Community Workshop – Recreational Boat Ramp Discussion

Date: 30 June 2026

Location: Lord Howe Island Public Hall

***Community Representatives** x 8 attendees*

***Lord Howe Island Board (LHIB)/ EBM** x 4 members*

***Reeves Envico** x 4 Project Managers*

***NSW Public Works (NSWPW)** x 1 Project Manager*

***National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)** x 1 Project Manager*

Note takers: Luke Phillips-Page

Public Boat Ramp Workshop Outcomes

The workshop facilitated discussion regarding the preliminary concept design for the recreational boat ramp and identified several opportunities for improvement and further investigation.

Ramp Length and Gradient

- Community members noted that the ramp shown in the concept design may not extend sufficiently to reach water depths required for safe vessel launching and retrieval operations.
- It was agreed that consideration should be given to extending the ramp further into the lagoon to improve access across a wider range of tidal conditions.
- A longer ramp would also allow for a flatter gradient, improving usability and making launching and retrieval operations easier and safer for users.

Navigation Channel and Revetment Protection

- Feedback highlighted concerns regarding reef hazards located on the western side of the proposed ramp alignment.
- Consideration should be given to extending the surrounding rock revetment to better define and protect the navigation channel, improving safety for vessels entering and exiting the ramp.

Ramp Width

- Community members suggested increasing the ramp width to approximately 6 metres to improve usability and allow for a wider range of vessel types and launching activities.

Vessel Design Capacity

- The community expressed a preference for the ramp to accommodate vessels up to approximately 14 metres in length to ensure long-term functionality and future-proofing of the facility.

Temporary Vessel Mooring During Launch and Retrieval

- Participants highlighted the need for infrastructure that would allow vessels to be safely secured while vehicle and trailer movements occur during launching and retrieval operations.

Potential options discussed included:

- **Floating pontoon and mooring piles on the western side of the ramp**
    - A floating pontoon connected to mooring piles on the western side of the ramp could provide a safe area for vessels to berth while trailers are retrieved.
    - Such infrastructure may also provide some protection from south-west and west swell conditions, particularly during medium to high tides.
    - Concerns were raised regarding:
        - The ability to design infrastructure capable of withstanding local weather conditions;
        - Potential public safety risks associated with the structure becoming an informal swimming platform; and
        - Visual impacts within the lagoon environment.
    - It was acknowledged that engineering requirements to withstand local conditions may make this option cost prohibitive.
- **Mooring or fender piles adjacent to the ramp**

- An alternative option discussed was the installation of two to three mooring or fender piles adjacent to the ramp, potentially commencing near the toe of the ramp.
- The possibility of connecting these piles with a line or handrail arrangement was also discussed and requires further investigation.
- Positioning piles on the south-east side of the ramp may allow vessels to naturally rest against the piles under prevailing swell conditions, while alternative locations may require vessel operators to manoeuvre against weather conditions to access the facility.

- **Rope anchor system**
  - A lower-cost alternative discussed was a rope anchor system with multiple tie-off points, similar to arrangements currently used along sections of the lagoon foreshore.
  - While recognised as a potentially cost-effective solution, mooring piles remained the preferred option of workshop participants.

Alternative Launch Access During Ship Operations

- Community members noted that the alternative launch access proposed within the laydown area should not be over-engineered to cater for the largest trailer vessels (approximately 45-foot vessels).
- Larger vessels would continue to have the ability to utilise the broader area when the cargo vessel is not alongside.
- The intent of the alternative access arrangement should instead focus on maintaining safe and practical access for regular recreational boat users during periods when ship operations are occurring.
- A request that the design team provide advice and recommendations regarding the relative merits, constructability, operational suitability and cost implications of the various vessel tie-up options discussed, including:
  - a floating pontoon with mooring piles;
  - mooring/fender piles located on either the western or eastern side of the ramp; and
  - a rope anchor system with multiple tie-off points.