

Naval Base Horse Beach Survey

What we heard

September 2024



Thank you for responding!

Following years of planning, scientific research and consultation, in November 2023 Westport released a preferred design for WA's future container supply chain.

The location of the proposed port facilities is between Barter Road and Mason Road in the Kwinana Industrial Area. This will directly impact the Naval Base beach, which is accessed via Riseley Road.

To facilitate the State's new port facilities, it is expected that public access to the beach will eventually cease. The timing for this closure has not yet been determined and Westport has commenced early community engagement.

Whilst not a dedicated or official horse beach, Westport recognises this land has been used informally by the horse riding community for many years and is widely known as the Naval Base horse beach.

The Western Australian Marine Science Institution recently conducted research to understand how Cockburn Sound (including the Naval Base horse beach) is used for recreation by the community.

Westport is the State Government's planning program to move container trade from Fremantle to Kwinana. This includes new container port facilities to be developed in the Kwinana Outer Harbour, which currently services heavy industry. The proposed design encompasses marine infrastructure and a freight network, including road, rail and logistics.

We know the beach is used for a range of activities including diving, fishing and dog walking however, horse-related activities are the focus of this engagement, with other engagement to follow.

Engagement activities predominantly took place online via a community survey that was open from 12 March to 31 May 2024 and received 646 responses.

The survey was supported by face-to-face conversations with people at the beach and an online community webinar during March 2024.



[Click here to watch the webinar recording on Westport's Youtube Channel](#)

This summary brings together the feedback received through the community survey, reflecting the views of the horse-riding community.

Community insights will be used to inform Westport's ongoing planning and future consultation opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.



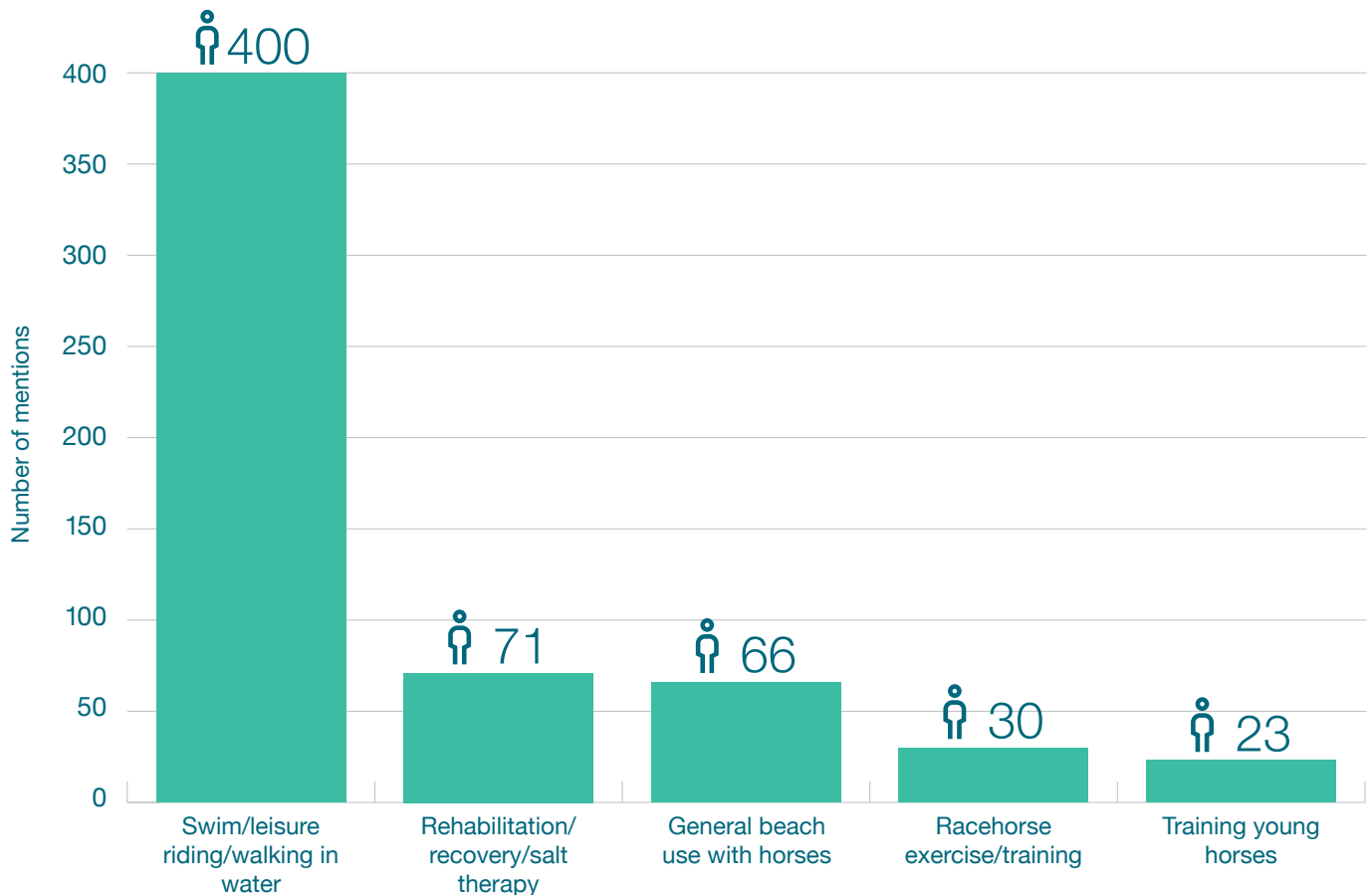
Results

Question 1: Please describe the activity that you use the Naval Base horse beach for.

86% of respondents identified horse riding as the main activity they use the Naval Base horse beach for. This includes recreational riding, rehabilitation and recovery, riding schools and training different types of horses.

Other activities were also noted such as diving and snorkelling, photography, and dog and other animal exercise.

Horse riding uses of Naval Base horse beach



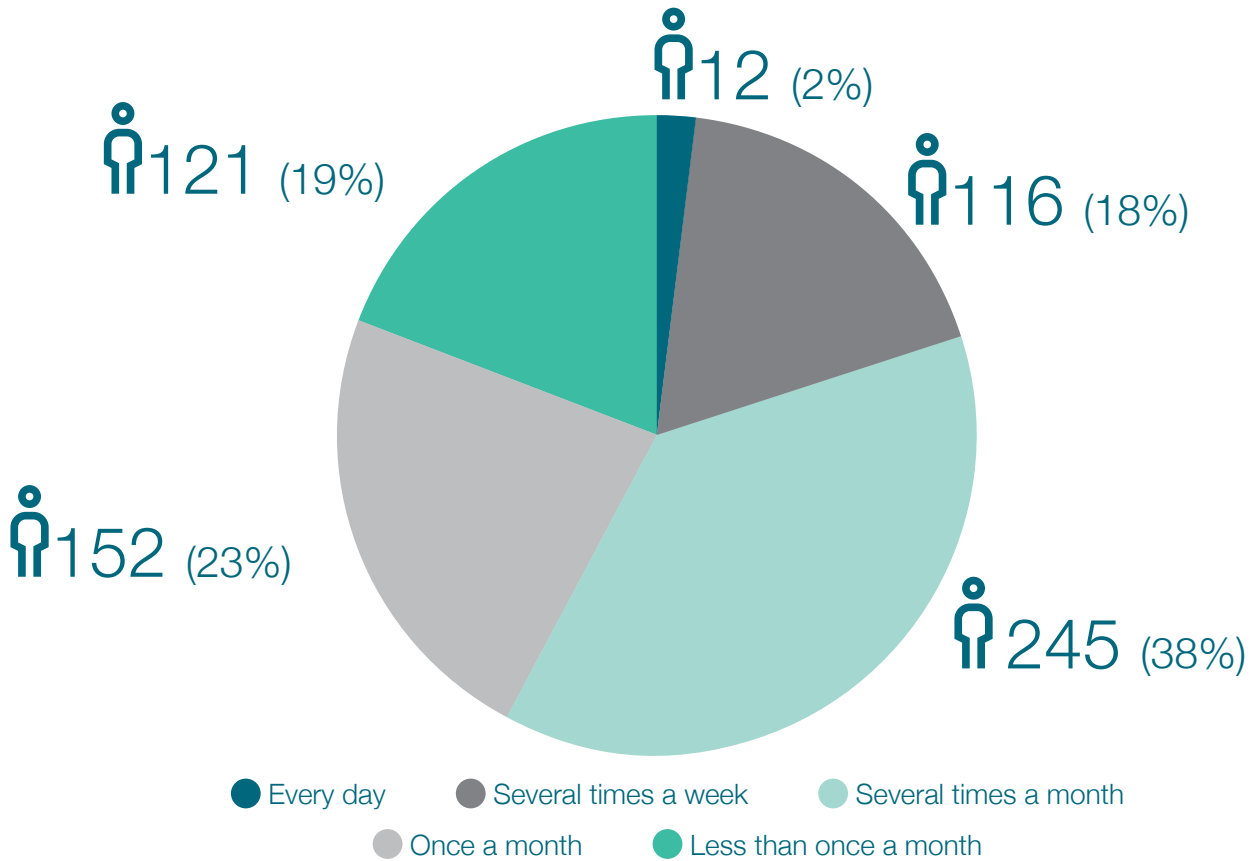
Note: respondents were asked to list all activities they use the Naval Base horse beach for, so there is more than one answer per respondent.

What you told us

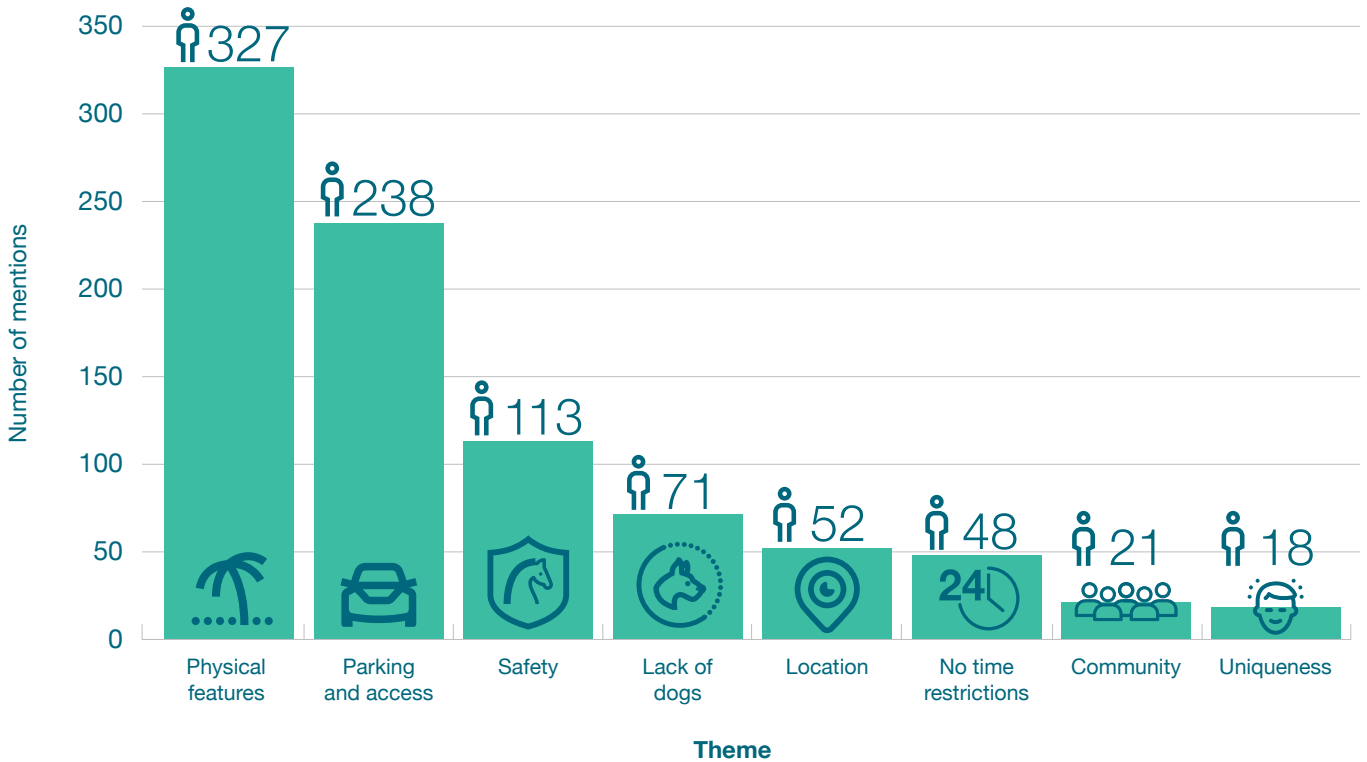
- “Desensitising horses to new environments including water. This is a fundamental part of building a horse’s confidence to make them a safe ride for anyone.”
- “Exercising our horses. Being in a wheelchair Naval beach is the only horse beach that I can watch my girls ride from the car park.”
- “Gallop and training racehorses along the beach.”
- “This beach is the best for keeping horses cool over hot summer days, not to mention that horses love to swim salt is very good for them.”
- “Recreational riding and legging up my horses in the water for strength training. Family picnics with the horses. Perfect beach for horse activities.”
- “Therapy for equine injuries, social outings for our equine groups, scenic photos of our horses on a beautiful beach setting, equine fitness training, horse socialisation.”
- “Rehabilitation for injuries. Galloping days for fitness. General wellness on hot days.”
- “Training and recovery for racehorses.”



Question 2: How often do you use the Naval Base horse beach?



Question 3: What features do you like about the Naval Base horse beach?

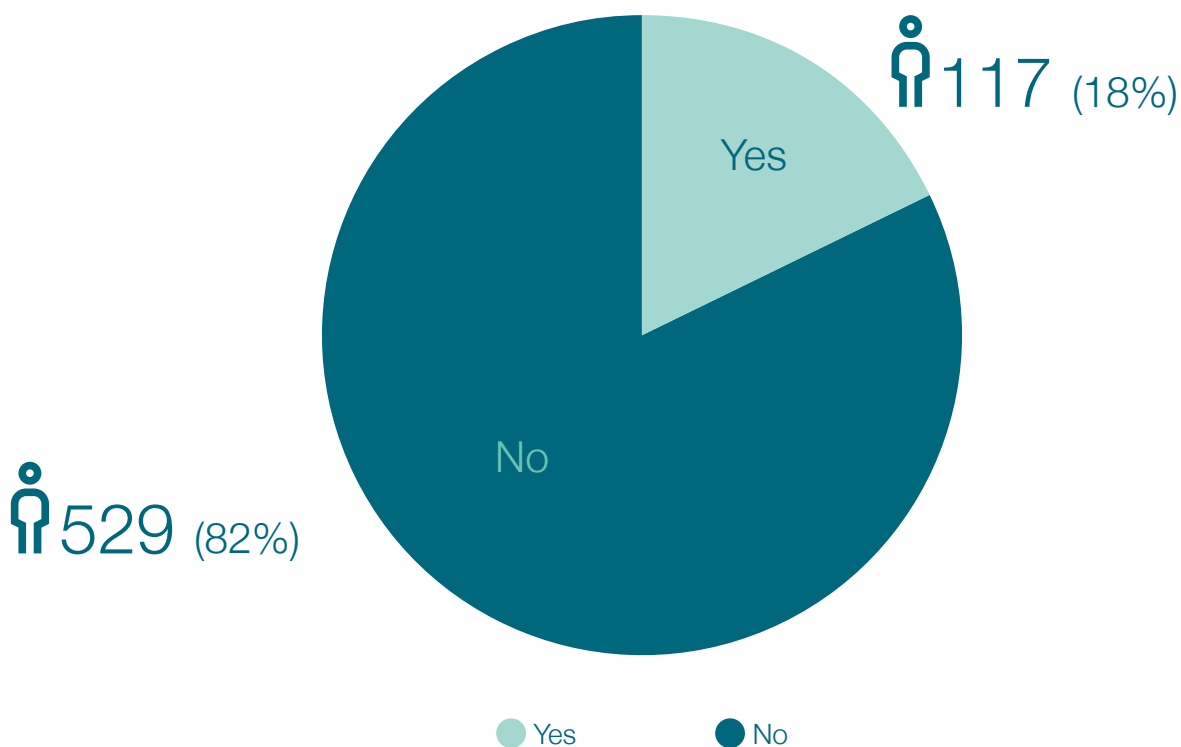


Note: Respondents were asked to list all the features they liked about the Naval Base horse beach, so there is more than one answer per respondent.

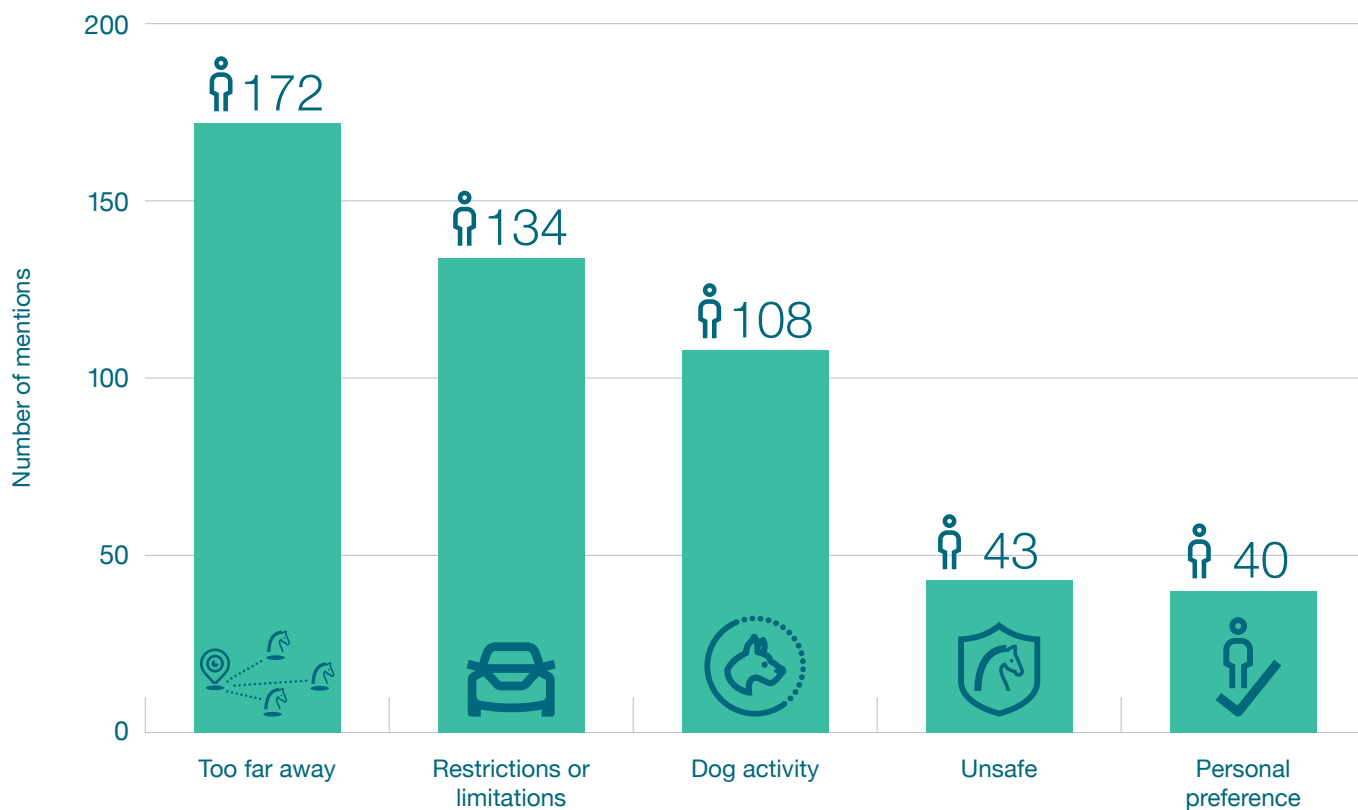
What you told us

Theme	What you said
Physical features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sheltered waters when easterly is blowing.” • “Good exercising for those of us with smaller properties.” • “The long stretch of sand and gentle sloping access to water makes it suitable for horses.” • “Room for a canter and gallop.”
Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Parking away from busy highways.” • “I travel 4 hours one way to use this beach and I appreciate that the roads are wide enough for trucks without lots of turns.” • “The parking is in close proximity to the beach itself which allows for safe passage of horses.”
Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No concern of rock or other hazardous footing in the water and sand that could injure horses.” • “This beach is well frequented by other members of the horse community, so it always feels safe for both horses and their handlers.” • “As horses can be unpredictable, having the ability to distance oneself is fantastic.”
Less dogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dog owners are generally horse owners, but the beach is big enough to cater for everyone” • “My niece can race her ponies up and down the beach with no bother from dogs or walkers.”
Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s located in a reasonable position from a lot of equine communities.” • “It’s one of already only a small few permitted locations to have horses at the extensive area of beach we have in WA.” • “It is somewhat secluded, so it is safer for the horses.”
No time restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s open all day long so you can take the animals at midday when it is quieter.” • “Naval base has no time restrictions.”
Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Likeminded people who know how horses behave.” • “Lovely horse community that goes there.” • “Beach rides have been an incredible way for my horses to socialise with other horses and riders, promoting positive interactions and building confidence.”
Uniqueness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Naval base is my favourite beach in Perth. I’ve been using it for over 30 years.” • “Invaluable place for horse trainers which is one of the state’s draw cards for the racing industry.” • “We travel over an hour (north of Perth) to bring our horse/ ponies.”

Question 4: Do you use other horse beaches in Perth?





Question 5a: If 'No' to question 4, why don't you use other horse beaches in Perth?



Note: Respondents were asked to list all the features they liked about the Naval Base horse beach, so there is more than one answer per respondent.

What you told us

Theme	What you said
<p>Too far away</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Distance from agistment centre. Cost of fuel.” • “Travelling with a horse in a float means we don’t want to travel further than necessary for both the horses comfort and for fuel use.” • “Too far, and with the cost of fuel and life in general it wouldn’t be feasible for me to use other beaches.”
<p>Restrictions</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not long enough stretch for riding. Time allocation availability limited.” • “Parking is very limited, time restrictions to be able to use, the beach space is a lot smaller.” • “The times are hard to accommodate.”
<p>Dog activity</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Too many dogs and not on lead/controlled causes higher incidence of horse attack.” • “I do not like the combination of horses and dogs that most animal beaches offer. Too many dogs have never been exposed to horses and can become aggressive and dangerous.” • “Vet expenses run into the thousands for some unfortunate owners after dog attacks.”
<p>Unsafe</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I find them dangerous to attend due to the steep shore, wave breaks and over run by uncontrolled dogs.” • “I find the Naval Base horse beach to be the safest option as it is located at a ‘no through road’ making it safer for horses and their handlers.”
<p>Personal preference</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We love Naval Base horse beach.” • “Naval base is by far the nicest.” • “No other beaches compare to Naval Base, it’s just the perfect place.”

Question 5b: If 'Yes' to question 4, which other horse beaches do you use in Perth?

Respondents who indicated that they use other horse beaches in Perth also noted issues or limitations of those beaches.

- East Rockingham Horse Beach is the most frequently mentioned alternative. Issues/limitations include time restrictions, crowded parking, and dog attacks.
- Hillarys Horse Beach was identified as another option, particularly for people who live nearby. Issues/limitations include time restrictions, the large number of dogs, and the lack of sand.
- Herron Point and Lancelin are less popular choices. Issues/limitations include dog safety, and Herron Point being an estuary not an ocean beach.

Note: While the question referred to horse beaches in Perth, a number of respondents mentioned horse beaches outside the Perth metropolitan area. These have been included to ensure all responses were reported.

1 Cervantes

1 Lancelin

18 Hillarys Horse Beach (Whitfords)

1 C.Y. O'Connor Beach

91 East Rockingham Horse Beach











5 Herron Point













1 Bunbury

Question 6: What facilities would be available at an ideal horse beach?

While the question asked about ‘facilities’, the broad range of responses are better classified as ‘characteristics’. The key characteristics identified below are ranked according to the number of times they were mentioned, from the highest to the lowest. The highest ranked facility was a large, enclosed parking area with enough room to turn around and safely unload horses, as well as a large carpark for busy days at the beach. Other highly-ranked characteristics included a dedicated horse beach away from dogs, and a long stretch of sand that is safe for horses.

What you told us





Characteristics (ranked in order of most to least mentions)	What you said	Are these characteristics available at Naval Base beach?
<p>1. Large parking area</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Parking facilities for car and float.” • “Drive in and out forward parking without needing to reverse.” • “Better car park – cul-de-sac type of road as we all have big floats and or big trucks and need access to get the horses on and off a float/truck.” 	
<p>2. No dogs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lots of [horse] signage on the beach for other beach users - such as dog owners.” • “Strictly no dogs allowed.” • “Long beach dedicated to horses only.” • “A space that is dog free. People and horses have been attacked at Naval Base beach. As a dog owner too, it’s not the fact that dogs are here, it’s the fact that there is so many places I can take the dogs, but this is the ONLY place I can take the horses.” <p>Note: A considerable number of respondents highlighted that dogs who are trained, are familiar with horses, or on a leash pose a much lower risk to horses.</p>	
<p>3. Long and wide stretch of sand that is safe for horses</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Enough room to work horses both in and out of the water.” • “A short walk to the water with no extreme dunes (bad for horses when using the ocean for rehabilitation).” • “Long open beach/sand to allow galloping and space for people to move around freely.” • “Length of beach enough to be able to exercise horses over a distance.” • “Sand gently slopes into the water.” 	
<p>4. No time limit for horse access</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No time frame restrictions so we can come when we need or want to.” 	
<p>5. Wash bays and fresh water</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hose down area.” • “A hose to wash horses off afterwards.” 	

Characteristics (ranked in order of most to least mentions)	What you said	Are these characteristics available at Naval Base beach?
6. Bins / manure disposal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Manure disposal area.” • “Manure bins and normal bins.” • “Emptied bins.” • “Clear instructions and signage on what to do with horse manure.” 	
7. Infrastructure (e.g. undercover areas, CCTV, public toilets etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “CCTV for secure parking and single women’s personal safety.” • “A clear, formalised path to the beach from the carpark to protect the dunes.” • “Wheelchair accessibility.” • “Security would be awesome too, possibly cameras.” • “Lighting in the carpark.” • “Sun shelters for observing is handy.” • “Lightning shelter.” • “Toilets for humans but not a priority.” • “Barbecues and picnic tables.” • “Live, on-site water quality information.” • “Flat car park without rocks that causes bruising under the horses’ feet.” • “Enclosed facilities to protect horse access over the area of the beach.” 	
8. No fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No fishermen as they leave bait, fishhooks, and rubbish at shoreline.” • “Ban fishing at the beach.” • “Absolutely no fishing, crabbing etc. Equine use only.” 	
9. Mounting blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A high bench that we could use as a mounting block!” • “A mounting block on the beach to assist equestrians.” • “A mounting block would be amazing.” 	
10. No facilities required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No facilities necessary if there is enough space for horses and parking.” • “As far as I am concerned it is perfect the way it is. Too many facilities will attract families.” • “Naval Base has everything you really need for a basic beach outing.” 	
11. Zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Official planning and zoning to ensure that the community will be able to continue to use the Naval Base horse beach as a recreational beach reserve for horses and dogs into the future.” 	

Question 7: Do you have any other feedback for Westport, or is there anything else we should consider as planning progresses?

The overwhelming response to this question was an appreciation for the beach as a safe, enjoyable and therapeutic place for both horses and people, without the challenges and pressures of other horse beaches such as overcrowding, lack of parking, fishing and off-leash dogs.

What you told us

Theme	What you said
<p>Used for more than recreation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The horse beaches of Perth are not only used for entertainment purposes. Many people rely on them for work, training and rehoming purposes. They hugely increase the welfare of racehorses, and therefore the sustainability of the racing industry.” • “The length of the beach is important to the racehorse community, who need adequate distance for galloping and swimming their horses.” • “Naval Base provides a training facility for the racing industry which is invaluable. Racing provides the state with many jobs and financial gain. Removing the horse beach would significantly impact many members of this industry. It would be a shame if it shut down as not many other places in Australia have a beach like this to work racehorses on.”
<p>A key part of people’s lifestyles</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This is such a well-loved place for people of all walks of life to enjoy the beach. It needs to remain a horse beach it is so therapeutic for the horse to be able to recover and relax.” • “People with horses come from very far away to be able to enjoy a magical western Australian horse beach. We travel over an hour one way and for us it is a once or twice a year special treat, both for the riders and the horses. The photos we have from days on the beach with our horses are the envy of the equine world.” • “Please don’t take our horse beach. We try so hard to get our kids in outdoor activities and teach the responsibility of horse ownership. It’s a wonderful sport and we are getting pushed aside.”
<p>There are limited other options</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are limited horse beaches in Perth and facilities for minority groups e.g. equestrians keep being removed or no funding to support.” • “I would like more horse beaches around Perth available, especially in the north. We would love to ride on the horse beach more often, but unfortunately traffic and distance makes it a bit difficult...” • “This is a unique area where horses can be exercised safely, and it would be a great pity if it is closed with no other alternatives available.”
<p>Considerations for Westport</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Thanks for advocating on behalf of horse owners and considering our plight to have a horse beach for all of the horse community.” • “Please incorporate a horse area into the plans. Horse beaches are disappearing. This beach is extremely popular and well used. Any planned horse beach area needs to be separated from general public and dogs.” • “Ensure that the alternative beach is in a similar vicinity. If it is too far north or south of Naval Base, it will significantly restrict access.”