

Crescent Head CAG Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday 7 August 2025

Venue: Crescent Head Community Hall

Time: 4:30pm – 7:30pm

Kempsey Shire Council Staff:

Michael Jackson (MJ) – Director Operations & Planning (Chair)

Liesa Davies – (LD) - Group Manager Community Partnerships (Facilitator)

Grant Dennis (GD) – Design & Investigations Manager (Project Lead)

Mick Hanly (MH) – Community Engagement Manager

Lacey Treanor (LT) – Junior Community Engagement & Communications Officer

Carly Potter (CP) - Business Support Officer Operations and Planning

Group Members:

Chloe Hobden-Welch	Lloyd Mather
Daniel Williams	Matthew Shannon
Fred Andrews	Pamela Bryant
Gail Ryan	Ross Foster
Jann Eason	Susie Hughes
Josh Dennis	Tom Vermeulen
Kerry Hudson	
Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council (KLALC) Representative	

1. Welcome, Apologies & Introductions

The facilitator extended an acknowledgement of country, and opened the meeting, welcoming attendees. Apologies were received from Michael Jackson, Caro Szary, Fred Andrews, Daniel Williams, Matthew Shannon. There was nil attendance by a representative from the KLALC. It was noted that Chloe Hobden-Welch was joining via MS teams and this opportunity had been extended to others who were not able to join in person.

2. Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #6, 9 April 2025, were supported as distributed.

3. Scene Setting - Terms of Reference & 'Our Rules'

The Facilitator noted the progress made by the group and the recent community engagement process.

The Facilitator noted the extent of material to get through in the meeting, that the group should try not to get stuck on a single matter for too long and that the facilitator would be actively keeping consideration of matters to be discussed moving.

Appreciation was expressed for the efforts and work of the CAG and Council, with CAG members acknowledging they had received positive comments from community and thanked Council staff for their efforts.



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The Facilitator noted that the Group should be proud of their progress and the great community feedback, that the finish line is in sight and emphasised the importance of today's conversation in moving forward. It was acknowledged that there were difficult conversations during the engagement period, and some people have been challenged by these and the action taken in the community advocating for more parking, but staff remained confident the Group could continue to work positively to a good community outcome.

In setting the scene for this meeting and next steps in working to finalise a recommended plan to Council, the Facilitator revisited the CAG's overarching goal, Terms of Reference and the rules which had been set by group members in their first meeting.

The facilitator reminded the Group of their first meeting and the way they had defined 'what success looks like'. The Facilitator asked members if they were still comfortable with this direction and if it should remain the group's focus. CAG members agreed.

The Facilitator reaffirmed the original uses and users of the Foreshore and Willow Street spaces, as previously set by the group and welcomed questions or comments.

4. Consideration of community engagement results

Engagement Overview

The Facilitator acknowledged there was a disruption to the engagement period (12 May – 21 July) due to weather events, but overall there had been a very positive response. The Facilitator provided an overview of the engagement methods implemented (including online and hard copy surveys, face to face conversations and a community briefing).

It was noted that feedback from/engagement by the community included:

- 311 online surveys, 16 paper surveys
- 11 written submissions
- 102 face-to-face conversations

Approximately 2,300 total visits to the Foreshore Project Your Say Macleay Website ([Crescent Head Foreshore Project | Your Say Macleay](#)). In terms of activity during the engagement period, the Facilitator acknowledged that engagement and feedback spiked during the face-to-face engagement and when the 'more foreshore carparking' survey completion guide was promoted by a community member.

Engagement respondents:

The facilitator and CAG members noted positively the even distribution of survey respondents by age group, and particularly that participation by young people had improved compared to the previous engagement period. It was noted also that most respondents were families and adults and local residents, and that visitors were also represented.

The Project lead then stepped through the key areas of feedback received from the community, in the order they had been presented in the survey questions.



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Surf check:

The Project Lead noted that the community feedback was in favour of the extended carpark option, over the surf check area. There was discussion among the Group and it was reconfirmed that the extended carpark option did not result in a net increase in parking numbers (and this was noted in the survey and conversations with community members).

Carparking and greenspace:

When considering the questions on whether the draft plan includes 'enough' carparking and green space, it was noted that feedback from the community indicated the majority felt there was enough green space, but there was a shift from our previous engagement in the number of people expressing the view that more parking is needed, and this was now greater than half of respondents to the survey.

There was discussion in the group around the questioning on these matters and that some respondents may comment there will never be enough carparking at the foreshore. It was noted and agreed that phrasing the question differently in terms of balance between the two may have presented better insights.

'Other' responses:

There was comment and discussion on the level of analysis undertaken when respondents selected "Other" rather than provide a definitive answer for or against in response to the survey questions, particularly noting the large proportion of 'other' responses relating to the question on green space (approx 100). The Facilitator confirmed that Council staff had reviewed the 'other' category and additional comments. Two members asked about the 'themes' in the 'other comments' and how many people raised common themes. They expressed concern around the need to use this information to make informed decisions. Council staff noted that 'other comments' could sometimes be leaning to one option or the other, or raise specific individual issues, and some not relevant to the question, but that analysis indicated they did not significantly alter the key insights, issues, and community sentiment highlighted in the slide deck and meeting discussion. Similarly, the number of 'like' comments was not significant or relevant to the question/concept to warrant specific and separate consideration in the concept planning, beyond the matters captured as options for amendment to be discussed with the group at this meeting.

The Facilitator then noted the need for trust in the review process and emphasised that the group needs to consider the overall sentiment rather than deep diving into individual 'other' comment. It was flagged that feedback was received by survey and in person, so there is a mix of data and sentiment, and that they group may also consider the role played by the 'survey guide' which was supportive of additional parking, distributed by one community member. At this point, the facilitator presented information on Council's policy on the consideration of organised form letters, pro-formas and petitions (as per Council's Community Engagement and Participation Strategy). This encouraged individual opinion and notes that form letters, pro forma responses or petitions do not carry additional weight simply because of the volume of submissions.

A CAG member highlighted the importance of the process itself and advocated for further consideration of the survey data and 'other' responses.



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The Project Lead noted that the staff analysis indicates community sentiment is that there is insufficient parking but adequate greenspace and encouraged the Group to consider this.

Skate park:

The Project Lead noted that overwhelmingly respondents agreed with the option of keeping a smaller skate park on the foreshore, with a larger option to be considered for Baker Drive. The Project Lead acknowledged after reading through the 'other' responses that some people may have misinterpreted the use of the word "smaller" as meaning footprint size instead of younger age, when the footprint of the proposed new skate/scoot park is larger than the existing. It was noted there would be the opportunity to engage further on the design of any new facility with local schools and youth.

Willow street:

The Project Lead noted that there was overwhelming support for the Willow Street design and mention that suggested improvements for parking and traffic circulation will be work shopped later in the meeting.

Written Submissions

A written submission for an alternative design for the foreshore was showcased to the CAG members as an example and was noted as the one submission which provided a proposed alternative visual plan.

The Project Lead acknowledged the similarities and differences of this plan and noted that of the eleven written submissions most people were happy to see the redistribution of the greenspace across the Foreshore. This prompted a further discussion in the group on balancing parking and green space.

The Facilitator noted that the written submissions highlighted individual perspectives and overall, the issues and sentiment presented were like the varying views in other engagement responses.

Community sentiment trends during the engagement period

The Project Lead 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 park and drop off zone.

The second stage post 10 July 2025, saw a marked rise in support for retaining the north facing carparks (and removing the surf check), a rise in objections to the drop of 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 the 'survey guide' was circulated, and it was clear that some survey responses included narrative directly from the 'survey guide'.

There were various points made by CAG members regarding the 'survey guide'. These included concerns that there had been a strong push for people to fill in the survey as per the guide and that the guide has skewed the sentiment of responses toward more carparking. On the contrary, one member felt the influence of this guide may not be as significant as



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people think and these responses still need to be considered, as some include individualised thought and comment. One member noted that there was also a strong push to complete the survey as the end of the consultation period neared and this may have resulted in increased responses.

Council staff confirmed that all responses are being considered and were included in the data presented to the Group, with the facilitator flagging that the CAG need to make informed decisions on the basis of community sentiment, and the range of other matters which have been discussed during the project (balance between green space and parking, safety, access and traffic considerations, various user needs).

The Group members presented varying views on influence, authenticity and the survey guide, with Council staff reaffirming the Council position as per its Community Engagement and Participation Strategy (refer minutes page 5).

Community comments

The Project Lead noted in excess of 55 surveys/submissions indicated specific support for the concept plan, with the key themes being that respondents felt there was a positive balance of surf culture and open space, appreciation for the inclusivity and consultation, a recognition of compromise, thank yous to Council and the Community Advisory Group and an overall improvement on earlier drafts.

In response to a CAG member's question, the Project Lead clarified that this figure did not include all respondents who made positive comments, but rather a selection of submissions that were overwhelmingly positive – and in the context of other Council engagement, this was a very significant number.

The Project Lead noted also that there were negative comments received, reviewed and acknowledged but this level of positive feedback is rare and should be acknowledged.

Key Takeaways from Engagement – potential amendment to the draft plans

Council staff noted there were some matters raised during the engagement period which they recommended the CAG consider, with a view to potentially further changes to the draft plans. Each of these were presented individually and discussed with CAG members. Where there was majority support for the potential change it was noted that Council staff would develop these options in an amended draft plan, for further review at the next meeting.

It was also flagged by staff that the Group (at the next meeting) would need to consider whether any agreed changes to the plan, would constitute a major change, and hence prompt a need for another round of community engagement. Staff and some CAG members noted there were already signs of 'survey fatigue' with some community members not wanting to provide a second round of comment and asking Council to 'get on with it'.



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1. Disability toilet parking:

The Project Lead noted feedback on the need for disabled parking closer to the amenities building and showed an option for this to be included. Discussion ensued regarding parking timeframes, location and pedestrian safety. There was consensus that this change should be included in an amended draft plan.

2. Shade, seating, and bike parking:

It was noted that there was a range of requests/feedback around the need for shade, seating and bike parking. CAG members noted and supported these and requested these be included in the detailed design once the plan is adopted.

3. Traffic and access – Willow street:

The Project lead noted feedback regarding traffic flow at the 'dead end' of Willow Street and discussed options to better manage this. There was a range of discussion regarding traffic flow in Willow Street, carparking numbers, holiday park access from Willow St, the value of the green space further away from the foreshore. The majority of the CAG member were in favour of staff developing an amended Willow Street Plan which was more reflective of a circular traffic movement, to be considered further at the next meeting.

Parking

The Project Lead noted that the community feedback included varying suggestions around parking - parallel, 45 degree and perpendicular. He worked through an explanation of the space implication of each type of parking, explaining the bay widths:

- Parallel: 6m
- 45 degree: 3.7m (with overhang)
- Perpendicular: 2.6m (with overhang)

And the number of parks that would fit over 100m are:

- Parallel: 16 parks
- 45 degree: 27 parks
- Perpendicular: 38 parks

Facilitator acknowledged most people prefer 45° parking but the numbers show that this option wouldn't maximise parking spaces. CAG members agreed that 45° parking is not suitable and should not be considered further.

It was noted that the feedback on parking focused in four key areas – the drop off zone, surf check/extended parking option, the southern foreshore strip on the holiday park boundary and the suggestion of additional parking in place of greenspace at area 15 near the café.

Southern foreshore parking strip

The Project Lead discussed perpendicular parking, noting that achieving this would require encroaching either 3.5 metres into the proposed foreshore greenspace or 3.5 metres further into the holiday park. There were mixed views on whether this potential change should be considered further. In response to a member's question on the option of taking more land from the holiday park, staff noted that ultimately this would be a Council decision and would



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be considered as part of the recommended masterplan. Further conversations could be had by staff in this regard.

Drop-off zone vs car parking & Bus drop off location

Discussion occurred around the suggested conversion of the drop-off zone to perpendicular parking. The Project Lead stated the options were 5 parallel or 14 perpendicular parks in this space (some of which could have a 5 minute drop off time) and explained that there was potential for buses to turn around / drop off behind the surf club (in the 4xboat trailer parking area).

CAG members discussed benefits for market days and for parents with children to have closer parking to the skate park and park area and also the fact that a change in this regard would slightly reduce the width of the market area greenspace (by 2.2m). A CAG member noted that these parking spots and could potentially be utilised by the markets for vehicle based stalls resulting in no loss in area for the Markets.

Area 15 Greenspace

The Project Lead noted the greenspace in Area 15 is a generous increase from the existing greenspace in that area and that more parking could, in theory, be added if the Group were supportive and felt this would still give a good greenspace/parking balance. The Area 15 greenspace in the draft concept was noted as being 50m wide. The project lead provided a parking configuration option which would potentially reduce the greenspace width to 30m and add an additional 17 parks, approximately 7 of which would be north facing

There was much discussion and mixed views in the group over the need (or not) for additional parking, the potential value of this green space (as a community/group gathering space), what is the right balance between parking and greenspace

Group Exercise – Prioritisation

Prior to undertaking the group exercise the Facilitator checked in with the CAG members about going over-time to try wrap up consideration of the matters in one meeting. All agreed to continue.

To gain a better understanding of potential options for parking changes, if the group were willing to consider these, the facilitator asked members to participate in a Menti prioritisation exercise and rank the options discussed.

All members present and on-line participated and the result (in order of priority 1 being their most preferred and 5 being their least preferred) was:

1. **Replace drop-off zone with perpendicular parking** – would add 14 parks
2. **Replace Surf Check area with perpendicular parking** – no net change in parking numbers
3. **Perpendicular parking along foreshore, southern strip** – would add 20 parks
4. **Reduce size of Area 15 (20m) for additional parking** – would add 17 parks
5. **Replace drop-off zone with parallel parking** – would add 4 parks



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Noting the inability to reach a consensus in the group on parking matters, the Facilitator asked members to vote on each option. Specifically, they were asked if supported further consideration of the option, or not. If the majority indicated they supported further consideration of an option, Council staff would develop these options in an amended draft plan, for further review at the next meeting.

There was a majority view of those in attendance that further consideration be given to options 1, 2 and 3 only (refer priority order above).

5. Wrap Up & Next Steps

In concluding the meeting, individual members took time to share their views and feelings around the meeting, discussions and process. The facilitator thanked all again for their time, input, willingness to have difficult conversations and their support in an extended meeting.

It was noted that staff will work to develop the potential amendment options discussed with the Group, for further consideration at the next meeting. As flagged in earlier conversation, it was also noted that this next meeting would also consider the need for further community engagement or whether the Group would reach a point to recommend a draft be presented to Council.

6. Next Meeting

Timing to be confirmed, at Crescent Head Community Hall.

