

Crescent Head Foreshore – Engagement Summary

September 2025



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Project Overview

Executive Summary

The Crescent Head Foreshore Project is a key initiative by Kempsey Shire Council aimed at revitalising public spaces in Crescent Head. The project responds to long-standing community interest in improving the foreshore and village precincts, balancing the need for green space, carparking, recreational amenities, and pedestrian access.

Engagement for the project has been a two-stage process – initial engagement on a high level ‘block plan’ in late 2024. With around 240 people directly engaged, this indicated the majority of respondents were supportive of the plan. It was noted however, that responses from the younger demographic were lacking.

A more detailed draft concept plan for the Foreshore was developed in early 2025 in collaboration with the Crescent Head Community Advisory Group (CAG).

Key features of the draft concept included:

- A nature-based playground and a skate/scooter park
- Shaded picnic areas and improved beach and creek access
- Market space and improved pedestrian circulation
- Stronger connections between Willow Street, Main Street, and Little Nobby
- Enhanced foreshore greenspace
- Retention of some foreshore carparking and an extended carpark option for consideration.

The design also included a notable redistribution of green space along the foreshore, including a significantly larger green area between the surf club and amenities, nearly double the current width, accommodating new recreational features.

The draft maintained approximately 140 foreshore carparking spaces, similar to current capacity (including informal parking). It was acknowledged that adjustments to the surf check area and drop-off zone could further increase parking availability. The Willow St area contained another potential 48 parking spaces.

During this second phase of engagement Council sought feedback on the draft concept plan from a diverse demographic and users of the space. Specifically, we asked about the draft Foreshore concept and the proposed carparking layout, the greenspace provided, the proposed nature-based playground and a skate/scooter park area, and the Willow Street draft concept (parking, green space, link to Pacific Street). Feedback was received by around 400 users of the space/community members/visitors on these matters and a range of other considerations.

Feedback received during these engagements will be considered by Council staff and the Crescent Head Foreshore Community Advisory Group. When considering potential amendments to the draft concept, the Group will need to consider feedback received alongside other factors such as balancing the needs and desires of all users of the space, traffic management and flow, and pedestrian movement and safety.

Introduction

This report summarises community feedback received during the exhibition of the Crescent Head Foreshore and Willow Street draft concept plans. Engagement activities included surveys (online and paper), face-to-face conversations, written submissions, and a community briefing. Community feedback collected during the two rounds of engagement will inform the final draft concept design, which is to be presented to Council for adoption.

Engagement overview

1. Engagement Methods

Residents of Crescent Head, Kempsey LGA and visitors were informed of and invited to participate in the engagement process via:

- Letterbox drop
- Media and social media
- Info sessions (Foreshore)
- Community briefing (Community Hall)
- Sunday markets (Foreshore)
- Signage / Posters / VMS board
- Online and paper surveys via Your Say Macleay

2. Engagement Timeline

Feedback was welcomed at two points in the development of the concept plan – Round 1 following the development of a high level ‘block plan’ by the Crescent Head Foreshore Community Advisory Group from 11 November – 20 December 2024, and Round 2 following consideration of this feedback, discussion on other contributing factors (traffic flow, pedestrian safety etc) from 12 May 2025 to 21 July 2025.

It is noted that engagement during Round 2 was interrupted and due to weather and flood events.

3. Participation Summary

During both engagement periods, there were over 3,120 visits to the Foreshore Project Your Say Macleay Website ([Crescent Head Foreshore Project | Your Say Macleay](#)).

Feedback received comprised:

Round 1

- Surveys completed: 60
- Written submissions: 16
- Face-to-face conversations: 167.

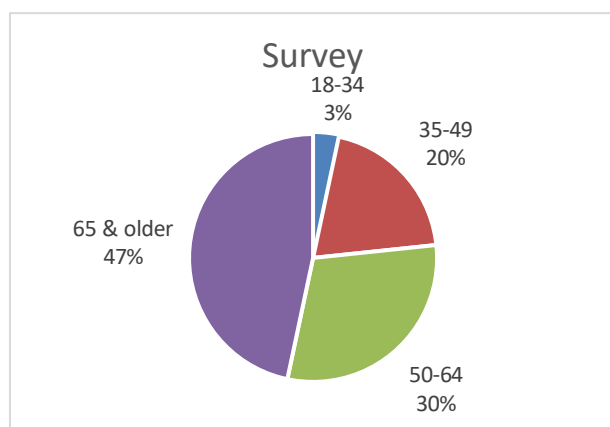
Round 2

- Surveys completed: 327 (311 online, 16 paper)
- Written submissions: 11
- Face-to-face conversations: 102.

4. Respondents Demographics

In Round 1 of engagement, it was noted that respondents skewed older, with very few responses from the 18-34 year age bracket. This resulted in Council staff undertaking targeted youth engagement regarding the skatepark. In Round 2 the demographic of respondents on the draft concepts was almost equally divided for the survey responses (see 2nd graph below) and is assessed as skewing older for the written submissions and face to face conversations.

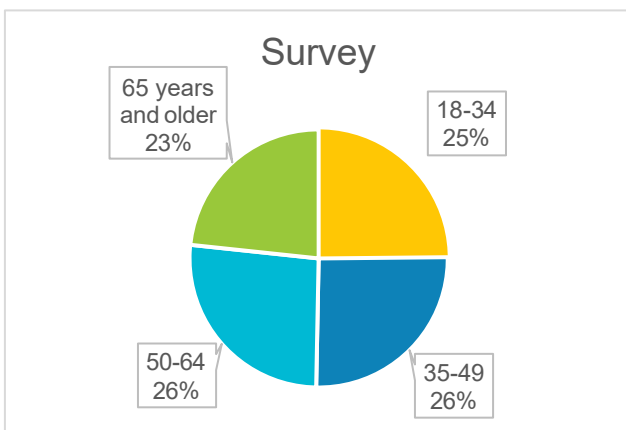
Round 1



Face to face & written submissions:

Round 1 saw a similar demographic to the survey responses, with majority over 50 years of age.

Round 2



Face to face & written submissions:

Round 2 skewed older – likely approx. 75% over 50 years of age.

It was noted that most respondents to both surveys were Crescent Head Residents (65.8%), with others comprising, residents of the Kempsey Shire, Mid North Coast and visitors from further afield. Those making written submissions were primarily local residents, and face to face feedback was received from each of the aforementioned categories also.

Engagement Trends

Round 1

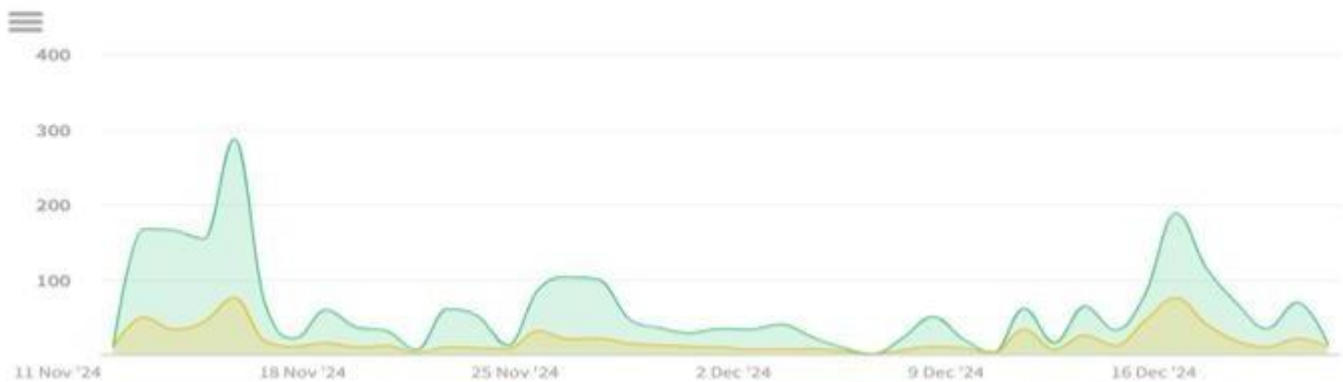
Round 1 engagement is as illustrated in the Your Say Macleay project webpage below. There was stronger activity at certain times in the engagement, supported by a well-attended community briefing, and a number of 'pop-up' engagement activities and Council project communication through various channels.

Visitors Summary

Your Say Macleay from 11 Nov'24 to 21 Dec'24

DAILY

MONTHLY



Round 2

It is noted that community sentiment in survey responses changed during the engagement period. The first stage was early responses pre-10 July 2025, prior to face-to-face engagement. Responses over this period included varied tone and language, and broad support for the skate/scooter park and drop off zone.

The second stage post 10 July 2025, saw a marked rise in support for retaining more north facing carpark (and removing the surf check), a rise in objections to the drop off zone and perpendicular parking in area 21 and concerns about too much green space, particularly in area 15 near the cafe. This change in sentiment occurred around the time that a 'survey guide' (pro-forma) was circulated by a member of the community, for those wanting to advocate for more parking. Analysis indicated some survey responses included narrative directly from the 'survey guide' and some had both this and individual feedback.

Visitors Summary

Your Say Macleay from 12 May'25 to 22 Jul'25

DAILY

MONTHLY

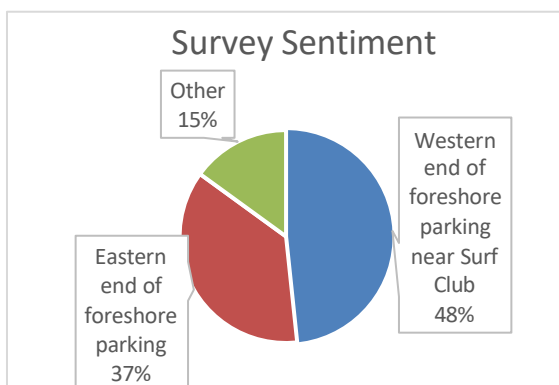


In accordance with Council's Community Engagement and Participation Strategy, all feedback received will be considered, however, form letters, pro forma responses (such as the use of the 'survey guide') or petitions do not carry additional weight simply because of the volume of submissions. Kempsey Shire Council always encourages individual feedback, as this best reflects a person's unique experience, concerns or suggestions.

Round 1 Engagement & Sentiment

Surf Check Area

In response to the questioning around where do you think is the best location for a surf check spot, survey respondents showed nearly half favouring the idea of it being at the western end near the surf club.



Face to face & written sentiment:

Around two-thirds of people were in favour of the surf check at the western end. Remainder were either skeptical, or suggested to leave things as is, while others thought it will be hard to enforce.

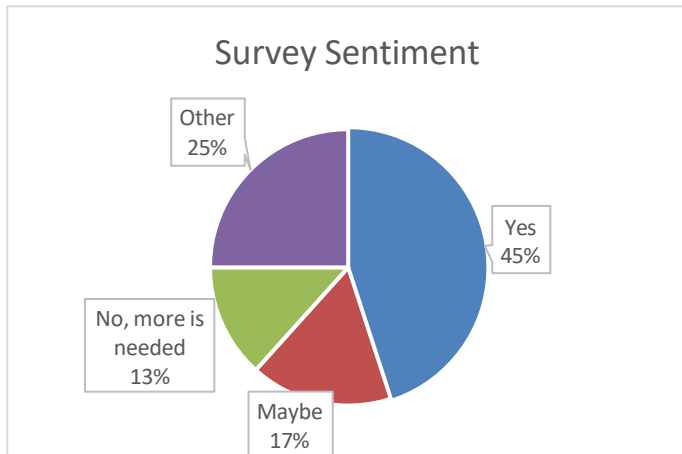
Many thought this would assist in easing congestion further down and help traffic flow.

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Respondents concern for Green Space
- That surf conditions are checked online, making a physical area redundant
- Opposition to a surf check area if it reduces green/open space

Carparking

In response to questioning whether the draft concepts provide enough parking, respondents indicated:



Face to face & written sentiment:

There was a mixed response for both, being enough or more parking spaces are needed.

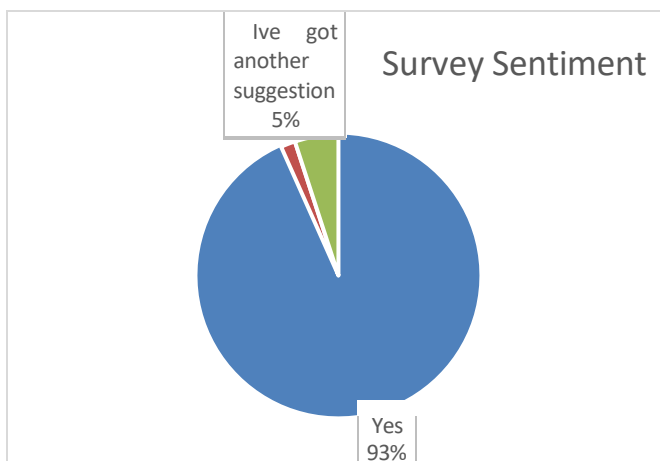
Most people said they didn't want to see less parking spaces.

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Positive response to the parking plan, being well balanced
- Concerns over enforcement of parking restrictions
- Impact to residents in Willow St.
- Some alternative suggestions for improvement
- Some opposition to foreshore parking

Drop Off Zone

In response to questioning whether do you support the inclusion of the drop off zone? respondents indicated:



Face to face & written sentiment:

Overwhelming support for a convenient safe space where they can drop off people / kids and items then find a longer stay parking option if required.

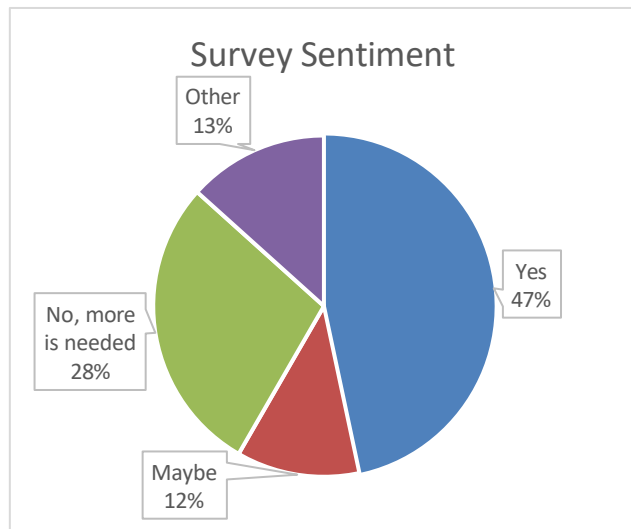
Enforcement was seen to be a challenge

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Suggestions for improvement / maximizing
- Concerns about loss of parking
- Ensuring Accessibility / Disability parking

Green Space

In response to questioning whether the draft provides enough green space, respondents indicated:



Face to face & written sentiment:

Most suggested there was a good balance of greenspace and the various options to use the space

Most were supportive of the distribution or location of green space being proposed

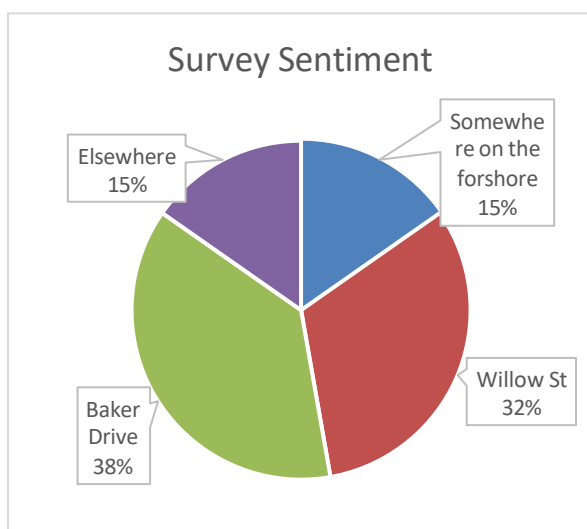
Lots of support to ensure there is space for the markets to continue.

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Draft provides enough green space
- Suggestions on the location of the skate park
- Some felt more green space was needed.
- Shade & Natural features
- Safety and Accessibility +
- Worries that car parking was insufficient or prioritized over green space.

Skate Park

In response to questioning whether in balancing priorities for the use of space, where do you think



Face to face & written sentiment:

There was support in keeping the skate park located at the foreshore. Also support for the skate park to cater for older kids at Baker Drive

Visitors commented the foreshore was the best option as its close to holiday park and amenities.

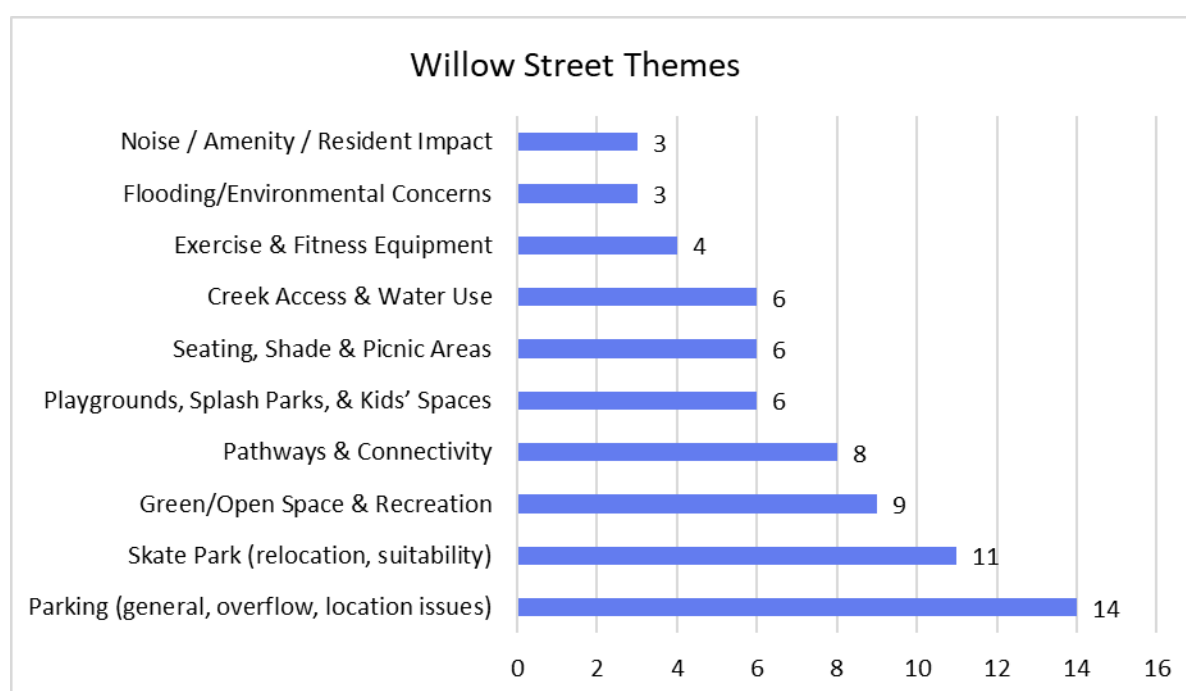
Key feedback themes raised included:

- Varied support for it to be located at the foreshore or Willow St.
- Family accessibility
- Designed for skill level diversity
- Cater for smaller kids
- Incorporate scooter experience
- Include natural elements in the design
- Other options the skate park is best located?

Willow Street

In response to questioning, The draft concept also outlines a possible plan for the Willow Street community space including new, additional parking and play/recreational spaces. Do you have any specific suggestions on the working draft concept for Willow Street?

The following was received:



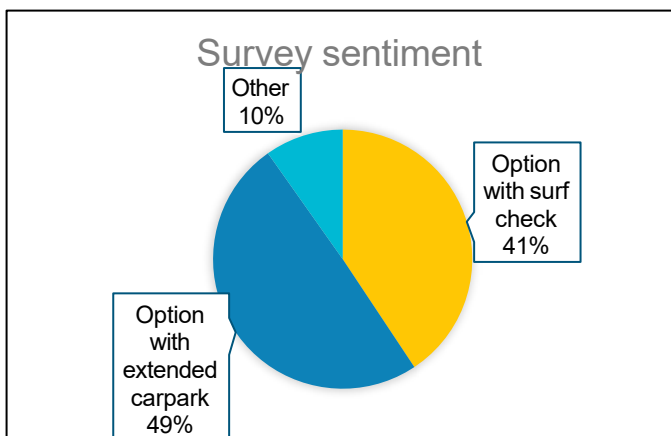
Other Comments

- Many comments raised parking as a priority (need for more, concerns about overflow, location near houses, or blocking access).
- Strong support for Willow St being used as green community space with recreation opportunities.
- Calls for improved pedestrian and cycle/skate connectivity, wider pathways, and safer creek access.
- Many want improved steps, fishing platforms, and safer water access.
- Concerns about flooding, waves, and ensuring designs consider coastal processes.
- Concerns about noise, fireworks, and effect of extra parking on residents.
- Requests for gym/outdoor equipment or better design than current.
- Desire for picnic tables, seating, shaded areas, and tree planting.
- Suggestions on whether the skate park should move to Willow St, stay in foreshore, or relocate to Baker Dr.

Round 2 Engagement & Sentiment

Surf Check Area

In response to questioning around the inclusion of a surf check area to the east of the surf club, survey respondents showed a slight majority favouring the idea of extended north facing carparking in place of the surf check area.



Face to face & written sentiment:

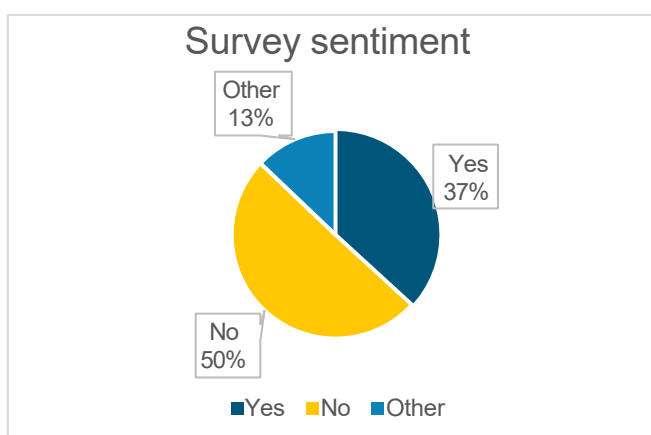
Around two-thirds of people were in favour of the surf check, with one-third in favour of the option extending car-parking in its place.

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Preference for more/retention of north facing foreshore parking
- Congestion from traffic looping down in front of the holiday park
- Surf check spot not in correct location, people will drive to other end.
- A desire to leave the carpark as it is.

Carparking

In response to questioning whether the draft concepts provide enough parking, respondents indicated:



Face to face and written sentiment:

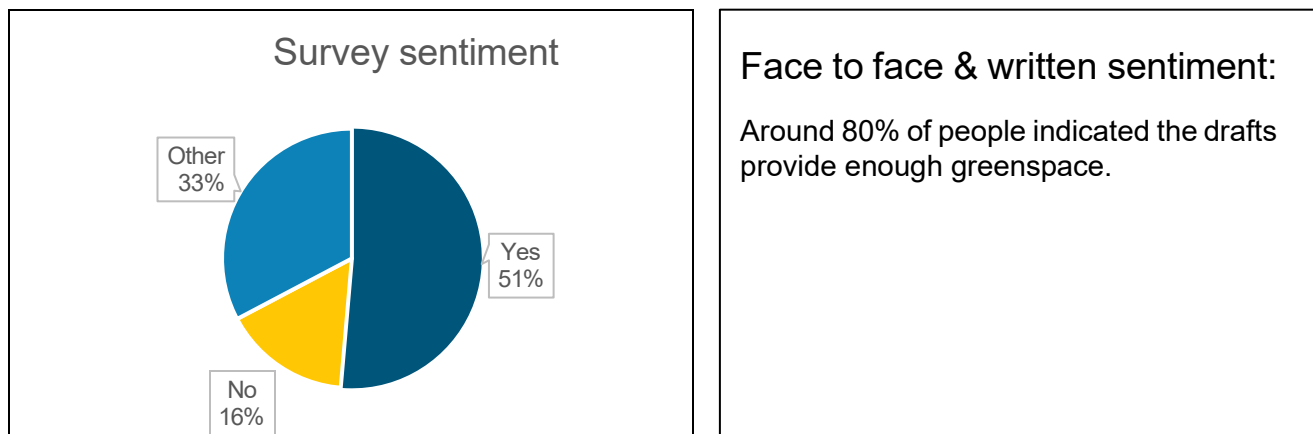
Around 70-80% of people indicated they believe the drafts provided 'enough' carparking.

Key feedback themes raised included:

- Would 45 degree angled parking be better/allow more parks?
- Desire for more parking and suggested different configurations to allow more parking
- Fear of reduced parking
- Importance of parking near the playground/park area
- Ensure you can see the surf from the carpark (ground level management)
- Ensuring access to markets area for stallholders
- Compliance activity – enforcement of time limits and overnight/all day camping
- Free vs paid parking
- Need for bike and scooter parking
- A desire to leave the carpark as it is
- There will never be 'enough' carparking.

Green Space

In response to questioning on whether the draft concepts provide enough green space, respondents indicated:

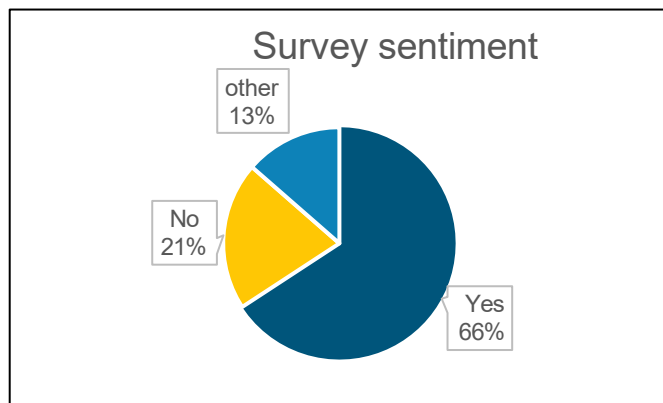


Key feedback themes raised included:

- A desire for more carparking, particularly in place of green space in Area 15
- A desire for angle parking
- Happy with amount of green space
- Focus on areas of gathering and pedestrian movement
- Keep things as they are.

Skate Park and Park Area

In response to whether people supported the inclusion of a smaller nature-based playground and a skate/scooter park on the Foreshore (and a potentially larger skate park be considered as part of planning for the Baker Drive sports precinct), respondents indicated:



Face to face and written sentiment:

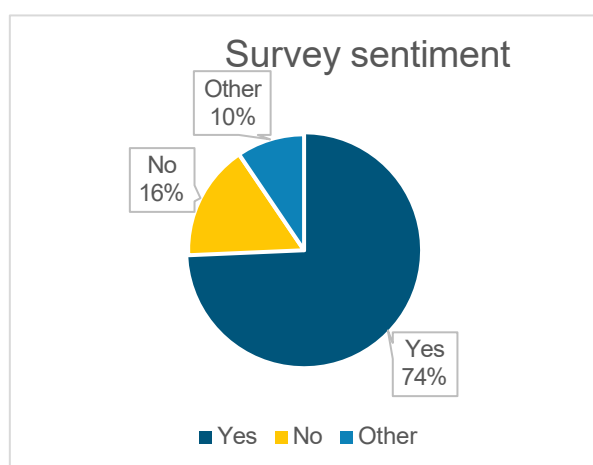
In excess of 85% of people indicated support for the skatepark and recreation space as included in the draft concept plan, with further consideration to be given to a larger park for older youth elsewhere.

Key themes raised included:

- All ages - include elements that are both advanced and simple.
- Prioritise older kids and the bigger skate park.
- Support for Baker Drive as long as that skate park is more complex.
- Make the park interactive.
- Fence the playground.

Willow Street Concept

When questioned on support for the draft Willow St concept plan, there was overwhelming support



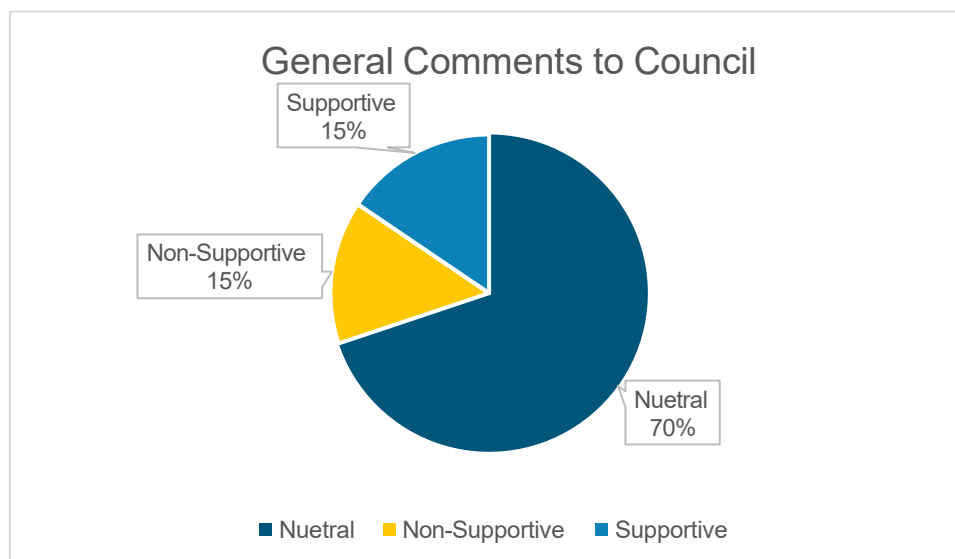
Face to face sentiment:

Around 80% of people indicated the drafts provide enough greenspace.

Key themes raised included:

- Concern re: the need for a better traffic turnaround, noting current design has a 'dead end'.
- Willow Street could be used for holiday park entry.
- Mixed views on Pacific Street to Willow Street footpath.
- Make SUP ramp wide enough for exit and entry to the creek.

Other Commentary



Comments included:

- Good compromise.
- We feel heard and consulted, thank you to Council and Community Advisory Group.
- Well balanced.
- Protect the bird of prey in the Norfolk pines.
- Focus elsewhere.
- Leave it how it is.

Additional Sentiment

While survey results provide valuable quantitative insights, they represent only one part of the engagement and decision-making process. When we add the qualitative feedback gained through all forms of engagement, these insights add depth, highlighting the reasoning behind feedback given, provides practical locally lived experiences, and grounded concerns that numbers in a survey alone cannot capture.

What we heard:

Parking and traffic: There many views expressed about the amount and configuration of parking, including too much/not enough, parallel vs angled vs perpendicular, parking, foreshore parking. There was also a view from some that ‘there will never be *enough* parking’. Some people acknowledged getting the balance of green space v car spaces is a big challenge. Issues of circulation, caravan access, and long-stay use (e.g. backpackers, campers and surfers) were also raised, as well as enforcing parking limits and a desire for increased Ranger patrols.

Green space: Many commented positively on the additional foreshore greenspace and the need to include trees and shelter options. The inclusion of the nature-based playground, skate/scooter park and market space was also well received.

Accessibility & Safety: Many highlighted the importance of pedestrian safety, disabled access, pedestrian pathways, bus stop locations, and safe circulation through Willow Street

Amenities & Comfort: A desire for more shade, sheltered seating, toilets, BBQs, trees, and improved facilities for all age groups were consistently raised.

Recreation & Community Life: Feedback supported the proposed skate/scoot park, and supported exploration of an additional larger skate park at Baker Drive, fencing for the playground, surf cams, and recognition of market stallholder needs, as well as facilities that encourage gathering, events, and multi-age activities.

Other Sentiment: Some community members expressed a wish to “leave the area as is,” while others pointed to increasing visitor demand and the need to plan for growth.

Where to next?

The Council project team and Crescent Head Community Advisory Group members would like to thank all who took the time to share feedback on this important project. Your insights will help us plan for a better space for all.

The insights gained from this engagement is being considered regarding potential amendments to the plan. When considering potential amendments, the Group will also need to consider other factors such as balancing the needs and desires of all users of the space, traffic management and flow, and pedestrian movement and safety. The aim is to finalise a draft concept to Council for approval in the near future.



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