PIRIE VOICES
Shaping our future, together

1,000 Voices: Interim Report

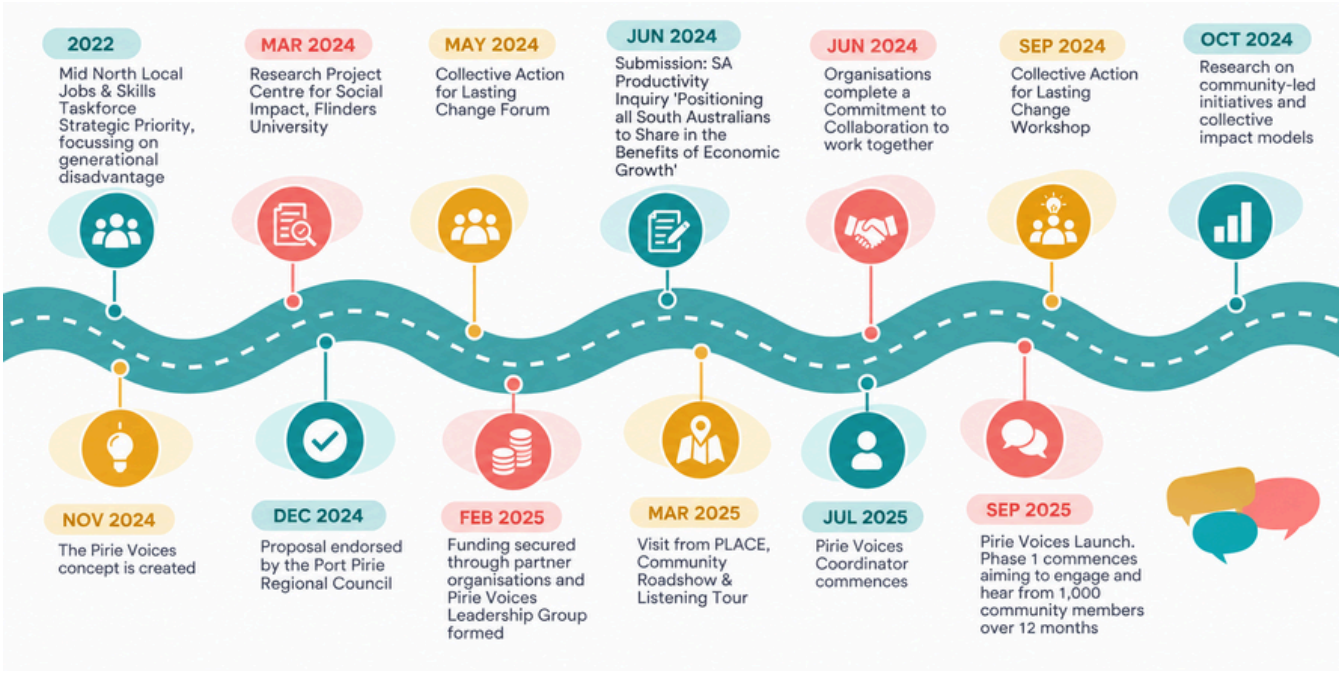


Change happens when the people most affected are part of driving it.
We want a future shaped by those who know Port Pirie best - the people who call it home, work here, or depend on it. Decisions about our community belong with us — that means working together, giving everyone a voice, and building a future that reflects who we are and what we value.
Over the past year, we heard from more than 1,000 local voices to understand what matters most. What shapes a good life in Port Pirie, the hopes and dreams we hold for ourselves, our young people and our community, the challenges we face and how we can work together to grow and flourish.

What is Pirie Voices?

Pirie Voices is designed to give the people of Port Pirie a stronger voice in shaping their social, economic, and cultural future, rather than leaving decisions to external authorities. Pirie Voices builds on years of work from local people and organisations seeking ways to do things differently.

Taking inspiration from successful community-led efforts in Australia and internationally, a collective of local organisations formed in 2024 with the vision of empowering the Port Pirie community to create locally driven, long-term solutions to strengthen our community.



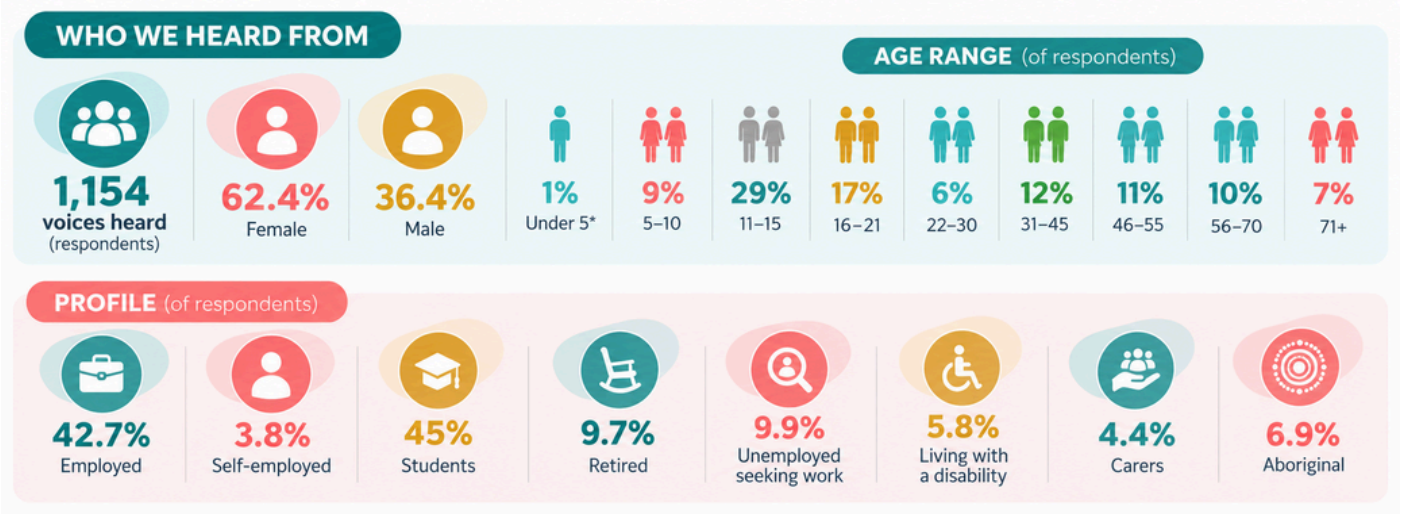
What we heard

Over the past year we heard from 1,154 community members through online survey responses, community pop-up events and facilitated workshop sessions with schools, service agencies and community groups.

They told us that Port Pirie's people, our connections, care, and community spirit, are our greatest asset. That quality services, education and employment are foundational to a good life here but cost of living is a major barrier to hope. We heard loud and clear that young people are central to our future.

And we heard that Port Pirie residents are ready to act together.

Who we heard from



What helps people live a good life in Port Pirie?

Community spirit and sense of belonging (44% responses)

- People, relationships, and looking out for one another
- Sporting clubs as social connectors
- Community organisations and volunteering
- Collective pride and community spirit
- Feeling safe as a community value

Range and quality of services, opportunities and liveability provide strong foundations (63%)

- Health services (GPs, hospital, allied health)
- Education (schools, TAFE, Uni Hub)
- Employment and the economy (Nyrstar, local business)
- Sporting and recreation facilities
- Affordability and liveability

Nature and culture, our outdoors and arts (16.4%)

- Parks, foreshore, beach, river, and outdoor spaces
- Community events and cultural activities
- Proximity to Flinders Ranges, beaches, and wine region
- Climate, pace, and lifestyle



What are your personal hopes and dreams?

A place to work and call home 27%

- Home ownership
- Local employment and career pathways
- Career aspirations, youth voice
- Staying vs leaving tension
- Financial security and stability

Health & happiness for all / wellbeing first 20%

- Health access as a personal hope
- Simple contentment and quality of life
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Family wellbeing

Brighter future for our kids / keeping families together 15%

- Keeping kids home and families together locally
- Education and opportunity close to home
- Children growing up proud of Port Pirie

A community of action 14%

- Council transparency and responsiveness
- Economic diversity beyond Nyrstar
- Lead and environmental health
- Community narrative and cultural change



What gets in the way of these hopes?

Cost of living pressures / financial struggles 30%

- General cost of living and rising interest rates
- Housing affordability
- Driver's licence costs (barrier for youth)
- Transport gaps and fuel costs
- Age and money (school-age respondents)

Community wellbeing challenges / social or age barriers 25%

- Substance use and crime
- Mental health access, including waitlists, cost, gaps
- Social isolation and post-COVID disconnection
- Disability access barriers
- Negative community reputation and media portrayal
- Age barriers (too young / too old)
- Neurodiversity and learning differences

Policy gaps / regional neglect 14%

- Regional neglect and government priorities
- Council decision-making transparency
- Education and training gaps (no local university)
- Rural rate inequity
- Nyrstar instability and economic dependence



What hopes do you have for our children and young people?

Safe & inclusive spaces / supportive communities for youth 49%

- Physical safety and environmental health (including lead)
- Belonging, inclusion, and being seen
- Something to do, activities and venues for young people
- Disability inclusion in spaces and programs
- Mental health support access
- Cultural connection and identity for Aboriginal young people

Future possibilities / opportunities for every child 41.5%

- Education and post-school pathways close to home
- Employment within Port Pirie
- The right to stay (not having to leave for opportunity)
- Life skills and practical education
- Big dreams and self-belief



What action can we take together to make these hopes happen?

Leading & working together / community power 46%

- Genuine community voice in decisions (not just consultation)
- Accountability and transparency from council and government
- Positive community narrative through social media and media
- Volunteering and mutual community support

Positive pathways for youth / empowering young people 34%

- Youth voice on committees and in decision-making
- Listen to and act on what young people say
- Education, training, and career pathway development
- Life skills and practical education
- After-school and weekend activities
- Disability-inclusive youth pathways

Attract new industries / grow our local economy 15%

- Local business support and promotion
- Diversifying economic base beyond Nyrstar
- Attracting and retaining professionals

Be culturally responsive 2.3%

- Include Aboriginal people in designing and reviewing
- Cultural education and awareness
- Reconciliation as community action



Whats next

It is clear Port Pirie community has a strong sense of pride and many strengths and opportunities to grow.

It is also clear there are still gaps and challenges.

We want to keep building a shared vision for Port Pirie's future, inspire greater community participation and leadership and spark new conversations and ways of thinking about and solving local challenges and opportunities.

Over the next year we will keep listening to community voices to advocate and drive action and we will keep working with local organisations, businesses, service agencies to unpack the data and help shape future programs and opportunities

How you can get involved

- Sign up to our subscriber list to receive updates
- Sign up to participate in 'deep dive' discussions and workshops about issues you care about
- Sign up to be trained as one of our team of 'Community Conversation Leaders'
- Sign up to be part of our video series – tell us what you love most about Pirie
- Sign up to be involved in our governing committee or working groups

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