

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COUNCIL ROADS

In the most recent community survey undertaken in July 2012, the satisfaction rating for developing and maintaining the road network was by far the lowest rating at 1.62 out of 5. This contrasted with the importance factor for this service being rated the highest at 4.78 out of 5. These results indicate the need for Council to increase the existing level of service in maintaining the road network as it is the community's highest priority.

This conclusion was supported by other questions in the survey. Road maintenance was seen by the community as being the highest priority issue for both their town or village (57%) and the local government area as a whole (50%). Consultation

during the development of the Community Strategic Plan also highlighted the condition of Cessnock's roads as a major issue for the future.

Council's road network is not only important to the local population but is also a significant asset to the economic sustainability of the region. Use of Council's road network has significantly increased over the last ten years with steady population growth (1.1%) and a significant increase in wine production and tourist visitation to the vineyards.

The additional income raised from the special rate increase will be committed to Council's regional and local collector roads.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

Cessnock City Council provides over 50 discrete services to residents within the Cessnock Local Government Area. Many of these are funded through rate income and are provided free of charge to the community.

Your rate income is used to provide a range of services including:

- road and bridge rehabilitation and maintenance
- footpaths
- stormwater drainage
- parks and sporting fields maintenance
- community facility construction and maintenance
- public toilets
- strategic land use planning
- libraries
- youth facilities
- economic development
- social and cultural planning and
- a wide range of customer service, information management, finance and administration functions.

Others services are provided on a user pays / partial cost recovery basis often with levels of subsidisation through rate income. Examples of these services are:

- development and building assessment
- regulatory enforcement
- environmental and public health regulation
- swimming pools
- Cessnock Performing Arts Centre
- waste collection and disposal
- cemetery management and
- companion animal management.

Wherever possible Council directs its funds to asset renewal instead of constructing additional assets. This is to minimise lifecycle costs and ensure that future generations can benefit from the same levels of service that the community currently enjoys.

