

Living in Toowoomba, 2023

Views report

.id informed
decisions



community views | views.id

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TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COUNCIL

Local Area Overview

About Toowoomba

The Toowoomba Regional Council local government area - home of the [Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people](#) - covers almost 13,000 square kilometres in the western fringe of South East Queensland. Toowoomba is approximately 125 kilometres from the Brisbane CBD. [More than 178,000 people](#) currently live across Toowoomba. The [local area economy](#) produces \$11.63 billion each year, with the LGA's main industry (by employment) being Health Care and Social Assistance.

LIVING IN TOOWOOMBA

About Living in Place for the Toowoomba Regional Council

About the Living in Place survey

[Living in Place](#) is an independent, robust and repeatable community survey that seeks to understand and help advance quality of life across Australia's local areas.

It uses 16 attributes to determine community values and experiences, calculate local area liveability and identify future needs. It also measures community health and wellbeing, financial circumstances, local area concerns and ideas for improving quality of life.

The Living in Place survey data is analysed and reported through our leading online platform, [views.id](#).

Together, Living in Place 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.

Living in Place is delivered in partnership with leading social research consultancy, Ipsos Public Affairs.

About Living in Toowoomba

[.id](#) deployed the Living in Place survey across the proposed Inland Rail Alignment across April and May 2023, returning a sample of n=3,757 completed surveys.

Surveys were collected to represent the views of communities across the Alignment at the local government area level (Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Ipswich and Logan).

The ARTC has contracted [.id](#) to deliver Living in Place annually between 2022 and 2024 to monitor how communities along the proposed Alignment feel they are progressing with regard to various aspects of Inland Rail's social performance framework, including the 'community health and wellbeing' agenda. As part of the Project, [.id](#) provides access to all insights and data to each LGA.

A total of n=632 Toowoomba residents were surveyed as part of the Program. Additional reports, data and resources are available from the [views.id reporting and exploratory platform](#).

OVERALL LIVEABILITY

The values, experiences, overall liveability and future needs of Toowoomba residents...

The chart below shows what Toowoomba Regional Council residents believe makes somewhere a good place to live and how they experience their local area in that regard. It also highlights how the Region's current Overall Liveability compares with the 2022 Benchmark.

Living in Place

Overall Liveability Index



Australia: 2023	62.6 ↑
Queensland: 2023	60.9 ↑
Regional Australia: 2023	61.2 ↑
South East Queensland: 2023	62.2 ↑

IR - Toowoomba Overall Liveability Index



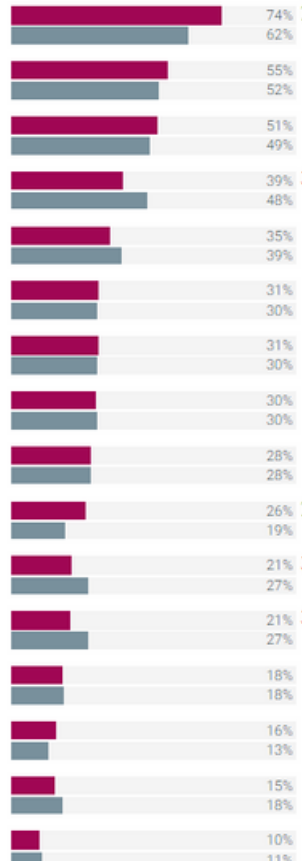
June 2022 Overall Liveability Index



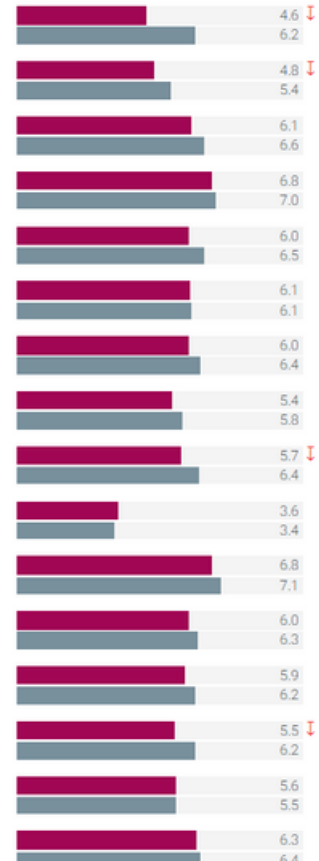
Results sorted by importance in IR - Toowoomba

- Feeling safe 62
- Affordable decent housing 52
- Health services 49
- Natural environment 48
- Sense of community 39
- Shopping, leisure & dining 30
- Making your way 30
- Good job prospects 30
- A lack of road congestion 28
- Public transport 19
- Education 27
- Social cohesion 27
- Opportunity for all 18
- A prosperous economy 13
- Cultural facilities 18
- Sports and recreation 11

Importance Sort by



Experience Sort by



↑ Significantly higher ↓ Significantly lower

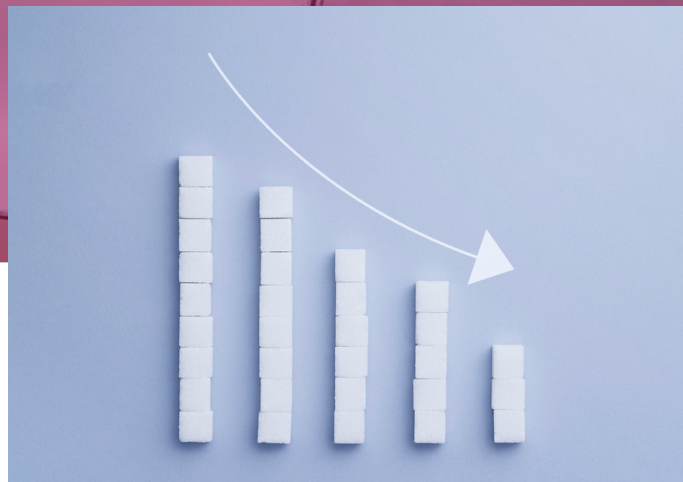
KEY INSIGHT 1

Overall Liveability in Toowoomba has contracted since 2022, and is lower than contemporary Australian and Regional Australian benchmarks.

Toowoomba's Overall Liveability Index – created by combining residents' values and local area experiences – returned a score of 55.6/100, lower than Australian (62.6) and Regional Australian (61.2) benchmarks.

Residents across Toowoomba Regional Council have a clear and consistent set of beliefs regarding what makes somewhere a good place to live.

In 2023, the community placed the greatest value on 'feeling safe' (74% selecting it among their five most important liveability attributes), followed by the provision of 'affordable decent housing' (55%), 'high quality health services' (51%), 'access to the natural environment' (39%) and 'a strong sense of community' (35%). 'A diverse range of shopping, leisure and dining experiences' (31%), 'making your way to and from services such as employment, education and healthcare with relative ease' (31%) and 'good job prospects' (30%) completed the list of most important items.



Despite the community's values proving to be largely stable across the two survey years, the local area experiences reported in 2023 were significantly worse in comparison to 2022 for two out of the three most important liveability attributes. Specifically, the community rated their local area an average of 4.6 out of 10 for 'feeling safe' in 2023 (compared with an average of 6.2/10 in 2022) and 4.8/10 for 'affordable decent housing' (was 5.4/10 in 2022).

These poorer local area experiences for the liveability attributes of greatest importance to the Toowoomba community are responsible for driving the contraction in Overall Liveability.

KEY INSIGHT 2

How safe your community feels in their local area is critical to improving quality of life.

Seven out-of-every ten (61%) Toowoomba residents surveyed selected 'feeling safe' among their top five liveability attributes, making it the item that the community believes contributes most towards making somewhere a good place to live.

Despite placing a high value on 'feeling safe' your residents did not - as a collective - feel safe where they live, with residents rating their local area an average of 4.6 out of 10; the 15th most positively experienced attribute of 16.

This combination of high importance coupled with very poor local area experiences determines that 'feeling safe' makes the single largest contribution to Toowoomba's Overall Liveability.

Importantly, your community's views on how safe they feel where they live reduced in comparison to the 2022 survey, when residents rated their local area an average of 6.2/10.

While the average Regional Australian also places a high value on 'feeling safe' (62%), they tend to feel safer – on average – where they live (6.5) in comparison to the residents of Toowoomba.



Spatially, residents in Central Toowoomba rated their local area an average of 4.1/10 for 'feeling safe'; which was significantly lower than those who make their home across the balance of the LGA (5.4/10). Residents from the lower socio-economic towns Wilsonton, Harristown, Newtown, Toowoomba City, Oakey, Harlaxton, Rockville and Wilsonton Heights felt least safe, rating where they live a collective 3.4/10.

Beyond values and experiences, 64% of residents nominated 'Crime/Law and Order/Violence/Anti-Social Behaviour' as one of the top three issues facing their local area, significantly higher than the 2022 survey (41%), and higher again in comparison to contemporary Regional Australian benchmarks (32%)

KEY INSIGHT 3

Residents' experiences of 'affordable decent housing' have decreased and segments of the community are feeling the impacts of interest rate rises and cost of living pressures.

Toowoomba residents rated their local area an average of 4.8 out of 10 for 'affordable decent housing', significantly lower than how they felt about this topic in 2022 (5.4/10).

Fifty-five percent of residents selected 'affordable decent housing' as an important attribute when considering what makes somewhere a good place to live, making it the 2nd most important liveability aspect for Toowoomba residents overall. Despite placing a high value on this item, the community rated their local area an average of 4.8 out of ten for 'affordable decent housing', making it the 14th most positively experienced attribute of 16.

Like perceptions of safety, this combination of high-value and poor local area experiences determines that the provision of 'affordable decent housing' represents a big inhibitor to advancing quality of life.

In saying this, the provision of 'affordable decent housing' is a national challenge. For context, the average Regional Australian nominates it as the 4th most important item (50%) and the 15th



most positively experienced (4.9/10). Your residents aged between 18 and 34 years (28% of the adult population) place considerably more value in (73%) and report poorer local area experiences of 'affordable decent housing' (4.0/10) in comparison to older residents, most notably those aged 60+ years (44%, 5.5/10). Your 60+ year old residents make up 33% of Toowoomba's adult population.

Your younger residents views on housing extend to feeling worse about their current personal financial circumstances (5.1/10) in comparison to the average Toowoomba resident (5.8), and their ability to meet their financial commitments, with 61% of 18-34 YO's reporting being 'never late' meeting their commitments in comparison to the average Toowoomba resident (68%).

KEY INSIGHT 4

Where residents make their home has an influence on how they perceive local area liveability and, more importantly, what they believe needs to happen to advance quality of life.

Toowoomba Regional Council's relatively large and fast-growing population, coupled with the evolving role and function of its urban, regional and rural communities, determines that planning is well served through the local community lens.

Understanding residents' values, experiences and future needs through a spatial lens should lead to actions and advocacy that serve specific local issues, solving local problems. When administered consistently over several years, this approach should deliver better local area experiences which will, by extension, return a collective benefit to the broader Toowoomba Region's liveability in the macro.

While the Living in Toowoomba survey delivers insights and provides data for 2 x broad Local Areas (Toowoomba Central and Rest of Toowoomba - see the Local Area Insights section below), the views.id reporting and exploratory platform allows for analysis and reporting of the survey insights by other custom spatial geographies (e.g. residents of Middle Ridge, Rangeville & Centenary Heights).



Residents from Central Toowoomba returned an OLI of 54.7/100. While these residents' values were largely consistent with those from across the Rest of Toowoomba, this community placed more stock in 'affordable decent housing' (58%) in comparison to those who make a home across the Rest of Toowoomba (49%). Residents from Central Toowoomba reported better local area experiences for 'a diverse range of shopping, leisure and dining experiences' (6.5 out of 10) in comparison to those from across the Rest of Toowoomba (5.3).

Those from the across the Rest of Toowoomba returned an OLI of 58.0/100 placed significantly greater value on 'a strong sense of community' (46%) in comparison to those from Central Toowoomba (29%). Residents these areas also reported feeling safer where they live (5.4/10) in comparison to Central Toowoomba communities (4.1).

KEY INSIGHT 5

Health plays an important role in quality of life and growing Toowoomba's economic prosperity.

51% of residents selected 'High quality health services' as an important attribute when considering what makes somewhere a good place to live, making it the 3rd most important liveability aspect for Toowoomba residents overall.

Residents rated their experience of 'high quality health services' in their local area 6.4 out of 10, making it the 7th most positively experienced attribute of 16. Your community placed the same importance on but reported more positive local area for 'high quality health services' in comparison to Regional Australians (51%, 5.6).

Health plays an important role in for Toowoomba's current demographic composition and economic future.

The 2021 ABS Census revealed that the number of residents across Toowoomba who were greater than 60 years was approximately 45,000. When compared to the 2001 Census, the number of older residents has increased in absolute (45,000 vs 22,000) and relative terms (26% of the Adult population in 2021 compared to 17% in 2001).



Toowoomba's growing and ageing population place more stock in 'high quality health services' (66%) and reported better local area experiences (6.9/10) in comparison to the average Toowoomba resident (51%, 6.1).

This positive sentiment from your community is supported by the important role that the health sector plays in your current and future economic prospects. As reported on your economy.id site, the Health Care and Social Assistance sector is the Region's largest employer. Looking forward, Toowoomba new \$1.3b hospital precinct will help amplify Toowoomba as the Darling Downs' health capital - driving further economic and social growth for the community - which will by extension advance residents' quality of life.

LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS ACROSS TOowoomba

Living in Central Toowoomba

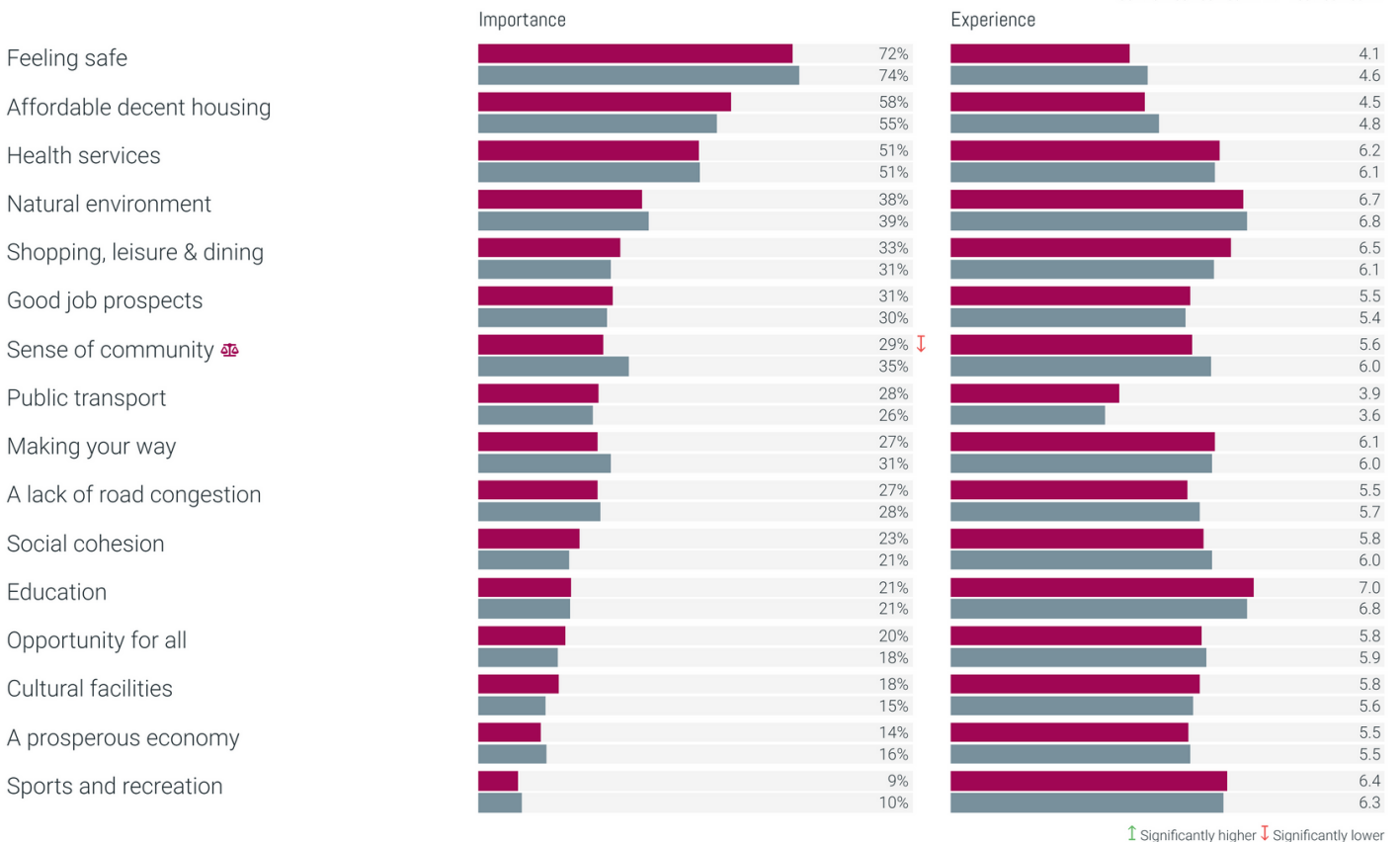
The Central Toowoomba Local Area is made up of Harlaxton, Kearneys Spring, Toowoomba City, Drayton, South Toowoomba, East Toowoomba, Centenary Heights, Middle Ridge, Newtown, Rangeville, Wilsonton Heights, Darling Heights, Glenvale, Mount Lofty, Harristown, North Toowoomba, Wilsonton, Rockville, Prince Henry Heights, and Redwood. 405 residents from Central Toowoomba participated in the survey.

The Central Toowoomba Local Area Overall Liveability Index returned a value of 54.7/100, lower than the Toowoomba Regional Council Index (55.6).

Central Toowoomba Overall Liveability Index



IR - Toowoomba Overall Liveability Index



LOCAL AREA INSIGHTS ACROSS TOowoomba

Living in the Rest of Toowoomba

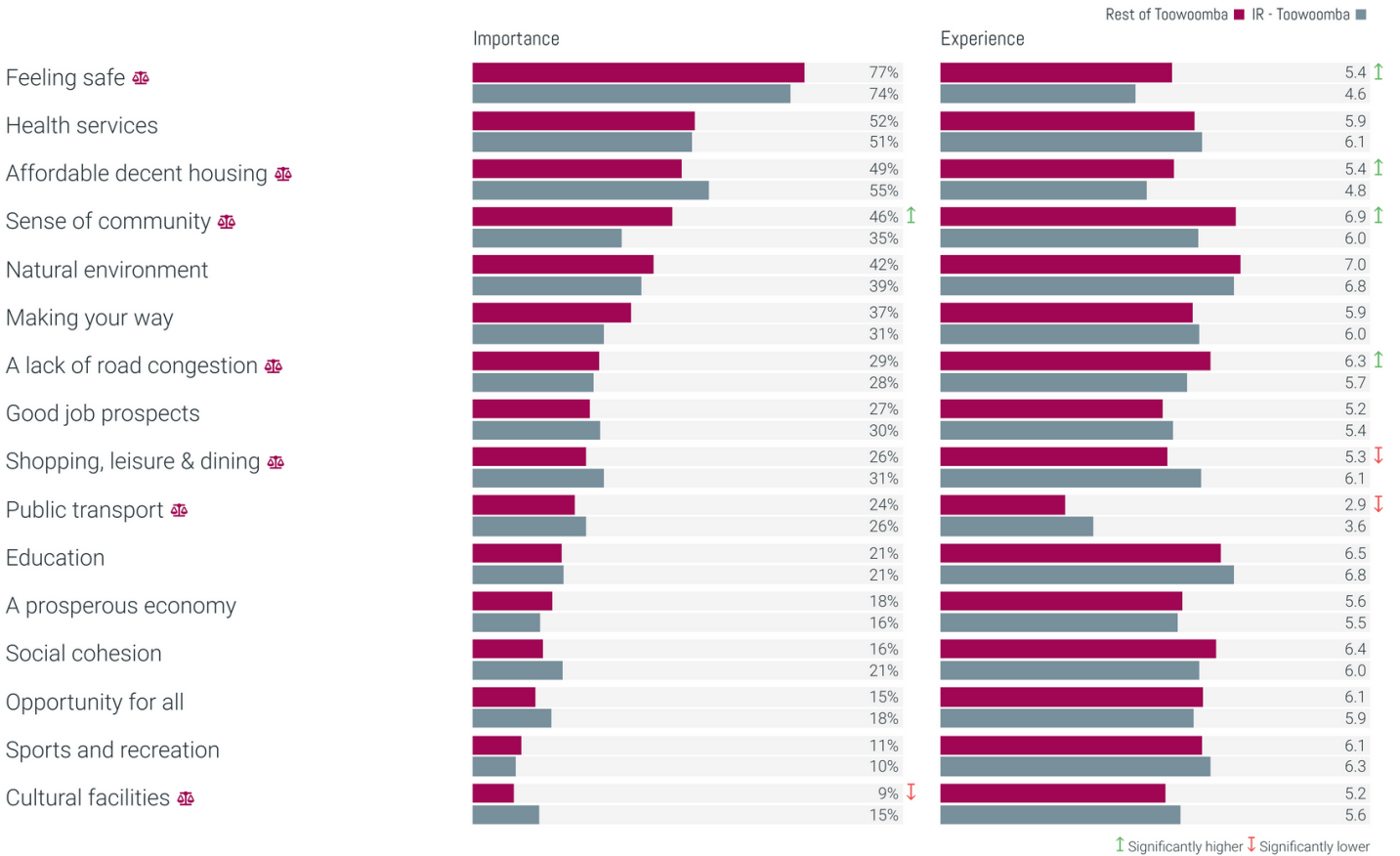
The Rest of Toowoomba Local Area is made up of several towns surrounding Central Toowoomba, including but not limited to Blue Mountain Heights, Highfields, Millmerran, Cranley, Biddeston, Clifton, Meringandan West, Westbrook, Cooyar, Cambooya, Oakey, Upper Yarraman, Torrington, Condamine Farms, Kingsthorpe, Pittsworth, Acland, Cotswold Hills, Wyreema, Preston, Crows Nest, Top Camp, Cawdor, Ascot, Hampton, Gowrie Junction and Gowrie Mountain. 227 residents from the Rest of Toowoomba participated in the survey.

The Rest of Toowoomba Local Area Overall Liveability Index returned a value of 58.0/100, higher than the Toowoomba Regional Council Index (55.6).

Rest of Toowoomba Overall Liveability Index



IR - Toowoomba Overall Liveability Index





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Please visit views.id.com.au/inland-rail-toowoomba for additional insights, resources and data.