



2021 National
Church Life
Survey

FOCUSED ON THE
future

Community Service Provision: views of Baptist attenders and leaders

A report on questions included in the 2021 National Church Life Survey for BaptistCare / Baptist Churches NSW & ACT – Joint Faith in Action Project

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NCLS Denominational Commissioned Headline Report No. 2022.BA1.09



Community Service Provision: views of Baptist attenders and leaders

A report on questions included in the 2021 National Church Life Survey for BaptistCare / Baptist Churches NSW & ACT – Joint Faith in Action Project

R. Powell, F. Hourihan, C. Gan & S. Sterland. | February 2023



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About the 2021 National Church Life Survey

National Church Life Surveys

The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is a major survey of churches and church attenders carried out every five years in Australia since 1991.

Each NCLS has involved over a hundred thousand church attenders across more than 20 denominations and movements, including Catholic, Anglican and all the major Protestant denominations in Australia.

Survey Types

Both hard copy and online survey forms were available.

The “NCLS Attender Survey” was completed by church attenders aged 15 years and older, usually during or after a service of worship.

The “NCLS Leader Survey” was made available to local church leaders (including pastors, elders, deacons and other leaders).

Method

The main attender survey is known as “NCLS Attender Survey A” and is available in a number of languages. Attender Survey A was completed by 85% of respondents in each denomination in 2021.

The remaining attenders receive one of a range of Attender Sample Survey forms, which include a core component from Attender Survey A, and additional questions unique to the sample variant. These small surveys (between 20 and 30 in each wave) progress a wide range of research agendas beyond church health and are included at random in the bundle of survey forms ordered by the church.

Ethics

The 2021 NCLS received Human Research Ethics Approval from Charles Sturt University (Ref: H21355).

About the 2021 NCLS survey sample for this report

Sample survey

The questions commissioned by BaptistCare and the Baptist Association of NSW and ACT were located in one of these small sample surveys, called the “2021 NCLS Attender Sample Survey S3” (Survey S3). They were randomly distributed across all Baptist churches. The characteristics of attenders completing these random surveys generally match those of the main attender surveys.

In 2021 some 427 attenders at Baptist churches in NSW & ACT completed questions in Survey S3.

Error rates

The maximum margin of error on a simple random sample of 1,000 at a 95% level of confidence is 3.1%. That is, assuming a simple random sample, there is a 95% chance that a sample result falls within $\pm 3.1\%$ of the result for the Australian churchgoing population.

Leader Survey

The NCLS Leader Survey was provided in paper and online formats. All leaders were invited to take part.

In 2021 some 473 church leaders at Baptist churches in NSW & ACT completed questions in the NCLS Leader Survey.

This headline report presents the overall responses to the commissioned survey questions.

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Awareness of Church-provided Community Services (Attender views)

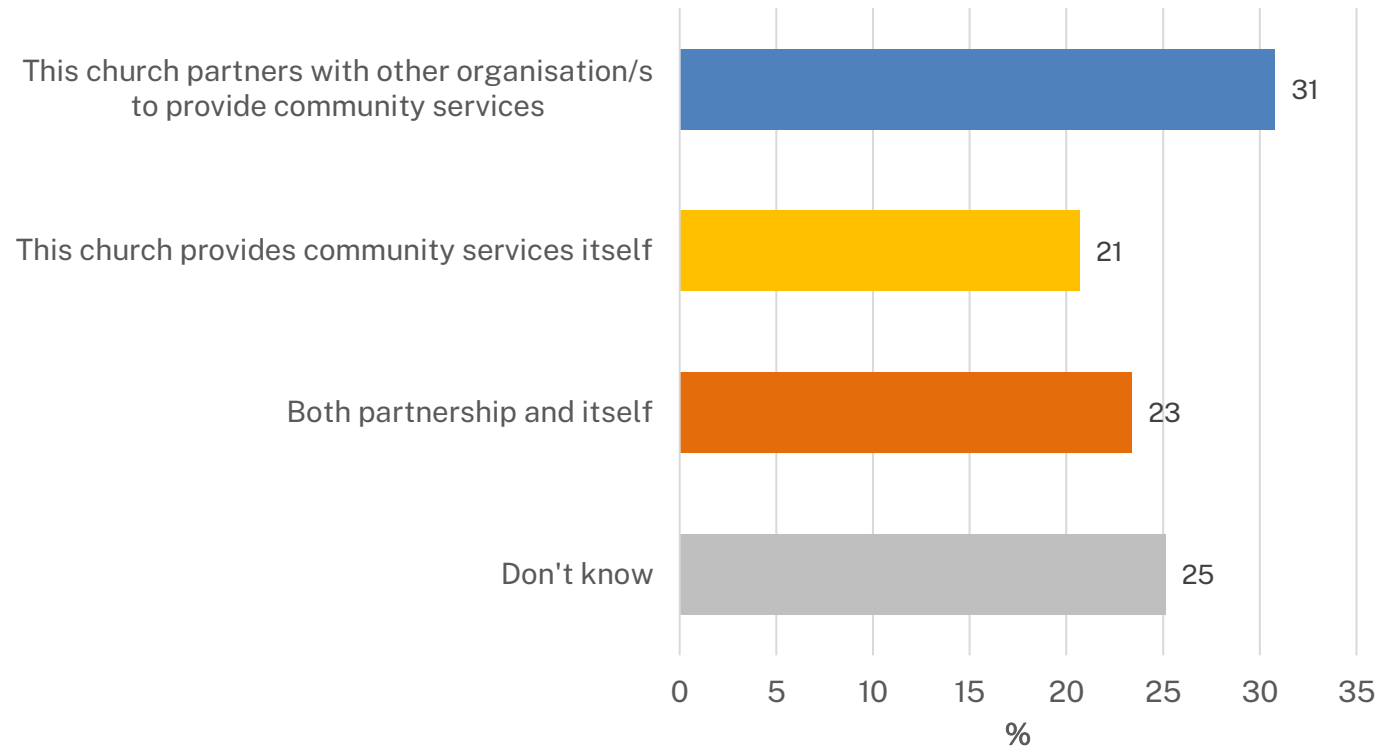


Awareness of community services

75%

of attenders are aware of the community services provided by their church, either by itself, through a partnership with an external organisation, or a combination of both.

Do you know if this church provides community services through partnership or delivers community services itself?



Source: 2021 NCLS Attender Survey S3 (n=427).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Should the local church provide community services? (Attender views)

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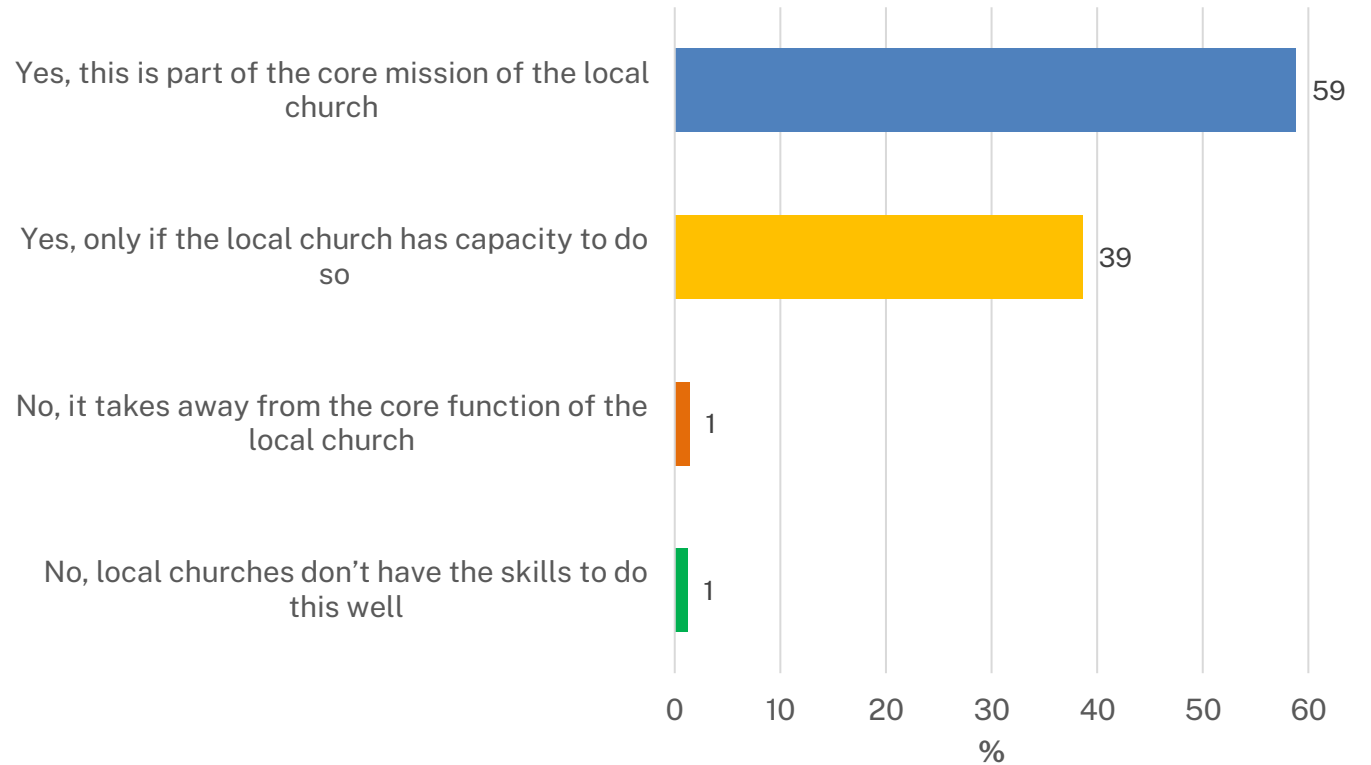
Provision of community services

59%

of attenders believe that providing community services is part of the core mission of their local church.

A further 39% believe that their local church should provide these services if they have the capacity to do so.

Do you agree that local churches should provide community services?



Source: 2021 NCLS Attender Survey S3 (n=427).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Involvement in Church-provided Community Services (Attender views)



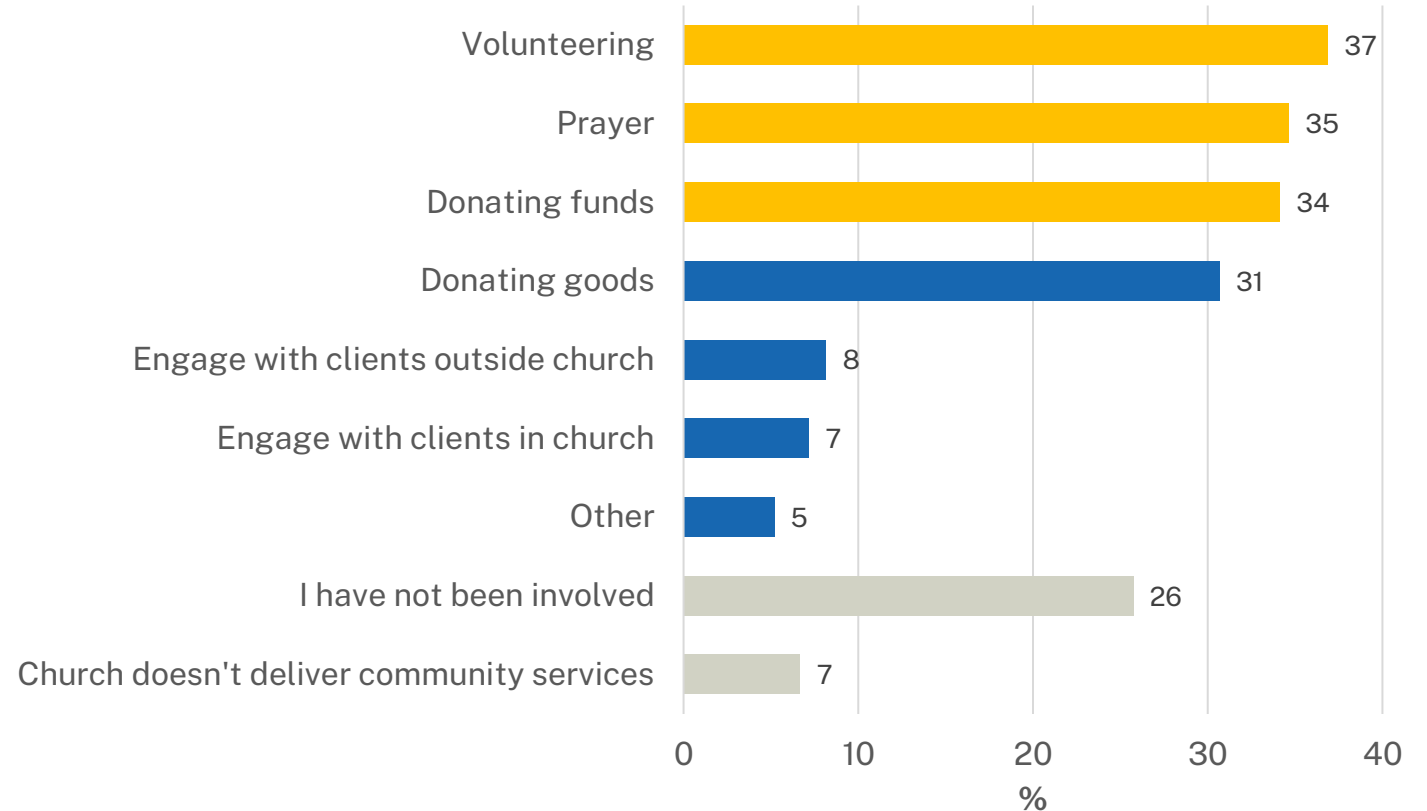
Involvement in community services

37%

of attenders volunteer with the community services delivered by their church

Over a third of attenders also support their church's initiatives though prayer and by donating funds.

If your church delivers community services, how have you been involved? *(Select ALL that apply)*



Source: 2021 NCLS Attender Survey S3 (n=427).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Connection to community service organisations (Attender views)



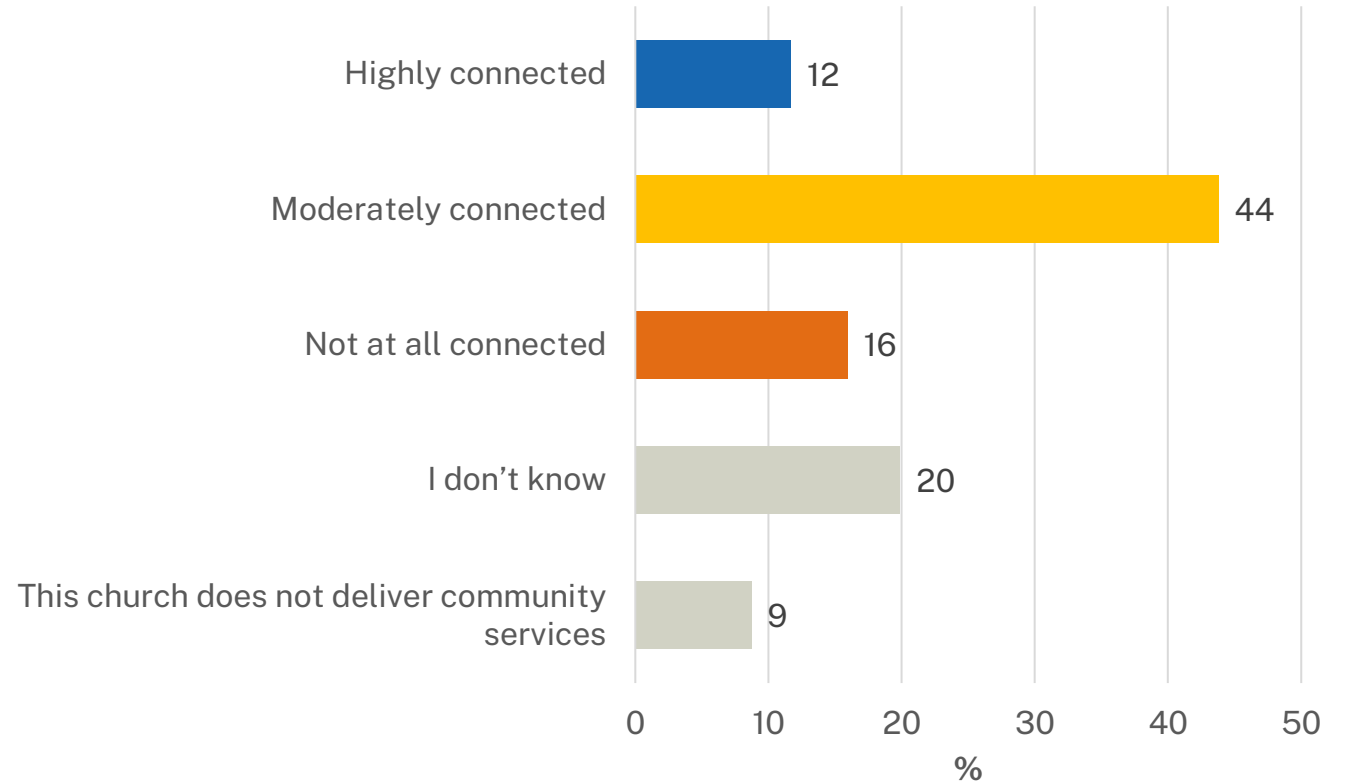
Connection to community service organisations

12%

of attenders feel highly connected to the organisations through which their church offers community services

A further 44% feel moderately connected

If your church does offer community services, how connected do you feel to those organisations? (*Select ALL that apply*)



Source: 2021 NCLS Attender Survey S3 (n=427).

- **75% of attenders are aware of the community services provided by their church.**
 - **98% of attenders feel that their church should be delivering community services, of which 59% believe it is part of the core mission.**
 - **A substantial proportion of attenders are involved in one or more ways in the community services provided by their church.**
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Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Awareness of Church-provided Community Services (Church leader views)

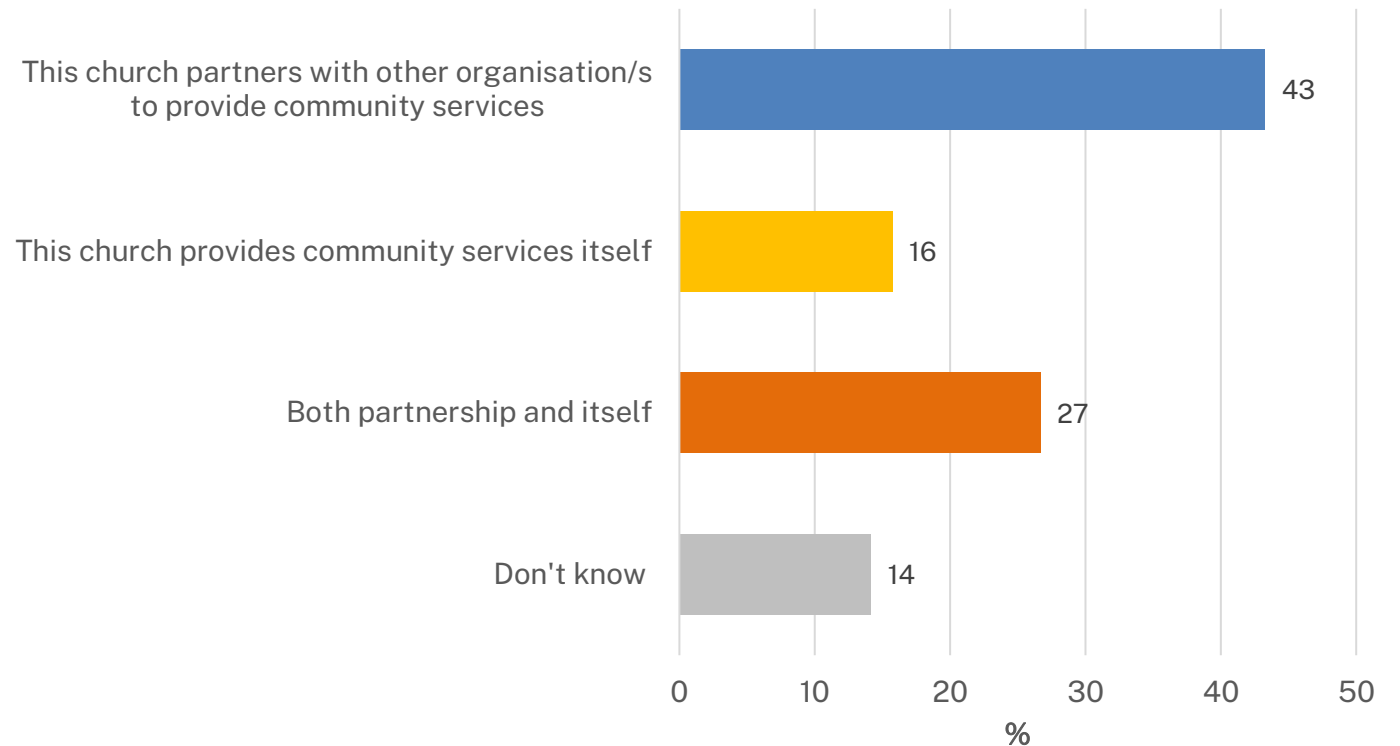


Awareness of community services

86%

of participating leaders were aware of the community services provided by their church, either by itself, through a partnership with an external organisation, or a combination of both.

Do you know if this church provides community services through partnership or delivers community services itself?



Source: 2021 NCLS Leader Survey (n=473).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Should the local church provide community services? (Church leader views)



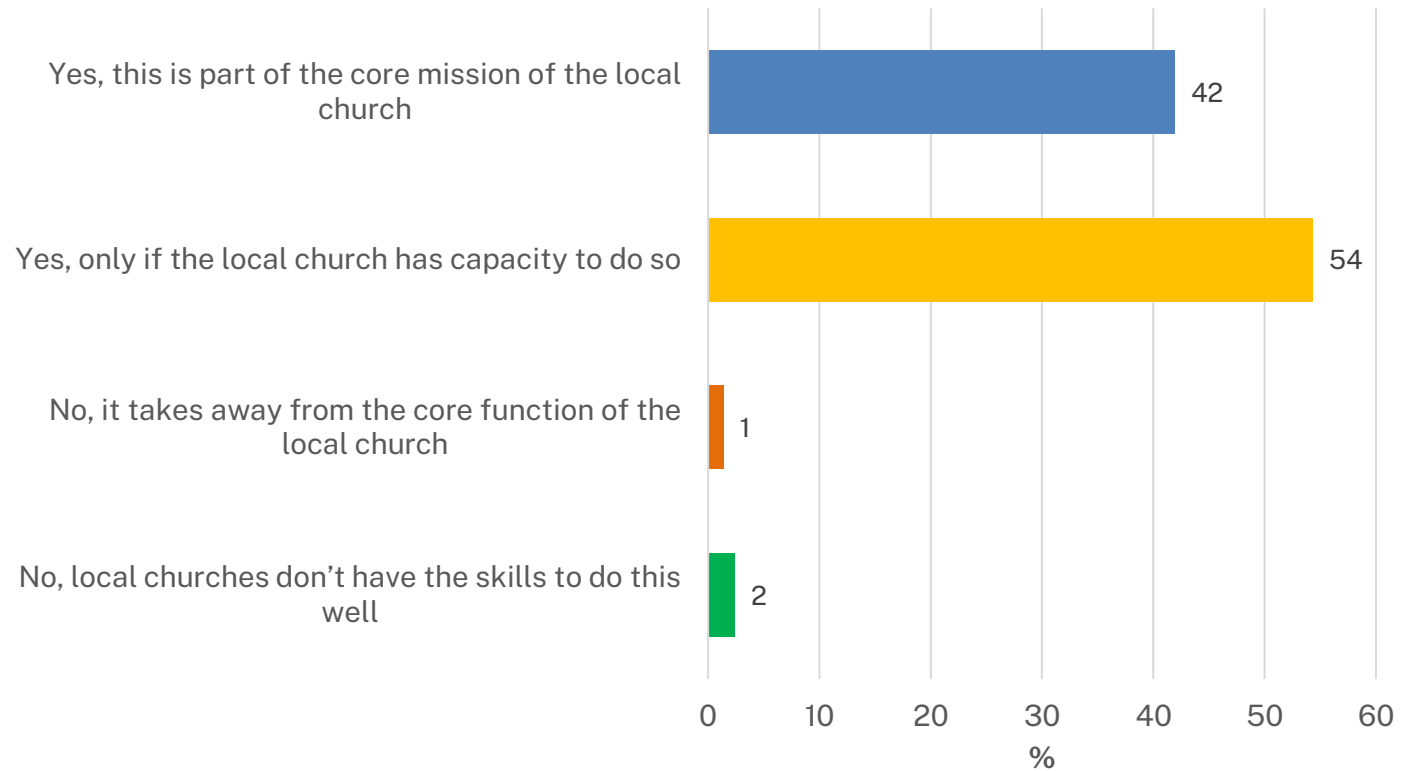
Provision of community services

54%

of participating leaders believed their church should provide community services if it has the capacity to do so.

A further 42% believed that their local church should provide these services as it is part of the church's core mission.

Do you agree that local churches should provide community services?



Source: 2021 NCLS Leader Survey (n=473).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Involvement in Church-provided Community Services (Church leader views)



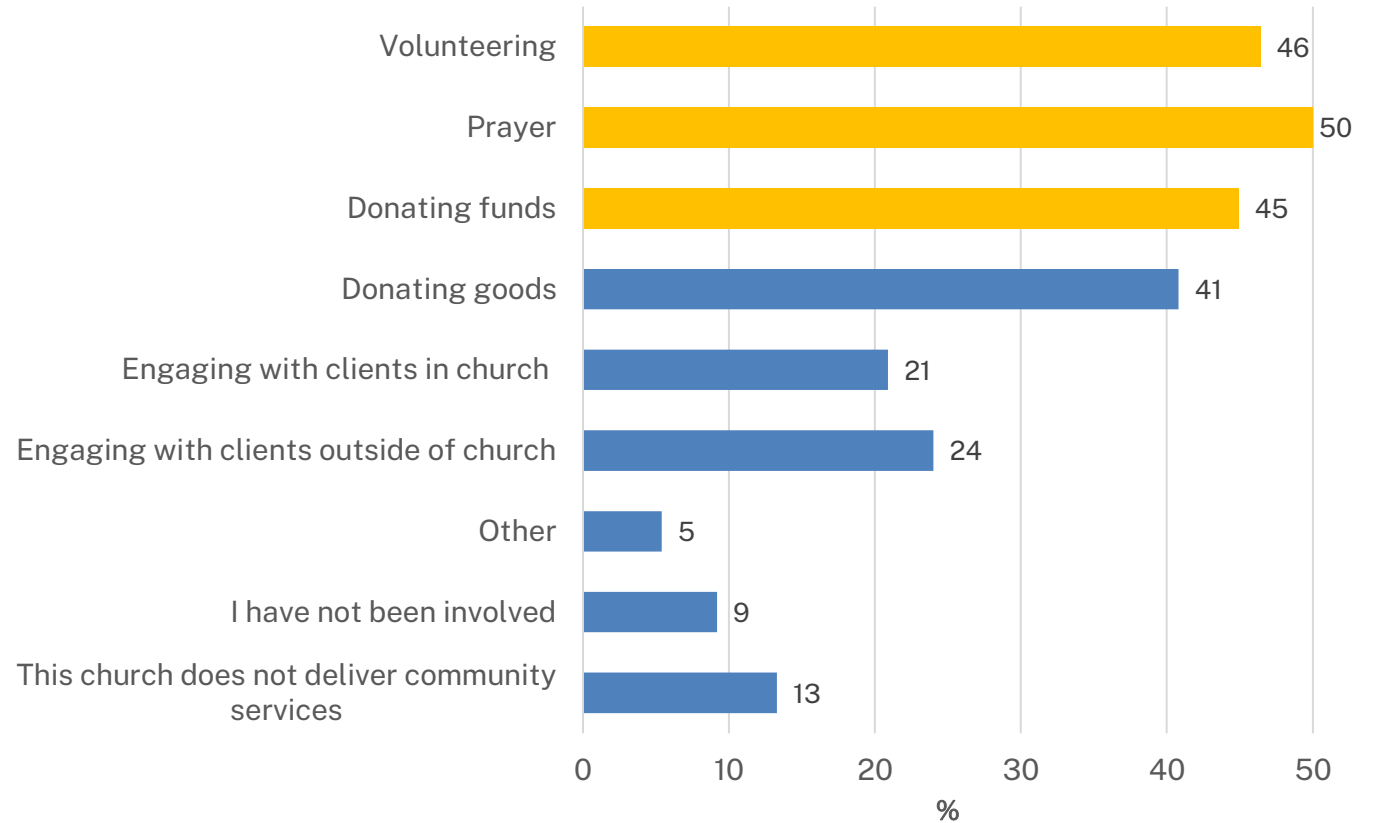
Involvement in community services

50%

of participating leaders supported the delivery of community services provided through their church through prayer

Just under a half of leaders also supported their church's initiatives though volunteering and by donating funds.

If your church delivers community services, how have you been involved? (Select ALL that apply)



Source: 2021 NCLS Leader Survey (n=473).

Faith in Action in Baptist Churches

Connection to community service organisations (Church leader views)



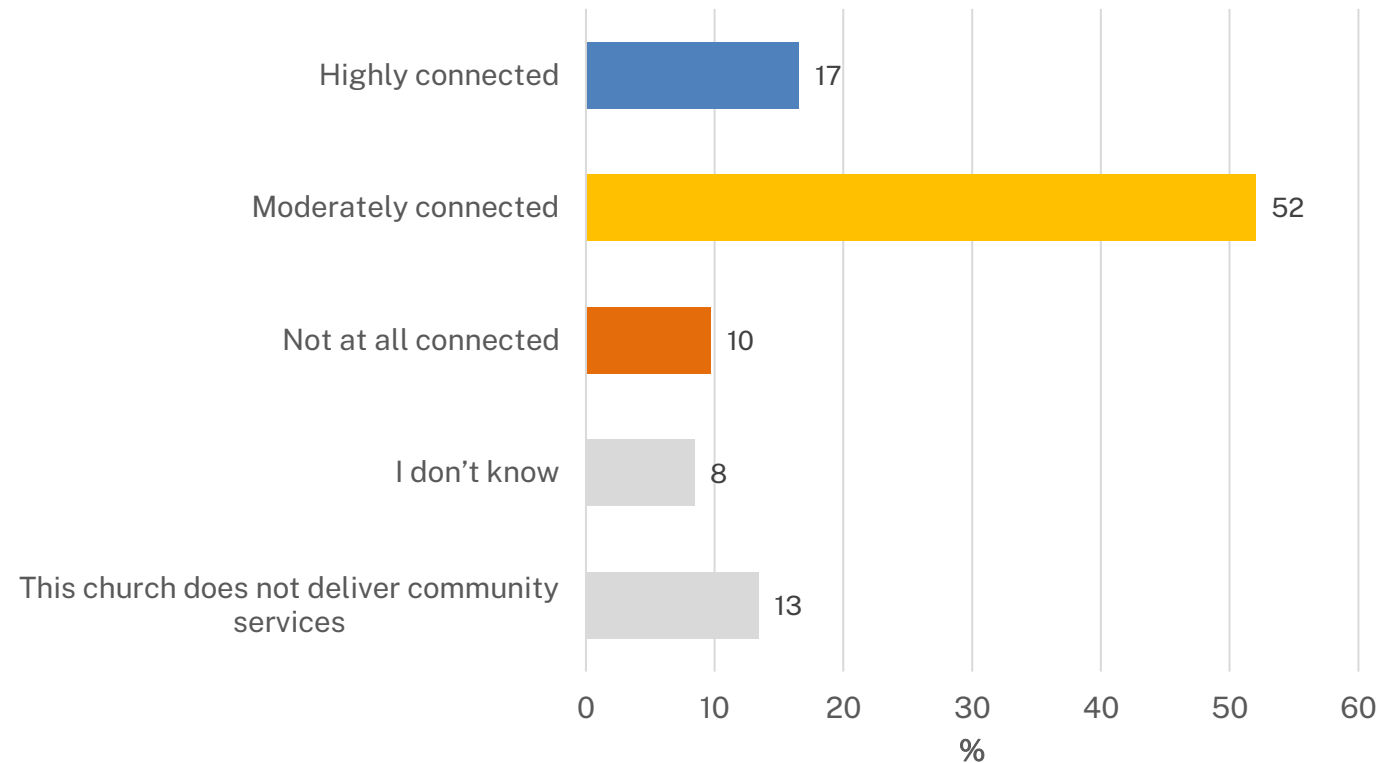
Connection to community service organisations

17%

of participating leaders felt highly connected to the organisations through which their church offers community services

A further 52% felt moderately connected

If your church does offer community services, how connected do you feel to those organisations? (*Select ALL that apply*)



Source: 2021 NCLS Leader Survey (n=473).

- **86% of leaders are aware of the community services provided by their church.**
 - **96% of leaders feel that their church should be delivering community services, of which 42% believe it is part of the core mission.**
 - **A substantial proportion of leaders are involved in one or more ways in the community services provided by their church.**
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Data sources

Powell, R., Sterland, S., Gan, C., Pepper, M. & Hourihan, F. (2021). 2021 NCLS Attender Sample Survey S3 [Data file]. Sydney: NCLS Research.

Powell, R., Gan, C., Hourihan, F., Sterland, S., & Pepper, M. (2021). 2021 NCLS Leader Survey. [Data file]. Sydney: NCLS Research.

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