



CUMBERLAND
COUNCIL



Community Engagement Report 2016

Cumberland Community Strategic Plan 2017-27



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Introduction

Purpose

The 2016 Community Engagement Project was undertaken by Cumberland council to form a valid and strong foundation for its community and business planning documents and to ensure that the community's priorities for the future are the foundation of council's decision making processes.

Aside from a commitment to transparency and continual community engagement, council is bound to undertake such a project to inform its long term planning under the Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation. This legislative amendment enshrines in legislation an obligation on all NSW councils to have an integrated network planning and resourcing documents that are underpinned by quality community engagement data and a long term view of why and how it will provide services to the community in a sustainable way.

As a newly formed organisation and community, Cumberland has the opportunity and the resources to be an industry leader in this field and a commitment to first class engagement between council and the residents will underpin this. This report provides a full overview of the 2016 community engagement project that has been undertaken to inform the production of Cumberland's first Community Strategic Plan (CSP) as well as many other community and business planning documents.

Background

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) legislation was introduced in 2009 to streamline the approach all NSW councils have to their long term planning and reporting systems, and ensure that these systems are based in sound community engagement data that reflects the broad strategic direction that the community want for their future, summarised in the Vision.

The result is that each NSW council has a cascading network of planning documents that ensure that long term strategic community goals are transferred into more specific actions that council undertakes to contribute to the community goals for the future. This network of plans is designed so that ideally there is clear line of sight from council activities through to the community outcomes that contribute to residents seeing their vision for the future become a reality.

To provide greater transparency into councils' progress in providing services sustainably, each organisation reports on progress in implementing its business plans. Councils are required by the IP&R legislation to report on their Delivery Program every 6 months and to produce an Annual Report after every financial year showing progress with its actions as well as supporting statutory information.

At the end of each four year Delivery Program cycle and political term, council produces an End of Term Report that shows the community's progress towards or away from their Vision over that time. The End of Term Report is supported by updated community engagement against the baselines set in the Community Strategic Plan, and this data is used as the bases for the revision of the CSP after the election of a new political body.

Key methods

This community engagement program was based on the experience of all former councils that joined to create Cumberland, and the knowledge that special efforts would be required to make sure some of our hardest to reach groups of people had the opportunity to set out their priorities for the future. This was achieved by recognising obstacles in the past, outlining possible barriers for people such as language or other demographic attributes for being hard to engage, as well as ensuring that the results of the people engaged broadly reflected our unique and diverse community of different backgrounds and cultures.

This community engagement project was undertaken within the parameters of the Cumberland Interim Engagement Strategy and recognised the IAP2¹ core principles of public participation. These core values were included in Cumberland's community engagement strategy and for this project:

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers

4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input will affect the decision.

To guarantee a thorough and sound data set of community engagement information and a meaningful conversation with the community, council undertook a multi-faceted approach utilising the skills expert staff and the use of third party resources where there were gaps in our knowledge or experience. The main projects that formed the overall community engagement program were:

- A council designed online survey
- Town Hall meetings facilitated by staff (with interpreter services)
- A youth engagement project in schools
- A third party-facilitated community satisfaction survey
- Third party-facilitated focus groups with community members
- A third party-facilitated business survey
- Engagement sessions targeting council staff

This approach has provided council with a comprehensive and credible base for it to set the strategic policy direction for the next 10 years and guide the resourcing and provision of its services to the community. This report constitutes the analysis and results of the 2016 Community Engagement process for the formation of the first Cumberland Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and will be repeated at the end of the first Cumberland Council political term for the production of an End of Term report and revision of the CSP.

This report is structured to show each individual project undertaken during the 2016 engagement project and the method, response and analysis of each component. Lastly there is a summary of findings and an outline of lessons learnt during the project which will be used to influence the repeat of this exercise for the revision of the Cumberland Community Strategic Plan at the end of the first political term of council.

¹ International Association for Public Participation, Community Engagement Resources for Local Government, IAP2 Core Values of Public Participation

Online survey – 762 responses

Method

During September 2016 an online survey was conducted by council to gather the priorities and focus areas for the community over the next 10 years. The results of the survey will be used to inform the first Cumberland Community Strategic Plan and supporting Delivery Program.

Participants were asked to answer broad questions about their Vision for the area and community for the future, program and service areas for council focus, and general priorities for Cumberland. To support the analysis, the participants were also asked to answer basic demographic questions around age, gender, cultural and language backgrounds.

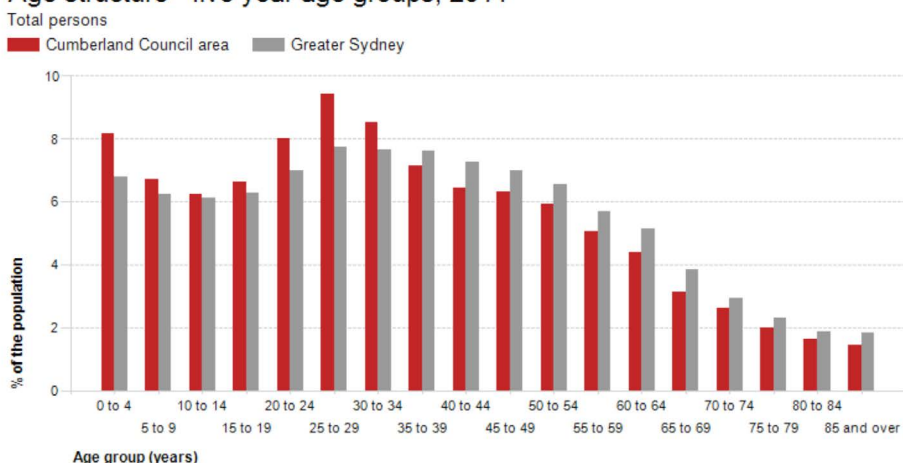
The Survey was promoted heavily through council advertising, community groups and community events which resulted in over 750 responses, which exceeded expectations. In addition to promoting the survey, council staff also conducted surveys on the street in Merrylands, Granville, Guildford, Lidcombe, Auburn, Regents Park, and at council events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and Pet Fest.

Response

Just over 90% of respondents lived, worked or studied in Cumberland, which was a better than expected result, considering many of the events the survey was promoted in attract visitors from all over Sydney. People who visited the area frequently for other reasons were also encouraged to complete the survey, to take into account their unique viewpoint and interests as a visitor to Cumberland.

A breakdown of these respondents is presented in the chart below.

Age structure - five year age groups, 2011



Of the 18% of people who responded as 'other' there were:

- People who work in Cumberland.
- Residents just outside the council boundaries who conduct business and frequently visit Cumberland.
- Service providers.

The age breakdown of respondents was well spread out through the age brackets, with 4 out of 5 groups having around 20% of the respondents. However, only 6% of respondents were under 18 which did not reflect the age demographics of the Cumberland area.

62% of respondents were Female and 38% Male. This was slightly outside the target of a 50/50 split which would have more accurately represented the demographics of the community. However, this was addressed in the independent telephone

survey conducted alongside this community survey. The Independent telephone survey achieved an exact 50/50 split between male and female respondents, and produced similar results to this survey in terms of community priorities.

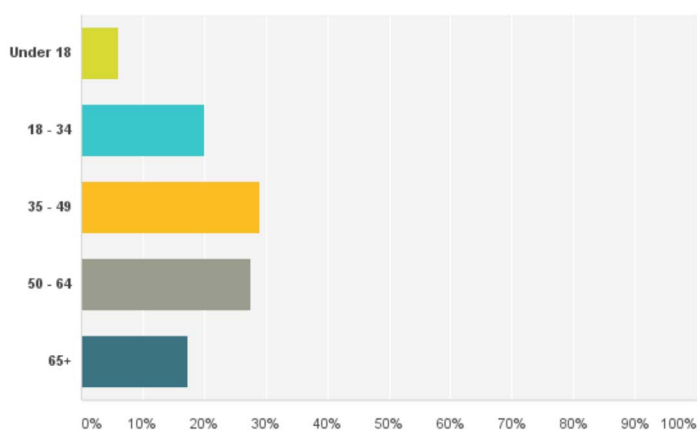
84% of respondents were born in Australia and 41% speak another language other than English at home. The main languages other than English spoken at home by participants included:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • Cantonese | • Arabic |
| • Hindi | • Italian |
| • Nepali | • Tongan |
| • Mandarin | • Urdu |
| • Tamil | • Vietnamese |

Council responded to the demographic differences by engaging with a number of schools in a specially designed engagement program for young people.

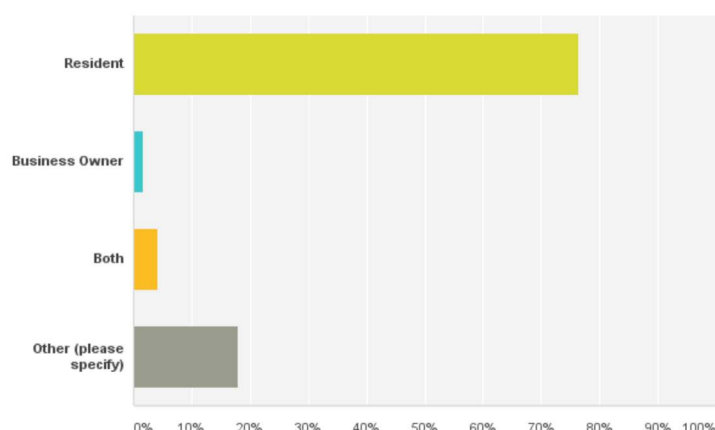
Q7 What is your age?

Answered: 756 Skipped: 6



Q2 Are you a?

Answered: 753 Skipped: 9



Key results

1. In Your Opinion, what are the main priorities for the Cumberland area over the next 10 years?
- When asked what their main priorities for the Cumberland Area over the next 10 years are, just under 20% of respondents mentioned a sense of community. Other concerns were parking, development control and access to services. Some secondary priorities (with about 10% of respondents mentioning them) were youth services, access to education and jobs, and cleanliness. The top 10 priorities from the 762 respondents were:
- 1. Sense of community
 - 2. Parking availability
 - 3. Development control
 - 4. Access to services
 - 5. The role of council in the community and transparent decision making
 - 6. Youth services
 - 7. Access to education and employment
 - 8. Cleanliness
 - 9. Quality of council programs
 - 10. Access to public transport

2. What are the Main Services / Programs council should focus on providing over the next 10 years?
- When asked about the provision of services and programs by council, there was a heavy focus on community service programs, open space and infrastructure. When respondents mentioned community services in their comments, they emphasised programs that both service community needs as well as help bring the community together across cultural lines. The main services

- and programs the respondents wanted council to focus on were:
- 1. Community services and programs
 - 2. Parks and open space
 - 3. Road and street infrastructure
 - 4. Employment services
 - 5. Education services
 - 6. Street cleanliness and trees in streets
 - 7. Employment services
 - 8. Public transport access
 - 9. Services for older people
 - 10. Programs with a focus on physical and mental health.

3. Can you describe your long-term vision for Cumberland?
- In this question, respondents were asked to describe their Vision for the Cumberland area and describe the type of place they would like it to be in the future. Again, a sense of community was very important, as were concepts of liveability, safety, cultural diversity and cleanliness. Participants were asked to use words, statements or phrases that best describe the type of place they would like Cumberland to be. The top 10 responses categorised by council included:
- 1. Community
 - 2. Supported by a good council
 - 3. A great place to live
 - 4. Safe
 - 5. High quality services
 - 6. Celebrating cultural diversity
 - 7. Great parks
 - 8. Clean
 - 9. Connected
 - 10. Attractive green and urban spaces

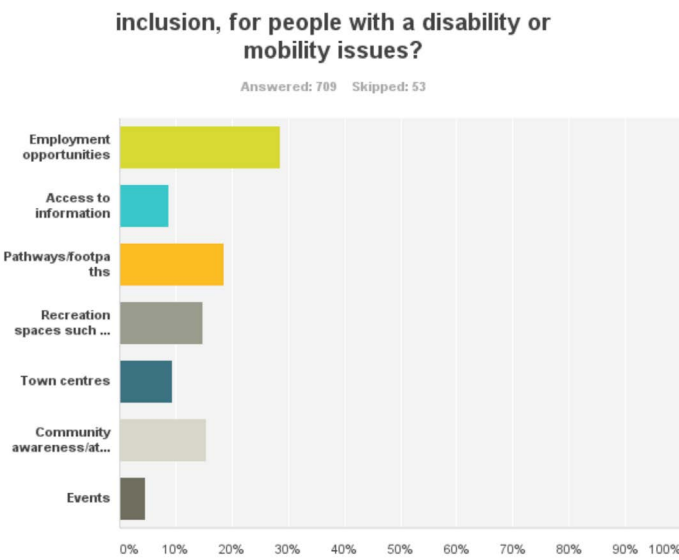
4. Which of these do you feel council needs to focus on in relation to access and inclusion for people with a disability or mobility issue?
- Council asked this question with a consideration of the 5.3%² Cumberland residents who identify as requiring assistance due to a disability. This information will help ensure that council services are targeting the right priority areas for these people and that all aspects of disability services are considered in decision making.

As shown in the adjoining graph, there was a high level of focus across all the areas presented, with employment opportunities the highest priority, followed by pathways and footpaths, community awareness and recreation spaces.

Summary

The data from this survey and the 762 participants has formed an important foundation piece for Cumberland's first Community Strategic Plan. This component of the engagement project has seen the highest response from participants will clear and concise data for analysis.

² Profile i.d data based on 2011 Census, <http://profile.id.com.au/cumberland/assistance>.



Community forums

Method

During September and October 2016, council facilitated 4 community forums spread evenly across the Local Government Area where residents could voice, discuss, prioritise and record their long term vision for Cumberland, as well as their specific priorities for the area and community over the next 10+ years. The forums were attended by key community engagement staff as well as the council's Administrator, Mr Viv May, who was on hand to answer questions and help initiate the discussion segments. In addition, multilingual staff were present to help ensure the inclusion of all members of Cumberland's diverse community.

The aim of this exercise was to gather the broad priorities the community had for the future, and find trends or strong shared ideas. In addition, this project offered a chance to form the broad priority areas for the other engagement activities to use and confirm in smaller, more focussed groups and activities.

After a brief introduction from the Administrator the sessions followed the following structure:

1. Discussion of specific priority issues

During this activity, the "round table" groups of participants voiced and discussed some of the key issues they thought were important to Cumberland over the long term. Participants discussed what they loved about the area already, and outcomes they thought would be important to Cumberland becoming a better place in the future. As they discussed the issues as a group, individuals noted down their thoughts onto post-it-notes and stuck them onto a large piece of paper divided into four broad themes representing the quadruple bottom line³. This setup was used so that all aspects of sustainability were considered equally, as well as to help record and analyse the data within the context of the quadruple bottom line and how it would feed into the Community Strategic Plan.

2. Finding the top issues and identifying strong trends

This activity required participants to reflect on all the issues discussed during the first task and identify priority areas they agreed with. This exercise resulted in many key trends identified, and consolidation of

FORUM	PARTICIPATION
Tuesday 13 September 2016, 6pm - 8pm Auburn Town Hall, 1 Susan Street, Auburn.	57
Thursday 22 September, 10am – 12pm The Holroyd Centre, 17 Miller St, Merrylands.	71
Wednesday 28 September, 12pm – 2pm Granville Town Hall, 10 Carlton St, Granville.	37
Thursday 29 September, 6pm – 8pm Allan G Ezzy Community Centre (Hall), 1 Newport St, Pemulwuy.	11
TOTAL	176

similar ideas into one clear community outcome agreed on by the group. The activity involved participants reviewing the post-it-note ideas from the first activity and using stickers to indicate their agreement with the priority idea. Participants were instructed to prioritise one idea in each quadrant to ensure equal weighting across all four components of the quadruple bottom line. This generally resulted in agreement for 1 or 2 idea in each section above all others. Where similar worded ideas were in the same quadrant they were consolidated into one note.

3. How council can contribute to the key community outcomes identified

Following on from the first 2 activities the groups were then asked to think about how council could respond to the outcomes they had identified. The groups took 4 of the top priorities agreed upon in the second task and then noted down how council could either respond through policy, services and projects, or by advocating on behalf of the community where council couldn't address or contribute to the outcome on its own.

4. Visioning Exercise

To help form the community's broad vision for the future, participants were asked to note words, phrases, statements or pictures on a card that represented the type of place they would like Cumberland to be in the future. Participants did not have to discuss these ideas or record them publicly, although some participants agreed to take a photo with their vision card for inclusion in council's engagement documentation in the future.

Response

Overall the sessions were well attended by community members and community partner representatives, with a total of 176 participants over the 4 forums. Specifically the attendance is shown in the table above.

This represented a good outcome for council because there was good attendance with great input from the attendees, and a positive staff to participant ratio, which allowed for free and informed discussion and coordinated facilitation of the sessions.

The forums were attended by residents from all over the Cumberland LGA by people from a range of cultural backgrounds. Varied levels of accessibility and disability were catered for, and multilingual staff attended the sessions where required. Representatives from community groups, schools, local business and State Government also attended.

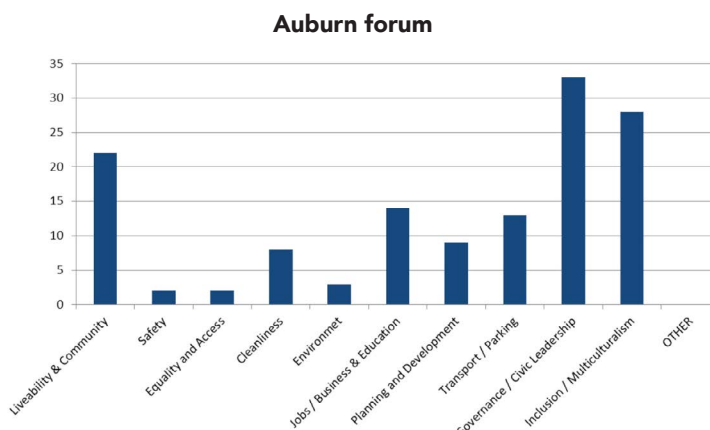
These forums were intentionally placed throughout the new Cumberland LGA to maximise the equity of access for all residents to attend. In addition to this the times of the sessions were varied between day sessions and evening sessions so that residents would have opportunities to attend during work hours or after hours. It is also important to note that residents from any suburb within the LGA could attend any session. For example some Granville residents attended the Pemulwuy evening session due to work commitments. While the data was recorded separately for each session there was no relation to where residents lived, and this was not relevant to the data analysis.

³ Social, Environmental, Economic and Civic Leadership quadrants of sustainability.
<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/framework/addressing-quadruple-bottom-line>.

Key results

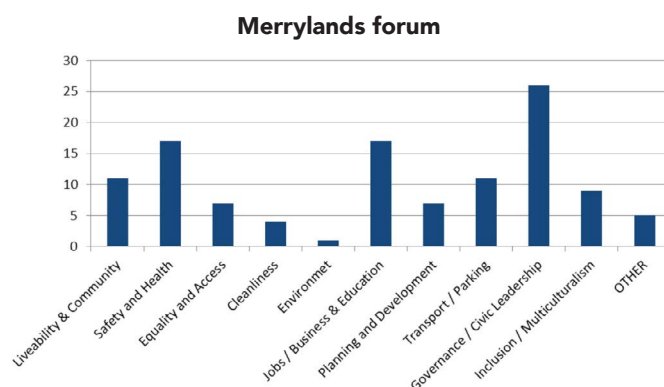
Auburn forum

In the Forum held in the Auburn Town Hall the issues of civic leadership, inclusion, multiculturalism, liveability and communities were the strongest reoccurring themes. Issues of transport, parking, planning and development, jobs and business, education and cleanliness were also significant issues for the attendees of the session. Priorities identified in this engagement process for the Auburn area broadly reflect the uniqueness of the community and the area. Auburn's multicultural community and recent events with the former Auburn City councillors clearly dominated the discussion of the participants. Auburn's above average unemployment rate was reflected through the identification of jobs and local business as a priority. On a positive note, participants indicated that in some ways the area was a very liveable place with a good sense of community, but that it could be improved with focus in the long term planning for the new Cumberland Council.



Merrylands forum

The main issues from the Merrylands session shared many similarities with the participants of the Auburn Forum, with some differences. The top priority areas differed slightly, being civic leadership, jobs, local business, education, safety and health. Issues of liveability and community were again significant, as was transport and parking, planning and development. Cleanliness was slightly less of an issue for these participants; however issues of equality and accessibility were more highly prioritised.



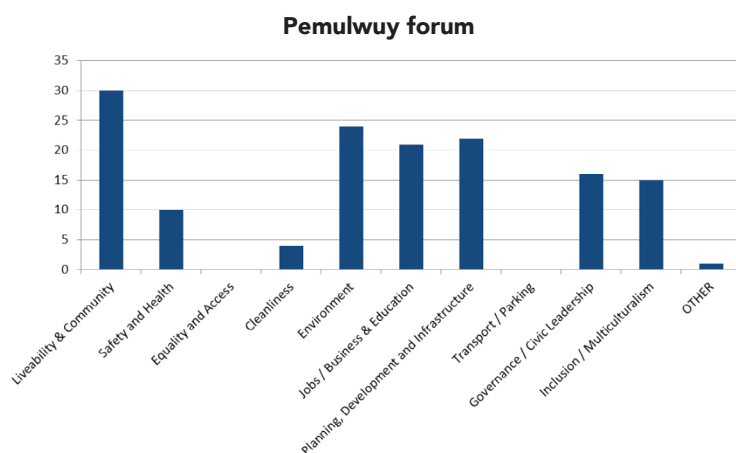
Pemulwuy forum

As shown in the graphical data, 6 main priority areas dominated the discussion of this group. In order of priority they were:

- Liveability and community
- Environment
- Jobs, business and education
- Planning, development and infrastructure
- Governance and civic leadership
- Inclusion and multiculturalism.

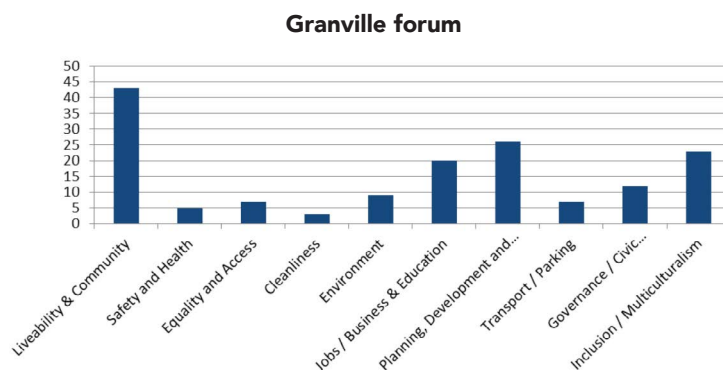
The significant differences in this session, compared to the Auburn and Merrylands Forums were the increase in comments related to environmental sustainability and natural areas. Cleanliness and waste management was also less important, as were concepts of equity and accessibility.

It is important to note that only 11 participants attended the Pemulwuy session, so from a statistical perspective, the results could be less representative than the sessions with many more participants. Despite this, the results are still considered to have been helpful in obtaining the overall the overall view of the community.



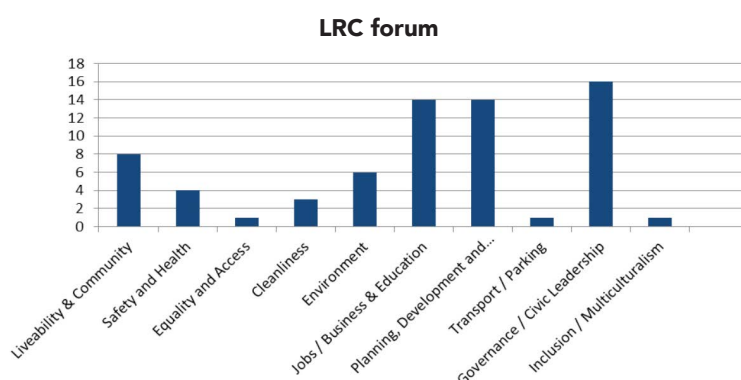
Granville forum

The Granville forum results showed a larger degree of agreement on one top priority than some of the other forums, with liveability and community concerns easily the top priority, followed by planning and development as the second highest priority, and inclusion / multiculturalism the third highest. This was an important forum due to the newly acquired areas it targeted, and the inclusive message that it brought. There was great attendance and high quality discussions had which resulted in excellent data for the Community Strategic Plan. An interesting point of difference with this forum was the relative lack of importance put on governance and civic leadership compared to the forums held elsewhere in the Local Government Area. It would be reasonable to assume this is due the previous Parramatta Council being relatively stable.



LRC forum

This forum was held with council's Local Representative Committee which advises the Administrator of community views on important issues. The overwhelmingly most important issues for this group were governance and civic leadership. This was closely followed by jobs, business development and education as well as broad issues of planning, development and infrastructure. Liveability and community was again a significant issue, as were environmental issues. Significant differences from the other sessions were the lack of importance placed on transport, parking, inclusion and multiculturalism. The role of this committee and the unique understanding its members have of the processes of local government may have played a role in the emergence of governance as such a strong priority for Cumberland's future.



My Vision for Cumberland

In the Visioning exercise participants were asked to describe their long term vision for the community and the area. As a result of the broad vision question, the results were varied.

In summary, participants want Cumberland to be a better place to live. This applied to Cumberland as a place to live, work, or visit. Participants identified that they want Cumberland to have a proper sense of belonging, a place people can identify with as their home.

Vision statements in their entirety are contained in the appendices to this document. Encouragingly the Visioning exercise results were consistent across all forums and generally related to some sense of pride in the area and the community, and Cumberland being a better place to live with a stronger identity as great place to call home.



Community satisfaction survey

Method

In this part of the overall consultation project council sought to shift the focus from broad future community priorities to current states of satisfaction with council services as well as attitudes towards future services and facilities of council. For this task, Micromex Research was engaged who helped design the questionnaire, advised on sample size and conducted interviews and data analysis on behalf of council.

In total 603 residents of Cumberland were interviewed most of which were selected at random using the electronic White Pages. This sample size provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4% at 95% confidence and the sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the most recent (2011) Census survey data to match the demographics of the Cumberland Local Government Area. The sample included calls to landlines and landlines through number harvesting via face-to-face interceptions at shopping centres and train stations throughout the LGA.

Response

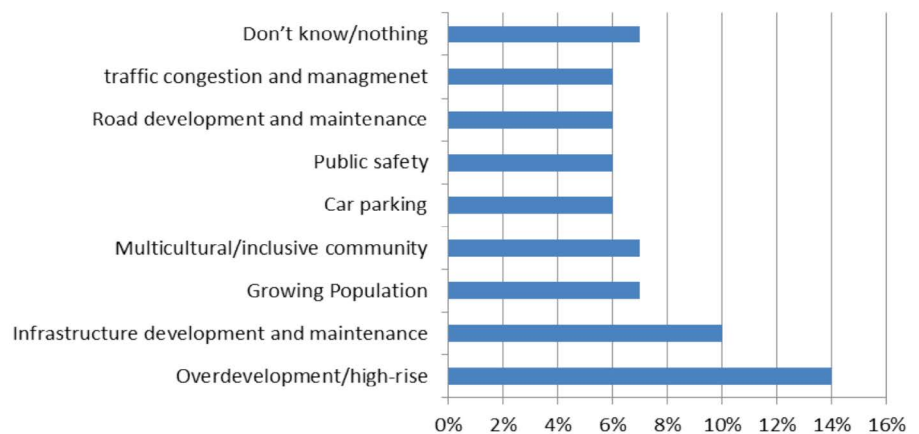
The response was split 50/50 over males and females and with an age breakdown that reflects our young population of families, although respondents were required to state that they were over the age of 18. 71% of respondents were ratepayers and 52% have lived in what is now the Cumberland LGA for over 20 years. 10% of respondents were unemployed when surveyed which reflects the community's unemployment rate. 39% of residents surveyed were born overseas and 50% speak another language other than English. The survey sample was appropriately weighted to closely reflect the demographics of the new Cumberland community.

Key results

- 84% of participants were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the performance of council with a mean rating on par with other councils across NSW.
- Participants believed the key challenges facing the Cumberland LGA in the next 10 years are 'overdevelopment/high-rises' and 'infrastructure development and maintenance'. Both of these challenges reflect our rapidly growing population and increasing pressure on population density and use of infrastructure and services to meet ever growing demands.



Key Challenges Facing Cumberland



- As shown the other top challenges facing the community closely mirror the priority results from the Community Forum project.
- Overall, 74% of participants were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the level of communication council currently has with the community.
- The 10 top service areas for importance as rated by residents were:
 1. Household garbage collection
 2. Community safety
 3. Traffic management and road safety
 4. Maintaining local roads
 5. Access to public transport
 6. Removal of illegally dumped rubbish
 7. Encouraging recycling
 8. Maintaining footpaths
 9. Long term planning for council area
 10. Protecting the natural environment

- The top 10 areas for satisfaction were:
 1. Household garbage collection
 2. Library services
 3. Encouraging recycling
 4. Maintenance of local parks and playgrounds
 5. Community centres and facilities
 6. Availability and maintenance of sporting ovals, grounds and facilities
 7. Flood management
 8. Access to public transport
 9. Festival and events programs
 10. Cycleways

- The bottom 10 areas of satisfaction were:
 1. Availability of public car parking
 2. Building heights in town centres
 3. Development applications and construction certificates
 4. Opportunities to participate in council's decision making process
 5. Protection of low rise residential areas
 6. Programs and support for newly arrived and migrant communities
 7. CCTV and safe public spaces
 8. Environmental education programs
 9. Long term planning for the council area
 10. Provision of council information to the community

Summary

This survey was a highly accurate and statistically valid sample of the priorities and important services to the residents of Cumberland. This survey will be repeated in some form every year so that council can continually track progress in satisfaction levels with its services. This will also provide an opportunity for council to do regular audits of the importance of its services, and to appropriately provide resources to the right areas.

Youth survey

Method

In consideration of Cumberland's uniquely young demographics there was a focus on engaging young people across the LGA. This was achieved in part by a targeted youth consultation project which gathered key data about young people's priorities for the future, as well as informing council's new Youth Strategy.

The survey and youth-led engagement engaged a total of 714 young people, as well as the inclusion of young people who attended focus group sessions.

Response

In the survey, a total of 714 young people between the ages of 12 and 24 were consulted across all suburbs in the Cumberland LGA.

Slightly more males than females responded to the consultation and the participants spoke a wide range of languages.

Key results

The young people engaged in this survey had a wide range of priorities for the local areas. The top 5 responses were:

1. Employment
2. Education / training
3. Sport and fitness programs
4. Youth events
5. Youth groups / programs

The survey also asked young people what the types of spaces and places they would like to see in the local area. The top 5 responses were:

1. Parks
2. Youth centres
3. Sportsgrounds
4. Safe areas
5. Basketball courts

Respondents were also asked what the most important thing that council could do to support young people in Cumberland. Most (427 responses) answered that programs aimed at young people was the most important thing council could do.

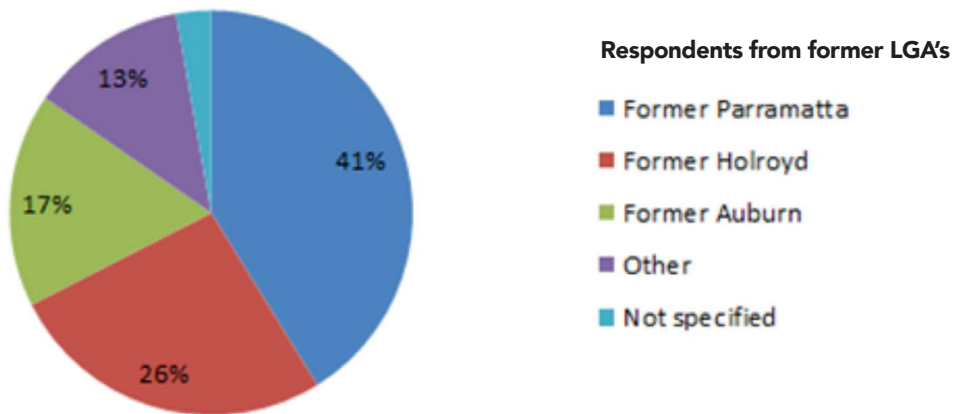
These responses included:

- Youth groups / programs
- Education / training
- Provide jobs
- Sport / fitness programs
- Community and youth events
- Financial support / scholarships

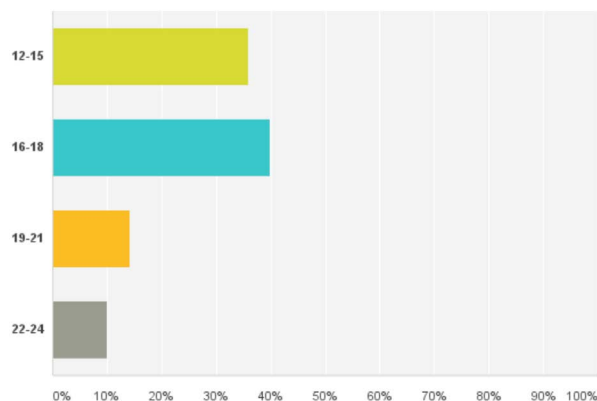
- Counselling / mental health support
- Employment support, including work experience
- Study support
- Health services
- Cheap transport
- Better promotion of programs
- Address youth homelessness

Summary

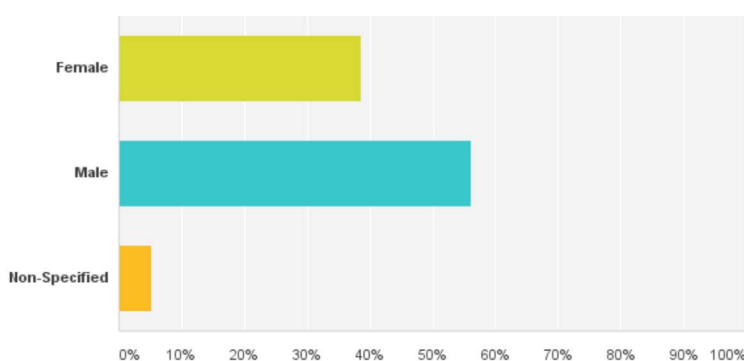
In summary, the broad priorities of the young people targeted in this survey closely mirror the results from other engagement projects. Concepts of jobs, safety, education and targeted community programs and facilities were also important across other demographics and other surveys. This shows fairly uniform support for these concepts as key community-wide priorities for Cumberland.



Age breakdown of participants



Gender breakdown of participants



Business survey

Method

This survey was conducted in order for council to examine local business attitudes and perceptions towards current and future services and facilities provided by council.

Key objectives of the research included:

- assessing the importance of service levels to businesses within the area to further understand their needs;
- measuring business confidence and overall level of satisfaction with council's performance
- identifying the businesses' level of satisfaction with contact they have had with council; and
- establishing benchmark data against which council's performance can be measured in 12 months' time.

To facilitate this, council employed Micromex to perform the survey, analyse the data and report back to council officers with the detailed findings.

Response

The sample consisted of a total of 127 local businesses that were selected by means of a computer-based random selection process using the electronic White Pages. The survey was accurate to within an 8.7% margin of error.

43% of respondents to the survey spoke another language in addition to English, and there was fairly even distribution of locations throughout Cumberland of the businesses surveyed. In addition to this, the sample was weighted by suburb to reflect the business demographics of the Cumberland council area.

The data was collected between 22 and 30 September 2016 between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

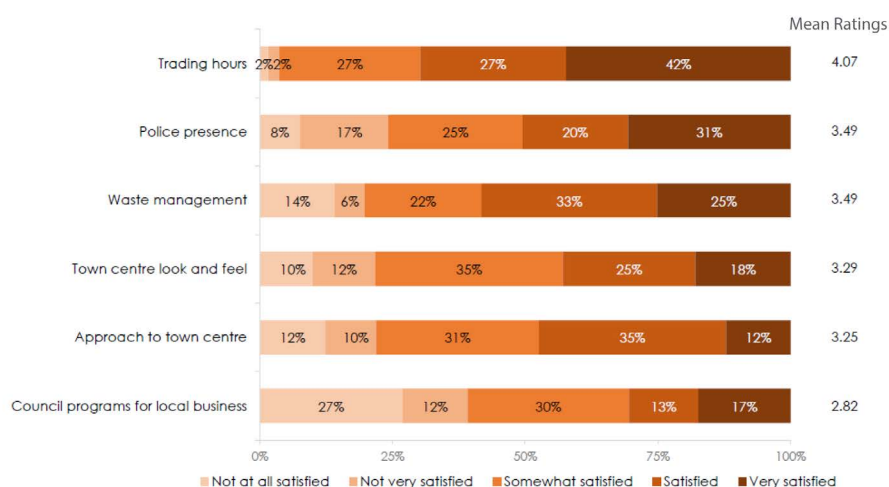
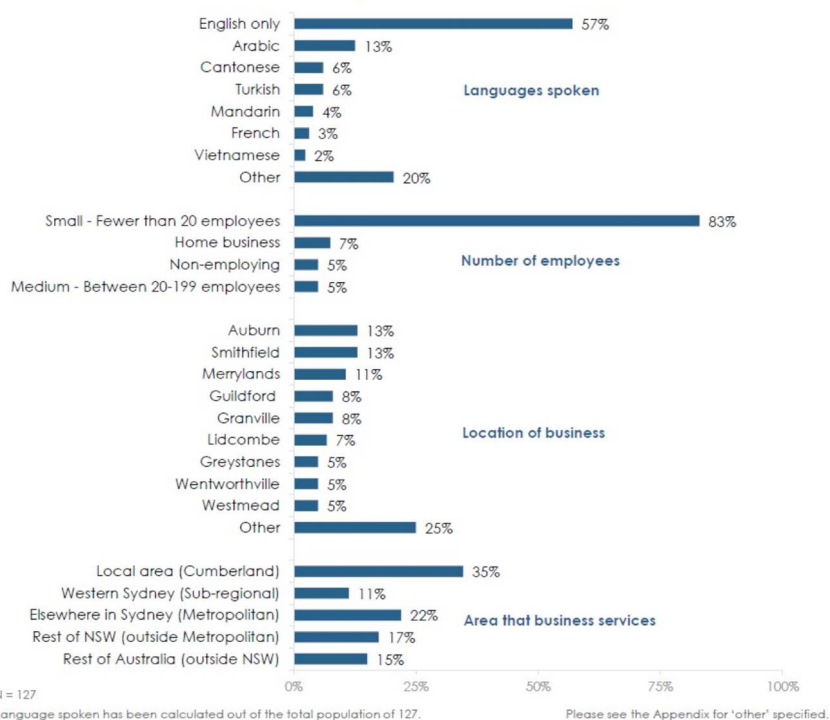
Key findings

General Business Performance

There is generally a high level of confidence in their business's performance, with 92% of participants expressing a positive level for the next 12 months.

- Businesses observed an increase in the prices of supplies and materials; however, this was seemingly offset by an increase in the sales of their own products/services
- Profitability has polarised the business community, with almost equal numbers claiming an increase or decrease
- Transport is a major concern for businesses, with 90% stating it was important to the location of their business

Sample Profile



- 43% of businesses advised their business could communicate in other languages, with two-thirds claiming there were benefits or barriers to being multilingual
 - o The main benefit was being able to expand their customer base by conversing with customers in a language they are more comfortable with.
 - o Barriers included staff not being proficient English speakers so more English speaking staff are required and people who speak the same language often ask for discounts further than those already provided.
- While business' have a moderate level of satisfaction for general council services, there is a relatively low level of satisfaction with 'council programs for local business'. See below:

The survey found the 5 most important major infrastructure/investment initiatives to local business were:

1. Improved road conditions and/or configuration
2. Revitalisation of the Parramatta Road corridor
3. Access to high speed broadband
4. Improved local public transport network
5. Improvement to the overall look and presentation of our LGA.

Council Services and Initiatives

83% of businesses were at least somewhat satisfied with the overall performance of council. There is an opportunity to contextualise the relatively low satisfaction score for 'council programs' (i.e. Is this driven by a lack of awareness, program content/relevance, access, or



availability). Transport issues (road, public transport, WestConnex) and appearance of the LGA (Parramatta Rd Corridor, overall presentation of the LGA) were considered the most important potential initiatives, along with access to high speed Broadband.

Communication

- 75% of businesses were at least somewhat satisfied with council's communication. This was in contrast to some of the engagement results from residents who had a lower score of satisfaction with council's communication.

- Two-thirds of those who had contacted council directly were satisfied with the handling of that contact.

Summary of results

The high level of confidence that local business has in their business' performance is encouraging for council and shows that the work done in the past towards local economic development has paid dividends. An important aspect of the data gathered was that a majority of business owners think that council can do nothing to assist their business. Other than that,

parking, roads and public transport were ways that council can assist.

The main lesson from the business survey was that while business has a positive outlook for the future in the Cumberland LGA, this was generally not due to the services council provides to help local business directly.

This highlights the importance of Council taking a role in economic development to understand the needs of local business and either act and/or advocate on their behalf where necessary and where it is within Council's resources.

Focus groups

Method

When the telephone survey was conducted by Micromex with Cumberland Council residents, respondents were given the option to volunteer for further engagement in focus group sessions. Those who volunteered were invited to 3 focus group sessions across the LGA and the individuals selected to reflect the demographics of the larger Cumberland area. This allowed for the broad themes discussed in earlier engagement to be discussed in more detail.

As such, the three follow up groups were conducted to explore in more detail strategic issues that could inform the development of a future CSP:

- How council can address the concerns of residents and support valued aspects of living within Cumberland
- Visions and priorities for the future of the LGA
- Methods of communication and consultation with the community
- Positives and negatives to come from the merger

The sessions were moderated by independent Micromex staff, with council staff attending as observers and to answer questions from participants if required. Specifically, the moderators explored the following issues:

- Living in Cumberland and visions for the future
 - Valued and dislikes aspects of living in the LGA
- What council can do to support/address these issues
 - Vision of the LGA in 10 years:
- Unprompted
- Prompted
- Priorities
 - Ranking of priorities
 - Actions council can take to address the top priorities
- Communication
 - Methods of communication with the community
- Amalgamation
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the merger

Response

Two of the focus groups took place on the 19th of October and one on the 20th October. Participants were recruited from those who participated in the earlier telephone survey conducted for council by Micromex Research. A total of 30 residents

Focus group 1: Pemulwuy	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70+
	8	3	1	1	1	3	3	2
Focus group 2: Auburn	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70+
	3	7	1	2	2	2	2	1
Focus group 3: Merrylands	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70+
	4	5	0	2	2	2	2	1

attended, with the participants from a broad range of age groups and an even spread of males and females.

The three focus groups were conducted across the LGA in Pemulwuy, Merrylands and Auburn, with times varying to allow for participants who could make it during business hours and those who couldn't.

Key results

The most valued aspects of living in Cumberland:

- Community spirit and proud multicultural community that creates vibrancy in the area
- An environment that is abundant with parks and green spaces, whilst also being within easy access to a large city.

The most disliked aspects about living in Cumberland were overdevelopment and population increase:

- Development changing the shape of the community by creating dense, isolated living spaces and removing valuable green space
- Governance issues around developments at the previous Auburn council appear to have heightened concerns about well-managed development in the past
- An increasing population without the accompanying infrastructure to support it. Specifically:
 - Congestion
 - Car parking
 - Schools
 - Safety

The main way that participants thought that council could address these issues is to significantly improve transport links that entice cars off roads and a slowing down of development in Cumberland.

Strengths and weaknesses of the merger

Despite some negative comments, potential positive outcomes were identified, such as increased efficiency, reduction in costs of services and to provide an opportunity for a new start. The main weaknesses identified were around possible financial losses, boundary decisions and confusion around possible service loss, if not all of the previous councils offered it.

Visions and Priorities for the Future of Cumberland

Consistent with most of the other consultation projects, planning and development were the most important aspect for the focus groups sessions. Closely linked to these issues were concerns around governance and positive leadership.

The focus group sessions were designed to be one of the last stages of the community survey process, where the results of the wider ranging consultations that focused on broad issues were distilled down to a number of key priorities for the future over the next 10 years, to be set out in the Community Strategic Plan.

Importantly, when the focus groups were presented with the 6 distilled pillars of community priorities, all 6 generated moderate to strong support suggesting that council has been successful in identifying these areas of focus for the future⁴.

Furthermore, in the unprompted sessions around community priorities, 55% of these unprompted suggestions fell into council's preliminary focus areas. Under further analysis, other comments around traffic management/parking are arguably related to the development and planning issues. As such, potentially 75% of the unprompted issues fell into the identified

⁴Page 9 of the Micromex Research Key Finding paper for the focus group consultation sessions.



priorities. Any other comments that were related to other community trends were included in the updated community priorities in the Draft Community Strategic Plan.

Methods of Communication between council and the Community

The two most popular methods of communication were:

1. Targeted reference groups
2. Open public meetings and forums

Interestingly, both of these involve face to face contact with council staff, and are both opportunities for participants to feel an active role in council's decision making process. It should though be noted that participants identified these as part of a focus group and it can be expected that they would favour these types of meetings.

The next 2 most preferred methods for communication and consultation were:

1. Surveys
2. Council Website

Increasing online availability of services and information was a common theme brought up in the focus groups and they also represent the direction council is heading with many of its upgrades and innovations since the merger.

Summary

Over development and the stress that an increasing population has on already struggling infrastructure and services was a major concern that repeatedly came up in the focus groups. A priority for council therefore needs to be to advise how they plan to address these issues, the requirements they have in place for new developments, how they will protect green spaces, and the benefits that development can bring to an area.

Whilst a common problem for most metropolitan councils, congestion and parking were particularly large sources of frustration for residents, with the earlier telephone survey identifying them to have notably low satisfaction ratings relative to their stated importance. Stricter parking regulations, traffic management and lobbying the State Government to improve public transport in the area will help residents to see that council acknowledges the problem and is actively trying to improve it.

Participants (especially those of the former Auburn Council) were apprehensive that the governance issues that previously occurred could be repeated. Participants were keen for council to show its support for proposals to ban developers from being on council, and require transparency on any potential conflicts of interest.

Staff engagement sessions

Method

Two staff engagement sessions were held during September with around 50 staff participating in round table discussion for their input on community priorities, strategies for council's effectiveness in implementing them, and the Vision.

The staff's input was valuable due to their understanding of the community and the area, and their unique knowledge of how local government works and the abilities and limits of council to contribute to the broad community priorities identified in the larger engagement program.

My Vision for Cumberland

Based on the results of the #MyVisionForCumberland exercise where participants were asked to write down words, phrases or statements about their Vision for Cumberland, there are some key strong themes. The top 4 themes that are important to staff for the Vision for Cumberland are:

1. Sense of pride in the community

This included concepts such as cleanliness, a place where people feel welcomed and respected, vibrant nightlife, considered a great place to live, and community self-esteem. 61% of responses mentioned community pride in some way and this was the highest priority of all responses which has a correlation with the engagement data from the wider community.

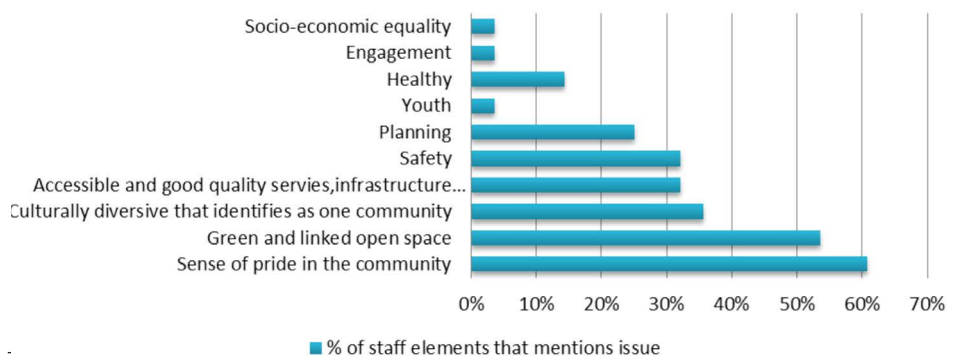
2. Green and open spaces that are linked

54% of respondents mentioned green space, open space, trees, plants, trees in streets, and better linkages of these spaces in their Vision for Cumberland. This was a strong theme that also seems to be shared by the community. Respondents had statements such as pedestrian access, street trees, clean and green environment, quality green space at Duck River and bike networks.

3. Celebrated cultural diversity that identifies as one community

Just over one third of respondents mentioned cultural diversity in their Vision. A major theme that is shared with staff and the community is the sense of one community in the area that is beyond cultural lines. This theme took into account statements such as everyone from Prospect Hill to Lidcombe identifying with Cumberland Council, diversity, identity and inclusiveness.

Staff Vision Elements



4. Accessible and good quality services, infrastructure and transport options

This broad theme took into account comments on services, infrastructure and accessibility of the

area via public transport and road systems. 32% of people mentioned one of these issues on their Vision. Safety issues were also as important.

Other issues that were common themes were, strategic approaches to planning, and focus on young people, health, engagement and ensuring socio-economic equality.

Priorities for Cumberland

This activity consisted of staff members using post-it notes on large pieces of paper to identify not only their priorities for the future, but also where they lay in within the Quadruple Bottom Line of sustainability (QBL). This activity was framed this way to ensure participants considered all aspects of community sustainability.

In this activity, it was suggested that the focus be on the outcomes people wanted to see, with less focus on how they would be achieved or whether or not they were feasible or practical.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

Merrylands office	Auburn office
Community pride	Social inclusion for all groups
Education and care services	Provision of quality infrastructure

ECONOMIC

Merrylands office	Auburn office
Long term financial sustainability	Employment and local business development
Attracting industry and business to Cumberland	Housing affordability

ENVIRONMENT

Merrylands office	Auburn office
Reduce litter	Sustainable urban and open spaces
Biodiversity plan	Biodiversity restoration

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Merrylands office	Auburn office
Ethical leadership	Engagement through a wide range of methods and that is input into policy and programs
Trust in new council and area	Staff leadership that reflects the diversity of the community

The top issues were as follows, within the QBL framework:

Some other top priorities across all quadrants included:

- Safety
- Facilities to service population growth
- Climate change
- Urban civic hotspots
- Identity

Action Plans

As the third major activity, the groups were asked to present ideas as to how council could respond to the top priorities at their table. A range of responses that council could have were documented, some of which are set out below as examples.

Summary

There was a greater than expected response from the staff sessions and this is an exercise that council would like to repeat and expand in the future. Many of the staff were residents of Cumberland and those who weren't had a unique view and understanding of what council can do to influence the community's progress towards their vision.

One key lesson from this session was that as a broad vision statement for the community's long term future, the council staff participants thought that a sense of pride in the community was the most important idea to work towards.

Other key points from the session included the top priorities of the participants for council to focus on:

- Community pride
- Education and care services
- Long term financial sustainability
- Attracting industry and business
- Reduce litter
- Biodiversity plan
- Ethical leadership
- Trust in new council

Participants also gave valuable input on strategies that could help achieve the above priorities which were taken into account when the Strategies in the Community Strategic Plan were formed.

MERRYLANDS

QBL	Priority	How council can respond
Social and Community	Community Pride	1. Decision making relating to high rise 2. Beautification of the area including improved landscape and trees (we need more of these)
Environment	Reduce Litter	1. State Government targets – reduce litter by 2020 should be considered 2. Review of public space bin system
Economic	Long Term Financial Sustainability	1. Put in place measures to reduce likelihood of financial issues in the future due to inheritance of new areas 2. Reducing costs associated with vandalism
Civic Leadership	Ethical Leadership	1. Ensuring that the Code of Conduct is practiced widely 2. No property developers on council

AUBURN

QBL	Priority	How council can respond
Social and Community	Inclusion	1. Activities that bring people together across cultural backgrounds 2. Place development officers with specific cultural knowledge
Environment	Sustainable urban and open spaces	1. LEP to include Open Space and Green Corridor 2. Bike network connecting open space
Economic	Employment and local business development	1. Business Unit within council and an economic strategy to deal with this area 2. Council to employ more local residents
Civic Leadership	Community Engagement	1. More resources to engage with culturally diverse people 2. Specialised community engagement as a core function of council





Summary of findings

This community engagement program represented a statistically valid, robust and multi-faceted approach to garnering clear information about the priorities of the diverse Cumberland community will help with council's long term planning and service provision, and the development of Cumberland community's Vision for the future.

Throughout all the engagement projects the community showed overwhelming preference for several key themes, with the same concepts emerging throughout most individual engagement projects and within most demographics:

- Sense of community and liveability of the area
- Safety
- Equality and access to infrastructure and services
- Cleanliness
- High quality and a diverse range of green space
- Jobs

- Education
- An approach to planning and development that results in positive outcomes for the community
- Positive leadership based on community involvement in decision making and transparency

These key themes will be distilled down to a smaller number of Strategic Goals which will form the basis of the Cumberland Community Strategic Plan.

Other themes that emerged from the process but weren't major themes included:

- Youth services
- Parking
- Quality of council programs
- Street trees
- Environmental sustainability
- Traffic congestion management
- Sportsgrounds and facilities
- Revitalisation of the Parramatta Road corridor

These themes, as well as council's regulatory functions, will be included in council's strategic planning policies as well as the 4 year Delivery Program and Operational Plan. This will ensure that the key community engagement themes are the core guiding principles of council's service provision, as well as a line of sight for all council activities through to the high level strategic goals of council and the community.

Key lessons from the engagement process

Overall the community engagement process has been highly successful. The numbers of community members engaged well exceeded expectations, as did the quality of data collected. A diverse range of community members have been consulted with a particular focus in this project on reflecting the demographics and backgrounds of the new Cumberland community.

Highlights

- **Online Survey** – Probably the most successful aspect of the engagement was the number of respondents to the online survey conducted by council via Survey Monkey. Over 700 people responded which was well above expectations and formed a useful foundation for the rest of the engagement that followed. In addition, the analysis of the data was of great quality and was easily transported into summary form.
- **Community Satisfaction Survey** – This survey was conducted by specialist consultants, Micromex Research. This project ran on time and the source of the data was from a diverse range of residents that reflected the demographics of the community and assisted with the accuracy of the overall engagement data. In addition, the analysis of the data was thorough and provided a credible base for measuring both the community priorities for the future as well as the current satisfaction levels with the services that council provides. This survey will be repeated regularly over the coming years to measure progress.
- **Youth Survey** – This component of the engagement was facilitated by council's dedicated youth engagement staff and provided a valuable set of data from young community members who have been hard to engage with in past projects.
- **Focus Groups** – These sessions were a valuable exercise and provided an excellent evolution of the project because it allowed for the findings of the overall project to be workshopped with a smaller group for refinement. This ensured that council's initial findings from the community were rechecked by the participants and agreement was reached on the key issues distilled from the over 2,500 participants of the overall engagement project.

Possible Improvements

- **Community Forums** – The 4 community forums that took place received mixed responses from the community,

reflected in the only 11 people who attended the Pemulwuy session. Despite great attendance at the Auburn and Holroyd sessions, from a data collection perspective the 4 forums were relatively resource intensive in comparison to the other components of the engagement process. It should be noted that these sessions provide many other positive outcomes, and should not be abandoned in the future, however a reconsideration of the resources provided could be relevant in future engagement processes, depending on the expected outcomes of particular projects.

- **Business Survey** – In considering the data provided in the Business Survey Report it is clear that most responses were concerned with infrastructure and issues that council cannot directly affect. This provides important data for council to lobby its partners (predominantly state government) for the expected community outcomes, but does not provide much guidance for council and its services. With this in mind a future improvement to this important aspect of the community engagement could be to target the questions more towards how council can directly improve the local business environment.

Alignment with Greater Sydney Commission Engagement

The Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) is the body set up to coordinate and align the planning that will shape the future of Greater Sydney, through collaboration of development, transport and housing to make Sydney a more productive, liveable and sustainable city for all. The Commission has divided up the Greater Sydney area into several districts, with Cumberland sitting in the West Central District along with Blacktown, Parramatta and The Hills.

In the same way that Cumberland council's long term planning framework sits on a foundation of high quality community engagement data, the GSC has regular conversations with the

community about what the community values about the West Central District. Encouragingly, the results from the GSC's engagement have closely reflected the results in the body of this report. The community told the GSC that they want:

- More Jobs
- Diverse training and employment opportunities closer to home
- Support for culturally and linguistically diverse residents to improve access to employment
- Improved public transport and better connections
- Affordable housing
- Increased public safety
- Quality open space areas
- Protection of the natural environment
- Healthy lifestyles

These priorities are closely reflected in this report's findings and show a strategic link between council's long term planning and the long term planning for the West Central District.

Next Steps

The engagement data contained in this report will inform the first Cumberland Community Strategic Plan which will set the strategic policy direction for council's activities contained in the 4 year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

A summary article of this report will be circulated to the engagement participants, as well as the wider community showing council's key findings and showing how they influence the draft community strategic plan.

Components of this engagement process such as the community satisfaction survey will be repeated regularly to track changes, while the larger engagement process will be repeated, with possible changes, at the end of the first political term of council. This will form the basis for the first End of Term report and the data foundation for the revision of the Community Strategic Plan at the start of the second political term.

Attachments

- Online Engagement Data from Survey Monkey
- Spreadsheets of data from Community Forums and Staff Engagement

- Micromex Research Community Satisfaction Survey Report
- Youth Survey Report
- Micromex Research Business Survey Report
- Micromex Research Focus Group Report



CUMBERLAND
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT
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