

Transport
for NSW

End of Life Vessels

Community Consultation Report

November 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from rail lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation's First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples' cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



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1. Definitions

Term	Definition
ELV	End of Life Vessel - a vessel that has reached or is nearing the end of its useful life
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
FRP	Fibreglass Reinforced Plastic

2. Related policy and supporting information

- [ELV Policy Options paper \(February 2022\)](#)
- [Managing End of Life Vessels | Have Your Say \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- [Managing End of Life Vessels Webinar](#)
- [Marine Estate Management Strategy](#)
- [Marine Safety Act 1998](#)
- [Marine Safety Act Amendment Bill 2024](#)
- [Marine Safety Amendment Act 2025](#)
- [Mooring Action Plan 2024](#)
- [Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995](#)
- [Responsible Boat Ownership Campaign](#)
- [Vessel maintenance checklist – outboard motor](#)

3. Executive Summary

There is growing concern about the increasing number of vessels, particularly fibreglass vessels, that are reaching, or have reached, the end of their useful life – commonly known as ‘end of life vessels’ (ELVs). The potential scale of ELV abandonment and disposal presents a major problem for boat owners, waterway users, industry, government and the community, creating economic, safety and environmental impacts.

Transport for NSW (Transport) recognises that developing an effective strategy to manage ELVs requires resolution of a range of complex issues and engagement with multiple stakeholders.

First, we undertook detailed research and analysis of ELV-related issues and prepared an Issues Paper for discussion. We undertook targeted consultation with key stakeholders with extensive knowledge and experience of ELV issues.

Based on this research and feedback we developed an End of Life Vessels Policy Options Paper for community consultation. The community consultation took place via the NSW Government ‘Have your say’ platform between November 2022 and January 2023.

This report identifies the key findings from the community consultation and highlights relevant public responses to the policy options:

1. **Definition of an End of Life Vessel (ELV).** Support was received to amend the legislation and ensure consistency in how ELVs are defined. However, concerns were raised around the use of the term ‘visually suitable’ to determine an ELV or the seaworthiness of a vessel. Concerns were also raised about criteria and expertise of persons required to make such a determination.
2. **Monitoring of ELVs.** Suggestions and support were received for:
 - inspection for ‘seaworthiness’ as part of the registration process for vessels, with a focus on increasing safety across our waterways
 - amending and improving current regulation, including for warnings and penalties.
3. **Management of moorings.** Suggestions and support were received around the review of mooring policy, specifically:
 - defining ‘mooring minders’
 - mooring licence timeframes, including the length of waiting lists
 - evaluation of mooring locations, including accessibility
 - fees and costs associated with moorings
 - mooring transfer rules
 - registration and insurance of vessels on moorings
 - condition of moored vessels.
4. **Disposal of ELVs.** Concern was raised around vessel disposal options and associated costs. It was suggested that the available data on ELVs and the number of ELVs spread across the state may not support the need to establish disposal facilities. However, an equitable, sustainable ELV disposal scheme was still supported, with suggestions that a ‘disposal fund’ be established. There were also suggestions that registration, licence and mooring fees/levies and penalties could fund an ELV disposal scheme.

In addition, an ELV ‘turn-in’ option was supported, with suggestions made that such an option be supported by guidelines, regulation and enforcement.

5. **Recycling of ELVs.** There was support for exploring recycling options for fibreglass material along with consideration of options to distribute responsibility between manufacturers and owners.
6. **Responsible boat owners.** Feedback identified the need to foster responsible boat ownership and support responsible boat owners. Options to support vessel owners included inspections at registration to ensure 'seaworthiness' and improved training and education (specifically vessel maintenance courses).
7. **National approach.** There was support for a nationally consistent approach for assuring the 'seaworthiness' of a vessel, for a compliance assurance framework, and for an extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme. Concerns were raised around the distribution of responsibility and costs across manufacturers and owners for an EPR scheme.

Based on what you told us, we have commenced work to improve ELV management, with a focus on the short-term policy actions. In doing so, we have considered NSW Government and Transport policy and operational priorities and are partnering with other organisations and agencies where appropriate.

Since consultation closed in 2023 we have focused on reshaping the Mooring Reform Program into the Moorings Action Plan (MAP). The MAP is an initiative that focuses on six key themes to improve the practical management of moorings in NSW. One of these themes relates to ELVs, and work is progressing to improve the management of ELVs through the MAP.

In addition, the *Marine Safety Act 1998* was amended by the passing of the Marine Safety Act Amendment Bill on 13 February 2025 to expand the definition of unsafe vessels to include derelict vessels and former vessels that are now unseaworthy. This is critical to enable the capturing of ELVs into the unsafe vessel regime and thereby improve the ability to direct the removal or disposal of ELVs. In addition, all vessels over a certain size must be registered, whether or not they are still being operated.

The preparation of this report has been delayed while we were progressing these two key initiatives - the development of the MAP and the assent of the Marine Safety Act Amendment Bill.

We are committed to continuing to share information and engage with the community, boating industry and organisations to develop and deliver options to improve the management of ELVs in NSW.

We thank all those who provided responses and submissions to this consultation.

4. Purpose of this report

4.1 Background

End of Life Vessels (ELVs) are vessels that have reached the end of their useful life and are no longer fit for purpose. The exact number of ELVs in NSW is unknown, however, analysis completed to inform the policy options paper in 2022 suggested that the number is large given that it is estimated up to 75,000 fibreglass vessels reached the end of their useful life between 2000 and 2017, and this number is likely to have increased considerably since then.

Additionally, it is estimated that 5-15% of moorings are occupied by ELVs across the state, depending on location.

This potential scale of ELVs in NSW presents a major problem for waterway users, industry, government and the public by creating impacts in three main areas:

- **Economic** – high costs to government from having to salvage and dispose of vessels. There is also an opportunity cost to users who are prevented from access to moorings occupied by ELVs.
- **Safety** – ELVs can present a navigational hazard on the water when they detach from moorings and if unseaworthy can present a major safety hazard to occupants when underway.
- **Environmental** – if abandoned on-water ELVs can leak harmful substances into the marine environment and off-water vessels present a major waste management problem.

Transport undertook detailed research and analysis of issues related to ELVs. This included consideration of best practice approaches used by other jurisdictions, and the feasibility of adopting these approaches in NSW. Transport then consulted with a range of key industry bodies and other government departments to develop the ELV Policy Options Paper, which sought broad stakeholder feedback on 15 potential reform options to inform the development of a more detailed ELV reform program.

5. Consultation approach

5.1 ELV Policy Options Paper

The ELV Policy Options Paper presented 15 individual policy options to improve management of ELVs. They were divided into:

- **9 short term actions (0-2 years)**, which considered legislative and policy reforms, management practices, improved data and information, responsible boat ownership and boat disposal guidelines.
- **4 medium term actions (2-5 years)**, which considered development of funding options for ELV turn-in programs, vessel inspections, and disposal programs and networks.
- **2 longer term actions (5+ years)**, which considered establishing recycling pathways, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and support for the Circular Economy.

These policy options were a combination of Transport-led actions, NSW Government agency collaborations, and collaborations across State and Federal governments and industry.

5.2 How we consulted

The consultation was conducted via the NSW Government 'Have your say' portal for 8 weeks in 2023, and included:

- exhibition of ELV Options Paper
- stakeholder briefings
- online information session/video
- survey presenting each policy option with supporting text and questions
- facility to upload a written submission and to request further information.

6. Consultation summary

6.1 Overview

The consultation result included 3,800 unique website visits, 174 website surveys completed and 8 detailed written submissions. Submissions were received from agencies and peak industry and interest groups.

Three main themes emerged:

- strong support for legislative reform, improving ELV management practices and strategic compliance
- strong support for improved data collection, better information for boat owners and a vessel turn-in program and disposal network
- mixed support for the use of a national extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme to manage ELVs.

6.2 Who we heard from

Most responses (77%) were from Greater Sydney and coastal regions, predominantly beachside or riverside suburbs.



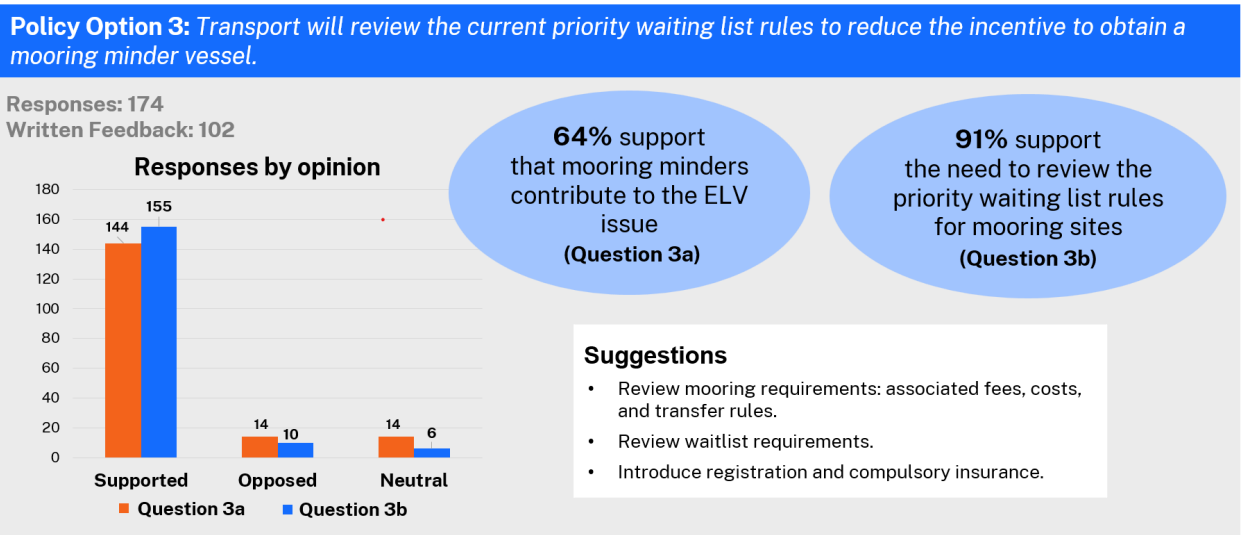
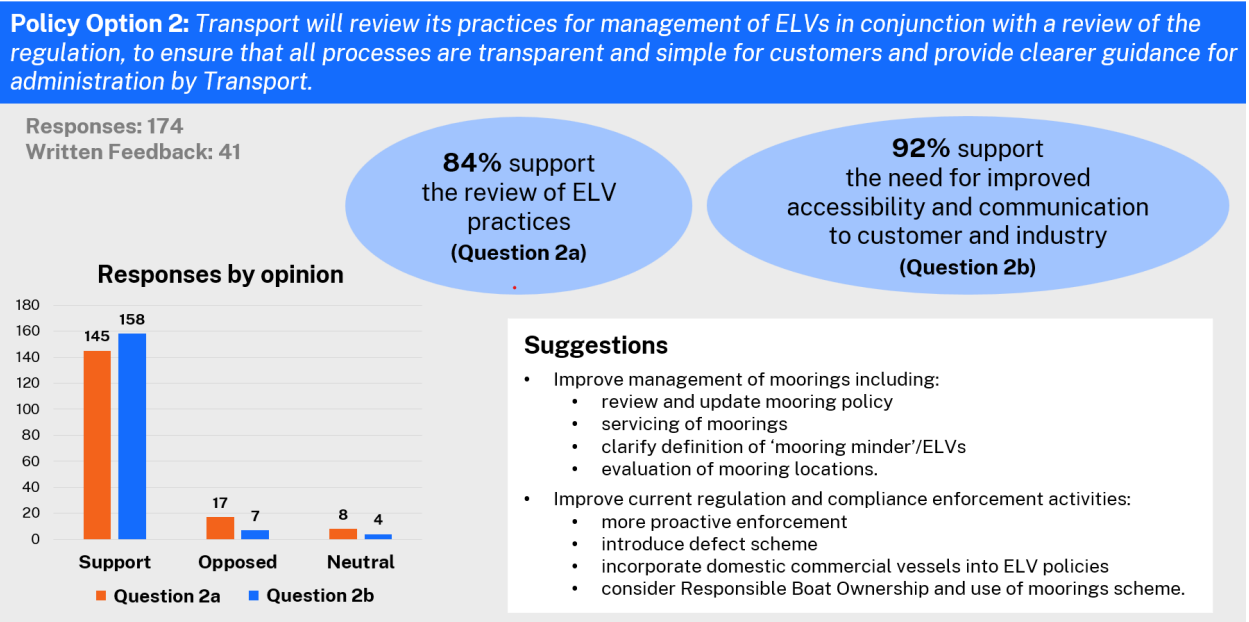
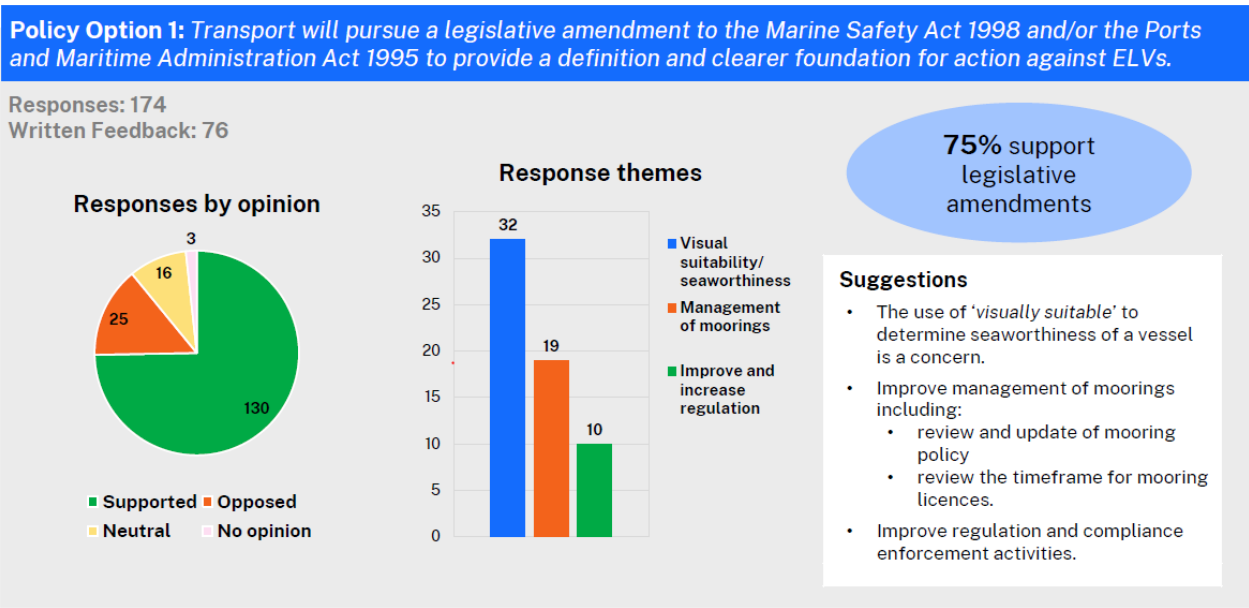
Figure 1: Responses by region

6.3 What we heard

This section sets out each policy option, and provides details of and/or highlights on:

- number of survey responses and written feedback
- responses by opinion (numbers for support, oppose, neutral)
- key measures supported (and percentage support)
- key response themes
- suggestions and concerns.

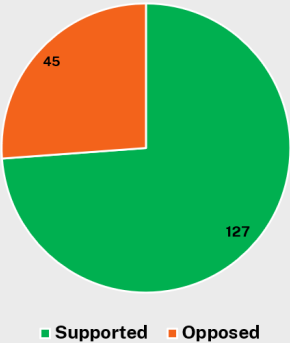
6.3.1 Short term policy options



Policy Option 4: Following the introduction of a clear definition for ELVs, Transport will improve data collection and monitoring for ELVs.

Total Responses: 172
Written Feedback: 72

Responses by opinion



74% support
the collection of data
about ELVs

Suggestions

Data can be used for:

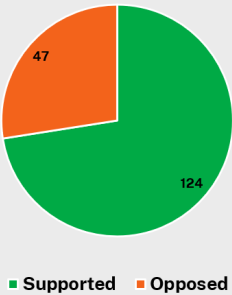
- management of moorings
- improved understanding of recreational fleet and associated management
- management of waterways to address environmental outcomes.

Feedback provided that 'age' is not a primary indicator for ELVs and that 'seaworthiness' may be more appropriate.

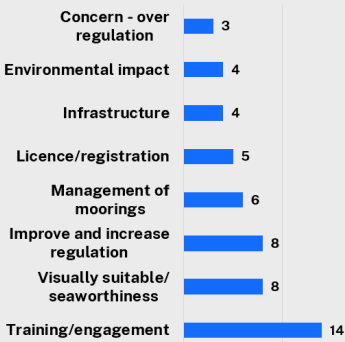
Policy Option 5: Transport will advocate at Australian New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG) for the promotion of education campaigns to promote responsible boat ownership and other initiatives.

Responses: 171
Written Feedback: 70

Responses by opinion



Response themes



73% support
national promotion of
responsible boat ownership
and ELV actions

Suggestions

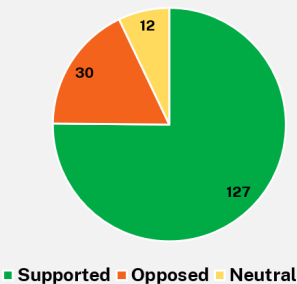
Initiatives to promote responsible boat ownership:

- training, education and customer engagement, specifically vessel maintenance courses
- improved regulation and compliance enforcement activities
- Introduction of a 'seaworthiness' certification process.

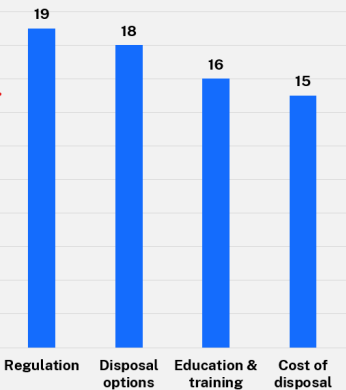
Policy Option 6: Transport will develop a strategic ELV education campaign on the impacts and options for vessel disposal. This could be considered alongside a 'Responsible Boat Ownership' campaign, with scope for collaboration with industry and across jurisdictions to enable consistency of messaging.

Responses: 170
Written Feedback: 83

Responses by opinion



Response themes



75% support
that education about
responsible boat
ownership is an effective
way to manage ELVs

Suggestions

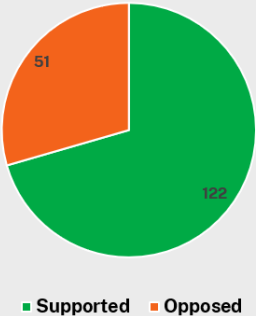
Education may not be effective without:

- regulation and financial consequences – penalties
- disposal options
- addressing the financial impact of disposal.

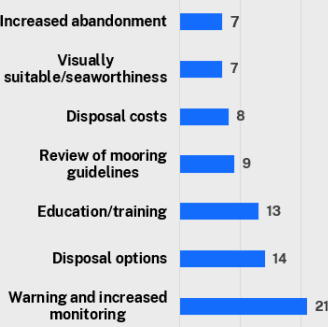
Policy Option 7: Transport to give detailed consideration of enhanced on-water enforcement and whether ELV related penalties and approaches to enforcement are appropriate.

Responses: 173
Written Feedback: 84

Responses by opinion



Response themes



71% support enhanced on-water enforcement and/or related penalties.

Suggestions

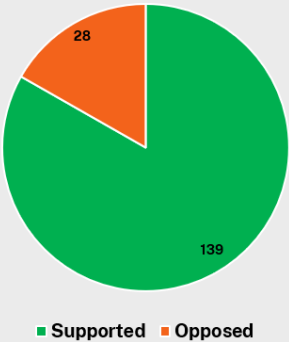
Feedback suggested consideration be given to:

- increased warnings and monitoring
- increased training and education
- options for disposal
- review of mooring guidelines
- qualifications to determine 'visually suitable' and 'seaworthiness'.

Policy Option 8: Cross agency development of guidelines around vessel disposal, incorporating advice from existing contractors.

Responses: 167
Written Feedback: 76

Responses by Opinion



83% support the development of ELV disposal guidelines.

Suggested stakeholder groups

- boat owners/operators
- recycling industry
- industry professionals

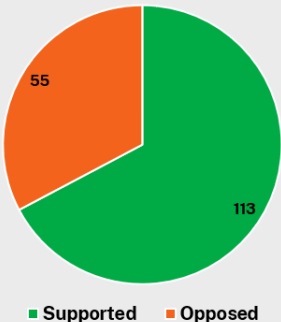
Suggested stakeholder organisations

- Boating Industry Association (BIA),
- Australia Recreational Boating Safety Committee (ARBSC)
- Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG)
- Recreational Vessels Advisory Group (RVAG)
- Commercial Vessels Advisory Group (CVAG)
- Maritime Advisory Council (MAC)

Policy Option 9: NSW Government to engage with the Commonwealth Government on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), with a view to understanding scope, feasibility and responsibility for an ELV related scheme.

Responses: 168
Written Feedback: 68

Responses by Opinion



67% support national Commonwealth-led EPR scheme

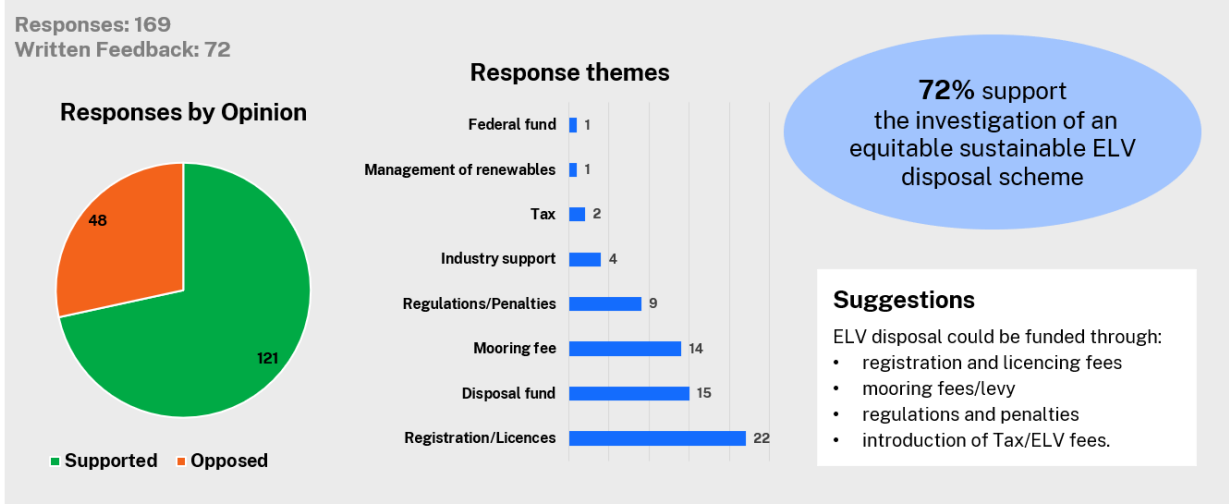
Suggestions

There is a need to consider:

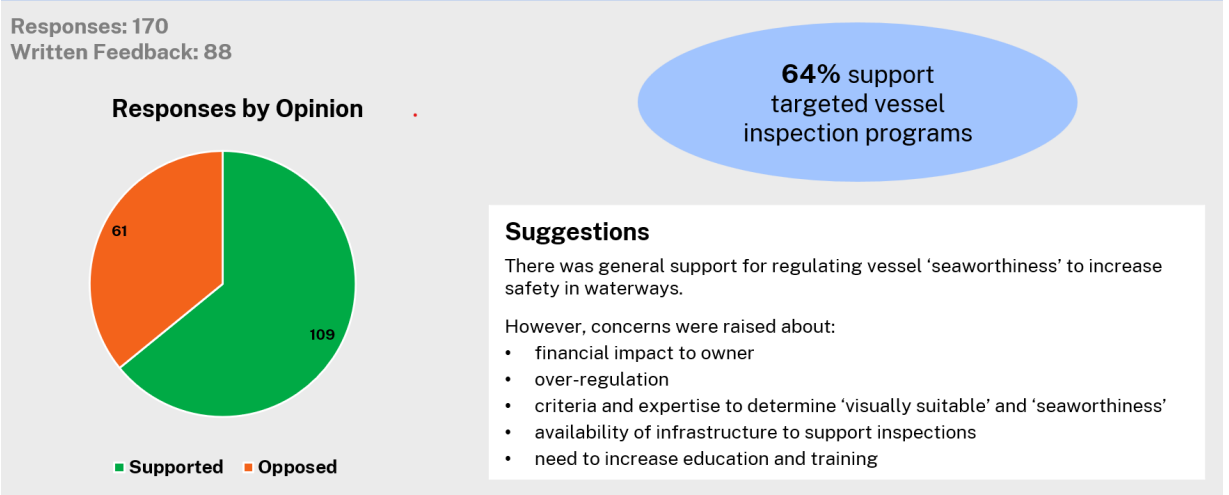
- distribution of responsibility between manufacturers and owners
- cost to manufacturers and owners
- alignment to current industry sustainability programs.

6.3.2 Medium-term policy options

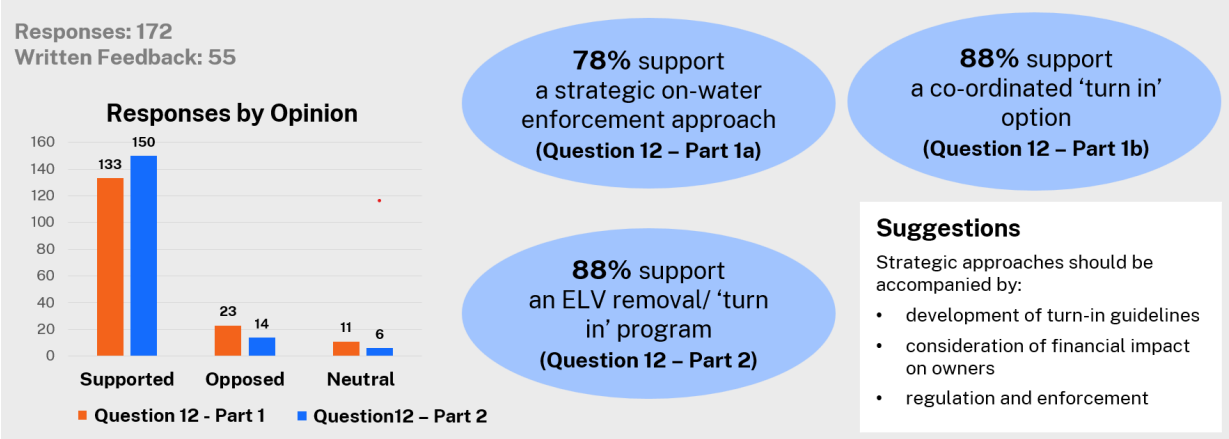
Policy Option 10: Transport to investigate options for an equitable and sustainable funding solution to fund ELV disposal. Potential options include an annual levy on vessel registrations and/or mooring licences, or a levy on vessel manufacturers.



Policy Option 11: Transport to explore the feasibility of a targeted vessel inspection program at either registration or pre-transfer of ownership to be explored. This could be based on vessel age on a periodic basis.



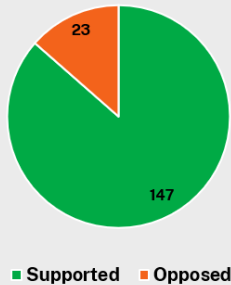
Policy Option 12: Transport to consider a strategic approach to ELV removal, with a focus on enhanced on-water enforcement and/or vessel turn-in option.



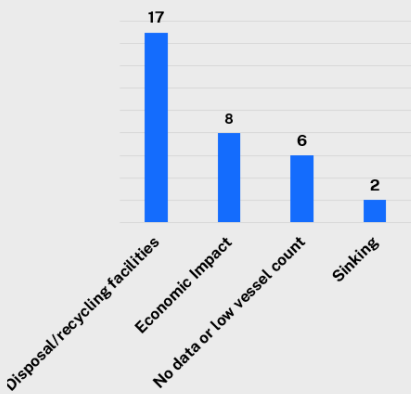
Policy Option 13: The NSW Government to consider establishing a disposal network similar to those that have been set up in France and Japan. This could be developed in collaboration with industry and Local Councils.

Responses: 170
Written Feedback: 50

Responses by opinion



Response themes



86% support
the establishment of a
vessel disposal network

Suggestions

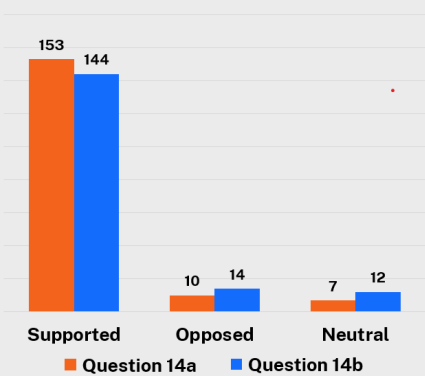
- Some concerns were raised about:
- options for disposal and recycling facilities
 - economic impact to industry
 - low number of vessels or data to support the establishment of facilities
 - scuttling of vessels as a disposal option.

6.3.3 Long-term policy options

Policy Option 14: The NSW Government to collaborate with other industry sectors to develop recycling pathways for fibreglass material.

Responses: 172
Written Feedback: 41

Responses by opinion



90% support
the NSW Government
collaborating with other industries
to develop recycling pathways for
fibreglass materials
(Question 14a)

85% support
that recycling material is
an important aspect of
the disposal of ELVs
(Question 14b)

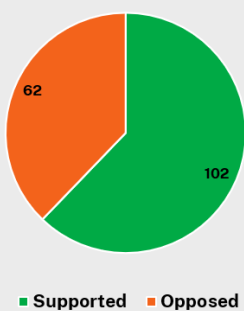
Suggestion

- Concerns raised about the need to develop Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) recycling pathways to support the disposal of ELVs.

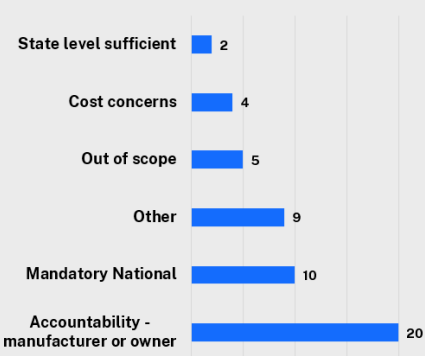
Policy Option 15: NSW Government advocates at the respective transport and environment national committee for the development of a national regulated EPR scheme for ELVs.

Responses: 164
Written Feedback: 49

Responses by Opinion



Response themes



62% support
that a national EPR
scheme would be
effective in addressing
ELV issues

Suggestions

- Concerns were raised about:
- distribution of responsibility between manufacturers and owners
 - producers/manufacturers not existing when vessels reached end of life.

6.4 What we learnt

The consultation process has helped us understand our stakeholder support for and concerns about ELV management and gave us a variety of views and new ideas. Feedback has indicated there is an appetite for reform and new ways of dealing with ELV issues.

6.5 Next steps

Based on what you told us, we have commenced work to improve ELV management, considering NSW Government and Transport policy and operational priorities. Our focus at this stage is on the short-term policy actions that we identified, and you supported. These include:

- [Marine Safety Amendment Act 2025](#) – In March 2025 the *Marine Safety Act 1998* was amended to:
 - expand the definition of ‘unsafe vessel’ to provide regulatory scope to track end-of-life management (the definition now includes a former vessel and derelict vessel)
 - insert definitions for a ‘person responsible’ and a ‘relevant owner’ of a vessel to ensure responsibility for ELV management and disposal
 - give authorised officers power to remove and seize unsafe, derelict or former vessels to address ELVs on our waterways
 - require any vessel over a certain size to be registered, whether or not it is still being operated.
- [Public Register of Statutory Vessel Notices](#) – was published on the nsw.gov.au website in April 2025. The Register allows second-hand vessel buyers to check for the existence of any statutory notices recorded against a vessel, and is linked to the Check Vessel Registration system.
- Responsible Boat Ownership Campaign – Transport’s Centre for Maritime Safety is a member of the Australian Recreational Safety Committee (ARBSC) and the Australia New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group (ANZSBEG). The ARBSC/ANZSBEG and Boating Industry Association (BIA) have rolled out a national [Responsible Boat Ownership](#) campaign. Transport advocated for the campaign to be simplified to focus on the key message of increasing awareness of the responsibilities of owners for maintaining and caring for their vessels.
- Boater Education – In October 2024 Transport released a [Vessel maintenance checklist – outboard motor](#), which provides a guide on the basic requirements for maintaining a vessel, including what to look for and how to conduct regular maintenance.

Better ELV management is also a key action under significant interagency and Transport initiatives:

- Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 - This is a coordinated interagency plan for the management of the NSW marine estate. Transport leads [Initiative 7 – Enabling safe and sustainable boating](#). One of the actions of Initiative 7 is to develop options to manage ELVs to mitigate potential environmental risks and enhance access to moorings.
- Moorings Action Plan – This Plan responds to strategic and operational priorities for improving the management of moorings in NSW and supports the adoption of Policy Options 1-6 as priority initiatives.

Critical elements we will continue to consider in the development of policies and actions to address ELV management include:

- continued engagement with industry stakeholders, especially for actions relating to vessel disposal, disposal guidelines and recycling
- improved information and boater education.

We are committed to continuing to share information and engage with the community, boating industry and organisations to develop and deliver options to improve ELV management in NSW.

6.6 More information

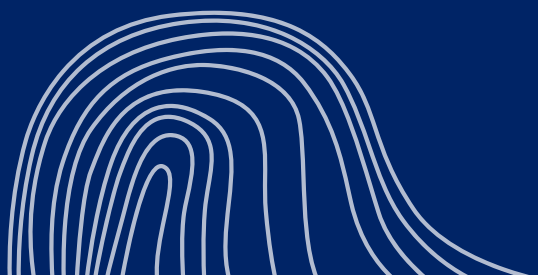
We will continue to keep you informed about what we are doing. You can find more information at:

- [NSW Government Have your say – Managing End of Life Vessels](#): Here you will find all the information about the consultation, including the End of Life Vessels Policy Options Document, online information session replay, Frequently Asked Questions and a copy of this report.
- [Transport's Moorings Action Plan](#) webpage: Here you will find information about all six MAP elements, including Element 2 - Effective management of ELVs.

7. Appendix A – Survey questions

Question	Policy Proposal	% Support	% Oppose	% Neutral
Q 1	Transport will pursue-a Legislative amendment to the Marine Safety Act 1998 and/or the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995 to provide a definition and clearer foundation for action against ELVs.	75%	14%	11%
Q 2(a)	Transport needs to review their existing practises for management of ELVs.	86%	9%	5%
Q 2(b)	NSW Government regulations for management of ELVs need to be accessible, well communicated and mutually understood by customers, industry, and administration.	94%	4%	2%
Q 3 (a)	Mooring Minder vessels contribute to the issue of ELVs.	84%	8%	8%
Q 3 (b)	Transport needs to review their Priority Waiting List rules for mooring sites, to reduce the incentive to obtain a mooring minder vessel.	91%	5%	4%
Q 4	Do you think annual collection of data about ELVs, such as information on vessel age, condition and storage location would be useful for better management of ELVs?	74%	26%	-
Q 5	Do you think there is a role for Transport to advocate nationally to promote responsible boat ownership and ELV actions?	73%	27%	-
Q 6	Education is about responsible boat ownership is an effective way to manage ELV issues.	75%	18%	7%
Q 7	Do you think enhanced on-water enforcement and/or related penalties would incentivise vessel owners to better maintain their vessels and/or dispose of their vessels legally?	71%	29%	-
Q 8	Do you think ELV disposal guidelines would assist vessel owners and contractors to dispose of vessels appropriately?	83%	17%	-
Q 9	The NSW Government is engaging with the Commonwealth Government on product stewardship and EPR, however not in relation to ELVs. Should a	67%	33%	-

Question	Policy Proposal	% Support	% Oppose	% Neutral
	national Commonwealth led EPR scheme be explored for vessels in Australia?			
Q 10	Do you support Transport to investigate an equitable and sustainable ELV disposal scheme?	72%	28%	-
Q 11	Do you think a targeted vessel inspection program at either registration or pre-transfer could be useful for identifying and managing ELVs?	64%	36%	-
Q 12 - Part 1(a)	A strategic approach to on-water enforcement targeting ELVs or vessels approaching their end of life would be effective in addressing the issue of ELVs.	79%	14%	7%
Q 12 - Part 1(b)	A coordinated approach to vessel removal including a 'turn in' option for ELVs would be effective in dealing with historical stock of ELVs.	87%	8%	5%
Q 12 - Part 2	Would you support an ELV removal/turn in program, in principle?	88%	11%	1%
Q 13	Would you support the establishment of a vessel disposal network similar to the networks in France and Japan?	86%	14%	-
Q 14(a)	The NSW Government to collaborate with other industry sectors to develop recycling pathways for fibreglass material.	90%	5%	5%
Q 14(b)	Recycling materials is an important aspect of the disposal of ELVs.	85%	8%	7%
Q 15	Do you think that a national EPR scheme which covers an ELV framework would be effective in addressing ELV issues in NSW?	62%	38%	-



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