



# Our Wollongong 2035 Engagement Report

2024-2025



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this city is built, the Aboriginal people of Dharawal Country. We recognise and appreciate their deep connection to this land, waters and the greater community.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our acknowledgement and respect to all Aboriginal people who call this city home.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to this city.

**Photo credit: Callia S**

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# Executive summary

Our Wollongong 2032 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) captures the community's vision for the area and identifies key social, economic and environmental priorities, along with long-term strategies for the next 10 years.

In 2024, we embarked on the review of Our Wollongong 2032. Our Wollongong Our Future Engagement Plan was developed and delivered to ensure our CSP is developed in collaboration with our local community.



The approach to developing our next CSP has been progressive and evolving. Many of the themes in terms of values, issues and what's important have been consistent. The love of our coast and beaches, the unique relationship between the escarpment and the coast, the friendly atmosphere, proximity to larger places and connections to family and friends are just some of the themes raised. In addition, feedback on Wollongong's potential and some of the issues we face were raised.

The feedback will be used to develop our next CSP and will guide Council, organisations, business and the community to achieve the community's vision, goals and aspirations.

Here is an overview of what we heard:

- Focus on creating jobs, invest in business that brings economic growth and is innovative.
- Our libraries and facilities are valued, increase places and programs for social inclusion and provide accessible community spaces.
- Create a liveable, accessible and inclusive community, with accessible information, meaningful employment for people with disability and digital inclusion.
- Provide events and spaces, support for creatives and showcase diverse cultures.
- Maintain and increase open space/s, invest in maintenance of parks and beaches and improve sporting facilities.
- Increase and promote the active transport network, make it safe and accessible.
- The Gong Shuttle should be expanded, public transport needs improving and more parking solutions are required.
- Affordable housing options are required, diverse and sustainable housing options are needed and initiatives to address homelessness.
- Avoid over development, preserve and protect the environment and heritage and encourage sustainable growth.
- Value our heritage, protect buildings and recognise and respect Aboriginal heritage.
- Protect and invest in our natural environment, retain and add green space and trees and invest in renewable energy, respond to climate change and increase climate resilience.
- Build more schools, provide equitable access to education.
- Create a connected and engaged community that is healthy, safe and celebrates diversity.



# Executive summary

The following section provides key highlights related to accessibility, engagement methods and participation.



## Accessible engagement

Increasing accessibility was a key goal. To achieve this:

- Plain English was used for all documents
- Easy Read FAQs were developed
- Community mobilisers were engaged
- Language aides and TTY offered
- Google Translate embedded online
- Reply-paid postcard sent to all homes



## Engagement methods

A range of methods were used to hear from our diverse community:

- Targeted workshops Community
- Circles
- Interactive stall at events and activities
- Surveys
- Community pop-ups
- Reply-paid postcards
- Children's drawing sheets



## Participation

4485 people provided input. This included:

- 181 Targeted workshops
- 3178 Surveys
- 377 Postcards received
- 193 Children's drawing sheets
- 282 A4 Feedback cards
- 274 Open feedback, socials, community circles

Plus, 5858 from previous engagements



Photo credit: Sterling

## Introduction

Our Community Strategic Plan (CSP), captures the community's vision for the area and identifies key social, economic and environmental priorities, along with long-term strategies for the next 10 years. Our CSP seeks to reflect the aspirations, needs and priorities of the local community.

In 2024, Council embarked on the review of Our Wollongong 2032. 'Our Wollongong Our Future' Engagement Plan was developed and delivered to ensure our CSP is developed in collaboration with our local community. Our engagement plan outlined the stakeholders to be engaged and proposed a range of engagement approaches to encourage and enable our diverse community to participate.



## Background

All Councils in New South Wales are required to plan and report on their activities as part of an Integrated Planning and Reporting framework set out by the Local Government Act 1993. The framework requires all Councils to prepare a Community Strategic Plan (10+ years), Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program (4 years) and Operational Plan (1 year).

Our Community Strategic Plan sets the future direction for Wollongong Local Government Area for the next 10 years.

## Legislative Requirements

All Councils are required to prepare and implement an engagement strategy to meet the provisions of Section 402A of the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016. The Act specifically states that Councils are required to 'establish and implement a strategy for engagement with the local community when developing its plan, policies and programs and for the purpose of determining its activities'.

## Previous Engagement

We have been engaging with our community throughout the development of several projects and plans such as:

- Creative Wollongong
- Managing Flood Risk (various)
- Climate Change Mitigation Plan
- Urban Heat Strategy
- Safer Cities Her Way
- Young People and Recreational Space
- Libraries Strategy
- Yarning about Reconciliation
- Skateparks
- Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy
- Speak. Share. Change.
- Public Art Strategy
- Sporting + Facilities Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Retail and Business Centres Strategy
- Social Infrastructure Plan

The feedback we heard through these engagement activities will also be used to inform the development of our new CSP.



Photo credit: Kai

# Our engagement goals

We are committed to our principles of community engagement: we aim to be flexible, inclusive, we believe community engagement is important for good governance, we aim to effectively plan each engagement, and to keep the community updated.

In developing our next Community Strategic Plan, we set out to push our engagement goals even further. We also aimed to:

## **Build awareness and understanding**

Use methods to help everyone learn about what the Community Strategic Plan means and why it's important.

## **Include diverse voices**

Use inclusive methods based on social justice principles to make sure we hear from all parts of our community.

## **Learn what people want for the Wollongong LGA**

Ask clear questions and use practical methods to understand the community's expectations and priorities for the future of our area.

## **Get more people involved**

Try various methods to encourage as many people as possible to share their views and participate in our discussions.



# A two-phased approach

A two-phased approach was implemented to enhance engagement outcomes and ensure the adopted document is a true reflection of the community's aspirations and priorities.



## 01 Listening to our community

Method highlights:

Accessible information

Postcards distributed to all households

Community Circle Kits

Interactive engagement at events

Targeted workshops

Children's drawing sheets

**18 Oct  
- 18 Nov  
2024**



## 02 Checking in

Method highlights:

Our Wollongong Our Future Engagement Snapshot

Plain English Community Strategic Plan - summary

Easy Read Community Strategic Plan

Information presentations

Online feedback form

**9 Apr  
- 7 May  
2025**

# How did we let people know?

A range of methods were used to build awareness and provide our diverse community with the opportunity to let us know what's important to them.



## Accessible FAQs

Easy Read uses simple text, pictures, and plenty of white space. It is great for people with disability, children, non-English speakers, or adults with low literacy. Printed FAQs had a QR code linked to online FAQs with numerous Google Translate language options.



## What is a Community Strategic Plan? Video

A video providing an explanation about a Community Strategic Plan was made available online and shared via social media to increase awareness.



## Stalls at community events

Interactive information stalls were set up at NAIDOC community event, Helensburgh Lions Country Fair, Culture Mix and Lord Mayor School Starters Picnic.



## Postcards

Reply-paid postcards were sent to every home in the Local Government Area letting recipients know about the engagement and inviting them to participate.



## Direct email

Emails were sent to networks and stakeholder databases. An email was also sent to all registered participants on Councils online engagement platform.



## Signage

Signage was erected in various outdoor locations across the LGA and included on digital screens at all Council facilities.



## Information at community facilities

Information was made available at Council libraries and community facilities. Information was also made available in MP office's, non government organisations and local businesses.



## Council communication channels

Council's internal and external communication channels were used to share key messages and encourage participation including social media and on hold messaging.

# How could people provide feedback?

A range of methods were used to build awareness and provide our diverse community with the opportunity to let us know what's important to them.



## Postcards

Reply-paid postcards were sent to every home in the Local Government Area inviting recipients to respond to 'What do you want our community to look and feel like in 10 years?'



## Our Wollongong Our Future: survey

A survey was provided online. Print copies were also made available at all Council libraries.



## Community Circles

A community circle is a structured conversation with a group about a set topic. Kits, including an explanatory video, were provided to guide conversations and capture feedback.



## Feedback cards

Feedback cards were made available at events and activities as an interactive way to capture feedback. Community members wrote their responses on card and displayed it at the event.



## Children's drawing sheet

Children's drawing sheets were provided to local preschools and primary schools with an accompanying teachers/educators guide.



## Workshops

Targeted workshops were held with government, young people, children, Aboriginal organisations, homelessness services, LGBTQIA+ and multicultural community members.



## Social media

Comments shared on social media platforms were captured and included in the feedback.



## Open submissions

Feedback could also be provided by writing to or speaking with Council staff.

# What we asked the community

The following questions were asked during Phase 1.



## Vision

What do you want our community to look and feel like in 10 years?



## Opportunities

What would make Wollongong Local Government Area a better place for everyone?



# Phase 1 - What we heard

An overview of community feedback is presented in the following section.

## What do you want our community to look and feel like in 10 years?

Our community has a clear vision for what Wollongong should look and feel like in 10 years, focusing on sustainability, inclusivity, and connection. Many people want environmental sustainability prioritised by expanding green spaces, planting trees, and reducing carbon emissions. Protecting natural areas, promoting biodiversity, and investing in renewable energy are seen as essential steps to combat climate change. People want community gardens and public spaces where people can gather and enjoy nature.

The desire for vibrant, well-maintained, and accessible public spaces is strong, with clean and safe streets, well-kept parks, and recreational areas identified as vital for community connection. Infrastructure that supports walking and cycling is widely supported to encourage healthier and environmentally friendly travel options. People want safer footpaths, bike lanes, and more reliable public transport to make getting around Wollongong easier and to reduce traffic congestion. Affordable and accessible public transport options that connect Wollongong's suburbs more effectively are also a priority.

Our community envisions a future where housing is both affordable and accessible, with calls for sustainable development that preserves green areas and protects the city's character. Ensuring housing remains within reach for young people, families, and lower-income residents is seen as essential to maintaining fairness and inclusivity. At the same time, many hope Wollongong can balance thoughtful development with the need to remain clean, relaxed, and uncluttered.

Economic resilience and local pride are key to the community's vision. There is strong support for creating more local jobs, supporting small businesses, and promoting tourism in a way that benefits residents. Many people spoke about the importance of cultural activities, live music venues, and creative industries to make Wollongong more vibrant and welcoming. This reflects a desire for the city to feel alive and dynamic while celebrating its unique identity.

There is also a clear call for Wollongong to embrace innovation and become a leader in tackling environmental and economic challenges. People want to see ambitious, forward-thinking solutions that ensure the community is sustainable, connected, and thriving.

At the heart of this vision is a deep commitment to inclusivity and connection. Our community want Wollongong to feel welcoming and supportive, with cultural diversity celebrated and vulnerable populations cared for. Safety, unity, and shared purpose are seen as fundamental to building a city that everyone can take pride in. The collective vision highlights Wollongong as a greener, more connected, and resilient community where progress aligns with the values that matter most to its people.

# Phase 1 - What we heard

## What would make Wollongong Local Government Area a better place for everyone?

Our community envisions Wollongong's future as connected, sustainable, and welcoming. To make the area better for everyone, people highlighted key priorities, including protecting the environment, creating affordable housing, enhancing public spaces, and improving transport options.

Access to green spaces such as parks, beaches, and natural areas was a common theme. People want to protect the environment by maintaining and expanding open spaces, planting more trees, and creating community gardens. Addressing overdevelopment and reducing waste, particularly through improved recycling programs, are seen as important steps.

Transport improvements are a major focus. Many called for expanded public transport networks, more frequent services, and affordable fares, particularly for students. The Gong Shuttle bus service is highly valued, with suggestions to extend it to more areas. There were also strong requests for better cycling infrastructure, such as safer bike lanes, and for traffic management improvements to ease congestion, provide better parking options, and make streets safer for pedestrians.

Affordable housing remains a pressing concern. People stressed the need to address rising housing costs and provide better support for those experiencing homelessness. Our community wants everyone to have access to secure, affordable homes.

Public spaces, such as libraries, sporting facilities, and community centres, were highlighted as valuable community assets that need maintenance, upgrades, and expansion. We heard how these spaces play a vital role in creating a sense of connection and belonging. Supporting young people emerged as a priority, with calls for more youth-focused activities, safe gathering spaces, and programs to help them thrive.

Celebrating local culture and heritage is important to many in our community. People want more events, festivals, and programs showcasing Aboriginal heritage and the region's history. Supporting creative industries and local artists is also seen as important, with calls for affordable spaces to create and share art, music, and hold community events.

Public safety is another focus. Suggestions included better lighting, safer pathways, improved pedestrian crossings, and cycling routes to ensure people feel secure, especially at night or in less-populated areas.

Economic opportunities are also a priority, with calls for more local jobs, support for small businesses, and tourism promotion. Ideas included reducing start-up costs for businesses, offering grants, and hosting local markets and festivals to attract visitors. People also suggested promoting Wollongong's natural attractions and cultural events to strengthen the local economy. By addressing these priorities, our community believes Wollongong can become a place where everyone feels included, supported, and proud to live.

# Phase 1 - What we heard

An overview of the major themes from community feedback are presented in the following section. These are presented in no particular order.



## Wellbeing

- Enhance public space safety
- Increase access to health services
- Increase & promote sustainable food systems
- Involve community in decision making

Our community values health, safety, and inclusion. People called for improved access to health services, including bulk-billing GPs, better hospitals, and free or low-cost mental health care. There is strong support for banning smoking and vaping and increasing opportunities for outdoor activities like walking, cycling, and fitness classes to promote wellbeing. There is also a desire to address the inequalities in health and life outcomes experienced by Aboriginal people.

Sustainable food systems are important, with requests for more community gardens, local markets, and affordable fresh food options to boost health and social resilience.

Our community want improved consultation with the community, particularly around major developments. People want to see the appointment of Aboriginal decision-makers within Council, cultural recognition, and truth-telling initiatives.

Safety remains a priority, especially for women and vulnerable groups. We heard requests for better lighting, more visible security, safer pedestrian crossings, and measures to reduce crime, speeding, and illegal camping. Improved maintenance of roads, parks, and footpaths, along with clearer regulations for dogs and rubbish management, were also highlighted to enhance public spaces.

Welcoming public spaces, cultural events, and programs for marginalised groups were also suggested to create connection and inclusion.





## Community services, facilities & spaces

- ◆ Increase services provided by libraries
- ◆ Provide places & programs for social connection
- ◆ Provide inclusive & accessible spaces

Our community wants inclusive, accessible spaces and services that support connection and learning. Libraries are highly valued, with requests for extended hours and programs. Community centres should be accessible, bright, and adaptable, offering spaces for social connection and family-friendly activities. Facilities and infrastructure should be sustainably designed, disaster-resilient, and well-maintained.

Physical and cognitive accessibility is a key focus.

Suggestions included putting in more shaded seating, water fountains, and making sure urban design integrates universal accessibility.

There is a desire to maintain social support groups for seniors, with increased outreach services. For young people, there were requests for skateparks and more free or low-cost safe spaces with activities such as arts, theatre, intergenerational programs and gender-inclusive spaces.



## Arts & culture

- ◆ Provide events & spaces
- ◆ Support creatives
- ◆ Showcase diverse cultures

Our community values a lively arts and culture scene that supports local creatives, celebrates diversity, and offers accessible spaces and events for everyone. People see the value of creative industries in enriching the community. They suggested more funding for local artists, affordable venues for live performances, and additional spaces and opportunities to showcase creative work, including community-led art, music, and cultural activities.

People want to see more festivals, live music, food and night markets, public and street art, and multicultural events, with efforts to reduce barriers like high costs and restrictive approvals. They also want Aboriginal culture showcased through public art, education, and truth-telling initiatives.

Accessible cultural hubs, vibrant community spaces, and diverse events like Culture Mix, Spring into Corimal, and Comic Gong are highly valued, as are opportunities for intergenerational learning and celebrating the region's unique history. More art galleries and museums are also desired.





## Inclusive & accessible communities

- ◆ Create equitable employment opportunities
- ◆ Provide accessible information
- ◆ Improve digital inclusion

Our community envision a liveable, welcoming community where everyone belongs. People called for universally designed public spaces and access improvements to beaches, parks, playgrounds, transport and housing. Access and proximity to essential services were prioritised, especially for people experiencing homelessness.

Clear communication is important, with calls for multilingual signage in public areas, use of interpreters, and promotion methods to reach older people and marginalised groups. There is a need for equitable employment opportunities, including pathways for people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and former refugees, supported by cultural sensitivity training.

Our community values connectivity, safety, and inclusivity in their neighbourhoods. They seek a vibrant, environmentally friendly city with accessible digital tools, and spaces everyone can participate in.



## Local economy

- ◆ Focus on creating local jobs
- ◆ Foster sustainable and cultural tourism
- ◆ Enhance dining, shopping, and nightlife options
- ◆ Invest in revitalisation and vibrancy

Our community envisions Wollongong as a thriving hub for work, recreation, and culture, balancing economic growth with natural beauty and creating opportunities for locals, businesses, and visitors.

There is a strong need for local job creation, with targeted opportunities for young people, newly arrived migrants, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Revitalising Wollongong's economy includes transforming Crown Street Mall and underdeveloped areas into vibrant spaces with fewer empty shops, outdoor dining, markets, and live events. Supporting small businesses through incentives, reduced rents, and streamlined processes is a priority.

Ideas for strengthening tourism included promoting Wollongong's natural assets with affordable accommodation, cultural and eco-tourism, public art, and waterfront activations. Boosting dining, shopping, and nightlife with extended hours, live entertainment, and safer spaces were suggested to create vibrancy.



## Recreation

- Maintain & increase open & recreational space/s
- Invest in maintenance of parks & beaches
- Improve sporting facilities
- Provide accessible recreational options

The community values open and natural spaces, calling for more parks, green areas, and accessible recreational options. People want spaces for families, children, and pets, with amenities like shaded seating, clean toilets, and facilities for diverse activities. There is a strong focus on maintaining existing parks, beaches, and waterways while improving their quality, cleanliness, and accessibility. Suggestions included creating more dog parks, community gardens, and play areas for all ages and abilities.

Improved sporting facilities were requested to support healthy, active lifestyles. The most requested facilities included skateparks, basketball courts, pools, pump tracks, and venues for activities like table tennis, pickleball, and mountain biking. There is also interest in outdoor gyms, and adventure play areas.

Better maintenance of spaces, including rubbish removal and repairs, is viewed as essential for making places feel safe and welcoming.



## Active transport

- Improve safety
- Increase & promote the network
- Increase accessibility

We heard strong community support for expanding and promoting Wollongong's active transport network with a focus on safety, accessibility, and connectivity. Priorities include building a comprehensive network of bike paths and footpaths, ensuring safe, separated cycleways.

Suggestions included completing a cycleway around Lake Illawarra, extending paths to the northern suburbs, and connecting key destinations like schools, workplaces, and shopping centres. Improving safety on shared paths, addressing infrastructure gaps, and improving signage and lighting were common requests. To promote active transport, people suggested visible infrastructure, education campaigns, and amenities like bike racks and storage.

Some concerns were raised about shared paths, electric scooters, and perception that bike lanes are underused. There is a desire for careful planning to balance community needs.





## Transport

- ◆ Improve public transport & expand Gong Shuttle service
- ◆ Provide parking solutions
- ◆ Build a safe & sustainable network

We heard a strong desire to improve transport and traffic management across Wollongong. Key priorities include resolving congestion and addressing busy intersections. Many called for safer roads, reduced speeds (40km/h in residential areas), and improved traffic flow through bypasses, additional on/off ramps, and better planning for new developments.

Public transport improvements are widely supported, including more frequent and reliable trains and buses, expanded routes to outer suburbs, and keeping the free Gong Shuttle while extending its coverage to places like Figtree, Dapto, and Warrawong.

Parking solutions are crucial, with calls for free or affordable parking, multi-storey car parks around the CBD, and more spaces near beaches, hospitals, and shopping areas.



## Housing

- ◆ Ensure diverse & sustainable options
- ◆ Increase Affordable Housing Options
- ◆ Address Homelessness

Our community envisions a future where housing is affordable, inclusive, and well-connected to essential infrastructure. They want more affordable, accessible, and diverse housing to ensure people of all incomes, ages, and abilities can live in Wollongong.

There is strong support for increasing social and affordable housing through better planning, collaboration with government agencies, and regulating housing developments. Many want to see rent price increases controlled and more secure options for tenants. We heard that high housing costs are pushing locals out of the area, especially younger families, and making it hard for people with disabilities to find suitable homes. There is opposition to luxury high-rise developments that exclude those on low incomes.

People want to see homelessness addressed with additional shelters, crisis accommodation, and stronger support for vulnerable people, including food, mental health, and rehabilitation services. It was suggested to use vacant buildings for temporary shelter.





## Development

- Avoid over development
- Preserve & protect environment & heritage
- Plan sustainable growth

Our community called for avoiding overdevelopment and protecting Wollongong's unique character. Concerns focused on limiting high-rise buildings, with many residents opposing excessive density. There is resistance to a 'Gold Coast' look, advocating for a height cap of six to seven storeys.

Preserving the natural environment, green spaces, and heritage buildings is a priority. Suggestions included retaining escarpment views, protecting mature trees, and making sure new developments integrate gardens and sustainable features. Our community also seeks thoughtful urban planning that prioritises infrastructure upgrades alongside growth, avoids urban sprawl, and maintains the village atmosphere in suburban areas.

People want development to balance housing needs with sustainability, focusing on affordable, diverse housing that supports green spaces and environmental resilience. This is to ensure Wollongong grows sustainably while maintaining its beauty, liveability, and heritage.



## Heritage

- Value our heritage
- Protect buildings
- Recognise & respect Aboriginal heritage

Our community strongly values Wollongong's unique heritage, both Aboriginal and European. There is widespread support for recognition and respect for Aboriginal culture. Many want more visible acknowledgment of Aboriginal culture, including dual-naming of streets and places, and Aboriginal art and storytelling in public spaces.

Preservation of historical buildings is also a priority, with calls to restore significant structures like the Regent Theatre, Gleniffer Brae, and old shopfronts. Our community wants adaptive reuse rather than demolition and better funding for heritage conservation.

There were calls for museums celebrating migration, coal mining, and local stories to strengthen regional identity. Public art, signage, and statues were suggested to highlight Wollongong's history, natural beauty, and cultural diversity. Our community want to retain the area's unique character, protect heritage sites, and ensure development aligns with local identity, prioritising cultural and environmental respect over generic urban growth.





## Environment

- Protect & add green space & trees
- Invest in renewable energy
- Respond to climate change & increase resilience

Many envision Wollongong as a green, sustainable, and vibrant city. The community values the natural environment and wants greater action to protect and enhance it. There is widespread support for increasing green spaces, planting more native trees, and regenerating bushland to preserve biodiversity and create shade for cooling.

People stressed the need for sustainable energy, such as expanding solar, wind power, and community battery storage. They want to see emissions reduced, improved urban resilience to flooding and heat, and renewable energy prioritised in public transport and infrastructure.

Our community want Council to lead in climate adaptation and education while protecting the escarpment, waterways, and wildlife habitats. Proactive measures, including urban greening strategies, disaster-resilient infrastructure, and community-owned renewable projects, were strongly supported. Calls were made for improved waste management, expanded recycling options, and initiatives to tackle pollution, such as reducing litter and traffic emissions.



## Education

- Build more schools
- Provide equitable access to tertiary education
- Diversify educational approaches

Education infrastructure, inclusive teaching, and equitable access to learning resources are seen as vital to ensuring education meets the needs of all.

Our community called for more schools, particularly in growth areas. People want improved support for children with disabilities, better teaching methods, and smaller, well-resourced schools.

We heard tertiary education must be more accessible, as costs remain a significant barrier for many. There is strong support for free education, opportunities for lifelong learning, and diverse pathways, including vocational training and community workshops.

Partnerships with the University of Wollongong (UOW) and other institutions were suggested to drive innovation, connect education with employment, and strengthen Wollongong as a learning and technology hub. We also heard about the importance of Aboriginal knowledges, with suggestions for yarning circles, learning on Country, and Indigenous scholarships.

## Phase 2 - Checking in

Phase 2 provided the opportunity to check in with the community to see if the draft Community Strategic Plan reflected the aspirations and priorities, we heard from the community through the engagement processes in Phase 1. A range of methods were used to encourage our community to review the draft Community Strategic Plan including the revised vision and goals, and let us know if we got it right.



### Stalls at community events

Interactive information stalls were set up in community spaces and at events.



### Information sessions

Information sessions and presentations were held with key stakeholder groups.



### Council communication channels

Council's external communication channels were used to share key messages and encourage participation including social media and on hold messaging.



### Direct email

Emails were sent to networks and stakeholder databases. An email was also sent to all registered participants on Councils online engagement platform.



### Online survey

Community were asked to consider if the draft Community Strategic Plan including revised vision and goals reflects the feedback we heard in Phase 1 via an online survey.



### Community Strategic Plan summary

A summary version of our Community Strategic Plan was developed using plain English.



### Community Engagement Snapshot

A document was created that reflected the feedback received from the community during Phase 1 and demonstrated how feedback was incorporated into the Community Strategic Plan.



### Easy Read Community Strategic Plan

An Easy Read version of our Community Strategic Plan was developed using simple text, pictures to explain text and lots of white space.

## Phase 2 – What we asked the community

In Phase 2 we asked the question 'Does the draft Community Strategic Plan, including the vision and goals capture the aspirations of our diverse community?' A total of 50 submissions were received during the exhibition of the draft Community Strategic Plan, and high level themes from those responses are summarised below.

## Phase 2 – What we heard

The draft Community Strategic Plan received broad support for its overall direction and vision with many appreciating its acknowledgement of Dharawal Country, focus on sustainability, and attempt to simplify the structure by consolidating goals. However, concerns were raised about the removal of key words, particularly the words 'we value and protect the natural environment' in the vision and goals, the word 'affordable' in relation to transport, and the word 'engaged' in relation to community and reference to 'education'.

### Vision and strategic direction

Overall, submissions showed support for the draft and considered the vision and goals to reflect the community's views. A number of submissions mentioned the improvement of the vision, with the inclusion of a reference to Dharawal Country. Many respondents encouraged Council to go further by explicitly including environmental protection and ecological sustainability. Some felt the emphasis on innovation and economic growth should be balanced with stronger commitments to education, equity, and an engaged community.

### Environment and climate

Submissions received asked for consideration of the words 'value and protect our natural environment', and stronger focus on ecological sustainability, or reference to environment in Goal 1. There were requests to strengthen mitigation at a strategy level, and some questions around why waste was grouped with greenhouse gas emissions.

Feedback asked why 'ecologically sustainable development' was related to the coast and Lake Illawarra and not applied more broadly. Several submissions gave suggestions, or requested clarity with regard to a particular Community Indicator, and some made suggestions for alternate Indicators. Other requests included updated biodiversity plans, and climate action. A minority opposed this direction, promoting nuclear energy and criticising renewable targets.

### Housing and development

A few submissions raised concerns about housing affordability, and there was a request for quality of new developments, and spaces. Other feedback included improved planning controls, developer accountability, and more timely delivery of essential services like schools, healthcare, and public spaces in growth areas. Consideration of the environment in planning and building design was a theme in a couple of submissions.



## Transport and connectivity

There was support for walking, cycling, and public transport, especially in growth areas. Feedback called for safer crossings, better connections, and improved cycling infrastructure, and wider concerns were raised about State Transport planning and poor public transport options. There were requests for the word 'affordable' in relation to transport to be referenced in the Plan, and a few submissions requested that 'affordable and accessible transport' be reinstated as a goal.

## Economy, creativity and culture

Submissions supported the focus on a diverse economy. Support was expressed for local artists, cultural events, and creative industries. Several submissions requested reference to 'education and learning'. Other requests included stronger promotion of Wollongong as a visitor destination, better integration of cultural infrastructure, and clearer roles for unions, universities, and TAFE NSW in actioning the strategies. One submission called for more attention to job quality, and one for workers' rights.

## Wellbeing and inclusion

Goal 4 – 'We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community' was supported overall with a few suggestions to be considered. Several submissions requested reference to 'local' fresh food. Healthcare, quality public space access, and inclusion were identified as important. Several submissions asked for the words 'engaged community' be referenced in the Plan, with calls for more participatory approaches and support for grassroots programs. A submission requested greater equity for vulnerable communities; to close disparities and take steps to address them. This includes greater access facilities, transport, resources and programs for high need areas in the LGA. A few submissions asked for Council to adopt the New South Wales State Governments 'Connecting with Country' Framework. There were requests for stronger inclusion of LGBTQIA+, people with disability, and multicultural communities.

## Clarity and accessibility of the Plan

Some submissions outlined a preference for shorter Community Strategic Plan Summary document. There were requests for definitions in the Plan, stronger environmental and social benchmarks, environmental data, and a jargon-free version.

## Feedback relating to Council's Services

The themes and priorities identified through both phases of engagement have directly shaped the structure and content of the draft Community Strategic Plan. Some of the feedback received, related to Council's services, projects, or infrastructure, sits outside the scope of the Plan. This feedback has been considered as part of the exhibition of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

# Overview of Phase 2 participation



# Communication results

An overview of the communication methods and distribution for Phases 1 and 2.

93,000	180,000	5,111	96,292
Postcards distributed	Community newsletters	Council E-News	Social media reach
27,000	1,609	3,411	1,432
Economic Development E-news	Emails sent to networks	Engagement HQ visits	Engagement HQ - informed
35	192	260	135
Conversations at Warrawong NAIDOC event	Conversations at Helensburgh Country Fair	Conversations at Culture Mix	Conversations at Transition to School Picnic
23	94	63	12
Conversations at Dapto Square	Conversations at Crown St Mall Friday Markets	Conversations at Beaton Park Leisure Centre	Conversations at Pride event
133	34	9	179
Attended community forum presentations	Outdoor and digital signs	Presentations at Network meetings	Attendance at Check In activities



# Participation results

Phases 1 and 2 overview of the participation results is shown below.



282	193	377	320
A4 Feedback Cards	Children's drawing sheets	Postcards received	Our Wollongong Our Future survey
166	71	9	30
Social media comments	Open Submissions	People experiencing homelessness in 1 workshop	Young people in 4 workshops
37	40	24	6
Aboriginal people in 3 workshops	Multicultural in 3 workshops	People with disability in 3 workshops	Older men in 1 workshop
35	37	605	502
Government + Business in 1 workshop	Participants in 5 Community Circles	Community Satisfaction Survey	Wellbeing Survey
1,479	272	5,858	10,343
Liveability Survey	Business Survey	Previous relevant engagements	Current + previous voices heard



# Our stakeholders



Photo credit: Rob Spreitzer

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Residents + ratepayers   |  Volunteers                |
|  Traditional custodians  |  Media                    |
|  Aboriginal communities  |  Business                 |
|  CALD communities        |  Industry groups          |
|  LGBTQI+ communities     |  Visitors + tourists      |
|  Young people            |  Council Reference Groups |
|  Children                |  Interest Groups          |
|  People with disability  |  Engagement HQ users      |
|  Commuters in/out of LGA |  Neighbourhood Forum/s    |
|  Homeless                |  Non-government agencies  |
|  Creatives               |  Government departments   |
|  Interest Groups         |  State and federal MP's   |
|  Educational intitutions |  Neighbouring Councils    |



# Acknowledgements

We thank everyone who joined the conversation about Our Wollongong Our Future. You've contributed to the development of plan that will guide the direction of Wollongong into the future.

This journey involved conversations with thousands of people at events, online, schools and community meetings. We met many new people along the way, heard their stories and explored how to make their dreams come true.

We hope you feel it has been a creative, interesting and genuine experience. We extend our thanks to you and our wish to continue working together as we strive to achieve your goals.

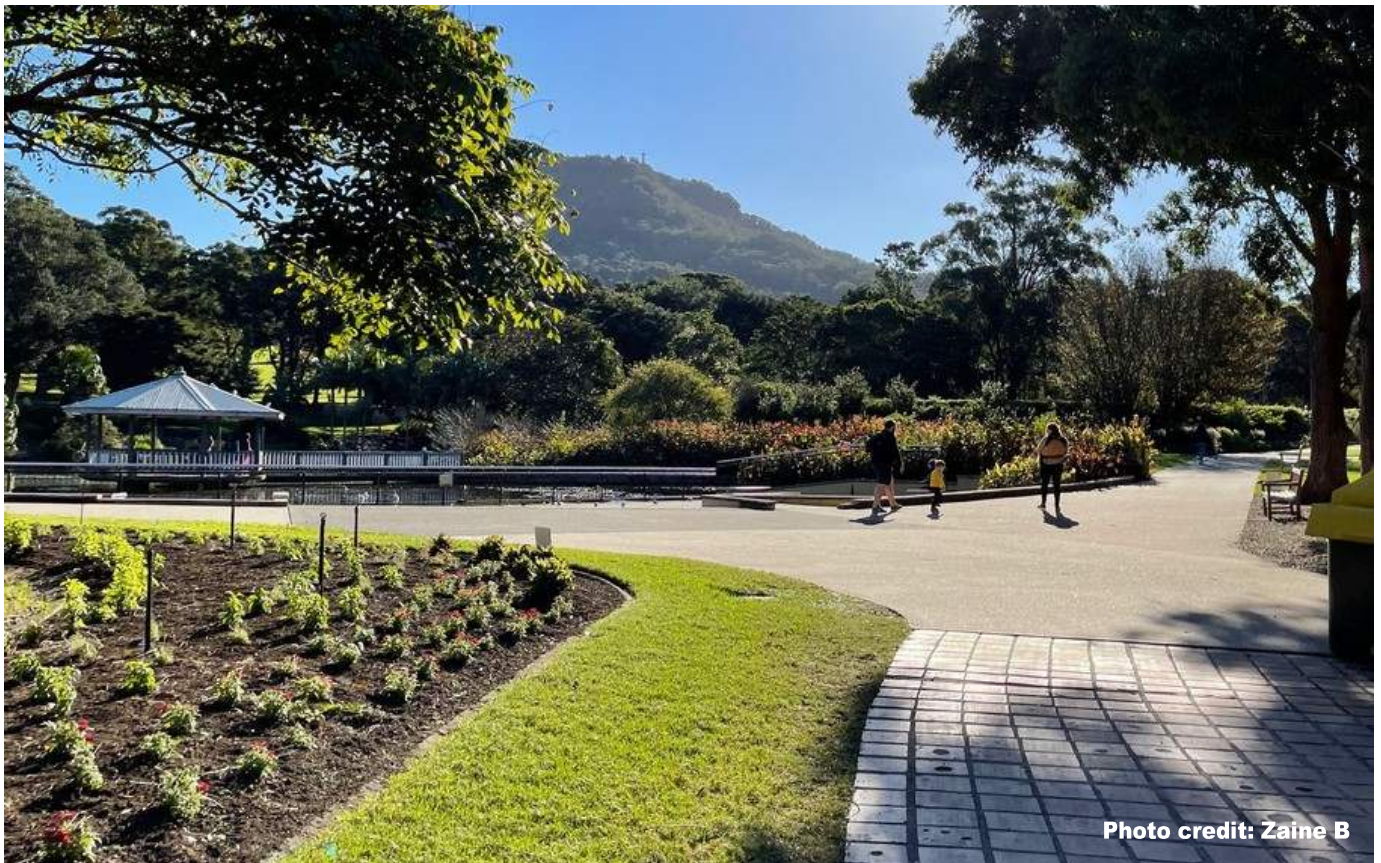


Photo credit: Zaine B

OUR WOLLONGONG JOIN THE CONVERSATION

[our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au](http://our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au)  
[engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au)  
4227 7111

