



# Sorrento Local Port Area Plan

## Community Engagement Summary Report

July 2024

## Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engaged with their world and experienced their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

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**Cover image:** Sorrento Harbour and Pier

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# 1 Introduction

As part of strategic planning in priority locations, Parks Victoria is developing a Local Port Area Plan for Sorrento. The plan is being developed using comprehensive research and analysis, including community and stakeholder consultation. The plan aims to identify key values, themes, and opportunities to ensure the local port area is well-placed to support future growth and ensure it continues to be a safe and maritime asset for many years to come

## 1.1 About this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings from community consultation on the draft Sorrento Local Port Area Plan. Prior to this phase of public community consultation, Parks Victoria conducted key stakeholder engagement and investigations to support the development of the draft plan.

This summary report was prepared by Parks Victoria. All feedback and ideas presented in this report were collected during consultation activities. All input has been given equal consideration and has not been weighted or adjusted. Findings have not been edited for accuracy and do not necessarily reflect the views of Parks Victoria.

The successful implementation of any actions outlined in the final local port area plan will depend on future funding, planning and necessary approvals.

## 1.2 Reading this report - limitations

As with all consultation processes and reporting analysis, there are considerations that should be acknowledged when reading the report. People who participated in the consultation process self-



Figure 1 Sorrento Pier

selected to take part. Therefore, the feedback in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of a representative sample of the community. Some participants chose to provide feedback via submission, without demographic details. Therefore, we do not have demographic details for all participants. The graphs and figures in this report are generated from the quantitative survey questions only (selected from choices provided).

## 2 Consultation approach

Following early stakeholder consultation and technical investigations, a draft local port area plan was developed for community feedback. The wider community were invited to participate in finalising the plan by providing feedback on the draft plan using a survey hosted on Engage Victoria. This consultation took place between mid-March and mid-April 2024.

### 2.1 How people participated

Participants could learn about the draft plan and provide feedback by:

- Visiting the project web page and Engage Victoria web page and reviewing the content
- Completing a survey on the Engage Victoria online platform
- Completing a survey by calling Parks Victoria on 13 1963
- Sending an email or submission via [engage@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:engage@parks.vic.gov.au)
- Direct discussions with stakeholders

### 2.2 Promotion

The consultation period was promoted via:

- Parks Victoria media release
- Email to over 100 project subscribers and stakeholders
- Posters installed on the pier and displayed at key community locations
- Social media post on Parks Victoria channels including LinkedIn

### 2.3 Participation

Due to the somewhat technical nature of local port area planning, public consultation participation rates are often found to be lower than for capital works projects and other planning activities. There was medium interest in the project with

- 953 participants viewed the Engage Victoria project page. Of these, a small proportion (2.3%) went on to share their feedback on the draft plan via the survey.
- 22 participants submitted online surveys and there were two email submissions.

### 2.4 Demographic insights

- Of the 22 survey respondents, 72% were residents of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council area.
- 68% of respondents identified as male and over half the respondents were over 50 years old.

## 3 Summary of findings

### 3.1 Feedback on the two scenarios

Two proposed design scenarios were presented in the draft plan. These scenarios aimed to support the local community, respect the pier's history and identify the best ways to accommodate visitors and users.

Both scenarios included:

- rehabilitation of Sorrento Pier
- restoration of the pier load rating
- new fendering on the outer berths
- removal of the inner east low landing
- a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant ramp for the low landing
- activate/make functional use of the Sorrento Pier Shed
- maintaining the historic character of the pier (a T-shaped pier head, retention of the shed, and original pier alignment).

The key difference between the two scenarios was the provision for additional berthing. Scenario 2 included increased berthing capacity to meet potential future demands. Scenario 1 acknowledged that the current berthing capacity is adequate for the needs of the commercial industry.

Participants who completed the survey were asked whether they supported the proposed scenarios. Scenario 1 received 57% support and Scenario 2 53% support. Scenario 1 was slightly preferred due to its preservation of the current pier and harbour form and values, whereas Scenario 2 raised some concerns about the environmental impacts of increased boat traffic and tourism activities. It is important to note that the 4% difference between the two scenarios is minimal given the sample size of 22 responses.

The results highlighted that the pier is a valued location for walking, swimming and Queenscliff-Sorrento ferry access. The pier's importance as a facility for both powered and non-powered boating was also clear.

### 3.2 Analysis of feedback

The limited number of participants made it challenging to identify significant themes in the data. Regardless, the following analysis explores what we heard when the community was invited to ‘have their say’ on the draft plan, aware that this feedback would be considered for inclusion in the final plan.

#### "What is your connection to Sorrento Pier and the local port area?"

The responses indicated most respondents enjoyed a connection with the pier and area and were residents of the local government area. Sorrento featured as a destination and popular day trip location. A number of participants valued the pier’s boating and mooring facilities and others valued visiting local businesses and used the adjacent ferry services.

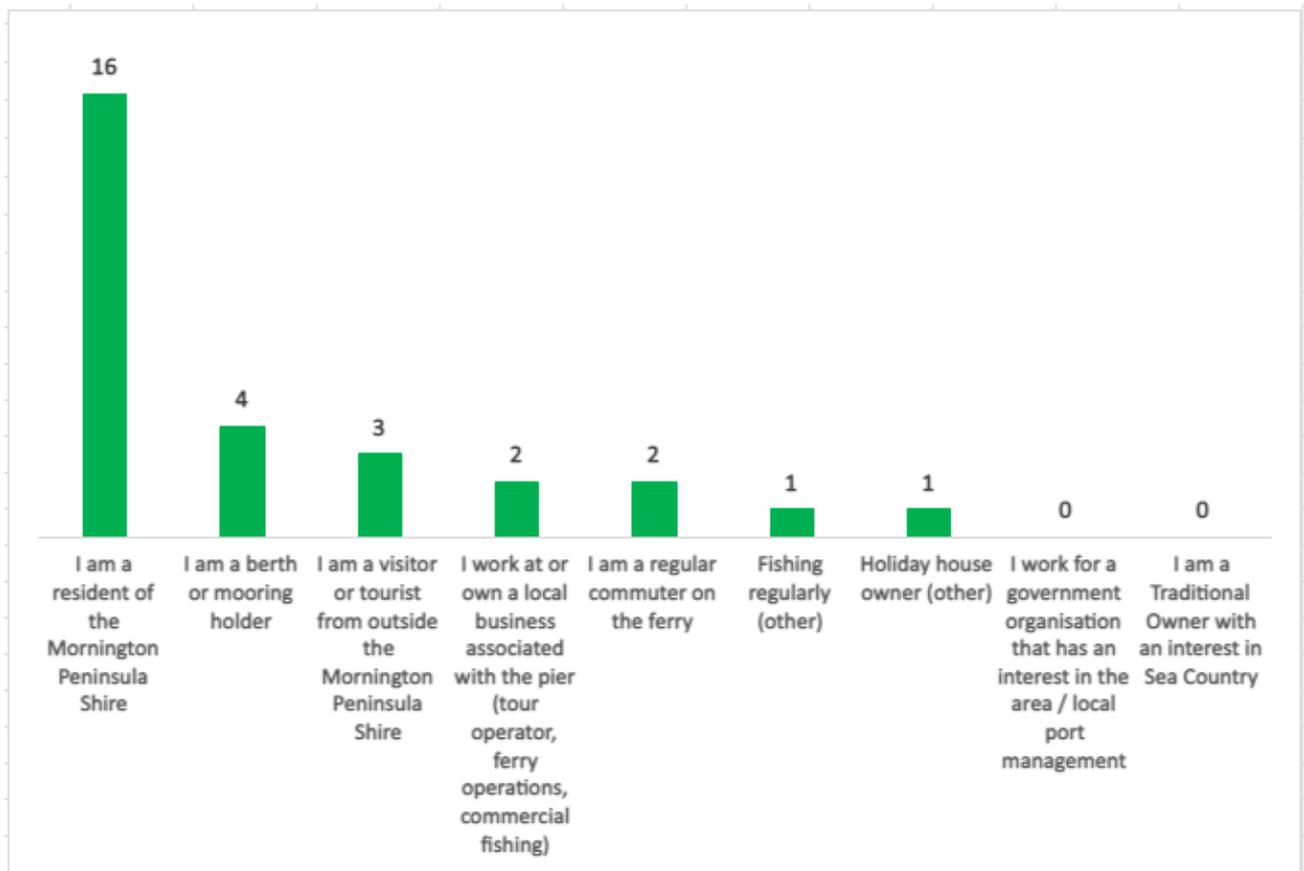


Figure 2 Participants' connection to Sorrento Pier



Figure 3 Sorrento Pier Shed

**“What activities do you do at Sorrento Pier and local port area?”**

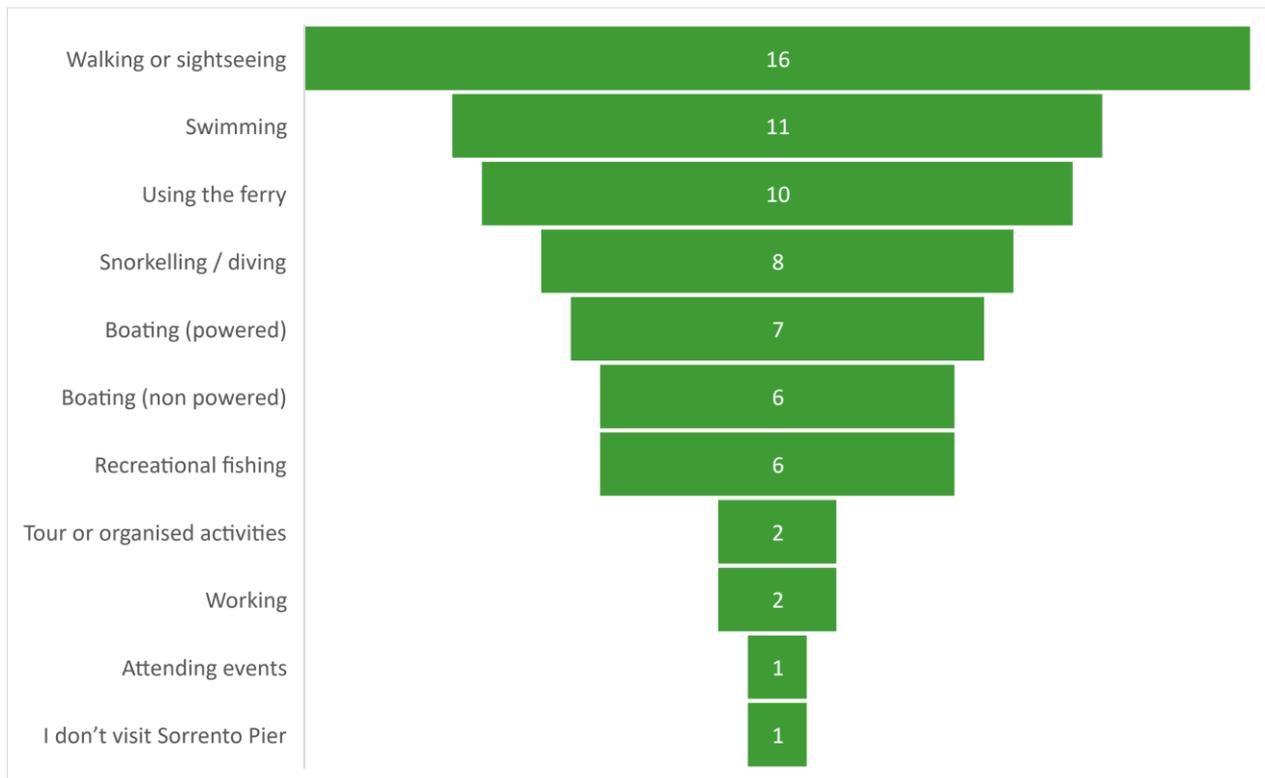


Figure 4 Popular activities undertaken at Sorrento Pier and local port waters

The feedback from this question indicates walking and sightseeing, as well as swimming and accessing the ferry were the top activities respondents undertake when in the vicinity of the pier. Boating and fishing were of medium importance to participants. Participants could select multiple options in this question, reflecting the multiple ways the pier and local port area are valued.

**“How often do you use or visit Sorrento Pier, and, how long are your visits?”**

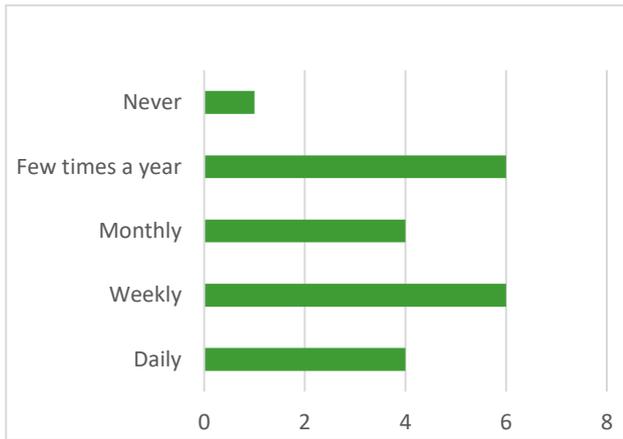


Figure 5 Length of visits to Sorrento Pier



Figure 6 Frequency of visits to Sorrento Pier

Responses indicate most respondents visit the pier somewhat regularly and visits are predominantly under two hours long.

**"Thinking about the pier and surrounding waters, tell us what aspects are most important to you in creating a better maritime facility at Sorrento?"**

This question sought to understand people’s aspirations for the pier when future changes are considered. The most popular response was ‘improving visitor experience and activating facilities’ and maintaining the pier’s special character. Boating themes emerged as important in the third and fourth most popular selections, which suggested improvements to on-water access and navigational aids/signage.

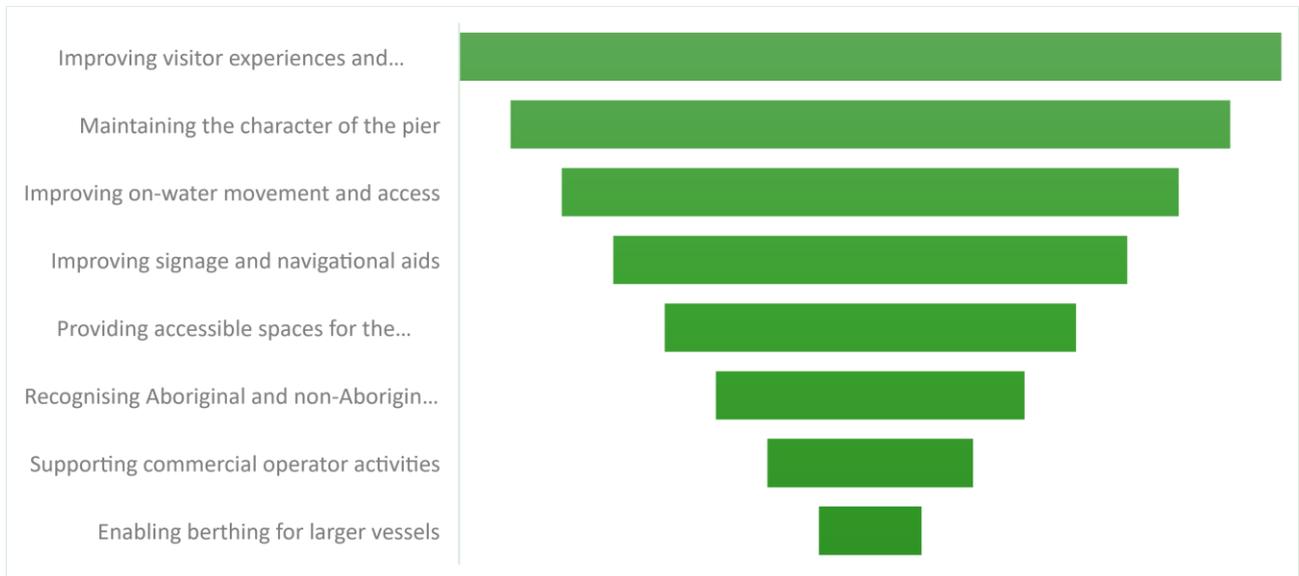


Figure 7 Important aspects for an improved maritime facility at Sorrento

In addition to the above responses, participants were offered the opportunity to suggest other areas of importance. In the open text fields, we heard that “improving safety for all users of the pier” was a key priority. People also said that recreational fishing is a valued part of their experience.

### 3.3 Feedback on Scenario 1

When asked if people supported the draft plan's Scenario 1, the response was generally positive with over 57% in support of the scenario, and less than 20% not supportive. Additional information was provided, including quotes from survey participants:

- "It keeps the integrity of the pier, but does not accommodate growth in the tourism companies..."
- "I don't support the removal of the East Lower landing, it is important to fishing..."
- "(the) pier should be redesigned to reflect the heritage of Sorrento"



### Key Features

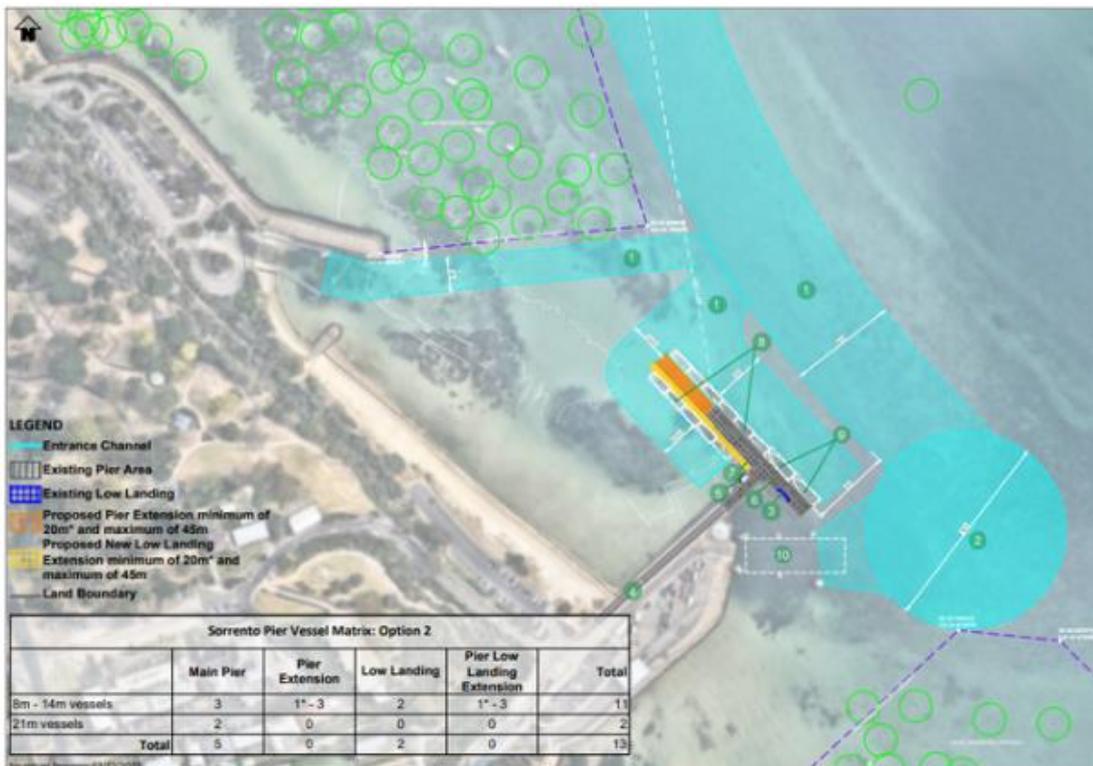
1. Entrance channel width in accordance with Australian Standards AS3962 (2020)
2. Turning circle for ferry in accordance with PIANC Approach Channel guidelines
3. Remove the inner east existing low landing and extend pier decking
4. Change to asphalt and restore load rating
5. Activation of Fisherman's Shed
6. Pile rehabilitation and deck replacement
7. Add fixed gangway slope 1:14 to enable DDA access to low landing
8. Berthing for up to 14m vessels
9. Berthing for up to 21m vessels
10. Berthing for Queenscliff to Sorrento ferry

Figure 8 The draft local port area plan Scenario 1 map

### 3.4 Feedback on Scenario 2

Scenario 2 proposed the same changes as Scenario 1, with a provision for additional berthing in response to future demand. The survey resulted in 53% supportive and 33% not supportive, with some unsure. Comments from survey participants included concerns around possible environmental impacts and a desire to leave the pier footprint ‘as-is’.

- *“There is more room for tourism companies to grow”*
- *“moves much of the activation of the pier by commercial and recreational vessels to the northwestern end of the pier, away from the ferry operations”*
- *“Extending the pier is not required as there’s more than enough room for boat and tour operators”*
- *“Will be to (sic) destructive to the delicate eco system”*
- *“I would rather see money spent on boat facilities... more ramps and parking”*



#### Key Features

1. Entrance channel width in accordance with Australian Standards AS3062 (2020)
2. Turning circle for ferry in accordance with PIANC Approach Channel guidelines
3. Remove the inner east existing low landing and extend pier decking
4. Change to asphalt and restore load rating
5. Activation of Fisherman's Shed
6. Pile rehabilitation and deck replacement
7. Add fixed gangway slope 1:14 to enable DDA access to low landing
8. Berthing for up to 14m vessels
9. Berthing for up to 21m vessels
10. Berthing for Queenscliff to Sorrento ferry

Figure 9 The draft local port area plan Scenario 2 map

### 3.5 Other feedback via submissions

#### 3.6 Parks Victoria received two written submissions regarding the draft plan.

##### Feedback from Searoad Ferries

Searoad Ferries provided a submission in support of Scenario 2, which they felt would result in improved separation between commercial and recreational activities on the piers such as ferry operations. The removal of the East Low Landing was also supported due to changes occurring in the area as part of upgrades to the ferry terminal (currently underway). The submission noted a proposed 'no boating' area near the pier's current East Low Landing for future safety due to ferry operations and the expansion of new steel piles that could pose a danger to small recreational vessels.

##### Feedback from Waypoint Foundation

The foundation owns a youth sail training ship, the Alma Doepel, and noted their interest in visiting the local port area as part of future operations.

#### 3.7 Support for the draft Sorrento Local Port Area Plan

When asked if the draft plan adequately captured and addressed the issues, risks and opportunities for the Sorrento Local Port Area, 43% of people agreed it had, with a further 43% unsure and a small percentage disagreeing. The degree of uncertainty may reflect the technical nature of the plan, the focus on local port maritime facilities such as berthing and fendering, which a proportion of visitors won't be impacted by. In addition to the question about support for the plan, participants were also invited to provide final comments.

*"Heritage has been overlooked... commercial elements have been prioritised"*

*"Considering the pier needs regular works, a more lasting design is needed..."*

*"The heritage, environment and safety should be paramount concerns. These are all addressed, but I would hate to see it overcrowded with tourism..."*

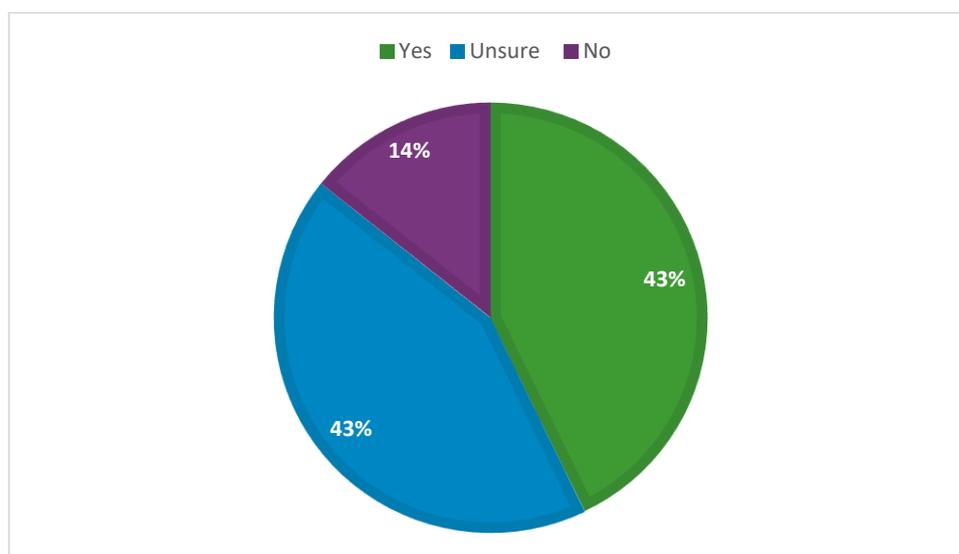


Figure 10 Overall support for the draft Sorrento Local Port Area Plan

### 3.8 Next steps

Developed as part of the Victorian Government’s *Sustainable Local Ports Framework*, this Local Port Area Plan seeks to celebrate Sorrento as a working port with diverse uses, while responding to current and future demands to ensure safe and navigable water for harbour users.

The implementation of any actions outlined in the plan will depend on future funding, planning and necessary approvals and we’ll continue to keep pier users and the local community updated.

All feedback summarised in this report has been considered by Parks Victoria to shape the final Sorrento Local Port Area Plan.

Parks Victoria thanks all those who have contributed their ideas and feedback in the first phase of engagement, and we look forward to finalising the Sorrento Local Port Area Plan.



*Figure 11 Sorrento Pier western low landing*

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