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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

lpswich City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners as custodians of the land, winds and water we share. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, as the keepers of the traditions, cultures and stories of a proud people.

BACKGROUND

Ipswich City Council (council) aims to engage with the community on issues affecting the city and local issues that significantly impact the community. Council has a Community Engagement Strategy based on the principle that community engagement is the foundation of sustainable decision-making and is mutually beneficial to the community and council. The strategy commits to the following:

"Wherever you live, work or play we will proactively engage with you, so we collectively make the best decisions."

Ipswich City Council established five Community Reference Groups (CRGs) in 2019. The groups aligned with the standing committees of council at that time:

- Economic Development
- Environment
- Growth
- Resilient Communities
- Transparent Governance.

Members went through an open Expression of Interest to join; guidelines were established to outline the operation and membership of the groups, and each group is governed by a Terms of Reference (TOR). Members could provide feedback to council in a structured forum, acting as advisors and representatives of their community.

CRG meetings were scheduled quarterly when they were established, which moved to bi-monthly following initial feedback from members to attend meetings more frequently. Members also had the opportunity to engage via a private group page on Shape Your Ipswich, council's online community engagement platform. Engagement between members and the wider community was encouraged between meetings.

As per the TOR, the Facilitator will 'undertake a review of the efficacy of the CRGs every two years'. This includes reviewing the TOR document, suitability of meeting frequency and the efficacy of the group in meeting the objectives and working to the TOR.

Relevant policy and legislation includes:

- Queensland Local Government Act 2009 (requirement for council to undertake community engagement)
- Ipswich City Council Guidelines for CRGs
- Council's Community Engagement Policy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- <u>iFuture</u>, council's corporate plan and community vision.

Community Reference Group Objectives

The purpose of the CRGs is to provide a platform where community representatives provide information, advice and views to council on matters relating to core business functions of their particular CRG.

The objectives of the reference groups are to:

- Provide a deliberative forum for members to discuss issues of community interest
- Draw on local knowledge and enhance community voice in decision-making processes and outcomes
- Build community understanding of council core business functions and specific projects and activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

The TOR states that a review of the CRGs is to be undertaken every two years.

This report outlines the results of the review completed in 2021 after the initial two year CRG membership period and will look at how the CRG program has progressed since the previous monitoring and evaluation undertaken. The review will be used to assist in the continuance of future community engagement programs.

This review will tell us if the objectives of the CRGs are being met and continue to monitor the quality of engagement practice and processes including:

- Demographics of members
- Participation in decision-making
- Access to information
- Facilitation of meetings
- Satisfaction of purpose and objectives.

The 2021 review, undertaken between April - August 2021, has incorporated:

 a survey of CRG members to track feedback on the key questions asked in the previous surveys and further questions on the success of the CRG

- a survey of council staff who have been involved with the CRGs through coordination of and/or presentation to a CRG
- key informant interviews with council General Managers and staff involved with setting up and coordinating the CRGs.

Monitoring and evaluation previously undertaken has included:

- a baseline survey to establish the position of members regarding community engagement undertaken by council
- an interim survey to track feedback on the key questions asked in the baseline survey, as well as gathering feedback on process, quality and legitimacy of decision-making and perceptions of success
- interactive engagement at the combined and individual CRG meetings.

Results of previous reviews can be seen in Appendix 1, Community Reference Groups Six Month Monitoring and Evaluation Report.

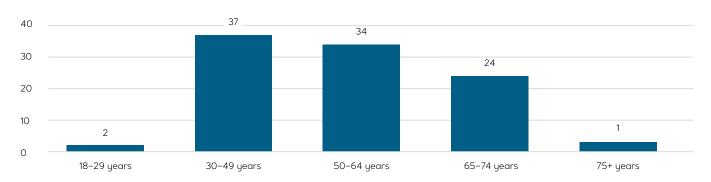


DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUPS

Demographics data gathered at the inception of the CRGs¹.

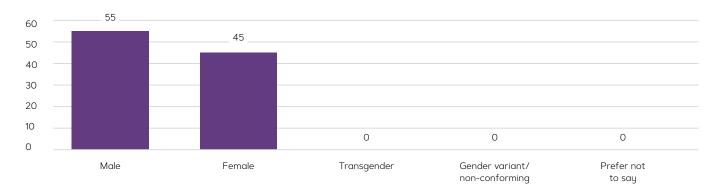
Age

The majority of members are aged between 30 and 74 years of age.



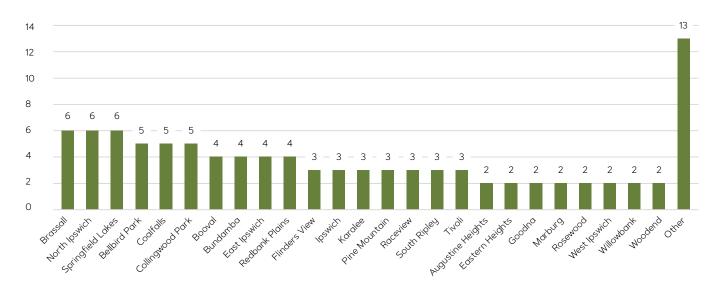
Gender

There are slightly more men than women involved in the Community Reference Groups.



Suburbs

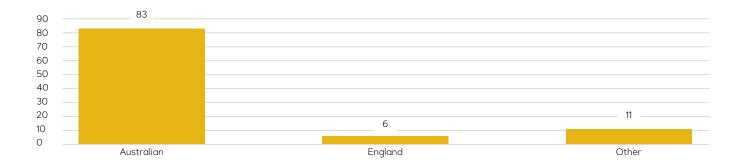
Members represent 38 suburbs across Ipswich, including central areas, new suburbs, and rural areas.



¹ Not all members provided demographic information, therefore totals may vary.

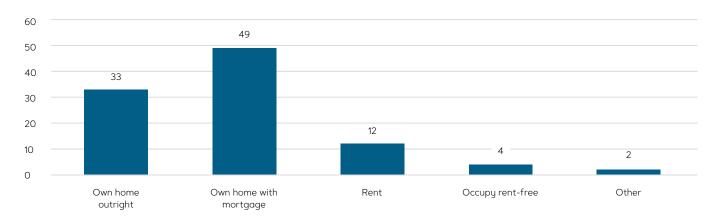
Cultural Background

While the majority of CRG members identify as Australian, other cultural backgrounds of members include: Indian, South African, Nepali, Austrian, German, American, Spanish, Iranian, British/Iranian, Kenyan.



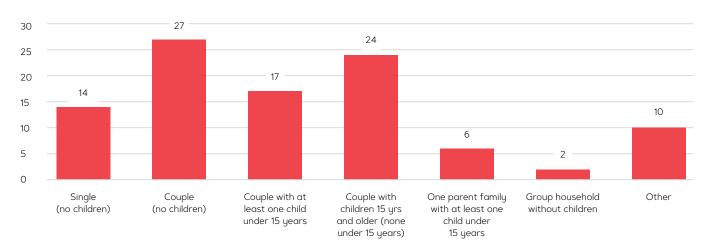
Housing Tenure

The majority of CRG members are home owners – compared to around 58% of the broader lpswich population (id.profile, 2020).



Family Composition

Family composition is fairly evenly split between those who live with children, and couples or single people without children.



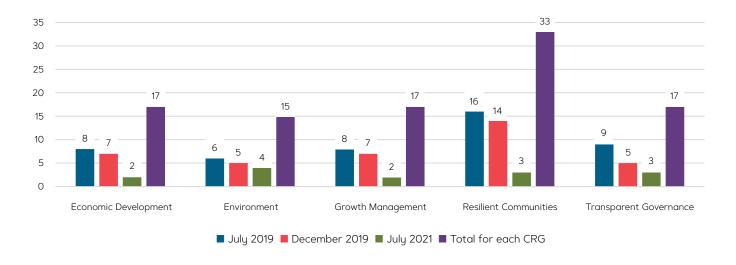
SURVEY RESULTS

The following section collates the results on a baseline survey, administered in July 2019, a follow-up survey, administered in December 2019, and a final survey in July 2021. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the evaluation surveys.

Number of survey respondents

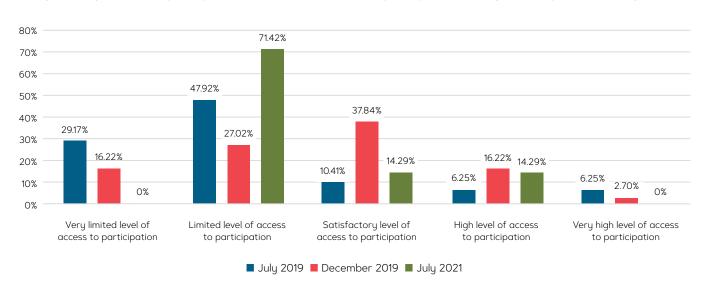
Over the two year period, the Resilient Communities CRG has had the highest response rate, followed by Economic Development, Growth Management and Transparent Governance with equal response rates. The Environment CRG had the lowest response. Note that some respondents did not answer all survey questions.

In July 2019, 47² members participated in the survey, in December 2019, 38 members participated and in 2021, 14 members participated in the evaluation survey.



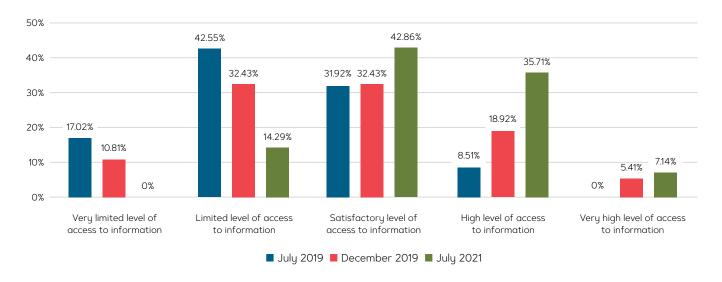
How would you rate current levels of community participation in council's decision-making processes?

Overall, respondents feel that the level of community participation in decision making is low. The latest survey had no ratings of very low level of participation; however, the low level of participation was higher than previous surveys.



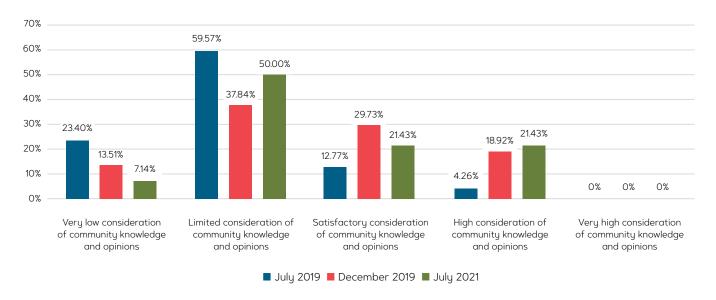
How would you rate current levels of community access to information about council decisions?

There has been an increase in the satisfaction level of community access to information about council decisions with 42.85% rating a high or very high level in 2021, compared with 24.33% in 2019.



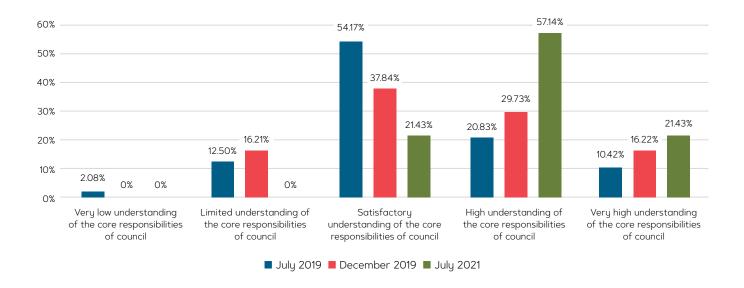
Do you feel that council currently draws on community knowledge and opinions when making decisions?

There has been an increase to 21.43% of respondents rating council as having a high consideration of community knowledge and opinions; however, over 50% of respondents feel negatively.



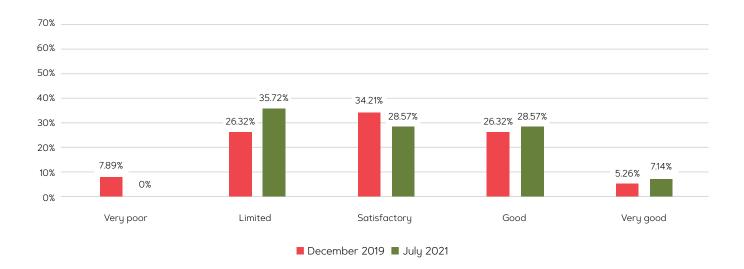
How well do you feel you understand the core responsibilities of council?

CRG members have an increased understanding of the core responsibilities of council since the commencement of the CRGs with 100% of respondents rating a satisfactory level or above.



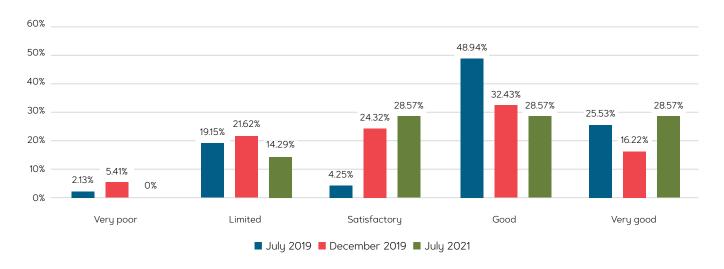
Regarding the operation of the Community Reference Groups to date, how would you rate: The purpose and objectives of the reference groups has been met?

As the CRGs have progressed, the level of satisfaction in the purpose and objectives being met is consistent with only small percentage changes in the satisfactory and above levels. In 2021, over 50% rated satisfactory or above. Note, this question was not asked in the baseline survey and as such, a comparison is not included.



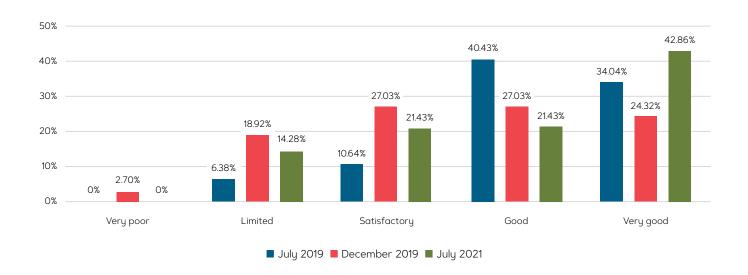
Regarding the operation of the Community Reference Groups to date, how would you rate: Provision of relevant information?

85% of respondents rated the provision of relevant information at satisfactory, good or very good. This is a slight increase from the 2019 survey, where 72% of respondents rated the provision of relevant information as satisfactory, good or very good.



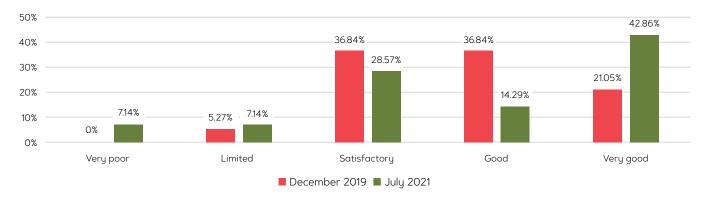
Regarding the meetings, how would you rate: Consideration of your ideas and input at the meetings?

Consideration of ideas and input at meetings remains the same as in 2019 with 78% at satisfactory or above. The percentage of lower ratings reduced by over 6% since 2019. Note that not all survey respondents attended the inaugural meeting and therefore did not respond to this question.



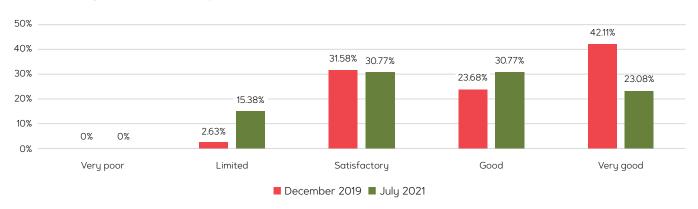
Regarding the meetings, how would you rate: Facilitation of the meetings?

Facilitation of the meetings remains highly rated with 42.86% of members giving a rating of very good compared with 21.05% in 2019. Note, this question was not asked in the baseline survey and as such, a comparison is not included.



Regarding the meetings, how would you rate: Collection and publication of minutes?

Over 80% feel positively about the collection and publication of minutes. Note, this question was not asked in the baseline survey and as such, a comparison is not included.



How would you rate your overall experience on the Community Reference Group?¹

Members' experience on the CRGs is still positive with over half of members considering their experience as good or very good in 2019 and 2021. However, overall experience satisfaction has decreased in the first two years of the CRGs, with only 57.15% rating their experience as good or very good in 2021 compared with 74.35% in 2019.

Note, this question was not asked in the baseline survey and as such, a comparison is not included.



1 For this question, members provided feedback by placing a sticker dot on a five point scale at the combined CRG meeting in December 2019 and via an online survey in July 2021.

Please provide any other comments/feedback you have on the Community Reference Group.

In the final survey, members were asked to provide any other comments or feedback on the CRGs. Response themes, along with respondent comments are provided in the table below.

ТНЕМЕ	FEEDBACK
Meeting operations	"The ICC officers involved have been extremely professional and their efforts have been faultless in my estimation."
	"The progressive drop off of committee members with attendance at the end being rather poor was disappointing."
	"Even though group numbers dropped it was a group that worked well together to achieve meeting goals."
	"I also felt that the formal agendas of meetings left little room for personal interest groups. This was a good strategy."
	"The group formed and functioned well, although the membership was varied and diverse."
Engage more meaningfully	"Appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the CRG process – still should continue – but with some review of the processes."
	"I would like to see this group continued but the direction/purpose may need to be modified."
	"With the collective knowledge of people in the room available to councils officers and councillors, there was a lack of real focus on environmental related discussion in favour of general discussion on broad policy issues."
	"A challenging task to combine a diverse group of community members into a useful feedback pathway for Council. Some of the views expressed were positive and useful but we also experienced some time wasting waffle."
	"While I enjoyed the process, I am not sure how effective we were as a group and, what value the council gained from our input."
Scope and topic identification	"The scope outlined for the Growth Management Community Reference Group (GMCRG) was quite specific. From this scope, we were provided very limited opportunities to deal with any of these topics."
	"Identify problem areas that cause concern/suspicion for the community and provide opportunity for initial, group input."
Information and	"Good for finding out information that informs community and dispels myths."
knowledge	"I found it interesting to learn about council processes and functioning. The meetings pushed me to research areas I wouldn't normally have an interest in."
Influence in decision making	"Often when attending the CRG, it felt as though when projects for consideration were presented the final decision had been made and this step of presentation to the CRG was a tick & flick step."
	"There are people on the committee that have experience in this area. Their input could have been very beneficial."
	"I feel I have benefited more from understanding council and others perspectives than I have been able to contribute to council decision making."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The CRGs provide a valuable opportunity for council and community to discuss, share ideas and provide feedback on issues that impact residents and the city. This initial two year period of the CRGs has delivered benefits to council operations and identified areas for improvement when meaningfully engaging with the community.

While there was some work towards providing more in-depth engagement with members following the first review, general feedback still indicates that members felt council don't listen to or value their feedback. The Community Engagement Team can continue to promote and encourage early engagement with community so that feedback can be used for efficient and effective decision making across council. Closing the loop with community on engagement projects and communicating how feedback is used in council decision making will also assist in establishing more meaningful engagement.

The CRG meetings and the closed group pages on Shape Your Ipswich were considered very good for information sharing and provided an increased understanding of council responsibilities. Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of topics presented at the CRG meetings.

The establishment, governance and operation of the CRGs has been successful. There was positive feedback in regards to facilitation of meetings and consideration of ideas and input at meetings.

Over 50% of members rated their level of satisfaction in the purpose and objectives being met as satisfactory or above. Clear expectations of members, council staff and the program need to be aligned to ensure roles and responsibilities are understood within a deliberative forum.

Overall benefits from the CRGs have included:

- increased engagement with our community
- varied topics presented to CRG members for feedback
- a well administered program
- a program with good governance documents and processes.

Improvement opportunities within the program:

- some scepticism remains regarding council's engagement and consultation, there is still a feeling that council is not utilising feedback provided in decision making
- more consultative engagement opportunities need to be provided to CRG members
- deliver a program which continually engages members to attend and be involved
- regular engagement with CRG members is preferred with feedback provided on project outcomes
- engagement projects and topics need to be planned to allow members to provide more meaningful feedback
- increase satisfaction levels in achieving the purpose and objectives of the CRGs.

Data has shown a drop off in attendance at CRG meetings and a reduced number of survey participants for this review. The extended timeframe between the last CRG meeting and this review, could be an indication that the current method of engagement is not the preferred by members.

Following this review, it is recommended that the CRG program, as it currently operates, ends at the completion of this two year period, and an alternative community engagement model be developed. The requirement and commitment to obtain and listen to feedback from the Ipswich community remains a priority for council and therefore an improved program is recommended to be implemented.

As a result of the review findings and undertaking research on best-practice community engagement models, the option of community panels has been identified and proposed as an alternative model to gain feedback from our community. Community panels are a contemporary form of community engagement and will provide an inclusive opportunity by which broad community sentiment on strategic issues can be understood and considered by council.

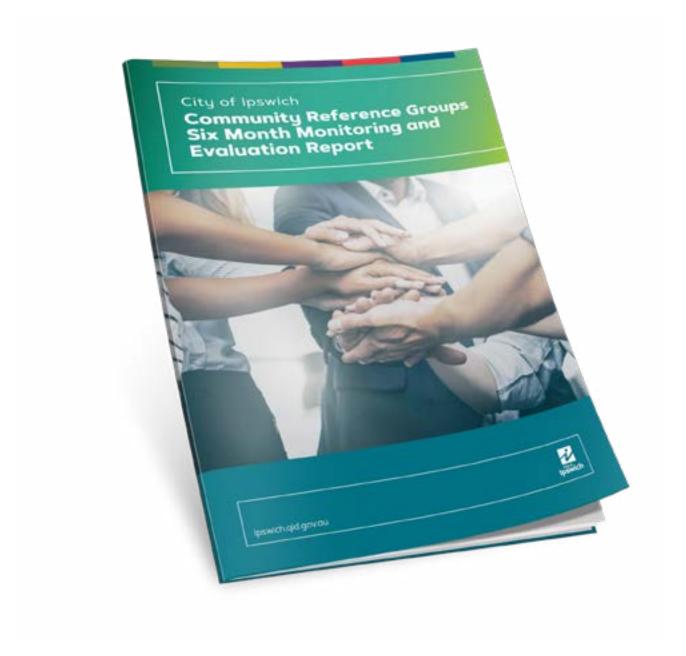
It is recommended that a key component of the community panels' program ensures meaningful engagement with members and that feedback is genuinely considered in council's decision making.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ipswich City Council acknowledges all Community Reference Group members for their valuable contribution, feedback and time as part of the CRGs over the past two years and during this CRG review process.

APPENDIX 1: PREVIOUS MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

<u>Community Reference Groups – six month Monitoring and Evaluation Report</u>



APPENDIX 2: CRG MEETING DISCUSSION TOPICS

CRG	TOPIC
Economic Development	The closure of the 10 community offices will save approximately \$2m on an ongoing basis. How might Ipswich City Council best apply these savings?
	Ipswich Central - Discuss the issues and opportunities of the precinct, looking at ways to improve its economic and social activity
	City Branding and Promotion: discuss the values, positioning and marketing of Ipswich as a place to visit, live and prosper
	Advocacy - the roles of council and community
	iFuture Corporate Plan consultation
Environment	The closure of the 10 community offices will save approximately \$2m on an ongoing basis. How might Ipswich City Council best apply these savings?
	Waste Management
	Natural Environment: Ipswich EnviroPlan, Enviroplan Program and Levy Policy, Nature Conservation Strategy
	Sustainability: Sustainable Ipswich, Sustainability Strategy
	Disaster/Emergency Management
	iFuture Corporate Plan consultation
Growth Management	The closure of the 10 community offices will save approximately \$2m on an ongoing basis. How might Ipswich City Council best apply these savings?
	Growth and Infrastructure processes – feedback for detailed presentation at October meeting
	Planning scheme consultation – feedback on consultation to date, and next steps
	Key priorities for the City of Ipswich: Review outcomes from first meeting to determine key priorities
	Shape Your Ipswich platform - GM Closed Group - Façade improvement conversation question
	CBD Update
	Briefings:
	■ Growth Areas
	Planning and planning scheme
	■ Infrastructure
	Development Assessments
	iFuture Corporate Plan consultation

Resilient Communities	The closure of the 10 community offices will save approximately \$2m on an ongoing basis. How might Ipswich City Council best apply these savings?						
	Key priorities for the City of Ipswich:						
	 Community assets/facilities (including safety and disability access) 						
	 Resources and information for community organisations 						
	Cultural understanding and diversity						
	Redbank Plains Community Centre: Social Impact Assessment						
	Online Community Engagement Platform						
	Grants and Funding						
	My Community Directory						
	Designing a program for community organisations						
	Revitalising Ipswich City Council's Community Funding and Support Program						
	iFuture Corporate Plan consultation						
Transparent Governance	The closure of the 10 community offices will save approximately \$2m on an ongoing basis. How might Ipswich City Council best apply these savings?						
	Planning scheme consultation – feedback on consultation to date, and next steps						
	Key priorities for the City of Ipswich: Review outcomes from first meeting to determine key priorities						
	Shape Your Ipswich - council's new community engagement portal						
	Community Complaints Management Framework						
	Transition to elected representation:						
	Preparation for caretaker mode						
	Councillor induction process						
	Question and answer						
	iFuture Corporate Plan consultation						
	Corporate Governance Update						
	Transparency and Integrity Hub						

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONS

lpswich

2021 CRG Review Survey Questions

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey for Community Reference Group participants. Your responses will assist with monitoring and evaluating the facilitation, support and work of the Community Reference Groups. Your responses to this survey are anonymous. You will not be personally identifiable in any reports that come out of this project. Your information will not be given to any other agency and your personal information is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Community Engagement Team at communityengagement@ipswich.qld.gov.au.

1. Regarding the operation of the Community Reference Group to date, how would you rate:

	1 Very poor	2 Limited	3 Satisfactory	4 Good	5 Very good
The purpose and objectives have been met					
Provision of relevant information					
Facilitation of the meetings					
Consideration of your ideas and input at the meetings					
Collection and publication of minutes					

2. How would you rate your overall experience on the Community Reference Group?

1	2	3	4	5
Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor

3. How would you rate current levels of community participation in council's decision making processes?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low level of participation	Low level of participation	Satisfactory level of participation	High level of participation	Very high level of participation

4. How would you rate current levels of community access to information about council decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low level of	Low level of access to	Satisfactory level of	High level of access	Very high level of
access to information	information	access to information	to information	access to information

5. Do you feel that council currently draws on community knowledge and opinions when making decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Low consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Satisfactory consideration of community knowledge and opinions	High consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Very high consideration of community knowledge and opinions

6. How well do you feel you understand the core responsibilities of council?

1	2	3	4	5
I have a very low understanding of the	I have a limited understanding of the	I have a satisfactory understanding of the	I have a high understanding of the	I have a very high understanding of the
core responsibilities	core responsibilities	core responsibilities	core responsibilities	core responsibilities
of council	of council	of council	of council	of council

7. Please provide any other comments / feedback you have on the Community Reference Group.				
8. Moving forward, what would meaningful community engagement look like to you for the City of Ipswich?				

Community Reference Groups Baseline Survey (June 2019)

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey for Community Reference Group participants. Your responses will assist with monitoring and evaluating the facilitation, support and work of the Community Reference Groups. Your responses to this survey are anonymous. You will not be personally identifiable in any reports that come out of this project. Your information will not be given to any other agency and your personal information is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Community Engagement Team at communityengagement@ipswich.qld.gov.au.

1. How would you rate current levels of community participation in Council's decision-making processes?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low level of	Low level of	Satisfactory level of	High level of	Very high level of
participation	participation	participation	participation	participation

2. How would you rate current levels of community access to information about council decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very limited level of	Limited level of access	Satisfactory level of	High level of access to	Very high level of
access to information	to information	access to information	information	access to information

3. Do you feel that Council currently draws on community knowledge and opinions when making decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low	Limited		High consideration of	Very
consideration of	consideration of	Satisfactory consideration	community	high consideration of
community	community	of community knowledge	knowledge and	community
knowledge and	knowledge and	and opinions	opinions	knowledge and
opinions	opinions		Opinions	opinions

4. How well do you feel you understand the core responsibilities of council?

	100.100.100.			
1	2	3	4	5
I have a very	I have a limited	I have a	I have a	I have a very high
low understanding of	understanding	satisfactory understanding	high understanding	understanding of
the core	of the core	of the core responsibilities	of the core	the core
responsibilities of	responsibilities of	of council	responsibilities of	responsibilities of
council	council	or council	council	council

5. Having met your reference group colleagues, how representative do you feel the group is of the Ipswich community (consider for example: age, cultural background, gender)

	, , ,	0 - /			
1	2	3	4	5	NA
					Did not
Very limited representation	Limited representation	Satisfactory representation	High representation	Very high representation	attend the Inaugural Meeting

6.	Regarding the establishment and operation of the Community Reference Groups to date, how
	would you rate the following aspects?

	1 Very poor facilitation and organisation	2 Limited facilitation and organisations	3 Satisfactory facilitation and organisations	4 Good facilitation and organisation	5 Very good facilitation and organisation	N/A Did not attend the Inaugural Meeting
Expression of interest process						
Purpose and objectives						
Provision of relevant information						
Facilitation of tonight's' meeting						
Consideration of your ideas and input at tonight's meeting						

7.	What would success for the community reference groups look like to you?
8.	Any other comments?

Thank you for completing the survey



Now that the community reference groups have been operating for some time, please take a few minutes to fill out this survey Your responses will assist with monitoring the facilitation, support and work of the reference groups as they continue to progress. Your responses to this survey are anonymous. You will not be personally identifiable in any reports that come out of this project. Your information will not be given to any other agency and your personal information is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Community Engagement Team at communityengagement@ipswich.qld.gov.au.

1. Which Community Reference Group are you a member of?

- o Economic Development
- o Growth Management
- Environment
- o Resilient Communities
- Transparent Governance

2. How would you rate current levels of community participation in council's decision-making processes?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low level of	Low level of	Satisfactory level of	High level of	Very high level of
participation	participation	participation	participation	participation

3. How would you rate current levels of community access to information about council decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very limited level of	Limited level of access	Satisfactory level of	High level of access to	Very high level of
access to information	to information	access to information	information	access to information

4. Do you feel that council currently draws on community knowledge and opinions when making decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Very low consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Limited consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Satisfactory consideration of community knowledge and opinions	High consideration of community knowledge and opinions	Very high consideration of community knowledge and opinions

5. How well do you feel you understand the core responsibilities of council?

	700.100.700.0110.01			
1	2	3	4	5
I have a very	I have a limited	I have a	I have a	I have a very high
low understanding of	understanding	satisfactory understanding	high understanding	understanding of
the core	of the core	of the core responsibilities	of the core	the core
responsibilities of	responsibilities of	of the core responsibilities	responsibilities of	responsibilities of
council	council	or council	council	council

	1 Very poor facilitation and organisation	2 Limited facilitation and organisations	3 Satisfactory facilitation and organisations	4 Good facilitation and organisation	5 Very good facilitation and organisation
The purpose and objectives of the reference groups					
has been met Provision of relevant information					
7. Regardin	g the meetings, ho	ow would you rate	the following asp	ects?	5
	Very poor facilitation and organisation	Limited facilitation and organisations	Satisfactory facilitation and organisations	Good facilitation and organisation	Very good facilitation and organisation
Facilitation of meetings					
Consideration of your ideas and					
input at meetings Collection and publication of					
minutes					
8. Going for	ward in 2020, who	at would success f	or the community	reference groups	look like to you
9. Any othe	r comments?				

Thank you for completing this survey

