



Rhyll Local Port Area Plan

Community Engagement Summary Report

December 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engaged with their world and experienced their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

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Cover image: Rhyll Jetty and surrounding waters Credit: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

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Introduction

The Rhyll Local Port Area Plan will set out the priorities, key values, themes, and opportunities to guide the future use and management of the jetty and local port area. Rhyll is located on Bunurong Country.

In 2023, discussions with key stakeholders and technical and heritage studies helped shape a draft plan. From July to August 2024, the draft plan was shared with stakeholders and the community for feedback, helping to refine the final plan.

About this report

A local port area plan involves planning and prioritising future projects in a maritime precinct. It serves as a way to engage with local communities and stakeholders, helping to understand their current use of local ports and their future needs.

This report summarises the findings from the 2024 community consultation on the draft Rhyll Local Port Area Plan, as prepared by Parks Victoria.

All feedback and ideas collected during consultation activities are included, with every piece of feedback given equal consideration - no weighting or adjustments were made. The findings reflect the views of participants. They have not been edited for accuracy, so they may not reflect the views of Parks Victoria.

Successful implementation of any actions in the local port area plan will depend on securing future funding, planning and necessary approvals.

Reading this report – limitations

As with any consultation process and analysis, there are a few points to consider while reading the report.

People who participated in the consultation self-selected to take part, so the feedback may not present a fully representative sample of the community. Some people submitted their feedback without demographic information, meaning we do not have demographic details for all participants.

The graphs and figures included in this report are based only on responses to the quantitative survey question.

Consultation approach

Parks Victoria created a consultation strategy to outline the purpose and ways people could share input on the draft local port area plan. The primary purpose of this stage was to collect feedback on the layout of the local port and design solutions for a reconstructed Rhyll Jetty.

The public consultation ran from 16 July to 12 August 2024.

Objectives

The objectives for this stage of engagement were to:

- engage with stakeholders and the community to understand their values and challenges related to the project, including:
 - the future of Rhyll Jetty and its associated structures
 - a functional on-water layout that promotes recreational use while considering impacts on the swing moorings and ensuring boat ramp functions are not impacted
 - opportunities for visitor berthing
- help develop the final Rhyll Local Port Area Plan.

Ways to participate

Participants had a number of ways to learn about the draft plan and share their feedback.

They could visit the project web page and Engage Victoria site, complete an online survey on the Engage Victoria platform, send an email to engage@parks.vic.gov.au, or have direct discussions with Parks Victoria staff.

Promotion

Consultation was promoted through a number of channels, including:

- emails sent to subscribers and interested stakeholders
- Parks Victoria media releases
- posters installed on Rhyll Jetty and displayed at local businesses
- direct email to key stakeholders, including government agencies, licensed tour operators, mooring holders and other stakeholders.
- phone calls to key stakeholders.

Participation

A total of 650 individuals viewed the Engage Victoria project page, and 28 of them provided feedback on the draft plan through a survey.

Altogether, 29 people shared feedback in the following ways:



28 completed online surveys on Engage Victoria.



One submitted feedback via an email to engage@parks.vic.gov.au

Demographic insights

Participants who completed the online survey had the option to share demographic information. Among those who did:

- Over half of the participants (64%) were male, (25%) were female, and (11%) preferred not to say.
- The majority (96%) were aged 35 years and over, including (46%) between 60 and 69 years, (28%) between 35 and 49 years, (14%) between 50 and 59 years, and (7%) between 70 and 84 years.
- As anticipated, most participants (68%) were local residents of Phillip Island, followed by (25%) who were visitors/tourists from outside Phillip Island, while (7%) did not respond.



Photo 1: Rhyll Jetty - left arm fixed jetty head, right arm floating pontoon

Summary of findings

The analysis below is based on responses from the online survey.

Feedback on the jetty design

The draft plan presented a preferred design option for Rhyll Jetty, and survey participants were invited to share their feedback on this design.

Do you support the preferred design?

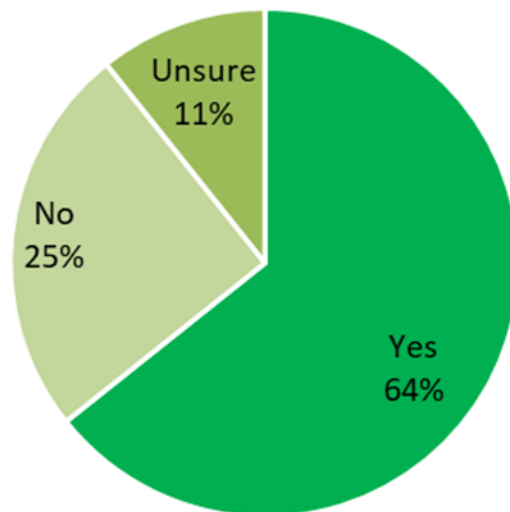


Figure 1: Participant support for the preferred jetty design (from 28 participants)

Participants told us they supported the proposed design.

When asked what they liked about the design, survey participants shared the following responses:

- *"it balances the preservation and improvement of recreation and local enjoyment with growing the opportunity for tourism"*
- *"it addresses safety and compliance issues without taking away from the character or overall layout of the existing jetty and its pontoons"*
- *"the turning bay"*
- *"better for boating and fishing. It all looks good"*

In addition to the above responses, participants were invited to suggest improvements for the jetty design. Survey participants shared the following feedback:

- *“ensure both sides of the floating pontoons can be utilised for docking unlike the Rhyll boat ramp”*
- *“larger waiting area/turn around and longer pontoons”*
- *“lighting needs to be low intensity to minimise light pollution for marine organisms and nocturnal migratory species”*
- *“I think the aesthetics of the design require more thought ... more concrete and stainless steel will destroy even further the gentle fishing village and 19th-century feel”**

*The construction materials for Rhyll Jetty were not included in the draft plan and have not been finalised.



Photo 2: Rhyll Jetty with timber decking and white painted handrail

Valued components in designing a new Rhyl Jetty

To identify the most valued elements for a new Rhyl Jetty, participants ranked a list of key features. Participants rated these features on a scale from 5 (most important) to 1 (least important).

Note: The numbers displayed in this figure represent the total rankings given by survey participants.

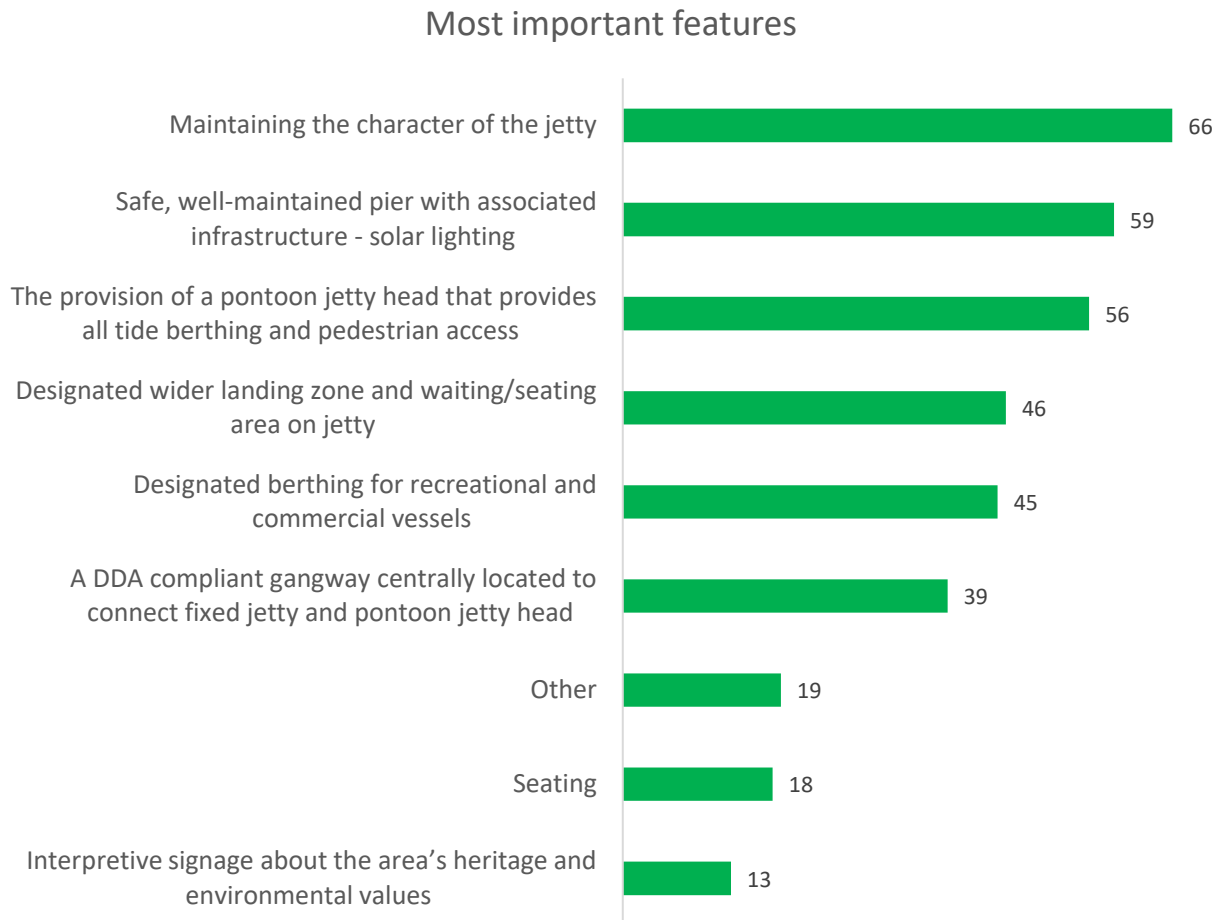


Figure 2: Participants ranked the most important aspects of the preferred jetty design (from 28 participants)

- The highest-ranked response was 'maintaining the character of the jetty'
- The second highest-ranked response in providing a 'safe and well-maintained facility'
- The third highest-ranked was 'access for all tide berthing' and 'pedestrian movement to the floating pontoon head'
- The equal fourth highest-ranked response was the 'designated wider landing zone and waiting/seating area on the jetty.'

Comments from survey participants included:

- *“it balances the preservation and improvement of recreation and local enjoyment with growing the opportunity for tourism”*
- *“the additional floating pontoon will be a great help with visitors and cruise ship tenders”*
- *“additional handrails and better accessibility”*

Connection to the local port area

Most survey participants indicated they were residents of Phillip Island.

Some participants were tourists or visitors to the area, including a Traditional Owner respondent who expressed interest on Sea Country. One participant said their business operations were linked to the jetty.

What is the connection between Rhyll Jetty and the local port area?

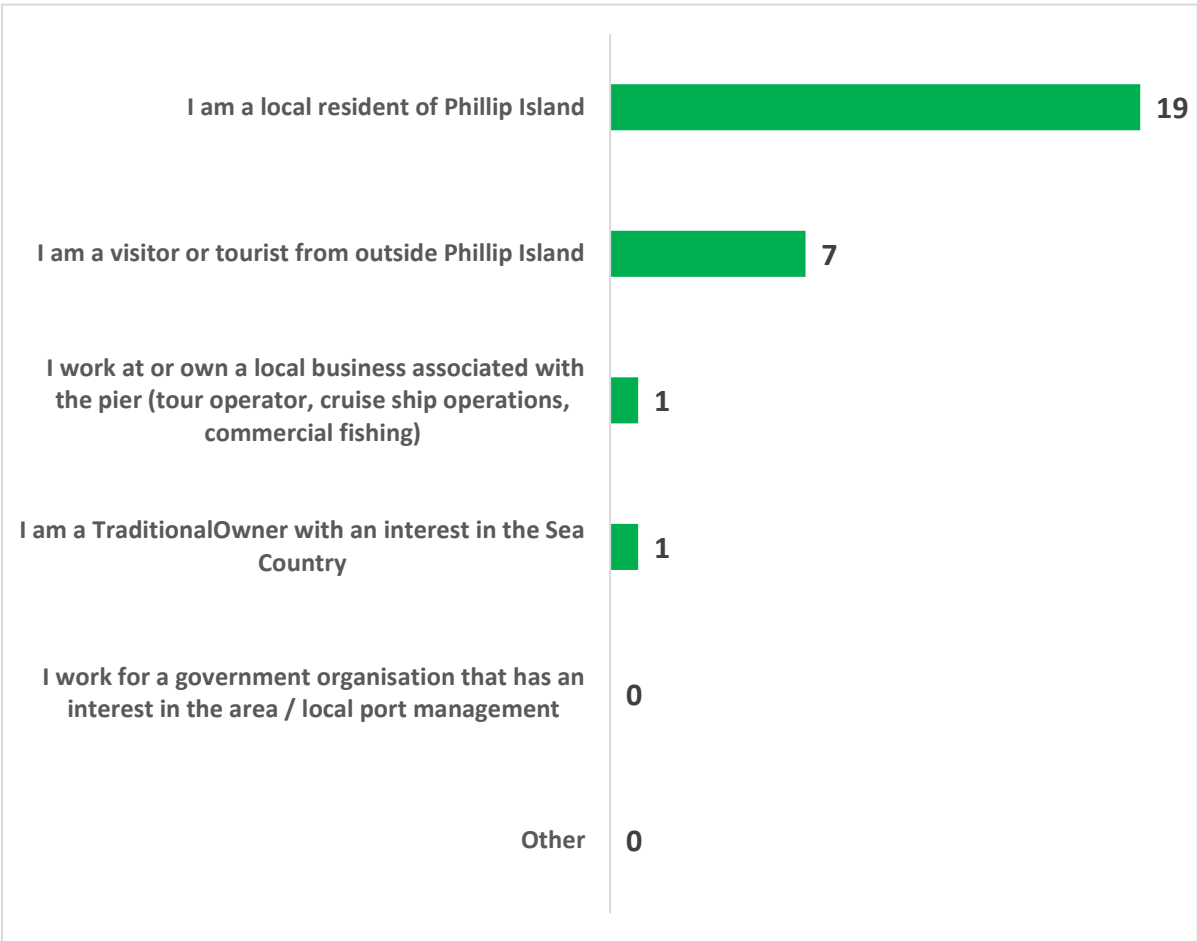


Figure 3: Connection of participants to Rhyll Jetty and local port area (from 28 participants)

What activities are undertaken in the local port area?



Figure 4: Popular activities at Rhyll Jetty and local port area (from 28 participants)

Participants told us that the jetty is a highly valued facility for boating, as well as for exercising and sightseeing.

The boating function is a key part of the Rhyll village and plays an important role in supporting tourism to Phillip Island, particularly for cruise ship tenders.

Recreational activities such as walking, fishing, swimming, scuba diving, and snorkelling were also highlighted. Additionally, we learned that the jetty supports local businesses and contributes to Phillip Island's tourism by giving access to cruise ship tenders.

Other feedback

Below is a selection of general comments provided by survey respondents on the draft plan.

- *"overuse by deep-hulled commercial vessels could detrimentally impact sea life"*
- *"I think the use of a breakwater would protect the marine asset in Rhyll Harbour for Parks Victoria and Bass Coast Council"*
- *"any ladders for rescue for people that fall in water, ship passengers and public"*

- *“the north west side needs to be dredged its very shallow 4m off the landing”*
- *“I really worry about the aesthetic (that) the heritage values of Rhyll, its charming 19th-century appeal will be lost”*

Next steps

All feedback summarised in this report has been reviewed and will help shape the final Rhyll Local Port Area Plan.

The implementation of any actions outlined in the plan will depend on securing funding, completing planning, and obtaining necessary approvals. We'll keep jetty users and the local community updated throughout this process.

Parks Victoria thanks everyone who has contributed their ideas and feedback during this phase of engagement, and we look forward to finalising the Rhyll Local Port Area Plan.

We'll keep stakeholders updated as this project progresses via the project website www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects and through the project mailing list.

If you'd like to join the mailing list, please email engage@parks.vic.gov.au



Photo 3: Aerial view of Rhyll Jetty

