Community Strategic Plan Engagement Report 2024

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY 4
BACKGROUND 5
About the Community Strategic Plan 5
About the Local Strategic Planning Statement 8
Partnership with Woolcott Research and Engagement 10
PHASE 1: DISCOVERY 11
Community Survey 11
Targeted Focus Groups 17
Council Advisory Groups and Committees Engagement 18
Phase 1 Conclusion 20
PHASE 2: EXPLORATION OF FINDINGS 21
Community workshops 21
CSP Findings and Priority Themes 24
Community Wellbeing Survey 27
NEXT STEPS 36
APPENDICES 37

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play.

We pay our respects to Darkinjung country and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to these lands and waterways and extend this acknowledgement to the homeland and stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.

Background

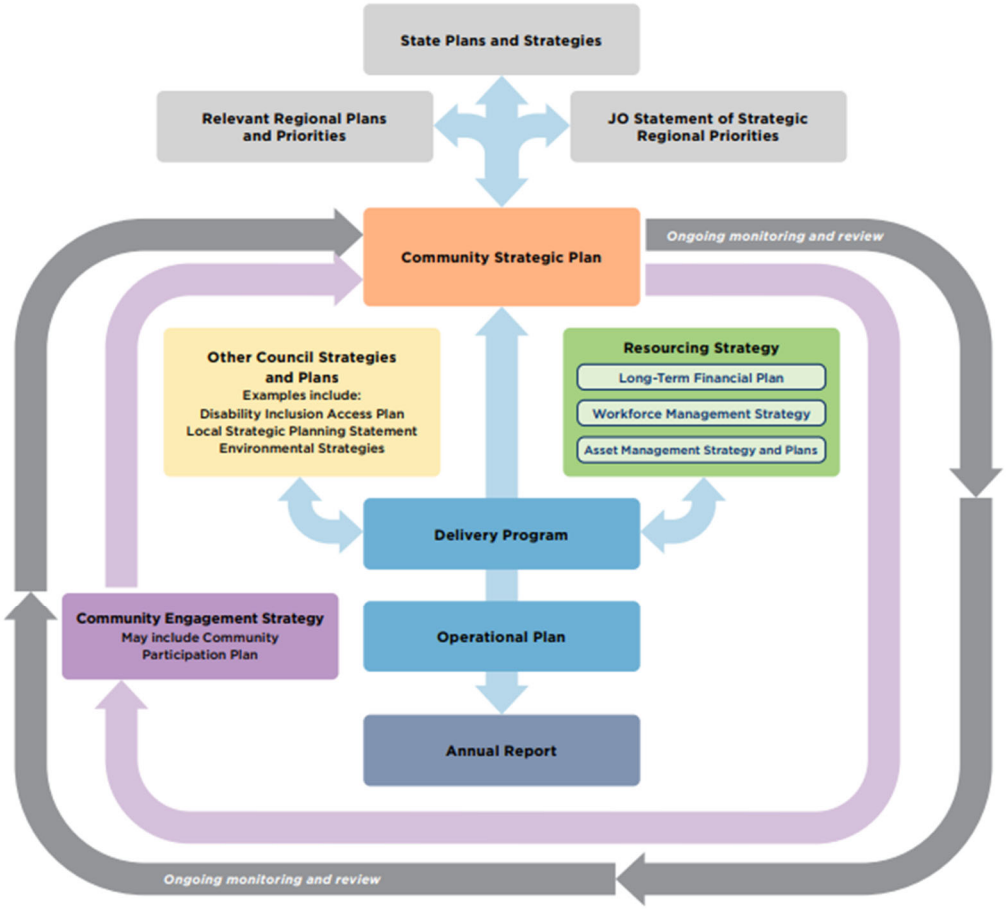
About the Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is a ten-year plan that outlines the community's priorities, vision, and aspirations for the future of the Central Coast. Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework the CSP is the highest level of strategic planning and guides the development of other strategies and plans including the Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy.

While the CSP is the community's document, Council has a custodial role in engaging, refining, and preparing the plan on behalf of its community. Council must always keep the CSP at the forefront when planning, designing, and implementing projects, to ensure it is delivering on the community's vision.

The CSP is integral in tying all the IP&R documents together. There needs to be clear lineage from the 10-year CSP to the four-year Delivery Program to the annual Operational Plan. Everything must link back to the CSP, as the community's needs, wants, values and priorities guide the future of the Central Coast.

Figure 1. IP&R Framework



The inaugural Community Strategic Plan, One - Central Coast, was endorsed by Council on 25 June 2018. Since its adoption, our communities have faced major issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial crisis, rising cost of living, and natural disasters such as bushfires, floods and coastal erosion.

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, it is a legislative requirement that the existing CSP is reviewed. The existing CSP may still be deemed appropriate or a revised or new CSP can be developed. Whichever the case, the adoption of the CSP is part of the newly elected body's role. The next local government election for the Central Coast is September 2024, which means a CSP is to be adopted by 30 June 2025.

The current CSP Themes and Focus Areas are:

- **Belonging**, which focusses on building community connections and bringing people together through culture, recreation and creative arts, valuing and celebrating the diversity of people, supporting vulnerable community members.
- **Smart**, which focusses on the economy of the region and generating education and employment opportunities, growing the Central Coast as a tourism destination and revitalising town centres as to attract businesses, visitors and locals.
- **Green**, which focusses on valuing and protecting the natural environment of the Central Coast from bushland to coast, to the flora and fauna that thrive, and addressing the impacts of climate change.
- **Responsible**, which focusses on the civic leadership of Council, engaging with the community to inform decisions, delivering value for money to the community, delivering essential infrastructure, lobbying and advocating to other levels of government on key matters affecting the Central Coast, and achieving balanced and sustainable development.
- **Liveable**, which focusses on the day to day access to services, facilities and amenities that improve community health and wellbeing such as, connected public transport, well maintained sport and recreation facilities or amenities that encourage the community to enjoy the outdoors, and investing in programs and solutions that keep people well.

Link: Current Community Strategic Plan – https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/about-council/council/forms-and-publications/community-strategic-plan

Figure 2. CSP Themes and Focus Areas

About the Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. It is a key resource that guides strategic and statutory land use planning and enables councils to undertake meaningful discussions with industry, community, and other government agencies as to how development, investment and infrastructure shall be planned, managed and delivered.

Central Coast Council's first LSPS was adopted as an interim LSPS in 2020 and is a consolidation of the strategic objectives and planning strategies of the former Gosford and Wyong Councils.

The current LSPS includes four Pillars that align to the CSP, these are:

- **Place**, which aims to retain and enhance the community focussed spaces and places in the region where neighbourhoods can thrive.
- **Environment**, where the built environment is planned and managed to protect the natural environment.
- **Lifestyle**, which enriches the Central Coast lifestyle through a balance of work, leisure, and wellbeing hubs and centres.
- **Infrastructure**, which responds to the infrastructure systems across the region that are necessary to drive sustainable growth and support the above Pillars.

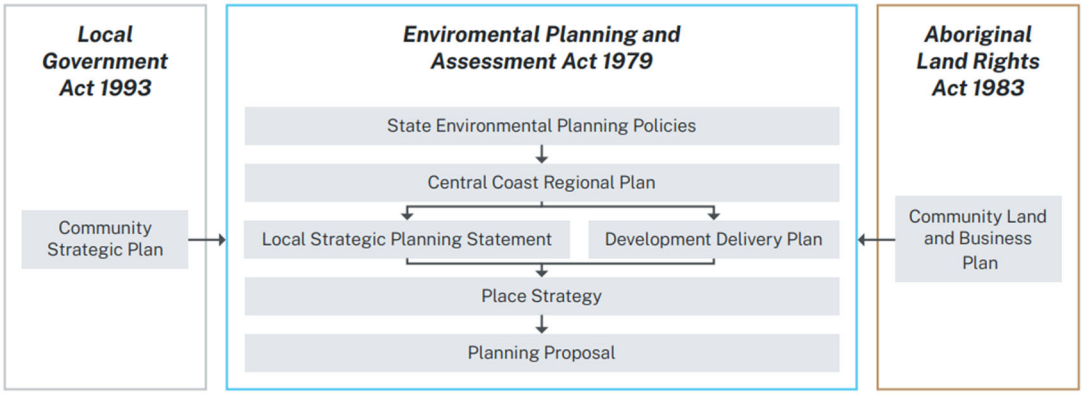
Figure 3. LSPS Pillars and alignment to the CSP

The LSPS is required to be reviewed at least every seven years, but should be revised on a needs basis to ensure it remains responsive, relevant, and local. These reviews may be in response to significant changes within the Local Government Area, such as projected population growth, economic climate, changes to regional planning objectives or to respond to updated strategic documents. Since the adoption of the LSPS in 2020, several relevant planning strategies for the Central Coast have been

prepared or are in development, including the Central Coast Regional Plan 2041, Central Coast Local Housing Strategy and Central Coast Employment Lands Strategy.

The LSPS will be reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with current local, regional and state strategies and policies and will be designed around a "One Coast" approach. It will require modernising of the actions, planning priorities and growth strategies to align with the diverse and changing needs and values of the Central Coast community.

Figure 4. LSPS Framework



The LSPS, together with the CSP, will guide the long term social, environmental, and economic aspirations of the community.

Link: Current Local Strategic Planning Statement - https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/reports/d14151449localstrategicplanningstatement2020-2020version-20augustlowres-forupload_0.pdf

Local Strategic Planning Statement Next Steps

The steps to date and next steps for the LSPS review is outlined below.

Stage	Timeframe
Project Planning • Scoping • Preparation of brief and request for quote	January 2024 – April 2024
Strategic Review • Review of actions in the LSPS and across all Council strategies	May 2024 – July 2024
Draft LSPS • Award consultant • Develop Draft LSPS	August 2024 – June 2025
Final LSPS • Exhibition and adoption of LSPS	July 2025 – December 2025

Partnership with Woolcott Research and Engagement

In 2023, Woolcott Research and Engagement (Woolcott) was engaged by Council to help deliver and undertake a telephone and online survey and facilitate community engagement for the CSP and LSPS, and conduct a detailed Wellbeing Survey.

Due to the similar target groups and questions about the community's lived experiences, values, perceptions, and desires about the local government area, the three projects were combined to avoid duplication of effort, community fatigue on engagement and deliver responsible spend.

The project was conducted in three phases as detailed below.

Stage	Timeframe
Discovery Phase • Survey launch (online and telephone) • Interviews with targeted groups • Analysis of results and presentation of findings	September 2023 – December 2023
Exploration of Findings Phase • Exploration of findings through collaborative workshops and interviews • Community Wellbeing Survey (online and telephone)	January 2024 – May 2024
Reporting • Analysis and synthesis of findings • Preparation of Engagement Report	May 2024 – July 2024

As the Central Coast covers a large geographic footprint, a key goal of the *Discovery Phase* was to reach as many community members as possible including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse groups, people living with a disability, gender diverse people, people across all age groups, business owners, and people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The aim of the engagement was to also be representative of the population across the five wards and the eight planning districts, following the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights to achieve the best community engagement outcomes.

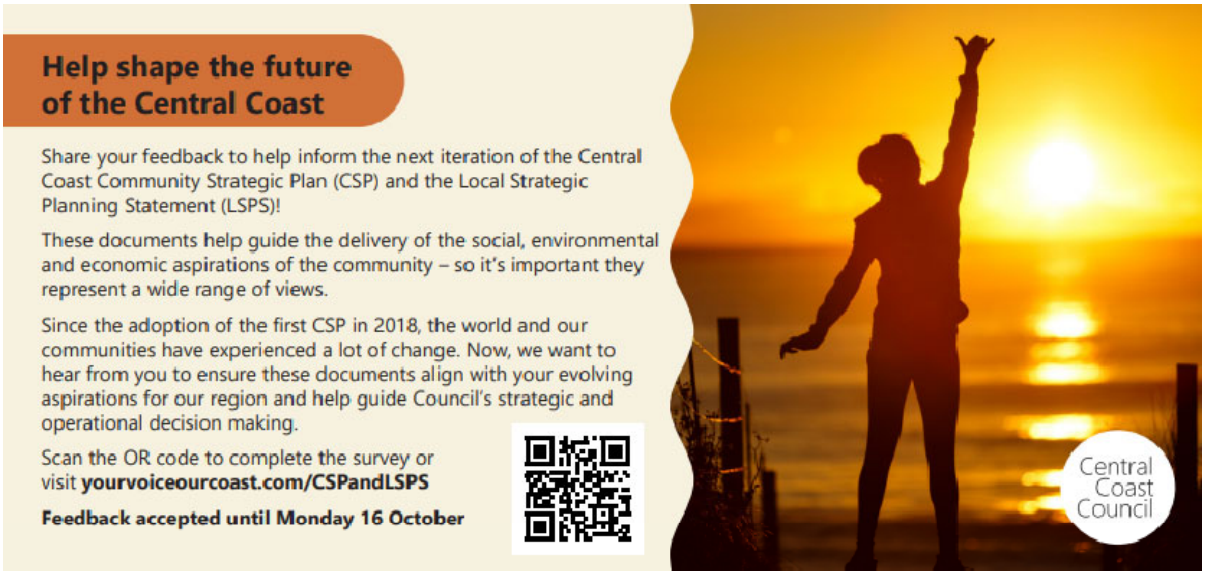
Phase 1: Discovery

Community Survey

Phase 1 was delivered through a mixed modality survey, with Woolcott conducting phone call interview via the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) in addition to a publicly available survey link accessible via yourvoiceourcoast.com/CSPandLSPS. Woolcott also conducted separate interviews with small to medium business owners, youth aged 16-18, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents. Council's Advisory Groups and Committees were also engaged to gain insight and perspective on their subjects and areas of interest.

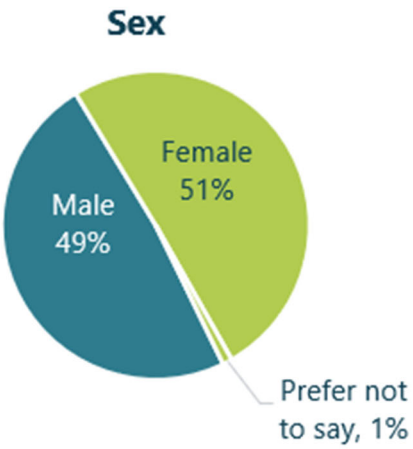
A community survey was developed to gauge the community's perceptions since first developing the CSP in 2017, and to understand community values and aspirations for the future of the Central Coast. The survey comprised of 27 questions and was open from 11 September 2023 to 16 October 2023. Advertisement included social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), the Central Coast Community e-newsletter, radio advertisements, physical posters in town centres including Woy Woy, Toukley, Terrigal and Wyong, and in the local newspaper.

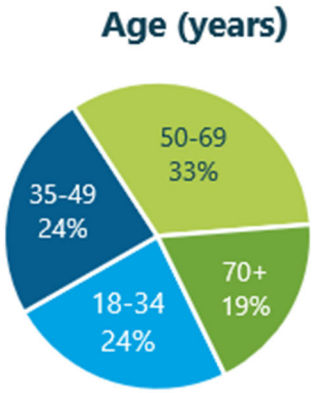
Figure 5. Example of the CSP and LSPS advertisement



A total of **1,038 responses** were received via Your Voice Our Coast (386 responses) and via telephone (652 responses).

Figure 6. A breakdown of survey responses by sex, age, Wards and Planning Districts





Ward & Planning District

Ward	Total
Budgewoi	15%
The Entrance	18%
Gosford East	24%
Gosford West	29%
Wyong	14%
Planning District	
Mountains & Valleys	6%
Peninsula	14%
Gosford Central	8%
East Brisbane Water & Coastal	18%
Narara Valley & Ourimbah	12%
Southern Lakes & the Entrance	17%
Wyong, Warnervale & Gorokan	13%
Northern Lakes, San Remo & Budgewoi	12%

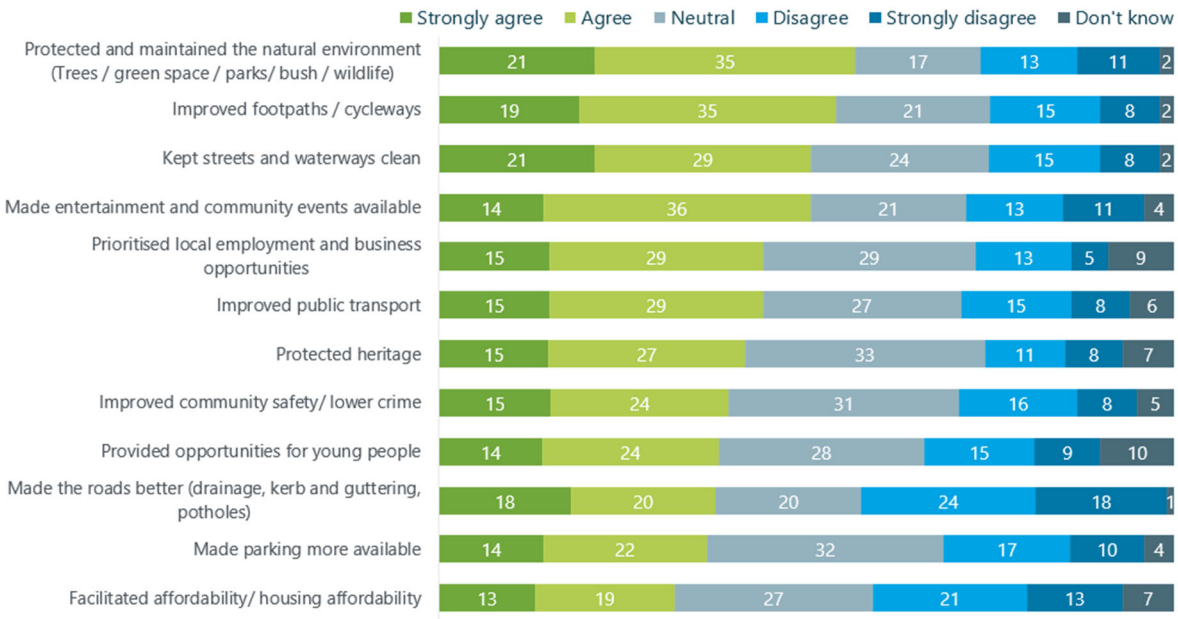
Below is a snapshot of the findings from the survey, with the full insights provided by Woolcott provided in **Appendix 1.**

The survey included how the community felt Council had progressed against key areas that formed the original CSP and areas they felt had not progressed as much. The survey did not focus on Council governance and operations and had more of a focus on broad community values, perceptions, and experience of growing, living, working, and playing on the Central Coast. Council governance, accountability and transparency is a strong feature of Phase 2.

A summary of the improvements identified since the inaugural CSP is outlined below, with Figure 7 and 8 showing that the community felt there had been improvements particularly in protecting and maintaining the natural environment (56% net agreement), footpaths and cycleways (54%) and clean streets and waterways. There was less reported perception of improvement in affordable housing (32%) and parking (36%).

Figure 7. Summary of progress

Figure 8. Resident responses to Q9: "In 2017, our community told us what was most important to them. Can you please tell us if you agree or disagree that Central Coast Council has addressed these since this time?"



The below shows those areas where the community felt they were satisfied with the current state versus areas where the community felt there was still work to be done or was an area previously missing from the CSP.

Figure 9. Summary of strengths and areas for future focus

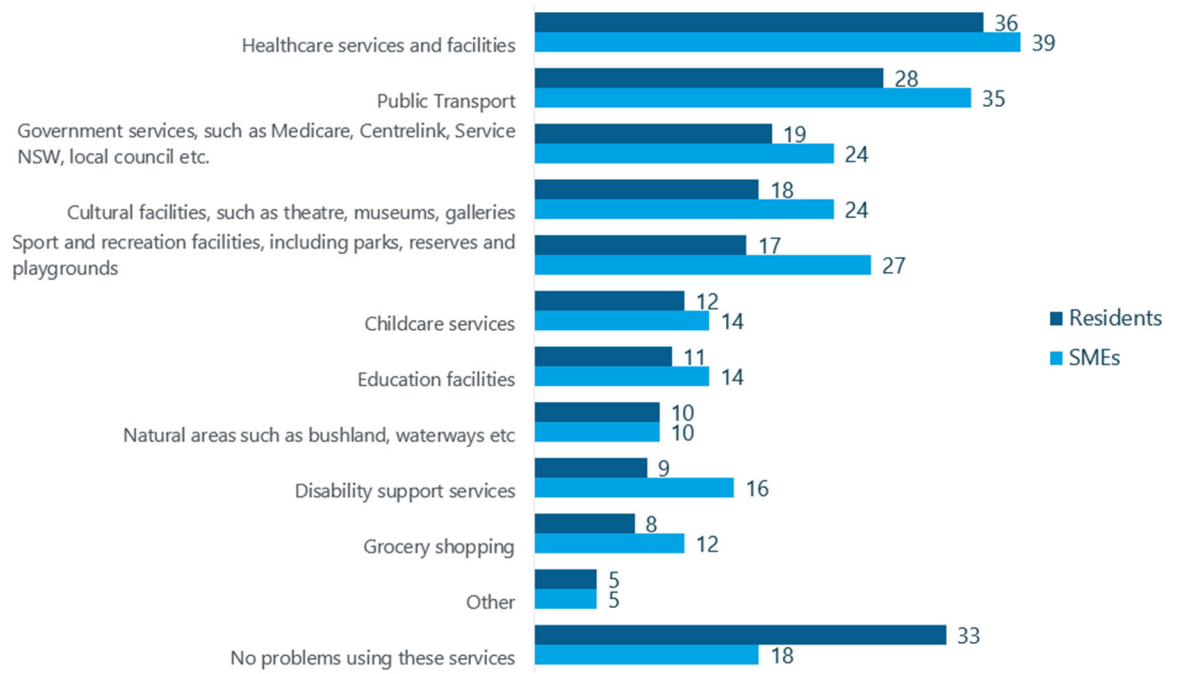
A detailed view of the strengths of the Central Coast from the community's perspective is below.

Figure 10. Summary of strengths and areas for future focus

Three things you like about Central Coast UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
The natural surroundings (waterways, grasslands, ecosystems, forests etc)	39	27
Proximity to the beach/lake/views & scenery	33	20
Proximity/easy access to major centres (e.g. cafes, amenities, local business, nightlife, shops)	32	25
Quietness/not too busy/lifestyle/atmosphere	28	27
The people	21	27
Social infrastructure (e.g. community halls, libraries, playgrounds, sporting grounds etc.)	17	7
Transport (e.g. roads, public transport, cycleways, pedestrian footpaths)/proximity to transport	14	14
Built landscape such as walkways	8	4
Rural areas/its still rural	4	1
Its not too big/not too much development / low density housing	8	3
Safety	3	2
Its clean/not polluted	3	3

The survey asked questions about access to services and the barriers to access those. It was evident from this survey that healthcare services and facilities and public transport were the areas respondents had the most difficulty in accessing.

Figure 11. Responses to Q16. about which of the following services or activities do you have problems accessing or using on the Central Coast?



The reason for barriers to accessing health services were varied but the leading reasons were cost of services, limited opening hours, no services in their area and lack of transport options. In relation to the barriers to public transport, the overwhelming reason for not being able to access this service is a lack of transport options.

Figure 12. Reasons for limited access to services

Healthcare services & facilities UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=283 %**	**SMEs n=96 %**
Cost of service / too expensive	42	39
They are not open at the times I require	25	24
No service in your area	19	22
Poor customer service	17	18
Lack of time	15	27
Lack of transport options	14	29
Remote location / hard to get to	13	19
Health or disability	10	17
Cannot trust them	5	5
Discrimination	2	5
Language difficulties	2	2
Don't feel safe where services are located	1	5
Other	43	31

Public transport UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=224 %**	**SMEs n=87 %**
Lack of transport options	71	70
Remote location / hard to get to	33	30
They are not open at the times I require	26	33
Lack of time	23	34
No service in your area	22	23
Cost of service / too expensive	19	21
Poor customer service	13	13
Cannot trust them	9	9
Health or disability	8	11
Don't feel safe where services are located	5	5
Discrimination	2	5
Language difficulties	2	5
Other	14	7

As part of the survey initial questions on the wellbeing and the spirit of the Central Coast were included, with a more in-depth survey conducted.

Figure 13. Resident's agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

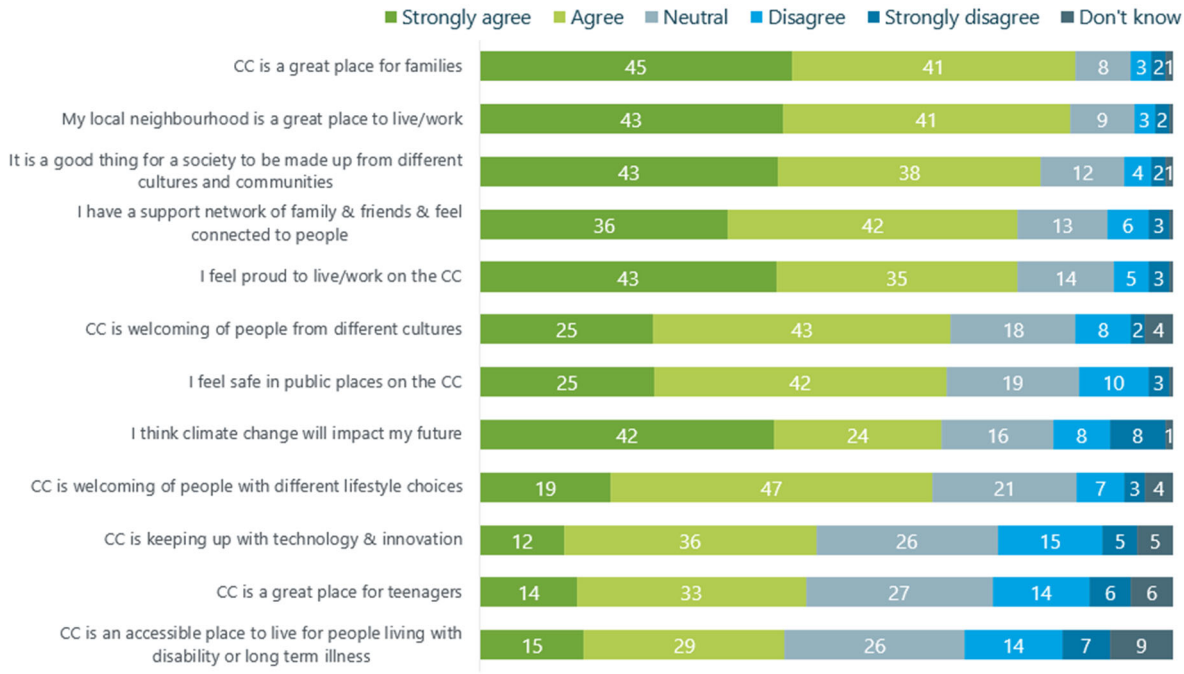
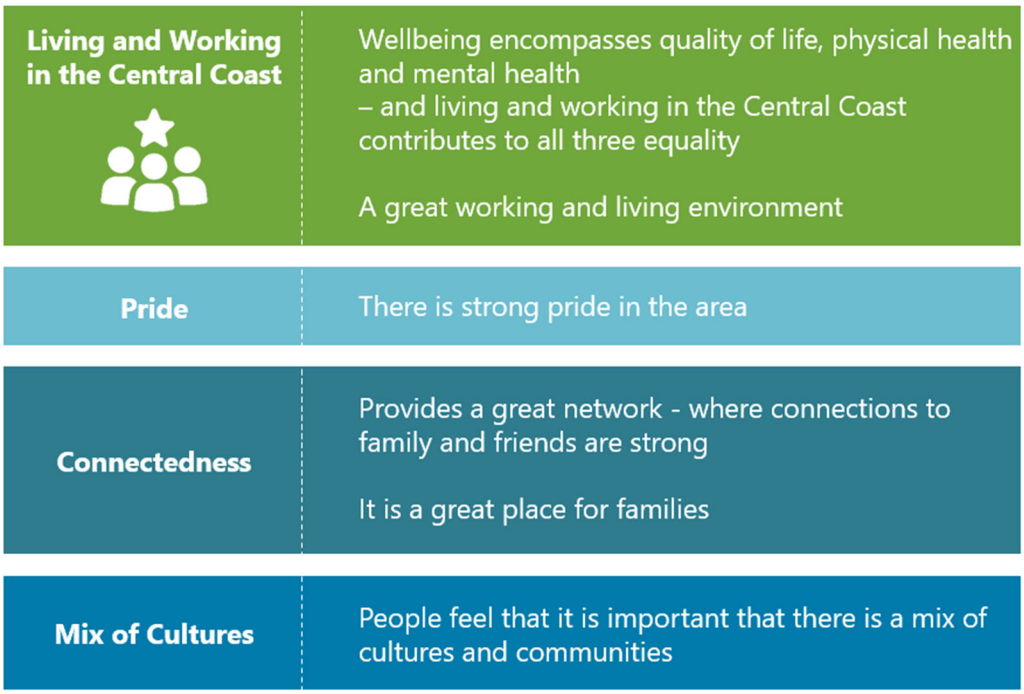


Figure 14: Summary of wellbeing values

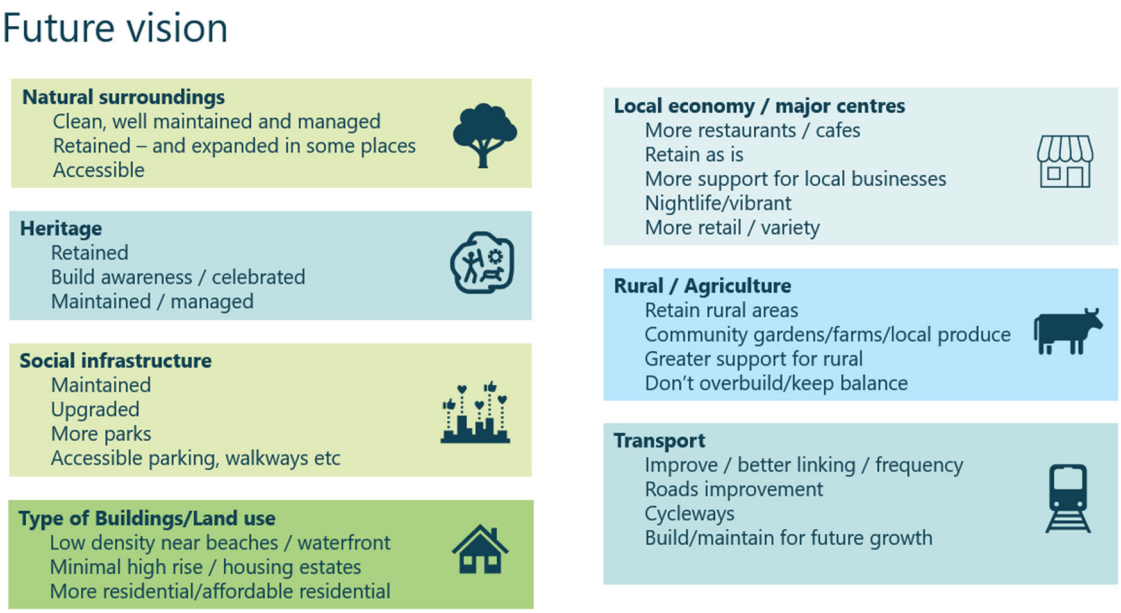


Through the analysis and synthesis a draft future vision that outlined what the community priorities over the next 10 – 15 years are. There was a clear emphasis on the importance of:

- Protecting and maintaining green spaces and the natural environment
- Facilitating safe and accessible footpaths and cycleways
- Personal safety in our communities
- Upkeep of local neighbourhood aesthetics
- Road maintenance

- Adequate consultation with key community members particularly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Creating meaningful opportunities for young people
- Public transport (frequency and routes)
- Affordable housing
- Support for local businesses and employment

Figure 15. Summary of community's future vision



Targeted Focus Groups

Woolcott facilitated targeted focus groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, youth, and small to medium business owners during Phase 1 and Phase 2. A summary of their feedback during Phase 1 is provided.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Focus Group

The first in depth interviews were conducted with six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. Many of the findings, such as protecting and celebrating the Central Coast's Aboriginal heritage and culture were also highlighted by participants in the Phase 2.

Participants: 6 in depth interviews in Phase 1 and another in Phase 2

Summary:

- Need to improve the unkempt areas of the Coast
- Greater health services available
- Consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on indigenous matters

Youth Focus Group

Woolcott facilitated a group of young people aged 16 to 18 years who live on the Central Coast. The conversation was guided by a set of pre-determined questions. The insights gained from the young people about what they like, what is missing and their future vision for the Coast is.

Participants: 7 young people aged 16 to 18

Summary:

- Ensuring a safe community for the future
- Maintenance and cleanliness of the local areas is important to young people
- Having access to public transport at key times, such as the weekend, when young people mostly work

Small to Medium Business Focus Group

The third targeted group for in depth interviews was the business community.

Participants #: 6 in depth interviews in Phase 1 and another in Phase 2

Summary:

- Need to increase marketing for central coast businesses, including at rest stops, bus stops, active social venues
- Support needed to local industries to help employ locals
- Revitalisation of Gosford

Council Advisory Groups and Committees Engagement

The project team proactively engaged with Council led advisory groups and committees to ensure their speciality area was considered appropriately in the CSP. A list of the advisory groups that the team engaged with is below.

Advisory Group or Committee	Date of Engagement
Aboriginal Advisory Group	20 October 2023
Access and Inclusion Reference Group	13 December 2023
Pedestrian Access and Mobility Advisory Committee	14 December 2023
Coastal Open Space System Advisory Group	5 March 2024
Catchments to Coast Committee	20 March 2024
Youth 4 Youth (Y4Y) Action Group	13 April 2024
50+ Centre Network meeting	24 April 2024

The majority of the advisory groups and committees were happy with the focus in the CSP and wished for that to be retained, with the continued focus of projects for inclusion in the Operational Plan. They believed that there was still a need to address their relevant subject and that it was still an important matter for inclusion and wasn't something that could afford to be excluded.

Other groups and committees provided more detailed feedback. The detailed feedback from these advisory groups is available in **Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5** with some notable highlights below.

Aboriginal Advisory Group

The group was engaged on the 20 October 2023, which was shortly after the Australian Indigenous Voice Referendum. The outcome of the referendum was top of mind and the group was expressive in how the CSP can be shaped better to capture the history and culture of the Coast.

- Acknowledgement of Country should be strengthened
- Use of more indigenous images and art through the document
- Post referendum the inclusion of reconciliation is not practical, but there is still a want for there to be acknowledgement of the indigenous heritage of the region
- Education / marketing should focus on sharing the history of the land and opportunities for Indigenous people to share their stories
- Recognising Aboriginal land as part of the environment and protection of these places – keeping them sacred
- Diversity – it's not just about accepting, it's about celebrating diversity on the Coast and how that makes for a greater community

Access and Inclusion Reference Group

In the year 2033 (ten years' time) where do you hope the Central Coast will be in how accessible and inclusive we are as a region?

- Minimal or no barriers to accessibility and inclusion
- I would love CSP to consider people living with disabilities in all community spaces and activities.
- In order to get there we need to educate community and businesses
- We need representation from diverse groups in consultation and decision making
- Any new development should have a baseline standards of accessibility/inclusion embedded in it
- The Central Coast is the leading model of inclusivity and accessibility, with improved infrastructure, inclusive policies and opportunities for the whole community to thrive.

Y4Y - Youth Action Group

Top 3 issues or concerns

- Housing affordability and options
- Access to education / free TAFE
- Transport
- Personal safety, drugs, vaping, physical violence and the lack of community calling out unsafe/inappropriate behaviours

Top 3 things young people want on the Central Coast

- A water park or Luna Park type amusement
- More outreach/advertising for events – young people don't use Facebook and would prefer physical posters in schools and in spaces where young people go (e.g. Erina Fair)
- More public study spaces in libraries etc with longer opening times

If you had a magic wand – what would you fix?

- Potholes
- Buses/public transport (particularly Sunday and public holiday buses)
- Cheaper options / affordable entertainment and social activities
- More festivals e.g. Lakes Festivals

50+ Centres Network Group

What is missing on the Central Coast?

- Parking – which is a barrier to accessing services, including the 50+ centres. For example, Gosford 50+ centre is at the back of Gosford, near Rumbalara Mountain. It is not feasible to walk from Gosford train station and parking is limited in the streets surrounding the centre. There are no community shuttles from the station, which would alleviate some of the access barriers.
- Lacking opportunities and entertainment for our young people. This group felt that there are recreational amenities and facilities that are lacking, for example, an updated skate park at Lake Munmorah. The group said there seems to be a lack of places for kids/teens/young adolescents to go, such as recreational centres, PCYC gyms, blue light discos etc.
- Police presence – the group felt there needs to be more active police presence in local communities. The group mentioned there are other communities up in QLD where the locals have taken action themselves and have a roster system to drive around and patrol their neighbourhoods.
- Mentorship – the cohort of 20s-30s would benefit from positive mentorship with older people. For example, mingling the different generations (young/old)

Phase 1 Conclusion

At the completion of Phase 1, the LSPS component concluded. To close off, Woolcott prepared summaries for each of the planning districts based on the findings from the survey and targeted focus groups. These are provided in **Appendix 6** and will be used to inform the review of the LSPS.

The next Phase was focussed on the CSP, with the results and findings from the survey explored further in the *Exploration of Findings* Phase. A detailed Wellbeing Survey was also conducted to delve deeper into the physical and mental health of the community and the contributors that are positively or negatively affecting them.

Phase 2: Exploration of Findings

Community workshops

Following the survey, exploration of the findings was carried out through facilitated community workshops. Two workshops were conducted to cover the north and south of the Coast.

The format of the workshops was led by a Woolcott Research with four tables of community members and each table facilitated by a Woolcott staff member. Council's Executive Team (CEO and Directors) was also present to answers questions and hear from the community. As the focus was to hear from the community and gain further understanding of the results of the survey, during the workshops most of the time was spent discussing key aspects amongst fellow community members at their tables, with only brief presentations made by Central Coast Council staff during the event.

The Gosford workshop was held on the 12 March 2024, with 30 community members attending.

The Wyong workshop was help on the 13 March 2024, with 29 community members attending.

Figure 16. Photo of participants at the Gosford Workshop

Figure 17. Photo of participants at the Wyong Workshop

Figure 18. Demographics of workshop attendees

Workshop participant demographics	Total (n=59) n=
18-34 years	13
35-49 years	14
50-69 years	24
70+years	8
Male	26
Female	33
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	5
Culturally and linguistically diverse background	6
Small – medium business owners	11
Income <$42,000	8

A key activity for the workshops was the allocation of focus areas (identified in Phase 1) into a quadrant that highlighted the importance of each to the community (see figure 19).

This information was necessary to understand what has changed since the inaugural CSP was developed and what changes may be needed.

The lower right quadrant (in figure 20) contains those areas that workshop participants prioritised as high importance and low satisfaction.

Figure 19. Importance vs satisfaction grid example

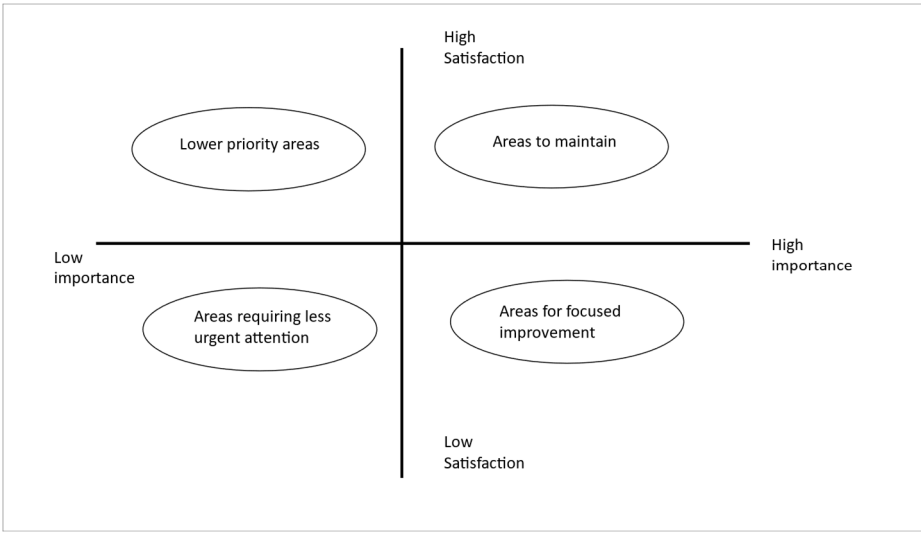


Figure 20. Summarised elements allocated to each quadrant

Lower priority areas (allocated by 4 or more tables). • A sense of pride • Peace and quiet • Strong connections to family and friends • Family friendly • Great work and living environment • Mix of cultures and communities	**Areas to maintain** (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Appealing parks and green spaces • Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches • Protection of built heritage • Disability access and inclusion
Areas requiring less urgent attention (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Vibrant nightlife	**Areas for focused improvement** (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Responsible Council governance* • Affordable housing • Balanced housing development • Protection of Aboriginal heritage • Opportunities for young people and teenagers • Cycleways/ footpaths • Keep up with technology and innovation • Protection and maintenance and bushland • Public transport • Support for local businesses and employment*

*Additional elements suggested by participants

CSP Findings and Priority Themes

There was strong support for the areas derived from the survey with the community.

As evident in Woolcott's final report (**Appendix 7**), the outcomes of the workshops, interviews and groups showed that participants consistently felt that the following elements were areas for focused improvement and were of the highest priority:

Responsible Council governance:

Note: this was a new area that did not come through in the survey results and was added by workshop participants.

- Better leadership with more transparency and accountability for Council's actions and spending
- Frequent and high quality communication and community engagement for decision making
- More responsible management, transparency and control over developers

Opportunities for young people and teenagers:

- Increasing the availability and quality of job opportunities, education and training in the area
- Specific programs such as a Technology Hub, Youth Leadership course, mentoring, help with how to find a job
- Better live music and recreation options (e.g. BMX/skate parks) and keeping sports grounds lit/open for longer in the evenings

Balanced housing development/affordable housing:

- Ensuing that development applications are evaluated fairly and responsibly (this relates to Responsible Council governance)
- Ensuring that supporting infrastructure, green space, facilities, parking, public transport is considered in an area before further housing development is approved
- Using land/space effectively - reviewing where housing development is taking place and the size/types of homes
- Ensuring that there are consistent housing development policies between federal, state and local government

Supporting local business and employment:

Note: this was a new element added by participants.

- More flexibility and streamlining approvals processes for businesses
- Promoting the area/attracting tourism in order to support local businesses
- Promoting local businesses and improving accessibility through better public transport

Protection of Aboriginal heritage:

- Education of all ages
- Increasing awareness about where these sites are located
- Maintenance and regeneration of these areas

Cycleways/ footpaths/public transport:

- More buses, trains, ferries, footpaths
- Better interchanges
- Safer and more accessible footpaths

The following elements were thought to be areas for Council to maintain, as they were considered highly important but participants were satisfied with these aspects currently:

- Appealing parks and green spaces
- Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches
- Protection of built heritage
- Disability access and inclusion

The elements considered lower in importance but higher in satisfaction, so lower priorities for Council focus included:

- A sense of pride
- Peace and quiet
- Strong connections to family and friends
- Family friendly
- Great work and living environment
- Mix of cultures and communities

These tended to be the less tangible aspects that were likely to be outcomes of other aspects.

There was one element that had mixed importance but lower satisfaction regarding – vibrant nightlife. This element resulted in polarised views on its level of importance. For those who thought it was important, it was thought that improvements to vibrant nightlife could assist with the element of 'providing opportunities for young people'.

There were some elements that did not have a majority consensus about their position in the quadrants:

- Aesthetically pleasing built environment (high importance, mixed satisfaction - lower satisfaction in Gosford)

- A safe community (high importance, mixed satisfaction – pockets of the area were thought to be less safe, e.g. Gosford centre)
- Retain rural/ agricultural connection (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)
- Easy access to nature (mixed importance, high satisfaction)
- Proximity to services e.g. shops, cafes, health services, businesses (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)
- Parking (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)

There were also several additional elements of importance added by participants, but not consistently placed in the 'areas for focused improvement' quadrant, including:

- Access to health services and mental health services
- Supporting vulnerable communities
- Transparent development guidelines
- Vibrant arts and cultural scene
- Well maintained, clean, tidy environment and community infrastructure

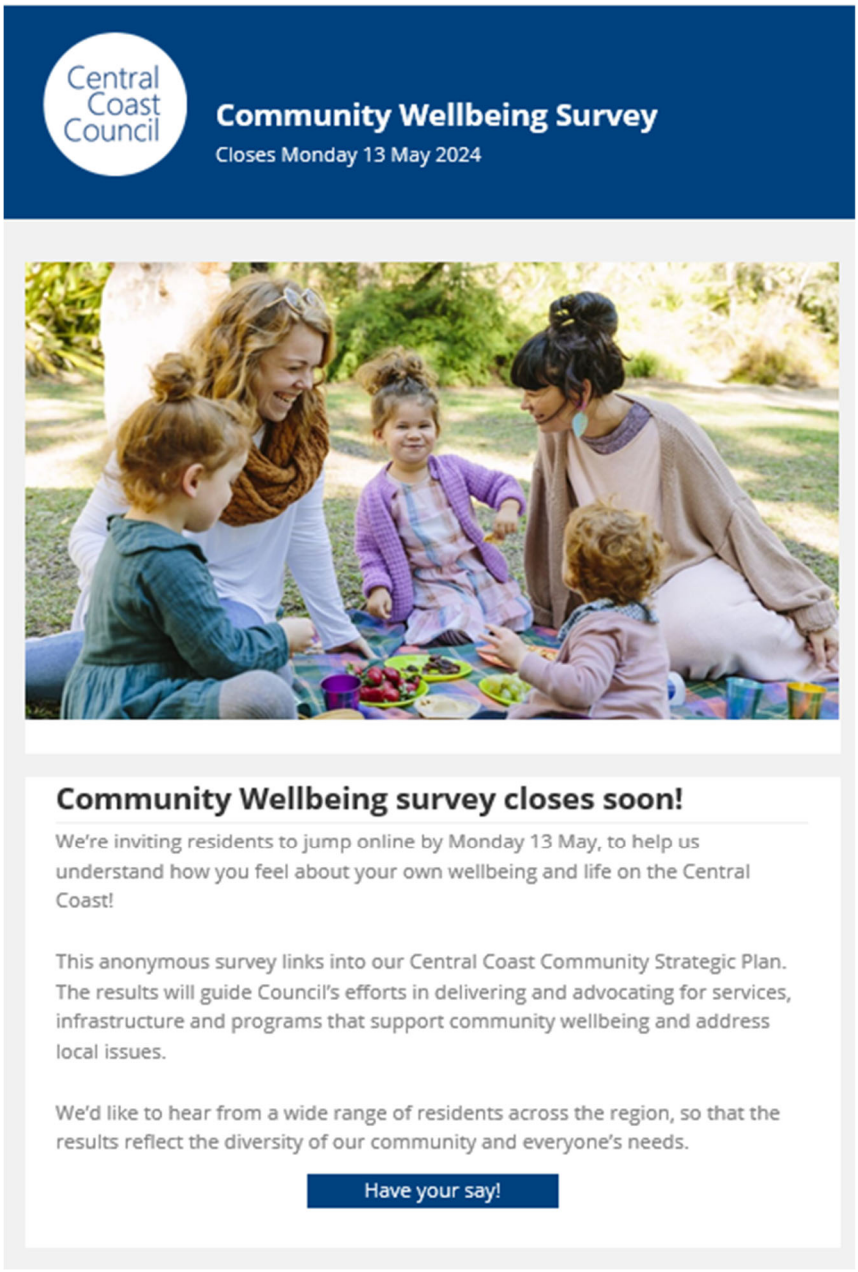
Community Wellbeing Survey

Following on from Phase 1 where the wellbeing of the community was touched on, a detailed survey was undertaken to gain a deeper understanding.

The Community Wellbeing Survey invited Central Coast residents of all ages and backgrounds to rate how they felt on topics such as community connectiveness and support, their neighbourhood, personal safety, access to services and facilities, health and wellbeing – and generally living, playing, working, and growing on the Coast.

The survey comprised of 27 questions, with Woolcott conducting telephone interviews via the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI). In addition, and online survey was open from 15 April 2024 to 13 May 2024 via Council's community engagement hub Your Voice Our Coast, yourvoiceourcoast.com/wellbeing. Advertisement included media releases, social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), the Central Coast Community e-newsletter, and radio advertisements.

Figure 21. Example of the Community Wellbeing advertisement

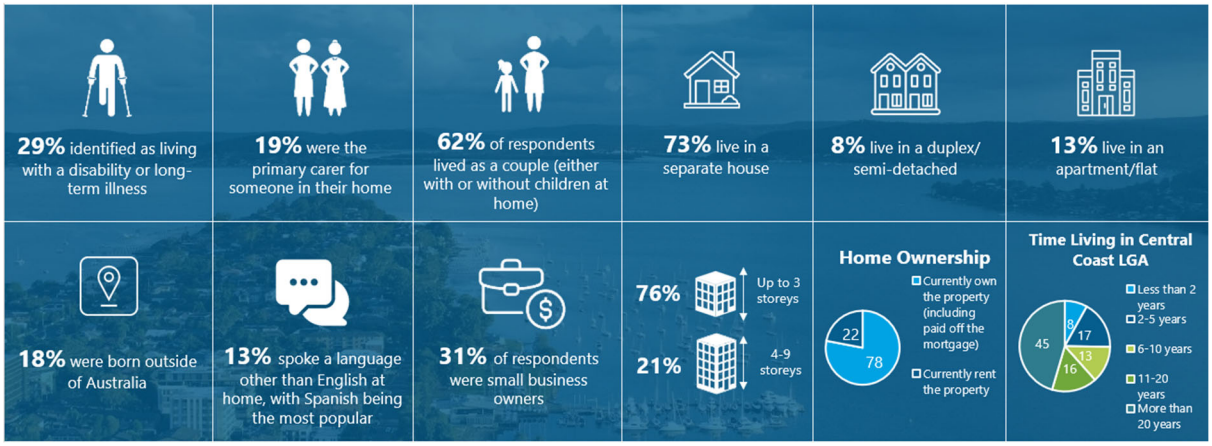


Responses were anonymous, and participants did not need to enter any identifying personal details.

A total of **1,952 responses** were received via Your Voice Our Coast (1,300 responses) and via telephone (652 responses).

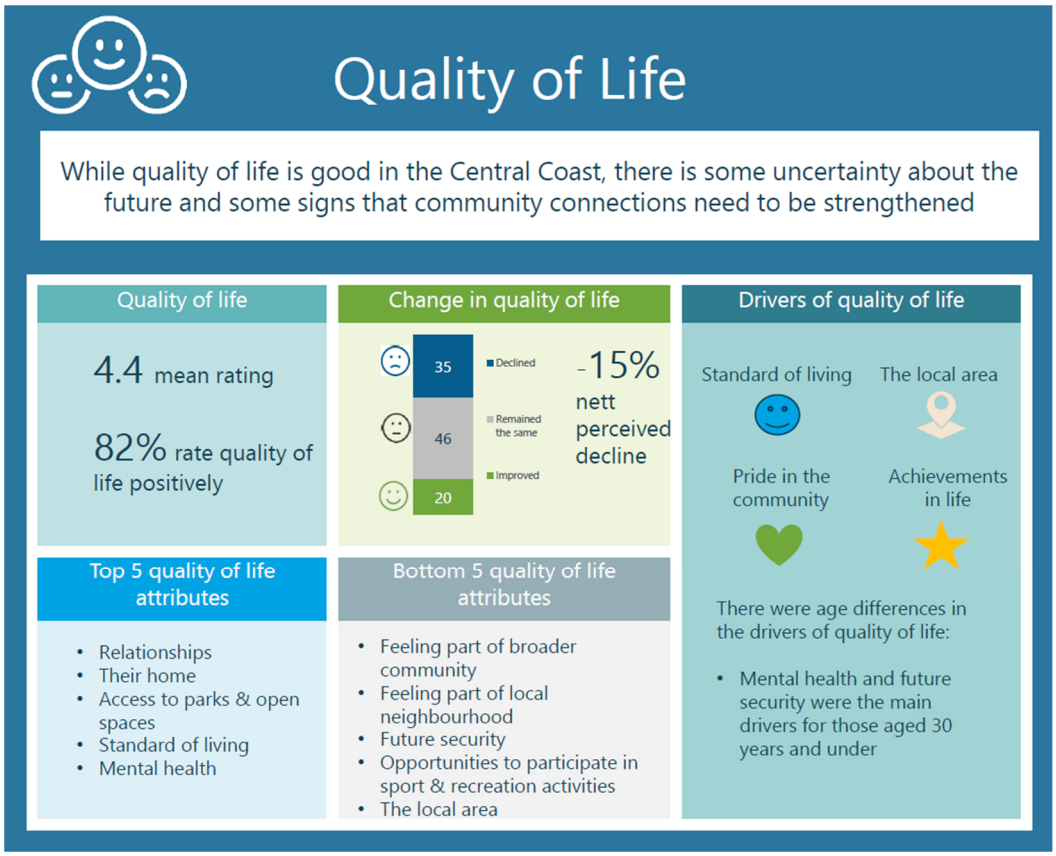
The detail of findings is available in **Appendix 8**, with some of key findings provided below.

Figure 22. A snapshot of the 1,952 respondents



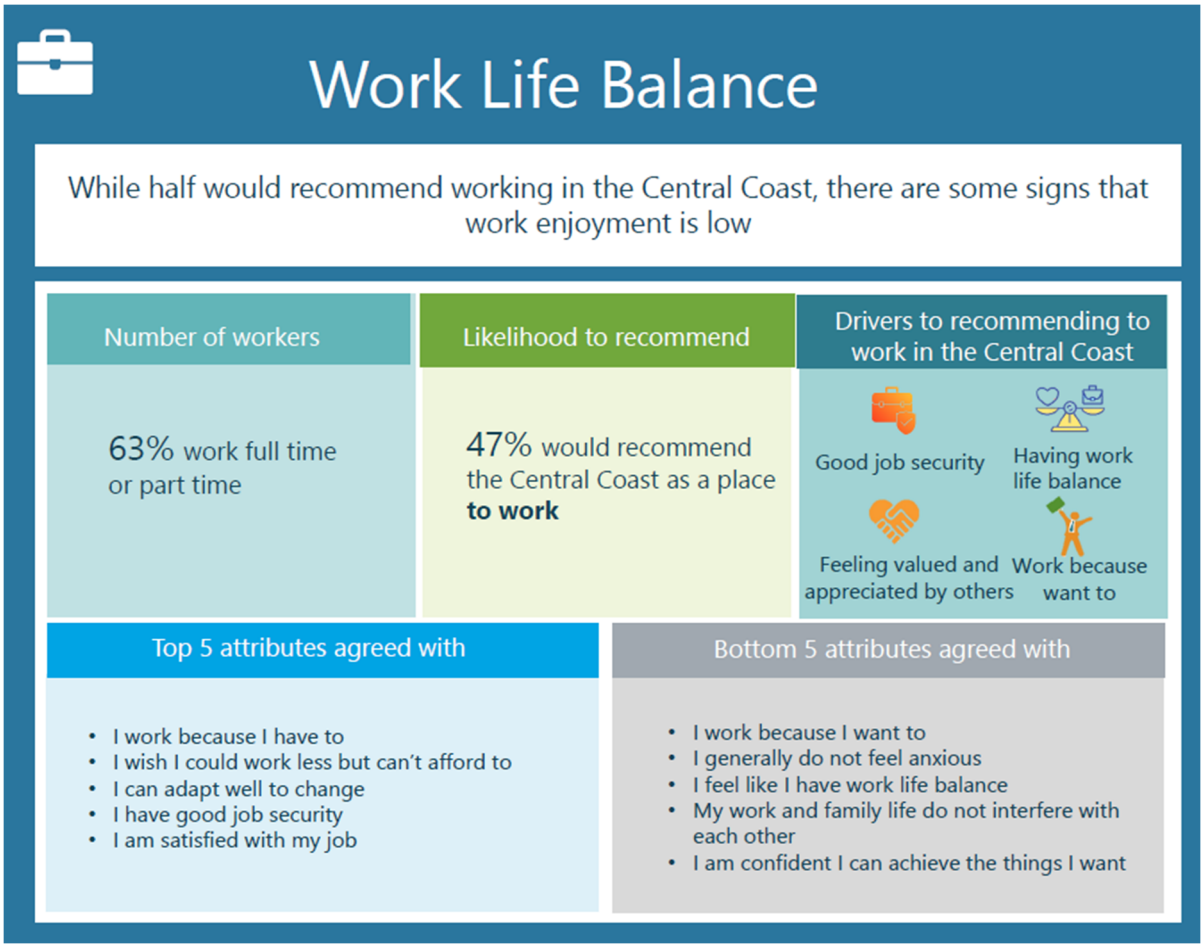
The contributors impacting quality of life varied by age, although most age groups cited their standard of living and feeling connected to their local neighbourhood and community as influencing their overall quality of life. For young residents' mental health was by far the greatest factor. For the 70+ age group, quality of life was driven by living standards, their local community having a bright future and a feeling of safety.

Figure 23. Quality of life summary



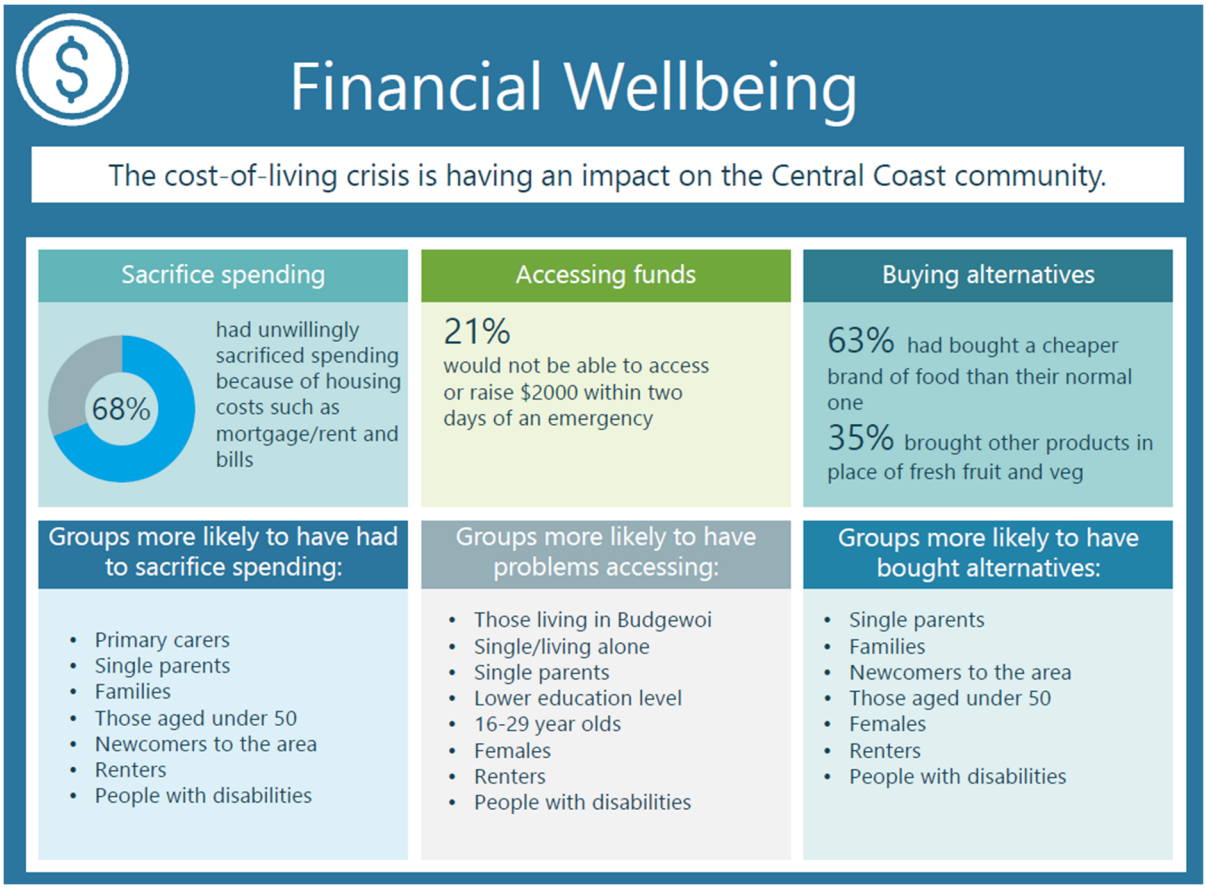
Of the 1,952 respondents, 63% work full time or part time (1,229 people) and of those, 47% would recommend the Central Coast as a good place to work (577 people). The 30–49 year old cohort experience the most interference between work and family and are most likely to work because they must. This may be indicative of the group most likely to be raising young children while navigating the housing market and the increasing cost of living. Good job security and having a good work life balance were key influences on positive recommendations of the Central Coast as a place to work.

Figure 24. Work life balance summary



The cost of living impact is evident in the reduced expenditure amongst all age groups on the Central Coast. A significantly high proportion of 16–29 and 30–49 year olds sacrificed spending at 80% and 83% respectively. The main areas where these groups are no longer spending include eating out (79%), food and groceries (55%), arts and cultural activities (49%), medical treatment (44%) and sports and recreation (44%). The reduction in spending in these areas impact the local economy, as well as residents' overall health and wellbeing.

Figure 25. Financial wellbeing summary



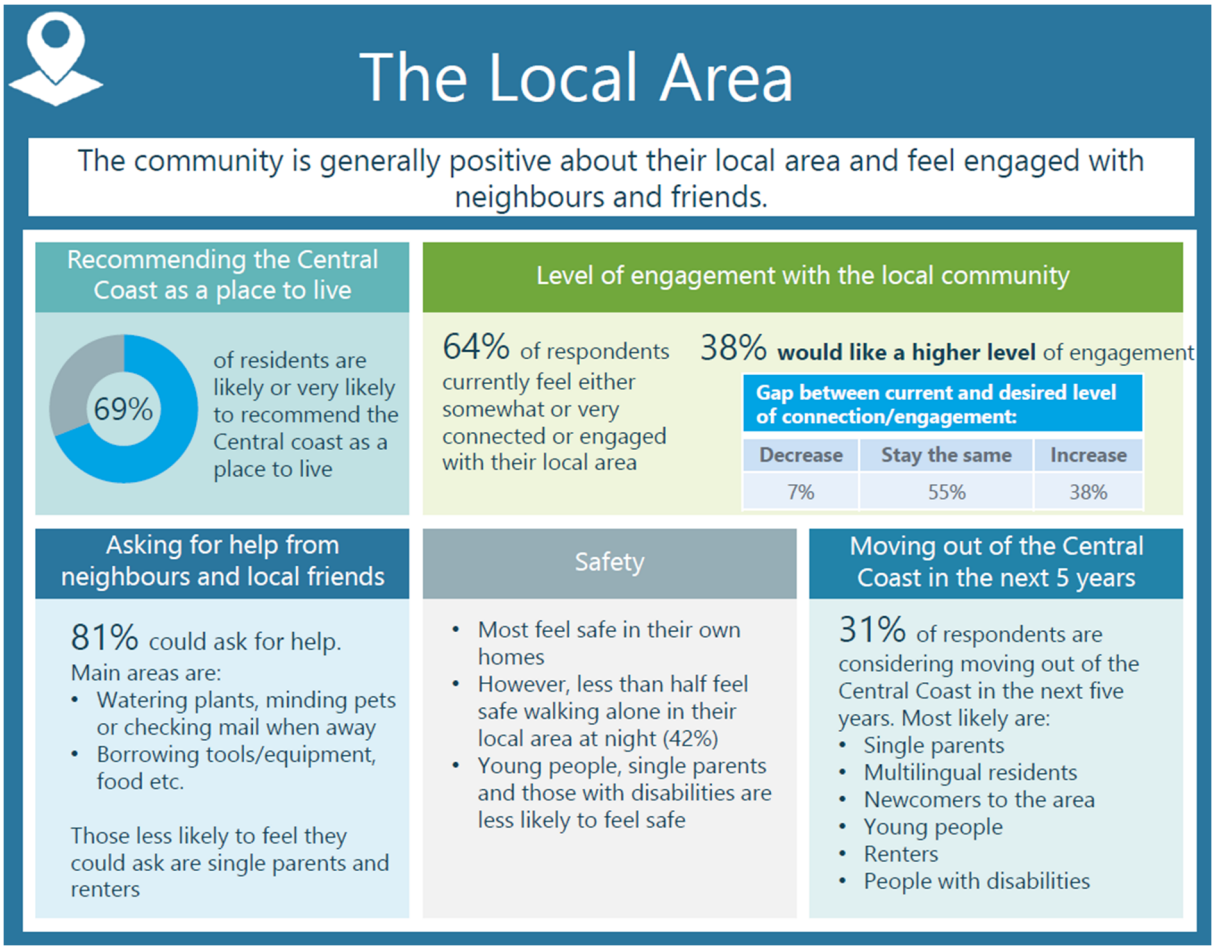
The boundaries of a 'local area' differed between age groups. People aged 16–29 primarily considered the local area to include the suburb they live in (42%). The 30-49 and 50-69 year old cohorts felt that local area was related more to the suburb they live in plus surrounding suburbs. Approximately 64% of respondents currently felt either somewhat or very connected or engaged with their local area. A considerably higher proportion (81%) would like to feel connected/engaged with their local area (people, businesses, etc)

Overall, 69% of the community would be likely to recommend the Central Coast as a place to live, particularly those 70+ age group (78%). Under a third were considering moving away from the area in the next five years with 50% of the 16–29-year-olds considering leaving.

The key drivers to recommend living on the Central Coast appear to be:

- A sense of pride
- Having a good local neighbourhood
- A community with a bright future

Figure 26. The local area summary

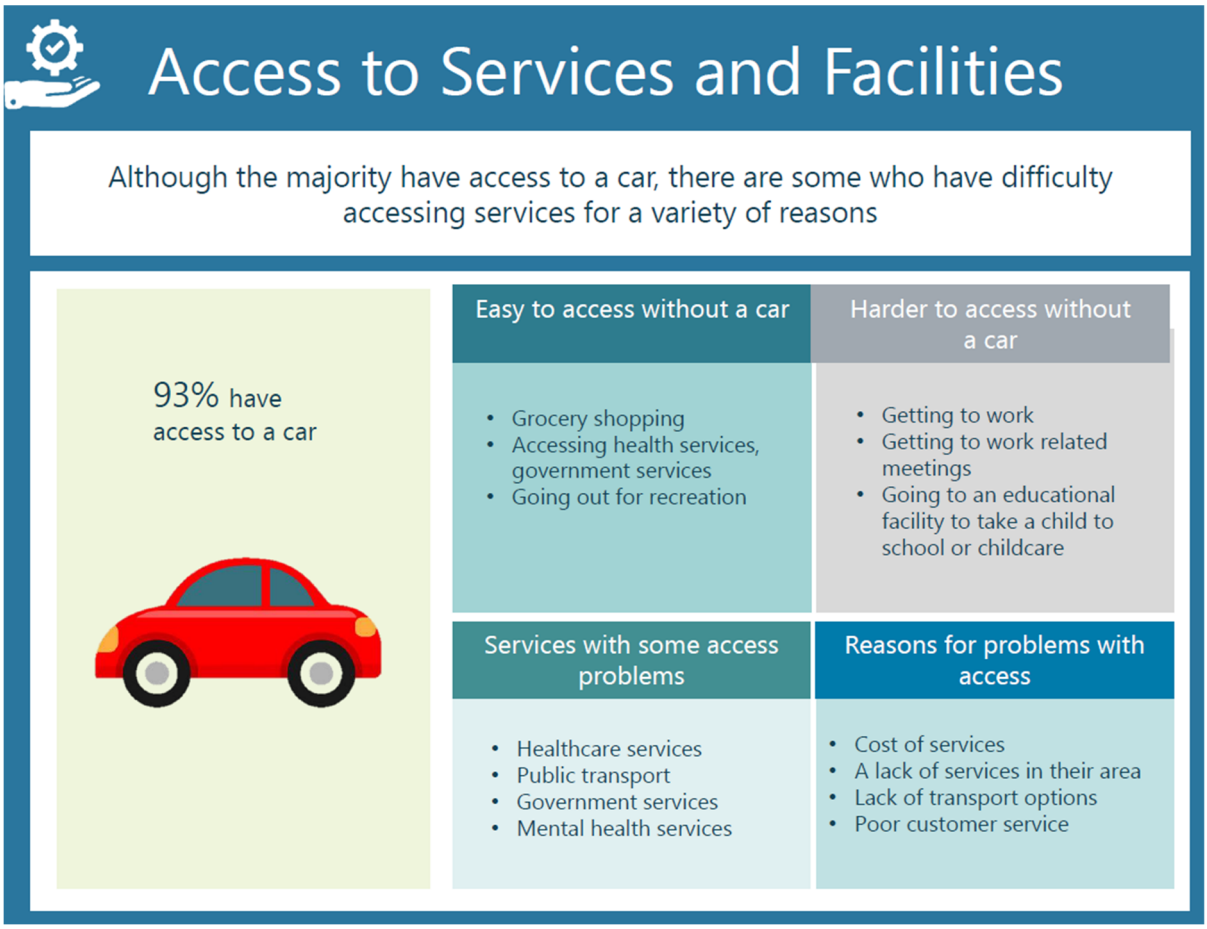


The key services with the greatest difficulties in accessing for varying reasons included:

- Healthcare services (e.g. GP, hospital)
- Public transport
- Government services
- Mental health services

The 30-59 year olds have problems accessing healthcare services (33%), public transport (26%), mental health services (25%), sport and recreation facilities (20%), education (13%) and childcare (13%). This is also the group most likely to sacrifice spending, based on financial wellbeing questions, which means the pressures are multipronged and interrelated for this group. The main reasons for difficulties in accessing these services include the cost of services (35%), no service/facility in their area (33%), lack of transport options and poor customer service.

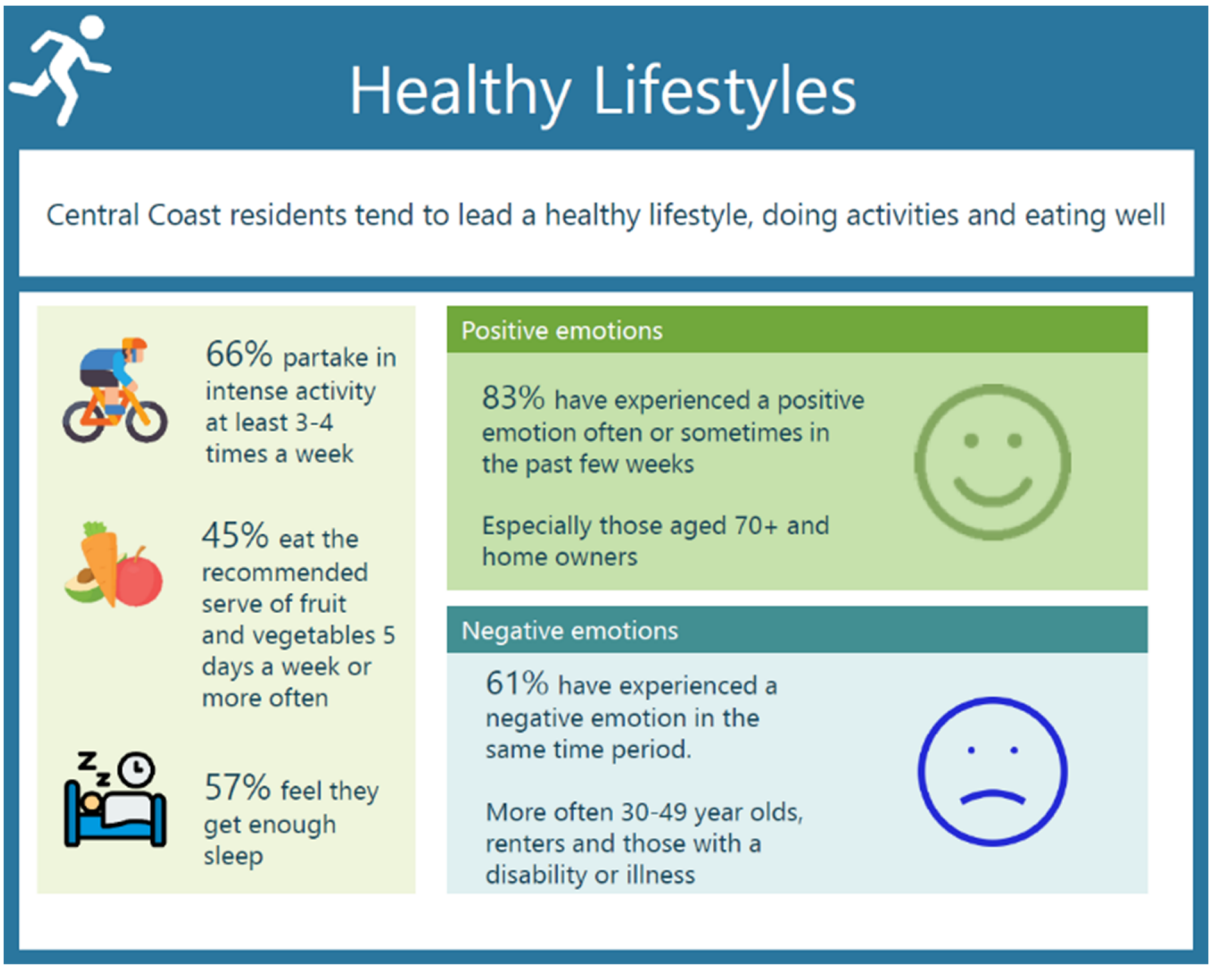
Figure 27. Access to services and facilities summary



Two thirds (66%) of respondents indicated they did 30 minutes of activity that increases their heart rate 3-4 times per week or more. Approximately 45% of respondents ate the recommended serve of fruit and vegetables five days a week or more. Sleep hygiene varied across the age groups, with a significantly higher portion of 30-49 year olds reporting they do not get enough sleep each night (48%) compared to 70+ year olds who feel most likely to be getting enough sleep (67%).

Over 83% of respondents have experienced a positive emotion often or sometime in the past few weeks and 61% experienced a negative emotion in the same period. It should be noted though that emotions are deeply personal and co-exist as a suite of feelings that ebb and flow based on situations, events, spiritual and emotional wellbeing, and relationships. As such, further exploration is required to understand the impact of this and how it relates to accessing services to support our community, increase resilience, and equip people with adequate coping skills to navigate the complexities of life.

Figure 28. Healthy lifestyles summary

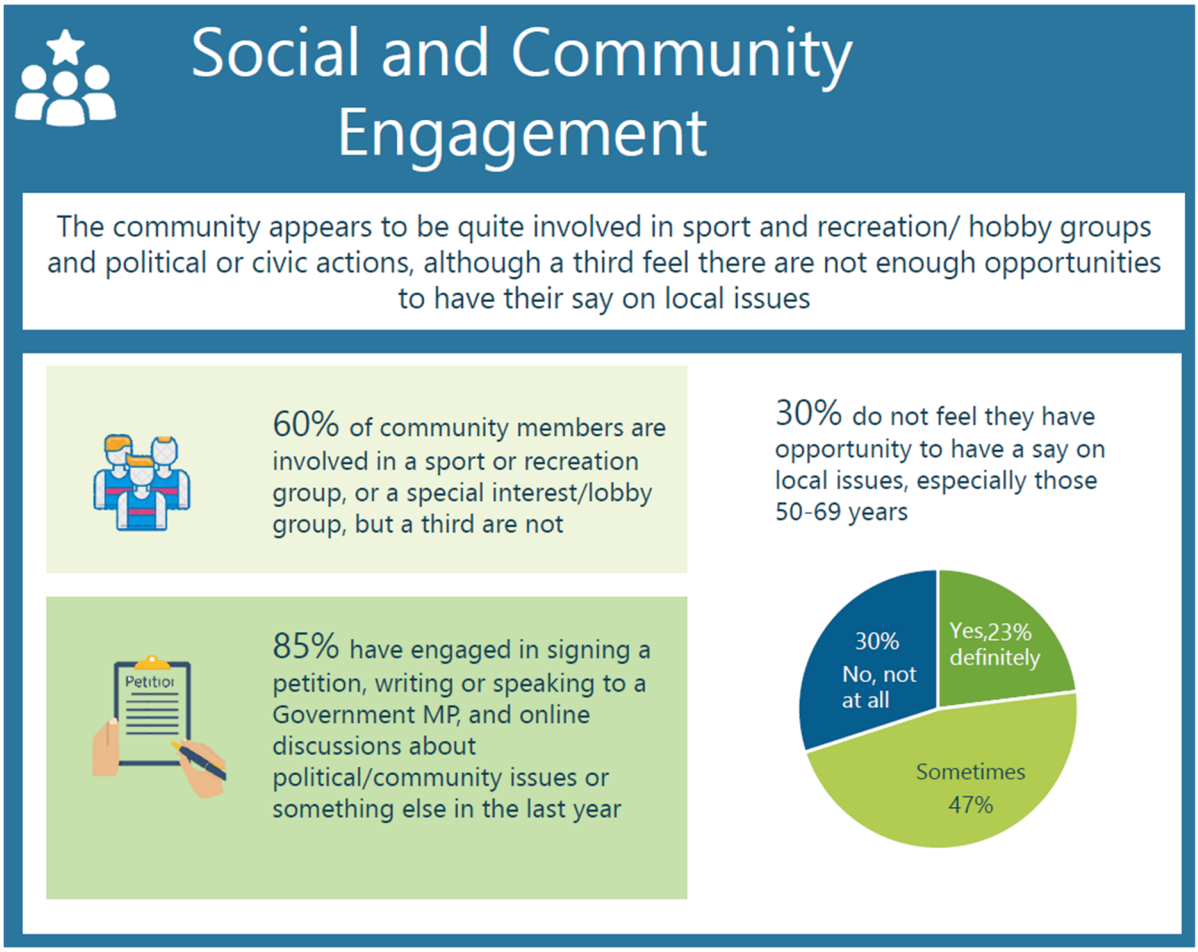


Around six in ten community members were involved in a sport or recreation group, or a special interest/lobby group, a third were not (32%). Activities that the community were most likely to have participated in included:

- Signing a petition (43%)
- Writing or speaking to a Government Minister of Parliament (22%)
- Online discussions about political or community issues (20%)

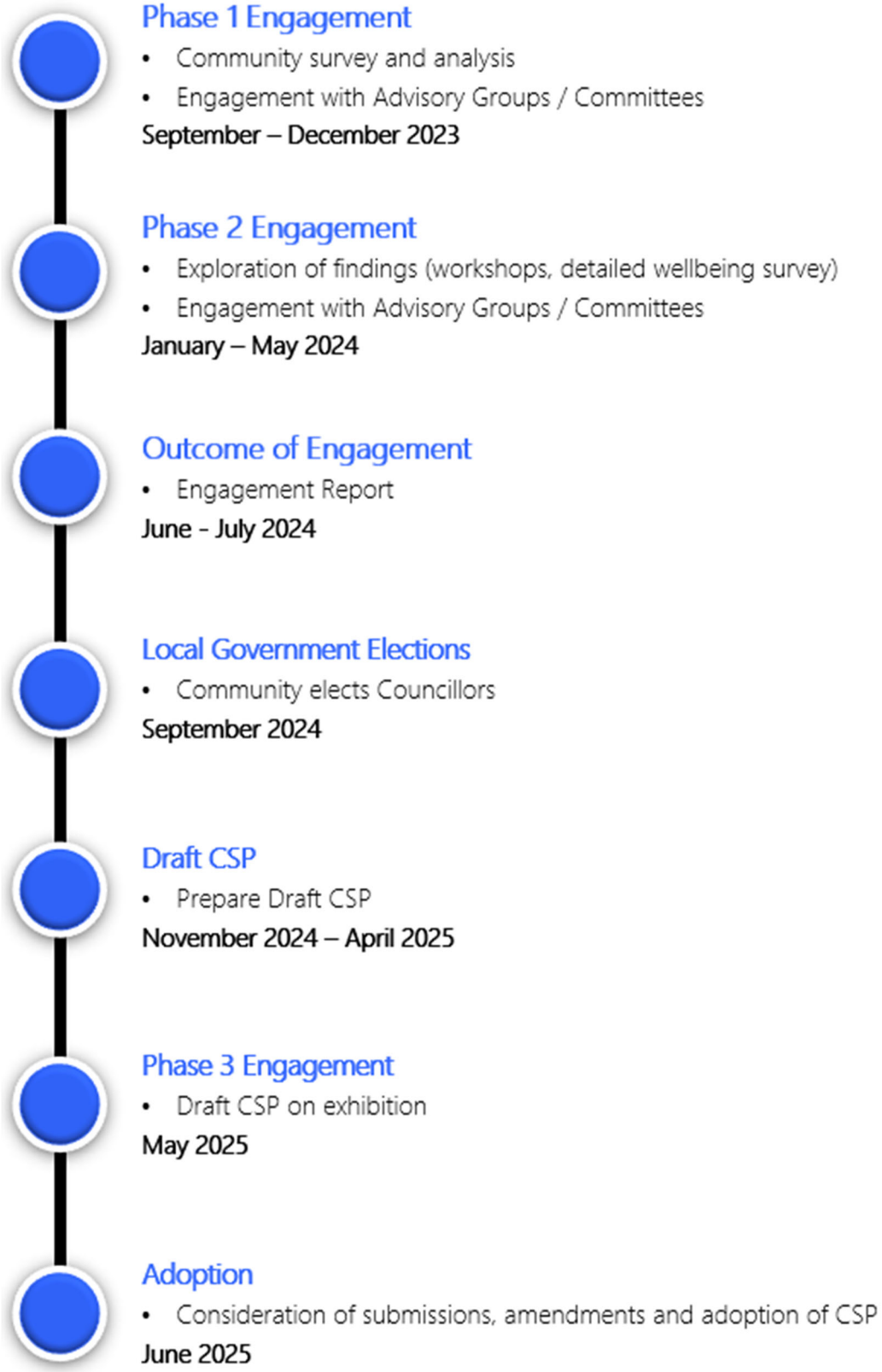
While many felt there were enough opportunities to have a say on local issues (47%), there is room to improve as 53% said only sometimes or organised not at all. Those aged 50-69 years were most likely to suggest that there are not enough opportunities to have a say.

Figure 29. Social and community engagement summary



Next Steps

The findings from Phase 1 and 2 will be used to review the current CSP and determine what changes may be required in collaboration with the elected Council. The steps to date and next steps for the CSP review is outlined below:



Appendices

Appendix 1	Woolcott - Phase 1 Results and Findings
Appendix 2	Aboriginal Advisory Group Feedback
Appendix 3	Access and Inclusions Reference Group Feedback
Appendix 4	Y4Y – Youth Action Group Feedback
Appendix 5	50+ Centres Network Group Feedback
Appendix 6	Woolcott – LSPS Planning District Report
Appendix 7	Woolcott – Phase 2 Report
Appendix 8	Woolcott – Community Wellbeing Results and Findings

Appendix 1

Central Coast Council

Community Strategic Plan, Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS) and Wellbeing Study

Research Findings –
Phase 1 Discovery Phase

November 2023

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Objectives

Overriding objective

To engage with the Central Coast Community to gain insights to input the reviews of three Council projects:

- The Community Strategic Plan
- The Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Assess Community Wellbeing

Specific objectives

Community Strategic Plan

- Identify the community's priorities and aspirations/vision for the future
- Uncover trends and community issues
- Articulate core community values
- Provide direction on actions to implement the vision

Local Strategic Planning Statement

- Identify views on the unique local character of the suburbs within the social planning districts
- Assess what the community values most within their suburb/ what should be protected
- Determine a future vision for the areas
- Identify place making outcomes for each and the areas that need to be changed, enhanced or maintained to achieve the vision

Assess Community Wellbeing

- Develop an understanding of community resilience, self-sufficiency, networks, and general social capital in the community
- Identify strengths and weaknesses within the LGA

Research Design

A multi-facet research program is planned

Phase 1: Discovery Phase

- Survey of n=1038 (inclusive of YVOC open survey n=386)
  Conducted between 11 Sept – 17 Oct 2023
  - Residents combined total: n=789
  - Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) combined total: n=249
- A group discussion amongst Council's youth (aged 16-18 years)
- Six in-depth interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
- Six in-depth interviews with business owners/CEOs
  (e.g. businesses in industries such as publishing, events, real estate, education)

Phase 2: Strategy Development Phase

- Collaborative workshops with residents/Small Medium Enterprises – Gosford and Wyong
- A group discussion amongst Council's youth (aged 16-18 years)
- Six in-depth interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
- Six in-depth interviews with business owners/CEOs

This presentation reports the findings from Phase 1 – the Discovery Phase

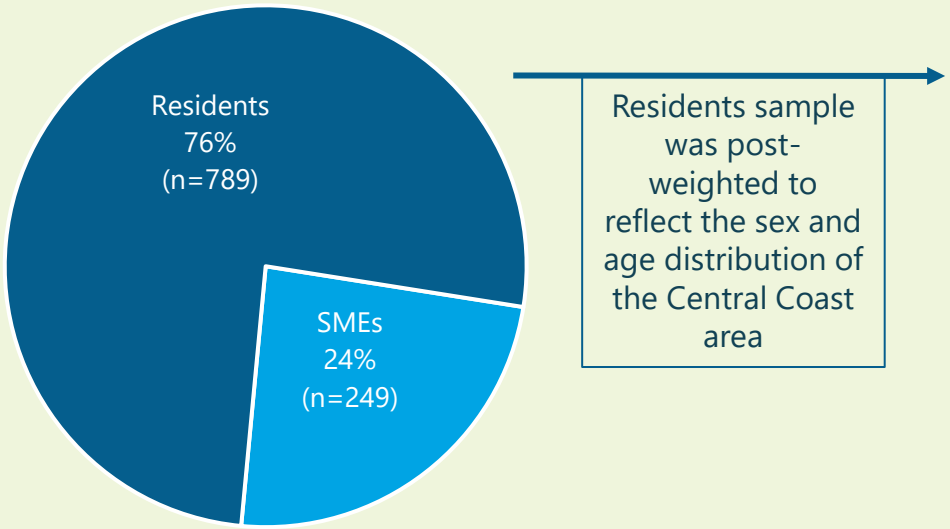
Respondent profile

Two separate surveys were conducted, and results combined:

Random general population survey:
n=502 residents + n=150 Small Medium Enterprises

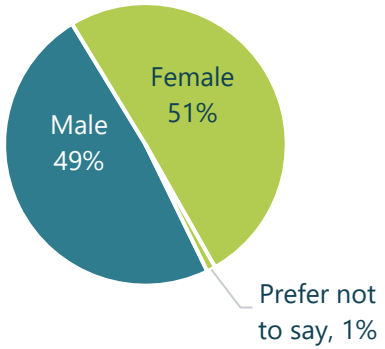
YVOC survey:
n=287 residents + n=99 Small Medium Enterprises

Central Coast Community
(n=1038)

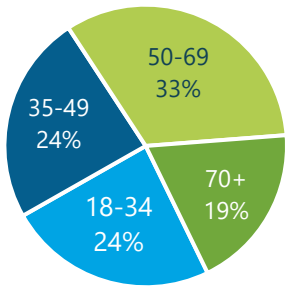


Residents sample was post-weighted to reflect the sex and age distribution of the Central Coast area

Sex



Age (years)



Ward & Planning District

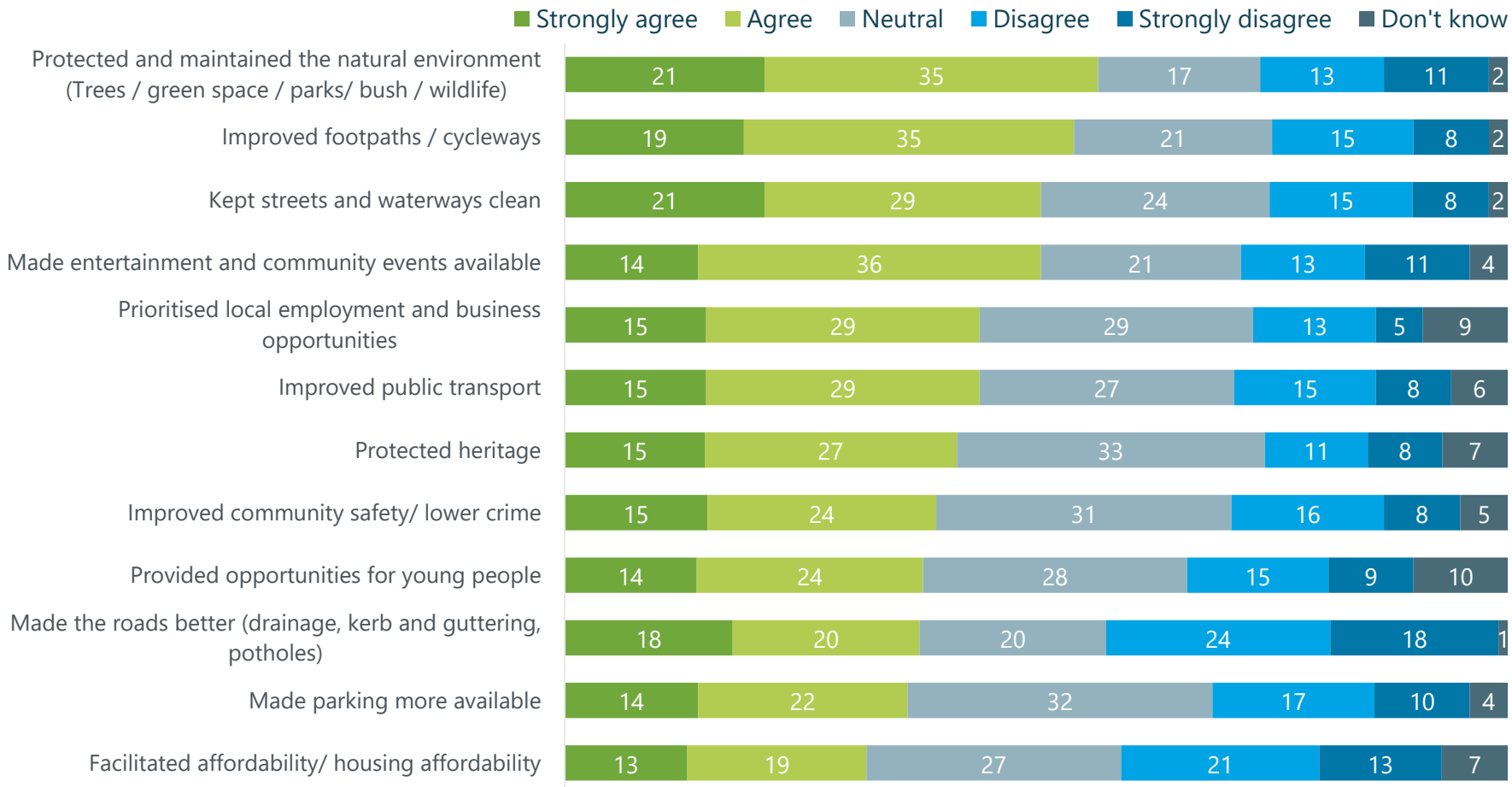
Ward	Total
Budgewoi	15%
The Entrance	18%
Gosford East	24%
Gosford West	29%
Wyong	14%
Planning District	
Mountains & Valleys	6%
Peninsula	14%
Gosford Central	8%
East Brisbane Water & Coastal	18%
Narara Valley & Ourimbah	12%
Southern Lakes & the Entrance	17%
Wyong, Warnervale & Gorokan	13%
Northern Lakes, San Remo & Budgewoi	12%

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The Current CSP

Improvements to Date

Agreement That Aspects Have Been Addressed
- Residents



Q9. In 2017, our community told us what was most important to them. Can you please tell us if you agree or disagree that Central Coast Council has addressed these since this time? ROTATE
Base: All residential respondents (n=789)

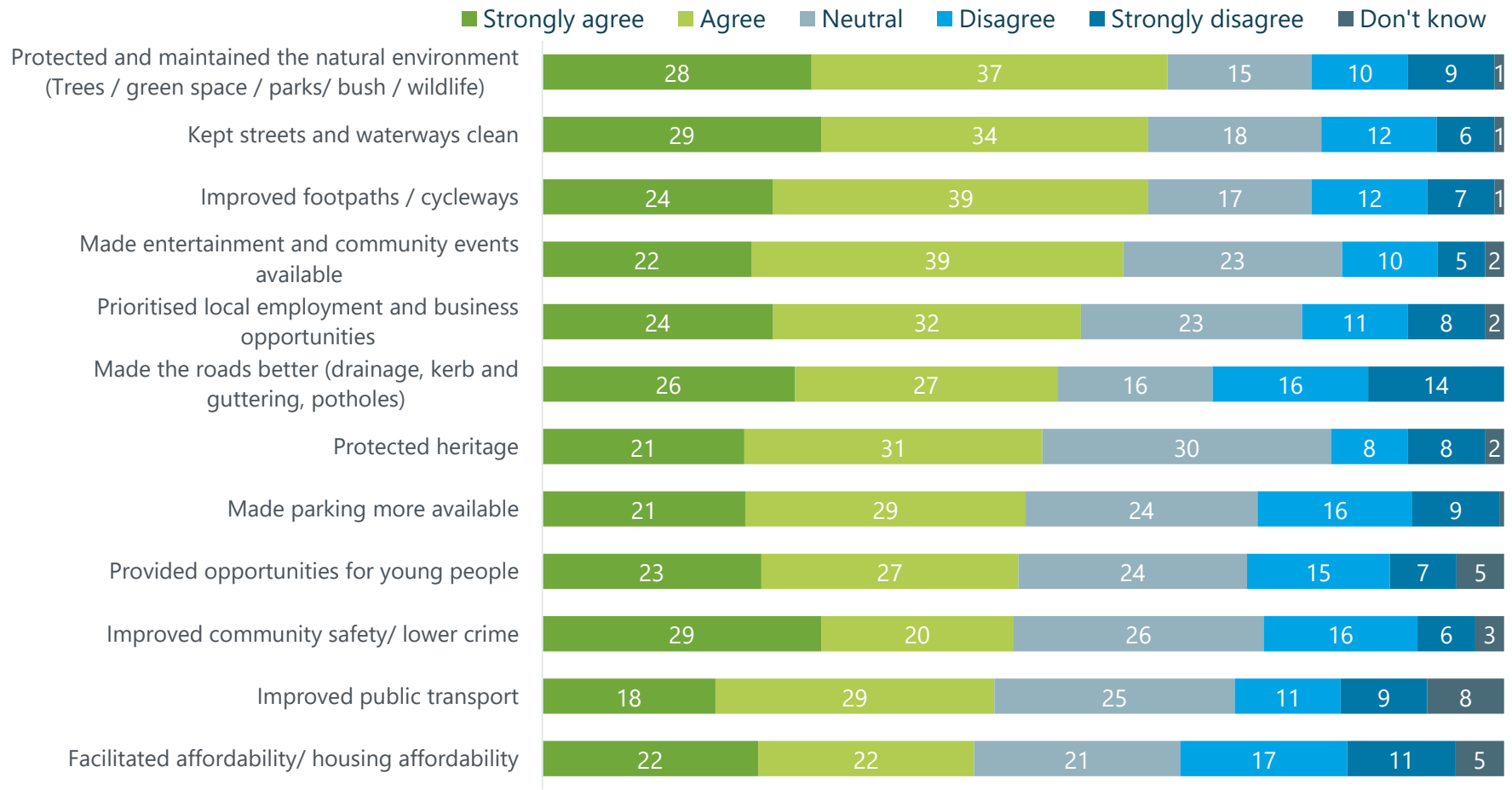
Improvements mainly noticed regarding:

- Protection and maintenance of natural environment (56% net agreement)
- Footpaths / cycleways (54%)
- Clean streets & waterways (50%)

Less so:

- Housing affordability (32%)
- Parking (36%)

Agreement That Aspects Have Been Addressed
- SMEs



Q9. In 2017, our community told us what was most important to them. Can you please tell us if you agree or disagree that Central Coast Council has addressed these since this time? ROTATE
Base: All SME respondents (n=249)

Similarly for SMEs, improvements mainly noticed regarding:

- Protection and maintenance of natural environment (65% net agreement)
- Clean streets & waterways (63%)
- Footpaths / cycleways (63%)

Less so:

- Housing affordability (44%)
- Public transport (47%)

Perceived Improvements – Prompted

Improved public transport

- Public Transport was generally felt to be adequate – buses are quite regular, but more peak hour express buses desired
- The new lift at Tuggerah Stn was acknowledged and praised
- Strong and frequent train links to Sydney were appreciated
- Ideally needs to be more Public Transport in the northern parts of the Coast
- Youth had noticed buses were cleaner and more efficient than previously

Kept streets and clean waterways

- Most agreed that waterways were generally clean (some silting mentioned)
- Some noticeable improvements re street cleaning - some SMEs noticed the CBD area now has cleaners

Providing opportunities for young people

- Mixed opinions – some felt the offering was good e.g. PCYC, retail and entertainment
- Others thought this had not improved and youth needed better access to entertainment, youth groups
- The area offered good gyms, pools, outdoor gyms
- Some businesses felt youth don't want to work
- Education/TAFE/new university campus all provide opportunities
- Youth thought this was positive - job availability was thought to be good (some had two jobs)
- More youth event opportunities suggested (i.e. for 16-17 years old).

Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Businesses and Youth participants

Perceived Improvements – Prompted (continued)

Made the roads better (drainage, kerb and guttering, potholes)

- Still lots of potholes – seen as a 'hot topic' in the area
- Some noticed improvements near Terrigal
- Some tolerance of the issue expressed - *Roads will always be a problem*
- Youth still noticing potholes – felt they don't get fixed until they are complained about

More parking available

- Very dependent upon area
- Locals find it hard to park in Terrigal, although new multi-level carpark, Coles carpark is still poor, parking in Wyong has not improved
- Youth were not sure about this issue

Protected the heritage – buildings, Aboriginal heritage, culture

- SME's and Aboriginal community felt there were not many heritage sites/buildings of historical note in the area
- Youth were unsure about this issue
- No improvement regarding Aboriginal consultation – except very recently a new committee established
- Some felt the indigenous community had good support – legal, health, schools
- The Aboriginal community were struggling with cost of living expenses increasing – rates, water, food,
- Still also homelessness, drugs/alcohol issues amongst the Aboriginal Community
- Some mentioned rock art was disappearing
- Some businesses thought that awareness of Aboriginal sites/artwork had increased and Council were active in this area

Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Businesses and Youth participants

Perceived Improvements – Prompted (continued)

Improved community safety / lower crime

- Not improved in areas such as Wyong, Gosford CBD, Springfield, Watanobbi, The Entrance
- Gosford not changed – *ice addicts still there*
- Night time/after 5pm there is no security - *"but crims don't work 9-5!"*
- Youth cited that younger kids in the area were a bit of a problem - *doing things they shouldn't be!*

Local area employment and business opportunities

- Improvement noticed
- There are opportunities for employment and training e.g. good hospitality staff
- Opportunities are there, but lack of willing and trained applicants
- Youth agreed this had improved

Protecting and maintaining the natural environment (Trees, green space, parks, bush, wildlife)

- Generally felt to be good/no noticeable changes – positive or negative
- Great bush tracks/foreshore and coastal walks
- Sometimes can be overprotective of, i.e. not allowing events to use natural environment responsibly
- Youth felt this had improved, e.g. 'Take 3 for the Sea' seen as an effective program in maintaining cleanliness of beaches

Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Businesses and Youth participants

Perceived Improvements – Prompted (continued)

Improved footpaths & cycleways

- Some repairs/new pathways noticed
- Some issues with mossy/slippery paths, drainage issues affecting footpaths
- Youth were positive, had noticed some new cycleways in particular

Affordable housing

- Considered variable, depending on the area - Southern areas were expensive, but northern suburbs were still affordable
- Vacancy is low
- Some indigenous residents felt this had not improved and work was still needed, e.g. Lots of abandoned houses/underutilised houses
- Some awareness of Council opening up more land for housing development
- Youth group were unsure – some comments that public housing should be reserved for those who truly need it

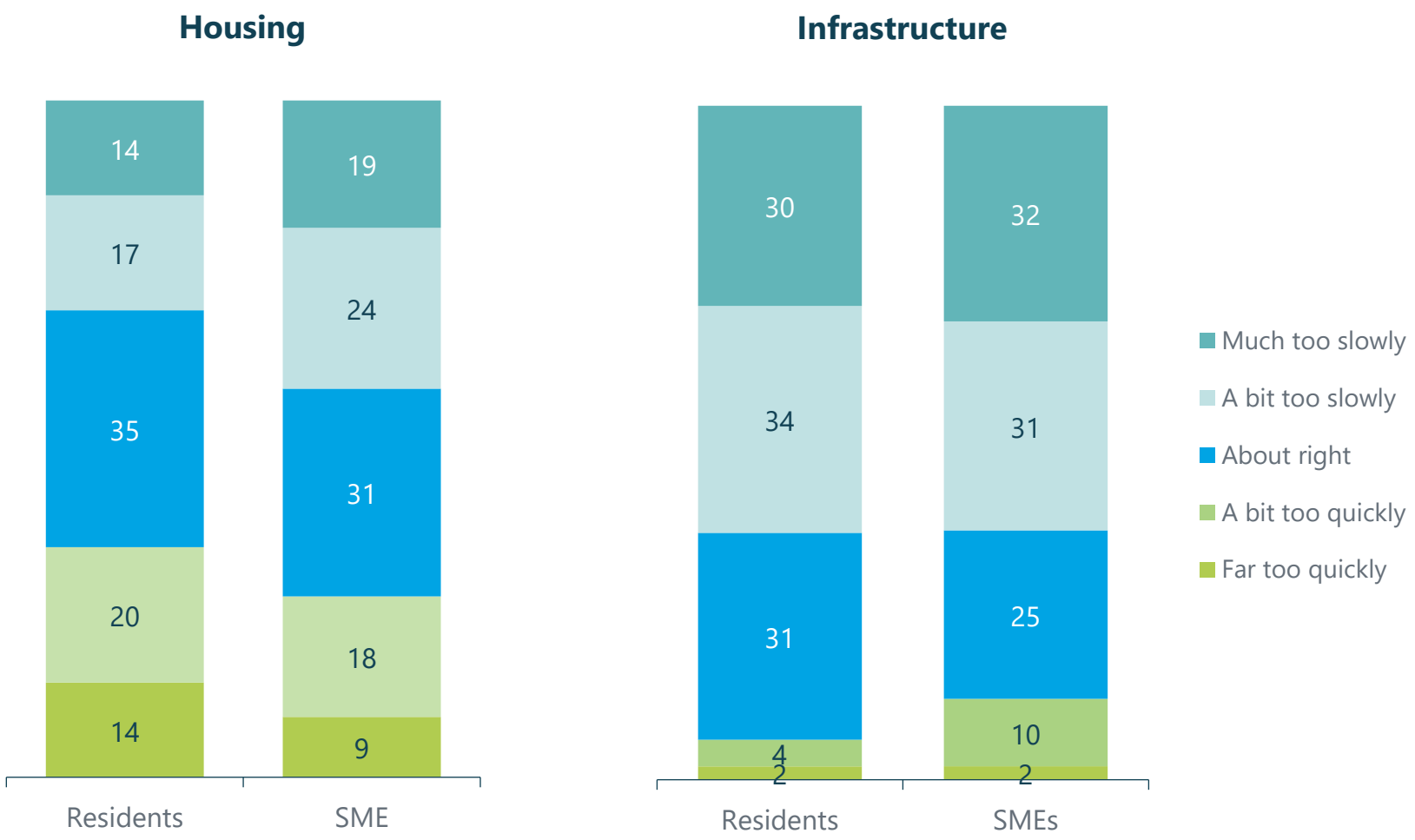
Made entertainment and community events available

- No noticeable changes, many would like more free community events
- Others indicated it was improving, slowly returning to pre-Covid times
- Youth noted that there were some events, but they need more for 16-17 year olds

Other issues raised:
General appearance/aesthetics of the area - There needs to be more maintenance of the area / more on beautifying the streets, certain areas; some parks are polluted and not well-maintained
Public toilets are not clean / well maintained

Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Businesses and Youth participants

Level of Comfort with Pace of Change

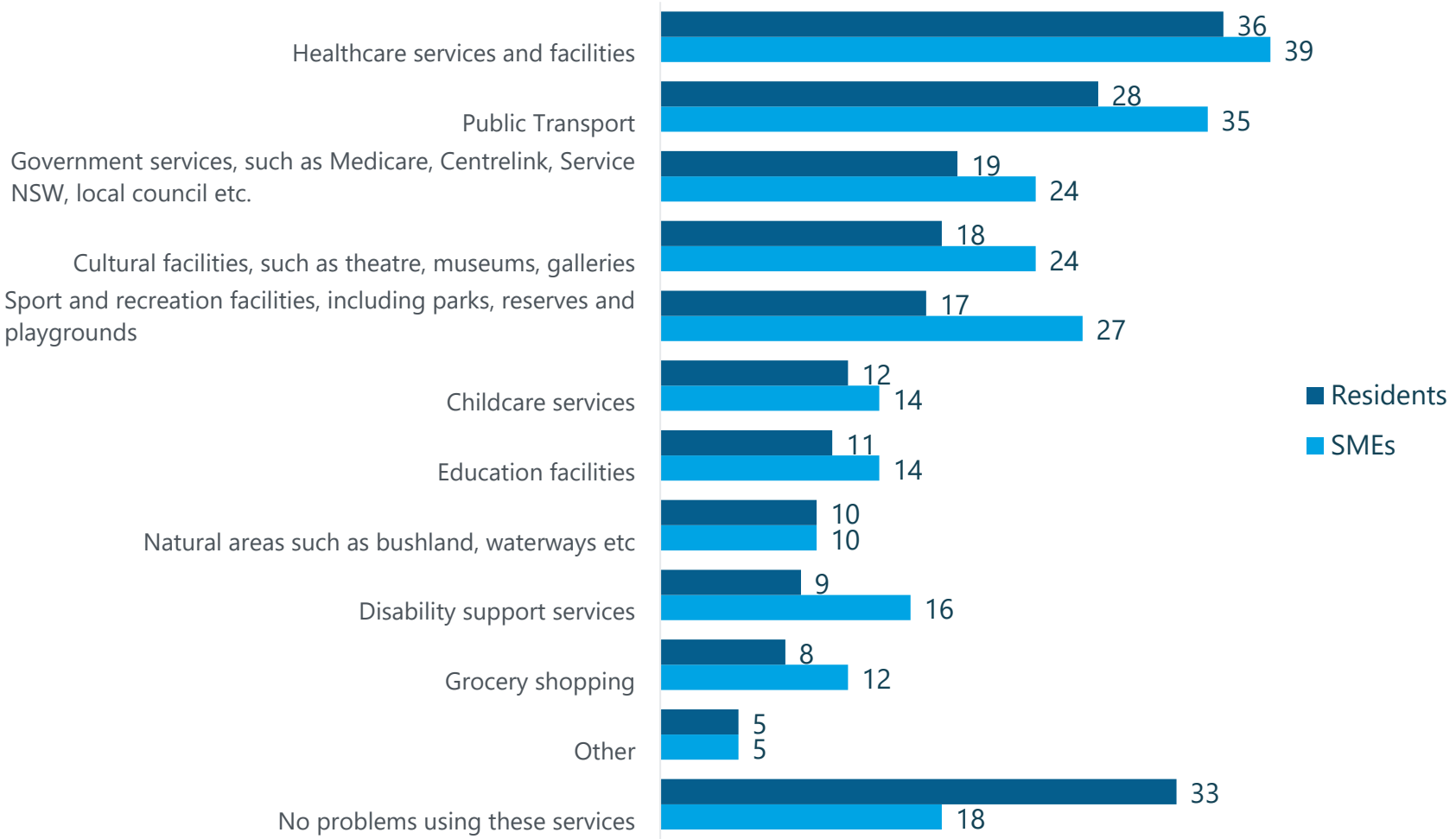


Mixed feelings about the pace of change of housing amongst residents, and most felt infrastructure is moving too slowly (similar to SMEs)

SMEs were slightly more negative about housing with 43% believing it was moving too slowly

Q15. There is a lot of change across the Central Coast in terms of housing and infrastructure development, how comfortable are you with the pace of change that is occurring?
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Services and Activities Having Problems Accessing



Healthcare services and facilities and public transport were the areas respondents had the most trouble accessing.

Q16. Sometimes it is difficult to access and use certain services and activities for a whole range of reasons. Which if any, of the following services or activities do you have problems accessing or using in the Central Coast?
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Reasons for Access Problems

Healthcare services & facilities UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=283 %**	**SMEs n=96 %**
Cost of service / too expensive	42	39
They are not open at the times I require	25	24
No service in your area	19	22
Poor customer service	17	18
Lack of time	15	27
Lack of transport options	14	29
Remote location / hard to get to	13	19
Health or disability	10	17
Cannot trust them	5	5
Discrimination	2	5
Language difficulties	2	2
Don't feel safe where services are located	1	5
Other	43	31

Public transport UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=224 %**	**SMEs n=87 %**
Lack of transport options	71	70
Remote location / hard to get to	33	30
They are not open at the times I require	26	33
Lack of time	23	34
No service in your area	22	23
Cost of service / too expensive	19	21
Poor customer service	13	13
Cannot trust them	9	9
Health or disability	8	11
Don't feel safe where services are located	5	5
Discrimination	2	5
Language difficulties	2	5
Other	14	7

Q17. You mentioned that you have problems accessing [INSERT SERVICE FROM Q16]. Which, if any, of the following explain why you have problems accessing those services?
Base: Healthcare Services and Facilities: All residential respondents who selected healthcare facilities and services as a service they have problems accessing (n=283), all SME respondents who selected healthcare facilities and services as a service they have problems accessing (n=96). Public transport: All residential respondents who selected public transport as a service they have problems accessing (n=224), all SME respondents who selected public transport as a service they have problems accessing (n=87).

Summary of Improvements Noticed

Improvements

- Protecting natural environment
- Footpaths & cycleways
- Clean streets & waterways
- Entertainment & Community events

Neutral

- Heritage protection
- Safety & lower crime
- Local employment & business opportunities

Areas for Future Focus

- Opportunities for young people
- Roads
- Parking
- Housing affordability
- Access to Healthcare and Public Transport

Future CSP and LSPS

Central Coast Strengths and Areas to Improve

The Central Coast's Key Strengths

Three things you like about Central Coast UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
The natural surroundings (waterways, grasslands, ecosystems, forests etc)	39	27
Proximity to the beach/lake/views & scenery	33	20
Proximity/easy access to major centres (e.g. cafes, amenities, local business, nightlife, shops)	32	25
Quietness/not too busy/lifestyle/atmosphere	28	27
The people	21	27
Social infrastructure (e.g. community halls, libraries, playgrounds, sporting grounds etc.)	17	7
Transport (e.g. roads, public transport, cycleways, pedestrian footpaths)/proximity to transport	14	14
Built landscape such as walkways	8	4
Rural areas/its still rural	4	1
Its not too big/not too much development / low density housing	8	3
Safety	3	2
Its clean/not polluted	3	3

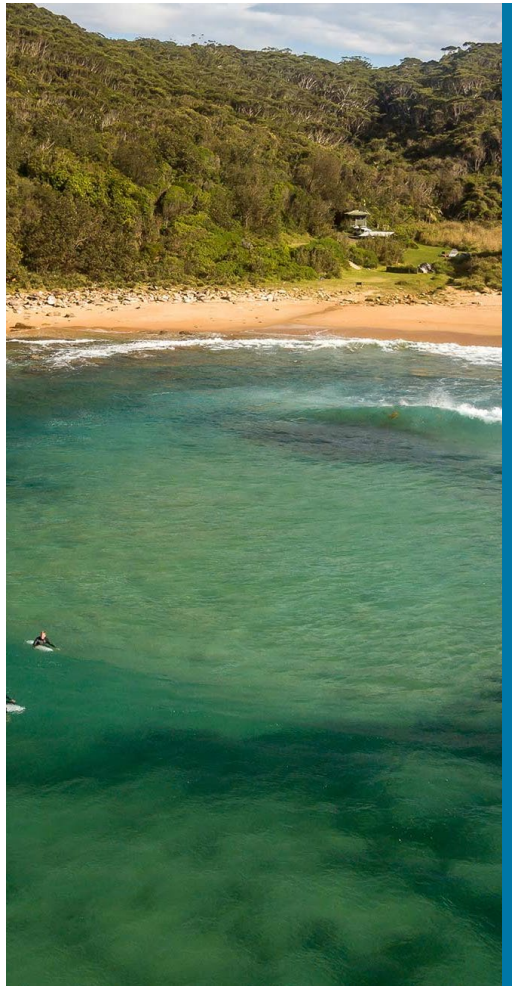
Q8. What are three things that you love most about living / working in your suburb/area that you would want to retain? OPEN TEXT
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

The Central Coast's key strengths are:

- The natural environment
- Close to beaches & lakes
- Proximity to services
- Quietness
- The people

The Central Coast's Strengths

- amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents



- Accessible to Sydney / Newcastle / regional NSW
- Good balance between urban and rural space
- Wide variety of retail/shops
- Easy access to all services, M1, health
- Beaches / waterways are accessible and free
- Abundant parks and natural bushland
- Healthcare – hospitals, medical facilities
- Education – access to schools and early childcare facilities
- Becoming more multicultural
- Safe – low crime

It's a city lifestyle in a rural area

It's close to everything – hospitals, parks, beaches the shopping centre, and 10 mins from the freeway

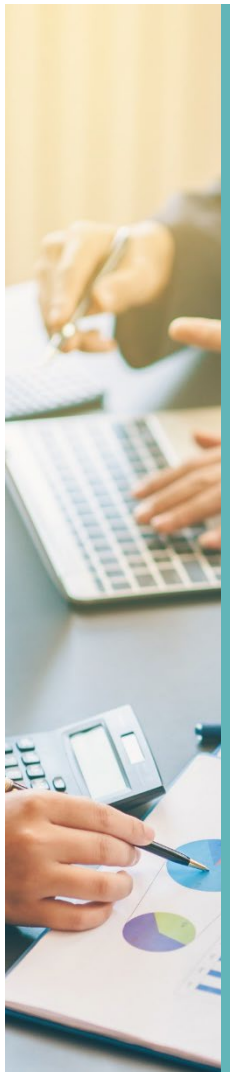
Starting to become busier, more diverse, other shops are coming up that wouldn't have been here five years ago such as Nepalese shops

Pretty easy access, can drive in a circle and get anywhere pretty much

Closing bars earlier so there is less crime, danger at night

The Central Coast's Strengths

- amongst businesses



- Natural surroundings – bushland
- A good environment to work – slower paced, more relaxed/less stressful – which is attractive to workers/employees
- Good work balance/lifestyle advantages
- Great deal of water, waterfront – to view, access
- Wide variety of cafes, restaurants, retail
- Feels positive and that there are business opportunities
- Reputation has improved/is improving – used to have a lower-socio economic reputation but this has changed/is changing
- Range of communities – artistic, farming, retired
- Medical services
- School choices / education
- No major disturbances / racial tensions amongst factory workers
- Growing population - providing future opportunities for small businesses
- Good place to raise a family

The foreshore is beautiful but under-utilised

It's slow paced, has lots of lifestyle advantages

The hospitals and medical services are all good, we're well catered for there

You used to hear that it was Mt Druitt on the coast….but big changes are happening, like the Archibald Building and Newcastle Uni coming will bring young people and opportunities

The area is growing giving more opportunity for future growth, just need to provide more services

Since the administrator took over the council has improved greatly

The Central Coast's Strengths

- amongst youth

- Proximity to the beach
- Clean environment – not much rubbish
- Availability of outdoor activities
- Accessible, public transport - is sufficient to get around if not yet driving
- *A 'good group of people'*/welcoming community

I am 5 minutes from the beach, I love being so close

The beaches are quite well looked after

There is so much to do outdoors – I do a lot of bushwalks and bike riding

Most areas of the Central Coast are quite clean

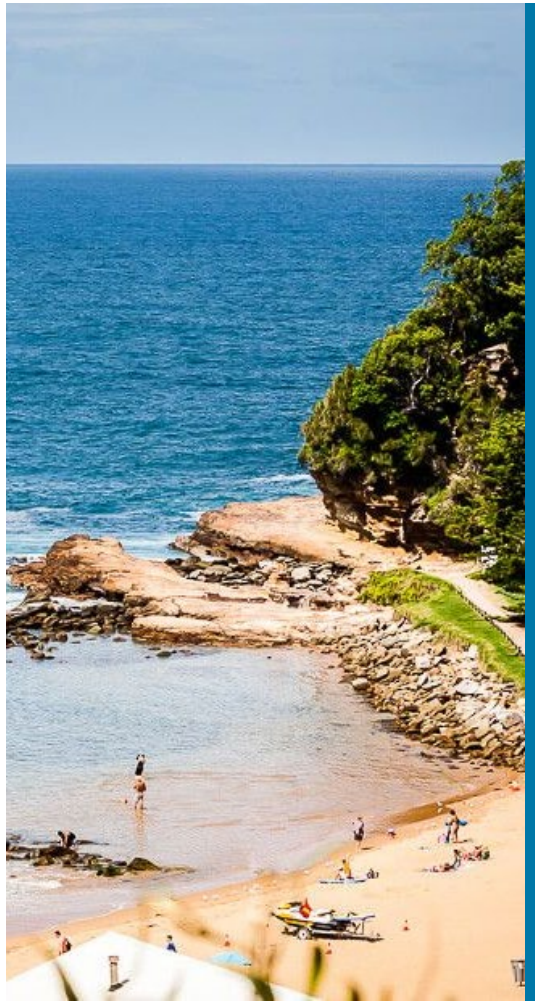
Everything isn't too far away for the most part

There's a train station close by but there are also a lot of buses

It's just a very nice place to be

The Central Coast Areas to Improve

- amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents



- Aesthetics – some areas are unkempt / not well maintained / abandoned houses / burnt out cars
- Safety/some 'rough spots'
- Lack of free activities / entertainment
- Roads/maintenance gets done in 'rich areas' e.g. Terrigal
- Lack of consultation with Aboriginal people
- Lack of health services / support available in the area
- Bad investments, resources that could have been used for maintenance put into poorly planned ideas

There are some areas that feel unloved – the Entrance …I always look over my shoulder at Wyong… Long Jetty is the new Newtown

The place just needs cleaning up – things are just left there, like burnt out cars

Decisions are best made for Aboriginal people by aboriginal people

They don't seem to care about the northern part of the Central Coast

There isn't enough services for health and mental health in the area

There is nowhere near enough support for people leaving situations of domestic abuse and other situations like that

The Central Coast Areas to Improve

- amongst businesses

- Employment pool is empty/small – businesses are short staffed, particularly skilled/qualified workers
- Nothing changes – Longer term residents have lost trust in Council doing what they say they'll do
- *Gosford!*
- Aesthetics needs improvement e.g. Gosford; The Entrance/west industrial area; the waterfront near Gosford
- A performing arts space is needed
- General maintenance of assets – overgrown/untidy/weeds around some green spaces, roadsides,
- Lack of publicity/promotion about events
- Lack of support/investment in tourism

Gosford should have been pulled down years ago.. Its depressing seeing the closed businesses and empty shop fronts

As people arrive off the highway they see the ugly industrial area – there is an opportunity for something like street trees to hide it

It's overgrown and untidy in some places

There isn't enough young people here due to the lack of universities, tertiary education, meaning potential skilled workers leave the central coast and aren't likely to come back

There isn't enough done to highlight events that are occurring in the area or to establish events that could bring in tourism

Not enough council investment in tourism – some would like to operate more in the Central Coast but have to go elsewhere because they only offer a marginal amount of money compared to other councils

The Central Coast Areas to Improve
- Amongst youth

- Overall, the youth participants had difficulty pinpointing aspects of the Central Coast they didn't like
- Ineffective planning and poor decision-making, regarding prioritising which areas need to be developed and where money is spent
- Pollution in some areas, especially close to waterways
- Cleanliness of public toilets

"I think for the most part it is pretty good, I can't complain about much."

"The unnecessary building of random stuff – there's a park next to Central Coast Stadium which I think was a waste of money, especially considering they went bankrupt. The park was fine before."

"They tend to focus on the unnecessary stuff. There are bigger issues."

"Some of the parks and beaches near me are pretty polluted and not well-maintained by Council."

"Public toilets for the most part aren't looked after very well."

Pride In the Central Coast

- amongst youth, businesses and Aboriginal residents

Generally there was a **strong sense of pride in the area** across the Aboriginal community, businesses and youth

Many commented that the area has really improved – used to be more an elderly demographic, and high welfare/lower socio economic, and is continuing to change

Most felt they had **positive reactions when telling outsiders** they live on the Central Coast

All youth participants indicated they **would want to raise their own kids in the area**, - because of opportunities, good schools and proximity to larger cities like Sydney and Newcastle.

Some Aboriginal participants were less enthusiastic and felt pride 'needed to build' with things like improving the aesthetics, maintenance and upkeep of some buildings

Youth also stated that issues with **drug use and homelessness** did not make them feel as proud

Summary of Strengths and Areas For Future Focus

Strengths

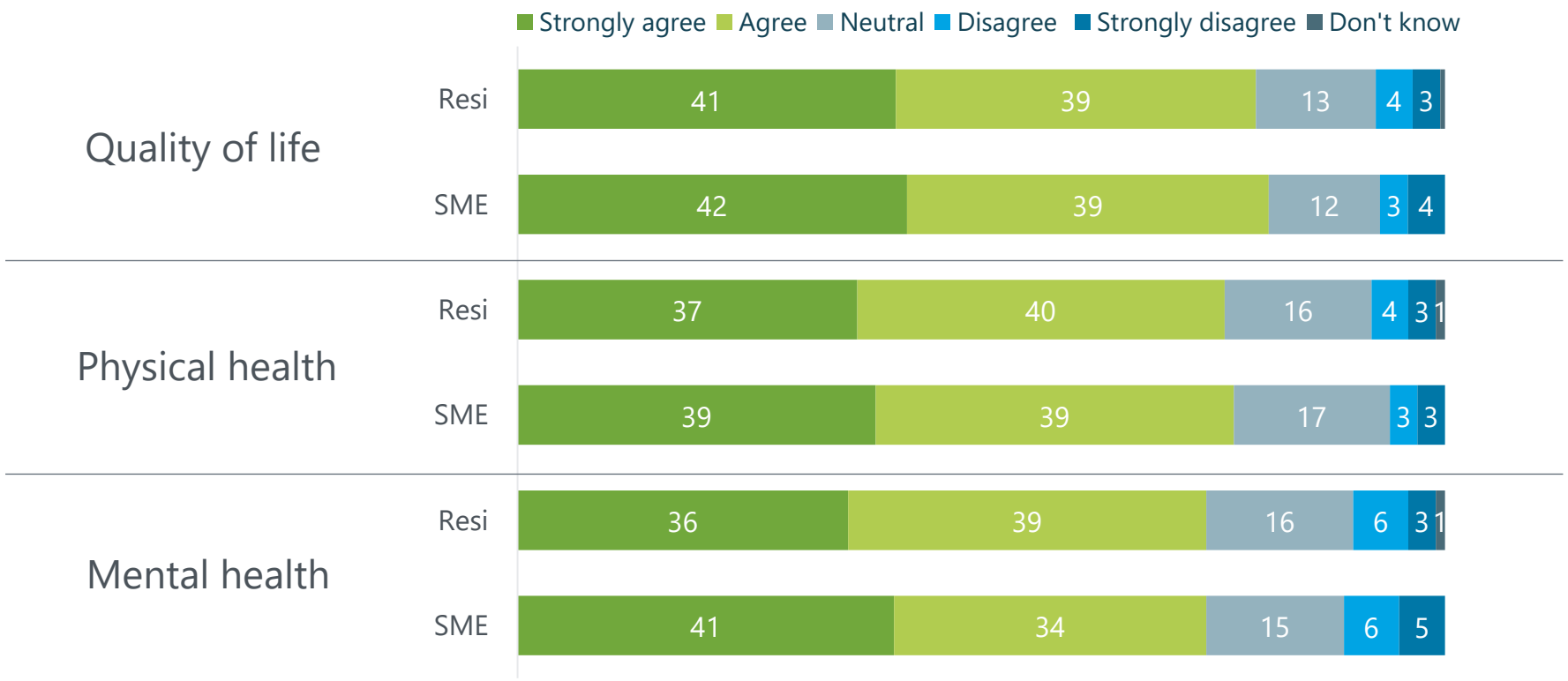
- Natural waterways, bushland, clean, well preserved
- Beach and waterway access
- Proximity to services – shops, cafes, businesses / social infrastructure, transport, M1
- The people/community
- Peace and quiet

Areas for Future Focus

- Housing affordability
- Parking
- Public transport
- General aesthetics / park & public area maintenance
- Roads
- Community safety – in some areas
- Opportunities for young people

The Central Coast's contribution to wellbeing

Central Coast's positive contribution to wellbeing
- Residents



Q12. Using a scale of 1 to 5 how strongly do you agree or disagree that living [SMALL BUSINESS/WORK IN CC: working] in the Central Coast contributes positively to your… ROTATE
Base: All residential respondents (n=789)

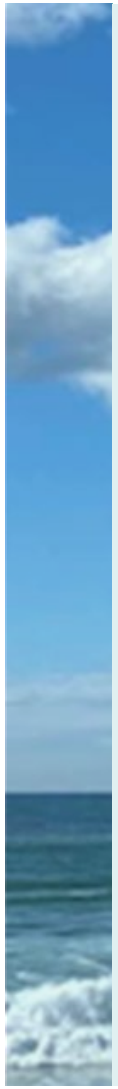
80% of residents agreed that living in the Central Coast contributes positively to their quality of life

Living on the Coast was also thought to contribute greatly to physical health (77%) and mental health (75%)

Similarly, amongst SMEs living in the Central Coast contributed positively to quality of life (81%)

Followed closely by physical health (77%) and mental health (74%)

Wellbeing within Central Coast



There was strong support for the notion that Central Coast provides a sense of 'wellbeing'

The **natural environment** was seen as an important element of wellbeing - the topography, green space and protection of the natural areas is important

Mental health, low stress, ensuring a good work-life balance were also raised as key aspects

- Generally agreed that there was not enough mental health services in the Central Coast
- Also not enough support for vulnerable people / mental health workers

Great place **to raise a young family**, plenty of services available for them – and youth agreed it was great for teenagers as well

Welcoming, and becoming more multicultural area (wasn't in the past), also more businesses locating in the area,

- But it needs more community groups to support the different cultures – e.g. Aboriginal community, other language groups

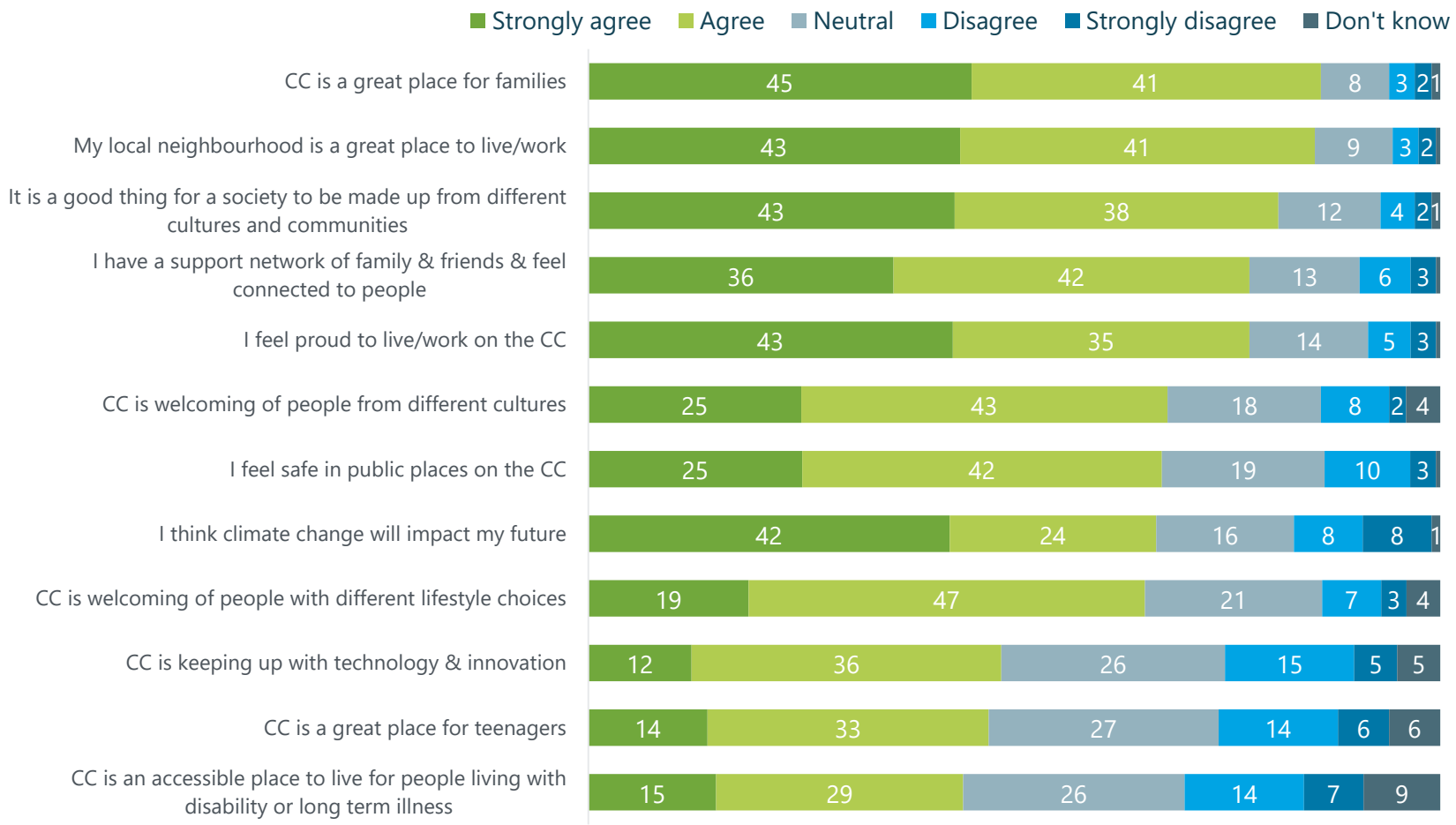
The whole of body is well – healthy body, mind and spirit

They maybe have a budget for mental health services that would help about 20% of the people on the coast

There aren't enough people with the (mental health) training to support everyone

Level of agreement with wellbeing aspects

- Residents



Q13. Using the same scale, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: I feel that central coast is...
Q14. On the same scale, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
Base: All residential respondents (n=789)

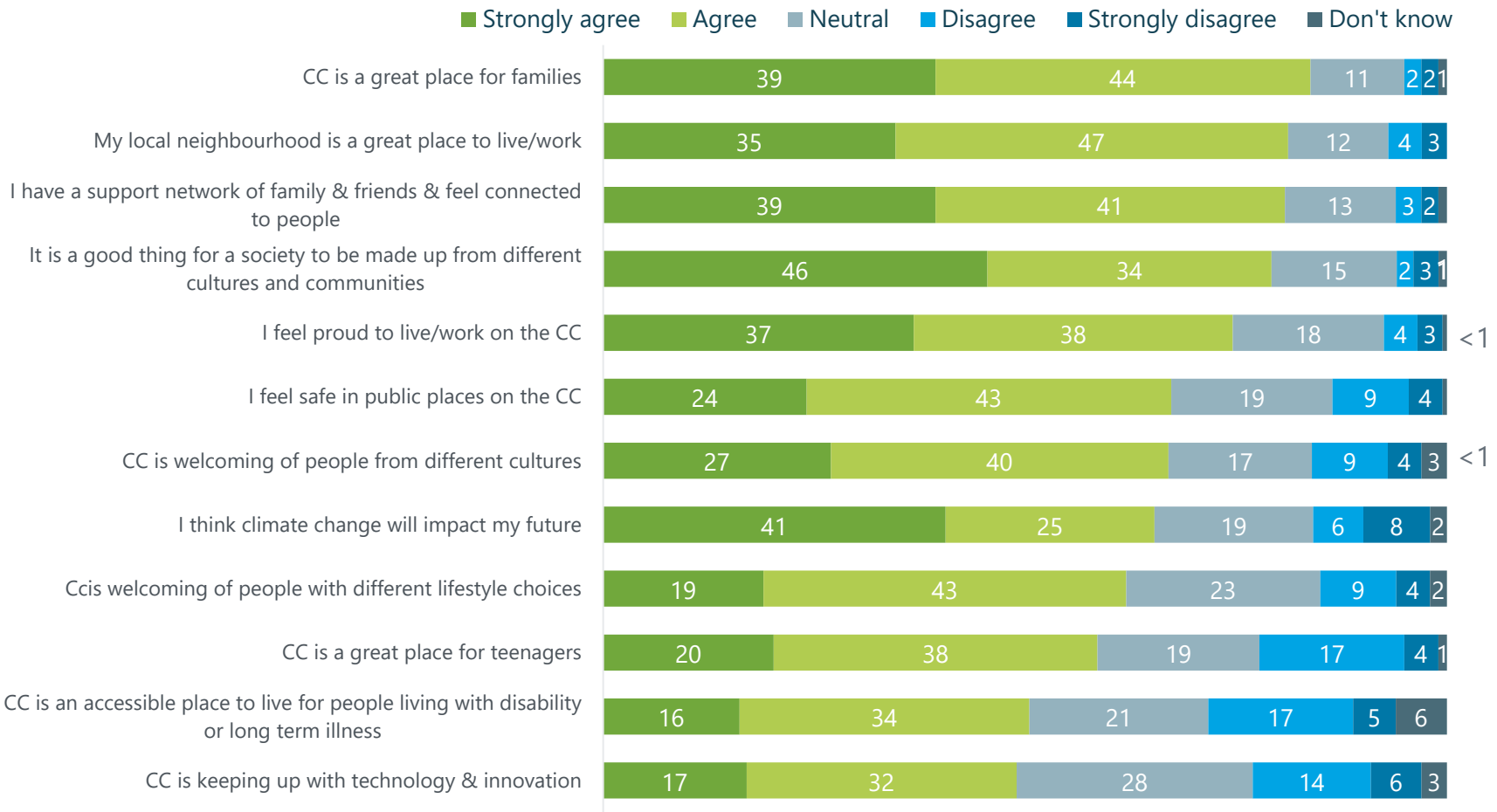
Highest rated wellbeing aspects included:

- a great place for families (86%)
- a great place to live / work (84%)
- it is good for society to be made up of different cultures and communities (81%)

Lower 'wellbeing' aspects included:

- it is accessible place to live for people living with disability or long term illness (44%)
- a great place for teenagers (47%).

Level of agreement with wellbeing aspects
- SMEs



Q13. Using the same scale, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: I feel that central coast is...
Q14. On the same scale, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
Base: All SME respondents (n=249)

Similarly, SMEs saw the Central Coast as:

- a great place for families (83%)
- a great place to live/work (82%)
- a great support network/connections to people (80%)

And less so:

- keeping up with technology and innovation (49%), and
- accessible for people with a disability/ illness (50%).

Summary of Wellbeing Values

Living and Working in the Central Coast	Wellbeing encompasses quality of life, physical health and mental health – and living and working in the Central Coast contributes to all three equality A great working and living environment
Pride	There is strong pride in the area
Connectedness	Provides a great network - where connections to family and friends are strong It is a great place for families
Mix of Cultures	People feel that it is important that there is a mix of cultures and communities

Future vision

Future vision

Natural surroundings
- Clean, well maintained and managed
- Retained – and expanded in some places
- Accessible

Heritage
- Retained
- Build awareness / celebrated
- Maintained / managed

Social infrastructure
- Maintained
- Upgraded
- More parks
- Accessible parking, walkways etc

Type of Buildings/Land use
- Low density near beaches / waterfront
- Minimal high rise / housing estates
- More residential/affordable residential

Local economy / major centres
- More restaurants / cafes
- Retain as is
- More support for local businesses
- Nightlife/vibrant
- More retail / variety

Rural / Agriculture
- Retain rural areas
- Community gardens/farms/local produce
- Greater support for rural
- Don't overbuild/keep balance

Transport
- Improve / better linking / frequency
- Roads improvement
- Cycleways
- Build/maintain for future growth

Q10. Thinking about the next 10-15 years, ideally what would you hope your suburb/area would be like in terms of….. This is your chance to provide your 'vision' for the future of your area.
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Future vision for Central Coast

- Most were happy with the direction in which the Central Coast was moving
- SME's felt some more investment was needed in **roads, tourism**, **education**, and establishing employment opportunities for young people
- Indigenous participants desired a more **even spread of investment** across all of the Central Coast and greater 'beautification'
- Considered important that the area **adapts to the changing needs** of people in the area
- Most were either happy with the rate of new development or thought it needed to be **moving faster** – particularly public transport
- The youth wanted more events / **opportunities for 16-18 year olds**, and continued focus on reducing pollution/**keeping the environment/beaches clean**.

A common vision was a vibrant dynamic atmosphere with cafes, retail, businesses and a youthful 'vibe'

Amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Businesses and Youth participants

Summary and Next Steps

Current Performance Against CSP

Areas doing well.
Average performance.
Areas with room to improve.

Belonging

Entertainment and community events
(51% resi / 60% SME)

Smart

Local employment and business opportunities
(45% resi / 56% SME)

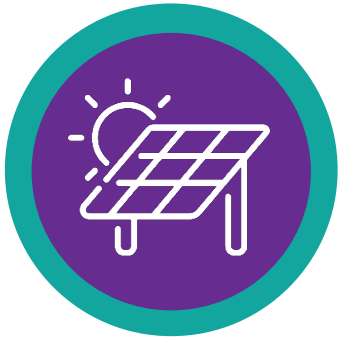
Opportunities for young people
(38% resi / 50% SME)

Green

Protect & maintain natural environment
(56% resi / 65% SME)

Keep streets & waterways clean
(50% resi / 63% SME)

Responsible



Protect heritage
(42% resi / 52% SME)

Roads, guttering
(38% resi / 53% SME)

Parking availability
(37% resi / 50% SME)

Affordable housing
(32% resi / 45% SME)

Liveable

Improved footpaths & cycleways
(53% resi / 63% SME)

% indicates respondents who agreed that Central Council has addressed these points since 2017

Summary of current strengths and future focus areas

In our future CSP we need to take into consideration:

- current performance against the current CSP
- strengths of living in the Central Coast
- perceived areas for focus
- community's vision for the future

Revised Themes

- Sense of community
- Thriving economy
- Nature
- Balanced lifestyle
- Accessibility

Build on the current strengths

- Natural waterways, bushland, clean, well preserved
- Beach and waterway access
- Proximity to services – shops, cafes, businesses / social infrastructure, transport, M1
- The people/community
- Peace and quiet
- A great place for families
- A great working and living environment
- Provides a great network - where connections to family and friends are strong
- A sense of pride

Focus on areas to improve

- Housing affordability
- Parking
- Public transport
- General aesthetics - parks & public areas
- Aesthetics of buildings/streetscapes/built environment
- Roads
- Community safety – in some areas
- Opportunities for young people
- Heritage protection
- Accessibility for disabled/ill
- Teenage / youth facilities and opportunities
- Keep up with technology and innovation
- Promote/welcoming of diversity and cultures

Implication for the future CSP

Sense of Community

- Strong connections to family and friends
- A sense of pride
- Mix of cultures and communities
- Aesthetically pleasing built environment
- Heritage protection (built and Aboriginal cultural)

Thriving Economy

- Housing affordability
- Opportunities for young people/ teenagers
- Keep up with technology and innovation
- Vibrant nightlife

Nature

- Protection of waterways, beaches, bushland
- Maintenance and cleanliness
- Aesthetics – parks & green spaces

Balanced lifestyle

- Peace & quiet
- Family friendly
- Great work and living environment
- A safe community
- Retain rural/ ag connection
- Balanced housing dev't

Accessibility

- To nature
- Proximity to services – shops, cafes, health services, businesses, motorway
- Parking
- Public transport
- Disabled access

LSPS Integration

Sense of community

Thriving economy

PLACE

Nature

ENVIRONMENT

Balanced lifestyle

LIFESTYLE

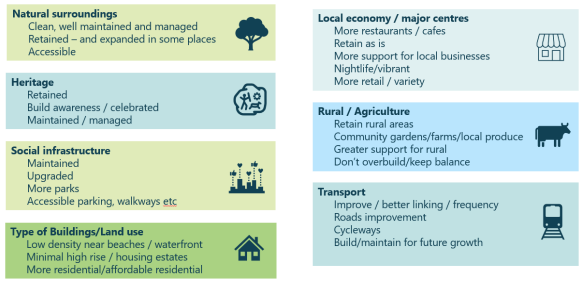
Accessibility

INFRASTRUCTURE

The LSPS will take into consideration current strengths, perceived areas for focus and the community's vision for the future.

Future Vision

Future vision



LSPS Vision Statement

Focus areas to improve

- Housing affordability
- Parking
- Public transport
- General aesthetics - parks & public areas
- Aesthetics of buildings/streetscapes
- Roads
- Community safety – in some areas
- Opportunities for young people
- Heritage protection
- Accessibility for disabled/ill
- Teenage / youth facilities and opportunities
- Keep up with technology and innovation
- Promote/welcoming of diversity and cultures

LSPS Planning Priorities

Current strengths

The Central Coast's Key Strengths

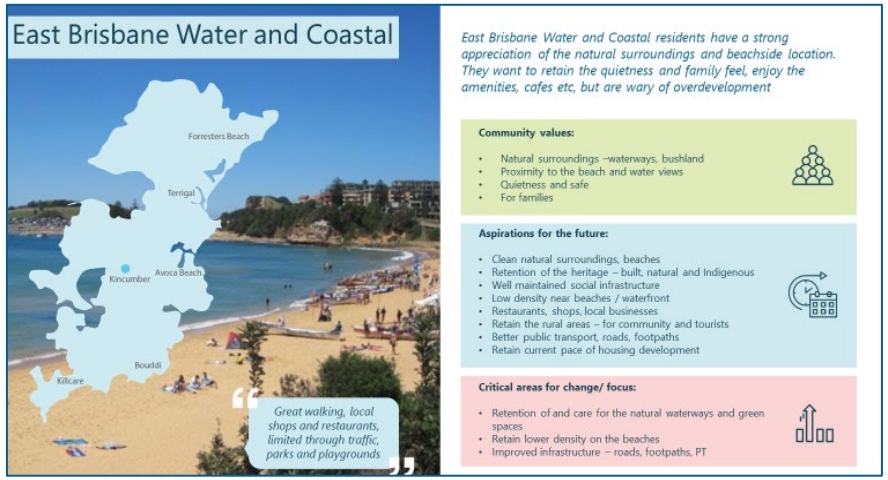
Three things you like about Central Coast UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	Residents n=789 %	SMEs n=249 %
The natural surroundings (waterways, grasslands, ecosystems, forests etc)	39	27
Proximity to the beach/lake/views & scenery	33	20
Proximity/easy access to major centres (e.g. cafes, amenities, local business, nightlife, shops)	32	25
Quietness/not too busy/lifestyle/atmosphere	28	27
The people	21	27
Social infrastructure (e.g. community halls, libraries, playgrounds, sporting grounds etc.)	17	7
Transport (e.g. roads, public transport, cycleways, pedestrian footpaths)/proximity to transport	14	14
Built landscape such as walkways	8	4
Rural areas/its still rural	4	1
Its not too big/not too much development / low density housing	8	3
Safety	3	2
Its clean/not polluted	3	3

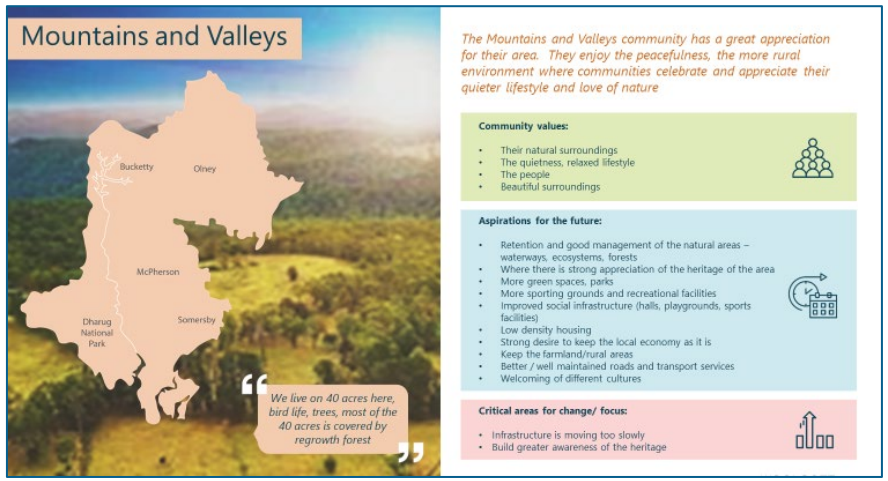
LSPS Place Value Statements

NEXT STEPS

Provision of individual LSPS for the Social Planning Districts:

- Mountains & Valleys
- Peninsula
- Gosford Central
- East Brisbane Water & Coastal
- Narara Valley & Ourimbah
- Southern Lakes & the Entrance
- Wyong, Warnervale & Gorokan
- Northern Lakes, San Remo & Budgewoi





Appendix

Appendix - Future vision

NATURAL SURROUNDINGS UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	Residents n=789 %	SMEs n=249 %
I would like it to be cleaner	22	22
I would like that to be well maintained	17	12
That needs management/control	14	14
I don't want it to be lost/reduced	14	11
I would like better access to that/eg walkways, car parking	13	14
Its fine/stay as it is	9	6
Stop building high rise/don't over populated/ we don't want high rise/housing estates	8	4
More green space/parks are needed/need to be cared for	7	7
Designate as much as you can for wildlife/preservation of wildlife habitat	6	4
I would like more of that	6	6
This could be improved	6	3
I would like better ecosystems/environmentally friendly, diverse systems	5	3
Other	22	24
Don't know	8	16

HERITAGE – built, landscape, nature and Aboriginal culture heritage UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	Residents n=789 %	SMEs n=249 %
I don't want it to be lost/reduced	14	10
More awareness of this is needed/more recognition/promotion/celebration	12	16
I would like that to be well maintained	12	8
That needs management/control	10	8
Its fine/stay as it is	7	3
Stop building high rise/don't over populated/ we don't want high rise/housing estates	5	4
We don't have much of that here/its all gone/will be all gone/its not looked after	4	2
I would like better access to that/eg walkways, car parking	4	5
Historic buildings to be restored/and repurposed	4	4
More green space/parks are needed/need to be cared for	4	4
Liaison with elders is necessary for this	3	2
Other	24	24
Don't know	23	30

Q10. Thinking about the next 10-15 years, ideally what would you hope your suburb/area would be like in terms of….. This is your chance to provide your 'vision' for the future of your area.
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Future vision

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE (e.g. community halls, libraries, playgrounds, sporting grounds etc.) UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
I would like that to be well maintained	14	9
Upgrade/update existing amenities, eg shade, lighting, security, safety	13	12
More green space/parks are needed/need to be cared for	12	10
I would like better access to that/eg walkways, car parking	12	10
Its fine/stay as it is	10	4
I would like more of that	8	8
More/bigger sporting grounds /recreation facilities are needed	7	9
More/bigger/better libraries are needed/longer opening hours	6	6
More facilities are needed here/couldn't cope with increased need/grow according to population	6	2
More social hubs/community meeting spaces are needed	4	4
This could be improved	4	4
I think they're on the right track	3	<1
Other	32	35
Don't know	10	21

THE TYPE OF BUILDINGS AND LAND USE (e.g. residential vs commercial, high density vs low density etc.) UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
I want/ we have low density/single homes/near the beaches, waterfront	24	20
Stop building high rise/don't over populated/ we don't want high rise/housing estates	17	10
I want/ we have residential	9	8
High rise/high density okay in central areas/near hubs etc/to stop urban sprawl	7	9
More residential is needed/affordable residential/options	6	6
More facilities are needed here/couldn't cope with increased need/grow according to population	5	7
I want/can accept /we have medium density development	5	1
Its fine/stay as it is	5	4
I don't want any commercial buildings here/where its inappropriate	5	2
This needs to be balanced/don't go overboard	4	4
More green space/parks are needed/need to be cared for	4	2
Other	40	39
Don't know	13	23

Q10. Thinking about the next 10-15 years, ideally what would you hope your suburb/area would be like in terms of..... This is your chance to provide your 'vision' for the future of your area.
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Future vision

THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND MAJOR CENTRES (e.g. restaurants, cafes, local business, nightlife, shops) UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
More restaurants /cafes would be nice	14	13
Its fine/stay as it is	14	7
Support/encouragement is needed for these places/to be viable	11	12
The Coast needs more work/business opportunities	9	10
More nightlife would be good/vibrance	8	12
We need more shops/more variety of shops	8	4
I would like better access to that/eg walkways, car parking	7	4
I would like more of that	7	2
Upgrade/update existing amenities, eg shade, lighting, security, safety	5	2
More places for entertainment are needed	3	4
Just improve it/revitalize	2	2
This could be improved	2	2
Other	30	30
Don't know	10	22

RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL LAND (e.g. agricultural land for local food production and rural land for residential housing as well as tourist destinations) UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
Its farmland/rural/should stay that way/rural areas are attractive to tourists	16	11
Community gardens/farms/locally sourced produce will /should increase	12	13
Its fine/stay as it is	8	3
Support/encouragement is needed for these places/to be viable	6	4
We don't have much of that here/its all gone/will be all gone/its not looked after	5	2
Stop building high rise/don't over populated/ we don't want high rise/housing estates	3	2
I don't want it to be lost/reduced	3	1
Tourism will be developed/needs to be developed/heritage tourism	3	3
This needs to be balanced/don't go overboard	3	2
Sustainable farming practices are a must	3	2
More green space/parks are needed/need to be cared for	3	3
Other	31	37
Don't know	25	37

Q10. Thinking about the next 10-15 years, ideally what would you hope your suburb/area would be like in terms of….. This is your chance to provide your 'vision' for the future of your area.
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Future vision

TRANSPORT (e.g. roads, public transport, cycleways, pedestrian footpaths) UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Residents n=789 %**	**SMEs n=249 %**
We need more/better/linking footpaths	29	21
Roads need improvement	27	18
We need more/better/more frequent transport services/especially buses	23	21
More /better/ continuous cycleways would be good/these would be a tourist attraction	20	19
I would like that to be well maintained	8	6
I would like better access to that/eg walkways, car parking	5	8
This could be improved	5	7
A faster/more efficient train service would be great	5	3
Its fine/stay as it is	5	6
Traffic needs better management	4	5
Upgrade/update existing amenities, eg shade, lighting, security, safety	3	2
More facilities are needed here/couldn't cope with increased need/grow according to population	3	2
Trains/access to trains needs improvement	3	1
Other	21	20
Don't know	8	20

Q10. Thinking about the next 10-15 years, ideally what would you hope your suburb/area would be like in terms of….. This is your chance to provide your 'vision' for the future of your area.
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

Appendix: Future Vision – Additional Comments

Additional comments about vision for the future/ what needs to be improved UNPROMPTED RESPONSES	**Total Residents n=789 %**	**Total SMEs n=249 %**
We need a new council /that will listen to the residents/spend money wisely	7	4
More protection of the environment is needed/more trees/greening	7	4
An upgrade of the roads is needed/better maintenance/fix them properly	6	3
We need a stronger police presence to minimize crime/CCTV	4	2
There is too much development/ too many housing estates/green space, farms etc are being lost	4	2
General upkeep needs improvement/some areas look run down/untidy	3	2
Traffic/traffic management/safety is the biggest problem	3	2
Good footpaths are crucial/with kerb crossings	3	1
Recreational facilities /opportunities for healthy lifestyle need improving/made more accessible	3	3
Please make sure the infrastructure keeps up with population growth	3	3
We need more/better/faster transport/more accessible	3	4
Everything is good here/I like it	2	5
Encourage businesses/more employment opportunities are needed	2	4
Preservation/beautification of the natural waterways/open them up	2	2
Stormwater/drainage etc needs work	2	-
The hospital/medical centre needs to be better/waiting times/cant get appointment	2	1
Nothing/no	31	30
Other	23	30
Don't know/not answered	9	17

Q11. Is there anything else that you want to add about your vision for the future or that you think needs to be improved in your local area?
OPEN TEXT
Base: All residential respondents (n=789), all SME respondents (n=249)

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research & Engagement
Level 6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060
+61 2 9261 5221
www.woolcott.com.au
Contacts: Karyn Wong, Kwong@woolcott.com.au
Lucy Economus, Leconomus@woolcott.com.au
Liz Sparham, Lsparham@woolcott.com.au

Appendix 2

Community Strategic Plan Engagement

Aboriginal Advisory Group

Friday 20 October 2023

- Provision of a more explicit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement or consideration of a standalone statements for each
- Acknowledgement of Country should be strengthened
- Consider Aboriginal history included in the document
- Show better connection of CSP to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and how Council actions
- Use of more indigenous images and art through the document
- Post referendum the inclusion of reconciliation is not practical, but there is still a want for there to be acknowledgement of the indigenous heritage of the region
- There is a need to be clear on what 'acknowledgement' is in the face of the Australian Indigenous Voice Referendum
- Need to ensure that Aboriginal people perspectives are sought
- Fast growing Aboriginal community on the Coast
- Acknowledgement of Country is more than just words
- Education / marketing should focus on sharing the history of the land and opportunities for Indigenous people to share their stories e.g. Newcastle Council run a similar event - Ngarrama
- Recognising Aboriginal land as part of the environment and protection of these places – keeping them sacred e.g. development and impact this can have
- Omission of Aboriginal land in the current CSP
- Diversity – it's not just about accepting, it's about celebrating diversity on the Coast and how that makes for a greater community

Appendix 3

Community Strategic Plan Engagement

Access and Inclusion Reference Group (AIRG)

Wednesday 13 December 2023

Community Strategic Plan

Full Plan: https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/full-report.pdf

Background

The Community Strategic Plan is a ten-year plan that captures the hopes, priorities, vision and aspirations for the future of the Central Coast. We call this document the 'CSP'. The CSP must be updated by 30th June after every local government election. For the Central Coast, the election is in September 2024, meaning we need a new or revised CSP by 30th June 2025. We are keen to hear your thoughts on the content for the new CSP to make sure it genuinely describes a vision and a way for us to create an accessible and inclusive region.

Question 1. In the year 2033 (ten years' time) where do you hope the Central Coast will be in how accessible and inclusive we are as a region?

- Minimal or no barriers to accessibility and inclusion
- I would love CSP to consider people living with disabilities in all community spaces and activities.
- In order to get there we need to educate community and businesses
- We need representation from diverse groups in consultation and decision making
- Any new development should have a baseline standards of accessibility/inclusion embedded in it
- The Central Coast is the leading model of inclusivity and accessibility, with improved infrastructure, inclusive policies and opportunities for the whole community to thrive.

Question 2. Does the current CSP include goals that clearly and genuinely aim to make the Central Coast accessible and inclusive?

Accessible: Yes / No / Somewhat

- Some of the goals address accessibility but others could be more specific (see Ques 3)
- Yes

Inclusive: Yes / No / Somewhat

- Some of the goals address inclusivity but others could be more specific (see Ques 3)
- Yes

Question 3. What would you include under the CSP themes (belonging, smart, liveable, responsible and green) to make it more accessible and inclusive?

Responsible

Appendix 3

- We will provide a diverse and inclusive workplace so we can lead by example
- Have accessible and diverse housing options which are energy efficient and retain neighbourhood character
- Public Toilets in all Council/community spaces.
- Withing the CSP I expect all newly planned infrastructure (and existing infrastructure) to include and take notice of consultation feedback including this Access and Inclusion Reference Group that includes people living with various disabilities, infirmities and also parents.
- Unisex toilets- provide separate Ladies and Gents toilets.
- As a survivor of long term, serious and severe sexual abuse I am terrified of unisex toilets and will not use them following a serious sexual abuse event at a unisex toilet block. There are many who feel like I do on this issue but don't speak up for many reasons. I feel that wherever public toilets are available there should always be an option for a separate ladies and gents toilets. Also, as I suffer from severe incontinence, I need to use public toilets frequently (again, like many others). I absolutely dread more unisex toilet blocks being built without separate ladies and gents.
- I would like CSP to consider moving the main Council building back to Gosford. I, along with many others cannot get to the Wyong meetings and this is a major issue/cause of frustration for citizens of the CC LGA.
- More community gardens where people from different cultures, different abilities, where people with differences of all kinds can enjoy.
- Consider people living with disabilities in all community spaces.
- More parking spaces for people living with disabilities close to where they actually need to be, this could also be extended to carers in the case where two carers are required, both carers coming from different areas. This is important everywhere but in particular areas that are to be pedestrianised. In areas like this there needs to be more than ample disability parking areas very close to the pedestrianised area. It is also needed for people with young children.
- Some people living with disabilities need to get to these areas but are living with disabilities that requires a huge struggle with travelling in a wheelchair for even short periods, making it incredibly difficult to access such areas unless accessibility is 'right there'.

Smart

- We will support business and local leaders to employ people with a disability and other divers groups.
- Implementing technological solutions to improve accessibility for navigating transportation and physical environmental surroundings.
- A smart community priorities inclusivity.

Belonging

- Have a variety of accessible sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities that can be pursued by all.
- Promoting events and initiatives that bring people together regardless of background or ability.
- Connect different groups in the community across boundaries of age, ability, etc
- I hope accessibility everywhere is looked at by the CSP.

Appendix 3

- It is important to note that some people using a wheelchair (even with two carers with them) cannot travel far at all in the wheelchair. These people must not be forgotten.
- It is also important to consider if anyone living in an area that is to become pedestrianised is disabled. Their needs require consideration.
-

Liveable

- Create accessibility and inclusivity to events and spaces (e.g. Stadiums) so all people can participate
- Organisations and businesses adopt inclusive hiring practices and promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Central coast stadium needs a drop off/pick up zone now for disabled.
- Public transport that is accessible and inclusive, with staff (e.g. bus drivers) who are well trained and able to help advocate for those with disabilities.
- Curbs to be flush with roads at crossing points across the LGA. Often wheelchairs and pusher of wheelchairs are stuck in the road for longer than should be
- continuous pathways. Currently many are hit and miss. Pathway that turns into grass verge, that turns into pathway and so on. This is difficult for wheelchair users as well as anyone who is infirm.
- possibilities for a full-sized Roller Skating Rink (particularly towards the south of the LGA where the population is larger and there is also several groups of roller skaters, that caters for everyone whatever their ability/disability needs.
- I love to Roller Skate with my Support Worker and my Guide Dog on occasion, but for me, roller skating on a netball court or footpath, anywhere there is divots on the surface is unsafe.
- Council members/creators of spaces for Roller Skating need to fully consider the needs of people living with disabilities. A pathway is unsafe and not okay.
- I would like to be included into the Roller Skating community, not at a privately owned small space, but a Council provided space where we can actually get some speed up and skate.
- In the next ten years I hope for a fresh look at the use and planning of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSI's) within the LGA. Currently, at the crossroads of Ocean View Road and Picnic Parade in Ettalong there are a couple of TGSI's installed that require blind and low vision people to actually walk almost in the bushes to use them as intended, putting them off balance. Also, if the blind or low visioned person has a Guide Dog, the Guide Dog has no room at all if walking in a particular direction (Guide Dog walks to the left of a right handed handler and sometimes to the right of a left handed handler). This position cannot be changed safely.
- I would hope that the use of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators at the very least is looked at within the CSP very soon. The Gallery might be accessible by wheelchair but as someone who likes to visit such places there are no TGSI's to indicate where to go from outside the building, and the use o TGSI's inside the buildings are lacking.
- As a lover of art (even though blind), I also love to create art in the form of mostly 2D art, ie; painting, drawing etc Creativity is hugely assistive with many disablities and people living with disabilites need to be able access such spaces/groups.
- I would dearly like to see classes/tutorials for the disabled implemented within the CSP.

Appendix 3

- I once travelled to the Art House at Wyong to partake in community painting and had a wonderful time, but sadly, due to limited time because of other disabilities and medical procedures that need to take place daily, and because my access to a Support Worker is limited, I am very limited in the ability to travel to Wyong (I live in Woy Woy).
- When a pop up activity happens in the area where I live, I usually find out after the event. I am unable to be online for periods long enough to check things out. I would like the CSP to consider all the different ways people with disabilities could be contacted in regards to upcoming events like this.
- I have heard of things for artists, but I am not an artist, I just dabble whenever I can.

Green

- Develop accessible infrastructure for all, including those with mobility challenges, that is environmentally sustainable and inclusive.
- More accessible walking trails as people with disabilities like to get out in nature too and don't always want to be in the built environment.

Question 4. What is important to you about access and inclusion on the Central Coast (e.g. education and awareness, the built environment, open spaces, safety, events, services and information, employment)?

- Education and awareness: This needs to be addressed at every level in the community not just Council employees. This includes businesses, schools, transport staff, etc E.g. We need to educate the public on disability (giving up seat on public transport) maybe work with Transport NSW develop posters – not just a picture of a person in a wheelchair/this is not representative of disability
- Employment: I think this is one area that needs attention as people with a disability are certainly under-employed.
- Education and awareness, an environment that supports accessibility, events that celebrate the prosperity of the community. Services that connect and create opportunities for everyone living on the coast.
- Accessible arts events and well trained staff, ensuring those with a disability can enjoy events without discrimination.

Question 5. Any other comments or input about the CSP that you think we should know:

[free text]

- B2 more inclusive sporting …..
- B4 to complement all ability activities……
- K1 key destinations and facilities with shaded areas provided to protect our children, elderly and those who are vulnerable
- The built environment needs more shade. People who are in a wheelchair get very hot and need shaded areas. Trees take too long to grow so it needs to be man made.

Appendix 4

Community Strategic Plan Engagement

Y4Y – Youth Action Group

Saturday 13 April 2024

What do you like about living on the Coast?

The group consensus is they like/love living on the Central Coast and felt it has been a good place to grow up for the following reasons:

- Close proximity to most things (only need to drive 20-30mins)
- Great beaches
- Chilled culture compared to the busyness of Sydney
- Relaxed people
- The roads are calmer and drivers aren't as angry like Sydney
- Erina Fair is a hub and often considered as the first option for hanging out, particularly over Tuggerah

What is missing on the Central Coast?

Transport: bus routes are confusing, hard to read/interpret and when young people need buses most (weekends), there are limited services running. Lots of young people work on the weekends and rely on public transport to move around but there aren't enough services or the buses that are running. Buses will stop at a lot of stops or not stop at the places they need to stop at (e.g. Avoca Beach). It takes a long time to get to their destination.

Parents worry about safety for their children on public transport, particularly with dark and hidden bus stops.

The group reported that in the morning, many of the trains don't stop at Ourimbah (for the uni) and are express trains catered for commuters rather than for locals. This could alter their decision on which Uni to go to as it would be the same amount of time to get to Macquarie versus Ourimbah in the morning.

Footpaths and cycle lanes: The group wishes there was more safer ways to move around their local communities with more footpaths and cycle lanes. Many of the footpaths end suddenly, leaving young people to cross busy and dangerous roads (e.g. Terrigal drive)

Education:

- There's minimal/no student accommodation and it isn't affordable.
- Limited subjects at Ourimbah e.g. Law and would need to go to Newcastle campus or Sydney
- Ourimbah campus doesn't offer a student life such as Newcastle e.g. accommodation, student events etc

Appendix 4

What services/events/facilities do you have to travel to Sydney and/or Newcastle for that you wish were on the Central Coast?

The group reported they are more likely to travel to Sydney then to Newcastle to do the following:

- Shopping
- Theatre – Lyric, State, Opera House
- Museums/art galleries
- Education (sometimes it is quicker to go to the Sydney universities than CC campuses)
- Chinatown
- School excursions
- Events such as concerts or festivals

While the group noted that they do travel to Sydney for the above, they also aren't looking for the Central Coast to be like Sydney.

Opportunities for young people

Mixed employment opportunities for young people, e.g. specialised jobs or fields like the arts/theatre/acting or working in a large firm such as KPMG, Deloittes, EY, aren't visible on the Coast, you need to go to Sydney for that.

The main view is that the Central Coast is a good place to settle down, not quite a place where you build a prominent career. The group agreed that the Central Coast is a great place to raise kids.

Main concerns for our young people

- Cost of living e.g. food
- Being priced out of the housing market
- Increasing rent and missing the opportunity to move out with friends. Rentals are also not liveable and if there are complaints to the landlord then the tenants are just kicked out versus fixing the problem. Noted that Victoria has laws / rules around this.
- The increasing number of holiday rentals on the Coast that sit empty during most of the year
- High rate of homelessness on the Coast while the holiday homes sit empty. Moving from one rental to the next is creating homelessness as the rental may not be available for weeks so needing to go to a hotel, couch surf or even live out of the car
- "post code wars" – particularly around Niagara Park/Gosford/Wyoming etc
- Big divide between the different socio-economic demographics
- Central Coast is not very welcoming of diversity – particularly in regard to being racially diverse. But noted that the Coast was welcoming with diversity of sexuality.
- Other religions are not visible

Appendix 4

- Personal safety with violence and drugs. Need more education to young people on vaping
- Potholes

What does the Coast need more of?

- Affordable housing (e.g. The Bungalows)
- Easier subdivision of large properties/acreage
- Medium density housing apartments with benefits such as pool, sauna, gym
- Need to have Indigenous appreciation at schools, similar to New Zealand. Having signs that use the Indigenous name versus the 'white' name

Top 3 issues or concerns

- Housing worries
- Access to education / free TAFE
- Transport
- Personal safety, drugs, vaping, physical violence and the lack of community calling out unsafe/inappropriate behaviours

Top 3 things young people want on the Central Coast

- A water park or Luna Park type amusement
- More outreach/advertising for events – young people don't use Facebook and would prefer physical posters in schools and in spaces where young people go (e.g. Erina Fair)
- More public study spaces in libraries etc with longer opening times

If you had a magic wand – what would you fix?

- Potholes
- Buses/public transport (particularly Sunday and public holiday buses)
- Reputation
- Cheaper options / affordable entertainment and social activities
- More festivals, e.g. Lakes Festivals but advertise on billboards and posters/flyers, not on FB

Appendix 5

Community Strategic Plan Engagement

50+ Centres Network Meeting

Wednesday 24 April 2024

In attendance were representatives from the following 50+ centres:

- Toukley
- Gosford
- Wyong
- Long Jetty
- Lake Munmorah
- Terrigal

What do you like about living on the Coast?

The group agreed the beaches and natural aesthetic of the Central Coast is appealing and a big draw card. Group consensus was that the Central Coast is a "perfect location" geographically as a base, because you can go up to the Hunter Valley, Newcastle or Sydney in a day. The group agreed that they enjoy being able to see family, whether they live in Sydney or surrounds. There are lots of low cost activities that the older community members can enjoy.

The group mentioned that they have seen a lot of people from Sydney sell their houses and move up to the Coast. The group saw this is a positive, as they believe it injects more money into the economy. The group noted that they feel there are lots of 50+ centres in the LGA and are pleased with this. The perception has always been that the Central Coast is a 'retirement location'. The group thinks this is still applicable, and there are an increasing amount of 50+ villages being developed.

What is missing on the Central Coast?

Parking – which is a barrier to accessing services, including the 50+ centres. For example, Gosford 50+ centre is at the back of Gosford, near Rumbalara Reserve. It is not feasible to walk from Gosford train station and parking is limited in the streets surrounding the centre. There are no community shuttles from the station, which would alleviate some of the access barriers. With the increasing amount of high rise apartments being developed, the group feel there is not adequate parking to meet the demands of the new dwellings.

Lacking opportunities and entertainment for our young people. This group felt that there are recreational amenities and facilities that are lacking, for example, an updated skate park at Lake Munmorah. The group said there seems to be a lack of places for kids/teens/young adolescents to go, such as recreational centres, PCYC gyms, blue light discos etc.

Police presence – the group felt there needs to be more active police presence in local communities. The group mentioned there are other communities in QLD where the locals

Appendix 5

have taken action themselves and have a roster system to drive around and patrol their neighbourhoods.

Mentorship – the cohort of 20s-30s would benefit from positive mentorship with older people. For example, mingling the different generations (young/old)

Main concerns for our 50+ community members

Safety – the group unanimously agreed that they feel unsafe in public spaces and often times, their own home. They hear about the break ins, people kicking cars in, stabbings, and they feel like it's getting worse. They no longer leave doors unlocked.

Homelessness – the group would like to see more being done for our homeless community members.

Parking – as previously noted.

Do you think the Central Coast is welcoming of people from all diverse groups, including race, sexualities, gender, ages?

Yes, the group feels they are welcoming of everyone, regardless of their background and story.

Do you feel proud to people you live on the Central Coast?

A resounding and unanimous 'yes!'.

Appendix 6

Central Coast Council

Community Strategic Plan, LSPS and Wellbeing Study

Individual LSPS for Social Planning Districts

November 2023

WOOLCOTT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

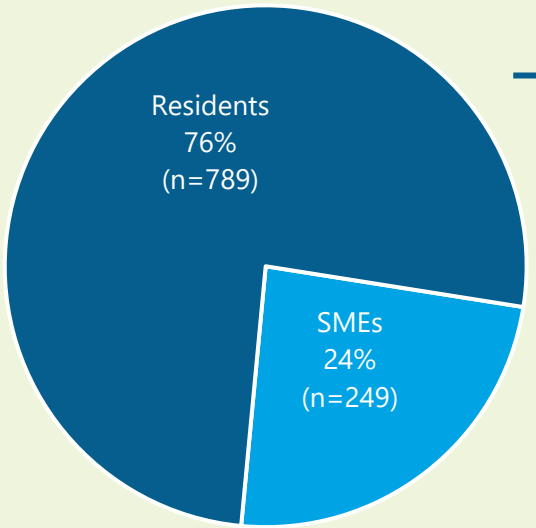
Survey Respondent Profile

Two separate surveys were conducted, and results combined:

Random general population survey:
n=502 residents + n=150 Small Medium Enterprises

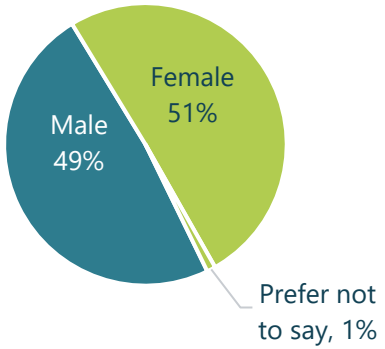
YVOC survey:
n=287 residents + n=99 Small Medium Enterprises

Central Coast Community
(n=1038)

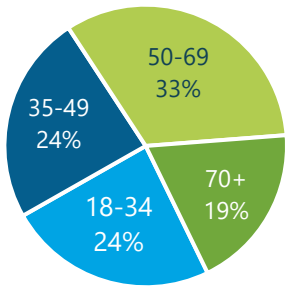


Residents sample was post-weighted to reflect the sex and age distribution of the Central Coast area

Sex



Age (years)



Ward & Planning District

Ward	Total
Budgewoi	15%
The Entrance	18%
Gosford East	24%
Gosford West	29%
Wyong	14%
Planning District	
Mountains & Valleys	6%
Peninsula	14%
Gosford Central	8%
East Brisbane Water & Coastal	18%
Narara Valley & Ourimbah	12%
Southern Lakes & the Entrance	17%
Wyong, Warnervale & Gorokan	13%
Northern Lakes, San Remo & Budgewoi	12%

Social Planning Districts Respondent Profile

Social Planning District	Sample size n=1038
Mountains and Valleys	6% n=64
Peninsula	14% n=142
Gosford Central	8% n=88
East Brisbane Water and Coastal	18% n=186
Narara Valley and Ourimbah	12% n=122
Southern Lakes and The Entrance	17% n=179
Wyong, Warnervale and Gorokan	13% n=138
Northern Lakes, San Remo and Budgewoi	12% n=119

LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENTS

East Brisbane Water and Coastal

East Brisbane Water and Coastal residents have a strong appreciation of the natural surroundings and beachside location.

They want to retain the quietness and family feel, enjoy the amenities, cafes, but are wary of overdevelopment.

Community values:

- Natural surroundings –waterways, bushland
- Proximity to the beach and water views
- Quietness and safe
- For families

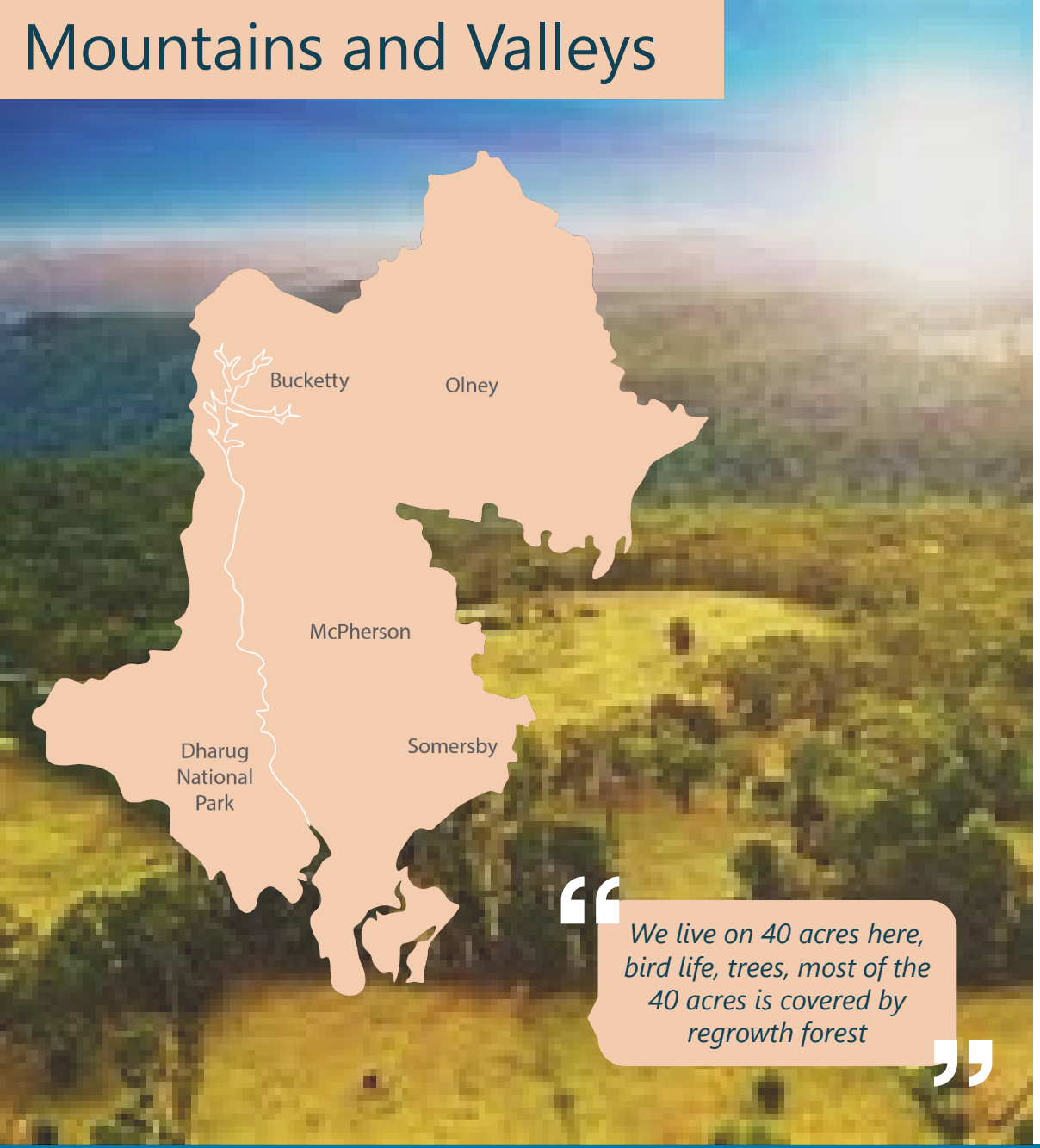
Aspirations for the future:

- Clean natural surroundings, beaches
- Retention of the heritage – built, natural and Indigenous
- Well maintained social infrastructure
- Low density near beaches / waterfront
- Restaurants, shops, local businesses
- Retain the rural areas – for community and tourists
- Better public transport, roads, footpaths
- Retain current pace of housing development

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Retention of and care for the natural waterways and green spaces
- Retain lower density on the beaches
- Improved infrastructure – roads, footpaths, PT

Mountains and Valleys



> *We live on 40 acres here, bird life, trees, most of the 40 acres is covered by regrowth forest*

The Mountains and Valleys community has a great appreciation for their area. They enjoy the peacefulness, the more rural environment where communities celebrate and appreciate their quieter lifestyle and love of nature.

Community values:

- Their natural surroundings
- The quietness, relaxed lifestyle
- The people
- Beautiful surroundings

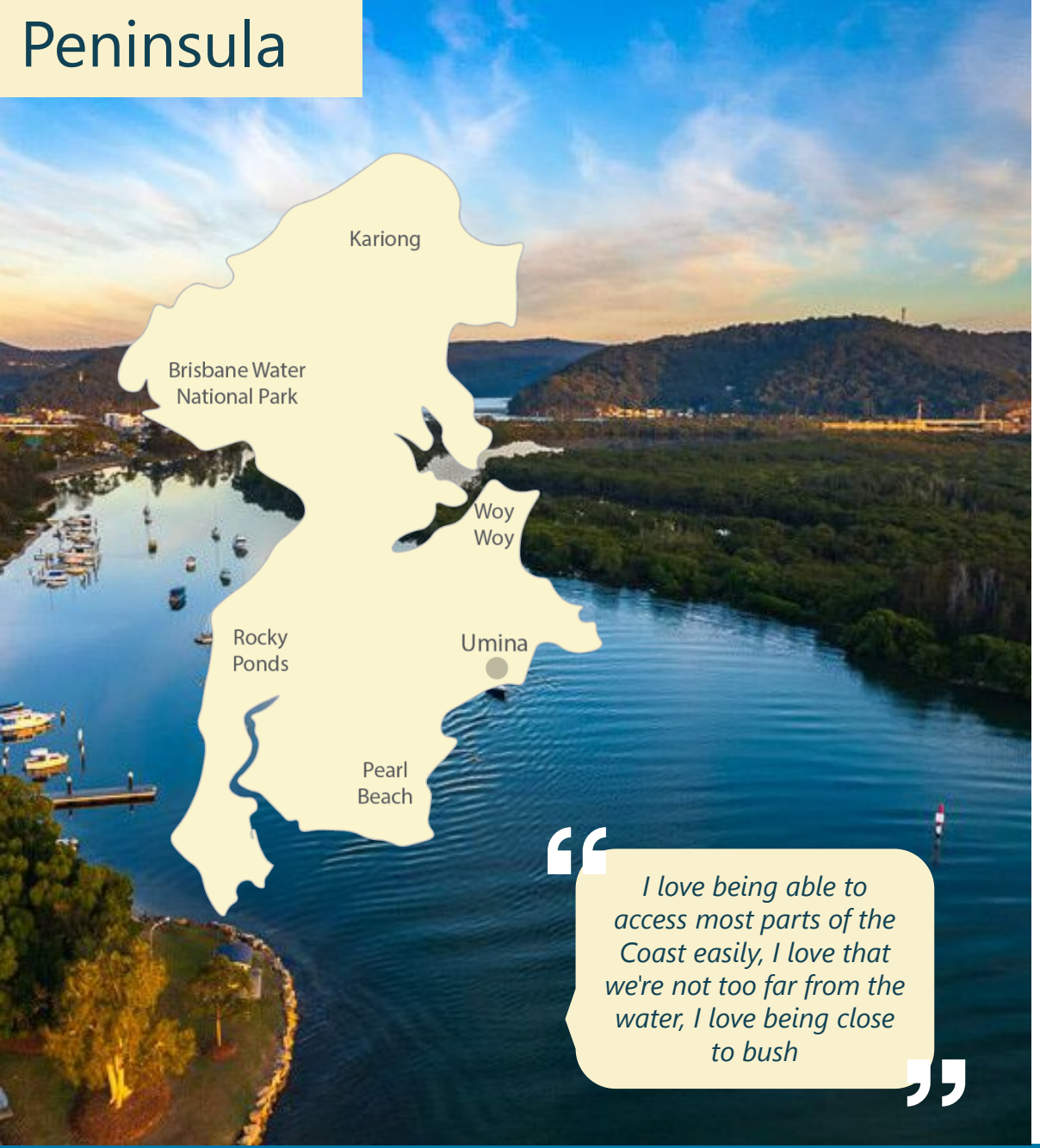
Aspirations for the future:

- Retention and good management of the natural areas – waterways, ecosystems, forests
- Where there is strong appreciation of the heritage of the area
- More green spaces, parks
- More sporting grounds and recreational facilities
- Improved social infrastructure (halls, playgrounds, sports facilities)
- Low density housing
- Strong desire to keep the local economy as it is
- Keep the farmland/rural areas
- Better / well maintained roads and transport services
- Welcoming of different cultures

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Infrastructure is moving too slowly
- Build greater awareness of the heritage

Peninsula



I love being able to access most parts of the Coast easily, I love that we're not too far from the water, I love being close to bush

The Peninsula community enjoy living close to the water and natural surroundings. They want to retain the scenic beauty and limit high rise and large urban developments.

Community values:

- Their natural surroundings
- Being near the beaches, waterways
- The people

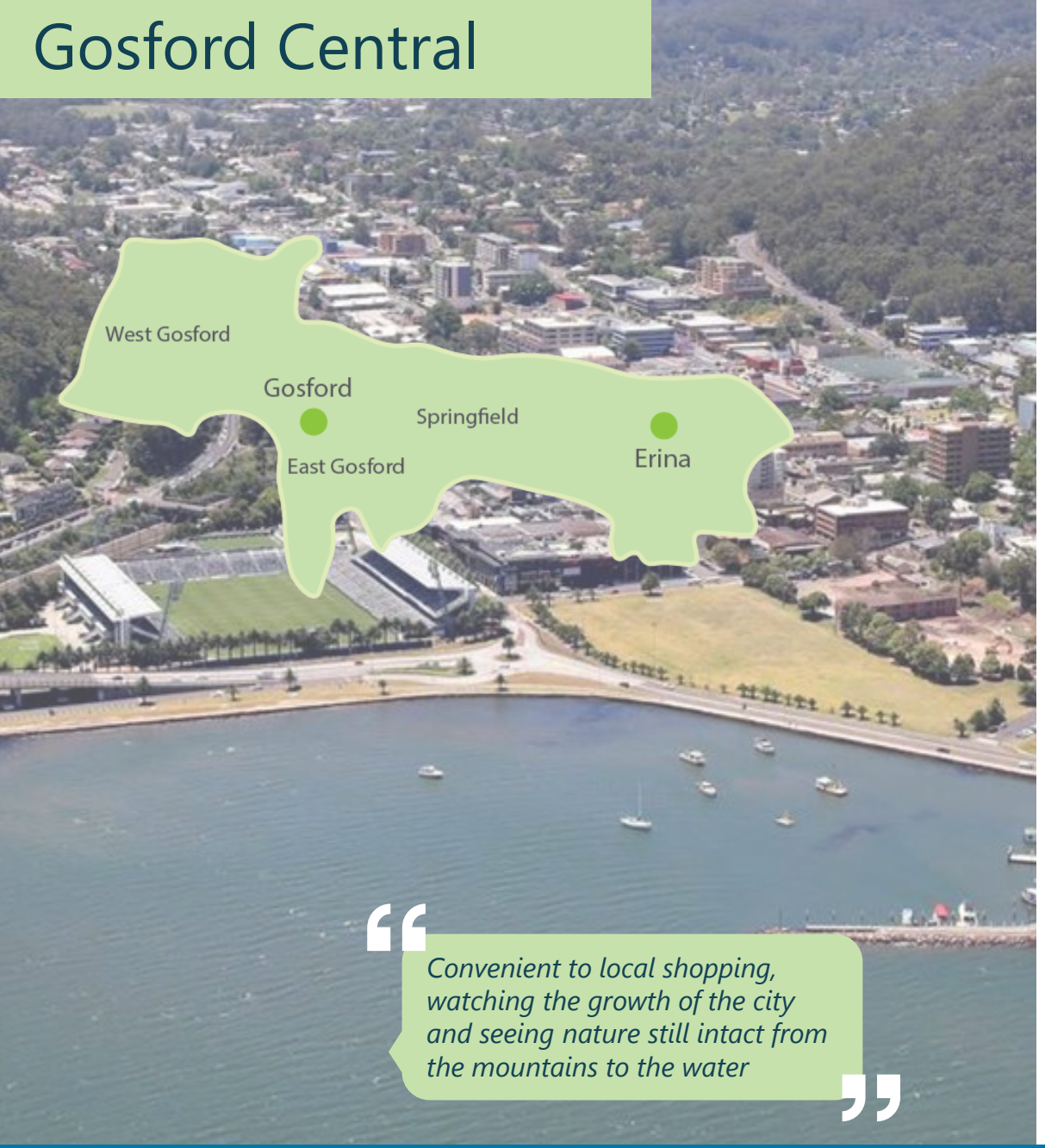
Aspirations for the future:

- Retention and good management of the natural areas – waterways, ecosystems, bushland
- More green spaces, parks
- Greater recognition of the heritage
- Few high rise and housing estates – low density on waterfront
- Well maintained and good access to social infrastructure (halls, playgrounds, sports facilities)
- Limit high rise to central areas/hubs – things are moving too quickly
- More restaurants, shops, local businesses and support for them
- Keep the farmland/rural areas and promote local produce
- Better / well maintained footpaths, roads, cycleways
- Adjust for climate change impacts

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Retention and management of natural areas
- Limit high rise and large developments

Gosford Central



Convenient to local shopping, watching the growth of the city and seeing nature still intact from the mountains to the water

Those living in the Gosford Central area appreciate the unique balance of urban and natural surroundings.
They want good infrastructure, limited high rise, a vibrant village lifestyle and affordable housing where a mix of cultures reside.

Community values:

- Proximity and easy access to local economy and major centres – cafes, businesses, nightlife
- The natural surroundings and less busy lifestyle
- A strong sense of connectedness to family and friends

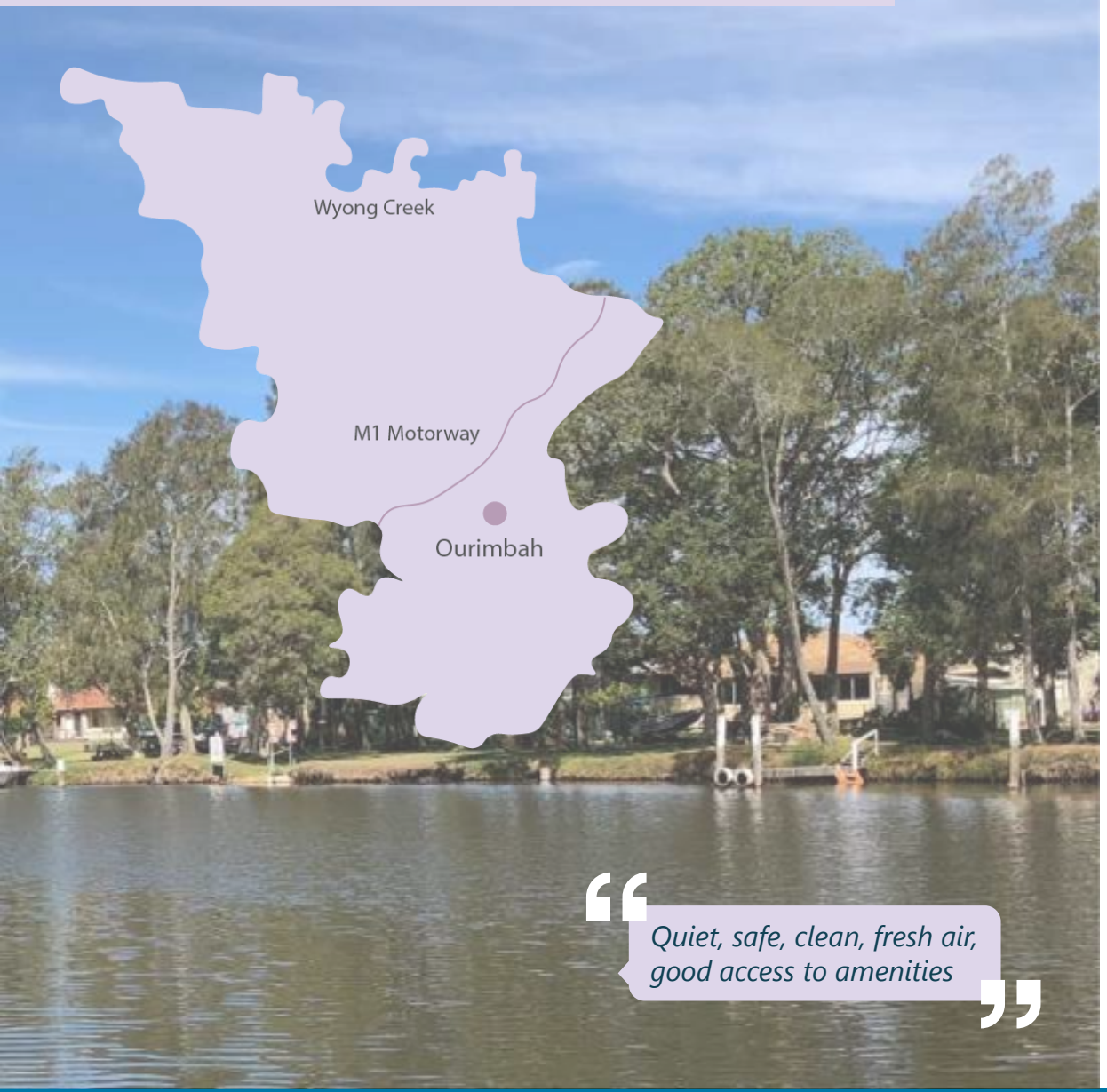
Aspirations for the future:

- Clean and accessible natural surroundings, waterways
- Retention of the heritage – built, natural and Indigenous
- Well maintained social infrastructure
- More green spaces, parks
- More housing, particularly affordable and keep low density on waterfront
- Limited high rise
- More restaurants, shops, local businesses and support for them
- A vibrant nightlife
- Community gardens and local produce
- Better public transport, roads, footpaths, cycleways
- A mix of cultures
- Recognition of climate change

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Development of a safe vibrant social 'village' and nightlife
- More housing
- Greater acknowledgement of heritage

Narara Valley and Ourimbah



"Quiet, safe, clean, fresh air, good access to amenities"

Narara Valley and Ourimbah residents enjoy the unique balance between accessing natural surroundings, rural areas and the local economy – cafes, businesses. They want to retain all these aspects in the future.

Community values:

- Proximity and easy access to local economy and major centres – cafes, businesses, nightlife
- The natural surroundings and quietness
- Access to transport – PT, roads, cycleways
- Access to social infrastructure – sporting & community facilities

Aspirations for the future:

- Retention and management of natural surroundings, waterways
- Maintenance and retention of heritage – built, natural, Indigenous
- Upgrading and updating social infrastructure
- Limited high rise and housing estates
- More restaurants, cafes and support for local businesses
- Retention of rural areas
- Road improvements and footpaths
- A great place for families
- Welcoming of different cultures
- Recognition of climate change

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Local employment and business opportunities
- Greater protection and acknowledgement of heritage
- Retain rural areas and natural surroundings

Southern Lakes and The Entrance

"The clean beaches, fresh air and more relaxed way of life. Friendly neighbourhoods."

The community living in the Southern Lakes and The Entrance areas are appreciative of their scenic location, close to the beach and lake. Residents like their easily accessed local economy and are wary of overdevelopment and high rise buildings.

Community values:

- Proximity to the beach/lake, views and scenery
- The natural surroundings
- Access to local economy –cafes, local businesses, amenities

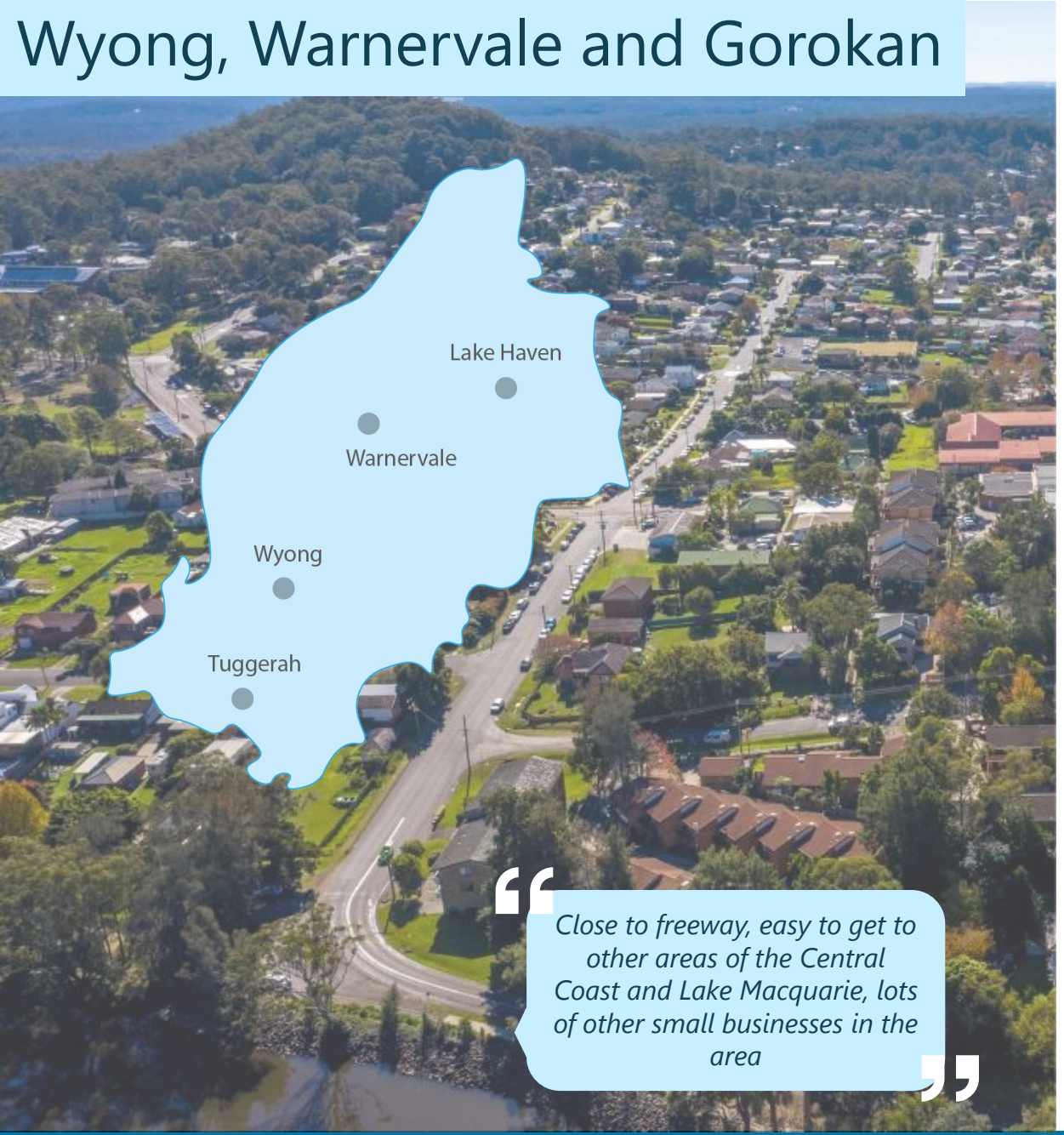
Aspirations for the future:

- Cleaner natural waterways, ecosystems,
- Greater awareness/celebration of heritage
- More green spaces
- Better access to social infrastructure -walkways, parking
- Low density housing near waterfront, limited high rise
- Support for local economy - restaurants, cafes, businesses
- Community gardens and promotion of local produce
- Retention of rural areas
- Improved footpaths and transport
- Welcoming of different lifestyle choices and cultures
- Recognition of climate change

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Cleanliness and maintenance of natural surroundings
- Social infrastructure – sporting and community facilities
- Controlled high rise and waterfront development

Wyong, Warnervale and Gorokan



> *Close to freeway, easy to get to other areas of the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie, lots of other small businesses in the area*

The community around Wyong, Warnervale and Gorokan enjoy living close to local services, while still maintaining a quiet, less busy lifestyle, accessing the natural bushland, waterways and rural settings.
Maintenance of the local services is key and retention of the relaxed lifestyle in the future.

Community values:

- Proximity to the local economy
- Their natural surroundings
- The quietness, relaxed lifestyle

Aspirations for the future:

- Cleanliness and maintenance of the natural areas – waterways, ecosystems, forests
- Protection and retention of the heritage of the area
- Better access to social infrastructure (walkways, parking)
- Affordable residential housing
- More cafes restaurant and a vibrant nightlife
- Keep the farmland/rural areas, and local produce
- Better / well maintained roads and transport services
- Welcoming of different cultures

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Improve roads and public transport
- Retention of rural areas
- Build greater awareness of the heritage

Northern Lakes, San Remo and Budgewoi

l look out my window over the lake to the entrance, I look out my door I see the Beachcomber I look out my verandah I see all of Toukley

Northern Lakes, San Remo and Budgewoi residents appreciated their close proximity to the beach/lake, and quiet lifestyle.

They also enjoy the easy access to social services and want clean, well-maintained services and transport, as well as mainly residential development.

Community values:

- Proximity to the beach and or lake
- The quiet, relaxed lifestyle
- Their natural surroundings

Aspirations for the future:

- Cleanliness of the natural areas – waterways, ecosystems
- Upgrading, maintenance of social infrastructure (lighting, shade, safety)
- Mainly residential development
- Retain and some more cafes, restaurants
- Keep the farmland/rural areas, and local produce
- Better footpaths, roads transport services
- Welcoming of different cultures

Critical areas for change/ focus:

- Cleanliness of the natural surroundings
- Public transport, roads, footpath
- Retention of rural areas
- Overdevelopment concerns

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research & Engagement
Level 6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060
+61 2 9261 5221
www.woolcott.com.au
Contacts: Karyn Wong, Kwong@woolcott.com.au
Lucy Economus, Leconomus@woolcott.com.au
Liz Sparham, Lsparham@woolcott.com.au

Appendix 7

Central Coast Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Review:

Phase 2 Report

Report of Key Findings

Central Coast Council

WOOLCOTT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research and Engagement is an Australian privately owned research and engagement agency that provide professional, independent and timely market research and engagement services. Our professional staff arrange, undertake and publish commissioned research and community engagement projects for industry, corporations, governments, integration agencies and individuals.

We acknowledge the Cammeraygal People as being the traditional owners of this land and pay respect to Elders past and present.

©Woolcott Research Pty Ltd 2024
This work is copyright. Individuals, agencies and corporations wishing to reproduce this material should contact Woolcott Research at the following address.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures 4
Table of Tables 5
Executive Summary 7
Background & objectives 7
Main findings 7
Conclusions 9
1. Background and Objectives 12
2. Engagement Design 13
3 Exploration of CSP elements 14
3.1 Areas for focused improvement 16
3.2 Areas to maintain 23
3.3 Lower priority areas 25
3.4 Areas requiring less urgent attention 28
3.5 Elements that did not consistently fall into a single quadrant 28
3.6 Other additional CSP elements for consideration 32
4. . Prioritising the areas of focus 36
5. Ideas/suggestions to address the prioritsed CSP elements 38
5.1 Workshops 38
5.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-Depth Interviews 42
5.3 Business In-Depth Interviews 43
5.4 Youth Focus Group 44
6 Conclusions 45
7. Workshop feedback 47
Quotes from end of session feedback 48
Appendix A: Allocation of CSP Elements to Quadrants 50

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Handout 1: Potential Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Elements....14

Figure 2: Importance vs Satisfaction Grid 15

Figure 3: Summarised elements allocated to each quadrant....16

Figure 4: Feedback regarding the workshop....47

Table of Tables

Table 1: Demographics of workshop attendees 13

Table 2: Token exercise results - prioritising the areas to focus on 36

Table 3: Tally of CSP elements into quadrants by tables 50

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Background & objectives

Central Coast Council is currently undertaking a review of its Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and wished to engage community members in a collaborative process to feed into its development.

The objectives for this research program were:

- To review the key issues and opportunities for the future of the Central Coast,
- To identify any gaps or additional elements for inclusion,
- To assess the importance versus satisfaction of key elements to determine which areas are key areas for Council to focus on, and
- To prioritise the key areas of focus.

Initially a survey was undertaken in October 2023 – a separate report has been provided on this stage. The current phase involved two community workshops – one in Gosford and one in Wyong. Additional qualitative research sessions were conducted amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members (six interviews), business owners (six interviews) and younger community members aged 16-18 years (one focus group comprising seven participants). A total of 78 participants took part in this phase.

Main findings

There was strong support for the elements derived from the survey with the community in 2023.

The outcomes of the workshops, interviews and groups showed that participants consistently felt that the following elements were areas for focused improvement and were of the highest priority:

Responsible Council governance (this was a new element added by participants) including:

- Better leadership with more transparency and accountability for Council's actions and spending
- Frequent and high quality communication and community engagement for decision making
- More responsible management, transparency and control over developers

Opportunities for young people and teenagers including:

- Increasing the availability and quality of job opportunities, education and training in the area
- Specific programs such as a Technology Hub, Youth Leadership course, mentoring, help with how to find a job
- Better live music and recreation options (e.g. BMX/skate parks) and keeping sports grounds lit/open for longer in the evenings

Balanced housing development/affordable housing including:

- Ensuing that development applications are evaluated fairly and responsibly (this relates to Responsible Council governance)
- Ensuring that supporting infrastructure, green space, facilities, parking, public transport is considered in an area before further housing development is approved
- Using land/space effectively - reviewing where housing development is taking place and the size/types of homes
- Ensuring that there are consistent housing development policies between federal, state and local government

Supporting local business and employment (this was a new element added by participants) including:

- More flexibility and streamlining approvals processes for businesses
- Promoting the area/attracting tourism in order to support local businesses
- Promoting local businesses and improving accessibility through better public transport

Protection of Aboriginal heritage including:

- Education of all ages
- Increasing awareness about where these sites are located
- Maintenance and regeneration of these areas

Cycleways/ footpaths/public transport

- More buses, trains, ferries, footpaths
- Better interchanges
- Safer and more accessible footpaths

The following elements were thought to be areas for Council to maintain, as they were considered highly important but participants were quite satisfied with these aspects currently:

- Appealing parks and green spaces
- Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches
- Protection of built heritage
- Disability access and inclusion

The elements considered lower in importance but higher in satisfaction, so lower priorities for Council focus included:

- A sense of pride
- Peace and quiet
- Strong connections to family and friends
- Family friendly

- Great work and living environment
- Mix of cultures and communities

These tended to be the less tangible aspects that were likely to be outcomes of other aspects.

There was one element that had mixed importance but lower satisfaction regarding – vibrant nightlife. This element resulted in polarised views on its level of importance. For those who thought it was important, it was thought that improvements to vibrant nightlife could assist with the element of 'providing opportunities for young people'.

There were some elements that did not have a majority consensus about their position in the quadrants:

- Aesthetically pleasing built environment (high importance, mixed satisfaction - lower satisfaction in Gosford)
- A safe community (high importance, mixed satisfaction – pockets of the area were thought to be less safe, e.g. Gosford centre)
- Retain rural/ agricultural connection (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)
- Easy access to nature (mixed importance, high satisfaction)
- Proximity to services e.g. shops, cafes, health services, businesses (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)
- Parking (mixed importance, mixed satisfaction)

There were also several additional elements added by participants, but not consistently placed in the 'areas for focused improvement' quadrant, including:

- Access to health services and mental health services
- Supporting vulnerable communities
- Transparent development guidelines
- Vibrant arts and cultural scene
- Well maintained, clean, tidy environment and community infrastructure

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewees suggested that Council should collaborate more with their community to empower them to make changes that will benefit them.

The small business participants each had unique interests so had mixed views on the importance of the individual elements. However, one commonality was that they highlighted the importance of promoting the Central Coast to those from outside the area.

Conclusions

- There appears to be strong support for the elements derived from the survey so it is recommended that they (or similar) are included in the CSP by Council.

- There are some additional elements or themes suggested that should be added by Council, at a minimum the following should be added:
    - Responsible Council governance
    - Support for local businesses/employment
- Consideration could also be given to adding elements on 'access to health and mental health services' and 'supporting vulnerable communities'. Other additional elements suggested by participants could be combined with existing elements, for example:
    - 'Transparent development guidelines' could fall under 'responsible Council governance'.
    - 'Vibrant arts and cultural scene' could be merged with vibrant nightlife to create 'vibrant arts/cultural scene and nightlife'
    - 'Well maintained, clean, tidy environment and community infrastructure' could be merged with 'aesthetically pleasing built environment' to create 'aesthetically pleasing environment'.
- Priority should be given to developing objectives, programs and initiatives for the CSP in the following areas. For aspects that are not solely the responsibility of Council, Council should aim to work with relevant government departments or agencies to improve these in the Central Coast:
    - Responsible Council governance
    - Opportunities for young people and teenagers
    - Balanced housing development/affordable housing
    - Supporting local businesses and employment
    - Protection of Aboriginal heritage
    - Cycleways, footpaths and public transport
- The ideas generated by participants under those elements and included in this report should be considered by Council and where practical should be included in the CSP.
- Some elements were deemed more important to focus on in the Gosford area, for example 'a safe community' and 'aesthetically pleasing environment' and these should be focused on by Council in that area.
- Some of the less tangible elements relate to community well being and could be considered outcomes of other more tangible elements, e.g. a sense of pride, peace and quiet, strong connections to family and friends, great work and living environment etc. Consideration could be given to having a 'community wellbeing' theme in the CSP which includes these kinds of aspects.
- Council should consider collaborating further with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to empower them to make positive change.
- It is recommended that Council communicate the findings of this engagement to the community, and outline any actions taken based on these findings.

Detailed findings

1 Background and Objectives

Central Coast Council is currently undertaking a review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and wished to engage community members in a collaborative process to identify and prioritise key areas of focus for the Central Coast and determine goals under the CSP.

This community engagement exercise will assist the newly elected body in the latter half of 2023 and input into the development of the draft CSP.

A survey was undertaken in October 2023, amongst the general community, exploring aspects that are important to the community and that should be taken into consideration when reviewing the CSP, including aspirations for the future.

A separate report has been provided on this element.

Following this, Council expanded on this survey to explore the importance of the key elements more qualitatively, and to seek the community's feedback regarding prioritising these elements.

The more specific objectives of this phase of engagement included the following:

- To review the key issues and opportunities for the future of the Central Coast,
- To identify any gaps or additional elements for inclusion,
- To assess the importance versus satisfaction of key elements to determine which areas are key areas for Council to focus on, and
- To prioritise the key areas of focus.

2 Engagement Design

This engagement phase consisted of two community workshops – one in Gosford and one in Wyong.

Additional individual qualitative research sessions were conducted amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members (six interviews), business owners (six interviews) and younger community members aged 16-18 years (one focus group comprising seven participants).

The format of the workshops was an informal meeting led by a Woolcott Research representative with four tables of community members (approx. 6-7 people were table) with each table facilitated by a Woolcott staff member. Most of the time during the workshops was spent discussing key aspects amongst fellow community members at the table level, with additional brief presentations made by Central Coast Council executives during the evening.

The Gosford workshop was held on the 12 March 2024, from 6-9pm, at the Erina Fair Centre, Meeting Space 3, and a total of n=30 community members attended the session.

The Wyong workshop was help on the 13 March 2024, from 6-9pm, at the Wyong Art House, and n=29 community members attended.

The table below shows the demographics of the residents who attended the workshops.

Table 1: Demographics of attendees of workshops

Workshop participant demographics	Total (n=59) n=
18-34 years	13
35-49 years	14
50-69 years	24
70+years	8
Male	26
Female	33
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	5
Culturally and linguistically diverse background	6
Small – medium business owners	11
Income <$42,000	8

3 Exploration of CSP elements

The community workshops commenced with an initial warm up session where community members introduced themselves and discussed aspects they liked and disliked about living in the Central Coast. Following this, participants were informed that Council had conducted a survey as well as qualitative research, and some topline results were presented, including a list of elements (generated from the survey results) that were deemed important by the community to include in the CSP.

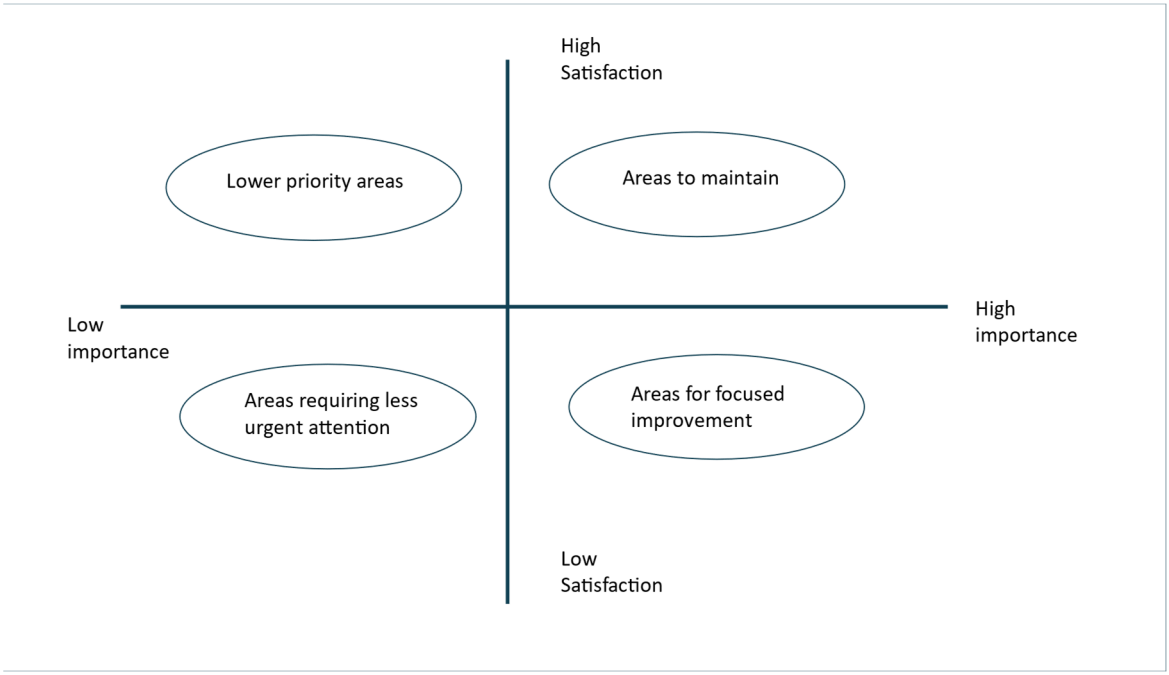
At the table level a list of potential CSP elements was viewed by participants, which was briefly discussed and elaborated on. They were then asked if there were any additional elements that should be included, and then discussed the importance versus satisfaction of each element.

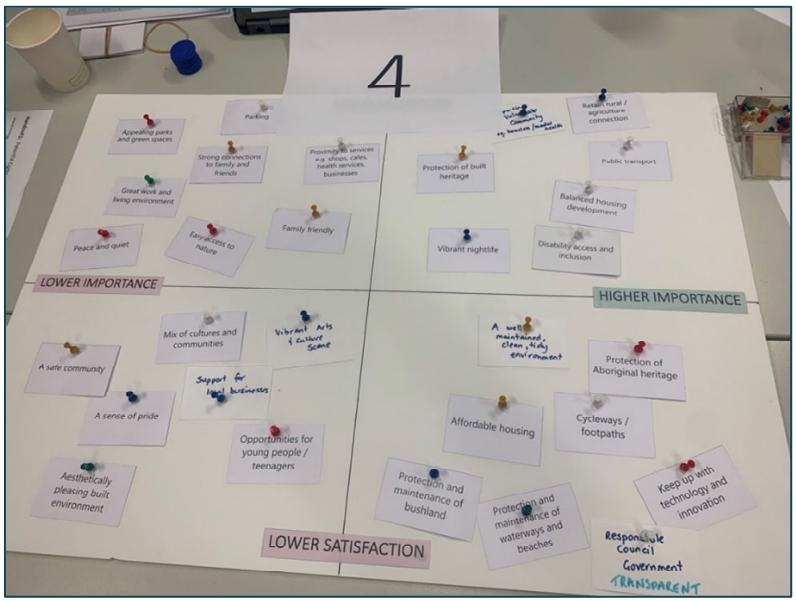
Below is a copy of the handout provided to participants with the list of elements:

Figure 1: Handout 1: Potential Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Elements

Following this discussion, participants sorted the elements into an importance versus satisfaction grid (see figure 2 below). Again, at the table level each element (written on a card) was pinned by participants into a quadrant based on whether it was a lower priority area, an area requiring less urgent attention, an area to maintain, or an area for focused improvement.

Figure 2: Importance vs Satisfaction Grid and an example grid completed by one of the workshop tables





Overpage (Figure 3) is a chart summarising the most common positioning of each element within the quadrants. Overall, ten elements were allocated to the lower right quadrant for 'areas for focused improvement' for Council with four or more tables allocating these elements to this quadrant. The actual number of tables that allocated each element to each quadrant is provided in Appendix A.

Figure 3: Summarised elements allocated to each quadrant

Lower priority areas (allocated by 4 or more tables). • A sense of pride • Peace and quiet • Strong connections to family and friends • Family friendly • Great work and living environment • Mix of cultures and communities	**Areas to maintain** (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Appealing parks and green spaces • Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches • Protection of built heritage • Disability access and inclusion
Areas requiring less urgent attention (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Vibrant nightlife	**Areas for focused improvement** (allocated by 4 or more tables). • Responsible Council governance* • Affordable housing • Balanced housing development • Protection of Aboriginal heritage • Opportunities for young people and teenagers • Cycleways/ footpaths • Keep up with technology and innovation • Protection and maintenance and bushland • Public transport • Support for local businesses and employment*

*Additional elements suggested by participants

3.1 Areas for focused improvement

The elements that the majority of workshop participants agreed should be areas for focused improvement by Council included the following:

- Responsible Council governance
- Affordable housing
- Balanced housing development
- Protection of Aboriginal heritage
- Opportunities for young people and teenagers
- Cycleways/ footpaths
- Keep up with technology and innovation
- Protection and maintenance and bushland
- Public transport
- Support for local businesses and employment

Below is a brief outline of each of the elements (including some additional elements suggested by participants):

3.1.1 Responsible Council Governance

As mentioned, participants were asked if there were any additional elements, not already outlined, that they felt should be included in the CSP, and 'responsible Council governance' was one that was raised in both workshops and felt to be a 'focused area' for Council in the future across both workshops.

This was also described as or felt to include 'greater transparency' or 'greater Council accountability', with many referring to the past issues Council has had and the fact that Council had to go into administration. It was felt to be important to ensure it did not happen again in the future.

> *"We need Council being managed effectively - appropriate governance. Recent events have tainted perceptions. Council have a lot to do to build trust, there needs to be more transparency, - that would increase trust. They have to prove themselves, and show they are changing and listening to what we want." – Gosford participant*

In instances where it was not placed in the high priority quadrant it was mainly because they felt it was 'a given' or business as usual element.

> *"Responsible governance should just be a given, it should be just done and it has to have a good approach." – Wyong participant*

3.1.2 Affordable Housing

Affordable housing was identified as an element which could be improved on the Central Coast. Although workshop participants felt that affordable housing would need to be improved in the future, there was some questioning regarding the role of Council and how Council could actually affect this.

> *"What does that actually mean? How can Council impact that?" – Gosford participant*
>
> *"Council can't do anything about that." – Wyong Participant*

A number of respondents noted the inclusion of 'tiny homes' in the Central Coast was a move towards a positive outcome regarding affordable housing, but again, some were confused about how Council would or could affect change in this area. Participants also felt there should be greater transparency regarding tiny homes in the Central Coast.

> *"The tiny homes you see popping up are pretty good. We need to make sure all people in the area are able to have places to live in." – Wyong participant*

Six of the eight workshop tables placed this element in the quadrant for focused improvement, implying low satisfaction and high importance.

> *"I think because we are a growing population it is really important for housing to be kept affordable, especially for those who already live here and whose kids will eventually be looking to buy a house." – Gosford participant*

> *"A lot of people move here because it is cheaper than a place like Sydney. If we aren't affordable anymore, I think it would put people off from coming here, or for those who are already here to stay." – Wyong participant*

3.1.3 Balanced Housing Development

Balanced housing development was an element of particular interest to the Workshop participants. From the outset, participants indicated this to be an area of high importance, given the increasing population of the coast.

Mostly, participants highlighted the importance of Council's influence in the housing development within the coast. Some called for Council to be more influential in which areas housing should be built, and what types of housing should be built.

> *"Don't have high rise near the beach. I know this is tricky because everyone wants to live there, but you can't just have those huge apartment blocks there." – Wyong participant*

> *"Apartments don't fit everywhere. It's a bit of contention I think in the coast. People want affordable, high-density housing but don't want it near them." – Gosford participant*

Some participants commented on the effects that an unbalanced housing development would create.

> *"The problem with the high-density apartment blocks is that these developers will sometimes not have enough parking. This has a flow-on effect and makes parking in some areas really difficult." – Wyong participant*

> *"If there is an area with heaps of apartments it will affect the traffic flow as well. I know our traffic isn't that bad compared to other places, but I think this needs to be considered. Everyone wants to live near the beaches but that just isn't possible." – Gosford participant*

Six of the eight workshop tables placed this element in the areas for focused improvement quadrant, which shows this is an element of low satisfaction and high importance.

> *"This is so important for the future. We talk a lot about a growing population, so it is obvious that these people need housing. But we need to make sure that we keep the Coast how it is. There definitely needs to be a balance." – Wyong participant*

> *"You see so many apartments going up now. There needs to be way more consideration into making other types of housing, not just these huge apartments." – Gosford participant*

3.1.4 Protection of Aboriginal Heritage

This element elicited a lot of discussion. To start, participants felt that awareness needed to be increased for the Aboriginal heritage in the Central Coast area.

> *"Personally, I have lived on the Coast for 30 years, and I don't think I actually know off the top of my head where the sites are. I don't know what is currently being done to protect them either." – Gosford participant*

> *"More education and knowledge are needed. A lot of people just don't know about it." – Wyong participant*

Further, some felt that a stronger voice was needed for the Aboriginal community in the Central Coast. As part of this, some commented on the Kariong development and used this as an example of the poor protection of Aboriginal heritage in the area.

"I don't know if they do, but they really need to consult with the Aboriginal community in the coast. In my job I talk to a lot of Aboriginal people and the feeling is that they are not heard by Council." – Wyong participant

"Look at the Kariong development. I'm not sure why that site was chosen in the first place. It really comes back to poor planning from Council as they approved the development." – Wyong participant

Overall, six of the eight tables agreed this element was an area for focused improvement, meaning high importance and low satisfaction. The two remaining tables deemed this element as an 'area to maintain', which suggested high satisfaction, and still high importance.

"That site at Bulgandry was vandalised. Obviously, this isn't directly Council's fault but I think greater awareness of the importance of the culture in this area may have prevented this." – Gosford participant

"Aboriginal people and their heritage have been put down and not catered for, for a long time in our community. It is really important that we improve this for the future." – Wyong participant

3.1.5 Opportunities for young people and teenagers

Firstly, participants mentioned having activities for young people and teenagers in the Central Coast. Most of these activities were outdoor, physical activities, however some also cited the need for a better social scene or nightlife for younger people in the area.

"I think there should be way more activities for kids – things like places they can go camping, water parks, just parks in general they can go and run around." – Wyong participant

"Back in my day there were places around you could go to and have a great night out. As a young person I could go out on the coast. My kids now will usually have to travel, sometimes even to Sydney just to have a good night out with their friends." – Gosford participant

"As a teenager still myself, there is really nothing to do. There are no hubs, no entertainment centres. A lot of the options we do have are high-cost activities which we just don't really have the money for." – Gosford participant

There was also discussion about opportunities regarding education and employment.

"There's not a lot of tertiary education on the Coast - most kids have to move or travel to either Sydney or Newcastle. I know we're getting the new university and the TAFE, but I think we need more." – Wyong participant

"I have a teenage son who wants a job and can't get one. They need more access to training so they can get jobs, or for there to somehow just be more jobs available." – Gosford participant

Again, five of the eight Workshop tables chose to place this element in the areas for focused improvement quadrant. The remaining three placed this in the areas requiring less urgent attention. Overall, it would appear that while opportunities for young people were perceived to be unsatisfactory, there was some disagreement regarding its importance.

"This is so important. I talk to my kids now and ask if they will stay in the Coast. They say there is no way they will. I think this also feeds into affordable housing in the future but also just the opportunities. There aren't as many jobs going around, there aren't as many opportunities for education. It's important that our kids want to stay in this area." – Wyong participant

"A lot of the parks you go to now, at night, they will be filled with teenagers doing things they shouldn't be doing. Maybe if they had more opportunities, such as jobs they had to go to, they wouldn't be doing these things. I think improving the opportunities for young people would help in a lot of other aspects." – Gosford participant

3.1.6 Cycleways/ footpaths

Participants felt that improving the cycleways and footpaths in the Central Coast area was something that should be included in the CSP.

Some participants indicated that the current quality of many cycleways and footpaths was not up to a standard they would expect, or simply did not exist.

"I live on the same road as a school and there is only a footpath on one side of the road. A lot of the kids will just walk on the road which is pretty dangerous." – Gosford participant

"A lot of the footpaths aren't properly maintained. I think a lot could be done to improve these." – Wyong participant

Others felt that improving this element would help with increasing accessibility for everyone and was similar to having an effective public transport system.

"These could be used to link between different towns. At the moment it's difficult to get to a lot of places if you don't have a car. Maybe if there were more bike paths more people would be riding their bikes." – Wyong participant

Five of the eight Workshop tables indicated this element belonged in the areas for focused improvement, suggesting that this is an area of low satisfaction but high importance.

"There are a lot of footpaths which could probably be upgraded. I think this really helps because this is how some people get around so you need to make sure it is a high level." – Wyong participant

"If we could improve this, I think it would be really beneficial to a lot of people. Not everyone owns a car and for some, walking and riding their bike is the only way to get around." – Gosford participant

3.1.7 Keep up with technology and innovation

Keeping up with technology and innovation was seen to be a broad element that could encompass many aspects. Specifically, participants cited technological issues currently with the quality of internet connection, social media engagement from Council and electric vehicle charging ports.

"We need a speedy internet connection. I feel we don't have that at the moment." – Wyong participant

"I think Council probably needs to do better at engaging with people that live here through social media. I feel a lot more could be done for them to have a bigger presence." – Wyong participant

"The closest electric car charging port to me was Hardys Bay or Gosford. In the future there are going to be more of these cars so it's important for Council to invest in these. I know there are other councils that do this." – Gosford participant

Some also felt the Central Coast should invest in or have its own 'Tech Hub'. This was described as a base where technology-based companies could locate, to create jobs and a 'buzz', in order to bring those who are technically minded into the area. They also suggested introducing university or TAFE courses in the technology field, to ensure that the Central Coast is not being left behind in technological advancement.

"A Tech Hub is needed on the Central Coast. There is a lot of room. It would involve investment and could bring a lot of money and jobs to the area." – Gosford participant

"I think we could really use this more on the northern end of the coast. It would attract a lot more people to live and work there." – Gosford participant

In total, five of the eight Workshop tables placed this element in the areas for focused improvement quadrant. The remaining three tables placed this element in areas to maintain. As such, this element was seen to be of high importance to participants, with varying levels of current satisfaction (leaning towards lower currently).

"This is so important for the future. It is the way the world is moving in now. I think if we kept up with tech and innovation, we could attract more people to live here, especially young people." – Wyong participant

3.1.8 Protection and maintenance of bushland

The protection and maintenance of bushland was seen by Workshop participants to be highly important.

Some respondents felt that there was a need for further investment into his element, indicating poor satisfaction currently.

"More funding is needed for bush regeneration. We need to look after a lot of bushland in this area." – Wyong participant

Some related this also to Council governance, indicating that perhaps rezoning needs to be reviewed.

"They're rezoning some things in Wyong at the moment. I know there are quite a few people who aren't happy with this." – Wyong participant

Again, five of the eight tables placed the protection and maintenance of bushland in the areas for focused improvement quadrant. The remaining three decided this element belonged in areas to maintain. Overall, this indicated that this element is of high importance, with mixed levels of satisfaction.

"The bush is so important for us. It's one of our biggest draws as a tourist destination and for people deciding they want to live here. We need to take care of it." – Gosford participant

"Protecting bushland also helps with protecting the Aboriginal heritage in our area. I think it's safe to say we all love the bush around here, so it is important to protect." – Wyong participant

3.1.9 Public Transport

Public transport was an interesting element for participants and generated a lot of discussion.

Participants mostly noted that the interconnectedness of the public transport system in the Central Coast is lacking, making it difficult to travel between towns.

"We are such a spread out area. If you don't have a car you really have no choice. It is really difficult for people to get around." – Wyong participant

"There needs to be more buses that go to areas that are further away. It is hard to get a bus somewhere far because there are so few." – Gosford participant

> *"We have the train line that comes up from Sydney and goes all the way to Newcastle. But what happens after you get off the train here? The trains don't go straight to the coast, where a lot of people are travelling. They need more buses that go from the train station and kind of sprawl out." – Wyong participant*

Others felt that special consideration needed to be given to public transport given the customers these services usually provide for.

> *"People who use public transport are those who don't have a car, who are usually an older demographic. I have a neighbour who I often do her grocery shopping for, just because she would have to get the bus to the shops, and the buses are too unreliable." – Wyong participant*

> *"It's important to remember that a lot of Uni and school students use the buses to get around. These kids don't have cars and can often travel quite far. It's important we improve this for everyone." – Gosford participant*

> *"If a tourist wanted to come here they would have to have a car to get around. I think that's probably a turn-off from coming here. If we had better public transport services maybe we'd get more tourists which would help our local economy." – Wyong participant*

Five of the eight Workshop tables indicated that public transport is an area for focused improvement in the Central Coast. This suggests that currently there is low satisfaction in this area, which is highly important. Two of the remaining tables placed this in the areas to maintain quadrant, which reinforces the idea that this is a highly important area.

> *"More rural areas of the coast really need way more public transport. It isn't good enough." – Wyong participant*

> *"A lot of benefits will come from improving our public transport. It could have a lot of spill-on effects." – Gosford participant*

3.1.10 Support for local businesses and employment

Another theme that was felt should be added to the CSP was providing greater support for local businesses and or businesses employing local people. This aspect was also closely aligned to 'a thriving economy'.

> *"There is no mention of jobs - supporting local business is really important, not big companies. A lot more marketing and promotion of the area in general." – Wyong participant*

> *"Supporting employment for all people, also for older people. Retaining employment and employees, that is the biggest problem with my business." – Wyong participant*

3.2 Areas to maintain

The elements that the majority of workshop participants agreed were still important, but areas to maintain by Council rather than improve, included the following:

- Appealing parks and green spaces
- Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches
- Protection of built heritage
- Disability access and inclusion

3.2.1 Appealing parks and green spaces

Participants felt that having appealing parks and green spaces is an important element for the area.

Some made comments regarding the current appearance of some parks and indicated that improvements need to be made.

> *"There are quite a few weeds at parks near me. When they do weed, they leave piles of soil everywhere." – Gosford participant*

> *"The gardens are usually not very well maintained, there is rubbish in a lot of the parks. I think this has decreased in the last few years." – Wyong participant*

Five of the eight Workshop tables indicated that having appealing parks and green spaces should be in the areas to maintain quadrant. Two tables placed this in the lower priority areas.

> *"This is pretty important, but I think we already have it." – Gosford participant*

> *"I think this is linked to having a sense of pride about where we live. We want to be able to go to the parks and enjoy looking at all the greenery. It makes you feel good about living here" – Wyong participant*

> *"I don't think this is super important. There are other areas which probably need a bit more attention from Council." – Wyong participant*

3.2.2 Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches

The protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches was seen to be a highly important element. Some noted that given the increasing population in the Central Coast, accompanied by the need for further development, this was an especially important element to consider in the near future.

> *"We really need to preserve the environment in the face of rapid development." – Wyong participant*

> *"With all the new apartments and all the construction, we need to make sure we still keep the waterways and beaches as a big focus." – Gosford participant*

Five of the eight Workshop tables placed this element in the areas to maintain. Although Council is seen as doing well in this aspect currently, this is an area of high importance and should be kept at a high level. Two of the remaining three tables placed this into the areas for focused improvement, which again suggests high importance, but denotes lower satisfaction.

> *"You see some litter on the beaches now but I think all in all it isn't the worst." – Wyong participant*

"This is so important for us. We are an area that is known for its beaches so we need to make sure that these are kept at a really good standard. People want to visit and live here because of our beaches." – Gosford participant

3.2.3 Protection of built heritage

The protection of built heritage had mixed perceptions from the workshop participants. Some felt they were not aware of the existence of any built heritage in the community.

"Do we have built heritage?" – Gosford participant

Others questioned Council's previous and ongoing commitment to actually protecting the built heritage there is in the Central Coast.

"I feel like this isn't exemplified in our current Council. The Library is a Council building in Gosford and is set to be knocked down. I would really like to know why that decision has been made." – Gosford participant

Despite this, some were pleased with the level at which the local built heritage is protected.

"I don't really hear too much about this, but I think that's probably a good thing. If I'm not hearing much about it then I assume Council is doing okay." – Wyong participant

Although there was some confusion around the existence of, and the satisfaction with Council protecting the built heritage, this was seen to be an area of high importance in the coast.

"We really have to look after this, at the end of the day it is our history as an area. My family has been in this area for a while and personally I'm proud to be from here. The built heritage is a part of that." – Wyong participant

Five of the eight workshop tables placed this element in areas to maintain, suggesting high satisfaction and high importance.

3.2.4 Disability access and inclusion

Participants agreed that disability access and inclusion is an important element for the CSP and highlighted the need for the area to be accessible to all residents.

"This is so important. We need to make sure that everyone that lives here has access to everything we have to offer." – Gosford participant

Some highlighted the perceived current lack of infrastructure for disabled people in the Central Coast area.

"I think there needs to be more things like ramps and disabled toilets. It doesn't seem like there is enough at the moment." – Wyong participant

"Disabled parking definitely needs to be improved. In a lot of car parks there will usually only be one spot. I think there needs to be more available for people who need these." – Gosford participant

Half of the tables placed this element in the areas to maintain, although most of the remaining felt it was a focused area for improvement.

"I think we do alright here honestly. I still think it's important but I can't see any problem with the access disabled people have." – Wyong participant

3.3 Lower priority areas

In total there were six elements which Workshop participants identified as being lower priority areas. This suggests that while there is strong satisfaction in these areas, they are of relatively low importance compared to other elements.

- A sense of pride
- Peace and quiet
- Strong connections to family and friends
- Family friendly
- Great work and living environment
- Mix of cultures and communities

3.3.1 A sense of pride

Feeling a strong sense of pride in the area was felt to be an interesting element and it was agreed that this could mean different things to different people. A common theme to emerge was that a sense of pride was an outcome of other elements rather than an element in itself. Overall, most did feel some pride for the Central Coast area and enjoyed living there.

Specifically, some thought that pride was related to the appearance of the area including buildings maintenance, maintenance of gardens and green spaces, rubbish, littering and they were not satisfied with this aspect.

> *"It's the overall appearance of things like weeds… untidiness around the area, gardens not maintained, rubbish lying around the place." – Gosford participant*

> *"The general appearance has gone backwards. I have been here for 51 years and it has gone backwards. This is also linked to a sense of pride." - Wyong participant*

> *"Untidy areas – aged and lacking in care, these both lead to a sense of pride in the area." – Gosford participant*

Some felt that pride was particularly lacking in some of the smaller local areas including mountain villages, as well as The Entrance local area.

> *"There's a lack of pride in the mountain village areas – that need improvement… there's a lack of kerbing on some roads." – Wyong participant*

> *"The entrance is slightly disappointing also, it's not as good a presence it has empty blocks of land." – Wyong participant*

> *"There are pockets of development areas that are lacking in appeal, it feels empty, rubbish accumulating and streetscape is really lacking." – Wyong participant*

Having a clean, well maintained area was also felt to affect tourism and in turn the local economy, and some indicated that a strong sense of pride also helped to build a stronger sense of community.

> *"If Council improves the local communities, the sense of community spirit builds and could solve some of the issues." – Gosford participant.*

Overall however, it was deemed a lower importance high satisfaction element and most tables (six out of eight) placed it in the 'lower priority' (top left) quadrant.

"I'm satisfied with this at the moment but also it's not really the most important thing compared to some others…. a sense of pride should flow from everything else." – Wyong participant

3.3.2 Peace and quiet

Initial thoughts on this element were that it should not be considered a highly important element. Some participants were confused about why this element would be included in the CSP.

"I get why it's there. I think a lot of people like this area because it is less busy, but also I don't think this is something Council really needs to focus on." – Wyong participant

"I'm not really sure why this is here. To keep peace and quiet we would need to stop development and growth, which really is not beneficial." – Gosford participant

Most (six of the eight) Workshop tables placed having peace and quiet on the Central Coast in the lower priority areas quadrant. This implies that while most participants felt highly satisfied with this element, this was perceived as of relatively low importance.

"I'm pretty happy with this at the moment, but it's also not that important for us." – Wyong participant

3.3.3 Strong connections to family and friends

This element was not really thought to be something that Council could do directly, but like the others in this section, was more likely to be an outcome relating to other elements. There were comments that developing and maintaining connections to family and friends was an important part of living in any community and they felt that they had this already.

There were some who felt that mental health facilities needed to be sufficient and improved so that all community members felt connected.

"Mental health facilities on the coast need to be improved – some people do have strong connection to family and friends but others fall through the cracks." – Wyong participant

Most participants (five out of the eight tables), placed this element in the top left quadrant – the 'lower priority areas', indicating that compared to all the others it was of lower importance and higher satisfaction.

3.3.4 Family friendly

Most participants thought that this was important for any area, but again intangible – something related to other elements, such as having a safe community and offering opportunities to young people and teenagers. Most felt that being family friendly and a safe community went hand in hand, and that the Central Coast could not have one without the other.

"It won't be family friendly unless it is a safe area. I personally wouldn't go to some places on the coast by myself, let alone with my kids." – Gosford participant

With regards to offering opportunities to young people and teenagers, participants felt there should be more child-friendly activities on the coast.

"There should be more activities. They need more parks, water slides and so on." – Wyong participant

"My boy is 11 years old and quite sporty. Every sport he does, it costs a fortune. Also, there needs to be more facilities for them to do this. I would live more basketball courts or bike riding tracks for them to use." – Wyong participant

Overall, four of the eight Workshop tables placed the Central Coast being family friendly in the lower priority areas. Three of the remaining tables placed this in the areas to maintain quadrant. As such, this implies that satisfaction with the area being family friendly is quite high, with differing levels of perceived importance.

> *"It is a pretty safe and family friendly area for the most part." – Wyong participant*

> *"I think we could probably look at improving this, but it's not too bad, and there are other areas which need more work." – Gosford participant*

3.3.5 Great work and living environment

Participants mostly agreed that this should be an element included in the CSP.

Some participants outlined the need for a focus on this in the near future, given the population growth on the Central Coast.

> *"With so many people moving here now we really need to focus on infrastructure. We need more facilities. We especially need more entertainment venues. This is something we lack at the moment." – Wyong participant*

A few participants suggested investing in and creating a Tech Hub in the Central Coast area and felt this would be a way to have a great working environment.

> *"I think a Tech Hub is a great idea. This would attract more people to the area and living here, but also I think that people would probably enjoy working there." – Gosford participant*

Others questioned whether 'working' and 'living' should be separated, and this should form two separate elements.

> *"Working and living are two very different things. I think maybe these could be separated. Personally, I think people would have different expectations for their work and their social life outside of work." – Gosford participant*

Four of the eight Workshop tables decided this element belonged in the lower priority areas. Three of the remaining tables chose to assign the element to the areas to maintain quadrant. This suggests that this area had high satisfaction, with different levels of perceived importance.

3.3.6 Mix of cultures and communities

While it was generally agreed that the Central Coast had a good mix of different types of people – perhaps because it is a cheaper place to live than Sydney, some felt that it was traditionally not a particularly multi-cultural area although it was improving in this regard, which was considered a positive. Inclusion of and greater presence of the Aboriginal community in the Central Coast was also mentioned as important and in need of improvement.

> *"People move here because it is cheaper, you get a diverse community just by default." – Gosford participant*

> *"It's not very multicultural, it would be good to entice multiculture into the area…. we have no exhibition of culture - people don't feel that we are accepting of a multicultural community." – Gosford participant*

> *"A strong voice of the Aboriginal community…. We don't see or meet enough Aboriginal people." – Gosford participant*

There were some comments that this element was not something that Council could do a great deal about, except for perhaps funding cultural celebrations and events.

> *"I'm not sure if that's something council can plan or even advocate for" – Wyong participant*

Perhaps for this reason, many placed it in the top left quadrant, deeming it a lower priority area (four out of the eight tables), that is, lower importance and higher satisfaction.

3.4 Areas requiring less urgent attention

There was only one element shown that at least half of the Workshop tables agreed would fall into areas requiring less urgent attention: vibrant nightlife. Four of the eight Workshop tables decided to assign this element to this quadrant. However, there were actually polarised views on this element as three of the remaining tables put it into areas for focused improvement. This shows mixed importance levels but low levels of satisfaction (seven of the eight tables).

3.4.1 Vibrant night life

Participants related having a vibrant nightlife to the element for offering opportunities to young people. There was a feeling that having a vibrant nightlife would help this.

> *"There aren't a lot of places for young people to go out here. There are no hubs or entertainment centres for young people." – Wyong participant*

Some specifically used Gosford as an example of an area in the Central Coast in which the nightlife could be improved.

> *"Gosford is a ghost town. It doesn't help that it's a bit dodgy at night either. Even if they did have events on or restaurants to go to, I probably wouldn't walk around at night." – Gosford participant*

> *"Gosford is a bit of a black hole. It is our capital city but what is there? Who wants to go there? It probably needs some revitalising." – Wyong participant*

Although half of the tables thought this was an element of lower importance, there were many who felt it is highly important to the Central Coast and should be improved.

> *"Having a vibrant night life is really important for attracting people to the area and attracting young people specifically. Why would someone want to move here if there's nothing to do?" – Gosford participant*

3.5 Elements that did not consistently fall into a single quadrant

There were a number of elements that, when looking at the table allocations, do not appear to fall into a single quadrant. For the purposes of this report, elements have been sorted under the heading of one of the four quadrants if half (4) or more of the Workshop tables assigned them to that quadrant.

In total, there were six such elements which did not fall into a single quadrant regarding their importance and level of satisfaction.

- Aesthetically pleasing built environment
- A safe community

- Retain rural/ agricultural connection
- Easy access to nature
- Proximity to services e.g. shops, cafes, health services, businesses
- Parking

3.5.1 Aesthetically pleasing built environment

After some discussion at the table level and further deliberation on the definition of an aesthetically pleasing environment, participants had mixed opinions on where in the quadrants it should be placed.

> *"There are quite a few vacant blocks I drive past on my way into The Entrance. It looks disgusting. It looks old." – Wyong participant*

> *"A lot of the apartments you see look really similar. They all look the same just copy and paste, there's no differentiation and it looks quite ugly." – Gosford participant*

As above, the placing of this element resulted in no consensus from Workshop participants. In total, three tables placed this in the areas for focused improvement, three tables in the areas to maintain, and the remaining two in the areas requiring urgent attention. As a result, it is fair to assume that having an aesthetically pleasing built environment leans more towards being of high importance rather than low, however there are certainly mixed opinions on the current satisfaction levels.

Interestingly, the three tables on which this element was placed with having lower satisfaction were in Gosford, yet those three with higher satisfaction were all from the Wyong workshop.

3.5.2 A safe community

Having a safe community was agreed to be a highly important element with participants also linking this to the area being family friendly.

Some indicated that they currently have low satisfaction with this element, and the coast being a safe area. Despite this however, most stated they only felt unsafe in certain areas, not all.

> *"There are some areas I wouldn't feel safe walking in at night." – Gosford participant*

> *"In the middle of Gosford CBD, it's pretty unsafe at night. There are a lot of people who are quite rowdy." – Gosford participant*

A few participants questioned the current methods of keeping the Central Coast a safe area for all.

> *"I don't know whether we have much CCTV or police presence to monitor unsafe behaviour. Maybe there needs to be more." – Gosford participant*

Overall, three of the Workshop tables placed having a safe community in the areas for focused improvement quadrant, and another three decided to assign this element to the areas to maintain quadrant. Both quadrants suggest that this element is of high importance to participants, however they were split as to how satisfied they were currently. The two remaining tables both placed this element in the areas requiring less urgent attention, indicating the remaining tables felt low satisfaction, however also felt that this was of lower importance.

> *"Who would want to live here if it isn't safe?" – Gosford participant*

> *"There are only a few problem areas. I don't think this is a huge problem. Maybe more so for people who live there." – Wyong participant*

"We're safer than a lot of other areas, I don't think this is something we need to be really concerned about, only if it gets worse." – Gosford participant

3.5.3 Retain Rural/ Agricultural Connection

Initial thoughts from Workshop participants were that this element was confusing. They were unsure exactly what retaining the rural and agricultural connection refers to, and some questioned whether this should be included as part of the CSP.

"I'm not sure what this really means. Why is this included in this document?" – Gosford participant

Others did understand, however, and most noted that while the Central Coast has previously been a farming community, this is not the way that it is headed.

"More people are moving here. It's becoming a more modern place. I'm not sure how we can keep that connection while still becoming a modern area for people to live in." – Gosford participant

"The Central Coast used to be a farming community, but this is dwindling away slowly. I don't think this is an entirely bad thing though – we've got to become a more modern place" – Wyong participant

Some felt that while urbanisation is a necessity, the Central Coast should still retain certain areas in which there should be a focus on keeping this part of the area's identity.

"We need to keep these communities. Of course, there are going to be urban communities but we don't want these to be in places like Somersby or Wiseman's Ferry." – Gosford participant

"There needs to be an understanding of what farmers need from Council. We still need to keep this in some areas." – Wyong participant

There was no consensus agreement at the table level regarding this element. In total, three tables placed this element in the areas to maintain, indicating high satisfaction and high importance. Inversely, three tables placed this in the areas requiring less urgent attention, suggesting low satisfaction and low importance. The remaining two tables placed the element in the remaining two quadrants.

3.5.4 Easy access to nature

Participants felt that having easy access to nature was an important part of the Central Coast's identity and a benefit of living in the area.

"People live here because we are so close to nature. I think we attract a lot of new people here and get a lot of tourists because we do still have this." – Wyong participant

Some commented on the ability to travel to nature using public transport.

"I think this relates back to public transport, but you really can't get to some places without a car. I'm not sure how they would do it for the National Parks but it would be great to get a bus to some of them." – Gosford participant

On the table level, three placed having easy access to nature in the areas to maintain quadrant, and another three in the lower priority areas quadrant. The remaining two tables placed this in the areas requiring less urgent attention. From these results, we can see that participants mostly agreed that this is an element in which they currently have high satisfaction. There were differing opinions on its importance, however,

although more of the tables appeared to believe it was among one of the less important aspects, relative to others.

> *"I mean, there is nature all around us where we live. I think compared to some of the other things we're being shown it isn't as important. There are areas of the coast that need way more attention." – Gosford participant*

3.5.5 Proximity to services e.g. shops, cafes, health services, businesses

Participants felt initially that proximity to services such as shops, cafes, health services and businesses was an element that should be included in the CSP.

In particular, some participants focused on the perceived lack of health and mental health services, which was also decided to be an 'additional element' suggested by participants.

> *"There needs to be more medical places. We need to be able to access things and not feel like a nuisance." – Wyong participant*

> *"We don't have enough hospitals and GPs. I think there should really be more of both. There should also be more local chemists." – Wyong participant*

Some also outlined the need for more retail services such as restaurants, cafes and shopping centres.

> *"A lot of restaurants and cafes end up leaving some of the villages. I think this is partly due to them not having enough customers so it's really a business decision, but the people in those areas still need to be able to access those things." – Wyong participant*

> *"Some cafes and restaurants will just charge so much because they don't have any competition in the area. They know that people will come because they have no other option." – Gosford participant*

> *"Gosford needs to have its own big shopping centre, like Erina Fair. We need a big shopping centre we can go to for anything we need." – Gosford participant*

Proximity to services was an element in which there was no consensus agreement between the tables. Three of the eight decided this element should belong in the areas to maintain, implying both high importance and high satisfaction. Two of the tables assigned this element to the lower priority areas and another two to areas requiring less urgent attention, both suggesting this element is one of lower relative importance.

> *"I don't think we're doing poorly here at the moment. It could always be better, but I think we're nit-picking." – Gosford participant*

> *"Overall, I'm pretty happy. I do think we need more health services, but I feel like that should be its own separate thing here." – Wyong participant*

3.5.6 Parking

Most participants felt that parking was an important element, although there was mixed satisfaction with it.

Some made comments regarding the need for parking to be kept in mind given the increased housing development in the coast.

> *"With all the new apartments, Council needs to make sure that developers are accounting for the extra parking needed. This could make it really difficult to find parking in those areas." – Gosford participant*

Others linked this element to needing more disability access, in that more disabled parking spaces are needed on the Central Coast.

> *"I have a disabled son so for me, access to disabled parking spaces is really important and frankly not good enough." – Wyong participant*

As mentioned, this element had mixed opinions regarding its importance and current satisfaction. Three of the eight Workshop tables assigned parking to the areas to maintain, implying high importance and high satisfaction. Two tables placed this in the areas for focused improvement quadrant, another two in the areas requiring less urgent attention and one in the lower priority quadrants. In summary, five tables placed this in a quadrant signifying higher importance.

> *"I think in general this is an area that we're not doing too poorly in at the moment. We have so much space it would be difficult to not find a park. This isn't to say this isn't important though, we need to make sure this is kept at a high standard." – Wyong participant*

3.6 Other additional CSP elements for consideration

3.6.1 Wyong and Gosford Workshops

The following other additional elements were suggested across the Wyong and Gosford workshops, however none of these elements were allocated to the 'areas for focused improvement' quadrant.:

- **More health services and mental health services.** While some thought this aspect could also be covered off under the element 'proximity to services' many felt it should be a separate point in the CSP. In particular, access to mental health services was thought to be lacking and also the services very costly – getting a mental health plan at the GP costs more than a standard appointment and then there is still a large gap to pay for each appointment with a mental health professional. Long term services were also thought to be lacking.

  > *"Mental health is so underfunded. Ever tried to get mental health services particularly for kids?.... it needs to be much more accessible." - Wyong participant*

  > *"You can go to an optometrist and get your eyes checked but you can't get your mental health assessed. You ring the phone numbers the GP gives you and they don't ring you back. They are all booked up. I called 10 mental health practitioners and they are all booked up." – Wyong participant*

- **Supporting vulnerable communities**. Similarly, this was felt to be something that needed including in the CSP as a separate item because certain vulnerable groups in the community need greater support, in particular the elderly, homeless people and those with mental health issues. It was suggested that some unused buildings could be used as shelter for the homeless and they could be given work such as cleaning up nature strips.

  > *"Supporting vulnerable communities really needs to be ramped up especially in Gosford. There are a lot of homeless people. I think this is really important. It is not as bad as other areas of Australia but this is still really important and Council could make it easier to help these people." - Gosford participant*

- **Transparent development guidelines.** This theme emerged more often amongst Gosford workshop participants and included comments relating to building regulations, zoning, restrictions. Some indicated that the development rules and guidelines needed better long-term planning by Council and

engagement with the community. There were felt to be some areas where the zoning was inappropriate and inconsistent.

> *"Building regulations, they're ripping up buildings and putting new things up with very little thought about it. There is a lot of shadowing." - Gosford participant*

> *"It is about planning – they zone areas and it is very specific, with so many restrictions." - Gosford participant*

> *"There's not enough about development (in the CSP) – it is a fear and an anxiety for anyone who lives on the Central Coast – however there's not enough infrastructure to support the development and not enough transparency." - Gosford participant*

- **Vibrant arts and cultural scene.** Some participants felt that Council should try to encourage or foster more arts and cultural events or initiatives. Whilst there was a perception that Terrigal was quite vibrant, it was thought that other areas on the Coast needed improvement in this regard. In particular, this was believed to be important for the younger community members and important for a growing population. For others, this theme was felt to be included under the element 'vibrant nightlife' and 'more opportunities for young people'.

> *"Events that celebrate, highlight and bring together the multicultural part of our community – arts and food." - Gosford participant*

- **Well maintained, clean, tidy environment and community infrastructure.** Cleanliness and maintenance of the area and community infrastructure was also felt to be worthy of inclusion in the CSP. Many indicated that some areas were overgrown, unkempt and looking 'unloved'. This point was also thought to be covered off under some of the other elements such as 'appealing parks and spaces', 'aesthetically pleasing built environment' and 'maintenance of built heritage'.

> *"Pockets of development areas are lacking in appeal, empty, rubbish accumulating and streetscape is really lacking….. there's also a lack of maintenance of local areas." - Wyong participant*

3.6.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

There were a few elements added by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants that were felt to be important additions to the CSP. Each of these elements were thought of as 'areas for focused improvement':

- **Focus on improving north area of Coast/Wyong council independent.** One respondent felt that the merging of Gosford city and Wyong councils was a bad idea as too much focus is now towards southern areas of the Central Coast compared to northern areas.

  "I don't think they would ever go back but I really think that merging the two councils was a really bad idea. It seems as though now they're prioritising the south more than the north. I think more consideration should be given to improving the north as well because it is quite often overlooked."

- **Frequency of buses/connecting to other areas.** This aspect was described in relation to improving northern areas of the coast, as discussed above. The respondent felt that bus services are particularly lacking in more remote northern areas and need to be improved so that people living in or visiting these areas can travel easily.

  "I really think there needs to be more coverage for the northern end of the coast. I will see maybe one or two buses a day go past my house and I live on a main road in the north."

- **Partnership and empowerment of Aboriginal community.** It was felt that council needs to better cooperate with and represent the Aboriginal community in their governance, so that Aboriginal people within the Central Coast may feel empowered to make meaningful changes as opposed to feeling ignored.

  "Council could work better with the Aboriginal community… there needs to be more representation of Aboriginal people in Council."

3.6.3 Small Businesses

Several additional elements were proposed by interviewees from Central Coast businesses, all of which were deemed to be 'areas for focused improvement':

- **Aquaculture business supported.** One respondent endorsed the aquaculture industry as an important area for council to focus on. They expressed that aquaculture business is a substantial contributor to tourism in the Central Coast and has wider significance to Indigenous heritage and environmental restoration.

  "Rock oyster production and heritage is a significant part of the aquacultural industry and the wider Central Coast. It stands for Indigenous use and heritage… There are benefits to the council through the oysters… they're restorative, they can help waterways through filter feeding."

- **Marketing Central Coast businesses.** An area seen as needing improvement is the increase in awareness and available information of local businesses, for example posters or QR codes at rest stops along the highway could provide information about local activities and shops.

  "There are a lot of rest stops on the freeways going past the Central Coast from Sydney/ Newcastle. I think they could have more information here about local businesses. Most of us are kind of off the track, so we need to build more awareness that we actually exist."

- **Grants – tender process.** Council was viewed by one participant as lacking transparency in their process of tender procurement. They felt that Council could provide more information regarding their decisions to engage certain organisations.

"I think the big thing in here is transparency to all of us. They always use the same production company which I don't think is very good."

- **Time with development application approvals.** The process of Council approving development applications was considered slow and bureaucratic by one.

  "These take way too long and are way too bureaucratic. They don't allow themselves to move on, and it really hurts us as the industry we are in relies on having the appropriate infrastructure."

- **Cultural sensitivity.** An interviewee felt that Council does not meaningfully consider all cultural groups on the Central Coast in their governance – any attempt to be culturally sensitive is seen as superficial and mainly for good appearances.

  "I think that Council can do a lot more to actually be mindful of all the groups we have on the Coast. Not just acting to look good, but genuinely being caring and inclusive of all these people."

- **Waste innovation – circular economy.** One participant sees recycling and reusing of waste as an effective way to reduce costs – an area which they feel council needs to focus on more.

  "More investment in circular economy, waste reuse and ways to reduce cost by recycling. Council need to do more in this space."

- **Support for local industries to help employ locals.** A respondent expressed belief that council could use local suppliers more often and provide greater assistance for local businesses to be compliant.

  "Council should look at their own procurement processes for suppliers - provide more help to local suppliers to comply, so they can use local businesses e.g., Indigenous content - businesses need help with that."

- **Higher education opportunities.** It was indicated by one interviewee that council could focus on encouraging more education providers to move into areas on the Central Coast, such as Gosford.

3.6.4 Youth Focus Groups

Participants in the Youth Focus Group did not feel there were any necessary additions to the existing list of potential elements in the CSP.

4 Prioritising the areas of focus

The next session in the workshops, in-depth interviews and the focus group, focussed on prioritising the elements that participants considered 'areas for focussed improvement'. Each table/group or respondent was provided with 20 tokens and asked to allocate the tokens to a consistent set of elements, pointing out that they only have a limited number of tokens just like Council has a limited budget.

As shown in the table above (Figure 6), the following elements were felt to be top priority for Council (receiving the greatest number of tokens):

- Responsible Council governance
- Opportunities for young people
- Balanced housing development
- Affordable housing
- Supporting local business and employment
- Protection of Aboriginal heritage

'Responsible Council governance' gained the greatest number of tokens across both the Gosford and Wyong workshops (a total of 32 out of a possible 160 tokens).

Following this, relatively high priority was given to 'opportunities for young people' (21 out of 160 tokens), balanced housing development (16 out of 160 tokens), and affordable housing (15 out of 160 tokens).

Table 2: Token exercise results - prioritising the areas to focus on

Potential Elements	**Workshops** Number of tokens (Out of 160 in total)	**Aboriginal community** (n=6) 120 tokens	**Business interviews** (n=6) 120 tokens	**Youth group** (n=7) 20 tokens
Responsible Council governance	**32**			
Opportunities for young people	**21**	**7**	**3**	
Balanced housing development	**16**	**10**	**3**	**2**
Affordable housing^	**15**	**12**	**8**	**4**
Supporting local business and employment^	**15**			
Protection of Aboriginal heritage	**11**	**8**	**9**	**1**
Cycleways/ footpaths*	**9**		**1**	
Public transport^	**8**	**14**		
Aesthetically pleasing built environment*	**8**	**1**		
Mental health services / more health services^	**8**			
Supporting vulnerable communities*	**7**			
Keep up with technology and innovation^	**6**			
Protection and maintenance of bushland^	**4**		**2**	

Potential Elements	**Workshops** Number of tokens (Out of 160 in total)	**Aboriginal community** (n=6) 120 tokens	**Business interviews** (n=6) 120 tokens	**Youth group** (n=7) 20 tokens
Family friendly		**14**	**3**	**3**
Parking		**10**	**4**	
Protection of waterways, beaches, bushlands		**9**	**11**	**2**
Mix of cultures/communities		**7**	**5**	**1**
A safe community		**6**	**3**	**4**
Maintenance and cleanliness		**3.5**	**3**	**3**
Proximity to services (cafes, shops, etc.)		**3**		
Disabled access		**3**		
Aesthetics – parks and green spaces		**2.5**	**2**	
Vibrant nightlife		**2**	**9**	
A sense of pride		**1**		
Retain rural/agricultural connection			**3**	
Accountability of council			**4**	
Others added				
Waste innovation – circular economy			**5**	
Support for local industries to help employ locals			**5**	
Cultural sensitivity			**3**	
Grants – tender process transparency			**3**	
Time with DA approvals			**3**	
Aquaculture business supported			**4**	
Marketing central coast businesses			**4**	
Focus on improving north area of Coast/Wyong council independent		**4**		
Partnership and empowerment of Aboriginal community		**3**		
Higher education opportunities			**20#**	

*These elements were only allocated tokens from Gosford workshop participants
^These elements were only allocated tokens from Wyong workshop participants
Note that all of these tokens were allocated by one participant

5 Ideas/suggestions to address the prioritsed CSP elements

Once participants had allocated tokens to each element based on their perceived importance, participants were then asked if they had any ideas or suggestions as to how Council could improve each of the priority elements.

5.1 Workshops

5.1.1 Responsible council governance

Among attendees of the Gosford and Wyong workshops, responsible council governance was seen as the most important area for focused improvement with the majority of tokens allocated towards this element. Respondents often expressed that they would like to see better leadership with more transparency of and accountability for Council's actions.

> *"Transparency, auditing, reporting on budget and expenditure… Breakdown on rates maybe – like taxes, show how the rates are allocated." – Gosford participant*

> *"More engagement and CPNs (corruption prevention networks) with how they are spending, what they are doing." – Gosford participant*

There were also common suggestions for better communication and engagement from Council, rather than relying on people having to go to the website, which they say is confusing to use.

> *"Transparency. More community engagement for decision making. Meaningful engagement so you are not just told one thing and something else happens. Sometimes they are 'tick a box'." – Gosford participant*

> *"They need to listen to what people are saying about them. Look at social media." – Wyong participant*

> *"More active communication, letters, emails. A breakdown on rates maybe, like taxes, show how the rates are allocated. Better communication." – Gosford participant*

Some respondents indicated that the management of developers was an issue and that they could contribute more to the community.

> *"Contribution from developers – green space, business space available, contribution to the arts/space – renewable energy – solar, batteries, charging points." – Gosford participant*

> *"Development decisions need to pass the pub test. If the guy at the pub thinks that there is something shady going on, then there probably is. Selling of assets for a $1 doesn't pass the pub test." – Gosford participant*

> *"How much do those developers fund councillors – we need donation transparency." – Gosford participant*

5.1.2 Improving opportunities for young people

Improving opportunities for young people was seen as a highly important aspect to be included in the CSP by both Gosford and Wyong workshop attendees. Most recommendations were to increase the availability and quality of opportunities involving jobs, education and training.

> *"Provide more vocational training that isn't TAFE or schools." – Wyong participant*

> *"Offer education about traineeships and public workshops, brainstorming sessions, business expos." – Wyong participant*

> *"Building education facilities – universities/trades/apprenticeships." – Gosford participant*

> *"Finding a job to get a future career on the coast is really hard. There needs to be more overt discussion about how employers are looking for staff and how people are looking. It needs to match… 'Seek' and 'Indeed' are useless. The greatest strike rate is by word of mouth. Advertise on local jobs boards." – Wyong participant*

> *"My kids have all moved away from the area, we really need to do things like increasing education opportunities to keep them here." – Gosford participant*

There were specific initiatives/programs that workshop attendees referred to which they felt could be reintroduced or enhanced to provide better opportunities for Central Coast youth.

> *"I think the Tech Hub idea was quite good – that's the way that the world is going, it will attract young people." – Gosford participant*

> *"Youth Leadership course – funded by government when I was down in Melbourne. Subsidised so that kids don't have to pay for education." – Gosford participant*

> *"Mentoring programs – almost like a younger version of the Men's shed." – Wyong participant*

> *"Form focus groups for teens. Council should do young people programs – doing a resume, how to find a job, what it is like having a job -what is expected." – Wyong participant*

Suggestions were also frequently made regarding better recreational options such as live music, BMX/skate parks and keeping sports grounds and facilities lit/open for longer in the evening.

> *"More bands and festivals. Concerts for people. Lost Paradise – supports local business." – Gosford participant*

> *"Blue light discos - they were the highlight of my childhood." – Wyong participant*

> *"Creating and funding of community spaces/skate parks, events – affordable for all." – Gosford participant*

> *"Footy grounds – they don't turn lights on evert night, why can't they run lights every night? Change rooms and bathrooms – make them open for longer." – Wyong participant*

5.1.3 Balanced housing development/affordable housing

Workshop participants expressed that it is important to ensure there is balanced development of housing, as well as affordability of housing. While it was identified that Council is limited in its influence in the housing area, respondents felt they could still make improvements, particularly in ensuring that free space is used effectively and that the level of infrastructure appropriately matches the rate of building development.

Balanced housing development was thought to be more important in the Gosford workshop and affordable housing in the Wyong workshop.

> *"Houses are getting bigger and bigger and blocks of land are getting smaller and smaller. Not all high rise, cap how high they can get." – Gosford participant*

> *"We need the infrastructure to match the development happening. We have so much space so maybe housing in other areas more rural where we have room. It's not a choice." – Gosford participant*

> *"Keep innovating housing options but make sure that it is responsible – using the space we have effectively… Tiny homes perhaps being used as housing options." – Gosford participant*

> *"Need to have development to support the young people and social affordable housing. Too much development – making the houses bigger and more expensive. Not necessarily the Central Coast fault, this is a statewide issue." – Gosford participant*

It was also thought to be important that there are consistent policies across government departments and levels of government, to encourage affordable housing development, for example tax legislation should support the development of affordable housing.

5.1.4 Supporting local business and employment

General beliefs among Wyong respondents were that local businesses should be supported through increased funding allocations and easier approval processes.

> *"Flexible zoning for business, more leniencies given." – Wyong participant*

> *"Streamline approval processes for businesses… perhaps Council can be approving business issues somewhat quicker." – Wyong participant*

> *"Put money into it, that's it really." – Wyong participant*

Respondents also felt that Council could help promote businesses through advertising and increasing general visitation to the area, as well as improving accessibility to local businesses in terms of public transport and parking.

> *"We're an eco-tourism area so we really need to focus on providing a good service… Promoting tourism and attracting tourism." – Wyong participant*

> *"More activities – markets and community events… Target everywhere, not just certain areas. Balanced approach throughout the Coast." – Wyong participant*

> *"For the regional businesses it is transport. We need more public transport." – Wyong participant*

> *"At the Entrance, it would be nice to turn that into a Marina. People are yachting up and down the coast, it's important to give them somewhere to dock. Halfway between Newcastle and Sydney." – Wyong participant*

5.1.5 Protection of Aboriginal heritage

This element was considered important, but less so than other aspects listed above. This may have potentially been due to participants feeling that Council is limited in making significant changes. Participants tended to believe that the improvement of Aboriginal heritage protection would be most achievable through increasing education/awareness and further maintenance and protection of culturally significant areas.

> *"More education – in schools, excursions. You often find it is not the children who are the issue, it is the adults because they haven't been at school when these things were taught." – Gosford participant*

> *"Educating the community – they have to be also interested enough to hear it… This is not a council responsibility." – Gosford participant*

> *"Bush regeneration. Awareness – where these sites are. Promotion and education." – Gosford participant*

5.1.6 Cycleways/footpaths and public transport

Participants believed that being able to 'get around' was crucial in terms of increasing the liveability of the area and being able to access to jobs, events and services.

> *"Just more of it [public transport], and better connections to different places. It is really hard to get to anywhere without a car up here." – Wyong participant*

Ideas within these elements were mainly regarding greater provision of these aspects, such as:

- More frequent buses (including direct and express buses), particularly outside peak hours and at weekends

  > *"People don't use it because it's slow – then it doesn't get used and it's underfunded . Used by youth, elderly and those who have accessibility issues that means they can't drive." – Wyong participant*

- More frequent trains, a light rail system, more southbound trains
- More ferries
- Better interchanges across modes of public transport
- More footpaths, particularly along public transport routes and around schools

  > *"Sometimes you have to cross the freeway to keep walking because there is no footpath. Ensure all walking areas have footpaths." – Gosford participant*

- Safer and more accessible footpaths – more barriers for footpaths beside busy traffic, level footpaths, wider footpaths (to allow wheelchair access)

5.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-Depth Interviews

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewees, the greatest proportions of tokens were allocated to both improving public transport and family-friendly aspects.

5.2.1 Public transport

Improvement in transport was predominantly thought of as increasing availability and reach of transport.

> *"There needs to be more inter-connect ability. It's hard to get places if you don't have a car… there also needs to be more coverage for the northern end of the coast."*

> *"There should be more express buses."*

> *"A lot of disabled people can't actually drive so I think increasing public transport is particularly important."*

5.2.2 Family friendly

Respondents typically felt that the Central Coast could be made more family-friendly by providing more areas/events tailored to families, particularly those with younger children.

> *"I think there could be more community engagement and events made specifically for families… more infrastructure brings more opportunities for families to do things in the area."*

> *"They need more parks for younger kids. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, kids will play in dirt. Keep it simple."*

5.2.3 Balanced housing development/affordable housing

Another key area respondents focused on for the CSP was housing, in terms of affordability and balanced development. Many expressed concerns with a rental crisis and inability for young people to afford a home, yet there were only a few suggestions made in terms of tackling these issues.

> *"Council are strict with DA approval, maybe they could push through DA approvals faster."*

> *"Prices are so expensive, it's driving people away from the Coast. Families are getting driven away, young people aren't wanting to buy here."*

> *"Rental prices are too high, some of my friends say it's cheaper to stay in a motel room."*

5.2.4 Parking

A number of respondents indicated that parking needs to be a high priority for the CSP, with recommendations generally being an increase of available parking spaces.

> *"This needs to be improved for commuters… there should be more parking at stations."*

> *"Particularly add near schools and in areas to avoid parking on busy roads (reduces visibility)."*

5.2.5 Protection of waterways, beaches, bushlands/Maintenance of green spaces

Several respondents allocated tokens to natural aspects such as the protection of waterways, beaches, and bushlands, and maintenance/aesthetics of green spaces. Most suggestions were to improve maintenance of these areas.

> *"There could be more staff/a big clean-up after public holidays and long weekends… That's when it gets really messy."*

> *"I think there are maintenance/reporting apps that exist but it doesn't feel like any of them are effective – is the reporting going anywhere or just ignored?"*

5.2.6 Protection of Aboriginal heritage

When discussing protection of built and cultural Aboriginal heritage, numerous interviewees expressed a need for stronger representation and cooperation from Council with the Aboriginal community. One respondent felt that the element should be more about 'Partnership and empowerment of Aboriginal communities'.

> *"Council could work better with the Aboriginal community… there needs to be more representation of Aboriginal people in Council."*

> *"It's a systemic problem: people's outlook needs to be changed, it starts in education."*

> *"Aboriginal people should have a seat/identified position on Council – it's not just advisory what they say…there are follow-ups on the advice given so that there's accountability… They should be paid for their input on Council matters, like I'm paid for this interview."*

> *"Make something out of things that have been destroyed (e.g., by fire), like the cinema."*

5.3 Business In-Depth Interviews

Central Coast businesses typically allocated tokens towards elements that aligned with their field of work. For example, an interviewee involved in the education sector added an element labelled 'higher education opportunities' and allocated all 20 tokens to this aspect, viewing it as a very important priority for the CSP.

Another respondent working in the seafood industry had several suggestions regarding the importance of aquaculture for the Central Coast.

> *"Rock oyster production and heritage is a significant part of the aquacultural industry and the wider Central Coast. It stands for indigenous use and heritage. This area is the oldest in modern Australia for doing this."*

> *"I think they could help with quality assurances, this ties into the protection of waterways and beaches, but I think they could do more to make our waterways more clean."*

Regarding existing elements that had been defined from previous Central Coast Council research, respondents from businesses placed high importance on protection of Aboriginal heritage, as well as protection of waterways, beaches, and bushlands. Many suggestions were similar to those from workshop attendees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewees.

> *"They need to form a connection with the community – talk to the Darkinjung Land Council, include them and the wider Central Coast Indigenous community in decision-making."*

"If you look up Rumbalara and Bulgandry these are both sacred sites to Aboriginal people that have been approved to be built over."

"I think that Council can do a lot more to actually be mindful of all the groups we have on the coast. Not just acting to look good, but genuinely being caring and inclusive of all these people."

5.4 Youth Focus Group

Participants of the youth focus group offered few ideas in terms of addressing each area for focused improvement in the CSP; they more so described their reasoning as to why each element was deemed important.

5.4.1 A safe community

Having a safe community was seen as one of the most important elements.

"If not (a safe community) there will be problems with crime and people's sense of pride won't be as high."

"It's important that people feel safe where they are living – don't want people living in an area they don't feel comfortable… it's not a good way to live – people don't want to live here."

5.4.2 Affordable housing

Affordable housing was also considered to be of higher importance:

"We are the future working generation so we need to be able to work and live here."

"If no-one is here all of the other elements are irrelevant."

5.4.3 Maintenance and cleanliness

Maintenance and cleanliness were agreed by the group to be important as people would not want to live there or visit if the area is unclean, yet there was no further elaboration on this point. The group also felt that keeping the Central Coast 'family-friendly' is an important aspect of the CSP:

"If you don't have a family friendly environment kids will grow up in a worse environment and may not cooperate as well in school, future workplace."

"If couples come up here and don't see a family friendly environment won't want to raise their kids here – school enrolment levels will drop."

6 Conclusions

- There appears to be strong support for the elements derived from the survey so it is recommended that they (or similar) are included in the CSP by Council.
- There are some additional elements or themes suggested that should be added by Council, at a minimum the following should be added:
    - Responsible Council governance
    - Support for local businesses/employment
- Consideration could also be given to adding elements on 'access to health and mental health services' and 'supporting vulnerable communities'. Other additional elements suggested by participants could be combined with existing elements, for example:
    - 'Transparent development guidelines' could fall under 'responsible Council governance'.
    - 'Vibrant arts and cultural scene' could be merged with vibrant nightlife to create 'vibrant arts/cultural scene and nightlife'
    - 'Well maintained, clean, tidy environment and community infrastructure' could be merged with 'aesthetically pleasing built environment' to create 'aesthetically pleasing environment'.
- Priority should be given to developing objectives, programs and initiatives for the CSP in the following areas. For aspects that are not solely the responsibility of Council, Council should aim to work with relevant government departments or agencies to improve these in the Central Coast:
    - Responsible Council governance
    - Opportunities for young people and teenagers
    - Balanced housing development/affordable housing
    - Supporting local businesses and employment
    - Protection of Aboriginal heritage
    - Cycleways, footpaths and public transport
- The ideas generated by participants under those elements and included in this report should be considered by Council and where practical should be included in the CSP.
- Some elements were deemed more important to focus on in the Gosford area, for example 'a safe community' and 'aesthetically pleasing environment' and these should be focused on by Council in that area.
- Some of the less tangible elements relate to community well being and could be considered outcomes of other more tangible elements, e.g. a sense of pride, peace and quiet, strong connections to family and friends, great work and living environment etc. Consideration could be given to having a 'community wellbeing' theme in the CSP which includes these kinds of aspects.

- Council should consider collaborating further with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to empower them to make positive change.
- It is recommended that Council communicate the findings of this engagement to the community, and outline any actions taken based on these findings.

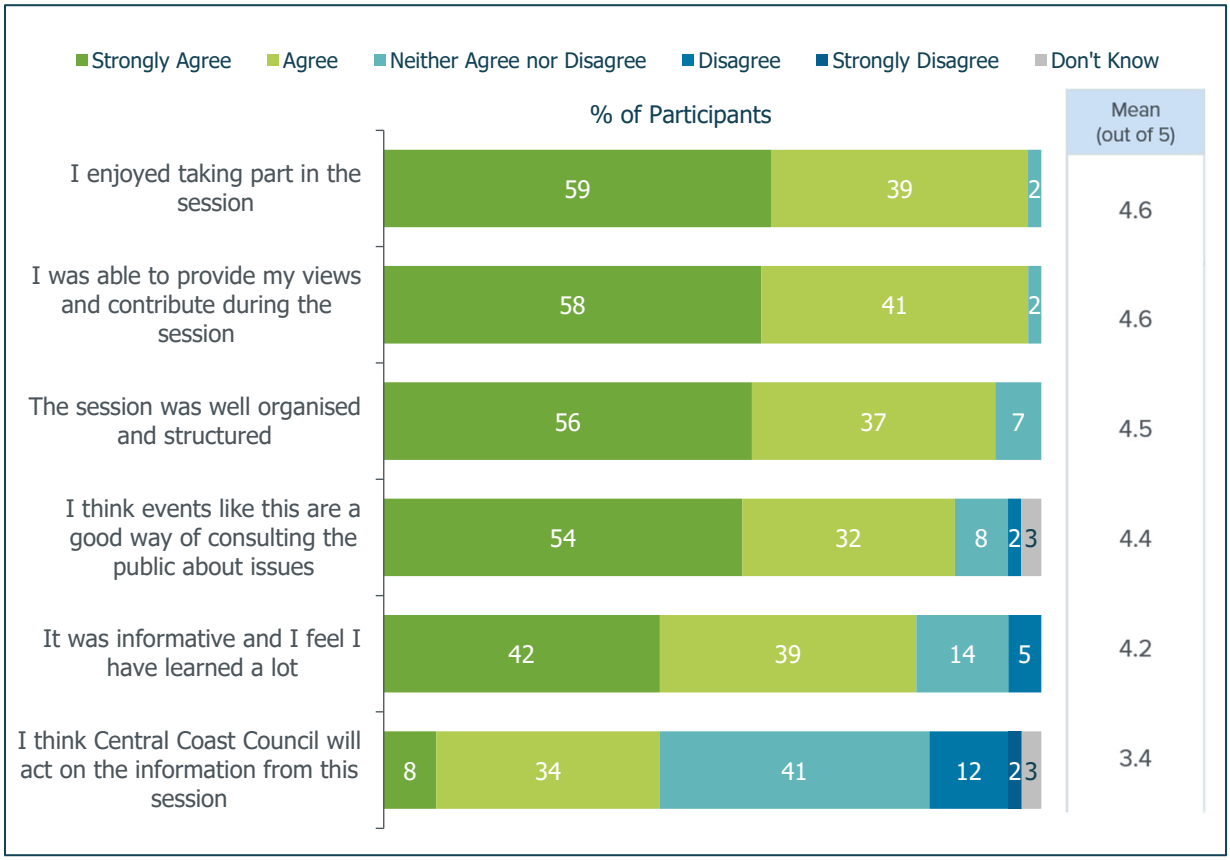
7 Workshop feedback

At the conclusion of both the Gosford and Wyong workshops, participants were asked for their feedback on the workshop itself.

Figure 7 shows that there were high levels of agreement that the workshop was enjoyable, with participants able to provide their views and contribute, and that the sessions were well organised and structured.

There was also strong agreement that events like this are a good way of consulting the public about issues, however, there was disagreement that Council will act on the information from the session.

Figure 4: Feedback regarding the workshop



Q. Based on your experience today, please indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Neither Agree or Disagree with each of the following statements: Base: All participants at Gosford and Wyong forums; n=59

Quotes from end of session feedback

"Open discussion and friendly atmosphere."

"Lots of time to provide group feedback and well timed table discussion."

"Everyone got a voice"

"Great to meet other locals and find out what people want to see happen on the Coast."

"I enjoyed listening to different viewpoints and priorities"

"Good structure, stayed on time, moderators kept us on track."

"I really enjoyed meeting with new people and sharing our thoughts and personal experiences."

"Learnt more about Council and how it operates and what's important to other residents."

Appendix

Appendix A: Allocation of CSP Elements to Quadrants

Table 3: Tally of CSP elements into quadrants by tables

Potential Elements/ Quadrant	Count (Max. of 8)
Areas for focused improvement (bottom right quadrant) High Importance and Low Satisfaction	
Responsible Council governance*	**8**
Affordable housing	**6**
Balanced housing development	**6**
Protection of Aboriginal heritage	**6**
Opportunities for young people and teenagers	**5**
Cycleways/ footpaths	**5**
Keep up with technology and innovation	**5**
Protection and maintenance and bushland	**5**
Public transport	**5**
Support for local businesses / local employment*	**5**
Areas to maintain (top right quadrant) High Importance and High Satisfaction	
Appealing parks and green spaces	**5**
Protection and maintenance of waterways and beaches	**5**
Protection of built heritage	**5**
Disability access and inclusion	**4**
Lower priority areas (top left quadrant) Low Importance and High Satisfaction	
A sense of pride	**6**

Potential Elements/ Quadrant	Count (Max. of 8)
Peace and quiet	**6**
Strong connections to family and friends	**5**
Family friendly	**4**
Great work and living environment	**4**
Mix of cultures and communities	**4**
Areas requiring less urgent attention (bottom left quadrant) Low Importance and Low Satisfaction	
Vibrant nightlife	**4**

*These elements were suggested by workshop participants

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research & Engagement

Level 6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

+61 2 9261 5221

www.woolcott.com.au

Contacts: Lucy Economus, Leconomus@woolcott.com.au
Liz Sparham, LSparham@woolcott.com.au

Appendix 8

Central Coast Wellbeing Study

Report of Key Findings

June 2024

WOOLCOTT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Central Coast Council

Table of Contents

Summary of Key Findings.....3

Detailed Research Findings:

Background and Objectives.....13

Research Design.....14

Snapshot of the Population.....15

1. Quality of life.....16

2. Work Life Balance.....23

3. Financial Wellbeing.....27

4. Local Area.....30

5. Access to Services and Facilities.....38

6. Healthy Lifestyles.....43

7. Social and Community Engagement.....47

Appendix.....50

Summary of Key Findings

Quality of Life

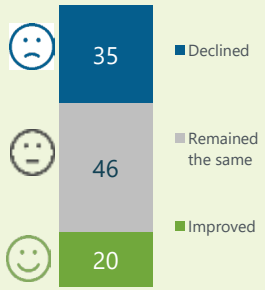
While quality of life is good in the Central Coast, there is some uncertainty about the future and some signs that community connections need to be strengthened

Quality of life

4.4 mean rating

82% rate quality of life positively

Change in quality of life



-15% nett perceived decline

Drivers of quality of life

Standard of living

The local area

Pride in the community

Achievements in life

There were age differences in the drivers of quality of life:

- Mental health and future security were the main drivers for those aged 30 years and under

Top 5 quality of life attributes

- Relationships
- Their home
- Access to parks & open spaces
- Standard of living
- Mental health

Bottom 5 quality of life attributes

- Feeling part of broader community
- Feeling part of local neighbourhood
- Future security
- Opportunities to participate in sport & recreation activities
- The local area

Work Life Balance

While half would recommend working in the Central Coast, there are some signs that work enjoyment is low

Number of workers

63% work full time or part time

Likelihood to recommend

47% would recommend the Central Coast as a place **to work**

Drivers to recommending to work in the Central Coast

- Good job security
- Having work life balance
- Feeling valued and appreciated by others
- Work because want to

Top 5 attributes agreed with

- I work because I have to
- I wish I could work less but can't afford to
- I can adapt well to change
- I have good job security
- I am satisfied with my job

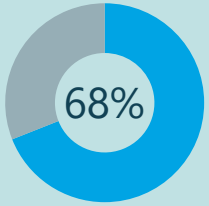
Bottom 5 attributes agreed with

- I work because I want to
- I generally do not feel anxious
- I feel like I have work life balance
- My work and family life do not interfere with each other
- I am confident I can achieve the things I want

Financial Wellbeing

The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on the Central Coast community.

Sacrifice spending



had unwillingly sacrificed spending because of housing costs such as mortgage/rent and bills

Accessing funds

21%
would not be able to access or raise $2000 within two days of an emergency

Buying alternatives

63% had bought a cheaper brand of food than normal

35% bought other products in place of fresh fruit and veg

Groups more likely to have had to sacrifice spending:

- Primary carers
- Single parents
- Families
- Those aged under 50 years
- Newcomers to the area
- Renters
- People with disabilities

Groups more likely to have problems accessing funds:

- Budgewoi Ward
- Single/living alone
- Single parents
- Lower education level
- 16-29 year olds
- Females
- Renters
- People with disabilities

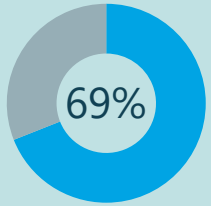
Groups more likely to have bought alternatives:

- Single parents
- Families
- Newcomers to the area
- Those aged under 50
- Females
- Renters
- People with disabilities

The Local Area

The community is generally positive about their local area and feel engaged with neighbours and friends.

Recommending the Central Coast as a place to live



of residents are likely or very likely to recommend the Central Coast as a place to live

Level of engagement with the local community

64% feel either somewhat or very connected or engaged with their local area

38% **would like a higher level** of engagement

Gap between current and desired level of connection/engagement:		
Decrease	**Stay the same**	**Increase**
7%	55%	38%

Asking for help from neighbours and local friends

81% could ask for help

Main areas are:

- Watering plants, minding pets or checking mail when away
- Borrowing tools/equipment, food etc.

Those less likely to feel they could ask are single parents and renters

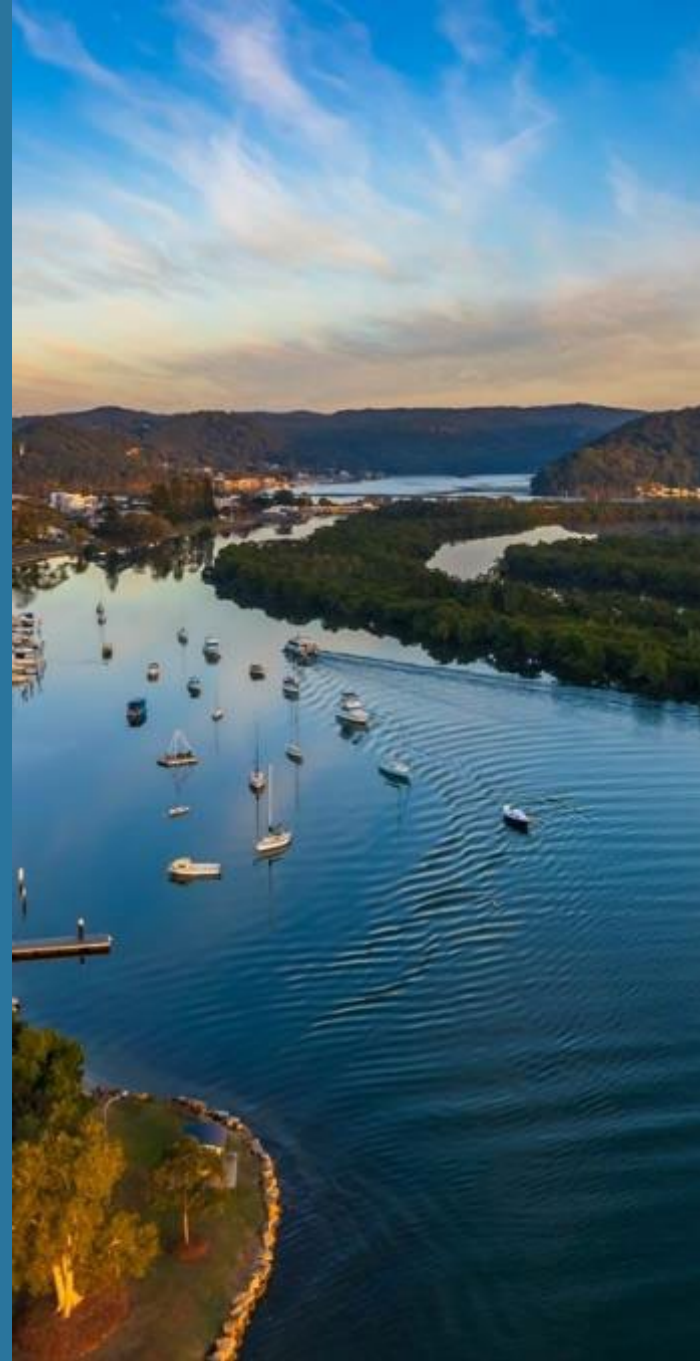
Safety

- Most feel safe in their own homes
- However, less than half feel safe walking alone in their local area at night (42%)
- Young people, single parents and those with disabilities are less likely to feel safe

Moving out of the Central Coast in the next 5 years

31% are considering moving out of the Central Coast in the next five years. Most likely are:

- Single parents
- Multilingual residents
- Newcomers to the area
- Young people
- Renters
- People with disabilities



Access to Services and Facilities

Although the majority have access to a car, there are some who have difficulty accessing services for a variety of reasons

93% have access to a car

Easy to access without a car

- Grocery shopping
- Accessing health services, government services
- Going out for recreation

Harder to access without a car

- Getting to work
- Getting to work related meetings
- Going to an educational facility to take a child to school or childcare

Services with some access problems

- Healthcare services
- Public transport
- Government services
- Mental health services

Reasons for problems with access

- Cost of services
- A lack of services in their area
- Lack of transport options
- Poor customer service

Healthy Lifestyles

Central Coast residents tend to lead a healthy lifestyle, doing activities and eating well

66% partake in intense activity at least 3-4 times a week

45% eat the recommended serve of fruit and vegetables 5 days a week or more often

57% feel they get enough sleep

Positive emotions

83% have experienced a positive emotion often or sometimes in the past few weeks

Especially those aged 70+ and home owners

Negative emotions

61% have experienced a negative emotion in the same time period

More often 30-49 year olds, renters and those with a disability or illness

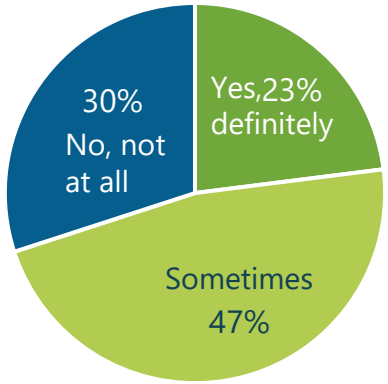
Social and Community Engagement

The community appears to be quite involved in sport and recreation/ hobby groups and political or civic actions, although a third feel there are not enough opportunities to have their say on local issues

60% of community members are involved in a sport or recreation group, or a special interest/lobby group, but a third are not

85% have engaged in signing a petition, writing or speaking to a Government MP, and online discussions about political/community issues or something else in the last year

30% do not feel they have opportunity to have a say on local issues, especially those 50-69 years



Potentially vulnerable groups

Renters

- Lower quality of life
- Lower satisfaction with standard of living, mental health, achievement in life, sense of purpose, future security, job security, their home.
- Less likely to be able to raise $2000 in an emergency
- More likely to have had to sacrifice spending.
- Feel less connected with people and businesses in the local area
- Less likely to feel they can ask for help from neighbours or local friends
- Less likely to have helped neighbours or local friends in the last 12 months
- Less healthy days and less likely to get enough sleep

Language other than English

- More likely to have seen or experienced discrimination
- More likely to have problems accessing services and facilities
- More likely to be thinking of moving out of the CC area within 5 years

Young people

- Less likely to be able to raise $2000 within two days in an emergency
- More likely to have had to sacrifice spending
- More likely to have seen or experienced discrimination
- Less likely to feel safe
- More likely to be thinking of moving out of the area in the next 5 years

Disability or long-term illness

- Lower quality of life
- Lower satisfaction with most quality of life attributes
- Lower future security and job security
- Less likely to have a sense of purpose, feel valued and appreciated, and to feel they can adapt well to change
- More likely to feel anxious, lonely and experience negative emotions
- Less likely to be able to raise $2000 in an emergency
- More likely to have had to sacrifice spending
- More likely to have seen or experienced discrimination
- Less likely to feel safe
- Problems accessing services or facilities due to health or disability
- Less healthy days and less likely to get enough sleep

Single parents

- Lower quality of life
- Lower satisfaction with most quality of life attributes
- Lower future security and job security
- Struggle with work life balance
- Less likely to have a sense of purpose, feel valued and appreciated, and to feel they can achieve what they want to in life
- More likely to feel anxious, lonely and experience negative emotions
- Less likely to be able to raise $2000 in an emergency and more likely to have had to sacrifice spending
- Less likely to feel safe
- Less likely to feel they can ask for help
- Not getting enough sleep

Detailed Research Findings

Background and Objectives

This project sought feedback from the Central Coast community (both residents and businesses) about perceptions of their community and their feelings regarding their own personal wellbeing.

Specific question areas covered the following topics:

- Perceptions of quality of life
- Work-life balance
- Financial resilience
- Incidence of feeling discriminated
- Perceptions of the local community
- Level of connectedness or engagement with your local area
- Crisis support and volunteering in the community
- Access to public transport and key services
- Physical and mental health

Research Design

The survey methodology was mixed mode – comprising telephone and online interviews. Two surveys were combined yielding a total sample size of **n=1,952**.
The two surveys were as follows:

- A random survey (mixed mode) of n=652 respondents with quotas set by location, gender and age to reflect the Central Coast population distribution.
- An open survey (online) accessed via Central Coast Council's 'Your Voice Our Coast' web page. N=1300 community members completed the survey via this method.

The surveys were conducted between 8 April-13 May 2024.

The data was post-weighted by location, gender and age to reflect the latest ABS population distribution for the Central Coast region.

AGE	%
16-29 years	18
30-49 years	30
50-69 years	32
70+ years	20
Refused	<1
GENDER	
Male	48
Female	50
Non-binary	1
I use a different term	<1
Prefer not to indicate	1

Ward	Total
Budgewoi	18%
The Entrance	21%
Gosford East	21%
Gosford West	22%
Wyong	18%
Planning District	
Mountains & Valleys	4%
Peninsula	14%
Gosford Central	7%
East Brisbane Water & Coastal	22%
Narara Valley & Ourimbah	8%
Southern Lakes & the Entrance	19%
Wyong, Warnervale & Gorokan	13%
Northern Lakes, San Remo & Budgewoi	14%

This report presents the key findings of this project.
Results that differ significantly from the total (at the 95% confidence level) are shown as follows:
GREEN for significantly higher and RED for significantly lower.
Please note that in certain instances, the total percentage may exceed 100%. This is due to the ability for respondents to select multiple options when completing the survey.

A snapshot of the population

29% identified as living with a disability or long-term illness

19% were the primary carer for someone in their home

62% of respondents lived as a couple (either with or without children at home)

73% live in a separate house

8% live in a duplex/ semi-detached

13% live in an apartment/flat

18% were born outside of Australia

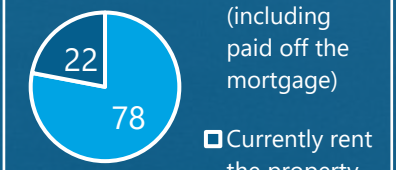
13% spoke a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the most popular

31% of respondents were small business owners

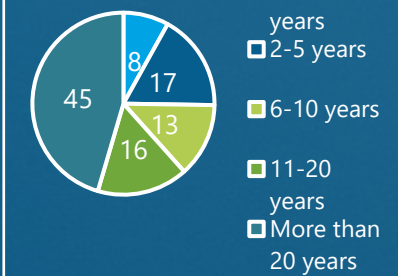
76% Up to 3 storeys

21% 4-9 storeys

Home Ownership



Time Living in Central Coast LGA



1. Quality of Life

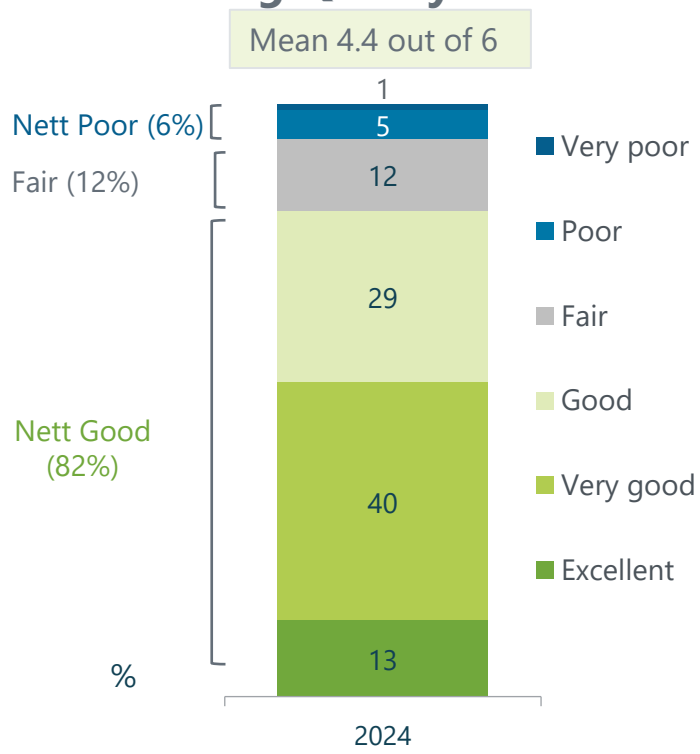
Quality of life perceptions

The majority (82%) rated their quality of life in the Central Coast positively (nett *good, very good or excellent*).

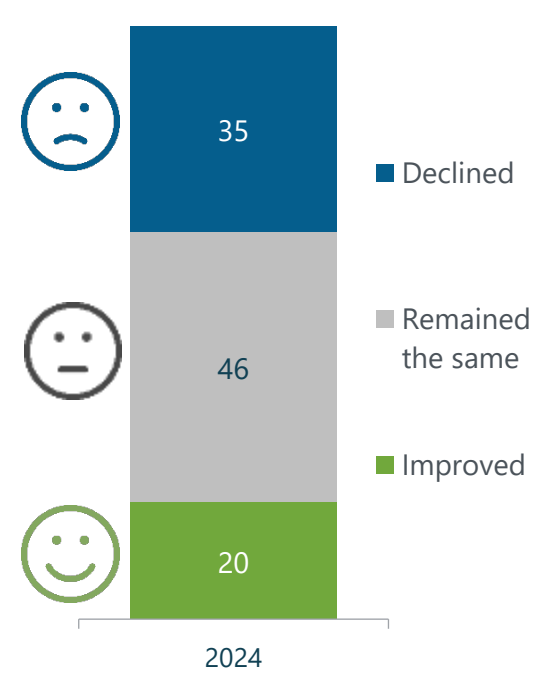
While around half the sample (46%) felt quality of life had remained the same over the past two years, there were more who felt it had declined than improved (15% net decline).

Those who felt it had declined were more likely to be aged 50-69 years.

Rating Quality of Life



Changes in Quality of Life



Declined (35%) minus improved (20%) = 15% nett decline

	Total (%)	16-29 (%)	30-49 (%)	50-69 (%)	70+ (%)
Nett Good	82	86	81	78	85
Improved	20	**48**	23	**8**	**10**

Q1. Thinking about your life and personal circumstances, overall, how would you rate the quality of life you have, living in the Central Coast Local Government Area?
Base: All respondents; n=1952
Q2. Since 2022, do you think the overall quality of life in the Central Coast LGA has improved, remained the same, or declined?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

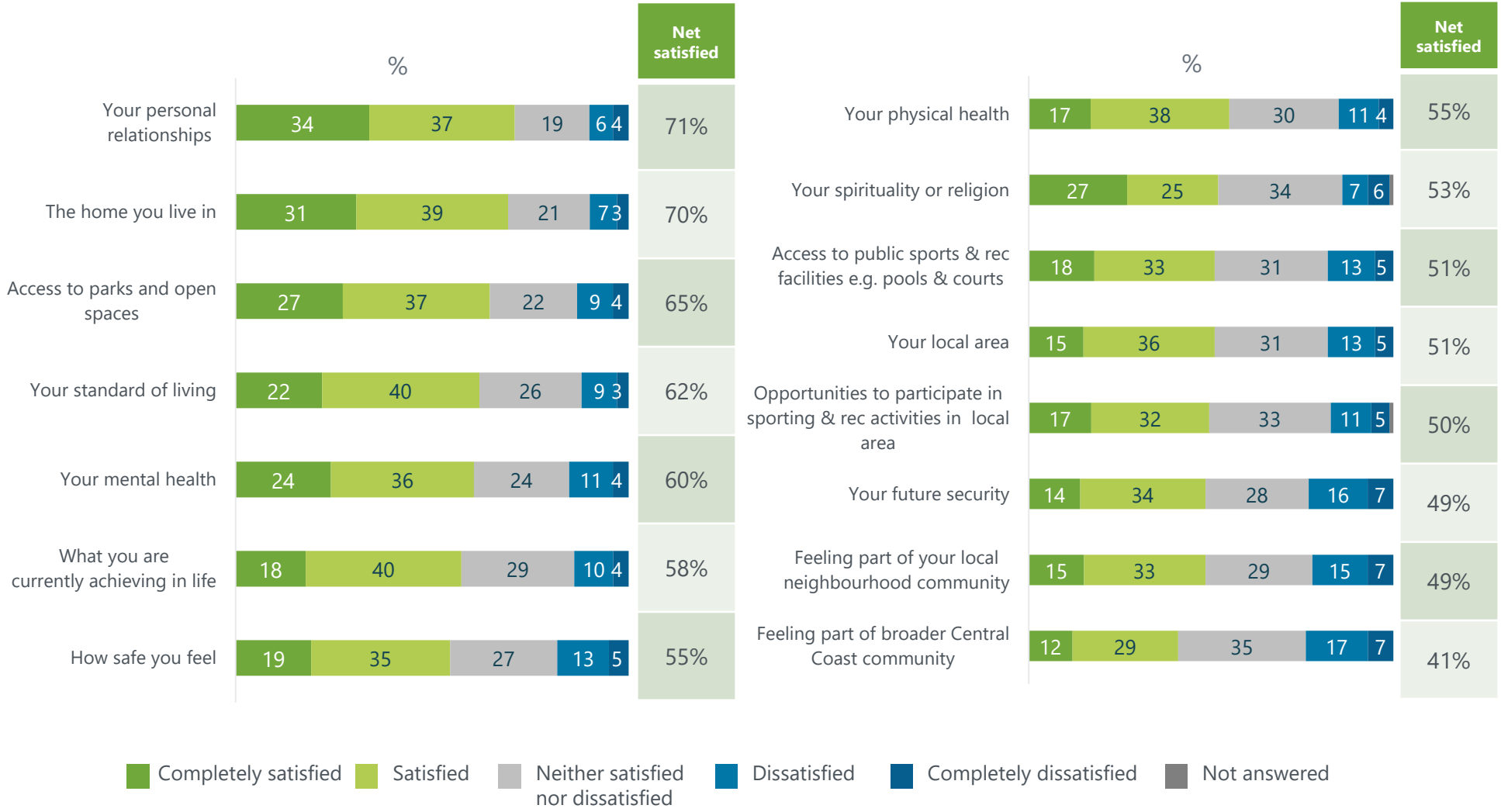
Satisfaction with quality of life aspects

Specific quality of life aspects that gained the greatest satisfaction included:

- Personal relationships
- Their home
- Access to parks and open spaces

Lower satisfaction was obtained for:

- Feeling part of the broader community
- Feeling part of the local neighbourhood
- Their future security



Q3. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely dissatisfied and 5 is completely satisfied, how satisfied are you with the following:
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Drivers to a positive quality of life

- Regression analysis

The top key factors driving variability in perceptions of quality of life for residents of Central Coast Council were:

- Your standard of living
- Your local area
- Feeling proud to live in the area
- Their achievements in life

- Regression analysis helps identify which of the attributes have most impact on overall quality of life and help to identify how Council can actively drive overall quality of life.
- Regression analysis is a statistical tool for investigating relationships between independent variables (in this case, the quality of life and local area attributes) and a dependent variable (in this case, overall quality of life(Q1)).
- This chart summarises the regression values for the **main drivers** for quality of life:
- The higher the score, the more variance in quality of life is explained by that variable.
- Any improvements Council can make in the higher scoring areas has the potential to improve overall quality of life ratings more.

49.1% of the variation in the quality of life score is explained by these factors in the model.

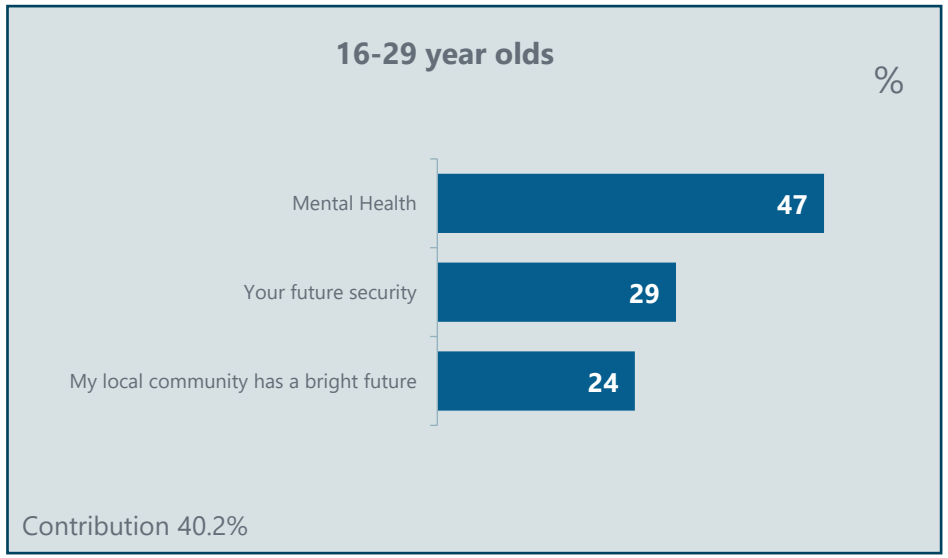
The remaining 50.9% is due to other factors that have not been measured.

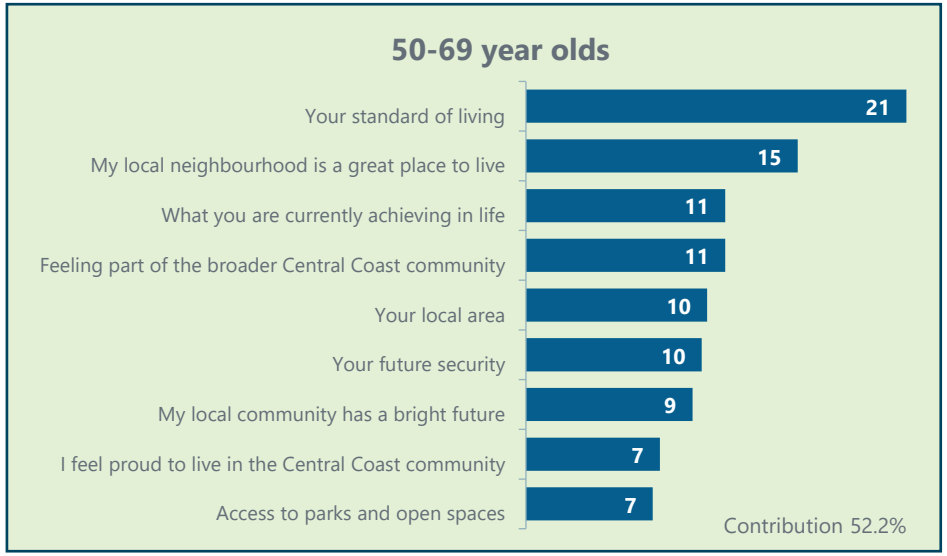
Base: All respondents; n=1952

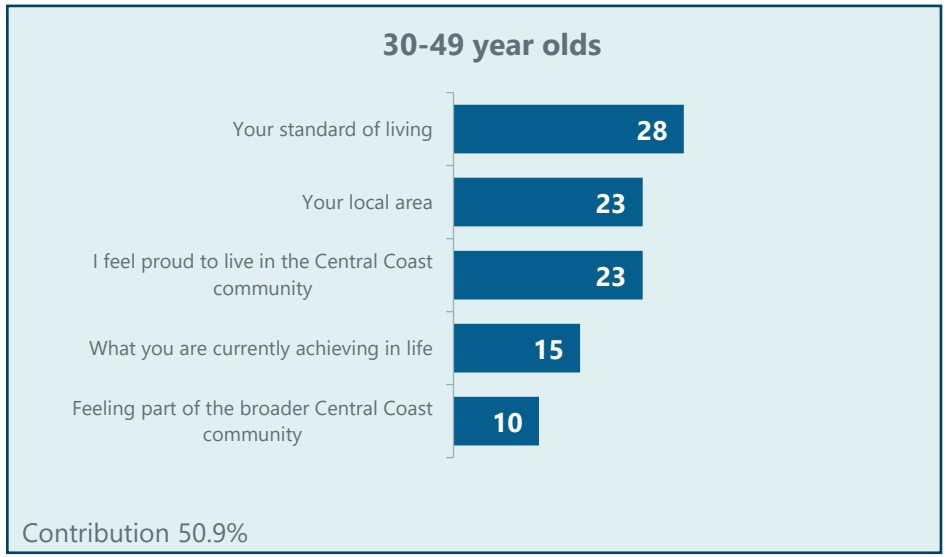
Drivers to a positive quality of life – by age

Interestingly the contributors impacting quality of life varied by age.

- For young residents mental health was by far the greatest factor.
- 30-49 year olds were being impacted most by standard of living, their local area and a sense of pride in the Central Coast area.
- 50-69 year olds were also influenced by standard of living, their local neighbourhood, but included what they are currently achieving in life.
- For the 70+ years group, quality of life was driven by living standards, their local community having a bright future and a feeling of safety



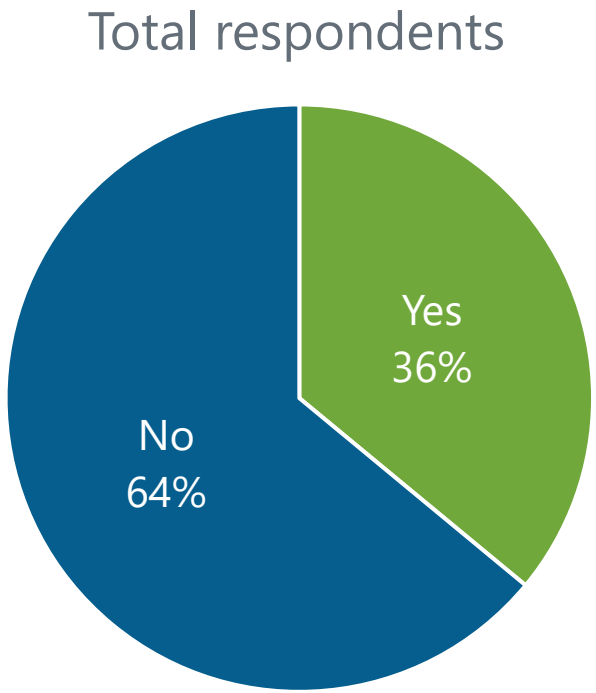


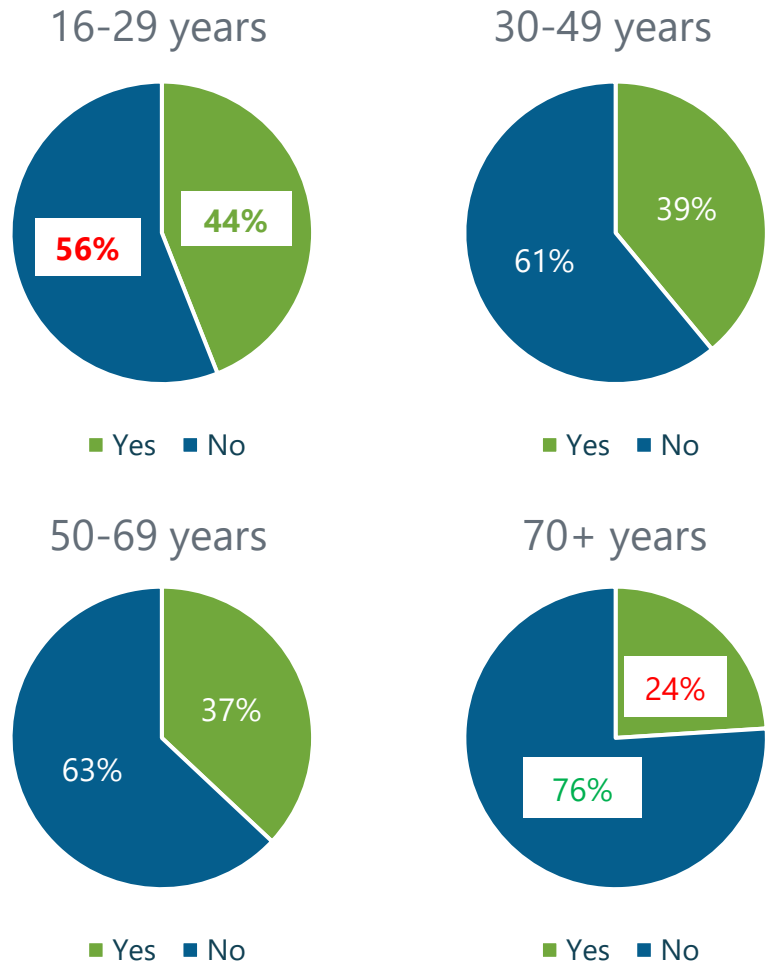


Incidence of experiencing discriminatory attitudes

36% of the community had seen or experienced discriminatory attitudes toward themselves or other people in the past 12 months.

Younger (16-29 years) respondents were more likely to have experienced this (44%), as well as small business owners/ managers (47%).





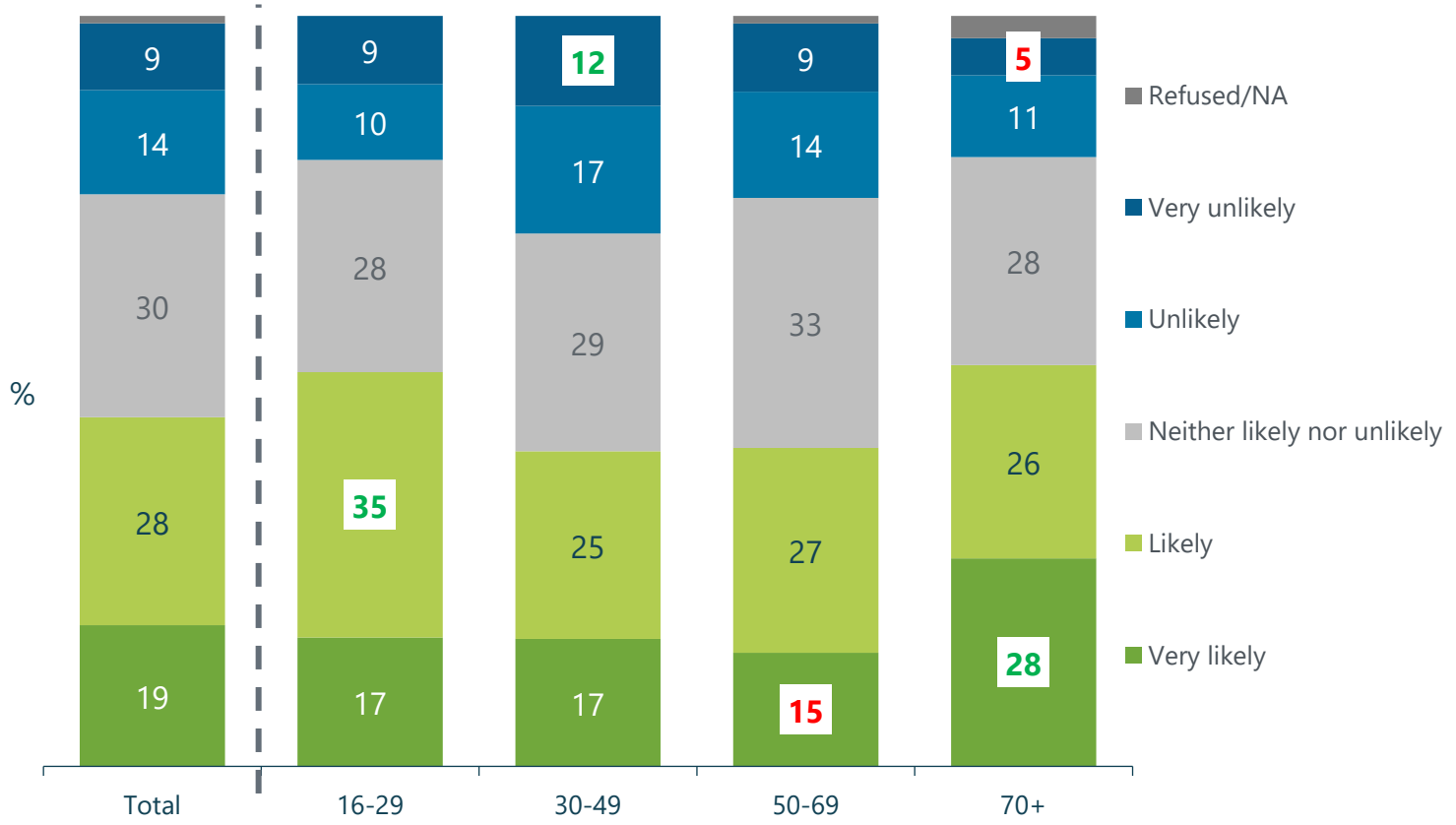
Q14. In the last 12 months, have you seen or experienced any discriminatory attitudes towards yourself or other people because of race, religion, age, sexuality or gender identity?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

2. Work life balance

Likelihood to recommend the Central Coast as a place to WORK

47% of respondents would recommend the Central Coast as a place to work (likely + very likely).

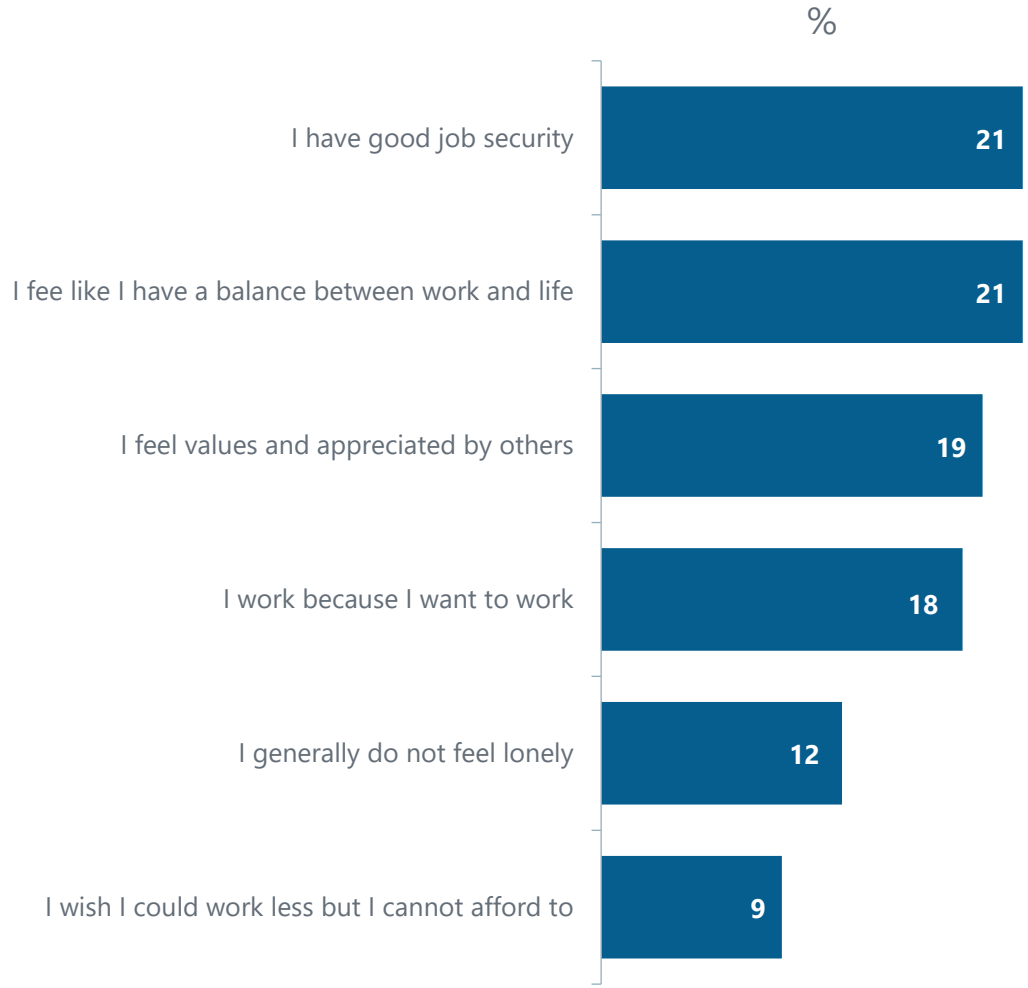
Particularly the younger (16-29 years) and older (70+ years) residents.



Q38. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very unlikely and 5 means very likely, if you were asked, how likely would you be to recommend the Central Coast area as a place to work?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Drivers to a positive recommendation to WORK in the Central Coast

Good job security and having a good work life balance were key influences on positive recommendations of the Central Coast as a place to work.

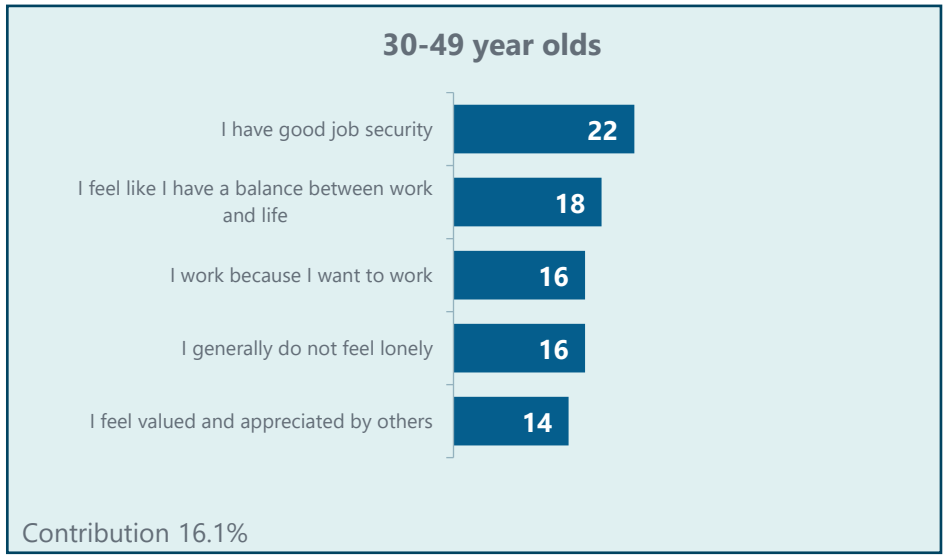


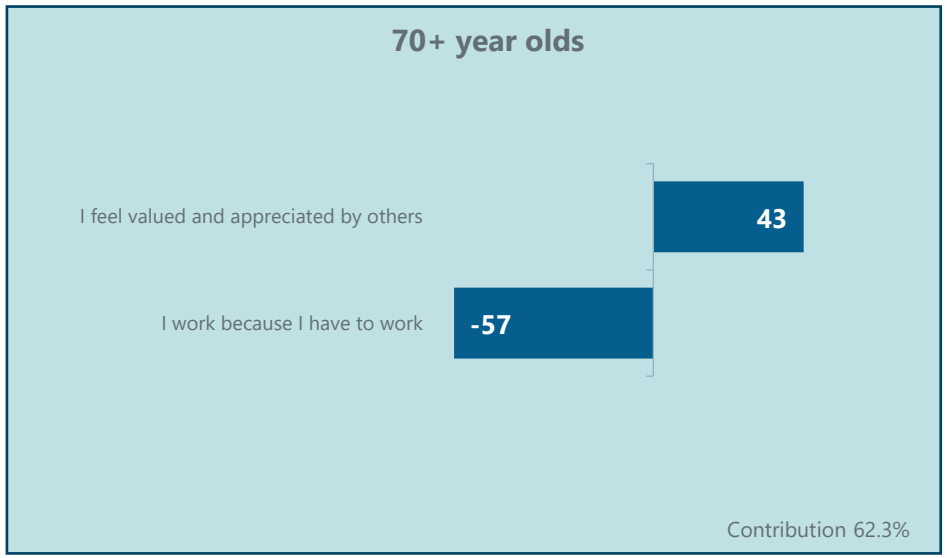
18.35% of the variation in the quality of life score is explained by these factors in the model.

Drivers to a positive recommendation to work – by age

There were different drivers to recommending the Central Coast as a place to work by age:

- For young residents satisfaction with their job was the most important.
- For 30-49 year olds job security and work life balance were the most important drivers.
- For 50-69 year olds feeling valued and appreciated by others and having a sense of purpose were most important.
- For the 70+ years group, feeling values and appreciated and not working because they have to were the strongest drivers.





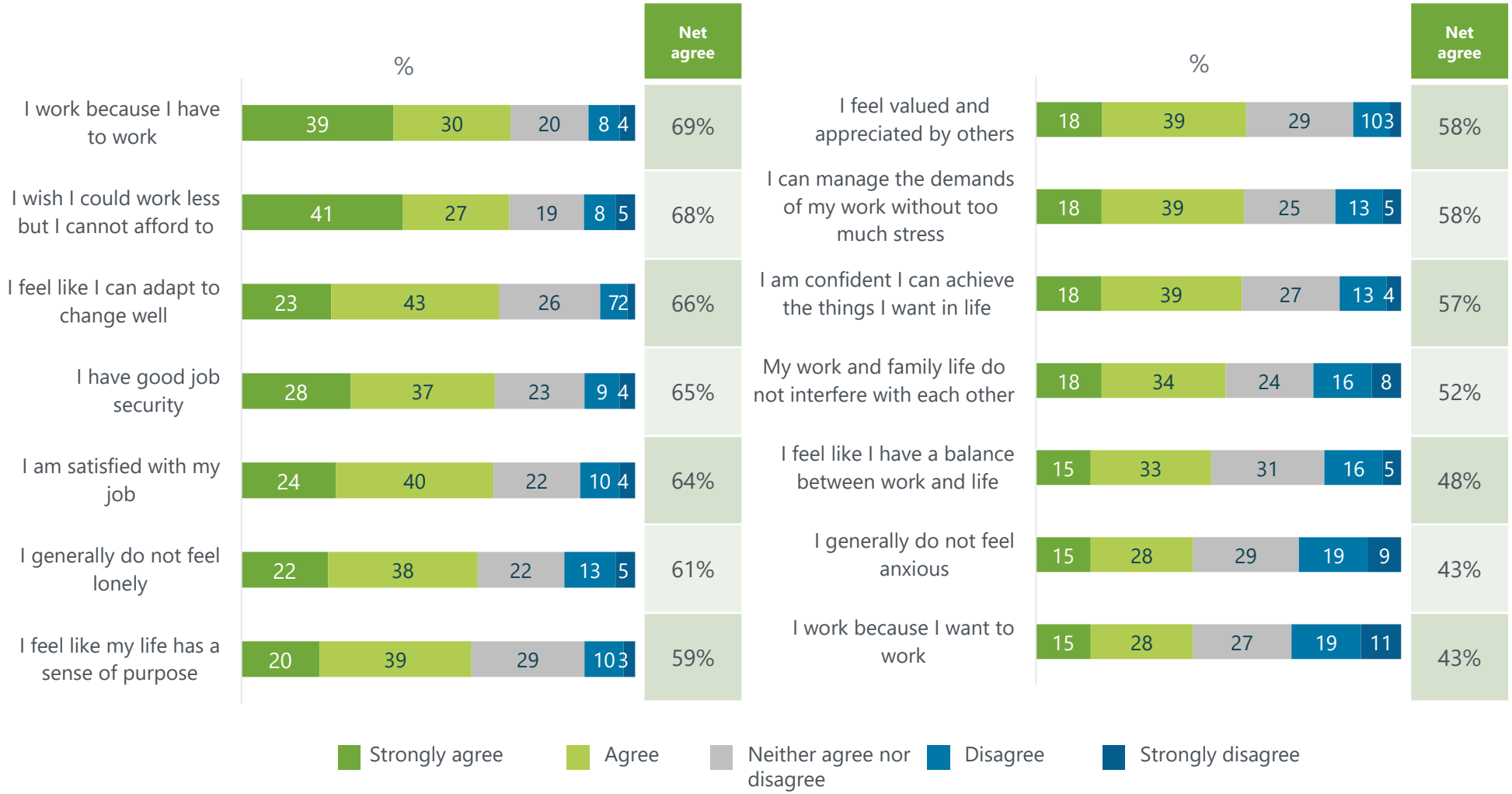
Wellbeing perceptions amongst the working community

There was highest agreement with:
- I work because I have to
- I wish I could work less but I cannot afford to
- I feel like I can adapt to change well

And lower agreement that:
- I feel like I have a balance between work and life
- I generally do not feel anxious
- I work because I want to work

The over 70 year olds are most likely to work because they want to, they have fewer problems with work/life balance, feel more valued and appreciated, less lonely and anxious and feel confident they can achieve what they want to.

The 30-49 year olds experience the most interference between work and family and are most likely to work because they have to



Q5. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Q6. And using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Respondents who work (full-time, part time or casual); n=1196

3. Financial Wellbeing

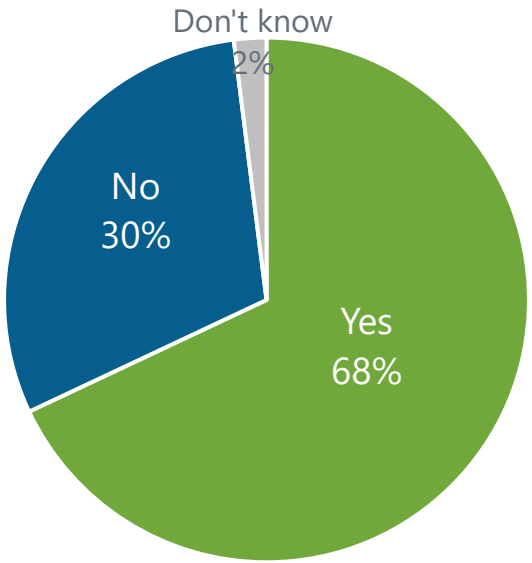
Incidence of sacrificing spending

Over two thirds of respondents indicated they had sacrificed spending on other things as a direct result of costs for housing, rent, bills, etc

The main things that the community had sacrificed spending on included:

- Dining out
- Food / groceries
- Arts / cultural activities

Total Respondents



A significantly high proportion of 16-29 and 30-49 year olds sacrificed spending (**80%** and **83%** respectively).

Sacrificed spending on…	Amongst those who had sacrificed spending (n=1325) %
Eating out	79
Food and groceries	55
Arts and cultural activities	49
Medical treatment	44
Sports and recreation	44
Air conditioning/heating	38
Therapy/counselling support	38
Petrol/fuel	36
Education	19
Holidays/travel	3
Other	5

Q11. As a direct result of housing costs, including mortgage or rent, electricity/gas/water, etc., have you unwillingly had to sacrifice spending on other things?
Q12. Which of the following have you sacrificed spending on?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Financial Wellbeing

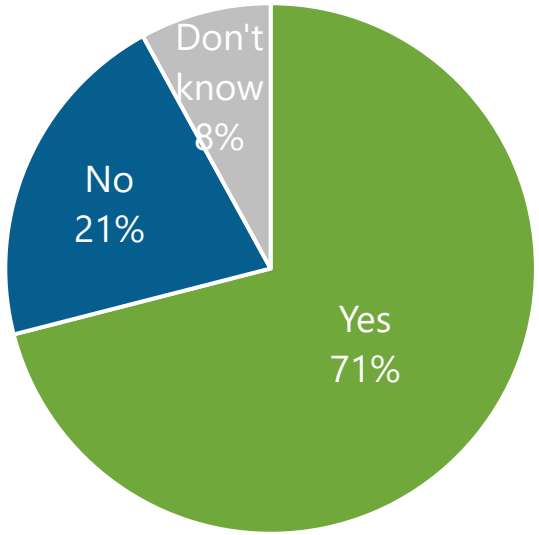
The majority (71%) indicated they could access $2000 quickly in an emergency.

Those in the Budgewoi Ward were least likely to say they could access $2000, with 32% saying they could not.

Those in the Gosford East Ward were most likely to say they could access the funds (77%).

63% had made other sacrifices such as buying a cheaper brand of food than their normal brand

Incidence of being able to access $2000 in two days for an emergency



16-29 year olds were less likely to be able to raise $2,000 quickly (64%), while 70+ years olds were more likely (78%).

63% had bought a cheaper brand of food than their normal brand

35% bought other products in the place of fresh fruit and vegetables

9% received a donation from a charity

31% did not have to do any of the above

Q10. If you needed to, could you access or raise $2,000 within two days in an emergency?
Q13. In the last 12 months, have you had to do any of the following?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

4. Local Area

Perceived definition of ‘their local area’

Opinions were mainly divided between ‘their local area’ being just the suburb they lived in (34%) and their suburb plus surrounding suburbs (31%).

Local area aspects	Total (%)	16-29 (%)	30-49 (%)	50-69 (%)	70+ (%)
The suburb you live in	34	42	35	29	34
The suburb you live in and surrounding suburbs	31	20	35	39	21
The streets immediately surrounding where you live	11	17	10	8	13
The street you live in	9	15	6	7	12
The council area you live in	8	4	7	9	9
The postcode you live in	6	3	6	7	9
Other	1	1	1	1	2

Q15. Thinking about where you live, which one of the following best describes what you would consider to be your ‘local area’?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

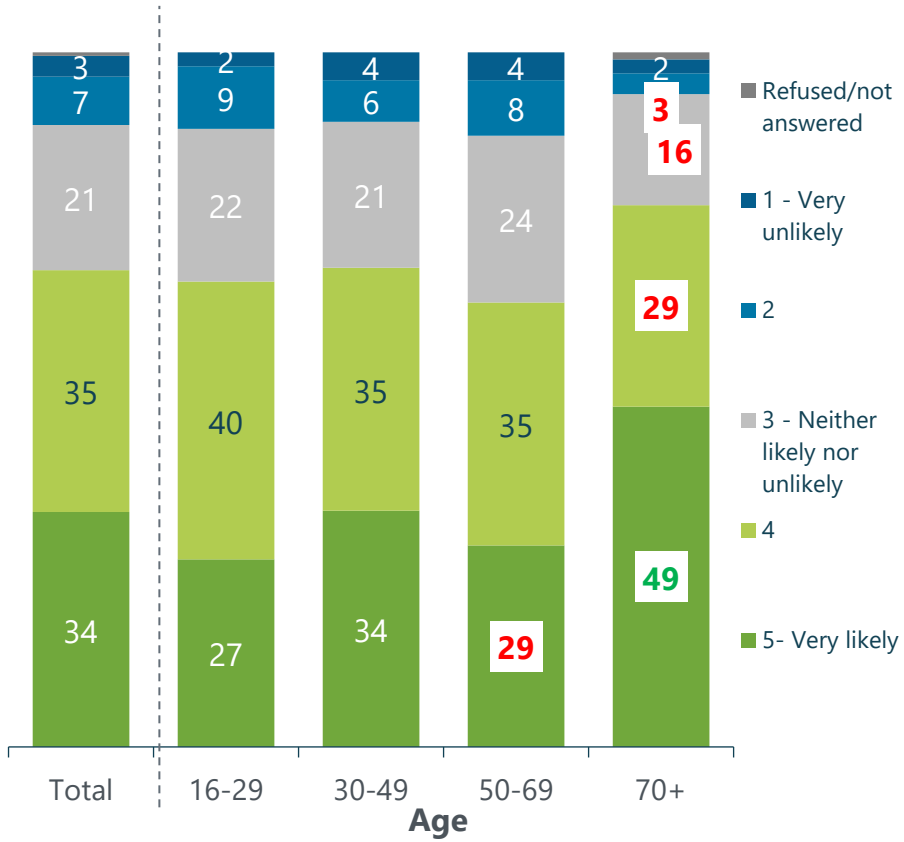
Likelihood to recommend the Central Coast and move away

Overall, 69% of the community would be likely to recommend the Central Coast as a place to live (very likely + likely).

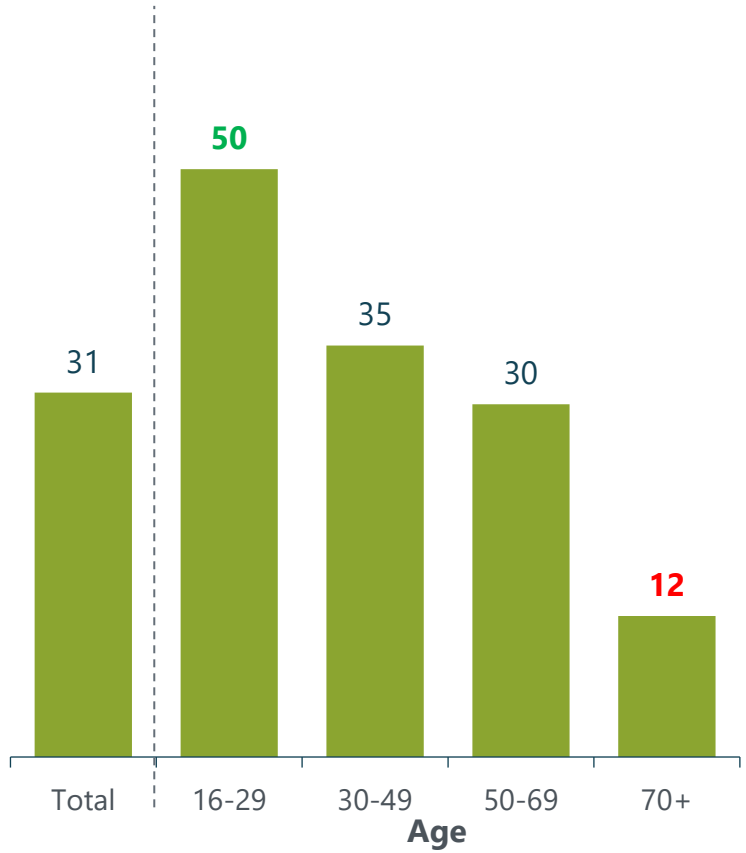
- Particularly those aged over 70 years (78%).

Under a third were considering moving away from the area in the next five years – with 50% of the 16-29 year olds considering leaving.

Likelihood to recommend living in the Central Coast



Incidence of considering moving out of Central Coast in next 5yrs

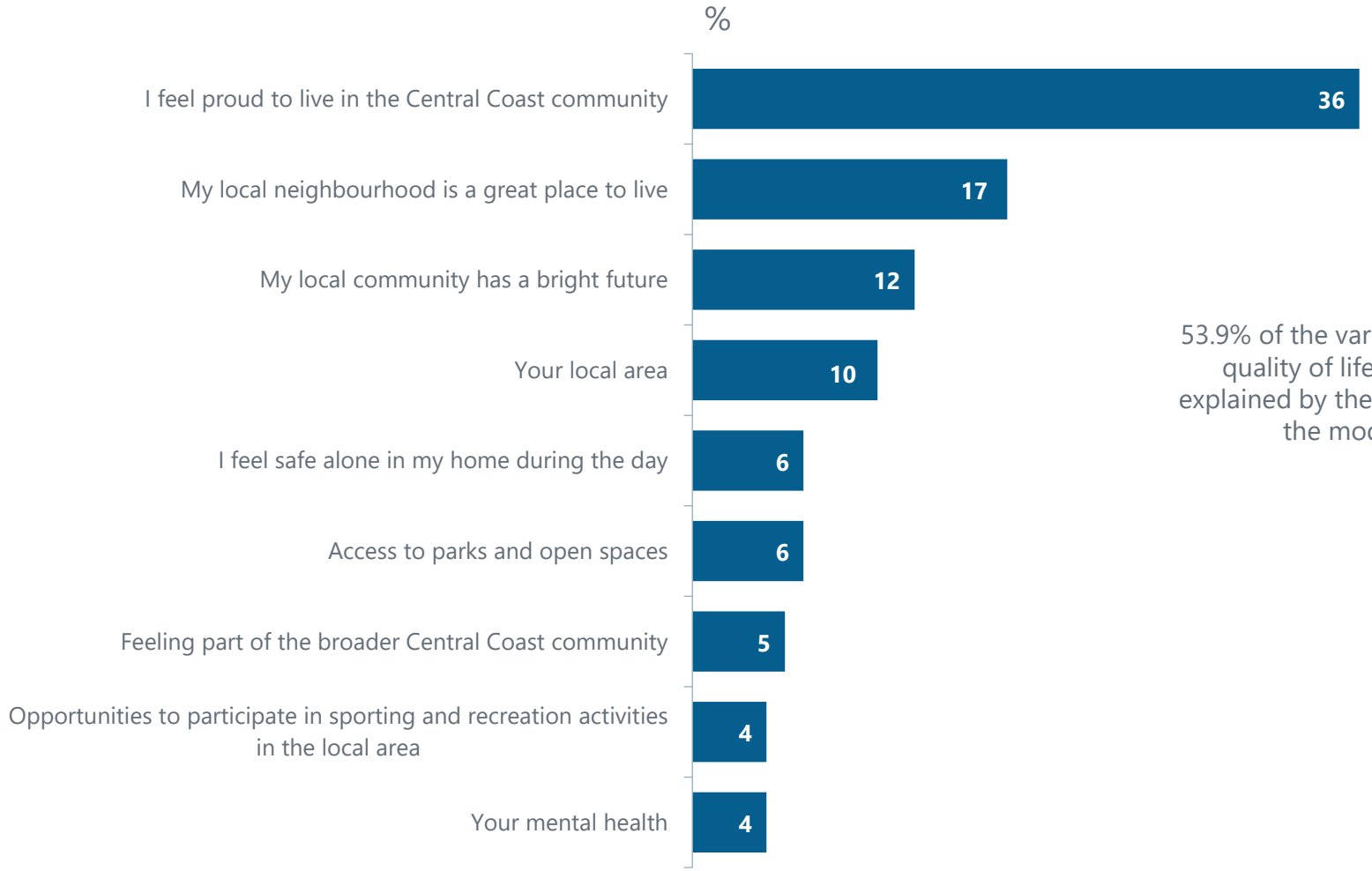


Q38. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means very unlikely and 5 means very likely, if you were asked, how likely would you be to recommend the Central Coast area as a place to:
Base: All respondents; n=1952
Q39. Are you considering moving out of the Central Coast area in the next five years or so?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Drivers to a positive recommendation to LIVE in the Central Coast

The key drivers to recommending to live in the Central Coast appear to be:

- A sense of pride
- Having a good local neighbourhood
- A community with a bright future



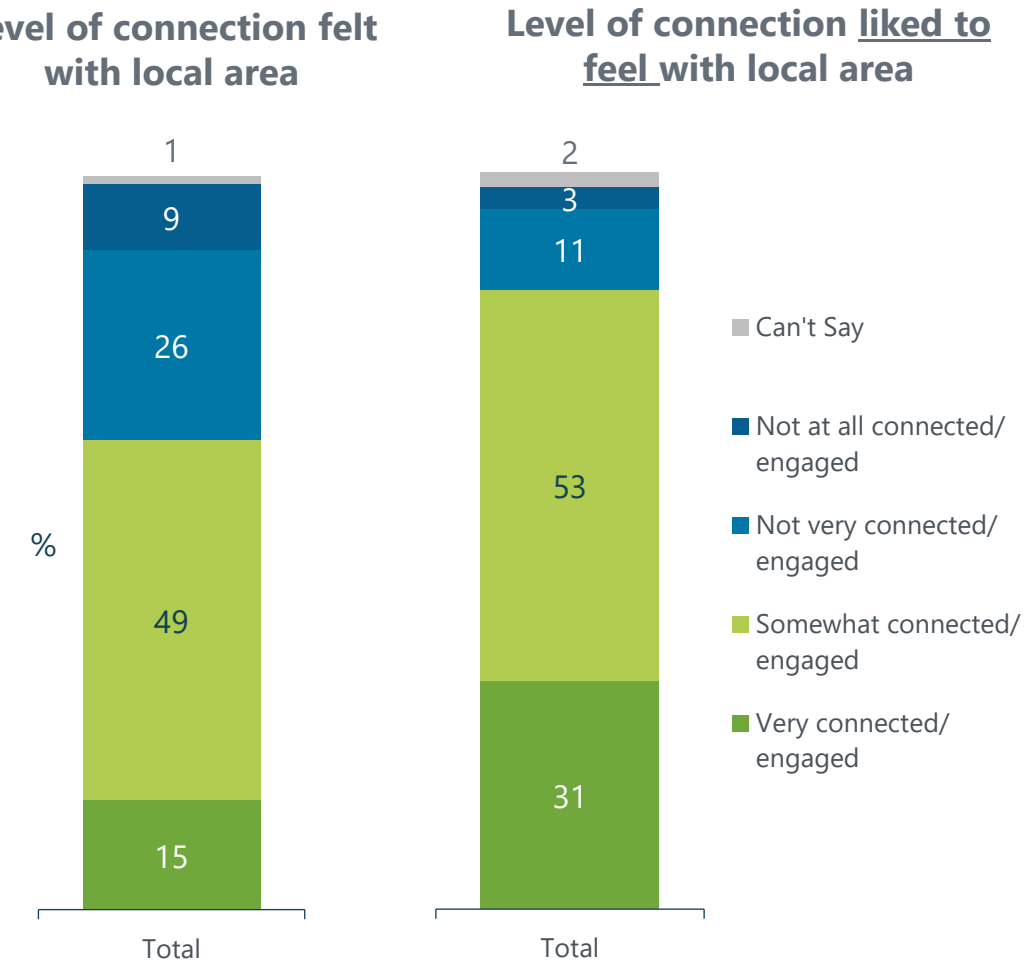
53.9% of the variation in the quality of life score is explained by these factors in the model.

Q18. If you needed to could you ask your neighbours or local friends for help or assistance in each of the following circumstances?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Extent to which a ‘local area’ connection is felt

64% of respondents currently felt either somewhat or very connected or engaged with their local area.

A considerably higher proportion (81%) would like to feel connected/engaged with their local area (people, businesses, etc)



35% of respondents would like to feel a higher level of connection or engagement than the do currently.

Gap between current and desired level of connection/engagement:		
Decrease	Stay the same	Increase
7%	55%	38%

Q16. How connected or engaged do you feel with the people, businesses, and other aspect, of your local area?
Q17. And how connected or engaged would you like to feel with the people, businesses, and other aspects of your local area?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Nature of local area support

The main circumstances where people felt they could ask neighbours or local friends for help were:

- To help water plants, mind pets, check letterbox
- To borrow tools, equipment, food items

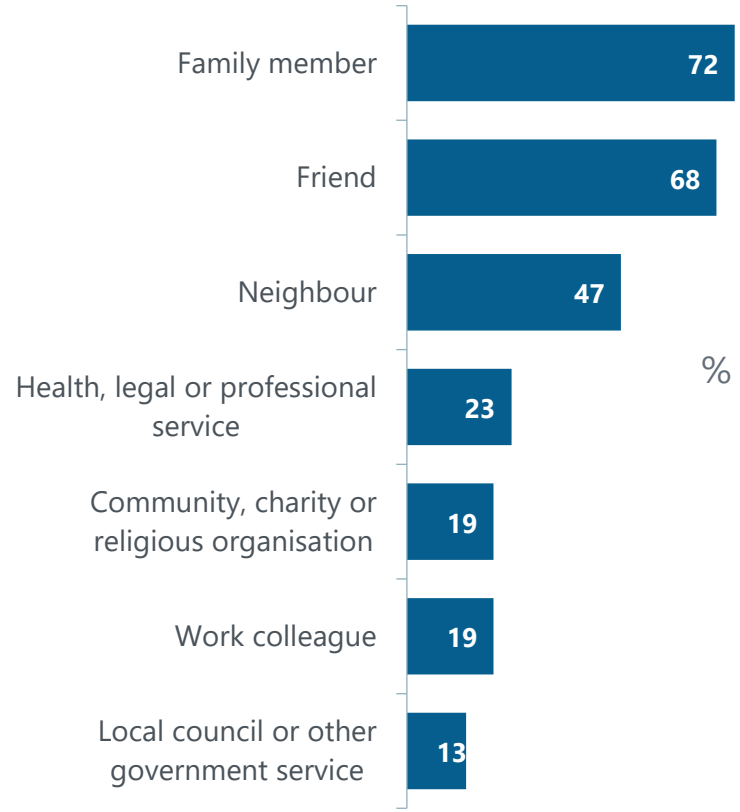
Two in ten could not ask neighbours/local friends for help in any circumstance.

These circumstances were also the main ones that people had provided help to their neighbours or local friends.

Incidence of being able to ask neighbours/local friends for help in certain circumstances and incidence of providing help

Circumstance	Would ask for help (%)	Gave help in past 12mths (%)
Help water plants, mind pets or check letterbox whilst away	59	46
Borrowing/loaning tools/ equipment, a food item etc.	51	42
Provided/received advice	44	40
In case of illness	44	30
Transportation	40	33
To shop for you	34	23
Emotional support	33	37
Providing food or money in an emergency	23	17
Minding children	19	17
None of the above	19	18

Nature of help in a crisis



Q18. If you needed to, could you ask your neighbours or local friends for help or assistance in each of the following circumstances?
Q19. Who could you ask for these types of support in a crisis?
Q20. In which, if any, of the following circumstances have you helped neighbours or local friends in the past 12 months?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

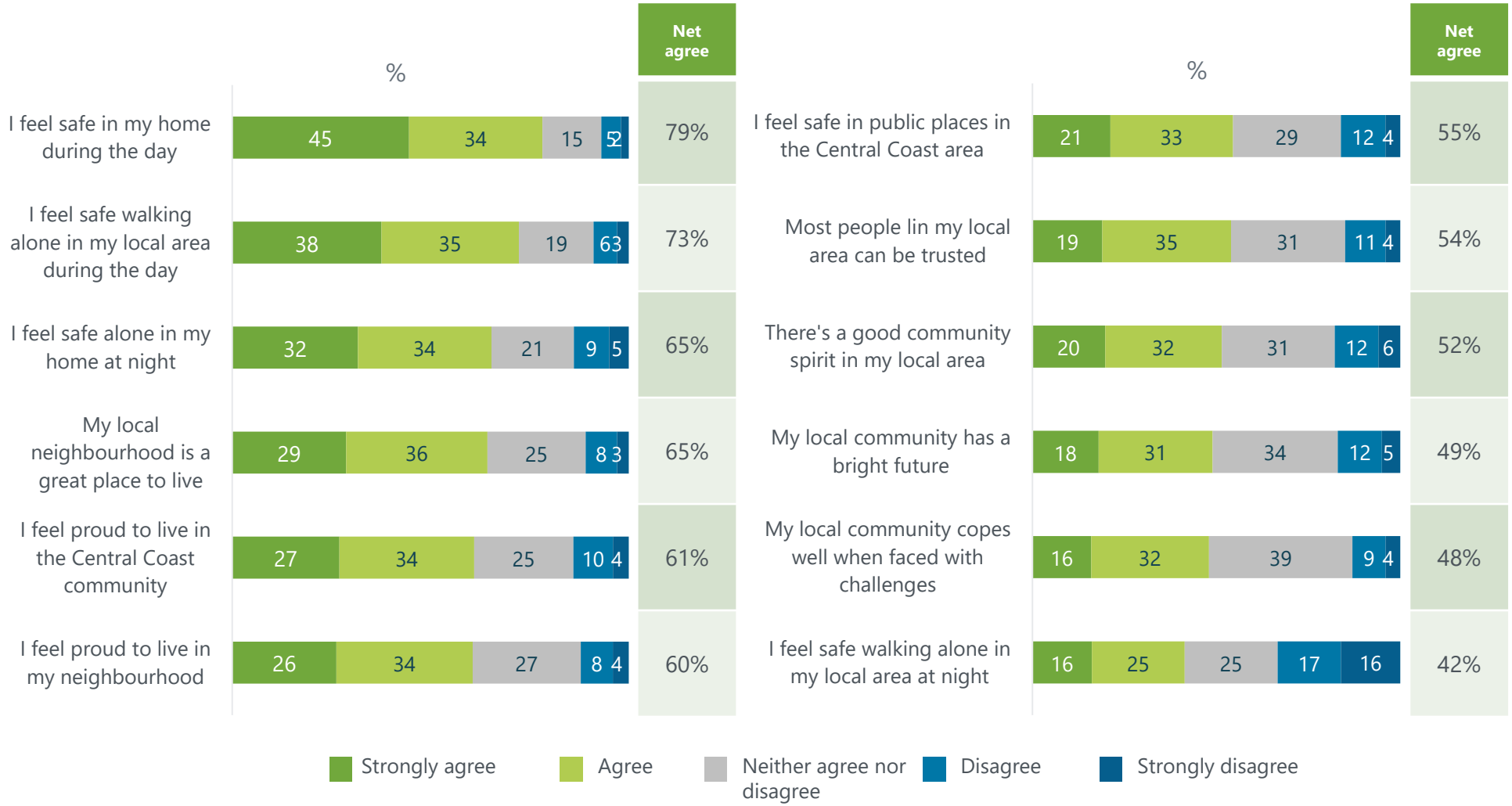
Perceptions of the local area

There was strong agreement amongst the community that they felt safe at home (day and night) and walking alone in their local area during the day.

It was also widely agreed to be 'a great place to live'.

There was lower agreement that :

- it is safe to walk alone at night
- the community copes well with challenges
- the community has a bright future



Q21. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (n=1952)

Incidence of volunteering/giving time without pay

Over half had not given time without pay to an organisation in the past 12 months.

Around 20% had helped a:

- charity/welfare organisation
- volunteer organisation

Type of service/activity	Total (%)	Differences by age
A charity or welfare organisation	21	
A volunteer organisation such as Rural Fire Service, SES, St. Johns First Aid, Bush Care team, Council libraries, etc.	17	
A civic organisation, such as helping a local sporting team	16	Higher amongst 30-49 yrs age group (23%)
A local school, such as working in the canteen, on the P & F Committee, cleaning the grounds, etc.	16	Higher amongst 16-29 and 30-49 years age groups (24 and 27%)
A religious group or church	13	
A service club, such as the RSL, Rotary, Lions, etc.	11	Higher amongst 16-29 yrs group (18%)
None of these	43	Higher amongst 50+yrs age group (51%)

Q22. In the past 12 months, have you given your time, without pay, to help any of the following organisations?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

5. Access to Services and Facilities

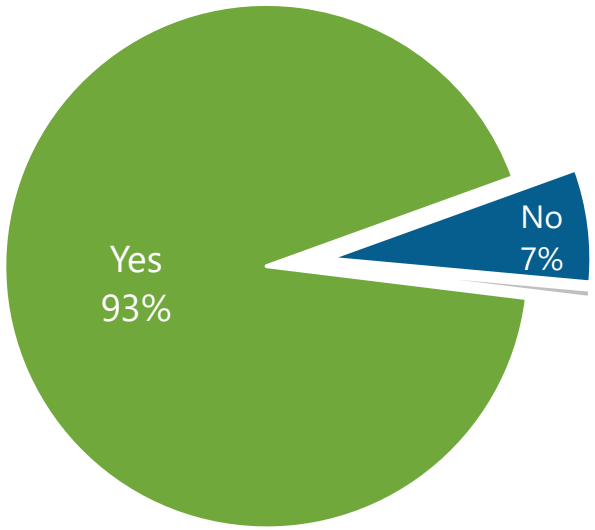
Access to a Car and a License

The vast majority (93%) had a car and license.

Of the few that did not, half had access to a car or person in the with a license, in the household.

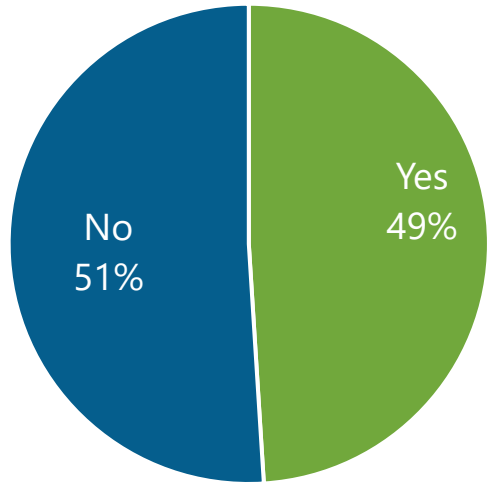
Incidence of having a car and licence

%



Incidence of someone in household having a car and licence

(amongst those without a car/licence)

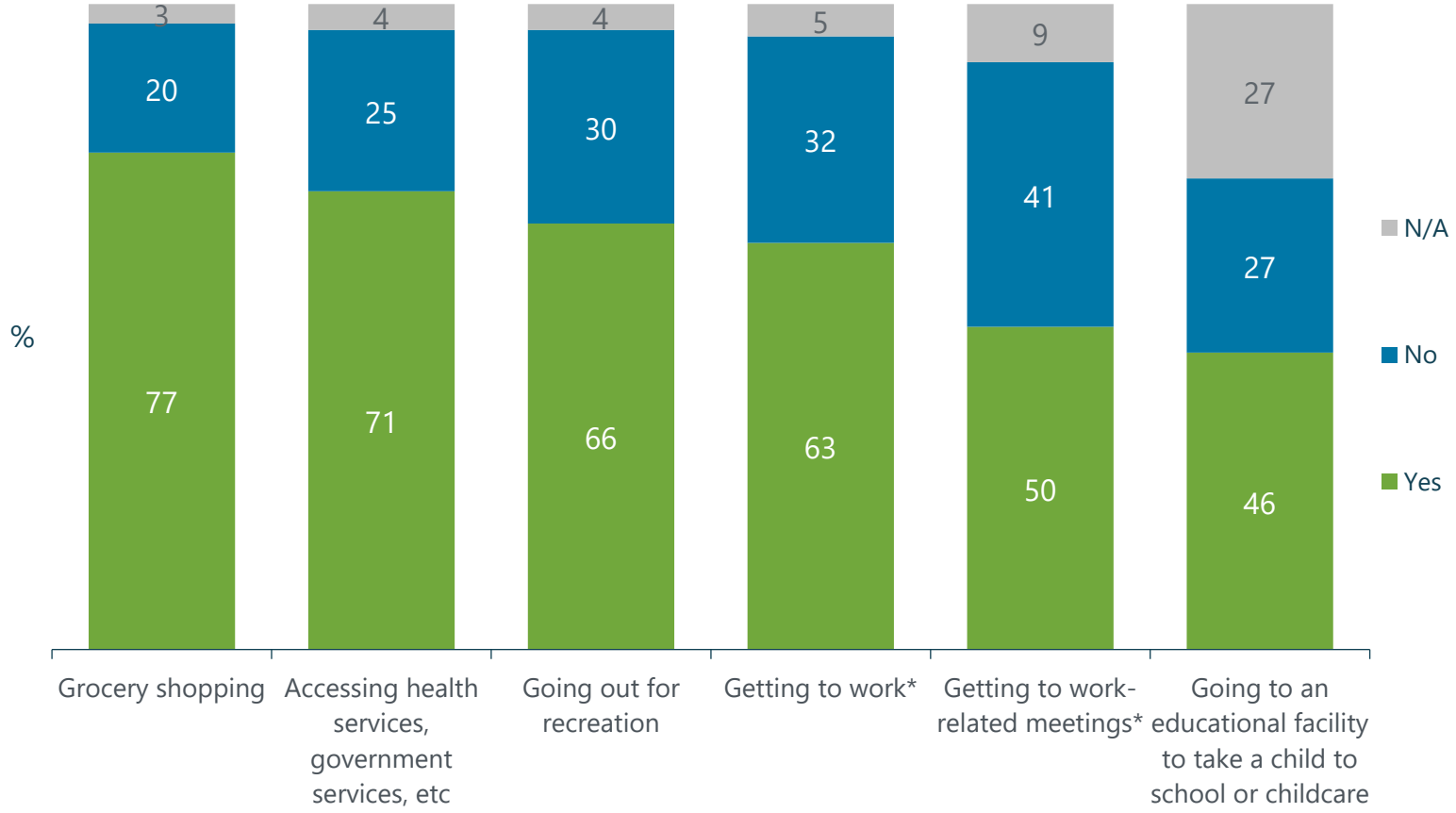


Q23. Do you have a car and a license so you are able to drive?
Base: All respondents; n=1952
Q24. Does anyone else in your household have a car and a license so they are able to drive?
Base: Respondents who did not have a car and a license; n=127

Incidence of alternative non-car transport options

Over 70% felt they could do grocery shopping and access health and other services if they did not have a car.

There was felt to be less non-car access available for going to an educational facility or childcare; and getting to work meetings.



Q25. If you had no cars in your household, would there be other non-car transport options (e.g. bus, train, bike, walk) you could realistically use to get to the following locations?
Base: All respondents; n=1952 (*only those who worked were asked about 'getting to work' and 'getting to work related meetings'; n=1191)

Services with problems accessing

Over one third indicated they did not have any problems accessing any of the services listed.

Key services with the greatest incidence of access problems included:

- Healthcare services
- Public transport
- Government services
- Mental health services

The older age groups (50-69 and 70+) have fewest problems accessing services (42% and 54% respectively).

The 30-59 year olds have particular problems accessing healthcare services (33%), public transport (26%), mental health services (25%), sport and recreation facilities (20%), education (13%) and childcare (13%).

Services	Total (%)
Have **no problems** accessing these services	37
Healthcare services and facilities (e.g. GP, hospital)	24
Public transport (e.g. bus, train)	21
Government services, such as Medicare, Centrelink, Service NSW, local Council	21
Mental health services	19
Walking tracks	16
Sport and recreation facilities, including parks, reserves and playgrounds	16
Cultural facilities, such as theatre, museums, galleries	15
Bikes/bike tracks	13
Natural areas, such as bushland, waterways, etc.	13
Gaming, coding, programming or other IT-related events and activities	9
Grocery shopping	9
Disability support services	9
Education facilities	8
Childcare services	7
Other	2

Q26. Sometimes it is difficult to use certain services and activities for a whole range of reasons. Which, if any, of the following services or activities do you have problems using for any reason?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Reasons why there is trouble accessing services

- Amongst those experiencing trouble

Main reasons for problems accessing services were:

- Cost of services
- A lack of services in their area
- Lack of transport options
- Poor customer service

Reasons why PROMPTED RESPONSES	Total having trouble accessing services (n=1,228) %
Cost of service/too expensive	35
No/lack of services/facilities in your area	33
Lack of transport options	29
Poor customer service	23
Remote location/hard to get to	21
They are not open at the times I require	21
Lack of time	20
Health or disability	18
Don't feel safe where they are located	12
Cannot trust them	11
Discrimination	8
Availability/wait time/long lines/can't get an appt.	4
Language difficulties	3
Other	9

Q27 You mentioned that you have problems accessing one or more services or activities. Which, if any, of the following explain why you have problems accessing those services??
Base: Respondents having trouble accessing services n=1,228

6. Healthy Lifestyles

Frequency of physical activity and places walked in the area

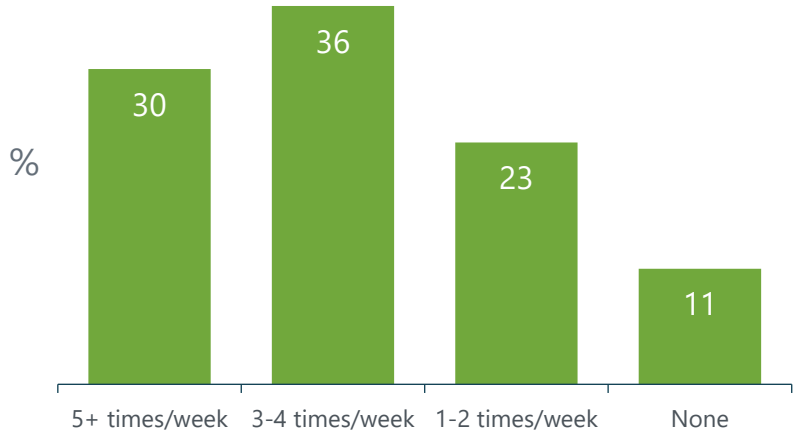
Two thirds (66%) of respondents indicated they did 30 minutes of activity that increases their heart rate 3-4 times per week or more.

Frequent places to walk in the neighbourhood were:

- Around the local neighbourhood streets (no specific destination)
- Parks, ovals or bushland

Frequency of intense activity

3.4 times a week on average



Usual walking routes

Q29. On average, how many times a week do you usually do 30 minutes or more of physical activity or walking that increases your heart rate or makes your breath harder than normal?
Q28. Which, if any, of these places in or around your neighbourhood do you walk to or through in a usual week?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Fruit and vegetable intake

45% ate the recommended serve of fruit and vegetables 5 days a week or more often.

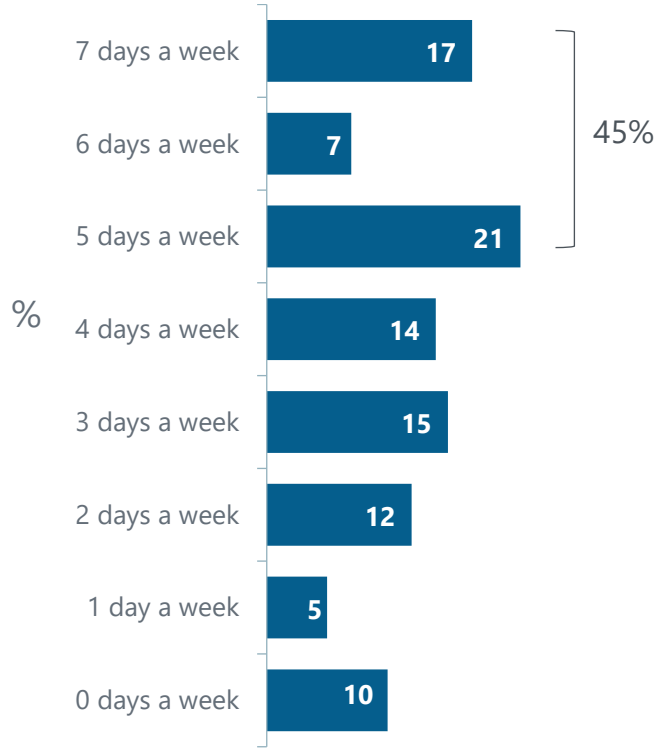
Fresh fruit appeared to be readily available in the area for the majority (87%).

57% of respondents felt they were getting enough sleep.

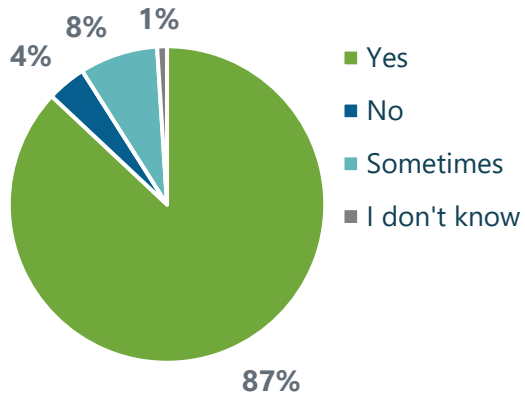
A significantly higher proportion of 30-49 year olds did not get enough sleep (48%)

70+ years olds were more likely to be getting enough sleep (67%).

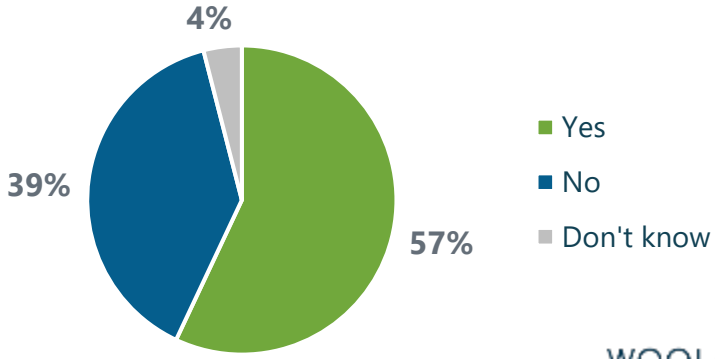
Incidence of eating five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit per day



Incidence of fresh fruit readily available in your area



Are you generally getting enough sleep?



Q30. Roughly, how many days per week do you eat 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit?
Q31. Are fresh fruit and vegetables readily available at stores, markets, or gardens in your area?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Mental health

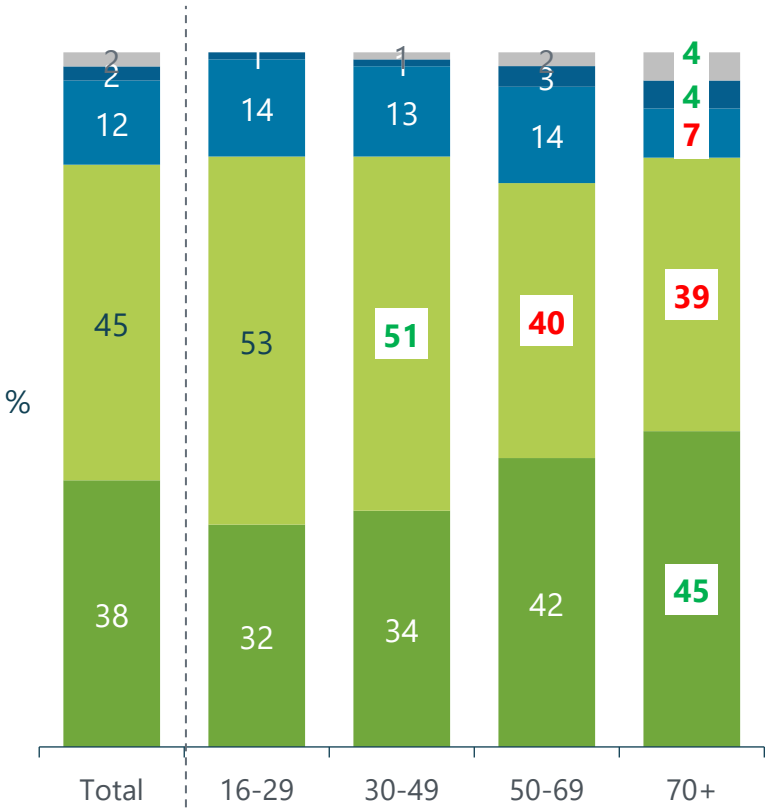
Eight in ten experienced a positive emotion often or sometimes in the past few weeks.

While six in ten experienced a negative emotion in the same time period.

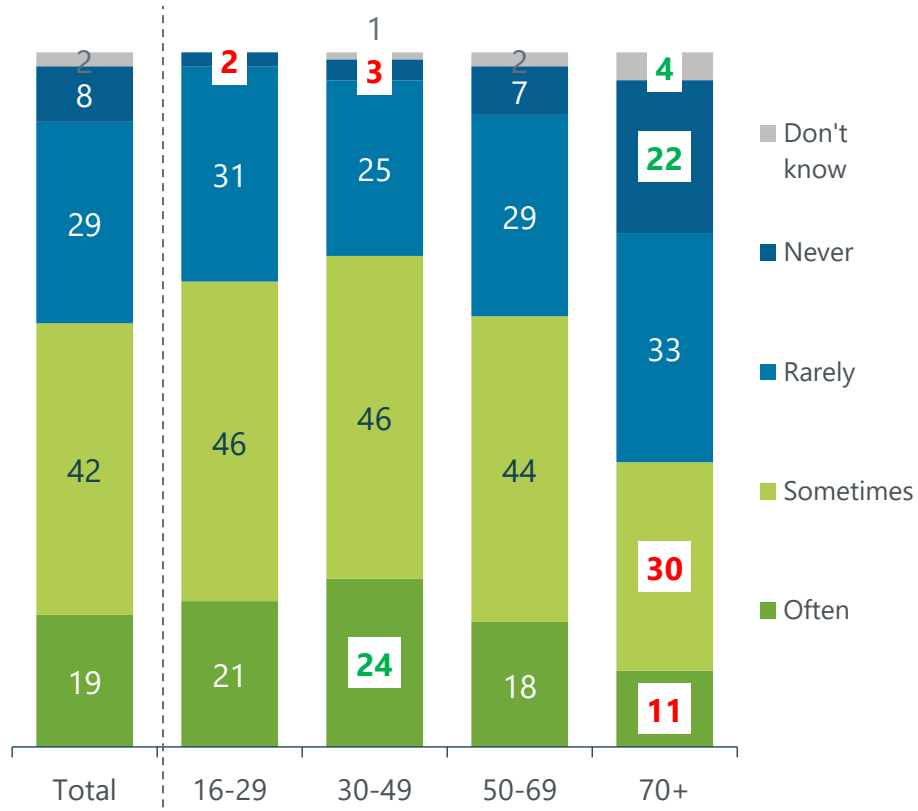
Those most like to experience a positive emotions were aged 70+ years and home owners.

30-49 year olds and renters were the most likely to experience negative emotions sometimes or often in the past few weeks.

Frequency of experiencing positive emotions?



Frequency of experiencing negative emotions



Q33. During the past few weeks, how often, if at all, have you experienced positive emotions such as calmness, compassion, forgiveness, contentment and generosity?
Q34. And during the past few weeks, how often, if at all, have you experienced negative emotions such as selfishness, jealousy, fear, worry and anger?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

7. Social and Community Engagement

Involvement in social and community activities

Around six in ten community members were involved in a sport or recreation group, or a special interest/lobby group, a third were not (32%).

Activities that the community were most likely to have participated in included:

- Signing a petition
- Writing or speaking to a Government MP
- Online discussions about political or community issues.

Incidence of being actively involved in the following:	Yes (%)
Sport or recreation group	33
Special interest or hobby group	27
Online community	18
Religious or spiritual group or organisation	16
Social group through school, TAFE or University	9
Ethnic or multicultural group	6
Other	3
No active involvement in social groups	32

Incidence of participating in any of the following political or civic actions:	Yes (%)
Signed a petition	43
Written or spoken to a Federal or State Member of Parliament	22
Participated in an online discussion about political or local community issues	20
Been a member of a group that makes decisions, such as a board, a body corporate, a local council committee, religious or sporting committee, community group, resident action group, or school committee	15
Participated in a community consultation or attended a public or Council meeting	13
Written or spoken to the Council Administrator	13
Attended a protest, march, or demonstration	10
Other	1
Engaged in none of these in last 12 months	36

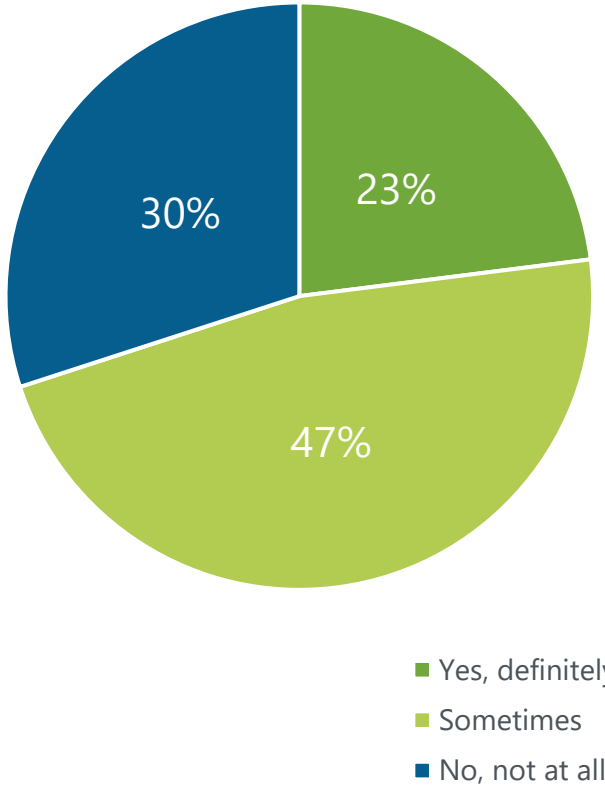
Q35. In the past 12 months, have you been actively involved in any of these social groups or taken part in an activity they organised?
Q36. In the last 12 months, have you participated in any of the following political or civic actions?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Opportunities to have a say on local issues

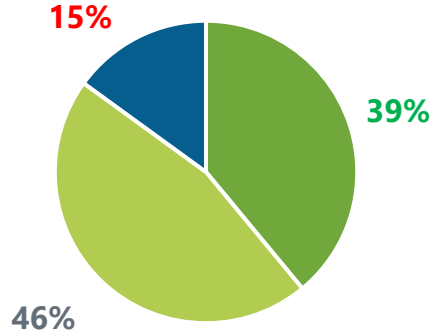
While many felt there were enough opportunities to have a say on local issues (47% yes definitely), there is room to improve as 53% said only sometimes or organized not at all.

Those aged 50-69 years were most likely to suggest that there are not enough opportunities to have a say (41%).

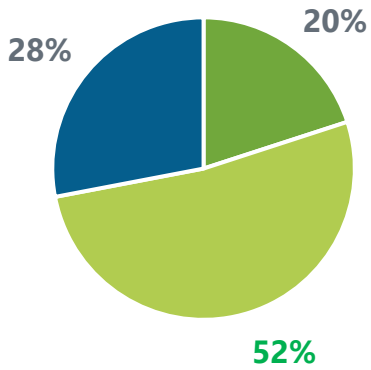
Incidence of having enough opportunities to have a say



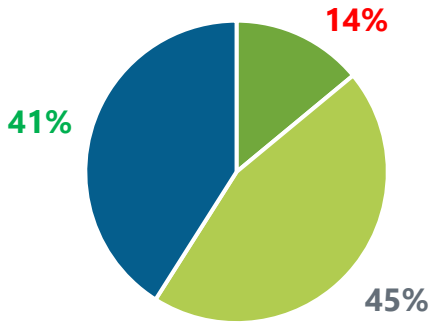
16-29 years



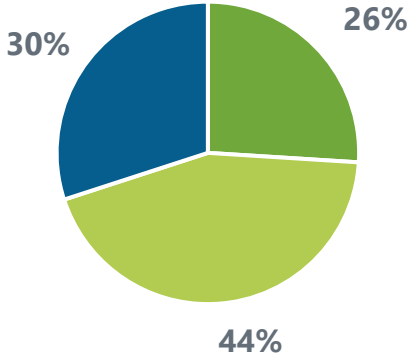
30-49 years



50-69 years



70+ years



Q37. Do you feel there are enough opportunities to have a say on local issues that are important to you?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Appendix

1. Respondent profile

2. Copy of Questionnaire

Appendix 1: Respondent Profile

Current Work Status	Total (n=1952) %
Working full-time for 35 or more hours a week	44
Retired	30
Working part-time or casual for less than 35 hours a week	19
Home duties	4
Studying at school, TAFE or university	4
Unemployed	3
Other	2

Current Family Status	Total (n=1952) %
Couple (children at home)	32
Couple (no children at home)	30
Single/living alone	20
Single parent (children at home)	7
Living at home with one or more parents	4
Group/shared household	3
Prefer not to state	3
Other	1

Highest Qualification	Total (n=1952) %
Bachelor Degree Level	25
Secondary Education - Years 10 and above	17
Certificate III and IV Level	16
Postgraduate Degree Level	15
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	11
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level	10
Secondary Education - Years 9 and below	4
Certificate I & II Level	2

Q4. What is your current work status?
D6. What is your family status?
D11. What is the level of the highest qualification you have completed?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

Appendix 1: Respondent Profile (continued)

Country Born In	Total (n=1952) %
Australia	82
United Kingdom	8
New Zealand	2
Philippines	1
India	1
China	1
South Africa	1
USA	1
Netherlands	1
Other	2

Languages Spoken at Home (other than English)	Respondents who speak a language other than English at home (n=204) %
Spanish	14
Mandarin	10
Cantonese	10
Korean	9
French	7
Filipino / Tagalog	7
German	6
Dutch	4
Hindi	4
Vietnamese	3
Greek	3
Other	35

D7a. In which country were you born?
D7c. Which languages?
Base: All respondents; n=1952

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research & Engagement
Level 6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060
+61 2 9261 5221
www.woolcott.com.au
Contacts: Karyn Wong, Lucy Economus and Liz Sparham

Central Coast Council

CentralCoastCouncil @CCoastCouncil @centralcoastcouncil

Council Office 2 Hely St Wyong | 8.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday

P 02 4306 7900 | **W** centralcoast.nsw.gov.au