



Community Engagement Report

Draft Recreational Boating Strategy 2025

Wednesday, 3 December 2025 – Friday, 30 January 2026



Executive summary

The following is an executive summary of the community consultation undertaken on the draft Recreational Boating Strategy 2025.

Participation Overview

Community engagement on the draft Recreational Boating Strategy attracted a high level of participation. A total of 603 survey responses were received, with approximately 93% of respondents indicating they had read the draft strategy, suggesting a well-informed participant base. In addition, 73 written submissions were received, primarily in email or formal submission format.

Survey respondents identified across a range of user groups, most commonly City of Victor Harbor ratepayers and residents, alongside visitors, businesses and commercial boating operators. Multiple user-group selections were permitted, resulting in overlap between categories.

It should be noted that there was a surge of survey responses received on the final day of consultation (25%). The contact information for the respondents was different, suggesting they were legitimate submissions.

Key Themes and Sentiment

Feedback from surveys and written submissions showed that the community often raised similar topics and priorities. The main themes identified during the consultation process are outlined below:

- **Access and Boating Infrastructure:** Respondents frequently raised issues relating to ramp capacity and the adequacy of existing facilities. Sentiment was mixed, with calls for upgrades alongside views that current infrastructure is sufficient for existing demand.
- **Parking, Traffic and Congestion:** Concerns about trailer parking, traffic impacts and congestion during peak periods were commonly expressed, particularly regarding conflicts between boat users, pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Safety and Emergency Access:** Safety-related feedback reflected mixed sentiment. Calls for improved Sea Rescue access and safer facility design co-existed with comments indicating acceptable safety levels or few incidents.
- **Environmental Protection:** Environmental impacts were a strong and recurring theme, especially in written submissions. Concerns focused on marine habitats, seagrass, dunes and coastal character, with sentiment predominantly concerned or opposed.
- **Eastern Facility / Marina Proposal:** The proposal to investigate a new eastern facility generated polarised views. Supporters referenced safety, capacity and economic benefits, while opponents cited environmental impacts, prior feasibility concerns and questions about process.

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- **Amenities and Supporting Infrastructure:** Toilets, wash-down areas, breakwaters, lighting and signage were commonly raised. Feedback was generally supportive of improvements, often framed as prerequisites for an acceptable boating experience rather than optional enhancements.

Considerations for Future Decision Making

The consultation provides valuable insight into community sentiment, priorities and concerns. Council (the decision-maker) must consider this feedback alongside technical, environmental, financial and statutory considerations, recognising that community views are diverse, at times polarised, and represent one element of Council's broader decision-making framework.

The engagement highlights a clear tension between improving access to boating and marine facilities, and protecting environmental values, which many respondents expect to be acknowledged explicitly. Conflicting views on the Eastern Beach marina facility suggest the importance of clear scope definition, staged investigation and transparent communication about project next steps.

There are a number of considerations for Council in working towards finalising the Strategy including:

- **The Eastern Boat Ramp requires further investigation before any commitment is made.** Community sentiment on this proposal was deeply divided, with written submissions overwhelmingly raising concerns about environmental impact, financial risk, and loss of public foreshore amenity. Council should ensure that any decision to progress the Eastern Boat Ramp is preceded by a rigorous Environmental Impact Statement, an independent needs assessment, and a transparent cost-benefit analysis (including long-term dredging and maintenance obligations).
- **The Strategy's framing of the Eastern Boat Ramp should reflect its investigative status.** Several respondents noted the proposal has been rejected previously and questioned what has changed. The final Strategy should clearly distinguish between near-term investigation actions and longer-term development decision points, ensuring the community understands no design or construction decisions have been made.
- **Sea Rescue needs require further assessment.** The Strategy identifies improved Sea Rescue access as a primary justification for the Eastern Boat Ramp. However, respondents questioned whether these needs could be met through lower-impact alternatives. Council should seek clear advice on Sea Rescue requirements, in consultation with the State Government, and consider whether these can be addressed separately from the broader marina proposal.
- **Near-term investment in existing facilities should be prioritised with the Strategy.** There is strong and broadly shared community support for upgrades to the Bluff Boat Ramp and other existing facilities, including parking, amenities, lighting, channel maintenance and wash-down areas. The Strategy should set out a clear set of near-term improvements to existing infrastructure for consideration in future budget cycles.

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- **Environmental values should be treated as a primary constraint, not a risk to be managed.** Environmental concerns (particularly around seagrass, marine habitats, shorebird habitat, coastal processes, and the Encounter Marine Park) were the dominant theme in written submissions. The final Strategy should explicitly outline environmental protection as a non-negotiable foundation for all proposed actions, with any development contingent on satisfactory environmental assessment outcomes.
 - **The financial implications for ratepayers require greater transparency.** Community concern about the cost burden of the Eastern Boat Ramp was significant and recurring. The final Strategy should provide greater clarity on funding pathways, the role of State and Commonwealth co-contributions, and the financial safeguards Council will apply before committing ratepayer funds to any major new infrastructure.

It is recommended that the Council utilise its Boating and Marine Facilities Advisory Group to seek targeted advice on key issues raised through the consultation, to help inform the finalisation of the Recreational Boating Strategy, including:

- Options for addressing Sea Rescue operational requirements in the near term, independent of any further decision around the Eastern Beach proposal.
- A prioritised program of short-, medium-, and long-term upgrades to existing boating facilities, particularly the Bluff Boat Ramp.
- How the final Strategy should frame the Eastern Beach Marina proposal to ensure community expectations are appropriately managed.



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the community consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft Recreational Boating Strategy. It outlines a summary of consultation activities and feedback gathered during the engagement period.

Background

The boating community of Victor Harbor, including permanent residents and visitors to Victor Harbor, has for some time voiced the need for the current boating facilities within the Victor Harbor region to be improved. This is due to population growth, growing interest in boating as a leisure activity, and safety/capacity concerns at current facilities.

The Draft Recreational Boating Strategy was prepared in collaboration with Council and the Boating and Marine Facilities Advisory Group. It outlines a long-term vision for safer, sustainable, and fit-for-purpose boating facilities across Victor Harbor. It includes proposed upgrades to existing ramps and the investigation of a new Eastern Boat Ramp and associated marina facilities, while improving boating safety, access, navigation, and amenities, supporting environmental protection, and meeting the region's growing boating demand.

The purpose of this community engagement was to seek broad community views in relation to the Draft Recreational Boating Strategy and supplement input already provided by the Boating and Marine Facilities Advisory Group.

Consultation Overview

603

surveys completed

73

written submissions

5,000+

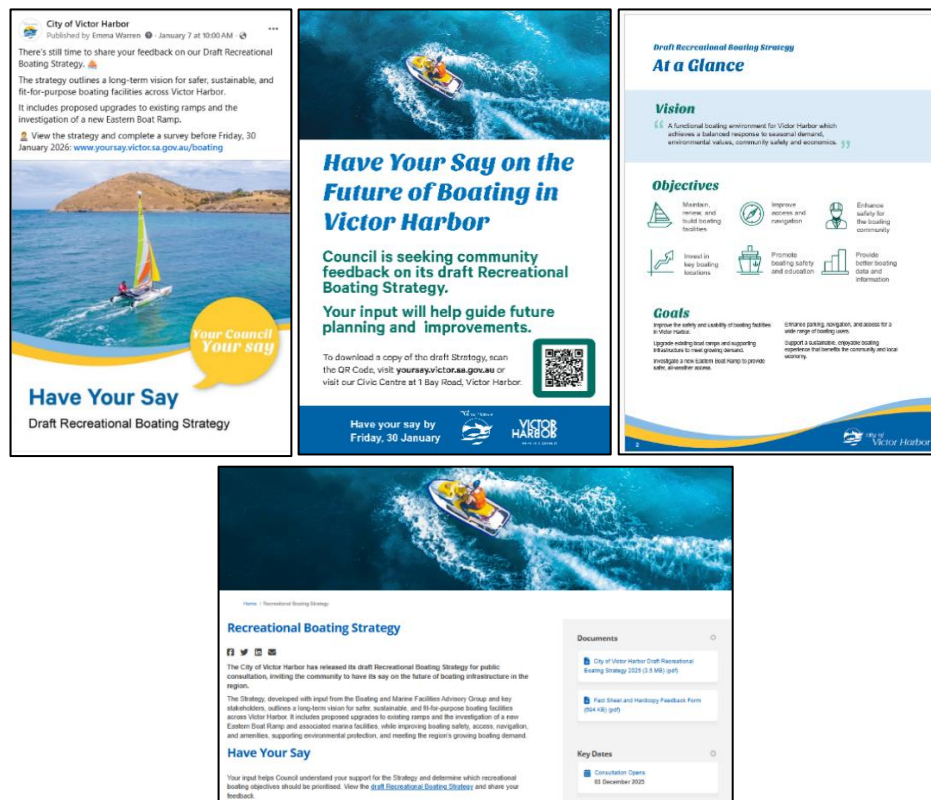
people reached/aware of consultation

Consultation Methodology

The community consultation period for the Draft Recreational Boating Strategy ran from Wednesday, 3 December 2025 until Friday, 30 January 2026. The opportunity for residents and ratepayers to have their say was promoted in a range of ways:

- **Public notice** in The Times newspaper, 9 December 2025 edition
- **Signage** displayed at Bluff Boat Ramp, Kent Reserve Boat Ramp, Causeway Boat Ramp and Civic Centre from late December
- **Information** on yoursay.victor.sa.gov.au (2,987 page views, 1,440 document downloads)
- **Facebook posts** published on:
 - 18 December 2025 (1,830 views, 13 link clicks)
 - 7 January 2026 (3,098 views, 83 link clicks)
- **Instagram posts** published on:
 - 18 December 2025 (289 views)
 - 7 January 2026 (274 views)
- **Email newsletters** distributed:
 - Your Say newsletter sent on 17 December (674 recipients, 84 clicks)
 - City Activation newsletter sent on 23 December (2,091 recipients, 3 article clicks)
 - Victor Viewpoint newsletter sent on 10 December (2,453 recipients, 39 article clicks)
 - Victor Viewpoint newsletter sent on 10 January (2,472 recipients, 79 article clicks)

During the consultation period there were also a number of stories published within local newspapers (The Times and Fleurieu Sun). Articles appeared in editions published on 4 December 2025, 23 December 2025, 30 December 2025, 22 January 2026 and 27 January 2026.



Community Feedback

Written Submissions

73 written submissions from 65 authors were received during the consultation. The discrepancy in number of submissions and number of authors is due to some individuals making multiple submissions.

The following table outlines a brief summary of each submission.

#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
1	J Ames	Opposition for Eastern Beach marina proposal	
2	H Anderson and G Fox	Concerns around impact of actions on marine environment, particularly sea grass. Opposition to marina proposal. Agree that attention needs to be given to improve sea rescue activities, but should not require a large marina.	
3	H Bechervaise	Concerns about location of eastern beach marina and highlights a 2004 report prepared by the submitter. Suggests improving ramp at Causeway to allow for sea rescue deployment.	
4	Biodiversity Victor Harbor	Opposes the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp arguing that the strategy places undue emphasis on a high-impact development without adequately considering independent studies, Environmental Impact Statements and business cases that may identify the site as environmentally constrained and financially unviable. It highlighted the importance of seagrass and noted the need for coastal resilience and water quality. The submission called for Environmental Impact Statements to be revisited, an independent needs assessment to be undertaken, and for seagrass protection to be treated as a non-negotiable.	
5	Birdlife Australia	Raises concerns about the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp, highlighting the site's importance as a critical breeding area for the threatened Hooded Plover. It argued that the development would result in loss of dune and beach habitat and restrict the movement of flightless chicks along the shoreline. It encouraged that Council undertake detailed assessments to ensure shorebird habitat and breeding outcomes are not compromised.	
6	J Brame	Concern over Eastern Beach Marina proposal and its impact on loss of recreational space and environmental impacts.	



#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
7	S Chichon	Opposition to Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to impact on marine life and views	
8	D Collins	Questions whether the draft strategy adequately supports Sea Rescue operations and argues that safety needs could be addressed through upgrades to existing facilities, while also seeking clearer evidence of rescue demand, locations and frequency. Strong concerns raised about impacts on marine ecosystems and views this as a constraint on proposed Eastern Beach marina. Questions whether full project costs have been considered and the potential burden on the wider community. Highlights congestion and access issues around existing boating facilities, particularly during peak periods. Expresses that the development of the draft Strategy has not sufficiently included a broad cross-section of the community. Suggests prioritising upgrades to existing infrastructure over new marina development and emphasises safety and access outcomes may be achievable without large scale new development.	
9	L Cooper	Urges Council to consider affects of sea current and water flow and other marina to learn from others. Suggests consideration be given to the boating infrastructure on Granite Island.	
10	G Cope	Concerned about Eastern Beach Marina proposal and would like to see more evidence to support demand, need and costings. Environmental investigations need to occur to inform future decisions. Action plan should be developed to help address safety and timely availability for Sea Rescue.	
11	T Crabb	Support for Eastern Beach Marina proposal. Sees it as a long overdue, great addition to the Council area.	
12	M Cragen	Against Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to potential loss of public recreational space and potential environmental impacts	
13	B Dawson	Against Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to negative visual impact, loss of public recreational space, ongoing costs and environmental impacts.	
14	E Ellie	Against Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to loss of public recreational space, cost to ratepayers and cultural impact. Concern that the consultation was not adequately advertised.	

#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
15	C Everitt	Against Eastern Beach Marina proposal on the basis of environmental risk, cumulative coastal impacts, biosecurity concerns and availability of lower-impact alternatives to meet boating and Sea Rescue needs.	
16	T Field	Against the Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to: • Loss of public recreational space • Loss of amenity and natural environment • Impact on coastal and marine environment • Concern about loss of seagrass and its impact • Traffic congestion within the town centre • Boat users are a small proportion of Victor Harbor population • Movement of sand is problematic • Requirements for Sea Rescue can be addressed independently	
17	D Fotheringham	Acknowledges the difficulty in finding suitable location for additional boat launching in Victor Harbor. Considered proposed Eastern Beach Marina location to be challenging. Issues concerning Sea Rescue and additional boat launching capacity could be resolved without a new boat ramp near Hindmarsh River estuary. Would like to see Eastern Boat Ramp removed from the draft Strategy.	
18	M Fredberg	Against the proposed Eastern Beach marina, citing environmental risks to an already stressed coastline and protected species, concerns about cost burdens on ratepayers for the benefit of a relatively small number of boat owners, and potential impacts on the area's unspoilt beaches, walking trails and existing recreational uses.	
19	R Gunter	Suggests focus should be on fixing and growing existing facilities rather than building new. Consideration should be given to improving the Bluff Boat Ramp (widening or upgrading ramps, more trailer parking, safer access, better signs and lighting).	
20	R House	Opposes revisiting the Eastern Beach marina proposal, noting it has previously been rejected and arguing it poses unacceptable risks of coastal erosion and environmental damage, would impose infrastructure and cost burdens on ratepayers, and could create safety issues associated with trailer access across the railway line.	



#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
21	C Jarvis	Objects to the location and scale of the Eastern Beach Marina proposal on sustainability and conservation grounds.	
22	D Jenkins	Supports improved boating facilities in principle but considers the proposed marina east of the causeway unrealistic, citing likely sand movement and silting, seagrass accumulation, traffic constraints from rail crossings, and the lack of supporting marina services. He urges Council to learn from other South Australian marinas and to investigate alternative locations or emergency launch options with better access and lower environmental impact.	
23	John	Concern around the consultation and finding out late about opportunity to make a submission. Concerned around loss of public recreation space and environmental impact on coast and birdlife – this needs to be given serious consideration. Suggests Strategy should be abandoned and focus is on projects that benefit the whole community.	
24	C Johnson	Objects to the Eastern Beach Marina proposal and refers to submission by J Porter.	
25	J Johnson	Opposes the Eastern Beach Marina proposal due to concerns around environmental damage and impact of tides, sand / seaweed build up. Does not want to see loss of public recreational space (beach area used by swimmers, walkers etc).	
26	S Johnson (submission provided twice)	Opposes the proposed Eastern Beach marina and boat ramp, arguing the shallow, reef- and seagrass-rich bay is unsuitable for construction, would harm protected marine species and iconic coastal views, worsen traffic and parking pressures, and impose significant ongoing costs on ratepayers. She considers the existing Bluff Boat Ramp adequate for current needs and suggests Council focus instead on safety and rescue improvements and better use of existing infrastructure.	
27	G Johnson	Supports improved boating facilities in principle but considers the draft strategy premature, arguing that further work is needed on environmental assessment, climate and sea-level-rise risks, economic and operational feasibility, and genuine partnership with Traditional Owners. He emphasises that any future boating infrastructure should be guided by best-practice sustainable design and aim to protect and enhance Victor Harbor's environmental and cultural values.	

#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
28	L Kimber	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy, arguing that investment in marina and boating infrastructure is not an appropriate use of limited Council resources at a time of rising living costs, housing insecurity and homelessness. She urges Council to prioritise inclusive public spaces and essential community support over discretionary recreational projects that primarily benefit a smaller, more affluent cohort.	
29	S Kimber (four submissions provided)	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy and the Eastern Beach marina proposal, arguing that it prioritises discretionary boating infrastructure over pressing community needs such as housing affordability, cost-of-living pressures and social equity. Across multiple submissions, the submitter contends that Council resources should be directed toward inclusive public spaces and essential services, and that the proposed marina would deliver limited community benefit while diverting funds from higher-priority social and environmental challenges.	Multiple submissions were received from the same named individual. While different email addresses were used, the submissions were consolidated for reporting purposes based on the consistent submitter name and content
30	J Kuhlenbeck	Opposes the Eastern Beach Marina proposal.	
31	Landscape Hills and Fleurieu	Raised concerns about the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp, noting that the site is located within known breeding territory and movement corridors for Hooded Plovers and within an area for Southern Right Whales. It argued that the proposal would adversely impact shorebirds through loss of foraging habitat, restricted movement of adults and chicks, and increased disturbance associated with construction. The submission also highlighted that the site lies within the Encounter Marine Park and contains dense seagrass, reef and sand habitats that would be significantly affected, while warning of broader risks related to sand movement, erosion, dune stability and potential impacts on the Hindmarsh River estuary. It encouraged that these environmental constraints be fully considered before progressing the proposal.	

#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
32	B Lane	Supports the draft Recreational Boating Strategy, praising its clarity, forward planning and focus on improving access, safety and user experience. He suggests designing future boating facilities with scalability in mind so they can accommodate increased demand over time and reduce the need for major upgrades later.	
33	T Le Messurier	Opposes a large-scale marina, arguing that Victor Harbor's coastal conditions, modest boating demand and natural character make it unsuitable, with environmental disturbance, dredging, cost and amenity impacts outweighing potential benefits. He suggests instead a smaller-scale, multi-use boating and Sea Rescue precinct that minimises seabed disturbance, protects coastal character and is supported by staged feasibility and environmental assessment.	
34	M Longhurst	Generally supportive of a high-quality marina as a potential economic drawcard but recognises concerns that such developments primarily benefit visitors. He proposes pairing any marina development with an artificial reef to provide environmental offsets, enhance surfing and marine habitat, and deliver broader recreational, social and coastal-protection benefits for the local community.	
35	Lucy K	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy and the Eastern Beach marina proposal, raising concerns about environmental impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems, pressures on volunteers and community groups, and the prioritisation of boating infrastructure over broader community and environmental needs. Across her submissions, she emphasises the importance of protecting Victor Harbor's natural values, recognising volunteer capacity and contribution, and ensuring future decisions are guided by sustainability, inclusivity and genuine community benefit rather than expansion of facilities.	Multiple (3) submissions were received from the same named individual. While different email addresses were used, the submissions were consolidated for reporting purposes based on the consistent submitter name and content
36	A Maclean	Opposes the Eastern Beach Marina proposal as presented with the draft strategy as it removes public space and disturbs natural habitats.	



#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
37	P Mann	Supports the very detailed and well researched draft Strategy. Conveys experiences with lack of access to boat ramps particularly in peak times. Supports the Eastern Beach Marina proposal.	
38	J Marx	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy, arguing that investment in a marina would benefit only a small proportion of residents while diverting limited Council resources away from priorities such as housing affordability, liveability, and attracting young professionals and families to Victor Harbor.	
39	C Mazzilli	Opposes the Eastern Beach marina and boat ramp proposal, stating it would negatively impact a popular family-friendly beach by increasing safety risks for swimmers, reducing access to inclusive recreational spaces, and altering the character of the foreshore that supports community connection and tourism.	
40	D Perenti	Objects to the proposed marina, expressing concern that dredging and construction would damage the marine environment, increase pollution and traffic near the town centre, and undermine the natural character of Eastern Beach.	
41	R Phillips	Does not state a clear position for or against the marina but raises detailed questions about public access, environmental assessment, dredging and disposal, ongoing maintenance costs, safety, and whether the foreshore would remain publicly accessible under the proposal.	
42	L Philp	Concerned about proceeding with a marina given past rejections, safety risks from swell conditions, and the recent algal bloom affecting Encounter Bay, and suggests delaying major boating infrastructure while exploring lower-impact alternatives focused on safety and environmental recovery.	
43	I Porteous	Supports the draft Recreational Boating Strategy and advocates for a safe, all-weather launching facility east of the Causeway, citing long-standing safety issues, congestion and operational problems at existing ramps based on extensive local boating and instructional experience.	
44	J Porter	Raises concerns about the proposed marina and associated boating infrastructure, questioning potential environmental impacts, changes to foreshore access and amenity, and whether the scale of development is appropriate for Victor Harbor's coastal setting.	



#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
45	B Ramsey	Opposes the Eastern Beach marina proposal, citing concerns about environmental damage, loss of public beach space, increased congestion and safety risks, and the prioritisation of boating infrastructure over broader community and environmental interests.	Three submissions
46	R Remilton	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy, expressing concern that a marina would negatively impact the marine environment and foreshore character and would not represent a good use of Council resources for the wider community.	
47	M Richards	Objects to the marina proposal on environmental and coastal-process grounds, warning that dredging and construction could alter sand movement, damage marine ecosystems and lead to long-term degradation of the foreshore.	
48	G Sauer-Thompson	Opposes the draft strategy and marina proposal, arguing that Council should prioritise social equity, climate resilience and protection of public space over discretionary boating infrastructure that benefits a limited segment of the community.	
49	P Shaedel	Expresses concern about the proposed marina, particularly potential environmental impacts, increased congestion and the effect on the character and accessibility of the foreshore for residents and visitors.	
50	J Seater	Raises concerns about marina development at Eastern Beach, noting potential safety risks, loss of amenity for swimmers and families, and impacts on the natural and recreational values of the foreshore.	
51	R Shirlaw	Opposes the marina proposal, emphasising the importance of preserving Victor Harbor's natural coastal environment and questioning the need for large-scale boating infrastructure given existing facilities.	
52	D Sinclair	Expresses strong concern about the marina proposal, citing risks to marine life, coastal processes and the long-term environmental health of Encounter Bay.	
53	No name provided	Objects to the proposed marina, arguing it would harm the marine environment, reduce public access to the foreshore and prioritise private boating interests over broader community use of coastal space.	

#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
54	Tarni Warra Sanctuary	Opposes the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp on the basis that it would disrupt longshore drift, the natural movement of sand that maintains healthy coastlines, river mouths and beaches. It argued that breakwaters associated with a marina would interrupt this process, leading to sand build-up, the need for ongoing dredging and significant long-term financial costs, with potential impacts extending to the Hindmarsh River mouth and the Granite Island Causeway. The submission suggested that the proposal would create coastal management issues and an ongoing financial burden. It encouraged Council to consider lower-impact alternatives that work with natural coastal processes.	
55	J Tauchnitz	Raises concerns about the proposed marina and boating infrastructure, particularly potential environmental impacts, changes to coastal processes, and whether the scale of development is appropriate for Victor Harbor's natural setting.	
56	A Terlaare	Expresses opposition to the marina proposal, noting concerns about environmental damage, loss of natural coastal character, and potential long-term impacts on the foreshore and marine environment.	
57	The Wilderness Society	Opposes the draft strategy and marina proposal, emphasising the high ecological value of the Encounter Marine Park and surrounding coastal environments and calling for avoidance of development that could damage marine habitats and biodiversity.	
58	C Truman	Objects to the Eastern Beach marina proposal, raising concerns about environmental impacts, loss of amenity and public access, and the prioritisation of boating infrastructure over protection of the natural coastline.	
59	G Warren	Opposes the proposed marina, citing risks to marine ecosystems, changes to coastal processes and amenity, and questioning whether the development aligns with the long-term interests of the broader community.	
60	Wildlife Welfare Organisation	Opposes the marina proposal, highlighting potential harm to marine and coastal wildlife, disturbance of habitats, and risks to animal welfare arising from increased boating activity and construction.	



#	Submitter	Summary	Admin Comment (if required)
61	J Winters	Opposes the draft Recreational Boating Strategy, raising concerns about environmental impacts, climate-related risks, and the need to prioritise protection of Victor Harbor's natural assets over new boating infrastructure.	
62	S Zeke	Objects to the marina proposal, citing concerns about environmental degradation, increased congestion and loss of public coastal space, and questioning whether the development would deliver benefits for the wider community.	
63	A Zon	Opposes the draft strategy and proposed marina, expressing concern about environmental impacts, loss of coastal amenity and public access, and the potential long-term consequences for Victor Harbor's natural character.	
64	Coastal Protection Board (Department for Environment and Water)	Expressed support for Council's desire to plan safe and sustainable boating facilities but held concerns for the Eastern Boat Ramp due to significant risks to coastal processes and ecosystems. The Board expressed that it would like to work with Council further to support safe recreational boating while protecting the environment.	
65	J Burchett	Opposes the proposed marina at the eastern site, expressing concern that it would not be a good outcome for Victor Harbor and poses unacceptable risks to local biodiversity, particularly in the context of recent algal impacts. She suggests that upgrading the existing boat ramp would be a more appropriate alternative to constructing a new marina.	



Key themes in the written submissions that were **not in support** of the Eastern Boat Ramp and/or Boating Strategy:

- **Environmental Protection and Risk**

The submissions noted strong concern about the loss of seagrass, reef system and near-shore habitats. There was common mention that dredging, breakwaters and altered currents would cause ongoing and cumulative environmental impacts, including increased turbidity, sediment movement and long-term maintenance dredging. There were concerns noted for protected and vulnerable species, including shorebirds, marine fauna and migratory species, and the compatibility of new infrastructure with existing conservation efforts.

Some submissions referenced the recent algal bloom event, noting that the marine environment is already under stress and that any additional disturbance could exacerbate bloom risk and undermine recovery.

- **Financial impacts and cost**

Some submissions raised concerns about costs, ongoing maintenance and dredging expenses, and long-term financial liability for ratepayers. Some submissions encouraged independent business cases and cost vs benefit analyses before progressing.

- **Loss of public space and amenity**

Some submissions noted the loss or fragmentation of open foreshore, beaches, walking paths and informal recreation areas. There was emphasis on the foreshore's role in daily life, including walking, swimming, sport, family recreation and tourism. There were also concerns raised about impacts to the heritage railway line.

- **Community safety and access**

Some submissions raised concerns that increased vehicle and trailer traffic near the foreshore would create safety risks. There were concerns about conflicts between boats, swimmers and other beach users, particularly in swimming areas.

- **Necessity**

Some submissions noted that recreational boating infrastructure may benefit a minority, while impacts and costs may be borne by the broader community.

A small number of written submissions were in support of the draft strategy.

Key themes in the written submissions that were **in support** of the Eastern Boat Ramp and/or Boating Strategy:

- **Economic and tourism benefits**

Some submissions noted the potential for a new facility to enhance Victor Harbor's profile as a boating destination, attract higher-spending visitors or boating events, and provide flow-on benefits for local businesses.

- **Addressing issues with existing boating facilities**

Some submissions noted that a new facility could reduce congestion and risk at existing

ramps during peak periods, and provide more reliable access to the water for recreational boat users.

Several written submissions also expressed dissatisfaction with Council's consultation process, requesting longer consultation timeframes and direct notifications to ratepayers/residents to encourage greater involvement.

The following table presents questions that were received within written submissions, along with responses that were provided by Administration.

Question	Administration Response
What are the boat launching figures for 2024-2025?	1,002 daily boat launching tickets were purchased and 112 annual launching permits were issued in 2024/25.
Could we just have a large shed built to house the emergency boat close to the existing ramp at the Bluff? Is it our council's responsibility to provide launch facilities for the emergency service or might it be funded by the State Government, say from the Emergency services levy?	Council has considered the requirements of State Government agencies as part of a strategic land workshop held 9 February 2026. Council is advocating with State Government in regard to the needs of emergency services.
What about the ecological consequences of allowing increased human access to the sensitive, already damaged habitats of the Right Whales, Fairy Penguins, Hooded Plovers and Dolphins?	The recent consultation was for the Draft Recreational Boating Strategy which is a high-level strategic document designed to guide Council's long-term planning and policy directions for recreational boating infrastructure across the City. While the consultation seeks feedback on whether Eastern Beach infrastructure should be included in the Strategy, it is a concept only and there is currently no budget allocation, including within Council's 10-year Long Term Financial Plan, for the design or construction of a marina or an eastern boat ramp. No environmental impact statement has been commissioned or approved in relation to such works. This process is simply about understanding from our community whether this high-level strategy aligns with community needs and expectations and your response forms part of this. Following the completion of the public consultation process (which closed on Friday, 30 January), the consultation feedback and draft Strategy will be presented to Council for consideration. The elected body may determine to

Question	Administration Response
	amend, remove, or reprioritise elements of the draft Strategy in response to community feedback, as well as broader policy, financial, and environmental considerations. This is why input from the whole community was encouraged at this strategic stage before resources are committed to delivering on components of the final Strategy over the coming years.
Why is the topic of an eastern marina on the agenda again? This has already been rejected twice over the past 20 years. Why has it suddenly been suggested that the earlier decisions should now be reversed?	As per response above
1) will pedestrians still have access along beach front. 2) is there any proposal or interest in developing the area adjacent to the proposed development. 3) will divers like myself still have access to the inner reef adjacent and in marina.. 4) will the beachfront and marina be considered private property and therefore available for private development in the future if the marina becomes unviable. 5) where will the spoils from future dredging be deposited. 6) was there an Environmental Impact Study done for this proposal, who has done this Study and is it available to the public. 7) What is the projected cost of maintaining the proposed marina including dredging.	1) The detailed design is yet to be completed for the Eastern Boat Ramp. 2) This has not been considered yet. 3) This level of detail is yet to be determined. 4) There has been no decision as to the tenure of the marina. Most Marinas in Australia are leasehold from government. 5) To be determined as part of the design process and assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. 6) An Environmental Impact Statement has not been prepared. 7) No estimate of maintenance and dredging has been provided as a design has not been finalised.
Would it not be prudent to keep the larger vessel in Goolwa to provide local access through the Murray Mouth in the Goolwa, Middleton, Coorong environs?	Council has considered the requirements of State Gov agencies as part of a strategic land workshop held 9 February 2026. The larger vessel also needs to attend to ocean-based emergencies and at low tide has to be launched at Cape Jervis.
Who is responsible for the management of these facilities currently?	Council and State Government.



Question	Administration Response
Also, if a new boat launch facility was developed, does this indicate that this will not also be ‘poorly managed’?”	Developing Council budget each year involves an extensive process, and our aim is to ensure that the mix of services and capital works meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to our Council area. Scheduled repairs and maintenance retain an asset at the appropriate service level and includes both planned and reactive works.

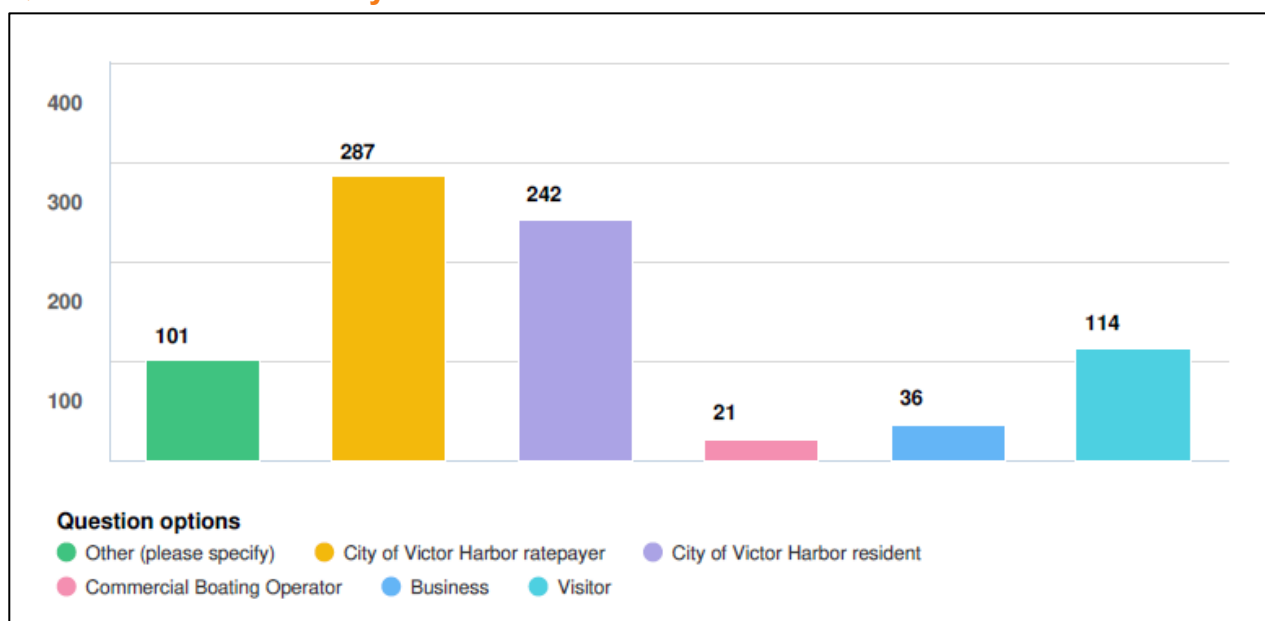
Survey Responses

585 surveys were completed and submitted online via Council's Your Say website.

During analysis of survey responses, it was identified that there were 478 unique contributors to the online survey, although a total of 585 individual contributions were recorded. This indicates that some responses may have originated from the same server or device, which can occur for a variety of reasons, including shared networks or multiple submissions by the same participant. All contributions have been included in the graphs and summaries within this report, however this factor should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

A further 18 surveys were completed in hardcopy, making the total survey responses 603. Both the online and hardcopy surveys have been collated to provide the following overview of responses.

Q. What best describes you?

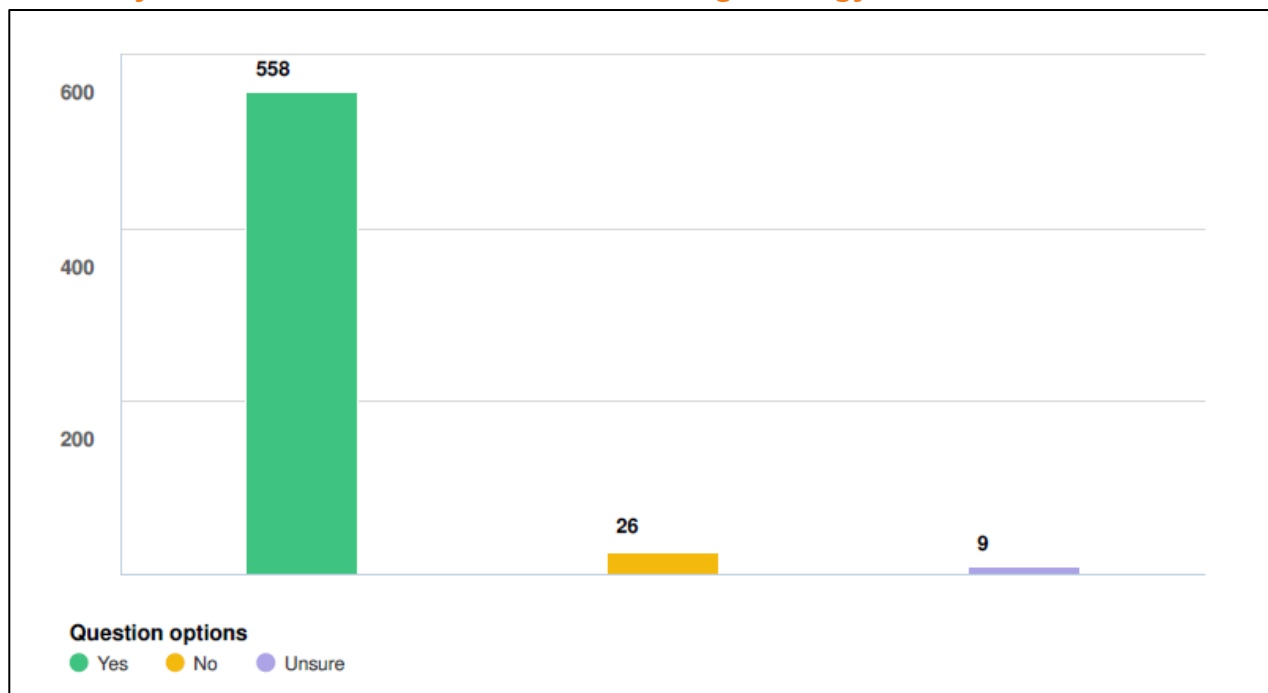


Majority of survey respondents identified as City of Victor Harbor ratepayers (287) and/or City of Victor Harbor residents (242). Around a quarter of respondents were visitors (114). A smaller portion of respondents were commercial boating operators (21) and businesses (36).

Respondents who selected 'other' (101) specified themselves as sea rescue volunteers, recreational fishers, residents of neighbouring councils, environmental volunteers, local yacht club members, or recreational water users (kayaking, scuba diving, snorkelling).

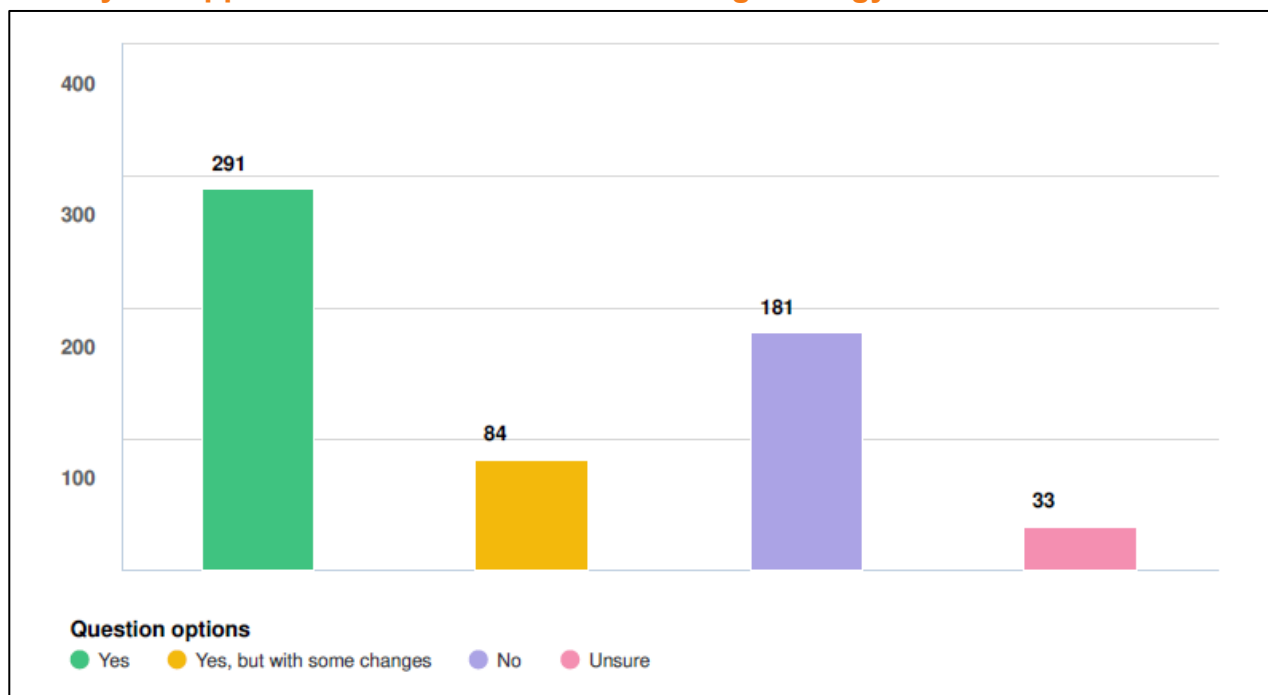
Note, respondents were able to select multiple answers to this question.

Q. Have you read the draft Recreational Boating Strategy?



Majority of respondents (558) indicated that they had read the draft Recreational Boating Strategy. A small number of respondents indicated that they had not read the draft (26) or were unsure (9).

Q. Do you support the draft Recreational Boating Strategy?





There were 589 responses to this question. The responses were mixed, with around two thirds of respondents indicating that they support the draft strategy (291 or 49%) or support the draft strategy with changes (84 or 14%). Around one third of respondents indicated that they do not support the draft strategy (181 or 31%) or were unsure (33 or 6%).

Key themes amongst **respondents who did support the draft strategy** included:

- **High demand** - Recreational boating is continuing to increase in popularity. A plan to improve and increase boating facilities is needed to address this high demand and issues of overcrowding, particularly at the Bluff Boat Ramp.
- **Local economy** - More boating facilities and improvements to current boating facilities would support the local economy and tourism sector.
- **Safety** - Safer boating facilities, improved response times for Sea Rescue, and improvements to deteriorating facilities are welcomed.

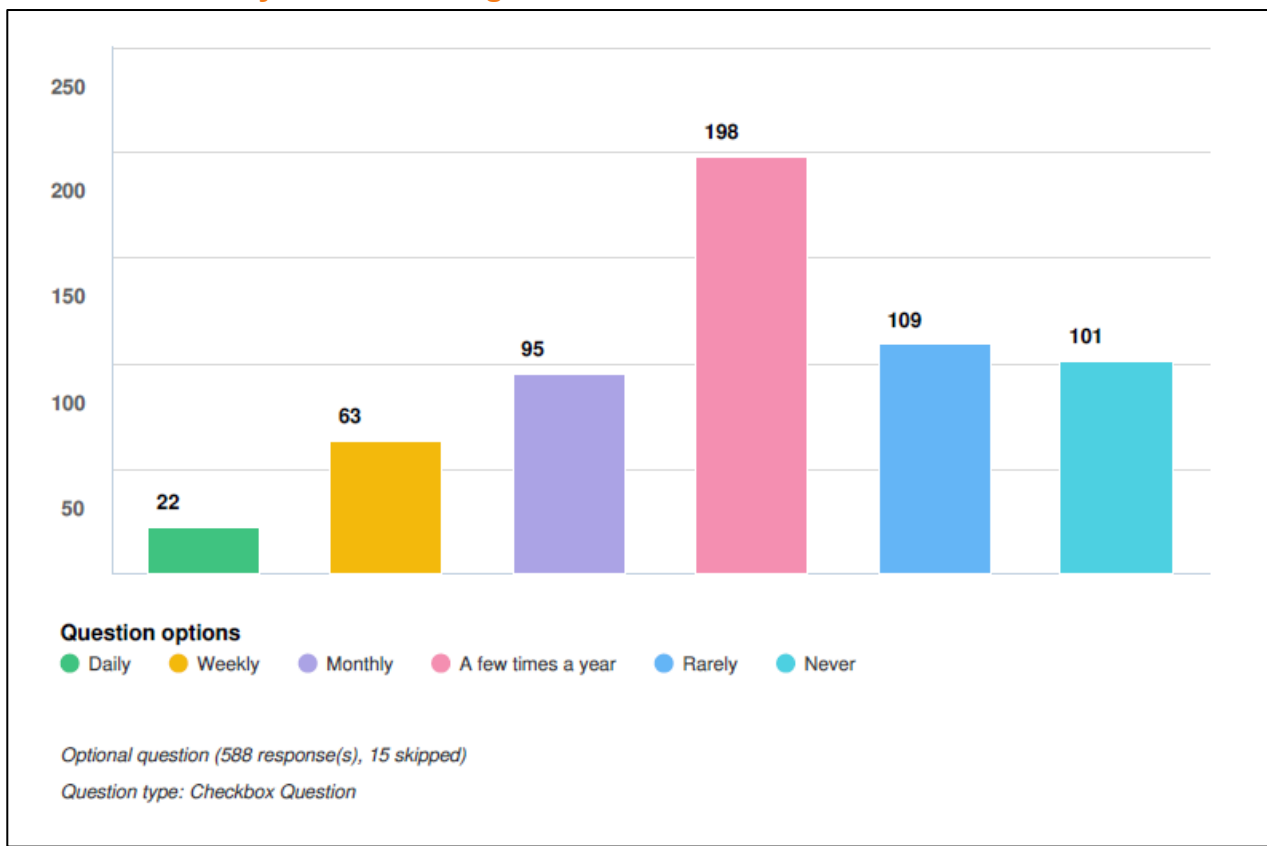
Key themes amongst **respondents who did support the draft strategy, but with changes**, included:

- **Timeline** – The development of a new facility and existing facility upgrades are needed more urgently.
- **Priorities** – A focus should be placed on improving existing facilities rather than building new facilities.
- **Research** – Research should be undertaken into other boat ramp constructions in South Australia, more public consultation should be undertaken.
- **Design of Eastern Boat Ramp** – Concerns with the design of the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp, including size, scale, car parking, environmental impact.

Key themes amongst **respondents who did not support the draft strategy** included:

- **Disapproval of Eastern Boat Ramp** – Due to environmental impacts, traffic impacts, parking limitations, cost and financial risk, threat to wildlife, inappropriate location or too close to other infrastructure (skate park, playground, swimming beach), size and scale, impact on Victor Harbor's character/charm, impact on views and aesthetics.
- **Disapproval of recreational boating and cruise ships** – Due to costs involved to maintain/upgrade facilities, environmental impacts.
- **Research** – More research should be undertaken, such as business cases and environmental impact studies, and references should be used in the strategy.
- **Perceived inequity** – The strategy benefits a minority, the boating cohort.

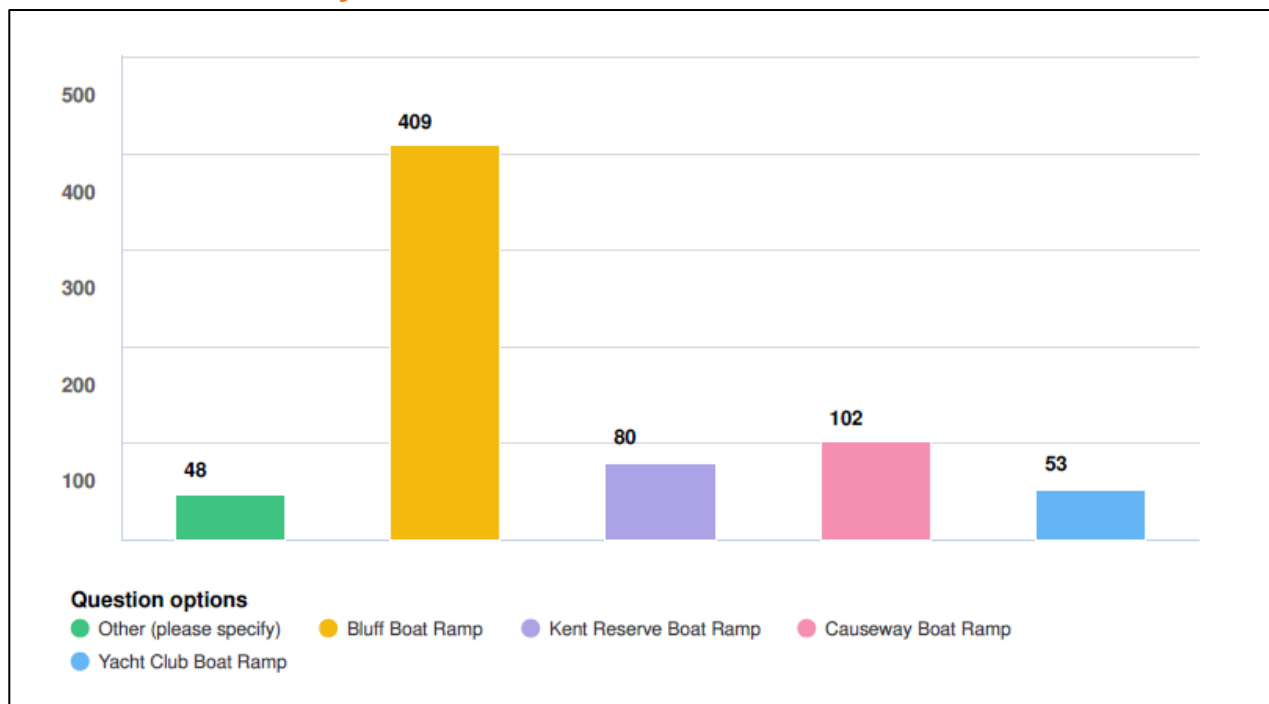
Q. How often do you use boating facilities in Victor Harbor?



The majority of respondents (69%) use boating facilities in Victor Harbor a few times a year or less.

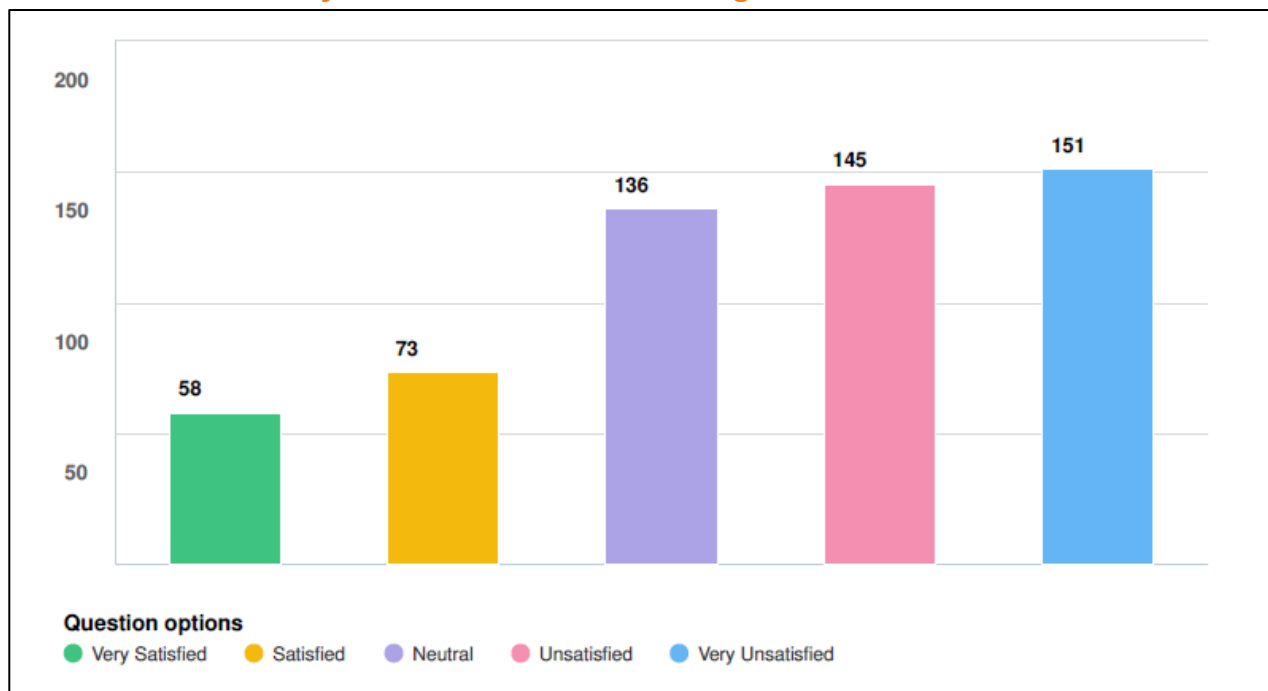
- 101 respondents (17%) never use boating facilities in Victor Harbor
- 109 respondents (19%) rarely use boating facilities in Victor Harbor
- 198 respondents (34%) use boating facilities in Victor Harbor a few times a year
- 95 respondents (16%) use boating facilities in Victor Harbor monthly
- 63 respondents (10%) use boating facilities in Victor Harbor weekly
- 22 respondents (4%) use boating facilities in Victor Harbor daily.

Q. Which facilities do you use?



Majority of respondents used the Bluff Boat Ramp (409 respondents), while smaller number of respondents used Causeway Boat Ramp (102 respondents), Kent Reserve Boat Ramp (80 respondents) and Yacht Club Boat Ramp (53 respondents).

Q. How satisfied are you with the current boating facilities in Victor Harbor?



Of the 563 responses to this question, around half of respondents (53%) were unsatisfied to a degree, with 145 respondents unsatisfied and 151 respondents very unsatisfied with current boating facilities. Around a quarter of respondents were satisfied (73) or very satisfied (58). Other respondents were neutral (136).

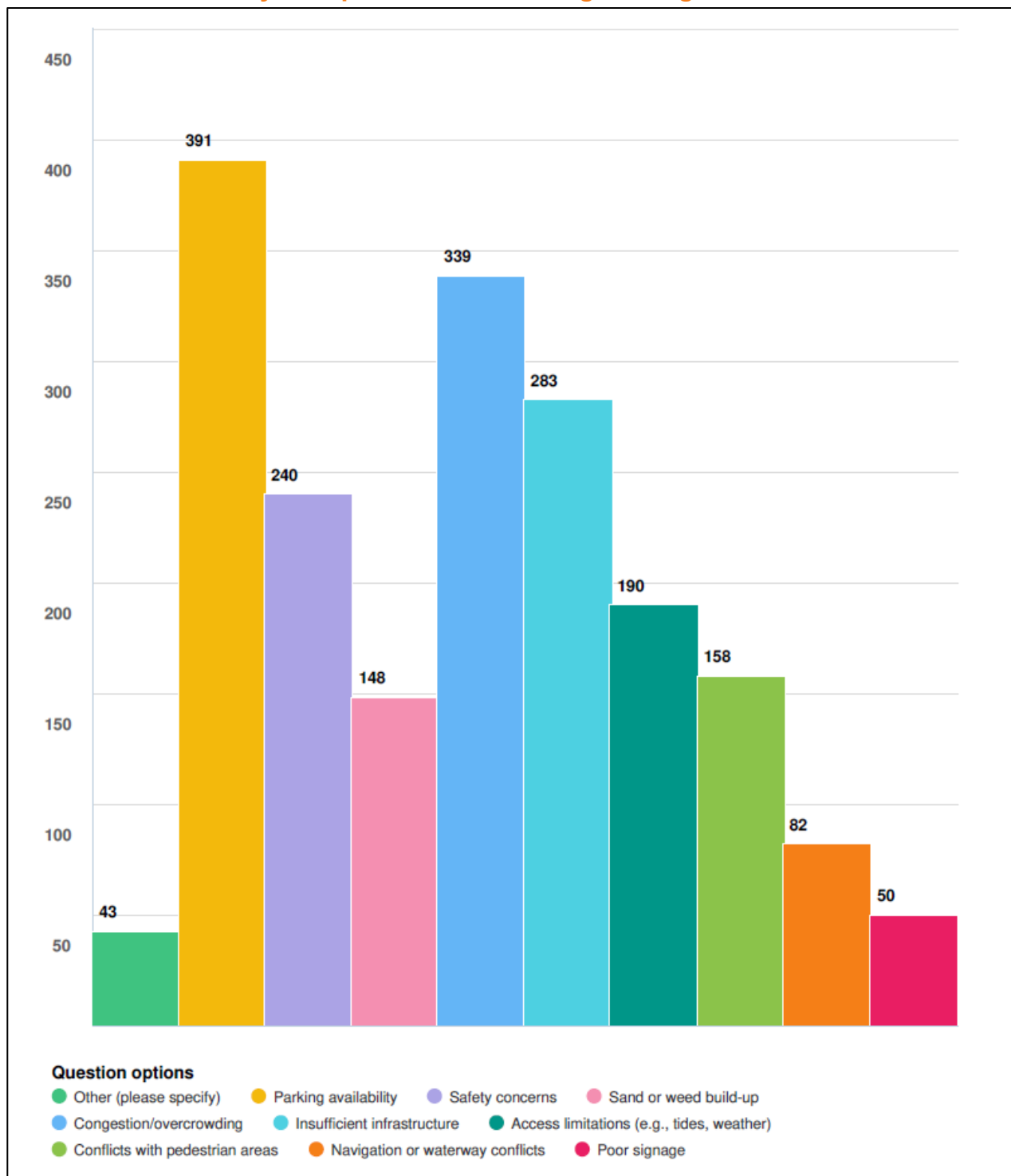
Respondents who were satisfied commonly noted that current facilities were sufficient, and they did not feel a need for further development. Other common themes expressed by respondents who indicated satisfaction included:

- Congestion only occurs during peak holiday periods, fishing events or ideal weather days - outside these times the facilities function well.
- Recent upgrades have improved the Bluff Boat Ramp – including new channel markers.
- Concerns about over-development – opposition to further development and construction of new facilities, citing environmental impacts and coastal character.

Respondents who were unsatisfied noted a range of reasons. The following were consistent themes among dissatisfied respondents:

- Parking shortages
- Overcrowding and congestion
- Safety concerns
- Inadequate capacity during peak seasons
- Lack of supporting amenities, including boat wash-down facilities, fish cleaning stations, toilets, rubbish disposal and lighting
- Limitations for larger or commercial vessels
- Channel depth, sand weed build-up, rocks in channel.

Q. What issues have you experienced at existing boating facilities?



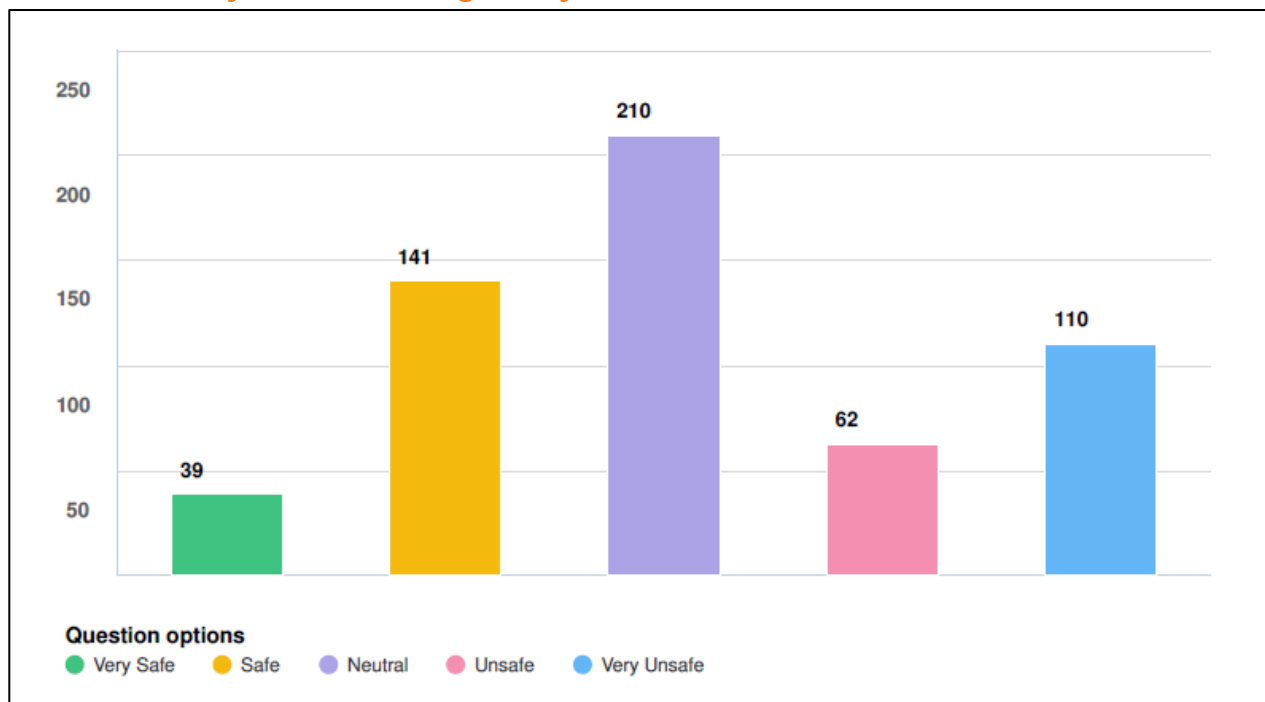
Parking availability (391) and congestion/overcrowding (339) were the two most common issues. This was followed by insufficient infrastructure (283), safety concerns (240), access limitations (190), conflicts with pedestrian areas (158), sand or weed build up (148), navigation or waterway conflicts (82), poor signage (50) and other (43). Issues noted under 'other' included ticket machine lighting, rocks/shallow water at low tide, lack of fish cleaning facilities, insufficient garbage bins, feral marine species, onshore weather conditions.

Q. Please provide any additional information on the issues you have experienced.

Some respondents shared additional information and experiences relating to the aforementioned issues. The following is a summary of key themes in the responses:

- **Congestion and long wait times**
Significant queuing to launch and retrieve boats during busy periods, sometimes extending along the foreshore. Delays causing frustration, conflict between users, and unsafe conditions on ramps and surrounding roads.
- **Parking and traffic issues**
Lack of trailer and vehicle parking during weekends, school holidays, tuna season and public holidays. Long walking distances from overflow parking, impacting safety, accessibility and convenience. Boat parks frequently occupied by non-boating vehicles, including tourists and individual cars.
- **Safety risks**
Overcrowding at ramps, particularly during peak periods. Conflicts between vehicles, trailers, pedestrians and cyclists in shared spaces. Inadequate lighting for early morning or night-time launching and retrieval.
- **Limited options for large vessels**
No suitable berthing or overnight mooring facilities for non-trailer boats or visiting vessels. Degradation of existing structures (e.g. screw pile jetty) reducing safe mooring options.
- **Enforcement concerns**
Excessive or unclear signage reducing effectiveness. Confusion around parking rules and time limits leading to fines. Concerns about enforcement being perceived as punitive during peak periods.
- **Inadequate facilities**
Lack of wash-down areas, fish cleaning facilities and freshwater access.
- **Ramp and channel condition issues**
Shallow water, sand and silt build-up affecting usability at low tide. Need for more regular dredging to prevent damage to boats, props and trailers. Slippery ramp surfaces and cross-currents making launching and retrieval difficult or unsafe.

Q. How would you rate boating safety in Victor Harbor?



Responses were mixed, with around a third of respondents rating boating safety as unsafe (62) or very unsafe (110). Another third of respondents rated boating safety as safe (141) or very safe (39). The remaining respondents were neutral (210).

Responses to this question were polarised, with respondents describing different experiences. For example, some respondents felt that there had been a very low rate of safety incidents at boating facilities, while other respondents felt that there had been a high rate of safety incidents.

Key themes amongst **respondents who rated boating as safe** included:

- Sea Rescue presence – committed volunteers providing additional safety
- Responsible boat users and respectful boating culture
- Good knowledge by boat users about reefs, swell patterns, tides and weather
- Good facilities and signage – including new channel markers, signage, navigational aids
- Low incidents – several respondents noted that they have personally never experienced or witness major safety issues/incidents
- Calm conditions – sheltered and protected bay areas seen as relatively safe for boating.

Key themes amongst **respondents who rated boating as unsafe** included:

- Sea Rescue response times – compromised due to congestion at boat ramps and long travel times
- History of safety incidents – several respondents noted that they had witnessed or heard accounts of boating incidents
- Overcrowding – creating unsafe conditions on the water and in car park, leading to near-misses
- Narrow and shallow boating channel
- Unfavourable conditions – Large swells, wind, low tides, reefs, submerged rocks, shallow channels
- Sea Rescue – slower response times due to lack of accessible boat ramps

- Lack of lighting – ramps are dark in the early morning and at nighttime
- Poor enforcement of boating regulations
- Conflict/aggression between boat users.

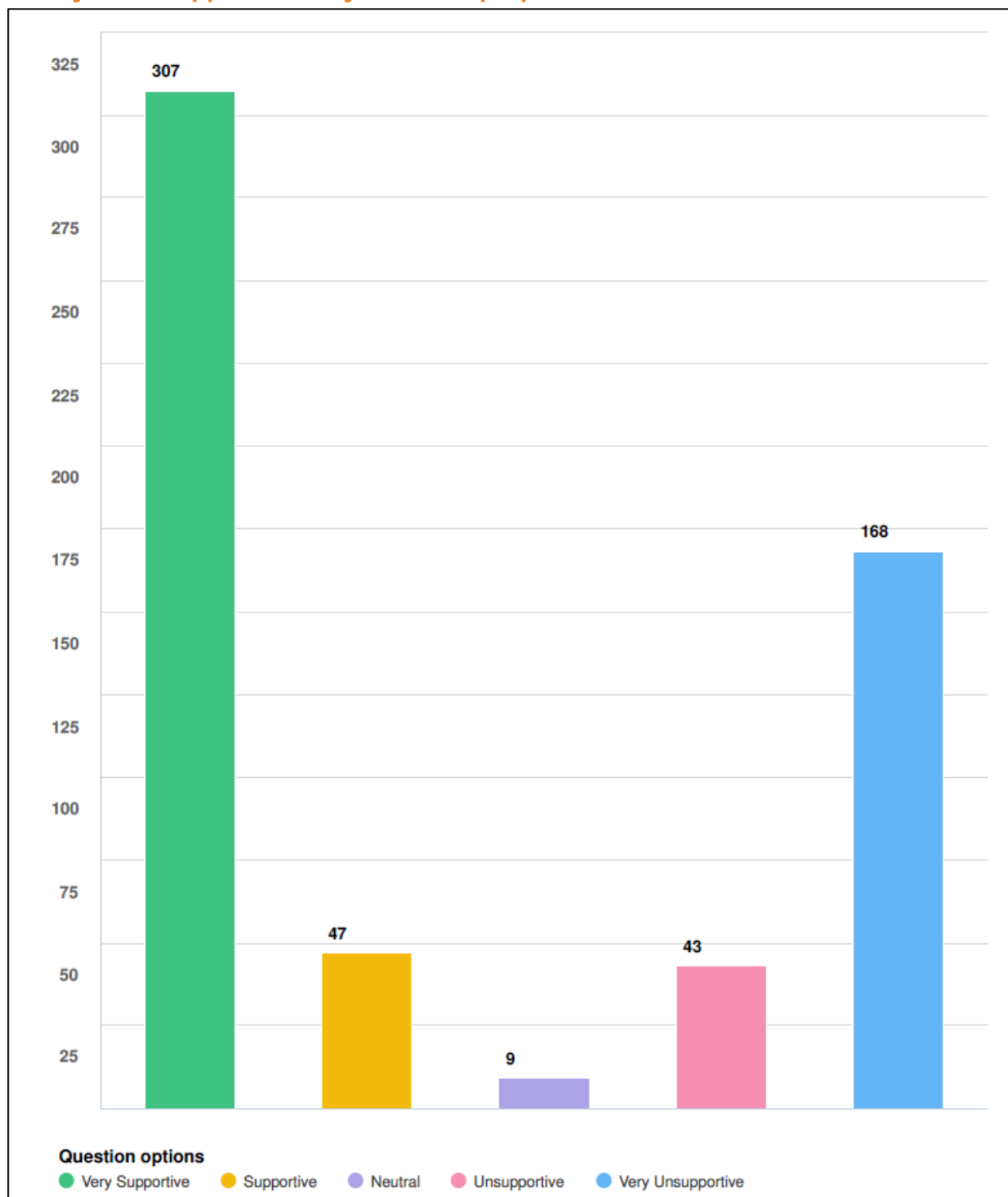
A number of respondents, both who rated boating as safe and unsafe, noted the inherent risk associated with recreational boating. This includes due to changing conditions, unpredictable weather and exposure to high seas.

Q. The Strategy identifies key priorities such as safety, maintenance, access, environmental management and education. Rank these priorities in terms of importance (from 1 being the highest priority, to 7 being the lowest priority):

OPTIONS	AVG. RANK
Safety	2.60
Facility upgrades	3.25
Building new facilities	3.46
Parking and access	3.51
Environmental protection	3.56
Signage and education	4.96
Promotion/boating tourism	5.38

Safety was ranked at the highest priority (average ranking of 2.60), followed by facility upgrades (3.25), building new facilities (3.46), parking and access (3.51), environmental protection (3.56), signage and education (4.96) and promotion/boating tourism (5.38).

Q. The Strategy proposes investigating a new Eastern Boat Ramp and marina-style facility. How supportive are you of this proposal?



There were 574 responses to this question. Around two thirds of respondents were very supportive (307) or supportive (47) of the Eastern Boat Ramp and marina-style facility. Around one third of respondents were very unsupportive (168) or unsupportive (43). The remaining respondents were neutral (9).



Residents and ratepayers had mixed views about the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp. Businesses, commercial boating operators and visitors were more supportive of the Eastern Boat Ramp.

- Of those who identified as a City of Victor Harbor resident and/or ratepayer, around 50% were supportive or very supportive and around 50% were unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- Of those who identified as a Business or Commercial Boating Operator, around 85% were supportive or very supportive, while around 10% were unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- Of those who identified as a Visitor, around 85% were supportive or very supportive, while around 10% were unsupportive or very unsupportive.

Frequent users of boating facilities were more supportive of the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp, while those who rarely use boating facilities were less supportive.

- Of those who identified that they never or rarely use boating facilities, around 40% were supportive or very supportive, while around 60% were unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- Of those who identified that they use boating facilities a few times a year or more, around 75% were supportive or very supportive, while around 20% were unsupportive or very unsupportive.

Q. Why?

Responses to this question reflected a wide range of views. Responses highlighted both benefits and concerns. Many submissions expressed strongly held and passionate views across the spectrum of support and concern.

Key themes amongst respondents who were supportive of the Eastern Boat Ramp included:

- **Addressing overcrowding/demand**
Strong view that the existing Bluff ramp is overcrowded, particularly during peak holiday periods. A second ramp would reduce queues, delays, and frustration for locals and visitors. A new facility would support increased interest in boating, allow better access to boating facilities, and improve safety.
- **Safety and emergency response**
Improved safety for launching and retrieving boats in a wider range of weather conditions. Faster and more reliable access for Sea Rescue, particularly for incidents east of Granite Island. Perception that current arrangements delay emergency response times.
- **Tourism and economy**
Potential to attract more visitors, increase length of stay, and boost local spending. Supportive of the blue economy, including recreational boating, charter operators, fishing, events, and potentially cruise tenders. Elevating Victor Harbor as a regional or premium coastal destination.
- **Modern infrastructure**
Modern, fit-for-purpose infrastructure could be developed as part of the Eastern Boat Ramp including additional launch lanes, pontoons, parking, wash-down areas, and mooring options.

- **Access to eastern waters**

Easier and safer access to waters east of Granite Island without navigating around the Bluff. Benefits for yacht clubs, sailing events, and recreational fishing closer to town.

Key themes amongst respondents who were unsupportive of the Eastern Boat Ramp included:

- **Environmental impacts**

Strong concern about damage to seagrass beds, reefs, and marine ecosystems. Risks to protected and vulnerable species, including Hooded Plovers, penguins, dolphins, seals, and Southern Right Whales. Concern that dredging, altered sand movement, and breakwaters would cause long-term, irreversible impacts.

- **Cost and Financial Impact**

Concern about ratepayer funding for construction, dredging, maintenance, and future repairs. Perception that benefits would accrue to a relatively small group of boat owners, many from outside the area.

- **Loss of existing recreational area**

Importance of the Eastern Beach and Bridge Terrace area as a shared community space used for walking, swimming, cycling, and recreation. Concern that the proposal could reduce public access, fragment the foreshore, and change the character and visual amenity of the area.

- **Traffic**

Concern about congestion on Hindmarsh Road, Bridge Terrace, and surrounding streets. Risks associated with boat trailers crossing or queuing near the railway line. Potential conflicts between vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, and children in already busy areas.

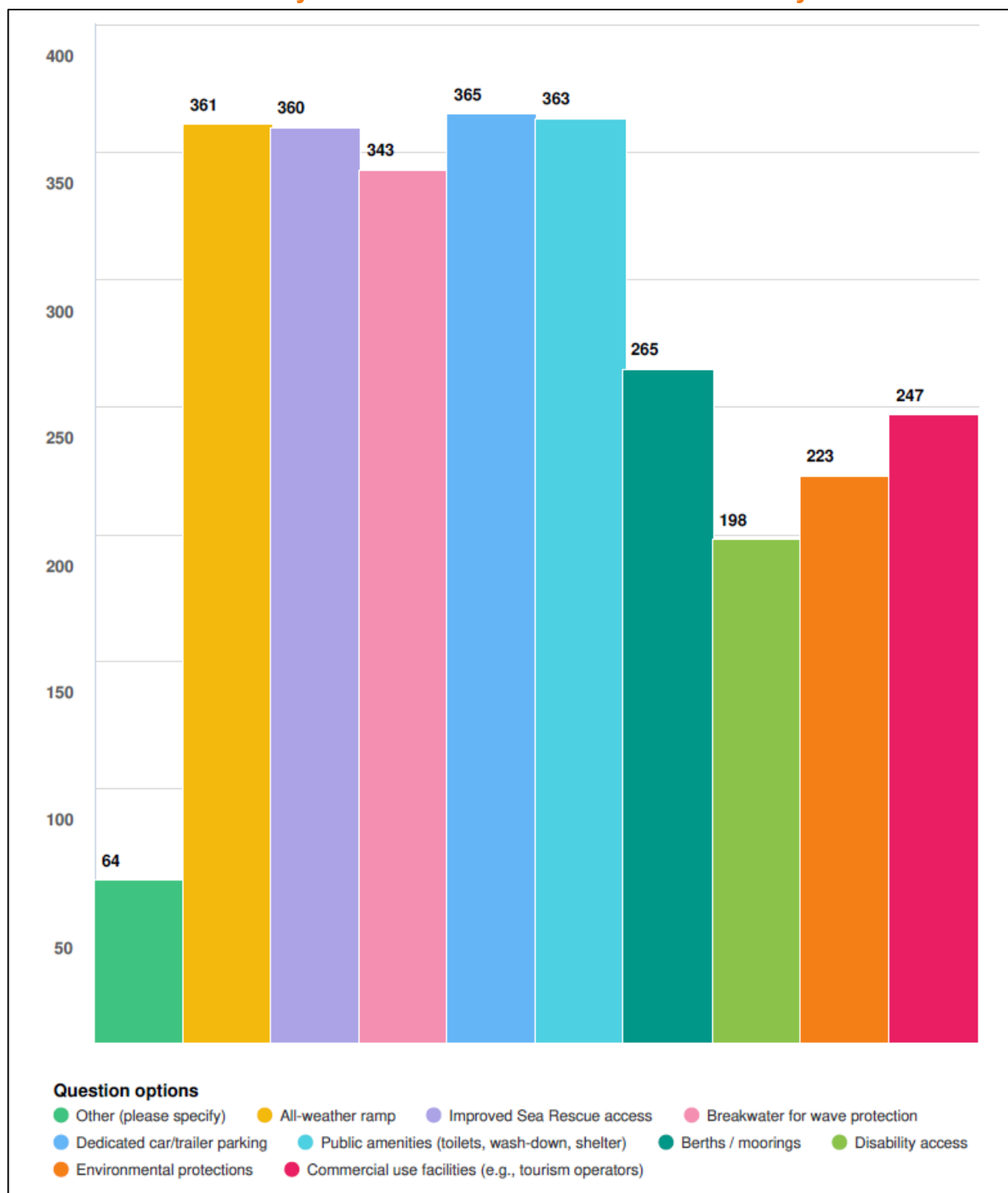
- **Aesthetic**

Marina facility could impact Victor Harbor's character/charm or impact existing views in the area.

- **Necessity**

Questioning need for new facility given other boat ramps exist in the council area. Preference for improving current facilities rather than creating a new site.

Q. What features would you like to see considered at a new facility?



Respondents showed interest in all features, with dedicated car/trailer parking (365), an all-weather ramp (361), improved sea rescue access (360), public amenities (363) and breakwater for wave protection (343) ranking highly.

Facilities noted under 'other' included cruise ship mooring, fuel facilities, retail outlets, board walks, hospitality, convenience centre, tidal pool, jetty, fish cleaning, wash down area.

Q. Are there any specific initiatives not currently included in the Strategy that you think should be considered?

Specific initiatives suggested by respondents included:

- Boat storage for Sea Rescue to enable quicker response times
- Boat storage for Dragon Boats
- Further investigation into financial viability and environmental impacts associated with Eastern Boat Ramp
- Disability ramp and wheelchair hoist onto commercial charter vessels.

Other initiatives suggested by respondents, but not within the scope of the Recreational Boating Strategy, included:

- Tidal pool/ rock pool/ wave pool for swimming
- Development of a Sea Grass Policy
- Patrolled swimming beach.

Q. Do you have any other comments or feedback?

Many respondents elaborated on the responses provided in previous questions and continued to express their support or disapproval for an Eastern Boat Ramp.

Key themes that emerged from the responses to this question were mixed and included:

- Environment - Desire to protect environment and limit environmental damage
- Financial considerations – Desire to limit impact on ratepayers
- Economic development – interest in boosting local economy and tourism
- Safety - Interest in improving safety for recreational boat users
- Traffic, parking and congestion – concerns about issues being faced at current facilities, as well as potential issues if a new facility were developed.

Some alternate ideas and topics that were raised in responses to this question included:

- Artificial reefs
- Greater education, compliance and environmental offsets if developments proceed
- Delaying decision-making until current environmental issues (algal bloom) are better understood/resolved.



Conclusion

Community consultation on the Draft Recreational Boating Strategy attracted a high level of participation and generated detailed, considered feedback from a broad cross-section of the Victor Harbor community, including residents, ratepayers, visitors, recreational and commercial boat users, environmental organisations and community groups. The level of engagement reflects the significance of boating infrastructure to the region and the strong interest in how Victor Harbor plans for future growth, safety and environmental protection.

The consultation revealed the complexity of balancing the growing demand for boating access with the need to protect sensitive coastal and marine environments, support community amenity, and ensure financial sustainability. Amid diverse perspectives, there was a clear expectation that future decisions, particularly regarding the proposed Eastern Boat Ramp, should be guided by thorough investigation, independent assessment, and a commitment to transparency and evidence-based decision-making.

Environmental values emerged as a central theme in the community's feedback, with many expressing concern that ecological protection should form a non-negotiable foundation for future actions, rather than being regarded as a risk to mitigate. Calls for clear, ongoing communication highlighted the importance of maintaining community trust, managing expectations, and ensuring all voices continue to be heard as the Strategy is refined and implemented.

Additionally, the Strategy must address traffic, parking, and congestion issues at current facilities, and anticipate challenges that may arise with any new developments. The community's strong engagement underscores the need for careful planning, transparency, and a continued focus on both environmental stewardship and public amenity for the future of recreational boating in the region.

Next Steps

It is recommended that Council utilise its Boating and Marine Facilities Advisory Group to seek targeted advice on key issues raised through the consultation, to help inform finalisation of the Strategy, including:

- Options for addressing Sea Rescue operational requirements in the near term, independent of any further decision around the Eastern Beach proposal.
- A prioritised program of short, medium, and long-term upgrades to existing boating facilities, particularly the Bluff Boat Ramp.
- How the final Strategy should frame the Eastern Beach Marina proposal to ensure community expectations are appropriately managed.

After consulting with the Boating and Marine Facilities Advisory Group, Council must then consider all of the findings, evidence and feedback to finalise the Strategy.