

INNER WEST



Engagement outcomes report
Ferris Lane: Permanent road
closure to support community
activity

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Summary

The community were asked to provide feedback on measures to support community activity in Ferris Lane, Annandale, between 19 April and 17 May 2021. They were asked for input on whether Council permanently closes Ferris Lane to vehicles and indicate if they wanted to form a group to manage proposed green space.

The project was promoted via letters to residents in the area, YSIW e-newsletter, social media, onsite posters and Council's website.

There was a total of 638 visits to the Your Say Inner West project page, out of which 167 provided feedback online. There were also 5 responses via email. All responses are included in this report.

Most participants support the proposal to permanently close Ferris Lane to vehicles and encourage community activity (164 respondents), 7 participants do not support the closure and 1 participant is not sure.

Most online participants do not wish to be involved in the management of the proposed green space (128 respondents), 9 respondents said yes, 28 respondents said maybe, and 2 participants did not respond to this question.

Background

For the past six years, local volunteers have transformed Ferris Lane into a neighbourhood garden with furniture, potted plants and sculptures. Neighbours have created what is now affectionately known as 'Ferris Lane, the Magic Lane'.

In 2018, the creator of the space approached Council for support. It was decided at a Council meeting on 18 August 2018 that the road be closed permanently, rezoned to public open space and an agreement be created for the community to manage the site.

This engagement is a requirement in the road closure process and will be reviewed by the Local Traffic Committee.

Engagement Methods

The community could provide feedback via:

- Your Say Inner West
- Email
- Phone (including via the National Relay Service for TIS National)
- Onsite information session on Saturday 1 May 2021

Promotion

The engagement was promoted through:

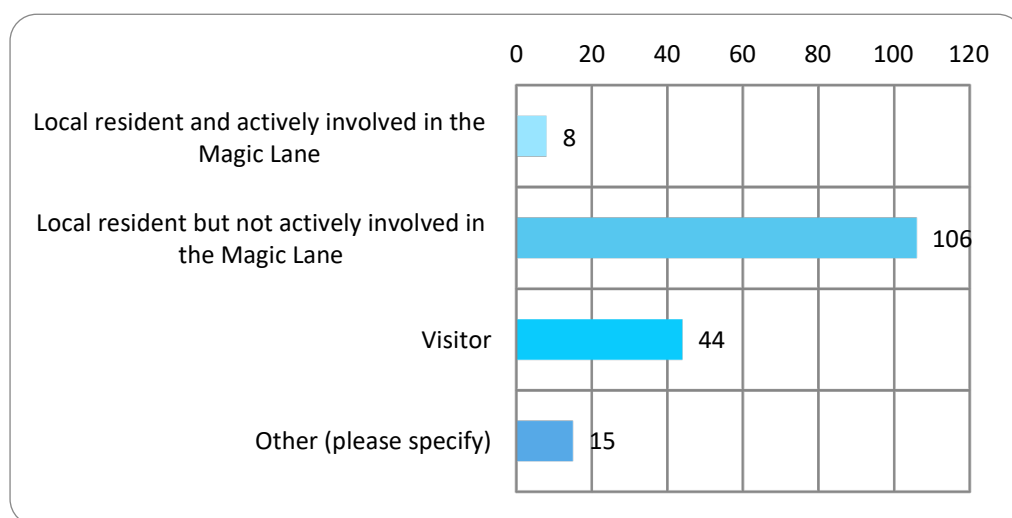
- *Social media*
- *Resident letter drop*
- *Onsite posters*
- *YSIW E-newsletter*
- *Council website*

Engagement outcomes

Who did we hear from?

The participants were mainly local residents but not actively involved in the Magic Lane (106 respondents), followed by visitors (44 respondents) and local residents and actively involved in the Magic Lane (8 respondents). There were 15 participants (including 6 participants who have responded in the previous categories) who responded 'other – please specify'. They identified as former local residents, living neighbouring suburbs, or part of Facebook Inner West Plantaholics group.

Graph showing responses to 'Which of the below describes your relationship to Ferris Lane?'



What did they say?

When asked if they support the proposal to permanently close Ferris Lane to vehicles and encourage community activity, 167 participants support the closure (164 online and 3 email respondents). The top reasons for supporting the proposal are:

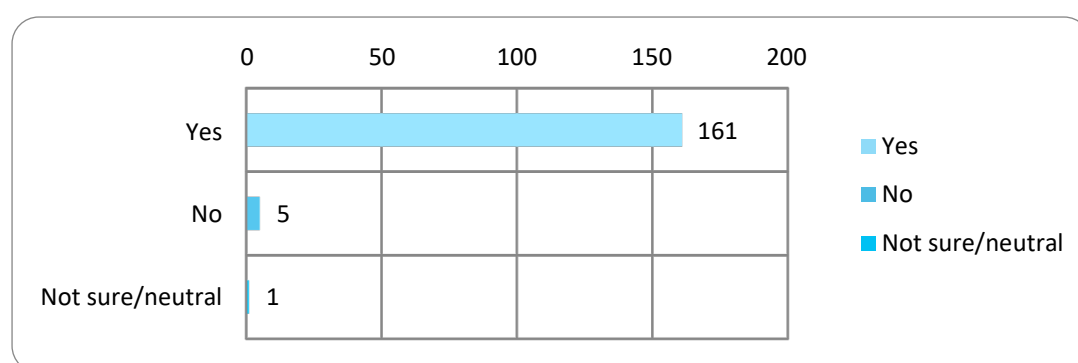
- **Vehicular movement:** The lane has not been used by vehicles for many years, there is no need for cars to use it now
- **Better environmental value:** as a green space by improving micro-climate, enhance urban ecology and increase biodiversity; and as a local food source to grow food like vegetables and herbs to supply to the community. This can also be used to educate the community about the environment, ecology, and food supply.
- **Social hub for the community:** children can play, and adults can gather to exchange gardening tips

There were 5 participants (3 online and 2 email respondents) do not support the closure and one is neutral. Reasons for not supporting the proposal include:

- **Exclusivity:** If it is to become a community green space, there is fear that it may be viewed as for the exclusive use by a select group of residents
- **Safety:** The clutter of plants, pots and furniture in the space may pose a hazard to pedestrians using the lane as a thoroughfare
- **Anti-social behaviour:** The pots might create hiding places for anti-social behaviour in the evenings and nights.

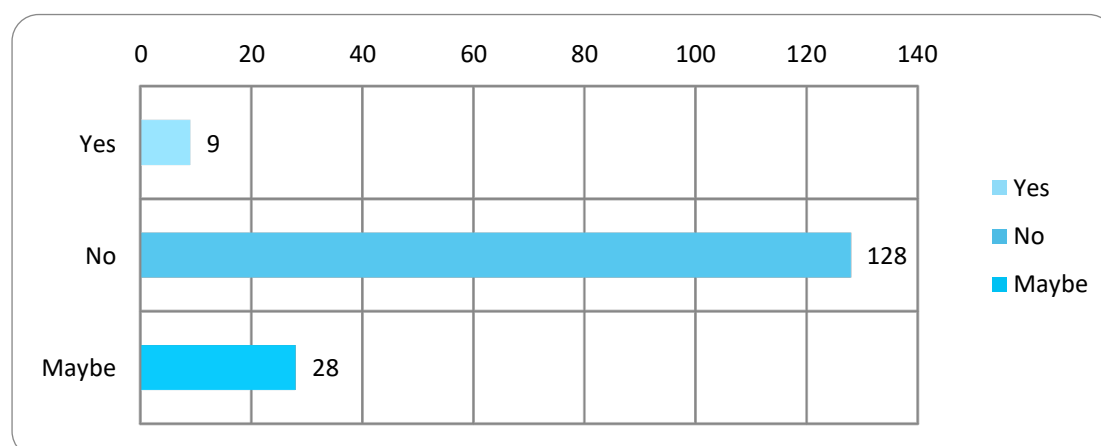
There were two participants who indicated that they did not support the closure, however their comments stated affirmative support for community activity in the lane.

Graph showing responses to 'Do you support the proposal to permanently close Ferris Lane to vehicles and encourage community activity?'



When asked about interest in being part of a group that manages the Ferris Lane green space, the majority responded 'no' (128 respondents), 9 respondents said yes, and 28 respondents said maybe.

Graph showing responses to 'Are you interested in being part of a group that manages the Ferris Lane green space?'



Other comments raised include:

- **Improving conditions for pedestrians** – such as lighting, resurfacing, maintaining clear pedestrian thoroughfare without hazards, maintains walkability, minimise hiding places
- **Better environmental value** - improves micro-climate, enhance urban ecology and increase biodiversity (plants, insects and frogs), local food source (supply of herbs and vegetables)
- **The community use improves health** – maintain an inclusive social space to be enjoyed by everyone, offering community connectedness through sharing of information and knowledge. Offers diverse sensory experiences by being a haven for residents and wildlife, nature in a concrete neighbourhood, offering tranquillity and colours.
- **Education and creativity** – learn about gardening, growing food and associated fauna
- **Aspirational** - Set a precedent for our generation

All comments are noted and will be carried on to the next round of engagement, subject to the outcome of the pending Local Traffic Committee meeting.

Concurrent to this outcomes report, a traffic report is being prepared to be tabled at the Local Traffic Committee meeting. Subject to the outcome of the meeting, further engagement may take place to support the forming of the community group and development of the green space concept design.