

Housing Strategy Engagement Report

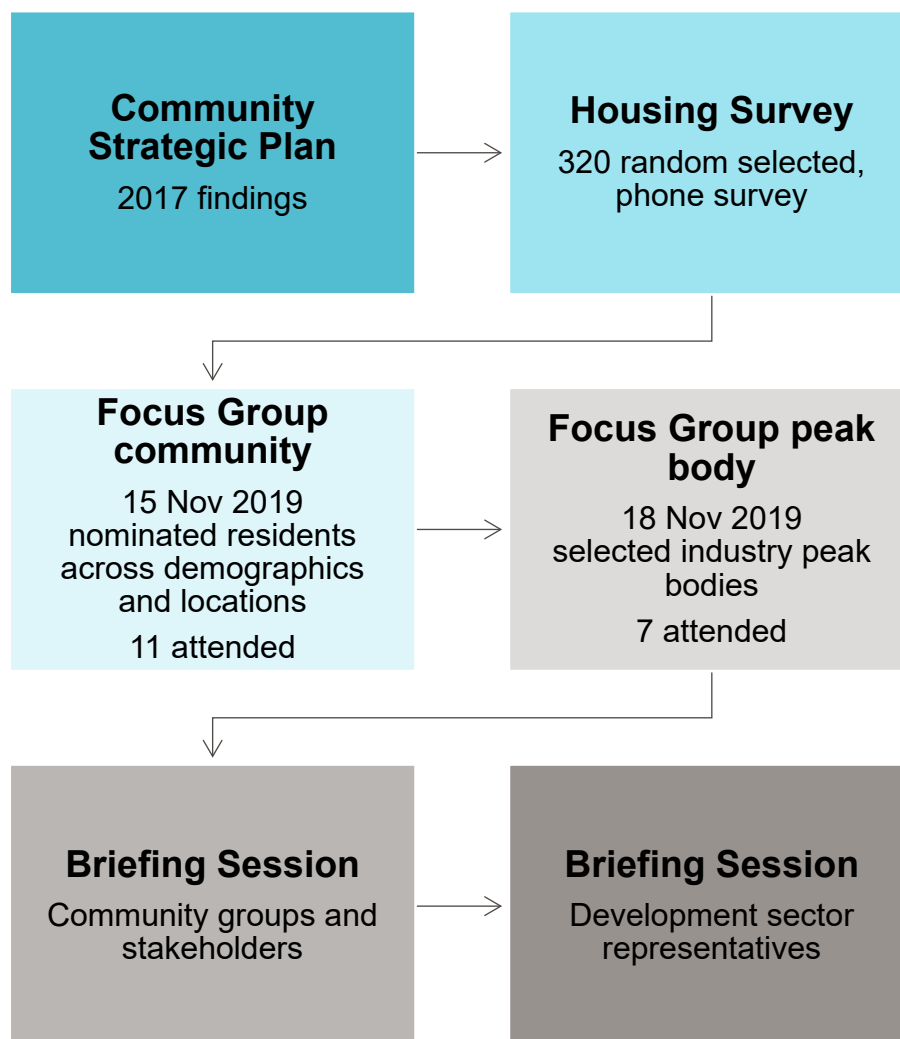
November 2019

To further inform the development of Housing Strategy, two focus groups were held in November 2019. Focus groups are structured and directed and allow insights and input on specific topics. The aim of the sessions was to:

- Increase understanding and awareness of the Housing Strategy and LSPS
- Test diverse perceptions, opinions and attitudes on early themes identified in the Strategy

Communications and Engagement Timeline

The focus groups are one method within a broader engagement program.



Findings Community Focus Group

The focus group was divided into key sections.

1. Introduction and background
2. Presentation on market findings and background research completed, followed by key question discussion.
3. Increased density discussion
4. Solutions session

Current lived understandings- setting the scene of housing

Responses were recorded by Council staff and grouped into common themes contained in Table 1.

Theme	Example comments
There are different needs across the demographics - we don't all want the same thing. This also changes over time	<p>65+ age are downsizing - but new estates don't allow for it.</p> <p>Our needs change over time - married (big house) - divorced (unit) - married (big house).</p> <p>Gen X & Y are much more mobile and happy to move around.</p> <p>Retirees moving to the area, have a cycle. 1. buy a big house 2. downsize when things like accessibility becomes an issue 3. Aged care facility</p>
Housing stress and affordability	<p>Can't afford to buy where I live</p> <p>RT is affordable and an untapped area - good schools, heritage, river.</p>
Housing trends are experienced differently across the local government area	<p>In Seaham you see professionals moving there for lifestyle - attractive location, moving away from higher density.</p> <p>Raymond Terrace is where you see younger families, big families in big houses</p>
Development must be well planned and supported by social infrastructure (including transport, open space, facilities) and environmental protection	<p>Subdivisions don't allow for street parking, so everyone has to have a garage.</p> <p>Supporting infrastructure must match development - big problem with over 55 living areas</p>
Lifestyle and place identity is a big factor in where we live, it's not just about the house type	<p>The west and Raymond Terrace is good bang for your buck and provides lifestyle and strong community</p>

Bigger houses and smaller lots are the new normal

Notice project homes are big. With 4+ bedrooms.
Houses are bigger and lot sizes smaller

What does increased density/infill mean to you

Participants were asked to describe what increased density means to them and whether they saw it in a positive light. The majority saw it as positive, or both positive and negative depending on the way it was done.

Participants saw increased density as meaning:

- Smaller blocks
- High rises
- Townhouses
- Older properties being developed
- Duplex's
- Smart cities thinking with technology driving our needs.

Participants also identified potential impacts as shown in the table zone.

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
jobs for young people	too many people to create a busy lifestyle
Economic growth	Over development of rural areas
	Loss of sense of place and lifestyle
	change the sense of belonging
	Loss and overuse of recreation space
	Surround environment not preserved