



Barwon
Coast

Community consultation report

Phase 1

Future of the Breamlea General Store

May 2024





Barwon Coast acknowledges the coastline of the southern Bellarine Peninsulas as the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people and wishes to recognise the Wadawurrung as Traditional Owners. The Barwon coastline is rich in Aboriginal culture, and we pay our respects to their Elders past present and future; and the Elders from other communities who may visit our coast. Barwon Coast acknowledges Aboriginal people as Australia's first people, and as Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live. Barwon Coast recognises the intrinsic connection to Country, acknowledging the contribution of Aboriginal people to the management of land, water, the natural landscape and our built environment.



Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast) is appointed by the Victorian State Government to manage 15km of coastal Crown land through the Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads townships, along the Bass Strait coast of the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria, Australia. Our vision is that the natural environment of our coastline will flourish whilst meeting the needs of our engaged communities. A major local employer in Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove, we have more than 50 skilled employees from a diverse range of backgrounds working across the coastal reserve.

Table of Contents

- 1. OVERVIEW4
- 2. APPROACH.....4
- 3. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES4
- 4. KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY CONSULTATION.....5
- 5. RESPONSE FROM EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS6
- 6. REFLECTIONS7
- 7. NEXT STEPS.....7

1. Overview

Breamlea is a special coastal village tucked away on the south coast of Victoria, mid-way between Barwon Heads and Torquay. Breamlea is known for its beautiful bush setting, beaches, significance to the Wadawurrung and its small, close-knit community.

In April 2022 the management of the Breamlea coastal reserves transferred from the City of Greater Geelong to Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast). This included the management of the Breamlea Caravan Park and the on-site Breamlea General Store.

Barwon Coast is committed to working to balance community benefit with responsible management of our resources. Following almost 18 months of operation, Barwon Coast has experienced a significant financial loss from operating the General Store. Due to this loss, we are reviewing options to change the service model to be more financially sustainable while continuing to provide a valuable service to campers, the local community and visitors.

Two important elements of this review include:

- Understanding the Breamlea community members and campers thoughts and ideas on preferences for services and product provisions at the General Store.
- Seeking Expressions of Interest from businesses interested in leasing the Breamlea Store.

This report provides an update and summary on these elements, and next steps in the review of the service model of the Breamlea Store.

2. Approach

To get an understanding of Breamlea community members and campers thoughts and ideas on preferences for services and product provisions at the General Store, three approaches were used:

1. Online survey
2. Community/resident and campers Focus Group discussion.
3. Workshop session with Breamlea Community Association.

To understand if there was interest from people or businesses to lease the Breamlea General Store an Expressions of Interest process was run by Barwon Coast from 23 January to 26 February 2024.

3. Summary of Responses



2 face-to-face sessions; consisting of nine members from the Breamlea Community Association and community Focus Group



72 survey responses



1 email submission



129 project webpage visits



1.8K reached via social media and covered in two local newspapers.

4. Key themes from community consultation

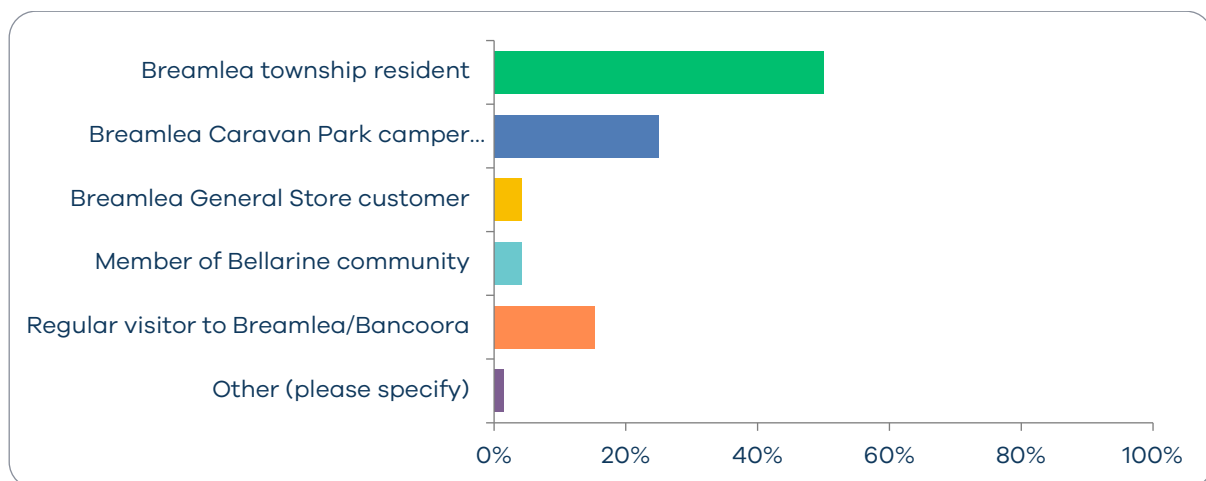
Themes to emerge from the community consultation include:

- Importance of good coffee and hot food (quality barista coffee and takeaway food options valued, offer possibility to order food, sell local produce).
- Post Office is very important to the community.
- Store is an asset, not a liability.
- Build it as a place of interest (e.g. share history).
- Consider trade hours to service locals who commute, cyclists etc.
- Innovation welcomed (open to creative solutions. Examples: Wye River General Store, Federal NSW, Fresh Water Creek Cakes).
- Proactive marketing seen as key for any new solution's success.

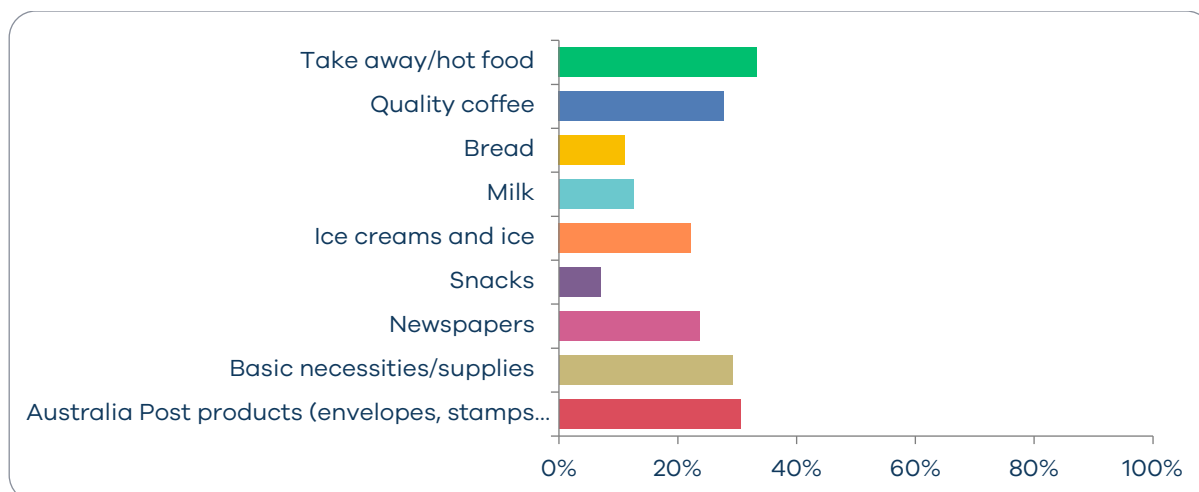
Snapshot of survey responses (72 responses)

This is a snapshot of some of the key responses from the community survey.

Which of the below would best describe your link to the Breamlea General Store?



Which would be your top two priorities to purchase from Breamlea in the future?



What would bring you to into the General Store more often?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Different food/drink offering	53%
Different retail offering	10%
Different opening hours	24%
Other (please specify)	13%

5. Response from Expression of Interest process

Barwon Coast conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to seek potential operators to lease the Breamlea General Store building. The EOI was open from 23 January to 26 February 2024.

The EOI was promoted via:

- Social media posts on multiple channels
- Published media (OG Voice, Bellarine Times, Talking Heads)
- Web news and project web page on the Barwon Coast website
- Emails to 20+ cafe and hospitality businesses across the Surf Coast and Bellarine

Unfortunately, no Expression of Interest applications were received by the deadline. Given this Barwon Coast will continue to explore throughout 2024 options for reviewing the operating model for the Breamlea General Store so it can be more financially sustainable.

6. Reflections

The first phase of consultation provided valuable community input that will guide the review of the future operating model for the Breamlea General Store. The community engagement reflected a strong desire to have the General Store continue operating in some capacity to serve local needs. Key themes included: maintaining essential postal services, offering quality coffee and fresher, local food options and exploring innovative models, partnerships, and marketing.

7. Next steps

Barwon Coast will continue to operate the Breamlea General Store while it continues to explore and trial changes to the operating model so the store can be more financially sustainable in the short term.

Barwon Coast will continue to engage with the Breamlea community, campers and other key stakeholders to present new ideas and seek further input where more significant changes may be considered. This will help to determine the best path forward that aims to balance community benefit with financial sustainability for the General Store operation.



Barwon
Coast