

How SOCIALLY
CONNECTED
ARE we?

WHAT DO we
NEED TO FEEL
CONNECTED?

*After a few immensely challenging years
we were wondering how our communities are feeling.*

SOCIAL COHESION HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT

Following a few immensely challenging years, we were wondering how our communities were feeling. Cred Consulting and Micromex Research sought to find answers by surveying 1,000 people from across NSW's cities and towns to find out how connected people feel to their local areas, and what the most important things are for them to feel connected to each other.

Whether we are dealing with bushfires, floods, pandemics or terrorism, all the evidence shows that the more connected communities are the more resilient to, and quickly they can recover from, all manner of adversity.

"Higher levels of social cohesion and positive social interactions serve to strengthen the overall fabric of a city, allowing communities to bounce back faster and rebuild more efficiently after experiencing major shocks and stresses"

– 100 Resilient Cities

Our research has found that, in NSW our sense of connection, quality of life, and priorities for the spaces and places to connect, can depend on where we live, the type of home we live in, our cultural identity and our age to name a few influences. Nuanced understanding of communities can help us build stronger connections, prepare for future emergencies, improve our quality of life and inform better planning outcomes particularly in our future high growth, highly dense urban areas.



A teal-colored outline of the state of New South Wales (NSW) is centered on the page. Inside the outline, the text "WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION IN NSW?" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The words "SOCIAL COHESION" are in orange, while the other words are in dark blue.

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT
SOCIAL COHESION IN NSW?

GENERALLY WE TRUST EACH OTHER...

We found that across NSW there was a relatively high level of trust in our local communities, with 76% trusting people in their local area to mostly/always do the right thing.

But, in Sydney that might depend on where you live...

Level of trust in local communities varied depending on which part of Sydney you live in.

87% level of trust in Sydney's East and North

63% level of trust in Sydney's South

Or whether you own your own home...

64% of people renting had much lower levels of trust in people in their local areas compared to ratepayers (**79%**) and in general (**73%** rate payers compared to **59%** non-ratepayers).

Or your age...

70% of respondents trust people in general to do the right thing, but this was lower in participants under 50 years of age (**63%**)

Or whether you speak a language other than English at home...

58% of people who speak a language other than English at home trust people to do the right thing, compared to English only speakers (**72%**).

GENERALLY WE HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING...

	All	Under 50	50+	Speak another language	English only	Apartment under 7 stories	Non-rate payers
Australia	83%	79%	<u>88%</u>	<u>72%</u>	84%	76%	67%
My Neighbours	80%	76%	<u>85%</u>	67%	82%	<u>63%</u>	66%
NSW	77%	74%	<u>81%</u>	66%	79%	75%	<u>65%</u>
My Local Area	78%	75%	<u>82%</u>	72%	79%	71%	<u>63%</u>
My LGA	67%	62%	<u>73%</u>	63%	67%	<u>49%</u>	53%

% Feel the **most** belonging to

% Feel the **least** belonging to

- **People felt the strongest sense of belonging to Australia (83%),** followed by their immediate and nearby neighbours (80%), NSW (77%), local area (78%) and lastly local government area (67%).
- **People under 50 were likely to score much lower** than people over 50 **in terms of a sense of belonging**, which most likely also relates to levels of trust.
- **There was a lower sense of belonging from people who speak a language other than English at home** and from people living in apartments under 7 stories and non-ratepayers.

MOSTLY WE THINK OUR **QUALITY OF LIFE** IS VERY GOOD...

74% of respondents rated their quality of life as very good or excellent.

but less so if you are a woman...

Women were more likely to have a lower quality of life rating than men (70% compared to 78%).

70%

and if you live alone...

People living alone had much lower quality of life rating at 66%.

66%

or if you live in an apartment...

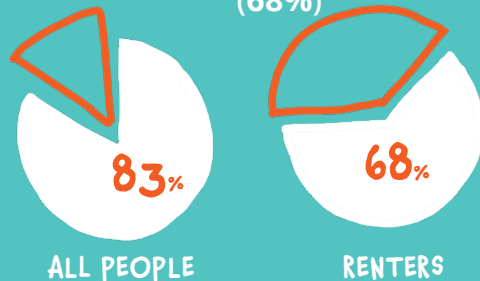
People living in apartments of 7 stories and above were also lower at 61%.

61%

This aligns with research from Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute 2020, "Improving outcome for apartment residents and neighbourhoods" which found that lower income households are disproportionately affected by challenges associated with apartment living, yet most existing research does not consider the impact of living in high density for lower income residents.

HOW MUCH DO WE **AGREE** THAT...

83% of people feel safe in their neighbourhood, but renters or non-ratepayers have a lower sense of safety (68%)

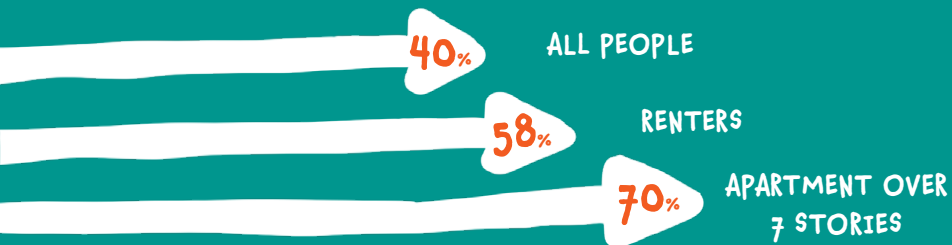


71% of people feel prepared to respond in an emergency however, renters and people living in apartments (under 7 stories) were more likely to not feel like they were prepared to respond in an emergency

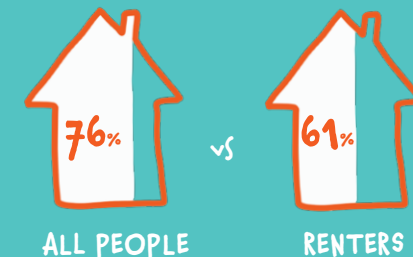


7/10 PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND IN AN EMERGENCY

40% of people need to leave their neighbourhood to connect with friends. This is much higher for non ratepayers (58%) and for people living in apartments over 7 stories (70%)



76% of people said that their neighbourhood feels like home, but again this was much lower if you were a renter or non rate payer (61%)



48% of people agreed that cultural diversity makes their local area stronger – however 63% of people in apartments (under and over 7 stories) were much more likely to say that cultural diversity makes my area stronger. This is most likely because 50% of people living in apartments in NSW are from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Only 15% of people feel that they are able to influence decisions that affect them in their local area, and this is much lower at 10% for people who speak a language other than English at home



THE THINGS WE NEED TO CONNECT IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

Growing pressures on communities like continued population growth, higher housing densities and demands for more and improved public spaces, services and activities also impacts on our social connectedness and wellbeing. The Committee for Sydney's recent Benchmarking Sydney 2021 report indicated that:

What's becoming increasingly clear is that the really successful cities are working out how to service much bigger populations as they grow. In some ways this is an important by-product of the Covid-19 era – understanding community sentiment and the resilience of city communities is becoming as important a consideration as their economic competitiveness.

Our research showed that having access to public spaces and quality parks was the most important physical thing (with **100% of people living in apartments rating this the most highly**) and to social programs and events are the most important social things for people to connect with their community,



IN ADDITION...

the things that we need to connect with our neighbours, varies depending on how old we are and what type of housing we live in.


People living in apartments under 7 storeys said access to nature, public transport and local community and cultural groups to join was important to them in an ideal neighbourhood

People living in apartments over 7 storeys said places for children and young people to play, a good mix of shops and daily needs and local social and health services to access was important to them in an ideal neighbourhood. Interestingly 80% of these respondents noted the importance of having cool, comfortable and tree lined streets

People over 50 said local social and health services to access and knowing who to contact in an emergency was important to them in an ideal neighbourhood

People under 50 said events and festivals and sports and recreational clubs and teams was important to them in an ideal neighbourhood





Understanding what we need in and what we feel about our neighbourhoods is crucial for planning for **socially cohesive** and **resilient cities**, particularly with increasingly high density neighbourhoods and rising inequality. We are experts in social planning and engaging with communities and can work with you to better understand **how connected** your communities are feeling over time.

This report shares some of the most interesting findings, our research however explored many aspects of social cohesion in NSW. **To learn more** you can contact
+ Sarah Reilly at sarah@credconsulting.com.au & 02 9357 2476
+ Stuart Reeve at stu@micromex.com.au & 02 4352 2388

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CONSULTING

micromex
research