

Press Release Results of Visitor Survey

During January and February, the Merriwa District Progress Association conducted a survey of more than one hundred visitors to Merriwa to gauge their opinion of the town and to identify any changes that could be made to improve its tourism appeal and local amenity.

Approximately 60% of those surveyed were travelling through town, with only about 10% staying overnight. They stopped at the toilets, visited the silo art and the Welcoming Centre, and shopped at the cafés and bakery.

Overall, those surveyed felt very welcome in Merriwa and found it a very friendly town. Around 70% travelled in cars, another 15% with caravans, and around 10% on motorbikes. Most found parking quite easy, but a few thought the roads required maintenance.

Surprisingly, only 25% of those surveyed were travelling with children on board. Unsurprisingly, many were travelling between the greater Newcastle area or the mid-north coast and central New South Wales.

Some of the suggestions to improve Merriwa included:

- more seating in the main street to relax in the shade;
- installing street art and historical information;
- main street makeover;
- walking and cycle tracks around town;
- tourist drives;
- heavy haulage bypass around town;
- more events after running of the sheep (Festival of the Fleeces);
- many venues closed for meals on weekends; and
- caravan park is too open, too small and too close to the highway.

The full results of this survey have been distributed to local businesses that service the travelling public, appropriate community groups and the Upper Hunter Shire Council.

Remember, residents can present their opinions and ideas on local issues to the Merriwa District Progress Association at its meetings held on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:00 PM at the Merriwa RSL Club, or email merriwaprogress@gmail.com.

**Stephen Gowlland,
Secretary, MDPA
15 March 2021**