

North Lorne – Coastal Erosion

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

DECEMBER 2022



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Our Community Engagement Commitment

The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) is in an incredibly privileged position to be tasked with protecting and enhancing the Great Ocean Road's coast and parks on behalf of the community.

The Authority is committed to engaging, listening, respecting and reflecting community and stakeholder views in everything we do, as guided by our [Community Engagement Strategy](#).

We are committed to being transparent and open with our communities and building and deepening relationships grounded in reciprocity and trust. Through various channels, mediums and engagement spaces, we will invite feedback, robust discussion and reflection with the aim of strengthening our connections and common purpose.

OVERVIEW

The North Lorne foreshore coastal erosion engagement was focussed on gathering feedback to identify community values that will inform the future Coastal Hazard Investigation and management actions.

This engagement report provides the project background, engagement undertaken, what we heard and key findings.

Through consultation with the community, we heard that the community highly values the North Lorne study area for walking, scenic views, habitat for plants and animals, and swimming.

Infrastructure to support these high priority community values includes steps for beach access, a walking path, the North Lorne picnic area car park, and the Three Pines car park. Due to the impacts of coastal erosion, these facilities and assets have been identified as highly valued and, there is a desire to retain them.

There is a strong community preference for a 'protection' approach to limit further erosion ([refer Marine and Coastal Act 2018 - Adaptation Hierarchy](#)), and more adaptation planning – taking into account community values – to build resilience within future complex scenarios.

Introduction

From 2 September – 7 October 2022, the Authority gathered feedback to identify community values as part of the Coastal Hazard Investigation for North Lorne, where coastal erosion is impacting public infrastructure (walking path, carparks and other facilities near the Three Pines car park).

The community values, as identified by the community and detailed in this engagement report (see key findings on page 11), will be included in the Coastal Hazard Investigation being undertaken by consultants, Water Technology. This investigation will provide site-specific management recommendations.

BACKGROUND

In January 2022, significant erosion to the dune embankment at the Three Pines car park in North Lorne occurred. Erosion has impacted this site for several years and has continued to occur through the winter of 2022.

The erosion damaged a pathway between the car park and the beach. As a result, the pathway was temporarily closed for public safety while emergency repairs were completed.

Emergency works included:

- Drainage bars reinstated on the coastal side of the car park
- Drains on the inland side of the road checked and cleared in partnership with Surf Coast Shire Council
- Approximately two square metres of clay material installed
- Geotextile and agriculture pipe drainage installed to manage moderate rainfall events

Following the completion of these works in February 2022, the pathway was reopened. Emergency measures continued to work effectively in high rainfall events but were unable to protect the land against ocean swells and high tide.

As part of these works, a Coastal Hazard Investigation was initiated for the North Lorne foreshore to better understand and manage, where practicable, ongoing erosion in the area from coastal processes and overland water flow.



As part of best practice coastal adaptation planning, community values will inform the Coastal Hazard Investigation. The study will examine the coastline area between the Erskine River and the Three Pines car park.

In all our works, we must address immediate risks to public safety while using evidence-based planning for long-term solutions. These methods take time to ensure unintended impacts are not caused elsewhere. Long-term works require technical assessments and further consent under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*; consent cannot be obtained until a community consultation and, adaptation planning process has been completed.

Engagement Period

**2 SEPTEMBER – 7 OCTOBER
2022**

Feedback was sought to identify community values as part of the North Lorne Coastal Hazard Investigation through multiple channels, including an in-person community consultation session and an online survey. To attract participation in the engagement, flyers, posters and digital and media activity was used.



In-person community consultation session, Sunday 18 September 2022

How we engaged

An online profile of the project was created and accompanied by an online survey to gather feedback. Information was provided on our website including project information and map of study area (**[click here](#)**), a coastal erosion fact sheet (**[click here](#)**), and a dedicated Have Your Say project webpage with consultation specific information and the online survey.

Consultation was broadly promoted through the following channels:

- Website
- Posters on community noticeboards in Lorne
- Letterbox drops to neighbouring households
- Media release
- Surf Coast Times newspaper article
- Email to key stakeholder groups

A total of 1,770 people were reached via online channels (see breakdown in table). The survey received 18 responses. The in-person engagement session attracted 22 people.

Activity	Publish date	Channel	Reach / impressions (unique)
Post - Community engagement open	2/9/2022	Authority LinkedIn	327
Post - Community engagement open	2/9/2022	Authority Facebook	199
Post - Reminder #2	16/9/2022	Authority Facebook	297
Post - Reminder #2	16/9/2022	Authority LinkedIn	400
Post - Final reminder survey closing	3/10/2022	Authority Facebook	278
Post - Final reminder survey closing	3/10/2022	Authority LinkedIn	269
Total			1,770

Engagement summary

Approach and description	Engagement level	Tools and techniques
1. General communications Communications released through the Authority's website, media release and social media to create awareness of the project.	Inform - Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Media release • Newspaper article • Social media
2. Community engagement A variety of techniques were used to capture feedback on community values.	Inform - Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Your Say Webpage • In-person consultation event (Sunday 18 Sept 2022) • Online survey • Fact sheets • Social media • Media release • Newspaper articles

What we heard

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SESSIONS

A total of 22 people attended the in-person engagement session at the North Lorne Three Pines carpark on Sunday 18 September, 10am - 12pm.

Feedback received at the in-person engagement included:

Address infrastructure concerns

- “Please fix the erosion site, including saving the (cypress) trees and fixing the path”
- “If erosion keeps going, we will lose the carpark. There's already not enough parking in Lorne”
- “Put some rocks - like between the pier and the aquatic club. Rocks there have held for 20 years”
- “The gap in the rock shelves along the shoreline is where the tide comes in and this has created the erosion”
- “We know that the tea tree is not endemic to this specific area. But one thing people really value about the beach at Lorne is being able to be on the beach and be screened from the road by the vegetation. Vegetation that is two or three metres high makes the beach at Lorne (from North Lorne to the pier) feel like a natural environment.”
- “The longer it takes (to fix or do anything) makes people more frustrated”
- “Everything you've (the Authority) done in the past hasn't worked”
- “The site was fixed initially with stones, then small rocks, then larger rocks. When the tree was removed, logs were put into the erosion site. The logs eventually washed into the ocean - very unsafe.”
- “The unstable pine tree has since been removed. The area needs to be stabilised to protect the trees.”

Retain Lorne's vistas

- “Carpark, footpath, trees, vista of Lorne - all nice to have”
- “Values: carpark (high importance), path for walking to town, trees nice to have (less important)”

Tea tree removal

- “The removal of the archway of tea tree along the walking path is vandalism”
- “The removal of tea tree which has been preventing erosion is pointless”
- “Tea tree is native in other areas further up”
- “Tragic to see absolute vandalism of the foreshore one day when I walked along the beach. Archway gone.”

Community not being listened to; disappointment with the Authority

- “We've provided feedback over many years - we're being ignored. Four years ago (2018), I contacted GORCC to say the erosion was 1.8m from bitumen, then 1.5m, now it's reached the bitumen in 2022. The tide is doing it, not overland water and it's also undermining the pine trees.”
- “Get on with it! Half-hearted efforts have made it worse.”
- “We would like to see this fixed in our lifetime - 10 to 15 years”
- “It's not just the size and nature of the problem that concerns us, the community would also like to see the evidence for effectiveness that GORCAPA considers when different solutions are proposed please”

Other

- “The carpark is used as a place for cars to pull off the Great Ocean Road when traffic is heavy”
- “There are no broken lines as you leave the car park.”
- “Vegetation has been poisoned across the road (from the Three Pines carpark)”
- “The erosion is happening due to the tide, not overland water. The information on the website is wrong”

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

We received 18 survey responses.

The majority of respondents identified as long-term locals or residents of Lorne (53%), with 29% stating they were property owners/rate payers. The greatest majority (four respondents) identified in the 75 – 84 age brackets.

The survey asked questions seeking feedback on the following areas:

- How well the study area is used
- What people most value about the study area
- What infrastructure is most used in the study area
- People's level of understanding of climate change impacts
- Other general feedback about the study area

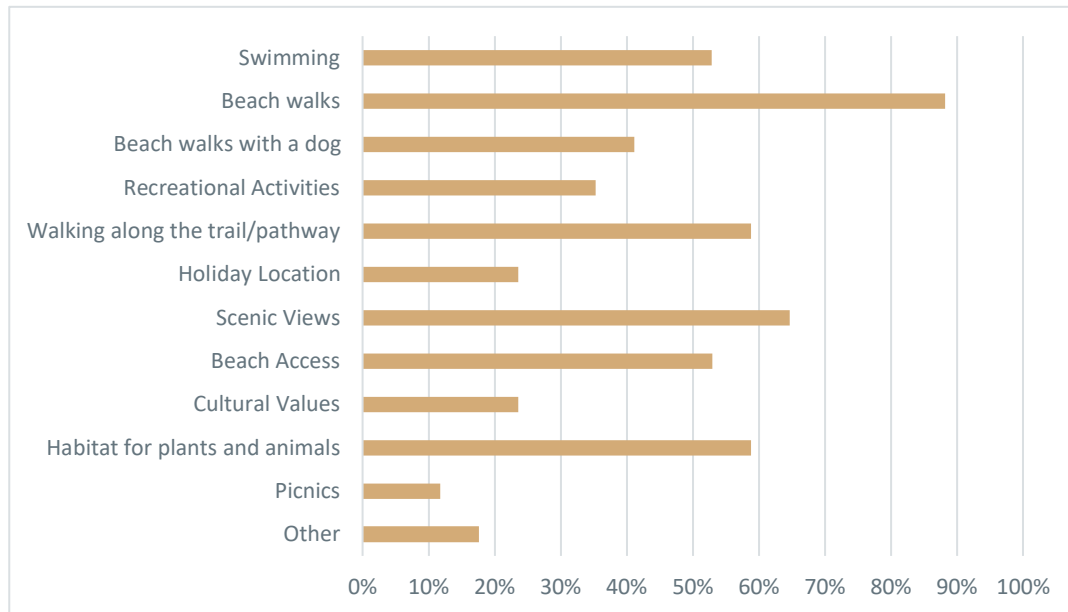
On average, respondents visited the study area 2 -3 times per week and used the walking track weekly.

Respondents rated the following community values in order of importance:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Beach walks | • Walking along the trail/pathway |
| • Scenic views | • Swimming |
| • Habitat for plants and animals | |

Q6.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT AND MEANINGFUL TO YOU ABOUT THE NORTH LORNE FORESHORE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA?

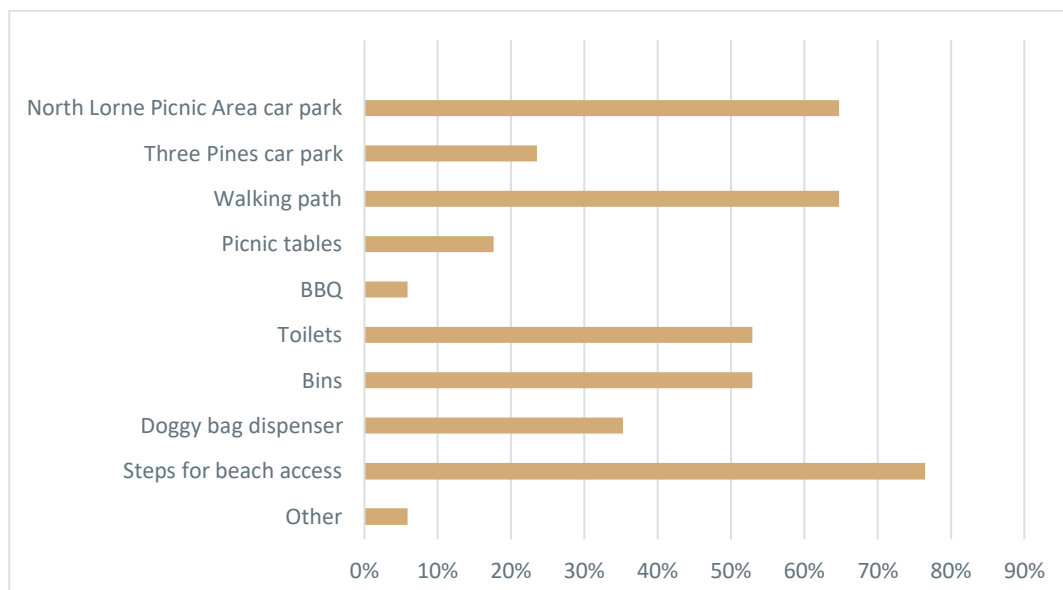


The most used infrastructure in the study area included:

- Steps for beach access
- Walking path
- North Lorne picnic area car park (Three Pines car park rated lower in online feedback but higher value for face-to-face respondents)
- Toilets and bins rated equally

Q7.

WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE DO YOU USE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA?



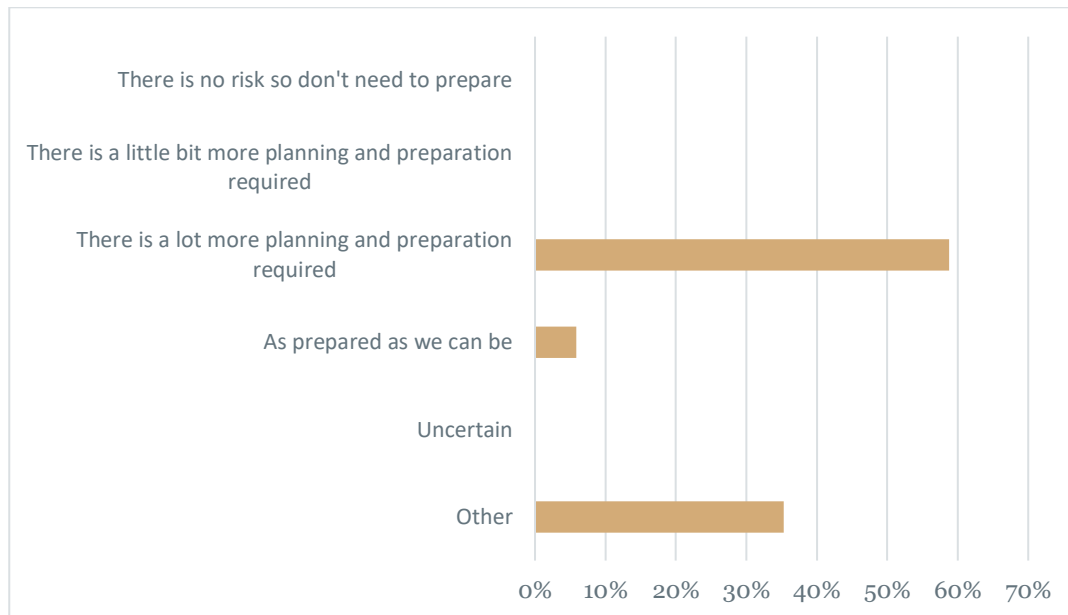
When asked to rate their understanding of current and future coastal hazards in the study area, the overall response was 74 out of 100, which showed a medium to high level of understanding.

To what degree is our community prepared to adapt to future coastal hazards, the greatest response was:

- There is a lot more planning and preparation required

Q9.

TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU THINK OUR COMMUNITY IS PREPARED TO ADAPT TO FUTURE COASTAL HAZARDS?



Other comments provided in the online survey regarding adapting to future coastal hazards included:

- “The Lorne community are conservative and abhor change in any form”
- “Change is constant in the wake of climate change. We all need to learn to adapt however as a highly valued and used area attention is needed.”
- “I think a lot more preparation and planning is needed - but that could mean anything from community education to structures. I think the community must be prepared to see things change, and to accept that change. Where possible we should retreat. To do anything else is often to exacerbate the underlying cause - i.e., create more greenhouse gas emissions. We should be flying kites about erosion and climate change, not be stuck trying to preserve three trees.”
- “I think that if the community is included in a true co-design process where they are given the scientific facts and information, they need to be fully informed and are part of the decision making then they can adapt.”
- “A sensible answer to this is that some areas are in desperate need - the 3 Pines Park, stair access, and sea-driven erosion... sorry, but I don't subscribe to the notion that it is all due to rain runoff - while other areas are intact and need little work. Sign reduction and rationalisation wouldn't hurt either!”
- “We only have a short time to protect the beach and coast.”

When asked on the survey for final comments, the following were provided:

Address infrastructure concerns

- “There MUST be massive rock protection of the coastline. At high tide and easterly wind, the waves sometimes go over the bank onto the grasses area. Consider a huge bank, about 100M out to sea made of old car tyres, chained together to break the massive tide surges. They could also be interplanted with kelp to attract fish.”
- “We have been north Lorne residents for over five years and have watched the erosion issue develop at the Three Pines car park. It looks like the present car park has been built on some degree of fill, which is now being eroded. I think the road at the car park area should be realigned slightly (maybe 4 or 5 metres) away from the water and into the hill. It could also be raised slightly to further prepare for erosion. This would allow the parking and walkway to be moved further away from the water and some sort of retaining wall built several metres back from the current edge.”
- “Coastal erosion needs urgent attention. The informal beach access requires a handrail. Unable to walk the beach at high tide, as the sand has been eroded, and the beach is covered in rocks.”
- “In addition to erosion-impacted areas, there has recently been a major loss of sand from the beach generally (exposing the rocks underneath) and a significant number of debris washing onto the shore regularly. Dog owners rarely observe the on-leash area during the summer season and with the loss of the sand from the area there are fewer places to sit and enjoy the space peacefully. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the number of 'day-trippers' who take over large sections of the grass areas, often including the walking track, and there's insufficient amenities for the level of use in peak season. Please do more to protect this loved space.
- “The erosion at Three Pines car park is primarily caused by ocean swells. I've observed this. It only occurs in the gap between the rock shelf that extends from Spout Creek to Erskine River. It is not an issue anywhere else along this stretch of coastline. Please reassess this site and examine the erosion in this regard.”

Need to adapt to climate change

- “An engineered response is not the best answer to the impacts of climate change in this area. Revegetation works, sand renourishment, moving infrastructure back off the coast are all solutions that should be explored”
- “We need to plan to adapt to the impact of climate change and increased erosion, but it is also important everyone is playing their part in reducing emissions. It would be logical to have better active transport facilities (e.g., bike racks, bike paths) and sustainable transport options (e.g., improved bus facilities to visit the area, more EV charging stations along the coast).”
- “I am assuming by ticking 'As prepared as we can be' that that will require a lot of planning and preparation to position us for the future as best we can.”

Community not feeling heard

- “Community trust is very low in part due to the point grey process - It is important that the various authorities demonstrate a genuine commitment to co-design.”
- “Common sense solutions, rather than endless surveys, expensive plans and pictures, and talkfests are needed. Blind Freddy can see the issues and solutions - it's disappointing that to date GORCAPA has done little but use its bully-boy tactics against one of our local favourite sanctuaries, the LAAC open air conversation pit. The depth of anger in the community over this arbitrary, stupid, and pointless use of GORCAPA force is palpable.”

Other

- “It is my understanding that some of the matters at North Lorne involve VicRoads. I think this needs to be made clear. I think the old GORC and now GORCAPA needs to make it clearer to the community where its control, but not necessarily influence”
- “1. At the Three Pines car park there is a large tree + stump obstructing beach access and swimming. The roots are protruding and look like big logs poking out of the sand. If GORCAPA has sufficient machinery on site it would be good to have this tree removed to allow swimming access again. As the sand encroaches in the tidal zone, it's hazardous to an unsuspecting tourist swimmer that is likely to be impaled. It's dangerous. It needs to be rectified.
- “Lorne doesn't receive as much coastal management implementation compared to other sections of coast. Great to see some investigations/ planning and engagement being undertaken.”
- “The North Lorne Erosion Protection Works report on the GORCPA website is incredibly misleading. One would think there is no problem. Time has ensured that action taken has now been washed away and the claims made in the report are spurious. There should be acknowledgement that the report is no longer accurate. The action taken has not addressed the issue. Surely this needs to be acknowledged? I am furious!!!”

KEY FINDINGS

Key themes from the online survey and drop-in session included:

- Highest ranked community values (in order of importance)– beach walks, scenic views, habitat for plants and animals, walking along the trail/pathway, swimming.
- Most used infrastructure (in order of importance) - steps for beach access, walking path, North Lorne picnic area car park, and Three Pines Carpark (rated higher at in-person session).
- Facilities and assets are highly valued by the community– desire to retain access stairs, walking path, and both car parks.
- Strong community preference for a ‘protection’ approach ([refer Marine and Coastal Act 2018 - Adaptation Hierarchy](#)) to limit further erosion, while perceptive and risk-alert about the broader impacts and complexity of planning

- Coastal vegetation is considered iconic and, provides a buffer to the Great Ocean Road and the surrounding environment, holds recreational, ecological and tourism values. There was some disappointment expressed by community members that the tea tree arch was removed.
- More integrative adaptation planning is required and community desires urgent actions and strategies to feel more resilient and build resilience within future complex scenarios. Community concern that insufficient actions have been taken to date, and without urgent actions, coastal erosion will only worsen.
- Lack of confidence in the Authority due to the Point Grey project outcomes and perceived lack of action to address the erosion at north Lorne. Accountability needs to be strengthened.

NEXT STEPS

The community values and key findings identified through this engagement have been provided to the consultants, Water Technology, who are undertaking the Coastal Hazard Investigation.

The Coastal Hazard Investigation report is expected to be completed by December 2022. The report will identify options for coastal erosion management actions and provide a recommendation for next steps.