Draft community and stakeholder consultation report

July 2018
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wollongong Harbour Master Plan project is a product of a collaborative effort involving a wide range of technical experts, designers and stakeholders, as well as the Wollongong community.

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Coastal Projects, NSW Department of Industry

Master plan lead consultant
Place Design Group

Supporting consultants
HIIPDA
GML Heritage

Project Steering Committee
NSW Department of Industry
Wollongong City Council
Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)
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1.0 Report summary

This report serves as a detailed overview of the consultation and engagement recently conducted for the draft Wollongong Harbour Master Plan to gauge public sentiment toward possible future uses of the harbour, and to ensure the community’s input into and shared ownership of the future master plan.

The findings featured within this report will guide the development of options and recommendations listed within the draft Wollongong Harbour Master Plan for consideration by the project steering committee.

In accordance with the project brief and the project’s consultation plan, this report will recap the program, methods, dates, and stakeholder pool details. In addition, the report will feature qualitative and quantitative findings from both the online survey, in-person methods, submissions and other forms of community feedback, to paint a picture of the community’s position on future master plan possibilities for Wollongong Harbour.
1.1 Consultation approach

A targeted mix of internal and external stakeholders were involved in the consultation process to provide a wide range of views and information required for the study.

Comprehensive public consultation was facilitated in the early stages of the project. An evaluation of consultation with a random sample of stakeholders will be conducted after project execution to test the effectiveness of both the process and outcome of the engagement program.

Consultation with key stakeholders and the local community was an integral part of creating the draft master plan, and the findings detailed in this report help to:

» inform key project outputs
» engender a greater level of stakeholder and community ownership of the harbour master plan
» facilitate ‘opportunity spotting’ in terms of possible partnerships, activation and investment actions
» demonstrate willingness to collaborate with stakeholders.

1.2 Objectives

Overall objectives of the consultation processes were to:

» obtain information and data for consideration in the study
» examine public perceptions of future needs/priorities for Wollongong Harbour
» determine appropriate options for stakeholders to be a part of growth opportunities
» identify the current development capacity of the harbour precinct, prioritise stakeholder interests, and manage conflicting interests within the project bounds and linked areas important to the project site
» employ public feedback to ensure proposed master plan options are relevant to community values and needs.
Pop-up event locations

POP-UP 1
WHERE North Wollongong Surf Club
TIME 6–11 am
DATE Saturday 28 October 2017

POP-UP 2
WHERE Cliff Road Boulevard
TIME 6–11 am
DATE Saturday 28 October 2017

POP-UP 3
WHERE Brighton Lawn
TIME 6–11 am
DATE Saturday 28 October 2017

POP-UP 4
WHERE WA Lang Park, City Beach
TIME 6–10 am
DATE Monday 30 October 2017

POP-UP 5
WHERE Crown Street Mall
TIME 10 am–2 pm
DATE Monday 30 October 2017
2.0 Methods and tools snapshot

2.1 Methods

**STAKEHOLDER FORUMS**
Two targeted key-stakeholder forums were hosted at the NSW Government offices in Wollongong. Members of the project steering committee and staff from planning and design firm Place Design Group conducted the forums.

The forums were held on Tuesday 31 October 2017. An overwhelming response and overflow of numbers for the first session paved the way for robust conversation and a range of clear themes and community-led preferences. Group discussion and Enquiry By Design methods (drawing) were utilised to further contribute to the master plan options, courtesy of targeted key stakeholders and strongly interested community members.

**FRANK CHATS ONLINE SURVEY**
The Frank Chats online survey opened on Friday 27 October and closed Monday 13 November.

**POP-UP CONSULTATION EVENTS**
Pop-up consultation events with Place Design Group representatives were hosted at five key localities.

- **Saturday 28 October:**
  - 6 am to 11 am, Brighton Lawn (Wollongong Harbour)
  - 6 am to 11 am, Cliff Road Boulevard (in front of the Continental Baths)
  - 6 am to 11 am, Wollongong Surf Club (public space outside)

- **Monday 30 October:**
  - 6 am to 10 am City Beach (WA Lang Park)
  - 10 am to 2 pm Crown Street Mall (city)

**OTHER CONSULTATION METHODS**
In addition to the previous consultation methods listed, a councillor workshop, government stakeholder interviews, written submissions and varying forms of general enquiries formed part of the engagement method mix.

2.2 Tools

A range of interactive and engaging tools was used to prompt conversation and spark community thought about ideas and preferences for the harbour.

Consultation tools included an interactive ‘ideas banner’ covered in colourful, community-written sticky notes.

A ‘super map’ was another conversation starter that allowed the community to review the harbour and its connections and features as a unified offering, while identifying the scope of the project and the boundary lines for the ‘Working Harbour’ components.

Popular with participants were worksheets containing maps and key questions, which allowed them to provide both drawn and written feedback.
Stephen Smith, Principal and Planner at Place Design Group hosting discussion at a targeted stakeholder forum at the State Government Offices, Wollongong.

Interactive super map of the harbour and surrounding areas with acrylic icons for community interaction used at various pop-up events.

Ruth Frettingham, Principal and Planner at Place Design Group hosts a pop-up event at Cliff Road, in front of the Continental Baths, Saturday 28 October.

Worksheets and feedback station at the pop-up consultation event, Brighton Lawn.

Ideas banner covered in community feedback written on colourful sticky notes—a popular consultation method for generating insights into key themes and ideas at pop-up events.

Print media advertising in the local Wollongong newspaper promoting the consultation program and the team’s on-ground presence.

Community members engaging and participating in conversation at Brighton Lawn, Wollongong Harbour on Saturday 28 October.
3.0 Participation snapshot

The Wollongong community is a passionate, active community with a strong set of values and vision for the harbour. Following is a snapshot of community response rates and participation levels.

» 250 clean and complete survey data sets were recorded, of which 92 respondents concluded the survey with open ended feedback/general overall thoughts.

» An ongoing number of targeted stakeholder interviews (phone and in person) were conducted with the local MP and relevant state and council departmental officers, police and water authorities.

» One councillor workshop was completed.

» Two targeted, design-led, community workshops were held with 29 key community stakeholders in attendance. These stakeholders represented core user groups for the working harbour, such as businesses, community groups, residents and industry/association representatives.

» There were 216 active respondents at pop-up community events along the harbour and connected spaces.

» A number of handwritten and email submissions, phone interviews and general enquiries were received.
Online survey findings

The following data, infographics and graphs represent a summary of the findings from the Frank Chats online survey.

The survey sought to understand the demographics of harbour user groups, their values, behaviours, sentiments, and overall vision for the harbour.

Findings are only inclusive of the good data received. An analysis of the total 260 raw data entries received (pre-cleanse) saw the removal of:

» any data from a Place Design Group test IP address
» any data received outside of the in-market dates (x 1 survey entry)
» duplicate entries that were identical in nature (double-ups or replications).

The survey findings include all valid submissions received between 9 am on October 26 to 5 pm on 13 November 2017.

A total of 10 responses were eliminated in the cleansing process, leaving 250 clean and complete response sets, which form the basis of the findings in this report.
### Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81+ yrs</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80 yrs</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60 yrs</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 yrs</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 yrs</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 yrs</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is Your Postcode?

- 58% 2500 WOLLONGONG NSW

### Are You a Member of Any Local Community Groups and Organisations?

- 58% Yes

### How do You Go To The Harbour?

- 54% Both by myself & with others
- 12% By myself
- 34% With others

### How Often Do You Access The Harbour?

- 51% Weekly or once every few weeks
- 42% Daily or more than once a day
- 7% Monthly, quarterly, yearly

### What Recreational Activities Do You Undertake?

- 24% Walking/running
- 20% Cycling
- 12% Motorised watercraft
- 10% Non-motorised watercraft
- 7% Relaxing
- 6% Swimming
- 4% Dining
- 3% Playground
- 2% Other

### What is Your Primary Reason For Going To The Harbour?

- 89% Recreation (land & water based)
- 10% As a tourist or other
- 1% Commercial use

### How Much Time Do You Typically Spend At The Harbour?

- 51% 1-3 hours
- 30% 30 min -1 hour
- 14% Half a day
- 9% All day

### Dining Frequency at The Harbour

- 32% Weekly
- 26% Once every few weeks
- 13% Quarterly
- 8% Monthly
- 4% Yearly
- 2% Never
### How do you access the harbour?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk/Run</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus/Scooter</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What improvements would you like to see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of Heritage &amp; historical elements</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More trees &amp; plants</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More cafes &amp; kiosks</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved pathways</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More green space</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More dining options</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved links to surroundings</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What would encourage more swimming in the harbour?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encouragement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved water quality</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated swimming area</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved safety</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunity for non-motorised/REC water activities</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More space to swim</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Would you pay for or use any of these activities/services?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferry service to surrounding areas</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardwalk</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent a board</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire a boat</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQUA splash</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing charter</td>
<td>9%</td>
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WOULD YOU SUPPORT MORE COMMERCIAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN THE HARBOUR?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE PLACES TO BUY FOOD & DRINK?

WOULD YOU SUPPORT SOME NEW SENSITIVELY LOCATED BUILDING AROUND THE HARBOUR?

WOULD YOU SUPPORT THE ADDITION OF A NEW BOARDWALK?

WOULD YOU SUPPORT THE ADDITION OF A NEW SHARED SLIPWAY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE PLACES TO BUY FOOD & DRINK?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE WATER-BASED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE HARBOUR?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE PUBLIC SPACES AROUND THE HARBOUR VISUALLY UPDATED?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE HARBOUR PRIMARILY USED AS A WORKING HARBOUR?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE HARBOUR VISUALLY UPDATED?
I would frequent the harbour more if there was greater connections to the city.

The harbour currently works as a great connection point for a journey along the Blue Mile.

Re-activating the fuel pump on the central pier would be a well-used addition to the harbour.

In its current state (not referencing weather conditions), it is okay to swim in Wollongong Harbour.

The harbour could be made a little bigger to accommodate a few more recreational yachts/births (with heritage elements still protected).

If there was a takeaway food kiosk on the central pier, I would use it.

Wollongong Harbour should be a peaceful and relaxing place where I can enjoy recreational activities.

Wollongong Harbour should be a destination strip activated by cafes, restaurants, licensed clubs and commercial businesses.
Wollongong Harbour should be a Community Entertainment Precinct with regular music and markets.

18% Strongly Agree

17% Somewhat Agree

8% Neutral

17% Somewhat Disagree

40% Strongly Disagree

Wollongong Harbour should be a Hub for Aquatic Sports and Recreation, with great facilities.

31% Somewhat Agree

30% Agree

14% Neutral

15% Somewhat Disagree

10% Strongly Disagree

Wollongong Harbour should be a Family-Friendly Place where children play/swim and parents can chat.

65% Strongly Agree

23% Somewhat Agree

8% Neutral

3% Somewhat Disagree

2% Strongly Disagree

Wollongong Harbour should be a Working Harbour with more marine industries.

22% Somewhat Agree

18% Strongly Agree

20% Neutral

20% Somewhat Disagree

17% Strongly Disagree
5.0 Key themes

01 There’s a lot right about the harbour

Most locals love the harbour just the way it is and don’t see a lot wrong with it. Words like ‘charming’, ‘quaint’, ‘full of character’ and ‘love the history’ were often used. It is collectively seen as the ‘local’s playground’ and a place for every generation.
Support for continuation of the working harbour uses

This was a very strong theme often accompanied by requests to repair the slipway and make it operational. There were varied opinions on the need and ongoing use of a recommissioned pump. Overall it was welcomed, but there was acknowledgment that if supplying fuel by truck was marginally cheaper, the truck would be the preferred option.

Other welcomed improvements were those that complemented the working harbour’s function, such as the addition of shower/toilet amenities, workshop and ship chandlery, and reintroducing the fresh fish market.
Many people would like to see more small-scale kiosks/cafés that do not impinge on working harbour uses. Several participants felt that extra seating, lawn and viewing areas were needed. There was a commonly shared view that the harbour suffered from a lack of public toilets, bins, bubbler s and shade. However, there was a very strong message against over-commercialisation, and a preference for small improvements that complement or better support current harbour uses.
More opportunities for water-based recreation

Common ideas for expanded water-based recreation services included kayak hire, whale watching tours, eco tours, fishing charters, other active recreation based water activities and water sports. Many were open to the idea of these being run by commercial operators if they worked to support or respect the historic/heritage elements of the working harbour.
Heritage and signage

People love the history of the harbour and there were suggestions for more interpretation and celebration of the space. Someone suggested opening the little lighthouse for public access. There was a suggestion to place signage on top of the hill for people who are whale watching. Safety and anti-hoon concerns in the evening were coupled with shared recommendations for more signage to deter anti-social behaviour, and lighting, particularly in carpark areas.

The theme of preservation of heritage was overwhelmingly supported and was a significant, unquestionable community value.
Improved access in and around the working harbour was a strong theme. Some suggested making the breakwaters more accessible as promenades, however the most prominent requests were to provide access in front of the fishermen’s co-op building and along the working harbour’s edge.

A more functional and accessible boardwalk or access option was a highly favoured improvement as long as it worked to celebrate, preserve and better connect the community with the working section of the harbour.

Shared use of space between pedestrians and cyclists along the harbour pathways was a clear access and safety concern. Almost all conversations favoured that the space be prioritised for pedestrians. The speeds at which cyclists travel through the harbour’s thoroughfares were considered a danger to user groups—particularly children and the elderly walking or playing in and around the space.
Existing harbour infrastructure

There is little fondness for the co-op buildings. Many respondents were open to small-scale changes along the harbour, including removal of the old clubhouse on condition that a better alternative was made available.

The lighthouses were unquestionably favoured as critical components of the harbour’s heritage and appeal.

The carpark and old jetty were commonly raised as possible areas where changes could be made to create new opportunities—again, only if done in a sensitive and complementary fashion.

All heritage listed areas were unquestionably seen as necessary to preserve. Very few respondents were open to removing or changing of any of these elements unless for repair, to make more accessible or to better celebrate the heritage.
Several people supported an increase in maintenance in the working part of the harbour to address the problem of rubbish pooling around the edges of the harbour.

Other feedback included that beaches need to be kept cleaner and more rangers are needed—particularly to encourage dog owners to remove their dog’s droppings. ‘More toilets and bins’ was also a strong key theme.

The need for greater care for the existing council toilets backing onto the Levendi Café was a hot topic, with many asking for these toilets to receive higher levels of maintenance. They are seen as an important but overused necessity that is not receiving enough attention from council.

Some parts of the working harbour are in need of care or repair. The outer seawall of the harbour needs repair after recent heavy storms. The inner heritage sandstone wall also needs some work. This was a hot topic and one of significance for almost all participants.
Major attractions and events

A small number of people thought a major tourist attraction was needed to support the local economy. The majority of these people favoured smaller-scale additions to lift the appeal of the area. However, they also believed that these additions should appeal not only to tourists, but also to locals. Suggestions included swimming pontoons, food markets in the car park and complementary changes to aesthetics such as the addition of feature lighting such as fairy lights and monument lighting.

Hosting major events and attractions within the harbour area was a commonly raised topic, and one that was also met with questions about the space’s ability to handle additional events. It was often noted that there was already an overflow of people in the area during peak event periods, particularly in greenspace areas. However overall, the notion of ‘more of the same’ prevailed.
Out of scope, but for consideration....

Traffic and parking
There was significant interest in the suggestion of converting Cliff Road to a one-way system to improve traffic flow.

Parking was raised as an issue, specifically on Cliff Road and adjoining roads. Suggestions to improve the situation included adding line markings to improve parking efficiency, converting the area near the arena where buses park for general parking, and freeing up parking near City Beach and Saint Mary’s School, which many complained was often ‘overtaken’ by students parking during school hours.

Ferry from Sydney
Several people suggested the harbour would be a great connection point for a ferry service between Sydney and Wollongong. This would have little or no negative impact on the physical or social aspects of the harbour, and would serve as a positive inclusion for locals looking to commute. The possible tourism opportunities were also mentioned.

Connection/access to the city
Although recognised as beyond the scope of this master plan, the issue of the harbour’s disconnection from the city centre came up regularly, particularly around discussions about parking and traffic concerns in and around the harbour. Interest and conversation around the need for improvements to connections with the greater Wollongong centre, generated a variety of community responses such as the need for increased walkability, guiding signage, ‘green’ buses/shuttles, etc.
Overall there was a prevailing consensus to:

» Maintain the character of the harbour, which was largely defined as retaining the size and scale/configuration of vessels using the harbour, and the heritage working elements within it.

» Promote the idea of ‘more of the same’ by only introducing improvements that work to complement, enhance or preserve the existing elements of the harbour.
6.0 Where to from here?

The outcomes of consultation activities have provided a sound foundation of stakeholder sentiment data to inform the development of the draft Wollongong Harbour Master Plan.

The consultation analysis will be used to prepare options for inclusion in the draft Wollongong Harbour Master Plan. Strong views that have broad consensus will guide key themes and strategies, while those that prompted divided views will form the basis of alternative options presented to council for further consideration.