

Forrest wastewater investigation project

Community feedback report

November 2017 to January 2018

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Overview

Barwon Water and Colac Otway Shire Council are partnering with the Forrest community to investigate opportunities for wastewater improvements in the township.

This partnership acknowledges the growing role tourism plays in Forrest and the regional economy, and the increasing stress this may place on existing wastewater systems in the town.

The purpose of this report is to share the views of the community sourced through the online and hard copy surveys that were sent to Forrest residents and businesses to complete.

The findings from the survey, along with the views shared at the December 2017 community visioning workshop will be used to develop an overall wastewater vision for the community and help inform possible wastewater solutions.

What we did

A community values survey was created and hosted on the dedicated online platform for the project – www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest and was also distributed to more than 180 homes and businesses in the Forrest community.

The survey was also promoted through the Barwon Water social media channels which resulted in reaching more than 3,000 people, 26 likes and shares and 123 post clicks. The online platform www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest received 246 visits.

The community was invited to share its feedback on:

- What makes Forrest special
- How you felt about wastewater issues (if any)
- What wastewater issues you experience the most (if any)
- What outcome you were seeking from the wastewater investigation

In total, 87 surveys were completed.

A community open house and community visioning workshop were hosted in November and December, 2017, which saw more than 25 people attend the events.

What we heard

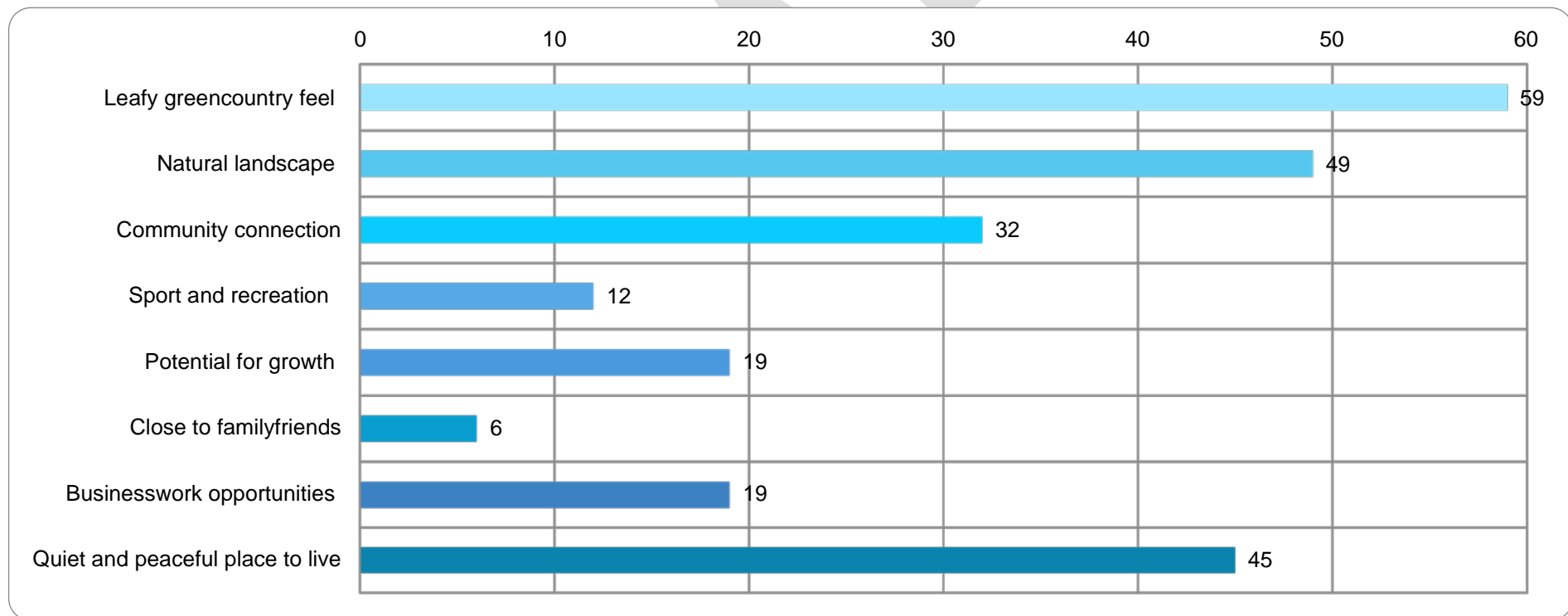
The community were asked to select three aspects that defined what made Forrest special to them.

The top three aspects that were selected were:

- 1) Leafy green / country feel (59 respondents, 68%)
- 2) Natural landscape (49 respondents, 56%)
- 3) Quiet and peaceful place to live (45 respondents, 52%)

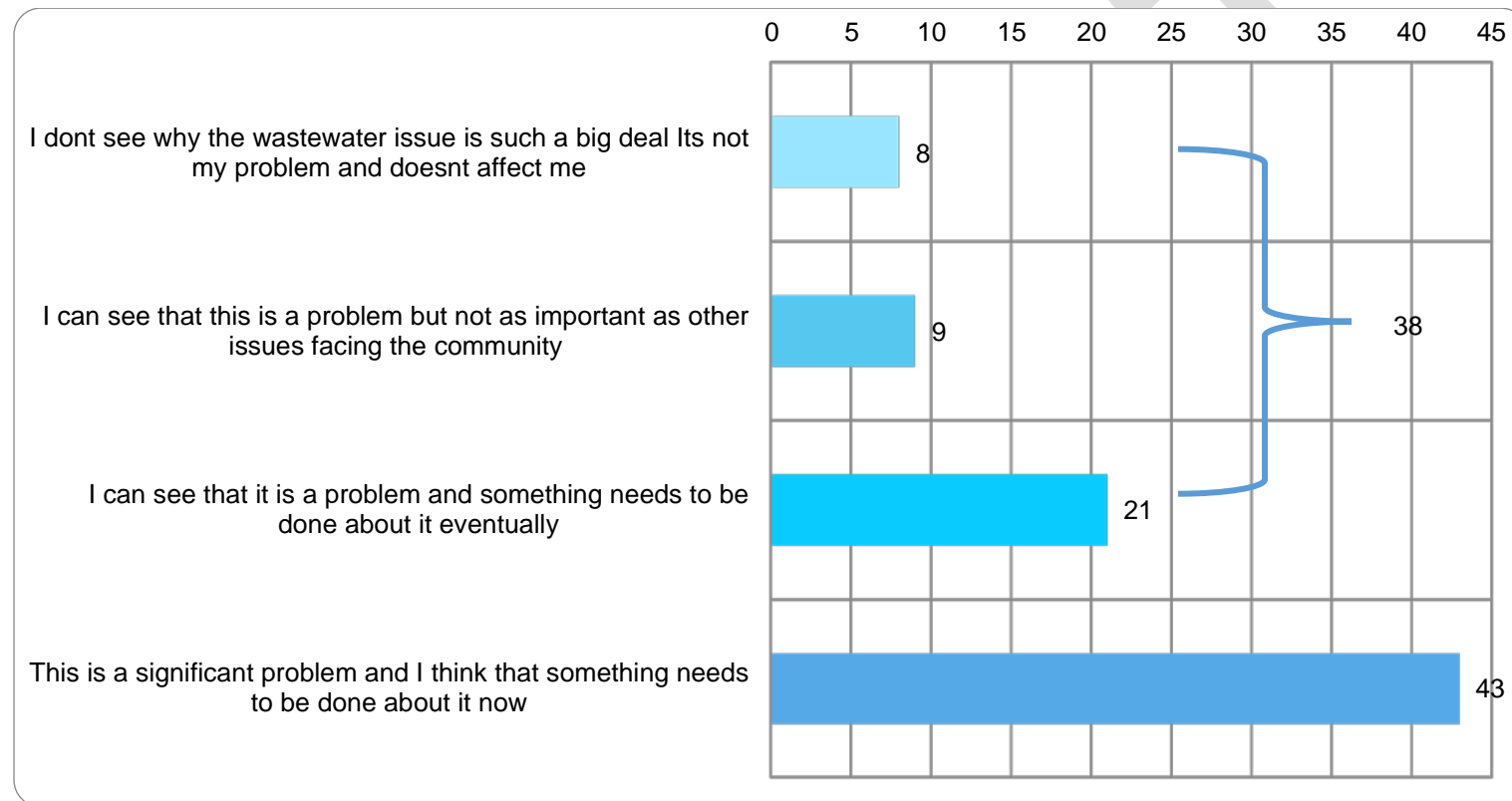
The full results are detailed below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: What makes Forrest special to you?



The community were asked to select one statement that characterised their perception or feelings toward the wastewater issues facing Forrest. The feedback was split, with 43 respondents (49%) stating that ***there is a significant problem and I think something needs to be done about it right now***. Whereas 38 respondents (44%) views from no problem at all to acknowledging a problem that needed to be addressed in the future. Figure 2 highlights the full findings.

Figure 2: Which of these statements best characterises how you feel about the wastewater issues facing Forrest?



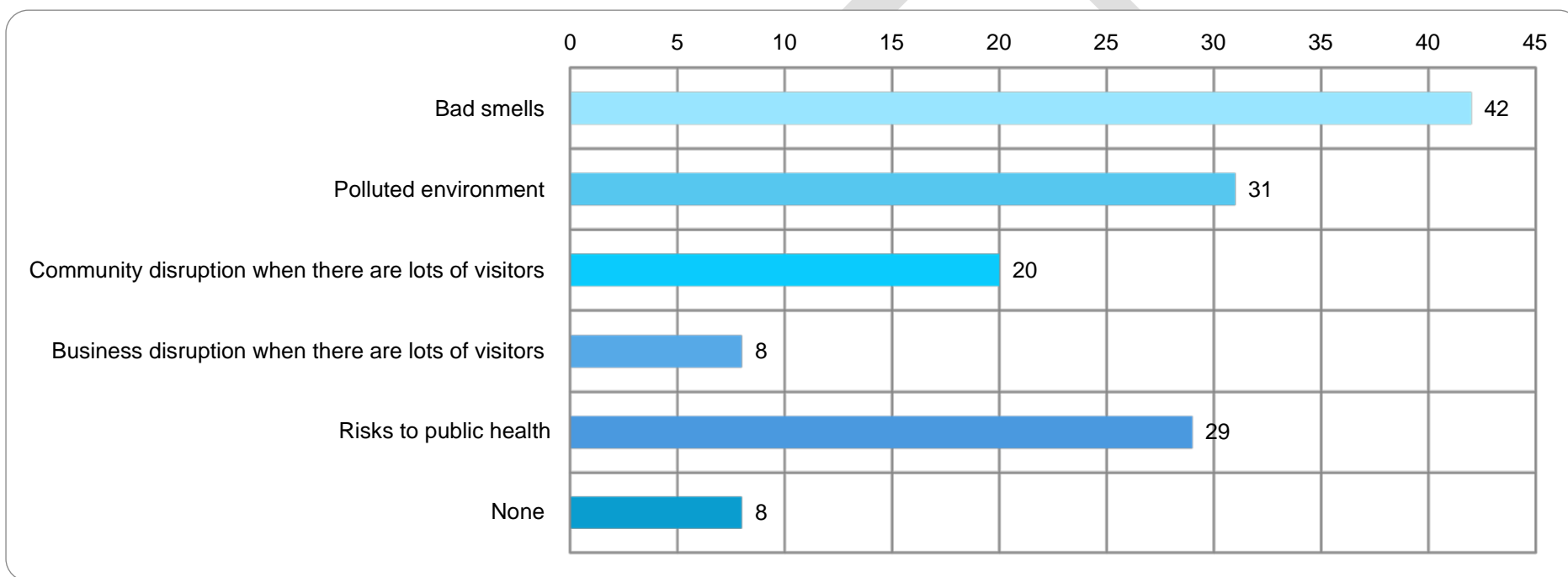
The community were asked to nominate two wastewater issues they experience the most.

The survey found that the top two wastewater issues facing the community were:

- 1) Bad smells (42 respondents or 48%)
- 2) Polluted environment (31 respondents or 36%)

The full results are detailed below in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Which two aspects of the wastewater issue do you experience most



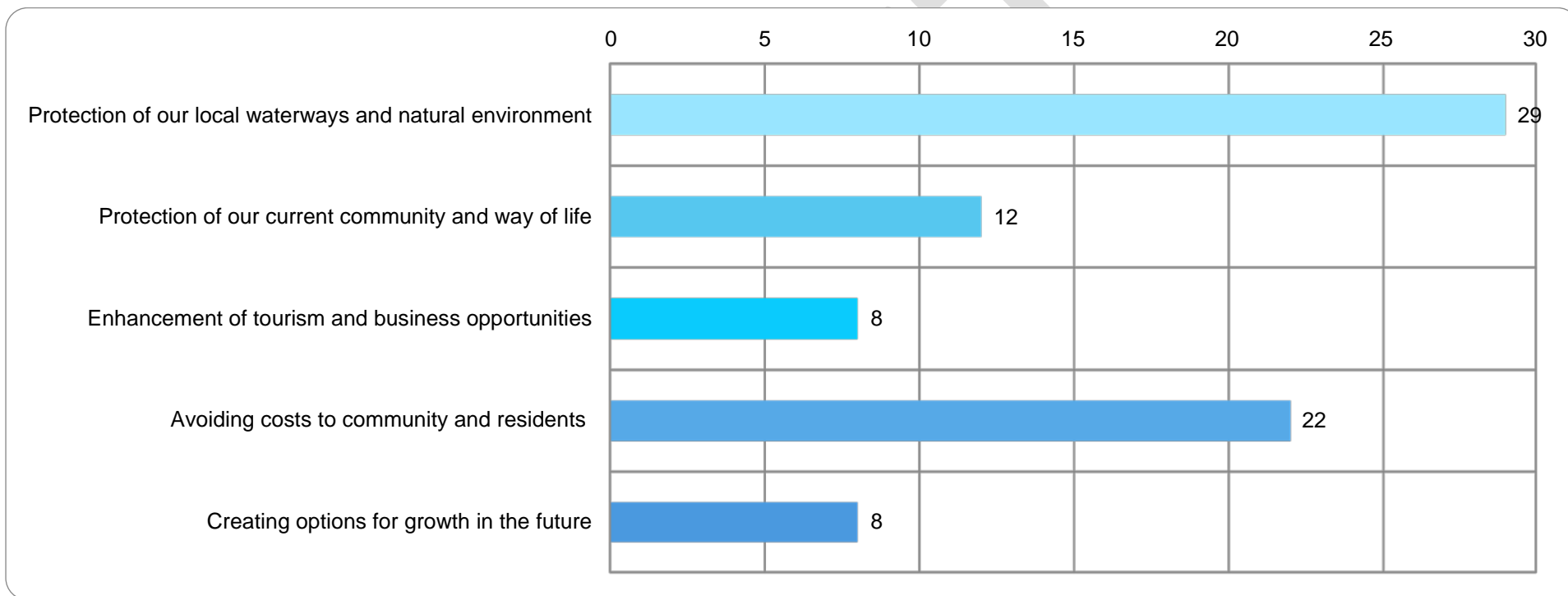
Finally the community were asked what outcome they were seeking from the wastewater investigation.

Respondents were asked to choose from five outcomes, respondents could also provide further comment to this question.

The most selected outcome from the project was: ***Protection of local waterways and natural environment.***

The full results are details below in Figure 4.

Figure 4: What outcome are you most seeking from the upcoming wastewater investigation?



Respondents could also provide additional comments to the survey, if their issue was not presented in the lists to choose from. The theme of this feedback is collated below:

Concerns about nearby rivers being polluted, particularly after major increases in population.

Shortage of public amenities such as public toilets

Any option or proposal should try and be alternative to traditional sewerage systems.

Ensuring the town can manage the surge period of tourists.

Cost of any wastewater option / proposal needs to be considered in light of affordability and impact.

More education and support to manage septic systems.