

Safety in the City of Maribyrnong

YourGround Survey Results

About the Survey

The YourGround project¹ was a social research project that asked women and gender-diverse people to map their perceptions of safety when exercising and recreating in Victoria's open spaces. It was designed to understand equity and access to, and use of, public spaces, particularly for exercise and recreation during the periodic lockdowns across Victoria.

YourGround collected data over a thirteen-week period from April to July 2021 using an interactive map interface. More than 3,600 pins were placed over the engagement period, plus 790 comments and over 1,780 clicks supporting other pins. This made a total of 6,043 submissions.

Summary of Results

The study results highlighted the importance of the physical conditions of a location to perceptions of safety. Well-designed environments helped to attract people to an area, increasing the sense of safety through positive passive surveillance. Other physical condition elements provided cues that women and gender-diverse people read to assess the level of risk when entering a place. These physical conditions included:

- A well-maintained area
- Areas that are open and spacious allowing good visibility of what is going on, and what and who is ahead.
- Lighting
- The provision of safe paths.

City of Maribyrnong Results

Participants placed 207 pins across the City of Maribyrnong, including 30 safe places and 177 unsafe places. An additional 92 comments and 221 clicks supported these pins. This equated to 520 total submissions from women and gender-diverse participants. The most common characteristics of places impacting perceptions of safety were:

Top five reasons a place felt safe:

- Can see ahead (77%)
- Well maintained (73%)
- Pathway is safe (67%)
- Easy to navigate (60%)
- Clear exits (47%).

Top five reasons a place felt unsafe:

- Poor lighting (58%)
- Other people's behaviour (37%)
- Hard to see what and who is ahead (32%)
- No people around (31%)
- Poor maintenance (23%).

The following maps provide a summary of the results for the City of Maribyrnong. They show a concentration of unsafe places in the Footscray activity centre, and from central Footscray towards Tottenham Station along the train line and towards Footscray Park through the Angliss area. The ten quotes included on the maps were the most supported submissions for unsafe places with a high stress rating.

Contact Council's social planning team for more information on the results for the City of Maribyrnong. Read more about the results for Victoria at: <https://www.yourground.org/>.

1. XYX Lab and CrowdSpot. 2021. YourGround Victoria Report. Melbourne: Monash University XYX Lab. [yourground.org](https://www.yourground.org/)

Safe/Unsafe Places

City of Maribyrnong

Safe/Unsafe Places with Stress Rating

- 4-5 (Unsafe) (84)
- 3 (53)
- 1-2 (37)
- 0 (Safe) (36)

Quotes are unsafe places supported by multiple respondents.

1. Maribyrnong River Trail

"Cameras need to be set up [along Maribyrnong River Trail]. In peak running times it still is not safe as perpetrators come out to watch. I was on a morning jog just after sunrise with a jogging group, and was sexually assaulted by a man on a bike following me."

2. Ashley St - Rail Underpass

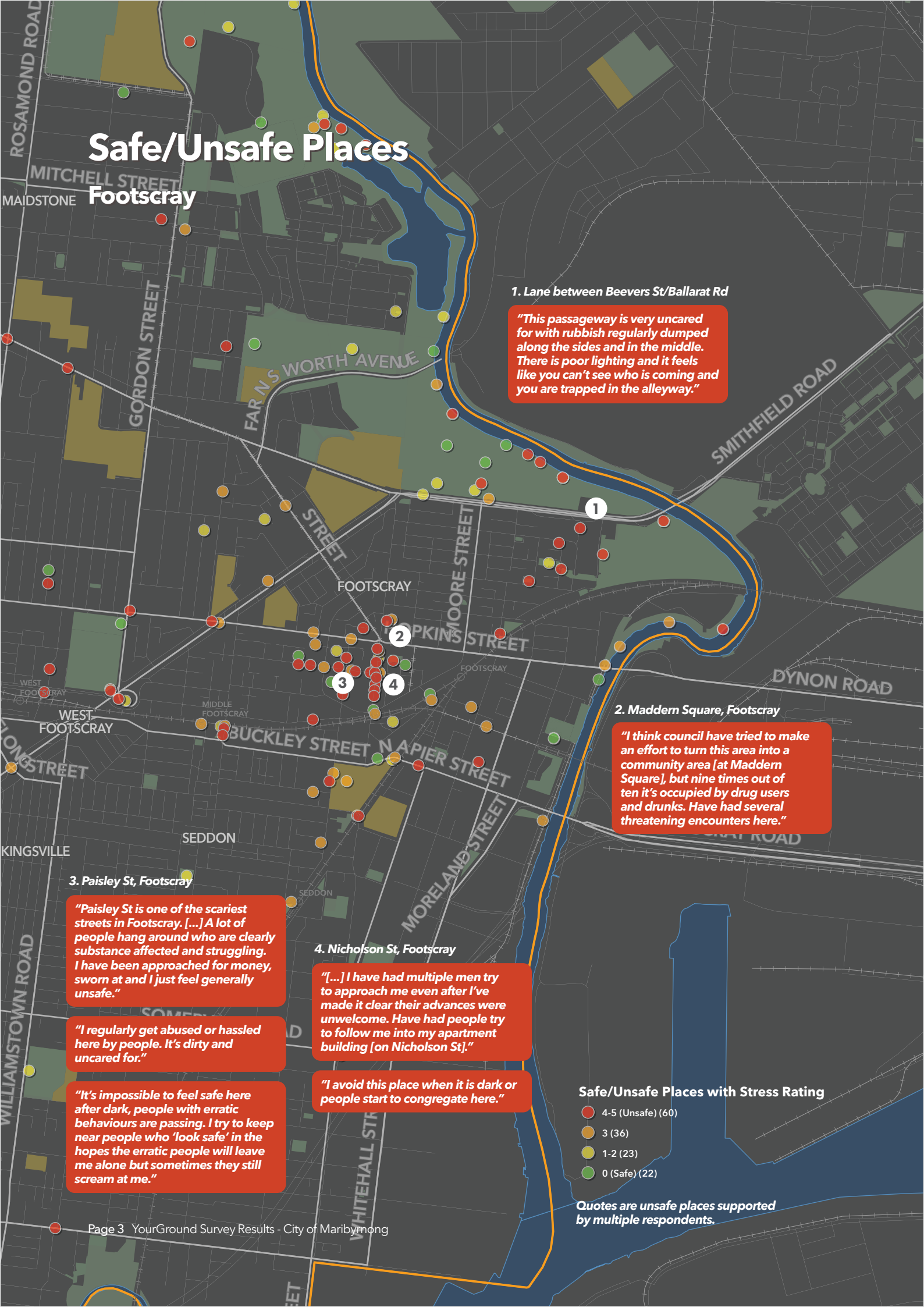
"This pedestrian underpass [on Ashley Street] is totally not fit for purpose and is the only place to cross the train line on foot for kilometers. It is too narrow, dark, and often wet and muddy."

3. Gordon St and Geelong Rd

"Walking through here [under Geelong Rd], I have come across a lot of intoxicated men, and I have also been followed. Often I would detour via Barkly Street even though it made my walk home much longer."

Safe/Unsafe Places

Footscray



1. Lane between Beevers St/Ballarad Rd

"This passageway is very uncared for with rubbish regularly dumped along the sides and in the middle. There is poor lighting and it feels like you can't see who is coming and you are trapped in the alleyway."

2. Maddern Square, Footscray

"I think council have tried to make an effort to turn this area into a community area [at Maddern Square], but nine times out of ten it's occupied by drug users and drunks. Have had several threatening encounters here."

3. Paisley St, Footscray

"Paisley St is one of the scariest streets in Footscray. [...] A lot of people hang around who are clearly substance affected and struggling. I have been approached for money, sworn at and I just feel generally unsafe."

"I regularly get abused or hassled here by people. It's dirty and uncared for."

"It's impossible to feel safe here after dark, people with erratic behaviours are passing. I try to keep near people who 'look safe' in the hopes the erratic people will leave me alone but sometimes they still scream at me."

4. Nicholson St, Footscray

"[...] I have had multiple men try to approach me even after I've made it clear their advances were unwelcome. Have had people try to follow me into my apartment building [on Nicholson St]."

"I avoid this place when it is dark or people start to congregate here."

Safe/Unsafe Places with Stress Rating

- 4-5 (Unsafe) (60)
- 3 (36)
- 1-2 (23)
- 0 (Safe) (22)

Quotes are unsafe places supported by multiple respondents.