
MPHWP Survey Data Summary

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021

A healthy, safe, vibrant and connected community

Methodology

Following the Council election in 2016, Latrobe City have implemented the development of a community focused Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for years 2017-2021. With this in mind, an extensive community engagement was undertaken to collect the community's thoughts and ideas on how to improve the health and wellbeing of the people and understand the best ways to engage with them to ensure this plan is useful and responds to the way in which they live.

Latrobe City's primary objective was to listen to the community and capture their thoughts on their life, their community and their wellbeing.

Latrobe City Council embarked upon neighbourhood door knock surveys in four townships in Latrobe City. Conversation Cafes were held with the neighbourhood which were visited to share these results and discuss the themes drawn from this to understand the ideas they have on improving their health and wellbeing. As well as these neighbourhoods online responses have been received from Tyers, Yallourn North, Yinnar, Boolarra, Newborough, Toongabbie, Glengarry and Traralgon South through online surveys. In addition, a short postcard survey was distributed through Latrobe organisational networks which asked three open ended questions.

This process generated a wealth of valuable insight into our community which drove the next steps. From these surveys Latrobe City identified a number of key themes taken from what the community said, which set the direction for further in-depth discussions. An external consultation company were employed to assist in facilitating conversation with the community, the objective of this was to ensure that the

community felt comfortable to bring their honest ideas and opinions in a non-judgemental, impartial environment.

From the data collated four main workshop themes were identified; social and community connection, feeling safe, active and healthy living and Work and educational opportunities and financial security. These formed the basis for discussions with the MPHWP Reference Group and the Municipal Themed Workshops where community members and representatives from local service providers examined the themes in more depth and explored ideas for how our community can improve their health and wellbeing in these key areas.

In addition people were asked how they would like to be engaged, what a thriving community would look like to them if the plan was successful and what they would like the plan to look like. This input drove out key priorities for development of a community focused Municipal Health and Wellbeing Draft Plan.

General observations

Data was gathered either through in-person verbal interviews, or mail drop; surveys were left at homes with return envelopes where in person surveys were not possible. Often staff were invited into homes where they had some rich and meaningful conversations with residents. This gave a very good understanding of the people in the area and provided much needed context and perspective to the data which was collated.

What became obvious was that despite the fact that this community has been through some challenges in recent years, a high percentage of people felt happy, which indicated a level of resilience that was encouraging.

This is the first survey that has taken a wellbeing approach compared with previous surveys which have collated health data. The survey ended with three open ended questions which provided some rich qualitative data and obtained valuable insight into the community and their ideas on how they can improve their health and wellbeing.

When asked what they liked about their neighbourhoods people indicated that they appreciated the proximity to amenities and shops, schools and the city as well as having easy access to nature (beaches, hiking, views etc.), they like that it offers a country lifestyle without the 'hustle and bustle' of city life. Comments were made that they didn't need to live too close to Melbourne but still have easy access to everything they need. They enjoy that it is for the most part, quiet and safe and that although they wouldn't walk out at night on their own they feel safe in their homes. Some members of the community commented on specific areas or problem houses and raised concerns about disruptive behaviour, hooning and visible substance abuse, however this tended to be isolated to specific areas and in many streets people said they felt safe and loved their neighbours. A large number of people said they often saw their neighbours, and felt that if they needed support or help they knew they could call on them.

Residents who had lived in the area for a number of years talked about the transition from the community being thriving and busy to it now being 'dead', commenting they felt sad it had declined and there were more issues as a result of this change. With the loss of local jobs, lack of recreational activities for children and young people, residential homes, as well as a high percentage of renters including 'people being sent from Melbourne to cheap housing', residents have become disappointed with the run down appearance of the area.

Numerous residents raised concerns about properties that were in disrepair, unkempt or dilapidated and the lack of community pride shown by those who resided within. There were quite a number of comments relating to hoon driving. However the overarching feeling was that the community loved their neighbourhoods, felt safe and felt that they belonged. Even though there is a higher than state average level of rental stress in this area, perhaps suggesting a more transient community in some places, the overwhelming message we received was that people were happy and loved living in the location; 'I've lived here my whole life and I love it' or 'it's just home'.

Following the conversation with the community it became apparent that there is a strong relationship between the themes that came through from the surveys. Social and community connection was seen to be a fundamental part of how other areas fitted together and affected each other. From this it was clear that feelings of isolation from community, family and friends had a negative impact on feeling safe, work and educational opportunities, active and healthy living (including mental health) and as a result issues tended to emerge.

There was a focus on the need for casual volunteering opportunities and informal recreational activities as well as having an infrastructure to support these. Issues around the affordability of organised sport, concerns surrounding work and educational opportunities, safety in the community and financial security were also raised.

Giving the community a voice

Neighbourhood surveys

Neighbourhood Surveys were conducted in four townships; Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Churchill (please find area maps over the page) between May and June 2017. A total of 3,377 dwellings were visited across the four neighbourhoods and surveys were either conducted in person, returned via mail or recipients were also able to scan their neighbourhood code to complete a survey online online. The image to the right shows how responses were received. In total, 552 surveys were completed from the neighbourhoods visited (in person, mail and online). The return for these surveys has been very encouraging with a response rate of 17% showing a representative sample of the community and indicated a good level of interest.

In addition to the four neighbourhoods the same survey was open to the public online and advertised through LV Express, Latrobe City Facebook Page, Latrobe City Health and Wellbeing Page and via Mayor's segment on local radio.

The survey asked five demographical questions before moving onto statements on health, wellbeing and safety. People were asked to indicate whether they Agreed, Strongly Agreed, Didn't Know, Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with each statement. It concluded with three open ended questions to garner additional qualitative data; What makes you happy and healthy?, What do you like about your neighbourhood? and What ideas to you have on how we can make it easier for you to be happier and healthier?



348
Churchill



1,221
Moe



1,268
Morwell



540
Traralgon



314 In Person



239 Mail



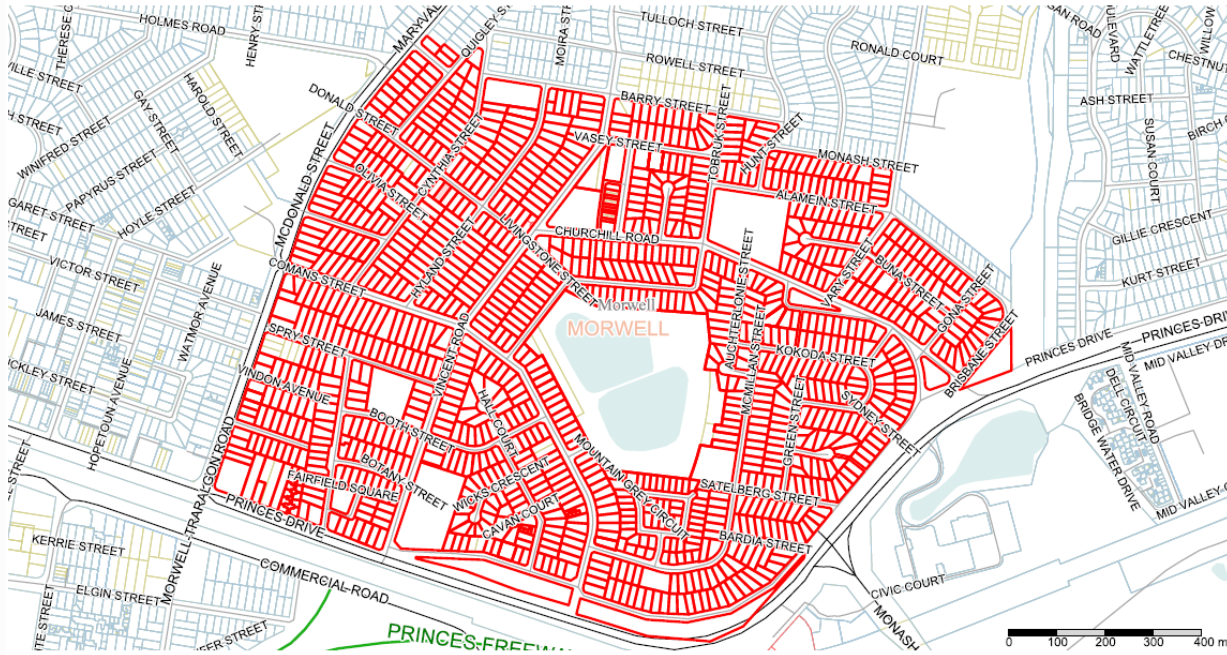
247 Online

Postcard survey

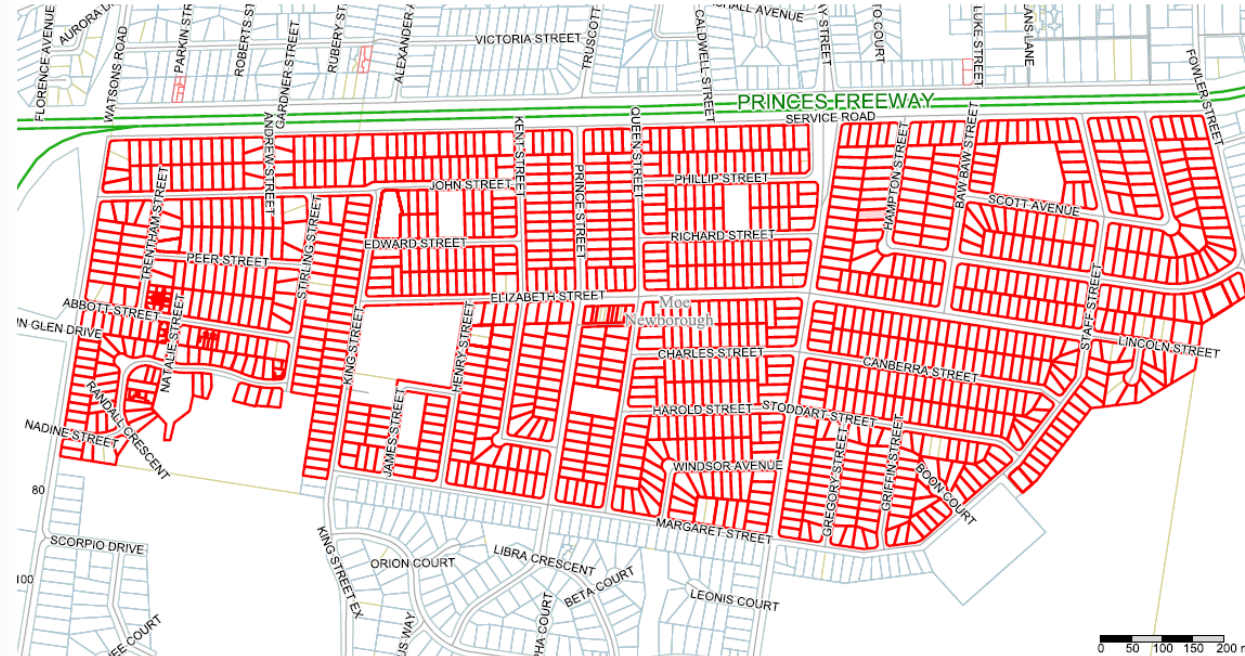
A short postcard survey was distributed through numerous Latrobe City organisational networks. This asked three open ended questions; What one change would make you feel more positive about your health?, What stops you from being happy and healthy? and What ideas do you have to improve the health and wellbeing of your community? A total of 203 surveys were completed with a 1.5% response rate, which was disappointing but perhaps indicated a community who were experiencing some survey fatigue due to a number of months of community engagements across other areas in the organisation. Despite this being the case this data offered some valuable insights into the community and helped in understanding their needs as well as gaining some innovative ideas.

Dwellings visited

Morwell

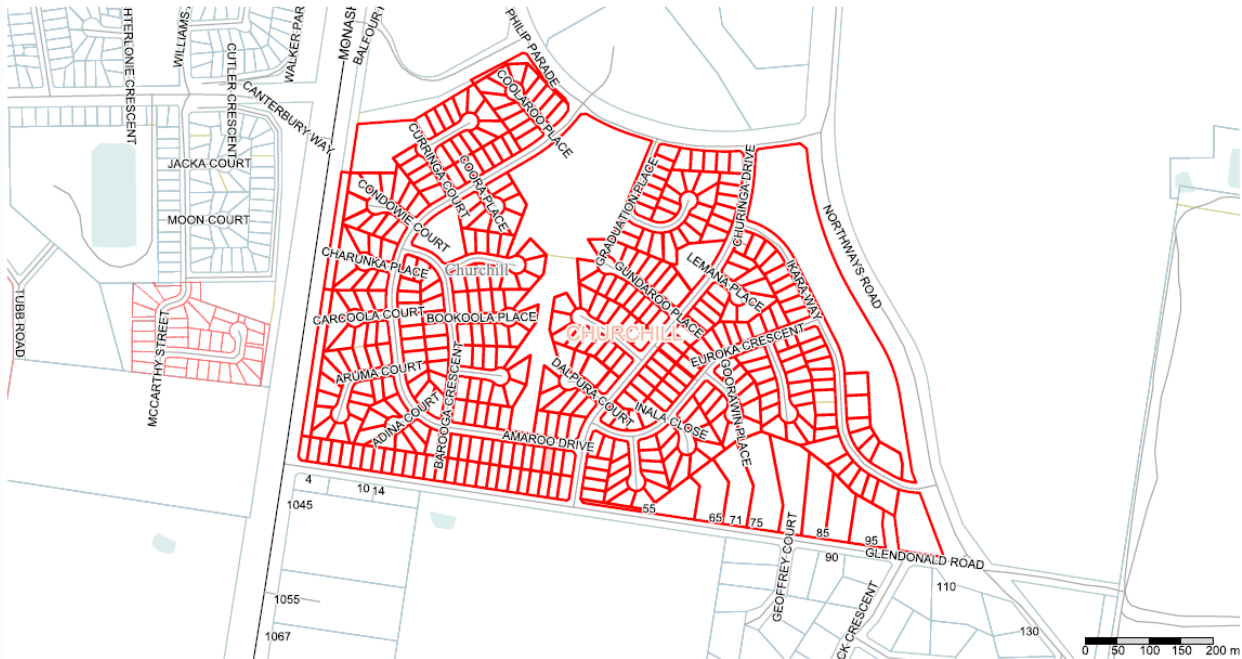


Moe

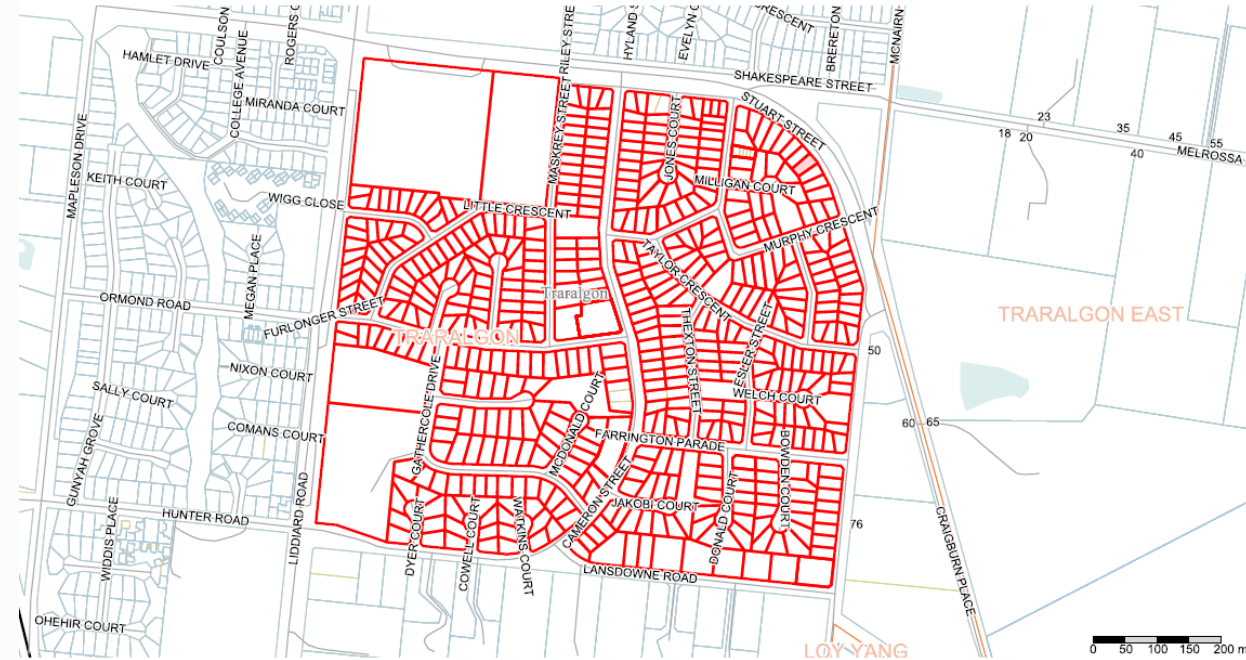


Dwellings visited

Churchill



Traralgon

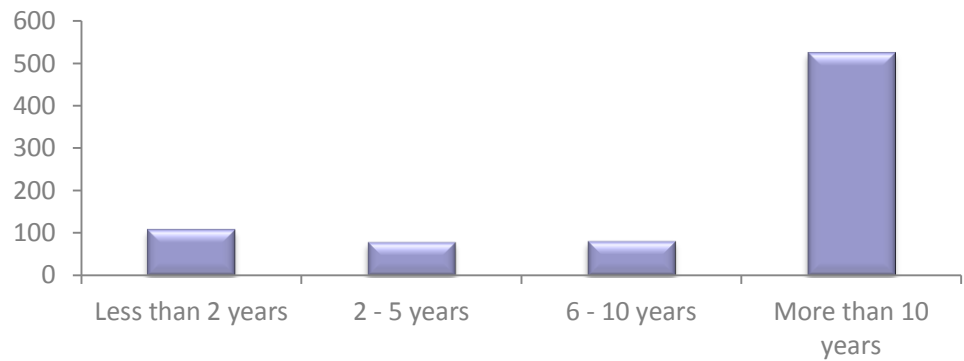


Where is home?

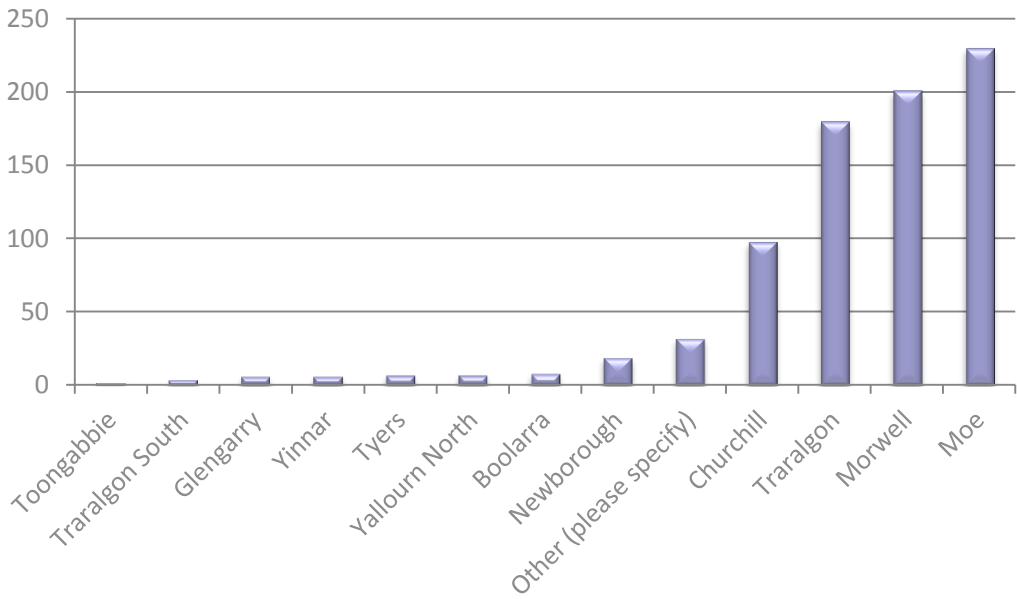
A snapshot

Survey data was collected across the Latrobe City municipality with a small proportion of recipients from Toongabbie, Traralgon South, Glengarry, Yinnar, Tyers, Yallourn North, Boolarra and Newborough in addition to the four neighbourhoods, where the door knocking surveys were conducted. Of the people who completed the survey 66% had lived in their communities for more than ten years and 76% had lived in the community more than 6 years, with a large number of people commenting that they have lived in their neighbourhoods their whole lives. Only 14% of people have been living in the area for less than two years, this indicated that people knew their communities very well and had some valuable insights and experiences to share.

How long have you lived in your community?



Where do you live?



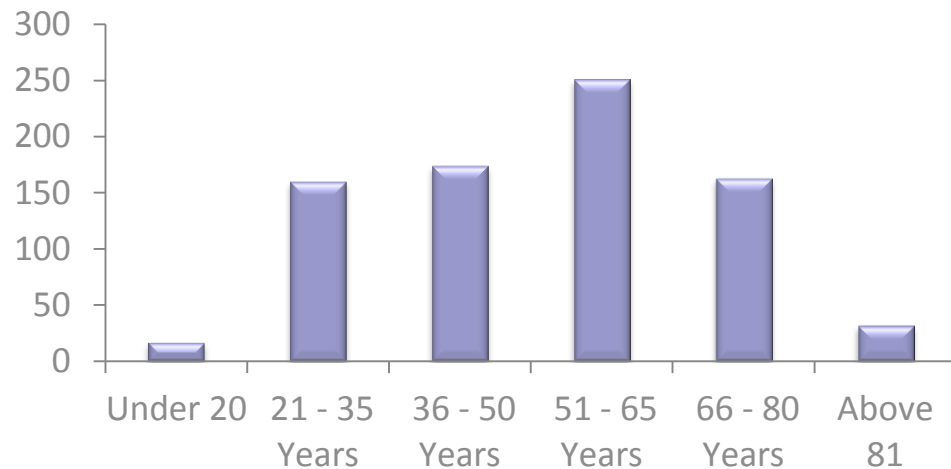
Who is our community?

A snapshot

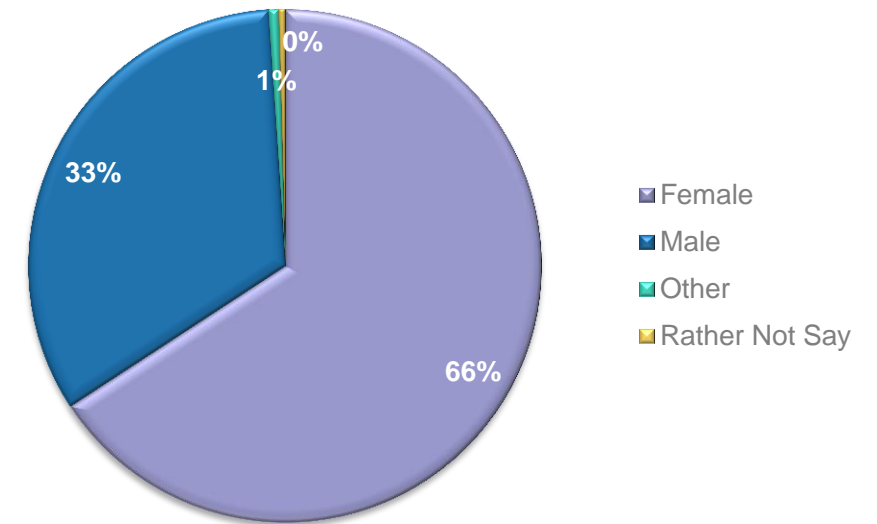
The statistics retrieved from the data showed the respondents were made up of 65% female and 33% male with 1% responding with they would rather not say. The majority of these recipients were aged between 21-80 years of age, 51-65 being the most representative group making up 31% of survey respondents, while 21-35, 51-65 and 66-88 groups each contributed around 20%.

It appeared that the under 25 years age group was potentially underrepresented in the full survey, however 30% of recipients who responded to the postcard survey were under 25 so there was some additional data that came from this group which ensured that they were better represented.

What age range do you fall into?

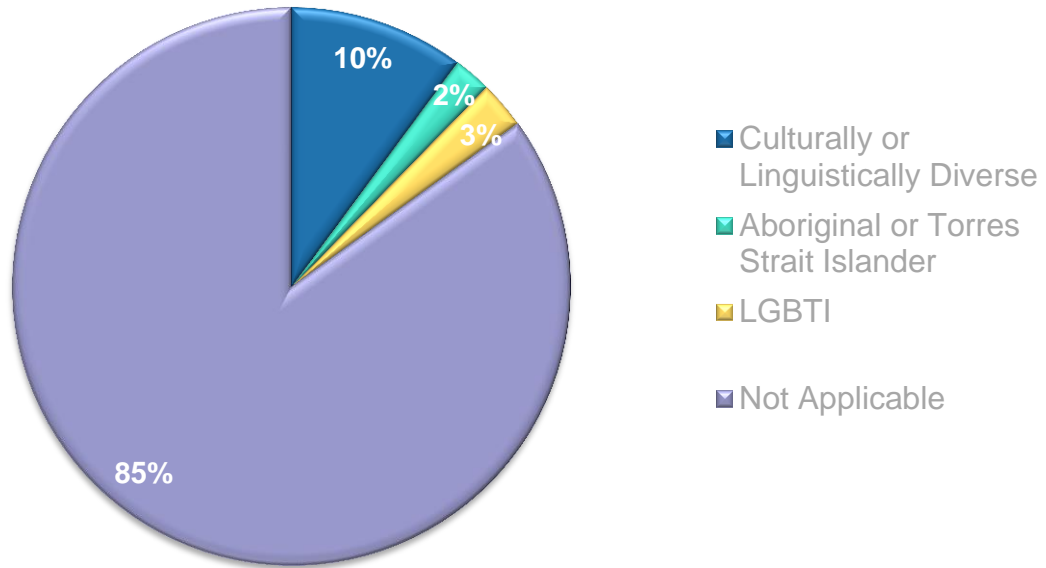


What gender do you identify with?



Who is our community?

Do you identify as any of the following: Culturally or Linguistically Diverse, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or LGBTI?



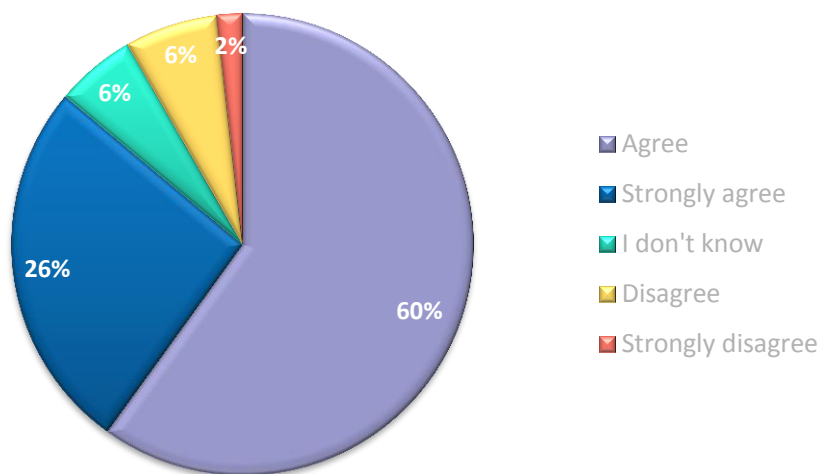
11% of individuals that responded identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and linguistically diverse.

3% of respondents identified as being a part of the LGBTI community.

Overall, I feel happy with my life

A snapshot

When asked if respondents felt happy with their lives 84% answered that they either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with this statement. This is an encouraging number and indicates a community of people who are happy and resilient, taking into consideration the challenges they have faced in recent years. Not surprisingly of the people who answered that they were happy with their lives they also answered positively to other questions which related to having good social connection, health, feeling safe and financial security. In comparison recipients who answered that they 'disagreed', 'strongly disagreed' or 'didn't know' to the question of whether they felt happy with their life, seemed to indicate they were more isolated from friends and family, felt unsafe or didn't feel they had employment security. It was shown that these respondents also felt as though they did not have adequate money to live comfortably.



What the community said

"I have a very blessed and lucky life"

"Family violence has had a big effect on my families life"

"My husband passed away 18 months ago, otherwise I would say I strongly agree."

"I would describe my state of being as content rather than happy"

"Happiness is a state of mind"

"Living in an area with no job prospects is depressing"

"Grieving for loved ones"

"A bit lonely"

Latrobe City staff were inspired by the community's resilience, particularly in cases where people were suffering from terminal illness, had lost loved ones or were experiencing other forms hardship but still answered that they were happy, showing a level of resilience and wellbeing which is encouraging to see.

Social And Community Connection

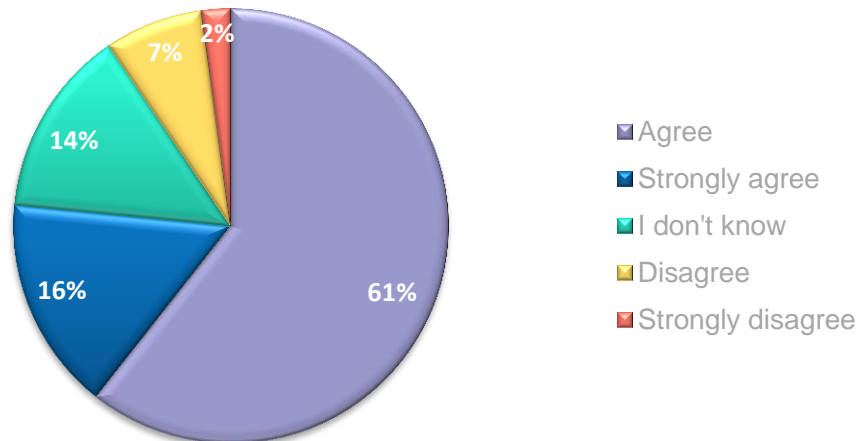


A snapshot

Of the recipients, 77% answered 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to the statement 'Overall, I feel like I belong' showing a strong sense of inclusion. However there were still 28% of people who felt that they 'disagreed', 'strongly disagreed' or answered that they didn't know, indicating that there is still a significant proportion of people who feel disconnected from their community/neighbourhood.

Of the respondents who commented that they did not have a 'good group of friends they see often and can rely on', 65% said that they had a good relationship with *family* and could rely on them. It was encouraging to see that a large majority of people felt they were in some way connected to a social group. However, there were still 7% of the total people surveyed who were neither connected to family or suggesting an area of the community which are not socially connected. This number would most likely be higher among people who were not surveyed due to their sense of disconnection.

Overall, I feel like I belong



What the community said

"Well I live & work here"

"I think you belong according to how much you are willing to contribute"

"I'm not in the footy club or soccer club - there is no community spirit here if this isn't the case"

"We have only been here a short time and just started to become more involved/getting to know our community"

"Volunteering in community groups gives me a sense of belonging"

"Yes I do. This is my town..."

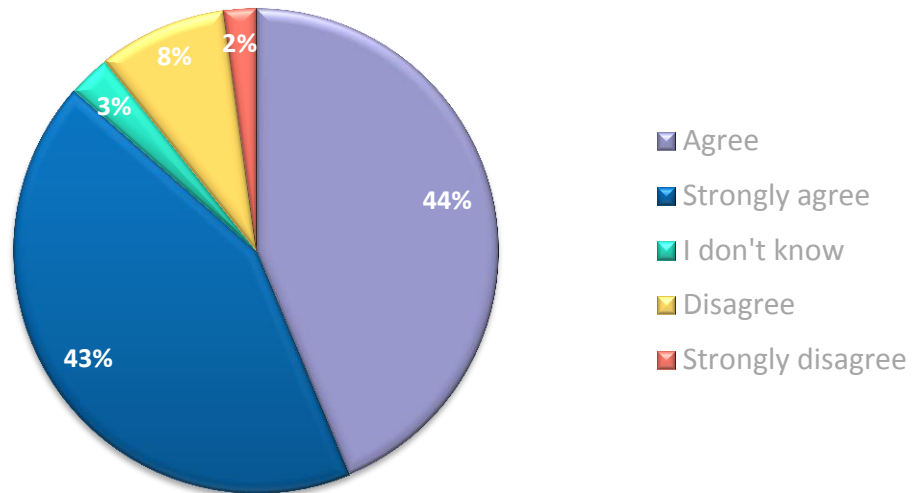
"I have developed a bond with some excellent people, but I miss my family ties that would add to a sense of belonging. I have a lot of relatives in the area but my children are not here. The friends I have made means a lot to me and there is a great 'sense' of community that I am tapping in to over time."

"Volunteer on three committees allows me to keep in touch with the local area"

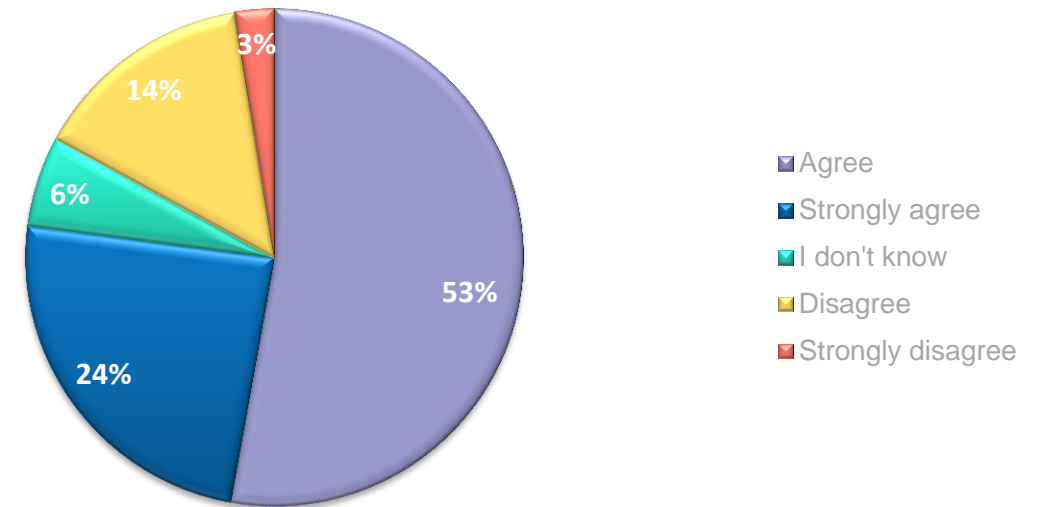
Social And Community Connection



Overall, I have a good relationship with my family I see them often and can rely on them



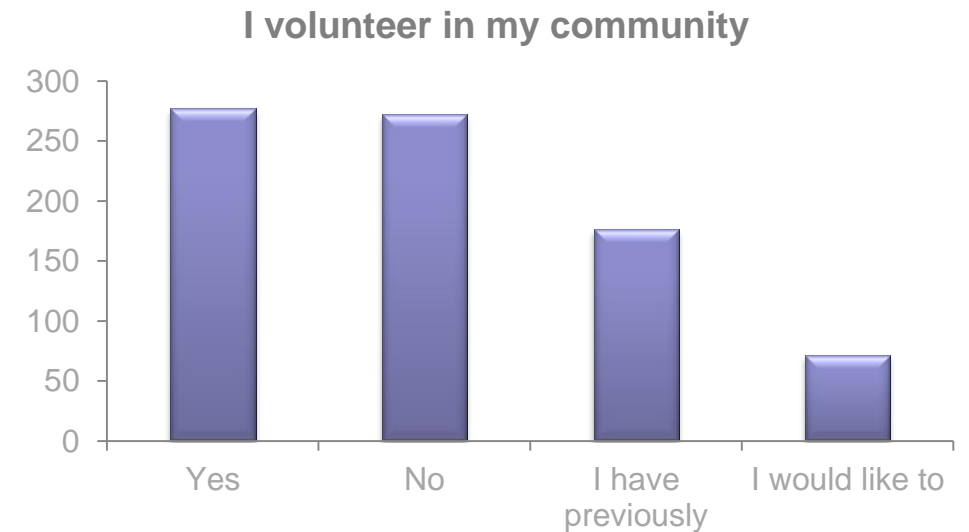
Overall, I have a good group of friends I see them often and can rely on them



Social And Community Connection

The community conversation cafes and workshops identified a number of the different areas of health and wellbeing are associated with, social and community connections. In the survey social connection was in the centre of peoples sense of the health and wellbeing; with people who felt connected commenting on feeling more resilient in times of hardship. Those who were isolated indicated that they were more likely to respond negatively if they felt that they did not have support or some form of social connection. It was recognised that if there was a network of people to contact in a crisis, their situation would be less likely to escalate or result in a negative health and wellbeing outcome.

In addition, volunteering showed to be very important for the social connection of residents in the community. In depth discussions throughout the community engagement processes showed that people want more informal/flexible volunteering opportunities that are able to be easily fit into their everyday lives. It was also prevalent in conversations that residents want to know how to offer assistance and help for others, they want to be able to find ways of connecting with people who required support. Community members want to be able to support residents who need assistance with getting to doctors appointments, helping with their grocery shopping and collection medication as an example. They want to be able to flexibly provide support and help when something happens and people don't have a support network surrounding them.



Feeling Safe

A snapshot

Of the total 68% of residents said they felt safe, this left 32% stating that they either 'didn't know', 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that they felt safe. This is a high proportion of the community to suggest that they feel vulnerable. In conversation with the community it came to light that people felt safe in their homes when they had taken measures to do so i.e. security lights, cameras, dogs or secure locks etc and numerous community members said they would not go out after dark alone or felt threatened when in the neighbourhood around certain groups or individuals. Street lighting was raised as an issue; either that there was not enough or the lights that were there were broken or not adequate. Another issue that affected residents feelings of safety was hoon driving with a significant number of people raising it as an issue in their areas. People commented that they would like for thier children to be able to walk to school by themselves but felt that they would not feel comfortable letting them do this.



What the community said

"I have secured gates etc I have security cameras"

"Fantastic neighbours"

"The kids that roam the streets and abuse you and cause damage do not make me feel safe anymore. Also feel unsafe for my kids at times."

"I live in a nice quiet street and feel totally safe walking to the local shop after dark"

"I don't feel safe walking down the street. I have to be on my guard all the time. To many undesirable people on the streets. On drugs and angry."

"Beautiful community"

"Safe at home"

"Most of the time but do not like to be out at night without company at night I feel uncomfortable"

"More police on streets at night – often noisy hoons which makes me feel unsure."

"Need better lighting on streets"

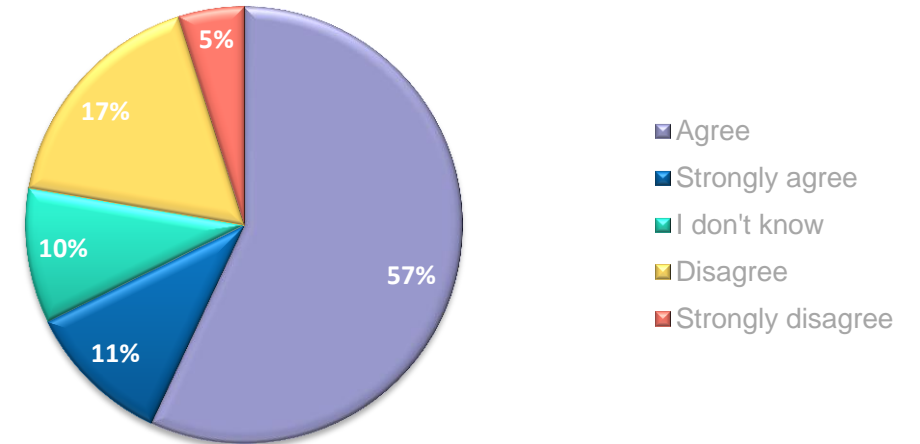
Feeling Safe

Conversations in the neighbourhoods during the door knock surveys highlighted that disruptive behaviour tended to be isolated to certain areas or specific houses and that drugs and alcohol were often seen to be related to these incidents.

On further exploration of this subject in the cafes and workshop,s people felt that safety was not simply limited to threat and discussed areas such as school crossings, footpath access as well as maintenance of footpaths for disabled and elderly community members. There was also a number of discussions around respectful relationships and how this was an integral part of people feeling safe in their communities. This topic carried through from early years to adulthood and included areas such as the work place, school, sporting clubs and in the home. It was felt that it was essential to teach people what respectful relationships entailed from an early age and that gender equity needed to be a crucial part of this discussion.



Overall, I feel safe in my community



Active Lifestyle



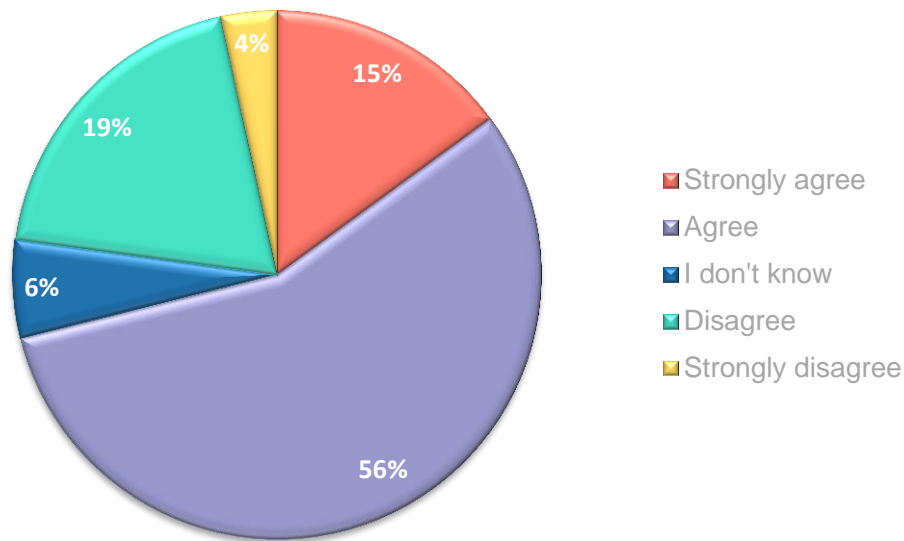
A snapshot

Of the recipients surveyed, 62% said that they felt they had a good level of physical health while 38% either 'didn't know', 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'.

Further discussions with the community highlighted that people tended to take part in informal recreational activities as opposed to organised sport or traditional ways of 'keeping fit'. People enjoyed walking their dogs, going to the park with their families, hiking and gardening in addition to more traditional forms such as involvement in organised sport or going to the gym. It became clear that the community wanted more facilities to enable them to do this e.g. hiking trails, amenities such as water fountains, off leash dog parks, public gym equipment, skate parks, community gardens etc

With regards to organised sport there were various conversations around the need for more funding for girls/womens sports, more recreational activities for children and young people including early years and the affordability of organised sport. Other concerns were raised around the cost of equipment, accessibility and transport. The community also communicated that they wanted more casual sporting activity options in non-competitive settings which were close to their neighbourhoods

Overall, I have a good level of physical health



What the community said

"Play golf and work. Volunteer"

"Provide more money for netball and other sports that are focused on girls/women not just football"

"Busyness prevents keeping regularly fit."

"I walk my dogs a regular"

"Lost 21 kilograms, stopped smoking and gave up sugar in 6 months. Going to gym."

"Do park run on most Saturdays"

"Gardening"

"Nudging 70 and still competing in active sport and Park Run, guess I'm reasonably fit."

Healthy Living

A snapshot

Conversations within the community identified concerns for individuals who were experiencing mental health issues including drug and alcohol abuse. Throughout the consultations residents raised potential solutions such as raising awareness and removing the stigma around mental health as well as providing affected individuals with the necessary tools and support such as rehabilitation services as an example.

Alcohol and drinking cultures within sporting clubs were raised as an area of concern, addressing the need for sporting clubs to participate in safe substance practice and leading the community in a change of drinking culture.

The necessity of providing children with tools to be resilient and teaching them skills to manage difficult situations and emotions including encouraging children to talk and ask for help and making services available in schools to support this.

Support for encouraging healthy choices and establishing systems to enable improved food security were raised. A number of community members highlighted the need for food establishments to provide healthier options for children. Community gardens and skills for planting and nurturing these were suggested, addressing the education behind healthy diets and teaching life skills.



What the community said

"If mental health was treated as an illness, not something that will 'go away'. If it was more widely accepted, I would feel so much better"

"Asthma, over weight, depression"

"Obesity is my main health issue...as my life settles I am addressing it."

"Fresher fruit and veggies in the supermarket, the quality is very poor"

"Having to travel to main towns for medical appointments"

"Get off the drugs"

"Health is more than body, it's emotional, mental, financial, physical & spiritual & everyone needs to work at improving"

"Disabled, smoke too much, eat poorly"

"Obesity is my main health issue...as my life settles I am addressing it."

"Encourage take away shops to sell good wholesome food instead of greasy food covered in salt"

"A stronger focus on community wellbeing that isn't just fitness but mental wellness"

Work And Educational Opportunities



A snapshot

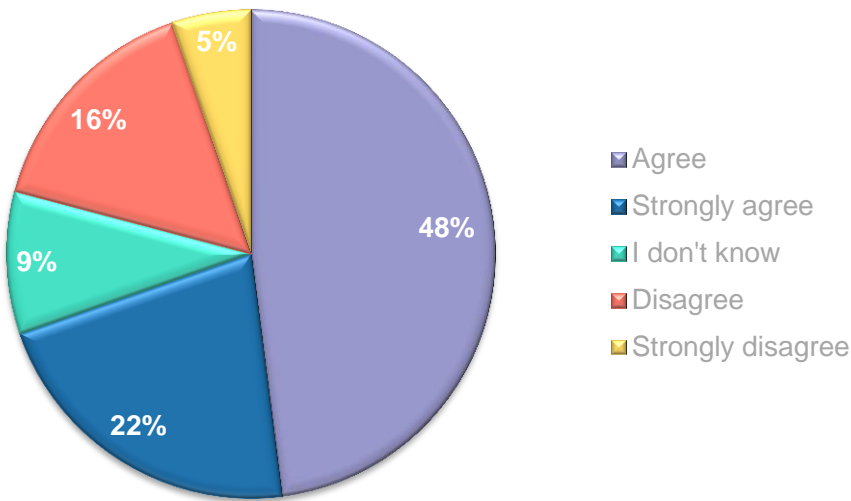
Of the recipients, 70% stated they had the skills required to get a job that they would like and 30% indicated that they do not or didn't know.

Discussions in the cafes and workshops indicated that the loss of industry in Latrobe City was a large contributor to this issue as well as lack of opportunities for education and training. The affordability of education and training was also a concern.

In addition, the need for training and support in areas such as resume writing, interview skills and career advice to match and develop skills for appropriate employment opportunities was identified. The community indicated the necessity for young people to gain work experience and that there was a need for more support at the other end of the spectrum with assistance for people exiting the work force as well as returning to work after periods of time away.

Also the need for re-skilling was raised with regards to new industry and projects coming into the area which the current workforce do not have the skills for.

Overall, I feel I have the skills needed to get a job that I would like



What the community said

"Not sure about my children's employment future locally though"

"I feel that because I am over 50 years, I am not encouraged to take on a completely new position that requires training"

"...better education and life skills for the young."

"...for the money put in to the Valley to go towards the young people with no education or employable skills."

"Very few jobs in the Valley that suit the skills which I have acquired during my working life...I believe age plays a big factor once you are over 50 years of age"

"Would like to work but need training in areas of craft and transferring skills"

"Need to go TAFE to do carpentry but very expensive"

"Skills to work, struggle in interviews due to social skills due to autism and Asperger's"

"Agree & disagree. I would have most of the skills needed. But not all to change careers"

"I have skills and very high education but not recognised in Australia so it is hard for me to get a job I would like in Latrobe Valley"

Financial security



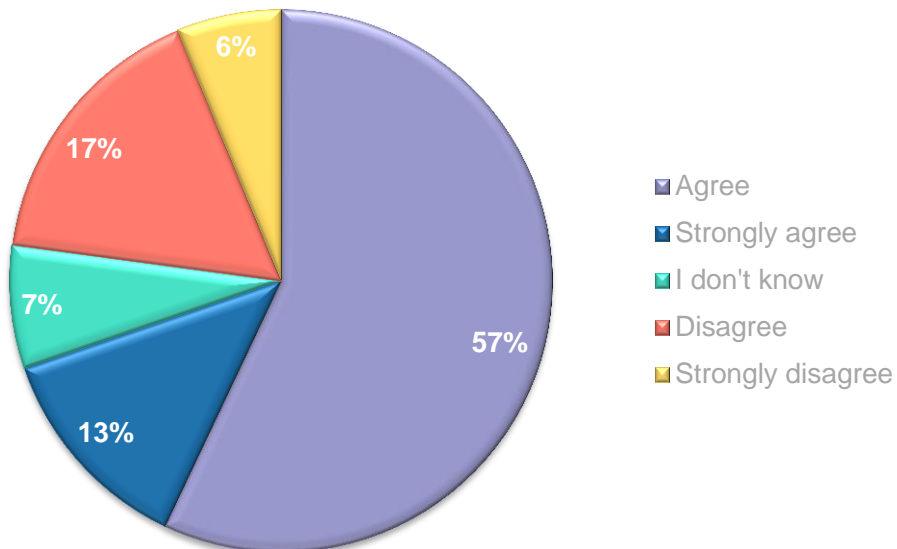
A snapshot

Of the total people surveyed, 70% stated that they have enough money to cover their daily living expenses and live comfortably while 30% indicated that they either were not able to cover their daily needs or didn't know.

It was highlighted that financial security affects people's ability to engage in the community with people commenting that they are more likely to stay house bound if they are under financial pressure. Different family situations lend themselves to different pressures; grandparents responsible for raising grandchildren, pensioners struggling to cover their expenses, individuals who are unable to afford a vehicle which affects their ability to gain employment, inability to afford training and education or travel to work.

The community suggested accessible education on financial skills, navigating centrelink and other government agencies as well as tax return support. A number of people commented on the pressure experienced in supporting their children and the impact this has on their lifestyle.

Overall, I feel I have enough money to cover my daily living expenses and live comfortably



What the community said

"Only survive on the pension because we own our house."

"Daily expenses are covered but not enough left to do other activities as a way of keeping healthy."

"All bills to be cheaper so I have more money to spend in the community and buy better food."

"I get just enough money to survive"

"Water, gas, electricity getting out of hand"

"Living on my own, so many bills to pay, my medications and daily living."

"I struggle financially on disability pension"

"I needed to go and see a heart specialist, but I couldn't because I can't afford \$450"

"Sole parent with three kids...that should explain it!!"

What do you like about your Neighbourhood?

What the community said

"There is a good sense of community."

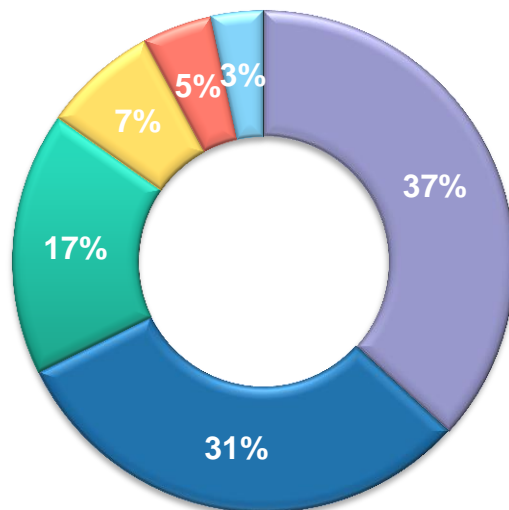
"Open and natural spaces. Manageable traffic. Access to Melbourne, coastal and mountain areas."

"Quiet and friendly."

"Close to all amenities and shops transport."

"Our neighbours are great so makes it a nice place to raise a family."

"I know a lot of the people, it is friendly. The kids can play with other kids."



Quiet & Safe



Community – neighbours, friends & family



Proximity – amenities, CBD, Melbourne, beach etc



Environment – country life, view & weather



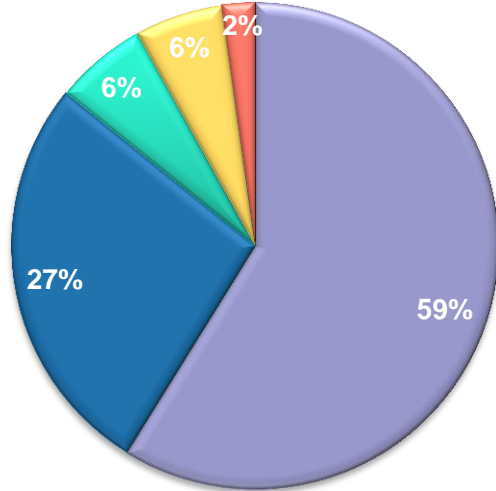
'It's Home'



Affordable - housing

What makes you happy?

What the community said



Social Connection



Recreation & Environment



Work, Education and Financial Security



Health



Feeling Safe

What ideas do you have on how we could make it easier for you to be happier and healthier?

What the community said

"Lowering prices of healthy food."

"Have a park equipped with exercise equipment, or a space where they could go to exercise with their friends."

"More outdoor music festivals in area please. More live bands. Bike/walking track in Hazelwood nth."

"...Shorter waiting times for health professionals. Sometimes you have to book a month or more in advance."

"More get fit programs. Activities for the older community."

"Off leash dog park that is fenced in with water"

"Community garden to promote/improve nutrition."

"Regular dances held in our hall. Regular social and fun events like visiting shows or activities for the mature aged."

Main themes



Social and community connection incl. volunteering



Recreation and environment



Work and educational opportunities incl. financial security



Drugs, alcohol and mental health



Violence and criminal behaviour i.e. family violence, assaults, theft and hooning

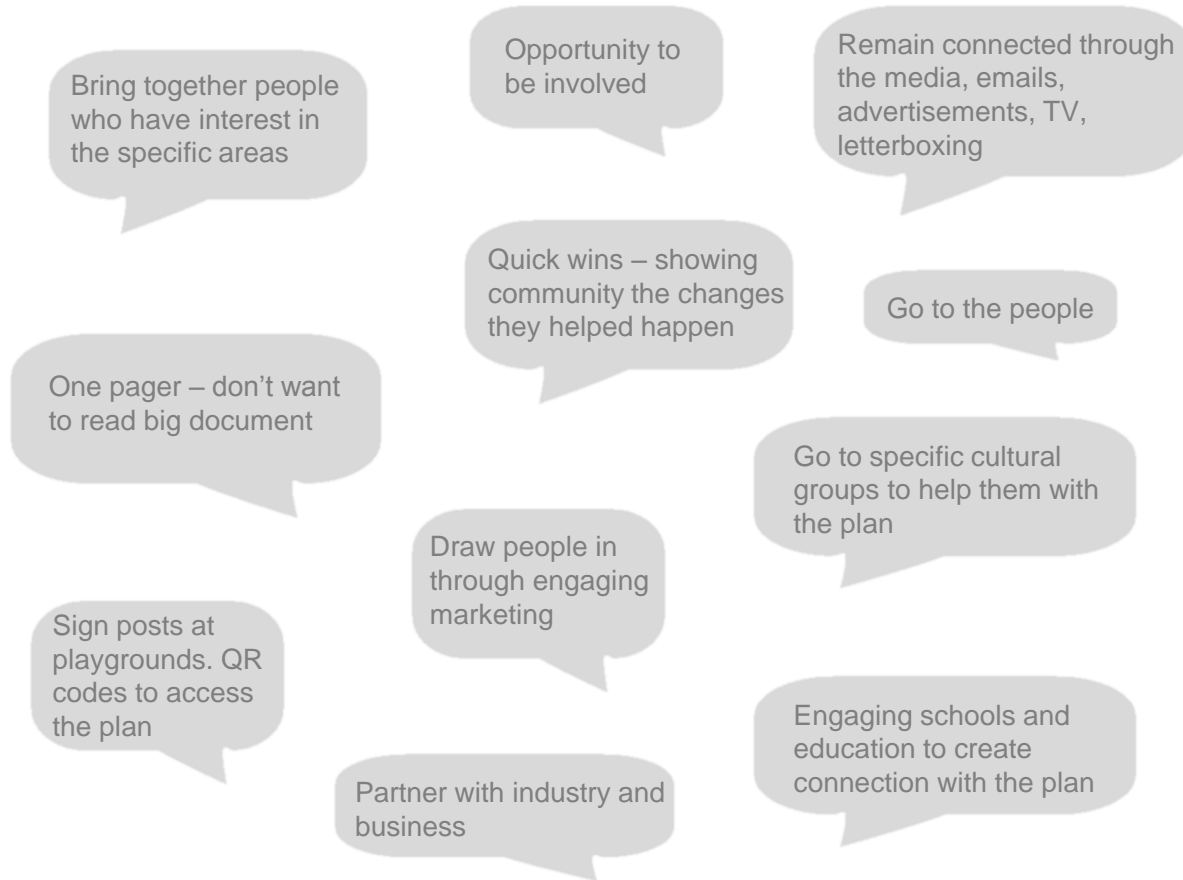


Enhancing opportunities for children and young people







The Plan



How do the community want to be engaged?



What should it look like?

-  *Progress updates and follow-up*
-  *Accessible, practical and useful*
-  *No jargon, no management talk – down to earth language*
-  *Consistent and accurate information with one point of contact*
-  *Simple, brief, to the point - 'What's in it for us?'*
-  *Community owned*