



St Kilda West Beach Boardwalk Accessibility Connection

Engagement Summary Report

February 2023



Introduction

Project background

Council is undertaking an upgrade to the St Kilda West Beach boardwalk to create a safer, more accessible passage. The current boardwalk does not currently connect to footpaths, meaning accessibility can be impacted. This will make St Kilda West Beach boardwalk accessible for all in our community to enjoy.

Proposed construction works include:

- an accessible ramp and boardwalk connection from Pier Road to the existing West Beach boardwalk
- additional recycled plastic seating
- a staircase and handrails to meet current Australian Standards and concrete pavement
- a new concrete balustrade to match existing heritage feature
- new native vegetation garden beds
- new timber post and rail fence along Pier Road.

West Beach Boardwalk Accessibility Connection is one of the sub projects included in the Public Space Accessibility Improvement Program and will provide enhanced accessibility for our community by linking to the foreshore promenade.

This program allows Council to address some of the actions stated in the City of Port Phillip Access Plan by undertaking the foreshore improvement works and work towards meeting accessibility standards.

The Construction works will provide a DDA compliant connection from the foreshore to the West Beach boardwalk. The existing boardwalk is already DDA compliant, but the connections are currently not accessible for all our community members from the foreshore path.

The community was invited to provide their feedback on the draft Concept Plan, between 21 December 2022 and 29 January 2023.



Figure 1: Site map showing the location of all proposed changes

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement project was to:

- Inform the community about the implementation of this project, and the benefits to the community.
- Sense-check the Concept Plan with the community as to whether we have missed anything in the design.

Engagement questions

Participants were asked to respond to the following question:

Take a look at the Concept Plan for the West Beach Boardwalk. Is there anything you think we have missed?

They were also asked to respond to a range of demographic questions, including:

- Age bracket
- Gender
- Disability
- Connection to the City of Port Phillip
- Suburb
- Country of birth.

Participants were given the opportunity to stay informed about the project, through providing their name and email address.

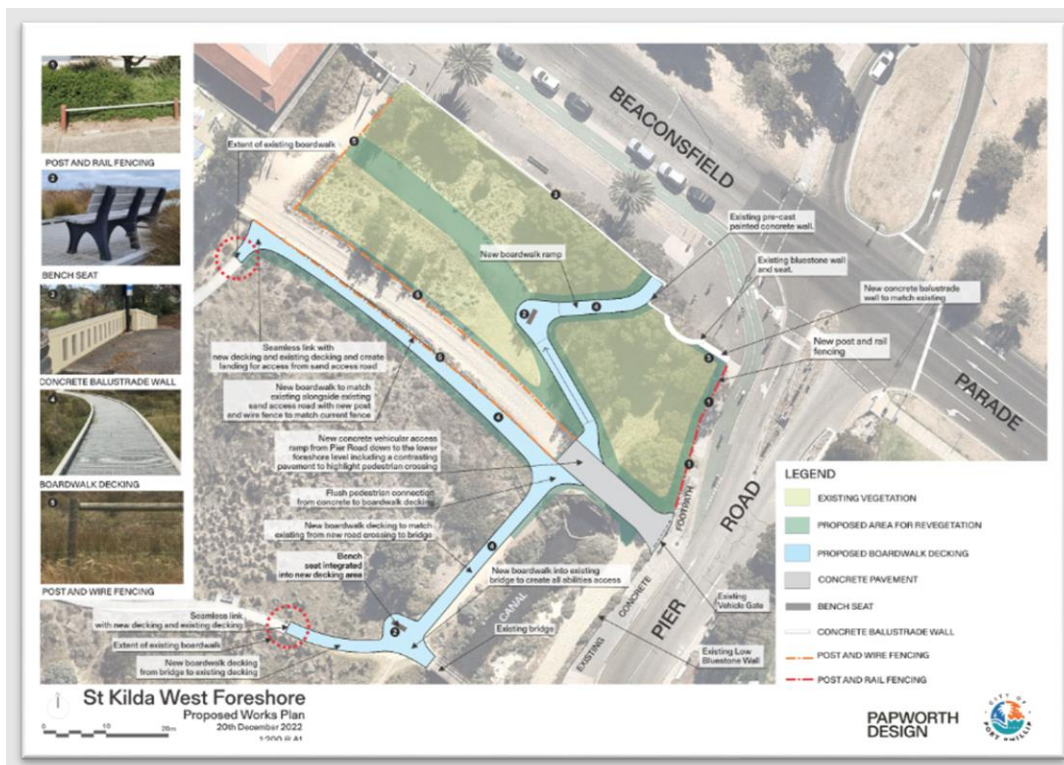


Figure 2: Concept plan for St Kilda West Beach boardwalk



What we did

Engagement activities

A short survey was hosted on Have Your Say, asking participants to provide their feedback on the draft Concept Plan. A copy of the concept plan was provided, as well as a map denoting the location of all proposed changes.

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted on Council's social media sites and via a Divercity article, as well as via signage installed onsite at the boardwalk.

Feedback was sought from the broader community, as well as the following stakeholders:

- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Ecocentre
- Earthcare St Kilda
- St Kilda Beach Patrol
- West St Kilda Residents Association
- Foreshore vendors.

Participation

The total reach of this project was 3,901 people, with 368 visits to the Have Your Say page, and 2,838 views of the City of Port Phillip's social media pages. There were 25 contributions to the survey, and 8 people following the project page. 8 people commented on the City of Port Phillip's social media posts about this project, and 3 further stakeholders provided feedback via email.

A post on the City of Port Phillip's Facebook account, which is followed by 12,063 people, reached 2,344 people, and attracted 181 post interactions (reactions, comments, views and clicks).

A post on Instagram reached 1,290 accounts, and attracting 16 post interactions (14 likes, 1 share and 1 save).

Who we heard from

Age of participants

Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 79 years, with the highest represented age group (40%) being 50 – 59 years (10 participants). This compares to the age demographics of the municipality, where 13.1% of the population is aged 50 to 59 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021). The second highest represented age group at 24% of participants was 35 – 49 years (6 participants), comparable with the 25.4% of this age bracket in the municipality (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021). A breakdown of participants' age groups can be seen in the chart below.

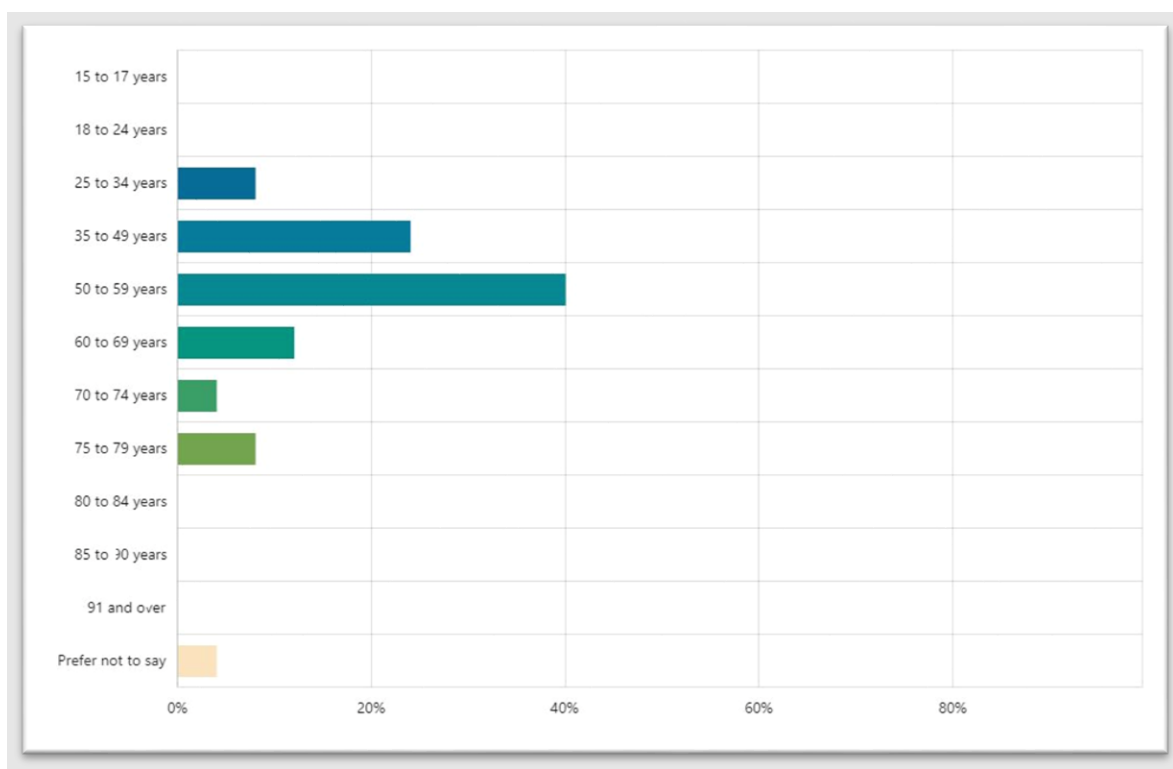


Figure 3: Participants' age groups.

Gender of participants

23 participants identified their gender, with two participants saying they preferred not to say. 44%, or 11 participants, identified as a man or male, 36% (9 participants) identified as a woman or female, and a further 12% (3 participants) identified their gender as non-binary. A breakdown of participants' gender can be seen in the chart below. This contrasts with the demographics of the municipality, with 51.2% females and 48.8% males (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021 – note that comparison of this data is limited as ABS data does not provide other gender options).

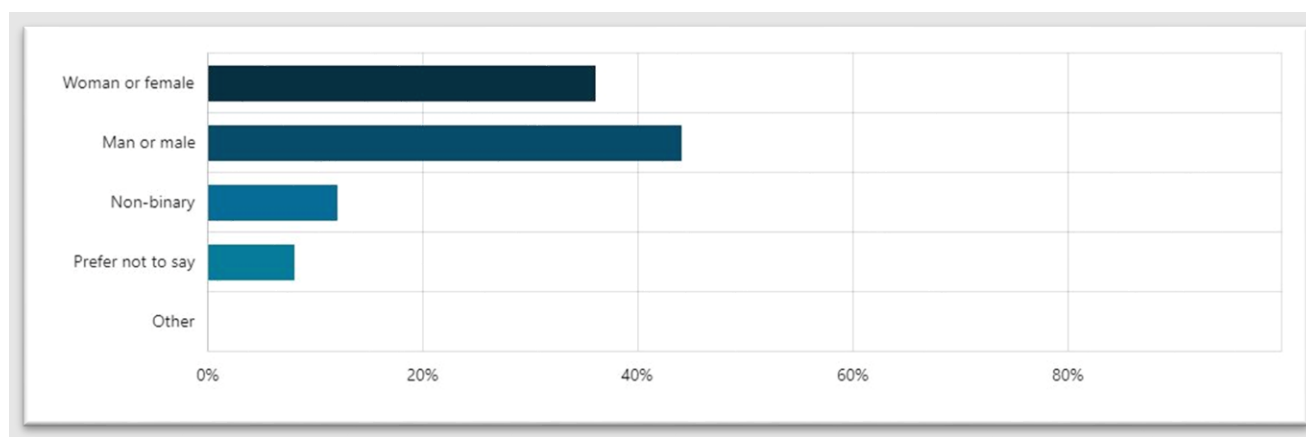


Figure 4: Participants' gender.

Connection with the City of Port Phillip

Participants were asked to nominate their connection with the City of Port Phillip, with participants able to select more than one response. 96% of participants identified as a resident (24 participants), with 40%, or ten participants, identifying as ratepayers. The chart below shows a breakdown of the ways in which participants identified their connection to the City of Port Phillip.

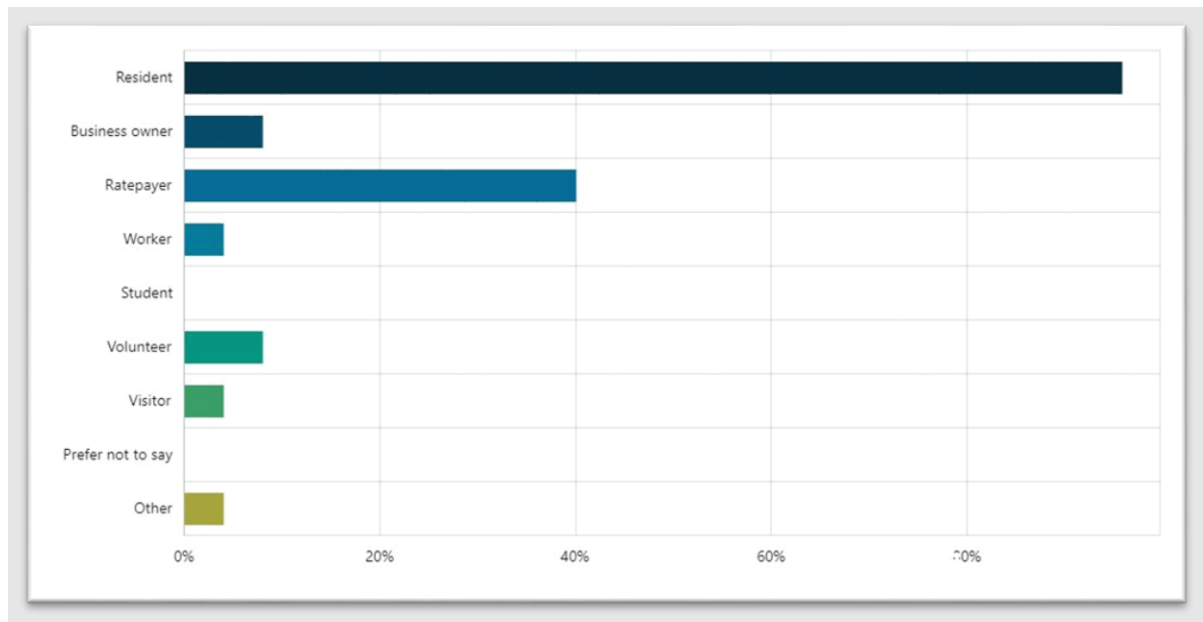


Figure 5: Participants' connection to the City of Port Phillip.

Participants by suburb

Participants were asked which suburb they lived in. 40%, (10 participants), lived in St Kilda West, and a further 28% (7 participants) lived in St Kilda. The chart below shows a breakdown of participants by the suburb they lived in.

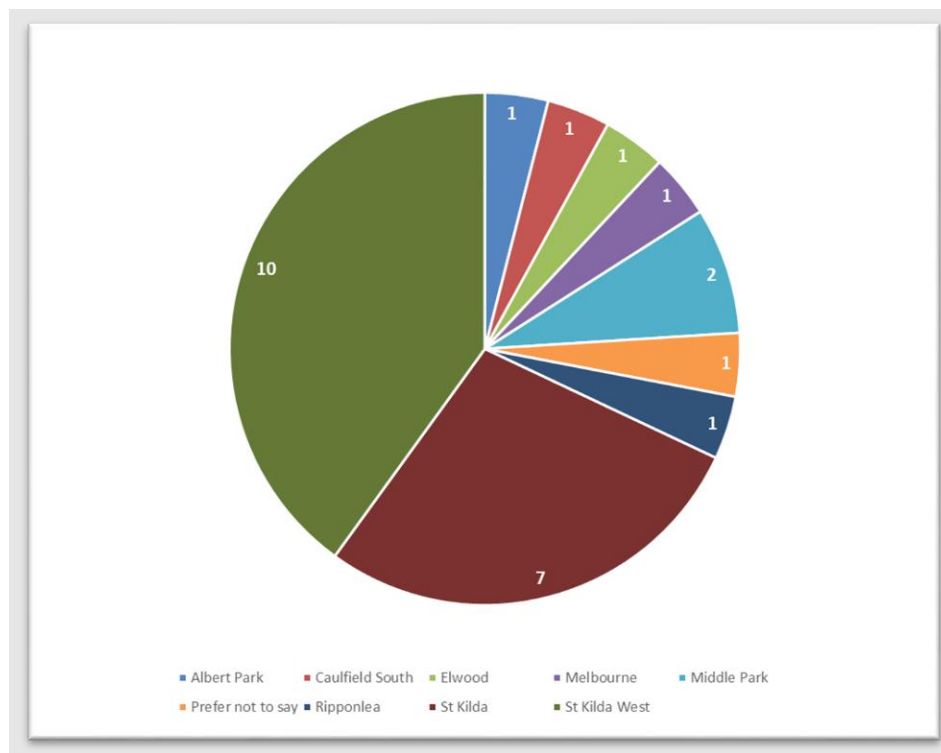


Figure 6: Which suburb do you live in?

Country of birth

Participants were asked to nominate their country of birth, with 60% (15 participants) reporting being born in Australia. 8% (2 participants) were born in the United Kingdom and 8% (2 participants) were born in New Zealand. This data can be seen in the chart below.

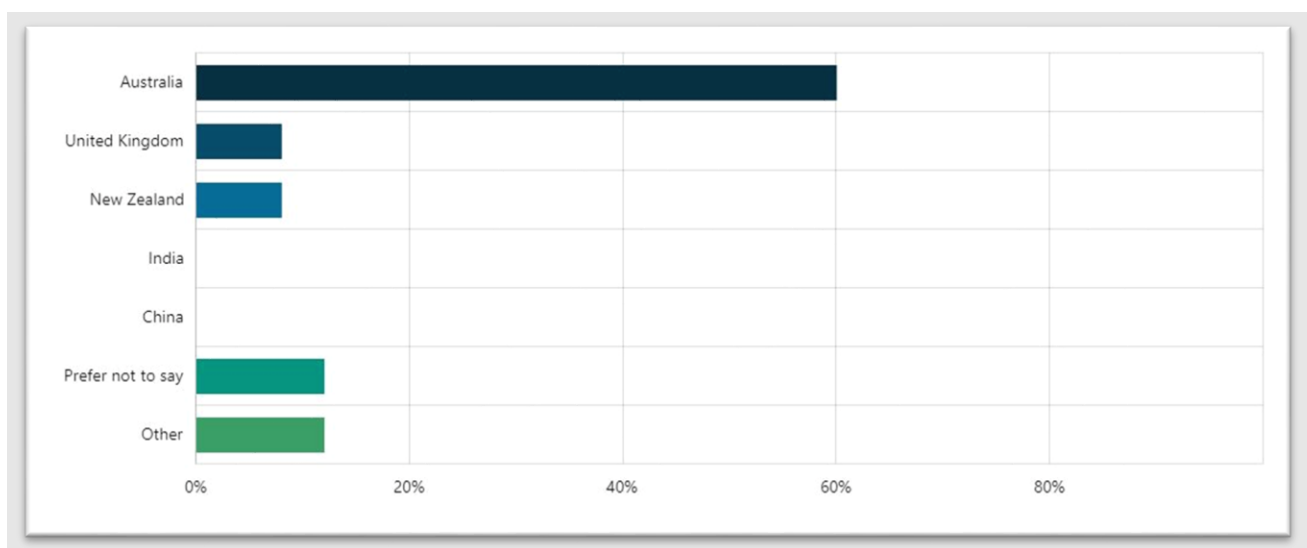


Figure 7: Participants' country of birth.

Disability or mobility challenge

Participants were asked whether they had a disability or mobility challenge that impacts the way they access the community. 24% (6 participants) said they did, 72% (18 participants) said they did not, with 1 participant preferring not to say. This breakdown can be seen in the chart below, and compares to the 3.7% of the City of Port Phillip population who identified a need for assistance with core activities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021).

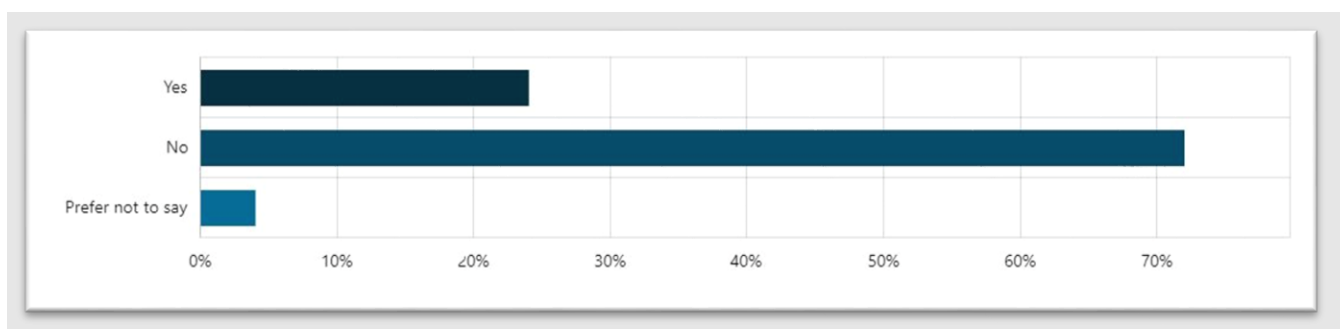


Figure 8: Do you have a disability or mobility challenge that impacts the way you access the community?



What we heard

Support for the Boardwalk Accessibility Connection

Overall support

When participants were asked whether there was anything we had missed in the Concept Plan,

- 21% of participants said they did not think we had missed anything, and
- 79% of participants highlighted further areas for consideration.

Feedback broadly fell into the following themes:

- Accessibility
- Signage
- Amenity
- Environment
- Heritage.

These themes will be explored below.

Further themes identified by participants

Accessibility

- Many participants applauded the move to increase accessibility at the Boardwalk, to allow greater access to and enjoyment of the Boardwalk for all in the community.
- Measures to limit the speed of bikes, scooters, skateboards and roller blades to walking pace were identified to make the Boardwalk safer and more accessible to pedestrians, with a range of suggestions including speed bumps, signage and surface treatment.

Signage

- There was strong support for retention of, as well as increase to, current signage at the Boardwalk.
- As well as signage to limit speeds to walking pace, signage to educate the community about the impact of dogs off leash on environmentally sensitive areas of the Boardwalk environment were suggested.
- One participant requested current signage to remain, with the 'Community Planting - West Beach Natural History Project' sign remaining in its current location and the 'Yalukut Willam People' sign relocated to stand beside the 'Community Planting - West Beach Natural History Project' sign, as the main entry point to wheelchairs and walking tours.
- Signage highlighting the Boardwalk's history, plants, local edible plants and providing some information about how the area's First Peoples used the area for food and recreation was also requested by several participants, one noting that current signage was at ground level and hidden by foliage.
- Better signage of the Boardwalk overall was also suggested, so the broader community could be more aware of this local feature.

Amenity

- Two participants requested further lighting be installed along the Boardwalk area, with another requesting the Boardwalk include all weather access surfacing and quality rails.
- It was noted by a participant that the predominant use of seating at the Boardwalk is later in the day, to observe the setting sun. There was a suggestion to supplement west-facing seating in order to maximise this. Another participant also spoke about seating, with a request for some shaded seating options.
- One participant felt that the Concept Plan missed a link from Pier Road to the bridge, observing that people have to climb over the bluestone wall to get to the walkway. Another felt that the existing bridge should be included in the development, and that it should be built flat and wider.
- One participant suggested an alternative entry point, with a relocation of accessible entry to Pier Road (as part of the concrete vehicle access) providing a relatively level path between the footpath and new boardwalk, with no boardwalk running from Beaconsfield Pde required.
- Two participants requested that water fountains be built into the design, with one requesting the restoration of and access to the bluestone water fountain on the beachside of the Beaconsfield Parade wall.
- There was one request for further rubbish and recycling amenity at the site.



Environment

- The quality of the drains and water ways was raised, with five participants identifying this as an area for improvement. It was felt that there was an opportunity to improve litter capture and prevent impacts on the beach, with one participant saying they felt that St Kilda West Beach and amenities (including the toilets) were not well maintained.
- One participant requested that a habitat management plan be established for the entire West Beach area, including the sandspit and intertidal zone, to protect and enhance existing habitats into the future. The provision of further information in connection with the re-vegetation was also requested by several participants, with one expressing a hope that consultation on the planting had taken place with First Peoples and those who created the West Beach Natural History Reserve.
- One participant suggested that plant species selection for proposed revegetation areas should complement the original vegetation plan which sought to demonstrate 5 distinct plant communities characteristic of the original West St Kilda (Yuro Yuroke) landscape, and suggested transplanting some existing plants growing inside the post and wire fence along the west side of the vehicle track.
- The ecological benefit in extending salt marsh and dune plants on the beach side of the plantings was highlighted by a participant, in addition to the proposed plantings. EcoCentre expressed an interest in advising on plant selection and delivering the plantings as community events supported by their volunteer base.

Heritage

- One participant expressed a desire for the old and the new to be incorporated in the Concept Plan, with the heritage steps near the intersection of Pier Road and Beaconsfield retained, and the Boardwalk connected from Pier Road to the steps that are being upgraded closer to West Beach Pavillion.
- Two participants expressed a desire for limited changes, with one requesting that only the ramp to be made accessible with the remainder left as is, and a further participant expressing that they didn't particularly like the concrete balustrade.



How to find out more

Next steps

The next steps in this project will be:

- Finalisation of the Concept Plan, which will take place in March 2023
- Construction of the finalised Concept, which will begin in April 2023.

You can stay in the loop about this project via the Have Your Say project page, at <https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/west-beach-boardwalk>