

WHERE WE BELONG:

Creating Inclusive and Accessible Communities Across Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2025

Centre for
Social Justice and
Inclusion





ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, upon whose ancestral lands this project unfolded. We pay respect to Elders past and present, acknowledging them as traditional knowledge holders and recognising their continuing connection to land, waters, country, and community.



PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work that we do in partnership with local communities would not be possible without our Community Partners, who work alongside us and contribute considerable expertise, ideas, and passion.

We also wish to thank all the community members who generously shared their time and stories.

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	2	5. CASE STUDIES: SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS	39
Project Acknowledgements	3	5.1 What do successful initiatives look like?	41
Project Team	3	5.2 What stops community members from participating?	42
List of Tables	4	5.3 Examples of successful initiatives	44
List of Figures	4	6. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE: WHAT DO THESE FINDINGS MEAN?	46
Executive Summary	5	Advocating for Policy Change	47
1. BACKGROUND	6	Informing Local Programs, Initiatives, and Events	48
1.1 The Role of Universities in Community Engagement	7	7. PROJECT EVALUATION: WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?	50
1.2 Community Voice: Suburb-Level Theory of Change as a Foundation	8	8. FUTURE DIRECTIONS	52
1.3 Community Profile	10	References	54
2. METHODOLOGY	11	Appendices	57
2.1 Place-Based Approaches and Appreciative Inquiry	12	Appendix A. Appreciative Inquiry Interview Schedule	58
2.2 Community Partners Group	13	Appendix B. Appreciative Inquiry Futuring Exercise	58
3. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	14	Appendix C. Outcome statements taken to community sensemaking workshop	59
3.1 Who Participated	16	Appendix D. Community Generated Local Project Ideas Bank	64
3.2 Discover: Community Voice Workshops & Community Conversations	18	LIST OF TABLES	
3.3 Define: Community Sensemaking	20	Table 1. Summary of Workshop Participant Demographics	16
3.4 Co-Design: Community Developed Projects	22	LIST OF FIGURES	
4. STORY OF CHANGE	24	Figure 1. Suburb Level Theory of Change	9
4.1 Shared values that help us create change	27	Figure 2. Creating Inclusive and Accessible Spaces Story of Change	26
4.2 Conditions that support change	29		
4.3 Outcome statements	31		



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contributing to the public good is at the heart of the University of Technology Sydney's (UTS) mission and purpose (UTS 2018). As a significant resource holder, we recognise the role universities can play in driving social change both on campus and in the wider community. The UTS Social Impact Framework (UTS 2017) provides a strategic foundation for community-engaged practice in teaching, knowledge transfer, and capacity building. The activities aligned under this framework have established UTS as a social impact leader in a sector which is increasingly recognising the importance of community-driven, place-based civic engagement and social innovation.

As part of this commitment, the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion (CSJI) leads collaborative initiatives that bring together community members, local businesses, government, and university stakeholders to tackle complex social and environmental issues. CSJI aims to embed participatory practice and community engagement across UTS, directly address societal challenges, and promote transformational change toward a more sustainable and socially just society.

This report documents a recent research collaboration between CSJI and local stakeholders to develop a community-driven theory of change that amplifies local priorities and voices. By exploring perspectives on inclusive and accessible public and private spaces, this work builds on a multi-year effort to foster community-led change. Using asset-based methodologies, the project highlights the best experiences of inclusive and accessible spaces in our community. These narratives are used as a basis for building on the best of what already exists to create more opportunities for similar experiences to occur.

Key deliverables from the project include a community-driven story of change that outlines key priorities for creating inclusive and accessible spaces, a bank of project ideas that were generated in a series of co-design workshops, a literature review into loneliness and social isolation, and a local community newspaper. These outputs reflect a rigorous process of community-driven inquiry and are offered as valuable tools to community advocates, social development practitioners, and planners.

Critically, the report also details policy and practice recommendations emerging from key findings including **increased investment in free and low-cost community spaces and events; prioritising social infrastructure in urban planning; improving public transport and walkability; embedding co-design and participatory decision-making in policy development; strengthening social inclusion policies for diverse and marginalised groups; prioritising funding for safe and livable housing; and funding for place-based organisations.** It also provides guidance for delivering community programs and initiatives to reduce loneliness and isolation, which was a community priority identified through this project.



1

BACKGROUND



1.1 THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement and participatory research practices are becoming increasingly important for higher education institutions with the emergence of ‘a new social contract between universities and society... to assume an active role in contributing to the solution of major societal problems’ (Jorje & Pena 2017, p.303). A recent report from The Chronicle of Higher Education demonstrates the essential roles universities need to play as educational, economic, and community partners (Fischer 2023). By broadening what is traditionally seen as the ‘education and research’ remit, universities can act as anchor institutions in their local communities to address issues of poverty, environmental degradation, social marginalisation, and a host of other ‘grand challenges (Fishcher 2023). This is known broadly as the Third Mission of universities, alongside the traditional outputs of teaching and research. In addition to broader societal outcomes, efforts in these areas offer a host of benefits to universities including broader funding opportunities, improved public confidence, increased engagement in education and employment, stabilised local economies and vibrant cultural environments. The 2024 Australian Universities Accord Interim Report emphasised

Globally, universities have been demonstrating the important contribution they can make to addressing societal grand challenges through knowledge networks, living labs, and dedicated social innovation centres (Bayuo, et al. 2020, Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020, Mdleleni 2021). In Australia, this trend has been slower as incentive structures have lagged and it has taken strong university leadership to embed sustainable development principles throughout the organisation. As commentators have articulated ‘The aim of [Sustainable Leadership] is to lead an organization toward sustainable development by implementing socially responsible activities...[improving] organizational sustainable performance’ (Iqbal and Piwovar-Sulej 2021, p.2).

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) has established itself as a leader in the Australian university sector for its emphasis on real-world research impact and social justice outcomes. These commitments have built a reputation for UTS as the ‘social justice university’ and strongly contributed to it being named the top young university in Australia for the fourth year in a row (Times Higher Education 2024). Leading the university’s commitment to social justice, the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion (CSJI) spearheads many social impact initiatives in our local community and beyond. CSJI recognises the influence UTS has in the communities surrounding its campus and seeks to build capacity and advocate for better outcomes in these areas. In 2023, the work of the Centre was recognised as UTS was one of two inaugural recipients of the prestigious Australian Carnegie Classification for community engagement in higher education institutions (Engagement Australia 2023).

Tertiary education providers have deep connections to their communities that go well beyond education and research. They create jobs, partner with local businesses and schools, undertake locally relevant research, attract investment and provide resources, facilities and leadership that improve lives in the communities that host them. This community engagement represents a major and largely unsung contribution to the nation (Australian Universities Accord 2024, p.58).





1.2 COMMUNITY VOICE: SUBURB-LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE AS A FOUNDATION

As an area experiencing significant gentrification and investment, the suburbs surrounding UTS are undergoing rapid change and demographic shifts. In 2020, it was announced that UTS would be part of Tech Central, a \$48.2 million investment in an innovation and technology hub located in Sydney's central districts. The region would attract leading technology firms, start-ups, incubators, a research hospital, and multiple research institutes. Although these developments can bring opportunities, new infrastructure at this scale can also have negative consequences for existing local communities (Chappel & Jeon, 2021; Echeverri-Carrol et al., 2018; McNeill, 2016). Without a strong inclusion and community voice approach, the benefits of innovation precincts may not be distributed equitably throughout the community. International experiences highlight the significant influence of 'tech giants' that can overshadow community voice, potentially exacerbating inequalities within community. Building from over seven years of working in reciprocity with local communities, the emergence of Tech Central has been a key driver for CSJI's recent work.

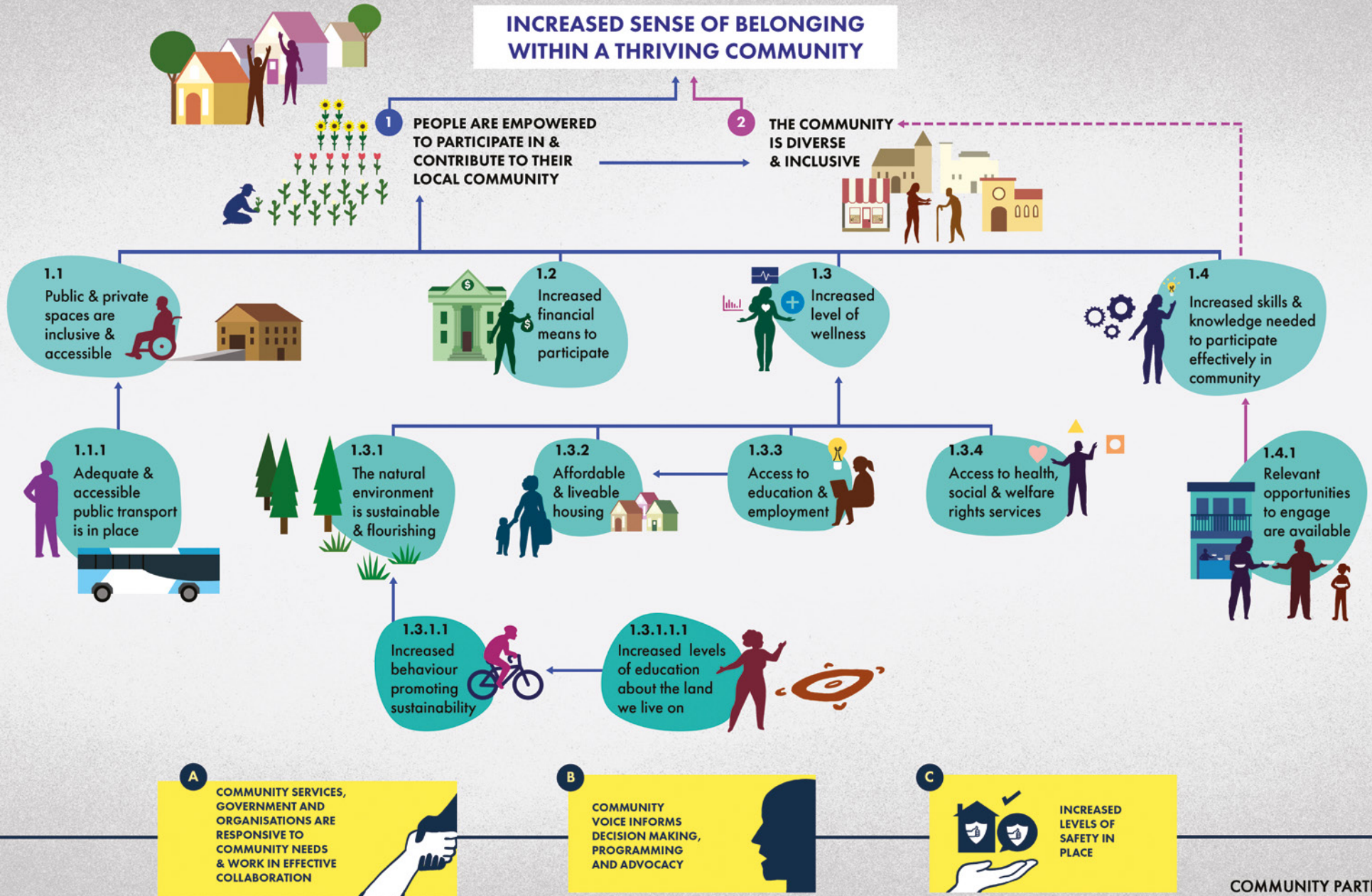
A key collaboration between CSJI and the local community over recent years has been to develop a Suburb-Level Theory of Change for creating an 'Increased sense of belonging within a thriving community' (UTS, 2022). This work reflects the priorities and perspectives of people from Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo and produced a practical tool that can be used to advocate for community needs, direct strategic decision-making, and improve service delivery in the area (see Figure 1

below). This work is described in detail in 'Community Voice: A suburb-level theory of change elevating community voices & strengths across Glebe, Pyrmont, Haymarket & Ultimo Community Engagement' (Aitken, et al. 2023).

This report describes the inclusive and accessible public and private spaces research project, which was identified by community as a priority area in the Suburb-Level Theory of Change. The report outlines the design of the research project, how it was implemented, key findings, and learnings, as well as policy and practice implications. It also details findings from a literature review on loneliness and social isolation, one of the community concerns which emerged through this project. Together, this report provides a robust overview of a place-based change agenda in the local area and what is needed to create a thriving community where everyone belongs.

SUBURB LEVEL THEORY OF CHANGE

**INCREASED SENSE OF BELONGING
WITHIN A THRIVING COMMUNITY**





1.3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Standing on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, UTS is at the heart of distinct and diverse communities across Ultimo, Pyrmont, Haymarket, and Glebe. Our neighbourhood is rich in cultural diversity and has a strong history of community-driven action.

Being some of the oldest and most densely populated suburbs in Sydney, these areas have historically experienced significant challenges and have been the site of industrial decline, poor living conditions, and overcrowding (City of Sydney 2011, Fitzgerald 2008a, Fitzgerald 2008b, Solling 2011). However, community ties have always been strong with resident action groups achieving significant social and environmental outcomes for their community (Burgmann & Burgmann 2011, Glebe Youth Service n.d.).

Although in recent years the region has experienced strong investment in infrastructure and rising land prices, economic diversity is still very present. Unemployment levels are higher than Greater Sydney, as are the proportion of social housing sites. At the same time, formal volunteering, as well as unpaid childcare and disability support are significantly higher, demonstrating the strength of our social connections and a diversity of approaches to meeting social needs beyond economic interactions.

The region is also extremely culturally diverse, with almost 52% of people living in the area having been born overseas and Haymarket hosting one of the nation's most recognisable Chinatown districts. This diversity offers undeniable cultural and economic value, however it also brings with it significant communication challenges for organisations as more than 10% of our community say they speak English 'not well' or 'not at all'.

Despite the presence of strong education and training pillars such as UTS, Ultimo TAFE and the University of Sydney in neighbouring Camperdown, a disproportionately high number of our young people leave school early and high numbers of our community are partially or fully disengaged from education or employment. This demonstrates the potential role these institutions could play in building better outcomes for their surrounding neighbourhoods

The data paints a rich picture of the neighbourhood UTS is proud to call home, and the community-driven work we engage in strongly reinforces this image. The overwhelming message from our community partners is that there is nowhere else like these neighbourhoods and despite the challenges it is an incredible place to call home.

Attribution note: The material in section 1.3 was compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). <https://id.com.au>



2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 PLACE-BASED APPROACHES AND APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Centring the expertise of lived experience is a core tenant of CSJI's approach. People with direct experiences of social or environmental issues have detailed and place-specific knowledge that is invaluable for both understanding and designing interventions (Attygalle 2017, Braithwaite, et al. 2007). By embedding community leadership throughout the process participants gain a significant sense of ownership and long-term commitment that is often missing from both academic and professional initiatives (Aiken 2017, Cabaj & Weaver 2016, Flexner, et al. 2021). For universities, this approach is critical as it 'challenges conventional, hierarchical research frameworks that position expertise outside of communities and instead understands critical collaborative research to be with communities rather than on or for them' (Chupp, et al. 2023, p.2).

Place-based engagement is characterised by collaborative, long-term approaches to community building in a defined geographic area (Victoria Government, 2020). Place-based engagement provides a way of working which prioritises meaningful partnerships with community members who live, work, study, or volunteer in a particular area. These partnerships provide a foundation for developing a shared agenda which can be used to create social change. Although there are many ways place-based approaches can be implemented, key components include:

- A deep understanding of the context where the work is unfolding;
- Reciprocal partnerships and continuous engagement with local communities; and
- Building a shared vision for change.

As well as taking a community-driven approach, this work is firmly grounded in an asset-based framework. Asset-based community development explores the strengths held in the community such as skills, knowledge, networks and organisations (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993, Payne 2006, Scott et al 2006). This is a departure from traditional service delivery models that look at unmet needs and deficits in the community. By focusing on community strengths, an asset-based approach has the potential to capture people's visions of 'the best of what is' and mobilise existing networks and resources to leverage opportunities for social change.

Typically, Appreciative Inquiry Summits are conducted over a single, day-long workshop with participants from a single organisation. Since the project was exploring social change in a highly diverse community with the impetus of embedding community leadership throughout the process, the format was broken into a series of workshops that took place between July 2023 and March 2024. These included an iterative cycle of:

- **Discovery:** finding out the best of what is
- **Definition:** collective sensemaking and data analysis
- **Co-design:** creating real-world community-driven projects
- **Capacity building:** upskilling community members to use the project outputs and make change in their community; and
- **Implementation:** enacting community-driven initiative.



2.2 COMMUNITY PARTNERS GROUP

The Community Partners Group is at the centre of CSJI's place-based community engagement research and action program. This group includes local residents and community leaders, and representatives from government, industry and service providers. Members of this Community Partners Group were identified through existing CSJI networks, local community organisation representatives, and invitation extended through the City of Sydney. Throughout this project, the Community Partners Group met in 4–6-week intervals to provide project direction, reflection, and feedback. This enabled the project to align with the expectations of both project partners and UTS, refine workshop activities and facilitation methods, sense-check data analysis and shape project outputs according to community needs. Partners were engaged as experts in their local communities and volunteer members were compensated for their time and input with gift vouchers.

Community Partners were also an indispensable conduit to engage with broader audiences. As leaders with high centrality in their communities, members have a wealth of personal and professional networks. Further, as the project sought representation from marginalised groups, community partners were crucial in accessing and establishing legitimacy with these communities. These relationships extended the reach of existing UTS networks and served as the main channel through which workshop participants were engaged.



3

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS



3. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Insights to create the story of change for inclusive and accessible spaces was generated through a series of community conversations, workshops, and community sensemaking. As described above, these engagements were designed using place-based and asset-based approaches, with input from the Community Partners Group.

Community members could participate through a one-on-one interview or workshop, depending on their availability and what they felt most comfortable with. To increase accessibility of the workshops, recruitment material was translated into the most frequently used community languages and interpreters were present at workshops where participants indicated they needed information in a language other than English. The project team also facilitated an additional workshop with a parenting group in community, to increase the accessibility of participation for community members with diverse access needs. The team was also invited to have a stall at a local services hub, to connect with people who had recently experienced homelessness.

Recruitment material detailing the project's purpose, registration information, and compensation information were provided to the Community Partners Group. This group disseminated the recruitment material through their networks. This approach effectively engaged community members in the project, leveraging the trust and credibility of community partners to conduct recruitment.

There was also a daytime and an evening session of each workshop so that participants could register for whichever time best suited their availability. Participants were also compensated with a \$50 Coles voucher for each workshop they attended.

The sections below provide an overview of who participated in the workshops as well as how data was collected and analysed through this process.

3.1 WHO PARTICIPATED

178 community members participated across all data collection engagements (workshops and interviews). To be eligible to participate, community members needed to be at least 18 years old and live, work, study or volunteer in either Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, or Ultimo.

Community members were provided with an optional demographics form to fill out at the beginning of the Appreciative Inquiry workshop. Community members were only asked to fill out the demographics form during their first engagement with the project, so that they were not overburdened in continuously providing this information to the research team. Table 1 below provides an overview of the responses received from community members.

TABLE 1.
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS % (N)	
Age	The average age of participants was 51 years old, with a wide spread from 18-88 years old.	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal	4.8% (4)
	Torres Strait Islander	0
	Both	0
	No	95.2% (80)
	Total	100% (84)
Country of birth	Australia	41.5% (34)
	China	17.1% (14)
	Other	41.4% (34)
	Total	100% (82)
	Main language spoken at home or in the community <i>Note: multiple languages could be listed</i>	English
Mandarin		13.1% (11)
Cantonese		8.3% (7)
Other		16.7% (14)

Gender	Woman or female	69.5% (57)
	Man or male	26.8% (22)
	Non-binary	1.2% (1)
	Gender neutral	1.2% (1)
	Preferred not to answer	1.2% (1)
	Total	100% (82)
Sexual Orientation	Straight (heterosexual)	83.5% (66)
	Gay/lesbian	2.5% (2)
	Bisexual	2.5% (2)
	I use a different term	3.8% (3)
	Don't know	1.3% (1)
	Prefer not to answer	6.3% (5)
	Total	100% (79)
Transgender or Trans	Yes	0
	No	95.1% (77)
	Don't know	1.2% (1)
	Prefer not to say	3.7% (3)
	Total	100% (81)
Intersex or variation of sex characteristics	Yes	2.5% (2)
	No	93.8% (76)
	Don't know	0
	Prefer not to say	3.7% (3)
	Total	100% (81)
Housing	Homeowners	26.8% (22)
	Renters	30.5% (25)
	Social/public housing	31.7% (26)
	Other	11.0% (9)
	Total	100% (82)
Disability	Yes, I have a disability	21.0% (17)
	No, I do not have a disability	76.5% (62)
	Prefer not to say	2.5% (2)
	Total	100% (81)

Data source: Appreciative Inquiry Workshop: demographic form



AGE:

The ages of people who attended ranged from 18 – 88, capturing a wide spread of people. However, with an average age of 51, the makeup of the group did tend to favour older community members. For example, there were 31 participants over the age of 60 and only 18 participants under the age of 30.

GENDER:

There were far more female participants than male, 69.5%, compared to only 26.8%. Only a small number of people identified as non-binary or gender-neutral (n=2). The workshop failed to include any participants who are transgender (or who felt comfortable sharing this).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

Regarding sexual orientation, the vast majority of participants 83.5% stated they were heterosexual/straight, with 8.8% of participants identifying as gay/lesbian, bisexual, or as using a different term to describe their sexuality.

FIRST NATIONS:

Almost 5% of participants identified as Aboriginal.

LANGUAGE AND BIRTHPLACE:

The workshops were incredibly diverse when reviewing the country of birth and the main language spoken data. Almost 60% of participants were born outside of Australia, the majority of which were born in China, with another 18 countries of birth being represented, including the Philippines, Nicaragua, Turkiye, Jamaica, Ireland, Vietnam, Colombia, South Korea, India, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Unsurprisingly, the main language spoken at home or in their community was English (77.4%), with Mandarin and Cantonese being the next most common. Another 11 languages were listed by participants though, including Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, and Arabic.

HOUSING:

The housing status of participants was also diverse, with almost a third of participants either owning their own home, renting, or living in social/public housing. A further 17% of participants described their housing situation in other terms, including living at home, with their parents, or in student accommodation.

DISABILITY:

The demographic data also revealed that most participants, 76.5%, did not have a disability. About 1 in 5 of the participants, 21%, reported living with disability.



3.2 DISCOVER: COMMUNITY VOICE WORKSHOPS & COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community voice workshops were held beginning in July 2023 to gather insights on how we can create spaces that contribute to a sense of belonging and connection. To begin the workshop, community members were invited to name physical and digital spaces in the local community that are critical in connecting to community. These were written on post it notes and placed on large maps of the local area around the room.

Following this exercise, community members were invited to share stories of their best experiences of inclusive and accessible spaces in their local community. Rather than facilitators guiding participants through the questions, participants were paired up and asked to ‘interview’ each other based on a series of questions (Appendix A). These questions were developed by CSJI and the Community Partners Group. Workshop scribes joined each interview pair and recorded the conversation, which enabled a free-flowing dialogue between participants. This facilitation method not only deepened the community-led nature of the project but also supported participants to build relationships with each other that led to stronger community networks (see Morgan and Blair, 2025). After the interviews, participants were brought back into a group to share what they learned during their discussions and engage in a forecasting exercise which created a picture of their community in an ideal future-state (Appendix B).

Additional community conversations were held with community members through targeted outreach and in one-on-one interviews for people who were unable to attend workshops. Targeted outreach included a workshop with a local Japanese speaking parenting group and with people who had recently experienced homelessness. The project team was also invited by a Community Partner to set up a table at an event focused on connecting people who recently experienced homelessness with local services. Although no formal interviews or workshops were conducted, the team engaged in informal conversations with three community members, who shared insights about public spaces in the local area they feel connected to.



IMAGES 1 (LEFT) AND 2 (RIGHT) APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY WORKSHOP

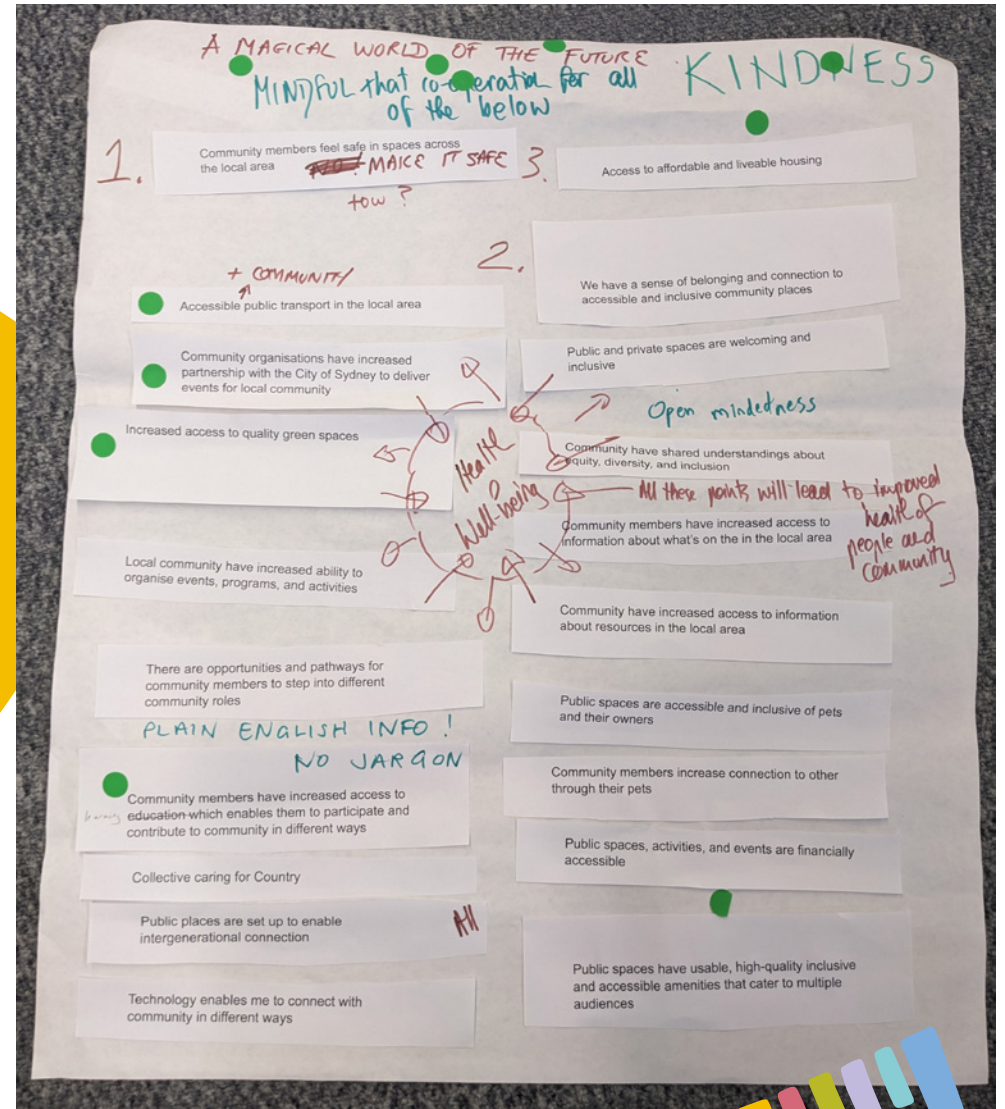


3.3 DEFINE: COMMUNITY SENSEMAKING

Following the Appreciative Inquiry workshops, CSJI researchers compiled the interviews and conducted an initial thematic analysis of the stories, drawing out major themes that arose from the data. This initial review was first taken to the Community Partners Group to ‘sense-check’ that the topics highlighted were representative of their experiences in community. The team at CSJI then drafted a series of statements that represented the ideal state for an inclusive and accessible community, as demonstrated by the interview data (Appendix C). These were then presented to community in the sensemaking workshops which were held in November 2023.

For the community sensemaking workshops, CSJI invited community members back to review the initial data analysis and help to ‘make sense’ of the emerging narrative. Participants were provided with the ‘ideal state’ statements and asked to provide feedback on how well they represented their priorities and perspectives. They were then asked to participate in a collective process of using the revised statements to create a ‘Story of Change’ that described how each of the identified outcomes might be achieved. Participants were also asked to identify which areas of the story of change were a priority in community.

Facilitators deliberately chose to frame the process as a ‘story of change’ rather than the more commonly used term ‘theory of change’ as feedback from the Community Partners Group had indicated that the use of less-academic language was preferable.



IMAGES 3 (LEFT) AND 4 (RIGHT) COMMUNITY SENSEMAKING WORKSHOP



3.4 CO-DESIGN: COMMUNITY DEVELOPED PROJECTS

In March 2024, two co-design workshops were held with community to collaboratively develop project ideas based on priority areas which emerged during the sense making process. 25 community members attended these two sessions.

The workshop included opportunities for community members to develop a shared understanding of the priority area, ideate potential solutions, and refine their ideas based on feedback and collaboration from other workshop participants. Participants were provided with the following statements, based on community-identified priority areas, to guide their ideation and project development:

- How might we ensure all of community has access to information about what's happening in the local area?
- How might we make activities and events in the local area affordable so that everyone can participate?
- How might we improve safety in public and private spaces across the local area?
- How might we improve wellbeing so people feel like they can contribute in our local communities?
- How might we ensure everyone can get to where they want or need to go (public transport, community transport, walkability, cycling etc).
- How might we make sure that everyone in the local area has access to secure, affordable, and liveable housing?

Community members self-selected which project area they wanted to work on. Some tables were combined on the day of the workshops and as such, there were no community members working on projects related to housing. Through these two workshops, community members developed 156 different potential solutions to improve access to information, making activities and events affordable, ensuring safety, improving wellbeing, and ensuring everyone can get to where they want to or need to go. See Appendix D for a full list of ideas generated by community.

Community members were encouraged to submit their project idea to the Centre for Social Justice Social Impact Grant program - a UTS grant program which supports UTS staff and students to work in partnership with communities to contribute to positive social change - to jumpstart their project. Learnings related to this are explored in section 7.



IMAGES 5 (LEFT) AND 6 (RIGHT) CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS



4

STORY OF CHANGE



4. STORY OF CHANGE

Through community voice workshops, conversations, and community sensemaking, we collaboratively developed a story of change (see Figure 2 below) which describes what's needed to create inclusive and accessible spaces across Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo. This story of change demonstrates how inclusive and accessible spaces connect people and create a sense of belonging, as well as what needs to be in place for this to be a reality. This section of the report provides an overview of community insights which were identified through the community-driven research process. These insights are presented in the story of change as shared values (see Section 4.1), conditions that support change (see Section 4.2), and outcome statements (see Section 4.3).

FIGURE 2 [NEXT PAGE]. CREATING INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES STORY OF CHANGE

Where we belong: Creating accessible and inclusive communities in Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo

Shared values that help us create change



Centre for Social
Justice and Inclusion

Kindness
Equity, diversity and inclusion
Open-minded to diverse perspectives
Agency to contribute to communities
Everyone can access support

Public spaces, activities
and events are financially
accessible



We can get to where we
want and need to go



Increased access to learning
which helps us contribute to
community in different ways

The skills and
knowledge we have
are valued



Information is
accessible, up to date
and in multiple formats

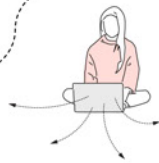
Increased participation from
diverse communities in
public and private spaces,
activities and events

Increased
connection to
each other



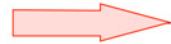
Increased
intergenerational
connection

There are different
ways to get involved in
community



Technology helps us
connect with community in
multiple ways

Public spaces have
high-quality facilities
and infrastructure that
meets diverse needs
and experiences



There are shared
spaces we can use
and enjoy



Activities, events and places help
us to learn about and practice
collective caring for country



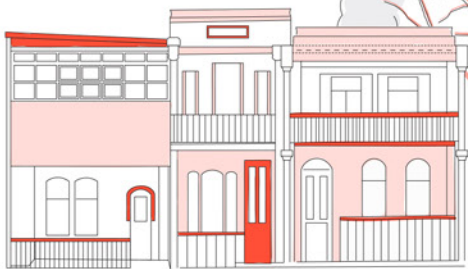
Local communities have
increased ability to organise
and attend events, programs
and activities



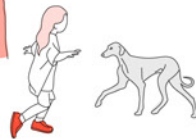
We celebrate the strengths
of diverse communities
across the local area

We have increased
individual and collective
wellbeing

We have a sense
of belonging and
connection to
inclusive and
accessible places
in community



We feel welcomed and
included in public and
private spaces



Conditions that support change

Physical and emotional
safety in public and private
spaces

Trust within our
communities

Mental health support that is
appropriate, active and readily
available

We can address conflict in safe
and meaningful ways

Services that are responsive
and connected to community
needs

Secure, affordable and
liveable housing



4.1 SHARED VALUES THAT HELP US CREATE CHANGE

In sharing stories about what is currently working well in community and identifying what needs to change for the future, community members articulated a set of shared values that are needed to guide social change. These shared values underpin both conditions that support change, and the outcomes that were drawn from community insights. These shared values include:

- **Kindness** is a fundamental value that fosters a sense of care, respect, and empathy among community members. By prioritising kindness in interactions and decision-making, communities can create a more welcoming and supportive environment where people feel valued and included. This helps to build strong social connections and trust, which are essential for collective action and resilience.
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion** ensure that all community members, regardless of background, identity, or circumstances, have the opportunity to participate fully in public life. These values recognise that different people face different barriers, and they emphasise the need to address systemic inequalities by creating fair and accessible opportunities for everyone. A truly inclusive community celebrates diversity as a strength and actively works to remove barriers to participation.
- **Open-minded to diverse perspectives** encourages active listening and mutual understanding, allowing communities to embrace new ideas and solutions. It enables people to learn from one another's experiences and create policies, programs, and public spaces that reflect the needs of the whole community. When diverse voices are heard and respected, decision-making becomes more representative and effective.



[IN SHARING HOW SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSIVE SPACES]...THEY ARE SUPPORTIVE AND CARING FOR US ELDERLIES, TREATING US WITH PATIENCE AND KINDNESS

WE NEED KINDNESS.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FRIENDSHIP, THE DIVERSE AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCE I'VE HAD. THESE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SENSE OF CONNECTION AND BELONGING.





- **Agency to contribute to communities** empowers individuals to take an active role in shaping their surroundings and influencing change. When people feel they have the power to contribute - whether through volunteering, leadership, or community-driven initiatives - they develop a stronger connection to their community and a greater sense of responsibility for its well-being. Encouraging agency fosters innovation, collaboration, and long-term engagement in community-building efforts.
- **Everyone can access support** is key to creating an inclusive and equitable society. Access to resources - whether financial, social, emotional, or informational - allows people to navigate challenges and thrive. A community where support is readily available strengthens individual and collective wellbeing and ensures that no one is left behind.

By embedding these values in community initiatives, decision-making and everyday interactions, community can foster long-term positive change. These values not only shape the conditions necessary for transformation but also guide the actions and relationships that make inclusive, accessible and connected communities a reality.



WE USED TO HAVE STREET PARTIES. WHERE WE'D CLOSE OFF THE STREET IN PYRMONT AND ULTIMO AND IT'D BE A COMPLETELY COMMUNITY DRIVEN AND MOTIVATED AFFAIR THAT REALLY GALVANISED EVERYBODY IN THE STREET. THE ORGANIC-NESS OF IT. THE INCLUSIVENESS. I'M GONNA USE THE WORD COMMUNITY.



4.2 CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT CHANGE

Complementary to these shared values, community members also identified conditions that are necessary for outcomes in the story of change to become a reality. These conditions were communicated through community narratives about what enables inclusive and accessible spaces and were further refined through the community sensemaking process. In particular, the role of mental health support and addressing conflict in safe and meaningful ways emerged as essential during the community sensemaking workshops. These conditions are:

- Physical and emotional safety in public and private spaces: Feeling safe - both physically and emotionally - is essential for participation and belonging. When people feel secure in their environments, they are more likely to engage in community life and build meaningful connections.
- Trust within our communities: Trust strengthens relationships and encourages collaboration. It enables communities to work together, navigate challenges, and create spaces where people feel valued and included.
- Mental health support that is appropriate, active, and readily available: When mental health support is accessible, stigma-free, and culturally appropriate, we are better equipped to navigate life's challenges and engage meaningfully with others. Community wellbeing is strengthened when mental health is seen as a shared responsibility, supported by formal services and informal community networks.



I JUST WANT A FUTURE
WHERE PEOPLE ARE SAFE
TO GO ANYWHERE AND
DO ANYTHING...

I WAS ASSURED THAT MY SAFETY AND NEEDS
WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF, BUT I FELT I
WAS BEING TAKEN CARE OF AND UNDERSTOOD,
WITHOUT ME HAVING TO EVEN ASK FOR THAT.



- We can address conflict in safe and meaningful ways: Conflict is inevitable, but when addressed constructively, it strengthens relationships and community resilience. Safe, inclusive approaches to conflict resolution ensure that all voices are heard and respected.
- Services that are responsive and connected to community needs: Services must be accessible, relevant, and shaped by the communities they serve. When support systems align with real needs, they enhance participation and trust.
- Secure, affordable, and liveable housing: Housing is not just about shelter - it is the foundation of stability, wellbeing, and participation in community life. Adequate housing allows us to put down roots, engage with our neighbours, and contribute to community without the stress of housing insecurity.

Safety, mental health and wellbeing support, and housing were all named as priority areas by community. Each of these areas were articulated as being essential in not only creating spaces where people feel like they belong, but also essential in creating inclusive communities where people can contribute. Without these foundational elements, social participation becomes challenging, and barriers to inclusion persist.

By strengthening these six conditions, communities can create environments where people feel safe, supported and empowered to engage. This, in turn, enables the shared values of kindness, inclusion, trust and agency to flourish, ultimately leading to more connected, resilient and accessible communities.

IT'S ONLY BECAUSE OF COMMUNITY HOUSING THAT I WASN'T OUT ON THE STREET.

ALL THESE POINTS [TALKING ABOUT CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES, AND HOUSING] WILL LEAD TO IMPROVED HEALTH OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY.





4.3 OUTCOME STATEMENTS

By sharing narratives about what is working well in community and envisioning a future of inclusive and accessible spaces, community members identified several changes that are needed to foster a sense of belonging and connection. These changes are articulated in the story of change (Figure 2, above) as outcome statements and are described in more detail below. Some of the outcome statements highlight the importance of being able to access high-quality spaces that meet diverse needs, whereas others speak to the psychological, emotional, and social factors related to being in spaces with other people. Together, the outcome statements tell a story about what's needed in the local community to create inclusive and accessible spaces where people can connect with each other and feel a sense of belonging.

PUBLIC SPACES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS ARE FINANCIALLY ACCESSIBLE

Community members talked about the value of public spaces, events, and activities in supporting people to participate in community and develop a sense of belonging. In doing so, they also highlighted the importance of ensuring these spaces, activities, and events are financially accessible for everyone to participate. Community members also talked about how increased costs of living can act as a barrier to participating, particularly in circumstances where accessing events and activities costs money. Having spaces, activities, and events that are financially accessible was named as a priority area by community.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT FINANCIAL BURDENS.

YOU NEED COMMUNITY SPACES, AND EVENTS THAT ARE LOW COST, THE COST OF LIVING IS HIGH AND YOU DON'T WANT THAT TO BE A BARRIER.

WHAT WE NEED MORE OF: BE ABLE TO ACCESS SPACES WITHOUT THE BURDEN - FINANCIALLY.

WE SHOULD HAVE MORE FREE AND INEXPENSIVE ACTIVITIES.



THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ORGANISES FUN EVENTS, BUT I'VE OBSERVED THAT THE COST OF LIVING IS INCREASING, LEADING TO SOME PEOPLE MOVING AWAY, WHICH SADDENS ME.



WE CAN GET TO WHERE WE WANT AND NEED TO GO

Community members highlighted the importance of being able to move freely and easily throughout the local area as a key enabler of participation in public and private spaces. Access to reliable and affordable transport is essential for ensuring that people can connect with others, access essential services, and take part in social, cultural, and economic activities. Without the ability to reach these spaces, opportunities for engagement, belonging, and contribution are significantly limited.

This issue was named as a priority by the community, reinforcing that transportation and accessibility are not just logistical concerns but fundamental to creating an inclusive and connected community. Addressing these barriers allows people to participate fully in community life, build relationships, and experience a stronger sense of inclusion in shared spaces.



THE BUSES IN CERTAIN ROUTES SHOULD START EARLIER AND RUN LATER TO GO TO PARTICULAR PLACES.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY IS IMPORTANT.



THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY & INCREASED ACCESS TO LEARNING WHICH HELPS US CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Throughout workshops, community members shared the importance of having different ways for people to get involved in community. The tremendous efforts of staff and volunteers at local community organisations and in community groups was evident in many stories about what works well and what enables success in creating a sense of belonging and connection. Community members also talked about the value of having different ways for people to get involved, in recognition of the diverse skill sets and perspectives that are required to create change.

Having increased access to learning opportunities that support people to get involved also emerged as an important contributor to community involvement. During the community sensemaking phase, participants highlighted the role of skill sharing and skill building as a way to get more people involved. This was reinforced by the Community Partners Group, who indicated that finding ways to build capacity in community was essential in growing the network of people who contribute to local initiatives.

TECHNOLOGY HELPS US CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY IN MULTIPLE WAYS

Through exploring stories of what enabled people to connect to public and private spaces, different forms of technology were named by community members. Participants talked about the role of technology in connecting people to each other and in finding out information about events, services, and programs in the local area.

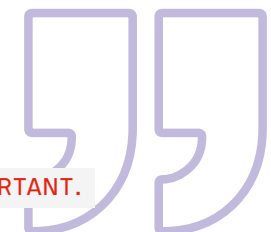


THE INVOLVEMENT TO SUPPORT THE EVENT. IT'S IMPORTANT BECAUSE IF EVERYONE SAYS 'I CAN'T BE BOTHERED' THEN THERE WON'T BE AN EVENT. WE NEED PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY TO BE INVOLVED. I THINK THAT MY CONTRIBUTION WAS BEING PART OF THE EXPERIENCE. I'M SOMEONE WHO CONNECTS PEOPLE, I'VE GIVEN A LOT TO COMMUNITY...IT TAKES A LOT OF DEDICATION AND EFFORT TO HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER.

WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE.

THE BUSES IN CERTAIN ROUTES SHOULD START EARLIER AND RUN LATER TO GO TO PARTICULAR PLACES.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY IS IMPORTANT.





INFORMATION IS ACCESSIBLE, UP TO DATE AND IN MULTIPLE FORMATS

While many participants talked about the value of technology in finding out information about what's on in the local area, some also talked about the benefit of information being available in multiple formats. For many this was because of barriers related to technology such as not knowing how to use it, not having smartphones, or not having internet access. Participants felt that having information available in multiple formats was a more equitable approach to ensure that everyone in community can access information.



THERE WAS COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE EVENT VIA EMAIL. THAT'S HOW I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE EVENT. THERE WAS ALSO FLYER, IT'S NOT TECHNOLOGY BUT IT'S AN ADDITIONAL TOOL.

MORE COMMUNICATION IN DIFFERENT FORMS TO REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE.



INCREASED PARTICIPATION FROM DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS & WE CELEBRATE THE STRENGTHS OF DIVERSE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE LOCAL AREA

Across all our engagements, community members expressed a deep appreciation for living in a diverse community and emphasised the importance of ensuring that people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to fully participate in public and private spaces, activities, and events. Many participants shared how access to inclusive spaces fosters a sense of belonging and connection, particularly when they can engage with others who share similar lived experiences.

A key theme that emerged was the idea that true inclusion goes beyond simply making spaces available - it requires intentional efforts to remove barriers and create environments where people feel welcomed, valued, and empowered to contribute. Whether through language, cultural recognition, or equitable access to events, ensuring diverse participation strengthens the fabric of the community.

Community members also highlighted the need to celebrate the strengths of diverse communities across the local area. This includes acknowledging and uplifting the cultural heritage, knowledge, and contributions of different groups, as well as fostering a culture of respect, mutual support, and care. Many participants spoke about how inclusion is not just about accessibility, but also about recognising and valuing the unique identities and experiences that each person brings to the community.

By increasing participation from diverse communities and celebrating their strengths, the local area can become a place where all individuals feel a deep sense of belonging, where differences are embraced, and where people actively contribute to a thriving, inclusive society.



[TALKING ABOUT INCLUSION AT AN EVENT] IT WAS AVAILABLE NO MATTER WHAT YOUR CLASS... IT WAS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE.

HERITAGE CONTRIBUTES TO MY CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY.

WHEN I FIRST MOVED TO THE ULTIMO COMMUNITY, STEPPING FOOT INTO THE ULTIMO COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF BELONGING WASHED OVER ME. YOU SEE, WE ALL SPOKE THE SAME LANGUAGE... THIS MADE IT INCREDIBLY EASY FOR ME TO FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING, LIKE I HAD FOUND MY RIGHTFUL PLACE.

HERE THERE IS SO MANY PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH. WE LEARN AS WE GO. THERE IS FUNDING FOR INTEGRATION OF CULTURES, WE DON'T WANT TO FORGET OUR CULTURES BUT WE WANT TO SHARE.

[TALKING ABOUT THEIR VISION FOR THE FUTURE]. WE RESPECT EACH OTHER. WE LOVE NEIGHBOURS. WE LOOK OUT FOR PEOPLE - PEOPLE WHO ARE OLDER, WITH DISABILITY, OR MARGINALISED.





INCREASED CONNECTION TO EACH OTHER & INCREASED INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION

Connection in community emerged as a significant theme across the data. While sharing stories about the best of what is in community, participants often reflected on moments and opportunities that enabled them to build connections with other people. Participants also reflected on the positive impact of intergenerational relationships, and noted that these were important to build. Intergenerational connection also often featured in positive stories about moments of connection and belonging.

PUBLIC SPACES HAVE HIGH-QUALITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MEETS DIVERSE NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES

In exploring what it means to create inclusive and accessible public and private spaces, community members talked about the physical quality of spaces and the importance of infrastructure to meet diverse needs. Participants emphasised that it is difficult to use public spaces that do not have high-quality amenities. Similarly, in talking about the strengths of spaces they enjoy using, they often spoke about amenities being a contributing factor. They also talked about how in their vision for the future, spaces would have infrastructure that meets everyone's needs.



WE WERE DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AND I WAS OLDER BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER - WE WERE EXPLORING SYDNEY TOGETHER FEELING FREE.

JUST MEETING PEOPLE MADE ME FEEL CONNECTED TO THIS PLACE. IT WAS NICE TALKING TO THE OLDER PEOPLE AS WELL, GIVING THEM A CUP OF TEA AND HAVING A CHAT. JUST MEETING DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

IN 5 YEARS TIME, WE SEE A PARK WHERE WE HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR EVERYONE TO ASK IT. TOILETS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEARBY, TV SCREEN TO WATCH SPORT, WATCH MOVIES, TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER, PLAYGROUND FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY...

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ORGANISES AN OUTING ONCE A MONTH AND WE ARE ABLE TO ENJOY THE OUTDOOR SPACE. THE PUBLIC AMENITIES ARE VERY CLEAN.

YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK, WE NEED MORE PUBLIC TOILETS IN THE COMMUNITY! WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, GOING ABOUT TOWN AND WHATEVER, THERE AREN'T ENOUGH TOILETS.

MAKE MORE PUBLIC TOILETS. AND ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.





THERE ARE SHARED SPACES WE CAN USE AND ENJOY

Participants emphasised that having shared public spaces that they could not just use but also *enjoy* facilitated opportunities for connection and increased wellbeing. These shared spaces include community centres, green spaces, and waterfronts.

Many community members also talked about how it is important to have spaces where they can take their pets. Participants talked about how having pets can create opportunities to have conversations with other people, acting as an enabling factor for connection.

ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND PLACES US TO LEARN ABOUT AND PRACTICE COLLECTIVE CARING FOR COUNTRY

Throughout the workshops, community members also highlighted the importance of Indigenous knowledges, and that caring for Country plays a significant role in creating inclusive and accessible spaces. To enhance how people can create inclusive and accessible spaces where people feel a sense of belonging, participants talked about a future where there is respect for First Nations cultures and ways of doing, being, and knowing.



THE PARK IS SO GORGEOUS – EVEN OUTSIDE THAT EVENT. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO WALK. THERE IS A PLAYGROUND FOR FAMILIES THERE ARE BBQS. THERE IS A POOL. I HEARD IT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED AND CLEANED SO PEOPLE CAN SWIM. THERE ARE CAFES. IT'S JUST GORGEOUS.

WHAT I WANT MORE OF – MORE PARKS, MORE PUBLIC SPACES FOR FAMILIES, LESS BUILDINGS AND MORE BUSES

[VISION FOR THE FUTURE] PEOPLE WALK THROUGH COUNTRY AND RESPECT ABORIGINAL LAND AND APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF THE LAND THAT WE LIVE ON.

I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL ALONE. I WANT TO CONNECT PEOPLE AND CONNECT TO COUNTRY... CONNECTED TO NATURE... UNDERSTAND WHAT BEING CONNECTED TO THE EARTH MEANS.





WE FEEL WELCOMED AND INCLUDED IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

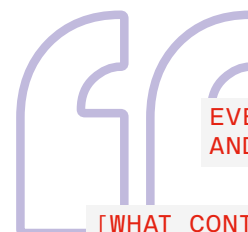
In talking about moments when participants felt connected, many explored the role other people played in helping them to feel that way. During these reflections, community members named feeling welcome and included in public and private spaces as an important contributing factor. Feeling welcomed and included were important factors in how people participated in the local area, such as attending events and activities and using spaces.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE INCREASED ABILITY TO ORGANISE AND ATTEND EVENTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

The ability to organise and attend events emerged through conversations about how power dynamics shape community's ability to organise. Participants talked about how increased autonomy to organise events and activities would lead to more opportunities to connect and more opportunities to enjoy spaces in the local area.

WE HAVE INCREASED INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE WELLBEING

Initially, this area was not included in the draft outcome statements, however during community sensemaking, participants noted the significance of individual and collective wellbeing and the role it plays in both connection and in using spaces. During this workshop, participants reflected on the importance of looking after yourself and each other, and how this shapes the way people participate in community, build connections, and use spaces.



[TALKING ABOUT A COMMUNITY CENTRE] THEY MADE ME FEEL INCLUDED.

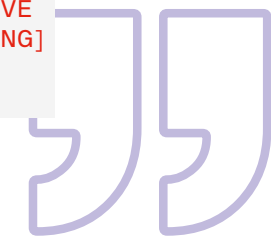
EVERYONE FEELS COMFORTABLE, RELAXED AND SAFE TO SHARE IN THE SPACE.

[WHAT CONTRIBUTED TO BELONGING] FEELING WELCOMED. PEOPLE INCLUDED YOU IN WHAT WAS GOING ON.

[TALKING ABOUT EVENT ORGANISED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS] PEOPLE HATE THESE THINGS HAPPENING IF YOU DON'T HAVE PERMISSION FROM ANYWHERE.

THERE WASN'T A NEED FOR AN AUTHORITY OR SOMEBODY TO BE REGULATING US. IN A FUNNY SENSE IT WAS LIKE THE OLD ABORIGINAL WAY, SELF REGULATING - WE DIDN'T NEED A CONSTABULARY.

ALL THESE POINTS [TALKING ABOUT CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES, AND HOUSING] WILL LEAD TO IMPROVED HEALTH OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY.





5

CASE STUDIES: SOCIAL ISOLATION & LONELINESS

5. CASE STUDIES: SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Stories of social isolation and loneliness routinely emerged throughout this project. These were interwoven into conversations about why connection and belonging play such an important role in understanding inclusive and accessible spaces. Based on these conversations, the Community Partners group identified isolation and loneliness as a key area they wanted to know more about. To identify how local communities could address social isolation and loneliness, and to complement what we heard from community members, we conducted a literature review to understand what initiatives had been successful in other communities. The review aimed to identify practical solutions that had been successful in reducing social isolation and loneliness for communities in a variety of different contexts.

The literature review reinforces many of the insights shared by the community throughout this project. As highlighted in the workshops and conversations, social isolation and loneliness are pressing concerns for many community members, with barriers such as access to affordable activities, transport, and feelings of safety playing a critical role in people's ability to access shared spaces and connect. The literature review reinforces key themes identified through this project, particularly in emphasising the need for shared spaces, affordable public activities, and neighbourhood-based initiatives. Successful case studies, such as Neighbourhood Houses, community gardens, and intergenerational programs, provide compelling evidence that interventions that build upon existing social networks and enable community leadership are the most sustainable and impactful. Similarly, the importance of designing programs that reflect cultural diversity, linguistic accessibility, and local strengths mirrors the inclusive vision articulated by the local community.

The literature review highlights that individual-based interventions often have limited effectiveness in reducing loneliness and isolation, while community-led, strengths-based approaches tend to foster more sustainable social connections. While this specific distinction did not emerge explicitly in our primary data, the community insights gathered through this project emphasise the importance of shared spaces, group activities, and neighbourhood-based initiatives in creating a sense of belonging. This aligns with broader research findings, which suggest that interventions designed around collective participation and social interaction are more likely to have a lasting impact.

Furthermore, the literature highlights that while physical infrastructure is essential for fostering social connection, how spaces are used and shared is just as important. Community members frequently spoke about the role of informal gathering spaces - parks, community centres, and local cafés - as hubs of connection. The success of initiatives such as Neighbour Day and community choirs underscores the potential of leveraging existing spaces to create low-barrier, inclusive opportunities for people to connect. These findings reinforce the significance of ensuring that local policies and planning efforts prioritise inclusive design and the activation of public spaces to encourage social participation.

By integrating these lessons, future community-led projects in Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo can take inspiration from proven approaches while tailoring interventions to local needs. This strengthens the case for embedding participatory co-design principles into policy and practice, ensuring that solutions to social isolation are deeply rooted in the lived experiences and aspirations of community members

5.1 WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES LOOK LIKE?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS HAVE LIMITATIONS

The research in our literature review largely showed that individual-level initiatives are not as successful as community-level initiatives. Different types of individual interventions, such as 1-1 weekly volunteer outings, home visits, or phone call check-ins were generally found to be ineffective in reducing loneliness. These initiatives are often short in duration and don't necessarily increase social interaction in a meaningful and sustainable way (Ferran et al., 2021).

COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE

In contrast to individual interventions, community-level interventions create conditions for multiple connections, affecting a whole group of people and enhancing neighbourhood and community trust, overall. This is what tends to make community interventions more effective than individual interventions. Community activities, such as support groups, physical activity groups, or communal neighbourhood activities, increase contact with neighbours or other people in the community, often seeing a reduction in loneliness (Ferran et al., 2021).

Many of the case studies, programs, and initiatives described below are communal activities, as loneliness and by extension social isolation are essentially community-level problems that need community-level solutions. For example, one study looked at how mothers' groups and playgrounds build social support and community in local neighbourhoods (Strange et al, 2014). When connections in these local groups formed, people generally felt more connected to their local community and less isolated postpartum. Further, when working with older adults, approaches that promote ongoing volunteering and community building tend to be more successful because older adults want to feel a sense of purpose and meaning in what they do, rather than being passive 'receivers' of help (Yang & Moorman, 2021).

Intergenerational programs can also be successful here, providing opportunities for friendship and purpose between older adults and children, but these need to be tailored to older adults who may have mobility issues (Kenning, et al., 2021). Building sustainable relationships, regardless of the setting, can take time, which is why interventions based off group activities over a longer duration create more favourable conditions for reducing loneliness.

COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS NEED TO BE STRENGTHS-BASED AND CO-DESIGNED WITH COMMUNITY

Communal interventions need to be co-designed in order to work well though (Cotterell, Buffel, & Phillipson, 2018). Adopting a participatory and strengths-based approach to program design goes beyond consultation and seeks to deepen collaboration between service providers and funding bodies, treating community members as equal collaborators. Focusing on community strengths (not deficits) when designing interventions for loneliness and focusing on building community members' capabilities to run their own community projects or initiatives can help improve the success and sustainability of projects (Mann, et al., 2017) and also lead to increase social networks, which in turn also reduces loneliness.

Recruitment of people into community initiatives should be carefully considered, as those participants who are isolated are often 'hidden' from community.

It's important for these activities to also be culturally competent. Successful community interventions should enable underrepresented groups to also experience a sense of belonging and inclusion in group activities, as these groups may have struggled in the wider community where they might otherwise have difficulties due to language or cultural barriers.



5.2 WHAT STOPS COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM PARTICIPATING?

While community-level interventions play an important role in reducing loneliness and isolation, there are key barriers that prevent participation. In the Appreciative Inquiry interviews, several barriers to participation and community engagement were identified that are reflected in the existing literature. These include the cost of activities, the location of activities (having available community spaces), and how accessible these spaces are (that is, do community members have access to any needed transport) (see also Hand, 2022).

For example, many interviewees spoke about the cost of using shared community facilities and how this can often inhibit participation. Community members felt that by reducing or removing fees, we could encourage participation and engagement within the community.

“CHARGING FEES FOR BOOKING PING-PONG OR BADMINTON TABLES CONTRADICTS THE COMMUNITY’S PURPOSE, WHICH IS TO SERVE THE PUBLIC. I PROPOSE ABOLISHING THESE CHARGES TO PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY AND ENCOURAGE BROADER PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES”

“YOU NEED COMMUNITY SPACES, AND EVENTS THAT ARE LOW COST, THE COST OF LIVING IS HIGH AND YOU DON’T WANT THAT TO BE A BARRIER”

Community members also discussed the importance of accessible community spaces. It was clear that community and neighbourhood centres act as very important anchors in local neighbourhoods, especially for marginalised groups and those at risk of social isolation.

“THE ULTIMO COMMUNITY CENTRE PROVIDES ME WITH A SENSE OF BELONGING AND I FEEL LESS LONELY, MORE AT HOME”

These spaces often provide an informal touch point for anyone in the community seeking support, whether it be a referral for a formal service, information about what’s going on in the local community, or just someone to have a conversation with.

It is also important to consider how physical environments can increase further isolation and loneliness, for example, an inability to walk around (such as from a lack of pedestrian crossings or unsafe footpaths) means people with limited mobility cannot safely move around their neighbourhood (Cotterell, Buffel, & Phillipson, 2018). Even something as simple as being able to safely walk your dog can foster a sense of connection and community:

“WE DIDN’T KNOW ANYONE SO WE WERE VERY LONELY WHEN WE FIRST MOVED HERE. [BUT] THERE WAS A CONNECTION THERE, TO BE ABLE TO WALK OUR DOGS AND TALK TO PEOPLE, GO TO CAFES. THE CONNECTION WAS FOR SAFETY, FOR HEALTH, FOR FRIENDSHIP.”

As such, designing and maintaining physical environments that enable people to safely move around their neighbourhood can foster informal connections that can help prevent loneliness and isolation.

The needs of marginalised groups such as older adults, people with learning difficulties, people living with disability, LGBTIQ+ communities, and racialised communities must also be considered so these groups are not excluded from whole of community and place-based approaches (Wilkinson, Lang, & Yarker, 2023).



Language barriers were often spoken about by our community members as a challenge that made it hard for some groups of people to fully engage in their local community:

“SOMETIMES LANGUAGE IS A BARRIER SO I CAN IMAGINE HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR ELDERLIES. PEOPLE SAY IF YOU LIVE IN THE COUNTRY, YOU SHOULD LEARN THE LANGUAGE. HOWEVER WHAT PEOPLE OVERLOOKED IS THAT THE ELDERLIES MIGHT HAVE TRIED HARD TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE BUT IT IS TOO DIFFICULT FOR THEM. THEY MIGHT FEEL ESPECIALLY LONELY AND EXCLUDED.”

Migrant communities may face cultural or linguistic barriers when accessing neighbourhood programs or interventions, or they may struggle to find someone they share an identity or experience with.

5.3 EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

The Neighbourhood Houses model is a series of sites for community-based adult learning. While they have feminist origins, they can be used as a place to develop and extend social connections. These places serve as a way for older adults to build their skills and learn different things, such as language and horticulture. Neighbourhood Houses are active social spaces, creating ways for people to build community connections. Examples of this included encouraging people to bring food from their cultures and engage in deep conversations. Overall, people who came to these Neighbourhood Houses because they were isolated found these sites provided them with a space to establish social connections in their local communities (Harrison, Ollis, & Ryan, 2020).

COMMUNITY GARDENS

One study focused on the impact of a garden project that was catered towards helping refugees in the community find greater social connections. The project involved 3 days a week of gardening activities, a weekly community kitchen, food enterprises, creative projects group, micro-enterprises, a weekly market, and a monthly community market. This project was found to provide the refugees with better social connections and support and helped to create a sense of community, through meaningful activities like eating meals and working with plants together. It was felt though that if the project had been run by the participants themselves and not the refugee agencies, it might have been more tailored to their needs – speaking to the importance of co-design in creating lasting impact (Hsueh, et al., 2022).

NEIGHBOUR DAY

Neighbour Day was run by a not-for-profit organisation, Relationships Australia. The event involved people across Australia connecting with their neighbours on a particular day, and support was given by Relationships Australia on how to host certain events. The specific kind of events/activities that were held included social gatherings in homes or communal spaces (such as driveways), leaving cards in letterboxes, checking in on older neighbours, community meetings, or community social media pages. The idea behind this initiatives was to have both large- and small-scale events that would promote connection, and belonging and a whole-of-community event to promote people establishing a sense of identity within their neighbourhoods. Their evaluation of the event found the day led to increased engagement with neighbourhoods, a reduction of loneliness and isolation, and an increased sense of social cohesion. Events like the Neighbour Day campaign are an example of how community and neighbourhood-specific focused events can help strengthen local's sense of connectedness and community, and thus reduce feelings of social isolation and loneliness.

COMMUNITY CHOIR

In Kingston, Melbourne, a group of Chinese Australians have a weekly choir. Older people from diverse backgrounds often need support because they may have cultural or language barriers, but feeling part of these inclusive groups can support and enrich friendships and decrease isolation. The group consists of people who have had no formal training, and they rehearse once a week for 90 minutes. The group



has a repertoire of songs which they all provide input on. Participating in the choir helps create a sense of belonging as weekly rehearsals become a social gathering where relationships can be formed. This was a key aspect of why people joined (to overcome loneliness) as it enabled people who had similar migrant experiences to connect. The group has helped people feel less isolated and is a place of inclusion for people who find English skills a barrier to engagement (Li & Southcott, 2012).

SOCIAL HUBS

Social Hubs is Finnish model which operates on a neighbourhood level, providing free service coordination, counselling, group activities, and meeting places. Some of the things on offer include chair exercising, handicrafts, games, cafeterias, free newspapers, and computers. These hubs are a valuable local resource and important gathering points for older adults in the neighbourhood, helping to foster community building among residents. Overall, the connections people formed in this hub fostered an overall sense of wellbeing and social inclusion (Rantala et al., 2024).

GEZELSCHAPP

GezelschApp was used to encourage social connection between older adults in the local community. The app used various tools to encourage older adults to visit local activities and make new friends. It gave users access to news, activities, information and tips, and an ability to message other friends/people on the platform. Friends could be added to the app, and invitations sent for different activities. This study found that after a sustained period of use, there was a meaningful increase in quality of life, as the users made new friends, though the long-term impact of this on loneliness is hard to gauge (Jansen-Kosterink et al., 2020).

SENIORS SATELLITE

Seniors Satellite was run across six neighbourhoods in London, UK. The Satellite program provided physical and social programs such as fitness classes, art classes, and social opportunities for a low fee. It was aimed at people over 55. One of the key elements of the program was that it was local, being close and within walking distance for participants was a big factor in its success. It was made to be a structured activity around the participant's schedule, providing a convenient way for people to meet other people, be part of a welcoming environment, do physical activity, and even share meals together. Providing an easy opportunity for people to meet and form relationships with others in the local area provided a way for people to get their physical needs met while also increasing their social connectedness. The program was successful also because it mixed a number of key features – being easy to access, low cost, welcoming, and friendly (Hand, 2022).



6

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE: WHAT DO THESE FINDINGS MEAN?

This research project, grounded in community voice and participatory engagement, produced a story of change that outlines key conditions and desired outcomes of inclusive and accessible communities. Through workshops, sense-making sessions, and co-design processes, community members identified the structural and social factors that enable belonging, connection, and participation. This research highlights key barriers to connection - such as financial accessibility, transport limitations, safety concerns, and language barriers - while also demonstrating the importance of recognising communities' strengths, valuing diversity, and facilitating skill-building and information sharing. These insights, paired with the findings from our literature review, provide a roadmap for policy change and practical guidance for local initiatives and programs, ensuring that solutions are tailored to the real needs and aspirations of the communities of Glebe, Haymarket, Pyrmont, and Ultimo.

ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

The evidence gathered in this report strengthens the case for policies that prioritise inclusive public spaces, equitable access to community activities, and investment in social infrastructure. Specifically, policymakers should consider:

- 1. Increased Investment in Free and Low-Cost Community Spaces and Events:** Findings indicate that affordability is a major barrier to participation in community life. Policies should support the expansion of publicly funded, accessible spaces where people can gather, socialise, and participate in activities without financial constraints. Local councils and government agencies should consider funding models that ensure affordability, such as subsidised entry fees for community events, free venue hire for local groups, and support for grassroots initiatives.
- 2. Prioritising Social Infrastructure in Urban Planning:** The importance of informal gathering places, such as parks, libraries, and community centers, is repeatedly emphasised in the research. Local and state governments should embed social infrastructure planning into urban development strategies, ensuring that growing communities have sufficient shared spaces designed for accessibility, comfort, and inclusion. Policies should require developers to incorporate social and cultural spaces into new housing and commercial developments, particularly in high-density areas.
- 3. Improving Public Transport and Walkability:** Accessibility is a major factor in whether people engage with their local community. Advocating for extended public transport hours, subsidised travel for vulnerable groups, and better pedestrian infrastructure will improve mobility and enable more people to participate in social activities. Local councils should prioritise safe and well-lit walking paths, more frequent public transport routes, and community transport options to address mobility barriers.
- 4. Embedding Co-Design and Participatory Decision-Making in Policy Development:** The research highlights that the most effective initiatives are community-led and co-designed. Governments and policymakers should embed participatory processes into decision-making, ensuring that residents, particularly from marginalised groups, have a direct voice in shaping community programs and policies. Legislative frameworks should support participatory budgeting at the local level, allowing community groups to allocate funds toward programs that best meet their needs.



5. Strengthening Social Inclusion Policies for Diverse and Marginalised Groups:

Policies should focus on addressing barriers that prevent participation for older adults, migrants, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ communities. This includes multilingual information campaigns, culturally appropriate programming, and anti-discrimination policies that foster a more inclusive community landscape.

6. Prioritising Funding to Support Safe and Livable Housing: This research highlights that safe and livable housing is an essential foundation for people to feel connected to their communities. The stability that housing provides enables people to participate in their local communities, improve their wellbeing, and build connections with their neighbours. Governments and policymakers should prioritise funding to support affordable housing, social housing, and people who are experiencing homelessness.

7. Funding for place-based organisations: Place-based organisations in our local area are critical in providing the services and programs which enhance wellbeing, connection and belonging. Many of these organisations rely on small or one-off grants to fund their work, a model which is unsustainable in meeting the needs of the communities they serve. To better support place-based organisations, which are best placed to meet community needs, Governments should provide sustainable funding to support this essential work.

INFORMING LOCAL PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND EVENTS

Beyond policy advocacy, these findings offer valuable guidance for designing community programs, initiatives, and events that foster connection and belonging. Local organisations, councils, and service providers can apply these insights in several key ways:

- 1. Expanding Strengths-Based, Community-Led Programs:** Community-driven models, such as Neighbourhood Houses, community gardens, and intergenerational programs, have proven effective in reducing social isolation. Local governments and funding bodies should prioritise initiatives that leverage existing social networks and empower community leadership. Training and funding should be directed toward local groups and volunteers to facilitate their ability to sustain these initiatives long-term.
- 2. Developing Accessible and Inclusive Public Events:** Initiatives such as Neighbour Day and community choirs have demonstrated their success in bringing people together. Future programming should focus on events that lower barriers to participation, such as: free, family-friendly activities in public spaces, intercultural celebrations that showcase community diversity, regular skill-sharing and learning workshops that foster connection and knowledge exchange. Events should be co-designed with residents to reflect local cultures, traditions, and interests.



3. **Enhancing Outreach and Communication Strategies:** Many people face barriers to accessing information about local activities, particularly those with limited English proficiency or digital literacy. Organisations should implement multi-platform communication strategies, including: printed newsletters in multiple languages, community noticeboards in key gathering spots, and partnerships with local radio, faith groups, and cultural associations for outreach.
4. **Embedding Mental Health and Wellbeing Support into Community Initiatives:** Many participants emphasized the need for mental health resources that are accessible, stigma-free, and community-oriented. Local services should integrate mental health check-ins into existing programs, ensuring that community spaces also provide emotional and psychological support. Peer-led support groups, wellbeing cafes, and community-driven resilience-building workshops could help strengthen social connection alongside emotional wellbeing.
5. **Facilitating Intergenerational and Cross-Cultural Engagement:** Programs that connect different generations and cultural groups have been highly effective in reducing loneliness and fostering meaningful relationships. Examples include:
 - a. Mentorship programs pairing young people with older adults for skill-sharing
 - b. Multicultural storytelling and heritage-sharing events
 - c. Community kitchens or food festivals that bring people together through shared meals and traditions

6. **Ensuring Physical and Digital Accessibility in All Initiatives:** To be truly inclusive, community programs must be accessible to people with disabilities, older adults, and those with mobility challenges. This includes physical accessibility in venues, digital accessibility in online resources, and ensuring all events are welcoming to people with diverse needs.

The findings from this research highlight the importance of community-driven, strengths-based approaches to creating accessible and inclusive communities. By advocating for policies that support inclusive public spaces, affordable participation, and accessible transport, decision-makers can create conditions that foster social connection and belonging. Likewise, local programs and initiatives should prioritise co-design, cultural inclusivity, and accessibility, ensuring that all residents - regardless of age, background, or ability - can participate meaningfully in community life.

Moving forward, collaborative partnerships between policymakers, local organisations, and community members will be key to sustaining long-term change. By embedding these principles into urban planning, social policy, and grassroots initiatives, we can create more resilient, connected, and inclusive communities that genuinely reflect the needs and strengths of the local community.



7

PROJECT EVALUATION



7. PROJECT EVALUATION: WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

An internal project evaluation was conducted by members of the research team to understand the extent to which the ‘Where we belong’ project outcomes were reached as well as to gain insights into the implementation of the project (see Morgan and Blair 2025). These learnings are important in informing the ongoing place-based work of the project team in the UTS precinct.

The evaluation revealed that the project successfully achieved its short-term outcomes. Over 80% of participants reported feeling more connected to their community, more confident in contributing, and empowered to make a difference. Both community members and partners expressed high levels of satisfaction with the project, praising its inclusivity, collaborative approach, and well-structured activities. The workshops fostered collaboration, trust, and a sense of ownership among participants, highlighting the value of participatory processes in community engagement. Additionally, UTS strengthened its role as a trusted partner, with high levels of trust reported by participants and community partners.

However, challenges arose in achieving mid-term outcomes, particularly in turning co-designed ideas into actionable projects. Limited time and funding prevented the implementation of many of the ideas, and the potential of tools like the Story of Change as advocacy resources have not yet been fully realised. The evaluation also identified gaps in reaching certain underrepresented groups, such as younger people, men, and transgender individuals, and highlighted the need for stronger collaboration with power holders, such as government and industry, to drive systemic change.

Key recommendations for future projects include enhancing outreach strategies to broaden engagement, fostering leadership development, and providing additional pathways and resources to turn ideas into action. Additionally, future work should continue to use the Story of Change as well as policy and practice recommendations as advocacy tools to support long term change.

Overall, the evaluation reveals that the “Where We Belong” project demonstrates the power of community-driven research to foster connection, amplify voices, and envision meaningful change. As this body of work moves forward, integrating these learnings will be critical to ensuring lasting impact. By aligning resources, empowering community leaders, and fostering strategic partnerships, future iterations of this work can build on its successes to create more inclusive, accessible, and vibrant communities. The insights and relationships cultivated through this project lay the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and advocacy, with the potential to inspire long-term, transformative change across the precinct and beyond.

For the full evaluation report please see: <https://uts.ac/WhereWeBelongEval>



8

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

8. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As the focus on place-based engagement continues to grow across the sector, the methodologies and findings from this project offer valuable insights into the role of universities in community engagement. Significantly, this project reaffirms the role of UTS in local community as a public institution that enables community-engaged research with real-world impact.

CSJI will continue to use findings from this project to inform its community-led, place-based engagement. This includes working collaboratively across the local area to develop in-depth understanding of additional community-identified priority areas. It also includes working with local communities and powerholders to translate key findings into action, such as community-led projects, advocacy, and informing the strategic direction and activities of local community organisations.

The community stories and vision for the future gathered through this project highlight the significant work required to create inclusive and accessible spaces, where people feel connected. However, by working collectively, local communities, organisations, and policymakers, can all play a role in building a world where everyone feels they belong.





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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Think back to a time when you were in a public or private space. A space that was either physical or digital.

*A time when you felt a deep sense of **belonging** and felt **connected** to others or to **community**. A time when you felt most alive and appreciative of being in that place. The space was usable and met your needs. A moment when you thought ... *this is why I live/work/play/study here... I love this community...* **Tell me about this moment.***

Name three things that made this experience **meaningful** to you

What role did **others** play in this story? Who else was involved? How did they **complement** you or how did they **support** and **enable** the experience?

If I were to ask someone who knows you the best, what would they say your role was in the story? What was it about **your strengths, your capabilities** and **your contribution** that led to this experience?

What was the role of **services** or other **organisations**? How did they contribute?

How did technology enable you to **connect** to this space?

What else contributed to this positive experience? What made you feel connected to this place?

Imagine a future where these experiences are the norm. Everyone has access to inclusive public and private spaces, where they feel welcome, safe, and connected to their community. What **2 or 3 things** do we need more of or what **2 or 3 things** need to **change** for us to get to this new reality from where we are today?

What are your wishes for the future?

Reflection

What 3 key things did you learn from the person you interviewed?

APPENDIX B: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY FUTURING EXERCISE

Use the best of what is to imagine what could be.

In your groups:

Imagine it is now 2028... Everyone has access to inclusive and accessible public, private and digital spaces, where they feel welcome, safe and connected to community.

- What do you see?
- What are people doing?
- How are they engaging with others and with the community?
- What role does technology play?
- What are the local organisations and businesses doing?
- What are we seeing as a result?



APPENDIX C: OUTCOME STATEMENTS TAKEN TO COMMUNITY SENSEMAKING WORKSHOP

- We have a sense of belonging and connection to accessible and inclusive community places
- Public spaces are accessible and inclusive of pets and their owners
- Community members increase connection to other through their pets
- Public and private spaces are welcoming and inclusive
- Public places are set up to enable intergenerational connection
- Technology enables me to connect with community in different ways
- Collective caring for Country
- Increased access to quality green spaces
- Public spaces have usable, high-quality inclusive and accessible amenities that cater to multiple audiences
- Public spaces, activities, and events are financially accessible
- Accessible public transport in the local area
- Community have increased access to information about resources in the local area
- Community members have increased access to information about what's on the in the local area
- Community organisations have increased partnership with the City of Sydney to deliver events for local community
- Local community have increased ability to organise events, programs, and activities
- Community members have increased access to education which enables them to participate and contribute to community in different ways
- There are opportunities and pathways for community members to step into different community roles
- Access to affordable and liveable housing
- Community members feel safe in spaces across the local area
- Community have shared understandings about equity, diversity, and inclusion

APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY GENERATED LOCAL PROJECT IDEAS BANK

The project ideas in these tables were generated during a 'fast thinking' exercise which encouraged participants to come up with ideas quickly and without qualifying or problematising them. They are therefore often underdeveloped but may still offer insight or starting-off points for further discussion.

HOW MIGHT WE ENSURE ALL OF COMMUNITY HAS ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE LOCAL AREA?
Scenic bus tours with community news spoken aloud - by a comedian!
A man spruiking community info from a milk crate
A 'physical' social media space
Door to door info collection
Community information flyers produced by different community members
Newspaper with community contributors
Distributing community information via USB
Information swap/Story swap
Noticeboards at Community Centres
Text/SMS
Local area Facebook groups
Local events/social gatherings
Local radio
Social media
Involvement of local vendors in creating activities and providing local information
Information presented in multiple different formats/ diversity of how we advertise
Letter box drops
Physical places for flyers
Staffed booths with information
Newsletters/magazines
Community stalls



- What's On @ City of Sydney Website
- Community Forums (online)
- Information through libraries
- Publicise community group forums
- Work with existing services/groups (e.g. churches, youth services, etc)
- Establish a channel for local people so our voice and requests can be heard
- A directory of services & facilities posted in public spaces so all can access
- Distribute information to people not technologically capable
- Encourage and talk to neighbours about what's happening in community
- Community newspapers that share what is happening so people can connect to activities
- Promote existing projects (like Green Plot)
- Street connectors
- Promote community groups
- Surveys to understand who people are
- Community notice boards
- Enlist support from local MPs who can help to promote the activities

HOW MIGHT WE MAKE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN THE LOCAL AREA THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE SO THAT EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Diverse cultural events
- Dog walking groups - with help from dog-carers
- Parkrun at Glebe
- Street fairs
- Volunteer groups (computer skills, welfare, food distribution)
- More activities for the neighbourhood
- Facebook groups for new parents to go on walks together
- A festival to celebrate local artists, cooks, skills & hobbies
- Community lunch events at a park to celebrate cultural diversity
- Social sport group to connect
- Migrant families to attend 'welcome groups' led by community - talk about issues, concerns, thoughts
- Book clubs in community centres
- Animal play groups at the local park to encourage connection

- Block party in Quarry Green
- Bring a dish in Wentworth Park
- Skills mapping to discover what people could share in the community for free
- Annual local art exhibition of local artists, with community connect talks
- Community Fund' that people donate to assist community events to occur
- Local historical walks - run by different local community members
- Volunteer opportunities board - come together, connect with others while helping
- Walking/reading groups for the elderly
- Volunteers to help with events (street celebrations, festivals, etc)
- Have smaller-scale community events subsidised by the City of Sydney to lower costs
- Create online portals to involve as many people as possible
- Have community centres (indoors) to conduct classes/workshops
- Hold block parties/gatherings specifically for people who live in the area - foster a sense of community
- Ensure organisers make an effort to involve diverse/disadvantaged communities
- Childcare play groups (free) for mums to congregate and hang out
- Create a map of available community spaces
- Encourage people to look outside themselves - as in what can I contribute?
- Don't limit groups to just 'doers' - others can sit in to just talk
- Make activities accessible in terms of people's abilities
- Spread activities over the week so that there is a way to make 'contact' every day
- Donation fun/fundraiser
- Street libraries
- Skill-shares - cooking, language classes, etc
- Lobby for financial backing of community-wide events
- Activities that focus more on aged population
- Improve facilities for families with young children
- Find halls not being used
- More free sport in open fields
- Advocate to council for less bureaucracy and insurance costs
- More outdoor & free events
- Create/join grass-roots events & activities
- Go to church events near you



- Hold regular walks with community members
- Suggest ideas to community centres that have space to hold events (e.g. chess club)
- Ask universities if under-used campus areas can be used for community events
- Use library spaces
- Use schools during weekends
- Sell tickets to hold outdoor movie events
- Ask for council funding for community events
- Small business sponsorship for new events
- Events for interest groups in cafes/local book shops/open areas
- Create a list of potential sponsors for our community that can support events
- Invite more community organisations and local food vendors to events, e.g Sydney Streets
- Invite City of Sydney to attend a community forum focused on affordable events
- Identify volunteers in our community who can help write community grants
- Create a fundraising committee for the neighbourhood
- Bus tours through Sydney, people share their stories
- Community talks/round tables/no structure
- Presentation night - share your life/share your interests
- Playgrounds
- Cooking classes for the community
- Expansion of Food Circle (at Glebe Youth Service) to spend more time with community and cooking/sharing meals
- Small community grants program that gives \$1000 to implement a local project (people want to get involved)
- A community bus that takes people to activities
- Free weekly events at Glebe Youth Service
- Get to know your neighbour 'speed dating'/ Six degrees of separation / safe spaces
- Networking with NGOs
- Transport to and from groups
- Funding and access
- Free community 'masterclasses'
- Weekly talks/seminars in parks
- Walking groups that share skills
- Private malls must have community space & activities

- Call a public meeting via local newsletters & workshop ideas
- Ask council for provision of space to hold community activities
- Long-form activity programs
- Find out what the community wants to do via a survey
- Re-activate activities/facilitators that have worked in the past
- TAFE/Universities to offer short form courses for community members
- Audit of community centres and space - size & location

HOW MIGHT WE IMPROVE SAFETY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES ACROSS THE LOCAL AREA?

- Neighbourhood cleaning activities
- Volunteer groups
- More police patrol at night time
- Add hand rails on steps
- Oznam Learning Centre
- Wentworth Park Community Centre
- Involve children
- Building trust, support, and fostering ongoing relationships

HOW MIGHT WE IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT ACROSS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY SO PEOPLE ARE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES?

- Free GP's / Bulk Billing GP's
- Better social sports entertainment for 18-35 year old's
- Creative classes & learning for adults
- Parkrun at Glebe
- Meditation in the park
- Sports clubs
- Group pet places, dog parks, etc
- Exercise classes in parks
- Free mental health talks
- Community walks for trauma survivors
- Community newsletter making people feel more connected



Life stories shared through a newsletter/blog

Drug & alcohol group meetings

Continuing Coordination Care Program

Share with people what help they can get and where

Community BBQ to support connection

Engage to help with isolation

**HOW MIGHT WE ENSURE EVERYONE CAN GET TO WHERE THEY WANT OR
NEED TO GO (PUBLIC TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY TRANSPORT, WALKABILITY,
CYCLING ETC)**

Parking

Better transport - busses coming into Glebe/Ultimo

Build an escalator on [Mount St?]

Add one more bus stop for B389 on King St

A community bus that takes people to activities

Transport to and from groups

Open space

Make walking easier - no stop lights

Seating, not just at cafes

Street scapes/furniture

More graffiti/public art



Centre for
Social Justice and
Inclusion