



Final Report to:



muswellbrook shire council

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Project:

Muswellbrook 2020: Online and random telephone surveys



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Front cover: Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre



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Executive Summary

In January 2011, Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random telephone survey, and parallel online poll, of local residents in relation to their vision for the shire's future. This "Muswellbrook 2020" research forms part of a community consultation phase, designed to understand resident sentiment in preparation for the shire's community strategic plan through to the next decade.

The random CATI¹ and online surveys (see Appendices 1 and 2) were constructed by Jetty Research and MSC, using a largely open-answer format. Telephone surveying was conducted between January 19th and 25th, 2011, using a commercially available residential database of 4,632 residential phone numbers within the 2328 and 2333 postcodes as the sampling frame.

Total sample for the telephone survey was 400 respondents, while 186 respondents had completed the online survey by its February 15th deadline. For more information on methodology, see pages 7 and 8.

Random sampling error for the random telephone survey was +/- 4.8 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. i.e. in 19 out of 20 polls, results of the telephone poll should be representative of the overall survey population (in this case, adult residents within the 2328 and 2333 postcodes) to within +/- 4.8 per cent. Sampling error cannot be applied to the online results due to the self-selecting nature of that survey. For more information on the sampling error and respondent characteristics, see pages 9 and 10.

It should be noted that online respondents were generally younger, more likely to be employed, and more likely to live in an urban setting than those interviewed by telephone. These skews are likely to account for some of the significant differences in response between the two research groups.

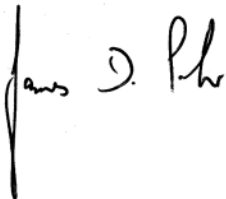
Among the key results of the telephone and online surveys:

1. **LIKES:** Respondents predominantly appreciated the region's rural or bush atmosphere and its sense of community. Beyond this telephone and online responses diverged: the former focussing on convenience, family-friendly atmosphere and quiet lifestyle, while the latter were more likely to mention the shire's good infrastructure, central location and healthy economy.
2. **DISLIKES:** The environmental impact of the mines was the number one concern of online respondents, and number two for telephone interviewees (behind a lack of recreational activities). Perceived infrastructure deficiencies were also near the top of the "dislike" list for both groups. The ongoing theme of tension between residents and "fly in" mine workers also made its first appearance here.
3. **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:** Common infrastructure wish lists among telephone and online respondents included a cinema and/or bowling alley, road improvements, and more community or cultural facilities. Telephone respondents also focussed on a perceived need for improved health care facilities and/or more GPs, more recreational options for youth, better aged care options and improved sporting and swimming facilities. Online participants, meanwhile, were more likely to focus on the need for a CBD bypass, and their desire to see Muswellbrook a tidier and cleaner town.
4. **ROADS, TRAFFIC AND PARKING:** Better roads topped the list of both set of respondents. Beyond this view diverged, with telephone respondents focussing mainly on improved rural roads, while online participants were more vehement in their wish for a bypass of Muswellbrook.

¹ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

5. **JOBS AND THE ECONOMY:** There was a strong desire by both set of respondents to see an improved retail offering in Muswellbrook. Other themes common to each survey were the need to see more locals employed in local jobs (again indicating tension with the mines) and to provide greater support for local businesses. Online respondents were especially keen to see a broadening of the economy away from mining, and a wish to apply a more tourist-friendly face. There was also a wish to see more tertiary education opportunities, in particular additional TAFE course and a university branch campus.
6. **LOCAL ENVIRONMENT:** A need for more parks, reserves and open spaces dominated both surveys. There was also considerable disquiet about the noise and dust being created by the mines, and a desire to see more – and more transparent – monitoring of dust and other pollutants. Beyond these, telephone respondents focussed more on walking and bicycle paths, and the need for improved public transport, while online participants returned to an earlier theme of tidying up Muswellbrook.
7. **SAFE, HAPPY, HEALTHY COMMUNITY:** An improved medical service was top of mind for both sets of respondents. Beyond this results diverged, with other popular themes again including more recreational and cultural facilities, increased law and order, improved youth services and aged care facilities, and more employment opportunities for youth. Online respondents were keen to see Muswellbrook promoted as a safe and friendly place, and to control mine pollution.
8. **HOUSING MODEL:** When asked whether they would prefer more or less medium- and high-density accommodation, results of both telephone and online surveys were unequivocally in the “greater controls to preserve the look and feel of Muswellbrook”. This finding was consistent across ages, genders, regions and times lived in the shire.
9. **BIG IDEA:** Telephone respondents were additionally asked if what they would do given the opportunity to implement one project, big or small, to improve the Muswellbrook LGA. The four major themes to emerge were: a youth activity centre; cinema; Muswellbrook bypass; and beautification of local parks and gardens.

In conclusion, it would appear that Muswellbrook Shire residents have a “love/hate” relationship with the mines: appreciating their economic impact, but resenting the (perceived) lack of job opportunities for local employees, the adverse environmental effects, and the negative lifestyle impact the mines have apparently had on many residents’ quality of life. While some respondents suggested that the mines should be shut down, or at least that no more be approved, the majority appeared to be appealing more for a “happy medium”, with Council focussed on leveraging the economic benefits of the mines for the long-term betterment of the local community.



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Managing Director
March 7th 2011



Introduction

Background and Objectives

The Muswellbrook Shire, located in the upper Hunter region of NSW, is currently seeking community feedback in relation to its “Muswellbrook 2020” long-term strategic planning for the region.

As part of this feedback process, in January 2011 Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of residents, together with a parallel online survey. Both surveys were designed to establish what residents likes and disliked about the shire, and their vision for how the region could be improved.

Methodology: telephone

Respondents were selected at random from a commercial database of 4,632 residential telephone numbers within the postcodes of 2328 and 2333². These numbers were then randomly uploaded into Jetty Research’s CATI³ software.

The survey instrument was created by Jetty Research, in consultation with the relevant Muswellbrook Shire Council managers.

Polling was conducted between Wednesday January 19th and Monday January 25th 2011 from Jetty Research’s Coffs Harbour CATI call centre. A team of eight researchers called Muswellbrook residents on weekday evenings (excluding Friday) from 3.30 to 8pm. Where phones went unanswered, were engaged or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to four occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

The poll was conducted on a purely random basis, with no quota sampling applied. Potential respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 16 or over, lived in the Muswellbrook Council area (namely postcode 2333 or 2328), and were not permanent employees or Councillors of Muswellbrook Council.

Total sample size for the survey was 400 residents.

Survey time varied from 5 to 31 minutes, with an average of 13.0 minutes.

Participation rate – defined here as the proportion of eligible residents reached who agreed to complete a survey – was 48 per cent. This is consistent with similar LGA surveys we have conducted in the past 12 months.

Open comments have been coded (i.e. themed) for comparison purposes. The exception is “Other Comments and suggestions” (Question 28 of phone poll, and 11.1 of online): these have instead been included in their entirety to give those interested a fuller picture of different community views. See Appendix 3.

² This compares with 5,644 occupied households in the 2006 ABS Census (Usual resident profile) for these two postcodes.

³ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing



Please note that due to the nature of the survey, not all respondents answered every question. The number of respondents answering each question is marked as “n = XXX” in the graph accompanying that question.

Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores or other analysis of variation (or ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone.

Telephone survey results have been weighted by postcode, to provide results consistent with ABS census data. No other weighting has been applied.

Methodology: online

The online survey was designed to be as similar as possible (given methodology differences) to the telephone survey. Constructed in Survey Monkey (see Appendix 2), it was placed prominently on the Muswellbrook Shire Council website home page and emailed to the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Council staff. A link also appeared on the Council’s Facebook page.

The online version of the survey went live on Thursday, February 2nd and closed on Monday, February 14th. By polling deadline, 184 responses had been received.

Unlike the telephone survey, there were no pre-coded options available in the online version. Instead, most questions were open-ended (see Appendix 2). These responses were coded (i.e. themed) at the completion of the polling phase.

Methodology Differences: Online vs. telephone

Apart from the obvious difference in the manner in which they were administered, there were three important variations between the telephone and online surveys:

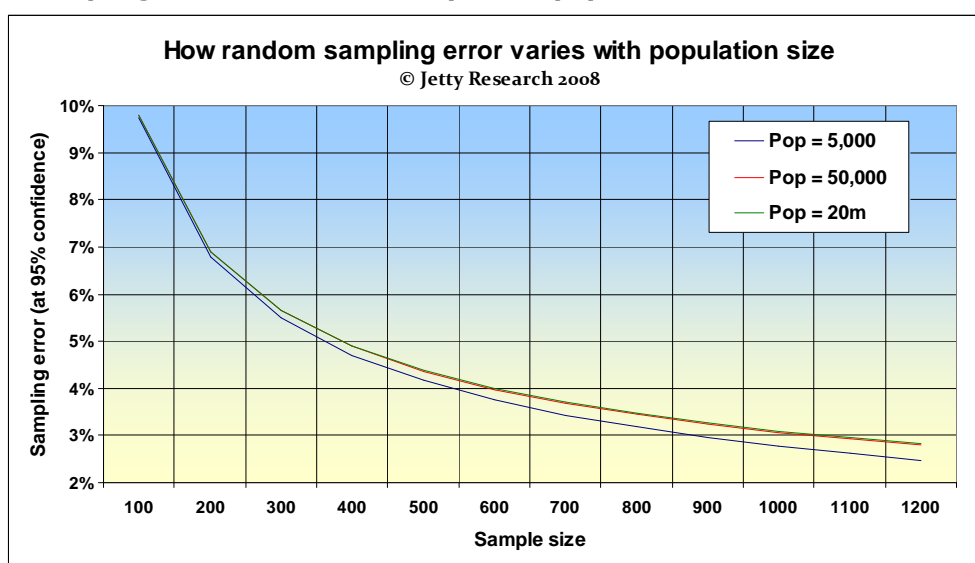
- The telephone survey was random and representative, online was self-selecting. Telephone survey results can hence be extrapolated to the overall survey population of Muswellbrook shire to a defined margin of sampling error, whereas online survey results apply only to those completing them.
- Responses to Parts 2 and 3 of the survey were differently constructed. In the case of the telephone survey some likely responses were pre-coded (see questionnaire, Appendix 1). With the online survey these questions were all open-ended, with respondents able to provide up to three written answers. These were then coded post-survey for comparison purposes. The vast majority of respondents answered all three options for most questions, against an average of approx. two responses per question for the telephone version.
- The open-ended telephone question “If you had the opportunity to implement one project, big or small, to improve the Muswellbrook LGA, what would it be?” was not included in the online survey.

Sampling error

The adult population of the Muswellbrook Shire (defined here as all residents aged 18+) is 10,778⁴. Random sampling error for a randomly selected telephone sample of 400 respondents is +/- 4.8 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.⁵

As shown in Table i, below, sampling error rises with lower sample sizes. Hence care needs to be taken in interpreting sub-groups within the overall survey sample.

Table i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size



In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include respondents without fixed line phones, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.) and/or imperfections in the survey database. However there is no evidence (at least in terms of significant variances between demographic groups within the survey sample) to suggest that such non-random error has affected the integrity of the following data.

Due to the self-selecting (i.e. opt-in) nature of the online survey, its results cannot be extrapolated to the wider population.

⁴ ABS Census 2006, Muswellbrook Shire, Usual Resident profile

⁵ This means, in effect, that were we to conduct the same survey 20 times, results should be accurate for the entire survey population to within +/- 4.8 per cent in 19 of those surveys.

Sample characteristics

The following breaks down the two survey samples by age, gender and residential postcode:

Table ii: Breakdown of telephone survey sample by age, gender and residential postcode

Postcode * Age * Gender? Crosstabulation

| Gender? | | | | Age | | | | | | Total |
|---------|---------------|------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|
| | | | | 16-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70 or more | |
| Male | Postcode 2328 | Count | 2 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 19 | 9 | 55 | |
| | | % of Total | 1.2% | 3.1% | 5.0% | 7.5% | 11.8% | 5.6% | 34.2% | |
| | 2333 | Count | 7 | 13 | 24 | 30 | 19 | 13 | 106 | |
| | | % of Total | 4.3% | 8.1% | 14.9% | 18.6% | 11.8% | 8.1% | 65.8% | |
| | Total | Count | 9 | 18 | 32 | 42 | 38 | 22 | 161 | |
| | | % of Total | 5.6% | 11.2% | 19.9% | 26.1% | 23.6% | 13.7% | 100.0% | |
| Female | Postcode 2328 | Count | 8 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 27 | 12 | 94 | |
| | | % of Total | 3.3% | 6.7% | 6.7% | 6.3% | 11.3% | 5.0% | 39.3% | |
| | 2333 | Count | 5 | 23 | 29 | 39 | 27 | 22 | 145 | |
| | | % of Total | 2.1% | 9.6% | 12.1% | 16.3% | 11.3% | 9.2% | 60.7% | |
| | Total | Count | 13 | 39 | 45 | 54 | 54 | 34 | 239 | |
| | | % of Total | 5.4% | 16.3% | 18.8% | 22.6% | 22.6% | 14.2% | 100.0% | |

Table iii: Breakdown of online survey sample by age, gender and residential postcode

Postcode * Age * Gender? Crosstabulation

| Gender? | | | | Age | | | | | | Total |
|---------|---------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| | | | | 16-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70 or more | |
| Male | Postcode 2328 | Count | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | |
| | | % of Total | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 3.6% | .0% | .0% | 8.9% | |
| | 2333 | Count | 4 | 15 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 49 | |
| | | % of Total | 7.1% | 26.8% | 21.4% | 14.3% | 17.9% | .0% | 87.5% | |
| | OTHER | Count | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| | | % of Total | .0% | .0% | .0% | .0% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 3.6% | |
| Total | Count | 5 | 16 | 13 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 56 | | |
| | % of Total | 8.9% | 28.6% | 23.2% | 17.9% | 19.6% | 1.8% | 100.0% | | |
| Female | Postcode 2328 | Count | 3 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 18 | |
| | | % of Total | 2.9% | 4.9% | 5.8% | 3.9% | .0% | .0% | 17.5% | |
| | 2333 | Count | 16 | 20 | 24 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 84 | |
| | | % of Total | 15.5% | 19.4% | 23.3% | 19.4% | 2.9% | 1.0% | 81.6% | |
| | OTHER | Count | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| | | % of Total | .0% | .0% | 1.0% | .0% | .0% | .0% | 1.0% | |
| Total | Count | 19 | 25 | 31 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 103 | | |
| | % of Total | 18.4% | 24.3% | 30.1% | 23.3% | 2.9% | 1.0% | 100.0% | | |

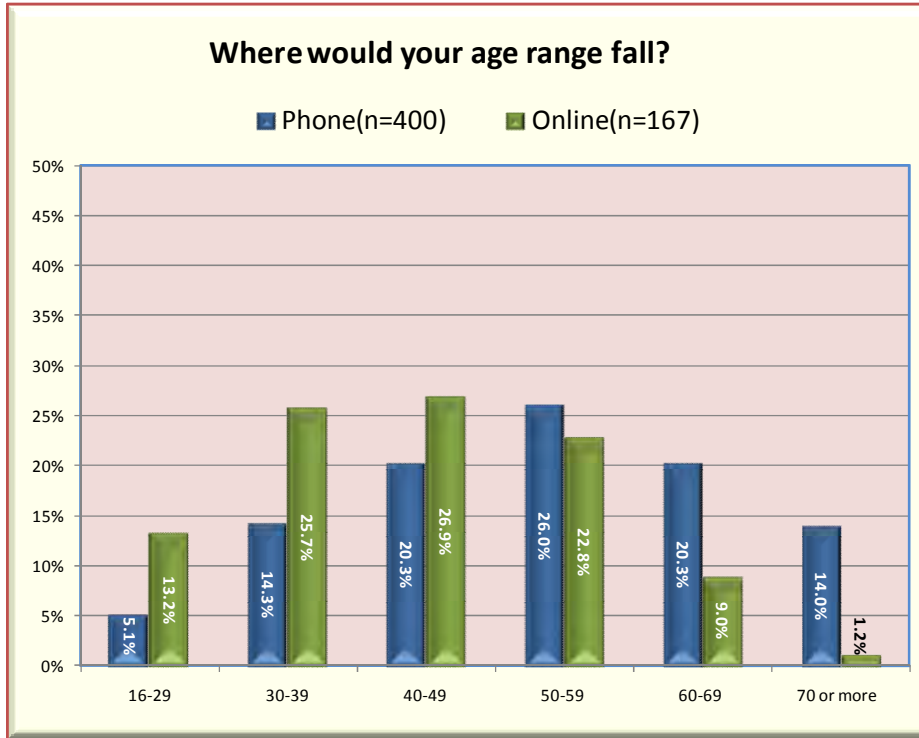
See “Demographics”, pages 11-16 for more detailed analysis of the breakdown of telephone and online samples.

The survey sample has not been subjected to any particular quotas. However results been post-weighted by region to ensure results match population ratios for the 2328 and 2333 postcodes.

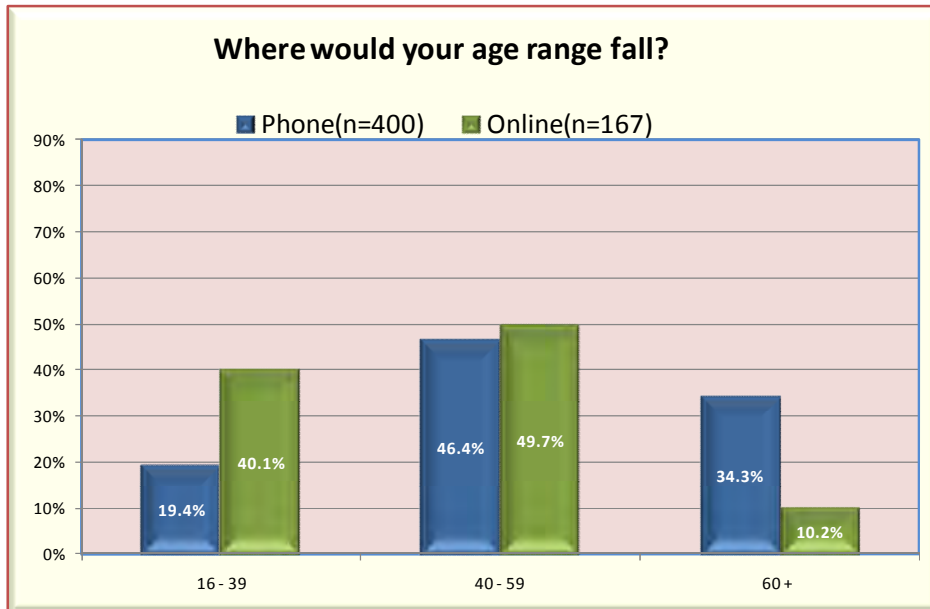
Note that due to the different methods employed for each survey – and in particular one being random selection and the other self-selection – it was not possible to merge the results.

Part 1: Demographics

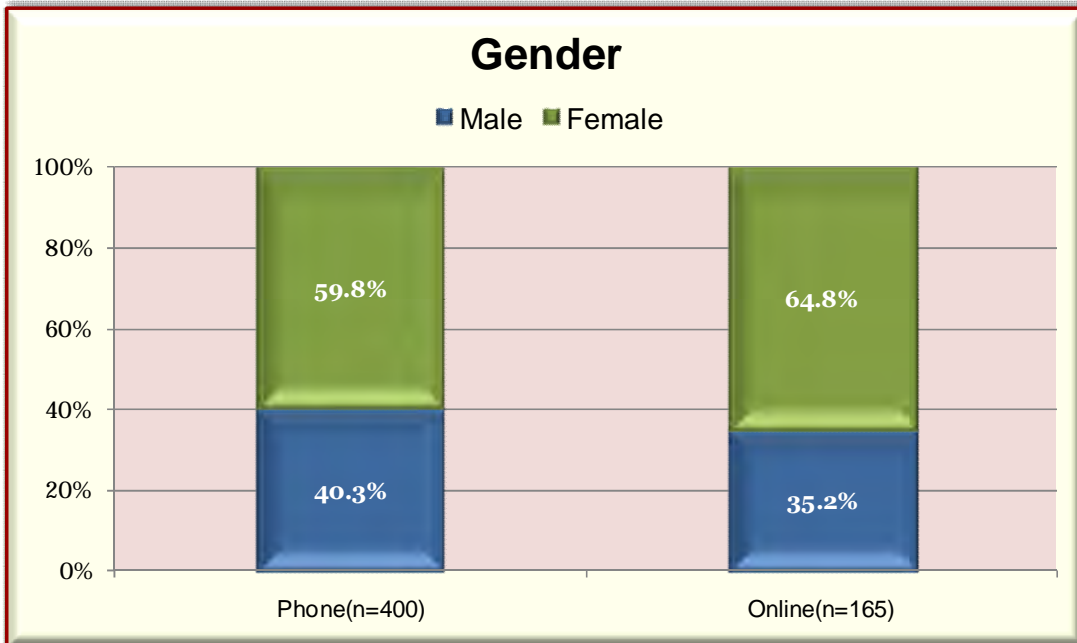
Graph 1.1:-Age breakdown



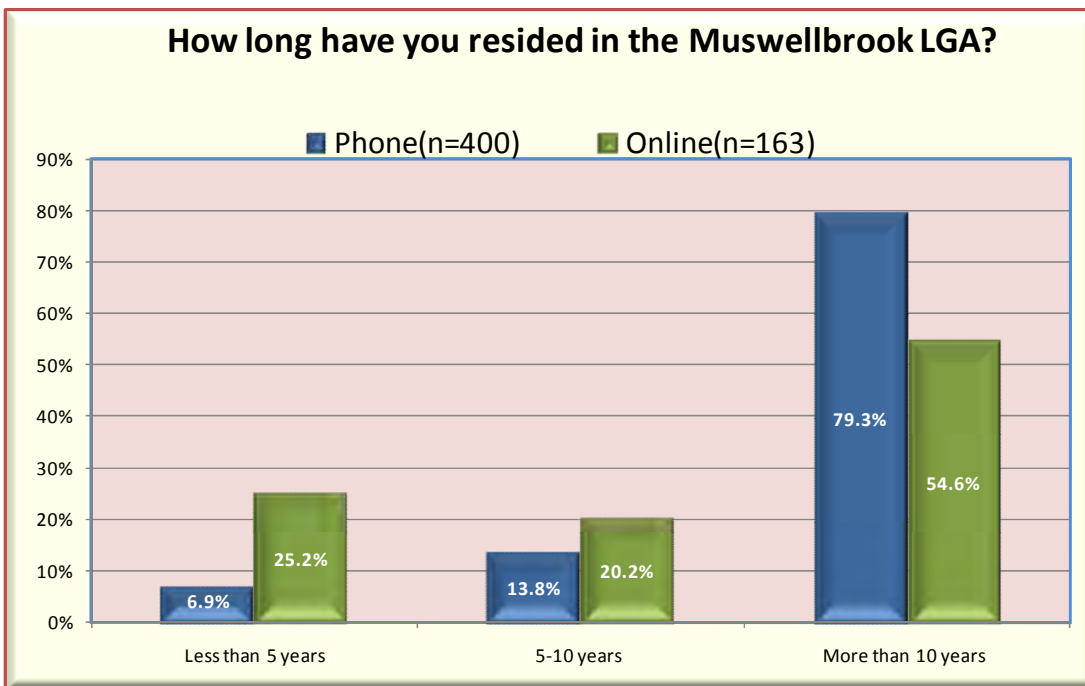
Graph 1.1a: Age split by 3



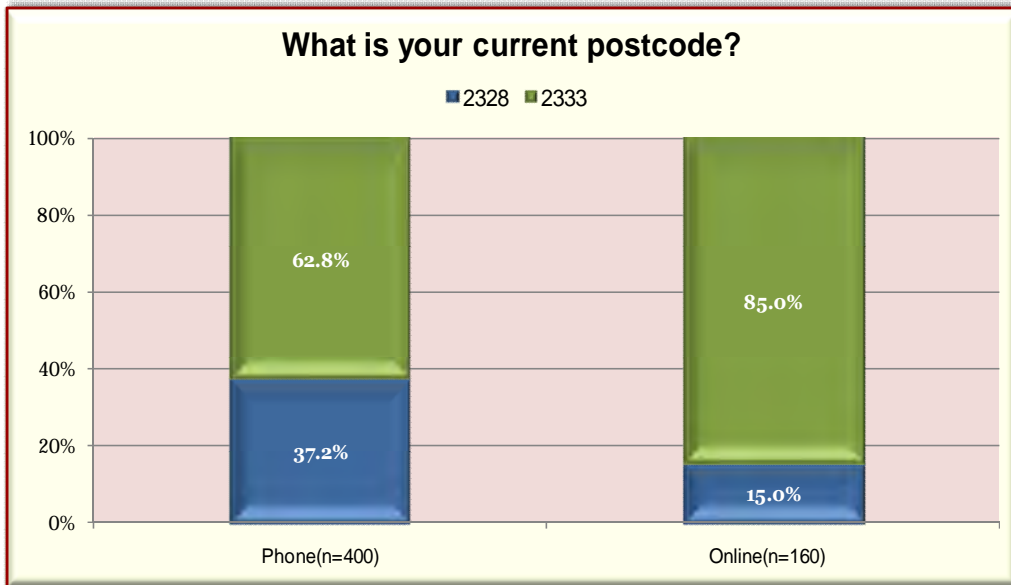
Graph 1.2: Gender



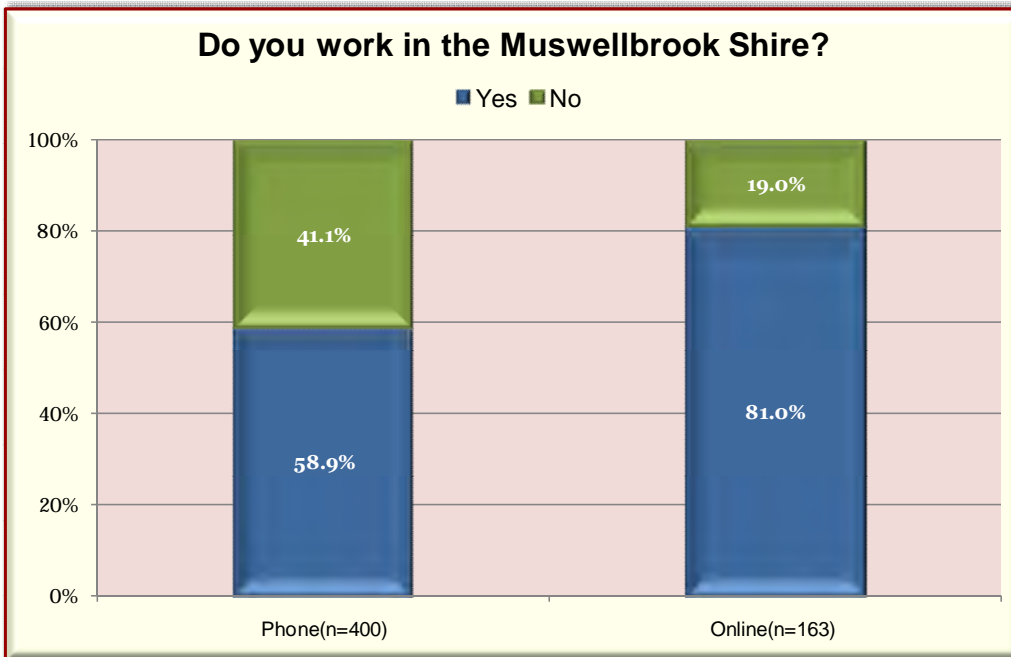
Graph 1.3: How long have you resided in the Muswellbrook LGA?



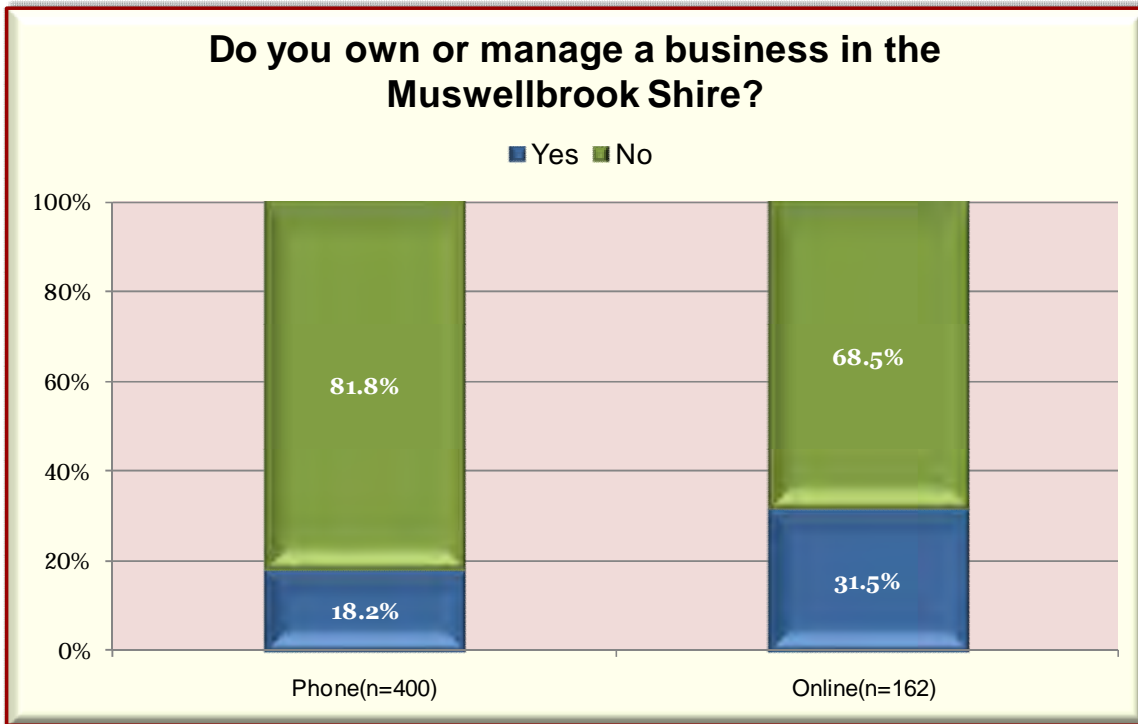
Graph 1.4: What is your postcode? (unweighted)



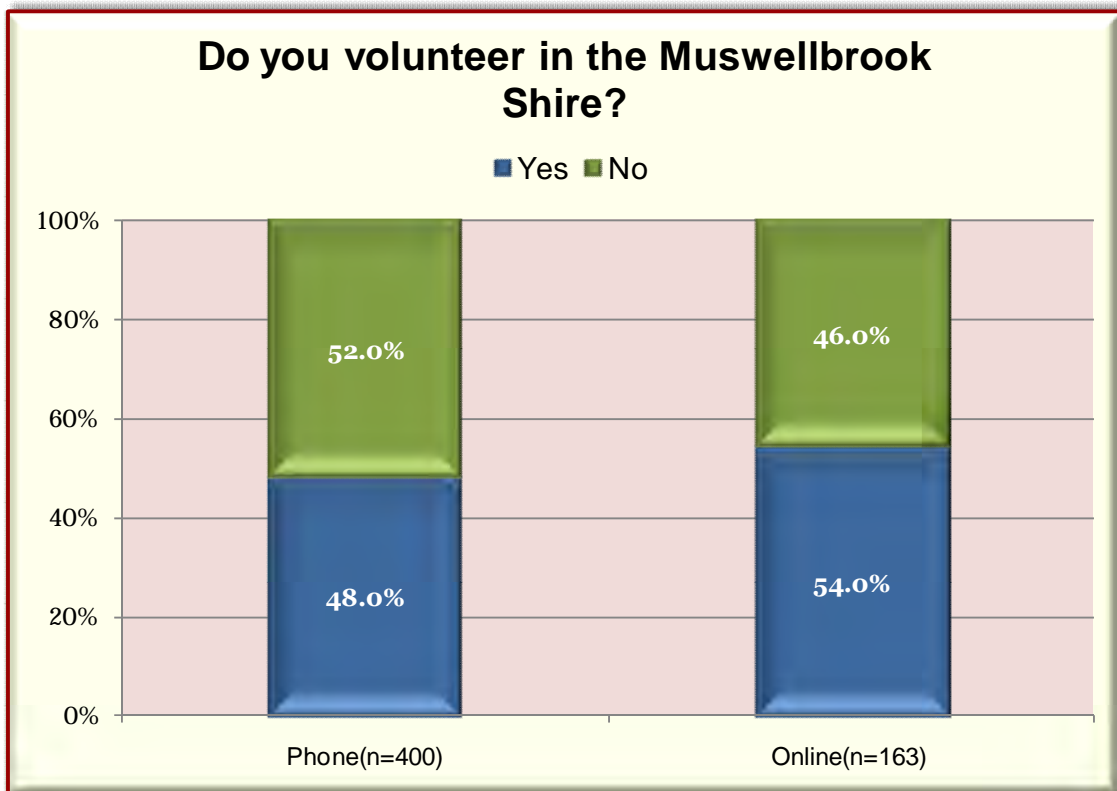
Graph 1.5: Do you work in the Muswellbrook shire?



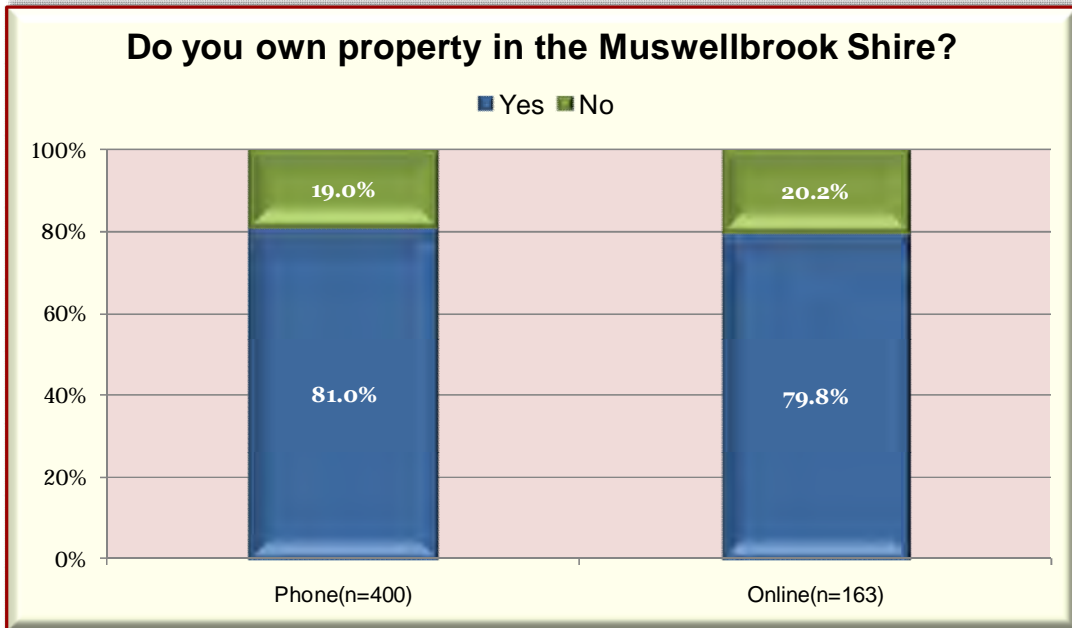
Graph 1.6: Do you own or manage business in the Muswellbrook Shire?



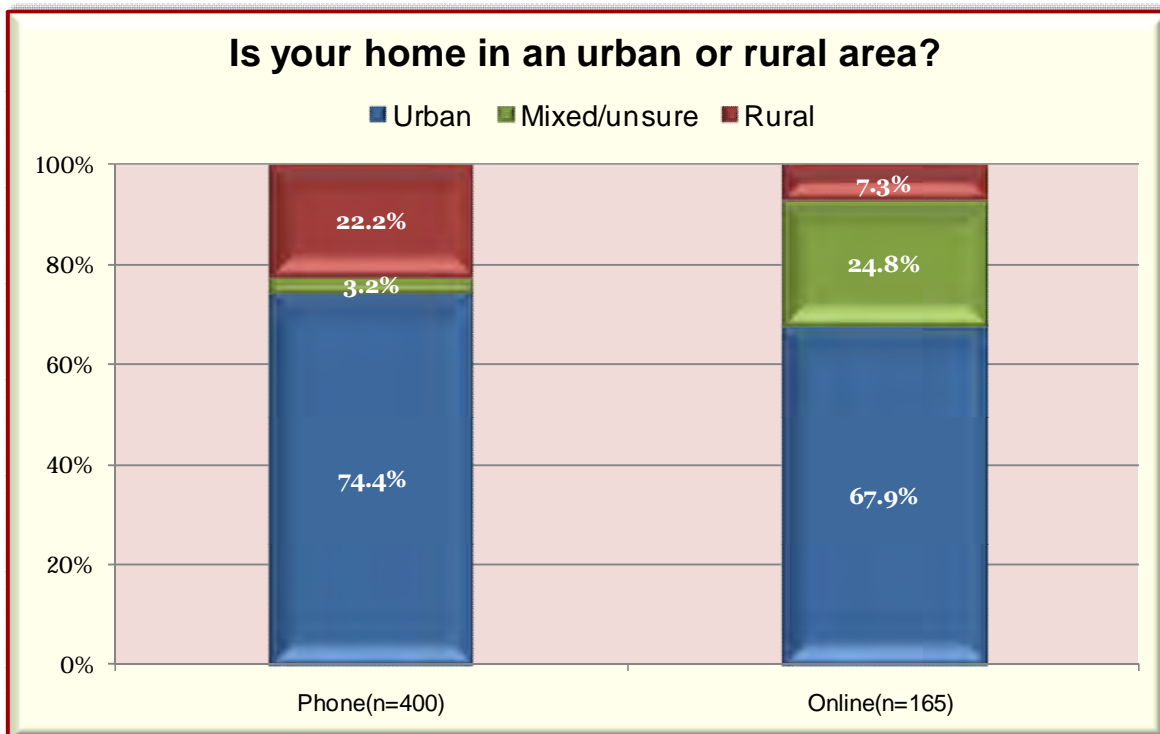
Graph 1.7: Do you volunteer in the Muswellbrook Shire?



Graph 1.8: Do you own property in the Muswellbrook Shire?



Graph 1.9: Is your home in an urban or rural area?



Comment:

Graphs 1.1 to 1.9, above, provide a snapshot of participant demographics in both the online and random telephone surveys⁶. They indicate that:

- While both telephone and online surveys enjoy a broad spread of ages (Graphs 1.1 and 1.1a), the online participants were significantly younger than their telephone counterparts;
- Both phone and email surveys were skewed slightly towards females (Graph 1.2);
- Telephone and online surveys were both biased towards long-term residents, with this being more pronounced among telephone respondents (Graph 1.3);
- In terms of area of residence (Graph 1.4), ABS Census data (2006) suggests total populations for the 2333 and 2328 postcodes of 12,860 and 2,373 respectively. This indicates that the telephone survey has over-represented Denman residents (at 38 per cent of respondents, against 16 per cent of combined population), while the online survey more accurately reflects the actual population split. To prevent this skew, all results have been weighted to provide results consistent with the Census populations (by postcode) as shown above.
- Only 59 per cent of telephone respondents presently work in the shire, against 81 per cent of online respondents. This undoubtedly reflects the younger demographic of the latter poll (Graph 1.5);
- Likewise, some 32 per cent of online respondents claimed to own or manage a business, against 18 per cent of those reached by phone (Graph 1.6). This may reflect distribution of the online survey through the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce;
- Proportions of respondents claiming to be volunteers (graph 1.7) were consistent and relatively high across both groups, at +/- 50 per cent;
- There was no meaningful difference between the proportions of local ratepayers in phone and online surveys, at 81 and 80 per cent respectively (Graph 1.8). This is to be expected, with local landholders more likely to be interested in the shire's long-term development;
- The online survey was heavily skewed towards urban residents, with only 7 per cent of respondents claiming to live in a rural setting. This compares with 22 per cent of those interviewed by telephone.

In summary, while neither survey can claim (nor was designed) to faithfully replicate the Muswellbrook Shire's demographic profile⁷, each element of the poll nonetheless provide a robust and varied make-up. This no doubt reflects the wide diversity of opinion expressed through the remaining questions.

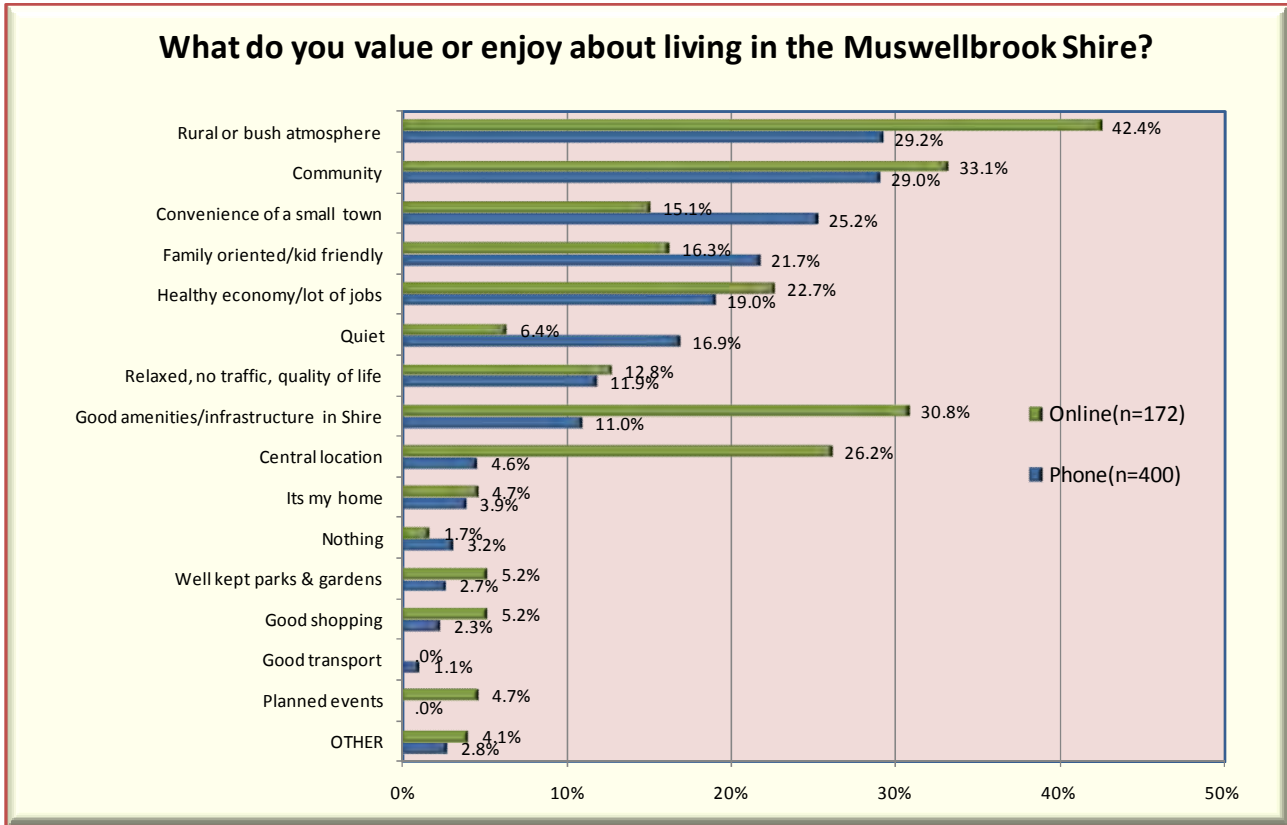
However with online respondents generally younger, more likely to be employed, and more likely to live in urban households than those interviewed by telephone, this is likely to explain some of the significant differences in response options between the two research groups.

⁶ Note that some online respondents did not answer all (or, in certain cases, any) of the demographic questions. Hence for graphs 1.1 to 1.9, sample size is different for most online components.

⁷ Apart from weighting, as explained above

Part 2: Likes and dislikes

Graph 2.1: What do you value or enjoy about living in the Muswellbrook Shire?



Comment:

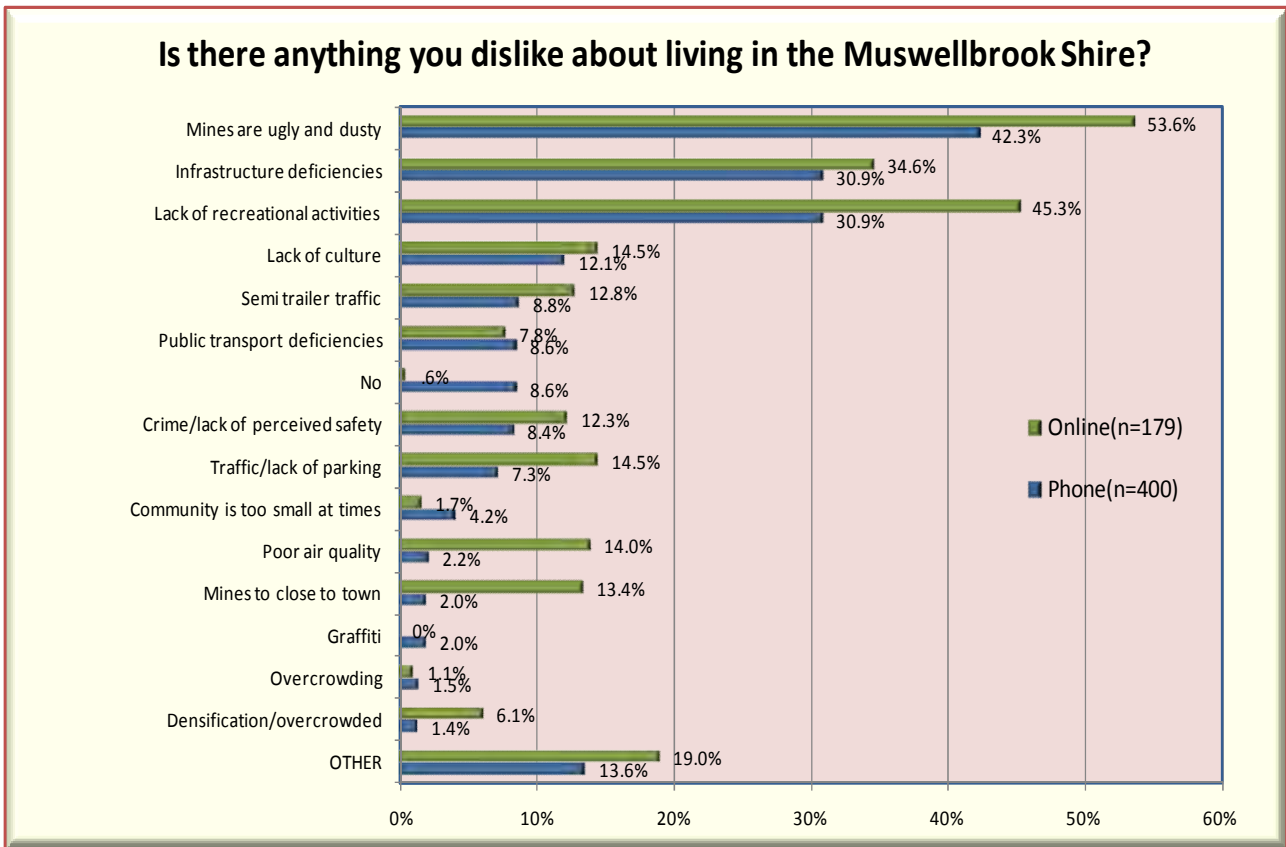
Both surveys commenced with respondents being asked what they valued or enjoyed about living in the Muswellbrook shire. The responses to this unprompted, open-answer question have been coded and the main responses shown in Graph 2.1, above.

The two major themes across both surveys were the shire’s rural or bush atmosphere, and the sense of community. After this view diverged somewhat: telephone respondents focussed more on the convenience, peace and quiet and child-friendly atmosphere, while those completing the survey online were more attracted by the shire’s good amenities and infrastructure, its central location, and healthy economy.

Some of the comments included:

- “It’s a quiet place, less traffic, 10minutes to work”
- “Shops, arts centre, cafes, parks, pool, job all close to home”
- “It’s a picturesque area with beautiful hills”
- “The amount of opportunity for employment of youth”
- “I like that it is not overly rushed, that facilities are easily accessible”
- “Lots of parks and open space for sport and exercise”
- “It is a handy location to Newcastle, Sydney and the coast”
- “By 2015 it will be the economic engine of Australia, if managed properly”

Graph 2.2: Is there anything you dislike about living in the Muswellbrook Shire?



Comment:

In terms of what residents presently dislike about the Muswellbrook shire, opinion was relatively consistent between the two surveys. The environmental and aesthetic impact of the mines topped both lists, with perceived infrastructure deficiencies and lack of recreational facilities filling second and third place (albeit in different order across the polls.)

Other often mentioned gripes were the lack of culture and cultural facilities, public transport deficiencies, semi-trailer traffic, crime/perceived lack of safety, and parking issues. Mine-related issues such as air quality and proximity to town also featured prominently among online respondents.

Among “other,” there also appears to be tension between “out of town” mine workers and some locals. This is seemingly based on a range of perceptions, from visiting workers not spending money locally or engaging with the local community through to taking jobs from local youth.

Typical comments included:

“It doesn’t matter how much they say they monitor the dust, they do nothing about it and it covers over EVERYTHING”

“The large increase of dust from open cut mining. When approaching the town the dust cloud is clearly visible making the whole town appear dirty and unhealthy”

“People that insist on shopping continually out of town when the same services are in town.”

“There is nothing to do for the teens and young adults here”

“No decent restaurants or places of entertainment for anyone”

“Lack of facilities - cinema, shopping, nice cafes”

“Lack of facilities, including hospitals, roads, movie theatre, etc”

“The road between Muswellbrook and Newcastle - getting busier and busier, and the trucks in the main street”

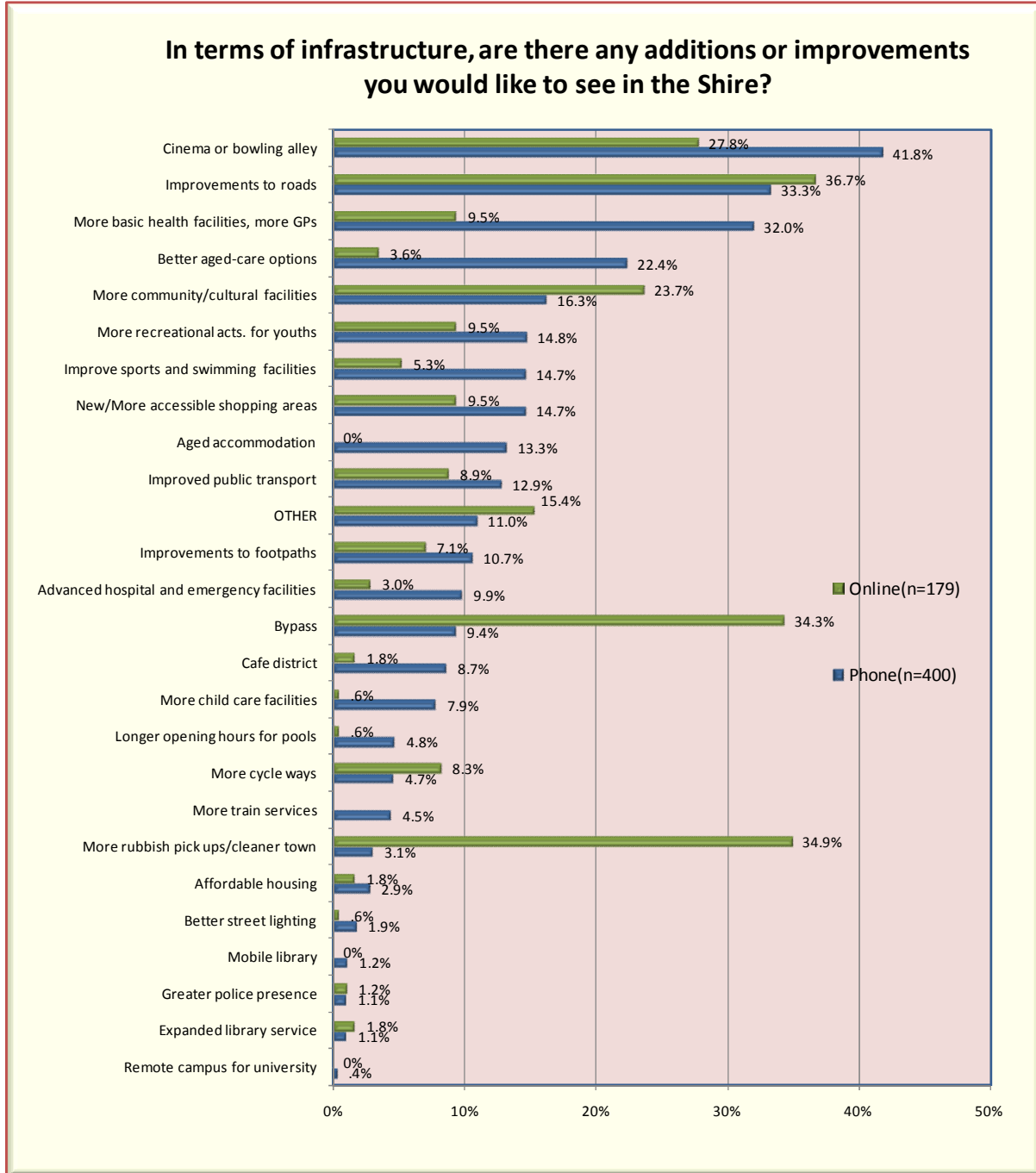
“The number of workers that live in Muswellbrook Mon-Fri - and take the money home with them so it is not spent in the town where they work.”

“The highway through the middle of town”

Part 3: How to improve the Muswellbrook Shire

Part 3A: Infrastructure

Graph 3.1: In terms of infrastructure, are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2020?



Comment:

In terms of desired infrastructure improvements, there were stark differences between telephone and online respondents. Those polled by phone focussed firstly on additional entertainment options such as a cinema or bowling alley, closely followed by improved health facilities and better roads. Aged-care facilities and cultural or community centres rounded out the telephone top five.

Meanwhile youth activities, sporting and swimming facilities, an improved retail offering, better public transport, aged accommodation, accident and emergency facilities and improvements to footpaths were each mentioned by more than 10 per cent of respondents.

Online respondents were predominantly concerned with improvements to roads, a bypass of the city centre, and creating a cleaner town. Then came the bowling alley or cinema option, and the need for more community centres. In this instance no other infrastructure issue rated above 10 per cent mention.

The following gives a flavour of some of the main commentary themes:

“The old picture theatre restored and used as an entertainment venue”

“Further improvement to main street - more attractive al fresco dining – atmosphere”

“Footpaths! There are numerous families who would benefit from having a network of footpaths on the North side to walk/cycle on. Good for health, fitness and the environment”

“Upgrade shopping facilities to accommodate growth and families now living here”

“Improve main street - encourage visitors to stop”

“A clean and beautiful town that we can be proud of”

“A large auditorium/conference centre / multi-use facility, available at reasonable cost (as many users would be community groups) that seats at least 300 - 400 people. There is nowhere in the Upper Hunter region a venue that seats 300 people that could be used for concerts, school assemblies or speech days / presentations, eisteddfods, a base for the Shire Band and Upper Hunter Conservatorium, large wedding venue, visiting artists, company conferencing etc.”

“Environmental monitoring devices, connected to a real time internet access”

“A larger, more efficient health service i.e. hospital emergency department”

“Road repairs need to be a priority”

“Many of the roads need upgrading/resurfacing (I think the mines should help \$\$\$ with that).”

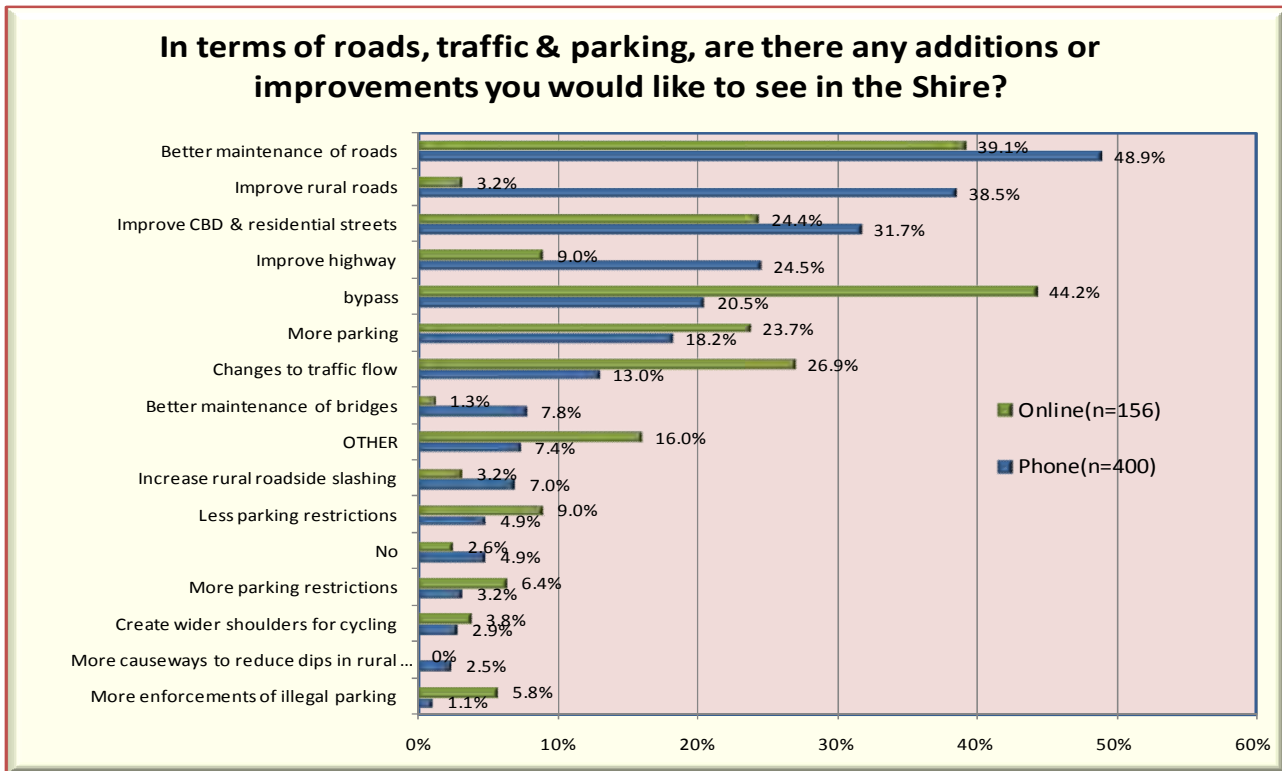
“The bypass should be treated as urgent”

“Reduce heavy vehicle traffic in main street”

“Wheelchair access from footpath to road at intersections”

Part 3B: Roads, Traffic and Parking

Graph 3.2: In terms of roads, traffic and parking, are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2030?



Comment:

When it came to transport and roads, once again there was a significant difference between telephone and online options. Telephone respondents focussed mainly on the improved maintenance of roads and upgrades to rural roads. Improving the CBD and residential streets and the New England Highway were also commonly mentioned requests among phone respondents.

Interestingly some 44 per cent of online respondents mentioned the need for a bypass of Muswellbrook, against “just” 17 per cent of those interviewed by phone. This may be due to the greater time and consideration allowed in online polling. However it may also be the result of a “pro-bypass” online campaign – not unknown in self-selecting survey formats such as this.

The other major difference lay in the higher online emphasis on changing traffic flow (27 per cent, against 13 in the phone survey). This included pleas for more roundabouts, less (new) traffic lights and additional speed humps.



Comments included:

“Train crossings will become a real problem with the increase in coal, we need to make sure ALL crossings are safe and where possible do not affect traffic flow such as in Denman.”

“More road repairs in areas of high traffic, such as around high school”

“Proper parking facilities for trucks outside of Sandy Hollow”

“In CBD paint parking spaces to optimise the number of cars that can park”

“More parking in the CBD and around town sport facilities”

“A dedicated bicycle path on Thomas Mitchell drive away from cars so people can cycle to work. I am sure the mines could help.”

“The roads are far too narrow. It is disgraceful that developers have been allowed to build roads so narrow that cars travelling in opposite directions have to pull over to allow a car to pass before resuming their own journey”

“All residential streets to be re-tarred, not patched up, it just makes it bumps”

“If we had a bypass to remove the trucks our main streets would be safer and parking would be a lot easier.”

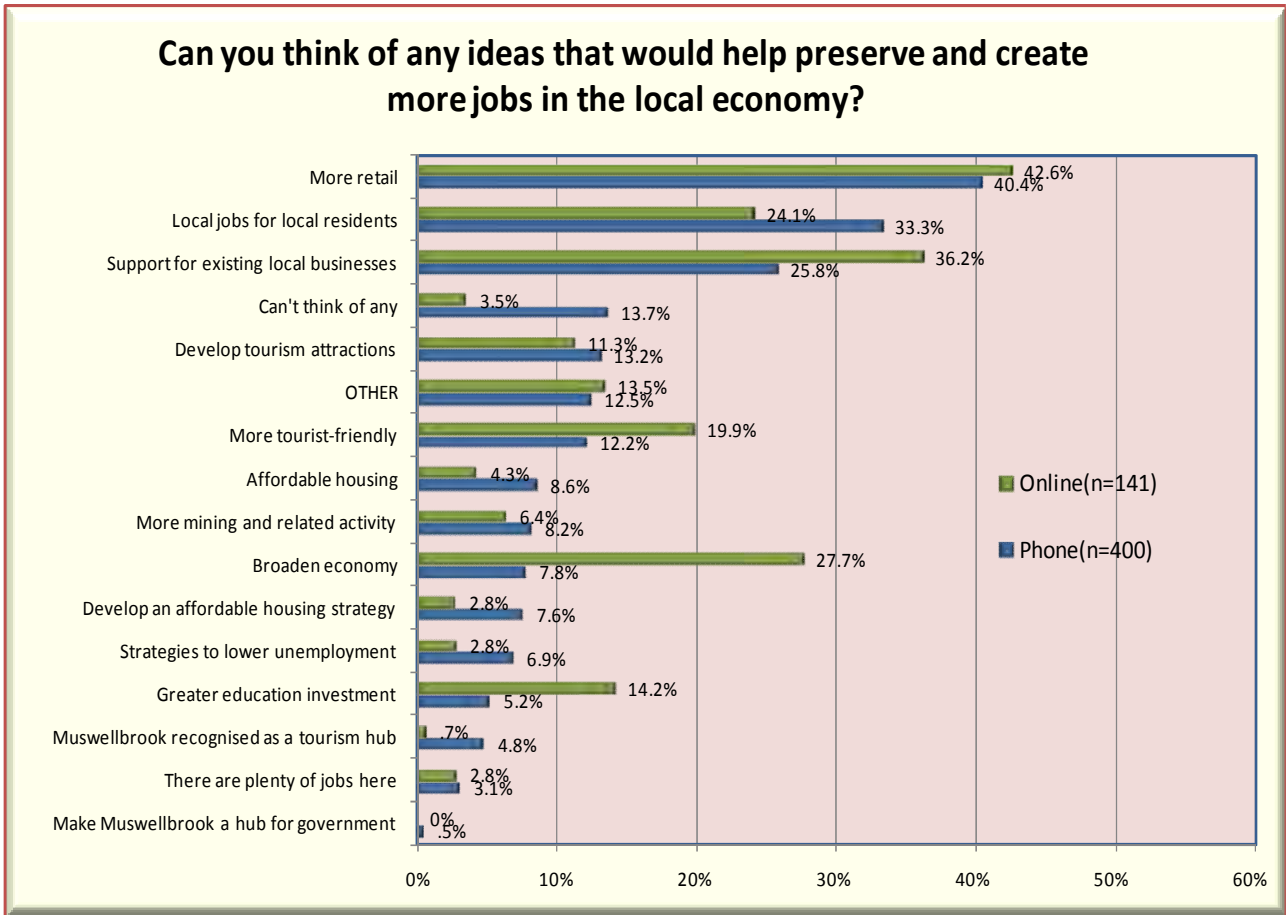
“Once bypass done then can have 45 degree parking in main street”

“Bypass Muswellbrook - get the trucks out of the main street”

“Better public transport in town and down to Newcastle and Sydney - you cannot live in this town without a car”

Part 3C: Preserve and create more jobs in the local economy

Graph 3.3: Are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2030?



Comment:

In terms of what need to be done to strengthen the local economy, results were – with two exceptions – similar between telephone and online polls. Major themes raised by both sets of respondents included the need for more retail options in Muswellbrook, creating more jobs for local residents, and providing greater support for local businesses (e.g. encouraging smaller retailers on the main street, shopping locally, rent assistance and start-up support for new businesses). Creating more tourist attractions/making the town more tourist-friendly was also seen as a priority by some.

Online respondents were keen to see the economy broadened beyond its mining base, a theme that was not picked up by telephone respondents to anything like the same extent. Those completing the survey online were also more likely to raise the issue of greater education, including the possibility of a branch campus for a regional university.



Comments included:

"You need to establish an eating street area to bring more coffee shops, gift shops"

"Conservation and regeneration of the natural environment would make the area much more attractive to visitors"

"Heavy vehicle bypass would open up more opportunities for people to enjoy main street"

"Need a manufacturing industry. We rely too heavily on the coal industry"

An outdoor plaza with specialist/niche/boutique/cafe/eatery shops around it. Not like Maitland's awful shopping precinct, but more like Lane Cove plaza- a former street closed off and has evolved into a great spot"

"The local industries should only employ people willing to live in the Muswellbrook Shire. This in turn creates demand on local businesses to employ more staff, improve their ranges."

"Encourage the mines to take on more apprentices - they are hopeless and lazy at this"

"Make free land available: example: my little town in Austria had big unemployment, so the council gave free land and some time free services, (i think it was 5 years), for a factory to be build. To make a long story short, today (there) is a GoodYear factory there with world export. A little spark from a desperate shire council."

"Provide incentives to lure new business to the industrial area."

"Diversify industry rather than be dominated by mining"

"I fear that the pendulum has swung too far towards the coal industry to save tourism, there is no longer anything attractive about Muswellbrook and its periphery. Maybe we need to concentrate on tourism in Denman and Sandy Hollow"

"More accommodation... there is apparently an estimated shortage of 1800 beds in town... This needs to be addressed by 2012 and expanded upon to reduce the number of drive in/drive out employees"

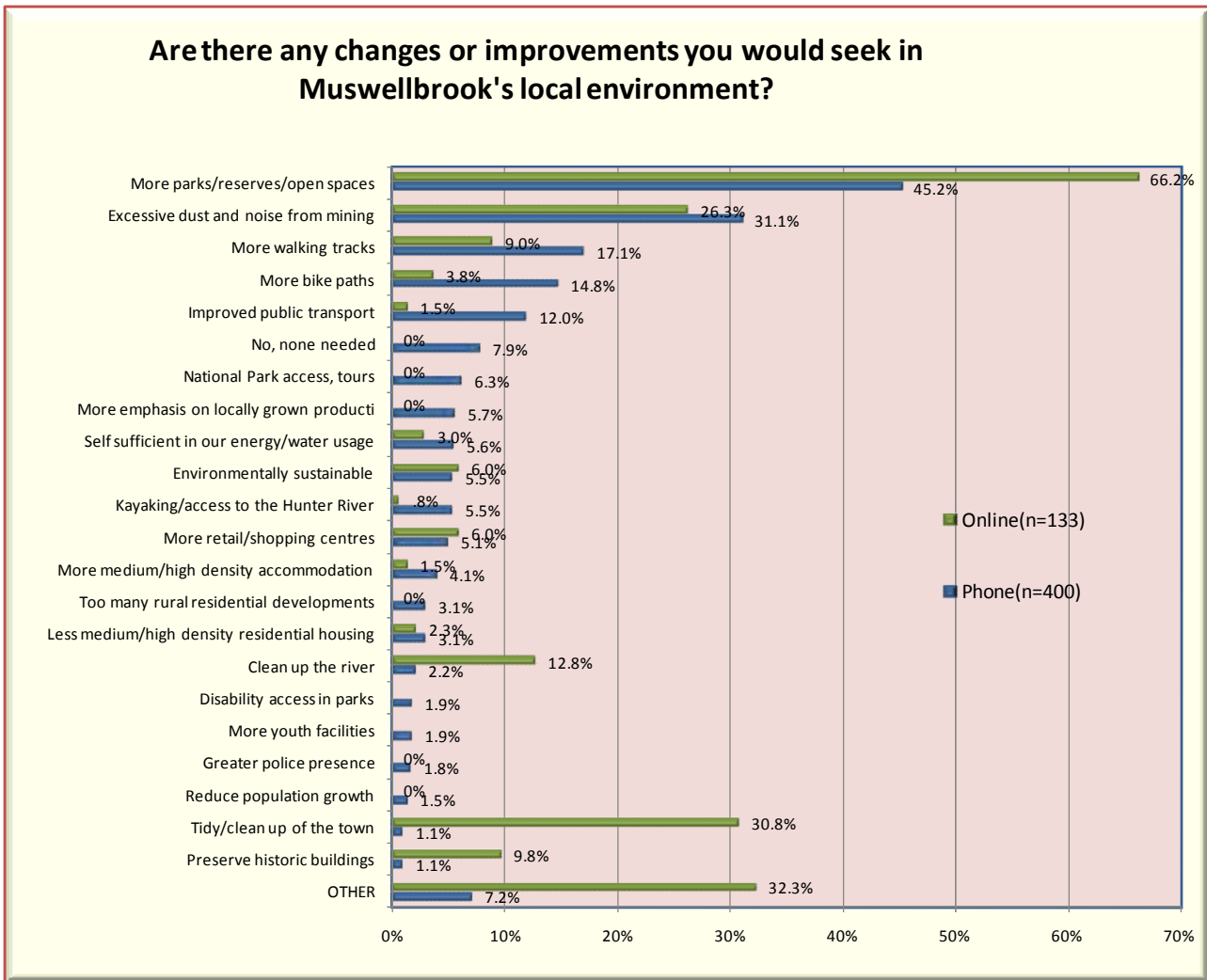
"Ensure all empty shops are utilised by local community, arts, political groups etc. to give Muswellbrook, Denman, Sandy Hollow the appearance of vibrancy - this will assist to attract business. Control outrageous commercial rental rates."

"Council planning staff should look for ways to approve new development in the town, not get in the way looking for reasons to slow it down stop it. "Their attitude should be 'how can we help you get this development here' - not, 'here is a list items that are in the way of you doing a development.'"

"Work towards reviving agriculture (cheaper water for irrigators) and promote local food growing."

Part 3D: Local and natural environment

Graph 3.4: Are there any additions or improvements you would like to see in Muswellbrook’s local environment between now and 2030?



Comment:

The overwhelming theme for environmental improvement lay in the need for more parks, reserves and open spaces. This was mentioned (unprompted) by some two-thirds of online participants, and 45 percent of telephone respondents. The other dominant theme among both groups was the need to better manage dust and noise from the nearby mines.

Online respondents were also keen to raise the issue of tidying or cleaning up the town centre.

Other themes raised included the provision of more walking tracks and bicycle paths, and improved public transport. Online respondents were more likely to mention cleaning up the river and preserving historic buildings in the town.

A range of relevant comments follows:

“Improve our air quality through stricter guidelines for the mining and power sectors”

“More tree planting to hide the mine slag heap”

“Creation and/or maintenance of urban green belts”

“More tree & shrub plantings - less grasses and an emphasis on native plants including native grasses”

“The common - it would be nice to have this area free of rubbish and an area where families can go to ride bikes, have picnics etc.”

“Upgrade of parks and reserves - make more useable and family-friendly”

“Capitalise on the natural beauty of the river”

“It should be a requirement that new houses incorporate solar passive design and that developers encourage planting of shade trees in gardens”

“Monitoring of dust from mines and ensuring public health is paramount”

“Cleaning up and making of walking paths along the Hunter River near Sydney Street”

“The housing estates are too tightly packed together and isolated from social infrastructure- it would be great to have some advanced planning to mitigate this”

“Beautifying the river with native vegetation & accessible parks. Weeds to be removed from Hunter River bed and Red Gum. Replace willows and pine trees & generally more tree planting in council reserves”

“Preserve and maintain the heritage buildings and homes in our town”

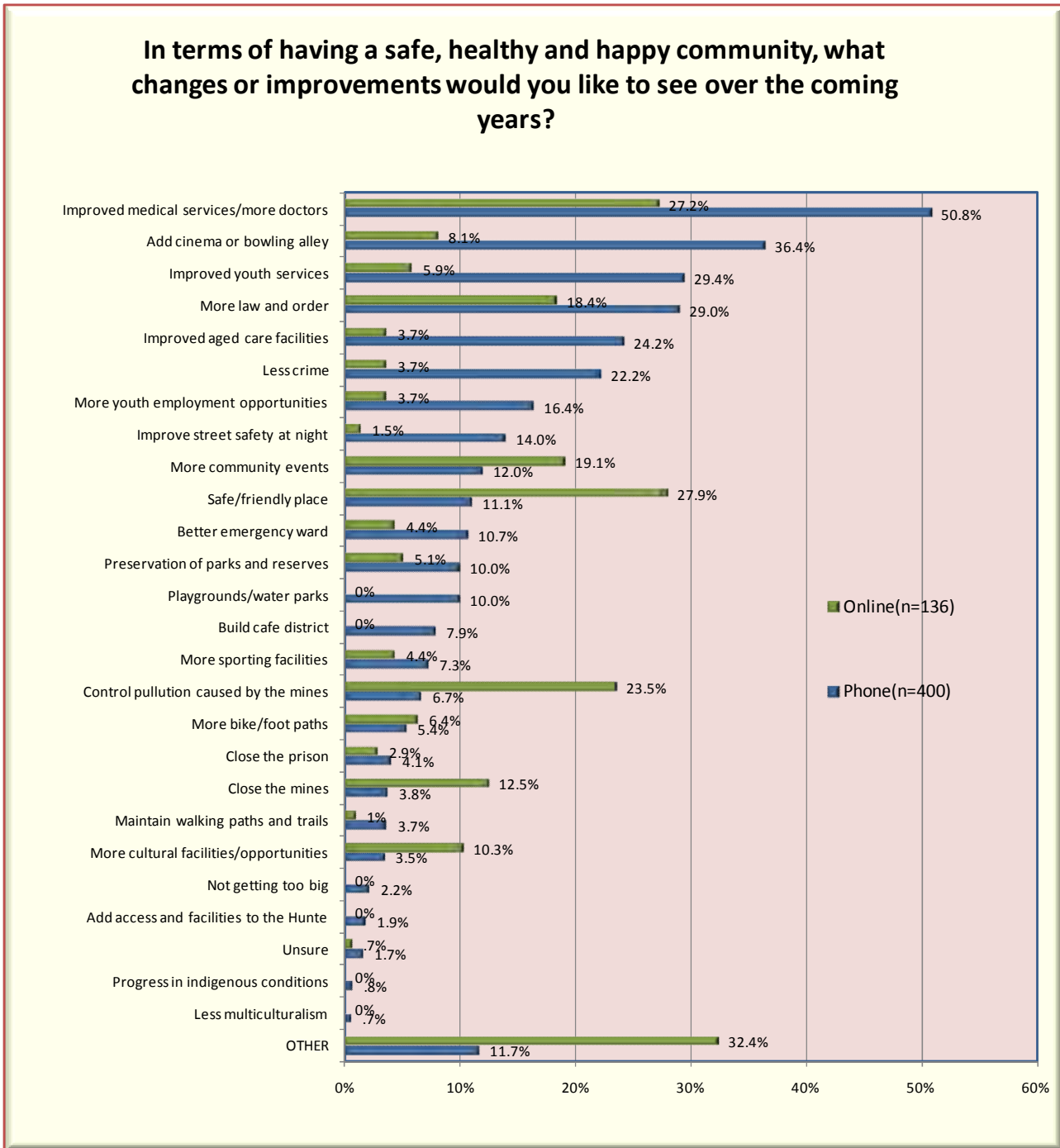
“No more mining. What we have now is enough and limits will extend the future of the industry for longer”

“Preservation of country feel in Denman”

“Looking forward to new library - we need to add a decent performance space and a cinema”

Part 3E: Safe, healthy, happy community

Graph 3.5: In terms of having a safe, healthy and happy community, are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2030?



Comment:

The question of what would make Muswellbrook a safer, happier, and healthier community logically provided the greatest diversity of results. Those surveyed by telephone focussed mainly on the need for more doctors and/or improved medical services. This was less pronounced among online respondents, likely due to the younger demographic of that survey.

The need for a cinema or bowling alley also re-appeared in this question, mentioned by more than one-third of all phone respondents. Other popular themes included increased law and order, improved youth services, improved aged care facilities, a reduction in crime, and more employment opportunities for youth.

While these themes also enjoyed traction among online respondents, they were additionally keen to emphasise the perception of Muswellbrook as a safe and friendly place, the need to control pollution caused by the mines, and a desire for a cultural facility and/or more cultural opportunities.

There was also some negativity around the local correctional facility, with perceptions it is bringing the wrong sort of families and visitors to town.

Among the many comments made:

“A doctor that bulk bills and doesn't charge extra would be great. At this point in time I know 10 different people that can't see the doctor because they get charged to see them even with a Medicare card and unemployment card. In Newcastle there are many doctors that don't charge a gap, surely this could happen here”

“A second doctors' surgery is mandatory. At present appointments need to be made a minimum of six weeks in advance and most doctors have closed their books to new patients”

“Limit mining expansion. We need to preserve nature as best we can before it's too late”

“I would like to see more patrols of a night keeping the main areas safe for people to go out and enjoy themselves”

“Increased police presence - More control over criminal activity, violence, assault, drunken behaviour, robberies”

“Skate parks and investment in youth recreation and education in other towns than Muswellbrook”

“The mental health of our youth concerns me with a rapid increase in the last five years. More needs to be available for them which in return creates a healthier and happy community”

“Skate park is good - need to keep improving options for kids and families such as bowling, improved parks, cinema”

“More activities for young families within the community”

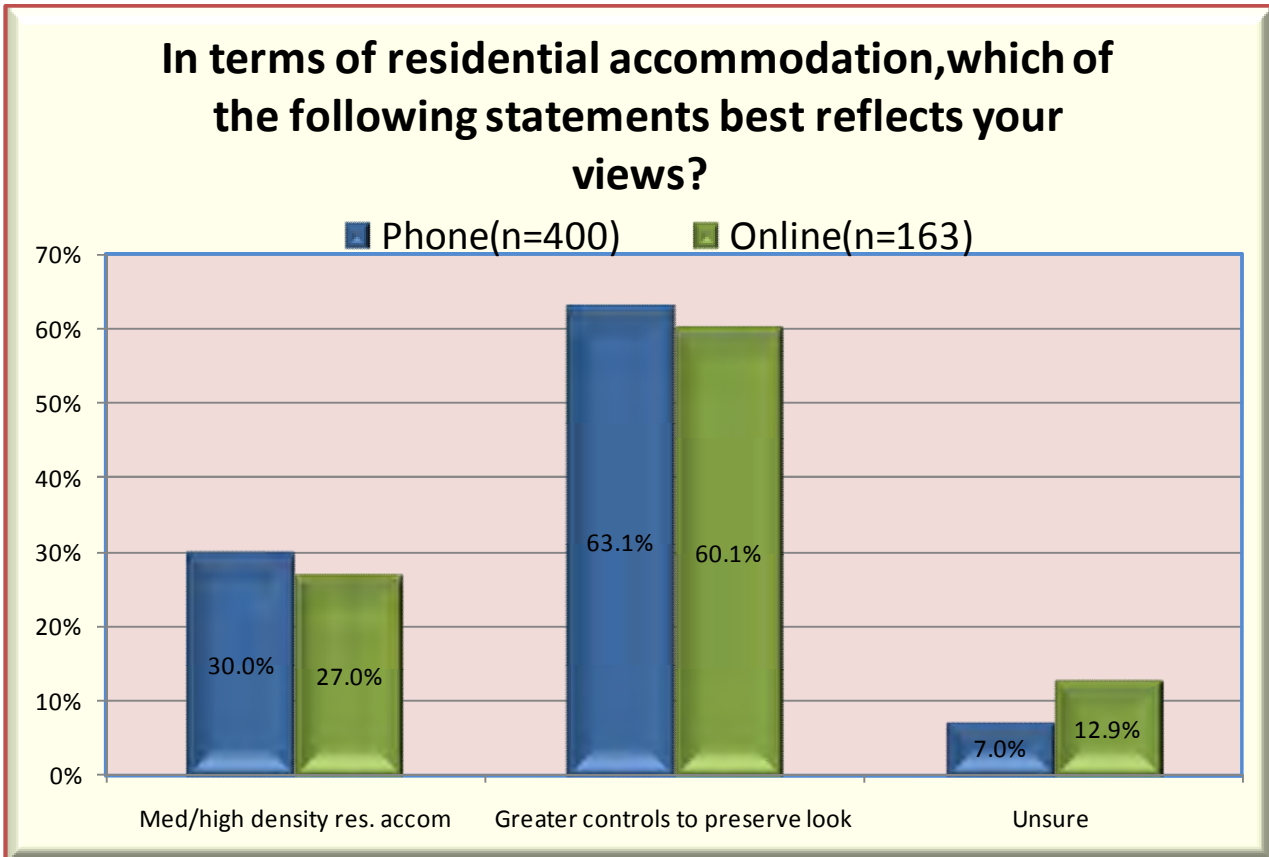
“More bike paths, walking paths”

“When inmates are released from St. Heliers make sure they are relocated away from the local area”

“Back to Muswellbrook day/s a gala event in the main street”

Part 4: Accommodation Options

Graph4.1: Which of the following statements best reflects your views on the subject within the Muswellbrook Shire?



Comment:

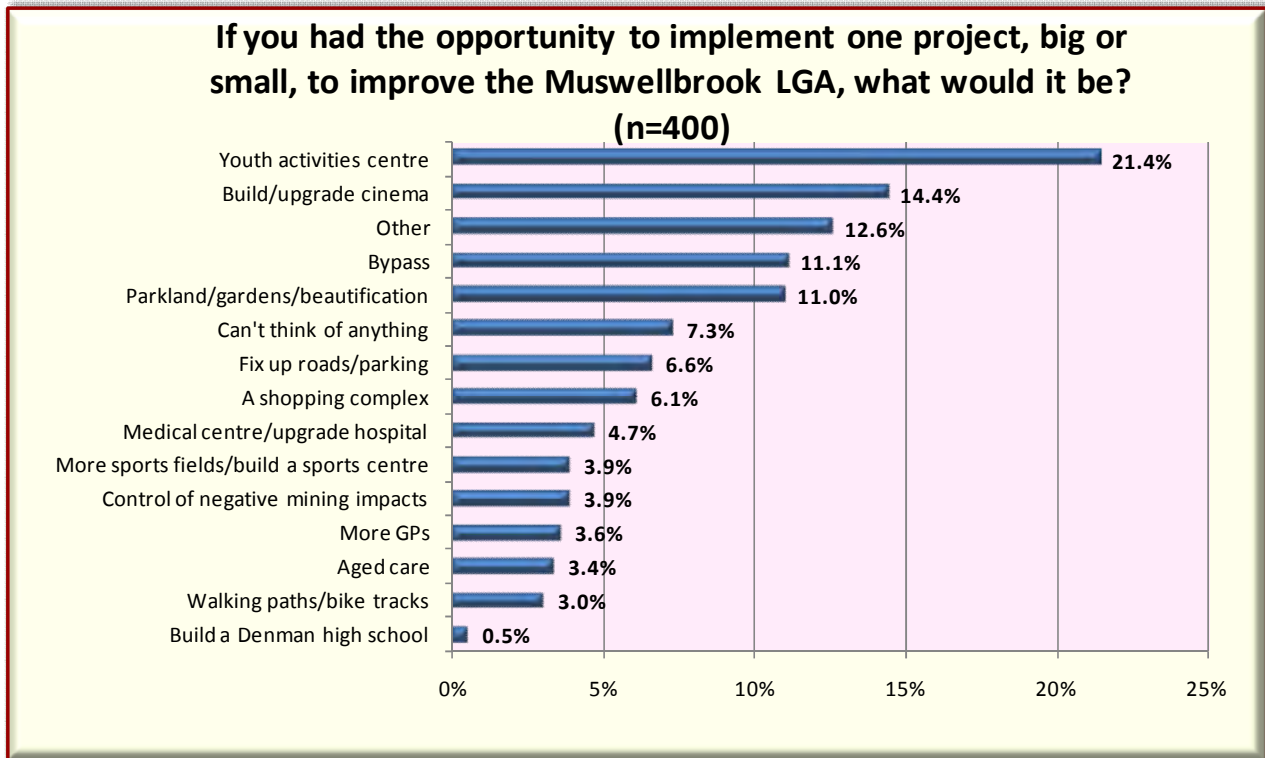
In terms of potential residential development models, both telephone and online respondents showed a strong preference for greater controls on medium-high density accommodation, to preserve the look and feel of Muswellbrook.

Interestingly, for the telephone survey this response was consistent by age, gender, time lived in the shire and postcode.⁸

⁸ For online survey sample size was not large enough to extrapolate results of sub-groups

Part 5: Overall improvements to Muswellbrook Shire LGA

Graph 5.1: (Phone survey only) What would be your one big project to improve Muswellbrook LGA?



Comment:

Telephone respondents were additionally asked “**If you had the opportunity to implement one project, big or small, to improve the Muswellbrook LGA, what would it be?**” The results of this unprompted question have subsequently been coded, and results are shown in Graph 5.1, above.

The creation of a youth activity centre topped the community’s wish list, nominated by more than one in five of those surveyed. Other popular options included a new cinema, a bypass of the Muswellbrook CBD, and improvements or additions to Muswellbrook parks and gardens.

Other ideas mentioned by 5 or more per cent of respondents included improvements to roads, upgrading of the town’s retail offering, and improvements to the local hospital (or creation of a separate medical centre).

Part 6: Other suggestions and comments

At the conclusion of the online and telephone surveys, respondents were invited to provide any other comments or suggestions to Council. In many cases this feedback re-emphasised points made earlier in the survey.

As one might expect, the key issue addressed in this question revolved around the long-term impact of the nearby mines on Muswellbrook. There was, for example, widespread concern that mining had progressively crowded out or destroyed other industries such as agriculture and tourism, and that the dust and traffic etc. had had a detrimental effect on the region's lifestyle and health:

"I think something major needs to be done with the health issues arising from the mines. I am not against the mines; I just feel that we need to acknowledge the fact that they are causing many health problems. The quality of the air is very poor, the dust level is very high, and there are a noticeable amount of people in our town with respiratory problems."

"I came to the Hunter Valley over 20 years ago and it was a hub of vineyards, dairies, horse studs, beef cattle, hay production and had some wonderful small close knit communities. That pride and sense of community is being lost with the huge reliance on mining. Yes it is economically viable in the short term but I worry about the future of the environment for our children - the long term effects of the huge amount of dust in our area is yet unknown."

Others focussed on the difficulty in younger residents finding work, despite the booming mines:

"Why do all these out of state/town people keep taking the jobs that should go to the youth of our town - they are our future. If we could (only) provide a trade training programme in conjunction with the resources sector...employing 'true' local youth."

And a number of respondents re-stated the need for greater retail, leisure and/or cultural options:

"Look at other small towns like Scone and Gunnedah - beautiful main streets and nice places to eat at. I can't wait to move out of this town as it offers nothing to young people at all!"

"Things like a bypass, cinema and a performance space would add to attractions already in town like the sporting facilities, Library, Arts Centre, Conservatorium and would be attractive to both tourists and future residents. The local Arts Festival should be encouraged and supported."

And the need for a bypass of the town once again featured prominently in this section:

"I would like to see an explanation as to when we will get a bypass. I would like to get all the trucks out of the city, so we can clean it up. I voted for the new mayor because he promised to get the trucks out of the city."

Beyond these four themes, the responses to this question were understandably diverse. Hence they have been included in their entirety as Appendix 3 to this report.



Appendix 1: Telephone Survey questionnaire

Version 1 Muswellbrook_Shire_Council

Last modified: 19/01/2011 11:20:00 AM

- Q1. Hello, my name is (name), and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council. Council is currently formulating a long-term plan for the region's future, and I was wondering if you could spare me less than 10 minutes to talk about what you like and dislike about living in the Muswellbrook Shire and how it can be improved. We're not trying to sell anything, and all information is completely confidential. Are you happy to participate in a short community survey this afternoon/evening?

Offer a CALL BACK if inconvenient time

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

- Q2. Thank you for your time, have a great afternoon/evening.

End

- Q3. Before we proceed I have some quick qualifying questions: Are you aged 16 or over?

IF NO, ask is there anyone in your house who is 16 or over who might like to participate in our survey.

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q3 is SELECTED

Q3

- Q4. I'm afraid you must be aged at least 16 or over to qualify for this survey. Thank you for your time and have a great afternoon

End

- Q5. Do you live in the Muswellbrook Shire Council area?



Or Muswellbrook Local Government area

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Q5

Do not answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q5 is SELECTED

Q6. My apologies, this survey is only for residents of the Muswellbrook Local Government Area. Thanks very much for your time and have a good afternoon/evening.

End

Q7. Are you a permanent employee or councillor of Muswellbrook Shire Council?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Q7

Answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q7 is SELECTED

Q8. I'm sorry, but Muswellbrook Council employees and councillors are not able to participate in this survey. Thanks very much for your time, and have a good evening.

End

Q9. May I have your first name for the survey?

Type N/A if not willing to give name

Q9

Q10. Thanks so much [Q9]. To kick things off, what do you value or enjoy about living in Muswellbrook Shire?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE and tick any that apply

| | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Quiet | 1 | Q10_1 |
| Convenience of a small town | 2 | Q10_2 |
| Good transport | 3 | Q10_3 |
| Family oriented/kid friendly | 4 | Q10_4 |
| Good shopping | 5 | Q10_5 |
| Good amenities/infrastructure in Shire or nearby | 6 | Q10_6 |
| Planned events | 7 | Q10_7 |
| Rural or bush atmosphere | 8 | Q10_8 |
| Community | 9 | Q10_9 |



| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|--------|
| Healthy economy/lot of jobs | 10 | Q10_10 |
| Well kept parks & gardens | 11 | Q10_11 |
| Relaxed, no traffic, quality of life | 12 | Q10_12 |

Q10_10
Q10_11
Q10_12
Q10_O

Q11. And conversely, is there anything you dislike about living in Muswellbrook Shire?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE and tick any that apply

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----|--------|
| Semi trailer traffic | 1 | Q11_1 |
| Mines are ugly and dusty | 2 | Q11_2 |
| Overcrowding | 3 | Q11_3 |
| Graffiti | 4 | Q11_4 |
| Public transport deficiencies | 6 | Q11_5 |
| Community is too small at times | 7 | Q11_6 |
| Densification/overcrowded | 8 | Q11_7 |
| Infrastructure deficiencies | 9 | Q11_8 |
| Crime/lack of perceived safety | 10 | Q11_9 |
| Traffic/lack of parking | 11 | Q11_10 |
| Lack of culture, too many bogans | 12 | Q11_11 |
| Lack of recreational activities | 13 | Q11_12 |

Q11_1
Q11_2
Q11_3
Q11_4
Q11_5
Q11_6
Q11_7
Q11_8
Q11_9
Q11_10
Q11_11
Q11_12
Q11_O

Q12. [Q9] I would now like you to think about how you would like Muswellbrook Shire to look, work and feel in the year 2030. Firstly in terms of local services and infrastructure, are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2030?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE for up to 3 If unclear ask if they use facilities such as libraries, aged care centres, or the Council swimming pool, and hence what other things Council or other levels of government could do to improve their quality of life.

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| Improvements to roads | 1 | Q12_1 |
| Improvements to footpaths | 2 | Q12_2 |
| More cycle ways | 3 | Q12_3 |
| Better street lighting | 4 | Q12_4 |
| Better health and/or aged-care options | 5 | Q12_5 |
| Expanded library service | 6 | Q12_6 |
| Improved public transport | 7 | Q12_7 |
| Affordable housing | 8 | Q12_8 |
| New/More accessible shopping area/s | 9 | Q12_9 |
| More child care facilities | 10 | Q12_10 |
| More community centres | 11 | Q12_11 |
| Improve sports and swimming facilities | 12 | Q12_12 |
| Cafe district | 13 | Q12_13 |

Q12_1
Q12_2
Q12_3
Q12_4
Q12_5
Q12_6
Q12_7
Q12_8
Q12_9
Q12_10
Q12_11
Q12_12
Q12_13

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| Cinema or bowling alley | 14 | Q12_14 |
| Aged accommodation | 15 | Q12_15 |
| More basic health facilities, more GP's | 16 | Q12_16 |
| More advanced hospital and emergency facilities | 17 | Q12_17 |
| Longer opening hours for pool/heated pool | 18 | Q12_18 |
| Mobile library | 19 | Q12_19 |
| More train services | 20 | Q12_20 |
| Remote campus for university | 21 | Q12_21 |
| | | Q12_O |

Q13. Likewise, in terms of roads, traffic and parking, are there any improvements that you would like to see in coming years?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE - up to 3

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| More parking restrictions | 1 | Q13_1 |
| Less parking restrictions | 2 | Q13_2 |
| Improve rural roads | 3 | Q13_3 |
| More enforcements of illegal parking | 4 | Q13_4 |
| Better maintenance of roads | 5 | Q13_5 |
| Better maintenance of bridges | 6 | Q13_6 |
| Changes to traffic flow | 7 | Q13_7 |
| Improve CBD & residential streets | 8 | Q13_8 |
| Improve highway | 9 | Q13_9 |
| Create wider shoulders for cycling | 10 | Q13_10 |
| Increase rural roadside slashing | 11 | Q13_11 |
| More causeways to reduce dips in rural roads | 12 | Q13_12 |
| | | Q13_O |

Q14. Next, can you think of any ideas that would help preserve and create more jobs in the local economy?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE - up to 3 (This may include new industries or retail areas or other ways to promote local businesses etc)

| | | |
|---|---|-------|
| More tourist-friendly | 1 | Q14_1 |
| More retail | 2 | Q14_2 |
| Strategies to lower unemployment | 3 | Q14_3 |
| Local jobs for local residents | 4 | Q14_4 |
| Broaden economy | 5 | Q14_5 |
| Affordable housing | 6 | Q14_6 |
| Greater education investment | 7 | Q14_7 |
| More mining and related activity | 8 | Q14_8 |
| Make Muswellbrook a hub for government services | 9 | Q14_9 |

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| Support for existing local businesses | 10 | Q14_10 |
| Develop an affordable housing strategy | 11 | Q14_11 |
| Develop tourism attractions | 12 | Q14_12 |
| Have Muswellbrook recognised as a tourism destination | 13 | Q14_13 |

Q15. Next, are there any changes or improvements you would seek in Muswellbrooks local environment, including buildings and the natural environment?

UNPROMPTED - PROBE- up to 3.

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| More parks/reserves/open spaces | 1 | Q15_1 |
| Environmentally sustainable/friendly businesses | 2 | Q15_2 |
| Self sufficient in our energy/water usage | 3 | Q15_3 |
| Excessive dust and noise from mining | 4 | Q15_4 |
| More emphasis on locally grown production | 5 | Q15_5 |
| More bike paths | 6 | Q15_6 |
| More walking tracks | 7 | Q15_7 |
| Improved public transport | 8 | Q15_8 |
| More medium/high density accommodation | 9 | Q15_9 |
| Less medium/high density residential housing | 10 | Q15_10 |
| Reduce population growth | 11 | Q15_11 |
| Too many rural residential developments - waterways cannot cope | 12 | Q15_12 |
| National Park access, tours | 13 | Q15_13 |
| Kayaking and access to the Hunter River | 14 | Q15_14 |
| Disability access in parks | 15 | Q15_15 |

Q16. And finally, in terms of having a safe, healthy and happy community, what changes or improvements would you would like to see over the coming years?

UNPROMPTED -PROBE - up to 3 responses (This may include anything from community events to helping people feel safer in the streets to new health and aged care services)

| | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Improved medical services/more doctors | 1 | Q16_1 |
| Improved aged care facilities | 2 | Q16_2 |
| Close the mines | 3 | Q16_3 |
| Less multiculturalism | 4 | Q16_4 |
| Progress in indigenous conditions | 5 | Q16_5 |
| More law and order | 6 | Q16_6 |
| Improved youth services | 7 | Q16_7 |
| More youth employment opportunities | 8 | Q16_8 |
| Safe/friendly place | 9 | Q16_9 |

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| Less crime | 10 | Q16_10 |
| Close the prison | 11 | Q16_11 |
| Not getting too big | 12 | Q16_12 |
| More community events | 13 | Q16_13 |
| Playgrounds/water parks | 14 | Q16_14 |
| More bike/foot paths | 15 | Q16_15 |
| More cultural facilities/opportunities | 16 | Q16_16 |
| Maintain walking paths and trails | 17 | Q16_17 |
| More sporting facilities | 18 | Q16_18 |
| Preservation of parks and reserves/open spaces | 19 | Q16_19 |
| Better emergency ward | 20 | Q16_20 |
| Build cafe district | 21 | Q16_21 |
| Add cinema or bowling alley | 22 | Q16_22 |
| Improve street safety at night | 23 | Q16_23 |
| Add access and facilities to the Hunter River | 24 | Q16_24 |
| | | Q16_O |

Q17. Some people would like to see more medium and high density residential accommodation in Muswellbrook to accommodate a growing population, while others would prefer to see greater controls on this sort of development. Which of the following statements best reflects your views on this subject?

PROMPTED -Don't offer unsure

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| I would prefer to see more medium-high density residential accommodation to meet the needs of a growing population. | 1 | |
| I would prefer to see greater controls on medium-high density accommodation to preserve the traditional look and feel of the region. | 2 | Q17 |
| Unsure | 666 | |

***Q18. If you had the opportunity to implement one project, big or small, to improve the Muswellbrook LGA, what would it be?**

PROBE -If they query how big this project could be, say they have a blank cheque but the idea obviously needs to be broadly realistic.

Q18

Q19. Thanks [Q9], to finish I just have a few demographic questions, to ensure we have a good spread of views. Would your age range be between?

PROMPTED

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| 16-29 | 1 | |
| 30-39 | 2 | |
| 40-49 | 3 | |
| 50-59 | 4 | Q19 |
| 60-69 | 5 | |
| 70 or more | 6 | |

Q20. Gender?

Don't ask

| | | |
|--------|---|-----|
| Male | 1 | |
| Female | 2 | Q20 |

Q21. How long have you resided in the Muswellbrook Local Government Area?

PROMPTED

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Less than 5 years | 1 | |
| 5-10 years | 2 | Q21 |
| More than 10 years | 3 | |

Q22. What is your postcode?

UNPROMPTED

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 2328 | 1 | |
| 2333 | 2 | Q22 |
| | | Q22 |

Q23. Do you work in the Muswellbrook Shire?

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | Q23 |

Q24. Do you own or manage a business in the Muswellbrook Shire?

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No | 2 | Q24 |



Q25. Do you volunteer in the Muswellbrook Shire?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Q25

Q26. Do you own property in the Muswellbrook Shire?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Q26

Q27. And is your home in an urban or rural area?

UNPROMPTED

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Urban | 1 |
| Rural | 2 |
| Mixed/unsure | 3 |

Q27

*Q28. And finally, do you have any other comments or suggestions for Muswellbrook Shire Council?

PROBE for a response

Q28

Q29. Thanks so much [Q9], that concludes the survey, Council greatly appreciates your feedback. Just to let you know that my manager may be in contact to confirm this interview has been conducted correctly. Did you have any questions about this survey? Have a great afternoon/evening.

End



Appendix 2: Online survey questionnaire

Muswellbrook Shire Council

1. Introduction

Muswellbrook Shire Council is currently formulating a long-term plan for the region's future, into the year 2020.

As part of this process, Council is keen to get your thoughts on what you like and dislike about living in the Muswellbrook Shire, and any ideas on how the shire can be improved.

The survey should only take around 10 minutes, and all answers are confidential.

Please note that only those who live, work, study, volunteer or own property in the Muswellbrook Shire are eligible to complete this survey.

To commence the survey, please click "Next", below.

2. Muswellbrook Shire: likes and dislikes

1. What do you value or enjoy about living in the Muswellbrook Shire?

1

2

3

2. Conversely, is there anything you dislike about living in the Muswellbrook Shire?

1

2

3

3. Services and infrastructure

In this section we would like you to think about how you would like Muswellbrook Shire to look, work and feel in the year 2020.

1. Firstly, in terms of local infrastructure, are there any additions or improvements you would like to see between now and 2020?

1

2

3

4. Economy

1. Do you have ideas that would help preserve and create more jobs in the local economy?

1

2

3

5. Roads, bridges and parking

Muswellbrook Shire Council

1. In terms of roads, traffic and parking, are there any improvements that you would like to see in coming years?

1

2

3

6. Environmental improvements

1. Are there any changes or improvements you would seek in Muswellbrook's local environment, including buildings and the natural environment?

1

2

3

7. Creating a safe, healthy and happy community

1. In terms of having a safe, healthy and happy community, what changes or improvements would you like to see over the coming years?

1

2

3

8. Residential accommodation models

1. Some people would like to see more medium and high density residential accommodation in Muswellbrook to accommodate a growing population, while others would prefer to see greater controls on this sort of development. Which of the following statements best reflects your views on this subject?

- I would prefer to see more medium-high density residential accommodation to meet the needs of a growing population.
- I would prefer to see greater controls on medium-high density accommodation to preserve the traditional look and feel of the region.
- Unsure/Don't care

9. Demographics

This section is to ensure we understand the views of different groups within the community.

Muswellbrook Shire Council

1. Please select your age range.

- Under 18
- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70+

2. And your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. How long have resided in the Muswellbrook Local Government area?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

4. What is your postcode?

- 2309
- 2328
- 2330
- 2333
- 2336

Other (please specify)

10. Demographics (continued)

1. Do you work in the Muswellbrook Shire?

- Yes
- No

2. Do you own or manage a business in the Muswellbrook Shire?

- Yes
- No

Muswellbrook Shire Council

3. Do you volunteer in the Muswellbrook Shire?

- Yes
 No

4. Do you own property in the Muswellbrook Shire?

- Yes
 No

5. Is your home in an urban or rural area?

- Urban
 Rural
 Mixed/unsure

11. Any final comments?

1. And finally, do you have any other comments or suggestions for Muswellbrook Shire Council?

12. Thank you

Thank you so much for your time and interest: Council greatly appreciates your feedback.

Click "done" to leave the survey.

Appendix 3: Others comments and suggestions

| Other comments –Telephone and online combined (unedited but randomised) |
|---|
| Allow Woolworths or Coles to have a liquor licence so there can be more competition with liquor prices. There needs to be more competition to keep the liquor prices down. |
| As a consequence of living in a mining community more needs to be done to improve our air quality. Why do all these out of state/town people keep taking the jobs that should go to the youth of our town - they are our future. If we could provide a trade training programme in conjunction with the resources sector, only employing 'true' local youth. I have lived here all my 41 years; I come from a mining family but am saddened by the amount of out of towners taking our kids jobs. Companies say they need experience, but if we don't provide that to our kids how are they supposed to get it! I am angry that I live in a street full of houses with cars parked out the front with QLD or VIC number plates and the while my children don't stand a chance to get a trade or even a go. We really need to look outside of mining and provide other options for our kids. |
| Basically what i can say is that they do a good job, i appreciate this survey but i feel there are a couple of missing links that they are neglecting. It would be great if we have one nice place where we could go to do our shopping, have a coffee, meet with friends and just relax. Muswellbrook always seems to be the shire in the area that always misses out; we seem to be sitting stagnant. |
| better controls on the APPROVALS OF MINING CLOSE TO TOWN |
| Better garbage collection services. In summer yellow and green bins need emptying weekly. |
| bypass and exploration licence around Denman and the concern that the black dust will have an effect health |
| Bypass! |
| Clean out a few people and have a few new ideas from council. |
| Clean up the area get the trolleys out of the creek and attract more tourism. |
| community consultation is the key-re pseudo National Park , Utilize outer areas |
| concerns for the lack of employment and training for youth also recreational services for them also |
| Congratulations for doing the survey. |
| Continue lobbying NSW government to return more mining royalties to the local community. |
| control the medium-high density accommodation, if there are miners wanting to come into the shire to work for money build more houses so these mine workers will live and stay in the area and their money will be put back into the community |
| Council & councillors require the obligation to put personal matters aside and strive to meet the increasing demands of our growing community; to acknowledge that we as a community contribute towards council's budget, yet feel that more cuts are being made on council's provisions for the community. This puts constraints on the community as a whole. There is scepticism as to where contributions from the mining sector are being spent as there is no evidence that any improvements are being made in the way of land care or river regeneration. A healthy community can only strive with great leadership and direction for our foreseeable future & future generations to come. |
| council are doing the best they can |

| |
|--|
| <p>Council has a reputation for being difficult and nit-picky. People do not feel like council is serving or helping them. Many feel like council makes life more difficult. Council needs to look at the way it does what it does.</p> |
| <p>Council needs to be more progressive</p> |
| <p>Council needs to be more welcoming to developers outside the mines to diversify the employment base - our neighbouring councils on hearing of a developer looking to start something new actively try to attract these developers, particularly in Singleton Shire, while it has been my experience that developers feel Muswellbrook council is too slow and puts up barriers to new development.</p> |
| <p>Council needs to build a skate park in Denman as there is nothing for teenagers to do. Council needs to be reminded to look after Denman too and not just Muswellbrook.</p> |
| <p>Council seems to be spending, but not a lot of result. So, maybe the council could be more outspoken about what they are doing.</p> |
| <p>Council should do more for the Denman area as most funds for facilities are raised through community fund raisers.</p> |
| <p>Council should encourage locals to keep their business/ spend their money in the local area.</p> |
| <p>Council should listen to locals regarding the mines as we have no say in what happens to our town. The mines come in and destroy the area and don't put back into the community as most mine employees come from other towns and spend their wages elsewhere. The mine trucks also ruin the roads then our cars get damaged by the potholes, will the mines pay for our repairs?</p> |
| <p>Council should listen to residents when residents object to development.</p> |
| <p>council should consult the (rate paying, hard working, local) community before they go ahead and develop different things,</p> |
| <p>council should be more agreeing with one another instead of fighting with one another -also too many broken promises</p> |
| <p>Create special extra cheap land zones for newcomers to attract people to the area. there must be incentive to buy</p> |
| <p>Critical the council promised a lot of things that never happened</p> |
| <p>Denman area should be expanded to provide an alternative to Muswellbrook. Golden Highway to divert away from centre of Denman</p> |
| <p>Denman is a growing town & will continue to increase in the coming years. However, the facilities need to be improved for a growing population including things such as upgrades to sporting facilities, roads, drainage, possible high school & more doctors.</p> |
| <p>Do not sell any -NOT ONE, of Muswellbrook shires assets ALL, councils assets belong to the people, not council, even if it is costing council money to maintain, and or operate. This is council's job! Even if it is costing council money to do. Let's face it, if Council are losing money on say the water supply, and a company want to buy it, then they think they can make money out of it otherwise they wouldn't want to buy it in the first place.</p> |
| <p>Do something about showground and build a town Hall</p> |
| <p>Doing a very good job</p> |
| <p>doing the best they can with what they have got</p> |
| <p>Don't forget Denman is a part of the shire. We tend to be left out of the Council spending funds on infrastructure.</p> |

| |
|--|
| Don't take so long to approve developments; be proactive to the expansion of Muswellbrook's community, industrial area and businesses. |
| Don't take the park land away and implement a nursing home near the hospital |
| drainage needs improving on Palace Street |
| Dust reduction and air quality is vital to be solved properly. |
| Fix the roads PROPERLY! |
| Fix the roads, implement bypass |
| Fix up the road in Brooks St near Woolworths and also the road passed the golf course near the lights needs fixing too as it's in a terrible state. |
| Fix up the roads and transport. Street lights need updating. |
| South side of town is in dire need of more doctors and another medical centre |
| Generally I like living here. My children have opportunities for cultural development they wouldn't have had in larger centres purely because of the compactness of the town and the excellent artistic centres it has. |
| Get a Mayor who has lived in Muswellbrook or surrounding areas and actually cares about the town and not just his own agendas. |
| Get out & talk to people about what they want |
| get rid of Martin Rush |
| Get the heavy vehicle bypass backed and implemented by the State Government |
| Get the mines to put more money back into the local area. |
| Get the roads fixed. |
| Get with the times and welcome the idea of bringing new business to town for the youth of the town. The skate park was a start, let's give the youth something to do so they are not wandering the streets or travelling out of town to occupy themselves. |
| has a sick husband and they have to travel out of town to see specialist and should be more medical help for everyone |
| Has observed that small businesses, e.g., restaurants, retail, regularly fail. Why is that? |
| Have some vision and don't just react to things. |
| Have your Councillors, our representative, speak to us. Public notices in the paper are not always seen or read. Keep up the good work, I do not envy you! |
| HOSPITALS NEED TO BE IMPROVED, i would prefer to drive the 4 hours to the next hospital than try and deal with our own hospital services. Bubblers should be installed at the parks for people to drink from. |
| hurry up and do something about market lane, not only for me but for the safety of the community |
| I am pretty happy with the new mayor and the direction that he is taking the town. |
| I believe Council should lobby the local mines, they are impending greatly on our Lifestyle and air quality without putting in a significant contribution to the Shire |
| I believe the current GM is doing a great job. He has done a lot for the town and I believe he will continue to do so. |

| |
|---|
| <p>I believe we live in a friendly community but slowly the demographics are changing and not for the better. The unemployment rate is growing and the respect values are dropping. People need to be proud of their town and more importantly themselves and that is what makes a happy healthy community. Council need to listen to the people of Muswellbrook and the people need to be more positive about the council and be more involved in the community, if we work as one we will be able to move in a positive direction and make Muswellbrook a better place. Thank you</p> |
| <p>I do not think politics should be brought into the council.</p> |
| <p>I don't think the council use our rates wisely.</p> |
| <p>I feel that the cost of rent is outrageous, it should not be allowed for owners to ask for high rent - it is obvious discrimination as they only want 'mine' workers because they are in the highest pay bracket. It makes it difficult for families who want to settle in the area, for those who are in the lower income bracket and for the growing population.</p> |
| <p>I have recently moved from Muswellbrook Shire after 17 years. I love Denman and it's surrounds but I fear the pendulum has swung too far to coal in the last 10 years. I still own a farm near Denman. I would like to see the balance returned.</p> |
| <p>I is important to not cluster too many duplex developments in one street as this creates safety issues with the traffic and also reduces the blend of homeowners and rentals which reduces the street appeal and welcoming of the streets of Muswellbrook</p> |
| <p>i like what the mayor has been doing and the shire council has got Muswellbrook's community at heart, continue to be environmentally thoughtful about what is going to be happening in the future</p> |
| <p>I pretty happy with the way everything is going.</p> |
| <p>I think it is unfair that the council has no say in regard to state affairs. We own our own home in North Muswellbrook and State run Compass housing group have taken over our street and are building 3 story high density housing, we tried talking to council but they have no say, I don't feel this is fair. I think the skate park for the children is wonderful but now we have our kids out in 40 degree heat in the sun, I would like to see a roof put on it, not a sail as I think the older boys would wreck it. Also I think the prison is encouraging un savoury people to come to our town, they re house here to be close to the people in jail and then when they are released the people don't leave. I wouldn't walk down our streets after dark.</p> |
| <p>I think MbK Shire Council is doing a great job.</p> |
| <p>It saddens me to see a dead beat main street which was once lively and busy, I have no reason at all to even go to the main street now, and I even avoid the lights because they stay red for too long. Shame on you Muswellbrook Council, look at other small towns like Scone and Gunnedah - beautiful main streets and nice places to eat at. I can't wait to move out of this town as it offers nothing to young people at all! I wonder how many councillors actually visit the main street??? None I can imagine as they would have no reason to!</p> |
| <p>I think something major needs to be done with the health issues arising from the mines. I am not against the mines; I just feel that we need to acknowledge the fact that they are causing many health problems. The quality of the air is very poor, the dust level is very high, and there are a noticeable amount of people in our town with respiratory problems, also we don't have enough Doctors to care for this rising amount of ill health.</p> |
| <p>i think that the council are doing as good a job as they can with little funding</p> |
| <p>I think that we should have an open day at the Council from time to time to meet the Council face to face.</p> |

| |
|--|
| I think the council are doing quite a good job. |
| I think the culture here should change. Local government here, when it has been remotely working, and they need to change the culture. |
| I think the Mayor of Muswellbrook needs to get out a bit more and meet the oldies; I have never met or seen him/her. |
| I think the Muswellbrook Shire needs to realise the benefits of having the surrounding mines to support the community. Without these mines many people would be without work and a reason to continue to stay in the local area. Additionally, the mines bring in additional people from the surrounding areas that support our local accommodation providers and other businesses. The mines also support many of the community events and fund many initiatives. Coming from the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, I really notice the difference in the appearance of the Muswellbrook area. There is a general lack of town pride with the main street looking tired and run down with no trees or areas to make it look inviting. If you want to go out for a nice lunch or enjoy a coffee you need to go to Scone, Denman, Singleton or other areas due to the lack of these things in Muswellbrook. |
| I think the skate park was a wonderful idea and is great for the older kids to have somewhere to go. Some shade should be provided by way of mature tree or shade sail and a water bubbler would have been a good idea. It looks like a usual half completed project and now will be forever forgotten about and never maintained - I hope I am wrong. |
| I think to improve the livelihood of our town; we need to broaden our horizons. There is a great amount of money made in this area and as far as I can tell not along being put back into the community. We need to improve our connection to the coast. Spend more money on our town's infrastructure; build better roads to connect us to Newcastle. We have a young population and we need to provide more facilities for them e.g. recreational activities. |
| I think you guys are doing a wonderful job. |
| I think you guys do a pretty good job. |
| I volunteer with amateur athletics and the Eisteddfod. I love the arts activity generated by the Eisteddfod and the support it receives from the mines, the Council and the community. A friendlier venue could be good. Athletics proceeds against the odds. The Council does not feel like a friendly force but more an obstruction. The Club consists of volunteers who have an uphill battle to encourage participation. |
| I would like see something more for the kids to do. |
| I would like to add the need for an aged care facility to be included in infrastructure planning |
| I would like to encourage the council as they do a difficult job with all of the mines to deal with. |
| i would like to see a cinema or bowling for the middle aged to use and enjoy |
| I would like to see an explanation as to when we will get a bypass. I would like to get all the trucks out of the city, so we can clean it up. I voted for the new mayor because he promised to get the trucks out of the city. |
| I would like to see more recreational activities for the youth. I also have an issue with council bringing in a regulation of an environmentally friendly sewerage system. I find it unfair that some and not all of us had to have this system in place. It is costly and also has a high input and up keep. I know that there are plenty of people in our shire and area that do not have this system in place. I think that they should make it that we either all have to have it or none of us. |
| I would like to see Muswellbrook outdoor pool open more often, especially on the weekends. |

| |
|---|
| i would like to see the remove of political parties in my local area |
| I would really like better access to the library; opening hours extended, and perhaps open on a Sunday. I would also love to see internet access available free at the library, even if it was only for a limited amount of time, and only for school aged children. I think it is a very important thing for children to be exposed to and at the moment I believe that not all children in our area have internet access. I would also like to see a lot more cycleway/bike tracks in our area. |
| if the town was cleaned up and make it more tourist friendly and that's why the showground needs to stay to attract events for outlying areas |
| if there is a local [problem, solve it locally stop sending away for solutions from Sydney etc. |
| If they just got out and went for a drive around the area they would see the things that need to be improved, they are quite obvious and easily seen such as guttering, footpaths, roads, drainage and the dilapidation of buildings. |
| Improve communication processes with community |
| improve the pollution coming from the minds |
| improved sporting/recreation services for children and teenagers, |
| in general the overall appearance of the area has improved considerably |
| in need of aged care as has to look after elderly mother |
| in need of a doctor as the hospital has not got one and as Dorothy is an elderly woman she says the footpaths are not in good shape when she is on her scooter |
| in need of youth facilities as the teenagers have nothing to do therefore trouble and crime starts |
| is the Muswellbrook shire balanced enough to share funds equally throughout the area, as so much needs to be done |
| It is ridiculous to have the council chambers sitting out of town and not even accessible by public transport. |
| It was obvious once we had our last council elections, and we got a new lord mayor, that there have been obvious changes in the area, and i fight the case of the skate park, and beginning of the beautification of the main street, I see those as important, and as moving forward. I also think the new library is a wonderful thing for the shire. Also i think The mix of demographics in the shire, in terms of socioeconomics, particularly relating to the prison, and the families of those within the prison, can contribute to a challenging environment for some people in town. Whilst i realise prisons are essential, perhaps we need to make a greater effort to provide more opportunities for the lower socioeconomic groups of the community. |
| It would be good to improve the emergency ward at the hospital |
| It would be great if when we make a complaint to the office we are informed of the progress. All surrounding properties to be notified if there is to be a building erected or change of use and times for a current business in the locality of our homes. |
| I've filled out at least 3 of these types of surveys for Muswellbrook Shire over the years. Nothing ever changes for Sandy Hollow. |
| Just far too many Duplexes are ruining the family feel of the streets. A bypass far too many trucks through town. |
| Just the fact to listen to the residents No input from residents is allowed at the council meetings. So the housing that is being built is not up to scratch, especially for down the track for resale |

| |
|---|
| just thinks that the youth need more facilities for leisure and for personal counselling |
| just to improve medical services and attract doctors to the area |
| just to slow down the mines from buying out real estate as Alex worried that they will lose their sporting facilities |
| Keep doing a good job. |
| keep Supporting Clean-up Australia and Tree planting initiatives |
| Keep the fertile land for farming not coal mines and monitor water and air quality |
| Keep the politics out of local government |
| Keep the shire free of mine pollution and stop them taking our beautiful bush land!!! |
| Keep up the good work |
| Keep up the good work |
| Keep up the good work, Martin and the present Muswellbrook Shire Council! |
| Keep up the great work - but please keep the mine ratio in balance - Denman will be ruined if planned mines go ahead. We have moved to get away from the ugly site of the mines in our beautiful valley where we have lived for 25 years. |
| Less dust |
| Let more young people have a say and listen to the people. |
| lift their game |
| Limit the expansion of mining before it is too late! I came to the Hunter Valley over 20 years ago and it was a hub of vineyards, dairies, horse studs, beef cattle, hay production and had some wonderful small close knit communities. That pride and sense of community is being lost with the huge reliance on mining. Yes it is economically viable in the short term but I worry about the future of the environment for our children - the long term effects of the huge amount of dust in our area is yet unknown. It is nearly too late, but we would strongly recommend limiting any new mining activity. Have a look around and see what we are doing to the land! |
| Listen to residents. Shire staff are employed by the ratepayers and Councillors have been elected to represent the community. This is often forgotten. |
| Listen to suggestions and not just go the politically correct pathway!!! |
| Listen to the people try to assist residents with practical solutions to their problems. |
| Listen to the ratepayers and try and give service. Represent the shire better when getting money from the state government. |
| Listen to the youth more - it is not all about hierarchy in the town who should have a voice. |
| Listen to what the community requires and needs |
| Listen to what the general public want. |
| long term resident that is only concerned in a bypass |
| look after the parks and the cemetery |
| Look at the roads and the shops in the main street. The rentals on the shops are too high |
| Lower the rates. |
| Maintain parks and cemeteries better, keep the grass down. |
| maintain roads so car doesn't disappear down the pot holes |
| Make it look more like Scone |
| make Muswellbrook better for everyone then people will enjoy this town think of the kids and their future |
| Martin is doing a good job keep it up |

| |
|--|
| MBK needs to get new showground for the benefit of residents to get in better events and provide entertainment for the youth as well as adults in MBK |
| mines are important in terms of local economy but Shire residents deserve same opportunities as in other towns, Council should adopt a more community development approach, more consideration of residents' needs |
| Mines need to be altered so the effect on community is not as severe |
| Mines need to be more controlled, as the mines are getting too close to townships and they seem to be building more and more, we have enough. |
| Mining companies should be more closely monitored and regulated, not shut down as they are beneficial. , Also, Council needs to adopt a more community development approach to government, be more socially pro-active. Currently seen as a regulatory body collecting rates and fines but have little visible presence in the community. |
| Mining is a large part of our community; however it threatens to take over our shire to the extent that it will dominate the landscape more than ever. There have to be restrictions; also health studies done independently. I have already had most of my immediate family move away for health reasons. They were lucky to find somewhere to go. We need to think and plan now for the mining-free future that WILL come. |
| more bulk waste collections through the year-also an electric waste pick-up |
| more children playgrounds with shade |
| more doctors are needed at Denman hospital |
| More done to the roads and less coal mines |
| More entertainment for the younger people in the community. Employment for the youth. |
| More law and order to keep down the crime rate. |
| More maintenance of entrances to town, such as mowing along roads to give a more pleasant entrance to visitors. A family friendly restaurant/visitor/museum area at one entrance to town (not tacky take away restaurants) would be ideal. |
| More people would go through a picture theatre than the art gallery, and create more work in the area. |
| More pressure on mining companies within MbK Shire to employ more Shire residents not out of area shires. |
| more retail and more youth services |
| More support needed for business and their families that work outside the mining industry or these families will simply pack up and leave. This support is desperately needed unless council just wants the Muswellbrook shire to be just for mining and their support industries and their families. |
| more to do for the community as a whole such as places to go such as bowling, cinemas youth and age centres |
| more youth services |
| Muswellbrook shire is the only place in NSW where families can live that have relatives in the jail, his comment was that they cause too much trouble and crime. |
| Muswellbrook Area needs more things for the young people to do!! Like Movie Cinema, More funner shops (to employ more kids), maybe a Superstrike (ten pin bowling) that will keep the young kids off the streets & create more jobs.. |
| Muswellbrook needs another doctor. |

Muswellbrook needs to avoid becoming an outer suburb of Newcastle. It needs to very carefully think about the kind of look the town and Shire presents to the prospective resident or tourist. A country town feel will have more appeal to the tourist and I believe more appeal to the future resident. Tourism seems to of fallen off the agenda over the last ten - twenty years and I believe this is a great mistake - Muswellbrook is close to losing its opportunity to present itself as the hub/gateway to the Upper Hunter Region - as the place where people would want to stay to explore the huge range of attractions both within the Muswellbrook Shire (wineries, power stations, mines, farms, bush, rivers etc) and those just outside in the neighbouring Shires of Singleton, Upper Hunter etc. Things like a bypass, cinema and a performance space would add to attractions already in town like the sporting facilities, Library, Arts Centre, Conservatorium and would be attractive to both tourists and future residents. The local Arts Festival should be encouraged and supported. The local Aboriginal community needs to be included in a more cohesive approach to tourism. The township of Muswellbrook needs better signage at all the entrances to town (not just the highways) to inform travellers of what facilities and attractions are available. Whatever happened to the free council caravan parks with minimal facilities that used to dot the countryside encouraging travellers to stay? In terms of local business the majority of shop assistants in the Shire are rude - there seems to be very little emphasis on customer service whether it's the corner shop or Big W - this is especially true of many of the trade stores - have you tried to order something and then be notified as to when it has come in? In Merriwa the businesses pride themselves on being able to get something in for you and letting you know it has arrived (they also have very good customer service and are polite). Muswellbrook companies often seem as though they just aren't interested in doing business.

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| Muswellbrook needs to create an identity, where everyone within the shire is identified as a member of this community, and not just a resident. |
| Muswellbrook shire council is bureaucratic and expensive. They are also not practical. |
| My main one is what I have suggested all along. We need something that is for everyone, someone that everyone in the community can enjoy, socially. E.g. Ten pin bowling. |
| My priorities are: 1. Manage impact of mines on urban area - already too great 2. Improve outdoor amenities, especially access to river with parks and walking tracks 3. Performance space and cinema |
| Need to look at the infrastructure it's starting to grow and nothings happening. No shaded areas in the park for kids |
| nice work |
| no mines to be opened as there is enough already and that there is enough dust pollution as it is |
| No more mines, enough is enough! |
| No thankyou |
| not enough government housing, for those people who are on pensions etc |
| not enough police and not enough youth facilities |
| Not to change too much. |
| only concerned in youth lack of facilities |
| Only the Bypass, I think it is very important to have this traffic removed from our town and re directed other ways. |
| please bring in a nursing home into our area and improve the number of doctors and GP's in the shire as it would be greatly appreciated by elderly and younger people alike |

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| <p>please commit to building a civic centre instead of needless other projects - we lost our town hall years ago and only have the local clubs to use for functions and have to go out of the shire if a large functions - i.e. Singleton Civic Centre. The local Mines have too many staff to be accommodated for any functions in this shire. So they go out of the shire and the money they generate goes with them.!!!</p> |
| <p>Please pick your act up and start looking at today's generation, everything seems to be based around 30-40 year old full time workers and there is nothing for anybody younger than this not working in the mines.</p> |
| <p>Please restrict the number of mines approved!</p> |
| <p>Please use this survey to affect change to this town; Muswellbrook has gone backwards for as long as I can remember. The mines have always ruled this town not the council. I would just like to see the council take control of the town and put back some of the revenue into the town that the mines take from OUR shire, this town use to be a thriving farming community with surrounding Mines. Now it is a dirty, rubbish filled contractors Mining camp with hardly any farming. Don't get me wrong, the mines bring a lot of people to the town (Day Trippers), but not permanent residence who want to make a home here. Predictably you will read this and say it is just another disgruntled resident (that is if you bother to read it) but I hope that you are fair dinkum about what the town needs and that there will be changes sooner rather than later. I don't think this town will reach 2020 with retirements and relocations happening monthly this town is in danger of being another ghost town that people travel for an hour to work because other towns like Singleton and Maitland have the needs that people want to use.</p> |
| <p>Preserve the showground for what it was intended to be unless a suitable alternative can be provided. It was a gift to the town not any one individual or group. How about the Greyhound track and adjoining lands as an alternative or the Racecourse area.</p> |
| <p>Proper doctors and a proper hospital!</p> |
| <p>prioritise what they are doing-re-taring roads that don't need it</p> |
| <p>Quite happy with the progress of the shire. Not getting enough of profit should be 50%</p> |
| <p>really need more medical and doctors services</p> |
| <p>Red bin needs to be as big as the other bins to accommodate for a family.</p> |
| <p>Remove the hideous and embarrassing town name signs. Remove the roundabout at Bridge & William Sts intersection in Muswellbrook with pedestrian crossing and lights. Improve road markings - they are often not replaced when new road work/repairs are completed or they fade almost immediately. Increase cleaning up of rubbish on wall street walks (town) and road sides (rural) - The road to Denman tip is always disgusting. Sidewalks in Muswellbrook are also almost always disgusting - especially in-between hotels after Friday & Saturday nights. Around the fast food outlets is also poorly cleaned. Improve the appalling odours emanating from the Muswellbrook sewerage treatment plant - these odours are on the increase and there they are just a few hundred metres from the ostentatious Muswellbrook town sign - a wonderful advertisement for the town. The Shire would benefit from widely distributed historical information signage both in and outside the towns - places of interest, historical houses, snippets from history - both Aboriginal and post settlement - make the Shire a place of interest in itself - good for tourists and travellers but also instils a sense of place in the locals both old and new. Increased amounts of public art will also have the same effect.</p> |
| <p>Replace old bridge at Kyuga on the Hunter river</p> |
| <p>Resign, appoint an administrator and flush all the executive staff.</p> |

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| Respond quicker to residents requests |
| Revive the CBD again, both during the day and at night. Is like a ghost town. Severe lack of entertainment options for adults and youth. Alternatives to pubs/clubs? |
| SAVE DENMAN NO MORE MINES---- NO SPUR HILL & NO YARRAWA MINE DENMAN WILL DIE |
| Scrap plans to build on Brennan Park & rezone it back to parkland! Councillors who do not live in urban Muswellbrook town should think more carefully about decisions that affect those of us who do. |
| serious weeding and grass cutting needs to be looked at on our medium strips and around our foot paths as these weeds and grasses are a deterrent for me to walk places as they are at least knee high in all circumstances |
| Stop the expansion of the coal mining industry |
| Stop the invasion of the coal mines, enough is enough. When I came here over 20 years ago it was a pleasure to drive both Muswellbrook and Wybong Rds now I cry. So many friends that I have made have been forced to move, so much of the money earned is actually spent elsewhere. I lived in Denman for 12 years and then moved to 10km passed the council border (west) in an effort to escape the coal mines (my mail is delivered to Sandy Hollow) - Anvil Hill is practically on our doorstep - we love the area but it is being ruined. We shop in Muswellbrook for our big shops, my husband works there for clients and the amount of coal dust that he finds in items that he repairs is deplorable. Please don't let Muswellbrook Shire be destroyed any more than it already has. It has lost Rosemount Wines, how long will the horse studs be able to hang on with the levels of pollution? Callatoota wines got bought out in Wybong, have rebuilt beautifully and to a high quality and may lose it all with the new mine - this destroys not only businesses but peoples sense of home and lives. Look elsewhere for economic development plan for a sustainable community that my great great grandchildren will be able to live in safely. |
| Me and my young children have been here three years, community has not been welcoming because my husband is a miner |
| Support the mining companies more |
| Talk to the people, and listen |
| Thanks for this survey. Feedback from the rate payers is vital so they have confidence in the Council. |
| The appearance of MbK is that of being primarily a mining town. It needs to regain its feel of being a country town with a lot to offer. There is so much money in the community, courtesy of the mining, yet all we have is a dreary highway strip and a few chain stores. MbK can be so much more than this! Our community needs to be encouraged to have its own identity, making it not just a place people come for work, but a place people want to come to. |
| The character of the area is becoming dominated by coal mining - to the detriment of everybody not directly employed in the industry. Suggest work towards halting further coal mine development. Muswellbrook also seems to be becoming a dumping ground for some rather undesirable people (including ex-criminals/prisoners, and welfare dependant people from western Sydney), to the extent it feels unsafe to even walk around parts of the town. Suggest council works towards moderating the influx of such people (i.e. by dealing with appropriate State/Federal authorities). |
| The council does a reasonable job, and I like the current mayor. |
| The council needs to do a lot more community consultation. |

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| <p>The council needs to encourage more activities for the locals, such as a cinema. They also need to be more careful and aware of mining approvals, as it's affecting quality of life in Muswellbrook, and we ne need to fix up all of our roads, and increase police presence, especially at night.</p> |
| <p>The council needs to look at how they are spending rate payers money-put money into to the basic needs of the towns people, put money into areas that the majority of people will get benefit on.</p> |
| <p>The council needs to share out the money the get from the mines more equally.</p> |
| <p>The council needs to stop making it hard for the people that are trying to improve the town.</p> |
| <p>the council needs to stop wasting money and get a new mayor and G.M.</p> |
| <p>The council should be looking at new buildings carefully and where they are placed - we have 2.5 acres and are now having houses built behind us on 600sq blocks - everyone in our street complained about the new development but the council was obviously more interested in the revenue the rates would bring in, other than how it would reflect on others in the area. Also charging us an extra \$60 a year to run a waste water management system and going to inspect it every 5 years is a waste of our money and again just revenue raising. We already pay to have qualified persons come and inspect and give reports to the council 4 times a year - maybe the council should be paying for this for us!!! Enough is enough... we had to get a waste water system because council did not have sewerage in our street - but now they also want a bigger cut !! Ridiculous!</p> |
| <p>The crime that's in town is a direct result of the high percentage of youth unemployment in the town. There's kids in this town who don't have a chance, and our council is doing nothing except paying LIP service. With the amount of coal mines and supporting business in our area, there shouldn't be any unemployment, yet we are one of the worst in our state because the mines do not employ locally, and they do not pay a cent, and neither do the supporting services. I would like to see the councils here abolished as they are amateurs.</p> |
| <p>the current mayor is doing a good job, i believe we need to continue to develop into the future by thinking outside the box</p> |
| <p>The dogs that are running loose in Denman are a big problem.</p> |
| <p>The improvement and development within our Shire will require some flexibility and positive initiatives from the levels within Council. As locals, we can have the ideas, but the implementation thereof will require the relevant people within Council to be pro-active.</p> |
| <p>The Muswellbrook Shire works hard to maintain its people's standard of living. I am truly inspired by innovative businesses such as the HUNTER BELLE CHEESE enterprise. Please acknowledge them and assist other businesses like them to flourish in your Shire!</p> |
| <p>The newly elected council had a good start with good improvements, like main street skateboard ring and so on, it's sad that the mistakes from the previous council are very costly or not be able to change, example Boronia building. This should be a family restaurant with the croquet on one site and a mini golf course on the other front site. The whole area could be transformed in a family entertainment centre, with pool, gym, coffee shops, ice cream parlours also. There could be an area for ball games and a beach area, it would bring people from all upper Hunter. Also there should be more actions, at least every 3 month, like a wine harvest festival, a veteran car race for the great price of Muswellbrook, national bicycle races which finish on our own place, and so on.</p> |

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| <p>the pound/RSPCA fees for having a dog picked up or looked after should be lowered to persuade people to use the service rather than having dogs tied up in back yards for days at a time</p> |
| <p>The provision of high to medium density accommodation needs to be dispersed throughout the community, not concentrated into mining accommodation camp areas. Especially if these areas are self contained with restaurants etc. The wider shire will not reap the rewards of this type of accommodation. The recent beautification of the main street and highway is great and needs to be maintained. This creates a great feel to the town. The town desperately needs to foster the cultural side of the town. We have a fair number of ovals and sporting facilities, which is worthwhile and necessary. There must be balance and we need to foster the artistic talents of our young people. The development of a performing arts centre is very necessary within the Muswellbrook Shire.</p> |
| <p>the question about medium high density housing, if you are asking about increasing housing well then shouldn't M S C support the increasing housing and population by offering services to local people to make them stay in the town and spend their money, which in turn generates local business and local economy????? What are you doing MSC about this?</p> |
| <p>the shire council NEED to get their act together ASAP</p> |
| <p>The survey was a really good idea</p> |
| <p>The survey was a really good idea to allow the public to have a say</p> |
| <p>there are ample consultation process this survey is not necessary waste of money should listen to the locals</p> |
| <p>There has been a massive improvement in the last 24 months, more appealing visually and the change in council is OBVIOUS. Muswellbrook needs to keep moving forward and move with the times. Health services (and lack of) are a massive concern in the town. There is also a sense of lack of community - sporting clubs are dying, newer families/people move in and out of the town and are treated as strangers - why would they stay. The main street shopping situation is almost non-existent compared to other towns of a similar size. Innovation and calculated risks are required for the future of Muswellbrook.</p> |
| <p>There is a real need to support the cultural areas of the community. There is no adequate venue to support the performing arts in the town or surrounds. Council needs to consider this weakness as a priority, as a service to their residents, and to show their value of the cultural aspects of the community.</p> |
| <p>There's a big drinking culture in Muswellbrook. The issue I hear every time is that there is nothing to do in Muswellbrook; it's a bit better now that there's a skate park - need a family restaurant like Wingen Pub &/or Gundy Pub; great outlook, family atmosphere & great prices. Also, need some sort of Indoor sports centre. I looked into doing a mixed Indoor Soccer team but found that the Council was after a private company to do this as the Public Liability was too much for the council - this is a joke! Get people to sign a waiver that they do this at their own risk - all Karate styles do it & get away with it.. Would be good if there was more train services in between Scone & Newcastle. Thanks for your time.</p> |
| <p>THEY COULD FREE UP SOME THINGS RE GARAGES ETC, too tight restrictions in building applications. Recycling to keep lower costs for ratepayers</p> |
| <p>They need to assess their DA approval process. They do not want to expand the housing in the area to keep up with needs.</p> |
| <p>they need to do more for the youth of the town</p> |

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| They need to make more business, and make it a bit easier for business that are just starting up here. |
| They need to support the rural residents. |
| they should actively seek more royalties from the mining companies and put it back into the town |
| They should be concentrating on supporting the existing facilities and maintaining them. Not become too involved in bright ideas without thinking them through and extend facilities for youth across the shire. Try to utilise the National Parks to the south as tourist beaches. |
| think about the bypass again |
| Think big, act local |
| This is a great survey from council. More emphasis on people outside the mining industry and their needs. |
| To be more informative for the public's benefit |
| to be more understanding for new businesses coming into town, support them a bit more |
| Town Hall space desperately needed to showcase the talent in the area, home for Con, Town Band, Eisteddfod, Mats, school performances, and will attract visiting shows. The venue can be used for Australia day, Anzac day etc.... and be the focus of positive town life. Sport is given such a focus in the town, but the area is producing promising Australian leaders in the field of music and entertainment, which is a growing prosperous sector of Australian life. Careers in light and sound is an attractive industry for middle class Australian Youth, and parents are making huge investments into their children's education, and the Upper Hunter is producing a talented generation of artists who are succeeding in the capital cities and also returning back to the valley as educators. |
| Trees planted between the roads verge and the edge restrict safe passing on the road of trucks and school busses. Martindale Road out of Denman 2 klms of gumtrees just outside of Denman. Starting at the winery need removal. |
| Undertake more strategic planning or provide funding to achieve this to better plan and accommodate for the needs of a quickly changing community and or their needs. |
| Upgrade the Wollombi area and increase the rentals/returns from the area in order to attract and retain a better class of citizen. |
| very concerned that there is not enough parks for people in general to use with shade and to be used for picnicking etc |
| wants Council to think about people more, have a social conscience |
| We need a complete upgrade of the roads. |
| We need a performance space! |
| We need more entertainment for younger people in the right atmosphere, to guide them towards more constructive activities. |
| We need more things for the young ones to do, to keep them off the streets and out of trouble. |
| We need to be mindful that one day the mines will no longer be as prevalent in this town |
| We need to focus more on activities for kids and young adults. |
| We need to improve our health system desperately. |



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| <p>We seem to have a large amount of home invasion and break ins in our area, general consensus from the locals is this is contributed to largely from the fact that we have a low security prison close to our town, and that people who are in this prisons' families are re housed into our community, I think this is a negative as we are encouraging a less than desirable class of people to our area. I also believe that it is unfair that indigenous youth get more support and assistance than their un indigenous underprivileged equivalent. In saying this I do believe that council do the best they can.</p> |
| <p>We will be moving out of the area as soon as we can relocate our employment. The change in the scenery as a result of the mines is actually embarrassing when family and friends come to visit. There are no really pretty or interesting places to go for a picnic or family day out in the area. More social infrastructure like movies, more variety in shopping (under one roof) and better access to health services are needed in the area.</p> |
| <p>why is there a need for license to recycle waste water/</p> |
| <p>With so many coal mines and more coming on board one does wonder that they have the upper hand in all that do. Have we missed something? Muswellbrook should be a wow town but after my 20 years of living in this area I see very little input from the coal companies and a dusty hot town with the only traffic lights in 300 km and all these travellers just cannot wait to get away.</p> |
| <p>Work on the parks to make the town family friendly (and the pubs for that manner) don't let Dept Planning or companies bully the town over mining (I work in and support mining) but do not want to see the area encircled inappropriately.</p> |
| <p>work out their priorities as far as some of the projects that they do,</p> |
| <p>Would like to get to know the councillors better and if they could make themselves more available</p> |
| <p>would like to see politics left out of local government eg party politics</p> |
| <p>would like to see skateboard park stay</p> |
| <p>would like to see the people get what they want not what the council wants</p> |
| <p>Yes! Take the politics out of the Council and make the Councillors more accountable for the residents</p> |
| <p>You are out of touch and continually are looking for residents to come to Muswellbrook and forget about the youth and the residents who are already here. Many of the mining partners refuse to come and they come alone due to lack of resources in town for social activities such as shopping and cinemas etc. Thus the wages are continually not being spent here as a result</p> |