

Barwon Coast Foreshore Master Plan Engagement Report Summary

SEPTEMBER 2025

About the project

Barwon Coast in partnership with Hatch Design is leading the development of the Barwon Coast Foreshore Master Plan, a forward-looking, landscape-first framework for land stretching from Breamlea to Collendina.

The Master Plan will cover all public coastal land managed by Barwon Coast, including Bancoora Beach, Black Rock, 13th Beach, Barwon Bluff, Barwon Heads foreshore, Bukareeyoo, Ocean Grove Main Beach, and Collendina.

The development of a 15-year plan will guide the protection, enhancement, and connection of these areas, underpinned by evidence and will ensure the Foreshore is cared for and managed responsibly, now and into the future.

About this Summary

This summary aims to provide a broad overview of the seven-month consultation process, and the themes and values that arose during our conversations and the feedback we received from the community, stakeholders, visitors, campers and Traditional Owners. The Barwon Coast Foreshore Master Plan Engagement Report is the full summary of shared learnings to help guide future improvement- you can find it on the Barwon Coast website. We encourage everyone to explore the full report and the detailed insights within.

Read the full Engagement Report

The full summary can be found on our project webpage at www.barwoncoast.com.au/project/foreshoremasterplan or by scanning the QR Code.



Participation snapshot

223

Survey responses

50

attendees at the pop-up launch event

175

people attended

19

Design Workshops

3

community drop in sessions

20+

members of our CRG

30

youth voices

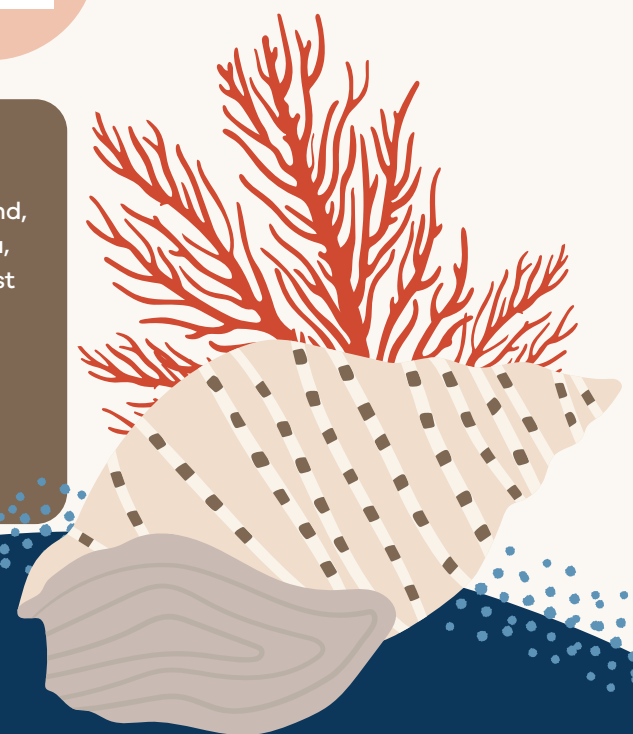
600+

community, Traditional Owner, visitor, staff & stakeholder voices

This is Wadawurrung Country

Barwon Coast acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land, waters, seas and skies of Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads, 13th Beach, Bancoora and Breamlea, as well as the rest of Wadawurrung Country. We say thank you to Wadawurrung Elders, past and present, and all Wadawurrung People who have cared for Wadawurrung Country for thousands of generations, and continue to care for Wadawurrung Country today. We are committed to continuing to walk beside Wadawurrung Traditional Owners – to listen and work together meaningfully to continue to make Wadawurrung Country healthy.

Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be, Wadawurrung Country.



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Engagement approach

The development of the Barwon Coast Foreshore Master Plan has been shaped by an extensive and inclusive engagement process.

The multi-layered approach ensures the Plan is grounded in deep listening, local knowledge, technical expertise, and cultural authority.

Between November 2024 and July 2025, sessions and engagement have included:

Community Reference Group

The Community Reference Group (CRG) has been a key contributor to the Master Plan process since its formation in late 2024 through an open expression of interest process. The CRG reflects Barwon Coast’s commitment to involving, educating, and supporting local communities and partner organisations in caring for the Foreshore. It brings together around 20 members representing a broad cross-section of the community, including local residents and landowners, and representatives from sporting clubs, recreational user groups, social, conservation, and community-based organisations.

The group acts as a vital bridge between the broader community and the project team, helping to:

- Test ideas and approaches
- Reflect a diversity of lived experience
- Strengthen social licence and community voice
- Support the emergence of a shared voice across diverse and sometimes competing interests

Workshops and strategic sessions

- On-Country Session with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners
- Community Reference Group (CRG) Workshops – see pages 13-17
- Barwon Coast Committee Workshops – see pages 13-17
- Barwon Coast Staff Workshops – see page 12.

Community and public engagement

- Community Engagement Survey (via EngageVic) – see pages 44-50
- Youth Forums at Bellarine Secondary College – see page 34
- Public pop-up event at Lahey Square, Barwon Heads – see pages 35-42
- Three days (19 sessions) of Community Design Workshops – see pages 52-88
- Community open gallery event
- Local Drop-in sessions:
 - › Breamlea Community (June 25)
 - › 13th Beach SLSC (June 25).
 - › Dawn Café, Collendina (June 26)

Inter-Agency Engagement

Project Meetings and ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders, including:

- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Barwon Water
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- City of Greater Geelong
- Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- Parks Victoria



Draft shared values

A defining step was the creation of nine draft shared values. These values grew from hundreds of conversations: survey responses, community workshops, CRG discussions, on-Country sessions with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, school forums, pop-up events, and Barwon Coast staff input. One message came through clearly: people care deeply about this place.

The draft values were independently tested with three key groups: Wadawurrung Elders and Traditional Owners, the Community Reference Group and participants of the community design workshops.

The nine draft shared values presented on the following pages are not listed in order of importance and remain open to refinement through ongoing dialogue.

Country First, Always

Planning begins with deep listening to Country, to Wadawurrung wisdom, language, and leadership.

Every action, from pathways to habitat care must strengthen the health of land, water, culture, and spirit. Cultural authority is recognised, respected, and resourced.

Link the missing: Connect with Care

Create meaningful connections between people, places, and stories that foster belonging and care.

A connected Foreshore isn't one long path, it's a series of thoughtful links that feel right for this place. One that connects people, to Country, to story, and to each other.

Access Without Impact: Not all places should be accessed in the same way

Design access experiences that are thoughtful, balanced, and respectful of environmental and cultural values.

Where we invite movement, we do so with intent, shaping experiences that are purposeful, light-touch, and ecologically sensitive.

Less Intervention, More Intention

Make every change purposeful, enhancing the landscape's character and meaning. Every intervention must earn its place.

Whether it's a new path, a restored habitat, or a gathering space, every action must have a reason to exist.

Making Every Voice Count: Shared wisdom shapes great places

We listen and we shape together. Great places are built on shared wisdom from those who walk, surf, care for, and call this coast home.

Engagement is a partnership that lives on beyond the plan.

Character Over Conformity

Celebrate the coast's distinctive identity through designs that feel truly of this place.

Honor and amplify the authentic character of the landscape, ensuring that every element reflects the unique spirit of this coastal community.

Uplift, celebrate and strengthen Wadawurrung Voices and Culture

Embed Wadawurrung cultural authority and knowledge throughout vision, design, and delivery.

Planning must be guided at every stage from vision to delivery by Wadawurrung voice, protocol, and leadership.

Country Continuing to Thrive (Let the Wild Stay Wild)

Nature isn't a backdrop, it's the foundation of this place's identity. The coast's wildness is its greatest gift.

A landscape-first approach means letting biodiversity, dune health, and water quality lead decision-making.

Immersive, Authentic Experiences

Let the ordinary feel extraordinary, because it already is. Reveal and enhance the everyday coastal moments that connect people deeply to place.

From roads to car parks, from lookouts to trails, design should lift the ordinary into the meaningful.



Key themes

Through the engagement activities, a number of key themes arose:

People care deeply about this place

Community members feel a strong sense of connection to the foreshore. They value it not just as a natural landscape, but as part of their identity and way of life. This deep attachment drives both pride and concern for its future.

The foreshore is well loved and deeply appreciated for its natural beauty, individual communities, and history

The unique character of each coastal community, combined with the foreshore’s striking natural features and long history of use, creates a place people are proud of. Locals and visitors alike recognise its beauty and want to see it respected and preserved.

Plan with Country

Wadawurrung cultural knowledge and connection to Country are central to caring for the foreshore. Planning and management must be guided by Traditional Owner voices, ensuring ecological health and cultural values are embedded in decisions.

Balance protection with access

While people want to enjoy the foreshore, they are clear that its protection comes first. Increased access, if not carefully managed, risks damaging fragile environments and cultural heritage. Convenience should never outweigh long-term care.

Make access meaningful

Where access is provided, it should support people’s ability to connect with nature and culture. Well-designed tracks and trails can help visitors understand and appreciate the landscape, while limiting harm and guiding people away from sensitive areas.

Design with restraint

Community members want infrastructure that is functional, respectful, and understated. Any changes should enhance the coastal experience without cluttering or overdeveloping the landscape. Good design means doing only what is necessary and doing it well.

We share care for the coast

There is a strong sense of shared responsibility. People see themselves as active stewards of the foreshore, and many want to be involved in its protection and management. Caring for the coast is seen as a collective effort.

Issues and opportunities

The following themes below capture a broad view of issues and opportunity themes raised during the consultation period.

Strengthening ecological health and restoration

There is an opportunity to build on existing restoration programs by integrating long-term biodiversity strategies, culturally-informed land care practices, and ongoing monitoring in partnership with Wadawurrung and specialist groups.

Improving active transport and connectivity

Cycling and walking networks provide important links between coastal destinations, but some routes have limited separation from traffic or lack safe connections. Upgrading these networks, in ways that respect ecological and cultural sensitivities, would improve safety and support sustainable travel.

Enhancing wayfinding and visitor orientation

Navigation across the foreshore could be improved, particularly where signage is limited or paths are less visible. Coordinated and culturally-informed wayfinding could better connect ecological, cultural, and recreational values, while guiding visitors away from fragile areas.

Improving inclusion and accessibility

Trails, amenities and infrastructure should allow for visitors of all abilities to feel invited and navigate the area with confidence.

Managing conflicting uses

Better manage competing uses across the reserves to improve safety and equity of access along the foreshore, such as supporting clearer entry/exit points and circulation to reduce conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

You can find more details on area-specific issues and opportunities from page 20 to page 32 of the Engagement Report.

Ready to dig deeper?

Read the full Engagement report and learn more about the project by visiting our website www.barwoncoast.com.au/project/foreshoremasterplan or scanning the QR code above.



Next steps

We are now working on the draft Master Plan alongside Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, Staff and the Community Reference Group. This will be shared with the community in early 2026. The community will be invited to learn about the draft Plan, and provide feedback.

