

Southern Beaches Plan

Community survey snapshot

What we heard

In March 2026, Sorell Council invited the community to share their views and contribute to the Southern Beaches Plan.

A total of 305 people completed the survey, representing a broad cross section of residents from Dodges Ferry, Carlton, Carlton River, Primrose Sands and Lewisham. This summary provides a snapshot of what we heard, and focuses on the themes, shared priorities and challenges that emerged across the feedback received.

Who we heard from

Over 90% of survey respondents live in the Southern Beaches, while 15% work locally and 10% own a business in the area. Most respondents have a long-term relationship with the area with around half having lived in the Southern Beaches for more than 10 years and over one third for more than 20 years.

The most represented age groups were 50-64 years (39%) and 35-49 years (33%) and there was strong representation from female respondents (61%). Responses were fielded from across the Southern Beaches: Dodges Ferry (38%), Carlton and Carlton River (23%), Primrose Sands (20%) and Lewisham (14%).

305

survey responses received

53%

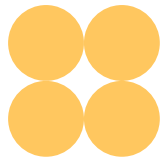
have been residents for 10+ years

44%

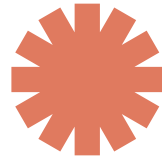
are aged under 50 years old

What matters most?

When asked what matters most to their experience of living in the Southern Beaches, there was very strong alignment of values. The most important things were:



Feeling safe



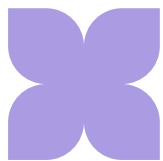
Managing natural hazards (erosion, bushfire & flooding)



Access to beaches and waterways



Walking and cycling paths



Access to and protection of natural areas



Sense of community and belonging



The Southern Beaches today

Local character

When asked to describe the character of the Southern Beaches today, the term 'Coastal' was by far the most used showing residents strongly identify with their beachside location.

'Friendly' and 'Family-friendly' were the top social descriptors, reflecting a welcoming, family-oriented community, while the terms 'Quiet' and 'Relaxed' indicate residents value a peaceful lifestyle.

'Changing' and 'Growing' also appeared frequently showing residents are aware of and noting the area's transition.


Social connection

Social connection is strong in the Southern Beaches with 77% of respondents feeling very connected or somewhat connected to their local community, while 70% feel a strong or very strong sense of belonging. Many respondents noted community organisations, schools,

Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club, and Okines Community House as important places for local connection. However, some expressed concern about declining affordability, and loss of informal social spaces if growth is not managed carefully.



“The most important aspect of local character has always been a love of fishing, beachgoing, walking, meeting people outdoors and a fairly ‘low-key’ way of life.”

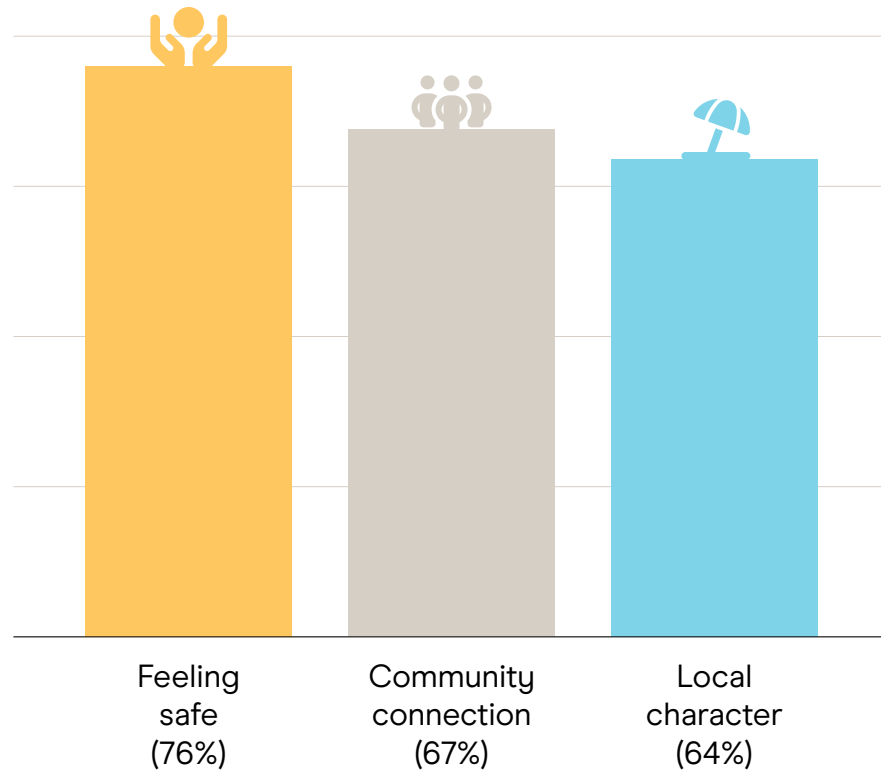


“The respect people show each other and the helping attitude of many in the community.”

The Southern Beaches today

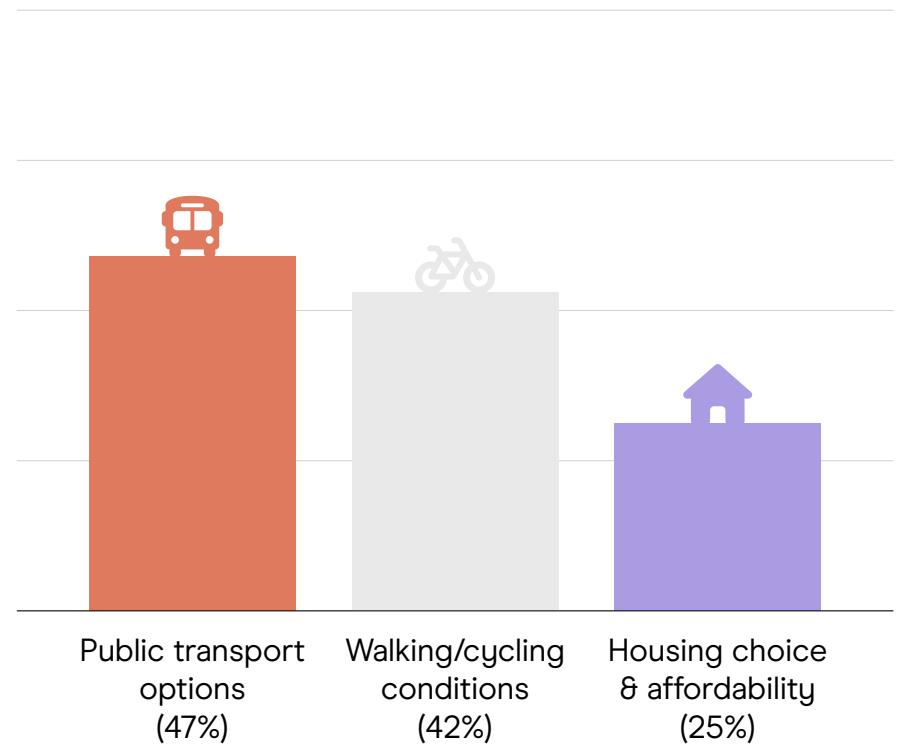
Strengths

The area is perceived as performing well in qualities linked to lifestyle and social connection. Percentages relate to a rating of 'good' or 'very good'.



Challenges

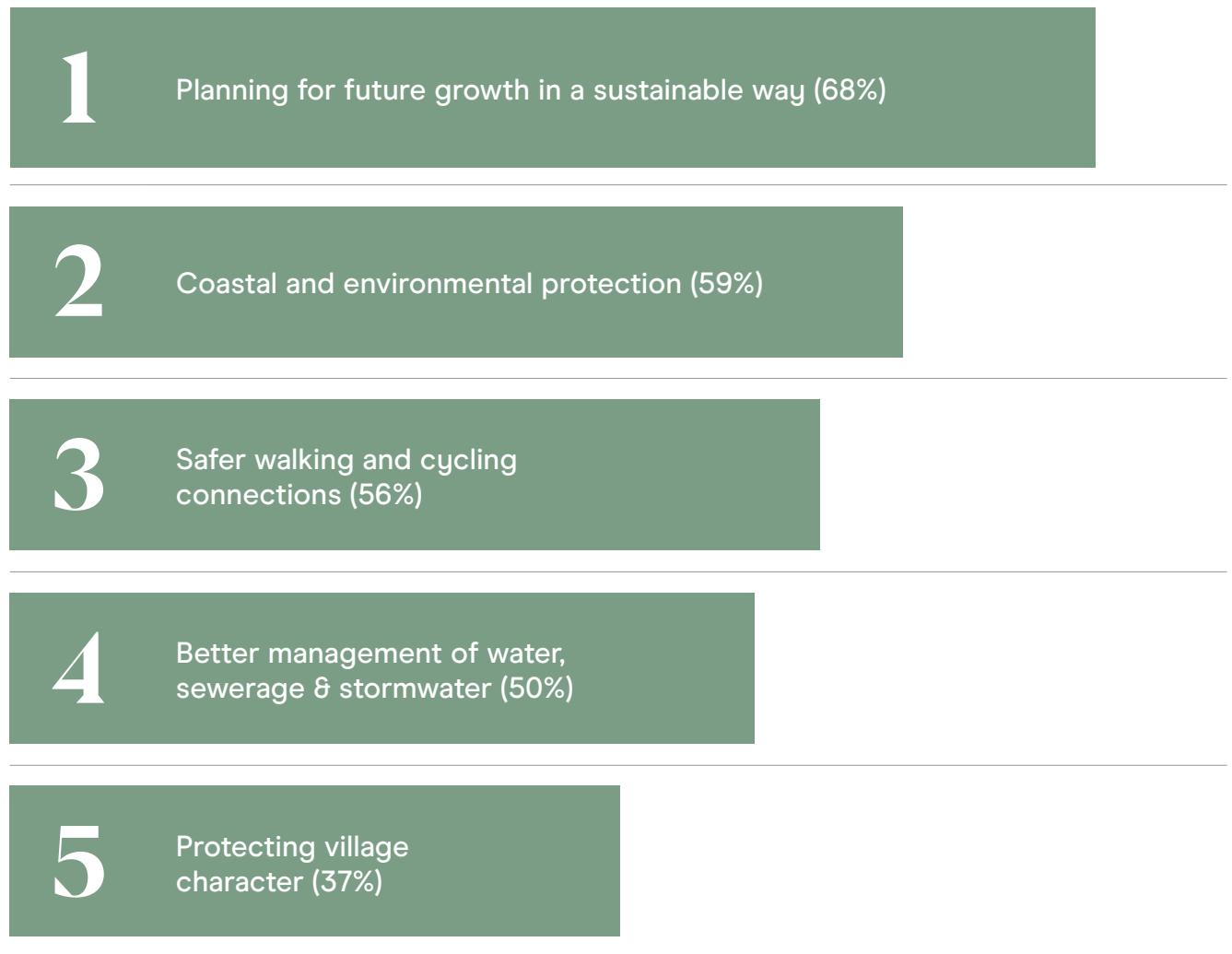
Performance was rated lower for housing and infrastructure. Percentages relate to a rating of 'poor' or 'very poor'.



Future priorities for the Southern Beaches

Focus for the Southern Beaches Plan

When asked to identify priorities for the Southern Beaches Plan, the most frequently selected were:



Future priorities for the Southern Beaches

A shared vision for the future

When asked to select the top five future vision statements, the most supported statements were:

- A place that protects and restores natural and coastal environments (66%)
- An area with connected walking and cycling networks (57%)
- A place where local services and facilities meet community needs (52%)
- A vibrant place with local activities, events and small businesses (50%)

“A resilient and beautiful coastal town that values and prioritises our environment and community.”



“Safe, affordable, healthy, and vibrant community with young people who are engaged and have the opportunity to be at their best.”

“A thriving environment and a connected community caring for each other and the beautiful environment we enjoy.”

Next steps for the project

Key takeaways

- Appreciation for the coastal setting, village character and community
- Support for well-managed growth that protects natural values
- Desire for change that strengthens, rather than diminishes, local character and liveability.

People value the Southern Beaches for its coastal environment, village character, sense of community and safety.

There is a desire for future growth to be carefully managed, supported by infrastructure, and clearly aligned with protecting natural assets and values, and celebrating what makes the area distinctive.

The strongest risk identified by the community is not change itself, but change that outpaces services, undermines environmental health, or erodes local character.

Future engagement

- Strong interest in staying involved, particularly through online and flexible engagement channels
- The community value clear, early and transparent communication that explains how input is used
- Preference for inclusive engagement that fits around people's lives.

The community noted a strong desire to stay involved throughout the project with 81% wanting to participate through online surveys while around one-third are interested in workshops or drop-in sessions.

Social media and word-of-mouth are the main ways people hear about local projects. The community also seek clear communication, early engagement and feedback loops that show how community input influences decisions.

How to stay involved

The project team are currently preparing technical assessments on housing, social infrastructure, economic needs, transport, landscape, and natural values. These will inform the development of a Discussion Paper and emerging options which will be released for community feedback.

All updates, documents and engagement opportunities will be listed on Council's website page:

[www.sorell.tas.gov.au/
southern-beaches-plan-shaping-
a-sustainable-future](http://www.sorell.tas.gov.au/southern-beaches-plan-shaping-a-sustainable-future)

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