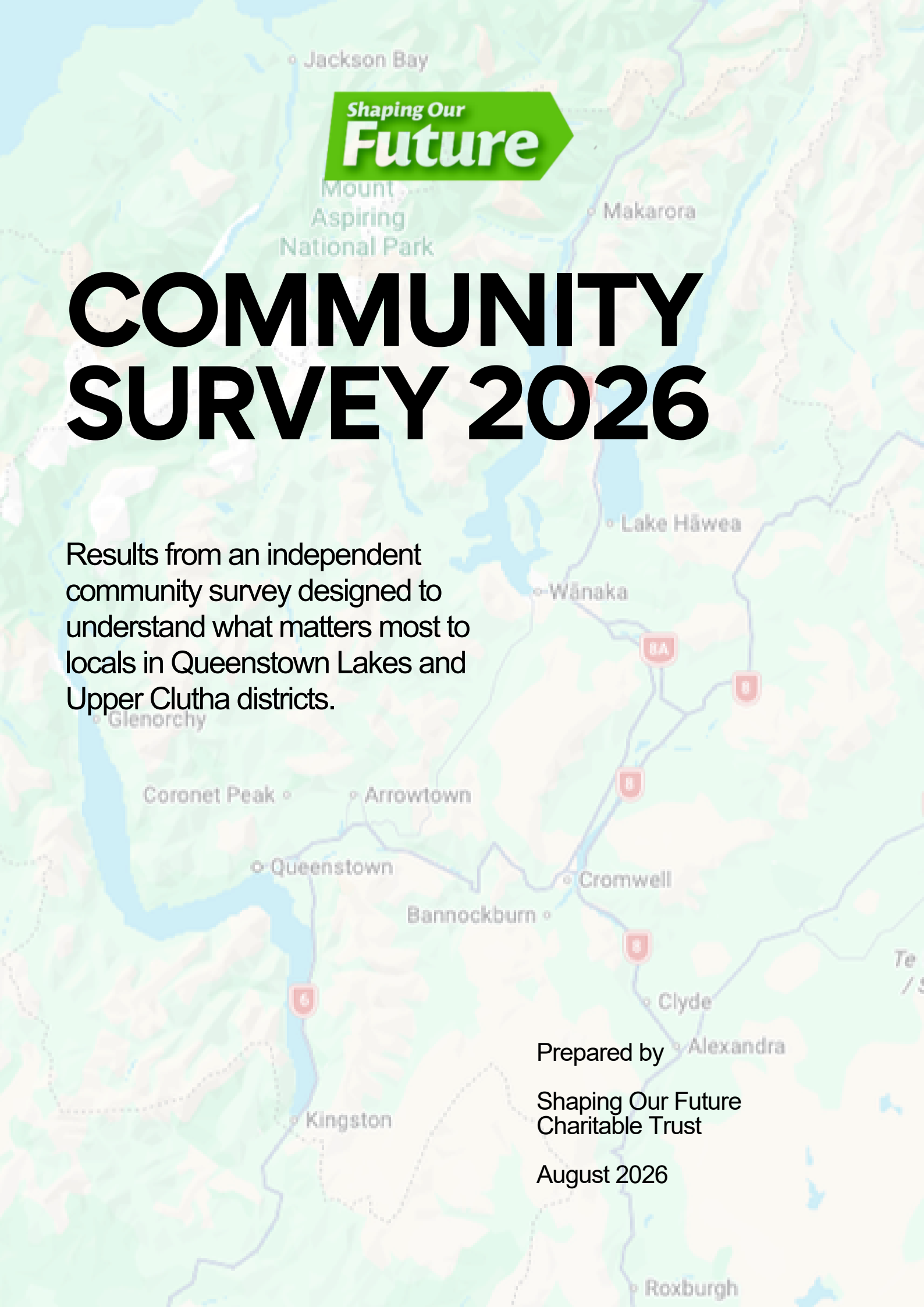


A map of the Queenstown Lakes and Upper Clutha districts in New Zealand. The map shows various towns and geographical features. At the top, Jackson Bay is marked. Below it, Mount Aspiring National Park is labeled. To the right, Makarora is marked. Further down, Lake Hāwea and Wānaka are shown. In the center, Queenstown is marked, with Glenorchy to its west, Coronet Peak and Arrowtown to its north, and Bannockburn to its east. Below Queenstown, Kingston is marked. To the east of Kingston, Cromwell is marked, with Clyde further east. At the bottom, Roxburgh is marked. The map also shows several roads, including State Highway 6 (SH6) and State Highway 8 (SH8).

Shaping Our
Future

COMMUNITY SURVEY 2026

Results from an independent community survey designed to understand what matters most to locals in Queenstown Lakes and Upper Clutha districts.

Prepared by Alexandra

Shaping Our Future
Charitable Trust

August 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS	4
COMMUNITY CONCERNS	5
WRITTEN FEEDBACK	12
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	13
OUR 2021 WELLBEING FORUMS & REPORT	14
WHY COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MATTERS	15
LOOKING AHEAD	16
APPENDIX	17

INTRODUCTION



In early 2026, Shaping Our Future invited the Queenstown Lakes and Upper Clutha community to share their experiences, concerns and priorities through a district-wide community survey.

A total of 385 people participated in the survey. In addition to survey answers, 342 people wrote written responses, which offer further insights into how people are experiencing life across the district.

Survey purpose

The survey is part of Shaping Our Future's ongoing role in creating opportunities for meaningful public participation and ensuring community perspectives help inform future conversations and decision-making processes.

Survey findings

Results provide valuable insights into how people are experiencing life in the district and their views on growth, infrastructure, affordability, transport, access to services and community wellbeing.

The high level of participation demonstrates that local people want to be part of conversations about the future of the places where they live, work and belong. Every response helps to build a clearer understanding of community experience which helps decision-makers, organisations and the wider community to better understand both the challenges and opportunities facing the district.

About Shaping Our Future

As an independent Charitable Trust, Shaping Our Future creates opportunities for communities to have say about what affects them. This survey forms part of our ongoing commitment towards ensuring that community perspectives are captured and used to help inform public discussion, planning and decision-making.



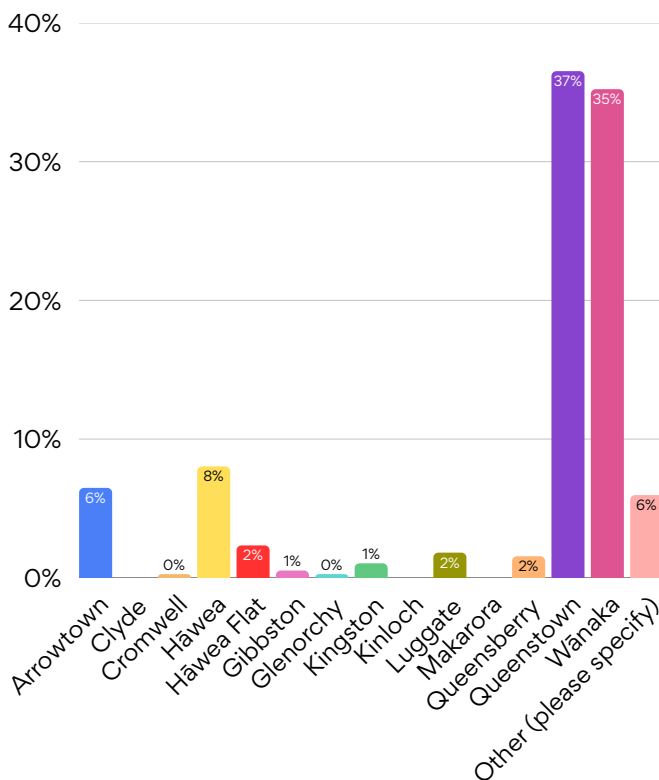
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



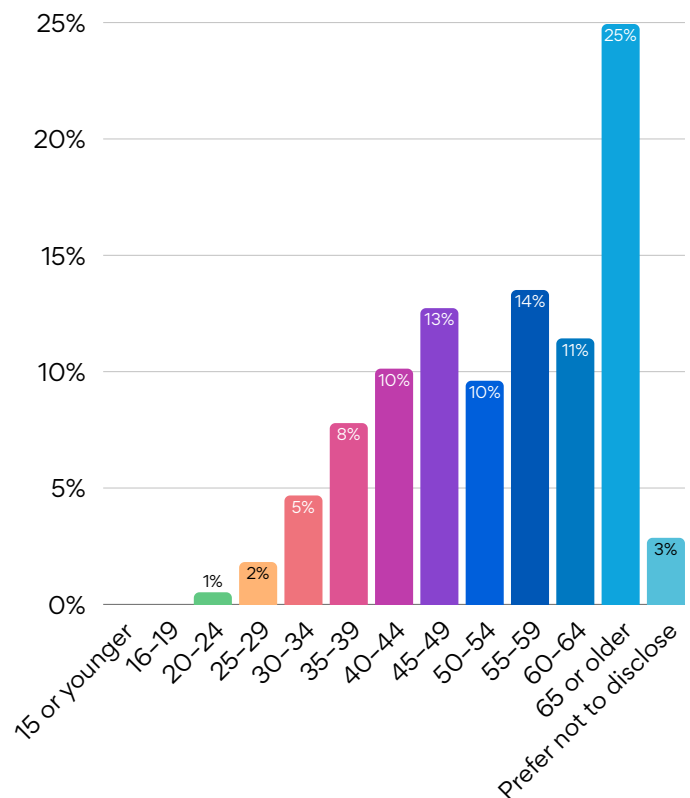
Responses were received from communities across the district, providing insight into the experiences, concerns and priorities of local residents.

Understanding who participated in the survey helps provide context for interpreting the findings. While responses reflect a broad range of perspectives, participation was voluntary. Some groups are represented more strongly than others.

Where do you live?



What is your age?



82%

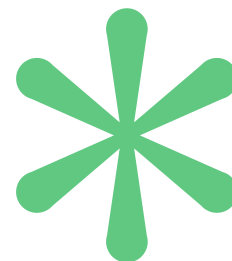
of survey
respondents are
aged 40 years or
older

The survey received the most responses from older residents and people who are already engaged in community issues and local decision-making.

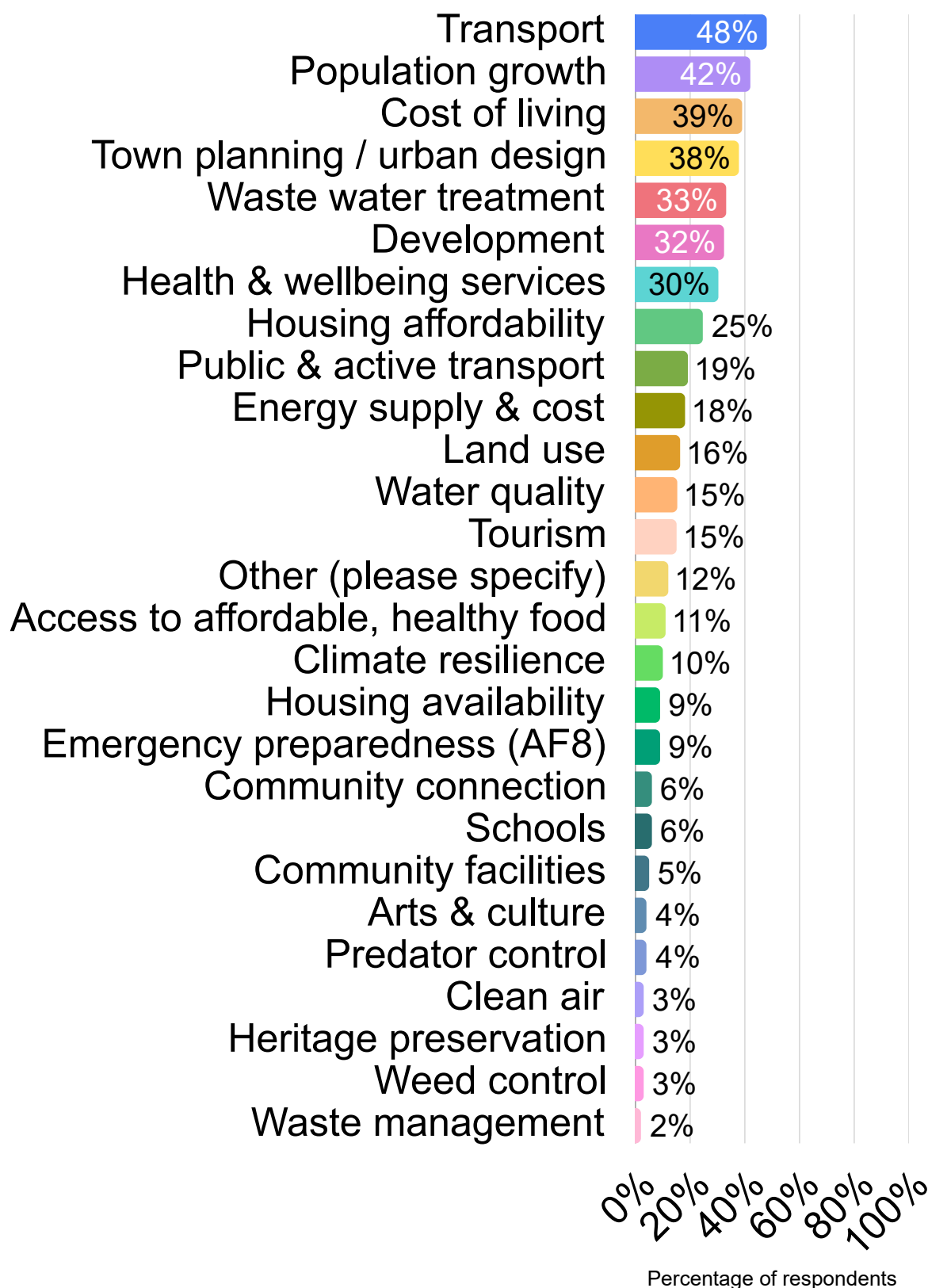
The demographic profile highlights the importance of continuing to engage with groups whose voices may be less represented through traditional survey processes.

This includes younger people, working families, migrants, renters and seasonal workers, who experience local issues differently.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



I am concerned about



COMMUNITY CONCERNS



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey respondents were asked to identify their top five concerns. The percentage shown for each issue represents the proportion of respondents who chose that issue. Because multiple responses were permitted, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Please refer to the Survey in Appendix 1.



WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

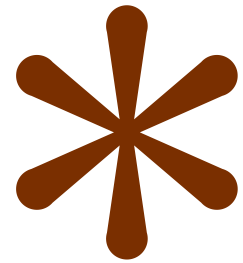
KEY INSIGHTS

The top five most commonly identified concerns were transport, population growth, cost of living, town planning/urban design and wastewater treatment.

Findings suggest many of these issues are closely connected: for example, population growth and town planning.

Written comments from survey respondents frequently describe the cumulative impacts of growth, infrastructure pressure and the rising cost of living as having an impact on the quality of everyday life for locals.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



The following sections explore the main community concerns identified in the survey in more detail, grouping related issues together to highlight common themes.

1. TRANSPORT, ACCESS & CONGESTION

Transport: parking, congestion, roadworks: 184 responses (48%)

Public transport, active transport, ride sharing: 74 responses (19%)

Transport, parking, congestion and roadworks emerged as the single most selected issue in the survey for nearly half of survey respondents. 19% of respondents identified public and active transport concerns, which reinforces the importance of how people move around and access the district.

Written responses consistently described movement around the district as becoming more difficult, time-consuming and stressful, with concerns about how transport pressures may continue to grow alongside population growth.

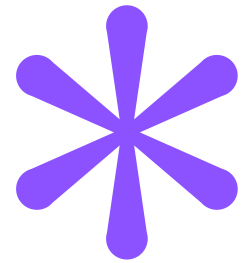
Many respondents described congestion as affecting daily life, not just during peak tourism periods, while others raised concerns about future gridlock as the district continues to grow.

Findings suggest that transport is not simply an infrastructure issue, but something that directly shapes people's daily experiences, access to work and services, affordability and overall quality of life.

"Quality of life of residents has been on a downwards trajectory for approximately 5-10 years due to traffic congestion resulting from infrastructure that hasn't kept up with population growth, how saddening that is."

There is a "huge drop in productivity as we all sit in ever increasing stupid traffic jams. People cannot opt for a bus service which more than doubles their journey and is not fit for purpose. Biking in winter is not safe on dark, slippery trails"

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



2. GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & URBAN DESIGN

Population growth: 161 responses (42%)

Development: 124 responses (32%)

Urban design and planning: 146 responses (38%)

Grouped together, these themes represent the strongest systemic concern identified in the survey.

Respondents express concern that growth is happening faster than infrastructure, planning and services can keep pace with. Others spoke about the importance of protecting the character, liveability and identity of local communities as the district continues to change.

Written responses describe growth as feeling reactive or poorly coordinated, with concerns that development is outpacing infrastructure capacity and affecting long-term liveability. Findings suggest that people are not necessarily opposed to growth itself, but are seeking greater input into how growth is planned, coordinated and managed over time.

ECONOMIC GROWTH *VS* COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY



TOURISM

Visitors and experiences drive our local economy.



DEVELOPMENT

Building communities, infrastructure and opportunity.



INVESTMENT

Business growth and investment create jobs and prosperity.



POPULATION GROWTH

A growing district brings diversity, talent and new ideas.



ACCESS

Easy, affordable access to transport, services and opportunities.



AFFORDABILITY

Homes, living costs and essentials within reach for our communities.



PUBLIC SPACES

Parks, lakeshores and spaces to connect, play and unwind.



COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Protecting the character, culture and place we call home.



QUALITY OF LIFE

Health, wellbeing and a strong sense of belonging.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



3. COST OF LIVING; HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & ACCESS

Cost of living: 150 responses (40%)

Housing affordability: 94 responses (24%)

Housing availability: 31 responses (9%).

Respondents described increasing financial pressure, which affects households, workers, families and long-term community stability. In written comments, housing affordability is frequently mentioned in relation to retaining local workers, supporting families and maintaining diverse and connected communities.



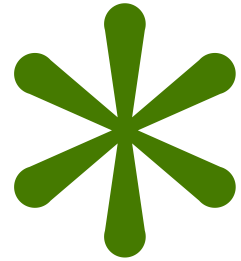
Increasing financial pressure is affecting people's ability to stay long-term

Access to affordable housing is a constraint for workers and families which affects community, employment and relationship stability.

"The cost of living is makes it increasingly harder for families and individuals to be able to live comfortably in this community. This adds stress and is causing relationship breakdowns or burnout."

"I'm paid a respectable wage (above living wage) and yet I'm living week by week, unable to save or afford a house. I desperately want to invest in the community and stay long term but it's increasingly impossible to balance."

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



4. WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT & WATER INFRASTRUCTURE STRAIN

Wastewater treatment: 128 responses (33%)

Wastewater treatment emerged as one of the highest-ranked infrastructure concerns in the survey, reflecting broader concerns about whether essential infrastructure is keeping pace with growth and development.

Written responses point to community concern about wastewater system capacity and potential environmental impacts.

Respondents link water infrastructure pressures to broader concerns about growth management and long-term planning.

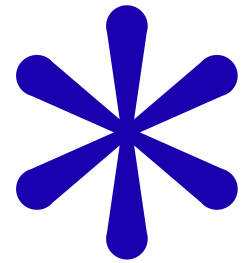


"With such rapid population growth and development, we must plan wisely to avoid negative impacts on our natural environment and quality of life. We can use nature-based solutions/design to keep our waterways healthy."



"Good waste water management and integrity within the waste water systems is way more important than more development."

COMMUNITY CONCERNS



5. HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICES

Access to health & wellbeing services: 117 responses (30%)

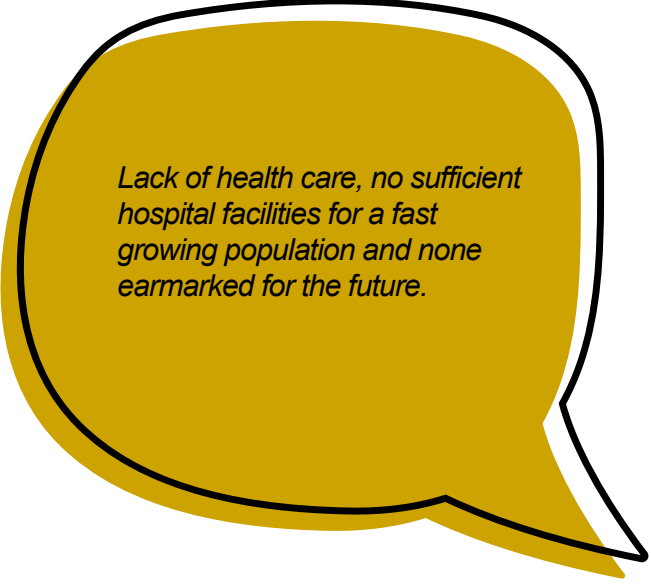
Access to health and wellbeing services is a concern for many respondents, reflecting broader concerns about community wellbeing as the area continues to grow.

Written responses reinforce community concern about:

- Increasing pressure on healthcare services and workforce capacity.
- Concerns about timely access to GPs, specialist services and healthcare appointments.
- Uneven access to services across different communities within the district.
- Concerns about whether healthcare infrastructure and services can keep pace with future population growth.



The lack of infrastructure and health care available. Especially for people moving to town, no awareness of the lack of health resources



Lack of health care, no sufficient hospital facilities for a fast growing population and none earmarked for the future.



WRITTEN FEEDBACK



WHAT PEOPLE SHARED IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Survey data helps us to identify which issues matter most to respondents. Written responses help to explain why these issues matter and how they affect everyday life.

Across 342 written comments, several strong themes consistently emerged.

Many respondents described a growing sense that infrastructure, services and systems are struggling to keep pace with population growth and increasing demand.

Others spoke about changes to daily life, including increased time, cost, stress and difficulty accessing services, housing, transport and community spaces.

RECURRING THEMES

A recurring theme throughout the responses is concern about how decisions are being made, including perceptions of limited coordination, planning and connection between decision-making processes and lived community experience.

Findings suggest people are not experiencing issues in isolation: respondents described compounding pressures across transport, affordability, infrastructure, healthcare, housing and growth.

EMERGING PATTERNS

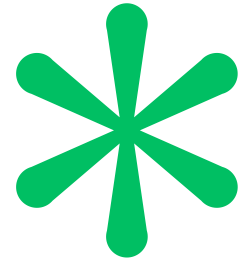


Growth is outpacing systems, infrastructure and facilities

Lived experience is deteriorating

The community has confidence in how decisions are being made.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



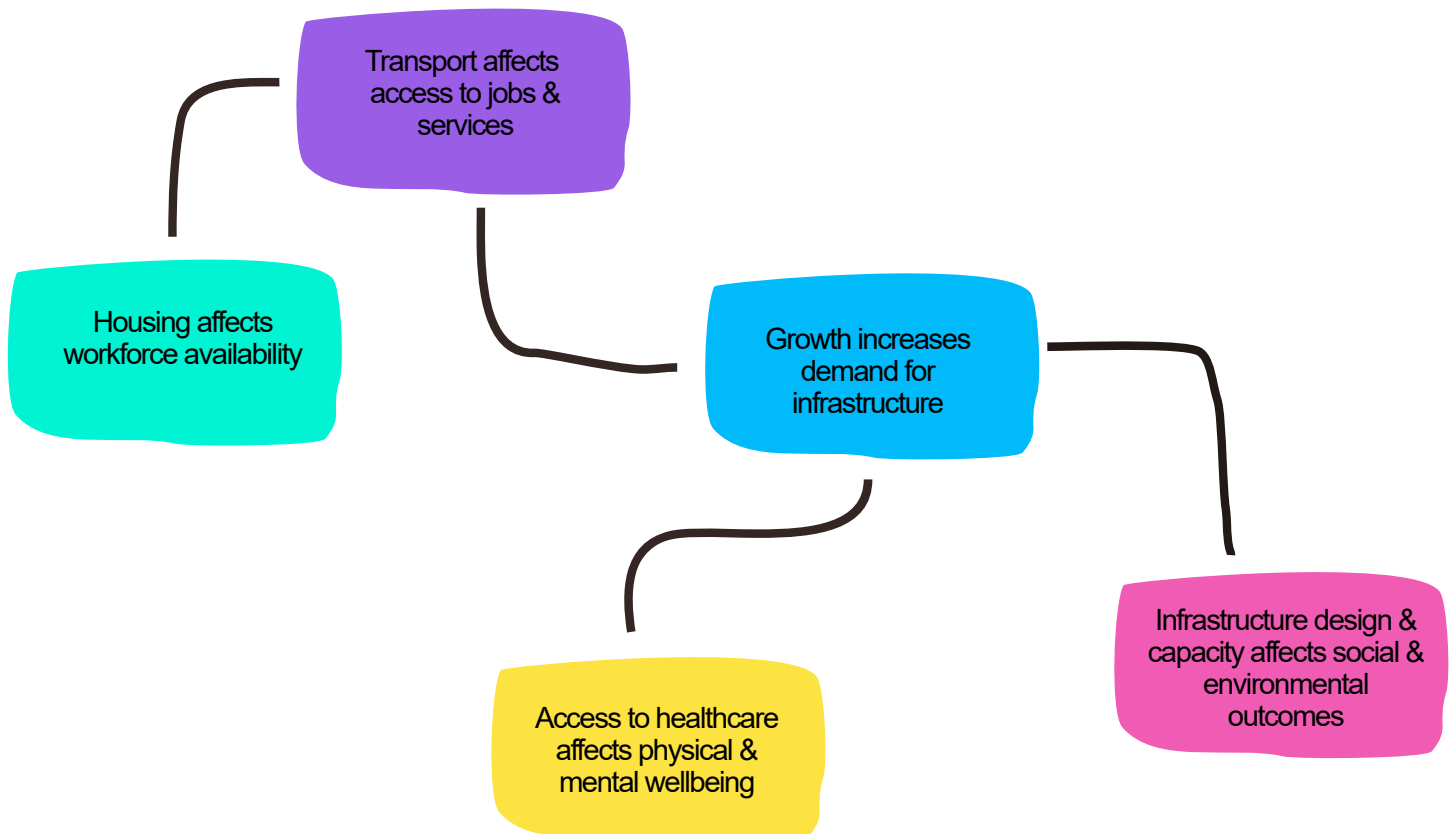
WHAT SURVEY INSIGHTS TELL US

Survey responses highlight a wide range of community concerns. Analysis of findings suggests that many of these issues are closely connected.

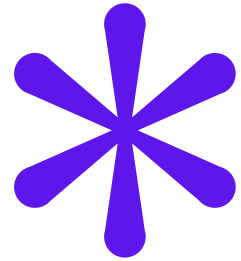
Growth is placing increasing pressure on transport networks, infrastructure, housing, healthcare services and affordability across the district. Many respondents expressed concern that essential systems and services are struggling to keep pace with the scale and speed of change.

Findings suggest that community concerns are not only about individual issues in isolation, but about how multiple pressures combine to shape everyday quality of life, access, wellbeing and long-term liveability.

Population growth is increasing demand across transport, infrastructure, housing, healthcare and community services: many respondents perceive these systems as struggling to keep up with growth.



LOOKING BACK



SHAPING OUR FUTURE 2021 WELLBEING FORUMS & REPORT

In 2021, Shaping Our Future held community forums in Wānaka and Queenstown, supported by an online survey, to understand community priorities across social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. Five years on, many of the same concerns remain. 135 people responded to the 2021 survey.

The recurrence of these themes suggests that some of the concerns identified by the community in 2021 remain significant five years later. The 2021 and 2026 surveys used different questions and engagement methods, so the results cannot be directly compared statistically.

2021 COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Community & wellbeing	People wanted stronger community connection and inclusion, better access to physical and mental healthcare and more affordable housing.
Growth & development	There was concern about uncontrolled growth, pressure on infrastructure, loss of local identity and character and the need for a more cohesive long-term vision for the district.
Cost of living & economic resilience	Housing affordability and the cost of living were significant concerns. People also wanted better wages, more diverse employment opportunities and an economy which is less reliant on tourism.
Environment	Protecting waterways, responding to climate change, reducing waste and protecting biodiversity were important priorities, alongside managing growth in a way that protected the natural environment.
Culture, identity & voice	People wanted greater recognition of Māori history and culture, more opportunities for cultural expression, greater inclusion of diverse voices and stronger community participation in decision-making.
Transport & accessibility	Traffic, parking and mobility were raised as concerns, with calls for improved public transport, cycling connections and better accessibility between communities.

WHY COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MATTERS



The value of this survey is not just to identify community concerns, but to build a clearer understanding of how people are experiencing change across the district.

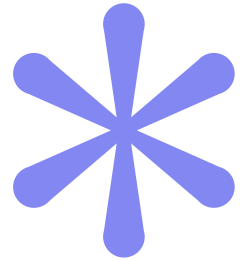
Community feedback gives decision-makers a snapshot of 'lived experience' that might not always be visible through technical planning, data, or formal consultation and engagement alone.

When people in the community share their lived experiences, perspectives and priorities, this helps to:

- identify emerging issues and pressures
- highlight how decisions affect everyday life
- improve understanding of community needs and experiences
- support more informed and community-led decision-making
- strengthen conversations between communities, organisations and decision-makers.



LOOKING AHEAD



Results from our 2026 Community Survey provide valuable insight into the experiences, concerns and aspirations of people across the district.

Findings highlight both the challenges communities are experiencing and the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for people to participate in conversations about the future of the district.

The survey also reinforces the importance of informed decision-making which is grounded in both technical evidence and lived community experience.

As our communities continue to grow and change, ongoing community participation remains an important part of supporting balanced, informed and community-led decision-making.

Every survey response helps to build a clearer understanding of lived community experience, supporting more informed conversations about the future of the district.

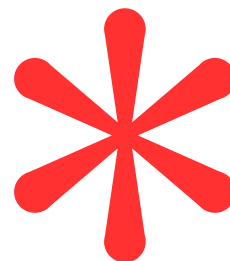
SHAPING OUR FUTURE'S ROLE

Our role is to help amplify community voice and create opportunities for meaningful participation in civic engagement and democratic processes.

This includes helping communities to better understand planning and decision-making processes, supporting people to engage with consultations and submissions and translating lived community experience into strategic insights which can help to inform future conversations and decisions.



APPENDIX 1



COMMUNITY SURVEY: TELL US WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

About this survey

We are currently preparing our 2026-2029 strategic plan. Your answers will help us to focus our work on the issues which matter the most to our community. This survey is anonymous.

About Shaping our Future Charitable Trust

Our purpose is to give everyone in our community the chance to have a say about what is important to them. We run community workshops, surveys, and meet with people in our community to listen to your needs. We take your feedback and ideas and share them with the people who make decisions that affect our future. We are an independent, apolitical charitable trust. We offer our services free for the community. Get in touch with our executive officer Anna if you'd like to know more: executive@shapingourfuture.org.nz

* 1. Where do you live?

- ☐ Arrowtown
- ☐ Clyde
- ☐ Cromwell
- ☐ Hāwea
- ☐ Hāwea Flat
- ☐ Gibbston
- ☐ Glenorchy
- ☐ Kingston
- ☐ Kinloch
- ☐ Luggate
- ☐ Makarora
- ☐ Queensberry
- ☐ Queenstown
- ☐ Wānaka
- ☐ Overseas
- ☐ Aotearoa New Zealand
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 2. What concerns you the most right now in the Central Lakes / Upper Clutha area?
Choose up to 5 answers.

If you have a burning issue that is not included in this list, write this in the 'Other: please specify' box below.

- ☐ Access to affordable, healthy food
- ☐ Arts & culture
- ☐ Clean air
- ☐ Community connection
- ☐ Community facilities
- ☐ Climate resilience
- ☐ Cost of living
- ☐ Development
- ☐ Electricity/power supply and cost
- ☐ Emergency preparedness (AF8)
- ☐ Health & wellbeing services
- ☐ Heritage preservation
- ☐ Housing affordability
- ☐ Housing availability
- ☐ Land use
- ☐ Population growth
- ☐ Predator control
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Town planning / urban design
- ☐ Transport: parking, congestion, roadworks.
- ☐ Transport: public transport, active transport, ride sharing
- ☐ Waste water treatment
- ☐ Water quality
- ☐ Weed control
- ☐ Waste management
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐

3. What's one thing you wish decision-makers understood about our community right now?
This could be a problem, or a solution.

Thanks for sharing your priorities with us. We value all the voices in our diverse community. Whether you were born here or arrived yesterday, your perspectives matter.

* 4. What is your country of birth?

- ☐ Aotearoa NZ: Central Lakes or Upper Clutha area
- ☐ Aotearoa NZ
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ United Kingdom
- ☐ India
- ☐ China
- ☐ Philippines
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐

* 5. What is your age?

- ☐ 15 or younger
- ☐ 16-19
- ☐ 20-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40-44
- ☐ 45-49
- ☐ 50-54
- ☐ 55-59
- ☐ 60-64
- ☐ 65 or older
- ☐ Prefer not to disclose
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐



Community survey: tell us what matters to you

6. I am aware of Shaping our Future's work in the community

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I have some awareness
- ☐ Other (please specify)

7. How did you hear about Shaping our Future Charitable Trust?

- ☐ Community Association
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ I have attended a Shaping our Future workshop or forum
- ☐ I have completed a Shaping our Future survey
- ☐ Google search
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Other (please specify)

8. Would you like to join Shaping our Future's mailing list?

Email address

Thank you for completing our survey. Survey results will be used for internal planning purposes.

If you'd like to talk more, please reach out to our executive officer Anna Mathieson
executive@shapingourfuture.org.nz



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