

Cardinia Shire Council

Social Health Check of residents living in the Growth Areas and Rural Areas of Cardinia Shire

Summary of research findings

August 2017

#

**Cardinia Shire Council**

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# Introduction

In 2014 Council commissioned research to provide a ‘Social Health Check’ of residents living in the Growth Area of the Shire. The purpose of the research was to explore the prevalence of social issues impacting new residents (i.e. those who had moved to one of the new housing estates in the last 5 years). Following on from the 2014 Social Health Check conducted in the newer areas, in 2016 a Social Health Check was also undertaken with residents living in the more Rural Areas of the Shire.

The Social Health Check provides insights into the needs, aspirations and priorities of residents living in the Shire. Presented is a selection of information from both research reports and a comparison of findings to identify any differences between residents of newer areas and residents of established areas.

A summary of key findings is presented along with tables comparing both areas and highlighting results which were significantly higher or lower, concluding with key themes to improve living in a newer estate.

# Methodology

A Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) approach was used to obtain responses from a random sample of residents. A total of 795 residents participated in CATI, 394 residents from the newer area and 401 residents from the established areas. This provided a sample size representative of the overall population. Respondents spoke for an average interview length of 23 minutes indicating a high level of engagement and trust within Council.

# Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with a range of key business units across Council covering the following broad areas:

* main social/personal issues experienced during time living in Cardinia Shire
* main issues causing stress at the individual and household level
* services used/required by members of the household
* participation in and barriers to living a healthy lifestyle
* opinions of local issues in the area
* experience of sense of community
* likelihood of recommending living in the area to potential residents
* demographics (age, gender, home ownership status, household situation).

# Key findings snapshot

## Sense of community

* Residents from Rural Areas have stronger neighbourhood relationships and are more likely than Growth Area residents to feel they can turn to neighbours for help in times of need
* Compared to Growth Area residents, residents from Rural Areas were significantly more positive about their community having a positive atmosphere, the range of community groups in their area, and their overall feeling of belonging.
* Suggestions for creating a stronger sense of community varied, with some centred on providing spaces and opportunities for community interaction in Rural Areas, compared to “getting to know you” parties as suggested by Growth Area residents
* Compared with the Growth Area residents, residents from Rural Areas were significantly more positive about their area being a good place to live and about recommending their area to others as a good place to live
* Compared with Growth Area residents, residents from Rural Areas were significantly less positive about the community having good health and community services that support families and slightly less positive about the services available for the elderly in the community
* Compared with Growth Area residents, residents from Rural Areas were slightly more positive about the sport and recreation facilities in the community.

## Community life

* Compared to Rural Area residents, Growth Area residents were significantly more likely to state that cultural diversity enriches community life
* Participation in unpaid voluntary work was higher among residents from Rural Areas compared to Growth Areas
* Residents in Rural Areas were significantly more likely than those in Growth Areas to participate in gardening and spectating at sports games
* Rural Area residents were significantly less likely than Growth Area residents to go shopping and visit the library/cultural centre outside of the shire for their free time.

## Health

* Most residents participate in healthy lifestyle behaviours and activities, although this is a challenge for low income households
* Barriers to living healthy lifestyles focused on lack of money, time and energy.

## Local services and facilities

* Rural Area residents feel that their lives would be made easier if public transport, Doctor/GP services, and aged and disability services were more available in their local area. These services were mentioned significantly more often by Rural Area residents compared to Growth Area residents.
* Supermarkets were also mentioned by a significantly higher proportion of Rural Area residents compared with Growth Area residents
* For Growth Area residents, the most commonly sought after facilities were entertainment venues with 71% of all respondents citing this. In contrast, entertainment and social venues were mentioned by 35% of Rural Area residents. Following entertainment venues, Growth Area residents most commonly sought a hospital, public toilets, walking and cycling paths, and mental health, counselling or support services.

## Personal and social issues

* The majority of residents from both the Growth and Rural Areas had experienced at least one social and/or family issue that had impacted negatively on them in the past year (68% of respondents in Rural Areas and 78% from Growth Areas)
* Compared to Rural Area residents, residents from Growth Areas were impacted by issues such as financial difficulties, unemployment and rental or mortgage stress to a greater extent.
* Rural Area residents were significantly more likely than Growth Area residents to state that they, or other members of their household, were experiencing issues that keep them awake at night, cause undue stress or are upsetting
* The majority of residents had experienced personal or family issues over the past year, the most common being sleeping problems, participating in fewer social activities and experiencing difficulties with family or relatives
* Rural Area residents were significantly more likely to state they had experienced difficulties getting transport to and from services compared to Growth Area residents
* The majority of residents have concerns for their children, or children in their local area; the most common concerns being lack of activities, unemployment, and drug usage
* Rural Area residents were significantly more concerned than residents from Growth Areas when it came to lack of activities/boredom and drug usage; and significantly less concerned with dangerous/drunk driving/road safety
* Rural Area residents have a strong sense of hope for the future, higher than for residents living the Growth Areas
* Compared with the Growth Area residents, Rural Area residents were just as likely to feel hopeful about their future.

# Summary of findings

## **Sense of community**

### Suggestions for creating a stronger sense of community:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RuralArea | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Hold community events/festivals/street parties | 8 | 22 |
| Council should interact with community | 5 | 1 |
| More public facilities e.g. toilets, sports, shopping centres etc. | 5 | 3 |
| More community groups | 5 | 7 |
| More parks/playgrounds/family friendly spaces/walking trails | 4 | 3 |
| Hold activities/events at convenient times | 3 | 4 |
| More promotion of events/activities | 3 | 3 |
| Create a town centre or meeting places | 3 | 9 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

Red = significantly lower than 2014 Total for New Areas

Green = significantly higher than 2014 Total for New Areas

## **Community life**

### Benefits of cultural diversity:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RuralArea | GrowthArea  |
| Base: Positive toward cultural diversity | **%** | **%** |
| Can learn about other cultures/help us grow | 36 | 41 |
| Helps understand other cultures  | 25 | 24 |
| Greater diversity of people | 25 | 22 |
| Brings people together | 21 | 23 |
| Greater diversity of food | 20 | 9 |
| Creates tolerance/acceptance | 19 | 18 |
| Enjoy meeting different people/makes life interesting | 13 | 8 |
| Creates a welcoming atmosphere | 6 | 7 |
| It’s Australian/right think to o/we are all equal | 5 | 4 |
| Other cultures are friendly/have no issues with them | 5 | 2 |
| Good for children to have diversity | 2 | 3 |
| Other (Specify) | 5 | 2 |
| (Don’t know) | 8 | 8 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### Participation in activities within Shire:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | GrowthArea |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Walking/running | 36 | 44 |
| Socialising/visiting family & friends | 13 | 11 |
| Cycling | 13 | 9 |
| Gardening | 12 | 4 |
| Playing sport (Specify sport) | 11 | 7 |
| Spectating at sports games | 11 | 4 |
| Fitness activities | 11 | 14 |
| Dining out | 9 | 11 |
| Going to shops/shopping | 9 | 18 |
| Going to parks/playgrounds | 8 | 18 |
| Aquatic activities/water sports (e.g. swimming /pool) | 7 | 15 |
| Church/religious/community activities | 7 | 2 |
| Bushwalking | 6 | 6 |
| Arts/crafts/photography | 6 | 4 |
| Going to the library/cultural centre/learning | 6 | 10 |
| Barbeque in the park | 2 | 4 |
| Performing arts/theatre/music | 2 | 2 |
| Going to the movies | 2 | 2 |
| Bars and clubs | 2 | 2 |
| Visiting museums/galleries/zoo | 1 | 1 |
| Camping | 1 | 1 |
| Other (Specify) | 8 | 8 |
| (Nothing) | 12 | 8 |
| (Don’t know) | 2 | 0 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### Participation in activities outside Shire:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RuralArea | GrowthArea |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Socialising/visiting family & friends | 18 | 16 |
| Going to the movies | 16 | 1 |
| Dining out | 13 | 15 |
| Going to shops/shopping | 12 | 20 |
| Camping | 10 | 6 |
| Performing arts/theatre/music | 9 | 8 |
| Aquatic activities/water sports (e.g. swimming /pool) | 7 | 6 |
| Playing sport (Specify sport) | 7 | 2 |
| Spectating at sports games | 6 | 4 |
| Walking/running | 6 | 6 |
| Cycling | 6 | 3 |
| Fishing | 5 | 4 |
| Fitness activities | 4 | 3 |
| Going to the library/cultural centre/learning | 4 | 27 |
| Arts/crafts/photography | 4 | 3 |
| Visiting museums/galleries/zoo | 4 | 2 |
| Going to the beach | 4 | 5 |
| Bars and clubs  | 2 | 3 |
| Bushwalking | 2 | 3 |
| Church/religious/community activities | 2 | 2 |
| Going to parks/playgrounds | 1 | 5 |
| Gardening | 1 | 1 |
| Barbeque in the park | 1 | 3 |
| Other (Specify) | 12 | 18 |
| (Nothing) | 17 | 17 |
| (Don’t know) | 1 | 1 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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## **Local services and facilities**

### Sought after facilities and services:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | GrowthArea |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Public transport | 46 | 25 |
| Doctor/GP | 43 | 26 |
| Aged and disability services | 40 | 27 |
| Police | 38 | 26 |
| Banking services | 37 | 28 |
| Specialist medical/dental services | 37 | 34 |
| Mental health/counselling/support services | 35 | 35 |
| Entertainment and social venues/centre  | 35 | 71 |
| Walking tracks/cycling paths | 35 | 38 |
| Hospital | 32 | 58 |
| Leisure/aquatic facilities | 30 | 28 |
| Arts and cultural facilities | 26 | 28 |
| Sports/recreation/fitness facilities | 24 | 24 |
| Employment service providers | 23 | 28 |
| Youth centre/skate park  | 22 | 33 |
| Barbeque/picnic areas | 21 | 38 |
| Public toilets | 21 | 51 |
| Financial /legal services | 19 | 21 |
| Supermarket | 17 | 9 |
| Library | 17 | 21 |
| Playground/play equipment | 16 | 31 |
| Community meetings spaces | 15 | 33 |
| Newsagency | 13 | 38 |
| Schools | 7 | 26 |
| Post office | 7 | 30 |
| Child care/kindergarten | 7 | 15 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### Features residents would like to see less of:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RuralArea | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Antisocial behaviour/hoons | 12 | 8 |
| Development/high density housing | 10 | 4 |
| Traffic/speeding | 9 | 12 |
| Traffic management/traffic lights | 9 | 1 |
| Crime/drugs | 7 | 2 |
| Rubbish/litter | 6 | 7 |
| Vandalism/graffiti | 5 | 14 |
| Youth on the streets/no activities for youth | 4 | 6 |
| Animal issues (e.g. dogs barking, off-leash, stray cats) | 4 | 1 |
| Council involvement/red-tape | 3 | 0 |
| Motorbikes/cyclists | 3 | 0 |
| Overgrown lawns/parks | 3 | 4 |
| Violence/aggression | 2 | 3 |
| Road works/construction | 2 | 1 |
| Unemployment | 1 | 1 |
| Trees | 1 | 1 |
| Immigrants | 1 | 1 |
| *Other (Specify)* | *8* | *4* |
| *(Nothing)* | *29* | *33* |
| *(Don’t know)* | *9* | *12* |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### How residents search for information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Internet search (e.g. Google) | 40 | 51 |
| Phone/visit the Council | 22 | 27 |
| Cardinia Council website | 20 | 25 |
| Connect Magazine | 9 | 1 |
| Family and friends | 9 | 5 |
| Local newspaper | 7 | 7 |
| Community newspaper | 6 | 3 |
| Community centre | 4 | 3 |
| Neighbours | 3 | 2 |
| Community noticeboard | 3 | 2 |
| Schools/kindergarten | 0 | 0 |
| Other (specify) | 5 | 3 |
| (Don’t know) | 2 | 2 |

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## **Personal and social issues**

### Negative issues experienced in past 12 months:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Dangerous driving | 29 | 29 |
| Mental health issues | 20 | 19 |
| Expensive medical services | 18 | 20 |
| Crime or safety issues | 18 | 20 |
| Workplace stress | 17 | 21 |
| Vandalism | 16 | 23 |
| Lack of support for pensioners | 16 | 13 |
| Anti-social behaviour | 15 | 14 |
| Financial difficulties or issues | 15 | 21 |
| Unemployment | 12 | 17 |
| Drug usage | 10 | 6 |
| Under-employment | 10 | 14 |
| Rental or mortgage stress | 9 | 17 |
| Body image | 8 | 11 |
| Alcohol addiction or binge drinking | 7 | 5 |
| Family violence | 4 | 6 |
| Problem gambling | 2 | 2 |
| Lack of support for people from ethnic backgrounds | 1 | 5 |
|  *Something else (Specify)* | 2 | 0 |
| *(None)* | 32 | 22 |
| *(Don’t know)* | 0 | 1 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### Issues experienced:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Had sleeping problems | 25 | 27 |
| Participated in fewer social activities | 16 | 25 |
| Experienced difficulties with family or relatives | 15 | 15 |
| Had weight management issues | 15 | 27 |
| Experienced high levels of workplace stress | 15 | 19 |
| Experienced difficulties getting transport to and from services | 13 | 0 |
| Had mental health issues | 11 | 15 |
| Experienced financial problems or issues | 11 | 19 |
| Experienced difficulties accessing health services | 10 | 11 |
| Been unable to pay household bills within the payment period | 8 | 14 |
| Experienced difficulties in your r’ship with your partner or spouse | 7 | 10 |
| Experienced employment difficulties or loss of employment | 7 | 14 |
| Had issues with alcohol | 2 | 1 |
| Been unable to pay rent or mortgage | 2 | 5 |
| Had issues with drugs | 2 | 1 |
| *(None of these)* | 40 | 34 |
| *(Refused)* | 1 | 1 |

*Multiple response: Totals may add to more than 100%*

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### Concerns for children/children in area:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rural Area | Growth Area |
| Base: All respondents | **%** | **%** |
| Lack of activities/boredom | 19 | 12 |
| Unemployment | 15 | 12 |
| Drug usage | 14 | 19 |
| Under-employment | 7 | 3 |
| Lack of facilities | 7 | 9 |
| Cost of living, housing, education, economy etc. | 7 | 5 |
| Dangerous/drunk driving/road safety | 4 | 11 |
| Not getting a good education | 4 | 7 |
| Criminal behaviour | 4 | 7 |
| General safety/strangers/abduction | 3 | 7 |
| Anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism/graffiti) | 3 | 5 |
| Lack of schools | 2 | 7 |
| Alcohol addiction/binge drinking | 2 | 3 |
| Bullying | 2 | 2 |
| Lack of parental supervision/involvement | 2 | 3 |
| Lack of health/support services | 1 | 2 |
| Mental health issues/youth suicide | 1 | 3 |
| Family violence | 1 | 0.3 |
| Body image | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| *Other (specify)* | 15 | 4 |
| *(No concerns)* | 30 | 32 |
| *(Don’t know)* | 4 | 5 |

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# Improving estate life

Residents in the growth area were given the opportunity to provide additional comments about how their estate could be improved. The key themes that emerged were a need to provide more opportunities for community interaction, improve the appearance and safety of the area and a better transport network. Following are some of the themes that came up across estates, however, note that some sample sizes were small so these are indicative only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Estate | General Themes |
| Arden Garden | Lack of community services and facilities |
| Arena | General clean-up of the estate, improved connectivity, more services |
| Blue Horizons | Safer roads, crossings and footpaths, maintenance and upkeep of area |
| Cardinia Lakes | Improved services and activities for youth |
| Falling Waters | Clean up green spaces, improve vehicle access |
| Henty Park | Increased police presence/visibility, parking issues |
| Heritage Springs | Traffic congestion, poorly planned roads, safety concerns |
| Lakeside | More community and social services/facilities, improved public transport |
| Pakenham Park | Improve community services and sense of community |
| Silver Gum | Connectivity and more entrances/exits to the estate |

# For more information

Please contact Council’s Social and Community Planning Team on 1300 787 624 or mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au