

Cowes Jetty Goods Shed

Engagement Summary Report

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Cowes Jetty Goods Shed, built in 1873, was an essential structure that originally served mariners and locals as a secure storage space for goods arriving by sea.

The historical Cowes Jetty Goods Shed is currently vacant and in review with an exciting opportunity to reimagine its future with input from the community. Council is planning to go out to market with the Goods Shed, seeking organisations to put in an expression of interest (EOI) demonstrating how they will activate the site. The feedback in this report will inform Council in developing the vision and next steps for the site.

Engagement Activities and Promotion

Council used a variety of communications and engagement activities and channels to promote the opportunity for community to have their say.

Engagement surveys

Council received **380** submissions in a variety of formats to provide feedback on the future of the Cowes Jetty Goods Shed.

- **158** responses to long-form online survey
- **97** responses to short-form online survey
- **19** contributions to a mood board on the Engage Bass Coast website with **106** votes

Promotion

- Reached **8,800** people in **3** Facebook/Instagram posts
- **1,100** views on the Engage Bass Coast project page
- **3** features in Coastell EDM newsletters
- **1** feature in January 2025 Business in Bass Coast Newsletter
- Signage installed onto temporary fencing for structural works on the site, showcasing the historical significance of the Goods Shed and a QR code to the Engage page.

Engagement Findings

Respondent Demographics

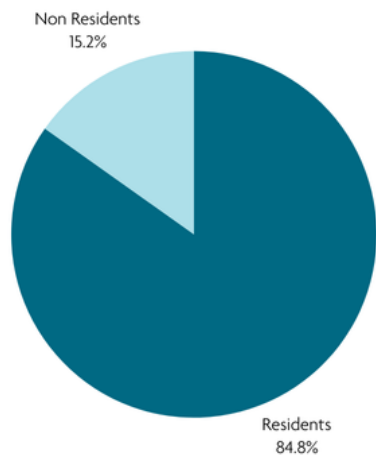


Figure 1: Respondents living in and out of Bass Coast

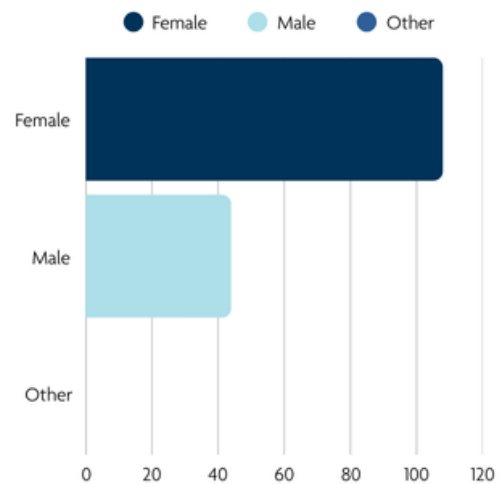


Figure 2: Respondents Gender

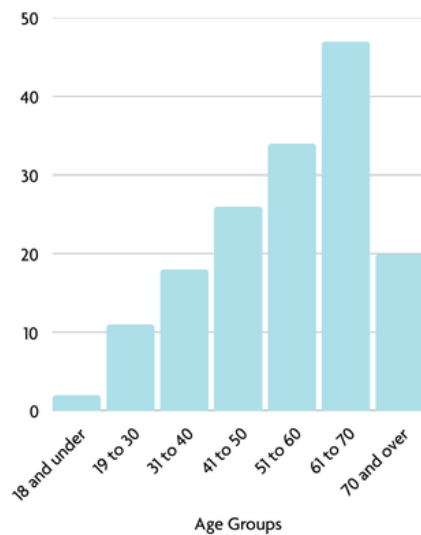


Figure 3: Respondents age groups

The survey was designed in three parts, to maximise the opportunity for community to leave their feedback with consideration to the time they had to spare. **Option 1** was a 30 second, short-form survey “tell us in 1-2 words your big idea for our small space by the sea” (see Figures 5 and 6 below). **Option 2** was a 10-minute long-form survey asking questions like “what type of business/operation would you like?” and “how would you like to see community and visitors engaging with the site?” (see Figure 4 below). **Option 3** gave community an opportunity to upload an image and create a mood board (see Figure 7 below) of what they envision the site to be.

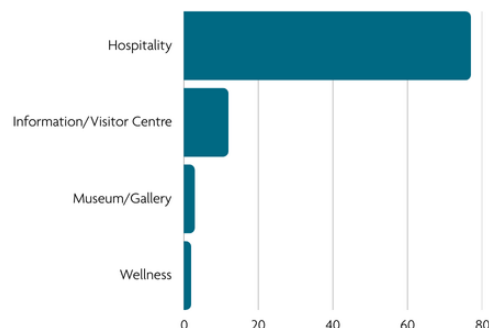
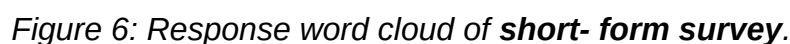


Figure 5: Top 4 businesses, participants of the **short-form survey** wanted to see in the Goods Shed



Extended responses from long-form survey

Below are some extended responses based on the top 4 types of businesses participants identified as the preferred use of the Cowes Jetty Goods Shed.

Hospitality Business

Respondents had a strong desire for a hospitality business such as a cafe, restaurant, coffee shop or bar to enter the Goods Shed. This was both as a stand alone occupancy or coupled with an adjoining business. Some respondents explored the idea of a site expansion, mentioning a fully enclosed area for winter use and outdoor seating for summer.

“Hospitality, absolutely. This location - the views, the breezes, the relaxing (...almost Mediterranean) vibe of the calm sea, and the divers and fishers on the pier...”

“Increase balcony over the rocks. Extended trading hours. Simple menus for summer and winter from local produce. It could be a small but iconic asset for the region, a mini destination to get crepe, hot chocolate or glühwein in winter.”

“I have very fond memories of visiting the old cafe as a child for a milk shake and enjoying the magical atmosphere and views. People want to be close to the beach we also support the beach kiosk at the boat ramp.”

Information Centre

The survey displayed a smaller group wanting a visitor information centre to be opened in the Goods Shed. It was suggested that the visitor information centre sell merchandise, tickets for activities on the Island and display local artwork and produce, a adjoining coffee shop was also mentioned.

“An inspiring hub dedicated to informing and captivating visitors to our region. Celebrating the creativity of local artists, the craftsmanship of our producers, and innovations manufacturers. Showcase and promote the best our Island and the Bass Coast has to offer, connecting, displaying and selling our wonderful wares.”

Museum / Gallery

Respondents interested in seeing a museum in the Goods Shed identified potential for displaying the history of the Cowes Jetty or even the greater Phillip Island. Others with a similar vision of a gallery proposed having local artists display their work and/or historic images of the Goods Shed. Again, many suggested including a café within the facility.

“Local artists, crafts people and photographers to display/sell their work to visitors and overseas tourists from ships visiting the town/port.”

Wellness

A small group of the survey respondents suggested a wellness business at the Goods Shed, such as a sauna as a suitable fit. This connects with the beach being nearby, allowing people to use the sauna after swimming.

"I envision the Cowes Jetty Goods Shed as a vibrant, welcoming space where both the community and visitors can connect, rejuvenate, and embrace wellness."

"The Jetty Goods Shed could be transformed into a vibrant wellness hub offering a holistic experience. With the serene backdrop of the Cowes waterfront, Phillip Island Sauna's proposal for "Jetty Heat" would integrate a large sauna, steam room, ice baths, and spaces for yoga, meditation, and breathwork. These offerings promote physical and mental health while fostering social connection."

Below is a summary of feedback participants highlighted in response to the question "how would you like to see community and visitors engaging with the site?"

General Comments

Respondents emphasised that the occupant should have day and night trading hours and being open all year round. Many Phillip Island residents expressed the need for a reliable operator to go into the Goods Shed, highlighting disappointment for it not being open this summer. The survey captured mixed opinions over the visual aspects of the Goods Shed with a split between modernisation and preserving the building as it is.

"I am drawn to this area every time I work or visit Cowes. It is historical, scenic and the views are magical!"

"A place for community members (particularly young people) do be able to come together for free and build strong community connections."

Mood Board Submissions



Beach/Surf Vibe Cafe

Posted by Anonymous 2 months ago

A fresh and vibrant cafe with beachy vibes and a relaxed environment. A place that those at the beach on the sand can enjoy some lunch with a take-away option, but also a cute little nook of tables on the deck for anyone to sit down and enjoy some...

56 Likes



Something like this would be perfect...open & close bifold doors to view!

Posted by Anonymous 2 months ago

Beautiful character filled restaurant/cafe with weatherboard & bifold doors, would be beautiful to use all year round!

6 Likes



Sauna and Yoga by the Sea

Posted by Anonymous 3 months ago

Sauna overlooking the ocean

5 Likes



Amalfi/Sicilian coast, Aussie-style

Posted by Anonymous 3 months ago

Embrace the outdoors/sea breezes and the phenomenal on-the-water location, and keep this as an outdoors dining location. (We have enclosed restaurants with views elsewhere on the island). This location is a one-off, with the north-facing views...

5 Likes



Modern visitor Inspiration Centre

Posted by Anonymous 2 months ago

Engage with our many visitors through interactive inspirational tools. Possibility to showcase local art, products and history. Have a small, warm cafe attached.

6 Likes



Coffee by Morning, Cocktail by Night

Posted by Anonymous 3 months ago

this spot is sensational and should not be limited by a one hospitality, it need diversity to move from coffee to cocktails! For all the community to enjoy

4 Likes



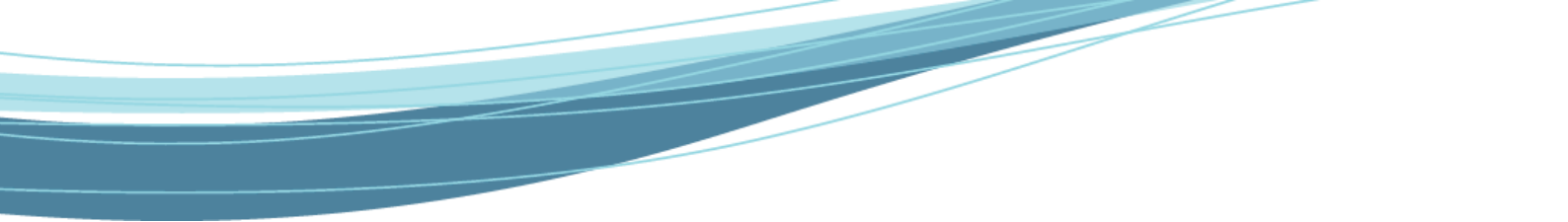
A showcase Hub of Phillip Island and the Bass Coast region

Posted by Anonymous 2 months ago

A place to establish the unique tone & branding of Bass Coast, where both locals & visitors can discover local secret location 'gems', activities, products & essential travel information.

5 Likes

Figure 7: Top 7 submissions out of 19



Conclusion

Summary

The community engagement process for the Cowes Jetty Goods Shed has clearly demonstrated the high level of public interest in the future of this iconic site.

Through a mix of surveys and creative submissions, participants shared a strong desire to see the Goods Shed brought back to life as a welcoming, accessible, and vibrant space that contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of Cowes.

Feedback reflected a broad but consistent vision: one that values the site's historical significance while embracing new uses that serve both locals and visitors. Hospitality offerings, local arts and culture, wellness spaces, and community-focused initiatives emerged as recurring themes. Many respondents emphasised the need for year-round activation, extended trading hours, and uses that complement the coastal character of the location.

This engagement has provided Council with a clear sense of community priorities and aspirations. It marks an important step in shaping the next chapter of the Cowes Jetty Goods Shed—ensuring future uses are informed by those who know and value the site most.

Council will now use this input to support the development of an Expression of Interest process, inviting proposals that align with the community's vision and unlock the site's full potential.