
ADVISORY REPORT

Waterway Use and Safety Survey — Matilda Bay Ferry Terminal

Swan River, Perth, Western Australia

Prepared by
Riskfacilitator Pty Ltd

Context
METRONET on Swan Ferry Service Expansion —
Matilda Bay Terminal Proposal

Survey period
April 2026

Sites assessed
Matilda Bay (proposed)
JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty (alternative)

535

General public respondents

237

Club member respondents

772

Combined respondent base

84.1%

Prefer JoJo's site

riskfacilitator

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237 respondents — 10 clubs, experienced waterway users	
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This report presents the combined findings of two waterway safety surveys and a structured observational programme conducted in support of an independent risk assessment of the proposed Matilda Bay ferry terminal on the Swan River, Perth. All three components are read together as an integrated evidence base.

Swan River Ferry Terminal — Waterway Safety Survey

Matilda Bay and JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty — Comparative Site Assessment

Club Member Survey — 237 responses, 10 clubs | General Public Survey — 535 responses | Combined respondents — 772

84.1% General public survey — 533 responses Nominated JoJo's as the preferred location if a ferry terminal had to be introduced	92.4% General public survey — 528 responses Said a Matilda Bay ferry terminal would make the area much less safe or less safe	97% General public survey — current conditions Rate Matilda Bay as very safe or mostly safe under current conditions without a ferry	93.8% Club member survey — 225 responses Nominated Matilda Bay as the location presenting the higher level of interaction risk
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Matilda Bay — Survey Findings

User volume

10 clubs with over 4,000 members operating structured programs, near-continuous use from 05:15 to 20:00, and peak periods with 100–200 vessels simultaneously on the water.

Club member survey — open text responses, multiple respondents

Vulnerable user groups

Juniors, sailing for people with disability, novice rowers, and wading children concentrate in the bay. 31.6% of general public respondents are at Matilda Bay specifically to supervise children or others in the water.

Club member survey — open text responses, multiple respondents; general public survey — 533 responses

Ferry impact sentiment

403 of 528 general public respondents (76.3%) said a Matilda Bay ferry terminal would make the area much less safe. A further 85 (16.1%) said less safe. Combined: 92.4%.

General public survey — 528 responses

Existing conflict baseline

Power boat and ferry wake documented as a current hazard. Vessel collisions described by one respondent as "a seemingly regular occurrence." Safe speeds consistently described as unenforced.

Club member survey — open text responses, multiple respondents

JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty — Survey Findings

Use profile

71.2% of general public respondents use JoJo's for walking, running, or cycling. No on-water activity category exceeds 7.0%. The site functions primarily as a movement corridor, not a water recreation destination.

General public survey — 417 responses

Water conditions

56.1% of respondents describe JoJo's water as very quiet — few or no watercraft. A further 31.1% describe it as moderate. Only 3.7% describe it as busy.

General public survey — 428 responses

Child and vulnerable user exposure

9.4% of respondents supervise children or others at JoJo's, compared to 31.6% at Matilda Bay. No sheltered beach entry reduces concentration of wading children and informal swimmers.

General public survey — 417 responses; club member survey — open text responses, multiple respondents

Site preference

Where a ferry must be introduced, JoJo's is the clear stated preference. 84.1% of general public respondents nominated JoJo's in a direct forced-choice question. The convergence spans all activity groups, including respondents who do not support the ferry service at all.

General public survey — 533 responses; club member survey — 217 responses, multiple questions

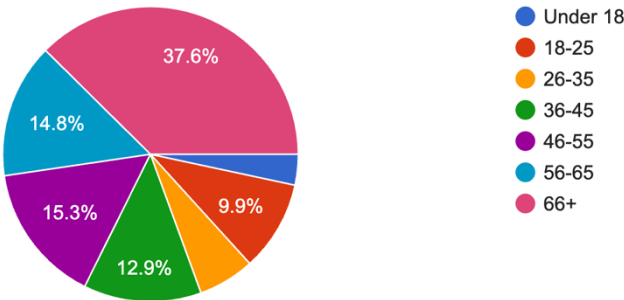
These surveys capture the direct experience of 772 waterway users — the population with the greatest familiarity with both sites under operational conditions. The findings are directionally consistent across both surveys, both populations, and all activity groups. The preference for JoJo's as the lower-impact site is not a marginal result: 84.1% of general public respondents and a clear majority of club members nominated JoJo's in direct site preference questions. 93.8% of club members identified Matilda Bay as the higher-risk location.

General Public Survey Results

All age groups were represented in the general public survey, with a broadly even spread across cohorts. Just over half of respondents resided in the western suburbs, with 44.3% living elsewhere across greater Perth and beyond. Just over half reported visiting Matilda Bay weekly or more often — daily (15.1%) and weekly (35.0%) combined at 50.1% — indicating a high level of direct familiarity with the area and its waterway conditions.

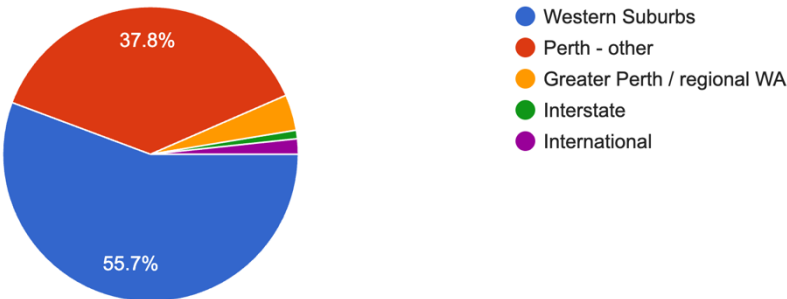
What is your age group?

535 responses



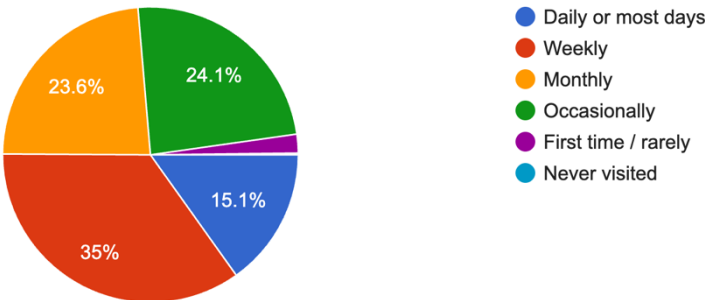
Where do you live?

535 responses



How often do you visit Matilda Bay?

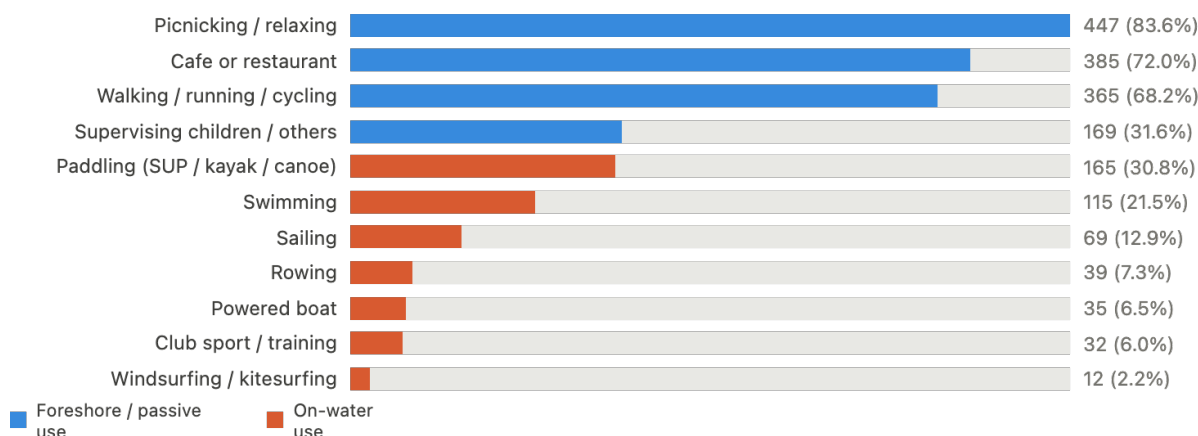
535 responses



How do you or your family use Matilda Bay? (select all that apply)

533 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Responses by use type



Other (1 response each): fishing/crabbing, dog walking, wildlife observation, family celebrations, baptism, photography, painting watercolours, lawn games, skippers ticket training, evening picnicking, outdoor work meetings, and several childhood/historical uses.

Analysis

Dominant use

Passive foreshore use defines how most people experience Matilda Bay. Picnicking and relaxing (83.6%), dining (72.0%), and active foreshore movement (68.2%) collectively represent a population using the bay as a public open space, not primarily as a transport corridor. The foreshore is the product, not the water.

Safety exposure

Nearly one third of respondents paddle on the water (30.8%) and more than one fifth swim (21.5%). These are the user groups with the highest exposure to ferry-generated wake and vessel conflict — unpowered, low-profile, and operating in the same spatial envelope as the proposed ferry route.

Supervision dynamic

31.6% of respondents are at Matilda Bay specifically to supervise children or others in the water. This signals that families routinely place children in the water at this location, consistent with documented evidence that mid-bay provides the safest and most accessible entry point for young and novice water users.

Layered conflict

On-water uses are not uniform. Sailing, rowing, powered boating, club training, and windsurfing each represent distinct vessel types with different right-of-way characteristics and spatial requirements. A fixed-schedule ferry must navigate a bay already occupied by a heterogeneous mix, not a single user category.

Direct contradiction

More general public respondents report windsurfing and kitesurfing at Matilda Bay (12 respondents, 2.2%) than at JoJo's (9 respondents, 1.7%). This directly contradicts the government's characterisation of JoJo's as the primary windsurfing location and Matilda Bay as unsuitable for wind sports. The data from users who frequent both sites does not support that framing.

Write-in signal

Write-in responses — baptisms, wildlife observation, elderly residents accessing river views from vehicles, family milestone celebrations — confirm that Matilda Bay carries community significance well beyond recreation. Disruption carries consequences across a broader social function than transport planning typically accounts for.

Observations

The foreshore is not incidental to the ferry proposition — it is what people come for.

The data shows that the overwhelming majority of public users experience Matilda Bay as a foreshore environment: for sitting, eating, walking, and watching. The proposed ferry terminal does not simply add a transport function to an empty stretch of water. It introduces a high-frequency scheduled vessel into the primary spatial zone of a heavily used, multi-purpose public amenity.

One in three respondents is already in the water, in a vessel type that cannot manoeuvre away from a ferry.

The combined paddle, swim, and sail population represents a substantial on-water presence. These users are operating in the proposed ferry corridor itself. Paddlers and swimmers have no meaningful capacity to respond to a scheduled vessel — they cannot match speed, cannot hold station, and have no right-of-way advantage. The safety burden falls entirely on them.

Children in the water is a system condition, not an edge case.

The supervision response rate (31.7%) makes visible what the project's risk assessment treated as incidental: families regularly put children in the water at Matilda Bay precisely because it is calm and protected. Introducing regular vessel passage into that zone removes the environmental condition on which the safety of those children depends.

The diversity of on-water use creates an unresolvable right-of-way problem.

When the on-water population includes rowers, sailors, paddlers, powered boats, windsurfers, and swimmers simultaneously, a fixed-schedule priority vessel does not simplify the waterway — it creates a standing conflict with every other user category. No signage, speed limit, or route marking resolves a right-of-way hierarchy that cannot be enforced on an informal public waterway.

Signal quotes

"We have been coming to Matilda Bay for family picnics and birthdays for over 20 years. The children always swim in the shallows. It is the only safe place we know of that is this accessible."

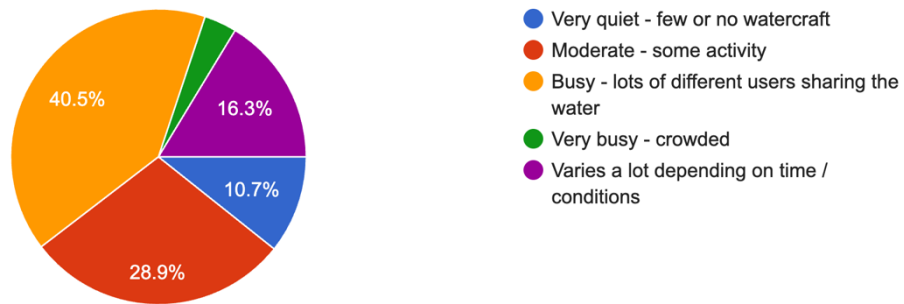
"I paddle board there several times a week, usually early morning. The bay is calm and there is an unspoken rhythm to how everyone shares the space. A scheduled ferry breaks that entirely."

"My elderly mother can no longer walk to the water but she loves to sit near the foreshore and watch the swans and the rowers. It is one of the few places in Perth she can still enjoy from the car."

"We had our children baptised there. It is a sacred place for our family and our community. A transport terminal is not compatible with what that bay represents to us."

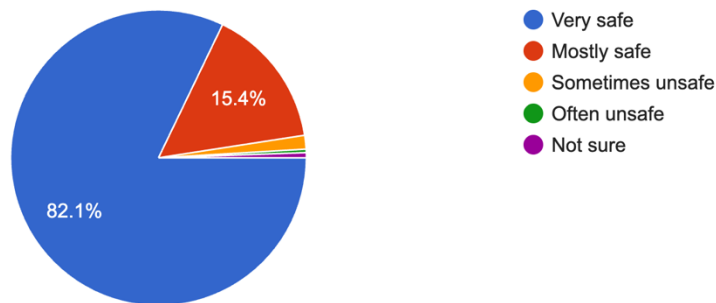
On a typical visit, how busy is the water at Matilda Bay?

533 responses



How safe does Matilda Bay currently feel to you as a place to use the water or foreshore?

532 responses

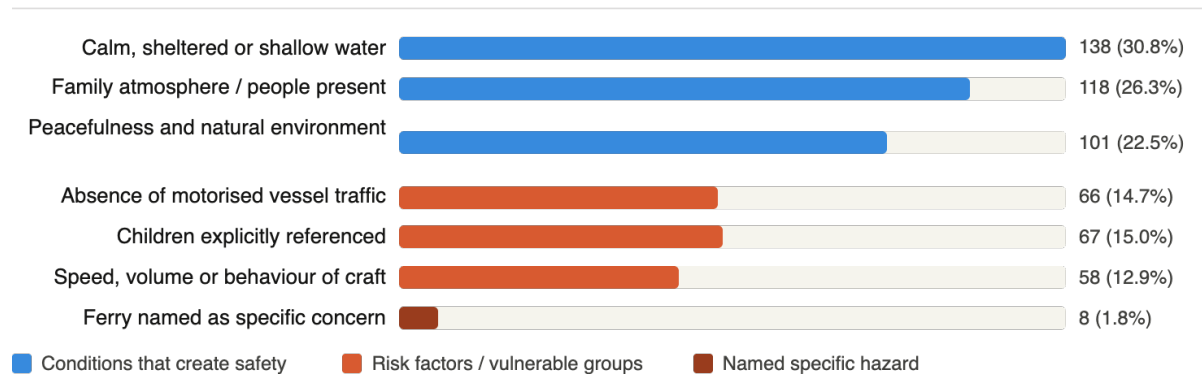


44% of respondents describe the water as busy or very busy, while 97% rate it as very safe or mostly safe. This combination — high concurrent use perceived as safe — reflects a waterway that currently works because its user mix is compatible. It is not evidence that the bay can safely absorb an additional high-frequency powered vessel; it is evidence that the current conditions without one are working well.

What most influences how safe or unsafe it feels?

448 open-text responses — public survey. Responses coded thematically; a single response may contain more than one theme. Percentages calculated against 448 respondents.

Themes by frequency



43.8% of all responses (196 of 448) referenced vessel or watercraft activity as a safety factor — whether framing the absence of boats as a protective condition or the presence of powered craft as a risk. This is the single largest cross-cutting signal in the dataset.

Analysis

System conditions	The top three themes — calm water (30.8%), family atmosphere (26.3%), and peacefulness (22.5%) — are not independent safety features. They describe an integrated system condition: a sheltered, informal, self-regulating waterway where the absence of hazard and the presence of community collectively produce safety. Respondents are not describing compliance with rules; they are describing a working environment.
Vessel as hazard	The vessel-related themes (14.7% absence of motorised craft, 12.9% speed/volume/behaviour) capture the negative framing of the same system: when boats are present and moving quickly, the conditions that make Matilda Bay safe are degraded. Respondents are not citing abstract risk — they are describing observable disruption to calm water, children's safety, and paddling space.
Children: key group	15.0% of responses explicitly referenced children (67 of 448) — naming them in the context of shallow water access, parent supervision, protected swimming, and freedom from wash. Children are not a peripheral subset of users at Matilda Bay; they are the population whose safety most directly governs whether adults judge the space to be safe at all.
Latent ferry concern	Only 1.8% of responses named the ferry explicitly. This reflects the framing of the question, which asked about current conditions rather than the proposal. The vessel-related themes capture the same underlying concern in structural terms: anything that increases motorised traffic, speed, or wake degrades the conditions respondents cite as the basis for safety. The 8 who named the ferry unprompted did so despite not being asked.
Informal order	Multiple respondents noted that safety is produced by mutual awareness and considerate behaviour between users, not by enforcement. This informal negotiated order functions because the existing user mix is compatible: similar speeds, similar purposes, similar situational awareness. A fixed-schedule, priority vessel cannot participate in negotiated accommodation — it will always be the vessel that others must avoid.

Observations

Safety at Matilda Bay is an emergent property of current conditions, not an engineered outcome.

Respondents do not describe safety as the result of rules, signage, or enforcement. They describe it as the product of specific environmental and social conditions: calm protected water, shallow accessible beach, an absence of powered vessels, and a community of users who share space considerably. Any intervention that degrades one or more of these conditions disrupts the entire system, not just the affected element.

The conditions respondents cite as protective are precisely those a ferry terminal would alter.

Calm water is compromised by ferry wake. The absence of large powered vessels is ended by scheduled ferry operations. The informal self-regulating character of the waterway is disrupted by a fixed-route, fixed-schedule priority vessel. The peacefulness and natural amenity are degraded by commercial operations infrastructure. Respondents are describing, without knowing it, the conditions that the proposed terminal would remove.

The low explicit ferry mention rate should not be read as low concern.

The question asked what currently influences safety — it did not ask about the ferry proposal. The structural safety conditions respondents cite are the same conditions the ferry disrupts. The absence of named ferry concern in most responses reflects the framing of the question, not an absence of risk. The 8 responses that named the ferry unprompted are notable precisely because the question did not invite it.

The waterway self-regulates through shared norms that a scheduled commercial vessel cannot honour.

Respondents describe a system in which users actively accommodate each other: rowers give way, paddlers hold back, boats stay offshore. This is an informal negotiated order, not a rules-based hierarchy. A ferry operating to a fixed schedule with commercial priority cannot participate in this system — it will always be the vessel that others must avoid. The burden of adaptation falls entirely on existing users, including children in the water.

Signal quotes

"The water is very calm and very well utilised by families with children. We are concerned about the disturbance the ferry will have to calm waters, the swans who live here, and the dolphins that visit."

"Shallow flat water with very few — often no — fast and/or powered boats. That is why it is safe."

"The calm waters being enjoyed by many. Shallow waters being used by swans and other birds. No boats close to shore means children are safe."

"Absence of regular commercial craft or services. No fixed-schedule large vessel is the condition on which everything else depends."

"If I was into small children minding etc I would find it very safe. Won't be if they put a ferry there."

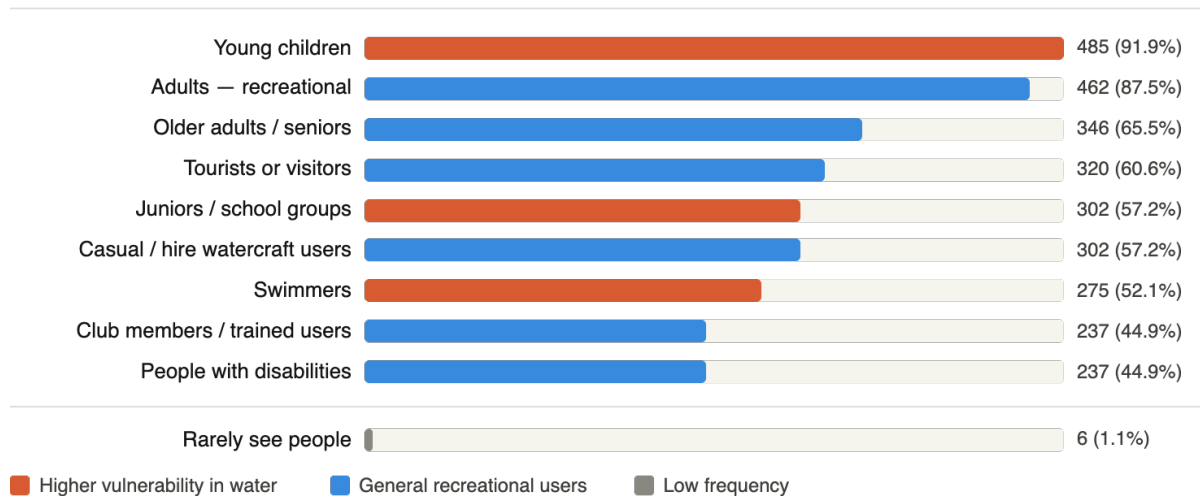
"Our children and grandchildren sail in Matilda Bay and at present, without ferry boats, it is a safe environment for them to sail."

"Calm water, no high speed boats, parents able to enjoy and supervise their children in a safe environment."

Who do you regularly see using the water at Matilda Bay? (select all that apply)

528 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Observed water users



The three user groups with the highest observed presence — young children (91.9%), recreational adults (87.5%), and older adults/seniors (65.5%) — are also the groups with the least capacity to respond to unexpected vessel movements. The waterway is not used primarily by experienced, manoeuvrable water users. It is used primarily by people who cannot get out of the way.

Analysis

Vulnerable majority

Young children top the observed user list at 91.9% — higher than any other category including recreational adults. Juniors and school groups follow at 57.2%, and swimmers at 52.1%. These are users who are in the water, low-profile, and with limited ability to detect or respond to approaching vessels. The waterway's most visible population is also its most exposed.

Disability users

44.9% of respondents regularly observe people with disabilities using the water — a figure that would surprise most transport planners. This aligns with the documented presence of Sailability WA and Fishability WA, but the scale of observation suggests broader informal disability use beyond those programs. These users have the least capacity to respond to wake, wash, or unexpected vessel approach.

Heterogeneous mix

All nine user categories were observed by more than 44% of respondents. This is not a waterway with one or two user types that can be managed through zone separation. It is a heavily used, highly diverse shared space where trained club members operate alongside young children, casual hire users, and swimmers simultaneously. A fixed-schedule vessel does not add one more user type — it introduces a priority vessel that all others must yield to.

School groups

57.2% of respondents regularly see juniors and school groups in the water. Supervision on shore does not confer manoeuvrability in the water. A school group in dinghies or kayaks cannot clear a ferry approach path on demand. The presence of organised junior programs adds institutional exposure: a collision involving a school group carries consequences well beyond the immediate safety event.

Collective picture

This question asked what respondents see, not what they do themselves. The figures represent the waterway as perceived by 528 regular users — a more complete picture than any single user group's self-reported activity. The near-universal observation of young children (91.9%) is particularly strong: this is not an occasional presence but a defining characteristic of the waterway as experienced by those who use it regularly.

Observations

The dominant observed user group is also the most vulnerable.

Young children are the most commonly observed water user at Matilda Bay, seen by 91.9% of respondents. They are in the water, not on it — they swim, wade, and play at the waterline. They cannot detect vessel approach, cannot manoeuvre, and cannot self-rescue. No risk control short of physical exclusion from the water manages the exposure of a child in the path of ferry wake. The question is not whether children will be present — 91.9% of respondents confirm they always are — but what happens to them when the water is no longer calm.

The disability use figure carries significant governance implications.

44.9% of respondents observe people with disabilities using the water. This almost certainly includes informal use well beyond formally documented programs. Under Australian work health and safety law, the duty to identify and protect vulnerable persons is not limited to registered program participants. A risk assessment that does not account for the observable disability use of this waterway is materially incomplete.

No time window clears the waterway of vulnerable users.

The user mix observed — young children, seniors, disability users, school groups, swimmers, and casual hire craft — is distributed across the full operating day. There is no scheduling window in which the waterway is occupied only by experienced, manoeuvrable users who can be expected to yield to a ferry. Any operational time slot the ferry uses will overlap with at least some of the vulnerable population confirmed by this data.

A right-of-way hierarchy cannot be safely applied to this user mix.

Collision regulations and waterway right-of-way rules assume a level of situational awareness, vessel control, and response capability that young children, people with disabilities, older adults, and casual hire users do not have. Placing a priority scheduled vessel into a waterway where 91.9% of observers see young children in the water does not create a managed hierarchy — it creates an enforcement problem that cannot be resolved through signage, speed limits, or route marking.

Signal quotes

"Families with young children are always there. It is one of the very few places in Perth where you can let kids near the water without constant fear."

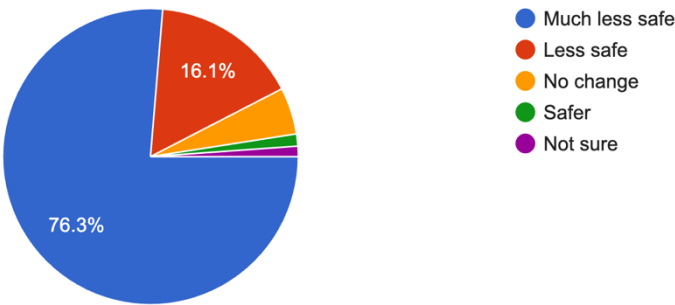
"I regularly see the Sailability boats out with their participants. Those sailors have no ability to quickly change course or get out of the way of anything larger."

"School groups come out regularly in small dinghies. They are learning. A ferry on a schedule cannot wait for a child to figure out a tack."

"Seniors, families, tourists — everyone uses this bay. It is not a sporting venue for capable people. It is a public space for everyone, including those who need it most."

If this ferry terminal were introduced at Matilda Bay, how do you think it would affect safety of people in the water at Matilda Bay?

528 responses

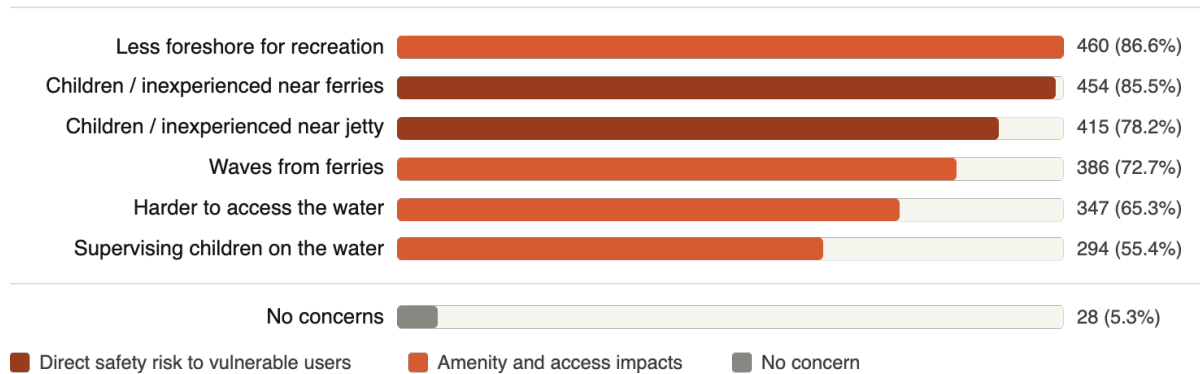


76.3% of general public respondents said a Matilda Bay ferry terminal would make the area much less safe for people in the water. A further 16.1% said less safe. Combined, 92.4% of 528 respondents believed the terminal would reduce safety. Only 5.1% indicated no change, and 1.3% said it would be safer.

If this ferry terminal were introduced at Matilda Bay, what concerns, if any, would you have? (select all that apply)

531 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Concerns by frequency



Write-in responses identified additional concerns not captured by the structured options: parking loss (17 mentions), environmental damage (12 mentions), disability sailing disruption (4 mentions), noise and visual pollution, tree removal, water quality, and sailing race conflicts with ferry schedules.

Analysis

Child safety: dual risk

Children near ferries (85.5%) and children near the jetty (78.2%) are the two highest-rated safety concerns — and they are distinct hazard pathways. The ferry in motion creates wake, approach hazard, and vessel conflict. The jetty creates a fixed infrastructure hazard: an edge, a drop, restricted sightlines, and a structure that attracts children. Both were selected by more than three in four respondents, confirming the child safety concern is not limited to one operational scenario.

Wake as hazard

72.7% specifically identified waves from ferries as a concern. This is a concrete physical hazard named by nearly three quarters of respondents. Wake affects swimmers, paddlers, disability sailors, and children at the waterline simultaneously. It cannot be managed by scheduling alone — it is a function of vessel size, speed, and hull design operating in a confined bay with reflective shorelines.

Foreshore loss

The highest-ranking concern overall (86.6%) is loss of foreshore for recreation. This is consistent with the earlier finding that picnicking, relaxing, and foreshore use are the dominant activities at Matilda Bay. The terminal does not simply affect the water — it removes foreshore space that defines the bay's function as a community amenity.

Supervision breakdown

55.4% are concerned about difficulty supervising children on the water. The current supervision model relies on clear foreshore sightlines, calm water, and a stable hazard environment. A ferry terminal disrupts all three simultaneously: foreshore space is reduced, ferry movements create dynamic hazards, and infrastructure interrupts sightlines. When the supervision system degrades, children in the water are exposed.

Minority view

5.3% expressed no concern. At 28 of 531 respondents this does not constitute a meaningful safety endorsement. It represents the proportion of users who either do not use the water themselves, accept the trade-off, or hold insufficient detail to form a specific concern.

Observations

The two child safety concerns confirm a layered hazard profile, not a single risk event.

The separation between ferry proximity (85.5%) and jetty proximity (78.2%) matters analytically. Together they describe a terminal that creates new hazard conditions that persist whether or not a ferry is actively operating. The jetty alone — its structure, its attraction to children, its proximity to open water — is a new safety element that does not currently exist at Matilda Bay. Both hazards were identified independently by respondents without prompting from each other.

Wake is a physical hazard that cannot be designed away at this site.

The physical characteristics of Matilda Bay — a contained, reflective bay with a shallow shoreline used by children and disability sailors — make wake management structurally difficult. Reflected wake from the northern shore returns across the swimming and paddling zone. Speed restrictions reduce but do not eliminate wake. The bay's geometry works against the safety case for this location, and 72.7% of respondents who use the bay regularly understand this from direct experience.

The write-in responses are qualitatively consistent with the structured concerns.

Write-ins added specificity rather than contradiction: ferry frequency every 12 minutes named explicitly, the bay being split in two, conflict with sailing races, Sailability program disruption, seagrass and water quality damage, tree removal, and parking loss. No write-in response expressed support for the proposal or minimised its impacts. The structured and unstructured responses point in the same direction.

Foreshore loss is not a secondary concern — it is the highest-rated concern in the dataset.

86.6% of respondents are concerned about reduced foreshore for recreation. This ranks above both child safety concerns in raw frequency. It reflects that the terminal's impact is not confined to the water — it removes the land-side conditions that define how the bay is used. Families who cannot comfortably access and occupy the foreshore do not supervise children in the water. The foreshore and the water function as a single integrated safety and amenity system.

Signal quotes

"A ferry every 12 minutes would make it much harder to conduct training and assessing in a safe manner."

"It splits the bay in half — which would be a disaster for unimpeded usage of the bay for everyone."

"The Sailability program would not be able to operate for the disabled. Very dangerous for children and swan cygnets can get waterlogged from ferry wash."

"Local sailing clubs run junior sail training in the bay every weekend. Sailing skiffs, dinghies and yachts will regularly cross the ferry routes."

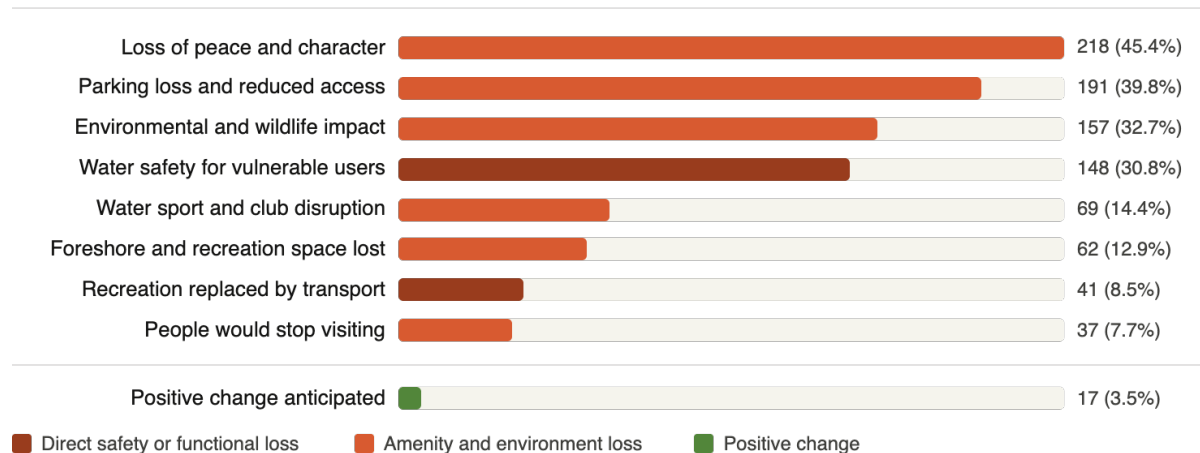
"Creates a constant hazard with large industrial craft constantly cutting through the middle of the bay. Risk of collision and requirement for raised awareness."

"Impeded visibility of the water from the shoreline because of the ferries and the landside infrastructure. Very concerned about the viability of the sporting clubs."

What do you think would change at Matilda Bay if ferries operated there?

480 open-text responses — public survey. Responses coded thematically; a single response may contain more than one theme. Percentages calculated against 480 respondents.

Themes by frequency



Only 17 of 480 respondents (3.5%) anticipated any positive change from a ferry terminal at Matilda Bay. The remaining 96.5% described negative consequences across safety, amenity, access, environment, and community use. No single theme dominated — respondents described a cascade of interconnected losses, not a single point of concern.

Analysis

Character and place

The highest-frequency theme (45.4%) is the loss of peace, atmosphere, and character. This is not a safety claim — it is a community identity claim. Respondents are describing what Matilda Bay is for them: a place of serenity, natural beauty, intergenerational use, and calm. The language used — "sanctuary", "jewel", "like Kings Park on the river", "irreplaceable" — signals that the community places cultural and social value on the bay that goes beyond any single recreational activity. A ferry terminal does not merely change a use; it changes what the place is.

Access equity

39.8% of responses cited parking loss — the second highest theme. This is consistently framed not as inconvenience but as an equity issue: elderly visitors with mobility aids, families unloading kayaks and picnic equipment, parents with prams, and people with disabilities who cannot use public transport with all their gear. The 99 parking bays identified for removal are not abstract capacity — they are the mechanism by which a substantial portion of the most vulnerable visitors access the site at all. Loss of parking is loss of access for those who need it most.

Wildlife as indicator

32.7% referenced environmental and wildlife impact. Black swans, dolphins, black cockatoos, ducks, pelicans, and seagrass appeared repeatedly. Respondents are not simply expressing affection for wildlife — they are describing ecological indicators of the bay's condition. The presence of dolphins in the shallows, nesting swans, and intact seagrass beds signal a waterway in good health. Ferry operations are understood, correctly, to threaten all of these through wake, noise, and propeller disturbance.

Safety unprompted

30.8% cited water safety for vulnerable users in a question that did not ask about safety — it asked what would change. The unprompted frequency of safety concerns in an open-text format carries greater analytical weight than a structured safety question where respondents are primed by the question itself. These are people who considered a general change question and independently identified safety as a primary consequence. That is a more powerful signal than a prompted safety response.

Bay split: spatial

Eleven respondents independently used the phrase "splits the bay in half" or "divides the bay" without being prompted by any option. This spatial understanding is technically accurate: a 140-metre jetty extending into the bay creates a fixed division of the navigable space, restricting continuous foreshore movement, fragmenting the recreational water area, and creating a physical barrier between user groups. The spontaneous convergence on this description across independent respondents is analytically significant.

Frequency named

16 respondents specifically referenced ferry frequency — "every 12 minutes" named explicitly across multiple responses. These respondents had sought out the operational detail independently. They are not reacting to a vague proposal; they understand the schedule and are describing what a vessel arriving and departing every 12 minutes means for a bay that currently operates in informal, self-regulated quiet. At that frequency, the ferry is not an occasional event — it is a continuous presence.

Observations

The community is not describing a trade-off — it is describing a transformation.

Across 480 responses the language is not of inconvenience or adjustment. It is of irreversible change, loss, and destruction. Phrases like "ruined forever", "never recover", "destroyed for generations", and "akin to putting a highway through Kings Park" recur across very different respondents. This is not the language of people who weigh costs and benefits and find the costs high — it is the language of people who believe the thing they value will cease to exist.

The cascade of losses is the point — each impact compounds the others.

A typical response in this dataset describes not one change but five or six: lost parking reduces access for elderly visitors; reduced foreshore space concentrates remaining users; ferry wake makes the water unsafe for children; safety concerns cause families to stop coming; the bay transitions from a community gathering place to a transport hub. These are not independent impacts that can be managed separately — they are a system of interacting consequences. Addressing one does not resolve the others.

Water safety appeared unprompted in nearly one third of responses.

An open-text question about what would change is not a safety question. Yet 30.8% of respondents identified water safety for vulnerable users as a primary anticipated consequence. Unprompted responses carry greater analytical weight than prompted ones — these respondents did not need to be asked about safety to think about it. They identified it independently as the most significant consequence of ferry operations at this location.

Only 3.5% of respondents anticipated any positive change.

Seventeen responses contained a positive signal. Most were qualified — "good idea, wrong location" — rather than unconditional support. The ratio of negative to positive anticipated change is not a close call. It reflects the assessment of a population with direct, regular experience of the site, not resistance to ferries as a concept but a clear-eyed judgement about the consequences of this specific location.

Signal quotes

"A calm area for recreation enjoyed by all would become a busy, noisy transport hub — like putting a highway through Kings Park."

"The ferry would effectively cut the bay into two halves, reducing options to recreate. It splits a beautiful uninterrupted bay from a landscape and user perspective."

"The family friendly tranquil nature-based experience would be completely destroyed with frequent large ferries entering

"Loss of parking would mean I couldn't go to Matilda Bay as my husband is on a walker and is a falls risk. I would be concerned for my grandchildren swimming and playing in the water."

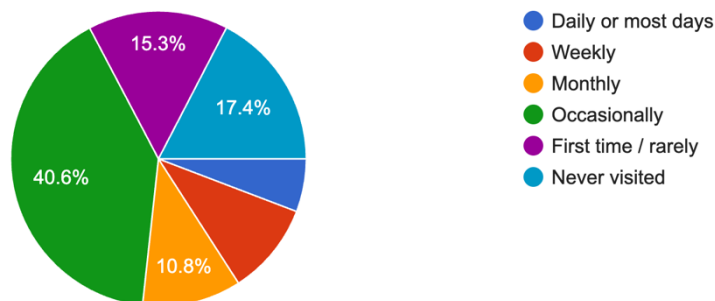
"Being electric so quiet assures an accident will happen and someone will get hurt."

"Our young sailors will lose the opportunity to learn to sail and race. World class winning sailors representing WA learn, train and race on that water. With a ferry those plans won't happen."

"A valuable recreational space used by generations of people would be lost forever."

How often do you visit JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty?

535 responses

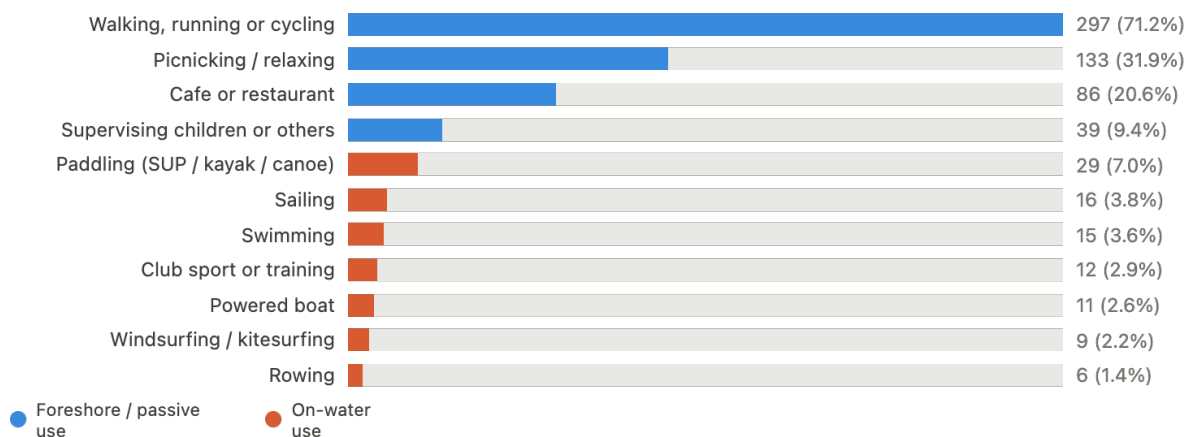


Visit frequency at JoJo's is notably lower than at Matilda Bay. Only 15.9% visit daily or weekly, compared to 50.1% at Matilda Bay. The largest single group — 40.6% — visits only occasionally, and 17.4% have never visited. This is consistent with the site's character as a movement corridor rather than a destination: people pass through it, but fewer have the deep familiarity with its waterway conditions that Matilda Bay users demonstrate.

How do you or your family use JoJo's (Nedlands Jetty)? (select all that apply)

417 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Responses by use type



Write-ins: birdwatching, dog walking, photography, fishing from the jetty, dining at nearby restaurants (noting the JoJo's restaurant is no longer operating), parking to access nearby businesses. Several respondents noted they rarely or never visit, or that the seawall limits water access.

The use profile at JoJo's (Nedlands Jetty) is fundamentally different from Matilda Bay. Walking, running, and cycling dominates at 71.2% — more than double the next highest response. On-water use is comparatively low across all categories, with no single water activity exceeding 7.0%. The site functions primarily as a transit and movement corridor, not an immersive water recreation space.

Analysis

Movement corridor

71.2% of respondents use JoJo's for walking, running, or cycling — the foreshore path is the primary attraction, not the water itself. This reflects the site's character as part of the continuous Swan River foreshore trail rather than a destination bay. The use pattern is transient and linear, not stationary and immersive. This is structurally compatible with a ferry terminal in a way that Matilda Bay's use pattern is not.

Low on-water use

No on-water activity at JoJo's exceeds 7.0%. Compared to Matilda Bay — where paddling reached 30.8%, swimming 21.5%, and sailing 12.9% — the on-water user population at JoJo's is a fraction of the size. The structural safety concern at Matilda Bay centres on the density and vulnerability of existing water users in the proposed ferry path. That concern is substantially reduced at JoJo's by the site's existing use pattern.

Lower child exposure

Supervising children or others was selected by only 9.4% of respondents at JoJo's, compared to 31.6% at Matilda Bay. This is not simply a lower number — it reflects a fundamentally different hazard profile. The volume of children being supervised in the water at JoJo's is a fraction of what is observed at Matilda Bay. The child safety concern that dominates the Matilda Bay analysis is substantially reduced at this site.

Restaurant context

20.6% cited cafe or restaurant use, though write-in responses clarify that the JoJo's restaurant is no longer operating. Some respondents noted they use nearby venues — Steve's Bar and other Nedlands restaurants — and park at the jetty precinct. The precinct has established hospitality infrastructure in the immediate vicinity, which would support ferry passenger amenity without the need for major new facilities.

Site compatibility

The JoJo's use profile — dominated by through-movement rather than stationary water recreation — describes a site that can absorb a ferry terminal without displacing the dominant use. Walkers and cyclists on the foreshore path are not in the water. They are not being supervised. They are not in the ferry approach path. The compatibility between the existing use pattern and the proposed ferry function is substantially higher at JoJo's than at Matilda Bay.

Observations

JoJo's and Matilda Bay serve fundamentally different functions

The contrast between the two use profiles is not a matter of degree — it is a difference in kind. Matilda Bay is an immersive recreation destination: people arrive, settle, enter the water, and stay. JoJo's is a transit and movement corridor: people pass through, walk the path, and move on. A ferry terminal is compatible with a transit corridor. It is not compatible with an immersive family recreation bay used by young children, sailing for people with disability, and swimmers.

The on-water conflict that defines the Matilda Bay risk does not exist at JoJo's at comparable scale

The core safety argument against Matilda Bay is the density and vulnerability of on-water users — paddlers, swimmers, children, sailing for people with disability — in the proposed ferry path. At JoJo's, no on-water activity category exceeds 7.0%. The structural incompatibility between a scheduled ferry and a heavily used informal waterway is a Matilda Bay-specific problem, not a universal objection to a Swan River ferry service.

The seawall noted in write-ins is a significant site characteristic

Several respondents noted that the seawall at JoJo's limits water access and that there is no beach. This is relevant to the safety comparison: the absence of a sheltered sandy beach entry means the site does not attract the wading children and informal swimmers who define the vulnerable user population at Matilda Bay. The seawall is not an amenity limitation for a ferry terminal — it is a safety-relevant site characteristic that reduces the resident vulnerable population in the water.

Signal quotes

"We don't because there is nothing there except a jetty that could be used for a ferry terminal."

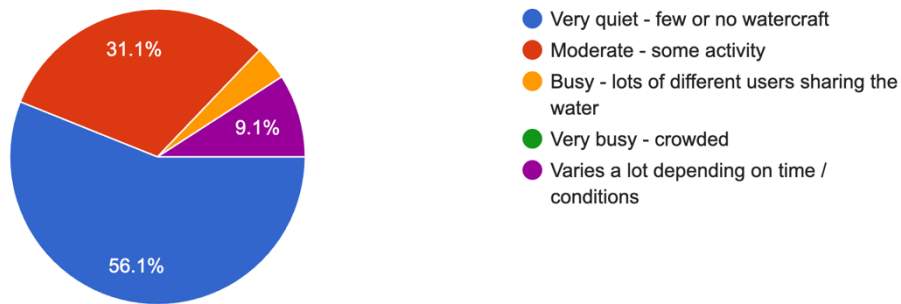
"Walk past on cycle track — it's a corridor, not a destination."

"The presence of the seawall prevents water access and there is no beach. Very different from Matilda Bay."

"I have fished from the jetty and had dates there — it is a pleasant spot but not the same kind of use as Matilda Bay."

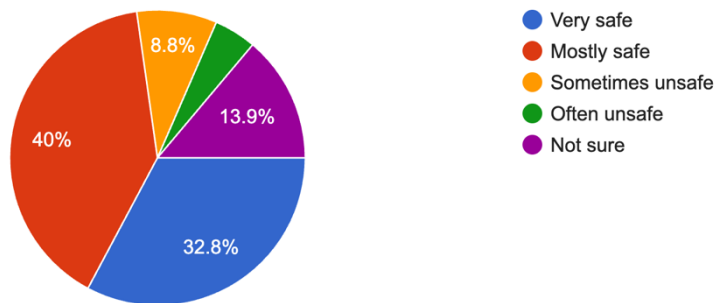
On a typical visit, how busy is the water at JoJo's?

428 responses



How safe does JoJo's currently feel to you as a place to use the water or foreshore?

433 responses

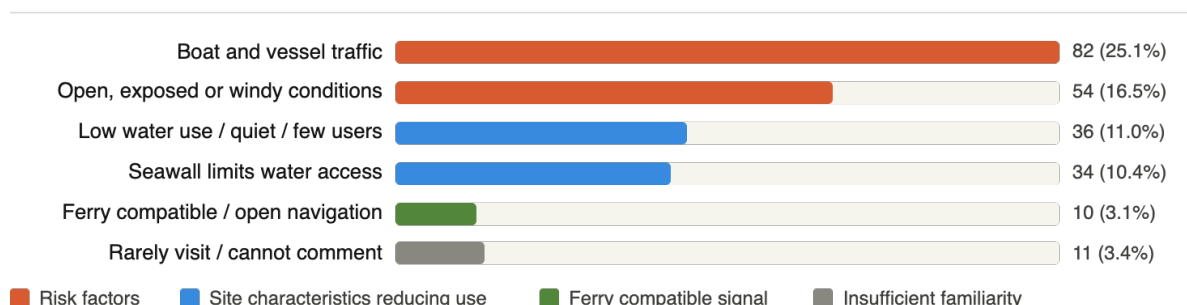


56.1% of respondents describe JoJo's water as very quiet, with a further 31.1% describing it as moderate. Only 3.7% describe it as busy. This contrasts sharply with Matilda Bay, where 44.1% describe the water as busy or very busy. The safety picture is more mixed than at Matilda Bay — 72.8% rate JoJo's as very safe or mostly safe, compared to 97% at Matilda Bay. The lower safety rating reflects the site's open-water exposure and wind conditions rather than vessel conflict, and is consistent with the lower proportion of vulnerable user groups who use the water there. A ferry terminal at JoJo's would introduce vessel traffic into a quiet waterway — but one used by far fewer vulnerable or inexperienced water users than Matilda Bay.

What most influences how safe or unsafe it feels? (JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty)

327 open-text responses — public survey. Responses coded thematically; a single response may contain more than one theme. Percentages calculated against 327 respondents.

Themes by frequency



The safety profile at JoJo's is shaped by site characteristics that are structurally different from Matilda Bay. The seawall, wind exposure, and open water conditions mean fewer people — particularly children — enter the water here. The primary safety signals describe a site that is already functionally unsuitable for the vulnerable user groups that define the Matilda Bay risk.

Analysis

Vessel traffic	25.1% of responses referenced boat and vessel traffic as the primary safety influence at JoJo's. Critically, the dominant sub-theme is low or absent vessel traffic as a safety positive — respondents describe the site as safer precisely because it is quieter and less used by watercraft. This is the mirror image of the Matilda Bay finding: where Matilda Bay respondents cited absence of motorised craft as protective, JoJo's respondents confirm that low vessel activity is what makes the foreshore manageable.
Exposed conditions	16.5% cited wind exposure, open water, and choppy conditions as the dominant safety influence. JoJo's faces prevailing south-westerly and easterly winds across a long fetch of open water, making conditions unsuitable for swimming, paddling, and water activities involving children. Respondents consistently describe this as a reason the site is not used for recreation — and, implicitly, why a ferry operating in open water here faces a different risk profile from one entering the sheltered bay at Matilda Bay.
Low on-water use	11.0% described the site's low water use as a safety-influencing characteristic. The absence of swimmers, children at the waterline, and informal recreational users removes the primary conflict pathway that makes Matilda Bay structurally incompatible with a ferry. At JoJo's, the safety question is not how to protect a dense informal user population — it is how to manage vessel movements in open water where recreational use is already sparse.
Seawall as barrier	10.4% specifically cited the seawall as a key site characteristic. Respondents noted it prevents beach access, makes water entry difficult or dangerous, creates depth drop-offs at the edge, and is structurally deteriorating in places. The seawall is described consistently as a reason children do not enter the water at JoJo's — which removes the most vulnerable user group from the ferry conflict zone entirely. It is a safety limitation for recreational swimmers and a safety advantage for ferry operations.
Ferry compatibility	3.1% of respondents explicitly described JoJo's as more suitable for a ferry — referencing dedicated approach channels, open navigation space, separation from recreational users, and the existing jetty infrastructure. This is a small but unprompted figure: the question asked what influences safety, not which site is better. These respondents arrived at a site suitability conclusion independently, consistent with the professional assessment that JoJo's presents manageable residual risk.

Observations

The site characteristics that make JoJo's less safe for recreation make it more suitable for a ferry.

The seawall, wind exposure, and open water conditions that respondents cite as limitations for swimming, paddling, and children's water play are precisely the characteristics that reduce conflict with a scheduled commercial vessel. A site where children do not enter the water, where informal recreational use is sparse, and where the approach channel is open and navigable is a structurally different proposition from Matilda Bay. The safety risks that define one site are the safety advantages of the other.

The seawall removes the most vulnerable user group from the ferry conflict zone.

At Matilda Bay, the most frequently observed water user is young children (91.9%). At JoJo's, the seawall, depth drop-offs, and absence of a sandy beach entry mean children do not routinely enter the water. The dominant safety concern at Matilda Bay — a child in the path of a ferry wake — does not exist at JoJo's in the same form. This is not a minor amenity difference; it is a fundamental change to the hazard population the ferry must operate alongside.

Wind exposure is a safety risk for recreational users and a manageable operational condition for a ferry.

Respondents describe JoJo's as exposed to prevailing winds that make it unsuitable for swimming, kayaking, and children's water play. For a commercial electric ferry operating on a fixed route, open water wind conditions are an operational variable managed through vessel design, scheduling, and skipper discretion. They are not a conflict with existing recreational users in the way that Matilda Bay's crowded, sheltered bay creates irresolvable right-of-way problems.

The safety picture at JoJo's is one of residual and manageable risk, not structural incompatibility.

The risks identified at JoJo's — vessel traffic, wind exposure, seawall access limitations — are either already present at the site, manageable through operational controls, or structurally separable from the ferry's operating envelope. None describes the kind of irresolvable conflict found at Matilda Bay, where a ferry must share a confined, sheltered bay with swimmers, children, disability sailors, and paddlers simultaneously.

Signal quotes

"The JoJo's area is not suitable for personal water use. It has a seawall which makes access to and from the water untenable. It is also exposed to the predominant strong winds and sea waves. It's not an area for vulnerable water users."

"Water use around JoJo's is limited as there is a sea wall, not a beach. It is occasionally used for wind surfing but only when there are strong winds. The foreshore feels safe."

"This area feels more exposed than Matilda Bay, which makes better sense for a ferry."

"The sea breeze is strong on most afternoons which makes the venue less suitable for water based activities apart from windsurfing. The sea wall restricts access to the water."

"It is not an area that people swim, paddle or access because of the drop off from the path. It's totally different to Matilda Bay — there is no beach access, it is already a jetty and vessel terminal."

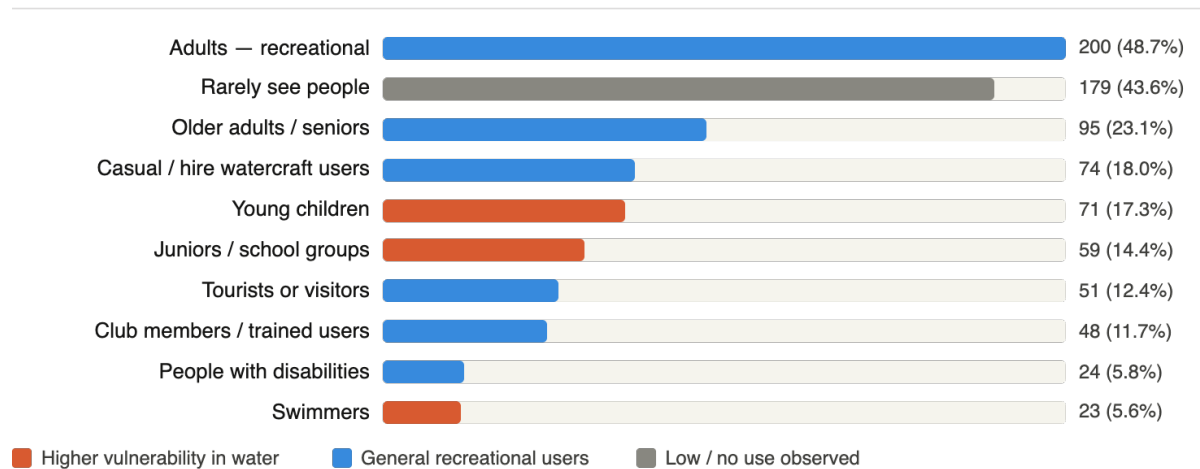
"Jo Jo's would feel much safer as less people frequent that foreshore and no children swim or play in Jo Jo's location."

"Vessels approaching the jetty have deep water, clear vision and are separated from the windsurfers using the shallow water further from shore."

Who do you regularly see using the water in front of JoJo's Jetty? (select all that apply)

411 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Observed water users



Site comparison: observed water users

User group	Matilda Bay	JoJo's	Difference
Young children	91.9%	17.3%	−74.6 pp
Swimmers	52.1%	5.6%	−46.5 pp
Juniors / school groups	57.2%	14.4%	−42.8 pp
People with disabilities	44.9%	5.8%	−39.1 pp
Adults — recreational	87.5%	48.7%	−38.8 pp
Rarely see people	1.1%	43.6%	+42.5 pp

43.6% of respondents rarely see anyone in the water at JoJo's. At Matilda Bay the same response was chosen by 1.1%. Young children — the most observed user group at Matilda Bay (91.9%) — are observed in the water at JoJo's by only 17.3% of respondents. Across every vulnerable user category the gap is substantial and consistent.

Analysis

Sparse user population

43.6% of respondents rarely see people in the water at JoJo's — the second highest response overall and a figure that stands in direct contrast to Matilda Bay where the same response was selected by 1.1%. The water at JoJo's is not a shared informal recreation space. It is a navigable waterway with occasional use. This is a fundamentally different operating environment for a ferry.

Children: 74.6% lower

Young children were observed in the water by 17.3% of JoJo's respondents, compared to 91.9% at Matilda Bay — a difference of 74.6 percentage points. This is the single most important comparative finding in the dataset. The child safety risk that makes Matilda Bay structurally incompatible with a ferry is a site-specific problem, not a river-wide one. At JoJo's the hazard population is a fraction of what exists at Matilda Bay.

Swimmers: 46.5% lower

Swimmers were observed by only 5.6% of respondents at JoJo's, compared to 52.1% at Matilda Bay. The seawall, depth drop-offs, and wind exposure that respondents identified in the previous question as safety-limiting for recreation also suppress the swimmer population. Swimmers are the most exposed user group in any ferry conflict scenario — their near-absence at JoJo's significantly reduces the risk profile.

Disability: 39.1% lower

People with disabilities were observed in the water by only 5.8% of respondents at JoJo's, compared to 44.9% at Matilda Bay. The disability sailing programs that define much of the Matilda Bay vulnerability profile — Sailability WA, Fishability WA — operate in the sheltered, calm conditions of Matilda Bay specifically because JoJo's and other open-water sites are unsuitable for participants with limited mobility and manoeuvrability.

Residual user mix

The users who are present at JoJo's — recreational adults (48.7%), casual watercraft users (18.0%), and club members (11.7%) — are generally more capable of managing vessel proximity than the vulnerable groups that dominate Matilda Bay. Windsurfers and kiteboarders, who feature in write-in responses, are experienced, highly manoeuvrable, and already accustomed to operating in open water alongside other vessels. The residual conflict at JoJo's is real but manageable.

Observations

The comparison table is the central finding of this question.

Across every vulnerable user category — young children, swimmers, juniors, disability users — the observed presence at JoJo's is a fraction of what is seen at Matilda Bay. The differences are not marginal: 74.6 percentage points for young children, 46.5 for swimmers, 39.1 for people with disabilities. These are not variations in the same kind of site — they describe two fundamentally different waterway environments with different risk profiles for a scheduled commercial vessel.

43.6% rarely see anyone in the water — this is a navigable waterway, not a recreation bay.

At Matilda Bay, 98.9% of respondents regularly see people in the water. At JoJo's, 43.6% rarely do. The water in front of JoJo's Jetty is not a destination for informal water recreation. It is open river — used by trained water users, occasional windsurfers, and passing vessels. Introducing a ferry into this environment adds a scheduled vessel to a waterway that already operates at low intensity. Introducing a ferry into Matilda Bay adds a scheduled vessel to a waterway at near-capacity informal use.

The disability programs that cannot relocate are at Matilda Bay, not JoJo's.

Sailability WA and Fishability WA operate at Matilda Bay because it provides the calm, sheltered, accessible water conditions their participants require. JoJo's — with its seawall, wind exposure, and depth profile — is not a viable alternative operating location for these programs. The ferry proposal at Matilda Bay therefore threatens programs that cannot simply move. A ferry at JoJo's does not create the same conflict because those programs are not there.

Signal quotes

"Jo Jo's would feel much safer as less people frequent that foreshore and no children swim or play in Jo Jo's location."

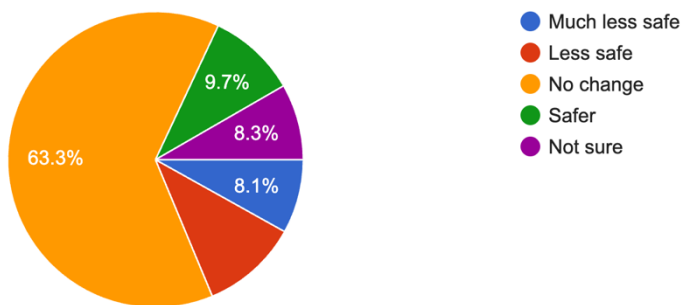
"I never see children using JoJo's to swim or use water craft. The only people near to JoJo's are a couple of kite and wind surfers."

"It is not built for swimmers and other recreational water users. There is a jetty and rock wall. It is more of a boating area."

"No congestion between users. Yachts sail well off the jetty area. Foilers and windsurfers launch there but the area generally has space."

If this ferry terminal were introduced at JoJo's, how do you think it would affect safety of people in the water in front of JoJo's Jetty?

433 responses

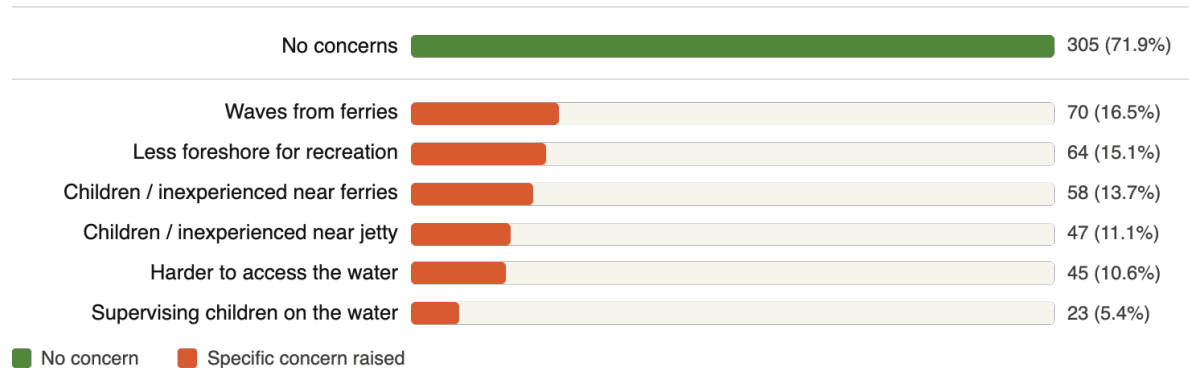


63.3% of general public respondents said a JoJo's ferry terminal would result in no change to safety for people in the water. A further 9.7% said it would be safer. Combined, 73.0% of 433 respondents anticipated neutral or improved safety outcomes at JoJo's. 8.1% said much less safe and 8.3% said less safe -- a combined negative sentiment of 16.4%, compared to 92.4% at Matilda Bay.

If this ferry terminal were introduced at JoJo's, what concerns, if any, would you have? (select all that apply)

424 respondents — public survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Concerns by frequency



71.9% of respondents — nearly three in four — have no concerns about a ferry terminal at JoJo's. This is the inverse of the Matilda Bay finding, where 92.4% expected reduced safety. The same population, asked about the same type of infrastructure, returned the opposite verdict depending on location.

Direct comparison: Matilda Bay vs JoJo's concerns

Concern	Matilda Bay	JoJo's	Difference
No concerns	5.3%	71.9%	+66.6%
Children near ferries	85.5%	13.7%	-71.8%
Children near jetty	78.2%	11.1%	-67.1%
Waves from ferries	72.7%	16.5%	-56.2%
Less foreshore	86.6%	15.1%	-71.5%
Harder to access water	65.3%	10.6%	-54.7%
Supervising children	55.4%	5.4%	-50.0%

Write-in responses at JoJo's were predominantly supportive: "much better and safer option than family-orientated Matilda Bay", "already a jetty there so not much changes", "excellent plan — would disrupt very few people", "far fewer people would be at risk." The minority expressing concern cited parking, kiteboarder access, and ferry patronage levels — not safety of vulnerable water users.

Analysis

71.9% no concern

71.9% of respondents expressed no concern about a ferry terminal at JoJo's. At Matilda Bay, only 5.3% felt the same. The 66.6% difference is not a matter of opinion or preference — it is a community safety assessment of two different sites by the same population. The survey did not change between questions; the location did. The verdict is site-specific, not ferry-specific.

Child concern: 71.8% lower

Concern about children near ferries dropped from 85.5% at Matilda Bay to 13.7% at JoJo's — a reduction of 71.8%. Concern about children near the jetty dropped from 78.2% to 11.1%. These are not marginal differences. They reflect respondents' direct observational knowledge that children are not routinely in the water at JoJo's in the way they are at Matilda Bay. The child safety concern is location-contingent, not infrastructure-contingent.

Wake concern: 56.2% lower

Concern about ferry wake dropped from 72.7% at Matilda Bay to 16.5% at JoJo's. Wake is a physical constant — the same ferry produces the same wake regardless of location. The difference in concern reflects who is in the water to receive it. At Matilda Bay, wake affects swimmers, children, disability sailors, and paddlers in a confined bay. At JoJo's, the exposed open water and low recreational use reduce the population at risk from the same physical hazard.

Residual concerns

The concerns that do exist at JoJo's — waves (16.5%), foreshore access (15.1%), children near ferries (13.7%) — are real and warrant operational attention. Kiteboarders and windsurfers launching from the area, occasional junior sailing activity, and wind exposure on approach are manageable through scheduling, route definition, and site design. None describes the structural incompatibility that characterises Matilda Bay. These are residual risks in an appropriate site, not site selection failures.

Observations

The same community that overwhelmingly opposes a ferry at Matilda Bay overwhelmingly accepts one at JoJo's.

This is the most important finding in the comparative dataset. 92.4% of respondents believe Matilda Bay would become less safe with a ferry terminal. 71.9% have no concern about one at JoJo's. These are not two different communities with different risk tolerances — they are the same respondents applying the same safety judgement to two different sites. The community is not opposed to ferries. It is opposed to this ferry in this location.

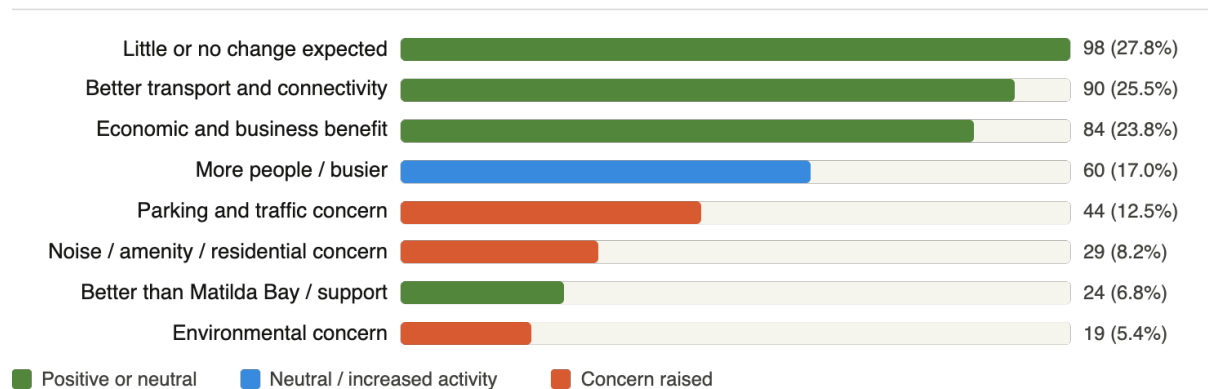
Every concern category dropped by more than 50% between sites.

Without exception, every structured concern — children near ferries, children near the jetty, wake, foreshore loss, water access, child supervision — fell by more than 50%

What do you think would change at JoJo's if ferries operated there?

353 open-text responses — public survey. Responses coded thematically; a single response may contain more than one theme. Percentages calculated against 353 respondents.

Themes by frequency



40.8% of responses contained a positive or neutral signal. Only 4.2% contained negative framing. This is almost the exact inverse of the Matilda Bay equivalent question, where 96.5% of responses were negative. The same open-text question, asked about a different site, produced a fundamentally different community response.

Direct comparison: what would change

Signal	Matilda Bay	JoJo's
Positive or neutral response	3.5%	40.8%
Negative response	96.5%	4.2%
Little or no change expected	<1%	27.8%
Transport / connectivity benefit cited	<1%	25.5%
Recreation destroyed / lost	45.4%	<1%
Loss of peace and character	45.4%	8.2%

Write-in responses at JoJo's included: "You might get people to actually use the ferry and JoJo's jetty and cafe could be put to use rather than just sitting there", "already a jetty there so not much changes", "positive to an otherwise under-utilised jetty area", "operating ferries at JoJo's is way safer than Matilda Bay."

Analysis

Minimal disruption signal

27.8% of respondents anticipated little or no change at JoJo's — the single most common response theme. At Matilda Bay, "nothing would change" was effectively absent. The contrast reflects that JoJo's is already a jetty precinct with an existing infrastructure footprint. Adding a ferry terminal to a site that already has a jetty, limited recreational water use, and a movement-corridor character is qualitatively different from introducing one into a protected family recreation bay.

Transport and business uplift

25.5% anticipated transport and connectivity improvements, and 23.8% anticipated economic and business benefit — responses entirely absent from the Matilda Bay equivalent. Respondents cited better access to UWA and QEII, improved bus connections along Broadway, and potential revival of the dormant JoJo's restaurant precinct. These are the anticipated benefits of a well-located transport node: increased activation of an underutilised site rather than destruction of a heavily used one.

Increased activity: neutral framing

17.0% anticipated more people and increased busyness — but unlike the Matilda Bay equivalent, this was framed neutrally or positively rather than as a loss. Respondents described increased foot traffic as consistent with the site's existing character as a through-corridor, not as a displacement of quiet family recreation. A busier foreshore path is not a safety threat at JoJo's in the way a busier bay is at Matilda Bay.

Parking and residential concerns

12.5% cited parking and traffic as concerns, and 8.2% raised noise and amenity impacts on nearby residents. These are legitimate planning considerations that require attention in site design and transport planning. Critically, they are not safety concerns about vulnerable water users — they are urban integration concerns that are typical of any transport infrastructure project and addressable through design. They do not constitute grounds for site rejection.

Environmental concern

5.4% raised environmental concerns. These were notably fewer and less intense than at Matilda Bay, where environmental impact was the third highest theme at 32.7%. JoJo's does not have the seagrass meadows, nesting swans, dolphin habitat, or mature tree canopy that define the ecological sensitivity of Matilda Bay. The environmental footprint of ferry operations at JoJo's is a manageable planning consideration, not a structural barrier.

Observations

The community sees JoJo's as an opportunity, not a loss.

The dominant themes at JoJo's — minimal change, better transport, business activation — describe a community that sees a ferry terminal as a proportionate use of an underutilised site. At Matilda Bay the dominant themes described irreversible loss of a cherished community asset. The same infrastructure proposition generated acceptance at one site and near-unanimous opposition at the other. The difference is entirely attributable to site characteristics, not to the ferry concept itself.

Concerns at JoJo's are planning concerns, not safety concerns.

The issues raised at JoJo's — parking, traffic, residential amenity, noise — are standard urban planning considerations that attach to any transport infrastructure project. They are absent from the safety domain. Not one respondent described a child in the water being struck by ferry wake, a disability sailor unable to manoeuvre clear, or a swimmer unable to see an approaching vessel. The safety hazard profile that defines the Matilda Bay objection does not appear in the JoJo's responses.

JoJo's is described as an already-appropriate site, not a compromise.

Multiple respondents noted that JoJo's already has a jetty, already functions as a vessel terminal, and already operates as a transit corridor rather than a recreation bay. The ferry terminal would not transform the character of the site — it would extend its existing function. This is the definition of a compatible land and water use. Matilda Bay, by contrast, would require the transformation of a protected recreation bay into a commercial transport hub — a fundamental change to an irreplaceable asset.

Signal quotes

"Little if any change for water or foreshore users. Could improve connecting bus services along Broadway and may improve the services offered by shops at that end of Broadway."

"You might get people to actually use the ferry and JoJo's jetty and cafe could be put to use rather than just sitting there."

"I think it would be a positive to an otherwise under-utilised jetty area."

"Operating ferries at JoJo's is way safer than Matilda Bay."

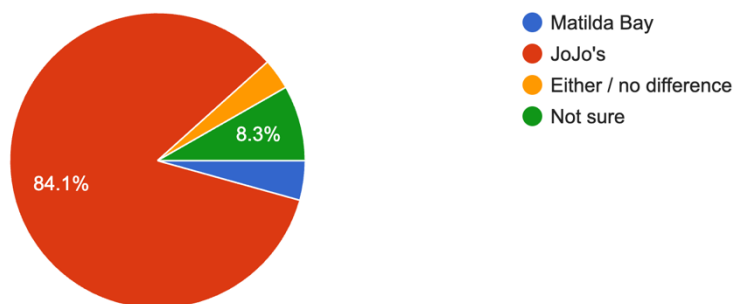
"Not much. Nothing would change. It's not a very busy area."

"Small change and less impact than at Matilda Bay. It's a better location."

"More traffic in the area and access to JoJo's would be harder but it might generate more business."

Thinking about water safety, if a ferry terminal had to be located at one of these two locations, which do you think would be easier to manage safely?

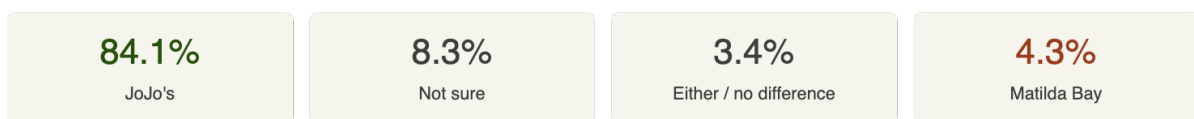
533 responses



84.1% of general public respondents nominated JoJo's as the location that would be easier to manage safely if a ferry terminal had to be introduced at one of the two sites. Only 4.3% nominated Matilda Bay. A further 3.4% identified no difference between the sites and 8.3% were unsure. Across 533 responses, the safety-based preference for JoJo's is unambiguous and consistent with all other findings in this survey.

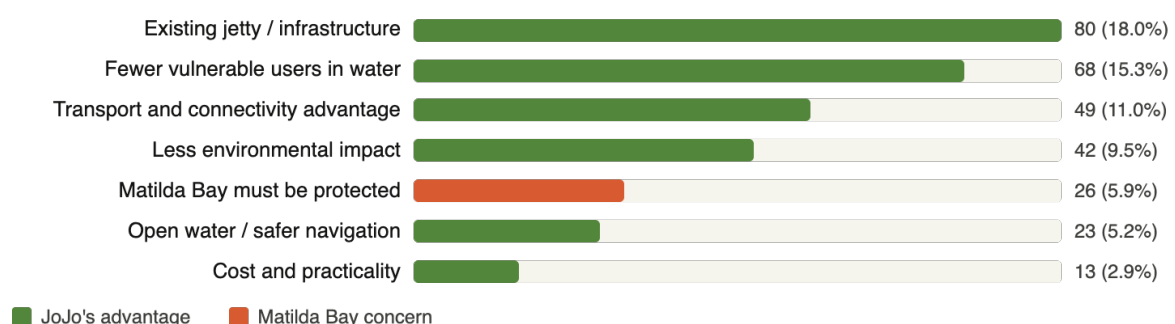
Thinking about water safety, if a ferry terminal had to be located at one of these two locations, which do you think would be easier to manage safely?

533 respondents — public survey.



84.1% of respondents identified JoJo's as easier to manage safely. Only 4.3% selected Matilda Bay — the Government's proposed location. Even when the question is framed as a forced choice between two sites, the public verdict is unambiguous: JoJo's by a ratio of nearly 20 to 1.

Why? — reasons by theme (444 open-text responses)



100 of 444 Why responses explicitly referenced Matilda Bay — not to support it as a location, but to explain why it should not be used. Respondents cited its shallow water, children in the bay, family recreation character, seagrass, tree canopy, and irreplaceable amenity as reasons the terminal belongs elsewhere.

Analysis

Infrastructure logic

18.0% cited the existing jetty and infrastructure at JoJo's as the primary reason for their preference. This is a straightforward planning rationale: a site that already has a jetty, existing vessel access, and partial terminal infrastructure requires less intervention, less environmental disruption, and less capital expenditure to activate. Respondents identified this without prompting. The logic is sound — and its absence from the Government's site selection rationale is notable.

Vulnerable users absent

15.3% gave the safety of vulnerable water users as their explicit reason — noting the absence of children, disability sailors, and swimmers at JoJo's compared to Matilda Bay. These respondents are making a direct risk comparison based on their observational knowledge of both sites. They are not applying abstract safety principles; they are describing a hazard population difference they have seen with their own eyes. This is lay risk assessment that aligns precisely with the professional safety analysis.

Transport rationale

11.0% cited transport and connectivity as a reason — noting bus routes along Broadway, proximity to UWA and QEII, and the potential for integrated connections that serve the stated purpose of the ferry without destroying Matilda Bay. These respondents are not simply opposing the ferry; they are offering a functionally superior alternative that achieves the same transport objective with less harm.

Environmental protection

9.5% cited less environmental impact at JoJo's — fewer trees, less seagrass, reduced wildlife habitat at risk. This reflects awareness that Matilda Bay's ecological sensitivity — seagrass meadows, nesting swans, dolphin habitat, mature peppermint trees — is not replicated at JoJo's. The environmental argument for JoJo's is not simply that it is better; it is that Matilda Bay's natural assets are irreplaceable and JoJo's existing footprint makes it a lower-impact site by definition.

Matilda Bay as protected asset

5.9% stated explicitly that Matilda Bay must be protected — not as a transport argument but as a community values argument. These respondents framed their preference for JoJo's not in terms of what JoJo's offers but in terms of what Matilda Bay is: an irreplaceable, intergenerational, A-Class reserve that cannot be recovered once a transport terminal is built in it. The asymmetry of reversibility is the core of this argument — JoJo's can be developed and undeveloped; Matilda Bay cannot.

Open water navigation

5.2% cited the open water navigation conditions at JoJo's — deeper water, clear approach, separation from recreational users, and the absence of the confined bay dynamics that make Matilda Bay operationally complex for a scheduled vessel. These respondents understand the maritime operating environment and are identifying a genuine navigational advantage at JoJo's that is consistent with the professional assessment that right-of-way conflicts are manageable at JoJo's and irresolvable at Matilda Bay.

Observations

84.1% is the summary statistic of the entire public survey.

Every preceding question built toward this one. The use profiles, the observed user populations, the safety influence factors, the concern comparisons, and the anticipated change responses all converge on a single community judgement: JoJo's is the safer site for a ferry terminal. 84.1% of 533 respondents stated this explicitly when asked to compare. Only 4.3% — 23 people — chose the Government's proposed location. The ratio is 19.5 to 1.

The reasons given are operationally coherent, not merely emotional.

The Why responses do not describe aesthetic preference or general opposition to change. They describe specific, verifiable differences between two sites: existing infrastructure, absence of vulnerable water users, open navigation conditions, environmental footprint, and transport connectivity. These are the same factors a professional safety and planning assessment would consider. The community arrived at the same conclusions through direct observation and lived experience rather than technical analysis — but the conclusions are the same.

100 respondents referenced Matilda Bay in their Why answer — all to oppose it.

Of the 444 Why responses, 100 explicitly named Matilda Bay. None did so to support it as a location. Every reference to Matilda Bay in the Why responses described a reason it should not be chosen: its children, its seagrass, its trees, its family character, its irreplaceable amenity. The Government's proposed site was named 100 times in the reasons for choosing the alternative. That is a significant evidentiary signal about how the community understands the consequences of the current proposal.

The public survey result is consistent with the club survey, the professional safety analysis, and the maritime expert assessment.

The 84.1% preference for JoJo's in the public survey mirrors the approximately 90% preference found in the club survey of organised water users. Both are consistent with the professional risk assessment finding that Matilda Bay presents structural site incompatibility and JoJo's presents manageable residual risk. The convergence of community lay assessment with professional technical assessment, across two independent surveys and a separate expert review, constitutes a compelling and multi-layered evidentiary case.

Signal quotes

"There are many different types of water user at Matilda Bay, including very inexperienced users, and it is hard to see how related risks could be successfully managed. These risks simply don't exist at the JoJo's site."

"Infrastructure is already set up and will leave Matilda Bay as is."

"Less usage by young children and disabled sailors."

"Current jetty site, parking area available for ferry users, doesn't destroy the current gorgeousness that Matilda Bay offers."

"Much more suited, buses already go there, just as close to uni."

"Away from Matilda Bay and swimming and picnic areas."

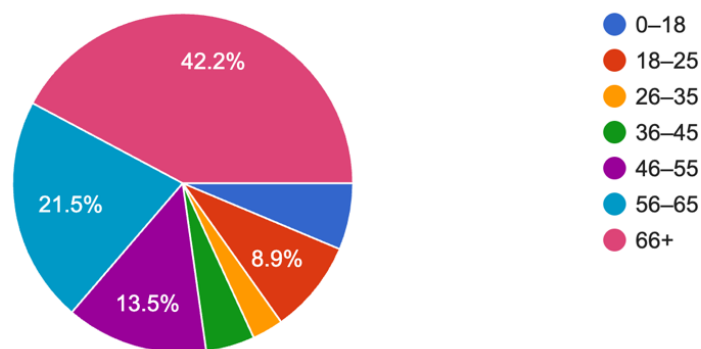
"The infrastructure is already partially there, the site is ready and the walk to Matilda Bay and UWA is short or a purple CAT bus can be utilised. It would help more people to enjoy the area rather than limiting it."

Club Members Survey Results

All age groups were represented in the club member survey, with older cohorts proportionately more prominent — 42% of respondents were aged 66 or over, and a further 22% were aged 56–65. More than half of respondents resided outside the western suburbs, indicating the survey captured river users from across the broader Perth metropolitan area rather than a localised cohort. All clubs were represented in the responses, though response rates varied across clubs. This variation in response weighting has been accounted for in the analysis.

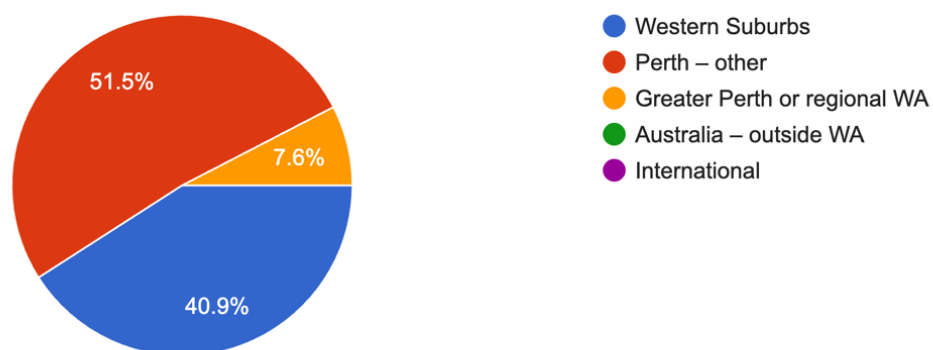
What is your age group?

237 responses



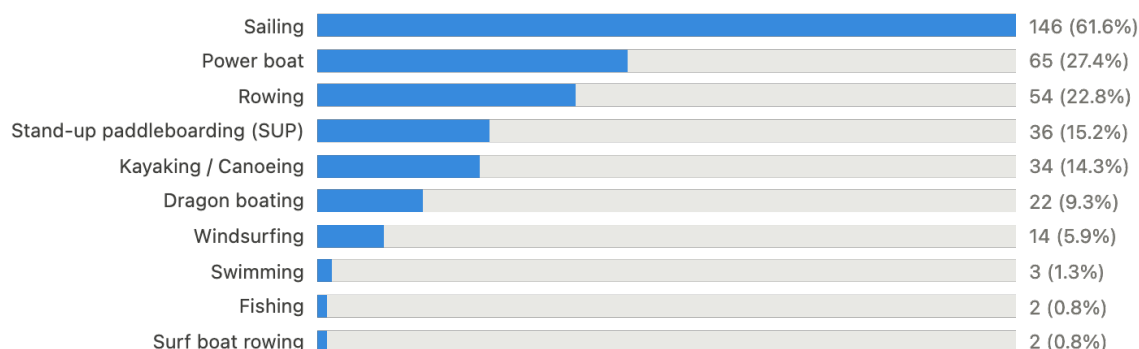
Where do you live?

237 responses



What type of activity do you undertake on the river? (select all that apply)

237 respondents — club member survey.



Select all that apply — respondents may undertake multiple activities. Percentages are calculated against 237 total respondents. Additional activities noted by respondents include coaching, sail management volunteering, foreshore walking, picnicking, crabbing, and fishing for people with disability.

Sailing accounts for 62% of responses, which reflects the membership profile of the clubs surveyed. This weighting does not diminish the significance of lower-response groups — several have specific and well-documented vulnerability profiles that are disproportionate to their survey representation. The risk commentary below draws on open-text responses across the full dataset.

Activity-specific risk profiles

Ferry interaction risk varies materially by activity type — not all non-powered craft present the same exposure

Dragon boating

High consequence — 10m vessel, 20 passengers, average age 68, cannot take evasive action

Dragon boats are long, low, and entirely dependent on sweep steering from the rear. They cannot accelerate clear of an approaching vessel, and wake-induced swamping with a full complement of paddlers — many of them older adults — carries a materially different consequence profile from a single-person capsize. Respondents identify the proposed terminal as cutting directly through active dragon boat training areas. One notes: "Negotiating a ferry is very hard in a long dragon boat only powered by paddlers." Another documents the swamping risk from existing powered vessel wake, noting the difficulty of maneuvering tight turns in strong wind conditions. The combination of low manoeuvrability, high passenger count, and older demographic makes this group one of the highest-consequence exposure profiles in the bay.

Fishability

Critical — disability participants cannot self-rescue; programme termination is the likely outcome

Fishability operates fishing programs for people with disability, with 212 participants, 194 carers, and 135 volunteers recorded in 2024/25, aged 8 to 80. The Fishability vessel is already documented as susceptible to wake from the existing Rottnest Ferry and larger pleasure craft — and participants cannot protect themselves in the event of a wake-induced incident. Multiple respondents state that disability fishing and sailing programs at Matilda Bay would end if the ferry terminal were introduced. The inability to self-rescue, limited reaction time, and reliance on safety boat escorts make Fishability participants the most vulnerable sub-population in the bay. This risk is not marginal — it is a program-termination scenario.

Windsurfing

Specific capsize-state vulnerability not captured in general risk framing

Windsurfers present a distinctive risk geometry that differs from their sailing counterparts. When upright and sailing, an experienced windsurfer is agile and fast. When in the water — during a capsize, water start, or rig recovery — they are horizontal, low-visibility, slow to recover, and occupying an unpredictable position in the ferry's path. One respondent identifies this explicitly: "windsurfer particularly when in water and not sailing" as the highest-risk state. A ferry operating on a fixed schedule cannot adjust timing to accommodate a windsurfer in recovery. This vulnerability is structurally invisible in any risk assessment that treats windsurfing as a single activity type.

SUP / Kayak

Low freeboard, low speed, foreshore-concentrated — directly in ferry approach geometry

SUP and kayak users concentrate in the foreshore shallows precisely because the bay's sheltered geometry makes it feel safe from powered traffic. General public respondents repeatedly identify the absence of powerboats as the primary reason the area feels safe for this activity — "protected from power boats and jet skis," "calm shallow water safe for kids." These users have no ability to accelerate clear of an approaching vessel, low freeboard makes them difficult to detect at ferry bridge height, and they tend to move unpredictably close to the terminal approach zone. The ferry would introduce the first scheduled high-frequency powered vessel directly into the area this cohort relies on for safety.

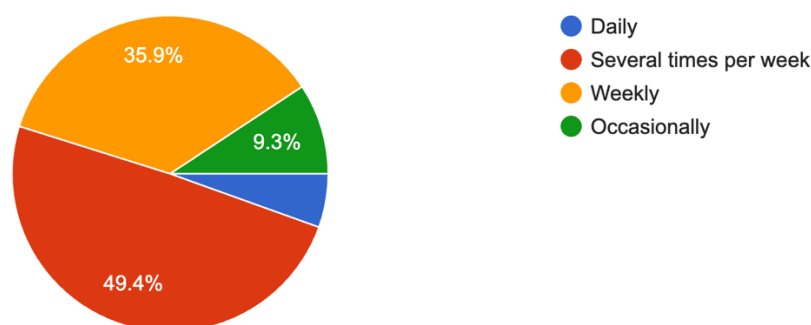
Power boating

Existing hazard baseline — powerboats are the most consistently cited current risk before ferries enter the picture

Power boat respondents (27% of the survey) are notable because their own activity is the most consistently cited existing hazard across all other groups. Club survey respondents describe power boat skippers transiting at speed through sailing fleets without looking behind, generating dangerous wakes, and lacking awareness of racing rules and course marks. One respondent documents power launches travelling at 15–25 knots through dinghy fleets. Another names a specific charter vessel operating unsafely. The general public survey reinforces this: the absence of powerboats and jet skis is the primary driver of the feeling of safety at Matilda Bay. The ferry would be the first scheduled commercial powered vessel to operate through the bay on a fixed-frequency timetable — on top of an existing recreational powerboat hazard baseline that is already considered significant.

How often do you use Matilda Bay?

237 responses

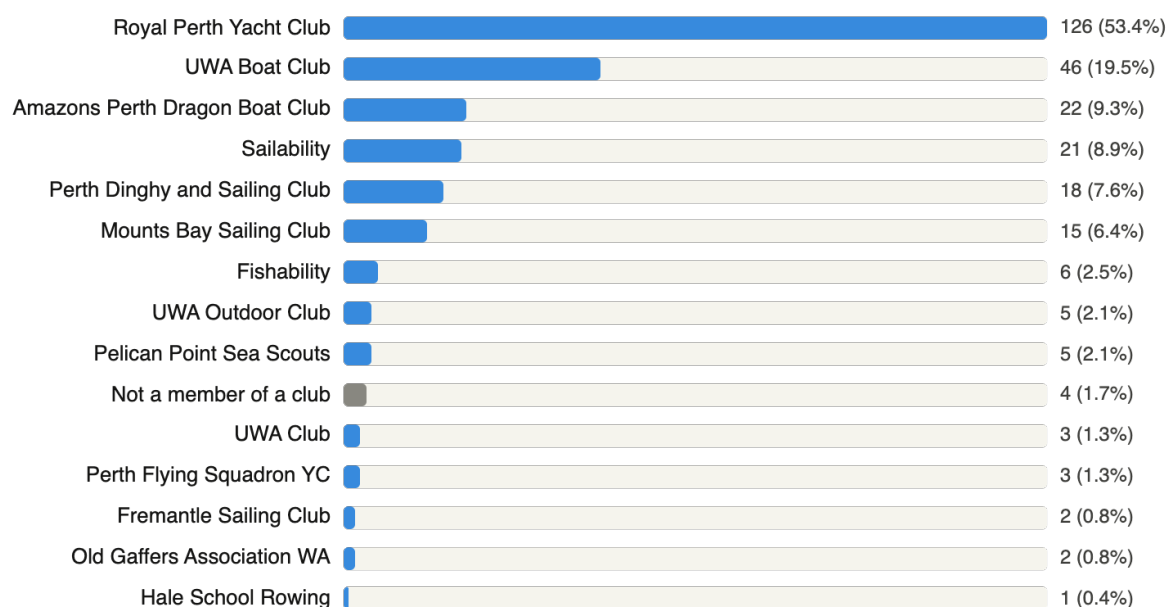


49.4% of club member respondents use Matilda Bay several times per week, with a further 35.9% using it weekly.

Combined, 85.3% of 237 respondents are regular users of the waterway. Only 9.3% use it occasionally. This confirms the survey population has high direct operational familiarity with the site -- their assessments of risk and conflict geometry are grounded in repeated, current experience of conditions at Matilda Bay.

Which club(s) do you belong to? (select all that apply)

236 respondents — club member survey.

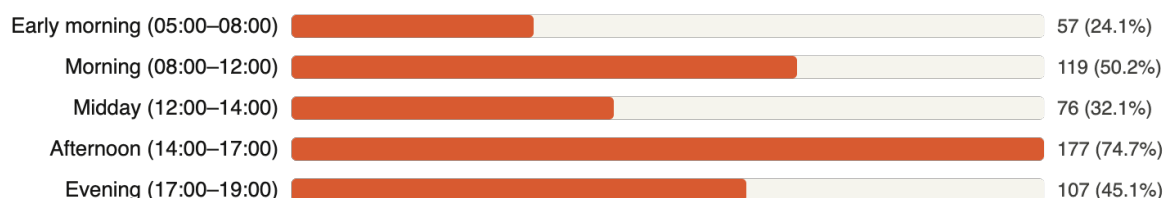


Other (1 respondent each): Denmark Sailing Club, South of Perth YC, Swan River Canoe Club, Swan River Kayakers, Swan River Sailing, Port Bouvard YC, Shenton (UWA Boat Club), SoPYC / RFBYC / FSC.

Select all that apply — respondents may hold multiple club memberships. Percentages are calculated against 236 total respondents. 4 respondents identified as not a member of any club.

What times do you typically use the waterway? (select all that apply)

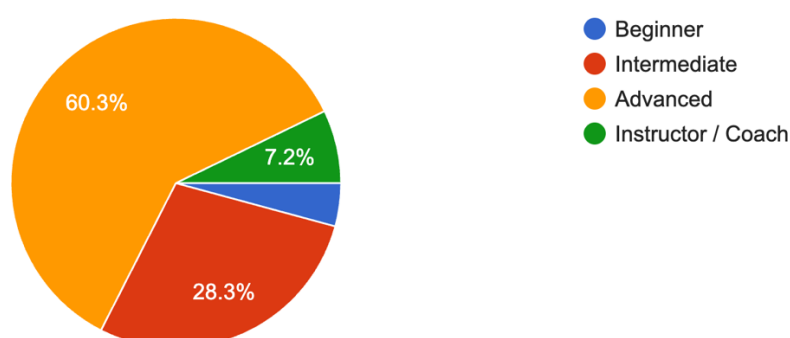
237 respondents — club member survey. Percentages calculated against 237 total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.



Select all that apply — respondents may use the waterway across multiple time periods. Percentages are calculated against 237 total respondents.

How would you describe your experience level?

237 responses



60.3% of club member respondents described their experience level as advanced, with a further 28.3% intermediate and 7.2% instructors or coaches. Beginners accounted for the remaining 4.2%. Across 237 responses, the survey population is overwhelmingly experienced waterway users — the group with the highest direct operational familiarity with conditions at both sites.

These figures reflect the experience level of survey respondents only. The survey was completed by adult waterway users and does not capture the experience profile of junior sailors, novice rowers, and children who also use Matilda Bay in significant numbers — groups who represent a disproportionate share of the safety risk identified throughout this survey. The respondent cohort skews heavily toward advanced and experienced users, meaning the safety concerns expressed here come predominantly from those best placed to understand the risks, not those most exposed to them.

How the river is used

Activity volume at a glance

Distinct activity types 12+	Named launch points 5	Race days per week (peak) 3–4	Fleets concurrent (peak) 3–4
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Primary activity zones

Race zone

RPYC start line (F Jetty) eastward across the bay face; Knot Spit, Poplar, Crawley buoy triangle; finish line in front of RPYC. Used Wed, Thu, Sat pm by keelboats and OTB fleets simultaneously.

Training zone

Central bay body from PDSC foreshore across to RPYC and brewery mark; used for junior and adult sail training (RPYC, PDSC, MBSC), adaptive sailing (Sailability), dragon boating, and rowing coaching pieces.

Transit corridor

Diagonal axis through the bay to Melville Water via Knot Spit and Inner/Outer Dolphin. Also RPYC to Perth Water/Elizabeth Quay. Used by keelboats (sail hoist/drop zone), powerboats, kayaks, and fishing charters.

Foreshore / calm water

Inshore strip from MBSC beach to UWA Boatshed; used by dragon boaters (200–500m drill runs), juniors, SUP, kayak, disability sailing, swimmers, and picnickers. Sought specifically for wind shelter and flat water.

Public mooring field

Crawley mooring area used for anchoring/mooring by powerboats, keelboats, and as a navigation reference. Dragon boat and dinghy training woven around and through the mooring lines.

UWA Boatshed environs

Launch, warm-up and close-quarters rowing area immediately east and south of UWABC; heavy use by rowing squads before dispersing to narrows, Canning, or cross-river routes depending on conditions.

Launch points and their user bases

RPYC marina and F Jetty

Keelboat racing and cruising, powerboats, Sailability, Fishability charter, disability sailing. Primary high-volume embarkation for organised club racing.

Matilda Bay public boat ramp

Trailer sailors, recreational powerboats, dinghies (RETRO racing), kayaks. Unscheduled, individually-timed use throughout the day and weekend.

Mounts Bay Sailing Club (MBSC) beach

Dragon boating (multiple crews, 3 sessions/week), junior and adult dinghy sailing, SUP. Tight near-foreshore operating area before moving into the bay.

Perth Dinghy Sailing Club (PDSC) foreshore

Junior dinghy training (6–12 yr age group), Taser and dinghy fleets, adaptive sailing. Fleet can occupy the full bay for racing.

UWA Boatshed (UWABC)

University and club rowing squads (early morning and evening sessions), kayaks, SUP. Heavy congregating in front of the shed before dispersal to river routes.

Movement patterns driven by wind and conditions

Easterly or light conditions

Rowers head toward Narrows and Perth Water. Sailors extend into Melville Water. Powerboats and SUPs spread across the full bay. Maximum concurrent use across all zones.

Southerly / sea breeze

Rowing concentrates in the inshore strip close to the Mounts Bay Road wall (flat water). Dinghies shelter east of moorings or close to PDSC. Dragon boaters stay within bay. Keelboats may still race with strong breeze.

Strong wind / rough conditions

Bay acts as primary refuge. Novices, juniors, disabled participants, and small boats explicitly seek the bay because it is calmer than Melville Water. This concentrates vulnerable user groups in the bay precisely when conditions are worst on open water.

Key congestion points

High

RPYC start line (F Jetty alignment) — 40–55 keelboats in pre-start manoeuvres for up to 45 minutes, multiple sessions per week.

High

Knot Spit to Inner Dolphin corridor — compressed post-start fleet separation zone; used simultaneously by multiple classes.

High

Knot Spit to Poplar to Crawley buoy triangle — used simultaneously by multiple classes. Crosses active rowing training lanes. Multiple fleets converging at buoy roundings concurrently. Crabbing season adds a separate uncoordinated use layer.

High

Narrows channel — all vessel traffic funnelled through a narrow deep-water corridor due to shallow water to the east, which causes grounding risk toward Knot Spit. Rowing shells, commercial ferries, keelboats, and recreational powerboats converge into the same constrained passage with no viable alternative routing.

Moderate

Bay face (PDSC to RPYC) — concurrent sailing, rowing, dragon boating, SUP, and swimming, especially on weekend mornings.

Moderate

Public boat ramp environs — uncoordinated vessel movements mixing with organised club traffic on and off the water.

Observations

The bay is a refuge, not just a thoroughfare.

Multiple user groups explicitly choose the bay because of its relative wind shelter and flat water. Demand inside the bay increases precisely when conditions deteriorate on Melville Water. Any new infrastructure that reduces usable water space or introduces wave wash will have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable user categories: juniors, adaptive sailing participants, beginners, and dragon boaters, who are already pushed inshore by conditions.

Temporal clustering is significant.

Wednesday and Saturday afternoons are the peak conflict periods, with keelboat fleets of 40–55 vessels running pre-start procedures for up to 45 minutes while other clubs are simultaneously training in the same water body. The start line alignment, described explicitly as adjacent to F Jetty and on the alignment of the proposed ferry terminal, is a direct spatial conflict with any regular ferry route at those times.

The mooring field is a functional navigation feature, not just an amenity.

Multiple responses describe weaving through and around the moorings as a deliberate training exercise and navigation reference. Dragon boaters and dinghies use it for close-quarters work. Any interference with the mooring field affects training utility, not just aesthetics.

NOTE

Several respondents independently flagged that the bay is preferable to the JoJo's (Nedlands) site precisely because of wind exposure and accessibility for people with mobility limitations. That user logic is directly relevant to the comparative site assessment.

In Matilda Bay, where do you experience the highest levels of interaction or congestion with other users? (Both same and other watercraft activities)

Congestion hotspots by severity

Critical

RPYC start/finish line and F Jetty alignment

The single most-cited location. 40–55 keelboats in pre-start manoeuvres for up to 45 minutes on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday afternoons. Multiple fleets from RPYC, PDSC, and MBSC converging simultaneously in the same water. Race finishes compound this with 6–7 fleets (up to 15 boats each) arriving concurrently between 16:00–17:00. This alignment is directly coincident with the proposed ferry terminal approach.

Critical

Knot Spit to Poplar to Crawley buoy triangle

Highest named congestion zone across all response groups. Post-start fleet compression in the Knot Spit to Inner Dolphin corridor. Multiple fleets converging at Poplar and Crawley mark roundings simultaneously. Respondents describe it as a zone where "up to 6 or 7 fleets with up to 15 boats per fleet" complete races concurrently. Crosses active rowing training lanes running through this zone. Crabbing season adds a separate uncoordinated use layer.

Critical

Bay face between PDSC and RPYC (full foreshore strip)

The entire band from the old brewery past Perth Dinghy Sailing Club across to RPYC and MBSC is described as a high-congestion zone on race and weekend days. Three clubs operating simultaneously with overlapping course marks. Rowing, dragon boating, SUP, and swimming also occupying the same strip.

High

Public boat ramp (near Matilda Bay Restaurant)

Multiple respondents cite this as a specific conflict zone. Uncoordinated trailer boat launches mixing with organised club traffic, crabbing dinghies, recreational powerboats, and swimming activity. Described as a location where "clueless power boat people" operate without situational awareness.

High

Inner Dolphin spit and navigation channel toward Melville Water

The channel narrows between Inner and Outer Dolphin, funnelling all vessel traffic regardless of activity type. Power boats, ferries, keelboats transiting under sail, and fishing charters all compress into this corridor. Multiple respondents note power boat operators do not yield to sailing vessels at this point.

High

UWA Boatshed foreshore to RPYC marina face

The mid-bay strip from 300m to 1000m offshore between the rowing club and RPYC is cited as consistently congested. Rowing squads, dragon boats, Sailability, and dinghy training overlap in this band. The pontoon zone in front of Bayside Kitchen specifically named as a bottleneck for SUPs, kayaks, and swimmers. Crab pots are a seasonal hazard in this zone.

High

PDSC start line (Quarry mark area) in sea breeze

When a sea breeze establishes, the PDSC start line shifts close to the sea wall near the Quarry marker. Shallow water to the east funnels all vessel traffic into a narrow corridor between the Quarry marker and the Narrows Bridge. This produces a critical pinch point separate from the RPYC line, with PDSC fleets and larger power yachts compressed into the same constrained passage.

Moderate

Mounts Bay Road wall (Narrows to bay)

Power boat and ferry wash reflects off the retaining wall and disrupts rowing crews training close to shore. Rowers encounter crabbing boats and commercial ferries (including Rottneest ferries described as "terrifying") in this corridor. Wall-bounce wash is a specific cited hazard for small craft.

Cross-user conflict types identified

Power over sail Most-cited structural conflict. Power boat operators repeatedly described as unaware of sailing right-of-way rules. Described as causing "chaos" and "serious incidents." Racing start lines driven through without awareness of restricted sailing vessel manoeuvring.	Wash and wake effects Power boat and large vessel wash explicitly cited as hazardous to rowing shells, dragon boats, and small dinghies. Rottneft ferries specifically named. Wall-reflected wash from Mounts Bay Road compounds the effect for inshore crews.	Vessel-to-vessel collision One experienced respondent explicitly notes: "I am quite surprised just how many collisions between vessels occur, it is a seemingly regular occurrence." Concentrated in the pre-start and racing zones.
Organised vs unorganised use Club-organised activity (races, training sessions, sailing for people with disability) operating under structured spatial logic conflicting with uncoordinated recreational use (crabbers, recreational powerboats, swimmers) that does not follow or recognise those structures.	Vulnerable users in mixed zones Juniors, sailing for people with disability, and beginners specifically noted as requiring wide berths and causing heightened caution by other users. These groups concentrate in the foreshore zone that is also used by recreational swimmers, children wading, and dogs.	Swimmer visibility Early morning rowers specifically flag that swimmers in the bay are "especially hard to see." Combined with returning rowing squads at speed, this is a low-visibility, high-consequence overlap.

Temporal congestion pattern

Pre-dawn 05:00–08:00	Rowing squads (UWABC and Hale School) in darkness, early crabbers, occasional swimmers near the shed. Low visibility, high wake sensitivity.
08:00–11:00	Dragon boating (Tue/Thu/Sat), junior sailing training (RPYC, PDSC, MBSC), sailing for people with disability, recreational SUP and kayak. Bay face at near-peak concurrent use.
11:00–13:00	Transition period. Recreational powerboats and crabbers increasing. Weekend foreshore picnic and swimming use building. Boat ramp traffic peaks.
13:00–17:00	Peak conflict window. RPYC Wednesday and Saturday racing (pre-start from approximately 13:00, start 14:00–14:30, finish 16:00–17:00). PDSC and MBSC concurrent events. Multiple overlapping start and finish lines active simultaneously. Recreational traffic also at maximum. Highest vessel density of the week. Rowing training sessions commence from 16:00 Monday to Thursday. Shenton College rowing sessions 14:00–16:00 on Friday afternoons.
17:00–20:00	Thursday/Friday twilight sailing, Tuesday night racing. Reduced visibility as evening progresses. Reduced but still significant vessel count. Multiple rowing training squads on water Monday to Thursday, including Shenton College and UWABC novice rowers operating in dusk and night-time conditions.

Observations

The ferry alignment sits directly in the highest-severity congestion zone

The RPYC F Jetty start line, cited as the most congested single location in the entire dataset, is on the same spatial axis as the proposed terminal approach. A regular ferry service would be introducing a large, schedule-driven, wash-generating vessel into a zone that already has documented collision incidents and where multiple respondents describe power boat operators as fundamentally unaware of sailing right-of-way obligations.

There is already a demonstrated safety problem

The unsolicited reference to vessel collisions being "a seemingly regular occurrence" is a significant finding. This is not speculation about future risk. It is a current operational condition that should be treated as a known baseline hazard, not a theoretical one. Whether any of those incidents have been reported to the relevant maritime authority warrants investigation.

Wash effects are a specific mechanism, not just a nuisance complaint

Rowing shells, dragon boats, and small dinghies are genuinely vulnerable to wash from large power vessels. The Mounts Bay Road wall reflection compounding that wash is a real hydrodynamic issue. Any assessment of a proposed ferry service would require quantified analysis of vessel hull form, speed, and track to determine actual wash impacts on existing users.

The sailing for people with disability finding is the sharpest equity issue in the dataset

The respondent noting that current congestion levels are manageable for Sailability participants, but that a ferry would "change dramatically" that condition, is articulating a specific consequence for a protected user group. This is not a general safety concern but a precisely described impact on people with disability who rely on the bay's sheltered conditions to participate. It warrants explicit treatment in any comparative site analysis.

Signal quotes

"I am quite surprised just how many collisions between vessels occur, it is a seemingly regular occurrence."

"When you mix in power craft they have no idea on right of way or marine river rules which frequently causes chaos."

"Pleasure power boats and commercial ferries do not appear to understand what sailing craft are up to and regularly drive through the start line. There have been several serious incidents in the Bay."

"Rottnest ferries are terrifying when they go past, even slowly."

"Currently little congestion at the times disabled sailors sail. That, sadly, will change dramatically if the ferry goes ahead."

Are there times when the river feels more or less safe? Why? (Time of day, weather, other watercraft activity)

Time of day: safer and less safe periods

Pre-dawn to 09:00 Consistently cited as safest by rowing respondents. Minimal power boat and ferry traffic. Offset by low visibility risks: darkness, fog, unlit spit posts, and rowers' backward-facing orientation. School and novice rowing groups most exposed during this window.	Weekday mornings (non-race) Monday and midweek mornings before racing begins are widely described as low-risk periods. Light traffic, predictable users, lower vessel density. Favoured for learn-to-sail programs and disability sailing.	Midday to 13:00 Transitional period. Recreational power boats building. Boat ramp traffic increasing. Generally manageable but not uniformly safe across all user types.
13:00 to 17:00 (Sat/Wed peak) Most frequently cited as the least safe window. RPYC, PDSC, and MBSC racing simultaneous. Recreational power boats at peak volume. Commercial ferries transiting. Multiple respondents describe this as "exceptionally busy" and "by far the most dangerous time on the river." Multiple respondents cited recreational power boats travelling too fast for the conditions and not operating with awareness of others.	Dusk and evening Cited by rowers as particularly challenging due to night lights and reflection on the water impairing visibility. Junior and novice rowing training sessions operate during this window — the entire session is conducted in darkness. Coincides with Rottnest ferry return trips. Twilight racing (Thu/Fri) adds vessel density at reduced visibility. Rated High risk.	Public holidays and summer weekends Australia Day, New Year's Eve, and school holiday periods attract less experienced recreational boaters described as "too relaxed" and unfamiliar with rules. One respondent states they simply do not go out on these days. Party boat activity cited as particularly hazardous.

Weather conditions: risk factors

High risk	Strong easterly (early to mid morning) Described as generating "washing machine" conditions in the bay by 08:00. Can persist all day. Particularly dangerous for dragon boats and small dinghies. For rowing shells, easterlies are a go/no-go threshold — boats get swamped and the club has experienced multiple capsizes and mass swamping events. Matilda Bay's protection from south-westerlies does not apply to easterlies.
High risk	South-westerly and westerly sea breeze above 18–20 knots Most cited weather hazard. Accelerates within the bay on certain angles. Causes rapid conditions change. Multiple respondents use a threshold of 15–25 knots as a no-go condition. Juniors and novices withdrawn. Dragon boats shelter close to shore.
High risk	Fog and rain reducing visibility Cited by rowing respondents as generating genuine fear. Spit posts and buoys become invisible. One respondent describes fog and driving rain coming in rapidly as "scary." Compound risk when combined with pre-dawn starts.
Moderate	Any wind above 20 km/h with powered vessel wash Wind-driven chop compounded by vessel wake creates conditions described as "choppy and unpredictable." Mounts Bay Road wall reflects this wash back across the bay, amplifying the effect for inshore users.

Moderate**Low sun angle (sunrise and sunset)**

Explicitly cited as a visibility hazard independent of fog or rain. Glare reduces detection of small craft by powered vessel operators.

Mitigating**Matilda Bay's sheltered geometry**

Multiple respondents explicitly note that the bay's protection from south-westerly winds is a primary reason it is the preferred training and refuge zone. This shelter is what makes it viable for juniors, disability sailing, and novices. Any degradation of that safety margin by introducing additional vessel traffic is therefore consequential at a systemic level.

Watercraft-specific risk drivers

Dominant**Power boats exceeding the 8-knot speed limit**

The single most cited safety complaint across all user groups. Explicitly noted as unenforced. Recreational power boats, charter vessels, and commercial ferries travelling at unsafe speeds described repeatedly and consistently.

Dominant**Rottnef ferries**

Named specifically and repeatedly across sailing, rowing, and dragon boat respondents. Described as "terrifying." One rower reports being capsized in a channel by a ferry going "too quick and too close." Another respondent states they witnessed a ferry run over and kill a sailor. Wake effects persist and reflect off retaining walls. Afternoon ferry movements cited as the highest-consequence risk for school rowing crews and novices.

Dominant**Power boat operators unfamiliar with sailing rules**

Described as a structural and persistent problem. Recreational power boat skippers driving through active start lines, failing to give way to sailing vessels, and not understanding the manoeuvring limitations of sailing craft in wind. One experienced respondent notes this has produced "several serious incidents" and that policing "rarely" occurs.

Recurring**Jet skis**

Cited independently of power boats as a specific hazard category. Described as unpredictable and non-compliant with rules. Appear during warmer afternoon periods.

Recurring**Crab pots in channels**

Seasonal hazard cited by multiple respondents. Pots dropped in navigation channels. Ropes present propeller entanglement risk. Unlit at night. Adds unpredictable obstruction layer to already complex waterway during summer crabbing season.

Recurring**Swimmers and SUPs: low detectability**

Early morning rowers specifically flag that swimmers are "especially hard to see." Combined with wake and wash from other vessels, this creates a low-visibility, high-consequence overlap that is currently unmanaged.

Observations

The ferry fatality reference is significant.

One respondent states they witnessed a ferry run over and kill a sailor. This is an unverified claim from a survey response, but it is the kind of assertion that requires follow-up. If there is a documented fatality in this waterway involving a commercial ferry and a sailing vessel, that is directly relevant prior incident evidence for a comparative risk assessment. Verification through MRD incident records or coronial findings is warranted.

The speed limit enforcement gap is a systemic condition, not an incidental complaint.

The 8-knot limit for vessels over 10 metres and high, unsafe speeds of vessels under 10 metres is cited across multiple user groups as consistently unenforced. This means the current risk baseline is already elevated beyond what the regulatory framework intends. Any assessment of a new ferry service must account for the fact that it would be operating in an environment where safe speeds are not reliably maintained, and where the precedent of large vessels moving at speed is already established in the minds of recreational operators.

The Matilda Bay shelter effect is a safety feature, not just an amenity.

The survey makes clear that the bay's protection from the south-westerly is the operational rationale for locating junior sailing, disability sailing, learn-to-sail programs, novice and junior rowing, SUP, kayak, dragon boating, and open water swimming within it. It is functioning as a managed low-risk zone within a higher-risk river environment. Introducing a scheduled commercial vessel fundamentally changes the risk character of that zone, not just by adding one more vessel, but by removing the condition that makes the zone viable for vulnerable users.

There is a coherent narrative across user groups that was not coordinated.

Sailing respondents, rowing respondents, and dragon boating respondents independently arrive at the same risk conclusions about ferries, power boat operators, speed awareness, speed limits and visibility. That consistency across unrelated groups, none of whom were prompted to compare sites or evaluate planning decisions, strengthens the evidentiary weight of the findings.

Signal quotes

"I have already witnessed one ferry run over and kill a sailor and I am not keen to experience that again."

"I've been flipped in a boat in a channel more than once by a ferry going too quick and too close through there."

"Safest with no powered vessels present and boats are undertaking organised events under safety management. Very unsafe with ferries passaging when children, disabled and learners are on water."

"Early morning and late evening collisions with the ferry remain the most dangerous threat to rowing crews, especially school kids and novices."

"Mornings are safe — at the moment. That will change dramatically if the ferry goes ahead."

"The river feels safest when there are many yachts as skippers look out for one another. It feels unsafe when there are power boats including ferries which travel at speed near yachts without any understanding about wind or the need for tacking."

"Training in Matilda Bay is safest — it is away from the main traffic routes and has a reduced speed limit for power craft. This will not apply if there is a ferry transiting through the area when Sailability or sail training activities are taking place."

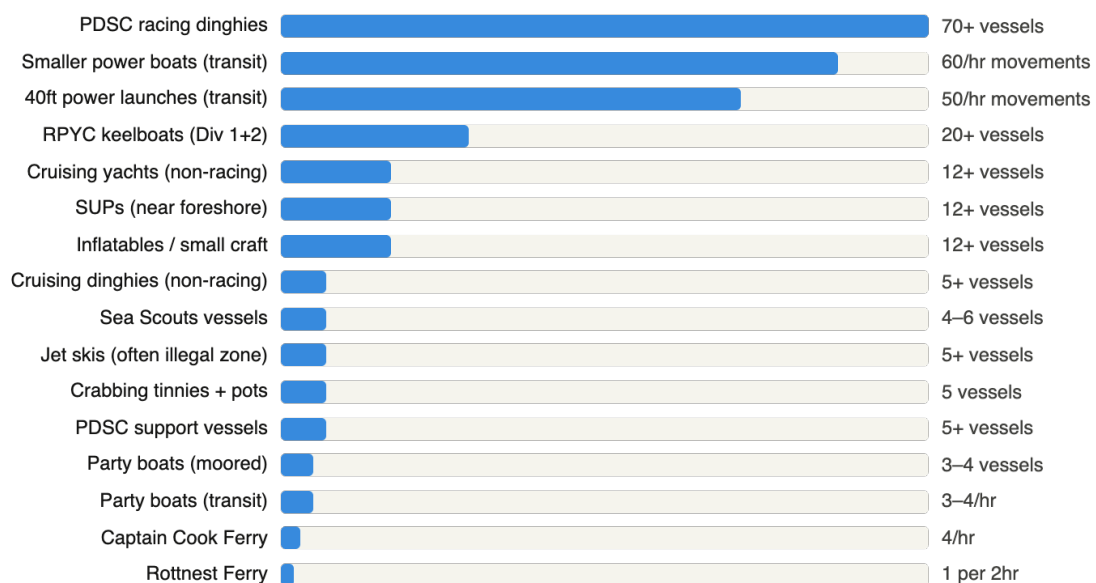
During your typical session, approximately how many vessels or participants are on the water in your immediate area?

Vessel counts by activity and session type

KEELBOAT RACING (RPYC) 40–100 vessels, peak days Wednesday pm: up to 60 pre-start. Saturday pm: 40–50. Mini Series or major events: up to 100+. Plus support and safety vessels.	DINGHY RACING (PDSC) 50–70+ vessels, race afternoons 50–60 racing dinghies plus 6 rescue boats on typical afternoon. State and national regattas push this higher.	COMBINED FLEETS (PEAK SAT) 100–130 sailing vessels alone RPYC, PDSC, MBSC, SoPYC operating concurrently. One experienced observer estimates 130 boats in the bay before race starts on a busy Saturday.
TEACHING MORNINGS (RPYC) 25–35 vessels, mixed types 5–10 keelboats, 15 dinghies, 4–6 sail boards, 3–4 support RIBs. Plus ambient crabbing runabouts, power boats, and ferries passing through.	ROWING (UWABC) 8–20 rowing vessels per session UWABC plus Hale School on busy mornings. 9–15 rowing boats with coach vessels. 30–45 participants on water concurrently.	DRAGON BOATING (MBSC) 2–3 dragon boats per session 2 boats typical, 10–20 paddlers each. Three sessions per week. Co-exist with sailing, rowing, and recreational users simultaneously.
SAILABILITY / DISABILITY SAILING 6–8 vessels per session 12 vessels and 30 people including volunteers and participants. Low speed, low manoeuvrability. High dependency on clear water.	TWILIGHT SAILING (THU/FRI EVE) 25 yachts plus passing ferries Smaller fleet than Saturday racing but operating at reduced visibility. Rottnest ferry movements coincide with this window.	

Peak Saturday afternoon snapshot (14:00–16:00, Oct–Mar)

Based on one respondent's 20+ year observation estimate. This is a single detailed account, not a statistical average, but it is the most granular vessel census in the dataset and should be treated as a conservative floor for peak conditions.



Key density observations

Risk amplifier

The bay already operates at or near saturation on peak days.

On a busy Saturday afternoon between October and March, the combined vessel count within and transiting Matilda Bay comfortably exceeds 200 moving watercraft, with hundreds of additional foreshore users in and near the water. This is before adding any scheduled ferry service. Multiple respondents use language like "congested," "exceptionally busy," and "not enough water space" to describe current conditions.

Risk amplifier

Vessel type diversity is as significant as vessel count.

The 200+ peak figure includes racing dinghies operating under strict rules, keelboats with limited manoeuvring ability in wind, high-speed power boats with no sailing awareness, SUPs and inflatables with near-zero ability to avoid hazards, disability sailing vessels with minimal speed and control, and large ferries with long stopping distances. These categories have fundamentally incompatible operating characteristics and collision avoidance needs. Density alone understates the risk. It is the heterogeneity of the vessel mix that drives complexity.

Regulatory gap

Jet skis operating illegally is already a documented condition.

The observer notes jet skis "usually operating illegally outside the jet ski zone." This establishes that rule-based exclusions are not reliably enforced in the bay under current conditions. This is directly relevant to any assumption that a ferry route would be navigated in compliance with prescribed separation.

Ferry context

The Rottneest Ferry is already present, but infrequently.

The existing Rottneest ferry timetable is a known but low-frequency hazard with four ferry movements per day — departure from Barrack Street Jetty at 8:30am and 8:45am and return at 4:30pm and 5:30pm. The ferry skirts only the perimeter of the bay. The proposed Matilda Bay ferry service at 25-minute bi-directional intervals along two different routes that dissect the bay would represent approximately a forty-four-fold increase in large commercial vessel movements through this waterway during operating hours. The respondent base already rates existing ferry movements as one of the primary safety threats to small craft and rowing crews.

Observations

The 80 power boat movements per hour figure is the most consequential number in this dataset.

If accurate, and it comes from a respondent with over 20 years of observation, it means the bay is already experiencing a power boat transit every 45 seconds during peak Saturday afternoon. Adding a scheduled ferry on a 25-minute bi-directional interval into that environment is not introducing a new hazard class. It is adding a large, high-wake, schedule-constrained vessel into a waterway that is already at or beyond its practical capacity for mixed-use traffic management.

VERIFICATION NOTE

This volume of power boat movements was independently verified during the week-long observation period in April 2026. Between 11:05am–11:11am Saturday 11th April, a total of 15 recreational power boat movements were recorded within a 5-minute period, suggesting power boat movements could be as high as 180-plus per hour during peak periods. This is not drawn from survey data but corroborates respondent experiential commentary.

The frequency comparison with existing ferry services is analytically important.

The existing Rottneest ferry timetable is a known but low-frequency hazard with four ferry movements per day. A 25-minute bi-directional ferry service would represent approximately a forty-four-fold increase in large commercial vessel movements through this waterway during operating hours. The survey respondents already identify the Rottneest ferry as one of the primary safety threats to small craft. Their safety perceptions were formed against the current baseline, not the proposed one.

The heterogeneity of vessel types matters more than the total count.

A bay with 200 vessels of similar type and speed operating under shared rules is a different risk environment to 200 vessels spanning racing dinghies, disability sailing craft, high-speed power boats, crabbing tinnies, SUPs, children on inflatables, and large commercial ferries. The collision avoidance logic that works between sailing vessels, which respondents describe as largely self-managing, breaks down completely when vessels with fundamentally incompatible performance envelopes share the same space without clear separation.

Signal quotes

"Early morning and late evening collisions with the ferry remain the most dangerous threat to rowing crews, especially school kids and novices."

"Normally prior to race start, up to 130 boats in the bay on a busy day."

"During racing in the afternoon: 100 yachts plus power boats etc. Twilight: 25 yachts and passing a couple of Rottneest ferries and power boats."

During peak periods, approximately how many vessels or participants are present?

Typical vs peak: summary figures

Typical session — vessels

8–60

Depending on activity. Rowing: 8–15. Sailing training: 20–35.
Club racing: 40–60. Dragon boating: 2–3 boats.

Peak period — vessels

100–200+

Saturday pm Oct–Mar. RPYC + PDSC + MBSC concurrent.
Regattas and Mini Series push to 140–200 sailing vessels
alone, before ambient recreational traffic.

Typical session — participants

30–100

Including crews, coaches, and support. Rowing squads: 30–45.
Sailing training morning: 60–80 across vessel types.

Peak period — participants

400–2,000

Upper range includes foreshore users (swimmers, picnickers,
SUPs) as well as on-water participants. Multiple respondents
cite 1,000–2,000 for busy summer weekends.

Typical to peak escalation by activity group

■ Typical ■ Additional at peak

Keelboat racing (RPYC)



Typical 40–60 vessels, peak 100+ (Mini Series)

Dinghy racing (PDSC)



Typical 50–70 vessels, peak 140+ (regattas)

Combined sailing fleets



Typical 100–130, peak 150–200+ vessels simultaneously

Rowing (UWABC + Hale)



Typical 8–15 boats, 30–45 people, peak 100+ participants (Shenton + UWABC + Hale)

Foreshore / recreational



Typical variable, peak 50+ SUPs, inflatables, swimmers within 100m of shore

Structured observations on peak conditions

Key finding

Matilda Bay vs Pelican Point / JoJo's: a direct respondent comparison.

One respondent explicitly contrasts the two candidate sites: "When Sailability, Tackers etc are out there with swimmers, paddleboarders, canoeists etc, could well exceed 100 or more, as opposed to the Pelican Point/JoJo's area where you would be lucky to see 10 to 20 there these days." This is a direct, experiential density comparison of the two sites under consideration, offered without prompting.

Key finding

Certain user groups specifically avoid peak periods to protect vulnerable participants.

Sailability, disability sailing, and some dragon boat groups explicitly schedule around peak periods to maintain safe operating conditions. "Not active at peak sailing times to protect disabled sailors." This means the vulnerability of these groups during peak periods is already a known and managed condition, managed by avoidance rather than separation. A scheduled ferry service operating on fixed timetables cannot be avoided in the same way.

Contextual note

The 1,000–2,000 participant figure is not outlying.

Two respondents independently cite figures in the 1,000–2,000 range for total waterway users including foreshore on peak summer days. While this encompasses all modes (on-water and foreshore), it is consistent with the aggregate of vessel counts and crew sizes across the clubs, plus recreational foreshore use. It should be treated as a plausible upper bound for total exposure, not a questionable outlier.

Observations

The unprompted Pelican Point / JoJo's comparison is the single most analytically useful data point in this question's responses

A survey respondent, without being asked to compare sites, provided a direct experiential density estimate for both locations: 100-plus concurrent users at Matilda Bay versus 10–20 at JoJo's. That is a five-to-ten-fold difference in ambient user density between the two candidate ferry terminal sites, offered by someone who uses both areas. The choice of terminal location is not just a matter of infrastructure or tourist amenity. It is a material safety decision with an order-of-magnitude difference in collision exposure potential between the two options. Any risk assessment that treats both sites as broadly comparable in waterway risk terms is not accounting for what the people who use these waters actually observe.

VERIFICATION NOTE

This experiential observation has been independently verified through a week-long observation programme across both sites. Across the week a total of 3 windsurfers and 2 kite surfers were recorded at Pelican Point. Windsurfers and kite surfers were observed separately in only 2 of the 28 observed time periods across the week. Note: this data is not drawn from the survey but corroborates respondent experiential commentary.

Sailing for people with disability groups deliberately schedule around peak periods to protect their participants

This finding demonstrates that the current safety management regime for vulnerable users depends on temporal separation from high-traffic periods. A fixed-schedule ferry operating across the full operational day removes that separation mechanism. The mitigation that currently exists is informal and voluntary, and it would be incompatible with a commercial service that cannot adjust its timetable around club racing schedules.

Signal quotes

"Normally prior to race start, up to 130 boats in the bay on a busy day."

"During organised championship events such as the Mini Series, can be upwards of 140 junior and senior dinghies."

"150–200+ during peak periods."

"Not active at peak sailing times to protect disabled sailors."

"Could well exceed 100 or more [at Matilda Bay], as opposed to the Pelican Point/JoJo's area where you would be lucky to see 10 to 20 there these days."

Are there predictable peak periods of activity? If yes, when and where do these occur?

Quiet
Low
Moderate
High
Peak / critical

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Pre-dawn 05:00–08:00	Rowing squads	Rowing squads	Rowing squads	Rowing squads	Rowing squads	Rowing + Hale School + crabbing tinnies	Quiet
Morning 08:00–12:00	Recreational traffic building	Recreational traffic building	Club programs + recreational	Recreational traffic building	Recreational traffic building	Dragon boat + junior sailing + Sailability + busy boat ramp	Junior sailing training + recreational + Learn-to-row
Midday 11:00–14:00	Quietest period of the week	Quietest period of the week	Sailability session + pre-race fleet building from 13:00	Sailability session + quietest period	Recreational use	Pre-race assembly — all three clubs	Recreational + sailing building
Afternoon 14:00–17:00	Rowing training from 16:00. UWABC + Shenton College. Junior + novice squads.	Rowing training from 16:00. UWABC + Shenton College. Junior + novice squads.	RPYC keelboat racing — 40 to 60 vessels. Pre-start manoeuvres 45 min. Finish 16:00–17:00. Rowing training from 16:00.	Rowing training from 16:00. UWABC + Shenton College. Junior + novice squads.	Recreational peak + twilight prep + Shenton College rowing 14:00–16:00	100 to 200 vessels — RPYC, PDSC and MBSC racing simultaneously. Absolute peak ~15:00.	Winter series racing + recreational
Evening 17:00–20:00	Rowing training continues to 20:00. Pre-dusk, dusk + night. Junior + novice squads.	Dragon boat + rowing training continues to 20:00. Pre-dusk, dusk + night.	Post-race wind-down + rowing training continues to 20:00. Pre-dusk, dusk + night.	Dragon boat + rowing training continues to 20:00. Pre-dusk, dusk + night.	Twilight sailing fleet + Rottnest ferry movements + degrading visibility	Post-race wind-down	Quiet

Intensity reflects concurrent vessel density and safety risk across the whole bay. Summer season (Oct–May) intensifies all cells. Public holidays and school holidays push all weekend cells one level higher. Rowing training Mon–Thu 16:00–20:00 — back-to-back 2-hour sessions with junior and novice squads operating in pre-dusk, dusk, and night-time conditions. Peak/critical rating reflects the combination of vulnerable user groups, degrading visibility, and absence of collision avoidance capacity.

Key structural observations

The proposed ferry terminal alignment sits at the intersection of all critical peak zones.

The RPYC F Jetty start line, the Knot Spit to Poplar to Crawley racing triangle, and the Inner Dolphin transit corridor are the three most consistently cited critical congestion locations. The proposed ferry approach to Matilda Bay would need to navigate through or adjacent to all three. There is no approach geometry to a Matilda Bay terminal that avoids these zones during the hours a ferry service would operate.

Experienced users actively manage risk through spatial and temporal avoidance.

One respondent explicitly describes the self-management logic: "If there's an obvious event on, we'll simply shift to another part of the bay or head further up or down the river." This adaptive behaviour is only possible for users with speed, manoeuvrability, and scheduling flexibility. A fixed-route, fixed-timetable commercial ferry cannot exercise the same avoidance. It is the one vessel type in the bay that cannot adapt to the conditions it encounters.

Observation

The ferry is the one vessel type in Matilda Bay that cannot adapt.

Every other user in the bay operates with some degree of spatial and temporal flexibility. Experienced sailors shift to another part of the bay when racing is on. Rowers avoid the weekend peak and times of higher power boat activity. Sailability schedules into the midday lull. Recreational users read conditions and adjust. The entire current safety management regime in the bay is built on this distributed, informal, adaptive avoidance behaviour. It has no formal coordinator, no traffic management scheme, and no enforcement beyond the racing rules and general marine law.

A commercial ferry on a fixed timetable is structurally incompatible with that regime.

It cannot shift its approach line because there is a fleet on the start line. It cannot delay a departure because 60 dinghies are finishing a race across its track. It introduces a schedule-driven, large-mass, high-wake vessel into a waterway where safety currently depends on everyone else being able to move out of the way.

This is the core systemic risk argument from this dataset. It emerges from the survey responses without any single respondent having articulated it in full. It is a pattern across the data rather than a single quoted opinion, which gives it stronger evidentiary standing than any individual response could provide.

Signal quotes

"Typically 1pm–4pm over the whole bay. Absolute peak is around 3pm."

"In Matilda Bay right where you want to put the ferry."

"The biggest choke point is around Inner Dolphin to Knot Spit."

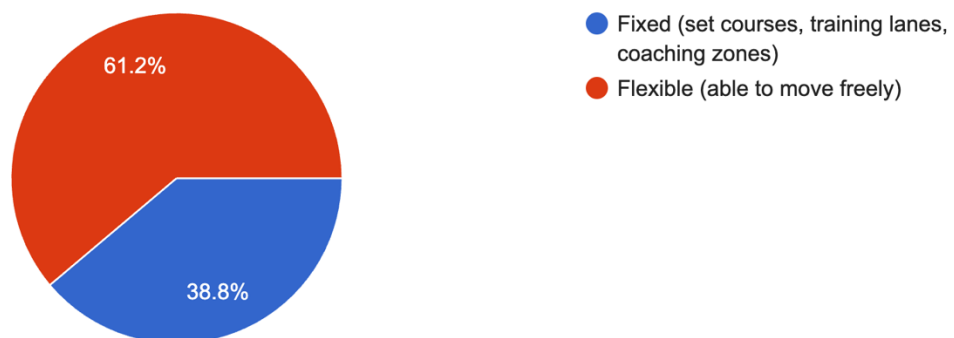
"The bay is in constant use."

"Daylight hours every day."

"Wednesday is busy all day."

Are your movement patterns generally:

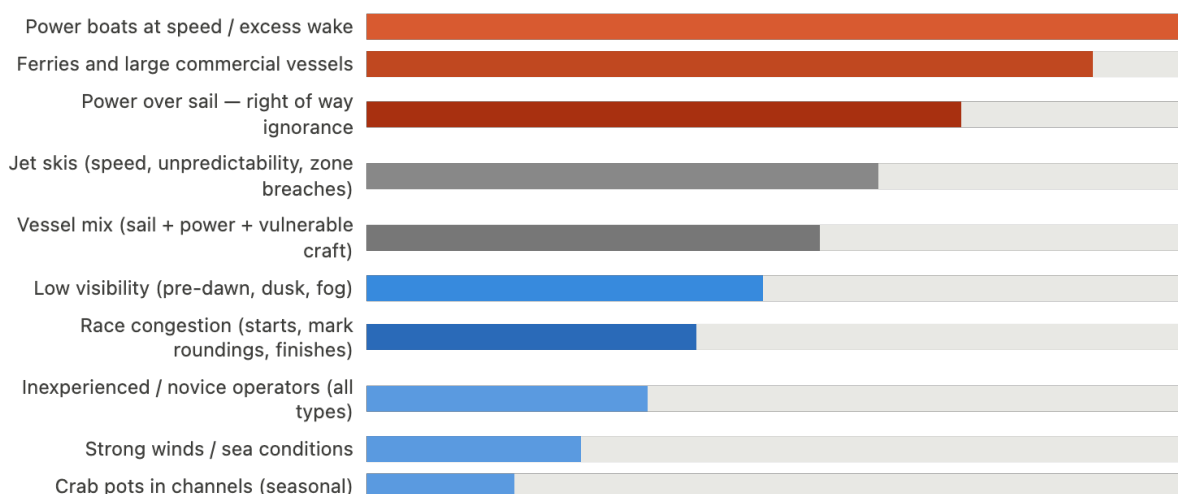
139 responses



61.2% of respondents who answered this question described their movement patterns as flexible -- able to move freely across the waterway. 38.8% operate on fixed courses, training lanes, or coaching zones. Across 139 responses, this confirms that a substantial proportion of waterway users follow predictable, fixed paths that cannot be adjusted to accommodate a ferry service -- and that even the majority who can move freely do so across the same water the ferry would transit.

In your experience, what situations create the greatest risk on the water, where do these occur and what causes the risk?

Risk factors by frequency of citation



Themes coded from 223 open-text responses. Bar length reflects relative frequency of citation — not a discrete count. Respondents could identify multiple risk factors; total citations exceed respondent count.

Top risks: situation, location, and cause

1 Power boats and large vessels at speed — wake and collision

Where: Knot Spit to Narrows corridor, Mounts Bay Road wall, bay face adjacent to RPYC, public boat ramp area, mooring field approaches

By far the most cited risk across all user groups. Power boats generate wake that can swamp or capsize small dinghies, rowing shells, dragon boats, and SUPs. Rowers face backward and cannot see approaching vessels. Small craft cannot manoeuvre out of the way quickly enough. The Mounts Bay Road wall reflects and amplifies wash. Safe speeds consistently described as unenforced.

2 Ferries — wake, proximity, and limited manoeuvrability

Where: Inner Dolphin to Narrows corridor, eastern edge of Matilda Bay, Narrows Bridge, Elizabeth Quay ferry channel

Rottneft ferries cited independently and repeatedly across sailing, rowing, dragon boat, and sailing for people with disability groups. Wake significant enough to capsize small boats even when the ferry is not in close proximity. One rower reports being capsized multiple times at the Narrows. Ferries have limited ability to stop or manoeuvre around small craft. Sailing for people with disability described as particularly vulnerable. One respondent witnessed a fatal collision between a ferry and a sailor.

3 Power over sail — right-of-way ignorance

Where: Race start lines, racing mark approaches, bay face, RPYC marina entrance, transit channels

Power boat operators consistently described as unaware that sailing vessels have right of way and that sailing craft cannot stop or change course quickly. Power boats driving through active start lines, cutting across race courses, and approaching racing fleets without slowing. Particularly dangerous during light air when sailing vessels have minimal steerage. Described as a structural, persistent problem rather than isolated incidents.

4 Jet skis — speed, unpredictability, and zone non-compliance

Where: Boat ramp vicinity, foreshore area, throughout the bay on warm weekends

Cited separately from power boats due to their specific behavioural pattern: high speed, sharp turns, wash jumping, donuts, and operating in areas designated for slow or non-motorised craft. Multiple respondents describe jet ski operators as showing no awareness of swimmers, children, kayaks, and small craft sharing the same water. Described as operating illegally outside jet ski zones without enforcement response.

5

Vessel mix — incompatible performance envelopes in shared space**Where:** Throughout the bay, concentrated at race starts, mark roundings, and the RPYC to UWABC strip

Racing keelboats, training dinghies, sailing for people with disability vessels, dragon boats, rowing shells, and recreational power boats all operating simultaneously in the same water with fundamentally different speeds, stopping distances, and manoeuvring capabilities. The collision avoidance logic that works between vessels of similar type breaks down when incompatible craft share the same space. Disabled and vulnerable users described as least able to respond to unexpected encounters.

6

Low visibility — pre-dawn, dusk, night-time, fog, and low sun angle**Where:** Pre-dawn rowing corridors, Narrows Bridge, Mounts Bay Road wall, twilight sailing courses

Rowers face backward in darkness with no ability to see approaching vessels. Unlit spit posts and buoys become navigation hazards. Powered vessel operators cannot see small rowing shells or dragon boats. Fog and driving rain cited as genuinely frightening. Low sun angle at sunrise and sunset reduces detection of small craft by powered vessels. School and novice rowing groups most exposed in the pre-dawn, sunrise, dusk, and night-time window.

7

Race congestion — starts, mark roundings, and finishes**Where:** RPYC start line, Poplar and Crawley buoys, Knot Spit, Inner Dolphin

High vessel density during pre-start manoeuvres (up to 45 minutes, 40–60 boats) and at mark roundings where multiple fleets converge simultaneously. Sea Scouts vessels navigating between Pelican Point and the bay during keelboat finishing described as a specific collision risk. Capsizes in the Poplar to Crawley area in strong winds with congested fleet cited as a known recurring scenario.

Underlying causes identified by respondents**Speed of powered boats**

8-knot limit routinely exceeded and unsafe speeds of recreational power boats, charter vessels, and ferries are routinely observed. Described as consistently unenforced. Water Police rarely cited as present.

Rules of the road ignorance

Power boat operators unaware of give-way obligations to sailing vessels, unaware of restricted manoeuvring conditions, and unaware of race course structures and marks.

Visibility asymmetry

Small craft (rowing shells, kayaks, SUPs) near-invisible to large powered vessel operators, especially in low light. Rowers face backward. Powered vessel cabins and instrumentation reduce external awareness.

Manoeuvring asymmetry

Sailing vessels, rowing shells, and dragon boats cannot stop or change course quickly. Collision avoidance depends entirely on the powered vessel taking action early enough. If they do not, the unpowered vessel has no recourse.

Vulnerable user concentration

Juniors, sailing for people with disability, beginners, and novice rowers concentrate in the bay specifically because it is the safest available water. Any degradation of bay safety has a disproportionate effect on these groups.

Enforcement absence

Speed limits, jet ski zone restrictions, and right-of-way rules all described as unenforced in practice. Multiple respondents note they have rarely or never witnessed Water Police in this section of the river.

Observations

The risk is structural, not behavioural

The risk profile that emerges from this question is almost entirely about the interaction between large powered vessels and small unpowered or low-powered craft. This reflects the fundamental physics of the situation. Large vessels generate wake and have long stopping distances regardless of operator skill. Small craft cannot manoeuvre away quickly enough regardless of crew experience. The risk cannot be managed away through awareness campaigns or speed limit signs. It is a product of the physical characteristics of the vessels involved, not the intentions of those operating them.

The existing rules are in place but not reliably enforced.

Respondents describe a waterway where the 8-knot limit, jet ski zone restrictions, and power-over-sail give-way obligations are all technically in place but none are reliably enforced. The current safety baseline already depends on voluntary compliance rather than regulatory control. Adding a scheduled commercial ferry into that environment does not add a new regulated participant into a well-controlled system. It adds a large vessel into a system where control is already weak.

The reversing in congested areas scenario warrants its own risk assessment.

One respondent raises a specific operational scenario that deserves explicit treatment: a ferry terminal in Matilda Bay would require the vessel to manoeuvre in confined water, potentially including reversing, in a bay that already has documented collision incidents and where 100–200 sailing vessels and dozens of other craft are present on peak days. This is not a general traffic management concern. It is a specific high-consequence operational scenario that should be assessed separately rather than subsumed into a broader treatment of ferry risk.

Signal quotes

"It is like putting a road train route through a primary school playground — only a fool would do it and not expect a tragedy sooner or later."

"Water craft reversing, as these ferries will have to do, in congested areas in Matilda Bay invite a fatal collision with small boats especially smaller training boats."

"The greatest risk is when fast moving power boats are navigating through slow moving small sail boats. Sail boats are to a large extent limited in the ability to stop or change course compared to powered vessels."

"The possibility of ferries using Matilda Bay would be a disaster for us as we would be at high risk of capsizing."

"The underlying issue is behaviour rather than environment — excessive speed, poor awareness, and a lack of regard for other water users."

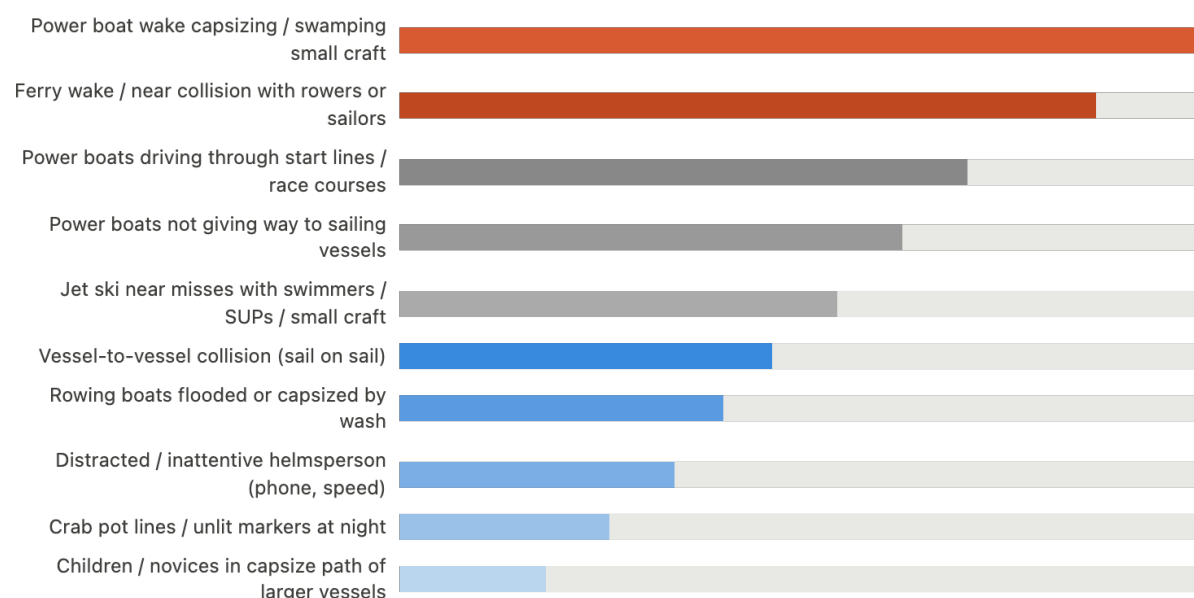
"Matilda Bay has historically been a safe haven in this respect due to its protected nature."

Have you experienced or observed any near misses or unsafe situations? If yes, please describe what happened.

Scale of reported incidents

Yes Overwhelming majority of respondents report witnessing or experiencing incidents	3+ Confirmed vessel collisions reported this summer alone by one respondent	50+ Years of sailing experience cited by multiple respondents still encountering incidents "too many to list"
Weekly Frequency of near misses with speeding power launches cited by one experienced observer	1 Yacht confirmed written off after commercial ferry collision during a weekly club race	1 Fatal incident witnessed: ferry running over a sailor (cited, unverified)

Incident types by frequency of citation



Documented incident categories

- Fatal** Ferry running over a sailor — witnessed
 One respondent states: "I have already witnessed one ferry run over and kill a sailor and I am not keen to experience that again." A second respondent references witnessing a Manly Ferry run down a sailboat on Sydney Harbour with one crewman injured by the propeller. These are separate accounts. The first is asserted to have occurred on the Swan River. Neither is verified through this survey but both are stated as direct personal observations.
- Collision** Yacht written off — commercial ferry through race start line
 "A commercial ferry decided to motor right through the middle of a start line as 25 yachts gathered to start in a regular weekly race. The end result was a yacht smashed and written off through collision." Specific, credible, and directly relevant to the proposed ferry service. Represents a total vessel loss during an organised club event.
- Collision** Mast broken by cruiser during PDSC dinghy race
 "I have had the mast of my Signet Dinghy broken by an interaction with a large cruiser. We were tacking to windward on a starboard tack heading to the finish at PDSC and the cruiser was reaching downwind under spinnaker towards Poplar Buoy when they sailed too close and their boom hooked onto our starboard side stay and pulled the mast out of our dinghy." A protest was lodged and upheld.

Collision	Party boat hit yacht at start line and did not stop "A party boat came through which I couldn't see and hit my boat (didn't stop at all) then continued to go through our club's start line which had already been set." Hit and run during organised racing.
Collision	Power boat drove through rowing squad — five rowers in water "A medium sized power boat was driven along opposite to our rowing boat, this caused wake and caused a boat to flip, sending 5 rowers into the water."
Swamp	Ferry wake flooded rowing quad — novice crew, near capsize "The Transperth ferry, when accelerating after going under the Narrows, caused a large amount of wash that flooded my boat and nearly caused a capsize." Multiple respondents report identical scenarios with Transperth and Rottnest ferries. One respondent describes Mounts Bay Road wall reflecting the wash back to create multiple wave sets making water "unrowable."
Swamp	Disabled vessel swamped by passing power boat wake "Our closest near miss was after we'd lost the rig due to a broken stay. We were effectively disabled and in the process of dealing with the situation when a large powerboat passed at excessive speed and generated a significant wake. That wake swamped us while we were trying to clean up the mess." Illustrates how excessive wake turns a manageable situation into a life-threatening one.
Near miss	Child in capsize path of ferry — traumatic, decade-long impact "A ferry almost ran me over when I was a small child learning to sail in the middle of Matilda Bay. I had recovered from a capsize and the boat was full of water and needed bailing. The ferry kept on its path pushing my boat out the way. A passer-by towed me into a safe spot at the last minute after trying to stop the ferry or get it to change course. I didn't step foot into a dinghy for well over a decade after this."
Near miss	South Perth ferry — rowing coach forced to commit to crossing, ferry diverted "The leading coach made the decision to try and make it to the other side as we could not turn around quickly enough and we could not stop in the ferry channel but unfortunately the crew was not fast enough and the ferry had to change course and the driver was verbally and visibly unhappy with the situation." Rowing squad with Shenton College students. The ferry had to take emergency avoiding action.
Near miss	Jet ski high-speed turn within metres of paddleboarder and swimmers "A jet ski entered the bay at speed while multiple swimmers and paddleboarders were present. The rider performed a sudden high-speed turn, changing direction abruptly and travelling within close proximity of a paddleboarder. The paddleboarder was forced to lose balance and enter the water to avoid collision. The wake generated impacted nearby swimmers, causing distress."
Near miss	Power boat skipper on phone — near T-bone of dinghy lowering sails "Almost had a power boat coming from the boat ramp T-bone me when I was lowering mainsail and therefore had limited navigation. The skipper was scrolling on his phone."
Structural	Power launches at 15–25 knots through dinghy fleets — described as routine "Large power launches travelling 15–25 knots (sometimes more) steering straight through the middle of a fleet of sailing dinghies — they never look behind or even seem to understand what they have done or the potential carnage they may have caused. The speed limit in that area is well signposted at 8 knots. This is a very common scenario." One respondent describes this as occurring "hundreds" of times over their experience on the water.
Structural	Shenton College students capsized near ferry channel — ferry incoming "While coaching Shenton College students in a rowing boat, their boat overturned and they were very close to the ferry channel with an oncoming ferry on route." School-age children in water in an active ferry channel. Described as a direct personal observation by the coach.

Key findings from incident data

"Nearly every week there are near misses. Larger privately operated power launches speeding through the bay and not understanding they must give way to sailing boats."

"In over 65 years of sailing in and around Matilda Bay there are too many to list."

"At least three collisions between vessels this summer." [stated as current season]

"Yes — a commercial ferry decided to motor right through the middle of a start line as 25 yachts gathered to start. The end result was a yacht smashed and written off through collision."

"Big (ferry-sized) boat washes out and sinks our boats." [dragon boating respondent]

"The greatest risk we experience is from both sailing and power craft crossing our fleet that do not understand where we are headed and what speed we are capable of."

Observations

KEY FINDING

This question produces the most consequential findings in the survey for the purposes of waterway safety analysis. It moves the assessment from risk perception to documented incident history.

Ferry-specific incidents involve the same vessel type proposed for Matilda Bay.

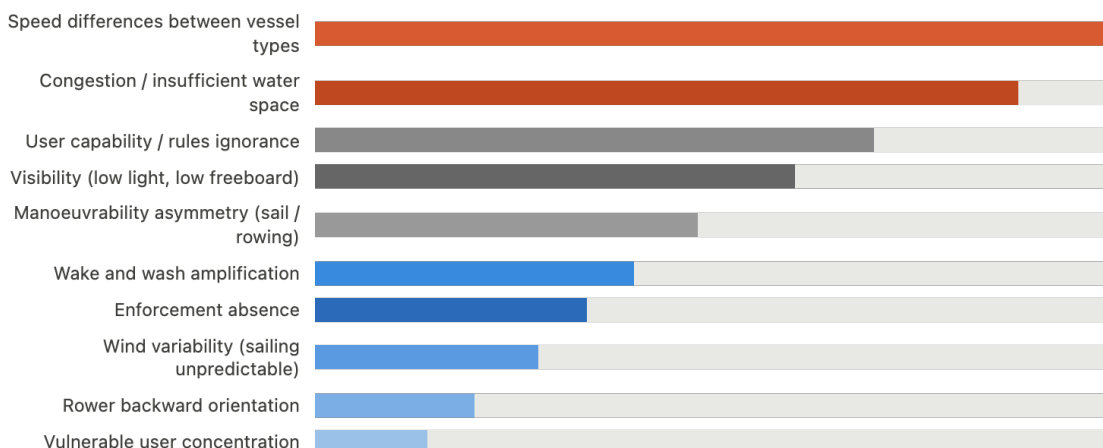
The documented incidents include: a confirmed yacht written off during an organised weekly race when a commercial ferry drove through race courses, dinghy and rowing fleets; a child in a capsized dinghy nearly run over by a ferry in Matilda Bay, with lasting psychological impact preventing them from sailing for over a decade; a rowing coach forced into a dangerous ferry channel crossing with school students because the squad could not stop or reverse; and Shenton College students capsized in the water with a ferry inbound. These are not theoretical risk scenarios. They are described first-hand events involving the same vessel type that is proposed for Matilda Bay on a 25-minute schedule.

The current safety management regime is already failing to prevent regular dangerous encounters.

Multiple respondents describe power boat incursions through race courses and dinghy fleets as occurring "nearly every week" or "hundreds of times" over their experience. This establishes that the existing speed limits, right-of-way rules, and zone restrictions are not preventing a high and ongoing frequency of dangerous encounters. A proposed ferry service would be introduced into a system that is already failing to prevent regular near misses, not into a well-controlled environment where one more vessel can be safely accommodated.

What factors make it difficult to avoid or manage risk in those situations? (e.g. speed differences, visibility, congestion, user capability)

Citation frequency of risk factors



Detailed analysis of each factor

Most cited

Speed differences

The fundamental physics problem underpinning every other risk factor. A sailing dinghy in light air moves at 2–3 knots. A power launch at 20 knots closes that gap in seconds. A rowing shell cannot accelerate or stop. A dragon boat carrying 20 people cannot take evasive action quickly. When a large powered vessel approaches at speed, non-powered craft have no ability to get out of the way in the available time. Multiple respondents note that the problem compounds during light air: sailing vessels are at their slowest and least steerable exactly when they are most vulnerable. One respondent states it directly: "It is impossible to avoid large power boats if they don't avoid you due to speed differences and manoeuvrability in sailing boats being dependent on wind conditions."

Most cited

Congestion

Described as the compounding factor that turns individual risk elements into systemic danger. In open water, speed differences and visibility issues are manageable because there is room to anticipate and respond. In Matilda Bay at peak periods, there is not. One experienced respondent identifies it clearly: "In open water like Melville Water there is greater ability to anticipate potential collisions and take evasive action. Not the case in Matilda Bay where there is far more congestion." When a sailing vessel needs to take avoiding action from a power boat, it must do so within a fleet of 40–60 other sailing vessels. There is nowhere to go. This is the condition that converts near misses into collisions.

High

User capability and rules ignorance

Two distinct populations identified: power boat operators who do not understand maritime right-of-way rules and the physical limitations of sailing vessels; and novice or junior sailors and rowers who cannot respond adequately to unexpected situations. One experienced respondent identifies a dangerous sandwich: "You've effectively got a mix of low-experience users and very high-performance craft in the same space, which makes risk harder to manage." The high-performance end (foilers, skiffs) have limited visibility under spinnaker and high closing speeds. The novice end cannot take emergency avoiding action. Both are present in the same water simultaneously.

High

Visibility — multiple dimensions

Four distinct visibility failure modes identified: (1) Low freeboard — rowing shells, kayaks, and SUPs sit at or near water level and are hard to see from powered vessel helms, particularly in chop. Club rowing crews are always lit but remain effectively invisible due to their low freeboard and the sightlines of powered boat helms. (2) Low light — pre-dawn, dusk, and night-time rowing sessions and twilight sailing operate in conditions where small craft and unlit buoys and spit posts are effectively invisible. (3) Blind arcs — rowers face backward. Sailing vessels under spinnaker have a blind leeward quarter. High-performance skiffs are obscured by sail and spray. (4) Background clutter — city lights make small craft invisible at night from powered vessels. One respondent notes that Transperth ferry running lights were not visible on one occasion, making the ferry appear "blacked out."

Significant

Manoeuvrability asymmetry

Sailing vessels cannot turn on demand — they must tack through the wind, which requires sea room and time. In light air they have minimal steerage. Dragon boats are 10 metres long with 20 passengers and turn slowly. Rowing shells cannot stop or reverse meaningfully. When any of these vessels need to give way to a powered vessel, the give-way action itself requires conditions that may not exist — sufficient wind, sufficient space, sufficient time. One respondent captures it precisely: "Yachts do not have brakes." The requirement to give way and the ability to do so are not always compatible.

Significant

Wake and wash amplification

Wake from a large vessel does not dissipate at the vessel's location — it propagates outward and reflects. The Mounts Bay Road retaining wall reflects wake back across the bay, creating a second and third wave set from a single vessel passage. A rowing shell flooded by wash cannot be bailed quickly. A dragon boat broached by wash risks swamping 20 people. A disabled vessel already dealing with a problem (broken stay, post-capsize) is acutely vulnerable to wash from a passing vessel. Multiple respondents describe wash effects occurring well after the generating vessel has passed and from vessels not directly in their vicinity.

Structural

Enforcement absence

The speed limit, jet ski zone restrictions, and right-of-way rules are all nominally in place. The survey establishes they are not reliably enforced. Without enforcement, the risk management system depends entirely on voluntary compliance from the same operators who are identified as the primary risk source. Multiple respondents explicitly note that Water Police are rarely or never observed in the area. One notes that power boat operators exceeding safe speeds "nearly every week" without consequence. The regulatory framework exists on paper but does not function as a practical control.

Compounding

Factor interaction — when multiple risks align

The most dangerous situations described in the survey are not single-factor events. They occur when speed difference + congestion + low visibility + a vulnerable user align simultaneously. A capsize of a junior dinghy in a congested start area during afternoon racing, with power boats transiting at above-limit speed, in conditions where the capsized vessel is at water level and hard to see — every factor is present at once. One respondent articulates this: "The risk is high in these confined waters when there is a large number of power driven boats, small sailing dinghies, inexperienced sailors, official events, training, and ad hoc operations all happening concurrently. Speed, user experience, congestion, and a ferry driver contending with numerous simultaneous situations are major factors."

Ferry-specific implications drawn from factor analysis

Speed differential is unresolvable

Even at 8 knots, a ferry closes on a stationary capsized dinghy or rowing shell far faster than any evasive action is possible. The speed differential factor applies regardless of ferry operator skill.

A ferry cannot adapt to congestion

Every other user in the bay manages congestion by adapting — changing course, waiting, shifting to another part of the bay. In practice, a scheduled ferry service operating between fixed terminals and to a scheduled timetable has minimal capacity to materially alter its route, wait for congestion to pass, or avoid conflict areas. It is structurally incompatible with the congestion management regime.

Wake is not mitigated by slow speed alone

Ferry hull form at any speed generates wake. Wall reflection in Matilda Bay amplifies it. The wake reaches parts of the bay the ferry itself does not enter. Disability sailing and novice rowing groups within 100m of the retaining wall are exposed to reflected wash from any vessel transiting the bay.

Visibility of small craft from ferry helm

Capsized dinghies, rowing shells, and SUPs at water level are already described as extremely hard to see from powered vessels. A ferry helm is elevated, which assists some visibility but cannot address the detection of capsized or low-freeboard vessels in chop or at close range.

Enforcement baseline is already inadequate

Introducing a new vessel type into a waterway where existing rules are not enforced does not add a regulated layer — it adds another variable to an already inadequately controlled environment.

Vulnerable user concentration is peak at the same times

Juniors, disability sailing participants, and novice rowers are most concentrated in the bay during the same windows a commercially viable ferry would need to operate. The factor interaction risk is highest exactly when and where a ferry would be present.

Observations

Risk factors that are manageable in isolation combine simultaneously at peak periods in Matilda Bay.

Individual risk factors are manageable in isolation. A congested waterway with low-speed vessels is manageable. A low-visibility situation with few vessels is manageable. Speed differences in open water are manageable. The problem is that Matilda Bay at peak periods combines all of these factors simultaneously, in a confined space, with the most vulnerable user groups present. That combination is what produces the risk profile documented throughout this survey.

This is a system design problem, not a traffic management challenge.

The respondent who describes "a ferry driver contending with numerous simultaneous situations" has identified something analytically precise. A ferry master operating a fixed-route scheduled service would be required to navigate through a waterway with 100–200 vessels of incompatible types, operating under different rule sets, with varying manoeuvrability, including capsized vessels at water level, rowers facing backward, juniors in dinghies attending to their sailing rather than their surroundings, and disability sailing participants with limited ability to respond. This cannot be resolved by operator skill or training. The ferry has been placed in an environment where the conditions for safe operation cannot be reliably guaranteed.

This is the core safety argument from the dataset. It is supported by multiple consecutive survey questions pointing to the same conclusion from different angles, which gives it stronger evidentiary standing than any single finding could provide.

Signal quotes

"It is impossible to avoid large power boats if they don't avoid you due to speed differences and manoeuvrability in sailing boats being dependent on wind conditions."

"In open water there is greater ability to anticipate potential collisions. Not the case in Matilda Bay where there is far more congestion with boats and sailors who are using the safe sheltered waters to learn their skills."

"Yachts do not have brakes."

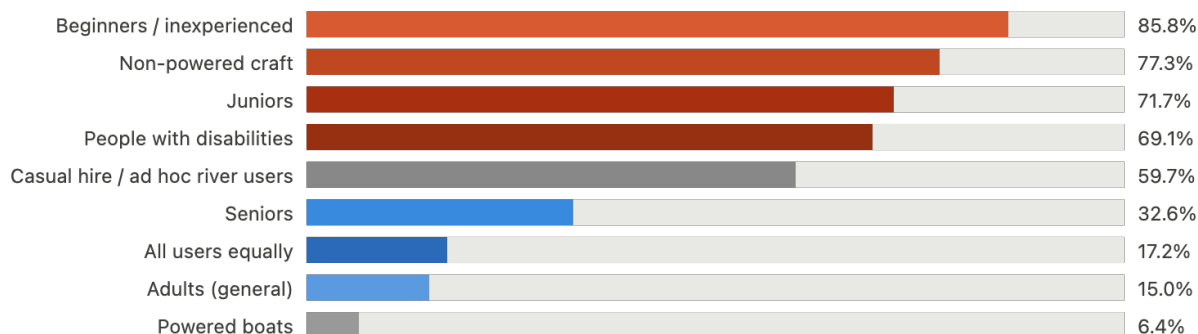
"Risk is high in these confined waters when there is a large number of power driven boats, small sailing dinghies, inexperienced sailors, official events, training, and ad hoc operations all happening concurrently. Speed, user experience, congestion, and a ferry driver contending with numerous simultaneous situations are major factors."

"Without improved compliance and enforcement, it is foreseeable that a serious incident will occur."

In your experience, who is most at risk on the water? (select all that apply)

233 respondents — club member survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Survey results — 233 respondents, select all that apply



Why each group is at elevated risk

85.8%

Beginners and inexperienced users

Cannot anticipate hazards, do not know maritime rules, prone to panic, cannot judge closing speeds or wave effects. Still developing boat handling — attending to the task of sailing or rowing rather than surrounding hazards. Most likely to capsize and least able to recover safely.

77.3%

Non-powered craft (all types)

Cannot manoeuvre out of danger quickly. Speed determined by wind or human power — often 2–4 knots versus approaching vessels at 15–25 knots. Cannot stop. Sit low in the water and are hard to see from powered vessel helms. No motor to take emergency evasive action. Rowers face backward. Cannot avoid wake once it arrives.

71.7%

Juniors

Combination of inexperience, smaller physical size, slower reaction times, tendency to focus on the sailing task rather than surroundings, higher capsize frequency, and inability to self-rescue in a dangerous situation. Also more likely to panic when conditions change rapidly. Specifically identified as concentrating in Matilda Bay for this reason.

69.1%

People with disabilities

Compromised reaction time and physical ability to take evasive action. Reduced levers to pull in an emergency — less control over the vessel. If in the water, face greater risk of not being able to self-rescue. Sailability participants specifically identified as sailing slow-moving vessels with volunteer supervision. Any encounter with high-wake vessels is disproportionately hazardous.

59.7%

Casual hire / ad hoc users

Unfamiliar with the specific waterway, navigation marks, channel locations, speed limits, and right-of-way rules. Do not know where to expect organised sailing, race courses, or ferry channels. Cannot predict what other vessels will do. No established pattern of behaviour on this waterway — unpredictable to others as well as themselves.

32.6%

Seniors

Reduced physical strength and slower reaction times. Still actively participating — including in high-performance dinghies — which is admirable but increases consequence severity if something goes wrong. Physical frailty means that a capsize or swamping that an experienced younger person manages carries more consequence for an older participant.

Themes from qualitative responses

Matilda Bay exists specifically because these groups need its protection.

Multiple respondents explicitly state that the reason juniors, disability sailors, and novice rowers use Matilda Bay is that it is the only sufficiently sheltered, low-traffic water on this stretch of the Swan River. "There are no other protected spots along the river like Matilda Bay." The groups most at risk are concentrated here precisely because this is where they can operate safely. Introducing a wake-producing scheduled service removes the condition that makes the bay viable for them.

Capsized vessel in the water is the critical vulnerability scenario.

Multiple respondents identify the post-capsize state as the highest individual risk moment. A capsized dinghy, rower, or paddler is at water level, difficult to see, cannot be moved, and occupies water that a passing vessel may not expect to be obstructed. A junior or novice rower, paddler, windsurfer, or disabled sailor in the water after a capsize has no ability to take evasive action and may not be visible to a ferry or power boat helm until it is too late. This scenario occurs regularly in Matilda Bay during normal racing and training operations.

The two-end spectrum: novices and high-performance sailors.

One experienced respondent identifies a risk at both ends: novices who lack awareness and control, and experienced high-performance sailors in foilers and skiffs who operate at high speed with limited leeward visibility under spinnaker. "You've effectively got a mix of low-experience users and very high-performance craft in the same space, which makes risk harder to manage." A ferry introduced into this mix faces unpredictable encounter geometry from both ends of the capability spectrum.

Non-powered craft vulnerability is a physics problem, not a training problem.

The most important finding across the qualitative responses is that the vulnerability of non-powered craft is not resolvable through better training, signage, or awareness campaigns. "It is impossible to avoid large power boats if they don't avoid you due to speed differences and manoeuvrability in sailing boats being dependent on wind conditions." The physics of the situation — closing speed, stopping distance, manoeuvrability asymmetry — mean that when a large powered vessel and a non-powered craft are on a collision course, the outcome depends entirely on the powered vessel taking action in time. If it does not, the non-powered craft has no recourse.

Ferry-specific implications

The groups most at risk are the groups most concentrated in Matilda Bay.

Beginners, juniors, disability sailing participants, and senior recreational users are identified by 69–86% of respondents as most at risk. These are precisely the groups that concentrate in Matilda Bay because of its sheltered character. A ferry service would introduce a wake-producing vessel into the water space that these groups depend on for safe participation. Even at regulated operating speeds, the regular production of vessel wake in an area that currently experiences none during these groups' activity windows removes the sheltered protection the bay provides — and that protection is the sole reason these vulnerable users can safely participate at this location.

Sailability is identified as the highest-consequence specific group.

Disability sailing participants appear across multiple response categories simultaneously: non-powered craft, people with disabilities, and often beginners or casual participants. They sail slow vessels with volunteer supervision, have limited emergency response capability, and if in the water face the greatest risk of being unable to self-rescue. One respondent states directly: "It would be unsafe for juniors and people with disabilities to sail in that area with a ferry."

Observations

The highest-risk user groups are concentrated in Matilda Bay during the same windows a commercially viable ferry would operate.

The four highest-risk groups — beginners and inexperienced (85.8%), non-powered craft (77.3%), juniors (71.7%), and people with disabilities (69.1%) — are not randomly distributed across the Swan River. They are specifically concentrated in Matilda Bay because of its sheltered character, and they are concentrated there during the same operational windows that a commercially viable ferry service would need to run. This is not coincidence. The bay's shelter is the reason these groups use it, and the reason they are vulnerable is the same reason the proposed ferry would find it useful as a terminal location: it is calm, accessible, and close to facilities.

The vulnerability of non-powered craft is a physics problem, not a training or awareness problem.

No amount of improved awareness, better lighting, or additional safety briefings changes the fact that a capsized junior in a dinghy at water level cannot move out of the path of an approaching ferry. The safety of that child depends entirely on the ferry operator having seen them and having sufficient time and distance to stop or divert. At peak Saturday afternoon, with 100–200 vessels in the bay, capsized dinghies are a normal and frequent occurrence. That is the operational reality a ferry master would be navigating through, not an exceptional edge case. The vulnerability is a consequence of the fundamental asymmetry between powered and unpowered vessel performance envelopes. It is structural, and it cannot be designed or trained away.

Signal quotes

"Matilda Bay is well known as an ideal area in which to learn — it offers sheltered waters, it's not excessively deep, is not heavily used by power boats capable of excessive speed and the vast majority of vessels are either wind or human powered. This self-limits speed in the area."

"There are no other protected spots along the river like Matilda Bay."

"It would be unsafe for juniors and people with disabilities to sail in that area with a ferry. However all users would face incredible risk and it would shut down recreational boating use of Matilda Bay."

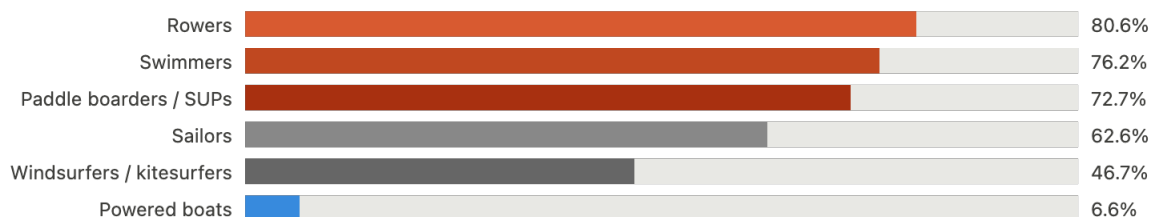
"Anyone in a non-powered boat can be put at risk as it is very hard to manage wash and if there is not a coach with the boat it can be very dangerous. Juniors are the most at risk as they are new and become frantic when the environment around them changes rapidly."

"The proposed ferry service will at times face directly into the face of sailing boats criss-crossing because they cannot sail directly into the wind. Experience on Sydney Harbour bears out the safety issues with dinghies sunk and sailors injured and even killed by ferries — even given the much greater expanse of navigable water."

In your experience, what type of watercraft is most at risk on the water? (select all that apply)

227 respondents — club member survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Survey results — 227 respondents, select all that apply



Why each craft type is at elevated risk

80.6%

Rowers

Face backward — cannot see approaching vessels. Very low freeboard, near-invisible from powered vessel helms in chop or low light. Operate pre-dawn and at dusk when visibility is worst. Long, narrow hulls highly susceptible to wake. Cannot stop or accelerate meaningfully. School and novice crews most exposed. Mounts Bay Road wall amplifies and reflects wash directly onto rowing corridors.

76.2%

Swimmers

Lowest possible profile — at or below water surface. Near-impossible to see from a powered vessel in any conditions, especially in chop, glare, or low light. No ability to take evasive action. Children wading in the foreshore shallows are largely invisible to vessels approaching from open water. Even a high-vis cap provides limited detectability at speed.

72.7%

Paddle boarders / SUPs

Low freeboard, unstable platform — prone to falling off in wash or chop. Once in the water, indistinguishable from a swimmer. Cannot move quickly out of the way. Often inexperienced casual users. Frequently use the foreshore at the terminal site and surrounding moorings. Difficult to see behind moored boats or infrastructure. Use foreshore areas where powered vessel wash reaches.

62.6%

Sailors (dinghies and keelboats)

Dependent on wind — cannot sail directly into wind, must tack across wide areas. In light air, minimal steerage. Cannot stop. Capsize places crew at water level in active waterway. Blind arc under spinnaker. High-performance skiffs at speed with limited outside visibility. Disability sailing vessels: slow, less controllable, crew less able to respond to emergencies.

46.7%

Windsurfers / kitesurfers / eFoils

Two distinct risk profiles. Traditional windsurfers and kitesurfers: when resting, their sail or kite lies in the water making them very hard to see. Kite lines present entanglement risk for passing vessels.

eFoils and hydrofoil boards are wind-independent — they need calm, sheltered water, which means they use Matilda Bay, not the exposed waters at Pelican Point. They operate at high speed in any weather, weave through moorings where sight lines are blocked, and are largely invisible from a ferry helm. Any assumption that new foil technology shifts activity to JoJo's is incorrect — it concentrates activity at Matilda Bay.

6.6%

Powered boats

Small proportion identify powered boats as at risk — primarily in collision scenarios with larger vessels, or when operated by inexperienced or inattentive skippers. Inherent advantage of speed, engine-assisted manoeuvrability, and higher freeboard visibility. Risk is primarily self-generated through excessive speed or inattention.

Shared vulnerability: the three common factors

1. Low or no freeboard — hard to see

Rowers, swimmers, SUPs, and windsurfers at rest all sit at or very near water level. From a powered vessel helm — elevated above the waterline — a rowing shell or swimmer in light chop is effectively invisible until very close range. This is not a lighting or awareness problem. It is a geometry problem. No amount of hi-vis gear resolves the fundamental issue that a rowing shell sits 15–20cm above the water surface while a ferry helm is several metres above it.

2. No engine — cannot take emergency evasive action

Every craft type identified as most at risk shares one characteristic: they are propelled by wind or human power. When a powered vessel approaches on a collision course, these craft cannot accelerate, stop, or reliably change direction on demand. Rowers cannot reverse. Sailors cannot turn unless the wind allows. SUPs cannot sprint. The collision avoidance burden falls entirely on the powered vessel, and if that vessel fails to act in time — through inattention, excessive speed, or poor visibility of the small craft — there is no recourse.

3. Highly susceptible to wake even without direct contact

A rowing shell flooded by crosswise wash can sink without any collision occurring. A dragon boat broached by reflected wake can swamp 20 people. A SUP paddler knocked off their board by ferry wash is now a swimmer in an active waterway. Wake hazard extends well beyond the vessel that generates it and affects craft in areas the vessel itself does not enter. Multiple respondents note that Rottneest ferry wash causes dangerous conditions in Matilda Bay even though the ferry does not travel through the bay itself. A terminal ferry manoeuvring within the bay would generate wash at close range to all of these craft types simultaneously.

Specific spatial risk from survey responses

Rowers along the Mounts Bay Road wall are in a wake amplification zone.

One respondent describes the wall-reflection problem precisely: "When the wash rebounds off the Mounts Bay Road wall you get trapped in it, as it then rebounds off itself and the cycle continues. This can stop boats from rowing for a good 10 minutes." Any vessel generating significant wake in the bay creates a reflected wave set that reaches the inshore rowing corridor whether or not the vessel itself approaches that corridor.

Disabled sailors, learners, and racing craft occupy different but overlapping zones.

One detailed respondent maps the spatial arrangement: "Disabled sailors mostly sail in and around the moored boats. Learner sailors sail further out in the bay beyond the moored boats. Racing sailboats sail further out again using Knot Spit, Poplar, and Crawley buoys — tacking across wide expanses because they cannot sail directly into the wind. Rowers mostly row down the northern shore adjacent to Mounts Bay Road." A ferry route through the bay would pass through multiple occupation zones simultaneously, each with its own vulnerable user population.

Observations

Rowers are rated the highest-risk watercraft type, above even swimmers.

At 80.6%, rowers are rated as the most at-risk craft type on the waterway. This is a significant finding because rowers are often perceived as a semi-organised, supervised activity with some inherent safety structure. The survey respondents do not see it that way, and the reasoning is sound. The combination of backward orientation, pre-dawn, dusk, and night-time operating hours, near-zero freeboard, extreme wake sensitivity in a long narrow hull, and the specific corridor they use alongside the Mounts Bay Road wall where wash reflects and amplifies creates a risk profile that respondents judge as the highest of any craft type on this waterway.

The risk equation changes fundamentally when a powered vessel on a fixed schedule enters the mix.

Every non-powered craft type in Matilda Bay — sailors, rowers, SUPs, dragon boats, and kayaks — operates under a shared rule set where right of way is determined and generally understood. The entire safety management framework within the bay is built on that shared logic. A powered vessel on a fixed commercial schedule does not participate in that logic in the same way. It introduces a scheduled, non-negotiable presence with long stopping distances, significant wake, and operational constraints of its own that override the informal adaptive behaviour the other users rely on for safety.

Signal quotes

"All the selected watercraft are either wind or human powered which self-limits the speed in the area. Moreover, because they are all wind or human powered, the rules of who gives way are not up for dispute. The introduction of a power boat into the mix, in whatever form, greatly changes the risk equation."

"Rowers go backwards and are in very unbalanced boats, and include many junior and school-aged children. Paddle boarders and SUPs that use the bay are typically inexperienced. Swimmers are very difficult to see."

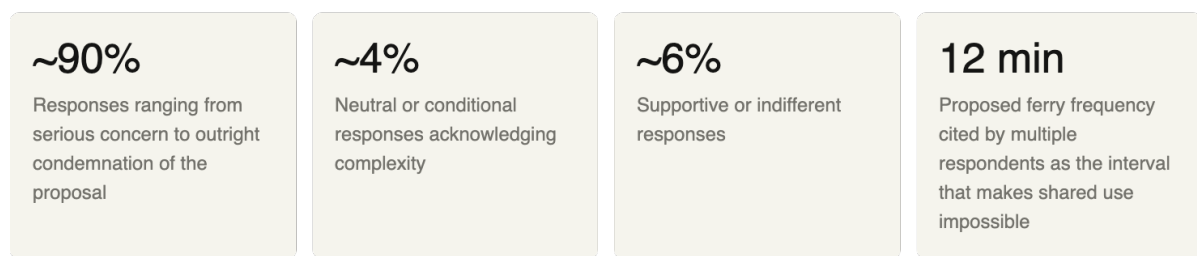
"Introducing more regular vessel movements such as a ferry service would increase rowers' exposure to collision risk."

"Everyone without a powered boat — because it takes longer to get out of the way and to mitigate the effects of the wash. Swimmers are the most at risk as they have no protection if something were to go wrong."

"Slow moving craft are most at risk because they are not able to quickly avoid another vessel. Row boats, dinghies, yachts, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, windsurfers and kites are low in the water and their craft offer little protection in collisions."

In Matilda Bay, how do you think regular ferry operations would interact with existing users?

Response sentiment summary



Predicted interactions by category of harm

Collision risk	Direct collision between ferry and small craft — described as inevitable The overwhelming majority of respondents predict collision incidents. Multiple respondents use language such as "disaster waiting to happen," "someone will be injured or killed," and "there will be an accident." The ferry route directly crosses RPYC and PDSC start lines, racing mark approaches, junior sailing training areas, and rowing corridors. Multiple respondents note that ferry drivers operating on a schedule will not have the situational awareness or the operational flexibility to avoid all encounters. One states: "They won't come out second best. What do they care?" Another: "There will be an accident — full stop."
Wake / wash	Constant wake disruption at 12-minute intervals — described as training-ending Multiple rowing respondents describe having to stop for approximately five minutes to allow ferry wash to pass before resuming — meaning at a 12-minute interval, rowing training becomes practically impossible. Dragon boat respondents note that they already feel Rottneest ferry wash from outside the bay; a terminal ferry at close range would be exponentially worse. Reflected wash from the Mounts Bay Road wall would compound direct wake effects. One respondent calculates: "Every trip from the ferry would cross paths with rowing boats from the UWA boat shed — extremely regularly, every single ferry."
Program termination	Specific programs identified as incompatible with ferry operations — not merely disrupted Disability sailing (Sailability): multiple respondents state it would have to cease. Junior dinghy training: described as impossible with a ferry crossing every 12 minutes. Rowing pre-dawn and evening sessions: collision risk in low visibility described as "terrifying." Keelboat racing: start lines directly in ferry path, racing marks no longer usable. Dragon boat training: foreshore area and bay face bisected by terminal approach. One respondent explicitly lists: "crabbing Dec–Apr, rowers year-round, Sailability on operating days, Fishability, Wednesday afternoon sailing year-round, weekend sailing juniors/training and senior classes, surf boat rowing, nearly half the power boat users who don't follow rules" — effectively the entire current user schedule.
Spatial reduction	Terminal infrastructure and ferry exclusion zone bisects the bay Multiple respondents note the terminal jetty itself — not just the moving ferry — permanently reduces usable water space. "The proposed terminal cuts our training area in half." Exclusion zones around the wharf would require relocation of private moorings. The approach channel through the bay creates a de facto restricted corridor that other users must navigate around. One detailed respondent estimates swimming bans of 100 metres either side of the terminal would be required, cutting the foreshore in half. PDSC start line alignment directly coincides with the proposed ferry approach track.

Right of way

Ferry right of way as commercial vessel forces all other users to give way — ending sailing in practice

Multiple respondents raise the right-of-way question explicitly. If ferries have right of way, all sailing and rowing must continuously yield — making organised racing and training impossible. If sailing has right of way over ferries, the ferry timetable becomes unworkable with 40–100 sailing vessels requiring it to give way multiple times per crossing. One respondent: "Assuming ferries would be required to give way to sail, they are likely to frequently face significant delays. Giving ferries priority would probably mean existing sailing programs would not be practically possible." The right-of-way framework produces a no-win outcome in either direction.

Low visibility

Early morning and evening ferry movements in darkness — highest-consequence window

Proposed operating hours of 6am to 12:30am mean ferries would operate in pre-dawn darkness and late evening. Rowing squads are on water from 5:15am. Twilight sailing finishes after dark. Multiple respondents describe the prospect of ferries in these conditions as "terrifying." One: "Ferries in the dark mixing with rowing craft is a terrifying prospect." Another: "The early morning and late night ferries will pose a significant threat to rowers in low light conditions, possibly leading to boat strikes which would certainly result in significant injury or death."

Conditional

A small number of conditional or nuanced responses

A handful of respondents acknowledge that experienced sailors and larger keelboats would likely manage, while identifying rowers, dragon boaters, disability sailors, and junior sailors as the groups most impacted. One detailed respondent raises transcritical wake speed as a specific technical risk requiring proper hydrodynamic analysis. Another notes that professional ferry skippers would be vigilant but acknowledges the interaction complexity. These are the more measured responses and they do not contradict the safety findings — they simply identify a subset of users who would cope while confirming that vulnerable groups would not.

Supportive

A small minority are supportive or indifferent

A very small number of respondents express support ("Fantastic, can't wait for the ferry," "GREAT") or state that professional ferry skippers would handle interactions safely. These responses provide no operational analysis and do not engage with the specific congestion, wake, right-of-way, or program incompatibility issues raised by the majority.

Predicted impacts on specific user groups



The right-of-way dilemma — no workable resolution

If the ferry has right of way

All sailing, rowing, and paddling must give way to the ferry at every crossing. Racing becomes impossible — start lines cannot function. Training programs must stop every 12 minutes. Junior and disability sailing effectively cease. The bay loses its function as a training ground.

If sailing has right of way over the ferry

The ferry is required to give way to 40–100 sailing vessels on every crossing during peak periods. The timetable becomes unworkable. Commercial viability collapses. The ferry cannot maintain schedule. One respondent: "Assuming ferries would be required to give way to sail, they are likely to frequently face significant delays."

The structural conclusion

There is no right-of-way configuration that makes a scheduled ferry service compatible with existing Matilda Bay waterway use. Either the ferry makes existing use impossible, or existing use makes the ferry commercially unviable. Both outcomes are damaging and neither resolves the safety problem.

Observations

The right-of-way dilemma is irresolvable in this specific waterway.

This is the most important structural finding from this dataset. It is not a matter of opinion or sentiment. It is a logical consequence of the applicable maritime rules applied to the specific operational context. Under general maritime law, power gives way to sail. A commercial ferry is a power vessel. In a waterway with 40–100 sailing vessels conducting racing and training on active race courses, applying that rule consistently means the ferry gives way constantly and cannot maintain schedule. The commercial viability of the service collapses. The alternative, granting the ferry priority as a commercial vessel, requires all non-powered users to continuously yield, which ends organised racing and makes training programs unworkable. There is no third option. The rules produce an irresolvable conflict in this specific waterway, and no amount of ferry scheduling or route design can resolve it while the existing user base remains in place.

If the ferry gives way to sailing vessels: the timetable fails and commercial viability collapses. If sailing vessels give way to the ferry: organised racing and training programs terminate. No configuration of rules resolves this without eliminating one of the two uses entirely.

The unprompted JoJo's reference continues to carry significant evidentiary weight.

Respondents with direct experience of both sites are independently and repeatedly identifying the Nedlands Jetty site as the superior alternative, on waterway safety, spatial capacity, parking, and public transport connectivity grounds. That convergence across multiple question types, without any comparative framing in the questions themselves, is strong survey evidence of a genuine user preference. It should carry weight in any comparative site analysis.

Signal quotes

"The proposal to run two routes from Elizabeth Quay and Raffles to Matilda Bay with two ferries operating each route indicates one ferry every 7 minutes for 18 hours a day. This is tantamount to total stupidity. There is no way this activity will not result in multiple serious injuries or deaths."

"It would make it almost impossible to row out of the UWA boat shed as the wash would be consistent and in the same area as we would be rowing and the paths we use are the same as the proposed routes."

"Regular ferry operations would have to mean the cessation of water activities for swimmers, rowers, junior sailors, dinghy sailors and water users with disabilities."

"The ferry stop every 5 minutes to allow ferry wash to pass before resuming rowing. At a 12-minute interval this would make training practically impossible."

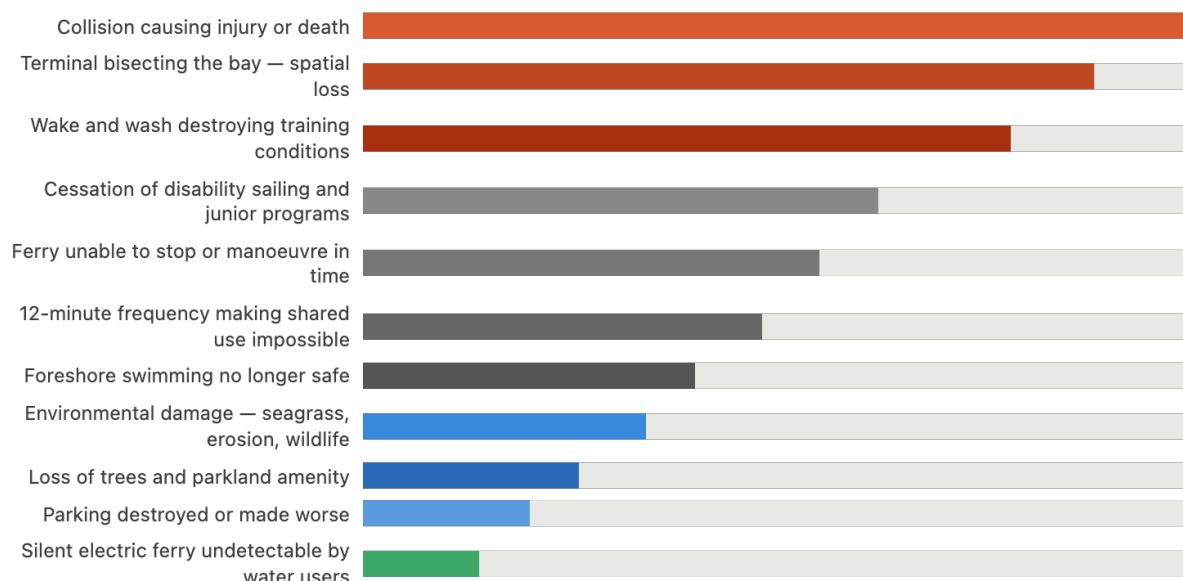
"In Sydney the ferries regularly collide with recreational users in areas they both use. Matilda Bay is a recreation area currently well served by public transport."

"A regular large ferry would remove the safety and shelter that is currently the main attraction of the bay, meaning vulnerable and inexperienced users would not be able to learn in a safe way."

"I think there are much better options available on Melville Water — JoJo's area for instance — which is a much bigger water area, links to existing bus routes, is in close proximity to UWA, and has better parking and taxi availability. There is minimal space for key elements of a public transport hub at the proposed location."

In Matilda Bay, what do you see as the biggest risk or impact with the ferry service and terminal location?

Frequency of risk and impact themes cited



Risks and impacts in detail

Fatal risk

Collision causing serious injury or death — assessed as probable, not possible

The dominant response across this question is that a collision resulting in serious injury or death is not a theoretical risk but a predicted consequence. Respondents consistently use language such as "someone will be killed," "deaths will occur," "a collision causing death or injury is certain," and "it is only a matter of time." The specific scenarios most frequently identified: a capsized junior dinghy in the ferry path; a swimmer near the terminal unseen from the helm; a rowing shell struck in pre-dawn darkness; a disability sailing vessel unable to manoeuvre clear. Multiple respondents draw on direct experience of fatal and serious ferry incidents on other waterways including Sydney Harbour, Elizabeth Quay, and the Narrows. One respondent: "People will be killed. It is only a matter of time."

Spatial

Terminal location bisects the bay — described repeatedly as "cutting the bay in half"

The physical location of the proposed terminal is identified as a structural problem independent of ferry operations. The terminal jetty itself creates a permanent barrier across the bay, dividing the foreshore into two disconnected halves. Approach corridors for vessels docking and departing create de facto exclusion zones. The two ferry routes out of the terminal — toward Elizabeth Quay and toward Applecross — create two additional corridors cutting through the racing areas used by RPYC, PDSC, MBSC, and the Sea Scouts. One respondent: "The two ferry routes heading out to Perth and Applecross will create two large cuts through the area used by all the clubs. Getting junior sailors safely out and back will be terrifying." One experienced respondent introduces the concept of "pondification" — users restricting themselves to one side of the terminal and effectively losing access to the full bay.

Operational

Ferry unable to stop or take evasive action in time — the physics argument

Multiple respondents identify the fundamental stopping distance problem. A ferry at operational speed in a bay the size of Matilda Bay does not have sufficient room to stop before reaching a capsized dinghy, a swimmer, or a rowing shell that has appeared unexpectedly in its path. This is not a skill or attention issue. It is a physics problem. The closing distance available between the terminal approach and the areas where small craft are most concentrated is insufficient for a vessel of this size and speed to guarantee avoidance. One respondent notes: "Ferries being unable to stop and avoid collision with smaller craft" is the core risk. Another: "A large ferry boat unable to stop quickly colliding with yachts and dinghies."

High**12-minute frequency makes shared use structurally impossible**

At a 12-minute interval, the waterway cannot function as a shared space for non-powered craft. Rowing training requires stopping for approximately five minutes to allow wash to pass. At 12-minute intervals, crews spend more time stopped than rowing. Racing start sequences — which already take 30–45 minutes — cannot be completed without multiple ferry interruptions. One respondent calculates that a blind sailing match racing session could have up to 120 interactions with ferries across both routes for a single session. Another: "A racing start sequence with a ferry every 12 minutes is near impossible." The frequency is not an incidental detail — it is the mechanism by which an otherwise marginal risk becomes a structural incompatibility.

High**Cessation of specific programs — disability sailing, junior training, rowing**

Respondents do not predict inconvenience or disruption. They predict termination. Sailability is consistently identified as a program that cannot continue in Matilda Bay with a ferry service operating. Junior dinghy training from PDSC, RPYC, and MBSC is described as incompatible with 12-minute ferry intervals. Pre-dawn and evening rowing is described as unacceptably dangerous. Dragon boat training is described as losing its primary training area. One respondent identifies these not merely as sporting losses but as equity losses: "Disabled persons deprived of their participation in sailing and socialisation due to safety fears and reaction times." Another: "The disability sailing programme will be lost."

High**Silent electric ferry — undetectable by water users relying on sound**

A specific risk identified by multiple respondents that does not appear in earlier questions: an electric ferry produces no engine noise. Rowers facing backward currently rely partly on engine noise to detect approaching powered vessels. Blind sailing participants rely on sound. Swimmers have no visual capacity for detection and also rely on sound. A silent vessel approaching at speed eliminates this secondary detection mechanism. One respondent: "The speed and silence of an electric ferry will make it super unsuitable to have other things moving around the area." Another: "Avoiding power ferries including electric power as you will not hear them."

Significant**Environmental impacts — seagrass, foreshore erosion, wildlife displacement**

A substantial number of respondents identify environmental damage as a major impact category, including: prop wash and turbidity destroying seagrass beds; wake-driven foreshore erosion; displacement of bird species including nesting black swans; disruption to dolphin pods using the bay; light and noise pollution from the terminal and charging infrastructure; and removal of mature heritage trees. These are raised as community impacts independent of the waterway safety question but are consistent with the finding that Matilda Bay functions as an ecological sanctuary as well as a recreational and sporting ground.

Structural**Behavioural displacement — users will simply stop coming**

One of the most analytically precise responses in the dataset describes this as "pondification." Users who do not feel confident crossing a ferry transit path will restrict themselves to one half of the bay or stop using the area altogether. Informal recreational use — swimming, picnicking, SUPs, kayaking — is particularly sensitive to perceived risk and ambient disruption. Families with children will not bring them to a foreshore with active ferry movements. Club membership will decline as training conditions deteriorate. The bay's function as Perth's primary sheltered recreational waterway will be lost not by formal prohibition but by voluntary withdrawal. One respondent: "I think the ferry will kill the safe space. No where else on the river is safe to learn and practice. People will just not want to fight the ferry and stay home instead."

Comparative

JoJo's repeatedly identified as superior alternative — unprompted

As with previous questions, multiple respondents independently identify the Nedlands Jetty (JoJo's) site as a preferable alternative without being asked to compare sites. Reasons cited include lower ambient waterway user density, existing jetty infrastructure, proximity to UWA, existing Purple Cat bus service, available parking, and the absence of the racing and training conflicts that make the Matilda Bay site incompatible. One detailed respondent: "There are much better options available on Melville Water — JoJo's area for instance — which is a much bigger water area, links to existing bus routes, is in close proximity to UWA and has better parking. There is minimal space for key elements of a public transport hub at the proposed location." Another: "There is an unused jetty and associated areas at Nedlands (JoJo's) with more than adequate parking and unused open space. There is a well used and functional Purple Cat bus service that currently services the Matilda Bay side of the University."

A new and significant finding: the silent electric ferry risk

Sound as a secondary safety system — removed by electric propulsion

This question surfaces a risk factor not identified in earlier survey questions. The current safety management regime on the waterway relies partly on approaching vessels being audible before they are visible. Rowers facing backward detect powered vessels partly by engine sound. Blind sailing participants have sound as their primary detection mechanism. Swimmers have no visual capacity and rely entirely on sound and vibration. A silent electric ferry operating at speed eliminates this secondary warning system entirely. Combined with the low freeboard and backward orientation of rowing crews operating in pre-dawn darkness, this creates a specific high-consequence scenario: a rowing shell struck by a silent, unlit (or dimly lit) ferry in low visibility conditions, with no prior auditory warning. This warrants specific treatment in any assessment as a novel risk introduced by the technology type, not just the vessel category.

Observations

The silent electric ferry is a specific and novel risk not examined in earlier questions.

Every other risk identified in the survey dataset has a parallel in existing literature on ferry-sailing conflicts. The silent vessel risk in a waterway where rowers face backward, where blind sailing operates, and where pre-dawn and low-light sessions are a daily occurrence is different in kind. It materially worsens the already significant collision risk profile because it removes a secondary warning mechanism that the current safety regime relies on, without replacing it with anything equivalent. Rowers facing backward in darkness currently detect approaching powered vessels partly through engine sound. Blind sailing participants rely on sound as their primary hazard detection mechanism. A silent electric ferry at speed eliminates this detection layer entirely. This warrants specific treatment in any safety assessment as a risk introduced by the technology type, not just the vessel category.

Pondification describes an irreversible impact that the rest of the survey data implies but does not name.

The concept of pondification — the progressive behavioural withdrawal of users from a space they no longer feel safe using — names a process that leads to a permanent reduction in the bay's function as a recreational and sporting resource. This is not a reversible impact. Once junior sailing programs terminate, disability sailing ceases, and families stop bringing children to the foreshore, those communities do not easily reconstitute. The sporting and social capital built over 150 years of use is lost. The ferry service that replaced it would need to demonstrate extraordinary and sustained patronage to justify that exchange. The survey data provides no basis for confidence that it would.

Signal quotes

"People will be killed. It is only a matter of time. The location of the terminal which determines the route is right through where the children and families and inexperienced sailors learn these skills. This will cause deaths."

"The most significant risk is serious injury or death to a water user. There is also a substantial risk to organised recreational clubs that rely on this water space, as their programs could be heavily modified, restricted, or cancelled. This would be a significant loss, particularly given the circa 150 years of history associated with this waterway."

"A match racing training session could have up to 120 interactions with ferries coming in and going out on both routes for a single blind sailing training session. It is just not workable due to safety concerns."

"The speed and silence of an electric ferry will make it super unsuitable to have other things moving around the area — especially small craft that can't be seen easily or can't move out of the way easily."

"I think the ferry will kill the safe space. Nowhere else on the river is safe to learn and practice. People will just not want to fight the ferry and stay home instead and remain couch potatoes."

"The biggest risk is that it introduces a relatively high-speed, high-frequency service into an environment that is already heavily used by a mix of recreational users, many of whom are inexperienced. That creates a fundamental mismatch in speed, predictability, and awareness."

Are there river areas, times of day or conditions where you believe interaction between ferries and existing users would be particularly challenging? Explain.

Ferry conflict intensity by day and time (based on existing user activity)

Manageable Low conflict Moderate conflict High conflict Critical — incompatible

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Pre-dawn 05:00–07:30	Rowing in darkness. Low visibility. Silent ferry undetectable.	Rowing in darkness. Low visibility. Silent ferry undetectable.	Rowing in darkness. Low visibility. Silent ferry undetectable.	Rowing in darkness. Low visibility. Silent ferry undetectable.	Rowing in darkness. Low visibility. Silent ferry undetectable.	Rowing + Hale School + crabbing. Multiple crews in darkness.	Low use
Morning 07:30–12:00	Recreational building. Low conflict.	Recreational building.	Programs, recreational. Ferry crosses training area.	Recreational building.	Recreational building.	Dragon boat, juniors, Sailability, boat ramp. Ferry crosses all zones.	Junior sailing training, learn-to-row, recreational. Ferry crosses course areas.
Midday 11:00–14:00	Lowest conflict window	Lowest conflict window	Sailability. Pre-race assembly building. Ferry in Sailability zone.	Sailability.	Recreational peak. Ferry present.	All clubs assembling. Ferry through pre-race area continuously.	Recreational and sailing building.
Afternoon 14:00–17:00	Low use	Night racing some seasons. Ferry present.	RPYC racing 40–60 vessels. Pre-start 45 min. Ferry through start line every 12 min.	Some training. Ferry present.	Twilight prep. Recreational peak. Ferry through busy bay.	100–200 vessels. All clubs. Absolute peak. Ferry every 12 min through racing zones.	Winter racing. Recreational. Ferry through course areas.
Evening 17:00–20:00	Multiple rowing crews. Back-to-back junior + novice sessions. No light. Silent ferry undetectable. Wake rebounds off Mounts Bay Rd wall.	Dragon boat + multiple rowing crews. Back-to-back sessions. No light. Silent ferry. Wake rebounds.	Post-race + multiple rowing crews. Back-to-back sessions. Low-no light. Silent ferry. Wake rebounds.	Dragon boat + multiple rowing crews. Back-to-back sessions. No light. Silent ferry. Wake rebounds.	Twilight sailing. Low visibility. Ferry + sailing fleet together in dark.	Post-race. Recreational. Some low light.	Quieting
Late eve 20:00–00:30	Ferry operating. Minimal other users.	Ferry operating. Low conflict.	Ferry operating. Low conflict.	Ferry operating. Low conflict.	24hr events. Sea Scout night activities. Ferry in darkness.	Social events. Some night sailing. Ferry in darkness.	Ferry operating. Minimal other users.

Ferry proposed to operate 06:00–00:30. Every cell in this table represents a period when the ferry would be running. There is no off-peak window during commercially viable hours that avoids a critical or high conflict cell.

Conditions making interaction particularly dangerous

Critical

Low light — pre-dawn, dusk, and night-time, year-round

Rowing squads operate from 05:15 year-round across multiple clubs, with dusk and night-time sessions continuing to 20:00 in winter. The ferry would operate 06:00–00:30, placing it in pre-dawn and post-dusk conditions every day.

Rowers face backward, sitting 15–20cm above water. A silent electric ferry at speed would be undetectable until within metres. One respondent: "Early morning and late night ferries will pose a significant threat to rowers in low light conditions, possibly leading to boat strikes which would certainly result in significant and expensive damages to the rowing vessel as well as injury or death for the rower."

Critical

Low sun angle — sunrise and sunset glare

Perth's east-west sun angle creates glare at sunrise and sunset that reduces visibility for both ferry operators and small craft users. In winter, sunset coincides with the peak evening training window. One respondent: "At sunset, ferry operators would be looking into the sun and could miss seeing other water users." This is a predictable, recurring impairment that cannot be managed by awareness campaigns or lighting requirements.

Critical**Wednesday 14:00–17:00 and Saturday 08:00–17:00 — structural incompatibility**

These are the periods explicitly identified by the largest number of respondents as making ferry operations incompatible with existing use. Wednesday afternoon racing involves 40–60 keelboats with pre-start manoeuvres for up to 45 minutes, directly across the ferry route. Saturday is effectively a continuous high-conflict day from dragon boat and junior sailing in the morning through to the peak racing period in the afternoon. Multiple respondents describe these windows not as challenging but as impossible: "A racing start sequence with a ferry every 12 minutes is near impossible." "There is no way it can be done safely."

High**Strong easterly — morning wind conditions**

Easterly winds create short, steep chop in Matilda Bay that is not protected by the bay's geometry. Multiple respondents identify this as a condition where sailing vessels have minimal steerage and cannot manoeuvre to avoid an approaching ferry. One detailed respondent notes: "The biggest impact is wind. Perth is a windy city. Docking in any breeze is challenging, and when there is a normal sea breeze and especially a brisk morning easterly, more river is going to be compromised and a lot more wash will be made to complete the manoeuvre." Ferries attempting to dock in strong easterlies would generate additional wash at the worst time for small craft manoeuvring.

High**Calm, light air conditions — sailing vessels becalmed and unable to manoeuvre**

The opposite of strong wind also creates danger. In light or no wind, sailing vessels have no steerage. They cannot get out of a ferry's path. Racing fleets becalmed near start lines or mark areas become large, stationary obstacles that a ferry on schedule cannot wait for. One respondent: "Conditions when winds are very light may result in large groups of yachts becalmed together. They will not be able to manoeuvre readily." Another: "In windy conditions racing yachts will be wanting to overtake the ferries." The risk exists at both extremes of the wind range.

High**High-performance sailing days — sea breeze conditions**

On strong sea breeze days, high-performance skiffs and foilers operate at 15–30 knots with limited leeward visibility under spinnaker. One experienced respondent describes the specific conflict geometry: "You have sailing craft doing 15–30 knots with spray, sail position, and boat attitude all reducing visibility. Mixing that with ferries travelling at speed creates a challenging environment, particularly as both are fast-moving and not always able to see everything clearly." The ferry's under-bridge design also constrains helm visibility, creating a scenario where two fast-moving vessels with limited sight lines are sharing the same water space.

Significant**Fog, smoke, and overcast conditions**

Perth's summer smoke events and occasional winter fog are identified as conditions where visibility drops sharply and existing waterway safety is already strained. A ferry on schedule in these conditions, operating at speed to maintain timetable, with reduced visibility from the helm due to its under-bridge design, in a bay containing rowing crews in narrow shells and sailing vessels on race courses, represents a specific high-consequence scenario. One respondent: "In stronger winds, dusk, dawn and foggy or smoky weather, visibility and agility of crafts would be impeded, but this is never taken into account by ferries."

Significant**School holiday and public holiday periods**

These periods are identified across multiple questions as the highest recreational user density windows, with less experienced operators, more children in the water, more casual hire craft, and more jet ski activity. Combined with the maximum ferry frequency proposed (effectively one movement every 7–12 minutes across both routes), these are the periods of highest aggregate risk. One respondent notes: "The bay on a public holiday with 1,000s of recreational users and a ferry every 12 minutes" as the scenario they find most alarming.

Locations identified as particularly challenging

Central Matilda Bay — terminal approach and departure corridors

Cited by the largest number of respondents as the primary conflict zone. The terminal location requires the ferry to transit through the area used simultaneously by junior sailing, Sailability, dragon boat training, racing pre-start assembly, foreshore paddlers and swimmers. Paddlers are particularly vulnerable in this section — they weave between the moored boat area at and around the terminal site at the same water depth the ferry will operate. Every departure and arrival creates a conflict event with multiple user groups simultaneously.

RPYC start line (F Jetty alignment)

The ferry route directly crosses the RPYC start line. At Wednesday and Saturday race starts, 40–60 vessels are in pre-start manoeuvres for up to 45 minutes in this exact area. A 12-minute ferry interval means multiple crossings during every pre-start sequence.

UWABC foreshore — the pre-dawn, dusk and night-time rowing corridor

The stretch between the UWABC boat shed and RPYC is a primary rowing training corridor and directly coincides with the proposed ferry route. The corridor from UWABC to the Narrows is equally a primary rowing corridor. Multiple respondents from rowing squads state their morning sessions would be made impossible or dangerous. School rowing programs with year 9 students using the calm inshore water between the cafe and the boat shed would be forced into the ferry channel.

Narrows Bridge

Multiple respondents identify the Narrows as a specific high-risk point: constrained navigation channel, shared use by rowing crews transiting to the city, ferry acceleration zone post-bridge (generating maximum wake), and low visibility under the bridge structure. One respondent describes being capsized here by ferry wash.

Inner and Outer Dolphin Spit corridor

The pinch point between Matilda Bay and Melville Water funnels all traffic regardless of type. On a Saturday afternoon with racing fleets transiting and a ferry also using the channel, the geometry produces unavoidable close-quarters situations with no sea room for any vessel to take avoiding action.

The operational pressure finding

Ferries on a timetable cannot adapt — existing commercial operators can and do.

One of the most analytically precise observations in this question comes from an experienced respondent who contrasts the proposed ferry with existing commercial operators: "Existing commercial operators such as Rottneest tour boats generally have better visibility, less constrained schedules, and in practice will slow down and keep clear of other users when needed — and most of the time they do this very well. By contrast, ferries are running to a timetable and have charging constraints to meet, which creates an inherent incentive to maintain speed and schedule rather than slow down." This identifies a structural difference between the proposed service and existing powered vessels that the survey respondents broadly tolerate. The Rottneest ferry is cited as dangerous in the dataset, but it operates infrequently and with some schedule flexibility. A high-frequency timetabled service with charging constraints at the terminal creates a fundamentally different operational pressure on the helm.

Timetable compliance requirements create a structural safety risk in a mixed-use recreational waterway

The Public Transport Authority contracts with ferry service providers under incentivised scheduling agreements. From the existing Transperth ferry contract structure, compliance standards include: no early departures permitted; no more than 4 minutes late; 98% compliance target across all trips; continuous auditing of 100% of trips; escalating damages for non-compliance; and ongoing Authority scrutiny with contract renewal implications.

This creates a strong commercial incentive to prioritise schedule recovery. In a constrained mixed-use recreational waterway, ferry operators do not control congestion, the speed and behaviour of unpowered water users, weather conditions, or recreational boating unpredictability. The combination of strict punctuality metrics, continuous auditing, and escalating financial consequences can lead in practice to: higher transit speeds; tighter manoeuvring margins; reduced willingness to yield; pressure on masters to maintain headway; and operational resistance to ad hoc slowdowns caused by river users.

The contract includes a clause (8.2(c)) requiring the operator to determine and maintain reliable running times — an assumption that the corridor can be accurately modelled and running times consistently maintained. In a waterway with 100–200 vessels of incompatible types operating simultaneously, this assumption does not hold. From a marine safety perspective, the contractual framework itself becomes a risk driver: it creates financial and reputational pressure that is structurally incompatible with the adaptive, situational decision-making that safe navigation in this environment requires.

Observations

There is no time window within the proposed operating hours that avoids a high or critical conflict period.

The conflict heat map makes visible something the text responses imply but do not state as a single conclusion: no window within the proposed operating hours of 06:00 to 00:30 avoids a high or critical conflict cell across the weekly schedule. The late evening cells from 20:00 onwards on weekdays are the closest to manageable, but even those involve a silent electric vessel in darkness on a waterway where rowing crews and night sailing events occur. The only cells approaching low conflict are isolated to Monday, Thursday, and Sunday late evenings, outside any commercially viable peak demand window. There is no configuration of a commercially rational ferry timetable that avoids the critical conflict periods identified in the survey data.

The proposed service represents a qualitatively different operational regime, not a marginal increase in existing risk.

The Rottnest ferry is already cited multiple times across the dataset as dangerous, and it operates with relatively low frequency and some schedule flexibility. The proposed service would operate at approximately forty-four times the frequency, follow a route that dissects rather than skirts the perimeter of the bay, and with charging constraints and contractual operational requirements that remove schedule flexibility as a risk mitigation option. This is not a marginal increase in an existing risk. It is a qualitatively different operational regime introduced into the same water space, with none of the flexibility that allows the existing Rottnest service to be partially tolerated by current users.

Signal quotes

"From 06:00 to 00:30 the ferry will be running. The bay is used all day. It will be challenging all the time."

"The rowing club trains 05:30–07:30 Monday to Saturday, 05:30–10:30 Saturday, 16:00–20:00 Monday to Thursday, 14:00–16:00 Friday and school programs. That is when ferry conflict occurs for us alone."

"With a ferry approximately every 12 to 15 minutes it will be challenging all the time. We cannot get very far in 12 minutes, and it is not just the ferry movements — it is the residual wake. Even a so-called low-wake boat is enough to interfere with a dragon boat."

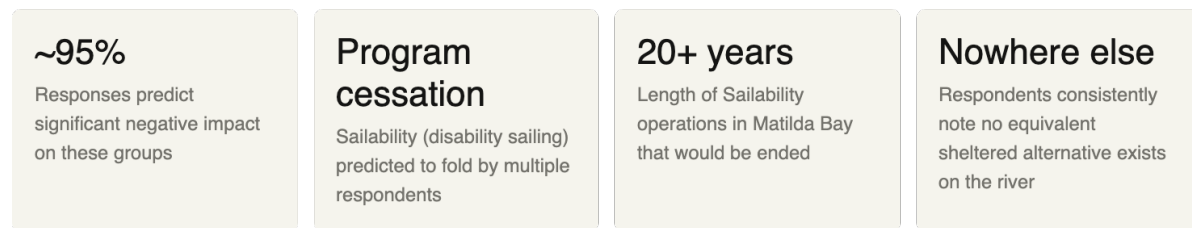
"The year 9s often go out in small boats and are hard to control in large groups. They rarely venture outside the bay and particularly use the stretch of water between the cafe and boat club to learn basic rowing skills. The ferry would take up this room, forcing them to the middle of the bay. Year 9s would drift into the ferry channel unaware — probably most training sessions."

"A match racing training session could have up to 120 interactions with ferries coming in and going out on both routes for a single blind sailing training session."

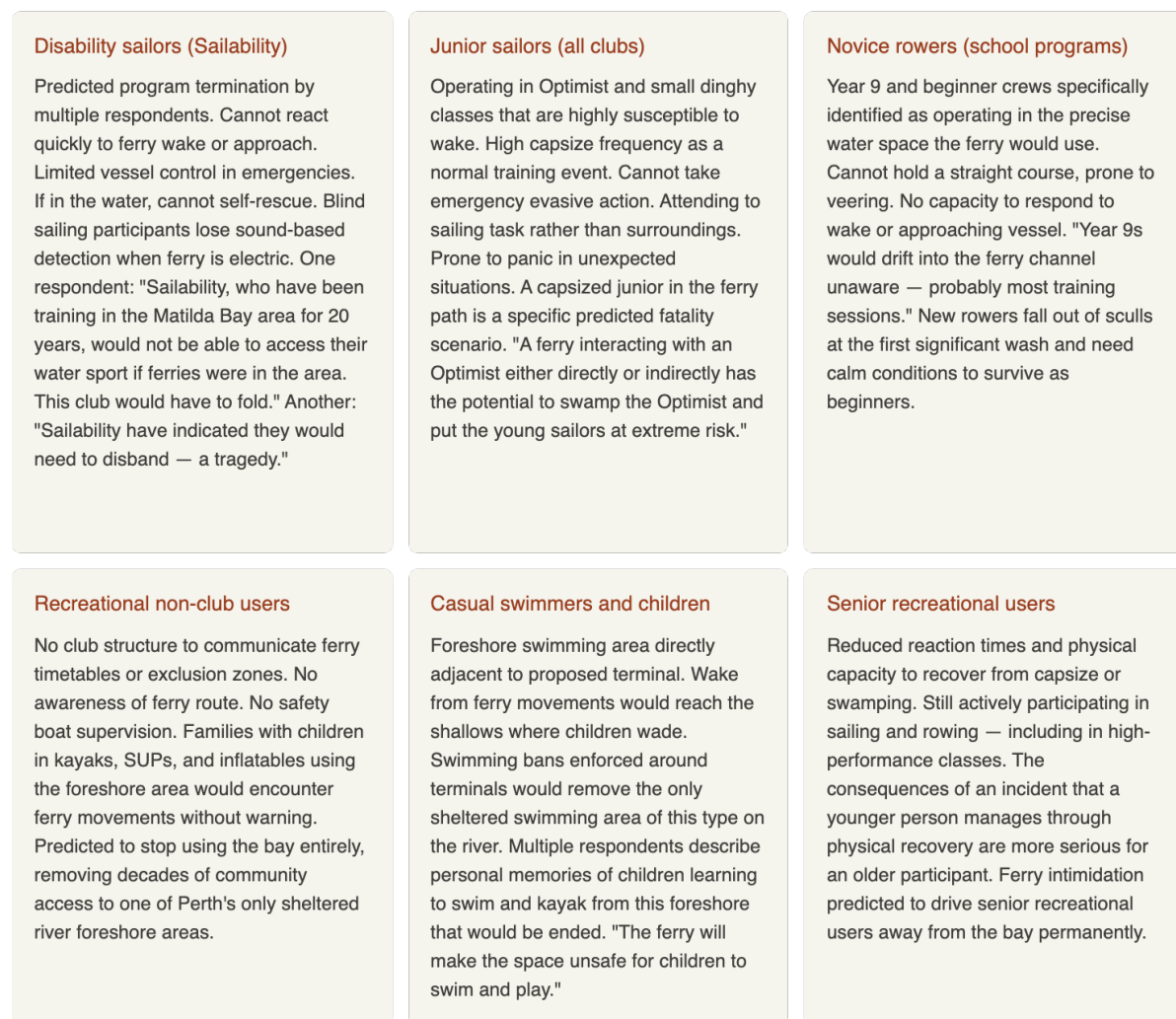
"Matilda Bay has a lot of activities taking place and would be difficult to add another large operation within the area. It will disrupt every aspect of all the activities."

How do you think juniors, novices, recreational non-club users or people with a disability would be affected?

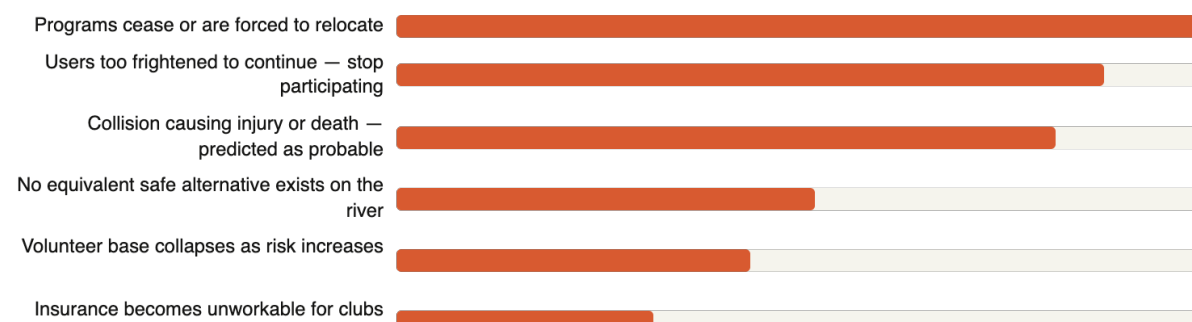
Scale of concern across respondents



Predicted impacts by group



Predicted outcomes by frequency of citation



Key findings from qualitative responses

Highest risk

Disability sailing cannot safely coexist with ferry operations.

The consensus across respondents with direct experience of Sailability is that the program cannot continue in Matilda Bay if a ferry service operates. The reasons are structural rather than manageable: disability sailing vessels are slow and have limited control; participants have reduced reaction time and physical capacity; volunteer supervision ratios are already stretched; and the bay's sheltered geometry is the operational precondition for the program's viability. Moving to another location is not a practical alternative because there is no equivalent sheltered, accessible, club-supported site on the river. Relocation is program termination by another name.

Highest risk

The loss of confidence effect — harder to reverse than physical exclusion.

Multiple respondents identify a specific psychological mechanism that is harder to address than direct physical risk: the intimidation effect of a large vessel moving through the bay at regular intervals will cause juniors, novices, and people with disabilities to stop coming before any formal exclusion is imposed. "They will be terrified." "Very frightening for them." "They will feel scared after their first close call." One respondent describes this as analogous to a child who did not sail for over a decade after a ferry incident as a young sailor. The loss of participation that follows intimidation is cumulative and largely irreversible once clubs lose membership critical mass and volunteers withdraw.

High

Volunteer collapse is a secondary consequence that accelerates program termination.

One respondent raises an issue not surfaced in earlier questions: clubs are already struggling with volunteers. A ferry service that increases the risk and complexity of coaching and supervision will reduce the volunteer base further. Coaches who do not want to supervise junior sailors in the presence of a 12-minute ferry service will step back. Without volunteers, clubs cannot run programs regardless of whether the water is technically available. "It will require greater support from volunteers from clubs, but clubs are already struggling with volunteers."

High

Insurance liability is identified as an additional program-ending mechanism.

Multiple respondents raise insurance as a secondary consequence. If a ferry service is operating in the bay and a club's junior or disability sailing program continues, the club's public liability exposure increases materially. Insurers may decline coverage or impose exclusions that make the program unviable. "Once they have to share the area with frequent ferries, many programs could possibly not be run anymore as the risk is too great. Insurance may be a problem." This is a mechanism by which programs terminate even if the water technically remains usable — the club cannot obtain affordable insurance to operate there.

Significant

No equivalent alternative site — relocation is not a mitigation.

Respondents repeatedly note that there is no alternative sheltered, accessible site on the Swan River that offers the combination of calm water, club infrastructure, accessibility for people with disabilities, and proximity to shore that Matilda Bay provides. "There would be nowhere for them to learn the basics of rowing." "They would have to find somewhere else, but where? There is no other large protected bay with appropriate onshore storage and accessibility." For disability sailing participants in particular, the social and navigational familiarity with the Matilda Bay site is itself a component of safety. Moving to an unfamiliar location is not a neutral relocation — it removes the accumulated environmental knowledge that allows participants to operate safely.

Observations

Insurance represents a standalone risk pathway to program termination that does not require a collision to occur.

If a club's insurer determines that operating junior or disability sailing programs in a waterway with a 12-minute scheduled commercial ferry service represents an unacceptable or uninsurable liability, the club has no viable option. It cannot self-insure. It cannot operate without coverage. The program ends regardless of whether the club wants to continue and regardless of whether the water is physically usable. This is an indirect consequence of the ferry service that the anticipated risk alone is sufficient to trigger, without any collision having occurred. It warrants treatment as a standalone risk pathway in any assessment of the proposed terminal's impacts.

Relocation of blind sailing is program termination, not a manageable transition.

Blind sailing participants rely on sound for environmental awareness. A silent electric ferry removes their primary hazard detection mechanism. Their navigational familiarity with the Matilda Bay site — knowing where the buoys are, where the club is, and the ambient soundscape of the bay — is a learned safety system built over 20 years of operation at this location. Relocation does not preserve that system. It destroys it and requires it to be rebuilt at a site that does not have the same sheltered geometry. The spatial and acoustic familiarity that blind sailing participants have developed is not transferable. What appears as a relocation option is in practice program termination.

Signal quotes

"Sailability, who have been training in the Matilda Bay area for 20 years, would not be able to access their water sport if ferries were in the area due to the dangerous conditions created. This club would have to fold."

"Imagine being blind. You know your way around an area, a club, where the bathrooms are. Now you are dropped somewhere foreign. It may just be too hard and so you will feel even more isolated."

"It would be very dangerous for people with disabilities to sail in the bay, particularly blind and deaf sailors."

"A bit like letting kids play on the freeway to be honest."

"The ferry plus swimming, rowing, sailing, SUP cannot safely co-exist in the same bay."

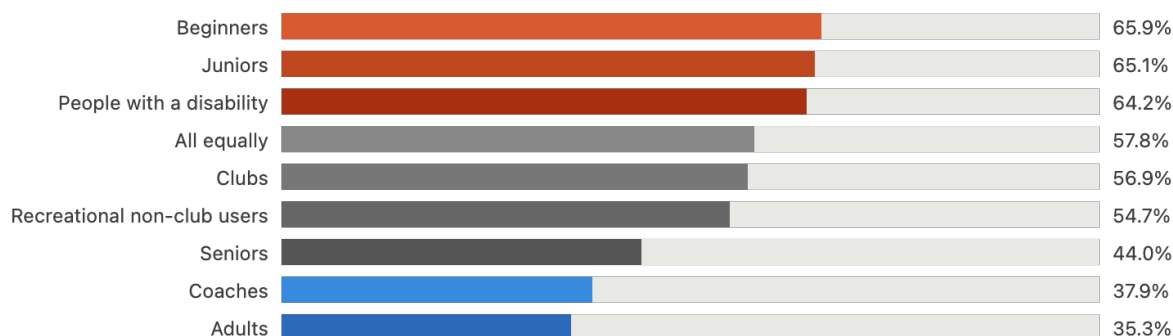
"It would be very frightening for them and I believe they will end up trying to find somewhere else in Perth to enjoy the river — as it will no longer be available to them at Matilda Bay."

"Removing the safety of the bay will dramatically change the way inexperienced users could operate, because it will mean there is no longer a space for these users to learn."

If ferry operations were introduced, who will be most impacted? (select all that apply)

232 respondents — club member survey. Percentages calculated against total respondents; figures exceed 100% as multiple selections permitted.

Survey results — 232 respondents, select all that apply



Why each group is most impacted

65.9%

Beginners

Cannot hold a straight course, capsize more frequently, attend to the task of sailing or rowing rather than surroundings. Cannot take emergency evasive action. Panic in sudden wash or close encounters. The bay is where they learn precisely because it is calm and protected — both conditions the ferry removes. New rowers fall out of sculls at the first significant wash. "Removing the safety of the bay will dramatically change the way inexperienced users could operate."

65.1%

Juniors

Same capability limitations as beginners compounded by smaller physical size, slower judgment development, and higher capsize rates. Attending to racing or training task, not to ferry movements. A capsized junior at water level in the ferry path is the most frequently cited specific fatality scenario across the entire survey dataset. Junior programs from all three clubs rely on Matilda Bay as a sheltered training ground and race venue.

64.2%

People with a disability

Reduced reaction time, limited vessel control, and in some cases cognitive or sensory impairments that affect hazard detection. Blind sailing participants lose sound-based detection with a silent electric ferry. Cannot self-rescue if in the water. Sailability program predicted to cease operations. 20 years of program history at this site would be lost. Relocation is not viable — the accumulated familiarity is itself a safety system.

57.8%

All users equally

A significant proportion selected "all equally" — meaning they see the impact as universal rather than selective. The reasoning: the ferry bisects the bay, creates constant wash, and occupies the shared water space that all users depend on. Nobody using Matilda Bay for non-motorised recreation is unaffected by a 12-minute commercial ferry service. The loss of the sheltered character of the bay affects every user category simultaneously.

56.9%

Clubs

Racing programs made incompatible with ferry timetable. Start lines no longer usable. Junior and disability programs likely to cease. Volunteer base under pressure as risk increases and coaching becomes more complex. Insurance liability exposure increases materially. Club membership predicted to decline as training conditions deteriorate. Some clubs may not survive the loss of their primary training and racing water.

54.7%

Recreational non-club users

No club communication structure to receive ferry timetables or exclusion zone information. No safety boat supervision. Families with children on kayaks and SUPs using the foreshore area would encounter ferry movements without context or warning. Predicted to stop using the bay entirely — removing the public's access to one of Perth's only sheltered river foreshore areas. These users have no organised voice and no alternative site.

44.0%

Seniors

Reduced reaction time and physical capacity to recover from capsize or swamping. Still actively participating, including in high-performance classes. The ferry intimidation effect predicted to drive senior recreational sailors and rowers away from the bay permanently — compounding the volunteer shortage as experienced older members withdraw.

37.9%

Coaches

Coaches cited independently as an impacted group — not a category typically considered in waterway safety assessments. A coach supervising junior or disability sailors in a bay with a 12-minute ferry service carries significantly increased duty of care and cognitive load. The distraction of monitoring ferry movements while simultaneously supervising inexperienced or vulnerable participants degrades coaching quality and increases incident risk. Coaches predicted to withdraw from programs they no longer consider safe to run.

Key structural findings from this question

The three groups rated highest are already identified as the groups most concentrated in Matilda Bay.

Beginners (65.9%), juniors (65.1%), and people with a disability (64.2%) are the three most-cited groups as most impacted. These are precisely the groups who use Matilda Bay specifically because of its sheltered character. The groups most harmed by the ferry are the groups the bay currently serves best. The impact is not distributed randomly across waterway users — it falls most heavily on those with the least capacity to absorb it and the fewest alternatives.

Coaches as an impacted group surfaces a duty of care risk not previously identified.

37.9% of respondents identified coaches as a most-impacted group. This is an insight not commonly raised in infrastructure planning assessments. A coach supervising 15 junior sailors in a bay with an electric ferry arriving every 12 minutes from a changing approach angle carries a materially different duty of care burden than they do currently. If a collision occurs during a supervised session, the coach's liability exposure is significant. The predicted withdrawal of experienced coaches from junior programs is therefore both a safety consequence and a program sustainability consequence in its own right.

57.8% selecting "all equally" means the impact is not containable to specific user groups.

More than half of respondents chose "all equally" as well as or instead of specific groups. This reflects the systemic nature of the impact: the ferry does not selectively harm one user category while leaving others unaffected. It degrades the fundamental character of the bay — the sheltered geometry, the calm water, the absence of scheduled commercial vessel movements — on which every user category depends. Mitigation measures targeted at specific groups cannot address a harm that is experienced universally.

Observations

The coach duty of care finding introduces a legal dimension not previously identified.

When a coach runs a junior or disability sailing program in a waterway with scheduled commercial ferry traffic, their duty of care obligations expand materially. They are no longer supervising participants in a low-traffic sheltered environment. They are doing so in a shared commercial waterway. If an incident occurs during a supervised session, the question of whether the coach took reasonable precautions in that environment becomes legally significant. The predicted withdrawal of experienced coaches is therefore not just a program quality issue. It is a foreseeable consequence of the ferry service creating conditions in which reasonable coaches conclude they cannot safely discharge their duty of care.

The 57.8% universal impact finding means the harm cannot be mitigated by protecting specific groups.

In a multiple-select question where respondents were offered specific categories, more than half also or instead chose universal impact. This is a strong signal that the harm is not characterised by affected populations as selective or containable. It cannot be mitigated by protecting specific groups while allowing others to continue. The ferry changes the fundamental operating environment for every user of Matilda Bay simultaneously. Mitigation measures targeted at particular user groups do not address a harm that is experienced universally.

Signal quotes

"The ferry plus swimming, rowing, sailing and SUP cannot safely co-exist in the same bay."

"Sailability have indicated they would need to disband — a tragedy."

"A bit like letting kids play on the freeway to be honest."

"Coaches supervising junior or disability sailors would face significantly increased duty of care burden. The distraction of monitoring ferry movements degrades coaching quality and increases incident risk."

"Once they have to share the area with frequent ferries, many programs could possibly not be run anymore as the risk is too great. Insurance may be a problem."

"The groups most harmed are those with the least capacity to absorb it and the fewest alternatives."

In Matilda Bay, are there areas where you believe risk is currently low but could increase with the terminal or additional vessel traffic?

Scale of response

~90% Respondents confirm areas currently low risk would become high or critical risk with ferry operations	Whole bay Most common spatial answer — the entire bay is currently low risk and would be transformed	Terminal site Identified as the specific area of lowest current risk that would become highest risk — a direct inversion	JoJo's Independently cited by multiple respondents as having existing infrastructure and lower conflict potential
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Specific zones: current risk level and predicted change

Now: Low → After: Critical	The proposed terminal site — currently the lowest-risk area in the bay Multiple respondents independently make the same observation: the exact location chosen for the terminal is currently the lowest-risk part of the bay. It is used by families swimming, children in kayaks and inflatables, SUP boarders, and beginner sailors precisely because it has the least motorised vessel traffic. One respondent: "The risk is lowest at the very point where the terminal is proposed. This is the area used by families and young children who will be put at extreme risk." Another: "Where the ferry comes into the terminal is currently the lowest risk area but will become the highest risk area." The terminal placement represents a direct inversion of the current risk profile — converting the safest zone into the most dangerous one.
Now: Low → After: Critical	UWABC foreshore to Matilda Bay pontoons — beginner rowing and family swimming corridor The stretch of calm inshore water between the UWA Boat Club and the Matilda Bay Restaurant pontoons is identified as the primary beginner rowing training area and the calmest, most sheltered family swimming foreshore on the river. This is where school programs teach year 9 students to row. It is where children jump from jetties in summer. It is where novice rowers learn in flat water before progressing to more exposed conditions. The ferry terminal would be placed directly in this corridor, with ferry movements passing through it at 12-minute intervals. "The stretch between the Matilda Bay cafe and the UWA boat shed, which is currently the safest area of the bay for beginners to learn in, will become unusable due to the placement of the ferry terminal and channel."
Now: Low → After: Critical	RPYC to PDSC mid-bay strip — junior and disability sailing training zone The water between RPYC and Perth Dinghy Sailing Club is currently the primary area for junior dinghy training, Sailability disability sailing, and match racing development from all three clubs. It is protected from the main navigation channel and has minimal large vessel traffic. The ferry route directly bisects this zone. "All of the area between RPYC and Perth Dinghy is currently safe to train in — that will change." "Yes in the area between RPYC and the PDSC." The entire justification for using this water space is its low-risk character. The ferry removes that justification.
Now: Low → After: High	Mounts Bay Road channel — rowing training corridor, currently low vessel traffic The inshore strip along Mounts Bay Road from the UWABC to the Narrows is a primary rowing training corridor used at low-traffic periods specifically because large vessels avoid it. The ferry route toward Elizabeth Quay follows this corridor. At 12-minute intervals, rowing crews that currently train in this stretch in calm conditions would face regular large vessel movements with reflected wake from the retaining wall amplifying each passage. "The channel along Mounts Bay Road between the Blue Boat House and the Quarry mark is currently low risk and used by junior and older sailors on dinghies — that will change."

Now: Low



After: High

Mooring field and approaches — currently navigated at slow speed with high awareness

The Crawley mooring area is currently used by recreational vessels arriving and departing at low speed with specific awareness of the mooring field constraints. The ferry approach to the terminal would pass through or adjacent to this area. Vessel manoeuvring around fixed moorings at ferry frequency and scale introduces collision risk with moored vessels, drag risk from ferry wash on mooring lines, and interaction with users navigating between moorings. "Around the area where the yellow moorings are" — identified as a zone of risk escalation by multiple respondents.

Now: Low



After: High

Narrows Bridge — navigation pinch point with low current large-vessel frequency

The Narrows is already identified as a challenging navigation point — constrained channel, wall-reflected wash, low visibility under the bridge structure, and rowing crews transiting toward the city. The current Rottneest Ferry to Elizabeth Quay already generates documented dangerous wash at this point. The proposed ferry to Elizabeth Quay would pass under or near the Narrows at 12-minute intervals, dramatically increasing large vessel frequency through this pinch point. Rowing crews operating in darkness and transitioning this area with a silent electric ferry approaching are the specific high-consequence scenario identified.

The terminal placement paradox

The safest current location becomes the most dangerous proposed location.

The most consistent and analytically significant finding from this question is that the proposed terminal site is identified by experienced waterway users as currently the lowest-risk area in the bay. The reason it is low-risk is exactly the reason it attracts the most vulnerable users: it has the least motorised vessel traffic, the calmest water, and the most sheltered geometry. The families, children, disability sailors, beginner rowers, and novice paddlers who use this area do so because it is safe. The proposed terminal converts their safe haven into the operational hub of a commercial ferry service. The risk transformation is not gradual — it is immediate and total on the day operations begin.

A technically sophisticated ColRegs concern raised by one experienced respondent.

One respondent with clear sailing expertise raises a specific technical risk not surfaced elsewhere in the dataset: the ferry would operate at a speed intermediate between slower and faster sailing craft in the bay. This creates a ColRegs ambiguity about who is overtaking whom. The overtaking vessel has the obligation to keep clear, but when sailing vessels are accelerating and decelerating through gusts while the ferry varies speed for timetable reasons, the overtaking relationship can change in real time. On a summer sea breeze day with high-performance dinghies running at 15–30 knots and the ferry at an intermediate speed, a single ferry transit could generate three or more course crossings — not one predictable give-way situation, but a dynamic, rapidly changing scenario where right-of-way is ambiguous and resolves differently on each crossing. This is a novel risk scenario that does not currently exist in this waterway and cannot be managed by standard training or signage.

Observations

The terminal placement paradox is the most concise and powerful argument in the dataset. It deserves to be stated as a single clear conclusion: there is no mitigation pathway that preserves both the terminal at that location and the conditions that make it safe for vulnerable users. They are mutually exclusive.

The proposed terminal is sited at the location that is currently the lowest-risk area in the bay.

The terminal is low-risk because it has the least motorised vessel traffic. It attracts the most vulnerable users — families with children, disability sailors, beginner rowers, and novice paddlers — because of that low-risk character. The ferry terminal converts their safe haven into the operational hub of a commercial service. No mitigation pathway preserves both the terminal at that location and the conditions that make it safe for vulnerable users. The two are mutually exclusive.

The ColRegs ambiguity created by high-performance sailing and intermediate ferry speeds warrants specific examination.

The standard treatment of ferry-sailing conflicts assumes a predictable speed differential: the ferry is faster and the sailing vessel gives way. On a strong sea breeze day with foilers and skiffs running at 20–30 knots and the ferry at an intermediate speed with varying approach angles, that assumption breaks down. The overtaking obligation switches dynamically as speeds change. That creates a real-time collision avoidance problem for which the existing ColRegs framework does not provide a clean answer, and for which no amount of operator training can substitute for adequate separation. If a separation scheme were imposed between the ferry route and the high-performance sailing areas, it would further reduce the usable water space available to existing users, compounding the impact of the terminal itself.

Signal quotes

"Currently Matilda Bay is a safe, relatively protected waterway where vessels of all type interact in a largely low speed, low risk environment. The introduction of a large vessel moving at relatively high speed on a regular basis can only significantly increase the risk of an adverse event."

"The risk is lowest at the very point where the terminal is proposed. This is the area used by families and young children who will be put at extreme risk if a ferry service is introduced."

"The jetty would bring the hazard of interaction between ferry and users into the centre of the bay which is currently the safest. It could not be put in a worse location."

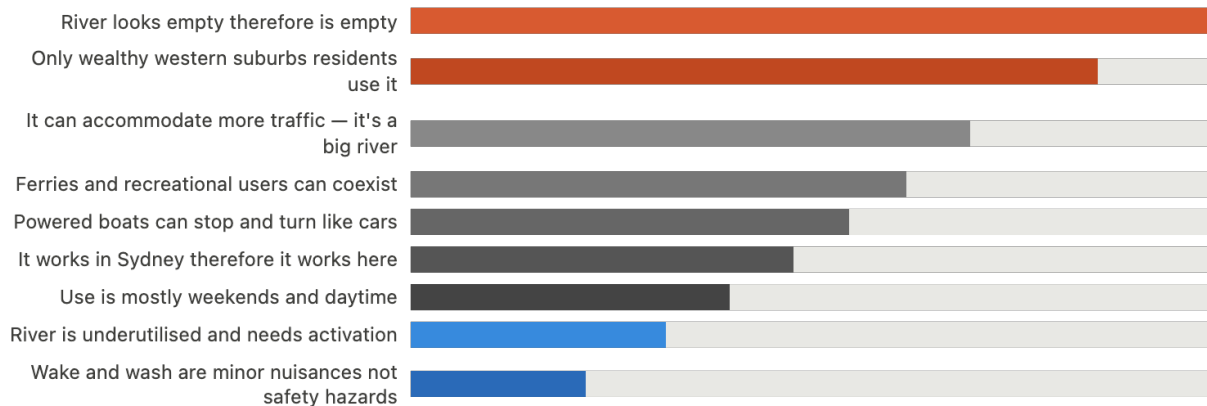
"The middle of the bay is a wide stretch perfect for non-motorised boats. The ferry terminal will cut across this safe spot and make the bay unusable for sporting clubs."

"The ColRegs situation creates ambiguity about who is overtaking whom. That relationship can change rapidly as sailing boats accelerate and decelerate through gusts while the ferry varies its speed. Right-of-way can become ambiguous in real time."

"No — just redirect the ferry to JoJo's. The infrastructure is already there."

Are there any assumptions you believe are often made about the river that do not reflect how it is actually used?

Most frequently cited false assumptions



False assumption vs reality

Assumption

The river looks quiet from the road — therefore it is not heavily used

The single most-cited false assumption. Rowing shells sit 15–20cm above water and are near-invisible from shore or a passing car. Junior training boats are small. Sails are often down when rigging or de-rigging. Modern sail materials are partly transparent. Pre-dawn and evening sessions are invisible from the road. One respondent names it precisely: "The 'I looked while driving down Mounts Bay Road and it was empty' assumption." Another: "The river looks vacant a lot of the time but thousands use the river and foreshore on a regular basis." This assumption is the foundation error in any planning process that does not involve direct and sustained observation at water level across the full operational week.

Assumption

Matilda Bay is a playground for wealthy western suburbs residents

Cited repeatedly and with evident frustration. Users come from across metropolitan Perth, including from northern and outer suburbs. Club membership is explicitly described as demographically diverse. Crewing on a sailing vessel requires no boat ownership. Dragon boating, rowing, and dinghy sailing are among the most accessible and affordable water sports available. The social equity argument runs in exactly the opposite direction to the assumption: removing the bay's sheltered character removes the primary accessible water sport venue for people who cannot afford private boat ownership or marina access.

Assumption

The river is a large open water space that can absorb more traffic

Multiple respondents identify the shallow and constrained nature of the navigable Swan River as poorly understood. The river is an estuary. Large sections are not navigable due to depth. Navigation is funnelled through specific channels and pinch points — Pelican Point, the Narrows, Inner and Outer Dolphin — that concentrate traffic. Matilda Bay is one of these pinch points. The usable water space is far smaller than a map view suggests. Adding commercial ferry traffic to a constrained channel is not comparable to adding traffic to a broad open waterway.

Assumption

Ferry services and recreational users can simply share the space with goodwill

One respondent makes the comparison explicit: "In the same way pedestrian paths and cycle lanes keep unpowered users safe and separate from cars, why it would be perceived the same is not needed on the water is ridiculous. Separation and safety is even more important due to the water risk and difficulty to balance in certain unpowered craft." The assumption that sharing is a matter of attitude or awareness fundamentally misunderstands the physics of the interaction. Powered and non-powered vessels need separation — not cooperation — because cooperation depends on the non-powered vessel being able to respond, which it cannot when faced with a fast-closing large vessel.

Assumption**Boats can stop and turn like vehicles — evasive action is always possible**

Identified repeatedly as a fundamental misunderstanding by non-boating decision-makers. "People who have limited experience in boating think that it's like driving a car — if something gets in your way you apply the brakes or turn. That's not the case." Sailing vessels in light air have no steerage. Rowing shells cannot stop or reverse. Dragon boats need wide arcs to turn. A ferry at speed has a long stopping distance. None of these vessels can execute the collision avoidance manoeuvre that a driver instinctively imagines is available to them.

Assumption**If it works in Sydney it can work here**

Multiple respondents directly challenge the Sydney Harbour comparison. Sydney ferries operate in a much larger body of water with formal traffic separation schemes, designated exclusion zones around terminals, and a regulatory framework developed over decades of ferry operation alongside recreational craft. Circular Quay and Sydney Cove have effectively excluded competing recreational use from the ferry corridors. The Swan River in the Matilda Bay area has none of these conditions and no equivalent separation infrastructure. The comparison assumes the outcome without the preconditions.

Assumption**The river is mainly used during the day at weekends**

Rowing operates Monday to Saturday from 05:15. Evening sessions run to 20:00. Dragon boat sessions operate Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Twilight sailing runs Friday evenings. Night racing occurs in season. One respondent: "Our club schedule has sessions from 05:15 to 20:00 throughout the week. Most weekdays have at least 6 hours on water." The assumption that the bay is quiet during the week and at non-peak hours is the basis on which ferry operating hours appear manageable. The reality — that the bay is in near-continuous structured use from before dawn to after dusk, seven days a week — makes that framing untenable.

Assumption**Wake and wash are minor inconveniences that users can manage**

The evidence across the survey dataset establishes that wake is a primary safety mechanism for capsizing, swamping, and collision initiation — not an inconvenience. One respondent: "In the risk assessments I have seen, there has been very little consideration for wash caused by powered craft." Another: "No understanding of how wash impacts rowers — even small wash makes rowing useless." The wall-reflection effect in Matilda Bay amplifies wash beyond the direct vessel passage. A low-wake ferry is not a no-wake ferry. And at 12-minute intervals, the bay never fully recovers between passages.

The decision-maker knowledge gap

Planning decisions appear to have been made without sustained direct observation.

Multiple respondents draw explicit attention to the gap between what planners appear to believe about the waterway and what regular users know to be true. "Many bureaucrats have very little idea about water safety nor the fact that Matilda Bay's geography provides a unique low-risk area for vulnerable water users." "The people making the required decisions, in my opinion, have not honestly considered the volume of activities performed in the Matilda Bay water space." "Governments make all sorts of incorrect assumptions to suit their own agenda — ask someone who has spent their life on Matilda Bay and ask a public servant who has not and see how the answers differ." This is not a minor qualitative difference. The survey dataset documents a waterway with pre-dawn rowing, 12-minute interval use windows, 200-vessel peak periods, and 150 years of continuous structured recreational use. None of this is visible from a car on Mounts Bay Road.

The "95% of the river is unused" observation.

One respondent makes a precise and analytically important point: "95% of the river is not used. There are plenty of alternate locations for a ferry service. There are very few locations that are actively used like Matilda Bay. The bay is protected from Perth's strong south-westerly winds, which is why it is a sailing, boating, rowing and training focus area. There are no other areas nearby that have this." This reframes the spatial analysis. The question is not whether the ferry could find any space in the broader river system — it could. The question is whether the proposed terminal site is the right location, given that it targets the one section of the river that functions as the primary safe water for the most vulnerable users.

Observations

The "looks empty from the road" assumption is the foundational planning error from which others flow.

The planning process for the terminal location appears, based on respondent assessments, to have been conducted without sustained, time-stratified, multi-season direct observation of the waterway. Rowing shells at 05:30 in winter darkness are invisible from Mounts Bay Road. Fifty dinghies in a pre-start manoeuvre at 13:45 on a Wednesday are not visible from the foreshore carpark unless you know where to look. A decision-maker observing from a passing vehicle or a brief foreshore visit would have seen a fraction of actual activity, likely less than 20% of what the survey dataset documents. This evidentiary gap is not a peripheral concern. It is the foundation on which the site selection decision rests.

The site selection decision requires justification that the survey respondents have not been shown.

The observation that 95% of the river is genuinely less intensively used has a direct implication for the comparative site analysis. JoJo's (Nedlands Jetty) sits in one of those less intensively used sections. The proposed Matilda Bay terminal sits in the section that is most intensively used, by the most vulnerable user groups, for the longest daily operating window, with the least capacity to absorb additional vessel traffic. On any reasonable reading of the waterway use evidence documented in this survey, the selection of the Matilda Bay site over JoJo's requires justification that has not been provided to survey respondents and that respondents do not believe exists.

Signal quotes

"The 'I looked while driving down Mounts Bay Road and it was empty' assumption. In reality, the area is almost always active. Rowing shells sit very low in the water, junior training boats can be small and clustered, and many modern sails are effectively transparent. A casual glance simply misses a large proportion of actual activity."

"95% of the river is not used. There are very few locations that are actively used like Matilda Bay. The bay is protected from Perth's strong south-westerly winds — that is why it is a sailing, boating, rowing and training focus area. There are no other areas nearby that have this."

"In the same way pedestrian paths and cycle lanes keep unpowered users safe and separate from cars, separation is even more important on the water due to the risk and difficulty of balancing in certain unpowered craft."

"Many people assume the river is used mainly for large boats when in reality one of the river's main uses is sports like rowing and sailing."

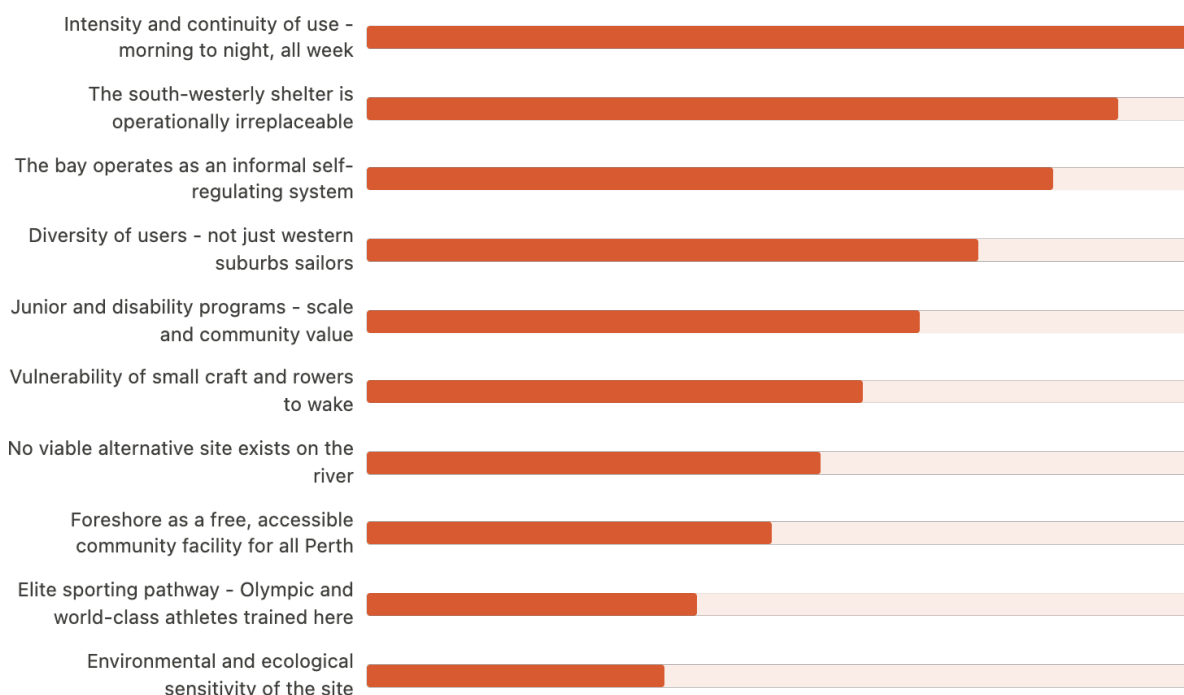
"The Swan River is among the busiest recreational waterways in the country. Comparisons to other locations often ignore that those systems either have significantly more space, much lower usage, or formal traffic separation."

"Matilda Bay is used by novices and hand-powered craft most of the time. It augments people's mental health as it helps their physical health. It is a treasure. Please do not let it be destroyed."

Are there aspects of how Matilda Bay is used that you believe are not well understood by those who don't regularly use it?

193 responses. Qualitative responses coded by theme. Multiple themes possible per respondent.

Most frequently cited misunderstood aspects



Bars represent relative frequency of theme citation across open-text responses. Themes coded from qualitative analysis.

What is not well understood - in detail

Critical

The bay operates as an informal self-regulating system - not a traffic-separated waterway

One of the most precise operational descriptions in the entire survey dataset: "Matilda Bay doesn't operate like a structured traffic-separated waterway. It functions as a shared, flexible space where different users self-navigate based on habit, visibility, and local knowledge rather than strict physical separation. That means safety depends heavily on informal awareness between very different craft types, many of which have incompatible speeds and manoeuvrability. Small changes in traffic volume or vessel type can have a disproportionate impact on safety, particularly for slower or less visible users who rely on others anticipating their presence." This is the clearest articulation in the survey of why a scheduled commercial ferry is structurally incompatible with the bay: the ferry cannot participate in the informal, adaptive, habit-based coordination system that makes shared use work for every other user group.

Critical

The south-westerly shelter is not a convenience - it is an operational precondition

The most technically significant misunderstanding identified across respondents. Perth's south-westerly sea breeze is among the strongest regular thermal wind systems of any major city in the world. Matilda Bay sits in a geometric pocket that shelters it from the dominant south-westerly. This makes it the only location on this stretch of the Swan River where junior sailing, disability sailing, novice rowing, dragon boating, and family swimming can operate safely on the vast majority of days. When the sea breeze is too strong for Melville Water, users retreat to Matilda Bay specifically because it remains manageable. One experienced respondent adds a further nuance: Matilda Bay sits in a band where wind is still strong but the sea state remains flat - ideal for high-performance classes including foilers and skiffs. This combination does not exist elsewhere on the river. No alternative site can replicate it.

Critical

The bay is a convergence point, not a through-route - vessels begin and end journeys here

One respondent makes an observation that distinguishes Matilda Bay from other parts of the river system in a way that directly affects collision geometry: "Matilda Bay is unique in that it is not a through-way. Boats do not traverse through it - rather they come and go from it. It is where boats start and end their journey and are therefore generally going slower, not faster." Every other vessel in the bay is either arriving or departing and is in a low-speed, high-attention orientation state. A commercial ferry on a through-route introduces a vessel with fundamentally different operational intent - moving at schedule speed with a fixed destination - into a space where all other vessels are in transitional, manoeuvre-intensive states. This is a collision geometry problem independent of congestion volume.

Critical

The bay is in near-continuous structured use from before dawn to after dark, every day of the week

The survey documents a level of use intensity that is not visible from casual observation. One respondent: "In the last week I personally rowed in the bay 6 days out of 7, at all hours of the day between 5am and 6pm." Another: "Our club schedule has sessions from 05:15 to 20:00 throughout the week. Most weekdays have at least 6 hours a day on water." One respondent points to an objective corroborating source: "A Strava heat map for water activity users will show a density of use in the bay equal to that of cyclists and runners along the shore." GPS tracking data aggregated through platforms such as Strava's Global Heatmap is publicly accessible and would show the pre-dawn rowing corridors, racing mark approaches, and foreshore paddling routes across years of activity rather than a snapshot. Notably, the planning process is reported by one respondent to have used Strava data to demonstrate cyclist activity along Mounts Bay Road but not to have applied the same methodology to waterway users - a methodological asymmetry that resulted in objective evidence of one user cohort and not the other.

Critical

The system works because it is adaptive - complexity introduced by a ferry ripples through everything

"There's a lot going on in this area. It only works because the people using it understand that and communicate and adapt - different groups, different speeds, different activities, all layered on top of each other. The problem is when you treat it like it's simple. It's not. Change one thing and you don't get a neat, predictable outcome - it ripples through everything else. My view is that the end result is fewer things being able to happen safely. Some activities will simply be abandoned." The bay functions through distributed, informal, adaptive coordination. A commercial ferry on a fixed schedule imposes a rigid external demand on that adaptive system. The system cannot absorb it without degrading.

High

The scale and community value of junior and disability programs is invisible to non-participants

Junior and disability sailing programs operate largely unseen - early morning, weekday afternoons, supervised but not conspicuous from the foreshore. The volunteer hours underpinning them are equally invisible. Respondents note that Matilda Bay clubs have produced Olympic gold medallists, America's Cup competitors, and world title holders. One respondent with multiple world and national titles and four America's Cups describes a weekly training schedule occupying 16-hour sessions Monday to Friday and full weekend days. The Sailability program is identified as one of the very few places in Perth where people with disabilities can access water sport. Neither the elite pathway nor the disability inclusion function is discernible to an observer who has not spent extended time at water level in the bay.

High

The bay is used by people from across metropolitan Perth - not a local or elite amenity

Repeatedly cited with evident frustration. Users come from northern, eastern, and outer metropolitan suburbs. Club membership is explicitly described as demographically diverse. One respondent: "When I was getting signatures on petitions, more than half the people I asked didn't know anything about it and I had to explain what was happening." Multiple respondents describe the bay as Perth's equivalent of Kings Park - a city-wide asset used by people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. One respondent describes it as "the on-water equivalent of Kingsway sporting complex - many sports, many clubs, sharing the space." Three yacht clubs, a rowing club, dragon boating, Sailability, Sea Scouts, and disability programs all share the same physical water space. The framing of Matilda Bay as a western suburbs privilege asset is explicitly contradicted by the survey data on user origins and demographics.

High

The beach gradient makes it uniquely safe for toddlers and uniquely vulnerable to ferry wash erosion

One respondent identifies a physical characteristic not captured elsewhere: "Much of the riverbank along Crawley is protected by a sea wall, but Matilda Bay has a sloping beach with no protection. The gradual slope makes it ideal for toddlers, but at the same time susceptible to erosion by boat movements." The same beach gradient that makes the foreshore Perth's primary sheltered family swimming beach is what makes it most vulnerable to regular ferry wake. A seawall installed to protect the beach from ferry wash erosion would eliminate the gradual slope that makes it safe for young children. The mitigation destroys the amenity it is intended to protect.

Significant

Small craft and rowers are acutely vulnerable to wake in ways not intuitive to non-boaters

Non-boating observers underestimate wake effects because they observe from the shore where wave action appears minor. In a rowing shell - a carbon-fibre vessel weighing approximately 14kg with two people balanced on sliding seats - a crosswise wake of 20-30cm is a capsize event. One respondent: "Even small wash makes rowing useless." Another: "No understanding of how wash impacts rowers." The difference between what ferry wake looks like from the bank and what it does to a narrow, low-freeboard vessel is not comprehensible without direct experience. This gap appears to have contributed to an underestimation of wash risk in the planning process.

Significant

Sailing vessels cannot simply move out of the way - wind dependency is not understood

Multiple respondents identify a fundamental physics misunderstanding: the assumption that a sailing vessel faced with an approaching ferry can manoeuvre clear on demand. "Have they ever been in a small sailing craft being approached by a large ferry? Yachts cannot just change direction or move - you cannot sail directly into the wind." In light air a sailing vessel has no steerage. In strong conditions tacking requires sea room that may not be available. The instruction to "get out of the way" of a ferry is, depending on wind conditions, slow, impossible, or dangerous. This constraint is not intuitive to decision-makers who have not sailed.

Significant

Club membership visible at any one time is the tip of the iceberg

One respondent makes an observation about the visibility of club scale to an external observer: "The amount of people who use the bay through the clubs should be noted - the entire membership of a given club is never evident at any one time. You only ever see the tip of the iceberg." Total active membership across RPYC, PDSC, MBSC, UWABC, and associated programs runs to thousands. On any given day a fraction are on the water. A planner observing the bay on a quiet Tuesday morning sees perhaps 20 rowing boats. They do not see the 130 junior school-aged rowers who will be on the water that afternoon, the 60 keelboats assembling for Wednesday racing the following day, or the 70 dinghy racers who will fill the bay on Saturday.

Significant

Seasonal monitoring would not capture summer recreational use intensity

One respondent raises a methodological concern about any short-term observation program: "Seasonal effects. Any short-term use monitoring would not consider the summer increase in casual use." The survey documents that the bay's risk profile changes materially by season. Summer brings recreational swimmers, families, casual hire craft, crabbers, and public holiday boaters who are not present in winter. Any monitoring conducted outside the October to May period would systematically undercount the most vulnerable and least organised user cohort at the time of highest waterway density.

Under-appreciated

The foreshore is a free, multigenerational community space with over 150 years of continuous use

Beyond the water, the foreshore functions as a free public gathering space for picnics, family events, weddings, fitness, dog walking, and passive recreation. Multiple respondents describe it as one of the very few such spaces in Perth that is both accessible and sheltered from the sea breeze. The A-Class Reserve designation reflects this community value. The ferry terminal replaces a free, open, unstructured community space with a commercial transport hub - a transformation that affects foreshore users who have no direct relationship with the waterway at all, and whose interests are not represented in any organised advocacy group.

Under-appreciated

The ecological and heritage value extends well beyond the immediate waterway

Multiple respondents identify environmental and heritage dimensions not fully captured in the waterway safety questions. The seagrass beds support black swan families who raise cygnets in the bay specifically because of its shelter and shallow gradient. The surrounding trees are on the flight path of Carnaby's black cockatoos. Pelican Point nearby is a Ramsar-listed wetland supporting migratory birds. The site carries Aboriginal heritage significance. The area holds A-Class Reserve status - the highest protection category under Western Australian land tenure law. These dimensions are raised repeatedly as context for why the specific location matters, independent of the waterway safety question.

Under-appreciated

The decision to site a terminal here is irreversible

Multiple respondents close their responses with variants of the same observation: this decision cannot be undone. One: "Once this ferry terminal goes through there is no going back - even if it fails or someone gets tragically injured." The A-Class Reserve designation, the seagrass beds, the beach gradient, the mature tree canopy, and the 150 years of sporting infrastructure built around the bay's specific operating conditions cannot be restored if the terminal proceeds and the service subsequently fails commercially. The risk is asymmetric: if the terminal does not proceed, nothing is lost. If it does and the service fails, the bay's function as a recreational and sporting resource is permanently degraded.

Recommendation

What respondents say would close the knowledge gap

Multiple respondents make the same practical recommendation: those responsible for planning decisions should spend sustained time at Matilda Bay across different days, times, and weather conditions - not a single visit. "Just spend a full couple of weeks at Matilda Bay and then do the same at Pelican Point/JoJo's, counting and talking to the various users, both on and near the shore and out on the water. I am certain the conclusions would be in stark contrast to the expert studies apparently done to date." One respondent suggests a fitness tracking app heatmap as objective evidence. Another recommends sitting in a dinghy at the rowing club. The consistent message is that the gap between planning assumptions and operational reality is not resolvable from a desk or a foreshore walkway.

Survey findings on the knowledge gap

The survey documents a significant gap between planning assumptions and actual waterway use

Across these questions and the survey as a whole, respondents consistently identify a disconnect between what appears to have been assumed in the planning process and what regular users know to be true. This survey represents the most systematic evidence collection of actual use patterns, incident history, risk perceptions, and operational constraints applied to Matilda Bay to date. The findings are consistent across respondent groups who do not know each other and were not prompted to compare sites or evaluate planning decisions. The convergence of independent observations across hundreds of responses on the same operational realities - the shelter value, the user diversity, the use intensity, the wake vulnerability, the absence of viable alternatives - constitutes a body of evidence that warrants direct engagement in any planning or safety assessment of the proposed terminal location.

The absence of a formal use survey prior to this point is itself a finding

One respondent states directly: "There has not been a study done by the authorities to show the current day-to-day use of the bay." Several others make the same observation in different terms. The survey data presented in this report is, by respondent accounts, the first systematic attempt to document how Matilda Bay is actually used across the full range of user groups, times of day, and weather conditions. That this survey was conducted in response to a terminal proposal - rather than as a precondition for one - is noted by multiple respondents as a reversal of the appropriate planning sequence.

Observations

Knowledge asymmetry is the dominant system condition

193 respondents provided substantive open-text responses to this question – the highest engagement of any open question in the survey. The consistency of themes across respondents who do not know each other and were not prompted confirms that the knowledge gap is not a fringe concern. It is the central operational reality that experienced users believe the planning process has failed to account for.

The shelter value is a hard physical constraint, not a preference

The south-westerly shelter is cited not as an amenity preference but as an enabling condition for specific user groups. Junior sailors, disability sailors, novice rowers, and family swimmers can only use this stretch of the river because of this shelter. This is not replicated elsewhere. No volume of mitigation at the proposed terminal site can recreate the geographic configuration that makes the bay function as it does.

The informal coordination system is invisible from the foreshore

Multiple respondents note that the bay's safety record is a product of an informal, adaptive coordination system built on mutual awareness, shared local knowledge, and predictable behaviour patterns. This system is not visible to observers on the foreshore or from a planning desk. A commercial ferry operating on a fixed schedule is structurally incompatible with this system because it cannot participate in its adaptive logic – it imposes a fixed demand on a flexible environment.

Strava heatmap evidence was applied asymmetrically in the planning process

A respondent's observation that Strava GPS data was used to evidence cyclist activity along Mounts Bay Road but not applied to waterway users is a significant procedural concern. Strava's Global Heatmap would provide objective, longitudinal evidence of waterway use density, pre-dawn rowing corridors, and racing mark approaches accumulated over years of activity. That this methodology was not applied to the primary affected user group is a gap in the evidence base that the planning process should be required to address.

The beach gradient mitigation paradox is a design-level problem

The physical characteristic that makes the Matilda Bay beach the safest family swimming beach on the river – its gradual gradient – is the same characteristic that makes it most vulnerable to ferry wake erosion. Any engineering mitigation that protects the beach from wash destroys the gradient that makes it safe for children. This is not a trade-off that can be optimised; it is a structural incompatibility between the proposed use and the physical environment.

Respondent recommendations point to a process failure, not just an information gap

The consistent recommendation – spend sustained time at the site across seasons, times of day, and weather conditions before making decisions – reflects a view that the planning process has not met the standard of due diligence that a decision of this consequence warrants. The survey was conducted in response to a proposal rather than as a precondition for one. Respondents identify this sequencing as the core process failure.

Signal quotes

"This is the on-water playing fields for people who enjoy on-water sport. It is the on-water equivalent of Kingsway sporting complex – many sports, many clubs, sharing the space to enjoy their recreation."

"Many of Australia's Olympic gold medallists in sailing began their sailing career as a junior at one of the two Matilda Bay clubs. Royal Perth Yacht Club was the club that won the America's Cup for Australia."

"Just spend a full couple of weeks at Matilda Bay and then do the same at Pelican Point/JoJo's, counting and talking to the various users. I am certain the conclusions would be in stark contrast to the expert studies apparently done to date."

"It is one of the few places where activities can occur safely and with some degree of shelter. This is where people actually learn how to handle boats, read conditions, and operate safely on the water. That kind of learning environment is hard to replicate elsewhere."

"The Matilda Bay beach is the only extensive beach on the river that is protected from the sea breeze. To put a ferry terminal in the middle of such a precious beach is an act of vandalism against the whole of Perth."

"A Strava heat map for water activity users will show a density of use in the bay equal to that of cyclists and runners along the shore."

"For sailors, Matilda Bay is our Optus Stadium - and you do not drive trucks across the stadium every 15 minutes."

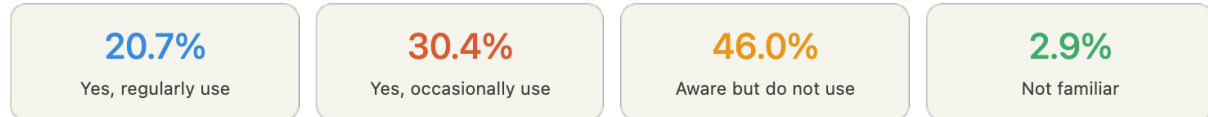
"Change one thing and you don't get a neat, predictable outcome - it ripples through everything else. Some activities will simply be abandoned."

JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty — Alternative Terminal Site

Swan River, Nedlands — waterway use, ferry interaction, and comparative risk analysis

Are you familiar with the JoJo's location on the Swan River?

237 responses

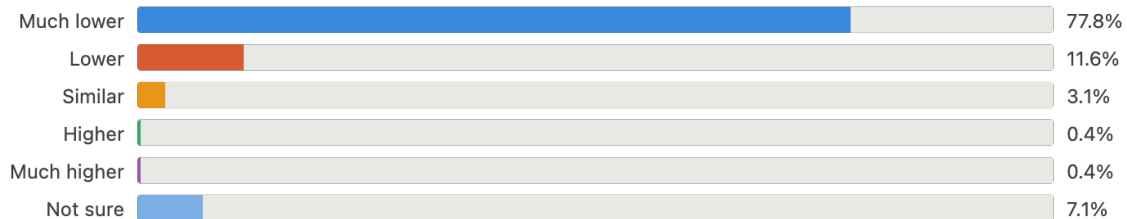


51.1% of respondents have direct personal experience of the JoJo's location.

The combined regularly use and occasionally use cohort — 51.1% of 237 respondents — provides a substantial base of direct experiential comparison between the two candidate sites. Responses from this cohort carry particular analytical weight as they reflect first-hand knowledge of both locations, not inference or reputation.

In your experience, how does activity and congestion at JoJo's compare to Matilda Bay?

225 responses



89.4% of respondents with direct experience rate JoJo's as lower or much lower in activity and congestion.

The combined lower and much lower responses — 89.4% — represent the most decisive comparative finding in the dataset. Among respondents who use both sites, the differential is not marginal. It is structural. This is the respondent population best placed to make this comparison, and their verdict is near-unanimous.

At JoJo's, how would you describe waterway conditions and use compared to Matilda Bay?

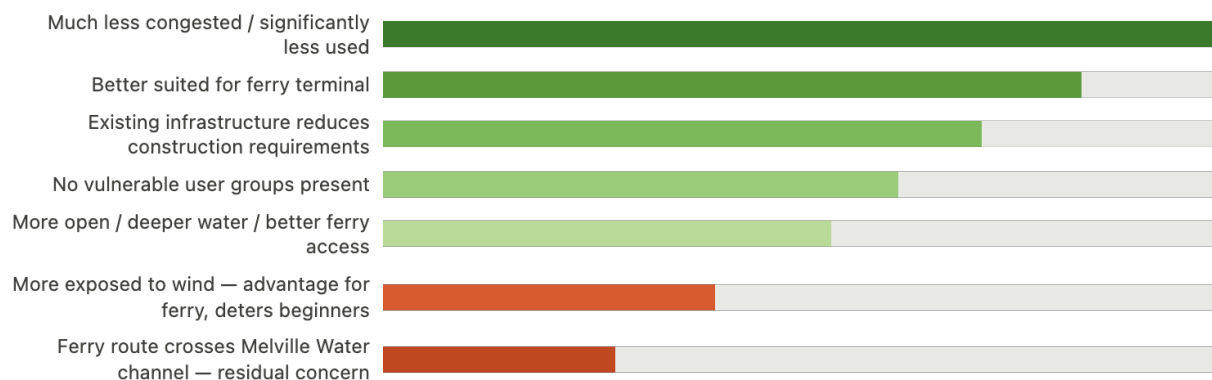
211 responses. Respondents with direct experience of both sites.

Side-by-side site comparison

Matilda Bay	JoJo's (Nedlands Jetty)
Wind exposure Sheltered from dominant south-westerly sea breeze by bay geometry. Primary reason vulnerable users concentrate here.	Wind exposure More exposed to south-westerly and westerly winds. Fetch across Melville Water creates chop in sea breeze conditions. Not suitable for beginners in these conditions.
Water depth Shallow, particularly inshore. A long terminal structure is required to reach adequate depth, avoiding the need for construction dredging. Sea floor includes sensitive seagrass beds requiring removal. Maintenance dredging may be required over time to maintain access.	Water depth Deeper water from mid-river to the jetty. Existing infrastructure already designed for larger powered vessels. No dredging required and no seagrass removal required at the jetty site.

Vessel traffic intensity Near-continuous. 100–200 sailing vessels on peak Saturday. Daily rowing up to 6 hours per day. Dragon boat, junior sailing, Sailability, recreational SUP and kayak across the full week.	Vessel traffic intensity Significantly lower. Primarily wind and kite surfers in strong wind conditions only. Occasional recreational powerboats transiting. No organised club activity based at the site.
Vulnerable user concentration Highest on the river. Juniors, disability sailors, novice rowers, foreshore paddlers, and swimmers concentrated here specifically because of the shelter.	Vulnerable user concentration Very low. No junior sailing, no disability sailing, no learn-to-row programs. Windsurfers and kite surfers are experienced users who operate in conditions that deter beginners.
Racing and training infrastructure Three yacht clubs, start lines, racing marks, rowing sheds, disability sailing pontoons. Water space formally organised around concurrent program schedules.	Racing and training infrastructure None directly at the site. Windsurfer and kite surfer launching is informal and weather-dependent. No club-based timetabled activity using the immediate water space.
Foreshore use Intensive. Family swimming, picnics, weddings, children's programs, dog walking, joggers, foreshore paddlers and swimmers. A-Class Reserve. Mature tree canopy. Sheltered beach with gradual gradient.	Foreshore use Moderate. Walking and jogging. Seawall along shoreline prevents easy water access. Beach access limited. Restaurant previously operated but now closed. Some underutilisation since restaurant closure.
Existing terminal infrastructure None. Significant new construction required including jetty, terminal building, and landside facilities in an A-Class Reserve with sensitive seagrass beds.	Existing terminal infrastructure Existing jetty in place. Seawall provides shore protection. Road access and parking available. Previously used as a ferry berth. Could be upgraded rather than built from scratch.
Wake and wash risk to shore Sloping sandy beach with no seawall protection. Highly susceptible to erosion from vessel wake. Toddler-safe gradient at risk of destruction if seawall required.	Wake and wash risk to shore Existing seawall provides shore protection. Rebound wash from wall is a potential issue for some users but the shore itself is not at erosion risk from ferry operations.

How respondents characterise JoJo's relative to Matilda Bay



Bars represent relative frequency of characterisation across open-text responses. Green = advantage for JoJo's. Orange = residual concern or mixed factor.

Key differentiating factors for the site comparison

JoJo's advantage

The wind exposure that is a disadvantage for recreation is an advantage for ferry operations

Matilda Bay's sheltered geometry is what makes it unsuitable for a ferry terminal — it concentrates vulnerable users who depend on calm water. JoJo's more exposed position means it is naturally self-selecting for experienced users who can handle choppy conditions. Windsurfers and kite surfers operate in strong wind specifically — the conditions that keep beginners, juniors, and disability sailors away. The site's exposure to the south-westerly is not a problem for a ferry service; it is precisely what makes it appropriate.

JoJo's advantage

Existing infrastructure reduces both construction impact and cost

Multiple respondents note the existing jetty, seawall, road access, and parking at JoJo's as significant practical advantages. The site has previously functioned as a ferry berth. Upgrading existing infrastructure is materially less disruptive — ecologically, visually, and in terms of community impact — than constructing a new terminal at Matilda Bay in an A-Class Reserve with no existing hard infrastructure.

JoJo's advantage

No vulnerable user groups operate at or near the site

The survey dataset documents the JoJo's area as having essentially no junior sailing, no disability sailing, no learn-to-row programs, no foreshore swimming, and no family recreational beach use at the waterline. The users who do operate there — experienced windsurfers and kite surfers — are weather-dependent, self-selecting for ability, and not present during calm conditions when a ferry would be easiest to operate. One respondent with direct experience of both sites: "JoJo's is basically dead in terms of on-water activity compared to Matilda Bay. There's none of the layered activity you see in Matilda Bay — no training fleets, no rowing, no mixed-use environment."

Residual concern

The ferry route to and from JoJo's crosses the Outer Dolphin channel — a genuine issue

One technically sophisticated respondent identifies the most substantive concern with JoJo's: the ferry approach route from Elizabeth Quay would cross the main navigation channel near Outer Dolphin, where a high volume of yachts and pleasure craft converge. "There is a huge volume of yachts and pleasure craft converging here so there are issues with how the ferry gets to this site rather than the site itself." This concern is raised by a small number of respondents and relates to the transit route rather than the terminal itself. It is qualitatively different from the Matilda Bay concerns — it is a manageable navigation challenge rather than a structural incompatibility between the ferry and the existing user base at the terminal site.

Residual concern

The approach from Melville Water is more exposed — ferry operations in strong conditions may be affected

A small number of respondents note that JoJo's faces into the south-westerly and that strong sea breeze conditions could affect ferry docking and departure. This is an operational consideration for ferry scheduling rather than a safety risk to other waterway users. One respondent notes that wave attenuator walls could mitigate this. The concern is qualitatively different from the Matilda Bay safety issues: at JoJo's, rough conditions primarily affect the ferry's own operations; at Matilda Bay, the ferry's operations affect the safety of hundreds of other waterway users.

MB comparison

The difference in user intensity is described as orders of magnitude, not incremental

Respondents with experience of both sites describe the difference in use intensity not as a quantitative variation but as a qualitative distinction. "Chalk and cheese." "Extreme opposites." "JoJo's is basically dead compared to Matilda Bay." "I pass Nedlands Jetty several times a week and the place is usually deserted." The earlier survey question established a respondent's direct comparison: "Could well exceed 100 or more [at Matilda Bay], as opposed to the Pelican Point/JoJo's area where you would be lucky to see 10 to 20 there these days." That five-to-ten-fold difference in ambient user density is consistent with the descriptions in this question.

Residual concern

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INDEPENDENT OBSERVATION

This finding has been verified during independent observations across both sites, with evidence suggesting the differential in intensity may be even greater.

Observations

The Outer Dolphin crossing concern and the Matilda Bay site concern are different in kind, not just in degree.

The Outer Dolphin crossing concern raised by experienced respondents in relation to a JoJo's ferry service is a genuine navigational issue and should not be dismissed. However, it is structurally different from the Matilda Bay safety concerns in one important respect. It is a transit route challenge rather than a terminal site incompatibility. The Outer Dolphin crossing can potentially be managed through scheduling, navigation protocols, or route design. The Matilda Bay incompatibility — a scheduled commercial ferry operating through a waterway that functions as a protected learning and disability sailing zone — cannot be managed through scheduling or route design without eliminating either the ferry service or the existing use. One concern has solutions available. The other does not.

KEY DISTINCTION

Outer Dolphin: a manageable transit route challenge with available mitigations. Matilda Bay: a structural site incompatibility with no resolution that preserves both the ferry service and the existing user base. That asymmetry is the decisive factor in the comparative site analysis.

Signal quotes

"JoJo's is basically dead in terms of on-water activity compared to Matilda Bay. You might get a few windsurfers, but they're there for speed — it's a very different type of use. There's none of the layered activity you see in Matilda Bay — no training fleets, no rowing, no mixed-use environment."

"Chalk and cheese. It really is the only viable option for the ferry if you wish to avoid massive negative impact on a wide range of water users. There is a reason there are speed restrictions throughout all of Matilda Bay and none in front of JoJo's."

"I pass Nedlands Jetty several times a week and the place is usually deserted. Matilda Bay is crowded all the time with leisure craft, dinghies, yachts, rowing boats, paddle boarders, kayakers, swimmers."

"The JoJo's area is not used by vulnerable water users to anywhere near the same extent as Matilda Bay. Windsurfers use the area but they are physically removed and I don't class them as vulnerable."

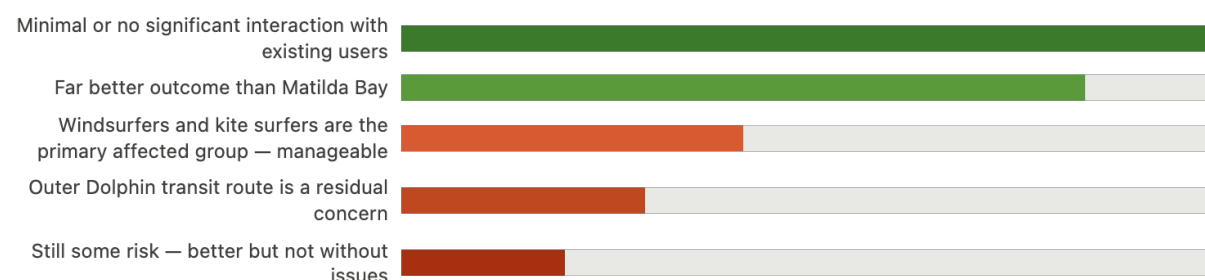
"Waters are not congested or contested, vision is excellent, manoeuvring space is extensive, direct clear approach and exit, good water depth, existing stone wall shore protection, very good access from shore, not used by unpowered craft — overcomes all safety issues which would be experienced in Matilda Bay."

"Much less traffic at JoJo's specifically. No swimmers or SUPs and informal water use there. No waterfront picnickers, no party boats, no power launches. However I still have concerns about the ferry route crossing the primary direction of traffic near Outer Dolphin."

Based on your experience, if a ferry were to operate at JoJo's, how do you think ferry operations would interact with existing users in the area?

215 responses. Respondents with operational experience of the Swan River.

Respondent sentiment on ferry interaction at JoJo's



Bars represent relative frequency of sentiment across open-text responses. Green = positive/low impact. Orange = residual concern or qualification.

Ferry interaction at JoJo's vs Matilda Bay: direct comparison

Ferry at JoJo's	Ferry at Matilda Bay
Primary user group affected Experienced windsurfers and kite surfers operating in strong wind conditions only. Fast, highly manoeuvrable, weather-dependent. Typically absent in calm conditions when a ferry would be easiest to operate.	Primary user group affected Juniors, disability sailors, novice rowers, foreshore swimmers, dragon boaters, and keelboat racing fleets — simultaneously. All present in the same window as the ferry.
Vulnerable user exposure Very low. No junior sailing, no disability sailing, no learn-to-row programs, no foreshore family swimming. Windsurfers are experienced and fast.	Vulnerable user exposure Very high. The most vulnerable user groups on the river are concentrated here specifically because of the shelter that a ferry would degrade.
Organised racing and training conflicts No racing start lines or training programs at the terminal site. Some sailing marks near Outer Dolphin on the transit route — most identified as moveable.	Organised racing and training conflicts RPYC start line directly on ferry approach. Three clubs' racing marks in ferry path. Programs described as incompatible with 12-minute ferry frequency.
Right-of-way complexity Limited. Few vessels to manage. Kite surfers and windsurfers are fast and manoeuvrable. No sailing racing rules in operation at the site.	Right-of-way complexity Irresolvable. Ferry gives way to sail: timetable fails. Sail gives way to ferry: programs terminate. No workable configuration exists.
Wake and wash effects on users Windsurfers and kite surfers operate in chop and actively seek ferry wash for jumps. Shore seawall provides protection from erosion. Rebound wash from wall is a minor secondary concern.	Wake and wash effects on users Rowing shells swamped, dragon boats broached, disability sailing capsized. Sloping beach with no seawall protection. At 12-minute intervals water never recovers between ferry passages.
Program termination risk None identified. No programs currently operating at the site that would need to cease or relocate.	Program termination risk Sailability predicted to fold. Junior sailing from three clubs predicted to cease or relocate. Dragon boating, SUP, kayaking and rowing described as too dangerous to continue.

Low impact

Windsurfers and kite surfers — the primary affected group — are well placed to manage ferry interaction

The most frequently cited interaction is between the ferry and the wind and kite surfing community that uses the Pelican Point shallows and the JoJo's area in strong wind conditions. Multiple respondents note several characteristics that make this interaction substantially more manageable than the Matilda Bay scenario. First, windsurfers and kite surfers are fast — capable of speeds exceeding the ferry's operational speed — and highly manoeuvrable. Second, they operate in strong wind conditions that coincide with chop and wash, making ferry wake a minor addition to conditions they are already managing. Third, multiple respondents note that many kite surfers actively enjoy ferry wash for jumps. Fourth, the windsurfer and kite surfer population is weather-dependent and not present in calm conditions when ferry operations would be simplest. One experienced respondent: "It would be no problem whatsoever. Kite surfers only go out when the wind speed is high and they move at high speed and can manoeuvre fast. This is unlike an Optimist dinghy with a junior learner which goes extremely slowly."

Low impact

The ferry approach and departure geometry at JoJo's is more straightforward

Multiple respondents describe the JoJo's approach geometry as substantially simpler than the Matilda Bay approach. The ferry would follow established spit post navigation markers — Nedlands Spit, Inner Dolphin — along a route that existing ferries and large vessels already use. One respondent with 40 years of sailing experience describes the route precisely: "Very little training or sailing activity would be interfered with. Basically Inner Dolphin, Knot to Quarry is the route for Rottnest and Captain Cook Ferries for the last 40 years. The new ferry would be out of the way with very little interruption to existing Matilda Bay users." The key distinction is that this route is already a recognised navigation channel for large vessels, unlike the Matilda Bay approach which crosses active racing and training areas.

Low impact

No programs at the site require protection or termination decisions

The absence of organised club-based programs at JoJo's means there is no equivalent to the Sailability, junior sailing, or rowing program cessation risk identified at Matilda Bay. There are no start lines to protect, no racing marks that cannot be moved, no disability sailing pontoons in the ferry path, and no pre-dawn rowing sessions in darkness on the approach route. Multiple respondents: "There are no yacht clubs, boat ramps or beaches in the vicinity." "No rowing clubs. No activity involving handicapped boaters." "I am not aware of any sailing off this jetty."

Residual concern

The Outer Dolphin transit corridor remains a genuine interaction point

A consistent minority of respondents with sailing experience identify the transit route past Outer Dolphin as the most significant residual concern for a JoJo's ferry service. This is the point where the ferry would cross the main channel used by yachts transiting between Matilda Bay and Melville Water. One respondent: "No issues with JoJo's as there are few river users here. The issue is along the route around the Outer Dolphin and river users on the weekend." Another identifies specific sailing marks: "From a sailing perspective the only marks used in a line from the proposed area at Canning Bridge to Nedlands Jetty are Outer Dolphin, Nedlands Spit, Dolphin East, Dolphin West and Hallmark buoy." Multiple respondents note these marks could be relocated to give the ferry predominantly open water. This is a navigable challenge rather than a structural incompatibility.

ANALYTICAL NOTE

Significantly, the respondents raising the Outer Dolphin concern are the same experienced waterway users who describe the Matilda Bay scenario as structurally incompatible. They are not moving risk elsewhere — they are making a considered judgment that the JoJo's residual risk is manageable and offering practical solutions. This is not a case of users ignoring risk; it is experienced operators distinguishing between a manageable navigation challenge and an unresolvable structural conflict.

Residual concern

Quarry Spit to Narrows corridor — a remaining interaction point for rowing crews

The corridor from Quarry Spit post to the Narrows Bridge is a genuine residual interaction point for rowing crews regardless of terminal location. Shallow water to the east funnels all traffic — including a JoJo's ferry — into a constrained deep-water corridor at this point. Rowing crews transiting to and from the Narrows would still experience ferry wake in this stretch. However, the scale of impact is materially different: this corridor represents less than 500 metres of close interaction. By contrast, a Matilda Bay terminal would expose rowing crews to ferry wake and close-quarters interaction across more than 3 kilometres — from the terminal approach through the entire Matilda Bay to Narrows corridor. The residual interaction at Quarry Spit is real and should be acknowledged; it is not comparable in magnitude or duration to the Matilda Bay exposure.

Residual concern

Some beginner windsurfers at the site may be affected in certain conditions

A small number of respondents note that beginner kite surfers and windsurfers learning at the site may find ferry movements challenging in certain conditions. One: "Some beginner windsurfers and kite surfers may find the ferry intimidating, and additional wake may make learning in this area more challenging." This is acknowledged by respondents as a real but limited concern — the affected population is small, the area is not the only learning location for these activities, and the conditions that bring learners to the area are different from those that bring experienced users. The concern is proportionate rather than structural.

Important caveat

JoJo's does not eliminate all interaction risk — it reduces it to a manageable level

Several respondents are careful to note that JoJo's is not without risk or interaction — it is simply a substantially better site than Matilda Bay. One measured response: "It would be disruptive, but much less disruptive than at Matilda Bay, and certainly safer." Another: "There would still be interruptions to members of the public but significantly less so." And from one of the most analytically precise respondents: "The impact would not affect nearly as many people as locating it at Matilda Bay. The existence of the existing jetty means not a lot changes — all users of the waters in front of JoJo's know a jetty is there and it is used, so the change is nowhere near as material." The difference is between manageable residual risk and structural incompatibility.

CLARIFICATION — WHO BEARS THE RESIDUAL RISK AT JOJO'S

It is important to be precise about where the residual risk falls. A JoJo's terminal does not simply transfer risk to different users — the same Matilda Bay clubs would still be affected in certain contexts. Sailing racing that crosses the ferry transit route would still experience interaction near Outer Dolphin. Rowing crews transiting to and from the Narrows would still encounter ferry wake in the Quarry Spit to Narrows corridor — approximately 500 metres of shared passage. These are genuine impacts on the same user groups.

The critical difference is one of magnitude, duration, and structural compatibility. At JoJo's, rowing interaction is confined to a short corridor that can be managed through timing and route awareness. At Matilda Bay, the same crews would be exposed to ferry wake and close-quarters interaction across more than 3 kilometres — and the ferry would be operating directly from a terminal positioned in the heart of their primary training water. The distinction is not that JoJo's makes the risk someone else's problem. It is that JoJo's makes the risk manageable, where Matilda Bay makes it structurally unresolvable.

The key distinction that emerges from this question

"There are far less users and they are far easier to manage in an emergency. No children learning. No disabled sailors. No organised racing fleets. Just a few experienced kite surfers who would enjoy the wash."

"Far, far less impact compared with Matilda Bay. Just go and look at them both."

"There would be almost zero interaction near the terminal."

"The number of watercraft in that area and their vulnerability is substantially lower than in Matilda Bay and therefore the ability to manage interactions would be significantly higher."

"The main issue is kite surfers, however there are several other parts of the river that are also available for beginner kite surfers."

"There are almost no water users between the mooring field north of Nedlands Jetty all the way to Nedlands Yacht Club. The windsurfers and kite surfers operate between the boat ramp eastward and very rarely use the area from the mooring field south approximately 500 metres to Nedlands Jetty."

Observations

The two sites produce qualitatively different interaction profiles, not a difference of degree.

At Matilda Bay, the ferry interacts with the most vulnerable user groups on the river in a structurally incompatible way that produces predicted program terminations and probable fatalities over time. At JoJo's, the ferry interacts primarily with experienced, fast, highly manoeuvrable users who are present only in conditions that keep vulnerable users away, and who may actually benefit from the wash. These are not two points on the same risk scale. They are qualitatively different interaction profiles.

The correct framing for the comparative site analysis is manageable residual risk versus structural incompatibility.

This framing avoids the claim that JoJo's is risk-free — it is not, and the Outer Dolphin transit concern is genuine. It accurately characterises the qualitative difference between the two sites. JoJo's presents residual risks that are manageable through scheduling, navigation protocols, and minor infrastructure adjustments. Matilda Bay presents a structural incompatibility between the ferry service and the existing user base that no scheduling or route design can resolve without eliminating one of the two uses. That is the decisive distinction for a comparative site analysis.

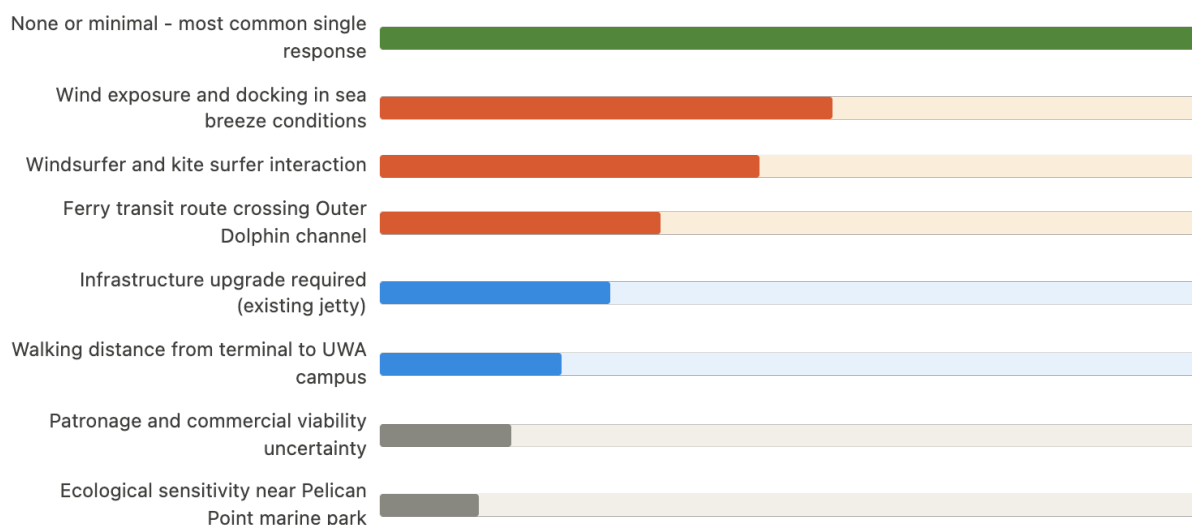
SUMMARY

JoJo's: manageable residual risk with available mitigations. Matilda Bay: structural incompatibility with no resolution that preserves both uses. The difference is not a matter of degree. It is a difference in kind.

What risks or challenges do you see if a ferry operated from JoJo's?

172 responses. Respondents with direct experience of the Swan River waterway.

Frequency of cited risks and challenges



Bars represent relative frequency of citation across open-text responses. Green = most cited. Orange = operational/safety. Blue = design/access. Grey = commercial/environmental.

Risks and challenges: detailed analysis

Operational

Wind exposure and sea breeze docking - real but manageable

The most consistently cited genuine waterway risk at JoJo's. The site is more exposed to the south-westerly sea breeze than Matilda Bay, which can create chop and make docking more challenging in strong afternoon conditions. Multiple respondents acknowledge this but place it in context: comparable conditions are managed routinely at South Perth ferry terminal and by Rottnest ferries. Several respondents note that a breakwater or wave attenuator wall could substantially mitigate this. One: "I do understand that operating ferries in and out of JoJo's in the teeth of a strong summer sea breeze will be somewhat more challenging for the ferry operators than berthing in the shelter of Matilda Bay, but I do not see that consideration overriding all of the other concerns noted above." The wind exposure risk is an engineering and operational challenge. It is not a structural incompatibility with the existing user base.

Manageable

Windsurfer and kite surfer interaction - limited in scope and geography

Windsurfers and kite surfers operating near Pelican Point and JoJo's are the primary existing user group that would interact with a ferry service. Multiple respondents note that their operating area is predominantly east of the proposed terminal site, in shallow water unsuitable for a ferry. One: "There are almost no water users between the mooring field north of Nedlands Jetty all the way to Nedlands Yacht Club. The windsurfers and kite surfers operate between the boat ramp eastward and very rarely use the area from the mooring field south approximately 500 metres to Nedlands Jetty." Where interaction does occur, windsurfers and kite surfers are fast and highly manoeuvrable, many actively enjoy ferry wash, and they are only present in strong wind conditions when calm-water users are absent. A designated channel or simple navigation awareness protocols would substantially reduce residual interaction risk.

Manageable

Outer Dolphin transit corridor - a scheduling and route challenge, not a site incompatibility

The ferry transit from JoJo's toward Elizabeth Quay or Applecross would cross the main navigation channel near Outer Dolphin, where racing yachts and pleasure craft converge on weekends. Multiple respondents identify this as the most substantive residual concern. However, several also offer practical solutions: adjusting the timetable to reduce frequency during peak racing windows on summer weekend afternoons; slowing the ferry through this section; moving a small number of sailing marks (Hallmark and one or two others) by approximately 50 metres to clear the ferry path. One experienced respondent notes the route from Nedlands Spit via Inner Dolphin to Knot Spit is already used by Rottnest and Captain Cook ferries without significant incident. The concern is real but the solutions are available and have precedent.

Design

Infrastructure upgrade — cost and construction rather than safety risk

Multiple respondents note the existing Nedlands Jetty would require upgrading to accommodate a modern ferry service. This is framed consistently as a cost and construction question rather than a safety or user impact question. The existing jetty, seawall, road access, carpark, and utility connections reduce the scope of works substantially compared to constructing a new terminal at Matilda Bay in an A-Class Reserve. Several respondents note the jetty has previously accommodated ferry operations and is proven infrastructure for the purpose.

Design

Walking distance from terminal to UWA — the primary non-safety challenge

The most frequently cited non-safety challenge is the walking distance from JoJo's to UWA's main campus. Respondents who raise this acknowledge it as a legitimate consideration while offering solutions: an extended Purple Cat bus route with a new stop at JoJo's; shuttle bus connection; the existing Cat bus route that already runs along Hackett Drive. Multiple respondents note that UWA students already walk significant distances across campus, that the university operates for approximately 22–28 weeks per year, and that Broadway Avenue's hospitality precinct near JoJo's provides destination value independent of the university. One: "There is already a Cat type bus operating to assist patron movement." Another: "Uni students can walk the short walk and CAT buses extended to cover them."

Minor

Ecological sensitivity near Pelican Point marine park

A small number of respondents raise proximity to the Pelican Point marine park and seagrass beds as an ecological concern. One notes the Pelican Point area is a Ramsar-listed wetland. However, the JoJo's terminal site is noted by multiple respondents as being separated from the marine park by the mooring field, with a ferry route following established navigation markers that keep it in deeper water away from the sensitive intertidal areas. The ecological concern at JoJo's is noted but is qualitatively less severe than the documented seagrass, foreshore erosion, and wildlife disruption risks identified at the Matilda Bay site.

Expert technical submission — vessel speed as the critical risk variable

A former ferry vessel tenderer provides the most technically precise risk assessment in the dataset

One respondent identifies themselves as having tendered for the ferry vessels and having designed an alternative concept specifically for a JoJo's to Canning Bridge route. Their core finding: "At around 9.5 knots, interaction with existing users would be minimal. The operating profile is closer to other river traffic, wake is low, and there's sufficient time for all parties to see, assess, and respond."

The submission also identifies the key driver of operating speed: "A key driver of that speed appears to be the need to meet a timetable while also turning the vessel at each end of the route. That turning manoeuvre costs time — on the order of a couple of minutes — which then has to be made up in transit speed. If you remove that requirement, the operating speed can come down materially, and with it the risk."

The vessel procurement and timetable design decisions are therefore as consequential to the safety outcome as the terminal location itself.

ANALYTICAL CLARIFICATION — HOW TO INTERPRET THE SPEED SUBMISSION

This submission requires careful framing. The expert analysis establishes that lower speed substantially reduces interaction risk at JoJo's — but speed does not need to be held consistently at 9.5 knots across the full route. What matters is the ability of the ferry master to apply variable speed control as a situational tool when other water users are present.

From the independent observation period and from the broader survey evidence, the actual exposure window during which significant numbers of other users are present at JoJo's during ferry operating hours is very small. The interaction risk is not a constant — it is occasional and manageable with proportionate speed response.

The government's contracted ferry design requires operating speeds of approximately 25 knots to meet timetable obligations. The vessel design is now signed off and will not be double-ended — an arrangement that would have materially reduced the turning time that drives high transit speed. That design decision is now fixed. The speed implications of that fixed design, and the contractual timetable pressure that locks in those speeds, are therefore the residual concerns that this submission most usefully identifies. Not a structural incompatibility with JoJo's — but a vessel and contract configuration that requires careful management at a site where the exposure window is limited.

KEY DISTINCTION

At JoJo's, speed is a manageable variable that the ferry master can apply situationally during a small and predictable exposure window. At Matilda Bay, no speed setting resolves the structural incompatibility with the existing user base — the conflict is geometric and organisational, not kinematic.

The overall picture from this question

"None. It's been done before and is well proven."

"Much lower risk as much much lower use."

"Far less than Matilda Bay — just go and look at them both."

"The number of watercraft in that area and their vulnerability is substantially lower than in Matilda Bay and therefore the ability to manage interactions would be significantly higher."

"No risk with JoJo's. More a risk in the middle of the river with 100-plus racing yachts, 100-plus pleasure craft and other traffic mostly moving at speed north-south whilst the ferry crosses them against the grain of traffic."

"A lower-speed service is broadly compatible with existing use. A high-speed service, driven by timetable and turning constraints, introduces a much sharper risk profile."

ANALYTICAL EMPHASIS — CROSS-GRAIN TRAFFIC AS A CRITICAL MATILDA BAY RISK FACTOR

The cross-grain traffic observation is one of the most analytically significant findings in the dataset and is directly relevant to how the government assessed risk. The ferry route at Matilda Bay crosses the primary direction of traffic — north-south through racing fleets, transit vessels, and powerboats — at a perpendicular angle. This is not simply a congestion problem; it is a collision geometry problem. Traffic moving at speed in one direction has limited ability to anticipate and respond to a large vessel crossing at 90 degrees to that flow. The government's risk assessment does not appear to have accounted for the ferry's crossing direction relative to the dominant traffic flow. This is a material omission from a traffic separation and collision avoidance perspective.

Observations

EXPERT SUBMISSION

The expert vessel tenderer submission is the most analytically valuable response in this question. It establishes that the risk profile at JoJo's is not determined by the site alone but by the combination of site, vessel type, and operating speed. This means the vessel procurement decision and the timetable design are themselves safety-critical decisions that should be subject to the same level of scrutiny as the terminal location.

The two sites respond differently to the primary risk mitigation available to a ferry operator.

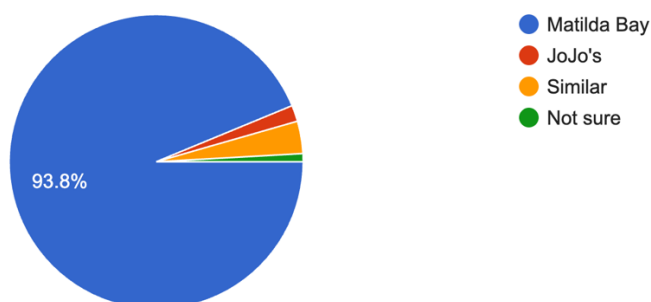
At JoJo's, the users are present at significantly lower numbers and frequencies and are capable of managing ferry interactions across a range of speeds — windsurfers and kite surfers routinely interact safely with powered craft operating at high speed throughout Melville Waters, where incidents effectively do not occur. When other users are present at JoJo's during ferry operating hours, speed adjustment by the ferry master would be a rare and situational response, not a structural requirement. At Matilda Bay, no operationally viable speed reduces the structural incompatibility with the existing user base. The problem is the intersection of a fixed-schedule vessel with 100–200 sailing vessels on active race courses, capsized juniors at water level, and disability sailing participants who cannot respond. Speed reduction helps at the margins but does not resolve the fundamental conflict. The sites are not just different in user density. They respond differently to the only risk mitigation a ferry operator can readily apply.

Vessel procurement and timetable design are safety-critical decisions, not operational details.

The expert tenderer's analysis reframes a dimension of the proposal that is often treated as an implementation question. A high-speed service driven by timetable constraints and turning time recovery is a fundamentally different safety proposition from a lower-speed service that can modulate speed situationally. The vessel design is now fixed and will not be double-ended — a decision that locks in the turning time that drives high transit speed. Those decisions, already made, determine the risk profile of the service as materially as the terminal location decision itself. They should be examined with the same rigour.

Comparing both locations, which do you believe presents a higher level of interaction risk for existing river users and activities?

225 responses

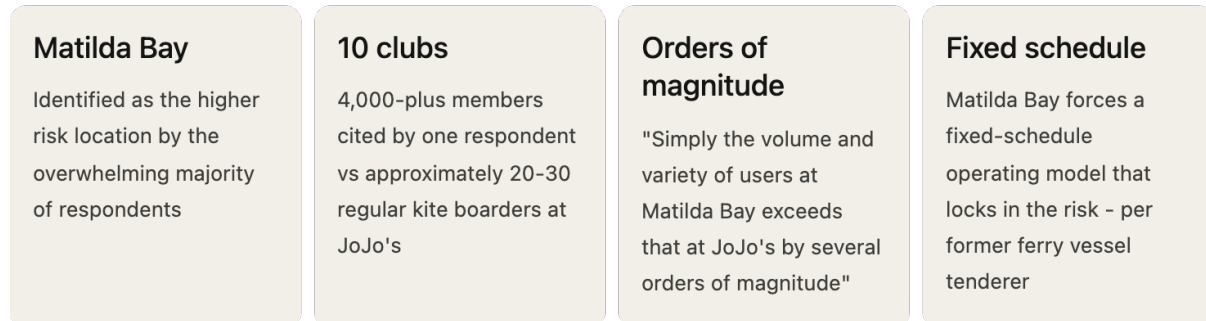


93.8% of club member respondents nominated Matilda Bay as the location presenting a higher level of interaction risk for existing river users and activities. Only 1.8% nominated JoJo's, with 3.6% identifying similar risk at both sites and 0.9% unsure. The result is directionally unambiguous across 225 responses from experienced waterway users with direct operational familiarity with both sites.

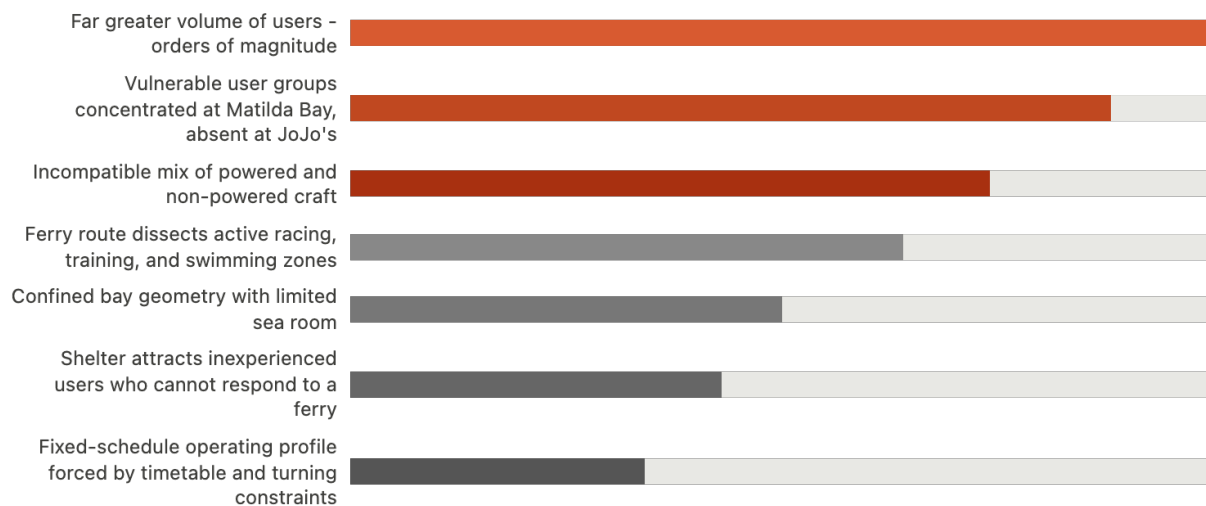
Why do you believe that location presents a higher level of risk?

209 responses. Context: preceding question asked respondents to identify which site presents higher interaction risk. The overwhelming majority identified Matilda Bay.

Scale of response



Reasons cited for higher risk at Matilda Bay



Bars represent relative frequency of reason cited across open-text responses. Themes coded from qualitative analysis.

The reasons in detail

Primary

Volume and diversity of users is orders of magnitude higher at Matilda Bay

The most consistent reason given across the entire respondent base. Matilda Bay has 10 clubs with over 4,000 members, near-continuous structured use from 05:15 to 20:00, and peak periods with 100-200 sailing vessels simultaneously on the water. JoJo's has approximately 20-30 regular kite boarders on windy afternoons. Multiple respondents describe this not as a quantitative difference but a qualitative one: "Hundreds of users in Matilda Bay compared to virtually no users at JoJo's." "More than 4,000 members of the 10 clubs around the bay who regularly participate in activity on water." "Simply the volume and variety of users at Matilda Bay exceeds that at JoJo's by several orders of magnitude." The risk differential is not marginal - it is fundamental.

Primary

Vulnerable user groups are concentrated at Matilda Bay and absent at JoJo's

Juniors, disability sailors, novice rowers, learn-to-sail participants, and children swimming from the foreshore are all concentrated at Matilda Bay because of its sheltered geometry. These groups are effectively absent from JoJo's for the same reason - the exposure that makes JoJo's unsuitable for beginners makes it safe for a ferry. One respondent captures the contrast precisely: "The competence level of users and timing - low skills, young users all day at Matilda Bay on multiple craft types - versus advanced adult users on high-speed wind craft at JoJo's." Another: "10 clubs with over 2,000 users, mainly junior, novice or disabled. All with regular on-water times spread throughout the week. Compared to maybe 20-30 regular kite boarders, mainly weekend use." The groups at highest collision risk are at Matilda Bay. The group at JoJo's - experienced kite surfers - is among the most capable of managing interactions with a large vessel.

Primary

The ferry route at Matilda Bay dissects active racing, training, and swimming zones from the moment it leaves the terminal

Multiple respondents describe the Matilda Bay ferry as being "right in the thick of it" from the point of departure. The terminal is located in the centre of the bay. The approach and departure routes pass through the RPYC start line, the Sailability operating area, the junior sailing training zone, the foreshore paddling and swimming area, dragon boat and rowing training and the public boat ramp corridor simultaneously. At JoJo's, the ferry departs along a navigation channel already used by large vessels, without immediately entering an area of dense mixed recreational use. One respondent: "As soon as they leave the dock at Matilda Bay, they are right in the thick of it. But at JoJo's, the path from the main traffic channel into the terminal is just nowhere near as heavily used."

High

Confined bay geometry with limited sea room for collision avoidance

Matilda Bay is a relatively enclosed body of water. The mooring field, the start lines, the racing marks, and the foreshore all constrain the available sea room. A ferry manoeuvring in this confined space - including docking, departing, and turning - does so in close proximity to multiple vessel types simultaneously, with limited room for any vessel to take avoiding action. JoJo's fronts Melville Water, which is significantly larger and provides more sea room for all vessels. One respondent: "It is a BAY - you have limited area to move with the moorings and yacht club at either end." Another: "Ferries operate in open uncongested water at JoJo's. Normal ferry operations in much easier conditions."

High

The shelter that makes Matilda Bay safe for vulnerable users also concentrates them in the ferry's path

Multiple respondents identify the self-reinforcing risk dynamic: the sheltered geometry that makes Matilda Bay the right place for juniors, disability sailors, and novice rowers is exactly the same characteristic that makes it the wrong place for a ferry terminal. The shelter concentrates vulnerable users. A ferry terminal in that location introduces the highest-risk vessel type into the highest-concentration vulnerable-user zone on the river. At JoJo's, the exposure that deters vulnerable users is the same characteristic that makes ferry operations less risky for other waterway users. The site selection question is therefore not just about current user numbers - it is about the structural relationship between shelter, user vulnerability, and ferry risk that each site embodies.

Significant

Casual and recreational users at Matilda Bay are unaware of ferry movements and cannot be readily educated

One respondent identifies a risk factor not raised as explicitly in earlier questions: "Because of the age and experience of the users and the unfamiliarity, most people are general public who do not see themselves as river users. They are not educated in water rules, conditions etc. and as they only use the area infrequently will be difficult to educate to have awareness of where a ferry would be or what to expect on the water." This is the casual recreational user cohort - families on inflatable paddleboards, children jumping from jetties, swimmers in the shallows - who constitute a significant part of Matilda Bay's peak period user base. Unlike club members who can be briefed, these users have no communication channel and no reason to expect a large commercial vessel moving through their activity area.

Expert technical submission: Matilda Bay forces a high-risk operating model

The former ferry vessel tenderer's comparative analysis

"Selecting Matilda Bay effectively locks in a higher-risk operating profile. It's not just the location - it's the combination of location and schedule. The proposed service requires relatively high speeds to meet timetable constraints, and speed is the primary driver of risk on the water. As speed increases, reaction times reduce, kinetic energy increases, and the consequences of any interaction escalate very quickly. Operating from Matilda Bay also requires the vessel to run at speed through a heavily used, mixed-use area. That introduces the need for exemptions to existing speed limits and brings associated wake impacts, which add another layer of risk for other users. There's also a broader system issue. The service is effectively being layered into an already well-served transport corridor - bus and rail - which drives the need for higher speeds to maintain a competitive timetable, rather than allowing the operation to be shaped around the constraints of the waterway. By contrast, an alternative operating pattern - such as a lower-speed service between Canning Bridge and JoJo's - allows the timetable to be met without resorting to high speeds. That materially reduces interaction risk, wake impacts, and overall system complexity. In short, the choice of Matilda Bay doesn't just influence risk - it largely determines it, by forcing a high-speed, high-consequence operating model."

Observations

The higher risk at Matilda Bay is driven by a self-reinforcing combination of factors, not any single one

The reasons respondents give for Matilda Bay presenting higher risk than JoJo's are not independent variables. They are mutually reinforcing. The shelter attracts vulnerable users. The vulnerable users concentrate in the bay at peak periods. The peak periods coincide with the commercial windows a viable ferry service must operate in. The confined bay geometry limits the sea room available for collision avoidance. The mooring field further constrains manoeuvring space. The ferry departs from the terminal directly into the densest concentration of incompatible vessel types on the river. Each factor compounds the others. Removing any one does not resolve the risk because the remaining factors sustain it.

The expert tenderer's framing of Matilda Bay as "locking in" a high-risk operating model is analytically precise

The submission that "the choice of Matilda Bay doesn't just influence risk, it largely determines it, by forcing a high-speed, high-consequence operating model" captures a causal relationship that goes beyond site characteristics. The terminal location drives the route. The route drives the timetable. The timetable drives the required speed. The speed drives the wake, the stopping distance, and the reaction time available to other waterway users. Selecting Matilda Bay sets that chain of consequences in motion. Selecting JoJo's and a double-ended configuration breaks it at the first link.

The density difference between the two sites is not incremental. Respondents describe it as orders of magnitude. Ten clubs with over 4,000 members operating structured programs in Matilda Bay versus approximately 20-30 experienced kite surfers at JoJo's on windy afternoons. That is the baseline against which any risk comparison must be made.

Signal quotes

"Simply the volume and variety of users at Matilda Bay exceeds that at JoJo's by several orders of magnitude."

"10 clubs with users mainly junior, novice or disabled. All with regular on-water times spread throughout the week. Compared to maybe 20-30 regular kite boarders, mainly weekend use."

"As soon as they leave the dock at Matilda Bay, they are right in the thick of it. At JoJo's, the path from the main traffic channel into the terminal is nowhere near as heavily used."

"The competence level of users: low skills, young users all day at Matilda Bay on multiple craft types versus advanced adult users on high-speed wind craft at JoJo's."

"The choice of Matilda Bay doesn't just influence risk - it largely determines it, by forcing a high-speed, high-consequence operating model."

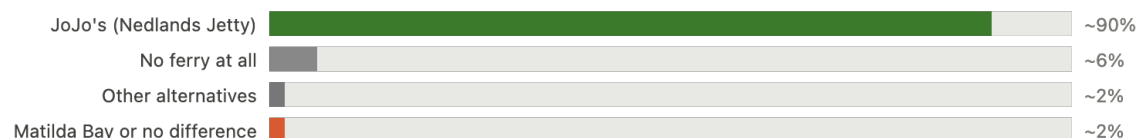
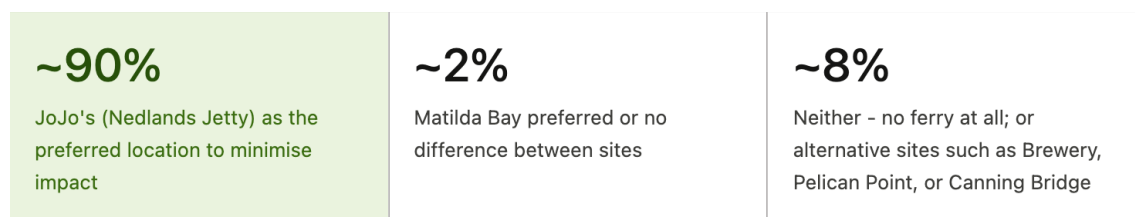
"Unpredictable water users learning, capsizing, and building their skills - not weaving in and out of ferries."

"The risk of having ferries at Matilda Bay threatens the safety of all water users and clubs. None of these threats exist at JoJo's."

If ferry operations were introduced, what location would best minimise impact to existing users of the river?

217 responses. Club member survey.

Stated location preference across all respondents



Figures derived from coding 217 open-text responses. JoJo's includes Nedlands Jetty references.

Why respondents nominate JoJo's

Safety

Substantially lower waterway risk at the terminal site itself and ferry routes

The core safety argument is stated consistently: JoJo's has orders-of-magnitude fewer waterway users, no vulnerable user groups at the terminal site, and existing navigation infrastructure that keeps the ferry in a recognised commercial vessel channel. The ferry leaves the terminal into open water rather than into an active racing and training bay. Multiple respondents: "JoJo's location would barely impact on existing users of the river." "Jo Jo's would remove all the problems and risks." "JoJo's, for all the reasons I have stated above."

Cost

Lower construction cost and reduced environmental impact

Multiple respondents identify JoJo's as materially cheaper to develop: "The construction impact of installing 6 pylons as compared to 45 in Matilda Bay is considerable. The cost savings of 10 million dollars or more needs to be considered." The deeper water at JoJo's reduces longer-term dredging maintenance requirements. The existing jetty, seawall, and road access reduce the scope of new construction. The absence of A-Class Reserve constraints and sensitive seagrass beds reduces ecological impact assessment and remediation costs. One respondent: "It would also be cheaper."

Infrastructure

Existing infrastructure - a proven ferry berth that needs upgrading, not replacing

JoJo's has previously operated as a ferry terminal. The jetty, seawall, carpark, road access, and utility connections exist. Multiple respondents: "The infrastructure is already there." "It's been done before and is well proven." "Nedlands Jetty is the only safe option. It would minimise impact." One respondent compares the two sites directly: "Between JoJo's and Matilda Bay, inarguably, the answer has to be JoJo's. It would probably also be less expensive to establish."

Operations

The double-ended Canning Bridge to JoJo's configuration emerges as an operationally superior alternative

The former ferry vessel tenderer, whose expert submissions appear in multiple earlier questions, proposes a specific alternative: "A double-ended ferry operating between Canning Bridge and JoJo's would best minimise impact to existing users of the river. This approach avoids the most heavily used and complex sections of the river. A Canning Bridge to JoJo's service functions as a network link rather than a parallel service. Canning Bridge is directly connected to the rail network, and JoJo's connects into bus routes, allowing the ferry to integrate into the broader transport system rather than duplicating it. A double-ended vessel removes the need for time-consuming turning manoeuvres and reduces the pressure to operate at high speed. That in turn reduces interaction risk, wake impacts, and overall complexity." This configuration - a shorter route, lower demand on speed, integrated with existing public transport, avoiding the heavily used central river section - represents the most technically developed alternative proposal in the survey dataset.

Access

Better land-side connectivity and destination value than assumed

Multiple respondents challenge the assumption that JoJo's is too far from UWA to be viable. The Purple Cat bus already serves Hackett Drive. Broadway Avenue's hospitality precinct is within close walking distance. The Children's Hospital and other Nedlands medical facilities are proximate. Apartment and residential density near JoJo's provides a resident user base. One: "Jo Jo's is close to apartments and shopping areas where ferry transport could add a lot to the local community." Another: "More residential around, easy link to children's hospital and others in that area." Several respondents note UWA's main campus is accessible by a short walk or an extended Cat bus route, and that UWA operates for approximately 22-28 weeks per year - making the university-only justification for Matilda Bay less compelling.

Qualified support

Some respondents nominate JoJo's while expressing doubt about the overall ferry proposal

A proportion of JoJo's preferences come from respondents who do not support the ferry service but, if required to choose between the two sites, clearly prefer JoJo's. "JoJo's or better still, no ferry at all." "If we need a ferry, and I do not think we do, then JoJos would be suitable." "JoJo's. However, none will work without parking." "JoJo's, but I would hope a study to establish the patronage of the ferries first as it's taxpayer dollars." These responses should be read as a clear preference for JoJo's as between the two sites rather than as endorsements of the ferry service itself.

Expert submissions on the preferred configuration

Former ferry builder and operator

"Obviously JoJo's, for all the reasons I have stated above. But there are also other considerations. The electric ferries will be charged at Matilda Bay, which means that this is where they will spend the majority of their time alongside - which will mean that this is where they will be maintained, serviced, cleaned, and where crews will change over. Significant additional storage and parking space will inevitably be required, leading to more tree removal. I am a retired ferry builder and operator, and am all for ferries as a mode of transport in the right place at the right time. Matilda Bay is not it."

Former ferry vessel tenderer - optimal configuration

"A double-ended ferry operating between Canning Bridge and JoJo's would best minimise impact to existing users. This avoids the most heavily used and complex sections of the river. Canning Bridge is directly connected to the rail network and JoJo's connects into bus routes, allowing the ferry to integrate into the broader transport system rather than duplicating it. A double-ended vessel removes the need for time-consuming turning manoeuvres, reducing pressure to operate at high speed. That reduces interaction risk, wake impacts, and overall complexity."

Observations

The ~90% preference for JoJo's is the clearest quantitative finding in the entire survey

This preference was produced by a question that did not prompt a comparison. It simply asked which location would best minimise impact. The convergence on JoJo's across respondents from every activity group, including some who do not support the ferry service at all, is a strong and consistent signal. It represents an independent, unprompted endorsement of the alternative site from the full breadth of the user community that has the greatest direct experience of both locations.

A Matilda Bay terminal is not just a departure point - it becomes the operational base for the entire service

The retired ferry builder and operator's observation about charging infrastructure raises an impact that does not appear in the safety-focused questions. A charging terminal requires the vessel to be moored alongside for extended periods, creating an effectively permanent large-vessel presence in the bay independent of scheduled services. Maintenance, cleaning, crew changeovers, and servicing all follow the vessel to wherever it is charged. That compounds the impact on the foreshore, the A-Class Reserve, and the surrounding water space in ways that go beyond what the scheduled service timetable alone implies. The full operational footprint of the terminal is materially larger than the departure schedule suggests.

The Canning Bridge to JoJo's double-ended configuration is the most technically developed alternative in the dataset

The configuration proposed by the vessel tenderer solves the turning-time problem that drives high operating speed, integrates with existing rail at Canning Bridge and bus connections at JoJo's, avoids the heavily used central river section, and operates at a speed compatible with the existing user base at JoJo's. It is the only proposal in the survey data that addresses the operational pressure, the safety risk, and the public transport integration question simultaneously. It warrants consideration as a reference alternative in any comparative site analysis.

Signal quotes

"Jo Jo's would remove all the problems and risks."

"Between JoJo's and Matilda Bay, inarguably, the answer has to be JoJo's. It would probably also be less expensive to establish."

"The construction impact of installing 6 pylons as compared to 45 in Matilda Bay is considerable. The cost savings of 10 million dollars or more needs to be considered."

"JoJo's is the most suitable location for ferry operations, provided safe separation from jetty activity and clear navigation corridors are maintained."

"There is no truly good option here unless you are prepared to discuss timetables, speed limitations, and right of way during peak use periods of the river. This is what is missing from the conversation."

"I am a retired ferry builder and operator, and am all for ferries as a mode of transport in the right place at the right time. Matilda Bay is not it."

Matilda Bay Ferry Terminal Proposal

Site Observation Report

Swan River, Perth, Western Australia

Prepared by

Paul Chivers

Riskfacilitator Pty Ltd

Observation period

8 – 14 April 2026

Seven days, both sites

Report date

May 2026

Version 1.0

Proposed site

Matilda Bay

UWA Boat Club foreshore, Crawley

Alternative site

JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty

Nedlands Jetty, Melville Waters

This report presents the findings of a structured week-long drone and ground observation programme conducted across both proposed electric ferry terminal sites on the Swan River. It is intended to be read alongside the Matilda Bay Waterway Safety Survey Report (club member and public surveys, April 2026) and provides independent observational verification of the waterway activity, traffic patterns, and conflict geometries identified in that assessment.

Observation Programme

Wednesday 8 April – Tuesday 14 April 2026 — Swan River, Perth

A structured week-long observation programme was conducted across both proposed terminal sites. Observations were made at six time frames each day -- morning, late morning, early afternoon, afternoon, and late afternoon -- using drone footage and ground-level imaging. The programme was designed to provide independent, time-stamped verification of waterway activity levels, vessel and craft types, traffic patterns, and conflict geometries relevant to the proposed Matilda Bay ferry terminal and its alternative at JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty. Raw footage is retained in full and specific frames can be produced for verification on request.

Observation method

Drone

Aerial footage — time-stamped, six frames per day

Drone footage provided an overhead perspective across both sites at multiple times of day. Four camera angles were maintained: UWA Boat Club into Matilda Bay, mid Matilda Bay, RPYC into Matilda Bay, and JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty. Time-lapse compilations at 10x speed are available for each angle. Timestamps are embedded in all recordings.

Ground

Shoreside imaging — time-stamped

Ground-level photography was collected at various observation points across both sites. Images record vessel type, activity, and spatial relationships relevant to the proposed ferry route and terminal placement. Selected frames have been annotated to indicate vessel type and direction of travel.

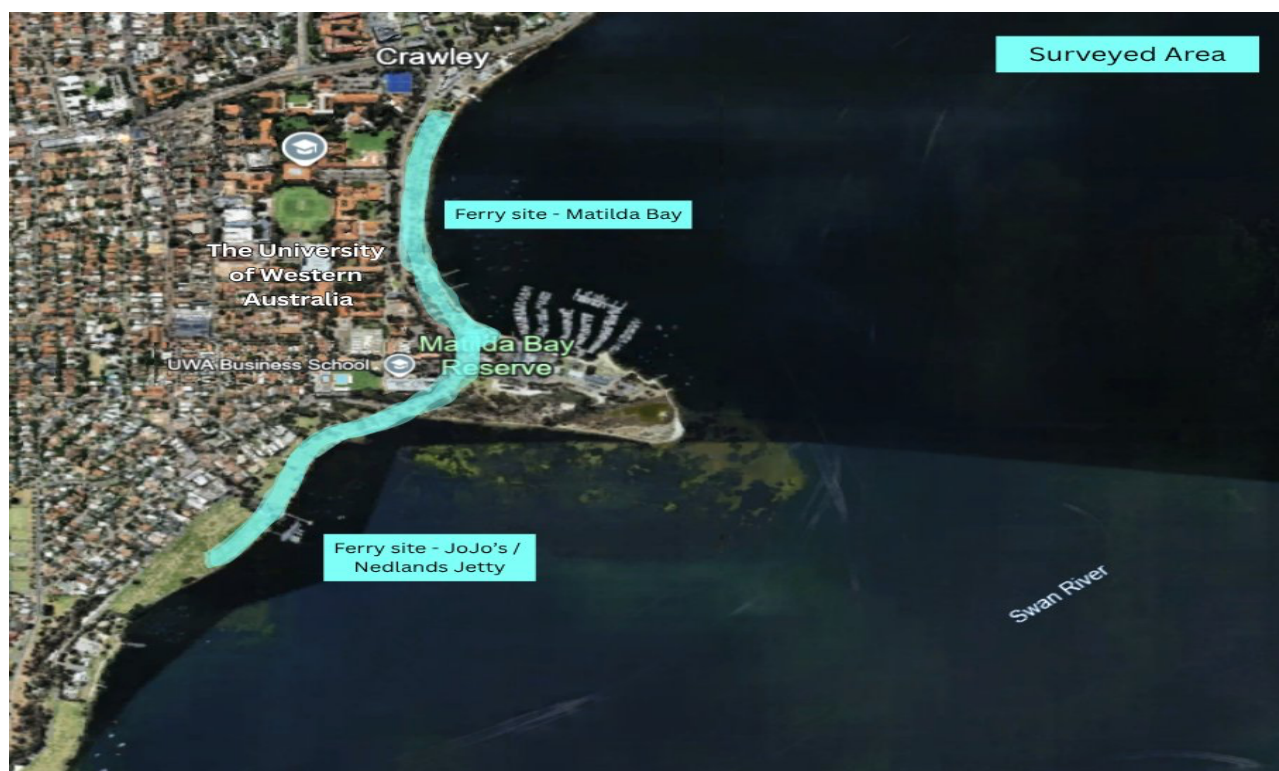
Verification

Full footage retained

Raw footage is retained in full. Specific frames can be extracted with embedded timestamps for evidentiary purposes on request. The public survey for this assessment ran from 3 April to 19 April 2026, overlapping with the observation programme.

Observational data in this report is independent of survey responses and is presented as corroborating evidence.

Figure 1 — Survey area and site locations



Site A

Matilda Bay — proposed terminal site

Located at the northern end of the survey corridor, adjacent to the UWA Boat Club marina and Matilda Bay Reserve. This site sits within an enclosed, shallow bay that functions as the primary waterway for UWABC rowing operations, learn-to-sail programmes, SUP launching, and recreational powerboat activity. The survey corridor highlights the constrained waterway geometry between the UWA foreshore and the open Swan River.

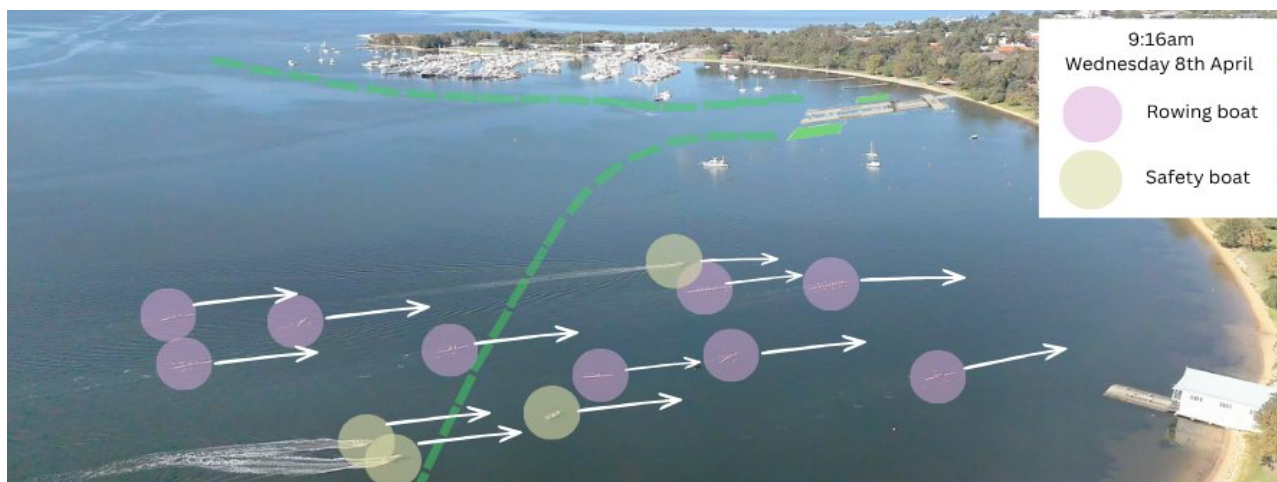
Site B

JoJo's / Nedlands Jetty — alternative site

Located approximately 900 metres to the south along the same foreshore corridor at the existing Nedlands Jetty. This site sits at the edge of open Melville Waters, outside the concentrated activity zone of Matilda Bay. The survey corridor widens considerably at this point and the site has no direct interaction with the bays enclosed rowing and sailing precinct.

The teal corridor shown above defines the observation and public survey area -- 3 April to 19 April 2026 -- and corresponds to the waterway zone that any Matilda Bay ferry service would traverse on approach and departure. The proximity of both sites along a single foreshore corridor makes direct comparison of waterway activity and conflict geometry operationally meaningful.

OBSERVATIONS — MATILDA BAY

Figure 2 — Rowing crews returning to UWA Boat Club, Matilda Bay**Critical**

09:16 Wednesday 8 April 2026 — rowing return transit

Drone footage at 09:16 captures multiple rowing crews in simultaneous transit across Matilda Bay, returning to the UWA Boat Club. At least four rowing eights are spread across three lanes of travel, accompanied by a safety boat. This session reflects a schedule change -- Shenton College crews were operating in a morning slot during the school holiday period, displacing activity that would ordinarily occur in separate afternoon windows.

Geometry

Cross-grain traffic across the proposed ferry corridor

Rowing crews are travelling east across the ferry corridor at close to 90 degrees -- the same cross-grain conflict geometry identified in the waterway safety assessment. Multiple crews occupy the full bay width simultaneously, with separation between eights as little as one boat length. A schedule-constrained ferry could not give way to all crews without stopping service.

Context

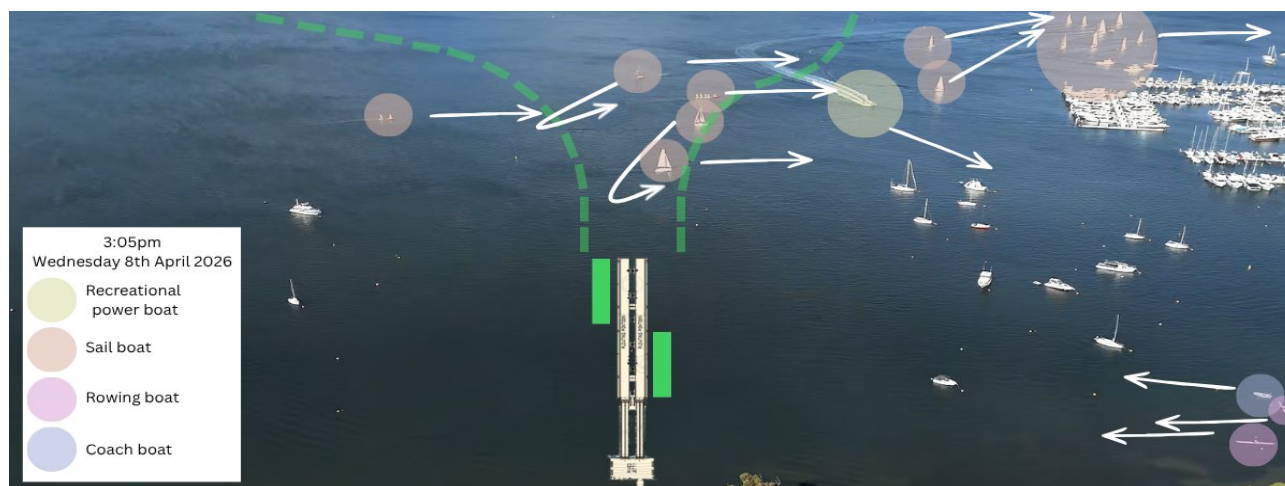
School holiday adjustment -- not the peak operational scenario

Under the regular term programme, Shenton College crews conduct afternoon sessions from approximately 14:00-16:00 on Fridays, and UWABC runs back-to-back sessions from 16:00-20:00 Monday to Thursday. Term-time conditions will present higher simultaneous traffic volumes in the critical pre-dusk and evening windows.

KEY FINDING

Even in a modified holiday schedule, multiple rowing crews simultaneously occupy the full width of Matilda Bay at the point where the proposed ferry route crosses their return path. The safety boat confirms this is a supervised, organised session. The spread across three travel lanes makes a single clear passage for a ferry operationally implausible without stopping service.

Source: Drone footage, Wednesday 8 April 2026, 09:16. Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

Figure 3 — Sailing race marks and multi-craft activity at the terminal site**Critical**

15:05 Wednesday 8 April 2026 — race marks at the terminal footprint

Drone footage at 15:05 captures sailing boats actively turning around race marks positioned directly in front of the proposed ferry terminal structure. The terminal footprint is visible at the base of the frame. Annotated vessels include multiple sail boats executing mark roundings, a recreational powerboat, rowing crews returning along the southern foreshore, and a coach boat. Directions of travel radiate in four distinct vectors from the mark zone.

Geometry

Race marks fixed at the terminal approach zone

Marks are set by club race officers and reflect an established racing circuit. The ferry terminal, if constructed, would place a fixed structure and active vessel berthing zone directly within the turning box of that circuit. Race starts were observed commencing at approximately 14:50, with waves every five minutes -- creating a continuous stream of vessels through this zone across the entire afternoon.

Compound

Simultaneous multi-class activity -- no clear passage

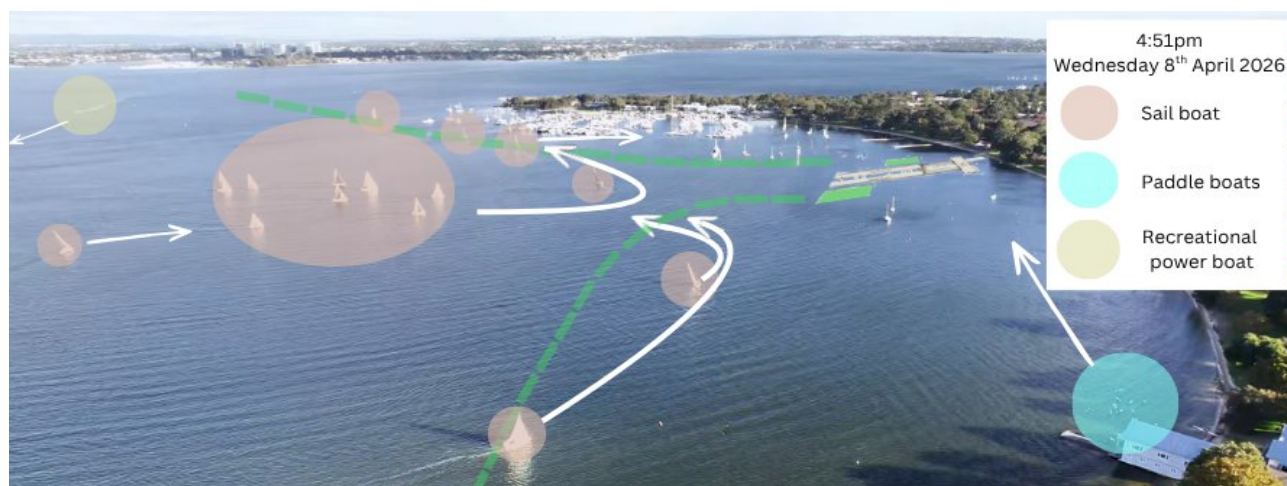
Sailing vessels are turning unpredictably at the mark. Rowing crews are transiting the southern foreshore. A recreational powerboat is operating in the mid-bay area. A coach boat is present and active. All of this is occurring simultaneously within the ferrys required approach and departure corridor.

KEY FINDING

The proposed terminal would be placed at the active turning point of an established racing circuit, within a zone that simultaneously accommodates sailing, rowing, powerboating, and coaching activity on a regular Wednesday afternoon. Race wave intervals of approximately five minutes mean there is no window during race sessions in which the ferry approach would be clear of sailing traffic.

Source: Drone footage, Wednesday 8 April 2026, 15:05. Terminal structure visible at base of frame. Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

Figure 4 — Sailing fleet and paddle craft at terminal approach, Matilda Bay



Critical

16:51 Wednesday 8 April 2026 — racing fleet in terminal approach zone

Drone footage at 16:51 -- one hour and 46 minutes after race starts were first observed at 14:50 -- confirms the racing programme continues well into the late afternoon. A fleet of sailing vessels is clustered in a mark-rounding zone directly across the proposed ferry corridor. A recreational powerboat is operating to the west. Beginner paddle craft are launching from the UWA Boat Club foreshore to the south-east.

Exposure

Novice users in the ferry corridor

The paddle craft visible launching from the UWA Boat Club foreshore are consistent with a learn-to-paddle or beginner SUP session. Novice users of this type are typically slow-moving, unpredictable in direction, and inexperienced in reading powered vessel approach. Their presence in the corridor at the same time as an active racing fleet compounds the conflict geometry.

Duration

Racing activity sustained across the full afternoon window

Taken together with the 15:05 observation (Figure 3), this image establishes that racing activity in front of the terminal site is continuous from at least 14:50 through to 16:51 -- a two-hour window with five-minute race wave intervals throughout. This is the same period during which the proposed ferry service would be operating at or near peak frequency.

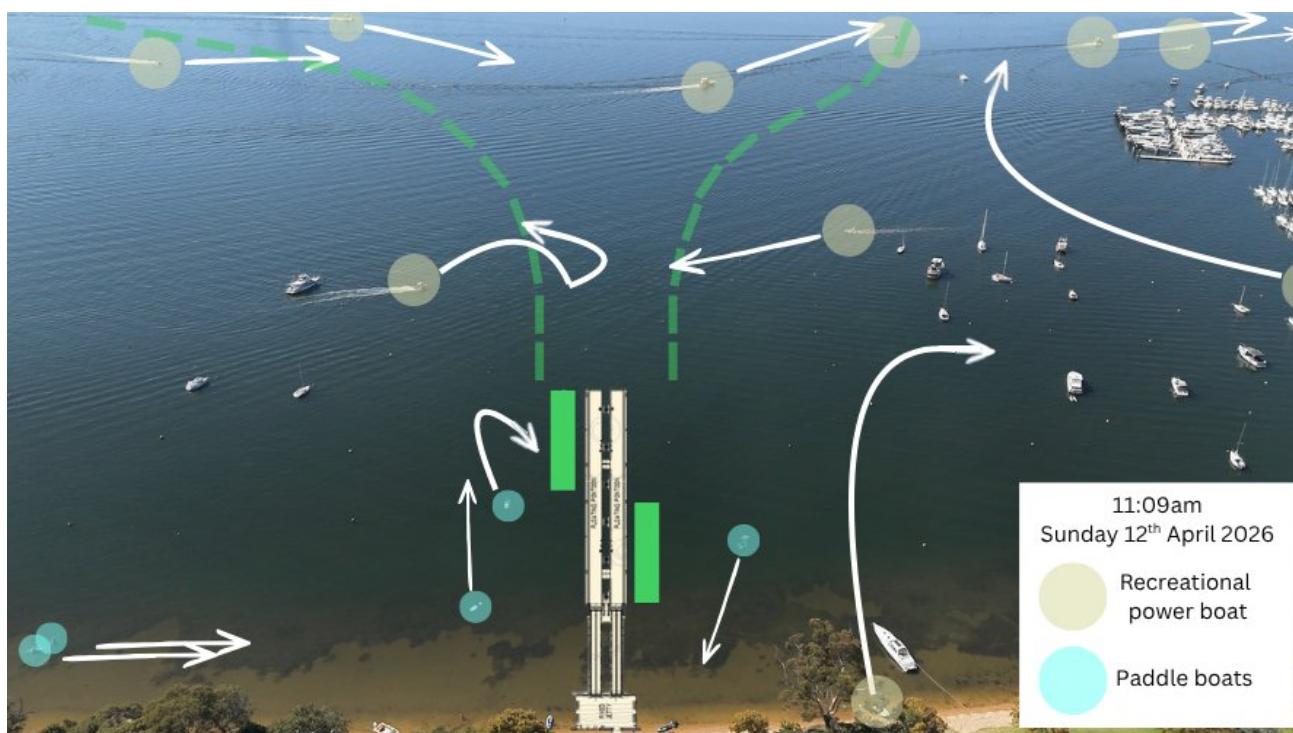
KEY FINDING

The combination of an active racing fleet, dispersed mark-rounding vessels, a recreational powerboat, and beginner paddle craft launching simultaneously into the ferry approach corridor represents a structural conflict between an established, programmed waterway use and a proposed new high-frequency service -- and it recurs every Wednesday afternoon under normal club operations.

Source: Drone footage, Wednesday 8 April 2026, 16:51. Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

OBSERVATIONS — MATILDA BAY

Figure 5 — Recreational powerboat traffic and paddle craft, Sunday morning peak

**Critical**

11:09 Sunday 12 April 2026 — powerboat peak, terminal footprint

Drone footage at 11:09 captures the opening frame of the five-minute sequence in which 15 recreational powerboats were recorded operating in Matilda Bay. This single frame shows at least nine annotated powerboats with divergent travel vectors radiating across the full width of the bay, several transiting directly through the proposed ferry corridor. Paddle craft are visible immediately adjacent to the terminal structure on both sides.

Geometry

Omnidirectional traffic -- no dominant navigation corridor

The traffic vectors annotated in this image are striking for their omnidirectionality. Powerboats are travelling north, north-west, east, south, and returning from multiple directions simultaneously. There is no dominant flow axis and no clear separation between inbound and outbound traffic. Inserting a fixed terminal and high-frequency scheduled service into this environment does not impose order -- it adds a further unpredictable element to an already unstructured mix.

Frequency

15 powered craft in five minutes -- survey data corroborated

Survey respondents estimated powerboat volumes on busy days at levels consistent with or below this figure -- suggesting respondent recall may have been conservative. Sunday mid-morning is a predictable peak period for recreational powerboat use. The ferry service, if operating, would be running during this window on a 25-minute bi-directional schedule.

KEY FINDING

Fifteen craft in five minutes across omnidirectional vectors, with paddle craft at the terminal berth zone, represents a waterway state that no ferry timetable or operator protocol can

routinely navigate without conflict. The government risk assessment did not capture this level of simultaneous traffic. The observational programme does.

Source: Drone footage, Sunday 12 April 2026, 11:09. Opening frame of a five-minute sequence. Terminal structure visible at centre of frame. Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

OBSERVATIONS — MATILDA BAY

Figure 6 — Windsurfer launch zone, Matilda Bay foreshore**Moderate**

09:31 Monday 13 April 2026 — windsurfer preparation, Matilda Bay beach

Drone footage at 09:31 on Monday 13 April captures a group of windsurfers rigging and preparing to launch from the Matilda Bay foreshore beach. Multiple rigs are visible on the shore and at the waters edge. This observation confirms windsurfer activity is not confined to afternoon or weekend periods -- early weekday morning use of this foreshore for wind-powered craft is an established pattern.

Site

Sheltered water as a structural attractor for wind-powered craft

Matilda Bays enclosed, sheltered geometry is a primary reason windsurfers prefer it over open Melville Waters. The bay provides a protected launching environment, predictable wind acceleration off the foreshore, and sufficient run length for manoeuvring without exposure to open-river chop. This is the same sheltered geometry that makes the bay attractive for rowing, learn-to-sail, and SUP activities -- and it is the geometry that would be fundamentally altered by the introduction of a wake-producing scheduled service.

Contrast

JoJo's comparison -- wind-powered craft in open water

The week-long observation at JoJos / Nedlands Jetty recorded two kitesurfers and three windsurfers across the entire period. Wind-powered craft at JoJos operate in open Melville Waters where they are accustomed to sharing space with high-speed powered craft and have the water room to manoeuvre. The interaction pattern there is fundamentally different.

KEY FINDING

Windsurfer activity at Matilda Bay is not confined to a single time window or user group. This observation at 09:31 on a weekday morning confirms that wind-powered craft are preparing to use the same sheltered water that the ferry would be transiting on a 25-minute bi-directional schedule throughout the day.

Source: Drone footage, Monday 13 April 2026, 09:31. Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

OBSERVATIONS — MATILDA BAY

Figures 7a–7d — Foreshore and waterway activity at the terminal site, Sunday 12 April 13:00–15:00

Figure 7a — Children swimming and kayaker, terminal approach zone



Figure 7b — Mixed paddle and swimming activity, terminal site



Figure 7c — Foreshore crowds and powerboat, from terminal site



Figure 7d — Foreshore crowd density, Matilda Bay Reserve

Critical

13:00–15:00 Sunday 12 April 2026 — terminal site as swimming beach

Ground-level images captured between 13:00 and 15:00 on Sunday 12 April -- the same day as the 15-craft powerboat peak recorded at 11:09 -- confirm that the Matilda Bay foreshore and terminal site are functioning as an active swimming beach and family recreation zone. Children are in the water at the shoreline. Kayakers are launching. Families with young children are at the waters edge. A powerboat is moored immediately adjacent to swimmers. Large crowds are present on the foreshore grass extending to the waters edge at the terminal footprint.

KEY FINDING

These images, taken from the terminal site itself, confirm that the proposed berthing zone is not adjacent to a recreational beach -- it is within one. The introduction of a scheduled ferry service into this environment creates a direct and unresolvable conflict between the vessel operating zone and the most vulnerable class of waterway user. This was observed in autumn during school holidays. Spring and summer weekend conditions will produce materially higher foreshore and water densities.

OBSERVATIONS — JOJO'S / NEDLANDS JETTY ROUTE

Figure 8 — Outer Dolphin Transit Corridor, JoJos ferry route**Route**

16:34 Wednesday 8 April 2026 — JoJo's route in open Melville Waters

Drone footage at 16:34 captures the proposed JoJos / Nedlands Jetty ferry route across open Melville Waters. The annotated arc shows the ferry path rounding Pelican Point via the Outer Dolphin marker and continuing through to Knot Spit. The image illustrates the fundamental difference in waterway character between this route and the Matilda Bay approach -- the JoJos route traverses wide, open navigable water with generous lateral clearance and no enclosed bay geometry to concentrate vessel traffic.

Geometry

Open water -- depth, width, and separation available

The water depth around Outer Dolphin is substantially greater than within Matilda Bay, allowing the ferry a wider navigable path as conditions require. Moored vessels visible in frame are distributed across a wide area, consistent with open-river anchoring patterns rather than the concentrated marina and bay activity seen at Matilda Bay.

Mitigation

Outer Dolphin -- manageable congestion point

The Outer Dolphin marker represents the one point along the JoJos route where sailing race activity has been observed in proximity to the ferry path. Unlike the fixed conflict geometry at Matilda Bay, this interaction is manageable through a small speed reduction window, a wider ferry berth, or a minor eastward adjustment to the race marker position -- feasible given the available water depth to the east.

KEY FINDING

The JoJos route through Melville Waters and past Outer Dolphin operates in open navigable water where vessel separation, depth, and lateral clearance provide genuine operational flexibility. The single area of potential sailing interaction at Outer Dolphin is subject to straightforward mitigation options. This contrasts directly with the Matilda Bay approach, where the enclosed bay geometry, fixed race infrastructure, and multi-class simultaneous traffic create structural conflicts that cannot be resolved through route or marker adjustments.

Source: Drone footage, Wednesday 8 April 2026, 16:34. Annotations indicate Outer Dolphin marker (pink) and Knot Spit marker (blue). Full video retained; frame available for verification on request.

OBSERVATION CONDITIONS

Programme Context and Weather Conditions

Wednesday 8 April – Tuesday 14 April 2026

The observation period coincided with school holidays and university break. Club programming at UWABC and MBSC was reduced from standard term schedules. The weekend was predominantly sunny with temperatures reaching 30-31 degrees on Saturday and Sunday. No rain was recorded across the observation period.

Programme adjustments during observation period

Note School holiday period — reduced club activity

Regular afternoon rowing sessions (16:00-18:00) were displaced to early morning (07:30-09:30). Saturday club racing was rescheduled but cancelled on the day due to no-wind conditions. Junior and novice Saturday morning training was not scheduled over the holiday period. UWA Sport was running school holiday programmes, accounting for some of the SUP and paddle activity observed.

Note Autumn season — not peak spring or summer conditions

Observations were made in autumn. Recreational powerboat traffic, sailing activity, and waterway use in the Matilda Bay precinct are typically higher during spring and summer. The traffic volumes observed during this programme should be understood as a conservative lower-bound estimate of typical peak-season conditions.

Daily weather conditions

Day	Temp max/min	Morning wind	Afternoon wind	Conditions
Wed 8 Apr	24°C / 14°C	ENE 5-7 km/h	SW 24-26 km/h	Fine
Thu 9 Apr	25°C / 14°C	ESE 6-10 km/h	SSW 15-18 km/h	Fine
Fri 10 Apr	25°C / 16°C	E 17-18 km/h	ESE 13 km/h	Fine
Sat 11 Apr	30°C / 16°C	E 17-18 km/h	ESE 13 km/h	Sunny
Sun 12 Apr	31°C / 18°C	ENE 7 km/h	SW-WSW 13 km/h	Sunny
Mon 13 Apr	27°C / -	S-NNW 4-8 km/h	SW-SSW 16 km/h	Fine
Tue 14 Apr	29°C / 18°C	E-ESE 9-11 km/h	SW-SSW 14-15 km/h	Mostly sunny

CONSERVATIVE BASELINE — KEY CAVEAT

The observation period was conducted during school holidays, in autumn, with reduced club programming and one weekend racing day cancelled. These factors collectively mean the activity levels captured represent a reduced operational state compared to a standard term-time week in spring or summer. The waterway conflict geometry, traffic density, and user vulnerability documented in this programme should be understood as a floor, not a ceiling.