



Williamstown Local Port Area Plan

Community Engagement Summary

December 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bunurong people, who have been the custodians of this land and sea country for many thousands of years; and pay respect to their elders past and present. We acknowledge that the land of which we speak is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong peoples living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

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Victoria
Level 10, 535 Bourke St, Melbourne

Cover image: Staff engaging with
community at the pop up at the monthly
Williamstown Craft Market during the
draft plan consultation period. Credit:
Parks Victoria.



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Image 1: Boating in Hobsons Bay. Credit: Parks Victoria.

Introduction

In alignment with objectives listed in the Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework (2021), Parks Victoria developed a draft plan to shape the future of the Williamstown Local Port Area. The draft plan was developed within the context of the Department of Transport and Planning's Sustainable Local Ports Framework and focused on addressing various challenges and opportunities concerning the on-water area.

The area includes key infrastructure such as piers and jetties (Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty, Boyd Street Pier, Gem Pier and Ferguson Street Pier), access channel sedimentation, and provisions for historic and large commercial vessels and emergency response.

The plan was developed using comprehensive research and analysis, including community consultation to ensure key values and opportunities were considered.

Related consultation – Waterway Rule Change

Separately, but at the same time Parks Victoria undertook community consultation on the proposed modification and extension of the 5-knot speed limit for the waters under its control in Williamstown. This proposed waterway rule change is identified as a key mitigation measure in the Williamstown Maritime Precinct Wave Wash Surge Study - Stage 3 Mitigation Options Assessment.

More information, including a separate consultation report on this process is available at www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects

About the Williamstown Local Port Area

Located in Melbourne's west, the Williamstown local port area has traditionally been home to a range of recreational, commercial and community boating activities. Boasting scenic views towards Melbourne's central business district and positioned near the entrance of one of the busiest commercial ports in Australia, the Port of Melbourne, the area supports a significant volume of maritime traffic and fosters connections to Victorian maritime history with Seaworks maritime museum.

Parks Victoria is the Committee of Management for a large portion of Hobsons Bay at Williamstown including the foreshore area which is home to many boat and yacht clubs, and marine repair businesses including Seaworks. The site serves as a focal point for Victoria's maritime history, is a working port, and Melbourne's key mooring site for visiting local and international tall ships and other historic vessels.

As the local port manager for Port Philip, Parks Victoria also manages a variety of maritime infrastructure assets in the area including the popular and well-used Ferguson Street Pier, Gem Pier, and Williamstown's swing mooring ground.

Consultation approach

A consultation strategy was developed by Parks Victoria that outlined the ways that people could input into the local port area plan. The consultation aimed to gather specific feedback on the proposed changes and solutions outlined in the draft plan.

Community engagement was undertaken between 31 August and 30 September 2023.

Participants could participate online (via Engage Victoria), in person (at a pop-up), via email (to engage@parks.vic.gov.au) or by calling 13 19 63.

In mid-2023, prior to developing the draft plan, Parks Victoria engaged with key stakeholders to understand the current usage, challenges, aspirations, and ideas for the local port area. The conversations were positively received with stakeholders showing keen interest in the project. The stakeholder group findings are available on the Parks Victoria website www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects.

About this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings from the 2023 community consultation process on the draft Williamstown Local Port Area Plan. This report was prepared by Parks Victoria.

All feedback and ideas presented in this report were collected during consultation activities or via the Engage Victoria webpage. All input has been given equal consideration and has not been weighted or adjusted. The findings in this report reflect the views of participants.

Findings have not been edited for accuracy and do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or position of Parks Victoria.

Report limitations

As with all consultation processes and reporting analysis, there are considerations that should be acknowledged when reading the report.

People who participated in the consultation process self-selected to take part. Therefore, the feedback in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of a representative sample of the community. Some participants chose to provide feedback via submission, without providing demographic details. Therefore, we do not have demographic details for all participants.

The graphs and figures in this report are generated from the quantitative survey questions only (selecting from choices provided). At times they equal more than 100 percent. This is because participants were able to select more than one choice. The total number of participants for each figure or graph is included in the caption using the shorthand 'n='. Where needed, quotations have been amended for spelling and grammar but are otherwise unchanged.

Promotion

Engagement was promoted to the public online and through printed materials. This included:

- Emails sent to people who have subscribed for updates and interested stakeholders.
- Social media by Parks Victoria.
- Local media coverage.
- On-site signage promoting engagement including postcards and posters about the project.

Participation

The information presented below shows the total number of participants by activity.



4,579

Engage Victoria page views



1

Pop up session at Williamstown where **100** people dropped by



55

Survey submissions



47 +2

Written submissions via Engage Vic and direct emails



1:1

Meetings with key community stakeholders

Pop up session

Parks Victoria staff spoke to around 100 attendees at a public community pop up which was held on Sunday 17 September 2023 as part of the monthly Williamstown Craft Market at Commonwealth Reserve. As expected, the majority of participants were residents or representatives from the local yacht or boating clubs.

Survey and submissions

A survey was hosted on Engage Victoria for four weeks. There were 102 contributions – 55 survey responses and 47 written submissions. Parks Victoria also received two emails directly.

The series of graphs below provide a representation of the demographic and visitation preferences of the survey respondents (n. 55).

The questions presented survey were designed to capture the following information:

1. Demographic data including age, gender, residential postcode, and reason, frequency and duration of visits.
2. Sentiments on proposed changes to key aspects of the local port area and overall feedback.

Parks Victoria sought agreement from survey participants regarding the collection of information and use of the information.

Supplementary information was available to assist survey respondents to provide feedback, this included:

- The draft Local Port Area Plan.
- Stakeholder Focus Group key findings report.
- Frequently Asked Questions.
- Project timeline.
- Parks Victoria contact information.

Community Stakeholder meetings

Parks Victoria met one one-on-one with key stakeholders such as the Port of Williamstown Action Group (POWAG) on two occasions and Seaworks on one occasion to present the draft plan and gather specific feedback. Additionally, members of the Project Reference Group were provided with a briefing and the opportunity to provide feedback.

Survey respondents

The responses provided through the Engage Victoria survey have been included in the analysis of who we heard from in this section of the report.

Survey participants (online) were asked to answer demographic questions. This showed:

- The majority of participants were male (69%).
- A vast majority were aged above 45 years (82%), with low representation of young adults and no children.
- Nearly half of the respondents (44%) came from the suburb of Williamstown as shown in Figure 1 below and visit the harbour weekly, tending to spend more than one hour there.
- The top three activities participants do when visiting the local port area are walking or sightseeing, using the facilities and non-powered boating such as sailing.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by postcode. (n.55)

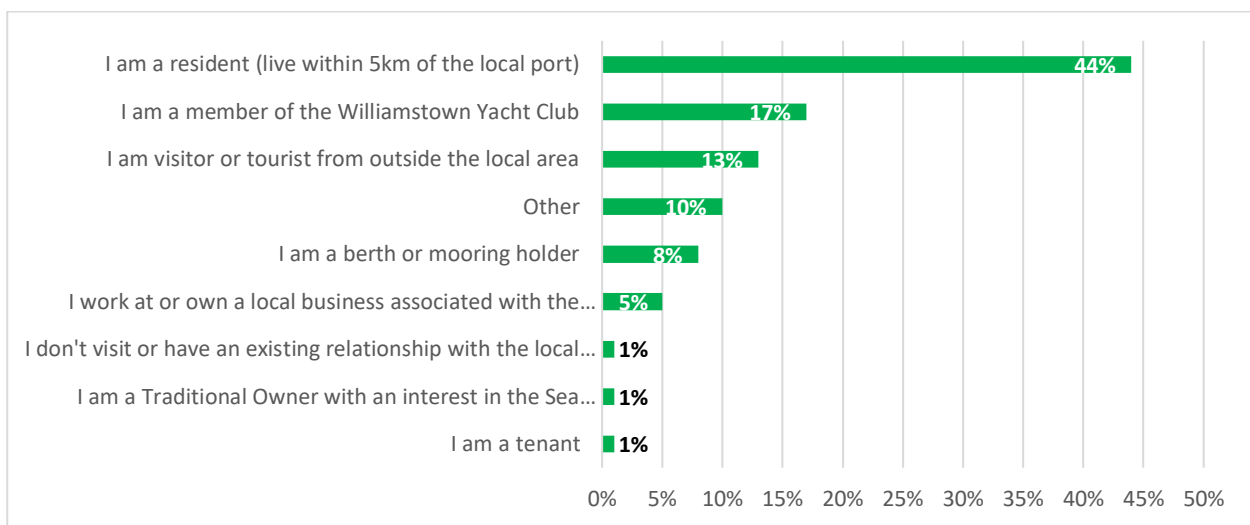


The question “Which of the following best describes your relationship with Williamstown Local Port Area?”, allowed for multiple selections. Out of 55 individual responses, there were 84 options selected in total.

Reaffirming the results presented in Figure 1, almost half (44%) of the respondents indicated they live within a 5-kilometre radius of the local port area. Many of those that selected the ‘local’ option also selected the options for being members of the yacht clubs, berth holders or work in the area. This suggests a strong correlation between locals being key users of the area.

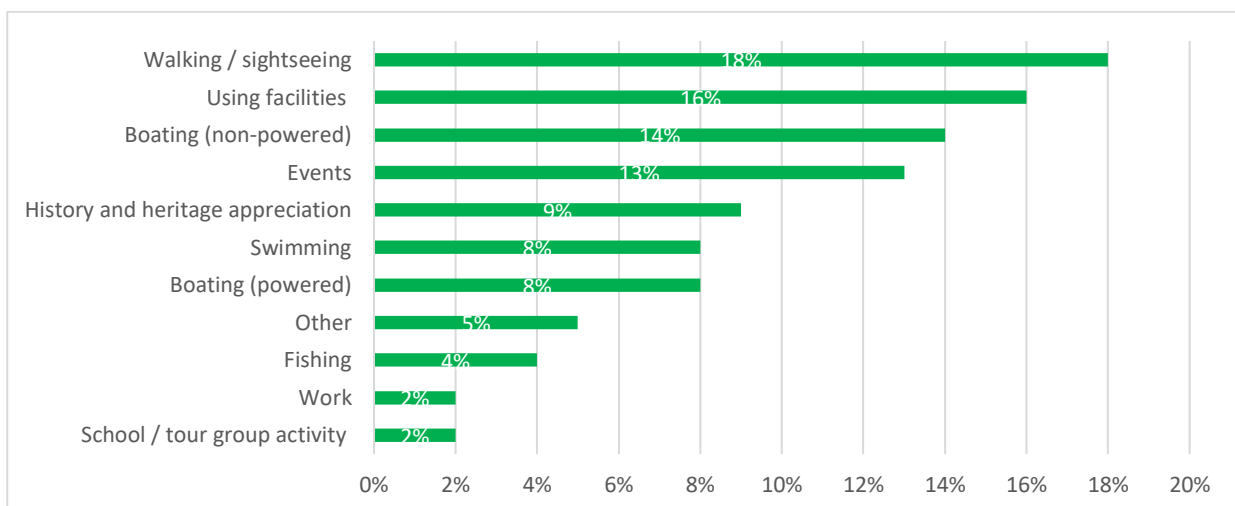
Just under a quarter (17%) of the respondents identified themselves as members of the Williamstown Yacht Club. Those that nominated the ‘Other’ category included members of alternate yacht clubs in the area or recreational users of the local waterways. A smaller proportion (13%) of respondents categorised themselves as ‘tourists / visitors’ indicating they come from outside the area.

Figure 2: Relationship to Williamstown LPA



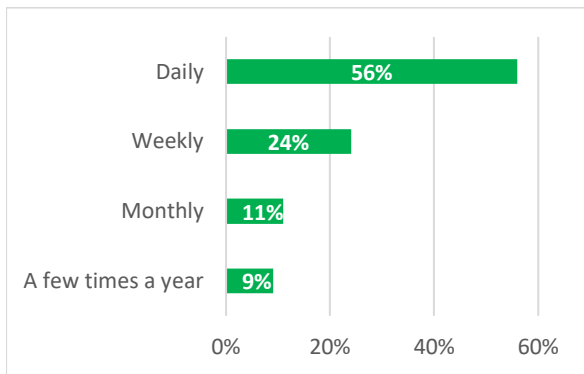
Participants were asked to expand on their relationship with the Williamstown Local Port Area by sharing why, how often and how long they visit. When asked “What activities do you participate in when you visit the Williamstown Local Port Area?” the primary activities for survey participants was ‘walking or sightseeing’ (18%). This was followed closely by ‘using the facilities’ (16%) and ‘non powered recreational boating’ such as sailing (14%). See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Activities when visiting Williamstown LPA (n. 55)



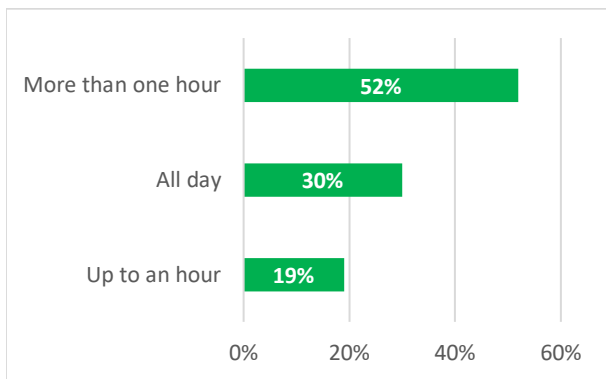
When asked “How often do you currently visit or use the Williamstown LPA?” over half (56%) the respondents stated they visit Williamstown LPA daily – see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Frequency of visit to Williamstown LPA. (n.55)



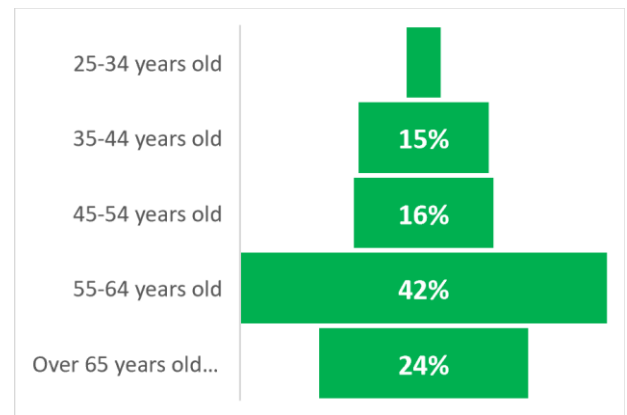
When asked, “On average, how long do you spend at Williamstown LPA each time you visit?”, most tend to spend more than one hour each time they visit (52%) – see Figure 5.

Figure 5: Duration of visit to Williamstown LPA. (n.55)



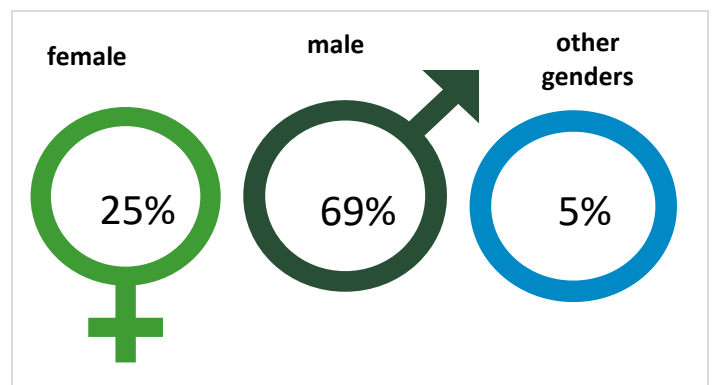
Over half (58%) the respondents fall within the 45 – 64 years combined age groups, and a further 24% in the 65+ years combined age bracket meaning the middle to senior age groups were well represented. The younger age groups were less well represented with only 4% of respondents falling into the 25 – 34 years brackets. There were no responses from people 24 years or under. See Figure 6.

Figure 6: Age range. (n.55)



More males (69%) than females (25%) and non specified genders (5%) responded to the survey. See Figure 7.

Figure 7: Gender diversity of respondents. (n.55)



Summary of findings



Image 2. Entrance to Gem Pier. Credit Parks Victoria.

This section provides an analysis of all data collected, including survey responses and written submissions on the draft plan.

Key feedback

People were asked to rate their level of support for the draft plan; 69 percent of the respondents agreed that the draft plan would deliver *Good to Very Good Improvements* to the Williamstown Local Port Area.

In relation to specific questions asked around key parts of the draft plan, we heard the following:

- **Functional layout improvements:** Most (85%) felt the proposed functional layout improvements addressed what is important to them *Very Well to About Right*.
- **Proposing a future for the piers and jetties:** Just over two thirds (71%) felt the proposed future for the piers and jetties addressed what is important to them *Very Well to About Right*.
- **Proposing a strategic direction:** Most (89%) felt the proposed strategic directions addressed what is important to them *Very Well to About Right*.

People were given the opportunity to expand on their selections and provided feedback on the overall draft plan. The consistent themes that arose through the responses and consultation process generally include:

- Williamstown is a crucial working port that caters to both recreational and commercial users. There is a strong desire to see appropriate investment to ensure it continues to be recognised and positioned as a premier maritime destination.

- Striking a balance between fit-for-purpose change and maintaining the maritime character and vibrancy of the area is important to the community.
- More opportunities to enhance the service offer by providing improved recreational boating and fishing opportunities and connectivity along the foreshore are desired.
- Restoring access to Workshops Pier and accommodating visits by Tall Ships, as well as Boyd Street Pier for public access and maintenance has been well-received.
- Many participants spoke of their love for this important maritime facility and its unique setting within close proximity to Melbourne, and the importance of preserving the character of the area.
- Many reflected on its historical significance and welcomed improvements that would enable berthing for visiting Tall Ships.
- There was strong sentiment around the need to create a safe, sustainable local port area and that future investment should be commensurate with its high-value contribution to social, economic, and tourism benefits for Melbourne's west.
- There was general support that the plan provided a sound response to a mix of uses and functions, but could do more to address expanding recreational boating, visitor berthing (particularly for smaller craft) and recreational fishing opportunities to deliver on the vision for a premier precinct.
- There was some feedback to reconsider the proposed dredging area to include Ferguson Street Pier and ensure the proposed local disposal site to be used occasionally by tenants does not impede yachts entering and leaving the Yacht Club or impact the environment.
- Many expressed concerns about the wash created from the increasing movements from commercial and recreation vessels and suggested the need to implement appropriate measures to protect the marinas and moorings, and improve safety for waterway users, particularly smaller craft.
- The community highly values the importance of improving the marine environment and enhancing water quality. Suggestions were received from key stakeholders to build environmental resilience through innovative practices, including creating artificial reefs to reduce wave impact on the shoreline, provide habitat for marine organisms, and improve water quality.

Survey

Respondents were asked three key questions around targeted sections of the draft plan.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to expand on their selections, with prompts to consider what they like about that part of the plan, not like and if anything is missing. Below are the results of the questions represented graphically, along with a selection of general comments provided by survey respondents around each question theme.

Improving the functional layout

When asked “How well do the responses address what is most important to you?” in relation to **improving the functional layout** of the local port area (page 8 of the draft plan), 85% agreed and responded, ‘Very Well’ or ‘About Right’, while 13% said it addressed their concerns ‘Less Than They Would Have Liked’. See Figure 8 and Table 1.

Figure 8: Functional layout response - page 8 draft plan (n.55)

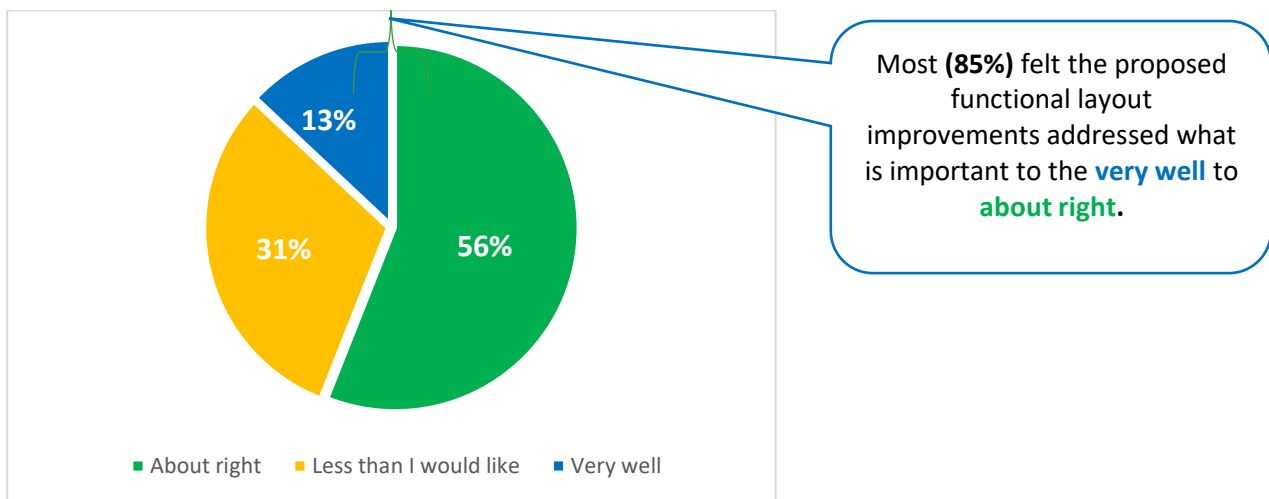


Table 1: Comments from survey respondents around functional layout

Very well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Supports berthing of Melbourne’s historic fleet and encourages visiting historic fleets.” “A sound mix of commercial, tourism, recreation and emergency services access.”
About right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “(Like regaining) access to Boyd Street Pier for traditional repair and maintenance.” “The piers were the original stations for transport (historically valuable, good for emergency services ... but please don’t destroy the village feel of Williamstown as when you do that, tourism will disappear.” “I think there should be mention of facilities for visiting sailors. At present they can moor on the guest moorings north of Ferguson Street Pier or tie up to the pier itself and this should be maintained.” “The area for disposal of dredge material needs to be further away from the access fairway to Williamstown.” “No allowance for shore based angling.”

Less than I would like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Higher priority for day visiting recreational vessels.” • “The proposal is great and well-deserved study and proposed improvements ... would like to see a potential breakwater created to enable improved environment; safer to protect the shoreline, mooring; usability of the area for smaller craft.” • “I feel the jetty’s ... are still not as accessible to the public as could be.” • “There needs to be capacity for the public to tie up their boats in the vicinity of Seaworks to improve visitor access options. A pontoon jetty would be ideal.” • “Williamstown is a hub for nautical history and continues to be an area of high recreational boating with 4 clubs in close proximity. There should be more to celebrate, promote and facilitate this.” • “Wave attenuations needs to be considered.”
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Proposing a future for the piers and jetties

When asked “How well do the responses address what is most important to you?” in relation to **proposing a future for the piers and jetties** (pages 9-10 of the draft plan), 71% agreed and responded ‘Very Well’ or ‘About Right’, while nearly one third (29%) felt it addressed their concerns ‘Less Than They Would Have Liked’. See Figure 9 and Table 2.

Figure 9: Future of piers and jetties response - page 9-10 draft plan (n.55)

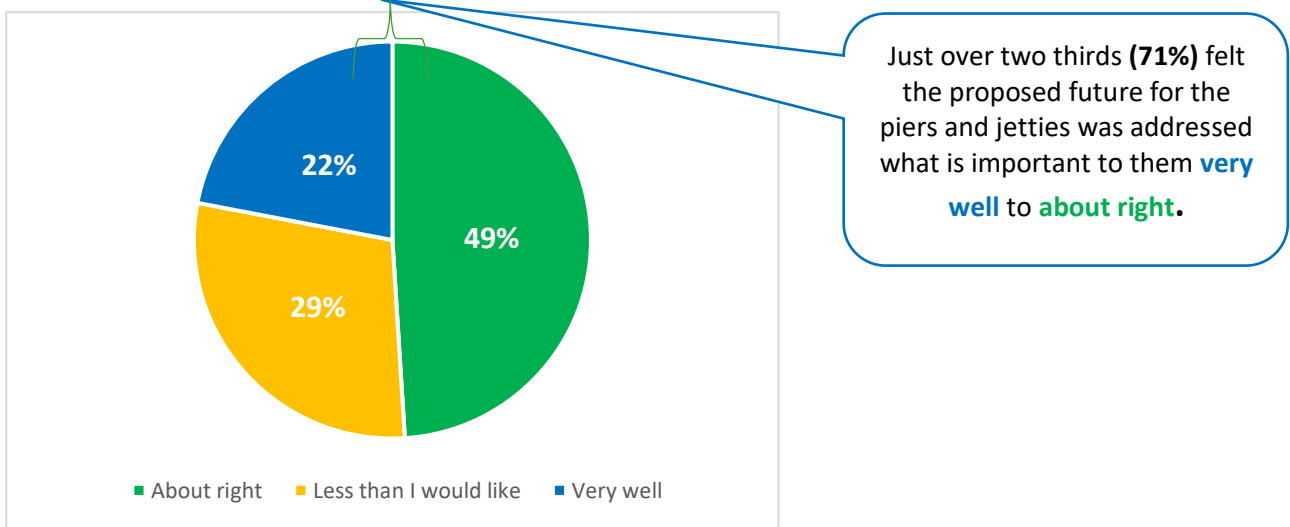


Table 2: Comments from survey respondents around the proposed future of piers and jetties

Very well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Good that Tall Ships will be able to visit again.” • “Like the enhancement to the maritime precinct at Seaworks.” • “Regaining access to Workshops and Boyd Street piers for public use (and maintenance) is critical.” • “Maintaining Gem Pier is vital for tourism.” • “Gives Water Police direct access to their boats.”
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About right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I support maintenance of Ferguson Street Pier to facilitate recreational uses and public overnight berthing (on the northern side of the pier).” • “The piers need to be properly maintained.”
Less than I would like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is unclear that Commissioner's Jetty should be removed as this is still a good place for small, shallow draft vessels to moor.” • “Access to piers could be better - look to Port Melbourne or Geelong for paths along waterfronts.” • “Recreational fishing was not adequately addressed - especially for Ferguson Street Pier.” • “The proposal sounds promising however not confident that future pier development access is beneficial to residents.” • “Would prefer the HMAS Castlemaine is not moored at Gem Pier as it impedes views of the city from Commonwealth Reserve.” • “I would like to be reassured that general public access is retained to Workshops Pier.” • “Plan addresses mainly commercial issues – would like jetty upgrades to enable more pier fishing with relevant facilities such as toilets.”

Proposing a strategic direction

When asked “How well do the responses address what is most important to you?” in relation to **proposing a strategic direction** for the local port area (pages 11-12 of the draft plan), 85% agreed and responded ‘Very Well’ or ‘About Right’, while 13% it addressed their concerns ‘Less Than They Would Have Liked’. See Figure 10 and Table 3.

Figure 10: Strategic direction response - pages 11-12 draft plan (n.55)

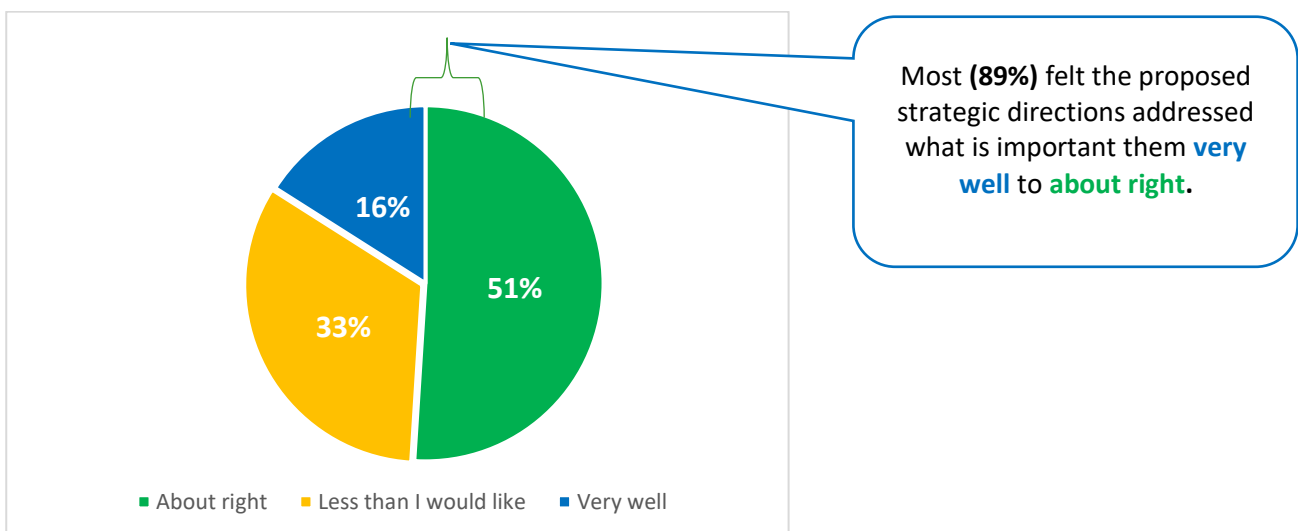


Table 3: Comments from survey respondents around proposed strategic directions

Very well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I like that you are valuing the Traditional Owners, whilst acknowledging the more recent history of the area.”
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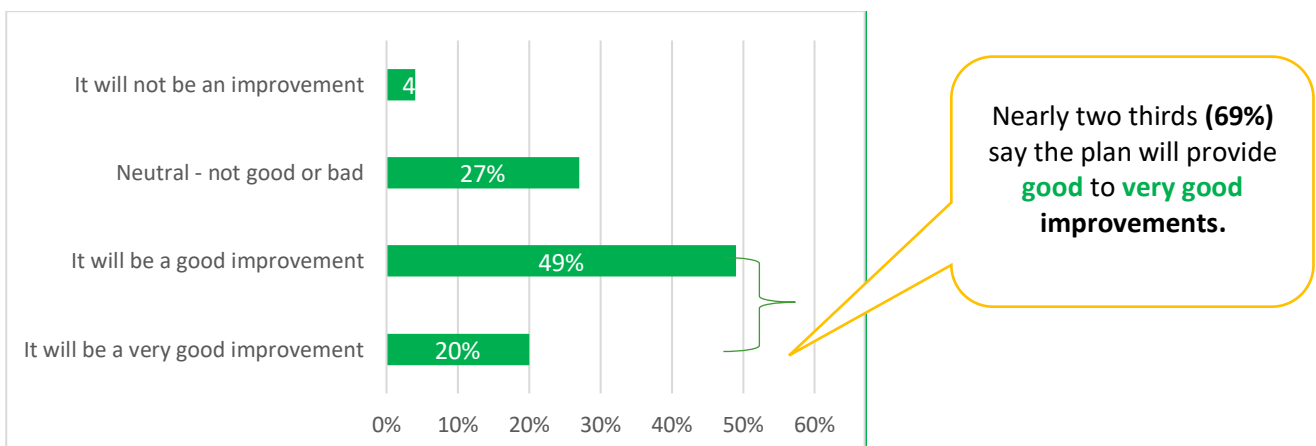
About right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I think the proposal addresses the heritage of the area appropriately.” “I like the idea of facilitating visits by vessels such as tall ships and sailors. In this case, however, thought needs to be given to facilities and public transport services to the city.” “A wave attenuation wall is needed to protect vessels and the shoreline (erosion) from surge.”
Less than I would like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Any planning decision regarding infrastructure MUST consider Climate Adaptation and Climate Resilience.” “I feel the Jetty access still are not as accessible to the public as they could be. Look to Port Melbourne and Geelong for uninterrupted, walking/riding paths along the waterfront past the jetties.” “I would like to see the more than just boat facilities and commercial use. Develop the area into a Darling Harbour type precinct for the whole of Melbourne to enjoy and make it a destination place to visit for tourists around Australia and the world. Embrace Williamstown’s rich heritage and history.” “I encourage the use, connections and proposed improved access, uses for existing users and the visitor experience and tourism aspects. I am concerned about the wash created from more movements on the waterways without a breakwater and or improvements to protect the marinas and moorings.”

Overall support for the draft plan

When asked how people felt overall about the draft plan (“Overall how do you feel about the draft plan and proposed changes?”) the response was generally very supportive.

A total of 38 (69%) of the 55 respondents felt the draft plan will deliver very good to good improvements to the LPA. A further 15 respondents (27%) were neutral – that is, felt it would be neither good nor bad. While 2 people (4%) felt the draft plan does not provide an improvement at all. See Figure 11.

Figure 11: Overall feeling about the plan and proposed changes (n.55)



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

<p>What are you most excited about?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Better emphasis on historical maritime aspects.”</i> • <i>“The proposed saving of the piers.”</i> • <i>“Tall Ships at Seaworks.”</i> • <i>“To hear that the piers remain a priority in the area.”</i> • <i>“More visitors to Williamstown and revitalisation.”</i> • <i>“Improved visitor nodes and access to the water and views.”</i> • <i>“A temporary dredge spoil option for the recreational users.”</i> • <i>“More activities at Seaworks.”</i>
<p>Other general feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Bigger focus on recreational (sail) boating.”</i> • <i>“I would have liked to have read mention of the hazards of jet skis to people, boats and marine life.”</i> • <i>“I would like to see the area opened up a little more, so that the public could walk through and appreciate the wonderful vibe the historical and maritime area has to offer.”</i> • <i>“Little/no disruption to our town during the process.”</i> • <i>“No real consideration is being given to making the Port of Williamstown a safe harbour for all users including recreational users of the yacht clubs.”</i> • <i>“Future repairs to Workshops Pier should continue to allow lateral docking across the end of the pier.”</i> • <i>“Please consider how the water ways can be improved to protect the environment, improve the environment with improved habitat and improved protection of assets within marinas and existing users facilities and boating.”</i>

Written submissions

A total of 47 written submissions were received through the Engage Victoria platform and two additional written submissions sent directly to Parks Victoria’s project team via email. These were received from:

- Royal Yacht Club of Victoria Members
- Hobsons Bay Yacht Club
- Port of Williamstown Action Group (PoWAG)
- A Licensed Tour Operator
- Williamstown Coastal Rowing
- Community member
- Tall Ships

A large portion of the letters from Royal Yacht Club of Victoria members were via templated letters. Their views and detailed feedback on the draft plan will be considered in the development of the final plan.



Image 3. Aerial view of Hobsons Bay looking towards Melbourne CBD.

What's next?

All feedback collected from the survey, stakeholder meetings and community pop up has been considered by Parks Victoria to inform the final plan.

Parks Victoria thanks all those who have contributed their ideas and feedback.

Further information

For further information about the project or to subscribe to receive email updates visit the dedicated [project page](#) www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects or email engage@parks.vic.gov.au. You can also call us on 13 1963.

Parks Victoria

Level 10, 535 Bourke St, Melbourne VIC 3000

parks.vic.gov.au

13 1963