


Gracetown Progress Association

Priority Setting

Public Release Report

June 2021





Ngala kaaditj Noongar moort
keyen kaadak nidja boodja

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of this
country and honour Elders, past and present*

Background

The Gracetown Progress Association sought to identify and prioritise community issues where it will concentrate its future efforts within the objects of the Association.

The objects of the Gracetown Progress Association are:

- (1) To stimulate and foster the interests and needs of landowners, tenants of dwellings, or commercial premises in the locality of Gracetown.
- (2) To promote sustainable use of the environment in and around Gracetown and Cowaramup Bay through the preservation and restoration of the ecology of marine, bush and dune areas and to promote the strong bond amongst the people of the Gracetown community and their respect for the natural beauty of the area.
- (3) To remain affiliated and assist with co-ordination between community service groups, local authorities and Government agencies.
- (4) To advise members of the community of the availability of sources of assistance, and to direct and offer assistance at committee discretion.
- (5) To provide a forum for the discussion of community needs.
- (6) To manage the Gracetown Recreational Hall on behalf of the community.
- (7) To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objects.

Process

The following process was used to undertake the work.



Background information reviewed included minutes of GPA meetings, social media posts and publicly available community development and planning documents.

Five structured interviews were conducted with key people with long and diverse association with Gracetown and Cowaramup Bay.

Gracetown – Planning Issues

Gracetown is described in planning documents as somewhat different to the key settlements of the Shire because growth will ultimately be limited by pre-existing physical constraints.

Gracetown encompasses an area that is contained by Cullen Road to the north, Caves Road to the east, effectively Old Ellenbrook Road to the south and of course the ocean. It includes the residential areas at Claret Ash and Seahawk Rest and the Gracetown Caravan Park. The main Gracetown settlement is located on Cowaramup Bay.

At the 2016 Australian Census there were 244 dwellings in the Gracetown areas and 237 people spread across 57 families.

Since, 2016 the Covid19 pandemic has meant that there has been a significant increase in the population residing in Gracetown. In addition, the enormous growth of platforms such as Airbnb has led to the occupancy of all dwellings to be at an all time high. Consequentially the loads on the township, Cowaramup Bay and associated infrastructure has dramatically increased (structured interviews).

The Landcorp development previously proposed appears to be “on hold” but there is potential for it to be reignited if market conditions are suitable.



COWARAMUP BAY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Prepared June 2019
by Litoria Ecoservices
for the Shire of Augusta Margaret River

This coastal management plan recommends greater protections for Cowaramup Bay amid increasing demand for recreational access.

The Cowaramup Bay Coastal Management Plan covers the 1.4 kilometre stretch of coastline between South Point and the North Point boat ramp.

The plan, which features 14 overarching recommendations, was developed by sustainability consultants Litoria Ecoservices for the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River.

The document outlines a series of objectives, developed based on feedback from four months of consultation with residents, the broader community, stakeholders and shire staff, as well as threats to the bay.

Litoria Ecoservices identified increasing recreational pressure, the growing tourism industry and climate change as the primary threats to the future of the bay, which currently supports a host of marine activities.

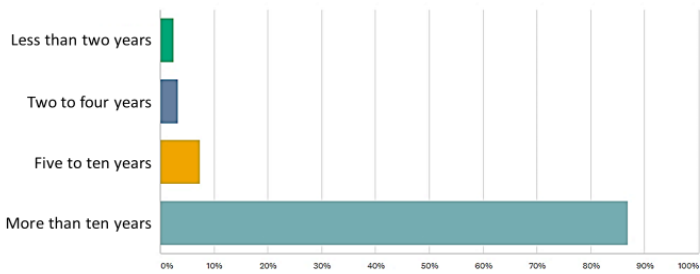
In general, the Plan aligns with the objectives of the GPA, and with the views of the community.

The Plan's status is unclear and there is no public information on timing around implementing the recommendations.

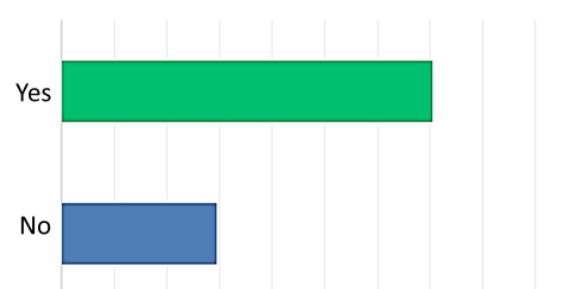
Online Survey

An online survey was distributed through GPA communications channels. The survey was open for responses between February 11 and 25, 2021. 124 responses were received. Respondents on average spent nine minutes completing the survey. The survey attracted a very high level of response which indicated that the community is enthusiastic, passionate and engaged in the future of the areas.

How long have you been associated with Gracetown?



Are you a financial member of GPA?



It is noted that despite only 33 percent of respondents being full time residents, 86 percent have been associated with Gracetown for more than 10 years.

What is your connection to Gracetown?

I am a part-time resident	45%
I am a full-time resident	33%
I regularly vacation in Gracetown	28%
I spend leisure time in Gracetown	17%
I live or work in a neighbouring community	11%
I have a business in Gracetown	3%
I occasionally vacation in Gracetown	2%

Percentages do not add to 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

Issues raised in online survey

- There was a wide variety of issues and opportunities raised in the survey comments.
- In total 490 issues were raised.
- The table to the right shows the frequency of a selection of issues potentially relevant to the future work of the GPA.
- The issues are grouped together by theme.

Issue or opportunity	No of times raised in survey
bike paths in general	14
footpaths in general	34
path to Caves Road	26
path to Cowaramup	7
Walking and Cycling Paths Total	81
community facilities and infrastructure	11
hall	9
oval	8
playground	17
toilets and showers	6
bbq and gathering areas	7
beach facilities	12
Community and Visitor Facilities Total	70
fire management and preparedness	31
second access road	19
underground power	8
shark mitigation	5
Fire and Safety Total	63
environmental management	22
marine protection	7
dunes and beaches	11
Environment Total	45
Small Town Feel	42
parking in general	8
main beach parking	15
parking boat ramp	3
parking overflow	5
Car Parking Total	31
road infrastructure	8
traffic calming	10
Roads and Safety Total	18
Community involvement	5
Communications	6
Activities and events	5
Participation and Communications Total	16

Community Workshop

- A community workshop was held on February 28, 2021.
- 40 people attended.

Results

Future focus to be:

- Community
- Amenity
- Environment
- Shire relationship
- Fire management
- Events
- Size of Gracetown



Taking into account the workshop, survey and interview results the aspirations of the community are condensed into this vision that the GPA can test its work against.

Vision for Gracetown and Cowaramup Bay

- Maintenance of a small town, peaceful, undeveloped feel for the town and bay.
- A high level of fire preparedness and fire management
- Protection of the environment
- A connected and involved community with common goals
- Improved safe road, cycling and walking infrastructure
- Improved parking arrangements, particularly at the main swimmers' beach and boat ramp
- Improved community amenities and areas for family and community gathering including new playground and bbq areas, revitalised hall, oval and main swimmers' beach area
- A quality relationship and level of support from the Shire
- Management of the impacts of visitors and large events

Issue	Solutions Suggested by Workshop
Fire Management	Additional water tank at hall to collect run off Improved fire breaks Educate owners Controlled pruning
Events	Support existing events Take position on MR Pro surf event Support community gathering events (eg book club, progressive dinners, wine tasting)
Community	Small community events (as above) and use hall kitchen/food trucks Better communications Involvement of Cowaramup community
Relationship with Shire	Have short list of target issues
Scale of Gracetown	Maintain current footprint of township
Amenities	Playground, bbqs, traffic calming, shade structures, footpaths, improved oval hall
Environment	Inform community of home planting strategies Formal tracks and paths Sustainability strategy for Gracetown



Priorities
—
Moving
Forward



Recommended Priorities for the Gracetown Progress Association

Issue	Possible actions	Priority
Community communications plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit existing communications methods • Develop and implement plan including new functional website • GPA membership drive 	1
Relationship with AMRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively engage Councillors and staff regularly • Present evidence-based positions on issues/opportunities • Engage in AMRS planning 	1
Footpaths and bike paths within town and to Caves Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop options and plan • Lobby Shire and WA Government to implement 	1
Fire and fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby AMRS for tank • Seek audit of fire breaks from DFES 	1
Facilities at swimmer beach – barbeques, seating, shade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Shire 	1
Community spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop calendar of small community events • Support event organisers • Include information in communications • Engage locals in GPA sub committees and working groups 	1

Issue	Possible actions	Priority
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on preferred location and type • Seek funding for planning and installation (grants, Shire, fundraising) 	2
Carparking – Swimmers’ Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get professional advice on options for redesigning and overflow parking options. 	2
Upgrades for hall and oval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a working party • Lobby Shire 	2
Environmental management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other groups • Include information in communications 	2
Traffic calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get advice from traffic professional • Develop options • Lobby Shire/Main Roads 	3
Dual use path extension to Cowaramup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Shire 	3
Parking – Boat ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get advice on options to make carpark to make more efficient 	3
Development proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep informed of developments via Landcorp and Shire • Keep community informed 	3

Priorities were assigned taking into account the role and capacity of the GPA, as well as potential complexity and cost of actions.

Disclaimer

This report has been produced by Jennifer Duffecy (sole trader) on a consultancy basis for the Gracetown Progress Association.

The content is derived from analysis of background information, an online community survey and the proceedings of a meeting held in February 2021.

The performance and operations of the results and the action plans outlined may be influenced by a number of factors and therefore no representation or warranty, express or implied is made that any intentions, expectations or plans will be achieved either totally or partially.

Jennifer Duffecy

✉ jduffecy@inet.net.au

☎ 0427013161

ABN 94 702 770 962

www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-duffecy