

Bilgola Beach Upgrades

Community Engagement Report

September 2018

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Background

Council identified the beachfront along the seawall at Bilgola had built up with sand and the koppers logs had deteriorated. An upgrade to this area is proposed make it safer, easier to maintain, and improve accessibility and aesthetics of the location.

Council developed the Bilgola Beach Upgrades Concept Landscape Plan (the original plan) and placed it on public exhibition on 11 April 2018.

The original plan was updated to the Final Bilgola Beach Upgrades Concept Landscape Plan - natural turf - April 2018 (the final plan), during the public exhibition due to community concerns about the proposed use of artificial grass.

Feedback was collected through an online survey hosted on Council's engagement platform Your Say Northern Beaches. Written comments were also accepted.

This report collates and analyses feedback received and Council's response to key themes raised.

Community engagement objectives

The purpose of the engagement was to provide a simple and accessible process for the community to provide feedback on the Bilgola Beach Upgrades Concept Landscape Plan. The key objectives of the engagement were to:

- identify how often respondents used the beach
- identify support for an upgrade
- understand community views on specific elements of the exhibited plan.

Community engagement approach

A public exhibition was held between 11 April and 18 May 2018.

Feedback was primarily collected through an online survey hosted on Council's engagement platform - Your Say Northern Beaches. Written comments were also accepted.

The online comments form contained two prescribed questions:

1. How often do you visit Bilgola Beach?
2. Do you support the proposed upgrade at Bilgola Beach?

An additional field was available for community members to provide general comments or highlight specific elements of the exhibited plan.

The public exhibition and associated engagement activities were promoted to the community using:

- a project 'your say' webpage
- onsite project signage
- a Manly Daily notice
- email updates.

Findings

Council received 57 online survey responses and three written comments during public exhibition of the Bilgola Beach Upgrades Concept Landscape Plan. Responses to the questions asked are provided below:

1) How often do you visit Bilgola Beach?

86 percent of online survey responses were from people who use the beachfront regularly (daily or weekly) as shown in Figure 1.

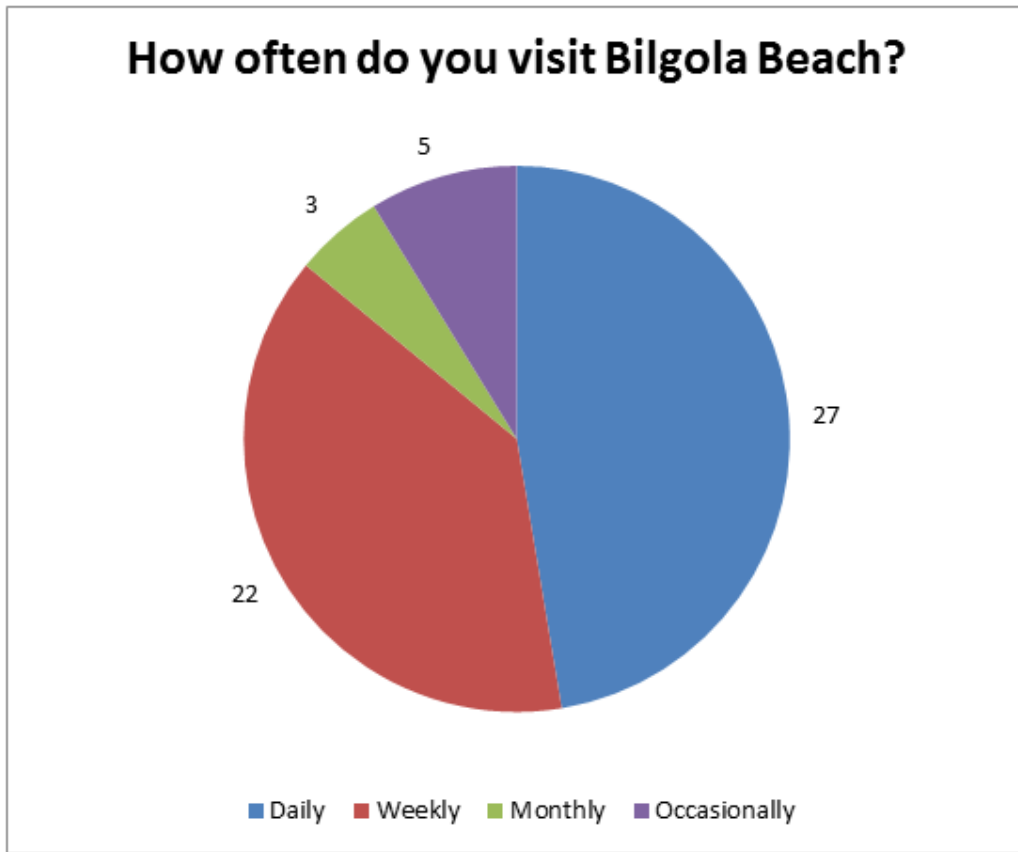


Figure 1: Responses to how often people visit Bilgola Beach

2) Do you support the proposed upgrade at Bilgola Beach?

Overall 24 responses supported the proposed upgrades. 22 comments were received in opposition to the original plan, however, these were primarily related to the proposed inclusion of artificial turf along the seawall. Five respondents unsure whether they supported the plan or not (see Figure 2).

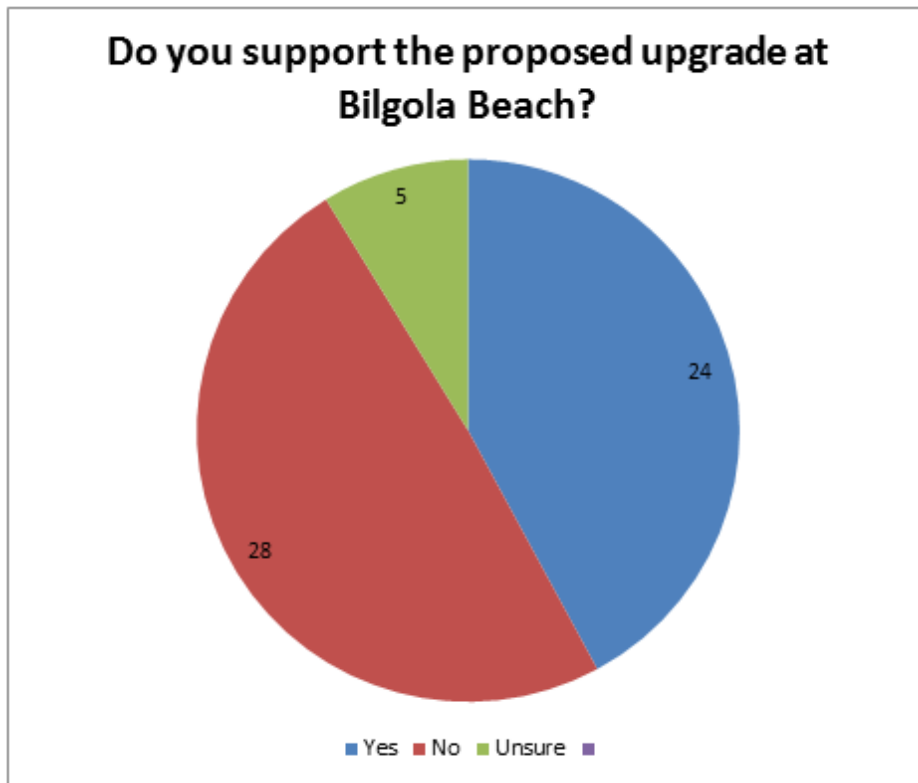


Figure 2: Response to 'Do you support the proposed upgrade at Bilgola Beach?'

Council amended the original plan during the public exhibition based on community concerns relating to the proposed use of artificial grass. Council only received 6 additional objections following the replacement of artificial grass with natural turf.

Figure 3 highlights the change in the community's level of support following removal of the artificial turf from the original plan.

Do you support the proposed upgrades at Bilgola Beach?

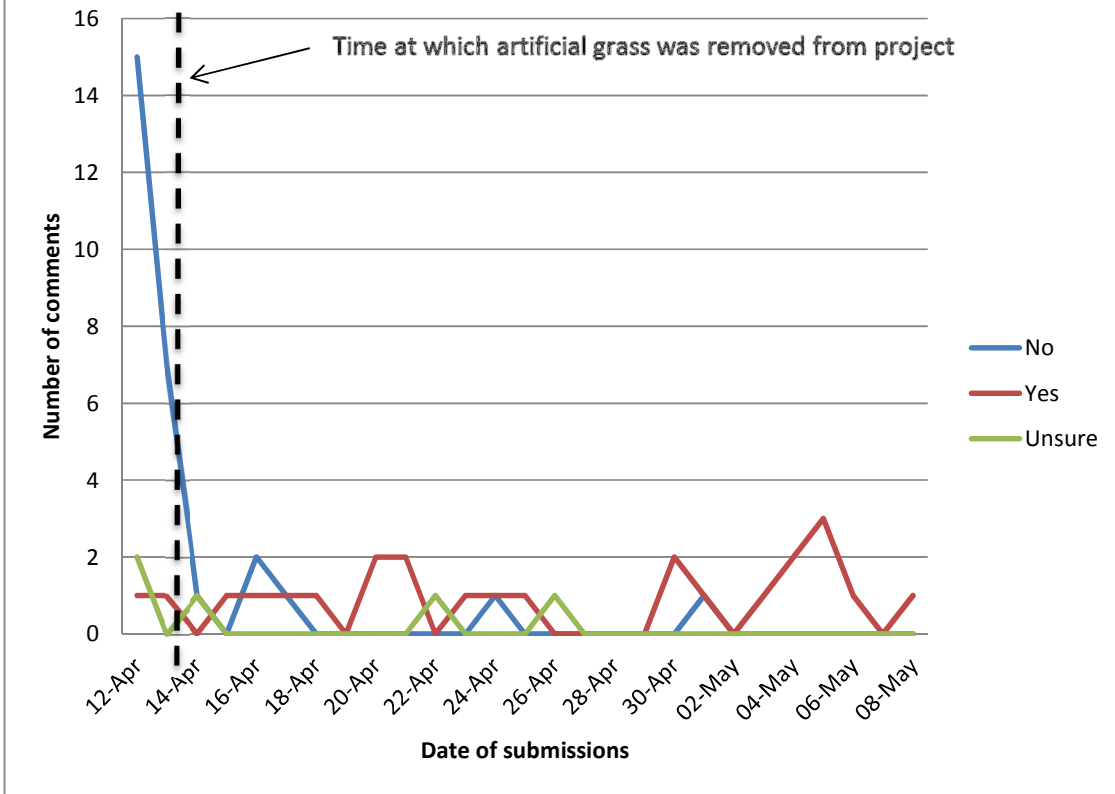


Figure 3: Support for and against the exhibited concept landscape plan over time

Council response to key themes raised

The following is a summary of Council response to key themes raised by community members in the general comments section of the online comments form and by written submission.

The revised plan is available on the project webpage.

| Key themes raised | Council response |
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| Opposed to artificial turf | <p>Opposition to the proposed use of artificial turf emerged within 24 hours of the project being advertised.</p> <p>Use of artificial turf was replaced with natural grass in response to community feedback.</p> |
| General opposition – leave as it is | <p>The upgrade is required to improve safety, accessibility and functionality and to provide an enhanced user experience, without changing the ambience of the locality. The works will also make the area easier to maintain.</p> |
| General opposition – damages environment and unnecessary | <p>The works have been designed to improve environmental outcomes. In the final plans a roll kerb replaces the flush kerb. This will minimise impacts of surface runoff from the carpark and reduce erosion.</p> <p>The revised design maximises the use of natural materials.</p> |
| Support for concept | <p>General support for this project was expressed by respondents predominantly after the artificial turf was removed from the plan.</p> |
| Support – sandstone blocks | <p>In the final design, the timber seats have been relocated to maximise the frontage along the seawall, this results in a reduced number of sandstone blocks being used when compared to the original design. Originally there were 19 sandstone blocks and the final design has 11.</p> |
| Suggestions – install a water fountain/refill area | <p>Council has included a water fountain/refill area in the final design.</p> |
| Suggestions – plant more trees in the carpark | <p>Rejuvenation of the garden beds is part of the final plan. It is unclear whether additional new trees will be part of that work. Council's aim is that there would be no net loss of trees in any event.</p> |
| Suggestions – re-paint the amenities block | <p>Repainting of the amenities block is outside the scope of this project however the matter has been referred to the Facilities managers.</p> |

| Key themes raised | Council response |
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| Suggestions – relocate the bins to the western side of the carpark | <p>In the final plan, the recycling bins will be reoriented in the same location. This will improve safety and enhance aesthetics.</p> <p>The bins at the southern end of the seawall are to be relocated next to the surf club.</p> <p>Bins on the western side of the carpark next to the amenities block will remain in situ.</p> |
| Suggestions – have good taps in the showers | Council will extend the timing on the shower push buttons. |
| Suggestions – disabled parking closer to the cafe | There are no plans to relocate or add to the current disabled parking allocation. Improvements to the beachfront will make it easier for people to access the café. |
| Suggestions – a foot wash or shower at the Allen Avenue end of the beach | Although a shower and foot wash at Allen Avenue is not part of this project, it is considered a useful facility and will be added to the future works program. |
| Suggestions – move garden beds back from beach to allow for cars and pedestrians to pass more safely | Council will trim vegetation back as part of the garden bed rejuvenation and directional arrows will improve traffic flow and safety. |
| <p>Suggestions – refresh the pool area</p> <p>Suggestions – improved lighting at the pool</p> | The pool area is out of scope for this project. Council has conducted an audit of all rock pools and works will be prioritised and programmed based on the condition assessment and funding levels. |
| Suggestions – timber boardwalk along beach instead of grass | A timber boardwalk at the top of the seawall is not part of this project. |
| Suggestions – bollards at cafe/carpark interface | To improve safety at the front of the café Council proposes to move the wheel stops back. |
| Suggestions – speed bumps in carpark | Council supports the installation of a speed hump. A speed bump has been added to the revised plan. |
| Suggestions – time-limited parking | Parking is in accordance with current car parking arrangements at the beach. Changes to parking restrictions in this area are not within the scope of this project. |
| Suggestions – extend grass area at northern end of seawall | Refer to the final plan – there is grass in this location. |
| Suggestions – new stainless steel fence to replace 'pool' fence | The existing fence is sound and does not need replacing at this time. |

| Key themes raised | Council response |
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| Suggestions – extend fence to the seawall to prevent further falls into the open storm drain | The fence has already been extended along the open drain to the seawall. |
| Suggestions – any plans to upgrade the toilet shower block – include disability access | Upgrading the toilet/shower block is outside of the scope of this project. |
| Suggestions - repairs to the block wall corner in front of the toilets and opposite the café | Repairs will be undertaken as part of the upgrade works. |
| Suggestions - provision of shade along the beach wall seating | There is no provision for shade structures within the current project budget. |
| Suggestions - maintenance of the garden between the café and the beach | Maintenance of this area is specified in the final plan. |
| Suggestions - removal of bushfire fuel in the form of cabbage palm fronds historically dumped in the bush south of the lawn area adjacent to the parking lot | Removal of palm fronds in this area is a maintenance activity. Issues of dumping should be reported via Council's website or Customer Service. |
| Suggestions - extension to the café lease to allow early dinners in summers | <p>An extension to the café lease to allow for early dinners in summer is not able to be considered for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current Plan of Management states that a restaurant is not permissible at Bilgola Crown Reserve, but it does authorise kiosk use. 2. The Development Application (DA) N0038/07 has condition 27 which requires the hours of operation, including all preparation, set-up and closure activities are between 6:30am to sunset, 7 days a week. 3. Condition 28 of the DA indicates the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol is not permitted. 4. In accordance with the Lease agreement, the kiosk is under permitted use. Further, the lease requires the kiosk must comply with DA conditions all the time. <p>Changes to the conditions of consent and the plan of management would require considerable more engagement and this is outside of the scope of this project.</p> |
| Suggestions – more timber slat seats – warmer to sit on than sandstone in winter | The existing timber slat seats will remain and are supplemented with sandstone seating blocks. |
| Suggestions – add handrails to steps between clubhouse and carpark | Handrails have been included and are shown on the final plan. |
| Suggestions - Stabilise the sandstone retaining wall east of clubhouse courtyard | No works are planned in this area. |
| Suggestions – natural hue on concrete | Concrete will be coloured 'Canvas' to blend in with the environment. |
| Suggestions – bench with back for older people to sit | The timber bench back seats will remain. |

| Key themes raised | Council response |
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| Request for trimming vegetation along the Serpentine | Outside of this project scope. This has been referred to the appropriate section of Council. |
| Request for light shields on pool lights and value of dark night sky | Outside of this project scope. This has been referred to the appropriate section of Council. |