

What does the community value about the Coromandel Peninsula coast?

To support the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Project in the Thames-Coromandel District and help guide the studies on coastal hazards, vulnerability and risk, an online public survey was run over the 2019/20 summer period. A total of 905 unique responses were received.

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of pre-selected values relating to the coastal environment:



Otama Beach (photo credit: T. FitzGerald, 2019)

- Appearance of the coast.
- Good recreational facilities.
- A dry sandy beach (at high tide).
- Easy access onto the coast.
- A healthy natural environment.
- Walking access along the full length of the beach.
- Maintaining personal or family connections.
- Protecting places of historic and/or cultural significance.
- Protection of scenic values.

66% of respondents thought that the natural/undeveloped character of the coast was very important, 61% the appearance of the coast, 57% scenic values and 51% easy access to the coast. With all attributes being considered important or very important. Protection of places of historic or cultural significance and maintaining personal connections did not rank as highly as some other values.

When at the coast, respondents reported that sedentary activities like enjoying the view, connecting with nature and relaxing/sunbathing were highly valued. Swimming, exercising and hiking/bushwalking were also preferred.

Climate change, sea level rise and erosion were recognised as significant threats to the Coromandel coastal environment; and development, population, access and pollution were seen to be key threats. There was broad recognition across the District that sea level rise will affect the Coromandel coast.

Further work unpacking coastal values is central to the next phase of the SMP Project and will help in setting objectives for dynamic adaptive pathways planning.

Respondents identifying as Māori and youth were significantly underrepresented in the survey. Going forward it is recommended that other methods of engagement are employed to provide a greater understanding of the importance of Te Ao Māori and targeted methods of engagement employed to enhance the participation of a younger cohort.

Coastal Panel Paper #1

