

Community Engagement Report

Community Safety – Nicholas Street Precinct

2-11 October 2020

Coordination and Performance, Engagement Section

Post-engagement report and findings for Council meeting 22 October

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1. Introduction

Ipswich City Council is committed to meaningful engagement with the community on issues affecting the city, and on local issues that significantly impact on the community. Community engagement is the foundation of sustainable decision-making, and is mutually beneficial to the community and the council.

The Engagement Section was asked to support the Community Safety and Innovation Manager in the delivery of the draft Community Safety Strategy for the Nicholas Street Precinct to Council, by conducting initial community engagement with key precinct stakeholders.

Initial community engagement was run through a closed group survey on the Shape Your Ipswich digital platform between 2 and 11 October 2020, with the goal of understanding safety issues (actual and perceived) from key stakeholders within the area, and to inform the development of a draft Community Safety Strategy for the precinct.

Targeted stakeholder engagement was aimed at each of the 14 businesses and six building owners within the Nicholas Street Precinct. Engagement included site visits to the businesses to assist with the online activity.

Thirty percent of targeted stakeholders completed the survey, including half of all building/site owners and 21 percent of all businesses in the precinct.

The Shape Your Ipswich page attracted 51 views, 31 visits, 21 visitors, and six contributions.


Should the draft Community Safety Strategy: Nicholas Street Precinct be endorsed by Council on 22 October 2020, the Engagement Section will immediately commence a second stage of community engagement targeting the broader community to better understand why residents currently don't visit the precinct (including safety concerns and issues), their perceptions about the area, and the actions, changes and deliverables that would help change these perceptions and encourage more locals to visit the Nicholas Street Precinct.

The results of this engagement will help the Community Safety and Innovation Manager to create and deliver a well-informed community safety framework and action plan for the precinct. It will also support the finalisation of the communications, engagement and activation program.

2. Key findings and recommendations

Six key safety issues emerged from the consultation program as identified barriers to community safety in the Nicholas Street Precinct. These are listed in order of importance as rated by survey participants:

1. The precinct is empty or perception it is closed

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2. Anti-social behaviour
 3. Perception that the precinct is unsafe
 4. Precinct is not family-friendly, particularly in the evening
 5. Lack of a security/police presence
 6. Real or perceived lack of cleanliness.

3. Engagement approach

This engagement was targeted at key stakeholders operating within the Nicholas Street Precinct via a closed group survey on council's Shape Your Ipswich digital platform, with the goal of understanding safety issues (actual and perceived) within the area, to inform the development of a draft Community Safety Strategy for the precinct.

3.1 Community engagement activities

The digital survey was available via a closed group on council's Shape Your Ipswich website between 2 and 11 October 2020, with businesses and building owners in the precinct directly invited to participate.

A map of the precinct was provided, together with relevant historical background information including council's Safe City Program fact sheet and a link to Ipswich First media articles relating to the redevelopment of the precinct.

Engagement was supplemented with direct email messages and site visits to the businesses to assist with the online activity.

3.2 Communications activities

Throughout the engagement process, the project team sought to inform the key stakeholders about the project and opportunities to provide their feedback. The following was undertaken to promote this engagement:

- Direct email
- Site visits.



3.3 Engagement limitations

Limitations relevant to the engagement process:

- The tight timeframe led to a targeted approach to engagement with the intention of further engagement with the broader Ipswich community to follow after Council's endorsement of the draft Community Safety Strategy.
- Community perspectives were limited to key stakeholders' own experiences and what they believed to be real or perceived barriers preventing their customers from visiting the Nicholas Street Precinct, as opposed to views from visitors to / users of the precinct.

4. Participant overview

4.1 Total number of participants

A summary of the Shape Your Ipswich platform closed group survey engagement is as follows:

- 51 views (cumulative number of times a visitor visits the page in the site)
- 31 visits (number of end-user sessions associated with a single visitor)
- 21 visitors (number of unique end-users in the site. A visitor is only counted once)
- 6 contributions
- 3 people volunteered to be part of a group to have an ongoing voice in the City Safety Strategy on behalf of businesses in the precinct.

4.2 Digital participation

Participants accessed the engagement on Shape Your Ipswich via the following platforms:

- Direct: 21 – 95.45%
- Search Engine: 1 – 4.55%.

Of the visiting profile, 14 (66.67%) were new visitors to Shape Your Ipswich and 7 (33.33%) were return visitors.

4.3 Participant demographics

Age, gender, and cultural background information were not obtained through this engagement activity. Participants were identified by their association with the Nicholas Street Precinct.

5. Engagement Findings

All survey participants felt either very safe or quite safe in the Nicholas Street precinct during the day. This is echoed in feedback that the extra security guards in place 'make us feel safe'. During the evening, most participants felt either 'quite safe' or 'neither safe nor unsafe', while one participant felt 'quite unsafe'.

Responses from survey participants identified the biggest overall safety issue during both the day and evening as 'the precinct is empty or closed'. 'Anti-social behaviour' followed by 'the precinct is not family-friendly' were other safety risks identified, particularly for the evenings.

Participants believed that the biggest barrier, real or perceived, that prevented their customers from visiting the Nicholas Street Precinct both during the day and evening, was overwhelmingly that 'the precinct is empty or closed'.

There was also concern regarding anti-social behaviour and that customers may not feel safe. In addition to this, a real or perceived lack of cleanliness was identified as a potential barrier to customers visiting the precinct.


Suggestions put forward by participants to improve community safety in the Nicholas Street Precinct included the following:

- More police and evening security patrols
- Good lighting including car park
- Obvious security cameras
- Improved signage
- Regular cleaning
- Increased community activity
- More green space and street art
- Greater connection between the precinct and top of Brisbane Street
- Redevelopment of Bell Street, Ipswich train station, Health Plaza and bus station.

Three survey participants nominated to be part of a group to have an ongoing voice in a precinct working group, as representatives of the precinct.

Direct comments about how to improve the perception of safety in the precinct and attract more visitors included:

- "I think once Nicholas Street opens up with more businesses it will create a much more inviting environment. I think the addition of the extra security guard has been beneficial also, Eddy and his team do a good job and make us feel safe. More police patrols would be nice."
- "Very good lighting. Obvious security cameras."
- "Good lighting. A commercial theme to attract businesses to the area."

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- “Just by attracting more people, night-time eateries. A visible security presence close by afterhours will certainly help. The best thing is to just revitalise the precinct in a family-friendly way. A greater prominence of security cameras in areas like laneways is needed.”
 - “Connection between Nicholas Street precinct and the top of Brisbane Street. Softening brutalist architecture. Extend street art. More green space/open space. Increase community activity.”

6. References

This community engagement report accompanies the draft Community Safety Strategy for the Nicholas Street Precinct.

7. Appendices

- A. Shape Your Ipswich data report.

“Together, we proudly enhance the quality of life for our community”



APPENDIX A – Data Report



Appendix A - Shape
Your Ipswich data re