



Skate Park Strategy Review

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PLA'CE

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Introduction

This review is a summary level review of the comprehensive Bass Coast Shire Skate Strategy 2018-2028 which was adopted by Council in 2018. Whilst it is a 'Skate' strategy, for the purposes of this review 'skate' refers to all wheeled sports including skateboarding as well as freestyle BMX and scootering.

This review will therefore firstly provide a summary of key achievements from the main objectives of the original strategy since adoption, then it will outline any new trends with skatepark provision since the original strategy was adopted, particularly given the recent success of the Tokyo Olympics. With skateboarding and BMX now being Olympic sports, now more than ever is it important to ensure the most appropriate skateparks are delivered in the best locations to benefit the community as a whole.

The review has been prepared in response to some challenges in finding an appropriate location for a regional skatepark originally mooted for San Remo. It will also outline a recommendation for the level of skate park that should be considered for installation at Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve in Newhaven and review the original hierarchical model for skate provision across the Shire.

Background

The original Bass Coast Shire Skate Strategy was prepared in 2018 and is a comprehensive document using extensive community engagement that aimed to shape the direction for skate provision across the Shire over the next 10 years.

The vision for the original Strategy was:

'To create a Shire where young people have a range of recreation options to keep them socially connected and physically active.'

The original Strategy essentially aimed to outline:

- How community needs can best be met
- What classification of facility should be provided
- Where the most appropriate locations are

Of the above, this review will specifically look at how the Strategy has been rolled out and how the community's needs have been met. It will also look in detail at the classification of the facilities in the Strategy given the challenges in finding an appropriate location for a regional skatepark and will consider alternative locations for skate and freestyle BMX provision moving forward.



Original Implementation Strategy

The original Strategy looked at a number of staged priorities and the table below lists these and confirms which have been achieved, which have not been completed and what the main issues and priorities are moving forward.

PRIORITY	NEW WORKS	RENEWAL WORKS	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
SHORT-TERM (2018-2020)	San Remo/Newhaven site selection and design works		Partially	The site selection and design works were undertaken at two sites (San Remo foreshore and Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve, Newhaven) but due to issues with available space, neither site was deemed suitable for a regional facility.
	Corinella new small local facility		✓	The design work was undertaken in 2018 and the facility was built in 2019.
	Grantville new small local facility		✓	The design work was undertaken in 2018 and the facility was built in 2019.
		Major renewal to Cowes local facility	✓	The design work was undertaken in 2018 and the facility was built in 2019.
		Wonthaggi phase 1 minor renewal	✓	Minor works undertaken to existing Wonthaggi Skatepark
		Inverloch phase 1 minor renewal	✓	Minor works undertaken to existing Inverloch Skatepark
MEDIUM - TERM (2020-23)	San Remo/Newhaven new regional facility construction		✗	Given no site suitable, construction for regional scale facility not undertaken
	Kilcunda new local facility		UNDERWAY	Kilcunda design completed and funding secured. Construction has commenced.
LONG-TERM (2023-26)	Grantville Phase 2: new small local facility		NOT YET DUE	
	Wonthaggi phase 2 new expansion to district facility	Inverloch phase 2 major renewal to local facility	NOT YET DUE	
	Newhaven: New amenity provision		NOT YET DUE	

Discussion

The above table summarises the original strategy implementation objectives and overall, Council has been very proactive and successful in implementing many of the short-term and medium-term priorities. The Corinella and Grantville smaller local skateparks have been designed and built successfully, as has the Cowes local facility. The main priority that has not been delivered is the regional skatepark designated for San Remo/Newhaven. This is primarily due to the lack of available appropriate public open space at the location highlighted within the original Strategy.

San Remo foreshore was recommended as the preferred location for a regional facility however after more comprehensive site assessment work, including survey and service location information, it was deemed unsuitable to cater for a regional facility. Following an internal review by Council officers of a number of other sites, Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve in Newhaven was then chosen to be assessed in detail for a regional facility. This local reserve contains a mini ramp and basketball half court and therefore could have been an appropriate site for a facility of this scale.

Following some initial design work and broad scale community engagement to test what could be implemented on site, Council reviewed the feedback in detail and it was deemed inappropriate for a regional skatepark. The project was therefore put on hold until this review was completed to determine a way forward for additional skatepark infrastructure for the Shire, in particular whether a regional facility should be constructed and where it should be located.

The following pages assess whether a regional skatepark is the best model moving forward and what adjustments can be made to the original Strategy to outline a way forward to construct new facilities in the future.

Distribution Model Review

Introduction

The original Strategy looks at a hierarchical model that includes local, district and a regional facility. It is explained within the Strategy that the hierarchical model is based primarily on other similar distribution approaches which have been used in a number of other municipalities. An example of this model is the Frankston City Council Skate Strategy, which led to the development of a central regional facility with supporting facilities such as Langwarrin, Seaford and Sandfield Reserve skate parks. The Strategy also highlights that each municipality is different in terms of its overall scale, transport connections, population distribution and level of services and infrastructure. Therefore, the distribution of facilities should tie in with these considerations.

Whilst outwardly having a single large regional facility is a valid approach with many councils, given the unique geographical and population distribution of Bass Coast Shire, the following distribution model review has been prepared that looks at a different approach to skate provision for the Shire.

Reviewing a Regional Facility

The site selection and design process for a regional skatepark in Bass Coast has proven a significant challenge. There was great difficulty in determining the best possible location for the facility. The location proposed in the Strategy ultimately could not accommodate a regional skatepark given significant services impacting on available space in both San Remo and Newhaven.

One of the key issues with the San Remo/Newhaven regional skatepark was the model proposed. Generally, a hierarchical model of a central regional facility, complemented by smaller facilities has been adopted successfully by many councils across Australia as outlined above. This model works when the regional facility is accessible to all and the smaller facilities then provide localised opportunities to skate and ride. But municipalities can differ greatly in their population and geographical distributions.

A large regional municipality Council like Albury City has one single population centre, whereas Bass Coast Shire is a collection of regional towns with significant distance between each population. Different municipalities therefore require different models. The first major consideration of any skatepark provision is looking at the unique geographical nature of the specific municipality.

The model changes significantly between councils given significant public transport and access, the distribution of population and the clustering of like services and facilities. In summary, local government areas can be classified as follows;

Metropolitan

These are generally inner city municipalities with good public transport. (Eg: Yarra, Boroondara). In this instance, the recommended hierarchical model of provision focuses on a central regional facility and then is complemented with local spaces as applicable.

Country centres

These are major townships servicing surrounding smaller rural neighborhoods (Eg. Albury, Ballarat, Shepparton etc). The recommended model is also for a single central regional facility with local facilities to complement the main space as applicable.

Suburban areas

These are outer city municipalities with significant urban development but more limited public transport. For the purposes of this study, Casey is considered as this type of municipality. It is generally recommended that 1-2 large regional facilities are located at a central space within the municipality with a series of smaller localised parks distributed across the suburbs.

Townships

These are outer metro and semi-rural municipalities such as Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula where there are only a few major centralised population centres, with smaller townships making up the majority of the population. Bass Coast falls within this classification.

Whilst a traditional regional facility model works in Metropolitan, Country Centres and Suburban Areas, a municipality such as Bass Coast should consider a different model due to the distance between higher populated townships, creating access issues for younger cohorts. Both Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula have looked at a number of district facilities across their townships to service their population rather than a single centralised facility.

Discussion

Fundamentally, looking at one large facility in a municipality that does not have a single large centralised population centre may not be the best approach moving forward. Given the distribution of the population and significant travel time between towns, putting in a single regional facility in one of the Shire's larger townships, would discriminate against the skaters/riders who live elsewhere in the Shire, who may have to travel up to 40 minutes to use the facility.

Taking a similar approach to both Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula where there are smaller district facilities distributed across Bass Coast would ensure more skaters and riders can easily access facilities accordingly.

A new model

The original strategy looks at a single regional facility in the San Remo/Cowes area, that whilst geographically is central, is not necessarily central with regard to population distribution. The following is a simple population review that looks at both overall population and youth population within the shire by townships.

PEOPLE AGED 12 TO 17 YEARS

Bass Coast Shire - Usual residence

	2016			2021			Change
Area	Number	Total population	Percent %	Number	Total population	Percent %	2016 to 2021
Cowes - Ventnor and District	363	6,286	5.8	474	8,319	5.7	2021
Inverloch - Pound Creek	333	5,45	6.1	430	6,524	6.6	+97
Newhaven - Cape Woolamai	160	2,110	7.6	193	2,841	6.8	+33
Phillip Island Balance	111	1,986	5.6	190	2,641	7.2	+78
Rural Balance	219	2,659	8.2	226	3,316	6.8	+7
San Remo	74	1,277	5.8	105	1,704	6.2	+31
Waterline (Western Port Townships)	204	3,955	5.2	279	5,166	5.4	+75
Wonthaggi - Cape Paterson, North Wonthaggi	652	9,122	7.1	638	10,272	6.2	-14
Bass Coast Shire	2,089	32,815	6.4	2,529	40,800	6.2	+440

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id (informed decisions).

Whilst many skateboarders and freestyle BMX riders are not aged between 12-17, the following table does provide a guide in terms of distribution across the Shire of an age bracket generally with the most participation in these activities. From the table it is clear that the distribution of young people is relatively consistent across the entire Shire and there is not one large single higher population town. This confirms the township model detailed in the previous section, outlining that a single regional facility may not necessarily provide the greatest benefit to all skaters/riders across the Shire.

Between 2022 and 2036, the population for Bass Coast Shire is forecast to increase by 9,774 persons (26.66% growth), at an average annual change of 1.67%. Of the main townships North Wonthaggi is estimated to grow the most. Whilst the original Strategy highlighted San Remo as the location for a regional facility given its central geographic location, San Remo and Newhaven actually have far fewer young people than Cowes, Inverloch and Wonthaggi.

Following the challenges in finding an appropriate location for a regional skatepark given the issues with existing major services and lack of appropriate public open space, there is a great opportunity to rethink the approach to facility provision within the Shire and look at a new model. Particularly given the growing populations of Cowes and Wonthaggi. The following section outlines this in more detail.

Multiple Sub-Regional Facilities

Given there are two significant main clusters of population within Bass Coast, being Phillip Island and surrounds and the Wonthaggi/ Inverloch area, this Strategy review recommends a new model be implemented that focuses on a major facility at each of these two population centres.

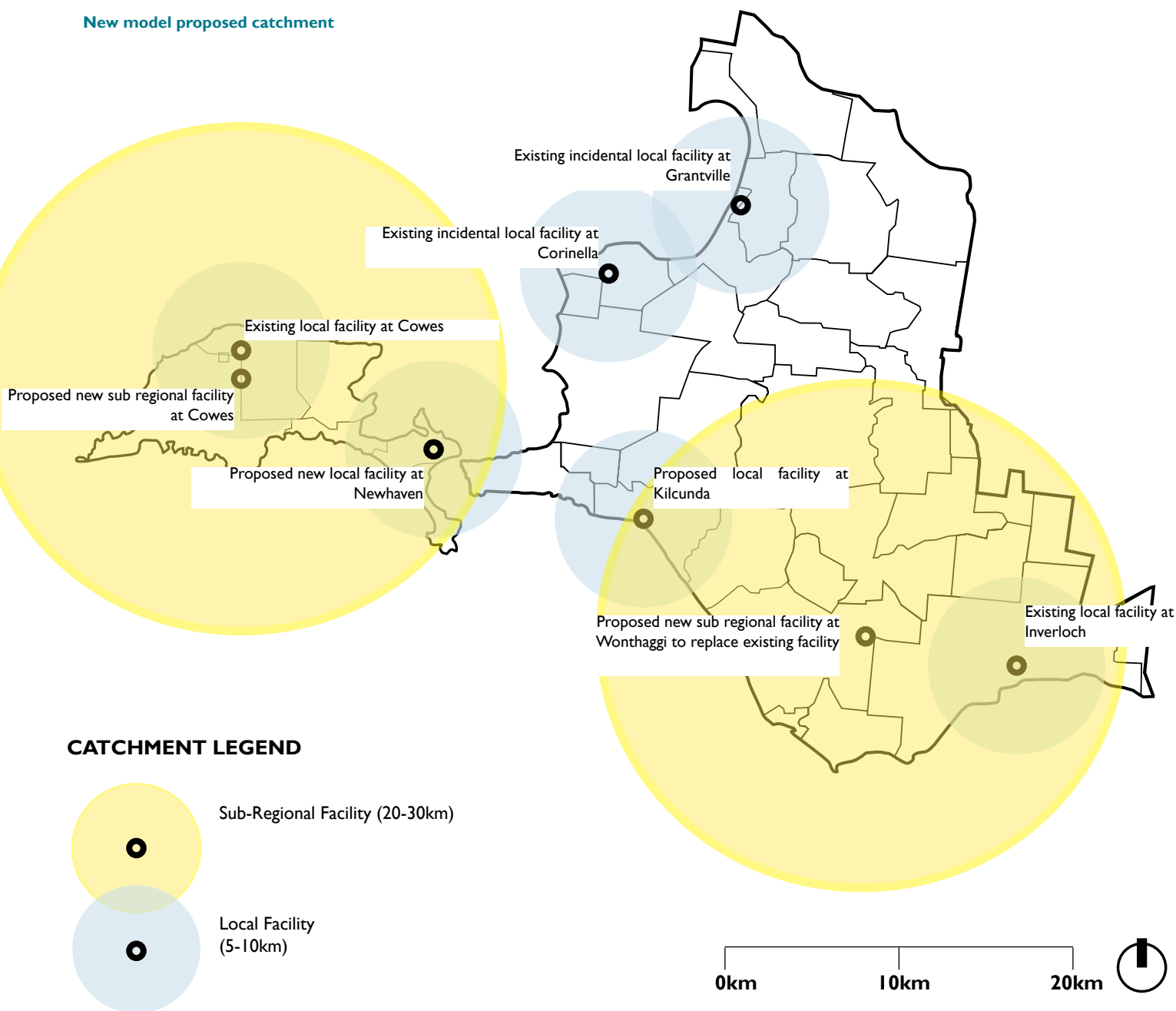
For the purposes of this review, a sub regional skatepark sits somewhere between a district and regional facility definition from the original strategy.

If a significant facility of a sub-regional scale is located at an appropriate site at the larger townships of Cowes and Wonthaggi, there will be an equitable distribution of major facilities at the two largest population centres within the Shire. Therefore all major population centres will be serviced by a major skatepark with a maximum time of 10 to 15 mins to access.

The added benefit of this approach is that these sub-regional facilities may not necessarily need to be as significant in size, allowing greater opportunity for finding appropriate sites for their implementation. They also can complement each other and contain slightly different features whilst ensuring they both meet the requirements for each location.

A new distribution model

New model proposed catchment



Discussion

The above map shows a proposed new model where there are now two sub-regional or larger district facilities. It is based primarily on the original Strategy however has removed the single Shire-wide regional facility. In its place is a proposed sub-regional facility in Cowes that provides a catchment across the Island and San Remo. There is also a new sub-regional facility in Wonthaggi that includes a catchment to Kilcunda and Inverloch. Finally there is also a new local facility being proposed at Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve at Newhaven to serve the local community.

This approach now ensures there are skateparks either in or closer to all the major population centres within Bass Coast Shire. The Grantville and Corinella communities still have their local facilities to use or have the choice of traveling a similar distance to either of the sub-regional facilities.

NEW IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This new suggested implementation strategy has slightly adjusted the original objectives in light of the recommended approach of two sub-regional skateparks at Cowes and Wonthaggi. It is outlined as follows;

PRIORITY	NEW WORKS	RENEWAL WORKS	COMPLETED	SKATE TYPE	COMMENTS
SHORT TERM	Council to undertake a Pump track, BMX and Mountain Bike strategy				Whilst not the focus of this strategy, there was some community interest in BMX, MTB and pump tracks as part of the survey outcomes. Council will look at this as a separate project.
	Kilcunda new local facility		UNDERWAY	Enclosed intermediate bowl	Kilcunda design completed and funding secured. Awaiting construction in 2022/23 financial year.
		Design of Wonthaggi sub-regional skatepark		Suggested street focus with some transition elements	Given current condition of existing Wonthaggi facility and that renewal works have not been undertaken this is a high priority to progress with design of this space, particularly also given recent Cowes local skatepark renewal.
		Design of Newhaven local facility renewal		Suggested mini ramp and basic street elements	Following consultation at Newhaven regarding the regional skatepark, there was significant community interest for a local level skatepark rather than regional facility at this location. Potential to look at prioritising a new local skatepark at this location.
MEDIUM TERM		Construction of Wonthaggi sub-regional skatepark			Prioritise the construction of this new park given delays following cancelling San Remo/Newhaven Regional Skatepark.
		Design and construction of Cowes sub-regional skatepark	NOT YET DUE	Suggested competition level bowls & transition with some street elements	Following completion of Wonthaggi sub-regional Skatepark, focus should be on implementing Cowes facility.
		Inverloch phase 2 major renewal to local facility	NOT YET DUE		Once sub-regional skateparks are complete, consider upgrade to Inverloch local facility.

DISCUSSION

The above revised implementation strategy looks at two new sub-regional skateparks at both Wonthaggi and Cowes, with Wonthaggi being the most pressing priority given the condition of the existing skatepark.

By upgrading and enhancing the existing facility, Council can resolve the current issues with its age and condition whilst also delivering a much-needed larger facility to service the regional centre of Bass Coast. As part of the engagement undertaken for the Newhaven regional skatepark, there was a lot of community support for a local scale facility at Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve. Therefore, it is recommended that a local skate park be constructed at Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve in the short term.

Following the implementation of the above, this Review then suggests a new sub-regional Skatepark for Cowes being the next priority. Given a more street focussed local skatepark was implemented at Cowes, there is a need expressed by a number of the skate stakeholders for a more transition focussed skatepark in this region. Given the original design for the regional skatepark at San Remo also focussed on competition level bowls, there is a need for this type of facility to be implemented on Phillip Island.

The next section highlights the possible locations of the two sub-regional skateparks and local skatepark at Newhaven after discussions with Council Officers and on-site assessments.

NEW SUB REGIONAL SKATEPARK AT WONTHAGGI



Discussion

The above image shows the proposed aquatic centre at Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve. There is space available at the existing skatepark to consider expanding the footprint to create a new sub-regional skatepark. Given that the skatepark has a long history at the site and is part of a larger recreation precinct, as well as having a number of local schools within walking distance of the site, it is considered an appropriate location for a new sub-regional skatepark.

The design shown is indicative only, but focuses on more of a street facility to reflect the key features of the existing facility and provide a large skatepark that has more park features for competitions and events and should accommodate features that provide an increase in skill development. There is an opportunity for minor transition elements that could include a bowl or mini ramp however given the new bowl being installed in Kilcunda which is relatively close, these may not be required.

As a guide the following should be considered for a sub-regional skatepark;

- Approximately 600-1000m²+
- Strategically located to service a number of communities and provide diversity across the Shire
- Located next to complimentary recreation
- Potential for an iconic design and theme
- Complex, unique and advanced obstacles
- Catering for skill development from beginner to advanced level
- Capable of holding medium sized competitions & event opportunities
- Amenity, spectator areas + landscape provision
- Family friendly + further activation / recreation provision –provide a playspace, basketball ring and pump track in line with relevant strategies and policies
- Caters to all styles of skate but focus on street/park style given proximity to Kilcunda bowl
- Allows for night time usage

New sub regional skatepark at Cowes



Discussion

The above image shows the proposed Cowes 'Carnival Site' masterplan. Council has newly acquired the land and space has been allocated to include a sub-regional scale skatepark on the North Eastern corner of the site. Given it is on Phillip Island Road which is the main road into Cowes, sits adjacent to a proposed recreation reserve and is situated on the residential outskirts of Cowes, and is both close to other future recreation facilities and close to the Cowes township, it is considered a good location for a sub-regional skate park.

The design shown is indicative only, but focuses on more of a bowl facility to reflect the key features suggested as part of the San Remo consultation and provide a large skatepark that has more bowl features for competitions and events and should include features that provide opportunities to increase in skill development to complement the existing street skatepark at Cowes.

As a guide the following should be considered for a sub-regional skatepark;

- Approximately 600-1000m²+
- Strategically located to service a number of communities and provide diversity across the Shire
- Located next to complimentary recreation
- Potential for an iconic design and theme
- Complex, unique and advanced obstacles
- Catering for skill development from beginner to advanced level
- Capable of holding medium sized competitions & event opportunities
- Amenity, spectator areas + landscape provision
- Family friendly + further activation / recreation provision –provide a playspace, basketball ring and pump track in line with relevant strategies and policies
- Caters to all styles of skate but focus on street/park style given proximity to Kilcunda bowl
- Allows for night time usage

New local skatepark at Newhaven



Discussion

The above image shows the existing Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve in Newhaven. There is an existing half court that contains some aging skate infrastructure. The concept looks at replacing this existing skate infrastructure and replacing it with some additional local level beginner to intermediate skate elements. These would sit around the existing ball court and extend towards the existing toilet.

The design shown is indicative only, but shows how a local facility could sit within the site accordingly.

As a guide the following should be considered for a local skatepark;

- Approximately 200-300m²+
- Strategically located to service the local Newhaven community and replace the existing aging skate infrastructure.
- Located next to complimentary recreation.
- Entry level obstacles
- Catering for skill development from beginner to intermediate users
- Amenity, local spectator areas + landscape provision.
- Family friendly + further activation / recreation provision basketball.
- Caters to for park style street course to complement district park facility already at Cowes

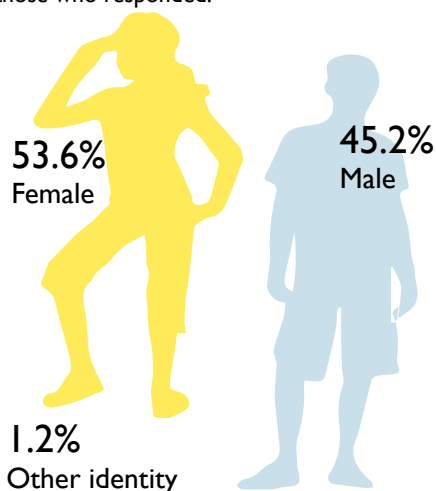
Consultation survey summary

237

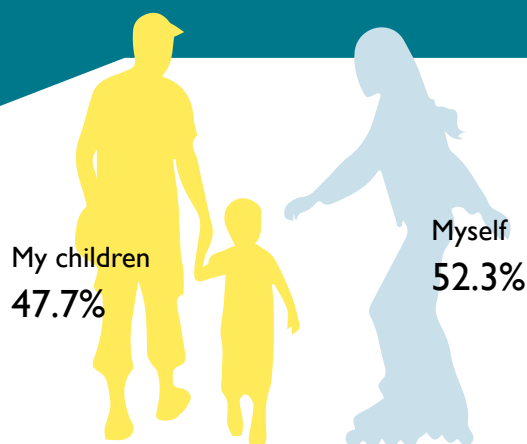
A draft of the this Skate Strategy Review was placed on exhibition and 237 people filled out the feedback survey. The following is a summary of these responses.

Gender?

There was a pretty even split of those who responded.

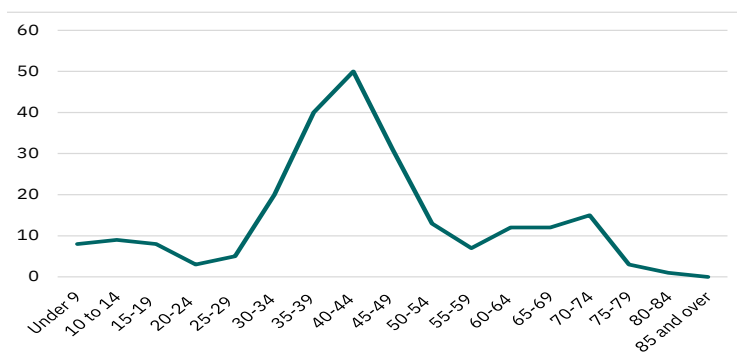


Who are you representing?

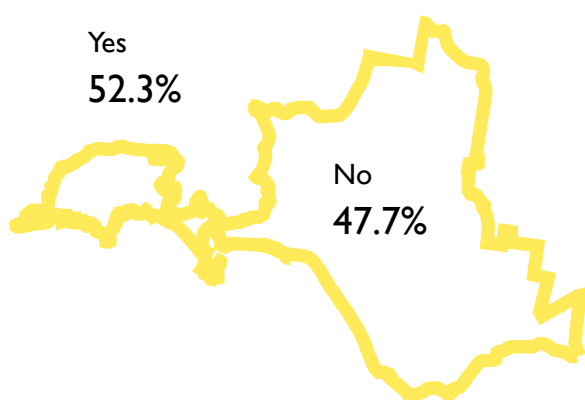


Age distribution?

There was a diverse range of ages who responded to the survey from young children through to older residents. Overall the majority that responded were those in their late 30's and early 40's.



Do you travel outside of Bass Coast to skate?



If you do travel outside of Bass Coast to skate, Why?

To use more advanced features

To go to bigger facilities, with more variety

To skate better facilities than what is currently available locally

Do you use existing skate facilities in the Shire?

YES
70%

NO
30%

Would you use the proposed sub-regional skate facilities?

YES	NO	MAYBE
72.6%	17.7%	9.7%

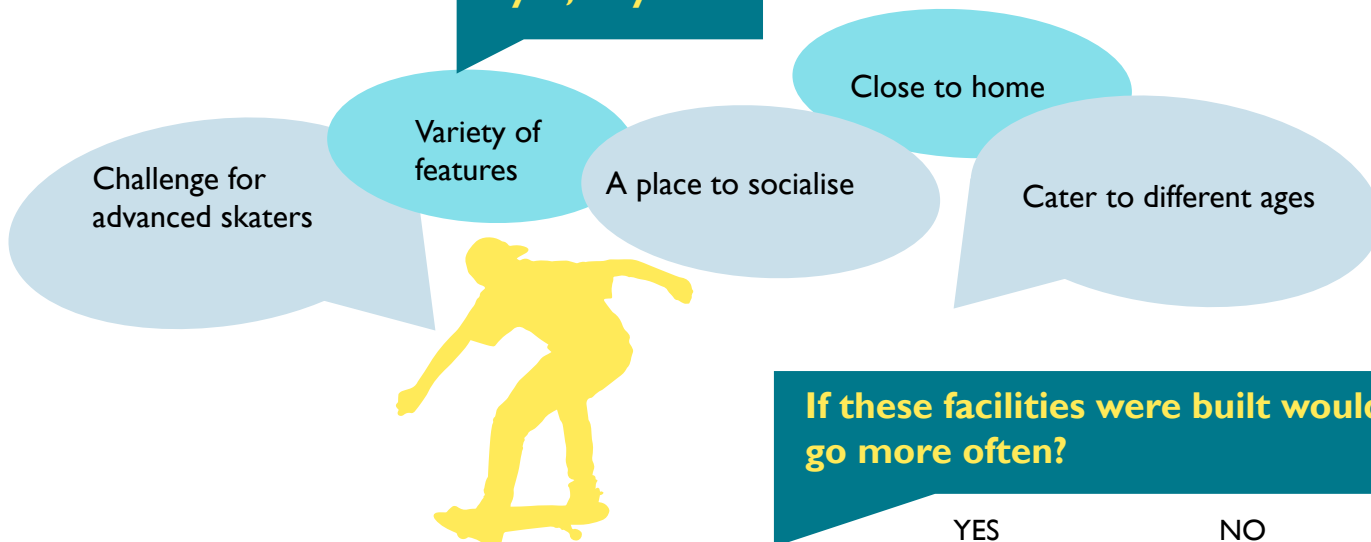
Would you use the proposed Newhaven skate facility?

YES	NO
MAYBE	

If these facilities were built would they meet your needs?

YES	NO
70.7%	29.3%

If yes, why?



If these facilities were built would you go more often?

YES	NO
79.3%	20.7%

If yes, why?



Discussion

237 was a significant number of responses to the survey, with an equal mix of genders represented and the majority of respondents being adults in their 30s to 40s. Just under half of those that responded were representing their children. The majority of those surveyed used the existing skate facilities in Bass Coast and also over half traveled outside of the Shire to visit other skateparks. Regarding key questions on the strategic direction, there was resounding support overall for both the proposed sub-regional facilities and local Newhaven facility. Regarding this Newhaven facility, there still was some concerns by some of the community and resistance to installing a local level skatepark at Richard Grayden Memorial Reserve. This will need to be considered with any future design with the space primarily catering for beginners and not significantly encroach on the green open space at the Reserve. Overall the majority of respondents believed the new facilities would meet their needs and would encourage them to go more often. This is a really positive response by the community to the strategic direction of this skatepark strategy review.