

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

MENZIES 

Institute for Medical Research

Communities for Walkability

A citizen science project to
connect local spaces and places

Primrose Sands 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.

Acknowledgments

The project is funded by the Medical Research Future Fund (Grant ID 1200144; 2020-2024). The project is a collaboration between researchers from the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania, and partners organisations:

- Public Health Services, Tasmanian Government Department of Health
- Local Government Association Tasmania
- Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University
- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT
- Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney



Suggested citation

McGrath, G., Jose, K., & Cleland, V. *Communities for Walkability: Primrose Sands Report*. University of Tasmania, 2023.

The work undertaken for this project was approved by the University of Tasmania's Research Integrity and Ethics Committee on 29 March 2021 (project ID: 23174).

Project Investigators:

- Associate Professor Verity Cleland, Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania
- Professor Anna Timperio, Deakin University
- Dr Kim Jose, Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania
- Associate Professor Melanie Davern, RMIT University
- Dion Lester, Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Dr Lynden Leppard, Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Kate Garvey, Public Health Services, Tasmanian Department of Health
- Dr Yvonne Laird, The University of Sydney
- Dr Samantha Rowbotham, The University of Sydney

Primrose Sands Community Members:

We would like to thank the Primrose Sands 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

us

NATURE 

Speed

Contents

Acknowledgment of Country	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Executive Summary	1
Key Findings	
Priorities	
Potential Solutions	
What is the Communities for Walkability Project?	5
Phase 1 — Spatial Walkability Assessments	
Phase 2 — Town Audits	
Phase 3 — Community Workshops	
Introduction	7
Overview of Primrose Sands	9
Findings From the Project	11
Spatial walkability assessment findings	
Audit and workshop findings	
Town wide and policy/Program audit findings	
Street segment audits: Overview of facilities	
Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)	
Features that make it difficult to walk and be active (barriers)	
Priorities	31
Priority 1: Improving pedestrian safety	
Priority 2: Improving footpaths and trails	
Priority 3: Planning community infrastructure	
Possible Solutions	33
Planning and maintenance	
Roads and traffic calming measures	
Footpaths, trails and walking infrastructure	
Signage	
Other solutions	
Conclusion	37

Executive Summary

The Communities for Walkability project aimed to identify features of Primrose Sands that make it easier or harder for community members to be active and walk around their town ('walkability'). Located 50km southeast of nipaluna/Hobart, the project examined the coastal locality of Primrose Sands. Historically, there has been a high number of cabins or family holiday homes in Primrose Sands (referred to in Tasmania as 'shacks'), however more recently the permanent population has grown. There are limited amenities in the town with residents travelling to nearby towns for schooling, work opportunities and other amenities (such as medical services and supermarkets).

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, Primrose Sands' walkability was rated low in comparison to the 91 other towns in the study. The spatial maps showed that walkability is limited throughout the town. The audits and workshop discussion suggest that the natural areas (such as the beach and informal bush tracks) are key assets that support walking and active recreation in the area. However, residents rely on roads to access these spaces and to get around the town. This is considered dangerous due to road conditions including the narrow roads, traffic speed and lack of pedestrian safety measures. The town wide audit lists good/excellent facilities located at the Community Centre (including playground and skate park). There were limited facilities captured in the audit beyond this. The program and policy audit did not capture any related programs and policies in the area.

Priorities

Community members felt the range of infrastructure to support walkability throughout Primrose Sands could be improved. Three priorities were identified as having potential to improve the walkability throughout Primrose Sands. These priorities were:



1

Pedestrian safety

Improving infrastructure to support pedestrians to safely move around the community was considered a priority. Paved footpaths were limited, and many other tracks are informal and not well-maintained which creates safety hazards. Community members felt it was highly dangerous to walk around the town particularly as pedestrians rely on narrow roads with minimal buffers. This is reinforced along some residential streets where public space along road verges (i.e. the nature strip) do not provide clear access for walking. Dangers are further enhanced by speed and high levels of traffic at certain times of day.



2

Footpaths and trails

Community members felt that improving footpaths and trails around Primrose Sands was important. Currently, there is a lack of maintained and well-connected paths. Furthermore, there is some uncertainty about where people can walk as there are large blocks of private land surrounding the town. Developing a network of paths throughout Primrose Sands was suggested to increase walkability in the area along with increasing access along public road verges and nature strips. Paths to the beach could also be better maintained to increase accessibility and connectivity.



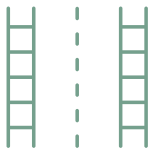
3

Planning community infrastructure

Community members recognised the importance of town planning in prioritising key projects and development within the town. The town has been evolving from a shack community into a commutable town with a growing number of permanent residents. Subsequently, community members felt there is a need for better planning processes. Engaging in a community infrastructure planning process would help to ensure the town can adjust to these changing dynamics.

Potential Solutions

During the community workshop, a range of solutions to address these priorities were identified to support walkability in Primrose Sands. This includes increased road safety signage, increased safe pathways, better connectivity and improved lighting. More specifically, solutions included:



Upgrading the paths to the beach and better maintaining informal tracks and trails.



Ensuring there are adequate footpaths and trails to facilitate safe access throughout Primrose Sands.



Improving roads used by pedestrians and adding traffic calming measures to increase pedestrian safety.

Engaging in a community infrastructure planning process to explore the infrastructure needs of the town.

Beautiful

~~DANGEROUS~~

Roads

CARS

be

lines

NATUR

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)* View of Primrose Sands Beach from the Coastal Track



Overview of Primrose Sands

This project explored walkability in Primrose Sands, a small locality in the southeast of Tasmania, approximately 50km east of nipaluna/Hobart. Primrose Sands is situated on Frederick Henry Bay and is in the Sorell Council municipality. The current population is 1209 and has been increasing over the last decade¹. The area has a population density of 0.3 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).

The Primrose Sands township is at the end of Primrose Sands Road (the only main road in and out of the town). Primrose Sands has some community amenities, including a general store, fire station, Returned and Services League (RSL), community centre, skate park

and accommodation. Residents must travel for schooling, work opportunities and other amenities (such as medical services and supermarkets). These facilities are in towns such as Dodges Ferry (14km away), Dunalley (16km away), Sorell (22km away) or nipaluna/Hobart (50km away). Locals describe the town as a:

Seaside village with minimal services. [There is] no infrastructure in place to encourage walking and access around.

“

[Primrose Sands has] a beautiful view of the sea and the beach is beautiful but also, it's incredibly quiet at night.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021





Images.

- ▲ Speed bump along Primrose Sands Road
- ◀ (opposite) View of Primrose Sands Beach from the Coastal Track

[The population] greatly increases during holiday times as there is a large percentage of shack/holiday accommodation in the township.

Historically, Primrose Sands is known as a holiday destination with a high number of shack owners, although the permanent population has grown substantially. The ABS reports that there are a high number of unoccupied dwellings in the area (44.5%), reflecting the large number of holiday residences (in comparison to the national average of 10.1%) . However, the number of occupied private dwellings (reflecting permanent residents) has grown from 49.1% in 2011 to 55.5% in 2021. Furthermore, during holiday periods the population of the town swells.

Primrose Sands is popular for beach activities including snorkelling, fishing and scuba diving. Residents also share their town with the critically endangered Red Handfish with many locals passionate about protecting the species. The beach is one of the key drawcards for community members:



The proximity and the beach is just beautiful. I've travelled a lot and this beach is still one of the nicest beaches I've seen in the world... people don't realise how nice it actually is here and it's a safe beach.



Overall, there are concerns that the infrastructure in Primrose Sands is not keeping up with the different needs of community members as well as the changing demographics.

Chats with people who have lived here for many years reveals that they don't think it is a problem. 'This is Primrose!' they say. As Primrose Sands undergoes a process of gentrification and more people and families move here permanently, expectations will change.

Alongside the growth in population, community members suggest the culture of the town is changing somewhat from a shack town to a commutable community.



With the population increase at Sorell, [people will]...go to the closest beaches... so that's going to put more pressure on places like this.

There is a portion of the community [for] who this is affordable as a place and then proximity if you have to travel for work.

Community members feel that these changes are becoming more pronounced and highlight the differing needs and interests of different groups within the community. There are some distinct groups within the community including locals and full-timers, shackies as well as tourists. Community members say this can sometimes lead to different social issues at different times of year.

Primrose is...the most beautiful community. It really is. I have never felt more welcomed, and people are friendly, they're supportive... and there's always someone who's willing to help in some way. So, it is a beautiful natured community.



[At] Easter it became really apparent that the rubbish on the beach increases, the dog poo and people tearing around... not a lot of hooliganism but it increases.

The relaxed lifestyle, community and proximity to the beach were key reasons residents choose to live in Primrose Sands.

Images.

- ▲ Stairs leading to the southern end of the Primrose Sands Beach
- ▶ (opposite) The informal Coastal Track winds towards Primrose Sands Beach



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 Primrose Sands. Overall, the spatial walkability assessment ranked Primrose Sands as having low walkability compared with the 91 other towns analysed in phase 1. The map shows most of Primrose Sands is dark pink indicating very low walkability throughout.

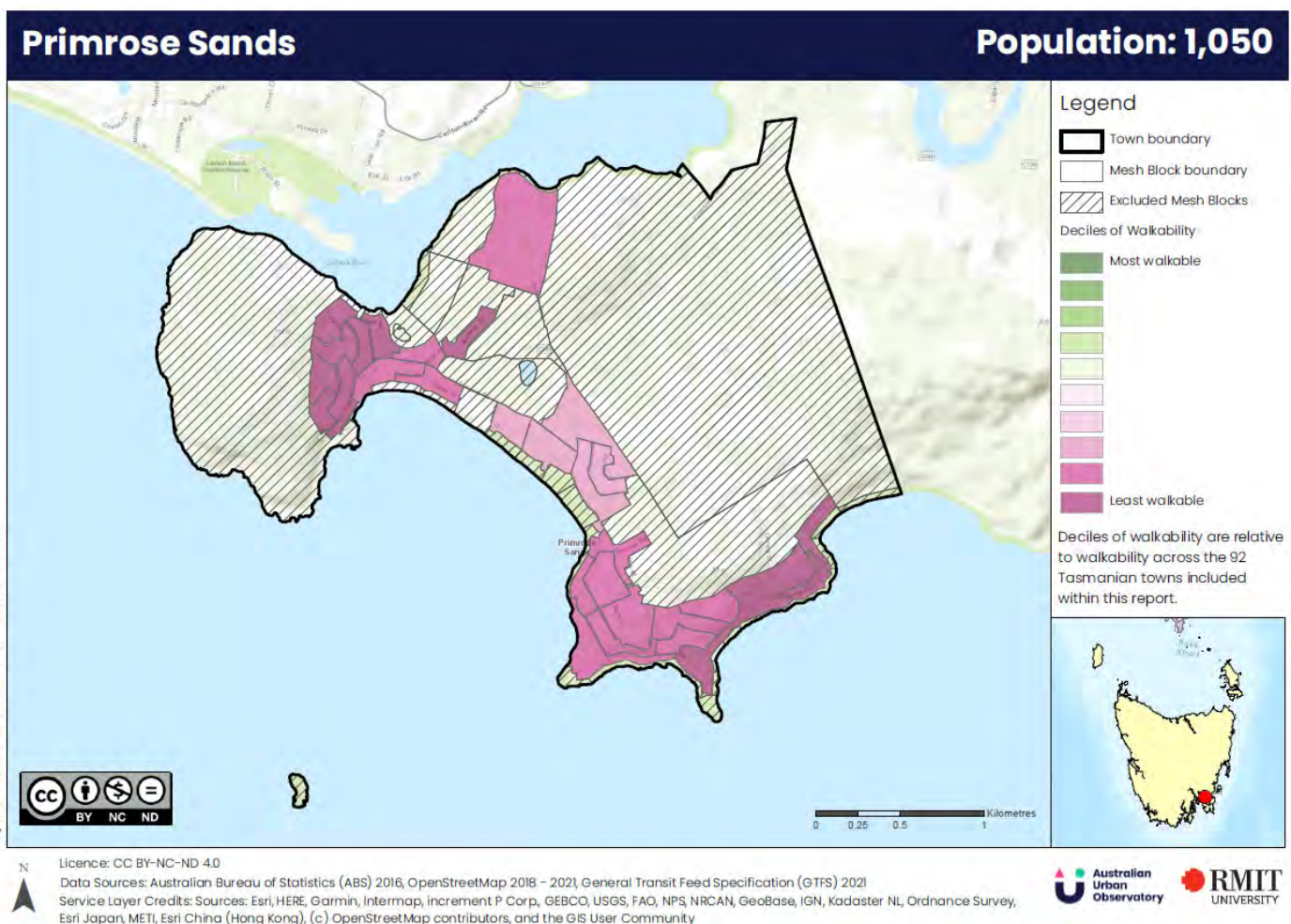


Figure 1. Primrose Sands spatial map²

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

Audit and workshop findings

In Primrose Sands, one community member completed the town wide facilities and programs/policies audits that examined the features in the area that supported walking and physical activity. One Community Champion also selected the segments of the area to be audited by the Citizen Scientists between January and April 2023. Seven 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 a workshop. The community workshop was held in Primrose Sands on 24 April 2023 with six community members present to discuss the findings. Following the workshop, this report was produced for the Primrose Sands community. Community members and Citizen Scientists provided feedback on this report and can use the report to bring about change in their community.

Image.

▼ View of Primrose Sands Beach from the Coastal Track



Town wide and policy/ Program audit findings

Some community facilities were captured in the town wide audit. In particular, the audit captured some natural environments that are used for recreation, though it was noted that many of these spaces are unmaintained and often difficult to access.



It is unlikely that the trails mentioned are official in any way. I believe they have been created by locals for fishing and beach access.

The town wide audit lists good/excellent facilities located at the Community Centre (including playground and skate park). There were limited facilities captured in the audit beyond this.

The town programs/policies audit examined the availability of health and physical activity related programs and/or policies in the area, including those run at the local school. The Program and Policy assessment did not capture many programs or policies in the area, which may reflect a lack of knowledge and awareness

about these programs and policies amongst the general community (for example around town-wide maintenance, or Council-based physical activity programming). However, the limited amenities in the town also impacts on the program/policy audit as there is no school and thus no school-based programs or policies.

Street segment audits: Overview of facilities

Seven segments of Primrose Sands were audited by the seven Citizen Scientists (Figure 2). This includes five Citizen Scientists who completed one segment each and two Citizen Scientists who completed two segments each. Of the segments, two were completed by two different Citizen Scientists. The street segment audits revealed the following:

- One segment was reported to have an intermittent paved footpath which was rated as good/excellent quality.
- Two segments were reported to have intermittent unpaved footpaths and one segment had unpaved footpaths on both sides of the road. All three segments rated unpaved footpaths as poor/fair quality.

Facilities rated Good/Excellent	Facilities rated Fair/Poor	Facilities not present
Public park (at the Community Centre)	Hiking or walking trails (informal tracks to beaches or along the bluff)	Biking paths or trails
Public toilets	Lake	Town recreational centre
Swimming beach		Private gym
River		Playing field
Skate park (at the Community Centre)		Indoor or outdoor courts
Playground (at the Community Centre)		
Other (Boat Ramp at Gypsy Bay)		

Table 1. Facilities in Primrose Sands as captured in the town wide audit.

- Four segments were reported to be aesthetically pleasing. Safety, overgrowth and lack of maintenance were reported as impacting upon ability to enjoy the aesthetic environment.
- Six segments had poor/fair footpath buffers or defined road shoulders for pedestrians.
- Three segments reported road condition to be poor/fair. Four segments had road signs listing a speed of 50kph.
- Traffic was low in four segments and medium in three segments.

- In six of the seven segments, community members disagreed or strongly disagreed that the segment was accessible. Similarly, only two segments were considered walkable for children.

Overall, Primrose Sands was reported to have very limited sport and recreational facilities as well as other infrastructure to support walking and participation in physical activity. In general, community members feel there is a need to make some improvements in Primrose Sands to improve overall walkability.

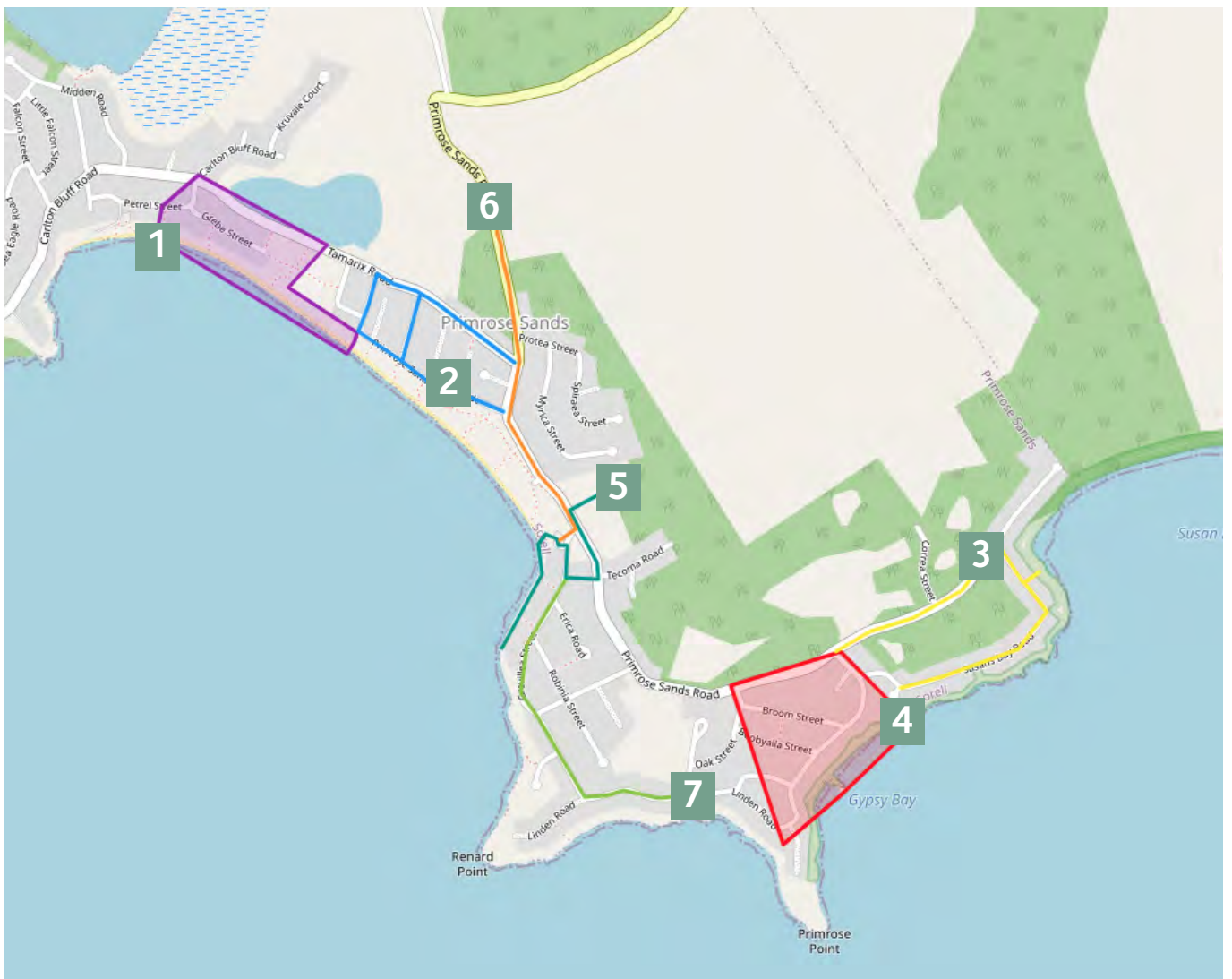


Figure 3. Audited segments in Primrose Sands



Image.

- ▲ Basketball hoop at the Primrose Sands Community Centre

Features that support walking and being active (facilitators)

Community members felt that the natural environment of Primrose Sands provided some important spaces to support walking and other physical activities. These environments were considered to have strong further potential to enhance community health and wellbeing.

The beach was the primary environment used by many residents for walking, beach activities (including swimming, snorkelling and kayaking) and dog walking.

“

The beaches are certainly one of the major attractions and to a lesser extent, the river.

The beach is a relatively safe beach and popular with visitors and locals.

The beach [is a] nice place to walk, it's level and you talk with people.

The aesthetics and beauty of the coastal environment and surrounding bushland encourages many community members to walk around the community. In addition, there are some spaces of unstructured natural bushland that some community members use but think could make great natural public spaces (including along the Carlton River or the informal 'coastal track' parallel to Grevillea Street).

The views from the coastal track are amazing.

Watching the mood of the ocean... is fabulous.

“

The coastal track gives stunning views of Primrose Sands over the water. Magnificent.

Image.

- ▼ Boathouses at the Gypsy Bay boat ramp

The majority of this section is visually pleasing given the proximity of public open spaces and large private holdings.

Finally, the Gypsy Bay boat ramp and the facilities at the Community Centre were rated good/excellent and provide some well-used spaces for recreation, particularly for children and young people.

“

[The] boat ramp at Gypsy Bay [is a] great facility and well cared for.

A park is located at the Community Centre and appears well equipped and maintained. There is also a skate ramp at this location.





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

Footpaths, trails and pedestrian safety

The segment audit data suggests there are minimal footpaths throughout Primrose Sands with only one paved footpath present (along Primrose Sands Road between Tamarix Road and the general store). However, this paved footpath is located on low-lying land with minimal drainage which causes issues when it rains.

“

Every single time it rains, the drain fills up. It's clogged. It was clogged after one month of [being built] ...So, you can't use it when it's wet unless you want your feet wet.



Images.

- ▲ Access to the beach can be difficult
- ◀ (opposite) The footpath along Primrose Sands Road provides an important space for pedestrians, but the path can become flooded.

In general, the quality of unpaved footpaths and trails were considered poor/fair.

The bulk of the area...has only adequate footpaths at most.

The informal paths along the water have beautiful views but are considered unsafe. Locals refer to one informal track as the 'coastal track' which follows the coastline from the general store in front of the houses parallel to Grevillia Street.

“

It's a really nice little track but you can't just casually walk along it, you've got to have your wits about you.

[The coastal track has] lots of trip hazards, lots of water on the track from property overflow making the track boggy, slippery and at times totally impassable, erosion, overgrown shrubs and bone seed weed etc.

The track along the front of the houses (parallel with Grevillea Street) is quite treacherous and definitely not one for the faint hearted.

The lack of regular path maintenance of the informal tracks and trails means that safety and accessibility is compromised in many locations.

“

The track itself is not maintained, hard to follow, overgrown and dangerous (potentially slippery) at times.



The area of open space with walking trail adjacent to the Fire Station provided an attractive thoroughfare. Unfortunately, it has not been maintained.

For this reason, some residents will maintain paths themselves in order to improve access.

Locals mow a bit.

The track parallel with Grevillea Street is mostly maintained by caring residents.

To move around Primrose Sands, pedestrians use informal tracks or are required to walk on the road. Many of the gravel walkways are rough tracks created through sustained use (“desire paths”) and some are created and maintained by residents.

Footpath (gravel) along main thoroughfare only. Is in reasonable condition.



P1: This track here at the back of the hall was made by the locals.

P2: And that seems to be [how] most tracks are [created] here.

I’m not sure these are ‘official’ but just locals making tracks to access beaches or bluffs.

In other locations, community members are required to walk on or next to the road which is often not wide enough to support vehicles and pedestrians. In addition, the road surface conditions also made it difficult for pedestrians.

Images.

- ▲ The path connecting the Primrose Sands Community Centre to the top of Myrica Street
- ▼ Track to Primrose Sands beach at the intersection of Nerine Street and the Esplanade

This is one of the most walked paths in the community (leading to the food/ coffee vans, the RSL and monthly market). This path is only wide enough for single file and often has offensive sludge in the adjoining drain.

“

There's nowhere to walk as everyone else has said, without walking up and down the roads.

“

I walk because I've got a heart condition, so I try and keep fit and it's really difficult in places in most of Primrose, unless you're walking down Tamarix Road and areas like that that are flat. [In most places] you've got roads that drop straight off either side [so] you can only walk on the roads.

Gravel roads can be slippery in the wet.

“

The camber on the road also puts stresses on people who have got problem ankles. So, there's nowhere flat to walk here and those photos don't actually show quite how uneven and how hilly this is.

In addition, there is some concern that public nature strips in residential areas are being utilised by homeowners which reduces the amount of public walkable spaces.

Road conditions and pedestrian safety

The road conditions were commonly discussed as impacting directly on the safety and enjoyment of walking around Primrose Sands. As mentioned, there are limited paved and unpaved footpaths throughout the town which results in pedestrians needing to use the road to get around. In most areas, roads are not designed to support pedestrians, yet they are



Images.

- ▲ Pedestrians walk on the road along Grevillea Street towards Primrose Sands Beach
- ▼ Pedestrians walk along the gravel road verge to access the RSL to the northern edge of town



used regardless which community members said was highly dangerous.



I want to add...the quality of the roads because that impacts the safety.

Primrose Sands Road from Tecoma to the hall is super dangerous despite there being a speed hump near the shop. There is nowhere to get off the road safely. If there are cars coming from both directions your only option is to stand in the ditch.

Due to the town history as a shack community, many roads are narrow with limited road shoulders and there is a lack of visibility in some areas due to hills or curves in the road. In addition, community members felt there is a lack of road safety measures such as signage.

There is a lack of safety measures, lighting, quality footpaths and safe crossings.

[There is] not even a shared path or shared space sign.



Its unsafe as there are too few road signs.

There are blind spots due to crests and corners.

Image.

◀ (opposite) Rough drainage along the roadside. At times pedestrians must use these spaces to avoid cars

Community members felt that the roads can also be dangerous due to a culture favouring drivers and speeding.



Many drivers in Primrose Sands seem to believe the road belongs to them and this is reinforced by the speed limit and the lack of signage to promote safe driving [or to] alert drivers that the street is a shared zone.

There is only one road in and out of Primrose Sands and the increase in traffic (including daily commuters as well as high numbers during holiday periods) creates further issues. Larger vehicles are common including water delivery trucks, construction vehicles, towing boats and caravans, as well as private vehicles. Speeding was common throughout the town.



Speed limits are rarely adhered to as commuters rush to be at the front of the traffic as they exit Primrose Sands. As there are no overtaking lanes between Primrose Sands and Sorell, the competition to be first is real.

When I first came here, the speed limit on the roads was 40 and then it was increased to 50 over time.

Vehicles speeding along road with nowhere for pedestrians to be safe.

The lack of paths and road shoulders combined with speeding vehicles, made community members feel highly vulnerable and that walking around town was very dangerous.



You take your life in your own hands because there's just nowhere to go.



When cars pass by very few slow down or move a safe distance from pedestrians.

There are no footpaths or safe places to step on to along the roadside.

“

There are times when cars have gone that close to me that I'm sure that another centimetre and the wing mirror would've hit.

The Primrose Sands Road and Grevillea Street are main thoroughfares in the neighbourhood. Morning commuter traffic and school buses on a very narrow, two-way road/street means cars often have to give way to allow passing. Pedestrians are at high risk of being 'a soft option' in these situations as there is nowhere to walk apart from the actual road.

Image.

- ▲ Access along the Carlton River is difficult for pedestrians
- ▶ *(opposite)* The Coastal Track starts from the southern edge of Primrose Sands Beach

Connectivity

The limited footpaths and trails around the town contribute to reducing connectivity. While the paved path to the general store does provide a useful link, other key locations (such as the RSL or coffee van) are not well-connected for pedestrians.

“

There's no connectivity, there's nowhere to walk as everyone else has said.

Unmaintained paths and land owners utilising public road verges have also reduced connectivity:





[The trail] adjacent to [the] Fire Station [is] not maintained and has been subject to water inundation over the past 2 - 3 years. This used to link up with a track to the local shop.

I thought that swamp bit at Nerine [Street] was actually Crown land and it's actually not.

The usurping of public street frontage for residential usage is quite widespread.



Not long after we got here, we walked from Susans Bay to Connellys Marsh and subsequently found out [it is private property] ... So, we can't walk that one which is a beautiful walk.

Connectivity is also affected by the limited public space in the town possibly reflective of the town's history as a shack community.

We don't have public, open spaces.

Community members would also like to see their town connect to other nearby towns such as to Connelly's Marsh or Dunalley. Providing recreational trail links could increase levels of walking and other physical activity participation.

Accessibility

Community members felt that the combination of safety concerns and lack of footpaths made accessibility a significant challenge for diverse groups including young people, the elderly or people with disabilities. In six of the seven segments, community members disagreed or strongly disagreed that the segment was accessible.



The problem is the public open space or the lack of it.



This segment is not suitable or accessible for anyone with mobility aids or for anyone with anything less than good levels of agility. No chance anybody in this category could walk this track.

The town is surrounded by private land which puts limitations upon spaces community members can access. In the past, many landowners have been willing to let pedestrians walk through private property. However, this is changing alongside increasing development and the evolution of the town from a solely shack community. There is some confusion over who owned land, and reports of resorting to using privately-owned land to reach a destination or follow a safer walking route. Many people have walked on bushland or tracks in the area only to realise the land is private.



P1: I know there is a gentleman who has a mobility scooter who lives [in town] - I fear for his life.

P2: He drives right down the middle of the road on his mobility scooter because he has no option.

P3: It's one way to be seen.

I wanted to go there - I didn't, I saw it was private property.

Pedestrians must walk on the road and have their wits about them. It is an unsafe place for children, the elderly, less mobile people and those with a disability.

This creates uncertainty as to what spaces are publicly accessible and there is limited information available for pedestrians to find out.



Images.

- ▲ It can be difficult for pedestrians to walk along the water at Gypsy Bay due to the boathouses
- ▶ Carpark at the southern end of Primrose Sands Beach

Community members said this was particularly important due to the aging population of the town.

I'm finding walking around getting harder [due to]...the accessibility and the lack of infrastructure here...Especially if you're in your 50s and 60s and above, most people have mobility issues but we're the ones who need to keep being active.

Beach accessibility

Furthermore, while the beach is the most popular walking destination in Primrose Sands, community members said it can be difficult to access. There are two key beach access points at either end of Primrose Sands beach (as well as informal tracks in between). One is behind the general store and the other

is at the carpark off Petrel Street. The access behind the general store is affected by storms, high tides and overflow pipes from residential properties which can move the path and rocks. Locals often attempt to address issues by completing their own maintenance work, however, this is not considered a long-term solution.



P1: [One resident has been] trying to create a rock wall to save the path to the beach by... mov[ing] the rocks and then [adding] wheelbarrow loads of sand on to create a path to the beach.

P2: But the sad part about that is that people thought it was a council effort and then complained because it wasn't wide enough because they still couldn't get their prams down onto the beach.



P1: [After a] storm you can't even get down to the beach because of the rocks.

P2: Every time there's a weather event, it changes.





Community members also said it is difficult to walk along Gypsy Bay due to the presence of boathouses.

“

The beach zone segment of my map is compromised by poorly maintained boathouses, not supplying public thoroughfare across their jetties or behind their structures. This prohibits anyone over a certain age from readily accessing the public amenity of the seafront.

The boat sheds on the foreshore have created massive obstacles to free flow of foot traffic.

The Petrel Street access point is a wide road to the beach which is also used by vehicles as access to the beach. Some community members felt this created some safety concerns.

Cars park on the beach...which then makes it unsafe for others with so many 4x4 driving about.

“

There [are] access issues here when it rains too at this end, unless you go down the boat ramp. I know friends of mine who work with aged care, they take their clients down the boat ramp to get to the beach.

Other concerns

Community members mentioned that the use of toxic herbicides to maintain the roadways or private gardens impacted upon the enjoyment of walking around the town. Some residents were particularly concerned as any runoff could affect the critically endangered Red Handfish which lives in the area.

Image.

◀ (opposite) There are limited clear spaces along residential streets for pedestrians to walk

So much toxic herbicide has been used by the private landowner there are three dead trees, erosion and the cliff side featuring dead foliage.

“

The trouble is...[that] hideous chemicals end up in our waterways and I'm just going to add now, a plug for the fact that we have an extremely endangered Red Handfish community that lives here in Primrose.

The intensity of weed killer poisons is a deterrent.

Lighting was also discussed as community members felt there were not enough streetlights across the town to support walking in the late afternoons and evenings.

Street lighting in the area is spasmodic, focused mainly at the Public Toilets and in the vicinity of the general store.

“

P1: We do get long nights and it's dark in the mornings and evenings earlier and earlier and safety becomes a serious thing if you've got uneven surfaces.

P2: I've taken to putting a light on [the dog].

P1: And on myself...because I need to be able to see where I'm putting my feet.

Finally, community members also discussed the off-lead dog rules for the Primrose Sands beach. Some people felt the current restrictions are limited whilst others felt they could be reduced.

Priorities

During the community workshops, participants were asked which of the identified barriers they considered a priority for action. Community members acknowledged the council have some development plans (including a footpath along Tamarix Street and a public toilet and playground at the western end of the beach), however, many feel there are more improvements that could be made.



This town badly needs this project, it could turn into a far more walkable and welcoming location for many people to enjoy.



Priority 1: Improving pedestrian safety

Community members felt that pedestrian safety could be improved throughout Primrose Sands. As pedestrians rely upon roads in many locations, improvements could be made to ensure these spaces are safer for pedestrians as well as for vehicles. The lack of road buffers combined with speed and increased traffic (at holiday periods as well as at peak commuter travel times) make these spaces dangerous for pedestrians. Traffic calming measures and improvement to key roads were suggested as pedestrians currently must compete with vehicles due to the lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Improving pedestrian safety was deemed necessary to ensure the safety of community members and increase accessibility and connectivity to key spaces within the community.



Priority 2: Improving footpaths and trails

Discussion highlighted the priority of improving tracks and trails to support walking around Primrose Sands. Some informal tracks already exist throughout Primrose Sands; however, many could be better maintained to increase accessibility and connectivity, and public roadside verges and nature strips could be utilised to create walkable spaces. Development of the beach entry points could ensure easy access and address issues caused by storms or high tides. In addition, development of footpaths and paths in key locations (for example, to the RSL or coffee van) would make it easier for pedestrians to get around safely. Furthermore, linking key spaces would allow community members to better navigate the available public open spaces. Ensuring greater knowledge of public and private land (through signage and better-connected public spaces) would also enhance walkability.



Priority 3: Planning community infrastructure

Community members recognised the importance of town planning in prioritising and developing the town. Due to the history of the town as a primarily shack community, the community members feel that many of the facilities and infrastructure need further consideration. Engaging in a community infrastructure planning process would help to ensure the town can adjust to changing community dynamics. It was suggested that this process could consider the strengths of the community as well as current challenges and opportunities.



Image.

- ▲ Intersection of Tamarix Road and Primrose Sands Road

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 Primrose Sands.

Planning and maintenance

Community members discussed the importance of high-level planning to ensure solutions that consider the town history as well as the current and future infrastructure needs.

It was a bit *laissez faire*; the town has obviously just grown over the decades.

“

There's one overarching issue which is lack of planning.

I think the biggest issue for this community is that there was never any... infrastructural planning...So we're starting from scratch really.

Many residents feel these issues are linked and that better planning will support community members to engage in walking and other physical activities.

Residents highlighted the need for strong communication between the community, council and other stakeholders. Engaging in a process of community consultation can ensure greater communication and decision making about community issues. Many local residents are keen to be involved, including new community group 'Southern Beaches Mobility Group' which aims to advocate for improved

walking and cycling infrastructure in the Sorell Council municipality.

Importantly, community members felt the need to ensure plans include consideration of housing developments, public and private land, road and services infrastructure (including the need for more regular maintenance) and recreational infrastructure.

Roads and traffic calming measures

Improving the roads and adding traffic calming measures was discussed as a key priority, not only for pedestrians but also for local wildlife.

From a pedestrian point of view, that needs traffic calming.

“

So, road calming will have an additional benefit to not just people but the native wildlife as well, which is part of the reasons why we live here, right?

Suggestions included upgrading key roads (including Primrose Sands Road and Grevillea Street to the boat ramp) as this would have dual benefits for vehicles as well as pedestrians. As pedestrians rely on roads to get around, safer roads would provide adequate road buffers, speed limits and visibility. Ensuring public road verges provide safe walking access was also considered important.

“

Residential owners need to be made aware and to care for the need for walkable space in front of their houses. No residential owner has the right to the roadside edge.



Image.

▲ Beach access along Primrose Sands Beach

Furthermore, traffic calming measures at high-risk points would help to reduce the number of accidents and near-misses. This includes exploring options for traffic signage, speed bumps and clear spaces to cross.

“ For the amount of traffic, I feel that there is...a lack of safety measures (signage, speed bumps, lighting) given the amount of pedestrian traffic.

The lack of defined safe footpaths and safe crossings is, I feel a problem for children.

“ There needs to be stop signs installed at several intersections - Susans Bay Road at Primrose Sands Road, Linden Road at Susans Bay Road.

It is walkable but risky due to the lack of footpaths and appropriate signs to alert drivers.

“ The road is too narrow. There's no real place to get off...[I think] putting extra speed bumps in along there to slow the traffic down [would help].

Community members recognised the need to prioritise the busier key roads.

I think one of the important things... is to prioritise the roads where there's more traffic.

I would like to see some priority on the major roads.

Reducing speed was also considered important and would maintain consistency similar to other small towns in the area. This should occur alongside efforts to enforce speeds.

“

Reduce speed limit back to 40kph on roads without footpaths.

Footpaths, trails and walking infrastructure

Footpaths, trails and other walking infrastructure were a priority for Primrose Sands.

Footpaths are required as a matter of urgency.

“

In my view, footpaths are the priority for Primrose Sands.

Improvements to existing footpaths and trails around Primrose Sands was deemed essential to increase participation in walking and other physical activities throughout the town. Having safe spaces for pedestrians to walk would help to address safety concerns. Community members did not necessarily feel that paved footpaths were required in all areas. Rather, it was suggested that having well-maintained footpaths or trails available combined with improved roads and pedestrian safety infrastructure would increase walkability.

The views from the coastal track are amazing and if this area was maintained and improved, I could imagine many people walking this easy route.

“

To be able to walk around and enjoy a bit more of the bush would be nice.

There is potential here to make this a stunning loop walk. The views from the coastal track are impressive.

Community members suggested there could be development of formalised paths in key locations as well as upgrades to current trails. Having a suitable footpath along Primrose Sands Road (connecting key locations such as the RSL and general store) was considered important. Community members also discussed connecting Primrose Sands to other local communities via footpaths. In addition, community members highlighted the need to ensure paths had adequate drainage.

There's no parks around or decent parks, decent walking tracks.

“

One of the things we really should be looking at is linking the communities like Connellys Marsh, Primrose, Dodges, Carlton, Lewisham and Sorell via the bay.

As the town is surrounded by private land, there is some uncertainty around spaces that can and cannot be used for walking and recreational activities. For example, some people were uncertain about walking along Carlton River or the wetlands on Tamarix Road. Creating paths and trails within spaces that are publicly owned, and ensuring greater connectivity between these public spaces, was considered important. Community members felt this would provide additional spaces for participation in walking and other recreational activities.

A decent, nice, little bushwalk [is missing along] the foreshore between the Esplanade and the beach. It could be a nice circuit that people could do and it wouldn't be that hard to create.

“

P1: Even if it could go from Midden Road to Colleen Crescent, I don't know if that's possible...

P2: I don't know if there was a pathway there or access [to] the Crown land bit, but whether it could go from here through the wetlands, that would be beautiful.

Furthermore, maps and signage could help to provide clarity around the publicly accessible areas for walking or other physical activities.

Finally, improving the paths at the beach access points would ensure community members can more easily access this well-used natural environment.

More assistance for getting to and from the beach frontage would be welcome.

Access walkways to beach could be improved.

“

The beachfront is public but there is too little access to it and along it.

Signage

Adding safety, directional and information signage was considered essential to address safety concerns, highlight key routes around the community and pass on information. As mentioned, road safety signage was deemed essential to address safety concerns:

“

There are no signs erected to indicate to drivers that this street is a shared space.

With the increase in people and families living fulltime in Primrose Sands there is a great need to erect signage to keep our streets safe for everyone.

In addition, directional and information signage was considered a useful way for community members to plan walking routes around the community. In addition, this would help to distinguish between the public and private land.

“

No markers or signs then to find the coastal track. I didn't even know this existed! I finally found the entrance halfway down the access track to the beach.

The river is used by kayakers and paddle boarders. The Sorell Council has some rules about its use, but these don't appear to be posted along the river.

Other solutions

Other suggestions focused on adding some general infrastructure such as lighting, seating, rubbish bins and dog bag dispensers.

“

The boat ramp needs more rubbish bins and a dog bag dispenser.

Seating at the boat ramp.

Whilst there is some lighting around the general store and public toilet block, residents felt that more streetlights could increase people walking around Primrose Sands. This was particularly important during the winter months when the days are shorter.

Conclusion

Primrose Sands is a small coastal locality in the southeast of Tasmania, approximately 50km east of nipaluna/Hobart. Historically, Primrose Sands is known as a holiday destination with a high number of shack owners, although the permanent population has grown substantially. The natural assets of the town (such as the beach) provide important spaces for engaging in walking and other recreational activities.

Primrose Sands has some community amenities, including a general store, fire station, RSL, coffee van, community centre, skate park and accommodation. However, residents must travel for schooling, work opportunities and other amenities (such as medical services and supermarkets). The town is primarily residential and there are limited footpaths or other basic infrastructure.

The audits completed by the Community Champions and Citizen Scientists highlight some assets as well as areas that could be improved. The natural environments are key spaces for engaging in walking and other recreational activities, however access and connectivity is limited throughout the area. Community members felt that the key priorities were:

- Improving pedestrian safety by ensuring roads, road verges and footpaths are suitable for pedestrians.
- Improving footpaths and trails would increase walkability. This includes maintaining current paths, developing additional paths in key locations and ensuring these are well-connected. Upgrading paths to the beach would also improve access.
- Planning community infrastructure will ensure the town has adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the towns growth as well as residents' recreational needs.

A range of possible solutions would help to address these priorities including maintaining current tracks and trails, developing safe walking spaces for pedestrians (including footpaths and improving roads for pedestrian use), adding traffic calming measures (such as signage and reducing traffic speed), increased lighting and engaging in a community planning process.

Image.

- ▶ *(opposite)* The Gypsy Bay boat ramp has good facilities available

SORELL COUNCIL

CAUTION
UNEVEN SURFACE
SLIP AND FALL HAZARD

Warning!
Water is Shallow
Limiting Access to Boat Ramp

SPEED LIMIT
5 KNOTS

PUBLIC TOILETS IN CAR PARK

1. WITHIN 50 METRES OF:
- ANY ENGINE, MARINE FACILITY, BUOY OR BOAT THAT IS UNREGISTERED AT ANCHOR, MOORED OR ENGAGED IN FISHING OR HARVESTING
- ANY PERSON ON WATER BAIL, AQUAPLANE OR SIMILAR OBJECT BEING TOWED BY ANOTHER BOAT

2. WITHIN 100 METRES OF:
- ANY PERSON, SWIMMING OR WESSEL, BUOY OR HARVESTING P. (SEEK FISHING)



ous

boards

beach

walkrural.com.au

Ames

NATURE 