Muswellbrook Shire Council

Community Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research
Date: May 2023

Report Outline

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Research Objectives

Muswellbrook Shire Council commissioned Micromex Research to conduct a random telephone survey with residents living in the Muswellbrook Local Government Area (LGA).

Why?

- Understand and identify community priorities for the Muswellbrook Shire Council LGA

- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council performance

- Assess and establish the community's priorities and satisfaction in relation to Council activities, services, and facilities

- Identifying opportunities and challenges for the area and the level of investment for future resource and funding allocation

How?

- Telephone survey (landline N=106 and mobile N=296) to N=402 residents

- We use a 5 point scale (e.g. 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)

- Greatest margin of error +/- 4.9%

When?

- Implementation 3rd – 10th May 2023

Methodology and Sample

Sample selection and error

A total of 402 resident interviews were completed. Respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using Australian Marketing Lists, Sample Pages, List Brokers, and Lead Lists.

A sample size of 402 residents provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of N=402 residents, 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.9%. This means, for example, that an answer such as 'yes' (50%) to a question could vary from 45% to 55%.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with The Research Society Code of Professional Behaviour.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Within the report, ▲▼ and blue and red font colours are used to identify statistically significant differences between groups, i.e., gender, age, etc.

Significance difference testing is a statistical test performed to evaluate the difference between two measurements. To identify the statistically significant differences between the groups of means, 'One-Way Anova tests' and 'Independent Samples T-tests' were used. 'Z Tests' were also used to determine statistically significant differences between column percentages.

Note: All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.

Ratings questions

The Unipolar Scale of 1 to 5 was used in all rating questions, where 1 was the lowest importance or satisfaction and 5 the highest importance or satisfaction.

This scale allowed us to identify different levels of importance and satisfaction across respondents.

Top 2 (T2) Box: refers to the aggregate percentage (%) score of the top two scores for importance. (i.e. important & very important)

Top 3 (T3) Box: refers to the aggregate percentage (%) score of the top three scores for satisfaction or support. (i.e. somewhat satisfied, satisfied & very satisfied)

We refer to T3 Box Satisfaction in order to express moderate to high levels of satisfaction in a non-discretionary category. We only report T2 Box Importance in order to provide differentiation and allow us to demonstrate the hierarchy of community priorities.

Micromex LGA Benchmark

Micromex has developed Community Satisfaction Benchmarks using normative data from 75 unique councils, more than 175 surveys and over 93,000 interviews since 2012.

Please note: The Micromex Benchmark satisfaction norms are based on surveys where only those rating importance as 4 or higher were asked to rate their satisfaction. Muswellbrook Shire residents were all asked to rate satisfaction, regardless of importance score, and therefore the section that compares satisfaction scores to our benchmarks use only the satisfaction scores from those who rated importance 4 or higher (important/very important).

Sample Profile

Gender

Female 49%   Male 51%

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander

Yes 10%   No 89%
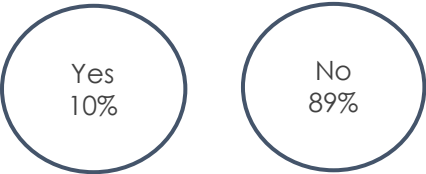
*1% prefer not to say

Where do you live?

Rural 28%
Urban 72%

Age

38%   17%   18%   13%   14%

■ 18-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60-69 ■ 70+

Resident Type

I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook Shire	72%
I work in the Muswellbrook Shire	58%
I study in the Muswellbrook Shire	8%
Other:	14%

Time lived in the LGA

1%   6%   14%   21%   58%

Less than 12 months | 1-5 years | 6-10 years | 11-20 years | More than 20 years
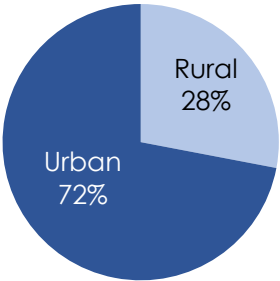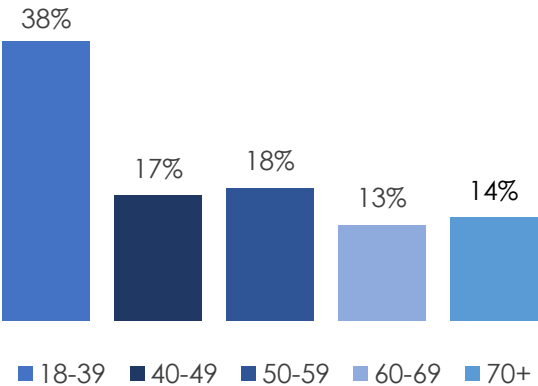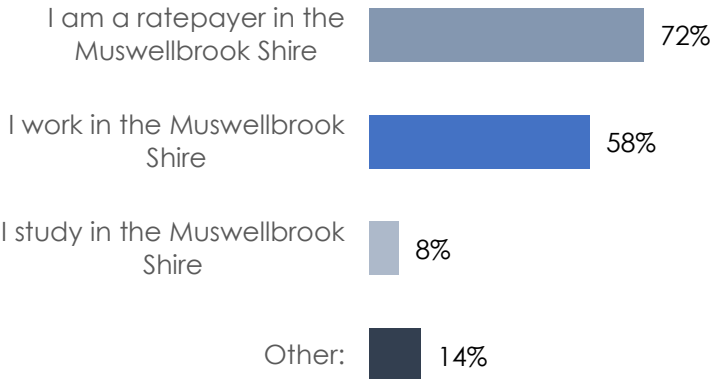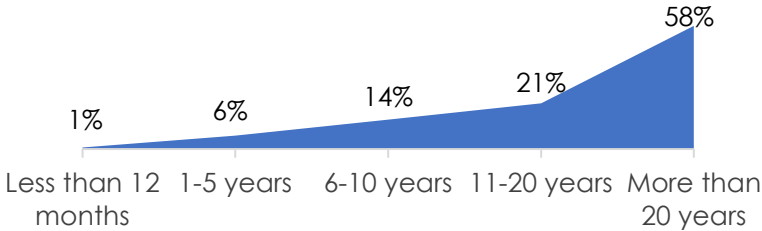
Does anyone living in your household identify as having a disability?

Yes 18%
No 82%

Have children under the age of 18 living in your home?

Yes 45%

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2021 ABS Census data for Muswellbrook Shire Council.
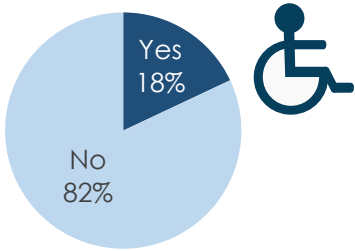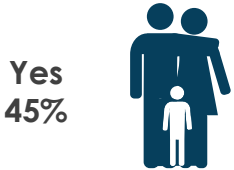
Summary Findings

Overview of Findings

There are several external factors that can affect the general perception of residents on both their quality of life and the performance of their elected leaders. Factors such as, housing prices, unemployment, and the local industry, to name a few.

Key measures of Council's efforts:

81% Overall performance
71% Inform
68% Involve
55% Respond

- 5
- 4
- 3
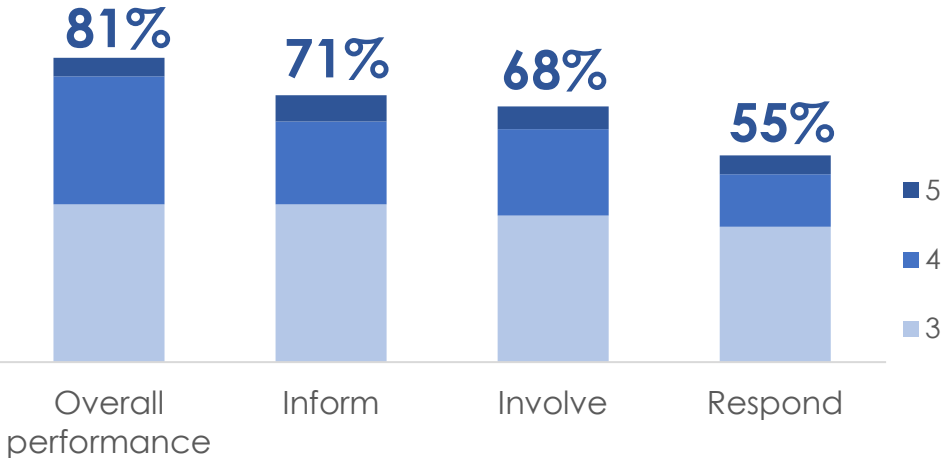
Over 90% Rated Important/Very important:

95%	Water supply
95%	Waste and recycling
94%	Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways
91%	Parking facilities
91%	The way Council communicates with the local community
91%	Protection of the natural environment and wildlife

Major Opportunities for the Future:

Coal mining — 24%
Renewable energy — 9%
Retail/small business — 7%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25%
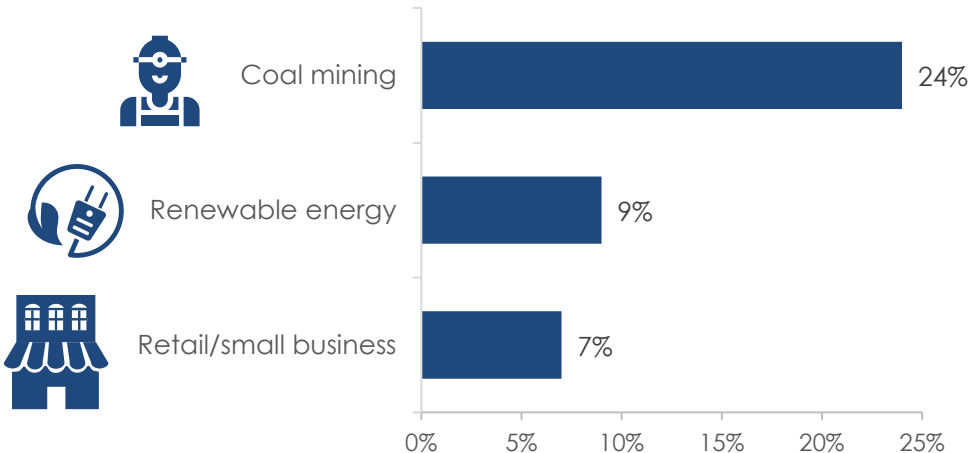
Major Challenges for the Future:

Future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation — 21%
Job security/ unemployment — 17%
Young people emigrating to big cities — 7%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25%
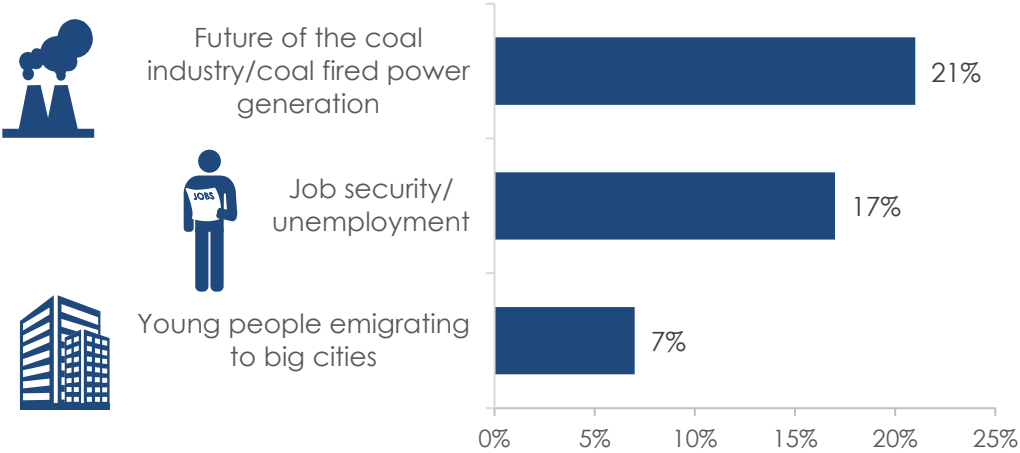
Where are we now?

Muswellbrook Shire residents have been facing a variety of challenges in recent years. The major challenges that residents have identified were the future of the coal industry (mining and power generation), unemployment, and young workers emigrating from the area. These issues have been reflected across many survey outcomes. To name a few; lower quality of life compared to our Regional Benchmark, economic development is a key driver of satisfaction, and low support for any increased rates for increased services.

However, despite these challenges, satisfaction with Council's performance is in line with our Micromex Regional LGA Benchmark. An initial regression analysis determined that communication with the local community is the most important contributor to satisfaction with Council's performance. Following this, we conducted further analysis adding three more specific communication measures (see right). We can see using this updated model that Council's efforts to involve, inform, respond, and communicate with residents are all key drivers. Combined these contribute just over 34% to overall satisfaction.

Council should look to explore how they can more effectively engage with, and communicate to, residents. Word of mouth currently dominates how residents receive information. While not strictly a negative thing, this second-hand source could be combated by increasing first-hand information via web, internet or social media, of which 25% of residents currently do not receive information about Council.

Key Measures:

Overall satisfaction

Overall, 81% of residents are at least moderately satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months.

Quality of Life in the LGA

77% of residents rate their quality of life as 'good' to 'excellent' in the Muswellbrook shire.

Key Drivers:

Below are key drivers of overall satisfaction that have been identified by our regression analysis by using the 30 services/facilities, and 3 communication measures as dependent variables:

Council's efforts to involve residents	9.8%
Council's efforts to inform residents	9.8%
The way Council communicates with the local community	9.0%
Council's efforts to respond to residents	5.9%
Economic development and attracting new investment	5.7%
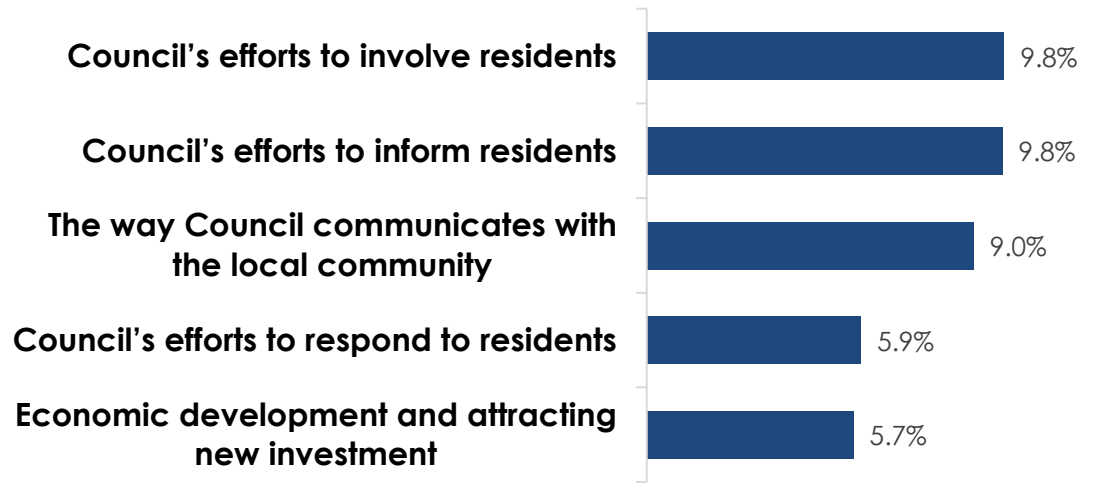
Note: values represent contribution to overall satisfaction out of 100%

Satisfaction Scorecard

12 of the 30 services/facilities received a satisfaction rating of 80% or more. Sealed roads was the only area with a rating below 60%.

✔ **Good performance**
(T3B sat score ≥80%)

➖ **Monitor**
(T3B sat score 60%-79%)

✖ **Needs improvement**
(T3B sat score <60%)

Parks, Gardens and Infrastructure	Parks, Gardens and Infrastructure (Cont.)	Community and Economy
Sealed roads	Parking facilities	Economic development and attracting new investment
Unsealed roads	Public lighting in town centres	Council website
Bridges	Stormwater drainage	Council social media
Footpaths and shared paths	Waste and recycling	Art Gallery
Cleanliness of streets	Water supply	Local festivals and events
Public toilets	Sewage collection and treatment	The way Council communicates with the local community
Weed control	**Community and Economy**	**Health and Environment**
Community halls	Council pools	Dog control
Sporting facilities	Libraries	Development applications (DA's)
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	Youth facilities and activities	Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways
	Services for the elderly	Protection of the natural environment and wildlife

Section 1:

Living In Muswellbrook Shire

This section explores residents perceived quality of life living in Muswellbrook Shire and determines agreement levels with a variety of statements about Council and living in the area.

Section One

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Quality Of Life

Quality of life in the Muswellbrook Shire region is high, with 77% of residents stating a good to excellent quality of life.

Muswellbrook Shire Council results for quality of life are lower than our Regional LGA benchmark.

	Muswellbrook Shire Council	Micromex LGA Benchmark – **Regional**
Top 3 Box %	77%↓	94%
Mean rating	4.17↓	4.95
Base	402	13,773

↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (compared to the Benchmark)
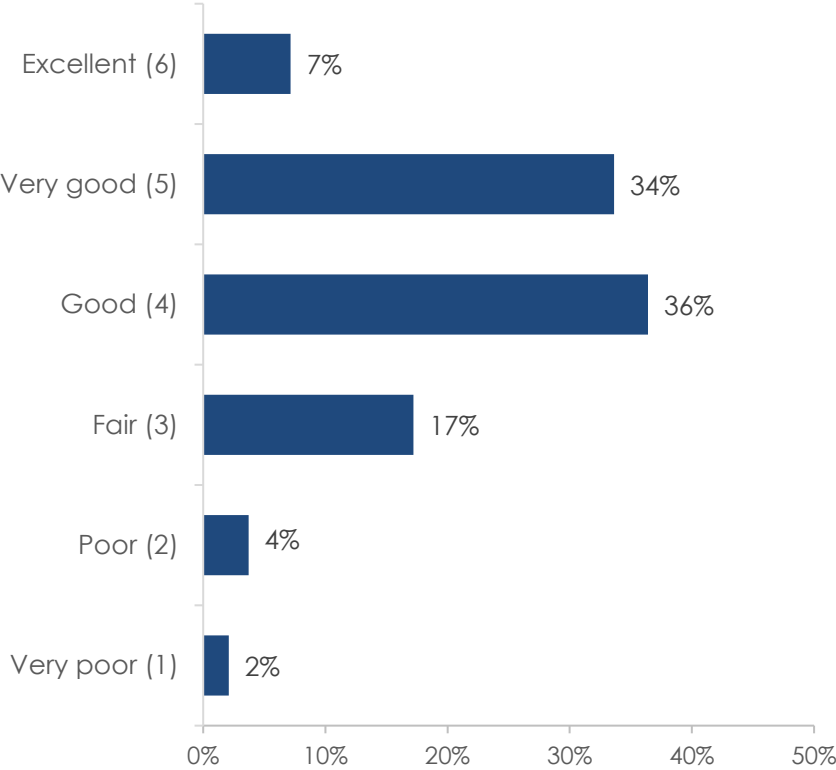
	Overall	Gender		Age					Time lived in area		
		Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	77%	74%	80%	73%	81%	77%	76%	85%	73%	79%	77%
Mean rating	4.17	4.09	4.25	4.03	4.18	4.21	4.14	4.52▲	3.90▼	4.17	4.26
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Scale: 1 = very poor, 6 = excellent

Q1.   *Overall, how would you rate the quality of life you have living in Muswellbrook Shire?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower rating (by group)

Local Area Indicators – Agreement Statements

The majority of residents agree that they feel proud of where they live, feel safe in their home at night, and feel part of their community.

The areas where more residents disagreed than agreed were: 'I feel safe walking in my local streets at night', 'if the Shire had better public transport, I'd be more likely to use it', 'Council delivers good value for money', and 'local roads are in good condition'.

		%T2B		Micromex Benchmark - Regional
		2023 (N=402)	**2021** (N=401)	
I feel proud of where I live	-7% -8% 38% 21%	59%↓	62%	78%
I feel safe in my home at night	-8% -14% 34% 24%	58%▼	68%	NA
I feel part of my community	-7% -10% 39% 17%	56%↓	57%	74%
There are good employment prospects for locals within the area	-7% -13% 33% 17%	50%▲↑	42%	26%
Our parks and reserves are clean, attractive and welcoming	-5% -13% 40% 9%	49%	47%	NA
It is easy to access the Council services I need	-11% -15% 25% 15%	40%	39%	NA
Traffic generally flows well within the main streets of Muswellbrook	-20% -19% 26% 14%	40%▼↑	48%	31%
I feel that Council provides opportunities for residents to have a say about the Shire's future	-15% -19% 28% 9%	37%▲	23%	NA
Local rivers and creeks are healthy	-15% -15% 29% 8%	37%▲	26%	NA
Generally speaking, the Shire's local infrastructure meets my needs	-12% -20% 28% 9%	36%	NA	NA
I feel safe walking in my local streets at night	-25% -19% 22% 9%	31%	32%	NA
If the Shire had better public transport, I'd be more likely to use it	-38% -13% 13% 19%	31%	36%	NA
Our local Council understands the Community's needs and expectations	-13% -14% 23% 7%	29%▲	21%	25%
Council delivers good value for our rates dollar	-18% -22% 17% 5%	22%↓	19%	36%
Local roads are in good condition	-35% -33% 9% 3%	12%▼	26%	NA

Legend: ■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower rating (by year)
↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower rating compared to the benchmark

Q2. *...to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

12

Local Area Indicators – Agreement Statements

Residents under 40 are significantly less likely to agree they feel proud of where they live or feel safe in their home at night. Residents over 70 were more agreeable for all statements.

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
I feel proud of where I live	59%	55%	62%	48%▼	54%	56%	66%	89%▲	46%▼	47%▼	67%▲
I feel safe in my home at night	58%	58%	59%	50%▼	47%▼	57%	69%	85%▲	47%	57%	62%
I feel part of my community	56%	49%	63%▲	53%	53%	55%	50%	73%▲	48%	56%	59%
There are good employment prospects for locals within the area	50%	55%▲	44%	50%	49%	49%	47%	53%	42%	56%	51%
Our parks and reserves are clean, attractive and welcoming	49%	48%	51%	44%	40%	50%	48%	75%▲	46%	55%	49%
It is easy to access the Council services I need	40%	35%	46%▲	36%	38%	36%	43%	58%▲	30%	41%	44%
Traffic generally flows well within the main streets of Muswellbrook	40%	35%	45%	46%	43%	42%	21%▼	34%	45%	49%	34%▼
I feel that Council provides opportunities for residents to have a say about the Shire's future	37%	34%	41%	37%	32%	31%	39%	50%▲	32%	33%	40%
Local rivers and creeks are healthy	37%	39%	35%	35%	37%	31%	33%	51%▲	41%	33%	37%
Generally speaking, the Shire's local infrastructure meets my needs	36%	32%	41%	30%	37%	30%	33%	64%▲	36%	30%	39%
I feel safe walking in my local streets at night	31%	39%▲	23%	31%	28%	28%	31%	40%	27%	33%	32%
If the Shire had better public transport, I'd be more likely to use it	31%	26%	36%	34%	24%	27%	34%	33%	28%	33%	32%
Our local Council understands the Community's needs and expectations	29%	25%	34%	25%	35%	25%	24%	47%▲	24%	26%	32%
Council delivers good value for our rates dollar	22%	21%	24%	18%	23%	16%	21%	45%▲	17%	16%	27%▲
Local roads are in good condition	12%	8%	15%	10%	8%	7%	14%	24%▲	11%	10%	12%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Base: N = 399-402

Q2.   …to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

Section Two

Section 2:

Council Performance and Engagement

This section explores satisfaction with Council's overall performance and key engagement measures, actions taken by residents to address local issues and confidence that their issue was taken into consideration by Council.

Overall Satisfaction

81% of residents are at least moderately satisfied with Council's performance, a higher result than across the previous 4 years*, and slightly below the Regional Benchmark.

Females, residents over 70, and those who have lived in the area more than 20 years were more likely to state a higher level of satisfaction.

	Muswellbrook Shire Council			Micromex LGA Benchmark –**Regional**
	2023	**2021***	**2019***	
Top 3 Box %	81%	67%	74%	83%
Mean rating	3.20	2.90	3.10	3.33
Base	402	401	505	47,365
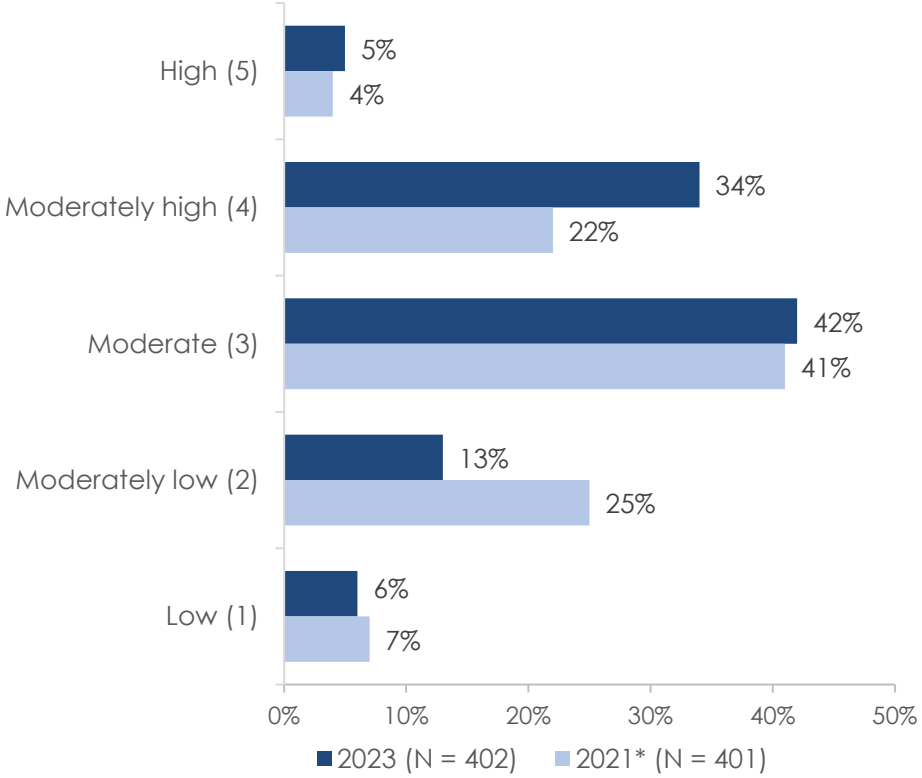
	Overall	Gender		Age					Time lived in area		
		Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	81%	77%	86%▲	81%	81%	75%	80%	93%▲	75%	80%	84%
Mean rating	3.20	3.12	3.27	3.10	3.20	3.08	3.09	3.71▲	3.07	3.04	3.30▲
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Chart (right):

- High (5): 2023 = 5%, 2021* = 4%
- Moderately high (4): 2023 = 34%, 2021* = 22%
- Moderate (3): 2023 = 42%, 2021* = 41%
- Moderately low (2): 2023 = 13%, 2021* = 25%
- Low (1): 2023 = 6%, 2021* = 7%

■ 2023 (N = 402) ■ 2021* (N = 401)

Q4. *Please rate your satisfaction with Council's overall performance on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction*

*Note: 2021/2019 results use different scale: 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

Satisfaction with Communication Efforts

The community is generally satisfied with Council's efforts to inform and involve residents, however, there is a noticeable gap regarding efforts to respond to residents.

	Top 3 Box %	Mean rating

						Top 3 Box %	Mean rating
Council's efforts to inform residents	12%	16%	42%	22%	7%	71%	2.95
Council's efforts to involve residents	13%	20%	39%	23%	6%	68%	2.90
Council's efforts to respond to residents	20%	25%	36%	14%	5%	55%	2.60

■ Not at all satisfied (1) ■ Not very satisfied (2) ■ Somewhat satisfied (3) ■ Satisfied (4) ■ Very satisfied (5)
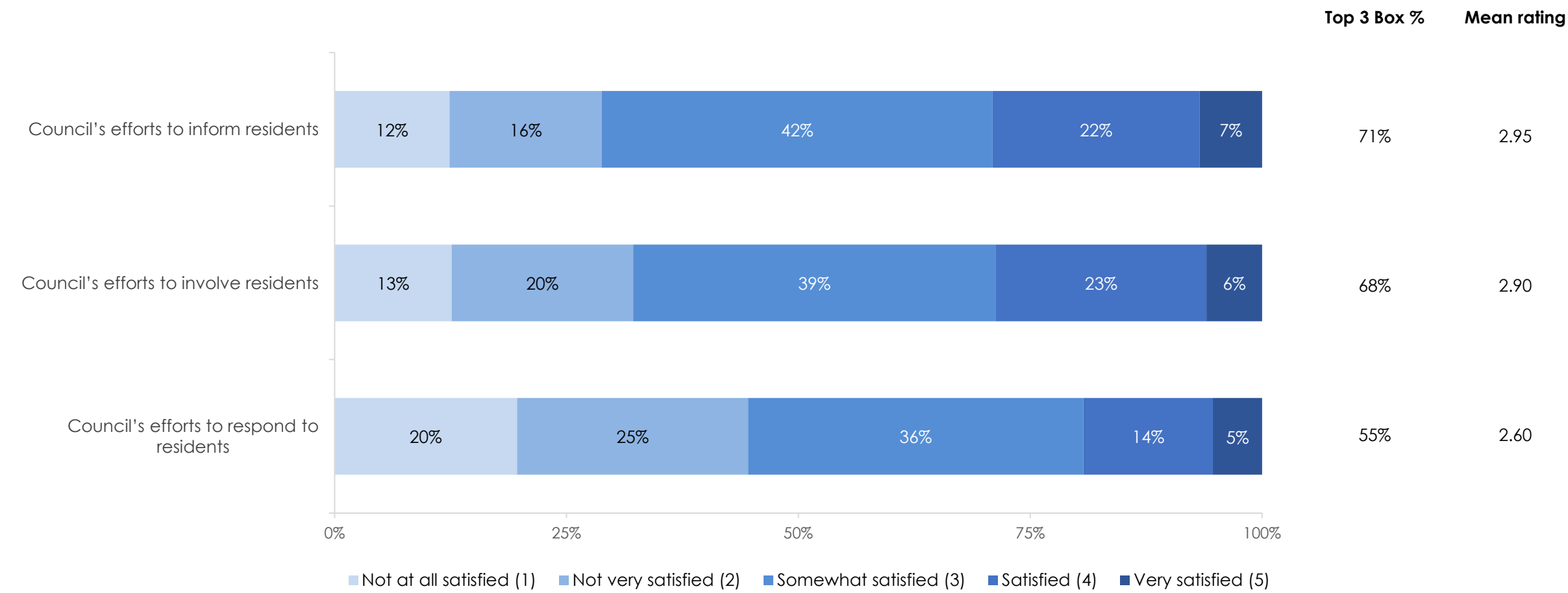
Satisfaction with Communication Efforts

Female residents and those over 70 are the most likely to have higher satisfaction across all these three measures. This aligns with their higher satisfaction score with the overall performance of council.

Council's efforts to inform residents

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	71%	66%	77%▲	72%	79%	67%	62%	74%	61%	70%	75%
Mean rating	2.95	2.83	3.07▲	2.87	3.13	2.81	2.78	3.26▲	2.66▼	2.89	3.07▲
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Council's efforts to involve residents

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	68%	63%	73%	72%	68%	61%	57%	76%	59%	67%	71%
Mean rating	2.90	2.76	3.04▲	2.92	2.92	2.67▼	2.76	3.25▲	2.67	2.87	2.99
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Council's efforts to respond to residents

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	55%	51%	60%	51%	64%	45%▼	56%	71%▲	59%	48%	57%
Mean rating	2.60	2.48	2.73▲	2.42▼	2.81	2.50	2.54	3.06▲	2.60	2.38	2.68
Base	399	202	197	150	68	73	54	54	83	84	232

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Q6. Can you please rate the following criteria regarding Council's efforts to communicate with residents?

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

Methods to Receive Information about Council

Word of mouth and social media are the most common means of receiving information about Council, followed by web/internet and brochures/flyers. Looking at the NETT total of social media and web/internet, there is still 25% of residents that have not received information via these internet-based means.

Word of mouth	76%
Social media platforms (Facebook and Linkedin)	63%
Web/Internet	56%
Brochures/flyers	54%
Community organisations	48%
Direct mail	44%
Council facilities (i.e Libraries & community centres)	37%
Newspapers (Hunter River Times)	35%
Council's newsletter	34%
Email	25%
Council meetings	13%
Council breakfasts	6%
The mayors listening post	6%
Other	5%
None of these	1%

NETT: 75% (Social media platforms and Web/Internet)

■ 2023 (N = 402)

Other specified	N = 402
Radio	4%
TV	<1%
Talking direct to Councillors/Mayor	<1%
Talked direct to Council Employees	<1%
School newsletters	<1%
Chamber of Commerce	<1%

Methods to Receive Information about Council

Looking at results by demographics, there is a distinct drop in the usage of digital mediums (web/internet and social media) for residents over 60. Residents over 70 were much more likely to receive information via newspapers and newsletters, while those under 40 were significantly less likely to use these mediums.

|	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Word of mouth	76%	77%	75%	77%	75%	81%	69%	73%	70%	80%	76%
Social media platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn)	63%	59%	68%	84%▲	73%	57%	34%▼	32%▼	70%	68%	59%
Web/Internet	56%	56%	57%	62%	69%▲	58%	42%▼	36%▼	52%	68%▲	53%
Brochures/flyers	54%	57%	50%	50%	57%	59%	47%	58%	47%	58%	54%
Community organisations	48%	44%	52%	53%	57%	44%	41%	37%▼	53%	44%	48%
Direct mail	44%	47%	42%	48%	35%	46%	43%	46%	42%	47%	44%
Council facilities (i.e Libraries & community centres)	37%	35%	39%	36%	46%	33%	34%	35%	42%	41%	33%
Newspapers (Hunter River Times)	35%	35%	35%	21%▼	39%	34%	40%	67%▲	20%▼	34%	41%▲
Council's newsletter	33%	36%	31%	22%▼	34%	37%	36%	55%▲	25%	28%	38%▲
Email	25%	28%	21%	26%	24%	27%	19%	24%	27%	28%	22%
Council meetings	13%	12%	13%	7%▼	20%▲	15%	13%	14%	6%	12%	15%
Council breakfasts	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	5%	8%	10%	3%	4%	9%▲
The mayors listening post	6%	4%	7%	5%	9%	0%▼	7%	11%	9%	1%▼	7%
Other	5%	6%	5%	2%	7%	8%	8%	6%	6%	5%	5%
None of these	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	4%▲	0%	1%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Section 3:

Contact With Council

This section explores residents most recent contact with Council, with focus on the method, nature and satisfaction with the experience.

Section Three

Contact with Council – Summary

- 53% of residents have made contact with Muswellbrook Council in the last 12 months, for a reason other than to make a payment.
- The most common reasons for making contact were:
    - Development application (16%)
    - Road and footpath improvements (13%)
    - Garbage/Waste management/Recycling/Tips (11%)
- Telephone is by far the most common method to first make contact, followed by face-to-face, making up 70% of contacts.
- 49% of residents that contacted are at least moderately satisfied with the way their contact was handled.
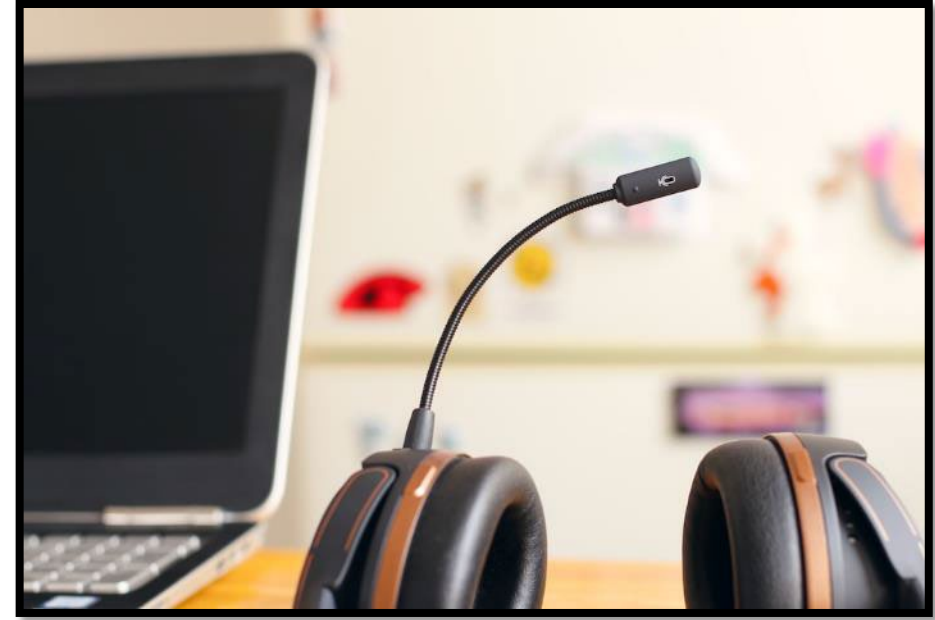
Q7a.   *Have you contacted Council within the past 12 months, for a reason other than to make a payment?*
Q7b.   *Thinking about your most recent enquiry, what was that contact regarding?*
Q7c.   *Regarding your issue, how did you first make contact with Council?*
Q7d.   *On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction how satisfied were you with the way the local Council handled your latest enquiry?*

Contact with Council

53% of residents have made contact with Muswellbrook Council in the last 12 months, for a reason other than to make a payment. Results did not significantly differ across demographics.
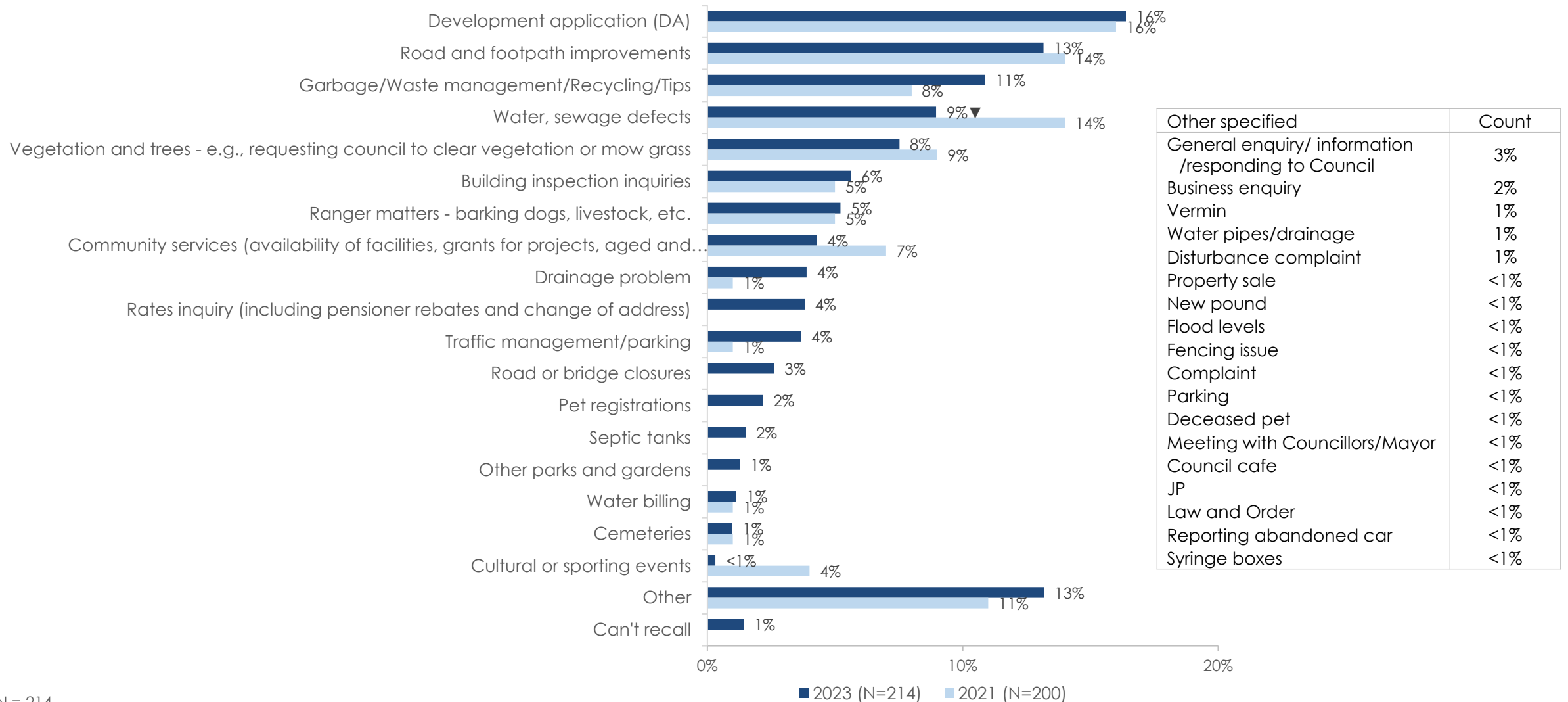
Have you contacted Council within the past 12 months (excluding to make payments)?

No, 46%

Yes, 53%

51% in 2021

Don't know/unsure, <1%
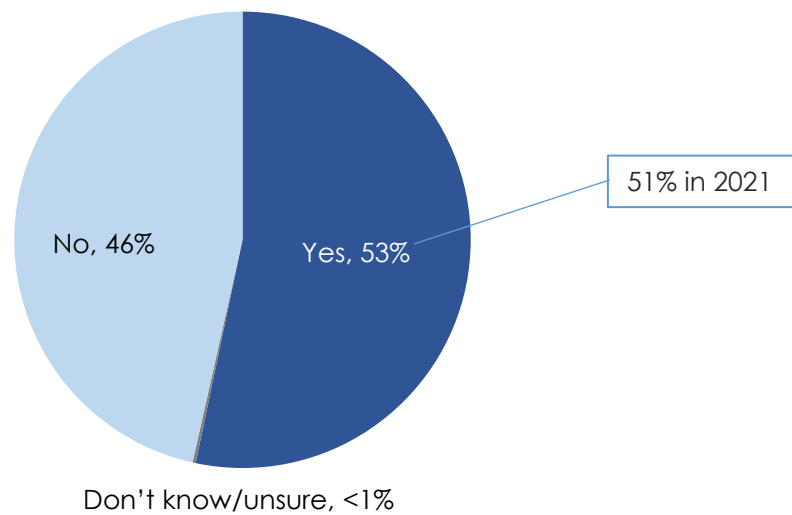
	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Yes %	53%	57%	49%	48%	57%	60%	56%	52%	45%	60%	54%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Base: N = 402

Q7a.   *Have you contacted Council within the past 12 months, for a reason other than to make a payment?*
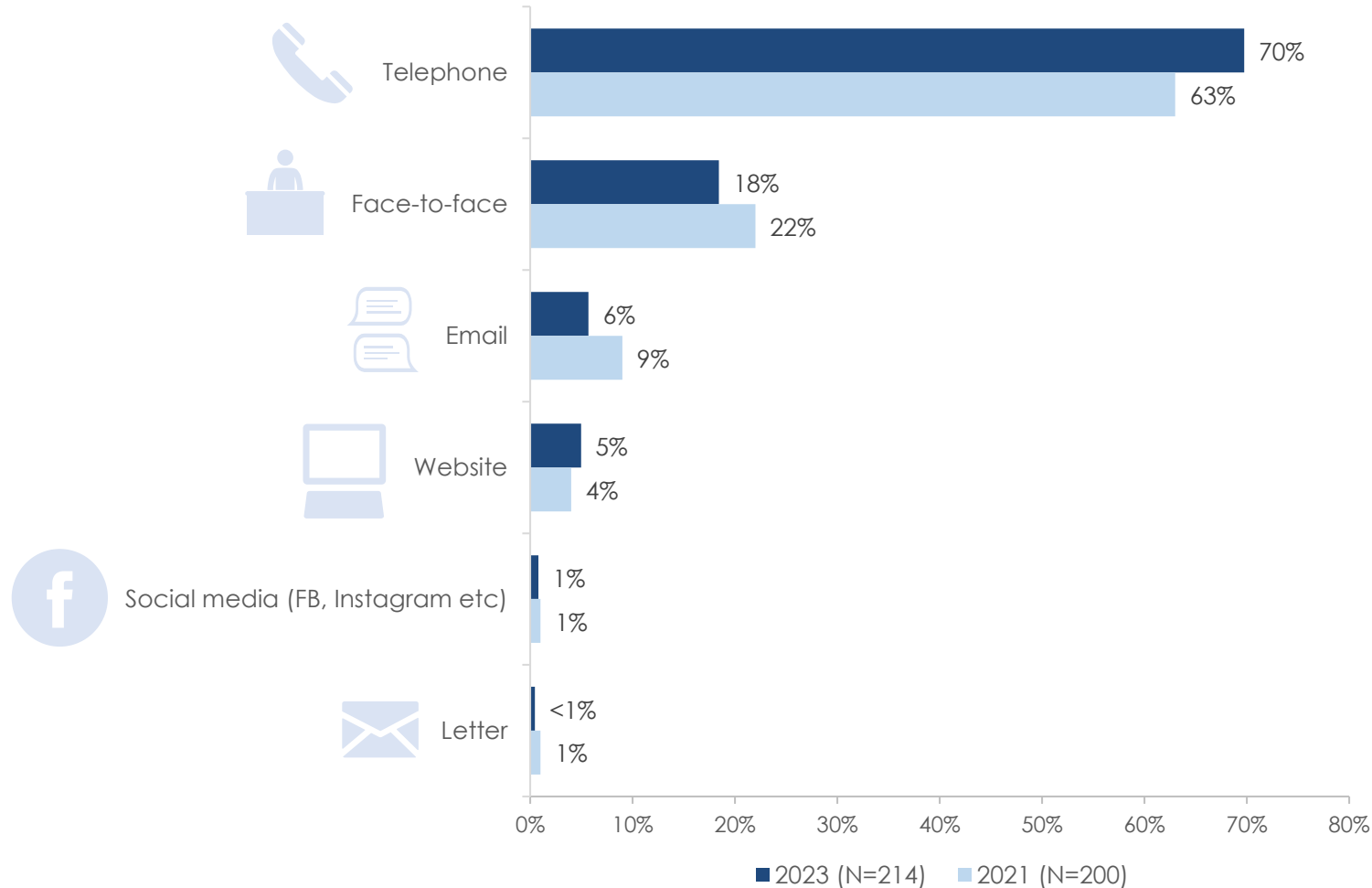
Nature of Enquiry

Development application (16%), road and footpath improvements (13%) were the most common reasons to make contact with Council.

Other specified	Count
General enquiry/ information /responding to Council	3%
Business enquiry	2%
Vermin	1%
Water pipes/drainage	1%
Disturbance complaint	1%
Property sale	<1%
New pound	<1%
Flood levels	<1%
Fencing issue	<1%
Complaint	<1%
Parking	<1%
Deceased pet	<1%
Meeting with Councillors/Mayor	<1%
Council cafe	<1%
JP	<1%
Law and Order	<1%
Reporting abandoned car	<1%
Syringe boxes	<1%

Development application (DA) — 2023: 16%, 2021: 16%
Road and footpath improvements — 2023: 13%, 2021: 14%
Garbage/Waste management/Recycling/Tips — 2023: 11%, 2021: 8%
Water, sewage defects — 2023: 9%▼, 2021: 14%
Vegetation and trees - e.g., requesting council to clear vegetation or mow grass — 2023: 8%, 2021: 9%
Building inspection inquiries — 2023: 6%, 2021: 5%
Ranger matters - barking dogs, livestock, etc. — 2023: 5%, 2021: 5%
Community services (availability of facilities, grants for projects, aged and... — 2023: 4%, 2021: 7%
Drainage problem — 2023: 4%, 2021: 1%
Rates inquiry (including pensioner rebates and change of address) — 2023: 4%
Traffic management/parking — 2023: 4%, 2021: 1%
Road or bridge closures — 2023: 3%
Pet registrations — 2023: 2%
Septic tanks — 2023: 2%
Other parks and gardens — 2023: 1%
Water billing — 2023: 1%, 2021: 1%
Cemeteries — 2023: 1%, 2021: 1%
Cultural or sporting events — 2023: <1%, 2021: 4%
Other — 2023: 13%, 2021: 11%
Can't recall — 2023: 1%

■ 2023 (N=214) ■ 2021 (N=200)

Base: N = 214

Q7b. *Thinking about your most recent enquiry, what was that contact regarding?*

Please see Appendix 1 for results by demographics
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by year)

Method of Contact with Council

For those that have contacted Council in the last 12 months, telephone is by far the most common method to first make contact, followed by face-to-face.

Compared to 2021, telephone has seen an increase in usage, while face-to-face and email were slightly less common.


Method	2023 (N=214)	2021 (N=200)
Telephone	70%	63%
Face-to-face	18%	22%
Email	6%	9%
Website	5%	4%
Social media (FB, Instagram etc)	1%	1%
Letter	<1%	1%

■ 2023 (N=214) ■ 2021 (N=200)

Base: N = 214

Q7c.   Regarding your issue, how did you first make contact with Council?

Satisfaction with Contact

For those that have contacted Council in the last 12 months, 49% are at least moderately satisfied with the way their contact was handled. Residents under 40 were significantly less likely to state that they were satisfied.

■ 2023 (N=214) ■ 2021* (N=199)
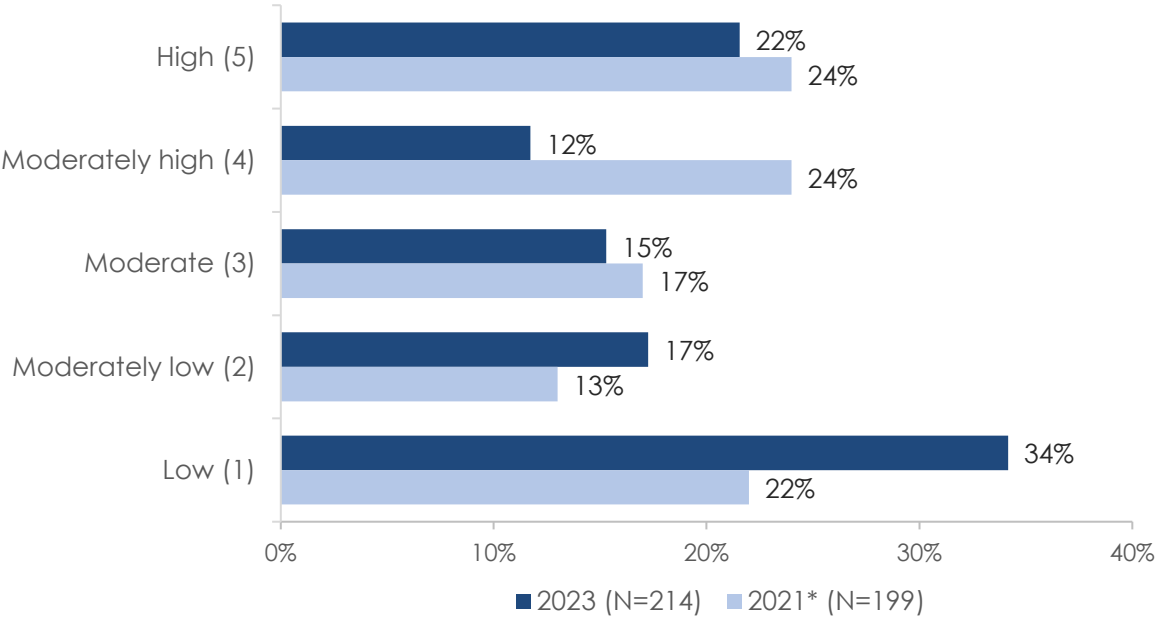
	Muswellbrook Shire Council			Micromex LGA Benchmark
	2023	2021*	2019*	
Mean rating	2.69↓	3.16	3.03	3.76
T3 Box	49%↓	65%	58%	80%
Base	214	199	217	23,787

↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (compared to the Benchmark)

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Top 3 Box %	49%	45%	53%	40%	56%	44%	39%	77%▲	40%	48%	51%
Mean rating	2.69	2.53	2.89	2.25▼	3.15	2.60	2.42	3.67▲	2.39	2.63	2.81
Base	214	117	98	74	38	44	30	28	37	52	125

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)
*Note: 2021/2019 results were measured on a different scale: 1=very poorly, 5=very well

Base: N = 214

Q7d.   On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction how satisfied were you with the way the local Council handled your latest enquiry?

Satisfaction with Contact – by Method and Nature of Enquiry

Those that contacted by email were significantly less satisfied than other contact methods, additionally, those who contacted about ranger matters or drainage problems were also significantly less satisfied.

Satisfaction with Contact by Q7b. Method of Contact

	Overall	Telephone	Face-to-face	Email	Website
Top 3 Box %	49%	49%	46%	25%	76%
Mean rating	2.69	2.69	2.73	1.61▼	3.58
Base	214	149	39	12*	11*

Satisfaction with Contact by Q7c. Nature of Enquiry

	Overall	Development application (DA)	Road and footpath improvements	Garbage/Waste management/ Recycling/Tips	Water, sewage defects	Vegetation and trees - e.g., requesting council to clear vegetation or mow grass	Ranger matters - barking dogs, livestock, etc.	Rates inquiry (including pensioner rebates and change of address)	Traffic management/ parking	Drainage problem
Top 3 Box %	49%	40%	54%	44%	74%	43%	14%▼	79%	20%	10%▼
Mean rating	2.69	2.28	2.79	2.89	3.61	2.75	1.74▼	3.80	1.72	1.39▼
Base	214	34	24	23	17*	14*	9*	8*	8*	8*

*Caution: low base sizes (only groups with a base size of 8 or more are shown)

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

Base: N = 214

Q7d.   On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction how satisfied were you with the way the local Council handled your latest enquiry?

Section 4:

Future Planning – Challenges and Opportunities

This section focuses on what residents perceive as the biggest opportunities and biggest challenges for the area, as well as thoughts on Muswellbrook's focus on the mining industry.

Future Planning – Challenges and Opportunities – Summary

- Coal mining is the most mentioned major opportunity for the prosperity of the Shire (24% of residents), followed by renewable energy (9%) and retail/small business (7%).

- When asked what the major challenge is for the future of the region, challenges regarding local industry and jobs were the most prominent, with the top three being: the future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation (21%), job security/unemployment (17%), and young people emigrating to big cities (7%).

- When asked to pick a preference, just over half of residents (54%) would prefer that Muswellbrook try to diversify into other industries, while 38% would prefer to continue to focus on coal mining, and 8% were unsure.

- Looking beyond mining, residents were very supportive of focusing on a range of other industry areas in the future, with the most mentioned being agriculture (88%), followed by services (nursing, education, and social assistance) (86%), and manufacturing (81%).

Q8.   What do you think is the MAJOR OPPORTUNITY for the future prosperity of the Shire?
Q9.   What do you think is the MAJOR CHALLENGE for the future of the Muswellbrook Shire going forward?
Q10. Some people think the Muswellbrook Shire should continue to focus on coal mining for its future prosperity, while others think it should be trying to diversify into other industries. Which category do you fall into?
Q11. Beyond mining, which of the following sectors of our local economy do you think should be our focus?

Major Opportunities for the Shire

Coal mining is the most mentioned major opportunity for the prosperity of the Shire, more than doubling in mentions since 2021. The only other options with more than 5% of residents selecting them were 'renewable energy' and 'retail/small business'. Another interesting change since 2021 is the increased engagement with this question, with the number of residents with a suggestion increasing from 69% to 90%.

Chart: Major opportunities for the Shire — 2023 (N = 402) vs 2021 (N=401)

Opportunity	2023	2021
Coal mining	24%▲	10%
Renewable energy	9%▲	3%
Retail/small business	7%▼	13%
Manufacturing (excluding food processing)	4%	4%
Tourism	4%	3%
Education	4%	3%
Healthcare	4%	1%
New energy sources (hydrogen, pumped hydro, biofuels, batteries etc.)	4%	6%
Agriculture/agribusiness (including food processing)	4%	7%
Community services and Council engagement*	3%	
Activities/facilities for families and children*	3%	
New bypass*	3%	
Jobs and employment*	2%	
Housing and development*	2%	
New industry and diversification*	2%	
Other	10%	8%
Don't know/NA	10%▼	31%

Other specified	N = 402
Improve roads	1%
Infrastructure	1%
Hospital and health services	1%
Lower crime rate	1%
Motorsports/racing	1%
Opportunity for young adults	1%
Arts and entertainment	1%
Better financial management from Council	<1%
Waste services	<1%
New power station	<1%
Remove coal mines	<1%
The environment	<1%
Technology/engineering	<1%
Improve footpaths	<1%
Nuclear Power	<1%
Reduce rural block size to 40 hectares	<1%
Tree removal	<1%
Focus on keeping area clean	<1%

Please see Appendix 1 for results by demographics
*Note: these options are not recorded in the 2021 report
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

Q8. *What do you think is the MAJOR OPPORTUNITY for the future prosperity of the Shire?*

Major Challenges for the Shire

Challenges regarding local industry and jobs were the most prominent, with the top three being: the future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation, job security/unemployment, and young people emigrating to big cities. The future of the coal industry was significantly more likely to be mentioned by male residents, when compared to female residents.

Future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation	21%▼ ... 28%
Job security/unemployment	17% / 16%
Young people emigrating to big cities	7%▲ / 1%
Councils performance/community engagement*	6%
Economic diversification	5% / 8%
Safety/reduce crime*	5%
Housing affordability	5% / 1%
Housing availability*	5%
Impact of mining	4%▼ / 14%
Air quality/pollution	3% / 4%
Roads and infrastructure	3% / 2%
Energy security/renewable energy*	3%
Health services*	3%
Bypass*	2%
Other:	8% / 4%
Don't know/unsure	4% / 12%

Legend: ■ 2023 (N = 402) ■ 2021 (N=401)

Other specified	N = 402
Population growth	1%
Support for local business	1%
Shopping facilities	1%
Agriculture	1%
Being more connected to major cities	1%
Hospitality and tourism	1%
Support for elderly	<1%
Hiring of event halls/community centres	<1%
Looking after the environment	<1%
Future of the area	<1%
Family activities/facilities	<1%
People not feeling a part of the community	<1%
Waste services	<1%
Listening to young people	<1%

Q9. *What do you think is the MAJOR CHALLENGE for the future of the Muswellbrook Shire going forward?*

Please see Appendix 1 for results by demographics
*Note: these options are not recorded in the 2021 report
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

30

Should Muswellbrook Shire Continue to Focus on Coal Mining?

Just over half of residents (54%) would prefer that Muswellbrook try to diversify into other industries, while 38% would prefer to continue to focus on coal mining, a similar result to 2021. When looking across demographics, all bar the over 70 group have a majority preference for diversification.

Which category do you fall into?

Focus on coal mining, 38%

37% in 2021

Try to diversify into other industries, 54%

Unsure, 8%
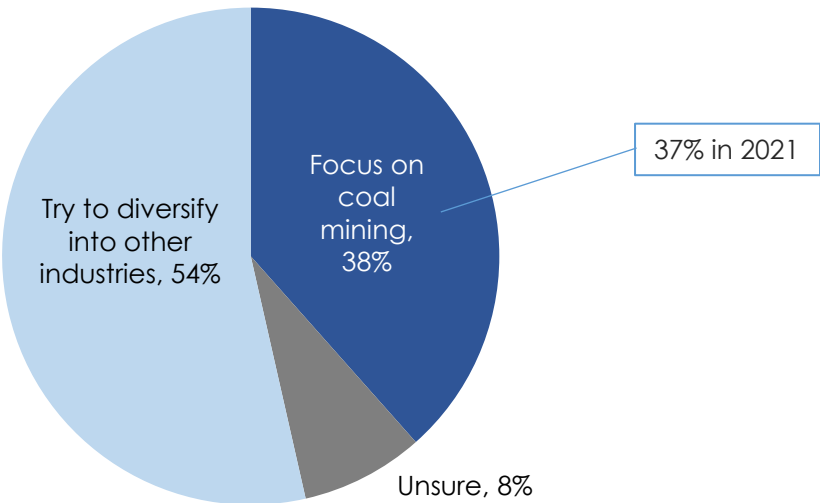
	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Focus on coal mining	38%	41%	36%	39%	41%	35%	34%	43%	34%	44%	38%
Try to diversify into other industries	54%	52%	55%	52%	52%	58%	60%	46%	55%	53%	53%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Base: N = 402

Q10.   *Some people think the Muswellbrook Shire should continue to focus on coal mining for its future prosperity, while others think it should be trying to diversify into other industries. Which category do you fall into?*

Areas Other Than Mining To Focus On

Residents were very receptive to all the prompted industry areas, with the most mentioned being agriculture, followed by services (nursing, education, and social assistance), and manufacturing.

Agriculture	88%
Services i.e. nursing, education, and social assistance	86%
Manufacturing	81%
Retail	79%
Renewable energy production	77%
Tourism	75%
Light industry	74%
Waste & recycling	71%
Transport and freight	69%
Viticulture (or wine making)	69%
Arts and recreation	61%
Thoroughbred Industry	61%
Other	3%

■ 2023 (N = 402)
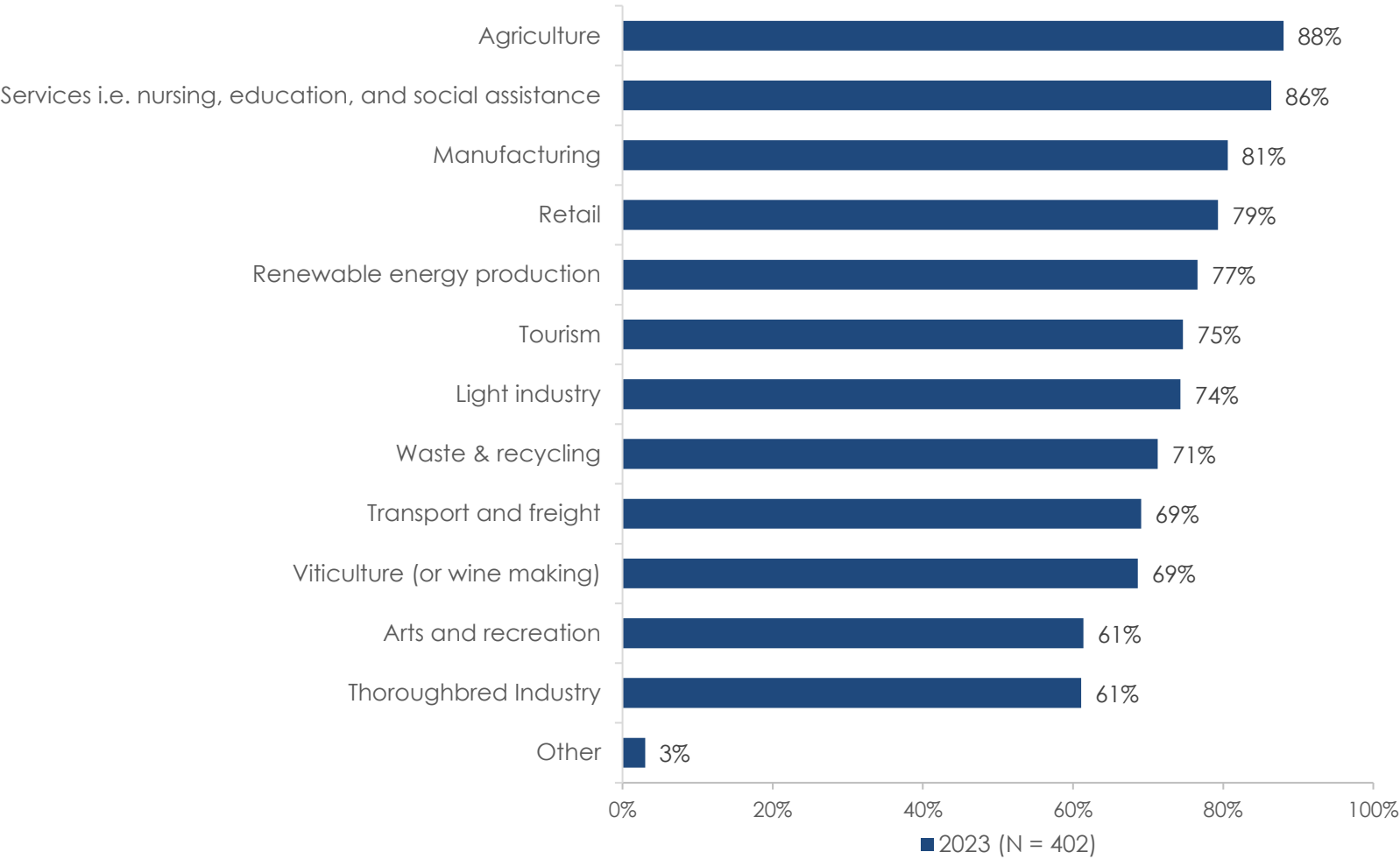
Other specified	N = 402
Health services	1%
Activities for youth and families	<1%
Bypass	<1%
Defence	<1%
Mining	<1%
Nuclear energy	<1%
Power stations	<1%
Property development	<1%
Sporting events	<1%
N/A	<1%

Q11.   *Beyond mining, which of the following sectors of our local economy do you think should be our focus?*

Please see Appendix 1 for results by demographics

Section 5:

Future Planning – Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure

This section explores residents support for increased rates for increased services/facilities/infrastructure, and where residents believe Council should focus their efforts and resources.

Section Five

Future Planning – Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure – Summary

- Residents have a generally soft level of support for paying more rates and charges to support improvement for any of the areas. Support was highest for facilities, with 59% being at least somewhat supportive of increased rates and charges to support improvement.

- In relation to future planning for regard to roads, bridges and drainage, half of residents (50%) stated they would prefer Council to focus more on maintaining current assets, while only 17% had a preference for providing new assets.

- When asked to rate their position on future planning for recreation facilities, there is a slightly stronger preference for providing a greater number of more basic recreation facilities, but this is not a majority of residents and preference varies across demographics.

Q12.   Thinking of the level of services, facilities and infrastructure in your local area, how supportive would you be to pay more via rates and charges to support improved:
Q13a.   Thinking generally about infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and drainage…how would you rate your position on this area?
Q13b.   Thinking generally about infrastructure, such as recreation facilities…how would you rate your position on this area?

Support For Increased Rates For Increased Services

Residents have a generally soft level of support for paying more rates and charges to support improvement for any of the areas. Support was highest for facilities, with 59% being at least somewhat supportive of increased rates and charges to support improvement.

	Top 3 Box %	Mean rating

	Top 3 Box %	Mean rating
Facilities i.e., playgrounds and sports fields	59%	2.78
Infrastructure i.e., roads and bridges	54%	2.70
Maintenance Services i.e., mowing	54%	2.58
User Services i.e., library services	51%	2.44

Legend: ■ Not at all supportive (1) ■ Not very supportive (2) ■ Somewhat supportive (3) ■ Supportive (4) ■ Very supportive (5)
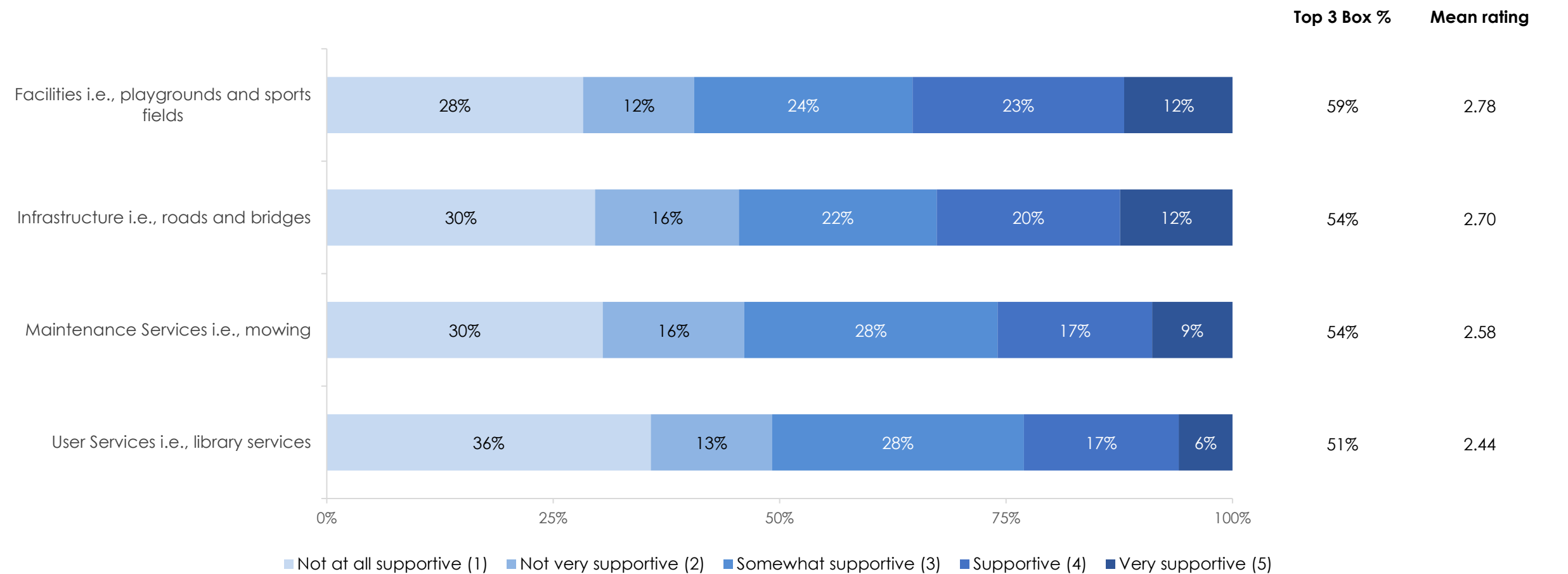
Resourcing Preference: Road, Bridges And Drainage

Half of residents (50%) stated they would prefer Council to focus more on maintaining current assets in regard to roads, bridges and drainage, while only 17% had a preference for providing new assets.

Residents over 70+ had a significantly greater preference for maintaining current assets.
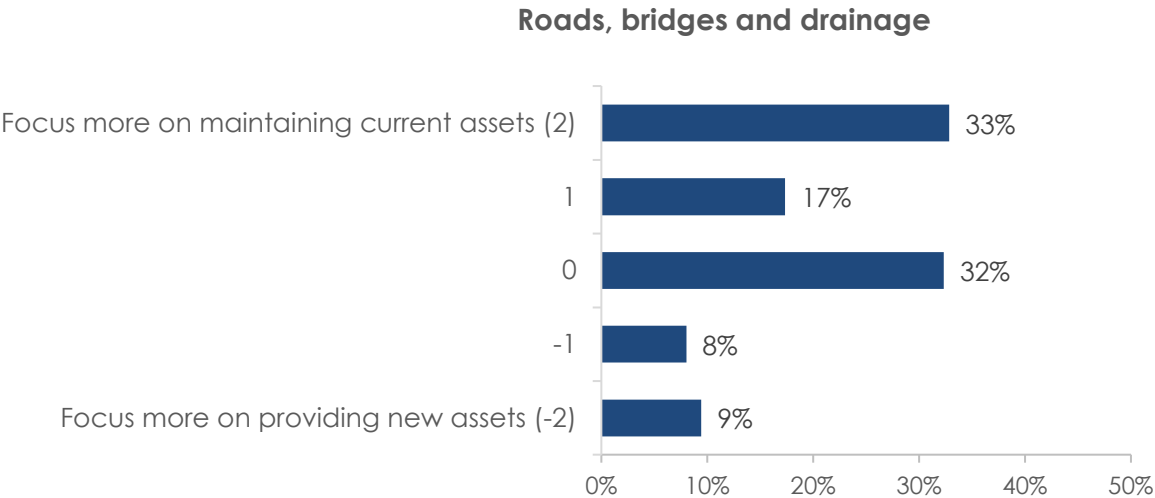
Roads, bridges and drainage

Focus more on maintaining current assets (2)	33%
1	17%
0	32%
-1	8%
Focus more on providing new assets (-2)	9%

	Overall	Gender		Age					Time lived in area		
		Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Maintaining current assets (2/1)	50%	49%	52%	46%	46%	48%	54%	65%▲	46%	46%	53%
Neutral (0)	32%	34%	31%	33%	35%	33%	31%	27%	30%	36%	32%
Providing new assets (-1/-2)	17%	17%	17%	20%	19%	19%	14%	8%▼	25%	18%	15%
Mean rating	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.46	0.44	0.58	0.63	0.90▲	0.37	0.52	0.65
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Base: N = 402

Q13a.   *Thinking generally about infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and drainage…how would you rate your position on this area?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

36

Resourcing Preference: Recreation Facilities

Overall, there is a slightly stronger preference for providing a greater number of more basic recreation facilities, but this preference varies across demographics.

Residents over 50 and those who have lived in the area more than 20 years would prefer Council to focus on providing a greater number of more basic recreation facilities. Interestingly, while preference was very dependent on age, it does not vary by gender.
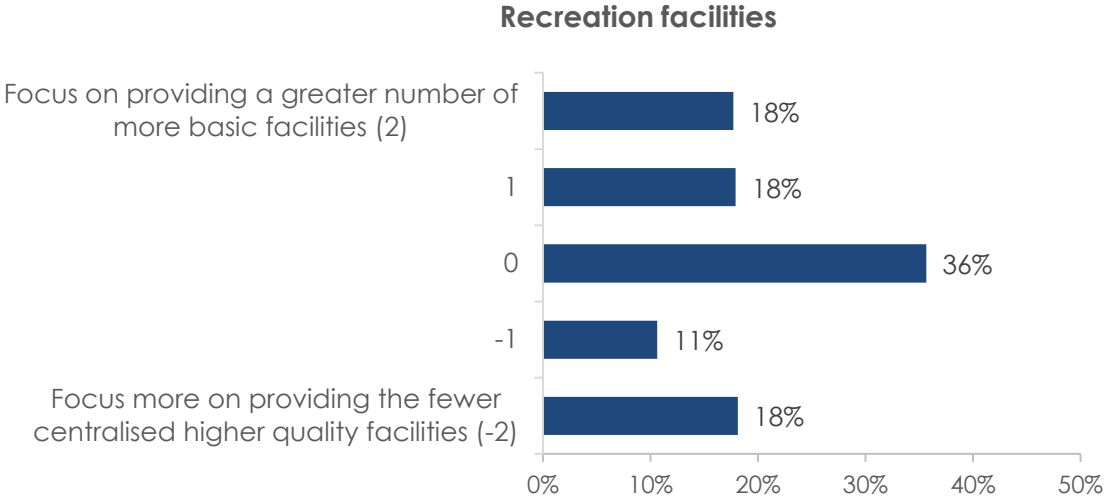
Recreation facilities

Category	%
Focus on providing a greater number of more basic facilities (2)	18%
1	18%
0	36%
-1	11%
Focus more on providing the fewer centralised higher quality facilities (-2)	18%

	Overall	Gender		Age					Time lived in area		
		Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Providing a greater number of more basic facilities (2/1)	36%	35%	36%	21%▼	31%	46%▲	50%▲	53%▲	36%	21%▼	41%▲
Neutral (0)	36%	34%	37%	44%▲	36%	26%	25%	36%	35%	43%	33%
Providing fewer centralised higher quality facilities (-1/-2)	29%	31%	27%	36%	32%	27%	24%	11%▼	29%	35%	26%
Mean rating	0.06	0.02	0.12	-0.31▼	-0.10	0.34	0.43▲	0.58▲	0.04	-0.27▼	0.20▲
Base	400	205	196	151	68	73	54	55	81	86	233

Base: N = 400

Q13b.   *Thinking generally about infrastructure, such as recreation facilities…how would you rate your position on this area?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)   37

Section 6:

Summary of Council Services/Facilities

This section summarises the importance and satisfaction ratings for the 30 services and facilities. In this section we explore trends to past research and comparative norms.

Section Six

Council Services and Facilities

A major component of the 2023 Community Survey was to assess perceived Importance of, and Satisfaction with 30 Council-provided services and facilities – the equivalent of 60 separate questions!

We have utilised the following techniques to summarise and analyse these 60 questions:

Highest and Lowest Results

Comparison with Micromex Benchmarks

Performance Gap Analysis

Quadrant Analysis

Regression Analysis (i.e.: determine the services/ facilities that drive overall satisfaction with Council)

Importance & Satisfaction – Highest/Lowest Rated Services/Facilities

A core element of this community survey was the rating of 30 facilities/services in terms of Importance and Satisfaction. The analysis below identifies the highest and lowest rated services/facilities in terms of importance and satisfaction.

Importance

The following services/facilities received the highest T2 box importance ratings:

Higher importance	T2 Box	Mean
Water supply	95%	4.72
Waste and recycling	95%	4.72
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	94%	4.70
Parking facilities	91%	4.52
The way Council communicates with the local community	91%	4.52
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	91%	4.57

The following services/facilities received the lowest T2 box importance ratings:

Lower importance	T2 Box	Mean
Art Gallery	44%	3.19
Unsealed roads	44%	3.22
Council social media	62%	3.58
Council website	65%	3.78
Community halls	68%	3.95

T2B = important/very important
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

Satisfaction

The following services/facilities received the highest T3 box satisfaction ratings:

Higher satisfaction	T3 Box	Mean
Libraries	94%	4.06
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	90%	3.76
Sewage collection and treatment	90%	3.89
Public lighting in town centres	87%	3.42
Bridges	84%	3.49

The following services/facilities received the lowest T3 box satisfaction ratings:

Lower satisfaction	T3 Box	Mean
Sealed roads	58%	2.66
Public toilets	60%	2.78
Unsealed roads	60%	2.71
Development applications (DA's)	62%	2.76
Economic development and attracting new investment	63%	2.76

T3B = somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Summary <u>Importance</u> Comparison to the Micromex Benchmark

The chart to the right shows the variance between Muswellbrook Shire Council top 2 box importance scores and the Micromex Benchmark. Services/facilities shown in the chart highlight larger positive and negative gaps.

Muswellbrook Shire Council Top 2 Box Importance Scores

Service/Facility	Score
Dog control	85%
Cleanliness of streets	90%
Local festivals and events	83%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	91%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	94%
Parking facilities	91%
Stormwater drainage	90%
Sewage collection and treatment	89%
Services for the elderly	89%
Water supply	95%
Economic development and attracting new investment	87%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	90%
The way Council communicates with the local community	91%
Libraries	77%
Sporting facilities	82%
Council pools	77%
Youth facilities and activities	80%
Art Gallery	44%
Unsealed roads	44%

Variance to the Regional Benchmark

Service/Facility	Variance
Dog control	14%
Cleanliness of streets	14%
Local festivals and events	12%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	10%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	10%
Parking facilities	9%
Stormwater drainage	9%
Sewage collection and treatment	8%
Services for the elderly	8%
Water supply	7%
Economic development and attracting new investment	7%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	7%
The way Council communicates with the local community	7%
Libraries	7%
Sporting facilities	6%
Council pools	6%
Youth facilities and activities	6%
Art Gallery	-16%
Unsealed roads	-33%

Note: Only services/facilities with a variance of +/- 5% to the Benchmark have been shown above. Please see Appendix 1 for detailed list

Top 2 box = important/very important

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Summary <u>Satisfaction</u> Comparison to the Micromex Benchmark

The chart to the right shows the variance between Muswellbrook Shire Council top 3 satisfaction scores (*filtered to those that stated top 2 box for importance for that measure) and the Micromex Benchmark. Services/facilities shown in the chart highlight larger positive and negative gaps.

Muswellbrook Shire Council Top 3 Box Satisfaction Scores*

Service/Facility	Score
Unsealed roads	56%
Stormwater drainage	72%
Weed control	68%
Cleanliness of streets	80%
Development applications (DA's)	60%
Council social media	74%
Community halls	78%
Council website	72%
Economic development and attracting new investment	62%
Services for the elderly	72%
Dog control	67%
Public toilets	58%
Waste and recycling	74%

Variance to the Regional Benchmark

Service/Facility	Variance
Unsealed roads	6%
Stormwater drainage	-5%
Weed control	-7%
Cleanliness of streets	-7%
Development applications (DA's)	-8%
Council social media	-10%
Community halls	-10%
Council website	-11%
Economic development and attracting new investment	-12%
Services for the elderly	-13%
Dog control	-13%
Public toilets	-14%
Waste and recycling	-14%

Note: Only services/facilities with a variance of +/- 5% to the Benchmark have been shown above. Please see Appendix 1 for detailed list
Top 3 box = at least somewhat satisfied

Performance Gap Analysis

PGA establishes the gap between importance and satisfaction. This is calculated by subtracting the top 3 satisfaction score from the top 2 importance score. In order to measure performance gaps, respondents are asked to rate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, each of a range of different services or facilities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = low importance or satisfaction and 5 = high importance or satisfaction. These scores are aggregated at a total community level.

The higher the differential between importance and satisfaction, the greater the difference is between the provision of that service by Muswellbrook Shire Council and the expectation of the community for that service/facility.

In the table on the following page, we can see the services and facilities with the largest performance gaps.

When analysing the performance gaps, it is expected that there will be some gaps in terms of resident satisfaction. Those services/facilities that have achieved a performance gap of greater than 20% may be indicative of areas requiring future optimisation.
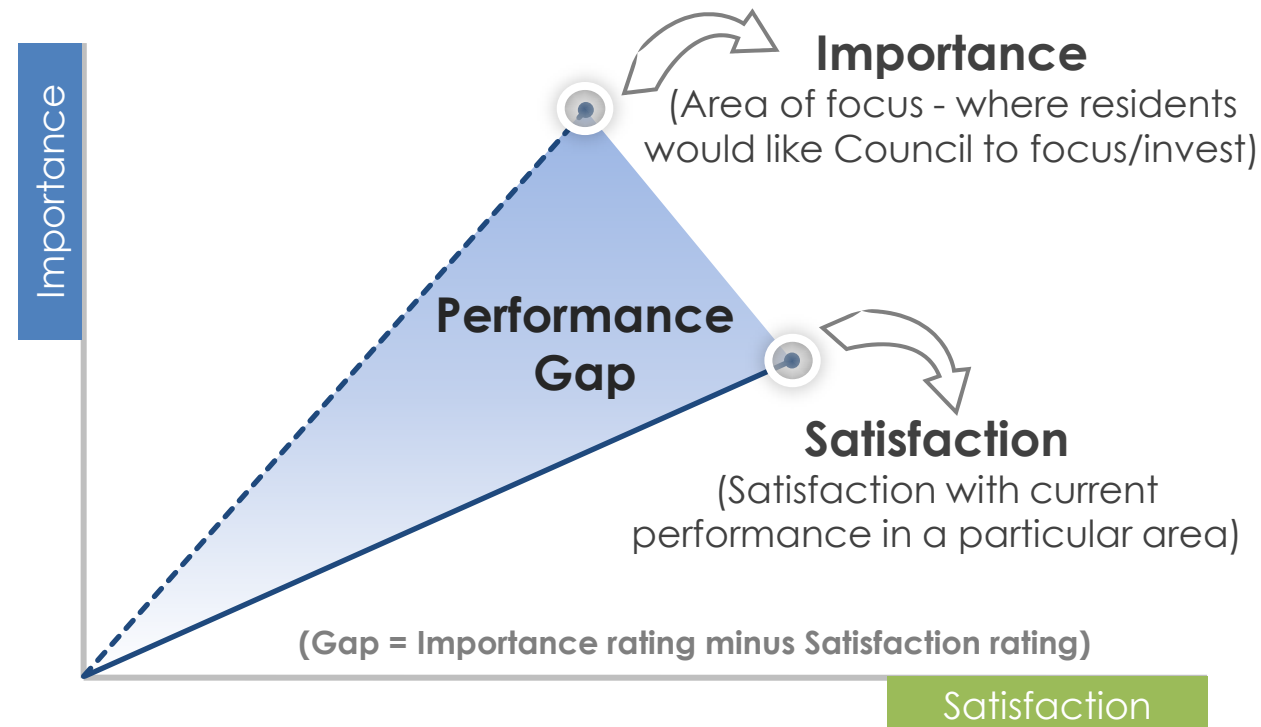
Performance Gap Analysis

When we examine the largest performance gaps, we can identify that all of the services or facilities have been rated as high in importance, whilst resident satisfaction for all of these areas is between 58% and 82%.

The areas with the largest performance gaps were: road infrastructure (sealed roads and parking), communication with the local community, and economic development and attracting new investment.

Service Area	Service/Facility	Importance T2 Box	Satisfaction T3 Box	Performance Gap (Importance – Satisfaction)
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Sealed roads	89%	58%	31%
Community and Economy	The way Council communicates with the local community	91%	65%	26%
Community and Economy	Economic development and attracting new investment	87%	63%	24%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Parking facilities	91%	67%	24%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Waste and recycling	95%	74%	21%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Public toilets	78%	60%	18%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Stormwater drainage	90%	73%	17%
Health and Environment	Dog control	85%	68%	17%
Community and Economy	Services for the elderly	89%	73%	16%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Water supply	95%	82%	13%
Parks, Gardens and infrastructure	Cleanliness of streets	90%	79%	11%
Health and Environment	Development applications (DA's)	73%	62%	11%

Note: Performance gap is the first step in the process, we now need to identify comparative ratings across all services and facilities to get an understanding of relative importance and satisfaction at an LGA level. This is when we undertake step 2 of the analysis.

Quadrant Analysis

Quadrant analysis is often helpful in planning future directions based on stated outcomes. It combines the stated importance of the community and assesses satisfaction with delivery in relation to these needs.

This analysis is completed by plotting the variables on x and y axes, defined by stated importance and rated satisfaction. We aggregate the top 2 box importance scores and top 3 satisfaction scores for stated importance and rated satisfaction to identify where the facility or service should be plotted.

On average, Muswellbrook Shire residents rated services/facilities more important than our Benchmark, and their satisfaction was, on average, slightly lower.

	Muswellbrook Shire Council	Micromex Comparable Regional Benchmark
Average Importance	81%	78%
Average Satisfaction*	76%	80%

*Note: Satisfaction for this table calculated using only those who rated importance 4 or 5

Explaining the 4 quadrants (overleaf)

Attributes in the top right quadrant, **MAINTAIN,** such as 'food safety in local restaurants, cafes, and take-aways', are Council's core strengths, and should be treated as such. Maintain, or even attempt to improve your position in these areas, as they are influential and address clear community needs.

Attributes in the top left quadrant, **IMPROVE,** such as 'sealed roads' are key concerns in the eyes of your residents. In the vast majority of cases you should aim to improve your performance in these areas to better meet the community's expectations.

Attributes in the bottom left quadrant, **NICHE**, such as 'unsealed roads', are of a relatively lower priority (and the word 'relatively' should be stressed – they are still important). These areas tend to be important to a particular segment of the community.

Finally, attributes in the bottom right quadrant, **SOCIAL CAPITAL**, such as 'art gallery', are core strengths, but in relative terms they are considered less overtly important than other directly obvious areas. However, the occupants of this quadrant tend to be the sort of services and facilities that deliver to community liveability, i.e. make it a good place to live.

Recommendations based only on stated importance and satisfaction have major limitations, as the actual questionnaire process essentially 'silos' facilities and services as if they are independent variables, when they are in fact all part of the broader community perception of council performance.
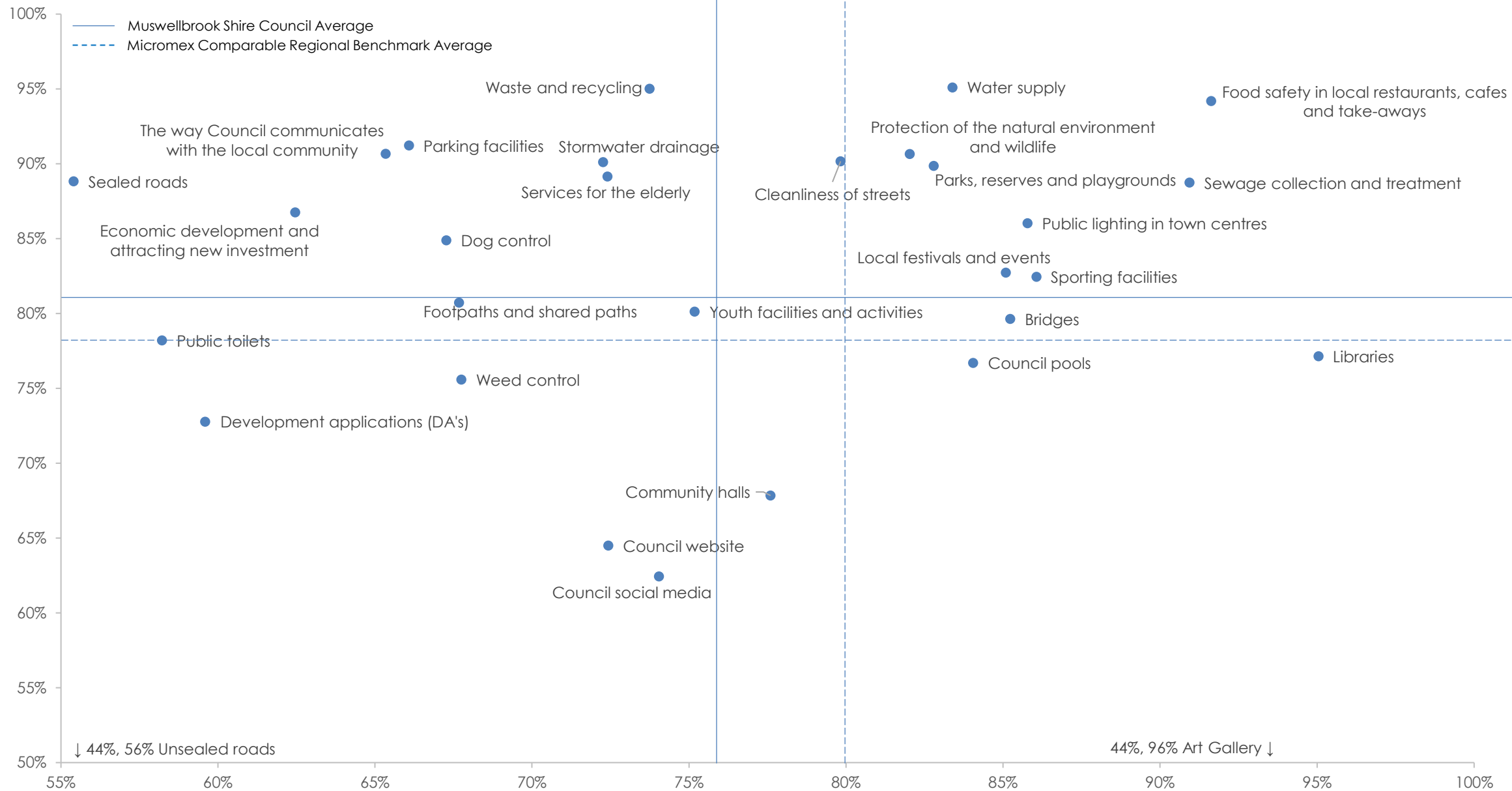
Regression Analysis

The outcomes identified in stated importance/satisfaction analysis often tend to be obvious and challenging. No matter how much focus a council dedicates to 'sealed roads', it will often be found in the **IMPROVE** quadrant. This is because, perceptually, the condition of local roads can always be better.

Furthermore, the outputs of stated importance and satisfaction analysis address the current dynamics of the community, they do not predict which focus areas are the most likely agents to change the community's perception of Council's overall performance.

Therefore, in order to identify how Muswellbrook Shire Council <u>can actively drive overall community satisfaction,</u> we conducted further analysis

Explanation of Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical tool for investigating relationships between dependent variables and explanatory variables. Using a regression, a category model was developed. The outcomes demonstrated that increasing resident satisfaction by actioning the priorities they stated as being important would not necessarily positively impact on overall satisfaction.

What Does This Mean?

The learning is that if we only rely on the stated community priorities, we will not be allocating the appropriate resources to the actual service attributes that will improve overall community satisfaction. Using regression analysis, we can identify the attributes that essentially build overall satisfaction. We call the outcomes 'derived importance'.

Identify top services/facilities that will drive overall satisfaction with Council

Map stated satisfaction and derived importance to identify community priority areas
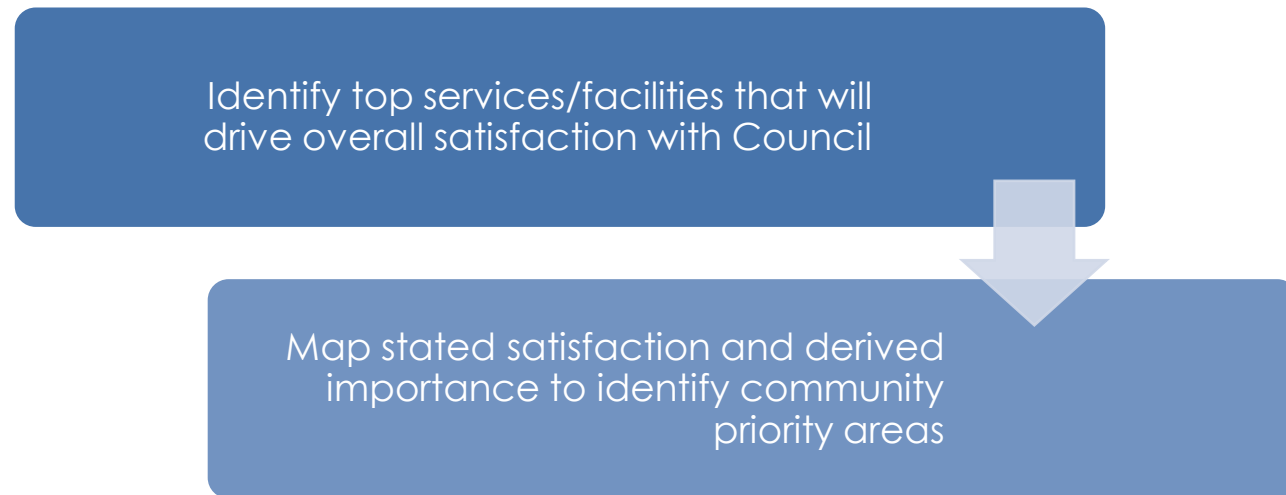
Key Drivers of Overall Satisfaction with Council

The score assigned to each area indicates the percentage of influence each measure contributes to overall satisfaction with Council. If Council can increase satisfaction in these areas it will improve overall community satisfaction.

Driver	Score
The way Council communicates with the local community	16.3%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	7.5%
Economic development and attracting new investment	7.0%
Council social media	6.2%
Local festivals and events	6.0%
Development applications (DA's)	5.9%
Parking facilities	4.6%
Dog control	4.5%
Sealed roads	4.5%
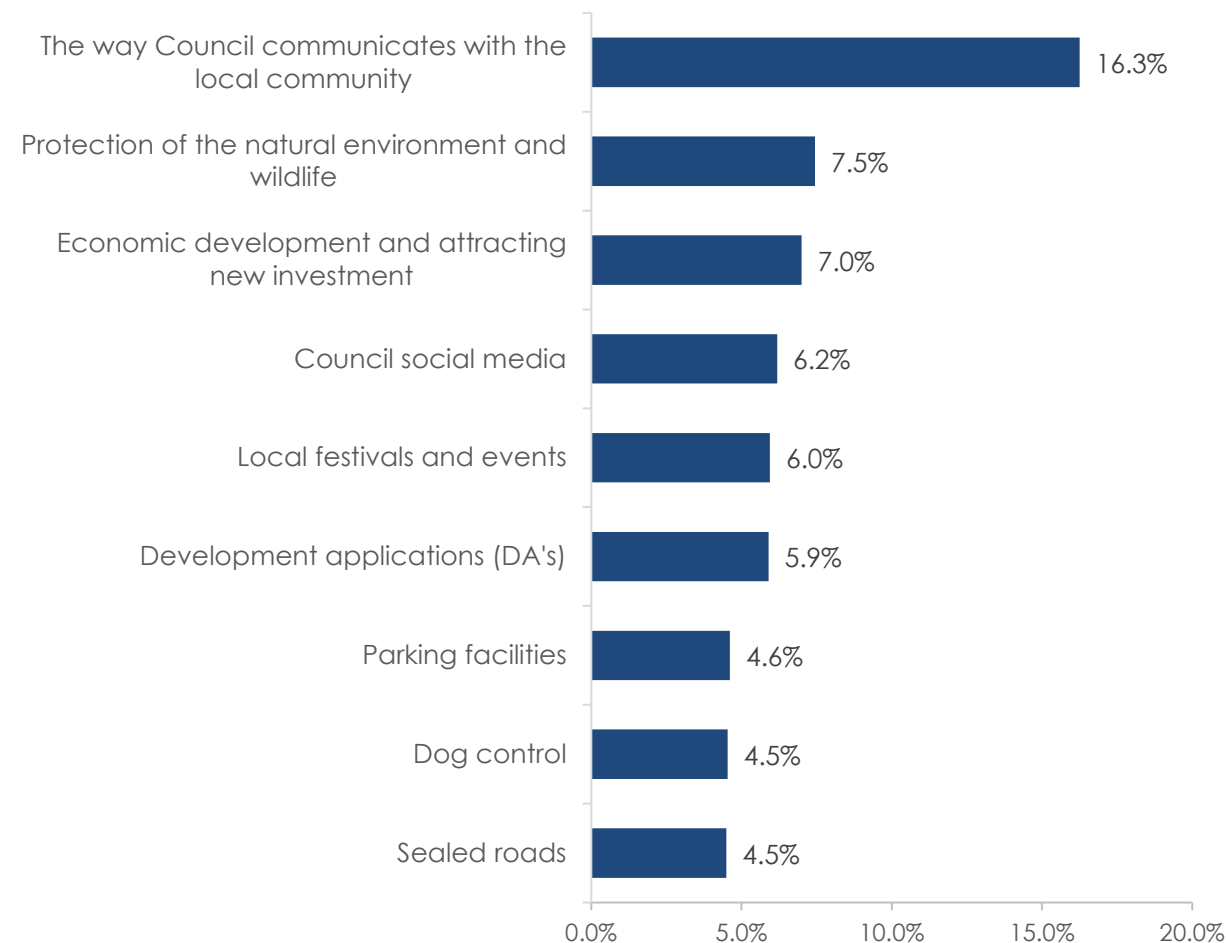
The results in the chart to the left identify which services/facilities contribute most to overall satisfaction. If Council can improve satisfaction scores across these services/facilities, they are likely to improve their overall satisfaction score.

These top 9 services/facilities (so 30% of the 30 services/facilities) account for over 62% of the variation in overall satisfaction. Therefore, whilst all 30 services/facilities are important, only a number of them are potentially significant drivers of satisfaction (at this stage, the other 21 services/facilities have less impact on satisfaction – although if resident satisfaction with them was to suddenly change they may have more immediate impact on satisfaction).

Optimisers R^2 value = 0.545

Dependent Variable: Q4. Please rate your satisfaction with Council's overall performance

Mapping Stated Satisfaction and Derived Importance Identifies the Community Priority Areas

The below chart looks at the relationship between stated satisfaction (top 3 box) and derived importance (Regression result) to identify the level of contribution of each measure.

Any services/facilities below the blue line (shown above) could potentially be benchmarked to target in future research to elevate satisfaction levels in these areas.
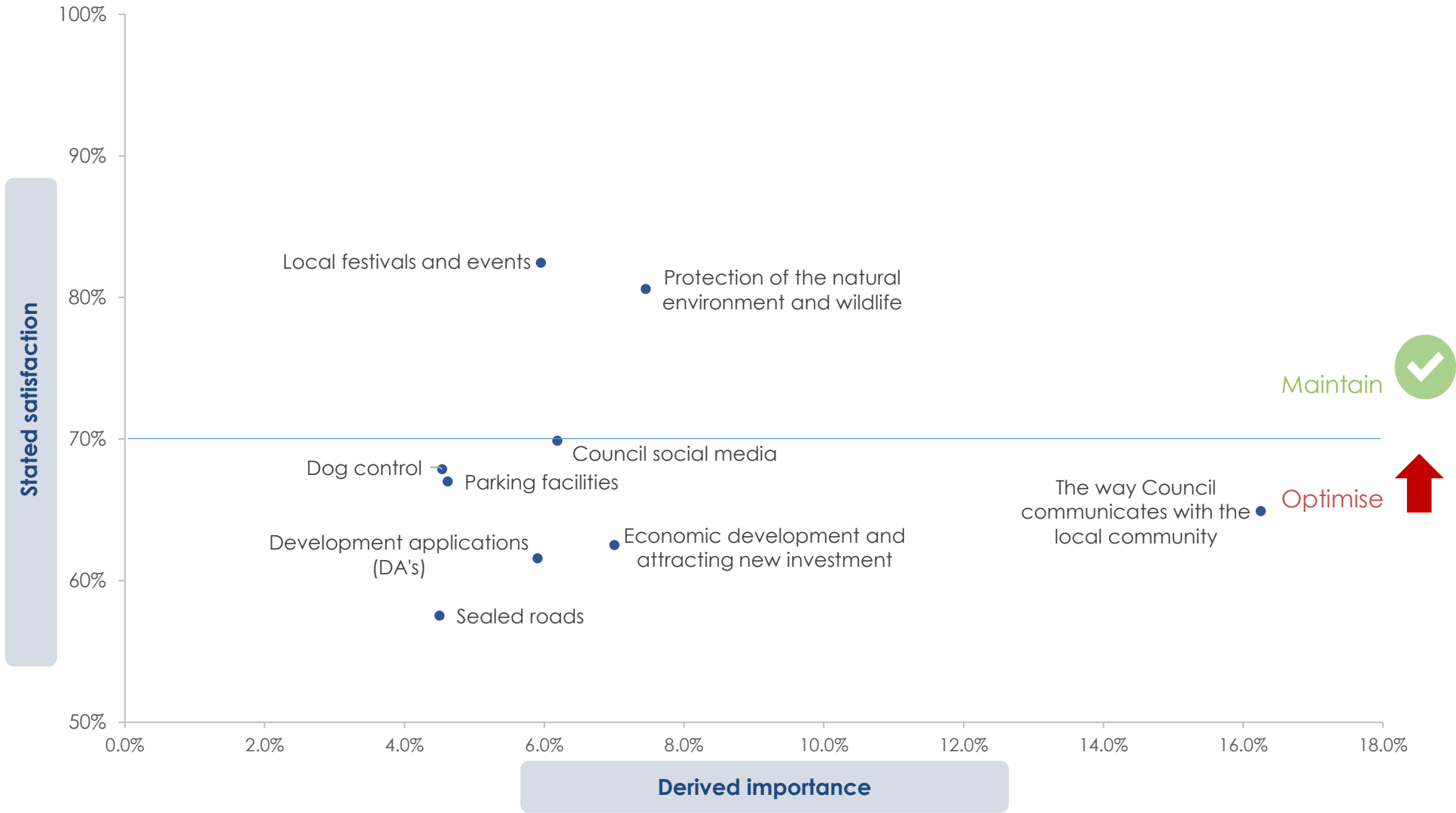
Contribution to Overall Satisfaction with Council's Performance

By combining the outcomes of the regression data, we can identify the derived importance of the different Nett Priority Areas.

'Community and Economy' (46.2%) is the key contributor toward overall satisfaction with Council's performance.

■ Nett Contribution
■ Average

Nett: Community and Economy (10) — 46.2% / 4.6%
Nett: Parks, Gardens and infrastructure (16) — 34.1% / 2.1%
Nett: Health and Environment (4) — 19.7% / 4.9%
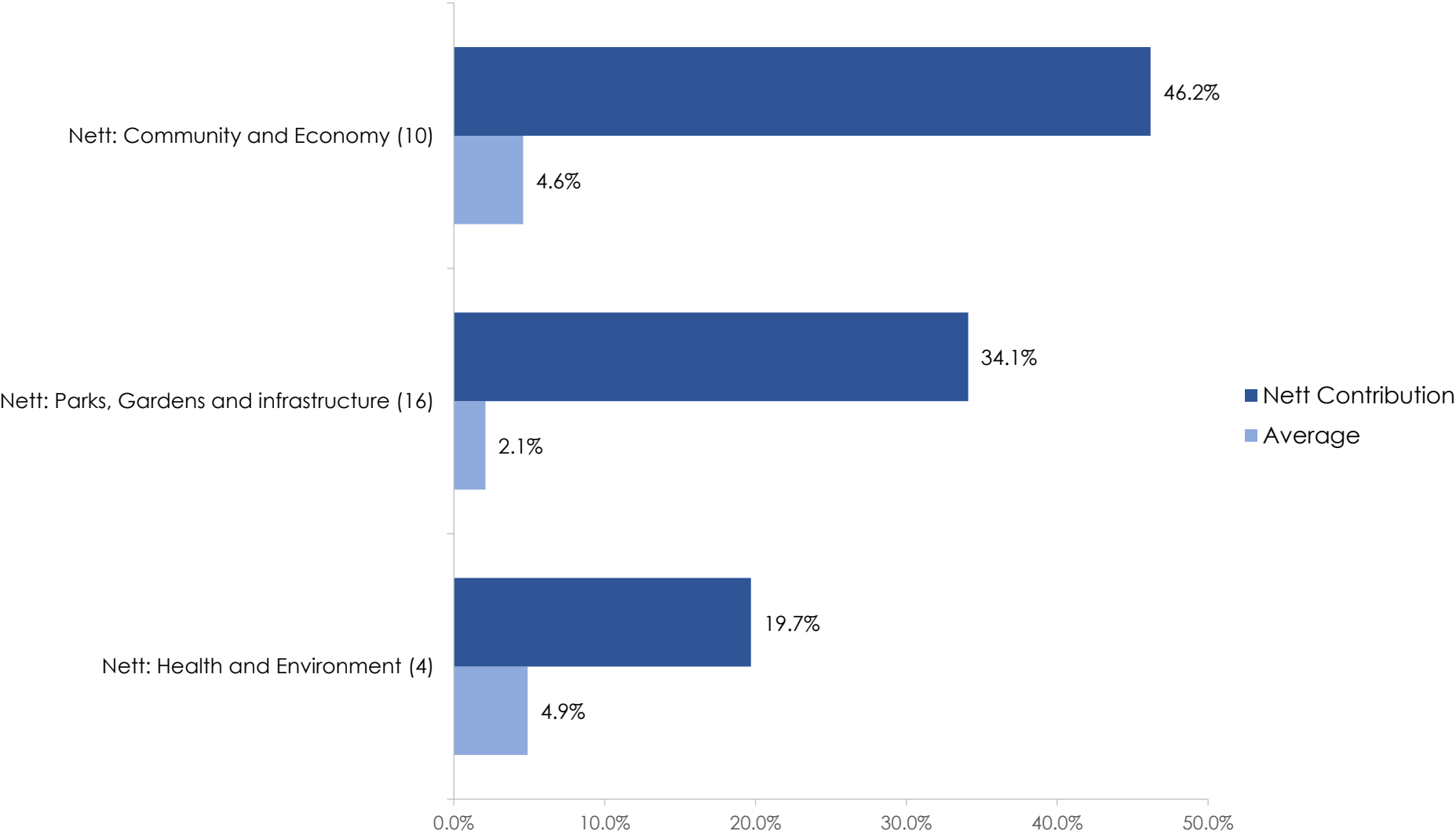
Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of services/facilities within each service area

50

Key Drivers of Overall Satisfaction with Council – Re-run

The below chart is a re-run of the key drivers contributing to overall satisfaction, but with the inclusion of the three additional measures from Q4:
Council's efforts to inform residents
Council's efforts to involve residents
Council's efforts to respond to residents

Council's efforts to communicate with residents contributes to over 34% of overall satisfaction with Council

Measure	Value
Council's efforts to involve residents	9.8%
Council's efforts to inform residents	9.8%
The way Council communicates with the local community	9.0%
Council's efforts to respond to residents	5.9%
Economic development and attracting new investment	5.7%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	5.5%
Council social media	4.8%
Local festivals and events	4.5%
Parking facilities	4.2%

R^2 value = 0.587

Dependent Variable: Q5. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, but across all responsibility areas?

Note: Please see Appendix 1 for complete list

Appendix 1:

Additional Analyses

Appendix 1

Nature of Enquiry

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Development application (DA)	16%	19%	13%	22%	21%	10%	13%	8%	16%	14%	18%
Road and footpath improvements	13%	15%	11%	8%	11%	20%	13%	19%	5%	11%	16%
Garbage/Waste management/Recycling/Tips	11%	10%	12%	17%	13%	3%▼	5%	10%	17%	21%▲	5%▼
Water, sewage defects	9%	8%	10%	11%	2%	12%	4%	13%	4%	7%	11%
Vegetation and trees - e.g., requesting council to clear vegetation or mow grass	8%	6%	10%	2%	6%	10%	17%▲	8%	7%	3%	10%
Building inspection inquiries	6%	3%	8%	10%	4%	4%	3%	2%	7%	5%	6%
Ranger matters - barking dogs, livestock, etc.	5%	5%	6%	5%	12%▲	4%	2%	2%	9%	7%	3%
Community services (availability of facilities, grants for projects, aged and disabled services etc.)	4%	3%	5%	5%	2%	4%	7%	3%	7%	6%	3%
Drainage problem	4%	5%	2%	6%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Rates inquiry (including pensioner rebates and change of address)	4%	4%	4%	8%▲	2%	0%	3%	2%	5%	6%	3%
Traffic management/parking	4%	5%	2%	3%	2%	4%	8%	3%	8%	1%	3%
Road or bridge closures	3%	3%	2%	0%	0%	8%▲	5%	3%	0%	1%	4%
Pet registrations	2%	1%	4%	2%	0%	5%	0%	2%	0%	5%	2%
Septic tanks	2%	3%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%
Other parks and gardens	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%▲	3%	0%	3%	2%	1%
Water billing	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	4%▲	0%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Cemeteries	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	5%▲	0%	0%	2%
Cultural or sporting events	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%▲	0%	2%▲	0%	0%
Other	13%	15%	11%	5%	17%	19%	19%	12%	16%	9%	14%
Can't recall	1%	1%	1%	0%	4%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%
Base	214	117	98	74	38	44	30	28	37	52	125

Q7b.   *Thinking about your most recent enquiry, what was that contact regarding?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

Method of Contact with Council

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Telephone	70%	71%	68%	81%▲	63%	70%	57%	62%	75%	76%	65%
Face-to-face	18%	17%	20%	8%▼	20%	20%	28%	31%▲	17%	12%	22%
Email	6%	5%	7%	5%	5%	2%	15%▲	5%	7%	3%	6%
Website	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%	8%	0%	2%	0%	9%	5%
Social media (FB, Instagram etc)	1%	1%	1%	0%	4%▲	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Letter	<1%	1%	0%	0%	2%▲	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Base	214	117	98	74	38	44	30	28	37	52	125

Q7c.   *Regarding your issue, how did you first make contact with Council?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)   54

Major Opportunities for the Shire

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Coal mining	24%	27%	20%	26%	19%	20%	26%	25%	27%	18%	25%
Renewable energy	9%	12%	6%	6%	9%	12%	11%	14%	7%	8%	10%
Retail/small business	7%	4%	10%	6%	6%	10%	8%	6%	5%	11%	7%
Manufacturing (excluding food processing)	4%	6%	3%	4%	5%	7%	2%	4%	3%	6%	4%
Tourism	4%	4%	5%	2%	7%	6%	6%	2%	5%	3%	5%
Education	4%	2%	6%	3%	1%	6%	4%	5%	3%	1%	5%
Healthcare	4%	0%	7%▲	5%	3%	3%	2%	5%	7%	4%	2%
New energy sources (hydrogen, pumped hydro, biofuels, batteries etc.)	4%	4%	3%	1%	6%	8%▲	3%	3%	1%	5%	4%
Agriculture/agribusiness (including food processing)	4%	4%	4%	1%	5%	3%	7%	6%	1%	5%	4%
Community services and Council engagement	3%	1%	6%▲	6%	0%	1%	3%	5%	2%	4%	4%
Activities/facilities for families and children	3%	4%	2%	6%▲	2%	0%	1%	2%	4%	4%	3%
New bypass	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	1%	0%	4%	5%	0%	3%
Jobs and employment	2%	1%	4%	0%▼	4%	6%▲	4%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Housing and development	2%	3%	2%	4%	5%	0%	0%	0%	7%▲	3%	0%▼
New industry and diversification	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	0%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Other	10%	13%	7%	12%	9%	10%	6%	10%	9%	12%	10%
Don't know/NA	10%	8%	12%	12%	13%	7%	14%	4%	10%	13%	9%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Major Challenges for the Shire

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation	21%	26%▲	16%	22%	23%	20%	22%	16%	19%	26%	20%
Job security/unemployment	17%	15%	18%	9%▼	19%	21%	20%	25%▲	5%▼	16%	21%▲
Young people emigrating to big cities	7%	7%	6%	8%	4%	5%	12%	4%	5%	8%	6%
Councils performance/community engagement	6%	7%	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	6%	7%	7%	4%
Economic diversification	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%	8%	8%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Safety/reduce crime	5%	5%	6%	6%	10%	6%	1%	0%	9%	2%	5%
Housing affordability	5%	4%	7%	8%	7%	1%▼	4%	2%	9%	5%	4%
Housing availability	5%	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%	1%	11%▲	5%	6%	4%
Impact of mining	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	7%	1%	5%	6%	2%	4%
Air quality/pollution	3%	4%	3%	1%	5%	6%	5%	2%	7%	3%	3%
Roads and infrastructure	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	4%
Energy security/renewable energy	3%	5%▲	1%	3%	1%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Health services	3%	2%	4%	4%	1%	2%	2%	3%	8%▲	2%	1%▼
Bypass	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	5%	3%	1%	0%	2%	3%
Other:	8%	6%	9%	10%	8%	4%	3%	9%	10%	9%	6%
Don't know/unsure	4%	3%	6%	6%	2%	0%	7%	4%	1%▼	3%	6%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Areas Other Than Mining To Focus On

	Overall	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Agriculture	88%	91%	85%	89%	92%	87%	85%	86%	82%	97%▲	87%
Services i.e. nursing, education, and social assistance	86%	83%	89%	87%	87%	86%	81%	90%	83%	87%	87%
Manufacturing	81%	86%▲	75%	77%	88%	84%	77%	80%	84%	83%	79%
Retail	79%	78%	81%	79%	81%	78%	74%	85%	75%	75%	82%
Renewable energy production	77%	77%	77%	78%	79%	82%	72%	68%	81%	80%	74%
Tourism	75%	78%	72%	71%	72%	79%	74%	81%	81%	71%	73%
Light industry	74%	79%	69%	69%	75%	77%	79%	80%	64%	76%	77%
Waste & recycling	71%	69%	74%	78%	68%	66%	63%	72%	74%	73%	70%
Transport and freight	69%	69%	70%	73%	68%	64%	64%	70%	67%	70%	69%
Viticulture (or wine making)	69%	71%	66%	70%	63%	67%	71%	70%	64%	69%	70%
Arts and recreation	61%	57%	66%	63%	65%	55%	62%	60%	63%	63%	60%
Thoroughbred Industry	61%	63%	59%	60%	54%	53%	71%	74%▲	57%	53%	66%
Other	3%	4%	1%	1%	5%	1%	5%	2%	5%	1%	2%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Q11.   *Beyond mining, which of the following sectors of our local economy do you think should be our focus?*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)   57

Support For Increased Rates For Increased Services

	T3B%	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Less than 10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Facilities i.e., playgrounds and sports fields	59%	59%	60%	67%	54%	52%	48%	66%	52%	70%	58%
Infrastructure i.e., roads and bridges	54%	52%	57%	58%	50%	58%	43%▼	55%	56%	57%	53%
Maintenance Services i.e., mowing	54%	53%	55%	58%	47%	58%	44%	57%	54%	54%	54%
User Services i.e., library services	51%	48%	54%	54%	45%	49%	46%	55%	52%	49%	51%
Base	402	205	197	152	68	73	54	55	83	86	233

Base: N = 396-402

Q12.   *Thinking of the level of services, facilities and infrastructure in your local area, how supportive would you be to pay more via rates and charges to support improved:*

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)   58

Importance Compared to the Micromex Benchmark

Service/Facility	Muswellbrook Shire Council T2 box importance score	Micromex LGA Benchmark – Regional T2 box importance score	Variance
Dog control	85%	71%	14%▲
Cleanliness of streets	90%	77%	14%▲
Local festivals and events	83%	70%	12%▲
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	91%	80%	10%▲
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	94%	84%	10%▲
Parking facilities	91%	82%	9%
Stormwater drainage	90%	81%	9%
Sewage collection and treatment	89%	80%	8%
Services for the elderly	89%	82%	8%
Water supply	95%	88%	7%
Economic development and attracting new investment	87%	80%	7%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	90%	83%	7%
The way Council communicates with the local community	91%	84%	7%
Libraries	77%	70%	7%
Sporting facilities	82%	76%	6%
Council pools	77%	71%	6%
Youth facilities and activities	80%	74%	6%
Public lighting in town centres	86%	82%	4%
Waste and recycling	95%	91%	4%
Development applications (DA's)	73%	72%	1%
Community halls	68%	68%	0%
Footpaths and shared paths	81%	81%	0%
Council website	65%	67%	-2%
Weed control	76%	78%	-3%
Bridges	80%	83%	-4%
Sealed roads	89%	93%	-4%
Council social media	62%	67%	-4%
Public toilets	78%	82%	-4%
Art Gallery	44%	59%	-16%▼
Unsealed roads	44%	78%	-33%▼

Note: Benchmark differences are based on assumed variants of +/- 10%, with variants beyond +/- 10% more likely to be significant
▲/▼ = positive/negative difference equal to/greater than 10% from Benchmark.

Note: T2 = important/very important

Satisfaction Compared to the Micromex Benchmark

Service/Facility	Muswellbrook Shire Council T3 box satisfaction score	Micromex LGA Benchmark – Regional T3 box satisfaction score	Variance
Art Gallery	96%	91%	6%
Unsealed roads	56%	52%	4%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	92%	90%	2%
Youth facilities and activities	75%	74%	2%
Bridges	85%	84%	1%
Libraries	95%	94%	1%
Sewage collection and treatment	91%	90%	1%
Public lighting in town centres	86%	86%	0%
Footpaths and shared paths	68%	68%	0%
Council pools	84%	85%	-1%
Water supply	83%	85%	-1%
Local festivals and events	85%	87%	-2%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	82%	84%	-2%
Sealed roads	55%	58%	-2%
The way Council communicates with the local community	65%	69%	-4%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	83%	86%	-4%
Parking facilities	66%	70%	-4%
Sporting facilities	86%	90%	-4%
Stormwater drainage	72%	77%	-5%
Weed control	68%	74%	-7%
Cleanliness of streets	80%	87%	-7%
Development applications (DA's)	60%	68%	-8%
Council social media	74%	84%	-10% ▼
Community halls	78%	88%	-10% ▼
Council website	72%	84%	-11% ▼
Economic development and attracting new investment	62%	74%	-12% ▼
Services for the elderly	72%	85%	-13% ▼
Dog control	67%	81%	-13% ▼
Public toilets	58%	72%	-14% ▼
Waste and recycling	74%	88%	-14% ▼

Note: Benchmark differences are based on assumed variants of +/- 10%, with variants beyond +/- 10% more likely to be significant
▲/▼ = positive/negative difference equal to/greater than 10% from Benchmark.

Performance Gap Analysis

When analysing performance gap data, it is important to consider both stated satisfaction and the absolute size of the performance gap.

Performance Gap Ranking

Service/Facility	Importance T2 Box	Satisfaction T3 Box	Performance Gap (Importance – Satisfaction)
Sealed roads	89%	58%	31%
The way Council communicates with the local community	91%	65%	26%
Economic development and attracting new investment	87%	63%	24%
Parking facilities	91%	67%	24%
Waste and recycling	95%	74%	21%
Public toilets	78%	60%	18%
Stormwater drainage	90%	73%	17%
Dog control	85%	68%	17%
Services for the elderly	89%	73%	16%
Water supply	95%	82%	13%
Cleanliness of streets	90%	79%	11%
Development applications (DA's)	73%	62%	11%
Footpaths and shared paths	81%	70%	10%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	91%	81%	10%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	90%	82%	8%
Weed control	76%	70%	5%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	94%	90%	4%
Youth facilities and activities	80%	76%	4%
Local festivals and events	83%	82%	0%
Sporting facilities	82%	83%	0%
Public lighting in town centres	86%	87%	-1%
Sewage collection and treatment	89%	90%	-1%
Council website	65%	69%	-4%
Bridges	80%	84%	-4%
Council pools	77%	83%	-6%
Council social media	62%	70%	-7%
Community halls	68%	79%	-12%
Unsealed roads	44%	60%	-16%
Libraries	77%	94%	-16%
Art Gallery	44%	81%	-37%

Note: T2 = important/very important
T3 = at least somewhat satisfied

Regression Analysis – Influence on Overall Satisfaction

The chart to the right summarises the influence of the 30 facilities/ services on overall satisfaction with Council's performance, based on the Regression analysis.

Facility / Service	Influence
The way Council communicates with the local community	16.3%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	7.5%
Economic development and attracting new investment	7.0%
Council social media	6.2%
Local festivals and events	6.0%
Development applications (DA's)	5.9%
Parking facilities	4.6%
Dog control	4.5%
Sealed roads	4.5%
Services for the elderly	3.3%
Council website	3.0%
Weed control	2.8%
Waste and recycling	2.6%
Public lighting in town centres	2.5%
Stormwater drainage	2.4%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	2.2%
Community halls	2.0%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	1.8%
Youth facilities and activities	1.8%
Public toilets	1.7%
Cleanliness of streets	1.7%
Unsealed roads	1.5%
Sporting facilities	1.5%
Council pools	1.4%
Bridges	1.3%
Footpaths and shared paths	1.1%
Water supply	1.1%
Art Gallery	0.8%
Sewage collection and treatment	0.7%
Libraries	0.5%

The chart to the right summarises the influence of the 30 facilities/ services on overall satisfaction with Council's performance AND the 3 additional communication measures, based on the Regression analysis.

Facility/Service	Influence
Council's efforts to involve residents	9.8%
Council's efforts to inform residents	9.8%
The way Council communicates with the local community	9.0%
Council's efforts to respond to residents	5.9%
Economic development and attracting new investment	5.7%
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	5.5%
Council social media	4.8%
Local festivals and events	4.5%
Parking facilities	4.2%
Development applications (DA's)	3.8%
Dog control	3.7%
Sealed roads	3.0%
Services for the elderly	2.8%
Council website	2.2%
Public lighting in town centres	2.0%
Waste and recycling	2.0%
Weed control	1.9%
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1.8%
Stormwater drainage	1.7%
Youth facilities and activities	1.6%
Council pools	1.6%
Community halls	1.6%
Unsealed roads	1.3%
Sporting facilities	1.3%
Public toilets	1.2%
Cleanliness of streets	1.2%
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	1.2%
Bridges	1.2%
Water supply	1.0%
Footpaths and shared paths	0.9%
Art Gallery	0.7%
Sewage collection and treatment	0.7%
Libraries	0.5%

Council's Used to Create the Micromex Regional Benchmark

The Regional Benchmark was composed from the Council areas listed below:		
Albury City Council	Great Lakes Council	Narrandera Shire Council
Ballina Shire Council	Hawkesbury City Council	Parkes Shire Council
Bathurst Regional Council	Kempsey Shire Council	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Bland Shire Council	Lachlan Shire Council	Richmond Valley Council
Blue Mountains City Council	Lake Macquarie City Council	Singleton Shire Council
Byron Shire Council	Leeton Shire Council	Tamworth Regional Council
Cabonne Shire Council	Lismore City Council	Tenterfield Shire Council
Central Coast Council	Lithgow City Council	Tweed Shire Council
Cessnock City Council	Liverpool Plains Shire Council	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Coffs Harbour City Council	Maitland City Council	Wagga Wagga City Council
Devonport City Council	MidCoast Council	Walgett Shire Council
Dungog Shire Council	Mid-Western Regional Council	Weddin Shire Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council	Moree Plains Shire Council	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Forbes Shire Council	Murray River Council	Wollondilly Shire Council
Glen Innes Severn Shire Council	Murrumbidgee Shire Council	Yass Valley Council
Gosford (Central Coast Council)	Narrabri Shire Council	

Appendix 2:

Questionnaire

Appendix 2

Hi my name is ………….. and I'm calling from Micromex Research, on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council. We are seeking community views on a range of local issues, Council services and future priorities for the Shire. This survey takes less than 15 minutes, and all answers are confidential. Would you be willing to assist by completing a short survey?

S1. **And are you a Councillor or permanent employee of Muswellbrook Shire Council?**

- O Yes **(Terminate)**
- O No

S2. **May I have your postcode?**

- O 2328 (Denman etc.)
- O 2333 (Muswellbrook, Sandy Hollow etc.)
- O Other **(Terminate)**

S3. **Please stop me when I read out your age group.** *Prompt*

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

S4. **Can you tell me which, if any of the following, apply to you? Please answer yes or no as I read each one.** *Prompt* **(MR)**

- O I work in the Muswellbrook Shire
- O I study in the Muswellbrook Shire
- O I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook Shire

PART A – Living in Muswellbrook Shire

Q1. **Overall, how would you rate the quality of life you have living in Muswellbrook Shire?** *Prompt*

- O Excellent
- O Very good
- O Good
- O Fair
- O Poor
- O Very poor

Q2. **On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?** *Prompt*

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Our local Council understands the Community's needs and expectations	O	O	O	O	O
Council delivers good value for our rates dollar	O	O	O	O	O
I feel that Council provides opportunities for residents to have a say about the Shire's future	O	O	O	O	O
It is easy to access the Council services I need	O	O	O	O	O
Generally speaking, the Shire's local infrastructure meets my needs	O	O	O	O	O
Traffic generally flows well within the main streets of Muswellbrook	O	O	O	O	O
Local roads are in good condition	O	O	O	O	O
If the shire had better public transport, I'd be more likely to use it	O	O	O	O	O
Local rivers and creeks are healthy	O	O	O	O	O
Our parks and reserves are clean, attractive and welcoming	O	O	O	O	O
I feel safe in my home at night	O	O	O	O	O
I feel safe walking in my local streets at night	O	O	O	O	O
There are good employment prospects for locals within the area	O	O	O	O	O
I feel part of my community	O	O	O	O	O
I feel proud of where I live	O	O	O	O	O

Community Priorities and Council Services

Q3. In this section I will read out different Council services or facilities. For each one could you please rate your opinion of the importance of the service/facility to you, and your level of satisfaction with Council's performance/delivery of that service during the last 12 months. The scale is from 1 to 5, where 1 is low importance and low satisfaction and 5 is high importance and high satisfaction. *Prompt (Importance & satisfaction asked for all)*

Parks, Gardens and Infrastructure

	Importance					Satisfaction				
	Low				High	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sealed roads	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unsealed roads	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bridges	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Footpaths and shared paths	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cleanliness of streets	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Public toilets	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Weed control	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Community halls	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sporting facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Parking facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Public lighting in town centres	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Stormwater drainage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Waste and recycling	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Water supply	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sewage collection and treatment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Community and Economy

	Importance					Satisfaction				
	Low				High	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Council pools	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Libraries	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Youth facilities and activities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Services for the elderly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economic development and attracting new investment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Council website	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Council social media	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Art Gallery	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local festivals and events	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The way Council communicates with the local community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Health and Environment

	Importance					Satisfaction				
	Low				High	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Dog control	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development applications (DA's)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Food safety in local restaurants, cafes and take-aways	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Protection of the natural environment and wildlife	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4. Please rate your satisfaction with Council's overall performance on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction.

- ○ 1   Low
- ○ 2
- ○ 3   Moderate
- ○ 4
- ○ 5   High

PART C – Communication & Engagement

Q5. Through which of the following means do you receive information about Council? *Prompt*

- ○ Web/Internet
- ○ Newspapers (Hunter River Times)
- ○ Word of mouth
- ○ Email
- ○ Brochures/flyers
- ○ Council's newsletter
- ○ Social media platforms (Facebook and Linkedin)
- ○ Direct mail
- ○ Council facilities (i.e Libraries & community centres)
- ○ Council meetings
- ○ Council breakfasts
- ○ The mayors listening post
- ○ Community organisations
- ○ None of these (Do not prompt)
- ○ Other (Please specify)..

Q6. Can you please rate the following criteria regarding Council's efforts to communicate with residents? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, and 5 is very satisfied. *Prompt*

	Low satisfied				High satisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
Council's efforts to inform residents	○	○	○	○	○
Council's efforts to involve residents	○	○	○	○	○
Council's efforts to respond to residents	○	○	○	○	○

Customer Contact

Q7a. Have you contacted Council within the past 12 months, for a reason other than to make a payment?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No   **(Go to Q8)**
- ○ Don't know/unsure   **(Go to Q8)**

Q7b. Thinking about your most recent enquiry, what was that contact regarding? DO NOT PROMPT

- ○ Garbage/Waste management/Recycling/Tips
- ○ Development application (DA)
- ○ Building inspection inquiries
- ○ Rates inquiry (including pensioner rebates and change of address)
- ○ Water billing
- ○ Water, sewage defects
- ○ Septic tanks
- ○ Drainage problem
- ○ Community services (availability of facilities, grants for projects, , aged and disabled services etc.)
- ○ Ranger matters - barking dogs, livestock, etc.
- ○ Vegetation and trees - e.g., requesting council to clear vegetation or mow grass
- ○ Other parks and gardens
- ○ Road and footpath improvements
- ○ Library
- ○ Cultural facilities & community events
- ○ Cultural or sporting events
- ○ Traffic management/parking
- ○ Road or bridge closures
- ○ Fees and charges generally
- ○ Cemeteries
- ○ Pet registrations
- ○ Website content and access
- ○ Can't recall
- ○ Other (please specify)..

Q7c. Regarding your issue, how did you first make contact with Council? (SR)

- ○ Telephone
- ○ Face-to-face
- ○ Letter
- ○ Email
- ○ Website
- ○ Social media (FB, Instagram etc)
- ○ Don't know/unsure

Q7d. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low satisfaction and 5 is high satisfaction how satisfied were you with the way the local Council handled your latest enquiry?

- ○ 1   Low
- ○ 2
- ○ 3   Moderate
- ○ 4
- ○ 5   High

Future Planning

Q8. What do you think is the MAJOR OPPORTUNITY for the future prosperity of the Shire? DO NOT PROMPT (SR)

- ○ Coal mining
- ○ Renewable energy
- ○ New energy sources (hydrogen, pumped hydro, biofuels, batteries etc.)
- ○ Tourism
- ○ Agriculture/agribusiness (including food processing)
- ○ Education
- ○ Healthcare
- ○ Retail/small business
- ○ Manufacturing (excluding food processing)
- ○ Other (please specify)...

Q9. What do you think is the MAJOR CHALLENGE for the future of the Muswellbrook Shire going forward? DO NOT PROMPT

- ○ Job security/unemployment
- ○ Future of the coal industry/coal fired power generation
- ○ Air quality/pollution'
- ○ Impact of mining
- ○ Housing affordability
- ○ Housing availability
- ○ Health services
- ○ Economic diversification'
- ○ Young people emigrating to big cities
- ○ Don't know/unsure
- ○ Other (please specify)..

Q10. Some people think the Muswellbrook Shire should continue to focus on coal mining for its future prosperity, while others think it should be trying to diversify into other industries. Which category do you fall into?

- ○ Focus on coal mining
- ○ Try to diversify into other industries
- ○ Unsure

Q11. Beyond mining, which of the following sectors of our local economy do you think should be our focus? *Prompt - Randomise*

- ○ Retail
- ○ Light industry
- ○ Agriculture
- ○ Services i.e. nursing, education and social assistance
- ○ Manufacturing
- ○ Transport and freight
- ○ Tourism
- ○ Arts and Recreation
- ○ Thoroughbred Industry
- ○ Viticulture (or wine making)
- ○ Renewable energy production
- ○ Waste & Recycling
- ○ Other (please specify)...

Q12. Thinking of the level of services, facilities and infrastructure in your local area, how supportive would you be to pay more via rates and charges to support improved: *Prompt* RANDOMISE

	Not at all supportive 1	2	3	4	Very supportive 5
Maintenance Services i.e., mowing	O	O	O	O	O
User Services i.e., library services	O	O	O	O	O
Facilities i.e., playgrounds and sports fields	O	O	O	O	O
Infrastructure i.e., roads and bridges	O	O	O	O	O

Q13a. Thinking generally about infrastructure, such as roads, footpaths, and drainage. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you prefer to see Council focus more on providing new assets and 5 means you would prefer for Council to focus more on maintaining current assets, how would you rate your position on this area?

- O 1 – Focus more on providing new assets
- O 2
- O 3
- O 4
- O 5 – Focus more on maintaining current assets

Q13b. Thinking generally about facilities, such as recreation facilities. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you prefer to see Council focus more on providing the community fewer centralised higher quality facilities and 5 means you would prefer for Council to focus on providing the community a greater number of more basic facilities, how would you rate your position on this area?

- O 1 – Focus more on providing the fewer centralised higher quality facilities
- O 2
- O 3
- O 4
- O 5 – Focus on providing a greater number of more basic facilities

Demographics

Thanks, we're very close to the end of the survey. I just have a couple more questions to ask you.

D1. Can you just tell me if you live in an urban or rural area?

- O Rural area
- O Urban area

D2. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?

- O Yes
- O No

D3. How long have you lived in the Muswellbrook Shire? *Prompt*

- O Less than 12 months
- O 1-5 years
- O 6-10 years
- O 11-20 years
- O More than 20 years

D4. And do you identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- O Yes
- O No
- O Prefer not to say

D5. And does anyone living in your home have a disability?

- O Yes
- O No
- O Prefer not to say

D6. Gender:

- O Male
- O Female
- O Non Binary

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used only for research purposes. Just to remind you, I am calling from Micromex Research on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council.

micromex
research

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