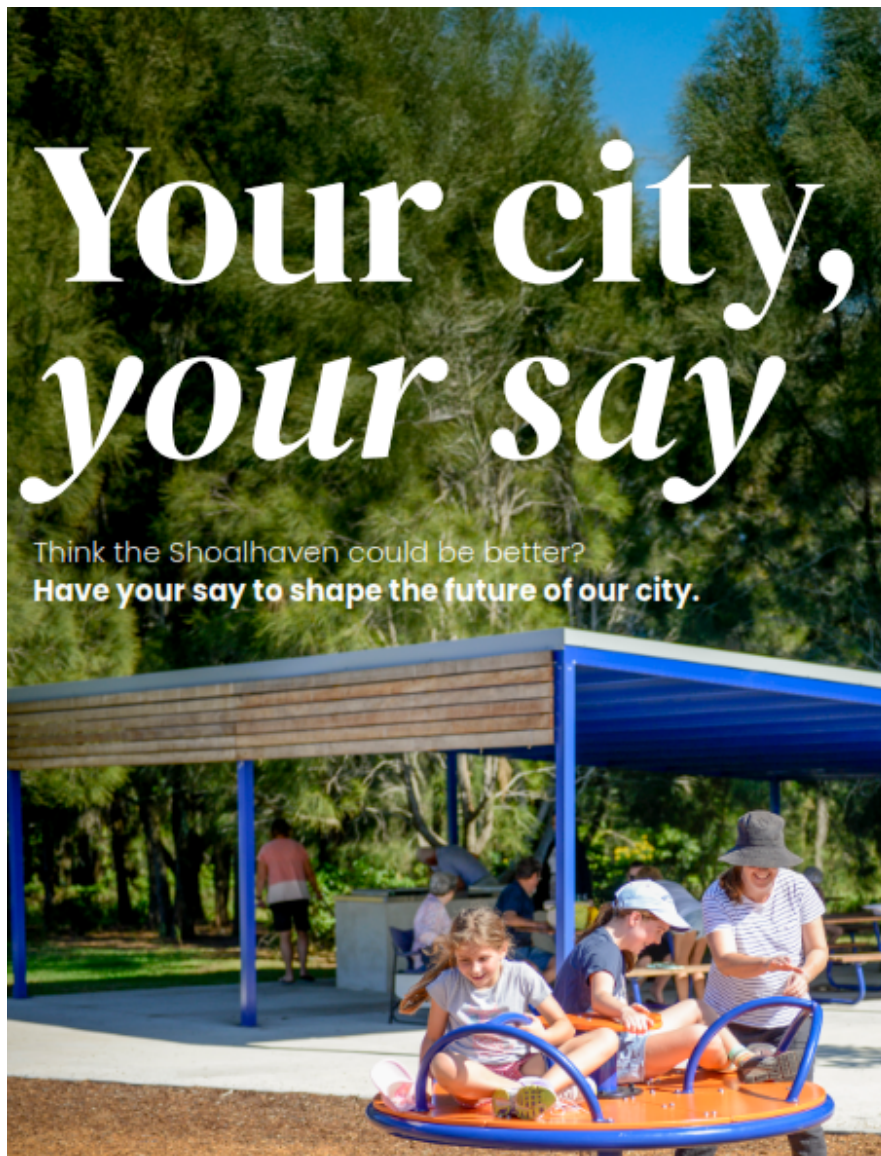


Community Engagement Report

Draft Community Strategic Plan 2035



April 2025

Contents

1. Project Overview	3
2. Key Communication Objectives	3
3. Engagement Methods.....	4
4. Survey Results	6
5. Targeted Stakeholder Consultation	10
6. Assessment of Community Led Strategic Plans	13
7. Next Steps	13
8. Appendix	14

1. Project Overview

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the community's plan for the Shoalhaven. It has a minimum ten-year timeframe and should reflect the community's main priorities and aspirations (needs and wants) for the Shoalhaven.

Council's role in the production of the CSP is to facilitate its development and produce the document. As per legislative requirements, the CSP must be reviewed and adopted each Council term. Therefore, following the September 2024 Council elections, Council must:

- review and update the CSP (10 year)
- create the Delivery Program (4 year) and Operational Plan (1 year)
- adopt a Resourcing Strategy (10 year Long Term Financial Planning; Workforce Planning and Asset Management Planning) (*current version adopted in December 2024*)

The whole suite of documents is to be adopted by Council before 30 June 2025.

The Communications Plan utilised printed collateral and physical touchpoints to offset the over-reliance on digital methods, and to accommodate community members who do not have access to the internet or with low digital literacy.

2. Key Communication Objectives

Objective	Measure
To raise awareness about the CSP	Provide information about the CSP, its purpose and promote upcoming engagement activities through a media release, social post, posters, flyers, newsletters, mayor's message and on the Council website.
To seek feedback from the community about their vision for the Shoalhaven	Advertise and promote upcoming engagement activities through a media release, social post, posters, flyers, newsletters, mayor's message and on the Council website.
To gather enough data and information to develop a CSP that accurately reflects the community's wishes	Use all collateral to encourage as much participation as possible through the survey and at in-person engagement activities. Attend additional community events to seek feedback from residents.
To encourage participation in the survey and at scheduled engagement activities	Advertise and promote upcoming engagement activities using all collateral.
To meet a legislative requirement to develop the CSP	Gather feedback from the community through the online survey and in-person engagement activities to assist with the development of the CSP within the necessary legislative timeframes.

Target Audience

- All residents, visitors and workers
- Local businesses and community organisations
- Local media
- Councillors

Key Messages

What we want our audience to know	Who is saying it
We are developing a new CSP.	Council / Mayor
The CSP sets out the community's vision for the next ten years. It sets goals for the Shoalhaven, discusses how we will achieve them and identifies outcomes that will hold us to account.	Council / Mayor
It is important we receive feedback from the community to ensure the CSP accurately reflects the wishes of residents and sets realistic and achievable outcomes.	Council / Mayor
It is a legislative requirement that we update our CSP at the election of a new Council (or every four years).	Acting CEO

3. Engagement Methods







The following table outlines the engagement methods employed and summarises the number of responses or awareness statistics.

Method	Tool/Platform	Summary Response/Outcome
Consultation Methods		
Webpage & Survey	Get Involved Shoalhaven - Council's official online engagement platform. Tools included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Upload Photos • FAQs • Documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,200 visitors to the Get Involved page • 384 survey responses • 8 photos submitted • 16 FAQ visits • 25 CSP 2032 document downloads
Focused Conversation	CCB Executive Meeting Inclusion and Access Committee Youth Advisory Committee Aboriginal Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 Nov 2024 CCB meeting Workshop activity • 24 Feb 2025 IAAC meeting Workshop activity • Scheduled YAC meeting (<i>not held</i>) • AAC meeting (<i>scheduled 9 April 2025</i>)

Method	Tool/Platform	Summary Response/Outcome
	Business / Industry online Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 March 2025 Business and industry online workshop
Pop up information stalls	Staff hosted pop-ups in key locations across the City to promote the survey and have conversations with community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bay & Basin Leisure Centre, 12 March 2025, 10 - 12pm Nowra Plaza Centre - 20 March 2025, 5 - 7pm Ulladulla Library - 25 March 2025, 10 - 12pm <p>49 conversations, 9 hard copy surveys completed</p>
Communication Methods		
Digital		
Electronic Direct Mail (EDM)	<p>Council's monthly e-Newsletter - In Your Neighbourhood</p> <p>All staff email</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 Feb 2025 – 3,760 subscribers received the newsletter of those, 1,923 opened it to read. 13 March 2025 – sent to 522 employees in the Nowra Admin Building about the 'Survey for a Sweet' initiative including a link to complete the survey.
Social Media	Facebook posts to promote the engagement and seek feedback directly from users	<p>6 Facebook posts over the period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26,483 people reached 97 reactions 26 comments 25 shares 1,300 video views
Media		
Media Releases	Radio, Newspapers, Community Newsletters, TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Media release – 28 Feb 2025
Print		
Flyers	Available at Council facilities	<p>360 flyers and 30 x A3 posters distributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nowra, Bomaderry, Ulladulla Pool, Bay and Basin Leisure Centre, Bomaderry Indoor Sports Centre Nowra, Ulladulla, Sanctuary Point and Milton Libraries Art Gallery, SEC & Encore Cafe
Poster Display	Posters with QR code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A1 poster in Admin reception area Nowra 14 x A1 corflute posters displayed in key public locations across the LGA

Method	Tool/Platform	Summary Response/Outcome
Staff Newsletter / Intranet	Monthly staff newsletter (EDM) News item on the intranet to inform staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 March 2025 – sent to 1,550 employees, opened by 573 staff with 42 clicks

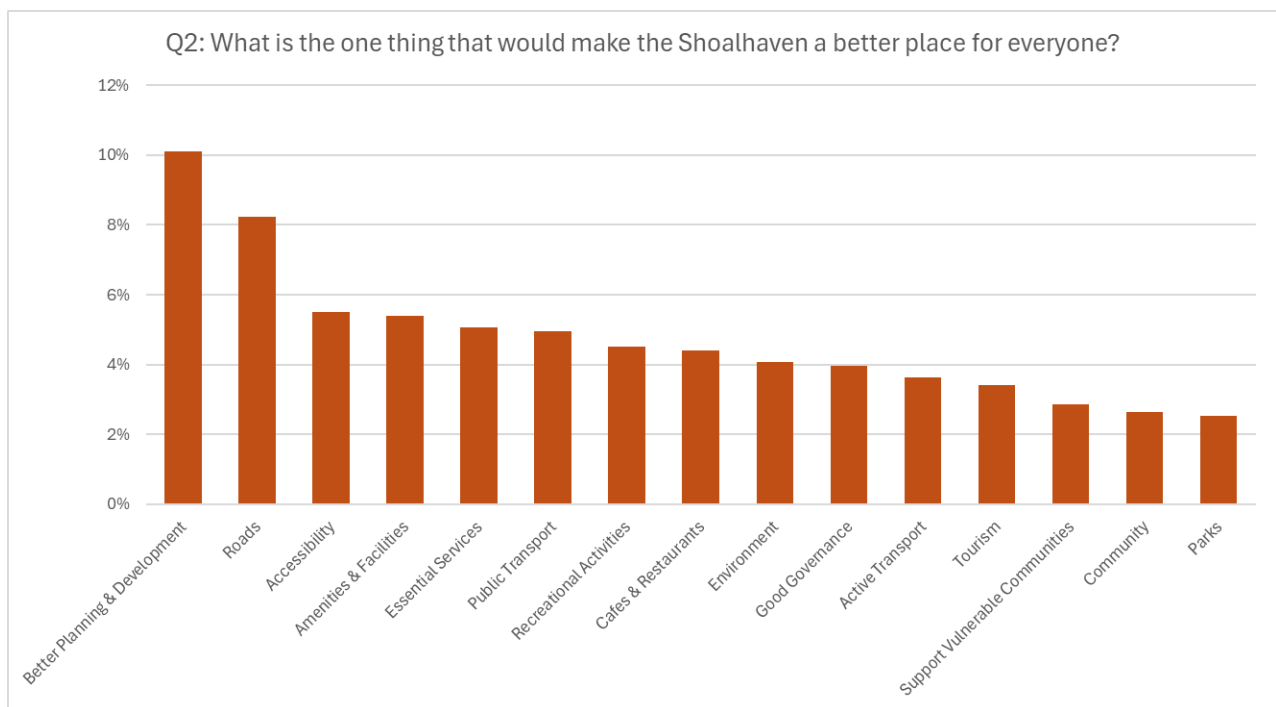
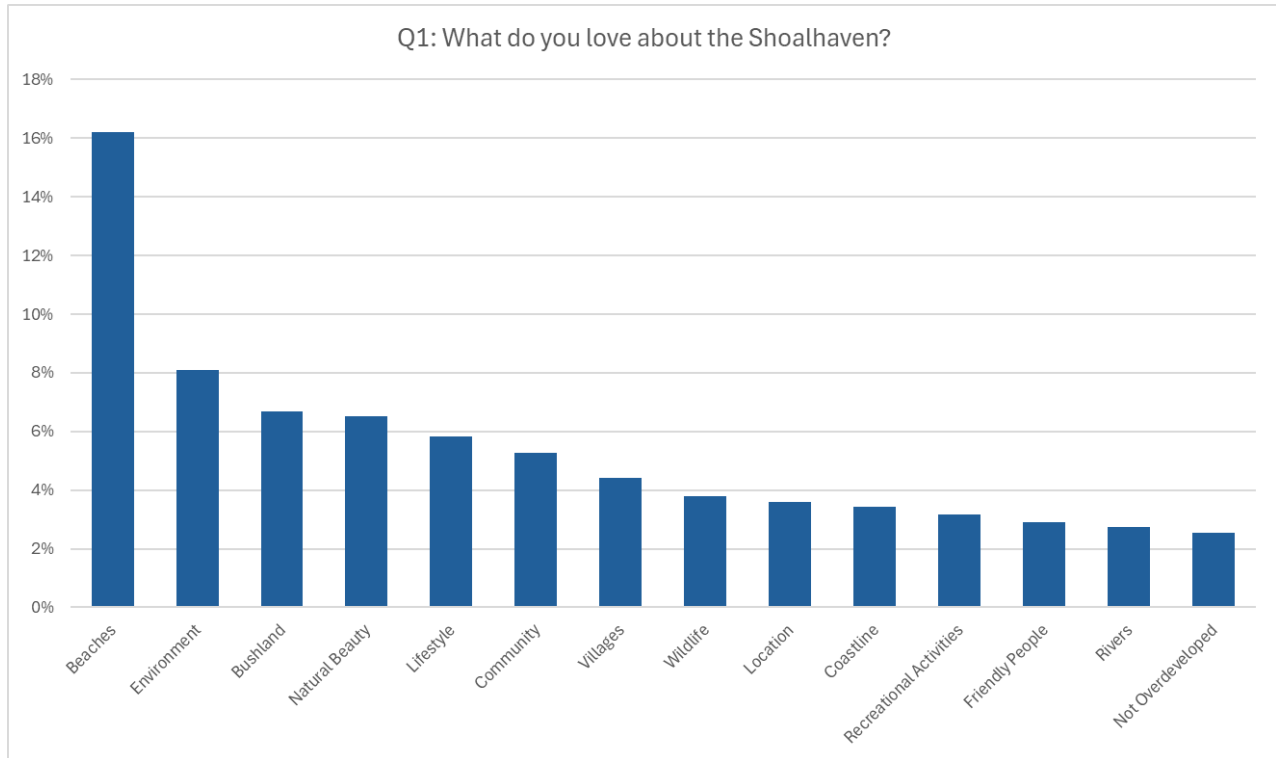
Facebook posts and reach

	Come down and speak to our friendly staff about our Community ... Photo · Shoalhaven City Council	Boost	25 March 10:07	2.2K
	Come down and speak to our friendly staff about our Commun... Photo · Shoalhaven City Council	Boost	20 March 17:04	4.9K
	Come down and speak to our friendly staff about our Commun... Photo · Shoalhaven City Council	Boost	12 March 10:21	2.4K
	What is it you value most about the Shoalhaven? Is it the stunn... Photo · shoalhavencitycouncil	Boost	11 March 09:00	283
	What do you love about the Shoalhaven and what would you c... Photo · Shoalhaven City Council	Boost	4 March 10:00	15.6K
	The countdown is on. There's just over a week left for you to tel... Video · Shoalhaven City Council	Boost	20 March 11:41	1.1K

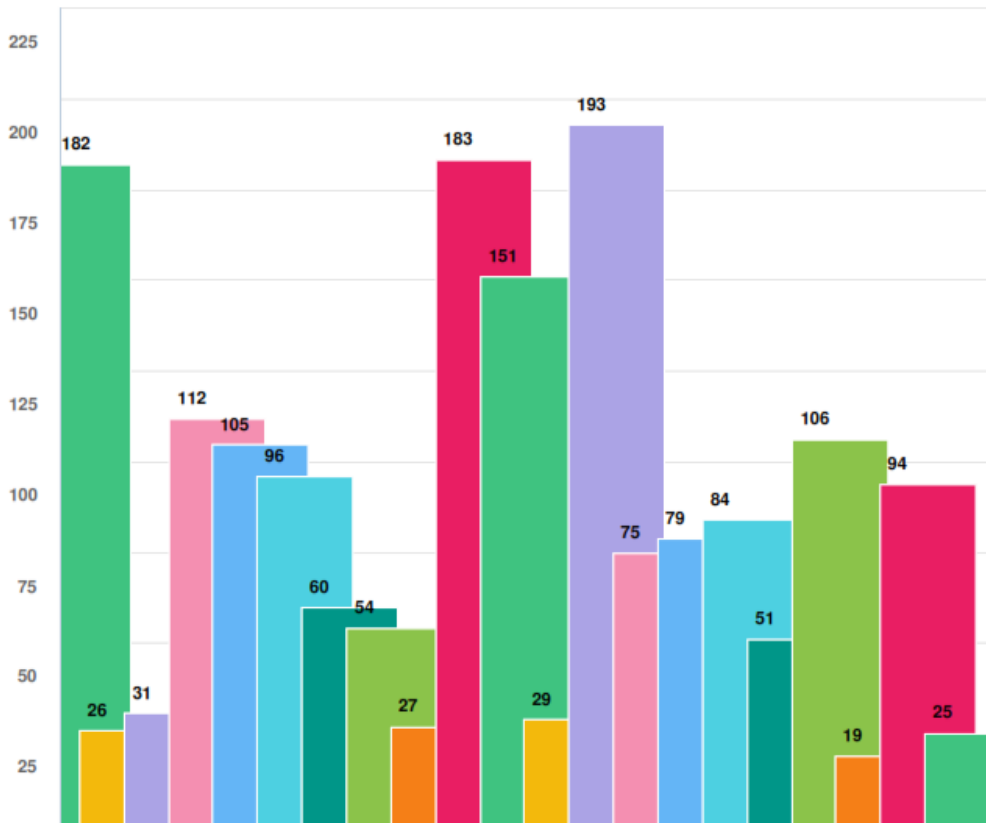
4. Survey Results

The combined survey responses from the online and hardcopy survey were analysed to create summary charts categorising comments into broad themes. These summaries were used to inform on the review and update of the CSP Pillars and Priorities and Council's Delivery Program Strategies.

The following survey results are based on the 384 responses received between 1 – 30 March 2025.



From the list below, what are most important to you? Select up to five (5)



Question options

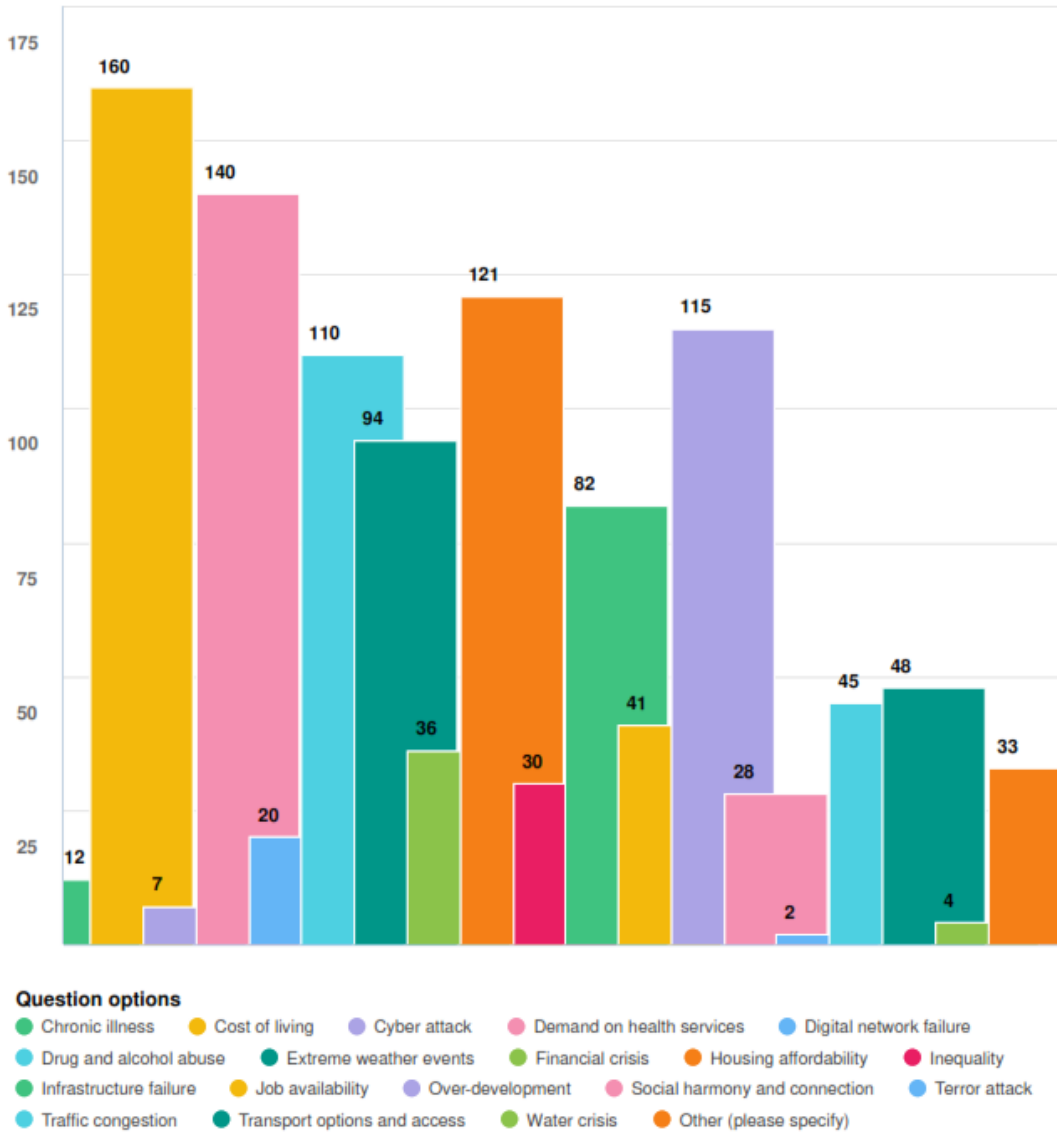
- Access to health services ● Access to social support services ● Accessibility ● Affordable housing options
- Community connection and inclusion ● Creative and cultural activities ● Disaster preparedness
- Education for employment ● Emergency management ● Environment & biodiversity ● Green spaces
- Healthy relationships ● Roads, shared paths and drainage ● Public transport ● Safe community spaces
- Sports and recreational activities ● Support for children and families ● Sustainable built environments ● Volunteering
- Waste and pollution ● Other (please specify)

Top 5 Most Important

1. Roads, shared paths, drainage
2. Access to health services
3. Environment & Biodiversity
4. Green Spaces
5. Affordable Housing options

See Appendix B for 'Other' responses.

What do you think are the three (3) biggest issues or challenges facing our community now, or in the future?

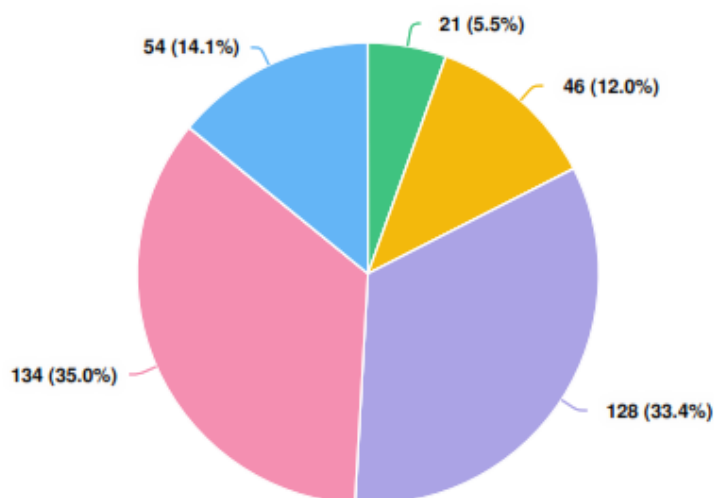


Top 5 biggest challenges

1. Cost of Living
2. Demand on health services
3. Housing affordability
4. Over-development
5. Drug and alcohol abuse

See Appendix B for 'Other' responses.

How well does this vision statement reflect the future of the Shoalhaven?



Question options

● Very unhappy
 ● Unhappy
 ● Neutral
 ● Happy
 ● Very happy

Demographics

What is your age?

Age Range	% Responses
12-17	0.5
18-24	9.7
25-34	12.3
35-49	20.1
50-59	19.6
60-69	23.5
70-84	13.8
85+	0.5

What is your gender?

Option	% Responses
Female	60.6
Male	37.3
Non-binary	0.5
Prefer not to say	1.6

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Option	% Responses
Yes	2.9
No	91.6
Prefer not to say	5.5

Are you a person living with a disability?

Option	% Responses
Yes	10.4
No	85.6
Prefer not to say	3.9

5. Targeted Stakeholder Consultation

Community Consultative Committee Executives Workshop

At the 27 November 2024 CCB Executive Meeting a workshop session was held to gather input into the review and update of the CSP 2035. Key themes from each of the question are included:

What words would you use to describe the Shoalhaven?

Welcoming, friendly, relaxing, connected to nature, unique, great place to live

What would make our community a better place for everyone?

- Maintain infrastructure especially roads, cycleways and footpaths
- Better access to health and education services – GPs, hospitals and schools
- Greater community participation
- Employment opportunities in strong businesses

What do you want the Shoalhaven to look like in 10 years?

- Sustainable development that keeps the character of towns and villages
- More facilities and services – schools, hospitals and public transport
- Access to aging in place
- Equitable and fair community – a good place to live

Inclusion and Access Committee Workshop

At the 24 February 2025 workshop session, we asked Committee members some key questions from their perspective on what would make the Shoalhaven a better place for people living with a disability and what the key challenges are. The overall themes we heard about:

1. Improve accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities - This involves physical access, community education, infrastructure improvements, and inclusive practices across various public and private spaces.
2. Enhance employment opportunities - This includes promoting inclusive hiring practices, improving physical access to workplaces and businesses, and ensuring supportive infrastructure and transport to enable full economic participation.
3. Foster inclusive communities through education, accessible infrastructure, and diverse representation - This includes improving communication about facilities, ensuring accessible public spaces and events, and integrating various voices and needs into community planning and activities.

Business and Industry Workshop

An online workshop session was held on 26 March 2025 with 15 attendees (from 62 invites) from businesses and organisations across the Shoalhaven - Chambers of Commerce, Community and Support Organisations, Neighbourhood centres, Aboriginal Land Councils and Uptown District businesses. A summary of recurring themes under each question is included:

What are the biggest challenges facing your communities or organisations?

- Affordable Housing / Housing Stress – including for key workers across all industries - including defence, manufacturing and essential services, e.g. Hospital and Nurses)
- Tourism and Investment Attraction has dropped
- Poor road and infrastructure network – fix the roads and open more industrial land
- Lack of funding and support for community organisations
- Cost of running a business and reduced customer spending
- Management of the impact of large events
- Capacity building in the community, especially for our youth

What do you think Council's role is in addressing these challenges?

- Improve housing infrastructure through a bequest of community land and facilitate investors in affordable housing
- Improve the Council DA approval to encourage investors to the City to provide housing and industrial property for employment.
- Improve the registration and opening of land to increase supply for Housing and Industry
- Advocate for funding from State/Federal Governments for community organisations, improved transport options and other important community issues
- Work with industries to attract new business and higher value jobs
- Deliver awareness campaign on benefits of events and visitor economy to the wider economy and job creation
- Council needs to invest in community and business events that have a clear multiplier factor through the business community
- Improved communication on Council project timelines
- Promote health and wellbeing programs
- Support charities and community organisations through partnership and advocacy

How is your business or service contributing to the Shoalhaven?

- Providing local employment opportunities and boosting our economy
- Businesses have proved community support to the community and charities, through profits from their organisations
- Delivering wellbeing, homelessness, education, trauma, multicultural and volunteering programs
- Providing leadership and mentoring to the wider community
- Giving access to essential support services

Additional Advisory Committees

Youth Advisory Committee and Aboriginal Advisory Committee meetings were scheduled but not held during the consultation period. These groups will be further engaged while the draft documents are on public exhibition.

6. Assessment of Community Led Strategic Plans

Since the assessment of community-led strategic plans in 2022 for the development of the CSP 2032, there have been several new plans that have been developed by communities across the Shoalhaven. An assessment was undertaken on the alignment of these Community-led strategic plan priorities as part of update of the CSP and development of Council's Delivery Program. Council staff will continue to work with community groups to support these initiatives where appropriate. New plans include:

- Cambewarra Resident and Ratepayers Association Business Plan 2022
- Red Head Villages Association Community Plan 2024-2030

Community led plans that were previously assessed are still aligned with new draft CSP 2035 include:

- Bay and Basin Community Led Strategic Plan 2021
- Berry Community Strategic Plan 2016
- Community Led Adaptation and Resilience Strategy for Shoalhaven
- Conjola District Strategic Action Plan 2014-2030
- Shoalhaven Heads - Our Future - Strategy 2018
- Sussex Inlet and District strategic Action Plan 2015-2030 (2019)

7. Next Steps

Engagement on the review and update of the CSP collected a variety of inputs which were considered in the drafting of the updated CSP Pillars and Key Priorities. Feedback was also utilised in development of the updated Delivery Program 2025-29 strategies and the related actions in the Operational Plan 2025-26.

Public exhibition of the draft documents will provide further opportunity for feedback from community and stakeholders to refine the content in the suite of Council's integrated planning documents.

A further engagement report will be provided to Council following public exhibition of the draft documents with recommendations on any further updates ahead of Council adoption prior to 30 June 2025.

8. Appendix

Appendix A – Online survey questions

Survey - Your city, your say

Let us know what makes the Shoalhaven a great place to live, what's important to you and our challenges.

Please provide your response by Sunday 30 March 2025.

What makes the Shoalhaven a great place to live?

(Required)

What is one thing that would make the Shoalhaven a better place for everyone?

(Required)

From the list below, what are most important to you? Select up to five (5)

(Choose any 5 options) (Required)

- ☐ Access to health services
- ☐ Access to social support services
- ☐ Accessibility
- ☐ Affordable housing options
- ☐ Community connection and inclusion
- ☐ Creative and cultural activities
- ☐ Disaster preparedness
- ☐ Education for employment
- ☐ Emergency management
- ☐ Environment & biodiversity
- ☐ Green spaces
- ☐ Healthy relationships
- ☐ Roads, shared paths and drainage
- ☐ Public transport
- ☐ Safe community spaces
- ☐ Sports and recreational activities

- ☐ Support for children and families
- ☐ Sustainable built environments
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Waste and pollution

Is there anything missing from this list?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Answer this question only if you have chosen Yes for Is there anything missing from this list?

Please provide what is missing from this list.

What do you think are the three (3) biggest issues or challenges facing our community now, or in the future?

(Choose any 3 options) (Required)

- ☐ Chronic illness
- ☐ Cost of living
- ☐ Cyber attack
- ☐ Demand on health services
- ☐ Digital network failure
- ☐ Disease pandemic
- ☐ Drug and alcohol abuse
- ☐ Extreme weather events
- ☐ Financial crisis
- ☐ Housing affordability
- ☐ Inequality
- ☐ Infrastructure failure
- ☐ Job availability
- ☐ Over-development
- ☐ Social harmony and connection
- ☐ Terror attack
- ☐ Traffic congestion
- ☐ Transport options and access
- ☐ Water crisis

How well does this vision statement reflect the future of the Shoalhaven?

“We will work together in Shoalhaven to foster a safe & attractive community for people to live, work, stay & play; where sustainable growth, development & environmental protection are managed to provide a unique & relaxed lifestyle.”

(Required)

- ☐ Very unhappy
- ☐ Unhappy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Happy
- ☐ Very happy

What is your age?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- ☐ Less than 12
- ☐ 12 to 17
- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 59
- ☐ 60 to 69
- ☐ 70 to 84
- ☐ 85+

What is your gender?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Are you a person living with a disability?

(Choose any one option) (Required)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Appendix B – Additional responses to ‘Other’ options

From the list below, what are most important to you? Other (please specify)

More dog access across the area

Dog Friendly places, including more Off-leash Untimed Beaches & Waterways.

Shared community resources where the community that lives in the Shoalhaven is placed as the main objective and tourism as a second objective - if the community loves living in the area it becomes more attractive to tourists to visit

Build a Park in CBD Nowra like Boongaree

More restaurant choices other than takeaway fast food. Footpaths and cycleways

Employment opportunities

Heritage preservation (Berry)

Establish solid fighting fund to counter legal challenges to Council DA refusals.

More on-leash dog areas on beaches and walks. Why so restrictive if dogs are on the leash?

Education for enrichment e.g. ceramics at TAFE

We are way behind in having a medical, specialist precinct as well as precinct for lawyers, barristers etc.

More housing and better roads

Better signage and education of wildlife.

Regulate camping, cabin & caravan grounds to prevent water pollution

Disability friendly. More connecting paths & ramps. Not paths that lead to nowhere.

Local free camping options and access to bushland areas

Commercial development in major centres

Providing areas to get out bush and camp

Crackdown on the Meth epidemic. We need police to make meaningful arrests of ringleaders.

Kid friendly environment

Facilities, like restaurants, pubs and parks and paths

Less red tape on development to allow the community to progress

Get a council that listens to the ratepayers. Sack the mayor.

More housing

Better maternity services for mothers and babies. Women need access to one on one midwifery led care whereby continuity of care is the norm, and getting into programs such as the MGP is only for the select few that we're just lucky to get in. Better school mental health programs for students and families. Consult with someone like Maggie Dent to get programs in place to help support families.

What do you think are the three (3) biggest issues or challenges facing our community now, or in the future? Other (please specify)

Waste management

Roads

A council that is incompetent and lies to the community.

Stormwater drainage

Special interest groups being allowed to use facilities or areas to the detriment of the community and local small businesses that operate in areas every day of the year

Need for another primary school for south Nowra and Worrigea, more daycare and family daycare

Spending too much money on large sporting infrastructure which costs too much to maintain.

The war against Christianity.

Lack of services & support for young people

Poor governance

- Victim mentality
- Entitlement without contribution
- over staffing

potholes

Crime and low social economic type people in Nowra

Poor road maintenance

Lack of green bins to assist environmental challenges

The impacts of climate change.

Environmental degradation; Mariculture in the bay

Kids roaming around causing trouble. If there was somewhere like a PCYC they could hang out with some activities and pool tables (especially for under 18's).

Losing our beautiful area to greedy development

Over-population

Waste issues.

aging population

Lack of clear direction/leadership

Loss of biodiversity

Councillors greed.

Under development

Lack of development leading to productive community members leaving the area

Lack of the current SIG council doing anything for the community. Could we get the mayor out of her car and stop charging the ratepayers for ever kilometre. Get her in a council car and stop rotting.

Developers and "the rich" doing what they want when they want avoiding, bending or outright breaking of laws for their own selfish gains whether it be financial or perceived social standing. (e.g. cutting down or poisoning trees and bushland to create paths, access or views for their benefit regardless of the environmental impacts.)

Bushfires and our dependence on volunteer emergency responders

Conservation of our environment and the wildlife that lives there.

Levels of government – local, state and federal – listening to each other and creating consistent policy that has listened to community.

Waste management