



Community Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024 Review

## Stronger Together - Stage 1 Community Engagement Summary

In 2019, Sunshine Coast Council adopted the [Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019 - 2041](#) and supporting [Community Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2024 \(Action Plan\)](#). As the Action Plan is expiring in 2024, council has initiated a comprehensive review process in consultation with the Sunshine Coast community. To ensure that the new Action Plan aligns with current community needs, a two-stage community engagement program is being implemented over 18 months from 2023 to 2024. This report provides an overview of the engagement activities conducted during the first stage of the engagement program.

### Overview

The first stage of the 'Stronger Together' Community Action Plan Review engagement program took place between February and May 2023. The purpose of this engagement was to review the priority areas of the Action Plan to ensure they reflected current community needs.

Throughout this initial stage, council employed various engagement methods, tailored to suit the preferences and circumstances of community members or groups. These methods aimed to facilitate effective participation and encourage diverse perspectives.

During stage 1, over 1850 individuals actively participated in and contributed to the consultation process.

Participants shared their ideas regarding the current priority areas outlined in the Action Plan. They also suggested actions that could address emerging opportunities and challenges over the next five years.

The findings collected during the first stage of the consultation process will inform the development of a renewed Action Plan. By incorporating the insights and perspectives shared by the community, council aims to ensure that the revised Action Plan accurately reflects the evolving needs and aspirations of Sunshine Coast residents. As a result, some actions from the existing Action Plan may be retained, while others could be modified or replaced to better address the identified priorities.

Over **1850 people** contributed to the first stage of the Stronger Together engagement program



**1628 online surveys** completed via Council's online engagement platform Have Your Say Sunshine Coast



The **Community Strategy Leadership Group** played an integral role in supporting the design and delivery of the Stronger Together Community Forum



**109 people** participated in the Stronger Together Community Forum



Conversations with targeted **community stakeholders** via a variety of methods



**Internal Consultation** activities and workshops across all of council



**8,495 visitors** to the Stronger Together Have Your Say project webpage during the Stage 1 engagement period.

## Engagement Activities

### Community Strategy Leadership Group



Members of the Community Strategy Leadership Group, 2023

The [Community Strategy Leadership Group](#) (CSLG) plays an important role in helping to guide the delivery of the Community Strategy. Members include representatives from government agencies, community groups, service providers and residents who have a focus on providing local, social and community services and outcomes.

The CLSG are a key partner in the Action Plan review and helped to plan and co-host the Stronger Together Forum. Members were instrumental in extending forum invitations to community members from across the Sunshine Coast, to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. This ensured the forum represented the different and diverse voices of our community.

### Online Community Survey

An online survey was launched on 30 March 2023, through council's [Have Your Say Sunshine Coast website](#). The survey utilised videos and fact sheets to summarise the outcome areas of the Action Plan, allowing respondents to provide feedback on specific topics and outcome areas of interest. The survey remained open for 8 weeks, closing on 30 May 2023. A total of 1628 responses and over 6000 individual comments were received, providing valuable insights from the community.

A summary of the survey findings is available via council's [Have Your Say Sunshine Coast website](#).

### Stronger Together Community Forum

The Stronger Together Forum was held on 16 May 2023 at Meridan Plains Community Centre. On the day, 86 community members attended with a diverse mix of people from different cultural backgrounds, ages, abilities and geographical locations. 23 hosts supported the forum delivery including council employees and the CSLG.

The forum used a variety of participatory methods such as storytelling and group activities, specifically designed so that participants:

- felt safe to speak and share openly on topics that mattered to them
- were enabled to actively listen to one another
- could collectively identify priorities and actions.

More information about the forum is available via council's [Have Your Say Sunshine Coast website](#).



Participants at the Stronger Together Forum, 2023

### Targeted Stakeholder Engagement

Key stakeholders were also targeted and consulted on the 13 topics covered in the Action Plan. A variety of engagement methods were used and adjusted depending on the needs of the stakeholders. The methods included workshops (in-person and online), conversations and email correspondence. These activities occurred between 30 March and 30 May 2023. Some of the sectors engaged included homelessness, youth services, multicultural and disaster resilience.

## Internal Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to external stakeholders, council conducted internal consultation with 61 employees from critical teams, whose work directly supports the Action Plan. Online and in-person workshops were organised to provide these employees with an overview of the project, including its approach, scope, and timeframes. The workshops also gathered insights from team members regarding emerging social trends and potential initiatives that align with these trends.

## Summary of Engagement Findings

Overall, community members told us that housing, homelessness, community facilities, public spaces, connectivity and active transport were current priorities. Cost of living was also an area of concern for residents. Community members emphasised that housing, transport and cost of living have interwoven impacts on health and wellbeing, safety, connection, inclusion and resilience.

- **Housing:** Residents emphasised the need for more affordable housing and social housing, increased efforts to address homelessness, and to advocate for state and federal government action on housing availability and affordability.
- **Facilities and public spaces:** Community members valued current community facilities, parks and green spaces and sports facilities, and wanted continued focus on providing these facilities and continued activation. They also suggested the need to provide improved access to facilities, and a focus on maintenance and safety of facilities, include parks and pathways.
- **Connectivity and active transport:** Residents were eager to see more convenient, affordable, frequent and efficient public transport and were generally supportive of a shift away from private vehicle use.
- **Community members also want to see a focus on activities and facilities for young people, further recognition of First Nations culture, inclusion of diversity, in all its forms, and personal and community connection.**

- Environmental sustainability was also an overarching theme across multiple topic areas. Our community values the amazing lifestyle of the Sunshine Coast beaches and green areas and wants this to be protected.

There were also suggestions made about how to improve the next iteration of the plan with feedback toward simplifying language and having clear and achievable actions.

**In total, residents and council officers who took part in the community survey, Stronger Together Forum, and internal stakeholder engagement provided over 6000 comments to consider in the revised Action Plan.**



*'Rex' attended the Stronger Together Forum, 2023 with his owner.*

## Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first stage of the Stronger Together Community Strategy Action Plan Review community engagement program.

Council remains committed to working in partnership with the community to develop the next iteration of the Community Strategy Action Plan 2024-2029.

## For more information

Visit council's [Have Your Say website](https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/haveyoursay) for more information or contact the Community Planning and Engagement team by email [engage@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:engage@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)