

Shaping our Future Water Services Engagement Summary

Central Coast Council

Between the 11 March 2026 and 31 May 2026, Central Coast Council sought feedback on what matters most to residents and businesses, now and into the future.

As part of Council's current Water and Sewer Delivery Plan 2022-2026, Council committed to engaging with the community to retest whether the values identified by the community in 2023, 2024 and 2025, remain relevant in 2026, or whether priorities have changed and what that means in practice.

The community could share their feedback by:

- Completing the survey on Your Voice Our Coast (YVOC)
- Completing the survey at one of six pop-up events
- In depth session open to members of the Water and Sewer People's Panel

Council received a total of 189 survey responses from the community. The survey asked participants to rank water and sewer service values and identify any gaps or missing values.

In addition, 19 members of the Water and Sewer People's Panel participated in a facilitated session. The People's Panel is a group of informed residents with an understanding of the water and sewer systems on the Central Coast.

The session explored the values in greater depth, including validating the current values, defining what they look like in practice through outcomes, identifying suitable performance reporting, and understanding what information the community wants to see and how it should be communicated.

How you connected



A total of **189** submissions received



6 pop ups at **6** locations across **5** Council wards



1 session with **19** members of the W&S People's Panel



Your Voice Our Coast **740** views



Facebook - **10,101** people were reached, generating **46** reactions



Instagram - **2,588** people were reached, generating **19** reactions



LinkedIn - **464** impressions, resulting in **8** reactions and **9** clicks



Coast Connect eNews - Delivered to **22,205**



Coast Connect print - Delivered to **60,000**

What we heard

Values

Survey respondents and participants from the in-person session were asked to rank six pre-defined values for both water and sewer services. These values were developed during earlier community engagement with the community. Participants ranked each value from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).

For water services, both groups identified good quality water as the highest priority value. However, a key variation emerged between the two groups, with the People's Panel placing greater importance on reliability over cost, while the YVOC survey respondents prioritised affordability ahead of reliability. These results suggest cost sensitivity within the broader community.

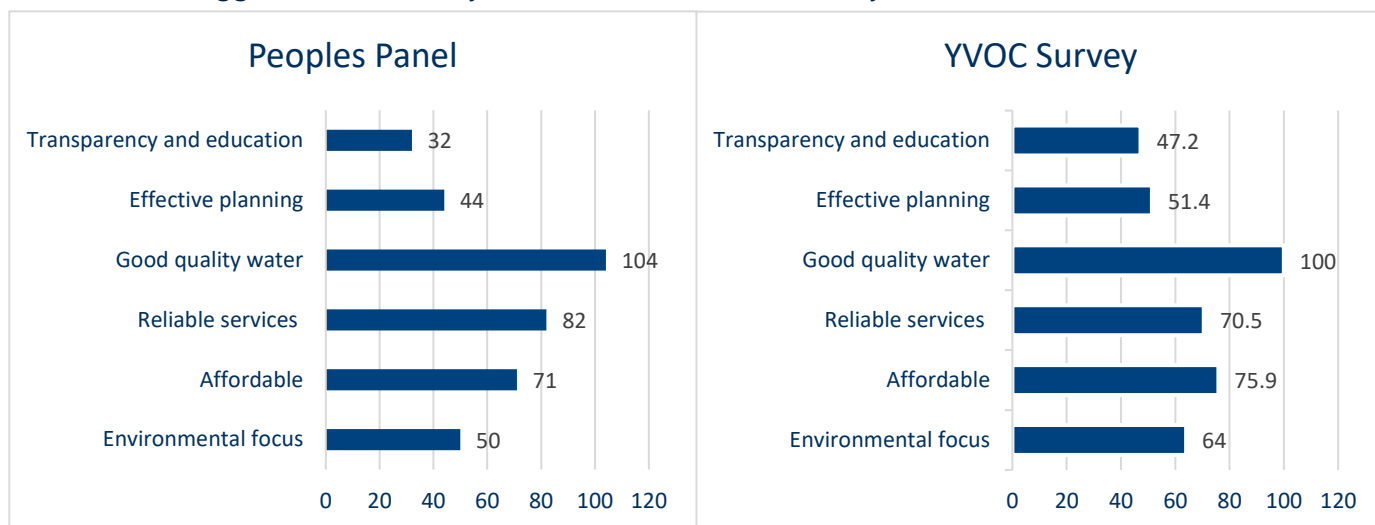


Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 1-2 show the weighted scores on how the People's Panel and survey respondents ranked the water service values.

Peoples Panel ranking:

1. Good quality water
2. Reliable Services
3. Affordable
4. Environmental focus
5. Effective planning
6. Transparency and education

Your Voice Our Coast ranking:

1. Good quality water
2. Affordable
3. Reliable services
4. Environmental focus
5. Effective planning
6. Transparency and education

For sewer services, rankings were consistent across both methods, showing strong alignment between the People's Panel and the broader community. Both groups prioritised service reliability over affordability, indicating greater concern about sewer network failures than water outages.

Both groups had the following shared ranking:

1. Quality treatment
2. Reliable services
3. Affordable
4. Environmental focus
5. Effective planning
6. Transparency and education

Perceived gaps in Water and Sewer values

Overall, community feedback shows acceptance of the current values framework, with an increased number of respondents stating "N/A", "No", "All ok", to the question - *are there any additional values that we have missed, or current values that no longer represent the community?* This suggests Council has largely identified the right values, with only minor gaps.

The following key themes however were identified by the community as perceived gaps or areas where the current values do not provide enough structure or support.

Participants expressed strong concern about cost and pricing pressures, particularly rising bills. There is a clear preference for minimal price increases, along with a desire for greater transparency around how funds are spent. Many also expect stronger long-term planning to help avoid sudden or reactive price rises.

Water quality and safety was another key area of concern. Participants raised issues with chlorine taste and odour, as well as ongoing worries about PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) and other pollutants. There were also calls for improved filtration and greater monitoring to provide reassurance about water quality.

In relation to sewer and environmental management, participants highlighted the need for better monitoring of pollution entering the system and called for a reduction in environmental discharge, including concerns about ocean outfalls.

Cultural and community values were mentioned less frequently but remain important, with some participants highlighting the need to recognise First Nations cultural connections to water.

Customer comments:

- "Council must realise times are tough for a lot of residents and minimal price increases for water and sewage is essential."
- "Less PFAS more filters closer to the plant to minimize chlorine & fluoride reaching customers' homes that are close to the plant."
- "No effluent of any quality should be going into the ocean; hence I have not included it my ranking."
- "Cultural values. For first nation ppl water is connected to the song lines. Eg the design of the water park in Gosford was indigenous led."

Figures 3-4 are from the in-person session held at Central Coast Council, Wyong, 7 May 2026

After completing the voting, panel participants moved into the second component of the activity. Working in small table groups of three to four across five tables, they were asked to develop two additional outcomes. This exercise aimed to identify any gaps in how the values are currently expressed in practice and to capture what the community felt was missing. The following outcomes were created under each relevant value (activity responses are direct quotes):

Good quality water:

- "Securing the infrastructure with major events (weather)."
- "Using new monitoring technologies for water quality monitoring/control."

Affordable

- "Developers should put more money towards infrastructure."
- "Accessible for all."
- "Increasing preventative maintenance to reduce incidents + temp repairs of pipes > cheaper in the long term."

Environmental focus

- "Education via school system - focus on reuse and oceans kept clean."
- "Less PFAS and fly ash, more recycling."

Effective planning:

- "Recycling rainwater – capture + storage for reuse in garden etc. Government run adaption to be used for non-essential water use in housing."
- "Planning long term maintenance (i.e. items require maintenance every 5-20 years)."

Quality treatment:

- "Quality assurance/ monitored/ testing for outgoing pollutants (if its ok for final destination)."

Reliable services:

- "Communication - 24/7 dependability - e.g. access to chat box to raise issues."
- "Increasing preventative maintenance to reduce incidents + temp repairs of pipes > cheaper in the long term."

The outcomes developed in the in-person session matched what was heard across the broader community, highlighting consistent themes identified in the values gap analysis, particularly around affordability, long-term planning, and the need for increased preventative maintenance to reduce reactive costs and maintain system reliability, as well as environmental concerns such as PFAS. While they do not introduce new themes, they provide greater depth and clarity on existing values and what the community expects to see in practice.

Performance preferences

Participants were asked whether they were satisfied with how often the Water and Sewer directorate currently reports on performance. Majority of respondents (n=17) indicated they were satisfied, while two respondents felt that reporting should occur more frequently.

Performance metrics were then broken down into 4 key areas, with respondents having the opportunity to provide feedback on what they would like us to report on across these areas.

Customer service and engagement

Participants highlighted the need for faster response times, especially for leaks and urgent repairs. There was also a strong focus on clearer communication during outages, better visibility of faults, and follow-up with customers once issues are resolved. People prefer simple, easy-to-understand information rather than complex reports.

Water supply, treatment and quality

Feedback focused on the importance of clear and transparent reporting on water quality, system reliability and future planning. Participants want regular testing and updates on contaminants such as PFAS, along with more visibility of how Council is planning for population growth and future risks.

Wastewater and environmental performance

Key concerns included odour, environmental impacts and proactive system management. Odour issues were raised most often, particularly around pump stations, treatment plants and vent pipes. Participants also want better monitoring and reporting on pollution, overflows and impacts on waterways.

Pipes, assets and network reliability

Participants emphasised the importance of reliable infrastructure and clearer information about network performance. This includes tracking outages and asset performance, sharing location-based updates, and investing in preventative maintenance and new technology to improve reliability and reduce long-term costs.

Communication

Planned and unplanned outages

Participants were asked how they would prefer to be notified about both planned and unplanned water and sewer network outages. Most participants preferred SMS notifications for both planned and unplanned outages. While this service is not currently offered, the results show strong demand for it.

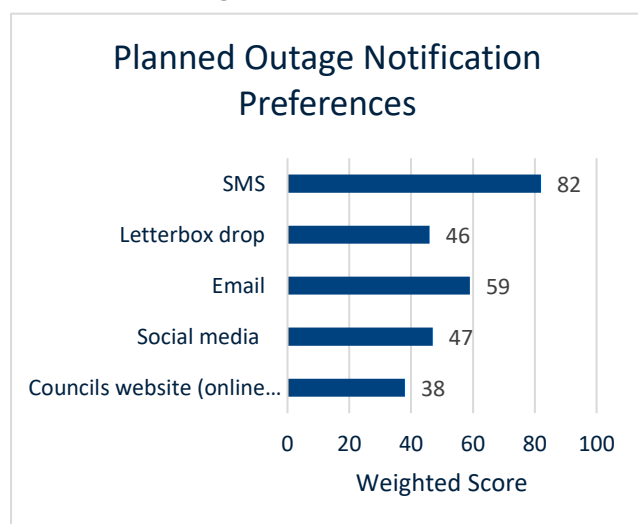


Figure 5

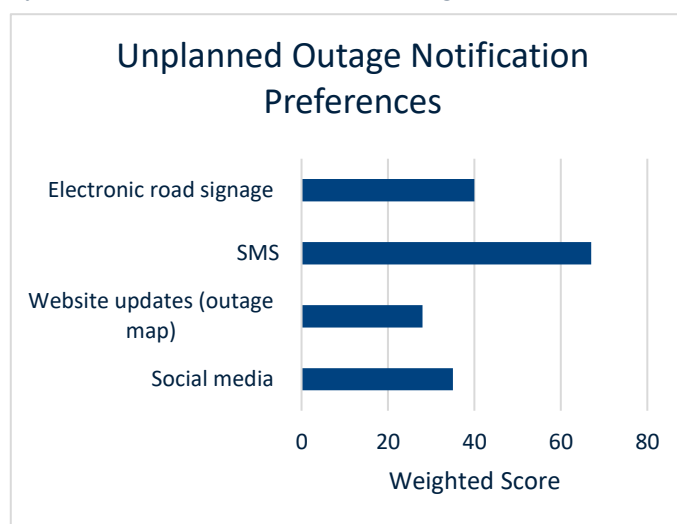


Figure 6

Figures 5-6 show the weighted scores for outage notification preferences for both planned and unplanned network outages.

Participants were also asked what factors should trigger or warrant notification during unplanned outages. The in-person panel session assessed factors such as the number of affected residents, impacts on businesses and industry, outage duration, impacts on access and roads, and damage to property or public infrastructure. Damage to property and public infrastructure ranked as the highest priority trigger, with nine participants selecting it as their top preference, closely followed by impacts on access and roads.

Important information

Lastly, panel participants were asked what information they want from Council, their preferred communication channels, and how often they would like to hear from us. These insights will help Council prioritise relevant information and avoid overwhelming the community.

Panel participants ranked three key information areas, with education on water supply systems, water conservation, and flushable and sinkable behaviours rated most important, receiving 47% of first-place rankings. This was followed by capital works and operational updates at 42%, while governance, regulatory and structural information ranked lowest in priority.

52% of participants preferred to receive this information quarterly. A further six participants preferred monthly updates, while only three supported weekly communication. Email and social media were the preferred channels for receiving updates, which supports business practices already in place such as Water Wednesday on social media.

Conclusion

The community engagement process provides Council with clear, well-considered insights into community expectations regarding values, outcomes and performance and communication metrics. The engagement outcomes confirms that Council's current values framework largely reflects community priorities, with strong alignment on service quality and reliability, while highlighting ongoing concerns around affordability, transparency and environmental performance. The findings also show a clear expectation for improved communication, particularly timely updates, accessible reporting and greater visibility of service performance.

What's next?

The delivery of Central Coast Council's water and sewer services is a shared responsibility between Council and the community. The insights garnered from this feedback will inform future planning, investment and service delivery, ensuring water and sewer priorities remain aligned with community expectations as Council heads into its next IPART determination period.

Find out more and stay up to date at

yourvoiceourcoast.com/shaping-our-future-water-services-2026

July 2026

Appendix

This appendix contains verbatim comments provided during consultation through the online survey and email submissions. It is included to ensure full transparency of community feedback. All comments have been de-identified and or redacted to protect respondent privacy.

Method received	Question	Contribution
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Council must realise times are tough for a lot of residents and minimal price increases for water and sewage is essential.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Council needs to be transparent about the amount of pharmaceuticals drugs flushed into our waterways by pharmacies as they flush it into our main waterways. The destruction of medications should be regulated and destroyed in incinerations not put into our waterways. More regulation is required from government and councils.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	You ask in the this survey about minimising costs? When does that ever happen? Councils are over run and yes I would really love to have an honest look at where our rates money is allocated and spent.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Educate school children of all ages - prompting them to discuss and educate others. Please note that I think that ranking for importance misses the mark. Every point should be prioritised p, as it all has to work in conjunction with the others.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Providing guttering and stopping our streets from flooding in chain valley bay south nsw
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	No effluent of any quality should be going into the ocean, hence I have not included it my ranking.
	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	I would like council to address the many properties that have stormwater run-off which damages their properties. The council still charges each resident for this charge when we are having to pay insurance excesses to recover the cost and damages to our belongings because we dont have stormwater drains or gutters. They arent one in a 100 year events. Their yearly events.

Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Costs too much.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	We have to use filters on our supply as it is always dirty. We would appreciate cleaner water.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Responsive and clear customer service especially to common issues & concerns- my water is brown, does it have PFAS,
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Ratepayers deserve and are owed a properly funded Asset Management Plan for their Water & Sewer Services. The plan should cover future maintenance, repair and replacement costs so Ratepayers aren't impacted by constant rate rises to cover inadequate funding, poor management and lack of planning.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Reduce chlorine
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Taste of chlorine makes me buy my own water
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Remediation from works need to return the environment back to how it was
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	The quality and taste of the water needs to come first. Too much chlorine in terms of taste and smell
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Water & Sewer control large stretches of land, which are effectively off limits to Central Coast residents. Whilst no one is suggesting introducing speedboating on Mardi Dam, promoting environmentally responsible access to catchments for walking, cycling and eco-tourism could open up valuable opportunities for Council.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Planning for future infrastructure in the Valley and surrounding areas to remove off septic.
Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Less PFAS more filters closer to the plant to minimize chlorine & fluoride reaching customers homes that are close to the plant.

Survey	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Council drainage can definitely play a role in how water flows through an area. However, even when council systems are functioning properly, a lot of water issues actually come from how rainwater is managed on the property itself. Installing properly designed gutters and drainage can make a big difference by directing roof water away from the building and preventing pooling around foundations. While council infrastructure affects overall stormwater management, most water problems around homes come from roof runoff and poor surface drainage. Proper gutters, downpipes, and drainage channels help control where that water goes and reduce the risk of flooding or erosion around the property.
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Im happy with the current values.
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	No- current values represent all aspects
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Ability to view up-to-date aka live updates regarding outages
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	All properties should be connected,100%
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Water. PFAS concerns Sewer - mains breakages, flooding overflows
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Health and Quality should be already impregnated within the core services. The value of accountability should be added.
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Monitoring sources of pollution that goes into the sewage system.
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	The values are a good selection of the present needs of the community.
In person session	Are there any additional values that Council have missed?	Cultural values. For first nation ppl water is connected to the song lines. Eg the design of the water park in Gosford was indigenous led.
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on	Water leaks that take longer than 6 hours to fix

	for customer service and engagement?	
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Better feedback to customers on urgent issues, fix required and when completed
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Complaint numbers
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	No- need to avoid reporting becoming the main activity
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Discuss EPA breaches with customers
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Servicing availability
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Regarding outages, is planned & unplanned outages (and anticipated delay times) published on CCC website?
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	I would like to see greater reporting (in essence greater visibility of where and when faults occur).
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for customer service and engagement?	Continue to solidify the availability of communication in order to ultimately eliminate the number of complaints and urgent fixing. Also establish a follow up on repairs done with consumers.
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Any environmental impact or issues that year
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Greater or more regular testing of catchment and quality, specifically PFAS.
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Number of stoppages longer than 24 hours
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on	Water quality rating

	for water supply, treatment and quality?	
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	How often, type and whereabouts
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	If any organic pollutants are found such as PFOS
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	report on Long term sustainability and long term projects regarding water supply and catchments, also including environmental long term impacts
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Water reports on quality .. needs simpler and more frequent communication with users
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Water quality mineral content
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	PFAS
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Regarding planned & unplanned outages, is this information available on CCC website - in real time - with anticipated result time. Similar to Elect, NBN outages
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Expected issues (environmental, population growth), and how it's being planned for
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for water supply, treatment and quality?	Continue on effectiveness
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Odour reports
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and	Door from vent pipes

	environmental performance?	
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Bad vs good What environmental impact happened What environmental wellness happened
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Micro plastics levels measured, map
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Odour complaints
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Odour from pump stations and sewer plants
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Long term Environmental management of sewer treatment plants
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Track hotspots of less than optimal performance
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Odour issues
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	The community are generally unaware of the extensive reporting being undertaken.
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Odours regarding sewage pumping & treatments plants
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on	Waste impacting local environment around plants

	for wastewater and environmental performance?	
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Condition of lakes, rivers, oceans after an overflow event
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Quality of waste output prior to release of material into environment
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for wastewater and environmental performance?	Rather than just wait for a problem to occur, be constantly on the lookout for potential repairs. Connecting with community to feel open to report
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	Any reports for exact incident locations?
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	Pumping station downtime
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	Instead of what is the breakdown stats ..what is the fixes or maintenance happened to make reliable
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	I'm of new pipes installed in the annual report
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	An increased Frequency of testing of infrastructure to ensure more easily identifiable areas to repair
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	Long term plans and money allocated to future preventative maintenance
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	When pump stations are offline
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on	Thickness of pipes

	for pipes, assets and network reliability?	
In person session	Are there any metrics you would like us to report on for pipes, assets and network reliability?	Explore the technology available to improve future safety of the pipes. So if there is an investment needed that may cost upfront, it may potentially reduce costs in the long run, should consider it.