Draft Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan
Your vision | Your future 2035

Community Survey Report

May 2025

Contents

1.   Introduction

Your vision | Your future 2032, Hornsby Shire's current Community Strategic Plan, was endorsed by Council in June 2022. As Hornsby Shire's highest-level plan, developed collaboratively with the community and other stakeholders, it sets the strategic direction for where the people of Hornsby Shire want to be in 10 years. Every project led by Council is guided by the Community Strategic Plan, however, working towards the vision is the responsibility of many partners including state agencies, community groups and private enterprise. A new Community Strategic Plan is required to be endorsed by the incoming Council by 30 June 2025.

Hornsby Shire Council has undertaken a review of the Community Strategic Plan, *Your vision | Your future 2032*. The review considered engagement on projects during 2022-2024 and updates included in the new draft Hornsby Shire 2035 CSP are outlined in a **Discussion Paper** available on the Your Say Hornsby consultation website.

Public exhibition of the updated draft Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan took place from 13 March to 21 April 2025 on the Your Say Hornsby consultation website. An online community survey was conducted as part of the public exhibition which focused on the Community Vision, the top 10 priorities, and key challenges for the Shire. This report provides a summary of the insights gained from the 97 people who participated in the survey.

1.1   Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings from the online survey. These findings will confirm that we have achieved success with our review of the Community Strategic Plan: that the community feels the Community Vision reflects the desired future of Hornsby Shire and that addressing the top priorities and key challenges identified will lead us in the right direction towards achieving the Vision.

1.2   Background

As a Council and the level of government closest to the people, we are required to lead the community in developing a long-term vision, identifying their aspirations and priorities, and developing a plan to achieve them with an outlook of at least 10 years. This is known as the Hornsby Shire Community Strategic Plan.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest-level plan that a council will prepare. The purpose of the CSP is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these priorities. It guides all of Council's other strategies and plans and must be developed by councils with and on behalf of the community. *Your vision | Your future 2032*, Hornsby Shire's current Community Strategic Plan, was endorsed by Council in June 2022. The new Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan, *Your vision | Your future 2035*, is required to be endorsed by the incoming Council by 30 June 2025.

The minimum timeframe for a CSP is 10 years and it addresses four key questions:

1.   Where are we now?
2.   Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?
3.   How will we get there?
4.   How do we know we have arrived?

These questions help identify the community's vision, aspirations and priorities and establish baseline targets, strategies and measures to aid performance monitoring and reporting.

The online survey was aimed at engaging the community and key stakeholders in the review process of the CSP, gathering valuable feedback and strengthening relationships with the community and stakeholders to ensure the community's vision, priorities and concerns are accurately reflected, and asked about the:

1. **Vision** – gauging the level of support for the streamlined vision statement and encouraging suggested changes or additions, ensuring that the vision is inclusive and representative

2. **Priorities** – asking the community to rank the top 10 identified priorities and encouraging changes or additions, ensuring the CSP captures what matters most to the community and informs the strategic planning process

3. **Key Challenges** - The CSP sets directions for addressing key challenges - asking the community to list challenges that might affect the community, ensuring that all relevant factors are considered and addressed.

2. Community involvement

The survey was open for five and a half weeks, from 13 March to 21 April 2025 and was widely promoted to all residents, businesses and stakeholders in the Hornsby Shire.

2.1 Community Engagement Strategy

Council is committed to meaningful community engagement and we believe that every resident has a right to have a say in decisions which impact them. We wanted to make sure we heard from all of our key stakeholder groups in Hornsby Shire. Our Community Engagement Strategy guides us in delivering best-practice community and stakeholder engagement with high quality outcomes. Initially adopted in July 2021, the Strategy was recently reviewed, minor updates made, and re-adopted in December 2024.

2.2 Survey promotion

The survey was available on the Your Say Hornsby consultation website during the public exhibition of the draft Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan. Promotion included:

1. **Advertisements and notifications**:	
• Advertisements in the Council Column of three local newspapers – Bush Telegraph, Dooral Roundup, Galston and Glenorie News.	April print editions
• Notifications sent to schools in the Shire, community and stakeholder groups.	
• Digital signage in three locations – Hornsby Station footbridge digital screen, West Pennant Hills digital screen, Hornsby Mall kiosks screensaver	13 March to 21 April
• Weekly community engagement e-newsletter.	
• Social media posts and vox pop reel on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.	13 March 17 March 2 April
• April monthly e-newsletter sent to almost 25,000 subscribers.	
• Our Council Autumn 2025 edition delivered to all households.	
• Media release issued to local, metropolitan, and multicultural media.	13 March

1. **Advertisements and notifications**:	
• Staff email signatures footer.	
2. **Events and flyers**:	
• Five pop-up events at Hornsby Mall markets, youth pizza afternoon, and Food Truck Friday with staff and flyers available.	20 March 21 March 27 March
• Flyers available at Hornsby Shire libraries.	
• Translated flyers dropped off at local CALD shops and restaurants.	
• Printed posters available at the Hornsby Aquatic and Leisure Centre and the Thornleigh Brickpit Stadium.	

2.3   Overview of participants

Ninety-seven people responded to the online survey. Most responses were from people who identified as a resident of the Shire (88.6 per cent), 15.4 per cent identified as workers within the Shire, 9.28 per cent were Business owners and 2.06% were students. (Respondents could select more than one category.)
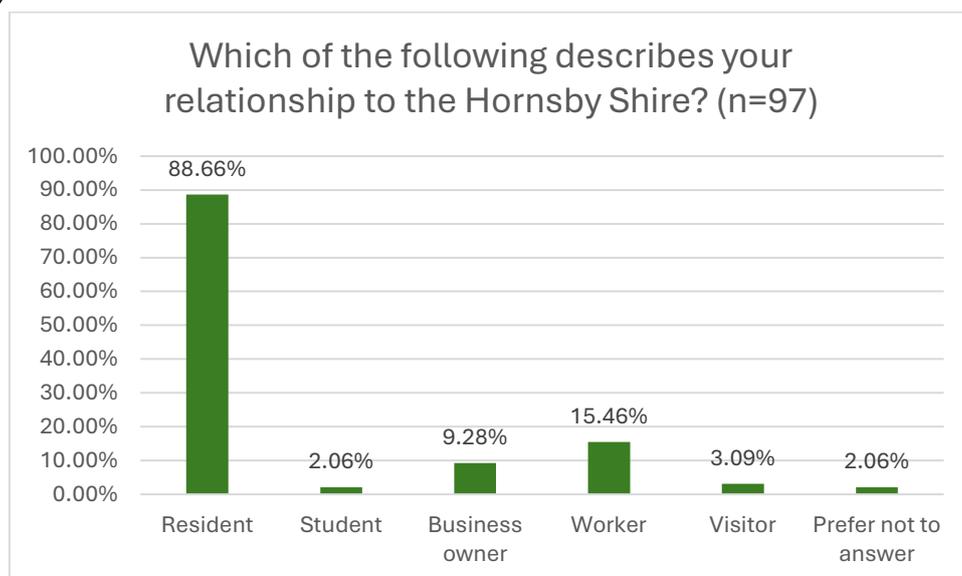

Figure 1: Survey participants' relationship to the Hornsby Shire

3.   Demographics

The online survey was an opt-in survey which has some limitations when analysing the results. The results of the survey are not specifically demographically representative as participants self-selected to participate.

As shown in the charts below (Figures 2 and 3), gender of survey participants was not significantly different to the LGA's overall gender profile. While there were no respondents under 18 years of age, participants in the other interval age groups generally follow the same curve as Hornsby Shire's age structure, with most respondents being in the age group 65+ (Figures 4 and 5). Participants were asked to identify their suburb which have been mapped to Hornsby Shire Wards – participants by Ward shows a stronger representation in Wards A and B (Figure 6). 14.4 per cent of respondents speak a language other than English at home, with seven respondents identifying the other language spoken (Figures 7 and 8).

Gender of participants (n=87)

7.53% 2.15% 0%

44.09%

46.24%

- Woman 44.09%
- Man 46.24%
- Prefer not to say 7.53%
- Other 2.15%
- Non-binary 0%
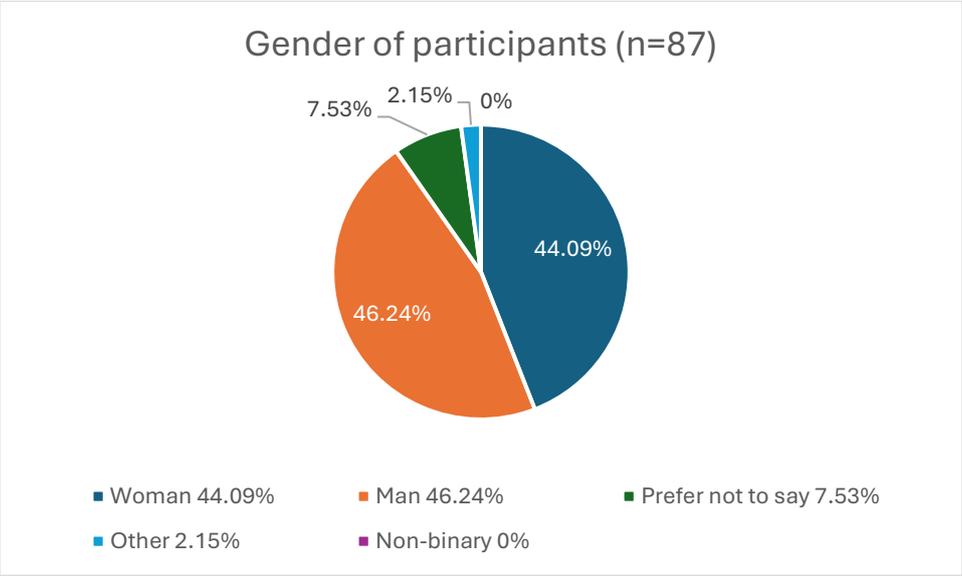
Figure 2: Gender of participants

Gender distribution - Hornsby Shire (for comparison)

51% 49%

- Males 49%
- Females 51%
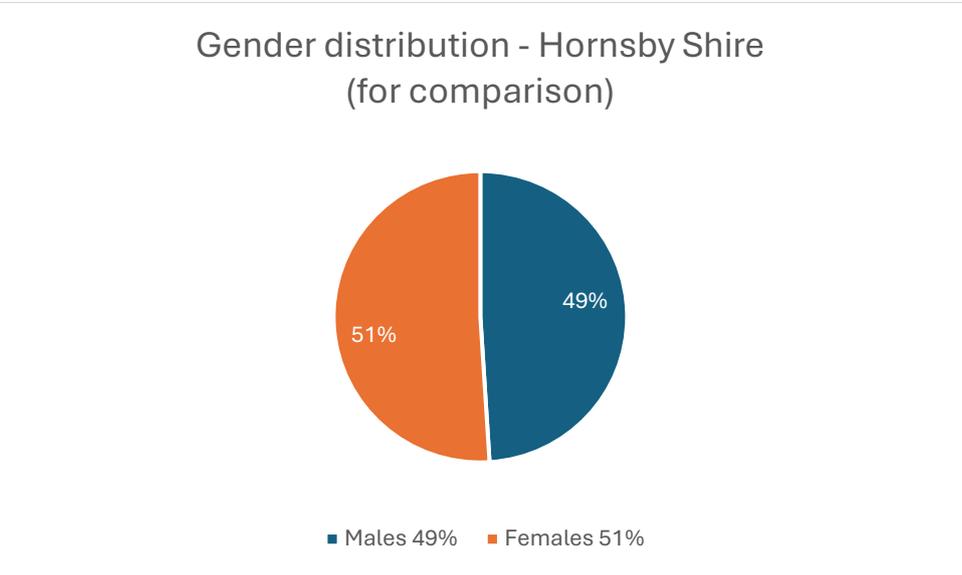
Figure 3: Gender profile of Hornsby Shire (for comparison)

Age of participants (n=97)

Age group	Percentage
Under 18	0%
18-24	4.12%
25-34	6.19%
35-44	19.59%
45-54	21.65%
55-64	15.46%
65 +	27.84%
Prefer not to answer	5.15%
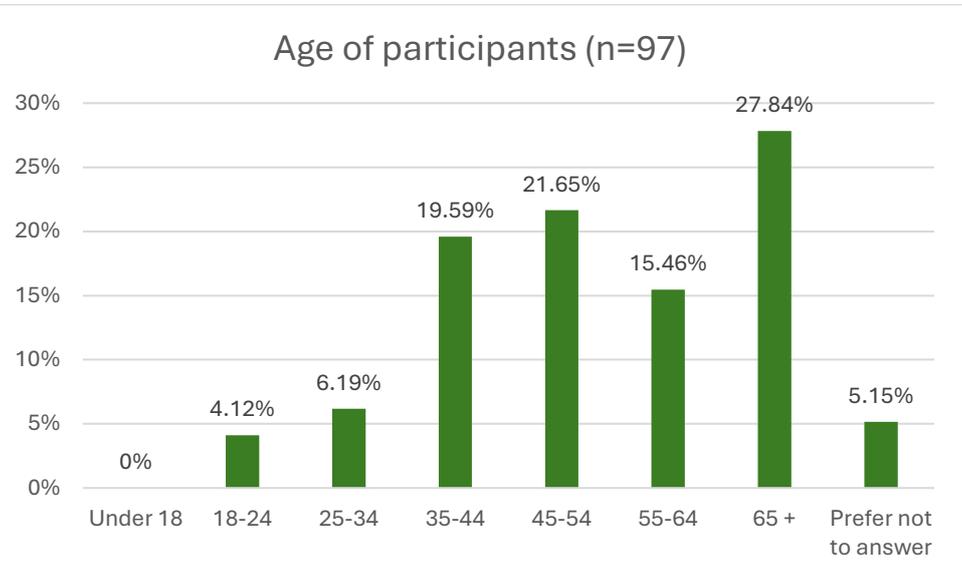
Figure 4: Age of participants

Age structure of Hornsby Shire (for comparison)
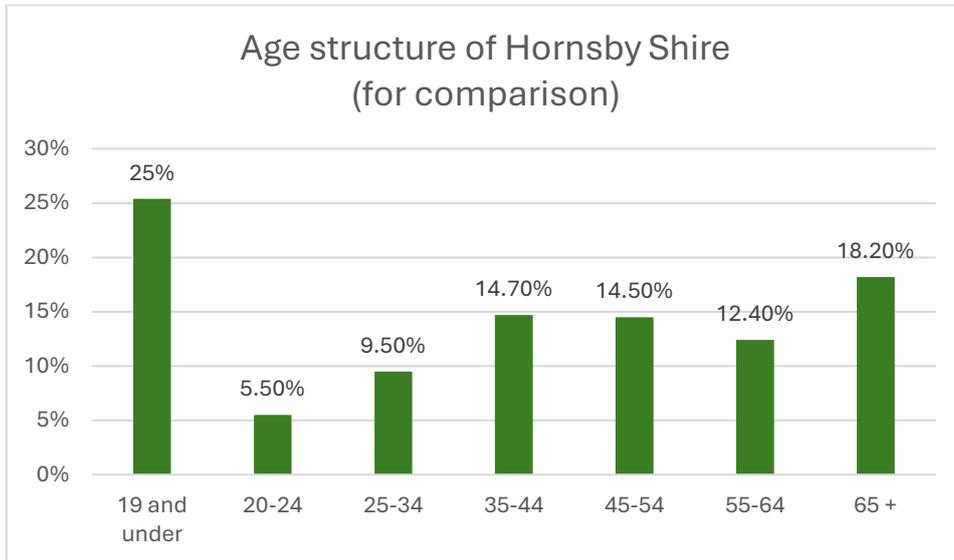
Figure 5: Age structure of Hornsby Shire (for comparison)

Number of participants in each Ward (n=77)

A Ward 31 ■ B Ward 29 ■ C Ward 14 ■ Out of Shire 3
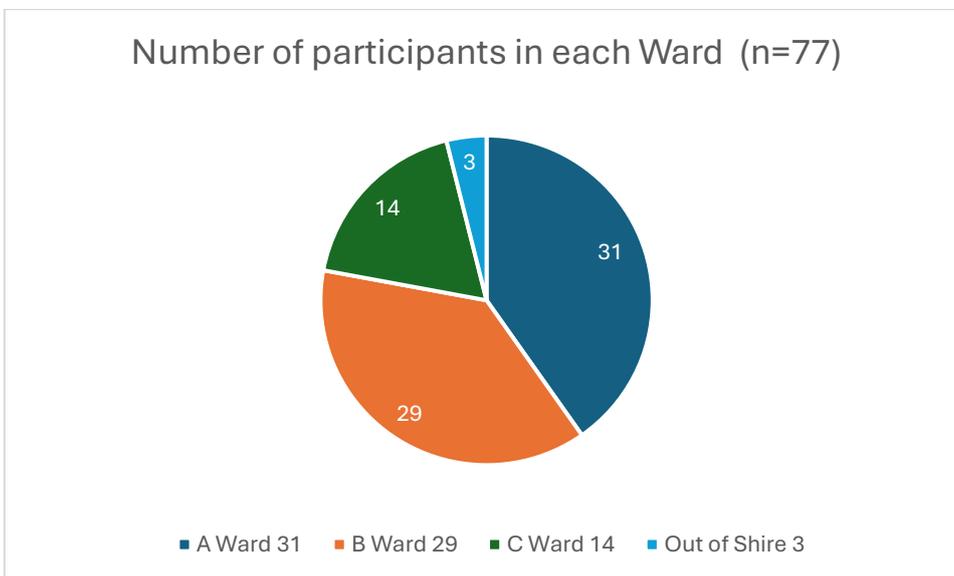
Figure 6: Number of participants in each Ward

Do you regularly speak a language other than English at home? (n=97)

■ Yes 14.43% ■ No 85.57%
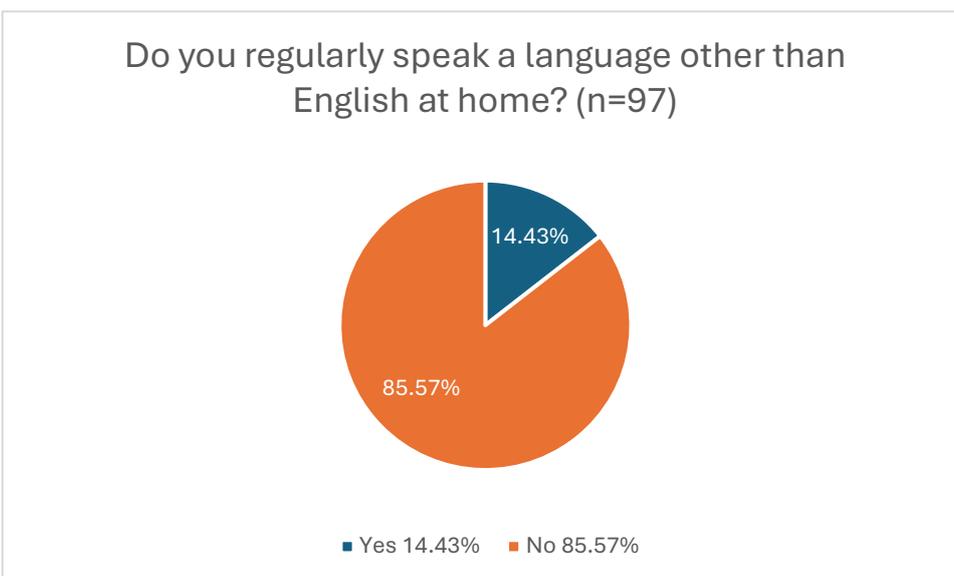
Figure 7: Speak a language other than English at home

Other languages spoken at home (n=7)	
Korean	1
Hindi	3
Japanese	1
Mandarin	1
Chinese	1

Figure 8: Other languages spoken at home

A large percentage of participants (54.1%) have lived in the Hornsby Shire for more than 20 years and 6.25 per cent do not live in the Shire. 42.8 per cent of participants have children under 18 living with them.
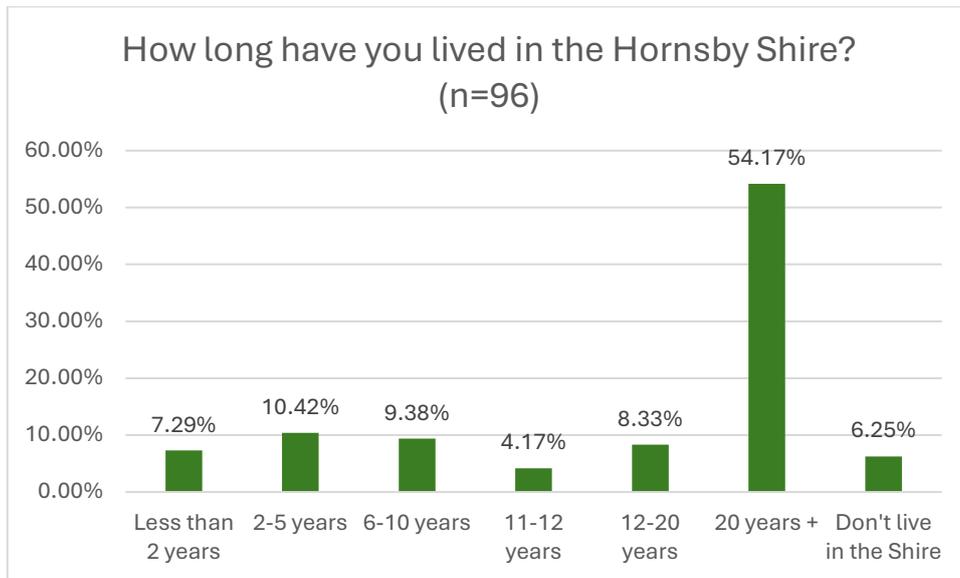
Figure 9: Length of time living in Hornsby Shire
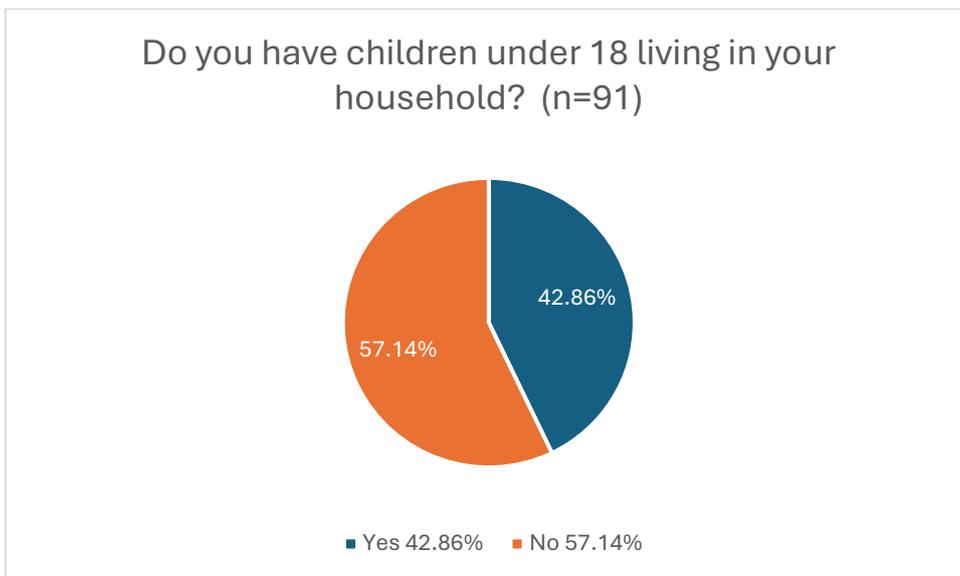
Figure 10: Participants who have children under 18 living in household

4.   What we heard

The survey was designed to be a quick five-minute anonymous survey with five questions relating to the CSP to ensure it still resonates with the community, together with eight demographic questions to gain more targeted insights. There was also a **Quick Poll** on the exhibition page of the Draft Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan for respondents to quickly answer based on a five point scale whether they agreed with the Vision statement:

> Hornsby Shire is a place that inspires and sustains us. A place where we value our connections to each other and our environment and celebrate living in our unique urban, suburban, rural and river communities.

Survey questions

1. Does this Vision statement describe how you would like Hornsby Shire to be? (Required) (Quick Poll and survey)

2. Is there anything you would like to change or add to the Vision statement? (Verbatim)

3. Please rank your top 10 priorities for Hornsby Shire. (Required)

    Natural Environment - bushland, trees and waterways

    Population growth, housing diversity and supporting infrastructure

    Climate change, waste and environmental sustainability

    Transport – traffic, walking and cycling, roads, parking and public transport

    Community facilities and cultural events

    Diverse and inclusive communities

    Parks, open space, recreation and sports

    Resilience to shocks and stresses

    Youth, ageing, family services

    Economic development and vibrant town centres.

4. Are there any other priorities not listed that you would like included? (Verbatim)

5. These are the Key Challenges we have identified:

    - The rate of population growth
    - Traffic and transport
    - Housing affordability and diversity
    - Climate change and environmental sustainability
    - The waste crisis

    - Building resilience
    - Protecting our natural environment
    - Cost of living
    - Financial sustainability

    - Digital solutions and AI

    Are there any other challenges we should consider? (Verbatim)

4.1   Feedback on CSP Vision

Quick Poll

Quick Poll respondents showed strong support for the Vision statement, with almost 56 per cent either Agreeing or Strongly agreeing that it describes how they would like Hornsby Shire to be. Twenty-three per cent either Disagreed or Strongly disagreed, with 20 per cent remaining Neutral.
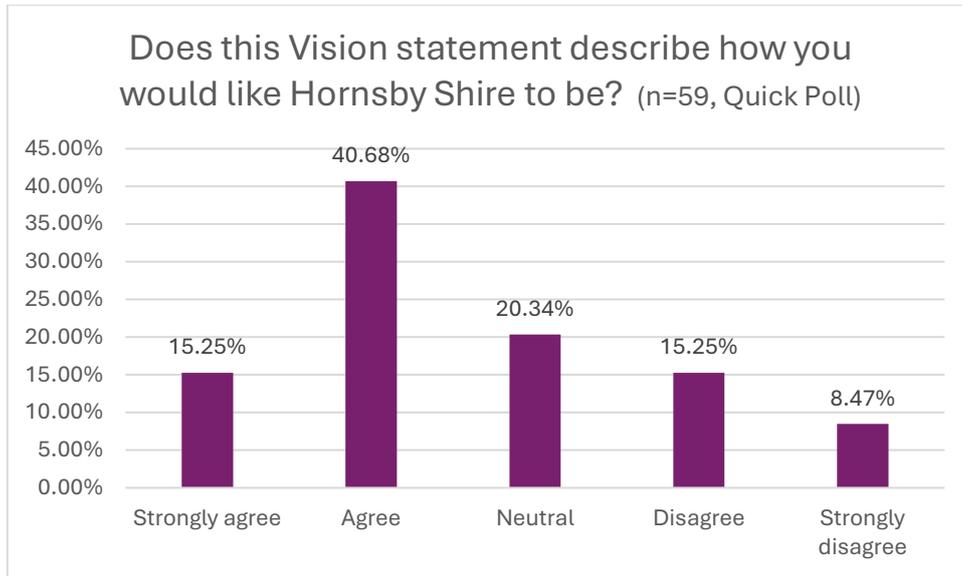
Figure 11: Agree with Vision (Quick Poll)

1. The Vision question was presented with five smiley face options ranging from a sad/angry face to a happy/smiling face. For the purposes of this survey we will equate each smiley face to the same scale as the Quick Poll. Forty-three per cent of the survey participants either Agreed or Strongly agreed with the Vision statement, with almost 33 per cent Disagreeing or Strongly disagreeing and 23 per cent remaining Neutral.
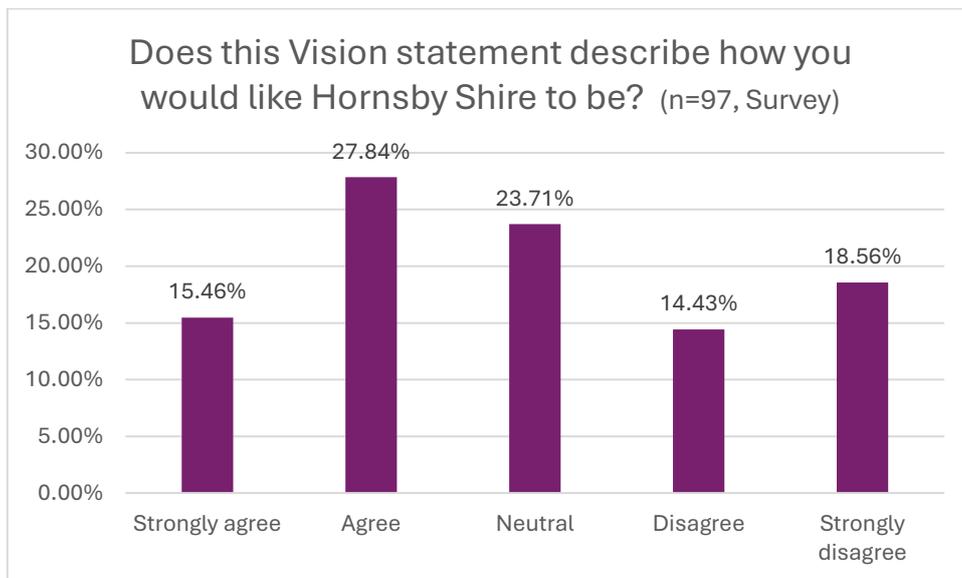

Figure 12: Agree with Vision (Survey)

Overall, support for the Vision statement across the two survey methods is shown below:

Respondents	Agree/Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly disagree
Quick Poll	33	12	14
Survey	42	23	32
Total	**75 (48.07%)**	**35 (22.43%)**	**46 (29.48%)**

Figure 13: Quick Poll and Survey Results

2. Sixty-nine respondents suggested changes to the Vision statement to include other ideas or sentiments. Key themes identified were:

- **Connections** – fostering community connectedness and belonging
- **Bushland** – reinstate wording relating to bushland
- **Environment** - protection of the natural environment. Existing vision wording on connection to environment supported
- **Sustain** – existing vision wording supported
- **Vibrant** – a vibrant community and place
- **Inspire** – existing vision wording supported
- **Recycling** – focus on recycling
- **Urban/suburban** – existing vision wording not supported.

The comments reflect a balanced mix of constructive feedback, suggestions, and concerns from the community regarding the vision for Hornsby Shire.

4.2   Feedback on the top 10 priorities

3. Participants were presented with the top 10 priorities identified in the current CSP, *Your vision | Your future 2032*, and were asked to rank them. Following analysis of engagement on projects during 2022-2024 since the CSP was developed, it was found that these priorities remain the things that are important to our community and their aspirations.

Overall, 97 survey participants nominated **Transport - traffic, walking and cycling, roads, parking and public transport** as the highest priority, followed by **Natural environment – bushland, trees and waterways**, and **Parks, open spaces, recreation and sports** coming in as third priority. Participants ranked the lowest priorities as **Resilience to shocks and stresses** and **Diverse and inclusive communities**.

Top 10 priorities ranked (n=97)

Priority	Score
Transport – traffic, walking and cycling, roads,…	7.59
Natural Environment - bushland, trees and waterways	7.23
Parks, open space, recreation and sports	6.47
Population growth, housing diversity and supporting…	5.86
Community facilities and cultural events	5.81
Economic development and vibrant town centres	5.19
Climate change, waste and environmental…	4.94
Youth, ageing, family services	4.69
Diverse and inclusive communities	3.62
Resilience to shocks and stresses	3.61

Figure 14: Top 10 priorities ranked

4. Forty respondents suggested priorities in addition to the 10 priorities listed for ranking. Key themes identified were:

- **Connections** – fostering community connectedness and belonging
- **Cost of living/hardship** – financial strain of Council rates and rising costs of living
- **Housing affordability –** affordability of housing

- **Inclusive decision-making –** more community inclusion in decision-making

- **Heritage** – protect heritage and residential character

- **Traffic** – consider traffic as a standalone community priority given its importance; more footpaths and better active transport connections

- **Vibrancy** – a vibrant night life.

4.3   Feedback on the Key Challenges

5. Survey participants were presented with a list of the 10 Key Challenges included in the Draft Hornsby Shire 2035 Community Strategic Plan and asked if there were others that should be considered.

- The rate of population growth
- Traffic and transport
- Housing affordability and diversity
- Climate change and environmental sustainability
- The waste crisis
- Building resilience
- Protecting our natural environment
- Cost of living
- Financial sustainability
- Digital solutions and AI

Seventy-four respondents suggested key challenges that should be considered. Key themes identified were:

- **Access to services/facilities/more facilities** - access to services, including health services, aged care facilities, financial services; more facilities including recreation and sports fields and facilities

- **Inadequate infrastructure/maintenance** - lack of schools and recreational/sporting facilities to support population growth; road quality, maintenance and repairs

- **Council planning/efficiency/effectiveness** - remove Council "red tape"; digitisation of Council services; capacity and capability of Council staff; focus by Council on the right things

- **Community connectedness/connections** - fostering community connectedness and belonging

- **Development** - State government's one size fits all approach to development and overriding Council on such matters; impact of development

- **Difficulties dealing with Council** - difficulties dealing with Council staff

- **Housing**

- **Irresponsible dog ownership**

- **Mental health**

- **Waste –** waste crisis; recycling

- **Community harmony/cohesion**

- **Cost of living –** increase to cost of living

- **Heritage –** protect heritage and residential character

- **Rates –** increasing rates; review rates

- **Safety**

- **Traffic –** impact of population growth on traffic

- **Transparency in local government -** Transparency in local government including engagement

- **Transport -** availability of public transport; accessibility of cycling network

- **Trees –** protecting trees.

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