

# Hooning in Victoria

## Community engagement outcomes report



Department  
of Transport

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## About this report

This report summarises the findings from community and stakeholder engagement on hooning in Victoria.

This report has been prepared by the Department of Transport for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to provide an overview of the current state of hooning in Victoria and recommendations for consideration by the Victorian Government to support the deterrence of hooning, or intentional high-risk driving.

The outcomes from this engagement have informed the draft interim recommendations report on Hooning Metropolitan Melbourne.

## Background

### About the project

The Hooning in Victoria project aimed to understand the impacts of hooning in Victoria and investigate options to enhance and support deterrence of hooning behaviour following a reported increase by the community.

To undertake this work, the Department of Transport, supported by Victoria Police, undertook the following activities:

- Desktop review to understand the current state of hooning and hooning deterrence in Victoria.
- Creation of a Hooning Community Reference Group to support and guide the report and generate ideas and issues for consideration.
- A series of community engagement sessions to gain insight to local experiences and concerns.
- An independent research piece to understand hooning interventions and other delivered by the Queensland University of Technology.

### About the Hooning Community Reference Group

The Victorian Government established a Hooning Community Reference Group to understand intentional high-risk driving, or hooning, in the State, with the aim of providing feedback and recommendations for consideration to enhance and support its deterrence.

In partnership with Victoria Police, the Hooning Community Reference Group brings together local community and stakeholder representatives to provide input and support the development of recommendations for consideration by Government.

## Summary of engagement approach

Between July and August 2022, Road Safety Victoria partnered with Local Governments to deliver four community engagement sessions.

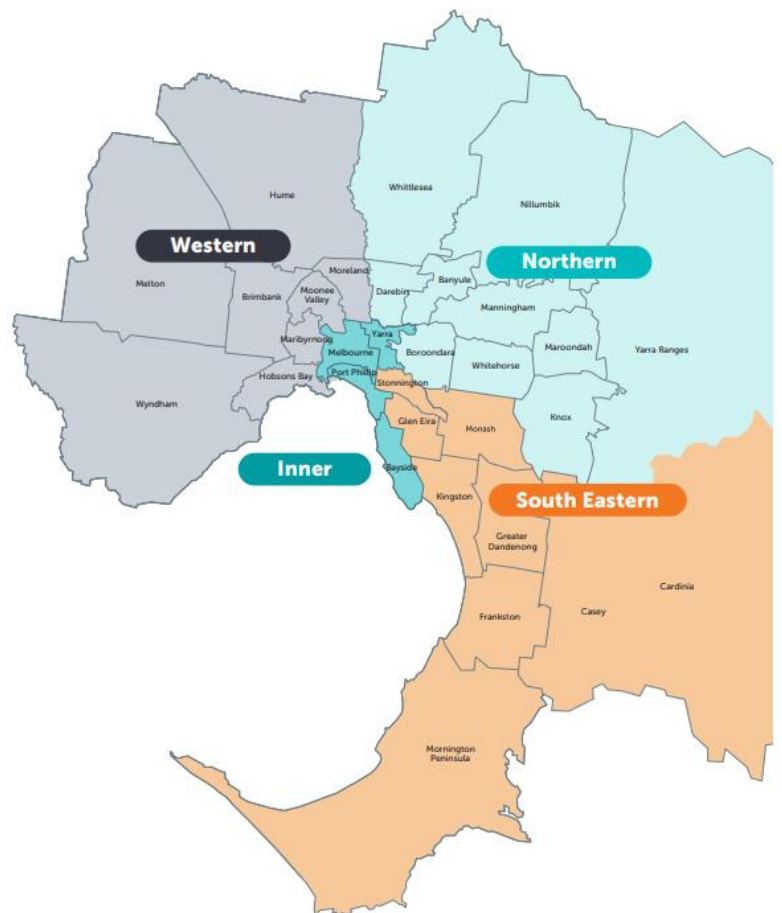
These sessions aimed to gain greater insights to local experiences and concerns regarding hooning's impact on the community and road safety. Each session focused on one of Melbourne's northern, south-east, western, and inner Melbourne areas.

Engagement sessions were supported by the City of Whittlesea, City of Casey, Brimbank City Council and City of Melbourne, respectively. Three of the four sessions were conducted online due to COVID restrictions, while one session was conducted in person.

Between 20 to 30 attendees were present at each session. The sessions attracted a varied audience, including members of the community who had been impacted by hooning in their neighbourhoods, those who wanted to understand more about hooning and what can be done to stop it, members from legal car clubs wanting legal avenues for 'hoon' behaviour, as well as Victoria Police representatives and Local Government representatives. Members of the media were also present.

Each session focussed on answering the following questions:

- Why had people attended the session?
- What concerns did the attendees have about hooning?
- Who hoons?
- Where are they hooning?
- What ideas do attendees have to reduce hooning?
- What would attendees like to see included in DoT recommendations to reduce hooning?



# Summary of feedback

## Community Engagement Session one – Brimbank

### What concerns you about hooning?

- The noise
- Danger to those involved and other drivers or pedestrians
- Flow on effects caused by bad decision making
- Damaging property and roads
- Excessive use of police resources
- Long term trauma experienced by those who are victims
- Misconception that there is legal avenues available to perform high risk driving in metro Melbourne

### Who hoons?

- Males
- 18–25-year-olds
- Those seeking attention
- Commodores
- Bored kids
- Thrill seekers
- Modified vehicles

### What are your ideas to deter hooning?

- CCTV cameras
- More local 'safe and controlled' honing locations
- Education and awareness campaigns and programs
- Heavier penalties and more expansive legislation

### What would you like to see put forward as recommendations?

- Funding for police resourcing, legal events,
- Increase public awareness
- Mandated education programs for those charged with hooning
- More school-based education
- A plan to offer 'safe hooning' locations and opportunities
- Proactive and early intervention

## Community Engagement Session two - Casey

### What concerns you about hooning?

- Impact on community and environment
- Noise
- Rubbish after an event
- Safety impact to other drivers and pedestrians

### Who hoons?

- Older bringing in younger
- 18–25-year-olds
- Those seeking attention
- Bored kids
- Thrill seekers

- Younger generation

#### **What are your ideas to deter hooning?**

- Harsher court penalties
- CCTV Cameras
- More security of restrictions on car modifications
- Support to provider closer, safer locations for drivers/spectators
- Quicker police response

#### **What would you like to see put forward as recommendations?**

- Funding for police resourcing, legal events,
- Collaborative approaches to road safety education
- Investigation of purpose-built facilities and events
- More investment to fix our roads in a timely manner
- Dedicated approach in addressing the concerns of hooning to fully understand the cost to the economy and community

#### **Where is hooning occurring?**

- Commercial areas across Cardinia Shire
- New estates as no lighting
- Arterial roads such as Pearcedale and Baxter-Tooradin and Park roads
- Industrial estates
- Truck loading areas
- Happens everywhere not just one area

## **Community Engagement Session three – Inner Melbourne**

#### **What concerns you about hooning?**

- Noise
- Speeds of 100kmh in 60kmh zones
- Safety impact to other drivers and pedestrians
- Unknown as to who to approach, EPA or VicPol – worried about approaching VicPol and taking their time for this

#### **Who hoons?**

- Young people
- Males
- Motorbikes
- Bored kids
- Car drivers in convoys and hotrods

#### **What are your ideas to deter hooning?**

- Cameras: CCTV, Acoustic, Noise, Speed
- More police patrol
- More collaboration between EPA and VicPol
- More resources, transparency for EPA I.e., Taskforce
- More accessible and affordable venues to allow these hoons to get their fix
- Definition of hooning improved
- Test the noise on the spot not a week later
- Heavier penalties for repeat offenders

### **What would you like to see put forward as recommendations?**

- More funding for enforcement
- Education
- Better interaction with overseas jurisdictions
- Not just putting boots on the ground- allow for devices to be installed in hotspots
- Coordinated approach across the states
- Emphasise safety, environmental and amenity issues

### **Where is hooning occurring?**

- Bay Street- Port Melbourne
- Beaconsfield Parade
- St Kilda Foreshore
- Elwood to Port Melbourne

## **Community Engagement Session four – Whittlesea**

### **What concerns you about hooning?**

- Impact on community and environment
- Noise
- Safety impact to other drivers and pedestrians
- Shared paths being used by dirt/monkey bike users
- Not registered and can never catch them

### **Who hoons?**

- Dirt bike and road bike riders
- Young people
- 18–25-year-old males
- Bored kids
- Thrill seekers

### **What are your ideas to deter hooning?**

- Education campaigns
- Consider road treatments- speed humps
- Local venues that are cheap and safe to run events
- Cameras: CCTV
- Online platform to accept photos and video evidence for enforcement
- Mandatory check on cars if roadworthy and legal
- Harsher penalties
- More research to understand why and what solutions can be put in place

### **What would you like to see put forward as recommendations?**

- Funding for police resourcing
- Dedicated off road facilities
- More cameras
- Tougher penalties
- Investigate infrastructure on common roads and ensure vehicles cannot go above speed of the proposed speed limit
- Data to help with education



### Where is hooning occurring?

- Areas around Painted Hills Road
- Salicki Drive
- Buch Avenue
- Mernda football ground
- McDonalds Road
- Childs Road, Lalor
- Miller Street, Epping
- Plenty Road
- Lakes Boulevard
- Back streets



# Insights

Across the four community engagement sessions, concerns regarding hooning of three different kinds were identified:

- **Individual hooning** – This typically involved individuals doing high-risk manoeuvres such as ‘burnouts’ or driving at excessive speeds on streets in their local area.
- **Group hooning** – It was identified that both illegal and legal group meetings currently occur and there was support for increasing the opportunities for potential hoon drivers to meet legally at safe, off-road facilities to ‘hoon’.
- **Noise and amenity** – this was identified as a key issue whereby people deliberately make noise in residential areas by revving their engines and/or modifying their vehicle deliberately or leave the area with marks or rubbish following their activities.

Several key areas of concern were apparent throughout the sessions, including:

- Impacts to road safety – Participants expressed concern regarding the danger to those involved in hooning, as well as to other nearby drivers and pedestrians. It was also recognised that this included the danger of those impacted experiencing long-term trauma.
- Impacts to noise and amenity – Participants raised noise impacts as a key issue across the sessions, with particular concern raised in the inner Melbourne region in relation to individual hooning. The damage done to roads and property, the impact on the environment and the waste left after group hooning events were also raised.
- Lack of clarity around reporting processes – Participants described uncertainty in the community regarding who to report hooning to, with some reluctance expressed regarding using police resources to address instances of hooning.

## Suggestions for addressing hooning

The most discussed suggestions for addressing issues related to hooning included:

- Education and awareness-raising initiatives, including initiatives that engage directly with hoon drivers in conversation.
- Provision of legal off-road sites for ‘hooning’ activities
- Enhanced camera operations to support deterrence and enforcement.

Other suggestions included introducing heavier penalties or applying anti-hooning laws state-wide, continuing to improve infrastructure in key areas to slow traffic and reduce hooning, and increasing restrictions on car modifications.

## Considerations for recommendations

When asked what they would like to see in the Department of Transport’s recommendations to address hooning, participants contributed the following:

- Enhancing enforcement capabilities – such as increased funding for police resourcing, detection devices/acoustic cameras to be installed in hotspots, and tougher penalties for those caught hooning
- Providing legal outlets and opportunities for ‘hooning’ behaviours – such as events or purpose-built facilities
- Increasing public awareness and education – such as further school-based education on hooning and road safety, mandated education programs for those charged with hooning, and enhanced data capabilities to help with education
- Determining a coordinated approach to addressing hooning across the state
- An emphasis on safety, but also on environmental and amenity issues posed by hooning.

