



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Informing Council's
Social Recovery
Efforts Towards the
COVID 19 Pandemic
Building a Case for
Service Advocacy



City of
Ipswich

1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Ipswich is a resilient community which has adapted well to the negative impacts to Covid-19. However, the pandemic has further increased socio-economic disparity among Ipswich's most vulnerable. Further, the report highlights:

- The challenge for Ipswich is to balance growth with socio-economic inequality. It is anticipated that the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are likely to be long-term.
- There is a digital divide within Ipswich. Covid-19 lockdowns highlight this.
- Ipswich's people are its wealth. Promoting as many job opportunities as possible is important to ensure good employment outcomes. Covid-19 saw job losses for casual workers and low-income earners.
- Ipswich will continue to have a pipeline of a younger workforce.
- Lifelong learning and narrowing the gap between training offered and changes in the job market will help ensure Ipswich has a flexible workforce.
- Building community connections along with socio-economic opportunities will be important in building a strong community as Ipswich changes.
- Underlying issues such as inadequate transport connectivity continue to be a reoccurring theme, not only in Ipswich, but across the West Moreton region.
- A regional view on service advocacy may be required. Ipswich plays a strategic role as service hub in the West Moreton region.

The findings were broadly consistent across the city indicating that some recovery work, such as rebuilding social connection, is required across the board. Future engagement will aim to narrow the focus by identifying and prioritising communities of most need by local areas. Community networks, strong local leadership and community connections are key to building community resilience.

2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS

A cross-section of stakeholders and residents (below) were invited to respond to questions relating to the challenges, impacts and ways that the community adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Telephone interviews were conducted with 400 Ipswich residents from 20 August to 7 September 2020. Telephone surveys were based on random sampling across the four divisions. Interviews with key stakeholders were also undertaken via online meetings, via telephone and (where appropriate) via face-to-face meetings.

The below table outlines some of the key demographics captured from the telephone surveys for each division of Ipswich.

Division 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 54% of respondents rent their homes ✓ 27% of respondents stated 'Home duties¹' as their work status
Division 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 88% of respondents stated they owned their homes ✓ 37% of respondents stated they work full-time
Division 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 11% of respondents were unemployed ✓ 31% of respondents work part-time ✓ 83% of respondents have lived in Division three for over 10 years
Division 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 95% of respondents stated they own their homes ✓ 44% of respondents stated they are retired ✓ 79% of respondents stated they've lived in Division four for over 10 years

3. FINDINGS HIGHLIGHT RESILIENCE, AND VULNERABILITY

Community conversations highlighted the following issues:

- Covid-19 has intensified existing socio-economic disadvantage in Ipswich.
- The most vulnerable are most impacted. These vulnerable groups include families and households, young people, homeless people and other residents unable to access social security benefits.
- Job insecurity, job loss and financial stress are major drivers of socio-economic and wellbeing issues.
- The findings indicate the potential for long-term inequality across Ipswich.
- Strengthening social connections is key to increasing community resilience. In turn, this will build greater social cohesion as Ipswich's identity continues to change with growth. While important, support services on their own are not enough without the support of positive local leadership and community networks to build community resilience.
- There is resilience across Ipswich with people using online means (where available) to stay connected.

4. IMPACTS ARE INTER-CONNECTED

Community conversations indicate a layered and complex story across Ipswich. A 'problem tree' (Figure 1), illustrates impacts and why some issues occurred as a result of, or were compounded by, COVID-19:

- **SYMPTOMS:** The leaves of a tree. These are the more obvious and direct impacts of the pandemic.
- **PROBLEM:** The tree trunk. The core issues cut across a wide cross-section of the community.
- **CAUSES:** The roots of a tree. These are pre-existing issues that drive and exacerbate impacts.

¹ Includes everyday household tasks, primarily by stay-at-home parent or individual.

5. NEXT STEPS

Additional engagement with the social services sector will be undertaken throughout 2021 to further understand social impacts and areas of need. The results of this engagement will be shared with the community on Shape Your Ipswich.

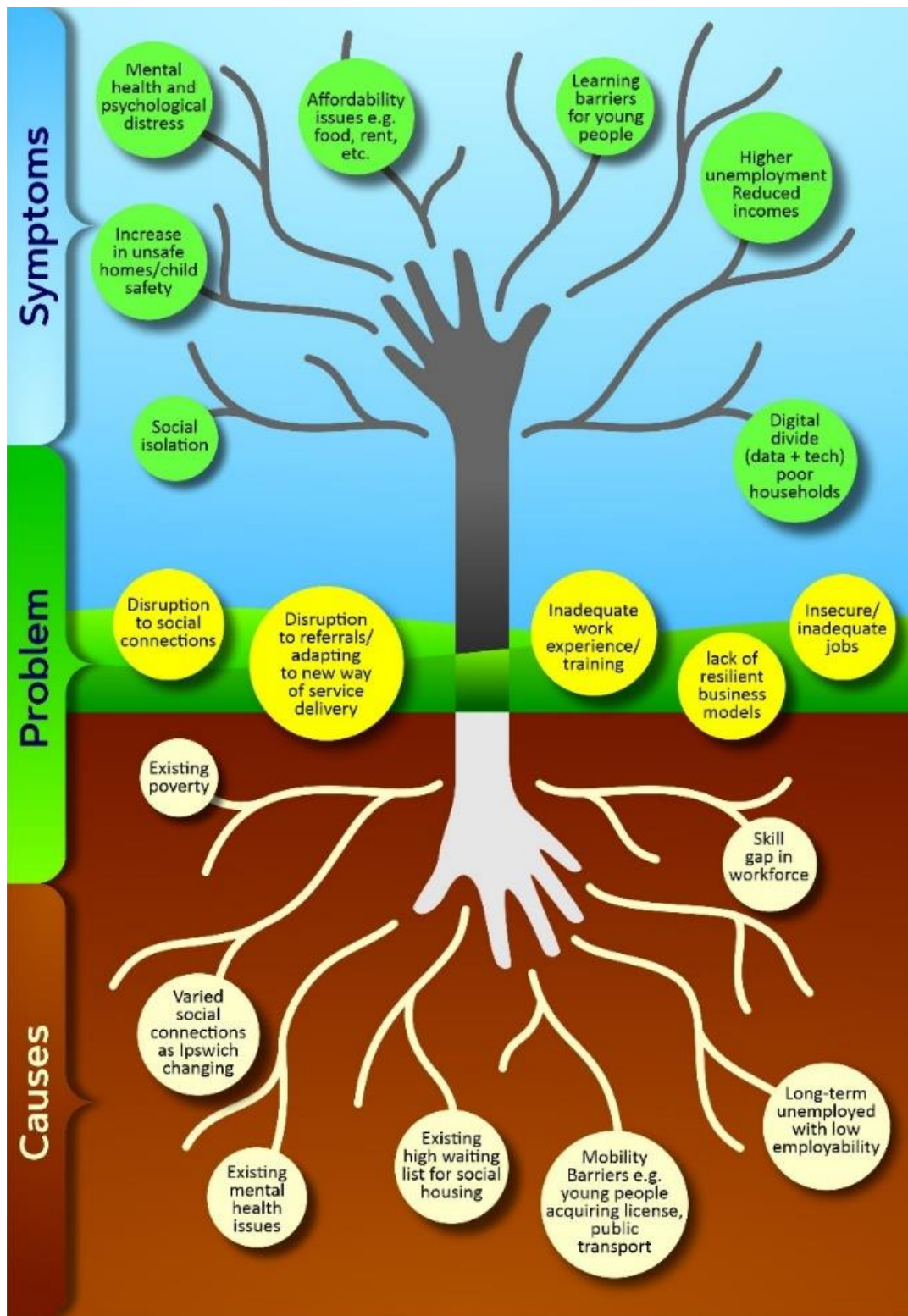


Figure 1. 'Problem tree' outlining existing causes, problems and symptoms/impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.