

A survey of Muswellbrook Shire residents to measure satisfaction and priorities with regard to Council-managed facilities and services



A random and representative telephone survey of 403 adult residents in the Muswellbrook Shire, conducted by Jetty Research on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council.

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Executive summary

In August 2017, Muswellbrook Shire Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a representative and statistically valid telephone survey of 400+ adult residents living within the local government area (LGA) to assess satisfaction with, and priorities towards different Council-managed facilities and services and Council customer service. The survey was also designed to understand community priorities on a range of potential new Council infrastructure projects.

The questionnaire was designed as a baseline measurement tool, from which future repeats of the study can understand movements in satisfaction, and identify the impact of changes in Council service levels, strategies and focus.

Polling was conducted from August 28th to September 4th 2017, as a random telephone survey of 403 adult residents living throughout the LGA. No formal quotas were applied, although we did attempt to ensure a robust mix of ages, genders and sub-regions.

Based on the number of households within the Muswellbrook Shire, a random sample of 403 adult residents implies a margin for error of +/- 4.8% at the 95% confidence level. This essentially means that if we conducted a similar poll 20 times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population – in this case “all Muswellbrook Shire adult residents excluding council employees and councillors” - to within a +/- 4.8% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.

For more information on survey methodology, sampling error and sample characteristics, see pages 9-11. For more detailed information on the demographic breakdown of survey respondents, see pages 12-14.

Among the survey’s major findings:

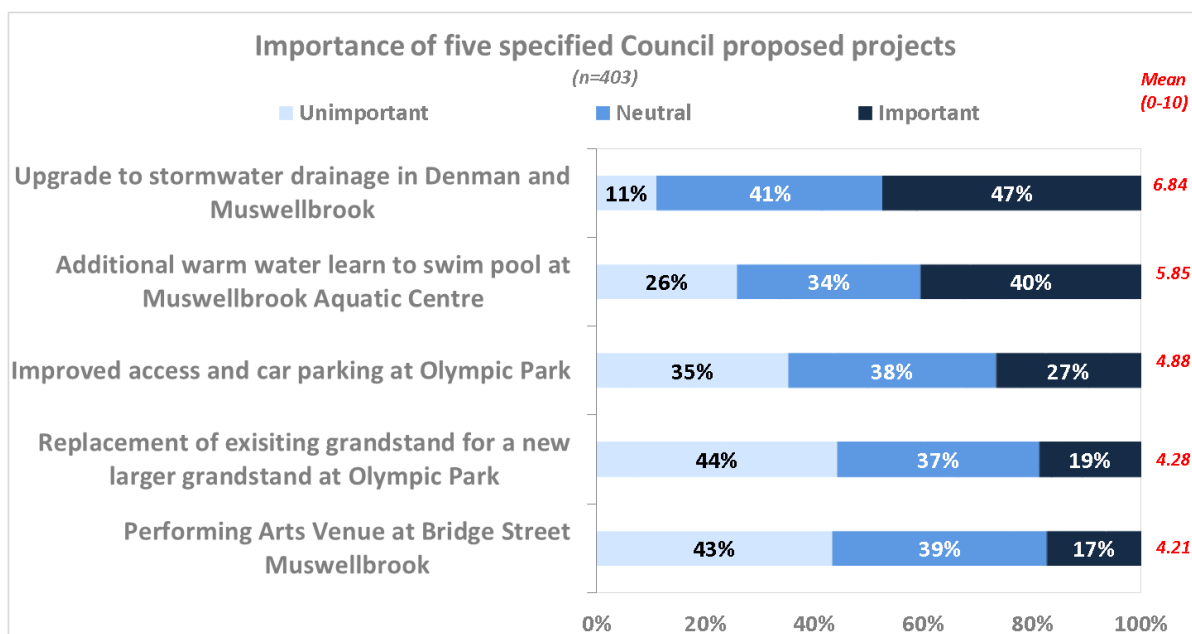
1. Overall satisfaction with Council was strong. In all, 44% of residents were satisfied with Council’s overall performance, against 21% who were dissatisfied (the balance being neutral). Net satisfaction rating (NSR) was hence +23% (i.e. 23% more residents felt satisfied than dissatisfied) and the mean overall satisfaction score was 3.28 out of five. This is an impressive result and an important measure to track over time.
2. The average level of satisfaction across the 22 key services and facilities was 3.22 out of 5. Twelve of the 22 services and facilities scored above the average “neutral” rating of satisfaction. Satisfaction was highest with *libraries* (4.33 out of 5), *sewage collection and treatment* (3.70), *water supply* (3.61), *sporting facilities* (3.55), *Council pools* (3.54), *waste and recycling* (3.53), *cleanliness of streets* (3.52) and *parks, reserves and playgrounds* (3.51). *Bridges* (3.38), *Council website* (3.28), *services for the elderly* (3.24) and *stormwater drainage* (3.23) also received above-average ratings of satisfaction.
3. Services and facilities receiving below average ratings of satisfaction were *public toilets* (2.48), *unsealed roads* (2.61), *community halls* (2.71), *economic development and attracting new investment* (2.85), *footpaths and cycleways* (2.93), *sealed roads* (2.93), *development applications* (2.94), *dog control* (2.97), *youth facilities and activities* (2.97) and *weed control* (2.97).

4. The services and facilities considered of highest importance to Muswellbrook residents included *water supply* (4.24), *sealed roads* (4.20), *waste and recycling* (4.10), *sewage collection and treatment* (3.90), *cleanliness of streets* (3.89), *footpaths and cycleways* (3.84), and *parks, reserves and playgrounds* (3.75). *Stormwater drainage* (3.71), *economic development and attracting new investment* (3.58) and *bridges* (3.55) were also considered of high importance (all rating above the average 3.47 rating of importance).
5. When placed into a matrix of importance vs. satisfaction, the following picture emerged:

Higher Importance, Lower Satisfaction	Higher Importance, Higher Satisfaction
Public toilets Dog control Economic development and attracting new investment Footpaths and cycleways Sealed roads	Services for the elderly Libraries Stormwater drainage Bridges Parks, reserves and playgrounds Cleanliness of streets Waste and recycling Sporting facilities Water supply Sewage collection and treatment
Lower Importance, Lower Satisfaction	Lower Importance, Higher Satisfaction
Development applications (DA's) Unsealed roads Community halls Weed control Youth facilities and activities	Council website Council pools

6. The services and facilities that fall into the “higher importance, lower satisfaction” quadrant should take priority at Council in terms of resource allocation. Residents place a high level of importance on *public toilets, dog control, economic development and attracting new investment, footpaths and cycleways* and *sealed roads*. However, their expectations regarding these services are currently not being met.
7. The driver analysis indicates that the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction with Muswellbrook Shire Council were: *economic development and attracting new investment, parks, reserves and playgrounds, cleanliness of streets, weed control, sealed roads, public toilets, services for the elderly* and *sporting facilities*. Focus on these service elements should have a strong impact on overall satisfaction ratings.
8. Around half of residents (48%) indicated that they had contacted Muswellbrook Shire Council in the past twelve months for reasons other than paying rates. Of those who had contacted Council, 74% had done so more than once. The most frequently mentioned reason for contacting Muswellbrook Shire Council was a ranger matter (19%), followed by a garbage / waste management / recycling / tips issue (12%), development application (11%) or road a footpath improvements issue (9%).

9. Over four in five (83%) indicated that they first contacted Council via telephone, with only 10% coming face-to-face via the Council customer centre. Some 5% contacted Council via email and just 2% by letter or fax. This suggests that even in an era of online communication and social media, phone and face-to-face remain critical forms of contact.
10. Almost half (48%) indicated that their most recent enquiry was handled well (rating of 4 or 5) and 35% poorly (rating of 1 or 2). This suggests that more residents are satisfied with their interaction with Council than those who feel disappointed by their contact experience.
11. Online remains the preference for transactional dealings with Council (such as making a payment) while the traditional methods of face-to-face and phone are preferred for the more typical interactions.
12. Of the proposed projects, upgrades to stormwater drainage was considered the most important project. The additional swimming pool ranked second in importance. Both of these projects had positive net importance score with more considering it important than unimportant. The remaining three projects would be likely to have higher opposition than support: see graph, below.



13. "Other" proposed Council projects and initiatives included (among others) rebuilding the Denman Town Hall, facilities/activities for youth, an aged care facility, a variety of recreational facilities, a City by-pass, better roads, upgrading the show grounds, better footpaths, more parking in town, better street lighting, improved public toilets, improved swimming pool facilities, better public transport, economic revitalisation, improved safety in town and a new or improved hospital.

Introduction

Background and Objectives

In August 2017, Muswellbrook Shire Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a representative and statistically valid telephone survey of 400+ adult residents living within the local government area (LGA) to assess satisfaction with, and priorities towards different Council-managed facilities and services and Council customer service. The survey was also designed to measure satisfaction with direct contact experience with Council, and to assist with prioritisation of a range of potential new Council projects.

The questionnaire was designed as a baseline measurement tool from which future repeats of the study will seek to understand: (a) movements in satisfaction over time; and (b) the impact of changes in Council service levels, strategies and focus.

As per the agreed project brief, the survey addressed the following objectives:

1. Measure perceived importance of and satisfaction with Council provided services;
2. Measure satisfaction with direct contact with Council staff;
3. Understand community priorities for a range of proposed infrastructure improvements;
4. See how results vary by factors such as urban/rural, age, gender, postcode etc.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a random fixed line and mobile telephone poll of 403 Muswellbrook Shire residents aged 18+. Respondents were selected at random from a verified random sample residential telephone database of 2980 residential and mobile telephone numbers within the LGA¹. A survey form was constructed collaboratively between Council management and Jetty Research based on satisfying the above objectives.

Polling was conducted between August 28th and September 4th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI² call centre. A team of 12 researchers called Muswellbrook Shire 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 five occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

¹ Postcodes sourced (from NSW DLG website) were 2328 and 2333. As with any postcode-based source, some records may lie outside LGA boundaries. Random valid numbers were supplied by Samplepages, a respected supplier of random numbers to the market and social research industry.

² Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

The poll was conducted on a purely random basis, though ensuring an adequate mix of respondents by age and gender and across different sub-regions. Respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 18 or over, had lived within the Muswellbrook Shire for at least 12 months, and were not councillors or permanent Council employees.

Survey time varied from 9-26 minutes, with an average of 14.1 minutes. Response rate (measured as percentage of eligible residents reached who agreed to participate) was good for a survey of this length, at 51%.

Results have been post-weighted by age and gender to match the demographic profile of the Muswellbrook Shire based on the 2016 ABS Census. (See Appendix 2 for details of weighting calculation.)

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. Caution should be taken in analysing some questions due to the small sample size.

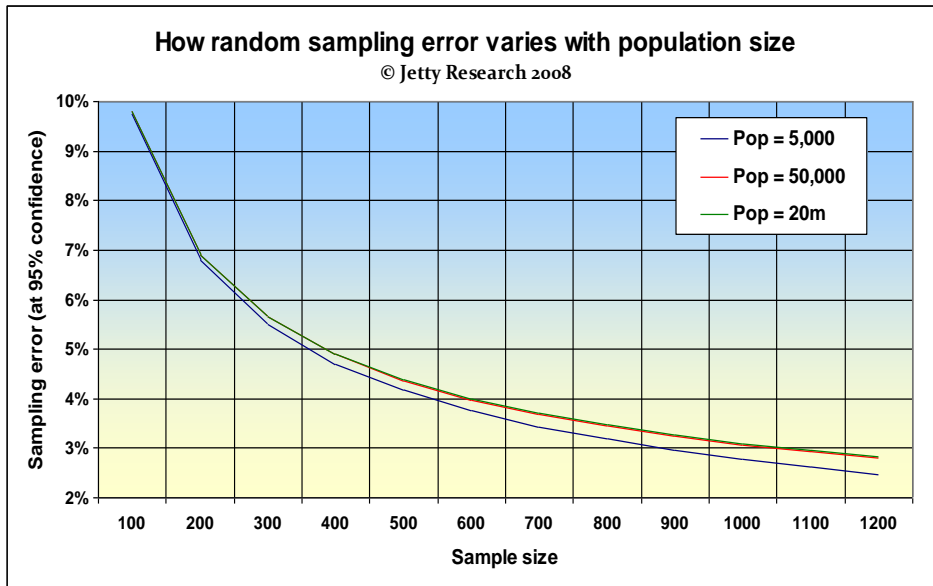
Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores or other analysis of variation (or ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone.

Sampling error

According to the 2016 ABS Census (Usual Resident profile) the total population of the Muswellbrook LGA was 16,093, of which approximately 11,265 (72%) were aged 18 and over. Based on this latter survey population, a random sample of 403 adult residents implies a margin for error of +/- 4.8% at the 95% confidence level. (This means in effect that if we conducted a similar poll 20 times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population to within a +/- 4.8% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.)

As Graph i shows, margin for error falls as sample size rises. Hence cross-tabulations or sub-groups within the overall sample will typically create much higher margins for error than the overall sample. For example, using the above population sizes, a sample size of 100 exhibits a margin for error of +/- 9.8% (again at the 95% confidence level).

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

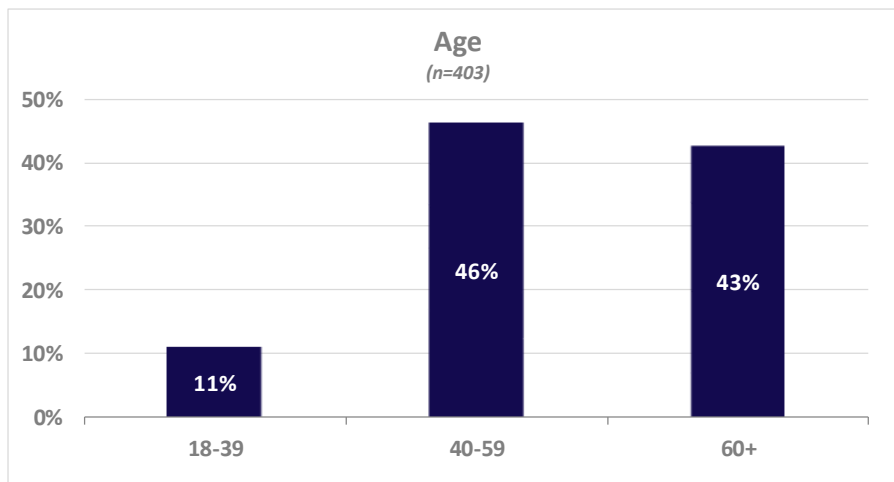


In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include residents unreachable by phone, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.) and/or imperfections in the survey design. However, steps have been taken at each stage of the research process to minimise such errors wherever possible.

Sample characteristics

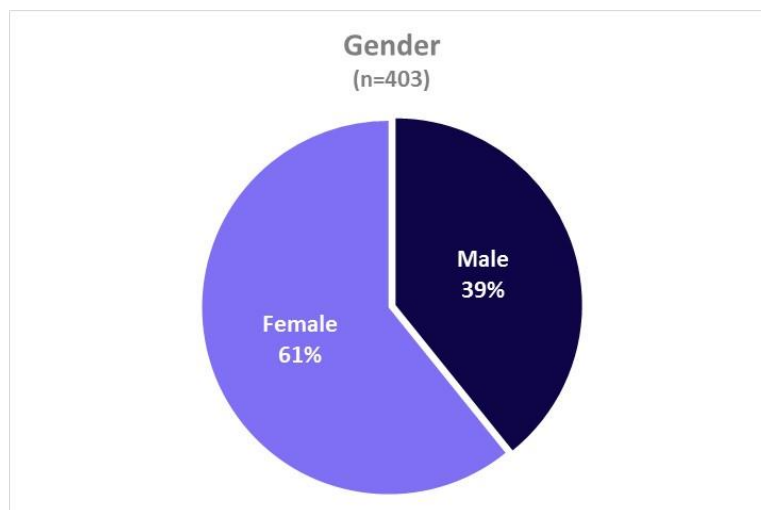
Respondents to this random telephone survey exhibited the following characteristics³:

Graph ii: Breakdown of survey sample by age



As is common in random telephone surveys, the sample was skewed towards older residents. However this was corrected via post-weighting of results to match ABS Census Data (2016, Usual Residents) for age and gender.

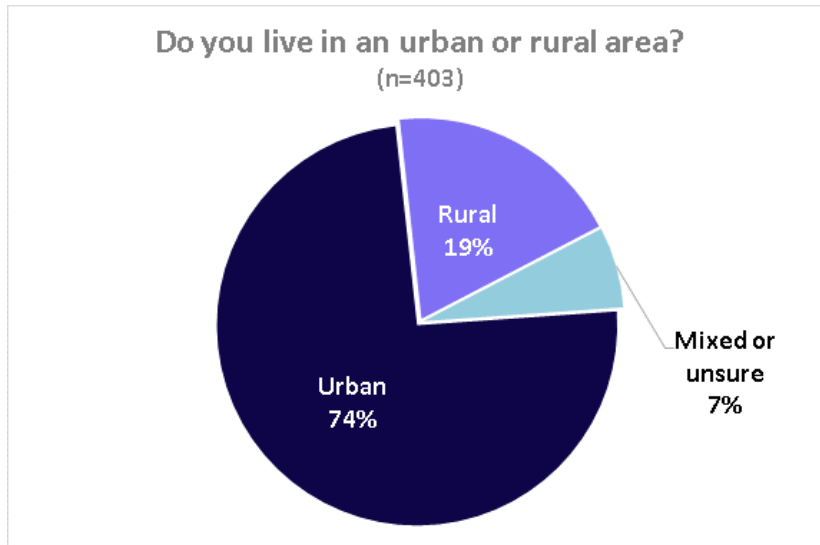
Graph iii: Breakdown of survey sample by gender



Roughly six in ten respondents were female. (Again this skew was corrected through post-weighting.)

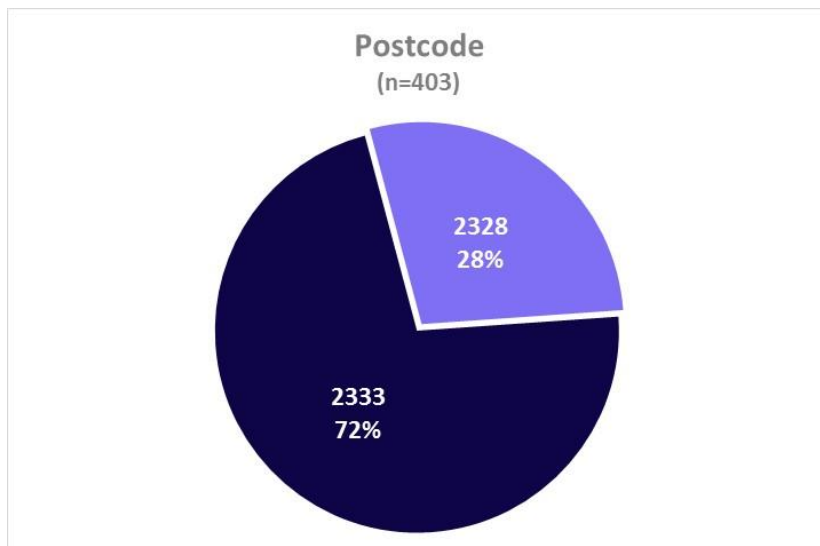
³ Note all demographic characteristics are prior to post-weighting of data

Graph iv: Breakdown of survey sample by type of residence



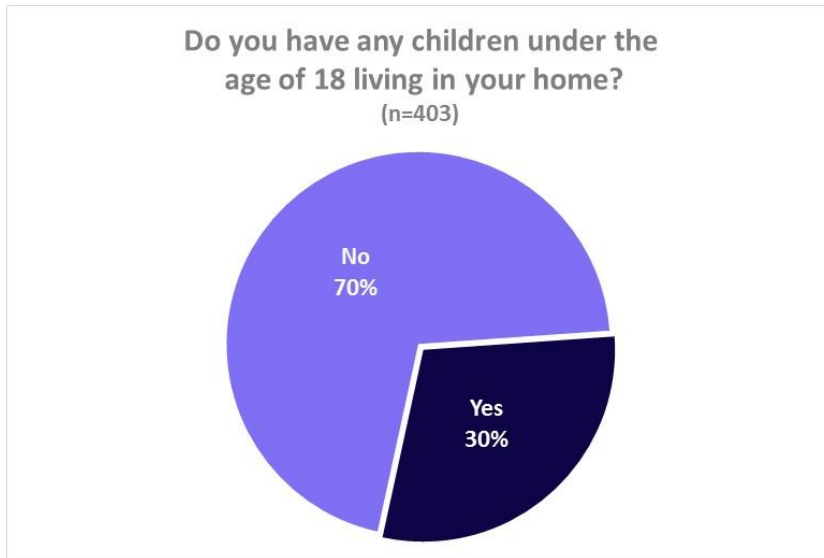
In relation to the urban/rural split, approximately three-quarters (74%) resided in urban areas, 19% rural and 7% mixed or unsure.

Graph v: Breakdown of survey sample by residential postcode



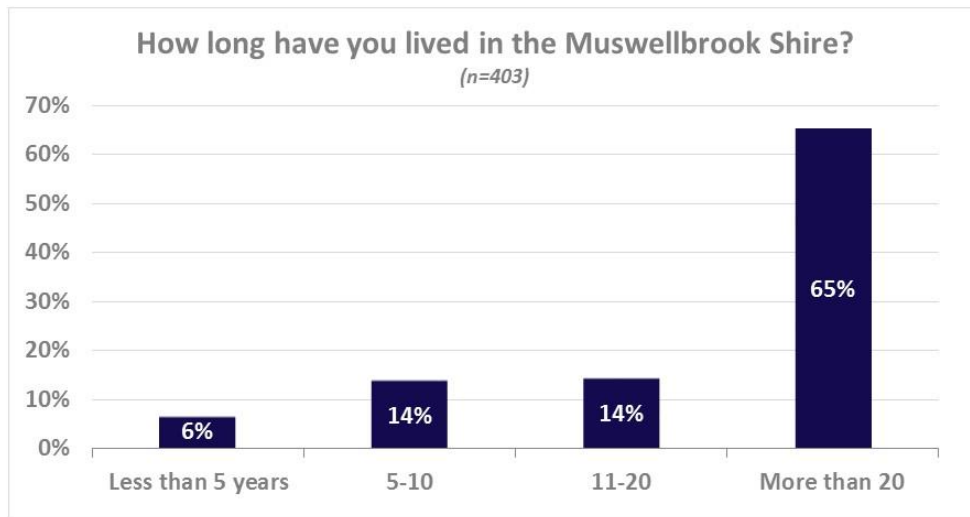
Just under three-quarters of respondents resided in the 2333 post code (incorporating Muswellbrook), with the remainder residing in 2328 (incorporating Denman).

Graph vi: Breakdown of survey sample by children at home



Just under one-third of respondents had children under the age of 18 living at home.

Graph vii: Breakdown of survey sample by length of time in the Muswellbrook Shire

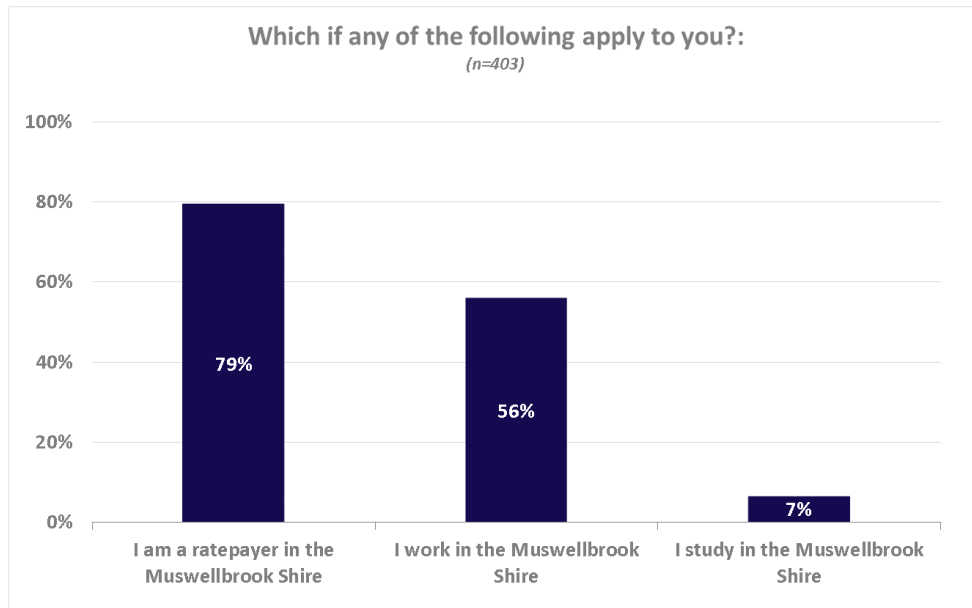


Approximately, two-thirds of respondents had resided in the Muswellbrook Shire for more than 20 years, while 20% had lived in the shire for 10 years or less.

Part 1: Satisfaction with, and importance of key services and facilities

The survey commenced with a question designed to determine the type of activities the respondents undertook in the Muswellbrook Shire:

Graph 1.1: Activities undertaken in the Muswellbrook Shire



Of the residents surveyed, 79% were ratepayers in the Muswellbrook Shire (suggesting that the remainder rented in the area), while 56% worked in the Shire and 7% studied locally.

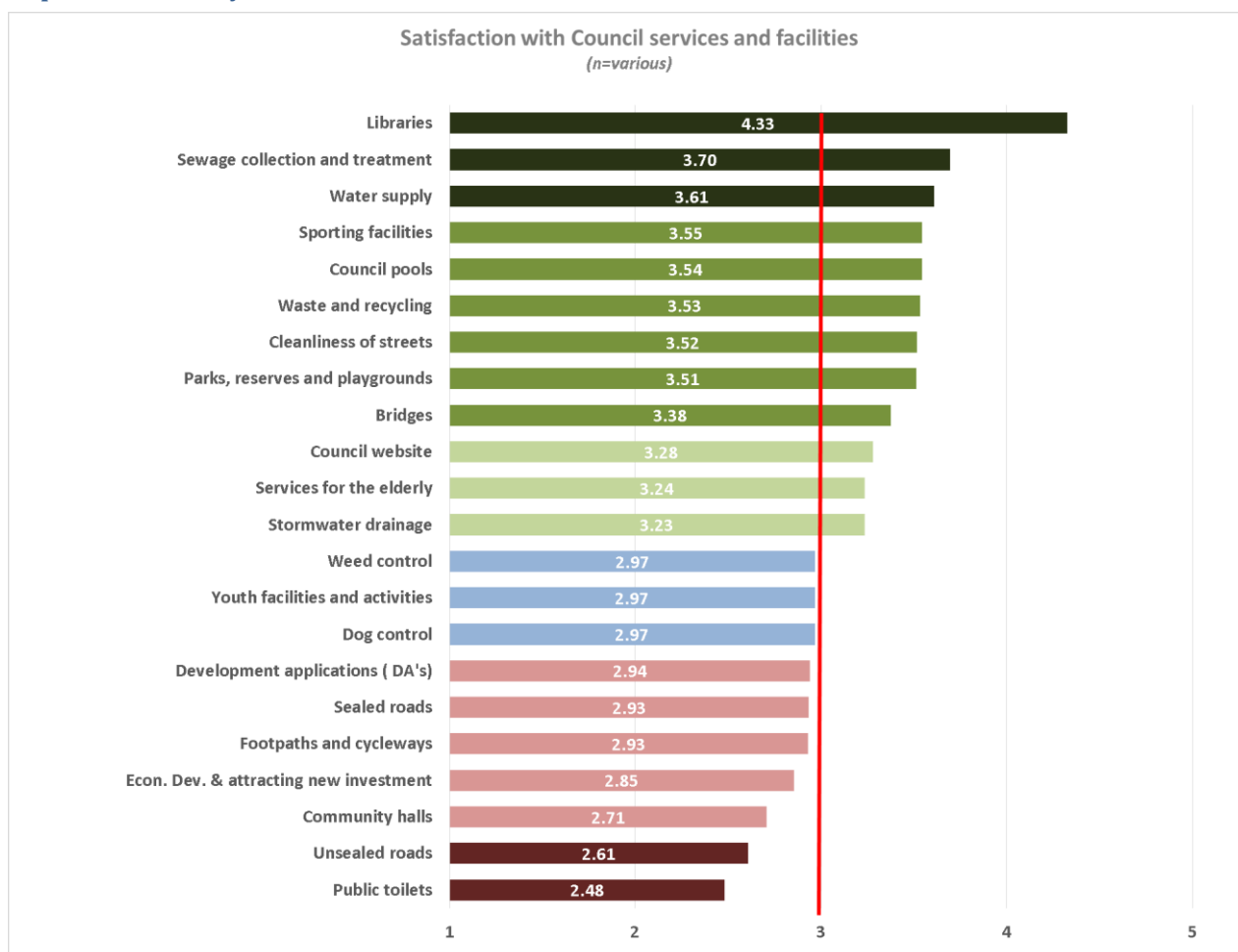
Workers in the shire were more likely to be male (63% vs. 48% female), aged 18-39 years (70% vs. 15% aged 60 years or older) and to have children living at home (70% vs. 44% without children living at home).

Students in the Shire were more likely to be aged 18-39 years (11% vs. 2% of those aged 60 years or older), reside in rural locations (14% vs. 4% in urban locations) and to have children living at home (11% vs. 3% without children living at home).

Ratepayers in the Shire were more likely to be aged 60 years and older (89% vs. 67% aged 18-39 years) and to reside in urban locations (83% vs. 70% residing in rural locations).

The survey continued with a series of scale-based questions designed to understand the satisfaction and importance attributed by residents to 22 Council-managed facilities and services. This was followed by an overall satisfaction rating on the same 1-5 scale (where 1 = very dissatisfied, 3 = neutral and 5 = very satisfied). We have denoted 3.0 as the "Neutral" satisfaction score. Graph 1.2 below outlines all of the satisfaction ratings, ranked from highest to lowest mean score:

Graph 1.2: Summary of mean satisfaction scores for 21 different Council services and facilities



The average level of satisfaction across the 22 key services and facilities was 3.22 out of a possible 5. Twelve of the 22 services and facilities scored above the average “neutral” rating of satisfaction. Satisfaction was highest with *libraries* (4.33 out of 5), *sewage collection and treatment* (3.70), *water supply* (3.61), *sporting facilities* (3.55), *Council pools* (3.54), *waste and recycling* (3.53), *cleanliness of streets* (3.52) and *parks, reserves and playgrounds* (3.51). *Bridges* (3.38), *Council website* (3.28), *services for the elderly* (3.24) and *stormwater drainage* (3.23) also received above-average ratings of satisfaction.

Services and facilities receiving below-average ratings of satisfaction were *public toilets* (2.48), *unsealed roads* (2.61), *community halls* (2.71), *economic development and attracting new investment* (2.85), *footpaths and cycleways* (2.93), *sealed roads* (2.93), *development applications* (2.94), *dog control* (2.97), *youth facilities and activities* (2.97) and *weed control* (2.97).

Table 1.1a shows how satisfaction scores vary across age groups:

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Table 1.1a: Difference in satisfaction scores between age groups

Satisfaction with service / facility	18-39		40-59		60+		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Libraries	4.43	127	4.17	112	4.37	76	4.33	315
Sewage collection and treatment	3.59	131	3.64	113	3.94	79	3.70	323
Water supply	3.44	146	3.60	130	3.93	84	3.61	359
Sporting facilities	3.35	144	3.52	126	3.92	80	3.55	350
Council pools	3.32	131	3.60	108	3.92	61	3.54	300
Waste and recycling	3.60	153	3.26	136	3.82	93	3.53	382
Cleanliness of streets	3.60	159	3.36	144	3.60	98	3.52	401
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.28	149	3.64	137	3.73	85	3.51	371
Bridges	3.24	151	3.38	137	3.61	87	3.38	376
Council website	3.27	106	3.27	84	3.34	36	3.28	226
Services for the elderly	3.39	91	3.07	99	3.27	79	3.24	268
Stormwater drainage	3.31	148	3.13	134	3.27	81	3.23	363
Weed control	3.16	142	2.78	129	2.94	84	2.97	355
Youth facilities and activities	2.81	129	2.97	114	3.29	61	2.97	305
Dog control	2.87	142	2.86	125	3.31	80	2.97	347
Development applications (DA's)	3.13	61	2.76	77	2.99	48	2.94	186
Sealed roads	2.90	156	2.82	144	3.16	97	2.93	397
Footpaths and cycleways	2.91	159	2.86	140	3.09	89	2.93	388
Economic development/attracting new investment	2.75	121	2.81	133	3.08	78	2.85	332
Community halls	2.84	106	2.59	107	2.68	75	2.71	289
Unsealed roads	2.61	118	2.46	114	2.86	64	2.61	296
Public toilets	2.32	133	2.52	112	2.74	71	2.48	316

Overall, those aged 60 years and older were significantly more satisfied than their younger counterparts across a number of core services.

A number of differences were also evident between post codes, urban vs. rural residents and those with and without children living at home and are outlined in tables 1.1b to 1.1d:

Table 1.1b: Difference in satisfaction scores between post codes

Satisfaction with service / facility	2333		2328		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Stormwater drainage	3.32	277	2.95	87	3.23	363
Libraries	4.37	240	4.18	74	4.33	315
Council website	3.27	178	3.33	48	3.28	226

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Table 1.1c: Difference in satisfaction scores between urban vs. rural residents

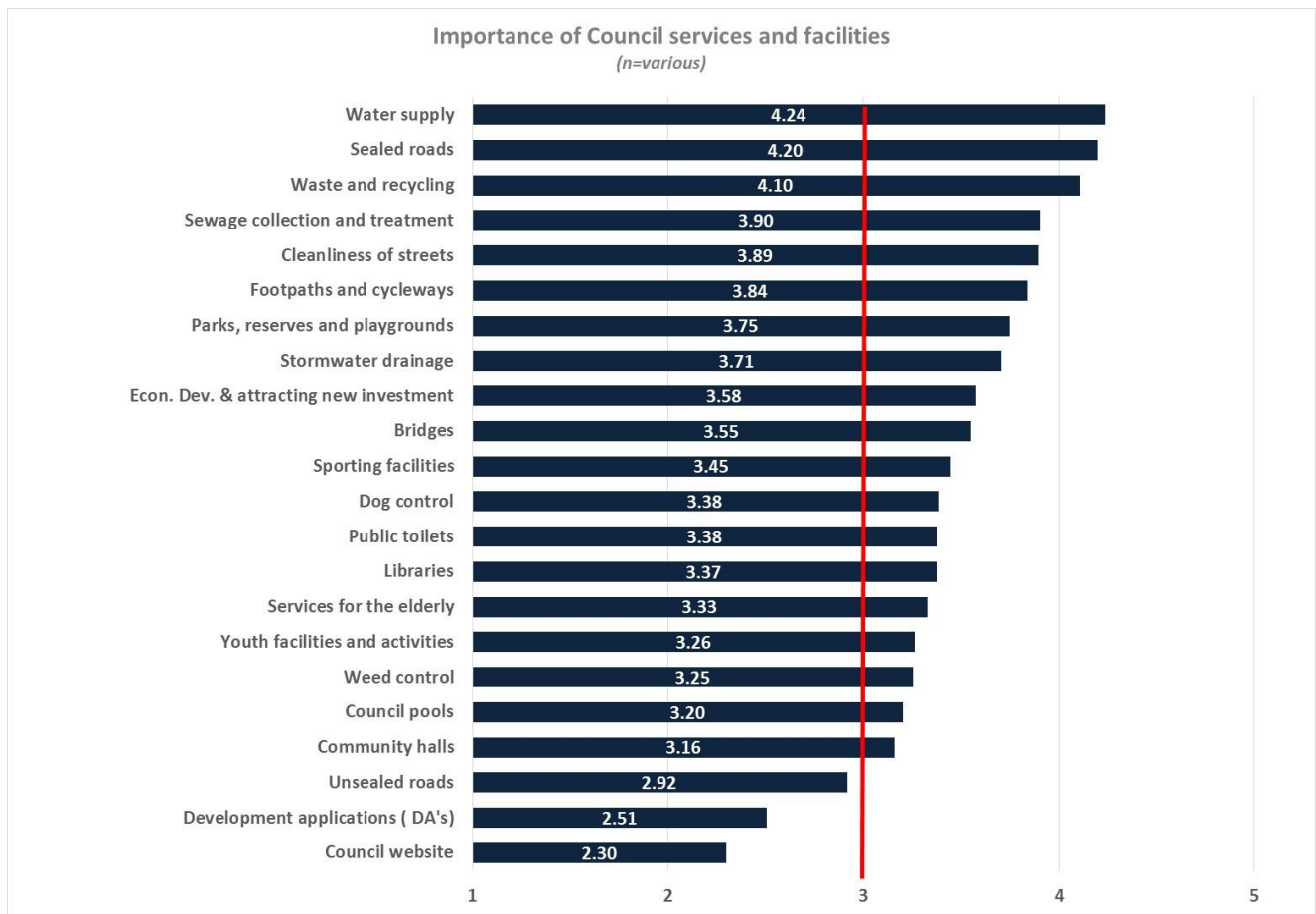
Satisfaction with service / facility	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Unsealed roads	2.79	210	2.17	87	2.61	296
Bridges	3.52	280	2.95	95	3.38	376
Council website	3.17	174	3.65	52	3.28	226

Table 1.1d: Difference in satisfaction scores between those with and without children living at home

Satisfaction with service / facility	Children		No children		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Waste and recycling	3.28	176	3.75	206	3.53	382
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.24	184	3.78	187	3.51	371
Youth facilities and activities	2.82	169	3.15	136	2.97	305

In terms of importance, and again using a 1-5 scale, Graph 1.3 shows how Muswellbrook Shire Council residents rank the relative importance of the same 22 facilities and services:

Graph 1.3: Summary of mean importance scores for 22 different Council services and facilities



What is most notable about this graph is that almost virtually *everything* is considered important: even the lowest-ranked facility, *Council website*, registered a mean importance score of 2.30 (out of a possible 5). This is quite typical, as residents have high expectations of their local Council and expect a substantial delivery of service for their rates dollar. The average importance rating was 3.47 out of 5 (while average satisfaction was 3.22).

The services and facilities considered of highest importance to Muswellbrook residents included *water supply* (4.24), *sealed roads* (4.20), *waste and recycling* (4.10), *sewage collection and treatment* (3.90), *cleanliness of streets* (3.89), *footpaths and cycleways* (3.84), *parks, reserves and playgrounds* (3.75). *Stormwater drainage* (3.71), *economic development and attracting new investment* (3.58) and *bridges* (3.55) were also considered of high importance (all rating above the average 3.47 rating of importance).

Again, there were differences by age, urban vs. rural locations and those with or without children at home and are outlined in tables 1.2a to 1.2c:

Table 1.2a: Difference in importance scores between age groups

Importance of Service / Facility	18-39		40-59		60+		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Unsealed roads	2.75	159	3.16	145	2.83	99	2.92	403
Bridges	3.35	159	3.81	145	3.48	99	3.55	403
Weed control	2.97	159	3.45	145	3.42	99	3.25	403
Council pools	3.13	159	3.43	145	2.99	99	3.20	403
Community halls	2.99	159	3.21	145	3.36	99	3.16	403
Youth facilities and activities	3.29	159	3.48	145	2.91	99	3.26	403
Services for the elderly	2.66	159	3.64	145	3.93	99	3.33	403
new investment	3.27	159	3.97	145	3.49	99	3.58	403
Council website	2.28	159	2.53	145	2.00	99	2.30	403
Development applications (DA's)	2.06	159	2.99	145	2.51	99	2.51	403

Table 1.2b: Difference in importance scores by urban vs. rural

Importance of Service / Facility	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Unsealed roads	2.70	300	3.55	103	2.92	403
Stormwater drainage	3.93	300	3.07	103	3.71	403
Water supply	4.56	300	3.29	103	4.24	403
Sewage collection and treatment	4.21	300	3.00	103	3.90	403

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Table 1.2c: Difference in importance scores by those with children (yes) vs. those without (no)

Importance of Service / Facility	Yes		No		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Footpaths and cycleways	4.10	185	3.62	218	3.84	403
Sewage collection and treatment	4.14	185	3.70	218	3.90	403
Sporting facilities	3.95	185	3.02	218	3.45	403
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	4.11	185	3.45	218	3.75	403
Council pools	3.61	185	2.86	218	3.20	403
Libraries	3.71	185	3.09	218	3.37	403
Youth facilities and activities	3.77	185	2.84	218	3.26	403
Services for the elderly	3.05	185	3.56	218	3.33	403

We can also plot the mean importance and satisfaction scores on a matrix to see how they rank in relative terms. Looking at this firstly in “big picture” terms, Graph 1.4 (below) shows how the 22 services relate to each other on the 1-5 scales of importance and satisfaction.

Those services and facilities included in the top right quadrant denote those classed as “higher satisfaction, and higher importance”. Those in the top left corner are those considered by residents of higher importance, but for which satisfaction mean scores are less than the “neutral” ranking. These are traditionally considered the services and facilities requiring of greatest attention and/or resources by Council.

Graph 1.4: Satisfaction vs. importance matrix



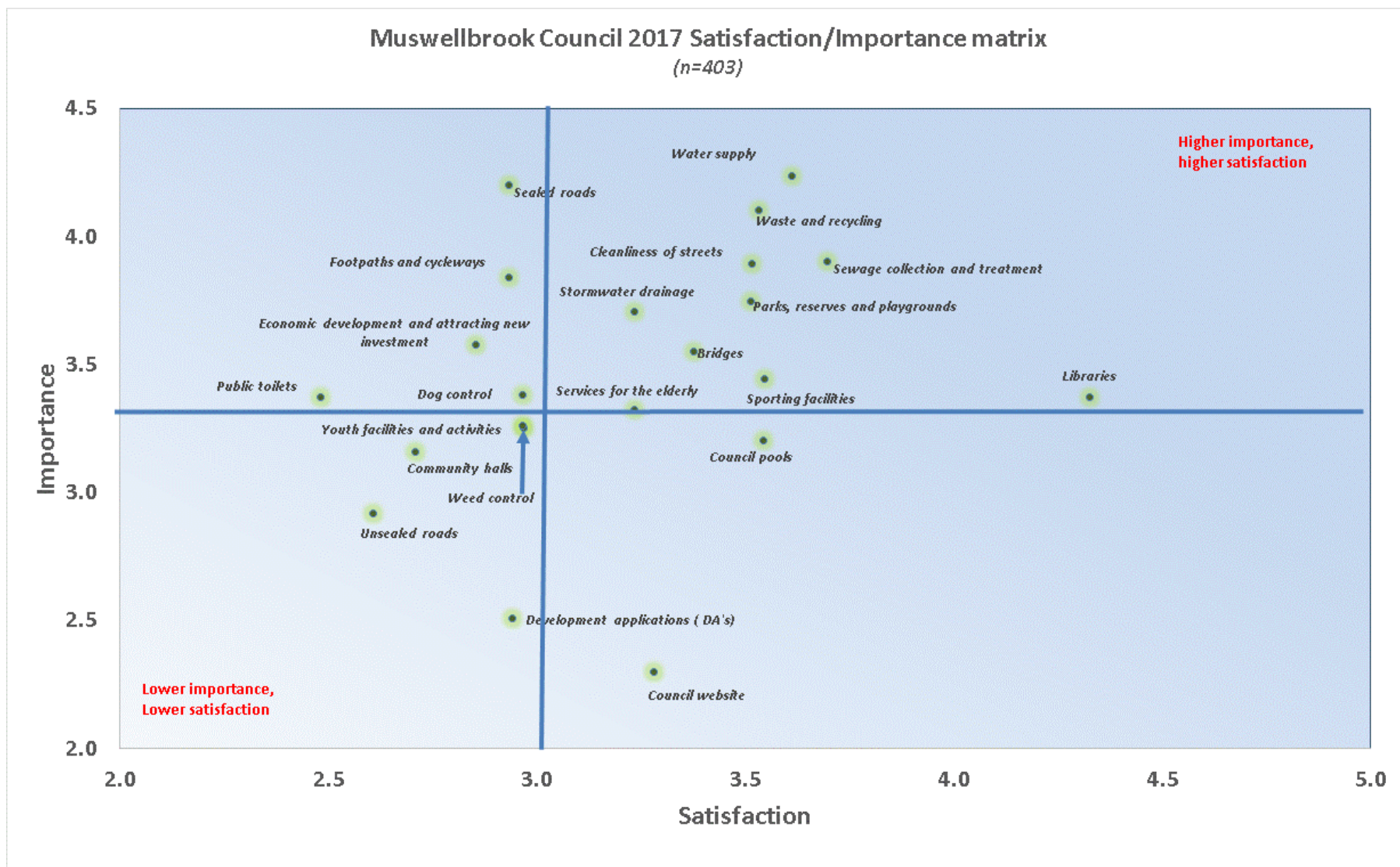
This concentration in the top half of the graphs highlights the notion that to local residents, *everything* is important. Satisfaction mean scores, however, (shown on the x-axis) are far more widely distributed.

(Often when services and facilities are not meeting the expectations of residents, residents will place higher importance on them. Similarly, where services and facilities exceed expectations, residents will place lower importance on them.)

Graph 1.5, over page, outlines the quadrants, neutral scores and the labelled services and facilities.

(Continued over page...)

Graph 1.5: Satisfaction vs. importance matrix, the quadrants



The quadrants are summarised in Table 1.3, below:

Table 1.3: Summary of satisfaction and importance quadrants

Higher Importance, Lower Satisfaction	Higher Importance, Higher Satisfaction
Public toilets Dog control Economic development and attracting new investment Footpaths and cycleways Sealed roads	Services for the elderly Libraries Stormwater drainage Bridges Parks, reserves and playgrounds Cleanliness of streets Waste and recycling Sporting facilities Water supply Sewage collection and treatment
Lower Importance, Lower Satisfaction	Lower Importance, Higher Satisfaction
Development applications (DA's) Unsealed roads Community halls Weed control Youth facilities and activities	Council website Council pools

The services and facilities that fell in the “higher importance, higher satisfaction” and the “lower importance, higher satisfaction” quadrants do not need any immediate attention from Council – these services and facilities meet resident expectations. Council should continue to provide and maintain the current state of *services for the elderly, libraries, stormwater drainage, bridges, parks, reserves and playgrounds, cleanliness of streets, waste and recycling, sporting facilities, water supply, sewage collection and treatment, council website and Council pools.*

The services and facilities falling into the “lower importance, lower satisfaction” are performing below-average in the minds of residents but do not necessarily require immediate attention or investment as they are considered to be of lower importance than other key services and facilities. *Development applications, unsealed roads, community halls, weed control, youth facilities and activities* are areas which should strive to improve in the medium to long term.

The services and facilities that fall into the “higher importance, lower satisfaction” quadrant should take priority at Council in terms of resource allocation. Residents place a high level of importance on *public toilets, dog control, economic development and attracting new investment, footpaths and cycleways and sealed roads.* However, their expectations regarding these services are currently not being met.

One final way to analyse this data is by measuring the gap between perceived importance and satisfaction. In an ideal world, the satisfaction of a service would match or exceed the importance placed on it by residents. This does not generally work in practice, primarily due to the extremely high importance scores for facilities or services. However, it is still useful to see where the “expectation gaps” are highest and lowest. This is shown in Table 1.4 (ranked from lowest to highest gap):

Table 1.4: Gap analysis for 22 selected facilities and services:

Council Service	2017 Satisfaction	2017 Importance	2017 Gap
Council website	3.28	2.30	0.98
Libraries	4.33	3.37	0.95
Development applications (DA's)	2.94	2.51	0.43
Council pools	3.54	3.20	0.34
Sporting facilities	3.55	3.45	0.10
Services for the elderly	3.24	3.33	-0.09
Bridges	3.38	3.55	-0.17
Sewage collection and treatment	3.70	3.90	-0.21
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.51	3.75	-0.24
Weed control	2.97	3.25	-0.29
Youth facilities and activities	2.97	3.26	-0.30
Unsealed roads	2.61	2.92	-0.31
Cleanliness of streets	3.52	3.89	-0.38
Dog control	2.97	3.38	-0.42
Community halls	2.71	3.16	-0.45
Stormwater drainage	3.23	3.71	-0.47
Waste and recycling	3.53	4.10	-0.57
Water supply	3.61	4.24	-0.63
Economic development/attracting new investment	2.85	3.58	-0.72
Public toilets	2.48	3.38	-0.89
Footpaths and cycleways	2.93	3.84	-0.91
Sealed roads	2.93	4.20	-1.27

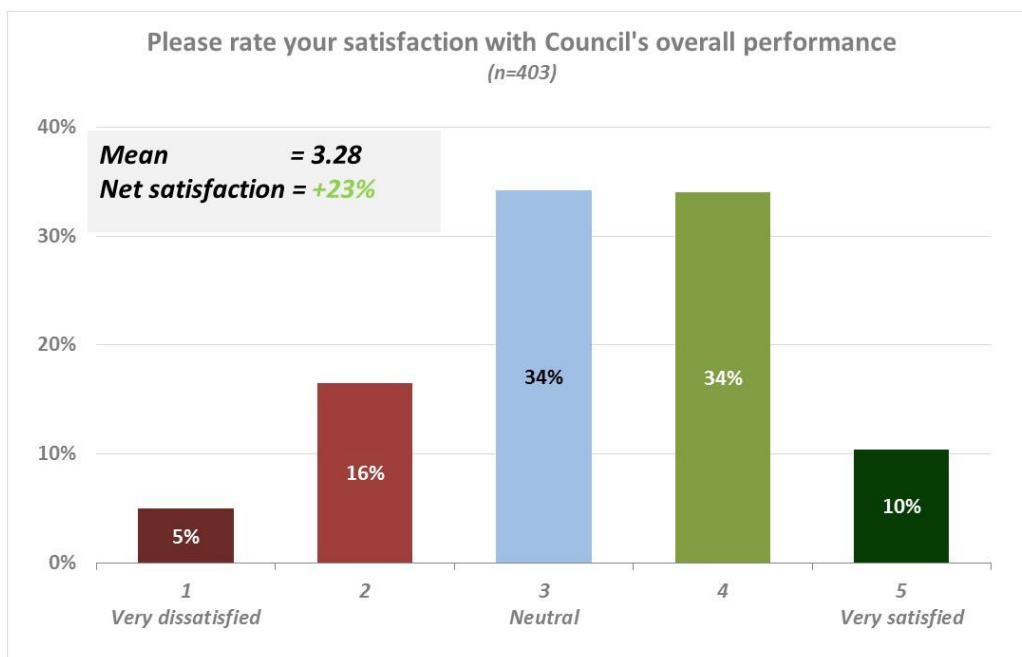
Again, the above analysis confirms that the areas requiring further attention (as they are experiencing the highest gaps in importance and performance) were *sealed roads, footpaths and cycleways, public toilets* and *economic development and attracting new investment*.

This shows that in all but two case (*Council website* and *libraries*), importance outweighed satisfaction.

Part 2: Overall satisfaction with Council

Once they had been asked to score their satisfaction with the individual facilities and services, respondents rated their overall satisfaction with Council’s performance: again using a 1-5 scale where 1 denoted very dissatisfied, 3 was neutral and 5 denoted very satisfied.

Graph 2.1: Please rate your satisfaction with Council’s overall performance



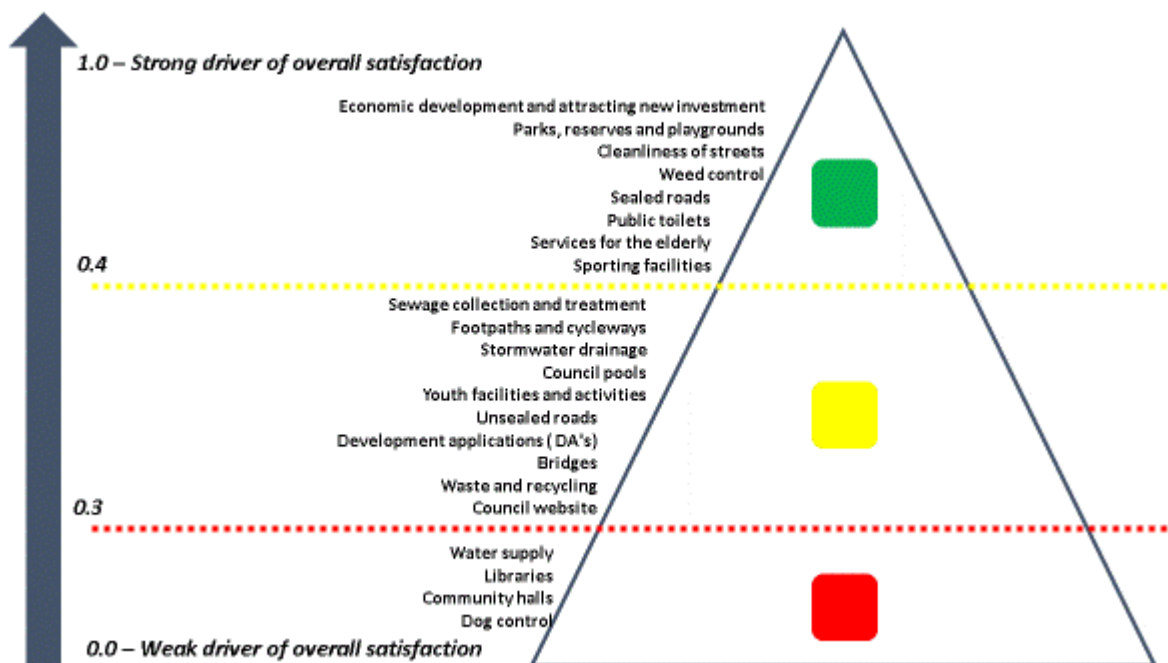
In all, 44% of residents were satisfied with Council’s overall performance and 21% were dissatisfied. Net satisfaction rating (NSR) was hence +23% (i.e. 23% more residents felt satisfied than dissatisfied) and the mean overall satisfaction score was 3.28 out of five. This is an impressive result and an important measure to track over time.

A third of respondents were neutral towards Council, suggesting there is opportunity to improve results further by moving this 34% into the satisfied category.

To drill down into the specific drivers of perceptions of overall satisfaction, we have undertaken a driver analysis. This seeks to understand the correlations between the specific satisfaction statements and overall satisfaction with Council.

Essentially the analysis outlines what some researchers refer to as the derived importance of specific service elements. This offers us an alternative way to prioritise service tasks. Some service tasks will have a greater impact on perceptions of overall satisfaction than others. The picture below outlines the ranking of specific service tasks according to how influential they are on impacting overall satisfaction. The closer the correlation coefficient is to 1.0, the stronger it is as a driver of overall satisfaction.

Picture 2.1: Drivers of overall satisfaction



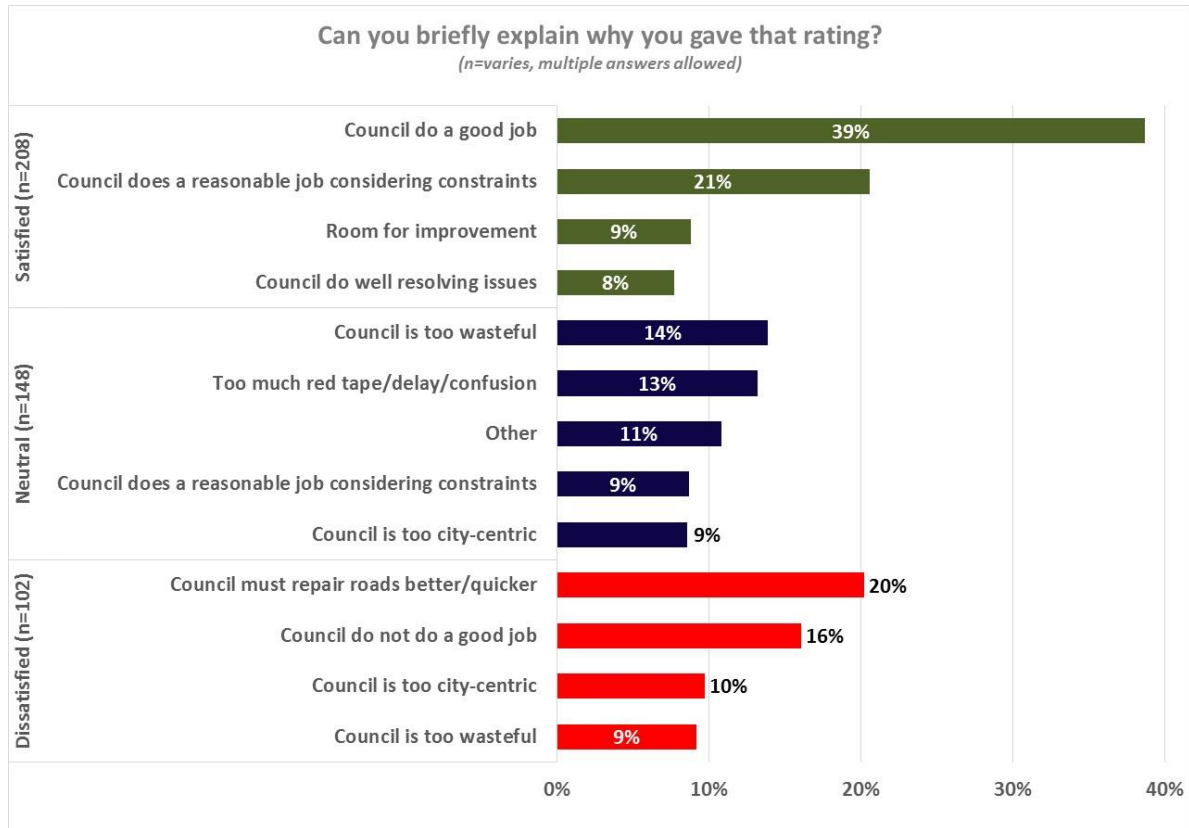
The driver analysis indicates that the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction with Muswellbrook Shire Council are: *economic development and attracting new investment* and, *parks, reserves and playgrounds, cleanliness of streets and weed control*⁴. This was closely followed by *sealed roads, public toilets, services for the elderly and sporting facilities*.

Those residents providing overall satisfaction ratings of 1, 2, 4 or 5 were then invited to comment on why they had scored Council accordingly. Their open responses have been coded (i.e. themed), with these themes shown in Graph 2.2 over page.

(Continued over page...)

⁴ Weed control, stormwater drainage and cleanliness of streets were strongly correlated suggesting each impacts the other.

Graph 2.2: Can you explain why you gave that score? (unprompted)



The majority of those with positive scores had trouble articulating specific reasons for their satisfaction, noting instead that Council did a good job generally (39%) and did a reasonable job considering the constraints (21%).

Those with negative comments, on the other hand, tended to be more specific. While some gave the vague comment that Council does not do a good job (16%), others focussed on the need for roads repairs to occur more quickly (20%) and that Council focusses too much on Muswellbrook⁵ (10%).

⁵ A common complaint in surveys such as this, particularly in rural/regional LGAs

Part 3: Satisfaction with Council contact

The next series of questions dealt with residents' satisfaction over their personal dealings with Council. Residents were first asked whether they had contacted Council in the past twelve months for any reasons other than paying their rates:

Graph 3.1: Contact with Muswellbrook Shire Council in the past twelve months

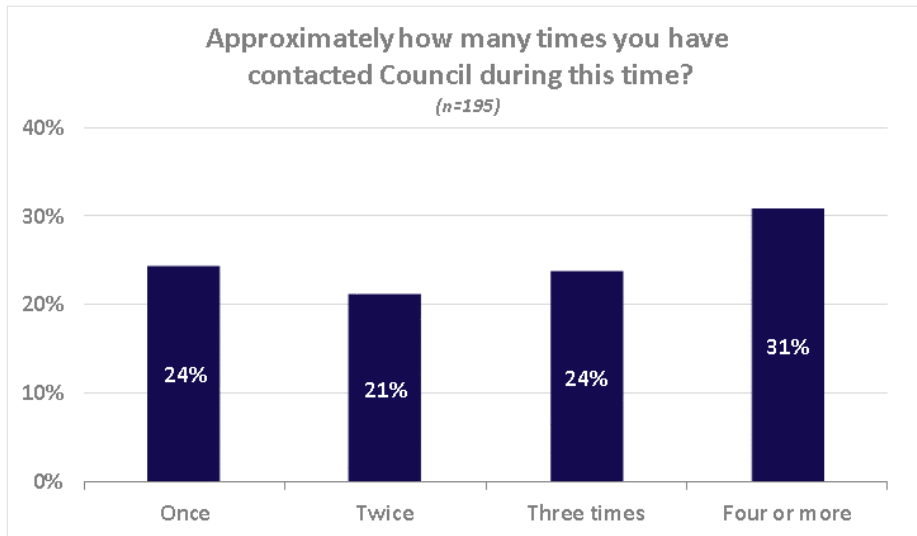


Around half of residents (48%) indicated that they had contacted Muswellbrook Shire Council in the past twelve months for reasons other than paying rates, higher among those in post code 2333 (53%). This once again highlights the crucial role Council plays in so many residents' lives.

Those who had contacted Council in the past twelve months were asked how many times they had contacted Council:

(Continued over page...)

Graph 3.2: Number of times contacted Muswellbrook Shire Council in the past twelve months



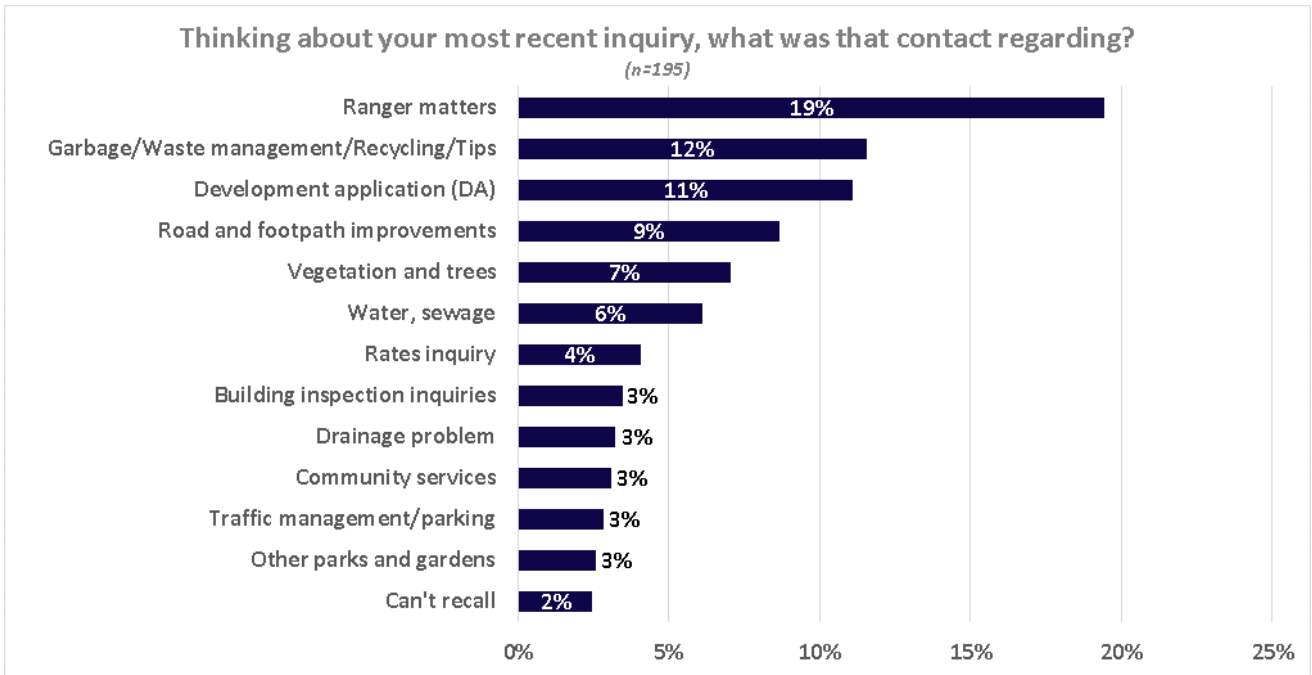
Almost a quarter (24%) had only contacted Council once during this time, while a further 21% contacted Council twice. Interestingly, over half of those with contact in the previous 12 months said they had contacted Council three of more times.

Following the broad questions regarding contact with Council, residents were asked a number of specific questions about their most recent interaction⁶. Firstly, respondents were asked the reason for their most recent contact:

(Continued over page...)

⁶ The most recent contact is used for a number of reasons. First, it is likely to be current and therefore fresh in their minds. Second, the most recent contact becomes the focus so that memories of previous contacts do not create confusion. Third, for simplicity in questioning, residents focus on one enquiry rather than trying to recall facts regarding multiple contacts with Council.

Graph 3.3: Purpose of most recent contact with Muswellbrook Shire Council



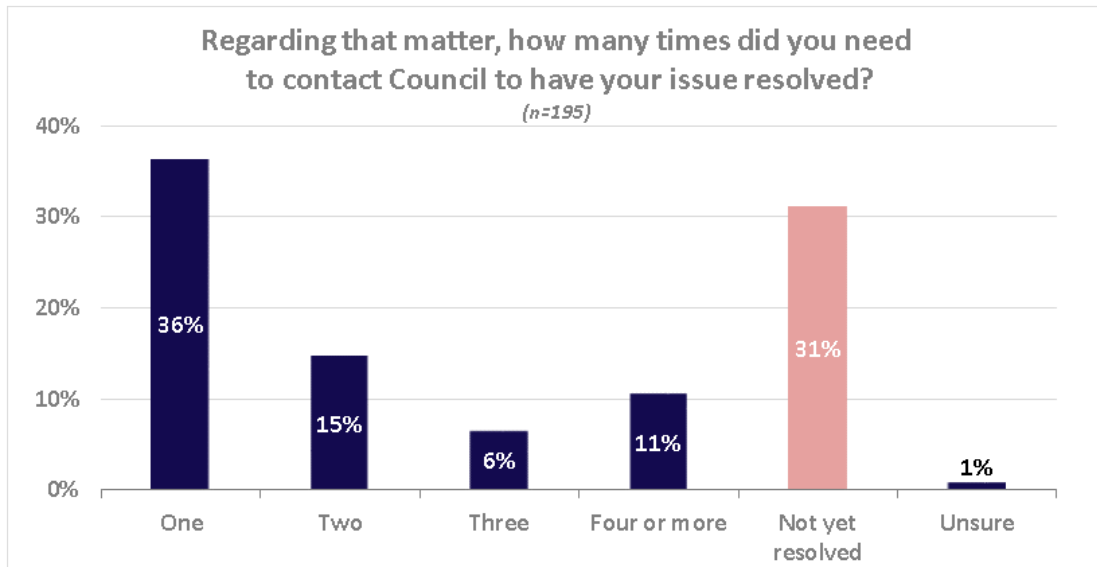
The most frequently mentioned reason for contacting Muswellbrook Shire Council was a *ranger matter* (19%), followed by a *garbage/waste management/recycling/tips issue* (12%), *development application* (11%) or *road a footpath improvements issue* (9%).

Interestingly, those aged 18-39 were more likely to contact Council regarding a ranger matter than those aged 60+ (33% vs. 0%) and conversely, those aged 60+ were more likely to make a vegetation and trees enquiry than their younger counterparts (23% vs. 0%). Rural residents were more likely than urban residents to make an enquiry regarding road and footpath improvements (21% vs. 5%).

Those who contacted Muswellbrook Shire Council were next asked how many times they had needed to contact Council to have their issue resolved:

(Continued over page...)

Graph 3.4: Number of contacts needed with Council to resolve issue

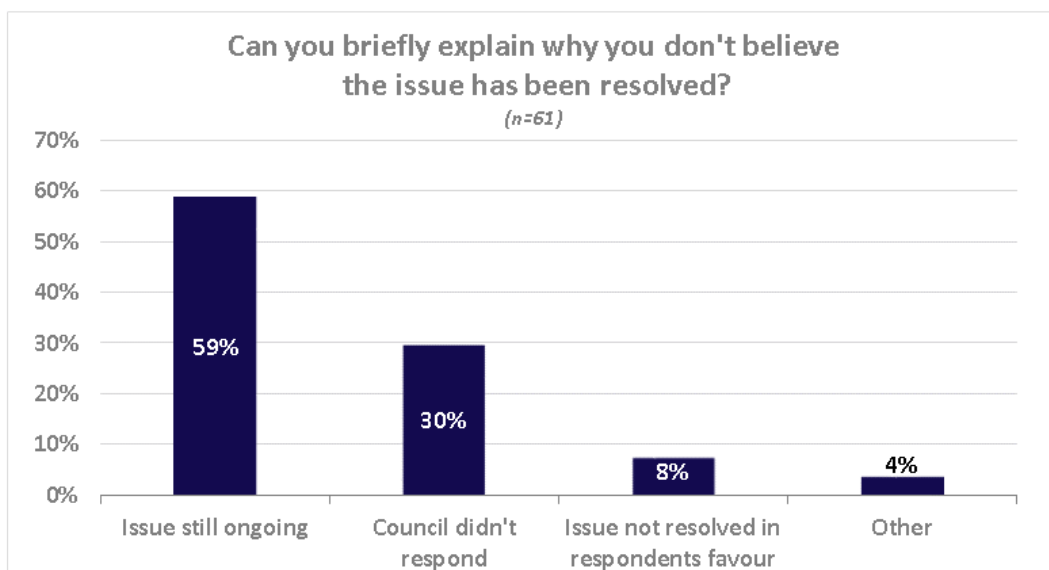


In all, 36% of residents who contacted Council reported that their enquiry was resolved on first contact. Conversely, some 31% indicated that their enquiry was not yet resolved.

Enquiries that these individuals had made which were unresolved related to a range of matters including: *road and footpath improvements* (11), *Development Application (DA)* (8), *traffic management/parking* (6), *vegetation and trees* (5) and a wide variety of “other” matters.

Those who indicated that their issue was still not resolved were asked to explain why this was the case:

Graph 3.5: Reason why issue is still not resolved

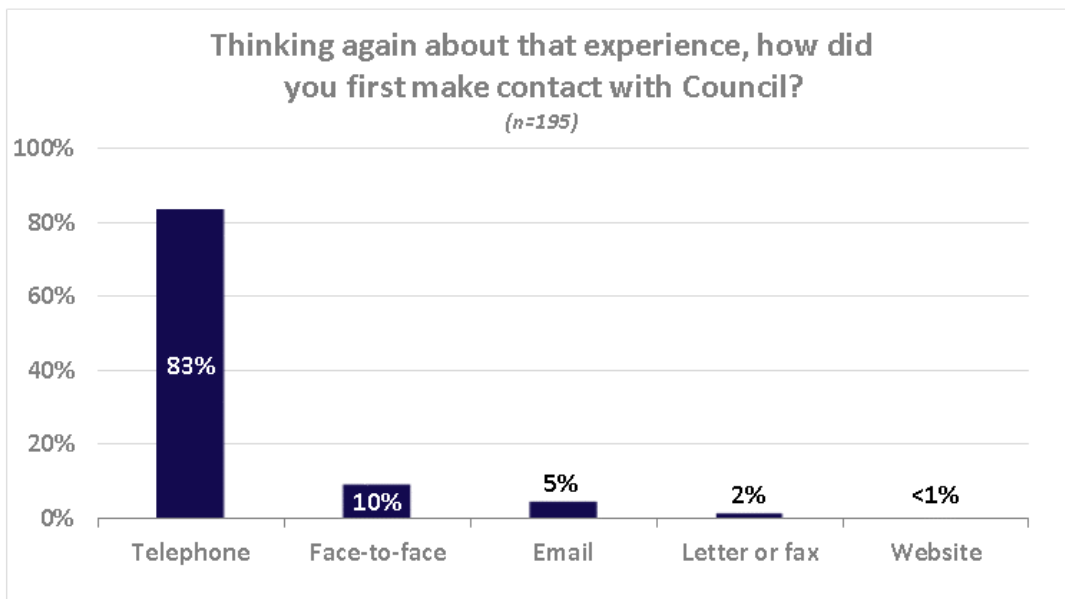


Over half (59%) indicated that their issue was ongoing and 8% indicated that the issue was, in fact, resolved but not in their favour. Unfortunately 30% claimed that the Council did not respond to their enquiry.

(Of those who said Council didn't respond, 18% related to DA's, 10% to road and footpath improvements and 9% to vegetation and trees. The balance were evenly distributed between different areas.)

Those saying they had contacted Muswellbrook Shire Council in the last twelve months were then asked how they first made contact with Council:

Graph 3.6: Method of contact with Council



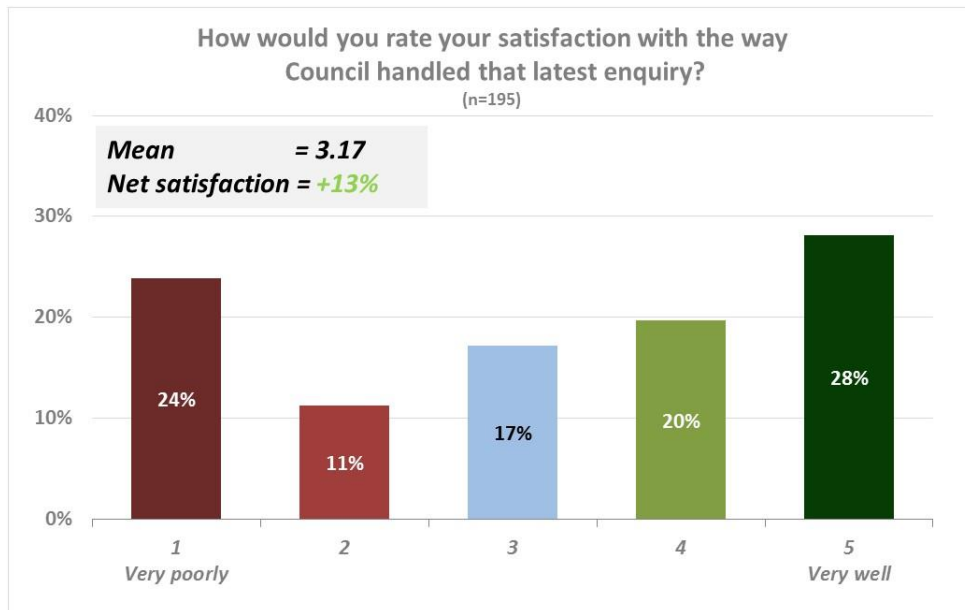
Over four in five (83%) indicated that they first contacted Council via telephone, with only 10% coming face-to-face via the Council customer centre. Only one in twenty contacted Council via email and just 2% by letter or fax. This suggests that even in an era of online communication and social media, phone and face-to-face remain critical forms of contact.

Interestingly, telephone contact was higher among 18-39's at 96% (74% among both 40-59 year-olds and 60 years and older) and those with children at home (92% vs. 76% of those without children at home).

Residents were then asked to rate the Council staff handling of their enquiry on a 1-5 scale (where 1 = handled very poorly, 3 = neutral and 5 = handled very well).

(Continued over page...)

Graph 3.7: Rating of satisfaction with how Council handled last enquiry



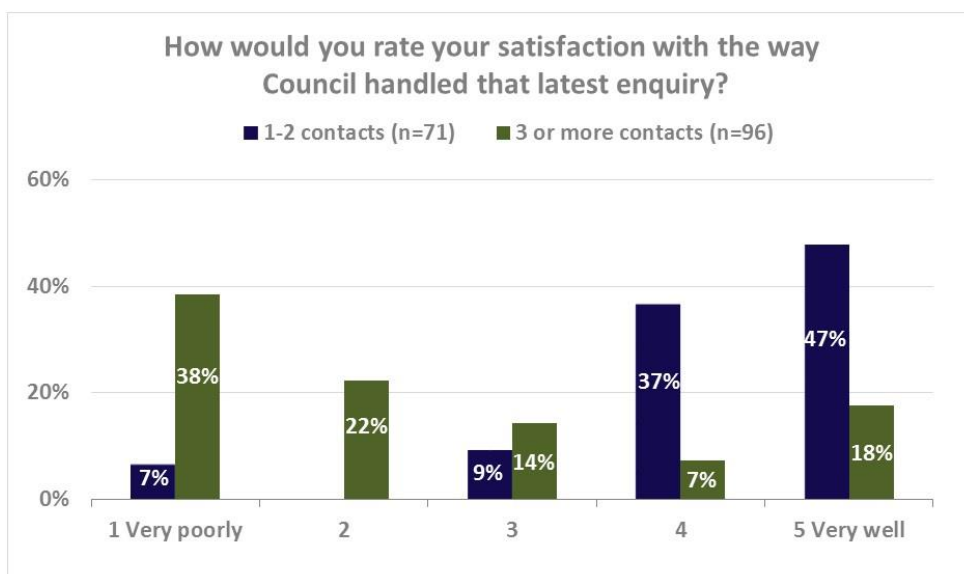
Almost half (48%) indicated that their most recent enquiry was handled well (rating of 4 or 5) and 35% poorly (rating of 1 or 2). The corresponding Net Satisfaction Rating (handled poorly total subtracted from handled well total) was +13% and mean satisfaction rating of 3.17. This suggests that more residents are satisfied with their interaction with Council than those who feel disappointed by their contact experience.

Mean enquiry handling scores were highest among those aged 60 years or older (3.53 out of 5 compared with 2.99 among those aged 18 to 39 years) and those residing in urban areas (3.36 compared with 2.60 among those in rural / mixed areas).

Graph 3.8 shows (logically enough) a significant difference in satisfaction with the way the most recent interaction was handled against how long that interaction took to resolve:

(Continued over page...)

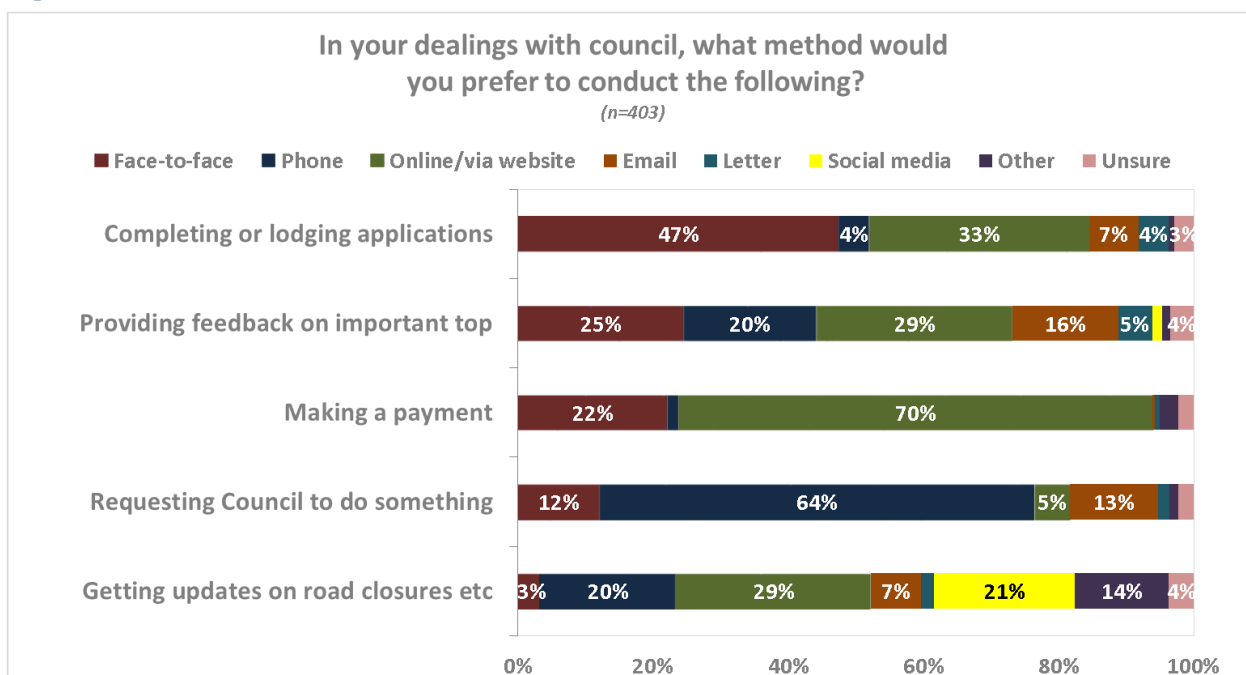
Graph 3.8: Satisfaction with the way Council handled the enquiry by contact time required to resolve



Those requiring multiple contacts to have their issue resolved, or who indicated that their enquiry was not yet resolved, were significantly more likely to feel that their initial interaction was handled very poorly. This highlights the importance of resolving issues quickly, and keeping residents informed of progress for ongoing issues.

Residents were then asked how they would prefer to contact Council across a variety of activities and issues:

Graph 3.9: Preferred communication methods



Online was the preference for transactional dealings with Council (such as making a payment) but the traditional methods of face-to-face and phone were preferred for interactions such as completing and lodging applications and forms (47% face-to-face), or requests for Council to do something (64% phone, 12% face-to-face).

Interestingly, a wide spread of methods emerged for community engagement activities such as providing feedback on important topical issues, and general requests for information.

These results suggest that Muswellbrook Shire Council residents are not yet ready to move some of their Council dealings online and they still require a high level of support either over the phone or face-to-face when conducting Council business.

The link between Council contact and overall satisfaction

Council survey after council survey suggests that overall customer satisfaction is more closely aligned to residents’ experiences in dealing with Council than it is to their satisfaction with specific services and facilities. And so it has proven in this instance as well.

Data linking: (a) satisfaction scores with how a personal contact has been handled; and (b) overall satisfaction suggests a strong and direct correlation between the two. In particular, there appears to be a statistically significant correlation between dissatisfaction with the way such contact is handled, and a poor overall satisfaction score as shown in table 3.1, below:

Table 3.1: How overall satisfaction is influenced by Council contact

Overall Satisfaction score	Mean Satisfaction with contact handling	N	Std. Deviation
Dissatisfied	2.39	45	1.658
Neutral	3.20	63	1.383
Satisfied	3.54	86	1.442
Total	3.16	194	1.537

This suggests that (of those who contacted Council), respondents who were satisfied with Council's overall performance had an average satisfaction score for their most recent contact of 3.54 out of a possible 5. This compares with just 2.39 out of 5 for those who were dissatisfied with Council overall.

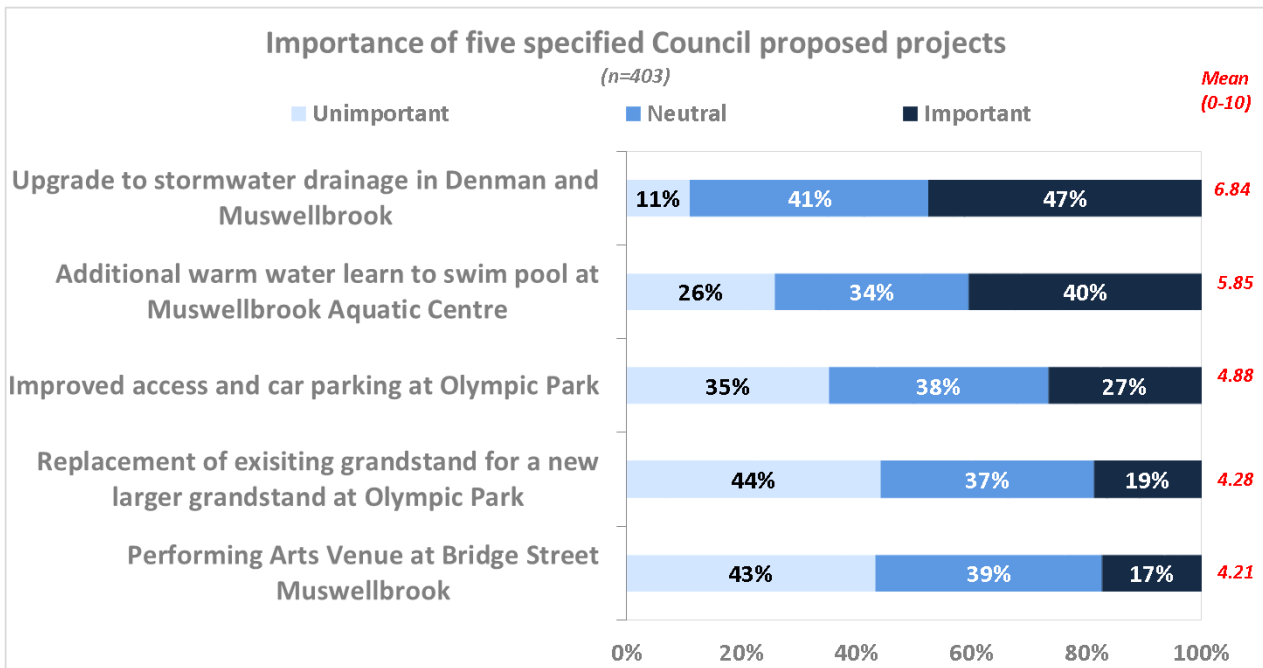
This once again highlights the need to ensure that all communication with residents is as timely and empathetic as possible – particularly where the decision is at odds with a resident’s preferred outcome!

Part 4: Perception of potential projects

Following the customer satisfaction questions, residents were asked a number of ad hoc questions relating to a variety of potential new Council projects.

Firstly, residents were asked, in a prompted question, to indicate how important a number of potential projects were on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means unimportant and 10 means extremely important. In the graph below, unimportant is a rating of 0-3, neutral is a rating of 4-7 and important is a rating of 8-10.

Graph 4.1: Perceptions of importance of Council proposed projects



Upgrades to stormwater drainage was considered the most important project, with 47% rating it as important (11% unimportant) and a mean importance rating of 6.84 (out of 10). The additional swim pool ranked second in importance with 40% rating it as important (26% unimportant) and a mean importance rating of 5.85 (out of 10). Both of these projects had positive net importance score with more considering it important than unimportant.

The remaining three projects would be likely to have higher opposition than support. Some 35% considered the improvements to Olympic Park parking and access unimportant (vs. 27% important), while 44% considered the new grandstand unimportant (against 19% important) and 43% considered the Performing Arts Venue unimportant (against 17% important).

The additional swimming pool was considered particularly important to those aged 18-39 years (6.06 out of 10 vs. 5.64 among those aged 60 years and older) and those with children at home (6.67 out of 10 vs. 5.15 among those without children at home).

Respondents were then asked what “other” projects they considered a priority for the community. The response to this question prompted a variety of responses. While approximately 40% were not able to specify any other project of importance to the community, the remaining 60% offered a wide variety of potential Council initiatives.

A number of projects were mentioned by multiple member of the community. These are outlined below (where the respondent response offers details, we have included the verbatim);

1. Rebuilding/revitalisation of the Denman Town Hall

- (No additional detail was offered. However, this was mentioned unprompted by upwards of 20 residents).

2. Facilities / activities for Youth

- *More things for youth to do in the area.*
- *A project for young kids, giving them things to do which are free or affordable. Because there are many families doing it tough in Muswellbrook*
- *Centre for music and dance for children and young people, cooking classes for 13 plus years activities and engagement for elderly. A Community centre basically.*
- *I think there should be more entertainment for younger people to keep the kids busy and active.*
- *More activities for young people, for example skate park*
- *Like to see more programs for the youth, new skate park would be good a BMX track as well so they have something to do.*
- *More for families and children parks green areas waterparks venues for children so not to travel out of town to do these things town need s to grow*

3. An aged car facility

- *Aged Care Facilities for Frail care rather than caring for people in hospitals*
- *Elderly need more help*
- *More aged care services in Muswellbrook*
- *Public pathway access for elderly people with scooters for safety*

4. A variety of recreational activities

- *An Archery range, because people shoot arrows at the local parks, and it's dangerous, and someone could get seriously hurt*
- *An outdoor basketball court.*
- *Anything for young kids to get them in activities and sports.*
- *Exercise park with bike track and equipment*
- *Exercise equipment at Hyde Park.*
- *Junior cricket fields need upgrading especially toilet facilities.*
- *Outdoor gym.*
- *Recreational picnic facilities along the river. End of Ford Street.*
- *Sporting groups other than the Rams need help and support as well and better indoor facilities.*

5. The City by-pass

- *Need a bypass its terrible having the trucks come through town. Feel that Denman is more disadvantaged with spending on services and resources*
- *Bypass around Muswellbrook to remove the trucks from the CBD*

6. Better roads

- *Focus on roads between Muswellbrook and Denman*

7. An upgrade to the show grounds

- *I think the Muswellbrook showground needs an upgrade or something done there they have been making plans for it but nothing has gone ahead.*

8. Better footpaths

- *I think council needs to keep reviewing disability access and work on improving that*
- *I think they need to look at the footpath situation as a lot of people want to buy property out of town as it is very dangerous walking around here. There are not even footpaths to the day-care for children*
- *Improved foot paths and cycleway especially for kids. It's a danger not to have these.*

9. More parking in town

10. Better street lighting

11. Better public toilets

- *Putting and improving public toilets in all the parks*

12. Improved swimming pool facilities (not just a new swimming pool)

- *Extra shaded areas in the outdoor area at the swimming pool for families to use rather than extra swimming pool. We would use the pool more if there were more shaded areas.*
- *I think upgrades to the pool in general.*
- *Upgrade of the pool and waterpark.*

13. Better public transport

- *More train and bus service to access Newcastle*
- *Public transport and taxis are lacking no disability taxi or the elderly who haven't transport cannot get one have to wait and cue outside shopping centres*

14. Economic revitalisation

- *Attract (non-coal based industry) new business /industries to the town and new jobs*
- *Bringing in more commercial business to the area.*
- *I think just to encourage businesses in town because people don't want to live here they just move away.*
- *The shopping centres needs fixing more shops we have enough banks building banks should lower the rents for businesses*

15. Improved safety measures

- *CCTV cameras at the skate park, my son has had his property stolen on several occasions. For the safety of children*

16. Hospital improvements

- *Urgent critical upgrade of the local hospital.*

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of importance their “other” projects is to the community. As expected, most people considered their “other” project to be of very high importance rating it 8 or higher. The full list of projects proposed are outlined in Appendix 3 along with their associated rating of importance.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Version 1

Muswellbrook_SC_CSS_2017

Last modified:28/08/2017 11:15:12 AM

Q1. Hi my name is (name) and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council. Council has asked us to call residents at random to conduct a short survey about local services. The survey takes less than 15 minutes, all answers are confidential and we are not trying to sell anything. Would you be willing to assist council by completing a short survey?

Offer a call back if inconvenient time. If refused ask if there is anyone else at home who might like to participate

Yes	1
No	555

Q1

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q2. Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening. . .If not in shire or Councillor/permanent staff: I'm sorry in that case you don't qualify for this survey. Thank you for your time.

Q3. Thank you. Before we proceed can I confirm you live in the Muswellbrook Shire?

MUST live in shire

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q2

Q3

Q4. And are you a Councillor or permanent employee of Muswellbrook Shire Council?

Casual and contract workers ok

Yes	1	Go to Q2
No	555	

Q4

Q5. May I have your postcode?

UNPROMPTED

2333	1	
2328	2	
None of these	3	Go to Q2

Q5

Q6. And would your age range be between?

PROMPTED

18-39	1
40-59	2
60+	3

Q6

Q7. Gender?

DONT ASK

Male	1
Female	2

Q7

Q8. And just your first name for the survey?

Only so we can refer to you by name

Q8

Q9. Thanks [Q8], to kick things off can you tell me which if any of the following apply to you:

PROMPTED

	Yes	No
I work in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555
I study in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555
I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555

Q9_1
Q9_2
Q9_3

Q10. I'd now like you to please rate your satisfaction with the following council facilities or services. We'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied, 3 is neutral and 5 means you are very satisfied. If you don't use the service, just say so and I'll move to the next one. Firstly how satisfied are you with?

PROMPTED

	1 Very dissatisf ied	2	3 Neutral	4	5 Very satisfied	NA
Sealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	555
Unsealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	555
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5	555
Footpaths and cycleways	1	2	3	4	5	555
Cleanliness of streets	1	2	3	4	5	555
Dog control	1	2	3	4	5	555
Stormwater drainage	1	2	3	4	5	555
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5	555
Weed control	1	2	3	4	5	555
Waste and recycling	1	2	3	4	5	555
Water supply	1	2	3	4	5	555
Sewage collection and treatment	1	2	3	4	5	555
Sporting facilities	1	2	3	4	5	555
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	555
Council pools	1	2	3	4	5	555
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5	555
Community halls	1	2	3	4	5	555

Q10_1
Q10_2
Q10_3
Q10_4
Q10_5
Q10_6
Q10_7
Q10_8
Q10_9
Q10_10
Q10_11
Q10_12
Q10_13
Q10_14
Q10_15
Q10_16
Q10_17

Youth facilities and activities	1	2	3	4	5	555
Services for the elderly	1	2	3	4	5	555
Economic development and attracting new investment	1	2	3	4	5	555
Council website	1	2	3	4	5	555
Development applications (DA's)	1	2	3	4	5	555

Q10_18
Q10_19
Q10_20
Q10_21
Q10_22

Q11. I'd now going to read the list to you again but this time please rate how important these council facilities or services are to you or your family. We'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 means you think its unimportant, 4 is very important and 5 is critical. So firstly how important to you or your family is?

PROMPTED

	1 Unimportant	2	3	4 Very important	5 Critical	
Sealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_1
Unsealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_2
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_3
Footpaths and cycleways	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_4
Cleanliness of streets	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_5
Dog control	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_6
Stormwater drainage	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_7
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_8
Weed control	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_9
Waste and recycling	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_10
Water supply	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_11
Sewage collection and treatment	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_12
Sporting facilities	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_13
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_14
Council pools	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_15
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_16
Community halls	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_17
Youth facilities and activities	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_18
Services for the elderly	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_19
Economic development and attracting new investment	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_20
Council website	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_21
Development applications (DA's)	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_22

Q12. Please rate your satisfaction with council's overall performance on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very dissatisfied, 3 is neutral and 5 is very satisfied?

1 Very dissatisfied	1
2	2
3 Neutral	3
4	4
5 Very satisfied	5

Q12

Q13. Can you briefly explain why you gave that rating?

RECORD

Q13

Q14. Now [Q8], have you contacted council within the past 12 months, other than to make a payment?

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q21

Q14

Q15. Could you tell me approximately how many times you have contacted council during this time?

UNPROMPTED

Once	1
Twice	2
Three times	3
Four or more	4
Unsure	666

Q15

Q16. And thinking about your most recent inquiry, what was that contact regarding?

UNPROMPTED

Garbage/Waste management/Recycling/Tips	1
Development application (DA)	2
Building inspection inquiries	3
Rates inquiry (including pensioner rebates and change of address)	4
Water billing	5
Water, sewage	6
Septic tanks	7
Drainage problem	8
Community services (availability of facilities, grants for projects, community events, aged and disabled services etc.)	9
Ranger matters - barking dogs, livestock, etc.	10
Vegetation and trees - e.g. requesting council to clear vegetation or mow grass	11
Other parks and gardens	12
Road and footpath improvements	13
Library	14
Cultural facilities	15
Cultural or sporting events	16
Traffic management/parking	17
Road or bridge closures	18
Fees and charges generally	19
Cemetries	20
Pet registrations	21
Website content and access	22
Can't recall	23

Q16

Q17. And regarding that matter, how many times did you need to contact council to have your issue resolved?

UNPROMPTED

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four or more	4
Not yet resolved	5
Unsure	666

Q17

Q18. Can you briefly explain why you don't believe the issue has been resolved?

Answer If Attribute "Not yet resolved" from Q17 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED

Issue still ongoing	1
Council didn't respond	2
Issue not resolved in respondents favour	3

Q18

Q19. Thinking again about that experience, how did you first make contact with council?

UNPROMPTED

Telephone	1
Face-to-face	2
Letter or fax	3
Email	4
Website	5
Unsure	6

Q19

Q20. And how would you rate your satisfaction with the way council handled that latest enquiry, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 means you think it was handled very poorly and 5 means you think it was handled very well?

1 Very poorly	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5 Very well	5

Q20

Q21. In your dealings with council, what method would you prefer to conduct the following?

PROMPTED

	Face-to-face	Phone	Online/via website	Email	Letter	Social media (FB etc.)	Other	Unsure
Making a payment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Requesting Council to do something (e.g. fix a pothole)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Completing or lodging applications or forms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Providing feedback on important topical issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Getting updates on road closures etc. during floods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Q21_1

Q21_2

Q21_3

Q21_4

Q21_5

Q22. Now [Q8], Council would like your feedback regarding the importance of some proposed projects. On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all important and 10 means very important, how important to you is the:

READ OUT rate each option

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Not at all important										Very important	
Performing Arts Venue at Bridge Street Muswellbrook	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Q22_1
Additional warm water learn to swim pool at Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Q22_2
Replacement of existing grandstand for a new larger grandstand at Olympic Park	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Q22_3
Improved access and car parking at Olympic Park	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Q22_4
Upgrade to stormwater drainage in Denman and Muswellbrook	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Q22_5

Q23. Are there any other projects that you think are a priority for the community?

RECORD COMMENT or type no

Q23

Q24. And can you rate this using the same scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all important and 10 is very important?

0 Not at all important	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10 Very important	10

Q24

Q25. Thanks so much [Q8], we're almost done. Can you just tell me if you live in an urban or rural area?

Urban	1
Rural	2
Mixed or unsure	3

Q25

Q26. And do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?

Yes	1
No	555

Q26

Q27. How long have you lived in the Muswellbrook Shire?

PROMPTED

Less than 5 years	1
5-10	2
11-20	3
More than 20	4

Q27

Q28. And finally, Muswellbrook Shire Council will be running a series of workshops where residents will be asked to provide council with their views on what the level or standard of council's service delivery should be for key existing services like parks, roads, footpaths and playgrounds. Participants will be paid to attend. Would you potentially be interested in being involved in these workshops?

Expression of interest only.

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q31

Q28

Q29. Thanks so much, i just need the following contact details and council will be in touch at a later date with further information. May I have your:

No committment at this stage. Prefer EMAIL.Details will be kept separate form survey answers

Name	1	
Surname	2	
Email	3	
Best daytime phone	4	

Q29_1_1

Q29_1_2

Q29_1_3

Q29_1_4

Q31. Thanks so much [Q8], that's the end of the survey. Muswellbrook Shire Council greatly appreciates your views. Did you have any questions about the survey? Have a great afternoon/evening

End

Appendix 2: Data Weighting Process

It is common in random surveys such as this to weight results by age and gender. This avoids the need to sample by quota (which is far more expensive than purely random sampling), and ensures the data from under- and over-represented groups is adjusted to meet the demographic profile of the survey population.

Population weighting can only occur where the true survey population is known. In this case the population, defined as “adults 18-plus living in the Muswellbrook Shire”, can be accurately measured through the 2016 ABS Census⁷. We can hence weight the survey data by the known population.

To do this we divide the survey sample by gender (male/female) and across three age groups (in this case 18-39, 40-59, and 60-plus.) This divides respondents into one of six age and gender categories, as shown below:

2017 Sample by age and gender		
Age	Male	Female
18-39	4.2%	6.9%
40-59	18.1%	28.0%
60+	16.9%	25.8%

Meanwhile ABS data for the adult (18+) population of the Muswellbrook LGA (as per 2016 ABS Census, Usual Resident profile), is shown in the following table:

ABS Census (2016) by age and gender		
Age	Male	Female
18-39	20.32%	19.12%
40-59	18.71%	17.30%
60+	12.09%	12.46%

Dividing the “true” population by the sample population for each age and gender category provides the following weighting factors:

Age	Male	Female
18-39	4.816	2.752
40-59	1.033	0.617
60+	0.716	0.483

These weightings are then assigned to each data record based on each respondent’s age/gender profile, and the raw data for each question is adjusted accordingly.

⁷ ABS Census for Muswellbrook LGA, Usual Resident profile.

Appendix 3: “Other” projects proposed

Project Proposed	Importance Rating
A better Waste catchment area at the mouth of Muswell Creek into the Hunter River	10 Very important
A big shopping centre.	10 Very important
A decent park / rest area adjacent to the highway for driver revivers and toilets	9
A project for young kids, giving them things to do which are free or affordable. Because there are many families doing it tough in Muswellbrook	10 Very important
A town hall for meetings. Performances and concerts.	10 Very important
A Victoria Park upgrade	10 Very important
Ability to recycle when out and about in the community.	7
Access for disabled	10 Very important
Access from Brook st to big w	7
Access to the new Links estate.	7
Affordable accessible age care facility	10 Very important
Aged Care Facilities for Frail care rather than caring for people in hospitals	8
Aged care facility	10 Very important
Aged care unit	10 Very important
Aged parking disabled parking	10 Very important
Along the side of New England Highway there are No Stopping Signs. We need a safe truck rest area close to amenities as a lot of trucks pass through our area, the roads would be safer if truck drivers could have a break, better for local economy.	10 Very important
An Archery range, because people shoot arrows at the local parks, and it's dangerous, and someone could get seriously hurt	10 Very important
An outdoor basketball court.	5
Animal shelter/pound	10 Very important
Another coal fired power station would be good.	10 Very important
Anything for young kids to get them in activities and sports.	8
Attract (non-coal based industry) new business //industries to the town and new jobs	10 Very important
Attracting larger companies, e.g., Kmart to the area	10 Very important
Attracting more business to town.	10 Very important
Better dog park	10 Very important
Better parking at Tourist Info to accommodate caravans. It needs to be more visible.	10 Very important
Block of the main street at Denman	0 Not at all important
Bringing in more commercial business to the area.	10 Very important
By-pass	8
By-pass. Trucks congest the main street.	9
Bypass	10 Very important
Bypass around Muswellbrook to remove the trucks from the CBD	10 Very important
Car park at the Denman football oval.	10 Very important
Centre for music and dance for children and young people, cooking classes for 13 plus years activities and engagement for elderly. A Community centre basically.	9
Concerned about rumours of prison extension the community need to know what's happening	5
Continuation of the study of floodbanks of the lower lying areas within the township.	7
Continue improving the conditions of sealed and unsealed roads.	7
Council is doing a good job	5

Council need to look at what they spend their money on.	10 Very important
Create jobs	10 Very important
CCTV cameras at the skate park, my son has had his property stolen on several occasions. For the safety of children	10 Very important
Cycleway to industrial estate	9
Denman community hall.	10 Very important
Denman hall	9
Denman hall	10 Very important
Denman memorial hall	10 Very important
Denman memorial hall replacement	10 Very important
Denman sports centre upgrade	8
Denman Town Hall to rebuild	10 Very important
Dog control...for example the dog pound needs upgrading	10 Very important
Drayton South Mine to continue	10 Very important
Easier rubbish disposal for the rural area.	10 Very important
Elderly need more help	10 Very important
Encouraging investment in the town and helping the local community stay in business	10 Very important
Establishment of a look out at southern end of queens street Muswellbrook	10 Very important
Exercise park with bike track and equipment	10 Very important
Exercise equipment at Hyde Park.	10 Very important
Extra shaded areas in the outdoor area at the swimming pool for families to use rather than extra swimming pool. We would use the pool more if there were more shaded areas.	8
Fixing the athletics field	10 Very important
Focus on more means of income instead of the mining sector.	10 Very important
Focus on roads between Muswellbrook and Denman	8
Foot crossing across near schools	4
For families more parks suitable for all ages	10 Very important
Further develop aged care facility	10 Very important
Getting Memorial Hall replaced	10 Very important
Heated pool for your aerobics in	10 Very important
Hospitals, the hospital is very old and not modern no machines have to travel to Newcastle so that is more important than anything else	10 Very important
I can't think of anything	0 Not at all important
I can't think of anything	0 Not at all important
I think council needs to keep reviewing disability access and work on improving that	9
I think doing something about our hall that was burnt out.	10 Very important
I think just a lot of general small things such as upkeep of roads.	10 Very important
I think just to encourage businesses in town because people don't want to live here they just move away.	10 Very important
I think more activities for kids because there is so much youth crime around area.	8
I think the burnt out hall needs to be a priority.	9
I think the bypass is important to get done.	10 Very important
I think the Denman Hall is important.	8
I think the footpaths and the Town Hall here at Denman.	10 Very important
I think the local roads and drainage in Denman township.	10 Very important
I think the Muswellbrook showground needs an upgrade or something done there they have been making plans for it but nothing has gone ahead.	9
I think the showground is important to keep as they want to sell it. I don't want it sold or developed.	9

I think the speed limit on Maitland road needs to be increased it is too slow being 50km they should increase it to maybe 70km.	7
I think there should be more entertainment for younger people to keep the kids busy and active.	10 Very important
I think they have got plans but the Denman Hall had a fire and that has to be repaired.	10 Very important
I think they need to bring in the bypass for Muswellbrook and Scone it should have been done a long time ago.	10 Very important
I think they need to look at the footpath situation as a lot of people want to buy property out of town as it is very dangerous walking around here. There are not even footpaths to the day-care for children. It would also be good if they had more of an attraction in Denman like a nice local park.	10 Very important
I think upgrades to the pool in general.	10 Very important
I would like to know what is happening with the golf club	9
I'm worried about lack of shopping area. I would like see small private shops	8
Improved foot paths and cycleway especially for kids. It's a danger not to have these.	10 Very important
Instead of renovating the main street, other areas should be a priority	10 Very important
Instead of using ratepayer money to buy unnecessary statues, our money could be used for other projects. More activities for young people, for example skate park	10 Very important
Would like to see what proposals they have at Denman they have plans so information on what they are doing	8
Junior cricket fields need upgrading especially toilet facilities.	7
Like to see more programs for the youth, new skate park would be good a BMX track as well so they have something to do.	8
Like to see the centre Council bought go ahead (Council should encourage new businesses and existing businesses)	10 Very important
Lower the dump fees then people wouldn't dump it up in the common area.	10 Very important
Making rules and regulations for cat owners public and enforce this.	10 Very important
Market place carpark needs to be fixed	10 Very important
Memorial Hall rebuild, it is also a War memorial - This is sad at the moment as soldiers and ANZAC events. It is also in a central position in the middle of the street, it can affect tourism negatively.	9
More activities for youth	10 Very important
More activities for youth to get them off the streets.	10 Very important
More activities for youth, e.g. Ice skating rink, more sporting facilities.	10 Very important
More aged care facilities	10 Very important
More aged care services in Muswellbrook	10 Very important
More disability accessibility car parks very hard to find near market place and doctors surgery etc. Very difficult	10 Very important
More eating places in Muswellbrook that are open weekends	8
More effective dog control	10 Very important
More events held by the council for the community - get them more active on social media to get these events up and running.	7
More facilities for teenagers	9
More foot paths	9
More foot paths and cycleway.	10 Very important
More for kids maybe a bike park motorbikes	6
More for families and children parks green areas waterparks venues for children so not to travel out of town to do these things town needs to grow	10 Very important
More for the disabled	10 Very important
More investment in activities for young people, teenager (early and mid-teens)	10 Very important
More parking in town	6
More parking in town.	6
More policing urgently required.	10 Very important

More sealed roads in Denman	10 Very important
More signage regarding compression breakage for the trucks	8
More street lightning	10 Very important
More things for youth to do in the area.	10 Very important
More train and bus service to access Newcastle	10 Very important
Muswellbrook netball courts...drainage	9
Need a bypass it's terrible having the trucks come through town. Feel that Denman is more disadvantaged with spending on services and resources	9
Need a lot more car parking in centre of town	9
Need more and better public toilets	10 Very important
New ambulance station, more money needs to be put into this project	10 Very important
New industries and businesses	10 Very important
New local swimming pool and fun park.	10 Very important
Not approving anymore coal mines.	10 Very important
Not off hand	0 Not at all important
Our historical society needs a place to display historical items. We need parking close to visitor info centre.	10 Very important
Our local town hall in Denman, would be a good start	10 Very important
Outdoor gym.	10 Very important
Outlying centres need upgrading, and not just Muswellbrook.	9
Overhead railway bridge needs a footpath along Aberdeen road, and for the grass to be kept short as snakes are regularly seen and it is dangerous	10 Very important
Parking in Muswellbrook	9
Parking with access to main street shops, Brook Street	10 Very important
Pathways footpaths	10 Very important
Preservation of historical sites in the town needs to be considered.	7
Proposed revitalisation of Denman main street, and memorial hall. , Regarding Development Applications. I don't think they are very clear, we are not informed about scheduled time frame of development. When viewing plans, they are not clearly marked, and are difficult to understand. The legend is not clear	10 Very important
Provide avenues for a taxi service for the area for the access and safety for the community.	8
Public pathway access for elderly people with scooters for safety	8
Public transport	6
Public transport and taxis are lacking no disability taxi or the elderly who haven't transport cannot get one have to wait and cue outside shopping centres	8
Put an extra 4 inches on pool fences	8
Putting and improving public toilets in all the parks	10 Very important
Rebuilding denman town hall	10 Very important
Rebuilding of Denman hall	10 Very important
Rebuilding of the hall.	9
Rebuilding of the Memorial hall at Denman	7
Rebuilding School of Arts in Ogilvy St, Denman	8
Recreational picnic facilities along the river. End of Ford Street.	8
Redevelopment of Muswellbrook shopping centre	9
Reducing our rates	10 Very important
Repairing sealed roads properly	10 Very important
Repairing the Memorial Hall in Denman	10 Very important
Replacement of Denman Memorial Hall	10 Very important

Restoration of Denman Hall	7
Revitalise the Denman town centre. But not lose village atmosphere	10 Very important
Revitalise the main street see that followed through	8
Revitalising town centre. There are lots of empty shops	10 Very important
Road repair and maintenance	9
Road safety and pedestrian safety. Perhaps more lighting	10 Very important
Road safety in town, more pedestrian crossing. ,	10 Very important
Road Surfaces (especially country roads	9
Roads	10 Very important
Roads and drainage improvements and getting town hall rebuilt.	10 Very important
Roads and footpaths	5
Roads really need repairing few of them seem to get for other jobs	8
Roadworks and repairs.	9
Safe cycleway	6
Sealing roads and fixing the roads properly. Rebuilding the community hall at Denman.	10 Very important
Seating around the town and on bus routes and more bus stops for the elderly. They need more shade too.	10 Very important
Sell off the showground. (Commercial businesses)	7
Several speed humps in Carl street to slow down the traffic as the cars go very fast and it is a very high traffic area, it is a risk to children and elderly. Cars a constantly flying up and down the hill, the cars go straight through the stop sign - this poses a real danger to us all.	10 Very important
Should put play grounds for families and kids they have ones for animals but children	10 Very important
Some decent shops in the main street of Muswellbrook would be good	10 Very important
Some kind of cafe into the Council run shopping centre - but not a food court - rather, an alternative food court.	9
Something for the youth to do.	9
Somewhere where youth can go to hang out that isn't sport	9
Sporting fields...need to be better maintained and watered in summer	10 Very important
Sporting groups other than the Rams need help and support as well and better indoor facilities.	10 Very important
Students with disabilities need services	10 Very important
Support the facilities more that we already have and not forcing new ones.	10 Very important
TAFE development	8
The bypass going around Muswellbrook	10 Very important
The car park in the Marketplace needs to be upgraded.	7
The community hall in Denman needs rebuilding.	10 Very important
The denman memorial hall rebuild	10 Very important
The Denman Town Hall replacement	10 Very important
The entry in and out of town. South side has an old service station that has been pulled down and is still unsightly and on north side there is an old saw mill needs be pulled down.	7
The garbage fees.	10 Very important
The Muswellbrook By Pass for heavy vehicles.	8
The pool needs to be upgraded (now that they're not doing the aquatic park)	8
The shopping centres needs fixing more shops we have enough banks building banks should lower the rents for businesses	10 Very important
The sports grounds need attention, there are smaller communities who look after their sportsgrounds much better. Sports are important outlets for young families.	10 Very important
There are not enough ladies toilets at Olympic park especially during games. Good toilet facilities are needed.	9

There are some issues with large trees, there are some trees which are a danger to the community and need to be trimmed	7
There is so much rubbish on our roads because of the exuberant waste facility fees.	10 Very important
They need to put a new bridge at Koyuga road, it needs to be double lane, concrete surface.	10 Very important
To get the market place going and more shops.	10 Very important
To rebuild the Denman Hall	10 Very important
Toilets on Golden Highway going to Denman. Rural roads, Bylong Valley Way,	10 Very important
Total upgrade to Muswellbrook pool	9
Tourist Information Centre needs upgrading.	10 Very important
Town hall (denman)	9
Town hall would be great	10 Very important
Trying to attract outside investments and industry to the area.	10 Very important
Tuning the public in on what's happening in the community	9
Unsealed roads need a permanent fix, not just a patch up job.	10 Very important
Upgrade of rural sealed roads	10 Very important
Upgrade of sewerage works.	10 Very important
Upgrade of the pool and waterpark.	10 Very important
Upgrade the hospital	7
Upgrade the shopping centre like Singleton has	10 Very important
Upgrade the sporting facilities in Denman	9
Upgrade to 2 lanes on Koyuga Bridge	10 Very important
Upgraded gardens in public parks.	7
Upgrading and beautifying parks and playgrounds.	10 Very important
Upgrading unsealed to sealed roads	10 Very important
Upkeep and repair of local footpaths especially for elderly and disabled people.	10 Very important
Upgrading out of town roads.	10 Very important
Urgent critical upgrade of the local hospital.	10 Very important
Walkways and cycleway	9
Water park at the pool even in a park would be great free for families so not to go out of town no entry fee	9
We need a regular town event to attract people to town, Denman is alive and thriving but Muswellbrook is dead. We need a project to encourage people and a sense of community.	10 Very important
We need an enclosed off-leash dog exercise area such as the one in Singleton.	10 Very important
We need to have free camping in Denman to keep tourists here	10 Very important
Would like a lot more footpaths in the town.	10 Very important
Would like see more private infrastructure invited to invest in the community.	9
Would like to have seen Area Health at the Showground.	10 Very important
Would like to see a community type of park for activities for families etc. To have picnics by the river.	10 Very important
Would like to see a spa, sauna and steam room at the aquatic centre.	8
Would like to see garbage collection outside of Musselboro	6
Would like to see the Denman Pony Club road needs urgent upgrading and widening.	10 Very important
Youth activities	10 Very important
Youth services activities to keep them off the street in Denman	9