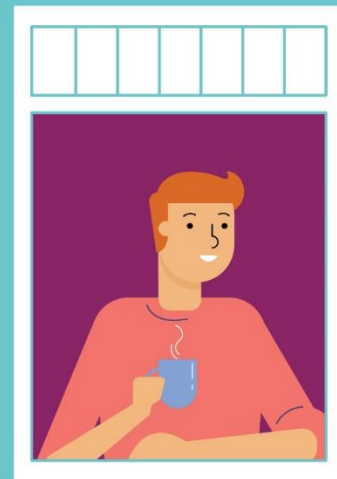# Maroondah COVID-19 Secondary Impact Assessment
Stakeholder Consultation Report
August 2021

Contents

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges and impacts felt across the nation.

To update our understanding of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community, and the subsequent supports needed, Council engaged with community organisations to undertake this *Stakeholder Consultation Report*, which informs the *Maroondah COVID-19 Secondary Impact Assessment*.

Between July and August 2021, Council engaged with 84 community organisations linked to Maroondah via qualitative questionnaires, with the aim of identifying and understanding the medium-term impacts and projected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community, and informing long-term community recovery planning in Maroondah

This Stakeholder Consultation Report outlines results on the medium and projected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community, supports needed, recovery priorities for the future, and challenges faced by community organisations as well as their contributions to recovery efforts.

Key Findings

The top **medium-term impacts** on the Maroondah community were identified as:

- Social isolation
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Education
- Reduced access to services/ supports

The top **projected long-term impacts** on the Maroondah community were identified as:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports
- Education
- Financial instability/ hardship
- Social isolation
- Health and safety

The top **supports needed** by the community over the next 12 months were identified as:

- Safety/ health and wellbeing
- Community connectedness
- Mental health
- Vulnerable/ living alone
- Children/ youth/ families

The top **long-term priorities for recovery** for the Maroondah community were identified as:

- Community connectedness and participation
- Mental health
- Access to resources/ information
- Health and safety
- Support for parents/ carers/ families

The top **challenges** for community organisation were identified as:

- Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely
- Establishing and/or maintaining engagement
- Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment
- Loss of revenue/ financial constraints
- Staff burnout/ decreased wellbeing
- Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been nationwide, deep and profound. The Maroondah community, along with the rest of metropolitan Melbourne, has been particularly impacted by an extended series of staged restrictions in response to the number of active positive cases.

To ensure that the needs of the Maroondah community are understood and effectively supported, Council is undertaking a comprehensive and ongoing relief and recovery planning process with a staged community engagement process at its centre.

This report details the methodology and outcomes of the stakeholder consultation with community organisations undertaken between June and August 2021 as part of the third stage of the community engagement process.

Details of previous engagement stages can be found on Council's website.

1.2 Objectives

The key objectives for this stage of the community engagement process were:

- To identify and understand the medium-term impacts and projected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community.
- To identify any new, changed or arising community needs resulting from the pandemic and provide recommendations to address them.
- To inform long-term community recovery planning in Maroondah.

The key aims and objectives for this stage's stakeholder consultation (detailed in this report) were:

A. **Community Impacts** - To identify and understand the medium-term impacts and projected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community

   Objectives:

   1. To identify and understand the medium-term and projected long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Maroondah community, from the perspective of community organisations

B. **Recovery Planning** - To inform long-term community recovery planning in Maroondah

   Objectives:

   1. To identify supports needed by the Maroondah community in the medium to long term (next 12 months)
   2. To identify long-term community recovery priorities from the perspective of community organisations
   3. To identify potential solutions / recommendations for long-term community recovery in Maroondah, from the perspective of community organisations
   4. To understand how community organisations are contributing to community recovery in Maroondah (to avoid duplication)

2. Methods

2.1   Stakeholder Consultation with Community Organisations

Stakeholder consultation with community organisations across a wide range of sectors was undertaken between July and August 2021.

Engagement Methods	Outcomes
Qualitative questionnaire with community organisations linked to Maroondah, undertaken by Council staff via either: • Phone interview; • Face-to-face interview; • Online survey; or • Focus group/s with a number of stakeholders from different organisations at once.	84
Total:	**84 responses**

2.2   Data Analysis Process

To transform the raw qualitative data received through the consultation into quantitative data that could be analysed, a process of 'coding' the data was applied. The raw data was categorised into a series of overarching themes. Each theme was given a code, and that code was then assigned to the responses that corresponded to that theme. For example, the large number of responses that were identified through the surveys were grouped into overarching themes (e.g. the theme 'mental health' includes responses around increases in poor mental health, suggestion for mental health support, awareness, training and education, demand for referrals and anecdotes on personal experience). This process required a degree of interpretation, so some subjectivity was unavoidable in the data analysis.

Frequency data for each theme could then be calculated, based on how many times a theme was identified in the surveys. If a particular response related to two or more themes, it was assigned to each relevant theme. This is due to open-ended questions being posed in consultations which resulted in a wide variety of responses in a singular answer. For example, in response to a question posed around impacts, an answer such as 'job instability, struggling with remote learning and loneliness' would be themed into employment, education and social isolation to capture further richness in the analysis.

3. Participants

3.1 Participants by sector

The 84 stakeholders represented in this engagement are broken down as per the below graph.

A number of participating community organisations straddle more than one sector, so it is acknowledged that the process of splitting results by sector is not perfect and there is some cross-over. A list of participating organisations in each sector is therefore provided in Section 5 to help clarify which organisations contributed to the responses.
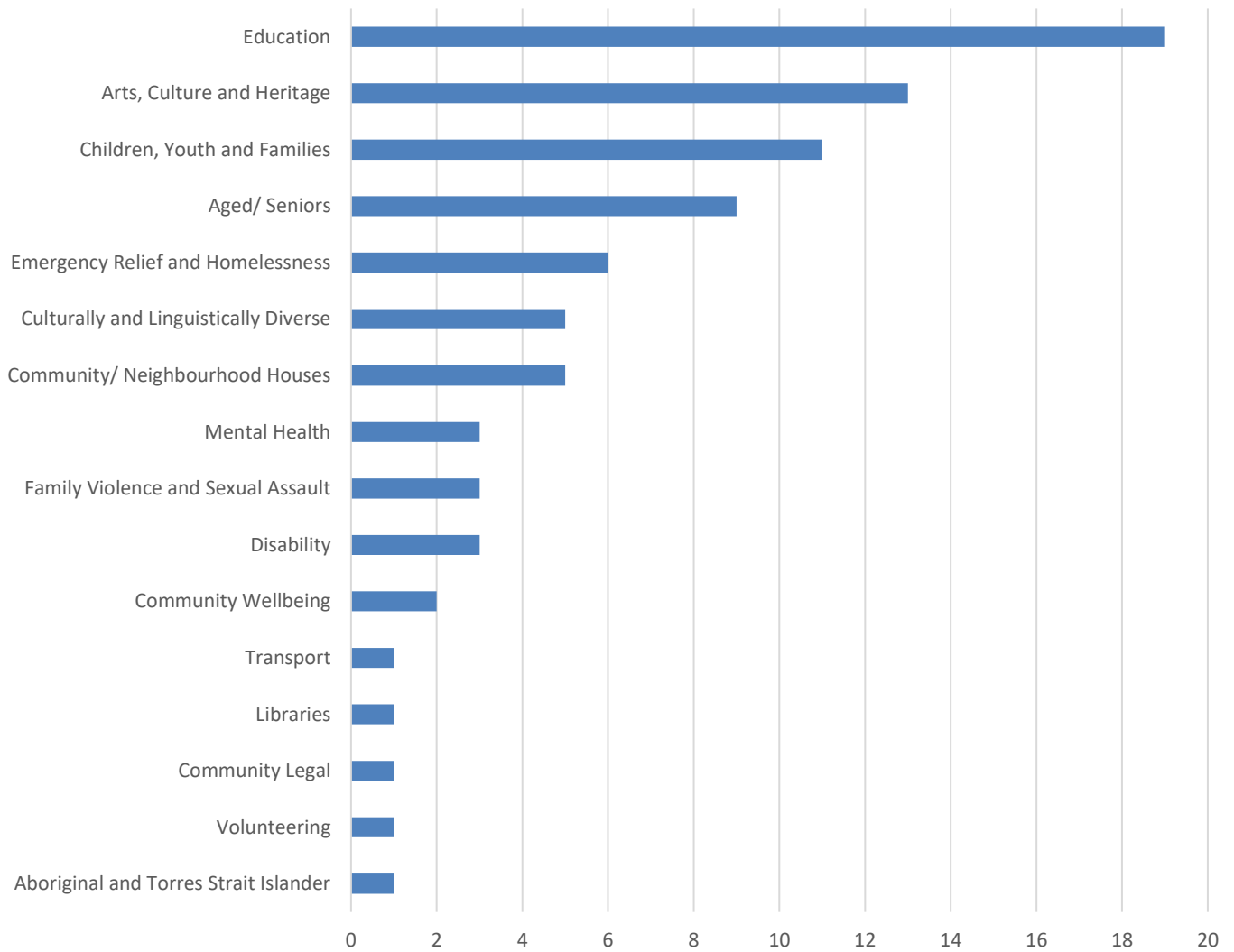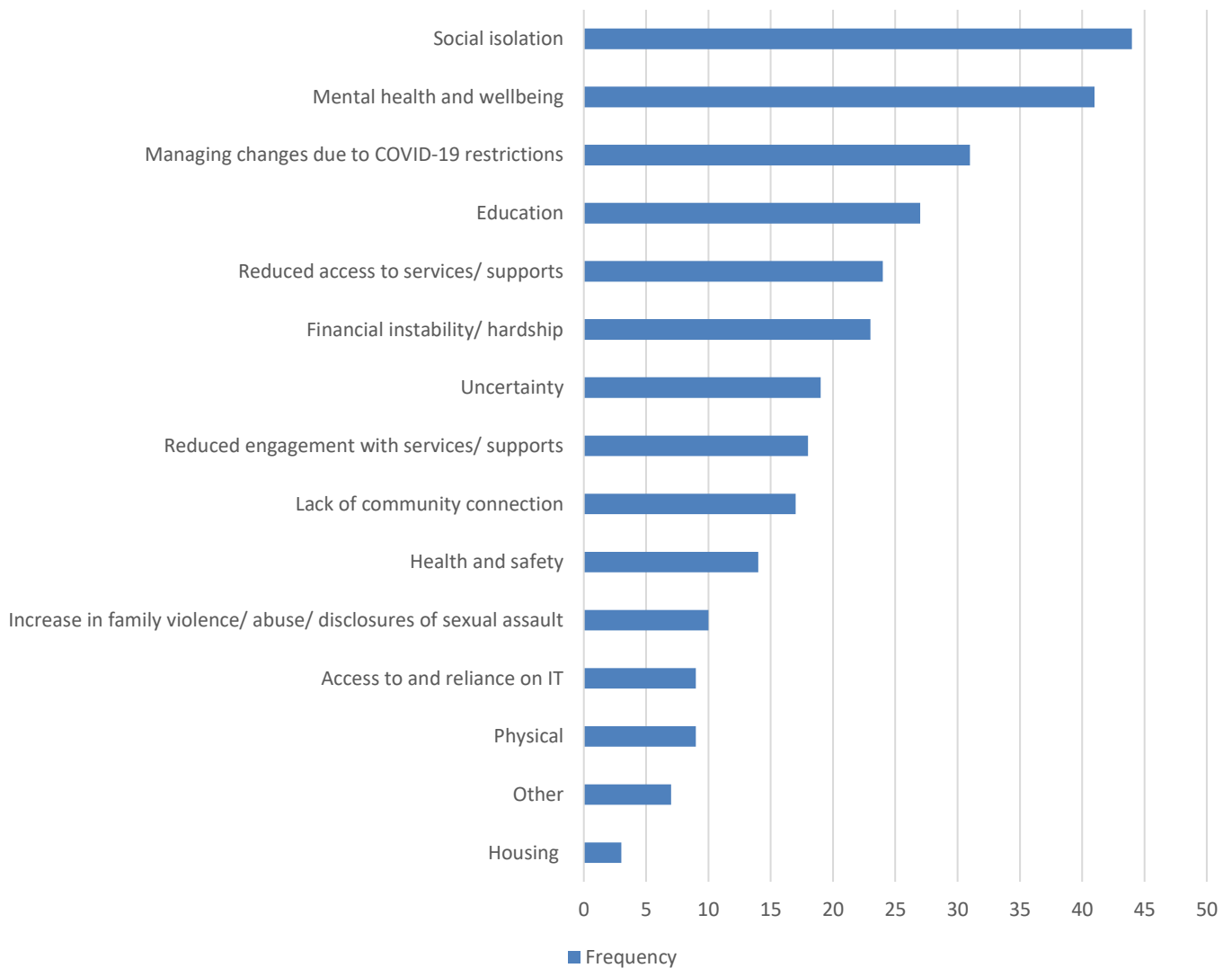
4. Key Findings

4.1 Community Impacts

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Top medium-term impacts on the community:

- Social isolation
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Education
- Reduced access to services/ supports

Results:

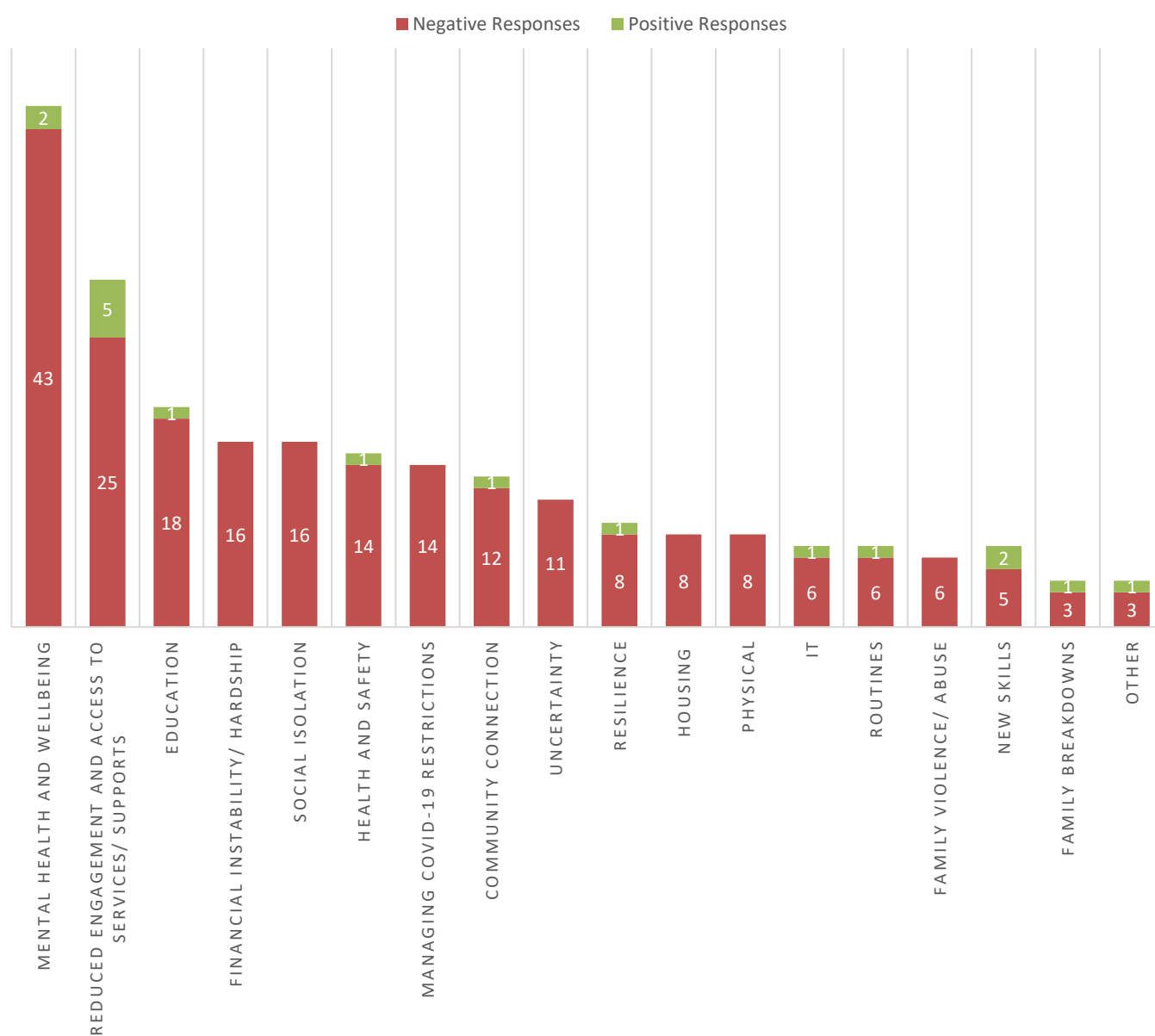| Theme	Description
Social isolation	Moving in and out of COVID restrictions, there were reports across all demographics of feeling disconnected from friends, family and loved ones. Social isolation is particularly hard for those with low tech literacy, living alone or retired.
Mental health and wellbeing	Mental health deterioration has been reported, with anxiety, depression and severe stress mentioned significantly. Some instances of self-harm have been reported as well as separation anxiety for children.
Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	During early 2021, restrictions were connected to increased feelings of being stuck at home, wearing masks, constant cancellations and changing routines/ lack of routine. Transitions are difficult especially during this time period where restrictions were put into placed and eased frequently. Many found it difficult to keep up with changes and access updated information.
Education	There have been significant disruptions to education due to courses moving online, being discontinued and schools closing and reopening due to restrictions. School refusal from students has been occurring. Home schooling/ remote learning is difficult for many, especially carers who are working. Academic learning for some students has been affected/ or slower and many students are experiencing a lack of motivation. There has also been reduced uptake of adult education.
Reduced access to services/ supports	Services have been disrupted or closed, wait lists have increased significantly and telehealth is still a barrier at first for many community members. The function of some services is also altered or decreased due to moving online. In transitional periods, there is also confusion about what is open, continuing or cancelled.
Financial instability/ hardship	Many respondents are nervous about employment stability, loss of work/ hours, underemployment, economic hardship, staying afloat without JobSeeker/ JobKeeper. The community is also concerned for struggling local businesses.
Uncertainty	Periods of lockdown, particularly where the situation changed so rapidly, caused feelings of instability, lack of certainty and acute stress. Disruptions, cancellations and changing environments cause people to feel uneasy and lose confidence, which can affect managing other commitments in life such as work and school.
Reduced engagement with services/ supports	There is increased hesitancy to attend organised activities or attend services in person for some community members. Some are waiting until 'the pandemic is over' to return to activities which has decreased volunteer numbers and willingness to join online alternatives. Due to concerns over visiting public facilities, there is still fear around being out in the community.
Lack of community connection	For many community members who participate in volunteering or are members of sporting or recreational groups, restrictions have limited ability or confidence to continue to attend. Online groups are valued by some but do not enable the same type of participation or interaction for many.
Health and safety	Some responses note a lack of confidence to be out in the community due to fear of coming into contact with the virus and the extended health implications, particularly for older demographics. This extends to returning to the community post-lockdowns. Access to vaccines for ineligible demographics at the beginning of 2021, caused worry and anxiety for some. With mixed messaging around the vaccine rollout, there is also hesitancy and fear around vaccines and where to get the best information. An increase in alcohol abuse/ consumption is also recorded.

Increase in family violence/ abuse/ disclosures of sexual assault	There has been an increase in family violence (both reported and less visible), elder abuse and disclosures of sexual assault, potentially linked to increased family stressors, deteriorations in mental health and individuals' having time to reflect during the pandemic. There are also reports of children and young people feeling unsafe in their homes and an increase in reports of child protection cases in the Outer East.
Access to and reliance on IT	Lack of digital literacy. Some people have a reluctance to use and obtain IT devices. For people who rely on the library for printing/ scanning/ computers and Wi-Fi, restrictions have made access difficult. Access to devices and internet to remote learn successfully has been challenging, with some families being unable to provide the resources and materials required. Some students are not engaging with online platforms. Reliance on technology is a challenge for many people.
Physical	Physical impacts highlighted by the community include reduced mobility, decreased incidental exercise and general decline in fitness due to lockdown.
Housing	There is concern around renting and evictions occurring as prolonged periods of financial hardship are being experienced by many people, and job stability is declining. Housing options have also been reduced resulting in hospital admissions. Exit from hospital is challenging due to housing instability. Some young people have disclosed an increase in feeling unsafe within the home environment and for others, access to adequate housing has placed them in a highly vulnerable position.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Top projected long-term impacts on the community:
• Mental health and wellbeing • Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports • Education • Financial instability/ hardship • Social isolation • Health and safety

Results:

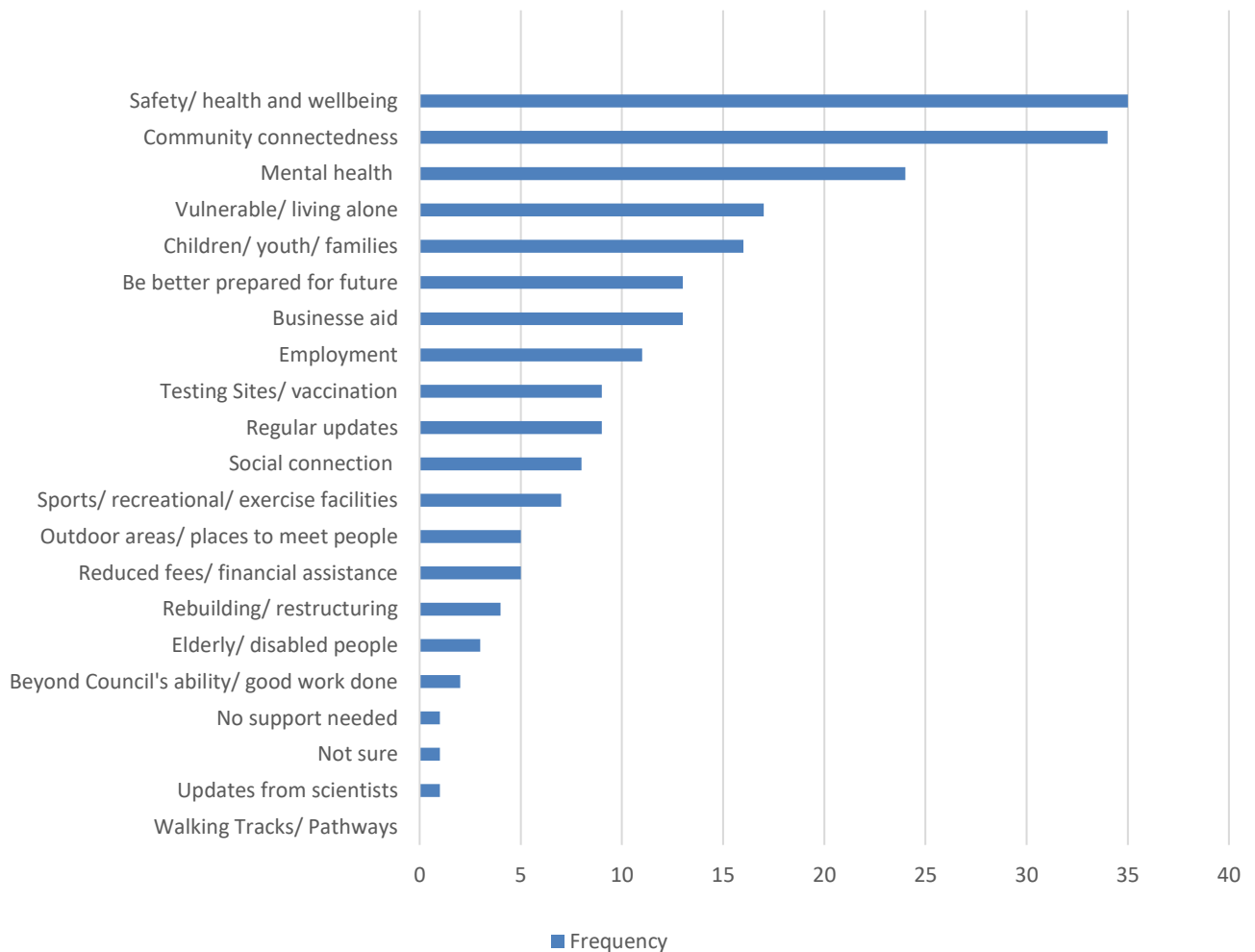| Theme	Description
Mental health and wellbeing	Mental health issues including social anxiety and depression are prevalent. A positive light has been shone on the importance of community connection and wellbeing which is valuable. For some, the fear and lockdown can replicate the experience of trauma which links to feelings of powerlessness and being trapped. Long term mental health and wellbeing impacts may be particularly significant for vulnerable people (i.e. isolated or living alone).
Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports	During the pandemic some community members have engaged more frequently with services and value the increased flexibility of service provision. Despite this, there has been a reduced uptake of services, loss of members and volunteers and hesitancy to participate. Lockdowns also reduce engagement and confidence in services. Increases in referrals and demand, alongside reduced staff capacity/ resources has meant limited access to some supports/ services.
Education	Education has been impacted by disruptions to learning. A number of survey responses note more children/ young people are disengaged with school. For those who missed out on early years education; social, language and independence skills are inhibited. Educators also need support to manage this effect. Disruptions to education also inhibit options for work experience. There is a concern that older students may not have time to catch up on what was missed during phases of lockdown.
Financial instability/ hardship	Reports of unemployment, instability in future employment and continued financial stress. Delays in education opportunities also impact employment opportunities. Many local businesses stopped trading or were forced to close permanently. Financial literacy is noted as important.
Social isolation	Isolation is widely acknowledged as an impact that may have long-term effects for community members, particularly those disconnected from peers and support networks.
Health and safety	There is a concern that higher levels of drug and alcohol use as coping mechanism will result in addiction and long-term problematic use. Health decline for older people due to lack of mobility and in-home support also connects to concerns of increased frailty and health conditions. Lack of exercise in general is seen to impact future physical health for many. Fear of infection from the virus is also an ongoing issue. The increase of awareness around health and hygiene however, is seen as a positive outcome of the pandemic.
Managing COVID-19 restrictions	Many community members are left with the uncertainty of lockdowns happening again and suggest support to navigate, and transition in and out of lockdowns, as this links to mental health.
Community connection	Responses relate to decreased willingness to volunteer and re-engage in community activities and general disconnection between community members and groups. Positive comments include willingness of some to engage more regularly than pre-pandemic.
Uncertainty	Feelings of uncertainty are linked to poor mental health, reduced confidence, lack of control and instability.
Resilience	Due to the pandemic, some respondents feel that long-term community resilience will be lowered while some believe the experience will increase levels of resilience.

Housing	Access to affordable and stable long-term housing. Given the impact of COVID on the housing market and lack of affordable options for marginalised communities and first home buyers. Potential for an increase in homelessness.
Physical	A decline in physical health is reported as a significant long-term impact for the community. Lack of exercise and confidence in physical abilities is noted as an issue for the future.
IT	A higher reliance on devices and technology may lead to those with limited access being left behind. Many people, particularly students are fed up with IT engagement and there is an increased use of social media and online platforms as opposed to face-to-face interactions.
Routines	Respondents commented on changing routines and lack of routines in periods of lockdown as challenging. Transitions in and out of lockdown require a readjustment to day-to-day life which is difficult for many people i.e., going back to school, work or organised activities.
Family violence/ abuse	There has been a higher prevalence of family violence, potentially due to factors such as mental health issues, increases in drug and alcohol use and financial stressors. There has been an increase in child protection and family services referrals. There are also reports of young people seeking to live independently due to family violence and not feeling safe in the home environment.
New skills	There were concerns around decreased social and collaboration skills across different demographics but particularly for children who have missed natural socialisation. Skills in technology have increased for many which is seen as positive, particularly for students. Reduced access to work experience and academic opportunities has also limited options for young people.
Family breakdowns	There is a concern that family breakdowns will be long-term and support will be required through appropriate services beyond COVID-19 to manage the impacts of increased stressors.

4.2 Recovery Planning

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Top supports needed by the community:		
Safety/ health and wellbeing	Community connectedness	Mental health
Vulnerable/ living alone	Children/ youth/ families	Be better prepared for future

Results:

Frequency

Theme	Description
Safety/ health and wellbeing	Community wellbeing activities and workshops, increased confidence in public health, information around healthy eating/ exercise. Access to services that people can contact for resources. Teachers educated to support student wellbeing. Basic needs to be met (i.e., food and housing). Increased resources in family violence response services and also additional recovery-based services such as specialist family violence counselling. Prevention of family violence in light of the pandemic with plans in place for the future. Support to encourage access to health and wellbeing programs. Promote safety in the community. Continued education in relation to COVID-safe measures.
Community connectedness	Sense of belonging, organised and affordable events, re-engagement with community activities and clubs and creating reasons to celebrate and create local connections. Inclusive opportunities for people to get out and interact with the community, including via face-to-face. Access to support programs, building community connection, wellbeing and mental health. Community inclusion programs helping people to get back out into the community.
Mental health	Mental health supports and services (including mental health workshops), suicide prevention, anxiety management and how to cope with stress. Places to come together and express emotions - support groups or spaces where people can feel less alone. Counselling services specifically for young people.
Vulnerable/ living alone	Support for food/ housing/ grocery relief for families and individuals in need. Focus on impacts for diverse communities who are risk of experiencing complex disadvantage and awareness of services available for vulnerable people.
Children/ youth/ families	Support for children and young people to manage with the challenges they are facing including remote learning. Creating opportunities to connect young people to courses. Support for first time parents or families. Counselling services specifically for young people with shorter wait times for service provision. Programs/initiatives that positively impact mental health for children, tweens and teens. Young people will need more secure employment pathways.
Be better prepared for future	Some respondents suggested education and training sessions on different topics including parenting, employment, digital literacy, growth and resilience building as well as creating opportunities to connect community members to relevant supports and services.
Business aid	As many local businesses have faced challenges due to the pandemic, training, financial support (i.e., grants), networking, promotion, events and encouragement for the community to shop locally have been suggested as supported needed over the next 12 months.
Employment	Boost employment opportunities and information about local jobs. Training programs to help people in the community who may need up-skilling to find new forms of employment. Support for unemployed or underemployed people including linking with education opportunities. Businesses need support to employ people. Young people and casual workers will also need more secure employment pathways and regular hours.

Testing sites/ vaccination	Encouragement and education around COVID-19 vaccination that is accessible. Boost community confidence in the vaccination roll out. Vaccine hesitancy for home care clients (access and fear issues) is a challenge. More opportunities to receive the vaccine with more flexible times, locations and interpreters.
Regular updates	Access to current information through varied methods (i.e., online and hardcopy). Ongoing provision of information about COVID-19 and the vaccine roll out, in languages needed. Information to understand, accept and move forward into the 'new normal' pandemic world.
Social connection	Opportunities to connect with others i.e., social groups. Assist residents to reconnect and return back to social and sporting clubs, and social events. Building confidence to move away from social isolation.
Sports/ recreational/ exercise facilities	Affordable access to spaces, venues and facilities and information around what is available for community use.
Outdoor areas/ places to meet people	More demands for outdoor spaces where people can socialize. Spread of information/ promotion about facilities, reserves and spaces in Maroondah for people to access.
Reduced fees/ financial assistance	Utility vouchers and rate reductions. Financial counselling support to assist community with economic impacts.
Rebuilding/ restructuring	Advocating for funding and infrastructure works.
Elderly/ disabled people	Support to adapt to change, i.e., teach older people technology skills such as phones/internet. Extra resources to support carers and clients with complex needs. Physical rehab or opportunities to combat frailty and decreased mobility.
Beyond Council's ability/ good work done	Responses here commended the support given by Council and mention initiatives such as Be Kind, Maroondah as having a positive effect on the community.
Updates from scientists	Reaching out directly to the community with information that includes resources and health information, to boost confidence in public health.

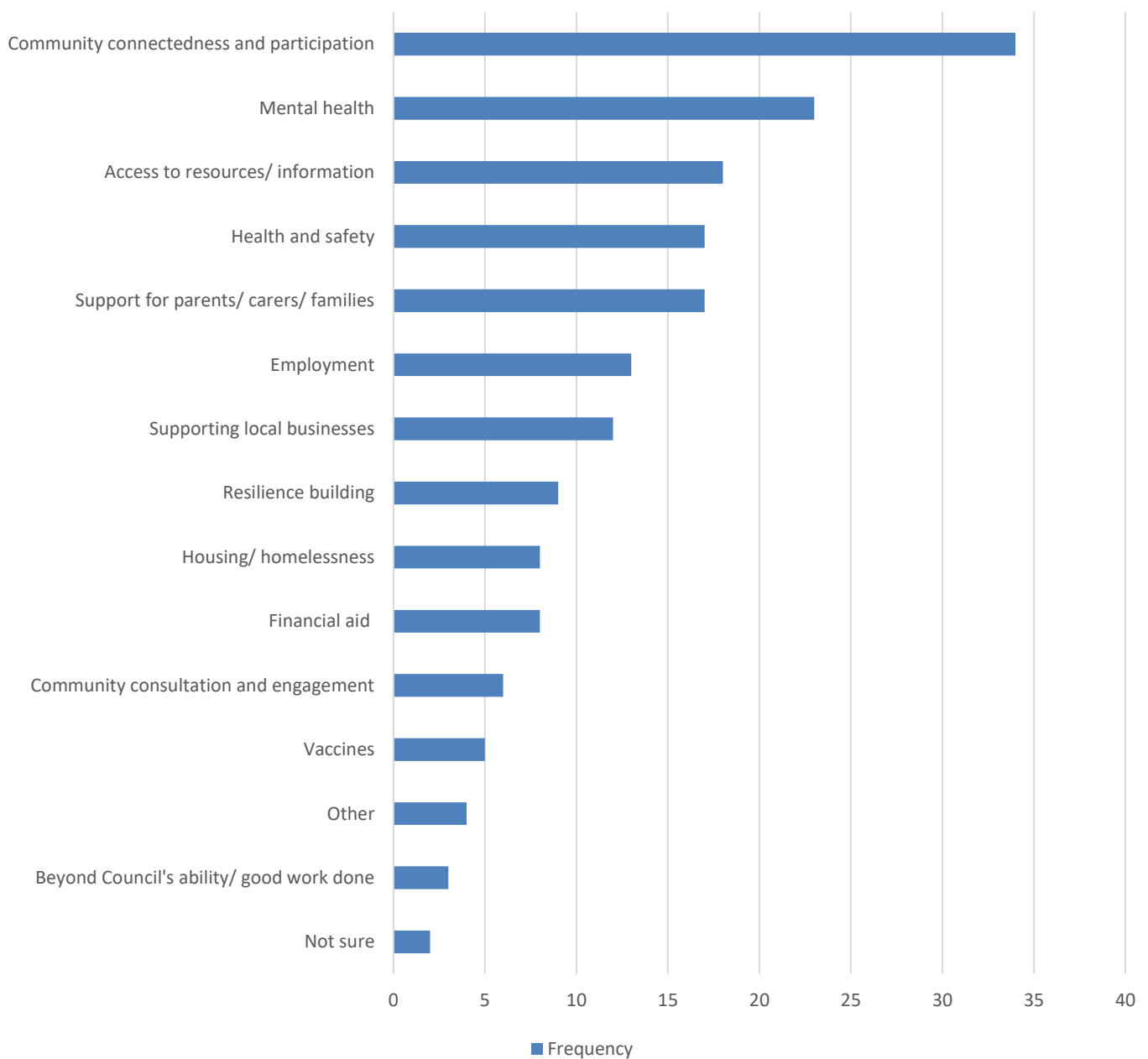*Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?*

Top long-term priorities for recovery for Maroondah community:

- Community connectedness and participation
- Mental health
- Access to resources/ information
- Health and safety
- Support for parents/ carers/ families

Results:

Theme	Description
Community connectedness and participation	Strengthen/ build community connection and participation for all community members, particularly through events and activities. 'Think locally', re-establish social connections and support community groups. Long-term commitment to social inclusion.
Mental health	Long term, accessible mental health support (free or low cost). Understand the trauma response of COVID-19 on the community, particularly for those with previous trauma. Peer-based networks and awareness of mental health services available to the community. Support children and young people to cope with anxiety. Mental health workshops.
Access to resources/ Information	More visibility of services and what's on offer to the community, including good communication channels that are accessible to vulnerable people/ groups.
Health and safety	Health promotion and messaging about health and safety in the community. Support physical health of individuals, along with community groups that supports these outcomes. Food and housing security for families due to loss of work and income. Support services for family violence. Early intervention and primary prevention initiatives that work to address the drivers and/or intervene early in order to prevent individuals experiencing crisis. A recovery plan that incorporates prevention and health promotion as well as adequate responses to the immediate needs arising from the pandemic.
Support for parents/ carers/ families	Supporting families both mentally and financially. Support groups and networks to connect with other families. Parenting workshops to assist children with the return to the classroom and promotion of child care services.
Employment	Local training, employment and up-skilling opportunities.
Supporting local businesses	Financial management and debt reduction strategies, and information and support on how to do this. Small business grants, promotion and more outdoor dining opportunities. Supporting local businesses to employ locally. Incentive programs for the community to support local businesses.
Resilience building	Resilience building opportunities for the community. Quick recovery, and adaptability. Create environments for motivation, agency and problem solving for the community.
Housing/ homelessness	Access to affordable and secure housing and diverse housing options. Some reports of more people sleeping rough around libraries.
Financial aid	Incentive programs for the community to support local businesses. Financial support for unemployed or underemployed individuals.
Community consultation and engagement	Consult and engage the community to identify wants/ needs and to inform Council responses. Providing a voice to local organisations. Making sure the community is heard via local papers, online forums and group forums.
Vaccines	Access to vaccines and information sessions regarding the vaccine that is widely accessible. Encouraging the community to get vaccinated.
Beyond Council's ability/ good work done	Continue to offer online learning opportunities for the community to access.

Q5 - What should be done to help address these priorities?

The following tables summarise survey responses which offer suggestions under each identified theme, around what should be done to address key priorities. The **bolded** examples denote that a number of responses from community organisations mentioned this response.

Key responses:

Community Connectedness and Participation	Mental Health	Access to Resources/ Information	Health and Safety	Support for Parents/ Carers/ Families	Employment
Deliver more public events	**Deliver suicide prevention and mental health first aid training for the community**	**Promote what is available in the community**	Deliver activities that promote different aspects of good health	**Encourage families to re-engage with community activities**	Hold employment expos
Provide free or low-cost social opportunities to help people and groups re-establish social connection	**Deliver mental health support for teens**	**Raise the visibility of the support that is offered and what Council can do**	Continue funding for family violence services	**Deliver programs, activities and events that encourage families and kids to get back a sense of normality**	Create more opportunities for flexible employment
Provide and facilitate spaces for people to connect	**Deliver activities that raise awareness of mental health**	**Increase the accessibility of services**		Continue working with schools to promote opportunities for children and families to increase wellbeing	Promote career support services
Include programs and activities at MFE and Karralyka in cultural recovery	Increase financial resources for counselling services	**Increase access to venues for community use**		Facilitate social/support networks for families	Encourage businesses to provide placements for students who have missed out
Deliver an inclusivity campaign	Coordinate a local anxiety support group/ peer support with a trained facilitator	Increase messaging around family violence			Bolster job force opportunities
Encourage volunteers to support vulnerable people to participate in community activities	More funding for services to deliver accessible sexual assault therapy and trauma counselling	Deliver classes for seniors to improve digital literacy			
	Provide a funding boost and support for programs that address mental health				

Key responses continued:

Supporting Local Businesses	Resilience Building	Housing/ Homelessness	Financial Aid	Vaccines
Provide free or low-cost advice/ training on business and finance	**Facilitate capacity building activities for young people**	Provide social housing development and incentives for developers to provide low cost housing	**Provide additional funding to increase services**	Utilise positive messaging to support the vaccine rollout
Facilitate business networking events	**Promote positivity in the community**	Continue to provide funding for housing	**Provide additional funding opportunities for community activities**	Utilise Council's public channels to promote locations where residents can get vaccinated
Provide information for CALD community members on setting up and supporting small business before, during and after a lockdown	**Facilitate networking opportunities**		**Provide small business grants**	Celebrating vaccine milestones
	Continue to consult with the community to make sure that we are meeting the current needs		Increased government support	Increase community access to vaccine e.g. through outreach, transport, help with technology
	Provide additional support for students who have fallen behind		Increase funding for community groups to have meaningful social supports in place	
	Create more mentoring opportunities			
	Facilitate more meetings or forums with CALD communities			

4.3 Community Organisations

Q6 - At any stage of the pandemic, did your organisation receive any COVID-19 related funds from state government or other sources to contribute to community relief or recovery efforts in Maroondah (not including operational support funding like Jobkeeper or cleaning grants)? If so, what for?
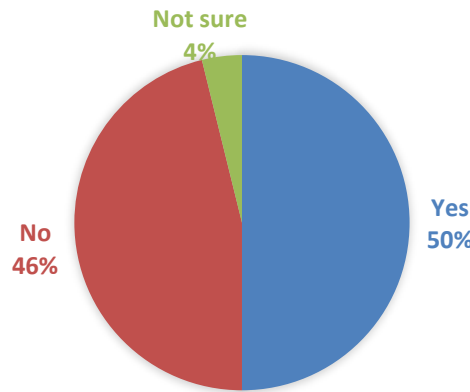
Q7 - Going forward, how is your organisation helping with community recovery efforts in Maroondah?

Summary:

Community organisations reported that despite the challenges faced by community organisations, they continue to play a role in supporting the community through recovery efforts and providing normalcy through services and supports. Many organisations report working within the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions to offer as many programs, classes, activities etc. as possible, in order to maintain engagement and meet community needs. There has been a large degree of flexibility and consultation undertaken to adjust BAU delivery and meet the changing landscape posed by the uncertain nature of COVID-19 restrictions in Melbourne.

Many organisations also report focusing on social connection, to ensure residents have a sense of belonging and community through this difficult time. Combatting social isolation, particularly for vulnerable groups has been an ongoing priority for many organisations. Increasing wellbeing is also widely discussed as a key activity and achieved through a range of training, workshops and initiatives for both the community and workforce. Distributing information and being a point of contact for resources or referral has also become the norm to support the community through this extended period of crisis.

Several organisations report that COVID-19 response teams were developed specifically to meet the changing needs of the community. Food relief, education sessions, translating materials, outreach and material/ financial aid are some of the recovery activities undertaken by community organisations.

Developing COVID-Safe measures/plans to continue program and service delivery has also been a key activity to allow for continued operation throughout COVID-19 restrictions. Strengthening local partnerships to create a collaborative and more holistic approach to recovery efforts is also widely practiced.

For results by sector and organisation, see breakdown in 'Results by Sector' section below

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Top challenges for community organisations:

- Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely
- Establishing and/or maintaining engagement
- Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment
- Loss of revenue/ financial constraints
- Staff burnout/ decreased wellbeing
- Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability

Results:

Theme	Description
Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Throughout the pandemic, several factors have made BAU delivery challenging. This includes learning to provide services in a COVID-Safe way, transitioning to online delivery, the necessity to reduce programs or activities offered, loss of face-to-face and changing circumstances and restrictions. Particular sectors that rely on face-to-face interactions and relationship building such as outreach services have found working remotely especially challenging.
Establishing and/or maintaining engagement	Maintaining and establishing engagement with targeted cohorts has been difficult across sectors. There is a particular concern around re-engaging young people and vulnerable groups during and post-lockdown, and ensuring volunteers or members will return once face-to-face interaction is a possibility. Attendance and participation rates have fallen in many sectors due to activities moving online or fear to return to face-to-face options in the community.
Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment	Across many sectors, a 'loss of people power' has been experienced, whether through reduced volunteer numbers, staff restructuring and redundancies or reduced capacities. Recruiting and training staff is particularly challenging during lockdowns.
Loss of revenue/ financial constraints	Due to the reduced operating capacity of many sectors, avenues to bring in revenue has been severely limited. Many organisations are financially constrained, with limited funding but increased demand for their services. In some cases, clients are unable to pay for services due to financial hardship and/ or organisations are unable to meet funding requirements due to limitations with service delivery.
Staff burnout/ decreased wellbeing	The pandemic has impacted individuals in diverse ways. Many organisations experienced difficulty in keeping staff motivated as fatigue, loss of confidence, impacts of increased loads, remote working and isolation were widely felt. Teams and colleagues were disconnected and facing both organisational and personal challenges alongside often increased workloads.
Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability	Across sectors, there was difficulty in planning for the future with no certainty about future funding, staff capacity, COVID-19 restrictions and future needs of target cohorts. Strategic planning is especially difficult as cancellations cause uncertainty about where to spend available funds.
Meeting increased demand	Demand for services, especially in mental health has increased significantly, yet the capacity of service providers is strained. Across many sectors, there is a lack of resources to meet the current demand for services i.e., requests for specialist family violence counselling and counselling for children/ youth.
Transition to/ from working from home	The rapidity at which COVID-19 restrictions are enforced caused many challenges across sectors, are some are more equipped than others to support staff remotely and adapt services to online platforms.
Increase in high risk and complex clients	The presentation of complex needs has increased and support networks have decreased in some cases. There has been a lack of resources to adequately provide services to an increasing demand for case management services - this is related to the increased complexity of family violence cases that require longer term support due to the impacts of the pandemic. Mental health needs are also more complex now. The challenge lies with whether staff are equipped to manage more complex cohorts i.e., teachers supporting highly anxious, stressed and demotivated students.

Supporting/ navigating vaccines	For some sectors, ensuring staff vaccinations is highly critical. Managing staff concerns and vaccine hesitancy causes challenges in some instances, whilst other organisations are supporting target cohorts through the vaccine rollout.
Difficult to use facilities needed	In some sectors, facilities have been at full capacity or repurposed which has made coordinating the use of office space challenging. There have also been some sectors which were unable to access the facilities needed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Q9 - Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Summary:

Communication, services and community resilience

Respondents mentioned that regular consultation with community about their needs and challenges is extremely important and a more coordinated effort to encourage agencies to work together will benefit people's wellbeing. As well as consultation and collaboration, providing additional programs to support people of all ages and to improve access to specialist support services was valued. The question of, "How can we encourage young people to engage in the services that are on offer" was raised as well as a suggestion to increase youth services past 25 years of age. Here, it was also stated that organisations are very happy to work together with Council to address any of the predicted ongoing issues arising from the pandemic, particularly in relation to the prevention, response and recovery services in family violence which is one of the social issues most negatively impacted by the pandemic. Council's links to community are also highly valued and seen as an opportunity to assist in promotions.

Council is seen to play an important role in supporting the community to regain confidence. Building/ rebuilding community confidence in Maroondah has been raised as an important resilience effort and is echoed through this feedback. There is also desire for the community to stay united to rebound from the impacts of the pandemic, which has affected the community in diverse ways. Finding ways to instil hope and spread positive messaging around gratitude and connection or phrases such as "We will get through this together", is seen as beneficial to the community. Bringing wellbeing literacy to our community including through a wellbeing resource library or online learning was raised as important, alongside the suggestion for Council to play a role in coordinating such efforts.

Access to hard copy information for those who don't use online resources (particularly older residents) is widely requested and featured in responses. Translated information and resources to increase access for CALD community members is noted as highly important. There is strong support to advertise the services the library has to offer. Several organisations participating in this consultation also expressed their desire to receive findings and final reports as well as the actions created for community recovery.

An increased gratitude for opportunities has been acknowledged, thus it has been suggested that Council could focus more on the 'fun' community events as well as social activity groups which are needed now more than ever to support mental health and wellbeing concerns.

Challenges and support needed

This pandemic has significantly impacted the health and wellness of everyone. It is now acknowledged that the effects of COVID-19 will be long term and those with the mindset of "wanting 2020 over so we can get back to normal" are grieving this loss. Considering the long-term effect on us all is highlighted as important.

Fatigue is a huge issue for staff, clients and communities. It is noted that there is a need to re-engage with community providers to think about big picture service delivery. An unintended consequence of COVID-19 on services has been more competition in the industry, with less co-operation.

There have been a lot of educators leaving or not wishing to return to the education sector which has been difficult. Issues recruiting quality staff has exacerbated this, especially during fully operational periods.

Other organisations have mentioned needing support to prepare a COVID-19 plan and risk analyses.

Quotes

"The more times a lockdown happens, the more exhausting it becomes for both students and staff. There can be a sense of powerlessness in this."

"Sometimes it's difficult to manage people with different expectations, sometimes we have people who do not follow the rules, that refuse to wear face masks, or to check in with the QR code. Sometimes we have people (anti-vaxxers) who come in to the library to spread misinformation. We face different challenges. "

"This year when things have been going well the positive feeling of community connection etc has been huge and people are very grateful for it. Connection between Council and schools is a real strength in Maroondah. It's great that this already exists."

A job well done

"Council has done an amazing job so far of taking on the responsibility of recovery. I think there is a genuine awareness that Council cares."

*"Ringwood Church of Christ have been absolutely awesome during lockdown."*

"I find what Council does absolutely amazing in what we are doing in the schools. I like that you are doing the survey to find out what the needs are and trying to fill them."

"Thank you to Maroondah Council for supporting their residents through the funding you have provided Hope City Mission. Encouraged by the opportunity to talk."

"Thank you to Maroondah Council for their dedication to the arts and the community. Great leadership. We are fortunate to live in the Maroondah City Council area because the support we have been receiving as a community has been tremendous, which is not just during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you and please continue doing the great work."

"Enjoyed how accessible Council has been in the past 18 months. Honest approach and sharing resources has been appreciated."

Q10 - Do you have any questions?
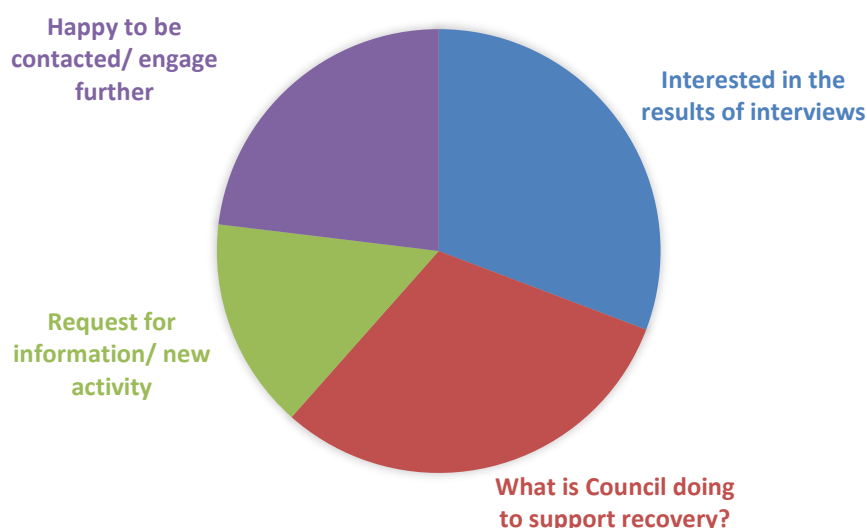
5. Results by Sector

This section breaks down key consultation results by sector, to allow for a more detailed understanding of the impacts and needs of particular cohorts within the Maroondah community.

As noted earlier, a number of participating community organisations straddle more than one sector, so it is acknowledged that the process of splitting results by sector is not perfect and there is some cross-over. A list of participating organisations in each sector is therefore provided below to help clarify which organisations contributed to the responses.

For each sector, key results are presented by question, beginning with the primary themes for that sector, then a summary of the responses from the organisations within that sector to provide further detail.

The number of primary themes differs between questions and sectors, as it depends on the number of organisations per sector and the responses provided. Primary themes were generally determined through the coding process described earlier section 2.2, however in some cases the existing codes did not provide the level of detail needed to more usefully understand the results from particular sectors (e.g. the Family Violence and Sexual Assault sector), so some discretion was therefore taken in determining the themes.

Sector	Participating Organisations
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	• Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
Aged/ Seniors	• Maroondah Senior's Register • EACH (Killara House) • Bolton Clarke • AVEO Mingarra Residential Aged Care • U3A Croydon Inc • North Ringwood Senior Citizens • Donwood Community Aged Care Services Inc • Ringwood East Senior Citizens Club • Caladenia Dementia Care
Arts, Culture and Heritage	• Melbourne Welsh Male Choir • Maroondah Brass Band • Studio4 Artists Inc • Ringwood Art Society • Fresh Theatre for Social Change • Ringwood and District Historical Society • New Community Ringwood • East Burwood Uniting (Gifford Arts Program) • Ringwood Eisteddfod Inc • Croydon Citizens' Bands, Urban Life • Nadrasca • Urban Life • Focus group - Arts and Culture COVID recovery

Children, Youth and Families	- Headspace Knox - HYPA - Job Prospects - Uniting Connections (Integrated Family Services) - The Misfit Project, Anglicare - Outer Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network (OELLEN) - EACH Youth and Family - Child FIRST - Department of Health and Human Services (East Division) - Child Protection - Relationships Australia - EACH - Assessment and support team
Community Legal	Eastern Community Legal Centre
Community/ Neighbourhood Houses	- Central Ringwood Community Centre - Yarrunga Community Centre - North Ringwood Community House - Glen Park Community Centre Inc - Arrabri Community House
Community Wellbeing	Communities of Wellbeing (x2 interviews)
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	- Migrant Information Centre - Eastern Melbourne - Australia Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne) Inc - Chin Community Victoria Inc (Falam Chin) - Eastern Karen community Association of Victoria Inc (x2 interviews)
Disability	- Different Journeys - Amaze - Focus group - Maroondah Disability Advisory Committee
Education	*Early years education and care* - TRY / Sparkways (Early Years Management organisation) - The Y (Early Years Management organisation) - Croydon North Kindergarten - Good Start Early Learning Bayswater North - Kurboroo Kindergarten - Milestone Kindergarten and Early Childhood Centre Croydon - TopKids Childcare and Pre-school *Primary schools* - Eastwood Primary School - Kalinda Primary School - Maroondah Primary School - Ringwood Heights Primary School - Tinternvale Primary School

- Yarra Road Primary School

Secondary schools

- Norwood Secondary College
- Croydon Community School
- Heathmont College

Alternative education program

- Mountain District Learning Centre

Tertiary education

- Swinburne University of Technology

Emergency Relief and Homelessness	• Maroondah Community Assist • Ringwood Church of Christ • Croydon Uniting Church Helping Hand • Croydon Hills Community Care • Hope City Mission • Uniting Vic Tas
Family Violence and Sexual Assault	• Safe Futures Foundation • Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault • EDVOS
Libraries	• Eastern Regional Libraries
Mental Health	• Eastern Health • Eastern Health - Child and Youth Mental Health Service • Neami National
Transport	• Metro Trains
Volunteering	• Eastern Volunteers

5.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation	Health and safety

- Emotional trauma of multiple lockdowns.
- More visible impacts on mental health.
- Social isolation and low emotional state.
- In between lockdowns, events well attended and people very happy to get together.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Housing	IT	Health and safety	Social isolation

- This year's lockdown has tested resilience.
- Increase in homelessness.
- Social engagement with older people is critical. It will impact eventually in their health.
- Youth are fed-up with IT engagement that just are sick of it and in its place, they are doing nothing. The engagement is not there for that group.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Children/ youth/ families	Community connectedness

- Events that are around community, celebration of being together again. Maroondah Festival - any ways of celebrating our strengths would be amazing. we could all contribute to a healthy the recovery e.g.: MMIGP could do some healing of country - other groups, cultural programs and everyone else all come together to celebrate.

"We are developing an Aboriginal youth program that when it is done will be fantastic - but we are still figuring out how that might roll out - recovery needs to also resource ways for our youth to navigate life together - homelessness I can feel that will be an issue. Life skills, information back into groups - budgeting, financial, - money matters - financial inclusion programs etc. low incomes - all this is needed. I know there are numbers like life line - but resources in place at the right time in front of you - somewhere to go."

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Employment	Support for parents/ carers/ families

- Resourcing key areas:
  - 〉 Focus on youth and financial inclusion.
  - 〉 celebrations - cohesion across the community.
  - 〉 Single parents - it would be nice that they get some relief from the kids/carers relief set up places for play-dates - not childcare - extended community - the village helping to raise concept.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Staff burnout/ decreased wellbeing	Housing security

- Social, emotional, mental health risks are there around.
- Housing security.

5.2 Aged/ Seniors

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Social isolation	Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	Reduced access to services/ supports	Mental health and wellbeing

- Isolation due to lockdowns, feelings of frustration for carers
- Poorer mobility and health due to lack of exercise, even incidental exercise'
- Lack of participation in all events they are enjoying due to shut down of centre.
- Lockdown disrupts our members ability to communicate and be in reachable contact with old and trusted friends.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Routines	Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation	Community connection	Managing COVID-19 restrictions
3	3	2	2	2

- Higher Carer stress, poorer wellbeing for both clients and carers
- Frailty - already seeing increased markers and a spike in falls. No social support visits, no shopping, less walking. If no intervention, then worse outcomes for falls. Depression, delay in medical care, tests, delayed diagnosis, eating poorly. Less access to communication technology and medical care. Doing research frailty, falls and connecting communities (social prescribing, re-engaging).
- The main impact is that they are hesitant about going out do their day to day activities i.e. their daily routine due to fear of getting COVID-19 as this virus will be with us for a while.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Safety/ health and wellbeing	Testing sites/ vaccination	Social connection	Vulnerable/ living alone	Community connectedness

- Assist residents to reconnect and return to social & sporting clubs, supporting both the clubs and the individuals, along with social gatherings, more promotion of the service, e.g. display for Seniors week.
- Helping those isolated, especially CALD, ESL where issues are further highlighted.

- Physical rehab for those who have become frailer, support staff to identify risk factor signs and symptoms.
- Invisible poverty, people don't have much money, e.g. don't spend on heating, nutritious food, etc. Vaccine hesitancy for home care clients (access and fear issues) will prolong this issue.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Resilience building	Vaccines

- Re-establish social connections, support mental and physical health of individuals, along with community groups that supports these outcomes. Emphasis on community building, community support.
- Ensure that our services, community groups etc are well supported (funding, resources and physical space) to resume once restrictions are lifted. Communication with the members of the Maroondah Community on these available resources would be crucial.
- Access to vaccine, community supports for socially isolated or those with chronic disease - especially without stop/start interruptions to services. Helping those who are at risk of homelessness.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turn-over and recruitment
4	3

- The pandemic has highlighted that resourcing for this service has diminished over time. When VicPol were more involved had higher standing, but people are very happy to hear from the volunteers. Loss of volunteers.
- Vaccination issues with staff, not all staff/residents have been fully vaccinated so there is an ongoing need to guard against COVID infection.
- Additional recruiting - we need new staff and it takes time for them to learn about the work and culture and that impacts on our effectiveness. The entire sector is battling to get staff, esp. nurses and care workers competing with other functions. Fatigue is a huge issue, can lead to complacency.
- Future - for staff: not going to work sick, difficult to resolve for a highly casualised workforce - people who don't get paid sick leave.
- Providing enough support for all our clients

5.3 Arts, Culture and Heritage

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Managing changes due to COVID-19 Restrictions	Lack of community connection	Social isolation	Reduced access to services/ supports
9	7	7	6

- Forced cancellations, continuous changing circumstances with difficulty to adapt
- Community members have not been able to attend any events and concerts and hence there has been a lack of engagement between arts groups and the community
- Hesitancy from community to attend exhibitions, concerts and other events
- Difficulty with marketing and promoting events
- Social isolation amongst artists and those in the industry
- Financial loss to artists and the industry

"Significant mental health impact on participants of the youth theatres. These participants are often young people in crisis with mental health issues, hospitalisations, etc. Adapted workshops to zoom workshops, online games, etc, but limits the social connection of these programs. In-person meetings provide insight into how they're going.

These programs are about social and emotional development, so important to continue that. Main concern is for the impact on the youth. Went back to in-person at the start of the year but have had to go back and forth between in-person and online."

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports	Mental health and wellbeing	Community connection	Managing COVID-19 Restrictions
9	4	3	1

- Problems with mental health. Social anxiety coming out of lockdown. Stability being upheaved. Not knowing whether they can commit to events.
- Will see some financial impacts, some younger members relying on gov. payments, which are changing.
- Serious potential long-term impacts include the survivability of the organisations. The organisation is at risk due to the drop off in membership.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Community Connectedness	Business aid	Sports/ Recreational/ Exercise Facilities
7	3	3

- A lot of community inclusion programs helping people to get back out into the community. More opportunities to be involved in activities and programs in the community. People need to be confident to go back outside again and being engaged in the community. Still a lot of hesitancy to get out and participate again.
- For some organisation's difficulty paying bills and professional staff without any revenue stream from concerts. Any help in defraying costs.
- Support the community to build a culture of attending events. There was excitement at the start of the year to attend events, but now ticket sales are fluctuating again, doom and gloom perspective again, currently people don't want to commit. Council could support with a campaign around positive messaging and promotion of local events.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Mental health	Health and Safety
6	5	3

- Long-term commitment to social inclusion and mental health is required. COVID has brought the conversation around mental health to the forefront, but we are going to be living with this for a long time, and mental health needs to be supported though community inclusion in an ongoing way.
- Participation and engagement in arts and cultural activities.
- Cultural recovery through music programs. Music so important for mental health recovery.
- Building confidence for people to go back out into the community.
- Council-led activities, programs, concerts, etc that encourage community participation.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability	Establishing and/ or maintaining engagement	Loss of revenue/ financial constraints	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turn-over and recruitment
5	4	4	3

- Enthusiasm hasn't been dampened too much, so hopeful that members will return and continue their involvement once things are back to normal. However, it is difficult in this time of uncertainty, and if there are more lockdowns, that will be challenging as the group will be unable to meet.
- There is currently and overwhelming need from the community. They have massive waitlists and increasing demand on services. The complexity of needs in those who are presenting has been increased, because existing networks have shrunk.
- Definite decrease in volunteering numbers. People are more hesitant to give time freely.

5.4 Children, Youth and Families

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Education	Social isolation	Reduced access to services/ supports
9	6	5	5

- Anxiety levels have increased for young people.
- Education disruptions
- Disconnection from their peers and education settings due to courses moving online.
- Clients reluctant to access services in-person.
- Financial - loss of work and other income support such as job keeper.
- Housing insecurity.
- Educators struggling to meet their job commitments whilst also managing care commitments to their own families.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Education	Social isolation	Reduced access to services/ supports
9	6	5	5

- Family breakdowns will be long term. Families will need support beyond COVID in relation to this and long-term support from appropriate services.
- Mental health concerns will continue. The start and stop nature of what is happening at the moment is going to lead to ongoing anxiety. This may stop young people taking action towards employment. On a positive note, young people have learnt to become more flexible.
- Hidden unemployment is also an issue with young school leavers not on Centrelink or enrolled anywhere for support. They are sitting in the gap and don't know where to go for assistance.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Vulnerable/ living alone	Community connectedness	Safety/ health and wellbeing
2	3	2	2

- Mental health related support. Programs that increase engagement with community. Lack of relationship for CALD and migrant community that cannot see family in home country. Programs/initiatives positive impact mental health for children, and tweens and teens.
- Community events, bringing people together. Reach out to your neighbour concepts.
- Additional funding and support for more counsellors, psychologists, social workers in health and community settings, and affordable housing options.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Mental health	Access to resources/ information
5	3	3

- Helping the community understand the supports and resources available to them.
- Ideally funding/grants to support existing services to meet increased demand and/or implement new innovative support options that address specific needs of COVID impacted families.
- Availability of supports. Family violence gone underground or undetected (e.g. locked up with perpetrator). When those people reach out needs to be accessible.
- Vulnerable communities - messaging from gov't difficult to navigate. Confusing messages around vaccine etc. If council can assist beneficial. Focus on health within coordination of services. Maternal health as an example of a service where very few people fall through cracks.
- Enhancing resilience, connection to others/peers. Opportunities to achieve and celebrate milestones. Younger cohort: prep into grade one some preps did not reach expected milestones, second year impacted as a result.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Establishing and/ or maintaining engagement	Staff burnout/ decreased wellbeing	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turn-over and recruitment
5	5	3	3

- Consequence is children in home who are not reaching potential e.g. children not having assessments - access limited due to COVID.
- Uncertainty, chop and changing to remote and in person, at office. Challenge children not having physical space with known worker. Working interpreters online harder. Not good experience for students. Consistency of service.

5.5 Community Legal

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	Increase in family violence/ assault/ abuse	Reduced access to services/ supports

- Increase in severity of family violence incidents, including elder abuse.
- Increase in family law matters.
- When in lockdown, community members are less likely to contact the centre, and we experience a spike in contacts as the state moves out of lockdown.
- Work with the Communities of Burma has indicated a lack up-to-date information that is provided in language and is accessible to all community members. There is pressure on young people from these communities to keep families informed and help them navigate through COVID restrictions, including complex family issues such as financial and health matters.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Health and safety

- Managing an escalation in mental ill-health from ongoing lockdowns.
- Living with the impacts of having experienced an increase in severity of family violence and elder abuse - linked to an individual's mental health.
- Debt/financial wellbeing matters for community members who have been economically impacted by lockdowns and other restrictions.
- Access to affordable housing - given the impact of COVID on the housing market and lack of affordable options for marginalised communities and first home buyers.
- Ongoing impacts experienced by vulnerable communities due to future pandemic risk and associated impacts of climate change on marginalised communities.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Reduced fees/ financial assistance	Community connectedness	Safety/ health and wellbeing	Vulnerable/ living alone

- Easily accessible and well-integrated mental health and family violence (including all forms of family violence) services.
- Opportunities to bring community together (when/if possible).

- Financial counselling support to assist community with economic impacts.
- Focus on impacts for diverse communities who are risk of experiencing complex

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Resilience building	Access to resources/ information	Health and safety	Affordable housing	Early intervention and primary prevention initiatives

- An increase in access to social support professionals, including better integrated services that include access to free legal advice and support for those in crisis.
- Prioritise early intervention and primary prevention initiatives that work to address the drivers and/or intervene early to prevent individuals experiencing crisis.
- Increased focus on affordable housing and providing more diverse housing options in response to the rise in housing prices from COVID.
- Forward planning for the possibility of future pandemics and/or climate change events that will impact on the community moving forward.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability	Meeting increased demand	Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Increase in high-risk and complex clients

- Adapting to new ways of delivering services to the community in a pandemic environment, including the introduction of new technology and systems.
- Providing wrap-around support for community members who are experiencing increased severity of family violence and elder abuse.
- Adequate funding and resources to meet increased demand and complexity of case work and response work and maintaining a focus on prevention strategies and activities to ensure work is happening across the continuum, including family violence, elder abuse and mental health prevention.
- Added complexity of planning for the impacts of climate change for our community, including undertaking work to build capacity to prevent and respond to the increased legal needs of priority communities.

5.6 Community/ Neighbourhood Houses

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Financial instability/ hardship	Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation	Education
4	4	4	4

- Learning online is impacted by the accessibility of the internet and devices. Some learners who possess little or no knowledge of computers found it impossible to grasp the online learning concept.
- People not wanting to wear masks and comply with health guidelines.
- Less participation in health and wellbeing programs and adult education, less willing to commit to duration of online courses and programs.
- Communication - finding ways to reach people when they are isolated and don't want to go online regularly - need other tools to connect those who are socially isolating and afraid to go out.

"Social isolation has been a huge impact. Many (in) our community join classes, groups and/or attend functions as it connects them with staff and other participants providing a social outlet. Online and regular telephone check-ins do not alleviate the feelings of isolation as it is not the same as regular face to face."

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Financial instability/ hardship	Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation	Education	Lack of community connection and reduced access to services/supports
4	4	4	4	2

- Long term impacts will be continued isolation, anxiety and effects on mental health wellbeing. There is a loss of confidence with living life "normally" resulting in more and more people becoming reclusive. Some of our clients will be forced to deal with the effect on their children's mental health wellbeing who may suffer from anxiety having to return to the classroom setting and social activities.
- The financial impact will affect some of the community due to being unable to work throughout lockdowns without assistance, loss of employment and the difficulty to secure further employment in these times.
- Increase in health concerns and medical issues due to lack of exercise participation.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Safety/ health and wellbeing	Business aid	Community connectedness
3	3	3	3

- Communication - finding ways to reach people when they are isolated and don't want to go online regularly.
- Financial support for local businesses who have suffered significant loss.
- Mental health and wellbeing programs.
- Support for parents and children regarding education.
- Support for people who have lost jobs or significant hours.
- Boost community confidence in vaccination roll out.
- Continued education in relation to COVID safe measures.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Supporting local businesses	Community connectedness and participation	Access to resources/ information
4	3	3

- Focus on getting information from the community rather than give information.
- Education to let people know when it's safe to return to some sort of normality.
- Mental health and physical wellbeing support.
- Support people who just want to talk/vent.
- Offer activities/events to get people out of their houses and back into society.

"Promotion of child care services - we have found many families finding the need to socialise their children. Our Community House offers such flexible arrangements and having subsidies available for families makes it a great place to start. It will also connect families. We have seen many friendships develop from parents meeting at the sign in table"

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Loss of revenue/ financial constraints	Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability
5	3

- Lost access to disability providers as they have changed their focus from outreach activities and day service to individual support.
- Mental Health - staff - no EAP programs, burn out. Offering courses and activities to help with physical and mental wellbeing.

5.7   Community Wellbeing

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	Financial instability/ hardship	Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation

- Community houses and teachers accessing the service feeling stressed, fatigued, pressured in struggle to keep up with changing working environment and changing conditions.
- Seniors experiencing difficulties getting out and about and are becoming withdrawn. Decreasing group participation. Higher incidence of illness and a decrease in seniors' overall wellbeing.
- Lack of social connection due to lockdown and restrictions.
- Mental health and wellbeing: stress (prolonged) fatigue, pressure.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Social Isolation	Resilience (positive and negative)	Reduced access to services/ supports

- Long term will lead to better awareness of mental health.
- Seniors organisation - geared on active groups, always been hard to fill committees/get others to take on some responsibility, now this is worse, more aware of mortality, changes in the world.
- Become more accepting of adversity.
- Focus on belonging rather than operating in isolation.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Safety/ health and wellbeing	Vulnerable/ living alone	Business aid	Employment

- Training and support to cope with changes i.e. seniors, businesses.
- Change in social structures - value wellbeing and life styles higher, reluctant to go back to old style working, productive at home, workplaces more flexible.
- Older groups - adapt to change, teach older people more tech skills, use of phones/internet.
- Help people adapt to social change i.e. pronouns, LGBTIQ+, older people chat to younger people, LGBTI+ people to talk about the meaning etc.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Resilience building	Community connectedness and participation	Access to resources/ information

- Building better connections between people and groups to support and enable each other, everyone talking to each other, working together.
- Think locally.
- Top PRIORITY - helpline that people can assess for resources etc.
- Council help to support those who want to help others, can this be coordinated through Council for our community.
- Give people a purpose beyond themselves.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Theme

Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely

- Create more visibility in wellbeing.
- Climate of competing resources.
- Want to build capacity, connection, conversations.
- Teach people how to be 'peer coaches', build stronger relationships, people are more intentional, more in the moment.
- Loneliness needs to be addressed too.

5.8 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Social isolation	Education	Health and safety and Financial instability/ hardship
4	4	3	2

- Continuing CALD community connection (from Burma, Iran, China), loss of employment leading to financial hardship.
- Indications of increased family violence, but not visible or reported.
- Visa implications and citizenship applications (digital process, some clients don't have digital literacy).
- Challenges for home schooling with devices and language.
- Vaccine hesitancy and accurate health information.
- Social disengagement and increase in mental health issues.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Education	Financial instability/ hardship	Health and safety
4	2	1	1

- Financial, mental health, wellbeing and family breakdown.
- Breaks in schooling, visa implications, overseas family separation. Impacts of continuing to readjust with new normal. The situation in Burma is having a big impact, families can't travel - exacerbating COVID impacts.
- Substance abuse especially alcohol problems.
- Young people involving in crimes and domestic problems.
- Education for children who are in vulnerable group/families.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Community connectedness	Safety/ health and wellbeing	Business aid	Children/ youth/ families
3	2	1	1	1

- Food/grocery relief for needy families and individuals.
- Cultural, social, community events that all ages and people from different background can participate.
- Reach out to community and check in with people regarding mental or physical health and wellbeing.
- Some organisational support grants as we couldn't raise any funds for the organisation and mental health support or activities for the people.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Community connectedness and participation	Employment	Health and safety

- Education and employment support and up-skilling.
- Ongoing support to adjust to demands of COVID as it evolves. With lots of restrictions and new rules that applied it's hard for Karen elders or those with language barriers having difficulties in maintain their daily life and unsure of what to do.
- Public and community safety.
- Set up long term support plan for families or communities who are in very vulnerable groups or community.
- The community will need help in increasing social interactions, by having more cultural, social, community events that all ages and people from different background can participate.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Establishing and/ or maintaining engagement	Loss of revenue/ financial constraints
3	2	2

- Ongoing disruptions to project delivery. Moving to remote work was challenging but is now functioning well. Trying to support communities who have low levels of digital literacy (Burmese seniors 50+ esp.).
  - Unable to run most of our volunteer support as used to.
  - No community sports or events that causes too much stress and upset for young people.
  - Not enough capacity to support our Chin community in their needs due to financial constraint.
- Limited number of volunteers who are very busy with their own study and/or work and their own families are impacted by COVID-19. The time they can spare to volunteer for the community has been reduced substantially. So, it is difficult to carry out all our activities supporting the community.
- Not so many community members engaged virtually.

5.9 Disability

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Social Isolation	Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions	Reduced access to services/ supports	Mental health and wellbeing

- Access to services being limited.
- Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Significant impact on carers – often missed
- Transport and access to medical appointments
- Larger impact on families with children with disabilities
- Vulnerable children's inability to go to school
- Challenges of people coming into people's homes for care
- Heightened stress and frustration
- Reliance on technology
- Health literacy is a challenge
- Erosion of independence and liberties – sense of identity
- Lack of understanding about the reasons for restrictions etc – especially for people with ASD
- Cumulative impact of restrictions

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Note: Primary themes were not conclusive as responses were varied with no theme mentioned more than once

- The autistic community requires valid information of the changing landscape of COVID.
- Workforce fatigue – people are tired.
- Stigma for people who are unable to be vaccinated or wear masks is significant.
- Long term grief and loss including for people who've been unable to have funerals.
- Long term economic impact on financially disadvantaged.
- People not returning to social and recreational activity.
- Ability to access booster shots for the vaccine.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Note: Primary themes were not conclusive as responses were varied with no theme mentioned more than once

- Support in homes to get vaccines.
- Access to information about vaccines.
- Awareness of services available for vulnerable people. Support for access to services including pet grooming, haircuts etc.
- Support for carers – they're doing it tougher than most.
- Leverage and promote outdoor areas as places for connection.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Note: Primary themes were not conclusive as responses were varied with no theme mentioned more than once

- In home support – especially for carers.
- Create a feeling of safety - So people feel part of the community. Continue Be Kind Campaign.
- Communication - People need to know what is available and how they access the resources they need. Strong and specific focus on COVID-recovery.
- Outdoor Spaces: making services and activities available. - Support people to connect, and access services in a safe environment
- Continue arts programs and activations - They have significant impact on inclusion, expression, connection and activation.
- Young people - They have been the most impacted and require additional effort and support, especially for 18-25's.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Note: Primary themes were not conclusive as responses were varied with no theme mentioned more than once

- Disengagement of our core cohort of people and difficulty supporting them to trust a return to community
- Financial difficulties to rebuild programs back to pre-COVID attendance.

5.10 Education

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Education	Mental health and wellbeing	Social Isolation	Managing changes due to COVID-19 Restrictions
10	10	8	7

- Educators feel under-valued, not adequately being recognised as essential workers and the services needed e.g. vaccinations, child-care for children.
- Educators who have children at home struggling to access school for their own children and to be recognised as essential workers.
- Parents and caregivers are also struggling - they need coping and language tips for talking to their children.
- Socially preps are behind - this is evident in the playground. Having to teach students how to play appropriately. Lack of understanding around routines and understanding how a classroom works. Other grades still struggling.
- Some families are looking for loop holes (and sometimes changing the restrictions) to be able to send their child to kinder.
- Ensuring people know service is open - constant and consistent communication

"Re-lived trauma and fear of successional lockdown periods has resulted in psychological distress, loneliness, educational disruption, disruption to regular routine and home life pressures"

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Education	Social isolation	New skills (positive and negative)
11	9	5	4

- Social, emotional and wellbeing of the children. There is a big difference in the "ability" i.e., sharing, general socialising, of our 3 and 4-year-old kinder children compared to prior to COVID.
- Families having confidence in bringing children back to care.
- Some families choose or could not send their child and that has meant that they have missed out on not only the vital Early Years education but also with all the restrictions and uncertainties children have missed out of that natural socialisation and experience such as visiting grandparents, meeting peers at playground. Really feeling that this will have a long-term impact. This year's 3-year-old children attending care are "young" - there is a lot of children struggling with independence. General social and language.

- Educators will also need support in managing this "effect" - am hearing a lot of disappointment from educators about not being able to provide a program like they "used to", as they are working on meeting needs of children, which is at a much "younger" development stage than prior to COVID. Concern therefore after the Early Years as could be possible to flow onto Primary and High School.

"This generation has the opportunity to build a new resilience to major life changes as they build confidence in our communities responding calmly and moving forward. Stress and anxiety will remain major issues for many."

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Safety/ health and wellbeing	Children/ youth/ families	Mental health	Community connectedness
10	9	8	7

- Expert advice for dealing with students who are lacking motivation, apathy and social isolation.
- Free events that students can connect with or in-school workshops.
- Easy access to vaccines, plenty of messaging from Council to ensure people get vaccinated.
- Venues to chat and receive guidance, healthy life style support, community celebration, counselling, food bank and goods support for those struggling.
- Modelling & Mentoring for parents on how to support their students during remote learning.
- Early intervention - growth mindset and resilience building training to help children and young people to manage with the challenges they are facing. Schools could be a good opportunity for this. Teachers need to be taught more about wellbeing so that they can better support student wellbeing.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Support for parents/ carers/ families	Mental health	Community connectedness and participation
9	6	4

- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Supporting families both mentally and financially - providing them with support groups/networks of likeminded people or mentors.
- Vaccine and immunisation support.
- Ways that we can keep all schools open during state enforced lockdowns to keep students connected, supported, learning.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Staff burnout/decreased wellbeing	Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Increase in high risk and complex clients	Planning/ disruptions due to uncertainty and instability
8	4	3	3

- Disparity in education of students - some have been really engaged and done a lot of school work, others have done very little.
- Inability to conduct 'normal' school events & celebrations - e.g. camps, excursions, productions, grandparent's day, sports days, etc.
- Long-term exhaustion, burn out, fatigue in staff and families.

5.11 Emergency Relief and Homelessness

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Financial instability/ hardship	Social Isolation	Health and safety
6	4	2

- Increased physical barriers to accessing the centres and services due to lockdowns. Closures to certain service providers resulted in clients being slow to return and reengage with services.
- Loss of financial support and work. Job Keeper and Job Seeker provided access to financial emergency support. When they ceased, this increased demand for services and new clients.
- Considerable increase in single parents accessing the service in May and June 2021.
- Concern over health impacts and safety.
- People couldn't couch surf as easily due to restrictions and couch surfing isn't only about somewhere to stay, it's about connection to people.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Housing	Managing COVID-19 restrictions	Financial instability/ hardship	Mental health and wellbeing
4	4	3	3

- Reduced connection with others - part of which is due to lack of access to technology where a lot more connection is happening.
- Lack of confidence in physical and social abilities.
- Uncertainty of what is going to happen - jobs, lockdown, housing, survival - both financially and mentally.
- Lockdown keeps clients away even when they need access to services.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Safety/ Health and Wellbeing	Vulnerable/ living alone	Testing sites/ vaccination	Employment
3	3	2	2

- Utility vouchers, reduction in rates, counselling - a new free mental health plan.
- Confidence and encouragement to re-link with services.
- Support to get employment and link in with education.
- Business needs support to employ people.
- Encouragement and education around COVID vaccination.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Housing and homelessness	Supporting local businesses	Employment

- Low cost secure housing would have a positive flow on effect for many vulnerable people.
- Encouragement to re-link with services and activities.
- Access to funding to help with meeting client's needs - capacity will be reached much sooner.
- Financial management and debt reduction strategies.
- Small business grants and advice on starting and managing new or small businesses as people begin to regain confidence in a lockdown-free time.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turn-over and recruitment	Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Loss of revenue/ financial constraints	Staff burnout/decreased wellbeing
3	3	3	3

5.12 Family Violence and Sexual Assault

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Increase in family violence/ assault/ abuse	Mental health and wellbeing	Reduced engagement with services/ supports	Managing changes due to COVID-19 restrictions

- Increase in severity and complexity of incidents of family violence.
- Social isolation, courses going online or being discontinued.
- Increase in reporting sexual assault, possibly due to media coverage highlighting issue of sexual harassment and assault.
- Increase in PTSD symptoms among clients.
- Lockdowns have had a big impact on services.

"While we attempt to continue seeing people for therapy, some people struggle with the modalities of phone and telehealth, whilst others find that their symptoms increase, and it impacts on therapeutic goals."

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Financial instability/ hardship	Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports

- Delayed access to and uptake of support services.
- The gendered impact of the pandemic.
- Increased mental health, financial, drug and alcohol and homelessness issues in the community will contribute to prevalence and severity of family violence.

"I think that for many of our clients, the experience of fear and lockdowns, often replicate the experience of trauma. Particularly in relation to the experience of sexual assault, that often results in people feeling powerless and trapped. The long-term impacts are also longer delays accessing many services who are all overwhelmed at the moment. This also includes accessing services such as courts, police to make statements etc. in turn, this can frequently have negative impacts on people's mental health and wellbeing."

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Safety/ health and wellbeing	Community connectedness
2	2	2

- Focus on preventative strategies may be less which will have long term impacts.
- Increased resources in Family Violence Response Services and also additional recovery-based services such as specialist family violence counselling will be needed.
- Additional supports for all of the contributing factors mentioned above.
- Plus, a renewed focus on prevention of family violence in light of the pandemic with good plans in place for the future.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Theme

Community connectedness and participation

- Economic and social recovery.
- Good communication channels and support to access services.
- A recovery plan that incorporates prevention and health promotion as well as adequate responses to the immediate needs arising from the pandemic.
- Ensure that minorities such as women and CALD communities benefit from council initiatives - much of the COVID recovery instigated by governments support male dominated fields such as construction.

"I believe that we have an obligation to understand that COVID-19 has been a significant trauma to our community. Particularly for those who have experience previous traumas such as sexual assault and family violence. We need to understand how this intersects and have a commitment to support the mental health of Maroondah."

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Meeting increased demand	Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely

- Increased demand of service and difficulties moving clients on because of the impacts that COVID has had on them and difficulties linking clients in with other services as they are also experiencing overwhelm.
- Lack of resources to adequately provide services to an increasing demand for our case management services - this is related to the increased complexity of family violence cases that require longer term support due to the impacts of the pandemic.
- Requests for specialist family violence counselling far outweigh our capacity to deliver this service.

5.13 Libraries

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced engagement with services/ supports	Reduced access to services/ supports	Access to and reliance on IT

- People cannot access the libraries in person.
- No events and activities for children.
- Digital Exclusion: some with no access to PCs, printers, copiers, WIFI.
- Even when libraries re-open, people are hesitant to come in - people are worried about handing books etc sharing space with strangers.
- Usage has declined, particularly among older users.
- People got used to books getting delivered/posted.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Social isolation	Community connection	Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports

- People are socially isolated. For some people, the public library is a space to come and have a chat with people but with now they can't access it.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Safety/ health and wellbeing	Social connection	Community connectedness	Sports/ recreational/ exercise facilities	Regular updates

- More emphasis on the well-being of the community.
- More spaces/facilities for community gathering.
- People are hesitant to come indoors. More demands for outdoor spaces where people can socialise. Spread of information about facilities, reserves and spaces in Maroondah for people to access. Opportunities to re-discover Maroondah.
- The library has 1k+ e-resources that people have accessed this last year. The usage has hit new levels. However, some people in the community don't have access to devices.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Employment	Housing/ homelessness	Access to resources/ information

- Economic recovery.
- Training and Employment opportunities for people.
- More homeless people around the library facilities.
- More visibility of the services offered to the community.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Theme

Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment

- Activities are free but the limit of number of people presents a challenge. There used to have more than 60 people assisting, when now the number has reduced significantly.

5.14 Mental Health

Primary Themes

Housing	Reduced engagement with services/ supports	Managing changes due to COVID-19 Restrictions	Uncertainty

- High levels of anxiety and stress.
- Reluctance to attend public facilities, still opting to engage online.
- Large increase in referrals.
- Due to the absence of waitlist with providers like Eastern Health, there are people missing out on referrals and possibly alternative services
- Difficulties with those in Year 8 and 12 have been highlighted. However, difficulties for students connecting with their school is evident across year levels.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Resilience	Social isolation	Community connection	Reduced engagement and access to services/ supports

- Impacts for community will be an ongoing sense of anxiety and fatigue and disconnection from others.
- Anxiety disorders (mental health issues).
- Community disconnection.
- Isolation.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Theme

Mental health
8

- Early intervention - growth mindset and resilience building training to help children and young people to manage with the challenges they are facing. Schools could be a good opportunity for this. Teachers need to be taught more about wellbeing so that they can better support student wellbeing.

- Suicide prevention. Anxiety management and how to cope with stress. Financial support - small business and underemployment. Places to come together and express their emotions - supports groups or spaces where people can feel less alone.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Mental health	Community connectedness and participation	Employment	Resilience building

- Growth mindset and resilience building
- Mental health support (anxiety)
- Connection
- Financial

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Reduced capacity to deliver services as usual/ deliver remotely	Establishing and/ or maintaining engagement	Staff burnout/decreased wellbeing	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment
5	5	3	3

- Facilities are at full capacity. Telehealth meant that staff needed to be in the office rather out and about in the community so coordinating office space was a nightmare and unable to work from home due to confidentiality.
- Demand for mental health services is sky rocketing which is putting pressure on staff and staff are experiencing higher risk of burnout.
- Being continually flexible to meet the changing directives.
- Keeping consumers engaged with the services/supports.
- Staff fatigued themselves with COVID changes, and less interested in new initiatives and change across the organisation.

5.15 Transport

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Theme

Education

- Travel on public transport got as low as 9% so you imagine there would have been many people who use trains from Ringwood impacted financially.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Financial instability/ hardship

- Many businesses stopped trading and in some cases closed permanently.
- The psychological pain that would be associated for business owners and their employees would be very hard.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Theme

Employment

- Training programs in place to help people in the community who may need up-skilling to find new forms of employment.

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Employment

- Support the local community with programs and events that bring some joy back to the local community.
- Create opportunities for the youth coming into the work force for the first time into a difficult market.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Loss of revenue/ financial constraints	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment

- The loss of revenue has led to a company restructure that has seen many people been made redundant.

5.16 Volunteering

Q1 - What are the main impacts your clients have experienced over the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Health and safety	Reduced engagement with services/ supports	Physical

- Financial impacts on transport providers due to a decrease in community use.
- Clients had needs for information and access to services - some without online access.
- Mobility of clients has decreased - physical decline due to lockdown.
- Mental health impacts - fear of returning to community.
- Interruption to service delivery.
- Loss of control over decision making
- Some agencies have been oversubscribed.
- Difficult to find volunteer opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Availability of specialised volunteers for some services is far more limited - this is linked to messaging around more senior people being encouraged to stay home. Volunteers over the age of 65 has dropped off.

Q2 - What do you think the main long-term impacts will be for your clients?

Primary Themes

Mental health and wellbeing	Reduced access to services/ supports	Social isolation	Physical	Uncertainty

- COVID has changed the thinking of a generation.
- Physical health and mental health decline due to repeated lockdowns.
- Health outcomes will be worse the longer the lockdown impacts continue.
- Isolation issues for young people with disability.
- Some organisations have not survived, others no longer have a physical presence.
- Lack of certainty in planning for organisations moving forward.
- Op shops really struggling.

Q3 - Over the next 12 months, what supports do you think the Maroondah community will need to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness	Better prepared for future	Social connection

- Building confidence to move away from social isolation.
- Sector needs to partner more to get people out into community.

-   Consider how we can get people into social settings but with smaller groups to build confidence

Q4 - What do you think the top long-term priorities should be to help the Maroondah community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and why?

Primary Themes

Community connectedness and participation	Community consultation and engagement

-   Community engagement in civic activities and social programs.
-   Providing a voice to local organisations - volunteer expo - enabling organisations to share information about what they do and encourage people to link with volunteer opportunities.
-   Promoting volunteering among younger people - critical to longer-term community development. Opportunities for young people to gain experience.

Q8 - What are the key challenges your organisation faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Primary Themes

Establishing and/ or maintaining engagement	Reduced staff and volunteers/ staff turnover and recruitment

-   Moving from block funding to service based funding.
-   Volunteer capacity.
-   Market concerns and duplication in community transport - better service coordination would assist.
-   Helping people to engage in community.