



5 JANUARY 2025

VOICES OF JAGAJAGA

COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT



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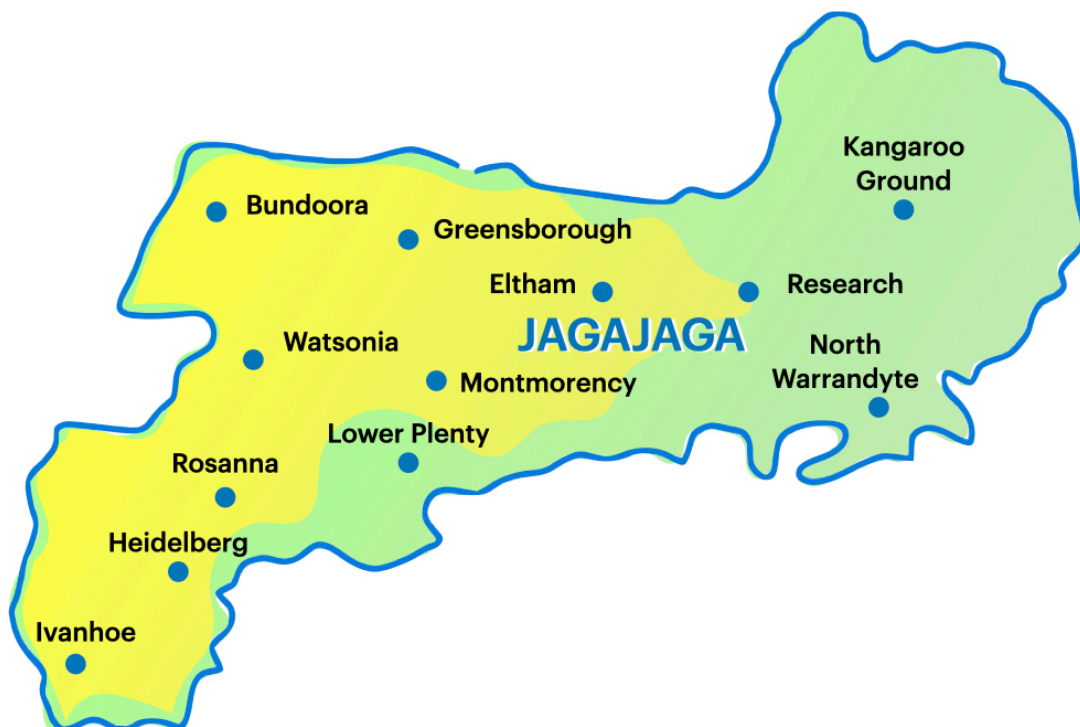
The Voices movement began in the Federal electorate of Indi in response to the community experiencing a sense of neglect by the incumbent sitting member of parliament. The movement provided a platform where members of the local community could express their views on a range of issues and to lobby for action to address them. The result was the election into federal parliament of a true representative of the community, independent of party politics. The success of this process in restoring democracy for local communities led to the formation of Voices groups across Australia and in the formation of the Communities Independent Project (CIP). The CIP is a collaboration to enable and support communities and Community Independents to build participatory democracy and conduct successful election campaigns.

The Voices of Jagajaga (VoJ) was formed in 2024 to provide a voice for the local community in the federal electorate of Jagajaga. The Voices of Jagajaga is a community group, not aligned to any political party, with the aim of supporting an independent candidate for election into federal parliament, someone who can truly represent the views of the electorate and act on its behalf, rather than be beholden to the interests of a political party or their external supporters.

Fundamental to this process is listening to the views of the community. This was done by asking people to contribute to a survey, either online or by answering questions in person. This report provides information about the survey and presents the outcomes.

THE ELECTORATE OF JAGAJAGA

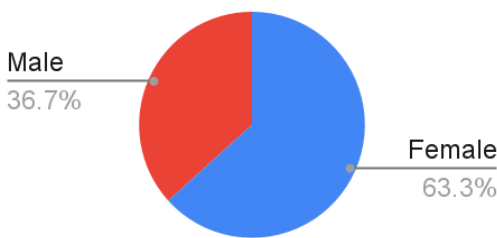
The electorate of Jagajaga resides in the state of Victoria and encompasses suburbs to the north east of the city of Melbourne. It includes the wealthier inner suburbs of Ivanhoe and Eaglemont to the south west, through the more moderate suburbs of Rosanna and Watsonia, extending along route 44 through to the more rural regions of Kangaroo Ground, more or less following the Yarra River valleys. The region is characterised by its green spaces, parklands and often a semi-rural environment.



THE SURVEY

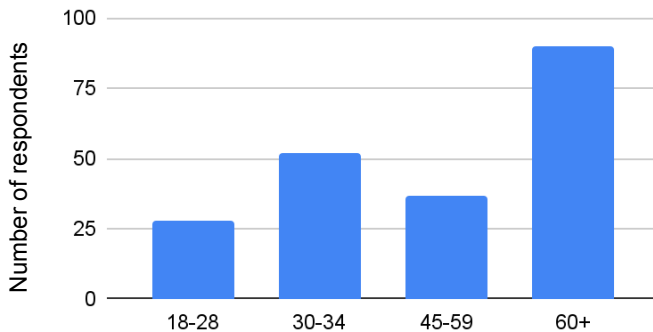
The survey was conducted mainly face-to-face by supporters of Voices of Jagajaga who asked members of the public for their opinions on a range of issues. The surveys were carried out at places in the electorate where people were gathering, such as markets, festivals, fun runs and local libraries. Most people were enthusiastic about being asked to contribute their views and the participation rate was very high. Their responses were recorded during the conversation.

Gender



Over 200 people were surveyed. The gender distribution and the age range of respondents show a bias towards females and to an older demographic, which is likely related to the times and places at which the surveys were conducted.

By Age Range (>200 Respondents)



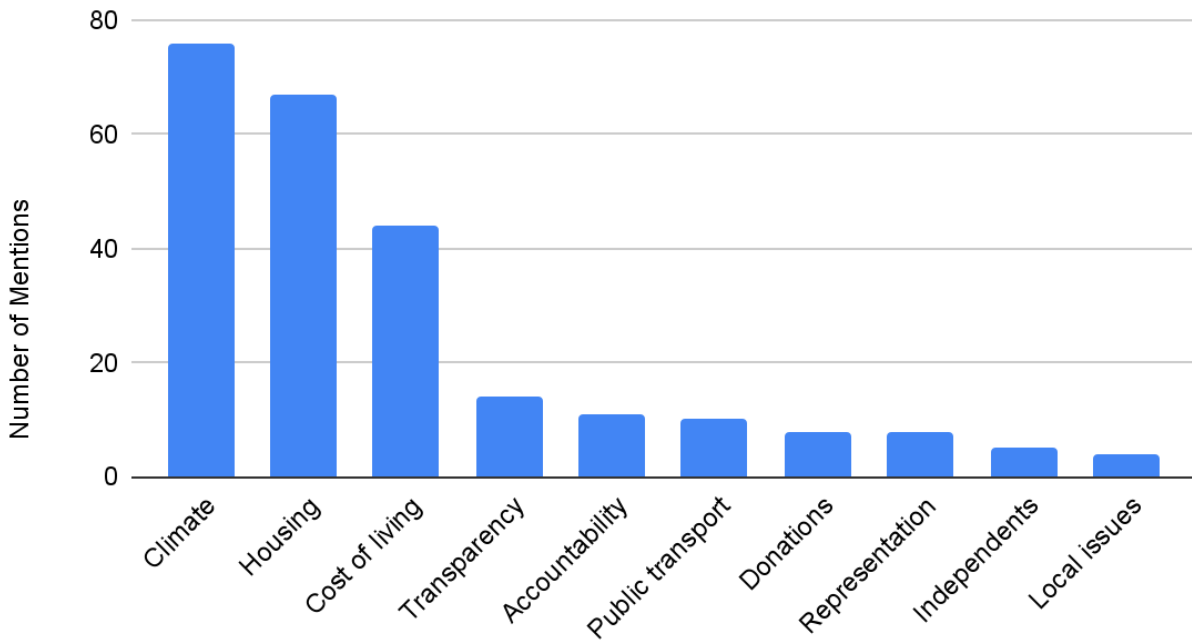
The survey questions are listed below. However, people were also asked to give opinions on any issues that are of concern to them.

The issues of main concern are summarised in the following chart. Also mentioned were concerns over the wars in Europe and the Middle East as well as aboriginal welfare and cultural recognition.

The most common concern was the impacts of climate change. This is probably not surprising since a recent report by the Climate Council noted that 84% of Australians had been affected by at least one climate-fuelled disaster since 2019.

The rise in the cost of living also appeared in the top three issues of concern, which in some part is also connected to the climate crisis. Fossil fuels like oil and gas produce greenhouse gases when burnt, leading to air pollution and recent price rises are pushing up inflation and increasing the cost of living for Australian families. The pollution affects health, particularly of children, and climate-induced disasters cause

Main Concerns



insurance premiums to rise in order to cover the costs. Moreover the rising price of fossil fuels leads to higher transport costs, which are reflected in the price of every day items and the cost of heating or cooling homes. The large injection of cash into the economy by the government during the COVID pandemic has also contributed to the recent rises in inflation.

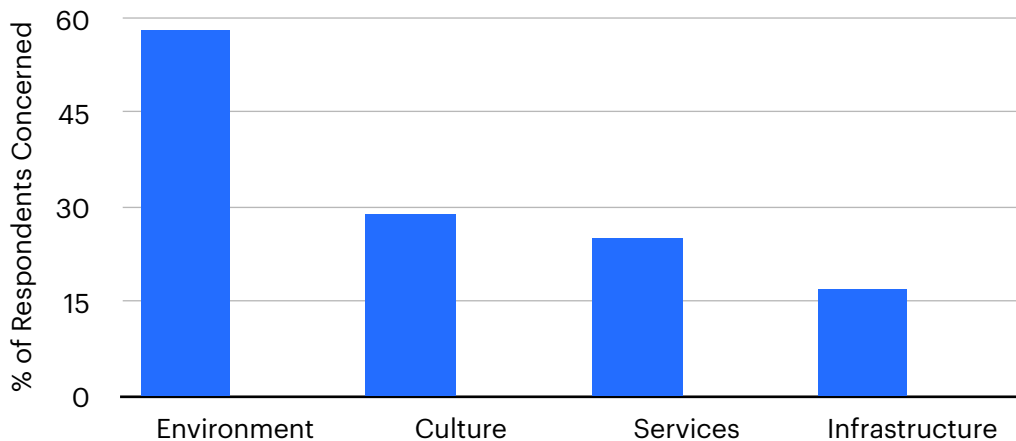
The cost and availability of housing also are of concern to the residents of Jagajaga who were surveyed. The problems with housing supply and affordability have been known by government at least since 2004, as reported in the recently released government papers for that year. A recent [report](#) by the ABC on the 2023 federal budget attributed the continued rise in the cost of housing to the population increasing too quickly, the lack of supply of housing stock and the decline in government investment in social housing. These factors along with inflation have increased the amount of money required to service a new loan from 29 per cent of annual income in 2020 to 46 per cent in 2023, which is now well above the 30 per cent threshold for mortgage stress. Moreover, most building materials for Australian homes come from overseas despite the availability of local products, which is largely driven by price and leads to lower quality construction. The development of new housing stock and its impact on the amenity of Jagajaga were issues raised by some respondents in the survey.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. *What are the best things about living in Jagajaga?*
2. *What could be improved to make Jagajaga a better place?*
3. *What do you think makes a really good political representative?*
4. *Do you feel you have an adequate voice in the way you are represented at the Federal Level? If not, why not?*
5. *What would make for a stronger, more accountable relationship between people and elected representatives?*
6. *What issues in Jagajaga are you concerned about?*
7. *What National issues are you concerned about?*
8. *What do you think can be done to deal with these issues effectively?*

LIVING IN JAGAJAGA

People overwhelmingly appreciate the natural landscapes, greenery and proximity to rural areas in Jagajaga as well as its relative proximity to Melbourne’s central business district. The semi-rural feel to many of the suburbs and the closeness to the Yarra Valley were viewed as positive attributes.

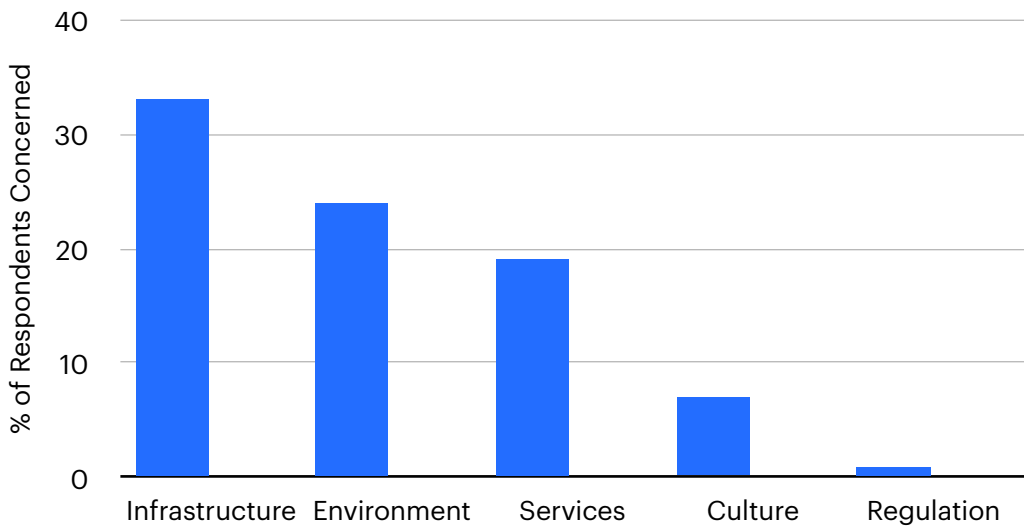


The survey respondents felt there was a strong sense of community and belonging in Jagajaga. The electorate is seen as having good community connections and community focus, with amenities like parks, gardens, local swimming pools, libraries and shopping strips with generally friendly people. There were a mix of views on public transport ranging between poor access to reasonable and good public

transport. This may be related to proximity to railway stations and the ability to access them in reasonable time.

CHALLENGES IN JAGAJAGA

Although Jagajaga is well-liked as a place to live, there are always things that can be improved. Many people want to see protections to maintain open spaces and vegetation. They are concerned about tree cover disappearing, with trees being cut down, as well as changes to the living environment. It was recognised that more affordable housing is required including more public housing. Even so there is a feeling there is not enough control over developments such as housing units. Underpinning this appears to be a desire for better building design and planning to ensure that increasing housing density does not negatively impact local neighbourhoods and amenity.



Road maintenance was a major issue with concern over the poor state of some of the roads that were considered unsafe. People want to see better planning in development to ensure new housing estates are “walkable” with paths connecting streets and improved public transport to reduce our dependence on cars. The issue of improving public transport was raised, particularly to access the greater Melbourne region.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVE

Many people stressed the importance of transparency, accountability and honesty in our political leaders. Some felt that a good representative should have a thorough

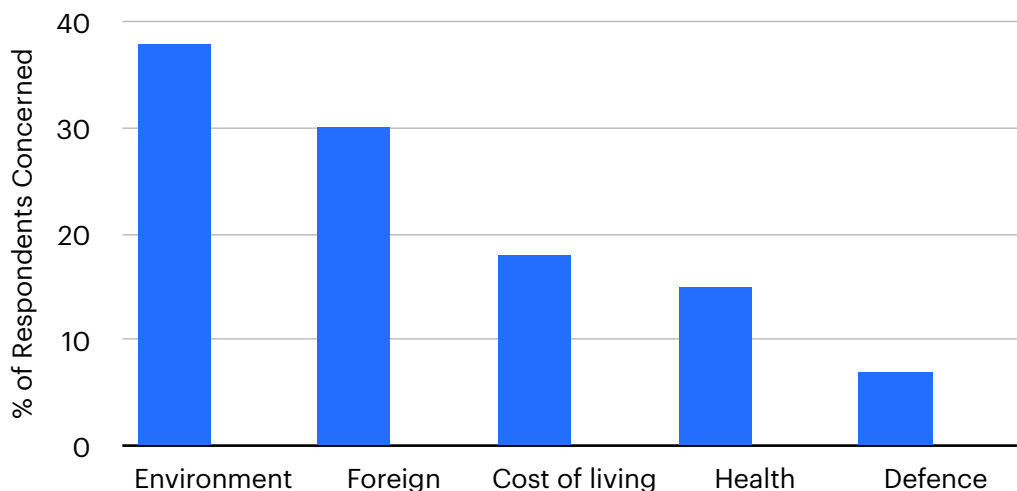
understanding of local issues and actively listen to the concerns of people in their electorate without being swayed by external influences. People are concerned about the undue influence of money in politics, the issue of donations to political parties and their influence on political decisions. There is strong support for representatives who are independent and not swayed by political donations.

A VOICE IN PARLIAMENT - STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Over half the respondents to the survey (56%) were concerned that they did not have an adequate voice in the way they were represented in parliament. There was generally good support for the local member of parliament but 13% held the view that the local member was constrained by their association with a political party and having to vote according to a party line. A recurring theme was the need to reduce or cap political donations to ensure fairness and accountability. Many respondents believe that having more independents in parliament would lead to a more accountable system of government.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES OF CONCERN

There are deep concerns about climate change and biodiversity loss. There is a feeling that Australia is not doing enough to help mitigate the effects of climate change and that our environmental standards are too low, resulting in species extinction. Australia has the highest rate of animal extinction of any country in the world, driven by factors such as habitat modification and destruction, invasive predators, changing fire patterns due to loss of cultural practices of first nations people as well as climate change. As reported in [The Conversation](#), current government plans for protecting the environment are too weak and highly unlikely to succeed, while politicians continue to approve the destruction of the environment that critically endangered species depend on. Moreover the current government approves projects to mine fossil fuels, a policy inconsistent with limiting global warming to below two degrees. These facts feed the



perception that there is inaction on critical issues and lead to dissatisfaction with current governance.

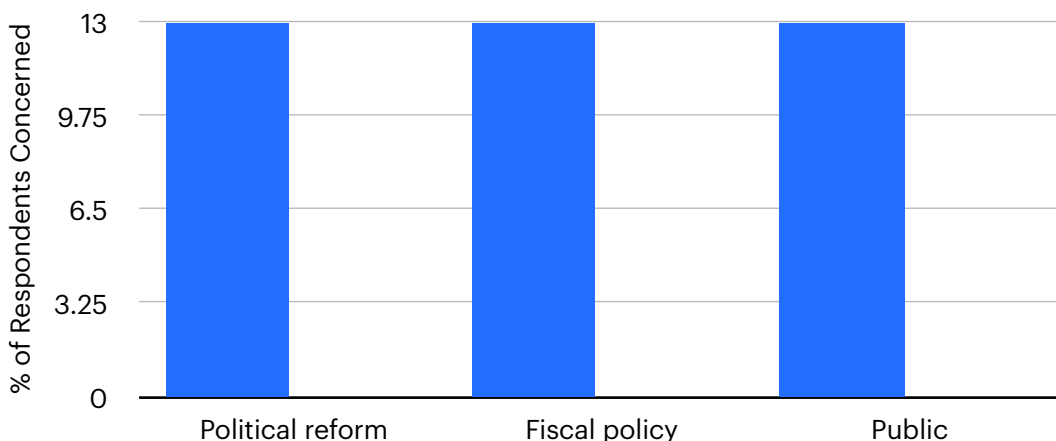
Although people are concerned about foreign affairs, such as conflicts in Europe and the Middle East and potential threats from China, most of these are outside of our control. However, the issue of immigration worried some people, with a mixture of views as to how to approach it but most with concern about how it is impacting on housing availability and cost.

The cost of living continues to be an issue of national concern for residents of Jagajaga particularly with regard to food, transport and fuel costs. There were separate mentions of the health system and particularly the increasing costs to access health and dental care. Concern over the privatisation of public assets rated several mentions.

Some people in Jagajaga are concerned about a number of issues relating to defence, such as the potential threat from China, the cost of Australia’s involvement in AUKUS with the expensive submarine deals and Australian companies benefiting from the sale of armaments.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The community in Jagajaga suggested a range of actions that could be implemented to solve the problems we face. Political reform is required to create more independent voices in parliament as well as placing caps on political donations. People expressed a need for systems to hold politicians accountable for their actions and mechanisms to ensure transparency. Examples of responses included “better transparency in governance” and “authentic engagement”. People felt there needed to be more input and participation from locals within the electorate to drive good solutions to local problems. There is a need for the concerns of locals to be heard and solutions “co-designed” with the local community.



Some respondents advocated for economic changes, such as removing negative gearing to make housing more affordable. Continuing the theme of political independence, many believed that having more independent representatives would lead to better outcomes for key issues.

SUMMARY

In general, the community in Jagajaga have a strong appreciation for the natural beauty and the community spirit in the electorate. They see a good representative in parliament as someone who is intelligent, committed to improving the lives of their constituents and are open to different ideas. A stronger relationship with the community can be obtained just by listening to their concerns.

The people in Jagajaga are concerned about climate change, a sluggish economy and a lack of political vision from major political parties. There are frustrations with governance, public services and infrastructure with a lack of decisive government action on important issues. The community expressed deep concerns about inaction to reduce the impacts of climate change and the economic challenges they face with regard to cost of living pressures and housing. There is a desire for elected representatives to be braver and make bold decisions when required.

While the incumbent Federal member was sometimes mentioned in a positive light, at a personable level, political parties were not. Frustrations and deeply held concerns remain. It is, therefore, likely that an independent Jagajaga candidate, free to represent the community without the constraints of party politics, would be strongly supported.

