

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

## Parramatta 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 Parramatta ward and provides a quantitative and qualitative summary of the key findings from the first community workshop as well as the responses that were received online from Parramatta ward residents.

## Parramatta ward community workshop

The Your Place, Your Voice! Parramatta Ward Community Workshop was held at the Toongabbie Sports and Bowling Club at 12 Station Road, Toongabbie on Saturday 17 June from 2pm until 5pm. Activities were designed to be practical, outcomes focused and fun.

The workshop was attended by 38 people, with a balance of males and females, ranging in age from 20-79. Participants represented most suburbs in the Parramatta 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 10 residents from the Parramatta ward.

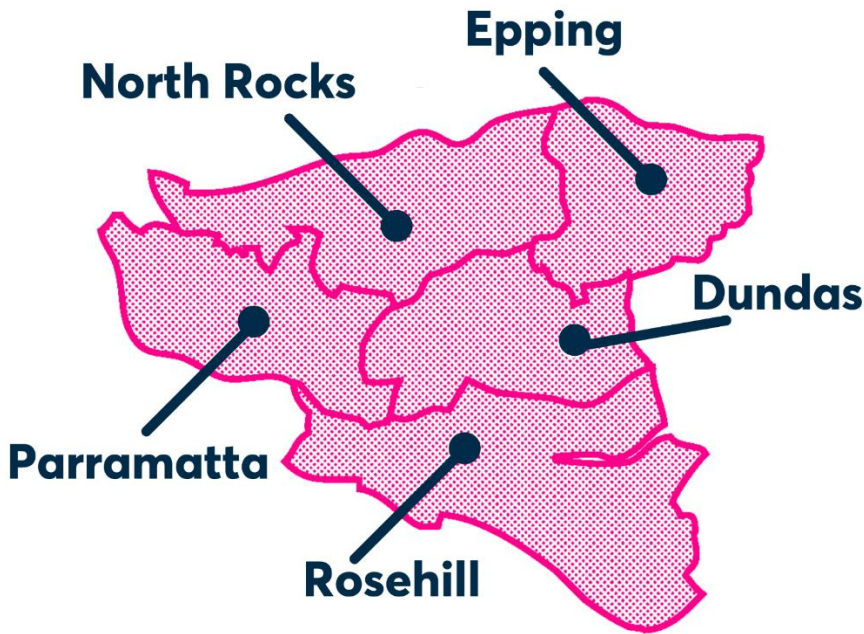
## Key outcomes

The top three things people identified as being unique to their suburbs across the Parramatta ward were convenience and proximity to the Parramatta CBD, a sense of community and the natural environment.

What participants found unique about the Parramatta ward?
1. Convenience – facilities, connectivity, transport.
2. Community – respectful, diverse, multicultural.
3. Natural environment – riverside, lake, tree canopy, bush, and views.

- Overall participants were highly networked, with most belonging to more than one type of community group; 37% reported being part of a religious community group.
- While most described feeling like they are part of these communities in Parramatta, over 70% feel that they do not know their neighbours well.
- Most people believe Council listens (81%) and communicates (81%) well with the community.
- Through a prioritisation exercise, the top services that participants most highly valued were 'parks, public spaces and recreation', 'maintaining roads, footpaths and drains', and 'major works and construction'.





## 2 PARRAMATTA WARD



There are five wards within the City of Parramatta LGA. The first ward-based workshop targeted the Parramatta ward which includes the suburbs of Parramatta, North Parramatta, Old Toongabbie, Toongabbie, Northmead, Constitution Hill, Westmead and Wentworthville.

The 2022 estimated resident population for the Parramatta ward is 49,634, with a population density of 3,355 persons per square km (source: profile id). Below is a snapshot of 'who' this community is:

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	50.1%	49.9%	1.1%	
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>First Nations</b>	
	20.7%	28.3%	33.6%	17.3%
	<b>0-17 yrs</b>	<b>18-34 yrs</b>	<b>35-59 yrs</b>	<b>60 yrs +</b>
	51.8%	42.4%	5.7%	
	<b>Born overseas</b>	<b>Born in Australia</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
	<b>Top 5 countries of origin</b>			
	India 20.2%	China 4.2%	Sri Lanka 2.5%	Philippines 2.4% Nepal 2.1%
	33.4%	21.9%	44%	0.6%
	<b>Separate house</b>	<b>Medium density</b>	<b>High density</b>	<b>Other</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 Parramatta Ward – Your Place, Your Voice! Community Workshop. The EOI was open from 11 May until 25 May 2023 attracting 150 responses.

The goal was to recruit 50 participants from a variety of suburbs within the Parramatta ward with broad representation across age and cultural diversity.

50 demographically representative persons were randomly selected to be involved in the session, with a further 15 persons shortlisted as possible participants in the event that selected persons pulled out.

The workshop was attended by 38 people, with a balance of women and men, ranging in age from 20-79. Participants represented most suburbs in the Parramatta ward. Three families attended with babies and small children who were accommodated during the workshop.

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

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



### Key demographics:

- Gender was balanced with a mix of male and female participants.
- Participants were aged between early 20's and 79.



### Participants were from:

- Parramatta
- Northmead
- Old Toongabbie
- Westmead
- North Parramatta
- Constitution Hill
- Toongabbie
- Wentworthville

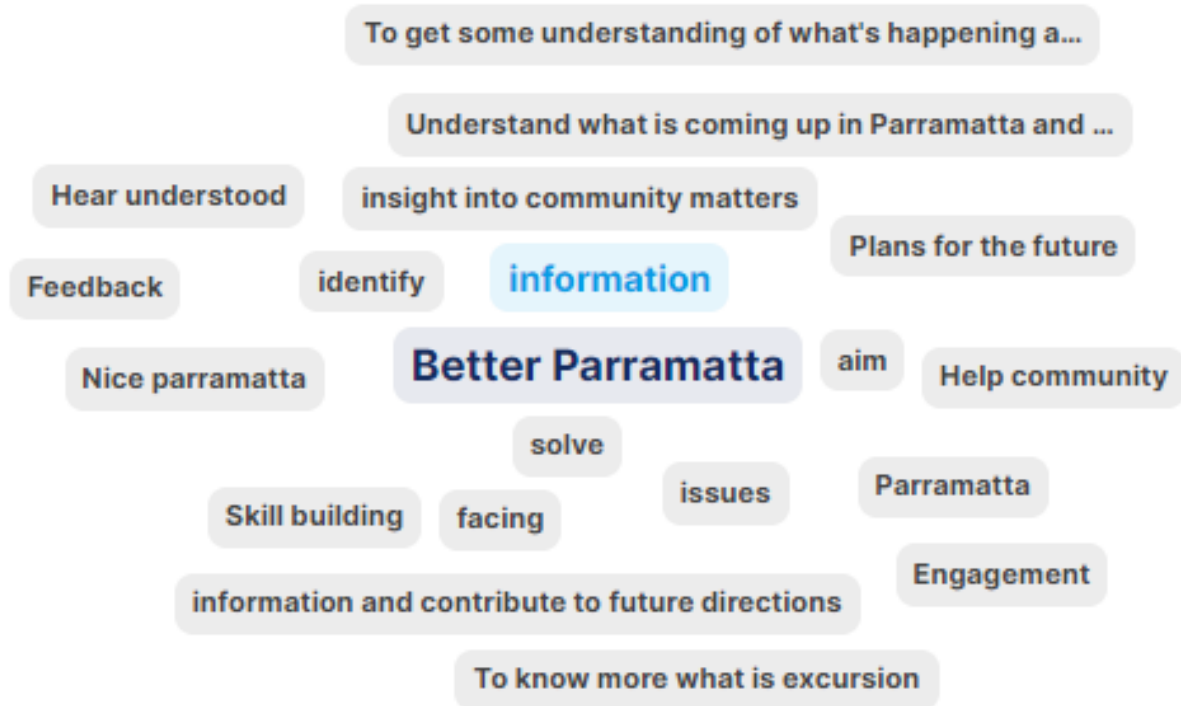


### Why people came:

- 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?

Mostly people wanted a 'better Parramatta' and to contribute to the planning and future directions of Council. Some had an interest in learning more about what is happening in Parramatta and their local areas; wanting to share concerns and participate in an opportunity to contribute to their community and be part of the decision-making process.



### 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARRAMATTA WARD

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

#### 3.1 Social connections in Parramatta ward *(workshop & online)*

- Most participants felt they know their neighbours and social groups in their local community 'a little well' (43%) and nearly a third felt they know their neighbours and social groups moderately to extremely well (30%).
- Participants were highly networked, with most belonging to more than one local community group:
  - 37% reported that they belong to a faith-based community group (Church, Temple, Mosque or other place of worship). 29% belonged to sports clubs and associations, 24% to resident/community advocacy groups, 21% to a volunteer or civic organisation, and 21% to a work, business, or professional association (55%)
  - 18% were members of school-based community groups, and/or cultural or ethnic associations.
  - 13% were members of hobby or interest-based clubs and/or support groups.

#### 3.2 Unique features of Parramatta ward *(workshop & online)*

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

- River, green space and natural environment
- Convenience and facilities
- Multicultural community

#### 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
Infrastructure investment e.g. lighting in parks	Housing disparity	Community diversity
Environmental initiatives		Cultural events

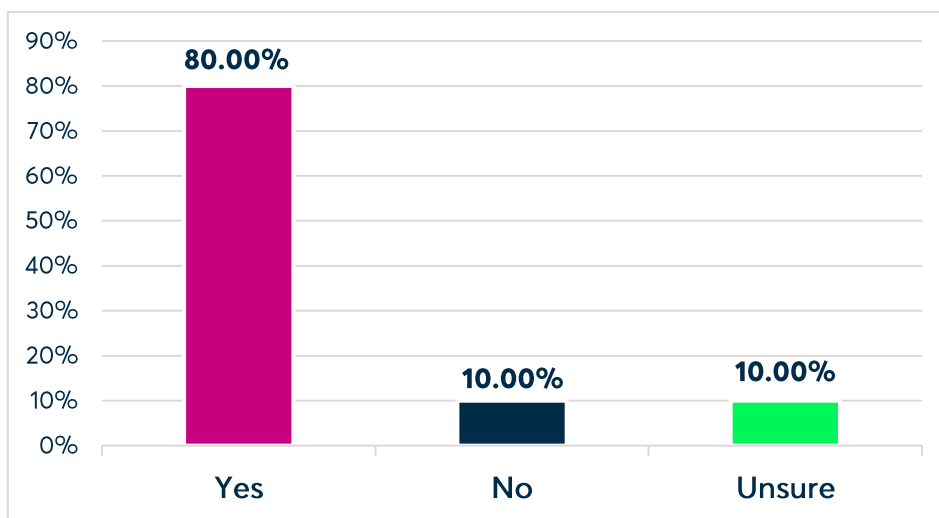
### 3.4 Connecting with Council *(workshop & online)*

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

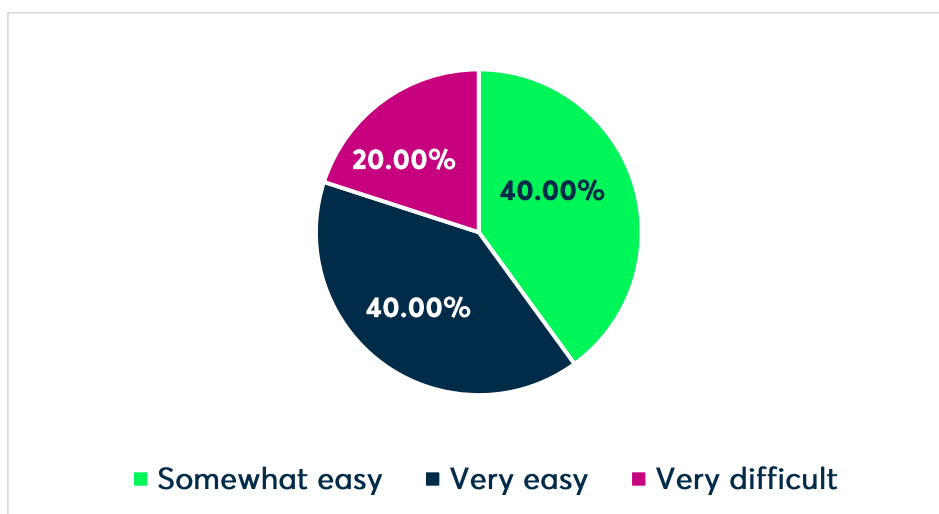
Residents that participated in the workshop were provided with a snapshot of community engagement and research projects, activities, community participation and feedback received annually. Information was also provided to workshop participants on the types of communications Council issued and the channels 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? \* *(\*only online)***

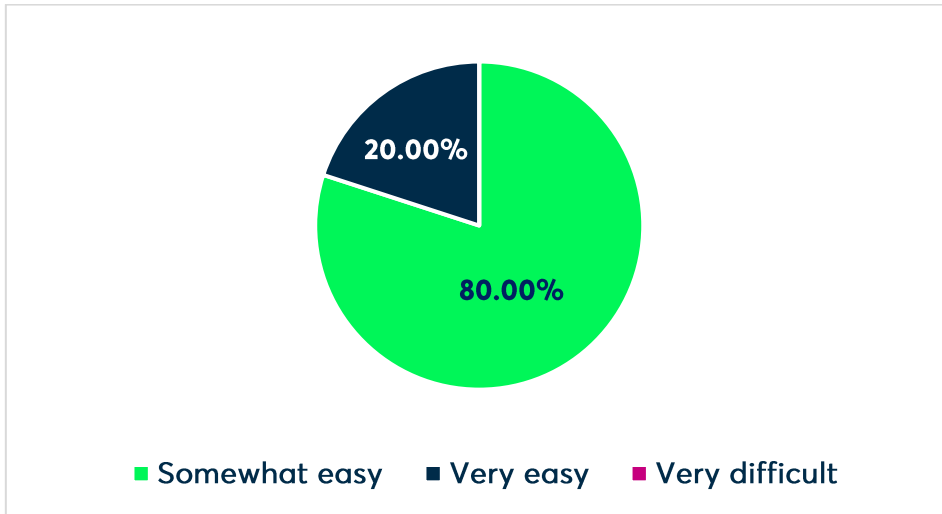


**How easy is it for you to get in contact with Council? (e.g. in-person, by phone or email) \* *(\*only online)***

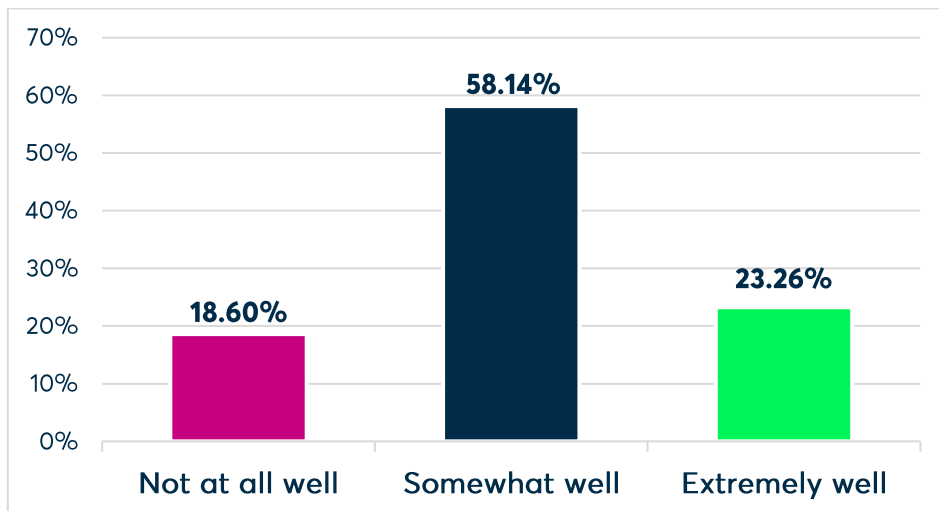




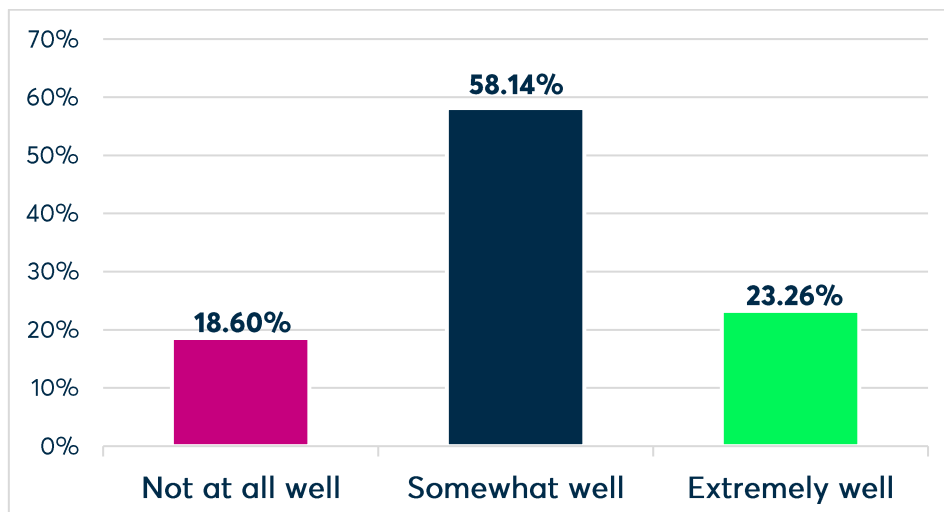
How easy is it for you to have your say on Council projects? \* (\*only online)



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?



Online participants were 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:

- If we still had a local paper delivered information could be readily accessed there. Sometimes if we see information it triggers interest otherwise we have to think of it first and then go looking.
- More use of apps social media. Opportunistic promotion.
- All councillors should have active social media accounts to advise general Parramatta info and then activities etc. specific to the ward.

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?'

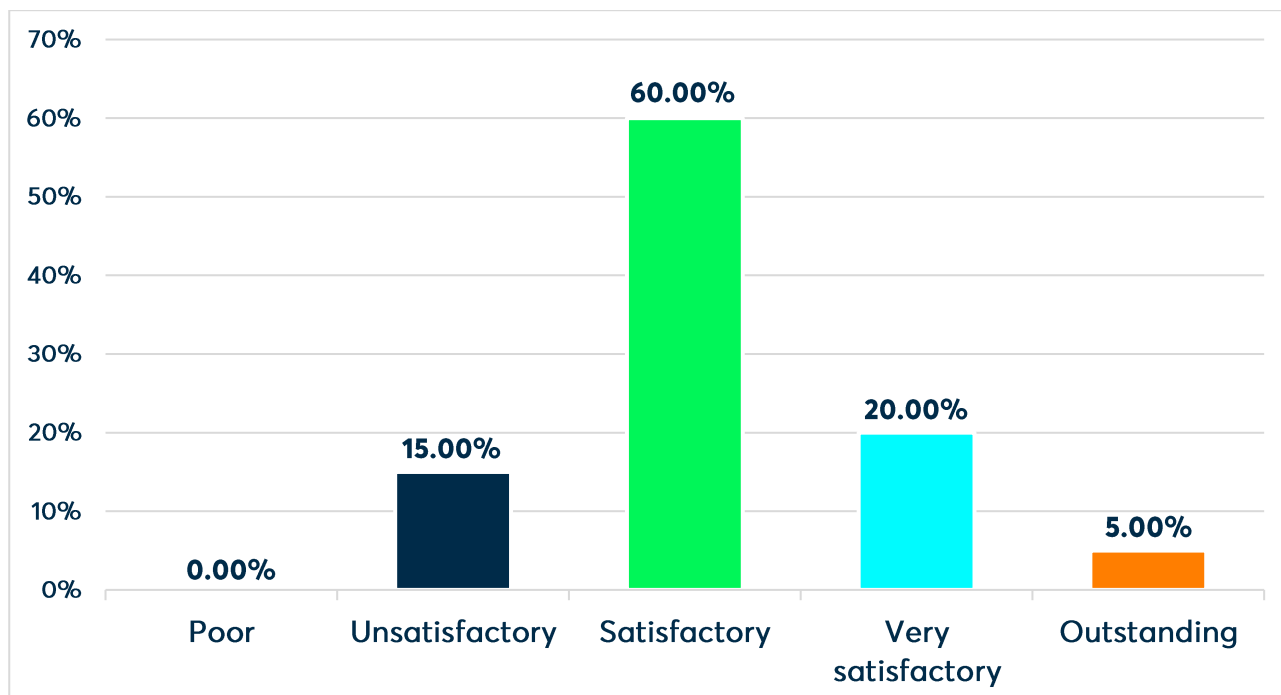
Three of the most popular responses are provided below:

- Be more responsive on apps like Snap Send Solve.
- Extend opening hours; the majority of people in Toongabbie predominantly work shift work or corporate hours and need to be able to make calls at times that suit them (say 8am to 8pm like most contact centers) or offer online chat.
- Have representatives in local libraries.

### 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 *(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 6 table groups that completed this activity at the Parramatta 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 (AS RANKED)	1. Maintaining roads, footpaths, and drains	13.64%
	2. Environmental sustainability	12.77%
	3. Parks, public spaces, and recreation	13.20%
	4. Library and community services	9.96%
	5. Waste management	9.74%
	6. Major works and construction	8.66%
	7. Engineering and traffic	8.44%
	8. Planning and development	8.23%
Least prioritised (AS RANKED)	9. Culture and events	8.23%
	10. Administration and corporate services	4.11%
	11. Trade and fleet management	3.03%

## 4.2 Prioritising service areas, 'Parramatta Dollars' *(workshop only)*

Following the group ranking exercise, each participant was able to nominate their priorities using Parramatta Dollars. Each table group was 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 previous activity marginally, as shown below. The only notable movements was 'environmental sustainability' which dropped 4 places.

	DPOP SERVICE AREAS	AVERAGE %
Most prioritised (INDIVIDUAL)	1. Parks, public spaces, and recreation	14.22%
	2. Maintaining roads, footpaths, and drains	14.08%
	3. Major works and construction	12.32%
	4. Waste management	9.09%
	5. Library and community services	8.80%
	6. Environmental sustainability	8.50%
	7. Planning and development	8.36%
	8. Culture and events	7.92%
Least prioritised (INDIVIDUAL)	9. Administration and corporate services	6.74%
	10. Engineering and traffic	5.43%
	11. Trade and fleet management	4.55%

## 5 WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

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

- 84% of participants considered the workshop to be 'interesting'.
- 68% 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.

