
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report

Freshwater Beach Building Amenities

Consultation period: 23 September to 27 October 2024

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1. Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement as part of a project proposal to build a new amenities building as part of the Freshwater Masterplan.

Freshwater Beach is one of the most popular destinations in our local government area, attracting a large number of visitors who rely on convenient public amenities. To better accommodate the growing needs of the community, as part of the Freshwater Beach Masterplan, which is focused on upgrading public open spaces, meeting future recreation needs, improving connectivity and celebrating the heritage of the area, Council has proposed relocating the public toilets from the Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club to a new, dedicated facility. This standalone amenities building will be located at the northern end of the reserve, near the new playground, ensuring accessibility and convenience for all beachgoers, coastal walkers and visitors to the reserve and playground.

During the consultation period, we asked how satisfied the community was with the following aspects of the concept design:

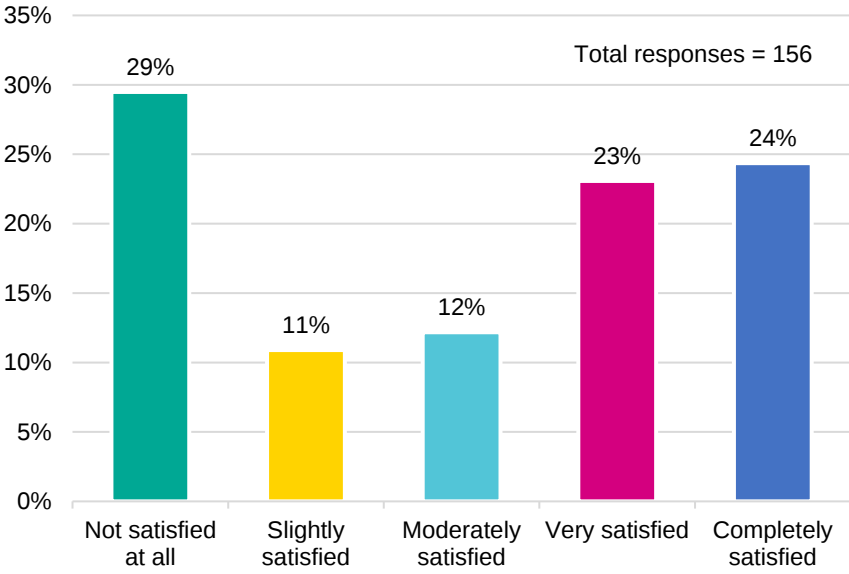
1. **The flow of the floor plan** - e.g. ease of access to facilities
2. **The inclusion of a toddler toilet into the accessible/family change room** – a first for Northern Beaches Council amenities buildings
3. **The external design of the building fits with the surrounding area**

We received 156 responses with 11 additional responses received via email. The project team spoke to 86 people at the two onsite community information sessions.

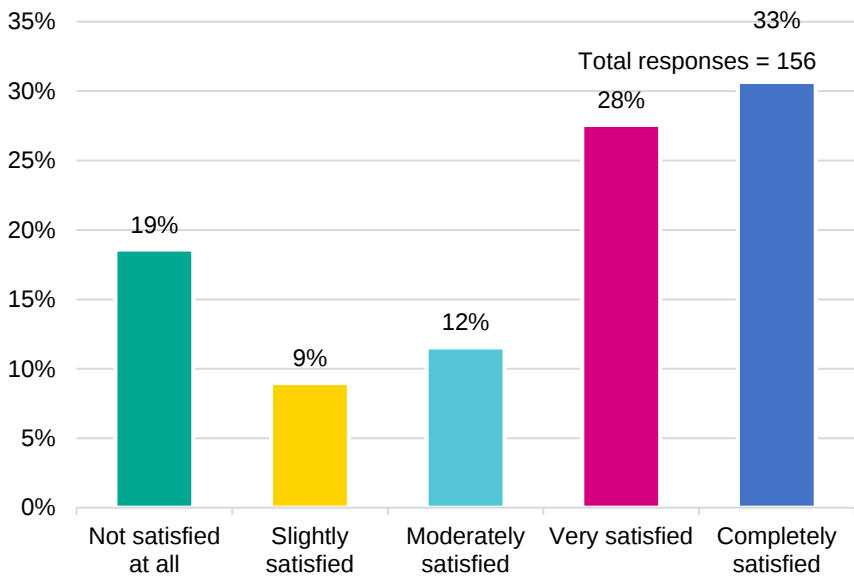
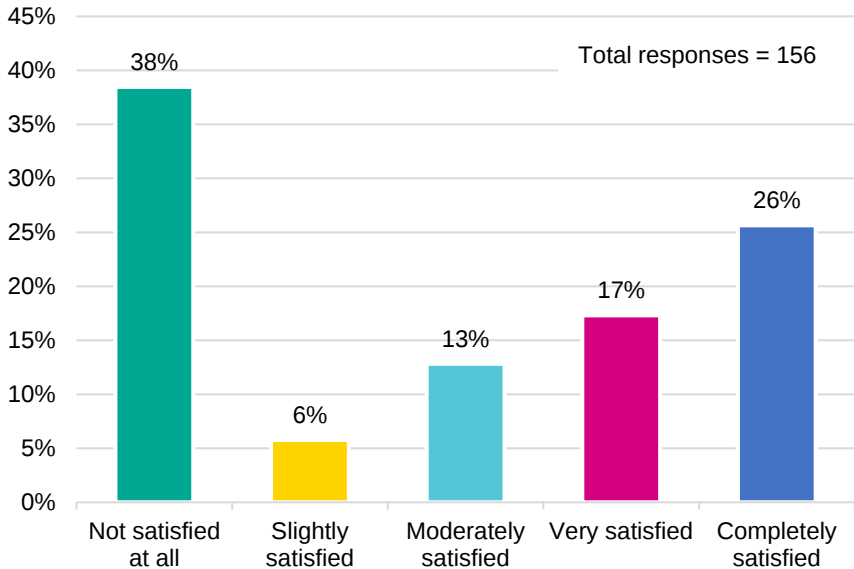
The feedback collected during the consultation period indicated a high level of support for the parent room with toddler toilet, especially given its proposed location next to the playground. Respondents who were not supportive of the proposal felt that the building size did not accommodate the future needs of the area, that the amenities should remain in the surf club or that it will take up too much green space.

All feedback has been captured and detailed in Tables 1 and 2, with verbatim comments shown in Appendix 1.

1.1. Key outcomes

 Total unique responses	167													
 How responses were received	Comment form Written responses (email/letter)	Completions: 156 Number received: 11												
 Online sentiment question: Satisfaction with the flow of the floorplan ¹	 <table><caption>Satisfaction with the flow of the floorplan</caption><thead><tr><th>Satisfaction Level</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Not satisfied at all</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>Slightly satisfied</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately satisfied</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Very satisfied</td><td>23%</td></tr><tr><td>Completely satisfied</td><td>24%</td></tr></tbody></table> Total responses = 156		Satisfaction Level	Percentage	Not satisfied at all	29%	Slightly satisfied	11%	Moderately satisfied	12%	Very satisfied	23%	Completely satisfied	24%
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Slightly satisfied	11%													
Moderately satisfied	12%													
Very satisfied	23%													
Completely satisfied	24%													

¹ Percentage may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding

 Online sentiment question: Satisfaction with the inclusion of a toddler toilet in the accessible/ family change room²	<table><tr><th>Satisfaction Level</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Not satisfied at all</td><td>19%</td></tr><tr><td>Slightly satisfied</td><td>9%</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately satisfied</td><td>12%</td></tr><tr><td>Very satisfied</td><td>28%</td></tr><tr><td>Completely satisfied</td><td>33%</td></tr></table>		Satisfaction Level	Percentage	Not satisfied at all	19%	Slightly satisfied	9%	Moderately satisfied	12%	Very satisfied	28%	Completely satisfied	33%
Satisfaction Level	Percentage													
Not satisfied at all	19%													
Slightly satisfied	9%													
Moderately satisfied	12%													
Very satisfied	28%													
Completely satisfied	33%													
 Online sentiment question: Satisfaction with the external design of the building fitting in with the surrounding area³	<table><tr><th>Satisfaction Level</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Not satisfied at all</td><td>38%</td></tr><tr><td>Slightly satisfied</td><td>6%</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately satisfied</td><td>13%</td></tr><tr><td>Very satisfied</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>Completely satisfied</td><td>26%</td></tr></table>		Satisfaction Level	Percentage	Not satisfied at all	38%	Slightly satisfied	6%	Moderately satisfied	13%	Very satisfied	17%	Completely satisfied	26%
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Completely satisfied	26%													
 Feedback themes	• Amenities should remain in the surf club • Number of toilets • Distance from the beach	• Loss of green space • High level of support for Parent Room • Bike stands and surf racks are needed												

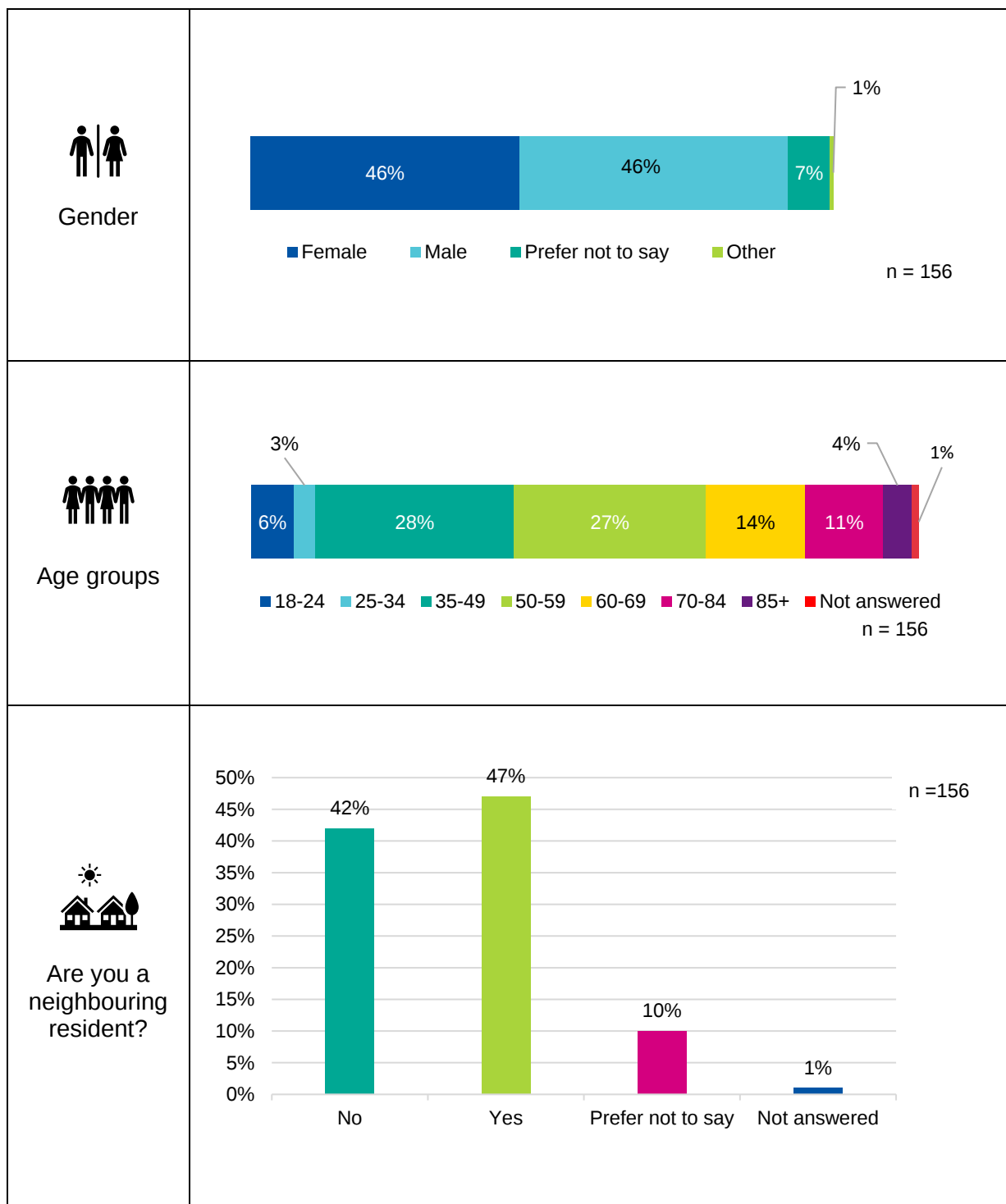
² Percentage may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding

³ Percentage may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding

1.2. How we engaged

 Have Your Say: visitation stats	Visitors: 1,770	Visits: 2,209	Average time onsite: 3 minutes 17 seconds
 Print media and collateral	Letterbox drop: 2096 Site signs used: Yes		Distribution: 100 Number of signs: 6
 Electronic direct mail (EDM)	Community Engagement (fortnightly) newsletter: 3 editions Council (weekly) e-News: 2 editions The Wave Disability newsletter (monthly):		Distribution: 21,800 subscribers Distribution: 58,200 subscribers Distribution: 1 Edition
 Key stakeholder engagement	Met with the Friends of Freshwater on Wednesday 25 th September 2024		Harbord Diggers Engaged: 5

1.3. Who responded⁴



⁴ Demographic data was gathered by request in the online form. The data represented only includes those respondents who provided this detail.

Some totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



⁵ Respondents could choose more than one option – there were 677 options selected by 156 survey respondents

⁶ 'Other' refers to postcodes with fewer than 3 responses.

2. Background

As part of Council's capital works program, Council proposes to construct a new public amenities building to meet the needs of the community and visitors to the reserve and beach. The designated location for this building is on Crown Land managed by Council, and its placement and design will align with the Freshwater Beach Masterplan to ensure seamless integration with nearby pedestrian walkways. The design will include fully documented, construction-ready plans, details, specifications, and schedules.

Following the construction of the new amenities, Freshwater SLSC plans to remove the existing public amenities within the club building as part of a broader project for alterations and additions.

3. Engagement objectives

Community and stakeholder engagement aimed to:

- build community and stakeholder awareness of participation activities
- provide accessible information so community and stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way
- provide balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions
- identify community and stakeholder concerns, local knowledge and values.

4. Engagement approach

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Freshwater Beach Amenities Building was conducted between 23 September and 27 October 2024 and consisted of a series of activities that provided opportunities for community and stakeholders to contribute.

The engagement was planned, implemented and reported in accordance with Council's [Community Engagement Strategy](#) (2022).

A project page⁷ was established on our have Your Say platform with information provided in an accessible and easy to read format.

The project was primarily promoted through our regular email newsletter (EDM) channels. Local signage was installed directing the community to the Your Say project page. Residents and businesses around the reserve were notified by letter. The project team were onsite for two community information sessions during the consultation period.

Feedback was captured through an online comment form embedded onto the have Your Say project page. The form included a question that directly asked respondents for their level of support on aspects of the concept design.

An open-field comments box asked community members to provide any other feedback they wished to contribute.

Email and written comments were also invited.

⁷ <https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/freshwater-beach-amenities-building>

5. Findings

Table 1: Issues, change requests and other considerations

Key Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised What we heard	Council's response
Amenities should remain in the surf club	Community members felt that, as a public building, the surf club should continue to house public amenities. Some noted that while the amenities in the club are adequate, they are outdated and need upgrading.	Relocating the public amenities outside the surf club will create dedicated spaces for both club and public use, reducing congestion in shared areas. The current configuration can become crowded, especially on weekends when club members and the public are gathered. The new amenities building is designed to better accommodate the community's needs by offering separate, more spacious, and updated facilities.
Loss of green space	There was concern that the new amenities building would reduce the limited green space in the reserve, particularly in shaded areas around existing palm trees. Many felt the reserve already has substantial concrete due to new pathways, an accessible ramp, and BBQ areas.	The selected location was identified in the Freshwater Masterplan as the most suitable due to its proximity to key amenities like the playground, carpark, coastal walk, and beach. Importantly, the existing palm trees will remain, and the design aims to minimise impact on surrounding green areas. Additionally, large open green spaces adjacent to the amenities and playground will remain available for public use.
Not enough toilets	Many felt the proposed number of toilets was inadequate to meet future needs, especially for women. Some suggested keeping the amenities in the surf club as well as adding new facilities to meet growing demands. Requests were also made for unisex toilets.	The building's limited footprint requires efficient use of space. The design replicates current surf club amenities and includes four outdoor showers, an accessible parent room with a toddler toilet, and a compliant accessible bathroom. Unisex bathrooms are unfortunately not feasible in the design without reducing male and female facilities. If the design were to expand to the east and south, it would encroach on the two access points for maintenance and events vehicles.
Distance from the beach	The community indicated that they felt that the new amenities	The new amenities building is designed to serve all community members within the proximity of the

Key Theme	Issues, change requests and other considerations raised What we heard	Council's response
	block was too far to walk to from the beach.	playground, reserve, carpark, coastal walk and beach. The new location is only about 40 meters further than the existing facilities.
High level of support for Parent Room	There was strong community support for the parent room with a toddler toilet, with some requesting an additional one if space allowed.	We are encouraged by the community's positive feedback on the parent room and toddler toilet. This design may serve as a model for future installations in other amenities, where appropriate.
Bike stands and surf racks needed	With the growing popularity of e-bikes, the community expressed a need for additional bike stands and racks to hold surfboards while using outdoor showers.	This feedback is valuable and will be considered in the detailed design phase.

Appendix 1 Verbatim community and stakeholder responses*

To view all verbatim comments, please click the link below:

<https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/Document.aspx?t=webdoc&id=SO0A2235XKIV0A60ki4OEg==>

**Personal details and inappropriate language have been redacted where possible. Spelling and grammatical errors have been amended only where misinterpretation or offence may be caused.*

Document administration	
Version	1.0
Date	5 November 2024
Approval	Content provided and approved by Building Assets Team. Responsible manager: Donald Gibson
Status	Initial report
Notes	Community and stakeholder views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Beaches Council or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.