

# Clarence Valley's Views, 2024

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decisions

Views report



**community views | views.id**

[home.id.com.au/community-views](https://home.id.com.au/community-views)  
<https://views.id.com.au/clarence-valley>

Daniel Evans  
[dan@id.com.au](mailto:dan@id.com.au) | 0407 502 887

Jacquie Norton  
[jacquie@id.com.au](mailto:jacquie@id.com.au)



# CLARENCE VALLEY

## Local Area Overview

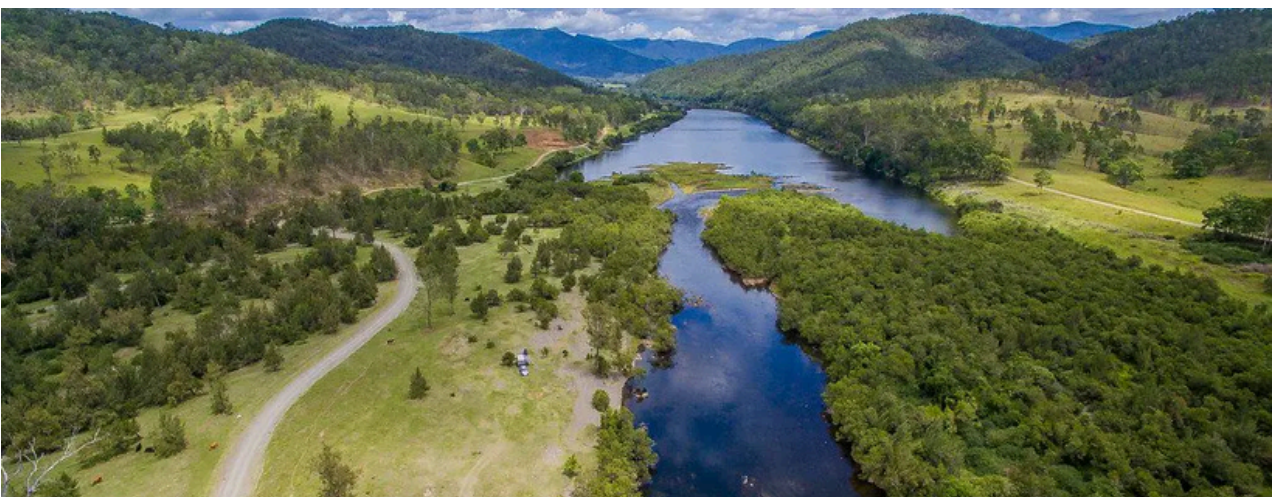
### About Clarence Valley

Clarence Valley - traditionally home to the [Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people](#) - is located in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, about 600 kilometres north of the Sydney CBD and 300 kilometres south of the Brisbane CBD. The area is known for its natural beauty, and much of the LGA is covered by national parks and pristine beaches.

More than [55,000 people](#) currently live across Clarence Valley. The median age of residents is [49 years](#), compared to 38 across Australia. There is a [high proportion of older couples without children](#) (16% compared to 10% across Australia). [Median weekly mortgage repayments and rents](#) are lower than averages for Australia and Regional NSW.

The population was forecast to grow [by around 18% from 2021 to 2041](#). Clarence Valley attracts older adults, including retirees, and some younger families with a large proportion of new arrivals coming from other parts of regional parts of NSW, Gold Coast, and Brisbane.

The local area economy produces [\\$2.89 billion each year](#) and supplies over 22,000 local jobs. The LGA's largest industry (by employment) is [Healthcare and Social Assistance](#).





# CLARENCE VALLEY'S VIEWS

## About Community Views for Clarence Valley

### About Community Views

Community Views uses a survey based approach to bring a credible resident voice to local area decision making.

Our standard questions cover a diverse range of topics including community values, experiences, local area liveability and future needs, health, wellbeing and financial circumstances, climate change, local area concerns and ideas to improve quality of life. Clients are also welcome to ask custom questions.

The survey data is analysed and published on our leading online platform, [views.id](#), which is supported by insights reporting, workshops, videos and on-demand assistance.

Together, Community Views and [views.id](#) provide councils and other organisations with a deep and representative understanding of their community's views to inform, monitor and evaluate strategic planning and advocacy.

Community Views is delivered in partnership with leading social research consultancy, Ipsos Public Affairs.

### About Clarence Valley's Views

Clarence Valley's Views was conducted in October to November 2024, returning a sample of n=526 completed surveys.

Beyond the standard questions, Clarence Valley's Views also collected attitudes to natural disasters, preparedness and council roles and responsibilities.

The data was collected using a combination of Social Media Advertising and via Clarence Valley Council's own channels. Controls were employed to ensure minimum representation from key groups of interest spatially and demographically.

A data-normalisation and weighting procedure was applied to ensure the survey sample reflected population characteristics.

Clarence Valley residents views are compared against Australian, Rural and Regional Australian, NSW and Northern NSW benchmarks collected as part of .id's annual [Living in Australia](#) survey.

Reports, insights and data derived from Clarence Valley's Views is available on [views.id.com.au/clarence-valley](https://views.id.com.au/clarence-valley)

# CLARENCE VALLEY'S VIEWS

This report contains five key insights

1

**Clarence Valley achieves an Overall Liveability Index of 61.2, performing better than the Northern NSW benchmark but falling short of the Australian average.**

2

**'High quality health services' is a critical concern, particularly due to the ageing population.**

3

**Residents are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and preparedness for dealing with natural disasters is variable.**

4

**Although local housing conditions compare favourably to national benchmarks, renting is becoming increasingly challenging.**

5

**The Clarence Valley community is diverse, and there are some clear generational and spatial differences in values and experiences.**



# Clarence Valley achieves an Overall Liveability Index (OLI) of 61.2, performing better than the Northern NSW benchmark but falling short of the Australian average.

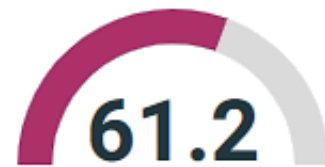


Clarence Valley residents identified 'access to the natural environment', 'feeling safe' and 'high quality health services' as the three items that contribute most towards making somewhere a good place to live.

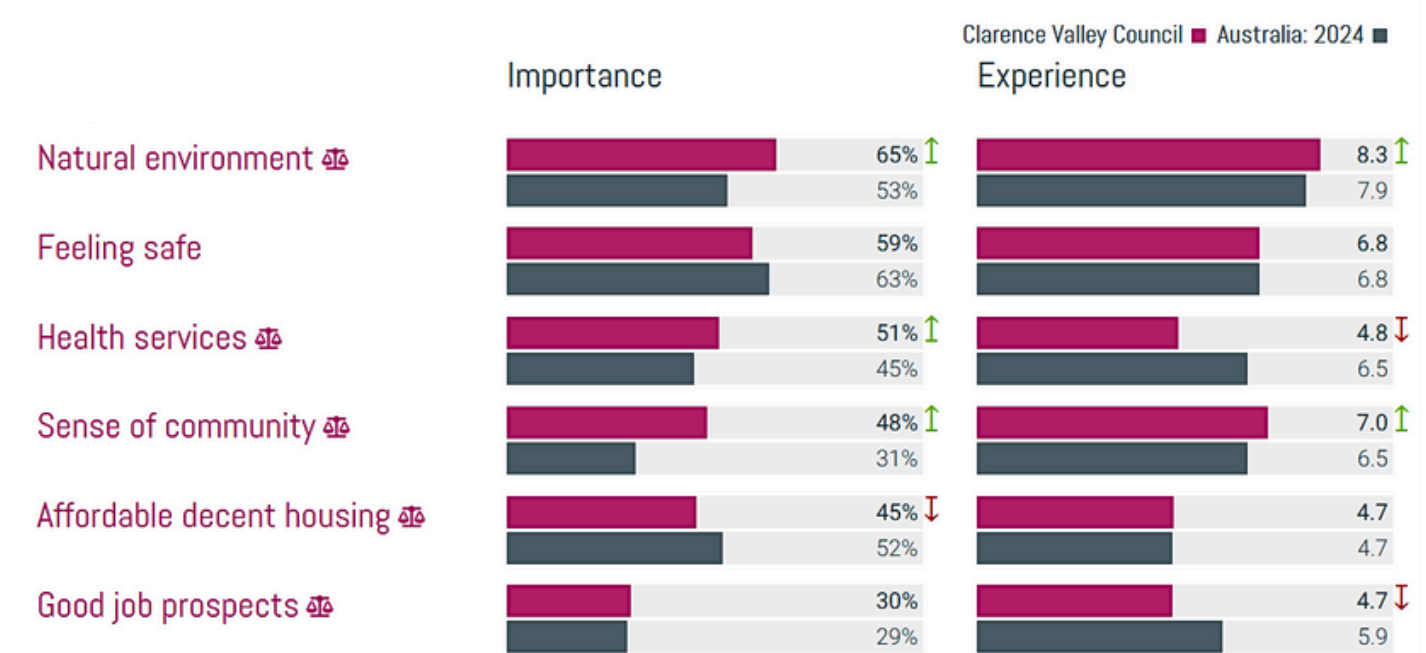
'Access to the natural environment' and 'a sense of community' are highly important to Clarence Valley residents, and more positively experienced than other parts of Australia.

However, collective experiences of 'high quality health services' and 'good job prospects' are relatively poor, with residents rating their local area significantly lower on each in comparison to Australian benchmarks.

## Living in Place Overall Liveability Index 2024



Australia: 2024	63.4
New South Wales: 2024	63.4
Northern NSW: 2024	58.5
Regional Australia: 2024	61.5



# What's driving Quality of Life across Clarence Valley?

## Mapping the 16 liveability attributes

By combining the community's values - what they believe makes somewhere a good place to live - with their local area experiences - how they experience those items where they live - we can clearly identify community priorities regarding which specific attributes are areas of relative strength (greater importance, better local area experiences) and relative weakness (greater importance, worse local area experiences).

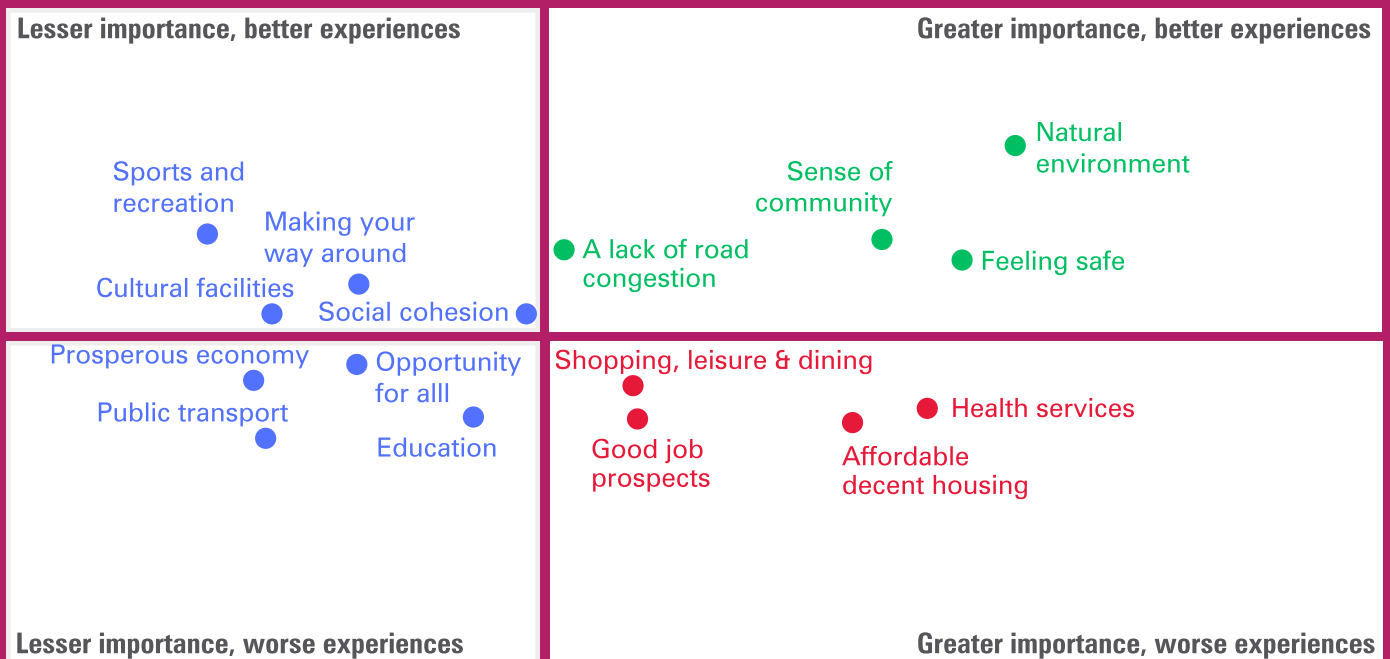
Attributes of high importance and above average in terms of local area experiences (i.e. **areas of strength**) include:

- 'access to the natural environment'
- 'feeling safe'
- 'a sense of community'
- 'a lack of road congestion'

Attributes of high importance and below average in terms of local area experiences (i.e. **areas of relative weakness**) include:

- 'high quality health services'
- 'affordable decent housing'
- 'good job prospects'
- 'shopping, leisure and dining'

## Clarence Valley's Views - Values and Experiences Matrix





# 'High quality health services' is a critical concern, particularly due to the ageing population.

Access to high quality health services and care impacts our quality of life. Healthy communities are productive, connected and vibrant communities.

In Clarence Valley, residents place a high level of importance on 'high quality health services' but report poor local experiences. Specifically, 51% of residents identify health services as one of the top five factors in making an area a good place to live, ranking it 3rd in importance. However, local experiences with health services average only 4.8 out of 10, making it the 13th most positively experienced attribute. For context, across Australia, 45% find health services important and the average experience score is 6.5/10.

Six in ten Clarence Valley residents select health services as the top issue they would like to see Council advocate on.

This highlights the potential for Council to advocate for targeted investment in health infrastructure, which could not only boost the local economy but also improve quality of life over the medium to long term.



## What could be done to improve the quality of life for people in your local area?

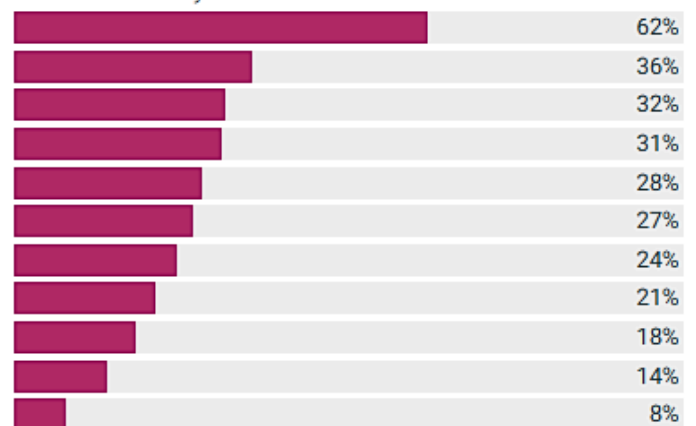
"Too many retirees moving to this area and lack of medical and hospital facilities will not work in the foreseeable future."  
66 | Female | Area D

"Increase in doctors, access to health services and a better funded hospital... Maclean hospital is poorly funded and does not cater for our community."  
49 | Female | Area C

## Which of the following services would you like to see Clarence Valley Council advocating for to help us progress towards our Vision?

- Health services (e.g. hospitals, doctors, specialists, etc.)
- Social services (e.g. counselling, youth services, disability ...)
- Law enforcement (e.g. police, courts, corrections)
- Public housing
- Economic development services (e.g. supporting local bu...)
- Emergency services (e.g. ambulance, fire, SES, etc.)
- Education opportunities (e.g. schools, kindergartens, univ...)
- Public utilities (e.g. water, gas, electricity, phone/internet, ...)
- Environment services (e.g. sewage, water management s...)
- Transport infrastructure and services (e.g. trains, buses, st...)
- Cultural services (e.g. museums, galleries, libraries, etc.)

Clarence Valley Council 2024



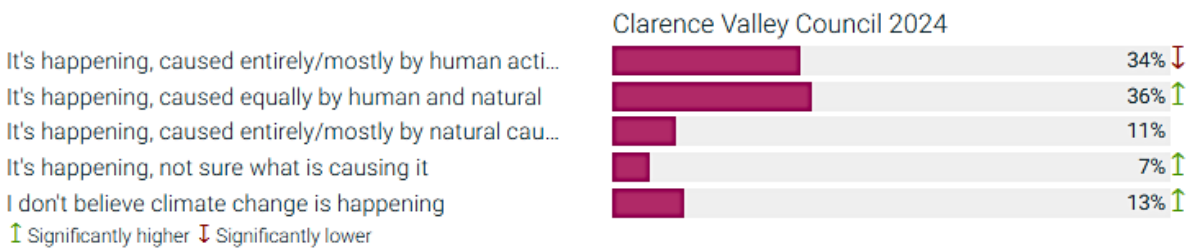
# Residents are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and preparedness for dealing with natural disasters is variable.

**87% of Clarence Valley residents believe in climate change, which is slightly lower than Australian (91%), NSW (91%), Northern NSW (88%) averages.**

## Clarence Valley Council Belief in Climate Change



### Which of the following best describes your personal views on climate change?

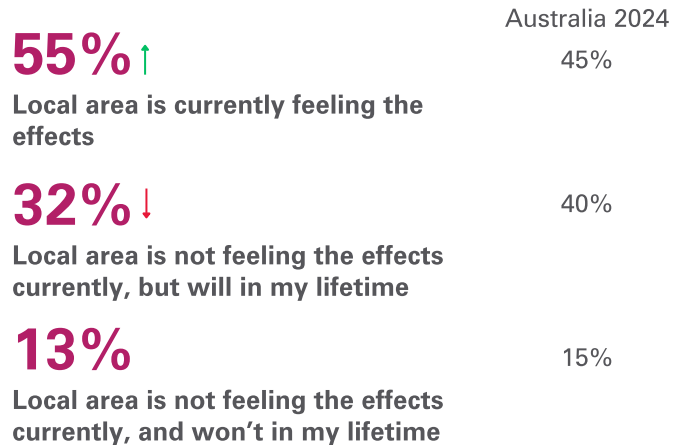


Belief about the causes of climate change differ within the local area, with 34% attributing it entirely/mostly to human activities, 36% believe it is equally caused by human and natural factors, 11% see it as solely natural, and 7% are unsure of the cause. As many as 13% do not believe in climate change. This highlights the diversity of views that exist within the community.

Among those who believe in climate change, 55% say the Clarence Valley local area is currently feeling the effects of climate change (higher than the national figure of 45%) while 32% are not currently feeling the effects but expect to in their lifetime.

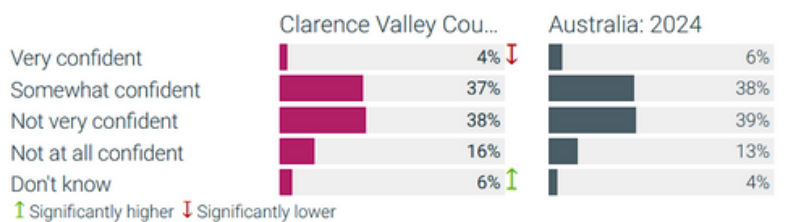
Confidence in the ability of the local area to adapt to climate change is varied, with 41% confident and 54% not confident - confidence is slightly lower than the national benchmark.

### Please select the extent to which climate change is impacting or will impact your local area in your lifetime?



Base: Those that believe in climate change, n=453

### How confident are you that your local area will be able to adapt to the effects of climate change in your lifetime?



Base: Those that believe in climate change and feel it is affecting, or will affect, their local area, n=384



Preparedness for natural hazards will become increasingly important as the frequency and severity of extreme weather events increases.

Flooding is the top anticipated event within Clarence Valley. Among those that believe in climate change and feel it is (or will) affect their local area, 87% feel that the local area is currently, or will, experience flooding. This is followed by bushfires at 81%, storms at 72% and extreme heat at 71%.

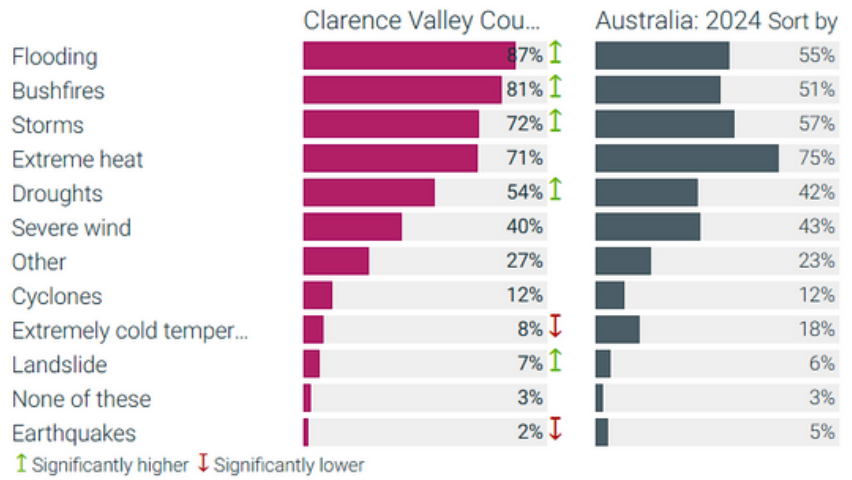
However, there is a noticeable gap between the level of concern and preparedness, with only 19% of residents feeling 'very prepared' for floods, 12% feeling 'very prepared' for bushfires and 9% feeling 'very prepared' for severe storms. Across all events, around 10% of residents feel 'not at all prepared'.

Addressing the gap between concern and readiness offers an opportunity to enhance disaster education, improve emergency response planning, and allocate resources to build resilience.

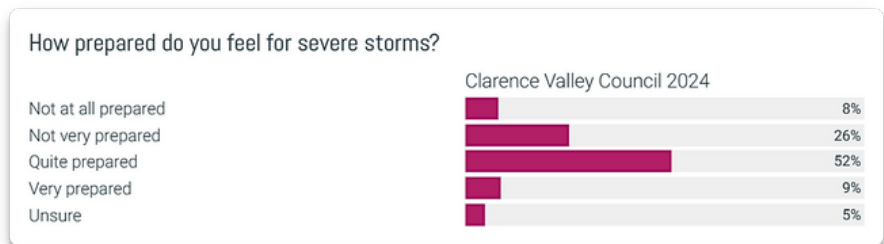
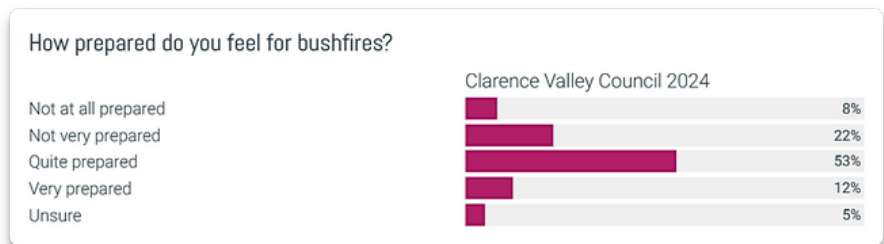
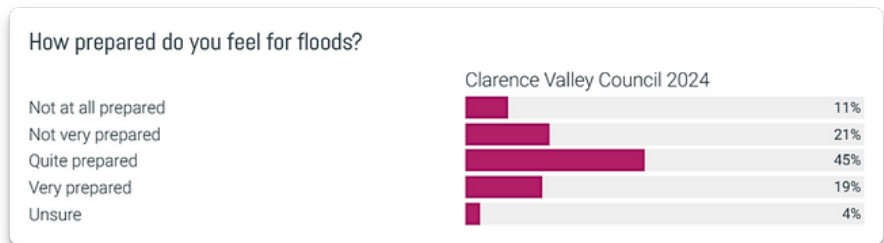
Clarence Valley residents are attracted to the region for its natural amenity, and this contributes significantly to their quality of life.

This proximity to natural environments increases vulnerability to climate-related risks, creating a delicate balance between the community's appreciation of its surroundings and the threats posed by these events. Local government – given their close connection to and deep understanding of their communities – are uniquely placed to help residents, industry and other levels of government to navigate the challenges posed by climate change and to build resilient communities.

How is your local area currently, or how do you expect it will, feel the effects of climate change in your lifetime?

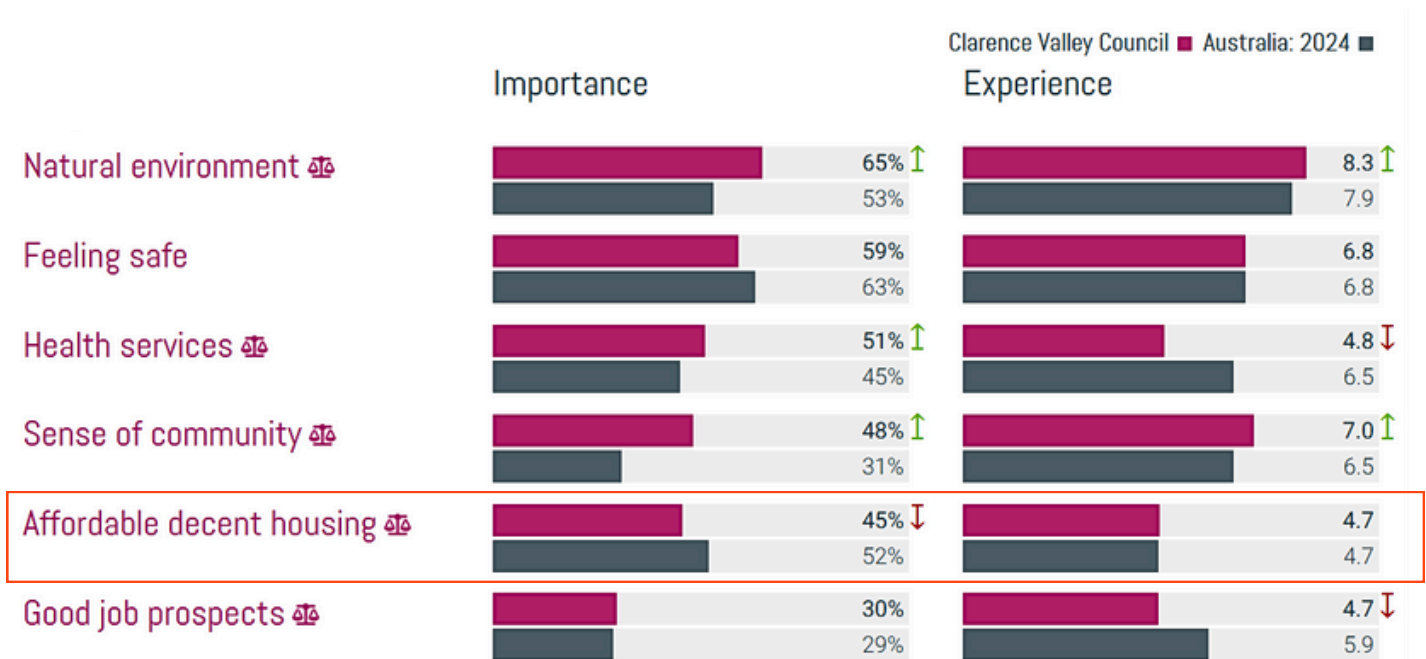


Base: Those that believe in climate change and feel it is affecting, or will affect, their local area, n=384



# Although local housing conditions compare favourably to national benchmarks, renting is becoming increasingly challenging.

Having access to 'affordable decent housing' that is stable and safe sets a great foundation from which we can move forward with achieving higher level goals, improve our personal economic situation, social wellbeing and ultimately advance our quality of life. The provision of affordable decent housing stands as the single most significant barrier to improving quality of life for many Australians.



In Clarence Valley, 'affordable decent housing' is the 5th most important liveability attribute at 45%, less important compared to the Australian benchmark. Local experiences with affordable decent housing are on par with the national average at 4.7 out of 10. Census data from 2021 tells us that median weekly mortgage repayments and rents in Clarence Valley are lower than averages for Australia and Regional NSW. However, median weekly incomes are also lower than national and regional average.

Among Clarence Valley renters, 'affordable decent housing' is the number one factor contributing to quality of life. In addition, experiences accessing 'affordable decent housing' among renters are lower at 4.3 out of 10. This highlights the importance of promoting an increase in affordable housing options in local planning and policy.

**Affordable decent housing is the...**

**#1** 

**thing renters look for in a good place to live (68%)**



# The Clarence Valley community is diverse, and there are some clear generational and spatial differences in values and experiences.

## Generational differences

Younger and older residents in Clarence Valley have distinct priorities and perceptions regarding liveability.

The 18-34 year cohort (making up 15.7% of the population) typically have lower liveability perceptions. Relative to other age groups they are more likely to value 'access to the natural environment', 'affordable decent housing' and 'good job prospects'. They tend to experience poorer mental health and social wellbeing, and are more financially vulnerable.

Those aged 35-59 years (making up 29.4% of the population) generally have moderate liveability perceptions. They are more likely to be in a family lifestage and value 'good job prospects' and 'high quality education opportunities'. They are the age group most likely to be concerned about rising cost of living.

The 60+ year community (comprising 35.5% of the population) have higher liveability perceptions. They are more likely to prioritise 'high quality health services' and 'a lack of road congestion'. They typically report better levels of mental health, social wellbeing and financial circumstances.



### 18-34 years

15.7% of Clarence Valley population

Low liveability perceptions: 59.4

Values:

- Access to the natural environment
- Affordable decent housing
- Good job prospects

Poorer mental health and social wellbeing, financial circumstances and hold stronger belief in and views regarding climate change and mitigation.



### 35-59 years

29.4% of Clarence Valley population

Moderate liveability perceptions: 60.0

Values:

- Good job prospects
- High quality education opportunities

Are the most concerned about rising cost of living/inflation, and are more likely to be late meeting financial commitments.



### 60+ years

35.5% of Clarence Valley population

High liveability perceptions: 63.1

Values:

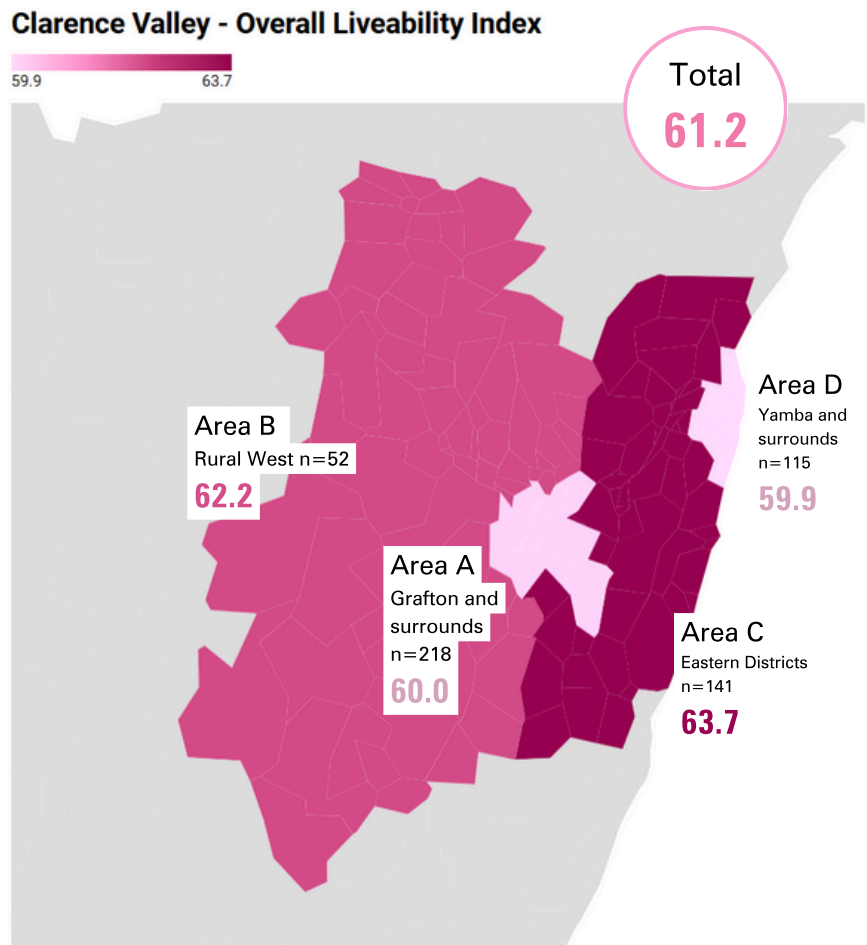
- High quality health services
- A lack of road congestion

Report better levels of mental health, social wellbeing and financial circumstances. Hold slightly lower belief in climate change.

## Spatial differences

Within Clarence Valley, there are higher perceptions of liveability in more rural areas of the LGA including Area C (Eastern Districts) at 63.7 and Area B (Rural West) at 62.2. In Area C, residents reported more positive experiences with the most important attributes of liveability, namely 'access to the natural environment' and 'feeling safe'.

Lower perceptions of liveability exist in urban areas - Area D (Yamba and surrounds) with an OLI of 59.9 and Area A (Grafton and surrounds) with an OLI of 60.0.



In Area A (Grafton and surrounds), experiences with access to the natural environment and a sense of safety and community are negatively impacting liveability. In Area D (Yamba and surrounds), perceived experiences with health services and road congestion are limiting liveability perceptions.

Maintaining the liveability of local areas is essential to retaining residents, attracting workers and businesses to the area, and for a strong local tourism market. The results of the survey indicate that the Clarence Valley region has many strengths, including a high level of natural amenity and a strong sense of community. However, there is an opportunity for further policy and advocacy directed at advancing quality of life for the attributes of relatively high importance, but poorer local area experiences, including high quality health services and affordable decent housing.



# APPENDIX

## LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS: AREA A

South Grafton, Grafton, Clarenza, Seelands, Waterview Heights, Rushforth, Junction Hill, Trenayr, Eatonsville, Great Marlow, Carrs Creek, Elland, Koolkhan, Glenugie, Carrs Peninsula, Bom Bom, and Southgate.

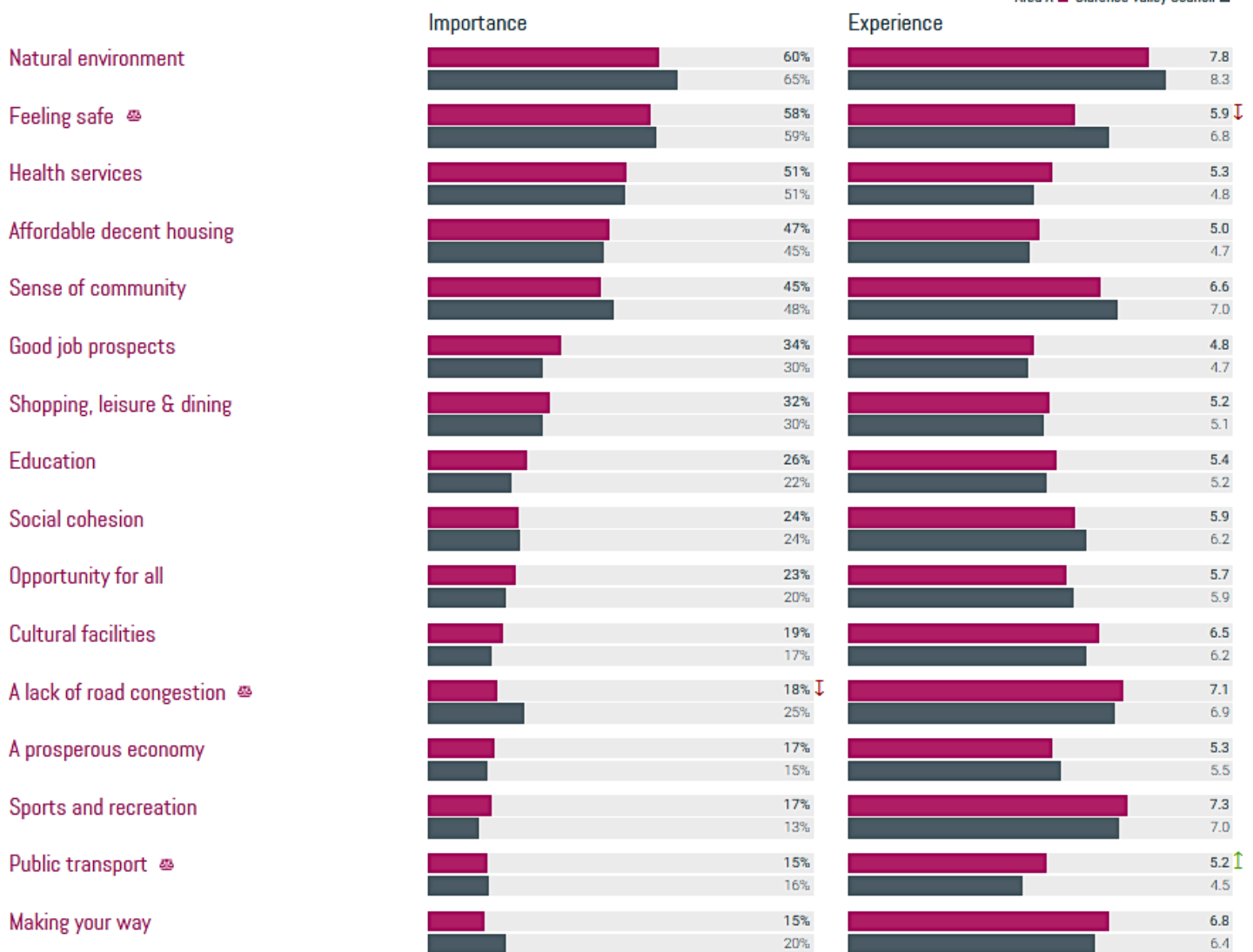
**The Overall Liveability Index for Area A was 60.0/100, lower than the Clarence Valley Index (61.2).**

Sample size: n=218

Area A Overall Liveability Index



Clarence Valley Council Overall Liveability Index



↑ Significantly higher ↓ Significantly lower

# APPENDIX

## LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS: AREA B

Shannondale, Banyabba, Coutts Crossing, Fine Flower, Chambigne, Keybarbin, Towallum, The Whiteman, Fortis Creek, Gurranang, Copmanhurst, Buccarumbi, Winegrove, Nymboida, Moleville Creek, Stockyard Creek, Blaxlands Creek, Coaldale, Mylneford, Kangaroo Creek, Jackadgery, Barretts Creek, Billys Creek, Bulldog, Alice, Upper Copmanhurst, Ramornie, and Whiteman Creek.

**The Overall Liveability Index for Area B was 62.2/100, higher than the Clarence Valley Index (61.2).**

Sample size: n=52

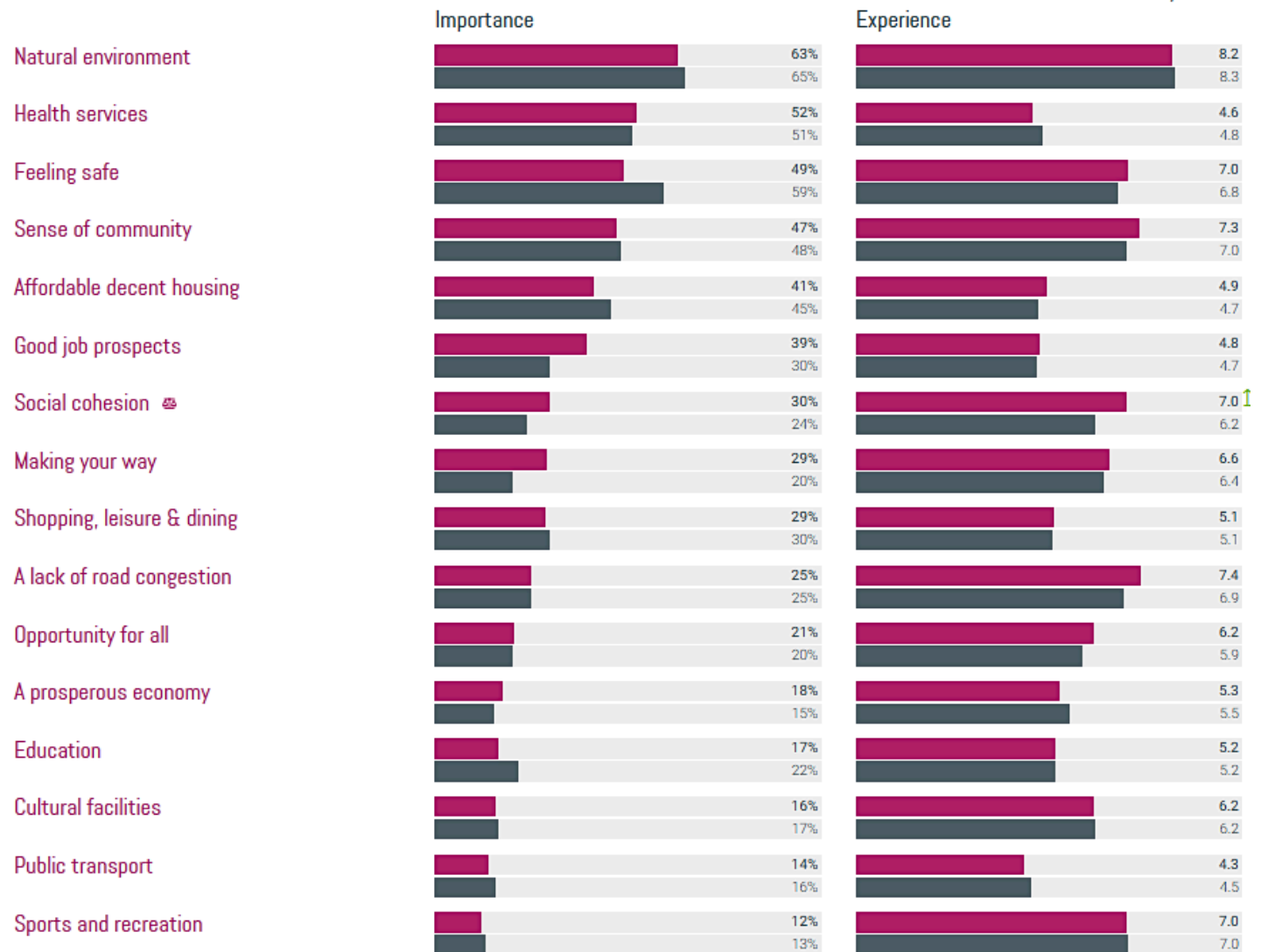
Area B Overall Liveability Index



Clarence Valley Council Overall Liveability Index



Area B ■ Clarence Valley Council ■



↑ Significantly higher ↓ Significantly lower



# APPENDIX

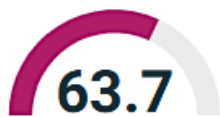
## LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS: AREA C

Maclean, Pillar Valley, Woombah, James Creek, Wooli, Brushgrove, Gulmarrad, Woodford Island, Ashby, Chatsworth, Townsend, Brooms Head, Wells Crossing, Ashby Heights, Ulmarra, Tyndale, Braunstone, Lawrence, Harwood, Tucabia, Minnie Water, Jacky Bulbin Flat, Mororo, Lanitza, Halfway Creek, and Warregah Island.

**The Overall Liveability Index for Area C was 63.7/100, higher than the Clarence Valley Index (61.2).**

Sample size: n=141

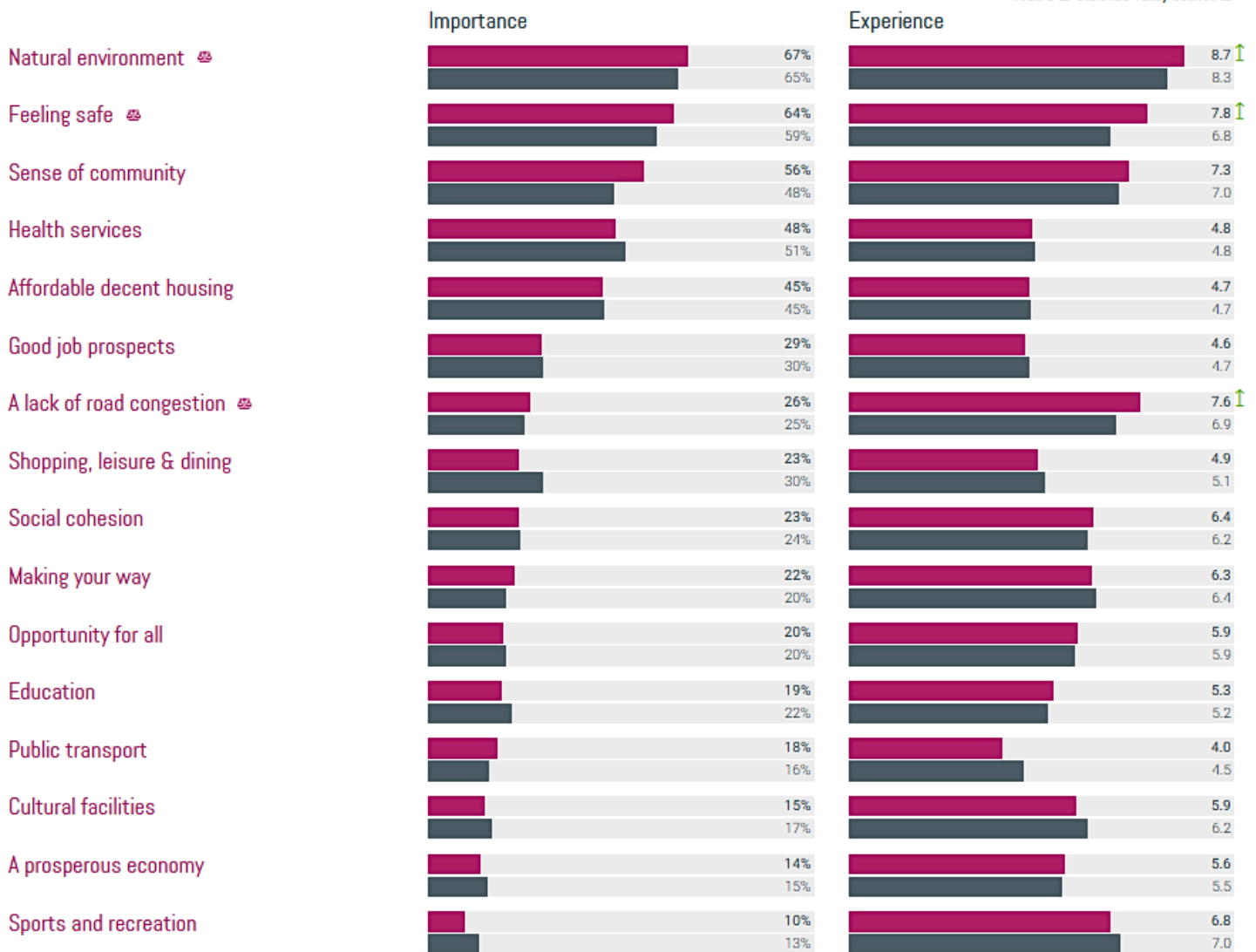
Area C Overall Liveability Index



Clarence Valley Council Overall Liveability Index



Area C ■ Clarence Valley Council ■



↑ Significantly higher ↓ Significantly lower

# APPENDIX

## LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS: AREA D

Yamba, Palmers Island, Wooloweyah, Iluka, Angourie, Palmers Channel, and Goodwood Island.

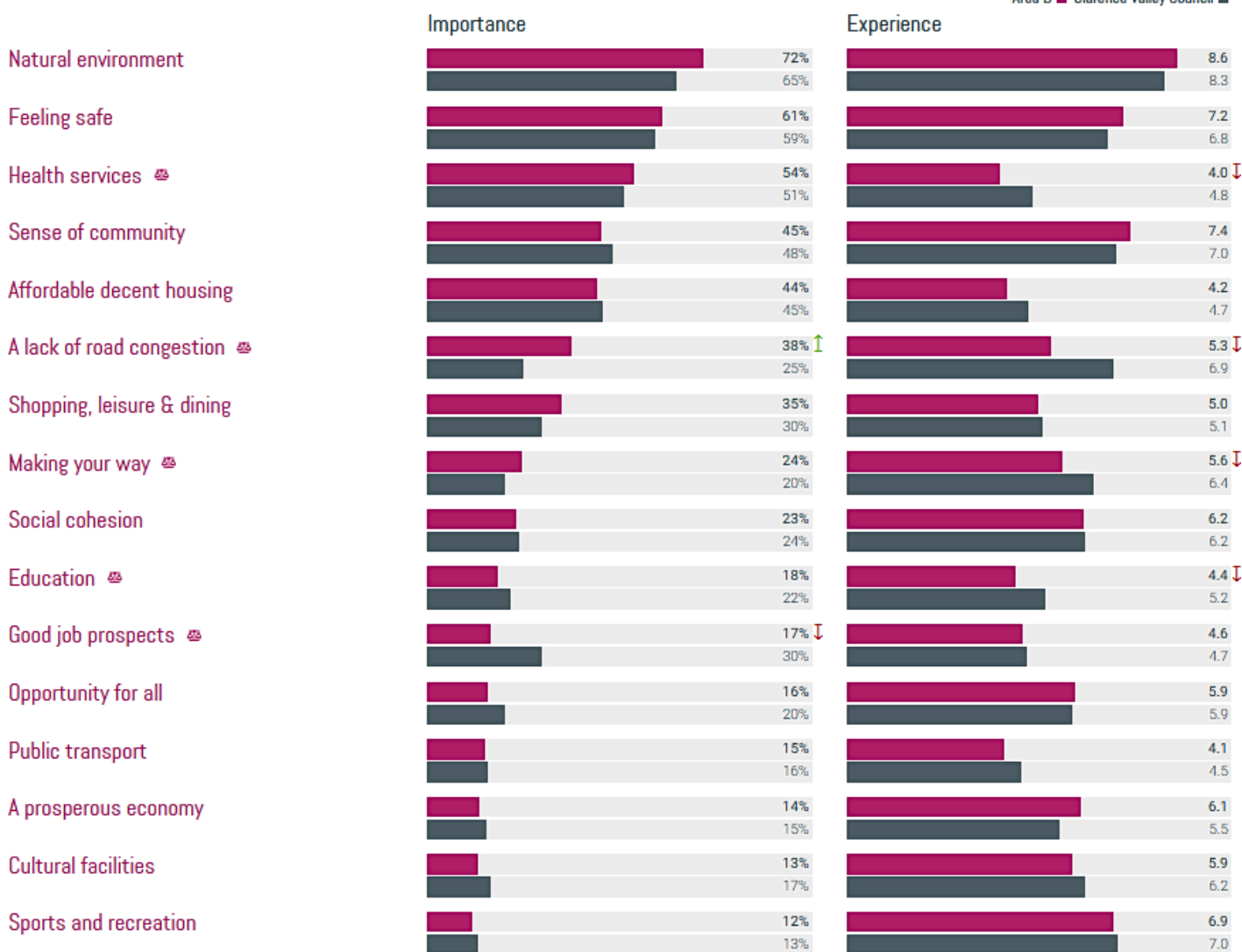
The Overall Liveability Index for Area D was 59.9/100, lower than the Clarence Valley Index (61.2).

Sample size: n=115

Area D Overall Liveability Index



Clarence Valley Council Overall Liveability Index



↑ Significantly higher ↓ Significantly lower





## Clarence Valley's Views Views Report

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Please visit [views.id.com.au/clarence-valley](https://views.id.com.au/clarence-valley) for additional insights, resources and data.



Daniel Evans  
dan@id.com.au  
0407 502 887



Jacquie Norton  
jacquie@id.com.au



Iksha Malik  
iksha@id.com.au