



Illegal Vegetation Damage Consultation – Point Vernon

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EVALUATION REPORT

June 2020

Fraser Coast Regional Council

There has been a continued and repeated history of illegal vegetation damage on the Hervey Bay foreshore for many years. Council recognises the community's interests and concerns in relation to recent incidents. Council have committed to ensuring the community and stakeholders are given the chance to **'have their say'**.



Remit: How do we collaboratively develop an approach for managing incidents of illegal vegetation damage?



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 OVERVIEW

There has been a continued and repeated history of illegal vegetation damage on the Hervey Bay foreshore for many years. Council recognises the community's interests and concerns in relation to recent incidents on Mant Street (at Point Vernon). In February this year, Council committed to ensuring the community and stakeholders were given the chance to 'have their say'.

Between February and June Council undertook an engagement process, within the restrictions of Covid-19. The process involved online engagement through Council's community engagement platform Engagement Hub, which included a survey. Council also conducted a panel discussion with members of the Esplanade Panel from 2019. During the engagement process Council received 16 submissions from the community and included this as part of the engagement analysis and evaluation.

The aim of the engagement for this project was to understand the community's perspective on incidents of illegal vegetation damage, whilst providing a process for collaboratively developing an approach for managing future incidents.

This report will inform Council in making a decision on mitigation actions, including the proposed fencing, as well as assisting with developing a collaborative process in managing future incidents of illegal vegetation damage.

1.2 KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Overall the findings show there is a clear level of concern from the community in relation to the illegal vegetation damage. Three prominent themes emerged during the process including, maintenance of the area, preservation and protection, as well as, some degree, of rehabilitation.

In addition, the engagement was largely inconclusive in relation to which temporary fencing mitigation option was best. The mesh signage fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 56% (248) of respondent, and the (plain) temporary fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 49% (215) of respondents. In contrast, 40% (180) of respondents believed that the mesh fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable and 44% (195) of respondents believed that the temporary (plain) fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable. Responses through the engagement show that there are conflicting views, for example the education aspect of the fencing versus the community feeling like they are being punished.

There were a number of ideas raised throughout the engagement towards mitigation and a collaborative actions to the issue including, but not limited to, education programs and signage, maintenance of the area, accountability and enforcement, security and more consultation and involvement with the community.



2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT OUTLINE

Council recognises the community and stakeholder interests and concerns in the illegal damage of vegetation along the Hervey Bay foreshore, most recently on Mant Street (at Point Vernon). Council committed, in February 2020, to ensuring the community and stakeholders were given the chance to 'have their say'.

In line with Council's current policies, and in order to protect and ensure the safety of the community, some mitigation actions have already been undertaken. These actions involve managing the safety of the contaminated area, as well as the dead and dying vegetation. However, at the February 2020 Council meeting, Council resolved to defer further mitigation actions, until the engagement with community and stakeholders was undertaken.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Remit: How do we collaboratively develop an approach for managing incidents of illegal vegetation damage?

The aim of the engagement for this project was to understand the community's perspective on incidents of illegal vegetation damage, whilst providing a process for collaboratively developing an approach for managing future incidents. This engagement was also an opportunity to provide awareness of issues surrounding the illegal vegetation damage to the wider community. To facilitate the engagement Council undertook surveys and other activities, including online engagement, which took place from **Monday 27 April 2020 to Friday 12 June 2020**, with the survey closing **Friday 22 May 2020**. Council also accepted submissions from stakeholders during the process. Due to Covid-19 restrictions Council was unable to undertake face to face engagement, however Council as utilised online engagement tools while also writing directly to stakeholders to ensure the engagement process had input from the wider community as well as key stakeholders – please see Communication Channels and Constraints sections for more information.





2.2.1 Engagement Timeline

The engagement timeline is outlined in the following diagram:



2.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In July 2019, an incident of tree dieback was investigated by Council staff in the foreshore area on Mant St, Point Vernon above Gataker’s Bay Boat Ramp. After investigation, it was determined the dieback was the result of the application of residual herbicide. The contamination of residual herbicide was confirmed through soil testing (through a third party) which was received by Council in January 2020. This isn't the only occurrence of this happening - there has been a continued and repeated history of illegal vegetation damage on the Hervey Bay foreshore for many years. In 2008, Council adopted a policy (*Unauthorised Vegetation Damage On Council Land*) to provide a standard Council response to address the issue, however, this response has not prevented further incidents and there have been a number of repeated occurrences since this time.

The result of the illegal vegetation damage and actions taken to mitigate the damage impacts funding for Council's regular activities in maintaining the natural environment areas. The application of hazardous contaminants, such as herbicides, requires Council to legally report the incident to the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) as environmental harm and to safely secure the site for a period of time.

Council resolved to defer mitigation actions, at the 19 February 2020 Council meeting, until engagement with community and stakeholders is undertaken.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 THEMES AND CATEGORISATION

Council identified themes based on comments made by stakeholders through the survey, submissions and panel discussion review. These themes are to illustrate a common or inclusive view of the community in relation to the overall issue as well as analysing the comments in regards to the following three engagement topics in response to the remit of the engagement.

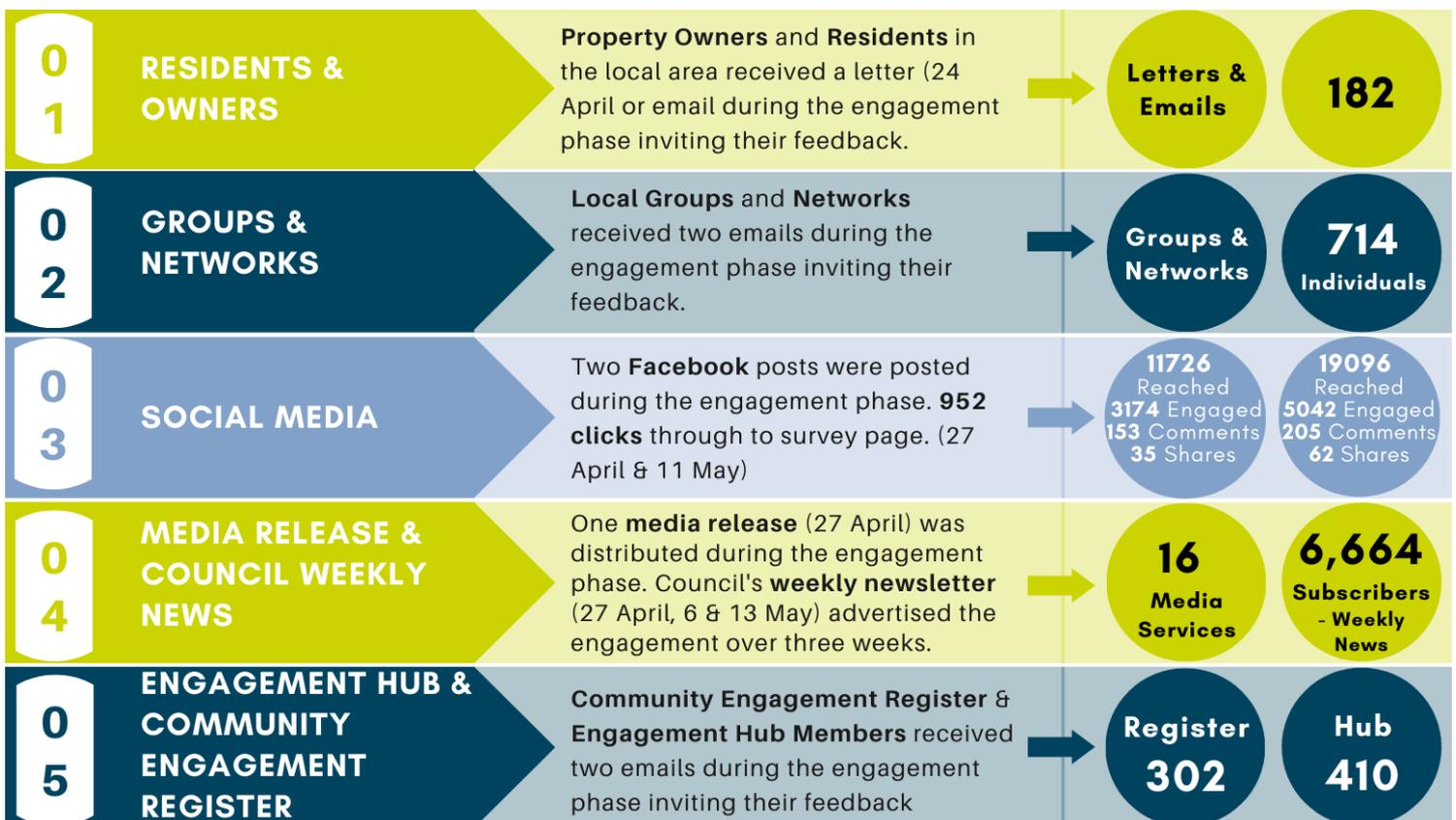
- Fencing and Future of the Site
- Vegetation Damage
- Mitigation and Collaborative way forward

The numerical values of comments, in relation to each theme, has been determined based on the total number of comments received in an engagement activity, for example the number of responses to a survey question or the number of submissions. Please note in some cases comments have been categorised under more than one theme - due to multiple comments within a response or submission. Furthermore, some responses did not relate to a theme at all. Consequently, the total number of comments made in answer to a question may not correspond to the total number of comments calculated within the determined themes.

Submissions have been included individually with a summary of each submission.

3.2 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Council utilised a diverse range of communication channels to promote the engagement process, invite stakeholders to have their say and communicate with the community in relation to the project. The channels utilised are outlined below:





3.3 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

3.3.1 Survey

The survey was conducted online through Council's Engagement Hub platform, from **Monday 27 April 2020** to **Friday 22 May 2020**. Hard copy versions were supplied to residents who made requests to Council – returned surveys were entered manually into the system for analysis. Council devised 10 questions to ask the community for their feedback in answer to the remit of the engagement.

3.3.2 Submissions

Council received submissions from residents and stakeholders during the project. While submissions were not called for as part of the engagement process, Council has accepted these submissions due to Council not being able to hold face-to-face consultations. Council believes these submissions should be included for this reason.

3.3.3 Esplanade Panel Review

Council resolved to conduct an online discussion with the Esplanade Community Panel who devised the Hervey Bay Esplanade 20 year Vision report in 2019. This group has reviewed a lot of information and engagement materials and gained extensive learnings of the Esplanade foreshore. The group was supplied with a summary of the survey and submission data (as shown in this report) and asked to do the following:

- Review the material in reference to the Remit of this project –
How do we collaboratively develop an approach for managing incidents of illegal vegetation damage? - including the following elements:
 - ✓ *Fencing and Future of the Site*
 - ✓ *Vegetation Damage*
 - ✓ *Mitigation and Collaborative way forward*
- Review the material in relation to the Esplanade Panel's Recommendations in 2019
- Review the material in relation to the Esplanade Wider Engagement Report of 2019

*Please note, as restrictions for holding group meetings were lifted 10 days earlier than expected to 20 people, the session was held face-to-face in mid June.

3.3.4 Other Feedback

Informal comments were received via Council's Facebook posts in relation to communicating about the consultation. These comments were not included in the engagement analysis and evaluation. Individuals were encouraged to complete the survey to formalise their feedback.

3.4 CONSTRAINTS AND ISSUES

Council experienced the following issues and constraints during the engagement process.

3.4.1 Covid-19

Council had to alter its engagement plan to be able to adhere to covid-19 restrictions. Under these restrictions Council was unable to hold face-to-face engagement. Council resolved to proceed with the consultation, due to the importance of the issue to the community, and not delay as there was no indication when restrictions would be lifted. Council decided to write to key stakeholders in replacement of holding face-to-face consultation, these included, but not limited to, local property owners and residents, Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation, as well as community and environment groups.



3.4.2 Survey

Upon the launch of the survey it was identified that there were some technical errors with the engagement platform. The survey wasn't responsive when accessed from a mobile device or tablet, and the captcha used to verify human interface with the survey was malfunctioning. Councils Community Development and Engagement team raised the functionality faults with the platforms technicians and resolutions were put in place within a 2 hour time frame.

It was identified upon further investigation that the issues experienced with the captcha and also further reported issues to submissions of surveys was user interface error and not a technical fault.



4 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

4.1 SURVEY

4.1.1 Who participated

Council received 446 survey responses. The below diagram outlines the survey participation.

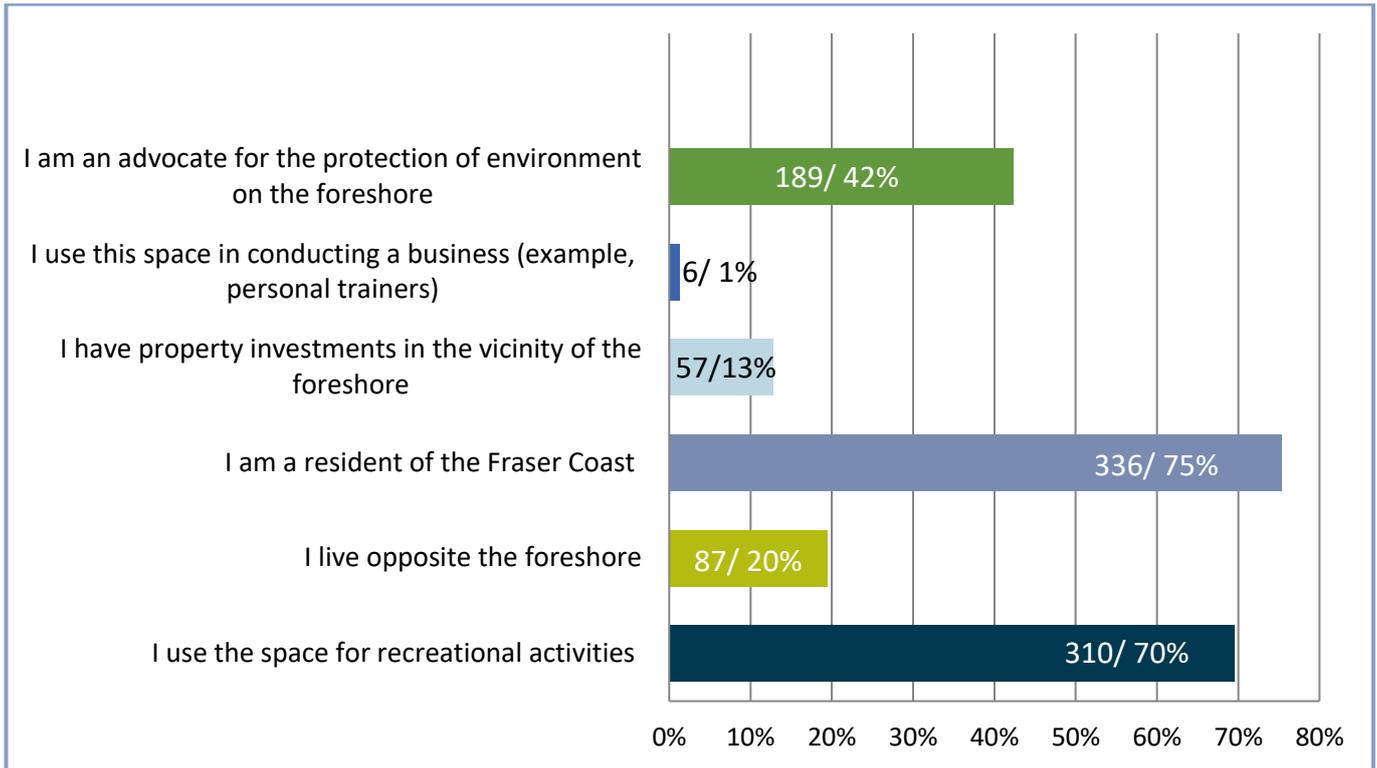


4.1.2 Survey Questions & Results

Below is a summary of the survey questions and results, including number of responses and percentages for each question. Some questions were open ended questions or had 'Other/Comment' fields – these answers have been themed with comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme.

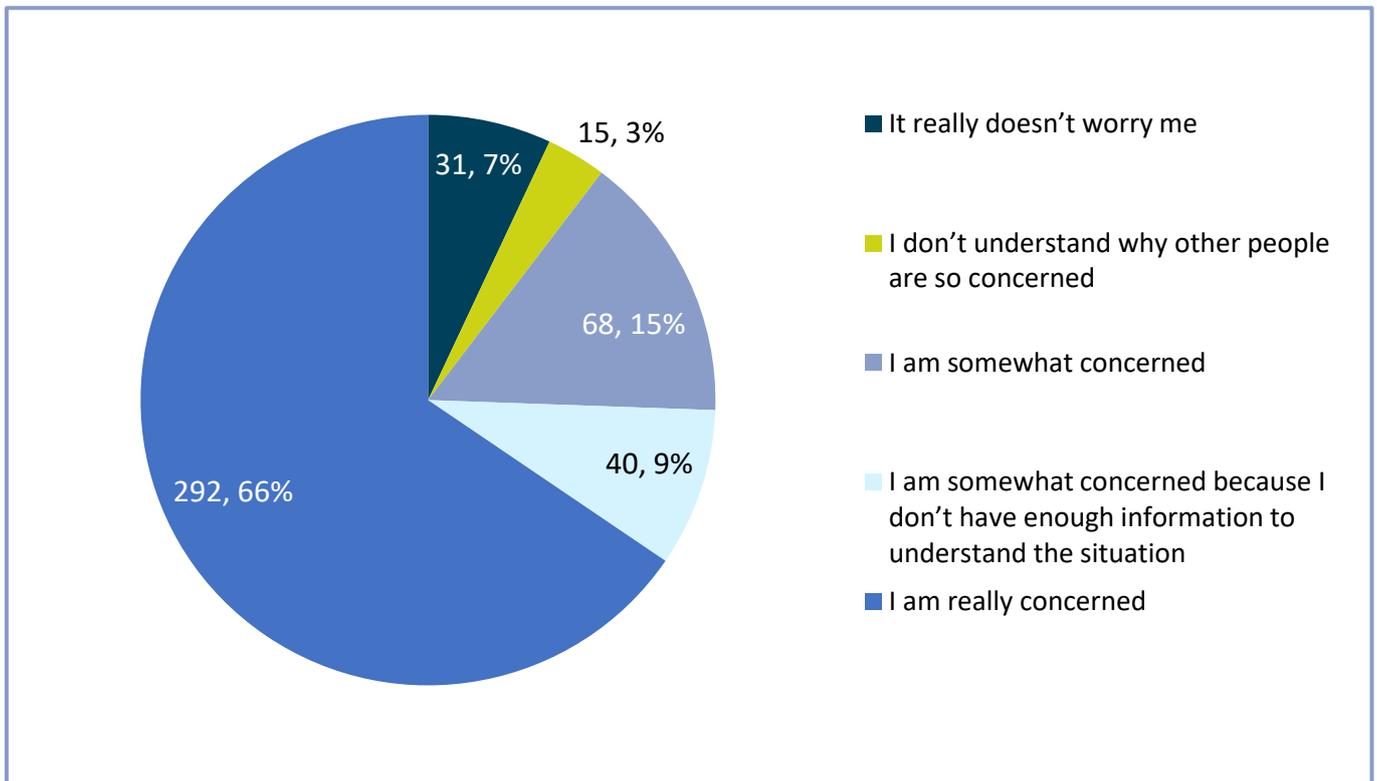
Q 1 - How are you connected to the Point Vernon foreshore?

The majority of respondents (75%) were residents of the Fraser Coast, with 33% of respondents either living or owning property in the Point Vernon area. 42% were advocates for the protection of the environment and 70% of respondents use the space for recreational activities. Only 1% of respondents conducted their business in the area.



Q2 - Which statement best reflects your level of concern on the current incidents of illegal vegetation damage?

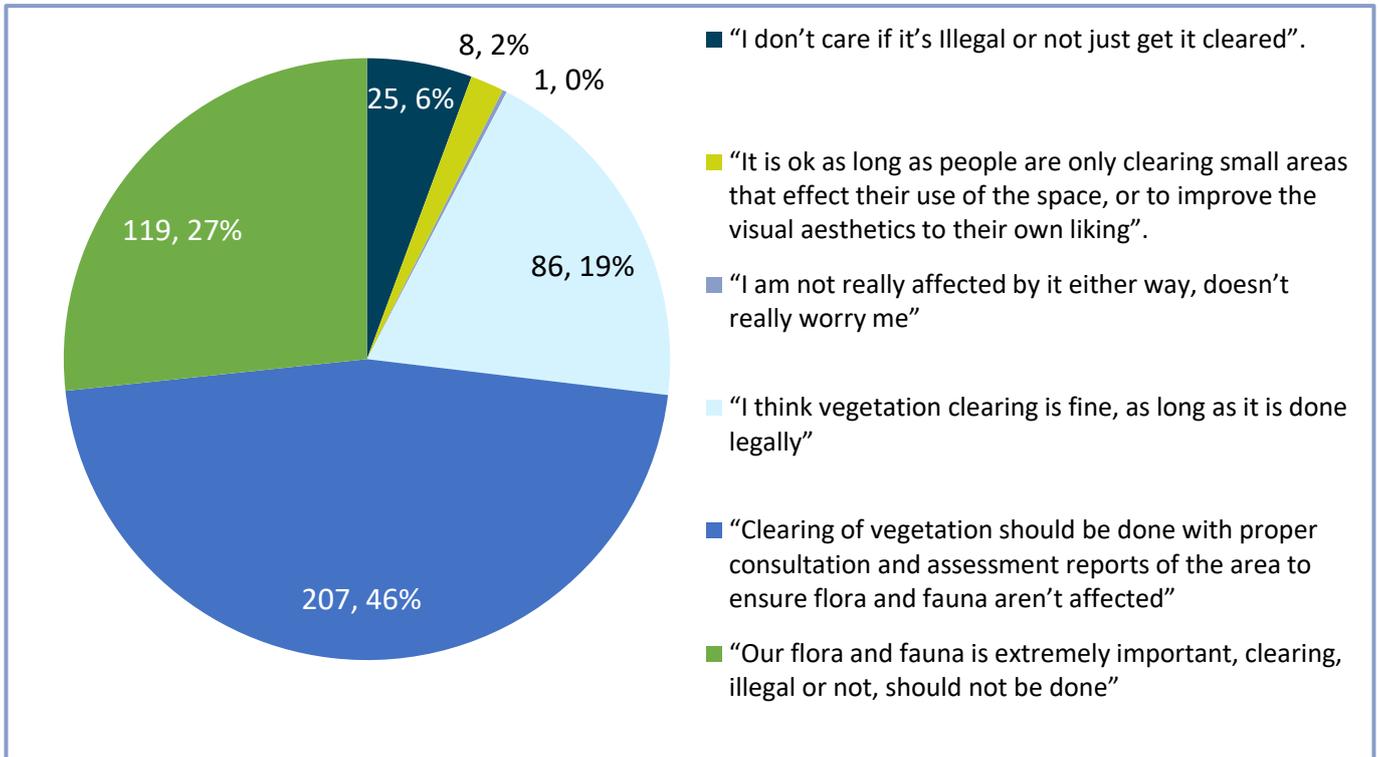
90% of respondents indicated they were ‘somewhat concerned’ to ‘really concerned’ about the current incidents of illegal vegetation damage. 10% of respondents were either ‘not worried’ or couldn’t ‘understand why other people were so concerned’ by the incidents.





Q3- Which statement best reflects your level of tolerance for illegal vegetation damage?

27 % of respondents answered that they had ‘no support for clearing of vegetation at all’, with 46% of respondents answered that they believed ‘clearing of vegetation should be done with proper consultation and assessment reports of the areas to ensure flora and fauna aren’t affected’. 19% answered that they think ‘vegetation clearing is fine, as long as it is done legally’. 8% of respondents believed that the ‘illegal clearing was ok’ or it was ‘ok when people were clearing small areas for their own use or improvement of visual aesthetics’.



Q4- Thinking about yours answers to questions 2 & 3, why do you feel this way?

This question required an open response, respondents typed their responses into a text box provided. Below is a breakdown of their comments including themes and comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme. The top three themes were Maintenance of the area, Preservation and Protection (General), and Purpose and Value of Vegetation. Please see [methodology section](#) for how survey responses were themed.

Theme	No. of Responses	Comments/Examples
Maintenance of the area	112	<p>"We believe the area is currently not being managed well enough to mitigate the fire risk"</p> <p>"Up this end of the esplanade it is untidy and overgrown, especially with dead fallen trees and we've experienced lots of rats and brown snakes in our yards."</p> <p>"Noxious weeds must be removed by law and the foreshore across from us have noxious weeds..."</p>



Purpose & Value of vegetation	<p>79</p>	<p><i>"vegetation especially along the foreshore, helps prevent erosion and stabilise the land, and is therefore really important to look after it and keep it..."</i></p> <p><i>"Provides shelter and shade for people and wildlife"</i></p> <p><i>"I have lived in Hervey Bay for 40 years and from a practical point of view have seen the benefits of native vegetation when coastal erosion related weather events occur"</i></p>
Protection & Preservation (General)	<p>76</p>	<p><i>"I think we need to preserve our natural environment within the scope of the law and not take things into our own hands."</i></p> <p><i>"My philosophy is that we need to protect and look after our environment."</i></p> <p><i>"The foreshore belongs to the community and should be protected for future generations to enjoy, and retain our natural heritage"</i></p>
Protection & Preservation – (specific to Fauna & Flora)	<p>74</p>	<p><i>"Foreshore flora and fauna should be protected"</i></p> <p><i>"I am interested in a sustainable ecological approach concerning the preservation and maintenance of our fauna and flora."</i></p> <p><i>"Flora and fauna have an important role within the natural environment. Any damage- legal or illegal, to either can have long-term effects on the natural environment"</i></p>
Protecting the Foreshore & its Natural Beauty	<p>72</p>	<p><i>"Having a natural shorefront sets us apart from the concrete wastelands found all up and down the Queensland Coast."</i></p> <p><i>"Our natural environment is a valuable asset, attracting visitors and giving residents a place to enjoy. Our coastline is still natural and accessible to all residents - this is unique and needs to be protected."</i></p> <p><i>"We moved to Hervey Bay and Point Vernon, in particular, because, although attempts had been made to clear the foreshore, there were still plenty of areas of relative natural beauty"</i></p>
Personal Gain/Entitlement	<p>54</p>	<p><i>"Clearing so people can improve their sea views is just plain wrong"</i></p> <p><i>"If you don't own it - don't touch it"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't believe vegetation should be cleared just to improve the views of some homes along the Esplanade..."</i></p>
Accountability & Enforcement	<p>49</p>	<p><i>"The fact that this survey is about ILLEGAL land clearing should imply that there is a penalty for this activity"</i></p> <p><i>"Illegal clearing of trees should not be tolerated."</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe fines and penalties should be more enforced, better security, video surveillance..."</i></p>
Stop the Vandalism & Destruction	<p>36</p>	<p><i>"It must be stopped, and the foreshore replanted before we lost it altogether"</i></p> <p><i>"...take a tough stand against this vandalism!"</i></p> <p><i>"It has to stop"</i></p>



Collaboration & Balance (Mutually Beneficial)	30	<p><i>"...please the landholders and protect flora and fauna, plant low growing shrubs."</i></p> <p><i>"...we need to strike a balance between nature and being able to appreciate the foreshore"</i></p> <p><i>"There should be a viable solution to provide adequate vegetation to wildlife and flora while not blocking the pristine views our amazing coastline provides..."</i></p>
Ocean Views	29	<p><i>"a filtered view of the water is desirable, not a blocked view."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to view the ocean when walking along the footpath and not dead and overgrown vegetation..."</i></p> <p><i>"This town needs views of the magnificent ocean and not of unsightly scrublands"</i></p>
Beautification & Enhancement	29	<p><i>"It would be much better to keep them pruned and beautify the esplanade, to keep it safe, useful and hopefully prevent some of the intentional damage."</i></p> <p><i>"Council has done an excellent job of beautifying the beachfront along [the Esplanade] whereby larger trees remain and the smaller trees removed and picnic areas built. I would like to see a similar approach adopted for the Pt Vernon..."</i></p> <p><i>"Lots of Palms and coconut trees would transform the foreshore giving it a more tropical, paradise feel which would be great for tourism and locals alike."</i></p>
Council's Responsibility	27	<p><i>"This would not happen if Council would maintain it"</i></p> <p><i>"Council have legal responsibility for vegetation management in public areas. It should not be necessary for others to take any action."</i></p> <p><i>"It's the responsibility of council, we pay our rates and deserve to have our areas clean and tidy."</i></p>
Area for everyone	25	<p><i>"The assets belong to every ratepayer and not just those who live on the foreshore"</i></p> <p><i>"...our foreshore is for everyone and part of the beauty and attraction is the old growth trees..."</i></p> <p><i>"Our vegetated foreshore is a public asset for the benefit and enjoyment of all residents and visitors alike."</i></p>
Clearing in consultation with authorities & lawfully	23	<p><i>"...all clearing should be done with consultation and consideration"</i></p> <p><i>"I think vegetation needs to be cleared legally, so that the correct vegetation is removed."</i></p> <p><i>"If done legally clearing can be ok."</i></p>
Tourism	21	<p><i>"Green tourism is the way of the futures"</i></p> <p><i>"We are a tourist destination and we need to showcase views of the bay"</i></p> <p><i>"We live in a fast growing city not the bush we are dependent on tourists and our best asset is our foreshore, ... people who visit come to see the views so why not make the best of them."</i></p> <p><i>"The existing vegetation along the Harvey Bay foreshore is valuable and is what sets Harvey Bay apart from other coastal villages. It has significant tourism and recreational value."</i></p>



Clear undergrowth	18	<p>"Plant appropriate trees for shade and no dense undergrowth to hide the view"</p> <p>"Residents of the Foreshore/Esplanade are becoming increasingly frustrated by the general lack of attention to large areas where mass undergrowth, scrubby bush and new saplings are left unattended"</p> <p>"I believe the area should be kept clear of dead wood and undergrowth..."</p>
Bushfire hazard	17	<p>"All the dead trees, shrubs and grass are a bushfire hazard. Just clear it before the next bushfire season"</p> <p>"... to prevent fires we need to clear the 'dead wood'."</p> <p>"I am seriously concerned that the build-up of vegetation will be a major bush fire risk to nearby residents."</p>
Fencing & Signage against	15	<p>"Using signs and fences unfairly targets all homes in the vicinity."</p> <p>"I hate walking along the footpath and looking at the signs council has put up informing of the vegetation vandalism"</p> <p>"Placing large fences is ridiculously, immature and will look terrible."</p>

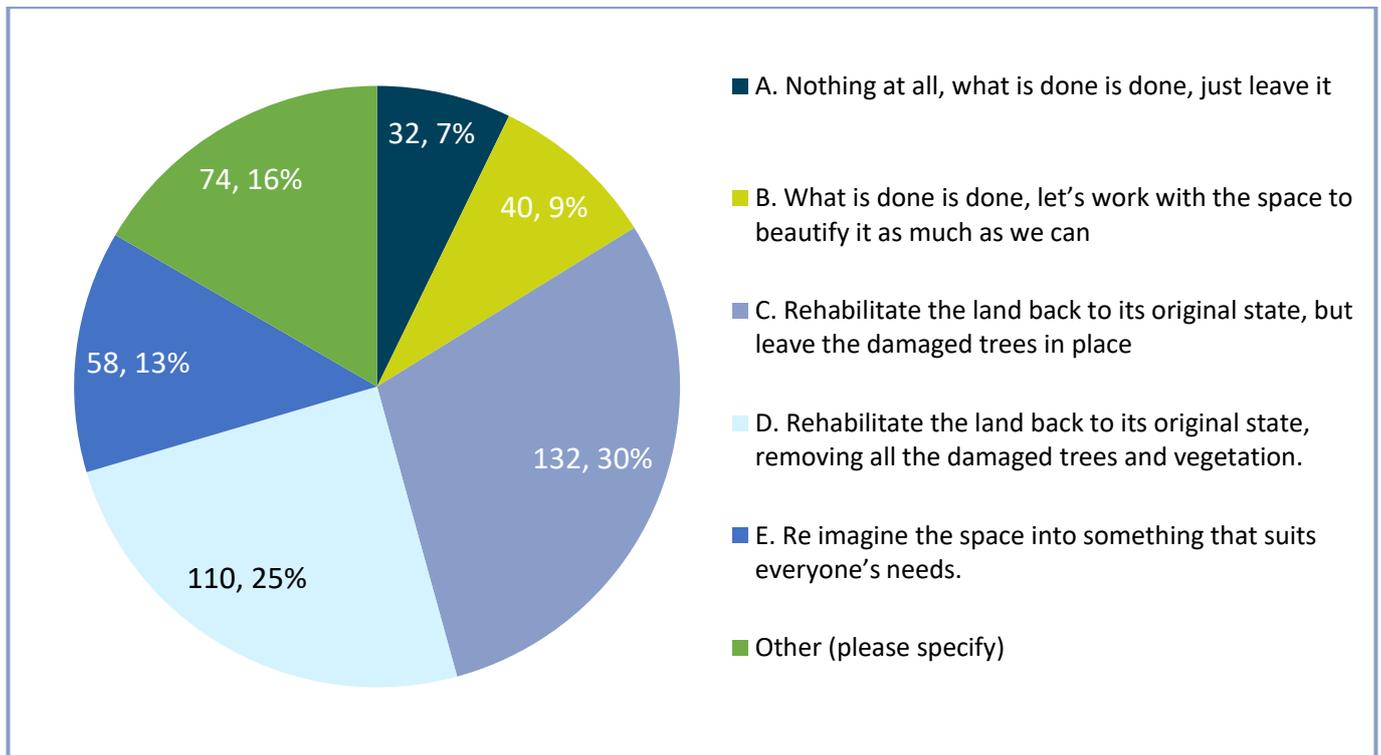
The below themes could not be contributed to any other higher level themes. There was also a small number of comments that either did not relate to the topic of the question or survey and could not be contributed to any theme.

Themes - between 14 & 10 responses	Themes - between 9 & 5 responses	Themes - between 4 & 1 responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High Rates – for views in Esplanade area ▪ Too much development/ loss of vegetation ▪ Retaining Point Vernon Distinctive Character ▪ Natural vegetation over non-natives ▪ Communication & Community Engagement ▪ No clearing ▪ Heritage for future generations ▪ Health and Wellbeing ▪ Reduces the value properties [vegetation with no views] ▪ Concern of poisons in public spaces ▪ General Security of the area' ▪ Clear vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain & Rehabilitate back to natural state ▪ Rehabilitate with different vegetation (incl. appropriate native vegetation) ▪ Sustainability ▪ History of mature trees and grass [what is there now isn't how it's always been] ▪ [specific] clear dead vegetation ▪ Accessibility ▪ Point Vernon resident views a priority ▪ Education ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Point Vernon should be similar to the rest of the Esplanade ▪ Recreation ▪ Don't punish everyone ▪ Economic Development ▪ Chose to live here because of natural environment ▪ Vegetation and Land Management Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not enough and quality of consultation ▪ Indigenous law and involvement ▪ state revenue increased valuations [because of views that don't exist] ▪ Fencing & signage for ▪ Low growing vegetation over e.g large trees ▪ Ongoing issue that hasn't been addressed ▪ Importance of Dead vegetation [specific] ▪ Cost to Council and the community ▪ Importance of Community volunteering program ▪ Laws need to be changed ▪ Legislation ▪ Ecosystems ▪ Importance of housing and development on the foreshore ▪ Reduction of rates for those who don't have views [that live on the Esplanade] ▪ Overall increase of vegetation along the foreshore



Q5 - What would you like to see happen in the area where the illegal vegetation damage has occurred?

55% of respondents answered they believed that ‘the area should be rehabilitated’. However, 30% believed that the ‘damaged trees and vegetation should be left in place’, while 25% believed that the ‘damaged trees and vegetation should be removed’. 13% identified that ‘the space should be reimagined into a space that suits everyone’s needs’. 7% of respondents answered they believed that ‘nothing should be done and the space should be just left as is’, while 9% responded that ‘the space should be worked with to be beautified as much as possible’.



16% of respondents chose ‘Other’ – below is a breakdown of their comments including themes and comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme.

Theme	No. of Responses	Comments/Examples
Rehabilitate back to natural state	20	"Rehabilitate land back to its original state" "Rehabilitate the land back to its original state, removing all the damaged trees and vegetation. Also fence off the new plantings and sign post the reason for it." "Rehabilitate the land and replant with native trees and shrubs. Erect a barrier so vandals can't destroy them again."
Rehabilitate with different vegetation	11	"Remove damaged vegetation, beautify in a more controlled manner" "Rehabilitate the land and replant with native trees and shrubs. Erect a barrier so vandals can't destroy them again."



Security and Safety	5	<p>"I think the area should be fenced off because of poisons and contamination, but not in an ugly way."</p> <p>" Broadcast that more trees will be planted to replace the poisoned ones within a proximity activated surveillance area"</p> <p>"the only answer to protect the Esplanade is the use of cameras ."</p>
Fencing and Signage (education)	19	<p>"a specific sign saying the trees were damaged illegally, and why native vegetation is important. i.e use it as an educational opportunity."</p> <p>"erect signage to the height of the damaged vegetation warning of the consequences and leave in place until the land has been Rehabilitated "</p> <p>"if any illegal vegetation damage occurs, council should secure the area and allow the vegetation to recover; the fencing will also block any view that the illegal destruction has created (very probably the reason for the destruction) and thus act as a deterrent against future vandalism."</p>
Leave damaged vegetation	5	<p>"leave damaged trees in place for bird nesting "</p> <p>"leave dead trees yes, but also take the opportunity to plant additional trees and understory"</p>
Remove damaged vegetation	9	<p>"As long as it is rehabilitated I don't mind if the damaged trees are left. (As long as they pose no danger to anyone)"</p> <p>"Rehabilitate land back to its original state, remove dead trees and have a view blocker until vegetation has grown."</p> <p>"Rehabilitate the land remove damaged trees; dead trees can become hazards, replanting with suitable vegetation that will suit the needs of the space keeping in mind open spaces to include an appreciation of the view."</p>
Maintain foreshore	8	<p>"mitigate fire risk refer"</p> <p>"A filtered view through attractive vegetation that is maintained is desirable. Low native grasses to aid against erosion, flowering natives for insect life, attractive shade trees would all create a beautiful vista for our area"</p> <p>"Maintained lawn and mulch underneath it for all to enjoy. Plant long lived trees that suit the subtropical climate and appearance of Hervey Bay."</p>
Accountability and Enforcement Action	6	<p>"Monitor people's behaviour and hold them accountable for destroying flora and fauna."</p> <p>"Tidy up the mess, and refer the culprit to the police."</p> <p>"With costs fully recovered from those responsible"</p>

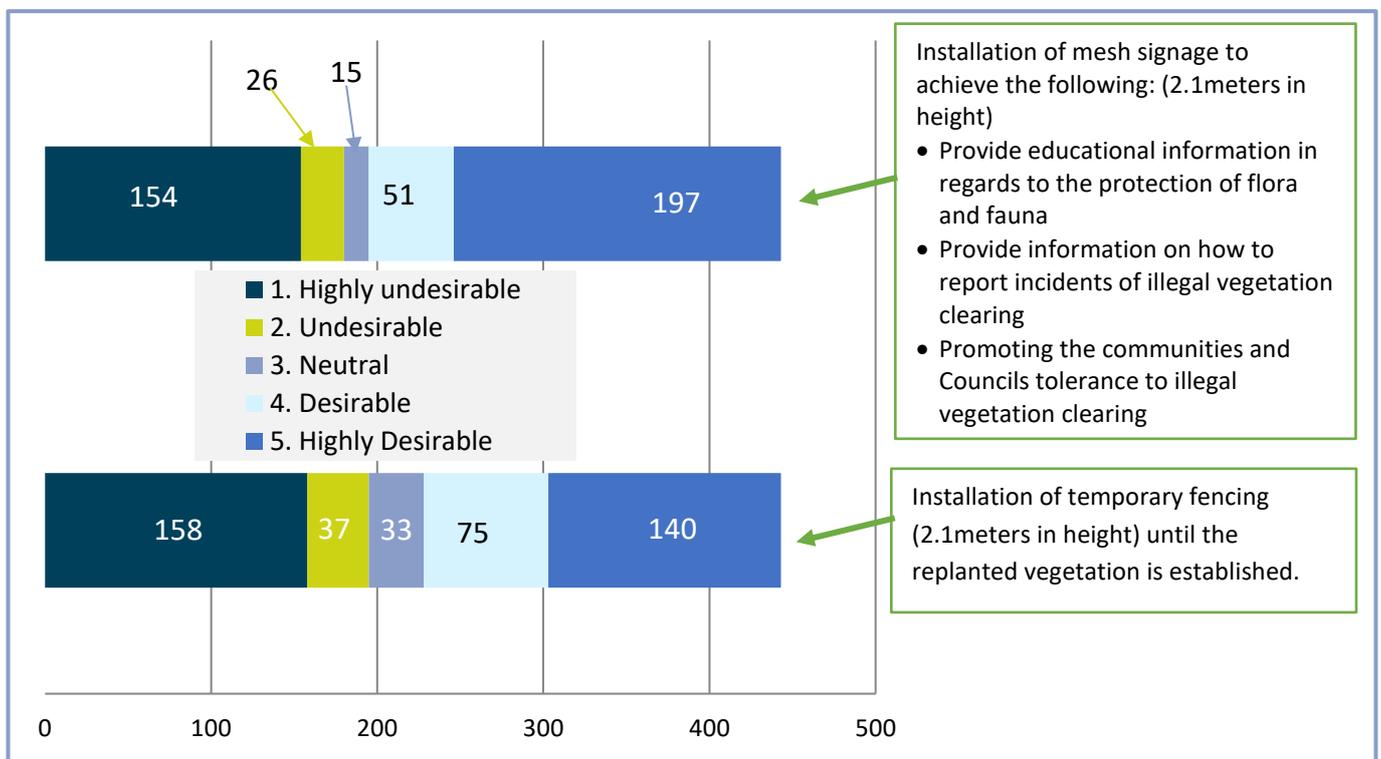


Q6 -Council has an obligation in protecting the health and safety of the community. Soil contamination has occurred due to the method of illegal vegetation damage and as such, the area must be secured from public access until such times as soil testing clears the site. How do you rate the following proposed activities:

The mesh signage fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 56% (248) of respondents, while 40% (180) of respondents believed that the mesh fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable. 15 (3%) respondents had a neutral answer.

The temporary fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 49% (215) of respondents, while 44% (195) of respondents believed that the temporary fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable. 33 (7%) respondents had a neutral answer.

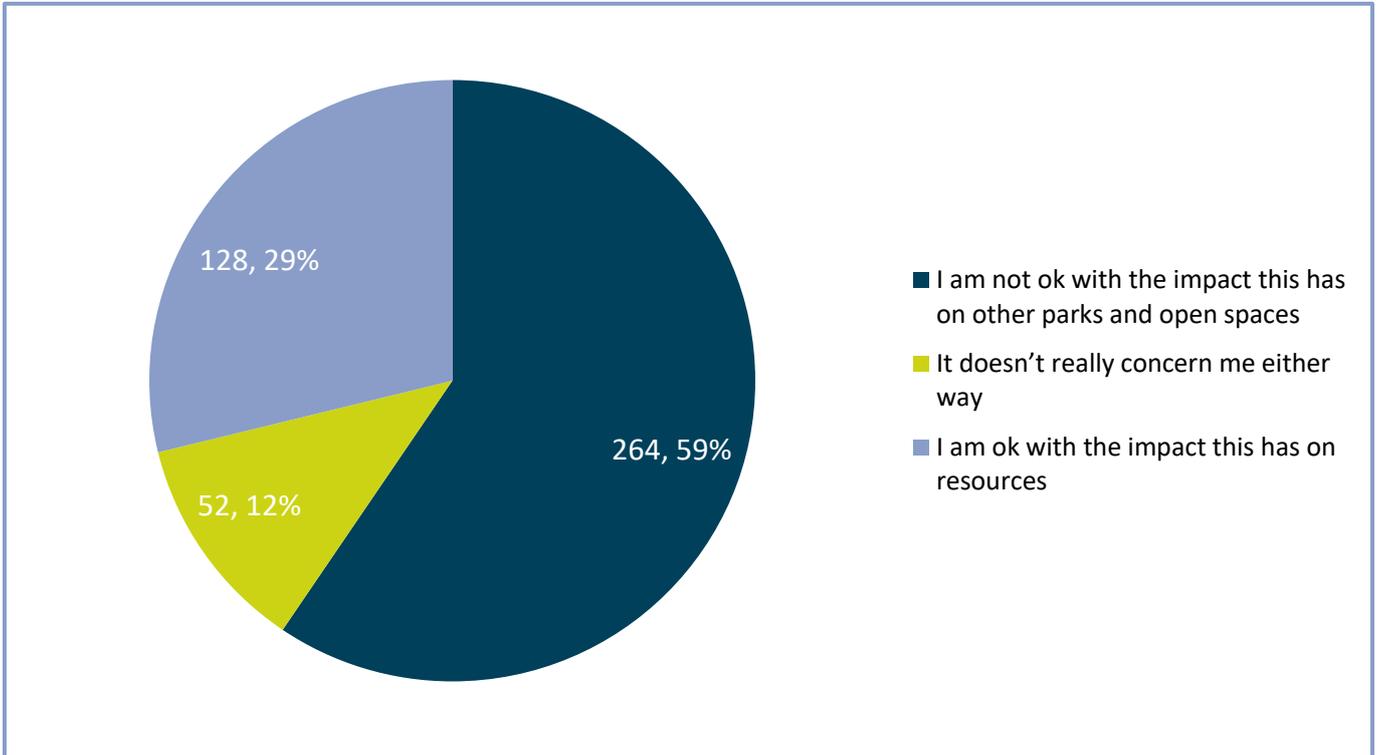
Please see appendices for examples of fencing: [Examples of Mitigation Fencing](#) & [Survey Question 6](#)





Q7- Illegal vegetation damage comes at cost to Council and the Community; this cost can defer resources from other activities in looking after our natural environment. How do you feel about this impact?

59% of respondents answered that they were 'not ok with the impact the incidents were having on other parks and open spaces'. 30% of respondents answered that they were ok with the impact it was having on other resources, while 12% were neutral.



189 respondents (42%) commented in the 'Other or Comments' field – below is a breakdown of their comments including themes and comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme.

Theme	No. of Responses	Comments/Examples
Fines/Legal retribution	40	"Where illegal vegetation damage can be prosecuted, it must be. Fines and penalties to match restitution costs." "Find the perpetrators and make them pay for the fencing and rehabilitation." "Where illegal vegetation damage can be prosecuted, it must be. Fines and penalties to match restitution costs."
Security	9	" better still install security cameras Live stream the cameras so it works as security and overseas visitors can see the foreshore and activities " "Vegetation needs to be replaced, security cameras and improved solar lighting all along the Pt Vernon area increases security and reduces criminal activity." "All destruction should be monitored and perpetrators heavily fined. Maybe security inspections regularly conducted at night."



<p>Maintenance of Area</p>	<p>52</p>	<p>"If Council maintained the Foreshore to a satisfactory level they would not need to worry about illegal vegetation destruction nor waste money erecting ugly view destroying fences."</p> <p>"If regular and proper maintenance was carried out by council this type of damage may not occur."</p> <p>"I feel that the damage would not happen if council cleaned up to began with"</p>
<p>Fencing For and Against</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>"While I do not agree with what someone has done in relation to killing off mature trees. I don't agree with erecting a temporary fence. A total waste of resources."</p> <p>"Punishing everyone is not the way to go we need to prosecute the guilty and recover cost from the guilty. Why should I and others on our morning walk be confronted by ugly fences and signs."</p> <p>"Need to make sure area is fenced off and signed do that resources are not wasted with reoffending"</p> <p>"Fence off the area and repair damage when future funds become available."</p>
<p>Collaboration/Mutually beneficial</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>"I believe council could proactively review the foreshore and compromise on the needs of every one where all parties may be satisfied and avoid this issue all together."</p> <p>"If members of the community are willing and able to assist in terms of 'manpower' to keep weeds under control and grass levels low, of course in consultation with Council, I think this could be beneficial to all in our community. We are enjoying living back in Point Vernon on the foreshore, and are more than happy to assist if able."</p> <p>"Time spent dealing with this would be best spent working with residents to get a win win situation"</p>
<p>To costly</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>"The reason I am unhappy with the mesh fence, is that it is a waste of ratepayer's money. Put up a plain fence. Cheap and nasty. "</p> <p>"We are wasting valuable resources. Fine the people responsible and make them liable for the cost of the work done."</p>
<p>Agree or Disagree with level of impact for instances of damage</p>	<p>59</p>	<p>"While I do not agree with what someone has done in relation to killing off mature trees. I don't agree with erecting a temporary fence. A total waste of resources. "</p> <p>"Happy that the rehabilitation and education is occurring after the fact - Not OK with it happening in the first place."</p> <p>"Illegal damage is NOT OK, but spending \$\$\$ on fencing is NOT the solution. Don't throw good money after bad. Be proactive, tidy up and replant when you are able."</p>



Q8 - Do you agree with the following inclusions in the Hervey Bay Esplanade Wider Engagement Report and panel report developed in 2019, in reference to the management of native vegetation and trees?

31% percent respondents listed removal of native vegetation and trees as a main threat to their enjoyment of the esplanade.

(supported by 60% of respondents)

Preserving the natural environment/vegetation was the most mentioned vision (34%) for Esplanade.

(supported by 73% of respondents)

Our vision for Point Vernon is:

*To maintain and improve all current assets. To build on the family friendly and accessible parklands **without intruding on native flora and fauna**. To protect and nurture the land and sea environment, with specific regard for the turtle hatchling area. Point Vernon to remain primarily a residential area.*

(supported by 85% of respondents)

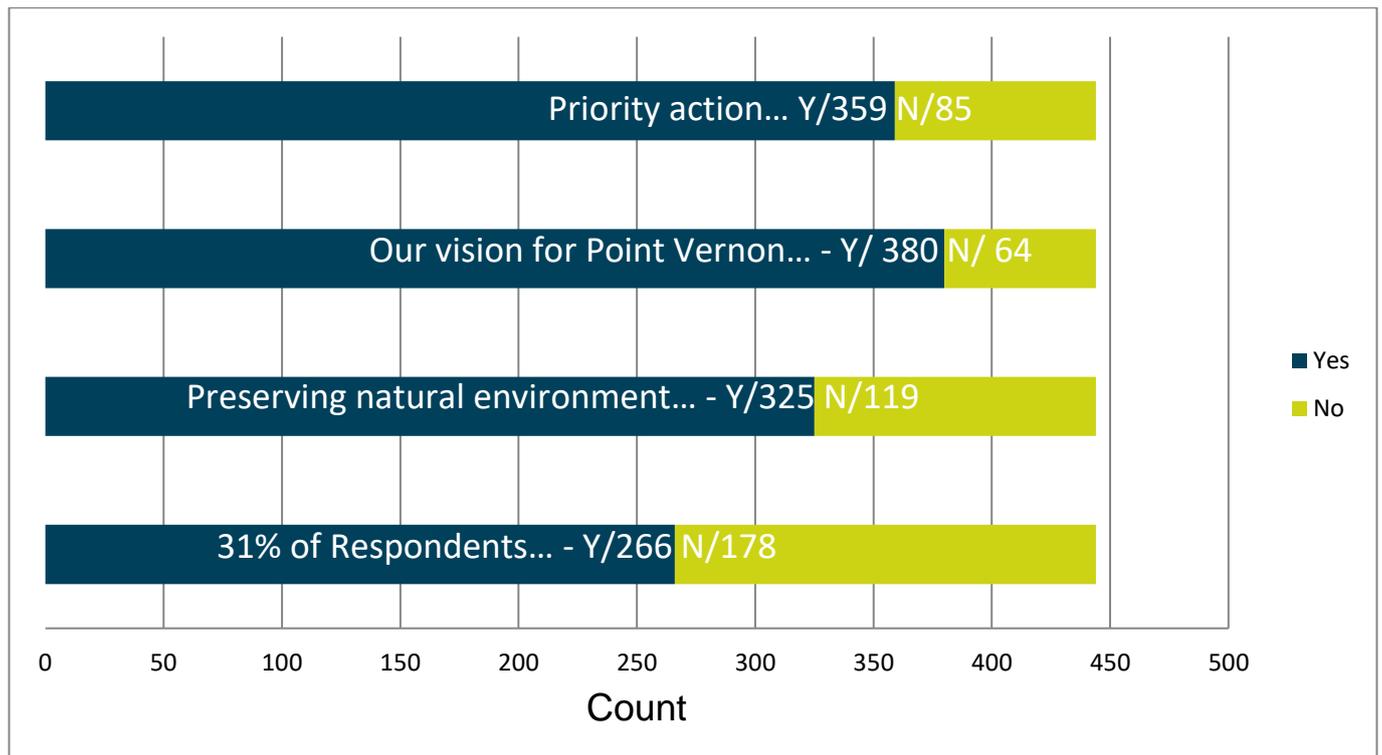
Priority action:

Protection, preservation and sustainable management of the natural environment - Preserve and maintain existing native vegetation

Overall rationale/reasoning:

Responsibility to preserve the native coastal ecosystems for future generations.

(supported by 80% of respondents)





Q9 - In reflection on your answers today, what do you feel are the two most important objectives in working collaboratively to develop a solution that meets everyone’s wants and needs? Outline the Objectives most important to you:

This question required an open response, the following table is a summary of respondents comments including themes and comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme. The top three themes from this question were preservation and rehabilitation of the natural vegetation at Point Vernon, the maintenance of the natural vegetation areas at Point Vernon, and the accountability of those who complete these acts as well as the enforcement of policies and local laws in relation to this issue. Please see [methodology section](#) for how survey responses were themed.

Q9/Themes	No. Responses	Comments/Examples
Preservation & Rehabilitation	217	"maintain and protect our natural vegetation" "maintain the natural foreshore at Point Vernon" "preserving the natural foreshore" "maintain the uniqueness of our foreshore" "...fulfil our role has caretakers of the land"
Maintenance of the area	92	"manage the esplanade consistently across the 18 kilometres" "remove weeds and non-native species" "clean the area up" "maintenance of undergrowth" "keep vegetation natural, but not overgrown" "protect the foreshore but also keep it maintained"
Accountability & Enforcement	83	"hold the offenders accountable" "produce consequences for illegal tree clearing" "increase oversight by Council Officers" "work to catch who are causing damage and penalise" "enforce the adopted policy" "increase fines for non-compliance"
Education	62	"educate people - why natural veg is important" "Education of how coastal vegetation works" "organise educational sessions" "education of the impacts..." "education and awareness..."
Ocean Views	55	"maintain ocean views" "all of the Esplanade to be able to see the sea" "clear ocean views" "Open views of ocean in popular areas" "water views" "retain views and most trees"
Protecting Fauna & Flora	50	"Protection of foreshore flora and fauna" "vigorously maintain esplanade flora and fauna" "conservation of wildlife areas" "to preserve our flora and fauna for the future" "maintain natural Fauna and habitat along our foreshore"
Collaboration & Balance (Mutually Beneficial)	42	"working collaboratively is very important" "balance between useability and preserving nature" "work with the community..." "shared vision for Esplanade residents and Council"



		"work with residents to achieve favourable outcomes" "volunteer workers to assist in foreshore maintenance"
Beautification & Enhancement	46	"Beautification of land with no damage to wildlife" "enhance the appearance..." "prune and enhance for tourism, economic and family" "envision new ways to enhance the area ruined" "create parkland with trees to provide shade" "incorporating community spaces for recreation"
Communication & Community Engagement	37	"communication before action" "consult with all Fraser Coast Residents" "gathering as much public input as possible" "maintain public input" "genuine consultation with users" "engage the community in the rehab of this area"
Stop the vandalism & destruction	30	"stop killing vegetation for personal views" "stop environmental destruction" "Stop illegal vegetation clearing" "Stop further vandalism" "Stop the destruction of wildlife habitat"
Security & Safety	25	"safety for those using the esplanade" "use cameras to help prevent vandalism" "use of street lighting" "make safe for everyone" "cameras to deter the guilty if possible" "put in cctv cameras to record dodgy activities"
Rehabilitate back to natural state	20	"The area is returned to its natural state" "to bring back to its original state" "Retain fauna and flora in its natural state" "To keep parts of the foreshore in a natural state" "Establish and maintain natural Foreshore ecosystems"
Rehabilitate with different vegetation (incl. appropriate native vegetation)	18	"mature trees" "remove overgrown non-native trees and bushes" "smarter choices on what vegetation is used" "clear the understory" "plant low growing vegetation" "vegetation may not have been suitable in the first place" "maintenance of quality native tree species"
Sustainability	18	"to have a acceptable sustainable long term plan" "protection, preservation and sustainable management" "Managing a sustainable natural environment along foreshore" "Council develop a Regional Sustainability Plan." "Sustainable management of the environment"
Fencing & Signage against	17	"no ugly fence" "Surveillance and fines. Not fences..." "don't put up signage and barricades" "Don't put fences or mesh up this is an ugly solution" "fences are not inclusive they are offensive" "don't waste money on fencing/mesh"



Fencing & signage for	16	"fence of the damaged area" "screening and protecting the area" "fencing of damaged areas with positive signage" "fence of some areas permanently" "temporary fencing" "put up barrier fencing..."
Some level of Clearing along the Foreshore	15	"Clear undergrowth" "Clear the Foreshore" "actually consider clearing the foreshore" "sustainable clearing above ground cover" "keep the mature trees and clear the rubbish shrub"
Clear Dead Vegetation	14	"clear dead vegetation and rehabilitate" "Clear the dead trees and replant new trees" "Clear dead trees and branches" "remove all foreign and dead vegetation" "Remove only dead tree's replace with new where necessary"
Area for everyone	14	"family friendly" "protect the foreshore for everyone not just a few" "... for all to enjoy" "...spaces that suit everyone" "understand the best solution to allow everyone's enjoyment"
Accessibility	13	"accessible to all residents" "we need to maintain accessible access..." "accessibility for relaxation and recreation" "lots of public accessible areas" "managed access to the foreshore/recreation areas" "improve beach accessibility"

The below themes could not be contributed to any other higher level themes. There was also a small number of comments that either did not relate to the topic of the question or survey and could not be contributed to any theme.

Themes - less than 10 responses	Themes - less than 5 responses	Themes - 2 or less responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't punish everyone ▪ Erosion ▪ Enhance Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Clearing ▪ Retaining Point Vernon Distinctive character ▪ Point Vernon Residents views a priority ▪ Economic Growth & Development ▪ Heritage for Future Generations ▪ Limit development ▪ You will not meet everyone's needs ▪ Negative views of Council's actions so far 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Best Foreshore in Australia ▪ Maintain a vegetation buffer against Northerly winds ▪ Removing red tape/doing things legally ▪ Don't waste money ▪ Council is voted in to decide ▪ Leave dead vegetation in place

Q10 - Do you want to keep up to date on this project, please leave your email address below?

375 of the 446 respondents provided their emails and responded yes to being kept up to date by Council on the outcome from the engagement process.



4.2 SUBMISSIONS

4.2.1 Who contributed

Submissions were received by groups and individuals from across the Fraser Coast Region. A summary of the 16 submissions are provided below. Please note, individual names of residents and businesses have been redacted for privacy and are referenced as 'resident' or type of business/industry. Please note Council received 1 submission from the Fraser Coast Property Industry Group, with 9 individual submissions attached. However, other groups submitted one combined submission from their whole group – for example the Fraser Coast Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.

4.2.2 Submission Feedback

Below is a summary of the submission responses including comment examples.

Stakeholder/Group	Comments Summary	Date
Resident, Point Vernon	There is a need to maintain weeds and unwanted species and ensure that they are controlled in these areas. <i>"I suggest that undergrowth should be better controlled, the oak particularly, & some of the thicker timbered areas"</i>	20/5/20
Resident, Pialba	The foreshore is a source of pride for Hervey Bay and an asset that is often complimented by visitors for its beautiful gardens and well-kept streets. Destruction of vegetation along any part of the foreshore should be counteracted with large signage that states the incident that has occurred.	19/5/20
Resident, Tinana	It is important, empowering and inductive to the community of Point Vernon to be part of solution-base stakeholders to the issue, in conjunction with Council and other stakeholders. <i>"an asset base approach would assist council immensely with monitoring and enforcements in regards to a participatory networks of locals."</i>	16/5/20
Resident, (unknown area)	Raised concerns in relation to the engagement process, mainly lack of face-to-face consultation processes. <i>Please refer to constraints section.</i>	19/5/20
Resident, (unknown area)	There is a need to look at impact developers are also having on land through clearing, as an example to the residents. Government agencies should look to promote community bush land, flora and fauna, and encourage to support it. Developers who undertake clearing need to show genuine reason to do so and then undertake replanting in other areas of the community. Development does not need to be halted, however requires better management in relation to vegetation clearance. <i>"as far as the esplanade is in its entirety is concerned it is one of the most beautiful urban strips of beach front that we have ever seen, and we have travelled a fair amount of the plant."</i>	19/5/20
Resident, Maryborough	Suggestion of a dob in a vandal style campaign to help target incidents of illegal vegetation damage.	29/4/20
Resident, Urraween (part of FCPIA)	Erection of fencing serves to punish residents living along the affected area and not just that of the potential offender. <i>"By installation of comers to deter those contemplating such an act and also assisting Council to prosecute any perpetrators may be the start."</i>	17/2/20
Resident, Point Vernon (part of FCPIA Submission)	<i>"our property could be devalued by as much as \$200,00 or more [by the erection of the fence]"</i>	10/2/20



	<i>"Now we are going to be severely penalized financially for as a result of an act someone else committed."</i>	
Resident, Point Vernon <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	<i>"Apart from the costs to the ratepayers it also reduced our property value considerably. It seems unfair to fence this area when there are other areas with damage also"</i> <i>"we hope more consideration will be given to this decision"</i>	10/2/20
Resident, Point Vernon <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	Previously Council has worked collaboratively with residents in successfully maintaining the foreshore, which resulted in residents taking pride in having tidy neat and cared for bush. <i>"In the interest of a better working relationship with between public and Council, Council should install security cameras to target those who seek to do damage"</i> <i>"Valuations will also drop proportionately on Mant, Spence and other streets"</i>	9/2/20
Resident, Point Vernon <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	<i>"Residents health will not be the only thing to suffer by this fence, property values will also no doubt take a nose dive. It will not just be the people in Mant Street or the Esplanade that will see their asset value reduced, it will surely have a ripple effect and the people one and two streets back will probably see the effect on their values as well."</i>	?/2/20
Business, Building Designer <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	The fencing proposed by Council will not only be an eyesore they will also be a financial burden to those adjacent to the fencing. It is estimated to reduce property values at around \$150,000 - \$200,000 for those in the street. <i>"as a result everyone in the street stands to suffer this financial catastrophe."</i> <i>"Many of the residents are elderly or at a stage in life where their residential properties represent a large portion of what they have built up over the course of their lifetime"</i> Through a Council run program where residents worked with Council in maintaining the area, residents developed a sense of pride in maintaining these areas for everyone to enjoy, again speaking to the theme of collaboration and adding community investment into the asset.	9/2/20
Resident, Point Vernon <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	The erection of a fence serves to punish the residents as a whole instead of targeting the offenders. <i>"my property will now have to remain an investment property at a lower rental income or I will sell and have to take a significant loss of value because of this decision"</i> <i>"this is my situation and how this fence will affect me personally, there are many more innocent residents in Mant Street, which this decision will affect in so many different ways."</i>	8/2/20
Business, Real Estate – <i>(part of FCPIA Submission)</i>	The fence seeks to severely devalue properties in the area, the effect may already be seen in the area following an auction in which <i>"the highest bid on the day" was "barley the value of the land pre fence"</i>	11/2/20
Resident, (unknown area)	There is an overall concern of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the value of eco systems in the area and the current legislation protecting the coastal environment. Lighting pollution is also of concern for the foreshore due to the impact of vegetation die back.	22/5/20



	<p><i>"I would prefer to see the Council seek professional input from the Department of Environment and Science for the management of future replanting of vegetation in the damaged areas rather than asking local residents for suggestions"</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to see extremely large permanent signage go up squarely in front of the damaged vegetation areas. "</i></p>	
<p>Wildlife Preservation Society QLD – Fraser Coast Branch</p>	<p>The Wildlife Preservation Society strongly support Council taking action and also community consultation relating to the topic.</p> <p><i>"It is the firm view of our Branch that Council and/or other relevant authorities should always take a strong stand against all activity that is illegal, particularly when it affects the environment and impacts on all other users of public space."</i></p> <p><i>"A three-pronged approach to management of all natural areas, including the foreshore, would minimise future illegal poisoning or other clearing of native vegetation:"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion of areas with native vegetation • Clear communication of community rights and responsibilities with regard to living adjacent to the foreshore. • Clear statements of policy, with appropriate sanctions for illegal activity. 	<p>31/5/20</p>



4.3 ESPLANADE PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1 Who participated

Invitations were sent to the Esplanade Panel members, via email, inviting them to participate in a two hour discussion about the illegal vegetation damage at Point Vernon. The invitation also provided the link to the survey if they wanted to participate in the survey – 5 members of the panel submitted responses. On the 12 June a discussion session was held with 8 panel members. Council received apologies from 4 panel members who would have liked to participate but due to personal reasons were not able to.

4.3.2 Panel Discussion & Feedback

The panel were provided with an overview of the survey data to review before the session, as well as tasked with reviewing their report and the wider engagement report as part of the Esplanade engagement in 2019.

The session focused on moving the panel members through a process of:

1. Firstly, evaluating their individual views on the issues - (What their views are and why they feel that way?).
2. Secondly, the panel were then tasked with developing a deeper understanding of the issues through analysis of survey data. During this section of the process they considered various views across the range of stakeholders through character case studies. Made up characters were used for anonymity purposes and to incorporate a variety of views into the discussion – including local residents, business/tourism advocates, environment advocates etc.
3. Thirdly, the panel were tasked with creating a forward (shared) vision that could respond to stakeholder needs – (What would it take to create a solution that responds everyone’s needs?).
4. Lastly, in conclusion of the evening – the panel were asked what had surprised them and what had challenged them.

The objectives of the discussion were:

- To determine the Esplanade panel’s recommendations in reviewing the Illegal Vegetation Damage survey data and Esplanade Report 2019.
- To discuss - How do we collaboratively develop an approach for managing incidents of illegal vegetation damage? - including the following elements:
 - Fencing and Future of the Site
 - Vegetation Damage
 - Mitigation and Collaborative way forward

4.3.2.1 What’s important to the panel?

The first two discussions of the night involved the panel answering the following two questions:

- Why have you come tonight? (1 response each)
- What’s important to you and Why do you feel that way? (multiple responses each)

Below is a breakdown of their comments including themes and comment examples – as well as the number of responses against the theme. The top four themes were, Protection and Preservation, Education and Awareness, Accountability and Enforcement, and Maintenance of the foreshore. Please see [methodology section](#) for how responses were themed.

Theme	No. of Responses	Comments/ Examples
Protection & Preservation	10	<i>‘Wildlife and natural environment and nature is an important aspect to our community – I like to see it protected’</i> <i>‘I live in Point Vernon – and I am Extremely concerned about vegetation damage and impact on local fauna’</i>



		<i>'We need to preserve natural beauty of the foreshore for future generations'</i>
Education & Awareness	7	<i>'Need to educate residents - of importance of foreshore protection and vegetation retention – i.e prevent erosion etc'</i> <i>'To create local awareness of the damage, costs etc and encourage people to report it'</i> <i>'Education regarding function of undergrowth of canopy, dead trees in relation to wildlife'</i>
Accountability & Enforcement	6	<i>'Concerned that those responsible for this poisoning believe it is ok for their own benefit without consequences to flora/fauna and community'</i> <i>'Stop illegal clearing – damages flora/fauna, expensive to fix, breaking the law obviously'</i> <i>'Education and info might be incorporated into a fenced zone with kiosk and security camera (some volunteer effort)'</i>
Maintenance of the Foreshore	6	<i>'Community groups to look after foreshore vegetation management – i.e weeding – replanting'</i> <i>'The dead or damaged flora be removed and replaced with new species of natives to the area'</i> <i>'While thick understory exists fire is a real danger to the whole environment'</i> <i>'Undergrowth must be cleared to protect children from vermin (snakes) – and locals made aware of the danger'</i>
Tourism	5	<i>'To ensure we have tried to do all we can in preserving Hervey Bay as a Tourist Mecca'</i> <i>'Ensuring the bay stays as one of the best coastal resorts'</i> <i>'I would like to see many more overseas visitors to our unique whale attractions and a well-managed foreshore would be a big draw card.'</i>
Civic responsibility	5	<i>'To have input into the damage done in my area of residence'</i> <i>'I wanted to see we find a positive solution'</i> <i>'Keep up to date with Council's management plans for the Esplanade/foreshore'</i>
Purpose and Value of Vegetation	4	<i>'Protect housing – trees provide mitigation from weather (e.g northerly winds)'</i> <i>'Protect flora – habitat for wildlife a- foreshore stability'</i>
Themes 2 or less (1)	8	Safety & Security (2) Accessibility (2) Fencing (temporary- for) (1) Economy and Employment (1) The act itself (vegetation damage) (1) The use of Poison in public areas (1)

4.3.2.2 What's important to the Community?

This discussion was used to get the panel thinking about other points of view in the community, considering other views that may be different to their own. Through analysing the survey data and character discussion – the panel were asked the following two questions:

- What's important to them (community)? (each stakeholder)
- What needs to happen (for the stakeholder)?

The panel were also asked to keep the last session's question of the evening in their minds during this discussion:

- What would it take to create a solution that responds everyone's needs?

Below is a breakdown of comments including themes and comment examples from the case study discussion. Number of responses was not relevant for this question as it was based on considering various views within the



community from case studies. As mentioned before this discussion was to get the panel members thinking about other points of view. Please see [methodology section](#) for how responses were themed.

Theme	What's Important to them?	What needs to happen?
Maintenance of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of service to the area has deteriorated • Clearing of undergrowth – maintenance of the undergrowth and non-natives • Keeping vermin under control • Weed control • Maintenance of the foreshore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Plan – incl. clearing and maintenance of the undergrowth • Weed control plan – through the Community Education Program • Boardwalks to be able to walk through the area? • Better maintenance of the grassy areas • More can be done to maintain vegetation • Need to enable small community groups – like the CEP • Work with Council
Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revegetation with ground cover • Natural areas need to be preserved • The area rehabilitated with better maintenance or grassy areas • Rehabilitate damaged area • Protect the environment • Loves the Natural beauty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassy areas • Ground cover to be considered as rehabilitation option • Restore vegetation damaged area
Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing seen as punishing the community • Fencing seen as necessary to stop further vandalism • Mesh fencing – but still only temporary • No fence it's an eyesore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary fencing – with educational mesh signage • Fencing as education • Fencing as punishment • Fencing to protect damaged areas
Security & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety – fire risk of the area • Poisons not being used – danger to wildlife and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Plan for the area – that includes regular cleaning/maintenance and provides safety to the area – incl. fire risk • Cameras • Tests soil for toxins regularly
Accountability & Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetrators to be held accountable • Punishment and restitution • Accountability and enforcement needs to be stronger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of vandalism to council be encouraged • Awareness of the costs of damage • Portable cameras in hot spots with warning signs • By bringing awareness to the wider community - to involve • Neighbourhood protection – keep watch for damage/ suspicious behaviour • rate increase from residences benefitting from damage - pay for rehabilitation and community education
Recreational Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love taking the kids for walks/bike rides watch wildlife • Hosting events and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways and recreation areas • Consider what areas are more sorted for events and beach access • Minimalist structures to host events and weddings • Better access to open spaces • Enhance and beautify for locals and tourists
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple access points



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach pathways • Plenty of parking • Existing specific areas for family activities and events (e.g weddings).
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education value of undergrowth – dead trees for habitat • Educational signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV advertising • Placing posters in parks, toilets, cafes and restaurant • Information at tourist places – parks, café’s and toilets • Engage clubs, community groups, caravan parks with awareness posters/ activities • Children’s arts program on tree’s and nature • School Program/Education – the importance of nature – children bring awareness to parents and the community

4.3.2.3 How do we move forward together?

This discussion involved considering different points of view within the community as well as the survey analysis and answering the following the question:

- What would it take to create a solution that responds everyone’s needs?

The panel were asked to consider the following elements in answering the above question:

- Policy and Legislation
- Commonalities and Outliers - between stakeholder needs
- Actions/Activities that could shift or change views or needs and how to make that happen

Below is a breakdown of comments from the discussion:

Policy & Legislation	Commonalities	Actions - Shift & Change	Outliers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal Management Act • Nature Conservation Act • Vegetation Management Act • Responsible for the Reserve – as Lessee • Environmental Protection Act • Council Policy • Native Title <p>* Council provided examples of legislation/ policy that needs to be considered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and maintaining native vegetation areas • Identification and observation of vegetation areas • Rehabilitation of the area • Penalties/ accountability for vandals • Education of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Education awareness – and lots of it • Education and Awareness programs through schools and wider community - (discussion included revival of the Community Environment Program (CEP) in the area) • Community garden activities • Community involvement being a part of it • Bring about more recreational activity • Environmental events and activities • Link to research centre – (the panel raised the idea of a research centre in their report last year – discussion on the night also went to the new property Council had purchased at Takura) • Signage – biodiversity and ecosystem –(educational) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never going to please everyone. • Always going to have opposing views. • Perception of the right to a view is never going to change.



4.3.2.4 *What has surprised you? and/ or What has challenged you?*

During the last session of the evening panel members were asked to consider:

- What has surprised you?
- What has challenged you?

Below is a breakdown of comments from the discussion:

Theme	Comments/ Examples
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council’s willingness to try to please everyone• That council hasn’t taken further action and resolution
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People’s sense of entitlement• A consistent complaint regarding fencing, understory and untidy vista’s• Surprised at people’s resistance to a temporary fence around the site• Lack of community awareness of the issue and environmental protection
Process/Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting expectations of strong differing views of some with resistance to protection• Balance between opposing views• Thinking we can shift



4.4 FEEDBACK RESULTS SUMMARY

4.4.1 Feedback – Vegetation Damage

There is a clear level of concern from the community in relation to the illegal vegetation damage. Through the theming of the engagement there was a clear message of preservation, protection and rehabilitation. In addition, maintenance of the area was also a major concern throughout the engagement.

The survey responses showed that 90% of respondents indicated they were ‘somewhat concerned’ to ‘really concerned’ about the current incidents of illegal vegetation damage.

The survey also showed, 27 % of respondents answered that they had ‘no support for clearing of vegetation at all’, with 46% of respondents answered that they believed ‘clearing of vegetation should be done with proper consultation and assessment reports of the areas to ensure flora and fauna aren’t affected’. 19% answered that they think ‘vegetation clearing is fine, as long as it is done legally’. 8% of respondents believed that the ‘illegal clearing was ok’ or it was ‘ok when people were clearing small areas for their own use or improvement of visual aesthetics’.

55% of respondents answered they believed that ‘the area should be rehabilitated’. However, 30% believed that the ‘damaged trees and vegetation should be left in place’, while 25% believed that the ‘damaged trees and vegetation should be removed’. 13% identified that ‘the space should be reimagined into a space that suits everyone’s needs’. 7% of respondents answered they believed that ‘nothing should be done and the space should be just left as is’, while 9% responded that ‘the space should be worked with to be beautified as much as possible’.

4.4.2 Feedback - Fencing and Future of the Site

The engagement was largely inconclusive in relation to which temporary fencing mitigation option was best.

The mesh signage fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 56% (248) of respondents, while 40% (180) of respondents believed that the mesh fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable. 15 (3%) respondents had a neutral answer.

The temporary fencing was supported as desirable to highly desirable by 49% (215) of respondents, while 44% (195) of respondents believed that the temporary fencing was highly undesirable to undesirable. 33 (7%) respondents had a neutral answer.

Through the engagement the main for and against arguments in regards to the survey were:

For

- Used as an educational tool
- Used as a mitigation tool in relation to further damage or vandalism
- Protection for the vegetation as it is rehabilitated

Against

- It is seen as punishment for the whole community
- Residents raised concerns around length of time - (how long is temporary?)
- Residents also raised concerns around the personal and economic impacts i.e to house prices, business/tourism etc
- Concerns around other areas of the foreshore – would this become the normal Council approach

4.4.3 Feedback - Mitigation and Collaborative way forward

There were a number of ideas raised throughout the engagement towards mitigation and a collaborative way forward in relation to the issue.



Several education and awareness projects were raised (including but not limited to):

- Reinstating the Community Education Program
- School/ Youth Environment Programs
- Educational signage (interesting signage like other areas along the esplanade)

Other ideas included:

- Events and activities promoting the use of the area and its natural beauty and purpose
- More consultation and involvement with the community on a general level
- Accountability to those who commit the acts and enforcement of current Council Policy and laws
- Security and safety measures, including, but not limited to, lighting, cameras etc
- Maintenance of the area

4.4.4 Feedback – 2019 Esplanade Report – Vision & Recommendations

The vision and recommendations from the Esplanade Panel’s Report 2019 are largely supported by the community.

The vision for Point Vernon was supported by 85% of respondents to the survey:

Our vision for Point Vernon is:

To maintain and improve all current assets. To build on the family friendly and accessible parklands without intruding on native flora and fauna. To protect and nurture the land and sea environment, with specific regard for the turtle hatchling area. Point Vernon to remain primarily a residential area.

The Priority Action and Rationale in relation to natural environment was supported by 80 % of respondents to the survey.

Priority action:

Protection, preservation and sustainable management of the natural environment - Preserve and maintain existing native vegetation

Overall rationale/reasoning:

Responsibility to preserve the native coastal ecosystems for future generations.

5 ENGAGEMENT CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of key overarching messages throughout the engagement:

- Service levels or maintenance of the area [in Point Vernon compared to other areas of the Esplanade].
- A solution that is collaborative and balanced - meeting community and Council needs
- Protection and Preservation of the foreshore
- The use of education and awareness programs to inform the community

6 FUTURE STEPS

Council will be undertaking a review of the ‘Unauthorised Vegetation Damage Policy later in the year. The information gathered from this engagement will also feed into the whole region engagement at that time.



7 APPENDICES

7.1 SURVEY

Illegal Vegetation Damage - Point Vernon - CLOSING 11:59PM FRIDAY 22 May 2020

Q.1 How are you connected to the Point Vernon foreshore? *

*Please note, if you are completing this survey via a mobile device you may need to turn your device to landscape to view the whole survey correctly.

- I use the space for recreational activities
- I live opposite the foreshore
- I am a resident of the Fraser Coast
- I have property investments in the vicinity of the foreshore
- I use this space in conducting a business (example, personal trainers)
- I am an advocate for the protection of environment on the foreshore

Q.2 Which statement best reflects your level of concern on the current incidents of illegal vegetation damage? *

- It really doesn't worry me
- I don't understand why other people are so concerned
- I am somewhat concerned
- I am somewhat concerned because I don't have enough information to understand the situation
- I am really concerned

Q.3 Which statement best reflects your level of tolerance in reference to the incidents of vegetation clearing as a result of illegal vegetation damage?

*

- "I don't care if it's illegal or not just get it cleared".
- "It is ok as long as people are only clearing small areas that effect their use of the space, or to improve the visual aesthetics to their own liking".
- "I am not really affected by it either way, doesn't really worry me"
- "I think vegetation clearing is fine, as long as it is done legally"
- "Clearing of vegetation should be done with proper consultation and assessment reports of the area to ensure flora and fauna aren't affected"
- "Our flora and fauna is extremely important, clearing, illegal or not, should not be done"

Q.4 Thinking about your answers to questions 2 & 3, why do you feel this way? *



Q.5 What would you like to see happen in the area where the illegal vegetation damage has occurred? *

- a. Nothing at all, what is done is done, just leave it
- b. What is done is done, let's work with the space to beautify it as much as we can
- c. Rehabilitate the land back to its original state, but leave the damaged trees in place
- d. Rehabilitate the land back to its original state, removing all the damaged trees and vegetation.
- e. Re imagine the space into something that suits everyone's needs.
- Other (please specify)

Q.6 Council has an obligation in protecting the health and safety of the community. Soil contamination has occurred due to the method of illegal vegetation damage and as such, the area must be secured from public access until such times as soil testing clears the site.

How do you rate the following proposed activities:

Example of proposed FCRC printed fence mesh ([view larger image here](#))



Example of mesh fencing installed



	1. Highly undesirable	2. Undesirable	3. Neutral	4. Desirable	5. Highly Desirable
Installation of temporary fencing (2.1meters in height) until the replanted vegetation is established.	<input type="radio"/>				
Installation of printed fence mesh (signage - 2.1 metres in height) to achieve the following: i. Provide educational information in regards to the protection of flora and fauna ii. Provide information on how to report incidents of illegal vegetation damage iii. Promoting the community's and Council's tolerance to illegal vegetation damage	<input type="radio"/>				



Q.7 Illegal vegetation damage comes at a cost to Council and the Community; this cost can defer resources from other activities in looking after our natural environment. How do you feel about this impact?

*

- I am not ok with the impact this has on other parks and open spaces
- It doesn't really concern me either way
- I am ok with the impact this has on resources

Other (please specify)

(Max Character Limit : 500)

Q.8 Do you agree with the following inclusions in the Hervey Bay Esplanade Wider Engagement Report and Panel Report developed in 2019, in reference to the management of native vegetation and trees?

To read the reports in full follow this link to Council's website: [Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Engagement](#)

*

	Yes	No
31% of respondents listed removal of native vegetation and trees as a main threat to their enjoyment of the esplanade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preserving the natural environment/vegetation was the most mentioned vision (34%) for the Esplanade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our vision for Point Vernon is: To maintain and improve all current assets. To build on the family friendly and accessible parklands without intruding on native flora and fauna. To protect and nurture the land and sea environment, with specific regard for the turtle hatchling area. Point Vernon to remain primarily a residential area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Priority action: Protection, preservation and sustainable management of the natural environment - Preserve and maintain existing native vegetation. Overall rationale/reasoning: Responsibility to preserve the native coastal ecosystems for future generations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.9 In reflection on your answers today, what do you feel are the two most important objectives in working collaboratively to develop a solution that meets everyone's wants and needs?

*

	Outline the Objectives most important to you
Objective 1	<input type="text"/>
Objective 2	<input type="text"/>

Q.10 Do you want to keep up to date on this project, please leave your email address below? *

Submit Now

Save Draft



7.2 FACT SHEETS



Illegal Vegetation Damage - Mant Street, Point Vernon

Herbicide poisoning has been confirmed as the cause of die-back and death of a section of bushland vegetation in the public foreshore reserve on Mant Street.

A chemical analysis, conducted by an independent consultant, detected the presence of residual herbicide in the soil. Residual herbicides remain active in the soil for extended periods and as a result it will take many years to re-establish the natural environment that has been lost.

In order to rehabilitate the site following the illegal vegetation damage on the reserve and ensure public safety, we will install temporary fencing with mesh infill panels that will contain environmental educational messages. The panels will be designed to be both attractive and educational. Council will also conduct rehabilitation activities on the site, including revegetating the area. When plants are established and have grown to the height of the temporary fence, the fencing will be removed.

Poisoned trees will be retained on site as roosts and nesting habitat, particularly for birds, and allowed to decompose naturally. Members of the public may be interested to know that the area of Gatakers Bay where this vandalism occurred supports a variety of wildlife, including almost 100 different bird species.

The cost of assessing environmental vandalism, and restoring and protecting damaged sites, is ultimately carried by the entire community.

These actions aim to raise awareness of illegal vegetation damage and demonstrate Council's and the community's zero tolerance for such obvious damage on Council managed land.

If members of the public have any information which could assist with identifying those responsible for the vegetation damage they can report it confidentially on 1300 79 49 29.



Vegetation displaying damage from poisoning



Vegetation damage areas



Similar example of proposed temporary fencing



Above - Vegetation displaying damage from poisoning

Illegal Vegetation Damage - Foreshore Reserves

Council, as Trustee of Crown Lands, has a duty of care and legal responsibility under the Land Act (1994) to protect vegetation under its control for the preservation of public land for everybody's use. When individuals damage vegetation on foreshore reserves, the whole community is affected.

What are the benefits for the community in protecting vegetation along our foreshores?

There are many positives for our whole community, vegetation helps provide cooler, greener and more comfortable pathways for recreational activities like walking and cycling. The improved air quality and natural wind breaks add to our well-being.

There are also significant environmental benefits, like cleaner storm water runoff, keeping the shoreline where it should be by assisting with erosion control and weed suppression, as well as being valuable habitat for wildlife.

What happens when we ignore or allow illegal damage to vegetation along our foreshores?

The community loses the natural amenity that trees and other vegetation provide. Contaminated soil from poisoning prevents everybody from using the public open space, sometimes for years. Council are required to notify the Department of Environment and Science (DES) when a contaminated site poses a risk to public safety.

There is a direct financial burden for the community. Resources are diverted from other community needs to fix the damage.

Vital habitat for birds and other arboreal (tree dependent) wildlife is lost, along with the safe haven vegetation on the ground provides for small animals and reptiles.

What are the costs of illegal vegetation damage?

When vegetation on public land is damaged, council must try to rehabilitate the loss of vegetation. There are many costs involved, including economic, cultural, environmental and social.

Council officers have to spend time and money investigating the damage, then there's the cost of replacement of trees and shrubs, remediation of poisoned and contaminated soil, fencing off the area to protect public safety and signage production and installation.

Trees connect us to the landscape and have great cultural significance for many in our community. With climate change already causing havoc for our bushland, intentional damage to vegetation can result in permanent loss as the landscape struggles to adjust to changing growing conditions.

There's less open space for all of us to use while the damaged areas are closed off and attempts are made to rehabilitate the bushland.

If members of the public have any information which could assist with identifying those responsible for foreshore vegetation damage they can report it confidentially on 1300 79 49 29.



Healthy foreshore vegetation



7.3 EXAMPLES OF MITIGATION MEASURES

TREES IN THIS LOCATION HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY VANDALISED.
Native trees and vegetation are significant and valuable to our environment and belong to the whole community.



They provide much needed shelter and food for local wildlife, are perfectly adapted to our soil and weather conditions and are a valuable part of our natural heritage. Every incident is a direct cost to ratepayers.

Anyone with information regarding any act of tree or vegetation vandalism is requested to contact Council on **1300 79 49 29**

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7.4 ENGAGEMENT HUB (PROJECT WEBPAGE)

Link: <https://frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/illegal-vegetation-damage-consultation-point-vernon>



Illegal Vegetation Damage Consultation - Point Vernon

Project Overview



Overview
Council recognises the community and stakeholder interests and concerns in the illegal damage of vegetation along the Hervey Bay foreshore, most recently on Mant St (at Point Vernon). Council have committed to ensuring the community and stakeholders are given the chance to 'have their say'.

In line with Council's current policies, and in order to protect and ensure the safety of the community, some mitigation actions have already been undertaken. These actions involve managing the safety of the contaminated area, as well as the dead and dying vegetation. However, at the February 2020 Council meeting, Council resolved to defer further mitigation actions, until engagement with community and stakeholders is undertaken. (For more information on this issue please see [Background section below.](#))

Engagement

~How do we collaboratively develop an approach for managing incidents of illegal vegetation damage?~

Council has resolved to defer any further mitigation actions of the illegal vegetation damage at Mant St until engagement with community and stakeholders is undertaken. The aim of the engagement for this project is to understand the community's perspective on incidents of illegal vegetation damage, whilst providing a process for collaboratively developing an approach for managing future incidents. This engagement is also an opportunity to provide awareness of issues surrounding the illegal vegetation damage to the wider community. To facilitate this engagement Council will be undertaking surveys and other online activities which will run from **Monday 27 April 2020 to Friday 12 June 2020**, with the survey closing **Friday 22 May 2020**. (To take the survey please see the [Survey section below.](#))

- Latest News
- Timeline
- Background

Survey Now Closed
The wider engagement survey has now closed (as of 11:59pm, Friday 22 May 2020).

Survey Now Closed

Document Library

- Fact Sheets
- Media Releases
- Policy
- Examples of Mitigation Measures

FAQS

- Community Engagement
- Vegetation Management
- Definitions
- How do I stay informed?
- Council's Decision
- Future Stages

View all

Gallery



View all

Project Links

Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Engagement

Contact Information

Open Space and Environment
P 1300 79 49 29 | E enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au [View](#)

Community Development & Engagement Team
P 1300 79 49 29 | E community@frasercoast.qld.gov.au [View](#)



7.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Council posted two Facebook posts during the engagement phase (27 April & 11 May). There were 952 clicks through to the project and survey page.

Fraser Coast Regional Council · 27 April at 12:31 · 🌐

Fraser Coast residents are being asked for their feedback on how Council should deal with illegal tree destruction along the Hervey Bay foreshore.

The call for feedback follows the poisoning of a section of trees between the Esplanade and Mant Street in Point Vernon.

Council had proposed to use 2.1-metre-high temporary fencing to cordon off the area as it rehabilitated the site and act as a billboard to raise community awareness about illegal vegetation damage.

The proposal generated informal feedback through Councillors and staff. Some residents supported the proposal, some did not.

As a result, Council put the fencing on hold until further formal community consultation was undertaken.

📄 Residents are urged to fill out the community wide survey available at <https://bit.ly/2KAM2T9> before Friday 22 May.

11,726 People reached **3,174** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍👎👏 77 153 comments 35 shares

Fraser Coast Regional Council · 11 May at 12:30 · 🌐

CLOSING SOON: Council is undertaking a community wide survey to help shape our response to illegal tree destruction along the foreshore. Read more about the project and take the survey here: <https://bit.ly/2KAM2T9>

Point Vernon Mant St Engagement
HAVE YOUR SAY

Fraser Coast Regional Council Government organisation [Learn More](#)

19,096 People reached **5,042** Engagements [Boost again](#)

👍👎👏 214 205 comments 62 shares



7.6 MEDIA RELEASE



MEDIA RELEASE

27 April 2020

Help shape Council's response to tree destruction

Fraser Coast residents are being asked for their feedback on how Council should deal with the destruction of trees in its parks and reserves.

The call for feedback follows the poisoning of a section of trees between the Esplanade and Mant Street in Point Vernon.

"Council had proposed to use 2.1-metre-high temporary fencing to cordon off the area as it rehabilitated the site and act as a billboard to raise community awareness about illegal vegetation damage," Cr David Lewis said.

"The proposal generated informal feedback through Councillors and staff.

"Some residents of Mant Street supported the proposal, some did not. Residents from other areas also expressed similar views.

"As a result, Council resolved the project was to be put on hold so we could undertake further formal community consultation."

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and pop-up forums and open days planned as part of a community survey cannot be held.

"We will now use our online engagement website, an online survey and online activities with key stakeholder groups," Cr Lewis said.

The survey is available on frasercoast.engagementhub.com.au/ and will close on Friday, May 22.

"Residents will be able to log on to view the project information and what was proposed and leave feedback by completing the survey," Cr Lewis said.

In a report to the January Council meeting it was estimated that it would cost \$40,000, spread over four years, to rehabilitate the Mant Street site.

That included the soil testing which pinpointed the poisoning, replanting and establishing the new trees, fencing and the information hoarding.

The fencing was needed to stop people accessing the site, which is contaminated with herbicide, as they could be hurt by branches falling from the dead trees.

It was proposed that the fencing would remain until the new vegetation reached the same height as the fence.

The fencing was to be wrapped with a printed cover explaining that illegal vegetation damage had occurred at the location, information about the importance of native vegetation and the contact details for Council to report suspicious activities.

ENDS