

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

MENZIES 

Institute for Medical Research

Communities for Walkability

A citizen science project to
connect local spaces and places

Beauty Point Report

walkrural.com.au

Acknowledgment of Country

The University of Tasmania pays its respects to elders past and present and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continues to care for Country.

We acknowledge the profound effect of climate change on this Country and seek to work alongside Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, with their deep wisdom and knowledge, to address climate change and its impacts.

The Palawa people belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures, continually resident on this Country for over 65,000 years. They have survived and adapted to significant climate changes over this time, such as sea-level rise and extreme rainfall variability, and as such embody thousands of generations of intimate place-based knowledge.

We acknowledge with deep respect that this knowledge represents a range of cultural

practices, wisdom, traditions, and ways of knowing the world that provide accurate and useful climate change information, observations, and solutions.

The University of Tasmania likewise recognises a history of truth that acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people, resulting in forcible removal from their lands.

Our island is deeply unique, with cities and towns surrounded by spectacular landscapes of bushland, waterways, mountain ranges, and beaches.

The University of Tasmania stands for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language, and history, and a continued effort to fight for Aboriginal justice and rights paving the way for a strong future.

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- Public Health Services, Tasmanian Government Department of Health
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Beauty Point Community Members:

We would like to thank the Beauty Point community members involved in collecting data and information for the audits and those who attended the workshops to discuss the findings and provided feedback on the report. Your input has been invaluable and critical to the development of this report.

~~HEROVS~~

Roads

beach

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NATURE 

Speed

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Executive Summary

The Communities for Walkability project aimed to identify features of Beauty Point that make it easier or harder for community members to be active and walk around their town ('walkability'). Located along kanamaluka/River Tamar, Beauty Point has a range of community facilities including a post office, a church, a Rotary community shop, restaurants and cafes and a range of accommodation. Other facilities such as a supermarket, neighbourhood house, sport ovals, pharmacy, medical clinic, primary school are nearby in Beaconsfield (a 10-minute drive to the south). The closest high school is in Exeter, a 23-minute drive from Beauty Point. The town is well known for its maritime history as well as popular tourism attractions. There is an aging population in Beauty Point with 57 years of age the median age of residents (in comparison to the median age of 42 across the whole of Tasmania and 38 in the rest of Australia).

This report summarises the information collected through spatial walkability assessments, audits (town wide, program/policy and street segments) and discussions at the community workshop. This report brings together the findings from the three project phases to provide a summary of the key issues impacting walkability in the area.



Key Findings

In the spatial walkability assessment, Beauty Point's walkability was rated low in comparison to the 91 other towns in the study. The spatial maps showed that Beauty Point has low walkability throughout the town. The town centre between the Inspection Head Wharf and the tourist park is rated slightly more walkable, however, this is still recorded as low overall.

The audits and workshop discussion suggest that Beauty Point has a range of assets that support walking and active recreation in the area. Key spaces for walking and other recreation include the shared walking/biking path between Beauty Point and Beaconsfield, the foreshore area (with paths, park, playground and toilets) as well as other walking trails. However, community members felt many of these were in need of improvement with the town wide audit rating, most facilities and features as fair/poor.

The program and policy audit suggests that the Council offers regular physical activity programming as well as maintenance services for public spaces. While there are some programs and policies addressing walking and active recreation, there are opportunities for improvement.

Priorities

During the community workshops, participants were asked which of the identified barriers they considered a priority for action. Community members recognised that planned improvements of the foreshore (as described in the Foreshore Master Plan) will greatly improve walkability in the area, however, other changes were recommended alongside this development. The two priorities identified to improve walkability in Beauty Point are:



1

Improving footpaths

A lack of footpaths with quality surface is creating safety challenges for community members. Upgrading and maintaining existing footpaths will ensure greater safety for pedestrians. In some locations there are limited footpaths requiring pedestrians to walk on ‘desire paths’ (paths created by sustained use) or road verges. Additional footpaths and trails in key locations (such as along the Foreshore) is also recommended to ensure safe walking spaces.



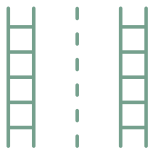
2

Improving connectivity

The foreshore is one of the key areas for community members to walk and enjoy the natural beauty of the town. The town sits along the West Tamar Highway (known as Flinders Street through the main town area) with most residential areas on the opposite side to the river. However, there are disconnections in paths along the foreshore (including a large carpark at Indented Head Wharf that pedestrians must navigate) and a lack of crossing options over Flinders Street. Improving connectivity throughout the area was considered a priority to overcome physical disconnections. This includes ensuring existing paths and trails are linked, and the provision of safe crossing options.

Potential Solutions

During the community workshop, a range of solutions to address these priorities were identified to support walkability in Beauty Point. This included signage and extending footpaths. More specifically, solutions included:



Continue working with community to implement the Foreshore Master Plan to create a continuous safe walking track along the foreshore.



Improve connectivity across Flinders Street by providing suitable crossings and footpath links between the residential areas and foreshore.



Upgrading and maintaining current footpaths to ensure quality paths that are safe for pedestrian use.

Beautiful

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What is the Communities for Walkability Project?

Communities for Walkability is a citizen science project to identify environmental characteristics that influence walkability and physical activity in rural Tasmania. This is important because the environments where people live, learn, work, play and age influence health and physical activity. The project involved three key phases:

1. A spatial assessment of walkability
2. Audits of the town's walkability using a town wide assessment tool, policy and program assessment tool and street segment walkability audits
3. A community workshop



Phase 1 — Spatial Walkability Assessments

To inform the selection of the 10 towns involved in the Communities for Walkability project, phase 1 involved conducting a spatial analysis of walkability for transport in 92 small rural towns across Tasmania with populations less than 6,000 people. This work was completed by project team members at RMIT University in Melbourne who are world-leaders in spatial assessments of walkability. They have developed the Australian Urban Observatory (auo.org.au), which includes liveability and walkability assessments across the 21 largest cities in Australia, including nipaluna/Hobart and Launceston in Tasmania. Spatial walkability assessments use Geographic Information Systems to understand the walkability of an area based on three key components: daily destinations (something to walk to), street connectivity (a way to get there) and dwelling density (people to service the destinations and shops). These three factors were summed to produce a final walkability score for towns resulting in an overall walkability rating of high (top third of walkability scores), medium (middle third of walkability scores) or low walkability (bottom third of walkability scores).

It is also important to note that factors like footpaths, roundabouts or signalled pedestrian lights are not included in these spatial walkability assessments. Previous research suggests that these urban design factors have a big influence on the willingness of residents to walk for transport which has a direct effect on physical activity levels and overall health. However, most of this previous research has been conducted in big cities and less is known about how valuable spatial walkability assessments are for understanding walkability in smaller rural towns. Thus, while spatial map scores are suggestive of walkability, this study aims to better understand how applicable they are within a rural context.

Phase 2 — Town Audits

Building on the spatial walkability assessments, the second phase involved a Citizen Science approach in 10 towns across Tasmania. Citizen science is valuable within health-related research projects for many reasons, including:

1. Gaining new perspectives on problems and solutions
2. Monitoring policy and program implementation
3. Obtaining difficult to access data
4. Mobilising support for action to improve health
5. Gathering locally relevant data to inform policy and practice

In each town, local leaders ('Community Champions') contributed to the project by identifying which parts ('segments') of the town to audit, recruiting 'Citizen Scientists' and completing town audits (including the town wide assessment and policy and programs assessment). Next, the Citizen Scientists completed street segment audits of the physical environment using the online walkability audit tool with the purpose of providing greater understanding of specific features within the town.

As part of the segment audits, community members took photos of town features that supported or hindered walkability. These images have been used throughout this report. It is important to note that the findings are general in nature as not all sections of the town have been audited. Instead, the findings highlight the broader features supporting and hindering walkability throughout the town.

Phase 3 — Community Workshops

Once each town had completed the audits and taken photos, a summary of the audit data was shared with community members at a community workshop. The workshop discussion enabled a greater understanding about the features impacting on walkability in the towns, identified priority areas for action and potential solutions. In each town, researchers facilitated a community workshop which was attended by Community Champion/s, Citizen Scientists and other interested community members.



Images.

- ▲ Documents to aid discussion at the workshop
- ◀ (opposite) Citizen Scientist completing an audit segment using the online audit tool

Introduction

Being active is good for our health – it can prevent us from getting diseases like heart disease, diabetes, breast and colon cancers, and osteoporosis. It is also great for managing our weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, and for keeping us mentally healthy and well. Research has shown that people living in rural parts of Australia are less active than those who live in urban areas. It is also known that rates of preventable health conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure tend to be higher in rural Australia than in urban Australia.

It is well known that walkable neighbourhoods provide health, environmental, social and economic benefits. A neighbourhood's walkability is the degree to which it has safe, designated areas for people to walk or bike to work, school, dining, shopping, medical services, recreation and entertainment. Walkable communities are easier to get around, they support everyday connections and foster a greater sense of community through increased informal and spontaneous social interactions. In cities, research shows that the physical environment where people live, work, study and play can affect physical activity levels.

However, there is minimal research showing what 'walkability' looks like in rural areas. Small towns and some rural council areas may have access to fewer resources to develop the infrastructure to support walkability and active lifestyles. This project was designed to help find out more about walkability in rural areas and what might be needed to support this.

Most of the research studies looking at walkability focus on cities and large towns and not much is known about how our environment helps or stops communities from being active in rural and regional areas.

The report includes quotes from people who attended the workshop or from comments they made using the online audit tool. Photos have been included to provide local examples of features that hindered or supported walkability. It is hoped the findings included here will support further discussions in the town as well as support local action to encourage walking in the area.

Image.

- ▶ *(opposite)* The walking trail between Indented Head Wharf and the Yacht Club has beautiful views



Overview of Beauty Point

This project explored walkability in Beauty Point, a small town along kanamaluka/River Tamar in the north of Tasmania. The town is on the west side of the river approximately 50 minutes north of Launceston and 10 minutes north of Beaconsfield. Beauty Point has a population of 1231 people¹ and is located within the West Tamar Council municipality. The area has a population density of 4 residents per square kilometre (compared to Inner Hobart which covers an area of 62.2 square kilometres and has a density of 1,356 residents per square kilometre). There is an aging population in Beauty Point with 57 years of age the median age of residents (in comparison to the median age of 42 across the whole of Tasmania and 38 in the rest of Australia). Community members say there are many locals who use mobility devices to move around the community.

The township of Beauty Point was originally established as the first deep-water port on kanamaluka/River Tamar. Now the town supports maritime and fishing industries including a campus of the Australian Maritime College and Commercial Dive Academy. Beauty Point is also the home of Seahorse World (world's first seahorse aquarium) and Platypus House (offering tours and experiences with platypus and echidna). Many tourism locations get very busy at particular times of year.

On the weekends, that Esplanade area is always packed.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021





Images.

- ▲ Crossing Flinders Street from the Esplanade can be difficult due to limited visibility. New footpaths are present along Flinders Street to Mainwaring Street
- ◀ (opposite) Views towards the Yacht Club along kanamaluka/River Tamar

The town is dissected by the West Tamar Highway, which is known as Flinders Street through the main town area. Beauty Point has some community facilities including a post office, a church, a Rotary community shop, restaurants and cafes, accommodation, recreation ground, a bowling club and a yacht club. Other amenities are available nearby in Beaconsfield including a supermarket, a neighbourhood house, sport ovals, a pharmacy, a medical clinic and a primary school. The closest high school is in Exeter, a 23-minute drive from Beauty Point.

A significant development is planned to upgrade the Beauty Point Foreshore area and will include walking paths, stormwater upgrades, car parking and an all-abilities playground. The West Tamar Council has a funding agreement with the federal government for \$3 million for this project (which is described in the Foreshore Master Plan document).

Community members feel the natural environment and sense of community are two of the key reasons they choose to live in Beauty Point.



The river for a start, for me anyway. I'm not saying – this is a general answer, but the river. I love the river. And from that flows the Foreshore and all that sort of thing. And I think it's just beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

It's a lovely, lovely community to live in. It's a beautiful place to live.

Findings From the Project

Spatial walkability assessment findings

The spatial analysis completed in the first phase of the project examined the local neighbourhood attributes of street connectivity, dwelling density and an index of access to services of daily living. These three attributes were used to indicate overall walkability and then given a rank to represent its position in relation to the other 91 small towns in Tasmania. Each attribute, as well as the overall walkability score, is classified as low, medium or high walkability.

The spatial analysis resulted in the creation of a Spatial Map (Figure 1) that helps to show the walkability around Beauty Point. Overall, the spatial walkability assessment ranked Beauty Point as having low walkability compared with the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1. The maps indicate that Beauty Point is least walkable (light and dark pink) throughout the town. The town centre between the Inspection Head Wharf and the tourist park (near the Redbill Point Conservation Area) is more walkable, however, this is still recorded as low walkability (light pink).

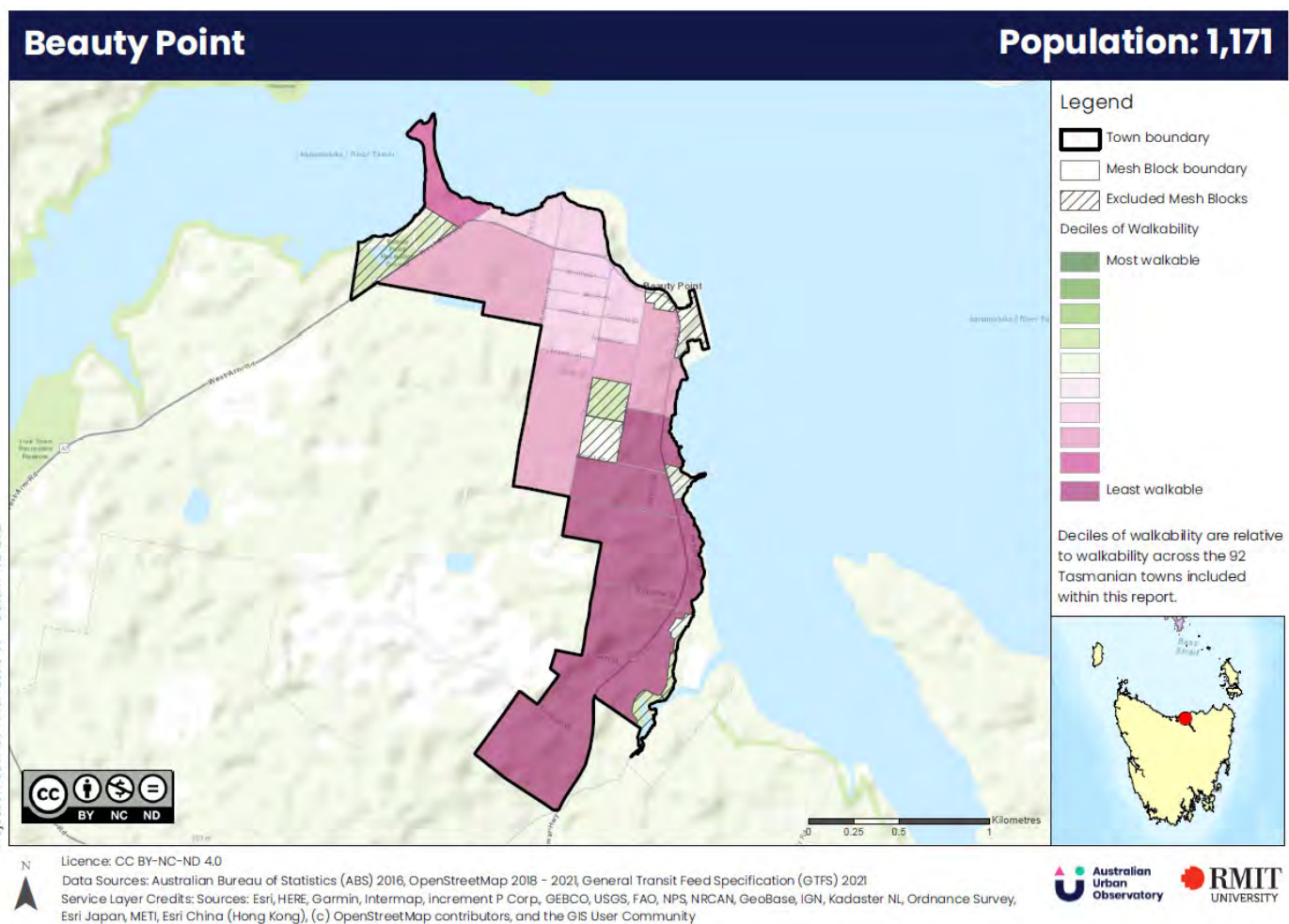


Figure 1. Beauty Point spatial map²

² Spatial map data sources: ABS 2016, OpenStreetMap 2018-2021 and General Transit Feed Specification 2021.

Audit and workshop findings

In Beauty Point, two Community Champions completed the town wide facilities and programs/policies audits that examined the features in the area that supported walking and physical activity. The Community Champions then selected the segments of the area to be audited by the Citizen Scientists between June 2022 and February 2023. Five Citizen Scientists conducted detailed walkability audits to examine specific segments of the area. While they walked a segment, Citizen Scientists used the audit tool to respond to questions about the segment including the presence of features such as paved footpaths, unpaved footpaths,

crossing, signage, roads, and other safety features. Citizen Scientists also took photos of key features that impacted on walkability in the segment.

Initial findings from the audits were presented to the community at the community workshop. The community workshop was held in Beauty Point on 9th March 2023 with seven community members present to discuss the findings. Following the workshop, this report was produced for the Beauty Point community. Community Champions and Citizen Scientists provided feedback on this report and can use the report to bring about change in their community.

Image.

- ▼ Seating overlooking the kanamaluka/River Tamar. An informal footpath follows along the bollards



Town wide and policy/ Program audit findings

The range of community facilities in Beauty Point was reflected in the town wide audit. The assessment captured the availability of amenities and physical features including the shared walking/biking path between Beauty Point and Beaconsfield, the foreshore area (with park, playground and toilets) as well as other walking trails. In the audit, most facilities and features in Beauty Point were rated as fair/poor. It is acknowledged that the West Tamar Council has a funding agreement from the federal government for a \$3 million upgrade to the Beauty Point Foreshore area including walking paths, stormwater upgrades, car parking and all-abilities playground.

Other amenities listed include the Redbill Point Conservation Area (provides walking areas), recreational boating at the jetty, a dog exercise area, Albert Square (council conservation area), general river access and two private sailing clubs.

The town programs/policies audit examined the availability of health and physical activity related programs and/or policies in the area. The audit suggests that the local council provide maintenance services to regularly clean obstacles from paths and offer regular physical activity programming. However, it was stated that physical activity programs are more limited for Beauty Point residents as most activities happen in nearby towns such as Beaconsfield.



Currently there is no active organisation in the community, the area is serviced though Beaconsfield.

Street segment audits: Overview of facilities

Four segments of Beauty Point were audited by five Citizen Scientists (Figure 2). The street segment audits revealed the following:

- Paved footpaths were intermittently available in two segments and unpaved footpaths were

Facilities rated Good/Excellent	Facilities rated Fair/Poor	Facilities not present
Indoor or outdoor courts (netball)	Hiking or walking trails (shared path from Beauty Point to Beaconsfield)	Swimming pool
	Biking path (shared path from Beauty Point to Beaconsfield)	Lake
	Public Park (Beauty Point Foreshore)	Skate Park
	Public toilets (Beauty Point Foreshore)	Gym
	Swimming beach	
	River	
	Recreational Centre (Beauty Point Recreation Ground with cricket, netball and football facilities)	
	Playground	

Table 1. Facilities in Beauty Point as captured in the town wide audit.

present in three segments. All footpaths (both paved and unpaved) were considered of fair/poor quality.

- Footpath buffers and road shoulders were present in three segments, and all were considered fair/poor quality.
- Traffic volume was reported as medium in two segments and low in two segments.
- Three segments were considered to have low connectivity – footpaths or trails linking the segment to other locations in the town.

- Three segments were considered not accessible for an older person, someone with mobility needs or children. Only segment 4 was considered walkable for these community members.

In general, there are limited sporting and recreational facilities in Beauty Point and opportunity to improve the recreational facilities supporting walking and other physical activities.

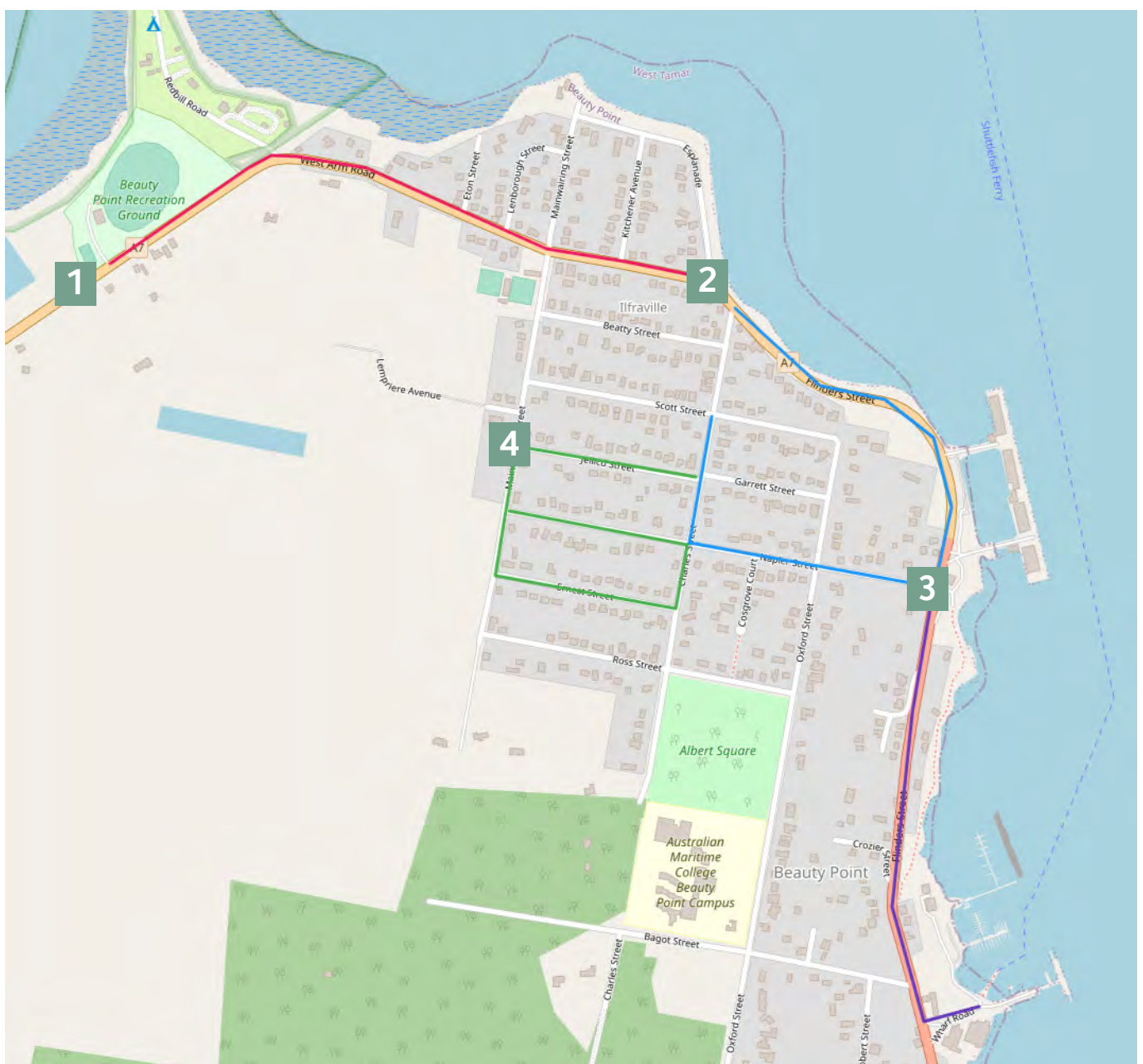


Figure 3. Audited segments in Beauty Point



Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)

Community members felt there were some good facilities that support walking and other physical activities. This includes the shared path from Beauty Point to Beaconsfield as well as sufficient seating and lighting throughout. The shared path to Beaconsfield is approximately 6km which follows along the West Tamar Highway.



I walk twice a week, from Beaconsfield to Beauty Point, or the other way – and I meet so many people... there are runners, there are people with prams, people on bikes – all sorts.

It is a very well-utilised area.

The shared pathway has seating at regular intervals along the trail which were donated by various organisations within the community. Seating was also present in other locations around Beauty Point including near the café and in places along the esplanade. Community members also felt the lighting was ‘pretty good’ particularly along Flinders Street.

The riverside location and surrounding natural environment is considered important in supporting community members to engage in walking and other physical activity. Many people love the river and surrounding areas of the town. However, as discussed in the following section, much of the foreshore, river and beaches are not easily accessible or safe to access. Regardless of these safety concerns, community members enjoy these spaces and the aesthetic qualities they provide.

Image.

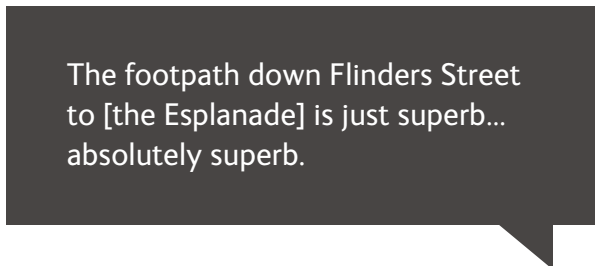
- ◀ (opposite) Playground, tables and seating along the Esplanade



P1: It's just...fabulous [along the river].

P2: It's beautiful.

Some new development has improved the footpaths including along Flinders Street and Cosgrove Court.



The footpath down Flinders Street to [the Esplanade] is just superb... absolutely superb.

The future development of the Beauty Point foreshore and esplanade was considered highly important to continue improvements allowing residents to access and enjoy the natural spaces.

Features that make it difficult to walk and be active (barriers)

Quality of footpaths and trails

The segment audit data suggests that footpaths (both paved and unpaved) were rated of fair/poor quality throughout Beauty Point. In general, community members felt the available footpaths were in need of upgrades.

“

P1: There's...many places that you can walk down the middle of the road [because it's so quiet].

P2: <laughter> But you've got to –

P3: Which is what you do, because you can't walk on the footpaths!

Bitumen footpaths (only present on one side of road) [are] all in need of repair - with the exception of Cosgrove Court which is a new development and has wide cement paths.



This is not a walkway in any sense. It is a rough track along the side of the road. Walking south you have your back to the traffic.

Many of the paths along the river are rough tracks or 'desire paths' (informal pathways created by sustained use). For example, between the Esplanade and Indented Head Wharf most paths are thin patches of dirt or grass that have been worn down by pedestrians who use it to walk along the riverside.

“

P1: It's obviously where people walk.

P2: Oh, yeah. Regularly. And why not? It's beautiful. And people like the walking.

P1: Around on the foreshore, it's just rough grass, and it's not [accessible for wheelchairs or mobility aids].

P2: Someone with a pram couldn't do it...

P1: No, we don't have a sidewalk.

P2: We've got a nice grass verge.

P3: Grass is fine if you've not got a wheelchair or a pram or pushbike.

Community members said that some paths were slippery, had cracked or broken pavement or other tripping hazards (including tree roots).

Images.

- ◀ An informal path along the river
- ▶ (*opposite*) Residential streets have lovely views of kanamaluka/River Tamar. However, there are limited safe places to cross Flinders Street to access the foreshore





Images.

- ◀ (opposite) Rough footpath surface along Charles Street
- ▼ Overgrowth along the footpath on Flinders Street



It's got big puddles in it.

You've got the vegetation on either side of that that doesn't get trimmed very often or sprayed.

“

[There are] large cracks in the walking path from the landslip movement and tree roots underneath the path, this track is used a lot but certainly needs attention.

Similarly, while the shared path between Beauty Point and Beaconsfield is a key space for walking, running and bike riding, the surface quality is poor in some locations.

“

P1: [The path is] very cracked.

P2: And that must be hard for [wheelchair and gofer users], because of all the tree trunks coming through underneath. I wouldn't like to use that. You'd have to go very slow.

P3: But it is a very well-utilised area. Even that slimy bit – well, I've walked there today. It wasn't slimy today.

The path along the water between the Tamar Yacht Club and Inspection Head Wharf also had some quality issues. In some sections, houses back onto the track and many have stormwater pipes that empty onto the track causing the ground to become wet and slippery. Community members said that the council would regularly refresh the gravel along this stretch but felt this did not always fix the issue.

“

P1: Yeah, it's terrible.

P2: Even when they put gravel on, it'll be really nice for a week, but then it soaks it up and...

P3: And it gets so wet. So wet on there.

Safety

Due to the low quality and slippery surface of many paths, falls and injuries were commonly discussed by community members, particularly on unpaved locations along the river. Half of the attendees at the workshop had been injured or had a family member who had a safety incident while walking.

My shoes after walking, slipping, sliding and nearly falling over twice on the bottom track. Although even though no rain for a week.

And there's one spot that...[is] very slippery. And I was just really going gently, and the next thing, I was down.

“

My husband two years ago walked [and] fell down the waterfront and broke his wrist.

I had one [fall] on Scott's Street about a year ago, which was really scary...I fell and shattered my wrist. So, I'm always nervous about walking anywhere.

“

Your feet go from underneath you. So weirdly, in the whole town, there really isn't anywhere that you can safely go.

In some situations, council had promptly improved some sections of the trails. However, many areas are still considered unsafe.

It wasn't long after [the incident], and all that bit was concrete.

However, community members felt addressing unsafe areas required a proactive approach instead of waiting to improve paths after an incident.

“

Surely it shouldn't take something like that to make it obvious that it's necessary.

Safety was also a concern around the Indented Head Wharf area. The Wharf is home to tourist attractions (Seahorse World and Platypus House) as well as boat ramps and the Commercial Dive Academy. From the path to the Tamar Yacht Club on the south of the wharf, there is a break in footpaths for the 250m stretch through the large carpark.

Part of the walk is through the [wharf] car park...there is no defined footpath, so can be quite dangerous as there can be tourist buses and cars coming and going. The only other alternative is to walk on the road.



Images.

- ▲ The walking trail from the Yacht Club to Inspection Head Wharf finishes at the carpark and requires pedestrians to navigate boat and tourist traffic
- ▶ (opposite) The Inspection Head Wharf carpark can be difficult for pedestrians to navigate



P1: There's no safe place [for pedestrians] to go...

P2: And it's also the boat ramp, so in the summer [it gets very busy].

P3: Yes, and you've got minibuses arriving.

P1: [Cars are] just pulling in and out and not looking...and they're often interstaters, therefore they're not so sure of Tasmanian roads, so they're looking at their maps or their Google thing...

P2: And they're fiddling around, trying to decide whether they're going to turn in here or there.

P1: It's quite scary.

The dangers of walking were widely acknowledged by community members, however many recognised there are minimal choices if you want to access particular locations.



This is a very beautiful walk and would be very restorative if it wasn't so dangerous. The views are spectacular...A wonderful view but a very steep road to access the water.

As stated previously, this is not a suitable walk under any circumstances. It is dangerous and although many of us have to walk along here to access the houses on Flinders Street, it is not for pleasure.

While some community members continue to use the paths along the river, others have chosen to avoid these areas.

I've given up now. I would like to go around to Inspection Head. Because I used to love going down there.





Finally, traffic safety along Flinders Street (particularly around the Esplanade and Indented Head Wharf) is made more difficult by parked cars.

“

Again, no footpath, rough track and too close to the main road. Cars parked on the verge mean one has to step onto the road to get around them.

Accessibility

Three of the four segment audits were not considered accessible for older people or people with mobility devices. With the aging population in Beauty Point, this creates significant barriers for many community members who cannot access many locations in the town.

Because it is, it's grass...[you cannot] push a baby pram along there, or if you're in a wheelchair you can't [access the path].

Image.

- ▲ Pedestrians are required to walk through the Inspection Head Wharf carpark to access trails which is considered dangerous
- ▶ (*opposite*) Some residential streets do not have footpaths but may have grassy surfaces that pedestrians use

“

I think the comment on almost every [segment] would be it'd be hopeless with mobility scooters, with prams and with walkers. Really nearly every single walk.

With that, you've got to watch – my eyesight is really bad. That's why I'm not allowed to drive. And I have to have my head down on all that walk, because there is so many of those ruddy bits.



Connectivity

The Citizen Scientists reported that most segments were not well-connected to other trails or key locations in the town. During the community workshop, discussion revealed there were areas throughout Beauty Point where the lack of “links and crossings” were limited which resulted in physical and social disconnection in the town. There are limited safe places to cross Flinders Street (see following discussion) and there are places with no footpaths or where footpaths abruptly end. This includes walking along the foreshore as well within residential areas.

You could walk down there, and there was this path. And we thought, “oh, that’s great. We’ll go down to the river” ... Then it stops.

“

We do walk it often because there is no option if we wish to get to the waterfront.

Many community members enjoy walking along the foreshore (from Indented Head Wharf to the Esplanade), however, structured paths are only available in some sections. Gravel paths are available between the wharf and the Tamar Yacht Club Marina whereas paths along the Esplanade and from the Esplanade to the wharf are gravel or grassy ‘desire paths’.

You can’t walk around the whole loop and join up.

This was an issue along Flinders Street, particularly along the river such as the Esplanade and Indented Head Wharf. As mentioned, pedestrian paths end at either end of the Indented Head Carpark requiring people to walk through the middle of the parked and moving vehicles.

And we wouldn’t want to be walking through a Coles car park or anything, would we, on our nice day walks?

In addition, connectivity in residential areas was limited by footpaths that do not always connect up well.

Several elderly people live on the southeast end of Napier Street and have no footpath access to the waterfront or the centre of the village.

“

P1: There’s an extraordinary thing at the end of Oxford Street...You come down and cross over the road. And there’s a footpath, lovely, and you can see the river over there. And you go down and it stops.

P2: Yeah.

P1: Stops in the middle of nowhere!

Furthermore, other locations do not have footpath connections. This includes the recreation ground and caravan park approximately 1km west of the Esplanade on the edge of town. In many places, safety is exacerbated by the lack of connectivity with community members recognising the importance of having awareness of paths and surface quality while walking.

Community members recognised the council was making some improvements in some areas by building connections between some footpaths. However, there are still areas in need of better connectivity.

“

P1: The path [stopped] in the middle of nowhere originally, didn’t it?

P2: And now it kind of stops in the middle of nowhere anyway.

P3: Yeah, but the ends are further apart.



Image.

- ▲ Crossing Flinders Street to the Inspection Wharf carpark to access the walking trails

Somewhat walk friendly until the footpath stops then have to walk on the road.

Crossings

As the main road runs along the riverside, with residential development on the opposite side most residents are required to cross Flinders Street to access the foreshore. In addition, community members can access the river from residential areas at almost any point along the highway which is more than 2km long. However, throughout the town there are limited places for pedestrians to safely cross.

“

There are no safe crossings of the main road either at the end of Napier Street or at the end of Charles Street.

Crossing Flinders Street is difficult also due to curves in the road which obscure vision as well as traffic speed and when volume is high.

“

[Getting across to the foreshore] is just too dangerous... to go around that corner on the road is also very dangerous. Because the traffic is going at 50kms an hour, and they fly around the corner, and it just feels dangerous.

Weather

Weather was also discussed by community members as having an impact on walking in the area. The town sits along kanamaluka/ River Tamar which can be subject to severe weather patterns. Low temperatures and wet weather were common at certain times of year and were acknowledged to create some barriers in engagement.

When we have some strong winds, like we had the last couple of days, we just all hunker down, close our sheds and think, “brrr!”. So, no one really generally walks out...because it’s very, very strong winds along the water. I wouldn’t feel safe, especially with slipping. The wind blows you off and then you slide on something.

Priorities

During the community workshops, participants were asked which of the identified barriers they considered a priority for action. The key priorities were to improve connectivity and footpath infrastructure throughout Beauty Point. Community members recognised that the development of the foreshore (as described in the Foreshore Master Plan) will greatly improve walkability in the area. However, any development should also consider the following priority areas to gain maximum benefit for community members.



Priority 1: Improving footpaths

Discussion suggested that pedestrian safety could be improved throughout Beauty Point.



The aim is, isn't it, to try and get people out of their houses...and walking. But there's a fear here about falling. And so that's kind of working against itself.

Improving footpaths was considered key to increasing pedestrian safety and accessibility for all community members. Upgrades to the surface of some paths and trails could ensure pedestrians can maintain footing and reduce injury. In addition, it was important to create safe spaces for pedestrians to walk along roads or carparks.



Priority 2: Improving connectivity

Community members felt that connectivity could be improved throughout the town, creating links over Flinders Street between the residential areas and foreshore. Currently, crossing the highway is difficult (particularly in areas of higher tourist traffic) and there are no clear crossing options for pedestrians to access the foreshore. The length of Flinders Street combined with the curvature of the road also creates a lack of visibility which exacerbates these difficulties in crossing. While community members support the improvement of paths along the foreshore, it is also critical for any new development to ensure strong connections between the residential areas and the foreshore walking trails. In addition, ensuring footpath connect up within the residential areas was considered important to ensure pedestrian safety.

Image.

► *(opposite)* The northern end of the Inspection Head Wharf where the footpath restarts



Possible Solutions

During the workshop participants were asked to consider possible ways to address the identified priorities. The following presents the solutions discussed by community members to address the key challenges in Beauty Point.

Footpaths and trails

Community members felt improvements along the river and foreshore area would help to increase accessibility and ensure all pedestrians could walk safely along the riverside.

It would be the most perfect walking track, if they did the whole thing all the way around, wouldn't it?

The workshop discussion focused on the planned foreshore development between the esplanade to the Inspection Head Wharf area. In particular, the addition of a shared footpath along the river was considered highly important for improving walkability in the area.



P1: There will be a long, shared walkway...

P2: It'll be very good...

P3: [For] wheelchairs, prams, scooters. So that will make a lot of difference too. [There will be] a new playground, and lots of new things along that foreshore.

Images.

- ▶ *(opposite)* The Esplanade has a range of facilities including public toilet block. Informal paths have been made by pedestrians who walk along the river
- ▼ The footpath joining to the informal paths towards the Esplanade from Inspection Head Wharf







Image.

- ▲ The new footpath along Flinders Street towards Mainwaring Street

Importantly, community members highlighted that the foreshore trail upgrades need to occur alongside improved connectivity between the residential and riverside areas. Community members discussed the importance of providing links for pedestrians between the residential areas across Flinders Street.

That's what I'd like to be able to do. Walk from my house down and do the whole walk.

If it was linked up, the whole thing was linked up – gosh, it would be wonderful.

Footpaths

Discussion suggested that improvements to footpaths and trails around Beauty Point would help to address connectivity and safety concerns. This includes upgrading the surface of some footpaths and extending sections of footpaths and ensuring connectivity between key locations. This includes options for pedestrians to cross Flinders Street, such as:



On the corner of Charles Street and the esplanade [or] down near the shop, near the fish and chip shop.

Community members recognised that council does make periodic improvements to paths around the town, but that there are still many areas with unsafe surface conditions. Increased maintenance or signage at dangerous locations could help to address this.



P1: It [needs] maintenance. That's what I was going to say.

P2: Some of that was just cutting back of trees.

The planned improvements to the foreshore paths will address some of these issues, however, there are other locations where improvements could be made to ensure pedestrians can access these safe walking paths.

There's [a crossing] down on the esplanade that should be put in, but I don't know whether there's a connection or any plan along further, near the shops. I don't think there is.

Other solutions

Other suggestions included increased pedestrian road signage, reduced speed and exercise equipment. Increased signage along the highway would ensure both pedestrians and vehicles are aware of the road and to direct pedestrians to safe crossing areas. This should occur alongside the previous discussion highlighting the importance of creating pedestrian links to the foreshore area.

Community members felt that reducing the speed along the main road could help to increase the safety of pedestrians. The curvature of the highway and increased traffic in certain areas (particularly near Inspection Head Wharf) increases the difficulty for pedestrians to cross to the foreshore.



If you slowed it down... to 40 [it would be safer].

If we had a steady speed along that straight, it would maybe make people realise that you're in the township and you're in a slow environment.

Finally, some exercise equipment or pump track for young people was also discussed.

That would be good for some of the young ones, especially the boys, as we said, that feel there isn't much for us to do. And then they respect it and won't vandalise it, hopefully.

Conclusion

Beauty Point is a town in the north of Tasmania and is situated along Kanamaluka/River Tamar. The main street (Flinders Street) runs alongside the river with most residents living on the opposite side of the road. The river and foreshore area provide valuable aesthetic environments that are currently accessible to some community members for walking and other recreation activities.

The town has a range of community facilities that support walking and physical activity including a post office, a church, a Rotary community shop, restaurants and cafes, accommodation, a recreation ground, a bowling club and a yacht club. Other facilities are located nearby in Beaconsfield including a supermarket, a neighbourhood house, sport ovals, a pharmacy, a medical clinic and a primary school and the nearest high school is in Exeter. In addition, the aging population in Beauty Point is important for council and decision-makers to consider when planning future development, including infrastructure needs.

The audits completed by the Community Champions and Citizen Scientists highlight the presence of valuable assets for walking and physical activities in Beauty Point, as well as areas that could be improved. The spatial map suggests walkability in Beauty Point is low in comparison to the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1.

The audit process and workshop identified features in Beauty Point considered a priority to increase walkability and physical activity participation in the area. Community members felt that the key priorities were:

- Improving footpaths by ensuring the surface quality of existing footpaths is maintained and safe for pedestrians. Also, developing safe paths and trails for pedestrians to walk (particularly along roads or carparks).
- Improving connectivity focusing on development of a foreshore walking trail as well as safe access to the foreshore from the residential areas on the opposite side Flinders Street.

A range of measures were identified by community members as having potential to improve walkability and pedestrian safety around the town. This includes improving walking tracks and trails along the foreshore (and development of the foreshore master plan) as well as improving connectivity to the foreshore from residential areas. In addition, other solutions include improving footpaths, road signage, reduced speed and exercise equipment.

Image.

- ▶ *(opposite)* Newer footpaths are present along Mainwaring Street



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