

MARIA CREEK SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Overview

Project & Community Focus Group



This Overview has been prepared to reflect key items identified through submissions in response to the recent ratepayer survey with a key focus on documents/resources which were made available to the community, and the journey so far.

1. When I received my survey recently, I felt as though I was missing some of the information I needed to make an informed decision. What information is available?

There has been significant time and effort invested into this project, including development of detailed information for the whole of the community to access. This project and issue are not simple or easy, and can be very technical at times, so there are a number of resources developed to document the journey so far.

The project has a dedicated page on Council's website <https://www.kingstondc.sa.gov.au/our-services/major-projects/maria-creek-sustainable-infrastructure-project> which is updated as soon as additional information becomes available. The resources currently available on the page include:

- Overview of project and key objectives;
- Community Focus Group members;
- Fact Sheets:
 - Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project Introduction (December 2019)
 - Concept Study Overview (July 2020)
 - Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project FAQ (July 2020)
 - Question & Answer #1 (August 2020)
 - Temporary beach access/Faun Trackway FAQ (October 2020)
 - Question & Answer #2 (October 2020)
 - Hybrid Concept (December 2020)
 - Business Case Summary (February 2021)
 - Question & Answer #3 (March 2021)
- Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project Concept Study (July 2020);
- Maria Creek Hybrid Concept Technical Note (November 2020);
- Maria Creek Business Case Final Report (February 2020);
- Community Focus Group documents:
 - 17 August 2020 Minutes and Presentation;
 - 21 September 2020 Minutes and Presentation;
 - 29 September 2020 Minutes and Presentation;
 - 26 October 2020 Minutes and Presentation;
 - 30 November 2020 Minutes and Presentation;
 - 9 February 2021 Minutes and Presentation.

This page will continue to be updated regularly, with Council continuing to provide e-newsletter updates and Facebook posts when new resources are available. All documents are available in printed format from the Council office.

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Whilst there have been a number of resources developed and ongoing engagement with the community, there has been some known challenges in distributing key information over the extended period of the project. These challenges included:

- COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, particularly the inability to host forums or attend key stakeholder group meetings (which were not operating);
- Temporary shut down and subsequent permanent closure of local newspaper, the Coastal Leader;
- Ability to communicate with demographic who are not active users of social media, internet or other electronic communication (such as e-newsletter);
- Any printed mail out (whilst expensive) is challenging, as Council's database is restricted to ratepayers/property owners which is not necessarily inclusive of all residents or community members;
- Community Focus Group distribution – whilst the Community Focus Group was formed to include representation of key stakeholders, it appears that the extensive investigations and key outcomes that were discussed/progressed in this forum were not able to be distributed to the wider community as originally intended in the establishment of the group;
- Complexity and volume of information available is substantial, as this journey has been very involved with a lot of technical data and analysis. This can be difficult to communicate in isolation (or quickly/easily), and relies on community members actively reviewing the information provided.

2. Can you please provide an overview of the Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project and how the project has got to this point?

As a very high level background, the significant weather events in 2016 accelerated the saturation of the southern breakwater at Maria Creek through 2017, resulting in significant sand and seagrass accumulation within the channel. The facility was closed for the duration of the 2017/18 peak holiday season after a substantial dredging campaign was undertaken and was unsuccessful. This prompted the engagement of Tonkin to deliver the Maria Creek Boat Breakwater and Boat Launching Facility Report in May 2018, which was a high level overview of options for the facility.

Following this closure of the facility for 2017/18 summer season, and in response to community sentiment, Council committed significant funds and resources to attempt to reopen the facility for 2018/19 summer season. As detailed in the March 2021 Q & A, this campaign was challenging and complex, however it was successful and allowed the facility to reopen prior to Christmas for approximately 6-8 weeks (with some closures during that time), and a secondary campaign to allow the facility to specifically open for the Easter Fishing Competition in 2019.

Council acknowledged that this approach to the facility was not sustainable, and accepted the closure of the facility for 2019/20. The facility has been closed since Easter 2019.

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Following the ongoing closure in 2019, Council was clear in its position of a wider set of key objectives, acknowledging the complexities and connected nature of the key coastal assets in the area. These objectives were:

- Provide a **jetty** that services the community and visitors;
- Provide a **boat launching facility** during peak times (October to May) that is **financially sustainable** (low maintenance) through an **affordable capital solution**;
- To create opportunity to **activate open spaces** and facilities;
- Consider **natural processes** of the coastal environment.

Council was committed to its focus to provide a long term solution that is financially sustainable through an affordable capital solution. To progress this, Council engaged Wavelength to deliver stage 1 of the Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project in December 2019. The [Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project Introduction Fact Sheet](#) detailing this project was released in December 2019.

The community were invited to take part in one-on-one sessions with Wavelength in February 2020, where they could share their knowledge, history or concepts. Written and verbal submissions were able to be received during this time and a number of the concepts put forward were considered in the first pass assessment within the report, as well as subsequently in detail by the Community Focus Group.

Wavelength delivered the initial stage of the Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project through the [Concept Study](#), which was tabled to Council in July 2020. This concept study was extremely robust and included the detailed analysis of coastal processes and scientific modelling of future solutions.

Broadly, the Concept Study included the following key components:

- Background and Stakeholder Engagement;
- Conceptual understanding of coastal processes;
- First Pass Assessment of a multitude of options put forward by community:
 - Remove southern breakwater
 - Reduce the width of the channel
 - Extend and alter direction of breakwaters
 - Pump seawater out of creek
 - Weir upstream of boat ramp
 - Redesign breakwaters with culverts
 - Capital dredging campaign
 - Alternate boat ramp location
- Detailed modelling and assessment of key concepts:
 - Concept 1 – Ongoing Management
 - Concept 2 – Extend Breakwaters
 - Concept 3 – Narrow Entrance
 - Concept 4 – Remove the Breakwaters
 - Concept 5 – Do Nothing

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- Impacts on Kingston Jetty and options;
- Alternate boat ramp locations, options and costings;
 - Located at stable beach locations under the 'Do Nothing' scenario with piled two lane ramp/finger jetty
 - Johnston Ave \$7.9M
 - South of Toops Road \$9.3M
 - End of Maria Creek breakwater \$7.5M
- Key findings and recommendations.

This concept study was released to the community in July 2020, as well as summarised in the [Concept Study Overview Fact Sheet](#) and [FAQ](#). The key concepts are provided below:

Concept 1 – Ongoing Management



Capital/upfront campaign required:

- No structural change
- 300,000m³ dredging (southern side)
- 32,500m³ dredging (channel)
- 250m breakwater repairs
- Ineffective change to management of sand/seagrass

Capital cost: \$6.0M

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$505K annual minimum + depreciation/loan

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$13.8M

Additional cost to reduce shoreline (jetty): \$1.8M

Concept 2 – Extend Breakwaters



Capital/upfront campaign required:

- 310m breakwater extensions
- 80m breakwater removal
- 150m breakwater repairs
- 100,000m³ dredging (southern side)
- 35,000m³ dredging (channel)
- Ineffective change to management of sand
- Effective to minimize management of seagrass

Capital cost: \$10.9M

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$430K annual minimum + depreciation/loan

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$17.6M

Additional cost to reduce shoreline (jetty): \$3.4M

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Concept 3 – Narrow Entrance



Capital/upfront campaign required:

- 7m (approx.) increase to breakwater width
- 250m breakwater repairs
- 300,000m³ dredging (southern side)
- 31,500m³ dredging (channel)
- Ineffective change to management of sand/seagrass

Capital cost: \$6.6M

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$505K annual + depreciation/loan

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$14.4M

Additional cost to reduce shoreline (jetty): \$1.8M

Concept 4 – Remove the Breakwaters



Capital/upfront campaign required:

- Remove 150m of northern breakwater
- Remove 240m of southern breakwater
- Shoreline change (sand mobilization/reduction) over time
- 5,000m³ annual dredging to ensure creek/drain flows

Capital cost: \$2.4M

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$22.5K annual

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$2.7M

Additional cost to reduce shoreline (jetty): N/A

Concept 5 – Do Nothing



- No change or repairs to breakwater structures
- Shoreline change (sand accumulation) over time
- Additional sand inundation at jetty
- 5,000m³ annual dredging to ensure creek/drain flows

Capital cost: N/A

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$22.5K annual

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$0.3M

Additional cost to reduce shoreline (jetty): N/A

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Following the receipt and release of the Concept Study, Council acknowledged the importance of this project to the community. In context of the COVID-19 challenges, it formed a targeted community focus group comprising of key stakeholders to consider the detail of the concept study report and to provide contribution on behalf of the community, as well as distribute key information back to its representation and community members.

Council approached key representatives of industry and interest groups to form the Community Focus Group, as well as staff and elected member representation.

The Community Focus Group comprised of the following members:

Name	Representation
James Braithwaite	Commercial Fishers Association President
Brett McLaren	SE Drainage Board / Primary Producer
Eddy Lindner	Dredging Volunteer / Recreational Fisher
Craig Richards	Business / Recreational Fisher
John Clarke	Business / Recreational Fisher
Robert Taylor	Ratepayer / Recreational Fisher
Scott Gluyas	Ratepayer / Commercial Fisher
Graham Usher	Upper SE Recreational Fishers President
Matthew Wright	Upper SE Recreational Fishers Vice President / Business
Robyn Campbell	First Nations
Kay Rasheed	Mayor
Chris England	Deputy Mayor
Tim Harding	Elected Member
Jeff Pope	Elected Member
Nat Traeger	Chief Executive Officer
Dave Worthley	Manager Assets & Infrastructure
Chelsea Burns	Team Leader Sustainability & Projects
Brad Smith	Wavelength Consulting

This Community Focus Group was tasked with taking a lead role as the voice for the community, and were required to provide feedback on technical detail and analysis, as well as provide direction. The Community Focus Group meetings were the key to how this project has progressed, and it was important to ensure that this was provided to the broader community through the access to detailed meeting minutes/notes, presentations and documents on Council's website. As an overview of the journey of the Community Focus Group, a summary of each meeting is provided below:

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Community Focus Group 1st Meeting - 17 August 2020

The Community Focus Group held its first meeting on 17 August 2020, where it considered the following:

- Submissions received from community members:
 - Graham Usher (proposal)
 - Greg Hamilton (comments and feedback)
- [Presentation from Wavelength](#):
 - Key sand and wrack causes;
 - Stakeholder engagement outcomes;
 - First Pass Assessment of concepts received from community;
 - Seawater pumping;
 - Weir;
 - Reinstate (Concepts 1-3)
 - Remove (Concept 4)
 - Do Nothing (Concept 5)
 - Alternate boat ramp options (service levels, locations and costs);
 - Wave attenuator;
 - Community submissions assessment.

Meeting outcome

This meeting included a lot of robust discussion, as well as a number of technical questions which were provided a high level response during the meeting. Key items which were progressed as a result of this meeting included further assessment on:

- Wave attenuators
- Concrete ramp suitability (such as at Johnston Ave)
- Blackfellows Caves boat ramp example
- Temporary track/matting options as an interim offering.

The [minutes](#) (capturing key discussion points) and Wavelength presentation were made available on Council's website following the meeting. Key questions and discussion points requiring further detailed response were provided through the release of the [Q & A Fact Sheet – Community Focus Group \(17 August 2020\)](#).

Community Focus Group 2nd Meeting – 21 September 2020

The Community Focus Group held its second meeting on 21 September 2020, where it considered the following:

- Submissions received from community members:
 - Peter Taylor (comments and feedback)
 - Don Richards (comments and feedback)
 - Mairi Paige (temporary access option)
 - Kym Vogelsang (proposal)
- [Presentation from Wavelength](#):

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- Assessment of over the beach concrete ramp;
- Johnston Ave location & seasonal changes to beach width;
- Assessment of Blackfellows Caves boat ramp example;
- Wave attenuator assessment;
- Temporary Ramp Options
 - ConcreteMats
 - Mobi-mat
 - Envirex Versa-deck
 - Trackpad
 - Faun Trackway
- Community submissions assessment
 - Kym Vogelsang presented to the group on his submission/concept proposal

This meeting had a key focus on consideration of alternate locations for a formal boat launch facility within Kingston. However, upon assessment and the community importance of providing weather protection and launch pontoons, it was identified that any alternate location would provide an inferior offering at a comparable cost to the reinstatement concepts provided through the Concept Study. As a result, the focus group identified its focus would be on the reinstatement of the existing facility as opposed to a new location and offering.

Meeting outcome

A key item which was progressed from this meeting and discussion, was the importance of a temporary/interim improvement for beach launching as an option in Kingston whilst the longer term pathway was being determined. As a result, further assessment of the two preferred options (being Concrete Ramp Extension vs Faun Trackway) was progressed as a priority. The temporary removal of the existing pontoons at Maria Creek for storage was also discussed and approved at this meeting, in an effort to preserve the pontoons and assist any natural mobilisation of trapped seagrass in the ramp area.

The [minutes](#) and Wavelength presentation were made available on Council's website following the meeting.

Community Focus Group 3rd Meeting – 29 September 2020

The Community Focus Group held its third meeting on 29 September 2020. This meeting was held quickly following the previous meeting in an attempt to have an interim boat launching/beach access in place prior to the peak season. As a result, this meeting was focussed on the detailed assessment of Concrete Ramp Extension vs Faun Trackway.

- [Presentation from Wavelength:](#)
 - Seasonal beach change;
 - Options review – concrete ramp;
 - Options review – Faun Trackway.

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The [minutes](#) and Wavelength presentation were made available on Council's website following the meeting. As a result of the technical analysis and assessment of the two preferred options, the Community Focus Group recommended that the Council proceed with the purchase of the Faun Trackway. The comparison of the two options and key considerations of the recommendation/assessment was included as an attachment of the meeting [minutes](#). An overview of the process and key questions were provided through the release of the [Faun Trackway/Temporary Beach Access FAQ](#).

Meeting outcome

As a result of the recommendation of the community focus group, Council proceeded to purchase 30m of Faun Trackway from the UK for a cost of \$78,079 (noting that the length and cost was significantly less than originally anticipated and considered during the assessment phase, being due to worldwide shortage and product availability). Due to international shipping delays (including effects of COVID-19), the product was received late and was installed successfully on 11 January 2021. The Trackway has been successful in improving beach access for all users since its installation.

Community Focus Group 4th Meeting – 26 October 2020

Having successfully progressed a temporary option for improved beach access to assist with beach launching, the Community Focus Group returned its focus to the longer term pathway for Maria Creek and held its fourth meeting on 26 October 2020 where it considered the following:

- Submissions received from community members:
 - Dean Ludwig (comments and feedback)
 - Lynton McInness (comments and feedback)
 - Kym Vogelsang (proposal)
 - Eddy Lindner (proposal)
 - Scott Gluyas & Don Richards (proposal)
 - Brett McLaren (meeting apology/comments)
- [Presentation from Wavelength](#):
 - Review of key physical drivers/causes of Maria Creek closure;
 - Sand – northerly sediment transport and saturated southern breakwater;
 - Wrack – storm waves and wind, net importer of sediment.
 - Partial breakwater removal;
 - Community submissions assessment;
 - Proposals assessment
 - Review of reinstate concepts provided in Concept Study:
 - Concept 1 – Ongoing Management
 - Concept 2 – Extend Breakwaters
 - Concept 3 – Narrow Entrance
 - Summary of effectiveness, jetty impact and costs of reinstate options.

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This meeting provided a key point for the Community Focus Group, as it was accepted that any community proposal put forward would exceed the costs of the reinstatement options provided in the study and focussed on the key physical drivers and causes of the closure.

It was generally understood that with a fully saturated southern breakwater, sand volumes in the order of $30,000\text{m}^3 - 50,000\text{m}^3$ per year will naturally flow across the channel entrance through the formation of a sand bar. This impacts directly on navigation at creek entrance and results in increased sediment availability for wave and current transport directly into the creek (being that the creek is a net importer of sediment). This is shown in the photo below:



Ultimately, any viable concept to reinstate the facility as a sustainable and long-term solution, needs to:

- address both the existing saturation of the southern breakwater (removal of approximately $300,000\text{m}^3$ to create a buffer);
- appropriately manage annual sediment transport (bypassing of $30,000-50,000\text{m}^3$ per year of sand);
- appropriately manage (or reduce) wrack accumulation within the channel and entrance.

This is shown in the photo below:



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Upon review of the reinstatement options, the group placed high importance on a structural change to the southern breakwater to reduce volumes of wrack accumulation within the channel. The preferred Concept 2 Extend Breakwaters was the only concept to be effective for seagrass reduction in the channel, however the capital cost of \$10.9M was considered unachievable.

Meeting outcome

As a result, a 'Hybrid Concept' option was progressed to detailed assessment and analysis, being a hybrid of the current structures (Concept 1) and Extend Breakwaters (Concept 2). In addition to the identification of the Hybrid Concept, a key item of this meeting was the considered need for a ratepayer survey for the broad options for the facility (Reinstate, Abandon/Remove, Do Nothing) and the likely effect on ratepayers under each scenario.

The [minutes](#), Wavelength presentation and written responses to questions/submissions ([Q & A Fact Sheet – Community Focus Group \(26 October 2020\)](#)) were released on Council's website following the meeting.

Community Focus Group 5th Meeting – 30 November 2020

The Community Focus Group held its fifth meeting on 30 November 2020 where it was focussed on the results of the detailed assessment of the Hybrid Concept, and considered the following:

- Submissions received from community members:
 - Peter Flint (comments and feedback)
- [Presentation from Wavelength](#):
 - Hybrid Concept;
 - Layout;
 - Effectiveness;
 - Costs;
 - Findings.
- Consideration of draft community survey (letter, information sheet, survey response form);
 - Reinstate (Hybrid Concept)
 - Remove (Concept 4 Breakwater Removal)
 - Do Nothing (Concept 5 Do Nothing).

Having considered the results of the modelling, financial analysis and effectiveness of the Hybrid Concept, the Community Focus Group accepted this was the preferred concept option for the reinstatement pathway. The [Technical Note – Hybrid Concept Review](#) was provided to the meeting and released to the community, as well as summarised through the [Hybrid Concept Fact Sheet](#).

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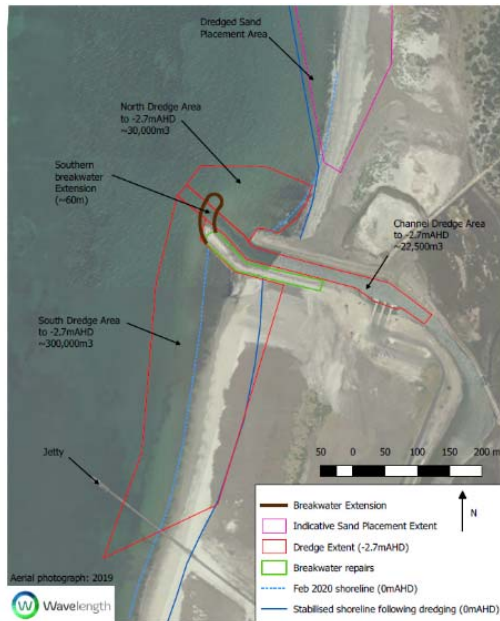
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The hybrid concept overview is provided below:

Hybrid Concept



Capital/upfront campaign required:

Capital cost: \$7.6M

60m southern breakwater extension

250m breakwater repairs

300,000m³ dredging (southern side)

52,500m³ dredging (channel)

Ongoing maintenance cost: \$434,000 annual + depreciation/loan

Minimum 30,000m³ – 50,000m³ sand bypassing annually

Minimum 17,000m³ 'in situ' sand / wrack removal annually

25 Year NPV (Net Present Value): \$14.4M

The draft survey considered by the Community Focus Group included indicative rate increases required under the following scenarios:

- **Reinstate** - Hybrid Concept
- **Remove** – Full breakwater removal and loss of facility
- **Do Nothing** – Loss of facility and additional sand accumulation at jetty

The draft survey was drafted on a 'worst case scenario' that no grant funding was able to be received for any pathway, but particularly the reinstate option. Through robust and in depth discussions on the indicative rate increases required to fund the reinstatement of the facility, it became increasingly clear that the economic impacts and business case for the facility (including Council's capacity to borrow and repay a loan facility) needed to be determined prior to the release of any survey to the community.

Meeting outcome

As a result of the meeting, the release of the community/ratepayer survey was put on hold and the development of a business case progressed as a priority. This recommendation from the Community Focus Group was endorsed by Council and BRM Advisory was engaged to develop the business case. Mr Mark Booth of BRM Advisory held one-on-one sessions with businesses and key stakeholders in Kingston during December 2020.

The [minutes](#), Wavelength presentation and Technical Note were released on Council's website following the meeting.

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Community Focus Group 6th Meeting – 9 February 2021

The Community Focus Group held its sixth and most recent meeting on 9 February 2021 where it was focussed on the outcomes and findings of the business case:

- [Presentation from BRM Advisory:](#)
 - Background & Coastal Assets;
 - Review of Wavelength Concepts/options;
 - Community consultation;
 - Concept Study
 - Community Focus Group
 - Community Feedback to Business Case
 - Economic Impact (Tourism and second homes);
 - Financial Impact on Council/Community;
 - Project Viability.

The key message in the presentation and the business case was that the reinstatement of Maria Creek will have a significant detrimental impact on Council's financial sustainability without an increase in Council rates or a decrease in existing services (or both). It was made clear that Council should only proceed if it is confident that the community, as a whole, is willing to pay to meet the ongoing cost of this facility. The Business Case considered the reinstate option under different funding scenarios (being 0% funding, 50% funding and 100% funding) with the likely rate increases required under each scenario. The Business Case provided a broad and realistic perspective on the viability of the reinstate pathway, the impact on Council's financial viability, as well as the indicative impact on business and tourism.

The [Maria Creek Business Case](#) was provided to the meeting and released to the community, as well as summarised through the [Business Case Fact Sheet](#).

Meeting outcome

Whilst there was a lot of discussion and alternate 'bandaid' solutions put forward for consideration in an attempt to reduce the ongoing costs for the reinstatement of the facility, it was reiterated and accepted that no stone had been left unturned in getting to this point. Any 'bandaid' attempt to reopen the facility would be unsuccessful, and any concept likely to be viable needs to counter the impacts of the key causes of the Maria Creek closure:

- saturation of southern breakwater, requiring ongoing sand bypassing; and
- wrack accumulation from storm wind & waves.

The [minutes](#), BRM Advisory presentation and Business Case were released on Council's website following the meeting.

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Following the meeting of the Community Focus Group, the Maria Creek Business Case was tabled at Council's 16 February 2021 meeting. Having considered the findings of the business case, Council resolved the following:

- Council acknowledges the preferred reinstatement pathway will have significant detrimental impact on Council's financial sustainability without a substantial increase in Council rates or reduction of other services.
- Council's 'in principle' position is that it does not proceed with the reinstatement of the Maria Creek Boat Launching Facility unless it is confident that ratepayers as a whole, are willing to pay to meet the ongoing cost of this facility.
- Council seeks the views from the owner of every rateable property in the Kingston District Council area about the potential significant rate increase required to fund the preferred pathway to reinstate the Maria Creek Boat Launching Facility.

As per the Council resolution, a survey mailout was released to each rateable property within the Council area, which requested a response on whether the ratepayer agreed with Council's in principle position not to proceed with the reinstatement of the Maria Creek. The survey closed on 21 March 2021, with Council to formally consider the outcomes and responses received at its April Council meeting.

For further information and supporting documents, please refer to the Maria Creek Sustainable Infrastructure Project page on Council's website:

<https://www.kingstondc.sa.gov.au/our-services/major-projects/maria-creek-sustainable-infrastructure-project>