

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT_ SUMMARY REPORT

Dawn Fraser Baths
Master Plan



Document register

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Front cover image: View of the Dawn Fraser Baths in use during an event.

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Community engagement event at the 'Back to Balmain Festival' in Elkginton Park on Sunday 29 October 2017. Photography by Inner West Council.

01_ Executive summary

During October and November 2017 Inner West Council undertook community engagement to understand the current use and future vision for the Dawn Fraser Baths. The community engagement included interactive engagement sessions and an online survey at the Inner West Council 'Your Say Inner West' website. During the six week engagement period, the online website received 1965 visits with 215 surveys completed. The engagement sessions also received input from over 125 respondents who completed interactive activities, paper surveys and had lengthy discussions with Council staff.

The scope of the engagement included feedback on:

- > The Dawn Fraser Baths;
- > The caretaker's cottage;
- > Access pathways to the Baths and the caretaker's cottage through Elkington Park;
- > The Elkington Park public toilets;
- > Car parking areas, embankment, stabilisation and storm water design solutions to ameliorate the degradation of the southern pavilion; and
- > Public domain elements that impact the design and construction of these listed elements.

The feedback highlighted the majority of those that visit the Dawn Fraser Baths live on the Balmain peninsula, although 16% of visitors do travel from a wide range of suburbs including Surry Hills, Caringbah and Vaucluse.

From the feedback received a clear list of actions have been requested by the community which will be considered in the master planning process. Some of the items include:

- > Retain the existing unique heritage and character;
- > Retain the existing vegetation on the batter slope up to Elkington Park - although remove the weed species such as Lantana;
- > Renovate or improve the toilets and change rooms;
- > Provide more shade options including over the beach area;
- > Improve access to the Baths and into the water at the Baths;
- > Provide more / different seating options;
- > Display the heritage memorabilia relating to the Baths;
- > Review use options for the caretaker's Cottage; and
- > Review the food and beverage options available at the Baths.

The information contained within this report will form the basis of the decision making through the next phases of the master planning process. A draft of the plan will be placed on public exhibition in 2018 to ensure Council has interpreted the feedback correctly and met community expectations. Feedback from the community will inform amendments to the draft plan, before the final draft is presented to Council for adoption.

The final master plan will guide improvements at the Baths and in Elkington Park including the caretaker's cottage over the next 10 years.

02_ Context

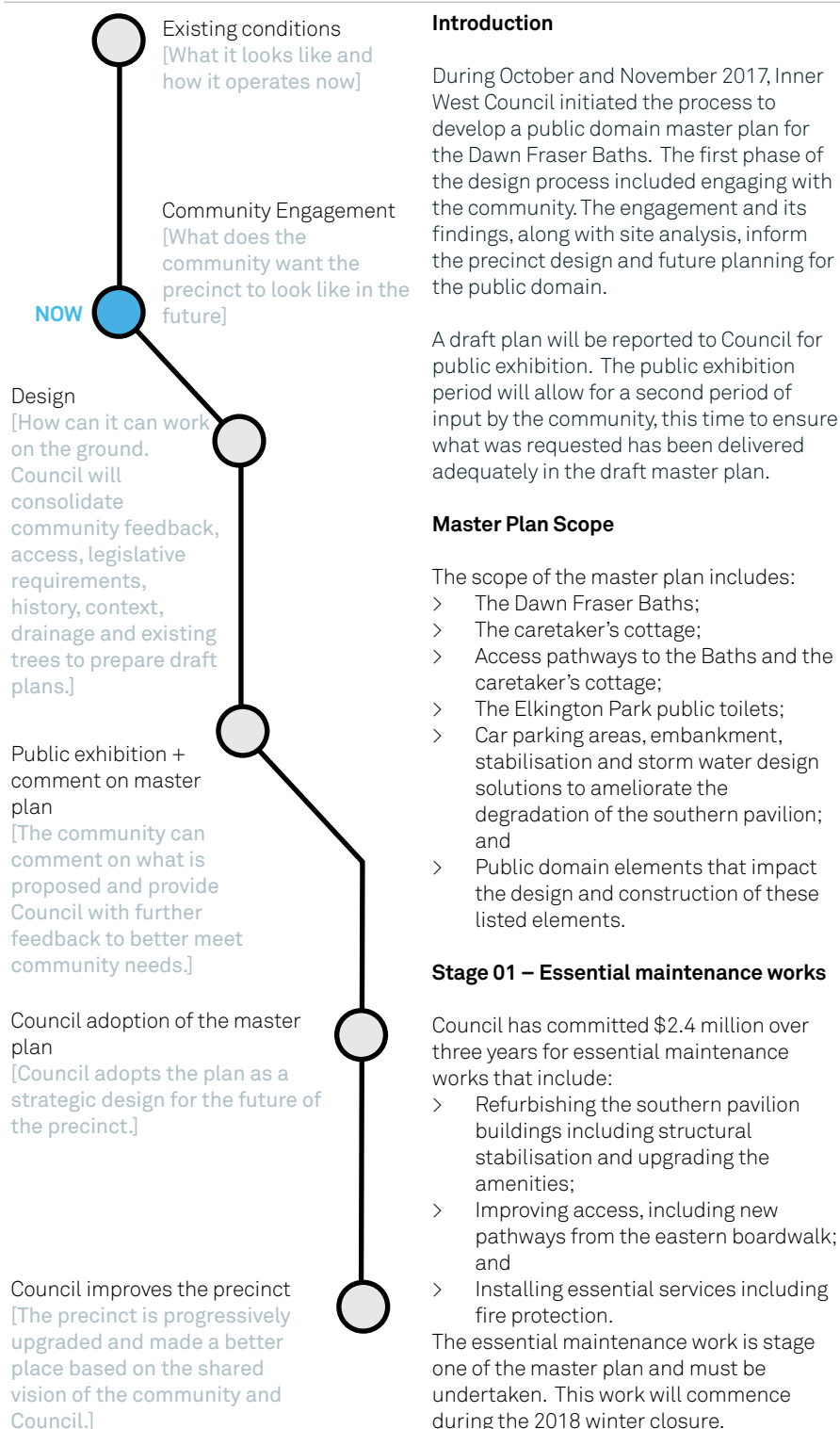


Figure 01: Diagram of the Master Plan process

02_ Context



Figure 02: Project scope.

NTS

The above plan locates the Dawn Fraser Baths, the caretaker's cottage and public toilets within Elkington Park and the nearby streets of Balmain.

03_ Method Statement

Method statement

The community engagement methodology aimed to be as inclusive as possible with a variety of forums for feedback. Feedback forums included weekday pop ups at the Baths, a Saturday stall on Darling Street at Loyalty Square (near Woolworths), one weekend stall at the Baths, stalls at the Back to Balmain Festival and Norton Street Festa. An online survey at 'Your Say Inner West' was available during the entire engagement period and paper surveys were also available from the counter at the Baths.

Advertising

The community engagement events and online survey were advertised with a letter distributed to 14000 households across the Balmain peninsula including Balmain, Balmain East, Birchgrove, Lilyfield, and Rozelle. Advertisements were placed in the Inner West Courier, on the Inner West Council Website, in the Leichhardt and Petersham Service Centres, Balmain and Leichhardt Library and as posts on the Inner West Council Facebook page.

Engagement Day – Saturday 14 October 2017

A community engagement day was held outside Woolworths in Loyalty Square, Darling Street, Balmain from 9:00pm to 1:00pm. The engagement day had more than 50 attendees who undertook paper surveys and participated in other engagement activities. The event was facilitated by three Council staff and the Mayor was in attendance for at least an hour. The event was highly successful with attendees asking questions and eagerly providing their opinions on the future of the Baths.

Engagement Day at 'Back to Balmain' – Saturday 29 October 2017

A community engagement day was held at the 'Back to Balmain' festival from 11:00am until 3:00pm in Elkington Park, Balmain. The event was well attended by the

community with more than 30 surveys completed, with more attendees interacting with 'sticky dot' plans. The event was staffed by two Council Officers and the Mayor was briefly in attendance. The community was very active in engaging with staff asking many questions about the project and design process.

Engagement Day at Norton Street Festa – Saturday 29 October 2017

A community engagement day was held as part of the Norton Street Festa from 10:00am until 5:00pm. The stall was staffed by two Council Officers who helped facilitate street surveys and interactive activities. The event had moderate interaction from festival attendees.

Engagement Day at Dawn Fraser Baths – Sunday 5 November 2017

A community engagement day was to be held at the Baths from 12:00pm to 3:00pm at the Dawn Fraser Baths. Due to heavy overnight rain the night before the event, pollution in the Harbour exceeded health regulations for swimming, which closed the Baths. Due to the Baths closure and ongoing rain showers, the event was cancelled.

Engagement Day at Dawn Fraser Baths – Saturday 11 November 2017

A community engagement day was held at the Baths from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at the Dawn Fraser Baths. The engagement day was well attended as there was a Water Polo event occurring concurrently at the Baths. The Council Officer attending the event, walked around asking Bath users to complete surveys while attendees generally from the water polo teams completed 'sticky dot' tasks on A1 boards.

Pool side Surveys

On several days, Council staff visited the Dawn Fraser Baths and undertook pool side surveys. This included surveys on Wednesday 18 October 2017 at around 11am; Thursday 2 November at 9:30am and Thursday 16 November 2017 at 10:30am. Paper surveys were available at the Baths from the entry counter at all times during the duration of the engagement period.

Online survey

An online survey was launched on 9 October 2017 and ran for 6 weeks until 19 November 2017. The online survey was well visited by the community with 1965 respondents viewing the online survey and 215 online surveys complete. Throughout the survey period activity visiting the site was steady, through there were major visitation spikes on 13 October 2017 and 18 October 2017, and smaller spikes on 31 October and 2 November 2017.

Who did we hear from?

- > The majority of responses were from the Balmain Peninsula – Balmain, Balmain East and Birchgrove;
- > The majority of respondents walk or drive to the Baths;
- > The majority of respondents are aged between 35 - 49; and
- > The majority of respondents stay one to three hours at the Baths and visit once or twice a month.

04_ Feedback

Feedback received from respondents provides clear feedback of how the areas is used, where and how people travel to the Baths and insight on what respondents would like to do in the future. The following is a summarised list of the feedback received.

Of the 326 respondents that completed where they live or what post code they are from, the majority of respondents were from Balmain, Balmain East, Leichhardt, Birchgrove and Leichhardt (68%) followed by Annandale and Rozelle (16%).

Respondents otherwise were from a wide range of suburbs, with the following list in declining order of responses: Canada Bay, Five Dock, Russell Lea, Croyden Park, Croyden, Drummoyne, Petersham, Lewisham, Darlinghurst, Camperdown, Bellevue Hill, Summer Hill, Newtown, Enmore, Watsons Bay, Dover Heights, Vaucluse, Glebe, Chippendale, Ashfield, Homebush, Haberfield, Strathfield, Hunters Hill, Marrickville, Stanmore, Surry Hills, Penhurst, Campsie, Arncliffe, West Pennant Hills, Bondi, Newcastle, Warners Bay, Cremorne, Quakers Hill, Abbotsford, Caringbah, Lilydale, Lane Cover North, Allawah, Gladesville, and Enfield.

This equates to 16% of Dawn Fraser Baths users from being outside the local catchment area.

Of the 471 responses (respondents could select more than one) received regarding how respondents travel to the Baths, Council received the following:

Walk	183 (39%)
Car or motorbike	179 (38%)
Bicycle	84 (17%)
Public transport	19 (4%)
Roller skates, roller blades or boards and scooters	4 (1%)
Mobility scooter	2 (1%)

Of the 338 responses received on how long people stay at the Baths, the most selected was once or twice a month. The results include the following:

Daily	15 (4%)
Two or three times per week	63 (19%)
Once a week	58 (17%)
Once or twice a month	114 (34%)
Once or twice per season	88 (26%)

Of the 1164 answers selected from the list (respondents could select more than one answer) respondents outlined their main reasons for visiting the Dawn Fraser Baths includes the following:

Sunbathe or relax in the shade around the pool	209 (18%)
Paddle or swim to cool down and relax	192 (16%)
Swim laps	153 (13%)
Visit the Baths with children	142 (12%)
Spend time relaxing in Elkington Park	109 (10%)
Attend events at the Baths	83 (7%)
Picnic in Elkington Park when visiting the Baths	78 (7%)
Children use the Elkington Park playground when visiting the Baths	73 (6%)
Play water polo at the Baths	55 (5%)
Member of a Club that use the Baths	51 (4%)
Off season key holder	19 (2%)

Feedback was received from 344 respondents outlining how long they stay at the Baths. The summary includes:

Less than an hour	37 (10%)
1 – 3 hours	269 (79%)
More than 3 hours	38 (11%)

When respondents (totalling 524 – as respondents could select more than one) eat food at the Baths they:

Get food and drink from the Kiosk	205 (39%)
Bring food from home	177 (34%)
Buy food from Darling Street	71 (13%)
Don't eat or drink when visiting the Baths	47 (9%)
Other	24 (5%)

From the 213 respondents that completed the age question online, the following breakdown of age demographics resulted:

Under 18	4 (2%)
19-24	21 (10%)
25-34	15 (7%)
35-49	77 (36%)
50-59	45 (21%)
60-69	35 (16%)
70 and above	16 (8%)

From the 118 respondents that answered the question online, the responses to questions relating to accessibility include:

It's difficult to access the Bath entry from the carpark	41 (35%)
The pathways from Elkington Park to the bath entry are unsuitable	43 (36%)
Its difficult to get into the water from the pool surrounds	34 (29%)

04_ Feedback

Respondents were asked during engagement events to select their favourite and least favourite locations at the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park with 'sticky dots'. Respondents were asked to also outline in several words why they selected these locations.



Figure 03: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **favourite locations** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.



Figure 04: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **least favourite locations that need to change** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.

Comments and requests

- > Clean up old baby pool area;
- > Scary side of the old pontoon [needs improving];
- > Showers / change rooms need refurbishment;
- > Love - pontoons, swim club;
- > Want to change - Bath rooms;
- > Love BBQ and beers. Increase hours with liquor licence;
- > Additional / stronger lighting for training;
- > Extra cover and seating, particularly at the western end of the Baths;
- > Access to the harbour in the middle of the city to swim is amazing;
- > Like - the beach at low tide for kids to play on;
- > Request a retractable shade awning over the children's beach area;
- > Like - the large deck to sit and watch the kids or water polo;
- > Like - the beach for the kids;
- > Open a hall of fame;
- > Like - the swimming club, the joy of swimming and jumping into the water;
- > Dislike - the Baths need new bathrooms;
- > Love the club BBQ and bar facilities for watching the water polo;
- > The bathrooms / change rooms need upgrading;
- > Would be great to have access to the hall of fame, above the kiosk;
- > Like - the new pontoon;
- > Like - the sausage sizzles;
- > Request a cafe;
- > Needs new bathrooms and change rooms;
- > Better lighting at night for water polo;
- > Needs better change rooms;
- > Need to provide permanent BBQ facilities (specifically for water polo); and
- > Needs more ongoing maintenance - removal of weed and barnacles from the pool walls;
- > New change shed and generally cleaner;
- > Remove the walls from the northern pavilion to improve the views;
- > Rename - to reflect community better;
- > Disability access to sand area;
- > Better kiosk;
- > Lap pool like Boy Charlton;
- > Free BBQs like Ballast point park;
- > Need more than one public toilet cubicle in Elkington Park - there are often queues;
- > More locals to have winter keys;
- > I like it how it is.
- > Open year round;
- > Less sea animals; and
- > Better access.

04_ Feedback

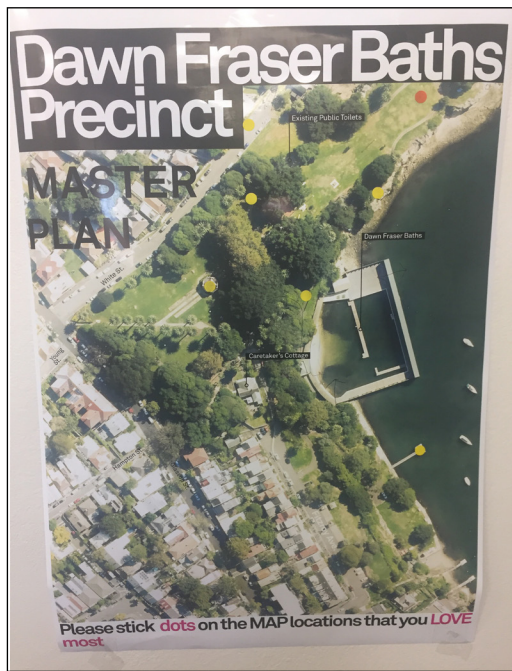


Figure 03: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **favourite locations** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.



Figure 04: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **least favourite locations that need to change** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.

Comments and requests

- > Request more shade;
- > Do nothing - leave it as it is;
- > Don't touch the Baths;
- > Request shade, better access and improved changing areas;
- > Provide more shaded areas;
- Make the cottage into a cafe and function room for community uses;
- > Make the toilets better and improve the lighting;
- > Remove the weeds - Castor Oil plants and Lantana;
- > Request the Baths to be cleaner;
- > Provide a railing to the stairs at the access;
- > Provide more play equipment in the park for older children;
- > Renovate the toilets;
- > Join it up to the bay run;
- > No boat mooring near the Baths;
- > Provide more seating on the peninsular;
- > Request better access;
- > Provide more seating;
- > Improve accessibility - prams;
- > We need escalators - better access;
- > Don't like the position of the new light posts in the park;
- > Too much vegetation - prune to improve views into and out of the Baths;
- > Seek opportunities for solar lighting to be installed;
- > Renovate the toilets;
- > Caretaker's Cottage to become a cafe or function service;
- > More sand;
- > Improve the access near the playground;
- > Open up the bottom park terrace with the pool;
- > Cafe in the caretaker's cottage;
- > Add somewhere to sit by the water;
- > Put 2 - 3 moorings, so people from boats can get to the park;
- > Cottage to become a cafe or function room;
- > Open up the waters so it is less enclosed;
- > The greenery is great - keep it;
- > Cafe in the cottage;
- > More parking;
- > More sand on the beach;
- > Get rid of the caretaker;
- > Provide better seating in the Baths;
- > Turn the cottage into a 'mens shed';
- > Provide a retractable shade awning over the sand beach;
- > Improve the sea bed of the Baths - increase the amount of sea grass.
- > Options for lift access e.g. at Balmain Sailing Club; and
- > Its hot - umbrellas are needed.

04_ Feedback

Comments and requests

- > Better cafe - Melbourne style
- > Twilight / evening wine and drinks - 5pm - 8pm;
- > More seating on the peninsula / point;
- > No night openings;
- > Maintain it how it is - no change;
- > No cafes;
- > No cafe;
- > The park is already really nice;
- > More shade;
- > Provide a cafe;
- > No night time parties - due to noise;
- > More visibility - open up the views from the park;
- > Better water filter - improved water quality;
- > Fix the drinking fountains that don't work in the park;
- > No cafes;
- > More shade;
- > Improve the coffee at the Baths
- > Improve the pram access and children's change areas;
- > Provide a rubbish bin within the north-east part of the park (at the bottom of Punch Street);
- > Provide a wine bar
- > Wine bar;
- > Bar;
- > Retain caretaker in the cottage;
- > Cleaner water in the pool - less seaweed;
- > The female toilets are not clean and feel unsafe;
- > Already too much traffic in the local streets;
- > Issue regarding residents parking - look at timed street parking;
- > I love the views from the park looking over the Baths;
- > I love swimming on summer afternoons;
- > Keep as a relaxed community asset - Don't develop;
- > Make it cleaner - otherwise lovely;
- > Skinny-Dip night time parties please;
- > Cottage as a cafe or kiosk window to service park;
- > Northern pavilion - remove walls and provide better views;
- > More shade;
- > Keep it as a local asset;
- > Disabled access - main access stairs - alternative access;
- > More sand;
- > More shade over beach area;
- > Take dogs out of park and allow on the foreshore;
- > Better access;



Figure 07: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **favourite locations** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.



Figure 04: Sticky dots on plans highlighting respondents **least favourite locations that need to change** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.

04_ Feedback



Figure 09: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **favourite locations** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.



Figure 10: Respondents placed 'sticky dots' on plans highlighting respondents **least favourite locations that need to change** within the Dawn Fraser Baths and Elkington Park.

Comments and requests

- > Caretaker's cottage - for the community. e.g. Cafe would be fantastic;
- > Jelly fish freaked us out last time we were there;
- > Best to go on a hot day in Balmain. Maybe friendlier staff at this time but great place;
- > Keep it quiet and peaceful;
- > Why not build a replica Roman Bath complex here?;
- > Need to be bigger, more signage - it's too hidden, needs to be renovated. Maybe a bit too enclosed;
- > I don't want it to change - I love the Dawn Fraser Baths;
- > Better park seating;
- > Dangerously dead Camphor Laurel tree - needs removing;
- > Keep the heritage look and feel;
- > Would be great if you could rent out Caretaker cottage for events and weddings;
- > I like how there's sea life in the pool;
- > I like jumping off the jetty;
- > I'd like a new cafe with ice creams;
- > I'd like to hire inflatable pool toys;
- > The wall destroys the pool for me - it cuts off the view of the harbour and makes it feel too enclosed;
- > Needs to be cleaned of seaweed - kids don't like it;
- > Tide timetable on DFB website?
- > Don't touch it other than new dingy racks and kayak racks at eastern side of pool (outside);
- > Employ locals for Council contracts;
- > Accessibility, shade, places to sit, wine bar;
- > Don't put barricades everywhere;
- > Better food at the kiosk, but keep it affordable;
- > Solve access issues into the water; Open up the northern pavilion and install a net - pilings not sustainable;
- > Retain ability to drive to pontoon - eastern side;
- > More comfortable for parents and carers e.g. Long wooden bench with umbrellas; and
- > Keep as a quiet oasis the locals can enjoy.

05_ Common Themes

Common themes from the community engagement feedback has been summarised below under public domain elements:

Character

Respondents love the existing heritage character of the Baths and described it as being of a very special quality. Respondents requested the existing character and heritage be retained in proposed upgrades.

Pathway connections to the Baths entry

Pathway access to the Baths does not meet user needs. The route is not direct, and is difficult for people with wheelchairs and prams. Some respondents believe the entry to the Baths is hard to find.

Elkington Park pathways

Respondents outlined the pathway network and kerb ramps in Elkington Park need to be improved.

Elkington Park

Respondents very much love the park setting of the Baths. The community particularly like the green backdrop of large trees on the bank between the pool and the park. A few respondents believe the pool could be better integrated with the park.

Elkington Park public toilets

Most respondents noted the public toilets in Elkington Park do not meet their needs. Respondents described them as dirty and not nice to use.

Elkington Park lighting

Many respondents requested better night time lighting in Elkington Park.

Parking

A lack of parking at the Baths was raised by many respondents as an issue.

Sand

Many respondents requested more sand at the entry beach.

Water access

Respondents requested improved access into the Baths for those not able to use the stairs.

Water quality

Many respondents raised water quality and sea life (including stingrays and jellyfish) as an issue at the Baths.

Moorings and boats

A few respondents requested that boats not moor near the Baths due to the pollution moored boats (e.g. toilet and bilge water) could contribute to reducing the Baths water quality.

Views

The views from Elkington Park to the Baths and the harbour beyond is loved by the community. Respondents described the loss of this view from some areas of Elkington Park due to weeds (Chinese elms and lantana) growing on the embankment down to the Baths. These respondents requested the removal of the weeds to return the views from the park.

Vegetation

Respondents requested the existing fig trees and palms be retained as a beautiful green backdrop to the Baths.

Safety

Respondents feel safe when they visit the Baths.

Seating

Respondents requested more seats and seating options.

Shade

Respondents like the option of sitting in the sun or shade at the Baths. Generally respondents however requested more shade at the Baths with a strong numbers of respondents requesting more shade over the beach area.

BBQ facilities

Some respondents requested public accessible / usable barbecue facilities at the Baths.

Rubbish bins

Only a few respondents requested additional rubbish bins around the pool area.

Bicycle parking

A lack of bicycle parking at the Baths was noted by some respondents.

Baths lighting

Respondent feedback was mixed in regards to improving lighting at the Baths. Many respondents stated they don't use the Baths at night, so found it a difficult element to comment on.

Heritage displays

There was strong support from respondents for the display of heritage items relating to the Baths on site.

Food and beverage

The Baths kiosk is a popular source of food and beverages, but most note the kiosk could have better options for customers. Many requested a bar with alcoholic drinks in the evening.

Change facilities and toilets within the Baths

Respondents highlighted the existing toilet and change room facilities do not meet their needs. Some requested family change areas so parents can accompany their children while they are getting changed.

Caretaker's Cottage

There was no clear direction from respondents on whether the caretaker's cottage should be used as a leasable business such as small food and beverage business (café/bar) or as a hireable community use space (community meeting area). The engagement has provided no clear direction on the future use of the cottage.

06_ The next steps...

The information contained within this report, along with detailed site analysis will form the bases of the decision making through the next phases of the master planning process. A draft of the plan will be placed on public exhibition in 2018 to ensure Council has interpreted the feedback correctly and met community expectations.

The final master plan will guide improvement at the Dawn Fraser Baths for the next ten years.