

The Future of the kanamaluka / Tamar Estuary

Phase 1: Online Survey

September 2021

Prepared on behalf of Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce by Capire
Consulting Group

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Definitions

The following lists the key definitions for common terms used in the design and delivery of community engagement as defined by Capire and as stated in Tasmanian Government Framework for Community Engagement (2014).

Community: A community is a group of people who share something in common. It may be location, interests, culture, language, beliefs, values, or traditions. Individuals can be members of many communities. Communities can also identify and form around issues. These issues may magnify the similarities or differences of community members. This may result in the identification and adoption of different methods and techniques when undertaking engagement.

Community engagement: Community engagement enables better outcomes for both the community and the Government. It enables all parties involved to identify the concerns, risks, opportunities, options and potential solutions that surround an issue, leading to more informed decision-making and mutual benefits.

Stakeholder: Any individual, group of individuals, organisation or politics entity with an interest or stake in the outcome of a decision.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report provides an update on the Future of the kanamaluka / Tamar Estuary project. It presents a summary of the key findings from Phase 1 of the engagement. The findings in this report will inform Phase 2 of the project and will ultimately assist the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (The Taskforce) to finalise the draft vision for the estuary and surrounds.

1.2 Project background

The Taskforce was established in 2017 to bring together organisations, businesses, local governments, and the Tasmanian Government to explore options for improving the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary. As an advisory body, it provides guidance and advice to the Tasmanian Government on how to enhance, develop and manage the estuary.

In June 2021, the Taskforce released its draft vision for the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary. The draft vision is focused on liveability, amenity, and the environment, while being a place that they community enjoys.

The Taskforce is committed to hearing what the community have to say on the final vision. The engagement process is proposed to be delivered in two phases which are outlined below.

PHASE 1 – ONLINE SURVEY

Phase 1 of engagement asked the community what they value about the estuary. Participants reflected on how they use the estuary, and if they had any ideas to contribute to community spaces and a cultural and recreational precinct.

Between 31 August and 13 September 2021, approximate 200 people who live, work, and enjoy the estuary gave their feedback.

PHASE 2 – COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Phase 2 of the engagement will be informed by the findings of Phase 1. It will focus on seeking feedback on the revised recreational and cultural precinct proposals, and proposals to manage sediment.

2 Engagement approach

2.1 Communication and promotion

Communications material informed the community about the project and promoted engagement opportunities. It also encouraged people to visit the project website for more information and to provide feedback. The following activities were used to inform the community about the project.

Table 1. Activities used to inform people about the project

Project webpage	<p>The project webpage (stategrowthtas.mysocialpinpoint.com/tamar-estuary-2021) had information about the project, including information on the project background, a project timeline, FAQs, and rendered images of potential outcomes.</p> <p>During the engagement period a total of 638 visitors visited the webpage, resulting in 2,312 visits.</p>
Social media	<p>Facebook was used to promote the project and encourage participation. There were two posts on Facebook with a combined reach of 5,029 resulting in 258 clicks.</p> <p>The Taskforce partners including the City of Launceston, NRM North, and TasWater, also promoted the community consultation program on their Facebook pages.</p>
Emails	<p>Over 100 e-mails were sent to individuals and stakeholder groups, including estuary users and businesses, over 40 schools, community associations, support services providers, conservation groups, and tourism places and entities.</p> <p>NRM North sent a reminder through their e-newsletter, which is sent to 1,500 subscribers.</p>
Postcard	<p>Hard copy postcards to promote the consultation were available at public locations including the Tamar Wetlands Visitor Centre, the City of Launceston Council, the West Tamar Council, Service Tasmania, QV Mag, and the Launceston Library. These postcards could then be taken freely by community members and returned at City of Launceston with their feedback and ideas.</p>
Advertisement	<p>A print advertisement was published in the Launceston daily newspaper <i>The Examiner</i> on Wednesday 1 September, Saturday 4 September, and Sunday 5 September.</p>

2.2 Engagement activities

We provided a range of ways for people to provide their feedback.

Table 2. Activities used to inform and receive feedback

Project webpage	<p>The project webpage had two tools to gather feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the survey we wanted to know how the community use the estuary, how often they visit, what they value and their ideas. The survey received 210 responses. • Through the mapping tool we invited feedback on the proposals in the draft vision and sought ideas to make the precinct a place for everyone to enjoy. The mapping tool received 67 responses.
Phone calls	<p>A project phone line was available for people to call if they wanted to provide their feedback over the phone. A total of 3 phone calls were received to the project hotline. These phone calls related to survey submissions, and the background reports used to inform the draft vision.</p>
Emails	<p>A total of 6 emails were received, providing feedback to the draft vision.</p>
Submissions	<p>Five submissions were received and incorporated into the feedback.</p>

2.3 Engagement limitations

There are several limitations regarding the engagement methodology that should be acknowledged. These are outlined below.

- Some people may have taken part in multiple engagement activities, for example completed the survey and submitted an idea via the mapping tool. Their views may have been captured more than once.
- In some instances, participants did not respond to all survey questions. This meant that some questions received fewer responses than others.
- People who participated in the engagement self-selected. As such, the information in this report does not reflect the views of a representative sample.
- In some instances, participants used the opportunity to provide feedback that was not related to the project. This feedback has not been included in this report, however all data collected has been provided to the Taskforce for consideration.

Every effort is made to summarise feedback accurately and comprehensively. Where responses are open-ended, interpretation is required, and assumptions are made in the analysis.

3 Summary of findings

Phase 1 of engagement involved closed- and open-ended questions corresponding to the respondents' views and values of the estuary. The closed-ended questions expressed respondents' value of the natural beauty and environment of the estuary. It also captured their enjoyment of the surroundings through using the trails and tracks and enjoying the dining and entertainment options on offer.

- Most respondents visit the estuary to enjoy its tracks and trails (70%), while 10% visit for employment
- Most respondents visit the estuary weekly, while only 3% visit yearly
- 70% of participants consider the natural beauty and environment of the estuary to be most important to them, and 40% consider open space as most important (where multiple answers could be selected)
- Estuary health was overwhelmingly the greatest concern for respondents (92%), while less were concerned about accessibility (45%)

The findings for the open-ended questions were summarised under 5 over-arching themes:

Connectivity

Walking paths, pedestrian access, bike paths, water taxis

Estuary activity and enjoyment

On and off water recreational activities festivals, events and food; recreation and open space

Culture and heritage

Aboriginal history, cultural significance, cultural values, maritime history

Environment

Rice grass, revegetation, flooding concerns, water quality, flora, wildlife, wetland restoration

Sedimentation

Mud, appearance of sediment, odour of sediment, impact on range of activities

The findings of the open-ended questions were broad, with many concerns relating to sedimentation. The value of the estuary's natural assets and beauty was reinforced in these answers.

4 Detailed findings

Approximately 200 people provided their feedback to the project during this phase of engagement. The following findings summarise the data collected through the engagement activities. The findings have been grouped under themes and quotes have been used to illustrate sentiment.

4.1 Demographics

We asked a series of demographic questions to understand who was reached through the engagement. We sought this information to ensure we heard the views, experiences, and aspirations of a range of community members. It is important to hear from diverse community groups to understand a range of experiences, including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, who live with a disability and who speak a language other than English.

POSTCODE

Residents from not only Launceston, but across Tasmania, responded to the survey.

Table 3. Number of survey respondents by postcode

Number of Respondents	Postcode	Suburb
54	7250	East Launceston, Trevallyn, West Launceston
1	7248	Invermay
1	7249	Kings Meadows - Punchbowl
2	7250	Launceston
2	7248	Mayfield
4	7248	Mowbray
6	7248	Newnham
1	7250	Newstead
4	7250	Norwood
4	7250	Ravenswood
5	7248	Rocherlea
1	7268	Rural East - Lilydale
2	7249	South Launceston
1	7250	St Leonards - White Hills
1	7250	Summerhill - Prospect
1	7250	Trevallyn

AGE

We received a total of 209 responses to this question. Most participants were aged between 60 and 69 years old, followed by 35 to 49, and 50 to 59 years old.

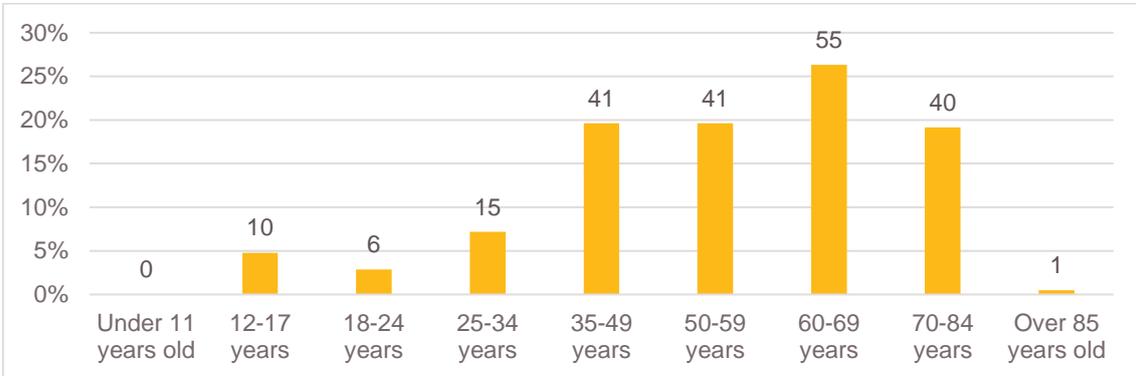


Figure 1. Survey respondent age (n=209)

GENDER

We received a total of 208 responses this question. Slightly over half of the survey respondents identified as male, followed by 42% who identified as female.

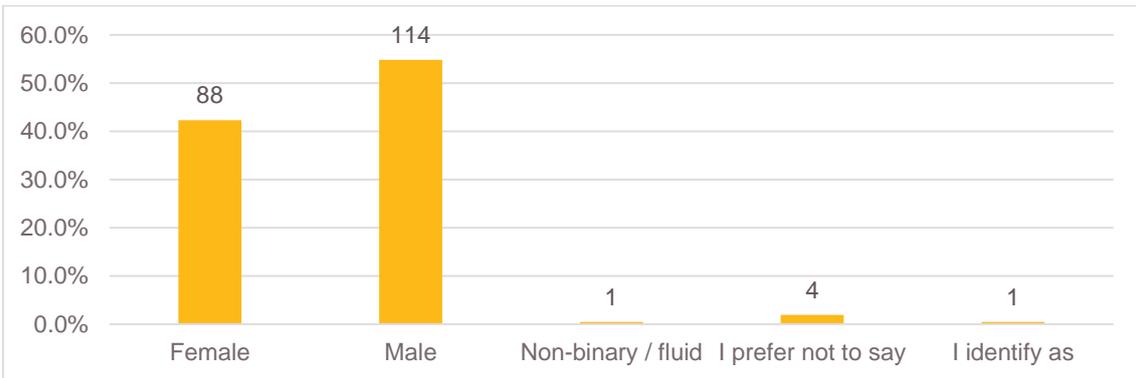


Figure 2. Survey respondent gender (n=208)

ACCESS, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

We received 44 responses to this question. A total of 14 survey respondents identified as living with a disability, 7 speak a language other than English, and 2 are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

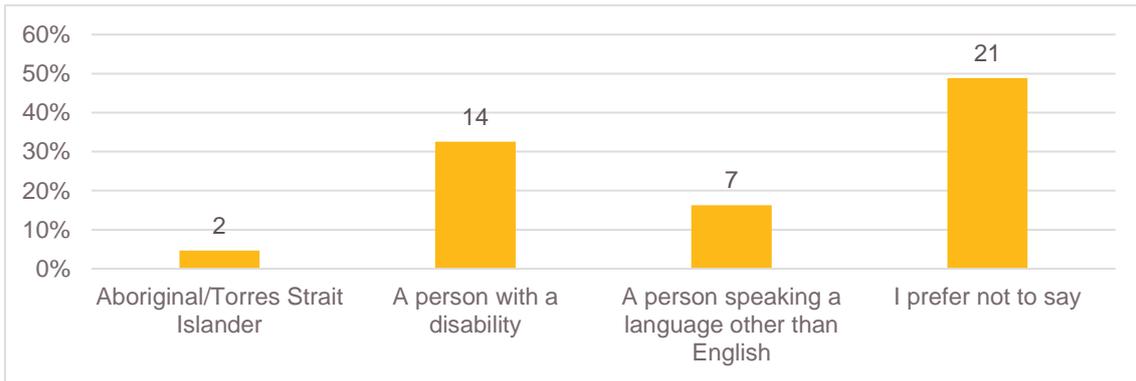


Figure 3. Survey respondent access, inclusion, and equity (n=44)

4.2 Estuary uses

WHY PEOPLE VISIT THE ESTUARY

We asked survey respondents ‘Do you visit the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary around Launceston? If so, why?’. Participants were able to choose from a list of 9 responses including an option for ‘Other’. A total of 210 responses were received. Most respondents visit to enjoy the area’s tracks and trails, followed by dining.

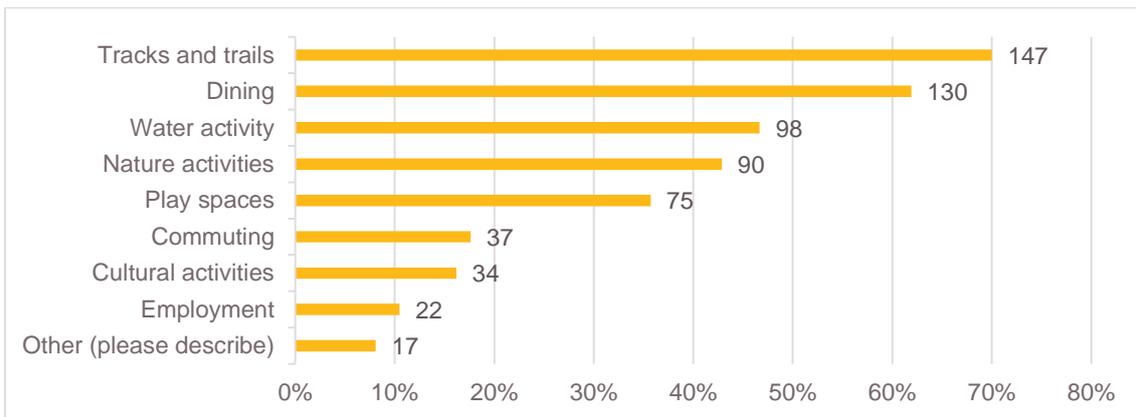


Figure 4. Responses to ‘Do you visit the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary around Launceston?’ (n=210)

Of the 17 respondents that chose ‘Other’, they said they walk and engage in general exercise, take photographs, volunteer, sail, and row.

- “Volunteering in retirement to assist others discover options to enjoy on water activities.”
- “Orienteering events, Grammar Walkathon, sports training, photography.”
- “Volunteering in retirement to assist others discover options to enjoy on water activities.”
- “Sailed on the Estuary for over 50 years.”

HOW OFTEN PEOPLE VISIT THE ESTUARY

We asked survey respondents ‘How often do you visit the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary?’. Participants were able to choose from a list of 7 frequencies including an option for ‘Other’. A total of 208 responses were received. Most respondents visit the estuary weekly, followed by daily.

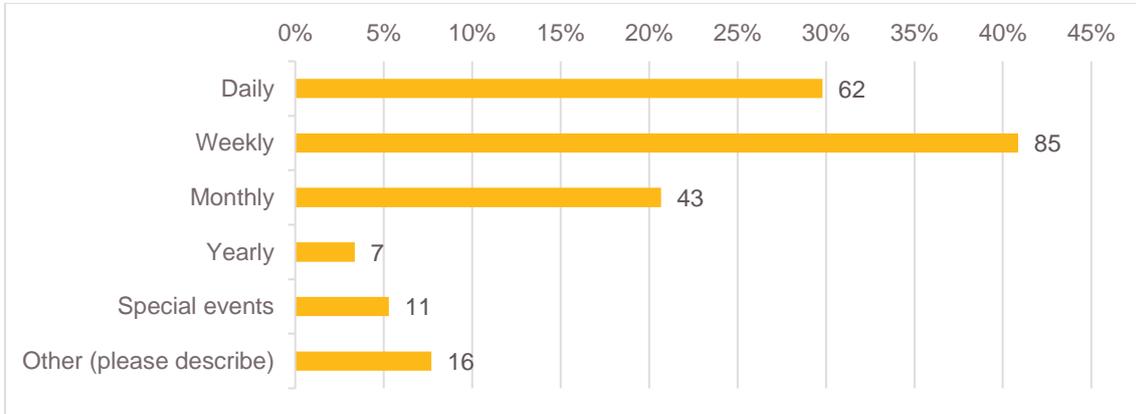


Figure 5. Responses to ‘How often do you visit the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary?’ (n=208)

Of the 16 respondents that chose ‘Other’, they said they visit the estuary for events, more than weekly but less than daily, or had previously visited but no longer visit the estuary.

- “Any photographic opportunity whether with guests or alone. Quite often.”
- “At least 3 times a week to row, often with a low tide the access from our club pontoon is not possible due to the silt build up.”
- “Have an apartment on the marina and [m]oving to Launceston. Currently visit 4-5 times per year - will be permanent in May 2022.”

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE ESTUARY

We asked survey respondents ‘What are the most important aspects of the area to you?’. Respondents were able to choose from a list of 10 responses including an option for ‘Other’. A total of 208 responses were received. Respondents were able to select multiple answers in response to this question. Most respondents chose ‘Natural beauty’ and ‘Environment’ of the estuary to be most important to them, followed by ‘Tracks and trails’.

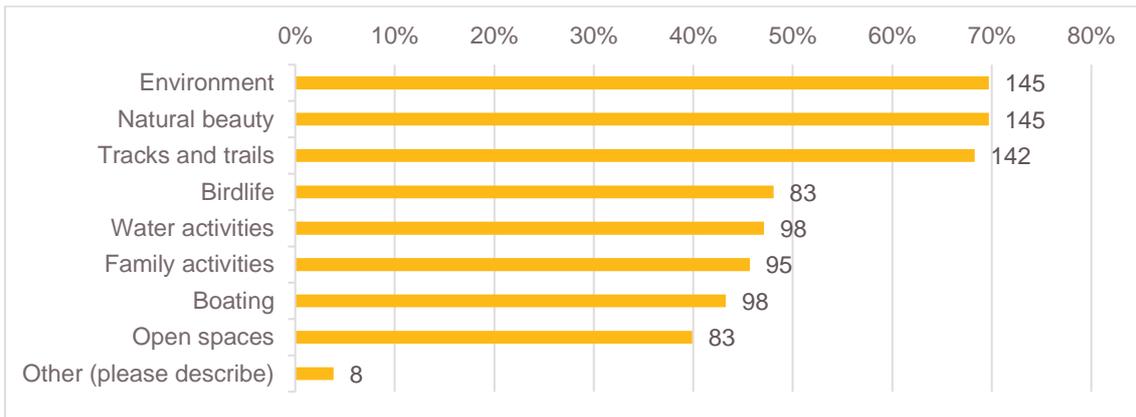


Figure 5. Responses to ‘What are the most important aspects of the area to you?’ (n=208)

Of the 8 respondents that chose ‘Other’, they said the most important aspects were social activities, fishing, and cultural history.

- *“I like the historical sense from seeing the old boats and pilings/wharves that provide context for our past.”*
- *“Open waterways [contributing] to sail-ability. To provide on water experiences for disadvantage[d] members of the community within walking distance.”*
- *“Everything about the area. Boat mooring also.”*

4.3 Estuary experiences

ESTUARY CONCERNS

We asked survey respondents ‘Do you have any concerns about the estuary?’. Respondents were able to choose from a list of 7 responses including an option for ‘Other’. A total of 208 responses were received. Respondents were able to select multiple answers in response to this question. The greatest concern for respondents is the health of the estuary, followed by the estuary’s appearance.

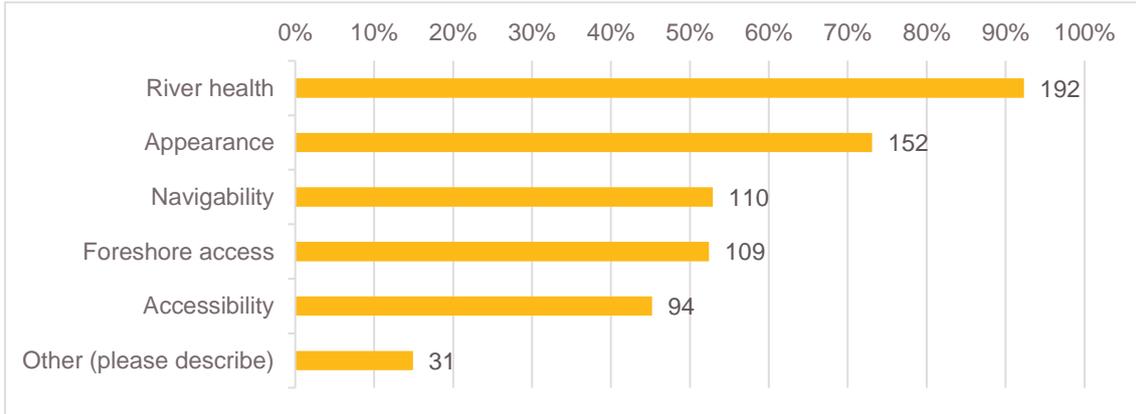


Figure 6 Responses to 'Do you have any concerns about the estuary?' (n=208)

Of the 31 respondents that chose 'Other', responses included mud and sediment, wildlife including birdlife, invasive species, and sewerage.

- *"The mud is a massive issue. It's unsightly for diners at Seaport, and inhibits tour activity on the water and severely restricts access to the water for sports activities such as rowing."*
- *"Community misunderstanding about the way it works. I worry that people will keep trying to make it something it's not e.g. a river with green lawn edges, or a freshwater lake, and the cost and harm that will cause."*
- *"Rice grass along the Tamar in general."*
- *"Fix the sewerage treatment plants throughout the estuary so they meet world's best practice in avoiding human health issues and environmental impacts."*

We also asked participants an open-ended question: 'How does this affect your use and enjoyment of the estuary?'. A total of 163 responses were received. We have categorised answers into 6 themes¹, including one theme for 'Other'. Figure 7 presents these in a graph. We have also detailed a thematic analysis of the key themes.

¹ Note, one response may be categorised into multiple themes.

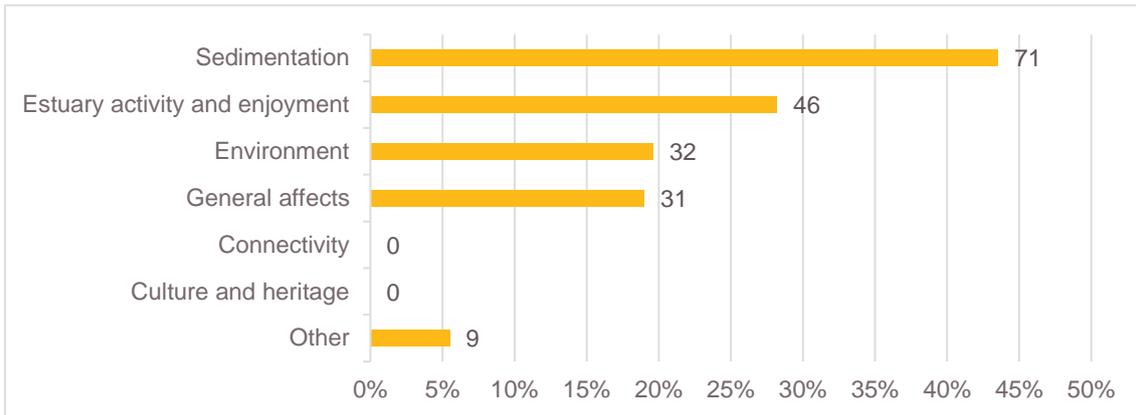


Figure 7 Responses to 'How does this affect your use and enjoyment of the estuary' by theme (n=163)

Sedimentation

Mud and sediment featured prominently in the responses received. Participants said that mud and sediment impact their use and enjoyment of the estuary, affecting visual impact, access, and the range of activities at low tide. This response was often combined with themes relating to flora – particularly rice grass.

- *“Visual amenity is poor at low tide. I’ll time visits for high tide, particularly with visitors.”*
- *“With so much mud there is anxiety re flooding. It is embarrassing when tourists stop to look at the low tide mud.”*

Estuary activity and enjoyment

Respondents felt that their activity and enjoyment of the estuary was greatly impacted by their concerns in the previous question. Activities both on and off water were frequently raised as concerns. Reference was made to boating, yachting, and rowing on the estuary. Some respondents connected these activities with the heritage of the estuary. Access for these activities, general enjoyment of the estuary surrounds, and the impact of sedimentation, were also raised.

- *“Must encourage/improve traditional activities on the river – rowing and yachting.”*
- *“The river access to participate in our rowing activities is severely curtailed by the increasing mud height, which we have noticed is the worst the Rowing Club has seen in the past 50 years of use. Especially, in the last two years, since raking of the mud stopped.”*
- *“The rising sedimentation is the main reason which triggered us [the Tamar Yacht Club] entering this debate because we can no longer sail in these estuary headwaters. The Club has moved all our junior and keel boat sailing 60kms down river to the Beauty Point campus...due to silt build up.”*

Environment

Respondents repeatedly raised the natural environment and ecosystem of the estuary as a point of concern. This included a perceived degradation of the estuary’s ecosystem through pollution and development, and a desire to preserve local wildlife.

- *“I like the estuary to be a vibrant place, full of life, even if I can't see it ... Sometimes I get a glimpse of an animal and I hope that means the estuary is functioning well ... I don't want to see the estuary converted into a lake which is convenient for boaters but sterile for animals.”*
- *“Strolling along the banks of the river created an invite for general social inclusion, physical viewing of this wonderful environment, of which changes daily, pending weather cycles.”*

PROPOSAL RESPONSES

We represented proposed elements of the draft vision using an online mapping tool. Pins with attached images and descriptions were placed on an interactive map of Launceston, visualising where the proposed elements correspond to. The proposed elements of the vision that were represented on the map on the map are detailed on Table 4.

Table 4. Proposed elements of the draft vision represented on the online mapping tool

Between the bridges	Proposed multi-recreational space including street furniture and recreational infrastructure between Charles and Tamar Street
Seaport Marina	Potential to enhance public space with interconnected decks and integrated plant life, with an intimate and multipurpose park-like environment for social gathering
Riverbend	Proposed estuary sculpture trail with viewing decks and integrated sculptures set among native water edge plant life
Recreation and cultural precinct	Potential for a connected recreational and cultural precinct, that could change our relationship with the estuary.
Kings Wharf	Proposed cultural hub with an integrated community arts and performance facility linked by a waterfront boardwalk, covered outdoor eating precinct and a new array of

	bars, cafes, and restaurants to bring people together
West Tamar Walkway	Proposed boardwalk connecting the Tailrace to the sculpture walk with wetland vegetation in an open recreational space
Getting Around	Potential for interconnected shared pedestrian/cycle ways, that might also include a river taxi service to improve accessibility to, and between, the enhanced areas of the city heart, river area and our two regional parks

Participants were able to respond to these proposals but liking or disliking the associated pins. The number of likes and dislikes responded to by participants is expressed in Figure 8.

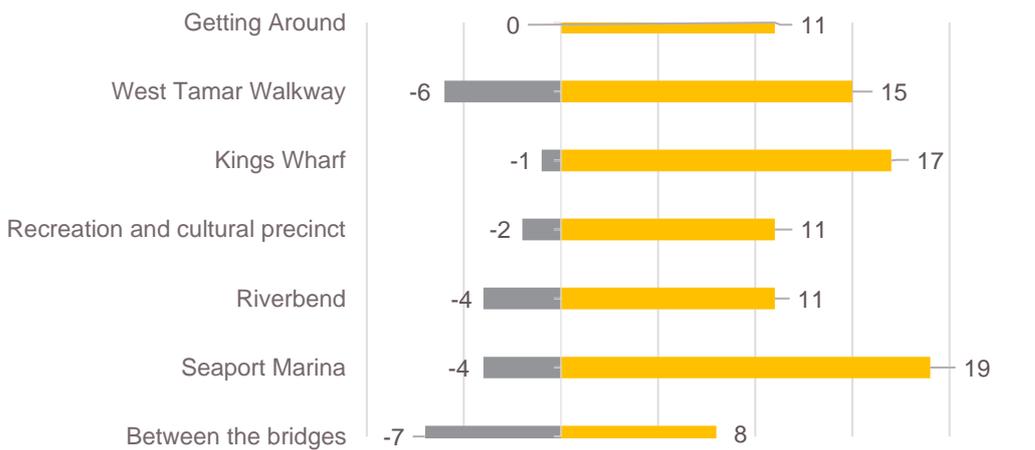


Figure 8 Likes and Dislikes in response to proposed aspects of the draft vision

4.4 Ideas for the estuary

We asked participants ‘Have you seen the concept of creating a cultural and recreational precinct in the draft vision for the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary?’. There were 197 respondents to the question, with three-quarters responding yes.

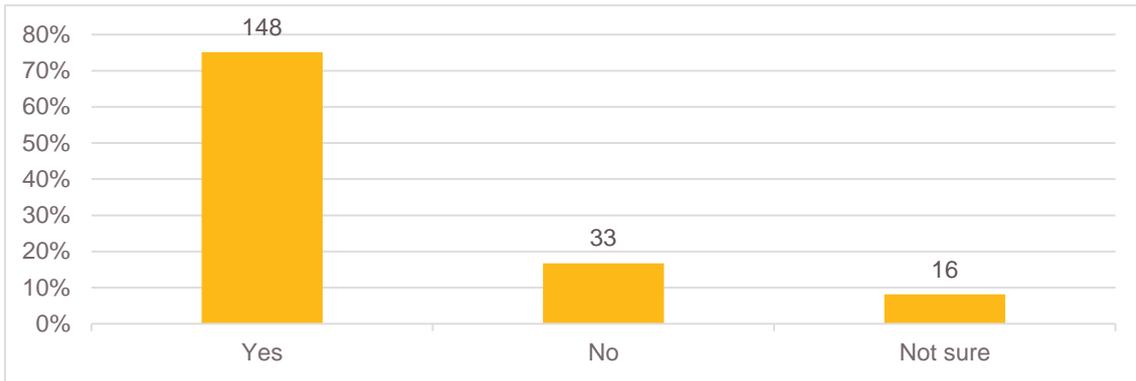


Figure 9 Response to 'Have you seen the concept of creating a cultural and recreational precinct in the draft vision for the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary?' (n=197)

Through the survey, mapping tool and postcard, we asked participants two open-ended questions: 'What ideas do you have to create a cultural and recreational precinct along the estuary?' (Figure 10), and 'Are there any other ideas on how you would enhance or create community spaces in the area?' (Figure 11).

There were 147 respondents to the former and 126 respondents to the latter question. The responses were coded by organically occurring themes in the feedback, which were then consolidated under 5 over-arching themes, and 'Other'.

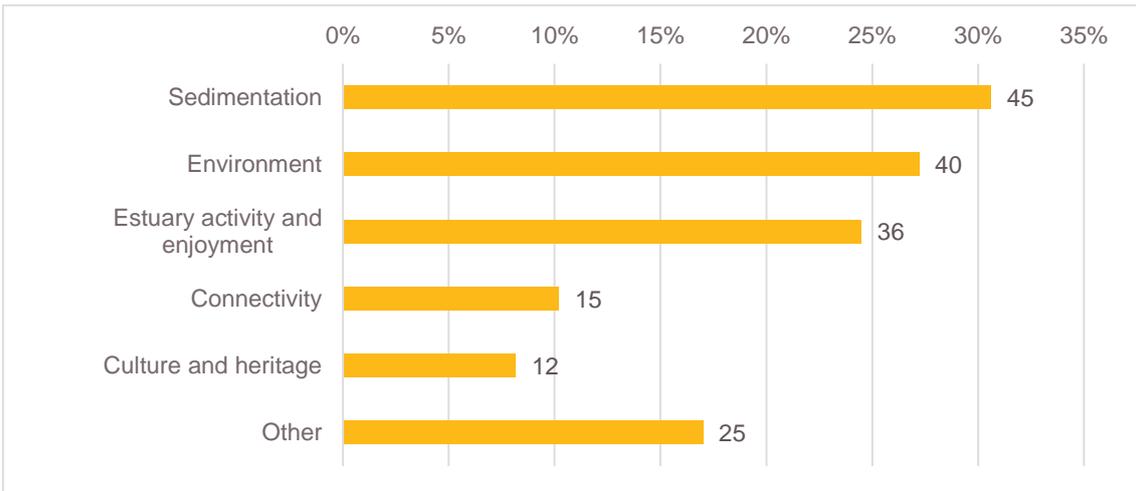


Figure 10 Responses to ‘What ideas do you have to create and cultural and recreational precinct along the estuary’ by theme (n=147)

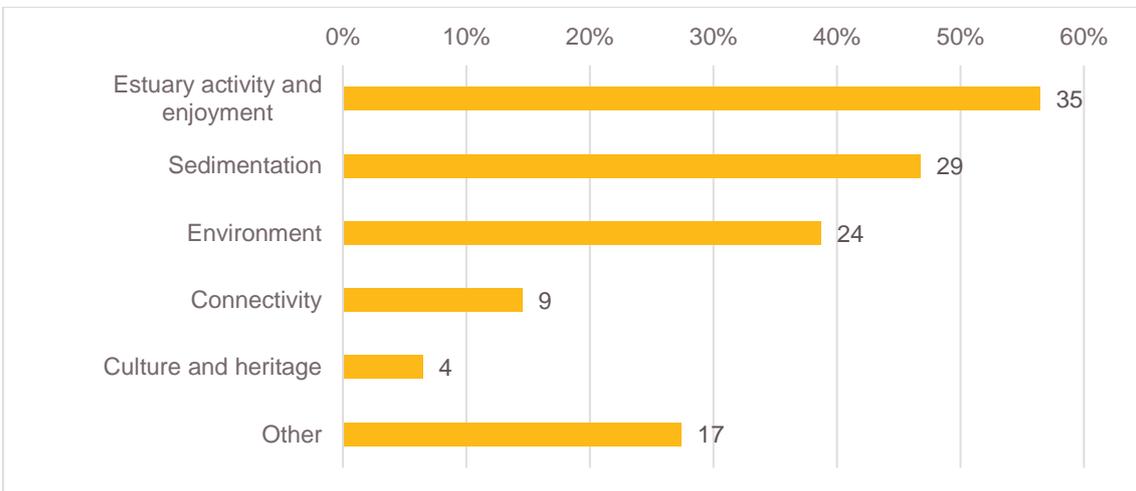


Figure 11 Responses to ‘Are there any other ideas on how you would enhance or create community spaces in the area’ by theme (n=126)

Sedimentation

Approximately a third of responses suggested ideas that related to the mud along the estuary. Clearing the mud, and dredging the estuary, were responses to these two questions. Dredging the mud was described as both a proactive idea and a limitation for further efforts to improve communal space.

- “Ultimately any proposals are going to be limited by the mud build up and risk of flooding & sea level rise. Increased access to the river (such as the proposed options) will raise more concerns about the river health and volume of mud. This will lead to even greater public pressure to fix the problem.”

Several participants (6) suggested building dam walls and establishing a man-made freshwater lake. Other proposals included the development of a tailrace canal increasing the tidal prism in the North Esk and sediment raking.

- *“Dredge the river to allow better access to the waterway. Covering the silt with board walks won't fix the silt problem!”*
- *“...a ‘Tailrace Return Canal’ to return the power station discharge to the Yacht Basin and recreate the ‘virtual lake’ of clean upstream water that existed there before the Trevallyn Dam and Power Station were installed in the 50’s.”*
- *“Raking should be reinstated now to get back to lower levels of sedimentation while other solutions are given time for consideration.”*
- *“Reliant upon comprehensive expert advice, however the Lake Tamar concept would appear to address almost all of the current issues and create a superb environment.”*

Environment

The estuary’s natural beauty featured prominently in suggestions related to the environment. For many respondents, addressing water pollution was seen as the greatest priority.

- *“Fixing the health of the river should be the immediate priority. Only after this has been adequately addressed should consideration be given to enhancing existing - or creating new - community spaces.”*

Other respondents frequently commented on the estuary’s ability to attract visitors through its role as a habitat for wildlife.

- *“Improve natural habitats to allow people to see more wildlife. Have accessible options. Improve water quality by building adequate sewage and storm water infrastructure.”*

Flora was often referred to, with particularly focus on fostering native flora species, managing invasive species, as well as revegetating and rewilding the area. Reduced flows in the estuary were also raised as an environmental concern for the health of the estuary.

- *“...keep the focus on the natural beauty and values so this doesn't become just another overdeveloped foreshore loaded with playgrounds and abstract sculptures. The river and wildlife with the boats provides enough attractive elements.”*
- *“....the prime purpose in calling for increased flows is that they will significantly improve water quality in the estuaries upper reaches.”*

Estuary activity and enjoyment

Participants frequently showed support for the existing recreational and open spaces along the estuary and supported the inclusion of additional spaces. This is paired with the modest support for walking trails and bike paths. Half of these responses focused on the proposed boardwalks and walking trails. Others suggested further trails in specific locations such as close to King’s Wharf and the existing West Tamar walkways.

Rowing access was referred to but featured less significantly under this question – respondents suggested increasing access for water sports could contribute positively to a cultural precinct.

- *“Allow access for all to the river for sporting purposes ... the western side of the river already has boardwalks and lookouts ... improve access to the river at all tide heights on the western side of the river not only from the Tamar Rowing Club, but let’s provide more access points for kayaking and small river craft on the western shore.”*

Participants referred to the existing uses of the space and made suggestions for improvement, including extending the bike track, creating a running track or mountain bike tracks and designating an off-lead dog area.

- *“Most of the current parks and tracks are adequate ... extending the bike track down the west Tamar via a bridge over the tailrace would be good”*
- *“Many people walk their dogs and catch up with their friends for a walk along the river, so perhaps an off-leash dog area could be set up, and walking tracks along each side of the river”*
- *“It would be great to see some hard [mountain bike] trails made here ... The lack of trails in Launceston means that many have to travel afar or build illegal trails.”*

Participants frequently envisioned community spaces around the estuary to be enhanced or created through activities and enjoyment. Enjoyment linked to the natural environment, as in public green spaces and open dining areas, received considerable support. This was followed by food and drink venues, festivals and events, and live music.

- *“More lawns and big shady trees for picnics. Park benches.”*
- *“I think it would be great to have a more casual family dining area. Or even take away food van area. I’d rather see a place to sit and enjoy rather than just walkways.”*
- *“I’d like spaces that are undercover that would allow for all-weather events, including regular markets, pop up shops, food vans and the like.”*
- *“It would be excellent to see an expansion of the use in this [King’s Wharf] area and linkages with Riverbend Park / Seaports etc. Would be a great place for festivals and events”*

Themes represented in the ‘other’ category involved general support for the project, general opposition to the project, targeting specific areas of development, and the implementation of specific ideas:

- *“Ensure community ideas are acted upon and ensure private enterprise doesn’t take over access and use of the foreshore or in any way exclude community access and use”*

Connectivity

Boardwalks, walking, and cycling paths were suggested as ways to create a cultural and recreational precinct along the estuary. There was one comment in support of the proposed water taxi. Other suggestions for improved connectivity included walk trails connected to the banks. There were several comments of opposition for proposed walkways, including the West

Tamar Walkway. Participants wrote that it would encroach on the natural beauty or detract from the concerns over sedimentation.

- *“I like the idea of a water taxi from the Tailrace area. This would take traffic away from the CBD, as well as using the natural water environment.”*
- *“On all walk ways, can it be made so people can ride there bike along the walk ways.”*
- *“The proposed walkways will be a blot on the natural beauty and only clog up the river even more. I see no point walking over the water and much prefer walking along the bank and watching the interaction of the wildlife and the river. Don't try to cover the mud, take it away.”*

Connectivity featured modestly in participants ideas for enhanced or increased community space. Responses often related to hybrid walking paths and open spaces, or new connections across the estuary and North Esk river

- *“The estuary vision must surely [be] linked to the urgent need for another bridge across the Tamar Riverside-Newnham to alleviate traffic issues and noise and air pollution from auto routes adjacent to these recreational river areas?”*
- *“When they are adding the idea of walks around the west side of the river. Maybe they could add gazebos every so often so there is sitting areas around there for eating and activities around the river.”*

Culture and heritage

Participants often suggested ideas to celebrate the culture of the estuary while creating a new cultural precinct. Participants wrote on natural culture and the importance of acknowledging the site's Aboriginal history. Other suggestions included rebuilding King's Wharf or the creation of a maritime museum.

- *“Celebrate and publicise the original people of the land. Create a "timeline" walk along the river bank.”*
- *“I like the ideas presented with restored wetlands and boardwalks. Events that showcase and celebrate the nature of the estuary would help increase cultural awareness of what's special in our estuary.”*
- *“How about rebuilding part of the old Kings Wharf and creating a maritime museum to celebrate Launceston's maritime heritage.”*

There were few suggestions to incorporate cultural and heritage elements into future community spaces. Responses that featured this theme celebrated the site's history and local crafts.

- *“I would like it to have more information about the history of the river and Launceston.”*

5 Next steps

The feedback in this report will inform Phase 2 of the community engagement process. The cultural and recreational precinct proposals will also be updated to reflect the feedback received from this phase.

The findings from Phase 1 of the community engagement process will shape the draft vision of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary draft vision prior to its submission for government approval

The final vision for the estuary will be provided to government in the quarter of 2021 after consideration of the ideas received. The objective of the vision is to help guide future planning and decision-making for the estuary across all three levels of government.