

Community Insights Report on  
**NOOSA SHIRE'S  
DESTINATION  
MANAGEMENT**



## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS REPORT ON NOOSA SHIRE'S DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

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## *Acknowledgement of Country*

Intego acknowledges the Kabi Kabi Peoples as the First and Continuing custodians of Noosa Shire, the land where the Shire's community works, lives, and plays.

We recognise the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories the world over.

We welcome their deep knowledge, wisdom, and participation in shifting mindsets and creating regenerative visitor economies in service to life.



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# KEY MESSAGES

Community Insights Report on  
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SUMMARY FOR POLICYMAKERS

# KEY MESSAGES

## A. Tourism is on the verge of losing its social license with the local community, primarily driven by tourism fatigue.

Findings reveal that many participants feel overwhelmed by the influx of visitors, which is significantly disrupting their daily lives and hindering their quality of life. Participants express frustration over the overcrowding of public spaces, the strain on local infrastructure, and the perceived prioritisation of tourists' needs over those of the local community. The emphasis with which participants express themselves highlights the urgent need for a shift in how tourism is managed. This growing discontent highlights a critical juncture where the community's tolerance for tourism is waning, indicating that if measures are not taken to address these concerns, tourism in Noosa Shire could face a backlash.

**A1 Findings indicate there has been a shift in local perceptions of tourism. Although participants acknowledge the economic benefits of tourism, they express concerns over its impact on their daily lives.** Post-COVID-19, the influx of tourists has increased, intensifying overcrowding and strain on local resources. One respondent noted, "It's a careful balance not to break - once it's

broken, it's hard to repair", underscoring the delicate balance needed to sustain the community's well-being and the visitor economy.

**A2 Traffic, short-term accommodations (STAs) and events erode the community's amenity and liveability.** Locals feel that the influx of visitors and the rise of STAs have led to a decline in their quality of life, making everyday activities more challenging. Many stated they have changed their daily routine to keep enjoying the spaces or activities that made Noosa special for them. STAs are increasingly encroaching on residential neighbourhoods, with long-term locals leaving as a result. One participant lamented, "We are losing our communities, one neighbourhood at a time."

**A3 There is a noticeable disconnect in positioning, perceptions, and expectations across stakeholder groups. Some stakeholders acknowledge tourism's contribution, while others feel its costs and disruptions no longer outweigh its benefits.** For example, Tourism Noosa and the Noosa Chamber of Commerce highlight tourism's economic significance, noting that most local businesses benefit from visitor spending. Conversely, the Noosa Residents and Ratepayers Association contends that tourism's adverse effects on community amenity and quality of life are not sufficiently addressed. They express concerns that the Council's focus on promoting tourism neglects the needs of

residents, suggesting that tourism policies have created a significant imbalance. One respondent pointed out, "The tension is between businesses that want greater visitation, and residents fed up with giving their Shire over to the visitors." Notably, the views of many local environmental organisations align with those of residents.

**A4 There is a strong call for ceasing Noosa Council's funding of the local Destination Marketing Organisation.** There is growing dissatisfaction with the funding model, with many locals and organisations arguing that the resources allocated to Tourism Noosa could be better used to address community needs. This sentiment is driven by concerns that the organisation prioritises the interests of the tourism industry over those of residents. One submission highlights, "Council funds Tourism Noosa to undertake destination marketing... [but] it seems counterintuitive for ratepayers to fund an industry body whose mission is to increase profits...and leave the community to literally clean up the mess."

## B. Environmental protection emerged as the community's top priority.

Findings indicate the importance of preserving Noosa's natural environment, with 78% of participants giving statements related to the environment. Overwhelmingly, there is a call for minimising environmental impacts and maintaining the region's unique ecological assets. One submission points out, "Noosa

residents value the environment and rate the protection of the environment as the single most important reason for why they like living here."

**B1 There is a stark divergence from the traditional perception of growth as a measure of success.** Findings show a significant shift in community attitudes toward growth and development. Participants expressed concerns over the negative impacts of growth, instead indicating a preference for balanced, sustainable practices rather than simply increasing visitors, population, and development. One submission states that "visitation to our region continues to increase and should not be celebrated", indicating scepticism about the value of growth metrics. Another states, "Why is growth good? It just destroys and creates more problems. Why do people keep coming here, trying to make it bigger and more like the places they escaped from?"

**B2 There is a strong call for introducing sustainability solutions across sectors and stewarding the environment above all else.** Participants point out the need for sustainable practices, stating that Noosa should "never let go of the environmental focus". They offer a myriad of suggestions for doing so, including incorporating sustainability principles into all new developments, from energy-efficient building designs and water conservation strategies to the use of environmentally preferable materials. The push for sustainability extends to tourism, with calls for an alternative tourism model



that incorporates regenerative and sustainable practices in alignment with the community's values.

**C. Goals for balancing tourism and the local community may only be achieved through transformative, transparent, and collaborative changes across sectors and stakeholder groups.**

The community highlights the need for comprehensive, inclusive approaches to address tourism's challenges. One participant highlighted the importance of "a community that balances environment, community, and tourism requirements," reflecting a common sentiment for integrated solutions. Transparency and collaboration are repeatedly called for, with participants advocating for greater scrutiny and public visibility of development projects and Council operations. Promoting dialogue and collaboration among residents,

businesses, and government entities can help create a thriving visitor economy that gives back to people and place.

**C1** There is discontent with Noosa Council's level of community engagement and consultation, in particular with the Council's perceived lack of action and implementation of proposed recommendations. Several participants expressed frustration over the Council's ineffective communication and follow-through, with calls for increased consultation and engagement with the local community and businesses. One submission highlighted, "Council appears to develop strategies and review them with little accountability to deliver," reflecting a common concern about the gap between planning and execution. Another participant highlighted the need for more transparent and inclusive consultation processes, stating that "the community needs to be better informed." This sentiment underscores the Council's

need to enhance its engagement efforts and ensure that community input leads to tangible outcomes, rebuilding trust and fostering a more collaborative relationship with the community. The challenge for Noosa Council will be managing different stakeholder perspectives. Underlying the community engagement is what can be conceptualised as a 'spectrum' of expectations regarding Council's involvement. Although minimal in number, some participants fiercely oppose increased Council intervention, demanding a laissez-faire approach. Others believe the Council's role is limited to providing basic services like "roads, rubbish, and infrastructure". The vast majority, however, envision Council as champions for the community and place. A smaller group of participants sees the Council's role as significantly involved, addressing every issue in the Shire, from major concerns like housing affordability to minor actions like providing poo bags for their dogs. The extent of these diverging views highlights the need for holistic and collaborative approaches that manage expectations while delivering solutions aligned with broader sentiments.

**C2** The community expects Noosa Council to embrace bold leadership in making difficult but necessary decisions. When asked about their desired level of change, the "transformational" scenario overwhelmingly emerged across all eight key themes. This sentiment is reflected in numerous responses. For instance, one submission points out the need for "courageous leadership, educating

and helping the community accept and prepare for change," underscoring the call for proactive and decisive action. The community expects "profound change" with noticeable, positive, and lasting impacts for the Noosa Shire. The consensus is that anything less than a transformational approach will fall short of achieving the desired outcomes, demonstrating the community's strong desire for bold and visionary leadership from the Council.

**C3** When implementing policy responses and actions to manage Noosa Shire's visitor economy, diverse stakeholder views must be considered. Findings indicate the need for coordinated efforts involving councils, the State Government, and community groups to manage tourism effectively. Engaging with the tourism industry, business leaders, environmental organisations, and residents is crucial for developing policies aligning with Noosa's community values. This collaborative approach aims to address stakeholders' diverse needs and expectations, ensuring that the implementation of plans and strategies is comprehensive, inclusive, and embraces the principles of equity.





# BACKGROUND

This report is prepared for Noosa Council to support the development of Noosa Shire's community-led Destination Management Plan. It presents the findings of the in-depth analysis that Intego was commissioned to undertake, examining results from the Council's community engagement process related to the Destination Management Plan Discussion Paper. This paper, which outlines eight key themes pivotal to Noosa Council's strategy as it relates to tourism management, serves as the cornerstone of the analysis.

## *Objective*

To understand key community themes, ideas, and actionable insights from the community engagement to guide Noosa Council in understanding Noosa Shire's diverse community perspectives and inform ongoing action for the future of tourism for the Shire, thus co-creating a Destination Management Plan alongside the community.

## *Scope of Work*

The scope of the engagement included:

1. Undertaking a deep analysis of community feedback concerning Noosa Shire's visitor economy.
2. Preparing a detailed report capturing the qualitative and quantitative results of this analysis. This report presents the findings from the total datasets.
3. Extending the preliminary analysis

completed in late 2023 to identify new or alternate themes, thus offering an expanded vision for Noosa's strategic tourism direction and management.

## *Rationale*

Noosa Shire stands at a crossroads, where the destination's attractiveness must be carefully managed to preserve its natural beauty and what makes Noosa special. The impetus for this engagement arose from the need to thoughtfully steer the region's future, one where tourism serves the community's interests and aligns with its core values.

As we present our findings, we keep in the foreground the voices of the Noosa community, whose insights have been invaluable. Their engagement has shaped the contours of this report and will resonate in future strategic decisions.

# METHODS

## Approach

The methodology was based on a 6-week community engagement process undertaken by Noosa Council, which used a mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative data. The community engagement was based on a Discussion Paper developed by Noosa Council, which detailed eight major issues or 'parent themes' intersecting with tourism in the Shire. They include:

- Traffic management
- Environment
- Waste management
- Destination marketing
- Visitor accommodation
- Visitor experiences
- Iconic events
- Governance

## Data Collection

The community engagement ran from 25 September to 31 October 2023. The engagement consisted of an intensive schedule of activities that included three Council staff, two consultants and one PhD student. Data was collected using a mixed methods approach through several engagement tools, summarised in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1. List of community engagement tools.

Approximately 1,168 individuals actively participated in the community engagement process, demonstrating widespread interest. This engagement yielded a total of 937 valid data records, contributing to a rich and diverse pool of data, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Summary of data collected across the community engagement tools. For reference, a typical novel is approximately 80,000 words. The data generated is equivalent to 6.5 novels.

Engagement Tool	Data Collected	Data Generated
Detailed survey	596 surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 596 data records</li> <li>• 222 pages</li> <li>• 118,286 words</li> </ul>
Short survey	202 surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 202 data records</li> <li>• 291 pages</li> <li>• 108,565 words</li> </ul>
Stakeholder conversations	16 conversations, approx. 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 data records</li> <li>• 342 pages</li> <li>• 153,511 words</li> </ul>
Individual submissions	67 submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 67 data records</li> <li>• 193 pages</li> <li>• 73,122 words</li> </ul>
Community workshops	7 workshops, approx. 14 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 data records</li> <li>• 74 pages</li> <li>• 33,475 words</li> </ul>
Coffee chats	84 participants, approx. 16 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 49 data records</li> <li>• 94 pages</li> <li>• 25,511 words</li> </ul>

The data collected included:

- Qualitative data: open-ended survey questions, formal and informal conversations.
- Quantitative data: closed-ended survey questions.
- Observational data: willingness to participate, emotional tone, expression, and overall engagement.

## Data Analysis

### Responsible Conduct of Research

The data analysis was done in observance of the principles of responsible research stipulated by the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, which outlines the expectations for research conduct in Australia. By adhering to these principles, the methodology undertaken ensures that findings are reported honestly, rigorously, and transparently, with minimum bias and in a manner respectful to the wider community. If readers have any questions or concerns about the research methods and findings, they are encouraged to contact Intego at the email address on page 2. We would be happy to discuss this openly and transparently with you.

### Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed through a frequency distribution method, a statistical analysis technique used to show how often each different value in a set of data occurs. It is a way to summarise and represent data clearly and at a glance through existing patterns, such as the most common and least common responses.

## Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data was analysed through inductive thematic analysis, supported by a coding framework created through open and axial coding, which refers to the process of analysing content and assigning a theme to the data. Coding generates ideas and helps researchers identify patterns and themes across datasets. As more statements are coded, researchers can quantify the data, enabling a better understanding of their relevance and importance to participants.

The inductive thematic analysis was done in NVivo 14. Cross-tabulation analysis was also conducted to identify relationships across themes and actions.

### Presentation of Findings

The quantitative and qualitative data were merged to create the findings in this report, with statements relevant to each theme and action quantified collectively.

The limitation of this approach is that some percentages may seem lower, as some specific themes or actions may have featured in the quantitative data but not the qualitative data. Despite this, the data was combined as it provided a clearer direction for policymaking.

# FINDINGS



## Participant Demographic



**89%**

of participants represented 'community', with the majority being residents. Others include students, visitors, and workers.



**8%**

of participants represented the private sector as business owners or commercial enterprises.



**2%**

Non-profits, like community and environmental organisations, made up 2% of the sample.



**50/50**

There was an almost equal balance of female and male participants, with the former representing 50% and the latter 40%.

**40%**

of participants have lived in Noosa for more than 15 years.



**85%**

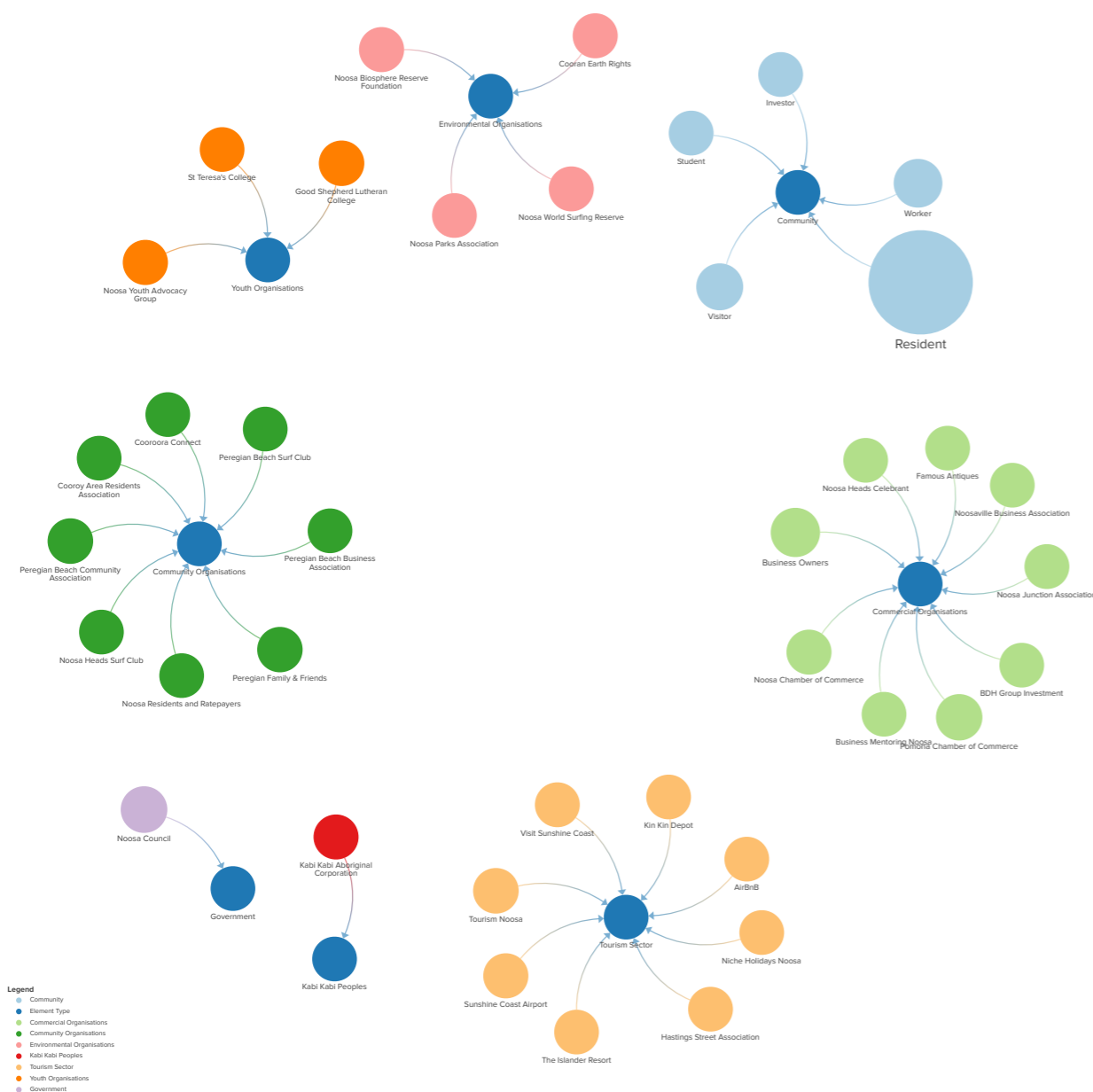
of participants were 35 years or older, with most being 55+.



## Stakeholder Map

The stakeholder map in Figure 2 shows the range of participants across the community engagement. An interactive version of this map is available online ([click here](#)). Overall, the community engagement included the local community, commercial enterprises, community organisations, environmental organisations, Kabi Kabi Peoples, the tourism sector, youth organisations, and government institutions.

Although every effort was made to capture all organisations, some may be missing, as formal introductions were not made during most community engagements.



## Participant Suburbs

As shown in Figure 3, the distribution of participants by suburb varied, with Noosa Heads having the highest number at 38 participants, followed by Tewantin with 31.

Unfortunately, 744 participant suburbs were unassigned due to limitations in the design of the survey instrument, which impacted the data collected for this parameter.



Figure 3. Noosa Shire map showing participants across suburbs. 744 data records were unassigned.

Figure 2. Stakeholder map representing the diverse stakeholder groups participating in the community engagement.

## Key Underlying themes

### Defining Success

When asked how they envision success for Noosa Shire in 10 years, several themes recur across the dataset:

- A vibrant and “connected community” with “happy, valued residents” who are Noosa Council’s primary focus.
- Noosa is recognised as Australia’s “leading regenerative tourism destination” that “gives back more to people, culture, and places than it takes.”
- A diverse economy where tourism is “just one industry among a variety of environment and tech industries.”
- There is a reversal in the growth of development, visitors, population, and high rises.
- Today’s environment not only remains “unchanged” but has in fact “improved.” There is more nature, more trees, bushland, and wildlife.
- The “cultural values of Noosa Shire...have been protected” and “respected.”
- Noosa Shire is less car-dependent. Instead, it relies on efficient, effective, state-of-the-art public transport that connects “the whole Shire” and “the rest of the Sunshine Coast”, eliminating traffic congestion.

- The ‘old’ Noosa has been revived, and the region’s character, charm, and uniqueness have been maintained and brought to life.
- Locals, businesses, and visitors are living in harmony with nature.
- Noosa Shire has embraced “sustainable, efficient, economical” and “world-class” waste management practices “including waste avoidance.”
- Short-term accommodation in residential areas would be banned and appropriately regulated in clearly defined tourist precinct zones.

### Achieving Balance

The following themes recur across participants’ responses when asked how we can ensure that living and visiting Noosa Shire is a more balanced experience.

- Noosa is no longer being promoted to attract more visitors to the region.
- Maintain Noosa’s uniqueness, “visitors come because it’s different – don’t change that.” Many tie this uniqueness to Noosa’s “incredible natural environment.”
- There is more “public education that shapes visitor behaviour to be more mindful about their impact on Noosa’s environment and community.”
- Ensuring we adhere “to the original ideas of less is better.”

- The environment “should be the priority over the economy of development. It should be cherished and protected but also allow visitors and locals to enjoy it safely and responsibly.”
- Short-term accommodation is appropriately managed and removed from residential areas.
- Tourism is dispersed, and more attention is paid to other areas, such as the Hinterland.
- The concept of limits to growth emerges again, with participants stating they don’t want Noosa to be “overstressed with growth” and that Noosa shouldn’t “rely on growth as something that is needed. They call for fewer visitors, “no more development”, “low numbers of residents.”
- Noosa Council conducts “more thorough consultation”, with “feedback proactively sought from many...including businesses.”
- The theme of diversifying the economy emerges again, with participants stating that “Noosa is much more than tourism.” There is room for “innovation” in other industries.

### Issues and Opportunities

When asked what are the priority issues and opportunities to be addressed for successful destination management in Noosa Shire, the below themes emerged:

- High visitor numbers negatively impact resident amenity, liveability, and the local environment. There is an opportunity to limit them, in particular day trippers. Ways of achieving this include imposing a tourism tax, limiting numbers to natural areas, especially Noosa North Shore, and a “user pays system for the use of the National Park.”
- Traffic congestion and a lack of parking impacts locals’ ability to move around the Shire and enjoy the spaces and activities they cherish. There is an opportunity to address this by introducing timed and paid parking, more parking infrastructure, resident parking permits, and frequent, connected public transport supported by active transport infrastructure, such as cycling lanes that are safe to use.
- Participants observed that environmental degradation occurs, with “more concrete and less green” being noticeable. There is an opportunity to “review areas...for greening opportunities”, move towards sustainability, protect the environment, plant more trees and restore and regenerate the Shire.
- Visitors lack education regarding the community’s values and environmental ethos. There is an opportunity to “increase educational opportunities for both locals and visitors”, as well as for “tourism operators to guide a transition to a sustainable, regenerative visitor economy.”
- Short-term accommodation is impacting housing affordability and residential

neighbourhoods. There is an opportunity to manage them more effectively through “a more rigid approach to registering STAs”, prohibiting them in residential areas and increasing taxes and rates associated with STAs.

- Affordable housing is a significant concern, particularly surrounding workers’ ability to live within the Shire. There is an opportunity to build “small, affordable housing in medium-density areas.” It should have “transport hubs” to get them to their jobs without relying on private vehicles.

- Development adversely impacts natural areas. Participants expressed that “very few residents want more development” and called for “reducing development” and “keeping planning restrictions” and that “any development strictly complies with the Noosa Plan.”

- Kabi Kabi’s empowerment and involvement are lacking in current decision-making. There is an opportunity to bring them on the journey to “discover and learn about our Kabi Kabi culture, heritage, and knowledge.” One participant suggests creating an Indigenous education centre to “highlight our local Kabi Kabi importance to the region.”

- Participants discussed the impact of increased population on the Shire, including the need for more infrastructure, increased traffic, and strains on local resources. There is an opportunity to devise ways of limiting and managing the

local population. The alleged population cap features often.

- The Council’s perception as a leader is diminished. There is an opportunity to return to the principles of previous Councils “and us locals that fought to keep Noosa as it is”. Participants want “people in Council that live and breathe Noosa.” A call for greater transparency in the Council’s operations and decision-making processes is also evident.

### Level of Change Desired

The detailed survey asked participants what level of change they would like to see across the eight key issues or ‘parent themes’ presented in the discussion paper, prompting them with ideas on actions for what each scenario would look like.

As shown in Figure 4, overwhelmingly, the responses were for transformational change across each issue.

The highest support for transformational change relates to waste management (47%), environment (46%) and traffic (44%).

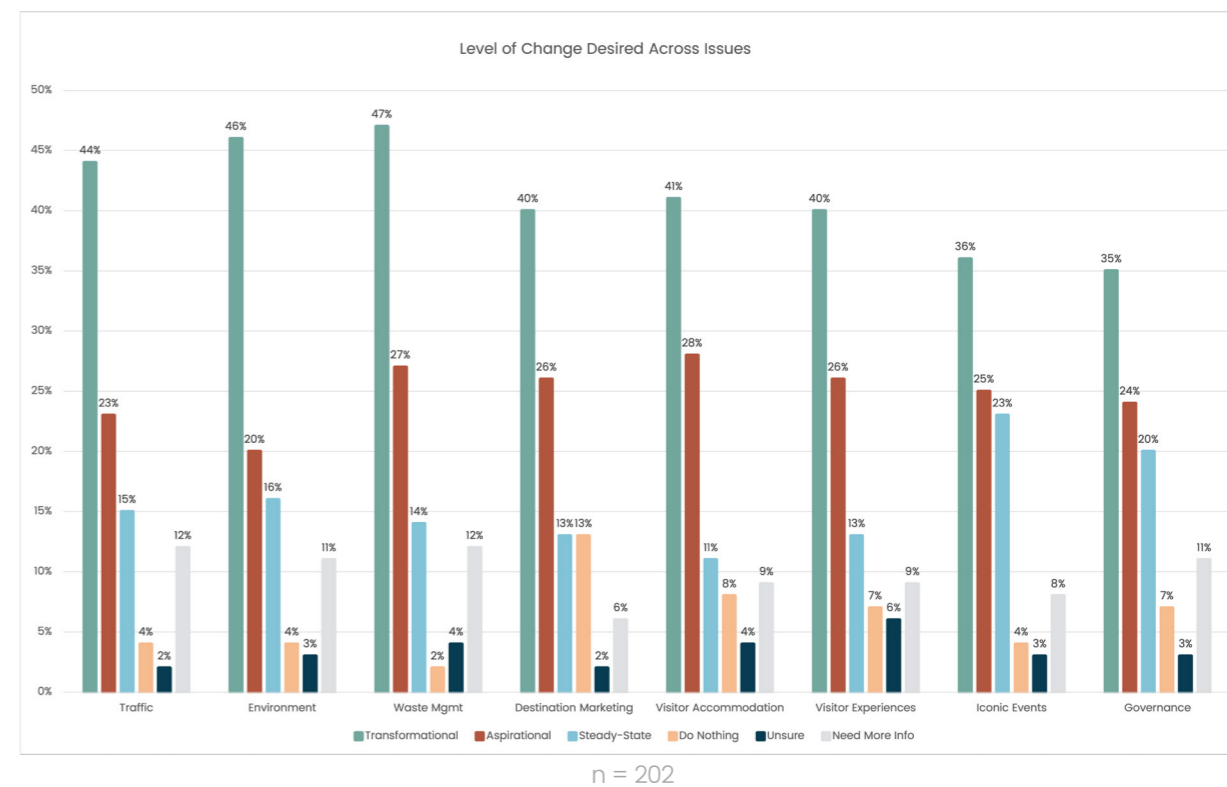


Figure 4. Level of desired change across the eight themes.

### Community Sentiment

#### The ‘Golden Thread’: Love of and Connection to Place

Underlying the community engagement is a deep, deep love of place. Bar a few responses, the golden thread across the data is that the community wants to see Noosa Shire protected and thriving in line with what makes Noosa, ‘Noosa.’ The respondents seem to have a good grasp of what that means for the Shire: a protected and regenerated environment, affordable housing, unhindered mobility, the younger generation being able to stay in the region, supported by well-paying jobs, economic diversity with businesses flourishing in industries that bring more value-add to Noosa Shire, enjoyment of the region’s natural beauty, and a community that is socially connected, inclusive, and enjoys well-being, harmony and a sense of belonging.

The sentiment is that Noosans choose to live in the Shire precisely because it offers a particular lifestyle. Yet, it is being increasingly threatened with, ultimately, growth – in visitor numbers, population, and development. It seems this pursuit of growth goes against the community’s values. As a result, the data reflects a deep sense of disenfranchisement, apathy, frustration, nostalgia, and solastalgia for the environmental changes occurring in their home.

This is reflected by quotes such as:

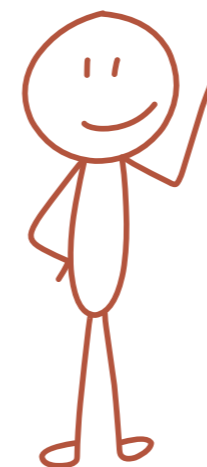
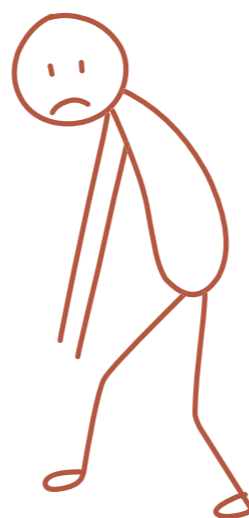
"One has to seriously question whether Noosa, its environment, natural heritage, iconic assets and laid-back lifestyle will be a casualty of its own success."

"Our street is now mainly used by strangers. Our part of Sunshine Beach is no longer the friendly, residential suburb it used to be. Many residents have moved away, and we now see neighbours occasionally, arriving for a weekend in their second homes."

"You feel helpless seeing critical habitat bulldozed like that, that I've been observing since I was 8, and I am 12 now. It's heartbreaking to see the habitat being destroyed. It's making me feel like I must fight more."

"Noosa is starting to lose its former, special, pristine, biosphere-type lifestyle and is gradually becoming an overcrowded resort."

"We used to see koalas in the National Park and had an amazing variety of wildlife all around us, virtually all gone - the possums, goannas, blue tongue lizards, pythons and various birds, even the spiders have disappeared. It is sad!"



On the other hand, many of today's residents discovered Noosa as a tourist themselves, thereby acknowledging the value of tourism to the Shire. Recognising the value of tourism is particularly evident amongst the tourism industry and the private sector.

The Noosa Chamber of Commerce's submission, which was supported by other participants, is relevant. It refers to the Biosphere Reserve's strategic objective of "contributing to building sustainable, healthy, and equitable societies, economies and thriving human settlements in harmony with the biosphere." Thus, the Chamber calls for honouring UNESCO's intended balanced approach to community, economy, and environment.

Notably, some business owners also state that tourism should not overshadow or impact business activity that is not tourism-focused, that is, construction, professional services, education, and health and aged care. Ultimately, the sentiment is that there needs to be more balance, with tourism tied to the community's well-being. This is reflected in these quotes:

"It will be important not to lose sight of the economic advantages of a thriving visitor economy."

"Tourism is a major economic driver in Noosa Shire and has flow-on effects throughout the economy. Any policies or actions detrimental to Noosa's small businesses could undermine Noosa's ability to remain an independent local council area."

"For the sake of residents, it is imperative that the Destination Management Plan ensures no economic shocks to local small businesses."

"Tourism is an important aspect of our Shire that provides employment and adds to character and vibrancy. However, it is growing out of control and negatively impacting residents' lifestyles, the fabric of our communities, and the environment."

## What's Working

The research explored the community's sentiment concerning tourism in Noosa Shire. Based on this, conclusions can be drawn about what's working and what needs improvement, with the former tied to positive community sentiment and the latter to negative sentiment.

Noosa Council's approach to addressing tourism concerns has garnered positive sentiments from the community. Participants appreciate Council's recognition of tourism concerns and its efforts to maintain Noosa's unique charm. One participant expressed, "I'm pleased Council is recognising the issues [associated with overtourism] and has commissioned this discussion document. I am supportive of the strategy behind it."

There is also positive sentiment towards environmental protection and sustainable practices. As noted, "Noosa Shire will attract a greater number of tourists who are interested in having an immersive experience and discovering more about the unique features of Noosa," highlighting the community's support for environmentally conscious tourism initiatives."

Several participants also expressed positive sentiment surrounding tourism's contributions to Noosa Shire. As stated, "Tourism is a major economic driver in Noosa Shire and has a ripple effect throughout the Noosa economy."

Moreover, the data shows a strong positive sentiment toward tourism's benefits to the local community, notably the variety of dining, recreation, and entertainment options. That said, some participants argue that the benefits of living in Noosa Shire result from the region and are divorced from any perceived benefits that tourism offers.

Finally, the Council's operational planning, infrastructure improvements, and commitment to community engagement have also been praised. The community welcomes better communication and transparency from the Council.

Overall, the key themes for what's working in Noosa Shire include:

- Waste management actions
- Council's operational planning and efforts towards better communication and transparency
- Infrastructure improvements, aesthetically pleasing nature-based tourist attractions, and well-maintained public spaces
- Cutting-edge environmental measures
- Free bus services

## What Needs Improvement

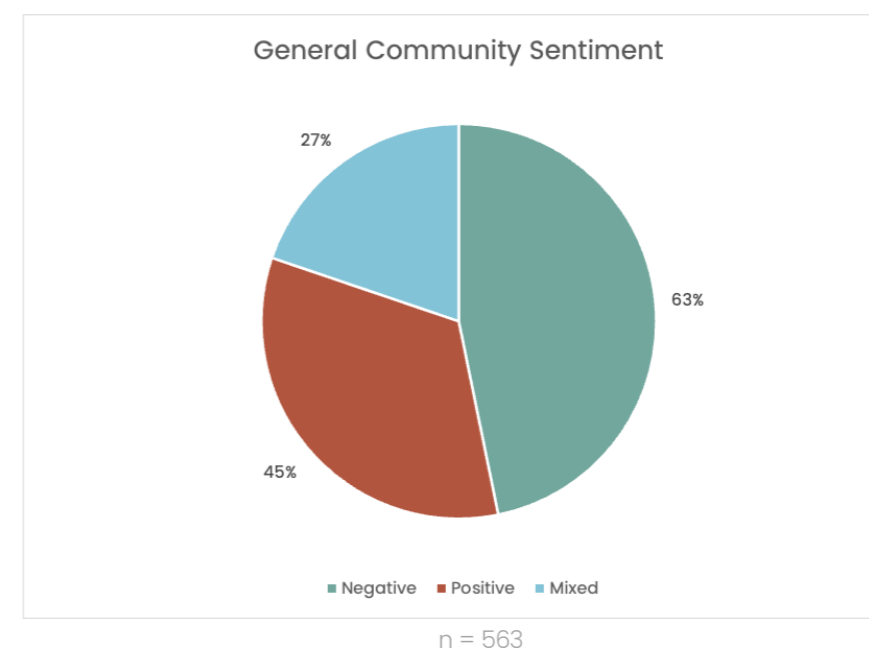
The sentiment analysis shows that negative sentiment features across most of the data. Most negative sentiment concerns

environmental impacts like habitat destruction and biodiversity loss, increased waste and pollution, and overdevelopment. Additionally, infrastructure strain is causing overcrowded roads, with traffic seeming "to get worse each day, even out of peak holiday periods." STAs are reducing the availability and affordability of long-term rentals for residents, and locals feel STAs are overtaking residential areas. There is a strong negative sentiment towards Tourism Noosa, particularly concerning the current funding model. As a result of the increased influx in tourism, participants feel their quality of life is severely diminished.

Some of the key issues that need addressing include:

- Stronger regulations for protecting natural habitats and managing waste
- Enhancing local transportation and managing traffic congestion
- Regulating STAs to ensure the availability of affordable housing
- Reevaluating the public funding model for Tourism Noosa
- Increased and genuine community participation in tourism planning and policy-making processes
- Limiting the number of events to ensure they do not disrupt residents

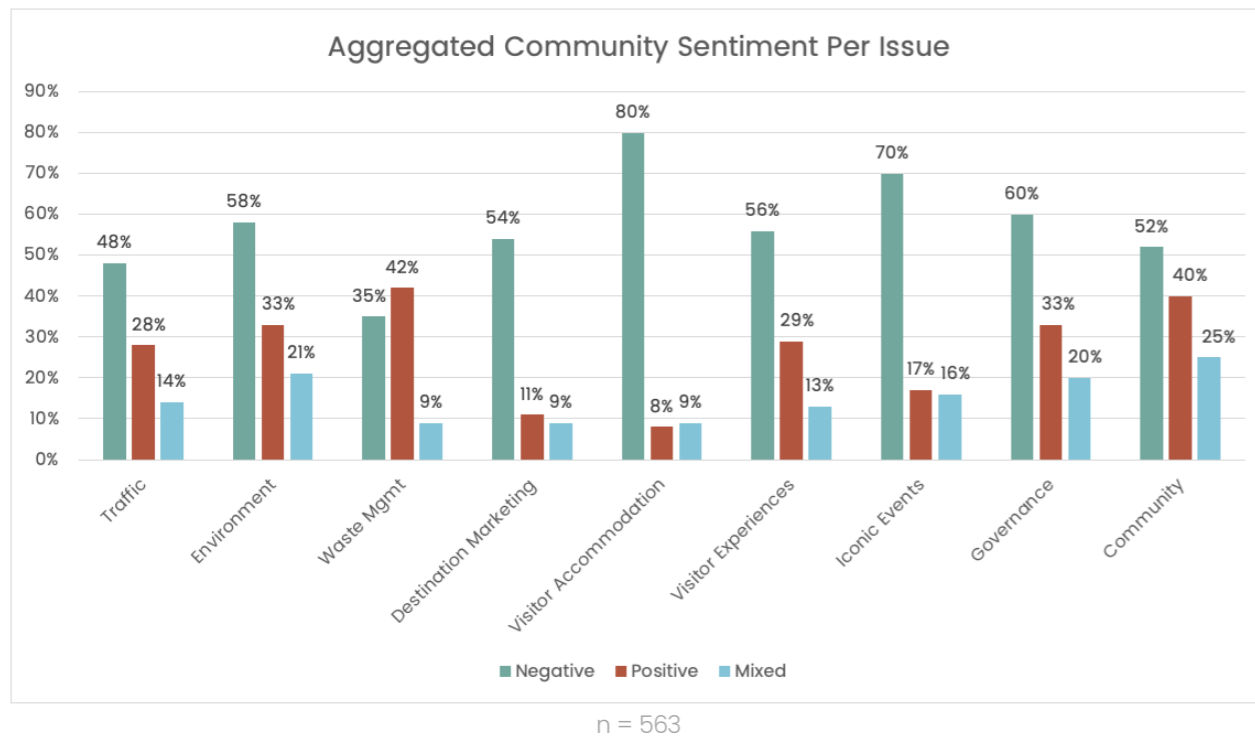
Overall, Figure 5 shows negative sentiment overshadows positive sentiment across the data.



**Figure 5.** General community sentiment across the data, measured by the number of participants whose statements reflected sentiment. Overall, 563 respondents expressed sentiment.

When analysing aggregated community sentiment per issue or 'parent theme', findings suggest a strong negative sentiment across each issue, as illustrated in Figure 6. Waste management is the only theme with a dominant positive sentiment, at 48%, indicating the community's support of current waste management policies.

Notably, visitor accommodation has a stark negative sentiment, with 82% of participants who expressed sentiment relevant to visitor accommodation expressing negative sentiment. Iconic events followed at 68%.



**Figure 6.** Aggregated community sentiment per issue. Percentages were calculated by dividing each sentiment by the total number of participants who expressed sentiment specific to each issue or 'parent theme'.

## Thematic Analysis

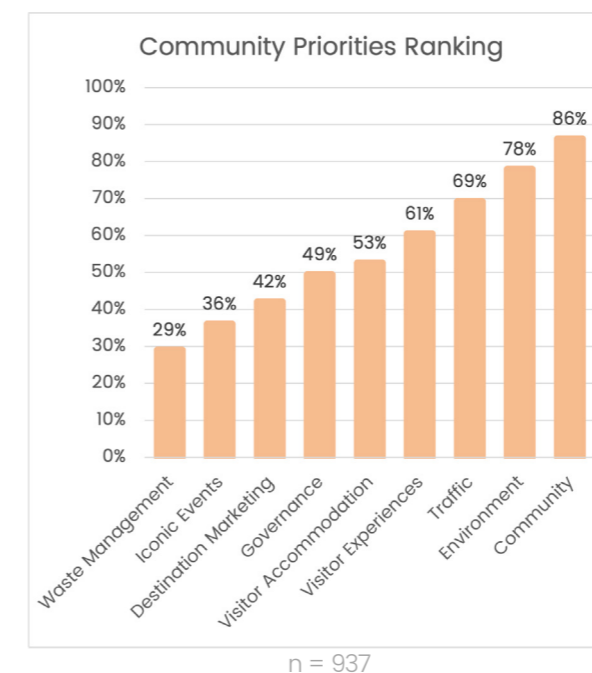
This section presents the thematic analysis findings for both the quantitative and qualitative data. The findings are segregated into three key sections for each issue or 'parent theme'.

1. Main sub-themes for each issue or 'parent theme' from the discussion paper. A 'Community' theme also emerged from the deep dive of the data analysis.
2. Opposition to dominant trends relevant to each issue or 'parent theme' and sub-themes within them. The sample size for opposition differs as some data points that only featured in the opposition theme were added to the original sample size.
3. Proposed actions per sub-themes, as extracted from the community engagement data.

Although some actions may not seem statistically significant, they have been included to maintain transparency in reporting findings and capture the diversity of community perspectives.

## Community priorities

The community ranks issues impacting the Shire in order of priority, as shown in Figure 7. The ranking was measured by the number of respondents who provided statements relevant to each issue or 'parent theme'. A percentage was calculated based on the total number of respondents for the whole dataset. For example, 730 individuals provided statements about the environment, representing 78% of the dataset. It is assumed that the recurrence of statements for each issue reflects how important it is for respondents.

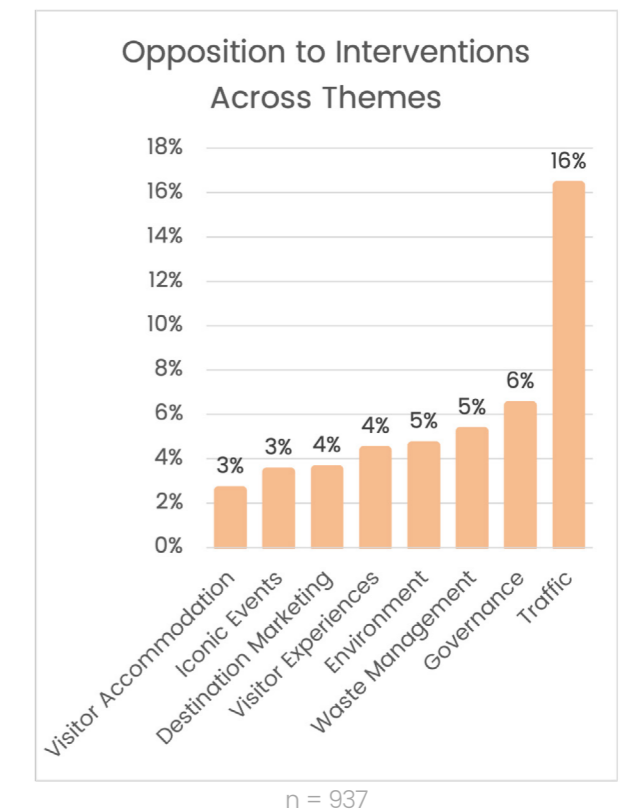


**Figure 7.** Community issues ranked in order of priority. Bars represent the number of respondents who provided statements relevant to each issue or 'parent theme'.

Notably, a small percentage of participants oppose interventions across the identified issues, as shown in Figure 8.

The percentage is calculated based on the total dataset, which is n = 937.

The findings section for each issue will further zoom into opposition results, where the percentage is calculated based on the total number of participants who gave statements relevant to each issue or 'parent theme'. In that sense, it will be a more accurate representation.



**Figure 8.** Community opposition ranked in number of priority. Bars represent the number of respondents who provided statements relevant to each issue.

## Community theme

The data analysis revealed statements that tie into a broader ‘Community’ theme, where the focus should be on locals living in Noosa Shire. This theme represented 86% of the total dataset.

Several sub-themes relevant to ‘Community’ emerged in the qualitative analysis, shown in Figure 9 below.

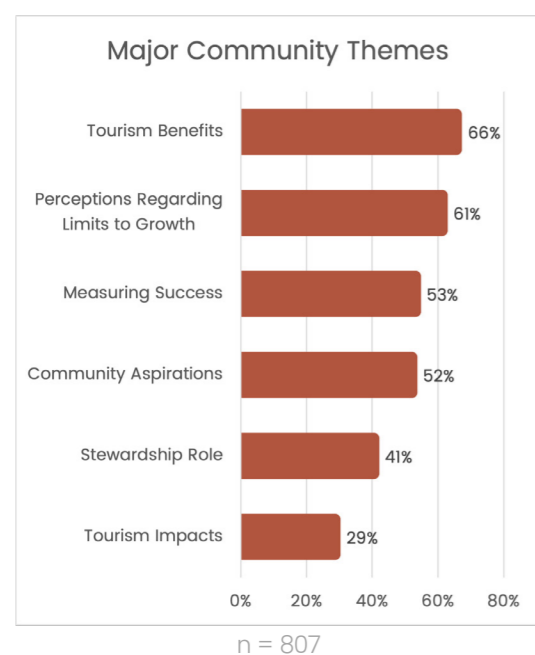


Figure 9. Major themes relevant to the broader community theme.

The sub-theme of tourism benefits was the strongest. It is important to note that this sub-theme reflects responses from a short survey question explicitly asking participants to describe the benefits of living in a tourism destination.

The tourism impacts sub-theme, which focuses on the adverse effects of tourism on the community, emerged organically from the data. That is, no specific questions were asked to detail tourism’s negative impacts on the community.

The following sections summarise the top four sub-themes for ‘Community’, breaking up each sub-theme at a more detailed level and presenting findings for each.

### Tourism benefits

Tourism in Noosa offers numerous benefits that are widely recognised by the community. Economically, it supports local businesses like restaurants, coffee shops, boutiques, and wellness spas, which many locals enjoy. Culturally, tourism helps preserve and celebrate Noosa’s unique history and indigenous heritage, enriching the local cultural landscape. Environmentally, it promotes the appreciation of natural assets such as beaches, national parks, and the hinterland. Recreationally, tourism provides diverse opportunities for activities like hiking, cycling, water sports, and enjoying the scenic beauty of natural areas, enhancing both residents’ and visitors’ quality of life.

Figure 10 shows that the major benefits the community enjoys from living in a tourism destination relate to recreation and entertainment, natural attractions and environmental appeal, and the variety and quality of restaurants, cafes, and pubs.

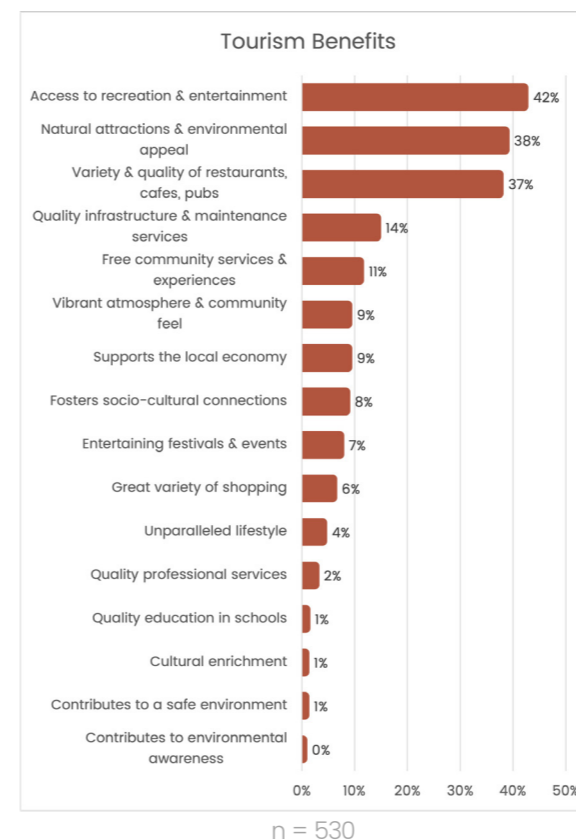


Figure 10. Major benefits from tourism enjoyed by the community, based on the number of respondents that provided statements relevant to tourism benefits.

Of importance to note is that 15% of respondents answered that they do not benefit from tourism, with many indicating they derive satisfaction from living in the Shire due to its natural environment, which exists independently of tourism.

In contrast, the community also highlights the adverse impacts of tourism. As shown in Figure 11, the top impacts concern the loss of amenity, lifestyle, liveability, mobility, and accessibility. This is followed by traffic congestion, overcrowding, and STAs negatively impacting residential neighbourhood areas.

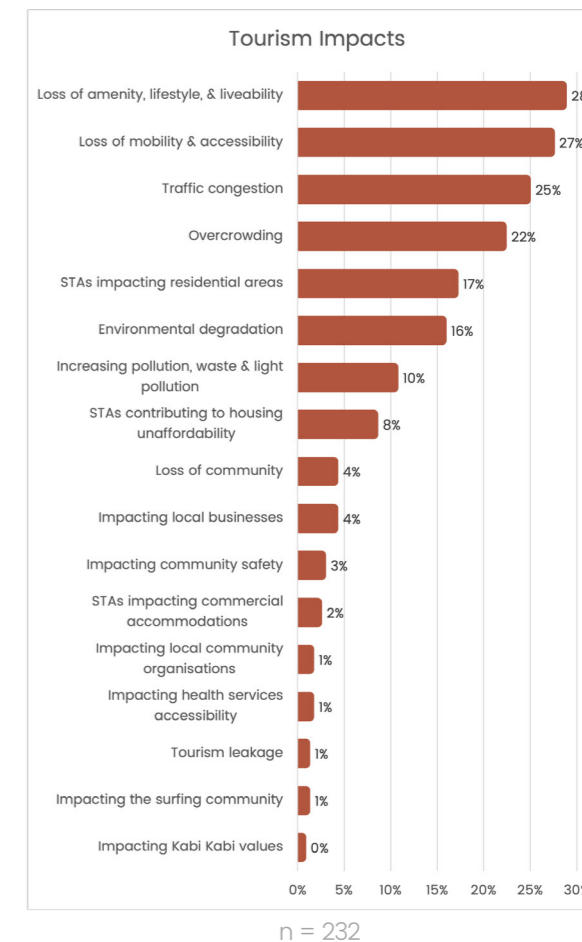


Figure 11. Major impacts from tourism on the community, based on the number of respondents that provided statements concerning tourism impacts.

### Perceptions regarding growth

There is a strong community desire to manage and control tourism and population growth in Noosa Shire, including limiting day visitors, resisting development in ecologically sensitive areas, opposing high-rise buildings, and reducing population growth. Environmental protection comes out as paramount, with a focus on preserving wildlife habitats and ensuring sustainable development. Community concerns include the impact of growth on local infrastructure and lifestyle, advocating for a balanced approach that prioritises environmental sustainability and aligns with community values.

### Measuring success

The data reflects the need for a balanced and holistic approach to tourism management in Noosa Shire. Participants call for detailed quantitative and qualitative analyses of tourism’s economic benefits and environmental costs, highlighting the importance of sustainable and regenerative tourism practices. They advocate for prioritising residential amenity, involving local stakeholders, and establishing clear metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact of tourism on the community and environment. Transparency and regular data collection are essential to ensure tourism benefits the local economy and preserves Noosa’s unique environment.

Participants also proposed several indicators against which to measure success as part of the ‘Measuring Success’ sub-theme. These have been grouped into additional sub-themes, as indicated by Figure 12.

The most popular indicators for measuring success are community satisfaction and sentiment, under which other similar themes can be grouped, such as resident well-being and happiness.

### Community aspirations

Community aspirations largely relate to prioritising residential amenity and environmental protection over tourism growth in Noosa Shire. Key points include

the community’s preference for local needs and safety, addressing uncontrolled traffic issues, and ensuring sustainable development that aligns with community values. Participants advocate for a balanced approach to tourism, emphasising the importance of community well-being, local stakeholder involvement, and preserving Noosa’s unique lifestyle and environment.

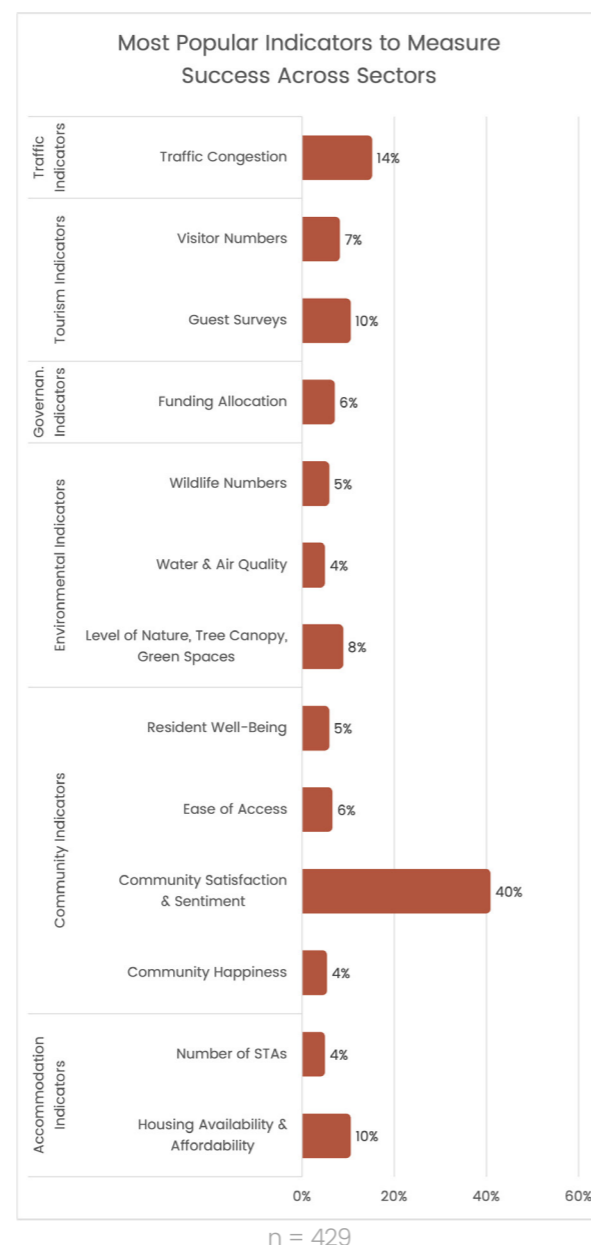


Figure 12. Proposed indicators to measure success across different areas in Noosa Shire.

Ultimately, the data reflects a strong sentiment towards limiting tourism’s negative impacts and prioritising long-term residents’ quality of life.

Overall, participants articulated different aspirations for Noosa Shire under each sub-theme relevant to the broader community theme, offering different ideas for actions to implement.

These are shown in Figure 13, with the top five being:

- Fewer visitors and reduced population growth
- Less development
- Measuring community indicators
- Being environmental custodians
- Putting community first and foremost

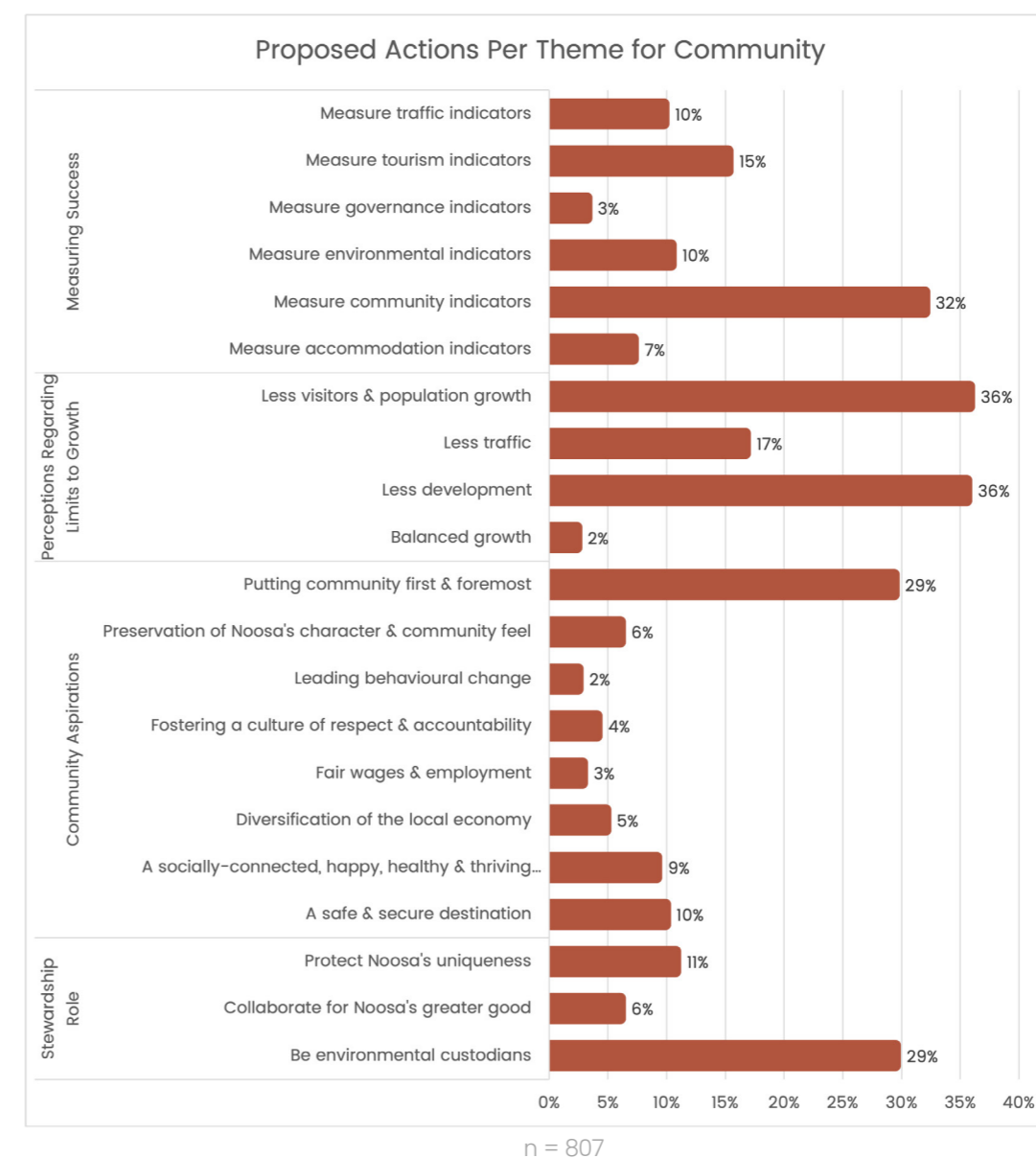


Figure 13. Community aspirations for each of the community sub-themes as indicated by the number of participants offering relevant statements.

## Environment

The 'Environment' issue was the second most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to the environment. Overall, 78% of the dataset contained statements relevant to the environment.

The analysis revealed major environmental sub-themes, shown in Figure 14. The top sub-theme was the protection and stewardship of the natural environment, followed by Noosa Council implementing environmental regulation, compliance and restrictions for development. The data also shows that participants expect Noosa Council to be a champion for both the natural environment and the local community.

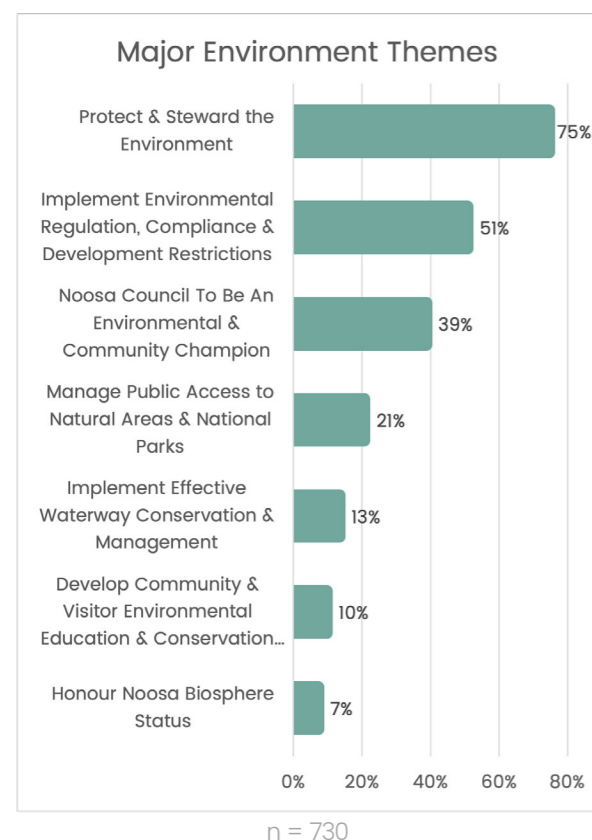


Figure 14. Major environment themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described below.

### *Protect and steward the environment*

This theme highlights the need for strategies that minimise environmental impacts. It calls for expanding programs like Land for Wildlife, bringing the Council's Net-Zero carbon emissions goal to all tourist events, accommodations, and large-scale development, and implementing effective waste management, such as linking waste with commercial operations that can utilise it. As outlined by UNESCO's Biosphere Reserve status, balancing community, economy, and environment is essential. Protecting and enhancing natural areas remains a central focus to maintain the unique environmental character of Noosa Shire.

### *Implement environmental regulation, compliance and development restrictions*

The sub-theme highlights the need for stringent regulations and community involvement in managing development in Noosa Shire. It points out concerns over excessive and inappropriate developments, illegal camping, and the pressure to open ecologically sensitive areas for tourism. Key points include the importance of sustainable design principles, protecting wildlife habitats, enhancing transparency in development approval processes, and ensuring developments provide net community and environmental benefits. Overall, the data reflects a strong community sentiment against unchecked

growth and emphasises preserving Noosa's unique environmental and community values.

### *Noosa Council to be an environmental and community champion*

Noosa Council is called to show strong leadership in promoting and implementing regenerative tourism. Key points include the transition from sustainable to regenerative tourism, which involves visitors contributing positively to the local community and environment. Participants highlight the need for clear definitions and standards for eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, and regenerative tourism to avoid misuse. They also stress the Council's role in supporting environmental initiatives. Ultimately, participants once again advocate for a holistic approach that balances tourism with environmental protection and community well-being.

### *Opposition to environmental interventions*

In contrast, a small number of participants oppose any environmental interventions. These are shown in Figure 15. Overall, 6% of participants who gave statements relevant to the environment issue oppose environmental interventions.

Specifically, they oppose limiting public access to natural areas, regulating the river, implementing booking systems in national parks, or making any further investments in the environment.

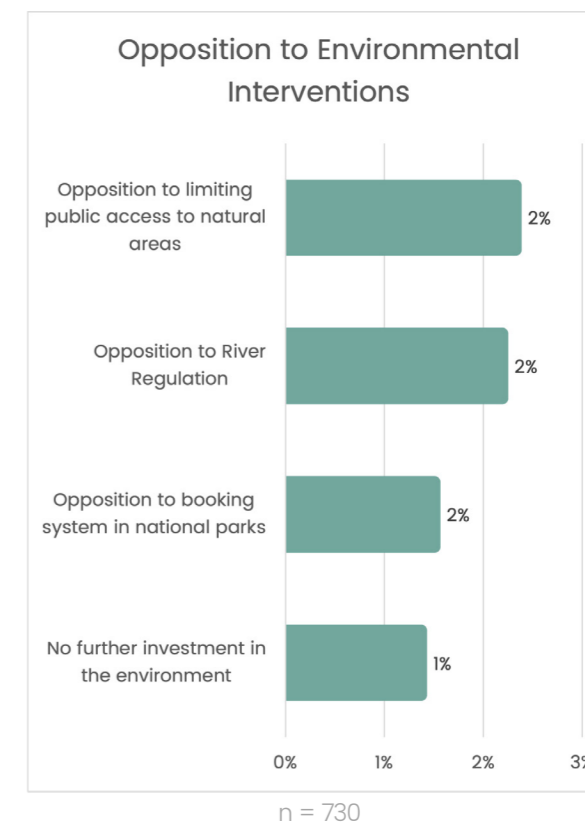


Figure 15. Opposition to environmental interventions. A total of 6% of participants within the environment theme indicated opposition.

### *Proposed environment actions*

Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each environment sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 16.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Implement initiatives and practices to safeguard Noosa's environment
- Restrict development and high-rise buildings
- Implement regenerative and sustainable tourism, making Noosa into a world-leading regenerative destination

- Improve the sustainability management of iconic locations
- Support for limiting public access to natural areas

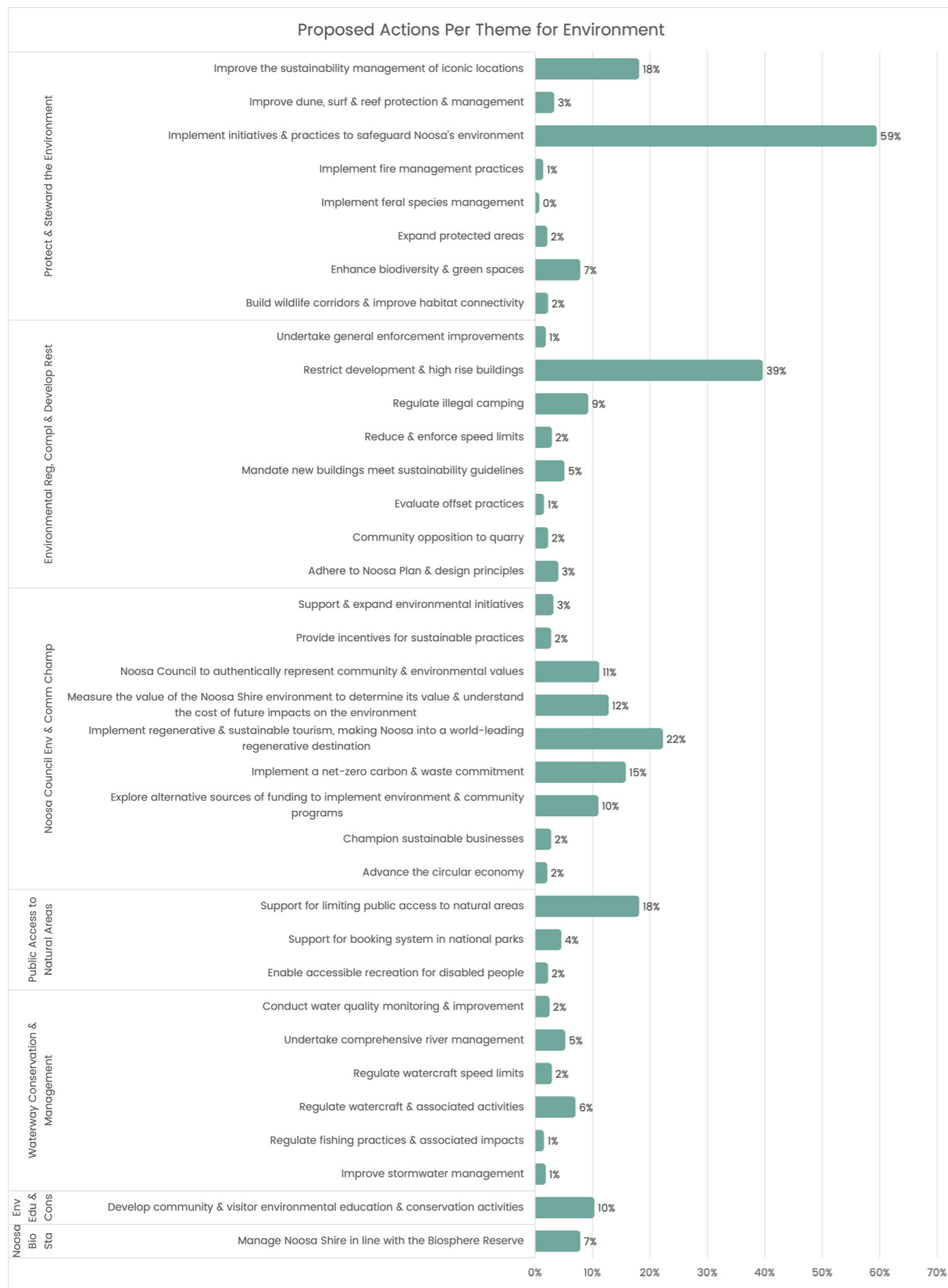


Figure 16. Proposed actions for environment theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to the environment.

## Traffic

The 'Traffic' issue was the third most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to traffic. Overall, 69% of the dataset contained statements relevant to traffic.

The analysis revealed major traffic sub-themes, shown in Figure 17. The top sub-theme was improving traffic and congestion management, followed by making transport infrastructure changes and introducing parking solutions. Improving public transport connectivity and service comes closely after.

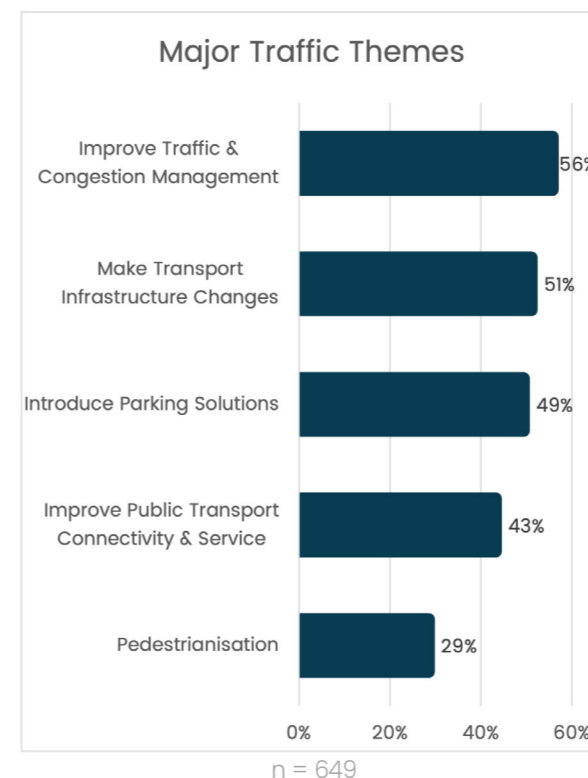


Figure 17. Major traffic themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described next.

## Improve traffic and congestion management

The sub-theme outlines strategies to address traffic congestion and enhance transportation efficiency in Noosa Shire. Key points include implementing vehicle recognition technology to restrict non-resident access to certain areas, promoting park-and-ride facilities, introducing one-way traffic flows, and congestion tolling for non-resident vehicles. It emphasises the need for better road network design, traffic calming structures, and public education on roundabout usage. The sub-theme also underscores the importance of balancing visitor access with maintaining local residents' quality of life and reducing environmental impacts.

## Make transport infrastructure changes

This sub-theme focuses on enhancing transportation and reducing congestion in Noosa Shire. Key suggestions include developing park-and-ride facilities at strategic locations, constructing tunnels and paths for safer and more efficient travel, and expanding cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. The emphasis is on limiting vehicle access to central areas, promoting the use of electric vehicles, and ensuring that open spaces are preserved for recreational use rather than parking. Implementing these measures aims to improve accessibility while maintaining Noosa's environmental integrity and reducing traffic impacts.

*Introduce parking solutions*

This sub-theme is around managing parking in Noosa Shire through a combination of paid and timed parking, particularly in high-demand areas like Hastings Street and Gympie Terrace. The sub-theme suggests implementing resident permits to exempt locals from fees, investing in park-and-ride systems, and addressing the challenges of parking congestion caused by tourists and large vehicles like boats and trailers. Revenue from parking fees and fines should be reinvested into traffic management and infrastructure improvements to enhance accessibility and alleviate congestion.

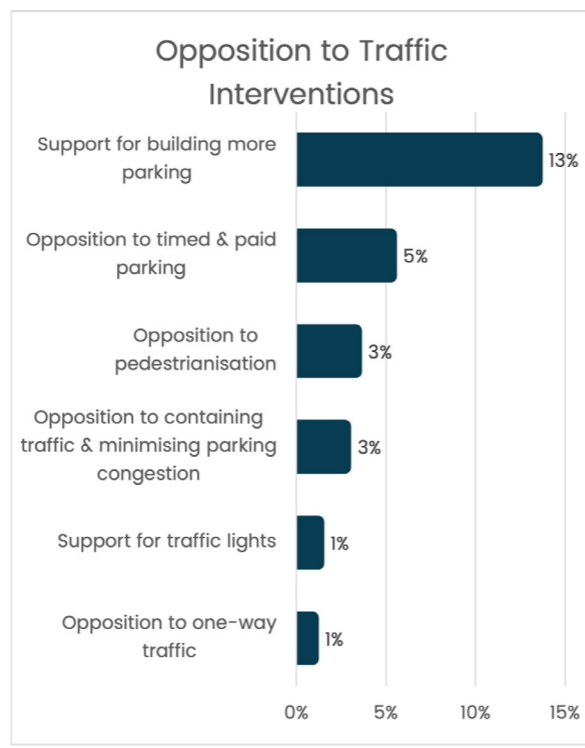
*Opposition to traffic interventions*

In contrast, a small number of participants oppose traffic interventions or indicate a preference for actions going against the dominant trends across the dataset. These are shown in Figure 18. Overall, 23% of participants who gave statements relevant to traffic oppose traffic interventions or propose solutions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they support building more parking and oppose timed and paid parking, and introducing pedestrianisation.

*Proposed traffic actions*

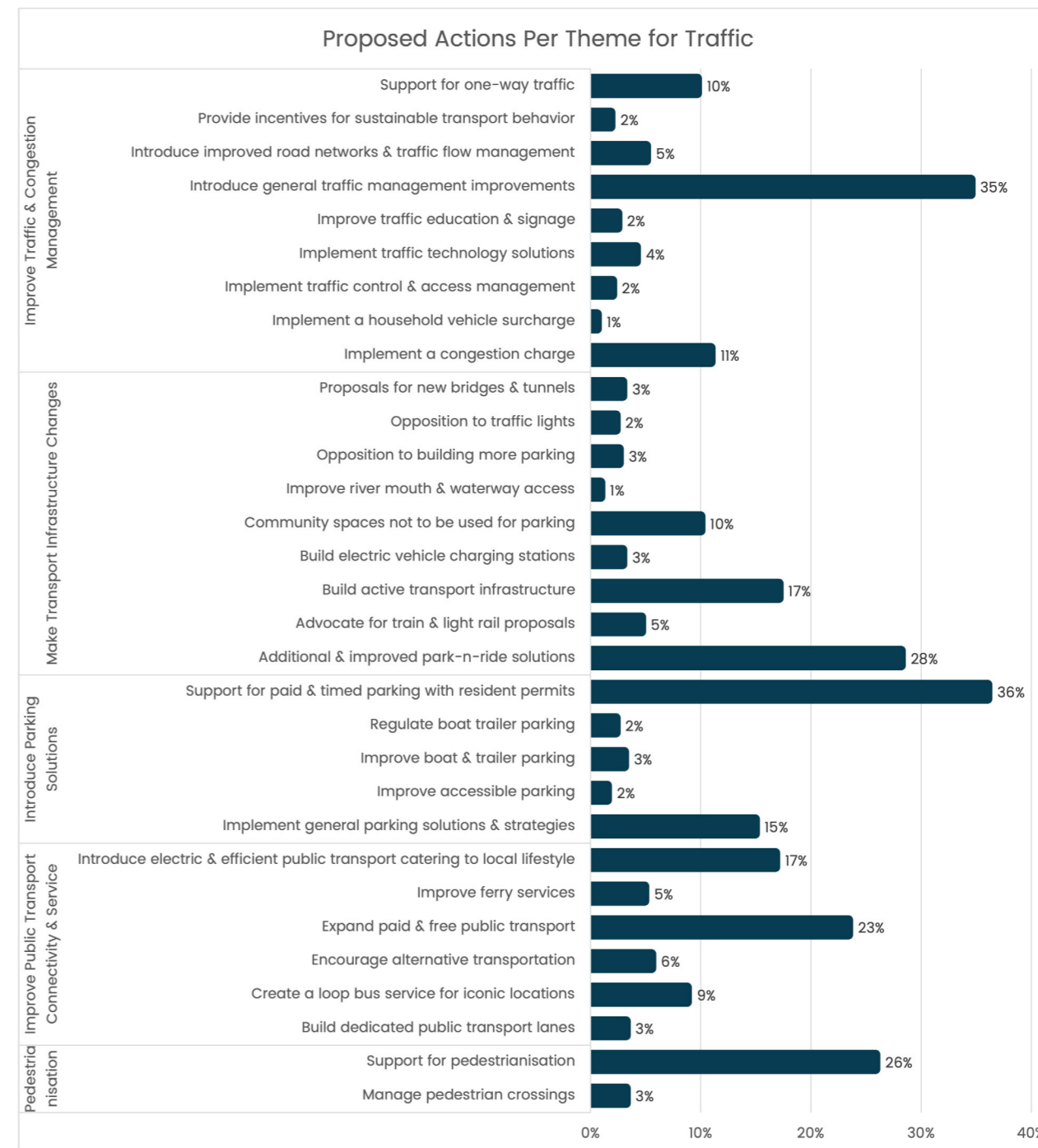
Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each traffic sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 19.



**Figure 18.** Opposition to traffic interventions. A total of 23% of participants within the traffic theme indicated opposition.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Implement paid and timed parking with resident permits
- Introduce general traffic management improvements
- Additional and improved park-n-ride solutions
- Support for pedestrianisation
- Expand paid and free public transport



**Figure 19.** Proposed actions for traffic theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to the traffic.

## Visitor Experiences

The 'Visitor Experiences' issue was the fourth most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to the visitor experience. Overall, 61% of the dataset reflected statements relevant to visitor experiences.

The analysis revealed major visitor experiences sub-themes, shown in Figure 20. The top sub-themes were regulation, compliance and tourism management, developing values-based tourism offerings, and improved infrastructure and facilities.

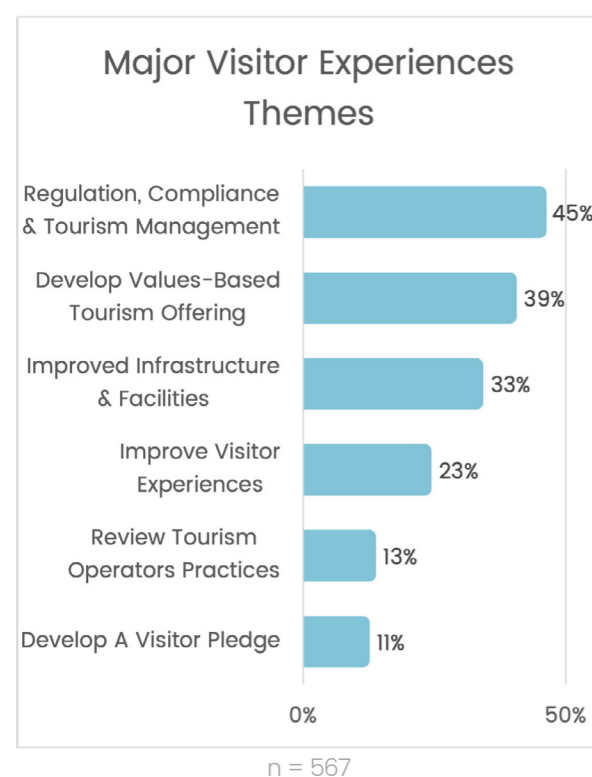


Figure 20. Major visitor experiences themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described next.

### Regulation, compliance and tourism management

This sub-theme concerns managing tourism in Noosa Shire with measures like caps on visitor numbers, booking systems, and fees for experiences. It advocates for reducing unregulated camping and vehicle access and phasing out inconsistent land use. Funds raised should enhance environmental maintenance. Sustainable tourism is emphasised, attracting eco-minded visitors and enforcing zero waste and emissions for operators. Key areas like Noosa North Shore should see reduced self-drive camping, limited vehicle access, and improved visitor safety and compliance to protect sensitive ecological areas.

### Develop values-based tourism offering

A better approach to tourism in Noosa would focus on extracting greater value from smaller tourist numbers by offering paid experiences and services aligned with community values, such as unique natural scenery, ecosystems, and Indigenous culture. There is a lack of alignment between tourism and community values and a need for better management of nature-based accommodations and experiences that minimise environmental impacts. Improving infrastructure to support eco-tourism and addressing the balance between resident amenity and tourism is essential. Strategies should emphasise sustainable tourism, cultural enrichment, and engagement with local Indigenous communities to enhance the

visitor experience while preserving Noosa's unique environment and lifestyle.

### Improved infrastructure and facilities

This sub-theme pertains to the need for improved public facilities and infrastructure in Noosa Shire. The feedback shows concerns about the state and maintenance of public amenities such as toilets, parks, playgrounds, and roads. Frequent suggestions include upgrading and increasing the number of public toilets, enhancing playground surfaces for children's safety, maintaining the cleanliness of streets and amenities, providing better connectivity and parking options, and ensuring amenities cater to both residents and tourists. The feedback also emphasises the importance of creating community hubs and spaces that support local residents while accommodating the influx of visitors.

### Opposition to visitor experience interventions

In contrast, a small number of participants oppose visitor experience interventions. These are shown in Figure 21. Overall, 7% of participants who gave statements relevant to visitor experiences oppose visitor experience interventions or prefer solutions going against the dominant trend.

Specifically, they oppose limiting public access to natural areas, regulating new business, or introducing a booking system in national parks.

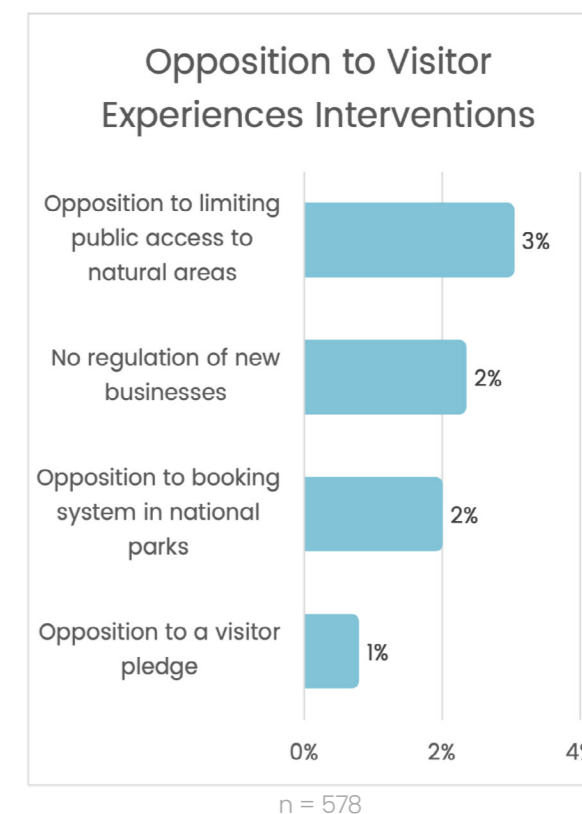


Figure 21. Opposition to visitor experiences interventions. A total of 7% of participants within the visitor experiences theme indicated opposition.

### Proposed visitor experience actions

Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each visitor experiences sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 22.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Develop community-first, place-based tourism experiences
- Improve and maintain current infrastructure
- Continue to ensure new businesses meet planning requirements

- Develop a carrying capacity model to determine the best use of tourism infrastructure, experiences and services
- Support for a booking system in national parks

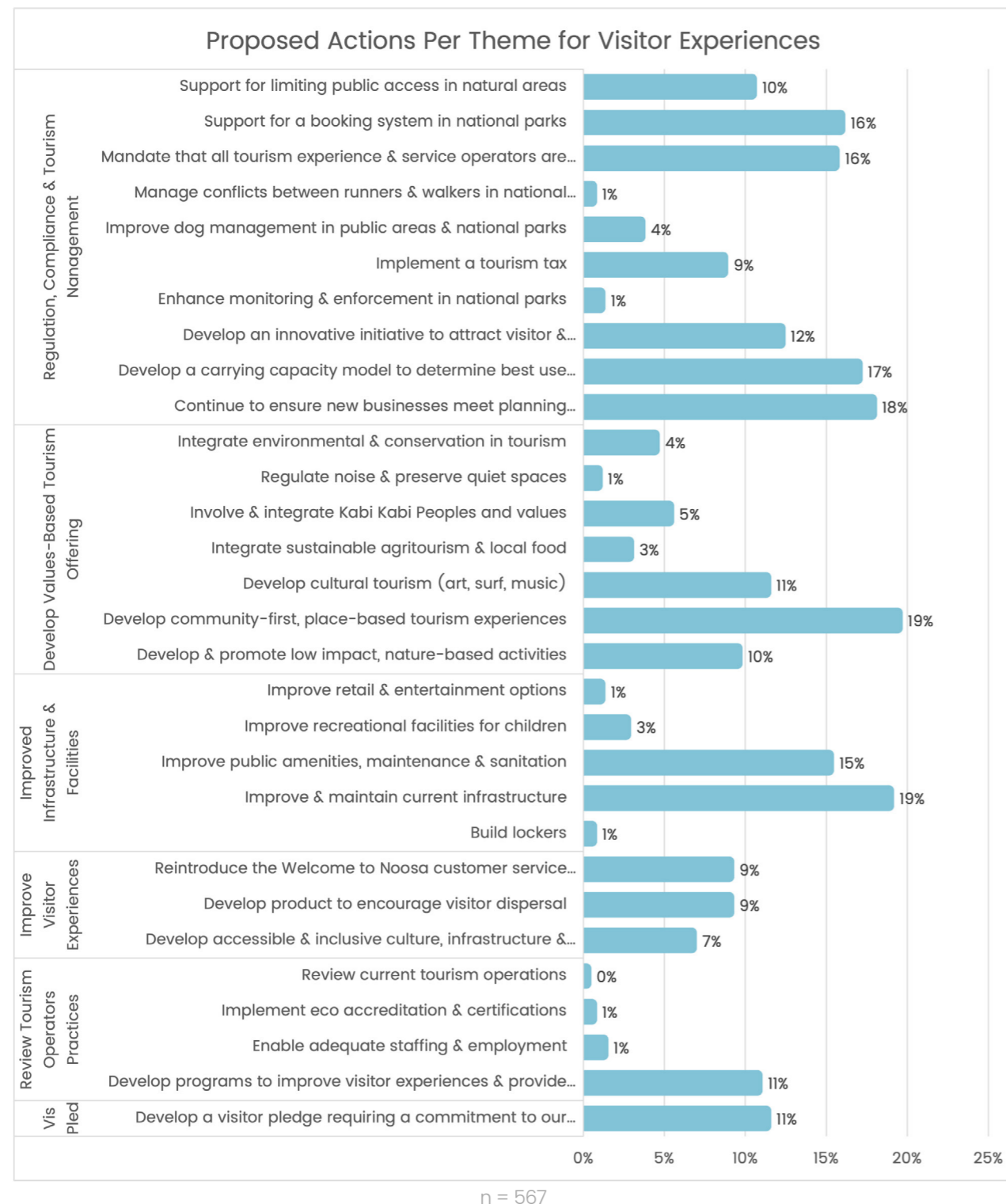


Figure 22. Proposed actions for visitor experiences theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to visitor experiences.

## Visitor Accommodation

The 'Visitor Accommodation' issue was the fifth most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to visitor accommodation. Overall, 53% of the dataset contained visitor accommodation references.

The analysis revealed major visitor accommodation sub-themes, shown in Figure 23. The top sub-themes were policies and regulations related to STAs and other dwellings, affordable housing, and commercial accommodation.

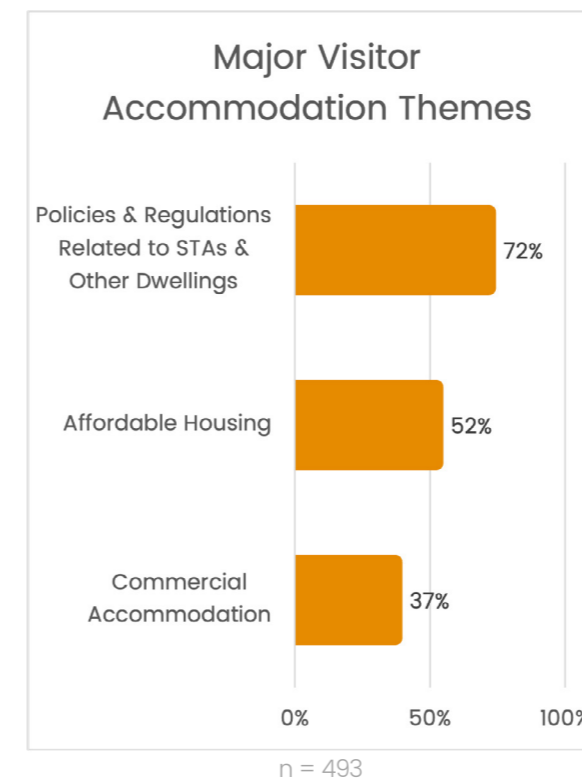


Figure 23. Major visitor accommodation themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described next.

### Policies and regulations related to STAs and other dwellings

The various submissions and surveys highlight several key concerns and recommendations regarding STAs in Noosa Shire. There is a strong sentiment against the proliferation of STAs in residential areas due to their negative impact on housing affordability, community cohesion, and local amenities. Many submissions advocate for stricter regulations, including placing caps on the number of STA properties, restricting STAs to specific zones, and requiring permits that do not transfer automatically upon property sale. Additionally, there is support for increased penalties for violations and incentives for property owners to return STAs to long-term rentals. The feedback also suggests leveraging higher fees and taxes on STAs to manage their impact and support the local community.

### Affordable Housing

The data highlights a critical issue in Noosa: the lack of affordable housing for workers in the tourism industry. This shortage forces many workers to live far from their workplaces, exacerbating traffic, parking, and emissions problems. The primary causes include high land values, insufficient rental accommodation, and a rise in short-term accommodation demand. Proposals to address this include developing affordable worker housing in central locations, rezoning land for residential use, and implementing programs like Moreton Bay Council's

initiative to release public land for social and affordable housing. Stakeholders emphasise innovative, sustainable housing solutions and the need for supportive policies to ensure workers can live near their jobs.

*Commercial accommodation*

The data reflects diverse perspectives on accommodation development in Noosa. There is a strong push for eco-friendly and nature-based accommodations, especially in the hinterland, to disperse tourists from central areas and alleviate the strain on popular sites. Proposals include adopting the Tasmanian model of nature-based accommodation to boost local industries and using revenue to enhance trail environments. Support for high-end tourist accommodations is also prevalent, with an emphasis on aligning with the 'value over volume' policy to attract high-spending visitors. Many emphasise the need for accessible, inclusive, and modernised accommodation facilities that adhere to zero-emission and zero-waste practices.

*Opposition to visitor accommodation interventions*

In contrast, a few participants oppose visitor accommodation interventions. These are shown in Figure 24. Overall, 5% of participants who gave statements relevant to visitor accommodation oppose visitor accommodation interventions or indicate a preference for actions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they oppose restrictions on STAs and any regulation of the accommodation sector.

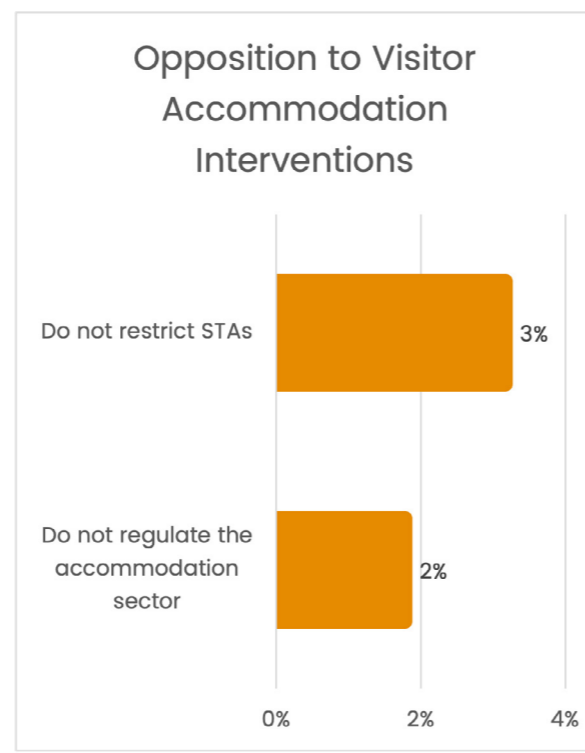


Figure 24. Opposition to visitor accommodation interventions. A total of 5% of participants within the visitor accommodation theme indicated opposition.

*Proposed visitor accommodations actions*

Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each visitor accommodation sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 25.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Build affordable housing for workers and locals
- Restrict STAs in residential zones

- Improve STAs management and compliance with local laws
- Build new commercial accommodation
- Integrate sustainability in accommodation

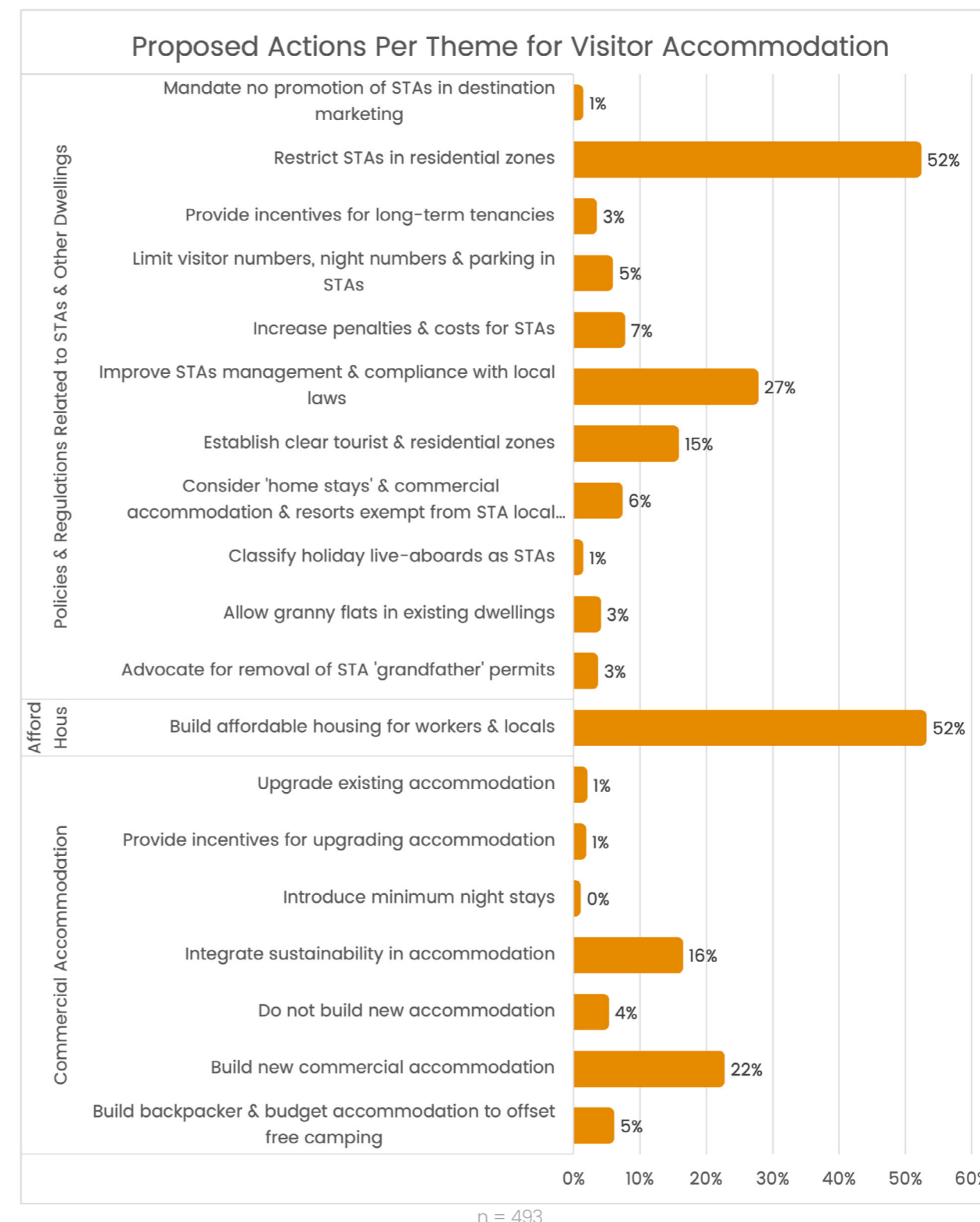


Figure 25. Proposed actions for visitor accommodation theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to visitor accommodation.

## Governance

The 'Governance' issue was the sixth most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to governance. Overall, 49% of the dataset contained governance references.

The analysis revealed major governance sub-themes, shown in Figure 26. The top sub-themes were community engagement and values, Council operations, and Council leadership.

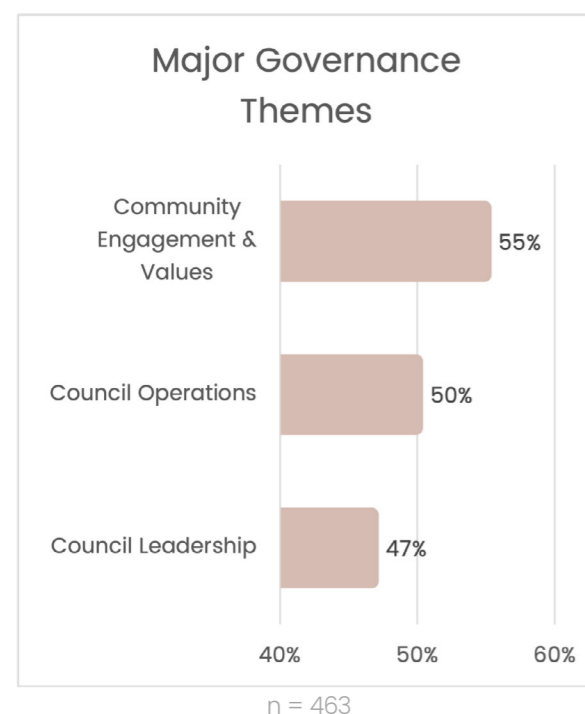


Figure 26. Major governance themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described below.

### Community engagement and values

Community engagement in Noosa's tourism development is a key concern across various submissions. Many participants highlight the need for

greater consultation and transparency in planning, ensuring that tourism benefits the community without compromising environmental values. Suggestions include early notification of council initiatives, careful consideration of visitor accommodations on rural land, and improved communication with the Kabi Kabi community. There is a call for involving locals in decision-making processes, regular feedback collection, and addressing concerns through ongoing dialogue. Ensuring that development aligns with community values and maintaining the unique environmental character of Noosa are recurring themes.

### Council operations

The dataset reflects concerns about the effectiveness and transparency of council-funded programs like Plastic Free Noosa and Trees for Tourism, questioning whether they serve more as marketing tools than impactful sustainability initiatives. There's scepticism about the ability of Noosa's Green Travel programs to engage visitors meaningfully in sustainability efforts, with locals bearing the brunt of conservation work. Environmental degradation due to increased tourism and population growth is a pressing issue, with calls for stricter management and regulation. Additionally, there's a demand for greater transparency and accountability in how tourism funds are allocated and managed, with criticisms of the influence and operational model of Tourism Noosa.

### Council leadership

Concerns about council leadership highlight the need for effective implementation of initiatives, as mere exploration and measurement without action are seen as futile. Submissions urge the council to exhibit courageous leadership, particularly in educating and preparing the community for change. There is a call for transparent communication regarding infrastructure needs and policies, emphasising the importance of a detailed operational plan. Feedback also stresses the necessity for proactive and transformational leadership, with suggestions to adopt innovative, radical measures to manage environmental and tourism-related challenges. The community demands accountability and bold decision-making to ensure Noosa remains a desirable place to live and visit.

### Opposition to governance interventions

In contrast, a few participants oppose governance interventions. These are shown in Figure 27. Overall, 12% of participants who gave statements relevant to governance oppose governance interventions or indicate a preference for actions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they would like to see minimised Council interference across Noosa Shire.

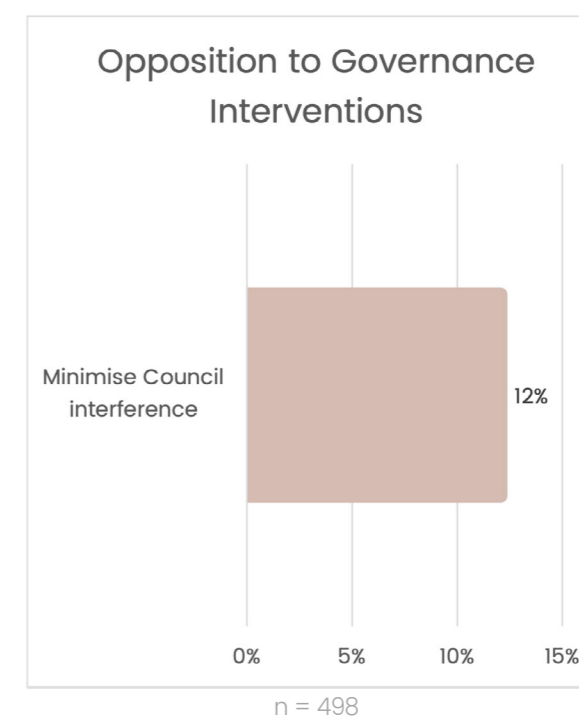


Figure 27. Opposition to governance interventions. A total of 12% of participants within the governance theme indicated opposition.

### Proposed governance actions

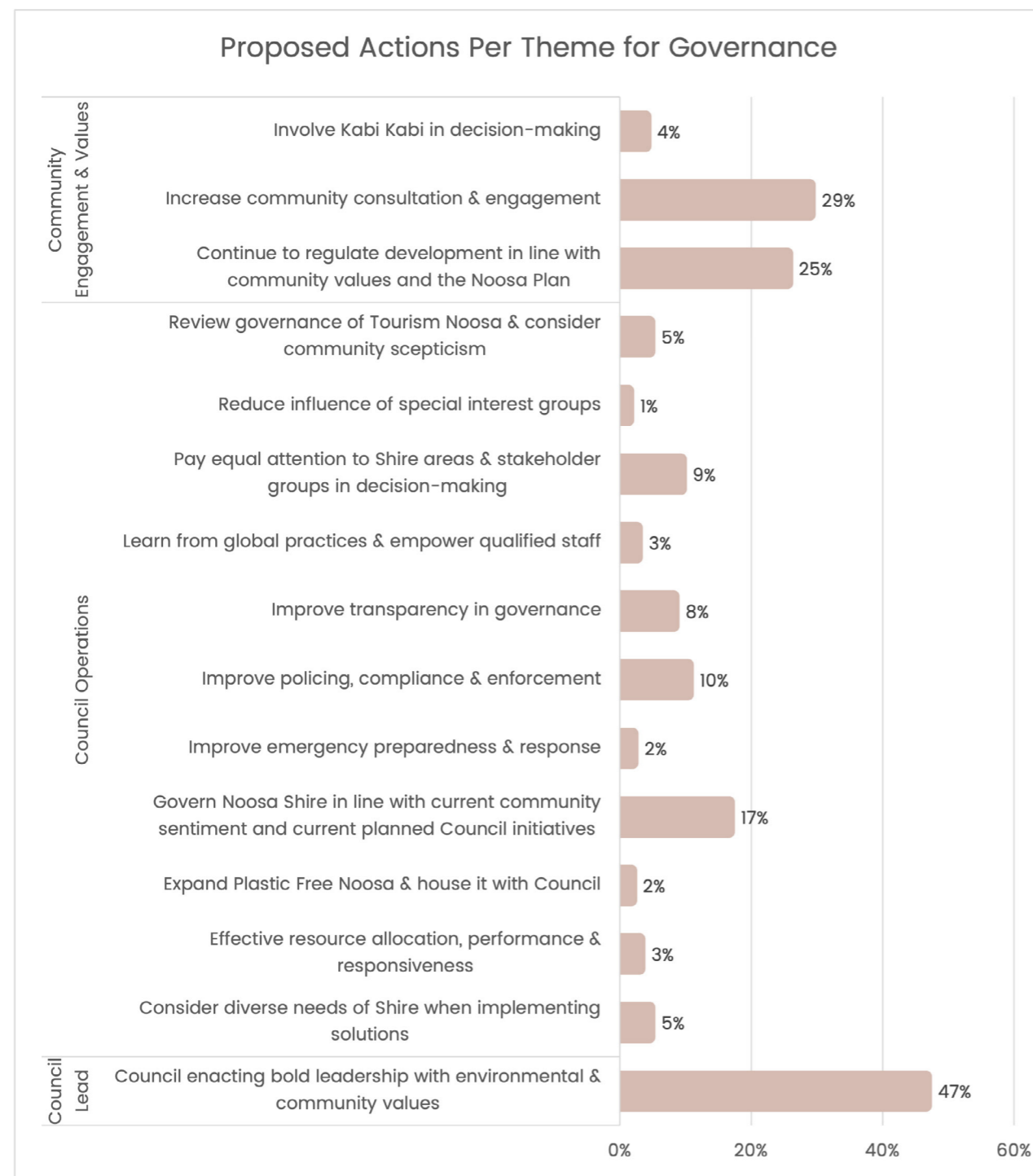
Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each governance sub-theme, as proposed by participants.

These are shown in Figure 28.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Council enacting bold leadership with environmental and community values
- Increase community consultation and engagement
- Continue to regulate development in line with community values and the Noosa Plan

- Govern Noosa Shire in line with current community sentiment and current planned Council initiatives
- Improve policing, compliance and enforcement

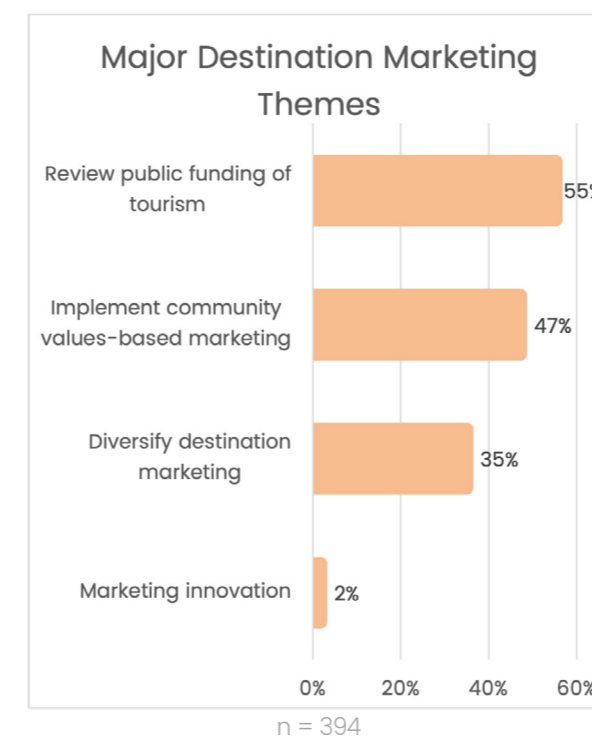


**Figure 28.** Proposed actions for governance theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to governance.

## Destination Marketing

The 'Destination Marketing' issue was the seventh most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to destination marketing. Overall, 42% of the dataset contained destination marketing references.

The analysis revealed major destination marketing sub-themes, shown in Figure 29. The top sub-themes were to review public funding of tourism, implement community values-based marketing, and diversify destination marketing.



**Figure 29.** Major destination marketing themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described next.

### Review public funding of tourism

The discussion on public funding of tourism reveals a strong sentiment among participants against the current level of financial support for destination marketing. Many argue that Noosa, being a well-established and iconic destination, no longer requires extensive marketing. Concerns are raised about ratepayer money being used to fund Tourism Noosa, which is seen as benefiting businesses more than the community. Participants express a preference for redirecting funds to local infrastructure and environmental initiatives, suggesting that tourism should be self-funded through business levies rather than general rates. There is a call for a review of this funding approach, with suggestions for reduced marketing efforts and more sustainable tourism practices.

### Implement community values-based marketing

This sub-theme reflects the importance of aligning tourism marketing with the core values of the Noosa community. This includes promoting environmental stewardship, sustainability, and respecting local culture and heritage. Marketing should reflect the region's commitment to protecting its unique environment and realistically depict the visitor experience, avoiding misleading portrayals. The focus should be on attracting visitors who share these values and educating them on responsible behaviour. The goal is to foster a tourism model that prioritises quality over quantity, ensuring that visitors leave Noosa in a better state than they found it.

*Diversify destination marketing*

There is a need to shift towards value-driven tourism. Emphasis should be on attracting high-value, longer-staying visitors rather than day trippers, which would help alleviate overcrowding and environmental strain. Marketing strategies should include promoting diverse experiences beyond iconic beach locations, such as the hinterland, cultural events, and local small businesses. This approach aligns with prioritising value over volume, ensuring that tourism supports the local economy while preserving Noosa's unique environment.

*Opposition to destination marketing interventions*

In contrast, a few participants oppose destination marketing interventions. These are shown in Figure 30. Overall, 8% of participants who gave statements relevant to destination marketing oppose interventions in destination marketing or indicate a preference for actions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they would like the current level of public funding for destination marketing to be maintained, as well as the current level of marketing in general.

Additionally, they would like to see Council communicate the visitor economy's value to locals to a more extensive extent.

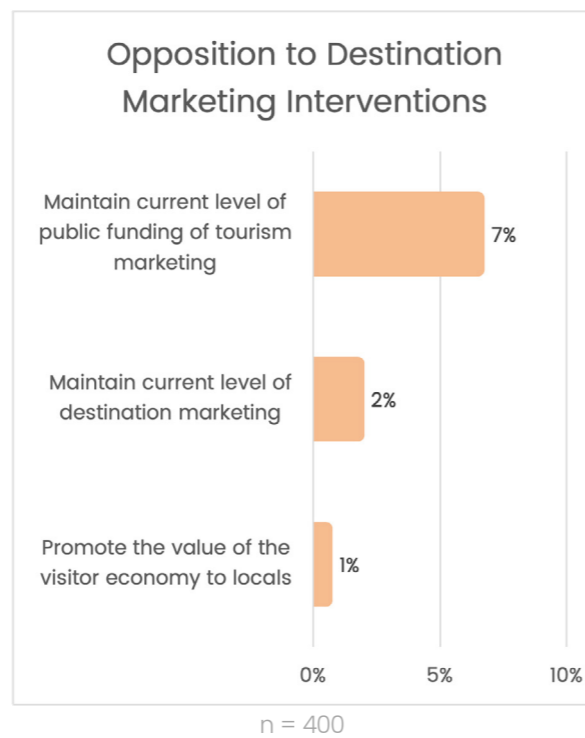


Figure 30. Opposition to destination marketing interventions. A total of 8% of participants within the destination marketing theme indicated opposition.

*Proposed destination marketing actions*

The thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each destination marketing sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 31.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Marketing based on sustainability, culture, and community values
- Stop promoting Noosa Shire to all visitors
- Stop public funding of tourism
- Focus marketing efforts on high-value visitors
- Equitable marketing of all Noosa Shire

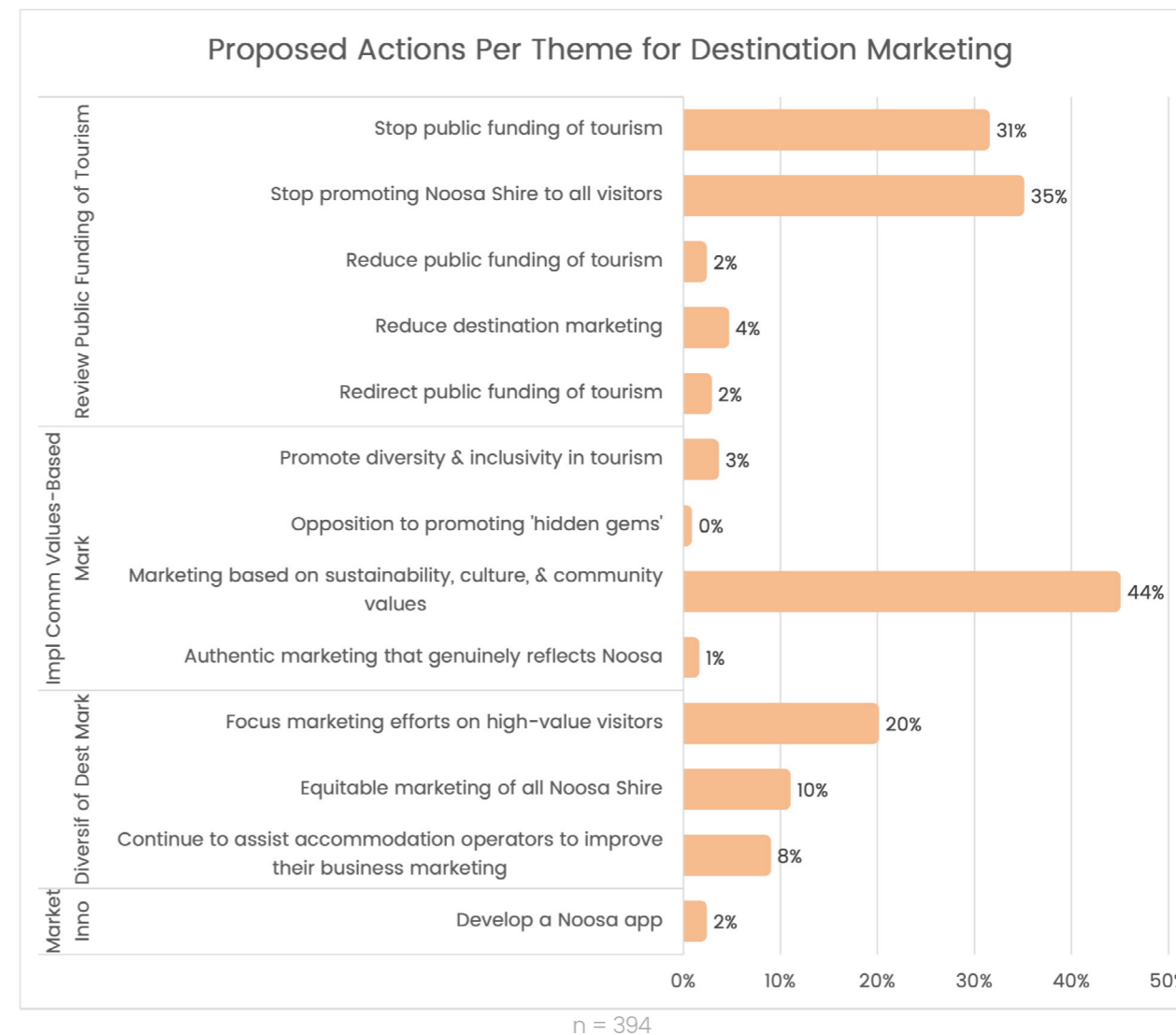


Figure 31. Proposed actions for destination marketing theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to destination marketing.

## Iconic Events

The 'Iconic Events' issue was the eighth most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to iconic events. Overall, 36% of the dataset contained references related to iconic events.

The analysis revealed major iconic events sub-themes, shown in Figure 32. The top sub-themes relate to the level, dispersal and type of events, events planning, permits and regulations, and building and improving event infrastructure.

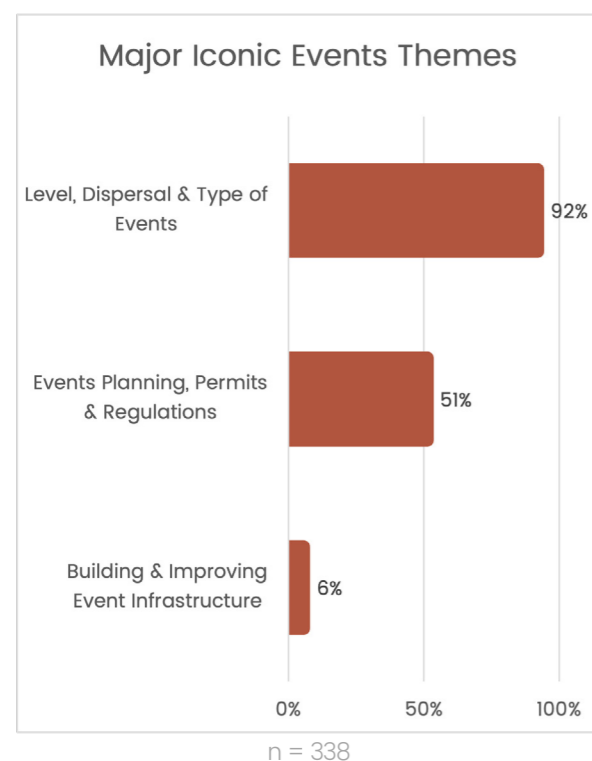


Figure 32. Major iconic events themes emerging from the data analysis.

These sub-themes are described below.

### Level, dispersal, and type of events

There is a need to cap or reduce the number of iconic events and align them

with Noosa's environmental and heritage values. There is a strong sentiment to limit large-scale events, ensure they provide tangible benefits to Noosa beyond economic gains, and better promote smaller, local events, especially in the hinterland. Suggestions include creating a centralised platform for event information, developing events that highlight local produce and culture, and replacing existing iconic events with those that align better with Noosa's values. Concerns about the environmental impact and community fatigue from frequent events, along with calls for events to demonstrate community and environmental benefits, are also prevalent.

### Events planning, permits and regulations

There is a strong call for community input on event impacts, particularly through digital questionnaires. There is a call for ensuring events generate adequate income for Noosa and maximise business benefits while minimising negative impacts. Recommendations include strict criteria for events, especially regarding road closures and infrastructure setup times, with a preference for events not held during peak seasons. There is a strong push for iconic events to be zero emissions or carbon neutral and to replace traditional fireworks with drones. Events using Noosa's natural assets should contribute significantly to a user-pays system, and permits should prioritise alignment with Noosa Shire's character and regenerative tourism plans.

### Building and improving event infrastructure

There is a call for cultural and event venues. Suggestions include consulting the Kabi Kabi People for cultural sites, establishing a world-class cultural precinct anchored by the Noosa Regional Gallery, and building a large multipurpose undercover area for various events. Proposals also emphasise the need for a proper convention centre to attract wealthy visitors and host significant events, such as a 1,500-seat convention and entertainment centre. There are calls for a beachfront music festival, improving the Noosa Triathlon course, creating an Indigenous education centre, and building a new art gallery to boost Noosa's cultural reputation.

### Opposition to iconic events interventions

In contrast, a small number of participants oppose iconic events interventions. These are shown in Figure 33.

Overall, 9% of participants who gave statements relevant to iconic events oppose iconic events interventions or indicate a preference for actions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they oppose limiting events on Main Beach and dispersing events. They would also like to see current iconic events maintained.

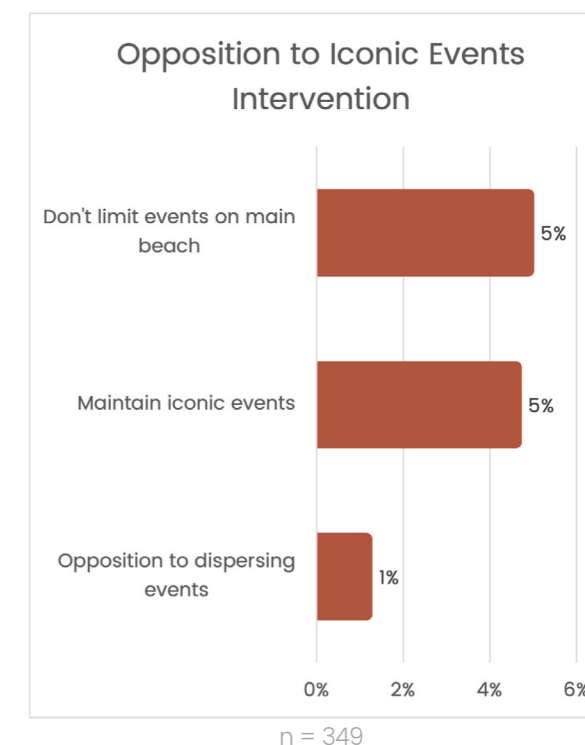


Figure 33. Opposition to iconic events interventions. A total of 9% of participants within the iconic events theme indicated opposition.

### Proposed iconic events actions

Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each iconic events sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 34.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Cancel, reduce or cap event numbers, duration or participants
- Align events with community benefits and local values
- Stricter limits on road closures and event infrastructure impacting community access and movement

- Ensure iconic events are not held during peak season
- Diversify and expand cultural, affordable community events

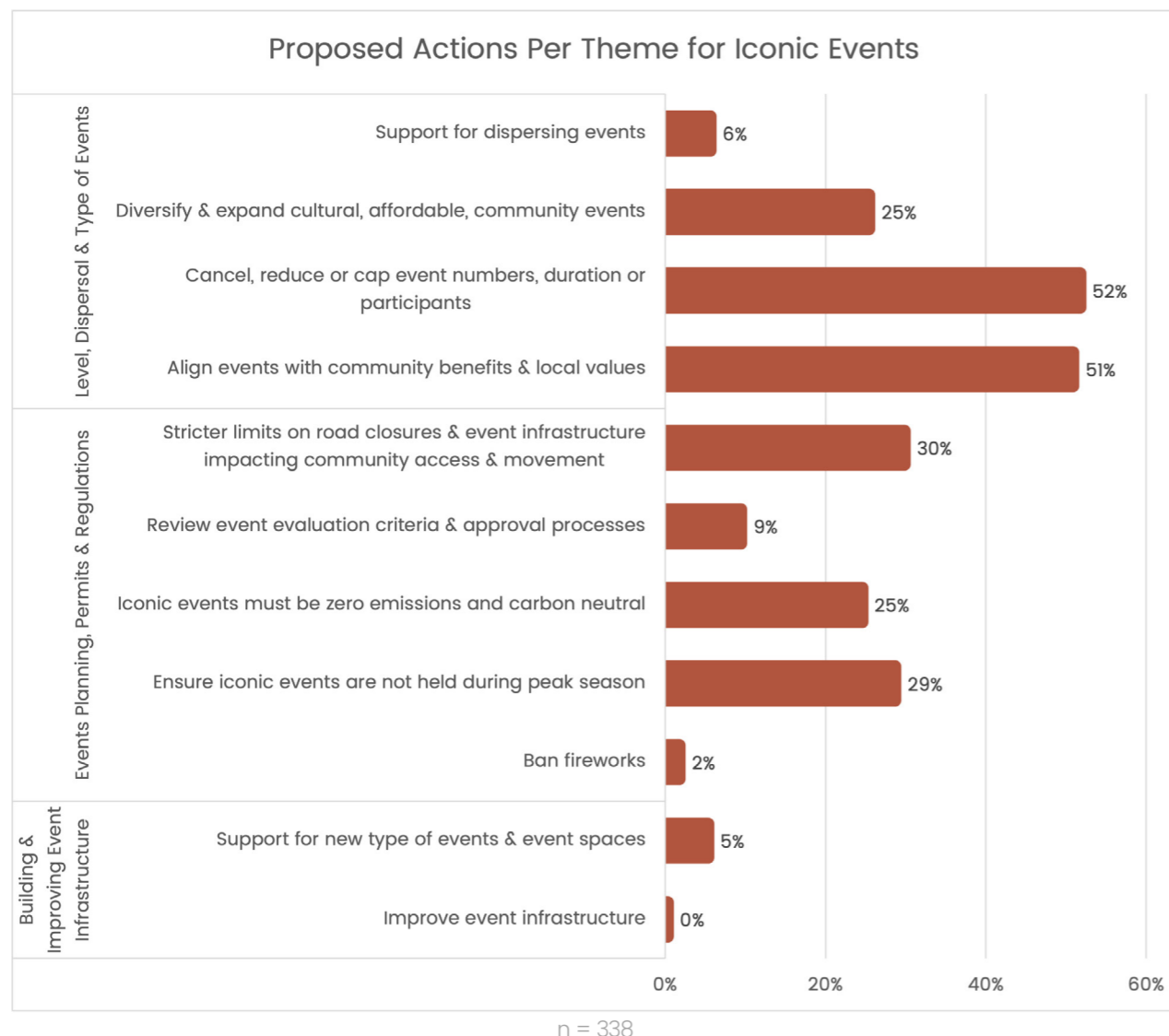


Figure 34. Proposed actions for iconic events theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to iconic events.

## Waste Management

The 'Waste Management' issue was the final most important parent theme emerging from the data analysis, measured based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to waste management. Overall, 29% of the dataset contained references related to waste management.

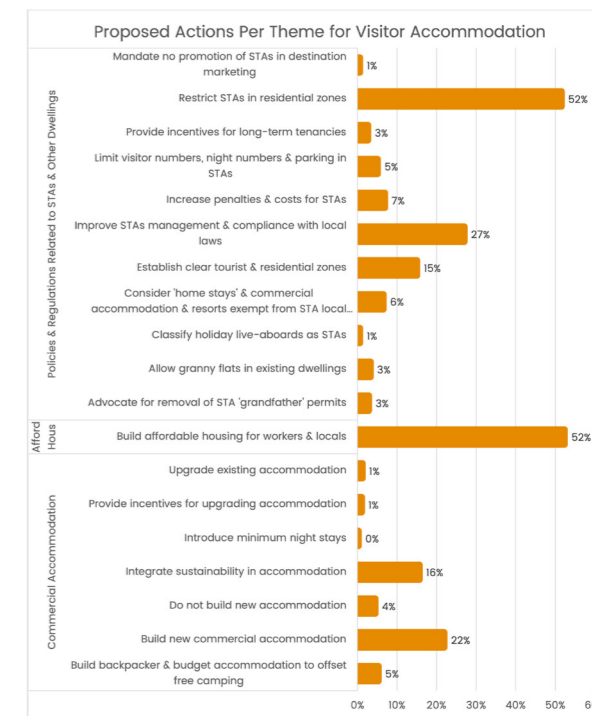
This low percentage suggests that, in general, waste management is going well in the Shire. This assumption is also supported by the community sentiment findings, where waste management was the only one with a dominant positive sentiment.

The analysis revealed major waste management sub-themes, shown in Figure 35. The top sub-themes relate to reducing waste and improving recycling, changing waste behaviour, and modifying waste collection streams.

These sub-themes are described below.

### Reduce waste and improve recycling

There is a need to enhance recycling infrastructure and policies. Suggestions underline expanding the containers for change program to include more items like batteries and phones, implementing strategies for sorting waste at source in accommodation complexes and integrating Council's waste management actions into mainstream programs. There is strong support for banning single-use



n = 272

Figure 35. Major waste management themes emerging from the data analysis.

plastics and coffee cups, encouraging the use of reusable alternatives, and improving recycling education for residents and tourists. Proposals also include creating more recycling opportunities, particularly for soft plastics, and implementing sustainable packaging and compostable products to minimise waste.

### Changing waste behaviour

Participants are cognizant of the need for both locals and visitors to take greater responsibility for waste management. Key suggestions include encouraging tourism precincts to improve recycling methods, mandating businesses to manage their waste better, and implementing educational campaigns to promote responsible waste practices. Specific measures proposed are charging

extra waste fees for tourists, making businesses accountable for waste, and encouraging visitors to take their rubbish with them. There is also an emphasis on the importance of community involvement, where everyone contributes to maintaining a clean environment by managing their waste effectively.

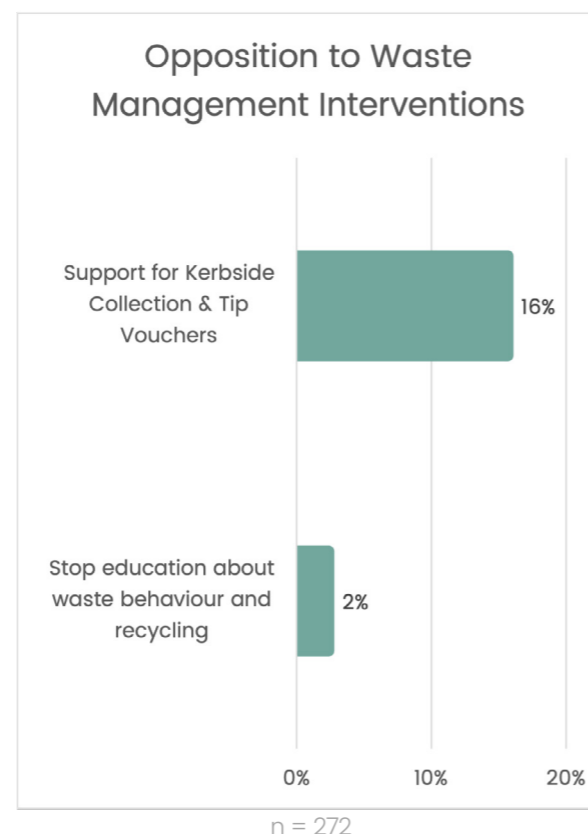
### *Modify waste collection streams*

This sub-theme concerns the need for improving waste management infrastructure and practices. Key suggestions include introducing shire-wide solar-powered smart bins, converting green and food waste to energy, and implementing composting systems for organic waste. There is a strong emphasis on excluding compostable organic waste from general bins, providing kitchen bins to encourage separation, and exploring technologies for high-temperature incineration of plastics. Proposals also highlight the need for commercial composting facilities and creating a circular economy by reusing organic waste as compost or energy. Overall, the aim is to enhance the efficiency and environmental impact of waste management systems.

### *Opposition to waste management interventions*

In contrast, a small number of participants oppose waste management interventions. These are shown in Figure 36. Overall, 17% who gave statements relevant to waste management oppose waste management interventions or indicate a preference for actions going against dominant trends.

Specifically, they would like curbside collection and tip vouchers to be re-implemented and education related to improved waste behaviour and recycling to be stopped.



**Figure 36.** Opposition to waste management interventions. A total of 17% of participants within the waste management theme indicated opposition.

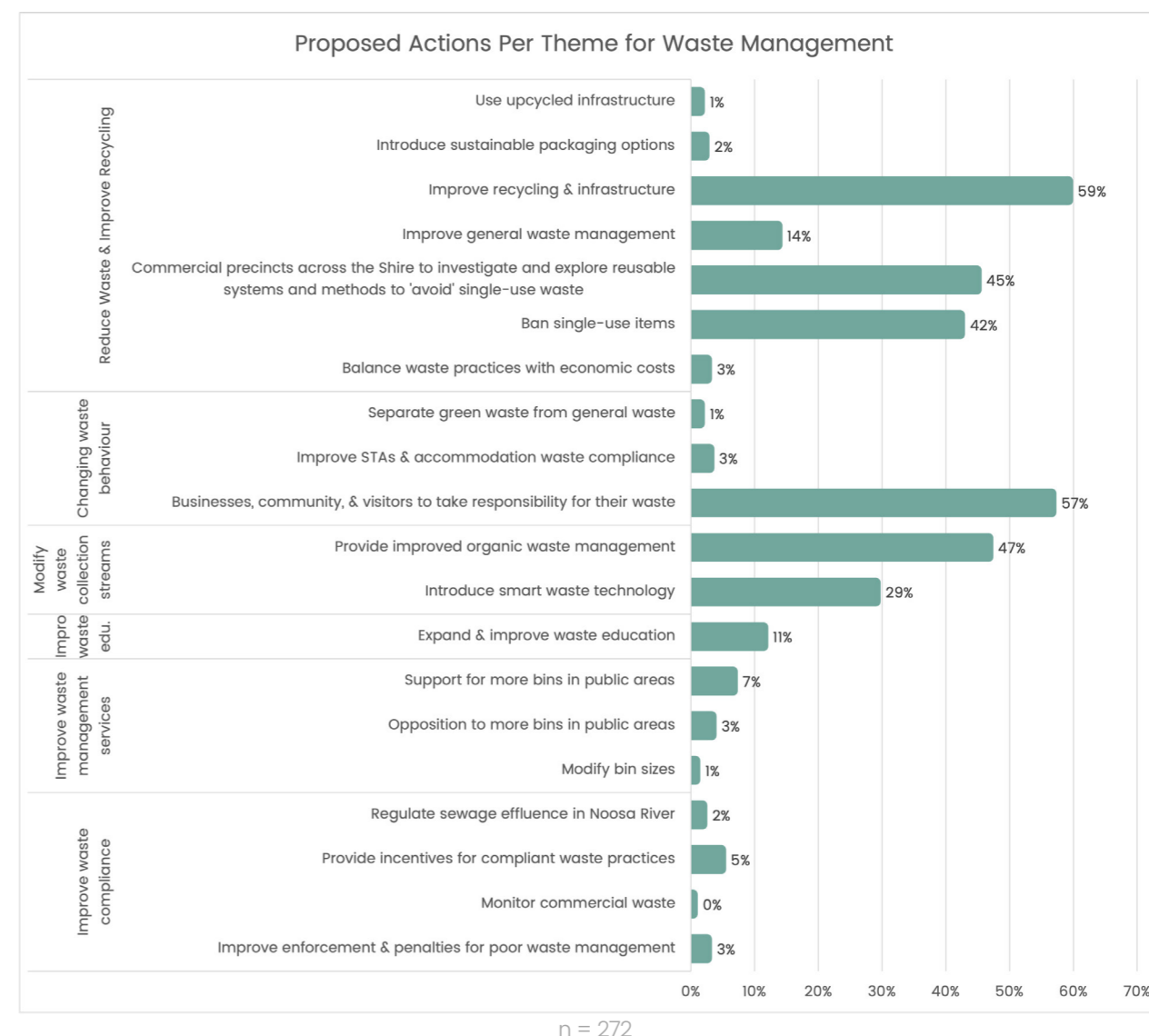
### *Proposed waste management actions*

Finally, the thematic analysis also identified the most popular actions for each waste management sub-theme, as proposed by participants. These are shown in Figure 37.

The top five actions receiving the most support are:

- Improve recycling and infrastructure

- Businesses, community, and visitors to take responsibility for their waste
- Provide improved organic waste management
- Commercial precincts across the Shire to investigate and explore reusable systems and methods to 'avoid' single-use waste
- Ban single-use items



**Figure 37.** Proposed actions for waste management theme as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing statements relevant to waste management.

## Outliers

The thematic analysis also identified what is called 'outlier' themes, representing those captured by only a select few data points.

In the spirit of transparency in the research process and the reporting of the findings, these are included here, too. This ensures that all diverse stakeholder views are adequately represented.

Overall, 87 data points reflected these themes, most of which concern opposition to broader community dominant trends, community values, or aspirations. These 87 data points represent 9% of the total dataset.

Figure 38, below, captures the broader themes, with the top three being miscellaneous (i.e., those that do not fit the profile of the other themes, opposition to practices relevant to sustainability or for the community, and proposals for new services, amenities, and infrastructure.

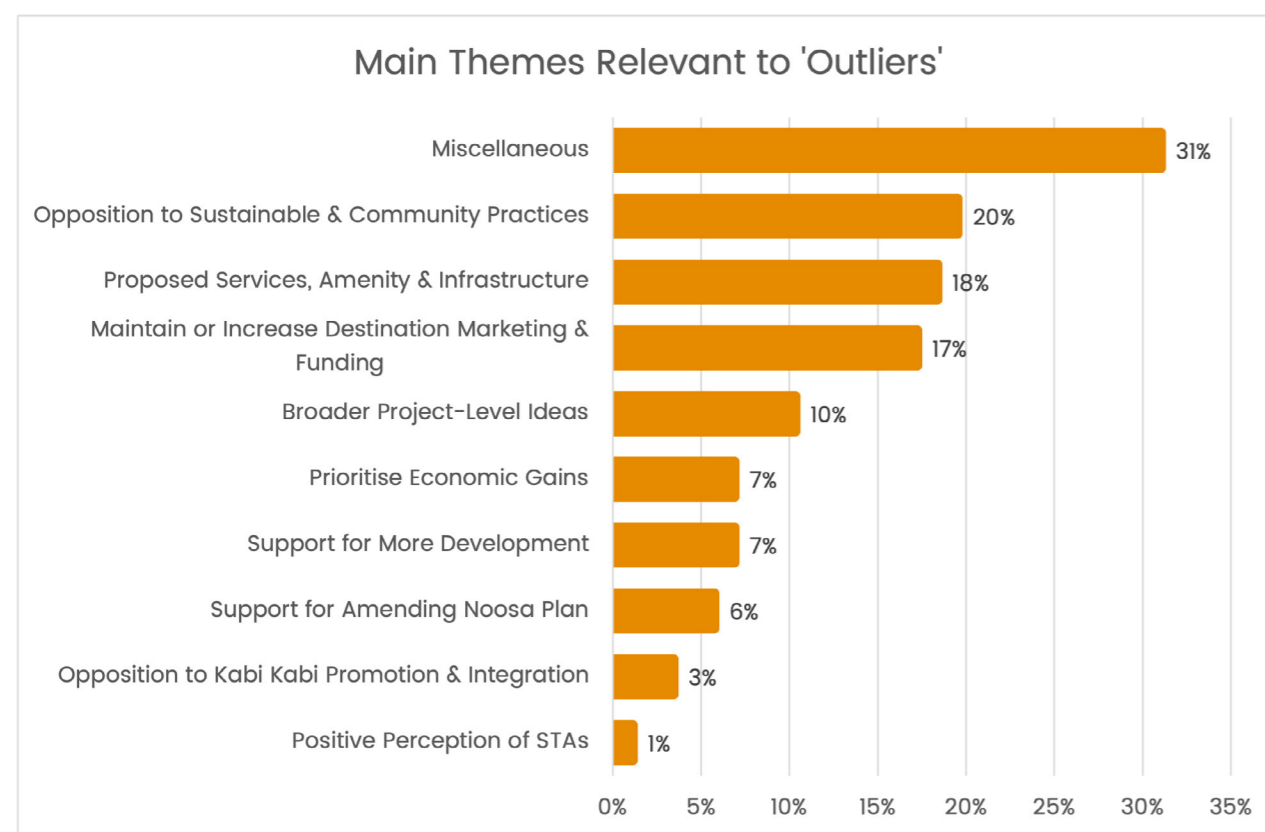


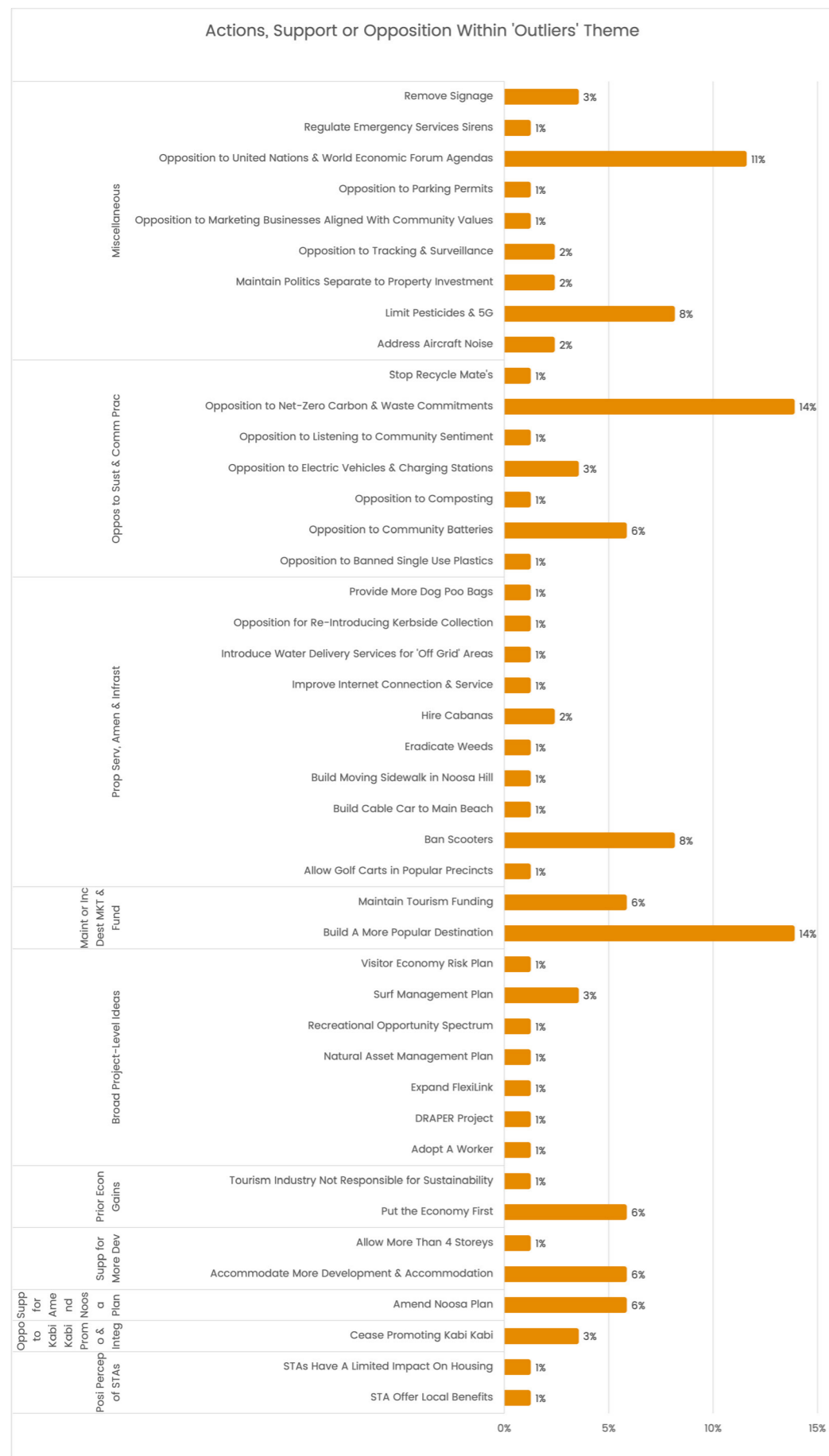
Figure 38. Major themes relevant to 'outliers' emerging from the data analysis. n = 87

Some actions and ideas indicated opposition or support for themes that did not reflect dominant trends from the overall findings.

These are shown in Figure 39, on the next page.

The five most popular were:

- Opposition to net-zero carbon and waste commitments
- Building Noosa Shire as an even more popular destination
- Opposition to the United Nations and World Economic Forum agendas
- Limiting the use of pesticides and 5G
- Banning scooters, which some participants consider pose dangers to pedestrians when the scooters are used on shared footpaths



n = 87

Figure 39. Proposed actions for outliers as indicated by participants. Percentages are calculated based on the number of data points containing outlier statements.

# CONCLUSION

The insights drawn from our findings highlight a pivotal moment for Noosa Shire's destination management plan and the future of its visitor economy to tourism.

Participants' evident discontent and tourism fatigue signal an urgent call for transformative change. A balanced, sustainable tourism model prioritising the community's well-being and the preservation of the natural environment is not just desired but necessary.

As Noosa Shire stands at this crossroads, bold, transparent, collaborative leadership must mark the path forward. The community's voices reflect a deep yearning for sustainable and regenerative principles that align with their values and the unique ecological heritage of the region.

This requires embracing innovative sustainability practices across all sectors and fostering a tourism industry that genuinely gives back to people and place.

The challenge lies in reconciling diverse stakeholder perspectives and managing expectations with transparency, integrity, and inclusivity.

By fostering open dialogue, ensuring robust community engagement, and demonstrating unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship, Noosa Shire can redefine its tourism landscape.

This vision of a thriving, balanced community, harmoniously coexisting with a regenerative visitor economy, can serve as an inspiring model for other destinations to follow.



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