

# **The TrainToCessnock.org User Survey March 2024**

We would like to thank the 995 people who spent the time to complete the survey and an interesting point was that the percentage results to most questions remained pretty stable; all the way from 100 to 995.

The promotion of the survey was done via Facebook community pages, the project website and Facebook page. There were no paid ad sets or boosted posts targeting particular Facebook users.

Often surveys used to discuss even national issues do not have samples much bigger than this and for example the survey results quoted in the recent Cessnock City Council Draft Traffic and Transport plan had only 188 responses; and that is considered a hot topic in the city.

Let's discuss the results of the TrainToCessnock.org survey.

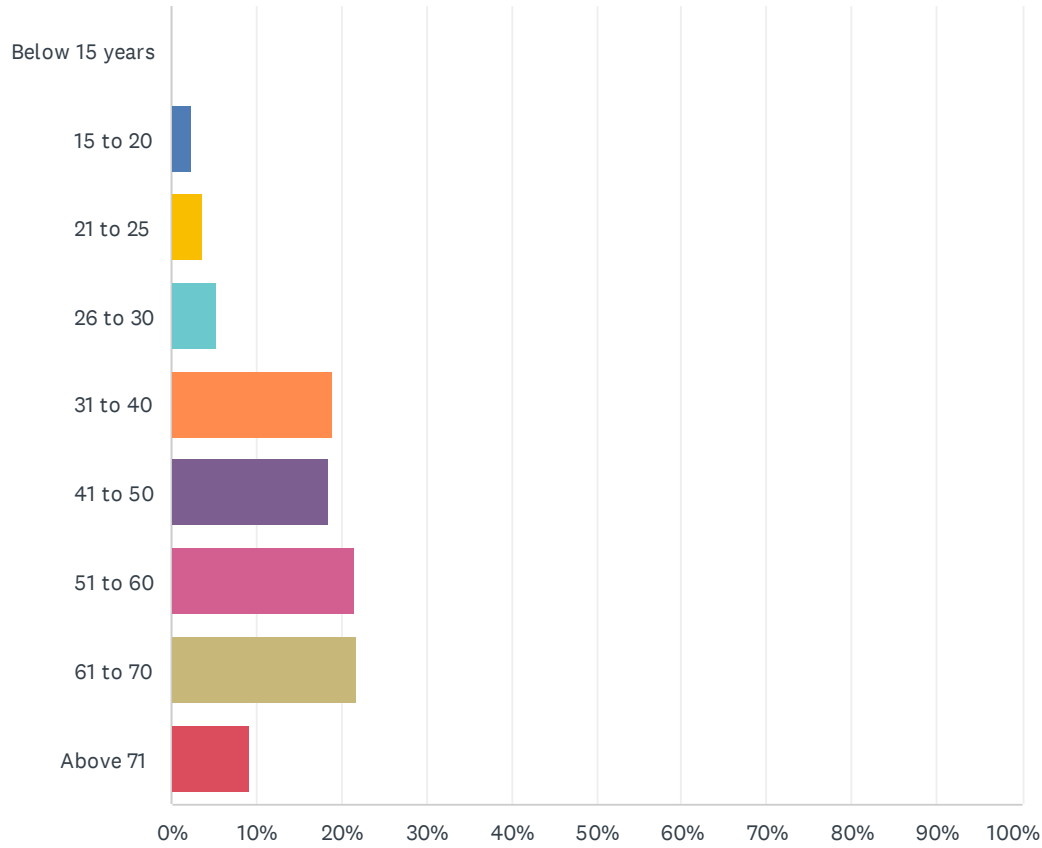
## **Question One:**

Ages of respondents may reflect the age group who use Facebook vs Instagram or TikTok, however it also is the demographic most likely to have young families through to the retired seniors in the community; who might be more interested in public transport, community issues and local political effectiveness.

Ages 31-70 pretty evenly represented in the four options.

## Q1 Which age group are you in?

Answered: 954 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Below 15 years	0.00%	0
15 to 20	2.41%	23
21 to 25	3.67%	35
26 to 30	5.24%	50
31 to 40	18.97%	181
41 to 50	18.45%	176
51 to 60	21.49%	205
61 to 70	21.70%	207
Above 71	9.22%	88
Total Respondents: 954		

## **Question Two: Which Station is Closest**

Not surprisingly Cessnock and Bellbird showed the highest concentration of responses when considering the population size and growth.

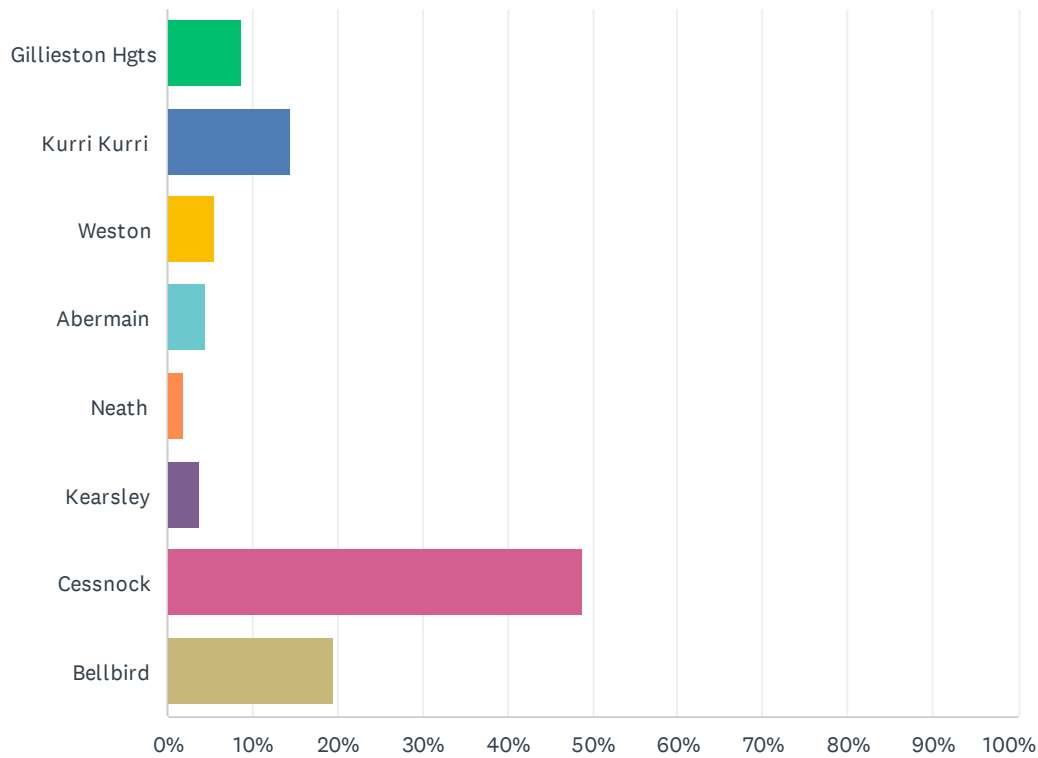
Kurri Kurri and Gillieston Hgts coming in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

As the survey was equally promoted via community boards this result may also reflect which boards are most active.

To add to the discussion, being the furthest away from Maitland the respondents from Bellbird and Cessnock may be more engaged in the discussion as a train will be a noticeable improvement in transport options.

## Q2 Which Station Will Be Closest To You?

Answered: 946 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Gillieston Hgts	8.67%	82
Kurri Kurri	14.59%	138
Weston	5.60%	53
Abermain	4.55%	43
Neath	2.01%	19
Kearsley	3.81%	36
Cessnock	48.73%	461
Bellbird	19.56%	185
Total Respondents: 946		

### **Question Three:**

Do you feel the NSW government needs to acquire the privately owned railway corridor from Maitland to Bellbird for future passenger rail services?

This was a resounding yes!

91.5% said so, with only 3.7% saying no; the remainder undecided.

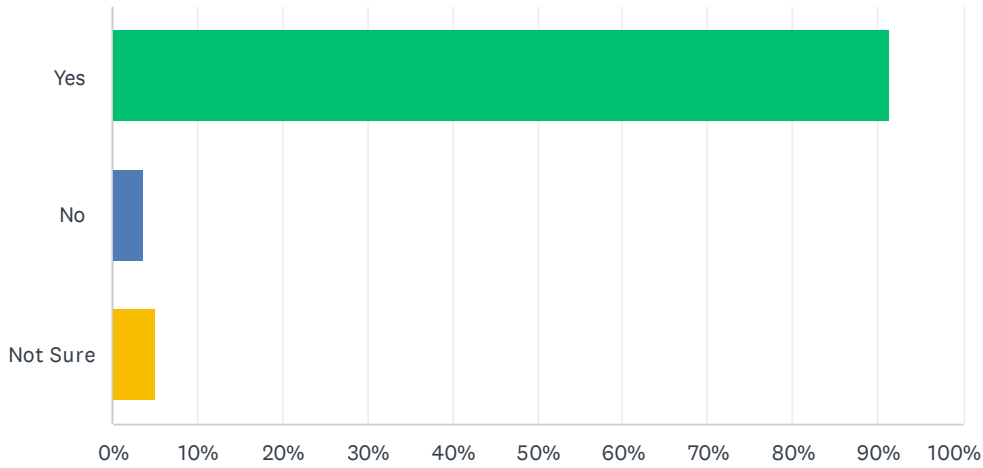
This is supportive of the current strategic plans to run trains from Newcastle to Cessnock via Kurri Kurri.

Transport for NSW think it will be something to do in the future to address the expected continued population growth up to 112,000 people by 2041 for the Cessnock LGA.

The survey response would say that the community is strongly in favour of doing this.

### Q3 Do you feel the NSW government needs to acquire the privately owned railway corridor from Maitland to Bellbird for future passenger rail services?

Answered: 954 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.51%	873
No	3.67%	35
Not Sure	5.14%	49
Total Respondents: 954		

## **Question Four:**

**Do you feel the NSW government needs to acquire the corridor as a matter of some urgency?**

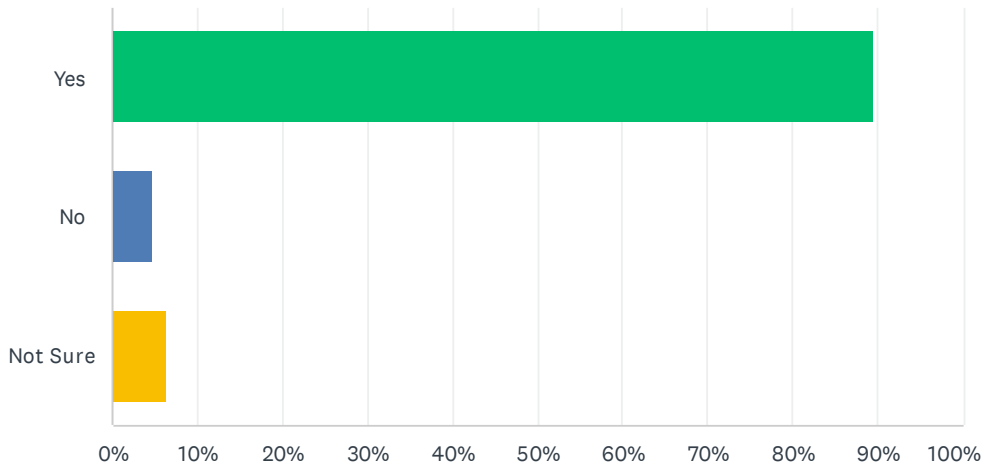
Once again, the results of the answer are strongly in favour, with 89.5% saying this needs to be an urgent action by the state government, 4.6% saying they didn't think it was an urgent action and the remaining 6.4% being unsure.

For those who have read the business case as part of their education on this issue they will recognise the unique set of circumstances around timing.

For others it maybe related to their personal need to have more effective public transport options available in the near future and see action now important.

## Q4 Do you feel the NSW government needs to acquire the corridor as a matter of some urgency?

Answered: 953 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.51%	853
No	4.62%	44
Not Sure	6.40%	61
Total Respondents: 953		



## **Question Five:**

**Do you feel the NSW government should be taking action in this current term to upgrade the railway line and start regular passenger train services between Newcastle / Maitland and Bellbird?**

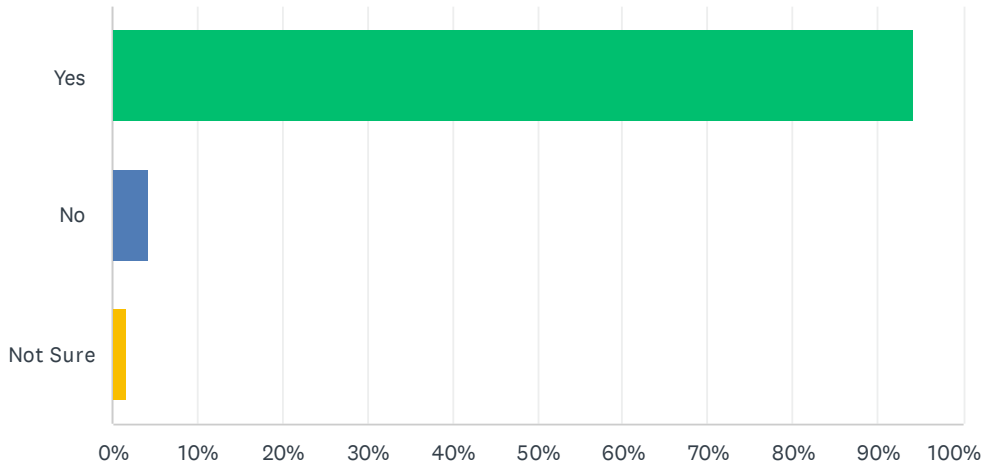
The sentiment supporting action to be taken on moving forward with the work necessary to start a train service into the Cessnock area is also very strong.

94.2% of respondents saying they want the current state government to act on this and act on it in this first term of the current ALP leadership.

Only 4.2% don't feel the current term is the time to take action (if any, as these responses maybe just against the train service being introduced at all) and the remaining 1.8% are not decided on this term being the time to act.

### Q5 Do you feel the NSW government should be taking action in this current term to upgrade the railway line and start regular passenger train services between Newcastle / Maitland and Bellbird?

Answered: 953 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.23%	898
No	4.20%	40
Not Sure	1.78%	17
Total Respondents: 953		

## Question Six:

**If this should be a priority project for the NSW government; do you feel that with a strong case supporting it, the current government will take action?**

The response to this question should be a bit sobering for the NSW state government as a whole and particularly to MPs of the area.

Pulled apart, the respondents overwhelmingly decided this was a matter for the state to consider with some urgency.

Then, when presented with the question above; when if a strong case to support the introduction of passenger services under the current ALP leadership in NSW, will that government do something about providing the services. Well, there is not a lot of faith shown in the answers to Q6.

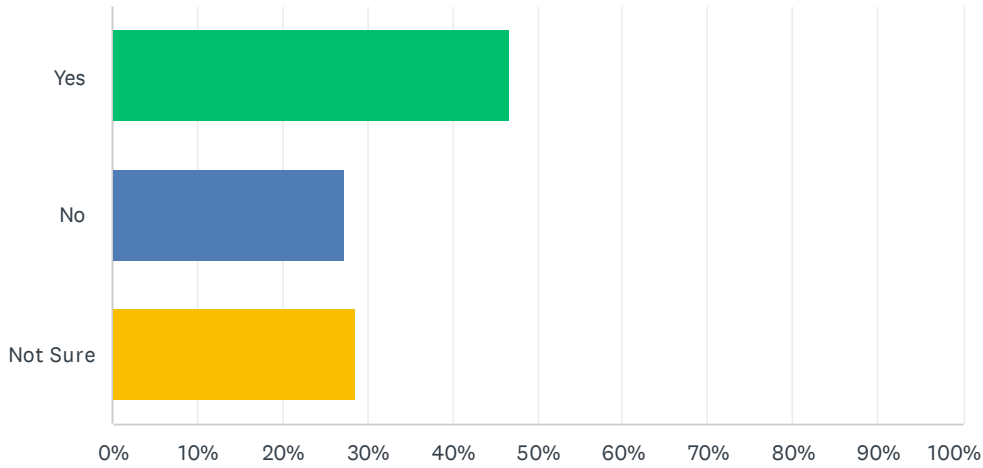
Less than half thought the state would act, even with a strong supporting case to proceed at 46.7%.

The **remaining 55.7%** were sure they would not or were unsure they would (27.23% and 28.48%).

This is interesting as the local Cessnock MP was re-elected with 48.7% of the primary vote; with the result here perhaps indicating that those voters have faith in the party they elected to take action.

### Q6 If this should be a priority project for the NSW government; do you feel that with a strong case supporting it, the current government will take action?

Answered: 955 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.70%	446
No	27.23%	260
Not Sure	28.48%	272
Total Respondents: 955		

## **Question Seven:**

**If you don't believe the government will take action, can you select a reason from the list below?**

The responses to this question are best observed on the survey data page for the question.

Strong point to observe is that 48.7% of the responses were that

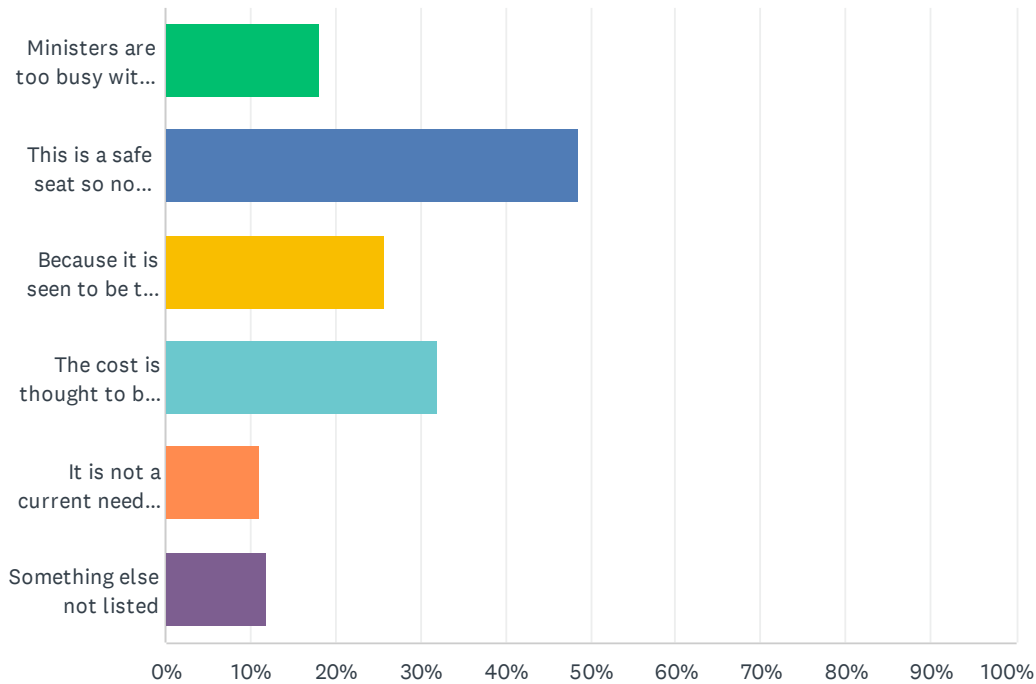
**“This is a safe seat so no government spends here”**

Once again, it is sobering to see that voters are cynical about the state taking action in this part of the region because of perceived political gains from investment elsewhere.

The next two highest responses were that the government would think it was too big a project or that it would be deemed too expensive.

## Q7 If you don't believe the government will take action, can you select a reason from the list below?

Answered: 803 Skipped: 152



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ministers are too busy with higher priority projects	18.18%	146
This is a safe seat so no government spends here	48.69%	391
Because it is seen to be too big of a job	25.90%	208
The cost is thought to be too high	32.00%	257
It is not a current need, but we will keep thinking on it	11.08%	89
Something else not listed	11.96%	96
Total Respondents: 803		

## **Question Eight:**

### **When rails services are introduced will you or your family members use the trains?**

When you go through the survey results yourself you will see how many people didn't apply an answer to each question. For example, with a complex question like Q7 there were 152 who didn't answer at all. What does this mean?

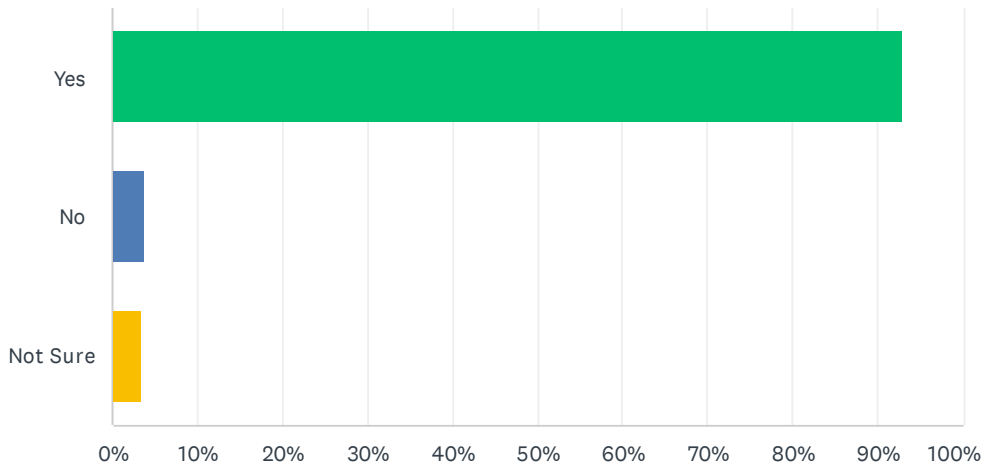
It may be related to time available to complete the survey and it looked like that one needed more consideration or they don't have an opinion as to why. This survey showed a strong interest in adding opinion to the issue; with all the surveys started being completed. Most question were answered by everyone or only a few people skipping past.

Only 5 skipped Q8 and of those that answered 93% say they will use the trains once they are introduced into the Cessnock area; which is a very strong positive response. There was less than 4% who said they wouldn't and the remaining less than 4% not sure if they would.

Now if this was a marketing survey it would be normal to expand this result into the population and state something like "These statistics mean that 44,640 people will use the trains". We are not suggesting this is the case; what can be suggested is that there is strong community support for a train service being introduced and our survey suggests it will be used.

## Q8 When rails services are introduced will you or your family members use the trains?

Answered: 950 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	93.05%	884
No	3.89%	37
Not Sure	3.47%	33
Total Respondents: 950		



## **Question Nine:**

**If yes (to using the trains), please select the main destinations you think will be travelling to.**

We suggest you look through these answers yourself on the following page.

What was clear, the majority of respondents were considering multiple uses for the train service.

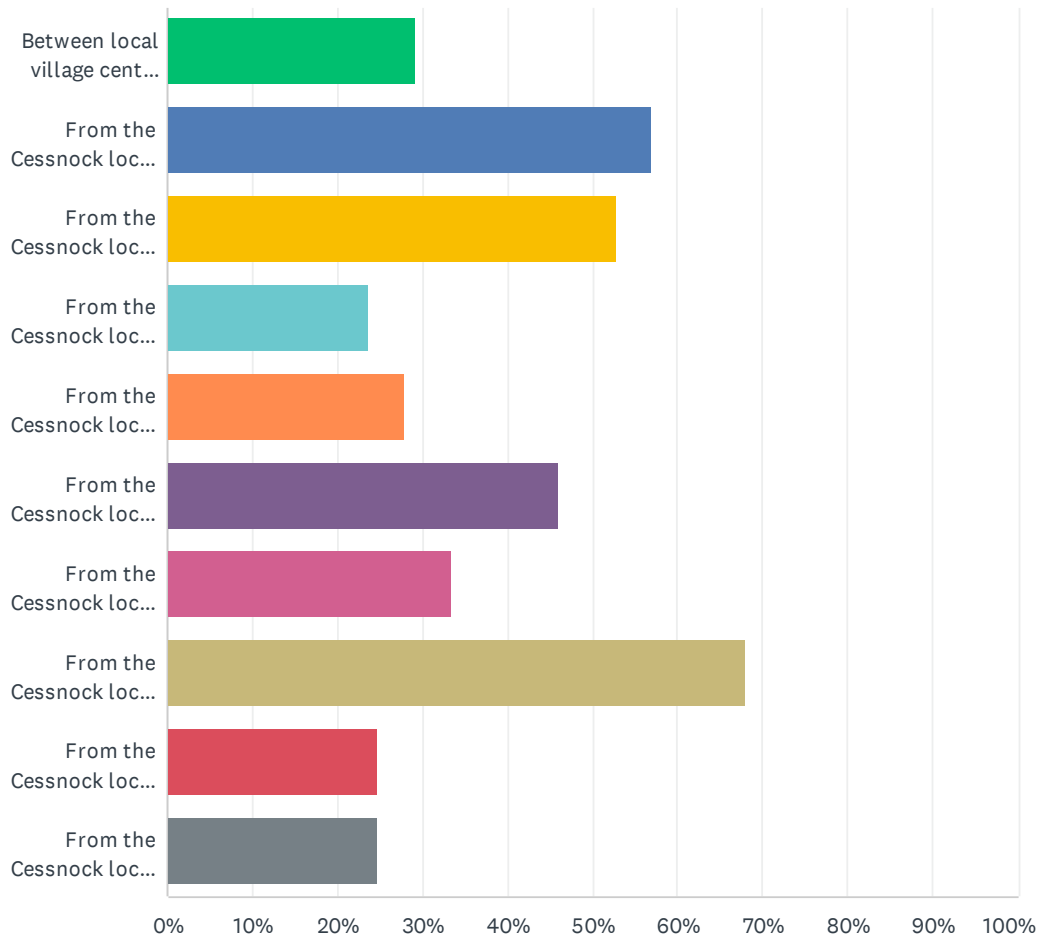
Standing out was travelling south towards Sydney with 67.9% looking for that connection.

Next was the Maitland destination at 56.9%.

What the answers do indicate is that the train service is not just a train from Newcastle to Cessnock; but a connection for the Cessnock area outwards to the whole state and beyond.

## Q9 If yes , please select the main destinations you think will be travelling to

Answered: 907 Skipped: 48



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Between local village centres i.e. from Kurri Kurri to Cessnock rather than Maitland and further away.	29.11%	264
From the Cessnock local area to Maitland.	56.89%	516
From the Cessnock local area to the New Maitland Hospital and Greenhills (Metford).	52.81%	479
From the Cessnock local area to stations between Maitland and Sandgate.	23.59%	214
From the Cessnock local area to Newcastle University (Warrabrook).	27.89%	253
From the Cessnock local area to stations between Warranrook and Newcastle Interchange.	45.98%	417
From the Cessnock local area to stations between Warrabrook and Central Coast (via Broadmeadow).	33.52%	304
From the Cessnock local area to Sydney and / or beyond.	67.92%	616
From the Cessnock local area to Dungog and/ or beyond (towards Brisbane).	24.70%	224
From the Cessnock local area to Scone and / or beyond (towards Tamworth and Armidale).	24.81%	225
Total Respondents: 907		

## **Question Ten:**

### **What do you think would be you and / or your family's main reasons for catching the train?**

There are quite a few strong responses to this question, with only 36 skipping it; which is around the number of people saying they oppose the train operating at all.

You can see by looking through the answers; again this is not a service seen as one for the less fortunate who can't drive a car everywhere. It is seen as a viable transport option for many different purposes and destinations.

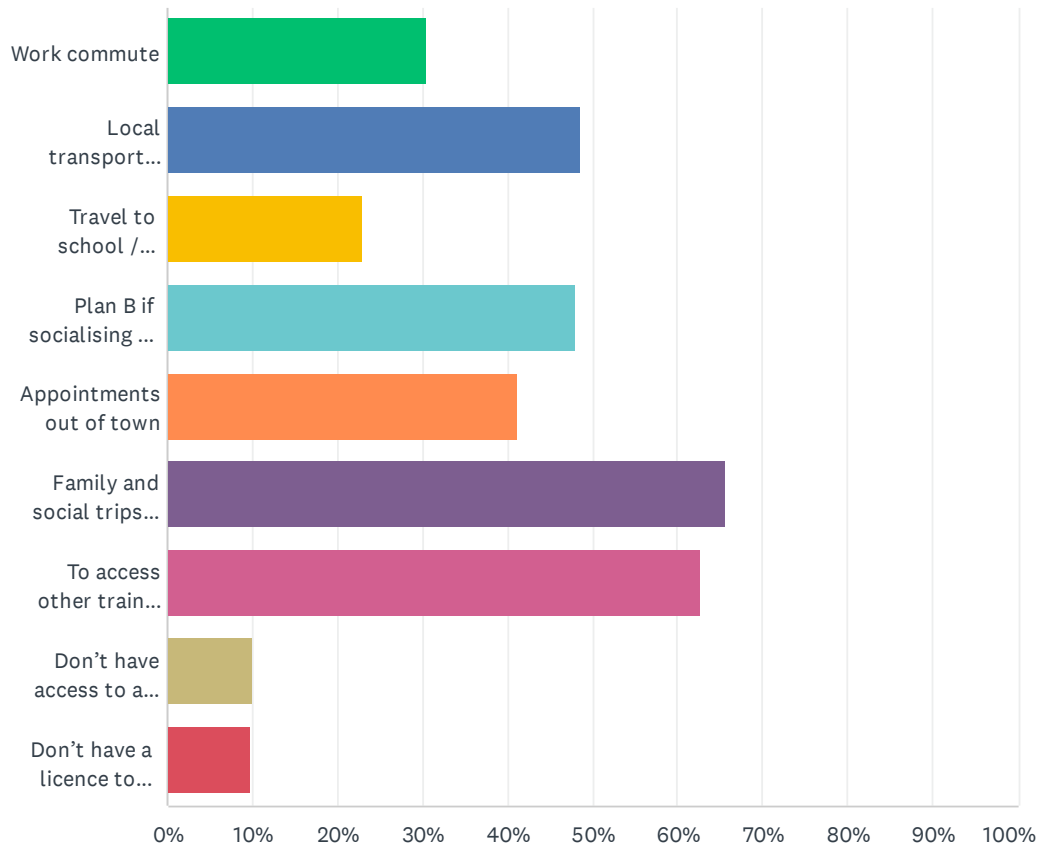
The connection to other trains for further travel and local transport for social and work stand out; which is the ideal use for local rail services.

Please check the following data to get a feel for the use preferences.

Thanks for keeping in touch with this important initiative in regional public transport.

## Q10 What do you think would be you and / or your family's main reasons for catching the train ?

Answered: 919 Skipped: 36



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Work commute	30.47%	280
Local transport between towns	48.64%	447
Travel to school / college / university	23.07%	212
Plan B if socialising in a town on the line	47.99%	441
Appointments out of town	41.24%	379
Family and social trips i.e. Newcastle beaches, events etc	65.72%	604
To access other train journeys i.e. Sydney	62.68%	576
Don't have access to a private car	10.12%	93
Don't have a licence to drive	9.79%	90
Total Respondents: 919		