

# Wagonga Inlet Estuary Management Study

## Questionnaire Results

### Summary

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Questionnaire forms were provided to the Narooma Tourist Information Centre, Narooma Plaza and the three caravan parks. Charlie Bettini distributed and collected questionnaires from Wagonga Princess passengers, and questionnaires were distributed to people using boat ramps and foreshore reserves over 10-11 December 1999. The questionnaire was also included in the Narooma Golf Club newsletter (mailed to 4,200 residents).

The total number of questionnaires returned was 292. A breakdown of returns from various sources is shown below:

Location	No. Completed	Percentage
Golf Club Newsletter	95	32.5
Wagonga Princess	94	32.2
Boat Ramp and Reserves	68	23.3
Narooma Plaza	33	11.3
Easts Van Village	2	0.7
<b>total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100</b>

Three written submissions were also received with completed questionnaires.

Most people who responded to the questionnaire were in the 40-59 years age bracket (almost 50%). About 60% were male and about 60% of respondents reside in the Narooma area. Most visitors to Narooma were from the greater Sydney region.

About one quarter of respondents indicated using/visiting Wagonga Inlet on a regular basis. The most popular activities for the inlet are listed below in order:

- walking
- relaxing
- picnics/barbecues
- swimming
- fishing from the shore
- fishing from a boat
- sightseeing

Most respondents indicated that they participated in most of the activities identified in the questionnaire. Generally little conflict between activities was identified, except for conflicts between power boating (eg water skiing and jetskiing) and other activities.

A number of identified values or attributes of Wagonga Inlet were listed in the questionnaire. The attributes respondents like most about the inlet are, in order:

- the good water quality
- scenic views, and
- the bushland surrounding parts of the inlet.

In addition to those listed in the questionnaire (ie the above, plus the range of recreational opportunities, low-key tourist facilities, fish and birds and a permanently open entrance to the ocean), other aspects of the inlet valued by respondents related to the pristine and undeveloped nature of the area, its natural attributes and the absence of commercial fishing.

A number of issues affecting Wagonga Inlet were identified in the questionnaire. Of these, respondents indicated the most pressing as being, in order:

- the lack of public jetties to tie up boats on a temporary basis
- navigation through the entrance breakwaters and across the bar
- the shallowness of the channel for watercraft, upstream of the bridge, and
- the lack of access/jetties/pontoons for fishing from the shore.

The most common comments on these problems included:

- monopolisation of public facilities by commercial vessels
- inexperience or a lack of common sense in regard to safe navigation of the entrance/bar, and
- a noticeable increase in shallowness and boat access difficulties upstream of the bridge during low tides.

With regard to siltation of creeks flowing into Wagonga Inlet, Punkally was identified as the worst affected. As for flooding, most stormwater drainage problems were identified in the 'flat area' of Narooma (ie area adjoining the eastern foreshore of Forsters Bay).

Other issues respondents identified related to development (particularly unsewered developments), noisy recreational activities, dogs, clearing versus removal of foreshore vegetation (including mangroves), oyster leases, walkways and access, park facilities and the bridge over the inlet.

There were many suggestions on how to address these issues. Most suggestions related to wharves, jetties, moorings and boat ramps and included provision of more jetties, upgrading of boat ramp facilities, and development of a marina at Mill Bay or downstream of the bridge on the southern side of the inlet.

Suggestions to improve navigation through the entrance and to address shallowness of the channel upstream of the bridge included alterations to the breakwaters and dredging. In addition, more education and hazard warning measures were suggested to address boat safety.

Better policing and regulation were suggested to address issues such as the taking of undersized fish, littering and pollution spills.

There were also many suggestions for additional walking tracks and park facilities and amenities.