



Floating Rafts - Community Engagement Summary

File	Version	Status	Author	Issue Date	Nature of update
CSV/86	1	Draft	John McKinney	24/10/2016	Draft



**SHIRE of AUGUSTA
MARGARET RIVER**

Margaret River
Monday to Friday: 9am – 4pm
Phone inquiries: 8am – 4:30pm
Ph: +61 8 9780 5255

Augusta
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1 Overview

Community engagement for Swimming Rafts in the Shire opened on July 27, closing on 14 August 2016.

2 Background

The purpose of this community engagement project was to understand what the community priorities and concerns are for the deployment of swimming rafts in the Shire.

At the Council meeting on 11 November 2015 Council resolved to undertake community consultation regarding the provision of swimming rafts.

Swimming rafts, or pontoons, are flat buoyant structures usually made of a plastic or fibreglass floating platform. They can be installed in the ocean like at Gnarabup and Gracetown, or in rivers like near Molloy Island. The use of professionally built rafts in the Shire can have wide ranging benefits for users including increased physical, emotional and psychological health.

The use and location of swimming rafts must be well considered, to minimise impact on the environment and residents in these social spaces.

3 Engagement summary

The aim was to keep this community engagement local, informal and simple in approach, and include a combination of public notices and online activities.

3.1.1 Public notices

This community engagement was communicated to the public in the following ways:

- A public notice was provided in the Community Consultation section of the Margaret River Times on Friday 29 July, 5 and 12 August.
- Posters of the community engagement were positioned in the Margaret River and Augusta Shire offices and libraries.

3.1.2 Online and hard copy surveys

The online tool had an online survey and mapping features activated. The overall response to the survey this page was very positive with 42 online responses and 5 hard copies completed.

A second online tool, interactive mapping was also available with the community able to place markers at locations they believed were suitable for floating rafts.

The landing page for the project featured a short blurb with some photos and the featured survey, and was featured on the homepage when engagement commenced.

[Home](#) » [Swimming rafts in our shire](#)

Swimming rafts in our shire

Consultation has concluded

We'd like to hear from community members and visitors to our shire on the use of swimming rafts and your ideas for possible raft locations. Please take a moment to complete the survey or pin your idea for a raft location below.

At the Council meeting on 11 November 2015 Council resolved to undertake community consultation regarding the provision of swimming rafts. These minutes can be viewed [here](#).

Swimming rafts, or pontoons, are flat buoyant structures usually made of a plastic or fibreglass floating platform. They can be installed in the ocean like at Gnarabup and Gracetown, or in rivers like near Molloy Island. The use of professionally built rafts in the Shire can have wide ranging benefits for users including increased physical, emotional and psychological health.

The use and location of swimming rafts must be well considered, to minimise impact on the environment and residents in these social spaces.

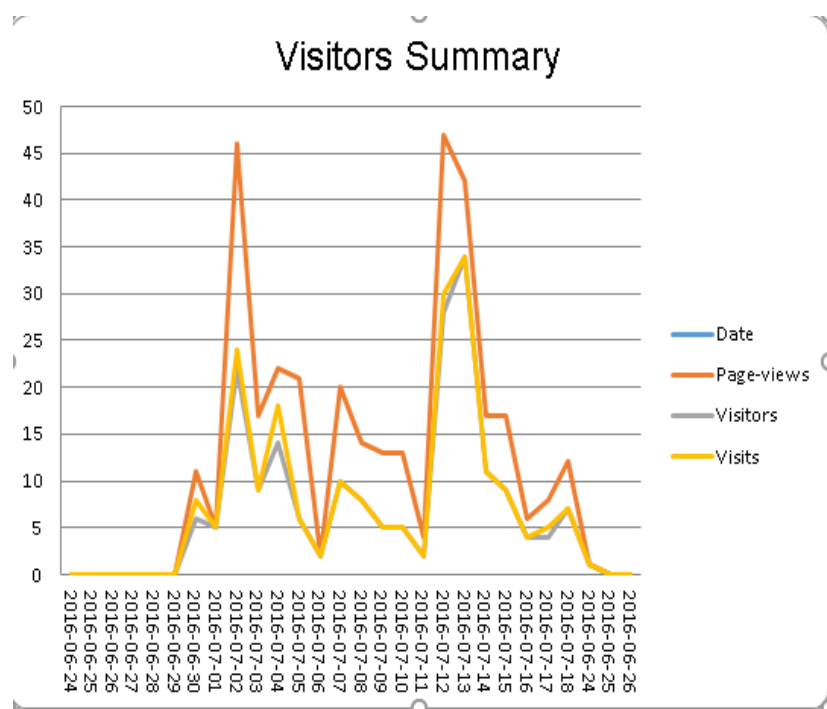
The project page attracted 203 individual page views, peaking on the 07th August with 34 views.



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4 Online Engagement Findings

At the conclusion of the community engagement the Shire received 42 online submissions and 5 hardcopy submissions.

A summary of the survey results is provided at Appendix B, with the findings of the consultation discussed further below. The hard copy responses were manually entered into an excel spreadsheet containing the online submissions.

5 Key Outcomes

The online and physical submissions were analysed and are presented below.



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5.1.1 Shire of Augusta Margaret River

Do you support the use of swimming rafts for nature play in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River



There was strong general support for the use of swimming rafts in the Shire as a whole, with support for the activity as it encourages people to exercise in a fun and healthy way. Concerns included safety due to murky water or unknown obstacles and potential impact on amenity or the environment.

5.1.2 The Margaret River

Do you support the use of swimming rafts in the Margaret River



Respondents identified that the Margaret River as a whole was close to town and rafts in general provided opportunities for fun exercise and recreation. Opposition included safety concerns, impact on the environment (erosion, fauna and flora) and amenity of surrounding residents and general users who use the area.



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5.1.3 Blackwood River or Hardy Inlet

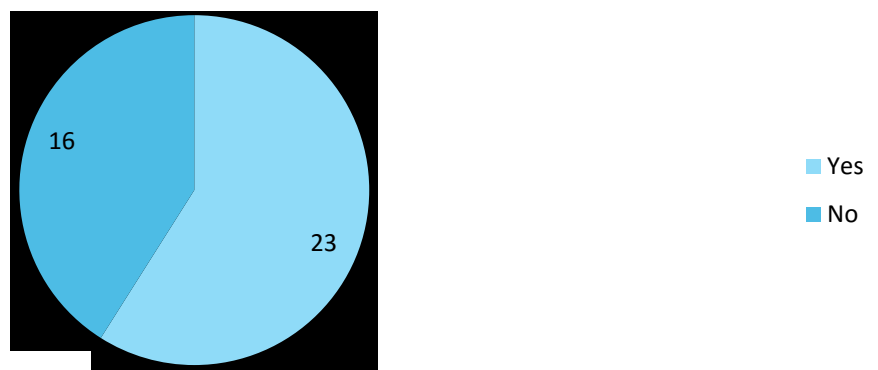
Do you support the use of swimming rafts in the Blackwood River or Hardy Inlet



There was general support for rafts in the Blackwood River and Hardy Inlet. Less concern was raised regarding potential environmental impact, with sandy beaches and greater infrastructure to provide access. Safety concerns were lower due to clearer water, and greater tidal influence providing greater visibility and buoyancy.

5.1.4 Barrett Street Weir, Margaret River

Barrett Street Weir Margaret River



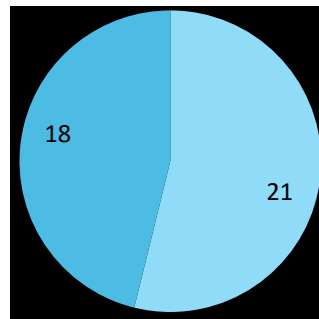
Support for this site included more suitable infrastructure than other locations, and less impact on amenity.

Concerns included inadequate infrastructure such as toilets, bins, parking, and inadequate supervision (lifesaving, rangers).

Opposition included safety concerns, impact on amenity, erosion and water quality concerns.

5.1.5 Old Swimming Hole near Carters Rd Margaret River

Old Swimming Hole near Carters Rd Margaret River



■ Yes
■ No

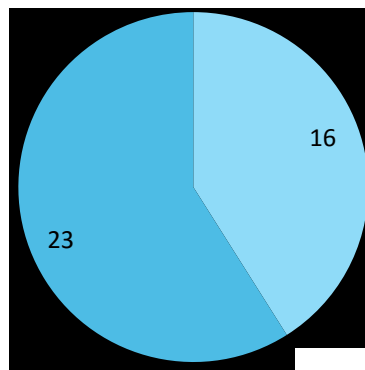
Support for this site included less impact on amenity, and is close to town.

Concerns included inadequate infrastructure such as toilets, bins, parking, inadequate supervision (lifesaving, rangers).

Opposition included safety concerns, impact on amenity, erosion and water quality concerns.

5.1.6 Rendall Close weir, Margaret River)

Rendall Close weir Margaret River



■ Yes
■ No

This was the one location that had less than 50% support, with significant concern and opposition due to lack of infrastructure, impact on amenity, safety concerns and environmental (erosion and water quality).

Support for this site was general in nature and not strongly site specific.



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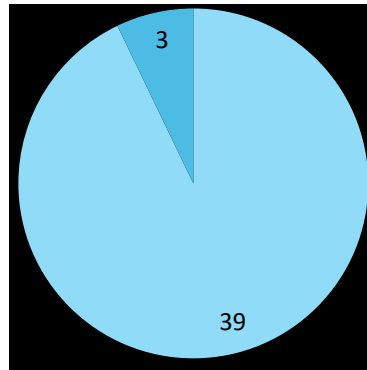
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5.1.7 Hardy Inlet near Turner Caravan Park

Hardy Inlet near Turner Caravan Park

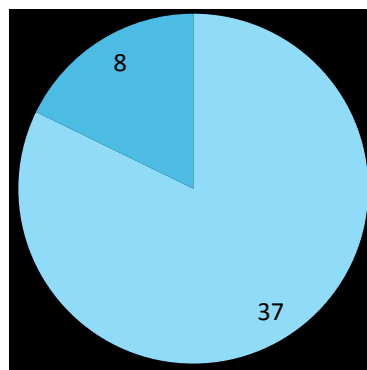


■ Yes
■ No

Strong support was shown for this site with main concerns relating to distance from potential users. There was strong support due to the presence of infrastructure such as toilets and parking and high numbers of potential users at the Caravan Park and surrounds. Safety and environmental concerns were considered less of an issue at this site due to water clarity and riverbank form.

5.1.8 Flinders Bay

Flinders Bay



■ Yes
■ No

Strong support was shown for this site with main concerns relating to distance from potential users. There was strong support due to the presence of infrastructure such as toilets and parking. It was raised by a number of submitters that a raft was previously located here. Safety concerns were highlighted by some respondents suggesting water depth would be insufficient. Some submitters stated that the potential demographic could conflict with existing users.



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It is also noted that in recent community consultation regarding the development of the Flinders Bay Masterplan there was 100% support (four unsolicited submissions) regarding installation of a swim pontoon.

5.1.9 Please tell us of any other locations you think are suitable and why.

A number of respondents suggested retaining or expanding the existing rafts at Gnarabup and Gracetown. Other locations suggested included Chapman Pool, Alexandra Bridge, Riflebutts Beach, Cosy Corner, Hamelin Bay and Disneyland. Of these sites, only Alexandra Bridge and Riflebutts Beach are managed by the Shire. Alexandra Bridge presents some of the same constraints as sites within the Margaret River and has additional issues such as high levels of boat traffic. Riflebutts could potentially be suitable, subject to a detailed site investigation.

5.1.10 Other Matters

There was an additional tool available online for respondents to drag a marker onto a dynamic map to show possible locations for floating rafts. Unfortunately, this tool was very poorly used, with only two people viewing the page and no responses received.

6 Next steps

Officers will prepare a report to Council summarising the public submissions and outcomes.

- It is recommended that rafts are not suitable for the Margaret River, with the possible exception of Barrett St weir due to safety, amenity and environmental impact concerns.
- It is recommended that further site analysis, including a full risk assessment is undertaken at Flinders Bay and the Hardy Inlet near Turner Caravan Park.
- It is recommended that at this point in time, detailed site investigations are not undertaken at any sites in the Margaret River.
- If additional rafts are made available, consideration is given to ocean based sites such as Gracetown, Gnarabup or Riflebutts rather than within the Margaret River due to environmental, social and safety concerns.

Sign off

Name	Position	Signature	Date Signed Off
David Nicholson	Manager – Asset Services		



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Appendix A: Copy of survey



We'd like to hear from community members and visitors to our shire on the use of swimming rafts and your ideas for possible raft locations.

Council have resolved to undertake community consultation regarding the provision of swimming rafts in our shire. The results from this survey will inform the next report to Council on this topic.

Have Your Say

Please take five minutes to complete this quick survey and hand in at the shire offices in Margaret River or Augusta before 14 August 2016. You can also post to:

***Attn: John McKinney, Coordinator
Landcare / Environment Shire of Augusta
Margaret River PO Box 61, Margaret River
WA 6285***



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The use and location of swimming rafts must be well considered, to minimise impact on the environment and residents in these social spaces.

The following conditions should be considered:

1. Sites must contain relatively clear water and be at least 3.2m deep with that depth extending for at least 4.5m surrounding the platform
2. Relatively flat water for the safe installation and use of the raft
3. Traffic and parking
4. Public facilities available like toilets
5. Noise and amenity issues
6. Water quality requirements for public safety
7. Supervision requirements including passive surveillance for crime or vandalism
8. Impacts to water quality, native vegetation and river banks

Do you support the use of swimming rafts for nature play in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Uncertain

Please tell us why *

Do you support the use of swimming rafts in the Margaret River?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us why

Do you support the use of swimming rafts in the Blackwood River or Hardy Inlet?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please tell us why

Based on the conditions above, the Shire has identified the following locations to be potentially suitable. Please advise if you support or do not support the following locations and why.

Barrett Street Weir, Margaret River *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please tell us why

Old Swimming Hole near Carters Rd Margaret River *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us why

Rendall Close weir, Margaret River *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us why

Hardy Inlet near Turner Caravan Park *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please tell us why

Flinders Bay *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please specify *

Based on the conditions above, the Shire has ruled out the following locations for swimming rafts: Margaret River mouth, Willmott's Pool Margaret River near Clydesdale Ave, and Rotary Park, Margaret River.

Please tell us of any other locations you think should be ruled out and why *

Thank you! We value your feedback.