

CITY OF PARRAMATTA - YOUR PLACE, YOUR VOICE! COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

North Rocks Ward – Summary Report



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Parramatta is committed to listening to the needs and priorities of our local residents to inform decision making and future planning. To understand community views and insights into what's important for our residents, in mid-2023, the City of Parramatta worked alongside RPS Consulting to design and deliver five, ward-based workshops across the local government area (LGA), encompassing the Parramatta, Rosehill, Dundas, North Rocks and Epping wards.

More than 200 local residents participated in the workshops, to:

- Explore what is important and of value to them about where they live.
- Prioritise services through a participatory budgeting activity to help understand the relative priorities for how Council spends money.
- Provide feedback on how they receive information from and engage with Council, on services, activities, and projects.

In addition to the face-to-face workshops and in line with our commitment to accessibility, the City of Parramatta also provided an online option for residents that were unable to attend their respective workshop. An online survey which featured a subset of the questions asked during the workshop was completed by 32 persons.

This report focuses on the North Rocks ward and provides a quantitative and qualitative summary of the key findings from the fourth community workshop as well as the responses that were received online from North Rocks ward residents.

North Rocks ward community workshop

The Your Place, Your Voice! North Rocks Ward Community Workshop was held at Muirfield Golf Club in North Rocks on Saturday 9 September from 2pm until 5pm. Activities were designed to be practical, outcomes focused and fun.

The workshop was attended by 45 people, with a larger mix of females than males, ranging in age from 22-81. Participants represented most suburbs in the North Rocks ward. Feedback was captured through table facilitators notes on templates provided as well as through digital in-room polling questions.

The online survey was completed by 8 residents from the North Rocks ward.

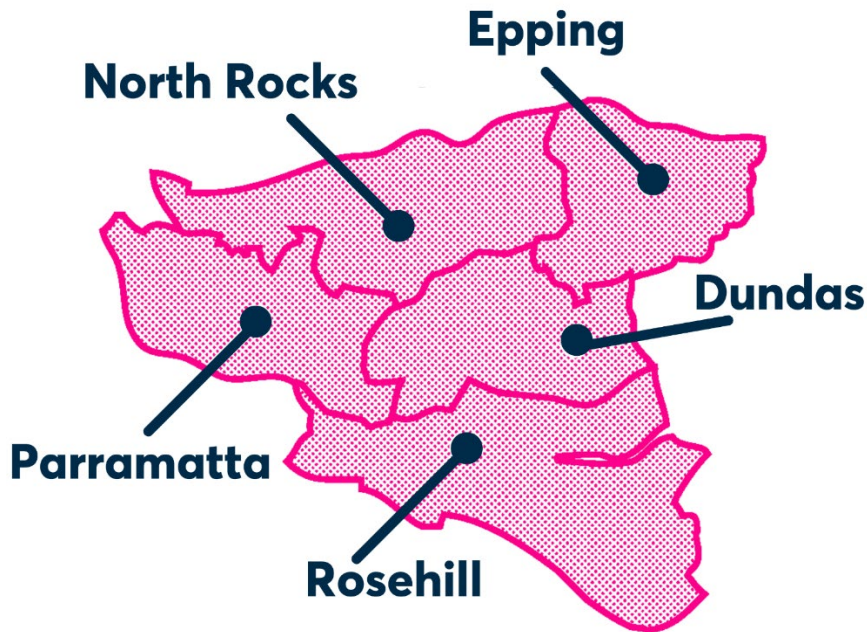
Key outcomes

The top three things people identified as being unique to their suburbs across the North Rocks ward were convenience, open space and sense of community.

What participants found unique about the North Rocks ward?
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Accessibility – central location, ease of transport options2. Community facilities – high-grade shops, schools, mix of facilities3. Open space – walks, waterfalls, trees, bushland, large land

- Participants were highly networked, with most belonging to more than one type of community group; 42% reported being part of a sports club and association.
- Reflecting on where they lived, nearly 70% felt that they knew their neighbours well.
- Most people believe Council listens (76%) and communicates (84%) well with the community.
- Through a prioritisation exercise, the top services that participants most highly valued were 'maintaining roads, footpaths and drains', 'parks, public spaces and recreation', and 'major works and construction'.





2 NORTH ROCKS WARD



There are five wards within the City of Parramatta LGA. The fourth ward-based workshop targeted the North Rocks ward which includes the suburbs of Carlingford, Winston Hills, North Rocks and Northmead.

The 2022 estimated resident population for the North Rocks ward is 42,385, with a population density of 2,317 persons per square km (source: profile id). Below is a snapshot of 'who' this community is:

1

	51%	49%	0.4%		
	Female	Male	First Nations		
	23.6%	18.9%	34.6%	22.9%	
	0-17 yrs	18-34 yrs	35-59 yrs	60 yrs +	
	42%	55.6%	2.4%		
	Born overseas	Born in Australia	Unknown		
	Top 5 countries of origin				
	China 11%	Sth Korea 3.7%	India 3.4%	United Kingdom 2.5%	Iran 2.1%
	74.6%	8.8%	16.6%		
	Separate house	Medium density	High density		

¹ Statistics source: ABS Census 2021

2.1 Participant recruitment *(workshop only)*

The City of Parramatta undertook an Expressions of Interest (EOI) to recruit participants for the North Rocks Ward – Your Place, Your Voice! Community Workshop. The EOI was open from 16 to 30 August 2023, attracting 61 responses.

The goal was to recruit 50 participants from a variety of suburbs within the North Rocks ward with broad representation across age and cultural diversity. All 61 persons that expressed their interest were invited to participate in the session.

The workshop was attended by 45 people, with a larger group of women than men, ranging in age from 22 to 81. Participants represented most suburbs in the North Rocks ward.

Participation in the workshop was incentivised with a \$100 gift voucher.

2.2 Who was in the room? *(workshop only)*



Key demographics:

- Gender representation was skewed to female participants.
- Participants were aged between early 20s and 81.



Participants were from:

- Carlingford
- Winston Hills
- North Rocks
- Northmead



Why people came:

- Interested in contributing to future planning and decisions.
- Wanting to understand what Council does/ is doing / will do.
- Workshop sounded interesting and fun.
- Wanted to meet others.

2.3 What were they expecting? *(workshop only)*

Mostly people came to the workshop because they were interested in learning about Council's future plans and wanted to help shape them. They wanted to 'understand more' and have the 'opportunity' to hear and be heard' as a 'community voice' in the future directions of Council. Notably the desire to 'meet and connect with others' in their community was also a common response in the North Rocks ward.



3 CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTH ROCKS WARD

Participants were asked about what they love and value about their local area.

3.1 Social connections in North Rocks ward *(workshop & online)*

- Over half of the participants felt they know their neighbours and social groups moderately well (52%) while just over a quarter felt they knew them extremely well (17%) and only a few indicated they knew them a little (22%) or not at all well (9%).
- Participants were highly networked, with most belonging to more than one local community group:
 - Over a third of participants reported being involved in sports clubs and associations (42%) and volunteer and civic organisations (Meals on Wheels, SES, Rotary, etc.) (35%).
 - Over a quarter of participants reported being involved in hobby or interest-based clubs (29%), Church/Temple/Mosque or other places of worship (23%), school-based community (19%) and work, business and/or professional associations (15%).
 - Less than a quarter of participants indicated they belonged to resident/community advocacy groups (13%), cultural or ethnic associations (10%), and other groups not specified (10%).
 - A small number reported their involvement with support groups (e.g., Men’s Shed/ Woman’s Shed, parenting groups, etc) (6%).
 - While 15% of participants reported not being involved in any community network.

3.2 Unique features of North Rocks ward *(workshop & online)*

Through an interactive exercise, participants identified what is important and unique to their local area/suburb. The outcomes are summarised below.

- Accessibility – central location, ease of transport options.
- Community facilities – high-grade shops, schools, mix of facilities.
- Open space – walks, waterfalls, trees, bushland, large blocks.

3.3 More of this, less of that, and keep these *(workshop only)*

Each table facilitator guided the discussion to understand their views and captured the outputs on table resources. The most common themes under the categories are tabled below.

More of	Less of	Keep	New initiatives / ideas
Community events	High rise and cheap developments – increased density	Green open space including swimming at Lake Parramatta	Civic, Library and community spaces Formalised mountain bike tracks in bushland
Kerbside gardens, tree canopy, open space, bushland management and First Nations land	Traffic and congestion	Low density housing	Resident education – cat owners and bushland Extend bike track past the Female Factory
Traffic management and transport options including bike paths	Overcapacity – schools, housing	Waste collection services	Transport links – Epping to Carlingford.

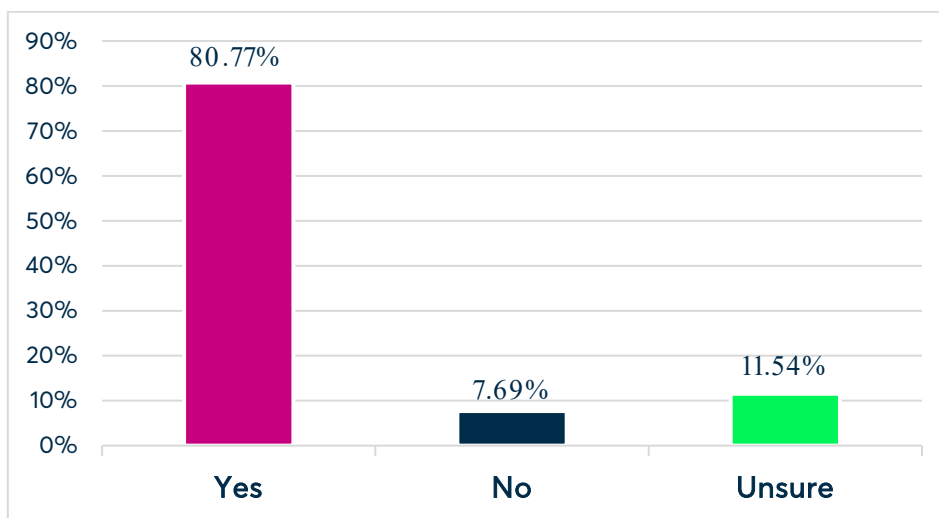
3.4 Connecting with Council *(workshop & online)*

Council undertakes a large number of activities to both communicate and engage with our community.

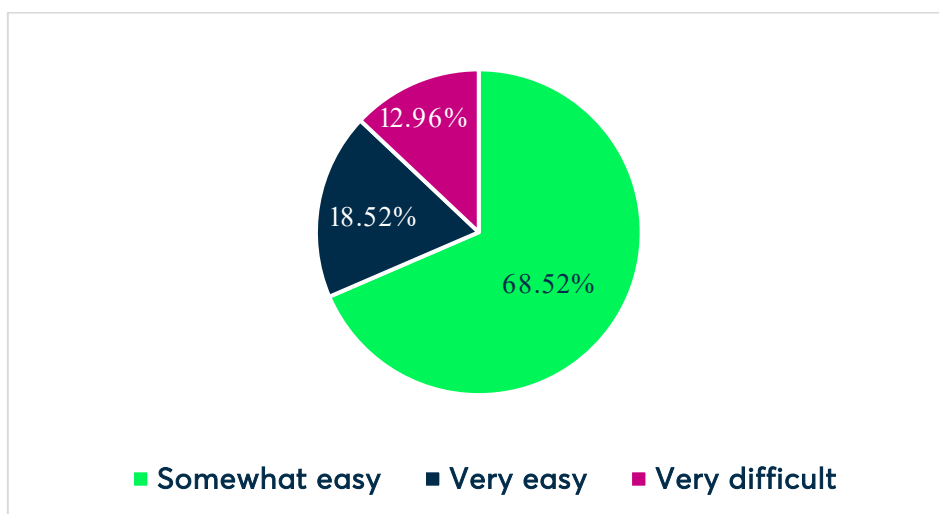
Residents that participated in the workshop were provided with a snapshot of community engagement and research projects, activities, community participation and feedback received annually. Information was also provided to workshop participants on the types of communications Council issued and the channels used to inform residents in Parramatta about Council activities and projects.

A series of questions were asked of workshop participants and those that responded online to better understand how well Council is performing in the communications and engagement space. The graphs provided below detail the results of these questions.

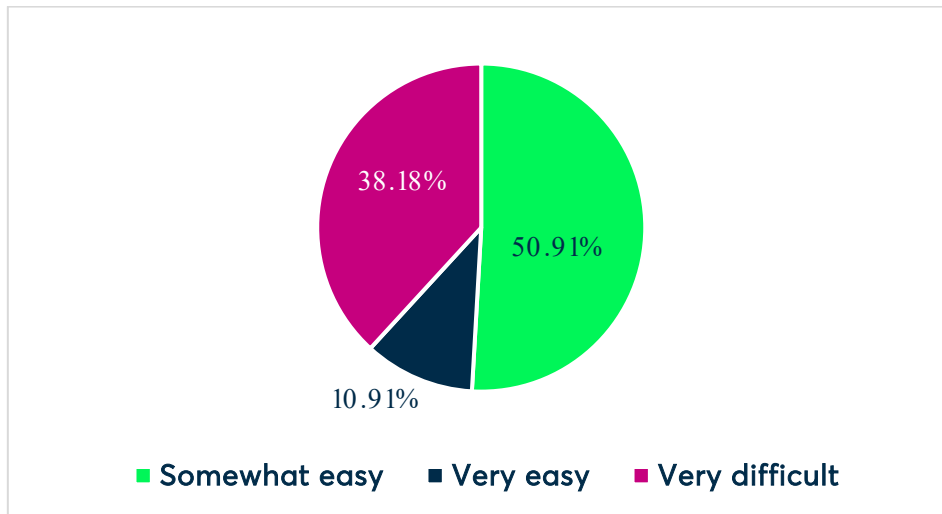
Do you know where to find out information about Council services, facilities, and activities?



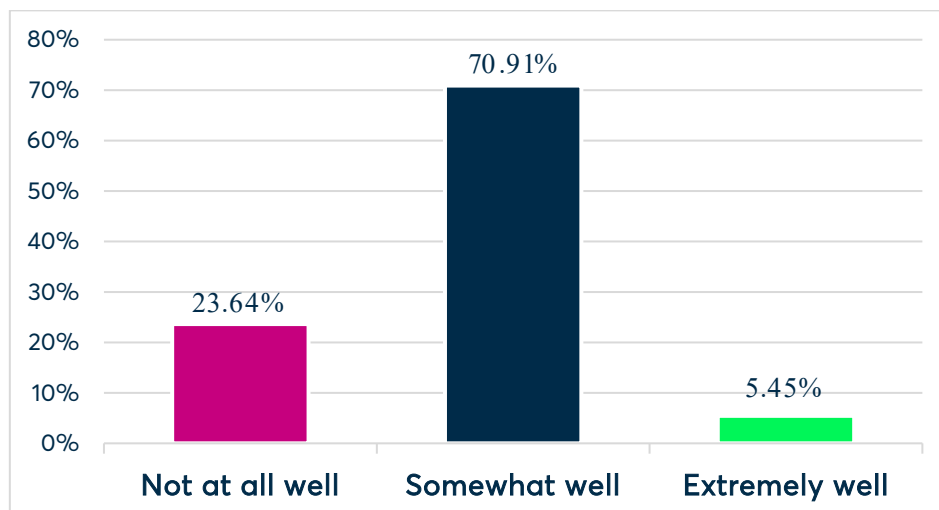
How easy is it for you to get in contact with Council? (e.g. in-person, by phone or email)



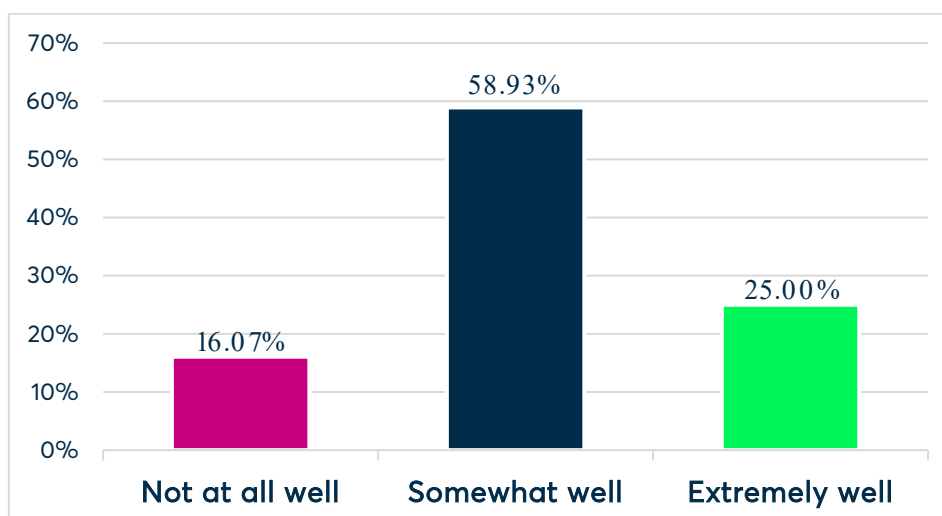
How easy is it for you to have your say on Council projects?



How well do you think Council listens to the community?



How well do you think Council communicates with the community about what is happening, and the decisions made?



In-person and online participants were then asked, 'What is the one thing that you think Council can do to better promote services, facilities and activities?'

Three of the most popular responses are provided below:

- More local news, less Parramatta focus.
- Staff come to local centres to talk to community.
- Community groups i.e. scouts and local schools/high school.

In-person and online participants were also asked, 'What is the one thing that you think Council can do to make it easier for you to get in contact?'

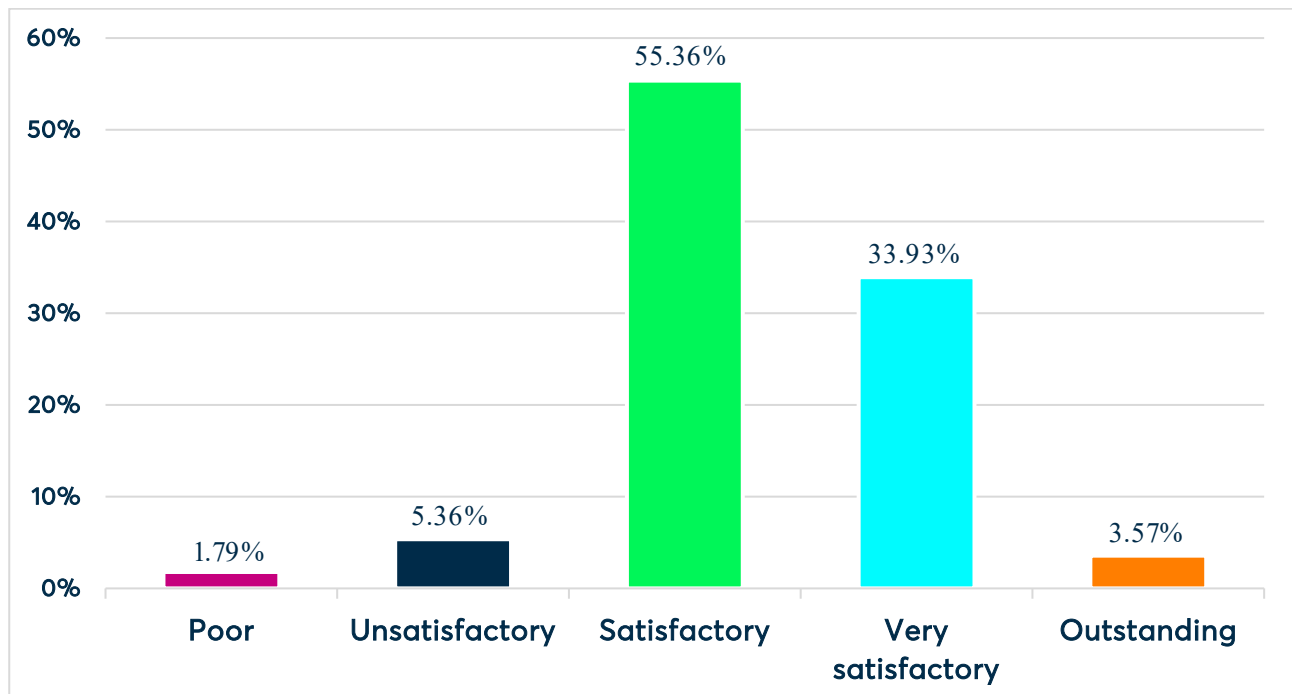
Three of the most popular responses are provided below:

- Email response needs to be more than auto responds 'email received'.
- "Live chat needs to be real".
- More direct access to areas of responsibilities.

3.5 Council performance *(workshop & online)*

Participants were also asked how they rated Council's performance in providing appropriate services for the Parramatta community. Responses provided are shown in the figure below.

Overall, how would you rate Council's performance in providing appropriate services for the Parramatta community?



4 WHAT WOULD YOU PRIORITISE

This segment of the workshop was designed to demonstrate the complexity of prioritising Council services and sought to understand resident priorities for Council's annual budget allocations. The activities in this section were asked to help inform future Delivery Program and Operational Planning (DPOP).

4.1 Prioritising service areas, in a group *(workshop & online)*

In the workshop setting, each table group was provided 11 cards with the service area headings on them (as identified within Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan).

Participants were asked to work together as a group to prioritise the service areas in order of importance. In total, there were 9 table groups that completed this activity at the North Rocks ward workshop.

Online participants were able to rank the 11 service areas using the online survey. The results of the online participants were combined to equal the weight of one 'table group'.

Both the in-person and online participants were provided with a sheet that detailed how \$100 is currently being spent across the 11 service areas in the DPOP. Please see image across.

The average of the workshop and online results are provided below ranked from most important to least important service area. The results reflect the importance of traditional Council focus areas of 'roads, rates and rubbish' to the group.



	DPOP SERVICE AREAS	AVERAGE %
Most prioritised (GROUP)	1. Maintaining roads, footpaths, and drains	12.73%
	2. Waste management	12.58%
	3. Parks, public spaces, and recreation	11.67%
	4. Planning and development	11.52%
	5. Major works and construction	10.00%
	6. Engineering and traffic	8.64%
	7. Environmental sustainability	8.03%
	8. Library and community services	7.73%
Least prioritised (GROUP)	9. Administration and corporate services	6.97%
	10. Culture and events	5.30%
	11. Trade and fleet management	4.85%

4.2 Prioritising service areas, individually *(workshop only)*

Following the group prioritisation, each participant was able to nominate their priorities using Parramatta Dollars. Participants were each provided with \$100 worth of 'Parramatta Dollars' that they were asked to allocate as 'funding' across the eleven service areas. Please note that due to the nature of this activity, it could not be offered online.



This changed the prioritisation from the group activity, as shown below. Notable movements include 'library and community services' which moved up 4 places, and 'engineering and traffic' and 'waste management' which both dropped 4 places.

	DPOP SERVICE AREAS	AVERAGE %
Most prioritised (INDIVIDUAL)	1. Maintaining roads, footpaths, and drains	13.04%
	2. Parks, public spaces, and recreation	12.99%
	3. Major works and construction	10.66%
	4. Library and community services	10.22%
	5. Planning and development	8.62%
	6. Waste management	8.22%
	7. Administration and corporate services	7.89%
	8. Culture and events	7.82%
Least prioritised (INDIVIDUAL)	9. Environmental sustainability	7.75%
	10. Engineering and traffic	7.08%
	11. Trade and fleet management	5.71%

5 WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants feedback was collected to evaluate their experience.

- 96% of participants considered the workshop to be 'interesting'.
- 52% of participants would recommend attending a similar workshop to their friends and family.

In addition, participants were asked, '**Do you think Council will act on what you have shared?**'. The results, which are presented below, demonstrate that Council has significant work to do in better reporting back on actions taken in response to community feedback.

