

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program Community Wellbeing Survey Report

Snapshot Month 'February 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.

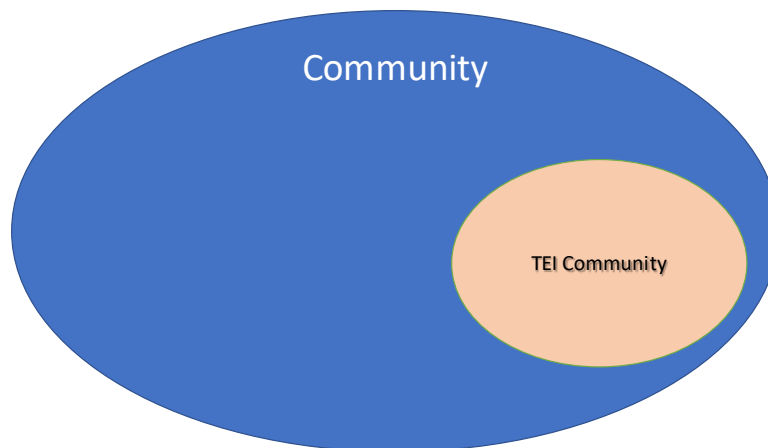
To exemplify the value of the Community Wellbeing Data Set, and the relationship between TEI clients and the community at large, it is important to acknowledge that the sum of individual TEI clients does not make up the entire community. In return however, strengthening the whole of community (beyond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

¹ 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

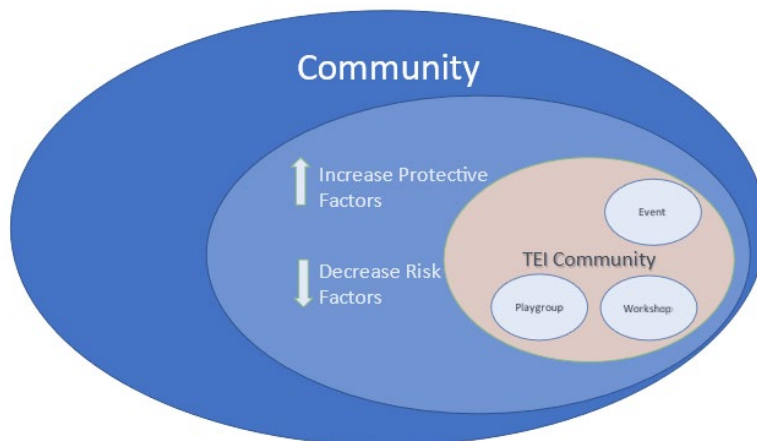
To demonstrate the relationship between the Community Wellbeing Survey and the DEX datasets, we must first distinguish between the community at large and the community of TEI clients (shown in these graphics as the 'TEI Community').

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.



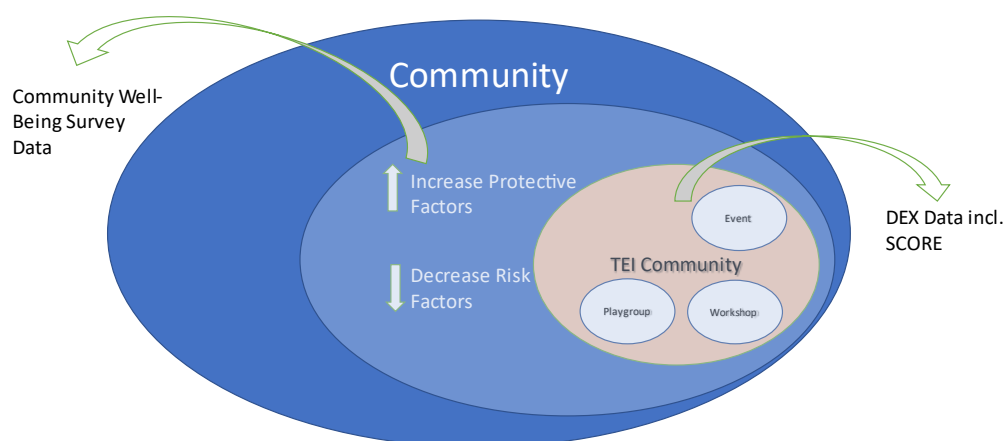
While program-level outcomes have most certainly a flow-on effect on the broader community, they can only make clear statements about the program and not about the community surrounding TEI clients.

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 first Snapshot Month: February 2023 - Process, Data Analysis and Key Findings

The survey begins with an “**About You**” section including a set of demographic questions which are not about identification but solely for statistical purposes. The survey is entirely anonymous. The demographic questions are designed to give survey participants ultimate freedom in answering the questions as they see fit, by making the answers open-ended rather than providing predetermined options. For instance, rather than giving gender options (as many surveys do), this survey requires a written word/s to describe their gender. This has created a greater diversity in demographic data than expected, and respectively serving self-determination and empowerment of survey participants.

The second part of the survey is about the four well-being outcome areas, entitled “**About your views on community wellbeing in your local area,**” giving survey participants the opportunity to share their subjective opinion on the state of wellbeing in their community as well as a story or an example, which provides valuable qualitative data. A total of **26** TEI services signed up for the snapshot month of February 2023, with **20** actively participating. This was the first attempt to roll out the Community Wellbeing Survey with TEI service providers. Overall LCSA received a total of **397** responses across NSW.

LGA	Count of Survey Responses by LGA
City of Lismore	103
Blue Mountains City Council	66
Central Coast Council	37
City of Sydney	33
Armidale Regional Council	32
Temora Shire Council	20
City of Parramatta	18
City of Fairfield	16
Port Stephens Council	13
not specified	11
Bathurst Regional Council	7
City of Liverpool	7
Tenterfield Shire Council	6
Kyogle Council	3
City of Randwick	3
Wingecarribee Shire Council	2
City of Lake Macquarie	2
Warrumbungle Shire	2
City of Lithgow	2
City of Canterbury Bankstown	2
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council	2
Tweed Shire Council	1
Mid-Coast Council	1
Oberon Council	1
City of Campbelltown	1
The Hills Shire Council	1
Richmond Valley Council	1
City of Ryde	1
Tamworth Regional Council	1
City of Maitland	1
Homeless	1
Grand Total	397

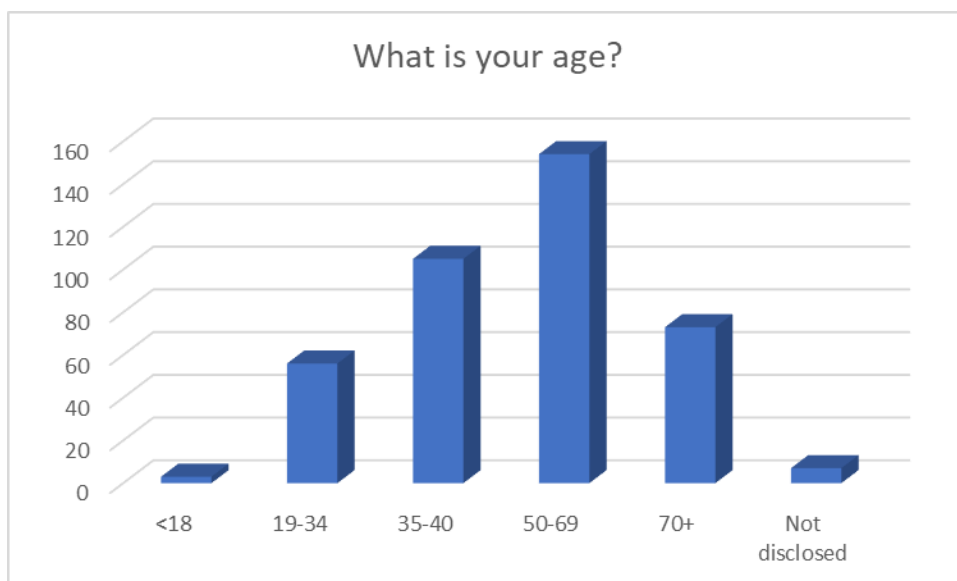
The table above shows the distribution of survey responses by Local Government Area. It must be noted that some organisations only participated as a trial and surveys were not distributed widely in the community. The top four number of responses were generated by Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre (showing as City of Lismore), Blue Mountains Belong (showing as Blue Mountains City Council), Toukley Neighbourhood Centre (Central Coast Council) and Counterpoint Community Services (City of Sydney). These organisations have a representative sample of data establishing a baseline for the future. Ultimately we will see data sets for LGAs that are the sum of individual organisations contributing data in the same LGA.

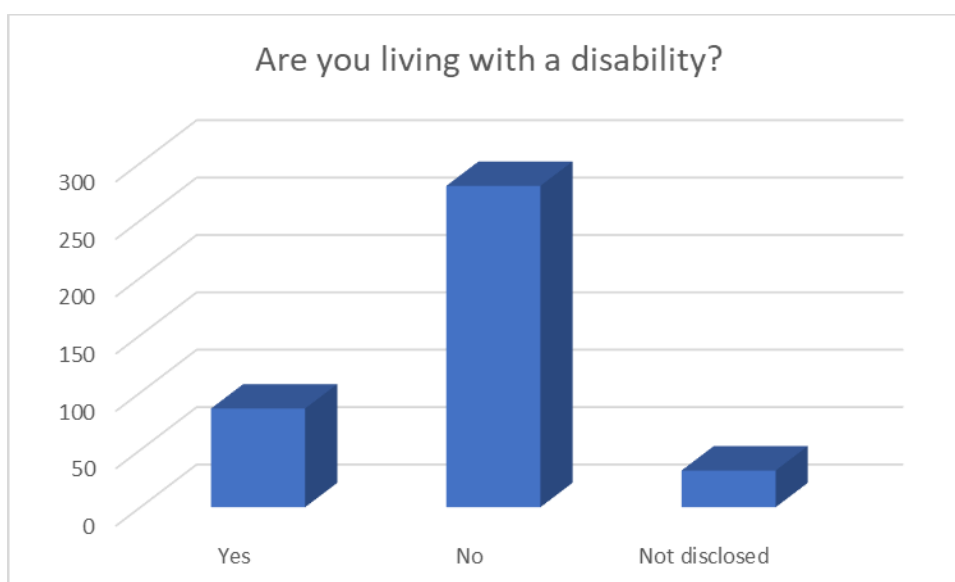
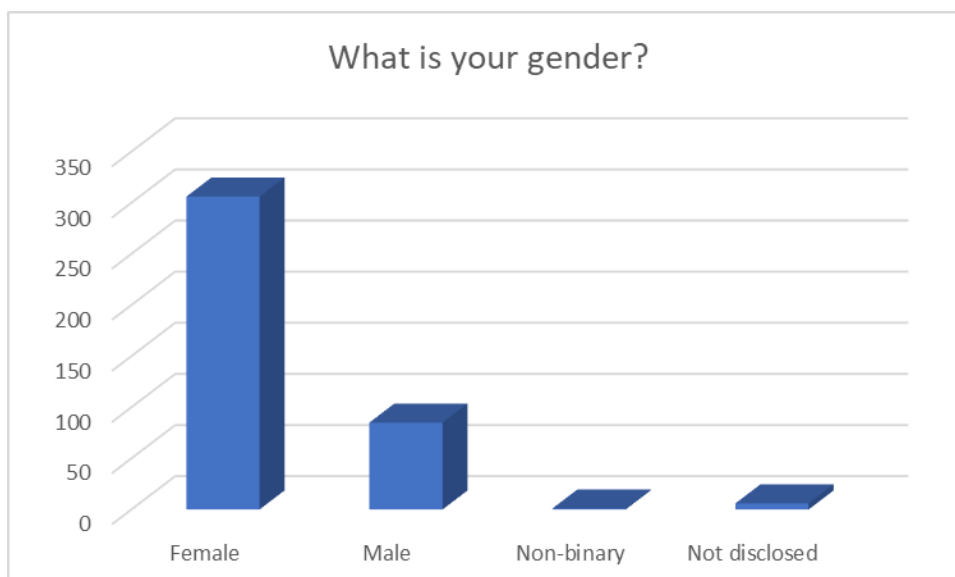
Quantitative Data

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.

The following 3 graphs give you an example of how the demographic data can be visualised for data analysis purposes:





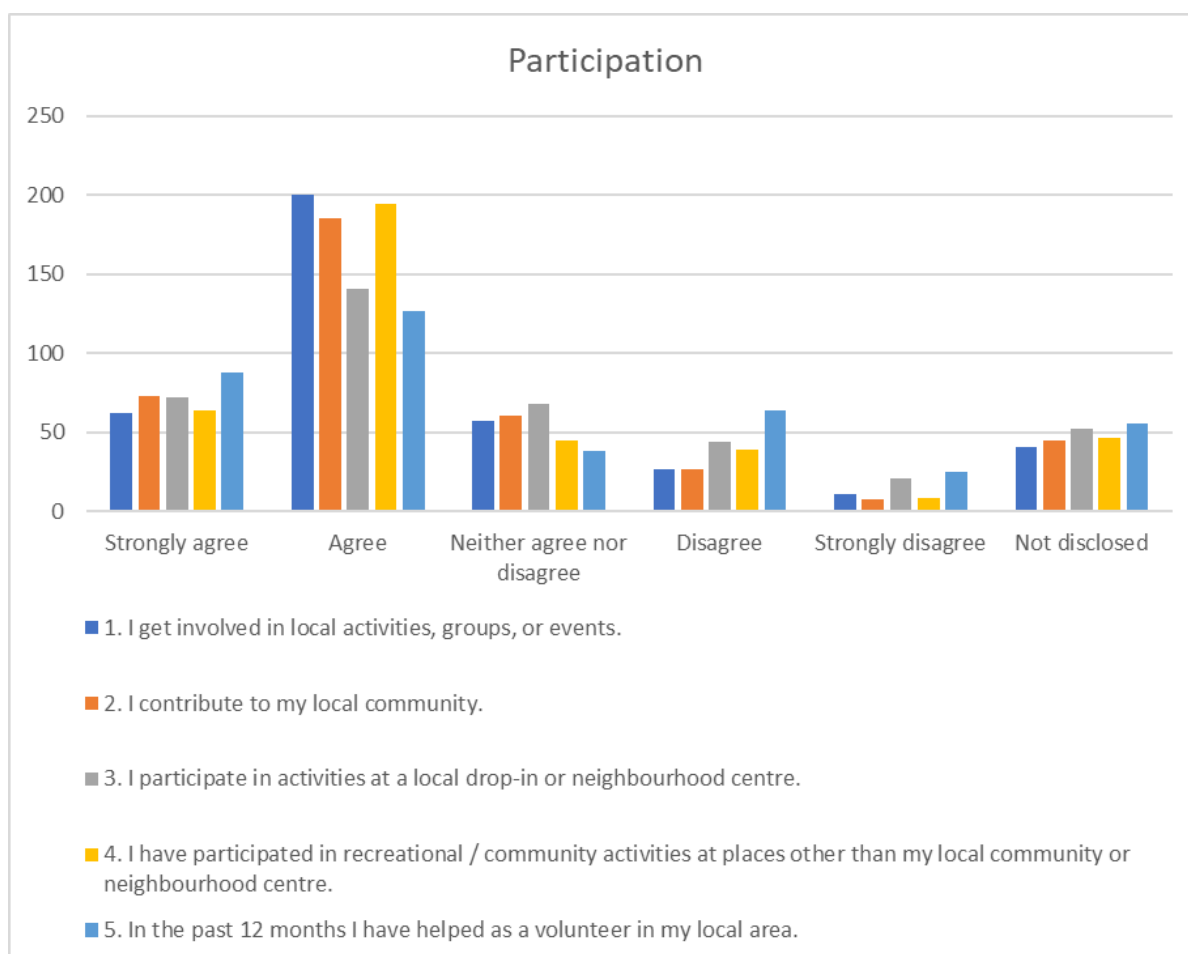
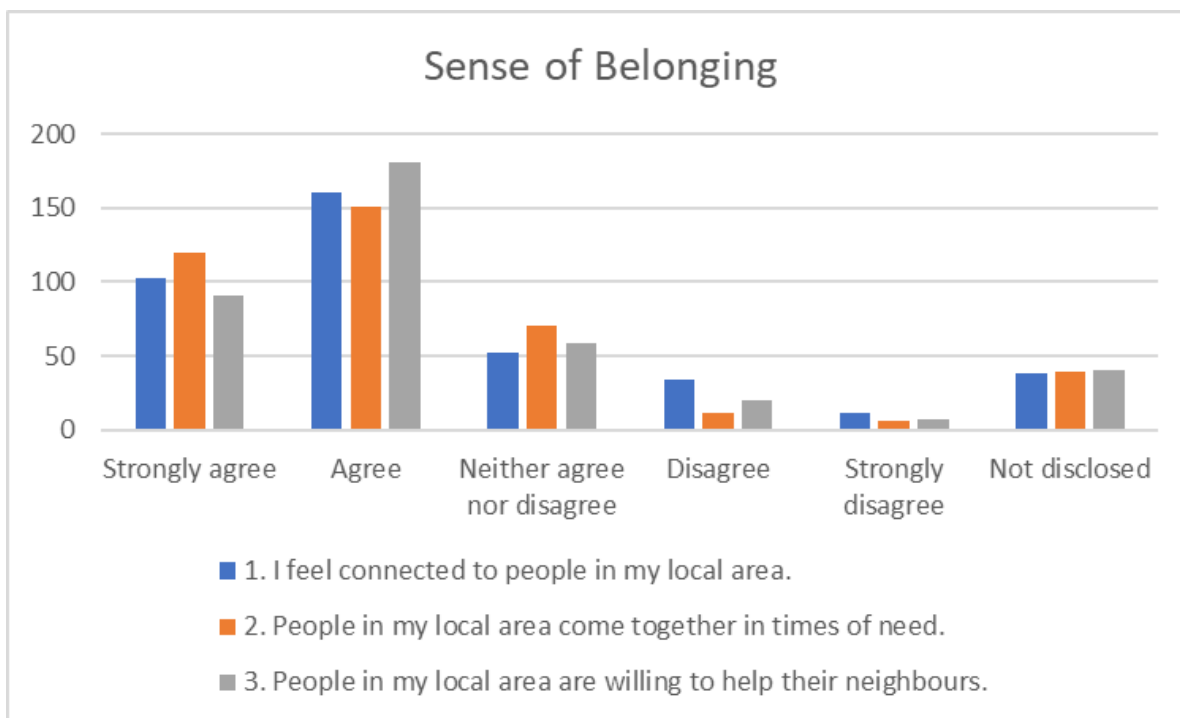
The survey responses also gather data about the diversity of languages spoken at home and the country of birth of survey respondents. The diversity represented in the sample of the survey responses we received is broad, but not representative of the overall diversity in NSW.

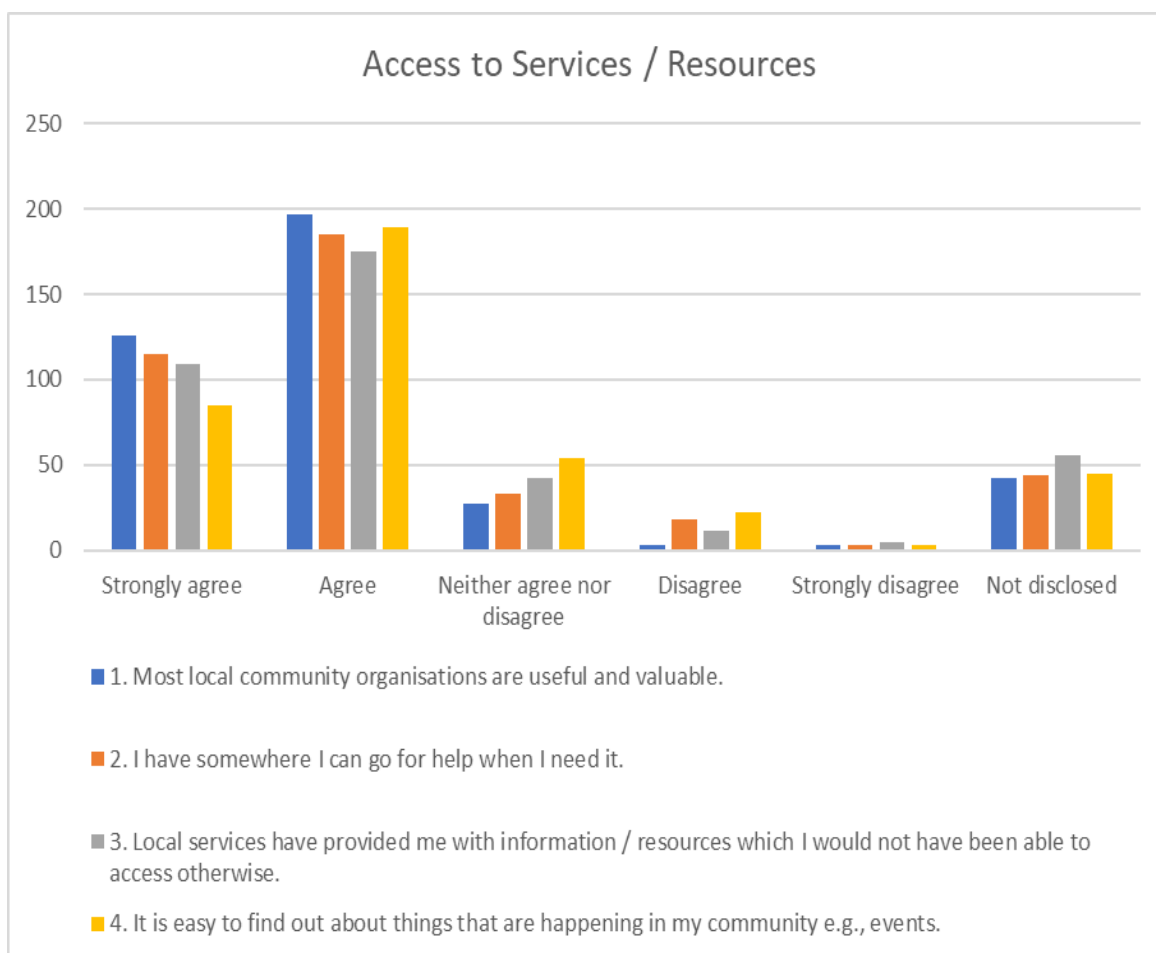
Statistical analysis of the Community Wellbeing Outcomes Data

The following graphs show responses for 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.

This data visualisation is an example for any community that receives a representative data sample from 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?²

² The sample size from the snapshot month is too small to analyse the data in this way for the state of NSW.





At this point in time, it is premature to draw state-wide themes from this data. It is worth noting that individual organisations however, that had a high participation rate in their own community, for example 100 survey responses in a population of 500 or 1000, is a substantial data set to measure Community Wellbeing.

Thematic analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions

Giving community members a voice about things that matter to them is essential to be relevant and impactful when providing community services.

Gathering qualitative data by inviting community members to give some examples about how they feel when they think about a sense of belonging, trust, participation, and access to resources/services in their community, is a powerful way to gain insights into the 'fable' of a community.

Every community has a 'fable,' a story that is told when people ask what kind of community they live in. Often the external perception, or story told *about a community*, is different to the story a community tells itself. Every person has also a story. Treating people as clients often results in the story to focus on their immediate need or current "deficit". Good community strengthening, or community development, aims to engage community in the telling of their story, gathering the community knowledge and aspirations to design programs and support activities that lead to the change a community wants to see.

It is therefore almost impossible to provide a "NSW story" based on a state-wide survey data set. These stories are local, and a meaningful analysis of qualitative data must start locally. However, events such as the COVID19 Pandemic, natural disasters, or war, can have a significant effect on the psychology of an entire population of a state. The survey responses would reflect this.

Indeed, the February 2023 snapshot data has shown a common theme and issues associated with the pandemic, but also with natural disasters and the rise in cost of living.

People expressed their experiences and concerns in relation to social isolation, loneliness, lack of neighbourhood interaction and support, financial stress, and difficulties in gaining meaningful employment or volunteering opportunities. In balance there are many mentions of gratefulness for having friends and neighbours look out for each other and to have local community centres and services available to access for information and support.

Another observation from the open-ended responses is the fact that Community Strengthening activities funded under TEI have an influence outside of the 'TEI Community.' The Community Wellbeing Survey has one question about participation in activities run by the local neighbourhood or community centre. 53% of survey respondents indicated that they did not participate in activities provided by their local centre, which points to an interesting correlation between non-TEI clients perceiving their community to be trusting and having a strong sense of belonging. These kinds of thematic conclusions are however much more meaningful on local level.

Ultimately the most important aspect of giving community members a voice is willingness to listen; the fact that very rarely they are provided with the opportunity to comment on the strength and wellbeing of their community.

The examples and comments provided by survey participants are made voluntary, with many comment boxes containing either short phrases or being left blank. The selection of examples and comments below are insights into real life stories often not captured by data. A thematic analysis on state level is limited by the sample size.

Qualitative Data

The following quotes are taken directly from the Community Wellbeing Survey responses we received during February 2023. Some phrases have been deidentified:

Sense of Belonging

“A strong connection to individuals and the community promotes a feeling of belonging within the community.”

“Both during the bush fires and floods the amount of work done by volunteers was extraordinary. In addition the amount of the local neighbourhood centre is amazing considering their limited funding and resources.”

“In the 2022 flood disaster it was amazing how the community worked together when we were isolated from all outside help.”

“Covid has affected my feelings of connectedness to the broader community, especially living in a place where so many people are anti-vaccination. However, my smaller local community was amazingly supportive during the flood event.”

“I do community work which gives me a feeling of belonging.”

“I feel I belong to my Fibromyalgia support group. I am just now venturing out and joining other community groups, too.”

“I lost my debit card on a walk one day, a resident found it and posted on our community Facebook page. Our local butcher commented on the post saying he knew me and I was able to retrieve my card later that day.”

“No one living in the community is eager to assist you. Waterloo and Redfern services are the only ones that will help and bring the community together. I feel that government institutions do little and create barriers for the community, while expecting non-governmental organisations to improve everything with limited resources.”

“I feel very isolated but the Springwood and Lawson Community Centres have been a great help.”

“I don't feel safe in the area because of antisocial behaviour, substance use, and domestic violence, which jeopardises my children's safety and well-being.”

“Lismore has nothing to offer the youth, I see a lot of crime, a lot of children walking around during school hours. I don't think there is a lot of sense of belonging, maybe the first few weeks post flood but since that I think the community has gone back to keeping to themselves.”

“Our neighbour who lost his accommodation due to landslips has been living at our place rent free for a year.”

“During the fires and the floods our community was there to support each other. We were isolated without services, however people ensured no one was left behind or without supplies. Now we are coming out the other side people are still hospitable and there is someone requires assistance. Nimbin has such a strong connection to the land and its people. There is nowhere like it.”

Community Participation

"I go to a nearby centre in Alexandria for activities and help as I don't find good services that is culturally appropriate to my need and speaks my language."

"I'm involved with a local sustainable hub & participate in community workshops & feel that Nimbin people share in a community vision."

"I haven't come across opportunities to volunteer where I can take my children with me since Covid, other than clean up Australia Day."

"Local events are not usually accessible to me, as I am mostly bed-bound. Events need to be online for me to attend, or at least wheelchair accessible."

"I started a garden club at local primary school for 6 years, I attend local community events to support organisers."

"I volunteer as dancer in my local community centre. I love the activities and events hosted by my local community centre."

"Because of my personal barriers, such as mental health and trauma, I try not to get involved in community activities because many members of the community have issues that trigger me, and I would rather get support from my case manager than get involved in anything else because I just want to live a simple and humble life."

"For many years I was involved in community development projects, usually at committee level."

"I volunteer at my local neighbourhood centre."

"I volunteer with local RFS and Soccer team."

"I volunteer with the CWA - we provide a drop in day and also sell 2nd hand clothes. Money we make is donated to different community groups."

"I help neighbours with mechanical and technical issues where I can."

"Best not to be too enthusiastic about sharing skills as this seems to threaten some people."

"Have tried to get involved, but treated with suspicion. I dress differently to the "locals"."

"At the beginning I put in lots of time & energy to find out it's not reciprocated...as u do! Now I look after myself & a very few selected trusted friends."

"During both the fires and then the floods that happened the community banded together to assist the fires and people who were isolated by landslides by cooking food and also driving around delivering food after the helicopter drop off. Neighbours offered whatever they could to help others."

"Due to the fact that I am a Disability pensioner with mobility issues & a plethora of health issues I am unable to participate in community activities. However, I did recently reach out for help to my local centre as I had a crisis situation adversely effecting my finances. People there assisted me & listened very carefully to my situation & gave me very much needed encouragement whilst addressing my financial crisis resulting in the government assistance I sought."

Trust

“Everyone has a story and just needs assistance in some way. Someone dropped in to church needing food. They don't get enough money each week, no matter how they budget. He's got no family, just is to talk to.”

“Being a small town if they're untrustworthy you would probably know about it through word of mouth. Businesses have locals as customers and are staffed by other locals, no one wants to rip their neighbours off.”

“I can trust my local community centre more than people around me. I can't even trust family members.”

“I don't trust local people. I can trust community centre staff especially those who speak my language, they are very good.”

“I trust those I know in my neighbourhood and I trust my local community centre because they support me.”

“We have built a network of friends in the local community in our time here and trust the friends we have made.”

“We refer families to our local neighbourhood centre, always excellent feedback.”

“Have worked for a large community organisation who only care about meeting KPI's and not the actual community and individuals who need the help.”

“I never lock my house up. People are welcome any time. We share transport of children & grandchildren.”

“Happy to take my children to community events such as the neighbourhood centre bbq and know my children are safe in the space.”

“Trust is a big thing, and the smaller services have my trust, but I don't trust the community members because of antisocial behaviour, and I don't trust government because they bullied and threatened to make me and my children homeless if we challenged their policy, and I can't risk being homeless again because I've worked so hard not to have this happen again.”

“Trust the community, but don't trust government agencies or big NGOs because they have not provided services to the community.”

“I trust my local community centre, very hard to trust others.”

“Several services in the Waterloo and Redfern area have my trust. I don't trust services outside of Redfern and Waterloo because of previous experiences in which they were not culturally sensitive or knowledgeable of indigenous communities. Local community people I do not trust because of their behaviour, and they just care about themselves, with no regard for other cultures or elders.”

Access to Services / Resources

“Small NGO's in the area provide services and resources to the community, but more resources are required to meet the community's demand as more complex problems arise.”

“My local community centre provides access to services and resources, but more resources are required for them because they go above and beyond to meet the requirements of the community.”

“My local community centre is great. They speak my language and helps with a lot dealing with government agencies and school.”

“My local centre helps and supports me when I need them. I get a lot of important information from them. They also interpret and translate information for me.”

“If events are advertised on social media I can miss out as I am not continually connected to social media.”

“Waterloo's community centre always provides access to services and resources, but it is underfunded, which is unfair.”

“I know I can come to my local community centre for information and help.”

“I am experienced in finding and sharing resources with individuals, on Facebook, for events and for the Community. I think it important to share as much information so that everyone turns up and has a great time, or has the resources they need.”

“I participated in a WDO at my neighbourhood centre so to pay off minor traffic offence fines.”

“Most services have extensive waiting lists for assistance and then when you get on their books case workers are too overwhelmed to be of much support.”

“We desperately need local services to support our youth.”

“Our local art gallery has allowed me to hold exhibitions.”

“I need my local community centre to help me with communication with government agency, they are very important to me.”

“I have been told about events, Facebook groups, and other resources while at community programs.”

“You need to know a little bit before it is easy to access services, changes all the time.”

“I have a lot of experience with community access to services and resources, however the smaller agencies are highly under-resourced to meet the community's need, while other large organisations do nothing and disappear.”

“My Neighbourhood Centre holds community BBQ's and I went to one and came away with information about other services I could be accessing that I did not know about.”

Key Findings:

Comparisons between different activities and communities (LGAs)

The small sample size for 26 communities across the state makes it difficult to compare between different activities and communities. It is anticipated that the participation of TEI services and hence local communities will grow over time, making the sample sizes much more meaningful for both local conclusions and broader comparisons across communities and regions. A state-wide analysis is therefore also not viable at this stage.

Comparisons between different reporting periods

The TEI Community Wellbeing Survey is open on a continuous basis. In order to make comparisons of data sets, it was agreed between DCJ, LCSA and the sector, to use the 6-monthly snapshot months in February and August.

This allows monthly data sets to culminate over time to demonstrate and analyse trends in a community. Developing Community Wellbeing is an ongoing, long-term venture. It is ultimately required to be seen as part of good community development practice rather than solely as a data collection exercise.

Community Wellbeing Indicators

The Community Wellbeing Survey generates data for indicators of the Sense of Belonging, Trust, Community Participation and Access to Resources / Services. 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 quantitative data from the February 2023 snapshot month shows a high level of Sense of Belonging, Trust, Community Participation and Access to Resources / Service.

With the statistical limitation in mind, a thematic analysis of the qualitative data can be summarised as follows:

- **Sense of Belonging:** Natural disasters and the COVID19 Pandemic are still a key feature in people's responses. Despite the anguish and despair people generally feel strongly connected to their community and emphasise the friendly support received by neighbours, friend and local community services that got them through difficult times. Social isolation and loneliness also feature prominently in the comments.
- **Community Participation:** Volunteering skills and time is seen as the way to participate in community life. People who experience barriers due to health, disability or cultural background used this opportunity to express their concern and frustrations.
- **Trust:** There are two major perspectives of trust featuring in the comments – 1) trust in organisations and practitioners and 2) trust in community in terms of cultural and personal safety. A key theme is that there is larger trust in local, community-based organisations compared to government agencies and larger charities.
- **Access to Resources / Services:** The comments in this section were overwhelmingly positive. Two concepts stand out – 1) people participating in community activities or accessing TEI services receive information about other things that are happening and relevant in the community; and 2) In addition to the traditional means of newsletters, notice boards and 'word of mouth', social media promotion of activities is reaching the broader community.

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:

- LCSA welcomes the adoption as an optional tool by DCJ.
- LCSA modified the survey with minor changes, particularly by creating a unique identifier that clearly relates the survey respondent to a specific organisation and community.

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:

- Survey snapshot months being in February and August each year means that biannually LCSA will be in the position to analyse and report on up-to-date data and compare it with previous snapshot months.
- This is the first of these reports.

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:

- For this snapshot month Survey Monkey was used, giving each participating organisation a unique survey link and respectively an individual data set
- There are limitations to Survey Monkey for the scope and purpose of this project and alternative web-based applications such as Qualtrics may provide a better solution for both user experience and administration

Recommendation 4 - Create website for live data dashboards: LCSA recommends the use of the domain 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 has access to a comprehensive dashboard of their own data, which can only be accessed by the organisation itself and LCSA as the administrator.
- Creating an interface between the abovementioned website and Survey Monkey as a database is proving difficult.

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:

- A Community of Practice has been established with organisations that were interested and participated in the snapshot month
- The first meeting was held in February 2023 and there will be 3 meetings per annum. The meeting scheduled for 20 June 2023 had occurred.
- A principal issue for the CoP (Community of Practice) to resolve is language and other accessibility issues related to the survey

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:

- LCSA negotiated a 3-year continuation of this project with a view to provide capacity building activities for participating TEI services
- This include but are not limited to integrating the Community Wellbeing Data into community planning, strategic planning and updating TEI Program Logics

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

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:

- A final Reference Group meeting was held to debrief about the process and the outcomes achieved
- Reference Group members have been invited to participate in the Community of Practice meetings, which to a degree will provide advice and guidance for the project.

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:

- To roll out the survey for the Snapshot month, LCSA has created an internal communication strategy including a database, individualised surveys and dashboards and email correspondence with participating organisations
- In the lead up to the next snapshot month in August 2023, LCSA will be promoting the value of the survey to existing participants and aim to recruit more TEI Community Strengthening organisations

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, who were recently awarded the tender contract by DCJ, 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
1. I feel connected to people in my local area.	<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. People in my local area come together in times of need.	<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. People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.	<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
1. I get involved in local activities, groups, or events.	<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 contribute to my local community.	<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. I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre.	<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. I have participated in recreational / community activities at places other than my local community or neighbourhood centre.	<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
5. In the past 12 months I have helped as a volunteer in my local area.	<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?