



Coastal Futures: Engagement Summary (Phases 3-4)

www.qcoast2100.com.au

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CONTENTS

Engagement snapshot	3
About the project and engagement process	8
The 'Coastal Futures - Planning our changing coastline' project	8
About phases 3 and 4	9
Key messages	9
Building off recent Council engagement	10
Engagement objectives and process summary	11

Engagement methods	13
Survey	13
Pop up event and library displays	13
Key stakeholder and community workshops	14
Colouring competition	16
Engagement Hub, social media and postcard	17

What we heard	18
Survey responses	18
Location of respondents	18
How the coast is valued and utilised	19
Most valued characteristic of the coastal environment	23
Overall comments about the value and importance of the coastal environment in the Fraser Coast region	25
Concerns about coastal changes	30
Stakeholder workshops and individual meetings summary	31
Locality summaries – coastal area use, values and experiences	33

Summary, Learnings and next steps	34
Summary and Learnings	34
Learnings for Future Engagement Process	35
Next Steps	35

Appendix A: Survey questions

Appendix B: Location of survey respondents

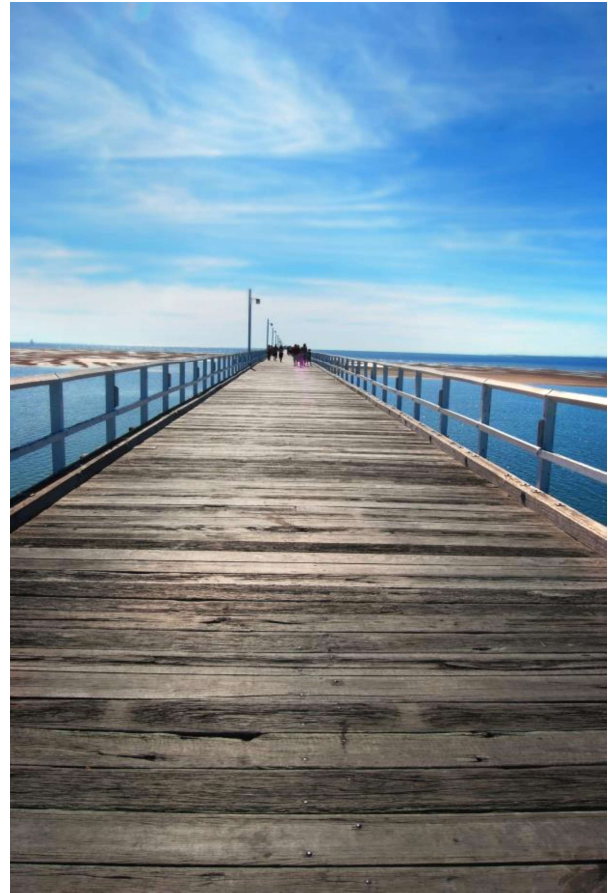
Appendix C: Locality summaries

CONTENTS

Figures

Figure 1 - Eight phases of the QCoast2100 program	8
Figure 2 - Coastal Futures: Roadmap of the engagement process	11
Figure 3 - Coastal Futures Survey (hardcopy)	13
Figure 4 - Pop-up event at Stockland Hervey Bay Shopping Centre	13
Figure 5 - Picture from Stakeholder workshop	15
Figure 6 - Stakeholder workshop poster	15
Figure 7 - Youth workshop poster	15
Figure 8 - Excerpt of Coastal Futures Engagement Hub and postcard	17
Figure 9 - Age of respondents	18
Figure 10 - Resident or visitor of the Fraser Coast region	18
Figure 11 - Key localities of survey respondents	19
Figure 12 - Valuable coastal locations	20
Figure 13 - Use of coastal areas	22
Figure 14 - Importance of coastal characteristics now and in the future	24

Engagement snapshot



Fraser Coast Regional Council commenced preparation of a coastal hazard adaptation strategy project in 2018. Funded through the QCoast₂₁₀₀ program, the project will develop a long-term plan to address coastal hazard risks out to 2100.

The project called '*Coastal Futures – Planning our changing coastline*' is about building community awareness and preparedness.

Community and stakeholder engagement are a critical part of the project to ensure that the community's values inform and drive the adaptation response to coastal hazard risk.

has been subject to a 'whole of project' engagement plan for all eight phases.

This report documents the engagement approach and activities undertaken as part of the early phases of the project. These activities were undertaken between June and October 2019 to inform the community and key stakeholders about the project, and to identify the areas and characteristics of the coastal environment that are highly valued by the community.

This report or rather "community conversation" will be built upon in the future phases.

How we communicated

The 'Coastal Futures' project launch involved a series of activities with the Fraser Coast community across a range of ages and backgrounds. The project has also been provided within an identifiable branding to support clear and positive communication. This branding has been an important feature of the project to ensure that the project is communicated in a clear and positive way. Both online and face to face engagement methods were utilised to connect and engage with the local community and stakeholders, including:



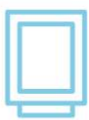
Engagement Hub – an online destination to inform and engage stakeholders. The engagement hub provides the 'point of truth' and permanent source of project information which will be built upon at each phase. As part of the project launch, information provided includes: a project overview, timeline, details of project events, relevant project documents, an image gallery, project news, fact sheets and media releases. The Engagement Hub allows community members to register as stakeholders and, for the early phases, provided access to an online survey and interactive mapping tool.



Council's website – Council's website has links to the Engagement Hub from various areas including the Have Your Say link from the homepage, as well as the Major Projects page and the Beaches and Coastlines page. There was a temporary banner on the home page providing a direct link to the project between July and October 2019. This increased community awareness and participation in engagement activities.



Social media posts – to inform stakeholders of the project, and outline ways for the community to be involved – via the survey, events and through the online hub. An ongoing social media 'conversation' has been started with Councillor video links, and imagery from engagement activities including results of the colouring competition, and survey details.



Library displays were used to promote the project and how to be involved, including provision of access to hard copy surveys and the project postcard.



Pop-up events held at the Stockland shopping centre to introduce community members to the project and build awareness broadly, along with assisting them to access the Engagement Hub and/or complete the survey. Clear and inviting signage along with face to face interaction and handing out the project postcard allowed project team members to interact and engage with a broad spectrum of community members.



Printed and online survey (available through the Engagement Hub) to gain a better understanding of what is of value and importance on the coast. An overnight trip to Kingfisher Bay, Fraser Island, was provided as a prize to incentivise completion of the survey.



Colouring competition available to primary school children, between prep and Year 7 offering a number of prizes to competition winners. The colouring competition included project branding and a link to the Engagement Hub for further information on the project to raise community awareness.



Internal Council workshops to undertake key Council asset identification, review and validate draft hazard mapping.



Stakeholder workshops and meetings open to the community and specific sectors (government asset owners, coastal-based community and recreation groups, environmental groups, traditional owners, business and industry, coastal and hinterland townships and youth leadership). First round workshops (August 2019) sought to introduce the project and capture community values.

Who participated, and what did they say?

Pop-up event engagement

A pop-up event was held between Thursday 8 August 2019 and Saturday 10 August 2019 at the Stockland Hervey Bay Shopping Centre, which has an average of above 84,000 visitors each week, providing a highly visible, central location the provided for engagement with a substantial number of community members.

Survey

In total, **349** people completed the survey. The survey was completed by **predominantly residents**. A small number (6.8% of total survey respondents) identified as being visitors, workers and business/property owners.

Across the adult age categories there was a reasonably equal split. **31%** of people who responded to the survey were between the ages of 25-44, **37%** of respondents between 45-64 and **28%** of respondents over 65. Only 4% of survey respondents were aged 24 years or younger.

A range of views and aspirations were captured through the survey, with key findings below:

- The community place significant value on the **recreation functions, natural characteristics and accessibility of coastal environments** within the Fraser Coast region, with the following being rated as the most important characteristic of coastal places, now and in the future:

- an inviting sandy beach for recreation including beach use and dog walking (Extremely important or Very important to **80%** of respondents);
 - nature conservation areas (Extremely important or Very important to **77%** of respondents);
 - easy access to get to the beach or water - walk, bike, bus or drive (Extremely important or Very important to **76%** of respondents); and
 - easy access for water-based activities (e.g. swimming, kayaking, jetties, boat ramps) (Extremely important or Very important to **75%** of respondents);
 - foreshore based recreation was also identified consistently as the most dominant activity in each of the localities only exceeded by shops, cafes, restaurants in Hervey Bay Esplanade and Urangan Marina.
- **Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan)** was identified based on an averaging of scores, as the most highly valued location in the region, averaging a score of 4.62 out of 5. Other areas of high value to respondents were:
 - Urangan Boat Harbour (**4.31**);
 - Burrum Heads (**3.92**); and
 - Toogoom (**3.85**).
 - **Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan)** was identified as the most popular location for Foreshore based recreation (83%), Shops, restaurants and clubs (83%) and Beach / water use (e.g. swimming, beach fishing, etc) (81%), indicating the importance of this foreshore and esplanade area for active lifestyle opportunities, hospitality services and recreation.
 - **Burrum Heads (59%), Toogoom (58%), Dundowran Beach / Craignish (52%) and Urangan Boat Harbour (40%),** were also popular locations for beach and water use.
 - The survey also allowed respondents to provide, via free text, further details or information which they considered relevant to the Coastal Futures project. Among other things, this identified the key concerns of community on the effects of coastal changes. The key concerns identified through the open-ended survey responses, included:
 - loss of beach and coastal erosion (raised in **35 responses**);
 - over development in coastal areas (raised in **14 responses**);
 - impacts on coastal processes of proposed boat ramp infrastructure in Poona (raised in **8 responses**); and
 - vegetation clearing (raised in **5 responses**).

- A total of **190 respondents** provided additional commentary regarding coastal places that are important in the Fraser Coast region now and in the future. Some important observations have come out of this:
 - **52 responses** referred to the need to better protect the health of both foreshore (beach fronts and dunes) and river areas and support increased vegetation along the coastline;
 - almost **30 comments** were made about the importance of coastal areas for recreational activities such as walking, cycling, four-wheel driving and camping; and
 - **24 comments** related to the importance of restaurants, shops and family-based activities as well as maintaining the relaxed coastal lifestyle.
- These findings align closely with what respondents' value about coastal areas, with the natural characteristics of beaches ranking highly in both areas of value and concern.

A detailed outline of the consultation findings is presented within the section of this report titled "*What we heard*".

Key Stakeholder workshops

Workshops held with key stakeholders and community members allowed for the identification on maps of areas of significance on the coast. These findings are shown for each locality on individual maps.

Across the region this feedback has established:

- foreshore based areas to recreate/exercise, meet people and be amongst the natural environment is highly valued;
- a number of precincts have 'key locations' of high value + activity – particular cafes, parks and spots that are unique to the region;
- much of the coast is valued for natural assets and provides important habitat and nesting grounds for birds/animals;
- erosion has been identified as a key concern

Next Steps

The findings from this consultation will be an important input into the risk assessment of assets in the coastal area, which will be used to develop potential adaptation options. Further broad community consultation will be undertaken when the risk assessment is complete, and potential adaptation options have been identified.

About the project and engagement process

The 'Coastal Futures - Planning our changing coastline' project

Fraser Coast Regional Council in partnership with the Queensland Government, is preparing a Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS) that plans for long-term coastal change in the region.

The ongoing process of change that occurs from storm tide inundation, coastal erosion and sea level rise is likely to impact on the Fraser Coast region's natural and built environment, community's wellbeing, and the economy.

The Coastal Futures project will develop a robust evidence base for future decision making and a coordinated response to coastal hazard risks. It will guide change, inform, and prioritise actions for Council, other levels of government, community organisations, businesses and industry, and residents.

The project is being delivered under the QCoast²¹⁰⁰ program and this involves eight phases of project delivery and will be finalised by September 2020 (refer to Figure 1).

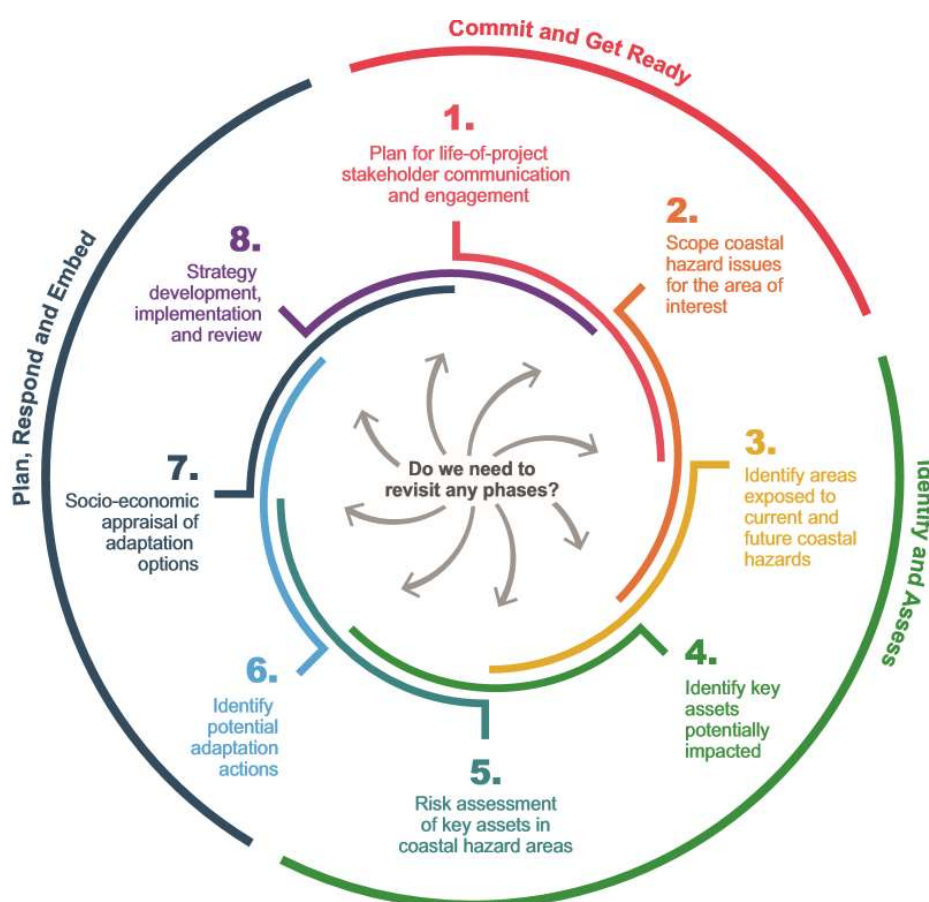


FIGURE 1 - EIGHT PHASES OF THE QCOAST2100 PROGRAM

Source: Developing a Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy: Minimum Standards and Guideline for Queensland Local Governments, Queensland Government, 2016.

Phase 1 and 2 were undertaken by Council during 2017, and part of this work involved the preparation of a whole-of-project engagement strategy and program to guide the remaining phases of the project.

About phases 3 and 4

This engagement summary report provides an overview of the process and key findings from engagement activities undertaken during Phases 3 and 4 of the Coastal Futures project. Phase 3 and 4 have involved considerable technical work, necessary to form an evidence-base for the remaining phases of the project. This work has included refined mapping of coastal hazards out to 2100 (Phase 3) and preparation of a comprehensive asset database (Phase 4).

Whilst this technical work was being undertaken, the engagement activities have been focussed on a formal 'launch' of the project and engaging with key stakeholders and the community to:

- inform them about the project;
- confirm the opportunities to be involved in each phase of the project;
- obtain their views and feedback about what they love and value most about the coast.

Key messages

Key messages that have underpinned engagement for Phases 3 and 4 are:

1. The *Coastal Futures: Planning Our Changing Coastline* project is all about getting ready for the long-term impacts of storm tide inundation, coastal erosion and sea level rise along our coastlines.
2. From Burrum Heads in the north, to Tinnanbar in the south, and all areas in between, this project will determine how Council and the community can become more resilient to the effects of coastal hazards.
3. The *Coastal Futures: Planning Our Changing Coastline* project will help us to develop a plan to protect our community assets and infrastructure, and preserve our unique natural environment and lifestyle.
4. We want to hear from you! Tell us what you value about the Fraser Coast coastline to help us to identify your priority for our built and natural environments.

Additional messages / Background

5. Fraser Coast Regional Council is delivering this project with over \$430,000 in funding from the Queensland Government.
6. At this stage, we are seeking input to identify important areas of personal, social, economic, cultural and environmental value. Gathering this information will ensure we are considering adaptation options that reflect the community's values and priorities.

7. Let's start a conversation. Through this project, we want the Fraser Coast community to tell us:
 - what are the consequences of a particular hazard? This will help to determine the 'risk level';
 - what are the preferred ways to adapt and respond to these risks? This will help determine what type of adaptation approach we would be considering;
 - what are the priorities for implementation? This will help work out the plan of action – what is most important and when we should be taking action.
8. When it comes time to think about the adaptation options and priorities, a deliberative democracy approach is going to be taken. A community reference group of approximately 20-30 people will be established to make recommendations to Council.

Building off recent Council engagement

When undertaking Phases 3 + 4 engagement, Council has been cognisant of the very recent engagement undertaken on the Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Engagement project.

This project engaged approximately 520 participants and involved several engagement methods including pop ups, online survey, targeted discussions, public open houses and community displays.

The Coastal Futures project has come in quick succession to the Hervey Bay Esplanade master planning project and associated community engagement campaign.

Therefore, deliberate effort has been made to ensure engagement undertaken as part of the Coastal Futures project did not focus heavily on the Hervey Bay Esplanade area. Instead, the pop-up engagement session was thoughtfully located at the Stockland Hervey Bay Shopping Centre, being a central location within the region and to allow for project differentiation to the esplanade engagement activities.

Key stakeholder groups in key locations throughout the region, which include utilising the small communities' network, have also been a focus for this project.

This approach shifted slightly from the strategy for Phases 3 + 4, to ensure that methods did not result in engagement fatigue and duly avoided duplication, as well as to appreciate the region wide nature of the Coastal Futures project.

This understanding of and response to past engagement activities was discussed with Council officers in preparation of the engagement plan for Phases 3 + 4 and therefore informed the engagement delivered for these phases.

Because the Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Engagement project had such a focus on the Esplanade and associated features, some of the recent engagement findings from this project have been incorporated to supplement the findings of this engagement summary report. Notably, the key findings are reflected in the Hervey Bay Esplanade locality summary which forms part of Appendix C of this engagement summary report.

This approach ensures that the community investment made for the Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Engagement project is suitably incorporated and reflected as part of the engagement for the Coastal Futures project.

Engagement objectives and process summary

The diagram overleaf shows the overall project (all 8 phases) and a roadmap of the engagement process being undertaken by Fraser Coast Regional Council to inform all aspects of the Coastal Futures project.

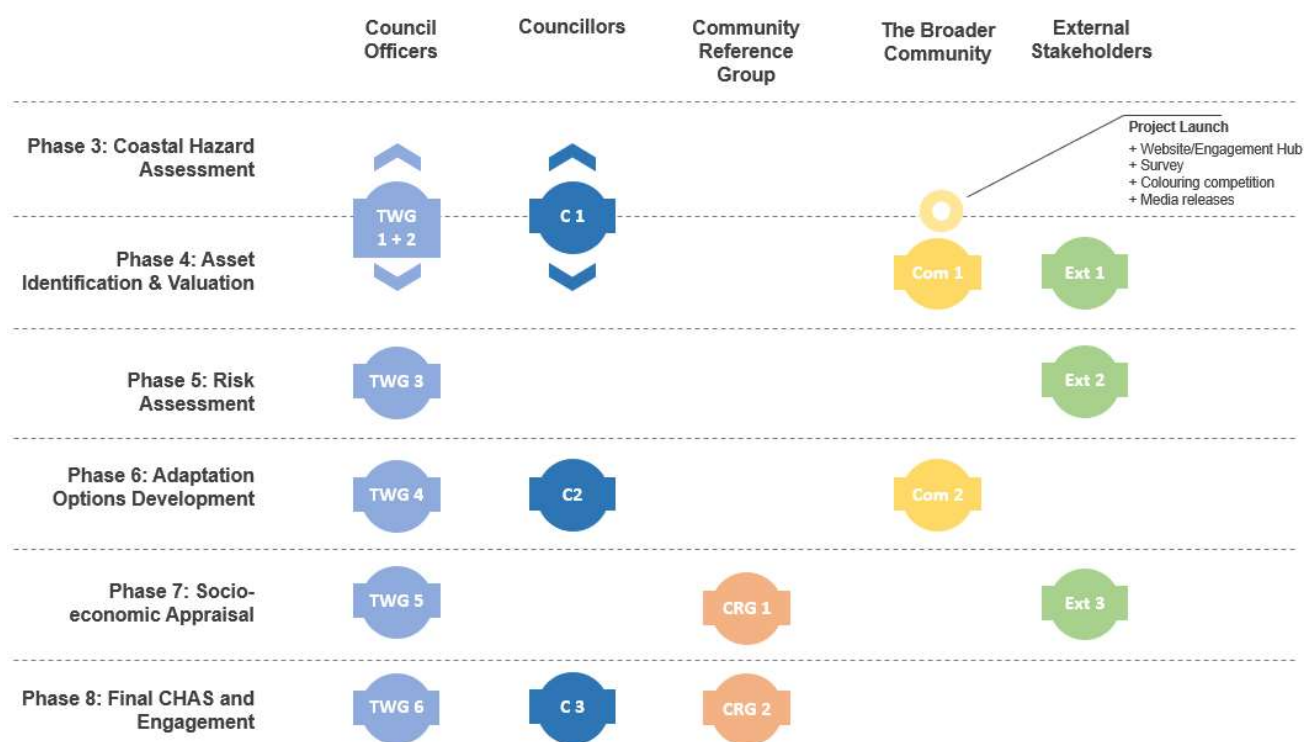


FIGURE 2 - COASTAL FUTURES: ROADMAP OF THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The purpose of engagement during Phases 3 and 4 of the CHAS is to introduce the project to key stakeholders and the broader community in order to ‘start the conversation’ about coastal values and prepare these groups for engagement in later phases of the project.

The objectives for engagement are to:

- inform stakeholders about the project, the motivation for and value of undertaking a CHAS;

- inform stakeholders about the roles and responsibilities of Council and the state government in responding to coastal hazards;
- build awareness amongst stakeholders and educate internal and external stakeholders regarding coastal dynamics and hazards, both existing and under a changing climate, and the associated risks posed by these;
- inform stakeholders of information about how the project will run and likely project outputs throughout project phases and ways to be involved;
- inform stakeholders about coastal hazards, particularly around concepts that are not well understood by stakeholders and addressing misinformation and misconceptions;
- undertake meaningful, innovative and sensitive consultation with key stakeholders and community, so there is shared understanding of the project, process, implications and input into decision making;
- provide information and mapping about the location and severity of risks, allowing internal and external stakeholders to make informed decisions about actions in their area;
- clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and clearly articulate what responsibility Council does and does not have regarding adaptation, including for assets that it does not own;
- inform stakeholders of how their input and feedback will be used to inform the next phases of the project and when the next engagement touchpoints are scheduled.

The project was formally and externally launched on Monday 8 July 2019 by a media release and with associated social media and webpage updates.

Engagement methods

This section provides an overview of consultation results by engagement method.

Survey

The survey was designed to gather an understanding of what the community currently values on the coast. It contained questions categorised into topics relating to respondent's background, how people use the region's coastal areas, what people value about these coastal areas, how important certain aspects associated with the coast are to people, and key changes that have been noticed in the coastal areas.

The survey was delivered in both electronic and hard copy format. The survey was available on Fraser Regional Council's Engagement Hub between Monday 8 July 2019 and 30 September 2019. Hard copy surveys were also provided during engagement activities, in conjunction with the school colouring competition and at static displays throughout the region.

In total, 349 people participated in the survey. A complete copy of the survey questions is provided at Appendix A.

Pop up event and library displays

The pop-up event was undertaken between Thursday 8 August 2019 and Saturday 10 August 2019 at the Stockland Hervey Bay Shopping Centre.

The pop-up display was set up at the following times over the three days:

- Thursday 8 August 2019 – 8:45am to 5:00pm;
- Friday 9 August 2019 – 11:00am to 8:00pm; and
- Saturday 10 August 2019 – 8:45am to 2:00pm.

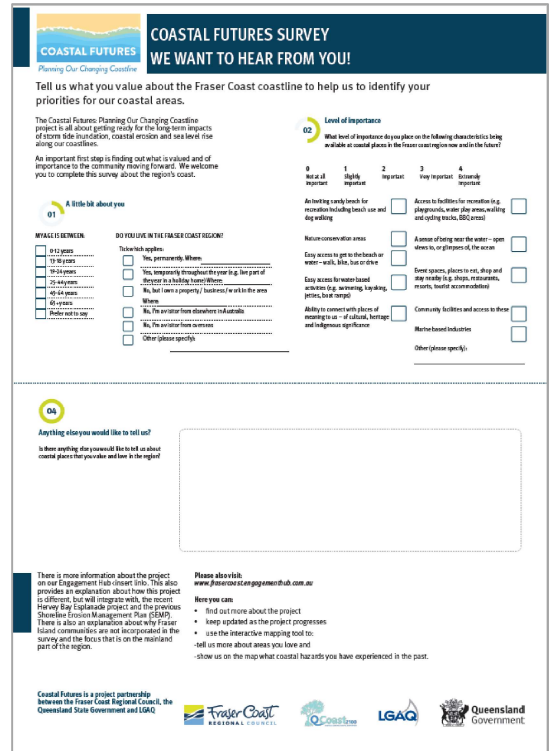


FIGURE 3 - COASTAL FUTURES SURVEY (HARDCOPY)



FIGURE 4 - POP-UP EVENT AT STOCKLAND HERVEY BAY SHOPPING CENTRE

Two representatives manned the pop-up display during the above times, interacting with community members on the Coastal Futures project.

In addition to providing project information the pop-up display contained copies of the colouring competition, project postcards and hardcopies of the project survey.

The pop-up display was highly visible to community members at key entry to the centre. Attendance at the pop-up stall was largely due to people seeing the stall / signage as they passed, given the highly visible central location.

In addition to the pop-up at the Stockland Hervey Bay Shopping Centre copies of the colouring competition, project postcards and hardcopies of the project survey were also placed at **six (6)** libraries throughout the Fraser Coast region.

All displays were well-frequented, and in total 600 project postcards were handed out or taken by community members.

Key stakeholder and community workshops

Eight (8) workshops took place during August 2019 to introduce the Coastal Futures project, identify important coastal values and assets, tap into the group's local knowledge and understand how key groups would like to be engaged in the process, and if they can engage with their memberships to be involved in other engagement activities being planned for this phase and future phases.

Workshops that were held included:

- stakeholder workshops in Hervey Bay which broadly were advertised along with targeted invitations to a range of sectors and groups;
- small communities advisory group meeting;
- Regional Managers coordination network (State Government representatives);
- Hervey Bay youth (school captains network – 24 school captains);
- Maryborough youth (school captains network – 16 school captains);
- Tiaro youth (Tiaro primary school);
- Maaroom Progress Association workshop.

Key sectors represented in the Hervey Bay based workshops included environmental groups, traditional owners and indigenous representatives, business, industry and invited and involved tourism groups and coastal-based community and recreation groups. Further workshops with the Butchulla groups and Queensland South Native Title Service are being arranged.

Workshop approach involved a 30 minute presentation to explain the project's funding arrangement, requirements of the QCoast₂₁₀₀ Minimum Standards and Guidelines, outline the 8 phases, identify 'where we are at' and discuss the work in progress. The project and engagement outline were also presented and an overview of the information needed at these early (phase 3 and 4) phases.

An interactive mapping activity was then conducted where attendees were invited to provide comments on what parts of the coast they value the most, and what changes they have observed.

Given the distinct youth focus of certain workshops, including the Hervey Bay School Captain workshop and Tiaro school workshop, a distinct interactive mapping activity was produced for these workshops in comparison to the remaining stakeholder workshops.

The interactive mapping activity material for both Stakeholder and Youth workshops are displayed in the below table. Notably, the wording of the interactive mapping activity for the Youth workshops had a future focus, asking for details on what respondents 'would' change, as opposed to changes which 'have' been experienced.



FIGURE 5 - PICTURE FROM STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

Stakeholder group workshop – Asset + values



FIGURE 6 - STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP POSTER

What parts of the coast are the most important to you?

1. Number + place a yellow dot on the map
2. Write about it in the numbered space below
3. Add a gold star if you agree with a previous idea

What changes to the coast have you seen or experienced?

1. Number + place a red dot on the map
2. Write about it in the numbered space below
3. Add a gold star if you agree with a previous idea

Youth leadership workshop – Asset + values



FIGURE 7 - YOUTH WORKSHOP POSTER

What is your favourite spot and thing to do?

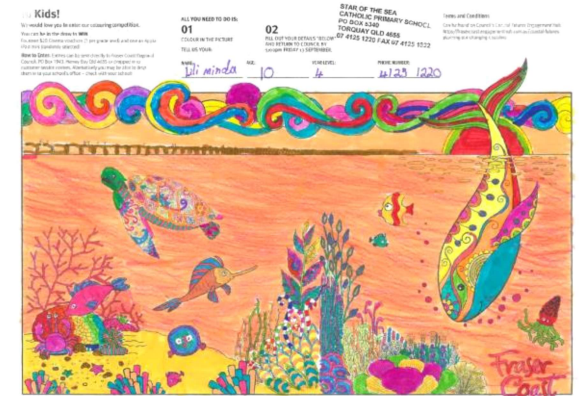
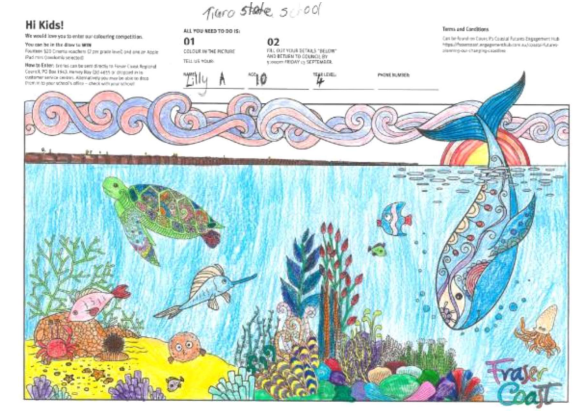
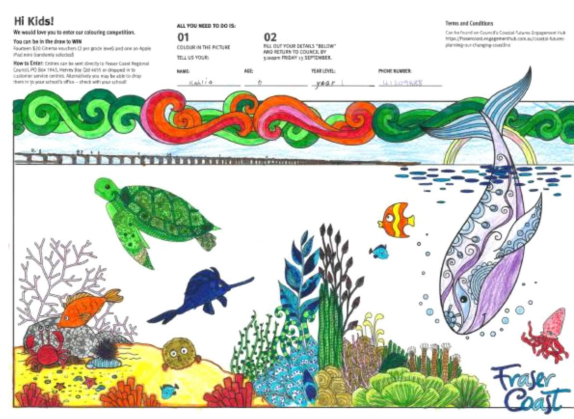
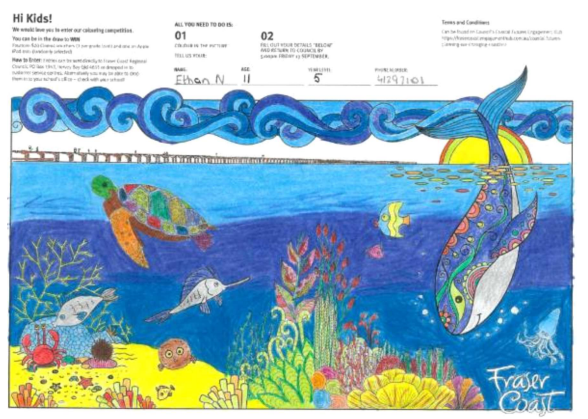
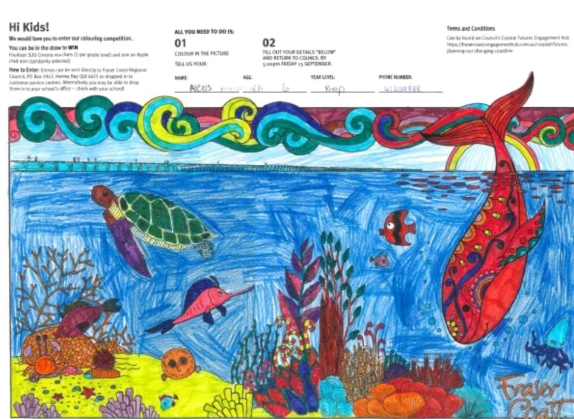
1. Number + place a yellow dot on the map
2. Write about it in the numbered space below
3. Add a gold star if you agree with a previous idea

Would you change anything?

1. Number + place a red dot on the map
2. Write about it in the numbered space below
3. Add a gold star if you agree with a previous idea

Colouring competition

The competition was a successful way to inform the broader community of the project and generate interest via youth. This was also combined in some cases with youth-focused workshops. A selection of entries is shown below.



Engagement Hub, social media and postcard

An online Engagement Hub for the Coastal Futures project was established in March 2019, with information about the Coastal Futures project, frequently asked questions, project background, fact sheets and a project overview and link to the project survey and interactive mapping tool.

A number of Facebook posts were loaded by Fraser Coast Regional Council to advertise the Coastal Futures project and engagement hub to encourage participation in engagement activities, especially the survey. Community members were highly responsive to the paid post with a reach of 11,014 people and 284 reactions, 35 comments and 19 shares.

A postcard (1000 printed, which will be used for the duration of the project) with project branding and information directing people to the Engagement Hub was an important resource used throughout events and at static displays in the region.

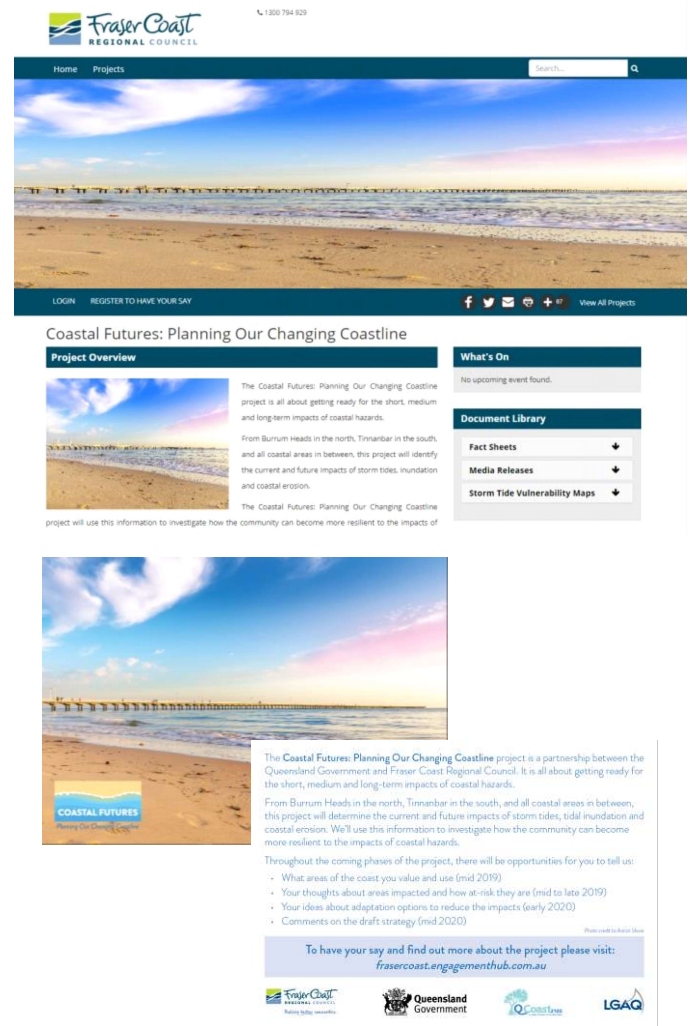


FIGURE 8 - EXCERPT OF COASTAL FUTURES ENGAGEMENT HUB AND POSTCARD

What we heard

Survey responses

In total, **349** people responded to the survey. Responses to closed questions have been analysed quantitatively. Open-ended questions have been analysed thematically.

Age

The vast majority of people who responded to the survey were between the ages of 25-44 (31%), 45-64 (37%) and over 65 (28%). Only 4% of respondents were aged 24 years or younger.

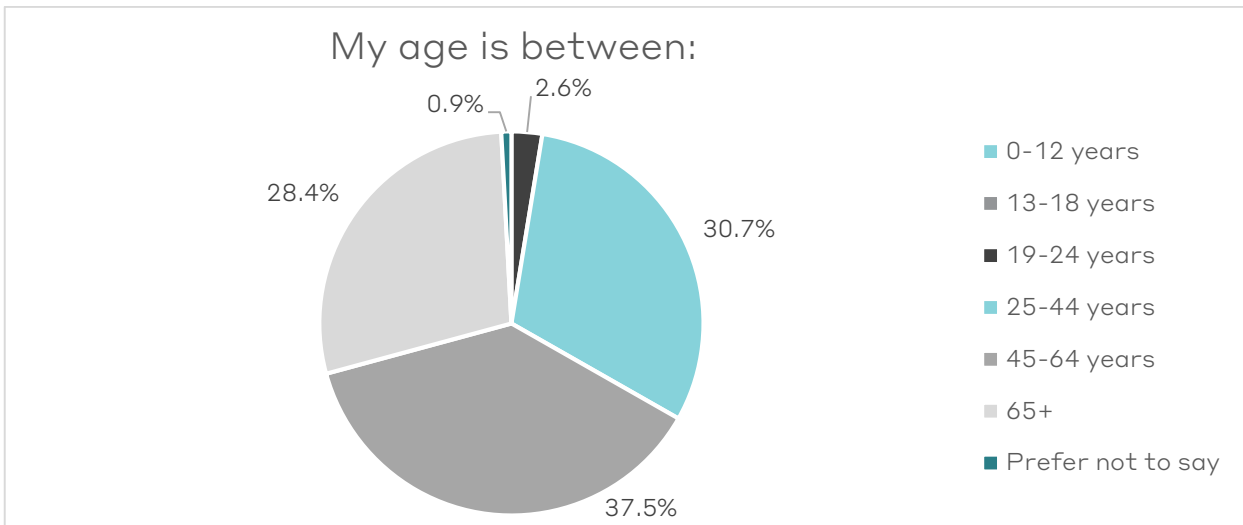


FIGURE 9 - AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Location of respondents

Of the 349 people who responded to the question, **91%** said they lived in the Fraser Coast region, 3.4% lived in the region temporarily throughout the year, 1.85% said they owned a property or business in the region but did not live there and 1.4% said they were a visitor from elsewhere in Australia.

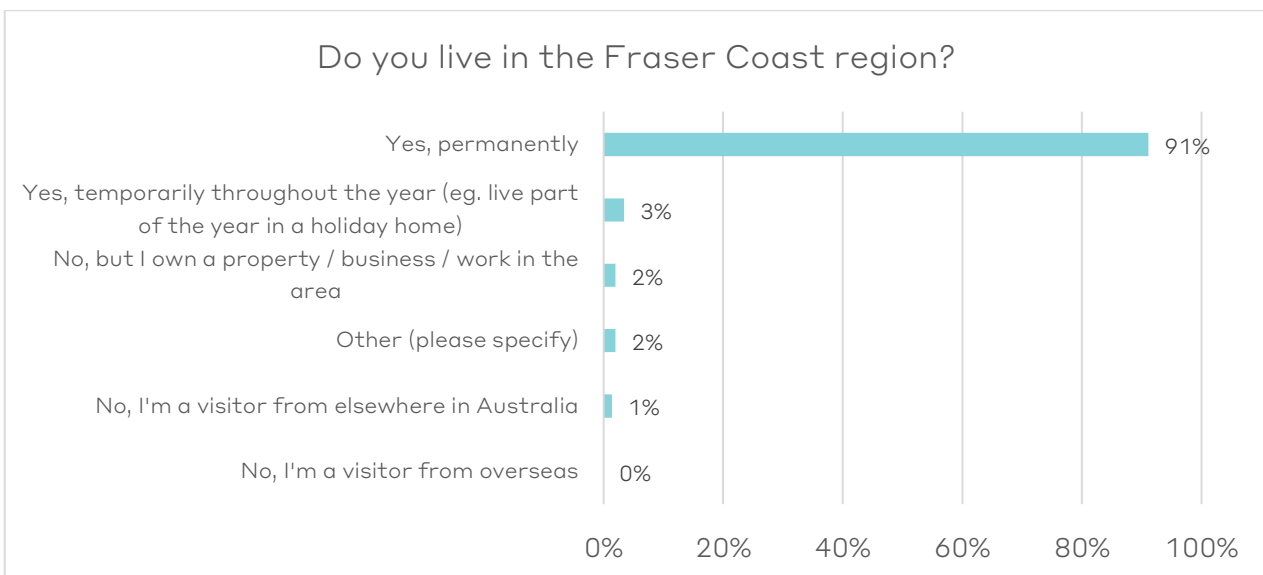


FIGURE 10 - RESIDENT OR VISITOR OF THE FRASER COAST REGION

Of the 330 people who said they permanently or temporarily resided in the region, 78% provided the locality in which they lived. From these responses, the top five places of residence included:

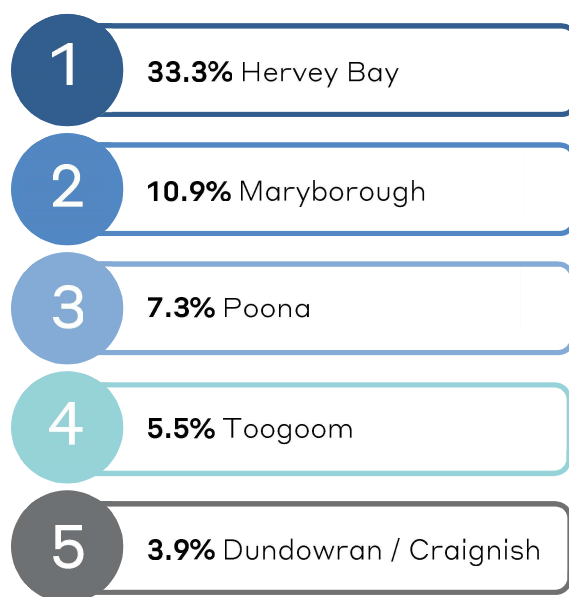


FIGURE 11 - KEY LOCALITIES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

A full breakdown of the respondent's place of residence can be found at Appendix B.

How the coast is valued and utilised

Respondents were asked to express how valuable coastal locations were to them, with a score of 1 indicating low value and a score of 5 indicating very high value.

Hervey Bay was the most highly valued area, averaging a score of **4.62** from survey respondents. Other areas that were valued by respondents were:

- Urangan Boat Harbour (**4.31**);
- Burrum Heads (**3.92**); and
- Toogoom (**3.85**).

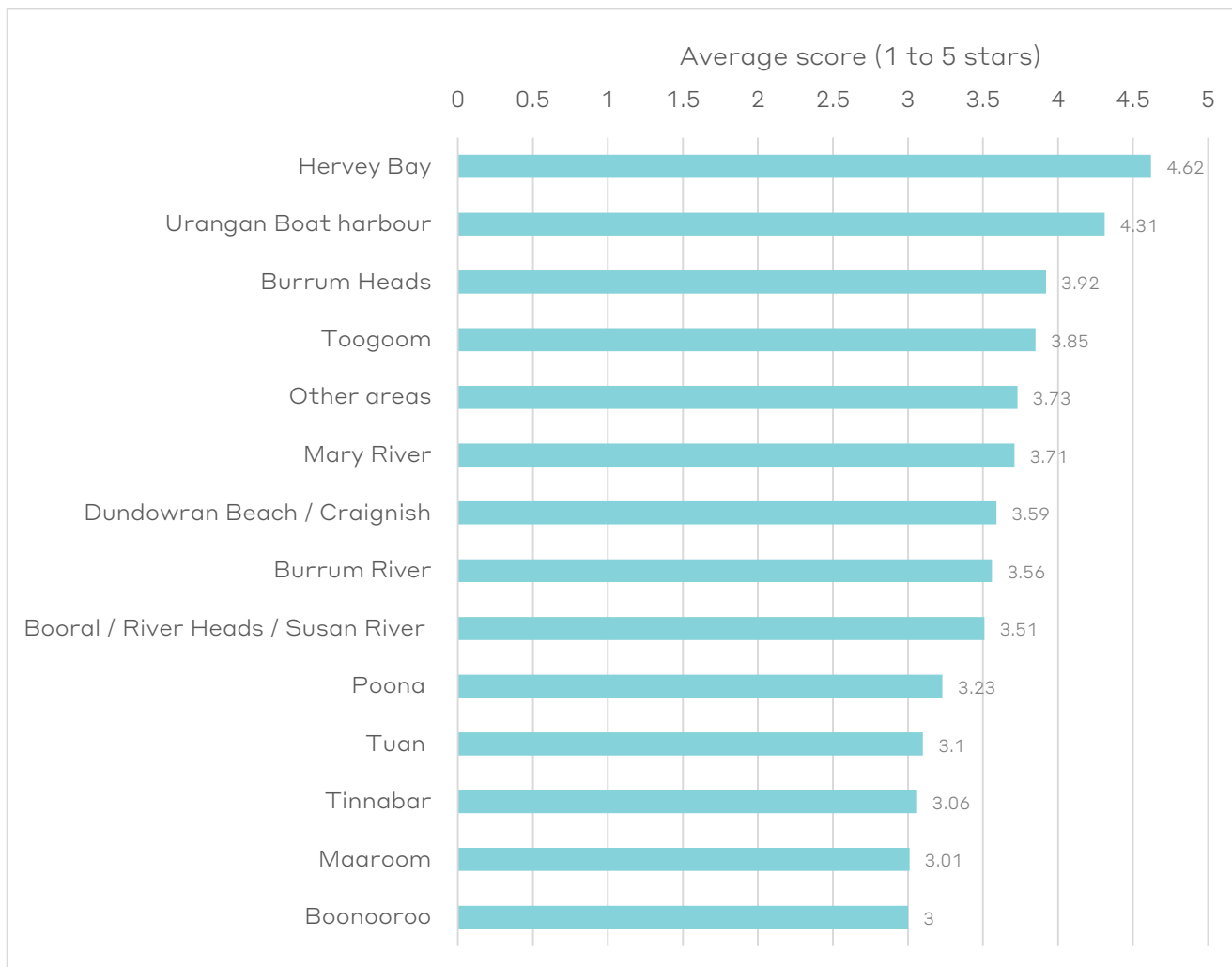



FIGURE 12 - VALUABLE COASTAL LOCATIONS

Survey respondents were asked to identify the main activities they undertake in coastal areas by location. Locality specific summaries are provided at Appendix C, allowing for a close understanding of how users prefer to experience the coastal values of each locality. Overall, it is evident that areas of the coast are used for diverse reasons. The most popular locations for each of the activities were:

TABLE 1 - MOST POPULAR LOCATIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Activity	Most popular locations (top 5)
 Beach / water use (e.g. Swimming, fishing etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (81%) • Other coastal areas (67%) • Burrum Heads (59%) • Dundowran Beach / Craignish (57%) • Toogoom (58%)



Recreation by the water (e.g. Picnics, walking dogs, cycling, etc.)

- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (83%)
- Other coastal areas (68%),
- Burrum Heads (67%)
- Toogoom (59%)
- Dundowran Beach / Craignish (57%)
- Urangan Boat Harbour (57%)



Boating

- Urangan Boat Harbour (46%)
- Booral / River Heads / Susan River (36%)
- Other coastal areas (34%)
- Mary River (30%)
- Burrum River (27%);



Shops, clubs, places to stay and places to eat

- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (83%)
- Urangan Boat Harbour (74%)
- Toogoom (53%)
- Burrum Heads (38%)
- Other coastal areas (35%)



Events / markets

- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (64%)
- Urangan Boat harbour (41%)
- Other coastal areas (31%)
- Mary River (30%)
- Burrum Heads (21%)



Community group or community service

- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (23%)
- Urangan Boat harbour (10%)
- Other coastal areas (10%)
- Poona (9%)
- Burrum Heads (8%)



Work/Business

- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) (17%)
- Mary River (7%)
- Booral / River Heads / Susan River (7%)
- Urangan Boat harbour (7%)
- Other coastal areas (7%)

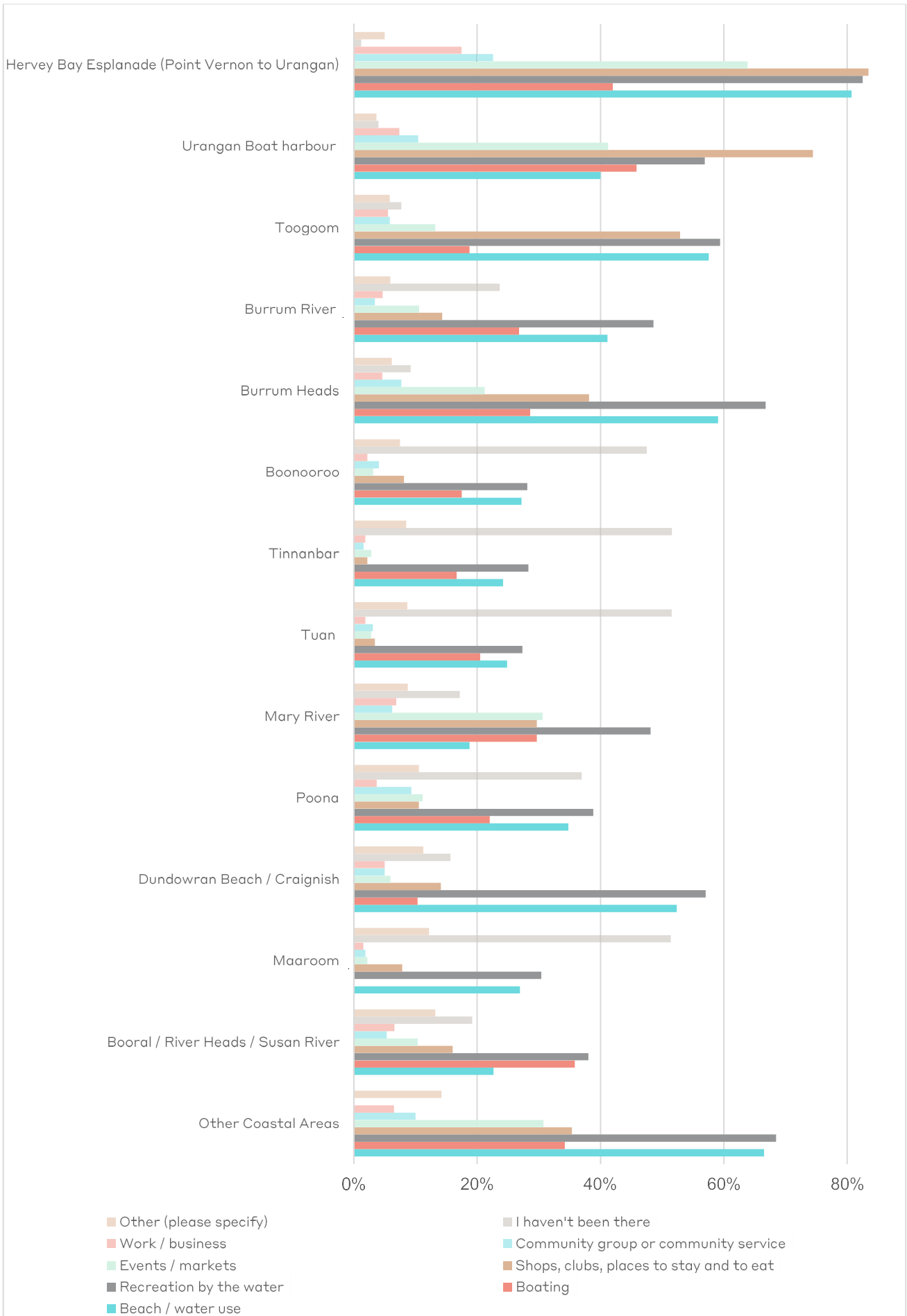


FIGURE 13 - USE OF COASTAL AREAS

Most valued characteristic of the coastal environment

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of qualities or characteristics of the coastal environment. Of the 349 people who responded to the question, **an inviting sandy beach for recreation including beach use and dog walking** was rated the most valued/ ideal characteristic of the coastal areas of Fraser Coast, both now and in the future (average score of **4.3 out of 5**).

Other characteristics which were rated as important by respondents include:

- nature conservation areas (average score of 4.2);
- easy access to get to the beach or water - walk, bike, bus or drive (average score of 4.1); and
- easy access for water-based activities (e.g. swimming, kayaking, jetties, boat ramps) (average score of 4.1).

The above average scores show little variation between the importance of each activity, demonstrating that there is no overwhelming preference between each activity.

The top coastal characteristics respondents consider to be important involve the quality of recreational opportunities and preservation of natural features in addition to the accessibility of coastal activities. This data aligns with the main ways in which respondents use coastal areas (as above).

Please note the above ratings were determined based on the following scale:

1. Not at all
2. Slightly important
3. Important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important

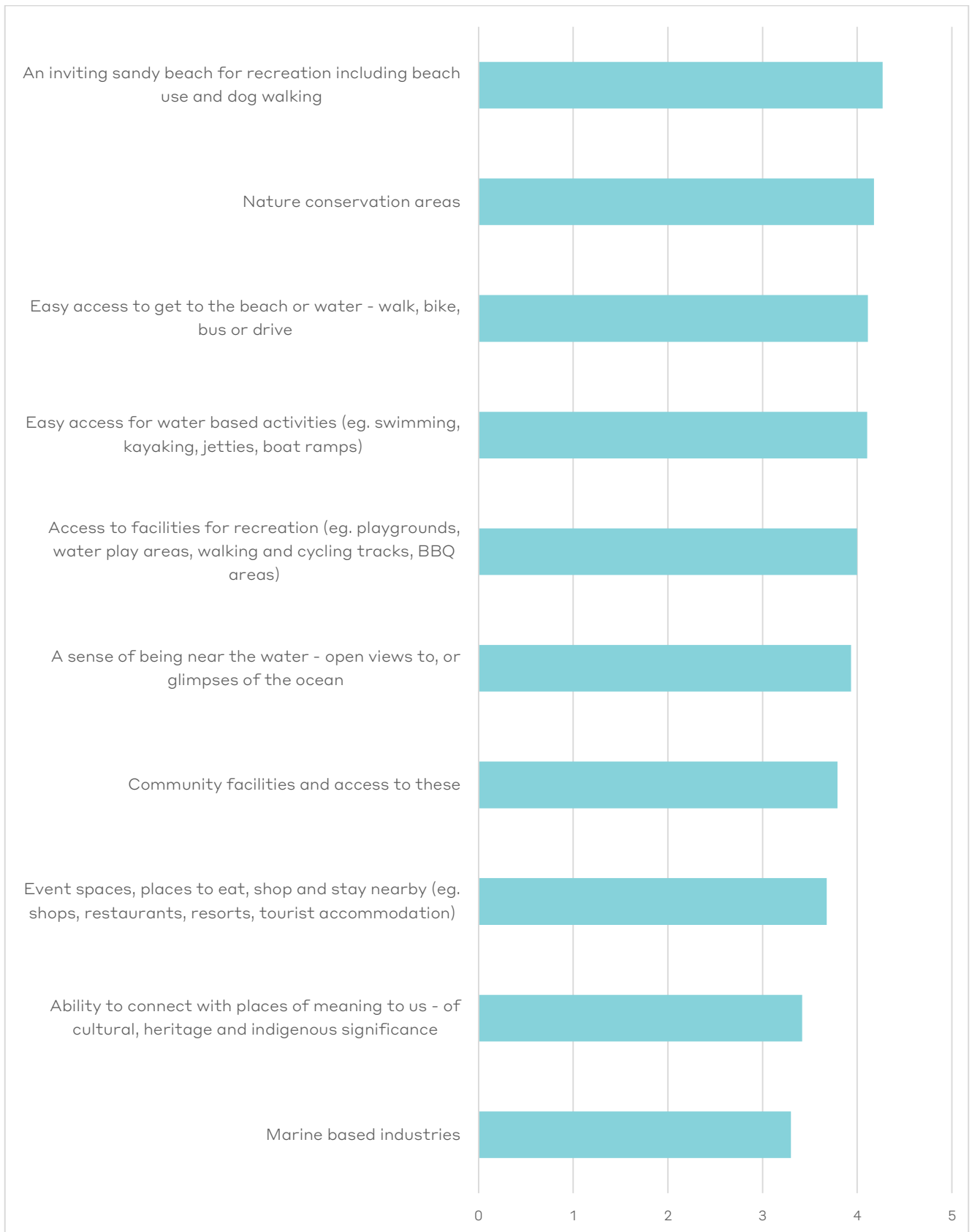


FIGURE 14 - IMPORTANCE OF COASTAL CHARACTERISTICS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Overall comments about the value and importance of the coastal environment in the Fraser Coast region

Responses were also provided in relation to specific locations within the region. Key values identified from this feedback are outlined below:

- **Toogoom** - 6 respondents raised erosion at Toogoom as a significant issue. Of these, 2 responses related to how erosion was affecting coastal properties and property prices, 3 related to concerns regarding the effectiveness of the existing Toogoom rock wall and 2 suggested implementing additional adaptation options to reduce erosion.
- **Burrum Heads** - 6 respondents mentioned Burrum Heads as an area of value. Of the responses, 3 people said they valued the area's natural state and recreational opportunities, 1 respondent was concerned about erosion of the foreshore area, 1 respondent wanted fallen trees to be removed, and another respondent wanted dog clean up bags and water supply at Burrum Heads dog beach.
- **Burrum River** – 2 respondents specifically expressed the need to address sediment build up in the Burrum River. Both respondents suggested undertaking sand dredging as a possible solution.
- **Urangan boat harbour** – The Urangan boat harbour was raised by 4 participants. Of these, 1 respondent stated that the boat harbour is under developed and underutilised, 1 respondent highlighted the significance of the Urangan Pier stating it is an “iconic structure”, 1 respondent suggested erecting a gazebo at Urangan pier and another respondent suggested development should be restricted to the foreshore between Urangan and Pialba.
- **Maaroom** – 1 respondent mentioned that the community had undertaken an initiative to protect the foreshore with sandbags during periods of high storm tide. The respondent advised that the efforts had been effective in the short term, but were only a temporary solution to protect the beach. The respondent said the community group had also planted trees but these are also being washed away.
- **Poona** - The importance of protecting the natural values of Poona foreshore was specifically mentioned by several respondents. Of these, 6 respondents strongly opposed the erection of a new boat ramp at the locality due to perceived negative impacts on the local community and environment. 2 respondents commented that they enjoyed using the foreshore, lake and bushwalks, 2 respondents were concerned about erosion and the removal of

mangroves and 1 respondent supported the creation of a new boat ramp for the locality.

- **Tinnanbar** – Tinnanbar was mentioned by 5 of the respondents. Of these, 4 people raised specific concern about beach erosion and the importance of addressing this issue. Other comments made by respondents included the need for a beach clean up and the upkeep of boat ramps.
- **Dundowran Beach / Craignish** – 6 respondents referred to Dundowran Beach within their open-ended responses. Of these, 3 raised concerns over the rapid rate of erosion occurring at the beach, including 1 respondent who identified that vegetation clearing by landholders is exacerbating erosion issues. 2 respondents said they would like to see a cycle and walking path created to Point Vernon and the Esplanade and 1 respondent identified the need to restrict future subdivision on private land adjoining the beach.
- **Mary River** – 4 respondents referred to increasing the development potential at the Mary River. Suggestions by respondents regarding future development included creating a river walk with cafes and shops, clearing the riverbanks to create better views and creating more recreational opportunities by offering river, wine and jazz tours.
- **Tuan** – 3 respondents provided commentary regarding Tuan. 2 comments were associated with the disadvantages of removing the old Tuan footbridge, 1 comment was made regarding implementing mitigation options to protect the Tuan foreshore from erosion and 1 reference was made to increasing the number of walking and biking tracks.
- **Hervey Bay Esplanade** – 36 respondents provided specific comments relating to the Hervey Bay Esplanade. A breakdown of the key themes identified in the responses is outlined below:
 - 7 people said they enjoy using the Esplanade and are in favour of the upgrades being made;
 - 5 general comments were made about continuing Esplanade upgrades. A further 8 references were made about improving facilities at the Esplanade by widening the footpath, improving footpath connections to other areas within town, providing more garbage bins to reduce littering and adding a shower and tap at the boat ramp;
 - 5 respondents expressed their desire to maintain the height restrictions along the Esplanade to retain the existing sense of place;
 - 4 responses raised concerns about the removal of vegetation along the esplanade, stating that this is leaving the shoreline vulnerable to erosion. 1

respondent suggested planting more native plants along the Esplanade to secure soil and reduce the likelihood of it being washed or blown away;

- 3 responses identified the need for sustainable development along the Esplanade to ensure the “vibe” and the history along the esplanade is maintained, current infrastructure is able to cater for growth and green spaces and recreational areas are protected;
- 2 responses expressed the need for more car parking on the Esplanade and nearby streets; and
- 1 response provided positive feedback on Council’s revegetation work to date.

Responses to the survey’s open-ended questions made suggestions associated with management of the coast, and future management and mitigation of coastal changes. Ideas that were raised include:

- **8 responses** identified the importance of managing coastlines through protecting, **replenishing and replanting natural vegetation, and providing more mangroves**;
- **13 responses** identified the importance of **not over-developing coastal areas** and **maintaining height restrictions in proximity to the foreshore** to maintain the sense of place and protect natural areas for wildlife.
- a range of additional responses and ideas associated with adaptation options such as:
 - keeping beaches in their natural state and undertaking revegetation;
 - using wave breakers in areas that are sustaining rapid foreshore erosion;
 - providing better funding for cultural leaders, conservationists and rangers to improve the reach of coastal value education programs for the public;
 - educating the general public on the importance of respecting and preserving the coastal environment by reducing litter and habitat contamination and protecting dunes and nests;
 - undertaking more public engagement regarding increasingly extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change;
 - providing more support for waterway maintenance, coastal erosion prevention, and private parties to undertake hazard adaptation actions.

Comments made on 'values' of the Fraser Coast region's coast:

"Conservation of the flora and fauna is of the utmost importance. The waterways are unique and even though they are a major drawcard for tourism they must be protected, and sustainability ensured."

"The unique overlap between tropical and sub-tropical species (flora/ and fauna); coral reefs; sandflats; peace and quiet. There is nothing worse than jet skis, hovercraft, quad bikes or trail bikes destroying the opportunity for passive recreation."

"We live in an area which is not only beautiful, but which has magnificent views from Pt. Vernon to Urangan. Council continue to improve and create foreshore areas which make it a delight to walk and explore."

"I would love to have the natural coastline retained. I live at Dundowran Beach and want our natural, not manicured and cleared foreshore to be retained. It is slowly being eroded by nature, but human intervention to clear the so-called weeds to make a manicured foreshore and improve views is also a threat. We have neighbours who have decided to create their own walkways for their personal use and increase erosion along our foreshore. If they wanted Gold Coast beaches, they should have stayed there."

"Preservation of natural environment but also erosion prevention along the coastline."

"We have been blessed with so much along our coastline. Sometimes we don't fully appreciate it - until it is threatened. The balance between the needs of development, lifestyle, historical preservation and conservation is difficult to maintain. So far, Councils have done a good job, but we must make sure it stays that way."

"Yes, I would like the low building height kept as is along our foreshores, that is what makes Hervey Bay and environs so special. We don't want another Gold or Sunshine coast here."

"All coastal areas and estuaries are vital to sustaining the native flora and fauna. Our reefs and foreshore are foundations for tourism and fisheries."

"Conservation of the natural habitat is extremely important."

"Love Poona but are concerned by beach erosion."

"Love the low impact of infrastructure and low population. Would hate to see that change."

Feedback on existing coastal hazard management and ideas for the future:

"Retaining natural vegetation, planting additional vegetation to protect dunes."

"I want to see mature trees all along the Esplanade and as street tree planting for shade for people and cars. I want to see supporting native plant plantings to secure soil from being washed or blown away. Less of large areas of mown grass and

"When shoring up seafront areas such as the Esplanade in Hervey Bay I would prefer to see a bluestone wall built like the ones they have around the bays of Melbourne and Sydney rather than the big rocks we see being used along the beach at the moment."

"The new rock wall at Toogoom is a disgrace & is clearly not working, something should be done immediately, we all pay our rates and Toogoom is in Hervey Bay!"

"Boat ramp upgrades & cleaning of ramps, foreshore management, coastal protection/erosion control, rock walls, clean up, sand filling, fencing, stair access."

"This is a beautiful region we need to continue to look after. Educating people further about taking rubbish home to dispose sensibly, as well as not taking shells, etc from the beach is something I feel strongly about."

"I feel the State Government should have a trial with wave breakers in those areas that are sustaining rapid foreshore erosion. I feel the by using the semi-submersible swimming enclosures like those are Gold Coast Paradise point would work perfectly in the sandy straights area. I feel it is not the high water that is eroding the foreshore it is the action of wind and waves smashing against the foreshore."

"I moved to Hervey Bay last year because of the beautiful beach and coastline. I base a lot of recreational activities around my local beach at Torquay - walking, cycling, swimming, kayaking. I hope that the impact of climate change can be mitigated so we don't lose the beach. The rock wall seems to have been successful at Torquay so hopefully that can be extended. I hope the piers are taken care of and I also hope that council works to make the Esplanade even more pedestrian and bike friendly."

"I worry about the beach erosion in the small coastal fishing villages. Please help us retain our beach fronts. We need to keep diligent with regards to the mangrove population and make sure it is not



"Coastal protection, cleaning water ways, no commercial fishing, erosion protection and future planning so future generations can enjoy our beaches."




"Council should be nurturing local flora for our local wildlife and educating residents of the value in growing Australian plants especially plants of this area so we don't lose our native bees, butterflies etc. Growing native plants relevant to our area will be less water reliant, prevent erosion and provide food sources to native animals, insects especially bees and butterflies."

Concerns about coastal changes

A number of respondents raised specific concerns regarding coastal changes in response to the open-ended questions. Key observations from these responses are themed and summarised below:

TABLE 2 - KEY CONCERNS ABOUT COASTAL CHANGE

Theme	No. of comments	Examples of comments provided
 <p>Loss of beach and coastal erosion</p> <p>Approximately 10% of respondents expressed particular concern about the rate of erosion in coastal areas and the effect this is having on natural areas such as foreshores, vegetation, dunes parks and reserves. Protection measures suggested by respondents to assist in preserving and enhancing environmental values include limiting the level of development within close proximity of the coastline and restoring/rehabilitating coastal foreshore areas through revegetation, rock walls and groins, sand pumping and wave breakers.</p> <p>The key coastal areas where respondents had noticed beach erosion included Poona, Toogoom, Tinnanbar, Tuan and Dundowran Beach.</p>	35	<p><i>"All southern Fraser Coast towns are suffering severe shoreline erosion. These areas were not included in previous SEMP project. I hope this Coastal Futures survey translates to shoreline management in these areas."</i></p> <p><i>"Erosion is a huge value destroyer to lifestyle, nature and property values."</i></p> <p><i>"Love Poona but are concerned by beach erosion."</i></p> <p><i>"It is very sad to see Dundowran Beach and foreshore area eroding away so rapidly!"</i></p>
 <p>Over development in coastal areas</p> <p>A theme expressed in the responses was the need to restrict development along coastal areas and maintain the bulk and scale of existing development to ensure natural values are protected. Suggestions to minimise over-development of coastal areas include containing higher density development in selective areas, restricting density near the foreshore areas and keeping the development footprint of caravan parks low when in proximity to the foreshore. One respondent commented that they support the development of Hervey Bay foreshore areas and that this should continue.</p>	14	<p><i>"I am very concerned about continued development, especially commercial and facilities in place of natural areas."</i></p> <p><i>"If we stop building so close to the water a lot of natural erosion won't affect anyone."</i></p> <p><i>"I think that development should absolutely be restricted to the Urangan to Pialba sections. Leave the rest to a natural habitat."</i></p>

Theme	No. of comments	Examples of comments provided
 <p>Vegetation clearing</p> <p>Vegetation clearing was identified as a key issue by a number of respondents in coastal areas, leaving the shoreline more vulnerable to erosion and storm tide events.</p>	5	<p><i>"...Please stop clearing the beach side vegetation just to serve the interests of a few local businesses and causing the public spaces to erode away."</i></p> <p><i>"The unchallenged devastation of coastal wetlands and coastal vegetation is shocking..."</i></p>
 <p>Poona boat ramp</p> <p>Some respondents (5 people) mentioned their concerns about a proposed boat ramp in Poona due to the potential impacts on coastal processes. In contrast, some respondents (3 people) mentioned their support for improved boat ramp infrastructure in the area.</p>	8	<p><i>"Reiterate my negative opinion upon the proposed boat ramp in Poona due to the potential environmental damage."</i></p> <p><i>"I do not like the new idea of putting a new boat ramp at Poona."</i></p> <p><i>"The proposal of a new boat ramp at Poona is ill founded and not wanted by the public."</i></p> <p><i>"Poona needs a better boat ramp in the centre of town at the end of Owen Cox Drive, Poona."</i></p>
 <p>Burrum River dredging</p> <p>Two (2) respondents identified the need to undertake dredging of the Burrum River. It was suggested sand is being deposited in the river as a result of coastal erosion.</p>	2	<p><i>"I would like Council to look at our beach erosion and all the sand that is going to the centre of the Burrum River. An option could be to look at undertaking sand dredging."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like Council to look at our beach erosion and all the sand that is going to the centre of the Burrum River. An option could be to look at undertaking sand dredging."</i></p>

Stakeholder workshops and individual meetings summary

Key stakeholder workshops were undertaken to identify important coastal values and assets, tap into the local knowledge and motivate local group members to be involved in other engagement activities planned for this phase and future phases of the project.

Young people are often an underrepresented group in engagement activities, and their input is particularly pertinent for long term strategic planning projects such as Coastal Futures which projects out to 2100. In light of this, the project deliberately sought to capture feedback from younger community members through the established youth leadership groups in Hervey Bay and Maryborough, and a visit to Tiaro State School. This provided young people with the opportunity to hear about the project and to ensure their views and values were captured.

All workshops involved a mapping exercise intended to capture (a) values associated with the coast – what is important, and (b) experiences associated with coastal changes. The information provided by workshop attendees on these maps has been summarised into electronic format at Appendix B. These maps will form important touchstones for reference throughout the project. The key community values observed have been displayed in locality summaries within Appendix C.

General observations made during the workshops and meetings about community values are outlined below.

- all coastal areas in the Fraser Coast region are considered important and is reinforced by the coastal living focus;
- significant natural assets support important opportunities for tourism, recreation and places to meet;
- water-based recreational activities and being amongst the natural environment are highly valued amongst the community;
- areas along the coast have high ecological value and provide important habitat and nesting grounds for a diverse range of flora and fauna; and
- Erosion is a significant issue at several beaches within the region and development along the foreshore is generally not preferred.

Infrastructure and provision of services

Observations identified during the workshops and meetings about the provision of infrastructure, are below:

- new infrastructure needs to be setback from foreshore areas to protect dunes and reduce likelihood of damage; and
- future infrastructure provision needs a focus on fostering sustainability and positive environmental outcomes i.e. choosing strategic locations and using sustainable design and management practices.

Environmental and cultural values

Environmental values were commonly raised in workshop feedback. A summary of key discussion points is outlined below:

- nature reserves, beaches and Fraser Island (including access to and from) are key assets that people are coming for, and there is a key opportunity to take advantage of the region's eco-tourism potential;
- the Fraser Coast region has significant biodiversity and ecosystems, both aquatic and land based. Those raised include habitats for migratory birds, turtles and mangroves;

- significant erosion is occurring in foreshore areas and waterways and this is threatening wildlife, cultural values and homes;
- runoff of sediments and contaminants is occurring;
- illegal removal of vegetation, including mangroves and poisoning of some coastal vegetation removal/damage is occurring throughout the region.

Existing and future development/construction

The key themes raised during the workshops and meetings about development and construction, are below:

- increasing development in low lying areas around Maryborough will increase flood risk;
- the reduction of rural agricultural land and expansion of development in coastal areas is threatening environmental values and needs to be carefully controlled to mitigate irreversible impacts on habitats and ecosystems;
- there is inadequate buffering between some development and the foreshore. This leaves homes and other infrastructure vulnerable to damage from high tides and storm tide inundation.

Adaptation and Disaster Management

Observations made during the workshops and meetings about emergency services and disaster management, include:

- infrastructure and access roads are at risk of inundation and erosion from king tides. Roads that can stay at a higher level for longer are critical for evacuation routes. Need resilient infrastructure and not just rebuilding the same road each time;
- erosion management in some areas has been ineffective, only acting as a temporary solution to erosion issues;
- some adaptation options implemented (rock walls) have not been successful in mitigating erosion;
- opportunities for particular foreshore reserves to be maintained by Aboriginal rangers.

Locality summaries – coastal area use, values and experiences

Findings from the survey and workshops have been combined to present locality based summaries which will form a critical piece for further project work.

These are provided at Appendix C.

Summary, Learnings and next steps

Summary and Learnings

A range of people, views and aspirations were captured through the initial consultation on the 'Coastal Futures' project.

The 'Coastal Futures' initial engagement campaign utilised a variety of consultation methods to engage permanent and part-time residents of the Fraser Coast region.

Key purpose of engagement was to:

- inform the community and stakeholders about the project – to provide a clear understanding of the project's purpose, scope, program and timeframes;
- consult with the community and stakeholders about particular values on the coast.

These findings will be used as a touchstone and reference point to inform future project phases and understand how consistent particular options are with the values of stakeholders and the community.

At a high level, some of the key findings are that:

- the community place significant value on the coastal features of an inviting sandy beach and water access for recreation functions (including beach use and dog walking) and the natural environment of the Fraser Coast region;
- Hervey Bay Esplanade (Point Vernon to Urangan) was the most well frequented and highly valued coastal location with the Fraser Coast Region across survey respondents;
- Coastal communities to the north and south were highly valued by those who access them for their environmental, cultural and recreational values;
- The community has observed coastal hazards, particularly erosion, in a number of locations and also identified where existing adaptation responses have not been working.

Learnings for Future Engagement Process

The engagement process has been effective to date, receiving a high level of participation, support and endorsement from key stakeholders. Learnings from engagement activities to be considered in future engagement processes include:

- locating the pop-ups within a central and well-frequented facility with good levels of pedestrian traffic ensured that there were high participation rates. It is recommended that these locations be considered for future engagement events;
- it is recommended that future pop-ups are supported with additional media promotion, well in advance of the event to encourage participation, and allow more time for community members to organise their attendance at the pop-ups. We noted that many of the visitors to the pop-up events had attended because they saw the display, rather than having read about the workshop in the media / online;
- there may be opportunities to better utilise existing community groups and networks in the subsequent stages of consultation to continue to raise awareness of and input into the project. This might include presentations, workshops, meetings with community leaders or direct email to these groups and networks in order to increase participation; and
- we also note that proactive steps are being taken to engage with business owners within all coastal locations, and establishing an appropriate way to obtain further traditional owner representation from the Butchulla people as part of the project.

Next Steps

The findings from this consultation will be an important input into the risk assessment stage of analysis (Phase 5). The findings will also provide important context to developing potential adaptation (Phases 6) options as well as the socio-economic assessment of those options (Stage 7).

At the end of this stage, the project website will be updated with the key findings from this consultation stage and explain how contributions from participants will be used in subsequent project stages.