

YU Collective at Holdfast Marina

We are proposing a small floating wellness pavilion at Holdfast Marina in Glenelg, offering sauna, contained plunge and space to relax. Our aim is to create a calm place for wellbeing that respects the marina, its wildlife and the people who already use and enjoy the area.

This FAQ explains the current proposal and the safeguards we intend to put in place. The project remains subject to consultation and the required approvals.

About the proposal

How does the proposed floating wellness pavilion materially change the existing use of the marina, berths and surrounding precinct?

The proposed pavilion represents a relatively low-impact and highly controlled use within an already active marina and recreational precinct.

The Patawalonga and surrounding public realm already accommodate a range of activities including boating, kayaking, fishing, exercise, community events and general recreation. Many of these activities involve people moving freely through the public realm or interacting directly with the water.

By comparison, the floating wellness pavilion would operate within a clearly defined footprint, with controlled access, limited guest numbers, set operating hours and staff supervision. Guests would remain within the pavilion environment, with no direct recreational access to the Patawalonga waterway.

This means the proposed use is highly managed and predictable, with greater control over noise, lighting, waste, patron behaviour and interaction with wildlife than many existing informal recreational activities.

Importantly, the pavilion does not seek to fundamentally change the character or function of the marina. It introduces a complementary wellness use within an established waterfront environment while being specifically designed to minimise its impact on other marina users, the surrounding community and the local environment.

What would YU offer

YU would offer booked sauna and plunge sessions and experiences, with showers, changing facilities and space for relaxation. It would be a staffed facility for small groups, with a focus on a quiet, welcoming experience for locals and visitors.

How big would the pavilion be

The current proposal is for a floating platform with a footprint of approximately 100 m². A low-profile timber design is intended to sit comfortably within the marina setting. Final positioning and shore access would be confirmed through the approval process.

What would it bring to the community

YU aims to offer a year-round wellbeing experience, opportunities for local employment and another reason to visit nearby businesses. We would explore practical ways for local residents and community organisations to participate, with any specific offers confirmed before opening.

Would public space become private

Entry to YU would be through paid bookings. Public paths and access outside the approved facility area would remain available. The proposal is intended to work alongside existing marina use, with its position and access arrangements considered through Council's public-space and approval processes, no different to that of the existing marina.

Has the project already been approved

No. YU is a proposal. Council and the relevant authorities would consider the site, public access, environmental safeguards and operating arrangements before any required approvals are granted. Community feedback would help inform that process.

Environmental and community safeguards

Would guests swim in the marina

No. The plunge would be a contained bath on the pavilion, filled from an approved water supply and separately treated. Recreational swimming, jumping into the marina or using lake water for bathing is not part of the proposal.

How would the waterway be protected

The proposed approach is to keep bath, shower and cleaning wastewater contained and send it through an approved disposal system. None would be discharged into the marina or stormwater. Treatment products would be stored securely.

How would dolphins and other wildlife be protected

Protecting wildlife would be part of both the design and daily operation. Guests would not feed, attract or interact with dolphins or other animals. We propose restrained lighting, secure waste storage and no underwater feature lights. Site-specific environmental review would guide installation, maintenance and any additional safeguards.

Would there be noise bright lighting or parties

YU is intended to be a quiet wellness experience. The saunas would use electric heating. Staff would manage arrivals, departures and guest behaviour, with equipment selected and positioned to control noise. Lighting would be warm, shielded and limited to safe use.

Would parking or public paths be affected

Timed bookings and small groups would help manage arrivals and departures. Parking, staff movements and session changeovers would be considered in the site assessment. Guests would receive clear arrival information, and queues or deliveries would be managed to keep public paths clear, with groups meeting on the floating pavilion.

Would boats or the operation of the Patawalonga be affected

The final location and mooring arrangement would need to maintain safe navigation, neighbouring berth access and the Patawalonga's water management and flood protection role. These matters would be assessed with the responsible authorities before installation. YU would operate within the agreed marina arrangements.

Using YU and staying informed

What hours and group sizes are proposed

The proposed customer hours are 6 am–9 pm daily, subject to Council agreement. The current operating proposal is for up to 12 guests at a time, with staff onsite. Bookings would manage group sizes; final hours and capacity would be confirmed through the approval process.

How would guest safety be managed

The facility would have staff supervision, controlled entry, protected water edges and appropriate safety equipment. Water treatment, cleaning, staff training and emergency procedures would be established before opening. Unsafe weather, access or equipment conditions would lead to affected activities being paused until safe to resume.

Would there be accessible facilities and toilets

Showers and changing facilities are proposed onboard, with existing public toilets approximately 100 metres from the pavilion. As YU is designed for short, pre-booked wellness sessions, we propose using these nearby amenities, an approach already adopted by other floating sauna operators in Australia and many other communal activities in the area such as Onsens beach pop up. In addition, there are another two public amenities 400m apart, at the Surf Life Saving Club and Coles. Accessibility from arrival to the pavilion and its facilities would be considered through the final design, with the suitability, accessibility and availability of the shore toilets during operating hours confirmed with Council. Guests would receive clear information about these arrangements before arrival.

What disruption would installation cause

Much of the pavilion is intended to be built offsite to reduce work at the marina. Installation and shore connections would still require coordinated access and safety arrangements. The work would be planned with marina management, with advance information for affected users where needed.

Who would pay for and look after the pavilion

YU is proposed as a privately funded and operated facility. YU would be responsible for its day-to-day operation and upkeep. Any approved agreement would set out maintenance, insurance and removal obligations, including what happens when the arrangement ends.

How could the community raise questions or concerns

We welcome questions from residents, marina users, businesses and community groups. Council would set the formal consultation process. Feedback could help refine the proposal and operating arrangements. Before opening, YU would publish an operating contact so concerns could be recorded, investigated and addressed, alongside Council's usual channels.