

# **BONDI AND TAMARAMA BEACH VOLLEYBALL: CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT 2021**



WAVERLEY  
COUNCIL

# Table of contents

## Acknowledgement of country

Waverley Council acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, who traditionally occupied the Sydney Coast and we acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present.

BACKGROUND	3
ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW	5
DATA ANALYSIS	6
CONCLUSION	27
APPENDICIES	28

# Background

Beach volleyball is allowed at Tamarama and Bondi beaches; these arrangements are formalised through the respective plans of management (Bronte beach is not suitable for beach volleyball due to the depth of the beach). These games are informal, players bring their own equipment and must adhere to Council's rules of engagement.

Concerns have been raised to Council on this practice, and in order to fully understand the issues Council consulted with the community.

The community engagement period ran from 29 March to 17 May 2021.

# Rules of engagement

- When there is potential for conflict with other beach users, the number of volleyball courts will be limited at the discretion of Council staff
- No commercial activity/provider
- No organised competition
- No bookings taken
- No vehicles may enter the park to unload or load equipment
- Temporary nets only ie. no permanent fixtures
- Soft volleyballs must be used
- Must not conflict with other beach users
- Volleyball courts must not block any access points to the beach

## Tamarama beach layout



## Bondi beach layout



# Engagement overview

The consultation objectives were:

- To understand any issues with how beach volleyball is operating at Bondi and Tamarama
- To raise awareness of the current rules of engagement, including the number and alignment of courts, and whether they are sufficient or need to change

## Have Your Say Waverley

7600 unique visitors  
1820 survey responses

## Long form submissions

79 submissions received

## Pop-up engagement stalls

2 stalls: Bondi and Tamarama beaches  
29 survey responses

## Stakeholder meetings

4 meetings:  
precincts, surf club reps,  
volleyball player reps,  
identified residents

## Council Facebook and Twitter

5587 people reached  
864 people engagements

# Data analysis

# Online survey

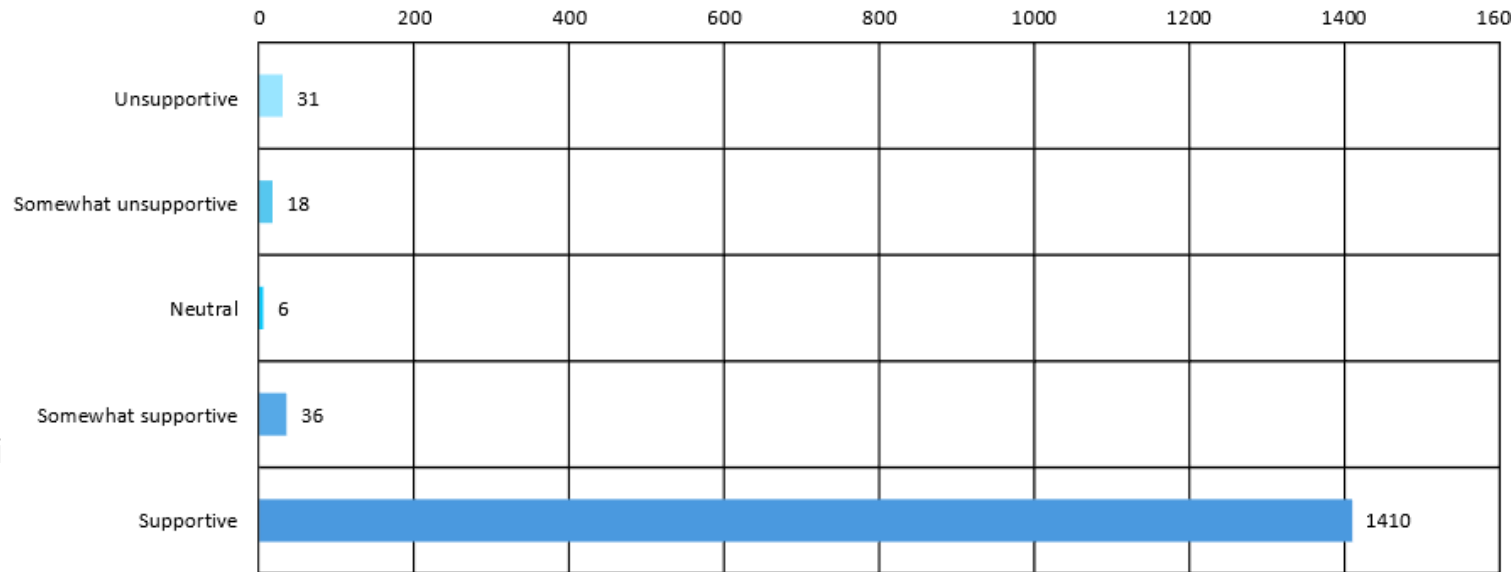
## 1820

responses received.

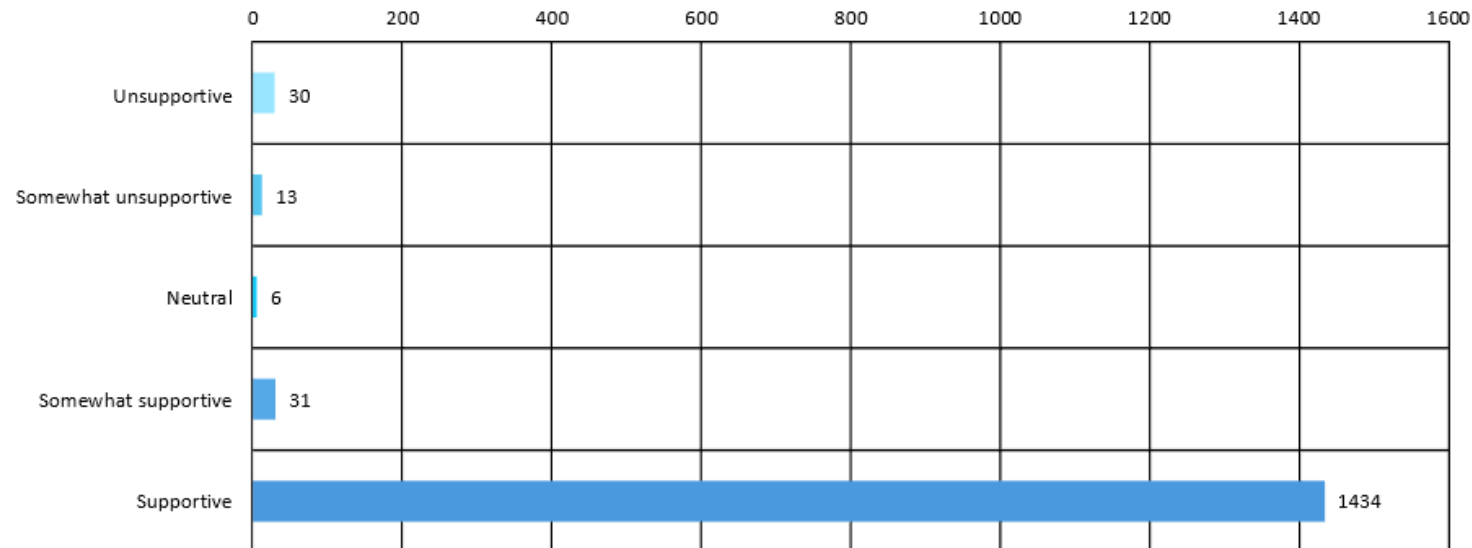
This is inclusive of the 29 received from the pop-up stalls at Tamarama and Bondi beaches.

There was majority support for beach volleyball at Tamarama and Bondi:

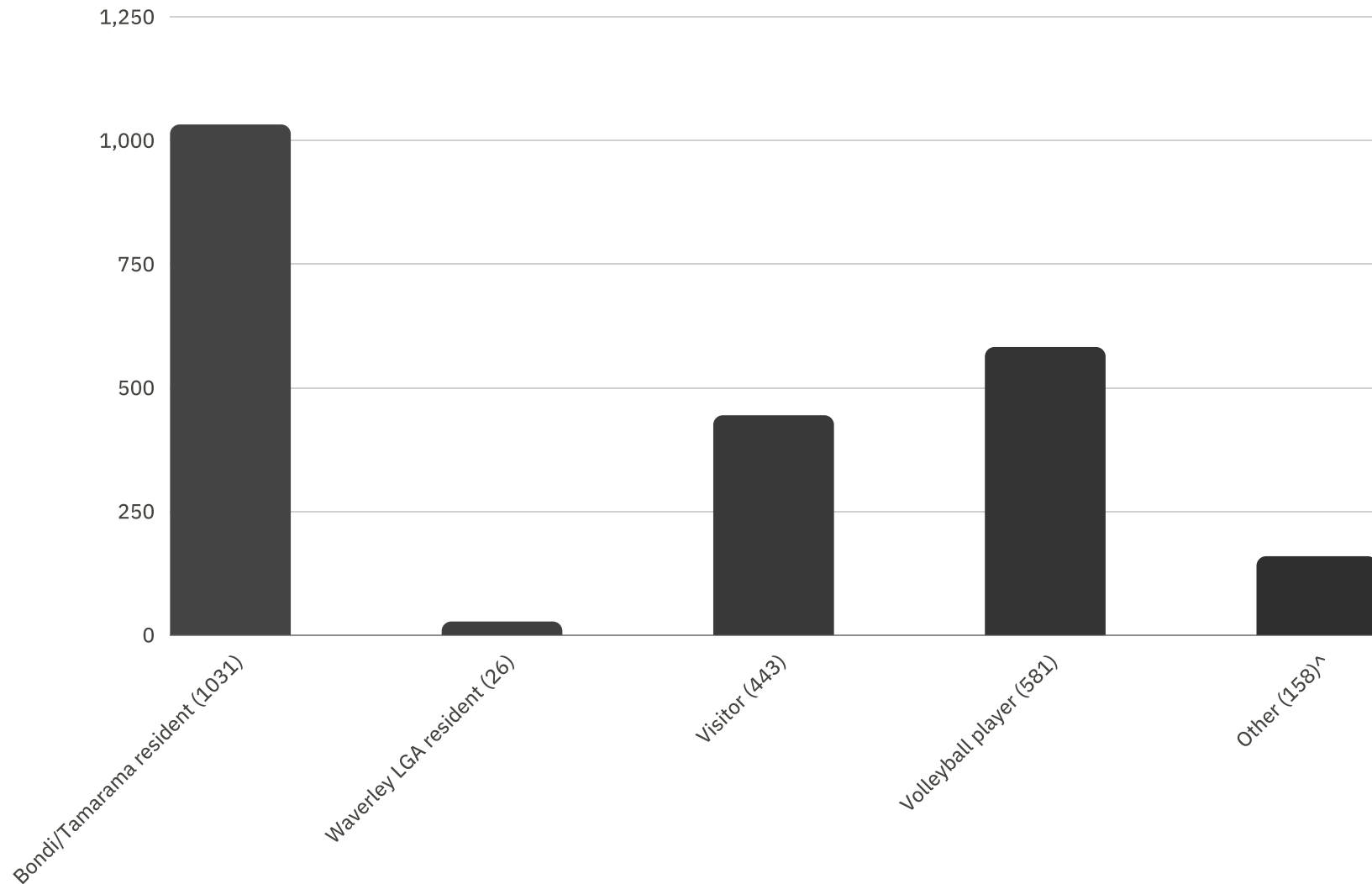
Are you supportive of beach volleyball at Tamarama?



Are you supportive of beach volleyball in Bondi?



## Demographics 'Which relates to you?'



^Of those that selected 'Other' the common/most relevant responses were: surf lifesaving club member, kids or friends play volleyball, industry representatives, cafe owner/worker.



The survey had several optional open-ended questions, broken down into categories for Bondi and Tamarama:

- Number of courts
- Location and alignment of courts
- Interaction with other beach users
- Compliance with the rules of engagement

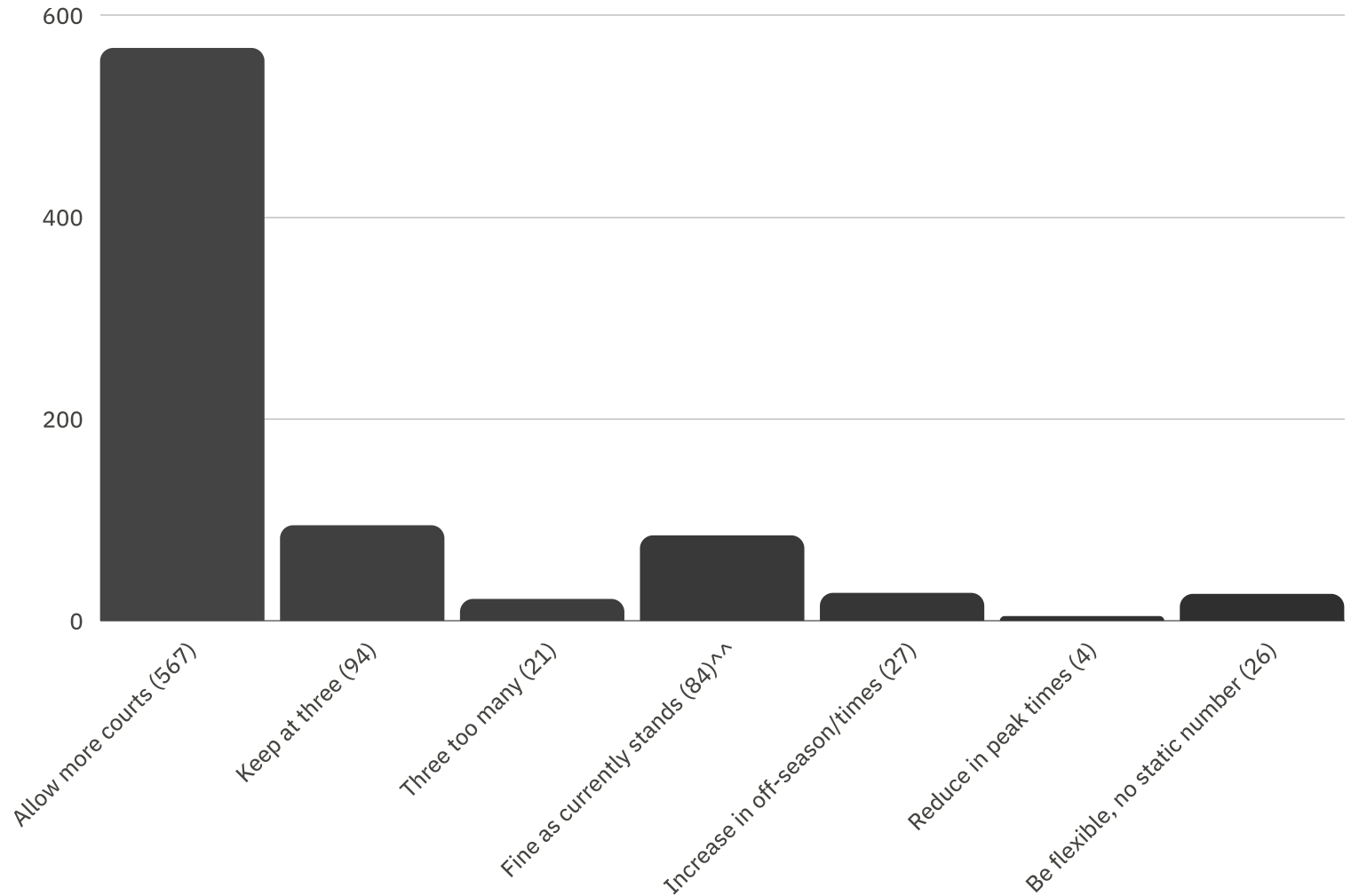
# Bondi results

## NUMBER OF COURTS

**905**

comments received.

Common themes<sup>^</sup>  
as follows:



<sup>^</sup>These are the most reoccurring themes of response, all responses are attached in the appendices.

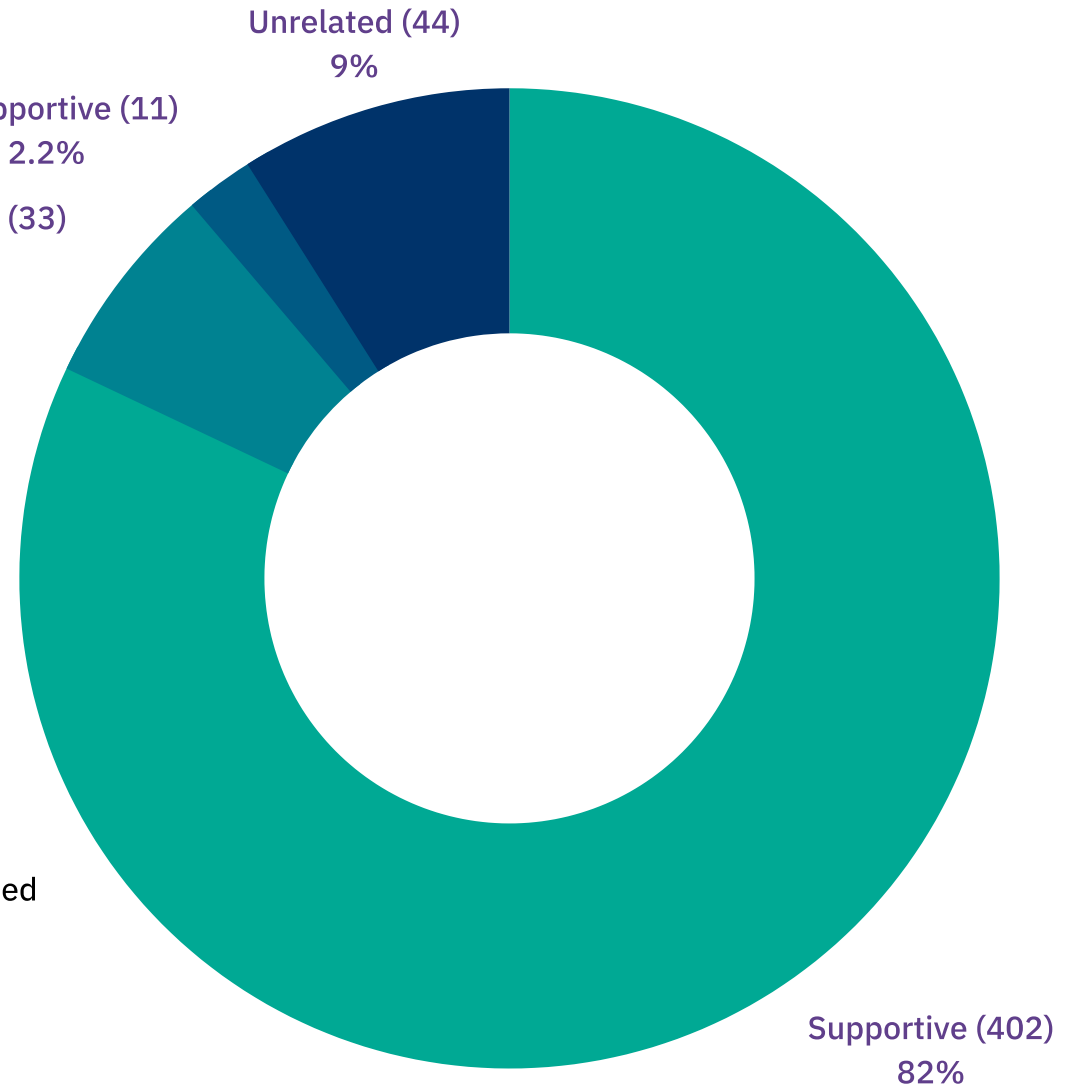
<sup>^^</sup>Anecdotally, Council has been told there are often more than three courts up at Bondi, so it is not clear whether these respondents were wanting to keep three courts, or have it remain as it is currently, with often more than three courts set up

## BONDI: LOCATION AND ALIGNMENT OF COURTS

**490** comments received.

Common feedback:

- Back of beach = little impact on other beach users
- Nets are too close together
- Concerns on the closeness to soft sand runners
- More courts could be spread out across ramps 1—3
- Of those unsupportive of the location and alignment, they were concerned over blocked pathways and felt they needed to be further from ramps
- Many respondents commented they were 'happy with current arrangements.' These have been marked as 'supportive' but should be noted that the number of location of courts at Bondi have been observed/communicated to be non-compliant with current rules of engagement ie. have been up to 8 courts between ramps 1—3



## BONDI: INTERACTION WITH OTHER BEACH USERS

**673** comments received.

Mix positive and negative (22)  
3.3%

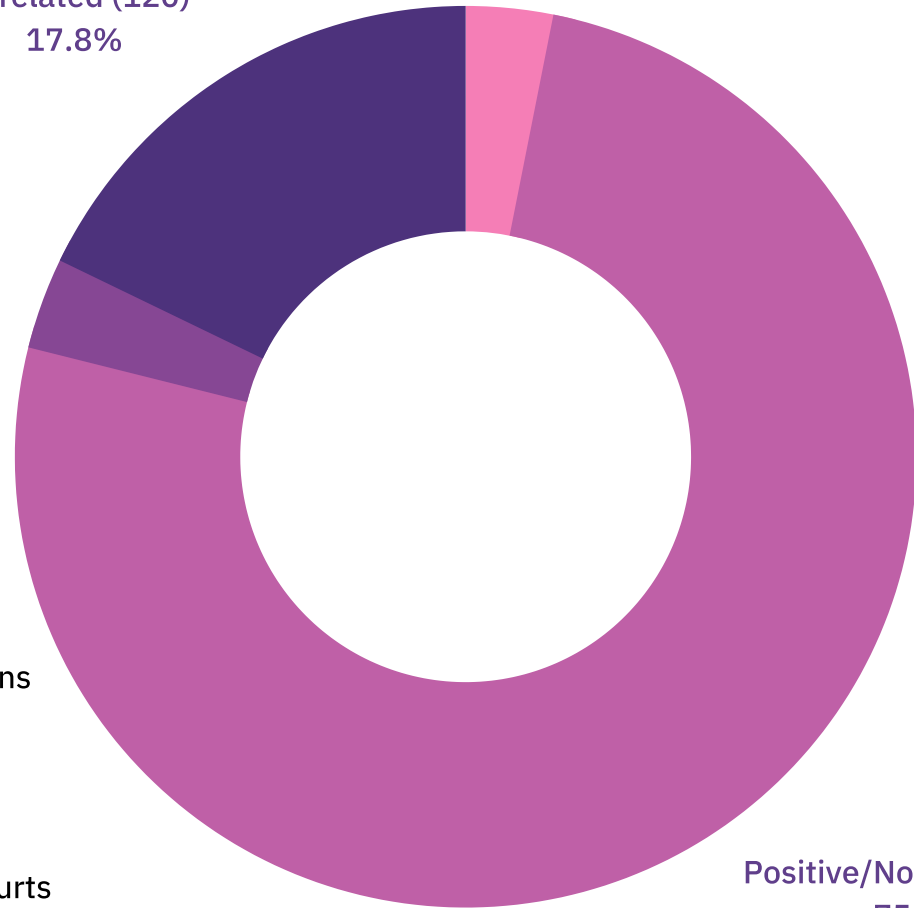
Unrelated (120)  
17.8%

Negative (21)  
3.1%

Positive/No issues (510)  
75.8%

### Common feedback:

- Many highlighted the lack of safety risk eg. never observed danger to children
- Many don't play but enjoy spectating
- Need clarity on 'conflict with other beach users' means in practice
- Concerns over noise and litter of players
- Some raised concerns over lack of space between courts and walls where players mingle and leave belongings
- Many emphasised the friendly, positive, community vibe that the players contribute to the beach
- Many respondents commented on what should or shouldn't happen, as opposed to what they've observed. These have been marked as 'unrelated'



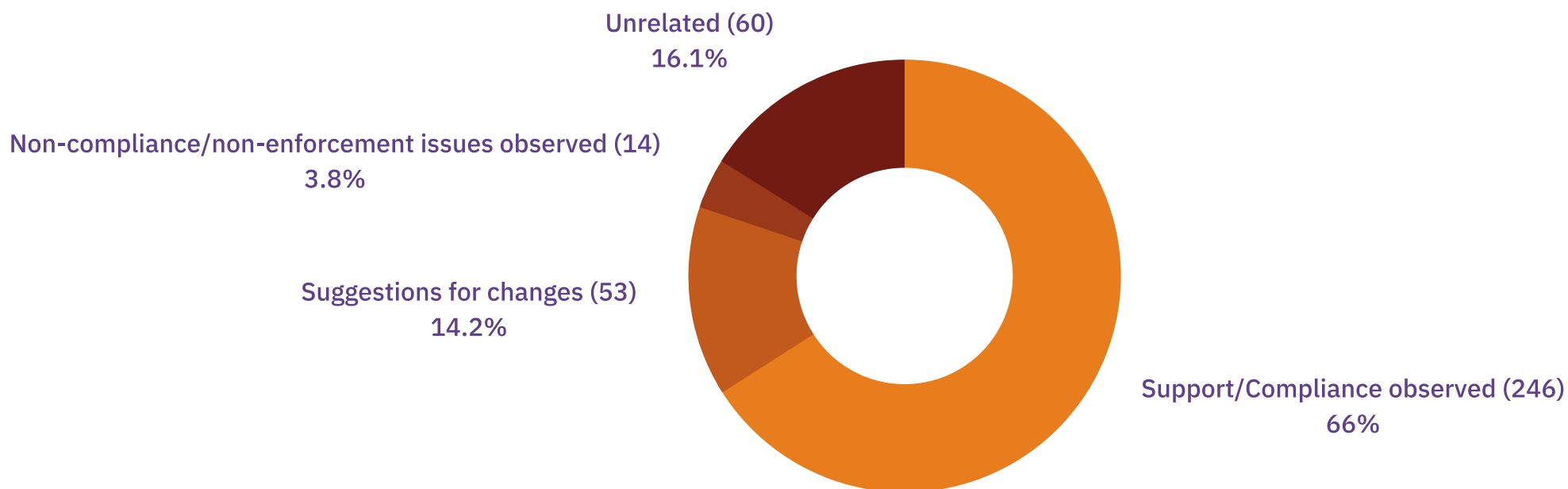
## BONDI: COMPLIANCE WITH RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

**373** comments received.

Responses related to people's observations of the current state of play, while also commenting on areas where they felt the rules could be improved.

Common feedback:

- Appropriate and consistent signage important, assists players in self-enforcing rules particularly with new players
- Many commented that competitions should be allowed, and coaching/training from organised providers
- Compliance an issue, some suggesting because three courts is not a reasonable number at Bondi (should be more)
- Commercial operators have been observed
- Volleyball facebook page encourages bookings and other non-compliance such as ways to unload
- Some supported permanent fixtures, and clear delineation of court location
- Courts that don't compile should be removed and fines should apply
- Clarity around footvolley is needed, is it permissible or not?



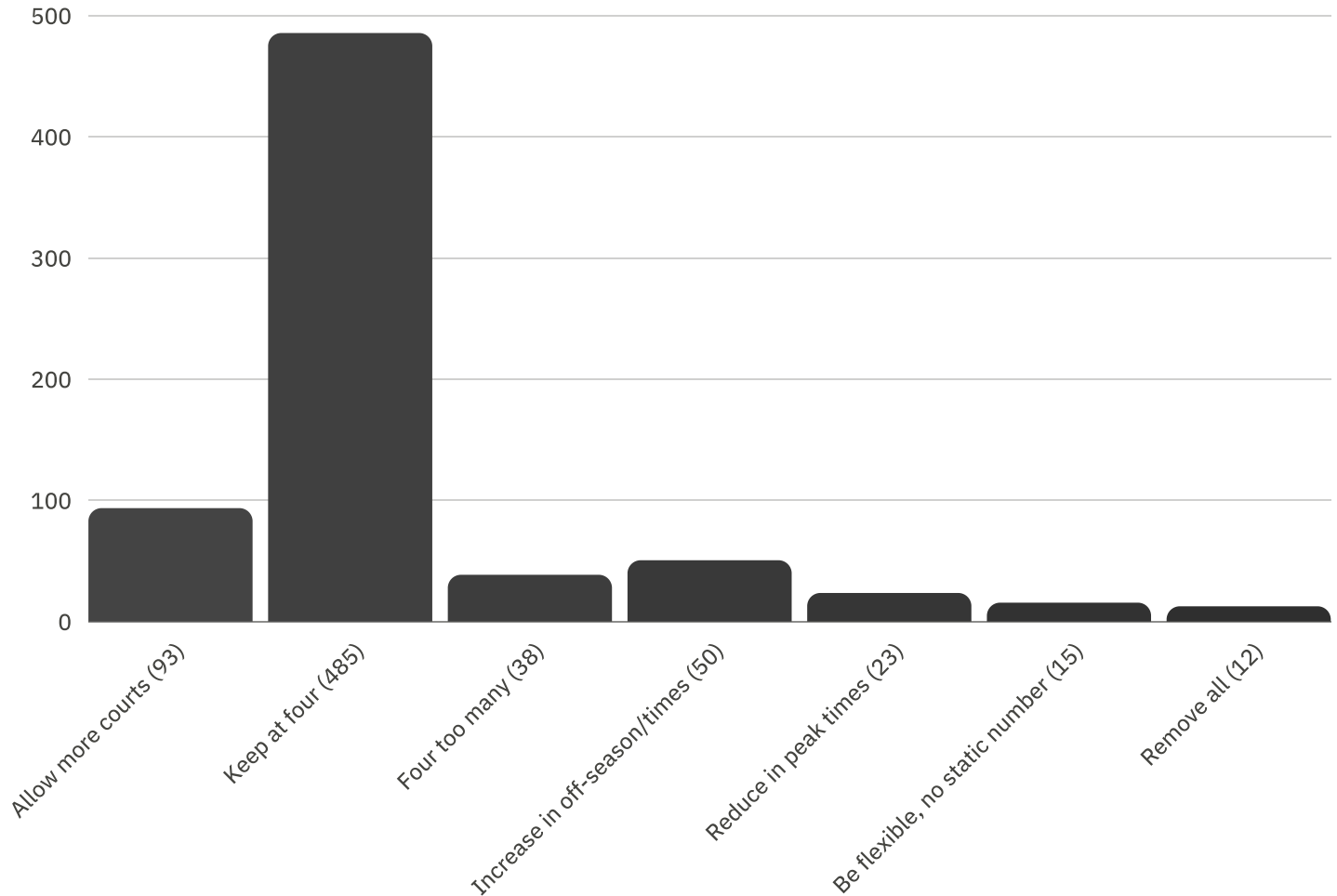
# Tamarama results

## NUMBER OF COURTS

**806**

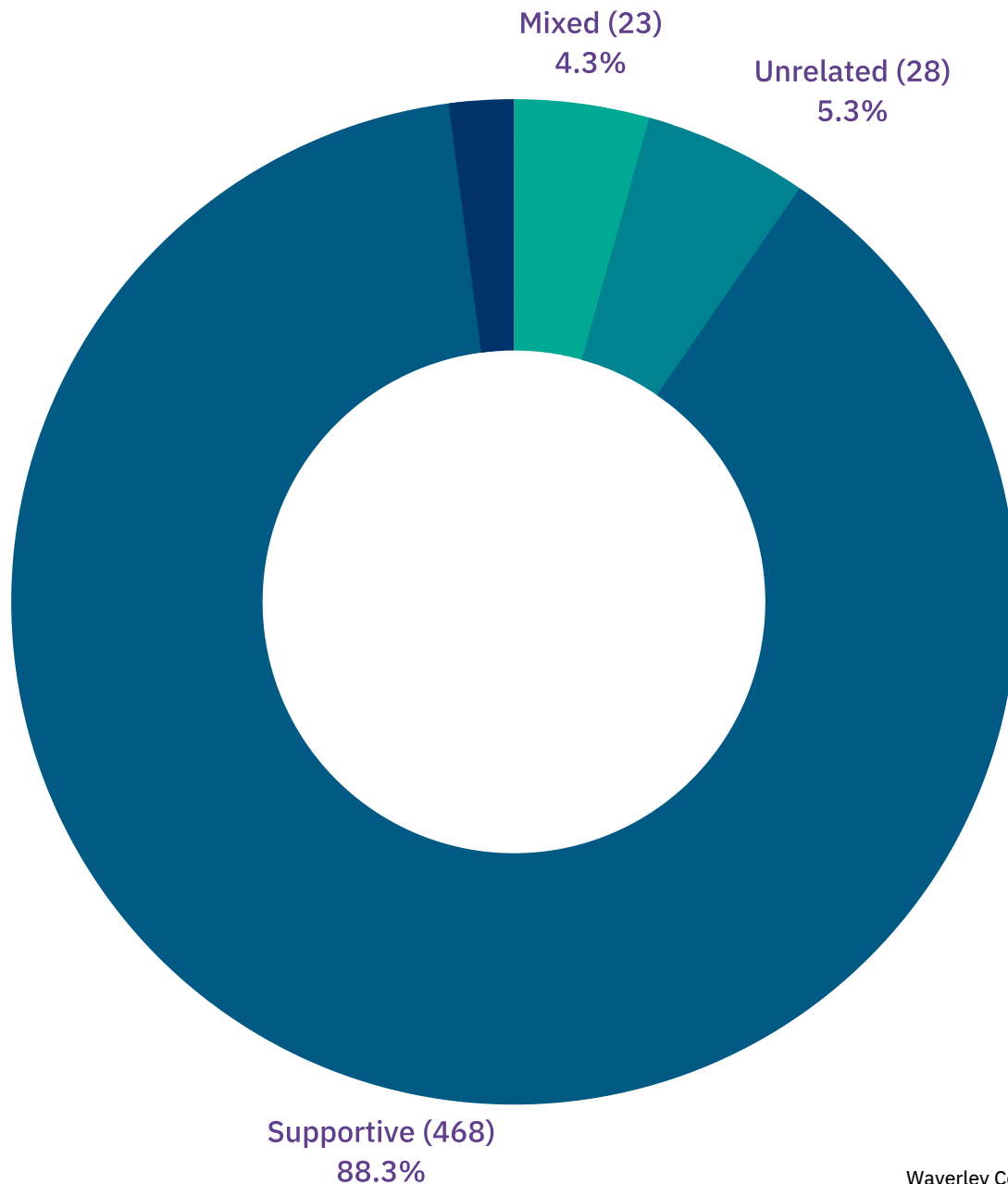
comments received.

Common themes^  
as follows:



^These are the most reoccurring themes of response, all responses are attached in the appendices.

## TAMARAMA: LOCATION AND ALIGNMENT OF COURTS



**530** comments received.

### Common feedback:

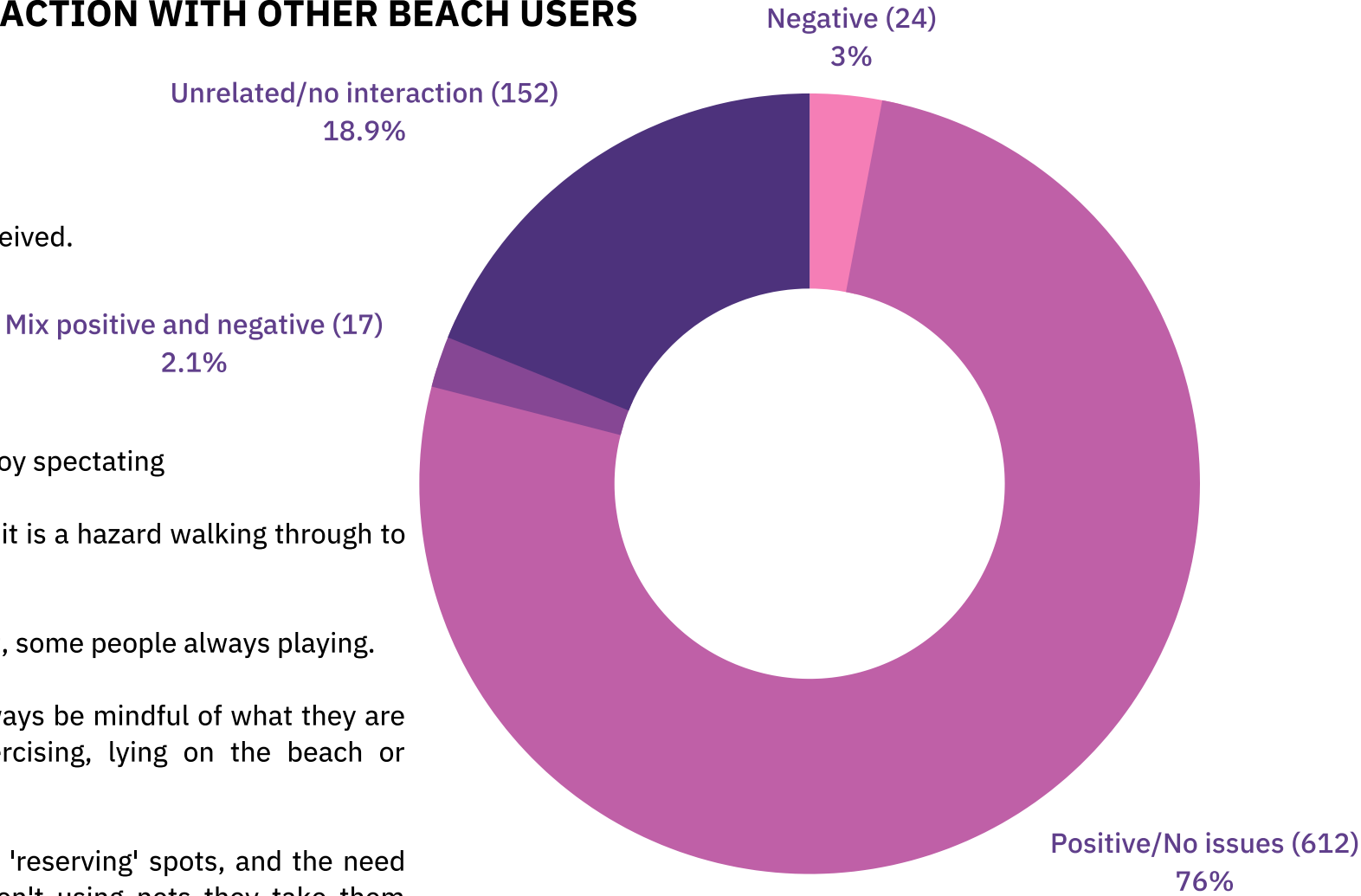
- Back of beach = little impact on other beach users
- Nets too close together
- Instances where rangers' advice has been inconsistent on what the correct location and alignment should be
- Observed that courts have been set up outside of the agreed designated location and alignment

# TAMARAMA: INTERACTION WITH OTHER BEACH USERS

**805** comments received.

Common feedback:

- Many don't play but enjoy spectating
- A few commented that it is a hazard walking through to get to the beach
- Often hard to get a spot, some people always playing.
- Participants should always be mindful of what they are doing whether its exercising, lying on the beach or playing volleyball
- Some observed people 'reserving' spots, and the need to ensure if people aren't using nets they take them down
- A few comments on the noise of players
- Many commented that players and supportive and accommodating, eg. removing nets when Nippers is taking place





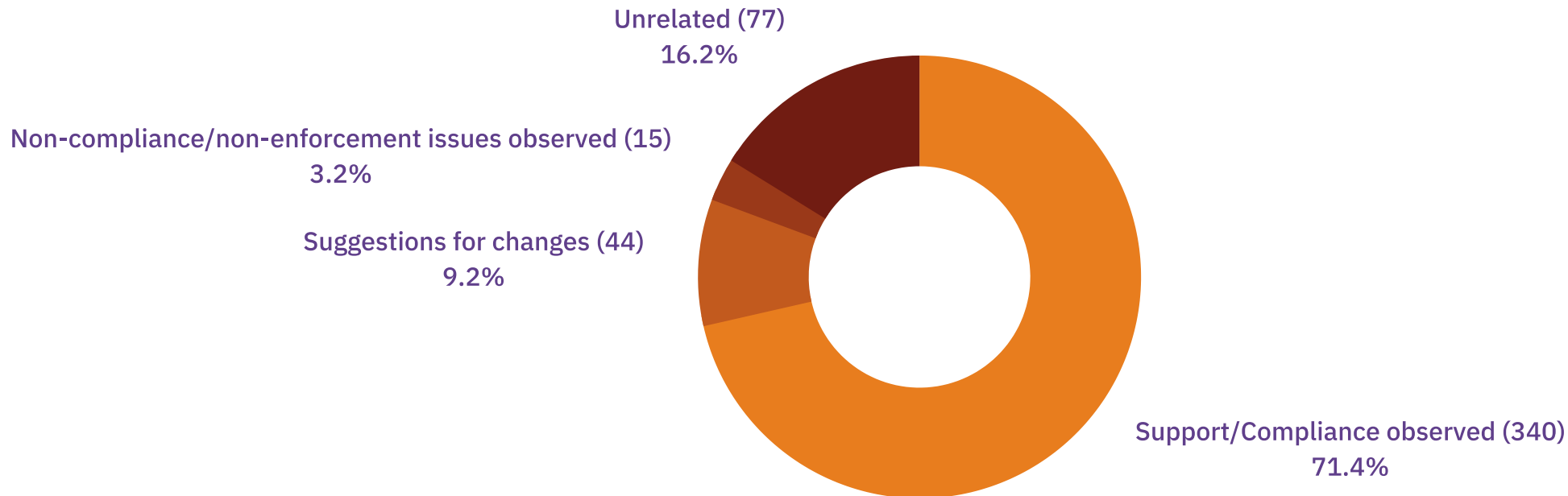
## TAMARAMA: COMPLIANCE WITH RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

**476** comments received.

Responses related to people's observations of the current state of play, while also commenting on areas where they felt the rules could be improved.

Common feedback:

- The new signage has assisted players in self-regulating and ensuring all players, particularly new ones, comply with the rules of engagement
- Occasions when new players haven't followed the rules, such as taking other people's balls and nets
- Need to be absolute rules which are easy for the rangers and players to enforce/follow
- Need clarity on how decisions are made on the reasonableness of conflict
- Clarity around footvolley is needed, is it permissible or not?



# Stakeholder meetings

Four stakeholder meetings were held with identified groups:

- Identified residents
- Volleyball players
- Surf lifesaving clubs representatives
- Precincts

The purpose of these meetings was to have in-depth discussion on beach volleyball issues, needs and options for resolution.

Attendees were a mix of those supportive and unsupportive of beach volleyball, with compliance, anti-social behaviour, and ideas for where the rules of engagement could be improved being the main themes of conversation.

# Stakeholder meeting 1

This stakeholder meeting was held with Council officers, Councillors, and resident representatives on 14 April 2021 at Waverley Council Chambers.

## **All comments are specific to Tamarama beach volleyball operations**

- Concerns on the Tamarama Plan of Management 2007, no communication to residents that it was adopted. Requested confirmation that Council and Crown Lands were notified of community opposition to the inclusion of beach volleyball
- Concerns on the poor behaviour of the beach volleyball players
- Concerns that the image used in outlining the rules of engagement is from low tide, in high tide the configuration would take up a significant portion of the beach, disproportionate to other uses
- There are many volleyball groups playing and they don't work together
- Beach is often crowded, and too small for it to be dominated by one user group – should be for all
- There was some support for volleyball, have observed respectful and considerate behaviour from volleyball players
- Attendee observed it was an area of the beach allocated to volleyball underutilised eg. too hot, unsuitable space for passive recreation
- Comments that volleyball has grown a lot over the past 20 years, before there was only one group, and now there are many
- Suggestion that volleyball should have session times, and rules enforced
- Observed that rangers have a hard time enforcing the rules
- Concerns that the volleyball equipment is stored under the boardwalk at no cost
- Concerns that people kick the ball under the sandstone wall, safety issue with other users of the beach
- Observed that there are times the volleyball is set up, but no players are there, indicating they are saving the space and other users are unable to sit there
- Council should use precedents from historic issues (for example Bronte Pool)
- Concerns that players have no public risk policy or insurance
- Hard ball causing a risk to other beach users
- Suggestion that Council begins charging people to play beach volleyball

# Stakeholder meeting 1 contd.

- Non-compliance with the rules of engagement – observed too many courts on the beach (photos supplied)
- Non-compliance with the alignment of courts
- COVID and social distancing has further impacted space allocation
- Too much space for one sport / need great allocation for passive uses
- Volleyball is a popular and well recognised sport and a safe form of exercise
- Volleyball users use the beach early morning or late night. Suggestion to implement a registration process similar to Bondi Pavilion

## General feedback

- Concerns that Council often doesn't provide meaningful responses from precinct motions
- Long-term effects of Council not listening to residents, including the loss of Bushcare volunteers
- Comment on beach volleyball operations – rules of engagement say 3 courts, often close to 13 courts have been set up.

## Clarification on Council comment

During the meeting, there was a discussion over which soft-ball games were permitted. Following this meeting, have confirmed that the only ball games permissible on the beach are beach volleyball and footvolley, and players must use the soft version of the ball.

# Stakeholder meeting 2

This stakeholder meeting was held with Council officers, Councillors, and precinct representatives on 14 April 2021 via Zoom.

## Feedback relating to Tamarama beach volleyball

- Mix of views as to whether Tamarama being more crowded than Bondi should mean that three courts is too few for Bondi, or that four courts is too many for Tamarama
- Concerns that players are rude to other beach users, and kick the ball against the wall
- Concerns that the community was never consulted with on allowing beach volleyball
- Residents on the north side of the beach have raised complaints about the noise when the volleyball goes on late at night. Other views that the noise is a separate issue as volleyball is not played after dark (no lights)
- Geography of Tamarama and the gully is very different from Bondi. Tamarama is a natural amphitheatre and any noise from the beach echoes along both sides of the gully. Noise is disturbing residents. Others raised that this is potentially from the picnic shelters as opposed to volleyball being played

- Suggestion that there should be session times and the players should pay for the use
- Observed that the nets are kept up for hours with no one using them

## Feedback relating to Bondi beach volleyball

- Observed there are often more than the three courts allowable in the plan of management
- Suggestion that if Council was looking to increase the number of courts, then there should also be an investigation of the possibility of other beach sports such as soccer
- Observation that there haven't been any previous issues with families during summer, plenty of space for beach users to establish themselves far away from the courts
- Enforcement issue — many people playing different ball games and is never policed
- Nets are far away from where other beach users sit; it is too hot
- Suggestion that as other ball games have been allowed to play at Bondi, perhaps it is not a volleyball that is hitting other beach users
- Comment that people shouldn't be able to set up when they want to, and there should be fewer courts allowed

# Stakeholder meeting 2 contd.

## General feedback

- Mix of views as to whether Council should charge people to play
- Issues that the signage doesn't match the rules of engagement, conflicting messages
- Concerns that the casual volleyball players have grown a lot, to over 200 people, becoming unmanageable
- Volleyball is a community event, a social group for people to get together
- Shouldn't be any aggression for other users of the beach, and when it does happen this should be called out by the other volleyball players
- Bondi and Tamarama are different things, can't have the same rules for both
- Enforcement on the rules is key
- Social games should be permitted but not competition
- Should be able to do other activities on the promenade, volleyball shouldn't dominate

## Clarification on Council comment

During the meeting, there was a discussion over which soft-ball games were permitted. Following this meeting, have confirmed that the only ball games permissible on the beach are beach volleyball and footvolley, and players must use the soft version of the ball.

# Stakeholder meeting 3

This stakeholder meeting was held with Council officers, Councillors, and volleyball player representatives on 15 April 2021 via Zoom.

## Feedback relating to Tamarama beach volleyball

- View that courts don't occupy the part of the beach that ever gets used
- Suggest trialling six nets over winter
- Rangers should be able to confirm that there are no historic issues at Tamarama

## Feedback relating to Bondi beach volleyball

- Layout at Bondi means it is harder to have a cohesive social group
- Lack of awareness of the rules of engagement – not understood that the limit was three
- Suggested that up to 8-10 could fit into the space allocated parallel to the wall
- Acknowledgement that there have been incidents of bad behaviour
- Signage would assist in explaining the rules to new players

- Suggested that if Council does not officially raise the number of courts permitted, there will be a lot of issues. Hard for rangers to enforce the three-net rule

## General feedback

- Thanks from the community for the rapid provision of improved signage at the beaches - which we believe will further enhance our self-policing efforts at Tamarama, and will also be useful at Bondi, if as we suggest, the number of courts is increased to a more acceptable level
- Mystification as to how our attempts to fix up an error on the council's own website has spawned this review
- Signage is not consistent with the rules of engagement
- Signage needs to be clear that footvolley is also permissible
- Hard to give a precise number of volleyball players. Could be up to 1000 but not all active. There are potentially up to 200 per day, not all playing at the same time
- The volleyball community is very strong and supportive, helped through tough times, and inclusive of children
- Hard to define the main groups playing, many informal Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Same with footvolley, though not as many players
- No observation of conflict between players and other users of the beach

## Stakeholder meeting 3 contd.

- Comments that the hours of play are from sunup until sun down, which a break in the middle/hottest part of the day
- People tend to play less during the main part of the day, but believe session times would be hard to enforce
- Comments that if the nets are up with no one playing, this would not be for an extended about of time, likely for a quick swim or to grab a coffee. Wouldn't want to leave them up to get damaged and people own them personally
- Haven't observed anyone playing at Bronte, may not be part of a known group
- Noted that majority of players are residents also
- Comments that there are many benefits volleyball players bring to the community – open access group, eyes and ears on the beach and are similar with what's going on there
- Noted that many beach users enjoy watching the volleyball as a spectator sport
- Opposed to commercial activity



# Stakeholder meeting 4

This stakeholder meeting was held with Council officers, Councillors, and relevant surf club presidents on 15 April 2021 via Zoom.

## Feedback relating to Tamarama beach volleyball

- No observed conflict with volleyball and other beach users
- Only time see conflict for space is during Nippers on Sunday morning, have an understanding they will only put up two courts during this time
- Never received a complaint
- When nets set up and no one there is it for a short period of time
- Tamarama being a deep beach, people generally go closer to the water, so away from volleyball nets
- Have sometimes heard noise at night at the beach, but this would not be volleyball as they don't play in the dark
- Sometimes have people playing amplified music but all fairly respectful

- Doing counts at beginning and end of patrol, the midday count is always the busiest time of day and this is when it is too hot to play volleyball, so not competing with other users
- No commercial operations/competition at Tamarama observed

## Feedback relating to Bondi beach volleyball

- never received a complaint, too down south. Have asked the captains and board, heard only positive comments from the public
- Location is good, far away from other users
- Sometimes set up in the early evening, but not in peak times
- Probably an activity that makes the least noise in comparison with other activities at the beach, eg. Drums and picnic shelters behind the playground

# Long form submissions

**79** submissions received.

- 72 supportive of beach volleyball
- 4 unsupportive of beach volleyball
- 3 no identifiable support/non-support

Main themes (all responses attached in the appendices):

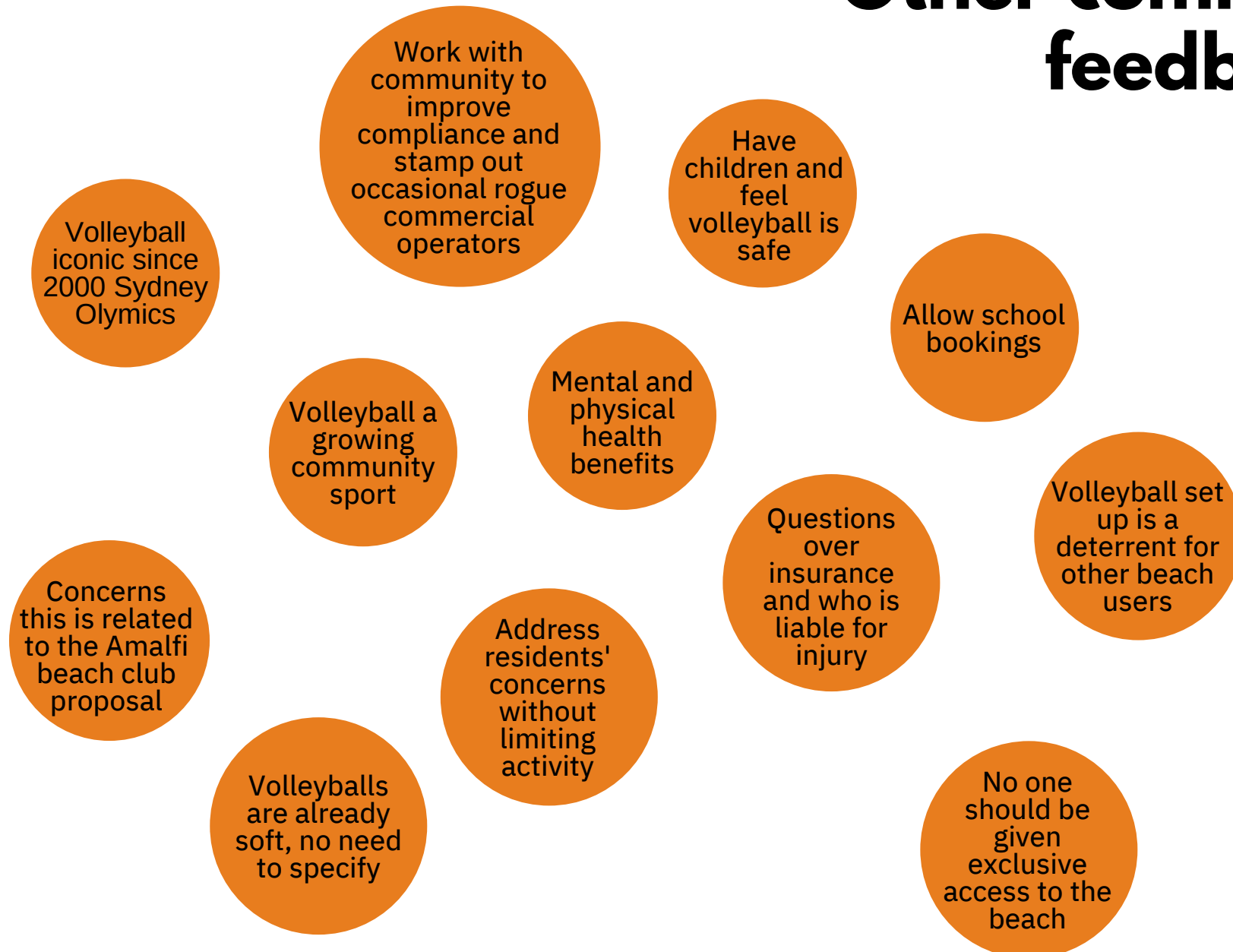
**Non-compliance with rules of engagement**

**Benefits of beach volleyball to the area**

**Agreement with the rules of engagement**

**Suggestions for improvement**

# Other common feedback



# Conclusion

The community response demonstrated overwhelming support for beach volleyball and the corresponding rules of engagement at Bondi and Tamarama. Many people highlighted the benefits of the sport, including a supportive and welcoming community, mental health and physical exercise, and good for the overall 'vibe' and atmosphere.

Of the comments received, the most common were the safety of the ball (or lack thereof), disturbance of the peace, increasing the number of courts at Bondi, the need for clarity over what 'conflict with other beach users' means, and permitting organised competition.

There were a few comments about allowing the courts to be increased during off-peak periods and seasons and decreasing during peak periods and seasons. Many suggested this should be at the rangers' discretion.

# Appendices

(attached under a separate cover)

- **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS (DE-IDENTIFIED)**
- **LONG FORM SUBMISSIONS (DE-IDENTIFIED)**
- **ONLINE SURVEY**
- **MEDIA STATEMENT**
- **MEDIA LOG**

# Appendices

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS (DE-IDENTIFIED)		2
LONG FORM SUBMISSIONS (DE-IDENTIFIED)		791
ONLINE SURVEY		880
MEDIA STATEMENT		887
MEDIA LOG		888