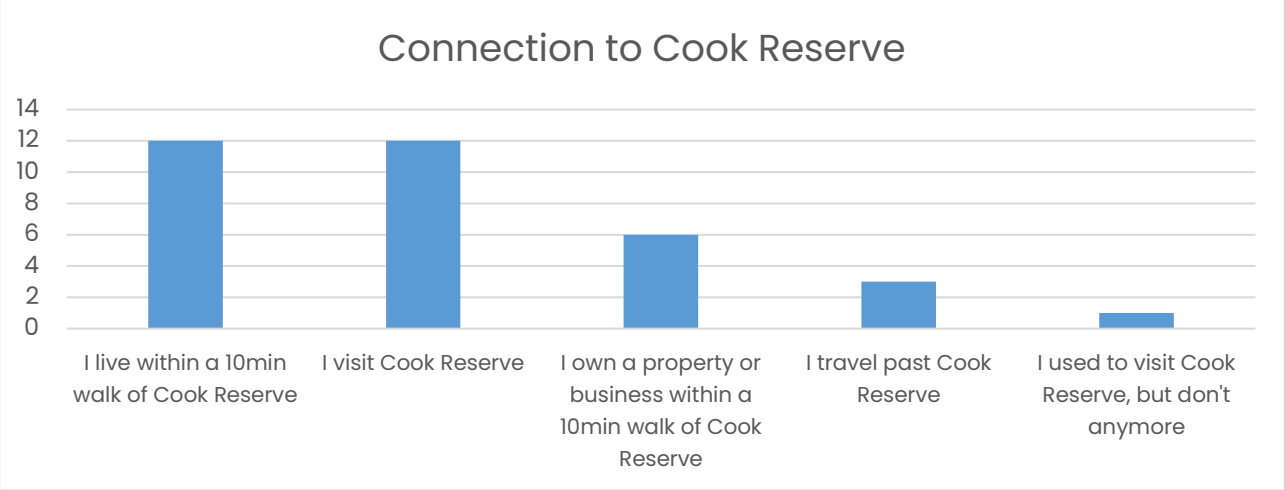
Turner Reserve

Seventeen responses were received to this question, with most respondents living within a 10-minute walk of Turner Reserve.



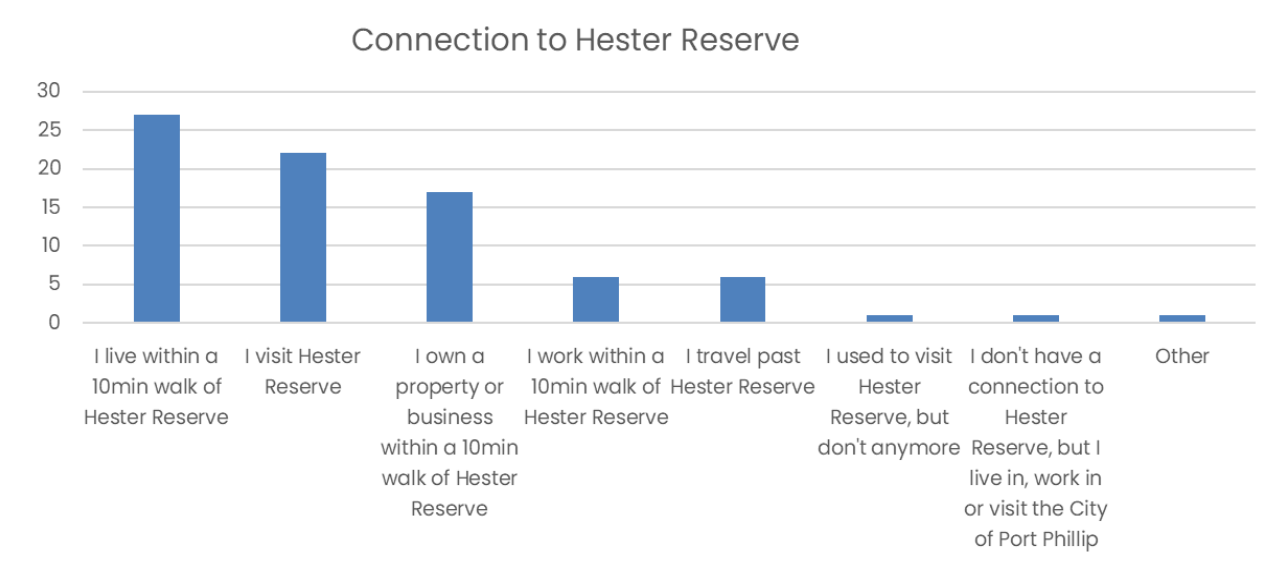
Cook Reserve

Most respondents to questions around Cook Reserve (14 people) either live within a 10-minute walk of Cook Reserve or visit the reserve regularly, reflecting strong local ties to the space. A smaller number reported owning property or travelling past the reserve, with only one person noting they no longer visit.



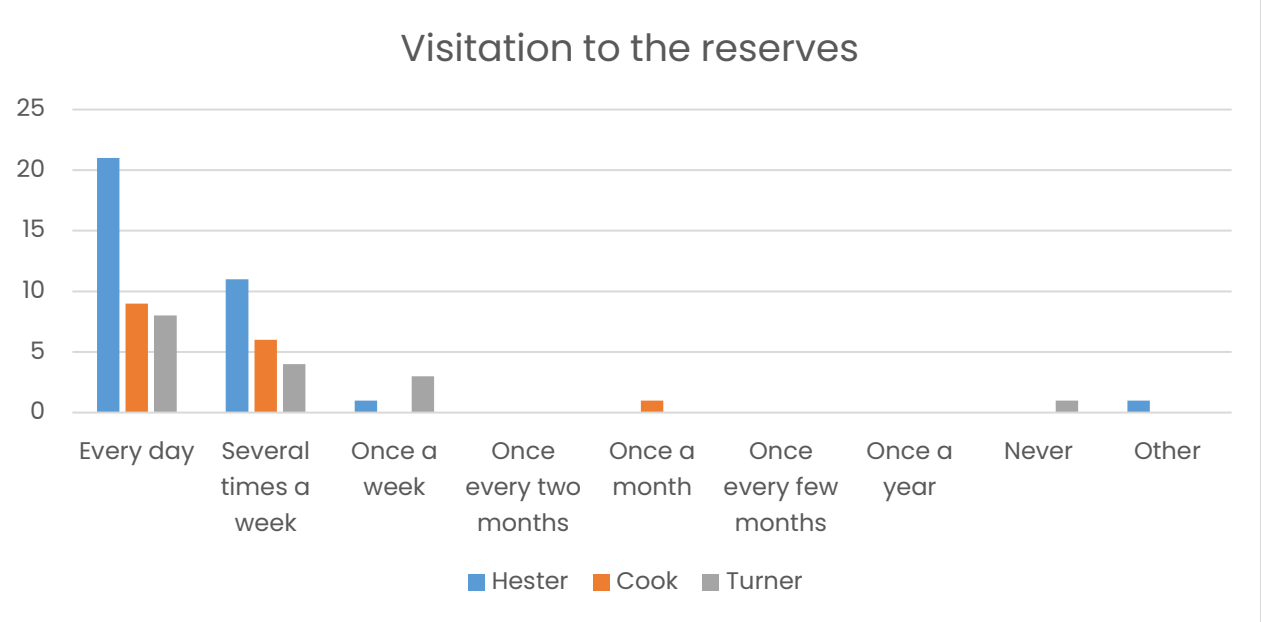
Hester Reserve

Most respondents reported a strong local connection to Hester Reserve, with the highest numbers living within a 10-minute walk (27) or visiting regularly (22). Smaller groups owned property or worked nearby, while only a few travelled past the reserve or no longer visited.



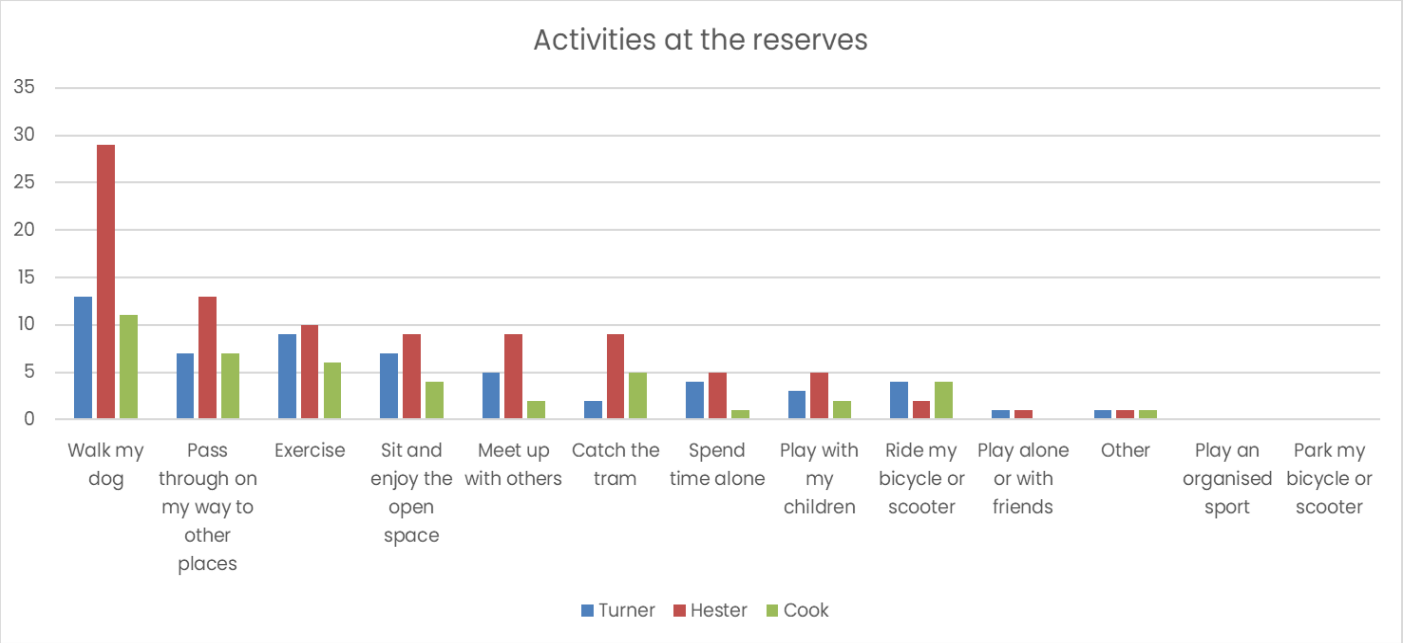
Visiting the Reserves

Of the three reserves, Hester Reserve recorded the highest frequency of use, with most respondents visiting every day (21) or several times a week (11). Cook and Turner Reserves were used less often, though both still attracted daily and weekly users, with smaller groups visiting only occasionally or not at all.



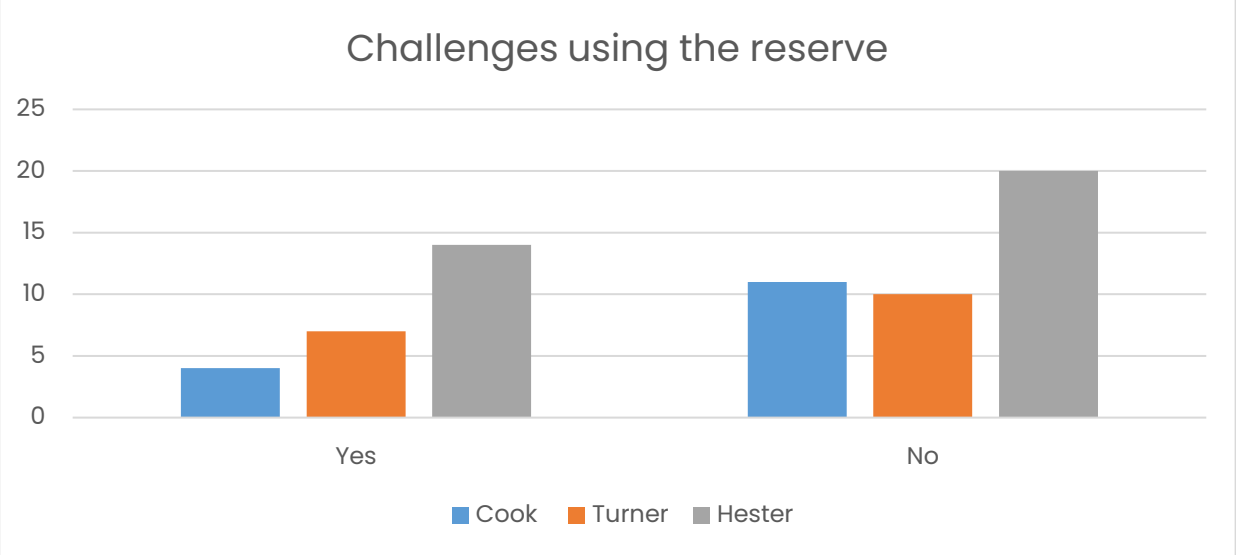
Activities at the Reserves

Across all three reserves, people most commonly use the spaces to walk their dogs, pass through, exercise, or sit and enjoy the open space, with Hester Reserve showing the highest overall activity levels. Turner and Cook Reserves also support a variety of uses, though with smaller numbers across most activities, reflecting more moderate but still diverse patterns of use.



Challenges using the Reserve

Participants were asked, 'Is there anything that makes it harder to use the reserve?' Most respondents across all three reserves reported no barriers to use, with the majority at Hester (20), Cook (11), and Turner (10) saying nothing makes it harder to visit. A smaller number did identify challenges, most notably at Hester (14), followed by Turner (7) and Cook (4).



Comments on Turner Reserve

Comments related to **dogs**, **safety** and **maintenance**, including the following examples:

'The purpose built cycle path is not safe for pedestrians with dogs on leash. Cyclists heckle us and tell us to get off the path. A new sandy path should be created near Evans St for pedestrians.'

'Trimming overhead branches along path more regularly, as some can be dangerous for those riding on a scooter'.

'[It's] very close to the road and doesn't have natural barriers to keep dogs safe.'

Comments on Cook Reserve

Comments were minimal, but related to **walking paths, dog drink taps**, and **seating**, including this example:

'The walking path stops suddenly at Bridge St'

Comments on Hester Reserve

Comments were minimal, but related to **walking paths, dogs**, **safety** and **maintenance**, including these examples:

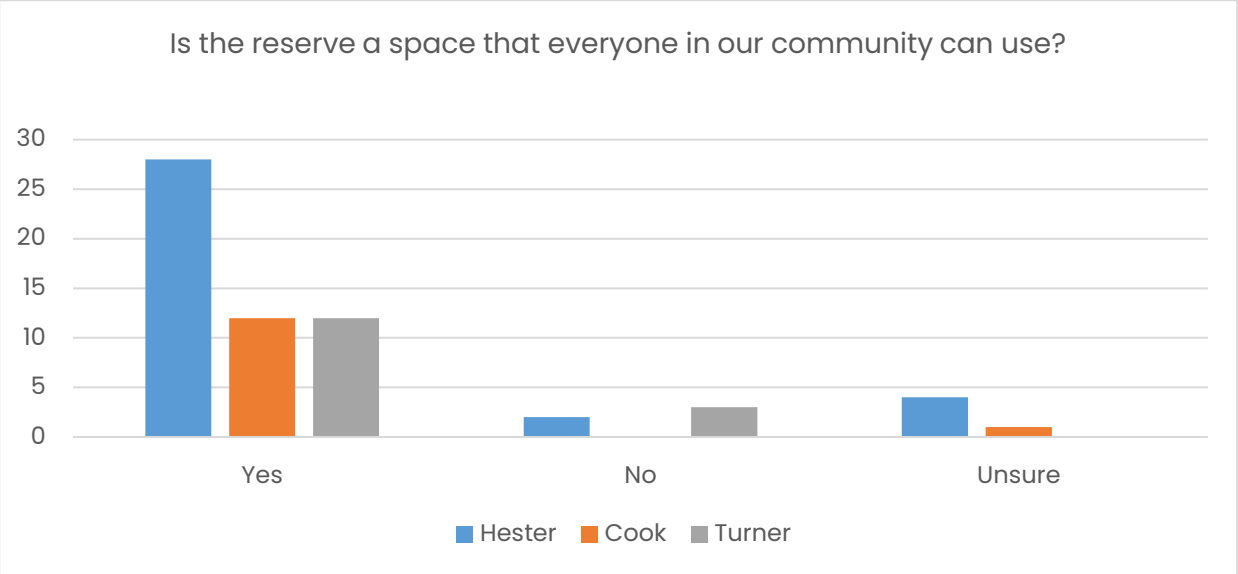
'Now the skatepark is so close to Hester Reserve, dogs are running into the skate park…This is dangerous. A fence, like the one on the Station St side, would stop this issue. The pathway from the skatepark to the Reserve needs a self-closing gate.

'The one water fountain…needs replacing, and a second dog-friendly water fountain installed at the Bridge St end of the reserve.'

'The trees that were cut down a few years ago need to be replaced (Bridge St end) … New shrubs and trees and a new irrigation system should be installed all along Hester's flowerbeds next to the tram track.'

Are the reserves a space for everyone?

Participants were asked, 'Is the reserve a space that everyone in the community can use?' Most respondents across all three reserves felt their local space is accessible to everyone in the community, with strong "yes" responses at Hester (28), Cook (12) and Turner (12). Only a small number felt otherwise or were unsure, suggesting overall confidence in the inclusiveness of these reserves.



What people like and want to improve

Comments on Turner Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Turner Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Turner Reserve, you can tell us here'.

What people like about Turner Reserve (7 comments):

- Open green space: People value the large, open, uncluttered grassy areas that support ball games, picnics and clear views across the reserve.
- Good maintenance: Respondents appreciate that the park is well kept, with healthy grass, regular watering, good lighting and low litter.
- Trees and planting: The community enjoys the mature trees and new planting along the bike path, with some expressing affection for specific species.

- Active everyday use: Turner Reserve is liked for its constant use by walkers, cyclists, families and dog-walkers, creating a lively but relaxed community space.
- Potential for dog use: Some see the reserve as a suitable location for controlled off-leash or agility activities.
- Loss of Morrie's Garden: There is disappointment that the popular community garden was removed.

What people feel can be improved about Turner Reserve (10 comments):

- Dog-related infrastructure: Some participants requested elements for dogs such as fencing, agility areas, dog-poo bags and tippable water bowls.
- Enhance safety: The were calls for better lighting for nighttime walking, separation of cyclists and pedestrians, improved sightlines to discourage rough sleepers.
- Amenities: Some participants advocated for extra seats or picnic tables at the reserve edges.
- Planting and maintenance: Participants identified a desire for more greenery, native planting, better maintenance and more wildlife habitat.
- Parking: Desire for parking restrictions to deter abandon cars and caravans.

'It is a wonderful park and kept in excellent condition at present. It is in constant use by walkers, runners, dog-walkers, families picnicking etc. A great community resource.'

'It's nice that this reserve is more open and grassy it gets used a lot by families to kick a footy/soccer ball etc and I like to picnic there.'

'It would be good if this area allowed for dogs off leash so long as they are controlled.'

'At the moment it is primarily a thoroughfare for cyclists.'

Comments on Cook Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Cook Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Cook Reserve, you can tell us here'.

What people like about Cook Reserve (5 comments):

- Outdoor gym and sports equipment are valued and well used.
- Recent kerbside and native plantings are appreciated.
- The reserve provides a pleasant environment with vegetation, wildlife and surrounding activity.
- Area feels accessible, with improved lighting enhancing safety; some paths could be wider.
- Seating, bins and drinking taps with pet bowls would improve comfort and usability.

What people feel can be improved about Cook Reserve (6 comments):

- Basketball and activity spaces: There is strong support for adding full or half basketball courts under the bridge where the height allows safe use, replacing the smaller courts currently constrained by low clearance.
- Dog safety and amenities: Respondents want roadside fencing for dog safety, better night-time lighting, dog-poo bag dispensers and tippable dog-friendly water fountains.
- Path layout and circulation: Several comments say the current two-lane bike/pedestrian system takes too much space and doesn't work as intended.
- Dog off-lead area and skate park conflict: There are concerns about dogs running from the off-lead area into the skate park, prompting calls for a fenced, isolated dog area.
- Planting and habitat: Preference for native planting and the addition of bird and animal habitat boxes.

It has the potential to be a great spot for training / practice and socila pick up games in a very under utilised spot.'

'The current walking path is eroding and uneven. Can we have a paved walking path?

Comments on Hester Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Hester Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Hester Reserve, you can tell us here'.

What people like about Hester Reserve (16 comments):

- Participants value the areas as a dedicated off-leash area.
- People enjoy meeting neighbours, forming friendships and feeling part of a community hub and family friendly environment.
- The open space and natural setting is appreciated, as well as the well-kept grass.
- Some concerns/improvements were raised as well, including:
    - Clear signage to direct cyclists to the path
    - Additional lighting for safety
    - Flooding on the central path
    - Better dog bowls
    - Toilets facilities
    - Parking restrictions
    - Extending the reserve to the beach.

What people think can be improved about Hester Reserve (26 comments):

- Amenities for dogs: Desire for fencing, poo-bag dispensers, additional bins and raised, tippable dog-drinking bowls; interest in a dog paddling pool for hot summers.
- Safety concerns: Participants would like to see better lighting, the path sealed to enable better access, clearer delineation between bikes and other park users, as well as anti-social behaviour addressed.
- Planting and maintenance: There were requests for additional shade, trees, shrubs and maintenance of the area; including irrigation, fixing of holes created by dogs and improved tree pruning.
- General amenities: Some participants would like to more seating in the reserve, whilst others suggested shade structures.

'Pathway needs to be fixed properly not just adding gravel which is hard to traverse.'

'I would like clear signage to direct bikes / e-bikes away from Hester reserve towards the bike track on the other side of the tram line.'

'The road signage needs to impose parking restrictions to prevent overnight stays.'

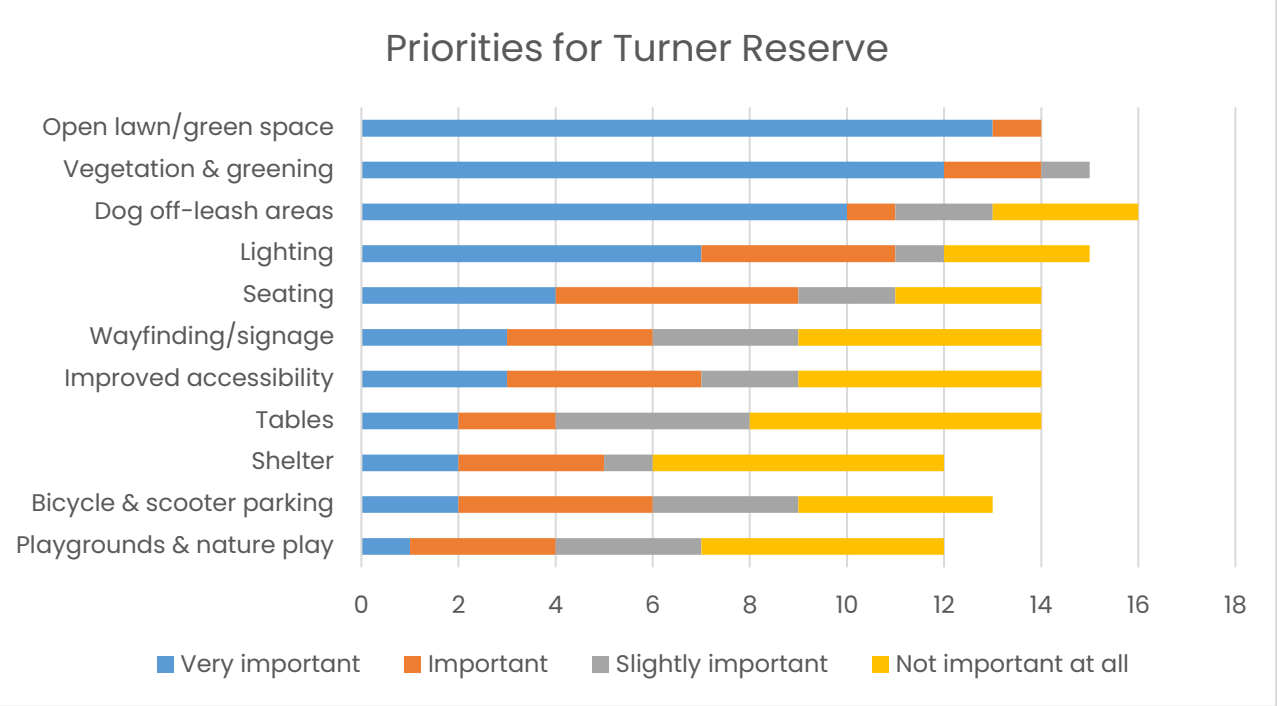
'Plant trees to provide shade for benches.'

Priorities for the Reserves

Participants were asked what was important from a preset list of priorities for each Reserve. All three reserves share strong community preferences for open green space, vegetation and improved lighting, though Hester shows the strongest emphasis on dog off-leash areas. Feedback on Cook and Turner prioritised natural, low-infrastructure improvements, while feedback on Hester placed higher importance on safety features, lighting and dog-related amenities.

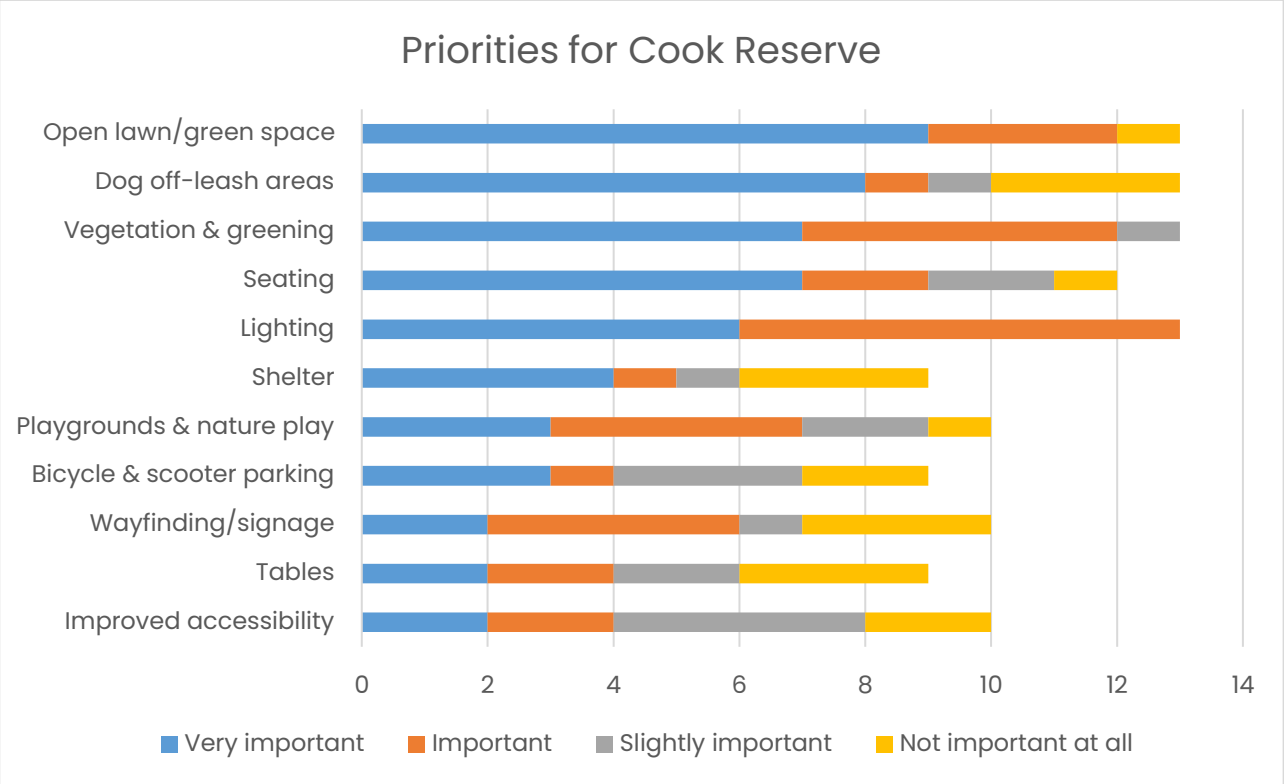
Turner Reserve

A total of 17 people responded to this question for Turner Reserve. Respondents placed the highest importance on open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, lighting, and dog off-leash areas, with strong support for these features. Built elements such as playgrounds, tables, shelter, signage and bicycle parking were generally seen as less important, receiving more mixed or lower ratings.



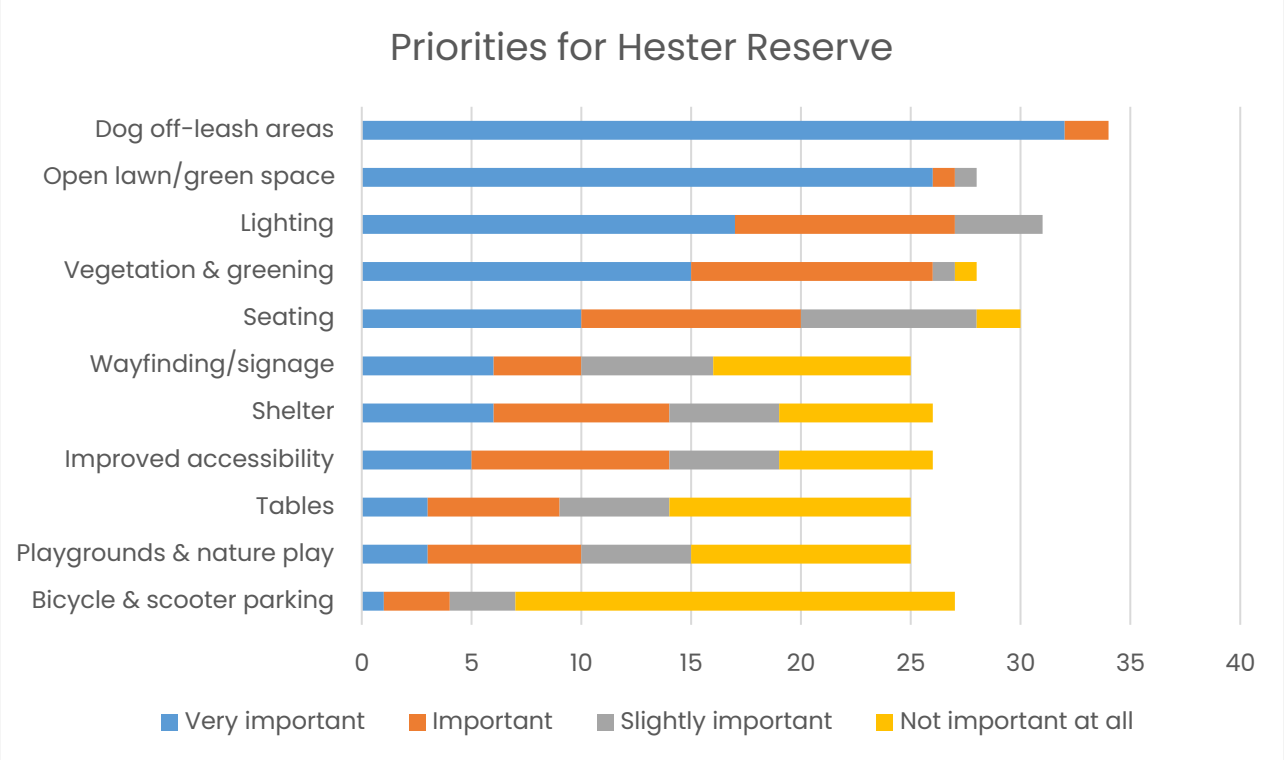
Cook Reserve

A total of 15 responses were received to the matrix question about priorities of Cook Reserve. Open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, seating, lighting and dog off-leash areas received the strongest support, with most respondents rating these as very important. Features such as tables, shelter, signage, bicycle parking and improved accessibility were still valued but attracted more mixed responses, suggesting they are lower-priority enhancements.



Hester Reserve

Hester Reserve received a total of 35 responses to this question. Respondents placed the highest importance on dog off-leash areas, open lawn and green space, lighting and vegetation, with strong support for these core features. Built elements such as shelters, accessibility, seating, playgrounds and signage were still valued but received more mixed responses, while bicycle and scooter parking was consistently seen as a low priority.


Priorities for Hester Reserve
Dog off-leash areas
Open lawn/green space
Lighting
Vegetation & greening
Seating
Wayfinding/signage
Shelter
Improved accessibility
Tables
Playgrounds & nature play
Bicycle & scooter parking
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
Very important
Important
Slightly important
Not important at all

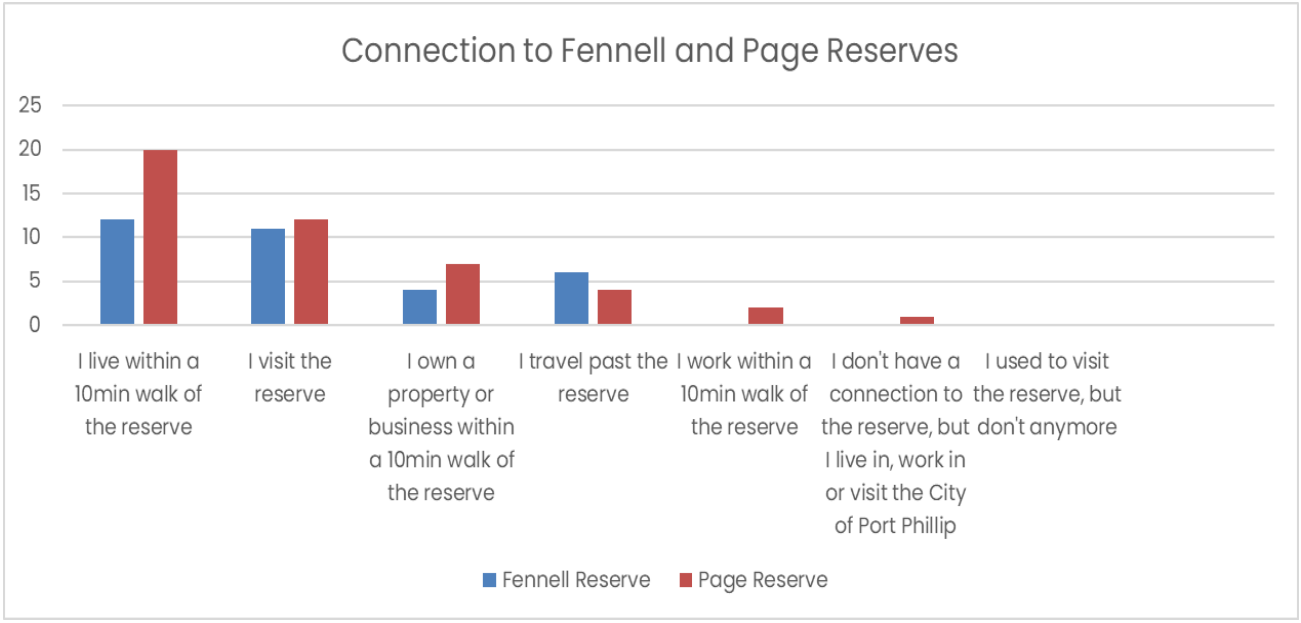
About Fennell and Page Reserves



Connection to the Reserves

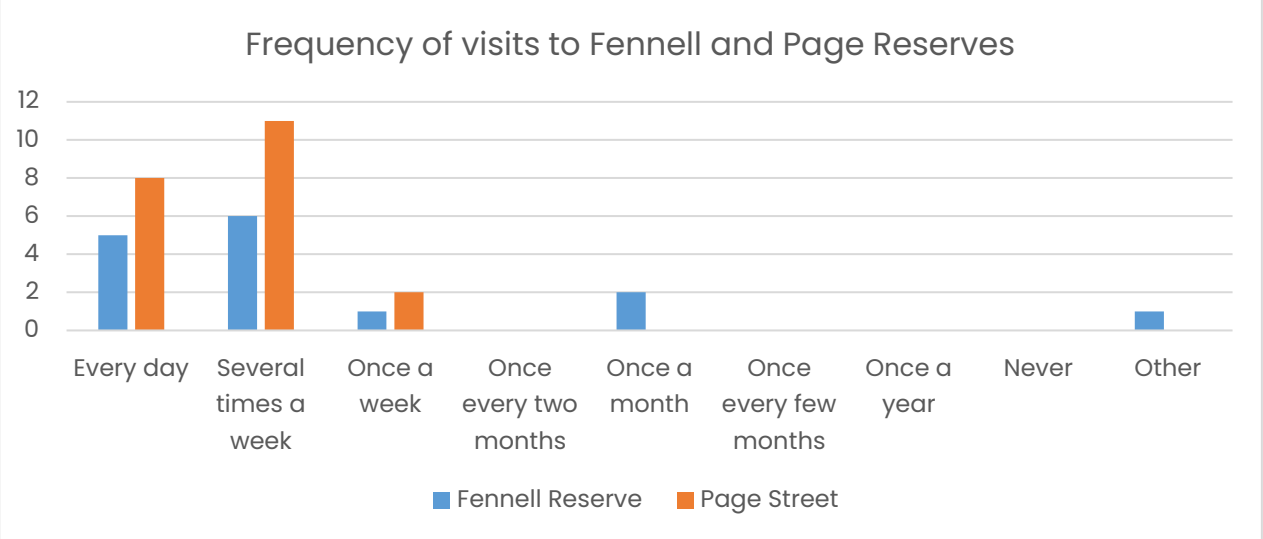
We asked participants what their connection was to Fennell and Page Reserves. A total of 22 people responded to the question in relation to Page Reserve and 15 to Fennell Reserve.

Most respondents had a strong local connection to both reserves, with the majority living within a 10-minute walk or visiting regularly. Page Reserve showed slightly higher levels of nearby residents and property owners than Fennell Reserve, indicating a broader local user base.



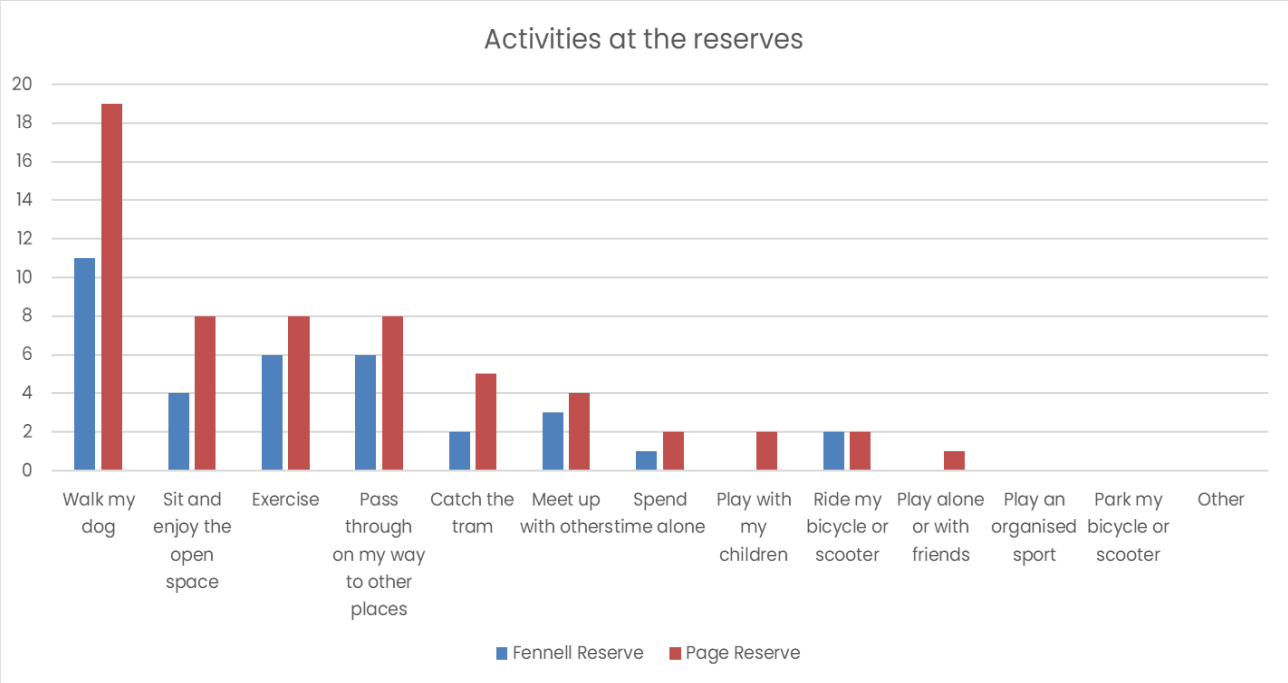
Visiting the Reserves

Twenty-two respondents provided feedback for Page Street Reserve and 15 for Fennell Reserve. Both reserves are used frequently, though Page Street shows slightly higher day-to-day visitation.



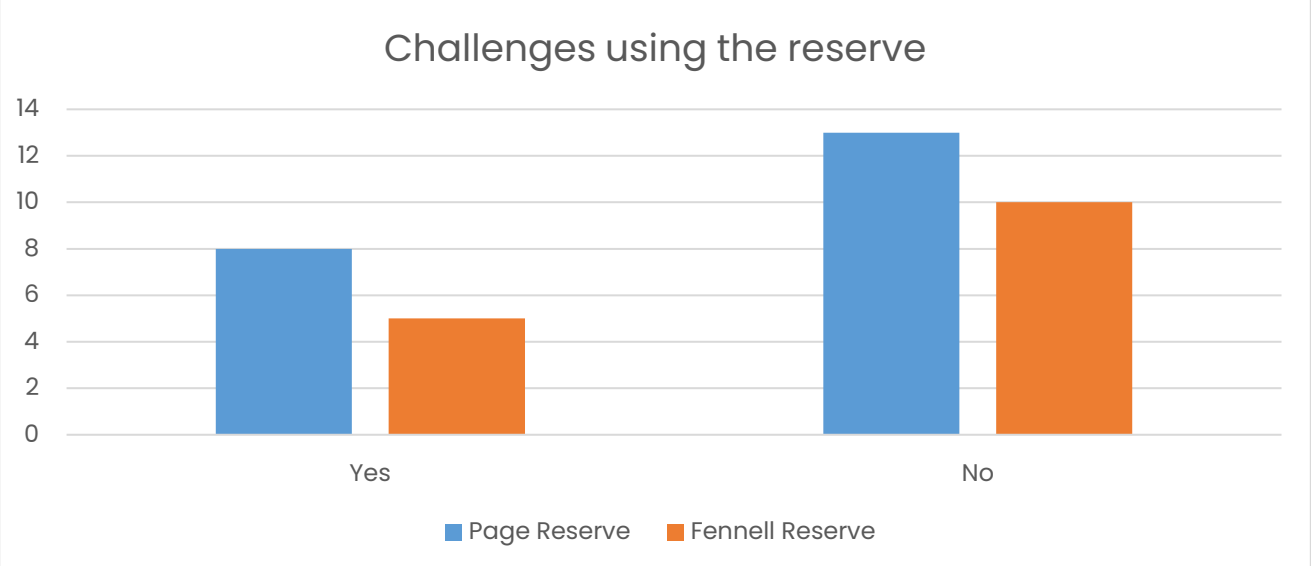
Activities at the Reserves

We asked participants to share what activities they do when they visit Fennell and Page Reserves. Walking the dog is the dominant activity at both reserves (Fennell 11; Page 19), followed by passing through, exercising and sitting to enjoy the open space. Page Reserve shows broader use across more activities, with higher counts for catching the tram and family use, while organised sport and bicycle parking were negligible at both sites.



Challenges to using the reserves

Participants were asked if there was anything about the reserve that made it harder to use. Most respondents reported no barriers to using the reserves, with 13 people saying "no" for Page Reserve and 10 for Fennell Reserve. A smaller number identified challenges (8 at Page and 5 at Fennell), indicating that while the majority find the reserves accessible, some users still experience difficulties.



Comments relating to Page Reserve

Seven participants provided comments regarding challenges at Page Reserve:

- **Access and connectivity:** Improve access at the Ingles Street end by opening the dead-end/low fence and resolving the stone wall interruption so prams and bikes can enter safely without using the road.
- **Safety and lighting:** Provide better night lighting along paths and consider perimeter fencing near the road to prevent dogs running onto traffic.
- **Maintenance and landscaping:** Refresh worn turf, address weeds and drainage, water during dry periods, and tidy broken branches; review mulching practices that may be contributing to termite issues.
- **Amenities:** Add more seating and tables so people are not sitting on dusty grass, and consider a public toilet for North Port tram users.

Comments relating to Fennell Reserve

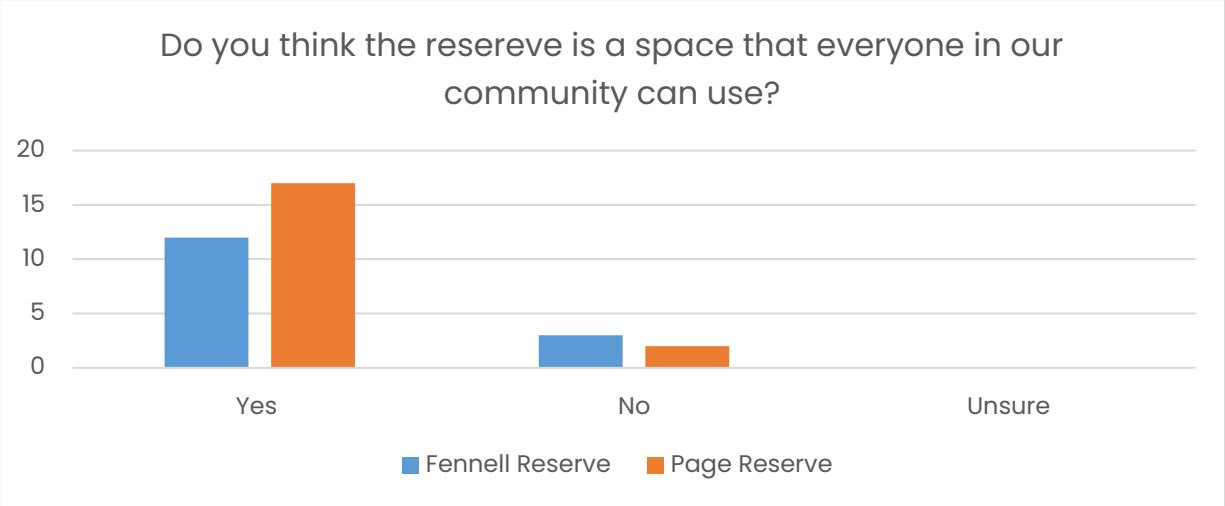
Four participants provided comments regarding challenges at Fennell Reserve:

- **Strong demand for dog-related facilities:** Some respondents want the reserve to become an off-leash area and called for fencing along busy roads, dog-friendly drinking fountains, and better amenities for pets.
- **Maintenance and upkeep concerns:** Several comments highlighted poor maintenance, including lack of watering during dry periods, tired grass, weeds and general cleanliness issues, especially compared with nearby reserves.
- **Safety and amenity issues:** Requests included improved lighting, removal of rubbish and food waste left by a person sleeping in the park, and more shade trees and shrubs for comfort and usability.
- **Equity and consistency across reserves:** Some respondents noted that Fennell feels neglected compared with other nearby parks, despite serving a growing population of apartment residents and dog owners.

Are the reserves a space for everyone?

Across both Reserves, almost all participants said 'yes, the reserves are a space that everyone in the community can use'.

A small number of participants said 'no'.



What people like and want to improve

Page Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Page Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Page Reserve, you can tell us here.' A total of 17 comments were received to both questions.

What people like about Page Reserve:

- Quiet, pleasant atmosphere – nice place to sit and walk through.
- Good weekday activity – local office workers using the park gives it a positive feel.
- Opportunity for activation – suggestion of a tram-café concept to bring more vibrancy.
- General appeal – people enjoy the space but want it maintained to the same standard as nearby parks.

What people feel could be improved about Page Reserve:

- Dog-related amenities: dog-waste bags, better dog-drinking bowls, more bins, fenced areas for dogs.
- Safety & lighting: improved lighting at night, especially near roads and paths; fencing along busy edges.
- Access & connectivity: better access from Ingles Street; improve rusted/damaged tram-line fencing.
- Amenities: more seating, picnic tables, water fountains; consider enclosed dog-play area.
- Maintenance: better upkeep of lawn, plants and general cleanliness to match other reserves in the corridor.
- Activation ideas: interest in a small café or activation near the tram stop.

"Tram line fence should be improved. Currently rusted and broken. It's a hazard for young children."

"Hard to access, as it is a dead end that doesn't lead to a tram stop, it is less frequented."

Fennell Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Fennell Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Fennell Reserve, you can tell us here.' A total of 14 comments were received to both questions.

What people like about Fennell Reserve:

- Popular and well-used: seen as an important local park serving a growing apartment population.
- Location and shade: valued for its proximity to homes and the shade provided by existing trees.
- Existing character: some appreciate its potential as an off-leash dog-park location.
- Local amenity: nearby venues such as the North Port Pub add to the appeal.

What people feel could be improved about Fennell Reserve:

- Strong call for a fenced off-leash dog park: multiple requests for fencing, double-gated entry, and safety barriers near roads and tram lines.
- Dog-related amenities: tippable dog-water bowls, dog-waste bags, more shade trees and shrubs for dog activity.
- Maintenance concerns: poor lawn condition, lack of watering, garden beds being damaged by dog traffic, and a general perception that the park is maintained to a lower standard than others nearby.
- Lighting and safety: better night lighting and improved pedestrian safety along the path near blind corners and fast-moving cyclists.
- Social/behavioural issues: concerns about rubbish and food waste left by a person sleeping in the park.

"Improved lighting at night, improve pedestrian path from Coles to the main cycling path- can be difficult as bike riders come at speed from the east around a blind corner."

"Fennell Reserve should be a dog off-leash park."

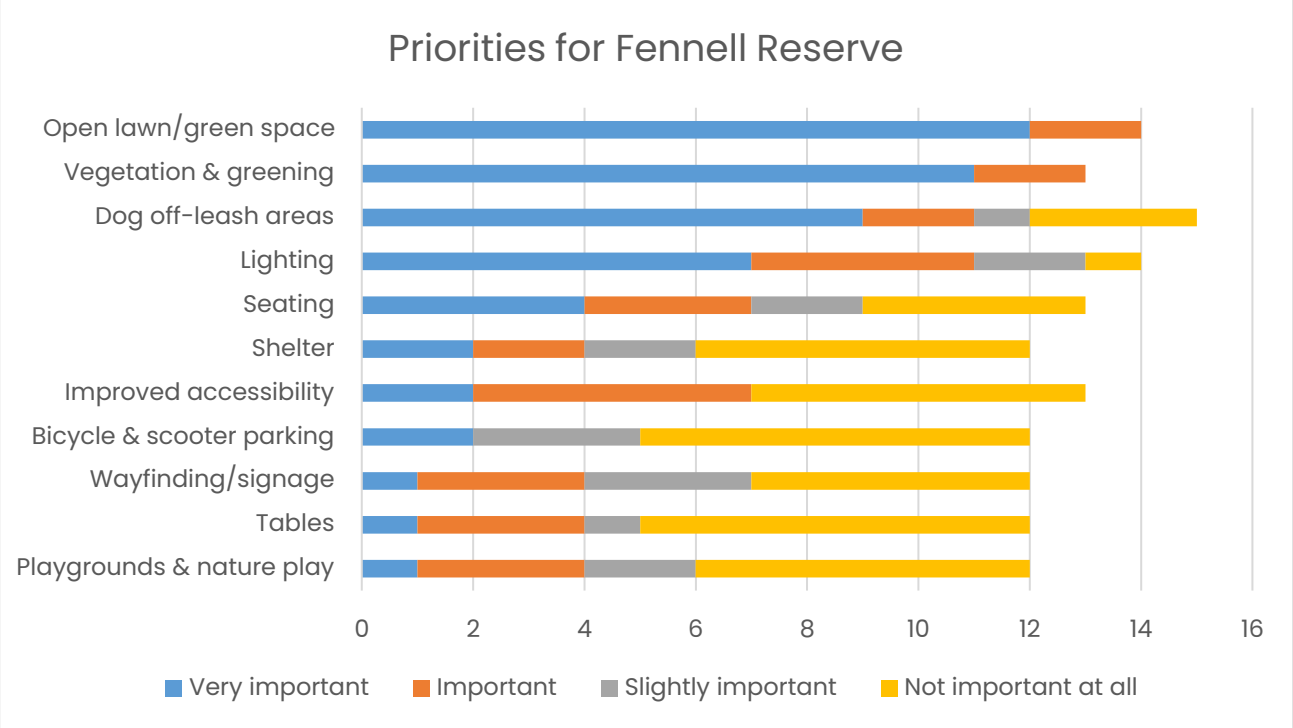
Priorities for the Reserves

Participants were asked what was important from a preset list of priorities for each Reserve. Respondents for both reserves placed the highest value on open green space, vegetation and lighting, but those engaging about Page Reserve expressed stronger support for dog off-leash areas and additional seating. Feedback for Fennell Reserve showed less interest in built features overall, with respondents emphasising simpler, low-infrastructure improvements compared with those commenting on Page Reserve.

Fennell Reserve

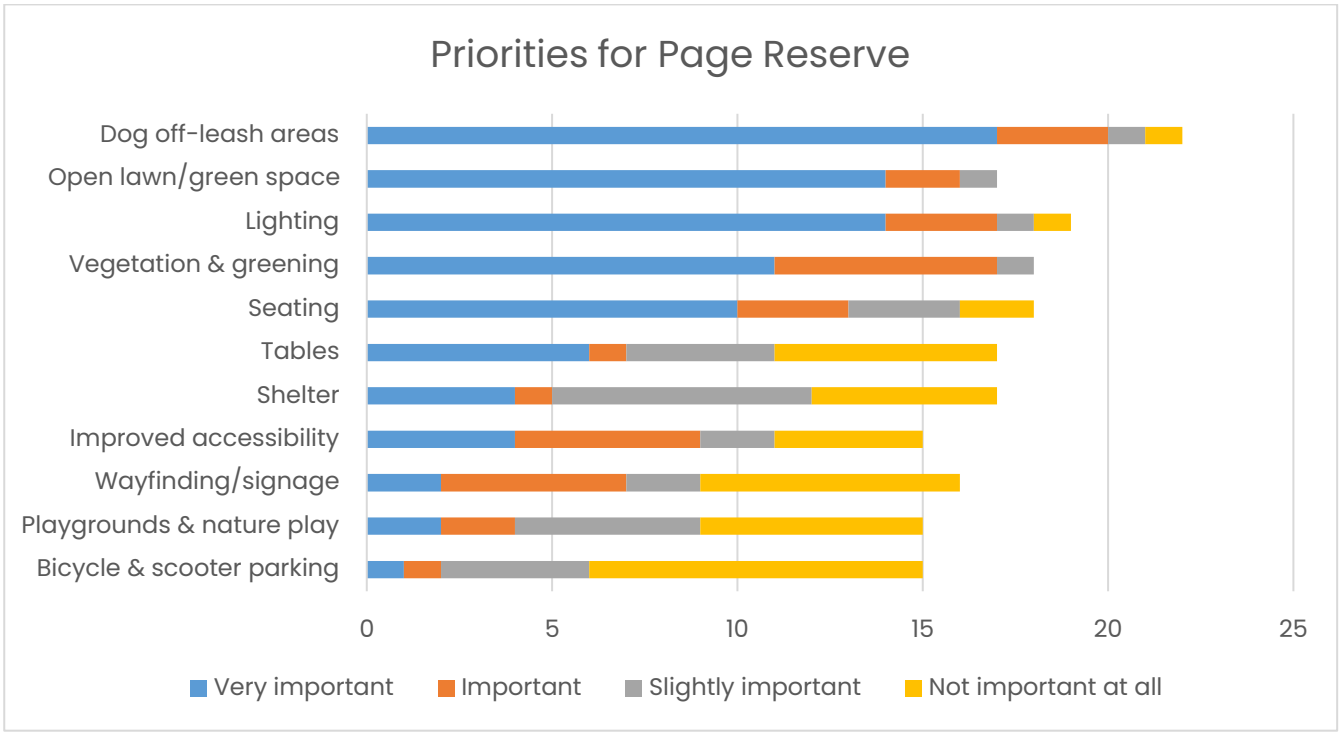
A total of 15 responses were received to this question. Respondents placed the highest importance on open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, lighting and dog off-leash areas, with strong support for these core features. Built elements such as playgrounds, tables, shelter, signage, bicycle parking and

accessibility were generally considered less important, receiving more mixed or lower ratings.

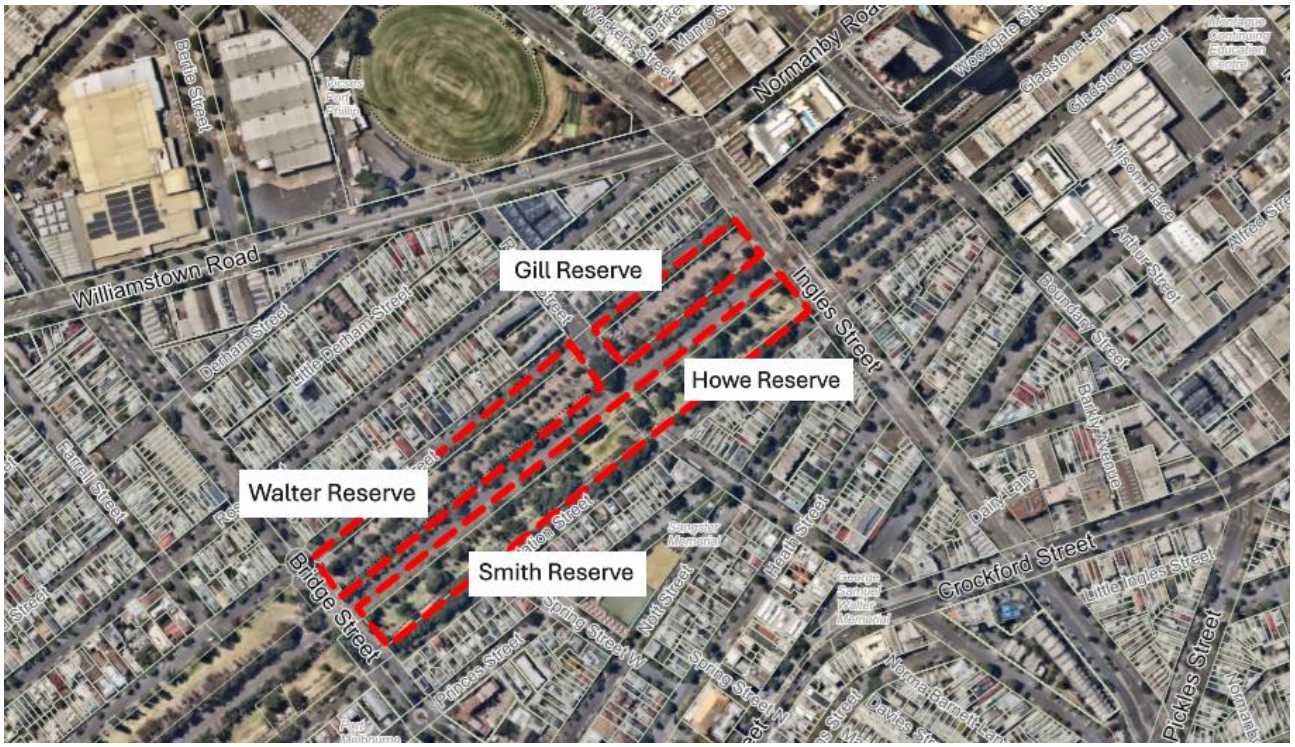


Page Reserve

Twenty-two participants contributed to this question, with the strongest priorities being dog off-leash areas, open lawn and green space, lighting and vegetation, all receiving the highest “very important” ratings. Lower-ranked features such as bicycle and scooter parking, playgrounds, and shelter were generally seen as less important, with many respondents marking them as only slightly important or not important at all.


Priorities for Page Reserve
Dog off-leash areas
Open lawn/green space
Lighting
Vegetation & greening
Seating
Tables
Shelter
Improved accessibility
Wayfinding/signage
Playgrounds & nature play
Bicycle & scooter parking
0
5
10
15
20
25
Very important
Important
Slightly important
Not important at all

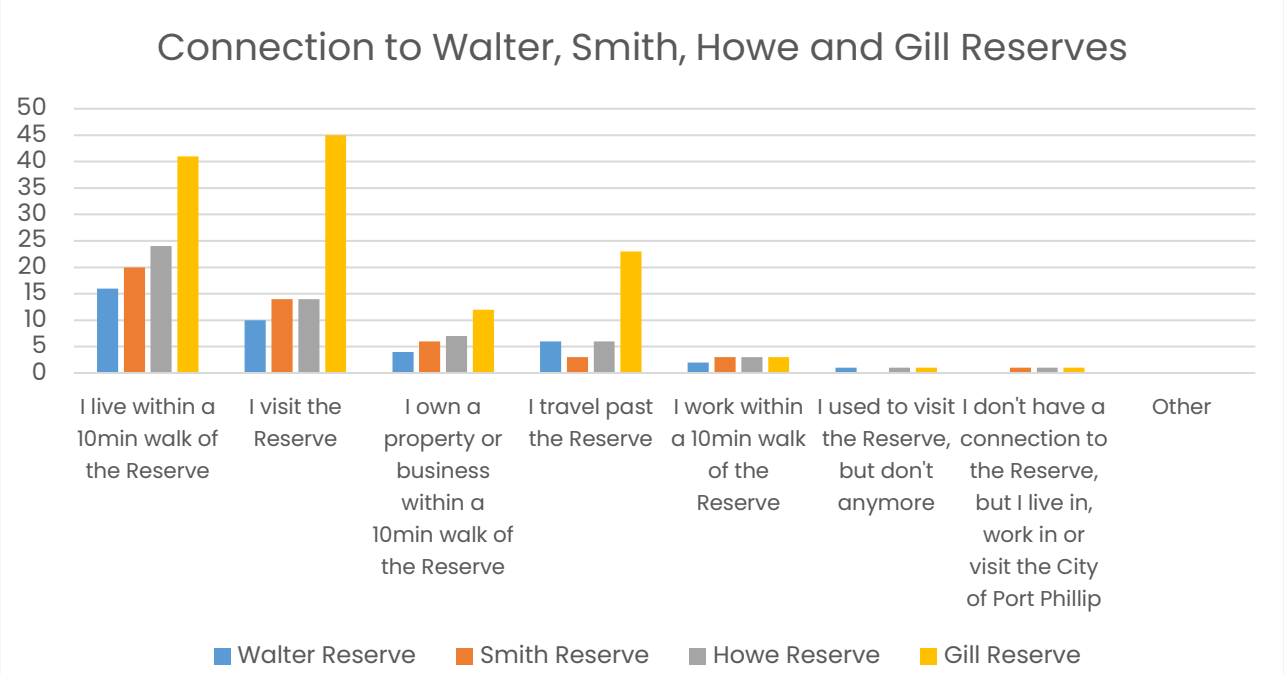
About Walter, Smith, Gill and Howe Reserves



Connection to the Reserves

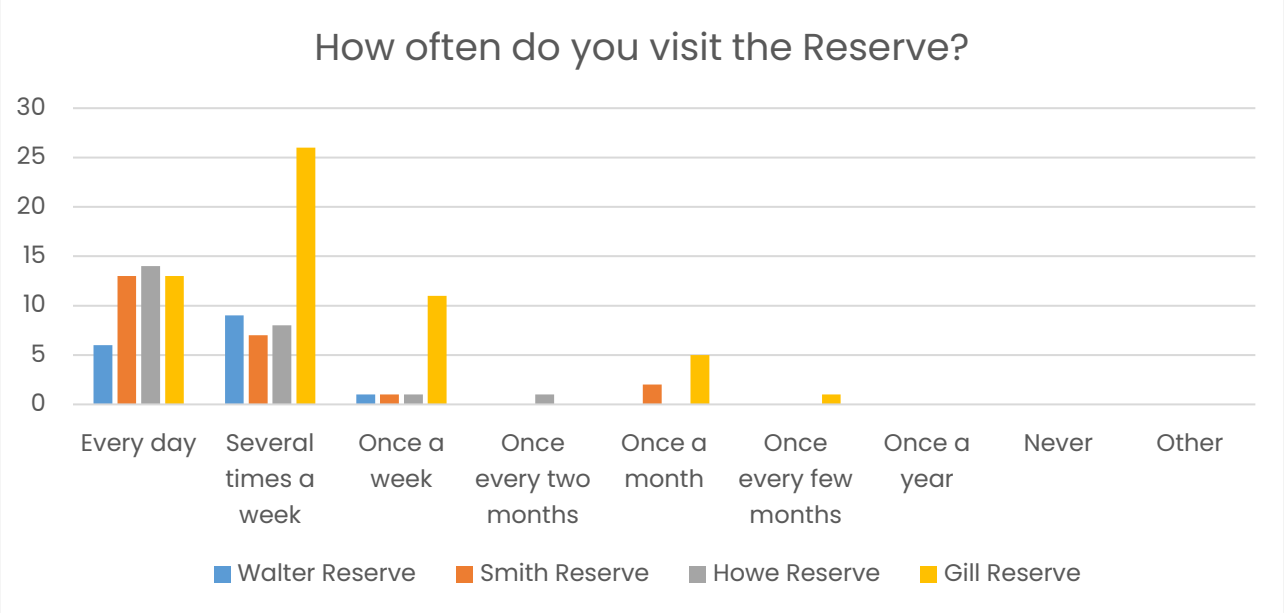
We asked participants what their connection was to Walter, Smith, Gill and Howe Reserves. A total of 24 people responded to the question in relation to Smith Reserve, 55 to Gill Reserve, 26 to Howe and 18 to Walter Reserve.

Across all four reserves, most respondents live within a 10-minute walk or visit regularly, indicating strong local reliance on these spaces. Howe, Smith and Walter Reserves show consistent patterns of nearby residents and regular visitors, while Gill Reserve stands out with the highest engagement, attracting the largest number of local residents, visitors and people travelling past the area. Overall, the responses reflect a highly engaged community with strong everyday connections to their local reserves.



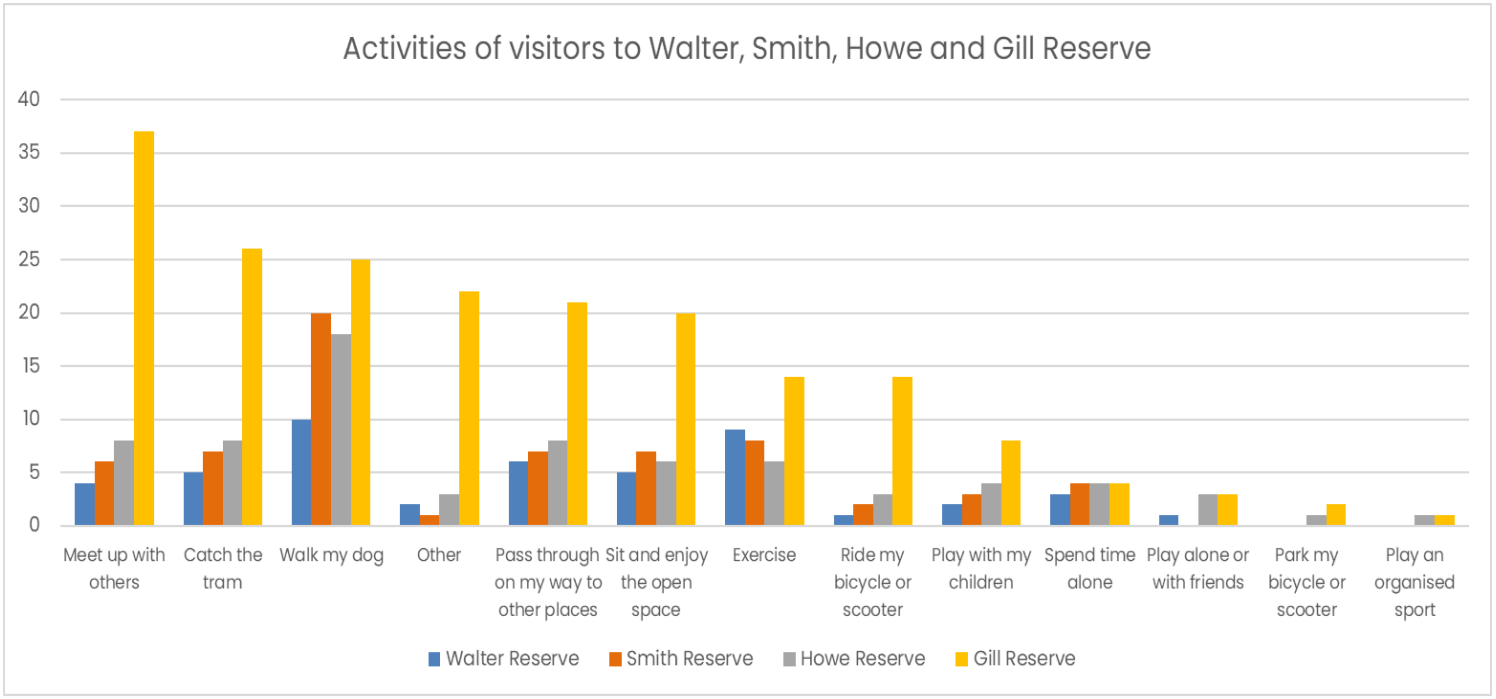
Visiting the Reserves

Participants were asked how frequently they visit the reserves. Respondents visit all four reserves frequently, with most people attending either every day or several times a week. Gill Reserve shows the highest overall usage, followed by Howe and Smith, while Walter Reserve records strong but slightly lower levels of regular visitation.



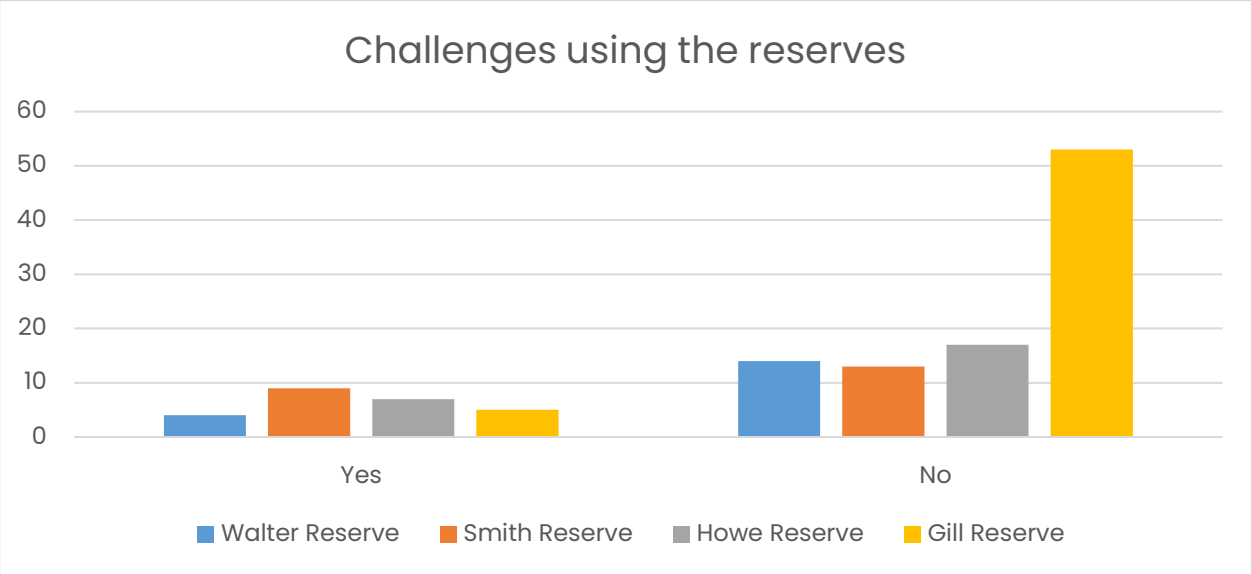
Activities at the Reserves

Participants were asked what activities they do when they visit Walter, Smith, Howe and Gill Reserves, selecting as many options as apply. Across all four reserves, dog walking is the dominant activity, with solid levels of exercising, passing through, sitting to enjoy the open space, and catching the tram. Gill Reserve shows the broadest and highest participation across most activities—especially meeting up with others (37), catching the tram (26), passing through (21), sitting (20), riding (14) and family use—indicating a strong social/transport hub, while Walter, Smith and Howe skew more to everyday local use centred on dog walking (10, 20, 18 respectively) and exercise (9, 8, 6), with organised sport negligible at all sites.



Challenges to using the reserves

Participants were asked if there was anything about the reserve that made it harder to use. Across all sites, 25 of 122 responses said something makes it harder to use the space, about 21%. Smith Reserve has the highest proportion reporting barriers (41%, 9 of 22), followed by Howe (29%, 7 of 24) and Walter (22%, 4 of 18), while Gill is notably lower (9%, 5 of 58).



Comments relating to Walter Reserve

Three participants provided comments regarding challenges at Walter Reserve:

- **Safety around bikes and scooters:** Fast-moving bikes and e-scooters on the shared path were described as unsafe, particularly near the playground and when accompanying young children who need to use the path to access the park.
- **Amenities:** Participants noted the lack of a public toilet near the playground.
- **Shade and usability**: The playground was reported to be unusable in hot weather due to the absence of shade sails, with equipment becoming too hot for children.

Comments relating to Howe Reserve

Seven participants provided comments regarding challenges at Howe Reserve, summarised below:

- **Safety and lighting:** Several people reported that lighting is poor or non-existent, making the reserve feel unsafe at night, particularly when walking to and from the North Port tram stop.
- **Fencing and boundaries:** Concerns were raised about the lack of fencing near the road and along the tram line, with some noting risks for dogs and children.
- **Access and connectivity:** The path connection from Ingles Street is difficult to use because of bark, lawn and unpaved areas, creating barriers for prams, mobility issues and general accessibility.
- **Cyclists and e-bikes:** Fast-moving cyclists and e-bikes on the sandy gravel path were described as unsafe, with suggestions they should use the dedicated cycle path.
- **Amenities and maintenance:** Comments noted a flooded water fountain with algae, a need for dog-friendly fixtures and issues with backpackers or homeless people using bushes for waste, creating hygiene concerns.

Comments relating to Smith Reserve

Seven participants provided comments regarding challenges at Smith Reserve, summarise below:

- **Path condition and accessibility:** Walking paths were described as uneven, muddy and slippery after irrigation, making them difficult to use.
- **Safety and lighting:** Multiple participants reported that lighting is non-existent, creating safety concerns at night, including when walking to and from the North Port tram stop.
- **Fencing and boundaries:** Several comments called for fencing along Ingles Street and around the perimeter to improve safety for dogs and people near the road.

- **Amenities and landscaping:** Concerns were raised about the visual impact of the proposed Transport Victoria substation on the reserve's leafy character.
- **Dogs and shared use:** Some participants felt uncontrolled off-leash dogs interfere with people sitting or picnicking, and suggested off-leash areas should not impact general lawn and walking spaces.

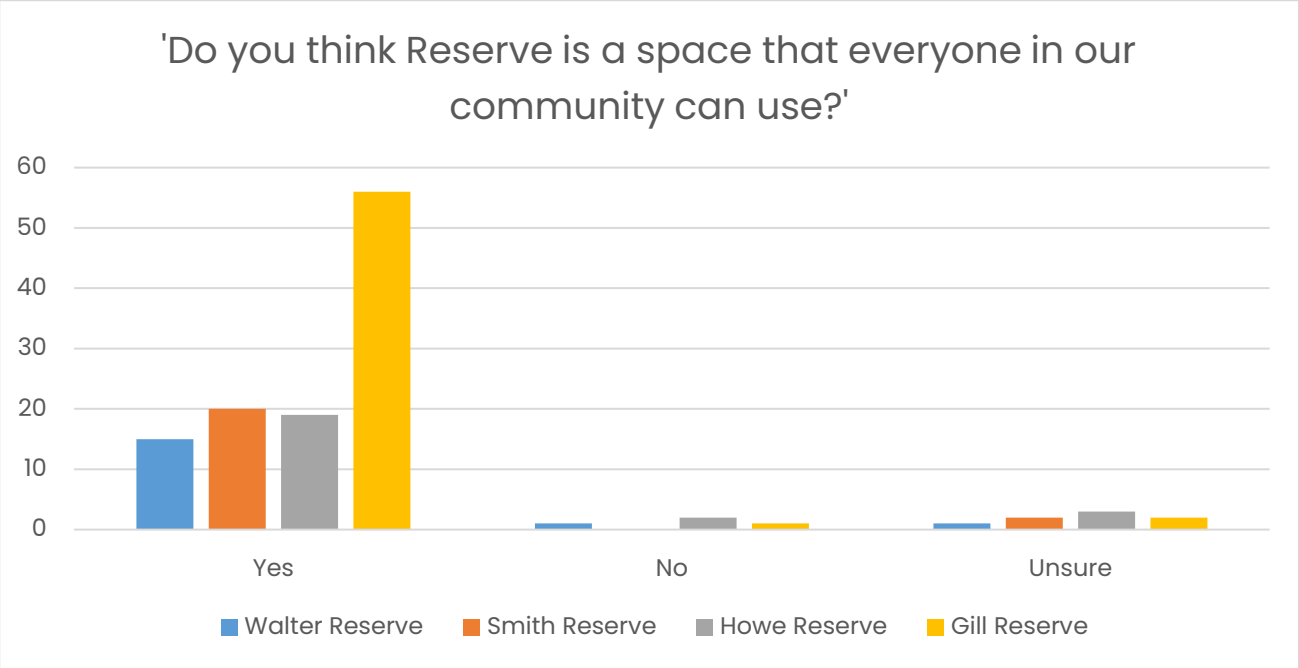
Comments relating to Gill Reserve

Four participants provided comments on the challenges relating to Gill Reserve, summarised below:

- **Grass condition and maintenance**: Some participants reported that the reserve has large areas of dead grass and bare dirt impacted by the lack of irrigation. They note that this makes the space dusty, unattractive and difficult to use for everyday activities such as walking dogs.
- **Impact of North Port Hotel activities:** Multiple comments raised concerns about the intensity of use associated with the hotel, including groups playing ball sports that feel more suited to a sporting ground, damage to parked cars and decreased enjoyment of the space due to alcohol-related behaviour.
- **Safety and amenity:** Some participants said they do not feel safe when people under the influence of alcohol move through the reserve, and noted that increased lighting would help improve safety for activities like evening dog walking.

Are the reserves a space for everyone?

Participants were asked if Walter, Smith, Howe and Gill Reserves are spaces that everyone can use. Across all reserves, most respondents felt the spaces are usable by everyone, with 110 out of 120 responses selecting Yes. Only 4 people said No and 8 were Unsure, with Walter and Howe Reserves accounting for most of these.



What people like and want to improve

Walter Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Walter Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Walter Reserve, you can tell us here' A total of 15 comments were received to both questions.

What people like about Water Reserve (5 comments):

- Popular facilities including the skatepark, basketball court, table tennis and open grass.
- "Pub in the Park" operated by the North Port Hotel.
- Playground is appreciated by local families.

What can be improved about Walter Reserve (10 comments):

- Desire for improved irrigation and general maintenance; large dirt patches and incomplete tree pruning.
- Support for additional amenities such as BBQs, seating, picnic tables, bins, dog poo bags, toilets and water fountains.
- Calls to improve safety: fencing along roads, better lighting and controls on fast e-scooters near the playground.
- Some would like to see playground improvements: fencing, more shade, more equipment and a nearby public toilet.
- Participants mentioned a desire for clearer management of dog off-leash areas and fencing to separate dogs from bike riders along the path.

"Also the playground would benefit from shelter and more equipment. It's close to a cafe and gets a lot of families using it."

"The kids play area needs a public toilet."

"It would be good to have more barriers along the street, so the dogs don't run off and is more secure."

Smith Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Smith Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Smith Reserve, you can tell us here' A total of 24 comments were received to both questions.

What people like about Smith Reserve (8 comments):

- Support for the natural environment, including trees, vegetation and landscaping, small hills, native planting and winding sandy path.
- Some comments mentioned the strong local community connection in the area.
- Shade and trees appreciated during hot weather.

What can be improved about Smith Reserve (16 comments):

- Some called for improved safety: Resurfacing of the walking track to address trip hazards, better lighting, playground fencing and better separation between cyclists and other users of the reserve.
- Dog-related facilities and safety: Better dog amenities requested including drinking fountains with raised, tippable bowls, dog waste bag dispensers and secure fencing near roads.
- Park amenities: Desire for more basic infrastructure such as benches, tables, bins and additional trees.
- Movement and connectivity: Calls for improved pathways and safer crossings between reserves, including suggestions for a pedestrian bridge.
- Anti-social behaviour: Concerns were raised about overnight camping.

"The lighting is non-existent, so my family and I do not feel safe walking through after dark."

"There is no water fountain in this reserve and we need one, with a dog bowl that can be tipped out and which is raised above the ground."

Howe Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Howe Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Howe Reserve, you can tell us here'.

What people like about Howe Reserve (11 comments):

- Support for open and green space including trees, well-kept lawn, vegetation, wildlife and landscaping.
- Support for mix use of spaces, including active (bocce courts) and passive (shady seated areas).
- Popular with dog walkers.

What can be improved about Howe Reserve (16 comments):

- Safety: People want fencing or screening along nearby roads, safer path connections and better lighting to feel secure.
- Dog-related needs: Users request raised tippable water bowls, reliable poo-bag dispensers and safer boundaries for dogs.
- Amenities and maintenance: Feedback highlights the desire for better grass, improved garden and tree care, more seating and well-placed bins.
- Water and drainage: There are calls to fix groundwater seepage and replace the faulty ground-level fountain.
- Planting and screening: Community members want more trees, shrubs and planting that improves amenity and screens the tram line.
- Access and signage: People want clearer bike and e-bike signage and better path connections, especially at the Ingles Street end.
- Recreation and community use: Some users want to keep community events like "pub in the park" and consider adding a half basketball court.
- Social issues: Concerns were flagged about antisocial behaviour in vegetation and a need for parking restrictions to reduce overnight stays.

"The Remembrance Garden needs to be better cared for. Many of the Clivea plants died not long after being planted and have never been replaced. Other areas are overgrown.."

" Fencing on the perimeter as the road is very close and I worry about my dog running on to it.."

"It would be GREAT if there was some kind of creative 'fencing' along Station Street and ESPECIALLY between Howe Reserve and Ingles Street."

Gill Reserve

Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions that have been summarised below; 'If you would like to share anything you like about Gill Reserve, you can tell us here' and 'If you would like to share anything you feel could be improved at Gill Reserve, you can tell us here' A total of 75 comments were received to both questions.

What people like about Gill Reserve (46 comments):

- General appreciation for the reserve; quiet place, peaceful, enjoyment of open space, having picnics and using it to walk dogs.
- Strong support for the pub in the park/North Port Hotel's outdoor area with an emphasis on the community spirit it brings and the welcoming family friendly atmosphere.
- Accessibility and convenience: The location near the tram and the ease of visiting with family, friends and kids is seen as a major advantage.

What can be improved about Gill Reserve (29 comments):

- Call for better maintenance of trees, garden beds, emptying on bins and irrigation, like nearby reserves.
- Desire for more amenities including more seating and picnic tables, lighting, water fountains, BBQ facilities, bins and more trees.
- Suggestions for active recreation spaces, such as basketball half or full court, sports of activity wall, climbing features.
- Some expressed a desire for the pub in the park to continue, while others were concerned about it reducing opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the space.
- Some identified that they would like additional dog-related amenities including fencing near the road, better lighting for night-time walking, more dog-poo bag dispensers and dog-friendly water fountains.

"I love that the North Port hotel can use this park for outdoor seating in summer. It's a space that we enjoy spending time in. It provides a space that is unique to the area and helps us see more of our community."

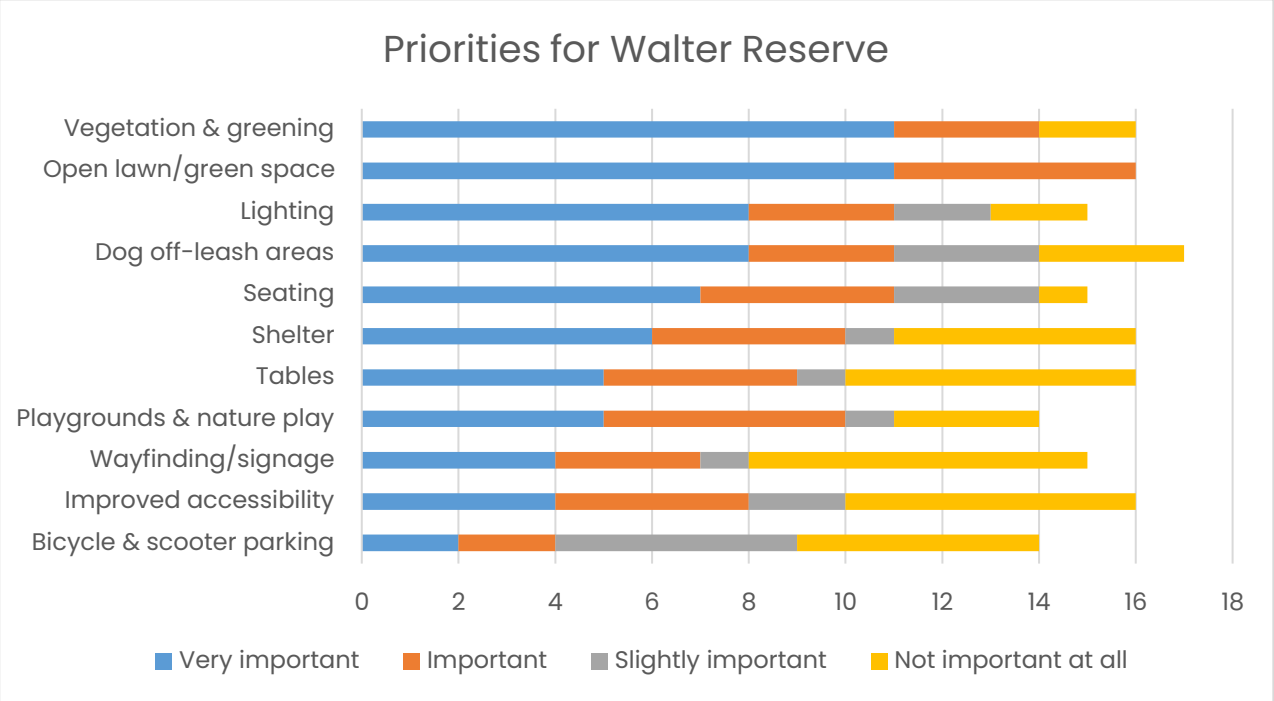
"Tap and water for pets."

Priorities for the Reserves

Participants were asked what was important from a preset list of priorities for each reserve. Across all four reserves, open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, and lighting consistently rank as the highest priorities, though Gill and Howe show particularly strong support for these elements. Dog off-leash areas are a strong priority in Howe and Smith, and even more so in Gill, while Walter shows moderate but not top-tier support. Seating is important across all sites but is strongest for Gill and Howe. By contrast, bicycle and scooter parking, tables, and shelter consistently rank lower at all reserves, though Walter shows slightly higher support for these than the others. Overall, Gill and Howe have the highest intensity of "very important" responses, while Smith and Walter show a more mixed spread of priorities.

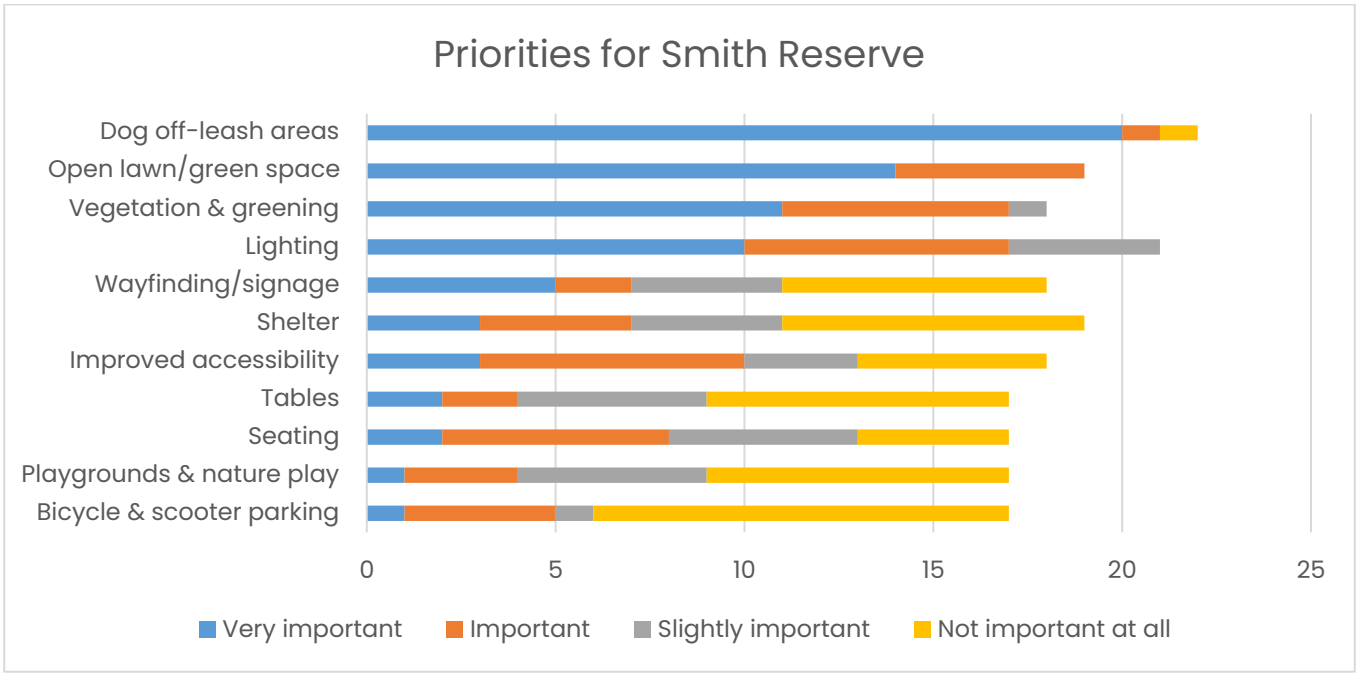
Walter Reserve

A total of 18 people responded to this question. Open lawn and green space, along with vegetation and greening, are the clear top priorities for Walter Reserve given their very high "very important" ratings and minimal negative responses. Seating, lighting, dog off-leash areas and shelter also rank strongly, while bicycle and scooter parking and wayfinding are lower priorities based on their higher "slightly important" and "not important" scores.



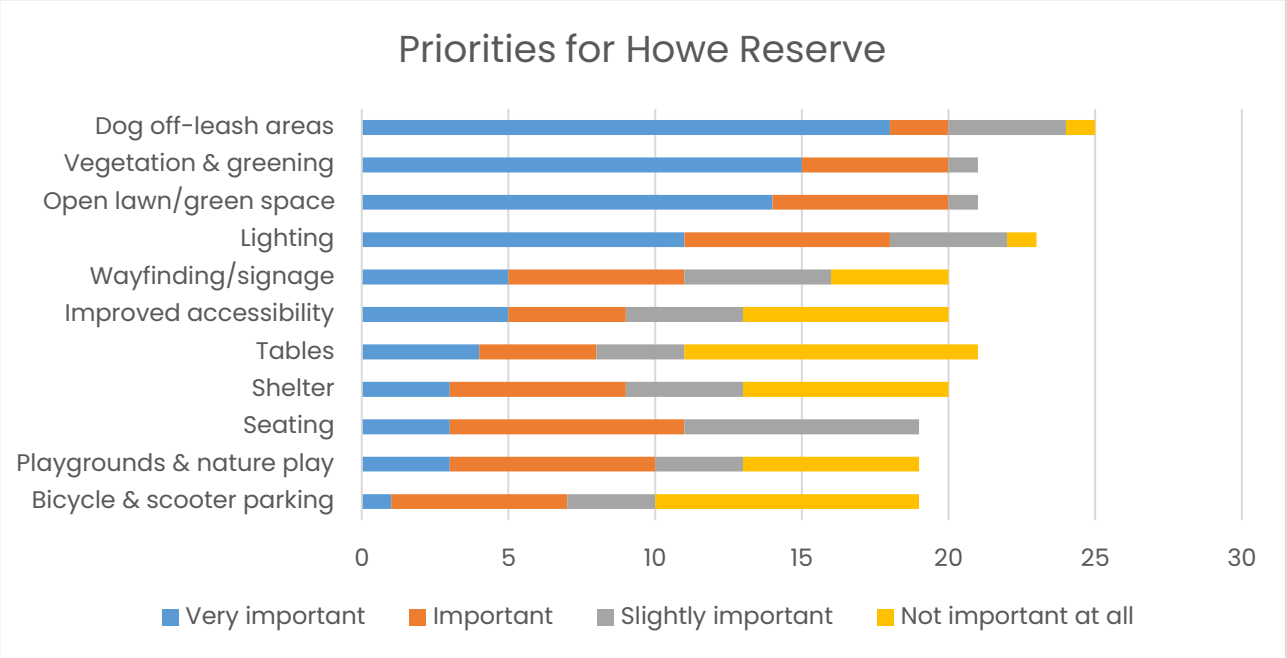
Smith Reserve

Twenty-four participants contributed to this question. Open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, lighting and dog off-leash areas stand out as the highest priorities for Smith Reserve, with strong “very important” ratings and almost no negative responses. By contrast, bicycle and scooter parking, playgrounds and nature play, tables and shelter rate much lower due to higher “not important” responses.



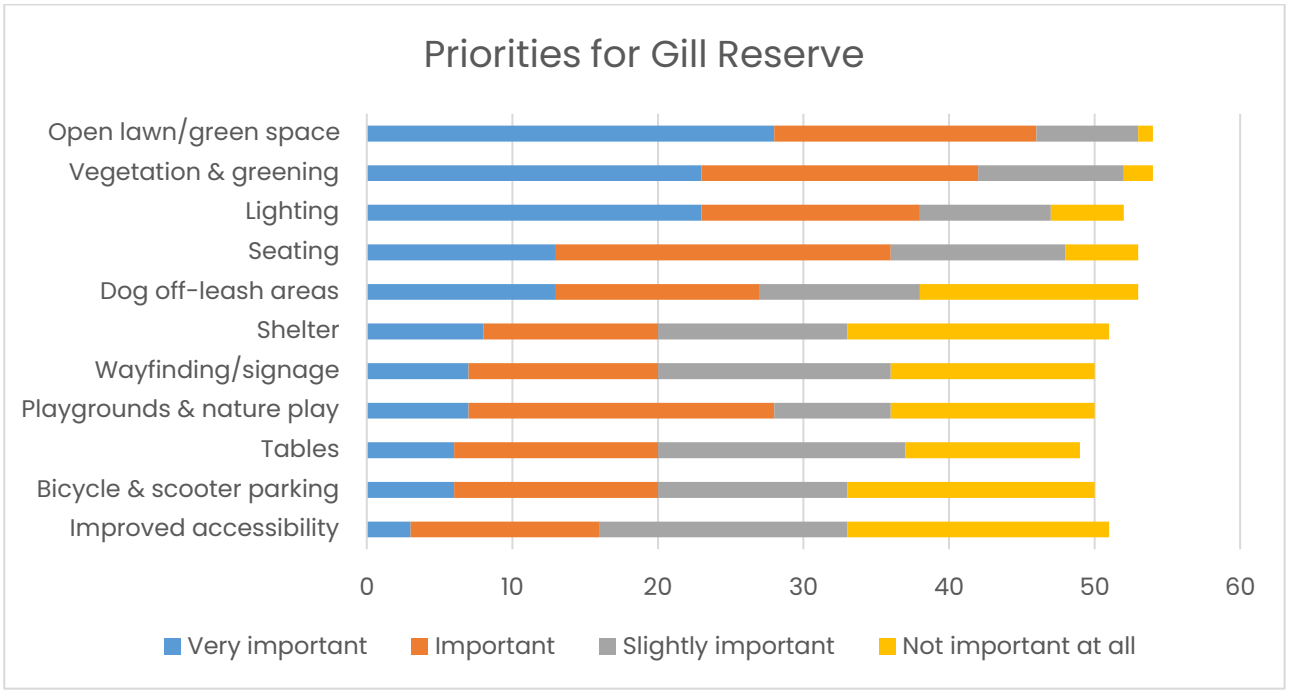
Howe Reserve

A total of 26 people responded to the question of their priorities for the future of Howe Reserve. Open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, lighting and dog off-leash areas are the strongest priorities for Howe Reserve, with high "very important" counts and almost no negative responses. Seating, wayfinding and improved accessibility also rate relatively well, while bicycle and scooter parking, shelter and tables attract much lower support due to higher "not important" responses.



Gill Reserve

Gill Reserve received 56 responses to the question around community priorities. Open lawn and green space, vegetation and greening, lighting and seating are the strongest priorities for Gill Reserve, with very high "very important" and "important" ratings and minimal negative responses. By comparison, improved accessibility, bicycle and scooter parking, tables and shelter score much lower due to large numbers of "slightly important" and "not important" responses


Priorities for Gill Reserve
Open lawn/green space
Vegetation & greening
Lighting
Seating
Dog off-leash areas
Shelter
Wayfinding/signage
Playgrounds & nature play
Tables
Bicycle & scooter parking
Improved accessibility
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
Very important
Important
Slightly important
Not important at all

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback on Stage 1 of this project. The engagement findings from this engagement will now be used to inform development of the draft Master Plan.

Stage 2 engagement on this project will take place in the first half of 2026, where the community will have an opportunity to review the draft Master Plan and provide feedback.

We will continue to keep the community updated on the progress of the project via the dedicated project page at www.haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/light-rail-linear-parks