

Engagement Report – Seaford Wetlands Rejuvenation Project (August 2022)



Project Overview

Project overview

Frankston City Council led this community engagement to inform the Seaford Wetlands Rejuvenation Project ('Project'), as part of the Victorian Government's \$154 million Suburban Parks Program. Between 21 February-31 March 2022, we consulted the community on how we can improve and enhance the Seaford Wetlands.

Engagement purpose

Frankston City Council, with its partners, seeks to improve and enhance the Seaford Wetlands, in a way that responds to the needs and aspirations of the Frankston City community.

Quick Engagement Stats - 21/02/22 – 31/03/22

Frankston City Council received over 500 responses from community members:

- 80 (approx.) people provided feedback and input during the public pop-ups.
- 121 people completed the online survey. Majority of survey respondents were visitors of the Wetlands (94.17%), 41% on a weekly basis, and 31% on a daily basis.
- 267 people completed the quick poll.
- 68 people inputted into the interactive online map.
- 3 email responses were received to the consultation.
- 94 people 'followed' the project to receive ongoing updates.

Respondents: elderly people, environmental groups, families, local residents & young people.

Outcomes & Next Steps

Outcomes

The Project Steering Group has been informed that overall, the community overwhelmingly value Seaford Wetlands for its ecological values. While upgrades to the reserve are seen as a positive step, it is important that they preserve the environmental significance and natural aesthetics of the wetlands, and that community members (particularly nearby residents) are regularly informed and engaged.

Recommendations made to the Steering Group, and endorsed, as a result of this engagement include:

- All upgrades to the Seaford Wetlands should prioritise the area as a natural reserve, with high ecological values including compliance with the Ramsar Management Plan.
- The final design for the new pedestrian bridge should respond to the preference of 68% of responders: Option A – wooden cladded bridge (endorsed by Steering Group).
- The final location for the shared use path should respond to the preference of 81% of responders: Option A – Kananook Creek path. Further consultation with residents of Palm Beach Drive and Melbourne Water is required.
- Facilities:
 - o Consideration will be given to the most commonly community requested facilities in Signage and Facilities Masterplan.
 - o All facilities upgrades should ensure preservation of environmental significance and natural aesthetics of the wetlands.

Community Consultation Process

The core components of this consultation included:

- Two Council staffed community pop-up events (approx. 80 people).
- Online activities, including a survey, quick poll and interactive map (473 contributors).
- Internal Council workshops and meetings.
- A key stakeholder meeting
- Stories in Frankston City News and E-news.
- Emails to 95 'project' subscribers.
- Postcard deliveries to residents in a 2km radius of the Wetlands.
- 3 Frankston City Council Facebook posts advertising the Project and/or pop-up events (16,205 people reached).

Calculating these numbers, it is reasonable to assume that over 20,000 experienced a direct notification of this consultation.

Summary of feedback

The feedback provided by community can be summarised as follows:

- All upgrades to the Seaford Wetlands should prioritise the area as a natural reserve, with high ecological values, and comply with the Ramsar Management Plan.
- The final design for the new pedestrian bridge should respond to the preference of 68% of responders: Option A – wooden cladded bridge.
- The most commonly requested facilities should be installed around the new bridge, including native plants, bench seat, drinking fountain, signage and lighting.
- The final location for the shared use path should respond to the preference of 81% of responders: Option A – Kananook Creek path. Residents of Palm Beach Drive should be further engaged given their concerns.
- The most commonly requested new facilities should be added to locations identified in the interactive online map. All facilities upgrades should ensure the environmental significance and natural aesthetics of the wetlands are preserved.
- A professional designed art mural should be installed at the Down's Estate Shed, as proposed by the Down's Estate Community Project.



Next steps

Thank you to all community members who participated. Next steps:

- Community engagement on Signage and Facilities Masterplan and Draft Master Plan: Sept 2022 (to be finalised Dec 2022).
- Targeted engagement with local residents on shared use path and pedestrian bridge.
- Construction of pedestrian bridge and shared use path: completed by June 2023.
- Ecological projects (habitat improvement, revegetation and pest management: completed by June 2023.
- New signage and facilities including biocultural trail: installed by June 2023.
- Construction complete: by June 2023.

Future community engagement opportunities will be promoted via engage.frankston.vic.gov.au, social media, media and newsletters.