

# Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan

## Engagement Report March 2023



Figure 1: Mayor Sullivan and Friends of Ramblers Road representatives

# Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan Engagement Report March 2023



We acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Lands, Waterways and Skies of Wadawurrung Country. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging. We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

We are committed to partnering and engaging with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and the implementation of their Healthy Country Plan: *Paleert Tjaara Dja – Let's make country good together 2020–2030*.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### Background

The *Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan 2023 (draft)* relates to the unique and dynamic coastal environments of sand dunes, native vegetation, and lagoons along the northern coast of the Bellarine Peninsula, that adjoins Ramblers Road, Portarlington.

This Master Plan will build on the *Ramblers Road Foreshore Management Plan 2007* and will aim to achieve an appropriate balance in usage, coastal hazard and climate change management as well as protection and enhancement of environmental values.

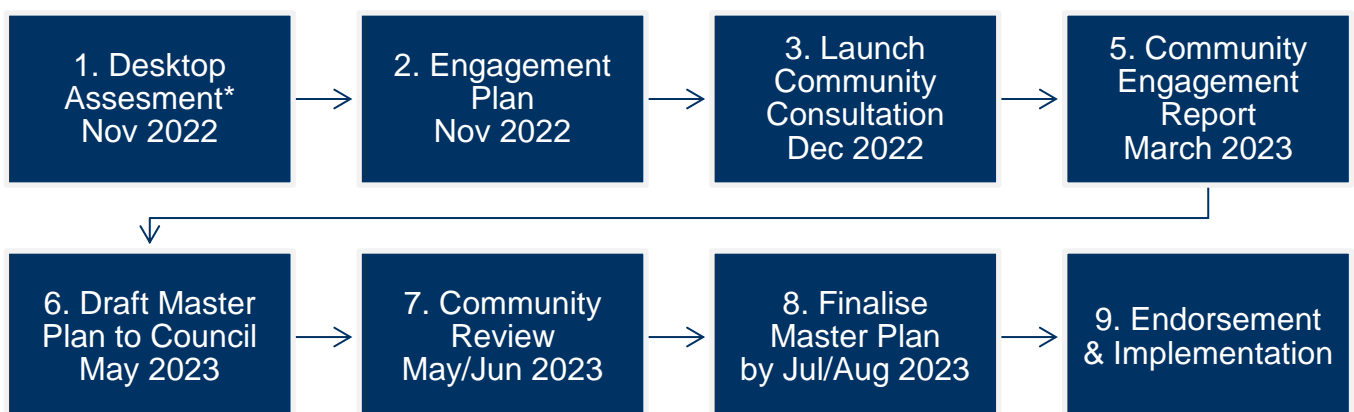
The Ramblers Road Foreshore is directly adjoined by 56 residential lots with dwellings on 52 of these. There are four public access points/walkways providing access from Ramblers Road through to the foreshore reserve. An unsealed walking path has also been installed to improve public access along the foreshore reserve. This has led to increased public use of the foreshore reserve, including the beach.

# Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan Engagement Report March 2023



Figure 2: Rambler Road foreshore with views to You Yangs

## PROJECT TIMELINE





# Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan Engagement Report March 2023



## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

A comprehensive Engagement Plan was created in November (Stage 2), with the launch of the community engagement on the 16 December 2022. This coincided with the Friends of Ramblers Road (FoRR) December meeting. The engagement provided stakeholders with an opportunity to identify values, issues and opportunities to help enhance the management of the foreshore.

Engagement took place with four open house sessions and three beach user engagement opportunities. Engagement was open until the 10 February 2023 (a total of eight weeks) to ensure summer holiday residents and beach users views were captured, alongside permanent residents.

This feedback will be used to inform the Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan, along with input from the adjoining foreshore manager Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management and other stakeholders. The Plan will outline the desired outcomes and priority actions to be implemented in protecting and enhancing the area. This section outlines the steps involved in engaging with our community.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The project is facilitated by Angie Poole, Environmental Project Planner with assistance from Jeanette Spittle, Co-ordinator Environment and Biodiversity.

Angeline Poole M: 0427 985 309 E: [apoole@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:apoole@geelongcity.vic.gov.au)



Figure 3: Aerial image of Ramblers Road foreshore and Point Richards boat ramp

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## HOW WE ENGAGED

### WHAT DID WE DO?

The aim of the community engagement process was to capture the feedback from full time and part time residents, local community, visitors to the foreshore, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and government agencies. The engagement was widely advertised via the City's website, social media and through the Bellarine Times. Have Your Say (HYS) cards were delivered to every house on Ramblers Road and the adjoining section of Point Richards Road. The FoRR also played an integral role in 'getting the word out' to residents and beach users.



**56 DAYS**

of engagement  
(Stage 3)



**1030**

Visitors to HYS page



**118**

People provided  
feedback



**72**

Surveys  
received



**30**

People following  
the project

### DATA METHODOLOGY

The engagement was open to all, with anyone able to respond, however feedback from local residents were specifically sought due to their interest, joint amenity, proximity and high use of the area.

### ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

A project specific engagement (Have Your Say) page was developed on the City's website to provide project information and opportunities to engage with the City.

A range of engagement tools and techniques were used to provide different types of opportunities for stakeholders and community to have their say. The main tools and techniques are explained in further detail below.

## HOW WE ENGAGED

### HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE PORTAL YOURSAY.GEELONGAUSTRALIA.COM.AU

An online Have Your Say project page was designed to share relevant information to encourage community feedback on Ramblers Road Foreshore.  
<https://yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/RRF>

### SURVEY (ONLINE & PRINTABLE)

A survey was provided through the HYS page and as a printable document and was available throughout the engagement period. Objective of survey was to capture community use, values, issues and suggestions.

### OPEN HOUSE X 4 (IN-PERSON & ONLINE)

Drop-in open house sessions were available throughout the engagement period, which included face to face and online opportunities.

#### **Online Sessions**

Both sessions were held in the evenings to ensure community members were able to attend after work.

12 January 2023 session took place in the height of summer holiday season

7 February 2023 session once school had returned in Term 1.

#### **Face to Face Sessions**

Both sessions were scheduled for the weekend when expected high use of the foreshore area.

7 January 2023

Township and visitors were encouraged to respond by holding a session in the centre of Portarlington at the Information Booth.

15 January

A more resident-focused session was held at the Point Richards Sailing Club due to its close proximity to the foreshore. This was the weekend of the Portarlington Mussel Festival with high level of residents 'at home'.

#### **Facilitators**

Jeanette Spittle and Angie Poole from the City's Environment Team

### BEACH USERS

Three informal beach user opportunities were provided.

15 January 2023 – beach walk and talk

16 January 2023 – Summer by the Sea

session run by Bellarine Catchment Network

18 January 2023 – Shell Survey session run by BayKeeper for FoRR

## HOW WE ENGAGED

### LETTERBOX DROP

Have Your Say cards were delivered to all households on Ramblers Road and the adjoining section of Point Richards Road.

### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Open at any time during the public engagement period. Submissions could be provided by email or mail.

### FRIENDS OF RAMBLERS ROAD

The community group Friends of Ramblers Road was formed in 2021. The group held their Christmas party/December meeting during the engagement period to notify members. FoRR also distributed additional HYS cards to beach users over this period.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The community engagement sessions were promoted through the City of Greater Geelong social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Mayor, Trent Sullivan met with residents on the foreshore to promote the engagement. In addition, a notice was published in the Bellarine Times in the 23 December 2022 edition.

City of Greater Geelong  
1d · 🌐

We want your ideas as we develop a new Master Plan for the management of Ramblers Road foreshore in Portarlington.

The foreshore is so important for biodiversity and conservation, as well as a place where people can enjoy swimming 🏊, fishing 🎣, and being out in nature 🌿.

You can share your feedback via the Have Your Say page or by attending our online open house at 5pm on Tuesday 7 February 2023.

Share your feedback at [yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/RRF](https://yoursay.geelongaustralia.com.au/RRF)

Feedback closes 5pm on Friday 10 February 2023.

🗣️ Cr Trent Sullivan - Mayor of Greater Geelong on the Ramblers Road foreshore with residents (L-R) Lee, Alice, Zoran, Ray and Andrew

### SOCIAL MEDIA



# 7372

Reach/Impressions

# 248

Actions (Clicks, reactions, shares, comments etc.)



### HAVE YOUR SAY

Share your feedback on Ramblers Road foreshore

We're seeking public feedback in developing a Master Plan for the management of Ramblers Road foreshore in Portarlington.

The Master Plan will replace the Ramblers Road Foreshore Management Plan 2007, which helped to address many key issues and coordinate improvement works in the area.

Come along to engagement session:

- Midday to 2pm, Saturday 7 January 2023 at the Portarlington Community Information Booth.
- 5pm, Thursday 12 January 2023 - Online open house. Scan the QR code below for more information.
- 9pm to 11pm, Sunday 15 January for Friends of Ramblers Road at the Portarlington Sailing Club, Point Richards Road.
- 5pm, Tuesday 7 February 2023 - Online open house

Community engagement closes at 5pm, Friday 10 February 2023.



### NEWS



# 1

print adverts in local newspapers

## WHO WE ENGAGED WITH



# PARTICIPATION

During the engagement period from the 16 December 2023 to 10 February 118 people engaged with the City about Ramblers Road Foreshore, with 39% engaging in person at our face-to-face events. The community were invited to share some demographic data with us, primarily through our HYS page survey. The following is a snapshot of the 72 people who responded via the survey.

Answer Choices	Percent
Ramblers Road /Point Richards Road	41.67%
Portarlinton	33.33%
Indented Head / St Leonards	6.94%
Clifton Springs / Drysdale	2.78%
Greater Geelong region (other than suburbs listed above)	6.94%
Other	8.33%

Figure 4: Location of resident (42% live on Ramblers Rd or Point Richards Rd)

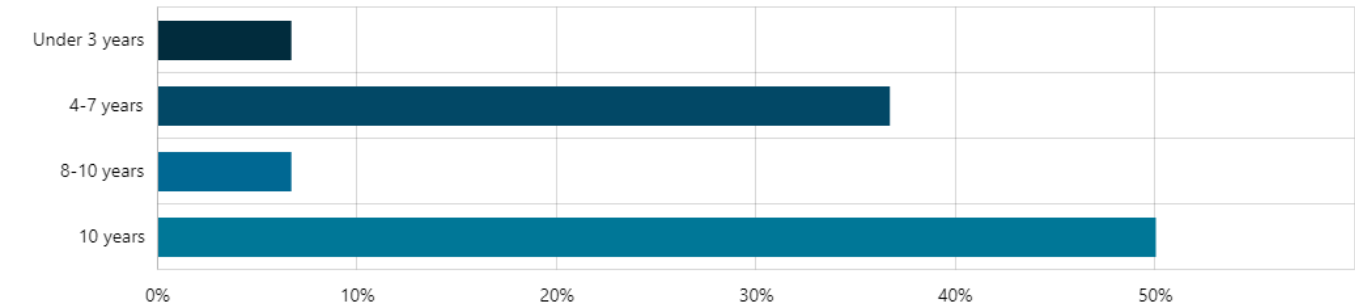


Figure 5: Time resided on Ramblers Rd or Point Richards Rd (50% of residents have lived there for 10+yrs)

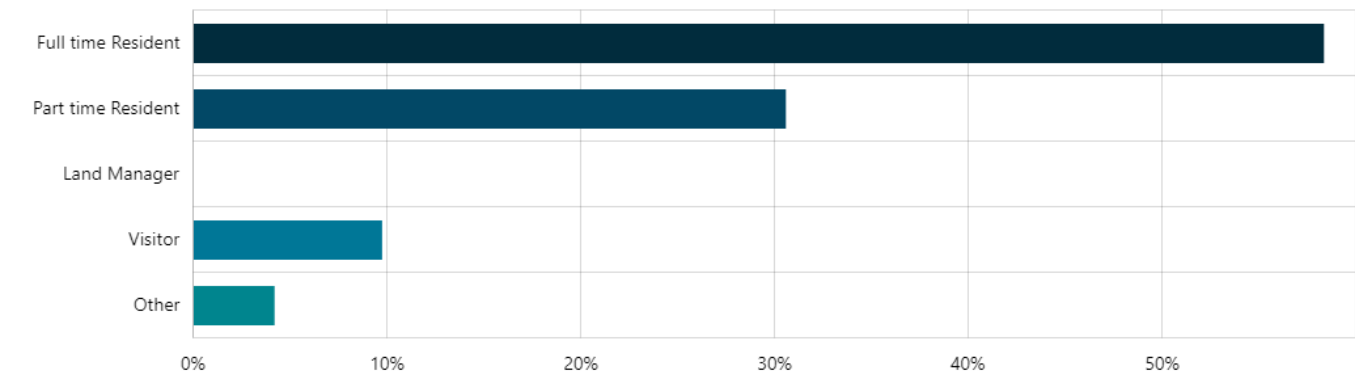


Figure 6: Connection to the area (58% full time residents)



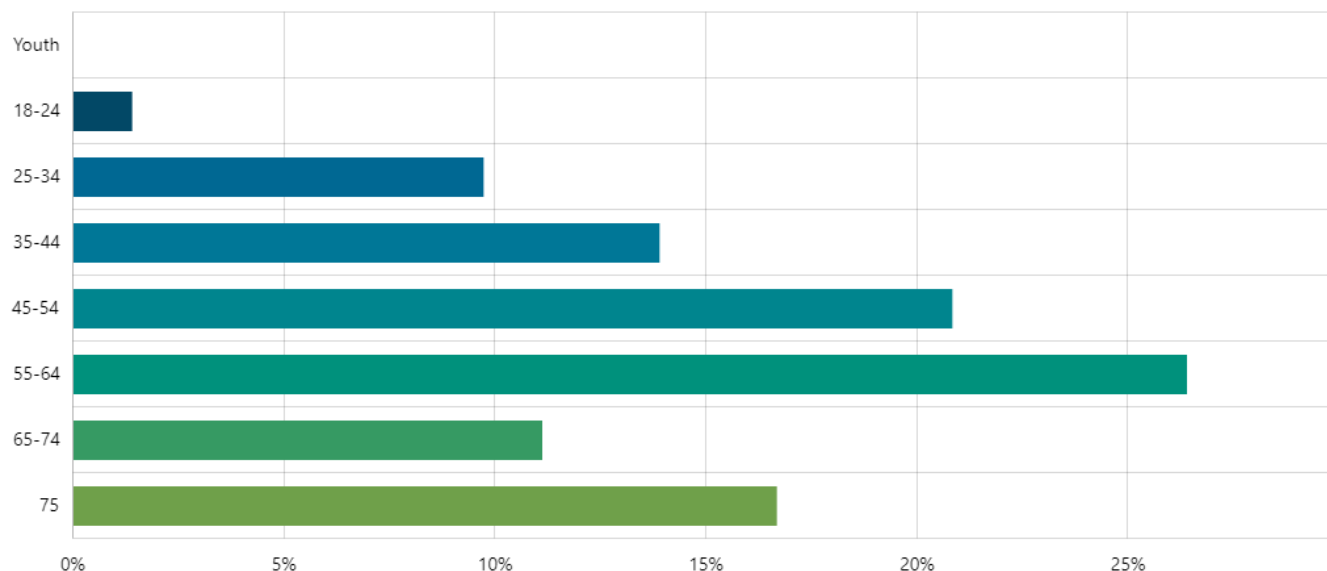


Figure 7: Age demographics

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Bellarine Landcare Group	1.39%	1
Friends of Hooded Plover	0%	0
Friends of Ramblers Road	30.56%	22
Geelong Environment Council	0%	0
Geelong Field Naturalists	0%	0
Portarlington Community Association	12.50%	9

Figure 8: Affiliation with community groups

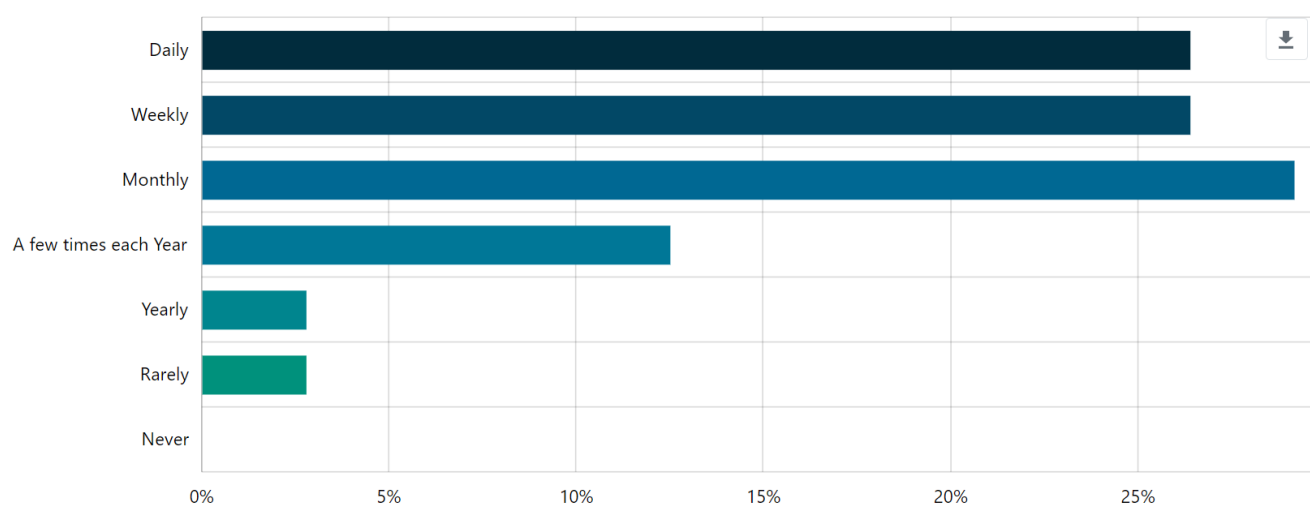


Figure 9: Frequency of visits to foreshore (63% visit regularly - daily or weekly)

## WHAT WE HEARD

### THE FEEDBACK

Feedback from the community highlighted beach and ocean as the element most used and valued. The highest concern was seagrass wrack on the beach. Residents were supportive of suggested formal access paths to the beach, in-line with designated walkways and restoration of foreshore dune with indigenous vegetation (aligned with pest plant control).

Residents who responded via the survey were comprised of full time (58%) and part time residents (31%) with half residing in the area for over 10 years. Many long-term residents have provided temporal observational information and some photographic representations of the foreshore. Community and stakeholder input, coupled with desk top accessible aerial images and scientific assessment and modelling will assist in the development of the Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan.

### OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the engagement were to identify how the community use the foreshore, what they value and what they identify as threats (quantitative data). Please see figures 10-12 for results. In addition, people were asked to provide free text responses (qualitative data) to share their suggestions on future protection, use and any other relevant information about the foreshore. Details of these can be found in Appendix One.

What did the data tell us?

- 69% of people ranked access to beach/ocean as the top use
- 67% of people ranked beach and ocean as the top value
- 73% of people ranked seagrass wrack as the top threat

### OVERARCHING THEMES

The overarching themes that came through in workshops and survey responses were:

- Many community members are concerned about the observed increase in seagrass wrack accumulation of the foreshore. Many residents mentioned that they believe this has been exacerbated since the installation of the Point Richards boat ramp rock groynes and in particular the recent western side installation. Concerns raised: unusable beach, unsafe to walk on these areas, unable to swim due to build-up of sea grass wrack in the water, significant amounts of litter trapping in wrack, unsightly, smelly, smothering of seagrass and creation of algae and impacts on seabed.
- Some residents highlighted that they understand that the seagrass wrack is an environmental asset that provides habitat and food for resident and migratory birds. It has also been observed by residents that the seagrass beds have grown significantly in the past few years and that fishing success and juvenile fish observations is the highest it has been for over 10 years. In addition, observations of seagrass wrack accumulating and dispersing with weather conditions was understood by many residents.
- Along with use of beach and bay, many residents outlined that they utilise the 'nature strip' area of public land between their houses and the foreshore footpath. It was also noted that this area has been maintained by residents and that there are strong concerns about encroachment of structures and plantings on this public land.
- During the open houses attendees expressed their support for more formalised and maintained tracks to the beach in line with the walkways.

- Many respondents were concerned about the impacts of dogs on native fauna and beach users. Dog control improvements in forms of increased controls, compliance and improved signage were suggested. However, dog walkers also suggested that the controls remain as they are and that further restrictions should not be implemented. The lagoon/saltmarsh area are highly valued by some.
- An unexpected discovery through the engagement was the concern of the wavelets created by the Spirit of Tasmania on the beach and beach users.
- The fenced off drain was mentioned by some as unsightly and requiring fixing.
- Septic leakage and impacts was raised as a concern along with implied impacts on water quality and algae growth
- Noted safety issues included; sand fences that are almost covered as dangerous and an injury hazard, road side markers are missing (have been damaged/removed) from the area where Point Richards Roads meets Ramblers Road, marine litter trapped in wrack and walking on the wrack are seen as a hazard.

For full summary of suggestions and observations please see Appendix One

	1	2	3		1	2	3
Access to Beach/Ocean	66.67% 32	22.92% 11	10.42% 5	Sailing / water sports	1	8	6
Bird Watching	30.00% 3	40.00% 4	30.00% 3	Swimming	4.76% 1	52.38% 11	42.86% 9
Dog Walking	44.44% 16	30.56% 11	25.00% 9	Walking/Running	17.78% 8	20.00% 9	62.22% 28
Nature Walks	20.00% 4	55.00% 11	25.00% 5				

Figure 10: Use of foreshore – rank top 3 (67% listed top use as Access to Beach/Ocean)

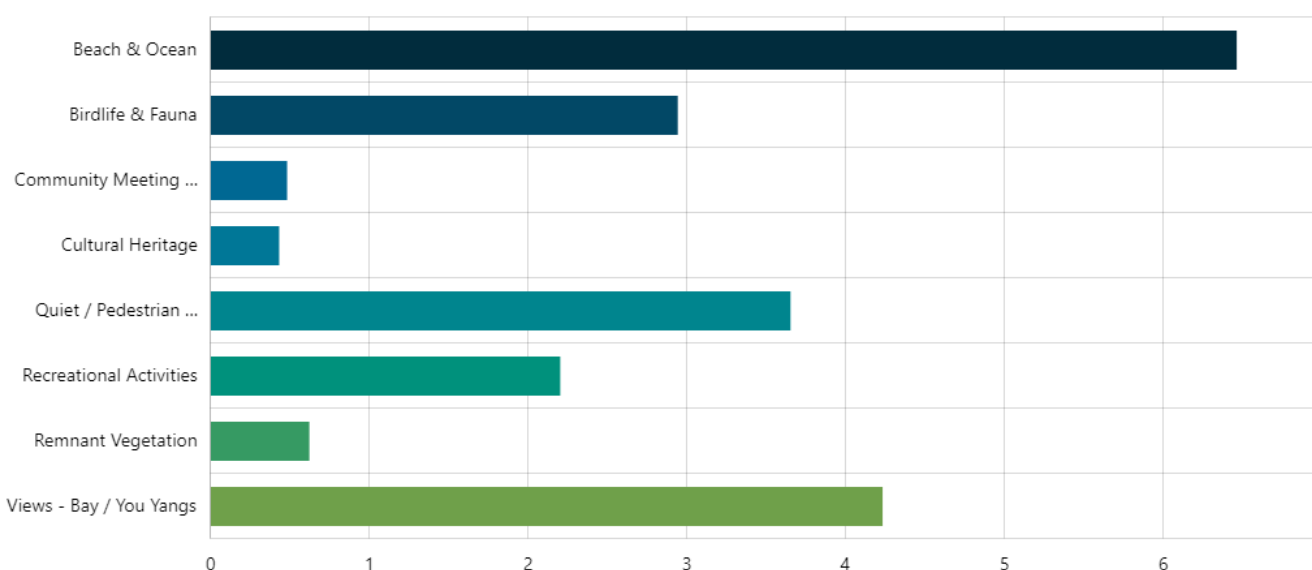


Figure 11: Values of foreshore – rank top 3 (67% listed top value as Beach and Ocean)

	1	2	3		1	2	3
Beach erosion	29.63% 8	33.33% 9	37.04% 10	Pest animals	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	40.00% 2
Climate change impacts	26.67% 8	26.67% 8	46.67% 14	Pest plants	20.00% 6	43.33% 13	36.67% 11
Dogs / cats impacts	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	Population growth	43.75% 7	18.75% 3	37.50% 6
Litter / marine litter	13.95% 6	55.81% 24	30.23% 13	Sea grass wrack on beach	72.97% 27	10.81% 4	16.22% 6

Figure 12: Threats to foreshore – rank top 3 (73% listed seagrass wrack as top threat)

The survey also asked for contributions on how the foreshore could be better protected and/or utilised into the future as well as any additional information or comments. All comments from survey and open houses have been summarised in Appendix One.

## NEXT STEPS

**Stage 6:** The City will use the engagement results to assist in the development of the Draft Ramblers Road Foreshore Master Plan. Development will be done in conjunction with stakeholder groups including ongoing consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.

**Stage 7:** The Draft Plan will make recommendations to be presented to Council (~May 2023) for consideration and approval for public review.

**Stage 8:** The Draft Plan will be then be made available for a period of 30 days for public review.



## APPENDIX ONE – SUMMARY OF IN-PERSON AND WRITTEN FEEDBACK

### Use

#### *Key theme*

- Access to beach and ocean

#### *Moderate theme*

- Use 'nature strip' between house boundary and path more than beach
- Swimming and beach use
- Fishing

#### *Single response*

- Playing in the sand
- Bike riding
- Walking
- Kayaking
- Paddle-boarding

### Viewed as Values

#### *Key theme*

- Views of the bay
- Birdlife and fauna / red capped plover breeding on beach / migratory birds

#### *Moderate theme*

- Fish - fishing has greatly improved in the past few years (40+ yrs fishing experience)
- Sea wrack important part of natural process, and the seagrass has increased in the bay which is a positive / this is food for birds and a natural part of the beach / leave it

#### *Single response*

- Leave the lagoon as is – it is looking really good
- Wind break beside property
- Like it open beside property for views
- Quiet and pedestrian only access
- Safe place for children

### Viewed as Threats

#### *Key theme*

- Protection of cultural sites and values
- Seagrass wrack and litter accumulation west of boat ramp / limited beach access
- Impacts from boat ramp structures
- Concerned about encroachment of residents on public 'nature strip' area (paths, fire pits, fences, plantings)
- Dogs off lead
- Spirit of Tasmania waves impacting on beach

#### *Moderate theme*

- Pest plants

### *Single response*

- Parking in front of road access points
- Pest animals
- Horses and motorbikes
- Prickly weeds on beach, unable to walk on dunes
- Sand fences stick out on dunes and are a hazard
- Overregulation by Council (don't change access/don't change 'nature strip' use)

## **Suggestions / Observations / Comments**

### *Key theme*

- More sea wrack building up and staying since rock groyne installed
- Residents have been maintaining 'nature strip' area between houses and path (for 60+ yrs)
- Some residents maintain walkways and access tracks as grass too long
- Support access tracks to beach aligns with walkways/road access
- Increased level of service for walkways and access tracks
- Make resident boundary clear to fix and stop encroachment
- Dog control required as many off lead
- Corral (fenced off) water hole to be fixed and removed

### *Moderate theme*

- Build-up of sand along foreshore west since 1<sup>st</sup> boat ramp rock wall was installed
- Sea wrack is taken away with SW winds
- Clear signs at access walkways for dog controls
- Replace white roadside indicator posts at corner of Point Richards, Ramblers Road; hazard
- Revegetation of low native plants on foreshore / stop people waling all over foreshore

### *Single response*

- Dog poo bags and bins should be installed
- Increased maintenance of path along foreshore – weed control
- Link from Ramblers Road to Drysdale as unsafe on main road – increased tourist use from Ferry users to wineries and other attractions
- Educational signs to showcase environmental values
- Plant evergreen natives
- Citizen science education – capture bird and fauna data
- Grind stumps in vacant block opposite #37
- New residents who are City (Melbourne) people need to appreciate that nature is always changing. It should be an opportunity for people to observe and learn from nature and understand that the foreshore is ever changing – they can't control it
- Years ago you could walk out in shallows with light and see flounder and lots of juvenile fish, this disappeared but in recent years has come back. The seagrass and health are helping the environment
- If people want to have a sandy beach, just walk a bit further than out your front door – good spots in front of artificial reef and Portarlington Sailing Club
- When lots of natural areas are suffering, we can see the health of the bay in this area improve
- Beach has grown in width over many years – started with dredging the opening of Port Phillip Bay
- Efforts from agencies to improve bay health as obvious in seagrass coming back, juvenile fish coming back
- More boating and jet-ski use prior to covid

- White faced heron pair nested and raised chick in WA gum
- Echidna in yard 2019
- Tawny frogmouth nest and raised chicks
- Kookaburras which used to be frequent have been gone for over 5yrs
- Lagoon used to 'empty out' with westerlies 12 years ago
- Sand was pumped onto beach during dredging of boat harbour
- Water is notably warmer this summer
- Fishing with nets stoppage seems to have increase seagrass growth
- Suggest machinery should be used to clean up sea wrack and beach
- Suggest fee charged for boat ramp use to pay for impacts and clean ups
- Next time boat channel is dredged the spoils should be put on the eastern side of the boat ramp
- Beach width has increased significantly since 2013 boat ramp structure. Until 2013 at high tide mark beach was approx. 10m, now 50m and likely to increase with new groyne. Better to have a narrower, cleaner foreshore (as per past 60 years)
- Accumulation of sea wrack smells bad, NE or E winds and reduces enjoyability of space
- It should be the responsibility of Bellarine Bayside or Better Boating Victoria to do clean up as they are the ones that installed the cause. The boat ramp used to have to be cleaned up by machinery, now the problem has just been pushed west to our beach.
- More artificial reefs
- Better hydrographic planning (boat ramp failure)
- Stronger cat controls – 8 pairs of swans at Point Richards wetlands, 42 cygnets, only 4 survived (2 foxes shot, cats trapped – but returned to owners)
- Stop using Round Up by land managers and residents – run-off damages bird, fish, marine life
- I am shocked how often pesticides are sprayed in that area. It is hardly good for the water quality, wildlife nor microbes in the soil, not to mention peoples health. I would rather see weeds grow or have them pulled out manually.
- More information signage so people can learn the real value of nature in the area.
- Signage about Indigenous life here eg re fish traps systems, living in tune w nature and food supplies, family life for 000s of years, destroyed within 10 years of Batmans arrival at St Leonards.
- Ensuring landowners do not claim public land through fencing or planting of hedges.
- Clearer signage for dog walking- off lead and on path and on beach. Currently the signs do not align with what is said online.
- Erosion caused by the swell from large ships and the threats posed by the Vopak and Viva has terminal projects
- Maintain housing numbers as they are.
- No new developments. No multi storey. No shopping precinct.
- No expansion of the current caravan park. No more boat ramps or car parks
- I strongly endorse the protection and regeneration of native ecosystems throughout the foreshore area. Future planning should enable a thriving natural environment and habitats alongside increased use for boating, fishing and other medium-impact human activities.
- If it is cleaned up, it could be a beautiful public beach for families to use
- We have lived on Ramblers Road for over 20 years and not once has the council maintained the land in front of the houses.
- Council needs to clear a metre of grass and vegetation on the beach side butting up to the path for easy viewing of any snakes as we walk along the path.
- A walking and bike trail along (beside) Point Richards Road is extremely necessary. The grass is very long on the sides of the roads (snakes) thus people walk and ride on the road. With heavy use by cars with trailers and caravans it is very dangerous. It's an accident waiting to

happen. There is plenty of room beside the reserve for this safe path. It would also connect more pedestrians safely to the Ramblers Road trail and back into Portarlington path. And in the future pedestrian access to the proposed chocolate development.

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- There is very little space on the beach to walk dogs off lead in Portarlington, this is one of the only areas. Better and clearer signage needs to be arranged as well as clear fences of where dogs can go when.
- The Ramblers Road Foreshore has been changed by the erection of the reef, the rock walls at the boat ramp and the rock walls at the Portarlington pier. It's a beautiful place that we need to maintain.
- This foreshore was a beautiful space where people used to gather, walk their dogs and use the beach. It's almost unusable now. It smells, there's seaweed everywhere to the point where there's hardly sand in some areas. It smells terrible and it looks like it's a dumping ground for sea wrack, I went out on my paddle board the other day and got stuck in the sea scum. It was revolting. Further along the beach near the caravan park, it is spotless, there's no seaweed or wrack, and no smell! This is what it used to be. Please, please clean up our beach to what is used to be like. It's unusable now and it would make the most perfect public beach and bringing much needed funds into our community