

# Merimbula Boardwalk and Foreshore Draft Concept Design

## Listening Report – February 2022



### Introduction

Council is developing a concept design to upgrade the Merimbula boardwalk.

From 19 July to 8 August 2021 council sought feedback from the community on how people use the boardwalk now and how they would like to use the boardwalk in the future.

Subsequently, council developed a draft concept design and released it for public comment from 13 December to 7 February 2022.

A survey was provided on the [project page](#) including five questions allowing people to provide feedback on what they like best and least about the draft concept design.

Key insights from the engagement are summarised in this listening report. This information will be used to inform the final concept design which will be used to seek development approval.

## Key insights from the community

Key insights from the community and key themes are provided below.

### 1. Where do you live?

I live in Merimbula	73.56%	153
I live elsewhere in the Bega Valley Shire	17.31%	36
I'm a visitor	9.13%	19
<b>Answered</b>	<b>208</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>1</b>	

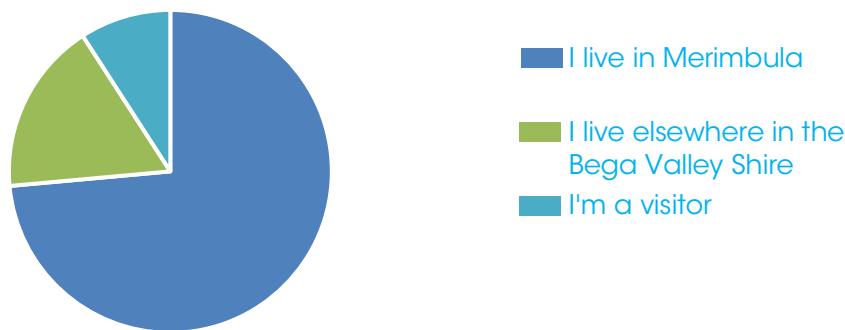


Figure 1: Responses to Question 1: Where do you live?

### 2. Has the concept design captured comments you provided to Council in July – August 2021?

Yes	71.98%	149
No	4.35%	9
Not applicable	23.67%	49
<b>Answered</b>	<b>207</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>2</b>	

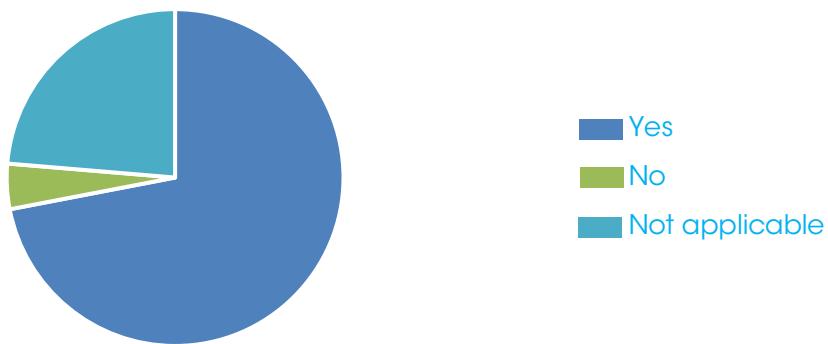
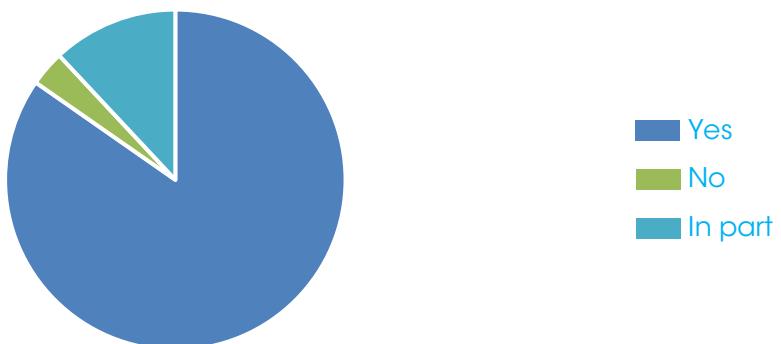


Figure 2: Response to Question 2: Has the concept design captured comments you provided to Council in July – August 2021?

### 3. Do you support the draft concept design?

Yes	84.69%	177
No	3.35%	7
In part	11.96%	25
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>209</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>0</b>



*Figure 3: Responses to Question 3: Do you support the draft concept design?*

### 4. What do you like best about the concept design?

#### ***Key themes:***

- Overall the feedback on the complete design was positive.
- The widening of the boardwalk was appreciated with some people suggesting that we could potentially widen further from 2.0m (proposed) to 2.4m which is more consistent with boardwalks in other jurisdictions.
- Lighting was popular however did come with requests to ensure that it was appropriate to the surrounding environment and nocturnal wildlife and to take into consideration energy usage, i.e. renewable energy sources such as solar and the opportunity for it to be on a movement sensor / timer.
- Additional water access and seating spots were highly supported.
- The environmental considerations including the requirement for Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) in areas of Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) were liked and there was a desire to ensure that the surrounding environment remains protected and conserved through removal of invasive species.
- The additional paths and opportunity to investigate recreational bike access in these areas was supported by many.
- Improved paths to residential streets was appreciated with a general acceptance that these would remain gravel trails with improved interventions such as timber sleeper steps and gravel drainage.

- People appreciated the character of the design being simple and integrated with the surrounding environment.
- Overall people felt that it would greatly improve the 'boardwalk experience' without spoiling its charm.

## 5. What do you like least about the concept design?

### **Key themes:**

- Overall, there were minimal comments with most people either skipping this question or stating 'nothing' however what comments were received are listed as follows:
  - The width of boardwalk
    - Could widen further from 2.0m (proposed) to 2.4m.
  - The jetties:
    - Could be slightly bigger.
    - Wading jetty could extend further to reach a deeper section of the lake.
    - Fish cleaning stations at swimming jetty may create a conflict between the two activities.
    - The tidal movement and current at the swimming jetty can be strong at times and whilst people have free will to swim at any location of Merimbula Lake, the encouragement of swimming in this location should be reconsidered.
    - The removal of the 'side jetty' at the western end of the boardwalk should be retained in some capacity as it provides shade and is a pleasant seating spot.
  - Toilets:
    - Disappointment that additional toilet facilities would not be located at the midpoint of the walk or at the eastern end of the walk.
  - Parking:
    - It was perceived that the changes to parking at the eastern end of the carpark would result in less parking and that parking here should be increased, not decreased in lieu of greenspace to the water's edge.
    - There was a suggestion that Bega Valley Shire Council obtain ownership of the Department of Fisheries depot for public amenities and lease as a café.
  - Market Street pedestrian crossing:
    - The pedestrian crossing at Market Street was perceived to be dangerous and there was a suggestion to direct pedestrian movement under the bridge.
  - Rubbish bins:
    - No provision for rubbish bins in the concept design and that having rubbish bins at each end of the walk and along the way for animal waste was a necessity.

- Material concerns:
  - There were a few concerns regarding the use of exposed aggregate concrete and whether this was an appropriate material to use in a natural setting.
  - Some people were concerned about the use of timber and its potential to be slippery in wet weather.
- Handrail:
  - There was some concern that no handrail was provided, in particular over the rocks covered with oysters at the western end.
- Provision for bikes:
  - Some people mentioned that a designated bike track around the lake is required and should be separate from a pedestrian path.
  - On the other hand people did not support the provision of bikes at all.
  - There was a perception that cyclists often travel at speeds faster than walkers and some are too aggressive when it comes to cycling on shared paths in terms of slowing down and stopping.
  - Some people felt that the concept plan didn't take bikes seriously enough and that not providing full access for bikes was not adequately planning for the future.
- Play area:
  - The proposed play area should be fully integrated and immersed with the natural surrounds, whereas a pre-fab play park was not appropriate.
- Bush tracks:
  - There was concern that the widening and formalising of the bush tracks may be too harsh and to retain the whimsical nature of the trails by only formalising what is required such as drainage and known wet areas.
- Kickrail:
  - There was a perception that the kickrail could cause a trip hazard.
- Furniture:
  - There were a few comments on the 'ramp style' seats and whether skateboards might use and damage them.
  - A request for three picnic tables at west end instead of two.

## What's Next?

A Council Report will be submitted to the Council with a summary of consultation outcomes (this Listening Report) and suggested amendments (any minor changes required based on feedback). The Council Report will be seeking endorsement from the Council to finalise the concept plan and move to the next stage of development approvals.

Council has allocated funding to complete Stage 2 and part of Stage 3 of the project for the Merimbula Boardwalk and Foreshore Path Upgrade project.



#### Timeline for Works

June 2021	Site assessments
July 2021	Community engagement and online survey
November 2021	Draft concept design completed
December 2021 – February 2022	Public consultation on draft concept design
February – March 2022	Review of consultation feedback
April 2022	Council Report - exhibited concept with a summary of consultation outcomes and suggested amendments (if any) to Council for endorsement.
May 2022	Finalise endorsed concept including typical details and sections required for approvals.
May 2022	Finalise Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE)
June 2022	Secure development approvals and permits.

#### Thank You for Your Feedback

**209** people provided survey submissions