

Community Engagement Report

Howqua Public Boat Ramp
6 January 2023 – 10 March 2023



Mansfield Shire

Summary

This engagement sought community stakeholder feedback on location options for construction of two new public boat ramps near Howqua Inlet.

It followed previous community engagement in 2022 regarding a proposed ramp at the end of Barnetts road, Howqua Inlet, which found strong support for the proposal but also significant concern about increased activity and disturbance close to nearby residents' homes.

Alternative location options were subsequently investigated and developed. Instead of a single ramp, two smaller ramps were proposed – a low-to-mid-level ramp and a high-level ramp – together serving the same lake levels as the previous proposal. Two location options for each were presented in this engagement.

Extensive feedback was received via an online survey, email submissions and phone conversations. It indicated strong sentiment and various competing preferences among respondents. The majority of respondents identified as local residents.

For the low-to-mid-level ramp, neither option was clearly preferred. However, the Peacheys Road option was more positively viewed than the revised Barnetts Road option.

For the high-level ramp, the “Howqua east” option was preferred by a clear majority, and the sentiment towards this option was generally positive. Sentiment towards the alternative Willow Lake Drive option was mixed, with many strongly negative responses.

This report recommends proceeding with the “Howqua east” option with consideration for addressing the concerns that were raised in relation to it. It recommends further consideration of issues raised in relation to the Peacheys Road option.

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Scope of engagement

Because wide stakeholder support for a ramp had been established through a petition to Council and Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) in 2016 and through previous community engagement in 2022, this engagement focussed on comparing proposed locations.

It aimed to enable Council to decide on suitable locations in alignment with community members' preferences and with consideration for achieving the greatest benefits from the ramps with the least possible negative impact to stakeholders.

To enable a decision, the engagement sought to assess community sentiment towards the proposed locations and find which were preferred, identify further concerns to be addressed and give local residents, property owners, regular visitors and boat users an opportunity to provide feedback.

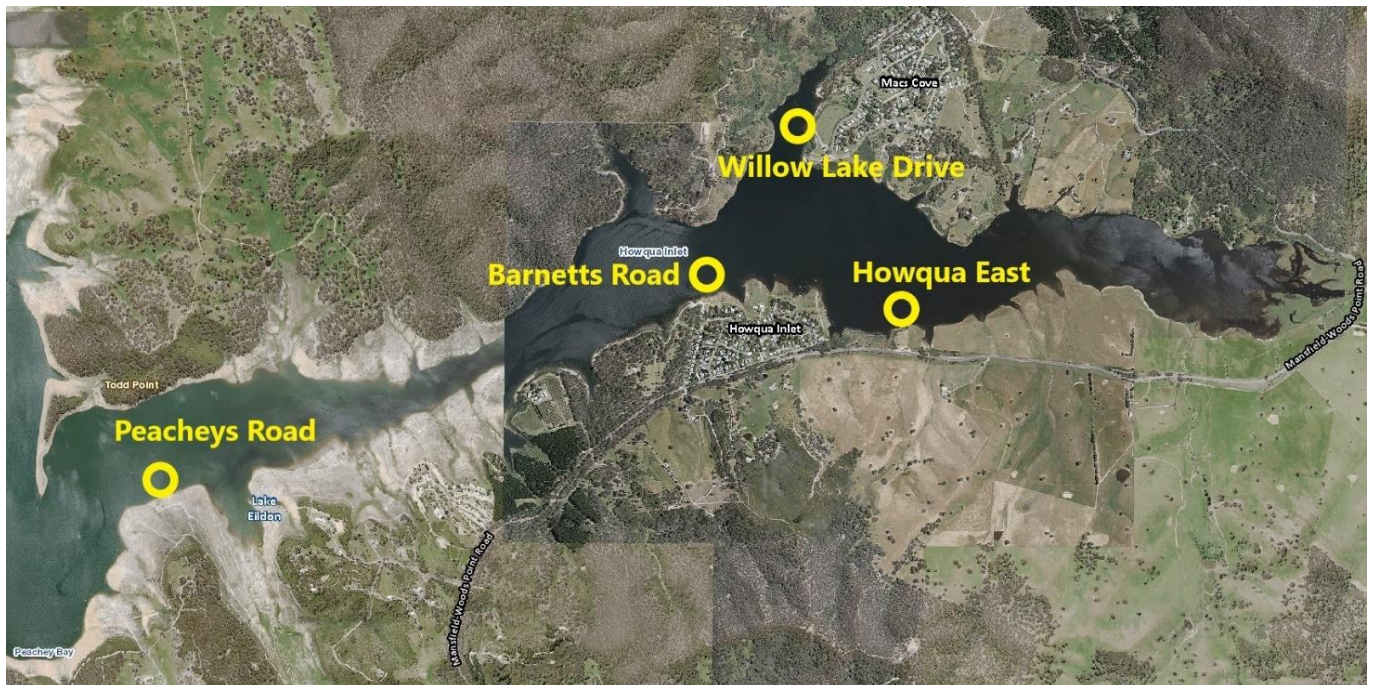
Proposed location options

Two options were proposed for a low-to-mid-level ramp operating from Lake Eildon's Full Supply Level to 79% Supply Level:

- ▶ Barnetts Road, Howqua Inlet
- ▶ Peacheys Road, Howqua Inlet

Two options were proposed for a high-level ramp operating from 79% Supply Level to 38% Supply Level:

- ▶ Mansfield-Woods Point Road, Howqua Inlet (referred to as "Howqua east")
- ▶ Willow Lake Drive, Macs Cove



Aerial image of Howqua Inlet and Macs Cove showing the four options

During the engagement, it was decided to postpone work on the low-to-mid-level ramp because the currently high lake levels were expected to prevent construction for the foreseeable future.

Officers proceeded to focus on the high-level ramp, but continued to collect feedback on the low-to-mid-level ramp options.

Method

Information about the proposals was made available primarily on Engage Mansfield, Council's community engagement website. An online survey was hosted there (6 January to 10 March) seeking feedback from stakeholders.

Public notices were posted in the Mansfield Courier (18 January) and on Council's Facebook page (9 January) directing interested readers to Engage Mansfield.

A letter was sent to all property owners in Howqua Inlet, Macs Cove and adjacent to Peachey's Road (3 March) providing background information and some preliminary results and encouraging recipients to submit feedback via Engage Mansfield or directly.

The online survey questions sought specific feedback focussing on:

- ▶ Which proposals respondents preferred.
- ▶ How respondents felt about each proposal.
- ▶ What concerns or recommendations respondents had.
- ▶ What were respondents' interests in the proposals and how respondents expected to be affected.

Feedback was captured quantitatively wherever possible, allowing detailed analysis of objective data. The survey also included an open question where respondents could comment freely.

Results

Online survey data

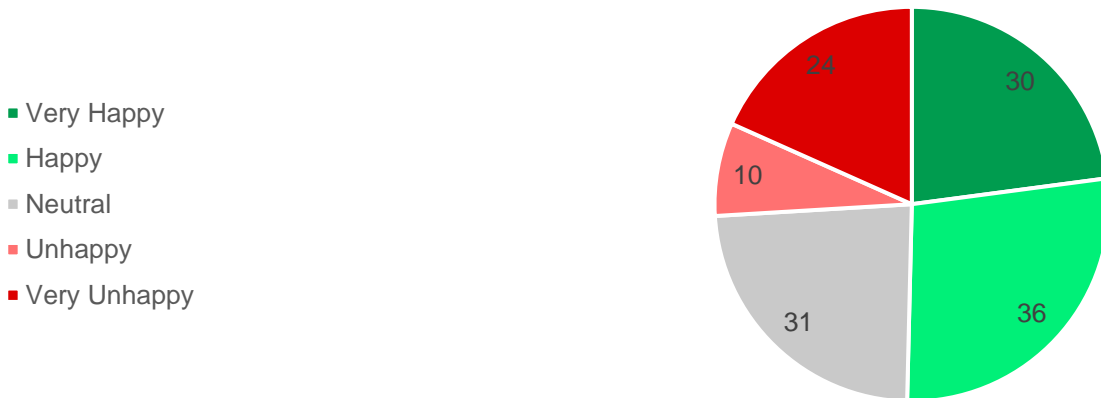
The online survey received 131 responses. Aggregated responses for each quantitative question that was asked are presented below.

Low-to-mid-level ramp proposals

Which proposal do you prefer for a low-to-mid-level ramp (79% - 38%)?



How do you feel about the Barnetts Road proposal?

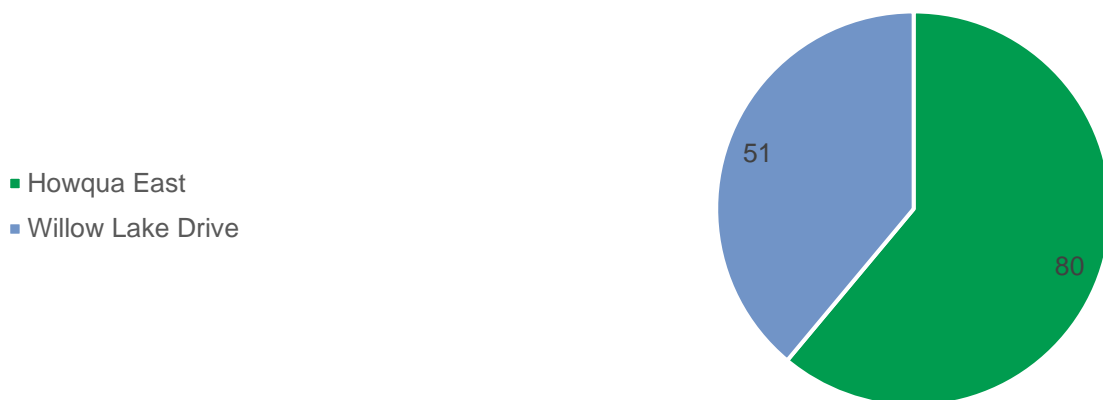


How do you feel about the Peacheys Road proposal?

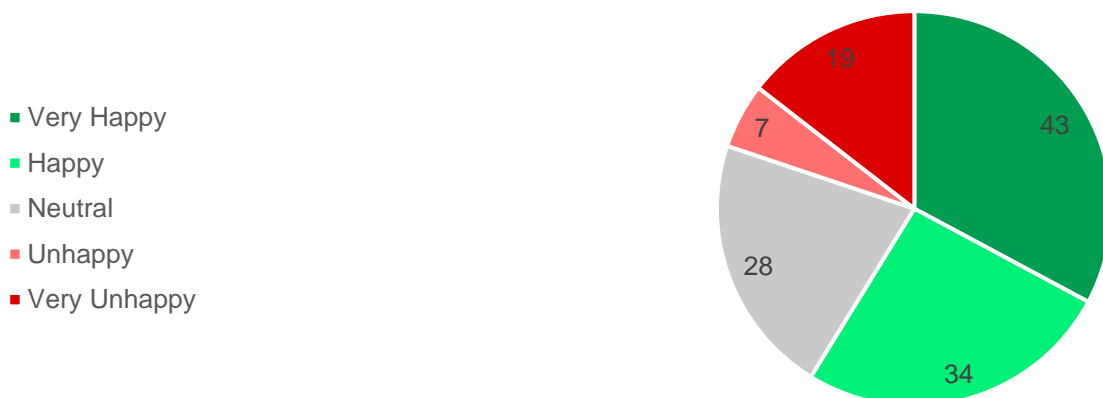


High-level ramp proposals

Which proposal do you prefer for a high-level ramp (FSL – 79%)?



How do you feel about the Mansfield-Woods Point Road (Howqua east) proposal?



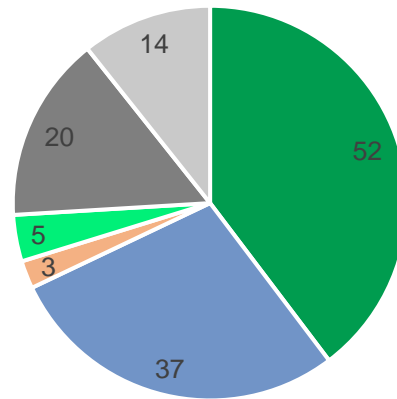
How do you feel about the Willow Lake Drive proposal?



Participant information

Are you a local resident?

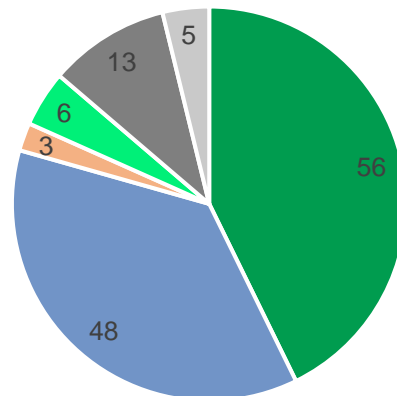
- Howqua Inlet resident
- Macs Cove resident
- Peacheys Road area resident
- Mansfield Shire resident
- Other
- No



Respondents who selected “Other” include Jamieson residents, holiday home owners and regular visitors.

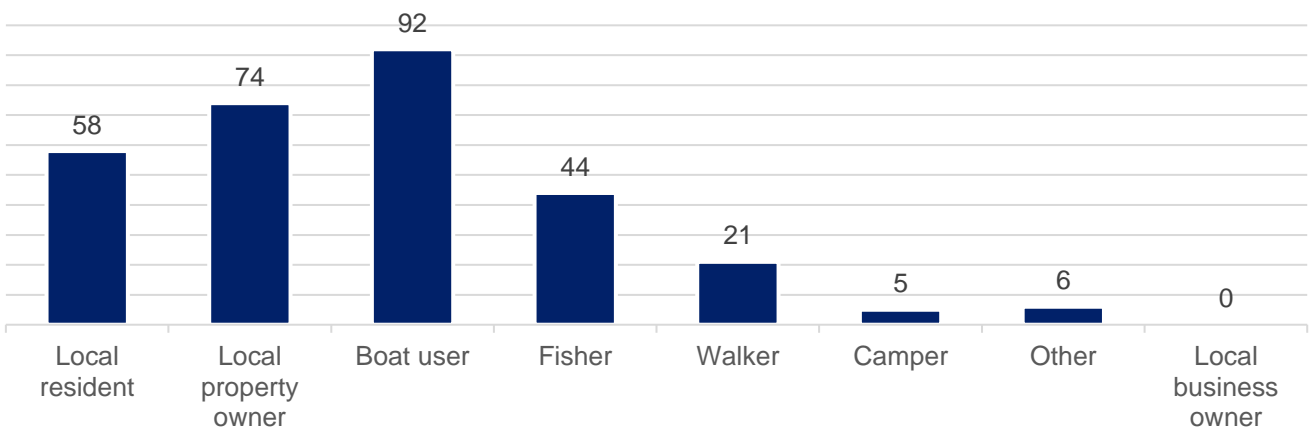
Are you a local property owner?

- Howqua Inlet property owner
- Macs Cove property owner
- Peacheys Road area property owner
- Mansfield Shire property owner
- Other
- No

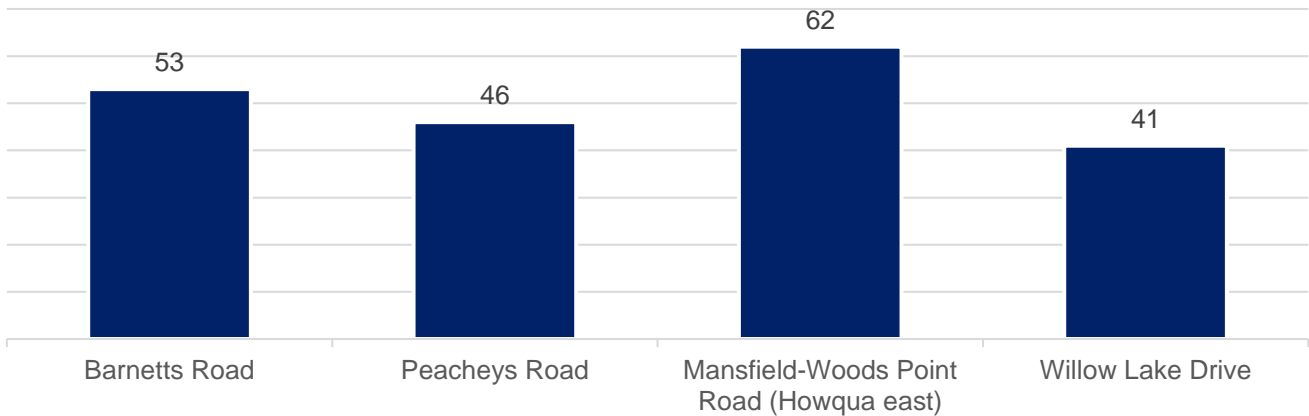


Respondents who selected “Other” include Jamieson residents, regular visitors and leaseholders of GMW.

What are your primary interests in relation to the proposed boat ramp? (131 responses)



Which of the proposed ramp options would you use? (116 responses)



Did you complete our previous survey?



Analysis of results

Significant aspects of the results are discussed in detail below.

Although the “online survey data” section of this report presents only overall response data, officers were also able to view data from groups of respondents who gave the same answer to any specific question. Insights from these groups are used in this analysis together with overall response data.

Responses from local residents

92 respondents identified as residents of Howqua Inlet, Macs Cove or the Peacheys Road area, out of a total of 131. An additional 15 respondents identified as property owners in these areas.

Sentiment towards each location among self-identified residents generally matched the overall response data. This report therefore considers the overall response data to be representative of local resident sentiment as well as that of non-residents or of residents in other parts of Mansfield Shire, and that it is not undermined by competing perspectives based on interest.

Preferences for a low-to-mid-level ramp

Overall response data

A stronger preference for Peacheys Road was expected following the previous community engagement, due to its greater separation from properties and houses.

Contrary to expectations, 51% of respondents indicated that Barnettts Road was their preferred location.

Despite the preference result, sentiment towards Peacheys Road appeared to be more positive than towards Barnettts Road. Peacheys Road received more “very happy” responses and fewer “very unhappy” responses. It also received more “neutral” responses.

To understand the apparent disagreement between preference and relative sentiment, the results were then investigated in more detail using response groups.

Detailed analysis based on preference and resident status

Among respondents who preferred Barnettts Road there was a low proportion of Howqua Inlet residents and a high proportion of Macs Cove residents compared with the overall results. Among those who preferred Peacheys Road the reverse was true, and there were many more respondents who indicated their primary interest was as a local resident.

	Howqua Inlet residents		Macs Cove residents	
	Number	% among same preference	Number	% among same preference
Overall results	52	40%	37	28%
Prefer Barnettts Road	21	31%	23	34%
Prefer Peacheys Road	31	48%	14	22%

Number and proportion of Howqua Inlet and Macs Cove residents who preferred each option. Percentages are based on all respondents with the same preference, e.g. 31% of respondents who preferred Barnettts Road were Howqua Inlet residents.

Comparison of sentiment between Howqua Inlet and Macs Cove residents showed that Howqua Inlet residents were much more likely to feel strongly about the low-to-mid-level ramp locations, whereas both locations were viewed neutrally by nearly 50% of Macs Cove residents.

This is interpreted as a strong negative response from many Howqua Inlet residents to a ramp located within their residential area, and a strong preference for Peacheys Road as the alternative. Other Howqua Inlet residents who preferred Barnettts Road nearly all identified as boat users, and are generally considered to have preferred it for its convenient access to them.

It is interpreted that Macs Cove residents generally felt less strongly about either option than they might as adjacent residents. Accordingly, they responded with less concern in relation to Barnettts Road.

The interpretation that Barnettts Road was somewhat preferred for its access by those not living adjacent is corroborated by data on which ramps respondents indicated they would use. In these responses, Barnettts Road was slightly greater in popularity among respondents of all local residency categories except Howqua Inlet.

Residents of the Peacheys Road area were a separate group consisting of 3 respondents. All 3 preferred the Barnettts Road option. Sentiment in this group was “very happy” or “neutral” towards Barnettts Road, and “very happy” or “very unhappy” towards Peacheys Road. These residents’ concerns included increasing numbers of people driving on the lake shore, the condition of Peacheys Road and the expense needed to upgrade and maintain it, and road safety especially at the intersection of Peacheys Road and Mansfield-Woods Point Road. Investigation of possible solutions to these concerns is recommended.

Preferences for a high-level ramp

Overall response data

“Howqua east” was clearly preferred by most respondents, and received far more positive sentiment than the Willow Lake Drive option. Willow Lake Drive received a very high proportion of “very happy” and “very unhappy” responses.

Responses to Willow Lake Drive

Residents of Macs Cove were strongly split between those who very much wanted a ramp in their area and supported the Willow Lake Drive option, and those who very much opposed it. Like Howqua Inlet residents responding to Barnetts Road, respondents opposed to Willow Lake Drive indicated concerns with insufficient separation from houses, security and traffic congestion.

Among other respondents, sentiment towards Willow Lake Drive was mixed. Each response option ranging from “very happy” to “very unhappy” was chosen by approximately 20% of these respondents.

This report does not recommend proceeding with the Willow Lake Drive proposal.

Concerns relating to “Howqua east”

26 respondents were unhappy about “Howqua east”, compared with 77 happy respondents. Of the unhappy respondents, 16 were residents of Howqua Inlet and 7 were residents of Macs Cove. 3 stated they would use a ramp at “Howqua east”, and 12 stated they would use a ramp at Willow Lake Drive.

Comments from this group specifically relating to the “Howqua east” site focussed on concern for wildlife, issues resulting from boat users exceeding the 5-knot speed limit, traffic and safety on Mansfield-Woods Point Road and impact on an area currently used for canoeing and swimming. These concerns are discussed in more detail in the following sections of this report.

Several respondents were also concerned that “Howqua east” in particular would be above water and unusable for most of the time, and commented that they believed this option was a waste of resources. It is unclear whether these respondents understood that the high-level ramp proposals were intended to complement a low-to-mid-level ramp.

More generally, this group indicated general concerns such as separation from properties, security and traffic. “Howqua east” is considered to be the most suitable location option for addressing these concerns.

Respondents who were unhappy with all options

5 respondents indicated they were unhappy with either low-to-mid-level ramp proposal. Of these, 2 preferred Barnetts Road and 3 preferred Peacheys Road. All identified as local residents of Howqua Inlet or Macs Cove, and 2 identified as boat users. Their comments focussed on issues relating to responsible use, traffic and parking.

8 respondents indicated they were unhappy with either high-level ramp proposal. Of these, 3 preferred “Howqua east” and 5 preferred Willow Lake Drive. All identified as local residents of Howqua Inlet or Macs Cove, and 4 identified as boat users. These respondents raised various issues in their comments, touching on each of the common themes and issues raised above.

3 of these respondents were unhappy with all of the 4 options.

Respondents were not directly asked whether they might be open to supporting a ramp under any circumstances. However, assessment of respondents’ comments in both of these groups

suggests that some appear to be open to supporting a ramp if their concerns could be resolved. Others did not appear open to supporting a ramp in the area at all.

Common themes and issues raised

Summaries of common themes or issues raised in phone calls, comments and submissions are presented below.

Negative feedback is more strongly represented, as respondents with concerns provided detailed comments more often than respondents who supported the proposals.

Individual written responses from which these summaries are drawn are available in the “participant responses” section of this report.

Separation from properties

Concerns were raised that locating a ramp in a residential area would have significant impacts on the occupants of nearby properties. Howqua Inlet and Macs Cove are quiet, peaceful areas, and local residents don't want the disturbance of increased visitor activity and noise. They considered there is insufficient space for high volumes of traffic and people, and a boat ramp would lead to further concentration.

Distancing the ramp from properties and especially houses will reduce these impacts and is considered to provide a better solution for everyone.

Social impacts

Concerns over increased visitation leading to greater security risks and nuisance to local residents were raised; including theft, nearby camping, late night parties and noise and general disrespect for others in the area.

Distancing the ramp from residential properties, in a location that provides good passive surveillance from the highway, would help to alleviate these potential issues.

Traffic

Issues were raised regarding safety risks from vehicles with trailers turning from Mansfield-Woods Point Road. The intersections leading to Peachey's Road, Barnetts Road and Willow Lake Drive have short visibility and are on a slope. Peachey's Road, “Howqua east” and Willow Lake Drive are in a 100km/h speed zone, however it is noted that “Howqua east” is located at the transition between the 100km/h zone and an 80km/h zone.

Council will consult with the Department of Transport and Planning over the “Howqua east” location regarding the possible extension of the existing 80km/h zone to include the entrance to the boat ramp.

Increased traffic on local roads such as Barnetts Road and Willow Lake Drive was raised as an issue leading to congestion, dust and safety risks in the adjacent residential areas. These roads have no footpath and are shared by pedestrians including children and pets. The increasing popularity of larger boats was also highlighted. The Barnetts Road and Willow Lake Drive locations are not recommended by this report.

Parking

Adequate parking should be provided at the ramp. The chosen location should have sufficient space, especially at high lake levels.

Unless enough parking is available, it was highlighted boat users are likely to park on the roadside or shore, creating traffic risks or reducing the amenity of the shore and disturbing the natural terrain and environment. This will be considered in the detailed design.

Responsible use

The ramps provide a safer launching option, reducing the risk of vehicles becoming bogged or slipping in the mud by launching boats from the shore.

There is a need for signage indicating proper use of the ramp as well as its location. The need for safeguards to ensure the ramp is not misused was raised.

Boat users and other drivers may continue to inappropriately access the shore area and launch boats without using the ramp.

Some respondents expect greater numbers of powered boat users would impact people engaging in other water activities such as swimming, canoeing and fishing. It was raised that boat users disregard the 5-knot speed limit that applies within 50m of the shore, creating significant waves and causing disturbance to other lake users and the shore environment. This is considered to be a matter of speed limit enforcement.

Many respondents were concerned that increasing visitation to the area would lead to more rubbish dumping. Local residents are already frustrated at having to frequently pick up rubbish left by visitors. Providing bins at the ramp site would alleviate the problem.

Several respondents commented that ongoing monitoring and management of the site is important to address these problems.

Road condition and access

Sealing the relevant access road would benefit boat users and residents by reducing problems with poor road condition and with dust.

Peachey's Road in particular has issues with its poor surface condition due to flooding and runoff. Access was considered to be difficult due to it being a heavily treed road with many bends, especially for ramp users with larger boats. The road would need significant upgrades to provide suitable access.

Peachey's Road would provide much better water access, as it is located closer to the main body of Lake Eildon. Boats would not need to travel as far to get beyond the 5 knot speed limit that applies within 50m of the shore.

Locations that are more directly accessible from Mansfield-Woods Point Road provide easier land access, especially "Howqua east".

Wildlife

Some respondents commented that the ramp would adversely impact wildlife in the area, including bird nesting sites in treed areas and pelicans visiting "Howqua east". Officers inspecting the "Howqua east" site did not report significant treed areas adjacent to the proposed ramp location, however further inspection of any potentially disturbed nesting sites may be conducted during the design.

Other

Several respondents were concerned that the high-level ramp would be unusable for much of the time due to lake levels, and therefore would be a wasteful expense. The high-level ramp is intended to operate only above 79% Supply Level and to be complemented by the low-to-mid-level ramp at lower levels. Based on GMW data, the high-level ramp is expected to operate

approximately 30% of the time. The low-to-mid-level ramp is expected to operate approximately 50% of the time.

Several respondents advocated for the inclusion of toilet facilities at the ramp. This feedback was received both from boat users who desired a convenient facility and from local residents concerned about boat users toileting without a facility. A toilet facility was excluded from the current proposal, as it is primarily for use as an access point.

Concerns were raised in relation to a grazing property adjacent to the “Howqua east” site and the potential impacts from encouraging activity close to livestock. Officers will continue to consult with adjacent property owners to resolve concerns and discuss appropriate screening and signage.

Many respondents indicated they had no concerns at all with the proposals.

Conclusions

Low-to-mid-level ramp

The mixed responses received make it difficult to identify a clear community preference for a low-to-mid-level ramp.

In overall community sentiment, both proposals were generally supported. The Peacheys Road option was somewhat more positively viewed than Barnetts Road.

Although a slight majority of respondents preferred Barnetts Road, many of those preferences did not appear to be as strong as others' preferences for Peacheys Road, reflecting a greater negative impact to some from the Barnetts Road option.

Both options drew significant concerns from various community members. Concerns relating to Barnetts Road do not appear to be resolvable through the design of the ramp and its supporting infrastructure, whereas those relating to Peacheys Road could potentially be addressed.

This report considers the Peacheys Road location option to have the best potential for alignment with community members' preferences.

It is recommended to investigate the feasibility of actions to address community members' concerns with this location, specifically relating to:

- ▶ The condition of Peacheys Road, including surface quality and difficulty of access for boat trailers due to bends and trees.
- ▶ Safety at the intersection of Peacheys Road and Mansfield-Woods Point Road.

This report also notes that all respondents who identified as Peacheys Road area residents did not prefer the Peacheys Road option, and recommends continuing to engage with residents of that area to address concerns.

High-level ramp

This report considers the "Howqua east" option to be best aligned with community members' preferences for a high-level ramp. A clear majority of respondents indicated they preferred this option, and it was the most positively viewed of all options.

Community sentiment towards the alternative Willow Lake Drive option was ambivalent, with many strongly negative responses.

It is recommended to proceed with the "Howqua east" option with consideration for addressing community members' concerns with it, specifically relating to:

- ▶ Safety at the entrance to the ramp from Mansfield-Woods Point Road.
- ▶ Impacts of increased boat traffic on other water activities near the site.
- ▶ Adjacent grazing properties.
- ▶ Any bird nesting sites that could be disturbed.

It is also recommended to emphasise to the community that the high-level ramp is intended to complement a low-to-mid-level ramp, in response to several comments indicating concern that the high-level ramp would be above water and unusable for much of the time.

General

Several concerns were raised by many respondents which apply to all proposed locations. In addition to addressing site-specific concerns listed for each location above, it is recommended to give consideration to the following issues in the final design:

- ▶ Rubbish dumping.
- ▶ The need for adequate parking.
- ▶ Vehicles driving on the lake shore.

Actions to address these issues are expected to lead to further increase in support for new ramps within the local community.

Appendix A: Participant Responses

Phone calls

Several phone calls were received during the engagement period, seeking further information or expressing concerns about one or more of the proposed locations.

Most callers have also taken the online survey or made email submissions. Feedback given over the phone is summarised in the “analysis” section of this report.

Online survey comments

The online survey included an open question which received 75 responses. All responses are presented below with personal information redacted.

“Do you have any concerns with the proposals, including those you preferred? If you do, please help us understand your concerns and how you think they could be addressed by the ramp’s design.”

- ▶ 4 Options but no choice for no boat ramp at all ?.
- ▶ Barrett’s is not possible with the lake above 80% there is no where to park
- ▶ Most of residents in Howqua are weekenders, so the impact on them is no greater wether a new ramp or not, summer users, a concrete ramp for winter would be great for locals who use all year round
- ▶ Howqua east and Peachys is best in my opinion. From a XXXXXX resident of Howqua Inlet
- ▶ Concern with trailer parking at Willow Lake Dr. We currently utilise the grass area with our children and do not want large swathes taken up by boat trailers.
- ▶ It really is time for a boat ramp either at howqua inlet or macs cove willow lake, numerous times I have been bogged or had slipped off my boat cause of uneven or wet ground, what really needs to be considered is safty , no body can stop the boats entering the lake so why not make it safe. It also is time macs cove and howqua inlet has a upgrade it really has stopped in time in its now time things catch up like other areas.
- ▶ No concerns,.
- ▶ Barnett’s rd revised option is still in a heavily residential and used area. The safety of our children around Barnett’s road and around lake is a major consideration. The parking of trailers and traffic to a residential area is a lot. Also the litter and lack of parking is an issue. It’s already very busy in peak periods and people getting angry with each other due to lack of space. Bring in boat ramp with increased congestion will make it worse
- ▶ Barnetts road option would result in a concentrated area with adverse aspects on traffic, pedestrians, and general water related activities. Particularly so when Full to 79% with very limited open space.
- ▶ Barnett’s road will get used whether or not a ramp is built I think the possibility of maybe sealing the road would keep dust down and be a positive for land owners on this road.
- ▶ End of ramp and associated water levels would need to be clearly determined and marked. Going off end or hitting end lip (if used) can cause significant damage.
- ▶ As A boat user from the Jamieson end Peachey’s drive to me make’s more sence as it impacts bugger all houses

- ▶ Access to peacheys is not good for large boats, macs cove has lots of trees
- ▶ Very concerned about the increased visitation to a small community that knows everyone. Security concerns and do not want a beautiful part of the world ruined by too many people. Howqua doesn't need a public boat ramp!!!
- ▶ Wherever the ramp is situated good and responsible use is dependent upon public usage. Thus should be stressed and safeguards built in (closed-circuit cameras perhaps) to ensure compliance.
- ▶ Security concerns for residents and their property in Howqua Inlet. Increased traffic flow in the area . Disturbing bird nesting sites. Disturbing the pelicans. No available parking for visitors. Rubbish concerns
- ▶ Increased visitation to howqua Inlet, security risk to property owners with non-local public visitation, parking, space on the bank to set up, rubbish, pollution, dust, disturbing wildlife and vegetation
- ▶ Howqua east: pelicans frequent the area, security for residents, where will people park? Already picking up day trippers rubbish as it is Barnetts rd: dust concerns, where will people park? Slow moving traffic entering on a dangerous corner onto woods point rd, security concerns, already have trouble with people camping down there. Willow drive: similar concerns as already stated Peachies: peachy road is the best option.
- ▶ Road going to peachy ramp will have to be improved for easy access with boat trailer
- ▶ Shire council to provide skip bin at locations of ramp during the peak season times
- ▶ My preference is definitely Peachys Road
- ▶ BARNNETS ROAD TO WILL MAKE THIS ROAD EXTREMELY BUSY FOR CURRENT RESIDENCE. HOWQUA EAST RAMP WILL REQUIRE A LARGE AMOUNT OF ROAD AND PARKING WITH ACCESS OFF A BUSY MAIN ROAD. IT WILL ALSO DISTURB THE WILDLIFE IN THE AREA.
- ▶ Macs Cove is a residential area with young families. Not all roads have been sealed as yet and have potholes. The boat ramp will bring in a lot of extra traffic and there is insufficient parking for cars and trailers. There is also a private tourism accomodation business adjacent to the proposed site.
- ▶ Howqua East - Concerned that the bird life, including nesting whistling kites, which currently reside in the heavily treed/bush area slightly West of the proposed boat ramp will be adversely effected. That area of the lake is also a 5 knot zone which many water users already ignore and I imagine without proper and continued policing will get worse with extra boats being able to launch and bank in that area. The entry and exit from Woods Point Road into the ramp area could be a major traffic concern from such an ever increasing busy roadway. Willow Lake - Even though this area is also a 5 knot zone it is a smaller section of the lake so difficult to ignore this speed restriction and you are very quickly out of the 5 knot area into a much larger and safer area of the lake for fast motor sports. Safer loading and unloading area and for parking with it being in a quieter less busy area with exit and entry not being from a main busy road. Roadway to ramp being bitumen results in less noise and dust. Peacheys Road - No water speed restriction at that area of the lake. Less locals/residential area will be impacted with noise and dust etc. Less impact on vegetation damage with a road already accessible and only requiring an upgrade. Barnetts Road - Noise and dust increase with cars and trailers travelling on dirt road. More local residents impacted in this area compared to Peacheys Road.
- ▶ We are in Macs Cove so the high level ramp at Willow Lake Drive would suit us . When the

water level is lower we are happy to launch off the bank

- ▶ Howqua East will have wildlife impacted & traffic slowing/turning right off a 100km/h zone road plus lots of boats launching a long way beyond 5 knot zone & potentially speeding thru it, many boats will potentially be just crossing to main/bigger part of lake causing unnecessary extra boat traffic across lake. Willow Lake has minimal wildlife impact, much closer to edge of 5knot zone, better access to main/bigger part of lake, less infrastructure works required as not off a main road & ideal position with less travel time from Mansfield, but not far from Howqua. Plenty of parking too. Barnett's road is just not ideal for the local residents on that road with the increase in traffic with trailers on the back passing close by their homes & also turning off a main road with 100km/h speed limit. Peachys Road is a good all round option for main arm lake access, doesn't affect local residents, plenty of space for boat trailer parking & great position/option for Jamieson residents too who want main lake access without miles of 5knot zone to go thru to get there.
- ▶ As a permanent resident in Macs Cove I am strongly opposed to a public boat ramp being situated in our community. Those that use the current 'access point' are locals or local (to our immediate location) holiday makers and are mostly very respectful towards residents; once they have put their boats in the water they take their vehicles and/or trailers back home, I fear a public ramp will cause a dramatic increase in traffic through our small town, and will result in cars and boat trailers clogging up our streets. I also feel the proposed location is unsustainable for a permanent ramp simply for its location. It is adjacent to a private tourism business and directly opposite residential houses of both permanent and semi-permanent residents, they are entitled to enjoy their homes in peace without having to put up with cars and boats constantly coming and going out the front of their premises.
- ▶ East of Howqua Inlet is just ridiculous as it would be high and dry for the majority of the time. Willow Lake has more room than Barnetts Road. Peachys Road would be better at all lake levels.
- ▶ Still no toilets bins parking etc,
- ▶ No
- ▶ The Howqua East proposal will create a lot of issues coming on and off the Jamieson Woods point rd - most likely to cause accidents.
- ▶ NO CONCERNS
- ▶ I think the Barnetts Rd and Mansfield-Woods Point Rd proposal is a very strong proposal. I think these two combined will work well.
- ▶ I think the Barnetts Rd and Howqua East sites make sense for boat owners on that side of Lake but to be fair I think a ramp should also be on the Macs Cove side as well. This will cost more but why not just do it right the first time, the extra cost will be absorbed over time and the extra convenience will be appreciated for ever .
- ▶ Parking - swimming near boat ramps and 5knot zones that are clearly identified.
- ▶ I would be against the Willow Lake Drive boat ramp due to the impact it would have on the local residents and the area around the ramp. This area is the only water access for Macs Cove so the local community congregate here to swim, fish and store boats. A proper boat ramp for big boats would push the locals out of the area as it would be filled with big, unoccupied cars and trailers. This summer's peak period already saw a lot of people pushed round from Gough's Bay and other areas. Locals are comfortably launching boats from the Jenkins Road ramp without issue. Even quite large wake boats are getting in. Whilst the large

boats themselves are not the biggest deal, the big cars and trailers on the dirt roads, the grass banks and then the turbulent waters through Macs Cove from the extra boat traffic will have a negative effect on the area. It's very much a small, family orientated settlement and I'd really hope it can remain that way for my own family and also our neighbours.

- ▶ The concern with the Howqua east option is it in a 100 km zone with very little side access area on road side ,would like to see proposed plan on how this would be accessed with lake levels as high as they are at this time and parking facilities. This area also drops away quite dramatically on a rocky face.
- ▶ Still have concerns around car and trailer parking space as there does not seem to be any provision in the proposal. Concerns with increased traffic, rubbish left behind on the foreshore, lack of amenities including toilets and no mention of who will be responsible for maintenance of boat ramp and insurance/public liability. A boat ramp will increase chances of camping, illegal fires, theft from homes and noise pollution.
- ▶ Peacheys best option for all
- ▶ I do have concerns with increased activity in the area. People sadly leave old carpet and tyres and other rubbish associated with boating when they leave.
- ▶ The entrance to Barnett's rd off Mansfield woods point rd may need a turn off lane
- ▶ Due to fluctuations in water levels it seems to be a silly notion to locate a boat ramp in this particular area. Other concerns are the people that already come here have no respect for residents with their ridiculous noise levels, partying all night and then just leaving all their rubbish behind for us to clean up. Barnetts Road should not be considered as an option for these very reasons because it is too close to residents.
- ▶ Dust from Barnetts Rd
- ▶ Issues still remain around the varied proposals is the lack of supporting infrastructure, traffic management, toilet facilities and public waste management.
- ▶ Peachys rd is better suited to the whole community - being howqua and Jamieson. There are very minimal residents there that this will affect and there is water right to when the water is very low. Much better suited option.
- ▶ Barnett's rd is too close to houses and residents. Dangerous for our children and animals. No parking
- ▶ Peachy bay road is the best lower level ramp on the lake. Gets used already by boats when water is low.
- ▶ Currently the lake is close to being full Over the past years it has struggled to be over 79% So it seems that on average water levels the boat ramp will be out of the water
- ▶ Peacheys Rd and Howqua East we feel would be the best positions to give the right gradient to launch and retrieve boats safely, and also provide off-road parking which in turn would ensure a safer environment being located further away from residents and holiday makers.
- ▶ I live in macs cove and do not want a boat ramp there. We are a quiet area and I don't want the extra traffic
- ▶ We constantly have people driving on the foreshore how are you planning to stop this if there is a boat ramp providing access to the lake front
- ▶ We as residents of XXXXXX object to the Barnetts Road proposal. We think that the actual residents should have some say as the majority of the pro Barnetts boat ramp are not actual

residents. They treat the area as their personal playground with no regard to others. This includes removing trees, bulldozing areas for their own view and pleasure. They make an incredible amount of noise with their partying and then dump their rubbish which we pick up including a Christmas ham we found in the bushes the other day and today someone has dumped discarded trees at the lake. We don't see that this group has any regard for the environment and their proposal is very self serving.

- ▶ I can see a number of issues with the Howqua East proposal, namely: increased traffic congestion on highway, car accidents entering in and out of the location especially during the winter months with heavy fog, very limited parking area which in heavy use you would then see people parking on the side of the highway, canoeists and swimmers use that passage of water as it is safe and quiet away from all the boats. Howqua East is not the location for a boat ramp, the Barnett's rd mid level ramp proposal is the most suited as when the water is high boaters do not get bogged over the summer months, when the water is low during winter the months the Barnetts rd ramp would be best suited so that boaters do not get bogged. Thanks XXXXXX Howqua resident
- ▶ Peachy's and Howqua east will allow space for trailer parking and better traffic management
- ▶ Would prefer East Howqua. More room for trailers. Not near houses.
- ▶ I am an owner of a property on XXXXXX. I have concerns with the Howqua East proposal. Mainly being the increase in boating activity in the Howqua Inlet. There is currently no speed restrictions in the inlet and i am concerned about the dangers of speeding boats and increased traffic, as this inlet is mainly frquented by slow moving fishing boats, shore fishing, kayakers and swimmers. Also I believe this rise in activity would lead to an increase in boat wake wave turbulence, creating a muddy shoreline. I would also like to point out that this inlet is frequently completely dry, except for the Howqua river of course, so the ramp would be not get used as much as one closer to the main body of water that does not dry out. I hope these concerns are taken into consideration
- ▶ The peachey rd proposal severely impacts my property and I would like to strongly oppose this proposal. The turn off to peachey rd is on a steep and curvy section of the road and would be very dangerous for cars with trailer coming from Howqua. Peachey's rd when the water is low is also a very prone to washouts and erosion so would be expensive to build and maintain. Barnett rd seems a much more suitable location for the majority of users
- ▶ Macs cove is a very quiet peaceful pocket, with one road in and out. No footpaths and certainly not suitable for increased traffic on this small road. It would destroy this beautiful serene community.
- ▶ Barnett's Rd will need to be fully sealed to prevent issues with dust. Adequate parking will need to be created
- ▶ Rubbish, road safety & noise to local residents.
- ▶ Preference is both below option are approved and constructed when possible. Mansfield-Woods Point Road (Howqua east) is preferred for a high-level ramp 79% -38% and Barnetts Rd is rereferred for a low-to-mid-level ramp (79% - 38%)? OR Peaches is a good option instead of Mansfield-Wood Point Rd and Barnetts Rd but only if the Road is resurfaced. 70%-38%
- ▶ No concern Prefer High-level ramp option 1: Willow Lake Drive
- ▶ Not in favour of additional non local traffic through willow lake drive & the ramp, vehicles and associated infrastructure will be a major eyesore for the proposed location. Access

gradient is difficult and the reserve attracts hoon driving. The water level at Macs Cove is more often than not below the design level so would be a tragic waste of money. Not a safe option for walkers and children either, there are no paths and the roads are narrow. Deep water and the appropriate infrastructure is available at Goughs Bay. Howqua East is an excellent option! Well done for thinking of this.

- ▶ As a resident of Macs Cove we would be devastated to have a boat ramp in our area. This quiet, secluded pocket which has only one road in and one road out is not suitable. The actual road itself is not structured to carry multiple vehicles, no footpaths and as we have a XXXXXX it would be very hard and frightening to walk XXXXXX on the road and dodge multiple cars with trailers with boats and jet skis. This quiet serene area should not be considered for any boat ramp proposal.
- ▶ Car parking or a level access drive will be required..... get rid of the wattle Weed trees too that obstruct views.
- ▶ Not really. Will be good for boaters but people will still put in off banks
- ▶ the ramp at Barnett's road would be too congested with trailer parking
- ▶ Need to also look at on water congestion of vessels entering and leaving the area particularly in the area including and east of macs cove
- ▶ Of all options Macs Cove will be the less suitable for a boat ramp
- ▶ Construction of a suitable boat ramp at macs cove will stop the destruction of the shore line and roads at the current launching area. It will also lengthen the time of usage throughout the fluctuations of the lake's level
- ▶ The traffic on Mansfield Woods Point Rd is far too busy. It is constant day and night. Where boats are involved then children are involved and this road is not acceptable as it too busy. Motor Bikes in particular speed through this area. There is no parking available.
- ▶ Willow Lake Drive would have a far greater area for parking of Trailers and Cars.
- ▶ For all options how will access be facilitated including restricted parking so that the whole bank doesn't become a barren dust bowl as vehicles park and drive everywhere
- ▶ In reply to your letter reference E3951 of 3rd March 2023 we wish to advise that our preferred option is the Howqua East location although we would ideally prefer a location with a lower lake level.
- ▶ This east howqua ramp will get very little use as the lake really only fills to the required percentage's in this area approx every 8 years. The negative impact on the area with a totally unmanaged ramp facility is what is concerning us. Regular users of this area of the lake don't need a concrete ramp to launch their boats as they have been launching in the area for many years without any real problems. The Peaches Rd site is a much more appropriate area to put in a public ramp as the required clearing of scrub will provide the space for turning ,mustering and parking of a double lane boat ramp to cope with 20 to 50 boats ,trailers and cars on weekends .

Email submissions

11 email submissions were received and are presented below with personal information redacted.

2 March 2023

Thanks XXXXXX

We fully support either proposal.

Do we need to make comment on link?

Regards

2 March 2023

Definitely Howqua over the blzzaro zombie world of macs Covina's

3 March 2023

Good Morning XXXXXX,

I am contacting you regarding the Howqua Public Boat Ramp proposal - we favor the Howqua East site.

Even now the dust off the dirt access road down to the lake is horrendous for the houses up on the corner of Willow Lake Drive during the drier months and with extra boat ramp traffic it would be considerably worse. (as was no doubt one of the complaints from residents in Barnetts rd)

Much as I would like to sit on my balcony and watch the shenanigans at a boat ramp, we think the East Howqua site is the best option, away from existing housing and there is more space for car/trailer parking, the river is still navigable long after the cove at Macs is high and dry.

Cheers

3 March 2023

Thanks XXXXXX

For your reply much appreciated mate, yes I would be happy to have a boat ramp in Macs Cove.

Previous email from Council – 3 March 2023

Hi XXXXXX.

Thanks for your feedback. I'll forward it to our Capital Works team.

The boat ramp proposal is funded by Better Boating Victoria, so it's not taking up resources that we could use for road upgrades. If you'd like to make any further comment on it you're of course welcome to write to me or take our online survey.

Regards.

XXXXXX

Previous email from respondent – 2 March 2023

I'd would prefer council to consider taring the roads in Macs Cove instead of constructing boat ramps.

5 March 2023

Hi XXXXXX,

We actually think it will be a waste of money as people will still put their boats in off the banks wherever they can and when tge Lake drops again it won't be used. Maybe the road down to where most people put them in at macs cove could be improved to make it easier access and the same at howqua inlet. We feel it will also bring unwanted traffic into the area. We do have a boat.

Thanks

8 March 2023

Hi XXXXXX

We do have some concerns about the proposed boat ramp at Macs Cove.

1. There will need to be road upgrades as going to and from the boat ramp. There is already a dirt track but when there is lots of traffic the track becomes full of ruts and deep groves making it dangerous for vehicles and boats as the potential for a rollover is there.
2. As there are no footpaths or a safe verge in Macs Cove residents walk with their children, dogs and prams on the road. With the increase in traffic there is the potential for someone being seriously injured or worse killed.
3. The entrance used currently is on a sharp bend and a steep incline so there is a potential for traffic accidents.
4. You would need to create an entrance and a separate exit, with the road into the proposed boat ramp being one way and car parks for vehicle and boat trailers. As the proposed area is on a hill there will be a need to do major excavation works to ensure the area is safe for those using the ramp as it can become quite congested as it was over the summer and that was only the residents of Macs Cove.
5. If an actual boat ramp is installed then the traffic will increase as there will be more people using the boat ramp not just the residents of Macs Cove which again brings me back to the safety issue.
6. Most of the residents of Macs Cove who own boats leave their boats moored on the bank whilst they are here during summer which lessens the amount of boat traffic around the roads of Macs Cove which currently are unsuitable for increases in traffic.
7. Having the boat ramp at Macs Cove will be unsafe and will require lots of money to make it viable.
8. With the increase in traffic the roads of Macs Cove will need upgrading as they are currently not suitable for the increase in traffic the boat ramp will bring.
8. At the moment it looks like a good site, but when the lake recedes there will be no boat access. That area was trees and shrubs less than 18 months ago.

The Howqua East option appears to be the best solution as it is the safest and financially viable. Why?

1. There are no residents near the area so no danger to residents walking along the road.
2. It comes straight off the Mansfield-Jamieson Road thus having better access to vehicles
3. Mansfield-Jamieson Road is straight so better traffic management options are available thus cutting down on potential traffic accidents.

I am bewildered as to why you are contemplating a boat ramp at either location. That is a lot of money for something that will only be used during holidays, mainly summer through to Easter. Plus when the lake is at 80% or less the boat ramps will not access the lake as both areas are the first to drain when the lake recedes.

Regards

9 March 2023

Thx XXXXXX. Yes, They are my two main concerns and you have summarized them clearly.

I'm not sure how easy it would be to manage these issues. The speed limit would need to be 60kmh or less to reduce risk but trucks heading to Mansfield like the A1 mine fleet don't get much time to see vehicles turning from Howqua into peachey rd. I do it with a horse float occasionally and know the turn very well and do it with extreme caution. It is a significant risk.

Yes you could fix the rd to the proposed Peachey rd ramp. My point is simply that I think your engineers would confirm the significant engineering and earthworks involved in making it a all weather accessible, deep water ramp site

I have a few other concerns regarding the volume of traffic that will follow from a ramp in that location and think a site closer to the boat users of Howqua inlet would be more suitable

Again, thanks for taking my feedback on this and I'd appreciate being kept in the loop on how things progress.

Regards

Previous email – 9 March 2023 – From Council

Hi XXXXXX.

Thanks for your call today. I thought I'd write to you to clarify your feedback in relation to the boat ramp proposal for Peacheys Road so that I can record it correctly.

So far I've summarised your feedback as follows:

- ▶ A permanent ramp at the end of Peacheys Road is not a good idea, mainly due to road safety risk and the maintenance required for Peacheys Road.
- ▶ The intersection of Mansfield-Woods Point Road and Peacheys Road is located on a bend in Mansfield-Woods Point Road with reduced visibility, and at the bottom of a downhill section with several curves. There is a significant safety risk to vehicles turning in to or out of Peacheys Road given the high-speed traffic on this section. A boat ramp is likely to exacerbate the problem by leading more vehicles towing heavy boats to use the intersection.
- ▶ Much of Peachey's Road is under water when Lake Eildon's supply level is above 80%, leading to water damage. Furthermore, during wet periods at lower supply levels water drains across the road, causing serious damage to the road surface with large sunken spots and rivulets. To safely accommodate boat trailers the road would need both upgrades and extensive regular maintenance that may be greater than what Council is prepared to provide.

Please let me know if there's anything I should edit or add.

I also notice that both these issues could possibly be mitigated. If we were able to address them successfully, would you be open to supporting a ramp at the end of Peacheys Road? Are there any other concerns you'd like us to note?

That said, I acknowledge that it will be some time before we can progress with a low-to-mid-level boat ramp at any location.

XXXXXX

10 March 2023

Hello XXXXXX my name is XXXXXX and have been at Howqua Inlet since XXXXXX. My comments are as follows

1 agree that Howqua East is best choice for the 100_80% ramp

But over the years it has not been at level for very long and would turn out to be under utilised.

2 . As the water recedes attention should be given to an overall project to include additional ramps following the water down to the 30% level.

3 . This in my thinking is a forward and future direction this planning should take.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

13 March 2023

Hi XXXXXX,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the new public boat ramp proposal.

We strongly oppose the original boat ramp proposal at Barnett's road. We understand there is an organised group of locals advocating for the Barnett's road boat ramp, however we do not feel they are representative of those in the community who will be directly impacted.

Howqua Inlet is a small, peaceful community with residential properties very close to the water and many children playing and riding around the streets.

We are in favour of the new Howqua East location proposal on Mansfield-Woods Point Rd. It provides appropriate distance from the residential Howqua Inlet area and will provide an accessible and visible location for those in the local and broader community to use.

Thank you

14 March 2023

Howqua Public Boat Ramp

Invitation to comment

We have owned our house at Howqua Inlet for the past XXXXXX.

Apologies for the lateness of this comment, which has been delayed due to a hospital stint and difficulty in obtaining detailed Lake Eildon storage level numerical data.

We have seen Lake Eildon low and very occasionally high. Howqua Inlet is at the extreme end of the lake and thus suffers low and nothing but dried up lakebed, more than most lake areas.

The original Barnetts Road site can operate down to 38% FSL whereas the new options will be almost useless, as Howqua East for example is useless once the lake drops below 79% And I presume the Macs Cove option would be even worse.

In the Invitation to Comment it is stated

Due to the current high-water level in Lake Eildon, council is currently proposing to focus on design and construction of a **high-level ramp** operating from FSL to **79%** lake level.

We suggest the record high levels we are currently experienced won't last, due to climate change and as the El Niño / La Niña cycle is forecasted to change bringing with it dry / drought conditions

I have attached a spreadsheet analysing the lake levels over the past 30 years. (*refer to note thereon re data source*)

The data shows that the Barnetts ramp would be usable nearly twice as many years as Howqua East. Residents know that the Howqua East section of the lake is the first area to go completely dry. Barnetts hangs on much longer and even longer if you factor in the years you can launch into the river at Barnetts and then sail down to Peacheys Bay where there will still be lake.

We appreciate that is tempting to do something now, if we do, we will just waste our money.

The current full levels are not the norm, Barnetts is a much better option. Even though in its self is not a good as the original low level ramp concept of a few years ago.

Thank you for the option to comment

14 March 2023

Hi XXXXXX

We spoke on Friday regarding the boat ramp consultation.

We are owners and residents at XXXXXX.

We have a few concern about the proposal for a boat ramp on Peachey's Road, specifically:

- ▶ The road is a narrow track and would require a significant upgrade to be able to accommodate safely passing traffic with trailers and boats. This would impact on surrounding bushland and the lake.
- ▶ Turing into Peacheys Road for the Mansfield-Woods Point Road is on a curve at 100km per hour limit. An upgrade to the highway would be needed to add a turning lane, but this would remain a dangerous spot for boats and tailers etc.
- ▶ There is already an issue with illegal camping and dirt bike riding along the road. A boat ramp is likely to exacerbate this. Illegal campers have made dangerous fires, and left rubbish and effluent polluting the lake and surrounding bushland.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide our input to the consultation. We would appreciate being kept updated on the proposals and provided with further opportunities to input.

Thanks and regards