

HORNSBY SNAPSHOT FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANNING FOR HORNSBY COMMUNITY PLAN FINAL REPORT

Prepared by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community consultation research was undertaken by the Miller Group during the first half of 2016 to support Council with the development of the new 10 year Community Plan. This research and consultation project involved three components:

To:

1. Identify how Council was 'tracking' against a series of community perception indicators in the current 10 year Community Plan 'Your Community 2013-2023',
2. Consult with residents about their vision for the future of Hornsby Shire in preparation for the new Community Plan, and
3. Review recent community engagement research outputs to identify any common or key issues that require highlighting.

An engaged community

Over the past three years Council has conducted a series of consultations to develop a range of key strategies and plans. These consultations have engaged 9,912 residents in surveys, focus groups, workshops and consultations. This current research engaged 3,750 residents – 3706 through an online survey and 44 through a series of focus groups.

Hornsby residents are highly engaged and eager to have continued involvement and 'dialogue' with Council around future planning for the LGA.

Community Perception - Online Survey Results

In general there has been a positive increase in activity reflected in the 5 key community perception indicators in the Community Plan. The indicators are:

- o Sense of belonging
- o Safety
- o Living and working in the Shire
- o Sustainable transport
- o Use of recreation and leisure facilities

A strong sense of belonging:

- ❖ Speaking to neighbours regularly
 - o 89% of people spoke to neighbours daily or regularly an increase from 63% in 2012 (Council survey)
- ❖ Being able to ask for help in an emergency
 - o 84% strongly agreed or agreed that they could get help from neighbours in an emergency an increase from 56% in 2012 (Council survey)
- ❖ Volunteering
 - o 39% volunteer both locally and outside LGA which is an increase from 22% (ABS 2011)

Safety:

High levels of day time and night time safety both when walking or catching public transport

3,750 residents participated in the **HORNSBY SNAPSHOT PROJECT** through online survey & focus group

1,000 residents indicated an interest in attending a follow up focus group

- ❖ 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe walking in the Shire during the day and 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe catching public transport during the day
- ❖ Night time safety rated lower than day time safety with 59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe walking in the Shire at night and 49% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe catching public transport at night

Living and working in the Shire:

Significant proportions of people both live and work in the Shire

- ❖ 30% of respondents reported living and working in the Shire, a 3.9% increase from 26.1% of residents who lived and worked at home in 2011 (ABS data)

Sustainable transport:

The use of sustainable transport is on the increase

- ❖ with 57% of respondents walk locally at least twice a week or more and 52% of respondents chose walking as one of their two most preferred means of travelling around the LGA for trips of 5 kilometres or less, 21% said they catch a train and 10% said they take the bus

Use of leisure and recreation facilities:

- ❖ Visiting the local park (44%) was identified as the most popular forms of regular recreational activities. This was followed by playing outdoor sport with 25% of people reporting that they play outdoor sport at least once a week, bushwalking with 19% of people reporting at least once a week, and 18% of people reported attending the local aquatic / leisure centre at least once a week. This is a significant increase on the 57% of residents who reported participating in these recreation activities in 2012.

However several indicators require attention as follows:

- ❖ 91% of respondents choose to drive their cars as one of their two most preferred means of travelling around the LGA for trips of 5 kilometres or less
- ❖ 37% of respondents who work outside the LGA take the train or bus to work
- ❖ There were high numbers of people who reported *never* using recreational facilities:
 - 79% never ride a skateboard or watch people at the skate park
 - 71% never use the local dog park
 - 70% never play indoor sport
 - 56% of people never attend the local community centre
 - 47% of people never attend the local leisure centre
 - 41% never play outdoor sport

Future Planning for Hornsby Council – Focus Group Results

The following themes emerged across all four focus groups.

Holistic planning for increased density there was a general understanding from participants that population increases would necessarily impact on the density of Hornsby LGA as with other LGAs in the Sydney metropolitan region, however there was unanimous agreement across all groups that this development and increased density must be predicated on holistic planning including the requirements of increased infrastructure, roads, parking, public transport, social connection and the maintenance of sufficient outdoor open space for community enjoyment.

Maintaining the extent and value of our natural environment and passive open space including bushland and other natural features intrinsic to Hornsby: all participants highly valued the natural environment with the majority citing this as one of the main reasons for why they chose to, and continue to choose to, live in Hornsby LGA.

Promoting an inclusive community through increased cultural events, festivals and food fairs: there was a clear acknowledgement and valuing of the changing cultural demographics of Hornsby and an active desire to build on this.

Promoting more active transport options through increased walkability and cycle paths and cycle infrastructure.

Increasing the productive capacity of the LGA through community hot-desking and work share hubs, creative hubs, agri-business including the maintenance and promotion of Dural as a Food Bowl community garden and farmers markets, and low impact Green Tourism such as nature walks, bushwalks and cycle tours.

Improving the accessibility of Council residents identified a range of ways to better engage with Council through improved online communication, a more accessible website, promotion of innovation and general presence via social media.

Reducing the impact of political parties at the local level there was a shared scepticism from participants about the reduced effectiveness of Council due to party political allegiances and also the use of local government as a stepping stone to State or Federal politics.

Increasing the transparency of development decisions including improved notification process and increased time for community feedback on major developments.

Better utilisation of the facilities and open space resources available Residents were in favour of making better use of existing community spaces, facilities sporting fields and open space for the benefit of all.

INTRODUCTION

The Hornsby Snapshot Project was conducted by the Miller Group between March and May 2016 and had three distinct project components. The first project component was to determine how Hornsby is tracking against a number of community perception indicators that form part of the existing community plan, Your Community Plan 2013-2023. The broad strategic issue underpinning the community perception indicators are:

- sense of belonging
- safety
- use of sustainable transport
- use of leisure and recreation facilities and
- living and working locally

The second component of the Snapshot project was to test these findings through a series of focus groups and use the findings as a springboard to start a conversation about the development of the next 10 year Community Plan. Community feedback was sought on the following:

- The key findings of the Community Perception research
- Key issues for the community against the five domains in the Community Plan – My Environment, My Community, My Lifestyle, My Property and My Council.

In addition the Miller Group conducted a short desktop review, the third project component, of four key Council plans and strategies to determine where there were linkages and common themes that require highlighting.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has been prepared by the Miller Group for the Strategy and Communication Section of Hornsby Shire Council to document the outcomes of the Snapshot of Hornsby project.

This report contains the following components:

- Snapshot Methodology
- General Findings – from the desktop review, the online survey and the focus groups
- Conclusion
- Appendices

SNAPSHOT METHODOLOGY

The project used two main methods to gather feedback from the community and measure progress against outcomes as follows:

1. An online survey - open to all members of the community - to gather feedback regarding the community perception indicators (see Appendix 1)
2. A series of focus groups: 3 groups with people selected from the online survey, and one recruited by phone with people who do not ordinarily engage with Council.

The Community Perception Indicators and metrics measured in the survey were:

- Percentage of people who volunteer locally,
- Percentage of our community who talk to their neighbours regularly,
- Percentage of our community who feel they can get help from their local community if needed,
- Percentage of our community who feel safe walking in the Shire and using public transport during the day and at night,
- Percentage of local trips (less than 5 km) by residents using sustainable transport options (walking, riding, public transport),
- Percentage of employed residents who travel to work using sustainable transport most days,
- Percentage of our community who visit parks and bushland reserves, or use sports and recreational facilities once a week or more,
- Percentage of the population that live and work in the Shire.

A short desktop review was undertaken to consider the findings from the online survey and focus groups against the outputs of four other projects undertaken by Council in the past two years (2014 and 2015):

- Active Living Hornsby Strategy, August 2015
- Socio-Cultural Consultation Outcomes, July 2015
- Community Recognition and Communication Effectiveness Research, July 2015
- Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan, August 2015

The purpose of the review was to identify common issues across these projects and also identify any gaps in consultation that require follow up activity by Council.

Sampling for the Online Survey

The online survey was built through an iterative process between the Miller Group and Council staff in the Strategy and Communications Team. Once finalised the survey was deployed on the Council's Website between 22 March and 8 April, and sent directly to subscribers to the Council's 'Your Community eNews' (29,664) by email on 22 March 2016.

In addition the Council promoted the survey:

- to younger community members in a Facebook post on 31 March 2016
- Through a reminder in April monthly 'Your Community eNews' subscribers (30,218) on 30 March 2016
- on Council's 'Join the Conversation' webpage from 22 March to 8 April 2016.

Sampling for the Focus Groups

As part of the survey respondents were asked to nominate whether they would like to be involved in a focus group. Of the 3,112 people who responded to this question 1,121 indicated that they would be interested in participating.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	36.02%	1,121
No	63.98%	1,991
Total		3,112

TABLE 1: INTEREST IN FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION – HORNSBY COMMUNITY PERCEPTION SURVEY 2016

To select participants for the focus groups the Miller Group used survey monkey data to establish a randomised sampling method by age as the primary coordinate to ensure that the groups were age balanced. This was particularly important to ensure that people who attended the groups expressed ideas and values specific to different stages in the lifecycle, i.e. young people, working couples with children, empty nesters, retired and single people. The secondary coordinate reflected the changing demographic ethnic diversity of Hornsby in 2016.

Registration for the focus groups was set up in Eventbrite and invitations to residents were generated by email with a direct link to the Eventbrite site. There was strong demand for the Hornsby daytime focus group (12 participants) and the Pennant Hills evening focus group (13 participants). The Berowra evening focus group was slower to be subscribed and did not reach capacity (10 participants).

In order to establish a 'control group' and hear from residents who do not normally engage with Council via either Council's enews or through the online survey a separate evening focus group was recruited by phone. The screeding for the group ensured that there was a mix of genders and a mix of ages targeting half the participants to be younger than the average age for the LGA of 39 years.

GENERAL FINDINGS

The following section outlines the findings of the desktop review, the online survey and the outcomes of the 'future planning' focus groups.

DESKTOP REVIEW

In addition to the primary data collection the Miller Group also reviewed the findings of the following recent Council projects to identify common themes and any gaps in community consultation or engagement:

- Active Living Hornsby Strategy, August 2015
- Socio-Cultural Consultation Outcomes, July 2015
- Community Recognition and Communication Effectiveness Research, July 2015
- Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan, August 2015

The key finding from this review is that Hornsby Council has undertaken extensive community engagement in the past two years with over 6,162 contacts with residents to undertake this strategic work. When one adds this current project the number of resident contacts jumps to 9,912 (see Table below)

Project / Strategy	Timeframe	Community participation
Active Living Hornsby Strategy – Community Engagement Report ¹	May – Sept 2014	1649
Community Recognition and Communication Effectiveness Research	July 2015	2,286
Socio-Cultural Consultation Outcomes	July 2015	1,521
Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan	August 2015	706
Total consultation	2014 – 2015	6,162
Community Perception Survey and Future Planning Focus Groups	March – May 2016	3,750
TOTAL	2014-2016	9,912

TABLE 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS – HORNSBY COUNCIL 2014-2016

Active Living Hornsby Strategy, August 2015

A component of the ALHS was extensive community engagement. Conducted between May and September of the previous year (2014) this project engaged 1,649 residents through a series of methods including workshops with residents, stakeholders and CALD community members and online surveys and quizzes and community open days.

The community engagement process for the AHLS identified the following:

- What people value most about Hornsby Shire's open space and recreational facilities are for exercise, family gatherings, children play and relaxing
- They also value open space and recreation facilities parklands, conservation and heritage as well as bushland
- the proximity to local parks, natural open spaces and bushland setting
- the availability of family leisure outdoor spaces for playgrounds, BBQs,

¹ This community engagement report formed a component of the Active Living Hornsby Strategy and was undertaken in mid 2014 to support the development of the Strategy which was completed and presented to Council by Coulston Associates July 2015.

- o picnics, outdoor cafes and public spaces
- o the opportunities available for sport and recreation for people of all ages and for all seasons
- o the overall variety and quality of local open space

Overall there is a 64% satisfaction level with Hornsby Shire open spaces and recreational facilities.

Some areas identified through the community engagement strategy for further consideration included:

- the overall provision of park facilities (like toilets, play equipment, picnic facilities, shelter and shade)
- upgrades to specific parks and ovals for informal and formal recreation activities
- ensuring open spaces near areas with more people are well maintained and are protected from future redevelopment
- ensuring access to a good local park for frequent visitation for daily, weekly and weekend family time (children's play) exercise and relaxation
- opportunities for more dog off-leash areas
- more information and access to bushland areas
- For those that responded to the online surveys that are not using open spaces or recreational facilities the key reason identified was a lack of information about facilities (26%, 58 people).

Another interesting component of the ALHS was the last section that focused on sustainable tourism as this was something highlighted in the focus groups in discussions about the environment and community as an area of ongoing interest to the community.

Community Recognition and Communication Effectiveness Research July 2015

In early 2015 Council commissioned research into community perception of Council including:

- o brand awareness
- o current levels of interest in Council facilities, events and activities
- o previous exposure to Council's communications
- o the effectiveness of Council's existing communications
- o preferences for future contact.

A total of 2,286 people were reached through the research process:

- o 305 people participated in the random telephone survey,
- o 1,895 people completed the online survey,
- o 64 people were reached through the intercept survey and
- o 22 people took part in the focus groups.

The research outcomes concluded that:

- There was an extremely high level of awareness and recognition of Council's brand
- Residents were positive about Council's brand
- Participants from CALD communities perceived Council more positively than working families and younger people
- Perceptions of Council were linked to community expectation of Council's role, as well as the length of time people had lived in the LGA
- Council, when positively described, was described as being:
 - balanced,
 - progressive, and
 - community based.
- This reflected the excellent work Council has been doing in engaging with CALD communities.
- Less positive words used to describe Council were:
 - inefficient, and
 - bureaucratic.
- A high percentage of the community had been involved in a Council run activity.
- Preferred activities were:
 - food and wine festivals,
 - street festivals,
 - bushwalking,
 - cycling,
 - swimming and other leisure activities.
- These cater for the older demographic wanting to attend Council events, as well as younger families
- Research identified current overall satisfaction with the frequency of Council contact and the types of communication methods used
- In particular community members were positive about the E-Newsletter and website, both of which were well read and recognised
- The website was overwhelming listed as the preferred source for information, followed by phone.

Socio-cultural Consultation Outcomes July 2015

This project was a review of social and cultural services being undertaken by Hornsby Council. Conducted between April and May 2014 the aim was to ensure services being delivered meet the changing needs of the Hornsby Shire community.

Key issues impacting service provision include:

- significant population growth in some areas,
- gradual decline in other areas,

- o increasing cultural diversity, and
- o an ageing community.

1,521 people participated in the consultation process through the following methods:

- o workshops with stakeholders and residents, and
- o online and telephone surveys.

Nearly 1,400 residents completed a survey either online or over the telephone, including some who also participated in a workshop to provide more in depth feedback about social and cultural needs.

Consultation identified that residents feel the Hornsby Shire has a good range of social and cultural services with a high standard of service delivery. However, the process sought to explore community needs in broad terms and when promoted participants identified a number of opportunities for service improvements. Through the consultation process, issues and priorities for service provision in relation to six key themes were explored.

The high level of participation indicates a strong desire from both residents and stakeholders to 'have a say' about issues affecting community wellbeing.

The themes were identified with input from stakeholders as follows:

1. Accessibility and transport
2. Accessing information about social services
3. Isolation and community connectedness
4. Arts and cultural expression
5. Vibrant and distinctive places and spaces
6. Healthy and active communities.

All of these themes with the exception of Theme 2 - Accessing information about social services - were strongly reflected in the Snapshot project findings.

Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan August 2015

Conducted in 2015 the development of the Community and Cultural Facility Strategic Plan involved a document and data review covering:

- o relevant Council policies and plans
- o analysis of existing demographics and projected population growth
- o analysis of the use of existing facilities
- o comprehensive audits of existing facilities.

It also analysed feedback from 706 community members and stakeholders including:

- o interviews with 22 regular and casual hirers of facilities, representing a cross section of users
- o seven group interviews with relevant council staff, including facility managers and library staff

- o consultation with representatives from Community Centre Management and Advisory Committees
- o an online community survey, which was completed by 214 respondents

The strategy also drew upon benchmarking of facility provision and fees and charges with other relevant councils, exhibition of the draft plan for a 13 week period review, analysis and consideration of 470 submissions received during the exhibition period and amendment to the draft plan in response to issues raised in submissions.

The following table outlines the 10 key strategic directions from the Plan and identifies whether this issue was strongly ranked or identified in the Snapshot project.

Key Strategic Directions for Community Facilities Hornsby LGA	Identified in the Snapshot Project
1. Locate sub-regional community and cultural facilities in Hornsby.	▲▲▲▲
2. Focus on multipurpose district hubs at Epping, Pennant Hills, Cherrybrook, Berowra and Galston.	▲▲▲
3. Increase use of and access to village level facilities operated by other organisations and maintain village level facilities where the market is thin. Investigate an alternate management model for village level facilities which are locally valued but underutilised. Where appropriate, rationalise other low performing facilities to fund improvements to district hubs.	▲▲▲
4. Adopt a commercial approach to the offer of leased kindergartens and preschools such that market rental rates are adopted and asset rationalisation is considered when economic considerations warrant.	×
5. Work with Scouts NSW and Girl Guides NSW to review the location, provision and lease arrangements of these facilities in order to obtain the best utilisation and maximise community benefit.	▲▲▲▲
6. Do not create new single purpose, stand alone facilities or provide land for third parties to do so.	▲
7. Review the support and assistance to volunteer management committees to better meet their needs	▲
8. Improve the current booking system to enhance usability for customers and staff, including online functionality.	▲▲▲▲
9. Review the Lease/Licence of Council Land and Buildings to Community Groups Policy and associated conditions in leases and licences, focusing on addressing shortfalls in respect of asset management and exclusive use arrangements.	×
10. Increase the consistency and sustainability of fees and charges, including simplifying the structure and increasing fees and charges over time to reflect industry benchmarks.	×

TABLE 3: COMPARISON BETWEEN STRATEGIES FROM THE ALHS AND FINDINGS OF THE SNAPSHOT PROJECT

While the focus of this project was specific to community and cultural facilities there was considerable synergy between the outcomes of this strategy and the concern of residents in the Snapshot project. In particular:

- A sub-regional community and cultural facility in Hornsby
- Focus on multipurpose district hubs at Epping, Pennant Hills, Berowra
- Any strategy to improve the utilisation on community facilities to the betterment of the whole community.

A SHORT SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

An outstanding response rate was recorded to the online survey Community Perceptions of Hornsby Shire with 3706 people responding during the three week period 22 March to 8 April 2016. The survey was made available to residents on the Council website and via a direct email to residents on the 'Your Community eNews' database.

About the Respondents

Gender

There was an equal response from men and women: 50.16% women and 49.84% men

Age

78% of responses were from people aged over 40, however there was a spread of responses across all age groups.

Answer Choices	Responses
Under 18 years	0.21% 7
18-24	0.94% 32
25-39	14.05% 479
40-55	37.11% 1,265
56-75	40.69% 1,387
76 years or older	7.01% 239
Total	3,409

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS – AGE

Ethnicity, language background and country of birth

Hornsby is a highly diverse LGA with people from a range of language backgrounds.

- 78% of respondents only speak English at home
- 707 respondents reported speaking a language other than English at home and were spread across a diverse range of language background, but the largest groups were people from Mandarin (14%) and Cantonese (13%), followed by Spanish (7%) and Hindi (6.8%) speaking backgrounds
- 62% of respondents were born in Australia
- 72% of respondents have lived in the Shire for longer than 10 years and 91% of respondents own their own home.

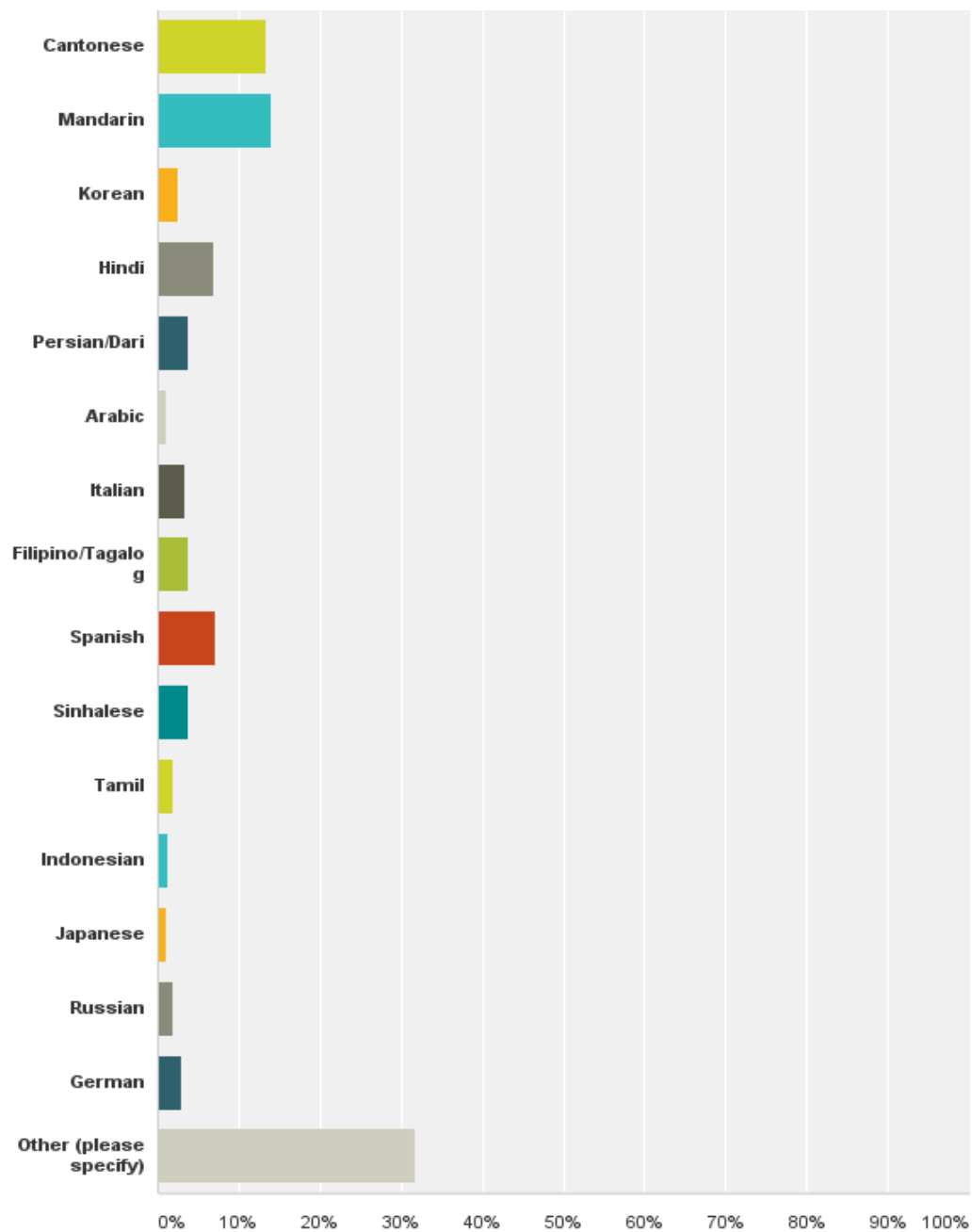


FIGURE 1: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS – LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

The Community Perception Indicators

The community perception indicators which were developed as part of the current 10 year plan that were reviewed through this survey were:

- Living and working in the Shire
- Sustainable transport
- Safety
- Use of recreation and leisure facilities
- Sense of belonging

While the emphasis for sustainable transport was on using sustainable transport for local trips (less than 5k) respondents were also asked about why they chose to walk, drive or catch public transport to both get to work and for non-work related local trips.

Living and working in the Shire

- 30% of respondents live and work in Hornsby Shire
- Of these, 29% work from home (this follows global trends), 25% work between one and five kilometres from home and 7% work less than one kilometre from home

Sustainable transport

This perception indicator was measured by:

- the percentage of local trips (less than 5 km) by residents using sustainable transport options (walking, riding, public transport), and
- the percentage of employed residents who travel to work using sustainable transport most days.

64% of respondents were employed in either a full time or part time capacity or self employed. These respondents were asked to provide information about their travel to work patterns including the mode of transport they most often used to get to work and the length of time it took to get there.

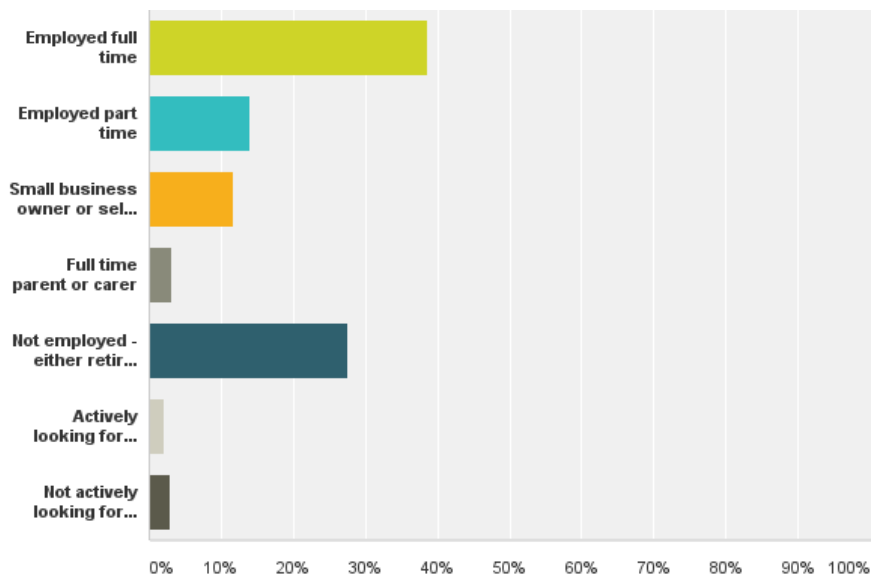


FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS – EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Answer Choices	Responses	
Employed full time	38.65%	1,318
Employed part time	14.08%	480
Small business owner or self employed	11.64%	397
Full time parent or carer	3.20%	109
Not employed - either retired, on pension and/or self funded	27.51%	938
Actively looking for work - not currently employed	2.08%	71
Not actively looking for work - not currently employed	2.84%	97
Total		3,410

TABLE 5: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS – EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Getting to work when you live and work in the Shire:

- 66% drive to work
- 15% walk to work

Answer Choices	Responses	
I work at home	28.19%	181
Under 1 km	7.32%	47
Between 1 km and 5 km	24.77%	159
Between 5 km and 10 km	22.12%	142
Over 10 km	17.60%	113
Total		642

TABLE 6: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS – GETTING TO WORK WHEN YOU LIVE AND WORK IN THE SHIRE

Getting to work when you work outside the Shire:

- 47% drive to work
- 33% train to work
- 8% take a mixture of modes
- 4% bus to work
- 1% ride their bike

For people who work outside the LGA an important factor in their choice of transport mode was length of time of their average trip to work. The majority of respondents to this question (77%) took between 30 minutes and an hour and a half to get to work.

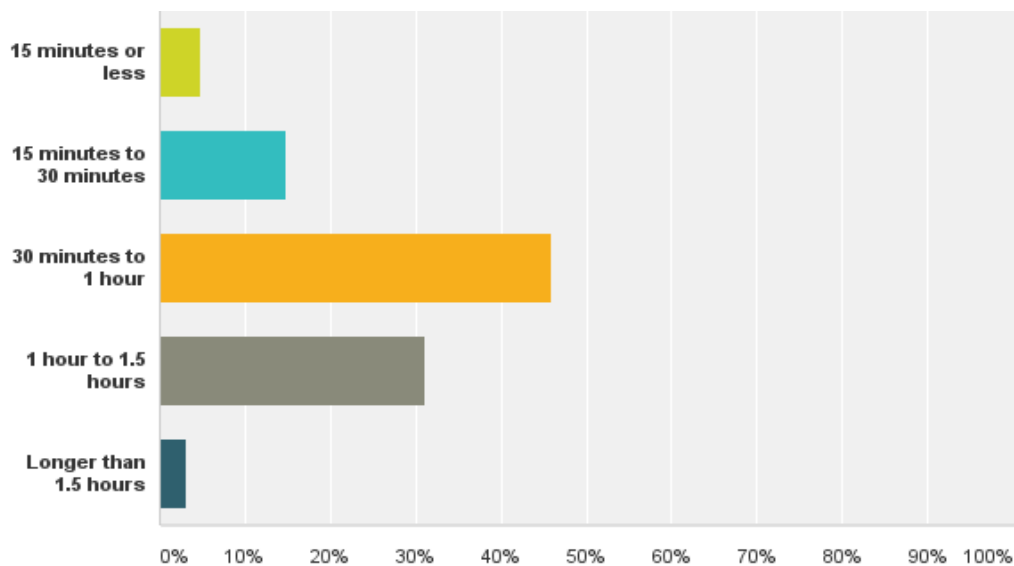


FIGURE 3: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – JOURNEY TO WORK TIME – WORKING OUTSIDE THE SHIRE

Answer Choices	Responses
15 minutes or less	4.85% 73
15 minutes to 30 minutes	14.81% 223
30 minutes to 1 hour	46.02% 693
1 hour to 1.5 hours	31.14% 469
Longer than 1.5 hours	3.19% 48
Total	1,506

TABLE 7: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – JOURNEY TO WORK TIME – WORKING OUTSIDE THE SHIRE

While the emphasis of the survey was on the current perception indicators, people were also asked to comment on their patterns of walking locally to identify how often and why people chose to walk locally and the sorts of things that might be a barrier to more active citizenry.

Walking locally:

- 57% of respondents walk locally either daily or more than twice a week (regularly)
- 22% of respondents walk locally once a week or a few times a fortnight
- 20% of respondents rarely or never walk locally

Reason for walking locally regularly – For respondents who walked weekly or daily, respondents were asked to select their two main reasons for why they chose to walk locally (2,340 respondents):

- 78% good for health
- 31% relaxing and recreational
- 31% enjoyable in my local area
- 24% to walk the dog

- 9% it is good for the environment
- 20% other reason

Respondents were also asked to identify the two main reasons for walking locally rarely or never (986 respondents):

- 81% drive because it is more convenient
- 48% are too busy to walk
- 22% because the footpaths are in poor condition
- 17% have mobility issues that make it difficult to walk or walk far

Answer Choices	Responses	
I am too busy	47.67%	470
I usually drive my car because it is more convenient	80.73%	796
I do not feel safe walking around my local area	3.85%	38
The footpaths around my house are in poor condition	21.60%	213
I have mobility issues that mean I am unable to walk or walk far	16.94%	167
Other (please specify)	29.21%	288
Total Respondents: 986		

TABLE 8: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – REASONS FOR RARELY OR NEVER WALKING LOCALLY

Transport used for local trips under 5ks – 2 methods of transport mostly used

While people walk locally for ‘health and recreation’ and because they ‘enjoy walking in their local area’, when asked about how they choose to travel locally for trips of less than 5 kilometres 91% of respondents reported driving as the most common mode of transport for local and 51% of people reported walking as their second choice.

People also reported catching public transport, though at much lower rates than car driving and walking for local trips:

- 21% catch a train
- 10% take the bus

The reason they gave for driving their cars in favour of taking public transport was because:

- it is more convenient
- they are too busy
- public transport does not take people where they need to go

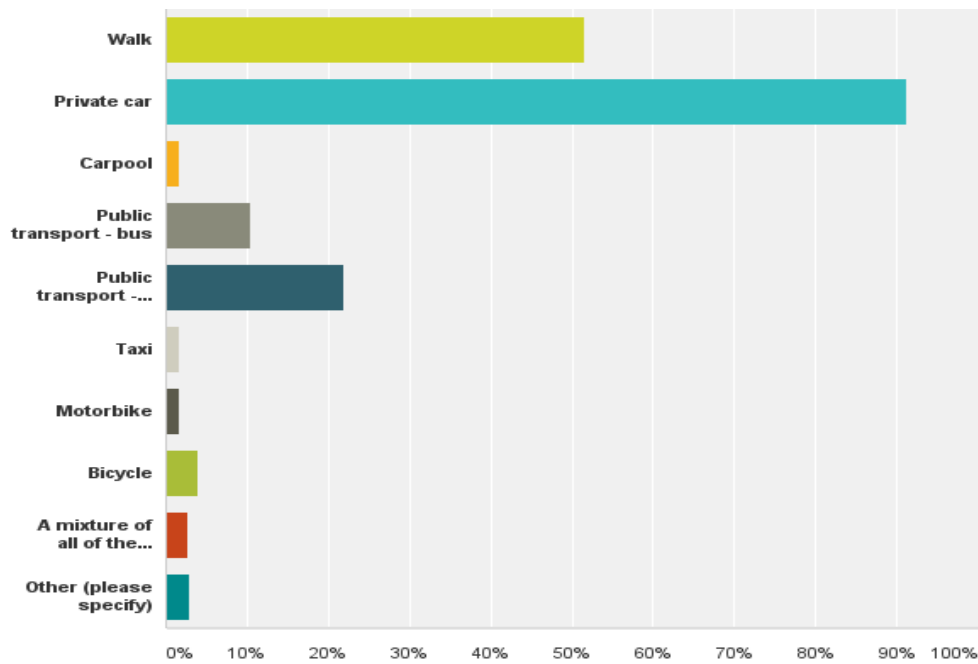


FIGURE 4: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – TRANSPORT MODE FOR LOCAL TRIPS – 5K OR LESS

Public transport usage for local trips:

- Only 16% of respondents use public transport for local travel on a regular basis (more than once a week)
- Of the 515 who do, the main reason is because they do not have to worry about parking (52%)
- 37% of respondents find public transport less stressful than driving
- 28% find public transport cheaper than other modes of travel
- 26% find it more convenient and 25% believe that public transport is good for the environment
- 84% of respondents don't use public transport for local trips because 56% of people prefer to drive
- 27% of respondents reported that public transport does not go where people need to go and 14% of people prefer to walk

Answer Choices	Responses
Public transport is cheaper than other types of transport	28.16% 145
Public transport is quicker than other types of transport	17.09% 88
Public transport is more convenient than other types of transport	26.21% 135
Public transport is less stressful than driving	37.09% 191
When I catch public transport I do not have to worry about parking	52.43% 270
Public transport is good for the environment	25.44% 131
Other (please specify)	12.82% 66
Total Respondents: 515	

TABLE 9: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – REASONS FOR CHOOSING PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR LOCAL TRIPS

Safety

Daytime walking safety:

- 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe walking in the Shire during the day

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.15% 37	1.27% 41	3.87% 125	27.18% 877	66.19% 2,136	0.34% 11	3,227	4.57

TABLE 10: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – DAYTIME SAFETY – WALKING LOCALLY

Night time walking safety:

- 59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe walking in the Shire at night

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.33% 107	14.39% 463	20.35% 655	39.81% 1,281	19.92% 641	2.21% 71	3,218	3.60

TABLE 11: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – NIGHT-TIME SAFETY – WALKING LOCALLY

Daytime public transport safety:

- 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe catching public transport during the day

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.78% 25	1.19% 38	8.54% 273	30.32% 969	52.85% 1,689	6.32% 202	3,196	4.42

TABLE 12: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – DAYTIME SAFETY – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Night time public transport safety:

- 49% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe catching public transport at night

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	3.29% 105	12.25% 391	23.02% 735	34.11% 1,089	15.35% 490	11.99% 383	3,193	3.52

TABLE 13: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – NIGHT-TIME SAFETY – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Use of leisure and recreation facilities

The most popular regular activity (once a week or more) was going to the local park, with 44% of people going at least once a week. This was followed by:

- playing outdoor sport, with 25% of people reporting that they play outdoor sport at least once a week

- bushwalking, with 19% of people pursuing at least once a week and 18% of people attending the local aquatic / leisure centre at least once a week.

Bushwalking was the most popular activity that people did at least once a month or more (40%).

People were asked to identify how often they undertook certain outdoor and indoor recreational activities. Those who never engage in certain regular activities were as follows:

- 79% never ride a skateboard or watch people at the skate park
- 71% never use the local dog park
- 70% never play indoor sport
- 56% of people never attend the local community centre
- 47% of people never attend the local leisure centre
- 41% never play outdoor sport.

	Daily	At least twice a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Rarely (less than once a month)	Never	Total
I go to the local park	5.54% 171	17.01% 525	21.81% 673	17.95% 554	27.77% 857	9.92% 306	3,086
I go for a walk in the bush	1.47% 45	5.72% 175	11.94% 365	21.19% 648	39.21% 1,199	20.47% 626	3,058
I play/watch local sport outdoors	0.80% 24	8.65% 260	16.30% 490	9.01% 271	23.71% 713	41.54% 1,249	3,007
I play/watch local sport indoors	0.50% 15	3.73% 111	7.50% 223	5.78% 172	22.39% 666	60.10% 1,788	2,975
I visit the local dog park	2.18% 65	3.75% 112	3.99% 119	5.93% 177	13.40% 400	70.76% 2,113	2,986
I attend the local aquatic and leisure centre	0.90% 27	5.74% 173	10.98% 331	9.39% 283	25.51% 769	47.50% 1,432	3,015
I ride/skate/watch at the local venue	0.30% 9	1.11% 33	2.25% 67	4.44% 132	12.61% 375	79.29% 2,358	2,974
I attend a local community centre	0.23% 7	2.65% 80	6.52% 197	8.10% 245	26.36% 797	56.14% 1,697	3,023
Other	4.58% 46	11.54% 116	8.26% 83	5.37% 54	6.47% 65	63.78% 641	1,005

TABLE 14: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – USAGE OF LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Sense of belonging - community connectedness

Sense of belonging is an important indicator for Council as it relates to the sense of connectedness residents feel to their community at the local level. Research has identified that communities that are more connected are also more resilient and able to engage with change and active citizenry. Community connectedness can be measured in a number of

ways, however Council has adopted three key indicators that were explored in the survey. These are:

- the % of residents who volunteer,
- the % of residents who talk regularly with neighbours, and
- the % of residents who feel they could get help in an emergency from either their neighbours or their wider community.

Volunteering:

- 39% of people responding to the survey volunteer
- Of these, 59% volunteer locally, 22% volunteer outside the Hornsby Shire and 23% volunteer both inside and outside the Shire
- This is higher than the national volunteering rate of 36.2%²

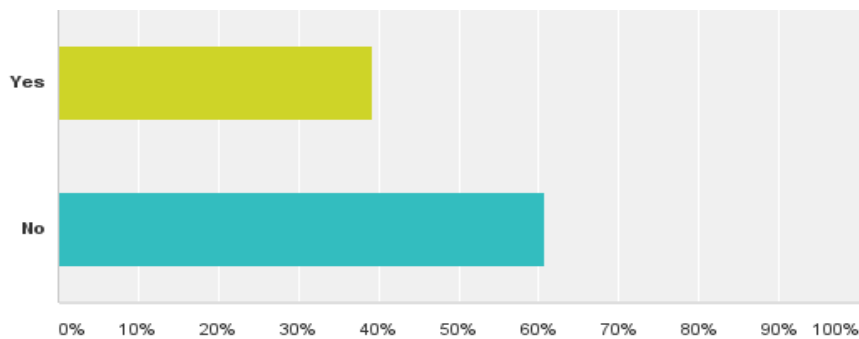


FIGURE 5: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY –VOLUNTEERING RATES

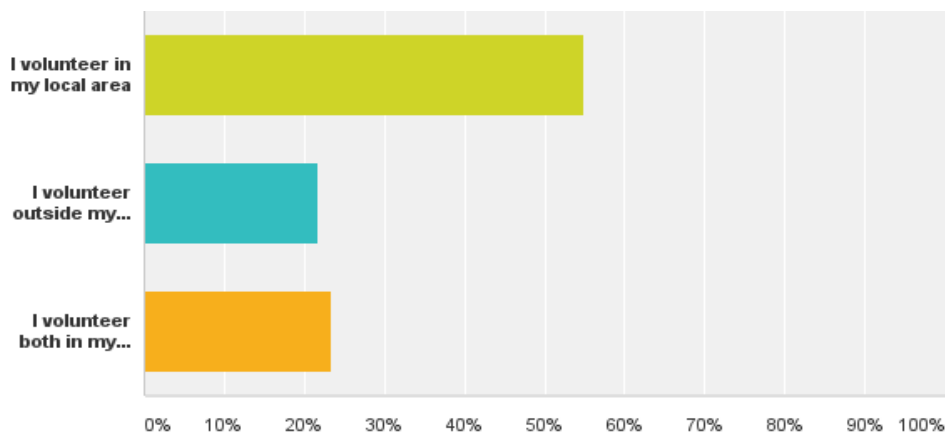


FIGURE 6: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY – VOLUNTEERING LOCALLY

Speaking to neighbours:

- 60% of respondents speak to their neighbours daily
- 29% of respondents speak to their neighbours sometimes

² Volunteering Australia Fact Sheet – Key Statistics about Australian Volunteering

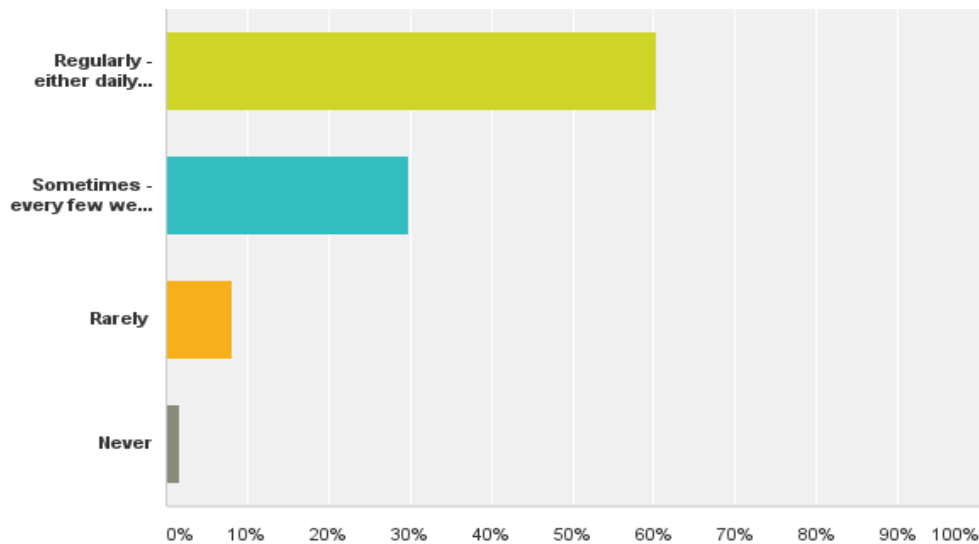


FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY –TALKING TO NEIGHBOURS

Getting help from neighbours:

- 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they could ask for help from their neighbours in an emergency

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.83% 58	2.81% 89	10.07% 319	39.03% 1,236	44.93% 1,423	1.33% 42	3,167	4.24

TABLE 15: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY –GETTING HELP FROM NEIGHBOURS

Getting help from the wider community:

- 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they could ask for help from the wider community in an emergency

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	1.26% 40	3.69% 117	20.52% 650	44.65% 1,414	23.74% 752	6.13% 194	3,167	3.92

TABLE 16: COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ONLINE SURVEY –GETTING HELP FROM THE WIDER COMMUNITY

KEY THEMES FROM FOCUS GROUPS

The following themes were reflected across all four focus groups.

- **Holistic planning for increased density:** there was a general understanding from participants that population increases would necessarily impact on the density of Hornsby LGA as with other LGAs in the Sydney metropolitan region however there was unanimous agreement across all groups that this development and increased density must be predicated on holistic planning including the requirements of increased infrastructure, roads, parking, public transport and the maintenance of sufficient outdoor open space for community enjoyment
- **Maintaining the extent and value of the natural environment and passive open space including bush land and other natural features intrinsic to Hornsby:** all participants highly valued the natural environment with the majority citing this as one of the main reasons for why they chose to, and continue to choose to, live in Hornsby LGA.
- **Promoting an inclusive community through increased cultural events, festivals and food fairs:** there was a clear acknowledgement and valuing of the changing cultural demographics of Hornsby and an active desire to build on this
- **Promoting more active transport options** through increased walkability and cycle paths and cycle infrastructure
- **Increasing the productive capacity of the LGA** through community hot-desking and work share hubs, creative hubs, agri-business including the maintenance and promotion of Dural as a Food Bowl community garden and farmers markets, and low impact Green Tourism such as nature walks, bushwalks and cycle tours
- **Improving the accessibility of Council:** Residents identified a range of ways to better engage with Council through improved online communication, a more accessible website, promotion of innovation and general presence via social media
- **Reducing the impact of political parties at the local level:** there was a shared scepticism from participants about the reduced effectiveness of Council due to party political allegiances and also the use of local government as a stepping stone to State or Federal politics³
- **Increasing the transparency of development decisions** including improved notification process and increased time for community feedback on major developments
- **Better utilisation of the facilities and open space resources currently available:** Residents were in favour of making better use of existing community spaces, facilities, sporting fields and open space for the benefit of all.

³ We are aware that this is not within Council's control – however it was a strong and consistent theme

WHAT PEOPLE SAID

About the environment

People across the focus groups valued the beauty of the natural environment highly. People had chosen to live in Hornsby because it was both affordable and because of the abundance of natural habitats and its proximity to the bush and open space. People were concerned about the loss of amenity, in particular passive open space, caused by an increase in development and density.

People wanted to see initiatives that would reduce the impact on the environment including:

- Uptake of solar technologies
- Sensor lighting

People also wanted to see initiatives that responded to the impacts of climate change that they had seen or experienced including the danger from tall trees during increased weather events and power blackouts.

People also valued and wanted to see greater advocacy from Council in relation to environmental initiatives including:

- Community gardens
- Verge planting
- Provision of community education about environmental issues such as composting, worm farming, solar panels etc.

People were interested to see increased infrastructure to support active transport including: Improvements to footpaths and town and village connections to increase walkability:

- More cycle path and end of journey facilities including bike racks to allow for more cycling
- Promotion of cycle to school options for children

About lifestyles and liveability

Holistic responses to planning and the impact of density to ensure that people's lifestyles are not impacted was the single most confirmed theme from all four focus groups. This idea includes:

- Maintenance of sufficient open space
- Traffic management and road repair to meet increase use
- Other related infrastructure
- Parking
- Recreational options

Parking and congestion around town and village centres was a significant concern and people wanted to see more attention paid to getting this right. This includes planning for increased density, increasing the ability for people to walk and ride more safely and advocacy for increased local public transport. Some innovative solutions included:

- provide or advocate for small gas operated shuttle buses around suburbs to major transport hubs such as train stations
- encourage smaller businesses to start local transport
- think of hybrid solutions – similar to Sydney Airport where you park a few kilometres away and small buses deliver you to/from vehicle

People did not necessarily want to see more sporting fields or parks but they consistently asked for better utilisation of existing parks and sporting fields:

- maintain and utilise what we already have, i.e. 49 sporting fields
- ensure maintenance of park infrastructure and facilities including toilets, water features, water bubblers and waste disposal appliances

People did want Council to provide solutions for the following unmet need:

- Specific play solutions for 9 year olds + where little currently exists
- Attend to the needs of teenagers by promoting active outdoor lifestyle and providing more quality access to skate facilities, mountain biking options etc.
- Activate local parks to discourage antisocial behaviour
- Creative outlets and support the production of creative industries
- Develop a hub for creative industries
- Promote hot-desking options for parents with young children to increase social connections and social inclusion

About their community

People spoke strongly about the need to increase the connections between their community and to celebrate and promote diversity and inclusion. They wanted a multi-purpose community centre for cultural activities, theatre and musical events.

They did not need to have new buildings but again wanted to see activation of existing stock, warehouse conversions and better utilisation or access to community facilities. Young people commented that they had very few options to play or watch live music outside of their own homes without going to the CBD.

People wanted to see more:

- Cultural festival
- Outdoor events
- Nightlife activation
- Celebrations of diversity

People were happy with many of the resources they had but again wanted to see things better maintained and improved. There was a general sense that more could be done to beautify and enhance the public domain, community facilities and assets.

"Things are looking a bit tired and drab"

Council should make facilities desirable so people want to go there – create a village atmosphere where people come to connect – libraries with high speed internet for kids to play games; community centres with more community activity and events; sports facilities with waterslide etc.

Libraries could be open for longer and public wifi should be more accessible and speedier in community venues.

About their property

People were most concerned about the increase in density and its impact on their own and community amenity. People identified the following changes or initiatives:

- Recommend increased exhibition times and increased notification for new development
- Stricter development rules
- Revitalisation of infrastructure – everything is looking tired and old
- Consider moving power lines underground due to increased blackouts after storms
- Increase in green space required by developers eg. roof top gardens

About their Council

People attending the four focus groups wanted to see:

- Increased accountability from Council about decision making

"Accountability is critical - Council should have KPI's in their plans that are audited and reported back to the community – they work for us not the other way around"

- Improved customer service
- Increased independence of Councillors
- Residents should have increased ability to intervene in DAs and better clearer processes for having this input

Communication and engagement were also important including:

- Improved website that is more accessible
- Council meetings being streamed live so residents can 'attend' virtually
- Ability to have ongoing engagement with Council as a follow up to this process
- Need to have better more regular information flow to the western part of the LGA.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from comparisons with past similar community consultations, from both the number and the content of the responses received from the community survey and from the greatly oversubscribed focus groups, that Council has an engaged community which is increasingly keen to communicate its views and ideas about the future, and about Council's role in helping to shape that future. It is also a community that feels strongly about the natural attributes of the Shire, the bushland and the recreational spaces in particular. Indeed for many respondents this was the reason they chose to live in Hornsby.

Overall the key community perception indicators about which the Council sought feedback via the online survey are increasing, in particular community connectedness, living and working locally, engaging in local recreation including walking. There were some indicators, however, such as sustainable transport – particularly public transport provision and usage - remaining relatively low. Hornsby given its size and topography remains a fairly car dependent local government area.

Although wanting to see the natural environment maintained, community members nevertheless accept the inevitable changes that accompany increased population, such as greater density and increased land use for development. However the strongest view to emerge from the consultations was that the increase in medium density and 'high rise' apartments was not the result of a holistic planning process. Such a planning process was identified by participants as critical to a future which balanced growth with the maintenance of the existing natural features of the Shire. Holistic planning incorporated passive recreational space, social connectivity, walkability and accessibility by public transport rather than increasing the use of motor vehicles.

The consultation made clear the fact that very few community members understand the power of the State government and the relative lack of power of local government in this area, or the efforts local government in general, and Hornsby Council specifically, has made to ensure holistic planning occurs. The community is of the view that Council has much more say and authority than is actually the case. This should however be viewed as a 'positive' in as much that when negotiating with the State government on development issues Council can be confident that they are representing the strong views of their community.

A related issue raised through the consultation process was the need for Council to be more innovative and effective in communicating with the community and in providing greater opportunities for community input. Social media has changed the communication landscape across virtually all age groups. People are much more likely to read and respond to e-mails, to use Facebook or similar platforms, or even read Tweets, than they are to read a notice in the local paper. This provides an opportunity for Council to 'capture' and build upon the growing interest and engagement of its community in several ways. Not only in continuing to provide opportunities for community feedback, but, for example, in clarifying what powers or capacity Council does and does not have in meeting community needs; in taking leadership in areas where Council can be sure that the community will be strongly supportive of their actions; and in demonstrating to the community the ways in which

Council does use the expertise of its staff to ensure the best possible outcome for the community, especially, but not only, in the area of planning and development about which the community feels so strongly.

There was strong support for innovation such as technology and work hubs which were seen as ways of retaining and attracting workers to the Shire and in providing opportunities for women in particular to balance their work and family life more flexibly and effectively. Using the Shire's natural attributes to promote 'green tourism' and to develop a 'food bowl' in areas such as Dural were other examples of innovation proposed by community members.

With a growing and increasingly ethnically diverse community across the Shire the community would like to see an increase in cultural events and activities that promoted a diverse and inclusive culture.

Both young and older residents identified that they did not want 'more' parks, open space and community resources, simply better use and utilisation of existing facilities, both open spaces such as parks, and the built environment such as cultural and community spaces to bring the community together, offer great opportunities for recreation, sport, music and culture and in this way build a strong and cohesive local community.

Finally, despite some criticism of Council, the community generally feels that they are well represented through their Councillors, and are keen for Council to continue to use mechanisms such as these consultations - and other communication strategies as identified above - to ensure that their voice is heard and that their engagement with their Council is maintained.