

**Hallett Cove Boardwalk
Community Campaign Summary
Amanda Rishworth MP, Federal Member for Kingston**

1 Summary of issue

Community members first raised concerns with Amanda Rishworth MP about the long term future of sections of the Hallett Cove boardwalk, following reports (Adelaide Now, 1 October 2019) that some sections of the boardwalk may remain permanently closed.

It was reported on Adelaide Now that due to structural issues, several sections of the Hallett Cove boardwalk were to be temporarily closed and there was not a clear timetable for reopening. It was also reported that there were some sections which may not be repaired and reopened by the council as a result of financial constraints.

Mayor Kris Hanna confirmed that financial constraints on the part of council may limit repairs of some sections, with public comments (ABC Radio Adelaide, 2 October 2019 and Adelaide Now, 5 October 2019) where he stated that council would approach the State Government to request funding to assist with repairs.

As there was no clear funding commitment by the council or State Government, there was a lack of certainty over the future of the boardwalk and many local residents were alarmed over the potential permanent closure of any part of the boardwalk.

Many community members were requesting an outlet to have their voices heard on the issue. Subsequently Amanda launched a community petition opposing the permanent closure of any section, which gathered around 6,500 signatures.

On 16 November, Amanda held a community meeting. Around 200 local residents attended and vocalised their opposition for any section of the boardwalk to be permanently closed.

Mayor Hanna also attended and outlined that many of the sections of the boardwalk could be repaired and reopened by February 2020 with the council covering the cost, however the two gully sections (Grey Road Gully and Kurnabinna Gully) were more expensive to repair.

Mayor Hanna estimated the cost to repair the gully sections would be \$4.8 million, which would be financially out of council's reach without a contribution from the State Government.

Mayor Hanna also confirmed that to ensure the long-term viability of the boardwalk, it will likely have to be completely rebuilt which would cost in excess of \$10 million.

Following overwhelming response to Amanda's petition, David Speirs MP commented to Adelaide Now that he was willing to work with City of Marion regarding funding options.

2 Community response

The community desire for the Hallett Cove boardwalk to be repaired and no section to be permanently closed has been overwhelming. At time of writing, the petition has reached 6,500 signatures and counting, and over 200 people attended the community meeting.

The petition has been completed mostly by local residents, but also by people from across South Australia indicating the importance of the asset to the entire state.

Through the petition and community meeting, the community has communicated overwhelming opposition to the permanent closure of any section of the boardwalk including to two gully sections.

Below is a summary of the key responses from community members, both via the petition and community meeting.

a. Importance to Hallett Cove

- Residents have expressed how iconic the boardwalk is to the Hallett Cove community. It is considered to be the most significant attraction in the local area.
- Residents are proud to have the boardwalk in their local area and don't want to see it diminished.
- Residents believe it gives them access to the unique natural landscape, as well as viewing native flora and fauna. This is one of the reasons they love living in Hallett Cove
- Respondents commented that is important that the boardwalk gives families access to an interesting local and free activity that the whole family can be involved in.

b. Importance to South Australia

- People from across the State have commented on how the boardwalk is not only an attraction to Hallett Cove, but to South Australia as a whole.
- It is frequently referenced as the most spectacular walking trail in South Australia and it would be a huge loss to our entire state if any section was to be closed.

c. Frequently used

- Many respondents indicated they use the boardwalk most weekends, often finishing at the local Boatshed Café.
- Many respondents also indicated that if they don't visit the boardwalk every weekend, it is a favourite activity they undertake regularly over summer and look forward to.

d. Tourism

- Respondents commented on the importance of the boardwalk as a tourist attraction to Hallett Cove.
- Local residents expressed how they are proud to have tourists visit the boardwalk and soak in their local community.

- Many also expressed that whenever they bring visitors to South Australia, they bring them to the boardwalk.

e. Fitness

- It was commented by a number of respondents that at a time when there are governments are encouraging people to be active and live healthier lifestyles, it would be a counterintuitive to lose one of the best and most popular fitness challenges in South Australia.

f. Closure/re-routing of particular sections

- There is a strong sentiment that no section should be permanently closed and that any closure will ruin the boardwalk.
- At the community meeting Mayor Hanna indicated the possible permanent closure of the two gully sections, or potentially re-routing these sections to be further up the hill.
- Attendees not only opposed the permanent closure of these sections but also the re-routing, stating that the gully sections are the highlight of the boardwalk and must be saved.

Examples – petition responses

“You only have to look at the 1000+ photos on the google maps listing to see how much people love this environmental and geographic asset. Not just for locals, but for the State. The boardwalk does a great job to protect the delicate ecosystem.”

“You must continue to maintain the outdoor attractions in our area, this is a the centre of Hallett Cove life.”

“You have to consider how important the hallet cove boardwalks are for residents and tourists alike.”

“You just can't. This is a get away spot for many many South Australias as well as a very popular tourist destination, This board walk not only helps but encourages us to get fit and exercise. It's full of history that I see Older couples enjoying, as well as family hikes. We already have absolutely nothing in Adelaide, Please don't take this away from us too.”

“You can't shut the boardwalk down. We've moved from Melbourne & it's one of the highlights of the area. It would be very disappointing to see this gone.”

“You can not close down the boardwalk!! It's such an amazing and important part of South Australia! The amount of joy it brings to so many people is second to none! And at a time in society where we should be promoting more people to be active, it would not help by closing it down! If you close it down, you let Adelaide down..”

“Would be unhappy to see the boardwalk closed permanently, walked half of it on Saturday, again said when is it going to be fixed. “

“Would be awful to lose this beautiful walk.”

“Would be absolutely stupid to shut the boardwalk down. Not only a physical workout, but such a mental release also with its amazing views! Huge attraction for Adelaide too. Please fix it, not close it down!”

“Would be absolutely ridiculous if the boardwalk was closed. So many international tourists are there every weekend and locals use it constantly and pay our rates so use our money appropriately.”

“Without a boardwalk people will miss seeing the beauty of our area. As local resident I know that we get tourists who come here to walk along this area.”

“Don’t deprive the south because you dont want to delegate funds to fixing the structure of the stairs and other parts of the walk, embrace it and look at it as a chance to improve it and make it safe for the future generations coming through who will also use it and promote it as an attraction for people to enjoy.”

“Why would you get rid of a boardwalk that is promoting free outdoor exercise?”

“Why would you consider closing this? Spend the money. It's already popular - keep encouraging people to remain active and result in less spent on health care. It's one of, if not the most beautiful walks in Adelaide.”

“Why would you close such a beautiful coastline that encourages and motivates people to get out and exercise. Government adverts keep on spouting off about how we should all get fit and get more exercise, and how obesity is on the increase. Maybe the people who want to close the walk should take a stroll down there and they would see how popular it is and how spectacular the views are.”

“Why shut a fantastic tourist attraction this area has to offer??? Please save the boardwalk.... especially now that the coastal walk continues through sommerton beach through to Glenelg etc.”

“Why destroy something so special?”

“Where is the encouragement for people to exercise, enjoy our beautiful coastline & state. We must look absolutely daft to the national & international community when they come to our state to enjoy a truly iconic & significant place.”

“When I visited family 10 years ago this was one of the highlights. I saw seals lazily floating on the waves and dolphins in the far distance. The walk granted me access to a beautiful coastline. It's something I will never forget and hope to one day be able to show my children.”

“What a wonderful walk with spectacular views. This boardwalk is unique. Please don't let it become unusable.”

“Wellbeing. Environmental awareness. Mental health. Fitness. Community. The boardwalk has such a profoundly positive impact on the people of this area and current issues that matter. To limit its use would be a huge step backwards at a local level. “

3 Conclusions

There is overwhelming community opposition to the closure of any section of the Hallett Cove boardwalk, as evidenced by the large petition response and community meeting attendance.

The community has made it clear that it expects all levels of government find a funding solution to ensure all parts of the boardwalk are reopened, including Grey Road Gully and Kurnabinna Gully.

The community has demonstrated their love of the boardwalk. It is therefore imperative that the long term viability of this important community asset is secured.