

## Community consultation on the Portarlington Sea Wall was conducted in November 2020

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) sought feedback on how the community uses a section of beach at Portarlington below the cliffs in front of a sea wall east of the harbour.

The survey sought to understand what aspects of the site are important to the community.

### Background

A recent structural assessment conducted by independent coastal engineers on behalf of DELWP found the seawall to be in poor to very poor condition.

It identified significant sections of failed concrete footings, eroded mortar, and weathered concrete wave deflectors and capping.

Action must be taken to repair or replace the deteriorating structure to ensure the cliffs continue to be protected from erosion and storm damage into the future.

In line with relevant health advice, face to face interactions with the public were not possible, so a combination of online and hard copy surveys were used to gather this feedback.

### What We Heard and Next Steps

From these surveys, 56% of the respondents said that they went to this part of the coast at least once a week, and almost all for walking as recreation or exercise and who felt that it was an important part of the Bellarine coast line.

*"It's one of the only places I can walk my dog on the beach without a lead"*

Many respondents (80%) said that the important elements of this part of the coast were the function of the wall in protecting the cliff face from erosion and ensuring access along the seashore.

Whilst not officially listed as of historic importance, a number also commented on the look and historic qualities of the wall itself.

*"Thoroughfare. Please don't block off access along the coast."*

*"Being able to traverse the lower cliff face"*

*"Heritage. I love the sea wall. So much heritage has been lost on the Bellarine"*

The survey also asked respondents for their ideas on how to proceed.

Several innovative solutions were proposed, including repairing the existing wall, building an offshore reef and cliff face planting (by volunteers). The most common suggestion was to continue the existing rock revetment, while maintaining access past the wall to the harbour.

*"Use the large boulders like you did on the harbour then put a walking track on top made of concrete so that people can use it"*

*"Replace with a boulder wall. Low tide access around it is the important thing for me."*

*"Mend the crack in the existing sea wall and leave it as is"*

Feedback from the survey will help DELWP develop options for the repair or replacement of the deteriorating sea wall.

It is anticipated further updates will be provided in January 2021.

DELWP thanks all those who contributed to the survey.