



Community Engagement Report

QLD Connects

July 2024

Office of the General Manager

Environment and Sustainability Department





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Executive Summary

The Queensland Connects program is an initiative of [Advance Queensland](#), a state initiative to promote innovation and solve regional problems. In 2023, Ipswich City Council (council) was invited to participate in Cohort 4 of the Queensland Connects program and nominated council's Senior Emergency Management Officer to take part on behalf of council. Cohort 4 was focused on bringing together government, entrepreneurs and academics into teams to address problems of climate and disaster resilience and preparedness in the regions.

Council was invited to join 'Team Connectivity' with a focus on improving digital connectivity across regional, rural and remote areas covering all aspects of digital connectivity from internet to telecommunications, computer and satellite hardware, digital literacy, access to telehealth and redundancy in disasters. Team members of Team Connectivity included the following people:

- **Dr Ivano Bongiovanni** – researcher, consultant, author and Senior Lecturer in Information Security, Governance and Leadership with the UQ Business School.
- **Fraser Nai** – an entrepreneur based on Thursday Island with extensive first-hand experience with connectivity issues in remote and regional Queensland.
- **Hari Boppudi** – previous CEO of Flinders Shire Council with extensive experience in government and IT.
- **Miranda Mears** – Innovation and technology strategist, entrepreneur and President of Townsville Chamber of Commerce.
- **Stephen Nicholson** – Director Business Planning & Strategic Initiative with 30+ years of expertise in whole of government, whole of state, and multi-jurisdictional ICT policy and strategy implementation.
- **Wesley Huffstutter** – Entrepreneur in residence at QUT and an experienced professional in the fields of IT, cybersecurity and entrepreneurship.
- **Kristie McKenna** – Senior Emergency Management Officer, Ipswich City Council.

About the project

Across the community there are a number of solutions, services and grant funding opportunities to address connectivity issues, but they operate in silos and the ecosystem is too complex for the average Queenslander/Queensland community to navigate.

As part of this project, Team Connectivity worked towards building a model and tool called Connectivity Compass. This tool is anticipated to act as a service navigator with the aim of assisting the community to map out its current connectivity maturity, identify gaps and link them with existing programs and funding opportunities.

Team Connectivity were provided with seed funding in March 2024 to undertake stages 1-3 of the project which included community consultation in various locations across Queensland in Ipswich, Flinders LGA and Thursday Island. The aim of the community consultation was to seek feedback from the community on their personal experience of digital connectivity which would be used to inform the development of the Connectivity Compass model and as the basis of future funding applications. For the purpose of this report, information presented pertains to community feedback received in the Ipswich region rather than the overarching project which will be shared at <https://connectivitycompass.au/> once finalised.



How we engaged

Over a four-week period between Saturday 1 June and Sunday 30 June 2024, the community were able to provide feedback on their personal experience of digital connectivity through the online engagement platform (Shape Your Ipswich) as well as in person at a workshop delivered by members of Team Connectivity held on Tuesday 12 June 2024 in Ipswich. Members of the community panel and a number of community networks and interagencies including Ipswich Youth Advisory Council, Ipswich and West Moreton Seniors Interagency Network and Ipswich Disability Interagency Network were invited to attend the workshop.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from participants during engagement, in accordance with council's Information Privacy Policy. Quantitative data was downloaded from the various digital platforms and/or transcribed into a master Excel database by project staff. Open thematic analysis of qualitative comments was carried out using Excel.

Findings

Shape Your Ipswich Findings

Over a four-week period between Saturday 1 June and Sunday 30 June 2024, the community were able to provide feedback on their personal experience of digital connectivity through an online survey. In total, 140 visitors viewed the page, and 8 contributions were received through this channel.

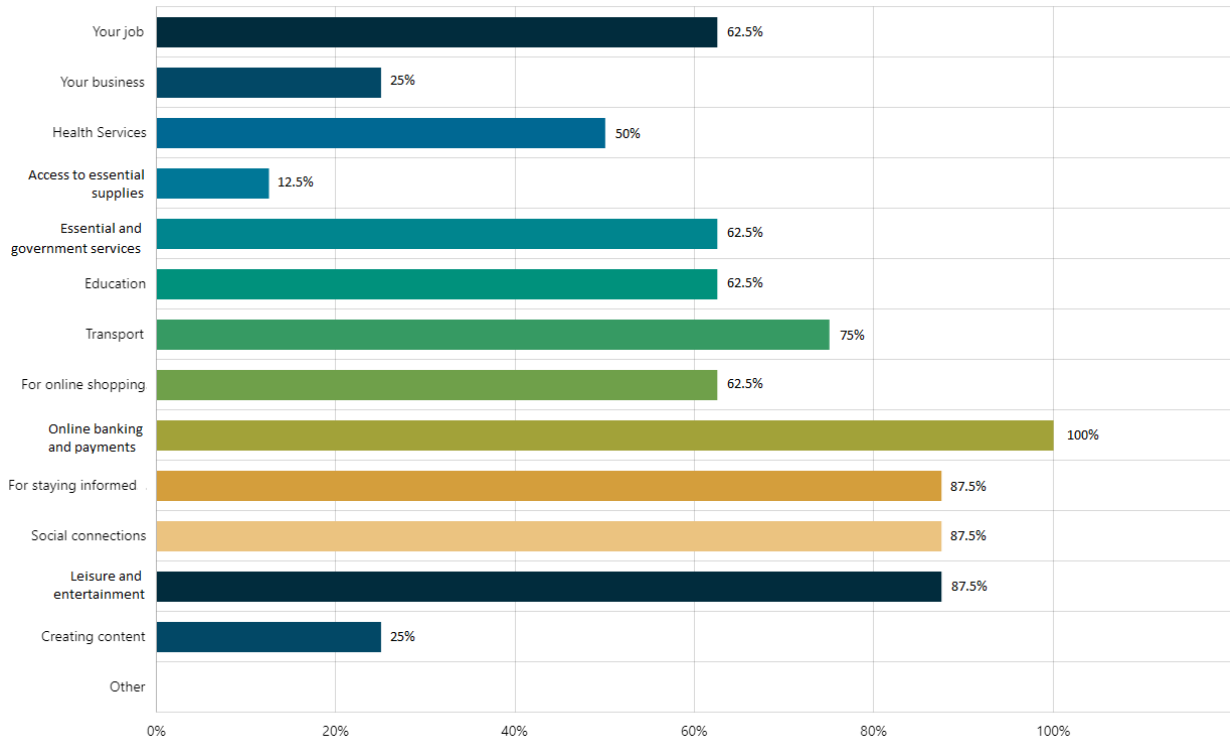
Data collected included demographics of respondents, technology use, connectivity experiences and personal reflection. A summary of each question and responses is provided below.

See the full list of questions used on Shape Your Ipswich at Appendix 1.

Technology Use

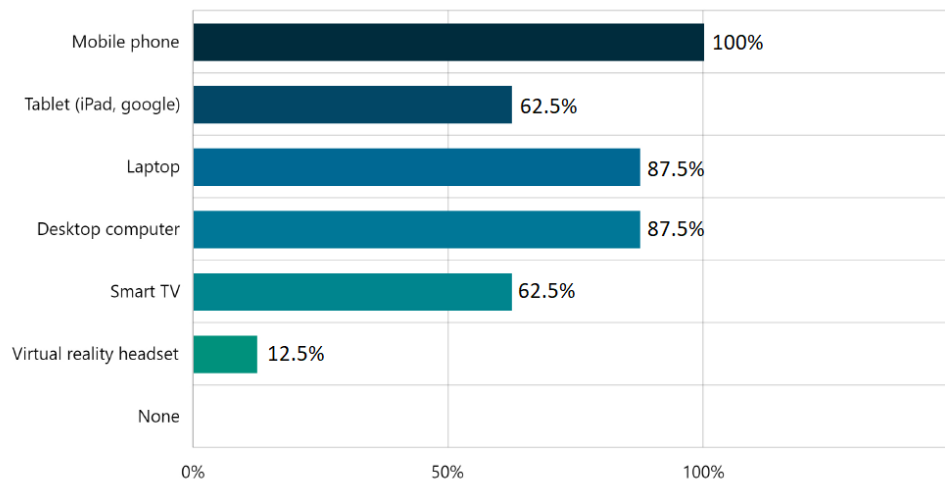
What do you rely on connectivity for?

Respondents indicated a strong reliance on online banking (100%), staying informed (87.5%), social connections (87.5%) and leisure and entertainment (87.5%). The least popular response was creating content with 25% respondents selecting this.



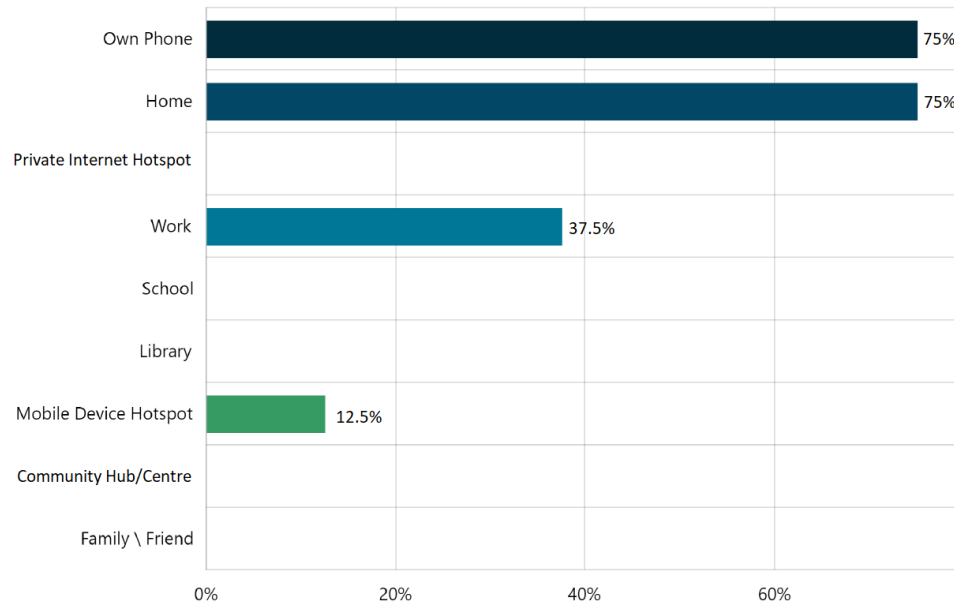
What devices do you have access to at home?

All respondents had a minimum of two devices, with an average of 4 devices per respondent. 100% of respondents have a mobile phone and 87.5% have access to a laptop and/or desktop computer.



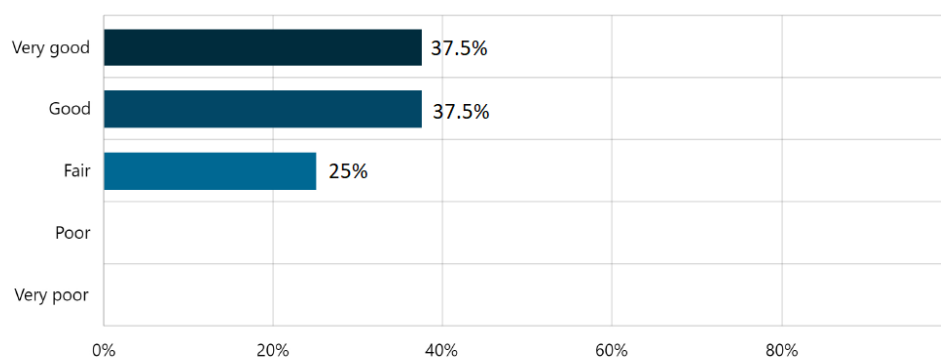
Where do you mainly connect from?

Respondents indicated majority of them connect from their own phone or home (both 75%) and some at work (37.5%).



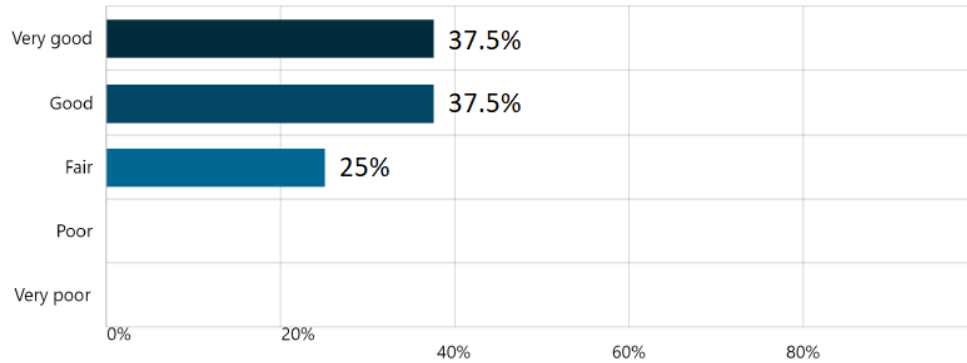
How would you rate connectivity in your area (reliability, accessibility, speed) in meeting your needs and goals?

Over 70% of respondents rated their internet connectivity 'Good' or 'Very good', with no respondents selecting either 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.



How would you rate your confidence and skills in digital literacy and using technology in the way you want/need to?

All respondents rated their confidence and skills in digital literacy at least fair with over 70% being good or very good.



What digital skills do you feel least confident or skilled in?

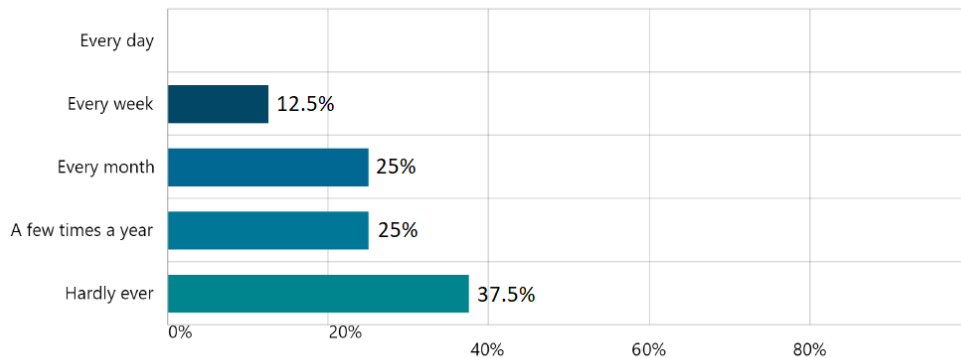
Respondents came back with a range of answers to this question including:

- "Coding"
- "Virus control"
- "Privacy"
- "Media platforms"
- "Large scale data management"
- "Imaging with AI"
- "Cyber security"
- "IT skills"
- "Being able to connect to a real live person"

Connectivity experiences

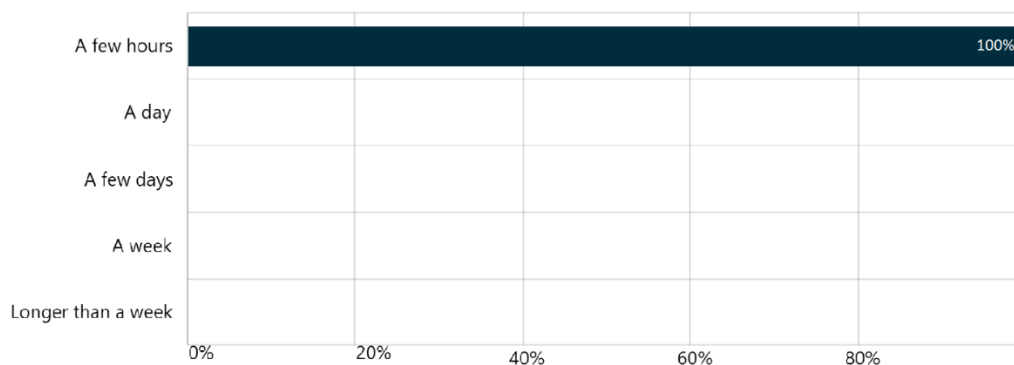
How frequently do you experience connectivity issues?

Connectivity issues experienced by the respondents appeared to be infrequent with one quarter answering every month and one quarter answering a few times a year. Almost 40% responded that they 'Hardly ever' experienced connectivity issues.



How long do they usually last?

All respondents advised when they experience connectivity issues, they usually lasted a few hours.



Are there specific locations in your community that are unreliable or drop out frequently? Examples would be useful if you are able to provide these.

Majority of respondents did not have a specific location to list that was deemed unreliable. One respondent had noted Booval as an area where they experienced dropouts and another respondent noted areas outside Walloon as an area where they had experienced poor internet access.

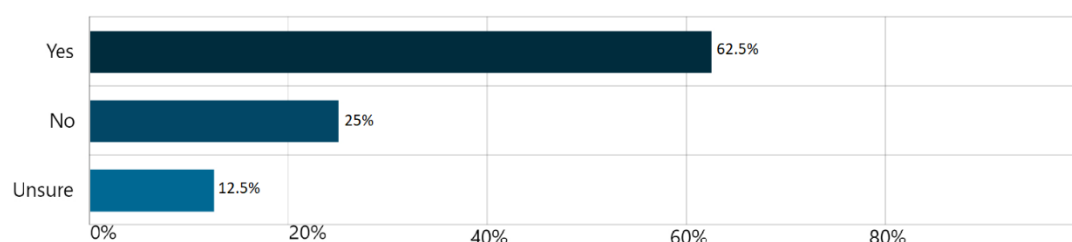
Were you affected by any of the following events? 2023 Optus outage, 2023 storms/floods, 2022 floods and/or the 2020 hailstorm.

- Yes – one event: 1 (12.5%)
- Yes – more than one event: 5 (62.5%)
- No 2 (25%)

Feedback from respondents indicated that the majority had experienced one or more major outage events since 2020.

Do you know how to test your internet bandwidth and speed?

More than half (62.5%) of the respondents knew how to test their bandwidth and speed whereas 37.5% did not know or were unsure.



Your story

Tell us briefly about a time when you experienced a connectivity issue

- “Watching state of origin.”
- “We were hooked up to a dodgy port on our home internet, that's since been fixed.”
- “Dropping in and out of connection.”
- “Once had the power and mobile phone networked knocked out by a severe storm while working a 12-hour night shift. Not much could really be done about that. I am lucky and have FTTP so my connection is excellent. Cannot say the same for others.”
- “Due to my area still being copper to node I often suffer from a significant degradation in speed during peak use times.”
- “In the past three years, I have only had one connectivity issue when the internet was down unexpectedly for an extended period of 12 hours.”
- “The internet just drops out.”

How does poor/loss of connectivity impact you?

- “More of an inconvenience.”
- “It's a minor inconvenience as we have many devices that can connect on different networks.”
- “Frustrating. Less able to consistently work or contact people. Duplication.”
- “I work nearly exclusively from home now so any connectivity issues affect my work.”
- “Inhibits my access to my university studies.”
- “My business is an online business. Without connection to the internet, I cannot work.”
- “Interferes with zoom meetings. Delays emails. Makes it impossible to complete online work.”



How do your connectivity needs and concerns differ from a normal day to when in a disaster or emergency situation?

- “Extremely as this would be a source of information we would want to access in such events.”
- “Normal day data bandwidth can if we want be entirely used, during an emergency the connections are self-limited to allow for essential communications with voice services needing priority.”
- “Not able to stay connected or up to date on alerts. Difficulties maintaining contact with family or emergency services if needed.”
- “I need consistent access to mobile phone and internet services during a disaster so that I can track where the worst weather is and also check up on my community. During the recent floods the internet was vital to keep track of how much the water was rising and what parts of Dawn Walloon were cut off.”
- “We lost all connectivity during the 2022 floods.”
- “My business is an online business. Without connection to the internet, I cannot work.”
- “Because internet is not reliable, I use an old transistor radio (ABC) during emergency.”

How could good connectivity improve your day-to-day activities?

- “More convenient.”
- “The connection is generally good.”
- “Better connected with others.”
- “I have outstanding connectivity and there is little to be improved on a FTTP setup. However, the network BADLY needs to be expanded as lack of services reduces my options about where I can live.”
- “Would improve my access for study.”
- “Improved connectivity from the existing standard will only have marginal increases to my day-to-day activities.”
- “It would provide security and relieve anxiety.”

How would your community change if it had better connectivity?

- “Unknown.”
- “People would probably watch more dodgy sitcoms.”
- “Better linkages.”
- “Work from home is a more equitable system for both men and women. If connectivity was more universal in Ipswich (for example, FTTP for every home), we would massively reduce inequality.”
- “Not sure.”
- “No advice to give.”

Do you have any final thoughts, or is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences and challenges with connectivity and digital technology?

- “Call centres, AI, bots, web forms etc are all worthless if no one is at the other end to serve you.”
- “Please set your goal to being “everyone in Ipswich City Council Area has FTTP”. Anything less is a waste of time. It’s not that hard to run fibre optic.”

Workshop Findings

On Tuesday 12 June 2024, a face-to-face workshop was delivered in Ipswich with 6 people in attendance. Unfortunately, poor weather had an impact on attendance with 18 originally registered to attend the workshop.

On the night, Team Connectivity were able to validate some of the attendees' preconceived ideas and assumptions about the value of connectivity to communities. More importantly however, the team learned about the extent of the challenges that poor connectivity presents to communities, even in relatively metro areas such as Ipswich.

Some of the key feedback shared by the group, through their lived experience, included:

Social
• People with a disability and the elderly are consistently left behind as their needs are not considered in design and delivery e.g. how to use the cloud, recognising scams. • Cyber security tools are not always inclusive e.g. voice ID is not accessible for people whose diction is different. • Pace of change is so fast that there is an increasing dependence on others with digital skills, which creates vulnerabilities e.g. elder abuse.
Economic
• In older suburbs of Ipswich, there may be power to the street but not to the house, which can cost more than \$30,000 to install. • Modern cyber security requires a level of hardware and software not accessible to everyone. • Community support organisations have limited funding to support with digital connectivity. • Transition to cashless won't work until connectivity issues are resolved everywhere in Australia.
Education
• Incorrect assumption that all students are IT-literate. • Many students don't have laptops at home, only mobile phones. • Inequity of being outside the capital city i.e. less teachers, poorer equipment. • The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and other critical assessments rely on connectivity. • Focus on digital education creates barrier for people returning to study at a mature age, especially those who left before the digital revolution.
Resilience
• Being able to contact loved ones during disasters is paramount. • In disasters, if technology doesn't work the first time, peoples' fight, or flight response may cause them to give up. • Many disaster communications now rely on connectivity e.g. disaster dashboards, BOM app, but more traditional methods are required to continue until connectivity issues are resolved or people will be left behind or worse, in danger.
Health
• Telehealth is great, but relies on good connectivity as a baseline, including for individuals to have credit/data on their phones. • My Health Record must/should have a hard copy backup because connectivity is not reliable enough. • GPS/mobile blackspots prevent navigation even locally, creating a barrier to attending health appointments.

The standout solution identified by the community at the workshop was for more education on technology and digital literacy. It was noted, it's in *how* this is designed and delivered that matters most. Suggestions and further feedback on this included:

Proper co-design
• Ensuring lived experience is built into the design and delivery of solutions from inception all the way through to delivery. • Ensuring subject matter experts are making the big decisions, rather than figure heads e.g. education experts advising on what solutions will work best for children, disability advocates advising on the accessibility of digital solutions.
Value in non-formal outcomes
• Positive outcomes can be achieved in different ways. Teaching people how to use and access what's important to them can empower broader digital literacy, for example; teaching someone how to access YouTube videos, or how to video call their family can lead to them being able to participate online. • Digital connection as a platform for social connection.
Meet people where they are
• It must be acknowledged that some people require a different approach to learning about technology and digital literacy. This then needs to be considered, particularly for the groups often left behind such as older people and people with disabilities. • If hub models are applied, they need to be local, not regional.

Who engaged

Engagement through Shape Your Ipswich was open to the broader Ipswich community, with awareness of the project triggered by:

- 1 x Shape Your Ipswich alert to all site users on 3 June 2024
- 1 x social media advertisement on Facebook on 5 June 2024 (see appendix 2)
- Direct email reach out to council networks including Ipswich Youth Advisory Committee, Ipswich Disability Interagency Network and Ipswich and West Moreton Seniors Interagency Network.

An email campaign was sent out via Shape Your Ipswich on 3 June 2024 to Shape Your Ipswich members who indicated an interest in one or more of the following categories:

- Business and Economy
- Community
- Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
- Health and wellbeing
- Disaster Management

This email campaign was sent to a total of 788 members, of which 356 opened the email (45.2%).

A direct email went to the following identified networks:

- Ipswich Youth Advisory Committee;
- Ipswich Disability Interagency Network, and
- Ipswich and West Moreton Seniors Interagency Network.

While not considered formal contributions, the social media post received 3 comments. Two of the comments were not relevant to the post but about other concerns across council, and therefore outside of this engagement's scope. One of the comments was pointing out a disconnect between access to services online which they thought were positive however noted access to the frontline service connected to this online service was often lacking. For example, going online to place a service request but not having the request actioned by frontline personnel.

The table below details the engagement channel and number of contributions of the engagement.

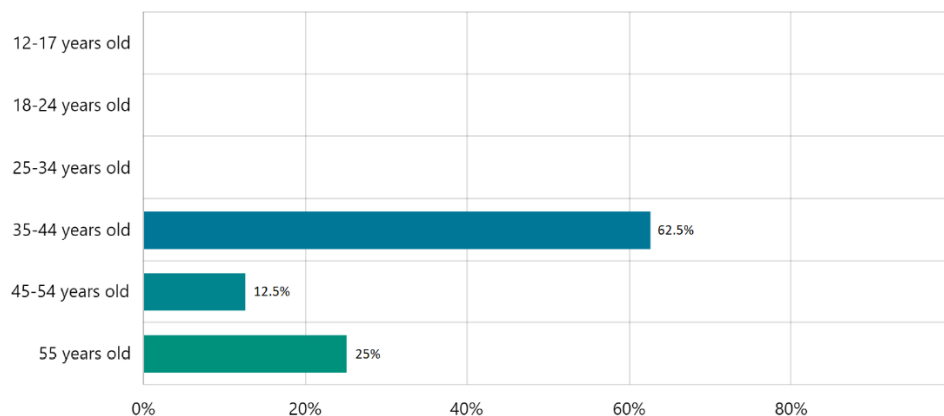
Engagement Channels	Contributions
Shape Your Ipswich Contributions	8
Workshop Contributions	6
Total Contributions Received	14

In total, 14 contributions were received for this project's community engagement.

Demographics

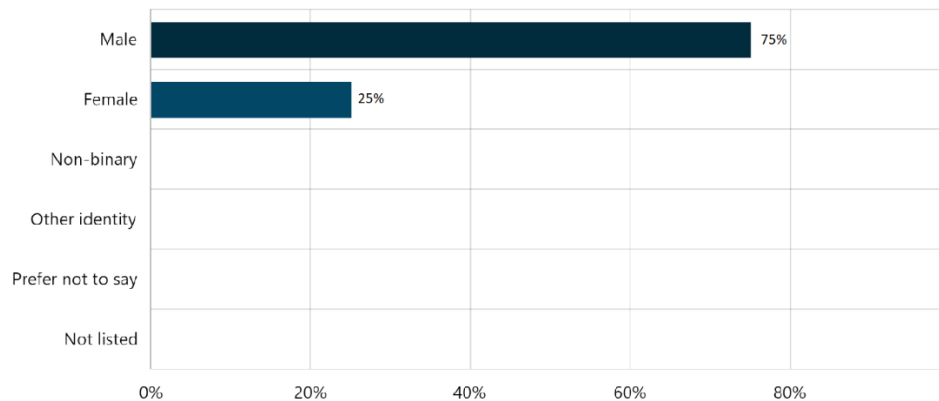
Age

All respondents were aged over 35 years of age with the highest representation between the 35-44 year old category (62.5%).



Gender

There was an over representation of male respondents (75%) verse female respondents in the online survey.

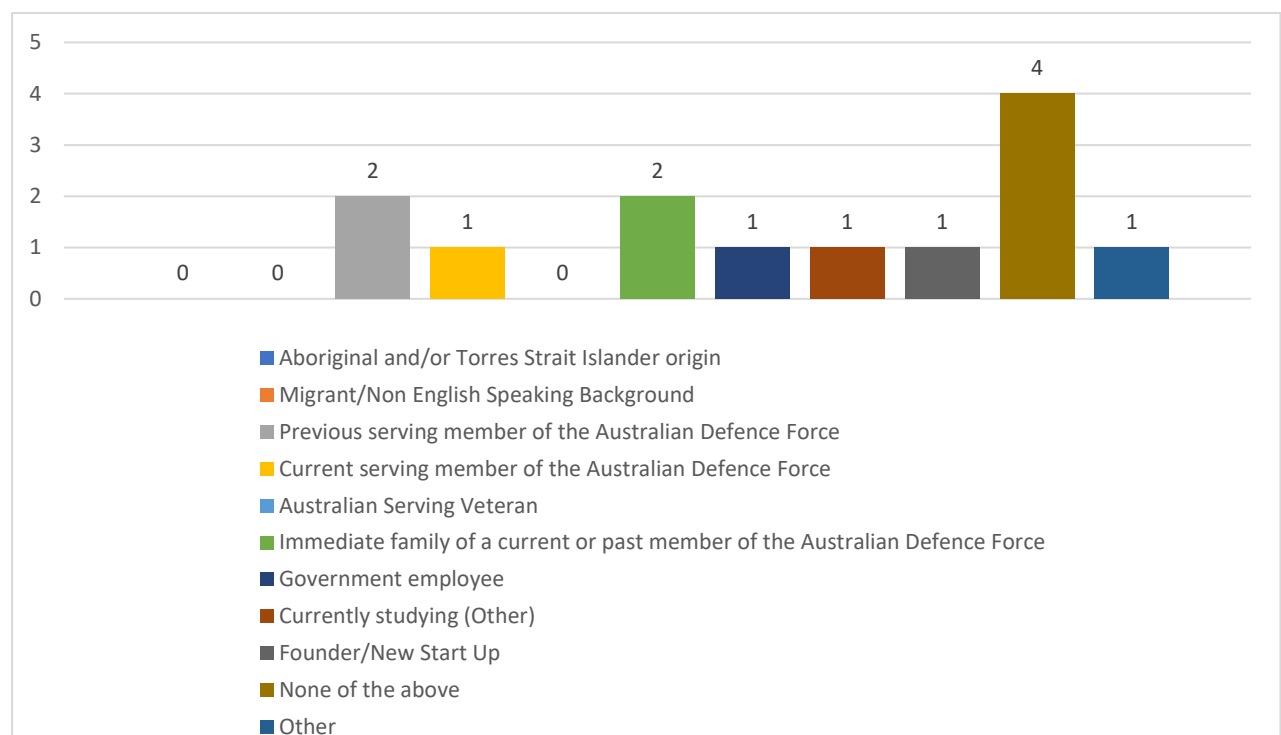


Locality

Respondents were from a range of suburbs across Ipswich including Barellan Point, Eastern Heights, Karalee, North Booval, Yamanto and Raceview representing 3 of the four divisions (Division 1, 3 and 4).

Affiliation

Respondents indicated representation from a wide range of groups including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, currently studying, current or previous serving member of the Australian Defence Force, immediate family member of a member of the Australian Defence Force, government employee and founder/new start up.





Conclusion

The invaluable insights shared by respondents via the survey on Shape Your Ipswich and face-to-face at the workshop have been collated and will be included in the report to Advance Queensland along with the other locations community feedback. This will aid in informing the development of the Connectivity Compass model and form the basis for future grant funding applications which is required to build the tool.

A summary of the Ipswich specific results will be shared on the dedicated QLD Connects page on [Shape Your Ipswich](#) along with a link to the website created by Team Connectivity where all project feedback and updates will be featured ongoing. The website is <https://connectivitycompass.au/>.

Outcomes of the project and future direction will be shared with the community once known.

Appendix

1. Shape Your Ipswich Survey Questions

Share your experience on connectivity

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. This survey has now closed.

Your feedback will help inform the development of the 'Connectivity Compass' model and is the basis for future grant funding applications which is needed to build the tool.

Privacy statement

Ipswich City Council is collecting your personal information so that we can better understand your experience with connectivity as part of the Queensland Connects Program. Your feedback will help inform the development of the 'Connectivity Compass' model and will form the basis for future grant funding applications which are needed to build the tool and start implementing in the pilot locations. A summary of the survey results will be published on Shape Your Ipswich which may be referred to in the future. We will not disclose your personal information outside of Council unless we are required by law, or you have given your consent.

However, to perform the above functions, we will disclose de-identified survey responses to members of Team Connectivity. For a complete list of Team Connectivity members, please refer to the FAQs.

By completing this survey, we will consider that you have given us your consent to manage your personal information in the manner described in Council's [Privacy Statement](#), [Personal Information Digest](#) and this collection notice and share de-identified survey responses with Team Connectivity.

01. Please check the box below to indicate you have read, understood and agree to the above statement before proceeding with the survey. **Required**

☐ Yes

About you

02. Age **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ 12-17 years old
☐ 18-24 years old
☐ 25-34 years old

☐ 35-44 years old

☐ 45-54 years old

☐ 55+ years old

03. Gender **Required**

Select one answer only

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary

☐ Other identity

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Not listed

04. Which suburb do you live in? **Required**

Select one answer only

☐ Amberley

☐ Ashwell

☐ Augustine Heights

☐ Barellan Point

☐ Basin Pocket

☐ Bellbird Park

☐ Blacksoil

☐ Blackstone

☐ Booval

☐ Brassall

☐ Brookwater

☐ Bundamba

☐ Calvert

☐ Camira

☐ Carole Park

☐ Churchill

☐ Chuwar
☐ Coalfalls
☐ Collingwood Park
☐ Deebing Heights
☐ Dinmore
☐ Eastern Heights
☐ East Ipswich
☐ Ebbw Vale
☐ Ebenezer
☐ Flinders View
☐ Gales
☐ Goodna
☐ Goolman
☐ Grandchester
☐ Haigslea
☐ Ipswich
☐ Ironbark
☐ Jeebropilly
☐ Karalee
☐ Karrabin
☐ Leichhardt
☐ Lower Mount Walker
☐ Mount Forbes
☐ Mount Mort
☐ Mount Walker West
☐ Mutdapilly
☐ New Chum
☐ Newtown
☐ North Booval
☐ One Mile

☐ Peak Crossing
☐ Purga
☐ Raceview
☐ Redbank
☐ Redbank Plains
☐ Ripley
☐ Riverview
☐ Sadliers Crossing
☐ Silkstone
☐ South Ripley
☐ Springfield
☐ Springfield Central
☐ Springfield Lakes
☐ Spring Mountain
☐ Swanbank
☐ West Ipswich
☐ White Rock
☐ Willowbank
☐ Woodend
☐ Wulkuraka
☐ Lanefield
☐ Marburg
☐ Moores Pocket
☐ Mount Marrow
☐ Muirlea
☐ North Ipswich
☐ North Tivoli
☐ Pine Mountain
☐ Rosewood
☐ Tallegalla

☐ Thagoona
☐ The Bluff
☐ Tivoli
☐ Walloon
☐ Woolshed
☐ Yamanto
☐ Other

05. Which of the following groups do you identify with being a member of?
Required

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
☐ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin
☐ Migrant/Non English Speaking Background
☐ Previous serving member of the Australian Defence Force
☐ Current serving member of the Australian Defence Force
☐ Australian Serving Veteran
☐ Immediate family of a current or past member of the Australian Defence Force
☐ Government employee
☐ Currently studying (Secondary School)
☐ Currently studying (Other)
☐ Founder/New Start Up
☐ None of the above
☐ Other

Technology use

06. What do you rely on connectivity for? **Required**

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
☐ Your job
☐ Your business
☐ Health Services
☐ Access to essential supplies
☐ Essential and government services
☐ Education
☐ Transport
☐ For online shopping and using e-commerce platforms
☐ Banking like online banking or online payments
☐ For staying informed about news and events through digital channels
☐ Social connections
☐ Leisure and entertainment
☐ Creating content
☐ Other

07. What devices do you have access to at home? **Required**

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
☐ Mobile phone
☐ Tablet (iPad, google)
☐ Laptop
☐ Desktop computer
☐ Smart TV
☐ Virtual reality headset
☐ None

08. Where do you mainly connect from? **Required**

Select all that apply
☐ Own Phone
☐ Home
☐ Private Internet Hotspot (i.e. cafe, shopping centre)
☐ Work
☐ School
☐ Library
☐ Mobile Device Hotspot
☐ Community Hub \ Centre
☐ Family \ Friend

09. How would you rate connectivity in your area (reliability, accessibility, speed) in meeting your needs and goals **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Very poor

10. How would you rate your confidence and skills in digital literacy and using technology in the way you want/need to? **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Very poor

11. What digital skills do you feel least confident or skilled in? **Required**

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Connectivity experiences

12. How frequently do you experience connectivity issues? **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ Every day
☐ Every week
☐ Every month
☐ A few times a year
☐ Hardly ever

13. How long do they usually last? **Required**

Select one answer only
☐ A few hours
☐ A day
☐ A few days
☐ A week
☐ Longer than a week

14. Are there specific locations in your community that are unreliable or drop out frequently? Examples would be useful if you are able to provide these.

Required

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15. Were you affected by any of the following events? **Required**

2023 Optus outage, 2023 storms/floods, 2022 flood and/or the 2020 hailstorm.

Select one answer only
☐ Yes - one event
☐ Yes - More than one event

☐ No

16. Do you know how to test your internet bandwidth and speed? **Required**

Select one answer only

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Your story

17. Tell us briefly about a time when you experienced a connectivity issue

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18. How does poor/loss of connectivity impact you?

--

19. How do your connectivity needs and concerns differ from a normal day to when in a disaster or emergency situation?

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20. How could good connectivity improve your day to day activities?



21. How would your community change if it had better connectivity?

Thank you for your time

22. Do you have any final thoughts, or is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences and challenges with connectivity and digital technology?

2. Social Media Post



Ipswich City Council



5 Jun · 🌐



Ever felt there is a disconnect in your community or neighbourhood with accessing essential services like healthcare, education, and emergency information?

We want to hear from you.

Council is part of a team that is working to build a framework that can help communities map their current levels of connectivity and identify gaps.



Find out out more and share your feedback here:



<https://loom.ly/oGmu9Pc>

