



MIDCOAST ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN

2022-2032





Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Gathang-speaking people and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the MidCoast Council area. We extend our respect to Elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.

Note on Terminology:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a unique place in Australia as the original inhabitants of the land. Throughout this plan the term 'Aboriginal' is used as an inclusive term to cover all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The written word 'Gathang' is used in the context of the Gathang speaking people as an inclusive term to cover the language spoken by the Aboriginal people of the MidCoast region. The spelling 'Gathang' is based on that used by Holmer in his vocabulary of Kattang. Other spellings of the language name include 'Katthung', 'Kattang' and 'Gadang'.¹

¹Lissarrague, A, 2010, A Grammar and Dictionary of Gathang: The Language of the Birrbay, Guringay and Warrimay, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language & Culture Co-operative.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to present MidCoast Council's first Aboriginal Action Plan. This is just the start of what I hope will become a strong working relationship.

Council's relationship with the Aboriginal community is important and we continually seek opportunities to engage in all aspects of Council's work. It is something that I have a very strong commitment to, and I wish to work together to build a strong collaborative relationship built on mutual trust.

I acknowledge the importance of land and culture to this community and believe it is important that we work together to ensure a strong Aboriginal voice in all that we do. I am proud that we have been able to name our Council's administration office "Yalawanyi Ganya" which means sitting or meeting place in Gathang, and of the way Aboriginal art has been incorporated into the building.

I look forward to the implementation of the strategies outlined in this Plan.

Claire Pontin

Mayor

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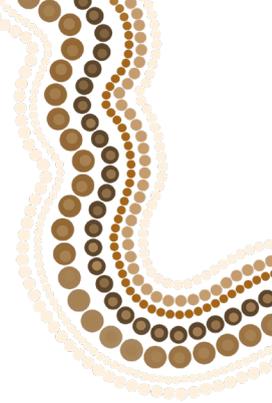
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MIDCOAST COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The MidCoast region has over 96,000 residents living across an area of 10,000 km², with a population density of 9.6 people per square km. Those that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander make up 7.3% of the population, well above the NSW and National averages of 3.4% and 3.2% respectively².

The MidCoast Local Government Area embraces two predominant Aboriginal peoples – Biripi in the north and Worimi in the south and western areas. Gathang is the common traditional language for both peoples and a local Language Group has worked hard over recent years to resurrect the language which is now taught in schools. Council has embraced the Gathang language and consulted with the Language Group for the naming of its administration building, “Yalawanyi Ganya”, which means sitting/meeting place.



Four Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) operate in the MidCoast Local Government Area, Purfleet Taree LALC in the north, Forster LALC in the Forster/Tuncurry area, with the Karuah LALC and Worimi LALC located outside the MidCoast, but whose areas extend into the south of the Council area.

Two active Aboriginal medical centres deliver vital health care to their communities, Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre working in the Purfleet/Taree area, and Tobwabba Aboriginal Medical Service serving the Forster and Tuncurry communities.

More than half (51.3%) of the MidCoast's Aboriginal population is aged 24 and under, while only 13.4% are aged over 60 compared to the broader MidCoast community over 60 age group which represents 42% of the total population³.

According to the 2021 Census, 41.1% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce was employed full time, and 41.2% employed on a part-time basis. The Aboriginal participation rate in the labour force was 51% compared to the NSW rate of 56.5%.

45.8% of the MidCoast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was not engaged in the labour force, compared with 40.9% for NSW.

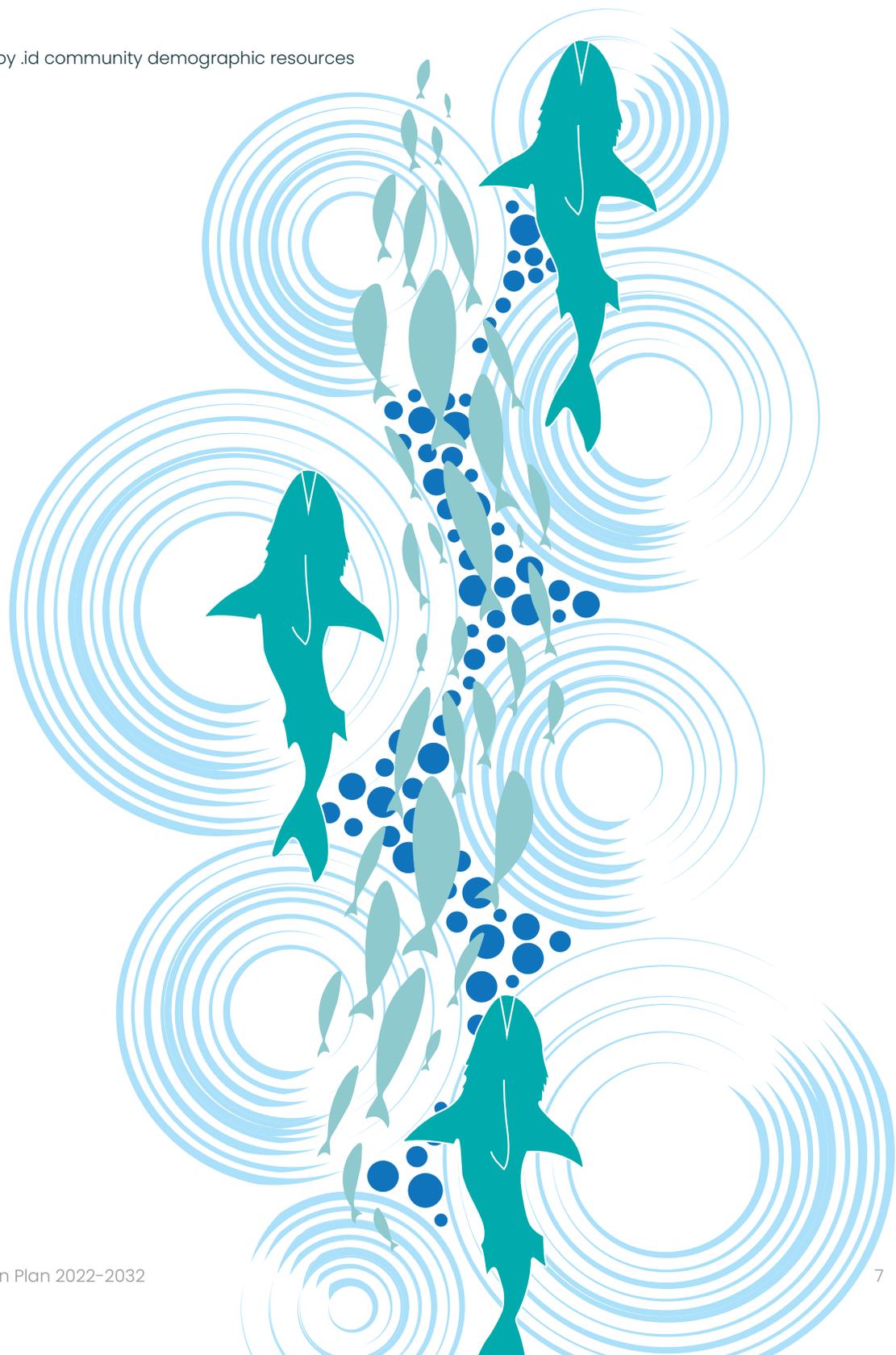
^{2,3} 2021 Census data as presented by .id demographic resources



The MidCoast region is the 28th most disadvantaged Council area in NSW (out of 129 Council areas) with a SEIFA index of 943. SEIFA is an index that measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage, based on a range of Census characteristics such as unemployment, low incomes, education levels etc.⁴

We value our diverse community and recognise the opportunity to embrace the local Aboriginal culture and enhance inclusiveness. We want to continue to strengthen our relationships and develop stronger partnerships with Aboriginal people through the MidCoast Aboriginal Action Plan.

⁴ 2021 index as reported by .id community demographic resources



MIDCOAST ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN SCOPE

The MidCoast Aboriginal Action Plan (The Plan) is a holistic plan, aligned to the Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, that is focused on improving outcomes for Aboriginal people in the MidCoast Council Local Government Area. The Plan is a mechanism for addressing key areas that have been identified as priorities in consultation with Aboriginal people and community service providers.

The Plan is a resource to support, guide and initiate collaborative approaches across six key focus areas through collaboration and partnerships with current service providers and community groups, and will assist in breaking down barriers to see all people in the MidCoast thrive.

The Plan focuses on Council's strategic goals and projects/initiatives for recognising and respecting Aboriginal culture and history and reducing the disadvantage experienced by the MidCoast Aboriginal community.

Strategic alignment

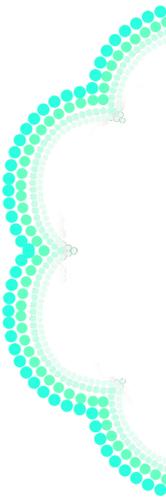
The Plan has strong alignment with MidCoast Council's Community Strategic Plan contributing to its delivery in the following 3 outcome areas:

- Community Outcome 1: a resilient and socially connected community
- Community Outcome 2: an integrated and considered approach to managing our natural and built environments
- Community Outcome 3: a thriving and strong economy

MidCoast Council commits to embedding the social justice principles within the delivery of the MidCoast Aboriginal Action Plan. Social and environmental justice is important in developing a culturally appropriate response to the six key focus areas identified by the community.

The four principles of social justice are:

- EQUITY – There should be fairness in decision-making, and prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community.
- ACCESS – Everyone should have fair access to services, resources, and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- PARTICIPATION – Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- RIGHTS – Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.



Including these as guiding principles helps to make sure that everyone:

- is welcome and can participate in local life;
- has access to the services they need; and
- is heard.

Partnership approach

It is important to note that while community consultation has highlighted a wide range of needs, Council cannot address them in isolation. It will take collective community efforts and cross sector collaboration with other levels of Government, support agencies, and the Aboriginal community to progress many of these objectives. Only going together as one, will we be able to move forward.

MidCoast Council's role throughout much of implementation of The Plan will be to advocate on behalf of the community. Council commits to standing with the Aboriginal community to advocate for increased support, improved services and collective action to address the needs that have been identified which fall outside Council's scope of delivery.

Key partners identified in the delivery of this plan are:

- Federal Government Agencies
- NSW State Government Agencies
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Aboriginal Medical Centres
- NSW Police
- Community Service providers
- Schools, TAFE, Taree Universities Campus
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations



Strategy resourcing

Council's actions will be outlined within the Operational Plan and Budget aligned with the Delivery Program to show the individual projects, activities and services that Council will deliver each year.

Legend for the following tables

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
Advocate	Council makes representations to State and Federal government, industry and other sectors to achieve the best possible outcomes for the MidCoast community.
Capacity Builder	Council works with partners, community groups and agencies to assist them to become self-sufficient in order to meet local needs.
Leader	Council identifies key community issues and mobilises both local and external stakeholders to respond where appropriate. Council plans and provides direction through policy and practices.
Partner	Council supports and partners with the community, private and government organisations to deliver benefits to the community.
Planner	Council undertakes research, provides information, and consults with community stakeholders to develop and evaluate ways to resolve identified issues. This work is undertaken from a whole of community perspective.
Provider	Council provides infrastructure, services, facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Resourced 1	Council provides existing staff time, budgets and resources to deliver.
Resourced 2	Council has existing partnerships, grants, and funding contracts to deliver i.e. Department Communities and Justice contracts under the Targeted Early Intervention Framework.
Not Resourced 1	No Council resources available. Dependent on approval of new business case for budget reallocation.
Not Resourced 2	No Council resources available. Dependent on new partnerships or external grant funding availability.



CONSULTATION

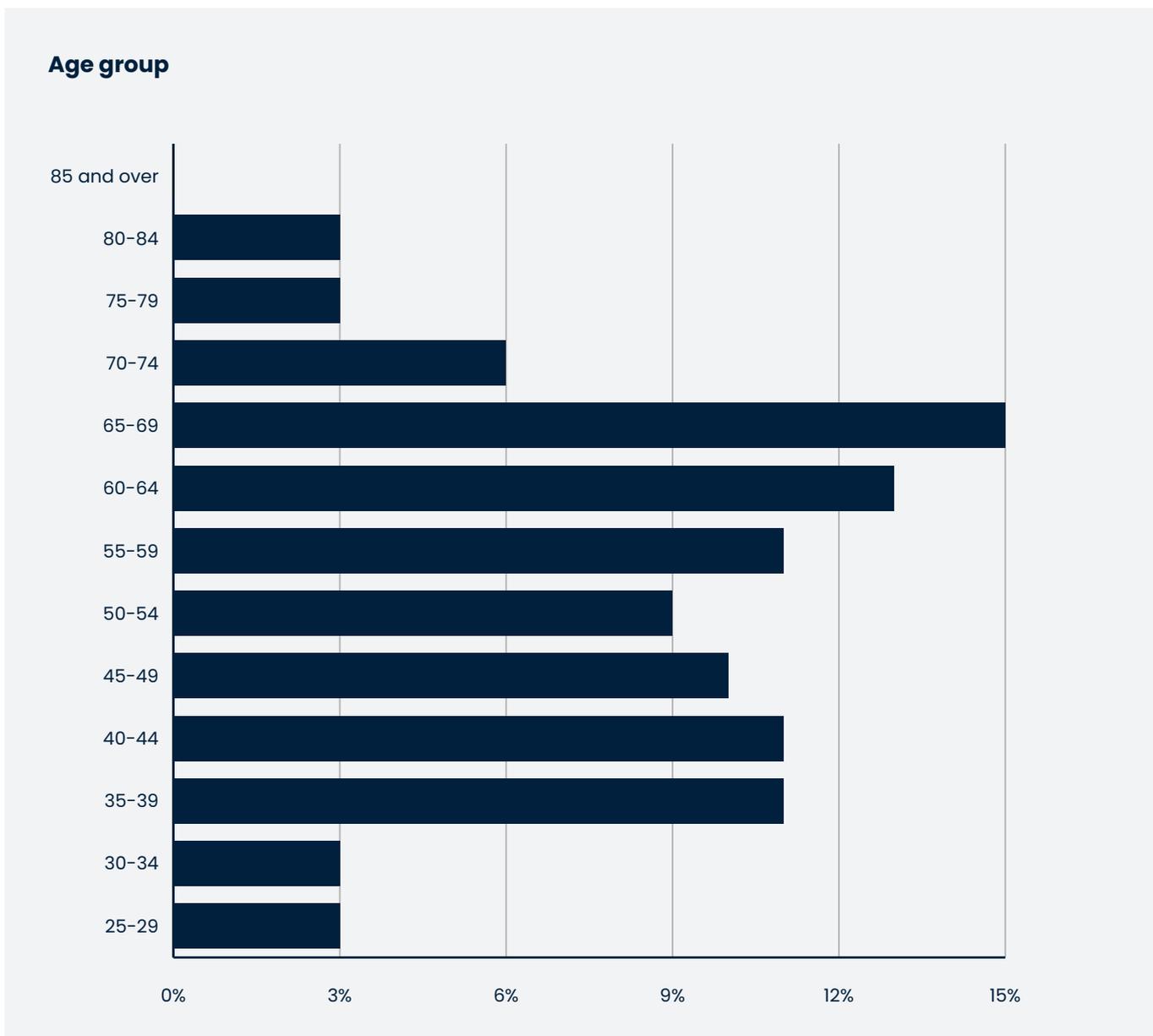
Who we heard from

Over almost two years, Council conducted extensive consultation with the community through surveys, pop-ups, yarn up/focus groups, idea walls in various locations and sessions with young people at schools. Council acknowledges that the COVID pandemic was a barrier to wider Aboriginal community engagement. Council heard from 266 Aboriginal community members who expressed the barriers, needs and aspirations they held for their community.

- 71 people provided comment on key issues including housing, health, education, justice, connection and inclusion, family and culture.
- 57 people attended pop-ups.
- 89 people participated in our survey (online and hard copy).
- 19 people shared their ideas for the future on our online 'ideas wall'.
- 28 people attended yarn-ups (focus groups).
- 86 people provided feedback on the Draft Aboriginal Action Plan public exhibition through workshops, focus interviews and formal submissions.
- 21 Aboriginal young people across two high schools were engaged.



The groups we consulted with in development are identified as follows:



Key focus areas

Analysis of the community feedback has identified six key focus areas:

1. Housing
2. Health & Wellbeing
3. Education & Employment
4. Justice
5. Inclusion & Participation
6. Families & Culture

Council asked the community to identify the areas of most concern and to rate the overall level of satisfaction with current services in each of these areas, to obtain a benchmark in which future progress can be measured.

KEY FOCUS AREA I HOUSING

What we heard

The housing crisis being experienced across NSW is also having a significant impact in the MidCoast. The Aboriginal community in the MidCoast is disproportionately affected by the shortage of housing stock and high costs.

The community identified that the lack of affordable housing was the top priority in this focus area for Aboriginal people. Other key priority issues identified are the limited availability of rental properties, social housing and overcrowding in homes.

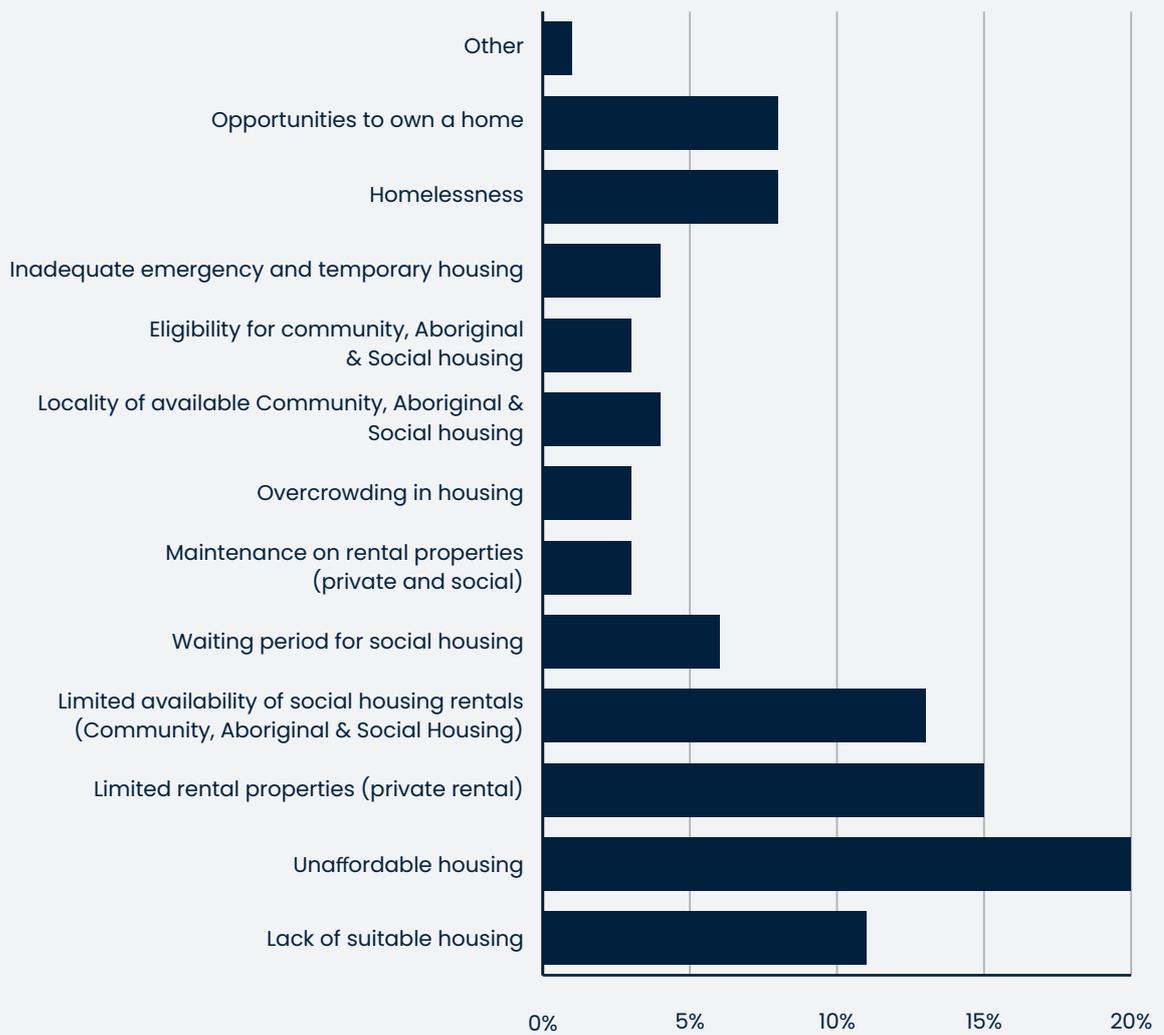
Council also heard positive stories about responsive housing providers creating solutions, and providing temporary resolutions for housing.

Of the respondents, 17% reported very satisfied or satisfied with Housing and only 16% reported that they were fortunate enough to be in a stable position in relation to accommodation i.e., owning their own home, affordable rent, etc.

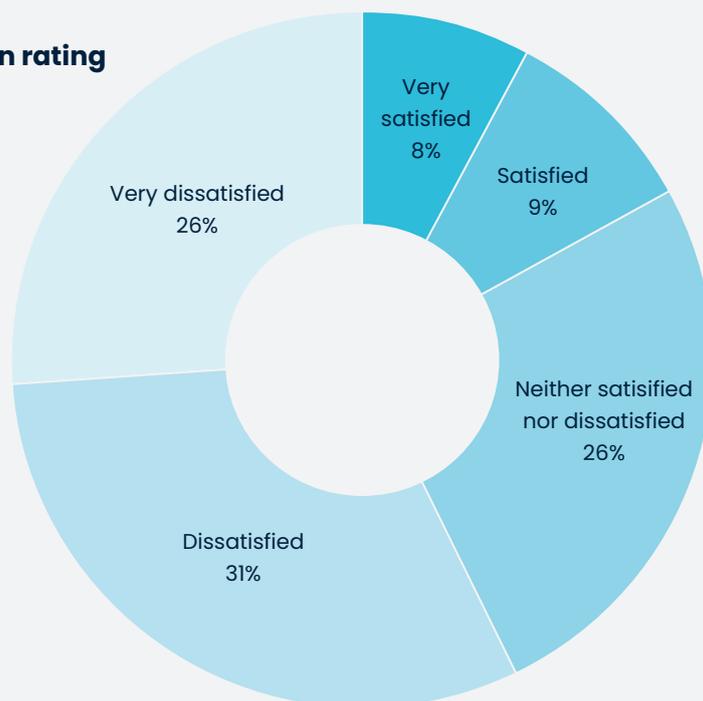
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Top priority issues relating to housing



Housing satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving housing

Objective 1: Our Aboriginal community has safe and sustainable housing that provides the foundation to close the gap by improving health and wellbeing and delivering economic outcomes.

Indicator 1: Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

Indicator 2: Aboriginal Land Councils report infrastructure improvements in bi-annual review.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
1.1. Key stakeholders collaborate to identify barriers to home ownership.	Housing providers collaborate to improve pathways to home ownership. Aboriginal people are confident in working towards home ownership and are aware of and able to access pathways. Aboriginal people feel better equipped and informed to save for deposits.	Advocate Capacity builder Resourced 2	Federal Government; State Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Housing providers; Banks; Finance service providers; Indigenous Business Australia; NSW Aboriginal Land Council; the Regional Land Council; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
1.2. Support education programs on the process for renting properties.	Potential tenants are aware of black-listings, how to find out if they're black-listed, and how to improve their options. Potential tenants understand rental processes and feel confident in applying for rentals. Improved cultural awareness in real estate agencies with culturally appropriate practice for approval of Aboriginal applications.	Advocate Capacity builder Resourced 2	Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Real Estate Agents; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
1.3 Advocate for the increased supply of social housing.	Social Housing provision is included in approvals for large developments. Plans are adopted to increase social housing stock.	Advocate Resourced 1	Federal Government; State Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Housing service providers; Aboriginal Corporations; Aboriginal Community; Neighbourhood Centres.



STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
1.4 Support Local Aboriginal Land Councils to advocate to State and Federal governments to fund new homes on Aboriginal owned land.	State and/or Federal Government commits to funding opportunities.	Advocate Resourced 1	Federal Government; State Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Housing service providers; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
1.5 Support improved Land Management education and processes.	Native title holders and Local Aboriginal Land Councils collaborate with Council to improve Land Management. Improve quality of life in Aboriginal communities through waste management, street safety, liveability projects, etc. Improved confidence in applying for Development Applications.	Advocate Planner Partner Deliverer Resourced 1	Federal Government; State Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Corporations.



KEY FOCUS AREA 2

HEALTH & WELLBEING

What we heard

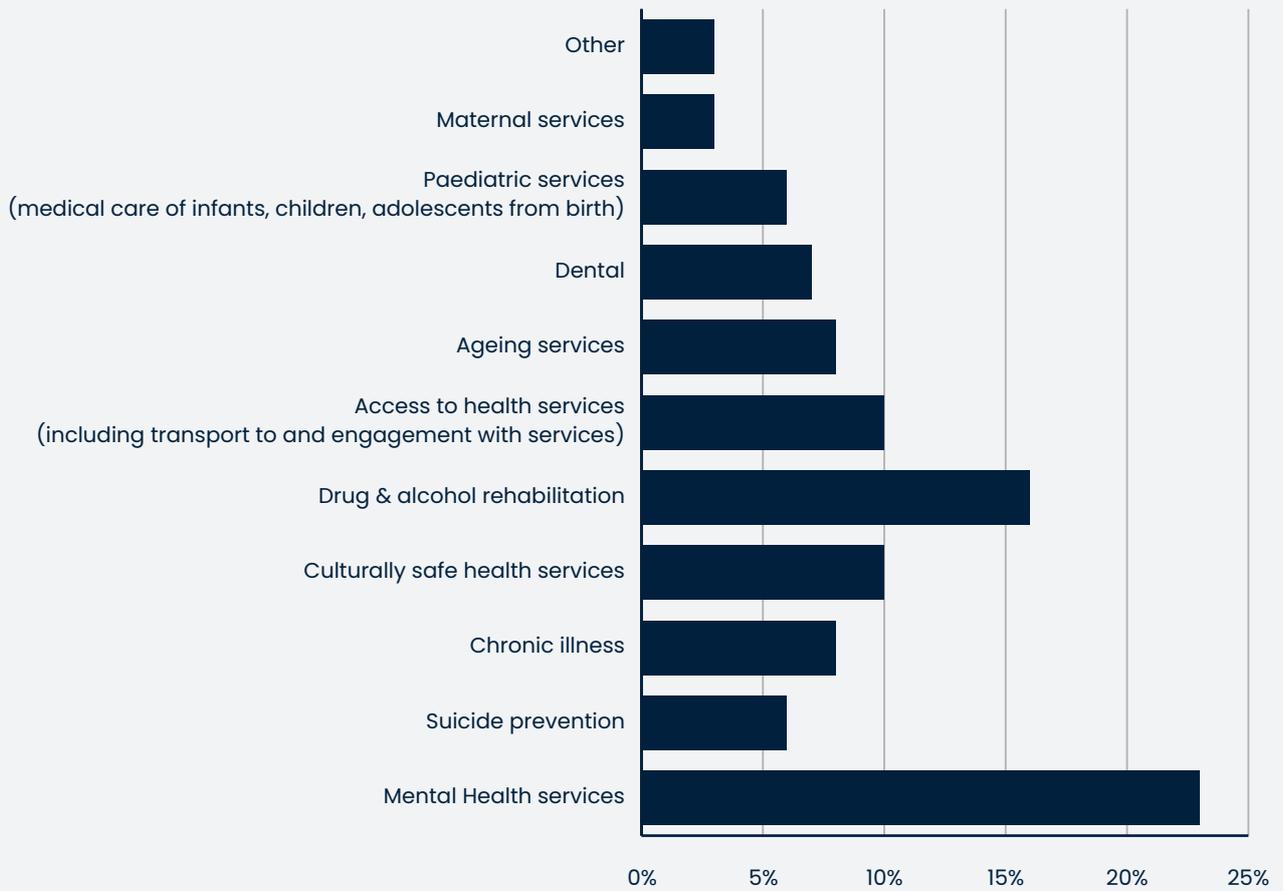
It's well researched that Aboriginal people have a lower life expectancy than non-Aboriginal people, higher rates of chronic illness and comorbidity. The Australian Government's 'Closing the Gap' initiative seeks to address this, but progress has been slow. It is notably more difficult for communities in rural and regional areas to access appropriate health services and Aboriginal communities are significantly affected. Research recognises the influence of social factors and the strengths of culture as a protective influence on Aboriginal peoples' physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

In this focus area, the community identified Mental Health as the area of most concern, closely followed by the need for Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation services. It was also identified that there is a clear demand for culturally appropriate health services and there is community acknowledgment that where this is happening, it's working well. Of the respondents, 29% reported very satisfied or satisfied with Health & Wellbeing.

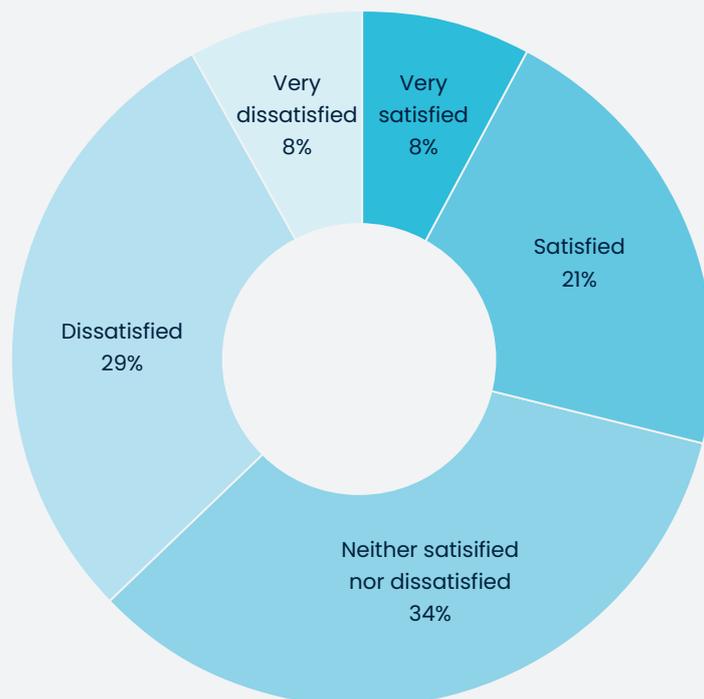
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Top priority issues relating health & wellbeing



Health & wellbeing satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving health & wellbeing

Objective 2: Create the best opportunity for Aboriginal people to live long, healthy lives that are centred in culture with prevention-focused, culturally safe and responsive health services.

Indicator 1: The Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

Indicator 2: Aboriginal Medical Services report decreased waiting lists in bi-annual review.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
2.1 Advocate for improved mental health and counselling services for Aboriginal people.	Improved services at medical centres, with reduced waiting lists and providing consistency for patients. Improved or increased telehealth opportunities provided. Increase in number of Aboriginal Counsellors. Increase in drug and alcohol counselling available.	Advocate Resourced 1	State Government; Federal Government; Aboriginal Medical Centres; Allied Health providers; Headspace; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; Primary Health Network.
2.2 Support Land Councils to source funding for the establishment of Wellbeing Services/Centres.	Funding opportunities identified for culturally appropriate health services. Increased knowledge and retention of cultural practices.	Advocate Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Aboriginal Medical Centres; Allied Health providers; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
2.3 Community collaborations to establish Men's, Women's and Elder's Groups, and education programs for young people.	Community collaborations to establish Men's, Women's and Elder's groups promote sense of belonging, improved cultural pride & improved mental health. Advocate for Culturally appropriate and Aboriginal-specific domestic violence education programs for young people. Support community groups and service providers to secure funding for breakfast programs, homework and after-school programs.	Advocate Capacity builder Not Resourced 2	Aboriginal Medical Centres; Allied Health providers; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations; Schools; Education providers; PCYC; Neighbourhood Centres.
2.4 Support Aboriginal Medical Centres to advocate for improved services.	Improved service access in remote areas. Aboriginal Medical Centres have a designated space and regular presence in schools. Improved access to specialist health and dental services.	Advocate Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Aboriginal Medical Centres; Allied Health providers; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
2.5 Advocate for cultural awareness training to be provided to local health providers.	Culturally safe services are provided.	Advocate Capacity builder Not Resourced 2	Aboriginal Medical Centres; Allied Health providers; Primary Health Network; Aboriginal Corporations.

KEY FOCUS AREA 3

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

What we heard

By nurturing strong foundations in the early years, building strong community education and training pathways, valuing cultural identity and enabling self-determined pathways to success and employment, the MidCoast is benefiting from positive community outcomes.

The community has highlighted isolated good news stories in Aboriginal support roles within schools. It was also identified that more cultural learning opportunities are needed to be facilitated for the wider community.

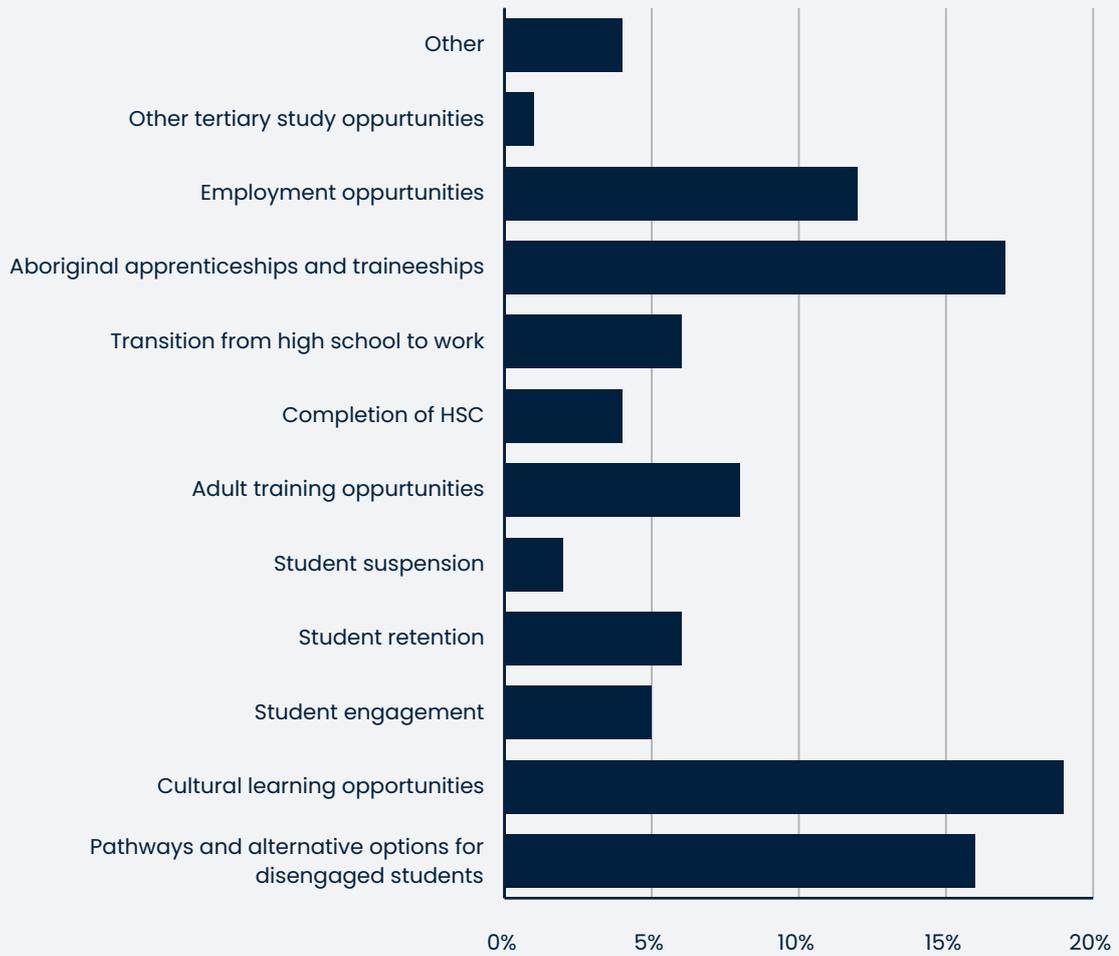
The MidCoast area has high levels of Aboriginal student suspension and low rates of Aboriginal student attendance and retention.

The community identified the need for more assistance to improve pathways and alternate learning opportunities for disengaged students; and improved pathways for apprenticeships and traineeships. Of the respondents, 21% reported very satisfied or satisfied with Education & Employment focus area.

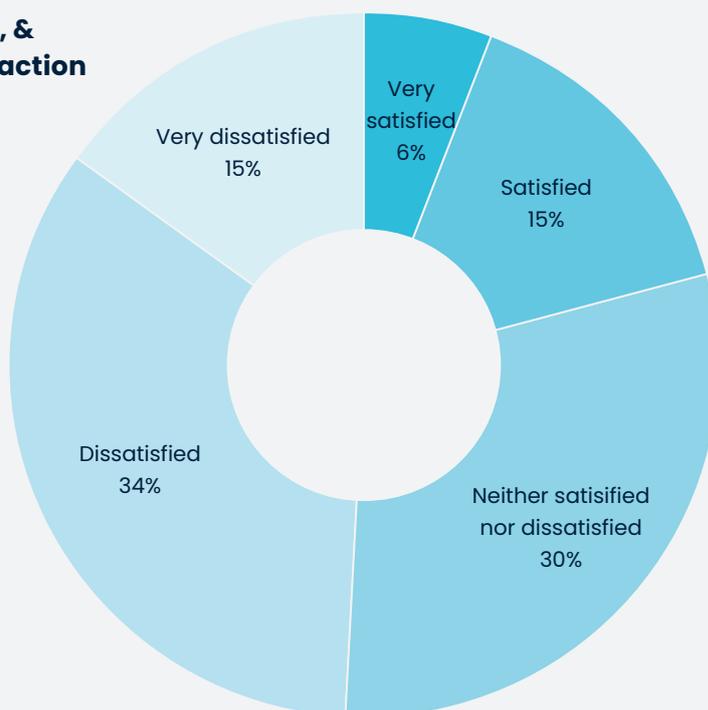


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Top priority issues relating to education, training, & employment



Education, training, & employment satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving education & employment

Objective 3: Working alongside Aboriginal families and communities building a confident, culturally inclusive workforce to maximise Aboriginal peoples ability to achieve growth and success.

Indicator 1: The Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

Indicator 2: Department of Education reports an increase in attendance in bi-annual review.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
3.1 Collaborate with the community to create Aboriginal led culture and language learning opportunities.	Support the community to create native/ bush tucker gardens. Aboriginal Language is part of the school curriculum and courses available for community.	Advocate Capacity builder Not Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Elder's Groups; Schools; Language Group; Civic Institutions; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee.
3.2 Support community groups to upskill in grant writing and navigating funding pathways.	Provision of grant writing workshops.	Advocate Capacity builder Provider Not Resourced 1	Department of Education; Taree Universities Campus; Neighbourhood Centres.
3.3 MidCoast Council becomes an Aboriginal community employer of choice.	MidCoast Council Aboriginal Employment Strategy identifies more opportunities for Aboriginal people to work at Council through apprenticeships, mentoring, traineeships and promoting tendering opportunities. An Aboriginal -identified work experience program developed. Cultural awareness training rolled out to all Council staff. An Aboriginal-identified work experience program developed.	Leader Planner Provider Not Resourced 1	Service Providers; TAFE; Taree Universities Campus; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Corporations.
3.4 Strengthen the Aboriginal education ecosystem and capacity building for AECGs.	Strong AECGs provide improved outcomes for Aboriginal students in consultation with families and community. Host careers expos in the Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal identified student support positions in all schools.	Capacity builder Resourced 2	Schools; Aboriginal Education Community Groups; TAFE; Taree University Campus; Service Providers; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
3.5 Strengthen support networks for Aboriginal people to achieve growth and success.	Aboriginal people are better equipped to apply for Aboriginal identified roles. Mentorship framework developed with partnerships formed to implement cross industry programs.	Advocate Capacity builder Not Resourced 2	Service Providers; TAFE; Taree University Campus; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Civic Institutions; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.

KEY FOCUS AREA 4

JUSTICE

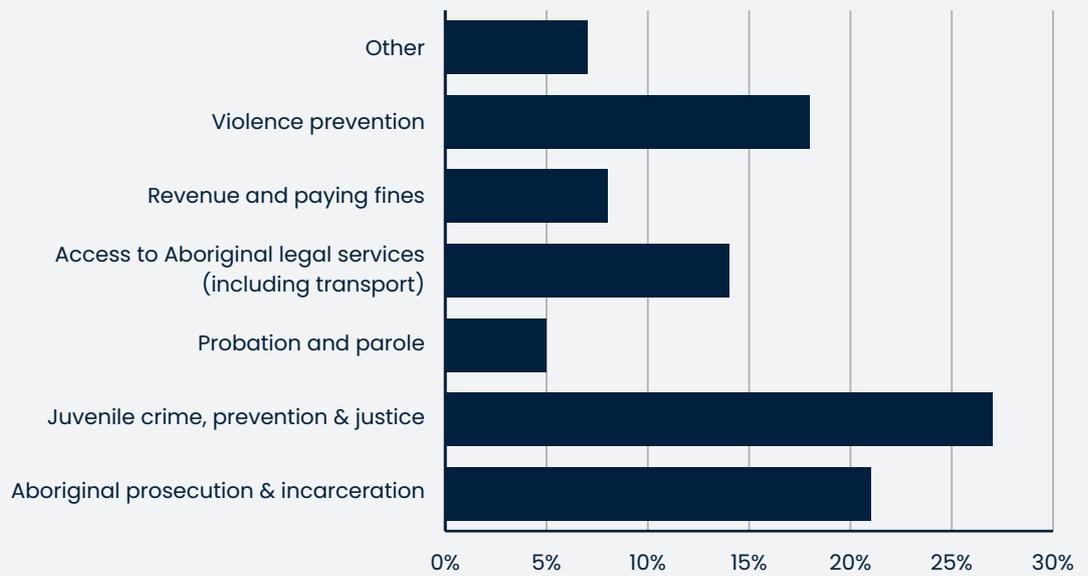
What we heard

Council heard that there are high levels of community concern about the rates of juvenile crime. There is evidence to support a link between the juvenile crime rate and the high rate of absenteeism from school and suspension, and the high rate of domestic violence in the MidCoast. The community identified a lack of positive role models and mentors for Aboriginal children within our community, and championed a greater need for culturally appropriate learning, fostering pride in culture and creating a stronger sense of belonging to assist in addressing the issues underpinning the Justice focus area. The community felt strongly that the Aboriginal people are over-represented in the Justice system. Of the respondents, 8% reported very satisfied or satisfied with the Justice focus area.

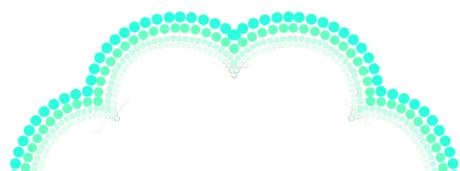
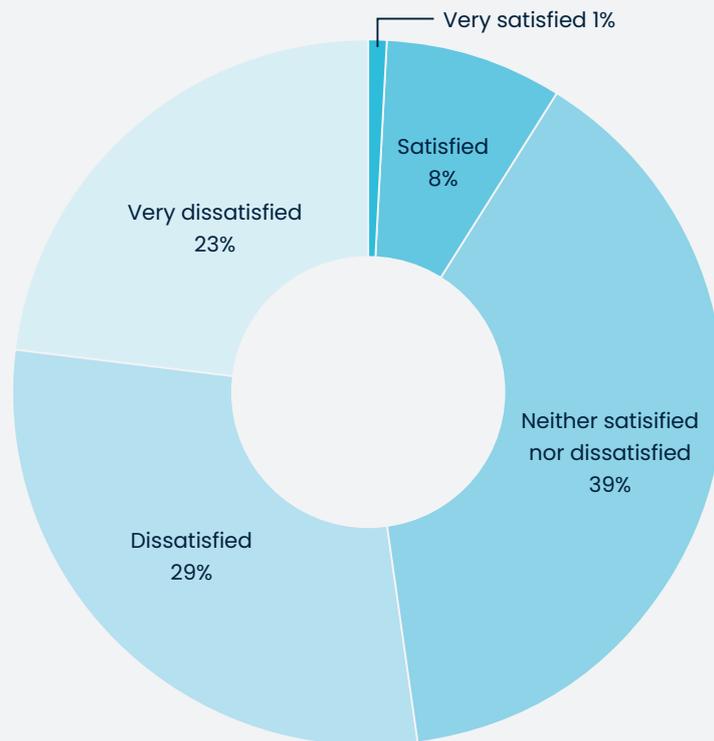
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Top priority issues relating justice



Justice satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving justice

Objective 4: Empowering Aboriginal young people and families to create change addressing over-representation in the justice system and increasing connection to family and community for a stronger sense of belonging.

Indicator 1: The Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

Indicator 2: Reduced incarceration rates for local Aboriginal people.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
4.1 Create strong and resilient support networks for young people and people at risk.	Increase in youth workers across the region. Create early intervention family services and programs to support Aboriginal children and young people aged to stay in school and at home and actively engaged in their communities. Young people know how to seek assistance.	Advocate Capacity builder Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; NSW Police; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; PCYC; Hunter and Great Lakes & Manning Local Police Commands.
4.2 Creating a fair and equitable system for Aboriginal people.	Support Police applications for more community policing. Rollout of Walama Court circle sentencing to MidCoast region. Strong community relationships with the local judiciary system.	Advocate Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; NSW Police; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Police Aboriginal Consultative Committee (LAC) Local Advisory Committee.
4.3 The youth justice system is child and adolescent centred and age appropriate.	A young person is recognised and met with a healing approach. Our young people are appropriately cared for within justice frameworks with age and developmental needs of the child and young person met. Trauma aware training is provided to police liaison and to Aboriginal support people. Social Worker/Aboriginal Support Workers embedded within justice system.	Advocate Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; NSW Police; Local Aboriginal Land Councils.



KEY FOCUS AREA 5

INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

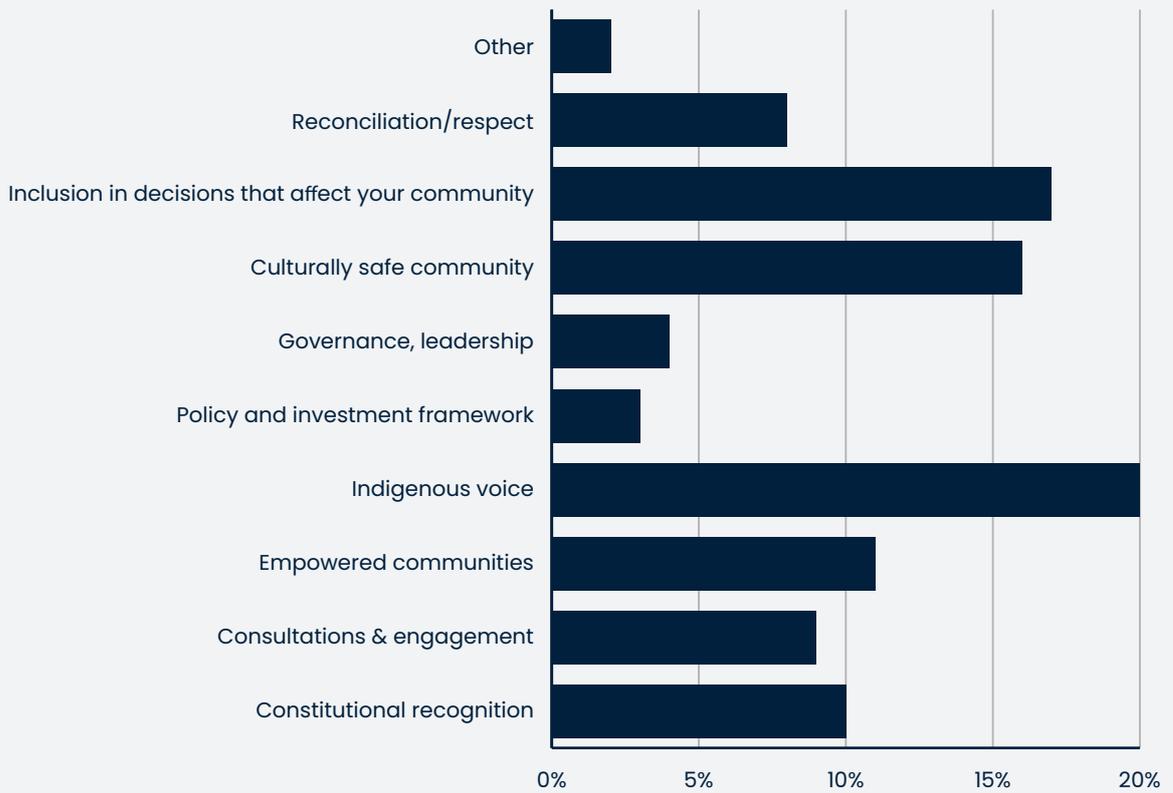
What we heard

Consultation revealed several areas where the community would like to see improvements, including an Aboriginal voice in decisions that affect them, increased consultation and engagement to enable the community to feel empowered, respect to the right of self-determination and a stronger sense of belonging. There is strong community support for establishing an Aboriginal Reference/Advisory Group to facilitate direct strategic input to Council. The community also expressed that an identified Aboriginal liaison position in all organisations would assist in improving cultural appropriateness, leading to increased connection and engagement. It was also acknowledged that organisations within the MidCoast struggle to fill identified Aboriginal roles and that the Inclusion & Participation focus area is strongly linked to all the other focus areas. The community highlighted that the Aboriginal Working Parties in the region are working well. Of the respondents, 8% reported very satisfied or satisfied with Inclusion & Participation focus area.

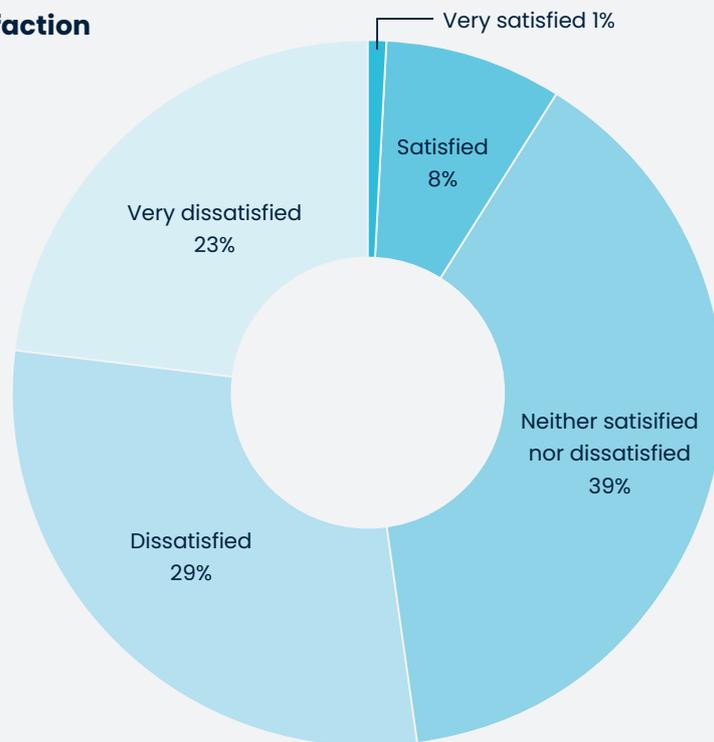
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Top priority issues relating to Aboriginal inclusion & participation



Aboriginal inclusion & participation satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving inclusion & participation

Objective 5: We celebrate our local Aboriginal heritage through public representation of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people are involved in decision making roles in leadership with influence.

Indicator 1: The Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

Indicator 2: Increased number of Aboriginal people engaged in MCAAP review bi-annually.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
5.1 Embed strong collaborative relationships between Council, Aboriginal Elders and Local Aboriginal Land Councils	Increased engagement with Aboriginal Community in relation to Council activities. Include Aboriginal identified roles in formal Council committees and reference groups. CEOs of Local Aboriginal Land Councils meet with Council at least quarterly.	Planner Leader Provider Partner Resourced 1	Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; Elders Groups.
5.2 Visual representation of culture across MidCoast with Gathang language in signage and naming conventions.	Increase in use of Gathang Language in Council and community signage. Naming of Public Reserves and Facilities Policy adopted by Council and implemented. Plan for cultural interpretive signage developed. Guidelines for road naming conventions adopted by Council. Policy developed for Aboriginal language use.	Leader Planner Capacity builder Provider Resourced 1	Language Groups; Local Businesses; Community Groups; Civic Institutions; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
5.3 The Aboriginal community has a voice and role in strategic decisions that may affect them.	Increase in consultation with Aboriginal community in relation to significant sites/ artefacts. Investigate the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas in consultation with Aboriginal people and Government. Establish an Aboriginal Reference/ Advisory Group. Consult with community on a pathway to establish a MidCoast Treaty with the Aboriginal Community. Facilitate educational programs to understand the democratic process, supporting new pathways for Aboriginal representation on Council.	Leader Planner Resourced 1	Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Corporations.

STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
5.4 Support capacity building activities for culturally appropriate services and engagement.	Culturally safe services are provided to the community. Cultural Awareness Training is developed in collaboration with Aboriginal people for all civic institutions. Commitment to culturally-appropriate consultation.	Advocate Capacity builder Provider Not Resourced 2	Funding bodies; Service providers; Civic Institutions; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres.
5.5 Create opportunities to partner with Aboriginal businesses/community groups to promote inclusion outcomes.	Increase in partnerships between Council and Aboriginal community. Increase in organisations working together to support Aboriginal people. Advocate and facilitate new pathways into diverse local businesses for young Aboriginal community members.	Leader Planner Provider Capacity Builder Not Resourced 2	Community Groups; Service Providers; Civic Institutions; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; Local Government NSW; Australian Electoral Commission.



KEY FOCUS AREA 6

FAMILIES & CULTURE

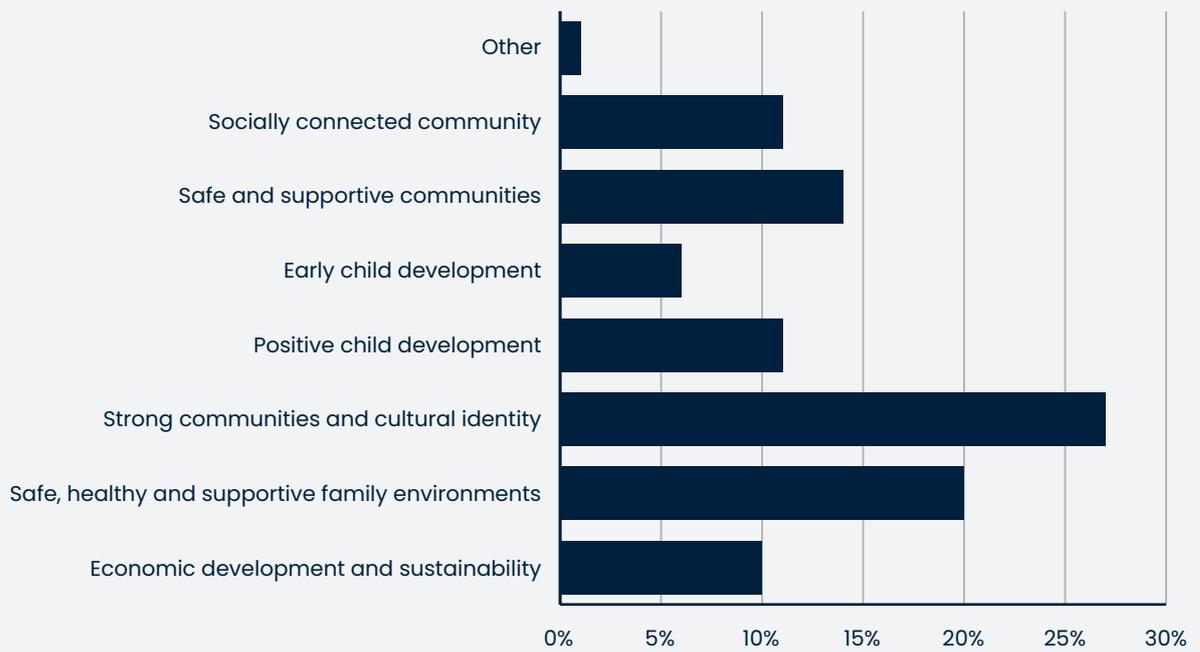
What we heard

It is widely accepted that Aboriginal culture is holistic, and many community members define culture as connection to family, community and country. Council heard that there are strong community concerns around the loss of identity and culture. It was identified that there is a strong sentiment to seeing active preservation and respect for culture, with much work to be done in strengthening family connections and a key investment needed to support early childhood development ensuring children and young people are nurtured, safe and supported. The community emphasised the relationship between a focus on learning and sharing culture with young people and indicated that the MidCoast will benefit in the long term with better education and economic outcomes. Of the respondents, 29% reported very satisfied or satisfied with Families & Culture focus area.

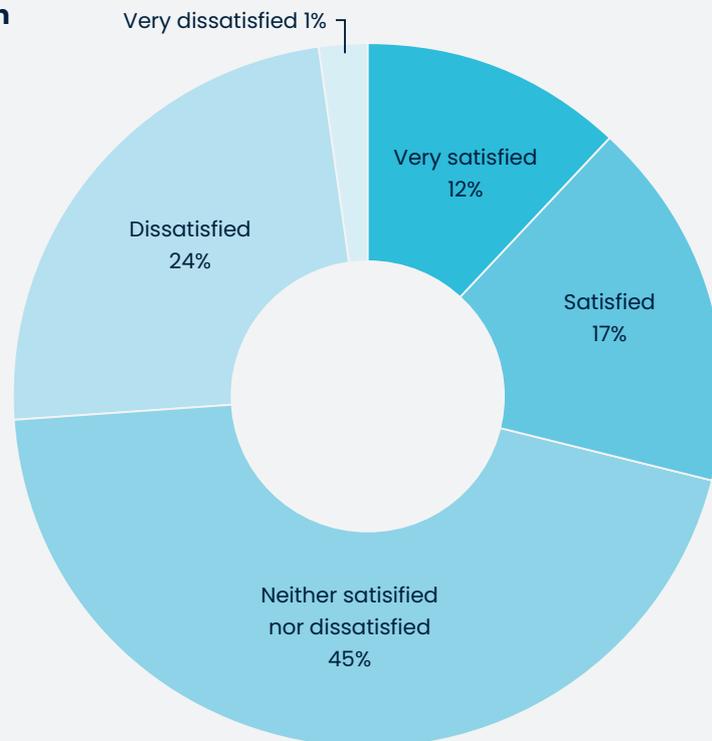
06



Top priority issues relating Aboriginal families & culture



Aboriginal families & culture satisfaction rating



Strategies for improving families & culture

Objective 6: We support resilient Aboriginal communities with strong cultural identity and safe, healthy and supportive family environments increasing connection to Country, community and culture.

Indicator 1: The Aboriginal community report an increased satisfaction rating in bi-annual review.

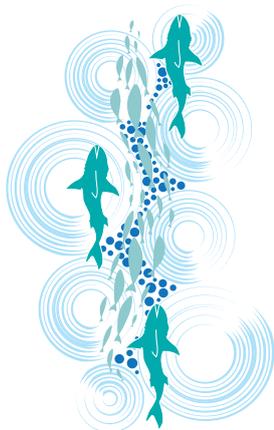
STRATEGIES How will we get there?	PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS What this might look like	COUNCIL ROLE	STAKEHOLDERS Who else has a role?
6.1 Create innovative opportunities for strengthening cultural identity and showcasing Aboriginal culture, art, and stories.	Support community efforts to establish a cultural centre. Partnership/consortium formed to advocate for funding and resources. Advocate for community groups to secure funding for cultural camps and events. Deliver programs to increase capacity of community groups to apply for funding. Provide Aboriginal genealogy research and support programs to empower community to preserve family history.	Advocate Capacity builder Provider Not Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; TAFE; Libraries; Manning Regional Art Gallery.
6.2 Support Aboriginal family services providers to build capacity and promote a collaborative approach to service delivery.	Strong partnerships and collective impact approach to Aboriginal family support service delivery. Collaborate to deliver parenting and family support programs.	Advocate Capacity Builder Partner Not Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Service Providers; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations; Neighbourhood Centres; Aboriginal medical centres.
6.3 Support Aboriginal families and communities to be prepared for natural disasters and access recovery services.	Collaborate to deliver specialist Aboriginal community disaster preparedness resources and support.	Advocate Capacity Builder Provider Not Resourced 2	State Government; Federal Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Community Groups; Neighbourhood Centres; Service NSW/Centrelink.
6.4 Support the facilitation of strengthening Aboriginal connection to Country and preservation of cultural knowledge and cultural sites.	Support Aboriginal Rangers working on Country programs. Facilitate strategic development and conservation of Aboriginal land in ways that generate economic, cultural, community and conservation benefits. Incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and language into biodiversity and environmental projects.	Advocate Capacity Builder Provider Resourced 1	State Government; Federal Government; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Community Groups; Aboriginal Corporations.



Kirra Fletcher

Kirra Fletcher is a proud Worimi woman. Kirra has strong connections to her Aboriginal culture and heritage through her family, which she conveys in her artwork. Kirra is known in her community for her unique traditional and contemporary designs which she creates through paintings and digital art.

The featured artwork "Barray" (meaning Country in Gathang Language) by Kirra, "tells the story of Worimi country. The main connection place in the middle, represents our people at the heart and the smaller blue and green tone circles represent the water and all the swimming spots around our coastal town. The sand banks can be seen around the edges of the artwork as well" (Fletcher, K. 2023).



Brittany Cochrane

Brittany Cochrane is a proud Aboriginal woman from Biripi Country. She grew up with strong influences from local culture, not just learning but also practising traditions. Brittany has worked on multiple art projects across the community, including a commissioned piece used in the MidCoast Council Administrative Office - Yalawanyi Ganya.

The featured artwork, "Saltwater People" by Brittany, "represents the connection the Biripi people have with water being located between the saltwater and the mountains of the valley. The design depicts the grey nurse shark swimming gracefully in the water - which is symbolic to our elders coming through and protecting our sacred land." (Cochrane, B. 2023)