

Safer Cities: Her Way

Engagement Summary

Central
Coast
Council

Summary

During a two-month period between 1 May and 30 June 2023 Council engaged with the Central Coast Community to ask how we can improve perceptions of safety in Gosford.

Safer Cities: Her Way is a collaborative partnership with Transport for NSW and several pilot councils across the state. Central Coast Council was selected to participate in the program and have received a \$1 million grant to deliver demonstration projects aimed at improving the perception of safety for women, girls and gender diverse people when walking or moving to, through and within public spaces and transport hubs.

Council asked the community to join a unique Human Centred Co-Design process, which championed community voice to identify problems and suggest demonstration projects that can test how we might make public spaces feel safer.

The community not only shared their thoughts and experiences via a community survey and interactive map, but also joined a range of in-person Walkshops through Gosford as well as participated in a Co-Design Workshop with key stakeholders and Council staff.

Once delivered, the demonstration projects will be evaluated for their effectiveness by our community and insights will be used to build the case for longer-term change.

Engagement Results

Feedback across the consultation activity revealed the following:

- **65% changed their route** or method of travel due to feeling unsafe.
- **71% did not participate in an activity** that was being held in Gosford due to not feeling safe.
- **43% feel somewhat safe in Gosford during the day.** They feel safest in the Imperial Centre and the most unsafe in laneways.
- **76% feel unsafe in Gosford during the night-time.** They feel safest in the Imperial Centre and the most unsafe in Kibble Park.

How you connected



2,979 responses to the in-depth community survey



539 comments dropped on the interactive map



30 local community members and school students joined **3** Walkshops throughout Gosford



30 community members, key stakeholder and community staff joined our Co-Design Workshop



5,340 visits to the project page and interactive map



90,784 social media users reached generating more than **12,000** likes, comments, shares, clicks and video views



3,720 direct emails sent out to community and key stakeholders

- **Streetlights (10%), People around/passive surveillance (9%), CCTV (8%) Well maintained pathways (8%) and Security (8%)** would improve participants sense of safety in Gosford.
- According to participants **Economic Stimulation (14%) and Activation/activities/events (12%) were just as important as Lighting (14%) and Decorative lighting (12%)** when it came to improving their sense of safety in Gosford.

What we heard

The following summarises the themes outlined in over 4,000 pieces of data collected.

- **People congregating** can make the community feel unsafe and systemic socioeconomic issues need to be addressed.
- Gosford requires a **more active police presence** at all times.
- **Increased proactive security presence** is required to support those working, staying and playing in Gosford.
- The current business offerings open in Gosford are not in line with our community's vision for the area.
- Gosford needs to attract a **higher standard of business** and the businesses need to be incentivised to open earlier and trade later into the evening (including weekends).
- **Restaurants, activations such as night markets** etc are required to generate more foot traffic.
- **There is a lack of things to do** within Gosford - think theatres, bowling alleys, cinemas, live music, art venues etc. there is no current attractor for families, the elderly or youth (all could be independent of each other).
- **More lighting is required** to support improved perceptions of safety, lines of sight and safety on footpaths.
- **The derelict buildings attract unsavory crowds** and contribute to the poor brand of Gosford.
- **The essential services** located within/near the city centre either need to be adequately resourced to cater to the large clientele base or there needs to be further resource added outside of the centre to disperse the congregations.
- **Economic stimulation** such as open stores, diversity of stores, night time economy, hospitality needs to be leveraged to support a revitalised Gosford - the options for the area endless.

How you connected



14,755 stakeholders were kept up-to-date through e-news.



238 views on internal news article to Council Staff



500 posters were distributed across the Gosford area.



4,000 coasters were distributed to Gosford Venues



110 footpath decals placed throughout Gosford



30 window decals placed throughout Gosford



443 QR code scans across footpath decals, posters and coasters



Project screensavers displays across **17** Council libraries, customer service centres and recreation facilities

What you said

"At night I know that I have people looking out for me [but I still] always sit with my back to a wall and close to people. This is always a feeling of not being truly safe"

– *15-year-old student during our School Walkshop*

"Homelessness is an issue and if we keep brightly lighting up spaces, it doesn't solve the issue, it just kicks them further out. It is our safety too, it's a balance." – *Walkshop participant*

"I pick my son up from the station and often go to meet him at the platform as I am worried about him coming from the train to the car" – *Walkshop participant*

"I won't walk somewhere without adequate street lighting and a good line of sight at night unless I absolutely have to and there's no other way to get to my destination. This can extend my trip by 15-20 minutes sometimes but it's worth it if I can see and have more time to react if something goes wrong."

– *Survey response*

"I work at the hospital, where parking is a problem, there are definitely streets that I will not walk down anymore due to being yelled at and even chased in the past" – *Survey response*

"Up lighting on the trees would make the space feel more inviting" – *Walkshop participant*

"The alleyway is unsafe, [it feels like it is] not anybody's responsibility. Unkept businesses, derelict buildings, blank walls that could have nice artwork on them" – *Walkshop participant*

"CCTV should make me feel safe, but I feel it's only helpful if reported" – *Survey response*

"[Kibble Park is a] Rare green area with last trees in the CBD :) Great for a break/play in the sun/shade. Needs new [public toilet] & maintenance. Less skyscrapers & more events and eateries around would bring good people." – *Interactive map comment*

"I feel safe inside the library, just have to make sure I leave during daylight hours"

– *Interactive map comment*

"Mann street during the day and early evening always feels safe to me. It's leaving the well serviced areas to go home through dark road to car or train station that is scary" – *Interactive map comment*

What's next?

The Co-Design workshop utilised insights from all data collected in the survey, interactive map and in-person walkshops to identify possible solutions with community, key stakeholders and Council staff.

The project team are now reviewing these outcomes and establishing working groups which will be responsible for the delivery of these interventions. Once delivered, community members will be asked to return to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions, to make sure that we got it right!

The findings from this project will be shared with key stakeholders and incorporated into Council plans to ensure the learnings can build the case for longer-term change. We are reviewing all feedback provided in detail to produce an in-depth consultation report which will be made available on the Your Voice Our Coast project page.

We will keep the community updated as the project progresses.

Find out more and stay up to date at yourvoiceourcoast.com

July 2023