

# Byron Youth Survey 2022

## Survey Findings Report



**BYRON**  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL



## Acknowledgement to Country

Byron Shire Council acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the Bundjalung Nation, the Arakwal people, the Minjungbal people, the Widjabal people and the wider Bundjalung Nation. We pay our deepest respect to elders past and present and acknowledge the importance of young people who are the future leaders. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, community, beliefs, traditions and their continual connection to the land, the waterways, the sea and the sky.

## Purpose

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Byron Shire Council conducted the 'Byron Youth Survey 2022' in December 2021 and January 2022.

The aim of the survey was to help Council understand the unique needs and views of young people, including their opinions, ideas, experiences, and challenges as young people living, working, studying and/or socialising in the Byron Shire.

The survey helps give Council insight into how we can ensure young voices are heard and considered when making important decisions about Byron Shire's future.

The survey will be used to inform future engagement activities with young people, including how Council consults with young people and on what key topics and issues.

The Survey Findings Report will be shared with local youth services and community organisations to help provide information that may be useful for service delivery and advocacy for young people in the Shire.

# Survey design

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The survey was developed collaboratively by various teams across Council who all contributed knowledge and ideas. This multi-disciplinary approach ensured the survey design was comprehensive and well-informed and acknowledged that youth are important across the organisation's many work areas. The teams involved included Sustainability, Resource Recovery, Infrastructure Planning, Corporate Services, Place Planning and Community and Cultural Development.

**The survey contained a total of 31 questions (refer to appendix) and included:**

- Multiple choice questions – with the option to select 'other' and write freely
- Open response questions

**The questions focused on the Byron Shire and covered five key areas:**

- Demographics
- Young people and the Shire
- What young people care about
- How to engage with young people
- Future vision

All questions were used to gather the opinions, ideas, experiences and challenges of young people within the Byron Shire community.

# Survey findings

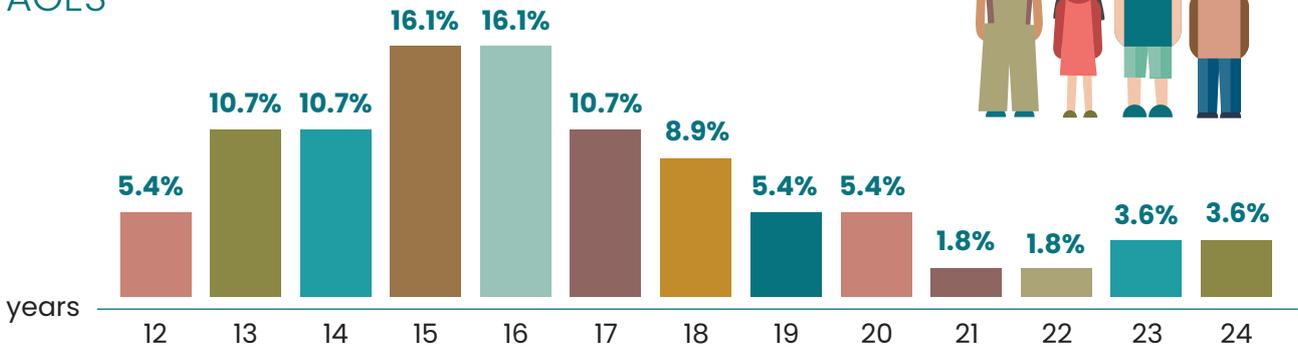
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56 young people, aged between 12 and 24 years, responded to the survey.

The number of respondents may have been impacted by the Christmas and New Year period.

# Demographics

## AGES



73.2% of respondents were aged 13 to 19 years. Importantly, there was at least 1 person representing every age from 12 to 24 years.

## RESIDENTIAL TOWN/SUBURB

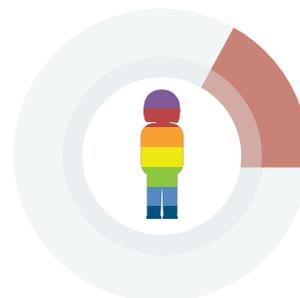
<b>21.4%</b> Mullumbimby	<b>3.6%</b> Wilsons Creek	<b>1.8%</b> Huonbrook
<b>16.1%</b> Byron Bay	<b>3.6%</b> Coorabell	<b>1.8%</b> Ballina
<b>16.1%</b> Ocean Shores	<b>1.8%</b> Federal	<b>1.8%</b> Burringbar
<b>8.9%</b> Bangalow	<b>1.8%</b> Mullumbimby Creek	<b>1.8%</b> Gabalong
<b>5.4%</b> South Golden Beach	<b>1.8%</b> Goonellabah	<b>1.8%</b> Keerrong
<b>3.6%</b> Suffolk Park	<b>1.8%</b> Tullera	<b>1.8%</b> Evans Head
<b>3.6%</b> Brunswick Heads		

## GENDER



- 60.7%** of participants identified as female
- 32.1%** of participants identified as male
- 3.6%** of participants identified as non-binary
- 1.8%** of participants identified as transgender
- 1.8%** of participants preferred to specify their gender identification

## LGBTIQA+



**28.6%**  
of participants identify as LGBTIQA+



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

- 1.8%** of participants identify as Aboriginal
- 1.8%** of participants identify as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

## MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



- 5.4%** of participants identify as a migrant
- 1.8%** of participants identify as a refugee

## LANGUAGES



**10.7%** of participants speak a language other than English at home

## DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH



**26.8%** of participants identify as living with disability or a mental health condition



**8.9%** of participants preferred not to specify

## PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



- 58.9%** School
- 14.3%** Do not attend specified learning activities
- 8.9%** University
- 3.6%** Home School
- 1.8%** Traineeship
- 1.8%** TAFE
- 1.8%** Other learning activity
- 1.8%** More than one learning activity

## PAID EMPLOYMENT

**39.3%** work casually

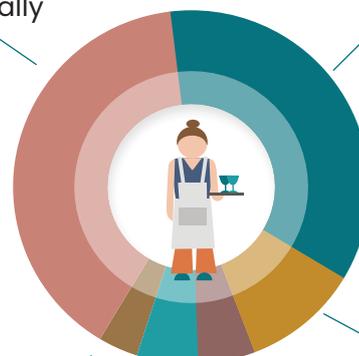
**35.7%** don't have a job

**3.6%** prefer not to specify

**10.7%** work part-time

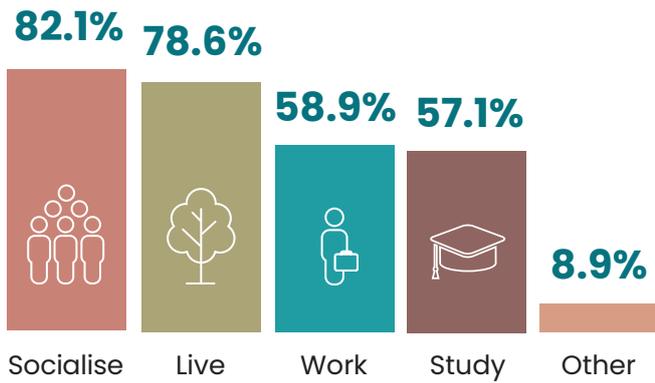
**5.4%** work holiday jobs

**5.4%** work full time



# Young people and the Byron Shire

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE DO IN THE SHIRE



## TOP 5

## PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES



1. **46.4%** Sports
2. **39.3%** Arts activities
3. **37.5%** Music
4. **33.9%** Youth group/ youth activities
5. **19.6%** Volunteering  
**19.6%** Student leadership

## TOP 5

## TOP DESTINATIONS VISITED EACH WEEK OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL, STUDY OR WORK

1. **69.6%** Byron Bay town centre
2. **66%** Brunswick Heads town centre
3. **48.2%** Mullumbimby town centre
4. **35.7%** Ocean Shores
5. **19.6%** Lennox head town centre

## TOP 5

## SAFETY CONCERNS

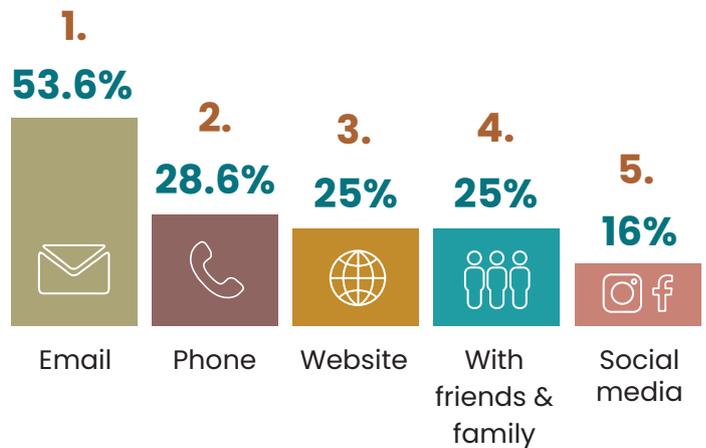
1. **53.6%** Paths and roads need improvement
2. **51.8%** Issues related to alcohol or drugs
3. **37.5%** Too dark to walk around
4. **32.1%** Speeding cars
5. **25%** Difficult to safely get around



**TOP 10** COUNCIL SERVICES USED

- 1. **85.7%** Footpaths and cycleways
- 2. **76.8%** Public toilets
- 3. **60.7%** Libraries
- 4. **58.9%** Council parks/ BBQ areas
- 5. **58.9%** Bus services
- 6. **48.2%** Sporting fields
- 7. **46.4%** Pay parking
- 8. **35.7%** Skate parks
- 9. **33.9%** Community centres/halls
- 10. **21.4%** Resource Recovery Centre (the tip)

**TOP 5** HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD MAKE SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS TO COUNCIL



**TOP 5** BARRIERS TO USING COUNCIL SERVICES

- 1. **44.6%** Lack of transport
- 2. **30.4%** Cost
- 3. **25%** Time
- 4. **17.9%** Safety concerns
- 5. **7.1%** Discrimination

# What young people care about

**TOP 10**

## ISSUES MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

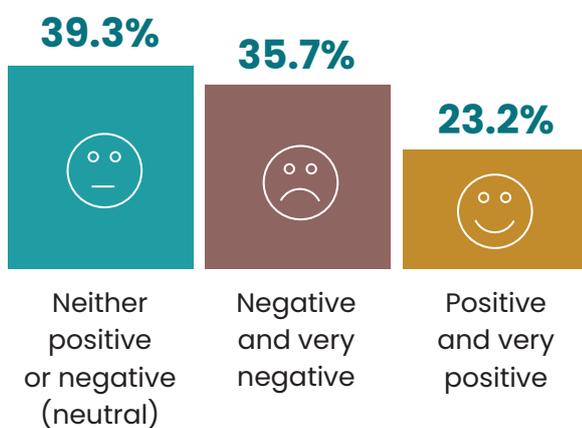
1. **42.9%** Climate change
2. **41.1%** Mental health
3. **37.5%** The environment
4. **30.4%** Homelessness and housing
5. **23.2%** Social justice and discrimination
6. **21.4%** LGBTIQ+
7. **16.1%** Black lives matter/ anti-racism
8. **14.2%** Human rights
9. **14.2%** Gender equality
9. **12.5%** Crime, safety and violence
10. **7.1%** Alcohol and drugs

**TOP 5**

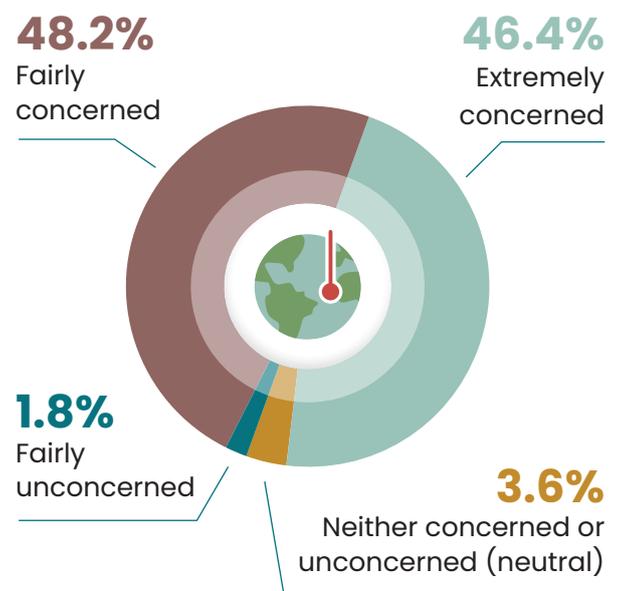
## BIGGEST ISSUES AFFECTING THE BYRON SHIRE

1. **75%** Affordable housing
2. **33.9%** Climate change and the environment
3. **32.1%** Tourism
4. **26.8%** Access to community services (health/ mental health)
5. **21.4%** Transportation

## FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE BYRON SHIRE AS A YOUNG PERSON



## CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE



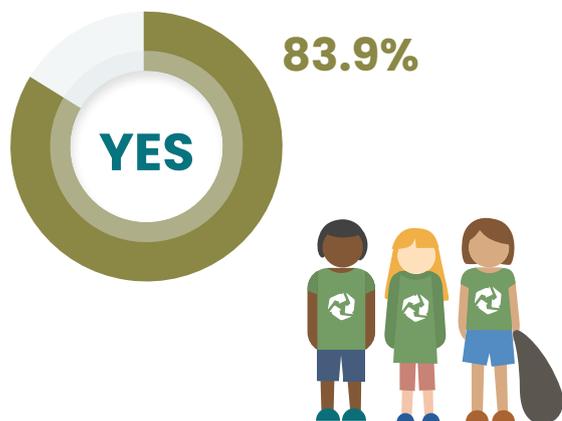
This means that 94.6% of young people indicated some level of concern about climate change (either extremely concerned or fairly concerned).

**TOP 5**

### LOCAL LEVEL ACTIONS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE BYRON SHIRE

1. **67.9%** Increasing renewable energy options
2. **53.6%** Preserving green spaces
3. **50%** Increasing share transport options
4. **48.2%** More recycling and waste reduction programs
4. **25%** Education programs

### ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT?



### EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

“Making sure everything I buy is recycled, not wasting water or food, respecting nature and not throwing rubbish, only supporting local cafes”

“I participate in every climate strike and am always conscious of my wastage”

“Participating in student activism and recycling when possible at home”

“Solar power, recycling, picking up rubbish off community grounds, hybrid cars”

“Activism (attend protests), written to the PM, living off grid”

“Recycling, no plastic, plant-based food”

“I take reusable items like cutlery, straws, cups, shopping bags when I go out as well as being mindful of my waste usage”

“Compost, recycling and monitoring water/electricity/carbon consumption”

“I pick up rubbish on the beach when I go for walks. Also I avoid plastic packaging when I shop as much as possible and I’m starting to look at entrepreneurial sustainable businesses to buy from”

# How to engage with young people

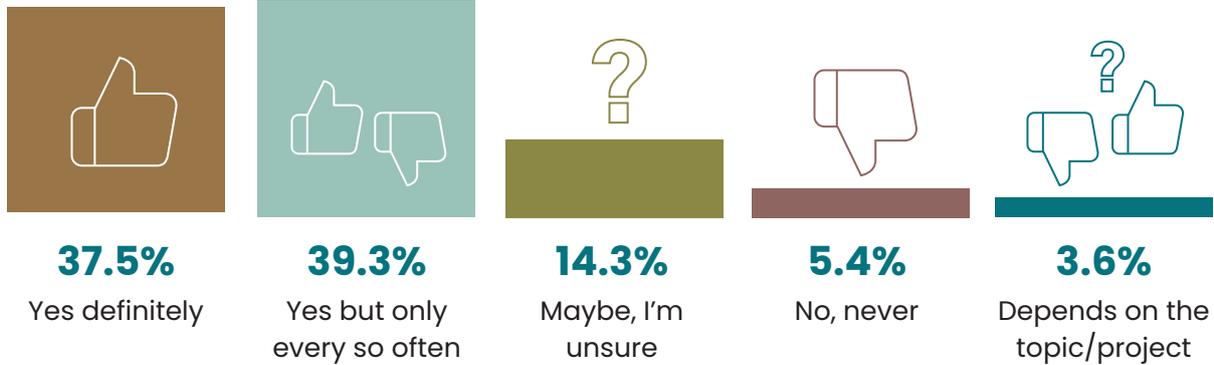
TOP  
10

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSULTED – TO SHARE OPINIONS, IDEAS, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES WITH COUNCIL

- 1. 69.6%** Surveys
- 2. 30.4%** Online/social media
- 3. 28.6%** Council should visit local schools or places of learning
- 28.6%** Invite us to Council
- 4. 26.8%** Involvement in key Council projects
- 5. 25%** Youth workshops (in person or online)
- 6. 21.4%** Council to partner with youth organisations
- 7. 19.6%** Youth forum
- 8. 16%** Attend community events
- 9. 7.1%** Visit places we hang out
- 10. 3.6%** Other



## WILLINGNESS TO GET INVOLVED IN CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES



A total of 76.8% of young people indicated a willingness to get involved in consultation activities whereas a total of 17.9% of young people indicated they are unsure or that it would depend on the topic/project.

### TOP 5

#### YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MOTIVATED TO GET INVOLVED BY

1. **64.3%** Opportunity to make real change
2. **33.9%** Opportunity to be heard
3. **30.4%** Opportunity to learn new skills
4. **26.8%** Fun/creative activities
- 26.8%** Will look good on job or uni applications
5. **21.4%** Opportunity to meet new people
- 21.4%** Food

### TOP 5

#### WHAT PREVENTS YOUNG PEOPLE FROM GETTING INVOLVED?

1. **67.9%** Limited time (work/school/family/caring commitments)
2. **55.4%** Will it make a difference?
3. **44.6%** Transport issues
4. **32.1%** Limited time (sports, arts and music commitments)
5. **17.9%** I don't like formal groups

# Future vision

TOP  
5

## CHANGES YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO SEE IN BYRON



- 1. 48.2%** More affordable housing
- 2. 32.1%** Improved bus and transport services
- 3. 26.8%** Cleaner beaches and parks
- 26.8%** Road upgrades (fix the potholes)
- 4. 21.4%** Better waste reduction systems
- 5. 19.6%** Bike and pedestrian path improvements

## Council should listen to young people because...



"I matter, like any other person who lives in Byron. I work in the community, I live in the community, and I learn in the community."



"I grew up here and I care deeply about this place. If Council doesn't listen to the voice of young people, they are neglecting a vital link in the fabric of this community, the new generation of locals. Our deep long-term connection to this place will be the only thing that keeps the community strong as this place changes."



"Young people are the future and have great ideas and views on the world that deserve to be heard."



"I do not believe my views are any more important than the next person, I think that everyone deserves the chance to speak up and be listened to."



"Because I care, and my opinion should be considered and valued despite the fact that I'm a minor."



"As a youth, the Shire will be passed on to us, so we have a right to make changes in it, and this is where I live so I should have as much impact as anyone else."

## Hopes for the future of the Byron Shire...

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"A greener, cleaner and kinder community. More multiple occupancies (MO's) and tiny homes, affordable housing, protected beach and nature parts, funding for theatre and youth activism groups."
- 

"More opportunities for young people to stay in the region (not have to leave for study or work)"
- 

"Able to properly accommodate everyone in need of affordable housing and transport so that living in Byron is more affordable and enjoyable."
- 

"Sustainable tourism in the Shire."
- 

"I hope the Byron Shire will be a more inclusive and accessible place for young people, with more opportunities for young people to be involved in the community with the guarantee of their opinions being heard and acknowledged."
- 

"Cleaner, greener and abundant opportunities for everyone."
- 

"I hope for there to be more services for young people in need, e.g., mental health, homelessness, public transportation."
- 

"I hope the Byron Shire has more affordable housing and more action to prevent climate change."
- 

"A more inclusive and interactive community that focuses on the greater good of the wider community and the environment."
- 

"Safer. More facilities. Better roads."
- 

"I hope that we all stay free, to make our own decisions, free from corruption, free from judgement."
- 

"A safe place with no discrimination against anyone, a place where we can celebrate all the different cultures we have here and learn about them too."

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## Thank you

This report would not have been possible without the 56 young people who completed Byron Shire's Youth Survey 2022. We extend a special thanks to them for sharing their opinions, ideas, experiences and challenges with us.

# Appendix

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## SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Demographics (10 questions)

What is your current age?

What suburb/town do you live in?

How do you identify (gender)?

Do you identify as living with disability or a mental health condition?

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Do you speak a language other than English at home?

Do you identify as LGBTIQ+?

Do you identify as a refugee or migrant?

Please select if you participate in any of the following learning opportunities

If you have a paid job, what is your employment situation?

### Young people and the Shire (7 questions)

In the Byron Shire do you... [live, work, study, socialise, other]

What activities are you involved in?

What are the top 3 destinations you visit each week outside of school, study or work?  
Select your top 3.

When you are out and about in the Byron Shire, do you have any safety concerns ?  
Select your top 3.

What Council services do you use?

Are there any barriers to you using these services? Select your top 3.

How would you contact Council if you had a suggestion or complaint?

### What young people care about (7 questions)

What issues are most important to you? Select your top 3.

What do you think are the top 3 biggest issues affecting the Byron Shire?  
Select your top 3.

How do you feel about the future of the Byron Shire as a young person?

Are you concerned about climate change?

What do you think can be done at a local level to tackle climate change?  
Select your top 3.

Are you taking action to protect the environment?

If so, can you tell us what this looks like? What actions are you taking  
or participating in to protect the environment?

### How to engage with young people (4 questions)

How would you like to be consulted, to share your opinions, ideas, experiences,  
and challenges with Council? Select your top 3.

Would you get involved in the activity or activities you selected above?

What might motivate you to get involved? Select your top 3.

What might prevent you from getting involved? Select your top 3.

### Future vision (3 questions)

What changes would you like to see in the Byron Shire over the next 3 years?  
Select your top 3.

Council should listen to my views about the future of the Byron Shire because...

What do you hope Byron Shire will be like in the future, say in the next 10 years?

## For further information

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