

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



CENTRE FOR
WESTERN SYDNEY

PARRAMATTA 2035

COMMUNITY VIEWS
ON THE FUTURE OF
OUR REGION

2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Western Sydney and beyond).

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

Western Sydney University (WSU) is the only university in New South Wales (NSW) with a legislated commitment to conduct research that meets the needs of Western Sydney communities. Fulfilling this unique mandate for research, WSU established the Centre for Western Sydney (CfWS) in 2014.

Combining WSU's world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to Western Sydney, the work of the CfWS is guided by its ambition for a thriving Western Sydney that is understood and respected for its strengths and contributions regionally, nationally, and internationally. Delivered through a strong politics of listening, the Centre aims to drive informed dialogue and action with, and for, it's region.

ONLINE

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FOREWORD

As we navigate the opportunities and challenges of rapid growth, transformation and development, it is essential to seek input from diverse communities to shape the future. At the Centre for Western Sydney, we are committed to conducting research that meets the needs of the Western Sydney communities. As the only university in New South Wales with a legislated commitment to this mission, the Centre for Western Sydney was established in 2014 to combine world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to the region.

This report presents findings from a public consultation on the future of Greater Parramatta, conducted from September to October 2022 as part of *The Glover Review* on Parramatta as a global city (see pp.11). The consultation aimed to capture the needs and aspirations of the people who live, work, and play in the region. The report identifies ten key priorities that emerged from the consultation, including cultural diversity, identity and social cohesion, transport and connectivity, dining and nightlife, natural environment, education and employment opportunities, housing affordability and cost of living, arts and entertainment, shopping and services, public space and amenity and sustainable growth and development.

At the Centre for Western Sydney, we understand the importance of informed dialogue and action in the region, and this report provides valuable insights into the community's needs and aspirations. We believe that policymakers, planners, and decision-makers should take note of these findings and recommendations to ensure that Greater Parramatta can thrive as a vibrant and dynamic place to live, work, and play. We hope that this report's recommendations will be taken into consideration in future regional planning and decision-making processes.

The Centre's framework for engagement is rooted in a strong politics of listening, and we will continue to work with partners to develop and improve this engagement. We are ambitious for a thriving Western Sydney that is understood and respected for its strengths and contributions regionally, nationally, and internationally, and we believe that this report contributes to this vision. As we look to the future, it is vital to consider, and respond to the voices of those who live, work and play in the region. This report provides a platform for those voices to be heard and calls for further investment into meaningful engagement with communities in shaping the future of Greater Parramatta.

PROFESSOR ANDY MARKS

Executive Director, Centre for Western Sydney
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Strategy, Government and Alliances, Western Sydney University



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr Rhonda Itaoui is a social researcher and human geographer with global expertise in examining geographies of diversity and multiculturalism in urban spaces. Rhonda is passionate about using research as a tool to advocate for the needs and aspirations of underrepresented and disadvantaged communities through collaboration and meaningful engagement. She has developed quantitative and qualitative research methods to measure perceptions and experiences of various city spaces and proposed place-based recommendations according to community perspectives. Through research and engagement, she aspires to develop inclusive city spaces of belonging, mobility, and conviviality.



Dr Sophie-May Kerr is an urban cultural geographer who uses social research methods to explore urban planning challenges, including housing and neighbourhood change. She is an advocate for equitable city design, governance and imaginaries that are informed by the lived experiences of diverse communities.



Jayden Price is an urbanist in social strategy and engagement committed to engaging with the local community to listen to their opinions and ideas on the future of cities. Jayden is a strong advocate for public and active transport and sustainable growth, particularly regarding greenfields development and LGBTQIA+ safe spaces, with a focus on outer south-western Sydney, from where he originates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

This report presents findings from a public consultation on the future of Greater Parramatta conducted from September to October 2022 as part of *The Glover Review* on Parramatta as a global city. The consultation sought to capture how diverse groups interact with the city, their perceptions of strengths and areas for improvement, and their needs and aspirations for the future of the Greater Parramatta region.

The online consultation, which included a survey and ideas wall, reached a diverse range of community members, however, was limited in terms of accessibility for those with low technical literacy or language barriers.

Ten key themes emerged from the consultation:

1. Cultural diversity, identity and social cohesion.
2. Transport and connectivity.
3. Dining and nightlife.
4. Natural environment.
5. Education and employment opportunities.
6. Housing affordability and cost of living.
7. Arts and entertainment.
8. Shopping and services.
9. Public space and amenity.
10. Sustainable growth and development.

KEY FINDINGS:

The consultation documents the region's most pressing challenges and the solutions required for a thriving future in Greater Parramatta as identified by its communities. In addition, it advocates for greater consultation in future regional planning and decision-making to respond to community needs and visions. The consultation findings reflected ten main themes and issues of interest.

1 Cultural diversity, identity and social cohesion

Participants appreciated Greater Parramatta's cultural diversity, unique local identity, and sense of community. However, concerns were raised about urban development threatening local identity and undermining community cohesion. Suggested improvements included fostering community integration and connectedness, placemaking at Westmead, enhancing LGBTQIA+ support and involving First Nations people in decision-making processes.

2 Transport and connectivity

The survey found that respondents highly valued Greater Parramatta's centrality and connectivity to wider Sydney. While the central transport options available in Parramatta are essential

for accessibility, respondents called for better motor vehicle travel, enhanced active transport and for improvement to public transport. Better public transport connectivity and enhanced cyclability and walkability are desired for improved pedestrian access across the region.

3 Dining and nightlife

The research highlighted dining options as a critical strength, however respondents expressed a mutual desire for better nightlife options and activities in Greater Parramatta.

4 Natural environment

The research revealed that the natural environment is a vital asset of Greater Parramatta, with 62% of respondents indicating their value of the region's quality green and blue spaces. While these spaces were highly valued, survey participants also expressed a need for increased protection, particularly in the context of heat mitigation in climate change, as reflected in the comments on the ideas wall.

5 Education and employment opportunities

Survey participants recognised Greater Parramatta's excellent educational, employment, and business opportunities, with 79% agreeing with this sentiment. Additionally, 60% of respondents acknowledged the region's fostering of innovation and creativity. Despite these strengths, respondents identified a need for more high-quality job opportunities and economic opportunities for young people, along with strategies to promote business growth in the region.

6 Housing and cost of living

The survey revealed that housing affordability and cost of living were areas of concern for respondents in Greater Parramatta, with 54% expressing concerns about housing affordability, and identifying cost of living pressures as a key area for improvement.

7 Arts and entertainment

Most participants viewed Greater Parramatta as a vibrant and dynamic place but identified a need for upgraded facilities and more community-focused festivals and free cultural activities, particularly for families. Respondents expressed a desire for further investment in creative arts, such as local artist/performance spaces, cultural institutions, and live music. Additionally, an upgrade to Riverside Theatre and increased funding for the arts and creative industries were proposed as key priorities.

8 Shopping and services

The survey found that Greater Parramatta has a high volume and variety of retail and shopping services, as well as essential services like healthcare, which were viewed positively. While shopping precincts like Westfield were highly regarded, some respondents expressed concern about the loss of local low-cost retail and food hubs. Therefore, there is a need to retain and develop local shopping options beyond large-scale services and expand offerings for high-quality social services.

9 Public space and amenity

Participants value the quality public spaces on offer in Greater Parramatta, with 72% agreeing with this sentiment. Outdoor facilities at parks and sporting and recreational spaces were identified as key strengths; however, some respondents sought further amenities. The survey highlighted a desire for more recreational spaces, such as sports grounds for community and local clubs, additional social areas for young people beyond Westfield, more community infrastructure, playgrounds, public pools, water parks, more open space, and more recreational options for children and families.

10 Sustainable growth and development

The consultation revealed that participants viewed the growth and investments in the transformation of Greater Parramatta as key strengths, resulting in a growing city, increasing opportunities, investment, and a commitment to improvement. This forward-thinking approach was evident through embracing and transforming new infrastructure. However, respondents also expressed concerns with the loss of heritage, the threat of gentrification, the need for sustainable development to avoid overcrowding, and better management of construction sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The community-led recommendations proposed in this report suggest:

- 1 Improving transport connectivity, dining and nightlife options, housing affordability, creative arts, public space and amenity, and sustainable growth and development while retaining cultural identity.
- 2 People and place should be at the centre of planning strategies for the region.
- 3 A multicultural strategy should be developed for the City of Parramatta.
- 4 High-quality local employment opportunities should be provided, and services and shopping should be reviewed to keep pace with population growth.
- 5 Sustainable growth and development should balance the retention of heritage and culture, maintain the identity of the region, and balance the needs of the natural and built environment.

Together, these recommendations underscore the crucial importance of consultation in regional planning and shaping the vision for the future.

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COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON GREATER PARRAMATTA



The region is valued as a place that is culturally and linguistically diverse, welcoming and inclusive.



The central location of Greater Parramatta within Sydney is a key asset, valued for its connection between people and place within and across regions. To best capitalise on this strength, enhanced cycling/pedestrian infrastructure and parking provisions in the central business district (CBD) are needed.



Greater Parramatta offers quality green and blue spaces that must be protected and further cultivated to prioritise liveability and wellbeing.



Greater Parramatta offers a diversity of restaurants across global cuisine and price points. There remains a need to unlock the 24-hour nightlife economy, and further investment to realise the region's potential as a cultural and creative entertainment hub.



There is a need for collaboration and creative use of space to position Greater Parramatta as an attractive hub for the arts, startups and entrepreneurial innovation.



Greater Parramatta's population is young and educated; however, spatial inequalities remain in the labour market. Local education and employment opportunities must keep pace as the city transforms.



Housing is unaffordable in the region and cost of living pressures are rising. Housing affordability, diversity and quality must be improved to prevent gentrification and its negative impacts on liveability and diversity in the region.



The region is transforming. As Greater Parramatta grows and develops, balancing heritage and maintaining cultural identity is key to ensuring that the region's unique characteristics are not lost.

ABOUT THE GLOVER REVIEW



Parramatta is a city in a state of accelerated growth with unparalleled public and private investment transforming the region. Appreciating that the Greater Parramatta region was at a pivotal moment in its urban transformation, NSW Premier, the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, appointed WSU Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Barney Glover AO in December 2021, to test the proposition that Parramatta can become a 'global city' by 2035. 'Parramatta 2035: Vibrant, Sustainable, Global', also known as *The Glover Review*¹, was published as a result, providing 12 recommendations to government backed by detailed policy and planning actions. The recommendations fall within three priority areas: strategic planning and governance, planning and infrastructure priorities and liveability and sustainability. It connects with key debates on regional planning (pp. 8-10), and key policies across various levels of government (pp. 48-61). The report concluded that it is not a question of whether Parramatta will become a global city, but rather, what kind of global city it chooses to be and what steps are required to get there.

If the Greater Parramatta region aspires to be a liveable, vibrant, dynamic, soulful city, we need to understand these aspirations from the perspectives of different communities engaging in the area. From residents, workers, students, business owners and visitors, the vast communities who engage in the region are critical to the success of its future.

¹Glover, B., Dufty-Jones, R., Itaioui, R., Marks, A., Bergan, T. & Perrone, L. (2022). Parramatta 2035: Vibrant, sustainable, global. Centre for Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/r7s8-9r10>



Panel discussion at the official launch of 'Parramatta 2025: Vibrant, Sustainable, Global.'
Photography by Sally Tsoutas.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report seeks to document diverse community voices on the future of Greater Parramatta, as captured through a public consultation undertaken from September to October 2022.

The public consultation was launched as a part of *The Glover Review* on Parramatta as a global city, and reflects the CfWS commitment to a politics of listening. This research seeks to engage with local communities and reflect their vision for the future of Greater Parramatta and the Central River City.

The report documents the region's most pressing challenges and the solutions required for a thriving future in Greater Parramatta as identified by its communities. These communities are most invested in the region's future and ultimately most impacted by decisions made when planning for its development. By listening to these valuable voices, we highlight the importance of capturing the knowledge and experience of various communities when planning for regional futures. We argue that through engaged community consultation, planners and policymakers can build cities that respond to community needs and visions. More of this consultation is needed across various user groups and social identities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS KEY TO PLANNING PROCESSES

Cities are never finished. The good ones – the cities that attract talent and investment, those that culturally radiate and compel – are in constant flux and change... – *Professor Barney Glover AO Vice-Chancellor and President WSU.*²

Cities are dynamic and ever-changing. They are places we live, work, play, travel, learn, create and experience opportunities. But they can also be sites of inequality. All these things ring true for Greater Parramatta – a city region experiencing intensive and accelerated urban regeneration and growth.

Imagining and planning for the future of Greater Parramatta requires us to recognise both the strengths of the region and the challenges standing in the way of its current and future success. It is critical that these strengths and challenges reflect the perspective of the diverse groups engaging in the region. In addition to those living in the region, people working, studying, visiting and building businesses in Greater Parramatta are also important groups to engage in when planning for its future. Meaningful participation from these diverse communities in guiding the transformation of Greater Parramatta is key to delivering a shared vision and a more equitable experience of the region in the future.

Community engagement provides a mechanism for including ‘local people in helping solve local issues’.³ By giving community members a voice and involving them in decisions that affect them, we can gain insight into both big-picture thinking and important site-specific information.⁴⁻⁵ The aim of this report is to provide an overview of key community visions for a Greater Parramatta that is liveable, sustainable and connected.⁶

This report summarises the findings of a community consultation undertaken in the Greater Parramatta region. More than just telling the public what changes are occurring, consultation provides a tool for two-way conversation and sharing ideas.⁷

The CfWS understands that community engagement occurs across a continuum. The level of appropriate engagement can range from informing community members (a one-way transfer of information), to consultation and finally to actively collaborating with stakeholders in the decision-making process.

²Glover, B., Dufty-Jones, R., Itaoui, R., Marks, A., Bergan, T. & Perrone, L. (2022). Parramatta 2035: Vibrant, sustainable, global. Centre for Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/r7s8-9r10>

³Cuthill, M. (2001). Developing local government policy and processes for community consultation and participation. *Urban Policy and Research*, 19(2), pp. 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0811140108727871>

⁴Moffat, I. (2017, 9 May). Pilot study on why academics should engage with others in the community. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/pilot-study-on-why-academics-should-engage-with-others-in-the-community-76707>

⁵Kamols, N., Foth, M. & Guaralda, M. (2021). Beyond engagement theatre: Challenging institutional constraints of participatory planning practice. *Australian Planner*, 57(1), pp. 23–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07293682.2021.1920993>

⁶Glover, B., Dufty-Jones, R., Itaoui, R., Marks, A., Bergan, T. & Perrone, L. (2022). Parramatta 2035: Vibrant, sustainable, global. Centre for Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/r7s8-9r10>

⁷Moffat, I., 2017. Pilot study on why academics should engage with others in the community. *The Conversation*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/pilot-study-on-why-academics-should-engage-with-others-in-the-community-76707>



CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The CfWS framework for impact and engagement recognises the importance of a nuanced approach to community engagement. At the CfWS we believe the quality and impact of our work is amplified when we promote inclusivity and equity whilst celebrating the richness of diverse views, cultures and experiences. As a centre committed to research and advocacy with and for the Western Sydney region, our community engagement is informed by the following values (see Figure 1).



COMMITMENT TO PLACE-BASED PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGION

1. We value place-based partnerships and engagements with local communities, industry and government.
2. The Centre seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of people living in Greater Western Sydney through collaborative research and fearless advocacy.



ENGAGEMENT IS INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

1. We recognise and support diverse strengths, abilities, interests and perspectives.
2. We seek to meaningfully engage with diverse groups, including young and older people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations communities, and people with limited digital literacy or access.
3. We produce research and advocacy pieces that are readily available and accessible to support the work and needs of Greater Western Sydney.



ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES ARE TRUSTWORTHY AND TRANSPARENT

1. We produce evidence-based research outputs that can be utilised by community, industry and government organisations.
2. We research with integrity and rigour, allowing our work to be trusted and respected.



ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS AND CONTRIBUTES TO ADVOCACY FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

1. Engagement is purpose-driven and seeks to drive informed dialogue and action based on the needs of communities.
2. Engagement outcomes are committed to elevating the authentic voices of community members.



ENGAGED APPROACHES ARE INFORMED AND REFLECTIVE

1. Engagement occurs at most stages of the research, is respectful of different points of view and is subject to an ongoing evaluation process for improvement.

Figure 1: Centre for Western Sydney Engagement Values

Source: Centre for Western Sydney

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

This report draws on an online consultation that sought input from communities of the Greater Parramatta region. Throughout the consultation, community participants were able to contribute their current perceptions of the region, how they interact with the city and their vision for its future. The consultation was open to all community members who engage in Greater Parramatta across living, working, studying or playing/socialising in the area. The decision to consult with a diverse range of user groups beyond residents allowed us to capture the multiple purposes of the city and the diverse relationships communities have with the region and its spaces. In doing so, the consultation sought to capture the wide breadth of concerns and priorities across various user groups and thus plan for the ongoing dynamism of the region.

Guided by the CfWS engagement values (see Figure 1), our consultation explored key questions, including:

1. How do people interact with and experience the city?
2. What are their needs and aspirations for Greater Parramatta?
3. What do they see as strengths and areas for improvement in the region?

The community consultation took place for one month across September–October 2022. The consultation included two main online engagement methods, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights into community perspectives (see Figure 2). The insights gathered through these methods were coded according to key emerging themes in the data and analysed using descriptive statistics and a content analysis of key issues.⁸



SURVEY ($n = 105$)

Open and closed-answer questions documented how respondents interact with/perceive the city and their perceived strengths and areas for improvement in the region.⁹



IDEAS WALL ($n = 20$)

Participants pitched ideas and shared stories in response to 10 questions/prompts.¹⁰

Figure 2: Consultation Methodologies

Aiming to include a diversity of perspectives, targeted recruitment was undertaken across the Greater Parramatta region, including key suburbs such as Parramatta, Merrylands, Guildford, Granville, Auburn, Lidcombe and Rydalmere. While city plans are devised based on statutory boundaries, this engagement recognised that place is more fluid and people (and contemporary urban challenges) move and engage across the region in a variety of ways.¹¹ By expanding the recruitment to various user groups, and targeting surrounding suburbs, the engagement sought to capture and plan for the diversity in functions, relationships and engagements that must be considered when envisioning the future of the region.¹²

⁸Refer to Appendix A for more details on the method of data coding and analysis.

⁹Refer to Appendix B for a copy of the survey questions.

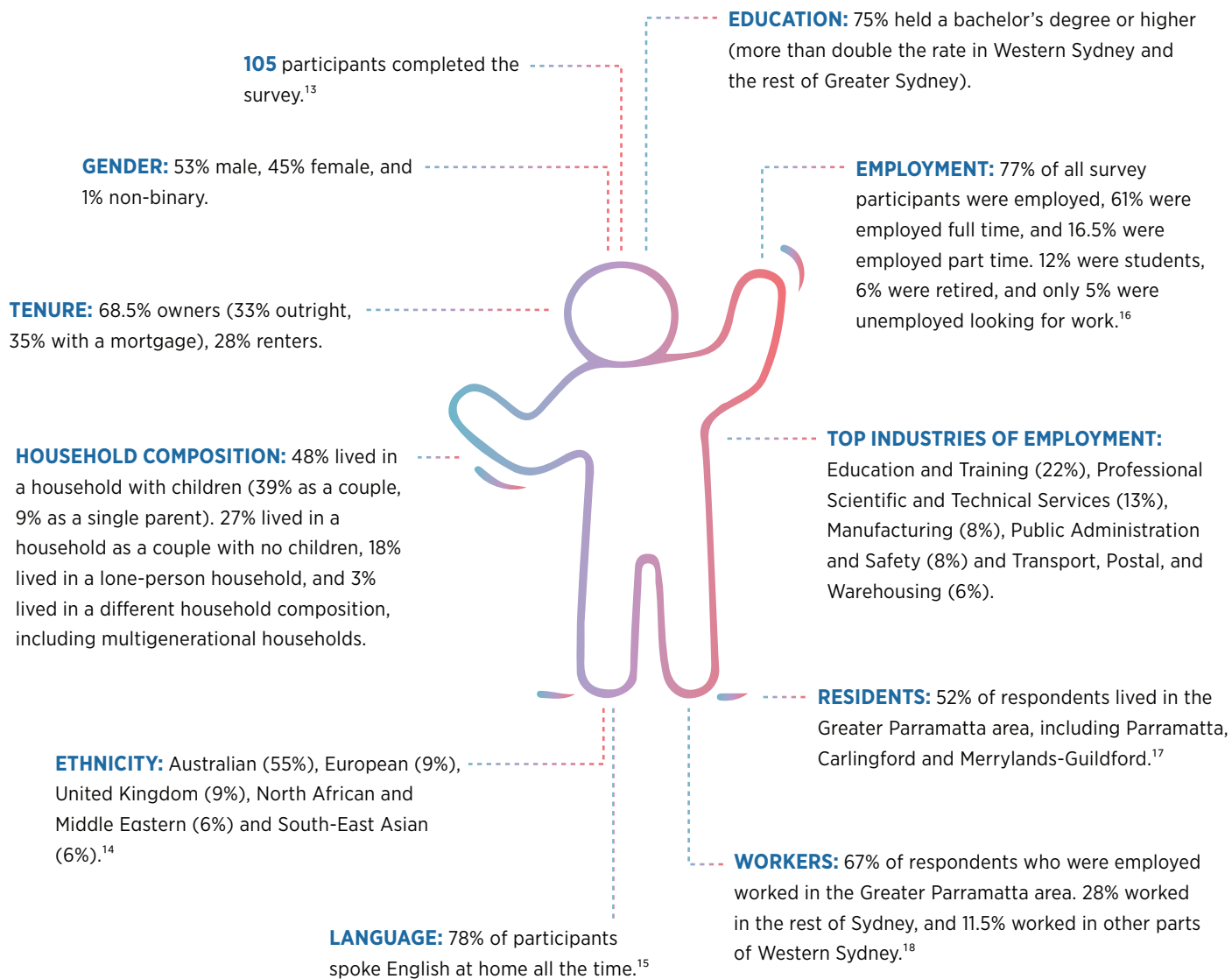
¹⁰Refer to Appendix C for a copy of the ideas wall prompts.

¹¹Pham, K. (2020). Beyond borders: Steering metropolitan growth priorities through spatial imaginaries. *Australian Planner*, 56(2), pp. 103–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07293682.2020.1739094>

¹²Refer to Appendix D for more detail on recruitment and data collection.



PARTICIPANT PROFILES



¹³Refer to Appendix E for a full participant demographic overview.

¹⁴Other ethnicities included Southern and Central Asian, New Zealander, North American, North-East Asian and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

¹⁵The consultation sample was thus not representative of the cultural diversity across Western Sydney, whereby 45.7% of people spoke a language other than English at home in 2021 (ABS, 2021).

¹⁶Our sample reflected strong workforce participation, particularly regarding full-time employment (61.2%) compared to Western Sydney (53.4%) and the rest of Sydney (55.5%). A high proportion of participants worked in professional and managerial roles (87.6%, compared to 35.9% in Western Sydney and 44.5% for the rest of Sydney).

¹⁷Other dwelling locations included: Blacktown, Bankstown, Strathfield – Burwood – Ashfield, Baulkham Hills, Sydney Inner City, Camden, Penrith, Blacktown – North, Marrickville – Sydenham – Petersham, Campbelltown, Goulburn – Mulwaree, South Coast, Gosford, Wollongong, Hawkesbury, Botany, Hurstville, Leichhardt, Chatswood – Lane Cove, Hornsby, Manly, Blue Mountains, Auburn, Pennant Hills – Epping, Ryde – Hunters Hill and Liverpool.

¹⁸Other locations of employment included North Sydney – Mosman, Sydney Inner City, Strathfield – Burwood – Ashfield, Penrith, Ku-ring-gai, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Leichhardt, Chatswood – Lane Cove, Richmond – Windsor, Auburn, Ryde – Hunters Hill and Fairfield.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT LOCATION AND DWELLING LOCATION (*n* = 16)

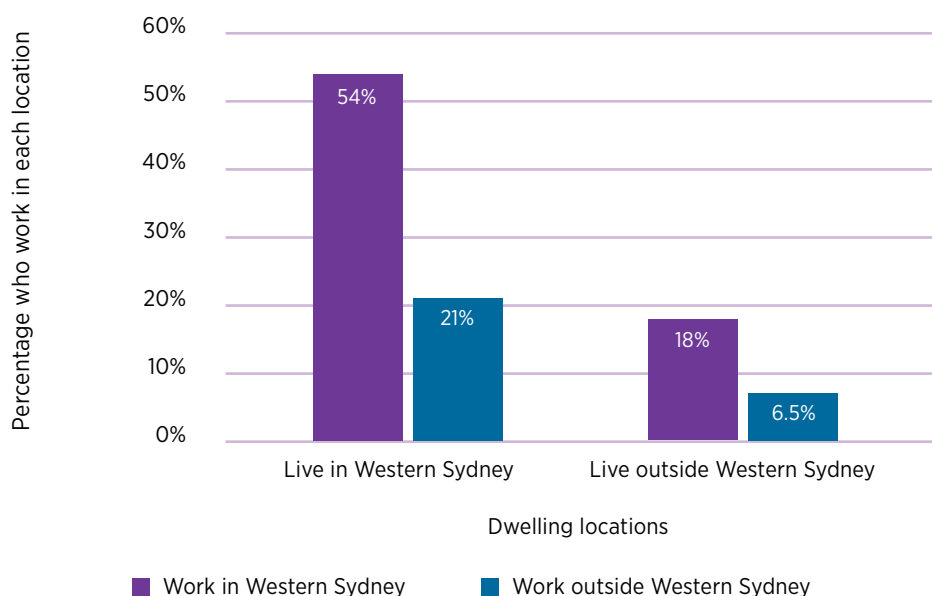


Figure 3: Relationship Between Employment and Dwelling Locations

Source: Project Survey

As shown in Figure 3, 54 per cent of the sample both lived and worked in Western Sydney, 21.3 per cent lived in Western Sydney and worked in the rest of Sydney, 18 per cent worked in Western Sydney and lived elsewhere, and 6.5 per cent both lived and worked outside of Western Sydney.

STUDENTS

16 survey respondents had engaged in formal education in the Greater Parramatta region in the past 6–12 months.

BUSINESS OWNERS

A small sample of respondents had run a business in the Greater Parramatta region in the past 6–12 months (*n* = 6).

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL USE

While education and employment engagement tended to cluster around Parramatta, participants in the study visited a wider range of locations for social and recreational purposes, including Parramatta City (66%), Sydney Olympic Park (55%), North Parramatta (38%), Harris Park (36%), Silverwater/Newington (28%), Westmead (28%), Rydalmere/Carlingford (27%) and Camelia/Rosehill (24%).



GREATER PARRAMATTA: STRENGTHS AND FUTURE VISIONS

To capture community perspectives of the region, this section of the report examines the key strengths and areas for improvement identified by respondents to our research in relation to Greater Parramatta. These are organised across 10 key themes that emerged from the data across both the survey and ideas wall. Figure 5 summarises the regional strengths and improvements that were identified and subtopics included under each theme.

REGIONAL STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	SPECIFIC ISSUES AND THEMES	
Cultural Diversity, Identity and Social Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and social diversity • Young population • Multiculturalism • Sense of place and community / place-making / local identity • Community spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family friendly • Inclusivity • Safety • Including First Nations perspectives • LGBTQIA + support • Intercultural opportunities
Transport and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport • Active transport (walking and cycling) • Accessibility / ease of travel • Location / centrality • Connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic / congestion • Parking and tolls • Roads and highways • Wayfinding
Dining and Nightlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants and cafes • Bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat street • Nightlife
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space • Blue space • Environmental initiatives e.g., Solar, FOGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban heat and mitigation • Air quality, pollution, and air flow
Education and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job opportunities • Business and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities • Schools
Housing and Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing affordability and cost of living • Housing diversity • Housing quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor accommodation • Homelessness
Arts and Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment facilities and activities • Events • Activities • Arts venues and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live music and performance spaces • Funding for creative industries • Cultural institutions
Shopping and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and retail shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services (e.g., healthcare)
Public Space and Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting facilities (e.g., sports grounds and swimming pools) • Recreation facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public space • Playgrounds • Amenities
Sustainable Growth and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage • Protection of heritage buildings • Management of construction and growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentrification • Investment and improvement • Transformation

Figure 4: Regional Strengths and Areas for Improvement by Theme and Subtheme

Source: Project Survey

TOP STRENGTHS OF THE GREATER PARRAMATTA REGION:

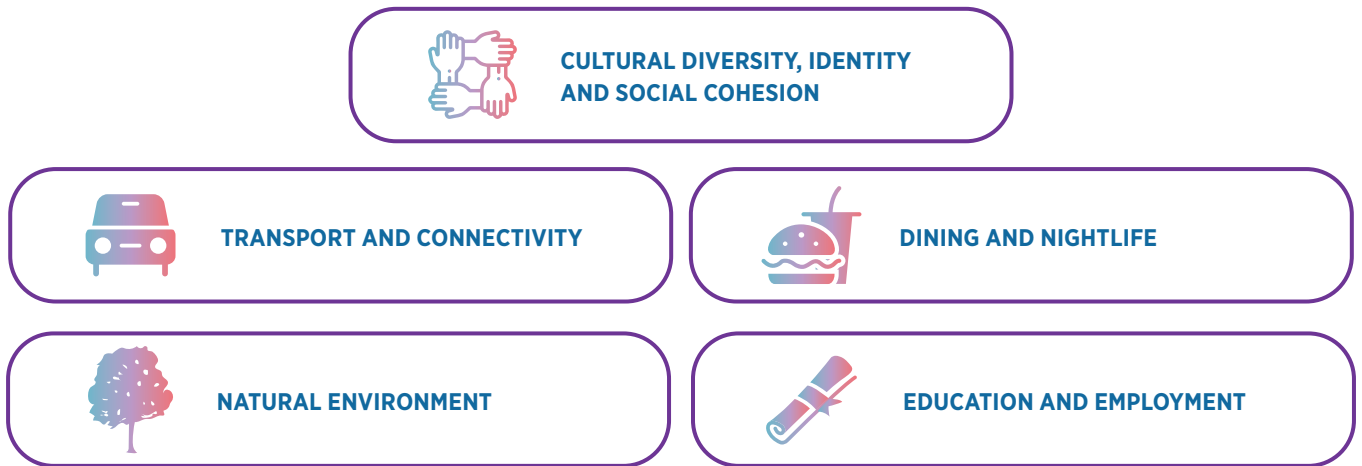


Figure 5: Top Strengths of the Greater Parramatta Region
Source: Project Survey

TOP AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE GREATER PARRAMATTA REGION:

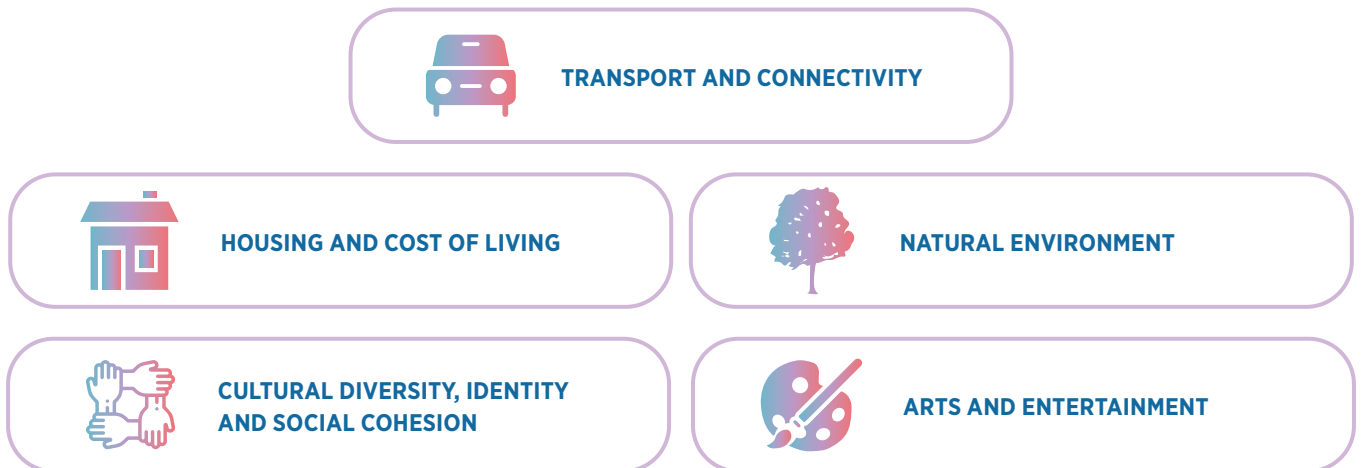


Figure 6: Top Areas for Improvement in the Greater Parramatta Region
Source: Project Survey



TOP STRENGTHS AND IMPROVEMENTS

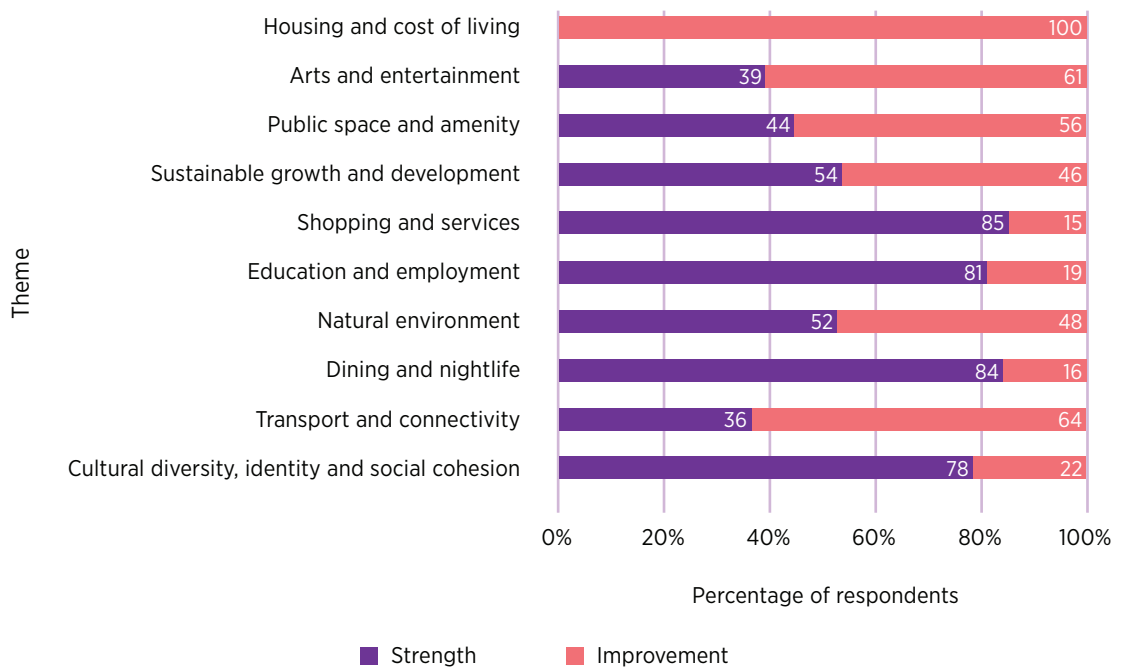
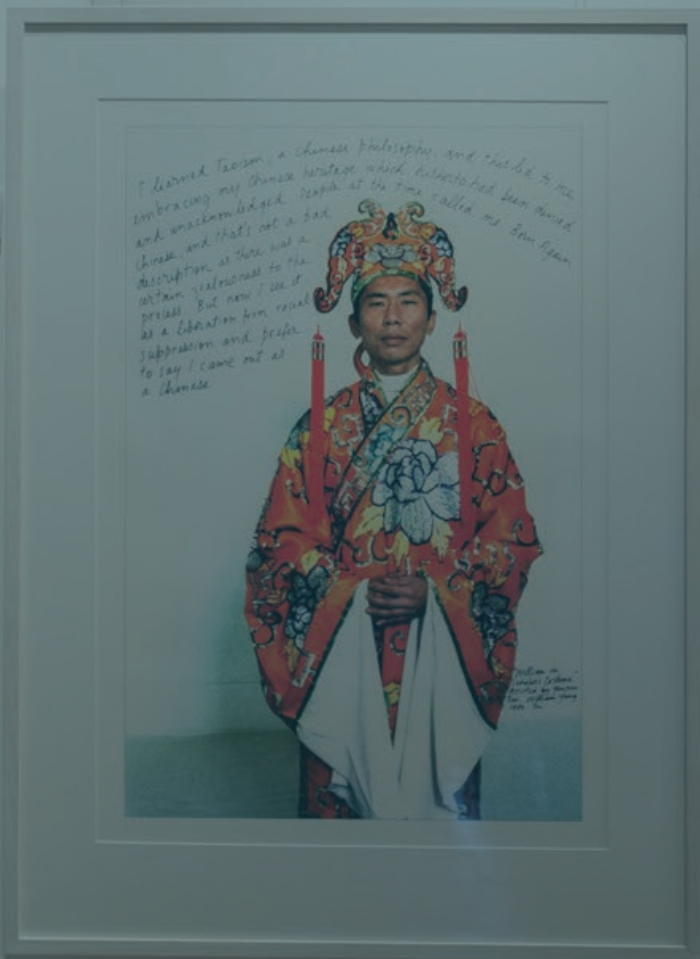


Figure 7: Top Strengths and Improvements
Source: Project Survey



William Yang Exhibition, The Institute for Australian and Chinese Arts and Culture (IAC), Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus, 2023. Photography by Sally Tsoutas.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, IDENTITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

Cultural diversity, identity and social cohesion were seen as significant assets of Greater Parramatta. According to the content analysis of the survey responses demonstrated in Figure 8, most participants proposed that the region is culturally and linguistically diverse and that it is welcoming and inclusive.

PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

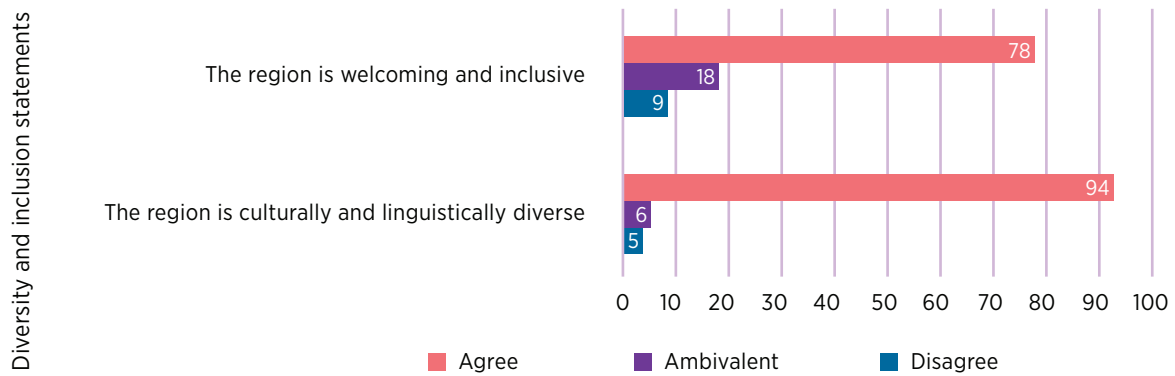


Figure 8: Perceptions of Cultural Diversity and Inclusion
Source: Project Survey

According to the 2021 Census, the population of Western Sydney is young (median age of 35 years old) and multicultural (40.9% of the population was born overseas).¹⁹ This was identified as a primary strength according to survey respondents. Most of the perceived strengths in this theme related to cultural diversity, as well as the young population in the region. Participants also expressed value for the region’s unique local identity, as well as their experience of a sense of community and sense of place.



¹⁹Demographic analysis of the population of Western Sydney is available at: <https://profile.id.com.au/cws/>
*Response to Project Ideas Wall

While Greater Parramatta was described as inclusive and a great place to socialise, respondents to the survey indicated concern about how urban development in the region threatens this local identity and risks undermining the sense of community in new areas. Conversely, participants cited community integration and connectedness as areas of perceived improvement. Other areas of enhancement required in the Greater Parramatta region included placemaking at Westmead, providing more LGBTQIA+ support and including First Nations people in decision-making. Our consultations with business owners in surrounding suburbs such as Guildford also indicated that crime and safety concerns negatively impacted social cohesion and belonging in certain suburbs. Over half of the comments within the survey on areas of improvement in the region related to cultural diversity, identity and social cohesion focused on safety, crime prevention and lighting, suggesting the need to prioritise safety concerns in the future development of the region.

Together, the young, multicultural demographic of the region is a key strength that should be harnessed and celebrated. People and place must be at the centre of planning strategies to ensure all communities (including culturally and linguistically diverse, young and old, First Nations, LGBTQIA+) are included and accommodated in planning for the future. To ensure cultural diversity is recognised, celebrated and retained as the region continues to develop, Parramatta City Council should develop a multicultural strategy.

COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE REGION

Recognising the value of cultural diversity for creating a unique sense of place, 'the fabric of the city needs to lend itself to the different cultures that use it not just replicate a Paddington or Bondi Junction'.

Re-naming or dual-naming landmarks and places within the city to diversify the 'old colonial...white' history that is predominantly reflected in current place names.

Hosting more 'cultural festivals' and 'intercultural opportunities' to activate the CBD and encourage more regular use of adaptive public spaces.

Box 1: Community Ideas for Celebrating Cultural Diversity
Source: Project Survey and Ideas Wall



'Made in the West' Film Festival event, 2022. Artwork by Rhonda Sampson.
Photography by Sally Tsoutas.



TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Transport and connectivity play a significant role in shaping the urban experience of residents, workers, students and visitors. Respondents to the survey emphasised the benefits of Greater Parramatta’s centrality and connectivity to the wider Sydney region. Participants particularly recognised the benefit of accessibility in the region via the central transport hub for connecting people and places within and across both Greater Parramatta and the rest of the City of Sydney (see Figure 9).

PERCEPTIONS OF CONNECTIVITY

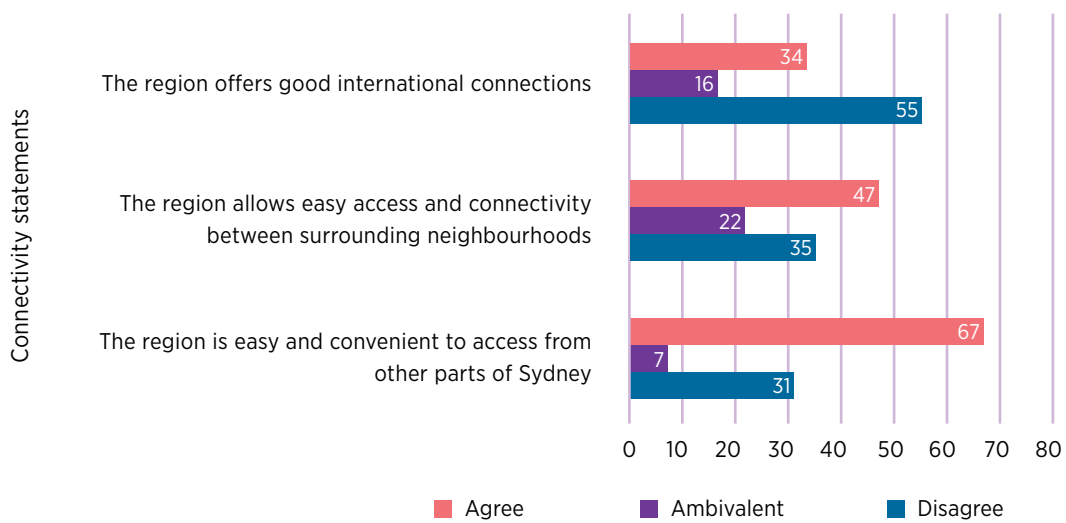


Figure 9: Perceptions of Connectivity
Source: Project Survey



*Response to Project Ideas Wall

Despite these strengths related to the region's connectivity and accessibility, most respondents to the survey indicated that the region does not currently offer good international connections. This may evolve with the development of the Western Sydney Airport to be located 36 kilometres from the Parramatta CBD.

Although transport and connectivity were identified as a strength of the region, participants also indicated a desire for improvement to specific modes of transport, including motor vehicle travel (42%), active transport (23%) and public transport (20%). Among the comments relating to motor vehicles, participants highlighted parking, traffic and congestion, road quality and safety as the key challenges in need of improvement. One participant shared their recommendations for improvement on the ideas wall to include '*less motor vehicle traffic around Parramatta CBD*', suggesting that '*car park towers at Railway stations Light Rail Stations*' could support this strategy while still ensuring people come into the city centre.

Participants in the research also proposed the need for improved active transport options, including a need for enhanced walkability and cyclability across the region. Participants indicated a desire for improved cycling infrastructure and safety, more walkways connecting Parramatta to surrounding suburbs, and increased pedestrian amenity and security. Cycling infrastructure was identified as critically important for both recreation and active commuting:




Participants also desired enhanced public transport connectivity, including suggestions for multimodal transport and connectivity (see Box 2).


COMMUNITY VISIONS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

- Fast metro to the city
- Train access from other areas of Sydney
- Heavy rail from Epping to Parramatta
- Light rail from Carlingford to Epping
- Light rail connectivity for Cumberland
- Better public transport between north and south of Sydney
- Improved wayfinding and signage for prominent places to enhance accessibility.

Box 2: Community Visions for Public Transport Connectivity
Source: Project Survey and Ideas Wall



Make Parramatta a green space for pedestrian access through central streets that run through the beautified and redeveloped Parramatta Park, right through to Eat Street and Camellia precinct (Westfield included). [Provide] free light rail transport, inviting people into the centre of the CBD, while creating free car spaces in and around central Parramatta to allow easy access to the commercial print...*



Without foot traffic business dies. Free light rail invites people to centralise and promotes business. Further, grants programs help encourage startups and the development and revitalization of store frontages. Free car parking and plenty of it allows people to get into the CBD experience what's to offer and get home safely... there is no business without people coming through your door.*

Overall, survey respondents perceived Greater Parramatta as easy and convenient to access from other parts of Sydney, allowing connectivity between surrounding neighbourhoods. However, respondents also expressed a desire for improved public transport connectivity between Parramatta and the rest of Sydney, as well as enhanced cyclability and walkability to improve pedestrian access across the region.

As the geographic centre of Sydney, Greater Parramatta should continue to be strengthened as a public transport hub to improve connectivity to other regions as well as global connections. The survey findings indicate a need for improved parking options in the Parramatta CBD and at transit hubs to encourage multimodal transport journeys. Planning should ensure transport improvements align with land use change, employment and education opportunities and sustainability imperatives, for example improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to facilitate greater active transport use.

*Response to Project Ideas Wall



Photography by Anthony Kerr

DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

Dining and nightlife emerged as a key theme in the research, with a range of responses indicating both satisfaction with current offerings and a mutual desire for improvements in current experiences across the region.

Greater Parramatta's plethora of diverse restaurants and food offerings were highlighted as a key asset of the region. Diversity in the form of different global cuisines, price points and dining options were all valued, and highlighted as a central component of the city's attractiveness. As the visitation survey data revealed, social and recreational engagement (that often includes food and dining) was evident across surrounding suburbs as well as Parramatta itself.

Three-quarters of respondents, however, indicated a desire for improved nightlife options and activities in Greater Parramatta.

As Parramatta Council has identified, the region *'needs to harness the opportunities our growth and changing demographics present to further develop our night-time offer. The City needs to diversify its night-time offerings to meet our diverse community's needs and aspirations, as well as address the need to balance residential amenity with a thriving night experience and to ensure everyone feels safe in our city at night.'*²⁰

These perspectives on dining and nightlife suggest a renewed focus on the Night-Time Economy (NTE) through Sydney's *24-hour Economy Strategy*, with *Parramatta Council's Parramatta Night City Framework 2019-2024* needing to become a key strategic priority for the future development of the region. Future nightlife options in Greater Parramatta should be safe and supported by infrastructure, e.g., public transport or parking. In addition, these community perspectives reinforce the importance of maintaining the vibrant dining options of the region that provide diversity in terms of global cuisines, price points and style. Recognising this strength, Greater Parramatta should be promoted as a dining destination.

²⁰See Parramatta Night City Framework, Available at: <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sites/council/files/2021-04/Parramatta-night-city-framework-2020-2024.pdf>

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Urban greening has significant benefits for the sustainability, resilience and wellbeing of urban populations and is increasingly recognised as a mechanism for combatting the climate and health challenges faced by our cities.²¹

Greater Parramatta's natural environment is an important asset that must be preserved for future generations, and as highlighted in The Glover Review, there is an opportunity for the region's conservation to be guided by Indigenous knowledge, which has protected and cared for the region for over 60,000 years.

The natural environment was identified as a key asset of the region among those who participated in this research.

A significant portion of survey respondents (64%) indicated that Greater Parramatta offers quality green and blue spaces (see Figure 10).

PERCEPTIONS OF GREEN AND BLUE SPACES

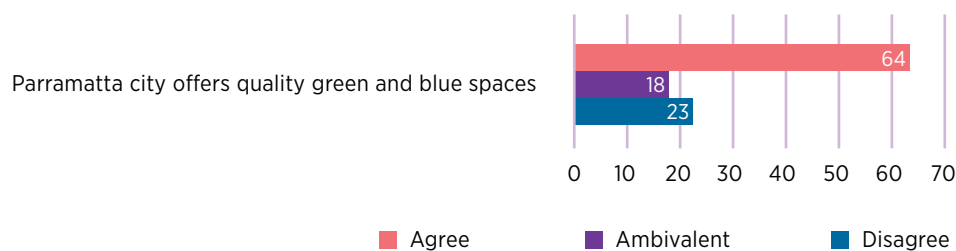


Figure 10: Perceptions of Green and Blue Spaces
Source: Project Survey

According to most survey respondents, strengths related to the natural environment regarded the variety of green spaces in the region, and to a lesser extent, the availability of blue spaces. Parklands in the region were most highly valued by members of the community, including Parramatta Park, Olympic Park and the riverwalk, which were all identified as key natural assets.

²¹See for example, the City of Sydney's 'Greening Sydney Strategy' available at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/greening-sydney-strategy>

While green and blue spaces were highly valued, participants also indicated that these spaces needed more protection. As participants' comments on the ideas wall indicated, green space is increasingly important in the context of heat mitigation in changing climates:



Survey respondents expressed a desire for more green space, maintenance, management and care of existing green spaces, improved river hygiene and restoration of the river, as well as flood and heat mitigation. Comments relating to the latter included increasing shade and consideration of airflow/wind tunnels in the CBD. A small number of survey participants also commented on improving waste and energy initiatives (e.g., FOGO and solar power) and emphasised the need to improve air quality, pollution, and cleanliness. This was reinforced by a participant who emphasised the importance of green space and clean air for wellbeing on the ideas wall:



An urban greening strategy is essential for improving liveability and wellbeing, as well as protecting people from heat stress and air pollution. This urban greening should connect through to other parts of the city, not just in parklands. Alongside protecting and maintaining greenspace, there is a need to restore river hygiene and increase environmental initiatives at the household (e.g., FOGO) and city scale (e.g., solar panels on public buildings, recycling and circular economy).

*Response to Project Ideas Wall

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Census data shows educational attainment in Western Sydney has registered a significant increase over the past decade. However this skills surge has not been reciprocated by a corresponding push in knowledge job creation, with spatial inequalities between Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney remaining.²² Education and employment opportunities across Western Sydney are uneven. However, Greater Parramatta is an example of an area where knowledge economy opportunities cluster. The region is also home to several world-class universities, knowledge centres and innovation hubs.

Both education and employment opportunities were identified as strengths of the region, with comments in the survey highlighting the important role of universities, schools and businesses for the current and future success of the region. As demonstrated in Figure 11, most survey participants agreed that the region offers great educational, employment and business opportunities (79%). To a lesser extent, 60 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the region fosters innovation and creativity.

PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION

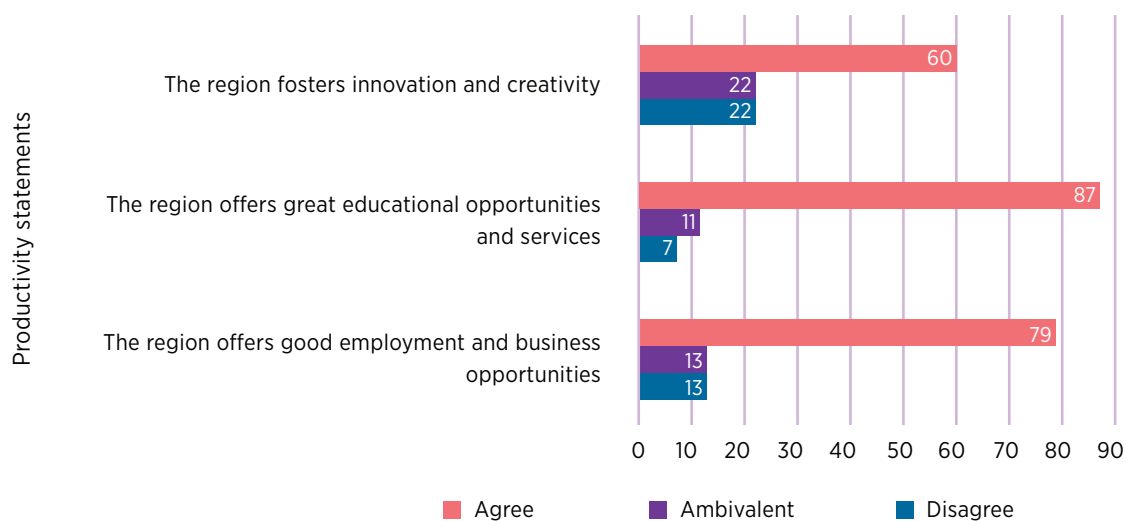


Figure 11: Perceptions of Education, Employment and Innovation

Source: Project Survey

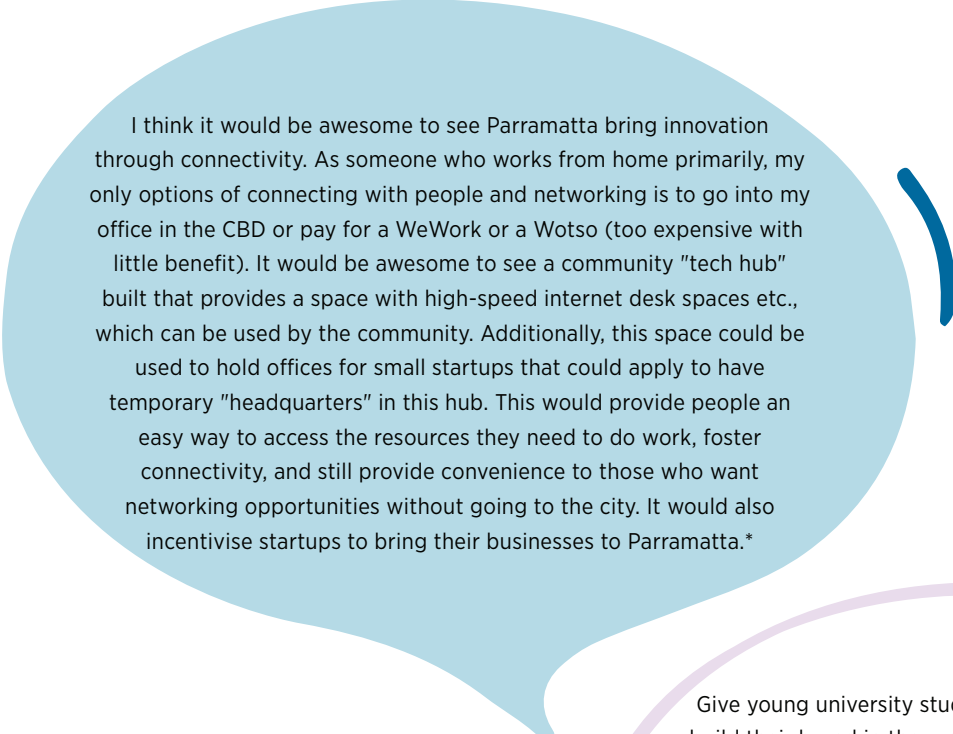
²²Marks, A., Itaoui, R. & Bergan, T. (2022). Untapped talent: Western Sydney's remarkable but inequitable labour market. Centre for Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/8d93-5j57>



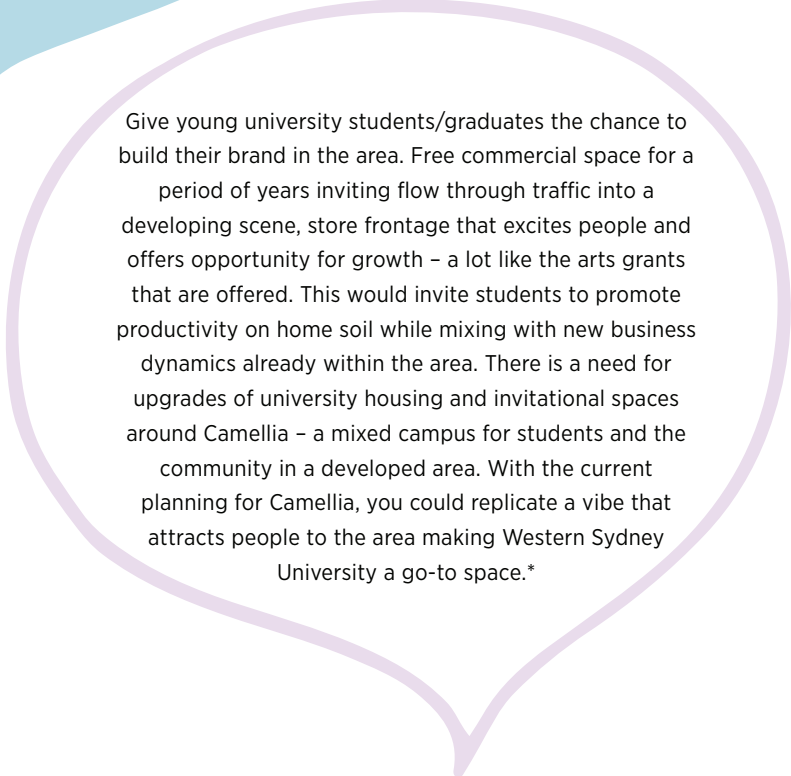


While these strengths were highlighted, participants expressed a desire for increasing high-quality job opportunities, economic opportunities for young populations, and the need for strategies to address empty businesses in the region.

Participants in the ideas wall shared their visions for improving these opportunities and creating a business centre that is innovative, connected and attractive:



I think it would be awesome to see Parramatta bring innovation through connectivity. As someone who works from home primarily, my only options of connecting with people and networking is to go into my office in the CBD or pay for a WeWork or a Wotso (too expensive with little benefit). It would be awesome to see a community "tech hub" built that provides a space with high-speed internet desk spaces etc., which can be used by the community. Additionally, this space could be used to hold offices for small startups that could apply to have temporary "headquarters" in this hub. This would provide people an easy way to access the resources they need to do work, foster connectivity, and still provide convenience to those who want networking opportunities without going to the city. It would also incentivise startups to bring their businesses to Parramatta.*



Give young university students/graduates the chance to build their brand in the area. Free commercial space for a period of years inviting flow through traffic into a developing scene, store frontage that excites people and offers opportunity for growth - a lot like the arts grants that are offered. This would invite students to promote productivity on home soil while mixing with new business dynamics already within the area. There is a need for upgrades of university housing and invitational spaces around Camellia - a mixed campus for students and the community in a developed area. With the current planning for Camellia, you could replicate a vibe that attracts people to the area making Western Sydney University a go-to space.*

While education and employment were identified as strengths, it is vital that quality education and employment opportunities keep pace as the city transforms. Greater Parramatta should harness its young, well-educated, culturally diverse population as a unique strength of the region, by providing high-quality local employment opportunities, rather than exporting talent out of the region. Research participants have highlighted opportunities for increased innovation and collaboration via the creative use of spaces to attract startups and entrepreneurial activities in the region.

*Response to Project Ideas Wall

HOUSING AND COST OF LIVING

Nowhere are the unequal impacts of urban change more evident than in housing. The Greater Cities Commission have shared a 20-year vision where everyone has 'access to a quality home that is connected, resilient, affordable, and which meets their needs'.²³ If we are to come close to achieving this vision, housing must be viewed as an essential infrastructure that requires transformational, city-shaping approaches.²⁴

Within the consultation, most participants expressed that housing is not affordable in the Greater Parramatta region (54%). In contrast, only 27 per cent of survey respondents felt housing was affordable (see Figure 12). In addition to these responses, there was an absence of participants who identified housing in the open-ended question on strengths of the region.

PERCEPTIONS OF HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

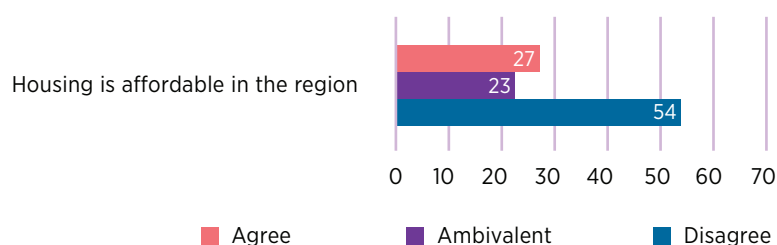


Figure 12: Perceptions of Housing Affordability

Source: Project Survey

²³More detail on the Greater Cities Commission's focus on housing is available at: <https://www.greatercities.au/six-cities-region/housing>

²⁴Glover, B., Dufty-Jones, R., Itaoui, R., Marks, A., Bergan, T., and Perrone, L. (2022), Parramatta 2035: Vibrant, Sustainable, Global, Parramatta, Centre for Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/r7s8-9r10>



Photography by Anthony Kerr

The open-ended responses revealed housing affordability and increasing cost of living pressures were the second most important areas of improvement identified by the communities who responded to the survey. Housing affordability and homelessness, increased cost of living and housing diversity and quality appeared in participants comments roughly equally. On the latter point, participants noted more housing opportunities are needed, including mixed-use development and fewer high-rises, as one participant commented, *'Dense walkable cities. Not just high-rises but also middle density'*. Improved quality of development was also mentioned, as well as increasing housing close to jobs. One participant posted on the ideas wall that the quality of the built environment has impacts on both social and environmental sustainability:



As the survey and ideas wall responses show, housing affordability, diversity (i.e., more medium density) and quality must be at the forefront of current and future planning for the region. This will require all levels of government and industry to collaborate and acknowledge housing as an essential infrastructure. This includes adopting evidence-based actions to reduce and prevent homelessness, while also supporting current homeless populations.

*Response to Project Ideas Wall



Photography by Anthony Kerr

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Investment in art and entertainment contributes to a city's vibrancy and supports a range of social and economic objectives. Western Sydney is acknowledged as having an active art and cultural sector. Yet, there remains inequity in state and federal cultural resource expenditure in Western Sydney.²⁵

Most survey participants identified Greater Parramatta as a vibrant and dynamic place and a great place to play and socialise (see Figure 13).

PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY AND ENTERTAINMENT

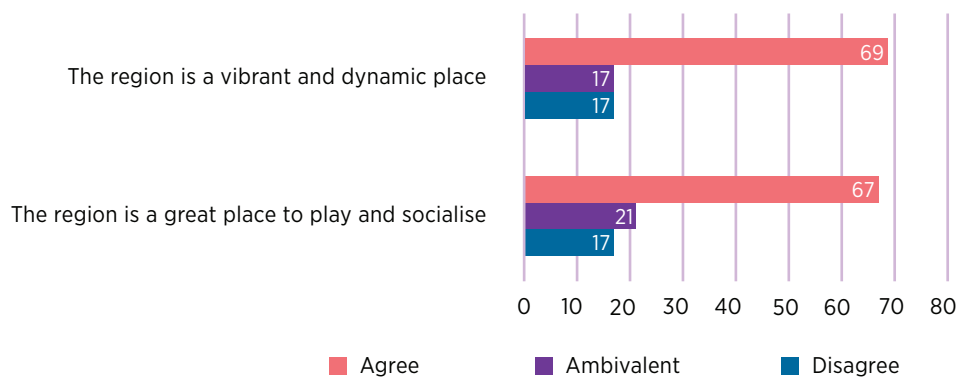


Figure 13: Perceptions of Creativity and Entertainment
Source: Project Survey

Social events, activities, and entertainment facilities such as stadiums were identified as key strengths of the Greater Parramatta region. However, participants who responded to the consultation also identified a need to upgrade existing facilities, host more community-focused festivals, particularly events for families and provide free cultural activities in the local area. Participants also expressed a desire to see further investment in creative arts with suggestions for more local artist/performance spaces, more cultural institutions, live music, Riverside Theatre upgrade and increased funding for the arts and creative industries.

²⁵Itaoui, R., Merrillees, D., & Gerace, G. (2023). State of the Arts in Western Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26183/tvye-5r23>

These visions for the future were also supported by the ideas proposed by participants during the consultation:

Parramatta needs a commercial theatre. It's right there in the form of the Roxy. This is potentially Parramatta's "Opera House", capable of staging musicals, rock concerts, opera, ballet, cultural events etc. in a 1500+ seat heritage listed theatre! The existence of the fully restored Roxy in its miraculous location at the head of the Civic Link will spawn more Arts venues all the way down the corridor to the Powerhouse, potentially creating a world class destination!*

To truly make Parramatta a second CBD, people need a reason to visit there outside of work. The [Sydney] CBD is filled with restaurants, galleries and events that people will travel for. This level of engagement with culture and art needs to be replicated in Parramatta and given the cultural diversity of the area there is a great opportunity to do this in a way that is unique to the area. Given the shortage of small-scale performance venues in Sydney it would also be great to see some in the area as well.*

Go-to places are spaces where people want to be seen – fashion labels which span from connective business start-ups. Provide options for creatives to flourish through from university; young on-trend places to eat and spend time; giving Uni students access to free commercial spaces to build and develop their brands, art spaces and design precincts. This vibe can be created through Camellia to Parramatta Park, building on Eat Street revenue. This will give people a place to go and sync with the alternative spaces being provided.*

Investment in cultural infrastructure is necessary to rebalance inequity between the region and the rest of Sydney. Increased investment in creative arts, live music, as well as artist training and performance spaces will help Greater Parramatta deliver on its arts and entertainment ambitions. There is an opportunity for the region to embrace First Nations and multicultural creative inclusion and cultural events to celebrate past, present and emerging identities within the region.

*Response to Project Ideas Wall

HOUSE PARRAMATTA



POWERH
PARRAM



Coca-Cola
PRESS MART
ATM

GUITAR FACTORY

GUITAR FACTORY

SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST GUITARS

Sound Devices

MUSIC ACADEMY

Laing Simmons

JUST CAKES

JU TO KAKA

Please do not climb or sit on the fence

SHOPPING AND SERVICES

Shopping and service precincts play an important role in ensuring access to food, healthcare, retail and other basic necessities and services. Local hubs and shopping centres are also a place for communities to gather and socialise, and shopping streets are part of a wider streetscape that, if designed well, can invite people into the city as an attractive place to visit.

The availability of shopping and other services was identified as a strength of the region among participants in the consultation. Respondents value the high volume and variety of retail, shopping and essential services such as healthcare.

While shopping precincts such as Westfield were perceived as a strength of Greater Parramatta, several participants were concerned about losing local 'hubs' and arcades that provided low-cost retail and food. This highlights a need to retain and continue to build local shopping options beyond large-scale services like Westfield. In addition, participants expressed a desire for more quality social services.

The ideas wall revealed how in addition to the services available, the appeal of the streetscape also shaped perceptions.

Likewise, shopping and services must be accessible and planned alongside transport:



As the region grows and transforms, it is important to ensure that services and shopping continue to keep pace with population growth. Here we highlight the importance of large shopping centres, as well as smaller village shopping centres, traditional high streets and local stores, recognising the role they play in providing local, affordable food and services in surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, there is a need to review the streetscape and pedestrian experience of shopping and service centres, with improvements to public space and building and street activation.

*Response to Project Ideas Wall



PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITY

Public spaces are linked to social cohesion, productivity and quality of life in cities and overlap with many of the themes in this report. As the famous architect and urban designer Jan Gehl reminds us: *‘Cultures and climates differ all over the world, but people are the same. They’ll gather in public if you give them a good place to do it’*. Public space and amenities open to all members of the community are hosts to a wide range of social and recreational activities. Addressing public space requirements may include planning for improved quantity and quality of public space, as well as thinking creatively about how to better utilise existing spaces, for example, partnering with schools to share spaces outside school hours.

PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE

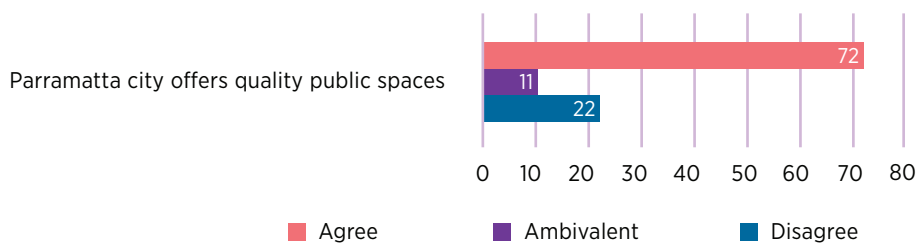


Figure 14: Perceptions of Public Space
Source: Project Survey

Overall, participants in the survey agreed that Greater Parramatta offers quality public spaces (72%). Participants documented parks, sporting and recreational spaces and facilities as key strengths; however some respondents sought further amenities. The suggested improvements revealed a desire for more recreational spaces such as sports grounds for community and local clubs, ‘more social areas for young people that [aren’t] Westfield’, more community infrastructure, playgrounds, public pools, water parks, more open space and more recreational [options] for children and families.



Photography by Kyisoe Han

THE GREATER CITIES COMMISSION FEATURES OF GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

Well-designed built environment: great places are enjoyable and attractive, they are safe, clean and flexible with a mix of sizes and functions.

Social infrastructure and opportunity: great places are inclusive of people of all ages and abilities, with a range of authentic local experiences and opportunities for social interaction and connection.

Fine-grain urban form: great places are walkable, of human scale, with a mix of land uses including, social infrastructure and local services at the heart of communities.

*Box 3: The Greater Cities Commission Features of Great Public Spaces*²⁶

Source: Greater Cities Commission

As Greater Parramatta continues to transform, it is vital that public spaces are protected and not reduced by private development interests. Great public spaces should be walkable, inclusive of all abilities and attractive to all ages. A focus on family-friendly spaces is important.

²⁶Greater Sydney Region Plan 2018. Greater Cities Commission, available at <https://greatercities.au/metropolis-of-three-cities>






SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Greater Parramatta is experiencing rapid growth and development, with changes perceived differently across community groups. Urban densification provides more efficient use of space; however, there are risks such as deteriorated place identity and threats to heritage if not managed properly.²⁷


Participants in the consultation drew on the city's growth and investments in its transformation as key strengths. These included a growing city, increasing opportunities, investment, commitment to improvement, better-looking building stock and assurance that the area is being modernised and cleaned up. Participants noted that this resulted in the region being forward-thinking through embracing and transforming in line with new infrastructure.

The need to develop the region in a way that maintains the heritage character and history of the region was also identified as a key priority. Participants expressed concern around a loss of heritage as a threat to local identity that should be considered when planning for future development. The threat of gentrification to the future of the region, the need to commit to sustainable development to avoid overcrowding, and better management of construction sites were all highlighted as key areas of improvement in the region.

Some participants provided suggestions for better maintaining historic character and retaining culturally significant buildings:



Making Parramatta the heritage, arts and culture centre. Leveraging our heritage assets such as Female Factory, Parramatta Gaol & Roxy Theatre, and tap into the vast and diverse talent pool of Western Sydney.*



Return Willow Grove to its rightful place in front of the ghastly new Powerhouse Museum. Repurpose it to make it into a museum for things of the 19th/early 20th century reflecting when it was built. Have it as the centrepiece of the new site.*

While the benefits of transformation of the region were recognised, the community sentiment was that heritage and culture should be retained, and the needs of the built and natural environment balanced. Maintaining the identity of the region within the vision of future planning through placemaking processes and collaboration with community will be key to the region's success.

²⁷Skrede, J. & Berg, S.K. (2019). Cultural heritage and sustainable development: The case of urban densification. *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*, 10(1), pp. 83-102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2019.1558027>

*Response to Project Ideas Wall

COMMUNITY-LED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF GREATER PARRAMATTA

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF GREATER PARRAMATTA

CONSULTATION WITH COMMUNITIES AS AN INCLUSIVE AND REFLECTIVE PROCESS



- Our findings demonstrate the importance of capturing a diversity of ideas and viewpoints on the transformation of cities. We advocate for more in-depth consultation and collaboration with communities in city planning processes at all stages of development.
- Planners and policymakers should seek to draw on innovative and evidence-based methods of engagement to reach different cohorts, e.g., tap into the young population by partnering with influencers to collect data through social media and engage with different audiences, use culturally-informed engagement approaches to capture the perspectives of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities or use accessible methodologies to engage community members with diverse abilities.

ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES IN SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOODS



- The diversity of city users (e.g., residents, workers, students and visitors) captured in this consultation on the future of the Greater Parramatta region demonstrate that people's lives in cities are fluid and move across statutory boundaries. Residents living in surrounding neighbourhoods are impacted by decisions shaping Parramatta, however, do not always feel that their voices and concerns are heard within the planning process. Future engagement should consider regional approaches to engagement when planning for the development and transformation of cities.

STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT



CULTURAL DIVERSITY, IDENTITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

- The young, multicultural demographics of the region are key strengths that should be harnessed and celebrated. People and place must be at the centre of planning strategies to ensure all communities (including culturally and linguistically diverse, young and old, First Nations, LGBTQIA+) are included and accommodated in planning for the future.
- Develop a multicultural strategy for Parramatta City Council to ensure cultural diversity is recognised, celebrated, and retained as the region continues to develop.



TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

- Greater Parramatta is the geographic centre of Sydney and should continue to be strengthened as a public transport hub to improve connectivity to other regions and as well as global connections.
- Ensure transport improvements align with land use change, employment and education opportunities and sustainability imperatives.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to facilitate greater active transport use.
- Improve parking options in the Parramatta CBD and at transit hubs to encourage multimodal transport journeys.



DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

- Grow nightlife options in Greater Parramatta that are safe and supported by infrastructure e.g., public transport or parking.
- Retain diversity in food offerings and price points and promote the region as a dining destination.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Improve liveability and wellbeing through urban greening, protecting people from heat stress and air pollution.
- Protect and maintain green space, connected with active transport, through to other parts of the city, not just in parklands.
- Restore river hygiene and increase environmental initiatives at the household (e.g., FOGO) and city scale (e.g., solar panels on public buildings, recycling and circular economy).



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Harness young, well-educated, culturally diverse population as a unique strength of the region, by providing high-quality local employment opportunities, rather than exporting talent out of the region.
- Continue to ensure quality education and employment pathways are maintained and improved as the population increases.
- Foster increased innovation and collaboration via creative use of spaces to attract startups and entrepreneurial activities in the region.



HOUSING AND COST OF LIVING

- Work with all levels of government and industry to address housing affordability, diversity (i.e., more medium density) and quality, viewing housing as an essential infrastructure.
- Improve access to affordable housing that meets a diversity of needs.
- Adopt evidence-based actions to reduce and prevent homelessness, while also supporting the current homeless populations.



ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

- Increase investment in creative arts, including cultural infrastructure in the region.
- Increase live music options, as well as artist training and performance spaces.
- Embrace First Nations and multicultural creative inclusion and cultural events as an opportunity to celebrate past, present, and emerging identities within the region.



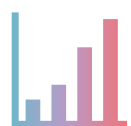
SHOPPING AND SERVICES

- Ensure services and shopping continue to keep pace with population growth.
- Review streetscape and pedestrian experience of shopping and service centres, with improvements to public space and buildings through street activation.
- Retain smaller village shopping centres, local stores, and traditional high streets, recognising their role in providing local, affordable food and services in surrounding neighbourhoods.



PUBLIC SPACE AND AMENITY

- Ensure public space and amenity continue to keep pace with population growth, including recreation, social and family-friendly spaces.



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Alongside transformation, balance retention of heritage and culture.
- Maintain the identity of the region within the vision of future planning through placemaking processes and collaboration with community.
- Balance the needs of the natural and built environment.

Figure 15: Community-Led Recommendations for the Future of Greater Parramatta

Source: Project Survey and Ideas Wall



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APPENDIX A

DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS

- The survey data was downloaded from the Engagement Hub platform in Excel format. Closed-ended responses were coded into numbers and imported into SPSS software for statistical analysis. Open-ended responses were manually coded into themes (see Figure 5). Top strengths and areas for improvement reflect the themes most common selected by survey participants.
- The ideas wall quotes were downloaded from the Engagement Hub platform and organised into the 10 themes that emerged from the open-ended survey responses.
- Some percentages may add up to more than 100 due to rounding. Statistics have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- Not all participants responded to each question. If less than 105, the number of people who responded is listed in each figure (e.g. $n = 61$).
- For ethnicity, the number of participants is greater than 105 ($n = 127$) due to respondents identifying with more than one ethnicity, highlighting high levels of multiculturalism in the region.
- Ideas wall quotes were edited for grammar and clarity by the research team where necessary.
- Likert scale questions were collapsed from six categories into three categories: disagree (strongly disagree and somewhat disagree), ambivalent (neither agree or disagree and unsure) and agree (somewhat agree and strongly agree).

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Have your say on the future development of Greater Parramatta

Q1 Participation in this study involves completing a web-based survey. This research is being undertaken by the Centre for Western Sydney at Western Sydney University. The survey focuses on how you currently engage in the Greater Parramatta City region, as well as your aspirations for its future development. Information such as age and gender will also be collected; however, you will not be individually identified in any way, unless you have registered an account with Engagement Hub and/or provide your contact details to be involved in a follow-up interview. Any personal information will be removed from the dataset, and you will remain anonymous in the analysis and presentation of this research.

To participate, you must be over the age of 18 and have an interest in the future development of Greater Parramatta

Q2 Do you consent to participate in this survey and have your responses used confidentially in this study?

- Yes
- No

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Q1 Which option best describes your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to state

Q2 What age group do you belong to?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

Q3 Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (please tick those that apply to you)?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Prefer not to say

Display this question (IF = yes to question 3)

Q3.1 What are your Nations, Clans and Languages?

Q4 Were you born in Australia?

- Yes
- No

Display this question (IF Were you born in Australia? = No)

Q5 If no, when did you settle in Australia?

- Less than 1 year ago
- Between 1-5 years ago
- Between 6-10 years ago
- Between 11-20 years ago
- More than 20 years ago

Q6 Please select the option/s that best describe your ethnicity (Select all that apply):

- Australian
 - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - New Zealander
 - European
 - North African and Middle Eastern
 - North-East Asian
 - North American
 - South American
 - South-East Asian
 - Sub-Saharan African
 - Southern and Central Asian
 - United Kingdom
 - Other, please specify
-

Q7 How often do you speak English at home?

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Q8 What is the suburb of your home address?

Q9 Is the house you currently live in:

- Owned outright
- Owned with a mortgage
- Rented
- Being purchased under a rent buy/scheme
- Occupied rent free
- Occupied under a life tenure scheme
- Other

Q10 How many people live in your house?

- 1 (just you)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

Q11 Which of the following best describes your household:

- Couple with no children
- Couple with dependent children (under 15)
- Couple with children over the age of 15
- One parent with children (under 15)
- One parent with children over the age of 15
- Group household, e.g., roommates
- I live by myself
- Other

Q15 What industry do you work in? (E.g., if you are an office manager for a construction company, your industry is 'Construction').

- Healthcare and social assistance
- Agriculture
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services
- Construction
- Wholesale trade
- Retail trade
- Accommodation and food services
- Transport, postal and warehousing
- Information, media and telecommunications
- Financial and insurance services
- Rental, hiring and real estate services
- Professional scientific and technical services
- Administration and support services
- Public administration and safety
- Education and training
- Arts and recreation services
- Other service

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Q12 Which option best describes your highest educational attainment:

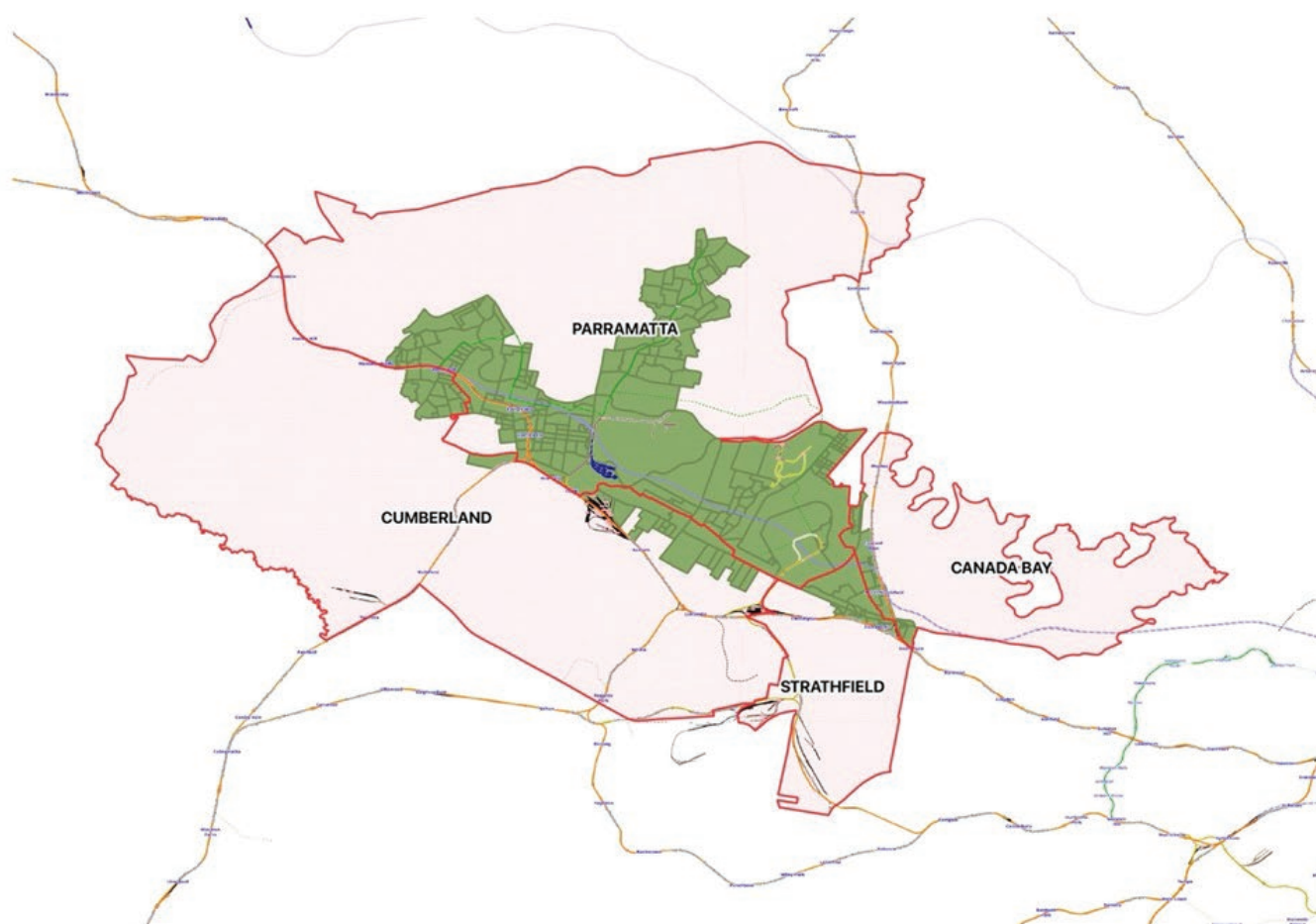
- Doctorate
- Postgraduate Degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Advanced Diploma or Diploma
- Certificate I and II Level
- Certificate III and IV Level
- Certificate Degree
- High School Graduate (completed year 12)
- Year 11 or below
- No qualification

Q13 Which option best describes your employment status:

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed looking for work
- Unemployed not looking for work
- Retired
- Student

Q14 What is the suburb of your work address?

EXPERIENCES OF GREATER PARRAMATTA REGION



Map of Greater Parramatta and Olympic Park Region

Source: Centre for Western Sydney

Q16) How often do you visit each of the following areas of the Greater Parramatta region? Please refer to the map above for the location of each region.

Region	More Than Once A Week	Once Every Two Weeks	Once A Month	Once Every Two Months	Once A Year	Less Than Once A Year
Westmead	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parramatta	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Parramatta	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harris Park	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camelia/Rosehill	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rydalmere/Carlingford	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silverwater/Newington	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sydney Olympic Park	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q17) Please indicate how you have engaged with the following areas of the Greater Parramatta Region in the past 6 – 12 months (select all that apply)

Region	Lived In Areas As A Resident	Worked In This Area	Ran A Business In This Area	Pursued Formal Education In This Suburb	Visited This Area To Attend Recreational And/Or Social Activity E.g. Theatre, Sports Stadium, Restaurant etc.	No Engagement In This Area
Westmead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parramatta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
North Parramatta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harris Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camelia/Rosehill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rydalmere/Carlingford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Silverwater/Newington	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sydney Olympic Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STRENGTHS OF PARRAMATTA REGION

Q18) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding connectivity and accessibility in the Greater Parramatta Region:

Greater Parramatta Region	Strongly Disagree	Some-what Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
The region is easy and convenient to access from other parts of Sydney	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The region is easy and safe for cyclists and pedestrians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The region allows easy access and connectivity between neighbourhoods and other surrounding communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The region offers good international connections e.g., airports, global businesses, tourism opportunities etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q19) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding economic opportunities within the Greater Parramatta Region:

Greater Parramatta Region	Strongly Disagree	Some-what Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
The region offers good employment and business opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region provides good educational opportunities and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing is affordable in the region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding quality of life within the Greater Parramatta Region:

Greater Parramatta Region	Strongly Disagree	Some-what Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
Parramatta City offers quality public spaces (such as playgrounds, public squares, marketplaces)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parramatta City offers quality green and blue spaces (such as tree-lined streets, gardens, grass, vegetations, shrubs, parks, the river and waterfronts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region is a great place to play and socialise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region is culturally and linguistically diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region is welcoming and inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21) Thinking about the Greater Parramatta region overall, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

Greater Parramatta Region	Strongly Disagree	Some-what Disagree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Some-what Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
The region fosters innovation and creativity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region fosters innovation and creativity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The region is globally connected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22) What are your top three favourite features of the Greater Parramatta Region?

Strength of Greater Parramatta Region (1) _____

Strength of Greater Parramatta Region (2) _____

Strength of Greater Parramatta Region (3) _____

Q23) What do you consider to be the top three features in need of improvement in the Greater Parramatta region?

Area of improvement (1) _____

Area of improvement (2) _____

Area of improvement (3) _____

CLOSE OF SURVEY

Would you like to receive a copy of the research findings based on this survey?

Yes (please provide email address) _____

No

Thank you for participating in this research project on the future of the Greater Parramatta Region.

APPENDIX C

IDEAS WALL PROMPTS

1. What makes a city a great place to live?
2. What is your big idea for improving this region?
3. What is the best thing about Greater Parramatta?
4. What is your least favourite thing about Greater Parramatta?
5. How can we best foster innovation, education, creativity, and entrepreneurship in the region?
6. How can we ensure business and industry thrive in this region?
7. How can we best celebrate the local identities and cultures of the community?
8. How can we improve engagement with the natural environment in Greater Parramatta?
9. What would make Greater Parramatta an attractive place to live?
10. How would you like to be involved in decision-making for the development of Greater Parramatta?

APPENDIX D

RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

The consultation was facilitated via the online Engagement Hub platform, a platform designed by stakeholder engagement specialists in urban and regional planning to gather insight into community perspectives on placemaking.

The consultation opportunity was promoted via online channels, including emails to key stakeholders and through paid and organic advertising on social media. In addition, the research team distributed flyers, which included a QR code directing people to the engagement hub website.

The research team distributed flyers at a variety of locations, including town centres, shopping centres, train stations, businesses, markets, and parks.

These promotion activities were carried out by Centre for Western Sydney staff, with the support of partner organisations, including local councils, who helped to share the opportunity to participate with their networks. The high level of education and employment within the cohort is likely reflective of recruitment for the study taking place at professional events, online communication distributed via university networks and in areas with a high level of professional staff foot traffic e.g., Parramatta Square.

As with any methodology, there are strengths and weaknesses to the approach. Benefits of the online consultation included the ability to reach a large audience who could provide their ideas and feedback at the time most convenient to them. Online spaces can also be a secure space for people to learn and test assumptions, positions, and options via a host of interactive tools.²⁸ The online engagement hub platform enabled us to provide transparency as to the purpose of the consultation. However, this method of engagement also limited the ability for groups to participate. For example, those without internet access or lower technical literacy could not easily participate in this method. In addition, the research tools were not translated in different languages, limiting the ability for those not fluent in English to participate.

In addition, the predominantly quantitative nature of the research limited the ability to interrogate people's responses in more detail. It thus lacked the depth and nuance that is ordinarily captured in qualitative materials.

²⁸Community engagement toolkit for planning, Queensland Government. Available at: <https://dilgpprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/Communityengagementtoolkit.pdf>

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC TABLE

Demographic Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (n = 105)		
Male	56	53%
Female	47	45%
Non-binary	1	1%
Prefer not to state	1	1%
Age (n = 104)		
18-24	20	19%
25-34	23	22%
35-44	19	18%
45-54	26	25%
55-64	6	6%
65-74	10	10%
Tenure (n = 103)		
Owned outright	35	34%
Owned with a mortgage	37	36%
Rented	29	28%
Other	2	2%
Household Composition (n = 101)		
Couple with child/ren	41	41%
Single parent with child/ren	9	9%
Couple no child/ren	28	28%
Lone person	19	19%
Other (includes multigenerational)	3	3%
Ethnicity (n = 127)		
Australian	70	55%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2	2%
European	12	9%
North African and Middle Eastern	8	6%

Demographic Categories	Frequency	Percentage
South-East Asian	8	6%
United Kingdom	12	9%
Other	15	12%
Highest Educational Attainment (n = 103)		
Doctorate	7	7%
Postgraduate degree	32	31%
Bachelor's degree	38	37%
Advanced diploma or diploma	6	6%
Certificate level (I, II, III, or IV)	9	9%
High school graduate	10	10%
Year 11 or below	1	1%
Employment Status (n = 103)		
Employed full time	63	61%
Employed part time	17	16.5%
Unemployed looking for work	5	5%
Retired	6	6%
Student	12	12%

