

Fishermans Beach car park upgrade

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 to strengthen our connections and common purpose.

OVERVIEW

The Fishermans Beach car park design engagement focussed on gathering feedback on design options to upgrade Torquay's Fishermans Beach (Fisho's) car park, boating facility and beach access adjoining the Torquay Marine Rescue Service, Torquay Angling Club and Salty Dog Café.

The designs aim to improve the access, safety and movement of pedestrians, vehicles, and boat trailers frequently using the existing car park and adjoining areas.

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

Through consultation with the community, we heard that this area is highly used and much-loved by a wide range of community members, and the parking area is in high demand. Community members use it for fishing and boating (as the home of the Torquay Boat Ramp), other ocean sports, beach-going, dog walking, recreation and socialisation. Of the two designs provided for feedback (see page 6), Option 1 with angled parking was marginally preferred (by 60% of survey respondents) but there were requests for the parking to be changed to nose-in instead of reverse-in.

The new designs, featuring marked long-bay parking for boat trailers in the southern car park, highlighted a need for more parking for other user groups without trailers. The high user demand of the area sees a greater request for parking than what is available in the current footprint and what is obtainable due to the boat ramp parking provisions. Diverse views emerged about how the parking area should be set out and regulated. Many comments were received about how the signage could be improved, particularly during boating season when parking restrictions apply.

Safety improvements were well supported, including separating the two car parks. Many comments were received to add a boat preparation area in the southern car park to allow for the safe launching and retrieval of boats. Community members raised some concerns about the conflict of boat ramp users accessing the ramp while pedestrians, families and beachgoers were using it for recreation and socialisation.

The inclusion of [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA) access was well supported, yet concerns were raised about the location of the DDA parks and ramp, suggesting it would be better if it was located away from the boat ramp and preparation area.

A range of comments were received about the environmental improvements, such as pollutant traps being well supported. However, many comments questioned whether sealing the southern car park would improve environmental outcomes.

Other public infrastructure suggestions (e.g., more bike parking, better toilets) were also provided.

Balancing user demands and providing clear direction for users will be a key feature of the project going forward. The designs are not quite there yet, and we'll be providing another design iteration taking on board community feedback early next year.

INTRODUCTION

From 19 September – 21 October 2022, the Authority gathered feedback on proposed concept designs to upgrade the Fishermans Beach car park, boating facility and beach access that adjoins the Torquay Marine Rescue Service, Torquay Angling Club and Salty Dog Café in Torquay.

The information gathered through this engagement will inform the next design iteration for the proposed upgrades.

BACKGROUND

Proposed upgrades were identified in a draft [Masterplan](#) developed in 2020 by the former Great Ocean Road Coast Committee for Torquay’s foreshore areas between Point Impossible and Jan Juc.

For the popular Fishermans Beach recreational area, suggested actions in the draft Masterplan were to *“Reconfigure Fishermans Beach car park including safe and efficient layout, sealed surface and a short-term vehicle drop off area. Include shade trees and water sensitive urban design.”*



Engagement period

19 SEPTEMBER TO 21 OCTOBER 2022

Feedback from the community was sought on new designs for Torquay's Fishermans Beach (Fisho's) car park, boating facility and beach access adjoining the Torquay Marine Rescue Service, Torquay Angling Club and Salty Dog Café.

The timing of the engagement was scheduled in late September to capture a school holiday period and coincided with the commencement of the changed parking conditions at the southern end of Fishermans Beach car park that permits boat-trailer parking only on weekends and public holidays during peak fishing season (October – May).

METHODS

The engagement used multiple methods to provide information and capture feedback including:

- Project information on the Authority's website, <https://www.greatoceanroadauthority.vic.gov.au/Projects/Torquays-Fishermans-Beach-car-park-upgrade> including a Have Your Say project page [link is <https://www.greatoceanroadauthority.vic.gov.au/Community-Consultation/Have-your-say/Fishermans-Beach-car-park-upgrade-community-consultation>]
- An online survey
- Stakeholder meetings
- An invitation to send emails to the Authority's Have Your Say email address
- Two in-person community consultation sessions - Sunday 2 October, from 10am - 12pm and Saturday 8 October from 9am – 11am
- Promotion of the engagement using digital media and traditional media activity, posters on community noticeboards around Torquay, and postcards at the Salty Dog Cafe.

HAVE YOUR SAY

TORQUAY'S FISHERMANS BEACH CAR PARK AND BEACH ACCESS DESIGNS

The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority is seeking feedback on new designs for the car park, boating facility and beach access at Fishermans Beach, Torquay.

The new designs seek to improve access, safety and movement of all users (pedestrian, vehicle, boat trailer) in the existing car park and adjoining areas.

To have your say, join us at the Fishermans Beach car park on:

- Sunday 2 October from 10 am - 12 pm
- Saturday 8 October from 9 am - 11 am, or
- Scan the QR code to learn more and complete the survey by 21 October 2022.



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DESIGNS

The designs aim to improve the access, safety and movement of pedestrians, vehicles, and boat trailers frequently using the existing car park and adjoining areas, and two designs were provided for feedback. The key difference between the two designs is the layout of the larger parking area to the south.

Option 1: A clockwise circular flow and 45-degree angle parking allows for approximately 27 car and trailer parks in the larger area and 13 parks in the smaller area, plus three DDA parks. The design also separates the vehicle queue from the area where vehicles are manoeuvring to park and allows for additional landscaping. For safety reasons Option 1 uses reverse parking.

Option 2: A linear flow with car parks at 90 degrees (similar to the current layout), allows for slightly more parks, with approximately 30 car and trailer parks in the larger area and 13 parks in the smaller area, plus three DDA parks. However, manoeuvring will be more difficult as there is no separation between vehicle queues and parking vehicles, and additional aisle space is required for larger vehicles.

OPTION ONE



OPTION TWO



CLARIFICATION ON BOAT-TRAILER PARKING

Once the engagement commenced, it became evident that not all users and visitors to Fishermans Beach knew it is home to Torquay's only designated boat ramp and is a Better Boating Victoria-listed facility. Some people were also unaware of the change in parking conditions during peak boating periods which permits boat trailer parking on weekends and public holidays and restricts the amount of other vehicle parking on these days. Currently, parking in the southern parking area is restricted to cars with boat trailers on weekends and public holidays between October and May.

The proposed upgrades to the car park area featured marked boat trailer parking bays (long bays) in the southern car park to cater for the boat ramp as per boating guidelines. Under the Victorian Boating Facility Design Guidelines, boat ramps in rural areas are recommended to provide 20-30 car parks designated for cars with boat trailers (CTU) per boat ramp lane.

To give clarity to the community on this issue, we updated the project website with boat trailer guideline information and a hand-out was created to share at the community drop-in sessions.

How we engaged

An online profile of the project was created, accompanied by an online survey to gather community feedback. The Authority's website featured project information and updates, 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
- Media release
- Social media
- Posters at key locations around Fishermans Beach and other Torquay community noticeboards
- *Surf Coast Times* newspaper article
- Email to key stakeholder groups

The survey received 251 responses, the in-person engagement session attracted over 200 people, and 32 email submissions were received, resulting in over 1,000 comments from the community about the designs and the project.

A total of 716 people were reached via the Authority's online channels (see below), and the engagement opportunity was also shared through the Torquay community Facebook page.



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

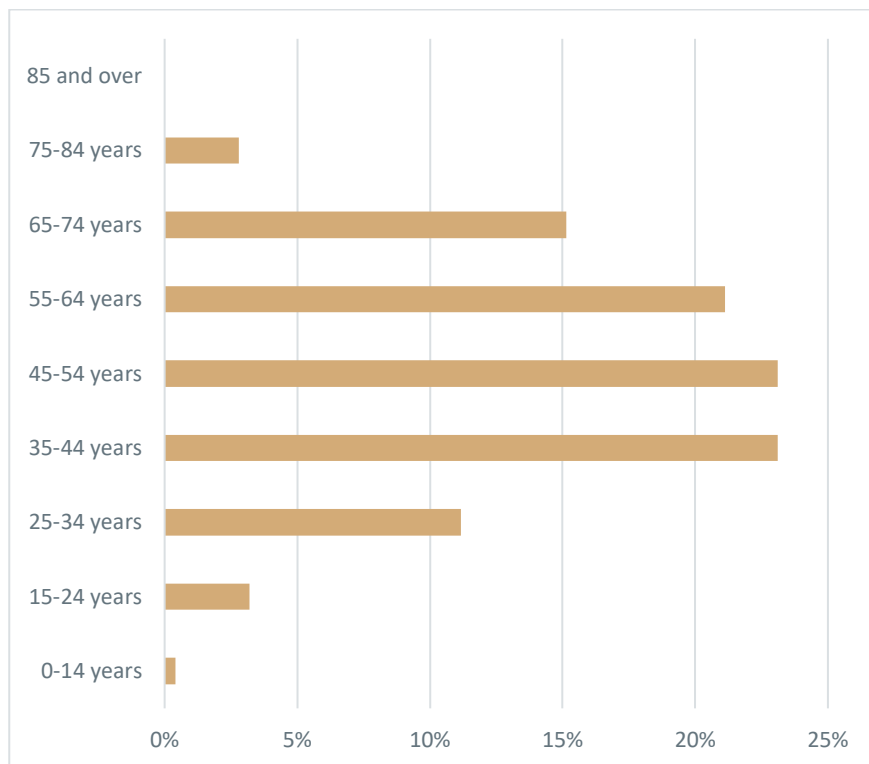
| Approach and description | Engagement level | Tools and techniques |
|--|------------------|--|
| General communications Communications released through the Authority's website, media release and social media to create awareness of the project. | Inform - Consult | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Media release • Newspaper article • Social media |
| Community engagement A variety of techniques were used to capture feedback from the community on the proposed upgrades. | Inform - Involve | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Your Say Webpage • In-person consultation events (Sunday 2 Oct and Saturday 8 Oct) • Online survey • Social media • Media release • Newspaper articles |

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

We received 251 survey responses. The majority of respondents (87%) identified as long-term locals or residents of Torquay, with a good spread of age range of respondents from 15 years to 84 years.

Q2.

WHAT IS YOUR AGE GROUP?



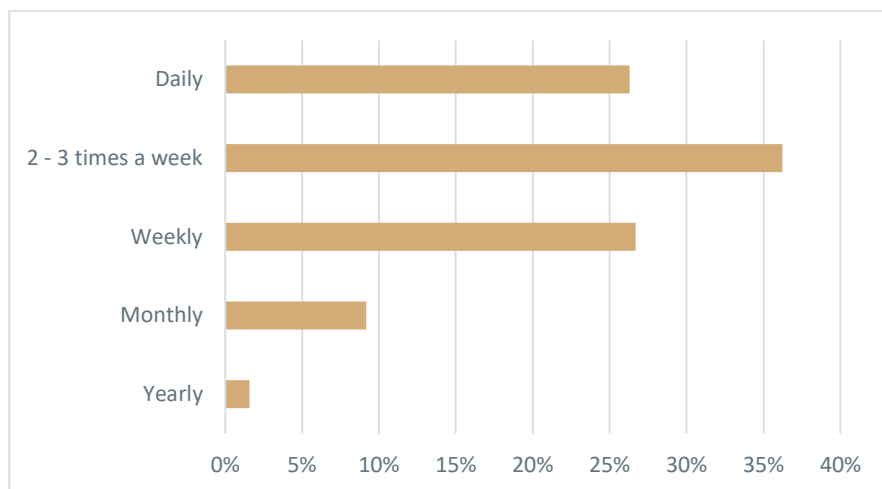
The survey asked questions seeking feedback on the following areas:

- Do you think the designs are an improvement of existing accessibility, circulation and movement?
- Do you think the designs offer an improvement of general amenity and facilities?
- Do the designs address safety issues with conflict of pedestrians, vehicles and bikes?
- Do the designs improve environmental outcomes?
- Do you have comments on the differing car park layouts?
- To what extent do you agree with boat trailer only parking during weekends and holidays during fishing season (Sept – May)?
- Do you have any comments about the proposed location of the DDA ramp and DDA parking?
- Other general comments?

The majority of respondents visited the area with high regularity – either, daily, 2-3 times per week, or weekly.

Q3

ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE FISHERMANS BEACH CAR PARK AND BEACH ACCESS AREA?



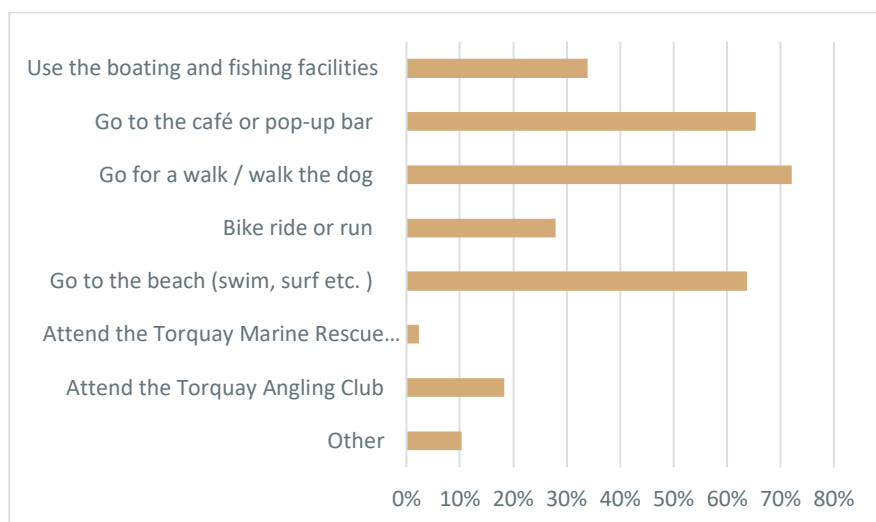
When visiting Fishermans Beach, the majority of respondents were either:

- Going for a walk / walking the dog
- Going to the café or pop-up bar
- Going to the beach to swim, surf etc.

34% of respondents were using the boating and fishing facilities.

Q4

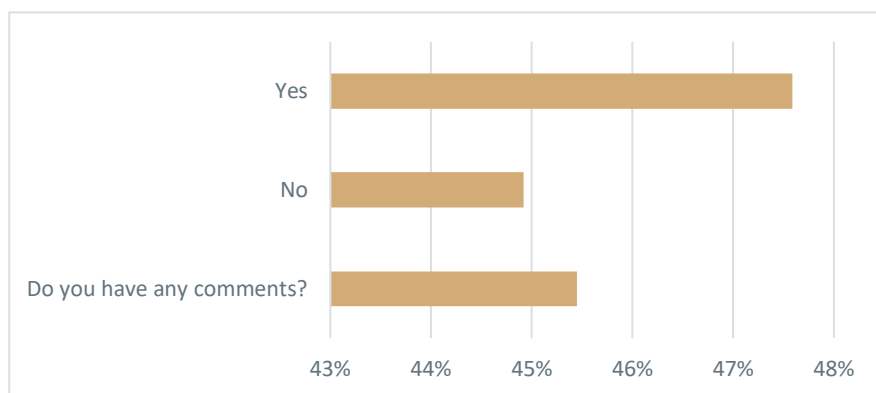
WHEN VISITING FISHERMANS BEACH, DO YOU:



When asked if the designs are an improvement of the existing accessibility, circulation and movement of all users, 48% said yes, while 45% said no.

Q5

DO YOU THINK THE DESIGNS ARE AN IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING ACCESSIBILITY, CIRCULATION AND MOVEMENT OF ALL USERS (PEDESTRIAN, VEHICULAR, BOAT TRAILER) IN THE CARPARK AND ADJOINING AREAS?



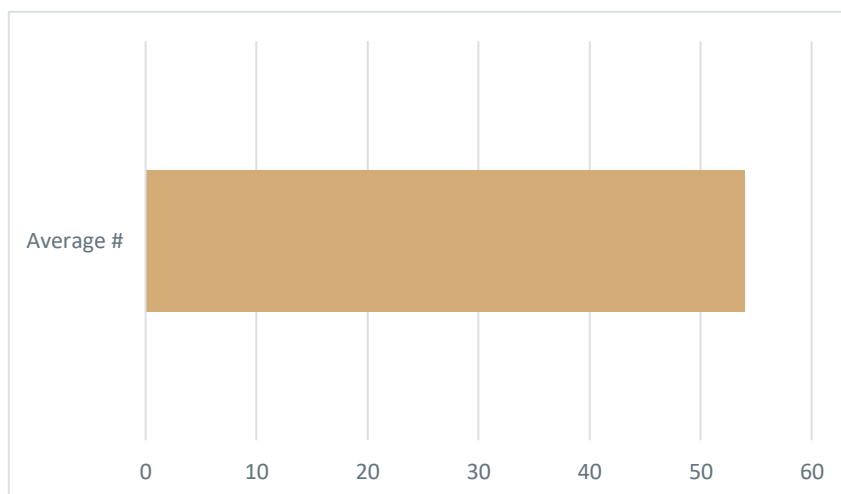
When asked if respondents would like to comment, the following was provided:

- “The designs do not consider all of the usage needs of the carpark.”
- “Somewhat improved but have many concerns especially disability access & increased traffic movement alongside Salty dog risking safety”
- “I don’t think it improves accessibility, but I do think it improves safety with cars no longer moving from the small car park to the south car park.”
- “It’s removing parking for regular people visiting an easy access beach”
- “Traffic from cafe should be directed away from the launch ramp for safer launch and retrieve at the moment launching or retrieving boat is dangerous as pedestrian traffic on ramp”
- “Turning circle for boat launching is hindered with new proposals. No area for ‘staging’, preparing the boat pre-launch.”

When asked if boat trailer parking during weekends, school holidays and public holidays would be supported, only 54% agreed.

Q10

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH BOAT TRAILER ONLY PARKING DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS FROM SEPTEMBER TO MAY?



When asked to provide a preference for the design options provided, Option 1 was slightly more favourable at 60% (114 respondents).

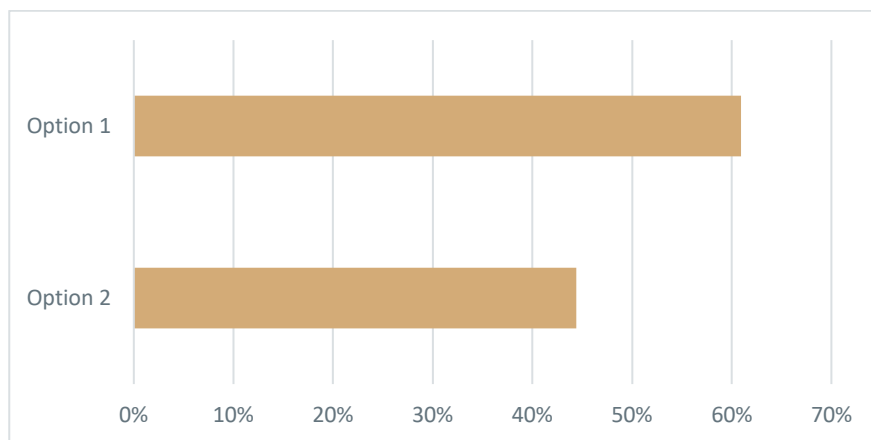
However, many comments were received stating the survey did not provide an option to say ‘neither’ Option 1 or Option 2 was their preference. Of the survey respondents, 37 respondents (14%) stated they didn’t like either design. In addition, we received five emails from people advising they had not completed the survey as they did not wish to answer this question.

We have taken this feedback on and will ensure future surveys provide an option to select ‘neither’.

This question was not designed to elicit a preferred outcome, rather to gauge the community’s level of preference for the features and parking layout of each design. The results of this question will not be robust enough to use in a meaningful way, and instead the information gathered from comments will inform future design solutions (e.g., angled parking is preferred in the southern car park, but make it nose-in parking, not reverse parking).

Q14

DO YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR OPTION 1 OR OPTION 2?



What we heard

The following provides an example of the quotes and sentiments that were provided by the community in the online survey, email submissions and the in-person consultation sessions. We received over 1,000 comments, and they were all collated, analysed, and summarised by the project team into themes.

Separation of car parks for safety reasons is supported

- “No traffic in front of Salty Dog is good. Safer for kids.”
- “Yes. There are too many dogs and children running around when people are trying to reverse trailers etc. Cars should be banned from the trailer area.”
- “I agree that separating people from vehicles to prevent vehicles passing in front of the Salty Dog & Angling Club will improve safety.”

... but two smaller car parks may create other issues

- “Major safety concerns with a circle car park near Salty dog traffic backlog will be inevitable and huge risk to children coming off beach or cycling on path.”
- “Having the entry at the current exit point will cause congestion on the Esplanade.”
- “Remove access to the Northern carpark for all users aside from emergency vehicles. This would eliminate the interference between the driveway and the high track.”

Angled long-bay parking is preferred (option 1) in the southern car park, but make it nose-in, not reverse parking

- “Nose in angled parking preferred”
- “45-degree angle parking design No 1 improves accessibility/safety.”
- “And another reason or two for nose in 45 degree is about half our tractor users launch with tractor but retrieve with their car...as its only at launching do cars enter the water. So, nose in allows for cars to be driven into the space, and after launching the trailer to be resecured to the car ready for retrieval.”
- “Reverse parking not so good for boat trailers as need to get back to boats in the water as quick as possible”
- “Consider drive through trailer parks to avoid reversing.”

Desire to find the right balance for parking bays to cater for regular cars vs. boat-trailer bays in the southern car park. Request to find more unrestricted, regular car parks in southern car park during fishing season.

Would like to see more car only parks (65 comments)

- “Please keep the carpark accessible to normal cars also. The fishing club building is empty or has two or three people sitting in it. If fisherman are out early enough they’ll get a carpark anyway.”
- “We need as many car parks as possible - there already isn't enough parking in the area. The minimum amount of boat/trailer parks should be considered, with as much parking space for normal cars as possible available.”

- This car park is used by so many people. Majority are locals going to the beach. Kids love this beach because of the water Inlet. So popular with mums and babies. The cafe is such a draw card for residents to use this beach and car park.”

Would like to see dedicated boat trailer parks (54 comments)

- “Need boat trailer parking as there is nowhere else in Torquay you can park a trailer. This is paramount to the design criteria.”
- “Boat launching needs to take priority, there is no other option, other beach users have numerous options, it is incredibly dangerous launching currently, with aggressive dog owners, clueless parents and aggressive behaviour.”
- “It is really important that we maintain boat trailer parking in this area near the boat ramp. When launching the boat off the beach and anchoring it just beyond the breaking waves, it is a rush to park the car and get back to the boat in case a larger set of waves comes through which can either swamp the boat or pull the boat from the anchor point and potentially push the boat towards swimmers. If we were forced to park the boat trailer on the road or beyond, this would leave the boat unattended for too long and potentially create a safety hazard.”

Suggestions for rules/signage regarding boat-trailer vs. car parking arrangements

- “Would be really cool if we could have some colour-coded car parks for on / off season”
- “It is critical that the boat trailer only parking remains during school holidays, weekends and public holidays from September to May as boat ramp users need to be able to launch, park and get back to their boat quickly. Ideally, there would be a section of the carpark dedicated to boat trailer only parking at all times.”
- “Fishos is multi-use and the car parking should represent that. As a resident for 15 years who uses fishos daily I have never seen a car with boat have trouble parking at fishos. It needs to remain a shared space with easy accessibility especially for those who surf fishos in winter - one of the special things about living in Torquay is watching the surfers from your car at fishos. There needs to some trailer parking but minimal, public use much more important.”
- “It may need to be considered that the carpark line markings are in two different colours say white for summer and yellow for winter with different layouts. An electronic sign will be required changing as required due to the weather to state that this day it is a white/yellow marking day. Some work may be needed to sort this out.”

Boat preparation area needs to be provided in the southern car park, and safety for the ramp and beach launch area needs further thought

- “One of the key safety issues is the number of beach users around the boat ramp. Launching and retrieving has to be performed quickly to avoid getting bogged in the sand. This is difficult when there are lots of people, kids, dogs etc in the area oblivious to the boat ramp users.”
- “Extra signs on beach area to inform parents with youngsters about the danger of being in that area”
- “Turning circle for boat launching is hindered with new proposals. No area for "staging", preparing the boat pre-launch.”

DDA inclusion is great, but reconsider DDA car parks and beach access so close to boat ramp

- “(DDA) Should be located out the front of salty dog cafe. Too dangerous where boats are entering trying to launch or retrieve.”
- “Excellent to see DDA considerations. Upgrades to facilities would be beneficial to the community.”
- “It seems the community and those seeking all ability access like to use this beach, it’s obviously why given the east gradient and ramp both the new on and the concrete one to access the beach. Somehow, you’re going to need to cater for both.”
- “Why do you need to place it so close to the boat ramp. This is asking for an accident to happen.”

Environmental considerations at Fisho’s

- “Native vegetation only at Fisherman's Beach. Where possible the frontal dune should be protected and restored as much as possible. Hard surfaces to be kept to a minimum to reduce pollution run-off.”
- “Dust suppression is a good idea. Planting is good as long as it does not obstruct vision.”
- “The carpark will be covered in sand, and you won't see any lines after the first easterly wind, so it won't really matter what gardening you do.”
- “There is always rubbish being washed out to sea when it rains. By having a pollutant trap it will prevent this.”

Does the southern car park need to be sealed?

- “Sealing the car park will remove its coastal feel and should not be done.”
- “The current set up is good, no need for more concrete. We are taking away the beach feel by turning it into a concrete car park.”
- “The sealing of virtually the entire area is just a terrible outcome from the point of view of character, sustainability, landscape values etc - it is also clearly not necessary.”
- “Has needed sealing for a long time.”

All user-groups should be considered:

Outrigger storage is not included in design

- “Request that space is set aside for storage of the outrigger canoes.”
- “Neither layout accommodates the Torquay Outriggers Canoe Club canoes, which is vital for the viability of our club.”
- “Guidelines suggest 20-30 spaces, but this is not a binding rule. If we take 3 spaces from either option to allocate the outrigger canoes that still leaves at least 24 spaces for trailer parking.”

What about other types of watercraft users (kayaks, SUP’s, surfers)?

- “No consideration for users of other ocean craft. No consideration for those who are also training for surf lifesaving.”

- “Option 1 is my preferred layout, maybe an option to also park if you are carrying another heavy piece of sporting equipment like a surf ski or have a drop off zone.”
- “Keep it simple and make sure the facilities are shared. Surfers have a right to access Fisherman's Beach during large swell conditions”

Other design suggestions / comments

- “The ramp to the south of the carpark is used as an alternate beach access point during period of significant beach erosion. Recommendation – beach access point to be widened (minimal required) to enable beach access of tractors for vessel launching and recovery.”
- “Exit and Entry of both options is extremely dangerous. There is a reason why today is a one-way option.”
- “Right-hand turn onto Esplanade will create traffic back up”
- “Turning circles towing 6 metre boat need to be given plenty of room plus the actual parking bays need plenty of space boat trailers can be wider than car”

Path upgrades are good

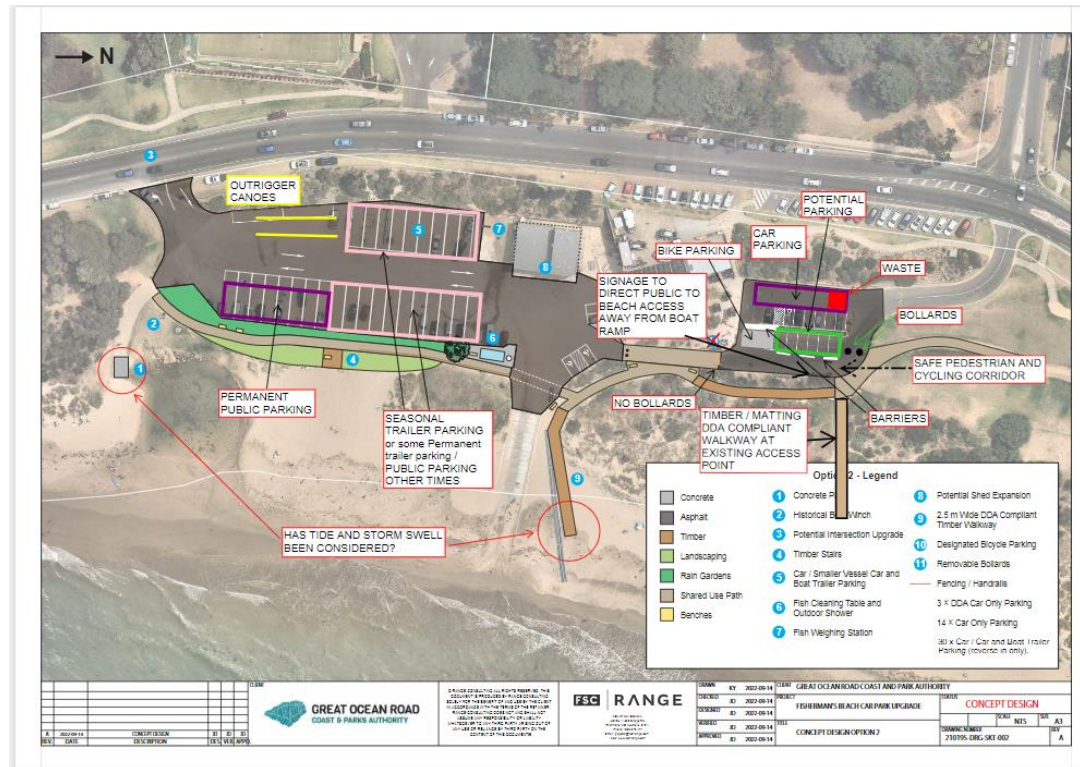
- “The timber walkway on to the beach is an excellent idea. This will stop people from accessing the beach via the boat ramp which has caused some issues when it is busy.”
- “It would be good to have a pedestrian path down from the start of the beach road driveway to access the cafe and the beach. At the moment you need to go onto the grass or road (with a pram or wheelchair etc) to get down there and it is dangerous.”
- “The walkway in front of the carpark must be wide enough for a shared pathway for pedestrians and bikes as it continues along the foreshore.”

Further public infrastructure suggestions

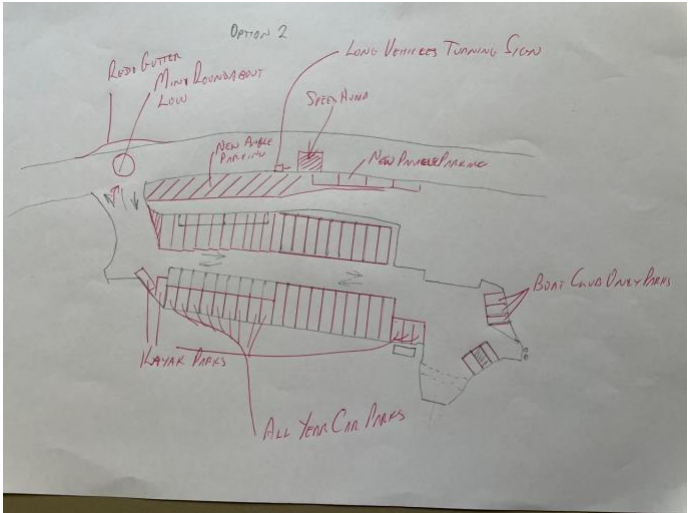
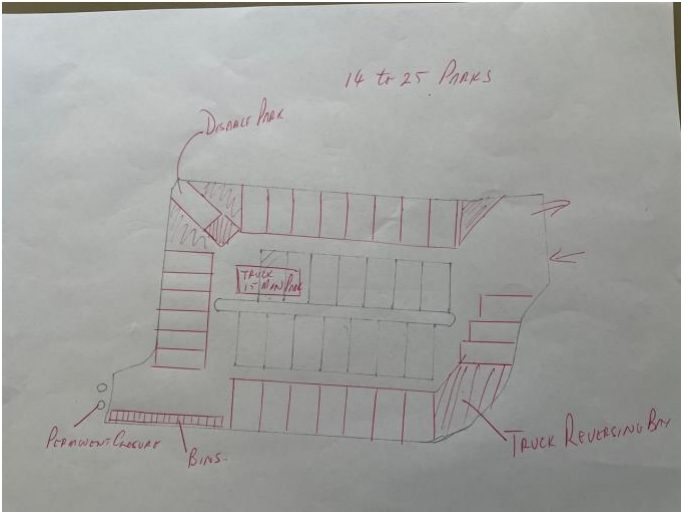
- “It is great to see bike parking included in the plans, however I would provide more bike parking near the Salty Dog as that is a natural stopping point for cyclists.”
- “Opportunities exist for incorporating ESD elements –reuse of materials, providing for bike and scooter ‘parking’.”
- “Maybe another outdoor shower near salty dog for people and pets”
- “Rather you spent the money on the toilet facilities. The better the redesign the more people /visitors you will attract.”
- “More bicycle lockup points are needed as in peak periods when the weather is good the only way you will be able to get to the beach is on a bike. Many are now on electric bikes that is of high value to steal. Bikes are already starting to be locked up in odd places.”
- “The public toilet facilities are a disgrace and no access for disabled. A new separate toilet block needs to be constructed with shower facilities. The current toilet facilities can be redesigned to facilitate additional space at the salty dog cafe. Facility could be built next to boat wash bay.”
- “Can you put more seats and tables and maybe BBQs in area 4.”
- “The position of the fish cleaning station should be moved to near the weighing station to improve the experience for those enjoying the "fresh air" who are not fishermen.”

ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS SUBMITTED

The following designs have been sent in by community members. We appreciate the time people took to share their ideas by producing alternative designs and that these have been reviewed and passed on to the design consultants.



Appendix A. Suggested Carpark Layout



Key Findings and Next Steps

Hearing from the community has given us valuable insights into how the community uses Fishermans Beach car park, boating facility and beach access area that adjoins the Torquay Marine Rescue Service and Salty Dog Café in Torquay.

KEY FINDINGS

In summary, the feedback highlighted the following themes:

- Clearer signage and information needed about Fishermans Beach being home to the Torquay Boat Ramp.
- Separation of two car parks was supported by the community, mostly for safety reasons.
- Preference for angled long-bay parking in southern car park (concept design Option 1), but nose in, not reverse in. Additional comments about drive-thru parking.
- Boat preparation area needs to be provided in the car park area, and safety for the ramp and beach launch area needs further thought.
- Desire to find the right balance for parking bays in the southern car park to cater for regular cars vs. boat-trailers during boating season. Flexible use during winter, non-boating days is important. Suggestions for improved signage.
- DDA inclusion is great, but reconsider DDA car parks and beach access so close to boat ramp.
- Comments for environmental considerations included managing sand drift and whether the car park needs to be sealed were provided.
- The Authority to consider all user groups at Fisho's (i.e., Outriggers, surfers, kayak/SUP users, café goers, families).
- Further public infrastructure suggestions (e.g., more bike parking, better toilets).

NEXT STEPS

The findings will inform the next iteration of the design. The next design will be made available for community input, expected to occur in late February/early March 2023.