

# Targeted Earlier Intervention Program Community Wellbeing Survey Report

Snapshot 'August/September 2023'

*"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."*

Margaret J. Wheatley

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## 1) The Community Wellbeing Survey – Background and Overview

LCSA (Local Community Services Association) has been funded by the NSW Department for Communities and Justice (DCJ) to deliver the TEI Community Strengthening Data Project (CDSP).

The objective of the project is to develop a **Community Strengthening Data Set** that complements the data reported in the Data Exchange (DEX) under the Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) Program, and showcases activities that are designed to build strong and resilient communities, preventing issues from arising in first place.

To this end a Community Wellbeing Survey was developed that Community Strengthening organisations can distribute to their clients, community members and stakeholders to:

1. Better understand how our services contribute to community wellbeing.
2. Tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange.
3. Collect consistent information about community wellbeing.

In the context of TEI, Community Wellbeing is defined as “the collective sense of belonging, participation, trust, and access to resources / services, which is achieved through:

- increasing protective factors such as local capacity, social support, and resources
- decreasing risk factors, such as miscommunication, disengagement, isolation / loneliness, and trauma.”

After piloting the Community Wellbeing Survey with 20 TEI services in 2022, LCSA provided a [Pilot Report](#) to DCJ with recommendations for the future implementation of the survey as part of the TEI data regime.

The Pilot Project fulfilled its aims successfully by enabling a better understanding of how TEI funded services contribute to community wellbeing, better telling the story behind the data reported, and more consistently collecting information about community wellbeing. It has given LCSA and DCJ a practice-informed evidence base for the prospects of measuring Community Wellbeing in TEI. At the end of this report there is assessment of how actions in response to LCSA’s recommendations are tracking.

In November 2022, DCJ formally adopted the TEI Community Wellbeing Survey as an optional data tool for all TEI funded services delivering Community Strengthening program activities. Subsequently it was agreed that TEI services will use 2 snapshot months a year – February and August - to distribute the survey in their communities. This report is for the first snapshot month, being February 2023. A total of 26 organisations signed up, with 20 participating actively, generating a total of 379 surveys across NSW.

LCSA is working with DCJ and TEI funded services to build on the momentum of the first snapshot month, with the aim to have 10% of all TEI services funded for Community Strengthening to participate by the end of 2023; 20% by the end of 2024; and 30% by the end of 2025. LCSA will host three Community of Practice meetings per year for all interested and participating parties.

The Community Wellbeing Survey fills a gap in the [TEI Outcomes Framework](#) and as such improves it overall. It captures the community level data as opposed to the program level data, which is adequately captured in the Data Exchange (DEX). The Pilot Project established that the Community Wellbeing Survey and the DEX Data are complementary data sets and together they create a more complete picture of the outcomes achieved by TEI Community Strengthening activities.

The Community Wellbeing Survey was developed to better collect, analyse, and report the stories behind the data reported in the Data Exchange and to measure community wellbeing more consistently as a longer-term outcome. TEI Community Strengthening organisations are invited on a **voluntary** basis to distribute the survey to their clients, community members and stakeholders.

The survey is not only for TEI clients but **all community members**. It asks a series of questions about their experiences living and participating in their communities. The survey includes a bank of questions with a 5-point Likert scale (quantitative data) and an opportunity to share an example or brief story (qualitative data) about their:

- Sense of belonging
- Community participation
- Trust in the community
- Access to services and resources

At the beginning of each survey participants can choose to provide some demographic information about themselves such as the suburb or town they live in, their age, gender, if they identify as a First Nations person, languages spoken at home, and if they live with a disability.

The Community Wellbeing Survey **does not collect any identifiable personal information** from participants, which mean that there are no privacy issues associated with the data generated. Respectively, LCSA shares the data set with DCJ on this basis with the only objective to provide a state-wide report. All demographic data is for statistical purposes only.

Most importantly this data set is filling a vacuum that was left when the former Community Builders Funding Program was integrated into the TEI Program, and when DEX became the data reporting portal. DEX, by design, is relying on individual data only and does not capture community or population level data that demonstrates how well and how strong a community is in its entirety.

To exemplify the value of the Community Wellbeing Data Set, and the relationship between TEI clients and the community at large, it is important to acknowledge that the sum of individual TEI clients does not make up the entire community. In return however, strengthening the whole of community (beyond TEI client cohorts) has a positive impact on prevention, early intervention, and community resilience.<sup>1</sup>

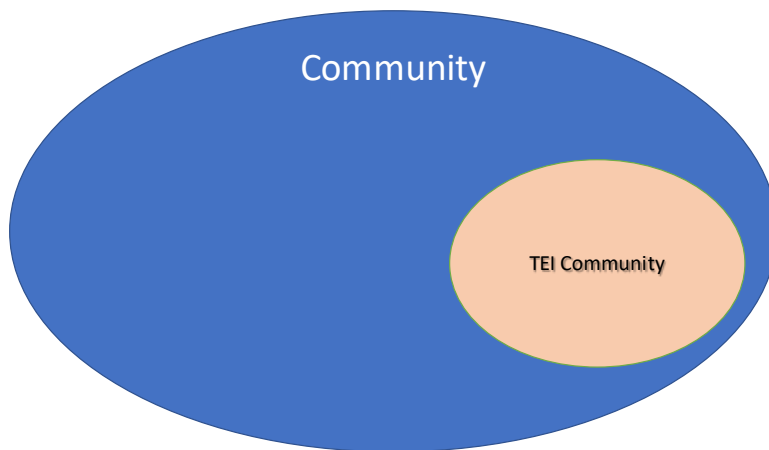
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<sup>1</sup> Refer to LCSA's TEI Submission, 2016 making a case for the integration of Community Builders into TEI.

## 2) The Difference between the Community Wellbeing Survey and DEX Data

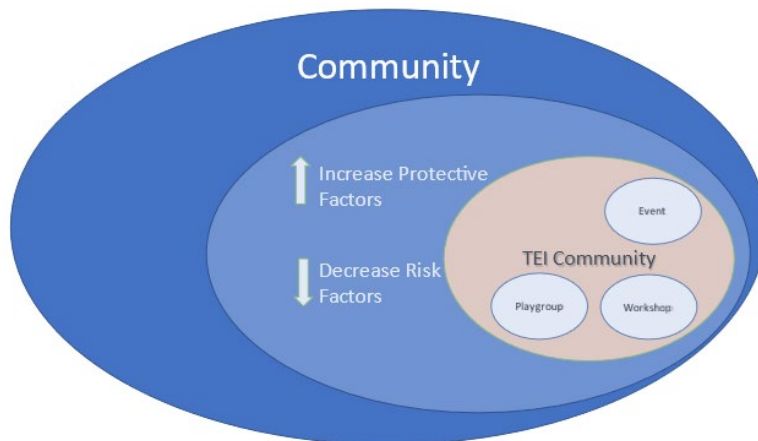
To demonstrate the relationship between the Community Wellbeing Survey and the DEX datasets, we must first distinguish between the community at large and the community of TEI clients (shown in these graphics as the 'TEI Community').

TEI Community members are certainly members of the broader community, however as recipients of direct services or participants of TEI-funded activities, any outcome in their lives because of the TEI activity, is solely a measure of *the effectiveness of the program* or TEI program activity. DEX captures this data adequately.



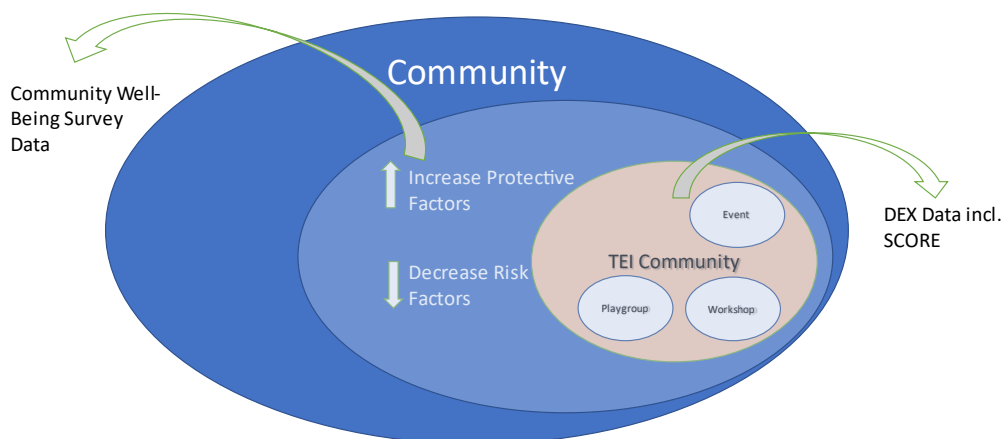
While program-level outcomes have most certainly a flow-on effect on the broader community, they can only make clear statements about the program and not about the community surrounding TEI clients.

As per the definition of Community Wellbeing, the increase of protective factors and the decrease of risk factors are not only observed within the TEI Community but in larger parts of the community, as seen in the next diagram.



Ultimately, the Community Wellbeing Survey is an attempt to capture the flow-on effects of TEI funded Community Strengthening activities in the broader community, by inviting people from the TEI Community but also outside the TEI Community, to share their experience of what it is like to live in their community (shown in the third diagram as the light blue area which includes the TEI Community).

It is important to note that the sum of individual's experience does not add up to a community's experience. It is at best a snapshot of Community Wellbeing. The Community Wellbeing Survey measures the community-level outcomes achieved through Community Development, asking the question 'Is the community any better off?' rather than program-level, individual outcomes which ask the question 'Is the service recipient / client any better off?'.



**In conclusion, both data sets are relevant and important. They complement each other as they are measuring two different things: DEX Data including SCORE captures the impact of an activity on an individual or group, whereas the Community Wellbeing Survey captures the protective and risk factors on a community level.**

### 3) The second Snapshot: August/September 2023 - Process, Data Analysis and Key Findings

In agreement with DCJ and the sector the second snapshot period stretched over a period of 6 weeks from mid-August until the end of September 2023. The Community of Practice that was established, meets now every 3 months. This forum comprises practitioners who have been actively engaged in the development and dissemination of the Community Wellbeing Survey, and provides invaluable advice for this project. Based on the experience of the first snapshot month, the survey remained unchanged, both for the first part about demographic questions and the second part about the wellbeing outcomes.

A total of **33** TEI services are now set up for the use of the Survey, with 6 actively participating in this snapshot period. Some chose not to partake as their communities experience 'survey fatigue', others cited that August and September are not a suitable time for the service to be running the survey. It must be noted that those **6** organisations who participated, collected large volumes of responses per organisation compared to February. Overall LCSA received a total of **332** responses across NSW.

Local Government Area	Number of Responses
Tamworth Shire Council	72
Mid-Coast Council	62
City of Lismore	51
Canterbury/Bankstown	37
Homeless	24
City of Sydney	16
Bayside Council	6
Ballina Shire Council	4
Byron Shire Council	4
City of Randwick	3
Kyogle Shire Council	3
Richmond Valley Council	3
Central Coast Council	2
Inner West Council	2
Armidale Shire Council	1
Marrickville Council	1
Hills Shire Council	1
City of Botany	1
Clarence Valley	1
City of Newcastle	1
City of Lake Macquarie	1
North Sydney Council	1
Georges River Council	1
Tweed Shire Council	1
Ku-ring-gai Council	1

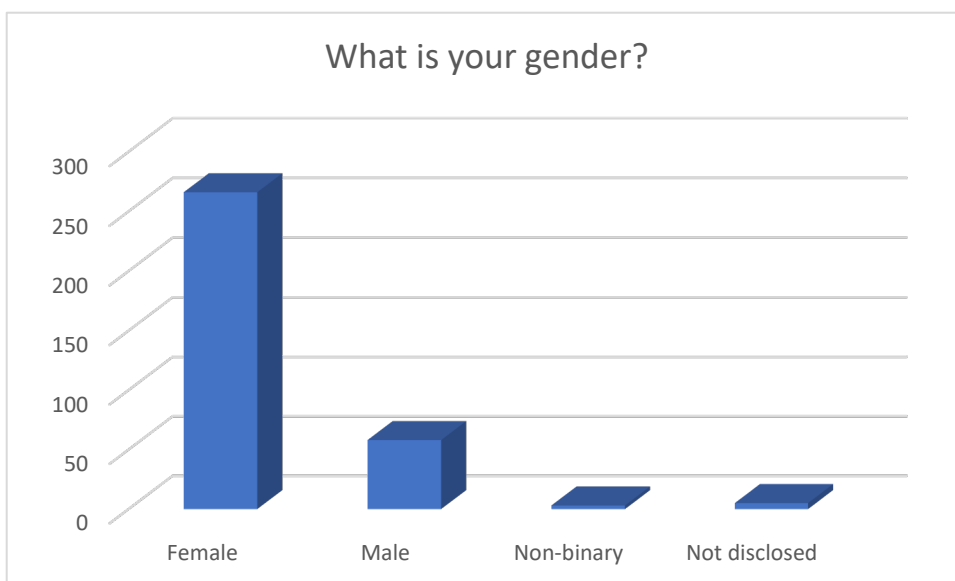
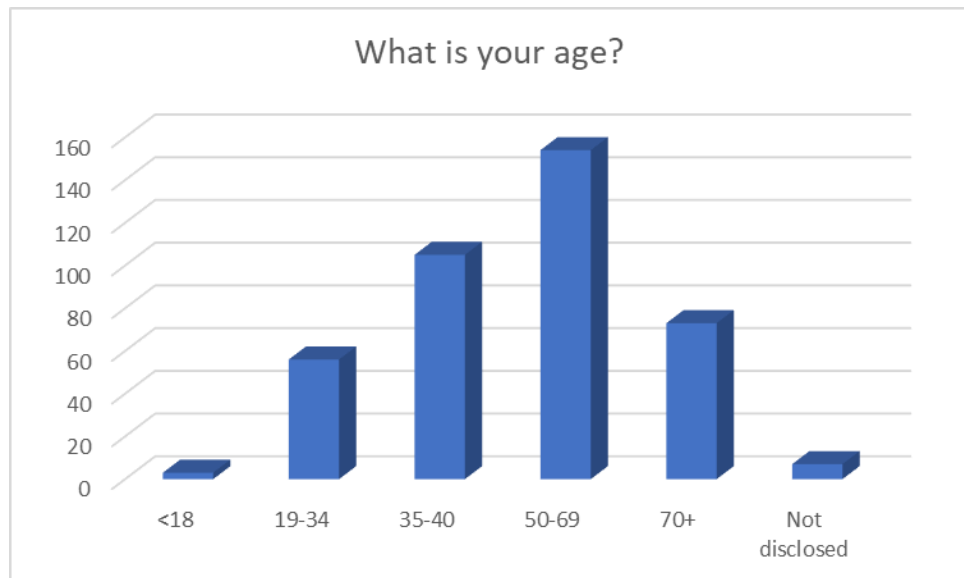
The spread across LGA's can be seen in a table above. Ultimately, the aim is to get much broader geographic coverage across NSW to compare regions and LGAs. Learning from the first snapshot month, the following data analysis provides much more detail on the demographic features of survey respondents, and also in relation to the outcome data associated with the four domains.

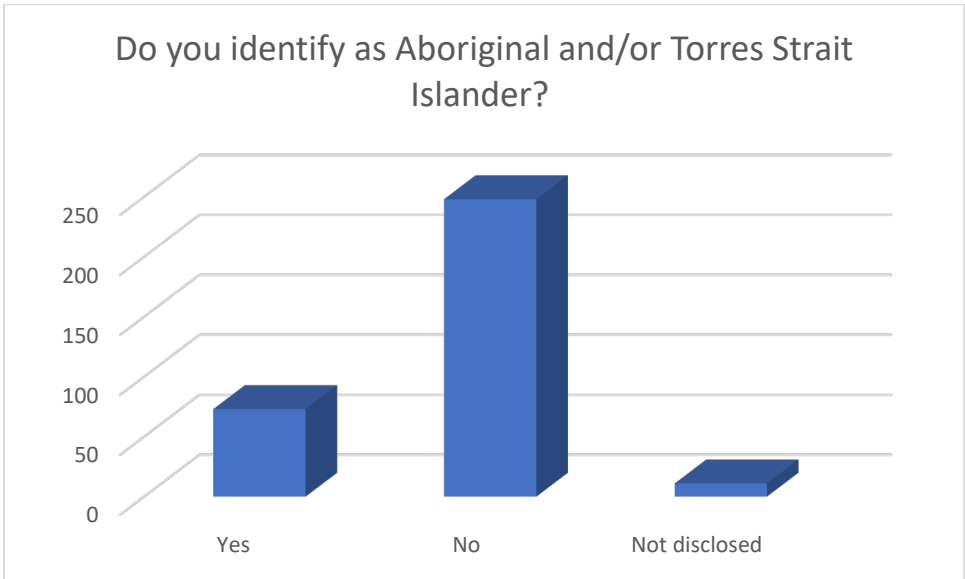
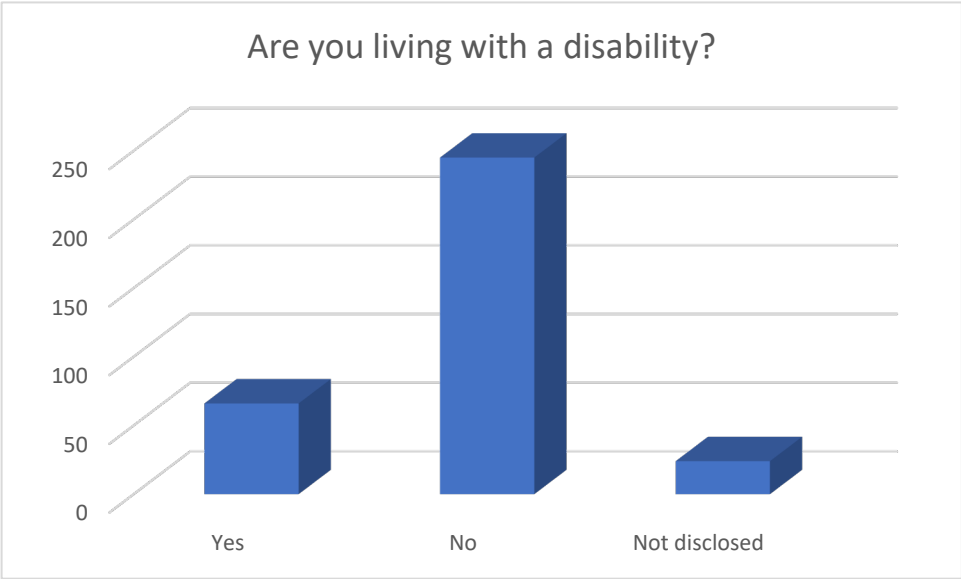


## Statistical analysis of the demographic data to identify characteristics of the survey participants

The demographic data of the total responses provides some insights into the characteristics of survey participants across the state. However, this information is likely to be more valuable for individual services assessing the participation in their surveys, rather than coming to state-wide conclusions. It highlights the diversity of people engaging with TEI services either as clients or as community members who see the value of contributing to the Community Wellbeing Survey.

The following graphs show you the data received statewide from the 332 responses.



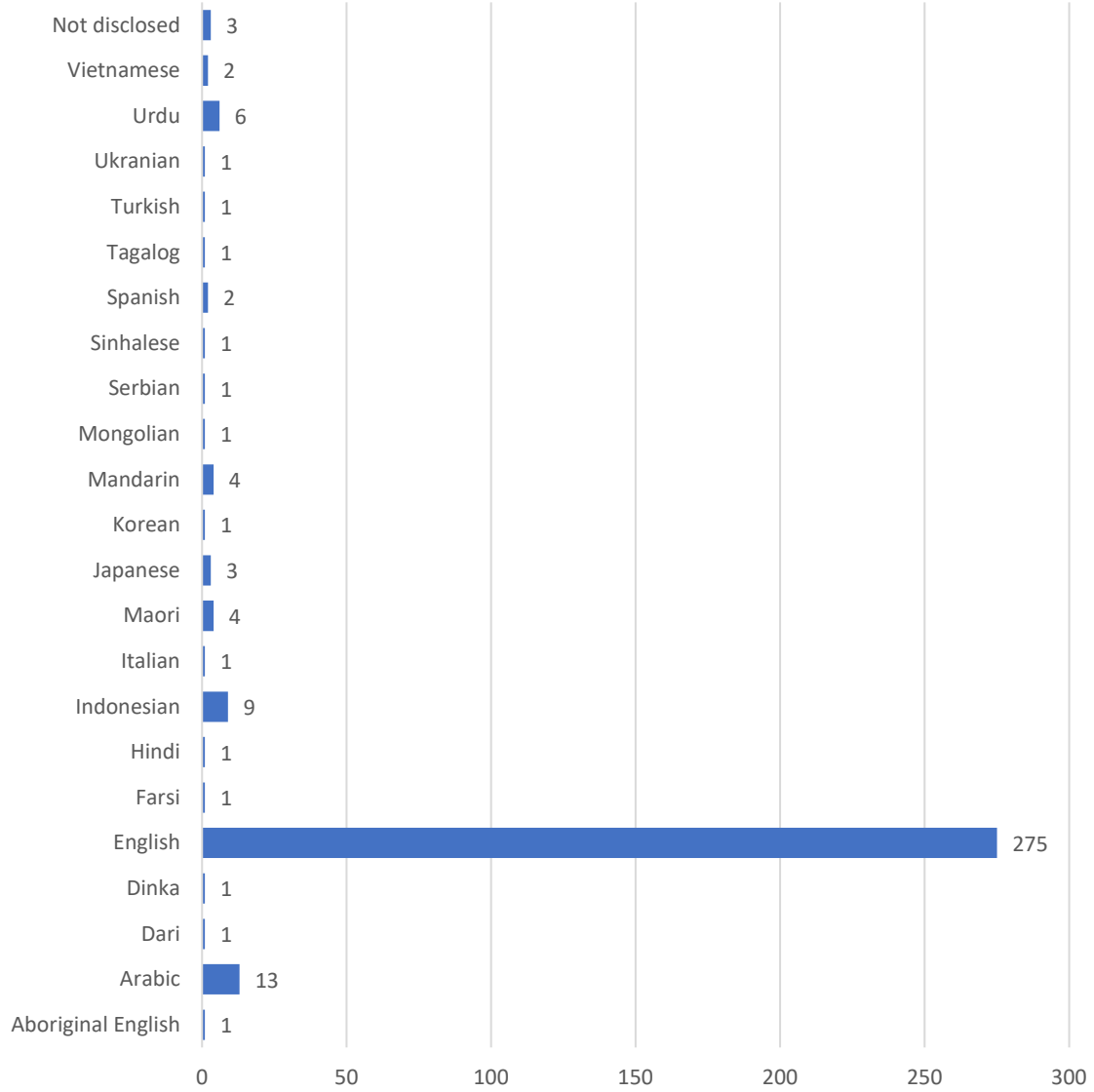


A key feature of this data set is that a large proportion of respondents in this snapshot period identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and that there is a broad cultural and ethnic diversity, which is demonstrated in the graphs below.

### Survey Respondents' Country of Birth



### Language spoken at home



## Statistical analysis of the Community Wellbeing Outcomes Data

The following graphs show responses to the questions about **Sense of Belonging, Trust, Participation and Access to Resources / Services** in the community. There is an overall majority of survey participants 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with the statement about positive connections and sentiments.

The data visualisation is an example of how participating organisations can showcase their own data based on their own community. There are two key points of interest for any local data analysis:

1) Why do people either agree or disagree, and what are the outliers? *and*

2) What are the stories behind the data i.e., what does the qualitative data tell us? Are there any stories or examples given by survey respondents that qualify their answers?<sup>2</sup>

In addition to last snapshot this report aims to provide more detail for each outcome area. We are providing the actual data against each outcome and subset within the outcome area, including the category of 'not-disclosed', which includes responses of 'Not Applicable' as well as respondents that skipped that question.

Over time the aim is to compare data sets in two ways: Firstly, a comparison over time both for individual organisations / communities and statewide. Secondly, a comparison between LGAs and regions in relation to a community well-being baseline.

## Sense of Belonging

A sense of belonging is a fundamental human need and plays a crucial role in individual well-being and community cohesion. It refers to the feeling of being connected, accepted, and valued within a particular group, community, or environment. Here are some key aspects and factors related to the sense of belonging:

- inclusion and acceptance
- connection to others
- shared identity and values
- cultural and social connections
- safe and supportive communities
- celebration of diversity

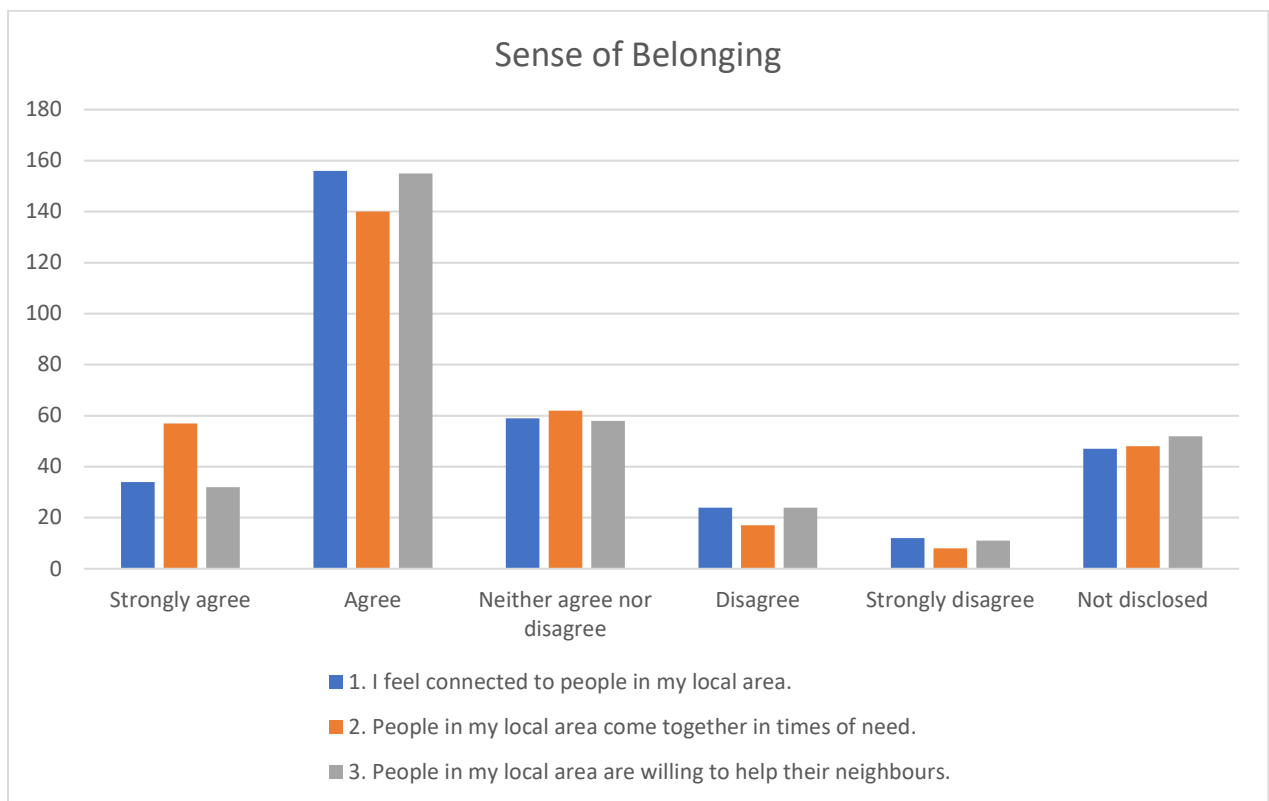
A strong connection to the physical environment, such as a neighbourhood or town, can also contribute to a sense of belonging. Feeling attached to the place where one lives enhances the overall sense of community. A strong sense of belonging has numerous positive effects on mental health, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. Communities that actively nurture this sense of belonging are more likely to thrive and create environments where individuals feel connected, supported, and valued.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that due to the large volume of the statewide data, LCSA used AI software to assist in the thematic analysis.

**Survey responses in this snapshot period**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not disclosed
<b>1. I feel connected to people in my local area.</b>	34	156	59	24	12	47
<b>2. People in my local area come together in times of need.</b>	57	140	62	17	8	48
<b>3. People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.</b>	32	155	58	24	11	52
<b>112 examples/stories shared by respondents</b>						



**The Story behind the Data**

The 132 responses from community members provide a diverse range of perspectives on the sense of community and belonging. Here are some key themes and sentiments expressed by individuals:

**1. Positive Community Spirit:**

- Many respondents express a strong sense of belonging and connection to their community.
- Instances of neighbors supporting each other during significant events like floods, fires, and emergencies are highlighted.

- Community gatherings, events, and celebrations contribute to a positive sense of community spirit.
- 2. Supportive Neighbours:**
    - Several respondents appreciate the support they receive from neighbours, such as helping with moving, lawn care, and keeping an eye on each other's properties.
    - Acts of kindness, like providing food to a family with a new baby or assisting an elderly neighbor, contribute to a sense of community support.
  - 3. Challenges and Concerns:**
    - Some respondents mention challenges, including antisocial behavior, redevelopment concerns, and experiences of racism or xenophobia.
    - Concerns are raised about the impact of redevelopment on the community spirit and well-being.
  - 4. Community Engagement:**
    - Involvement in community activities, volunteering, and group activities is cited as a way to feel connected.
    - Participation in community events, festivals, and groups like playgroups and women's sheds fosters a sense of community.
  - 5. Community Response to Adversity:**
    - Instances of communities coming together in times of adversity, such as floods or bushfires, are highlighted as examples of strong community response and resilience.
  - 6. Diverse Perspectives:**
    - Perspectives on community vary, with some feeling deeply connected, while others may feel isolated or unsupported.
    - Cultural diversity is acknowledged, with mentions of Indigenous communities, multicultural neighborhoods, and experiences of racism.
  - 7. Community Engagement Challenges:**
    - Some respondents express challenges in engaging with the community, citing antisocial behavior, a lack of rapport, or concerns about redevelopment projects.
  - 8. Sense of Safety and Security:**
    - Neighbors looking out for each other's safety and well-being contribute to a sense of security in the community.
  - 9. Volunteering and Active Participation:**
    - Many respondents engage in volunteering and community-level activities to contribute to the well-being of the community.

## 10. Impact of External Factors:

- External factors, such as COVID-19 lockdowns and redevelopment projects, are mentioned as influencing community dynamics and well-being.

These responses reflect the multifaceted nature of community experiences, encompassing both positive and challenging aspects. They underscore the importance of community engagement, mutual support, and shared experiences in fostering a sense of belonging and connection.

## Participation

Community participation involves individuals actively engaging in various activities and initiatives within their community. It encompasses a wide range of actions and civic opportunities. The following examples are not exhaustive:

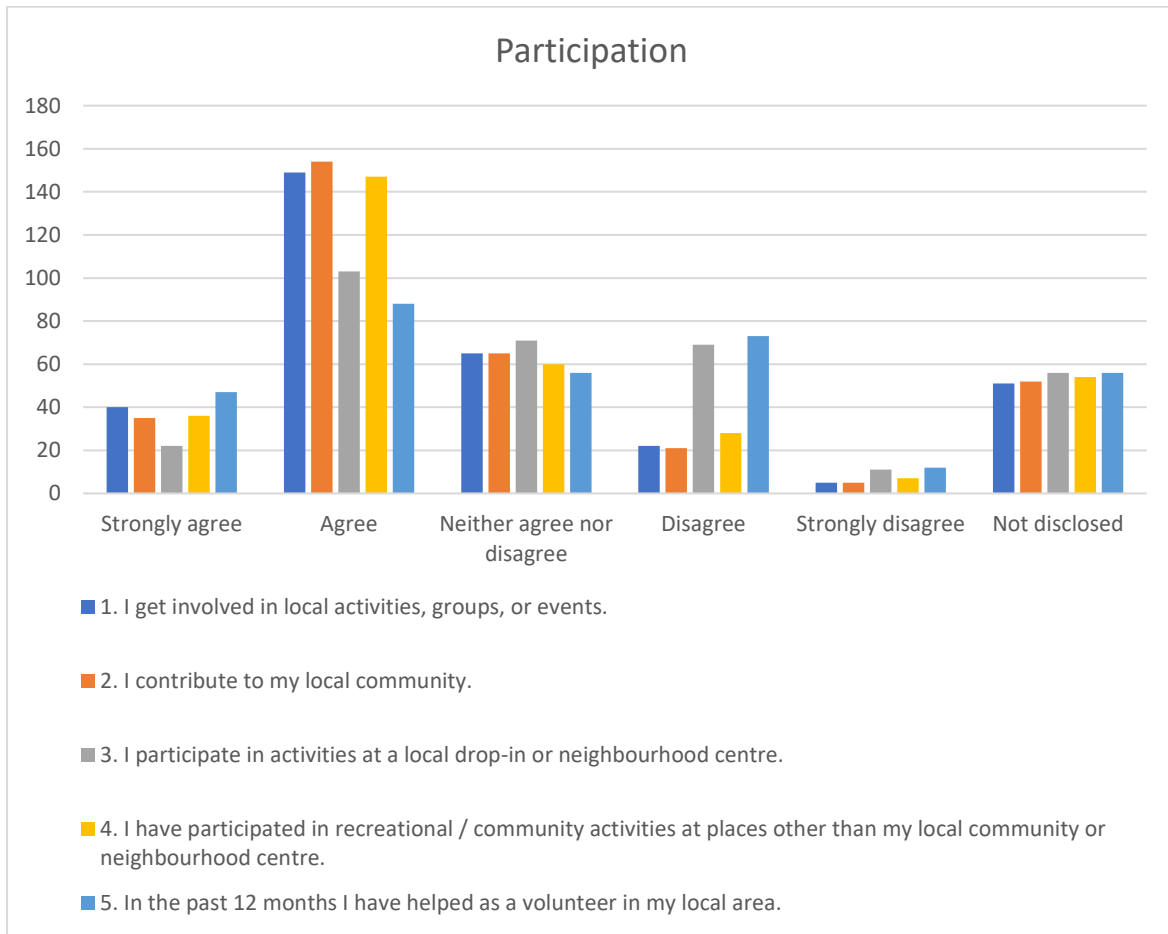
- volunteering
- attending events
- joining community group
- participating in decision-making
- environmental initiatives
- civic engagement
- advocacy and promoting social justice
- arts and cultural engagement
- emergency response and safety
- interaction with local institutions

Community participation is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that empowers individuals to contribute to the collective well-being of their community. It builds social capital, strengthens community bonds, and contributes to the development of vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities.

### *Survey responses in this snapshot period*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not disclosed
<b>1. I get involved in local activities, groups, or events.</b>	40	149	65	22	5	51
<b>2. I contribute to my local community.</b>	35	154	65	21	5	52
<b>3. I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre.</b>	22	103	71	69	11	56
<b>4. I have participated in recreational / community activities at places other than my local community or neighbourhood centre.</b>	36	147	60	28	7	54
<b>5. In the past 12 months I have helped as a volunteer in my local area.</b>	47	88	56	73	12	56
<b>173 examples/stories shared by respondents</b>						





### The Story behind the Data

173 community members took this opportunity to share a story or example of community participation means to them. Analysed thematically the comments give us the following insight about Community Participation. These responses provide a glimpse into the diverse ways individuals engage and participate in their communities. Here are some key themes and examples:

#### 1. Formal Volunteering:

- Respondents actively participate in formal volunteering roles, such as being a member of the Rural Fire Service (RFS), volunteering at the Animal Welfare League, and patrolling beaches with Surf Life Saving NSW.

#### 2. Community Events and Groups:

- Participation in community events, festivals, and groups is common, ranging from attending playgroup events and ladies' groups to joining in cultural celebrations like NAIDOC Week.
- Examples include involvement in choir, art galleries, meditation centers, and participating in events like Clean Up Australia Day.

**3. Sporting and Recreational Activities:**

- Many individuals engage in community through sports clubs, fun runs, and local sporting events.
- Participation in activities like sports clubs, local fun runs, and supporting primary and high school events.

**4. Support for Local Schools:**

- Several respondents volunteer at local schools, participating in activities such as reading programs, canteen duty, and supporting school events.

**5. Community Care and Welfare:**

- Involvement in crisis help, disability groups, and volunteering with organizations like Meals on Wheels reflects a commitment to community care and welfare.
- Supporting homeless individuals, participating in mental health programs, and providing crisis help demonstrate a focus on community well-being.

**6. Challenges and Barriers to Participation:**

- Some respondents express challenges in participating due to personal circumstances, work commitments, or feelings of discomfort or safety concerns in their community.

**7. Advocacy and Committee Membership:**

- Participation extends to advocacy and committee membership, with individuals actively involved in committees for non-profit organizations (NGOs), adult gymnastics, and local school P&C committees.

**8. Community Celebrations and Cultural Engagement:**

- Engaging in cultural celebrations, such as NAIDOC events, and involvement in multicultural communities highlight the importance of cultural engagement in community participation.

**9. Work-Related Community Involvement:**

- Some individuals participate in community activities as part of their work, such as participating in ASHOW programs, contributing to flood recovery centers, and attending community events related to their professional roles.

**10. Volunteering Challenges:**

- Some respondents express a desire to volunteer in the future, indicating that caregiving responsibilities and other constraints currently limit their ability to volunteer

## 11. Community Engagement for Youth:

- Youth participation is evident through involvement in youth committees, sports clubs, and events like Homeless Connect, reflecting a commitment to supporting younger members of the community.

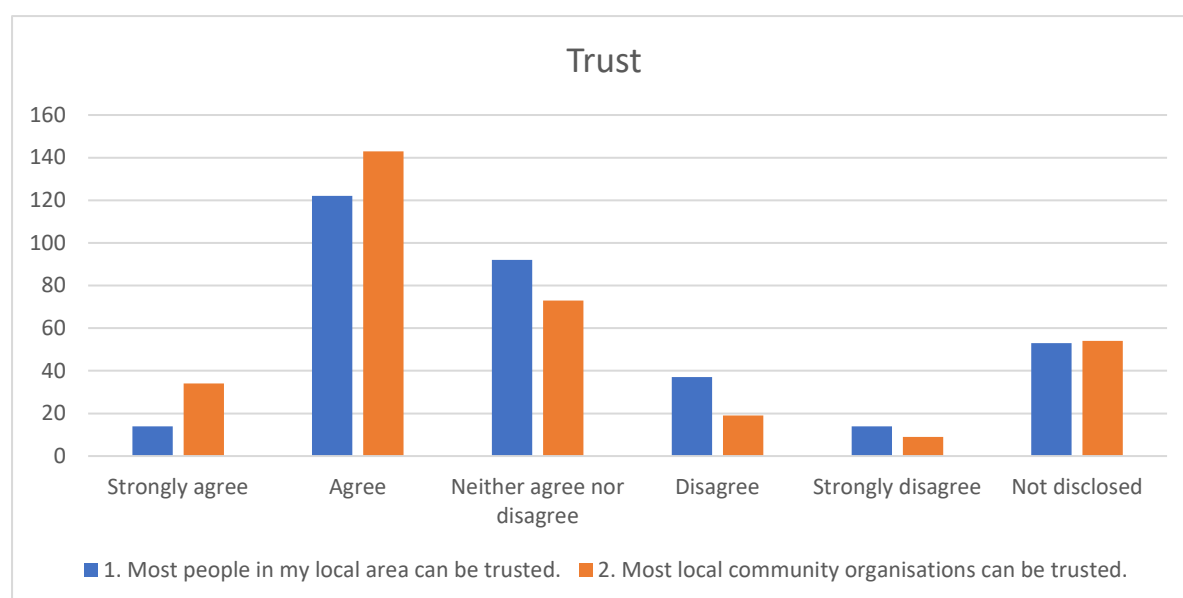
These examples showcase the diverse ways individuals contribute to their communities, emphasizing the importance of active engagement, volunteerism, and support for various community initiatives.

## Trust

The concept of community trust has many facets, from trust between community members to trust in the service system, government authorities and local civic institutions. Notwithstanding its definition and context, trust is the predetermining factor for any kind of respectful, safe and harmonious relationships, whether it is between people or between organisations or even between people and organisations

### Survey responses in this snapshot period

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not disclosed
<b>1. Most people in my local area can be trusted.</b>	14	122	92	37	14	53
<b>2. Most local community organisations can be trusted.</b>	34	143	73	19	9	54
<b>131 examples/stories provided by repondents</b>						



### The Story behind the Data

The 131 responses giving an example of how people perceive trust within their community, highlight a range of perspectives within communities and towards various services. Here are some key points:

**1. Concerns about Redevelopment:**

- Several respondents express concern about redevelopment projects, particularly in areas like Waterloo and Redfern. There's a fear that these projects might negatively impact the existing community spirit.

**2. Trust in Community Services:**

- Trust in community services varies. While some express satisfaction and trust in local community hubs and organizations, others voice dissatisfaction and mistrust, particularly towards services provided by Housing, Mission Australia, and the police.

**3. Impact of Crime on Trust:**

- The increase in crime is mentioned as a significant factor eroding trust within the community. Crime rates and experiences with law enforcement can influence perceptions of safety and community trust.

**4. Challenges with Government Agencies:**

- Some respondents mention challenges and negative experiences with government agencies, including Housing, Health NSW, and Centrelink. There's a perception that these agencies may not fully understand or address the needs of diverse communities.

**5. Impact of COVID-19:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic is cited as a factor influencing community dynamics. Lockdowns and financial hardships have increased anxiety, impacting trust and community interactions.

**6. Positive Experiences and Trustworthy Services:**

- Despite challenges, there are positive experiences noted. Trust is placed in specific community services, local hubs, and organizations that have proven helpful and reliable.

**7. Distrust in Corporatization of Community Services:**

- Some respondents express concern about the corporatization of community services, suggesting a focus on growth may compromise the delivery of services. This contributes to a sense of distrust in certain organizations.

**8. Community Engagement and Awareness:**

- Engagement in community activities and organizations is seen as a way to build trust. Getting involved personally allows individuals to see the inner workings of an organization and make informed judgments.

**9. Cautious Trust and Circumstances:**

- Many respondents express a cautious trust, indicating that trust levels may vary based on personal experiences, interactions, and circumstances.

**10. Concerns about Inequity and Wealth Gap:**

- The increasing wealth gap and corporatization of services contribute to concerns about inequity. This may impact trust levels as individuals perceive a mismatch between organizational statements and actual service delivery.

**11. Importance of Confidentiality:**

- The importance of protecting confidential information is highlighted, suggesting that maintaining privacy and security is crucial for building trust within the community.

**12. Positive Acts and Good People:**

- Acts of kindness, like returning lost items intact, are highlighted as positive examples that contribute to a sense of trust within the community.

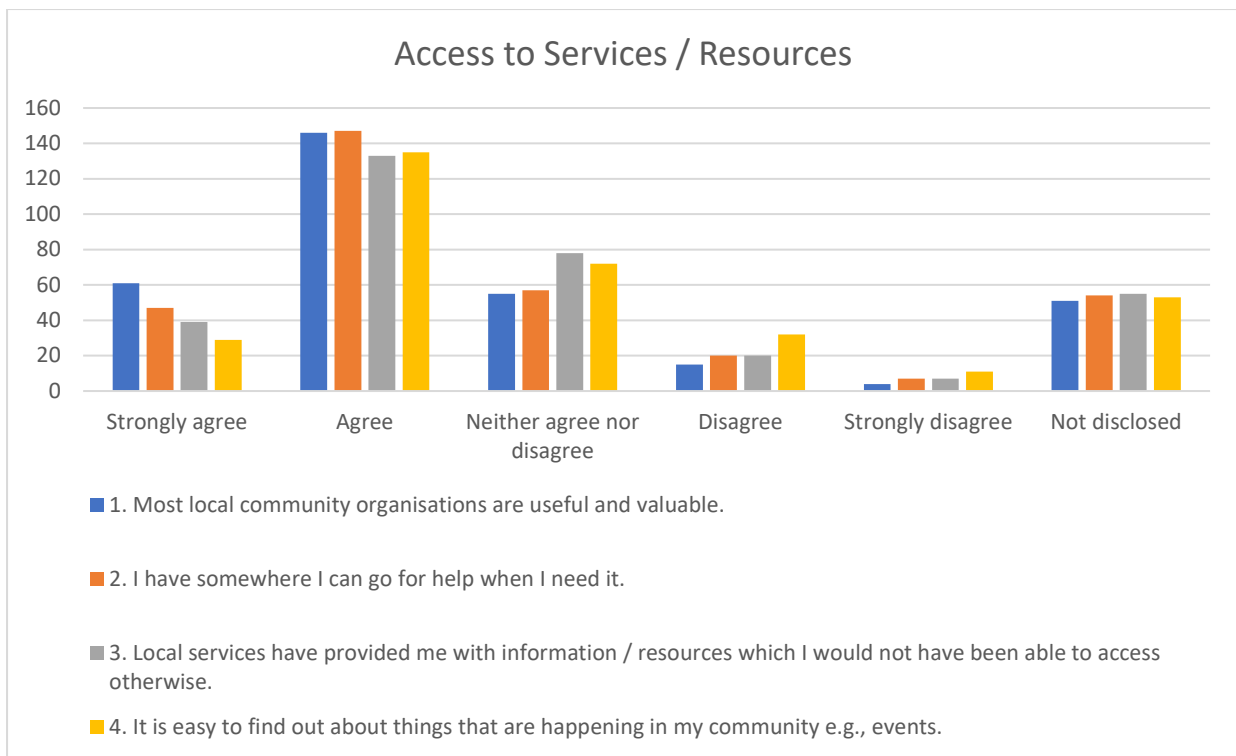
These insights underscore the complex interplay of factors that influence trust within communities, including personal experiences, service delivery, crime rates, and broader social and economic issues.

## Access to Services / Resources

The ability for community members to find and access services and resources to navigate the service system and manage their own affairs, is a crucial element of a strong, connected community. It is a key feature of prevention and early intervention, ensuring that crisis situations do not escalate further or do not arise in the first place.

***Survey responses in this snapshot period***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not disclosed
<b>1. Most local community organisations are useful and valuable.</b>	61	146	55	15	4	51
<b>2. I have somewhere I can go for help when I need it.</b>	47	147	57	20	7	54
<b>3. Local services have provided me with information / resources which I would not have been able to access otherwise.</b>	39	133	78	20	7	55
<b>4. It is easy to find out about things that are happening in my community e.g., events.</b>	29	135	72	32	11	53
<b>140 examples / stories provided by survey respondents</b>						



### The Story behind the Data

The responses and examples given by 140 respondents provide valuable insights into the challenges and experiences related to accessing services and resources in various communities. Here are some key points:

#### 1. Challenges in Accessing Services:

- Some respondents mention challenges in finding support services, particularly due to criteria, wait times, and unclear application processes. The bureaucratic hurdles are seen as obstacles to accessing essential services.

#### 2. Awareness through Social Media:

- Social media, especially Facebook, is highlighted as a useful tool for disseminating information about local events and services. It serves as a platform for community members to stay informed about resources and support.

#### 3. Community Hubs and Centers:

- Community hubs, centers, and local newspapers play a crucial role in sharing information about available services. They serve as central points for residents to gather information about local events and resources.

#### 4. Inequity in Funding:

- There's a recurring theme of inequity in funding, with smaller organizations often being underfunded despite their significant contributions to the community. The need for more resources to support smaller NGOs is emphasized.

**5. Criticism of Specific Programs:**

- Some respondents express dissatisfaction with specific programs, such as the Mission Australia Tenant Participation and Community Engagement (TPCE) program. There's a call for reevaluation and potentially redirecting resources to more effective initiatives.

**6. Geographic Limitations:**

- Geographic limitations are mentioned, with some individuals having to travel outside their local areas to access support services. Limited services in specific regions contribute to difficulties in finding assistance.

**7. Positive Experiences and Support:**

- Positive experiences are highlighted, with mentions of services that have been helpful and supportive. Some community organizations, despite facing challenges, continue to provide valuable assistance to those in need.

**8. Word of Mouth and Networking:**

- Word of mouth and networking within the community are identified as important sources of information. Personal connections and recommendations play a significant role in guiding individuals to relevant services.

**9. Role of Social Websites and Council Pages:**

- Social websites, council pages, and community forums are recognized as valuable resources for information. Online platforms contribute to accessibility and awareness of local events and services.

**10. Concerns About Lack of Mental Health Services:**

- Some respondents express concerns about inadequate mental health services in their areas, highlighting a gap in essential support.

**11. Community Newspapers and Leaflets:**

- Local newspapers and leaflets are acknowledged as effective means of communication, ensuring that information about services reaches a broader audience within the community.

**12. Impact of COVID-19:**

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to services is not explicitly mentioned in the provided responses. However, changes in community dynamics and service availability may have been influenced by pandemic-related factors.

These insights underscore the importance of equitable funding, streamlined access processes, and the role of community hubs and online platforms in ensuring residents are aware of and can access vital services.

## Key Findings:

### *Comparisons between different activities and communities (LGAs)*

Even though there were only 6 active participating organisations in this snapshot period, the data generated by each organisation is a meaningful data set. The spread across more than 6 LGAs indicates that the people filling out the survey are living in a different location to their local TEI-funded community centre. If this assumption is true, then there are instances in which a participants travelled long distances to access a service.

It remains LCSA's objective to maximise the participation of TEI services and hence local communities over time, making the sample sizes much more meaningful for both local conclusions and broader comparisons across communities and regions.

It is incumbent on each organisation to analyse its own data, with comparisons to be made over time. This has two purposes: 1) to create a baseline on Community Wellbeing Outcomes in their own community and 2) to have 'before and after' shots on emerging issues or community activities.

A comparison between LGAs is not a viable analysis with this ample size.

### *Comparisons between different reporting periods*

Compared to the snapshot month February 2023, the number of participating organisations decreased significantly to 6 but the sample size generated by these organisations is proportionately larger than previously with 332 responses across 6 communities – as opposed to 397 responses across 26 communities in February.

It was agreed that in 2024 we will replace the Snapshot Month approach with more flexibility for services, making the TEI Community Wellbeing Survey available on an ongoing basis. At the end of June and at the end of December LCSA will collate all survey responses into a statewide report for every 6-month period.

Participating organisations will have full agency over when and how to administer the survey, and respectively analyse the data in a way that is meaningful to them.

### *Community Wellbeing Indicators*

There is continuing agreement with the Community Wellbeing indicators of the Sense of Belonging, Trust, Community Participation and Access to Resources / Services and the questions asked within the Survey. These indicators align with evidence-based research data sets used by government and academia in Australia and worldwide. The long-term objective of the Community Wellbeing Survey is to make statewide conclusions on the contributions the TEI Program makes to Community Wellbeing in NSW. A bigger sample size is paramount to achieve this objective.

The data from the August/September 2023 snapshot month shows a high level of Sense of Belonging, Trust, Community Participation and Access to Resources / Service. Compared to the February 2023 dataset, it must be noted that levels of agreement have decreased slightly, with a significant increase in respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements.

As a process of quality improvement LCSA took the opportunity in this report to utilise AI software to assist with the thematic analysis of the large volume of qualitative data, which are the 'Story behind the Data' sections above, giving an insight into the opinions and lived experiences of community members.



## 4) Progress report and future actions for the TEI Community Wellbeing Project

In publishing the [Community Wellbeing Survey Pilot Project Report](#) in 2022, LCSA made a series of recommendations to implement the Community Wellbeing Survey as part of the TEI data regime. The following progress has been made against each recommendation.

**Recommendation 1 - Refine and continue:** LCSA recommends continuing the optional use of the Community Wellbeing Survey by TEI Community Strengthening funded services. The Survey requires only minor changes, particularly by creating a unique identifier that clearly relates the survey respondent to a specific organisation and community.

Progress:

- The Community Wellbeing Survey is now a well-known optional tool for TEI funded services funded under the Community Strengthening Stream.
- Each participating organisations receives a unique link to the survey.
- Based on feedback from participating organisations, DCJ and LCSA have agreed to give organisations more flexibility in collecting data. In 2024 this will be done in without snapshot months, which means surveys will be open continuously and services can choose how frequently and when they will use the survey to gather data.

**Recommendation 2 - Develop a bi-annual report:** LCSA recommends publishing a bi-annual report to tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange, and support learning and evidence-building in the TEI program.

Progress:

- The departure from snapshot months does not impact on LCSA's commitment to publish a report twice a year. At the end of June and at the end of December LCSA will collate all the data generated by participating organisations into a statewide report.
- The reports will be provided to DCJ and consequently published on the LCSA website in August and February respectively.

**Recommendation 3 - Explore web-based applications to capture data and streamline data administration:** LCSA recommends an investment into a tailored data collection and curation tool that automates all aspects of survey administration both for services and for LCSA as the depository of data. This technology should ensure services have their unique usernames and data portal.

Progress:

- LCSA and DCJ will work in partnership to develop the Community Wellbeing Survey using Qualtrics, utilising the enterprise agreement between DCJ and Qualtrics.
- It will be investigated if TEI services participating in the Survey will get full access to their own database.
- In the absence of a new software being used, we will continue using Survey Monkey with the unique identifier for each organisation as tested and trialled in the two snapshot months in 2023.

- The introduction of a 6-monthly flexible reporting period will align with the 6-monthly DEX reporting periods and assist in telling the story behind the data in each DEX reporting period.

**Recommendation 4 - Create website for live data dashboards:** LCSA recommends the use of the domain [www.communitydevelopment.org.au](http://www.communitydevelopment.org.au) (already in LCSA's possession) for a website that acts as a database both from a front end (user) and a backend (administrator), as well as a public dashboard of TEI-wide data showing live, deidentified, regional and district-wide data sets.

Progress:

- Each organisation continues to have access to a comprehensive dashboard of their own data in Survey Monkey.
- LCSA will provide the raw data to services together with templates for self-analysis.
- Qualtrics may provide an interface between the abovementioned website and the data sets, in which case LCSA will pursue creating the website as intended.

**Recommendation 5 - Create "Communities of Practice" of participating organisations:** LCSA recommends having ongoing meetings and capacity building activities with TEI organisations using the Community Wellbeing Survey. This will ensure continuous quality improvement as well as the potential to align with DCJ Districts planning and policy development.

Progress:

- The Community of Practice has met twice since the last report, meeting in August and December 2023.
- Attendance has been good with 8 and 9 organisations participating respectively.
- The issue identified by the CoP that the survey lacks language and other accessibility features, remains unresolved.
- The CoP has been an invaluable sounding board and advisory group for adapting and fine tuning the survey and the way it can be administered both locally and statewide.

**Recommendation 6 - Investigate useful add-ons to the new web-based application:** LCSA recommends assessing the need for data collection relevant to TEI-funded organisations such as capturing information and assisted referral services and adapt the application accordingly, in consultation with all stakeholders. (*Refer to LCSA's defunct Lasso App*)

- No progress to report.

**Recommendation 7 - Add Community Wellbeing Survey to TEI Program Logics:** LCSA recommends service providers update their Program Logic where they choose to use the survey e.g., indicate the survey will be used to collect data in the "Output" column and add survey findings to the "Current situation" and "Evidence" columns where the findings have informed practice.

Progress:

- At the LCSA Conference in August 2023 a workshop was delivered jointly by DCJ and LCSA to demonstrate the value of the Community Wellbeing Survey data in relation to program planning and ultimately for reviewing TEI Program Logics and KPIs.
- In 2024 this capacity building aspect of the project will ramp up with a view of informing TEI recontracting negotiations.

- LCSA proposes to run this workshop online (or a series thereof) during the first half of 2024 as part of the promotion to attract more participants into the project.

**Recommendation 8 - Engage further stakeholders to benefit the TEI program:** LCSA recommends building intentional partnerships both internally with other DCJ funded programs e.g., SHS and external stakeholders e.g., PHNs, to promote the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey in other jurisdictions.

Progress:

- It was agreed that in the first instance LCSA's efforts will be focussed on engaging the TEI services sector
- The objective is to have a participation rate of 10% of TEI Community Strengthening organisations by the end of 2023, 20% by the end of 2024 and 30% by the end of 2025

**Recommendation 9 - Economic modelling:** LCSA recommends including the Community Strengthening Data Project and the Community Wellbeing Survey pilot and rollout in the design of the TEI Program Evaluation to model economic and social return on investment of community strengthening outcomes based on the Community Wellbeing Survey.

Progress:

- LCSA has been advocating for the Community Wellbeing Survey and these reports to be considered as part of the TEI data regime in the external TEI Program Evaluation conducted by Social Ventures Australia and Taylor Fry.
- In an interview with the Evaluation team, key chapters like the relationship between DEX and the Community Wellbeing Survey as well as key findings and policy implications were shared
- No further progress to report.

**Recommendation 10 - Review Reference Group role and composition:** Notwithstanding the value of the current Reference Group, LCSA recommends reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Reference Group and its potential for future purposes.

Progress:

- The Community of Practice is now well established and provides the advice and support for the project by the sector.
- This recommendation is completely implemented and finalised.

**Recommendation 11 - Promote the survey:** LCSA recommends devising a marketing strategy to attract more TEI funded services to participate in the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey and to promote the value of the data set as complementary to DEX data sets.

Progress:

- Moving away from the snapshot month approach provides an opportunity for LCSA to implement a communication strategy in January 2024, to set out the roadmap for the year.
- The Community of Practice recommended that clear communications are essential, which includes stand-alone emails and reminders about the TEI Community Wellbeing Survey

- The above-mentioned series of workshops about integrating the Community Wellbeing dataset into TEI Program Logics will be used to attract more TEI services to participate in 2024

## Implications for policy and further investment

The TEI Community Strengthening Stream makes up almost half of the overall TEI funding pool. A baseline data set showing 'how strong' a community is, will ensure that governmental investment into community strengthening is evidence-based and well-targeted. It is anticipated that the formal TEI Evaluation Process undertaken by Social Ventures Australia and Taylor Fry will take the data set generated by the TEI Community Wellbeing Survey into account.

The Community Wellbeing Survey provides crucial evidence for the role of Community Strengthening in TEI, the overall child protection system in NSW and the contribution of place-based community work to the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework. Since the inception of the TEI Program, LCSA has maintained a clear position on the following issues. The TEI Community Wellbeing Survey and the contribution it can make to the TEI Evaluation Process supports the following issues:

- The role of Community Development in the community sector is broader than the role of the Community Strengthening Stream in TEI towards the prevention and early intervention of child protection issues but it makes an indispensable contribution to the child protection system in NSW.
- TEI needs to appropriately fund 'place-based' approaches for the whole-of-community. The effectiveness of early intervention and prevention services is dependent on strong communities and strong locally-based, community-led organisations.
- Neighbourhood and Community Centres are an essential part of a diverse community services system and demonstrate the value of universal services and community strengthening in preventing child protection issues from arising and also in providing a client-centred, flexible and local service delivery platform for other universal (primary) and secondary services.
- Community development work, funded through TEI, creates stronger communities and soft entry points for vulnerable and disadvantaged people to the service system, including people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. It provides an opportunity for people from these target groups to engage in locally based and accessible programs and services.
- Locally governed Neighbourhood and Community Centres and Sector Development Organisations play a vital role in strengthening the service system and local networks as well as in increasing the social capital within communities.
- Local service delivery and program design must be determined and supported by the local communities.
- Measurement of the Community Strengthening Stream through DEX cannot establish an accurate picture of the value of Community Strengthening. LCSA recommended the Pilot Report 2023 for the TEI Community Wellbeing Survey and the CSI Evidence Review Report as key documents to be considered in the TEI Evaluation.
- Given the importance of "building strong communities" being one of the key outcomes and target groups of TEI, there is a case for 'Prevention' as a pre-determinant of 'Early Intervention'.

To mount these argument for sound investment into community development, baseline data on the state of a community's well-being, is currently missing from the social policy framework in NSW. Broader participation in the Community Wellbeing Survey by TEI funded services is essential.

On community level, the Community Wellbeing Survey can give a baseline for services to gain a deeper understanding of their community, and what emerging issues need to be addressed through TEI Community Strengthening activities.

This is particularly important in the context of Disaster Management. A community needs to be prepared and ready for any crisis that may occur, be capable in its immediate crisis response when it occurs, and ultimately be well-connected, resilient, and trusting to recover and rebuild after a crisis. In the current day, the COVID19 Pandemic has unfolded in addition to natural disasters with destructive outcomes, putting unprecedented demands on TEI services.

Organisations participating in the Community Wellbeing Survey can use the data for a myriad of purposes, including but not limited to:

- Conduct community consultation and planning activities
- Inform organisational strategic planning and resource allocations
- Implement quality improvement measures within the organisation
- Advocate for key issues affecting their communities
- Apply for funding or seek other support for activities addressing community-identified issues
- Update their TEI Program Logic and deliverables
- Inform local networks and stakeholders of community issues
- Adjust other funding contracts and work plans to be more relevant to their respective clients and communities

## 6) Appendix 1: TEI Community Wellbeing Survey

### Community Wellbeing Survey

#### About you:

All information you provide is anonymous and will only be used for statistical purposes.

Where do you live? (suburb / town only):			
What is your age?			
What is your gender?			
Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?			
Are you living with a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
In what country were you born?			
What is the main language you speak at home or in your community?			
Which organisation gave you this survey?			

#### About your views on community wellbeing in your local area

Below are 4 sections with statements about:

1. Sense of belonging
2. Participation
3. Trust
4. Access to resources / services

Thinking of your local community, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statements. There are no right or wrong answers. You have the option to skip an answer and leave it blank, or tick N/A if the statement is not applicable to your experience.

#### Sense of belonging

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>1. I feel connected to people in my local area.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>2. People in my local area come together in times of need.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>3. People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Can you share a brief example or story about connecting with other people in your community?

## Participation

Below are some statements about your experience of community participation. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>1. I get involved in local activities, groups, or events.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>2. I contribute to my local community.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>3. I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>4. I have participated in recreational / community activities at places other than my local community or neighbourhood centre.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>5. In the past 12 months I have helped as a volunteer in my local area.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Can you share a brief example about your experience of community participation?

## Trust

Below are some statements about your experience of trust in the community. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most people in my local area can be trusted.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Most local community organisations can be trusted.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Can you share a brief example about your experience of trust in the community?

## Access to services / resources

Below are some statements about your experience of access to services and resources in the community. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most local community organisations are useful and valuable.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I have somewhere I can go for help when I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. Local services have provided me with information / resources which I would not have been able to access otherwise.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. It is easy to find out about things that are happening in my community e.g., events.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Can you share a brief example about your experience accessing services and resources in the community?