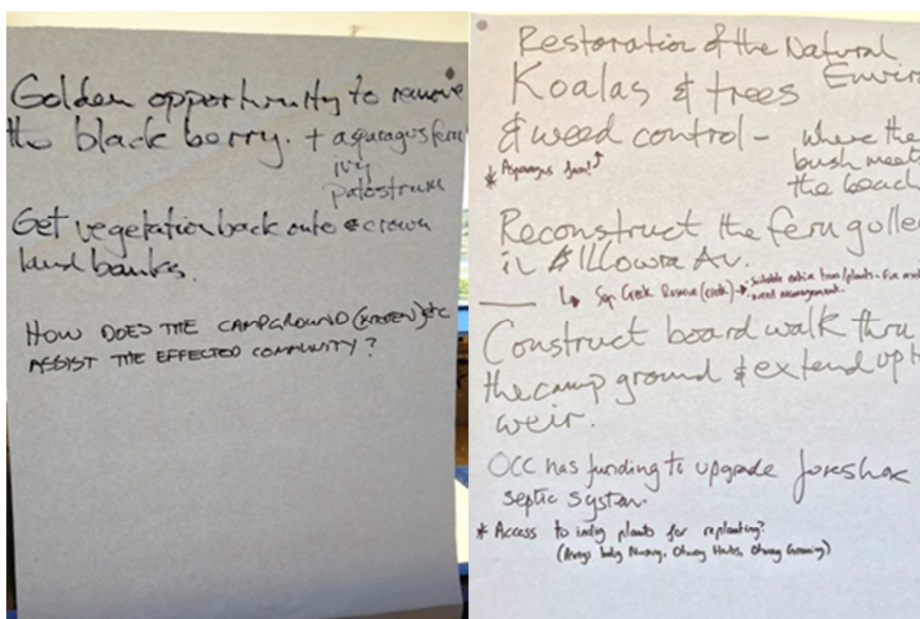


DELWP Flora, Fauna & Beachscape Resettlement Projects for Wye River & Separation Creek

Community Engagement Milestone Report, April 2016



Cover Image (top): Recording community input at a Wye River Open House engagement event, March 2016.
Cover Images (bottom): Transcribed notes on community priorities for resettlement projects.

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List of events where engagement opportunities were provided:

Community Meetings:

- Melbourne Community Meeting, Thursday 3/3/2016
- Wye River Community Meeting, Sunday 6/3/2016
- Wye River CFA fete Saturday 26/3/16
- Melbourne Community Meeting, Thursday 7/4/2016

'One Stop Shop' attendances:

- Wye River, Friday 4/3/2016
- Wye River, Saturday 5/3/2016
- Wye River, Friday 11/3/2016
- Wye River, Saturday 12/3/2016
- Wye River, Friday 18/3/2016
- Wye River, Saturday 19/3/2016
- Wye River, Friday 18/3/2016
- Wye River, Saturday 19/3/2016

Online Engagement Page (bushfire-planning.delwp.vic.gov.au/Flora-Fauna-Beachscape)

Page / Project	Date Open	Date Closed
Flora, Fauna & Beachscape Resettlement Projects (Landing Page)	8/3/2016	still open
Rebuilding Paddy's Path	8/3/2016	still open
Foreshore Campground & Kitchen Upgrades	8/3/2016	still open
Wye River Playground Upgrade	14/3/2016	still open

Note:

Further engagement was planned to coincide with the Wye River Community Meeting (10/4) but was held off due to community focus on Terra Matrix BAL report.



Image above: Improvised display stands at the CFA fete in Wye River 26/3/16

Context and Focus of Report

This document has been prepared as a 'Milestone Report' to coincide with the winding down of the Open House events primarily focussed on the five DELWP projects being developed within the context of the Flora, Fauna and Beachscape 'bubble'. Community engagement theory and practice is an emerging discipline, and the activities referred to in this report form only a small proportion of those carried out by other agencies and 'bubbles'.

The impetus for the Open House events came from the identification within the PRAATS Report that there was a significant risk of community outrage if a Top-Down development approach was carried out. The risk mitigation approach identified in the report was to commence with an Open House program, followed by a facilitated workshop process such as 'Enquiry By Design' or other collaborative facilitated processes.

The intention of an Open House process is to provide background information on topics of interest to community members, and also provide opportunities for individuals to input their knowledge, issues, concerns and ideas into those topics and decisions that will affect them. It is a useful consultation tool at both the beginning of an engagement process, and also once decisions have been made prior to implementation.

Complex systems are by definition both unstable and evolving. Thus this report is called a 'milestone report' because it includes the data and information reported in the 'Interim report' but updated to the current situation. On the other hand, as engagement activities will continue in some form or other, it is also far from being a 'final report'.

Each of the five DELWP responsible projects had initial engagement plans developed, of which the 'Open House' and 'Bang the Table' approaches comprised the initial 'diverge' phase. As this phase comes to a close, each project is currently having a new engagement plan developed for the 'collaboration' phase. Some are already naturally moving into that phase which has been captured as a Current Situation and Next Steps paragraph in this document.

Community Engagement Approach

Engagement opportunities were provided based on some key principles:

- Engagement is to be inclusive, and provide opportunities for as many community members as possible to provide input,
- Engagement is to be collaborative, and aligned and linked with the work of other agencies where possible (principally Emergency Management Victoria and Colac Otway Shire),
- Engagement is to be dynamic; new opportunities are added as projects come 'on line' and content is updated in response to what we are hearing,
- Project negotiables and non negotiables should form the scope of what we are seeking feedback / input on, however;
- Engagement is about listening and recording, regardless of whether there is a strong link to DELWP projects or not,
- Engagement outputs (data) is to be shared with the Community Resilience Committee and affiliated agencies with a view to ensuring community is at the centre of the decision making process.

Engagement opportunities were provided through two main formats:

- 'Open House' style face to face discussions at existing community meetings and events, involving posters for key projects, and butchers paper to capture 'other' input,
- An Online Engagement Portal with generally the same content and questions displayed as at the open house events.



Above Image: Community members sharing their thoughts on Flora, Fauna & Beachscape projects at the Melbourne Community Meeting, 3/3/2016.

Data Collection Report

Data Collection Interpretation

- Generally, the numbers in the tables represent the number of ticks (or votes) that community members have used to demonstrate their preference for something.
- In some cases, participants have registered a cross (instead of a tick). These have been considered as a vote *against* a particular idea.
- In some cases, the numbers refer to *how many* of a particular thing that people want (ie; number of cooktops in the foreshore campground kitchen upgrade).
- Comments have been captured ‘verbatim’ to the best extent possible, and we have tried to avoid overlaying our own interpretation of the input received.
- Often additional comments have been made, and other participants have come along and added ticks (votes) next to these comments. This is captured for all projects where applicable.
- The figures are the total from all Open House events, though different posters were often used. Mostly the posters remained the same, but some had extra or reworked questions when deemed necessary.
- Most posters were presented at all events, but some were added later and sometimes due to space considerations were not displayed on any particular occasion.



Images above: Early photos of Sep & Wye River provided by community members

Issues, Questions & Observations not directly linked to the funded DELWP projects

Theme	Issue / Question / Comment
Recreation	Walking and mountain bike tracks: how can we maintain and upgrade existing tracks for recreation values? Eg; 'Loop' walks around Wye / Sep / Kennett, make use of existing tracks (the hard work is already done), connecting the Great Ocean Walk from Apollo Bay > Wye > Lorne?
	Mountain bike tracks around Wye / Sep; great opportunity.
	There is an old track on the headland between Wye and Lorne which is now exposed due to the fire. Opportunity to open as a bushwalk / mountain bike track? Could link into the Great Ocean Walk from Apollo Bay > Wye > Lorne?
	Wye walking tracks: great opportunity to build these now. Considerations: > Tie into Lorne walking tracks > Tie into Great Ocean Walk > Provide incentives for LTO's to use these for tourism (and therefore boost accommodation needs of visitors in town)
Native Wildlife & Pest Animal Management	Feral cats and foxes: how do we manage these?
	How hard is it to set cat traps? We (the public) don't have the resources!
	What can landholders do to support birds / animals and wildlife recovery, eg: Raise awareness, direct actions (nest boxes, water supply), feral animals (cats and foxes). Nest boxes have been donated by Bunnings. We need assistance in placing them appropriately. What other can we provide to support this? Eg; Fact sheets, connecting into Landcare Network through Mandy Baker?
Tree Management (from fire response)	DELWP have left some dangerous trees beside my house. Also DELWP have left my property in a mess.
	What is DELWP doing about trees that were felled during the emergency and are now on private land? Grocon does not see it as their responsibility.
Fire Risk	Case studies of well-prepared houses?? What worked/what didn't. ie what can we learn for the future?
Foreshore / beach Management	Foreshore fence line at Sep Creek, opposite the beach: fence wires are not in place, and people are walking through the dunes to access the beach and not using the designated access / walking paths. Can wires be replaced on fence posts to keep access to tracks?
	Provide a longer term fix for the stairs / steps onto the sand at Wye River; these are eroded / damaged after big swells, high rainfall and high tides, and constantly needs to be fixed.
	Increased communication with campers – newsletter (via email) at start and end of season

Integrated Vegetation Management in Wye and Sep

A common topic raised was that of Integrated Vegetation Management in Wye & Sep in light of bushfire and fuel risk. This crosses a number of different management areas and considerations (native flora & fauna management, weed management, fire risk management, etc). At this stage there is no confirmed project funding linked with these suggestions and community input.

- “A vegetation plan that works for the future liveability and fire protection is the single biggest strategic problem for Wye.”
- We need a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Including flora and fauna and a fire management plan.
- Need integrated vegetation management plan – Weeds / replacement plants / fire impact / engagement plan with community - How?
- Priority should be to restoration of the natural environment, koalas and trees and weed control. "Where the forest meets the beach"
- Reconstruct the fern gully in Illowra Avenue - Sep Creek Reserve (creek). Suitable native trees/plants - fire resistant - weed management.
- Access to indigenous plants for replanting? (Aireys Indigenous Nursery, Otway Herbs, Otway Greening)
- Get vegetation back onto crown land banks.
- The undergrowth should be cleared and wild goats put on it.
- I'm disturbed about all the talk about clearing – the flora and fauna are what it's all about. If people want it cleared they should move to Torquay. Also the buffer zone clearing is ridiculous.
- We need to keep the community garden (next to the CFA shed)

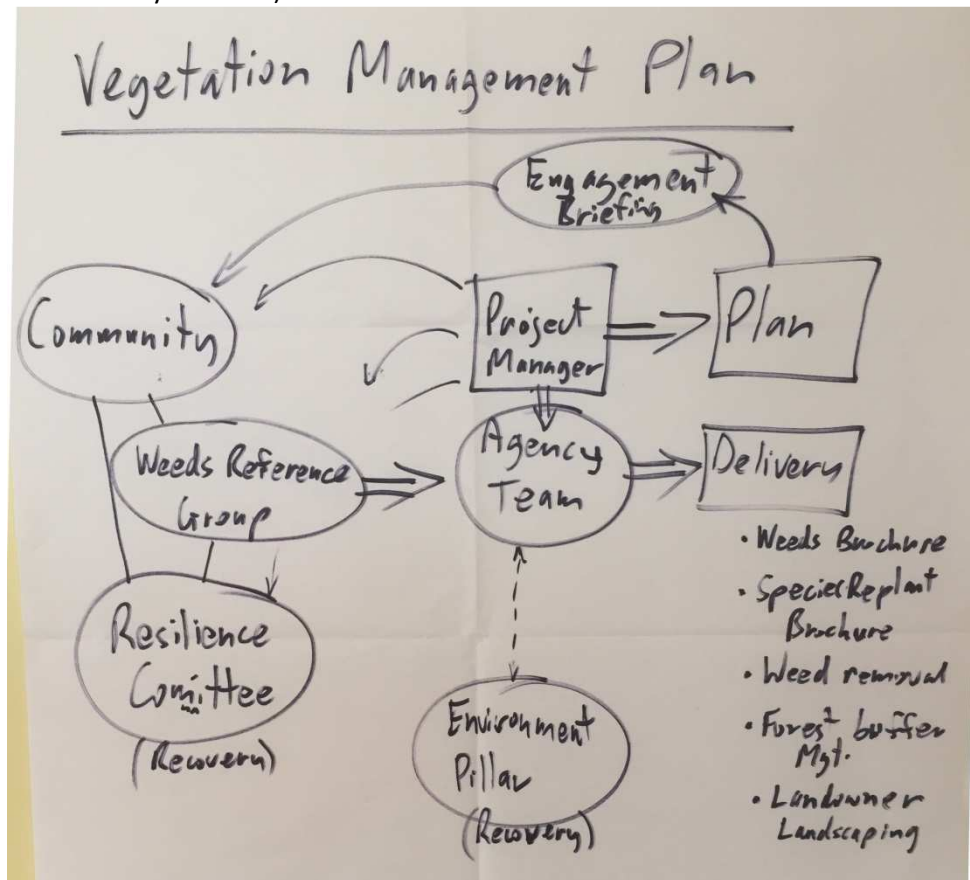
Issues specific to weed management (but important in the context of integrated vegetation management):

- If we (Wye to Wongarra Landcare / Wye weed warriors) had \$30K we'd probably be able to fix the big weed problem for 10yrs.
- Weeds to Mulch program, forest fire tracks and weed program need to work in a coordinated way.
- Soil stabilisation, treat weeds but maintain soil stabilisation.
- What about the world class blackberry jam that comes out of this town?
- This is a golden opportunity to remove the blackberry, asparagus fern, ivy and pittosporum.

Possible outcomes of an Integrated Vegetation Management Plan (as suggested by passionate community member)

- Weed management: Which weeds? What is achievable? Public Land plan? Landholder brochure that explains how to identify weeds and remove them.
- Replacement plants: Suitable list of natives for land owners, What happens for replanting following Grocon clean-up? Where and how are plants available?
- Fire Plan: Individual landowners; What sort of vegetation for my block? Remove this, plant that, etc. Expert support (eg; Darren Spicer from Surf Coast Shire?).
- Fauna Plan: Landholder info with agency support: What and how to feed fauna? Nesting boxes, Feral animals?

Suggested Governance / Structure for an Integrated Vegetation Management Plan (as suggested by passionate community member):



Current situation and next steps

A 'Wye/Sep Weeds Steering Committee' has been formed and has representation from DELWP, COS, Parks Vic, Corangamite CMA, Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN), Otway Coast CoM and the Wye Weed Warriors. The committee has both a short term and long term focus.

This group has developed an engagement plan to formally engage the broader community in the creating these long and short term plans.



Image left: Parks Vic, DELWP and Colac Otway shire staff discussing weed management priorities in Separation Creek with community members and the shire led Weeds Consultative Committee, 25th February 2016.

Project: Paddy's Path

Specific Question: What sort of style (look & feel) do you want for the path?

Views	Adventuresome	Family Friendly	Exercise Friendly	Quick access (shop / pub)	Minimise steps / stairs (pram friendly)	Resting Places (chairs / tables / viewpoints)
14	3	8	4	5	6	2

Other style suggestions:

- Disability friendly (2 ticks)
- Make it tranquil,
- Non slip
- Safe test!

Specific Question: What do you mainly use the path for?

Access to shop / pub, etc	Walking the dog	Family Outings	Exercise or fitness	Views & fresh air
5	4	1	2	2

Specific Question: What sort of path material would best suit your needs?

Concrete / tarmac	Tar & chippings	Compressed gravel with edging	Formed dirt	Random dirt
3 'no'	3 'no'	1 'yes', 1 'no'	13	7

Other material suggestions:

Specific Question: What do you think about the opportunity to link Paddy's Path to the new bridge in Separation Creek?

Yes	No	Maybe	I need further info
15			1

Other thoughts on this opportunity:

- 'Essential'
- Have pedestrian access under both bridges (Wye & Sep) to safely access the beach.

Other input / feedback received on Paddy's Path:

- It would be good to form a 'friends of Paddy's Path group'
- Is there interest in a "Friends of Paddy's Path" group?
- Take Paddy's Path as far as the Wye River Walk > waterfall.
- Great new walk – from Sep Creek > Wye River Walk > Wye waterfall. Great hard walk!
- We need a safe walking path & pedestrian bridge.
- Paddys path and the new Sep Creek bridge: needs walkways/islands at each end to enable safe crossing of road.
- Paddy's plaque reinstated next to creek (where Paddy lived)

- ‘May I make a request that when Paddy's Path is re-built that it is renamed? I don't wish to denigrate Paddy Harrington, who, indeed was a wonderful character and a friend of my family, but to name the path after him is inappropriate. Paddy never walked along this track or even through the bush where it now is. He died before it was built. This path follows the site of the railway that linked the timber mills at Wye River and Separation Creek. It would be much better named The Railway Path, or something similar. The plaque expressing the town's admiration for Paddy could be placed in Harrington Park. Paddy wasn't the only Harrington around during the early days. There were his cousins Ned and Mike, to name just two. Ned was a particularly charming man whom we all loved. He is remembered by Ned's Lane in Separation Creek.’

Extract from a Vision for Paddy’s Path posted on the web site

Things that I want to see -

- *Safe and stable path, let’s do a good job so that the many slippages over the last few years which have closed the path for months don’t occur.
- *At least 2 lovely seats in strategic viewing places
- *Paddy’s History sign back
- *Better signage at beginning and end of the path
- *A sign and small art work or sculpture acknowledging the traditional owners of this land
- *Interpretative signage to explain the local flora after revegetation has been done
- * Immediate work to keep weeds at bay and planting of indigenous plants
- * a smooth rise next to the steps where pushers can pass

Current situation and next steps

There is a three stage process in place. Currently work is being undertaken to address the immediate public safety risk. Step 2 is to carry out a Geo technical hazard treatment in association with Vic Roads. Step 3 will be to let a contract to reinstate the path and extension taking into consideration what has been heard.

It has been noted that a number of suggestions have been made to form a ‘Friends of Paddy’s Path’ group, which will be taken up with Project Managers, Colac Otway Shire and the Community Resilience Committee.

Project: Wye River Walk

Specific Question: What sort of path material would best suit your needs?

Concrete / tarmac	Tar & chippings	Compressed gravel with edging	Formed dirt	Random dirt
		2	6	3

Other material suggestions:

- Boardwalk (2 ticks).

Specific Question: What sort of edge marking would best suit your needs?

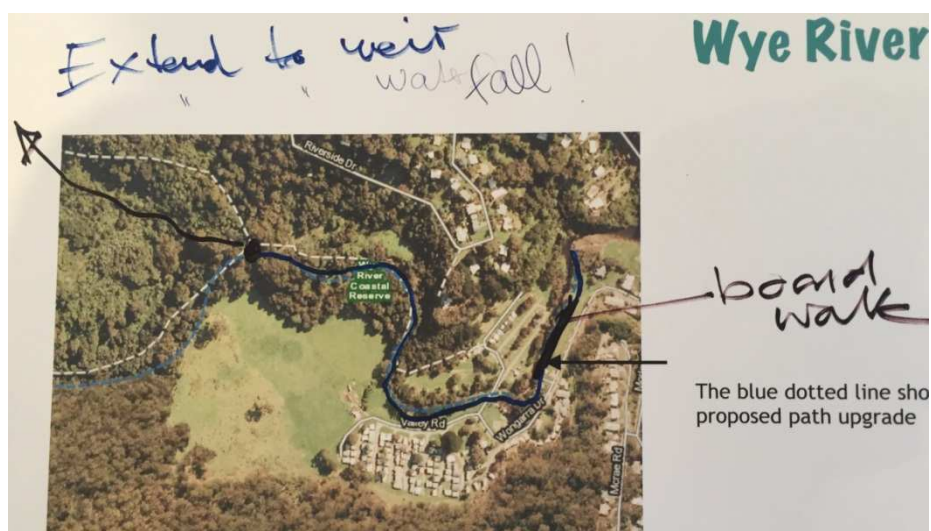
Concrete bollards	Timber post & rail	Timber bollards	Brick edging
	5	9	

Other edge marking suggestions:

- Nil

Other input / feedback received on Wye River Walk:

- Construct board walk through the Big4 camp ground and extend up to the weir.
- Extend walk to waterfall.
- Extend walk to weir.
- Firm, open matting through which grass can grow and be mown (ie; for path surface) (supported with three ticks).
- Provide documentation on how this links to other walks.
- Make the track all the way to the falls (see map below).



Current situation and next steps

A working group of DELWP, OCC, CMA and the Big 4 franchise holder is doing a technical investigation of the river bank. It is then planned to let 2 contracts: 1) river bank stabilization 2) new path treatment and demarcation to reflect community input.

The extent of suggested extensions will have to be determined through an appropriate decision making process. Potentially this would be at some form of facilitated workshop with all stakeholders invited.

Project: Wye River Playground

Specific Question: What sort of equipment would you like to see in the playground?

Swings	13
Climbing Equipment	6
Flying Fox	9
Interactive Features	13
Nature Features	12
Exploration	6
Ball / Frisbee Space	3
Cubby House	2
Slides	4

Other equipment suggestions:

- Boats
- Exercise stations for everyone (plus 3 ticks)
- Picnic tables (plus 5 ticks)
- Zoned area for different age groups.

Specific Question: What sort of style (look & feel) do you want for the playground?

Ocean	Adventure	Jungle / Rainforest	Similar to current
10	9	1	

Other style suggestions:

Other input / feedback received on Playground upgrade:

- Friends of mine built that playground and it just needs some maintenance and a few additions
- My kids really enjoy the playground.
- Playground !?!?
- Castlemaine Botanical Gardens playground has very specific items relating to the history of the area. Get the designer to consider with the committee all the specific things about Wye/Sep and see what happens.

Current situation and next steps

Melbourne City Council has offered to provide design expertise to this project. An initial discussion has been held and the importance of engaging community stakeholders in the design agreed. A meeting was held on April 29 to plan this engagement process.

Project: Foreshore Campground Kitchen & Office

Specific Question: What location would work best for the kitchen?

Same as before	Next to managers office	Away from Managers Office
4	5	1

Other location suggestions:

Specific Question: What sort of character (look and feel) would work best for the office and kitchen?

Tent	2
Corporate / Office	
Enclosed / Glazed	7
Fun / Funky	1
Mainly veranda	
Chunky / Woodsy	1
Standard Transportable	1
Designer	6

Specific Question: What sort of equipment (amount) does the kitchen need?

	0	1	2	3	4
BBQ			2		5
Cooktops			3	2	1
Sinks			1		5
Tables			2		5
Fridge	1	1	4	1	

Other equipment suggestions:

Other Foreshore Campground Upgrade issues raised:

- Rebuild must include accommodation for the park manager.
- SLSC septic system is a small 'domestic' system and struggles in peak demand. It is also used by other parties (eg; for major SLSC events, and if foreshore campground septic is under pressure).
 - Opportunity: Connect the SLSC septic system into the new foreshore campground system (which has a bigger capacity)? Frances Northeast and Michael Noelker to consider in conjunction with Otway Coast COM.
 - The old SLSC generator could be used to assist the campground septic system (during power outages).
- Flood risk in campground sites adjacent to river: Can we use clean fill from the clean-up process to 'raise' the low lying land near the bridge?
- Water pressure in the campground hoses (including fire hoses) is not very good.
- Can the campground be opened for a longer period this year?
- Why is the campground being renovated when it wasn't impacted by the fire?
- How does the campground (kitchen) etc. assist the effected community? (Well said - totally agree!!)
- Low water pressure in the camp ground is potentially dangerous. The CFA didn't even use the system in the fire because it was so useless.

- Road in the campground ground needs resurfacing (plus 4 ticks)
- Need to replace the tables and chairs on the foreshore
- OCC has funding to upgrade the foreshore septic system.

Current situation and next steps

Appropriate designers are currently being sought to provide suitable designs that satisfy DELWP and community requirements.

Project: Forest Road Vegetation Management

Specific question: How should fire control lines be treated now and into the future?

All roads and tracks to maintained to Level 1 (high)	6
Increase level of roads and tracks within 5km of town	4
Reinstate to same level as prior to fire	
More info required	
Would like to be a part of further discussion	

Specific Question: What are your thoughts about continuing to mulch Asset Protection Zones around the township ?

Yes	6
No	
Need further info	
Would like to be a part of further discussion	4

Current situation and next steps

This information will be presented to the CRC where it is anticipated it will be incorporated into any workshops developed to consider long term fire risk reduction plans and activities.

Project: Post fire weed management

Specific question: Which of these weeds Colac Otway Shire have identified as the top 10 weeds of Wye River and Sep Creek?

Arum Lily	2
Mirror Bush	
Gorse	
Agapanthus	2
Wild Watsonia	
Blackberry	3
Bluebell Creeper	2
Sweet Pittosporum	3
Banana Passionfruit	4
Coastal Tea Tree	
Wandering Trad	
Montpellier / Cape Broom	1
Spanish Heath	
African Weed Orchid	
Flax Leaf Broom	
Boneseed	2
Bridal Creeper	1
Montbretia	1
English Ivy	3
Asparagus Fern	3
Vinca Major	1
Cape Ivy	
Pampas Grass	
English / scotch broom	
Angled Onion	1

Trick question – which one is not on the list?

- Ragwort

Specific Question: What are your top priority areas for weed management throughout Wye & Sep?

Area	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
Creeks and drainage	3	3	6	1
Foreshore	4	4	5	3
Harrington Park	1	1	4	4
River Walk	2	2	3	3
Roadside			1	1
Banks of Great Ocean Road			2	2

Other Issues raised RE weed management:

- Note: see comments in section on Integrated Vegetation Management in Wye & Sep (page 9 of this report).

Project: Pump Reinstatement Project

An initial engagement plan identified that there were only a small number of community members affected or with an interest in this project, thus it was not included in the Open House events.

A Participatory Analysis workshop was carried out on 15/4/16 with the three main community stakeholders. This workshop identified the relationship between the existing pumps, the specific pieces of infrastructure impacted by the firefighting operation and developed a two stage process for a 'design and construct' contract to ensure speedy reinstatement of the pump itself and further co-ordination with the Wye River Walk project.

Project: Waste Water Treatment

A new poster was developed by EPA to obtain views on waste water treatment options. This poster was only displayed at one Community Meeting (7/4/16 in Melbourne)

General: What might be your thoughts about the best solution for treating waste water in Wye River/Sep?

Individual plots taking own responsibility	
Neighbourhood/Cluster reuse schemes	
Neighbourhood/Cluster Treatment schemes	
Novel treatment technologies	2

Interactive workshop: Are you interested in attending an interactive workshop to explore the topic further. If so, how long?

Half day	
1 day	1
1 1/2 days	
2 days	

Further information: How would you like to be kept informed of this topic?

One-stop shop/EHO	
Email	1
Website	

Other notes regarding waste water treatment

- There needs to be a coordinated sewage strategy – it can't be ad hoc.

Current situation and next steps

Developing a specific engagement plan would be potentially useful.

Observations of the engagement process:

- The community have been ready and willing to engage for the most part, and have appreciated the opportunity to have their input considered in the planning process.
- People have been keen to take the opportunity to share their thinking, and have openly engaged with staff.
- Some people have not been ready or 'in the right space' to engage on the projects and opportunities that we have provided. Given their personal situations and circumstances (losses, grief, etc), this is understandable, and was considered likely to happen before the engagement process started.
- The community meetings (as opposed to the One Stop Shops) have provided access to the most people, both in Melbourne and in Wye River. In this sense, these meetings have provided the best opportunities to maximise input / gathering of community feedback.
- Through both the community meetings and one stop shops, we have heard from long term locals, long term visitors / landowners, and frequent visitors. We have not engaged strongly with infrequent visitors or tourists at this stage.
- Close to 250 people have visited the online engagement site, comprising of the landing page and three specific project pages (Rebuilding Paddy's Path, Foreshore Campground & Kitchen Upgrades and Wye River Playground upgrade).
- Whilst people that visit the site are thus aware of the engagement opportunities it provides, only a small number of stakeholders are making use of this opportunity by completing surveys, submitting their thoughts or asking questions. Nonetheless, the online site was an important part of the engagement process in terms of providing opportunities to people who may not have been able to make it to meetings or events in person.

Feedback from participants on the engagement process:

- *"Thanks for your display on Sunday and for involving the community in DELWP decision-making."* (Community member and attendee at Open House).
- *"It is great that you are seeking and inviting community input into these projects."* (Chairperson of Otway Coast Committee).

Image right: Community members providing their input on DELWP projects at a Wye River Open House event, 6th March 2016.



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