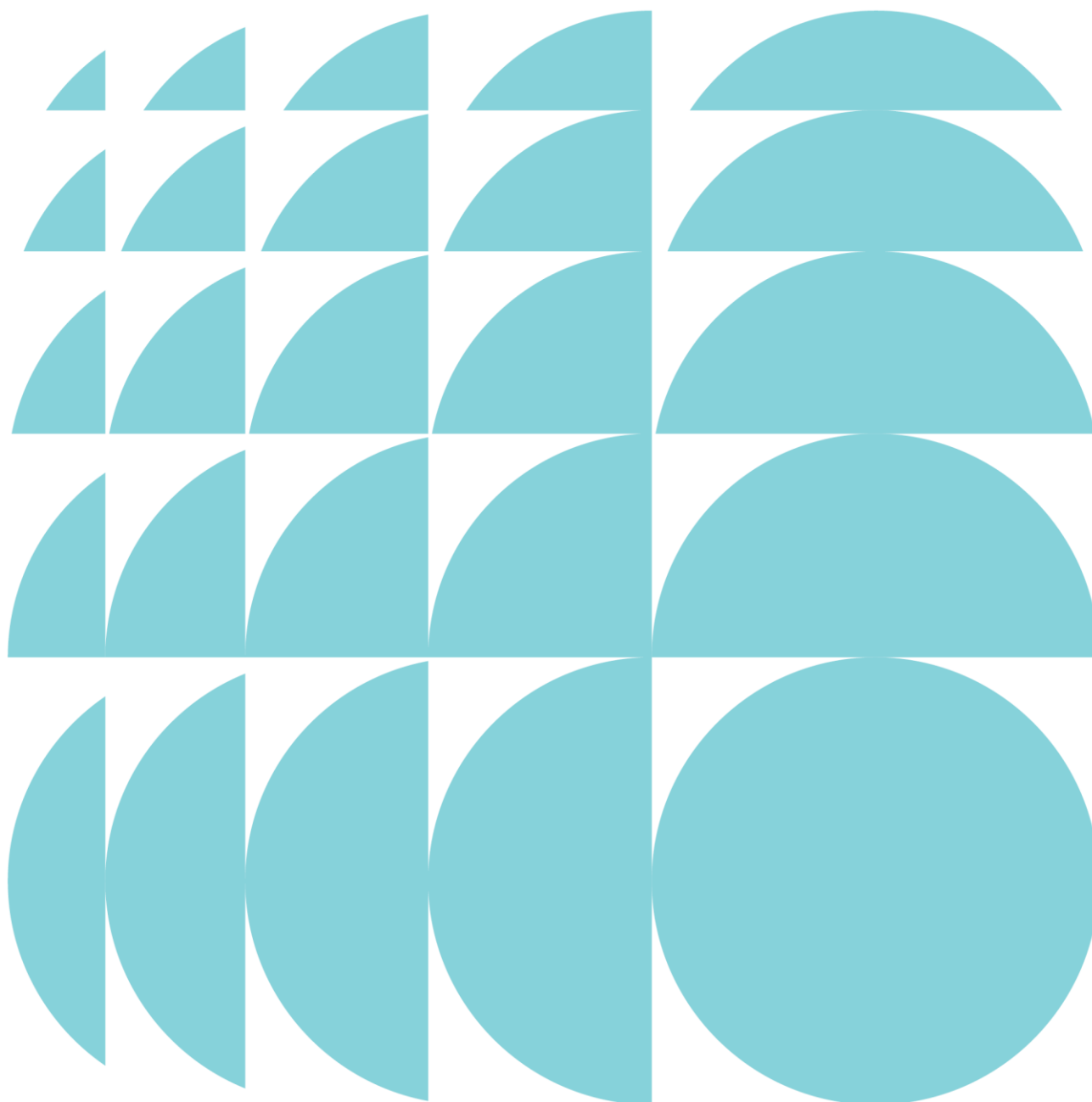




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The Study Team recognises that Macleay Valley has an ancient and proud Aboriginal history. We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and offer our respect to the past and present Elders, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the wonderful Macleay Valley community for sharing their opinions, experiences aspirations for the present and future of the region.

1.0 Introduction

Ethos Urban and Otium Planning Group are preparing the Macleay Community Infrastructure Strategy for Kempsey Shire Council. This report provides a summary of the “Your Future: Places and Spaces” community consultation undertaken from July to September 2019.

The purpose of this engagement was to understand the current use, values, opportunities and aspirations for community infrastructure across the shire. The campaign sought the views of the general population (residents and works), community groups and volunteers as well as relevant local businesses, organisations and Council officers. Your Future: Places and Spaces involved targeted, online and broad community consultation activities.

For the purposes of this report the term ‘community infrastructure’ includes community facilities, social services, public open space and recreation areas.

1.1 Macleay Valley Community Infrastructure Strategy

The Macleay Community Infrastructure Plan is a 20-year plan which will seek to ensure that community facilities, services and spaces meet the needs of the current and future community of Kempsey. The plan will provide a practical guide for planning and managing community infrastructure across the Shire that is responsive to the population and demographic profile, local values and aspirations as well as the role and characteristics of the shire’s diverse townships. It will also assist with ongoing asset management and inform future investment decisions by Council. The Macleay Community Infrastructure Plan will:

- Clearly articulate current supply and benchmarked need for community infrastructure.
- Identify current and future gaps in provision of community infrastructure.
- Deliver clear guidance on how community infrastructure may best be provided and managed to sustain liveability and community wellbeing across the Shire.

There are certain elements the plan will not cover. This includes:

- Delivery of facilities and programs that are governed by the NSW State Government.
- Financial requirements and the ability of Council to fund new or refurbished community infrastructure identified in the plan.
- Individual needs of persons in the community.
- Crown land.

2.0 Engagement Approach

Your Future: Places and Spaces comprised a series of outreach activities across the region between July and September. Approximately 119 people from across the region actively participated in engagement activities.

2.1 Engagement Objectives

The overarching objectives of engagement associated with Your Future: Places and Spaces were to:

- Understand which community facilities and open space/recreation areas are used and valued;
- Understand how people use community infrastructure and open space/recreation areas and what is needed in the future to make the Macleay a better place to live; and
- Identify and understand the issues and opportunities associated with the use, operation and maintenance of community infrastructure and open space/recreation areas.

2.2 Engagement Approach

Table 1 presents a summary of the consultation activities undertaken. It also outlines the number of participants reached through each activity. In some instances, an approximate number of participants is provided as not all attendees completed the sign in sheet.

The engagement campaign was publicised using the following channels:

- Social media – A series of posts were made on Council's Facebook and Instagram page leading up to and during community consultation advertising the project and consultation opportunities. A Facebook event was created for the South West Rocks and Kempsey Community Workshops.
- Media Release – published in the Macleay Argus newspaper and sent directly to Your Say Macleay newsletter subscribers and community/organisation contact database via email.
- Poster drop around Crescent Head
- Project mention in the Mayoral Column
- Council Notices
- Website – Your Say Macleay homepage included a direct link to survey and advertised the workshops, providing a link to RSVP to attend.

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Activities

Activity	Purpose	Location	No. Participants
Your Say website	- Inform the community of the project, its scope and timeframes - Provide information and links to engagement activities	Council's website	376
Survey	- Understand what and how community infrastructure and facilities are currently used - Identify key issues and opportunities relating to community infrastructure in their community and across the Shire - Understand what factors are important to accessing different community facilities and services - Understand the community's aspirations for community infrastructure	Online via Council's website Hard copies provided at Council services centres and at community engagements activities	30
Community Workshops	- Provide an overview of the Macleay Community Infrastructure Plan project - Understand community aspirations for community infrastructure - Understand what and how community infrastructure is currently used - Identify key issues and opportunities associated with existing community infrastructure across the Shire - Discuss future needs and priorities	South West Rocks	Approx. 30
		Kempsey	1*
		Crescent Head	Approx. 50
Workshop with School Students	- Engage with youth who may not be aware of the project and understand what are the key priorities for children - Understand what and how community infrastructure is currently used - Identify key issues and opportunities associated with existing community infrastructure across the Shire - Discuss future needs and priorities	Crescent Head State School	46
Crescent Head Community Drop In	- Engage community members that may not be aware of the project - Provide community members with copies of the survey and project information - Understand what community infrastructure and facilities are currently used by the community - Discuss future community infrastructure needs - Discuss key issues and opportunities relating to community infrastructure in their community and the Shire	Crescent Head	Approx. 30
Focus Group	- Understand what facilities are used by persons with disabilities (within the shire and across the region) - Investigate if there are facilities across the shire that would like to be used by people with disabilities - Identify improvements and opportunities for community infrastructure across the shire to benefit people of all abilities	Kempsey	7

Activity	Purpose	Location	No. Participants
One-on-One Meetings	Detailed discussion with key representatives / volunteers / facilities managers from the region	Various across the shire	5
Telephone interviews	Interviews with community groups/organisations, community hall managers, school principals and facility operators to: - Understand use of particular facilities / spaces / services - Understand the capacity of facilities and frequency of use - Discuss any improvements required to existing community facilities	Various across the shire	17

* There were construction works being undertaken at the location where the Kempsey Community Workshop was held, meaning that it was difficult for people to access the venue. This is assumed to have affected participant numbers at this event.



Participants at the South West Rocks workshop

3.0 Community Consultation Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings by consultation activity. All comments recorded at workshops, drop-in sessions and focus groups have been transcribed. The comments have been grouped by workshop, activity and analysed thematically (as required).

The thematic approach used in this report is necessarily subjective and required the exercise of professional judgement as to how comments are summarised and categorised. The advantage of this approach is that it provides a useful means of identifying significant themes and priorities within highly variable and detailed responses.

3.1 South West Rocks Workshop

This section presents the findings from the South West Rocks Workshop. There were three workshop activities undertaken at the session, including:

- Visioning activity: What is the vision for community places and spaces?
- Information gathering: What places and spaces do you use? How could they be improved?
- Looking to the future: What are the key priorities for this strategy to address? What places, spaces and services are needed to support the outcomes envisaged?

3.1.1 Vision

Participants were asked what is important to them when they think about community infrastructure in the future. The key themes from feedback are summarised below.

Theme	Summary of findings
Accessibility	• More footpaths and bike paths that are safe, useable and accessible for all • Better access to Kempsey and Port Macquarie (bus services)
Communication	• Improved communication between Council and the community
Access to open space and our natural environment	• Improve existing open space areas (e.g. Back Creek) • Parks and open space areas with BBQ's, shelters, playgrounds and dog parks • Celebrate, protect and retain our beautiful natural environment
Access for all abilities	• Better access to council facilities and infrastructure for persons with disabilities and the elderly
Need for a new library	• South West Rocks needs a new and bigger library

3.1.2 Information Gathering

Participants were asked to identify which community facilities they currently use (within South West Rocks, within the Macleay Valley and outside the Macleay Valley) and how these facilities could be improved in the future. The table below lists the facilities the communities use and suggested improvements.

Place, space or service	Feedback
Back Creek foot bridge, reserve and break wall	• New bridge, toilets, showers, walkway • More tables required • Dog walking • Improved but clarify where off leash is • Swimming • Access the back beach

Place, space or service	Feedback
	• Large rubbish bins on holidays • Toilets on holidays • Landings for recreation on and near Back Creek shore either side of the footbridge • Needs safe entry to the water • Needs more facilities
Boyters Lane wetlands	• Signage- many people unaware of this beautiful resource
Brighten Park	• Should have toilets • Should be made into a dog park • Could be a speciality dog park • Fenced/off leash
Horseshoe Bay Reserve and shelter shed (housey shed)	• More tables/benches • Meeting space for BBQs and families – important for locals, Australia/Father's Day events • Well maintained/recently rebuilt, better shelter on sides • Children's play area at Horseshoe Bay
Maritime museum	• Excellent facility
All medical centres	• Need to attract new doctors • Very frustrating for new residents – no spaces, need to go to Kempsey
Roads	• Maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. Back Creek Bridge, signs that aren't policed - no camping, no stopping, no drinking)
Library	• A new library would be good - the one we have now needs renewing • Great location – keep it here • Use for community notices on outside of building • Not big enough, not enough room for resources • Needs more programs, more variety of books • More non-fiction books to library
Main Beach	• Historic signage at the wrecks
Swimming pool	• Heated • Old, leaks, needs upgrade and improvements • Aqua fitness, recreation, health • Needs disabled access
Open space generally	• Honoway Rangers from the community (e.g. Maori words in NZ)
Walkways and cycle paths	• Fitness, connection to town and recreation areas • New track to Little Bay • Needs repairs, currently unsafe (too narrow) Arakoon Drive and Phillip Drive • Link walking paths
Arts Hall	• Yoga and tai chi classes, public meetings, craft, painting, art exhibitions, dancing, movies, school groups, plays and performance – lighting, air con
Men's Shed	• Needs to be bigger

Place, space or service	Feedback
Roxy School of Arts	Variety of activities are provided and well used

3.1.3 Priority Community Infrastructure Outcomes

Participants were asked to work together as a group and identify their top three (3) community infrastructure priority outcomes, explain why and then identify the places, spaces and services are needed to support the outcome identified. The table below presents the findings from this activity.

Priority outcome	Why is this a priority	What places, spaces and services are needed to support this outcome
Access to quality outdoor sport/recreation, parks and playgrounds	- Healthy active lifestyles are important - Activities for older and young people - Get kids outside - Important for the tourism trade	- Pool upgrades - Paths upgraded and repaired - Brighton Park repaired and maintained
Spaces for young, old and disabled	- Education/training – U3A - Connectivity - Fellowship - Sense of community – building this and maintaining - Places for kids - Areas for artists and cultural activities	Multi-purpose community centre
Better access across the whole region (Kempsey, Port, Coffs)	- Important for tourists (shops and cafes would close without tourists) and locals - Better access to existing facilities	- Bus services cross the region (and to/from the airports) - Transport strategy - Advocacy role? - Upgrade pathways and bike paths around towns and across the region – safer and more useable (wider) - Road repairs (potholes)
Disability access	- Inclusive communities - Age of population – retirees are increasing	- Pathways new housing estates - Parking all public areas – consult - Toilets
Community knowledge of existing facilities and services	- Aids community connection - Access to spaces - Don't duplicate available spaces/facilities	
Young people's activity/space/drop-in centre	- Needs to be safe - Connection with peers improves mental health	- Needs to be a in town - Talk to young people - Support TAFE in Kempsey
A place for kids to study after school and cultural space	- A hub for the community - A place for the community to gather informally	- A larger library, current location is great - Combine with community hub
A place for the community and community groups to meet and sing	We don't have one	- Community centre, hub, hall - Combined with library

Priority outcome	Why is this a priority	What places, spaces and services are needed to support this outcome
Access to information and people's voices are heard	• We don't get enough!	• Council meetings in local places • Newsletter with the rates • Community notice board (at the new hub)
Lively and active community	• To attract and maintain tourism and save lives • Older population needs social cohesion, help to keep people living here • Ageing population	• Extended library services and spaces with access for everyone • Break wall at Back Creek • Providing great places for everyone to enjoy (includes tourists and locals) with good facilities in the outdoor (Back Creek) • Shared community spaces especially including technology access • Access to extended and centralised medical services

3.2 Kempsey Workshop

The Kempsey Workshop only had one (1) participant. There were construction works being undertaken at the location where the workshop was to be held, and access to the venue was problematic. It is assumed that this influenced the low attendance to the event.

As a result, the session was conducted as an unstructured one-on-one discussion. The key themes from this discussion are presented below.

Theme	Comments provided
Connecting and connection with the community	• Transport is a key issue – older people and poor communities are isolated and there is limited public transport in the shire • Council needs to improve communication with the community • There is a lack of connection between young and old • Social isolation is a big issue for disadvantaged and elderly residents in Kempsey • Need to inspire pride in the community – markets, Christmas decorations / Christmas tree in main street, something to look forward to etc
Community facilities	• The Kempsey Library is important for the community • There aren't many central meeting spaces in Kempsey, apart from the RSL and The Old Bank • The Band Box is an underutilised asset – look after it • Improve safety in public parks and places – need better lighting • The PCYC is an important facility for the community • There are opportunities to do more at the Indoor Sport and Rec Centre
A focus on young people and families	• There needs to be more places for families and children • Need more things for young people to do – youth play space, youth advisory committee
Arts, Culture and Heritage	• Opportunities for more public art across the shire
Activate and use the River	• Important that we better activate the river in Kempsey (e.g. riverside park, markets and events, street festivals) • It is hard to host markets and events at Riverside Park due to lack of power • Would like a performance space / stage and storage along the river • More footpaths / places to walk along the river • Users of the river require better facilities and improvements • Better pathways linking into town and along the river • Boat ramp • Dragonboat storage facility

3.3 Crescent Head Drop-In Session

The Crescent Head drop-in session was held at the Crescent Head Country Club. This session was advertised as a general community information drop in where residents and business owners could find out information on a range of Council projects that were on public exhibition at the time and talk to a planner / Council staff.

Participants were invited to provide input into the Macleay Community Infrastructure Strategy in two ways:

- Mark up a map of the town and provide information about which facilities they currently use and what is needed to improve these facilities.
- Identify top five social outcome priorities for Crescent Heads (using sticky dots) from a list of suggestions. There was also space provided for people to identify what kinds of facilities, services and spaces would support their identified priorities.

Approximately thirty people provided feedback on the Community Places and Spaces project. A consistent message received at this session was that overall, participants felt that Crescent Heads is well serviced by community infrastructure, and they would like to retain what they currently have.

3.3.1 What places, spaces and services do you currently use?

Feedback from this activity is summarised below.

Places, spaces and services	Comments	Improvements required
Community Hall	• Used for dancing classes, rate payers' meetings, resident's association, sewing group, playgroup	
Swimming pool	• Pool is great, regularly used	• Disabled access into the pool • Change rooms inside
Crescent Head Foreshore area	• Beach and foreshore area are well used • Surf club is popular • Boardwalks and pathways are used • Foreshore is very important to the community • Skate park is used by the kids	• Dredging of sand in reserve is needed • Bigger playground and park • Better access to foreshore • Skate park upgrades
Golf Course	• Heritage listed • Highly valued	
Bowls club	• Used by women's club • There is a library downstairs that is used by the community	

3.3.2 Priority Social Outcomes

Based on feedback received at the drop-in session, the top five priority outcomes identified for Crescent Head are:

Social Outcomes	Outcomes to achieve priorities
Things for young people to do	• Mini golf and indoor recreation facilities • After school activities for kids/teenagers • Places for social interaction
Things for older people to do	• Aqua fitness • Yoga and other programs needed in town

Social Outcomes	Outcomes to achieve priorities
Opportunities for learning and education	• Learn computer skills • U3A in Crescent Head • Community garden
Access to parks and playgrounds	• Expand playground at the foreshore • Better access to picnic areas • Improve safety of parks • Need to better utilise the river in Kempsey • Big long (flat) walking tracks that are safe
Access to aquatic facilities	• Keep the pool • Aqua fitness

3.4 Crescent Head Workshops

There were two (2) workshops held in Crescent Head on 25 September, facilitated by representatives from Kempsey Shire Council. The first was with primary school students (years 5/6) during school hours and the second was an evening workshop and community catch up involving members of the general public.

3.4.1 Crescent Head Primary School

Prior to the workshop Council had arranged for the school to run an in-class project. Students were asked to work in small groups to develop a poster which highlights what they love and value and would like to see in their community, with ideas and suggestions for improvements and then present this to the class. The workshop was structured to ensure that the activities captured the work the students had done in preparing the posters as this would be used to inform several Council projects that were on public exhibition at the time (including the Community Infrastructure Strategy, Local Strategic Planning Statements and Crescent Head Foreshore Masterplan projects). There were approximately 46 students who prepared group posters and participated in the workshop.

Students were asked to identify the spaces and facilities in the community that they value and use the most using sticky dots. The dots were counted to identify the most valued places and spaces in the community:

- Skatepark
- Killick Creek
- Sporting precinct near the pool
- Foreshore area & playground
- The point
- Surf Club
- Main Beach

The second activity asked students to write on post-it notes what they would like to see improved in the community and stick these onto photographs of community infrastructure that were pinned up. This conversation was facilitated by a council member or teacher who sat a small group tables with the students. Once comments had been made, each student was provided with three (3) love heart stickers and asked to place a heart on the ideas they loved/valued the most

The most popular improvements / upgrades to community infrastructure were:

- Improved skatepark or a bowl in the existing park
- More and upgraded netball / basketball courts
- BMX tracks and bike paths
- Playground for older kids (giant pillow, flying fox, climbing nets)
- Better soccer fields with more nets.

3.4.2 Evening Workshop – Community catch up

The evening session was a structured workshop which focused on the Community Infrastructure Strategy, Local Strategic Planning Statements and Local Character statements that Council are currently preparing. Small group tables were facilitated by Councillors and the workshop asked participants to identify what local infrastructure is valued, what can be improved and what's missing. Approximately 50 people attended this workshop.

The communities **most valued places** and spaces were:

- Swimming pool
- Beach foreshore
- Golf course

The **key improvements** identified as a priority by attendees are:

- Bike lanes and tracks
- Yellow brick road pathway from Willow Street, around creek, foreshore and headland
- Shade at tables and more seating / tables at the foreshore
- Playground near the surf club
- Paths through the reserve at the headland (Little and Big Nobby)

Based on the workshop feedback, improving the facilities and amenities within the reserve and foreshore area is a key priority for the community. The primary school workshop highlighted a need for improvements to open space and recreation areas to improve their quality and usage. Walking and cycling paths to better connect key destinations in Crescent Heads was also consistently identified.

3.5 Disability Reference Group workshop

A focus group was held with the managers of disability support services. The purpose of this session was to gain an insight into the use and access to community infrastructure for people with a disability and discuss future opportunities.

The key messages from this session are listed below:

- There are a number of facilities which do not provide appropriate access or amenities (toilets, change rooms) for people with a disability or who are mobility impaired.
- Footpaths are generally not wide enough or of a suitable quality/standard within townships and many recreational areas. This is a particular issue in Crescent Head and South West Rocks.
- The hydro program at the hospital is only available to individual clients (groups cannot access). Other pools in the shire are not accessible for people with limited mobility. Macksville swimming pool (outside the shire) is used quite regularly because it is wheelchair accessible, indoors, heated and has suitable changing facilities etc.
- The showgrounds and racecourse are used for big events (e.g. carols by candlelight, camp drafting) but the covered areas are not accessible for people with limited abilities.
- Public toilets across the shire are not very accessible for people with disabilities. A changing places toilet would be welcomed.
- The new park at South West Rocks and Riverside Park are great to access and use for children with limited mobility.
- Access to internet across the community is not equal – this makes it hard to know what is happening across the shire.
- The shire is not very easy to get around if you don't or can't drive.

3.6 One-on-one Interviews

A number of one-on-one interviews were undertaken to provide a deeper insight into some of the key issues facing Kempsey as they relate to community infrastructure and open space planning and provision.

Organisation	Key messages
Aboriginal Liaison Officer – NSW Police	• There isn't enough for kids to do in Kempsey (particularly in South and West Kempsey). • Access to transport is a major issue people in South and West Kempsey – very low car ownership means people are isolated from services • The river could be better utilised and activated • Need to improve our sense of community and pride • Opportunity to locate community facilities and open space in aboriginal and social housing areas in South Kempsey, West Kempsey and Greenhill. • Arson can be a problem in the area – need to consider this when designing new facilities. • Opportunity to engage with young people in the area to find out what they would like to see in their area (e.g. via the PCYC) • Opportunity to incorporate more public art (murals, sculpture etc) throughout the Shire, particularly engaging local aboriginal artists.
CEO – Kempsey Aboriginal Land Council	• Kempsey Shire needs to become a destination where people want to go to live and stay. Investment is required at all levels of government to ensure the area can grow – stop people from needing to travel outside to work / live / access facilities • There are limited opportunities for arts and music and celebration of culture and heritage – existing facilities are too small and there are no venues that can cater for festivals or large events that attract visitors. • Opportunity to develop a cultural centre to celebrate and recognise the area's rich indigenous heritage. • Accessibility is a key issue. There are opportunities for better links between Stuarts Point to SWR and SWR to Kempsey. Public transport is very limited across the shire. • Key opportunities for the Strategy are to provide: – Things for young people to do (sporting and artistic) – More business support – Facilities that attract tourists – Infrastructure to better service and connect isolated areas of the community – Improved facilities in recreation areas – Opportunities to recognise and celebrate the cultural heritage of the traditional owners – To better utilise the river and celebrate it
Kempsey Regional Support Group	• The shire does have very many places that are suitable for people with a disability and/or limited mobility. • Limited access to public toilets in key areas and there are no changing places toilets in the shire. • Many pedestrian pathways do not meet relevant standards for use by wheelchairs. • There is an opportunity to develop more programs, activities and events for people with a disability. • The river could be better utilised • Facilities in Kempsey are very spread out which makes them more difficult to access • Need more information about what is going on in the area – currently very difficult to find out about existing community groups and events (i.e. when the CWA have their meeting or when other community groups are running events/having meet ups) • Information / map about accessible venues etc would be useful

Organisation	Key messages
Kempsey Shire Council Community Development Officer	• Community development working on a number of things to try and improve the community's access to information and know how to get involved (e.g. Hey Hey Macleay and portal regrading access to grants) • There is no strategy for 355 committees (how they are running or who is managing them). This needs to be reviewed to see where improvements or changes should/could be made. • There are issues with current booking arrangement for sports fields and the management of this – this needs to be reviewed. • Council needs to maximise the use of existing facilities across the shire • Libraries vary in their level or service and facilities provided – opportunity to consider different delivery models over time. • The communities across the shire are quite dispersed and isolated, especially vulnerable residents where car ownership and access to the internet is not affordable.
Gladstone Youth and Community Centre	• Co-location of a community hall with a local art gallery – both of which are community run. • The art gallery is very successful - has approximately 9,500 visitors every year and the exhibition program is booked until 2022. The gallery is staffed by volunteers from Thursday – Saturday. It attracts artists and visitors from across the region and outside the shire. • There is a regular program of activities in the hall every week (e.g. dance classes, yoga etc). The hall is also booked out for community events and gatherings. • Maintenance and improvement works are needed to the facility as a matter of urgency. • The monthly Gladstone market helps to support the facility • Opportunity to better promote the facility and program across the shire. • Need a consistent contact at Council to assist with the ongoing management of the facility.

3.7 Telephone Interviews

A number of telephone interviews were conducted with managers, volunteers and staff of various types of community facilities and organisations across the Macleay Valley. Interviewees were asked specific questions regarding the current use and future opportunities.

A separate summary of the key findings from these interviews, by facility, is contained as an appendix.

Type	Summary of key messages
Community halls	- Maintenance was the most common issue - The management arrangements work well for most, but it would be good to have more assistance from Council and/or a key contact person. - The use of halls varies across facilities – there are some which have regular events each week (e.g. yoga, playgroups, dancing). The most frequently used facilities include: - Yarrahapinni Community House - Gladstone Youth and Community Centre - Crescent Head Community Hall - Kundabung Hall - Sherwood Hall - Other halls are mainly used for periodic community events (e.g. birthday parties, funerals, weddings etc)
PCYC	- PCYC provides a number of services to local families – including before-school care and breakfast, after school care, vacation care. On Friday night's the facility also provides a "hang out" space for young people to have dinner and spend time together. - The facility contains indoor courts, game / play area, gym and some multi-purpose space. - Police noted that youth crime rates in Kempsey region are relatively low compared to other regional areas who do not have a PCYC - PCYC would benefit from bigger outdoor space or proximity to a park / outdoor play areas.
Schools	- Some local schools use local community facilities (e.g. South West Rocks school use the town swimming pool and town oval; Kempsey High School use the sports fields, saleyards, racecourse and showgrounds for events: - Some schools hire out their facilities to the general community (e.g. Kempsey High hire out gymnasium for karate, rotary meetings etc)
Other observations / miscellaneous notes	- Kempsey RSL used to host big events, but the auditorium has been removed. Big events (school formals) now need to be held at the schools or in the Slim Dusty Centre. - The HUB Kempsey has closed / is not operational. - There is a new youth centre being developed in Kempsey by the Department of Family and Community Services

4.0 Survey Findings

A community survey was developed to gain detailed feedback from the community on their values, aspirations and priorities for community infrastructure in the Macleay Valley. Surveys were available both online and in hardcopy from 19 August to 19 September 2019.

A total of 30 people completed the survey. The majority of survey responses were received via the online platform. However, this is not considered to be a statistically significant or representative sample of the shire. There are a number of factors that could have contributed to the low response rate for the survey:

- Access to internet - The Macleay Valley has a proportionally lower rate of households with internet connection (65.5%), compared to Regional NSW (73.1%). There is the potential a number of residents were not aware of the project (most marketing for the project was digital) and/or did not have the resources to complete the survey.
- Number of Council projects being consulted on – at the time of our project there were a number of individual Council projects seeking community input or comment. It is possible that the low participation rate was attributed to the range of projects being consulted on at the time.

To improve the rate of participation in the future, it may be appropriate to use more face-to-face methods to promote the project and increase the survey response rate (e.g. run pop up/listening posts in towns or at community events or to consider integrating numerous projects into a single survey (if appropriate).

Survey Analysis

Responses to close questions have been analysed quantitatively and open-ended questions have been analysed thematically. It is noted that many open-ended responses contained comments that fell into multiple themes. Responses were tallied to identify the most common themes and actions raised.

The thematic approach used in this report was purposefully subjective and required the exercise of professional judgement to categorise and summarise comments in a logical manner. This approach was advantageous as it provided a useful means of identifying significant themes and priorities within highly variable and detailed responses.

4.1 Survey Participants

Questions one to four of the survey sought to capture key demographic data of survey respondents. A summary of their key characteristics is provided below.

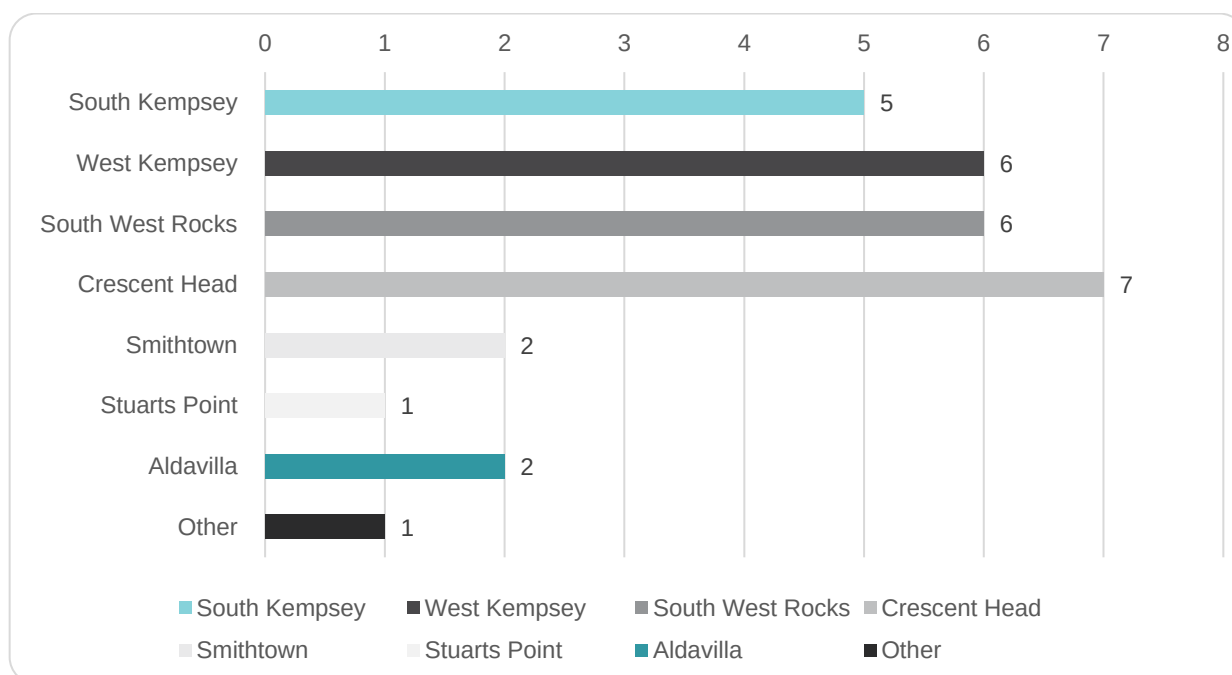
Place of Residence

Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of survey respondents were from four (4) of the largest towns in the Macleay Valley:

- 37% of respondents live in South Kempsey and West Kempsey
- 23% of respondents resided in Crescent Head
- 20% of respondents lived in South West Rocks.

The balance (20%) of respondents lived in other townships outside of the region's major towns, including Smithtown (6%), Stuarts Point (3%) and Aldaville (6%).

It is acknowledged that promotion of consultation activities for this project were focussed on the shire's larger townships. There may be opportunities for future engagement campaigns to consider mechanisms to better involve residents living in the smaller townships and rural areas.

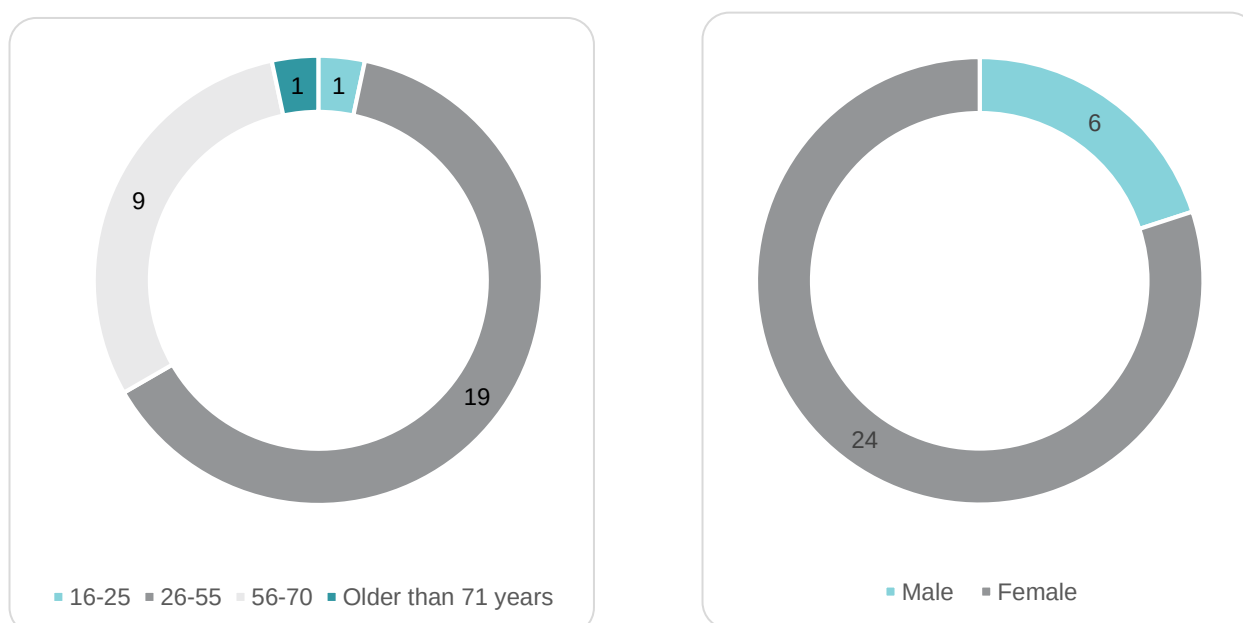
Figure 1: Place of Residence


Age, Gender and Ethnicity

As illustrated at Figure 2, 80% of survey participants were female and 20% were male. In terms of the age profile of survey respondents:

- the majority of the survey respondents were adults aged between 26 and 55 years of age (63%)
- people between the age of 56 and 70 years represented 30% of all respondents.
- younger and older age groups represent a minority of survey respondents, with only 3% of people aged over 70 years and 3% of people aged 25 years or younger.

Only 10% of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 6% of respondents preferred not to respond to this question.

Figure 2: Age Profile and gender of Respondents


4.2 Survey Findings

Accessing community infrastructure

Question 5 of the survey asked survey respondents to indicate what community infrastructure they access and where. The key findings from this question are:

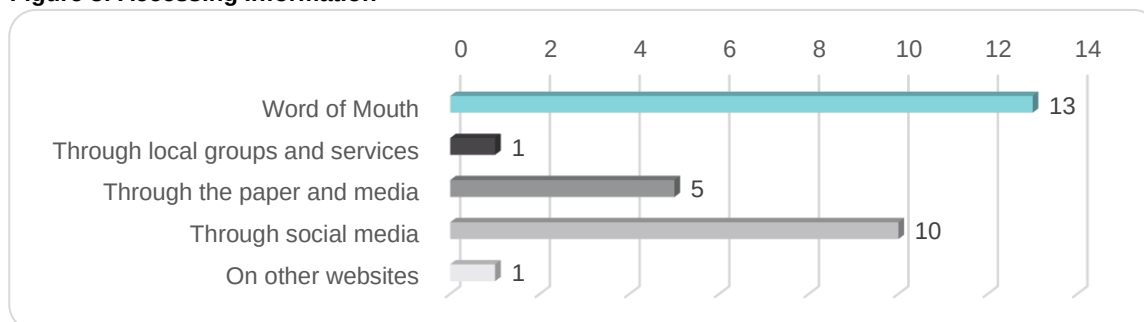
- The Macleay Valley is generally quite well serviced by community infrastructure, respondents indicated that they can most types of community infrastructure within the shire.
- Residents are fairly mobile and travel to other locations outside their local township to access social infrastructure and open space.
- Childcare, kindergarten, primary schools, swimming pools and skateparks were the main places and spaces accessed within the respondent's local township.
- People generally travel elsewhere within the shire to access secondary school, TAFE / vocational training, and arts and cultural spaces.
- Surveyed residents access library services both within their local town as well as elsewhere in the shire.
- A large proportion of respondents travelled outside of the shire to access higher order facilities and services such as university and health care.

Refer to Appendix A for the graphic representation of the responses to this survey question.

Accessing information

Question 6 was interested in determining how respondents find out about what is happening in the local community. Word of mouth was the most popular response amongst 43% of respondents, followed by social media (33%) and the paper/media (17%). Refer to **Figure 3** below.

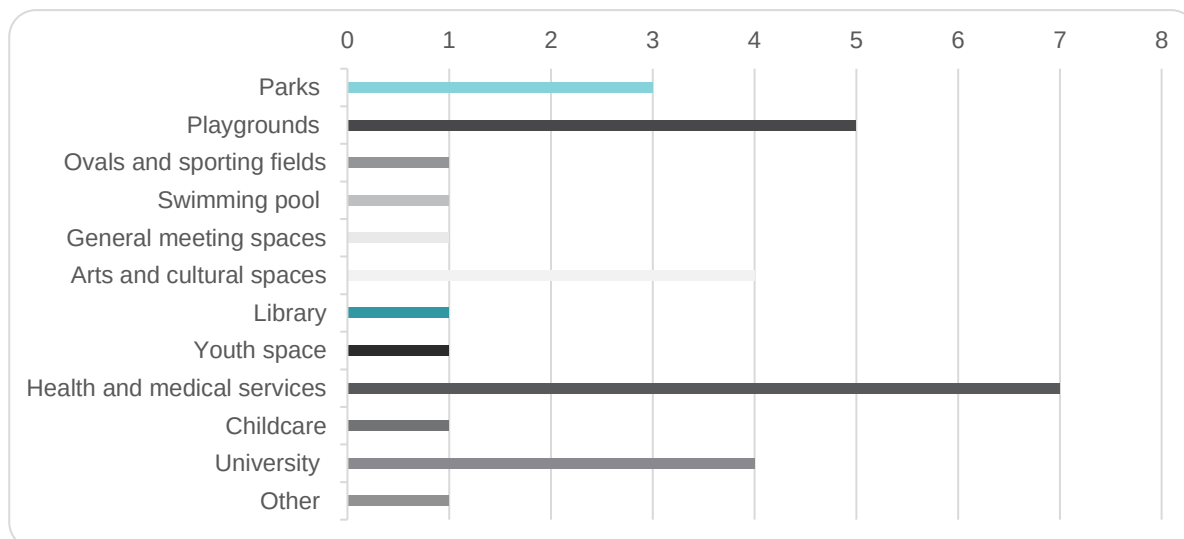
Figure 3: Accessing Information



Most important community facility within nearest township

Question 7 asked respondents to tell us what they think is the most important community facility that should be provided within their nearest township. As illustrated by Figure 4, health and medical services was identified as the top priority, followed by playgrounds, university and arts and cultural spaces. For the single 'other' response, the respondent identified that better access to the foreshore recreation areas and the beach is important.

Figure 4: Most important community facility within nearest township

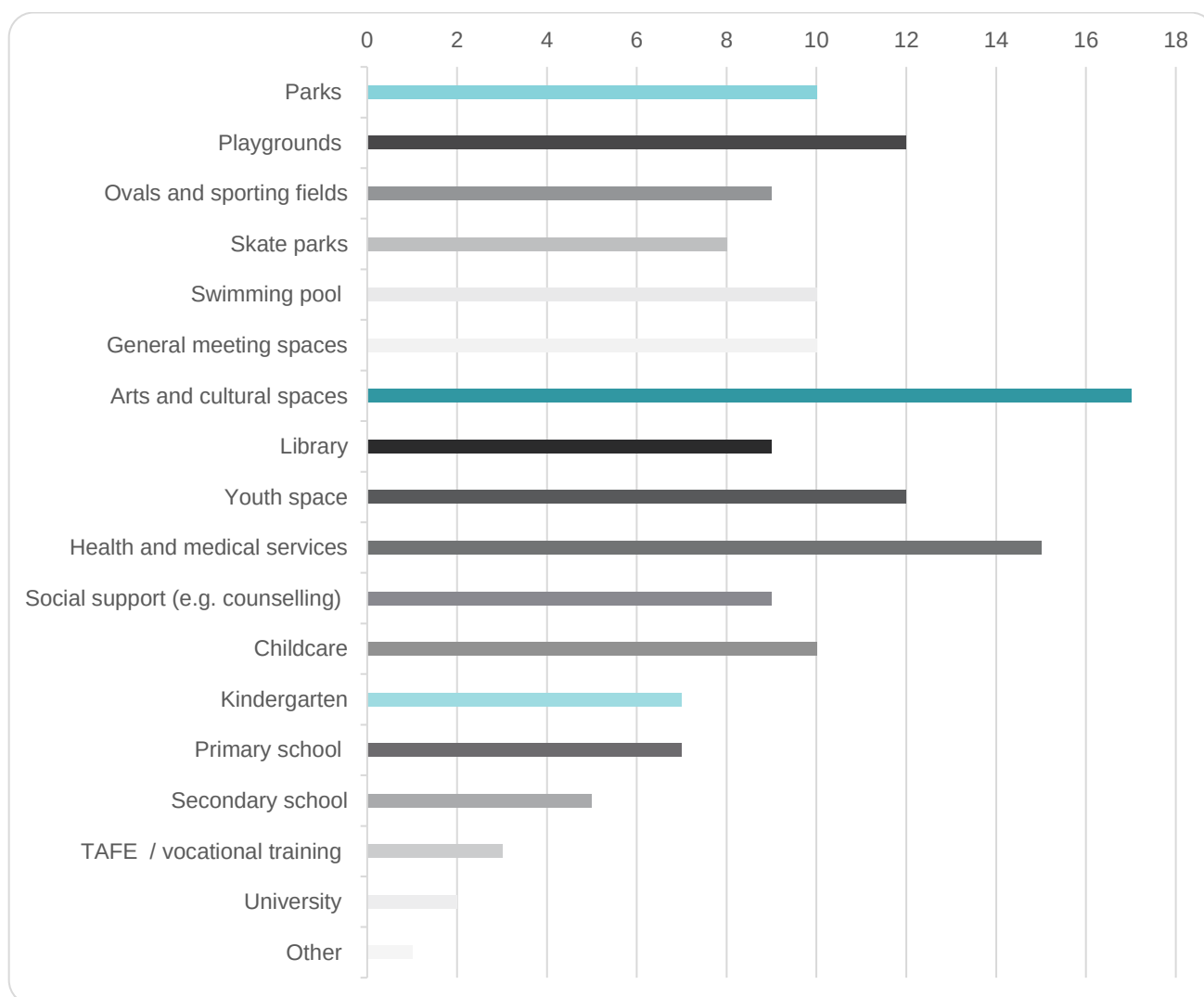


Question 8 then asked respondents to identify what other types of community infrastructure are needed within the nearest township. Respondents were able to select multiple responses for this question. The results are presented in Figure 5 below.

Arts and cultural spaces as well as health and medical services were again the most frequently identified spaces and services. Other facilities which also ranked highly were playgrounds, youth space, parks, swimming pool, general meeting spaces and childcare.

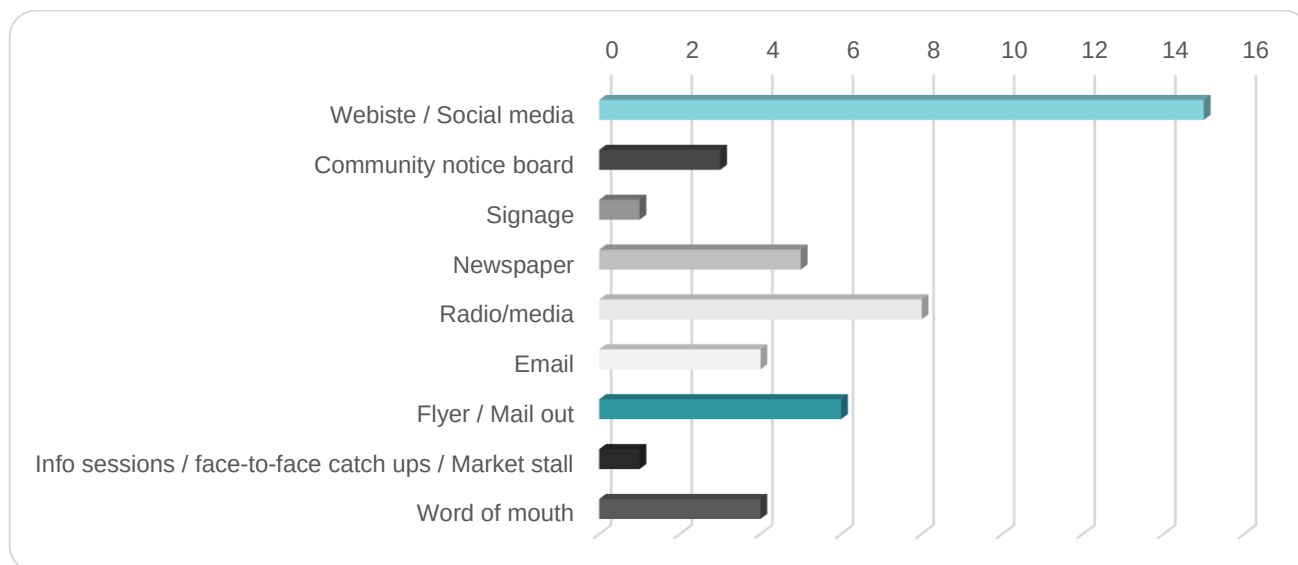
The responses to these questions indicate that places and spaces for families as well as access to health care, arts and culture and learning facilities are important to the surveyed people living in the shire.

Figure 5: Other important community infrastructure for nearest township



Finding out information

Question 9 was an open-ended question which asked respondents to identify the best way for them to find out what is available within the community. Social media (Facebook), Council's website, radio/media sources, flyers and mail-outs and the newspaper were commonly cited by respondents. Refer to **Figure 6** below.

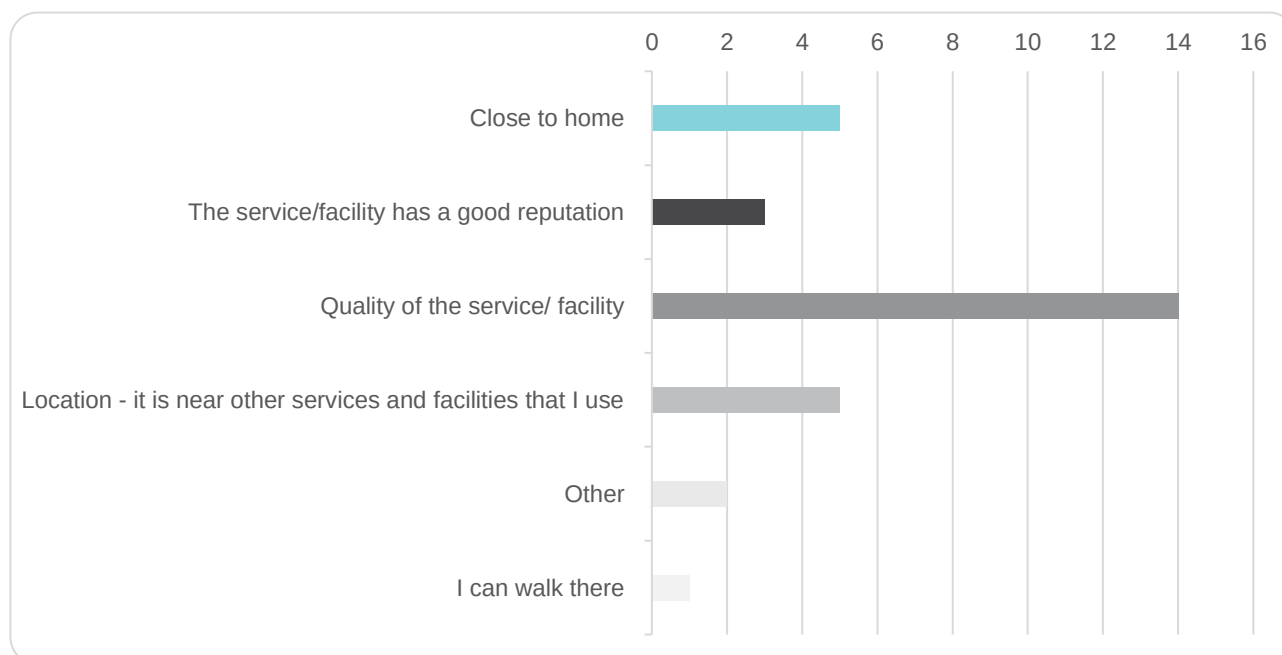
Figure 6: Important sources of Information

The diverse mixture of responses tells us that it is important for Council to use a variety of techniques to engage with the community, including digital and face to face methods.

Choosing community facilities and services

Question 10 is interested in knowing what factors influence the selection and use of a community facility or service within the shire.

As illustrated by Figure 7, the majority of respondents indicated that the quality of the service or facility was the most important factor (47%), while the ability to walk was not an important factor (3%). Location to other services and facilities and being close to home ranked equally at 17%.

Figure 7: Factors influencing the selection of community facilities and services

Respondents were invited to provide further information and elaborate on the key factors influencing the selection of a community facility or service. Below are some of the key points raised.

- Facilities and services need to be accessible and remain within the shire or be provided in the shire to prevent the need to travel to Port Macquarie or Coffs Harbour (i.e. health care services). Provide facilities within walking distance of other facilities or commercial areas
- The services / facilities must be current and provide a quality service to all age brackets and interests within the local area. Facilities should be multipurpose to cater for a variety of events.
- Safety is important – CCTV, lighting or a security presence is needed

Most used facilities

The next three questions asked respondents to identify their top 3 most used facilities.

Table 2 below provides a list of the top three most commonly referred to facilities within the Macleay Valley. The facilities with an Asterix were mentioned multiple times.

Table 2: Most used facilities within the Macleay Valley

Most used facility	Second most used facility	Third most used facility
Riverside Park****	Kempsey Library***	Parks****
Parks****	Kempsey Swimming Pool**	PCYC**
Gladstone park / playground **	Crescent Head Pool**	Community hall
Sporting fields**	Beach**	Health care services
Bike paths and walking tracks**	Parks**	Meeting spaces
The river*	Pathways	Kempsey Hospital
Community Halls	Pool	Preschool / Primary school
Back Creek bridge	Shopping centre	Markets
Beaches	Riverside Park	Pathways
Gladstone Swimming Pool	TAFE	Swimming pool
Saleyards	Medical and health care services	Playground
Playgrounds	Childcare	River and riverbanks
Boat ramp	Horseshoe Bay Reserve	Sporting fields
Libraries		Surf club
Crescent Head beach foreshore and playground		
Health and medical services		
Primary school		
The Hub		
Stuarts Point Library		
South West Rocks Library		

The key messages from this question are the following facilities and services are well used:

- Open space and recreational areas, including parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and swimming pools
- Riverside Park
- Foreshore areas at Crescent Head and South West Rocks
- The libraries across the shire in Kempsey, South West Rocks and Stuarts Point
- Health and medical services
- Beaches

The results did not identify any specific community halls or meeting spaces that were well used.

Most important improvements required

After asking respondents to identify their most used facilities, the following questions then asked respondents to outline the most important improvements that are needed to existing community spaces and facilities. The responses are summarised and listed in Table 3 below. Note that the responses are not listed by order of importance.

Table 3: Most important improvements required to existing community facilities and spaces

Most important improvement	Second most important improvement	Third most important improvement
• Connected spaces that allow kids and elderly to navigate • More maintenance • Upgrade picnic tables and BBQ shelters • Erosion control measures to protect Little Nobby and Big Nobby walking tracks • Playground equipment for all ages • Improve security and cleanliness in parks and playgrounds – syringe problems • Improve boardwalks along headland • Expand South West Rocks sports fields to cater for growing community • Improve safety of public places – more CCTV cameras needed • Fencing around playgrounds • Improve accessibility for people with disabilities and prams • Modernise playgrounds and other facilities • Expand South West Rocks Library • Facilities and amenities at Back Creek • Accessible toilets for people with wheelchairs and children • Improve pedestrian and vehicle access • Rehabilitate vegetation along riverbanks • Upgrade coastal parks at Stuarts Point and Grassy Head • Upgrade footpaths at Crescent Head on main street	• Artwork / street art • Marked walking tracks from Little Nobby to the water tower • New toilets and showers at the pools • Undercover pool which is open year round • Public toilets • Improve security • More family centred places that create involvement • More BBQ facilities with covered tables and seating • Upgrade Horseshoe Bay reserve • Improve roads • Lighting • More health services • Central neighbourhood youth spaces (skateparks, recreational centres, parks) • Upgrade libraries • Bigger PCYC • Street landscaping	• Boardwalk through Killick Creek • Signage to promote and make people aware of area of local cultural and historical interest • Lights at the Crescent Head pool • Improve safety and security • Footpaths and cycle ways along Loftus Road and Baker Drive • Improved pathways and connections with South West Rocks • Activity centres for youths and family-oriented places • Free community events • Improve access – public transport around the shire • Smaller playgrounds scattered around South West Rocks • Car parking • Shelter for outdoor pools • Repair and upgrade existing toilet blocks • Better health services

Future community infrastructure requirements

The final question asked respondents to think about the future and tell us what services or facilities they think the Macleay Valley will need, that are not currently available. The survey question allowed for open ended comments so that respondents could provide as much information as possible. The responses provided by the respondents are organised thematically below:

	Future Services and facilities needed for the Macleay Valley
Outdoor space and recreation	• An aquatic centre for Kempsey • More facilities at Kempsey Pool (Diving, water polo) • Larger pool at South West Rocks • Indoor heated pool facility • Riverside bike and walking paths • Pedestrian mall areas and open space • Community walking tours – celebrate local history, culture and natural areas • Improved access to beaches, foreshores and riverbank • More cycle ways and pathways • Indoor sporting facilities • Fences around playgrounds • More day picnic areas at Crescent Head foreshore
Health and community wellbeing	• More doctors and health care services offered at Kempsey Hospital and within coastal communities • Homeless support services and community care facilities
Education	• University campus in the shire
Youth	• Youth hub • Skatepark or recreational park in South Kempsey opposite neighbourhood centre • Youth services, mental health hub
Community spaces and culture	• Nice meeting places with dining and entertainment • Aboriginal cultural facility • Amphitheatre at Riverside Park • Band rotunda in Riverside Park • Community hall
Economic growth	• Entice businesses to come to Kempsey
Access and connectivity	• Bus service within the shire and beyond (connect to train services and airports) • Maps showing footpaths and bike paths • Bike paths to connect villages

Other ideas and comments

The survey provided a final section which allowed respondents to offer any final comments or feedback to Council. The following summarises the key messages related to community infrastructure. It is noted that a range of other comments not related to this project were provided – these have been passed on separately to Council for consideration.

- Kempsey pool and skate park could be turned into an outdoor concert and market venue
- Facilities need to be better managed, with a focus on customer service. Look after locals and tourists.
- Kempsey is a beautiful place and we need to work on making it safe as a priority
- Multiple comments opposing the second bridge crossing in Kempsey
- Playground on corner of Macquarie and Bloomfield St (South Kempsey) needs to be upgraded
- Upgrades to the Crescent Head foreshore reserve are needed. The area also needs to be accessible by all residents / visitors
- Need for a safe and paved level pathway between Stuarts Point and Grassy Head Beach – current road is unsafe.
- South West Rocks needs clearer signage



5.0 Conclusion

The purpose of the Your Future: Places and Spaces consultation was to understand the current use, values, opportunities and aspirations for community infrastructure across the shire. The campaign sought the views of the general population (residents and works), community groups and volunteers as well as relevant local businesses, organisations and Council officers through targeted, online and broad community engagement activities. Approximately 119 people from across the region actively participated in engagement activities.

A key learning from this engagement approach was that the face-to-face methods, generally, were more successful for consulting with the community. There was only a small response to the community survey. In the future and for later stages of this project, it may be more appropriate to consider using more face-to-face methods (e.g. pop ups/listening posts at public events, undertaking surveys at well attended events such as rugby games etc) to gather information and feedback from the community and key stakeholders.

5.1 Key summary of consultation findings

A summary of the key messages from the consultation activities is provided below:

Macleay is generally well serviced by community infrastructure

Findings from a range of consultation activities indicate that the community, in general, acknowledges that the Macleay Valley has a good network of community infrastructure, open space and recreational facilities. Most people are able to access the places and spaces that they need within their township or elsewhere in the Shire; and would like to retain this level of service. There are however improvements and upgrades required in some locations to ensure that facilities are fit-for-purpose and accessible, and to improve their use. The approach for some community facilities to be managed by community groups via 355 Agreements currently works well, however there are some opportunities for improvement.

Our links to Port Macquarie are important

Many people consulted as part of this project stressed the importance of linkages to Port Macquarie in accessing community infrastructure. In particular for include universities, medical facilities and performing arts spaces. The town also has a good range of programs and facilities for people with a disability. The relationship with Port Macquarie library was also acknowledged as a strength. Some people mentioned that better public transport options are required to make Port Macquarie more accessible; others indicated that the local markets (Kempsey and Gladstone) often draw people from Port Macquarie to the shire.

Open space is highly valued

The findings from face-to-face engagement activities as well as the survey results indicate the importance of open space – to support health, wellbeing and sense of place. Foreshore areas were identified as particularly important, and it was noted that upgrades are required in some locations. Local playgrounds were also important to families and young people living in the area. There is also an opportunity to better activate and utilise the Macleay River, particularly in Kempsey.

Information sharing

A consistent finding from all consultation activities was associated with the need for better information sharing across the community – people want to know what is going on, when and where; as well as improve communication with Council. The survey findings indicated that people gain information from a number of sources – and therefore a range of channels are needed to keep the community informed, including digital, word of mouth, print and community noticeboards.

Better transport connections

A consistent finding from the consultation was associated with the heavy reliance on private motor vehicles, and difficulty in moving between towns through public transport. Alternative transport options (e.g. community transport) was identified as an opportunity to better connect isolated and disadvantaged community members. Improvements to footpaths and bicycle paths to provide connections within and between towns was also mentioned.

More things for young people to do

A consistent finding from this engagement campaign is associated with the lack of spaces and programs for young people in Macleay Valley. It will be important to undertake further and targeted engagement with young people to better understand the types of places and activities that they desire. This could provide an opportunity to better activate and utilise existing facilities; while also responding to the needs of this community cohort.

Access for all abilities

A key finding from stakeholder and community consultation was an identified lack of good quality accessible community facilities that are suitable for people living with a disability or with limited mobility. Many people identified the importance of ensuring that open spaces, facilities and amenities are accessible for all – this should be a key consideration in the planning and design of community infrastructure.

A desire for more arts and cultural facilities

A consistent finding from the survey and face-to-face consultation findings relates to the community's desire for more arts and cultural facilities throughout the shire. This was identified as an aspiration at a local as well as a municipal scale. It was suggested that the shire could also develop a cultural centre which acknowledges and celebrates the area's strong Aboriginal heritage.

Developing community pride and cohesion

Many people indicated that there is a need to improve community pride and cohesion in the shire – to build stronger relationships with place and each other. More public art and community events were some of the suggestions to address this issue. It is acknowledged that addressing this finding cannot be achieved by a community infrastructure alone.

Fostering opportunities for learning

Many people consulted indicated the importance of continuous, or lifelong learning. This relates to the importance of schools for young people in the area, to providing space for U3A to continue to grow in the shire. Libraries are highly valued across the shire; the upgrade of the South West Rocks Library is a key priority. Access to computer programs and providing cross-generational programs were also identified as opportunities.

5.2 Next Steps

This Consultation Summary Report provides an overview of the activities and outcomes associated with community consultation for the Macleay Community Infrastructure Plan. The key findings from the Your Future: Places and Spaces consultation will be incorporated into the Issues and Opportunity paper, which will ultimately inform the development of the Plan itself.

It is also recommended that Council publish the key findings from consultation activities on the Your Say Macleay website.

Appendix A. Survey response – accessing community infrastructure

