

Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan Closing the Loop

Community engagement report

July 2026



About Us

Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast) is delegated to manage 22km of the southern coast along Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula. This includes the beaches and foreshores of Collendina, Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads, 13th Beach, Black Rock and Breamlea.

In partnership with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, Barwon Coast's charter is to protect and enhance the natural environment and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy these areas. We operate the Barwon Heads Caravan Park, Riverview Family Caravan Park (Ocean Grove), Riverside Campground (Ocean Grove), and Breamlea Caravan Park, as well as managing various commercial and community-based leases and licences.

Barwon Coast is a State Government body, established under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 on 1 July 1995. All revenue raised is reinvested to care for the natural environment and to provide facilities and infrastructure along the coast for use and enjoyment by all.

About the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan

Barwon Coast, in collaboration with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC), have developed this Coastal Adaptation Plan (CAP), for the Bancoora Beach and Breamlea foreshore. Alluvium Consulting were engaged to develop the plan. The project was fully funded under the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's Victoria's Resilient Coast Grants Program 2023.

Community consultation

Community consultation for the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan was undertaken in two stages, designed to progressively inform the development and refinement of the Plan:

Stage 1 of consultation – understanding the values focused on understanding community and stakeholder values, aspirations and priorities for Bancoora Beach and the Breamlea foreshore. This feedback informed the early development of the Plan, including the identification of key values, aspirations and the overarching vision.

Stage 2 of consultation – feedback on draft Plan sought community and stakeholder feedback on the draft Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan. This stage tested the proposed adaptation pathways and high-level actions, and provided an opportunity for the community to comment on whether the draft Plan appropriately reflected the vision and values identified during the earlier consultation.

Our aim

We wanted to build community understanding of the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan and coastal adaptation planning, while gathering community and stakeholder values, aspirations and feedback to inform development and refinement of the Plan within a clear scope of influence.

How we engaged



Pop-up at One Planet Festival



2 community surveys



In-person interviews



Project Steering Group (PSG)



Drop in information session



Media articles



Email submissions



Social media content



Dedicated project page

Consultation opportunities were promoted through a broad communications program, including:

- Website news items and the dedicated project webpage
- Social media posts and reminders across multiple platforms
- Community emails and stakeholder correspondence
- Letterbox drop materials distributed within Breamlea
- Posters and printed information materials
- QR code links to the online survey and project information

Detailed engagement insights

Stage 1: Values, aspirations and vision

August - October 2024

The first stage of community engagement for the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan focused on understanding the cultural, social, environmental and economic values associated with Bancoora Beach and the Breamlea foreshore.

- An online community values survey was made available via the Barwon Coast website and completed by 56 community members.
- Five targeted interviews were undertaken with long-term residents and representatives from key local community groups, including Breamlea CoastCare, the Breamlea Community Association and the Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club.
- The PSG was established as the primary tool for engaging with Traditional Owners and stakeholders that have an interest or responsibilities across the study area. The PSG shared ideas, knowledge, information and feedback at key project stages. Four PSG meetings were held throughout the development of the plan.

Stage 1 consultation insights

The majority of respondents (71%) had a close connection to the area, being either a resident of Breamlea, a resident of a nearby town, and/or a resident within 10 km, and nearly half of all respondents (45%) were frequent visitors to Bancoora Beach and/or the Breamlea foreshore.

People shared how they use and enjoy the Bancoora and Breamlea foreshore. Walking was the most commonly performed activity (80% of all respondents) in the area, with other 'passive' forms of recreation (relaxing – 64%, walking a dog – 51%, socialising with friends and family – 41%) also very common. Swimming was the most popular 'active' activity (71%), followed by surfing (45%) and exercise (41%).

Participants shared five words that come to mind when visiting the Bancoora Beach or the Breamlea foreshore, which were then categorised into eight themes:



Eight key values emerged from the consultation:

- Prioritising protection of the natural environment
- Community connection and tradition
- Cultural and historical significance
- Quietness and isolation
- Accessibility, safety and fit-for-purpose infrastructure
- Dog-friendliness and responsible dog ownership
- Recreational use and community activities
- Simplicity and limited development

Participants shared their ideas around how coastal areas could be made more resilient over time. The key themes arising included:

- Nature-based methods for ecosystem and erosion protection (including dune protection and stabilisation)
- Revise estuary management
- Infrastructure and access control
- Broader community engagement and education
- On-ground management presence and enforcement
- Preserving simplicity and limiting development

Stage 2: Draft Plan consultation

March and May 2026

The second stage of engagement invited community and stakeholder feedback on the draft Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan. Consultation was open from Thursday, 26 March to Sunday, 3 May 2026 and sought feedback on the draft adaptation pathways and high-level actions proposed in the Plan.

A range of engagement and communication methods were used to provide opportunities for participation, including an online community survey, written submissions via email, a community Accessibility audit drop-in information session at Breamlea Community Hall, and a pop-up information session at the One Planet Festival. Consultation opportunities were promoted through the project webpage, website news, social media, community emails, printed materials and direct stakeholder communications. Printed copies of the draft Plan were also made available locally to support accessibility.

In total, 45 community and stakeholder voices contributed during this stage, helping test whether the draft Plan appropriately reflected the values, aspirations and vision identified during Stage 1, and whether the proposed adaptation pathways were reasonable and supported by the community.



Stage 2 consultation insights

The consultation included a range of opportunities for community members and stakeholders to learn more about the project and provide feedback.

Online community survey

- Open Thursday, 26 March to Sunday, 3 May 2026
- Promoted via Barwon Coast channels and at events
- 12 responses

Insights

- 83% 'somewhat support' and 'strongly support' the draft Bancoora CAP, indicating the majority of respondents feel the draft Plan is adequate to the needs of the coastal area.
- 83.33% of respondents indicated they feel the think the proposed adaptation pathways are 'very reasonable ' or 'mostly reasonable', indicating broad support for the actions.
- These were indicated as the highest priority areas of the Plan:
 - Collaborate with rightsholders (Traditional Owners), land managers and community to promote holistic care for coastal areas and adaptation to changing conditions
 - Proactive planning to avoid and manage coastal hazard risk
 - Monitor changes in coastal hazard risk and effectiveness of adaptation

Survey broad feedback themes

Desire for broader, whole-of-coast planning: Respondents wanted clearer understanding of how the Bancoora CAP fits within broader coastal management and planning for the wider coastline.

- Need for greater trust, transparency and accountability
Feedback highlighted a desire for clearer communication about how community input informs decisions, stronger accountability, and more visible follow-through from engagement.
- Concerns about environmental impacts and coastal processes
Some respondents raised concerns about dune and vegetation management, potential impacts on surf conditions and ecological health, and broader environmental influences such as upstream land use.
- Strong preference for environmental protection over development
Respondents emphasised protecting natural coastal processes and ecosystems, with concern about increasing development and population pressures.
- Desire for clearer detail and implementation pathways
Some feedback called for clearer actions, commitments and implementation detail.

Written submissions via email

- One email response was submitted 20 times from different email addresses.

Key themes:

- Breamlea land transfer (out of scope for this engagement)
- Methodology, evidentiary basis, scope and proposed adaptation pathways of the draft Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan
- Community engagement process
- Query around the statutory and policy framework the Plan adheres to

Community drop-in information session

- Breamlea Community Hall
- Saturday, 18 April 2026
- 15 attendees

The drop-in session included attendance from Alluvium Consulting, who supported community understanding of the technical findings and answered questions about the draft Plan.

Discussion topics included:

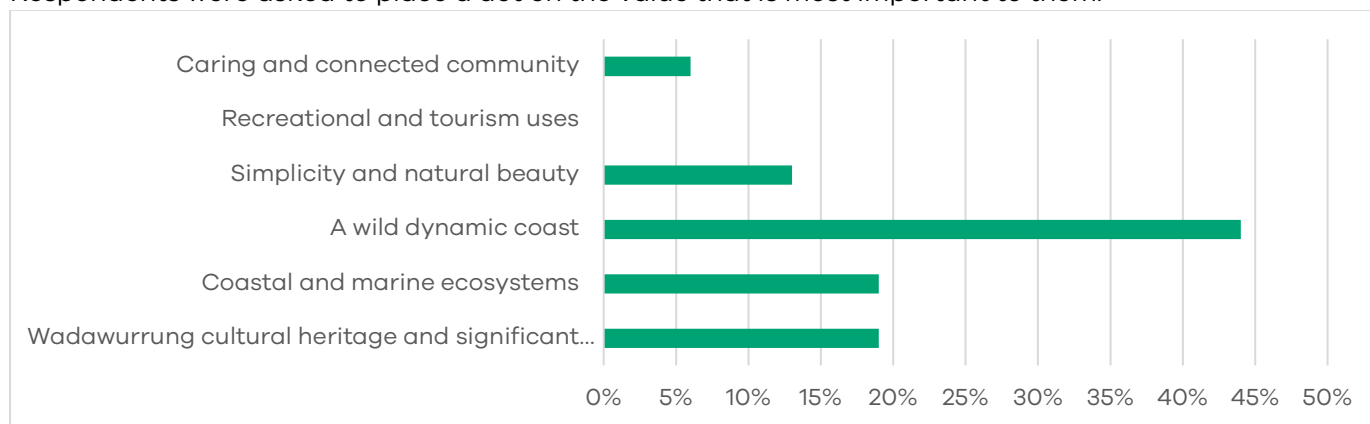
- An overview of how to read the report
- How Barwon Coast works with neighbouring land managers and agencies to manage the coast
- Explanations around coastal hazards
- Who the responsible authority/agency/land manager/estuary managers are for different areas.

Pop-up information session

- One Planet Festival
- Saturday, 28 March 2026
- 120 conversations total (covering all Barwon Coast topics)



Respondents were asked to place a dot on the value that is most important to them.



Insight

- “A wild, dynamic coast” emerged as the strongest priority, receiving 44% of votes, indicating respondents place high value on maintaining Bancoora’s natural coastal processes and undeveloped character.
- Environmental and cultural values were strongly represented, with both Wadawurrung Cultural Heritage and significant places and coastal and marine ecosystems each receiving 19% of votes, highlighting community recognition of both ecological and cultural importance.

What we heard vs what we did/did not do

What we heard (feedback themes)	What we did/did not do
Many respondents supported the overall direction of the draft Plan and felt the proposed pathways and actions aligned with the identified vision and values.	As a result of what we heard the overall direction and structure of the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan will remain largely unchanged, reflecting the strong level of support for the proposed adaptation pathways and actions. We appreciate all community members and stakeholders who took the time to participate and provide feedback on the draft Plan.
The Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club precinct, particularly the tower removal, is of great importance, and there was a desire to understand the plan more fully	We understand the importance of the Bancoora SLSC and associated assets to both the local and visitor communities, and in response to this feedback, we wanted to expand on the approach to the SLSC tower and the viewing platform. The SLSC tower and the viewing platform are currently at risk of open coastal erosion (see page 35 of the Bancoora CAP). Both these assets will be increasingly exposed to erosion as time progresses. Adaptation actions must retain essential SLSC services while also seeking to address emerging risk to values and assets. In response, the adaptation pathways include an action to consider SLSC observation needs at the end of design life for the current SLSC tower and viewing platform, including the potential use of relocatable towers or trailers. Community members, Traditional Owners, stakeholders and land managers will be consulted as adaptation actions are planned and implemented.
Respondents strongly supported collaborative, partnership-based coastal management involving Traditional Owners, land managers and the community.	As a result of what we heard the final Plan and supporting communications now more clearly demonstrate how collaboration is embedded throughout the Bancoora CAP, including through actions under F2. Collaboration and community stewardship (page 40, Bancoora CAP), landscape-scale partnerships with other land managers and agencies (summary table found on page 52, Bancoora CAP), and ongoing engagement with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation during future planning and implementation.
There was strong support for proactive planning and early action to manage coastal hazards and future coastal change.	Recognising the strong level of support received through community consultation the final Plan retains its strong focus on proactive, long-term planning and staged adaptation approaches to support informed decision-making and future coastal hazard management.

Community members wanted clearer connections between the Bancoora CAP and broader coastal planning and management.	The Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan is part of our whole-of-coast management approach that includes the Coastal Hazard Exposure Report (CHER) and Foreshore Master Plan. Upon receiving the feedback, the final plan remains as is and any supporting communications/FAQ's (particularly as info on webpage) provides current Barwon Coast Planning context of Coastal Hazard Assessment and Foreshore Master Plan and whole of coast approach. The CHER maps current and future coastal erosion and inundation from Breamlea to Collendina. Results from this Plan have been incorporated into the CHER to create a consistent set of hazard maps across Barwon Coast's management area. Unlike this Plan, the CHER does not assess impacts on coastal values and assets or identify adaptation actions. However, its mapping has informed the draft Foreshore Master Plan and will support future risk-informed adaptation planning for other coastal areas. The Foreshore Master Plan is a 15-year plan for protecting, accessing, and improving the coast from Breamlea to Collendina. Its scope extends beyond coastal adaptation, setting Barwon Coast's strategic direction, investment priorities and works program. It will help balance the protection and enhancement of the natural environment with pressures such as population growth and ageing infrastructure, as well as coastal hazards.
Some respondents sought greater detail and clarity around implementation.	The Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan follows Victoria's Coastal Hazard Risk Management and Adaptation Planning Framework and covers Stages 1–5 of the process. These stages focus on understanding coastal hazards, identifying the values that may be affected, assessing risks, and developing adaptation pathways and actions to respond to future coastal change. Barwon Coast will complete stages Stage 6 (Plan and implement) and Stage 7 (Ongoing monitoring and review) in a separate process. Detailed decisions about priorities, timing, funding, design, approvals and delivery will be considered during these later stages. Community members, stakeholders and land managers will be consulted as adaptation actions are planned and implemented.

	To ensure community input continues to inform implementation, we've made the following changes to the Plan: • Action F3.1 has been updated to 'Make the Bancoora CAP publicly available and continue to engage and communicate with the community, Traditional Owners stakeholders and land managers on plan implementation.' • Add action F5.4: Consult with the community, Traditional Owners, stakeholders and relevant land managers during the planning and implementation of adaptation actions.
Feedback highlighted a desire for greater transparency about how community input is considered and incorporated into decision-making.	This "What we heard – What we did" summary aims to share how feedback was considered, where it informed changes, and where suggestions could not reasonably be incorporated. We have also updated the FAQs, which can be found on our dedicated project page .
Some respondents raised concerns about dune management, vegetation management and potential impacts on surf conditions and natural coastal processes.	In response to community queries, a definition of 'sand scraping' has been added to the Terms and Definitions (page 2) section of the Bancoora CAP. Additionally, in response to this feedback, Barwon Coast will release the Technical Report, that underpins the Bancoora CAP, to the community. It includes detailed information and data about coastal processes and hazards including geomorphic setting, climate change, sea level rise, risk, wave impacts and more. You can find the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan Technical Report on our dedicated project page.
Protecting the natural coastal environment was identified as a key priority.	Protecting the natural environment is a central focus of the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan and was identified as a key community priority. The Plan is built around six key themes (page 18), most of which relate to the importance of healthy coastal ecosystems, natural landscapes and environmental values. These themes helped shape the adaptation objectives and actions. Many of the adaptation objectives (page 20) focus on protecting beaches, dunes and coastal ecosystems, supporting biodiversity, and allowing natural coastal processes to continue where possible. As a result, many of the proposed actions aim to protect ecosystem health and avoid or minimise interventions that could adversely affect the natural functioning of the coastline.

Some respondents questioned the data sources, modelling and projections used to inform the Plan.	Coastal models are built using extensive scientific knowledge and research, but they can only provide a simplified representation of the real world; for example, depending on the timing and approach taken for various coastal hazard assessments, this baseline mean sea level may vary and can be outdated by years. To address this feedback, the Bancoora CAP was updated to include: • A call out box on page 4 titled 'Coastal modelling considerations and limitations' to expand more on data/modelling limitations, and • Added a heading on page 22 call out box to more clearly signpost a key limitation of the data. Find out more about the data and modelling in section 3.5 of the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan Technical Report, which can be found on our dedicated project page.
Respondents wanted greater visibility of the legislation, policies and frameworks informing the Plan.	The Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan has been developed in accordance with Victoria's coastal and marine management framework, which guides how coastal hazards and climate change are managed across the state. Key documents informing the Plan include the Marine and Coastal Act 2018, the Marine and Coastal Policy, the Marine and Coastal Strategy, and Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+ (2023). Together, these provide the legislative and policy basis for coastal hazard risk management and adaptation planning. For more information on the legislation, policies and frameworks that inform the Plan, please refer to Section 1.2 of the Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan Technical Report, which can be found on our dedicated project page.
Some feedback raised broader environmental and catchment-scale issues, including farming impacts on waterways.	The Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan focuses on managing coastal hazard risks within the Bancoora Beach and Breamlea foreshore area and on land managed by Barwon Coast. Broader catchment and land-use issues are therefore outside the scope of this Plan and are managed through separate processes and agencies. However, coastal change does not stop at management boundaries. The Plan recognises that some impacts will affect surrounding roads, access routes, utilities, rural land, the Thompson Estuary and township areas. As a result, the Plan includes a landscape-scale approach that identifies

	priorities requiring collaboration with other land managers, agencies and stakeholders. Further detail on these landscape-scale priorities is provided in Table 12 (page 52) of the Bancoora CAP.
Respondents expressed a desire to have more details about the community engagement process and activities.	The Bancoora Coastal Adaptation Plan was informed by a two-stage engagement process. Stage 1 focused on community values and aspirations for Bancoora and Breamlea, while Stage 2 sought feedback on the draft Plan and proposed adaptation actions. Engagement included online surveys, stakeholder interviews, community information sessions, written submissions and direct stakeholder engagement, supported by website updates, social media, emails and printed materials. Further detail is provided in pages 2-7 of this Closing the Loop report.