

Consultation Report

Southern Beaches Plan | October 2026



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Southern Beaches Plan

The Southern Beaches Plan is being prepared by Sorell Council to guide the long-term future of Dodges Ferry, Lewisham, Carlton, Carlton River and Primrose Sands.

The Plan will set a shared vision for the area and guide future decisions about land use, housing, infrastructure, natural hazard management, transport, and the protection of environmental and community values.

The Southern Beaches is one of the most distinctive and valued parts of the Sorell municipality. It is a growing coastal community, with increasing visitor interest and a natural environment that residents strongly value.

The Plan will help Council make clear, future-focused decisions so the area can continue to function well as it changes over time.

The Plan is being informed by technical work and community engagement, including a Discussion Paper and supporting reports covering economic analysis, transport, social infrastructure needs and precinct planning.

Together, these inputs provide an evidence base for identifying key issues, opportunities and emerging options for the Southern Beaches.

Earlier engagement identified community priorities including safety, access to beaches and waterways, protection of natural areas, walking and cycling paths, local character, community connection, and managing natural hazards such as erosion, bushfire and flooding.

Engagement on the Discussion Paper tested these issues further and helped identify practical directions for land use, infrastructure, open space, movement, local centres and community facilities across the Southern Beaches. This report provides an overview of the results associated with this engagement.

About this report

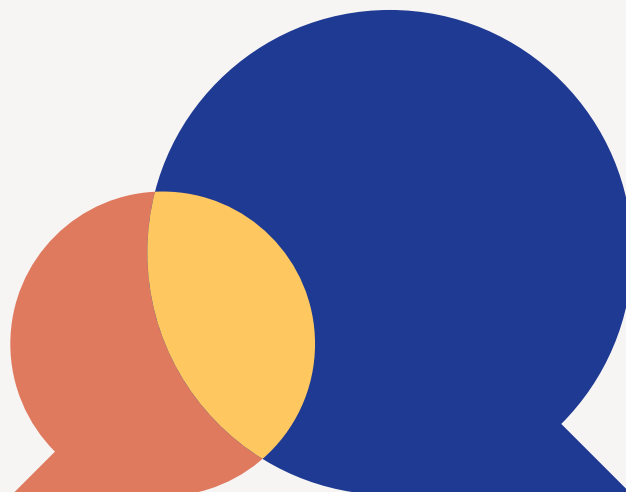
This report groups feedback into six topics that align with the chapters of the Discussion Paper:

- People & housing
- Business & economy
- Natural environment & landscape
- Transport & movement
- Community & recreation infrastructure
- Service infrastructure

What's next?

The feedback outlined in this report will help shape the Draft Southern Beaches Plan.

We'll be engaging the community again later this year once the Draft is published. Keep an eye on Council's website and social media channels for opportunities to have your say!



How we engaged

About this consultation

This stage of consultation invited the community to review the Southern Beaches Plan Discussion Paper and supporting technical reports and share feedback on key issues, opportunities and emerging directions for the area.

Consultation ran from Thursday 16 July to Wednesday 12 August 2026.

Face-to-face consultation

Face-to-face consultation included local pop-up sessions in Lewisham, Park Beach and Primrose Sands, a community workshop at Okines Community House, a social infrastructure workshop, and activities with students from Dodges Ferry Primary School.

These sessions gave residents, landowners, business owners, visitors, service providers and young people a chance to speak directly with the project team about what is working well, what needs attention, and what should be considered in the Southern Beaches Plan.

Online and written consultation

People could also provide feedback through an online survey or written submission. The survey asked about local values, future priorities, key issues and the early ideas in the Discussion Paper.

125 survey responses and four written submissions were received, alongside direct feedback provided through the project contact channels.

The numbers

Responses to
the online survey

125

Conversations at
pop-up sessions

100+

Participants at
community workshops

28

Local school
students engaged

40+

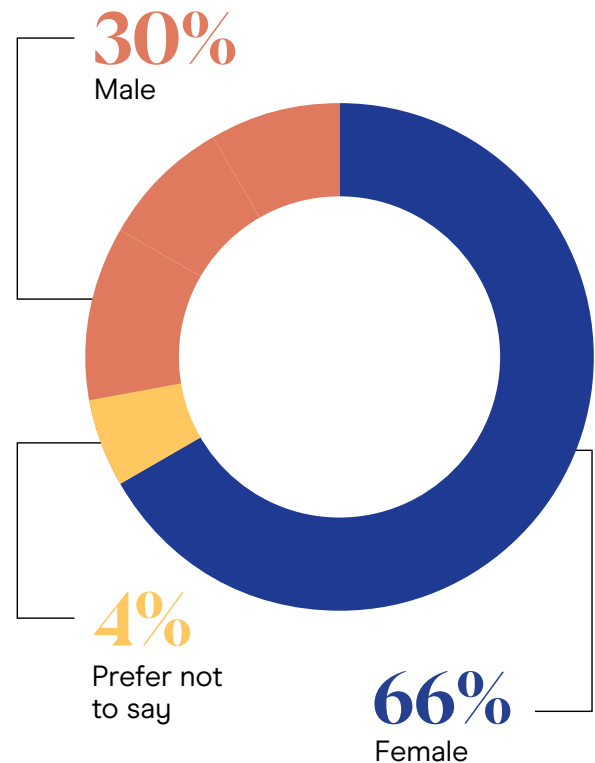
Who answered the survey

The survey was strongly resident-led, with 96% of respondents living in the Southern Beaches.

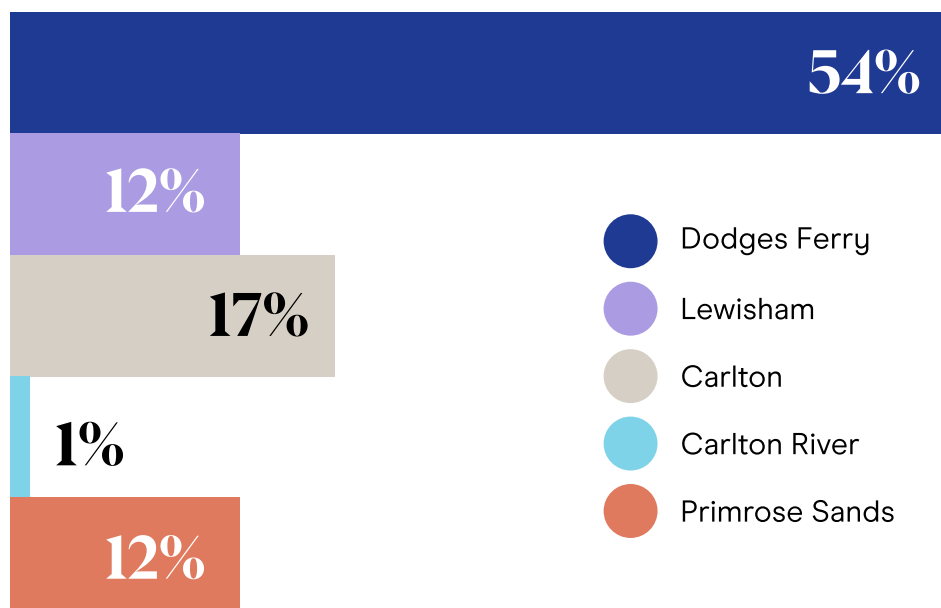
Dodges Ferry was the most represented township, followed by Carlton, Lewisham and Primrose Sands. Most respondents had a long-standing connection to the area, reflected in the strong focus on local character, environmental protection and infrastructure constraints.

The largest respondent age group was 50 to 64 years, representing 37% of respondents. Around two-thirds identified as female, 6% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and couple households were the most common household type.

This demographic profile relates to online survey respondents only. Pop-ups were generally attended by people from the suburb in which they were held, while workshops drew attendees from across the Southern Beaches.



Location of where survey respondents live





What we heard

People & housing

The community want more housing choice, but also want change to be considered and suited to the Southern Beaches.

The main message was that housing should help local people stay connected to the area, while protecting the coastal, bushland and village character that people value.

Feedback also highlighted the need to consider servicing, access and environmental limits before supporting further housing development.

- Many people want housing options that help older residents stay in the area as their needs change, with 53% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three priorities for local housing needs.
- There was concern that holiday homes and short-stay accommodation are reducing the amount of housing available for locals year-round.
- Feedback pointed to a need for more homes suited to smaller households, including people living alone, couples, smaller families and downsizers.
- Rental availability and affordability were raised as practical issues for local residents, workers and younger people, with 31% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three housing priorities.
- Standalone homes remain important, but there was also support for secondary dwellings, smaller homes and other well-designed options that help people stay local.
- People wanted future housing change to happen in suitable locations, where services, access, local character and environmental conditions can support it.



“There is a need to provide affordable options to allow future generations to be able to afford to live in the area.”

“Being able to down size and stay within the community.”

— Comments from survey respondents

Business & economy

Feedback showed that people want the Southern Beaches to have better everyday services, without becoming a commercial centre.

The strongest message was support for modest, practical improvements that make local centres easier to use, more comfortable and more useful for residents.

People identified service gaps that affect day-to-day life, especially where it is harder to access Sorell or Hobart.

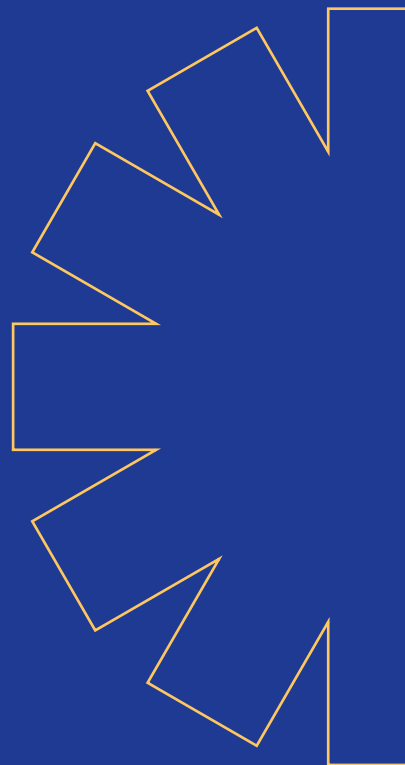
- Almost half of survey respondents supported small-scale growth that improves existing local services and helps local centres work better day to day.
- 27% of survey respondents supported a moderate level of growth where it would provide useful services and reduce the need for longer trips.
- A smaller group (15% of survey respondents) preferred little or no change, mainly because of concerns about overdevelopment, traffic, local character and infrastructure capacity.
- Feedback showed a strong interest in more places to eat, meet and spend time locally, including cafes, restaurants and informal gathering places.
- People identified service gaps including health services, public toilets, useful local shops and small business spaces.
- Primrose Sands residents more often raised limited local services as a daily inconvenience.

65%

of survey respondents want to see better public spaces, seating, shade or landscaping near local shops

46%

of survey respondents want to see better public transport access to shops, services and nearby centres





67%

of survey respondents want to see action on restoring or rehabilitating natural areas such as dunes, wetlands and vegetation

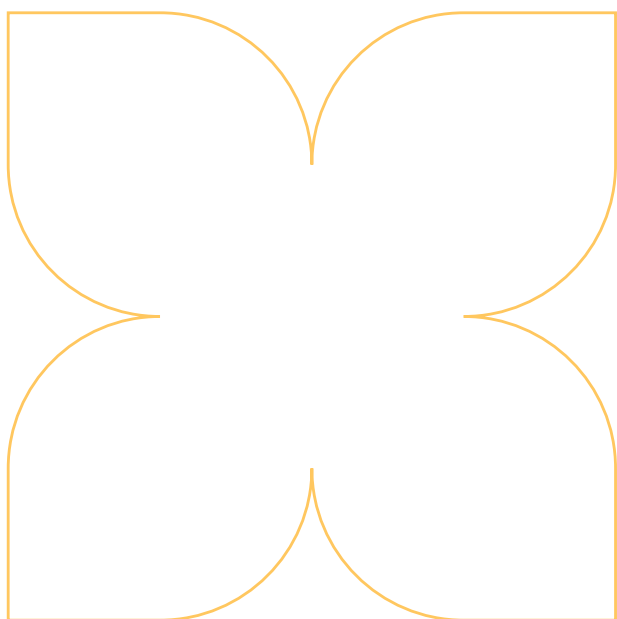
Natural environment and landscape

The natural environment was one of the strongest themes in the feedback.

People described beaches, dunes, bushland, waterways, lagoons, wetlands and wildlife as central to the character and liveability of the Southern Beaches.

The feedback also showed that people want better care for these places, with improvements that protect the environment while still allowing people to enjoy it responsibly.

- Beaches and coastal landscapes were the most valued natural features, followed by wildlife and habitat, native vegetation, bushland, waterways, lagoons and wetlands.
- Two-thirds of survey respondents ranked the restoration and rehabilitation of dunes, wetlands, vegetation and other natural areas in their top three priorities for environmental care.
- Stormwater, runoff and water quality were raised as important issues, especially where they affect beaches, rivers, lagoons and wetlands.
- People supported clearer paths, signs and basic facilities where these help guide access and reduce damage to fragile areas.
- There was concern about development in sensitive or hazard-prone places, including areas affected by erosion, flooding or bushfire, with 39% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three environment-related priorities.
- Lewisham foreshore, Carlton Beach dunes, Red Ochre Beach, Blue Lagoon, Flora Park, Carlton River, Primrose Sands beach and local wetlands were identified as places needing care and attention.



“We need to weave things in whilst simultaneously retaining the natural values that draw people to the area.”

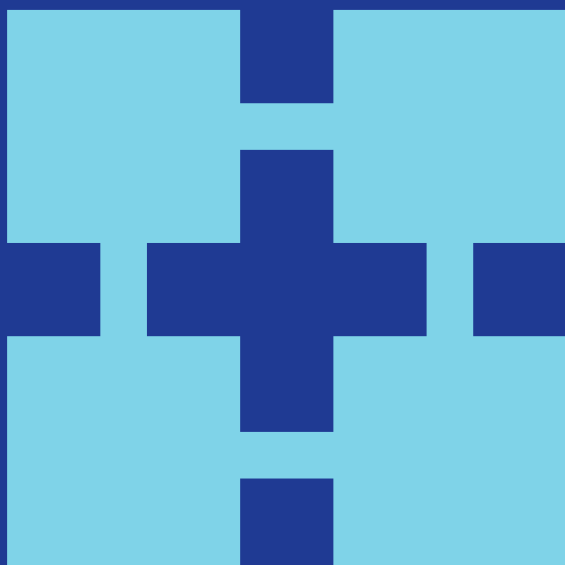
— Comment from survey respondent

Transport & movement

Transport feedback was strongly focused on safer, more connected walking and cycling routes, supported by better public transport access and safer local roads.

People described transport as a daily liveability issue, especially for older residents, families, children, people using mobility aids and those who want to reach schools, shops, beaches, community facilities and bus stops without relying on a car.

- Walking and cycling paths were the most frequent item raised across all engagement, with 76% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three priorities for transport and movement.
- Continuous footpaths were the leading improvement sought by the community, with three-quarters of survey respondents agreeing it would make the biggest difference to how people get around the Southern Beaches.
- People wanted safer routes to schools, shops, beaches, community facilities and bus stops.
- Around half of survey all respondents ranked public transport in their top three for transport and movement. Related feedback focused on better services, accessible stops, shelters and first and last leg connections.
- Key locations included Lewisham Scenic Drive, Carlton Beach Road, Old Forcett Road, Dodges Ferry shops, Park Beach and Primrose Sands.
- Primrose Sands feedback highlighted bus access, Tamarix Road footpaths, Sugarloaf Road speeds and safer beach access.



“More footpaths that take people off the main road would make people use them more and be safer.”

— Comments from survey respondents

Community & recreation infrastructure

Community and recreation feedback prioritised making existing places work better, rather than creating major new facilities.

People wanted practical upgrades to parks, foreshore areas, halls, paths and gathering spaces, with a strong focus on youth, health access, shade, toilets, seating and flexible spaces that can support different users over time.

- Upgrades to existing facilities, parks and foreshore areas were seen as a priority.
- Better access to health services was an issue identified by the community, with 43% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three priorities for this topic.
- More facilities or spaces for teens and more flexible indoor community spaces were identified as a priority by 38% of survey respondents.
- Improving walking, cycling and local access to existing parks, beaches, halls and recreation facilities was the strongest improvement priority.
- People want parks and public places to provide more shade, seating, toilets and basic amenity.
- Frequently mentioned places included Okines Community House, Boat Park, Snake Hollow, Park Beach, Ferry Hall, Lewisham foreshore and other coastal reserves.
- Feedback pointed to the need for flexible, multi-purpose spaces of different sizes, including spaces that can support young people, families, older residents and community groups.

72%

of survey respondents want to see improved walking, cycling and local access to existing parks, beaches, halls and recreation facilities

42%

of survey respondents want to see upgraded parks and public places with better shade, seating, toilets and amenity



Service infrastructure

Service infrastructure feedback showed strong concern about water, wastewater, stormwater and the limits these issues place on future development.

Respondents linked servicing constraints with environmental protection, housing capacity, emergency resilience and the need for careful planning in coastal, low-lying and bushfire-prone areas.

- Stormwater management, drainage and runoff into waterways were recurring servicing concerns, with 47% of survey respondents ranking it in their top three priorities for this topic.
- Onsite wastewater systems were linked to environmental risk, water quality and the limits of further development. 44% of survey respondents agreed that this is a local priority.
- Household water supply and long-term water security were raised as practical constraints for residents and future planning.
- Emergency access and infrastructure resilience were raised in relation to bushfire, flooding, storm events and outages.
- There was support for stronger stormwater and environmental management in coastal and low-lying locations, with 55% of survey respondents agreeing that this would improve local infrastructure and servicing outcomes.
- Feedback supported clearer limits on development where servicing or environmental constraints cannot be addressed.
- Place-based concerns were identified at Primrose Sands, Lewisham, Red Ochre Beach, Carlton and other low-lying coastal areas.



“Improved guidance, standards and oversight for onsite wastewater and stormwater systems.”

“Catch stormwater run off from roadways so as minimal rubbish enters the rivers and oceans.”

— Comments from survey respondents



