
Capel Sound Foreshores

Boating Survey

Analysis of Survey Results

July 2018



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Introduction

Capel Sound Foreshore Boating Strategy

The Capel Sound Foreshore stretches from Chinaman’s Creek in the East to Shirlow Avenue, Rye in the West and is bordered by Point Nepean Road and the southern shore of the Bay. The total area of the foreshore is approximately nine hectares and its width varies between 150 and 200 metres along its east-west length.

The Capel Sound Foreshores has had a Coastal Management Plan in place since 2016. At this time, Strategic Plans were developed to guide successful management and delivery of future benefits in the following key areas:

- Environment
- Camping
- Boatsheds
- Boating
- Infrastructure
- Community Engagement

The Capel Sound Boating Strategy aims to:

- maintain the Tootgarook Boat Ramp as the primary access for vehicle-launched craft; and
- support the manual launching of small craft along the length of the Capel Sounds Foreshore

Further information about the strategy can be found here:

<http://www.capelsoundforeshore.com.au/admin17/assets/downloads/2016-Gazetted-Plan-FINAL-2.pdf>

Purpose of the Survey

The Capel Sound Foreshores’ boat ramp has enabled generations of families to launch their small fishing boats and recreational craft to fully enjoy the Bay.

A survey of people who make use of the boating facilities was undertaken in August 2017 to inform the boating strategy, especially in relation to the use of the Tootgarook Boat Ramp and people’s satisfaction with the facilities.

Survey Methodology

On the 11 August 2017, a survey comprising 30 questions was sent to 111 Capel Sound Foreshore campers. The respondents were identified as users of Tootgarook Boat Ramp between September 2016 and April 2017 (season 2016/17) through the Capel Sound Foreshores’ in-house booking system.

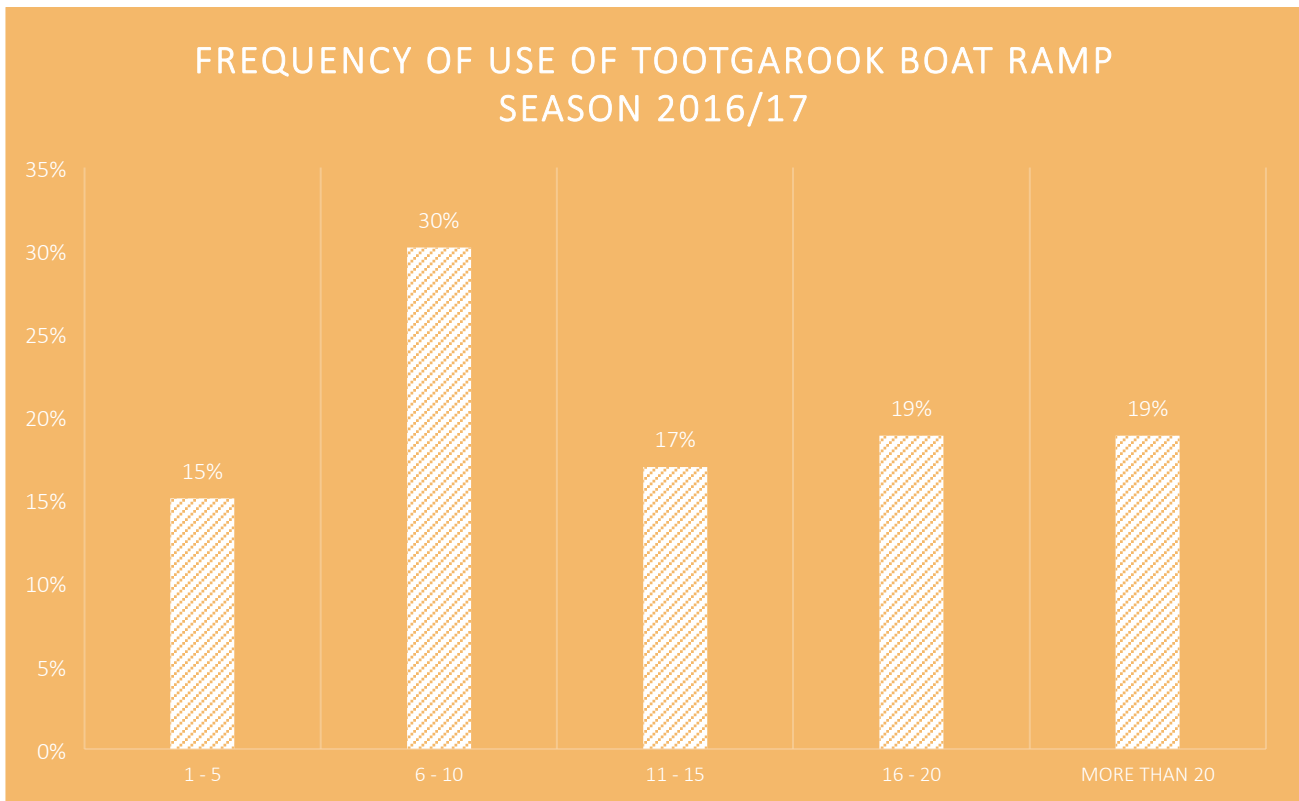
The survey remained open for approximately 30 days. Overall, 65 responses (representing 59% of total survey recipients) were received, which is a robust response rate.

Given the response rate for the survey, it is likely that the survey sample would represent the larger demographic of boating campers who used the Tootgarook Boat Ramp between September 2016 and April 2017¹.

Respondent Demographics

The most common reported frequency of usage during the 2016/17 season was between 6 and 10 times (30%).

More than half of the respondents who used the Tootgarook Boat Ramp did so more than 10 times during the season.

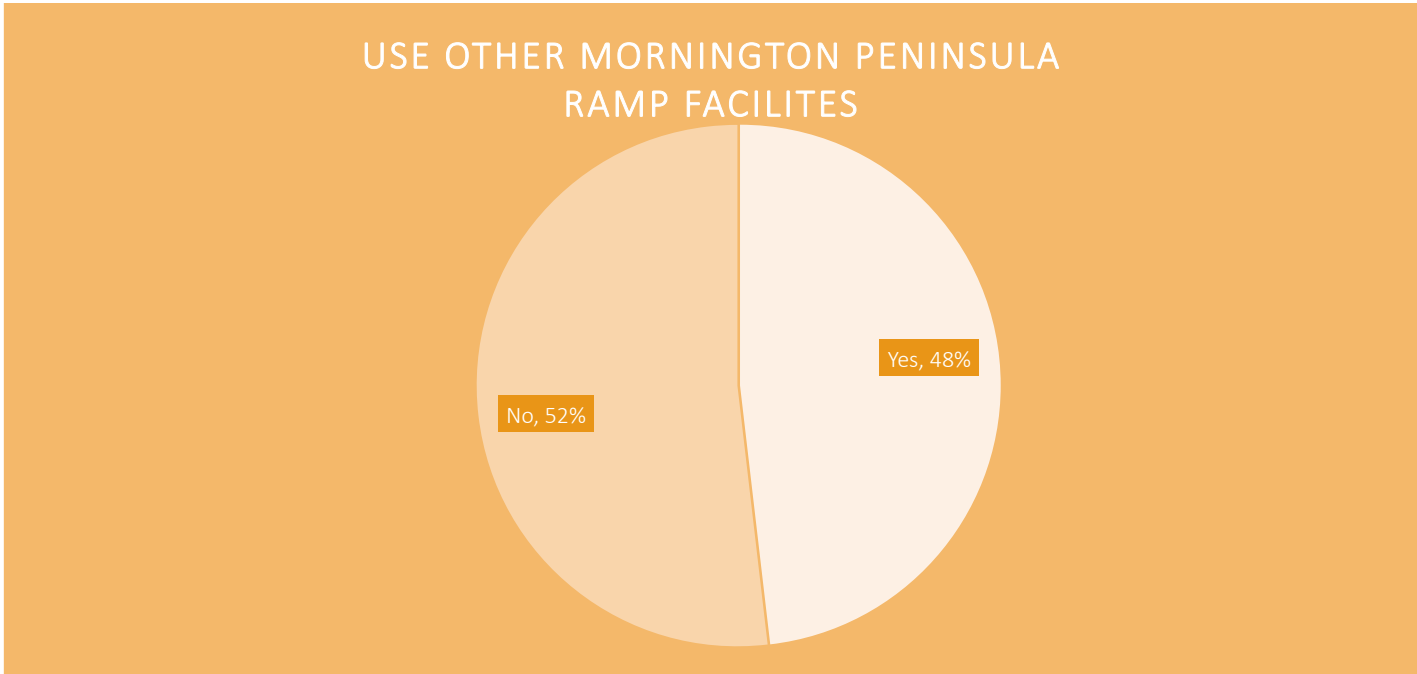


The nearest alternative boat ramps are:

- in the west at Rye, which caters for larger craft; or
- in the east at Dromana, which is similar in size to the Capel Sound Foreshores' ramp.

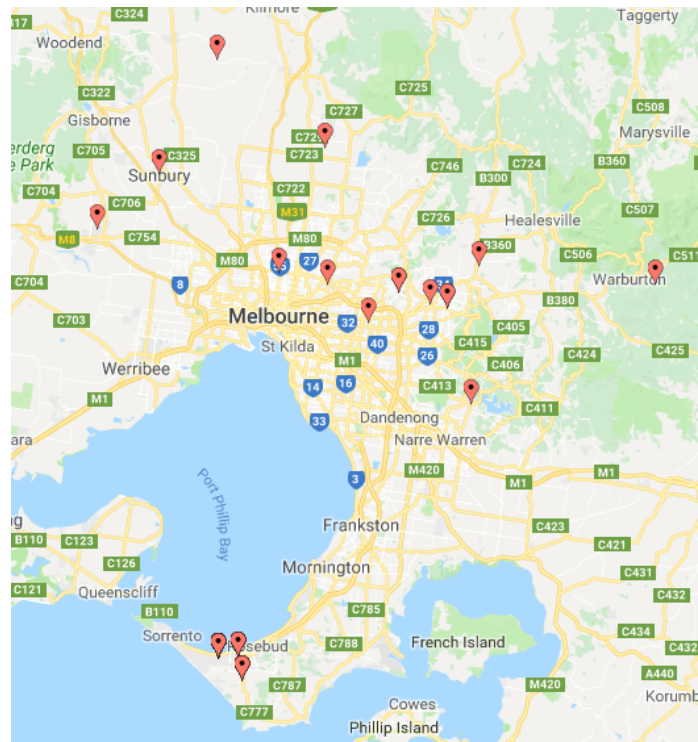
Although most respondents do not hold memberships to boating clubs, fishing clubs or boating associations, close to 50% of respondents use other boat ramping facilities on the Mornington Peninsula.

¹ Assuming that the original mail out list was all encompassing.



Almost half of survey respondents (45%) also store their watercraft in the Rye/Tootgarook area. The table and map below reveal the range and spread of watercraft locations.

Suburb where watercraft is stored	Percentage of respondents
Rye/Tootgarook	45%
Rosebud West	12%
Boneo	10%
Park Orchards	4%
Kilsyth	4%
Blackburn	2%
Woodstock	2%
Coburg	2%
Croydon	2%
Narre Warren East	2%
Eaglemont	2%
Chintin	2%
Big Pats Creek	2%
Sunbury	2%
Kurunjang	2%
Coldstream	2%
Locksley	2%
Grand Total	100%



Key Findings

This report provides a detailed analysis of the survey responses.

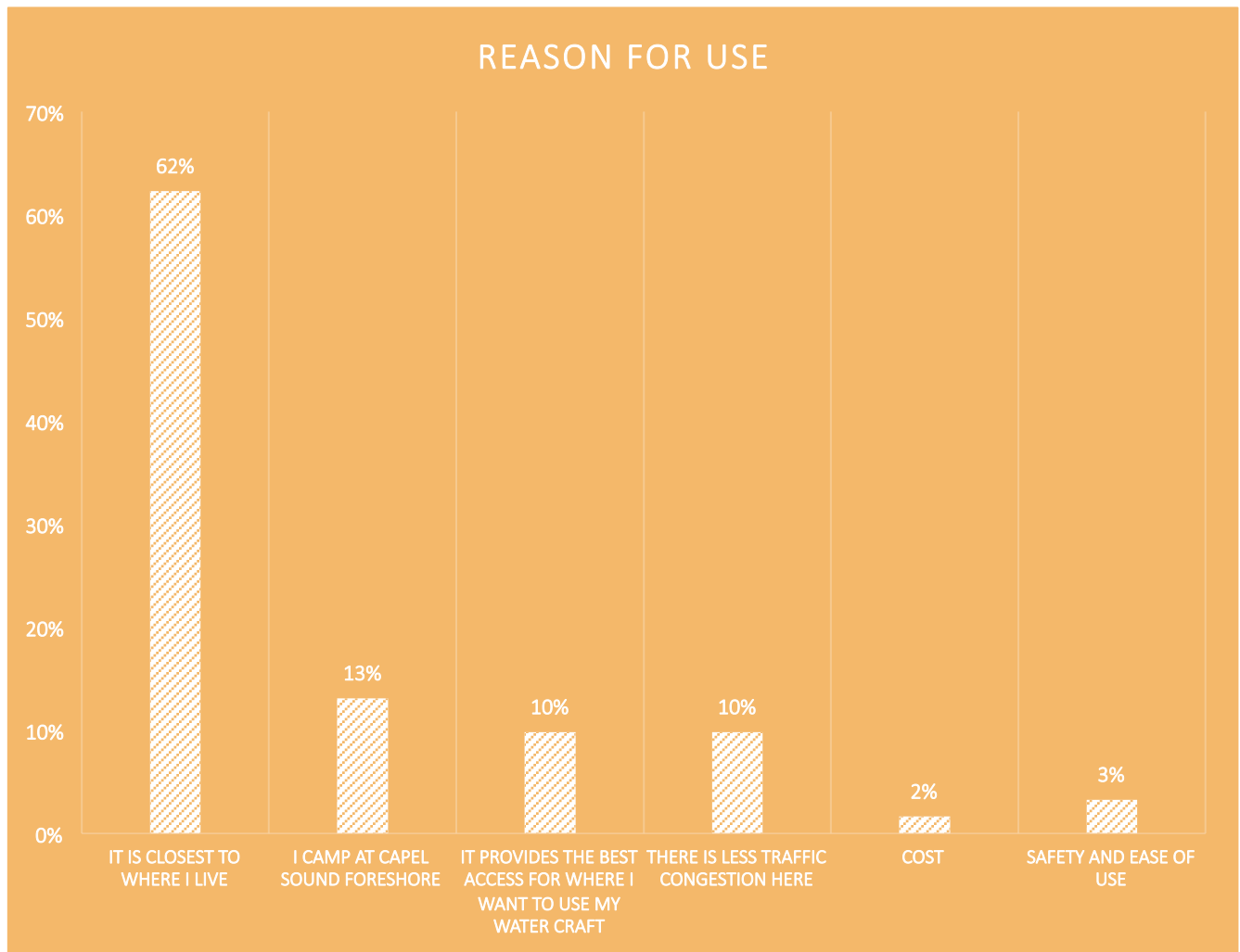
The following is a summary of the findings:

- More than half of respondents (62%) use the Tootgarook Boat Ramp because it is close to their home.
- Open boats and jet skis are the most commonly launched watercraft (72%).
- Access to the boat ramp most commonly occurs in the mornings.
- Most users spend more than five hours on the water.
- Season permits are the most common purchase that respondents make to access the boat ramp, with daily passes used significantly less. It is predicted that this purchasing pattern will continue in the following 2017/18 season.
- Just over 50% of respondents expressed a difficulty in locating parking when using the boat ramp and parking was the most often raised issue associated with using the boat ramp. Most parking takes place on Point Nepean Road.
- Almost half of all respondents (46%) were unable to launch from the Tootgarook Boat Ramp because it was too busy; these people either return later, go elsewhere or give up for the day.
- There are mixed levels of satisfaction with the waterways, with the main concerns being depth of the channel and sandbars. Some respondents were also dissatisfied with the amount of sand on the ramp itself.
- Respondents are mostly satisfied with the availability of staff and more than 70% felt that staff members were helpful. The most common feedback for staff was the need to improve the management of the flow of people and watercraft around the boat ramp.

Usage

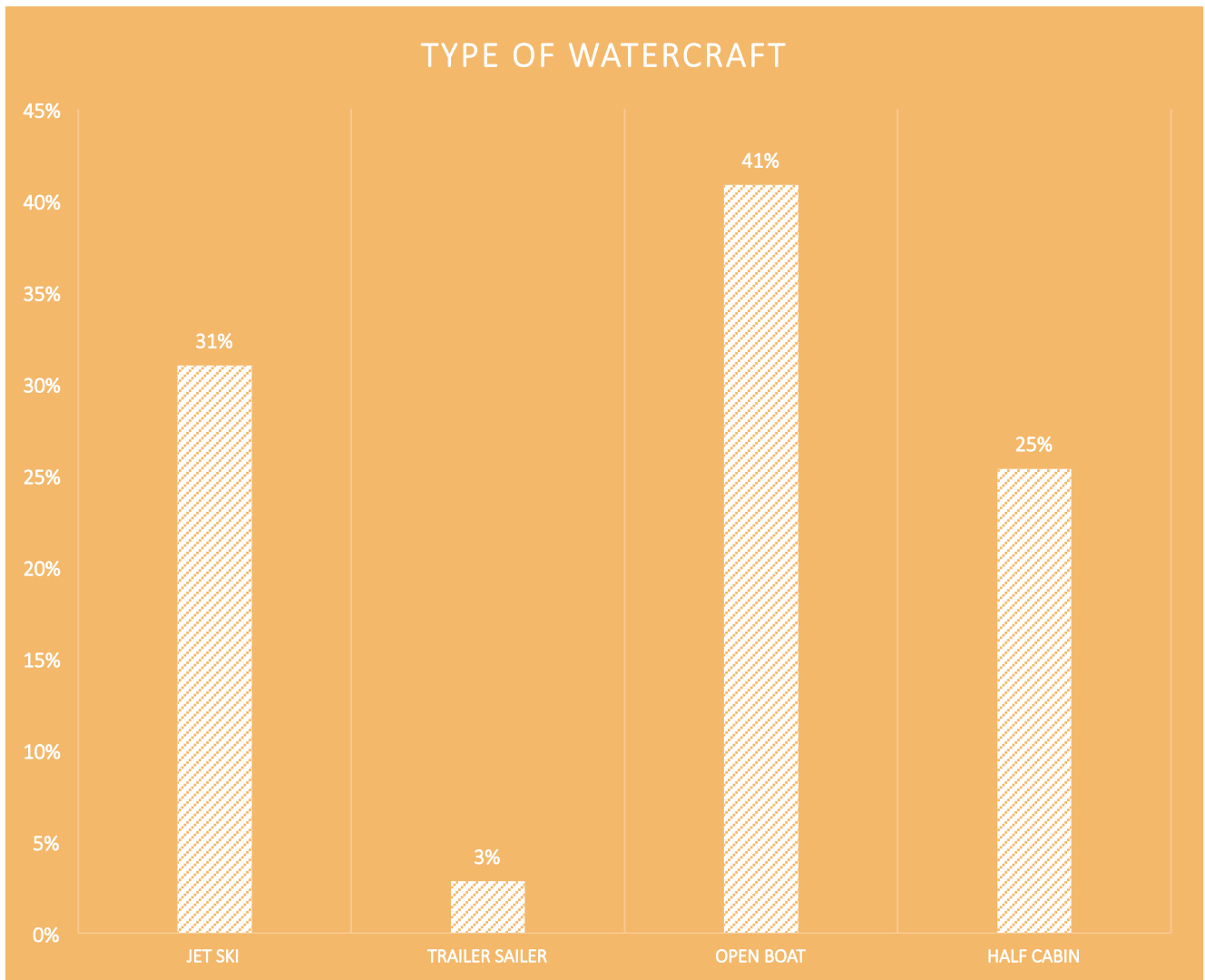
Reason

Overwhelmingly, respondents use the Tootgarook Boat Ramp as a launching facility because it is close to their home (62%).



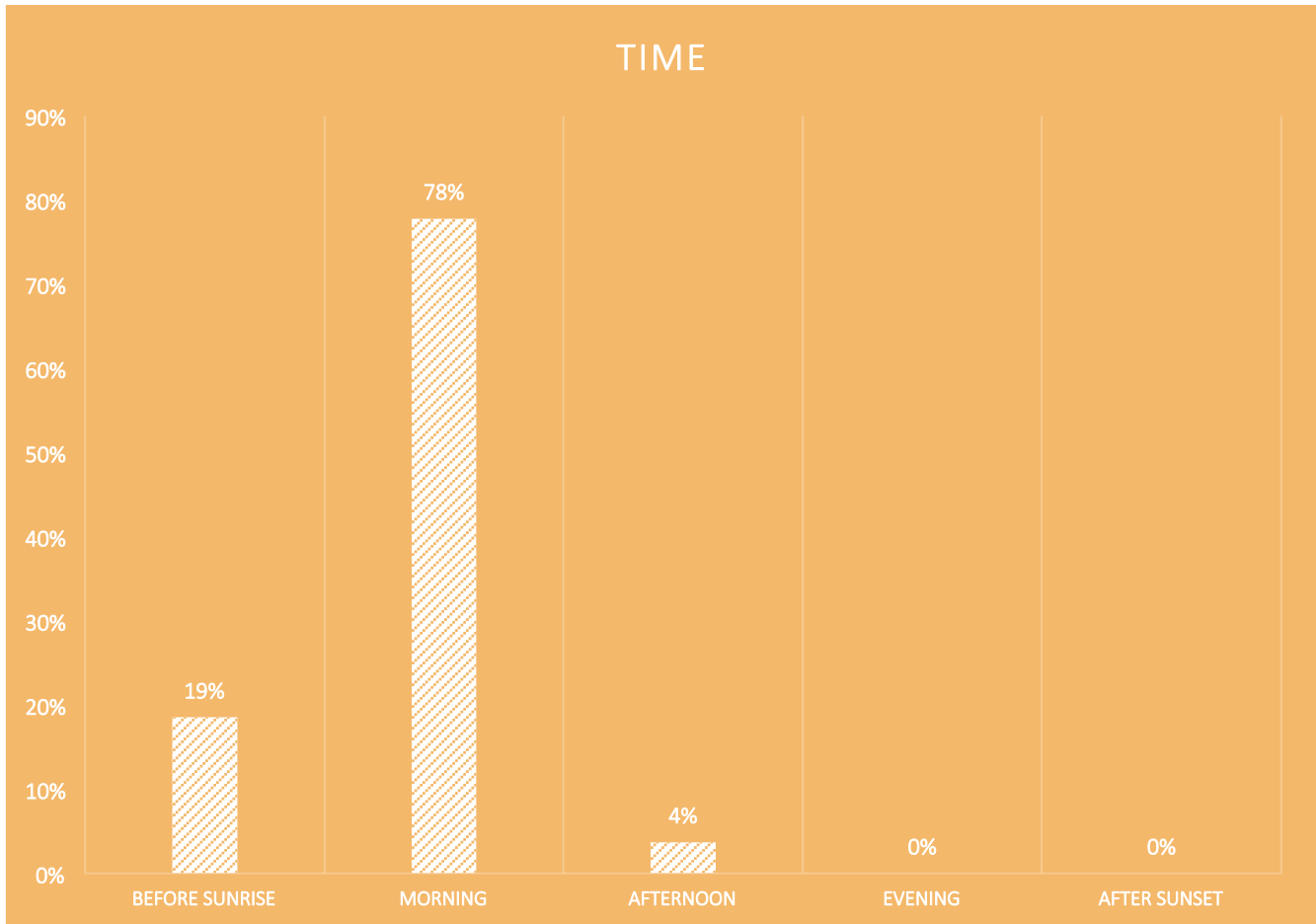
Type

Open boats and jet skis make up more than 70% of the type of watercrafts used at the boat ramp (41% and 31% respectively). Half cabin boats account for exactly a quarter of watercrafts used, while trailer sailers are used only marginally. There is no significant relationship between the type of watercraft used and the frequency with which people visit the boat ramp.



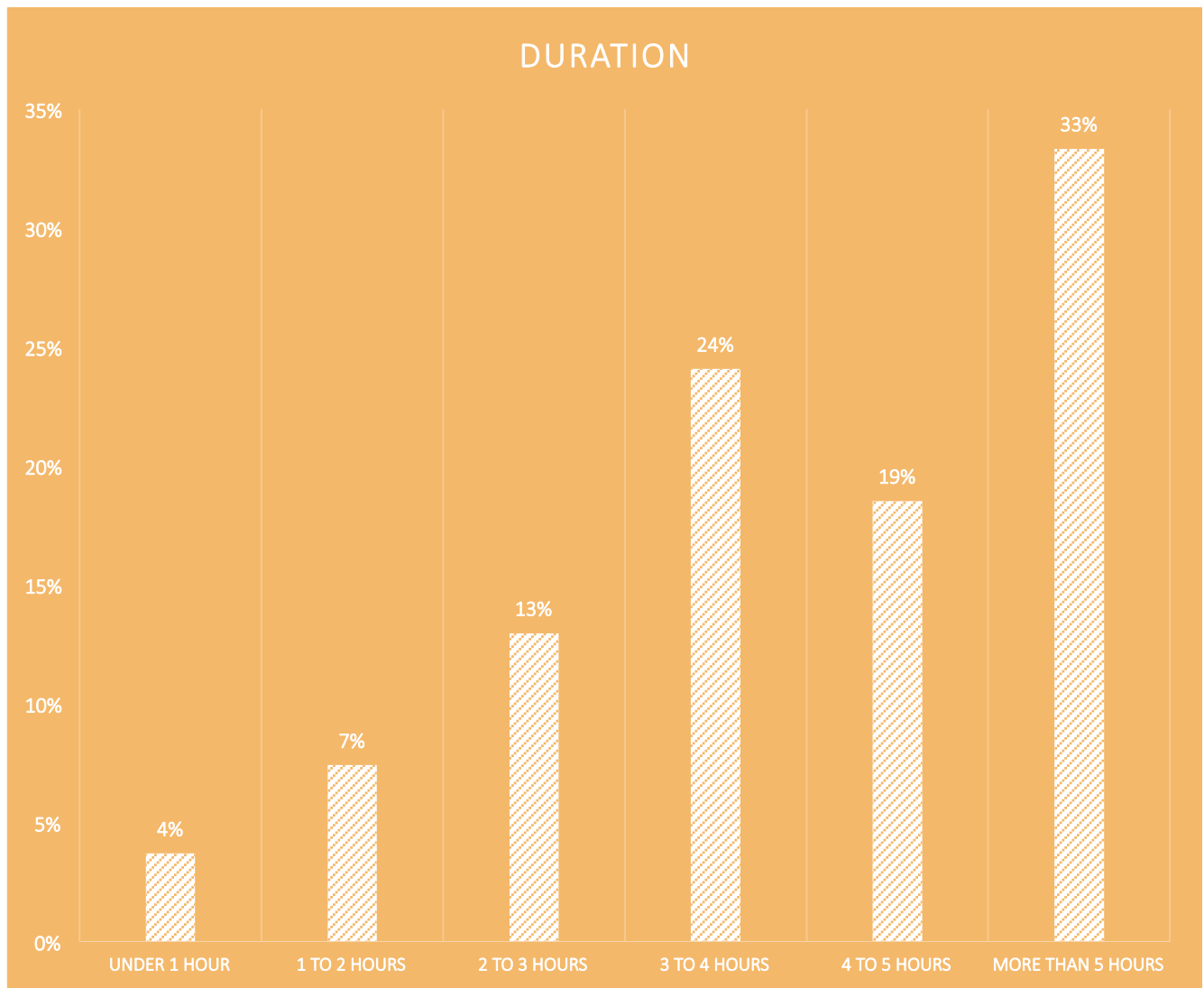
Access

Overwhelmingly, respondents access the boat ramp in the mornings (78%) and to a much lesser extent before sunrise (23%) and in the afternoon (4%). None of the respondents launch from the boat ramp in the evening and after sunset.

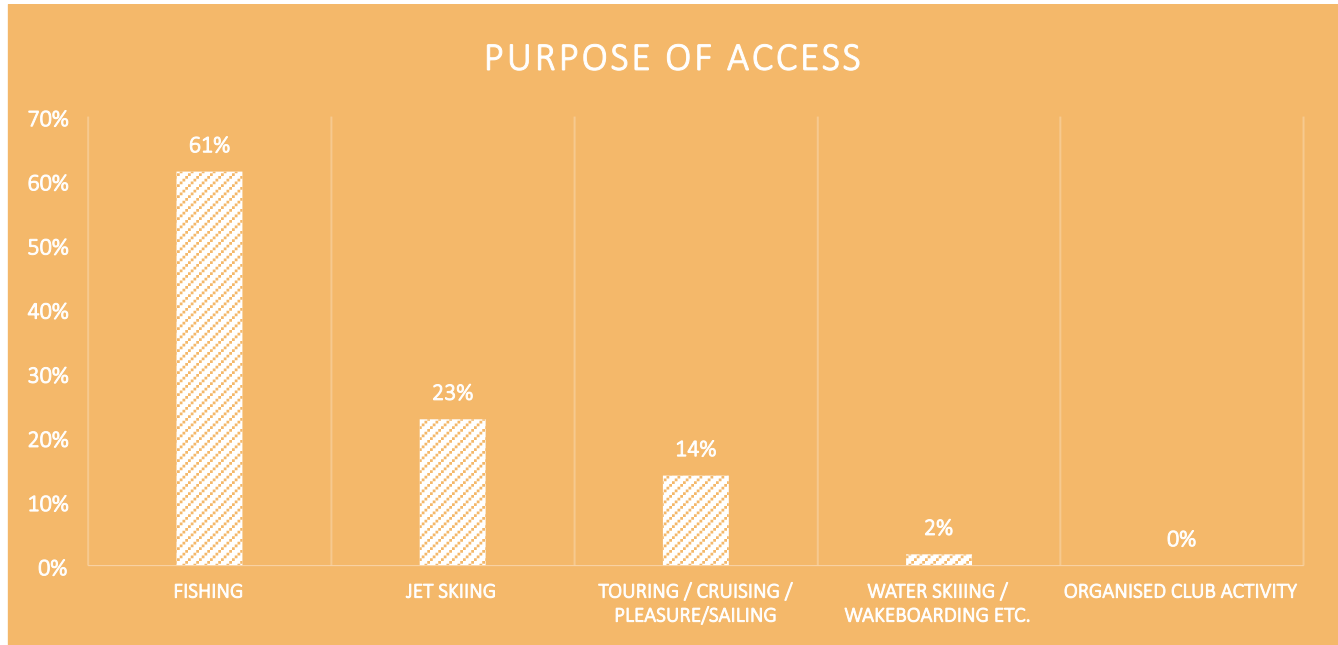


Most respondents spend three hours or more on boating trips, with the highest proportion of respondents (33%) spending more than five hours.

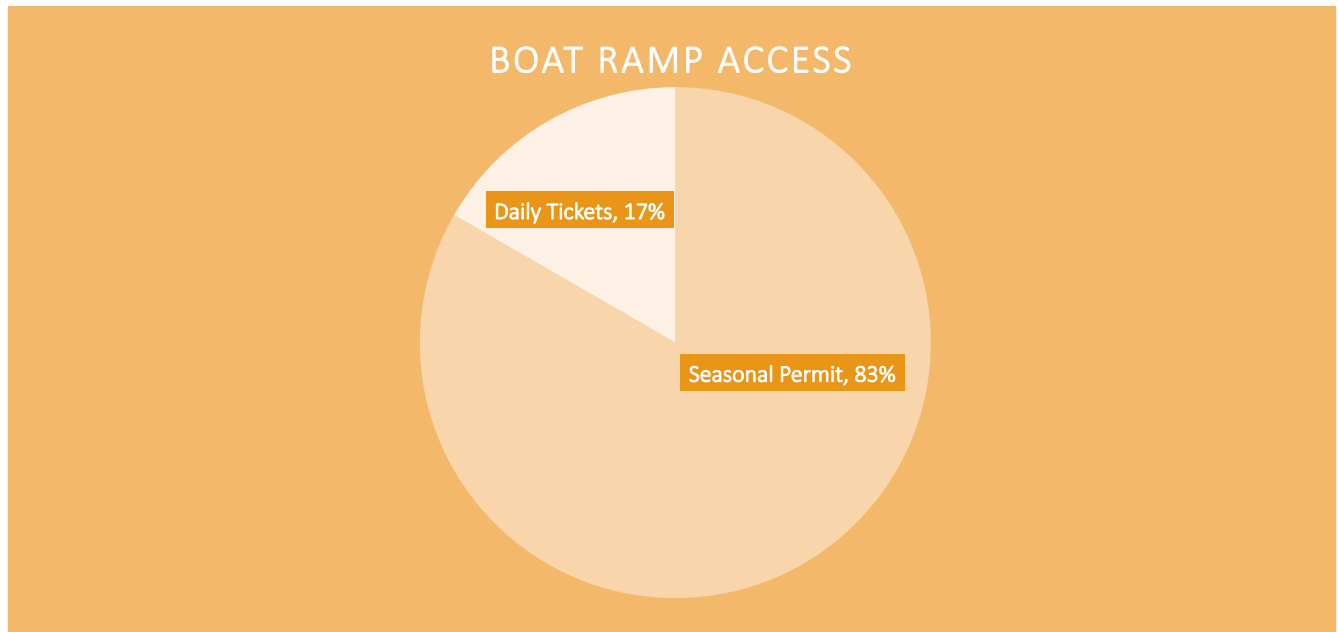
There was no discernible relationship between the type of watercraft used and the duration of the trip. Given that most respondents spend more than five hours on a trip it is not surprising that most respondents launch in the morning period.



More than 60% of respondents access the boat ramp for the purpose of fishing, while almost a quarter do so to jet ski. To a lesser extent, respondents undertake touring/pleasure sailing (14%) and water skiing (2%).



Season permits are the most common purchase that respondents make when using the boat ramp (83%), with significantly fewer respondents buying daily passes (17%). There is also no significant relationship between the type of watercraft used and the type of ticket purchased for ramp access.



Future Access

Significantly, 100% of survey respondents indicated that they planned to use the Tootgarook boat ramp in the following 2017/18 season. Around 10% of current seasonal permit holders plan to switch to daily tickets but the same percentage of daily ticket holders plan to switch to seasonal permits. Therefore, future season purchasing portions are predicted to be identical to the previous season, with 83% buying seasonal permit holders and 17% daily ticket holders.

Parking

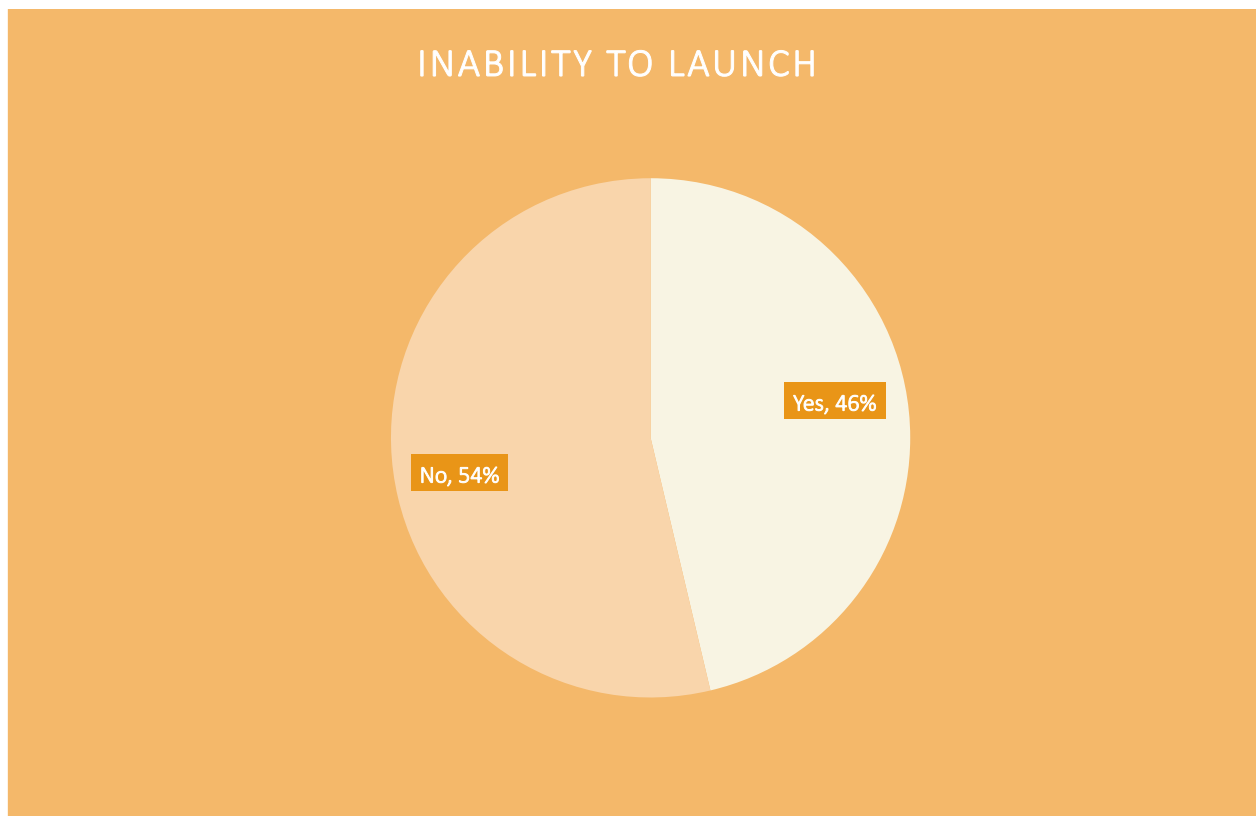
Respondents were asked where they parked their vehicles after launching. This was an open-ended question (i.e. allowing for free text responses), however, many respondents gave similar responses, suggesting a clear pattern of parking behaviour. Most respondents park on Point Nepean Road (33%) and, to a lesser extent, around Tootgarook Primary School (19%) or sides streets (16%).

Nominated Parking Location	Percentage of respondents
Point Nepean Road	33%
Tootgarook Primary School	19%
Side Street	16%
Home	13%
Closest Possible Available	11%
Camping/Caravan Site	5%
Wilkinson Street	3%
Beach Road	2%

Just over 50% of respondents expressed difficulty in locating parking when using the boat ramp. Respondents who had difficulty parking (56%) and respondents who had no difficulty reportedly (44%) used the boat ramp at the same time period, most often in the morning and, to a lesser extent, before sunrise. This suggests that there may be a window of opportunity in the mornings when parking is available. More research would need to be undertaken to estimate what time in the morning parking starts to become problematic.

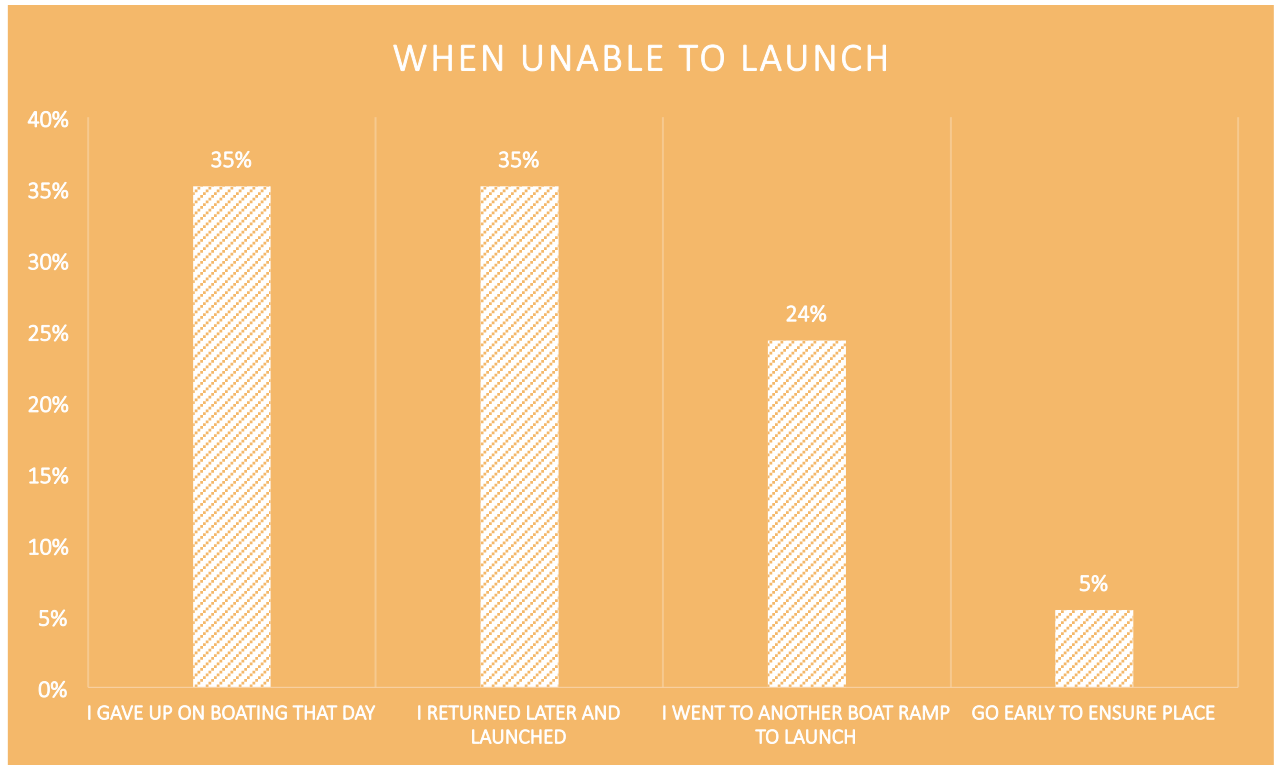
Boat Ramp Availability

Close to half of all respondents (46%) were unable to launch from the Tootgarook Boat Ramp because it was too busy. This is likely because respondents use the boat ramp at a similar time, in the morning and before sunrise. It should be noted that those with open boats reported slightly less difficulty in launching from the boat ramp. Open boats owners reported only a 42% inability to launch, while jet-ski owners reported a 50% inability. It may be that boat owners generally start earlier or that the process for them launching is more efficient.



When unable to launch, respondents either give up on boating for the day (35%) or returned later to try again (35%), while 24% chose to go to another boat ramp.

When asked for alternatives when unable to launch, 5% said they anticipated busy times and planned to go earlier accordingly.



Satisfaction

Waterway

The below graph illustrates how respondents rated their satisfaction with the waterway at the Tootgarook Boat Ramp, with **1** being the **lowest** level of satisfaction and **5** being the **highest** level of satisfaction.

The category of width of the channel was perhaps the most diverse in terms of levels of satisfaction, with 33% of respondents ranking this only 1 out of 5, however, 22% ranked the width as 4 out of 5. This results in an overall average rating of 2.5.

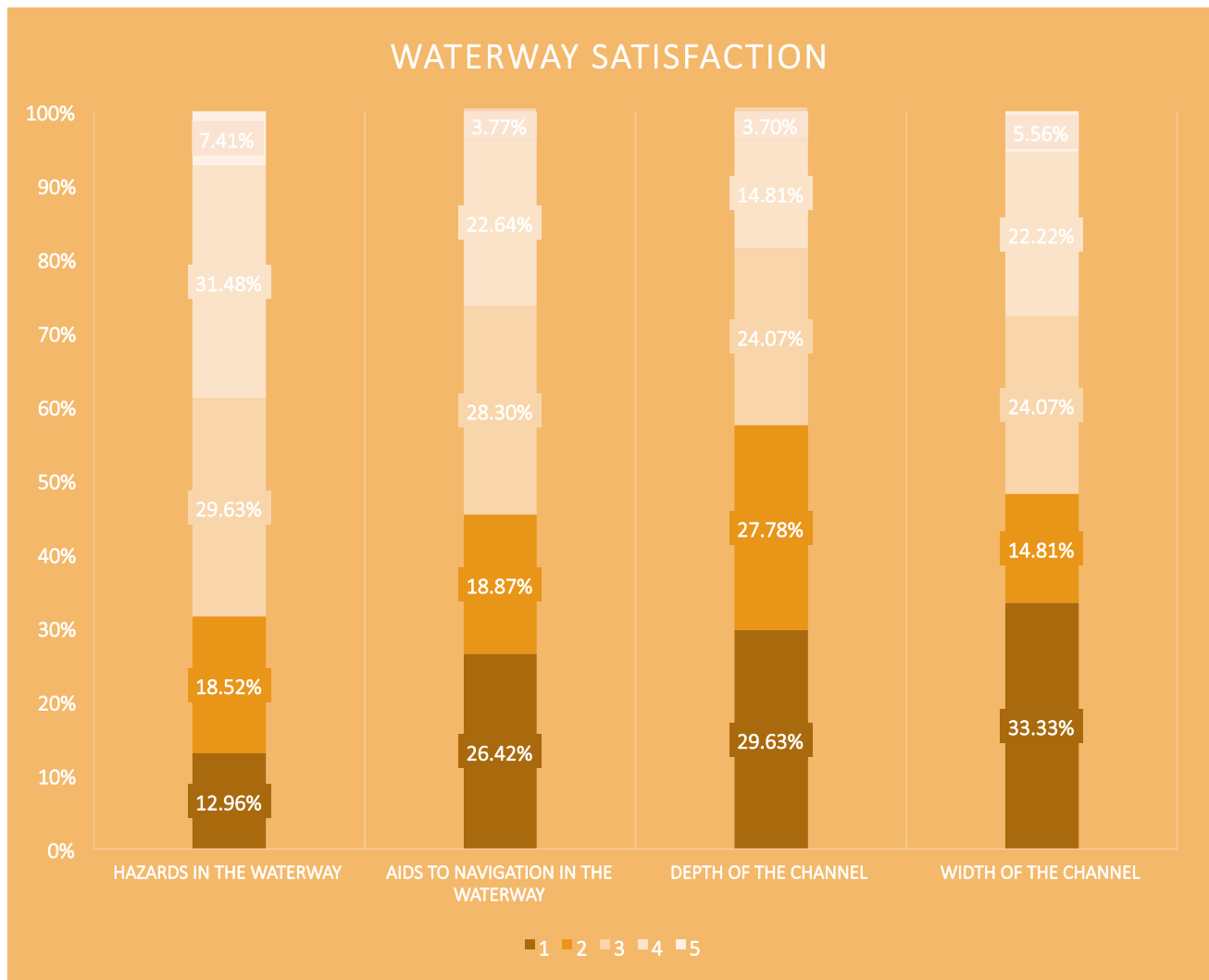
The average ranking for the depth of the channel was lower at 2.3%, due to the large number of respondents ranking their satisfaction as 2 out of 5.

Feelings about navigation in the waterways are more evenly split, with an average level of satisfaction of 2.6.

The issue of hazards in the waterway received the highest level of satisfaction, with an average of 3, due to most respondents ranking this category as 3 and 4 out of 5.

When asked to specify waterway problems, some survey respondents cited issues relating to sandbars at certain times.

“One needs to be realistic - we have sand bars between the beach and the channel and no amount of dredging/digging is going to solve that problem. I do NOT think that the extra dredging last year made a significant improvement over other years where it was simply dug out.”

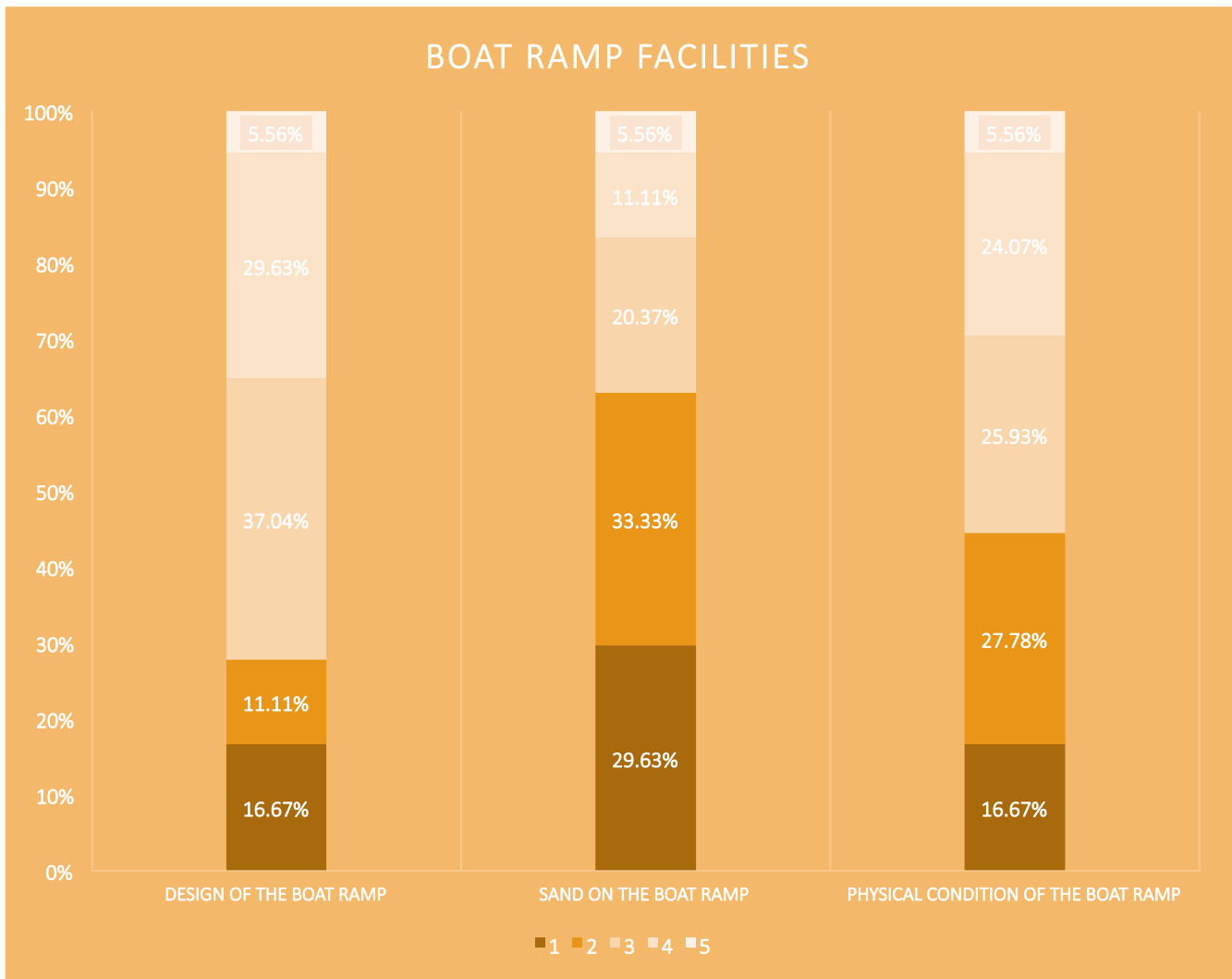


Key: A rating of **1** indicates the **lowest** level of satisfaction and a rating of **5** indicates the **highest** level of satisfaction.

Boat Ramp Facility

Respondents were mostly satisfied with the design of the boat ramp, ranking it an average of 2.9 with 72% ranking the design 3 or more out of 5. The number of those ranking the design 1 out of 5 (17%) reduces the average somewhat.

Sand on the boat ramp was an issue for many respondents, with 30% ranking this category unsatisfactory (less than 3) and this resulted in a low average satisfaction ranking of 2.3. Feelings about the physical conditions of the boat ramp split the respondents, with 56% ranking this category between 3 and 5 and 44% ranking the design less than satisfactory (below 3).



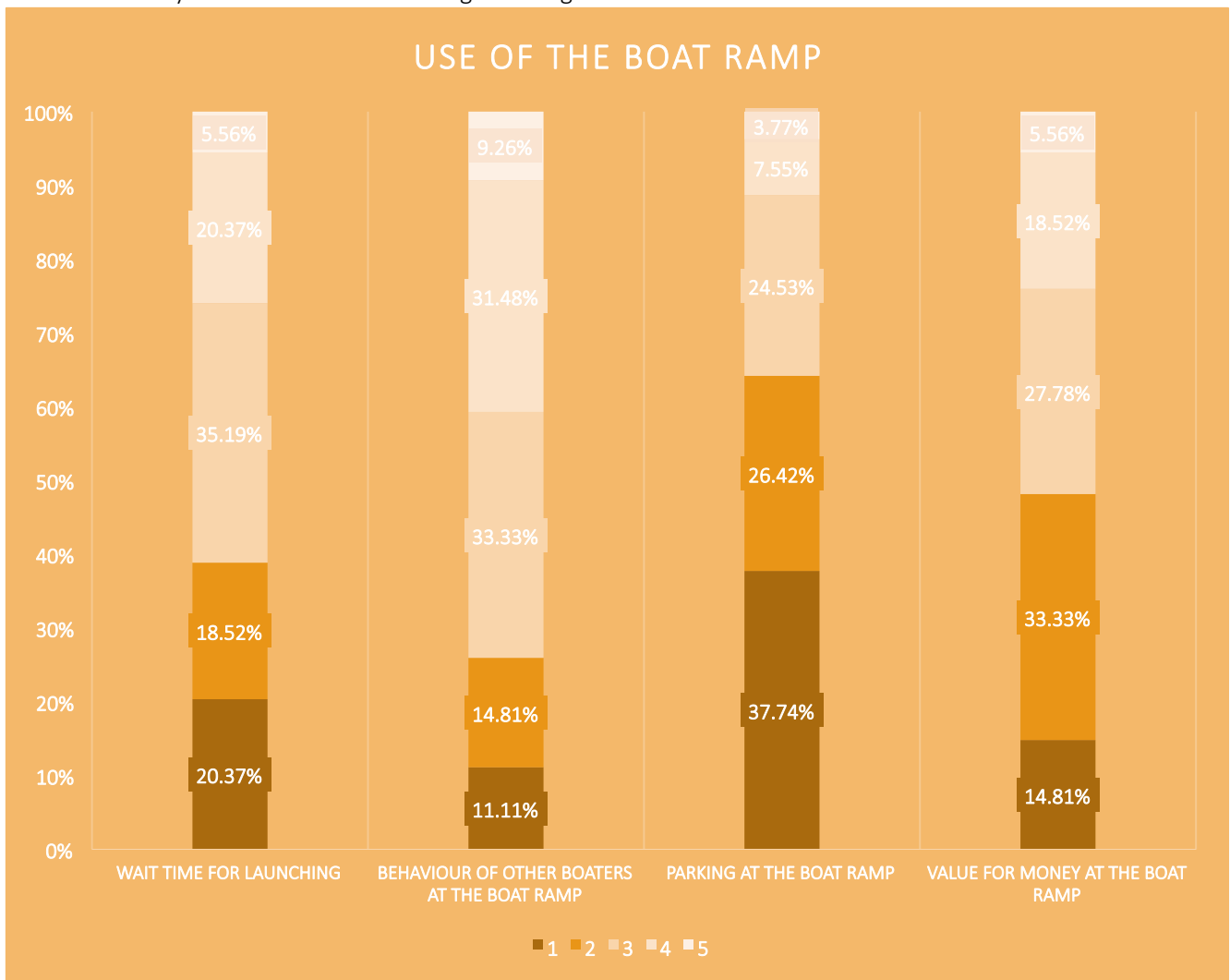
Key: A rating of **1** indicates the **lowest** level of satisfaction and a rating of **5** indicates the **highest** level of satisfaction.

Boat Ramp Use

Waiting to use the boat ramp received an average satisfaction score of 2.7 with 35% of respondents rating this issue 3 out of 5. Behaviour of other boat users was mostly satisfactory with 74% of respondents ranking this category between 3 and 5.

Respondents were most unhappy with parking at the boat ramp, which was unsurprising as over 50% of respondents had also expressed a difficulty in locating parking when using the boat ramp earlier in the survey. This category received an average ranking of 2.1 with 64% grading parking as less than 3 in the satisfaction scale.

Value for money was mixed with an average ranking of 2.6.



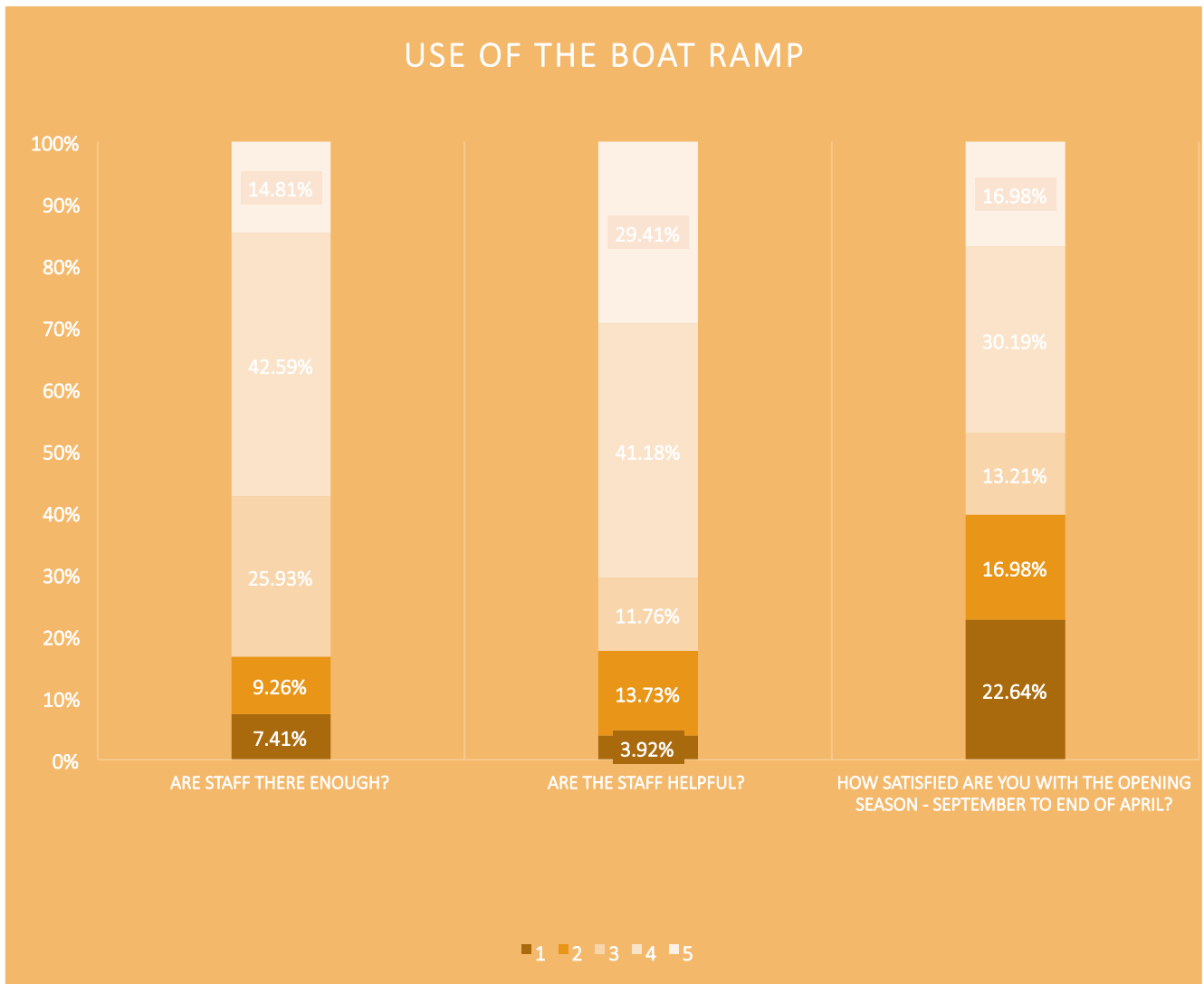
Key: A rating of **1** indicates the **lowest** level of satisfaction and a rating of **5** indicates the **highest** level of satisfaction.

Resourcing

The graph below illustrates that survey respondents were mostly satisfied with the availability of staff members, while more than 70% felt that staff members were helpful.

Responses about the opening season, which extends from September to the end of April, were mixed, with several respondents providing different suggestions for an optimal season length.

“I’m on the fence with the opening season. It is OK; however, the ramp must be usable for the ENTIRE season.”



Key: A rating of **1** indicates the **lowest** level of satisfaction and a rating of **5** indicates the **highest** level of satisfaction.

Other Suggestions for Improvements

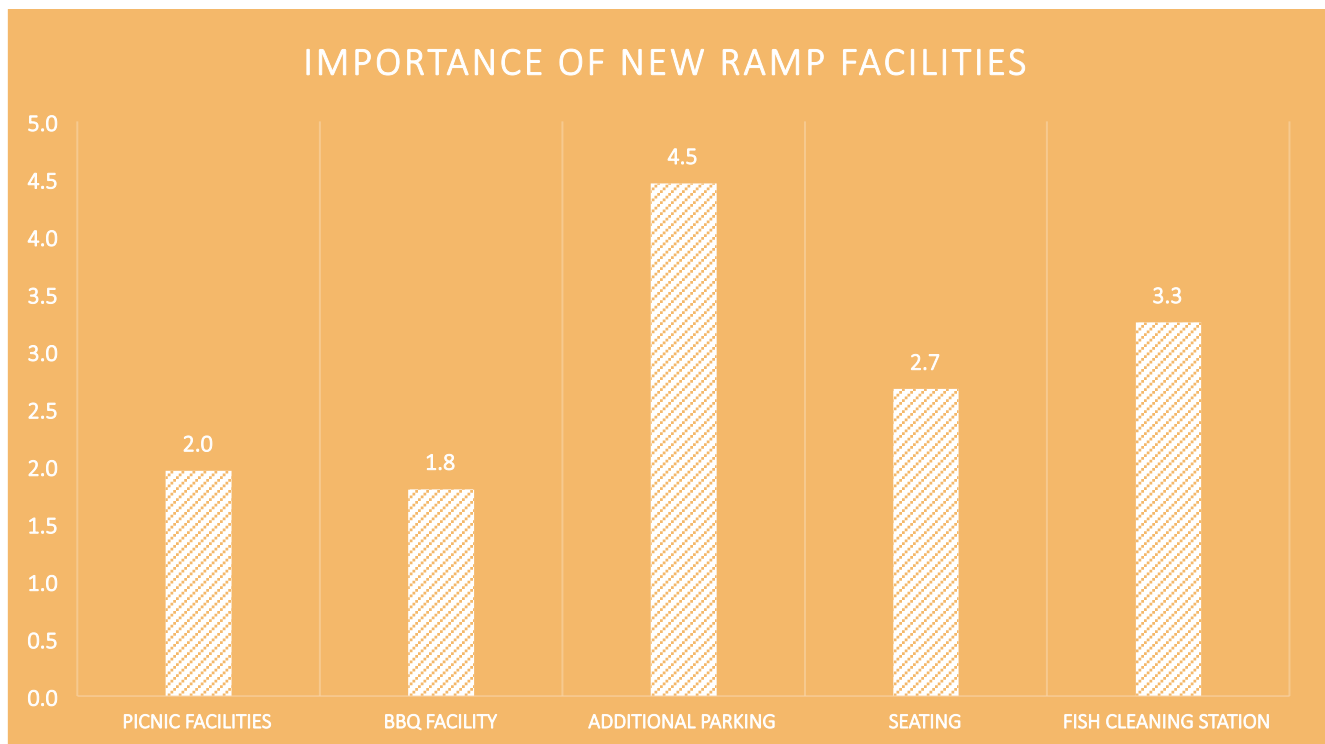
The survey also provided respondents with the opportunity to offer general suggestions for improvements.

The most common feedback was that staff should try to better manage the flow of people and watercraft around the boat ramp. Respondents would like staff to:

- keep people moving as they are launching and retrieving;
- ensure that users follow a correct order and give way to others; and
- be more proactive in guiding and directing people in how to load and unload in an efficient and courteous manner.

“Assist boat users that are not experienced enough to launch, manage traffic flow (instead of just collecting fees), provide more direction to reduce tensions.”

In terms of facilities, additional parking was again overwhelmingly raised as an important improvement to the boat ramp precinct. There was a mixed response about the need for a fish-cleaning station. Most respondents indicated that seating, BBQ facilities and picnic facilities were of low importance. When prompted, respondents suggested improved/additional public toilets were another facility that could improve the area.



Almost 60% of respondents were satisfied with the signage around the boat ramp precinct, however, there were some suggestions which again illustrated a desire for an efficient flow of visitors.

Respondents expressed difficulty in turning right from the highway into the entrance during busy times and that perhaps, some traffic routes should be blocked off or redirected. Channel markers were also identified as an area for signage improvements.

“When ramp is busy, e.g. the Christmas period, perhaps, there should be no right turn to the ramp from Nepean Highway towards Portsea.”

Changes to infrastructure, such as wider ramps, additional ramps and additional lanes were offered as suggestions to improve the boat ramp area.

Increased channel depth and a reduction in the number of jet skis allowed around the ramp were proposed solutions to improving waterway access.