

Community Engagement Summary

Project Name	DDA Compliant Pontoon – Charles Clarke Park – Mooloolaba
Project Description	To design and construct a DDA water access pontoon At Charles Clarke Park on the Mooloolah River trail
Engagement Dates	14 October to 11 November 2024
Project Manager/Lead	Sunshine Coast Council

Community engagement

Initial targeted engagement was undertaken with the Access and Inclusion Coordination Group, a reference group representing people with lived experience of disability. Feedback from this group informed the draft concept plans for the pontoon, developed by an independent pontoon specialist who was engaged for the project.

The draft concept plans for the pontoon were made available for broader community feedback on Have Your Say Sunshine Coast. This included 2d location plans, sections and 3d model images, along with the following background documents for context:

1. *DDA Compliant Pontoon Investigation Site Assessment* which recommended Charles Clarke Park as the preferred location for the pontoon.
2. *Non-Motorised Water Access Plan* which identifies a need for additional DDA water access points across the Sunshine Coast Region.

Participants were invited to review the background documents and draft plans and provide feedback on the design through a ten-question survey. Community engagement was open for a period of four weeks between 14 October to 11 November 2024.

Project overview

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant pontoon at Charles Clarke Park in Mooloolaba will allow people of all abilities to access and paddle the Mooloolah River kayak trail using non-motorised watercrafts including kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards (SUP). The DDA compliant pontoon will help create a more inclusive region and improve access to nature for people of all abilities. The pontoon will have built in features to allow for assisted and unassisted access to the water.

Charles Clarke Park was chosen as the preferred site for the first location to receive a specialist pontoon as it:

- is central to the Sunshine Coast
- has existing infrastructure to support all abilities access including parking, amenities and facilities
- is close to a carparking with flat grades, providing better accessibility to the pontoon
- offers access to the Mooloolah River kayak trail.



Engagement approach

What engagement methods were used?
SCC 'Have your say' project webpage and Online Feedback Survey
SCC Social media posts and advertising
Targeted engagement with the Access and Inclusion Coordination Group Meeting. Directly sought feedback from people with disability, sector via this reference group.
X2 A1 Corflute 'Have your say' posters with QR codes installed in Charles Clarke Place. QR code linking to the projects 'Have your say' page
Email campaigns via the 'Have your Say' newsletter distribution list

Engagement reach

How was the engagement received?
1,325 visitors to Have your say project webpage
67 survey responses
39,568 people reached on social media / 970 people visited the project webpage via social media link.
2 Written email submissions
2258 Newsletters emailed out to 'have your say' subscribers / x171 people visited the project webpage via newsletter link

Engagement response

Snapshot of survey responses
23.88% of respondents were a person with lived experience of disability
82.09% of respondents participate or have experience in non-motorised watercraft sports
Kayaking was the most popular non-motorised activity respondents indicated they would use at this pontoon at 76.12%.
78.57% of respondents agreed the pontoon would accommodate their non-motorised watercraft.
98.51% of respondents have never used a specialised pontoon like this before



Engagement results

What the community told us

Support and usage

The project proposal received strong community support, and the survey indicated the facility would be used by 78% of those who completed a survey. Social media commentary was a majority in support and alignment with the projects aim to help move towards a more inclusive Sunshine Coast for people with disability by providing greater access to the region's natural environment. Some on-line comments included "As a keen paddler of an Ocean Ski and a Disability Support Worker I think this is a wonderful project" and "Absolutely yes. Everybody has the right to enjoy our waters" and survey responses included "Brilliant initiative. This pontoon would be a game-changer as Queensland's only compliant facility for accessible water activities. It's a meaningful step towards inclusion, enabling people of all abilities to connect with nature and participate in kayaking and paddleboarding."

Concerns regarding chosen location

There were concerns raised with the pontoon selected location.

The *DDA Compliant Pontoon Investigation Site Assessment* was provided on the 'Have your say webpage' as a background document. The report analysed x4 possible locations and analysed those through a multi-assessment criteria. Charles Clark Park came out as the preferred location. Notwithstanding the outcome of the report some community feedback received expressed concerns for the chosen location regarding safety of pontoon users, obstruction to navigation of existing boats. A loss of existing park and beach uses. A loss of visual amenity from the park to the river. Some comments included "Having been involved with sailing for people with disabilities over the years, I am concerned that the location at Clarke Park & its close proximity to the wharf marina where larger watercraft are moored would pose safety issues" and "Destroying an iconic vista".

Key themes

The key themes of the community engagement have been collated and summarised below.

Pontoon function - *Feedback regarding the pontoons design and useability.*

Comments included the need for non-slip surfaces, appropriately placed handles, supports, guards. Spatial requirements for manoeuvring from devices into vessel and onto the water. Storage of personal items and shaded surfaces.

Council response to feedback

All design and technical feedback will be considered, inform, and improve the detailed design of the pontoon as it evolves from concept to detailed engineering designs.

Pontoon location - *Concerns regarding the location of the pontoon and impacts on safety and park/beach amenity*

The community feedback presented concerns about the potential negative impact of high boat traffic, speed, and wake on non-motorised craft users. Large vessels using the waterway may pose safety risks,



and the pontoon's location could reduce the beach's amenity for recreational activities. The structure could create a negative visual impact, divide the beach, and reduce usable park space. Additionally, it could displace boats that currently moor near the beach and impact navigation due to its proximity to a channel marker and a sandbar. Charles Clarke Park is already congested, and alternative sites should be considered.

Council response to feedback

The waterway's current speed limit of 6 knots supports both motorised and non-motorised vessels. While the pontoon is not expected to interfere with navigation in the channel or wharf area, further investigation will be conducted. The proposed location for the pontoon is at the northern end of the existing beach, allowing current recreational activities to continue. The area already has numerous pontoons and wharves, contributing to the visual character of the river, and a new pontoon would align with this marine aesthetic. Parkyn Parade pontoon was not considered a viable option due to its lack of access to toilets.

Pontoon safety – Concerns regarding use of pontoon

The pontoon will be used for fishing, swimming and jumping into boat channel. It will not be monitored by security. It will attract vandalism and anti-social behaviours.

Council response to feedback

While concerns about the pontoon attracting undesirable activities are valid, it's important to consider the potential benefits it brings to the community. The pontoon can provide a safe and designated area for non-motorised watercraft. The presence of a well-used community facility can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents, potentially deterring vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Clear signage to promote safe use of the facility will be implemented. Council will inspect and monitor the pontoon ensuring the pontoon remains a positive asset for everyone.

Ancillary Facilities – Parking, toilets, shower and change rooms.

Existing car park very busy. Include an accessible change facility.

Council response to feedback

The existing car park will have access to DDA parking spaces in addition to a longer bay for mini-buses. The existing amenity block contains cubicles for all genders and persons with disabilities. It is important to note that there is no accessible shower/change facility currently provided or planned at this site. Grant opportunities will be explored as they become available to support future improvements.

NEXT STEPS

We have heard what the community said and note that although there is strong support for a DDA compliant pontoon that provides access to the natural waterways on the Sunshine Coast for people of all abilities, the community has expressed concerns regarding Charles Clarke Park as the preferred location. Therefore, we will be undertaking further investigations to ensure that we get it right. This will include investigations at Charles Clarke Park, along with other Sunshine Coast locations.

