

# What Australia Wants

National summary and New South Wales results



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# Methodology

*What Australia Wants* presents results from a Heart Foundation survey measuring community sentiment around qualities of active neighbourhoods and support for initiatives to increase infrastructure for physical activity in and around neighbourhoods.

The survey covered several themes of active living and healthy neighbourhoods, using seven key questions asking:

1. What individuals want in a neighbourhood/suburb in general (unprompted).
2. What level of importance people give to a list of neighbourhood design elements, based on the seven Healthy Active by Design features.
3. How individuals rank these design elements from most to least important in deciding where to live.
4. How individuals rate the availability of active living elements in their current neighbourhood.
5. What level of support individuals have for governments' funding for active living infrastructure.
6. What level of support individuals have for a National Physical Activity Strategy for Australia.
7. What level of knowledge individuals have about the connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing.

Surveys were conducted online over a three-week period. Survey results are based on a pool of 2,895 total respondents, weighted to be nationally representative of the population in terms of age, gender and location. This included 619 participants in NSW (388 in Sydney), compared to 618 in Victoria and 456 in Queensland.

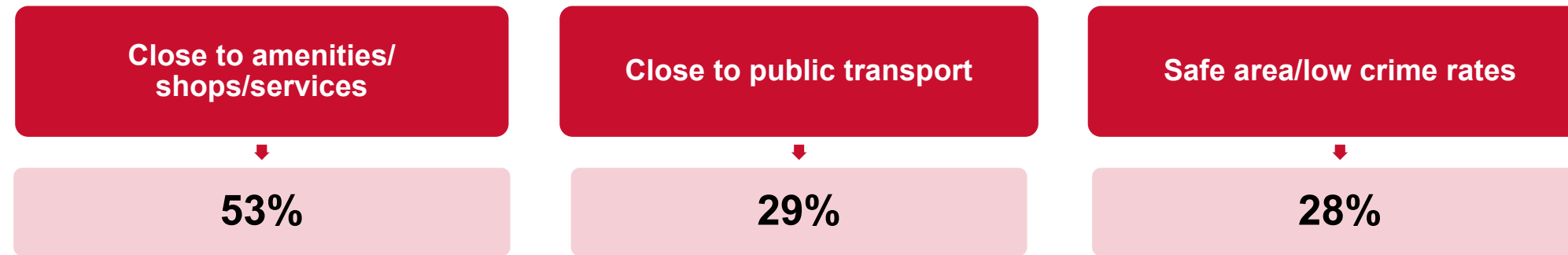




# Summary of National results

# What Australians want

Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)



Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



When deciding where to live, participants overwhelmingly indicated their desire for **proximity to fresh food and services, neighbourhood safety** and **access to public outdoor and open areas**.

‘Housing diversity’ was mentioned when asked to prioritise some features over others but did not feature when broken out into individual elements. This suggests that **the right type of house in the right area is more of an essential need and will be prioritised over elements such as parks and open spaces if necessary**.

# Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

**Best performers**  
(percentage who  
rated  
excellent/good)

Public parks, open spaces,  
reserves, gardens  
**76%**

Natural elements,  
vegetation  
**76%**

Facilities in convenient,  
accessible areas  
**75%**

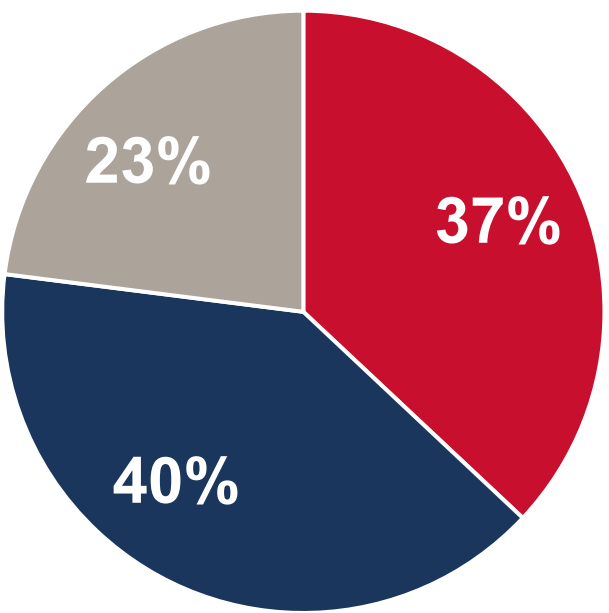
**Worst performers**  
(percentage who  
rated poor/area  
does not have)

Safe cycling routes  
**19%**

Traffic calming  
measures in place  
**12%**

Sports facilities  
**11%**

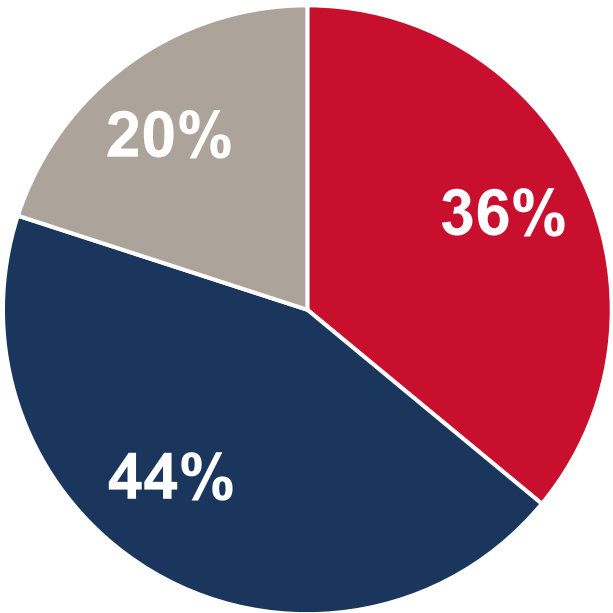
Importance of local area allowing physical activity



■ Very important  
■ Somewhat important  
■ Neutral/not important

**77%**  
say it is important that  
they can be active in  
their local area

Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



■ Helps a lot  
■ Helps a little  
■ Doesn't help

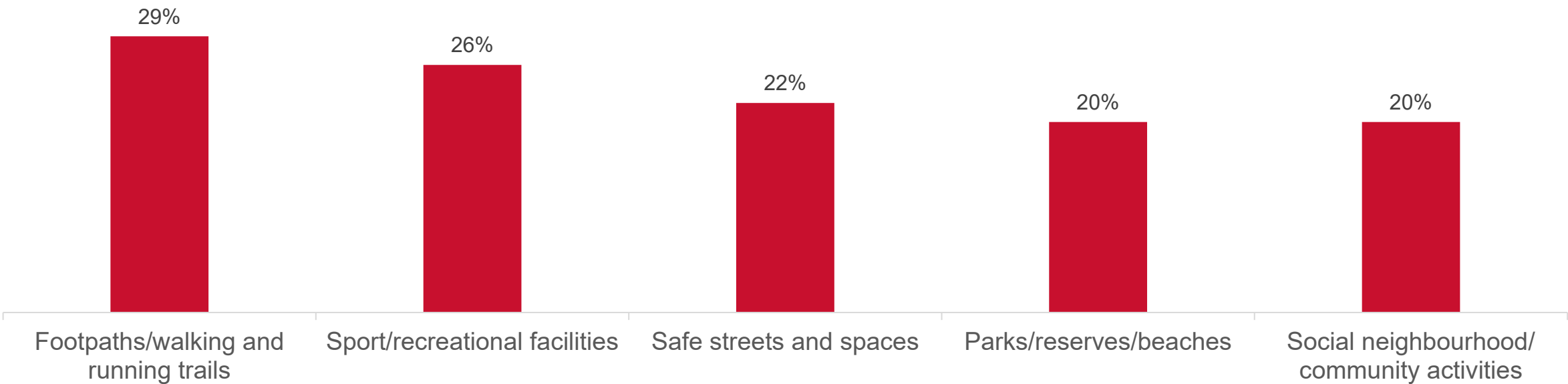
**80%**  
say their  
neighbourhood helps  
them to be active

# Neighbourhood analysis

Reasons active neighbourhoods are important



Elements that could increase physical activity



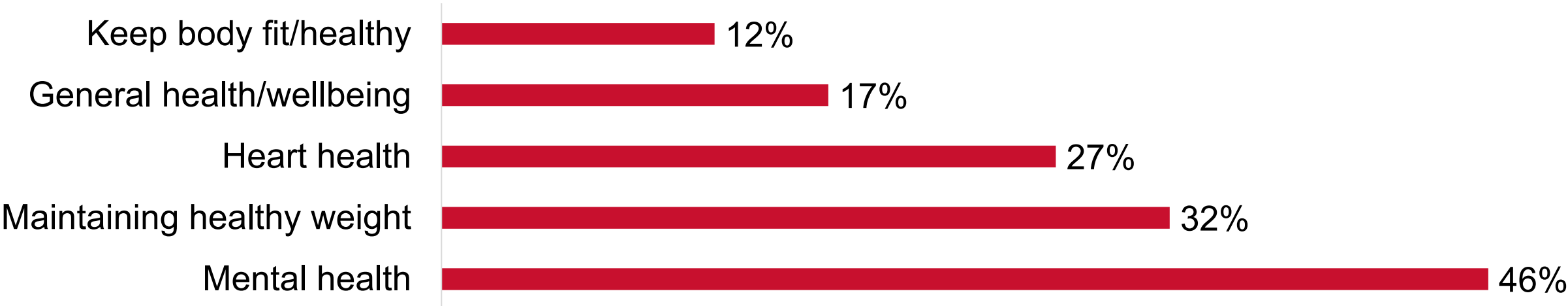
# Support for infrastructure funding

	<b>Support for active infrastructure</b> Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	<b>67%</b>
	<b>Support for public transport funding</b> Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	<b>68%</b>
	<b>Support for speed limit reductions</b> Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	<b>64%</b>
	<b>Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy</b> Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	<b>78%</b>

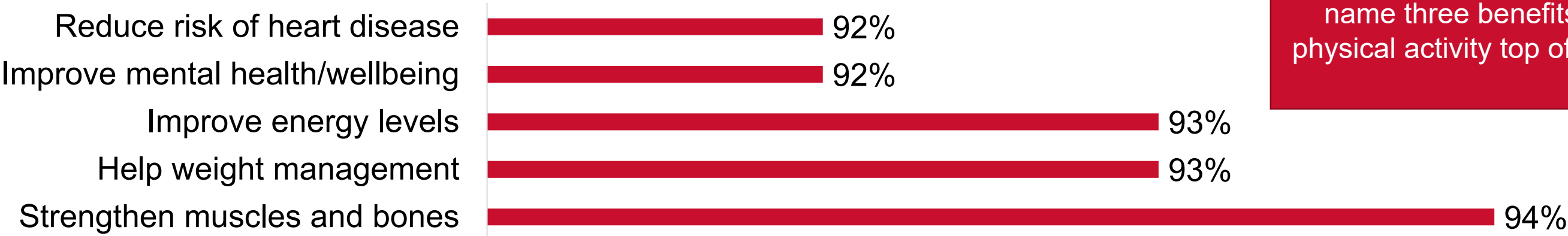


# Knowledge of health benefits

## Benefits of physical activity (unprompted)



## Benefits of physical activity (prompted)



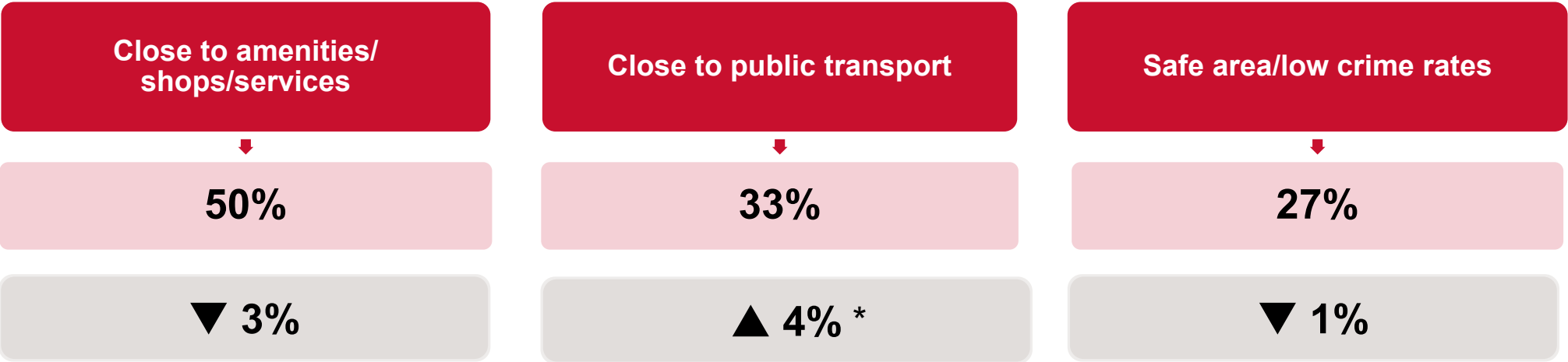
Only **24%** of people can name three benefits of physical activity top of mind

# Summary of New South Wales results



# What New South Wales wants

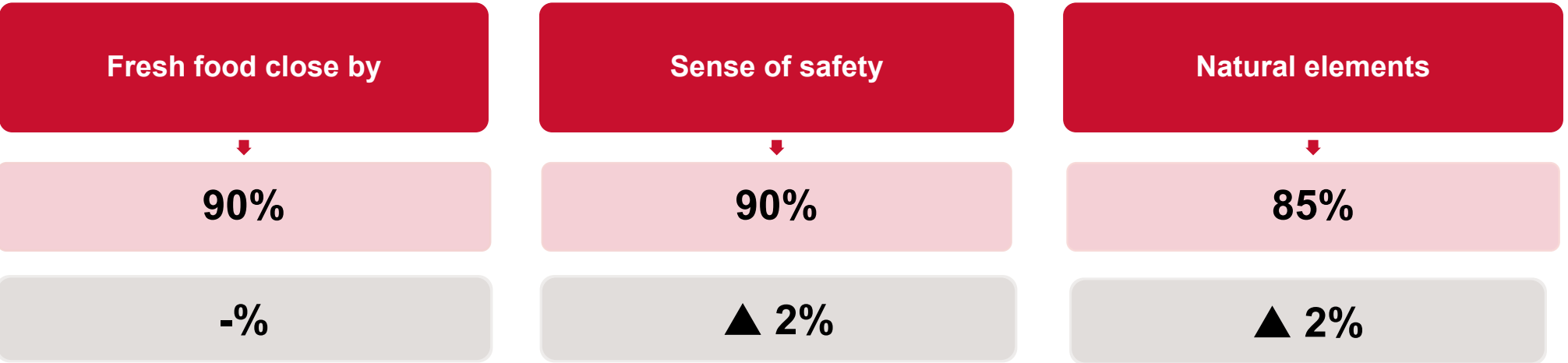
Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)



\* Statistically significant

Compared to national results

Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



Compared to national results

Top three types of features that are important in deciding where to live (prompted)

Sense of place



Access to healthy food



Housing diversity



# Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

<b>Best performers</b> (percentage who rated excellent/good)	Public parks, open spaces, reserves <b>77%</b>	Facilities in convenient places, accessible by walking/cycling <b>73%</b>	Natural elements, vegetation <b>74%</b>
<i>Compared to national results</i>	▲ <b>1%</b>	▼ <b>2%</b>	▼ <b>2%</b>
<b>Worst performers</b>	Safe cycling routes	Traffic calming measures	Sports facilities


Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



■ Doesn't help at all   ■ Doesn't really help   ■ Helps a little   ■ Helps a lot

80% of people in NSW believe their neighbourhood helps them to be active

# Support for infrastructure funding

			Compared to national average
	<b>Support for active infrastructure</b> Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	67%	-%
	<b>Support for public transport funding</b> Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	68%	-%
	<b>Support for speed limit reductions</b> Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	66%	▲ 2%
	<b>Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy</b> Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	79%	▲ 1%



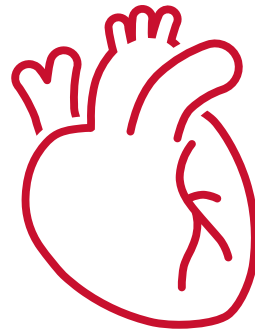
# Knowledge of health benefits

Top three benefits of physical activity mentioned by participants in NSW.



**42%**

Mental health



**27%**

Heart health



**31%**

Weight management

Only **25%** of New South Welshmen can name  
three benefits of physical activity top of mind

1% above the national average

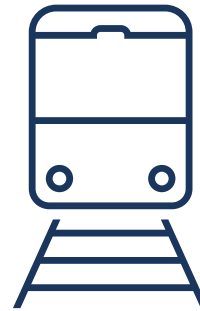


# Key areas of comparison between National and New South Wales results

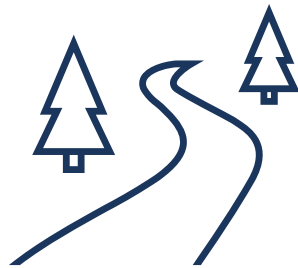
# Points of difference

Broadly, **4%** more people in NSW **want to live closer to public transport**.

In Sydney, **13%** more people value living close to public transport.



**Safe cycling routes** are both **less important** to NSW residents and perceived as being **lower quality**.



Safe cycling routes are less important as neighbourhood design features  
(▼4%)



Safe cycling routes are rated lower in NSW than in other states  
(▼7%)



# Comparing the findings

## Commonalities

- Overall, the results for NSW compared to the rest of Australia do not differ dramatically – particularly as NSW contained the largest pool of participants.
- Like those in other states, participants in NSW expressed a desire to live close to shops and public transport, and in a safe area with low crime rates.
- Like other Australians, New South Welshmen prioritise access to healthy food, housing diversity and a sense of place (that is, safety, community, natural elements) as the most important design features.
- When prompted, most in NSW value the same neighbourhood elements as many other Australians, however more people in NSW responded that they value being close to public transport – the highest proportion alongside VIC.

## Differences

- A lower proportion of participants in NSW value being close to open spaces, parks or gardens (24% compared to 27% nationally).
- NSW had the lowest score for safe cycling routes within current neighbourhoods, with less than half of respondents rating their area well.
- Fewer people in NSW value the quality of the area and neighbours, or are concerned about living in a quiet area.
- Affordability was more important to those living outside of Sydney (21%) than within the city (12%).
- Those in Sydney were more likely to rank movement networks (that is, safe and convenient travel options) in their top three priorities, while those outside Sydney were more likely to rank housing diversity higher.





# Take action for healthier places

The Heart Foundation advocates for policy changes to prioritise physical activity and healthy built environments that enable healthy active lives, because we know that physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for developing heart disease.

We are working in partnership with a range of industry, government, community and academic organisations to create environments that support healthier living through better planning, built environments and transport solutions.

We are creating positive change and are directly influencing healthy active urban planning within our states and territories.

Please share, engage with us and advocate for *What Australia Wants*. Together, we can create a healthier Australia.

## Share the link:

<https://healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/publications/what-australia-wants-report>