

Nambucca Valley Council



Community Strategic Plan consultation Engagement Report

October 2024

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land where we carried out this project: the Gumbaynggirr people and we pay respect to their elders – past, present and emerging.

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Job Number: 2024/828

Job Name: Nambucca CSP

Client: Nambucca Valley Council

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Document Name: Nambucca CSP – Community Engagement Report

Version	Date	Authors	Approved
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1. Project overview

1.1 Community Strategic Plan

A Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is a collective vision that guides local council activities over a ten-year period. It is developed in consultation with the community as part of a suite of strategic plans under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework. Whilst a council document, the plan belongs to the community.

In the case of the Nambucca Valley Council (Council), the *Nambucca Valley Council Community Strategic Plan 2022/2023 – 2031/2032* was last updated and adopted in June 2022.

1.2 CSP review process

Council first adopted a CSP in 2012 following the introduction of the IPR Framework. Regular reviews have been undertaken in accordance with IPR cycles, generally every four years. However, recent reviews of Council's CSP have been limited in scope, and the current CSP requires a substantial update to reflect demographic and economic changes resulting from the Covid pandemic and other external factors in recent years.

To inform this more substantive update, Council, with the assistance of Locale Consulting, has undertaken a series of community engagement activities over July and August 2024. Following local government elections in September 2024, the newly elected Council will consider this feedback and are required to adopt a new CSP by 30 June 2025.

Separately, a youth-orientated project called Nambucca Valley YOUTH Speak has been conducted through 2024. The results of the youth survey and youth forum are documented in a separate report that was released in July 2024. Whilst not a Council-led project, this report provides valuable insights into the perspectives of young people (aged 11 to 24) in the local government area (LGA) and should be incorporated into the development of the CSP.

1.3 Purpose of this report

This Community Engagement Report documents the outcomes of engagement activities undertaken by Council with the assistance of Locale Consulting including the results of the online survey and feedback received at seven pop-up events held across the local government area.

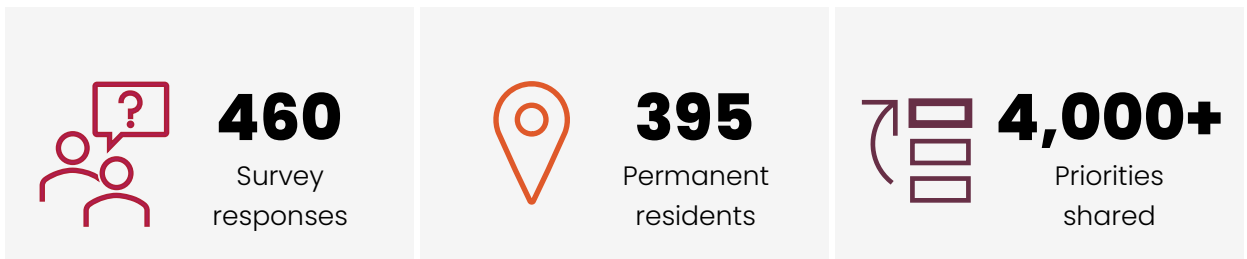
1.4 Snapshot of engagement activities

Below is a snapshot of the engagement activities and associated interactions, with details documented in Section 2 (Online Survey) and Section 3 (Pop-up events).

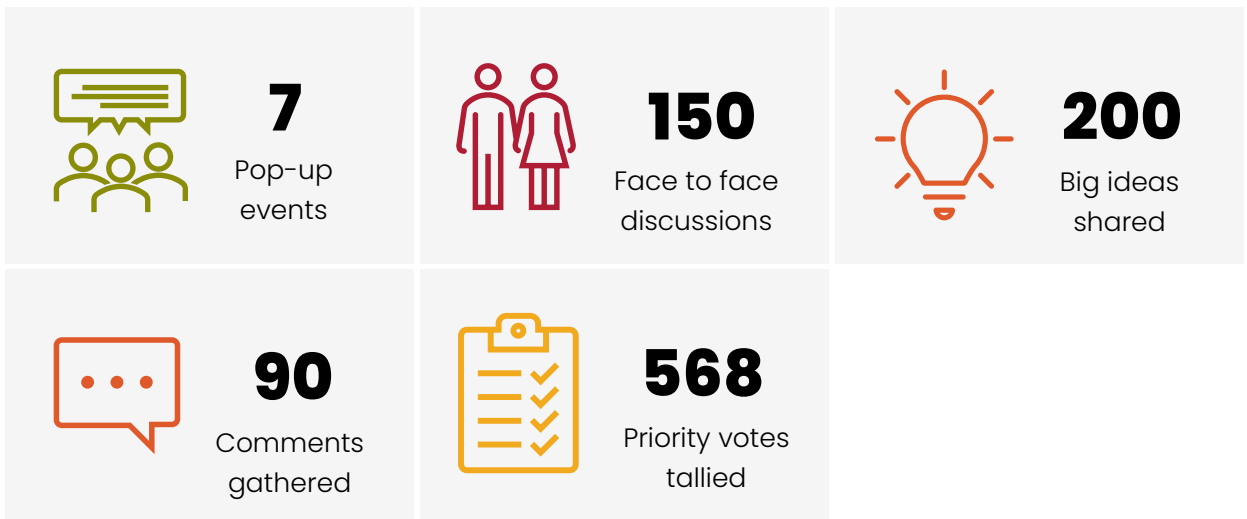
Awareness



Online Survey



Pop-up events

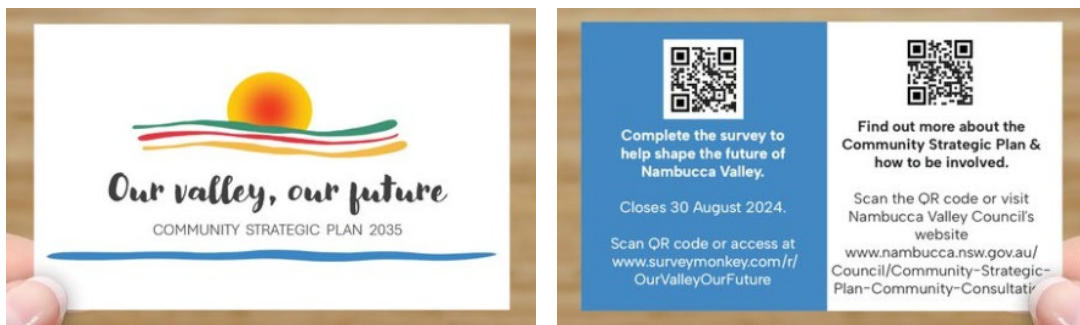


2. Online survey

2.1 Overview

The online survey was open from 17 July to 30 August 2024. A total of 460 survey responses were received.

It was promoted via Council's website, social media channels including Facebook and Instagram, the Antenno app, advertising in the News of the Area, by direct email to identified stakeholders, by distribution of information cards and flyers with QR codes to local businesses and at the pop-up events.



The survey included a mix of open-ended questions, short response formats, as well as questions seeking priorities across set themes of:

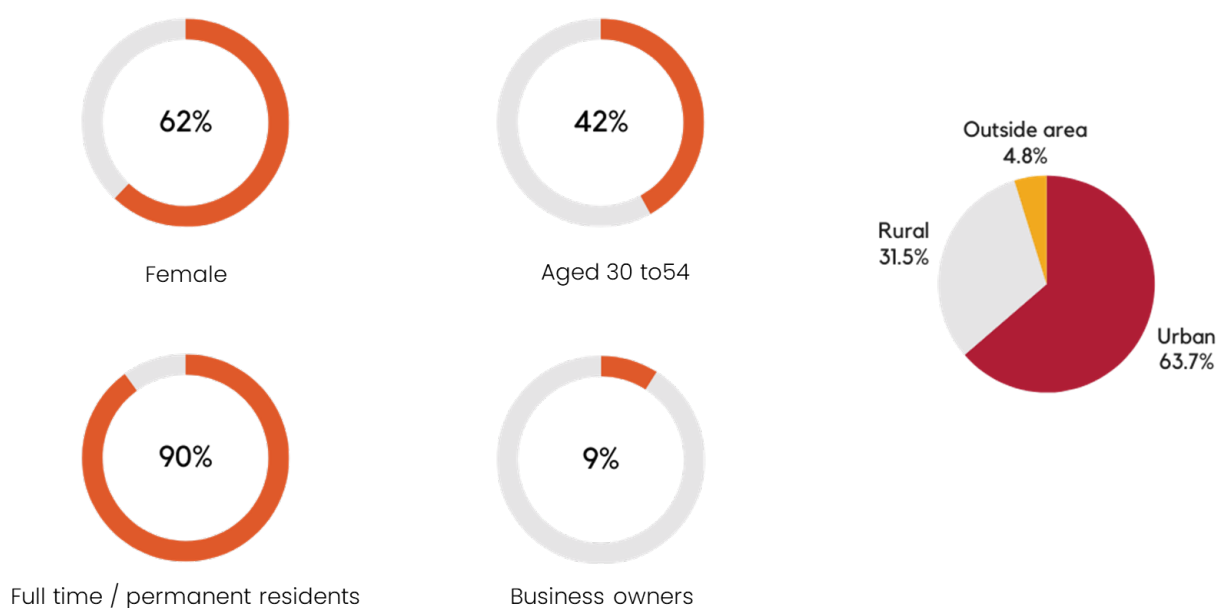
- o social and community,
- o infrastructure and development,
- o environment and sustainability, and
- o economic needs.

2.2 Who completed the survey

A series of questions were asked to understand the characteristics of the survey respondents.

Summary snapshot:

Below is a snapshot of who responded to the survey with further details provided on the following pages.



Gender:

Female	Male	Other
281	165	7

A majority of respondents were female (62%), compared with only 36% male and a small number that identified as non-binary or preferred not to say.

Age:

0-12 year olds	12-17 year olds	18-29 year olds	30-54 year olds	55-64 year olds	65-74 year olds	75+ year olds
1	2	24	189	112	96	31

A large proportion (42%) of respondents were within the 30-54 year old age group, sometimes referred to as young parents. 55-64 and 65-74 year olds were also highly represented at 25% and 21% respectively. Compared with available census data, ages

from 0 to 29 and above 75 were underrepresented in the respondents. As such, supplementing the collected data with other forms of information such as the Nambucca Valley YOUTH Speak project will be important to understanding the broader community.

Identifies as:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Culturally and linguistically diverse	Person with a disability
25	32	27

Between 5% and 7% of respondents identified as one or more of the nominated areas. A further 8% preferred not to say if they identify with any of the nominated areas.

Relationship to the local government area:

Full time/permanent resident	Part time resident	Property owner (non-resident)	Visitor	Traditional owner	Business owner or operator
395	24	18	12	6	39

A strong response to the survey was provided by full time/permanent residents of the area who represented almost 90% of all respondents. Around 9% identified their relationship to be as a business owner or operator, with a similar number of part time or non-resident responses. The option of providing a further answer by text was provided, with the main additional response being from workers/employees of the area (11 responses).

Community of interest:

Macksville	Nambucca Heads	Valla Beach	Scotts Head	Bowraville	Taylors Arm
198	246	168	148	102	64

With respect to geographic spread, there was a relatively good spread of respondents who associated with various communities of interest across the local government area. It is noted that many respondents associated with more than one area.

Locality of residence:

Urban	Rural	Outside the area
291	144	22

The locality of residence sought to identify the mix of urban or rurally based respondents. Just under two thirds of respondents identified as being based in urban areas, whilst just under one-third were located in rural areas. A further 5% identified as being located outside the area (e.g. visitors or non-residents).



2.3.2 What is the biggest strength of our community?

Respondents were asked to share a few words to describe the biggest strength of their community. A total of 371 responses were received, with keywords for all responses set out in the word cloud below.



Three key themes emerged:

Resilient & connected community	Connection to environment	Cultural knowledge & resourcefulness
That the community comes together well in times of need, such as following natural disasters, which creates greater resilience and connectedness within those involved.	Being a small community and having a strong affiliation with the natural environment, with a desire to protect and enhance these key lifestyle attributes.	A general appreciation for First Nations culture, a community culture of volunteerism and a desire to 'get things done' by coming together to meet future challenges.

However, there were also a number of respondents who were unsure of any strengths or felt that there is a potential lack of strength within the community at the current time. Some commented that previous community strength and connectedness had been lost and work was needed to rebuild communities following the natural disasters, the pandemic and related changes in demography.

2.3.3 What are the top three concerns facing our community?

Respondents were asked to share three short responses to this question to describe their top concerns. As part of the question, it was explained that ‘concerns are the things that you think are a problem facing our community. You don’t need to know the solution, just let us know what these are to you’.

A total of 385 responses were received to this question, with keywords for all responses set out in the word cloud below.



There were six themes that emerged:

Theme	Description
Crime & policing	Were a major concern, particularly amongst younger people, including elements of vandalism, drug use and anti-social behaviour. More support, services and infrastructure for young people were regularly requested.
Housing affordability & availability	Many felt that there was a need to address housing affordability and availability, including within the rental market and to negate the rise in homelessness that many identified.
Balanced planning outcomes	Related to this was the need to provide for careful, considered and balanced planning outcomes, recognising the need to address housing whilst also protecting natural environments and providing for growth in business, jobs and economic opportunities.

Theme	Description
Protecting the environment	Concern over agricultural activities, particularly blueberry farming and related impacts on waterways and environments, as well as impacts on the environment more broadly, such as 4wd beach access and habitat protection.
Changing demographics	Conversely, there was also concern that new residents are forcing out longer-term locals and/or do not have an understanding of the background and traditional employment sectors of the area, such as the importance of farming and forestry.
Better infrastructure & services	More generally, many felt that having effective infrastructure, services and opportunities for the community was needed, particularly considering the increasing population and the growing socio-economic gap between some community members. This includes issues under Council control, as well as broader matters such as health services and education.

2.3.4 What three words would you use to describe your ideal Nambucca Valley in 2035?

This question sought short / single word answers to describe the future vision for the Nambucca Valley (noting the CSP has a 10-year horizon). 348 responses were received, with keywords for all responses set out in the word cloud below.



2.3.5 If you could change anything about Nambucca Valley, what would it be?

This question sought written responses that prioritise the most important things for the respondent to change in the future. Of the 342 responses received, those changes that received 10 or more mentions included:

Theme	Description	Mentions
Business & employment opportunities	Greater support for businesses and employment opportunities, with a particular focus on more shopping opportunities and town centre renewal in areas such as Nambucca Heads, Macksville and Bowraville	57
Council leadership & governance	Improvement of Council's governance, leadership and staffing to facilitate more responsiveness to community needs and outcomes	31
Crime & drug use	Reducing crime and drug use, including the increased presence of police within the local area	26
Retain natural beauty	Working to retain the natural beauty of the area, including natural environments, important habitat, biodiversity values, trees and related systems (note that water quality and systems are further noted below)	23
Infrastructure	Improving the quality of roads, bridges and intersections	19
Youth support	Providing more support for youth, young adults and increasing both day and night time activities within town centres	18
Intensive agriculture	Reducing the impacts of blueberry/intensive agriculture	16
Community connectedness	Encouraging and facilitating greater levels of community connectedness, inclusion and connectivity within and between towns and villages	14
Open spaces and facilities	Improving public open spaces, including play areas and areas for public gatherings e.g. markets and events	13
Land use planning	Reviewing and updating Council's approach to planning and sustainability to achieve better long-term planning and development outcomes	12
River health	Reviewing the use of rivers and waterways, including fishing activities and improving water quality	11

Theme	Description	Mentions
Protect beaches	Removing beach access for 4wds	10
Social disadvantage	Working to address low socio-economic status and costs of living issues for residents	10
Housing affordability	Provide for more affordable and available housing stock	10

Just below this number of mentions were a range of other issues, including First Nations support and reconciliation, requirements for health care and support for tourism, including eco-tourism opportunities. Some also identified that there was no need for change.

2.4 What respondents said – Priorities within themes

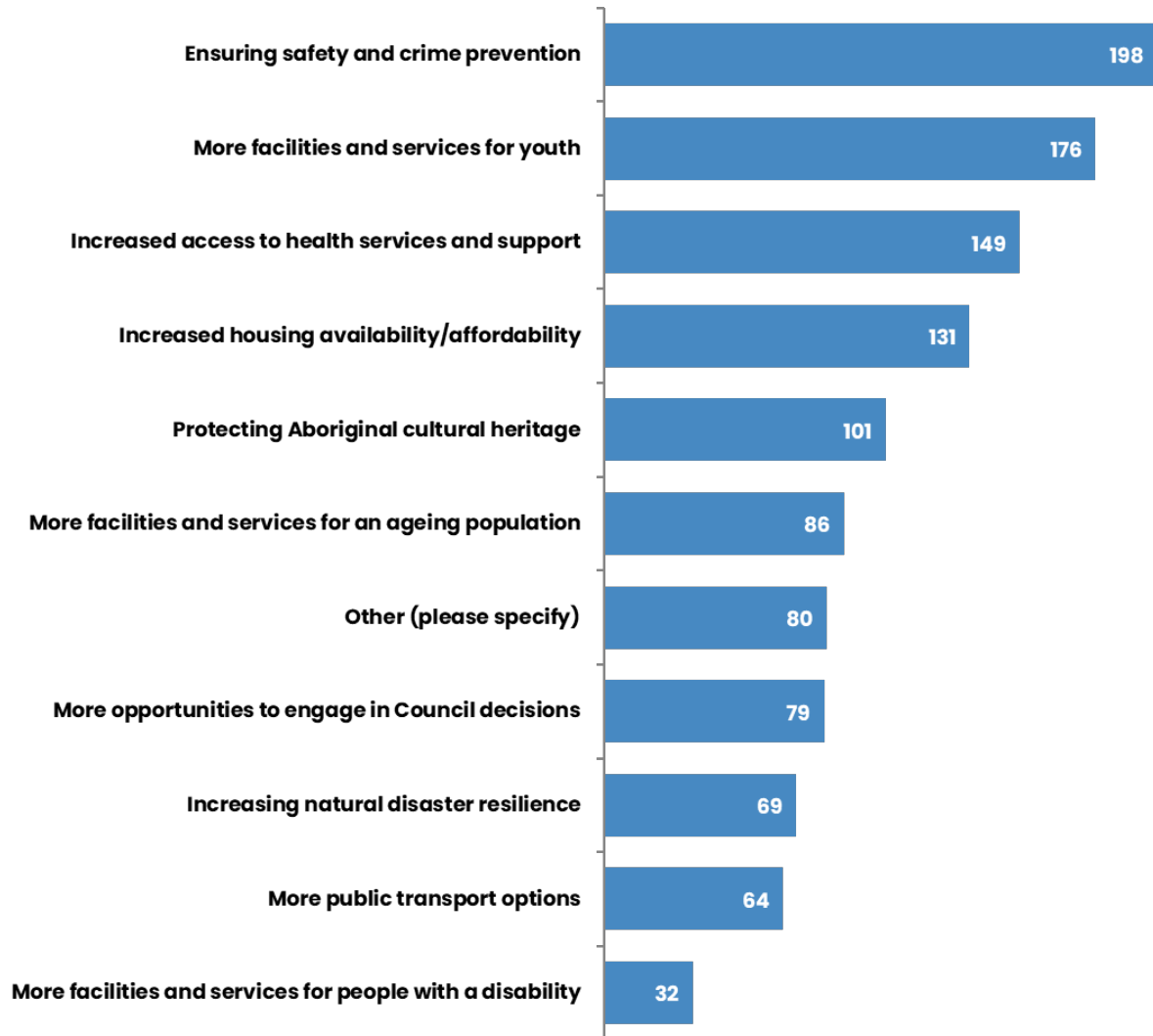
In addition to the open written questions outlined above, there were a further four questions that sought to understand the respondent’s views on the greatest needs across the following four areas:



These questions essentially indicate the relative importance (or priority) of each direction statement that was provided within each of the questions. These are reviewed by area in the following sections. In addition, there was an option for other comments to be added. As these overlapped between the four areas, they have been summarised separately in Section 2.4.5.

2.4.1 Social and Community Priorities

This question asked “What are the three greatest social and community needs that should be captured by the 10-year Plan? Select up to three responses”. The graph below highlights responses received under each available need:

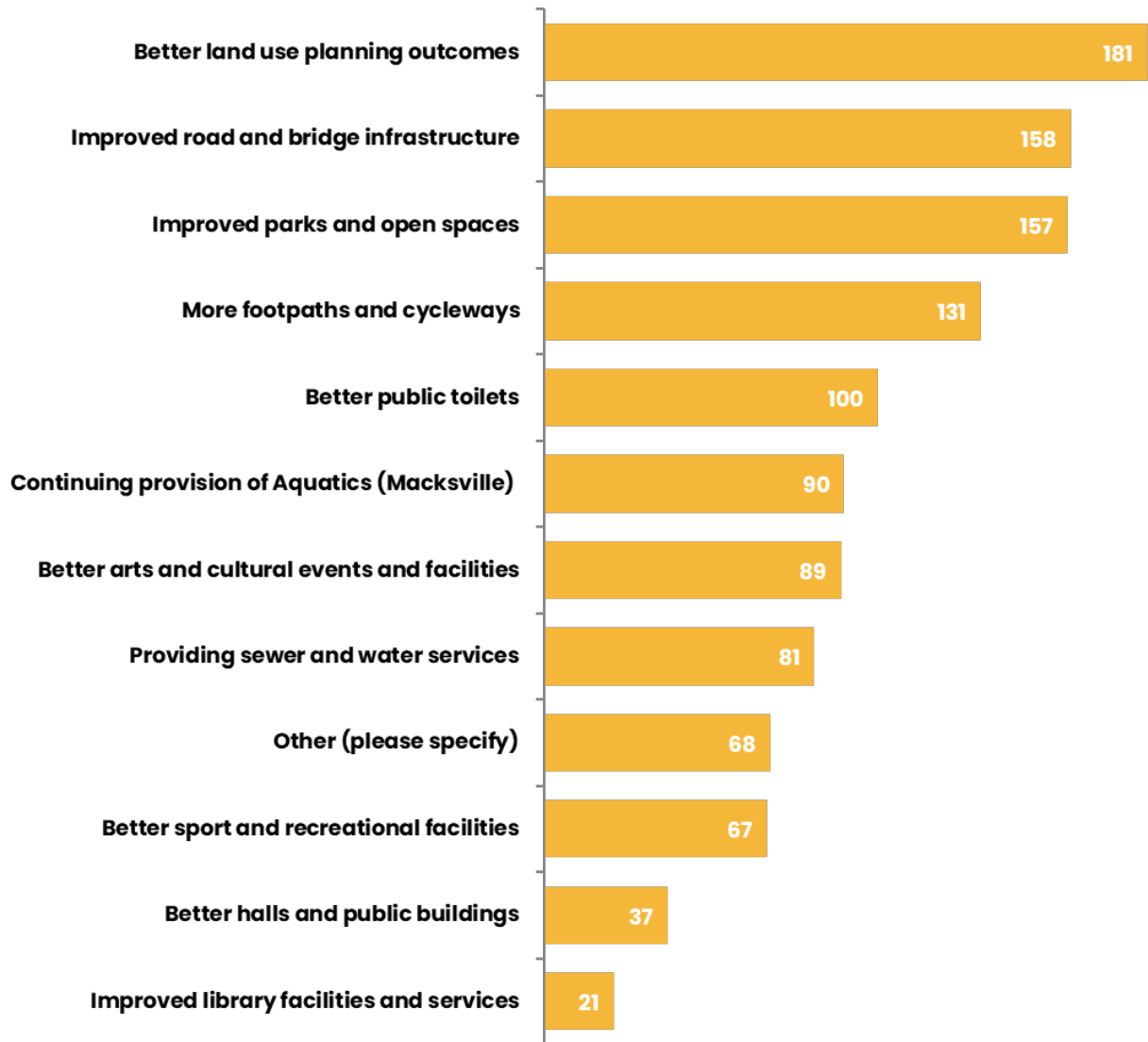


The top priority in this area is consistent with previous survey questions, highlighting concern over real or perceived growth in crime and safety, particularly amongst younger people. Providing more focus on youth facilities and services is a logical response to this concern and the second ranked priority.

Other top responses included access to health services and housing, also being consistent with earlier questions. Also receiving more than 100 responses was protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, highlighting the importance of this issue to many across the broader community.

2.4.2 Infrastructure and Development Priorities

This question asked “What are the three greatest infrastructure and development needs that should be captured by the 10-year Plan? Select up to three responses”. The graph below highlights responses received under each available need:

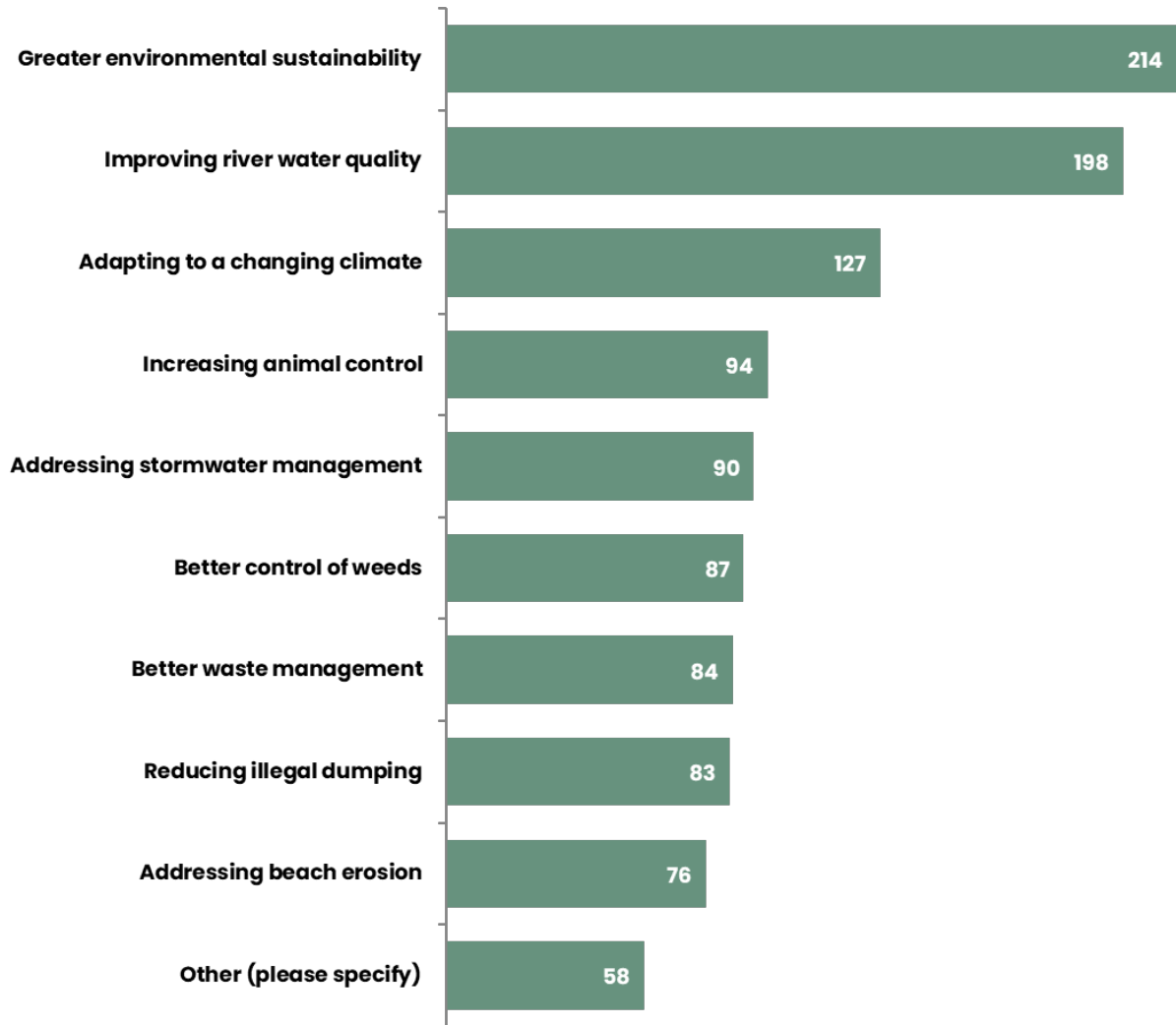


The top priority in this area, better land use planning outcomes, is likely to be related to both agricultural activities (e.g. blueberries) as well as the increase in housing demand and development in recent years – both of which were regularly raised in other parts of the survey.

Roads and bridges, parks and open spaces, as well as footpaths and cycleways all received relatively high response rates, highlighting the community’s desire for Council to address these key everyday infrastructure areas. Providing better public toilets was the only other area receiving 100 or more responses.

2.4.3 Environment and Sustainability Priorities

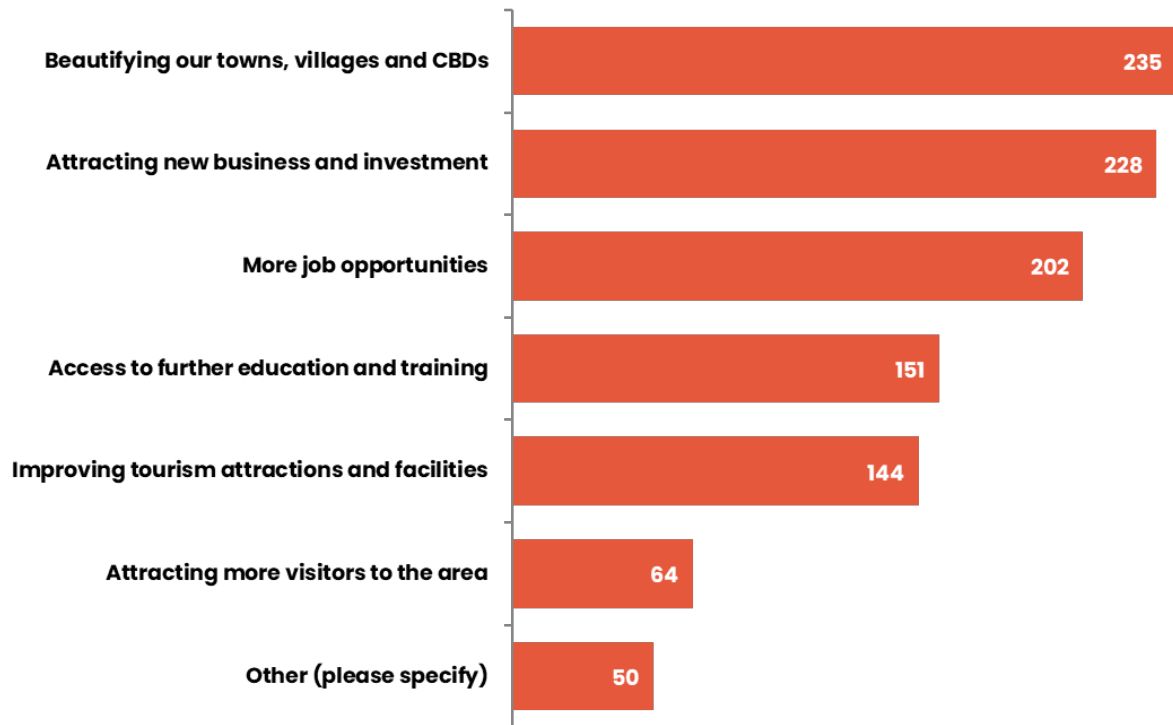
This question asked “What are the three greatest environmental and sustainability needs that should be captured by the 10-year Plan? Select up to three responses”. The graph below highlights responses received under each available need:



The clear top priorities in this area were ‘greater environmental sustainability’ and ‘improving river water quality’. These were also strongly represented in other questions, with concerns around issues such as intensive agriculture, logging, commercial fishing and tree removal likely to be linked to these responses. ‘Adapting to the changing climate’ was also a popular response, though not to the extent of the more generalised response relating to environmental sustainability.

2.4.4 Economic Priorities

This question asked “What are the three economic needs that should be captured by the 10-year Plan? Select up to three responses”. The graph below highlights responses received under each available need:



The smaller number of response options to this question means that the number of responses for each is generally higher. The top three responses are somewhat interrelated, with attractive town centres and villages linked to the vitality brought by a strong business community and subsequently resulting in greater levels of localised employment.

‘Access to further education and training’ opportunities and ‘improving tourism attractions and facilities’ (as opposed to more tourists) were also well supported.

2.4.5 “Other” priorities identified in responses

Of those that identified an “Other (please specify)” response to any of the above theme areas, most identified issues and opportunities that were raised across other themes. However, some did raise issues and opportunities that were not specifically captured in any specific theme areas.

Top other concerns included:

Theme	Description
Council leadership & action	Many identified that Council needed to continue or should become more approachable and engaged with the community, including First Nations communities, as well as then delivering with more transparency and enforcement.
Vegetation removal	Over and above generalised environmental themes, many raised specific concerns about vegetation and tree removal, including logging and impacts on native forests / national parks.
Intensive agriculture impacts	Over and above generalised environmental themes, many raised specific concerns about intensive agriculture and related impacts on neighbours, the land and waterways.

To a lesser extent than the above, other concerns or opportunities included:

Theme	Description
Local focus & connectedness	Desire for greater “locals supporting locals” programs and activities to support business as well as community connectedness. Similarly, encouraging various local waste management initiatives based on a circular-economy model and providing for more local self-sufficiency with respect to food and energy production was desired by some.
Vehicle beach access	Regarding beach access by 4wds, other than emergency access.
Holiday rental restrictions	With a desire to ensure that existing properties are being used as homes instead of tourist accommodation (e.g. AirBNB), rather than just increasing the number of homes generally.
Partnership approach	Recognising the need to work with others, including Crown Lands, health services and other State agencies in achieving desired outcomes.
Focus on young adults	In addition to youth, including issues and opportunities relating to the nighttime economy and job creation.
Nature-based tourism	Recognising the economic value of natural assets as part of the visitor economy whilst managing impacts of peak tourism on key natural assets and villages (e.g. Scotts Head).
Maintenance	Highlighting that whilst new or better infrastructure is desired, maintenance and ensuring the cleanliness of existing infrastructure is also important.

2.5 What the respondents said – Final comments

A final question ended the survey, asking “Is there anything else that you would like to raise?”. This question was designed to ensure that respondents had the opportunity to share any final comments that may not have been previously captured. A total of 194 written responses (excluding those that did not provide any further comments) were received. Of those that 3 or more mentions included:

Theme	Description	Mentions
Council leadership & governance	Addressing Council’s leadership and engagement with the community to rebuild trust and deliver on what’s most important to the community	17
Environmental protection	Providing for environmental protections, including reducing vegetation and tree removal	15
Engaged & connected community	Encouraging a connected, well-informed and engaged community	13
Open space provision	Improving public open spaces, including provision of play spaces and facilities	12
Town centre renewal	Preparing and implementing town centre renewal opportunities, particularly for the Nambucca Heads town centre	10
Intensive agriculture	Reducing the potential for impacts of intensive agriculture	9
Council enforcement	Increasing Council enforcement, including to manage illegal camping, beach access and dogs	8
Land use planning	Providing for better land-use planning to meet local needs and a growing population	8
Road safety	Addressing various road safety issues, such as intersections and speed limits within towns and villages	7
Companion animals	Providing for infrastructure, policies and rules to support dog owners and those with concerns over irresponsible dog ownership	7
Active recreation	Providing for improved walking and cycling infrastructure	5

Theme	Description	Mentions
Police & crime prevention	Having a police presence within the local area to deter crime	5
Love for local	Recognising the love for the local area and retaining its core attributes	5
Housing affordability	Providing more housing, including public and social housing	4
Roads	Improving the quality of roads	4
Beach access	Regulating the access of vehicles to local beaches	4
Youth support	Providing for youth engagement, programs and facilities	3
Business support	Developing and strengthening local business, including the provision of more shops	3
Geographic equity	Ensuring equity between areas within the Nambucca Valley	3



3. Pop-up events

3.1 Overview

During July and August 2024, Council held seven pop-up events across the local government area as follows:

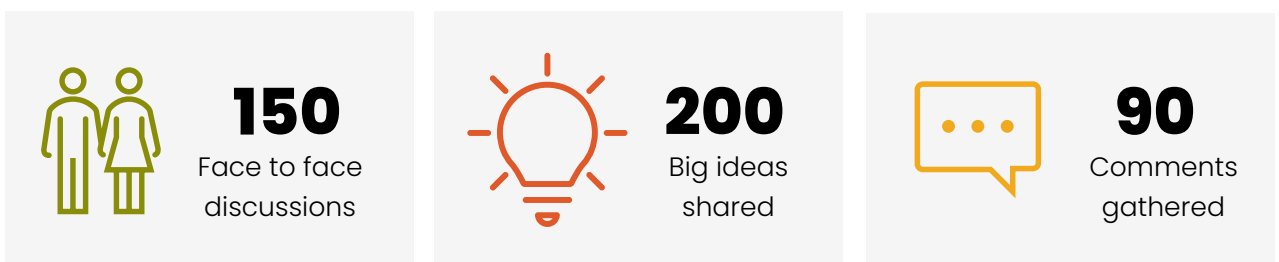
- Macksville (outside Foodworks Supermarket)
Wednesday, 31 July 2024
9.00am - 12.00pm
- Nambucca Heads (Farmers Market, Gordon Park)
Thursday, 1 August 2024
2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Scotts Head (opposite the Friendly Grocer)
Saturday, 17 August 2024
8.30am - 10.30am
- Taylors Arm (Pub with No Beer)
Saturday, 17 August 2024
12.00pm - 2.00pm
- Valla Beach (outside Nourish Café)
Monday, 19 August 2024
8.30am - 10.30am
- Bowraville (outside the IGA)
Monday, 19 August 2024
12.00pm - 2.00pm
- Eungai (Funkya Unkya Market)
Sunday, 25 August 2024
8.00am - 12.00pm

At each event, Council staff were present as well as two team members from Locale Consulting. People were invited to share their answers to the following prompts:

1. Over the next ten years, what is the one big thing you would like to see happen in the Nambucca Valley?
2. Nambucca Valley is the answer...what is the clue or question

People were also asked to identify their priorities across four areas – social, economy, environment and infrastructure / development.

Overall, it is estimated that the pop-up events engaged approximately 150 people, with around 200 big ideas generated and over 90 comments received describing the Nambucca Valley (both positively and negatively).



3.2 Nambucca Valley is the answer...

People were asked to respond to the following prompt:

Nambucca Valley is the answer, what is the question or clue...

Around 90 comments were received across the seven pop-up events. These comments were positive and negative.

On the positive side, many of the comments focused on the natural beauty of the area including the pristine and unspoilt environment, as well as the beautiful beaches, waterways and bush. Others noted that the relaxed, laid-back, peaceful and quiet lifestyle of the area, make it a great place to live and visit.

The Nambucca Valley was described as a “step back in time” and not having changed much in 85 years. Many expressed that it should stay as it is (both visitors and residents), with comments shared that it is “beautiful country that needs to be protected”.

Other comments highlighted that Nambucca Valley is an ideal retirement area and is also a place for new people to live. However, others commented that “infrastructure needs to match growth in the area” and the area should be the mid-north coast leader in sustainability and regulating intensive farming.

On the negative side, some of the comments highlighted that youth suicide is an issue and there is no funding for youth services and a neighbourhood centre. Other comments highlighted the history of genocide of First Nations people in the area, with others noting that Indigenous people are not involved in decision making. Other comments noted there is violence in some places and a need for more police presence.

Comments were made that there needs to be better value for rates and better communication with residents about blueberry farming.

“The east coast’s best kept secret!”

“One of the last beautiful places left on the coastline, should be cherished”

“Beautiful nature and pristine beaches”

“What is the best rural area in Australia?”

3.3 Big ideas

People were asked to respond to the prompt, “Over the next ten years, what is the one big thing you would like to see happen in the Nambucca Valley?”. Around 200 ideas were generated across the seven pop-up events. These ideas centred on five themes as outlined below.

3.3.1 Social

Many ideas related to creating more connected and cohesive communities, particularly for those who are more vulnerable such as First Nations people, young people, the ageing population and people living with a disability. Below are the main themes.

Theme	Description
Access to health & medical services	A key concern to address in the future is better access to health and medical services particularly more bulk billing GPs, more specialist medical services for an ageing population, mental health and people living with a disability
Crime & safety	Many people expressed a desire to improve safety and reduce crime in the community. This includes a greater Police presence, particularly in Nambucca and Macksville.
Gumbaynggirr culture	Others identified a need for increasing understanding and knowledge of Gumbaynggirr language, cultural knowledge and places. Others suggested that it is important to recognise the history of the area (e.g. mural in Bowraville).
Focus on young people	Many ideas related to the need for more activities for young people as well as the ageing population to stay active and healthy.
Transport & connectivity options	Improving transport options, particularly in rural areas to the major centres such as Coffs Harbour and Kempsey (e.g. community transport) is seen as important. So too is improving mobile coverage so people can reliably access basic services such as internet banking.

3.3.2 Infrastructure and development

Many of the ideas related to the future development of the local government area. There were conflicting views expressed about the extent of development with some people identifying that they wish to keep the area as it is, whilst others see the need for

sustainable and sensitive development that respects the environment and provides a diverse mix of housing and supporting infrastructure. Below are the main themes.

Theme	Description
Housing affordability & availability	Some noted the need for structural and systemic changes to the housing market to address housing issues, and the need to explore renewable energy options for social / community housing to address cost-living pressures.
Intensive horticulture	A key concern related to better land use planning around intensive horticulture and the impacts it has on the rural setting. This includes resolving conflicts between rural and residential land uses.
Infrastructure & connectivity	People expressed a desire for more accessible paths, as well as more footpaths and bike paths, particularly in Macksville. Other suggestions were made to better link towns and villages with bike paths (e.g. Scotts Head to Macksville, Valla Beach to Nambucca Heads, Urunga and Nambucca Heads) or walking trails (e.g. Grassy Head to Scotts Head) and to improve connectivity (e.g. off road route to Jacks Ridge Mountain Bike and fixing Bellwood Park walkway).
Car parking	Others identified the need to review car parking limits in Macksville, investigate options for long-vehicle parking as well change reverse parking in Macksville and Nambucca Heads.
Roads & bridges	In rural areas, a key priority is improving roads, particularly potholes and verges (e.g. between Macksville and Taylors Arm, Rhones Creek Road, Southbank Road). Whilst in urban areas such as Valla Beach, there is a need for improved road safety. Others identified a need for new bridges (e.g. Macksville, at Golf Club at Nambucca Heads, Scotts Head to Gumma),
Signage	Several suggestions were made about improving signage (e.g. First Nations, multi-lingual for pickers, off-lead dogs and public toilets).
Playgrounds & community facilities	Others would like to see better playgrounds in Macksville and Nambucca Heads, more facilities for young people (e.g. Skate park in Scotts Head, pool in Bowraville, theme park, motorised dirt bike track) and more community owned assets (e.g. PCYC in Nambucca Heads or community hall in Scotts Head). Other ideas included a dedicated dog park.

3.3.3 Environment

Many ideas related to the environment, with people sharing that this theme underpins everything else, and is one of the things that they value the most about living or visiting the area. Below are the key themes.

Theme	Description
Intensive horticulture	A key concern for the future is managing the impacts of intensive horticulture in rural areas, particularly in Taylors Arm and Eungai. Many expressed a desire for improved regulation of blueberry farming, noting concerns about its impact on the environment.
Tree removal	Another concern is stopping the clearing of trees particularly the logging of State Forest and other native vegetation. Many expressed a desire to protect the biodiversity of the Nambucca Valley, whilst others identified there is a need to create a tree preservation order for urban areas to better protect trees, particularly from illegal clearing.
Fire trails	Some noted the importance of maintaining the fire trails within the State Forests, particularly for future disaster preparedness.
River health	The ongoing health of the Nambucca River is also seen as important, both in terms of water quality and the ability to use it (e.g. houseboats).
Beaches & pet controls	On the coast, people want clean beaches and erosion to be addressed. There is also a desire for more dog-friendly beaches, with increased enforcement of rules about responsible dog ownership. Others also identified the need to review the use of beaches by 4WD and motorbikes and to have greater controls for cats.
Waste management	Other ideas related to improving waste management, particularly options for soft plastic recycling, allowing compostable bags and reducing tip fees for those who live in rural areas.
Open spaces	In Macksville, several people expressed a desire to clean up Dawkins Park.

3.3.4 Economy

Many ideas related to the economy, with many people expressing the need to create more employment opportunities in a range of sectors and industries such as small business, eco-tourism, government, sport and education as well as industries that cater for all abilities and education levels and activating the night-time economy. There is a strong desire to support local businesses and to focus on a small-scale local economy.

Theme	Description
Diversity of shopping opportunities	Others expressed a desire for greater choice and diversity of shops including retail and commercial options, as well as more supermarkets and shops that are affordable for families.
Beautification of towns & villages	Beautification of townships is seen as important, particularly upgrading Nambucca Heads main street as well as implementing the approved Master Plan for Scotts Head.
Promotion of villages & tourism attractions	Opportunities were identified to better promote places such as Bowraville and the Jacks Ridge Mountain Bike Park for tourism. Others identified that there needs to be more tourism attractions (e.g. using the dam for recreational use and camping / walking trail along the river) and tourism facilities (e.g. public car wash for boats and caravans).
Managing tourism impacts	At the same time, others expressed the need to manage the negative impacts of tourism particularly in Scotts Head.

3.3.5 Leadership and governance

In addition to the ideas shared across the four themes in the online survey, many of the ideas shared centred on the theme of leadership and governance, particularly from Council. This included a desire for:

- A more responsive and helpful Council,
- A financially sustainable Council,
- More transparency with decision making,
- Better co-ordination between Council and State Government,
- A Council that listens to the community, and
- Public consultation with stakeholders about Council decisions.

3.4 Feedback frames

People were asked to identify their most important priority across four areas of 'social', 'environment', 'economy' and 'infrastructure and development' using a series of feedback frames. In total, 568 votes were made across the four areas. The results are summarised below.



568

Priority votes tallied

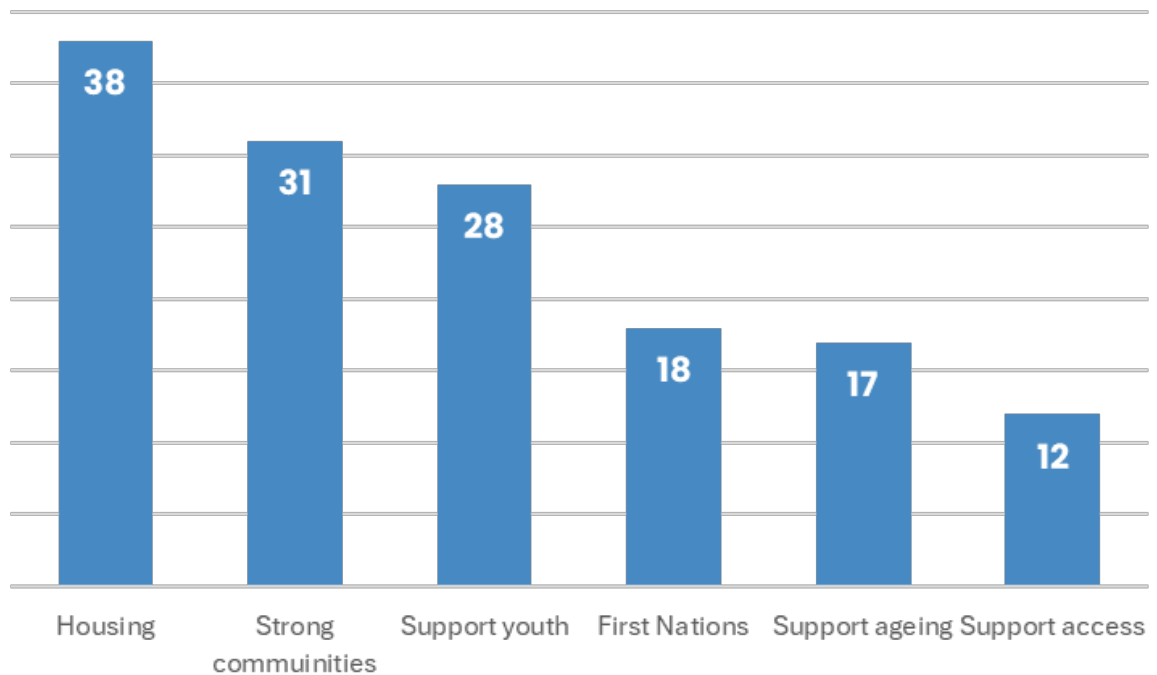


3.4.1 Social

People were asked to identify their most important priority from the following six options:

- 1 HOUSING**
That is available AND affordable now and for future generations
- 2 STRONG COMMUNITIES**
Resilient, safe and engaged residents and communities
- 3 SUPPORT AGEING**
Through services and facilities such as health care
- 4 SUPPORT YOUTH**
Through services and facilities aimed at younger people
- 5 SUPPORT ACCESS**
Including disability support and access to public transport
- 6 FIRST NATIONS**
Support for reconciliation, respect and cultural protection

The top priority was housing, with strong communities being the second most important priority.



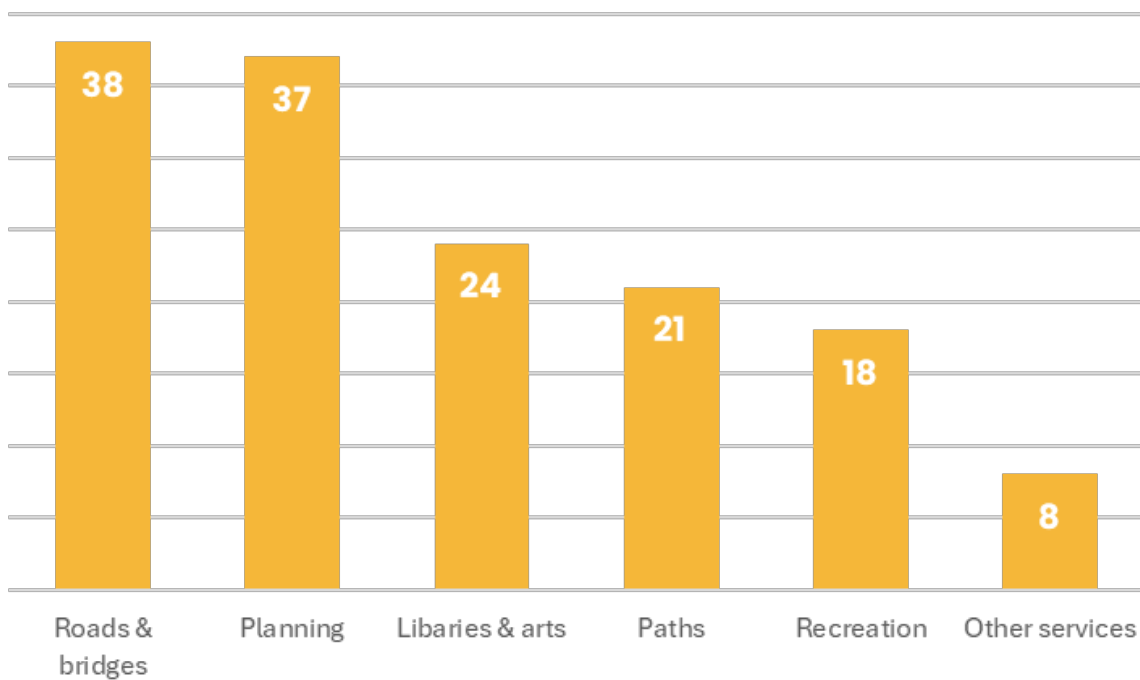
While the results here are similar to the online survey outcomes, there was no direct response available for crime and safety, which was the top ranked priority in the online survey. Nonetheless, housing strong community and youth were all prominent themes.

3.4.2 Infrastructure and development

People were asked to identify their most important priority from the following six options:

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 1 | ROADS & BRIDGES
Maintaining and renewal of roads and bridges | 4 | LIBRARIES & ARTS
Facilities, events and services for social and cultural growth |
| 2 | PATHS
For walking and cycling to enable safe active transport and recreation | 5 | OTHER SERVICES
Including halls, public toilets and sewer / water services |
| 3 | RECREATION
Including parks, sports fields and swimming facilities | 6 | PLANNING
Strategic long-term planning and effective approvals (DAs) |

The top priority was roads and bridges, with planning being the second most important priority.



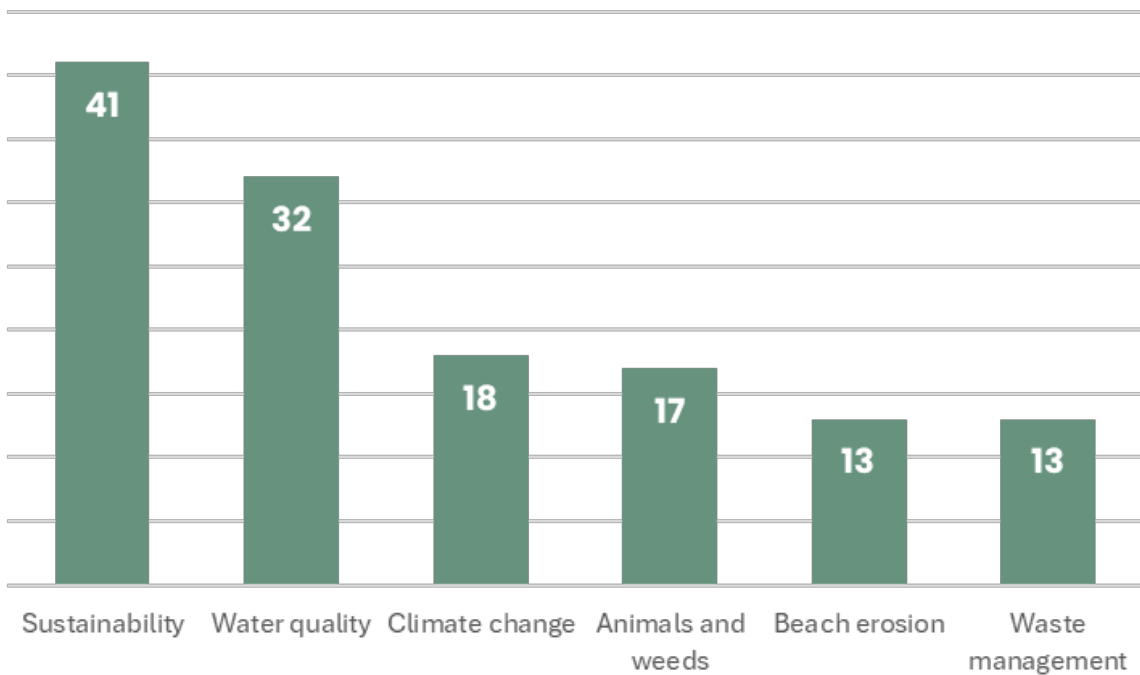
Some results in this area differed from the online survey. For example, recreation and paths were more highly supported in the online survey, much closer to roads and bridges that were still a high priority. However, libraries was a much lower priority in the online survey compared with the above result, suggesting some inconsistencies in this area.

3.4.3 Environment

People were asked to identify their most important priority from the following six options:

- 1** **SUSTAINABILITY**
Protect natural areas and reduce consumption
- 2** **CLIMATE CHANGE**
Adapt and prepare for a changing climate
- 3** **WATER QUALITY**
Improve river water quality and address stormwater issues
- 4** **BEACH EROSION**
Reduce the impacts of beach erosion and coastal processes
- 5** **WASTE MANAGEMENT**
Effective collection & management of waste, including illegal dumping
- 6** **ANIMALS & WEEDS**
Enforce animal control and address weeds

The top priority was sustainability, with water quality being the second most important priority.



This was a similar outcome to the online survey results, with sustainability issues and concern over water quality being key issues.

3.4.4 Economic

People were asked to identify their most important priority from the following six options:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1
ATTRACTING TOURISM
Attracting tourists through marketing and promotion | 4
JOBS
Increasing localised employment now and in the future |
| 2
VISITOR FACILITIES
Providing more attractions for visitors to the area | 5
EDUCATION
Having access to training and education opportunities |
| 3
STRONG BUSINESSES
Support local businesses and attract new businesses to the area | 6
BEAUTIFICATION
Attractive & vibrant centres encourage local spending |

The top priority was strong businesses, with beautification being the second most important priority.



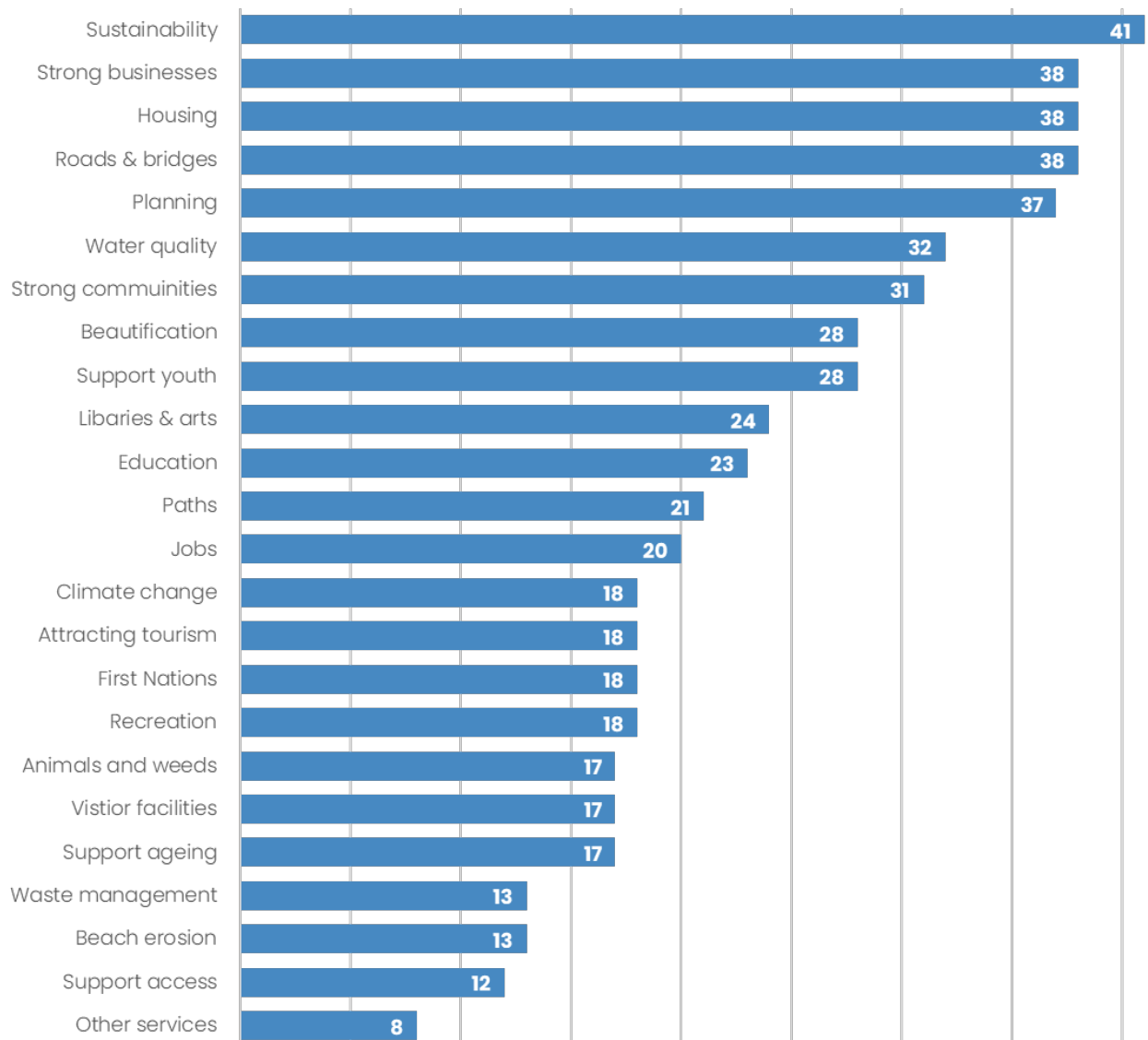
This result was consistent with the online survey outcomes, where beautification was a top priority following by business related initiative and jobs.

3.4.5 Summary of results

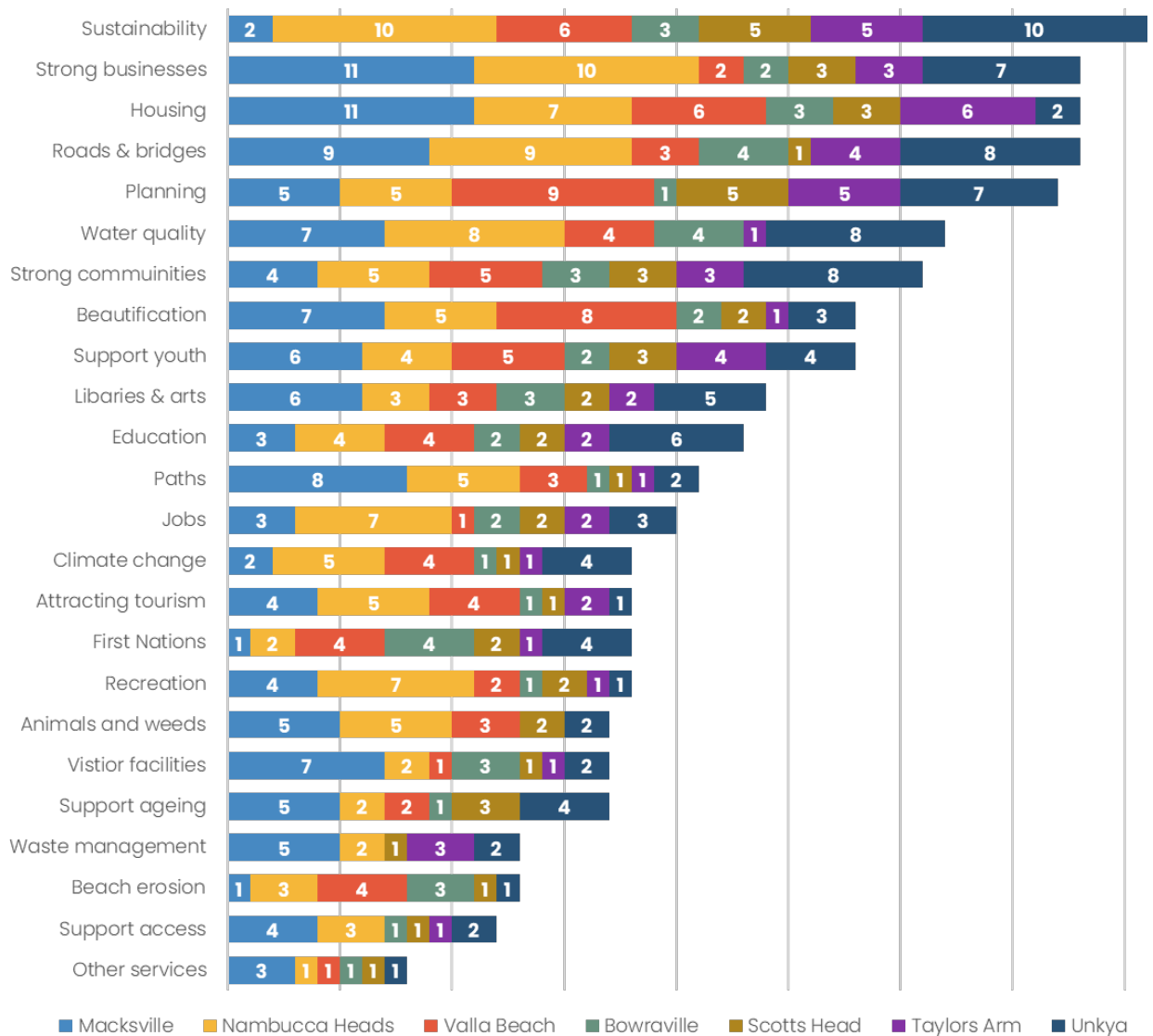
When the results are compared against each other, the top ten priorities across the four areas were:

1. Sustainability
2. Strong businesses
3. Housing
4. Roads and bridges
5. Planning
6. Water quality
7. Strong communities
8. Beautification
9. Support youth
10. Libraries and arts

A full list of all results is shown below.



By locality, these results can be further broken down as follows:



4. Key take-outs and next steps

4.1 Key community priority areas

The engagement process sought to establish a strong baseline of community information to inform the development of Council's next CSP. The community was engaged through two main methods:

- **An online survey:** with open questions, priority-setting questions and an opportunity for any concluding remarks providing ways for the community to provide input. 460 responses were received, and
- **Seven pop-up community events:** with open questions and 'feedback frames' being used to identify community priorities across four themes. 150 face-to-face discussions generated 200 big ideas and 90 other comments.

These engagements sought to capture similar sets of information, ensuring that it was consistent and able to be reviewed and assessed to capture the key strategic directions from a community perspective. In addition, and recognising the difficulty of capturing youth voices, the outcomes have been supplemented with the results of the Nambucca Valley YOUth Speak Project.

Based on this information, the following key priority areas for the community have been identified.



Protect the environment and live sustainably

Preserve our highly valued pristine environment, minimising our impacts and living sustainably whilst adapting to climate change. Includes retention of important habitat and trees whilst managing our impacts on land and rivers/waterways.



Encourage vibrant town centres and villages

Focus on revitalising and improving town centres and village precincts to help build strong businesses, greater retail diversity and nightlife. This will assist in creating localised and meaningful employment opportunities for local residents.



Demonstrate Council leadership and governance

Show that Council listens, communicates, and responds to community needs and desires. From enforcement activities to meaningful engagement on key issues, Council plays a core role as a delivery partner with the community.



Improve community recreational infrastructure

Establish and improve infrastructure opportunities to support healthy and active communities. This includes foot and cycle paths that connect to places and spaces, and parks and playgrounds that meet recreational needs for all ages.



Connect and support all communities

Respond to diverse community desires for connection to each other and our local places. Includes a focus on First Nations, the ageing population and people living with a disability, by improving services (e.g. health) and assisting those that are most vulnerable.



Support young people to thrive

Building on the YOUth Speak LGA-wide project, collaborate with younger generations to create positive change, reduce negative stigma/stereotypes, and take action on the issues that are important to them.



Enhance community safety

Work with State Government and other community sector partners to help address the underlying cause of crime and to build a community that feels safer, stronger, more respected and engaged across all age groups and community sectors.



Manage the intensification of agriculture

Respond to the rapid growth of intensive agriculture and manage impacts on the community and natural environment. This includes review of land use planning and enforcement measures to mitigate potential negative impacts.



Provide safe roads and increase access

Provide and maintain safe and suitable roads and bridges that enable physical community connectedness. From unsealed rural roads and verges to safe urban intersections, there are ongoing desires for improvements across the road network.



Balance housing and population growth

Recognise the tension between the desire to retain existing character and scale with future growth that is sustainable and suitably located. This includes opportunities to ensure housing is affordable and available now and into the future.

4.2 Next steps

The community priorities identified above will now be considered for reflection in the development of the Nambucca Valley CSP, which will be developed, exhibited and adopted by Council by 30 June 2025. In developing the plan, Council will also need to consider its diverse and varied responsibilities and how it will work with partners, including the community, to deliver on what it has heard.

Council will also need to meet its legislative requirements in developing the plan, including its broader IPR responsibilities. This will include developing the:

- **Community Strategic Plan:** as a 10-year community-led document that includes a 'vision', 'strategic objectives' and 'strategies' to achieve those objectives,
- **Delivery Program:** as 4-year Council-led plan that sets out the 'strategies' from the CSP and what 'actions' Council will take to implement them over the four term of the current Council,
- **Operational Plan:** as an annual plan that contains details of the 'actions' taken from the Delivery Program, and
- **Resourcing strategy:** a suite of three plans that support implementation, being the:
 - Long term financial plan
 - Workforce management plan
 - Asset management plan

Outcomes of these processes will provide further direction to the development and implementation of other 'core' and 'supporting' strategies and plans over time.

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