



**Murrumbidgee**  
COUNCIL

## **Community Strategic Plan**

**Towards 2032**

## **Community Engagement Report**

April 2022

### Why we reached out to the community

We recently ran a campaign to gather information about the community's priorities and aspirations for the future, with the intent to use the information to guide the review of the existing Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The CSP is a 10 year picture of the community's collective visions for the Murrumbidgee Council area and how they will be achieved. In essence, it is a plan for our community, guided and driven by our community. The existing document was adopted in 2018 and the incoming Council is required to review the Plan and adopt it by the 30 June 2022.

Feedback and ideas from the community are sought over two rounds. The initial round was undertaken from 2 February to 31 March 2022, with the aim to learn more of the community's priorities and aspirations for the future. This report provides information on the first round of engagement and details how we engaged, who we engaged with and what we have learnt. The feedback will then be used to draft the revised Community Strategic Plan. The second round of engagement will be undertaken when the draft plan is adopted by Council, and it is placed on public exhibition.

### How we engaged

We sought feedback from the community from 2 February to 31 March 2022. Our engagement activities targeted these stakeholders, as follows:

Target Audience	Communication Tool used	Response
Murrumbidgee Council residents (including ratepayers and non-ratepayers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community survey mailed to all households and available online</li> <li>• Digital ideas boards on social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) – posted on Council pages and each town's 'I live in xx' pages</li> <li>• Ideas boards in Council office foyers and at events</li> <li>• Mayoral newspaper columns</li> <li>• Posters in the community</li> <li>• Word of mouth and e-word of mouth</li> <li>• Stories in the media</li> <li>• Council's website</li> </ul>	258 responses (14.6%)
Community organisations and interests groups	Council's monthly e-newsletter (500+ subscribers).	

Online audience	Targeted ad campaign on social media (targeting the age demographic)	
Business and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail to Business Chambers</li> <li>• Direct mail to businesses</li> </ul>	
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Survey</li> <li>• Articles in school newsletters</li> <li>• Targeted ad campaign on social media (targeting the age demographic)</li> </ul>	35 responses (5%)
Councillors and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing at Council Meeting</li> <li>• Email updates to Councillors and Staff</li> </ul>	

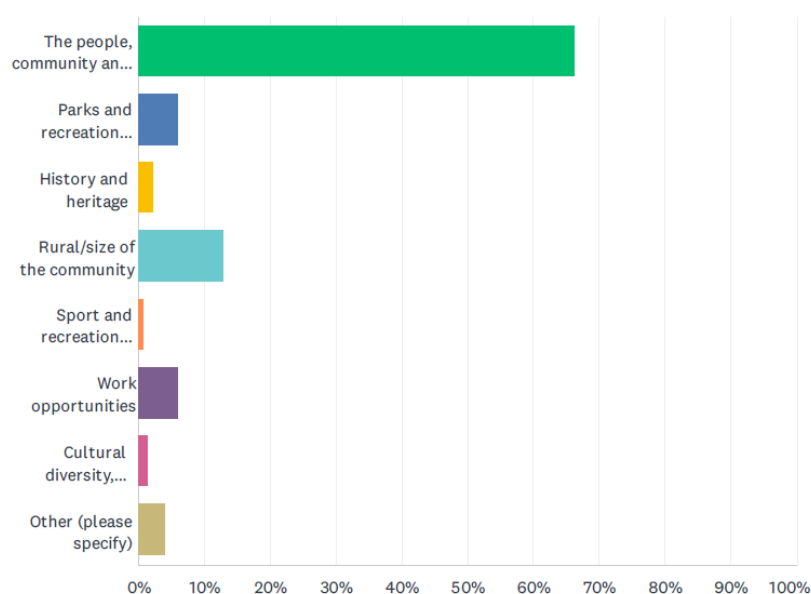
### What we learnt:

#### COMMUNITY SURVEY

Responses received: 258 responses (14.6%) – making the findings reliable.

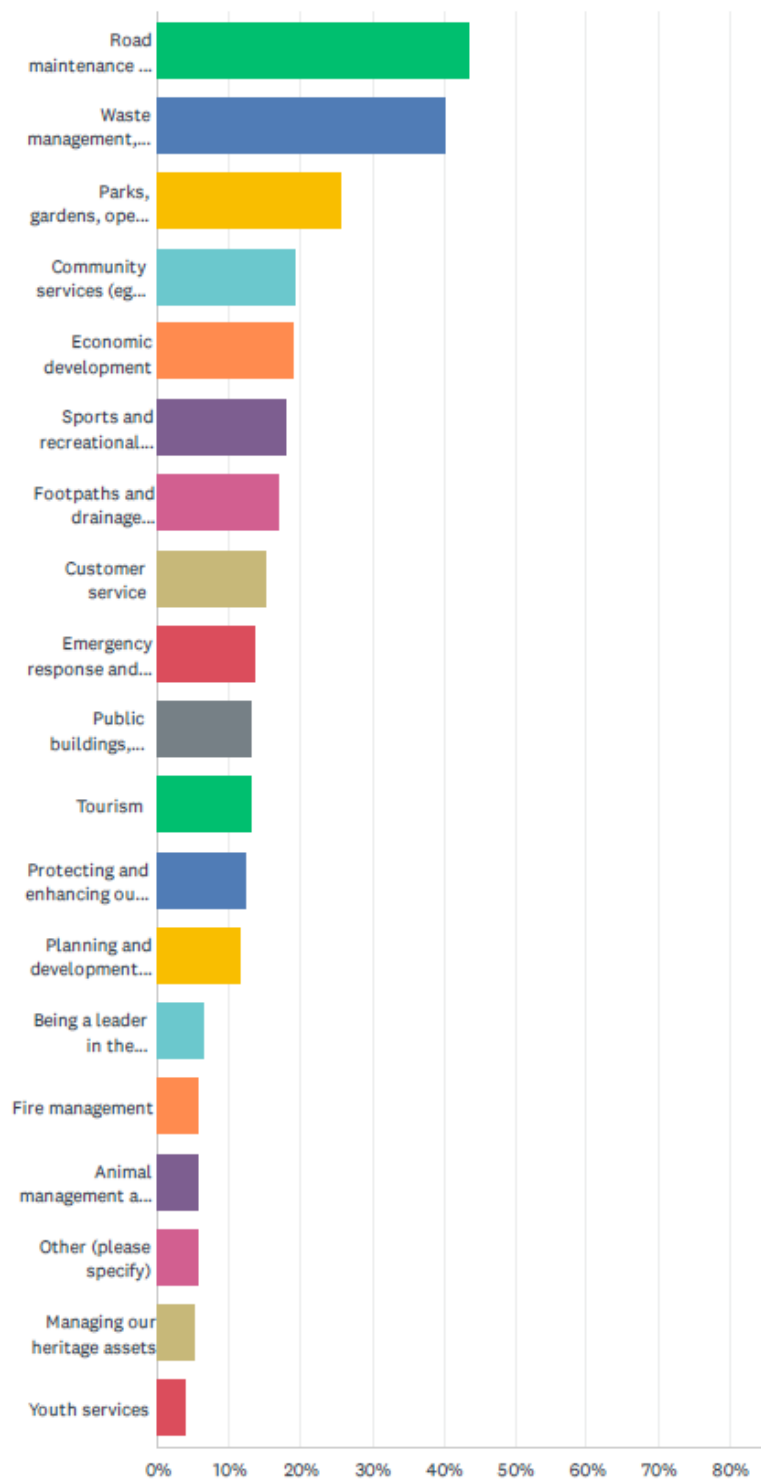
The top three answers are provided as a summary.

**Question 1. The best thing about living in the Murrumbidgee Council area is overwhelmingly the people, community and lifestyle, followed by rural/size of community, which is a similar answer.**



**Question 2. The most important Council services were deemed:**

1. Road maintenance and construction
2. Waste management, rubbish control and recycling services
3. Parks, gardens, open space and playgrounds



**Question 3. The Council services people are most and least satisfied with:** (43.70% of respondents said they had dealt with Council in the last 2 years and this influenced their answer [question 4]):

Most satisfied with (combining 'somewhat satisfied' with 'very satisfied')	Most dissatisfied with (combining 'somewhat dissatisfied' with 'very dissatisfied')
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public amenities</li> <li>2. Parks, gardens, open spaces and playgrounds</li> <li>3. Sports and recreational facilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roads, footpath and drainage construction and maintenance</li> <li>2. Aged, disabled and health services</li> <li>3. Economic development and tourism</li> </ol>

**Question 5 - Key words to describe how the community wants our area to look in 10 years' time:**

Popular descriptions were:

- Peaceful, tranquil, clean, tidy/well kept
- Progressive
- Environmentally proactive/responsible, sustainable
- Thriving, prosperous, vibrant, happy
- Small, as it is now
- Inclusive and welcoming
- Safe
- Sense of community

**Question 6 – Biggest challenges were:**

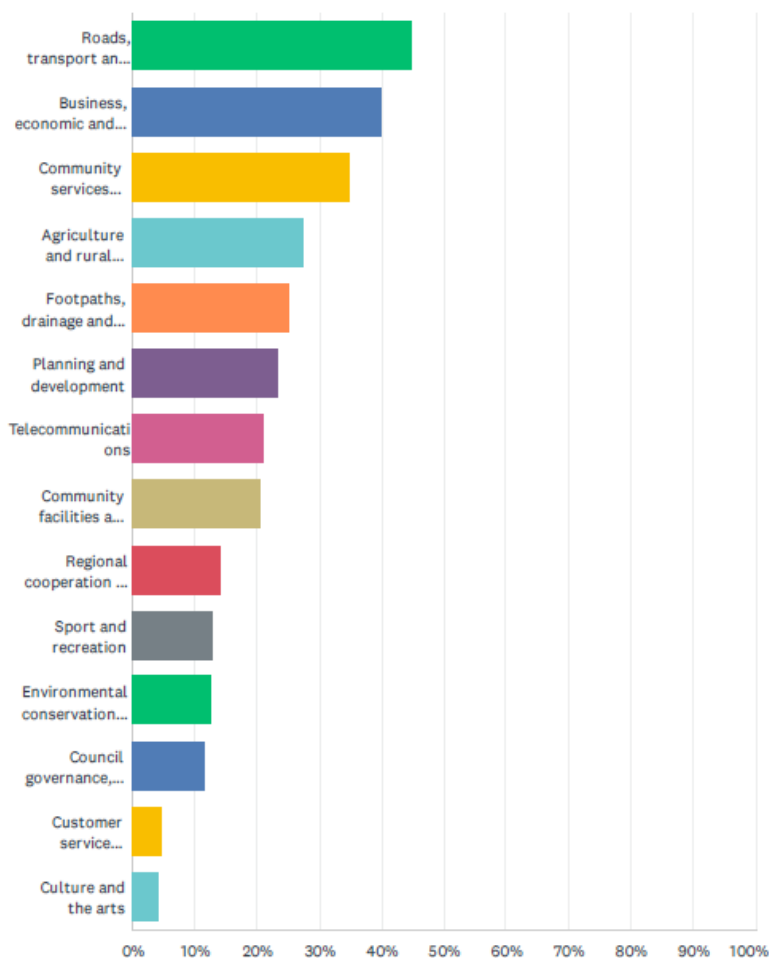
- Job opportunities/employment, youth employment, labour shortages,
- Housing/accommodation/land availability
- Population growth/avoiding decline
- Water security
- Ageing population/aged care services
- Tourism growth
- Business and retail growth
- Medical and health services
- Retention of youth/youth engagement
- Drugs/alcohol/crime/gambling
- Climate change

**Questions 7, 9 and 10. The services the community supports or opposes Council's involvement in:**

Most support (combining 'somewhat support with 'strongly support')	Most oppose (combining 'somewhat oppose with 'strongly oppose')
<p><b>COMMUNITY</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safety in our community</li> <li>2. Council's facilities, such as the Library, pools and skate parks</li> <li>3. Health and wellbeing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culture and the arts</li> <li>2. Events/entertainment for our youth and seniors</li> <li>3. Health and wellbeing</li> </ol>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing waste and recycling</li> <li>2. Managing weeds</li> <li>3. Protecting waterways and catchments</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preserving and showcasing our heritage</li> <li>2. Promoting environmental sustainability in our natural or built environment</li> <li>3. Balancing growth, development and environmental protection</li> </ol>
<p><b>ECONOMY</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assisting new and existing businesses, industry and investment</li> <li>2. Enhancing and promoting educational opportunities</li> <li>3. Supporting a diverse agricultural industry</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing residential and industrial land in the Council area</li> <li>2. Building on tourism strategies and opportunities</li> <li>3. Working with Government, joint organisations, other Councils and stakeholders</li> </ol>
<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The maintenance and construction of rural roads</li> <li>2. The maintenance and construction of urban roads</li> <li>3. New and existing community facilities/services</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The maintenance and construction of footpaths and the drainage network</li> <li>2. The maintenance and construction of rural roads</li> <li>3. Water, stormwater and wastewater</li> </ol>

**Question 8 – People want Murrumbidgee Council to focus on the following three things for the next 10 years:**

1. Roads, transport and connectivity
2. Business, economic and tourism opportunities
3. Community services (including youth, senior, disability and family support services)



### Qualitative feedback received from the Community Survey

**Comments on community facilities or services** (sorted by Department). Popular answers have been highlighted (ie responses of at least 5).

This section includes Question 12 of Community Survey, ideas boards in offices, at community events, engagement on social media channels, and engagement with businesses.

#### Infrastructure and Planning and Environment

- Improved drainage
  - Darlington Point township
  - Nowranie Street gutter – highway end
  - Pipe all table drains along eastern side of Hay Road
  - Fix and repair concrete culverts/replace with pipe
- Improved town water supply (Darlington Point and Jerilderie)
- Totally renewable energy
- Solar energy production by Council to offset Council's electricity costs
- Natural gas (Darlington Point)
- Telecommunications improved
- Free wifi

- Community hubs
- More focus on parks/better maintained
- Fence around Lions Park (Darlington Point)
- No feral animals
- Dog parks
- Improved ranger service/companion animal control
- Simplified development conditions
- Improved environmental controls to stop people removing trees without approval
- Nature playgrounds
- Amphitheatre
- Improve the pools at Darlington Point and Coleambally
- Maintain tracks in The Common (Darlington Point)
- Walking tracks on the levee bank (Darlington Point)
- Affordable and low impact housing
- More lifestyle blocks
- Move industry to outskirts of town
- Recycling services (Jerilderie)
- Rural garbage collection and recycling
- Industrial development
- Protecting heritage
- Expansion of sensitive housing
- Tidier front yards
- Seating and tables at the pool and skate parks
- Better play equipment
- Cash for Cans unit (return and earn)
- Ramps and electric opening doors into shops for elderly
- Toilets at each park that has a playground
- More road train access
- Truck parking areas in town
- Use of better quality road base on edge of bitumen roads
- All roads should have six metre “clear zone” from edge of road
- Add Murrumbidgee LGA to the Farm Gate Access Scheme for Heavy Vehicles – allows truck operators to cart grain throughout the LGA permit free (10 likes and positive comments on Facebook post)
- Improve rural road network
- Better maintenance of what we have instead of new facilities
- Replace road signs on rural roads
- Public transport
- Disabled facilities
- Complete and tidy up what we have before starting new ventures
- Every grant or infrastructure project should have a local project manager attached to the project – include in grant application.
- Provide infrastructure that benefits the whole community – cohesive, planning
- Maintain channels and mow all town surrounds, especially between Kidman Way and Coleambally



- Toilets and seating at all cemeteries
- Shade trees at cemeteries
- Heavy truck bypass (Darlington Point and Jerilderie)
- Make main street safer for pedestrians, lower speed limit (Darlington Point)
- Toilet at skate park (Darlington Point)
- Keep cemetery clean and tidy (Darlington Point)
- Amenities at Town Beach (Darlington Point)
- Expansion of housing subdivision (Darlington Point)
- Improve Darlington Point Golf Course
- Gym with after-hours access (Darlington Point)
- Smarten up the crossroads (Darlington Point)
- Recycle bins at sporting grounds and river entrances (Darlington Point)
- Move football oval to golf course to allow for affordable housing (Darlington Point)
- SES (Darlington Point)
- All weather truck parking bay (Darlington Point)
- More retail space allowing for CBD expansion (Darlington Point)
- Footpaths and bike paths (Darlington Point)
- More picnic areas and gardens – better maintained (Darlington Point)
- Water slide at pool (Darlington Point)
- Maintain recreation equipment properly – eg fix outdoor gym equipment, fix kid's playground cover (Darlington Point)
- Indoor squash courts (Darlington Point)
- More bins in the RV friendly area (Darlington Point)
- Roof over the basketball court (Darlington Point)
- Digital sign to announce community events (Darlington Point)
- Indoor sports centre (Darlington Point)
- Business hub (Darlington Point)
- Sealed/all-weather airstrip (Coleambally and Darlington Point)
- A lake/community water park (Coleambally)
- Tasteful streetscape in Coleambally – no more sterile additions, eg like the new centre islands
- Footpaths in residential areas (Coleambally)
- Disabled access to Brolga Place (Coleambally)
- Improve Kookaburra Avenue to all one width with kerb and guttering both sides (Coleambally)
- Residential development (Coleambally)
- Pull down old masonic hall and redevelop site for tourist information office with public toilets or museum/art gallery (Coleambally)
- Outdoor community meeting areas (Coleambally)
- Street sign for sports precinct (Coleambally)
- Indoor recreation centre – 10 pin bowling or roller skating (Coleambally)
- Expansion of sensitive housing along creek corridors to protect the environment and also connect community with water (Jerilderie)
- Dedicated bike trail/rail track (Jerilderie)

- 40 km from the Jerilderie Hospital to Golf Club
- No ugly sheds in the main street (Jerilderie)
- New/improved medical centre (Jerilderie)
- Disability aged care (Jerilderie)
- Upgrade the hospital – more beds (Jerilderie)
- Medical centre housing (Jerilderie)
- New club rooms and better building at Monash Park (Jerilderie)
- More pathways along the creek (Jerilderie)
- New nature reserve with native trees – for recreation and walking (Jerilderie)
- Restaurant/nice café near lake (Jerilderie)
- More presentable main street – improve the 80s vibe and empty shops (Jerilderie)
- More street trees/shade (eg Lockhart)
- Streetscape improvements (Jerilderie)
- Planting at Monash House (Jerilderie)
- Car wash and truck wash (Jerilderie)
- More shade/BBQ areas around lake (Jerilderie)
- Splash Park/slides at pool (Jerilderie)
- Street sign for Mahonga Street (Jerilderie)
- Decent banking and Post Office facilities (Jerilderie)
- Water tank art (Jerilderie)
- Building inspectors available for consultation

### Community Services

- Adult education/U3A
- Community hub including meeting spaces, youth activity, free wifi (Darlington Point)
- More regular Service NSW visits or office
- More services for veterans/ex-service members
- More facilities and services for the elderly, nursing home (Darlington Point)
- Affordable community transport for seniors
- Bring back community service for the elderly
- Childcare services, Day care (Coleambally and Darlington Point)
- A library in Darlington Point and Coleambally
- Meals on wheels (Darlington Point)
- Retirement village (Jerilderie)
- Aged care units (Darlington Point)
- Higher level aged care (Coleambally and Darlington Point)
- Palliative care (Coleambally)
- Good range of health facilities/better health care options
- New medical centre for Jerilderie
- More activities and services for youth
- TAFE facility
- Council staff member to keep elderly people's gardens in order
- Heated swimming pools
- Ambulance Service (Darlington Point)

- Better police services (Darlington Point)
- Extra doctors (or available more often – Darlington Point and Coleambally)
- Upgrade medical technology in doctor's surgery (Darlington Point)
- Dental clinic (Darlington Point and Coleambally)
- Community support for the elderly (Coleambally)
- Bank (Jerilderie)
- ATM reinstalled (Jerilderie)
- Family friendly events (Darlington Point)
- More/weekly youth activities (particularly Darlington Point between 6 and 8 pm – social problem)
- Free entry to the pools to continue
- Community art and cultural displays

### Governance

- Well managed/sustainable Council
- More Council workers – understaffed
- Improve communication, with more transparency
- Treat all towns equally
- Sustainable rates
- Provide incentive for paying rates for the whole year
- Produce information bulletin to replace newspaper
- More responsive Council staff (returning phone calls, etc)
- More collaboration with community on environmental projects
- Sensible spending of money

### Economic Development and Tourism

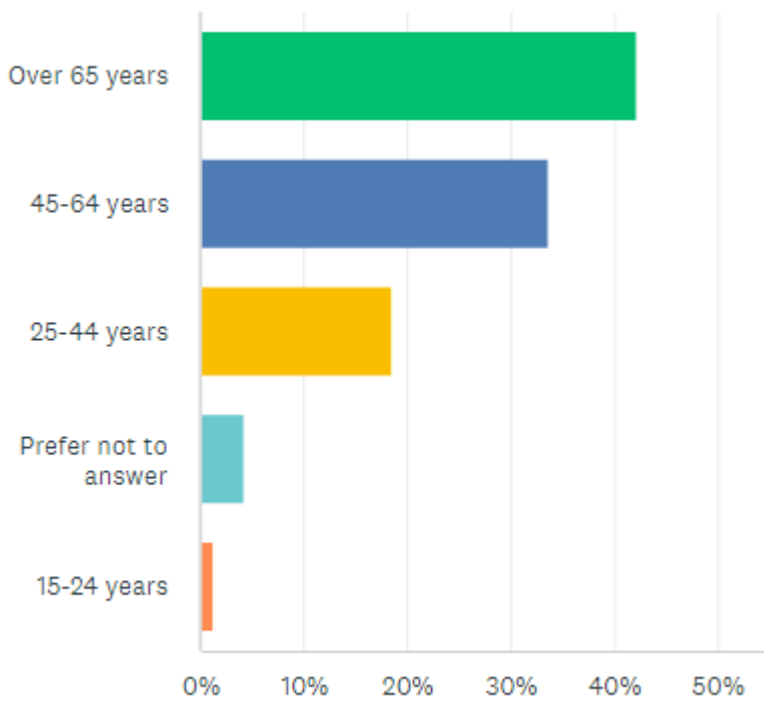
- Better economic development activities
- Better job opportunities
- More businesses open
- Population growth
- More activities, festivals and markets (especially on weekend)
- Arts/culture festivals
- Manufacturing company – recycling plant
- Encourage/facilitate access to freight connectivity facilities
- More tourism
- Education tours within area – eg agriculture
- Tourist office (Darlington Point)
- Functioning attractions (Jerilderie)
- Ned Kelly Festival (Jerilderie)
- Camping sites along Billabong (Jerilderie)
- Walking trails throughout the LGA
- Large free camping areas for tourism
- Meet the needs of business/tourism
- More dining options

- New businesses: Automatic car wash; newsagency and bakery (Coleambally); bakery (Darlington Point); coffee shop open on weekends
- Reopen Jerilderie Mini Rail
- Development of Willows precinct as function centre to hire out/hospitality business (Jerilderie)
- More information for new residents
- Better collaboration between Council and businesses

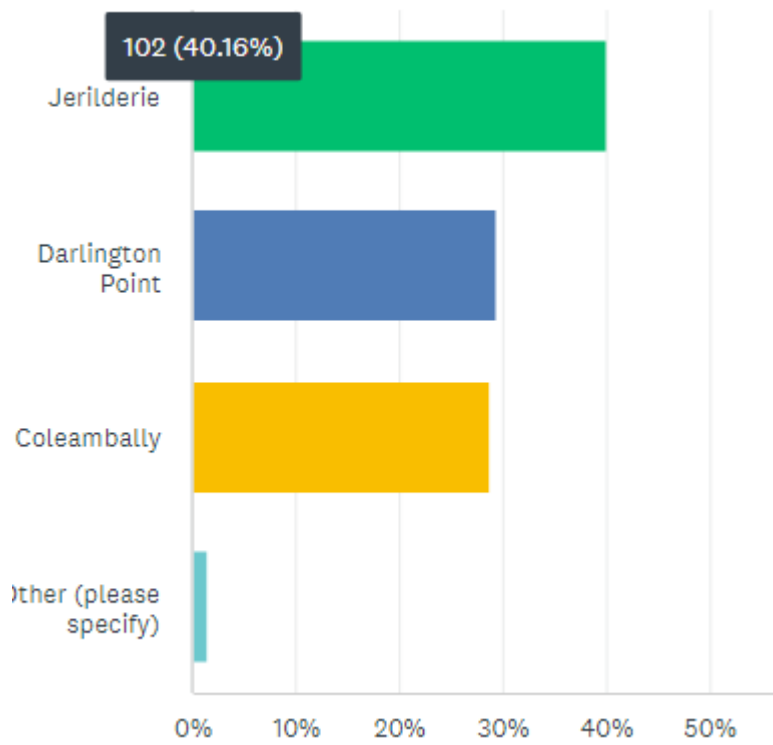
**Demographic information**

Male: 43.08%, Female: 50.99%

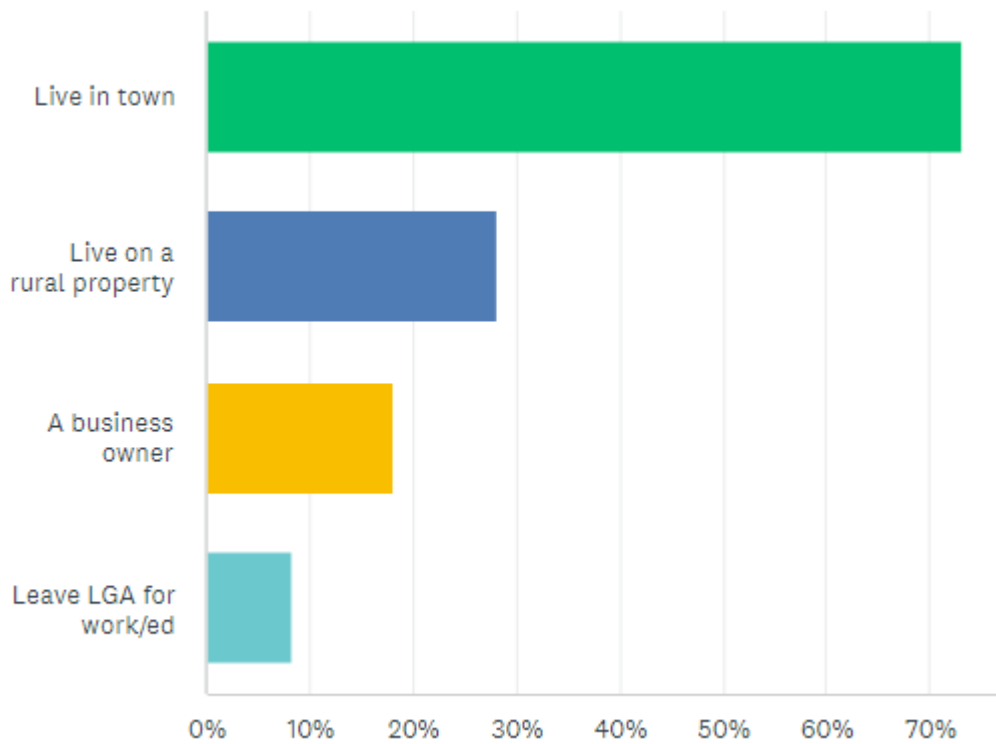
Age range:



Town: Jerilderie: 40.14%  
Darlington Point: 29.53%  
Coleambally: 28.74%



Other information:



## YOUTH SURVEY

Responses received: 35, this makes the findings reliable as they are within the response range of 5%.

### Question 4 – Best part about your town

Most popular answer:

- Peaceful and friendly, small town feel – most people know each other, welcoming, wonderful community, close-knit community, community spirit

Other popular answers:

- Safe
- Clean and quiet
- Family
- Parks and recreation, spending time at the river, new skate park (Jerilderie), beautiful river and bushland (Darlington Point)
- History and heritage
- Sports mad community and facilities, free activities like the skate park

### Question 5 – Biggest challenges for young people

Most popular answer:

- Finding work

Other popular answers:

- Lack of shopping
- Boredom
- Entertainment, more planned activities and cultural events, things to do outside of football and netball, somewhere to catch up besides pub
- Access to services and opportunities, banking and healthcare
- Out of touch Councillors
- Distance
- Quality education, having to relocate for university
- Access to public transport
- Social problems – eg drugs

### Question 6 – Things most important, especially those that influence the decision to keep living here

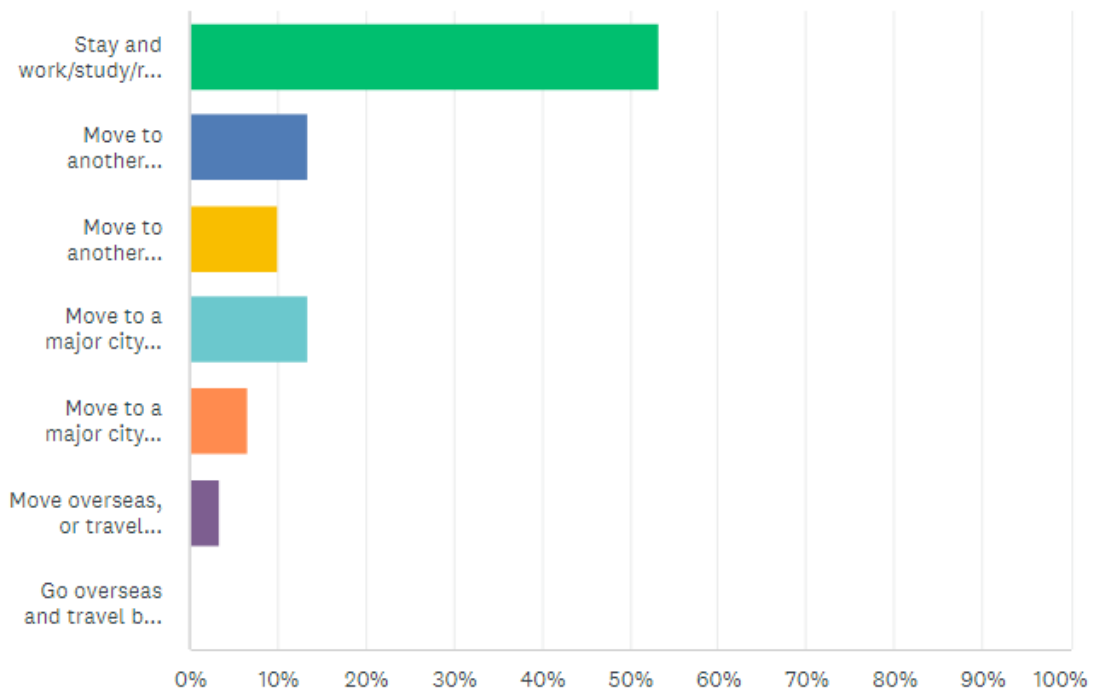
The top responses were (all similar response levels):

1. Recreation facilities and clubs (eg sports, arts, gyms, theatres, BMX tracks)
2. Roads and public transport
3. The range of employment opportunities and jobs
4. Places to socialise, eg restaurants, cafes, pubs and clubs
5. Being close to family and friends
6. Access to health care

### Question 7 – Most likely outcome as an adult

The top responses were:

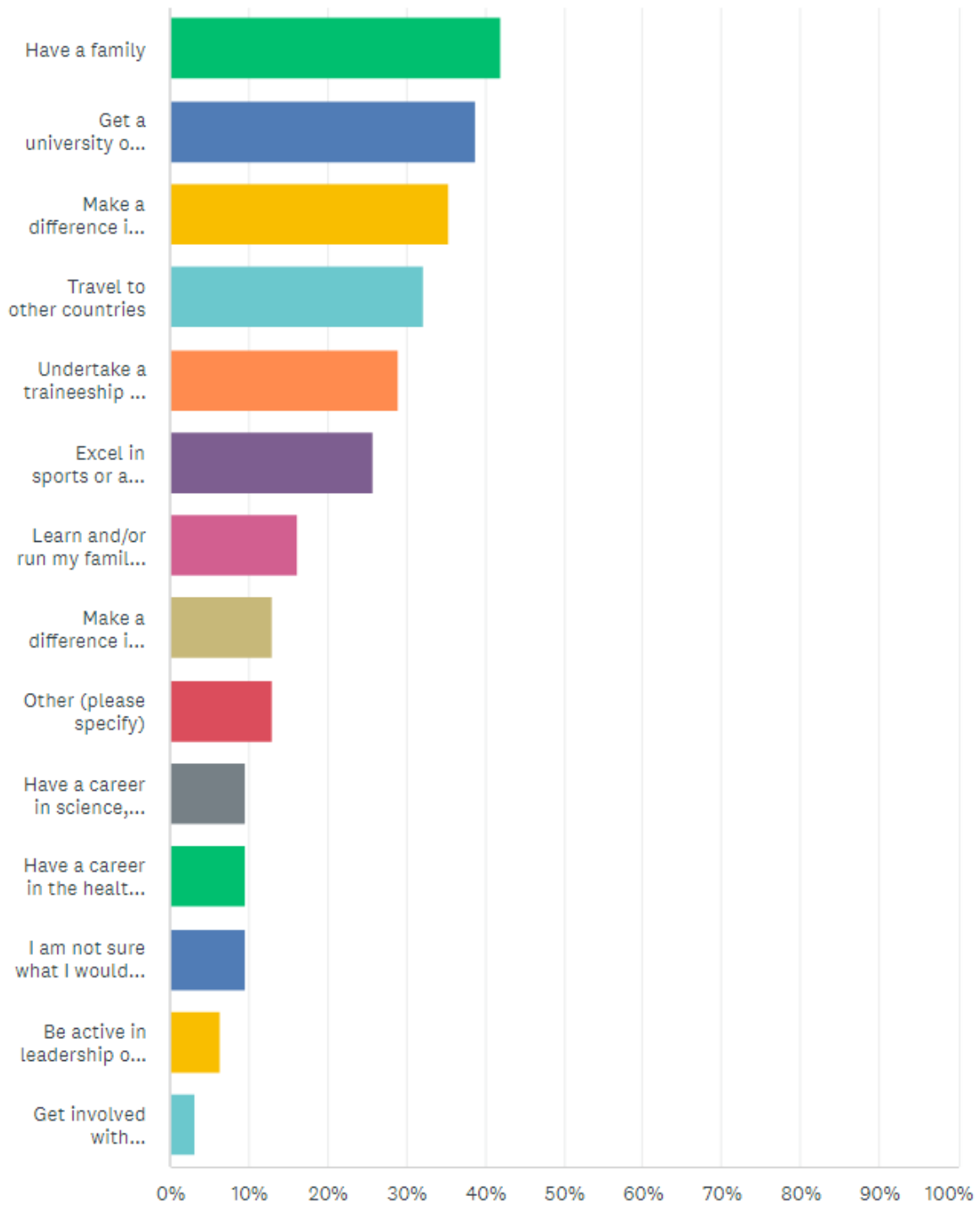
1. Stay and work/study/raise a family in the region
2. Move to another regional area for work or study or to be with friends and stay indefinitely
3. Move to another regional area for work or study or to be with friends/family but return after a few years and settle in Murrumbidgee Council area
4. Move to a major city (e.g. Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney) for work or study or to be with friends/family and stay indefinitely



### Question 8 – Aims before turning 30

The top responses were:

1. Have a family
2. Get a university degree, TAFE degree or similar
3. Make a difference in the community





### Question 9 – Events/opportunities desired in our Council area

- More classes in arts and crafts
- Women’s shed
- More community fetes and markets, day festival with local produce, religious events, cultural events, health seminars, clean up days, more local concerts, live music (outside), car show/car events, gala nights, senior pool party (7pm to 10 pm)
- Programs to foster youth engagement and safety – eg driver safety, volunteer opportunities, pop up netball clinics, photography course, art classes
- Water parks around the river
- Aqua island on lake
- Splash Park near the Skate Park with food van in the holidays (Jerilderie)
- Social activities to meet people
- Work with other Councils to promote people going to each other’s towns
- Better health care
- Lake at Coleambally

### Demographic information

Male: 45.71%, Female: 51.43%

Age range: No longer a student and working part-time/full-time 25.71%  
 University/college/TAFE student 20%  
 Junior high student (years 7-10) 17.14%  
 No longer student and not working 14.29%

Town: Jerilderie (44.12%)  
 Darlington Point (17.65%)  
 Coleambally (44.12%)