



OUR WOLLONGONG JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Community Safety Survey

Engagement Report

March 2025

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The information in this report is based on data collected from community members who chose to be involved in engagement activities and therefore should not be considered representative.

This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it’s not possible to include all the details of feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the project has been provided to technical experts for review and consideration.

Executive Summary

During the period 25 November 2024 to 2 February 2025, we invited the community across the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA) to provide feedback and suggestions about community safety in their neighbourhood, and the Wollongong City Centre. Feedback will inform Council's next Community Safety Plan.

Methods

A project webpage on our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au was published, which included an online community survey, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and important links to Council and external resources. The engagement was also promoted on Council's general website through the Open for Feedback section, and the Community Safety page. Twenty corflute signs were installed at high visibility and foot traffic locations across the LGA from Helensburgh to Windang, A3 posters were provided to libraries and community centres for display. All signs and posters had a QR code linked to the project webpage.

A newsletter with a link to the project page was sent to 1244 people via the engagement platform (Engagement HQ) Register of Interest – Safety. Direct emails were sent to previous participants of relevant engagements including *CCTV in the Wollongong CBD* and *Safer Cities: Her Way*; neighbourhood forums; business chambers; community groups and organisations; and relevant interagency members. An extensive social media campaign was also conducted with posts on Council social media accounts, and targeted and paid social media advertising. A community update was published in the local paper, and hardcopy information made available at six library locations. Three pop up kiosks were held at different sites including Friday Crown St Markets, Dapto Square and Wollongong Youth Centre, and targeted workshops held with students at four local high schools, and a community group.

Community Feedback

We received 350 surveys (349 online, one hardcopy) and two emails from the community. We heard directly from 119 people at pop-ups events and workshops, and 64 young people through the high school workshops.

Summary of quantitative data

- People feel less safe in their neighbourhoods and in the Wollongong Central Business District (CBD) at night compared to the day.
- Train stations and bus stops, and local parks are identified as the areas where people feel most unsafe in their neighbourhoods.
- Wollongong Train Station, and Crown Street heading towards the hospital, are identified as the areas where people feel most unsafe in the Wollongong CBD.
- Physical and /or verbal assault and aggression is the greatest crime concern for most people.
- Drugs and drug affected people, violence and lack of police presence are the three factors that most impact people's personal feeling of safety.
- 35% of respondents had experienced or witnessed a crime in the last 12 months.
- People are underreporting crime, with only 46 % reporting incidents to police.

- The primary reasons provided for not reporting crime included lack of trust or confidence in police and processes; not recognising the value of reporting and the belief that reporting wasn't required.
- Social media is the primary source of safety information for people.

Summary of qualitative data

Many suggestions and ideas were received to improve community safety. Most can be themed into the following:

- Improved lighting and surveillance
- Increased police and security presence
- Addressing homelessness and drug issues
- Public space activation and maintenance
- Traffic and pedestrian safety
- Stronger community engagement, education and reporting.

Young people's concerns and suggestions followed similar themes to the general community with additional issues of note:

- Public transport networks were considered unsafe, infrequent, unreliable and expensive with significant impacts for young people who rely heavily on this mode. Young people reported feeling unsafe during lengthy waiting times for connections. Train stations and bus stops have been identified as areas where people feel most unsafe.
- Significant mistrust or fear of police and security due to previous experiences or the feeling of being targeted.
- Vapes and vape shops were identified as being unsafe and unsavoury places with the high uptake of vaping noted by many young people.
- Concerns around privacy and technology and misuse of surveillance.
- Young people identified and acknowledged how important and inclusive safety should be for everyone in the community.

Many location or area specific concerns were identified across all the feedback heard; these have been separately collated.

Background

The 2024 Community Safety Survey* was developed to gain understanding and insight into the community's safety and crime concerns within their neighbourhoods, and the Wollongong CBD and surrounds. The survey also explores what factors and information sources contribute to people's perception of safety and their experiences of crime.

The survey is conducted every four years with the insights from the community used to inform a comprehensive Community Safety Plan. Feedback allows Council to better understand specific areas of concern so the Community Safety Plan can:

- focus on the safety needs of the community
- improve safety (and the perception of safety)
- reduce crime and create safer public spaces.

*In previous years this survey has been called the *Perceptions of Safety Survey*. It was significantly longer and asked specific details on personal crime experiences and safety of the respondent. The current survey and engagement approach were developed with a trauma informed approach. This recognises that relaying personal safety and experiences of crime can be challenging, confronting or triggering for individuals. The current survey was developed ensuring that key information and trend data would be available and comparable to previous years.

There were several opportunities and different methods for the community to provide feedback. These included an online survey, pop up information stalls at local malls and targeted workshops. This engagement also provided opportunity to increase awareness and education for the community on maintaining personal safety, and reporting crime options.

Community Safety Plan 2025 - 2028

To ensure the plan is based on industry best practice and community concerns to reduce the opportunity for crime in the city, in addition feedback from this engagement, the plan will be informed by:

- A review of other community safety plans in NSW
- Internal consultation
- External consultation with key organisations including Lake Illawarra Police, Wollongong Police and Community Safety Interagency attendees, and community groups
- Review of local crime trends
- Feedback and findings from the following related consultations:
 - Safer Cities: Her Way
 - Community Strategic Plan
 - CCTV in the Wollongong CBD
 - Community Wellbeing Survey

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the start of the engagement period included:

- Young people
- Women and girls
- Gender diverse people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse / Multicultural communities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Older people
- People with disabilities
- Communities in specific geographic locations
- General community

Methods

Table 1: Details of Communication and Engagement Methods

Methods	Details of Methods
Communication Methods	
Our Wollongong website	<p>The project webpage hosted background information and supporting documents. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online survey• Frequently Asked Questions• Important Links to Resources
Wollongong Council website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open for feedback• Community Safety Survey page
On-site signs	<p>20 corflute signs with a QR code linking to the Our Wollongong project webpage were installed in key locations, and foot traffic areas across the Wollongong LGA.</p> <div></div>

A3 posters	Posters with a QR code linking to the engagement page were sent to various community centres and organisations for display.
Library packages	Information packages were sent to all six city libraries (Unanderra library was closed for renovations) with hardcopy information and surveys made available to view.
Community Update	A community update was published in the Illawarra Mercury on 21 December 2024.
Register of Interest – Safety newsletter	A newsletter was sent to 1244 people on the Register of Interest – Safety on 4 December 2024, with an open rate of 60.3%.
Direct emails	<p>Emails were sent to all key stakeholders including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted groups via Community Development and Youth Services previous participants of <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> engagement previous interested participants of <i>CCTV in the Wollongong CBD</i> engagement Neighbourhood Forums Business Chambers Interagencies
Pop up kiosk	Three pop up kiosks were held in different locations to provide information, and answer questions and share hardcopy resources.
Social media	<div>   </div> <p>A paid social media campaign for the duration of the engagement, with targeted posts to specific geographical locations on Wollongong City Facebook and Instagram.</p> <p>Social media posts were also shared via Wollongong Youth Services and non-Council accounts such as Facebook Community Notice Boards.</p>

Engagement Methods

Online Survey	The online survey was accessible via the Our Wollongong website, as well via a link from primary Wollongong Council website. Respondents were not required to register to the engagement site however were encouraged to leave their email address if they wanted to receive project updates.
Hardcopy Surveys	Hardcopy surveys were available at each library location with instructions on how to return them. Hardcopy surveys were also made available at each pop-up kiosk.
Pop up kiosk	Poster boards (of varying sizes) were made available at each pop-up event with questions “ <i>What are your suggestions to improve community safety / safety in public spaces?</i> ” Community members were invited to either write

	down their thoughts and ideas on the boards or available post it notes. If they preferred to respond verbally, staff wrote down their ideas.
Workshops	Workshops were held for local high school students and one cultural group. Responses and ideas were written down either by staff or by participants.
Email	People emailed in open written submissions.

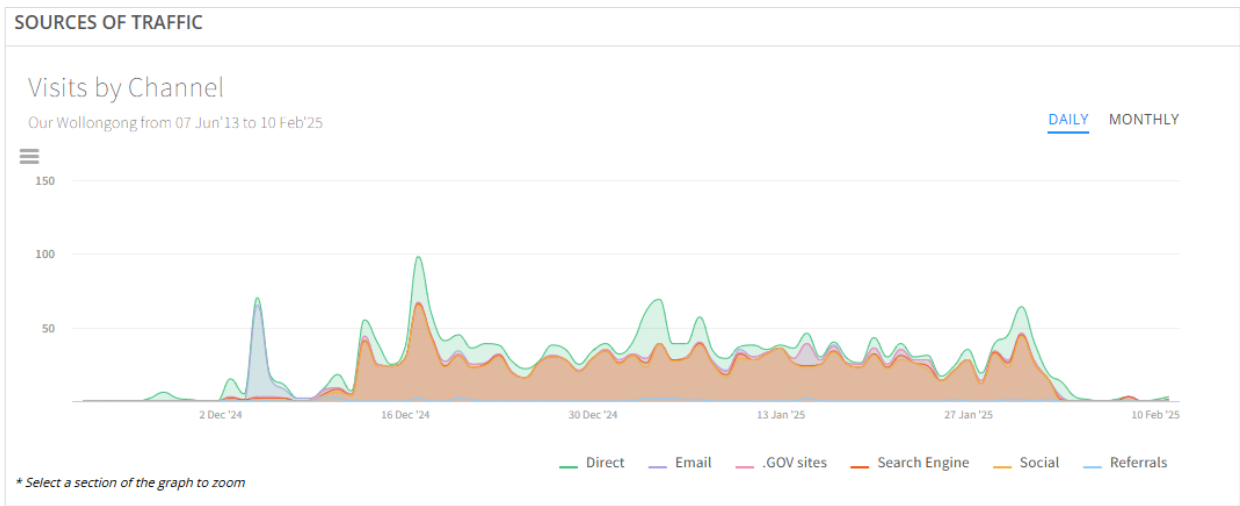
Engagement Participation

The community were invited to provide feedback and suggestions on community safety. This section provides details on the online participation and feedback received during the engagement period. Details of the online participation are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Online participation

Engagement Activities	Participation
Online Participation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aware – Total number of people who viewed the project webpage.	1900
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Informed – Total number of people who clicked a hyperlink, e.g. to download additional information.	458
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaged – Total number of people who actively contributed to the project, e.g. by submitting comments via the survey	349

Graph 1: Sources of traffic



TRAFFIC CHANNEL	AWARE VISITS	INFORMED VISITS(%)	ENGAGED VISITS(%)
DIRECT	499	169 (33.9%)	127 (25.5%)
EMAIL	93	38 (40.9%)	33 (35.5%)
.GOV SITES	92	29 (31.5%)	18 (19.6%)
SEARCH ENGINE	47	16 (34%)	11 (23.4%)
SOCIAL	1422	209 (14.7%)	156 (11%)
REFERRALS	26	10 (38.5%)	6 (23.1%)

The Sources of Traffic table indicates the social media campaign generated significant amounts of interest – the majority of people who viewed the project page linked to it via a social media post. These views converted into almost 45% of people who completed the online survey.

Table 3: Social Media reach



Social Media Reach	Reach	Interactions
Facebook – Organic Post	2366	6
Instagram – Organic Post	982	20
Linked In - Organic Post	911	34
Facebook Ad – multiple formats	59 603	1809
TOTAL	63 862	1869

Submissions

We received feedback from the general community across the Wollongong LGA. The types of submissions received are detailed in the table below.

Table 4: Submission types

Submission type	Number of participants
Open – Emails	2
Online community surveys	349
Hardcopy survey	1

Table 5: Workshops and Pop-up events

Participation	Number of participants
Four high school workshops	64
One community group	6
Three pop-up events	113



Figure 1 Dapto Square Pop Up

Results

The Community Safety Survey asked questions about whether people felt safe in their neighbourhood, and in the Wollongong central area; their crime and safety concerns and experiences and suggestions for improving safety. We also asked some demographic questions including age and gender. Respondents could choose to opt out of any questions.

Questions about your neighbourhood

Table 6:

	Answer	Number	%
Do you usually go out at night in your neighbourhood or home suburb?	Yes	201	57.4
	No	149	42.6

Table 7:

	Answer	Number	%
Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood or home suburb, during the day?	Yes	296	85.5
	No	50	14.5

Table 8:

	Answer	Number	%
	Yes	155	44.5

Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood or home suburb, at night?	No	193	55.5
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Graph 2: Is there anywhere you feel unsafe in your neighbourhood, or home suburb? (Select all that apply)

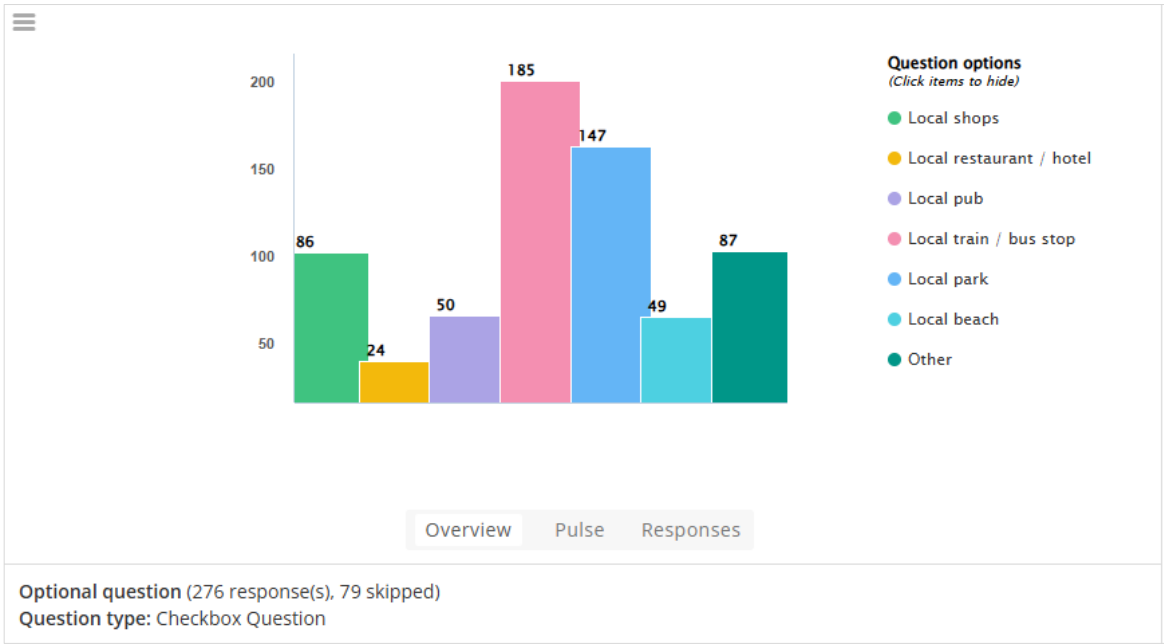


Table 9: Is there anywhere you feel unsafe in your neighbourhood? Detailed responses for “Other”

These responses can be broadly categorised into places or other people that respondents identified as making them feel unsafe.	
Other* - Some of the responses received in this category have been integrated into the results found in Feedback on Specific Locations .	
+ indicates similar comments or responses received from others. The number of + indicates how often it was raised.	
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anywhere where there are men I don't know, or where groups of men are drinking++Anywhere I see policeWhere druggies areWherever local drug addicts or alcoholics live or hang out+Abusive people who yell outWhen there are no people aroundAt home because of the people in my neighbourhood / or my neighbours++++
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Around the streets where I live+++Around my streets (local break in's, car break in's, knock and runs) +++

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On bike tracks and trails because others ride recklessly • Shared bike paths and regular footpaths due to e-bikes riding too fast, unsafe and dangerous++++ • Wherever people are riding e-bikes and scooters++++ • Clubs • Local skate parks • Walking at night alone • On the road due to dangerous and aggressive drivers+++ • Anywhere at night • Near housing commission areas • At the hospital • On streets near train stations and pubs • Walking around+
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are no safe footpaths and walkways • Where there is poor lighting++ • Where there is poor visibility, too many trees or no line of sight+ • Whenever people let their dogs off leash++

Questions about the Wollongong CBD and surrounding areas

Table 10:

	Answer	Number	%
Do you usually go out at night in the city centre (Wollongong)?	Yes	177	50.9
	No	171	49.1

Table 11:

	Answer	Number	%
Do you feel safe in the city centre (Wollongong), during the day?	Yes	273	78.4
	No	75	21.6

Table 12:

	Answer	Number	%
Do you feel safe in the city centre (Wollongong), at night?	Yes	109	31.8
	No	234	68.2

Graph 3: Is there anywhere you feel unsafe in the city centre (Wollongong)? (Select all that apply)

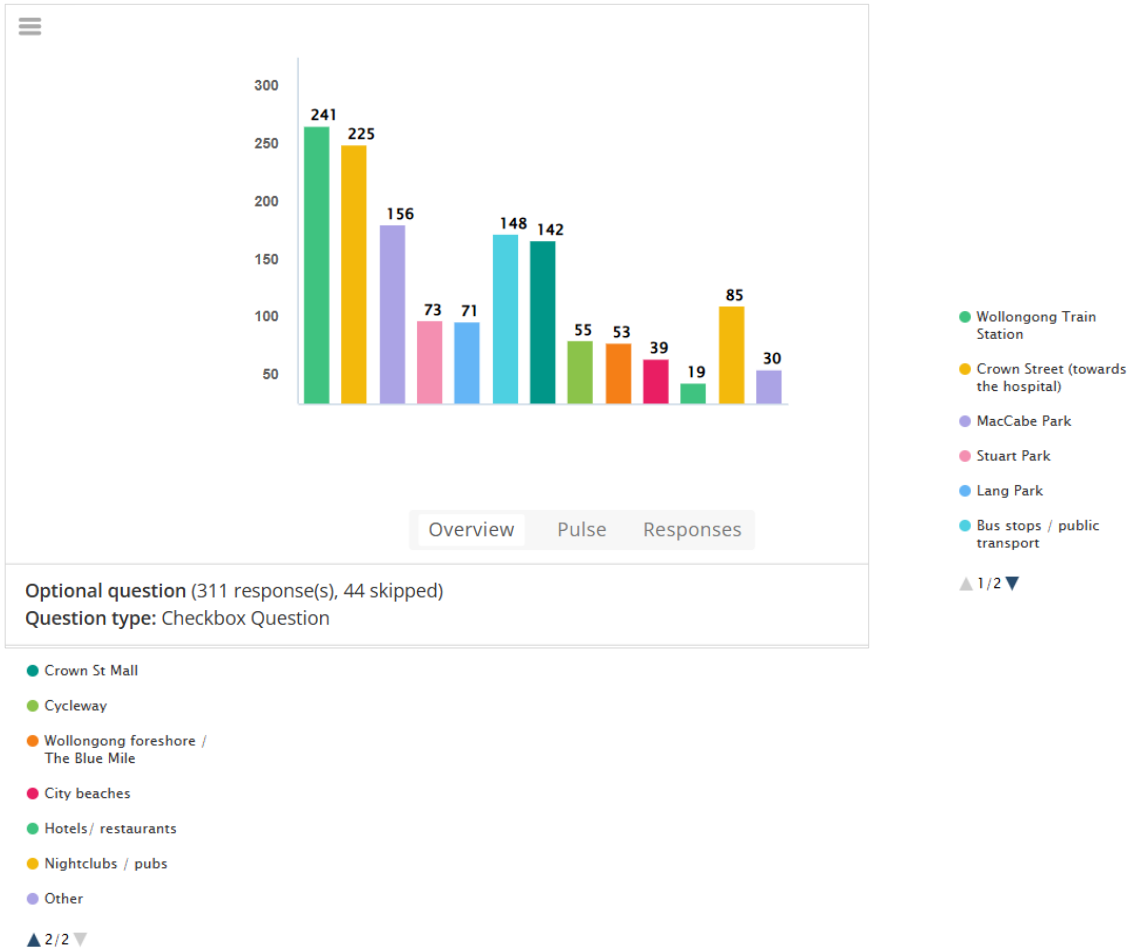


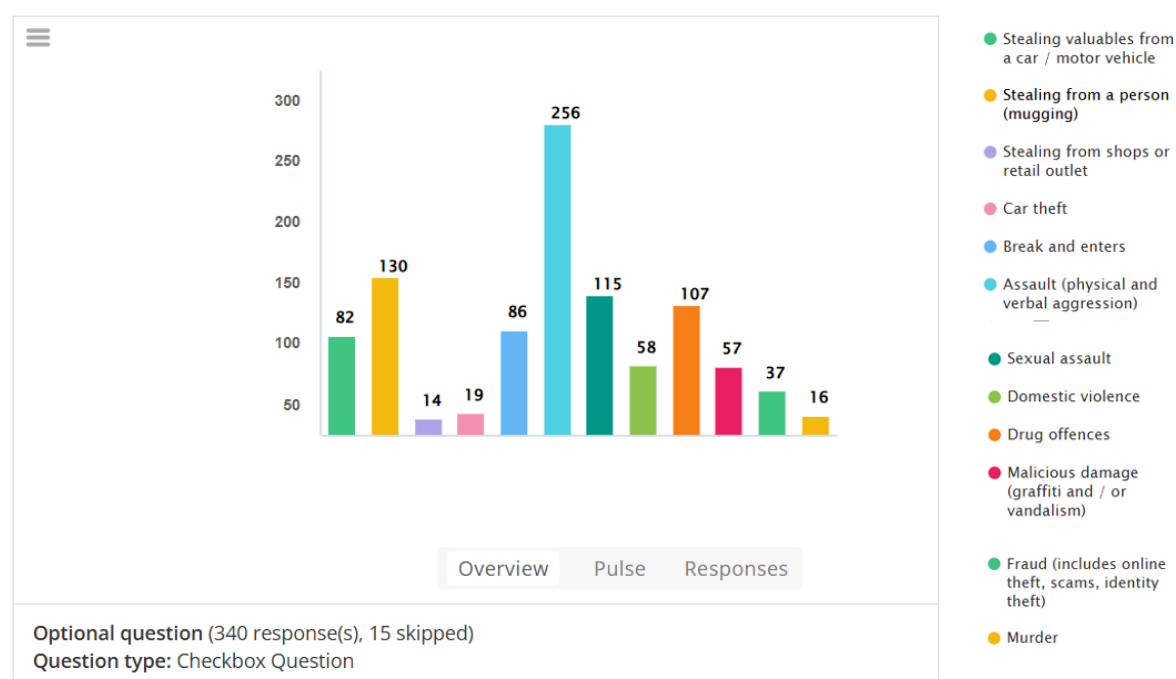
Table 13: Is there anywhere you feel unsafe in city centre (Wollongong)? Detailed responses for “Other”

These responses can be broadly categorised into places or other people that respondents identified as making them feel unsafe.	
Other* - Some of the responses received in this category have been integrated into the results found in Feedback on Specific Locations .	
+ indicates similar comments or responses received from others. The number of + indicates how often it was raised.	
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anywhere where that men gather+Anywhere near policeWherever there are drug addictsMen driving in loud cars yelling things out the windowPeople in the street at night who yell out
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Near social housing ++Car parks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The harbour
Roads and footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around roads and footpaths because of aggressive cyclists There are not enough safe walking paths Crossing roads because of aggressive driving and not enough pedestrian infrastructure Too many bike lanes and electric scooters

Community Crime Concerns

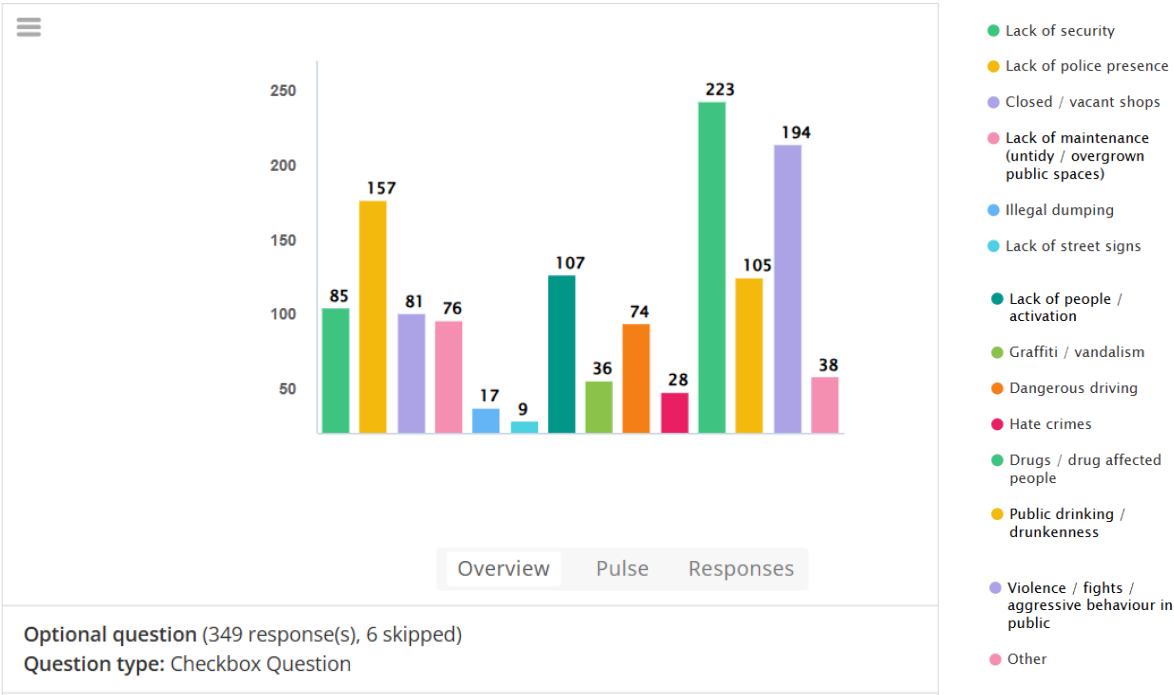
Graph 4: What are your top three crime concerns?



People indicated that they were most concerned about their personal safety with the top three responses being:

- Assault - physical and verbal aggression (75.3%)
- Stealing from a person /mugging (38.2%)
- Sexual assault (33.8%)

Graph 5: What are the top three factors that impact your feelings of safety?



The factors that were most identified as impacting people's feeling of safety were:

- Drugs and drug affected people (63.9%)
- Violence / fights / aggressive behaviour in public (55.6%)
- Lack of police presence (45%)
- Lack of people / activation (30.7%)
- Public drinking / drunkenness (30.1%)

Table 14: What are the top three factors that impact your feelings of safety? Detailed responses for “Other”

These responses can be broadly categorised into people and transport / pedestrian safety with other issues including lighting, dogs and gendered violence.	
+ indicates similar comments or responses received from others. The number of + indicates how often it was raised.	
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Groups of men+• Behaviours related to mental health, drugs and alcohol, aggression and homelessness. ++++++• People protesting in the mall
Transport / Pedestrian safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-bikes on shared paths, Blue Mile, roads, all cycleway – they are too fast, create danger and risk for all other users of paths especially children and older people+++++• Prioritising cyclists on roads• Not enough cycling infrastructure• Lack of pedestrian safety and infrastructure (road crossings), poorly designed++• Too many bikes everywhere• Speeding and dangerous driving

Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted culture of gendered violence and intimidation against women, not enough awareness or education or accountability+++ Stray dogs or dogs off leash, on streets++ Police, not present enough, take too long to respond++ Lack of adequate lighting+++++++
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Reporting

Table 15:

	Answer	Number	%
Have you been the victim of, or witnessed a crime in the last 12 months?	Yes	122	35.1
	No	226	64.9

Table 16:

	Answer	Number	%
Did you report the crime?	Yes	56	46.3
	No	65	53.7

Table 17:

(Of the 56 people who had experienced a crime)

	Answer	Number	%
Who did you report the crime to?	Police (Local police, 000, Police Assistant Line)	52	93%
	Council	2	3.6%
	Crimestoppers	1	
	Security	1	

Table 18: If you chose not to report the crime, was there a reason why?

+ indicates similar comments or responses received from others. The number of + indicates how often it was raised.

Lack of trust, confidence or familiarity with police and reporting processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of police interest / nothing gets done about it++++++ • No response from police- police line and online police page was not working++ • Police station was closed • DV – bad experiences reporting, too emotionally vulnerable/ traumatised to talk to police+ • Never feel heard • Poor response from police previously • Feel like police are biased / discriminatory or racist++ • Waste of time and effort • Police forms / reporting process too hard, too long to complete++
Perception that there is no value in reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because this sort of thing just happens all the time • It didn't seem like big enough deal (but was terrifying) • Common incident • No chance of catching them • Put on community Facebook instead • Didn't feel worth it, and would have been hard to prove • No evidence or other witnesses+++ • Not enough harm (no physical harm)
Negative consequences of reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of retaliation or repercussions +++++
Not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already reported by someone else++++++ • Offenders were caught at the time+ • Police were present

Sources of Information

Graph 6: Where do you usually get news and information about crime and safety? (Select all that apply).

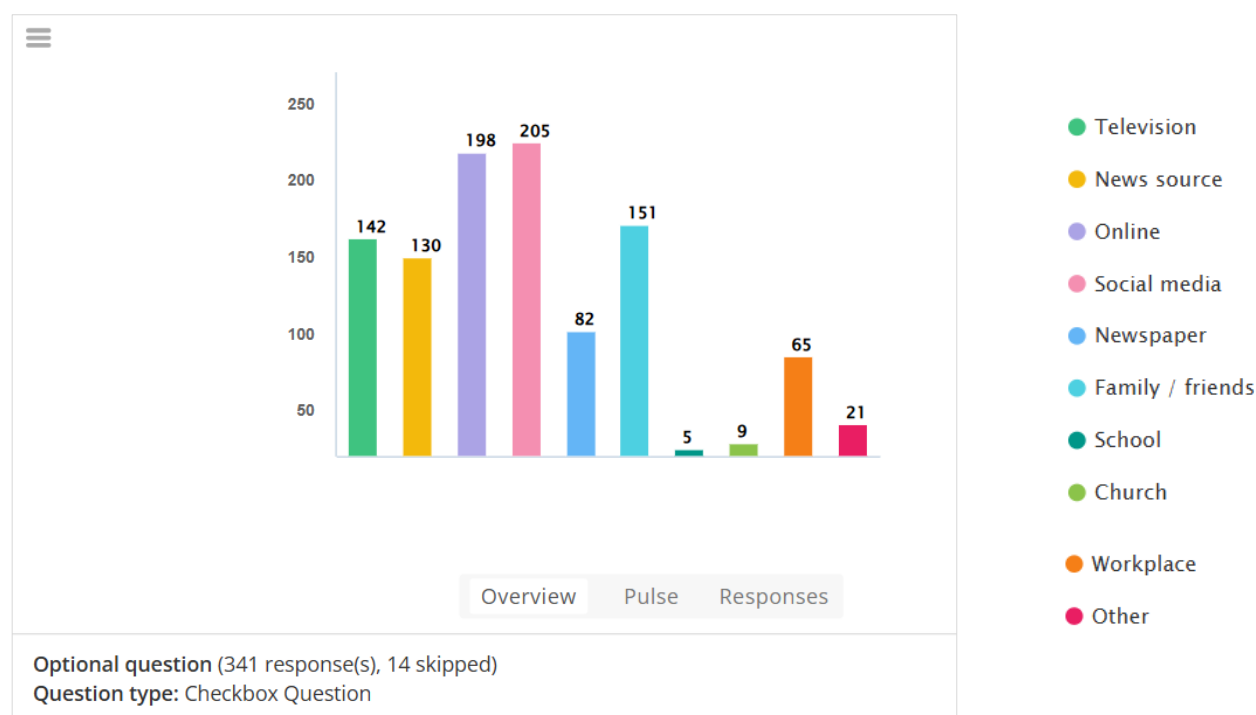


Table 19: Where do you usually get news and information about crime and safety? Detailed responses for Other

+ denotes similar comments across multiple responses.	
Local social networks (in person / digital)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours • Community groups – their social media, newsletters+ • Email groups • Facebook Community Noticeboard groups++ • Local shopkeeper, corner shop++
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local radio – ABC Illawarra, i98++++
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Bureau of Statistics • Police
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal observation, experience+++

Suggestions

239 respondents of the survey provided ideas and suggestions on ways to improve their own feeling of safety, and that of the community. Most people at face-to-face engagements provided suggestions on how to improve safety in public spaces. These responses have been themed and summarised below:

1. Improved lighting and surveillance

- **Increase street lighting** in parks, footpaths, bike trails, car parks, public transport hubs, and busy streets and residential /suburban streets too (e.g., Keira St, Burelli St, Crown St, Church St).
- **Upgrade and maintain existing lighting** where visibility is currently poor (such as Pioneer Beach, Crown Street Mall) and paths leading to railway stations and other public transport stops. Ongoing and regular maintenance to ensure bulbs and breakages are repaired quickly. When planning for streetlights, consider positioning them so that there are no dark gaps between them.
- **Install more CCTV cameras** in high-crime areas, including the CBD, train stations, parks, and shared walkways. Consider motion activated CCTV.
- **Clearly display CCTV signs** to deter criminal activities.
- **Add free and accessible emergency phones** in dark or isolated public spaces for quick access to help.
- **Use motion-sensor lighting** in parks and walkways to enhance safety while conserving energy.

2. Increased police and security presence

- **Increase foot patrols** by police officers and security personnel, especially at night.
- **Have police on bicycles** for better mobility and visibility in public spaces, shopping malls, and entertainment precincts.
- **Station security guards at public transport hubs** to improve safety at bus stops and train stations.
- **Regular patrols around known crime hotspots**, including MacCabe Park, North Beach toilets, and Crown St Mall.
- **Stronger enforcement against drug-related crimes**, including public intoxication and substance abuse in highly frequented areas.
- **Encourage community-police engagement** and positive proactive friendly police personnel to build trust and improve safety reporting.

3. Addressing public drug and alcohol issues and providing more support

- **Expand mental health and drug rehabilitation programs** to offer long-term support for affected individuals.
- **Relocate homeless shelters and support services** away from the CBD to prevent congregation and anti-social behaviour in public areas.
- **Increase funding for social housing initiatives** to provide stable accommodation and reduce street presence.
-

- **Stronger enforcement on public intoxication** to ensure safety in shopping areas, train stations, and parks.
- **Increase access to safe spaces and community services** for vulnerable individuals to reduce street crime.
- **Consultation and collaboration** with homelessness and other services



Figure 2 Crown Street Mall Pop Up

4. Public space activation and maintenance

- **Regularly remove graffiti and clean and maintain all public spaces** to improve perception of safety.
- **Increase activation of public areas** with markets, outdoor dining, music, community events, and family-friendly events – create good vibes. Facilitated activations and people in spaces.
- **Improve parks and green spaces** by adding better seating, shaded areas, and well-maintained pathways. Design spaces that don't have spaces or areas to hide, or not visible to public.
- **Encourage businesses and business activity** (for nighttime operations as well) to increase foot traffic and deter crime, eliminate empty shopfronts. Free parking will encourage more people.
- **Enhance the streetscape in key areas** (e.g., Crown St, Dapto, Port Kembla) to make them more inviting.
- **Redesign and refurbish key public facilities**, such as the Ribbonwood Centre, to reduce loitering and anti-social behaviour.
- **Public artwork and vibrancy** – keep public spaces welcoming and vibrant with colour or artworks.

5. Traffic and pedestrian safety

- **Reduce speed limits** in high-pedestrian areas (e.g., 30 km/h in city centre and residential areas).
- **Enforce road rules for cyclists and e-bike riders**, ensuring they do not speed or ride on footpaths. Provide education for all road and path users. Prioritise safety for pedestrians and people with limited mobility or mobility aids.
- **Separate cycle lanes from pedestrian walkways** to prevent collisions.

- **Improve footpath conditions** by repairing cracks, removing trip hazards, and widening paths where needed.
- **Enhance road safety measures**, such as pedestrian crossings and speed cameras, greater separations between busy roads and pedestrian footpaths.
- **Increase police presence to enforce traffic laws**, particularly against hoons and reckless drivers.

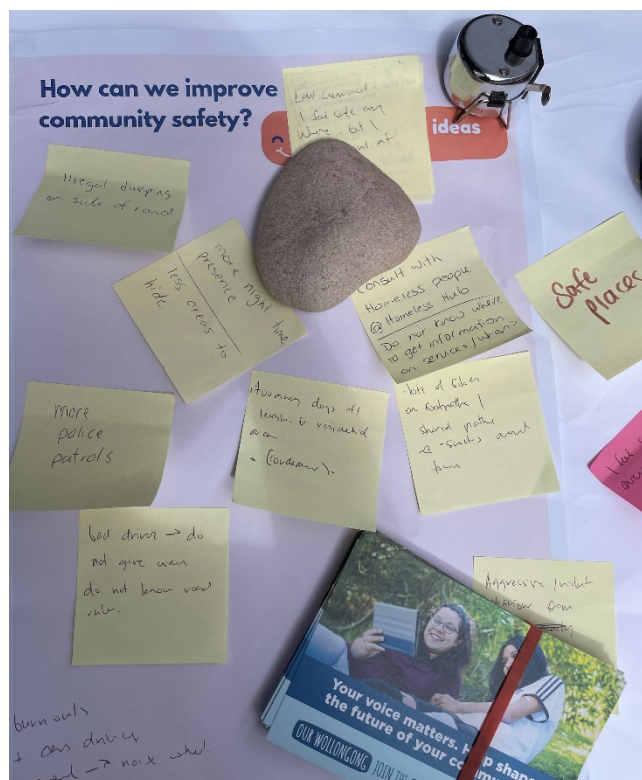


Figure 3 Feedback from Pop Up

6. Stronger community engagement, education and reporting

- **Implement a simpler crime reporting system** for lower-level crimes, such as break-ins and vandalism.
- **Create a dedicated app or hotline for reporting safety concerns**, including stray animals, dangerous footpaths, and illegal activity.
- **Launch public education campaigns** on safety, crime prevention, and respectful community behaviour. Education and awareness supporting societal / cultural change and no tolerance of discriminatory and intimidating behaviours.
- **Encourage community-led initiatives**, such as neighbourhood watch programs and local safety groups.
- **Hold regular public forums on safety concerns**, allowing residents to share their experiences and suggest solutions.
- **Visible action and enforcement** around things that compromise safety (e-bikes, dogs off leash, abusive behaviours in public) will encourage more people to report.
- **Programs and activities for young people to access easily and free** and safe places to go such as youth centre / homework / sports programs to keep the busy and interested.

Social Media responses

The comprehensive social media campaign comprised of both paid and organic social media posts created significant reach across the platforms and generated many community comments. Social media comments consisted of concerns and suggestions about improving community safety as well as acknowledging some of current projects or interventions across the city. They reflected what we heard across the broader feedback during this engagement. Issues raised include:

- The need to improve pedestrian and bike safety, slow car speeds, better manage e-bikes and e-scooters.
- Urban renewal and encouraging activations and improving access to the mall space.
- Concern that some planting initiatives with trees will reduce line of sight and passive surveillance in the future.
- More lighting and better lighting, emergency telephone points.
- Active and visible policing and open local police stations.
- Greater enforcement and penalties for crimes and criminals.
- Employment and housing support for individuals and community members to help lift them out of poverty.

Across several different posts, positive feedback was received on the lighting projects in MacCabe Park and Ethel Hayton Walk.

Feedback on Specific Locations

The community also provided information about locations or areas across the LGA where they had identified a safety concern, felt unsafe or would like to see a particular improvement to safety. An overview of issues and concerns raised are listed here, by suburb.

Bulli

- Loose dogs frightening residents
- Fire hazard house nearby
- No safe pedestrian paths on Franklin Rd and Thompson St
- Poor lighting on bike path (McCauleys Beach to Bellambi), Campbell St pedestrian path, Ursula Rd, and Bulli High area
- Unsafe, steep, and uneven access on Park Rd (railway overpass), Waniora Headland steps, and laneway between Ursula Rd and Alroy St

Coniston

- Unsafe areas include Edney Lane, underpass under Masters Rd, and tunnel/bridge near Coniston Station

Dapto

- Hooning and loud motorbikes/cars revving engines all night
- Unsafe public areas (Byamee St, Fowlers Rd reserve, Dapto Mall alleyways, Ribbonwood Centre).
- Lack of green spaces and shade
- Rough sleepers and antisocial behaviour at Ribbonwood Centre

Fairy Meadow

- Overgrown trees in Guest Park create hiding spots

- Public drinking at Fairy Meadow Beach

Gwynneville

- Very dark pedestrian path near Throsby Dr/Dennison St
- University of Wollongong – frequent campus harassment

Helensburgh

- Insufficient footpaths, even on main roads

Horsley

- Footpaths needed on Horsley Drive

Lake Illawarra

- Motorbikes, dirt bikes and e-scooters causing issues
- Poorly lit foreshore pathway from Koonawarra to Tallawarra
- Negative interactions in the area

Kembla Grange

- Harry Graham Drive – frequent street parties, burnouts, and reckless driving

Koonawarra

- Drug activity around shops
- Poor lighting at Koonawarra Bay and Culgoa Crescent footpath

Mangerton

- Identified hot spot location with high crime, vandalism, fires, and illegal dumping

Otford

- Large construction trucks making roads unsafe for pedestrians

Port Kembla

- Dangerous intersection at Military Rd & Darcy Rd, plus unsafe pedestrian crossings near King George Oval

Tarrawanna

- Confusing and unclear road markings at Caldwell Ave & Princes Hwy

Thirroul

- Poor lighting at Thomas Gibson Park, Thirroul Pool, shared path to Newbold St, and McCauleys bike path

Warrawong

- Blocked catchment area at Kully Bay harming fish and eels
- Warrawong Plaza – poor lighting near taxi rank, high presence of drug-affected people

Windang

- Poor lighting around tennis courts

Wollongong

- Poor lighting, unsafe secluded car parks, and lack of pedestrian pathways (Cliff Rd, Corrimal St, Rawson St)
- Excessive e-scooters and crowded Blue Mile
- Unsafe bus stops due to intoxicated and aggressive individuals
- Dangerous areas: CBD laneways, WIN Stadium surroundings, Crown St/Piccadilly (drug activity, homelessness, and crime)
- Wollongong Mall – unsafe atmosphere, especially Thursday nights
- Wollongong Hospital precinct – poorly lit areas, high presence of substance-affected individuals.
- Wollongong Train Station – unsafe bridge, lack of security, antisocial behaviour
- Unsafe public spaces: MacCabe Park, Lang Park, Arts Precinct, Continental Pools, Stuart Park, and Belmore Basin (hooning and burnouts)
- Victoria St car park needs better lighting and CCTV

Wollongong West

- More street lighting needed for safer walking at night
- Tony's Chicken Shop area needs lighting and CCTV

Woonona

- Poor street lighting at Pioneer Beach estate

Other

As part of our conversations with multicultural communities, and newly arrived community members, we heard that there are some specific and unique concerns to people who have limited English language skills and familiarity in the local environment. These include:

- They often rely on public transport but often are not confident enough to use it independently. Lack of English skills and being unfamiliar with the routes means they often feel worried and uncertain.
- In busy and crowded public spaces, the noise can be overwhelming and makes it seem unsafe. This is often compounded by hearing lots of English (people talking, screens, announcements) but not understanding what is being said.
- There is an increased sense of not feeling safe when unfamiliar things are happening around their homes including unfamiliar people knocking on the door or entering their property, or people accessing their property such as using their bins without permission people sometimes knock on the door and run away.
- Neighbours sometimes use their bin without permission.

Demographic data – online participation only

Table 21: Gender

What gender do you identify as?				
Woman	Man	Non-binary	Other	Prefer not to say
239	93	6	1	8

Table 22: Age range

Please select an age range							
Under 17	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 or over
3	24	62	68	75	63	43	11

Table 23: Please identify which postcode you live in

Postcode	Associated Suburbs		Number of respondents
2500	Coniston Gwynneville Keiraville Mangerton Mount Keira Mount Thomas	North Wollongong Spring Hill West Wollongong Wollongong Wollongong West	123
2518	Bellambi Corrimal Corrimal East	East Corrimal Tarrawanna Towradgi	40
2530	Avondale Brownsville Cleveland Dapto Dombarton Haywards Bay Horsley	Huntley Kanaooka Koonawarra Marshall Mount Penrose Wongawilli Yallah	31
2525	Figtree		25
2519	Balgownie Fairy Meadow Fernhill	Mount Ousley Mount Pleasant	21
2517	Russell Vale Woonona Woonona East		18
2526	Cordeaux	Kembla Grange Kembla Heights	18

	Cordeaux Heights Farmborough Heights	Mount Kembla Unanderra	
2515	Austinmer Clifton Coledale	Scarborough Thirroul Wombarra	15
2508	Coalcliff Darkes Forest Helensburgh Lilyvale Madden Plains	Otford Stanwell Park Stanwell Tops Woronora Dam	12
2505	Port Kembla		12
2502	Cringila Lake Heights	Primbee Warrawong	10
2528	Windang		9
2506	Berkeley		7
2516	Bulli		3

High School Workshops – What we heard from young people



Figure 4 High School Workshop

To ensure we heard directly from young people, workshops were organised with students from four local high schools. The workshops were designed to provide information on the Community Safety Plan and Council's role in community safety, and gain an understanding of the safety concerns, experiences and knowledge of local young people.

A total of 64 students from Dapto High School; Keira High School; Woonona High School and Five Islands College participated. Their responses are presented below.

High School Workshop Themes

Improved lighting, amenity and infrastructure – Inadequate lighting in public spaces, streets and thoroughfares was consistently identified as an issue; conditions of roads and footpaths particularly flooding, unevenness, potholes also make walking in suburban areas unsafe. Young people want to see improvements to directional and wayfinding signage and more safe and secure access to toilets, shade, water, shelter and seating in parks and recreational spaces. Issues around visibility and sightlines when walking along overpasses and footbridges were also mentioned.

Transport – Train stations and bus stops were identified as places where many young people felt unsafe due to inadequate lighting, security and limited access / egress, and for being hubs for anti-social behaviour. Young people also identified that travelling on public transport was sometimes unsafe, infrequent and unreliable and required them to share space or wait in spaces with others whom they may find intimidating, with limited security. Public transport was reported as being expensive, limiting young people's capacity to use it frequently.

E-bikes - Young people identified that the proliferation of e-bike riders was concerning as they often rode in groups and at speed. This makes pedestrians or riders of standard bicycles feel less safe.

Maintenance of public spaces – Some locations and areas were identified as experiencing ongoing vandalism and graffiti. This impacted how safe people felt travelling through those areas. There was also mention of rubbish being regularly dumped or left, and messy, overgrown areas that were not regularly maintained. The lack of maintenance around some areas meant that visibility and sightlines were compromised. Some mentioned that streetlights were often blown or damaged and not replaced and there was also risk of drug use equipment in some places.

Police and security – Young people have varying views on the impact of police and security. Some believed that greater police and/or security presence would be better and that there should be more staffed police stations. A few people mentioned that if security had a more visible presence, and more capacity and willingness to act when anti-social behaviour was occurring in areas like Wollongong and other train stations and Crown St Mall, that would be better. Others believed that police sometimes targeted young people unnecessarily and that their presence and approach towards young people could be intimidating, or anxiety inducing and that they were often difficult to approach (in person or at stations). Some believed they had experienced unwarranted checks from security or profiling.

Personal safety – Many young people felt unsafe, intimidated or threatened by other people's behaviour in public spaces. Aggressive behaviour, physical fights and arguments were mentioned as well as drug-affected people in public. Young women and girls mentioned boys and men could make them feel unsafe through actions such as catcalling or yelling out, and non-verbal behaviour like staring, gesturing or following. Loitering or gatherings of big groups of people was also mentioned, often making people feel uncomfortable in a park or square or causing people to avoid certain areas.

Many young people mentioned that they felt less safe walking around public spaces at night.

Drugs, alcohol and vapes – There is significant concern for young people across the LGA about people who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol in public spaces. They feel intimidated and concerned

and do not feel safe in areas where people are drug affected, or hanging around smoking and drinking. Many young people who live in the Wollongong CBD mentioned specifically that they were consistently exposed to drunken behaviours, noise and aggression. The ease of accessing vapes and vape shops was also repeatedly raised, with many believing it attracted anti-social behaviour into areas and similarly had concerns that young people should not be able buy vapes so easily.

Inclusive safety – Young people mentioned that safety and the experience of safety was different for different people such as women, girls and gender diverse people; people with neurodivergence; rough sleepers and people from multicultural backgrounds. They acknowledged that their experiences or safety concerns were sometimes linked to who they are, or how they present to the world.

Privacy and technology – Some people were fearful of being hacked or scammed on their personal devices as well as spam calls and texts which are invasive to their personal privacy. Concerns were raised around being watched by CCTV cameras and not knowing who is monitoring or watching them.

Where and how do young people find out about things that may impact their safety?

We heard that young people find out about issues and events that may impact their safety in a range of ways including:

- News - *"Sometimes hearing about different things on the news makes me feel less safe"*
- Social media – snapchat, video sharing, Facebook, Instagram, community notice pages - *"On the community pages of the suburb that I live in I see things like snake warnings or where and when people steal stuff"*
- Newspapers
- Internet
- Other people – friends, siblings, social groups
 - Word of mouth, rumours, eavesdropping – *"I hear a lot more about unsafe stuff more than safe stuff"*
 - Radio
 - Observation
 - Parents
 - Rumours

A lot of fights are videoed and then they're shared around or on Facebook groups, it makes me more aware of what's going on and who I might need to avoid

I found out a lot of information from my parents, they tell me where to avoid and who to avoid and they tell me this information based on their own experience. For instance if they go for a walk and they see things.

We also heard young people rely on a wide range of information sources to be aware or learn about issues that impact their safety, as well as the options to report concerns, criminal or suspicious behaviour.

Table 24: Where do you find information relating your safety

30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents if they're not involved • Teachers • Vandalism – 000, non-emergency, property damage • Parents • Kids helpline • E safety commissioner • 000 • Police station
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What would make young people feel safer?

Young people had several suggestions, ideas and changes that would make them feel safer in the community.

General feelings of safety:

- Areas like Fairy Meadow, Russell Vale, Wollongong Harbour, Woonona, and Corrimal feel safe due to factors like proximity to school, active community, and well-lit spaces.
- Beach areas are considered safe because of lifeguards, lots of people, and a sense of community presence. There is a visible sense of 'well-being' and health in these areas.
- Shopping centres and community spaces feel safer when there are people around (using the space or enjoying the space appropriately) and there are fewer empty shopfronts

Physical infrastructure and environment:

- Well-lit spaces, especially streetlights and areas like McCabe Park with fairy lights
- More creative and vibrant lighting
- Brighter streetlights
- Clear lines of sight
- Areas that are more open and visible
- Areas with no rubbish, graffiti, or people loitering
- Keep and maintain clean and safe public spaces.
- More bins
- Soundproof phone boxes
- Better street and directional signs
- Safer Reporting options
- More public art or murals to brighten up spaces
- Things like emergency buttons at lights and telephone boxes with privacy for safety.

Security and policing:

- CCTV (but not too many)
- Outwardly friendly and well-trained police
- Reliable and trustworthy security
- Access to security or other service to escort people to places, they don't feel safe going alone (e.g., to cars or public transport).

Community education and support:

- Access to self-defence programs, safety advice, and practical classes especially for women and girls.
- Access to services for people in distress, like those acting strangely or angrily, support for homeless people and/ or addicts
- Easy access to reporting and reporting systems
- Need for Bite-Sized Information: Preference for short, easy-to-understand safety tips in a concise format, rather than long reads or lengthy videos

- Information available on media and formats that young people use e.g. social media like Tik Tok or Instagram
- More community education and awareness needed
- Better community initiatives
- Interactive social media: Short safety tips or life hacks on platforms like TikTok and Instagram are found to be helpful.
- Having safe spaces to go to

Public transport and accessibility:

- Frequent and free transport, especially for young people
- More buses for ease of travel and connections
- More public transport options
- Free Wi-Fi and phone charging stations

Activation and social interaction:

- People and having people around different spaces
- Areas with higher foot traffic (e.g., shops, parks) and activities or events going on

Feedback on Specific Locations

We also heard about the locations and areas where young people live and spend time. There were some very specific concerns and issues raised as well as general concerns in different geographical areas. An overview of issues and concerns raised are listed here, by suburb.

Bellambi

- Poor lighting in footbridges, bike paths, and laneways, making public spaces unsafe at night
- Issues with crime, including drug use, vandalism, and public disturbances
- Frequent flooding, particularly around the high school

Bulli

- Poor lighting in public spaces, making them unsafe at night

Coniston

- Crime and antisocial behaviour, including public drinking and drug use
- Speeding and reckless driving
- Poor infrastructure, including uneven footpaths and potholes

Corrimal

- Speeding and reckless driving, particularly on Raleigh St, a hotspot for accidents

Dapto

- Poor lighting in footbridges, bike paths, and public transport hubs (train stations, bus stops)
- Crime and antisocial behaviour, including drug use and vandalism, particularly at Dapto Mall
- Road safety concerns due to hooning, burnouts, and unregistered vehicles
- Poor infrastructure with broken footpaths, potholes, and flooding issues near the high school
- Unsafe train stations and bus stops with loitering, drug use, and aggressive behaviour
- Skate parks feel unsafe due to drug use, public drinking, and broken glass

Fairy Meadow

- Poor lighting in public spaces and laneways
- Crime and antisocial behaviour in commercial areas, including vandalism and drug use
- E-bikes and dirt bikes being ridden dangerously on footpaths
- Poor infrastructure, with uneven footpaths and potholes
- Illegal dumping under bridges and in public areas
- Skate park feels unsafe due to drug use, broken glass, and lack of proper amenities

Horsley

- Poor lighting in public spaces, making footpaths and parks unsafe at night

Kanahooka

- Unsafe drinking water

Kembla Grange

- Poor lighting in public spaces
- Poor infrastructure, including cracked footpaths and road maintenance issues

Tarrawanna

- Crime and antisocial behaviour, including vandalism and drug use
- Illegal dumping under bridges and in public areas

Thirroul

- E-bikes and dirt bikes being ridden dangerously on footpaths

Wollongong

- Poor lighting in public spaces and transport hubs (train stations, bus stops)
- Crime and antisocial behaviour, especially in commercial areas and transport hubs and other key locations across the city centre
- Speeding, hooning, and reckless driving
- Poor infrastructure, including potholes, broken footpaths, and bridges in disrepair
- Unsafe train stations and bus stops due to loitering, drug use, and altercations
- Parks feel unsafe due to drug use, broken glass, and lack of proper amenities
- Wollongong Beach lacks adequate shade and seating

Next steps

- Feedback from the community received during this engagement will assist the development of the Community Safety Plan 2026-2030.
- An engagement summary will be developed and published on the Our Wollongong engagement page and sent to all participants.
- Additional engagement opportunities have been identified for targeted communities and groups, these will take place over the next few weeks.
- The Community Safety team will conduct internal engagement to inform the development of the Plan.

- The draft Community Safety Plan 2026-2030 will be placed on public exhibition in late 2025 subject to Council endorsement.