

Whitianga Esplanade Waterfront Redevelopment: User Focus Group 2 Conversation Notes

Tuesday 19th June, 6:00 - 7:30 pm, Mercury Bay Bowling Club

Around 23 participants with diverse backgrounds and interests attended the session. This second focus group session brought together various local waterfront users to present concepts on the wharf redevelopment and discuss feedback from the focus group.

A register of attendees was taken recorded. Apologies accepted from Ken Hindmarsh and Anne Ward.

Whitianga Esplanade Waterfront Redevelopment Presentation – Focus on Commercial / Public Wharf Redevelopment

A Powerpoint presentation was delivered by the project manager, Lorenzo Canal to the user focus group. A copy of the PPT is attached to the notes.

Focus Group Discussion

- The attendees sat in group tables based on their interests and affiliations.
- Each of the groups presented their response and suggestions on the concepts presented.
- Posters used to capture group notes and present ideas.
- A summary of the feedback on the concepts presented was noted below:

Existing Wharf H&S Upgrades and Pontoon Replacement

- Eric Hamilton provided an update to the wharf user agreements and short term plans for wharf improvements to address H&S.
- Automated retractable bollards will be installed to control vehicle access onto the wharf and additional CCTV cameras will be added within the next quarter. Wharf users will be issued with an access card or app to access wharf.

User feedback / issues raised

- Fender piles need replacing and extending. Catwalk would be desirable.
- Replacement of existing pontoon needed.
- Proposal of second pontoon on inside of wharf and beach not supported as it is too confined for boat manoeuvring and too close to boat ramp. The area is tidal and would require constant dredging.
- Location of second pontoon needs to be re-assessed in the context of the wider wharf redevelopment

Concept 1 – Keep existing wharf for fishing and create new public wharf

User feedback / issues raised

- 5 out of 6 groups favoured as a good idea and supported the option 1 concept for a new wharf to separate users and provide for growth.
- Advantage that no reclamation required or significant dredging.
- Pontoons could be modular and expanded for growth over time.
- Need for shelter for ferry users
- Wharf length may be issue for some people. Suggestion to locate ferry berth at middle section of pontoon to minimise walking distance.
- Vehicle drop off bays to service wharf and emergency services need to be considered.
- Existing wharf to be upgraded with more fendering for at least three commercial fishing boats to be tied up.
- By removing pontoon and ferry from existing wharf, the boat ramp trailer boat operations is easier to navigate.
- Weigh station and rec fishing possible from existing wharf.
- Events can be booked on existing wharf for approx. 10 Days year. Commercial fishing can manage for this scenario.
- Need to consider open reserve area to free up space.

Concept 2 – Upgrade and expand existing wharf and pontoons

Desires and ideas to address demand and issues:

- Not widely supported as it creates more of the same issues.
- Option does provide for separation of users.
- Pushing wharf out in channel causes navigation issue and more adverse current for swimmers.

