



# SOB

**SAVE OUR BEACHES  
PHILLIP ISLAND**



[www.saveourbeaches.org.au](http://www.saveourbeaches.org.au)

## **SAVE OUR BEACHES**

Response to the draft business case

**More than 5,000 people have signed a petition opposed to a car ferry terminal on a rare, north facing beach at Phillip Island.**

**The people have spoken, and Council must stop this madness!**

**5,000 People!**

**5,000 People!!!**

**Any responsible Council would have stopped this madness long ago.**

**A Council that does not listen to the people is not fit to be in power.**

**Save our Beaches speaks for over 5,000 people who say a car ferry terminal on a rare north face beach is wrong.**





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Osbourne Beach is a family beach, loved by visitors and locals alike for swimming, boating and walking. **The infrastructure proposed in the draft business case Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry is not appropriate to the location.** This development would change the beach forever, destroying a much-loved community asset. There are very few north facing beaches in Victoria and the community feels strongly about this beach, which can rightly be called is a rare north facing beach and foreshore should be protected from this development, so as it may continue to be used and enjoyed. Where is the vision for 10, 50, 100 or 150 years when there are more people who will want a beach?

Strong community sentiment has clearly told the Council the scope of the business case was too narrow providing no alternative location for the car ferry terminal and the community engagement was inadequate.

Save Our Beaches (SOB) urges decision makers to stop this flawed process and protect this rare north facing beach so it may be enjoyed by future generations!

The Save Our Beaches movement has enormous support with an active website and Facebook page with approximately 400 followers and strong engagement, take this comment for example:

*“The Andrews Government and Bass Coast Shire must listen and stop the car ferry, spend the money on something useful like the awful roads on the Island and saving the sand erosion on the beaches east of Cowes that attract people to the Island, NOT car ferries”.*

More than 100 Save Our Beaches signs are displayed on properties near the proposed location and hundreds of car bumper stickers are in circulation, along with t-shirts, posters and other materials as supporters spread the message that the community do not want the ferry on the north facing beaches. The group has actively promoted the Save Our Beaches message with more than six articles, most of which were front page, in the Phillip Island San Remo Advertiser. Articles were also run in the Sentinel Times and The Star Newspapers.

Save Our Beaches held an information stall at the Woolworths complex on the weekend of the 17 and 18 February 2018 and the feedback was overwhelming **opposed to the ferry terminal at the proposed location.** An informal survey of 214 people showed that



while 21 per cent did support the Island getting a car ferry, 97 per cent were opposed to the ferry terminal at the proposed locations at Osbourne Beach.

A large number of Save Our Beaches supporters turned out at the Bass Coast Council meeting at Inverloch on 21 February to;

- highlight concerns about the impact the car ferry terminal on a natural asset
- seek a delay of the draft business case to allow for further community consultation.

Despite being present and respectful, Save Our Beaches was not given an opportunity to speak to these questions at the Council meeting. Residents and ratepayers were left feeling further disempowered by the process and that their voices were not being heard.

Save Our Beaches was determined to have a voice and support for the cause culminated at the rally which was attended by approximately 800 people on 11 March 2018. There were adults and children with t-shirts, banners and signs all promoting the message Save Our Beaches. The throng rallied down The Esplanade in Cowes chanting “No more planning, no more speeches, Bass Coast Shire Save Our Beaches!” Following the march an estimated 500 people, mostly families, gathered at Osbourne Beach for a peaceful protest. Children played games and made sandcastles to demonstrate how precious this family beach is and how important it is to protect it. The rally received widespread media coverage including Chanel 7 Melbourne, Nine News Gippsland, ABC Gippsland, Phillip Island San Remo Advertiser, The Sentinel Times, The Star and social media coverage.

The proposed car ferry terminal will effectively cut the beach in half, and it's not clear from the draft business case if dredging will be required or if an exclusion zone will be in place. This will render a large area of this family friendly, safe swimming beach unusable and destroy the foreshore. The proposed terminal is in the middle of quiet residential area, this would add additional traffic where families walk, children ride bikes and parking is already at a premium. This section of the beach is home to Cowes Yacht Club and is used extensively for water sports including swimming, boating and kayaking. To destroy a beautiful asset that enhances liveability and promotes a healthy, actively lifestyle for the sake of transport infrastructure such as a car ferry terminal, simply defies belief!



Through the release of this draft business case, Bass Coast Shire Council has failed to adhere to its own guiding statement to “support a sustainable and healthy community, and value and protect its natural assets.” (Bass Coast Shire website).

Bass Coast Shire Council, through its Consultants, has failed to adequately engage the community on this proposal. The engagement has failed to meet several of councils own objectives for engagement (Bass Coast Shire Council Communications and Engagement Strategy 2015-2018) including:

4. Engagement processes reflect diverse community needs and voices. Diverse opportunities are created for people to be informed about and have input into issue that impact their quality of life.
5. There is clarity and transparency about how community input influences decisions.
6. Local knowledge and experience is integrated into decision making and solution building.

A large number of residents and ratepayers were not informed early enough about the proposal, most only becoming aware once it had reached the draft business case stage. Many received formal notification from the council after the six week community engagement period had already started.

Furthermore, six weeks is **not** an adequate time frame to engage on such a complex issue given the proposed location and the history of a car ferry terminal on Phillip Island. It is still not clear what ability the community has to influence the outcome of this proposal. What is negotiable? Under the International Association of Public Participation Guidelines (IAP2) a number of steps should be taken to ensure effective communication:

- Learn from the public,
- Select the level of participation,
- Define the decision process and identify the public participation objectives.

Save Our Beaches has formally requested a copy of the public participation plan from the consultants to understand these principals. This information has not been forthcoming. Save Our Beaches was contacted only once by the consultants, their main



objective was to determine how the planned rally may impact on the information tent at Mussel Rocks over the Labor Day weekend. This was the first and only contact initiated by EarthCheck to Save Our Beaches during the six-week engagement period. As a key stakeholder, representing the views of more than 5,000 people this is simply not good enough!

The assumption must be made that this engagement is only in the “Inform” realm on the IAP2 spectrum. This is where the information is provided, in this case via the draft business case, without acknowledgement of the concerns, aspirations or feedback of the community. It is not clear how public input may influence the decision and how, or if, the feedback will even be used.

The Consultant’s data collection methods are questionable. Part way through the consultation period a change was made to the survey available online and in hardcopy. On question three, an additional response box was added to the possible locations - “none of the above”. The survey has been compromised. Also, of great concern is the survey is unlimited, meaning the same person can “game” the results by submitting many responses. This data cannot be relied upon.

Save Our Beaches is also concerned the sentiment of community feedback was not adequately captured at the information tent. On Monday 12 March 2018, Save Our Beaches observed the tent for approximately 30 minutes. During that time more than 12 people made heartfelt objections to the proposed car ferry terminal. These comments were not captured, not one was recorded despite the request from community members to record their feedback – this smacks of lip service and incompetence by the Consultants. One of the stories was from Rod who lives opposite the affected beach. His voice shook as he explained to the consultants how much he loves the beach and how he and his children had enjoyed fishing and swimming there. He questioned, would he be able to do the same with his grandchildren?

Save Our Beaches believes that a golden opportunity has been missed to actively engage the community on this project and use local knowledge to identify the best solution. There are some members of the Save Our Beaches who agree with the concept of a car ferry, others who are unsure and others who are dead against it. We acknowledge there appears to be growing support in the community for the terminal to be built at the existing Cowes pier, many other ideas have been shared in the local



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newspaper and on social media. Either way the diversity of views and lack of thorough process has taken a toll on the community. This issue caused division in the community, creating significant tension and stress that need not to have occurred. The Council needs to accept they have caused this tension and stress by releasing a poor business case.

Save Our Beaches is strongly opposed to the car ferry terminal on the north facing beaches. This is a beautiful, north facing, family friendly beach that is well used and loved. **It is our strong recommendation that the draft business case be scrapped as this is the wrong location and community engagement is flawed.**

Please give the community time to settle, before re-engaging in a meaningful and respectful way, utilising local knowledge and passion to provide the best outcome for the community. Save this rare, north facing beach for future generations.

Over 5,000 people have told the Council to stop this madness!

**Our collective message to you, each and every Councillor of Bass Coast Shire is to stop this madness and if you don't the community will hold each and every one of you responsible for wrecking a rare north facing beach in this 150<sup>th</sup> year of Phillip Island.**

Save Our Beaches has to assume the Councilors will continue to ignore the community and will not stop this madness. Save Our Beaches assumes the Council will vote to approve this business case at the Ramada Resort on 18 April 2018.

Save Our Beaches will continue to highlight this flawed Business Case and failed Community engagement.

Save Our Beaches will protest at the Council Meeting on 18 April 2018 to **STOP THIS MADNESS**. It is estimated thousands of concerned Phillip Island residents will join us on the day to tell you what we've already told you and STOP Bass Coast Shire's madness:



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No more planning

No more speeches

## Bass Coast Shire

# Save Our Beaches!!

NB: Please understand we are not threatening the Council, rather we consider we have been responsible and have forewarned Council. The Community have clearly said NO to this business case and they are prepared to stop this madness.

