

Definitions used within this Report

'Barwon Coast' – The Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast) is responsible for the management of the coastal Crown land reserves from beach access 7W at Collendina on the eastern boundary of Ocean Grove, through to 42W at the western end of 13th Beach, Connewarre. The BCCM is also responsible for the management of the Riverview Family Caravan Park, Riverside Camp Ground, Barwon Heads Caravan Park and the Local Port of Barwon Heads.

'Engagement' – In the context of this plan “engagement” refers to a planned process involving two-way dialogue with communities and stakeholders to encourage discussion or active involvement to inform a project decision.

'Community' – In the context of this plan, “community” comprises of local residents, visitors and businesses located near Ocean Grove Main Beach who may have an interest in the project.

'Stakeholder' – In the context of this plan, “stakeholder” refers to key organisations or individuals who have an interest in the playground project.

Executive Summary

In 2018 Barwon Coast commenced a project to tackle coastal erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach. A new access ramp and seawall are required to be built as well as erosion protection works to protect capital assets and their associated community benefits. Stakeholder engagement with key local organisations such as emergency services, the Disabled Surfers Association, Ocean Grove Surf Lifesaving Club and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, was conducted to ensure that the planned works met stakeholder requirements to enable them to perform their specific functions.

Two stages of community engagement were conducted via open houses and listening posts held in October and November 2018. 96 community members attended these engagement activities. The first stage of engagement showed that community members supported action tackle erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach including a new ramp and seawall. This round of engagement also showed that geo textile sand bags and rock revetment were the two preferred treatment options for erosion control to the east of the existing ramp. The second stage of engagement enabled the community to further gain information on these options and feedback showed an equal preference for both treatment options.

This feedback, together with stakeholder engagement outcomes and a multifactorial analysis of the two treatment options informed the final decision to construct a smooth-faced brown coloured rock wall to tackle erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach.

Background

Ocean Grove Main Beach is a recognised activity node which adjoins the Ocean Grove township and has a regional significance for safe aquatic access, a major toilet facility and large car park area.

Barwon Coast recognises a need to undertake erosion mitigation works at the 15W beach access site on Ocean Grove Main Beach. The purpose of these works is for the protection of capital assets and their associated community benefits.

Ocean Grove Main Beach is experiencing ongoing issues with dune erosion. This erosion is caused by storm surges and wave impacts. The erosion impacts extend primarily to the east of the seawall and to a lesser extent on the western side. This loss of sand has reduced the dune buffer and threatens significant capital assets (such as the toilet block, shared trail and car park) for public use and enjoyment of the coast.

In addition to these issues, the beach access ramp at 15W on Ocean Grove Main beach requires replacement. The ramp was constructed in the late 1960s and was refurbished in the 1980s, however recent storms and age have significantly deteriorated the ramp's condition and it now requires replacement. The access ramp is the only formalised vehicle access to the beach between Point Lonsdale and the Barwon River mouth.

Barwon Coast undertook a planning process for the erosion mitigation works at Ocean Grove Main Beach. As part of the planning process an engagement program was conducted.

Engagement Objective

Barwon Coast conducted engagement activities with stakeholders and the community on the planned works to tackle coastal erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach. The goal of these activities was to assist Barwon Coast in designing a ramp, erosion mitigation works and adjacent landscaping works which met all coastal management requirements as well as taking into account the desires of stakeholders and the community.

Due to the regional significance of Ocean Grove Main Beach, the substantial coastal erosion and the deteriorated state of the beach access ramp, the following items of the project were 'must-haves' and therefore could not be negotiated through the engagement process:

- There must be an access ramp and erosion mitigation works undertaken at this location
- Certain design parameters were required to enable service vehicles (such as Barwon Coast and emergency services) to access the beach
- There must be landscaping works completed at the top of the ramp to link with existing infrastructure

Methodology – Communications and Engagement Approach

Barwon Coast conducted a planned engagement program consisting of various activities designed to engage with identified stakeholders and the general community.

Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder engagement activities aimed to ensure that the planned works met the requirements that stakeholder's have to enable them to perform their specific functions. This was also a process which enabled stakeholders to impart their knowledge and expertise to help guide the works design. Stakeholders we consulted with included : Ocean Grove Surf Lifesaving Club, City of

Greater Geelong, Disabled Surfers Association, Ocean Grove CFA and licensed tour operators and activity providers who use the foreshore in the Ocean Grove Main Beach precinct.

Community Engagement

The engagement process also included public consultation. This entailed:

Step 1: INFORM the public of the proposed works and the chance to get involved in the consultation process. This was achieved through onsite signage, media releases, newspaper and social media advertising, website content and venue signs on the day of engagement activities.



Figure 1 Posters used to advertise community engagement activities

Step 2: CONSULT with the public. Two stages of community engagement were held for this project.

The first stage of consultation consisted of two Open Houses held at the Ocean Grove Library in October 2018 to gather community feedback on various treatment options for the erosion mitigation element of the project. A series of displays were put up at the Open Houses detailing the project, the coastal processes at Ocean Grove Main Beach, a timeline of the site and a Community Input area. These displays can be accessed at <http://www.barwoncoast.com.au/15w-ramp>

After the Open Houses community feedback was collated and analysed using a multi-factorial evaluation matrix to assess the different options for erosion control treatments. This evaluation and the top two treatments that resulted from the evaluation were the subject of the Listening Posts which were the next phase of the community engagement process. The top two treatments selected were geo textile sand bags and smooth rock sloped seawall – revetment (brown coloured).

The second stage of consultation consisted of two Listening Posts held at Ocean Grove Main Beach in November 2018. Displays at the Listening Posts outlined the project plan, community feedback from the Open House process, the evaluation matrix and artist impressions of the two top ranked draft treatment concepts, being geo textile sand bags and a smooth rock sloped sea wall.



Figure 2 Images from the Community Open Houses and Listening Posts

Step 3: INFORM the public of the issues and ideas that were raised through Step 2 of the consultation process, how we considered those and integrated them into the final plans for the erosion mitigation works and ramp. This was achieved through media releases, a webpage on Barwon Coast’s website, social media and newspaper announcements and this summary report.

Community Engagement Findings

The public engagement element of this project attracted feedback from 96 members of the community, many of which were from the local area. 16 individuals attended our community open houses and 80 attended the listening posts. This is a good number of individuals with an interest in the project. We are confident that the wide range of issues and ideas provided by the community has given Barwon Coast a clear understanding of the needs and wants of the community for the coastal erosion works and ramp replacement.

The first stage of community engagement showcased the communities support for taking action on coastal erosion and also identified the community's preference for the treatment types to be used as an erosion treatment.

Some General Comments Received:

"I have noticed many kids and even adults playing in the crumbling sand dunes in summer. This is very risky behaviour, even playing under overhangs."

"This is a beach that has high usage, but retains natural values and habitat for wildlife."

"The ramp provides very easy access to the main beach, especially on hot summer days along with everyone else."

"Long, clean, beautiful beach, good parking, easy access, excellent amenities, safe, need to do more to protect the ti-tree foliage areas and sand dunes, especially during summer tourism season."

"Highly accessible, fantastic beach for recreational pursuits. Community hub where there is a sense of connection to 'land' and 'community.'"

Table 1. Key comments received on various treatment types that could be used for tackling coastal erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach.

Treatment Type	Likes	Dislikes
Seawall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives solid permanent protection to sand dunes • Very effective to stabilise • Very thorough and long lasting • Still looks like a beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete taking over a natural environment • hazardous in surf conditions • too man-made and formal, not good for a natural setting • kills the beach :(no sand • Quite severe causes more erosion at ends of structure • Steps are too artificial and would cause more erosion • Pushes water elsewhere causing problems • Will result in loss of beach at high tide • Might be effective in less powerful beaches, but Ocean Grove • Results in beach lowering. • Can other profiles be better to reduce energy/sand loss?
Rockwall (rough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The colour of rock • looks like natural feature • Looks more natural as long as a gentle slope - not severe wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand will still wash away and damage sand dunes • dangerous for people walking along there • causes more erosion and loss of beach • increased risk for injuries • makes access difficult • Where do you source rocks from? • Erosion still problems at end of wall • Huge 'inaccessibility'
Rockwall (smooth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profile and looks of rock matches natural dune slope • looks more natural if rocks match sand bar • wildlife friendly • practical, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks hard • black basalt does not blend into 'yellow' sand dune • sandstone is much lighter than basalt and may not resist big waves • no sandy beach • Too severe and not gentle natural slope - erosion will occur either end

Treatment Type	Likes	Dislikes
Sand replenishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A natural option, closest to natural beach • Unfortunately easily washed away • More natural looking, could combine with rocks, wood and plant cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term fix for long term issue • Easily washed away • No vegetation to cover to build sand • Where do you take the sand from - another beach?
Geo Textile Sand Bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks like a natural beach • Looks better than rocks • People friendly - can be walked over • practical and feasible • Probably cost less • Effective & long-lasting (simple) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs constant sand brought in to maintain • Ugly and looks temporary. • Maintenance required • Looks unnatural • It looks like a flood wall
Sea Barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps maintain natural look of beach • Partial low cost treatment • Low cost horizontal large planks might work and also act as a barrier/fence • Looks pretty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't work, look at the sand dunes at RAAF's • Not effective

The second stage of consultation enabled the community to provide feedback on the two prioritised treatment options - Geo Textile Sand Bags or Smooth Rock Sloped Sea Wall.

Many community members chose to state their preference for one of the draft treatment options. Community feedback displayed a mostly even preference for both of the treatment options.

Table 2. Key comments received on the two prioritised treatments for tackling coastal erosion at Ocean Grove Main Beach.

Treatment Option	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
Geo Textile Sand Bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer the natural, softer look of sand bags • Sand bags would be safer for children than rocks • Sand bags could provide a seat for people at high tide • More cost-effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about vandalism • Look like an emergency repair • Artificial and don't belong on the beach

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more practical approach as you can see the sand 	
Smooth Rockwall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer for its longevity, aesthetics and natural look • Strong preference for a smooth rock wall rather than rough jagged rock • Rock is preferred and government funding for more may be available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about kids being unsafe on rocks
General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would prefer groynes to impact sand movement • Safety concerns about the ramp finishing right near where a rocky reef is, so people may swim there rather than the sandy area of beach • Strong support for the terraces and Kettlefish restaurant staying • 50/50 each option • Do nothing. Creating structures and interference creates the problem in the first place. • We need to cater for increasing numbers of people 	

Conclusions and Next Steps

The community values for the area as well as the specific feedback on each the two top draft protection treatments was considered alongside other evaluation items such as cost and long term effectiveness in protecting against erosion. This evaluation resulted in a smooth rock sloped seawall (brown coloured) being chosen as the preferred erosion treatment option. The construction of a new ramp and seawall are also part of the final project.

Project information including final designs can be viewed at www.barwoncoast.com.au/15wramp