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Survey finds Perth's satisfaction rating has fallen

A new survey conducted for the Committee for Perth has uncovered a tale of two cities, finding that fewer people believe Perth has changed for the better, their overall satisfaction level about living here has fallen and they're worse off financially than they were. On the other hand, the survey found an overwhelming percentage of people would recommend living here and like the new developments around town.

"What the survey tells us is that while there's a lot of talk about green shoots in the economy, yet that optimism isn't currently reflected in homes across Greater Perth. Taking stock of the results, only 59% of people surveyed said they were satisfied with living in Perth, this is a substantial fall from the 73% just three years ago," said Committee for Perth CEO, Marion Fulker.

"We can see that flatter employment and economic prospects are driving negative sentiment, two-in-five households reported being financially worse off than they were five years ago and only 37% thought their economic situation has improved. Forty-one percent of people say there aren't enough jobs for their skills and there are less jobs available here than elsewhere, and more than a third aren't happy with their employment prospects in Perth."

The online Perth Perception Survey carried out by Ipsos in May, asked more than 600 people from across Perth representing a range of ages and backgrounds, 184 questions, including why they live in Perth, what changes they'd make if they were Premier, their work circumstances, retirement plans and thoughts about the changing face of Perth.

"Overall, 41% of people thought Perth has changed for the better, down from 60% in 2015, while 33% thought it had changed for the worse, up from 25%. Urban development, infrastructure and entertainment were given a tick of approval, while cost of living, social issues and infrastructure were seen as getting worse. So interestingly, infrastructure was seen as being good and bad, but the survey also discovered there was strong support for new developments like the freeway expansion, Perth Arena, Optus Stadium, rail investment and Metronet," added Mrs Fulker.

"When it came to whether Greater Perth had a strong, stable economy, with equal access to opportunities and no barriers to upward mobility, people aged between 35 and 54 strongly disagreed that it did, compared with the other age groups. This view could relate to where they are in their lives, with a heightened sense of financial responsibility, possibly children living at home and a focus on earning money and paying off debt."

The majority of residents don't see Perth as having a diverse and stable economy, instead positive perceptions are based on climate and lifestyle. When it came to what makes Perth a good place to live, 74% said feeling safe, 56% affordable decent housing, 47% high-quality health services, 42% access to the natural environment and 36% reliable and efficient public transport.

When asked what issue they'd address if they were Premier for a day, the top five answers were:

- Cost of living 20%
- Social issues 20%
- Infrastructure, including transport 16%
- The economy 14%
- Government/policy-making 13%

"This is a stark turnaround from our last survey in 2015, which found that transport was clearly the number one issue, with almost half the people surveyed saying it needed addressing. This year, there's a much more even spread of issues around utility bills and taxes, more police, tougher criminal penalties, and tackling homelessness and drug use," said Mrs Fulker.

"Looking to the future, people were asked to compare the current importance of an issue with their future expectations. This gap analysis revealed the issues people were worried about were strong effective government, a strong, stable economy and Perth being an affordable place to live."

"While population growth, migration and density are seen to be critical for the success of Perth's future, support for change is divided, particularly in the 55-plus age group. They showed the least support for population growth, encouraging migration to Perth and more high-density living."

On the work front, the survey found that 69% of people would like to work more flexible hours if their employers allowed it, 62% would like to work less than full-time, if it didn't impact on their career and 35% believe working part-time is frowned upon by employers. For working parents, childcare was still an issue, with 46% saying that the daily costs weren't low enough to justify working.

"Workplace opportunities weren't perceived as being equal, with more than half of the men saying there weren't any barriers to being promoted in Perth, compared to 36% of women. And, 35% of men thought everyone has equal access to opportunities, while only 23% of women did."

The survey confirmed that people plan to work longer, with an average retirement age of 64.2. Even then, 78% won't retire completely but will reduce their hours, volunteer, work from home, mentor or work in another field or profession.

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