



## RESEARCH REPORT

# Community Satisfaction Survey Bega Valley Shire Council

October 2024



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## CONTENTS

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. Background and Objectives	8
2.2. Methodology	8
2.3. How to Read this Report	10
2.4. Sample Profile	11
<b>3. OVERALL SATISFACTION</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1. Satisfaction with Performance of BVSC	13
3.2. Perceptions of Value for Money	17
<b>4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1. Quadrant Analysis	26
5.2. Drivers of Satisfaction	28
5.3. Highest and Lowest Priorities	29
<b>6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1. Recent Contact with Council	33
6.2. Communication	33
<b>7. COUNCIL AND REGION</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS</b>	<b>43</b>

## FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b> Overall Satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council	13
<b>Figure 2</b> Overall Satisfaction – Benchmarks	14
<b>Figure 3</b> Reasons for High Overall Satisfaction with Council	14
<b>Figure 4</b> Reasons for Neutral Overall Satisfaction with Council	15
<b>Figure 5</b> Reasons for Low Overall Satisfaction with Council	15
<b>Figure 6</b> Value for Money	17
<b>Figure 7</b> Scale between Lowest Rates and Best Services	18
<b>Figure 8</b> Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction	20
<b>Figure 9</b> Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 1	24
<b>Figure 10</b> Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 2	24
<b>Figure 11</b> Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 3	25
<b>Figure 12</b> Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 4	25
<b>Figure 13</b> Quadrant Matrix	27
<b>Figure 14</b> Top Priority	29
<b>Figure 15</b> Prefer Defunded	31
<b>Figure 16</b> Way Council Handled Last Enquiry	33
<b>Figure 17</b> Channel Prefer	34
<b>Figure 18</b> Preferred Sources of Information	36
<b>Figure 19</b> Preferred Sources of Information (2016 v 2024)	37
<b>Figure 20</b> Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness	38
<b>Figure 21</b> One Best Thing about Council	40
<b>Figure 22</b> Net Promoter Score	42

## TABLES

<b>Table 1</b> Sample Profile – Gender	11
<b>Table 2</b> Sample Profile – Age	11
<b>Table 3</b> Sample Profile – Area	12
<b>Table 4</b> Sample Profile – Length of Time Lived in LGA	12
<b>Table 5</b> Sample Profile – Ratepayer	12
<b>Table 6</b> Overall Satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council – Subgroup Analysis	13
<b>Table 7</b> Verbatims from Reasons for their Satisfaction Rating	16
<b>Table 8</b> Reasons for Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis	17
<b>Table 9</b> Scale between Lowest Rates and Best Services – Subgroup Analysis	18
<b>Table 10</b> Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Internal Benchmarks (mean scores)	21
<b>Table 11</b> Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis 1	22
<b>Table 12</b> Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis 2	23
<b>Table 13</b> Summary of Quadrant Analysis	27
<b>Table 14</b> Top Drivers of Satisfaction	28
<b>Table 15</b> Top Priority – Subgroup Analysis	30
<b>Table 16</b> Verbatims from Prefer Defunded 1	31
<b>Table 17</b> Verbatims from Prefer Defunded 2	32
<b>Table 18</b> Prefer Defunded – Subgroup Analysis	32
<b>Table 19</b> Channel Prefer – Subgroup Analysis 1	35
<b>Table 20</b> Channel Prefer – Subgroup Analysis 2	36
<b>Table 21</b> Preferred Sources of Information – Subgroup Analysis	37
<b>Table 22</b> Verbatims from Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness 1	38
<b>Table 23</b> Verbatims from Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness 2	39
<b>Table 24</b> Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness – Subgroup Analysis	39
<b>Table 25</b> Verbatims from One Best Thing about Council 1	40
<b>Table 26</b> Verbatims from One Best Thing about Council 2	41
<b>Table 27</b> One Best Thing about Council – Subgroup Analysis	42
<b>Table 28</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 1	43
<b>Table 29</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 2	44

## TABLES

<b>Table 30</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 3	45
<b>Table 31</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 4	46
<b>Table 32</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 5	47
<b>Table 33</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 6	48
<b>Table 34</b> Random versus Opt-in Results 7	49



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research study was commissioned by Bega Valley Shire Council to better understand key issues, community needs and priorities regarding the services and facilities provided by the Council.

## Among the key findings:

### Overall Satisfaction

The 2024 BVSC overall satisfaction mean score of 2.62 was lower than both BVSC in 2016 and the average across 35 regional NSW councils in the Taverner database. Seventeen percent (17%) of residents felt Council provided good or very good value for money. Residents leaned slightly (mean 5.37 on a 0-10 scale) towards preferring the best services over the lowest rates.

### Services & Facilities

In 2024, 23 service/facility measures had their satisfaction scored. Of these, all but nine achieved mean scores above the neutral 3.0 point (on a scale of 1-5).

The highest-rated measures were:

- Sewage services (mean 4.0)
- Water supply (mean 3.9)
- Libraries (mean 3.9)

The lowest-rated measures were:

- Processing Development Applications (mean 1.8)
- Planning/Managing residential growth (mean 2.3)
- Council's road network (mean 2.4)

Residents in Bermagui and surrounds seemed to be more often satisfied than those in other areas. Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were consistently more satisfied than those who had lived there more than 20 years.

### Priorities

When asked directly, residents considered Roads (28%) and Affordable housing (20%) the single highest priorities for Council. When correlating services and facilities satisfaction against overall satisfaction, the two top rated coefficients were Council's road network, and Planning/managing residential growth – suggesting these are deemed of highest importance by the community.

### Customer Service

Fifty percent (50%) of residents surveyed in 2024 had contacted Council in the past 12 months, with 27% of them awarding that interaction the highest satisfaction rating.

### Communication

When residents were asked about six types of potential interactions with Council, online was the most preferred channel for four types. Council website (38%), emails (35%) and social media (32%) were the most preferred ways of finding out about BVSC activities.

### Council and Region

When asked what Council most needs to do to improve its effectiveness, 28% of residents cited Council management and transparency, and 27% Better communication, engagement and accessibility. When asked the one best thing about Council, 18% said Accessibility and responsiveness and 10% said Waste management. When residents were asked their likelihood to recommend living in the Bega Valley region, the mean outcome was 7.24 on a 0-10 scale – a very positive score.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Taverner Research (TRG) was commissioned by Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) to conduct its Community Satisfaction Survey in 2024. The survey tracks Council's performance in service delivery, identifies priority areas and evaluates Council's customer service and communication.

The agreed objectives for the Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 process were to:

1. Rate satisfaction with specific facilities and services, and with overall satisfaction
2. Benchmark against other regional NSW Councils
3. Compare against 2016 survey results (where possible)
4. See how results compare between age, gender, sub-regions etc.
5. Explore community sentiment to topical issues

### 2.2. METHODOLOGY

Two separate sampling approaches were employed in the Bega Valley Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 – a random/representative sample, and an opt-in/self-selecting sample (which were not combined). Differences in the results of these two samples can be seen in Appendix: Random versus Opt-in Survey Results.

The random sampling collected 400 completed responses by telephone and online panel from a random sample of adult residents in the Bega Valley Local Government Area. The reported results have a margin of error of +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence level. This means that if the survey was repeated 100 times, in 95 times the results will be within 4.9% of true population value. This is a robust sample and reliable for Council's planning and reporting activities.

#### Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews

A telephone-based (CATI) survey was used to secure a response from 363 adult residents throughout Bega Valley Shire.

In total, 216 responses were collected from mobile phones (54% of the total telephone interviews). Interviews were conducted from 15 July to 8 August 2024 inclusive. Calls were made between 4.30pm and 8.30pm during weekdays, and on Saturdays from midday to 5pm. Nine interviewers from Taverner's Wollongong phone room conducted interviews over the course of the data collection period. The survey was implemented under Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) quality guidelines.

Median length of the telephone interviews was 16 minutes and 22 seconds.





## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Online Panel

An online survey was used to secure a response from 37 residents throughout the Bega Valley Shire Council local government area. The same questionnaire and qualifiers were employed.

A randomly sampled, reputable panel (<https://www.pureprofile.com/>) was engaged, to improve participation by younger cohorts (and resulting in smaller weight factors in 2024). Panellists answered from 15 July to 8 August 2024, inclusive.

The 5% of online respondents who completed in the fastest time (hence the least likely to be giving sufficient consideration to the questions) were removed to improve overall data quality.

### Opt-In Survey

A version of the survey was made available online and in hardcopy for all residents to complete. The survey was available from 15 July to 5 August inclusive and 798 responses were collected. It was promoted via:

- Social media posts
  - Facebook – 3 posts (15 July, 20 July and 23 July)
  - Instagram – 2 posts (15 July and 20 July)
- Council newsletter – news item on 26 July
- Website
  - Media release page – online from 15 July
  - Have Your Say Page – online from 15 July to 5 August (26 days)
- Media release – 15 July
- Use of QR codes
  - on the Have Your Say webpage
  - on the rates insert
  - on the digital screens (Council building foyer and libraries)
- Other communications
  - [CEO's radio interview](#)
  - Rates insert
  - Website banner
  - Digital screens (Council building foyer and libraries)
  - Internal communications (news items on Staff Portal)

Results from this non-random (i.e. self-selecting) sample appear in Appendix: Random versus Opt-in Survey Results. The tables in that appendix show percentages and means of 2024 responses for the opt-in survey, compared to the randomly sampled survey.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Sample Weighting to Population Proportions

The collected data often cannot mirror the exact age/gender distribution of a region. To allow for this, the collected dataset was weighted by age to reflect the actual adult population of Bega Valley Shire as per the ABS Population Estimates by LGA 2021.

The maximum 2024 weighting was applied for male residents aged 18-39 (at 4.16), while the minimum weighting was for female residents aged 60+ (at 0.57). This compares to 4.56 for males 18-29 and 0.60 for females 65+ in the 2016 study.

### 2.3. HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

#### Statistical Differences

Differences between groups are described as significant differences if they reached statistical significance using an error rate of  $\alpha=0.05$ . This means that if repeated independent random samples of similar size were obtained from a population in which there was no actual difference, less than 5% of the samples would show a difference as large or larger than the one obtained.

Statistical significance is more often compared between sub-groups, however in some situations statistical significance is measured between response items within the total sample. This is clearly noted in the commentary.

The use of the term 'significant' throughout this report indicates statistical significance. The report may also use the terms 'more likely' and 'less likely' to indicate statistically significant differences.

#### Subgroups

Comparison tests are used to test if there are statistically significant differences in survey results based on the demographic profile of respondents.

Subgroup analysis was conducted using the following demographic questions:

- Gender
- Age
- Five regions within the LGA
- Length of time lived in the LGA
- Ratepayer status

#### The Effect of Rounding

Note that where two or more responses have been combined the sum of the combination may be different (+/- 1%) to the sum of the individual items due to rounding.

#### Internal Benchmarks

Where possible, comparisons have been made with previous survey results (2016) to track progress in all aspects measured in the Community Satisfaction Survey 2024.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### External Benchmarks

Where possible, results for the Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 have been benchmarked and compared with regional NSW councils in the Taverner database. This analysis highlights areas where Bega Valley Shire Council is outperforming, underperforming, or performing in-line with comparable councils.

### 2.4. SAMPLE PROFILE

To obtain a clear view of the sample's profile and to conduct comparison tests, demographic characteristics were sought. The following tables detail the unweighted profile of samples (the 2016 report showed these details as weighted, so are restated here).

**Table 1** Sample Profile – Gender

	2016	2024
Male	42%	37%
Female	58%	63%
Other/cannot say	-	0%

**Table 2** Sample Profile – Age

	2016	2024
18 to 39	-	13%
18 to 29	3%	-
30 to 49	13%	-
40 to 59	-	22%
50 to 64	41%	-
60 and over	-	66%
65 and over	43%	-



## 2. INTRODUCTION

**Table 3** Sample Profile – Area

	2016	2024
Eden and surrounds	20%	9%
Merimbula and surrounds	21%	34%
Bega and surrounds	21%	34%
Bermagui and surrounds	15%	8%
Rural	23%	16%

**Table 4** Sample Profile – Length of Time Lived in LGA

	2016	2024
Up to 5 years	3%	4%
5 to 10 years	11%	12%
10 to 15 years	13%	18%
Greater than 15 years	74%	66%

**Table 5** Sample Profile – Ratepayer

	2016	2024
Own	91%	89%
Rent	9%	10%
Prefer not to say	1%	2%



### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

This section of the report covers overall satisfaction with the performance and value for money of Bega Valley Shire Council. It includes subgroup analysis, comparisons with previous results (internal benchmarks), comparisons with councils with similar characteristics to BVSC (external benchmarks), and reasons for overall satisfaction.

#### 3.1. SATISFACTION WITH PERFORMANCE OF BVSC

Residents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council using a five-point scale where 1 meant ‘very dissatisfied’ and 5 meant ‘very satisfied’.

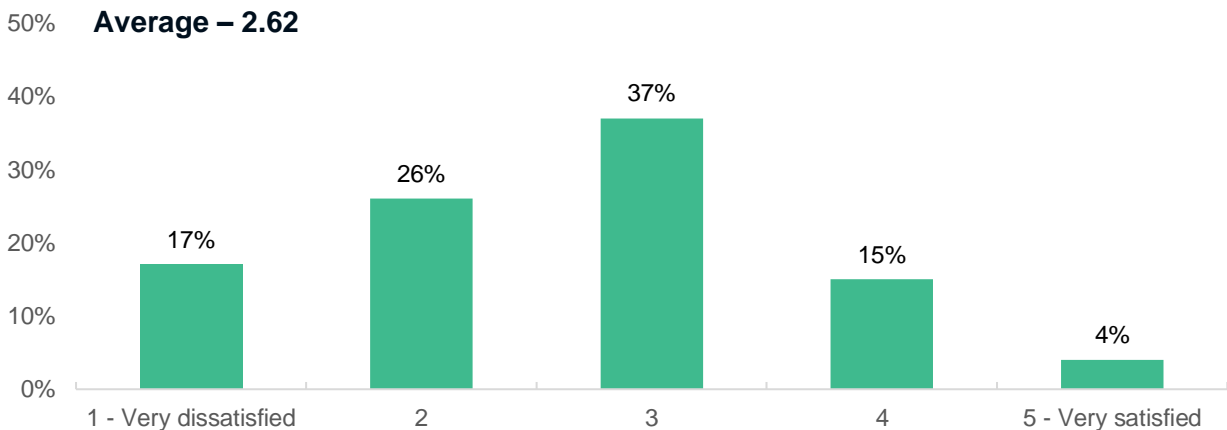
In total, 19% of residents were satisfied with Council, with 4% providing the highest rating of 5. Forty-three percent (43%) were dissatisfied while 37% provided a neutral rating of 3 (**Figure 1**).

These results combined for an average overall satisfaction rating of 2.62 out of 5.

**Figure 1** Overall Satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council

**Q: Please rate your satisfaction with Council’s overall performance, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL, across all responsibility areas on a scale of 1-5. Where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied?**

Base: All respondents (n=400)



**Table 6** below lists statistically significant differences among subgroups in 2024.

**Table 6** Overall Satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
Gender	Nil.
Age	Nil.
Location	Nil.
Length of time lived in LGA	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years had higher satisfaction (mean 2.87) than those who had lived in the Shire for 20+ years (2.48).
Ratepayer status	Renters had higher satisfaction (mean 3.04) than homeowners (2.56).



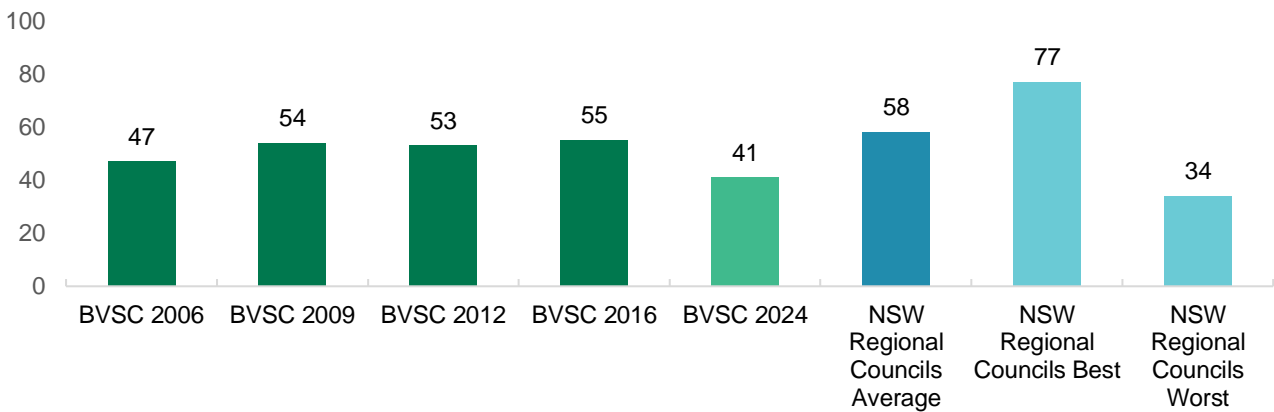
### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

BVSC in 2024 had overall satisfaction significantly lower than 2016 result (its mean score of 2.62 out of 5 is re-indexed out of 100 in **Figure 2** below). It was significantly lower than the average for regional NSW councils.

**Figure 2 Overall Satisfaction – Benchmarks**

**Q: Please rate your satisfaction with Council’s overall performance, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL, across all responsibility areas on a scale of 1-5. Where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied?**

**Base: All respondents 2006/2024**

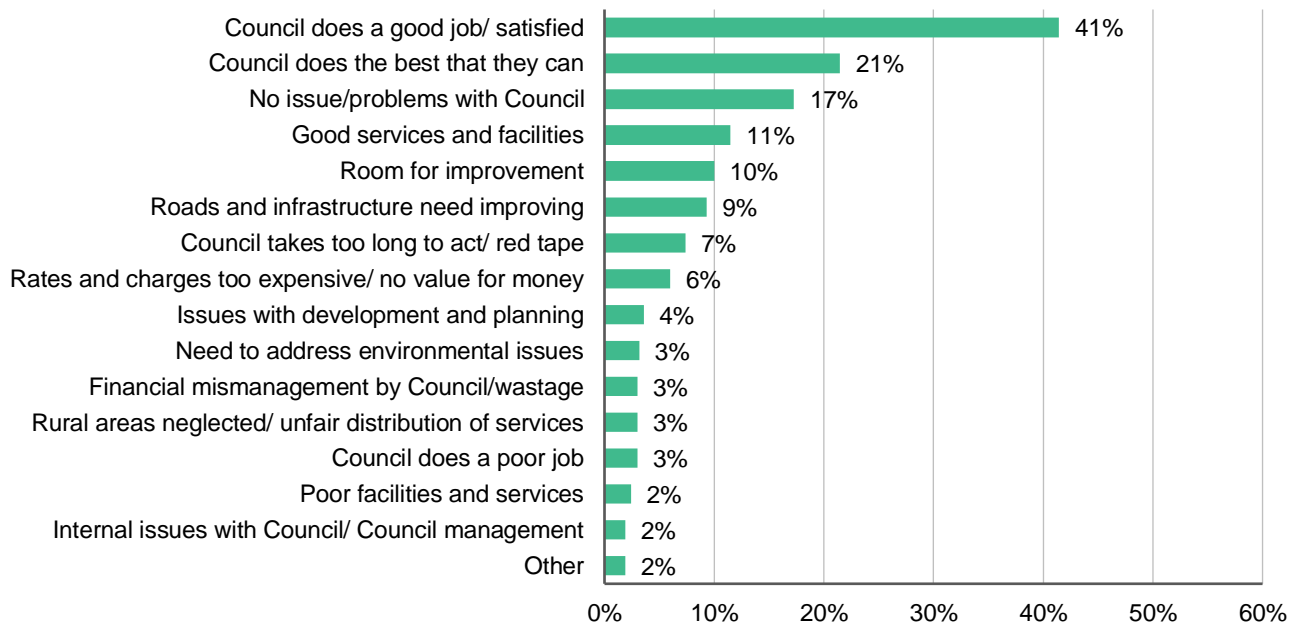


Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their overall satisfaction rating. This was an open-ended response. A full list of open-ended responses has been provided to Council in a separate delivery. **Figure 3** (below), and **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** (next page) has these responses grouped into themes, and then based separately, depending on resident’s response at overall satisfaction.

**Figure 3 Reasons for High Overall Satisfaction with Council**

**Q: Can you briefly explain why you gave that rating?**

**Base: Rated overall satisfaction high (4-5) (n=84)**



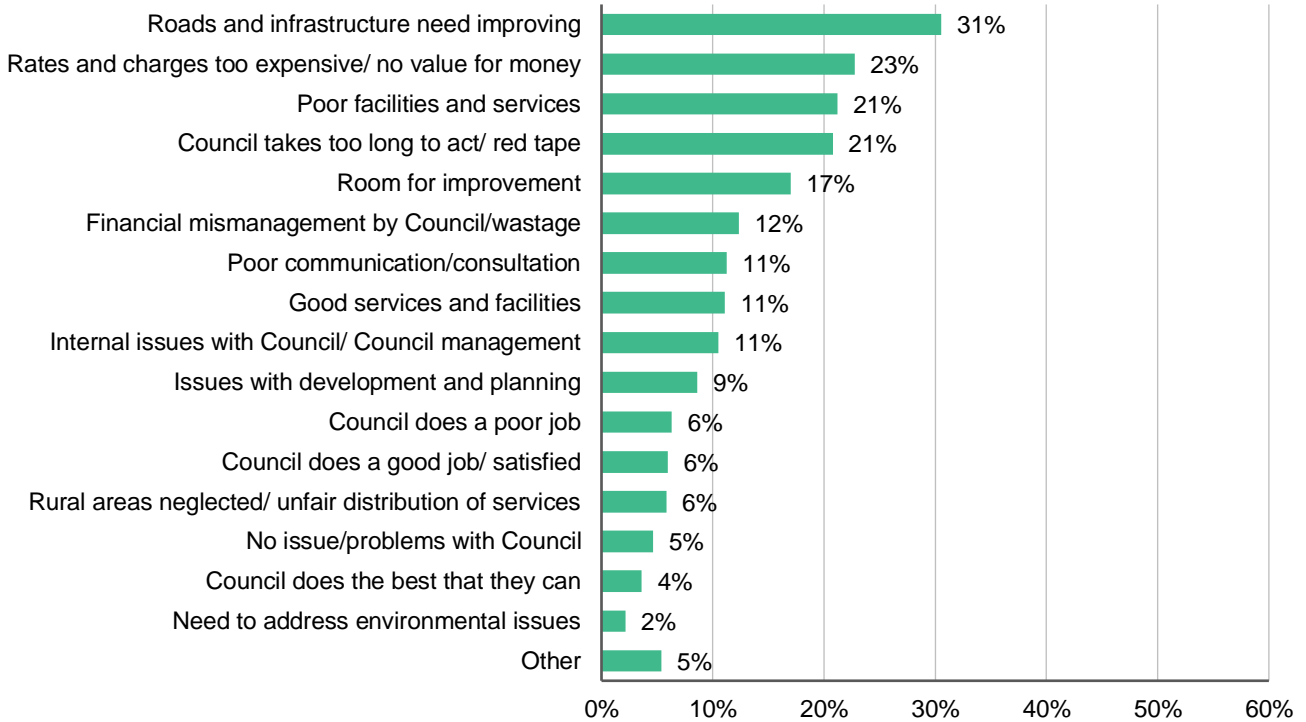


### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

**Figure 4** Reasons for Neutral Overall Satisfaction with Council

**Q: Can you briefly explain why you gave that rating?**

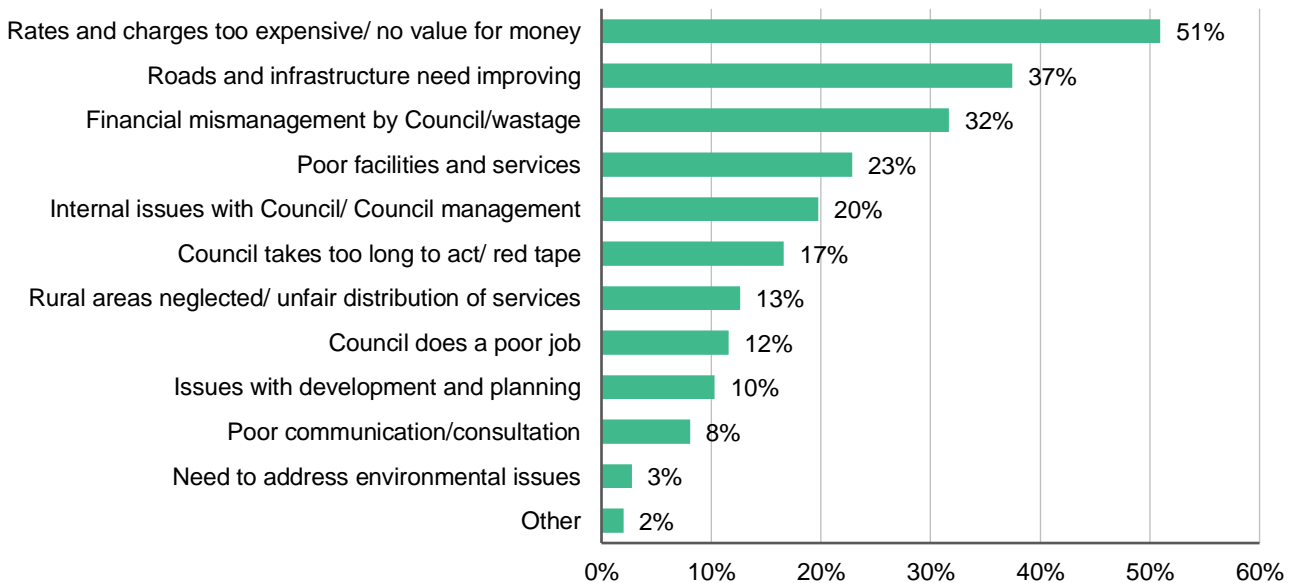
**Base: Rated overall satisfaction neutral (3) (n=156)**



**Figure 5** Reasons for Low Overall Satisfaction with Council

**Q: Can you briefly explain why you gave that rating?**

**Base: Rated overall satisfaction low (1-2) (n=159)**





### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

**Table 7** (below) shows some quotes by topic for respondents in 2024.

**Table 7** Verbatims from Reasons for their Satisfaction Rating

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Internal issues with Council/ Council management</b>	<p>They have just increased our rates by 97 percent over last two years and they keep employing more people and they cry poor. One of the reasons of rate increase they said because of the fires and the money was provided by state and federal government for fires. They had a lot of grant money that they didn't know what to do with and used it as an excuse to increase the rates. They redid all the footpaths in Tathra and Kalaru they were done wrongly with outside people and had to be redone.</p> <p>The bureaucracy in the Council...they don't have an understanding or appreciation of business or development, lack skills or vision. For example, their deletion of basketball courts at Eden skate part which was later reinstated after community intervention and their active discouragement of park amenities in new development applications.</p> <p>They do not have enough staff doing the groundwork for mowing, weed control. Their road work they do not have enough staff, it is all put out to subcontractors who do not do it properly and have to do it again and again. They are not doing enough for the amount of rate increases so you are not seeing anything for all this extra money you pay yet they want more money out of the rater payer.</p> <p>They are interfering rather than assisting with their management, their planning is useless for a small town, it is not a big city, and they don't acknowledge that in their policies.</p> <p>Most of the money goes on supporting staff and specialist, and don't have enough boots on the ground. It's got a bad reputation with other areas and staff are hard to find, it all comes from management.</p> <p>Lack of response and timeframes of responding to complaints, covering up building compliance issues. Correspondence is very poor; it appears they offload issues to others e.g. illegal dwellings there are a lot in the area, and they turn a blind eye to this.</p> <p>Our local Council has tunnel vision, I don't believe personally they take on board community comment. Appears to be favouritism with certain private contractors for public works.</p> <p>I think they are paid too much; I think the staff higher ups. Engineers, General Manager wages are too high and then it impacts our rates and drives up inflation. Council is obsessed with climate change and need to change their focus onto the roads, waste.</p> <p>They've got about 500 office staff and only 10 people doing the work. Bureaucracy gone mad.</p> <p>I feel like our Council has a very red light, whenever things are brought to Council it's no no and you have to push to get anything seen or taken seriously. Mentality that they don't seem to be working for the benefit of the community. Outside shires seem to have so much more facilities, outdoor parks also festivals and buskers and more community engagement.</p> <p>They are focusing too much on the business, on how to make money rather than focusing on the people. For example, building inspections are being used in order to raise money or to gain control of builders, they are playing power games in order to force people to comply with their agenda.</p> <p>A couple of things, we approached Council recently and went in there, there's gatekeepers on the front desk, you can't get any information, transparency is not there. Not enough community engagement as far as things like surveys and even if you do them it doesn't get anywhere. They did a survey on rates, and they went up anyway.</p> <p>Stuff they have to do they have to do twice, such as roads, they fix it then a month later they have to come back and do it again. They do things then they have to come back and redo them, I don't think they're a very transparent decision. Such as when they have the Council meeting, there isn't enough transparency about what's happening.</p> <p>Seems to always have issues going on and unhappy community members.</p> <p>Very top heavy, a lot of people in the office that are getting paid, and I would struggle to know what their role is....my opinion only.</p>





### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

**Table 8** below lists statistically significant differences among subgroups for all 2024 responses (n=400).

**Table 8** Reasons for Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	Female residents were more likely to mention Poor facilities and services (24%, compared to 12% of males).
<b>Age</b>	Residents aged 18-39 years had higher responses for Rates and charges too expensive/no value for money (47%, compared to 24% of those 60+).
<b>Location</b>	Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds had higher responses for Rural areas neglected/unfair distribution of services (17%, compared to 3% of those who lived in Merimbula and surrounds).  Residents who lived in Rural areas had higher responses for No problems with Council (14%, compared to 3% of those who lived in Merimbula and surrounds, and 3% of those who lived in Bega and surrounds).
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years had higher responses of Good services and facilities (11%, compared to 4% of those who had lived there 20+ years).  Residents who had lived in the Shire more than 20 years had higher responses for Council takes too long to act/red tape (21%, compared to 8% for those who had lived there less than 20 years).
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Homeowners had higher responses of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council takes too long to act/red tape (18%, compared to 4% of renters)</li> <li>• Rates and charges too expensive/no value for money (35%, compared to 9% of renters)</li> <li>• Issues with development and planning (9%, compared to 1% of renters)</li> <li>• Financial mismanagement by Council/wastage (21%, compared to 3% of renters)</li> </ul> Renters had higher responses of Good services and facilities (21%, compared to 4% of homeowners).

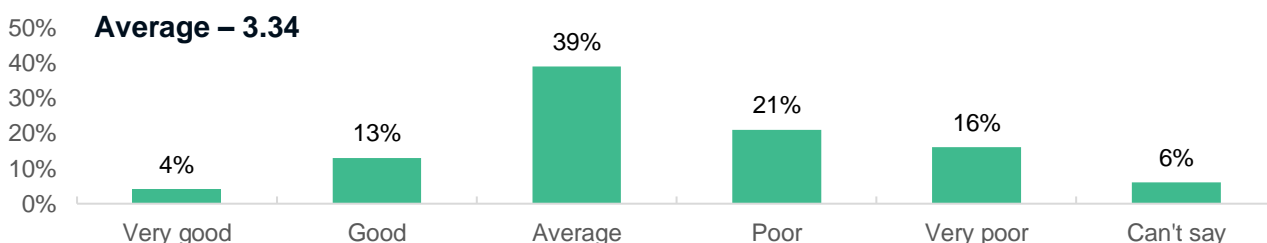
### 3.2. PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Residents were asked to rate BVSC for value for money in providing infrastructure and services to the community using a five-point scale between ‘very good’ and ‘very poor’.

**Figure 6** Value for Money

**Q: How would you rate Council at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**





### 3. OVERALL SATISFACTION

In total, 17% of residents felt Council provided value for money, with 4% providing the highest rating. Thirty-seven percent (37%) felt Council did not provide value for money while 39% provided a neutral rating (Figure 6, previous page). There were no significant differences among demographic subgroups in 2024. These results combined for a mean of 3.34 (with “1” being the best, “5” the worst).

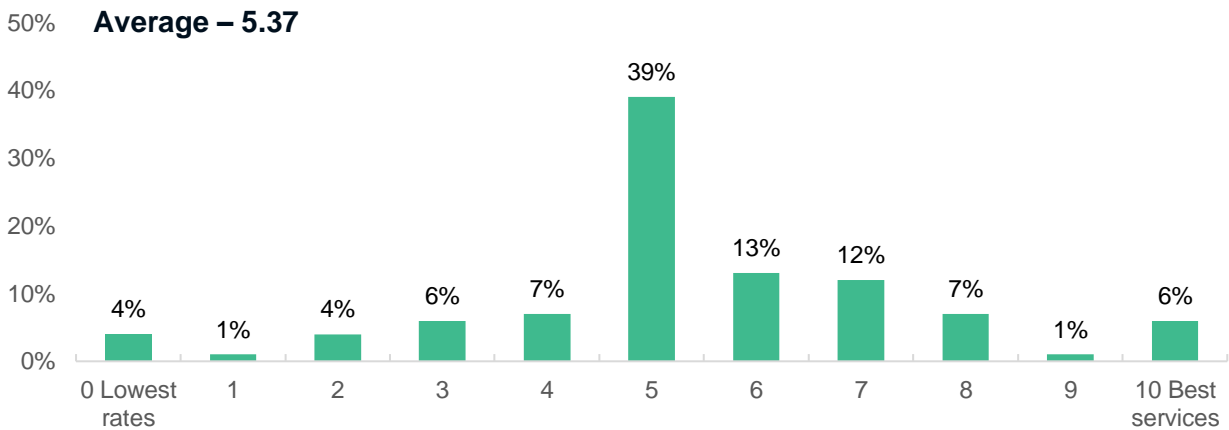
Residents were asked to choose a spot on a 0-10 scale, with the end points being the lowest possible rates and the best possible services.

In total, 39% of residents gave a response higher than 5 (best services over lowest rates), with 6% providing the highest rating of 10. Twenty-two percent (22%) gave a response lower than 5 (lowest rates over best services) while 39% provided a rating of 5 (Figure 7). These results combined for a mean of 5.37 out of 10.

**Figure 7** Scale between Lowest Rates and Best Services

**Q: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible services?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**



**Table 9** Scale between Lowest Rates and Best Services – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	Female residents were more in favour of the best services (mean 5.63) compared to males (5.07).
<b>Age</b>	Nil.
<b>Location</b>	Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds were more in favour of best services (5.83) compared to those in Rural areas (4.61).
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Nil.
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Renters were more in favour of best services (6.24) compared to homeowners (5.27).

## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION



This section reports on the facilities and services provided by Bega Valley Shire Council. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with 23 facilities and services, using a scale of one to five where one means “Very poor” and five means “Excellent”.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Council's road network             | 14. Council's Gallery - known as SECCA (the South East Centre for Contemporary Art) |
| 2. Footpaths and cycleways            | 15. Bega Civic Centre   |
| 3. Waste and recycling                | 16. Processing Development Applications   |
| 4. Water supply                       | 17. Ranger services (animals, illegal dumping)                                      |
| 5. Sewage services                    | 18. Parking enforcement   |
| 6. Parks and playgrounds              | 19. Weed control  |
| 7. Sporting facilities                | 20. Environmental protection  |
| 8. Council pools                      | 21. Planning/Managing residential growth  |
| 9. Merimbula Airport                  | 22. Building compliance   |
| 10. Council's childcare and preschool | 23. Tourism marketing (including Visitor Information Centres)                       |
| 11. Public toilets                    |   |
| 12. Libraries                         |   |
| 13. Community halls                   |   |

As shown in **Figure 8** (next page), 65% of residents did not give a score for Council's childcare and preschool. It is worth mentioning that they do not form part of the mean calculation at **Table 10** (two pages down)- so the decrease of 12% in the mean score for that measure between 2016 and 2024 is just from the one-third of respondents who could give a rating.

Council's gallery had 46% of residents not giving a score, which may present an opportunity to increase awareness or interest.

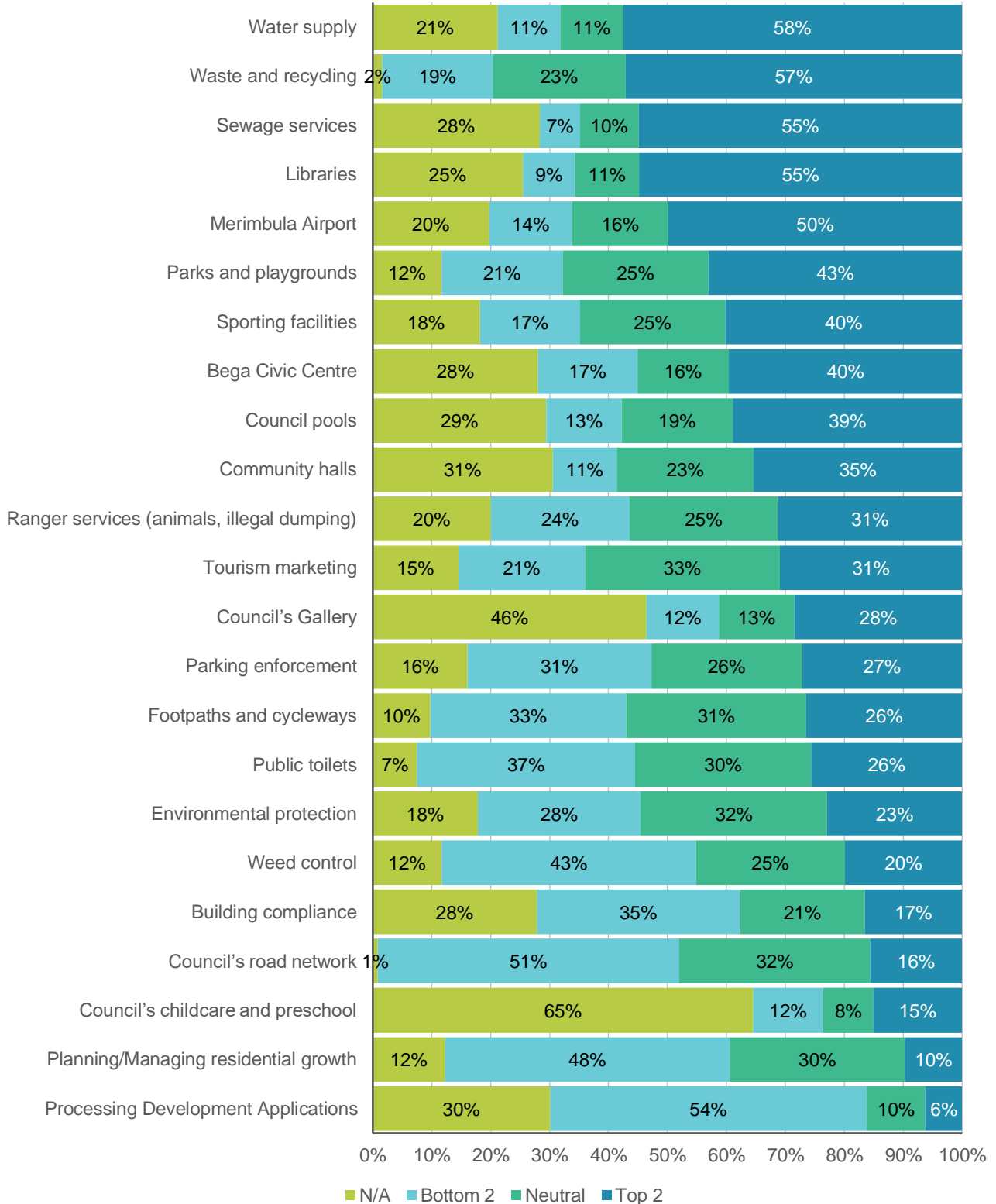
Nine times as many residents gave a negative (1-2 out of 5) rating for Processing Development Applications as gave a positive (4-5) rating in 2024, and as shown in **Figure 9** (5 pages down), BVSC was the lowest ranked for this in regional NSW.



## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

**Figure 8 Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction**

**Q: Can you please rate your satisfaction with the following Council facilities or services. We'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 means you think it's very poor and 5 is excellent. If you don't use the service, just say so and I'll move to the next one.**  
**Base: All respondents (n=400)**





## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

Sewerage services showed the largest increase in satisfaction from 2016 to 2024, and Weed control showed the largest decrease over that period (see **Table 10** below).

**Table 10** Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Internal Benchmarks (mean scores)

Facility or service	2006	2009	2012	2016	2024	2016 vs 2024
Sewerage services	3.4	4.0	3.6	3.5	4.0	+14%
Water supply	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.9	0
Libraries	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	0
Merimbula Airport	-	4.2	3.2	3.2	3.6	+13%
Waste and recycling	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.5	-5%
Bega Civic Centre	-	-	-	-	3.5	-
Council pools	3.0	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	0
Community halls	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.4	+6%
Council's Gallery	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.4	-3%
Parks and playgrounds	-	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3	0
Sporting facilities	-	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.3	-8%
Tourism marketing	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.5	3.1	-11%
Ranger services (animals, illegal dumping)	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.0	-9%
Council's childcare and preschool	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.0	-12%
Environmental protection	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.4	2.9	-15%
Parking enforcement	-	-	-	-	2.8	-
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	-	3.1	2.8	-10%
Public toilets	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.8	-7%
Building compliance	-	-	-	3.1	2.6	-16%
Weed control	3.3	3.4	2.9	3.0	2.5	-17%
Council's road network	-	-	-	-	2.4	-
Planning/Managing residential growth	-	-	-	-	2.3	-
Processing Development Applications	-	-	-	-	1.8	-



## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

As shown by the mean scores in **Table 11** (below) and **Table 12** (next page), how long a resident had lived in the Shire was the leading differentiator. Residents in Bermagui and surrounds seemed to be more often satisfied than those in other areas.

**Table 11** Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis 1

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Female residents had higher satisfaction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries (4.13, compared to 3.57 for male residents)</li> <li>• Community halls (3.57, compared to 3.25 for male residents)</li> <li>• Council's gallery (3.69, compared to 3.05 for male residents)</li> <li>• Tourism marketing (3.27, compared to 2.87 for male residents)</li> <li>• Ranger services (3.22, compared to 2.86 for male residents)</li> <li>• Parking enforcement (3.02, compared to 2.56 for male residents)</li> <li>• Planning/managing residential growth (2.45, compared to 2.14 for male residents)</li> <li>• Processing development applications (2.04, compared to 1.60 for male residents)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Residents aged 18-39 were more satisfied with Building compliance (3.00) than those 40-59 (2.30).</p> <p>Residents aged 40-59 were more satisfied with Environmental protection (3.12) than those aged 60+ (2.71).</p> <p>Residents aged 40-59 (3.57) and 60+ (3.84) were more satisfied with Waste and recycling than those aged 18-39 (2.92).</p> <p>Residents aged 40-59 (3.74) and 60+ (3.64) were more satisfied with Council gallery than those aged 18-39 (2.39).</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds (4.12) were more satisfied with Merimbula airport than residents who lived in Merimbula and surrounds (3.41).</p> <p>Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds (3.86) and Rural areas (3.83) were more satisfied with Community halls than residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (2.94), Merimbula and surrounds (3.30), and Bega and surrounds (3.34).</p> <p>Residents who lived in Rural areas (3.81) were more satisfied with Council's childcare and preschool than residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (2.65), Merimbula and surrounds (2.83), and Bega and surrounds (2.98).</p> <p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (3.44) and Bermagui and surrounds (3.37) were more satisfied with Parking enforcement than residents who lived in Merimbula and surrounds (2.62) and Bega and surrounds (2.70).</p> <p>Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds (3.31) were more satisfied with Public toilets than residents who lived in Merimbula and surrounds (2.74) and Bega and surrounds (2.55).</p>



## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

**Table 12** Council Facilities and Services Satisfaction – Subgroup Analysis 2

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries (4.06), compared to 3.79 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Waste and recycling (3.80), compared to 3.40 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Bega Civic Centre (3.72), compared to 3.28 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Council gallery (3.77), compared to 3.16 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Tourism marketing (3.34), compared to 2.92 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Ranger services (3.42), compared to 2.84 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Council's childcare and preschool (3.32), compared to 2.79 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Environmental protection (3.06), compared to 2.72 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Parking enforcement (3.07), compared to 2.65 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Public toilets (2.98), compared to 2.64 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Building compliance (2.95), compared to 2.42 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Weed control (2.82), compared to 2.38 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>• Processing development applications (2.07), compared to 1.68 for those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> </ul>
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Renters were more satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries (4.17), compared to 3.87 for homeowners</li> <li>• Bega Civic Centre (3.95), compared to 3.37 for homeowners</li> <li>• Parks and playgrounds (3.81), compared to 3.29 for homeowners</li> <li>• Council's childcare and preschool (3.66), compared to 2.90 for homeowners</li> <li>• Footpaths and cycleways (3.31), compared to 2.71 for homeowners</li> <li>• Planning/managing residential growth (2.89), compared to 2.22 for homeowners</li> <li>• Processing development applications (2.52), compared to 1.73 for homeowners</li> </ul>

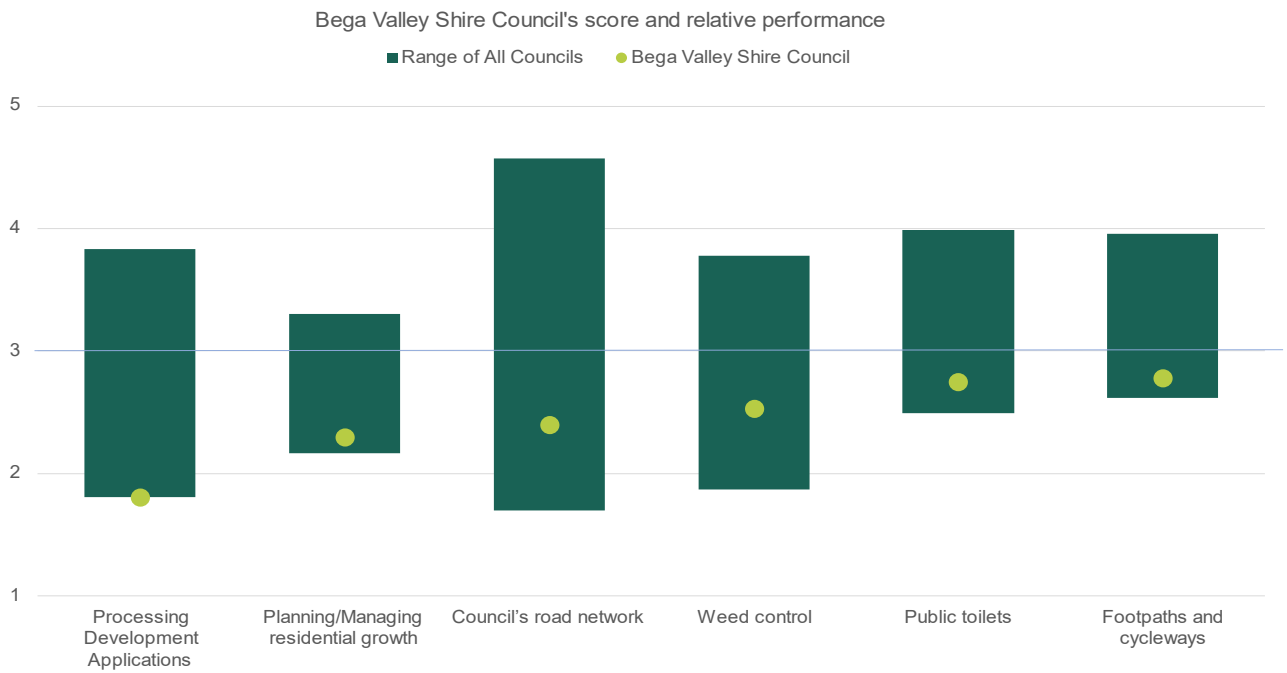


## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

### External Benchmarks

Taverner Research maintains a database of satisfaction scores for 35 regional NSW councils. The next two pages show how BVSC's performance compares to its regional peers. At each facility/service that could be compared, the bar shows the mean scores of these councils on the 1 to 5 scale, best through to the worst performing, and the dot shows where Bega Valley Shire Council 2024 sat in comparison. The longer bars are facilities/services with a higher degree of variance between best and worst performing regional NSW Councils (and/or that were asked about by more councils.)

**Figure 9** Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 1



**Figure 10** Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 2



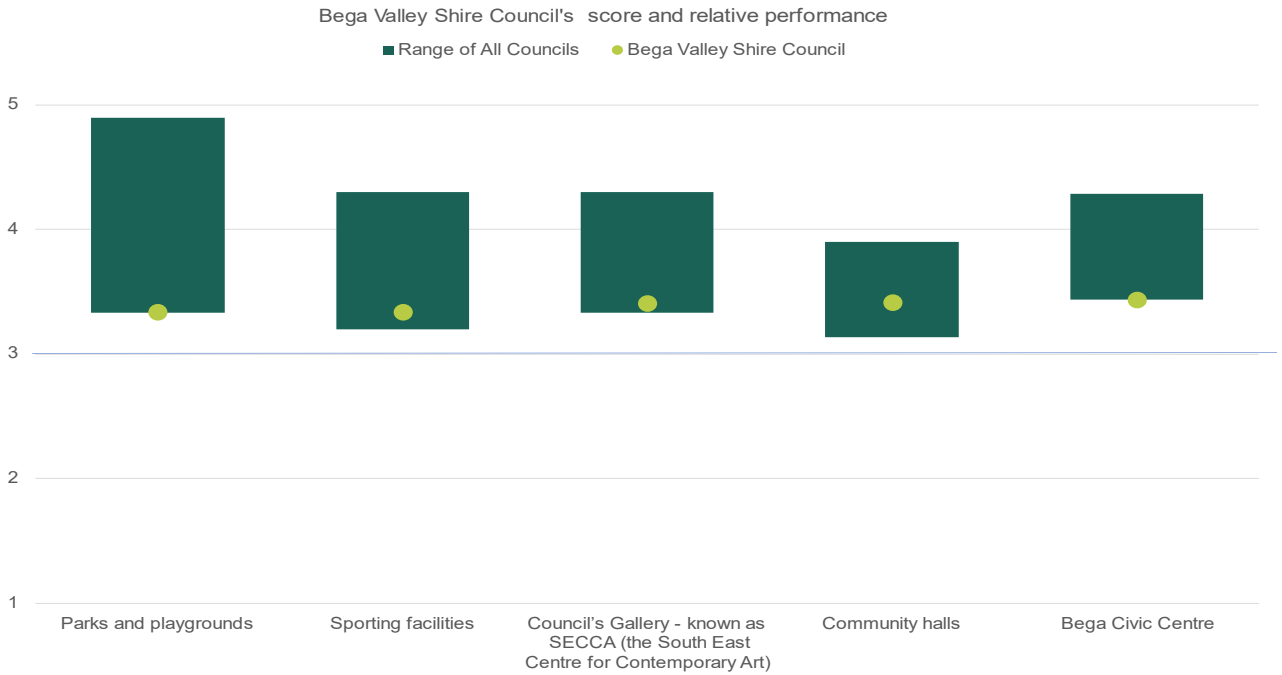




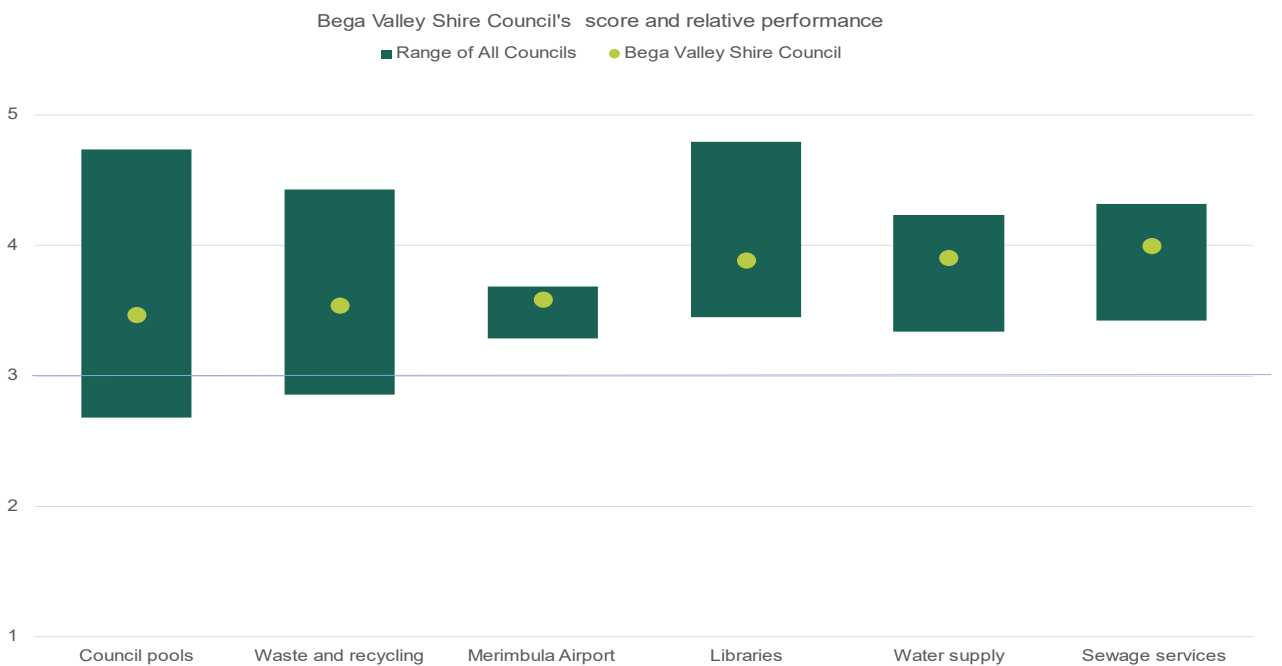
## 4. COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES SATISFACTION

As shown in **Figure 9** and **Figure 10** (previous page), and **Figure 11** and **Figure 12** (below), BVSC in 2024 was not best in class for any of the measures, and was the lowest performing Council for Processing development applications, Council’s childcare and preschool, Parks and playgrounds, and the Bega Civic Centre.

**Figure 11** Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 3



**Figure 12** Comparisons to Regional NSW Benchmarks 4





## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### 5.1. QUADRANT ANALYSIS

This section of the report aims to identify the key drivers of resident satisfaction via a deeper analysis of the relationship between overall satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council and satisfaction with services and facilities (as reported in the previous section).

Quadrant analysis simultaneously analyses the importance of a service in terms of driving overall satisfaction and the performance of services in terms of resident satisfaction. To do this, mean satisfaction scores are plotted against derived importance scores for each Council service. Importance scores are derived from regression analysis and are basically a factor of the relationship between satisfaction score for individual services, and overall satisfaction with Council.

To form quadrants, the average derived importance score and average satisfaction score across all services and facilities were calculated. Services and facilities with a mean satisfaction score less than the overall average were classified as 'lower' performing while those with a mean score above the average were classified as 'higher' performing. Similarly, services and facilities have 'higher' or 'lower' derived importance depending on their position above or below the overall average.

These scores do not suggest the facility or service is not important in the personal lives of residents. It strictly relates to *relative* importance in creating overall satisfaction with Council.

**Figure 13**, (over-page) is Council's performance/importance quadrant.

1. The upper right quadrant (high importance and high satisfaction) represents current service strengths or '**Strengths to maintain**'.
2. The upper left quadrant (high importance but low satisfaction) denotes services where satisfaction should be improved or '**Priorities for Council**'.
3. The lower left quadrant (relatively lower importance and relatively lower satisfaction) represents lower priority service dimensions or '**Second order issues**'.
4. The lower right quadrant (relatively lower importance and high satisfaction) represents Council's '**Opportunities**'. These are higher performing services that are not yet having a strong impact on creating overall satisfaction with Council.

The numbers shown in **Table 13** (over-page) match the services and facilities shown in **Figure 13**. (Note that services and facilities listed in are not in order of importance/satisfaction, but rather listed in numeric order as per the numbering shown in **Figure 13** for ease of reference.)

As shown in **Figure 13** (next page), in 2024 Council's road network, Planning/managing residential growth, and Processing development applications were an arc across the top left (the interaction of the highest importance and lowest satisfaction). A cluster of high satisfaction but low importance (bottom right) was formed by Sewage services, Water supply and Libraries.



## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**Figure 13** Quadrant Matrix



**Table 13** Summary of Quadrant Analysis

PRIORITIES FOR COUNCIL	STRENGTHS TO MAINTAIN
14 Council's childcare and preschool	4 Merimbula Airport
15 Environmental protection	5 Waste and recycling
17 Footpaths and cycleways	7 Bega Civic Centre
18 Public toilets	8 Community halls
19 Building compliance	9 Council's Gallery - known as SECCA (the South East Centre for Contemporary Art)
20 Weed control	
21 Council's road network	
22 Planning/Managing residential growth	
23 Processing Development Applications	
SECOND ORDER ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
12 Tourism marketing (including VICs)	1 Sewage services
13 Ranger services (animals, illegal dumping)	2 Water supply
16 Parking enforcement	3 Libraries
	6 Council pools
	10 Sporting facilities
	11 Parks and playgrounds



## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### 5.2. DRIVERS OF SATISFACTION

**Table 14** (below) shows derived importance for Council services and facilities – a correlation<sup>1</sup> between satisfaction with the individual measures, and overall satisfaction with Council. The higher the correlation, the more likely that this facility or service will influence a resident's overall satisfaction score (with a correlation above 0.60 considered useful). The top five of the 23 measures that respondents rated in 2024 are shown.

The top two measures had a correlation coefficient well ahead of the following three.

**Table 14** Top Drivers of Satisfaction

Measure	Correlation coefficient
Council's road network	0.583
Planning/Managing residential growth	0.567
Environmental protection	0.484
Public toilets	0.483
Council's Gallery - known as SECCA (the South East Centre for Contemporary Art)	0.481

<sup>1</sup> Pearson's correlation [https://wiki.q-researchsoftware.com/wiki/Pearson%27s\\_Product\\_Moment\\_Correlation](https://wiki.q-researchsoftware.com/wiki/Pearson%27s_Product_Moment_Correlation)



## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

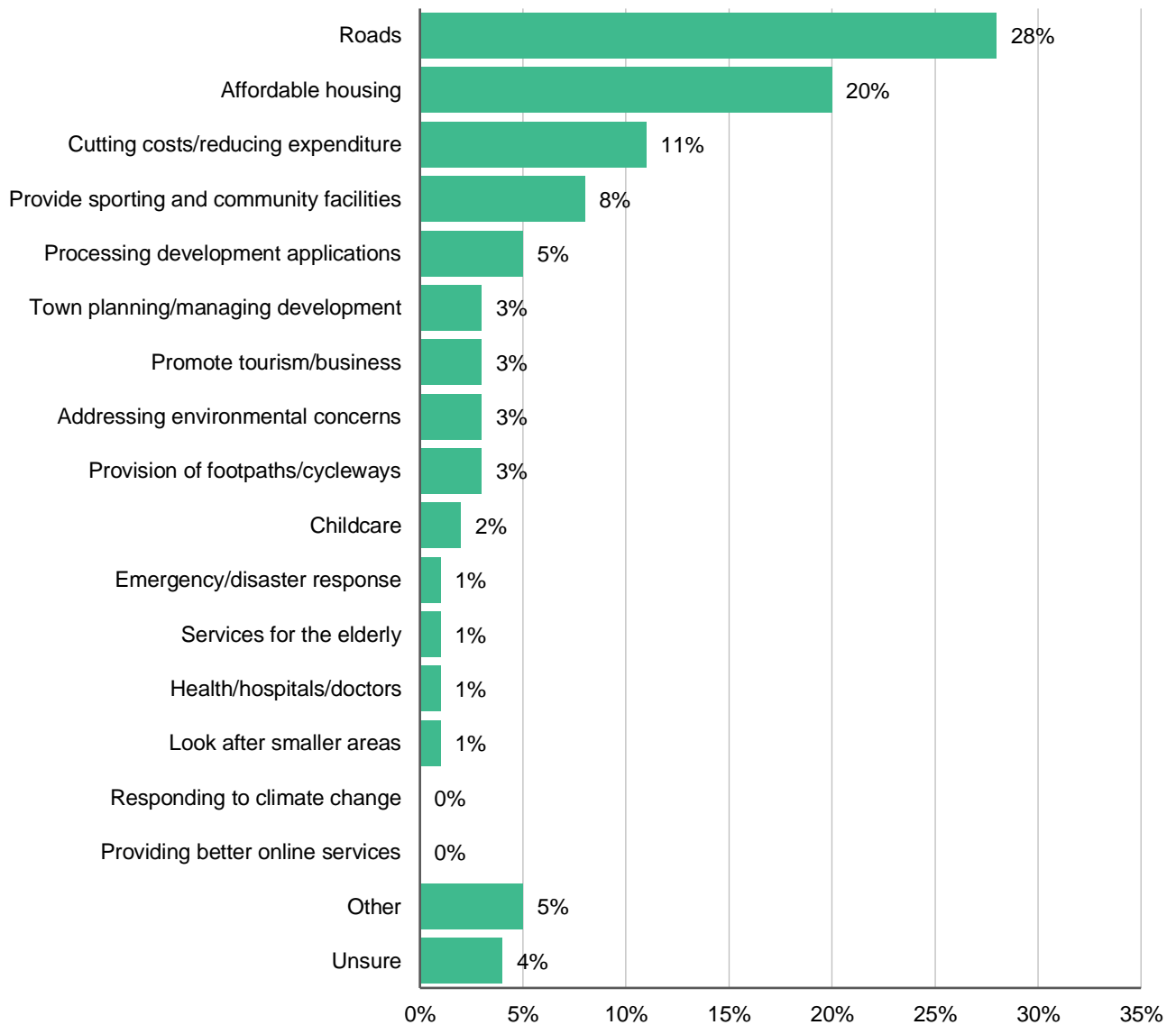
### 5.3. HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRIORITIES

Residents were asked (unprompted) to name what they believe should be Council's top priority over the next five years. **Figure 14** (below) lists the categories of responses.

**Figure 14** Top Priority

**Q: And thinking about Council services and infrastructure as a whole, what do you think Council's top priority should be over the next five years?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**





## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**Table 15** Top Priority – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Male residents were more likely to say Cutting costs/reducing expenditure (15%, compared to 7% of females).</p> <p>Female residents were more likely to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare (3%, compared to 0% of males)</li> <li>• Health/hospitals/doctors (2%, compared to 0% of males)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Residents aged 18-39 (15%) and 40-59 (10%) were more likely to say Providing sporting and community facilities, compared to 4% of those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 60+ (5%) were more likely to say Promote tourism/business than those aged 18-39 (0%).</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds were more likely to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote tourism/business (11%, compared to 1% of those who lived in Bega and surround)</li> <li>• Look after smaller areas (4%, compared to 0% of those who lived in Bega and surround)</li> </ul>
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	<p>Residents who had lived in the Shire more than 20 years were more likely to say Cutting costs/reducing expenditure (14%, compared to 7% of those who had lived there less than 20 years).</p>
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	<p>Homeowners were more likely to say Cutting costs/reducing expenditure (13%, compared to 0% of renters).</p>

Residents were asked (open-ended) to nominate any particular Council services they believe should have their funding reduced. All responses have been provided to Council in a separate delivery. Thematic analysis was used to categorise into key themes. **Figure 15** (next page) lists the categories of responses.

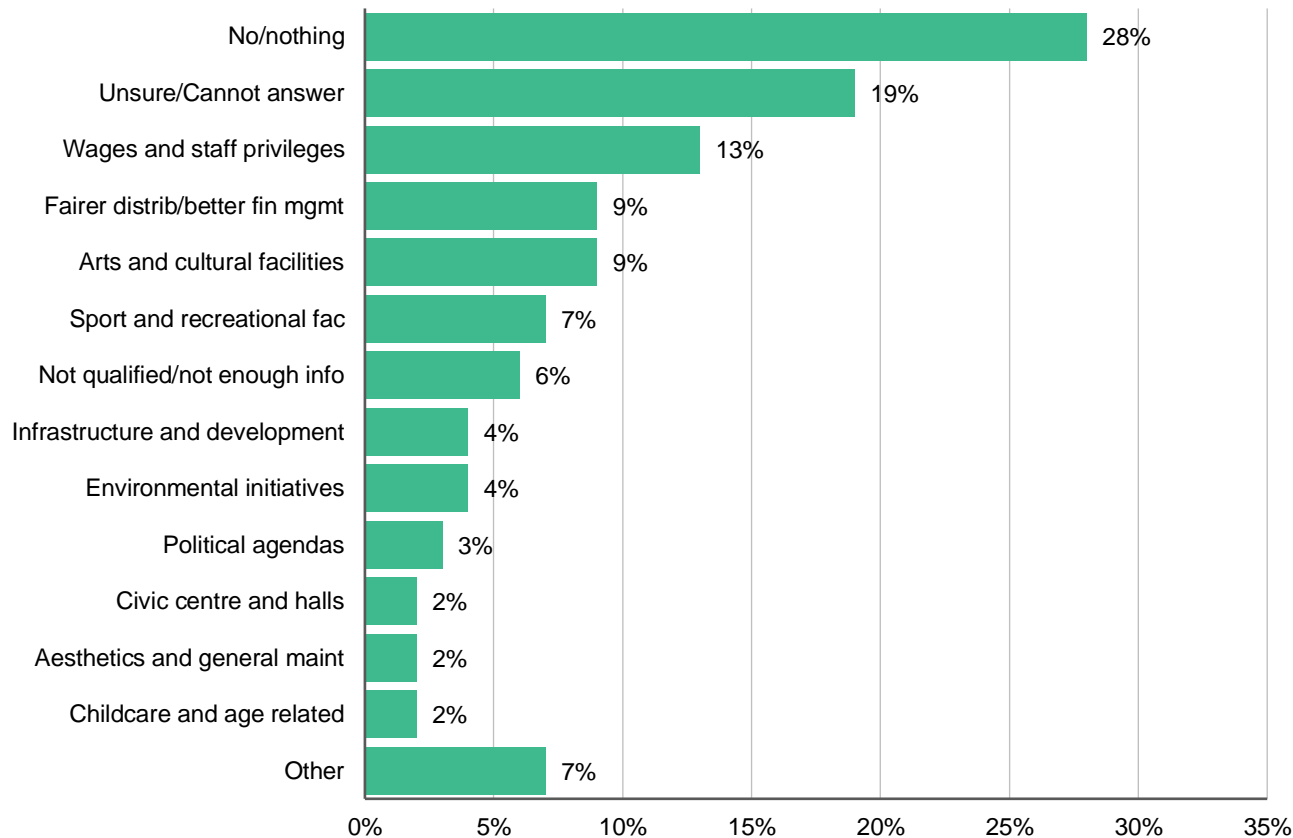


## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**Figure 15** Prefer Defunded

**Q: Are there any particular Council services that you think deserve less or no funding?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**



**Table 16** (below) and **Table 17** (next page) shows some quotes by topic for respondents in 2024.

**Table 16** Verbatims from Prefer Defunded 1

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Fairer distribution of funds/better financial management</b>	Spending too much in Bega, there is less funding out of town.
	I don't think they should pay these blokes that take a week to complete a one-day job. The workers got to work harder.
	They duplicate state run services - multicultural officer.
	I feel that they're concentrating on Bega...not so much on the whole valley.
	Waste of money building some of the buildings. Too much in Bega not enough in other towns.
	The buildings they have bought that haven't been used for anything such as the old hospital, and a reckoning of why they bought it and what are their plans for it.
	Stop buying unnecessary buildings for nothing e.g. they bought the tavern at Tura beach for an art gallery.



## 5. PRIORITISING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**Table 17** Verbatims from Prefer Defunded 2

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Fairer distribution of funds/better financial management</b>	<p>Less funding for planning and just get the job done. No one makes a decision because they might upset someone else.</p> <p>I think that anything more than roads and rubbish, Council shouldn't be involved. Council spends money promoting environmental issues and advocates instead of just providing books in libraries.</p> <p>Merimbula town they overspend all the time.</p> <p>Libraries and childcare, people who access those should have to pay for it themselves, they cater for people in townships only and not people on rural properties.</p> <p>They do a good job but do not use their money wisely. When they do the shades sales on the weekend, the Council workers get overtime. They do not trim the trees when the events are on, no planning.</p> <p>I believe in more for families and lowering rates to make it more affordable for everybody as ours are about to go up again. We pay \$4700 a year and they reckon it's going to be \$8000 a year.</p> <p>Basketball court got demolished and they built a brand new one and a lot of resources were wasted in the demolition and there was no need to build a new one and sink that amount of money into building a new one.</p> <p>Buying commercial properties and I've wondered why. They bought a pub in Eden and I don't know why a Council needs a pub.</p> <p>Just look after roads and rubbish and stop wasting and mismanaging finances.</p> <p>The rural properties that pay for gutter and wastewater services that don't get anything for them.</p>

**Table 18** Prefer Defunded – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Male residents were more likely to say Environmental initiatives (7%, compared to 2% of females).</p> <p>Female residents were more likely to say Civic centre and community halls (4%, compared to 0% of males).</p>
<b>Age</b>	Residents aged 40-59 (20%) were more likely to say Council wages and privileges than those aged 60+ (9%).
<b>Location</b>	Nil.
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 10 years were more likely to say Arts and cultural facilities (15%, compared to 6% of those who had lived longer than 20 years).
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	<p>Homeowners (15%) were more likely to say Council wages and privileges than renters (0%).</p> <p>Renters were more likely to say Political agendas (12%, compared to 2% of homeowners).</p>





## 6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

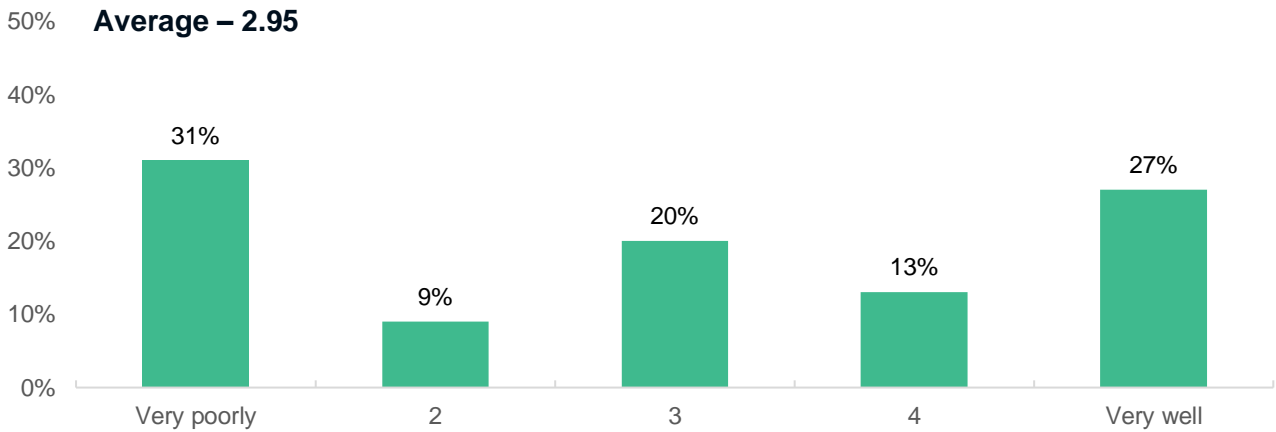
This section of the report covers Bega Valley Shire Council’s customer services and communication. It includes recent contact with Council and satisfaction with the handling of last inquiry, preferred sources of information about Council activities, and preferred method of contact for a range of issues.

### 6.1. RECENT CONTACT WITH COUNCIL

Fifty percent (50%) of 2024 residents surveyed had contacted Council in the past 12 months, with no significant differences among demographic subgroups. Customers (those who had contacted Council customer service) were asked to rate how their most recent enquiry was handled, and as shown in **Figure 16** below, the responses were somewhat polarised, with 58% of customers selecting either the highest or the lowest score.

**Figure 16** Way Council Handled Last Enquiry

**Q: 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?**  
**Base: Respondents who had contacted Council in 12 months (n=196)**



The only significant difference among demographic subgroups for how Council handled their last enquiry was that residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years rated this higher (mean 3.35), compared to a mean of 2.76 for those who had lived in the Shire for 20+ years.

### 6.2. COMMUNICATION

Residents were next asked their preferred method for conducting six different types of business with Council.

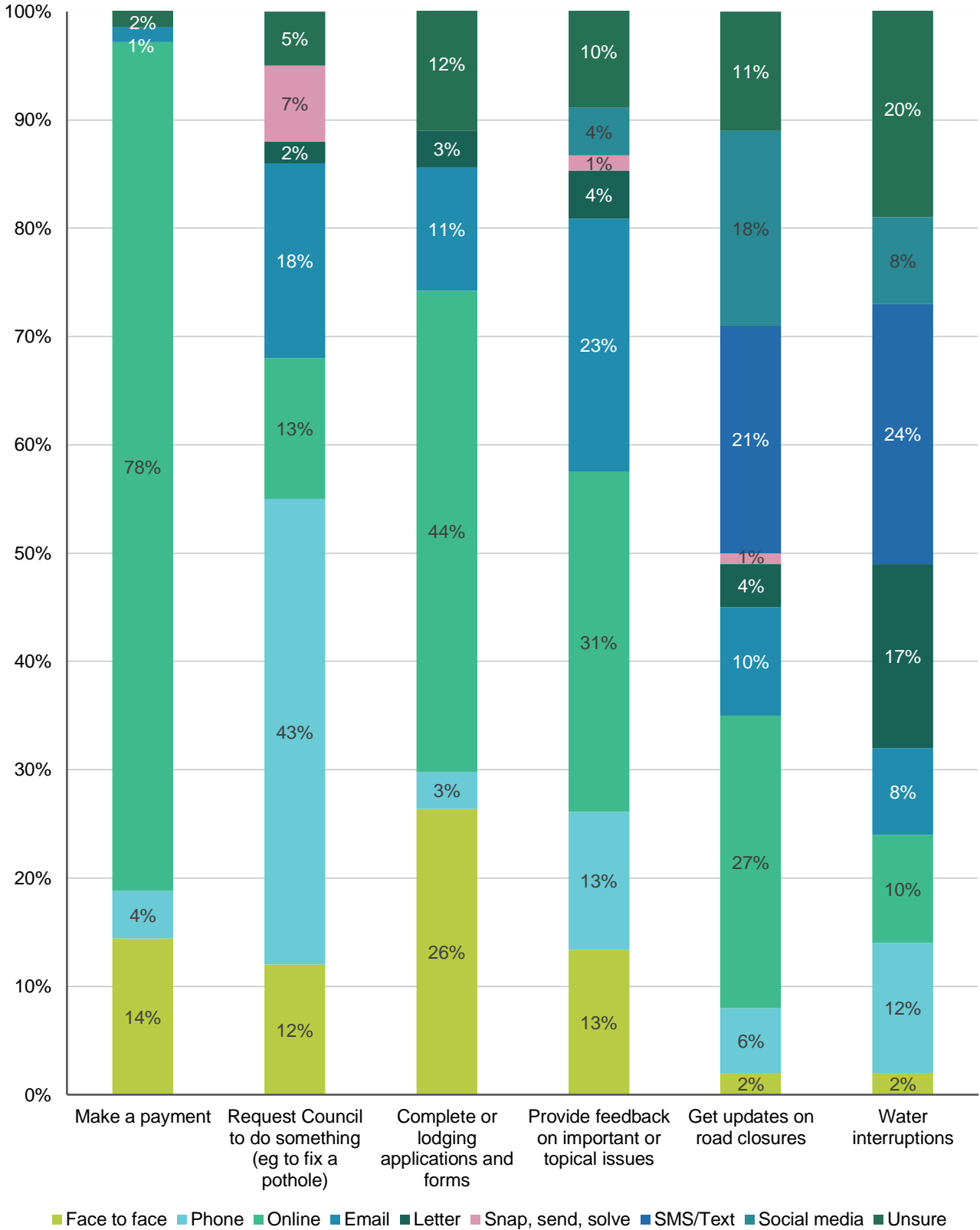
As shown in **Figure 17** (next page), Online was the highest response for four of the six types of interaction, and particularly dominant for Making a payment. Phone was preferred by 43% when Requesting Council to do something e.g., fix a pothole. SMS and Social media only really came through for Getting updates on road closures, and Water interruptions. The second most preferred way of finding out about Water interruptions was by Letter.



## 6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

Figure 17 Channel Prefer

**Q: In your dealings with Council, how would you prefer to conduct the following?**  
**Base: All respondents (n=400)**





## 6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

**Table 19** Channel Prefer – Subgroup Analysis 1

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	Female residents were more likely to prefer SMS/text for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting updates on road closures (28%, compared to 13% of males)</li> <li>• Water interruptions (32%, compared to 16% of males)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Residents aged 18-39 (94%) and 40-59 (85%) were more likely to prefer Online for Making a payment, compared to 66% for those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 18-39 (26%) were more likely to prefer Online for Requesting Council to do something, compared to 7% for those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 18-39 (66%) and 40-59 (54%) were more likely to prefer Online for Completing or lodging applications or forms, compared to 27% for those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 18-39 (46%) were more likely to prefer Online for Providing feedback on important or topical issues, compared to 22% for those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 18-39 (11%) and 40-59 (12%) were more likely to prefer Snap Send Solve for Requesting Council to do something, compared to 3% for those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 60+ were more likely to prefer Face to face for Making a payment (22%), compared to 4% for 18–39-year-olds preferring this, and 10% for 40–59-year-olds.</p> <p>Residents aged 40-59 (22%) and 60+ (40%) were more likely to prefer Face to face for Completing or lodging applications or forms compared to residents aged 18-39 (6%).</p> <p>Residents aged 40-59 (16%) and 60+ (17%) were more likely to prefer Face to face for Providing feedback on important or topical issues compared to residents aged 18-39 (3%).</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds were more likely to prefer Phone for Making a payment (16%), compared to 2% for those both in Bega and surrounds and in Rural areas.</p> <p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (11%) and Bermagui and surrounds (14%) were more likely to prefer Phone for Completing and lodging applications and forms, compared to 1% for those in Merimbula and surrounds and 2% for those in Bega and surrounds.</p> <p>Residents who lived in Merimbula and surrounds were more likely to prefer Phone for Getting updates on road closures (9%), compared to 2% for those in Bega and surrounds.</p> <p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds were more likely to prefer Phone for Making a payment (16%), compared to 2% for those both in Bega and surrounds, and in Rural areas.</p> <p>Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds were more likely to prefer Snap Send Solve for Water interruptions (3%), compared to 0% for those both in Merimbula and surrounds, and Bega and surrounds.</p>



## 6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

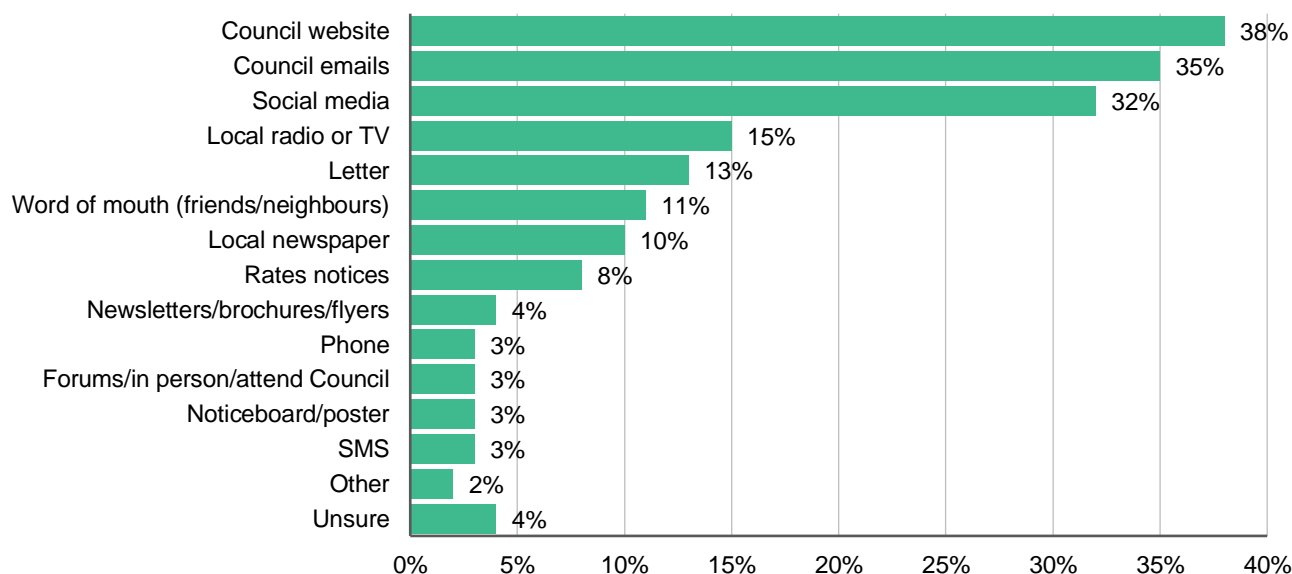
**Table 20** Channel Prefer – Subgroup Analysis 2

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	<p>Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to prefer Phone for Making a payment (7%), compared to 3% for those who had lived in the LGA for 20+ years.</p> <p>Residents who had lived in the Shire more than 20 years were more likely to prefer Phone for Requesting Council to do something (47%), compared to 34% for those who had lived in the LGA less than 20 years.</p> <p>Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to prefer Email for Requesting Council to do something (24%), compared to 14% for those who had lived in the LGA for 20+ years.</p> <p>Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to prefer Snap Send Solve for Getting updates on road closures (3%), compared to 0% for those who had lived in the LGA for 20+ years.</p> <p>Residents who had lived in the Shire more than 20 years were more likely to prefer Letter for Water interruptions (21%), compared to 11% for those who had lived in the LGA less than 20 years.</p>
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	<p>Renters were more likely to prefer Online for Requesting Council to do something (25%), compared to 10% for homeowners.</p> <p>Renters were more likely to prefer Letter for Completing or lodging applications and forms (12%), compared to 2% for homeowners.</p> <p>Renters were more likely to prefer Online for Providing feedback on important or topical issues (52%), compared to 28% for homeowners.</p> <p>Homeowners were more likely to prefer Email for Getting updates on road closures (12%), compared to 2% for renters.</p> <p>Renters were more likely to prefer Online for Water interruptions (23%), compared to 8% for homeowners.</p>

**Figure 18** Preferred Sources of Information

**Q: What are your preferred ways of finding out about Bega Valley Shire Council activities or policies, or changes in Council activities?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**





## 6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

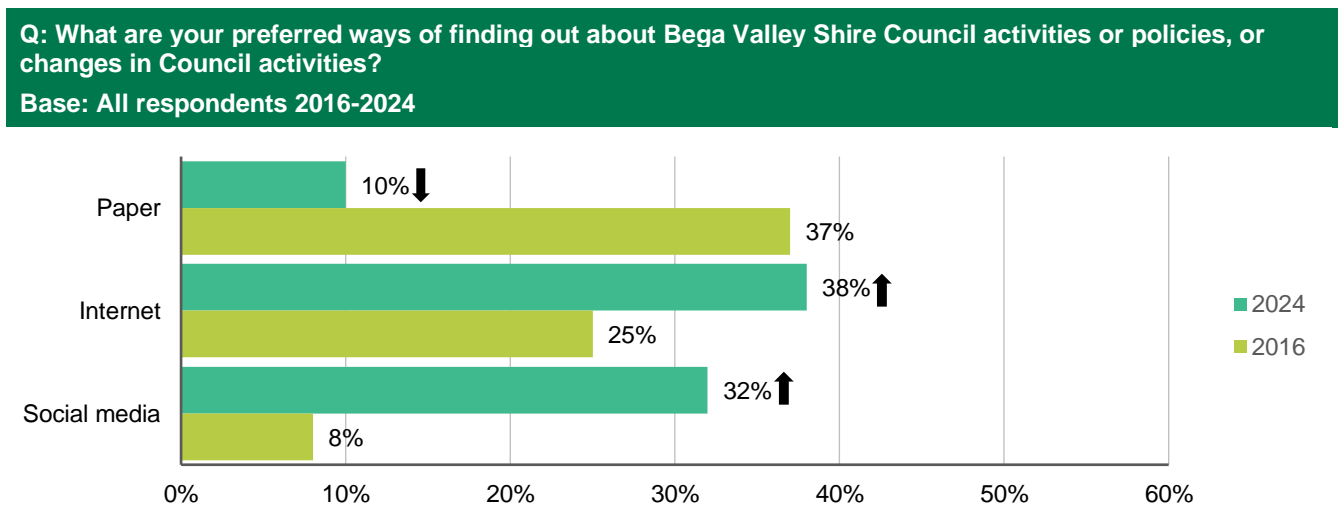
Respondents were asked unprompted for (up to three of) their preferred sources of Council information, with low-marginal-cost electronic media dominating (see **Figure 18**, previous page).

**Table 21** Preferred Sources of Information – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	Female residents were more likely to say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media (42%, compared to 22% of males)</li> <li>• SMS (4%, compared to 1% of males)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	Residents aged 18-39 (48%) were more likely to say Council emails, compared to 27% of those aged 60+. Residents aged 18-39 (43%) and 40-59 (44%) were more likely to say Social media, compared to 18% of those aged 60+. Residents aged 60+ (18%) were more likely to say Local newspaper, compared to 3% of those aged 18-39 and 4% of those 40-59.
<b>Location</b>	Residents who lived in Merimbula and surrounds (44%) were more likely than those in Eden and surrounds (14%) to say Council emails. Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (7%) and Merimbula and surrounds (6%) were more likely to say Phone than those who lived in Bega and surrounds (0%). Residents who lived in Bermagui and surrounds (11%) and Rural areas (5%) were more likely to say Noticeboard/poster, compared to those who lived in Merimbula and surrounds (0%).
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to say Council website (46%), compared to 34% of those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years.
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Nil.

**Figure 19** below shows some of the preferred sources of information in 2024 compared to 2016. “Radio” in 2016 was not included, it does not compare sufficiently with “Radio/TV” in 2024. As shown by the arrows, each of the responses that could be compared were significantly different between 2016 and 2024.

**Figure 19** Preferred Sources of Information (2016 v 2024)





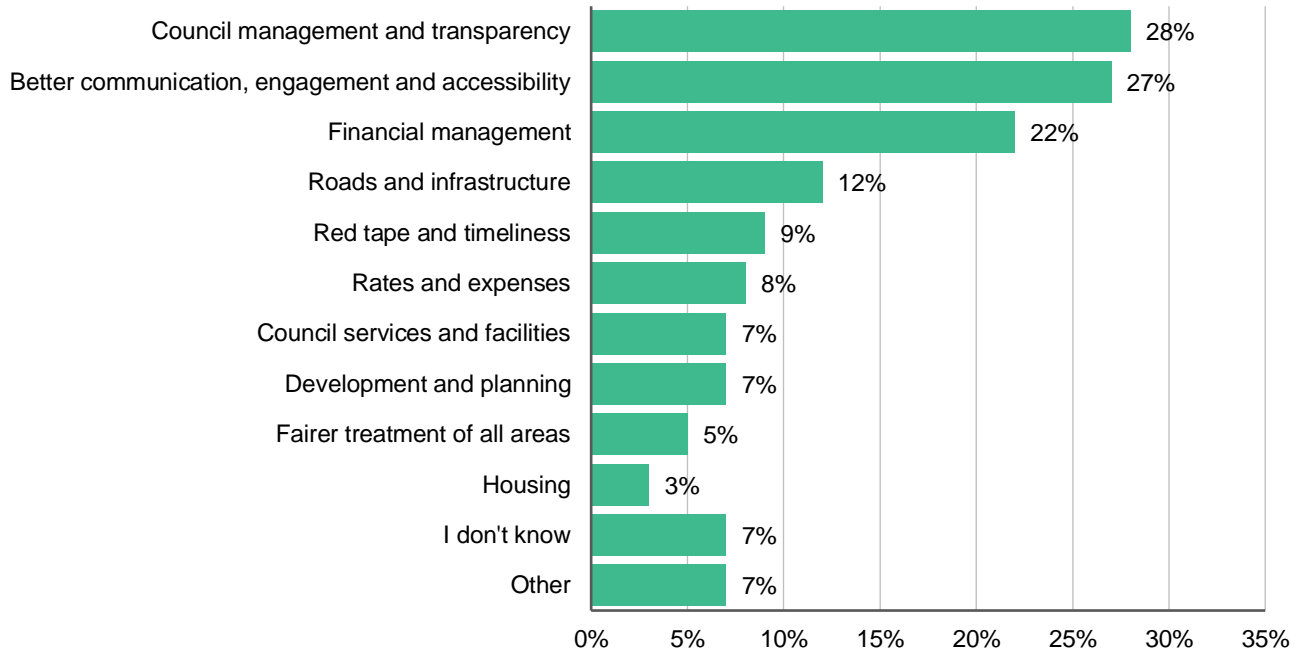
## 7. COUNCIL AND REGION

Near the end of the interview, respondents were asked two open-ended questions (**Figure 20** below, and **Figure 21**, two pages down). A full list of open-ended responses has been provided to Council in a separate delivery.

**Figure 20** Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness

**Q: What does Council most need to do to improve its effectiveness?**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**



**Table 22** (below) and **Table 23** (next page) show some quotes by topic for respondents in 2024.

**Table 22** Verbatims from Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness 1

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Council management and transparency</b>	Have less holidays and afternoons off. Every time I ring, they're on morning tea, I don't know.
	Get some decent councillors that look at the broad picture rather than people pushing their own agendas for little area.
	I don't think the councillors don't know what happens in the Council on a daily basis. I don't know whether the heads of each section report to the councillors, but they need to.
	Stay out of politics - there's so many people that make their choices for the Shire based on their political leaning.
	They've got to relook at their agenda and work out what the priorities for Bega Valley are and not necessarily the priorities of the individual councillors.
	Transparency in funding for projects and activities. E.g. would be they just put a monstrosity out the front of the civic centre in Bega where was the funding from grant or rate payer funded and how much did it cost.



## 7. COUNCIL AND REGION

**Table 23** Verbatims from Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness 2

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Council management and transparency</b>	<p>Transparency during consultations. I'm sure they do it, but it doesn't translate like that.</p> <p>They need to become more efficient. They're too top heavy with management and bringing in outside assistance and they spend thousands on their advice and then ignore it.</p> <p>Employ better staff. A lot of the workers in Council consider it to be a government job and they can stand around and do nothing.</p> <p>Sort out any issues at hand, instead of introducing new infrastructures. Not taking on new initiatives when there is current issues which need fixing.</p> <p>Gain the trust of the community. They can do this by engaging and being more open with the people. A lot of rate rises but we don't see a lot of investment such as the conditions of roads are poor.</p> <p>Need to ensure that their frontline contact people are suitably trained &amp; have the ability to pass queries on to the respective specialty area rather than just be the gate keepers.</p> <p>Put in an arbitrator, to get things done instead of fighting all the time.</p> <p>They should get their act together; the Council is top heavy, and people should be able to multitask at Council.</p> <p>Be more brutal, flick the people who aren't up to standard.</p> <p>They need to go and look around Australia at what other towns are doing, so they can improve on the way they handle upgrades, community issues and town planning.</p> <p>Being able to have the 'right' people to do the job properly.</p> <p>A little bit more transparency of where the money goes, just the Council budget, what goes into sports, roads, services and staffing.</p> <p>Focus on one project at a time.</p>

**Table 24** Most Need to do to Improve Effectiveness – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Male residents were more likely to say Development and planning (11%, compared to 3% of females).</p> <p>Female residents were more likely to say Better communication, engagement and accessibility (32%, compared to 21% of males).</p>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Residents aged 40-59 (10%) were more likely to say Fair treatment of all areas compared to 0% of those aged 18-39 and 3% of those aged 60+.</p> <p>Residents aged 60+ (18%) were more likely to say Local newspaper, compared to 3% of those aged 18-39 and 4% of those 40-59.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (14%) and Rural areas (11%) were more likely than those in Merimbula and surrounds (2%) to say Fairer treatment of all areas.</p>
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	<p>Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to say Better communication, community engagement and accessibility (36%), compared to 22% of those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years.</p> <p>Residents who had lived in the Shire more than 20 years were more likely to say Council management and transparency (31%, compared to 20% of those who had lived in there less than 20 years).</p>
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	<p>Renters (8%) were more likely to say Housing, compared to homeowners (2%).</p>

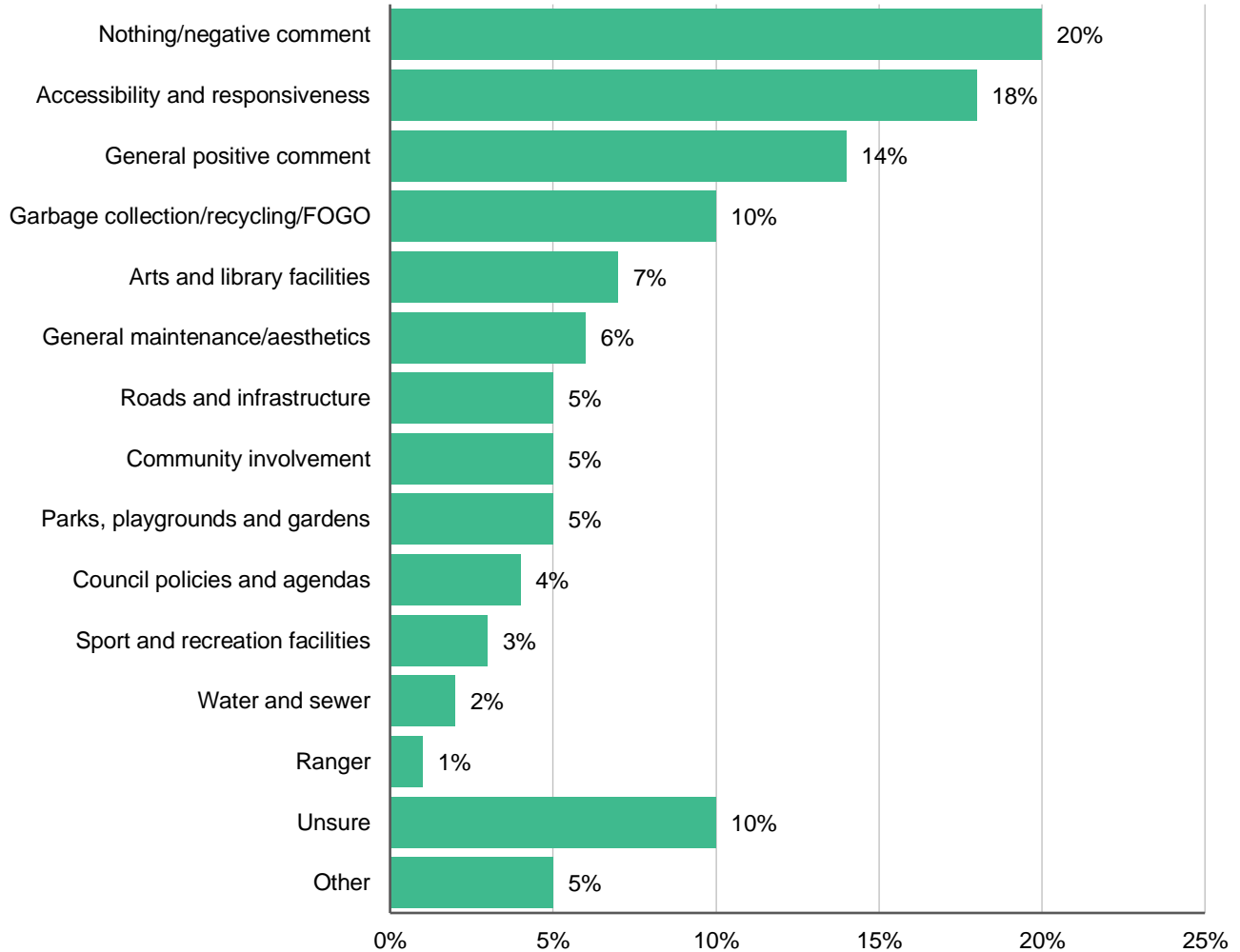


## 7. COUNCIL AND REGION

**Figure 21** One Best Thing about Council

**Q: Please tell me what is the one best thing about Council? It could be about any of the issues or services we have covered in this survey, or it could be about something else altogether.**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**



**Table 25** (below) and **Table 26** (next page) show some quotes by topic for respondents in 2024.

**Table 25** Verbatims from One Best Thing about Council 1

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Accessibility and responsiveness</b>	Our local member keeps the community up to date with what Council is doing such as the roads, when bridges are down.
	With work I find the girls on the switchboard very helpful and knowledgeable.
	I think the Council activities e.g. welcoming days for new residents and refugees. They have an open attitude towards people.
	They are good at communications. People need to know what is going on.
	I find them pretty accessible, courteous and helpful.





## 7. COUNCIL AND REGION

**Table 26** Verbatims from One Best Thing about Council 2

Code applied	Respondent's comment
<b>Accessibility and responsiveness</b>	<p>I like that I feel it is approachable and don't feel that it is not too difficult to talk to them.</p> <p>From my opinion our current mayor is exceedingly accessible that would be the biggest thing.</p> <p>There are certain members of the team that are outstanding and have their hearts in the right place, but they get bogged down with the operation and bureaucracy.</p> <p>Efficiency at answering emails.</p> <p>They listen to you and take to heart what you are talking about.</p> <p>They are in touch; they know what is going on.</p> <p>All the staff in the real world are really polite. They did a great job in every possible way cleaning up after the bush fires.</p> <p>I can walk up to the mayor and say g'day. Very approachable.</p> <p>The communication in general regarding things like road closures. Also, critical things we need to know.</p> <p>Just being there and being available. If one has a problem, say the road torn up or something like that, you can always tell the Council, they are available.</p> <p>At least they are doing this survey which could mean they are interested in residents' opinions on services and getting community feedback.</p> <p>I suppose it's the number of avenues available to communicate with the Council to get your views across.</p> <p>I think it's a large area and they are doing their best and I think the area is too big to manage.</p>
<b>General positive comment</b>	<p>Personally, I think they are doing a fantastic job under the restrictions of money.</p> <p>They try to do the best for the community in general, make sure that the seaside isn't favoured over the other little places like Candelo.</p> <p>We have some good councillors.</p> <p>They try quite hard; a very small population base covers a very large area so they will never satisfy everybody.</p> <p>They have a hell of a job to do, and it is not easy they can only do their best which I think they are doing their best.</p> <p>The Council has integrity and has potential to make this beautiful area very great, it just needs further refining.</p> <p>They are trying to make an effort to improve the community in the valley.</p> <p>Stability of governance.</p> <p>Somebody else is doing the job and I don't have to.</p> <p>Most of the councillors will connect with other people in the community. the mayor is very good with connecting with people. Being present at events and just showing up to things, such as being at my Lions club, sporting events and other community events.</p> <p>The mayor he is a good bloke, and he is out there having a go.</p> <p>They are doing a pretty good job overall for the size of the Shire, as it's a big Shire and there's lots to do.</p> <p>They provided a lot of services in the 40 years we've been here. The place is clean &amp; tidy, and they get around to fixing things.</p>



## 7. COUNCIL AND REGION

**Table 27** One Best Thing about Council – Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup	Significant differences
<b>Gender</b>	Male residents (28%) were more likely to say Nothing/negative comment than females (13%). Female residents were more likely to say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and library facilities (11%, compared to 2% of males)</li> <li>Community involvement and services (9%, compared to 1% of males)</li> <li>Water and sewer (3%, compared to 0% of males)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	Nil.
<b>Location</b>	Residents who lived in Eden and surrounds (11%) and Bermagui and surrounds (14%) were more likely to say General maintenance and aesthetics, compared to those who lived in Rural areas (0%).
<b>Length of time lived in LGA</b>	Residents who had lived in the Shire less than 20 years were more likely to say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council policies and agendas (7%), compared to 2% of those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> <li>Water and sewer (4%), compared to 1% of those who had lived in the LGA 20+ years</li> </ul>
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Renters were more likely to say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roads and infrastructure (15%, compared to 4% of homeowners)</li> <li>Community involvement and services (15%, compared to 4% of homeowners)</li> </ul>

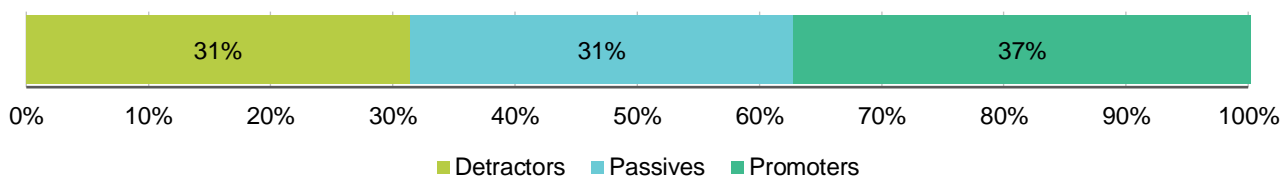
The final question, a Net Promoter Score for the Bega Valley region, was introduced in 2024 to understand the community’s connection to Bega Valley and establish a benchmark of people who advocate for the Shire as a place to live.

As shown in **Figure 22** below, the 2024 Net Promoter Score (percentage rating 9-10 “Promoters”, minus the percentage rating 0-6 “Detractors”) was +6. The 2024 mean was a high 7.24.

**Figure 22** Net Promoter Score

**Q: Thinking more broadly now about the Bega Valley region as a whole, how likely is it that you would recommend living in the Bega Valley to others? We’ll use a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all, and 10 means extremely likely.**

**Base: All respondents (n=400)**



The only significant difference among demographic subgroups for how likely they would be to recommend the Bega Valley as a place to live was that residents aged 60+ rated this higher (mean 7.84), compared to a mean of 6.46 for those aged 18-39 and a mean of 6.96 for those aged 40-59.

## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

As detailed in Section Opt-In Survey, page 9 of this report, an online and paper version of the CATI (Telephone) survey was made available to all BVSC residents via a link on the Have Your Say page of Council website, social media posts, Council newsletter and QR code. By survey completion deadline, 798 residents had taken the opportunity to provide feedback via the opt-in version of the survey.

Below and over the next pages are the (representative) random versus (self-selecting) opt-in responses (for all quantitative questions) shown side-by-side, qualitative comments have been supplied to Council as a separate spreadsheet. Significant differences between random and opt-in responses in each row are highlighted **blue** for significantly higher, and **red** for significantly lower.

By and large, **self-selecting satisfaction scores were lower than for the representative survey**. This is quite typical of Council community satisfaction surveys, as opt-in results tend to be biased towards those with strong views (and hence less likely to capture the “middle ground” encountered via the random methodology).

**Table 28** Random versus Opt-in Results 1

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Overall satisfaction</b>	1 Very dissatisfied	17%	46%
	2	26%	28%
	3	37%	19%
	4	15%	6%
	5 Very satisfied	4%	1%
	Mean	2.62	1.89
<b>Value for money</b>	1 Very good value	4%	4%
	2 Good	13%	5%
	3 Average	39%	21%
	4 Poor	21%	21%
	5 Very poor value	16%	47%
	Can't say	6%	2%
	Mean	3.34	4.02



## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 29** Random versus Opt-in Results 2

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Lowest rates v best services</b>	0 Lowest rates	4%	15%
	1	1%	3%
	2	4%	7%
	3	6%	11%
	4	7%	7%
	5	39%	31%
	6	13%	10%
	7	12%	9%
	8	7%	5%
	9	1%	0%
	10 Best services	6%	3%
	Mean	5.37	4.23
<b>Likelihood recommend Bega Valley</b>	0 Not at all	5%	14%
	1	1%	5%
	2	3%	6%
	3	1%	7%
	4	6%	7%
	5	11%	17%
	6	6%	7%
	7	11%	8%
	8	20%	12%
	9	9%	5%
	10 Extremely likely	28%	12%
	Mean	7.26	5.11
	Detractors	31%	63%
	Passives	31%	21%
	Promoters	37%	17%



## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 30** Random versus Opt-in Results 3

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Satisfaction with Services &amp; Facilities</b>	Sewage services - Mean	4.00	3.00
	Water supply - Mean	3.91	3.09
	Libraries - Mean	3.90	3.51
	Merimbula Airport - Mean	3.59	3.08
	Waste and recycling - Mean	3.54	2.98
	Bega Civic Centre - Mean	3.45	3.01
	Council pools - Mean	3.47	2.97
	Community halls - Mean	3.43	2.77
	Council's Gallery - Mean	3.42	3.16
	Parks and playgrounds - Mean	3.34	2.77
	Sporting facilities - Mean	3.34	2.71
	Tourism marketing - Mean	3.08	2.83
	Ranger services - Mean	3.05	2.51
	Council's childcare and preschool - Mean	3.02	2.55
	Environmental protection - Mean	2.86	2.45
	Parking enforcement - Mean	2.80	2.59
	Footpaths and cycleways - Mean	2.79	2.23
	Public toilets - Mean	2.76	2.41
	Building compliance - Mean	2.61	2.14
	Weed control - Mean	2.53	2.16
Council's road network - Mean	2.40	1.85	
Planning/Managing residential growth - Mean	2.30	1.81	
Processing Development Applications - Mean	1.81	1.44	



## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 31** Random versus Opt-in Results 4

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Top priority next 5 years</b>	Roads	28%	23%
	Processing Development applications	5%	4%
	Cutting costs/reducing expenditure	11%	28%
	Providing better online services	0%	0%
	Provide sporting and community facilities	8%	6%
	Addressing environmental concerns	3%	4%
	Provision of footpaths/cycleways	3%	5%
	Responding to climate change	0%	0%
	Affordable housing	20%	4%
	Emergency/Disaster response	1%	1%
	Other	5%	9%
	Unsure	4%	3%
<b>Contacted Council in 12 months</b>	Yes	50%	66%
	No	48%	30%
	Don't know	2%	4%
<b>Handled Latest Enquiry</b>	1 Very poorly	31%	40%
	2	9%	19%
	3	20%	19%
	4	13%	13%
	5 Very well	27%	10%
	Mean	2.95	2.33
<b>Making a payment</b>	Face to face	14%	10%
	Phone	4%	7%
	Online/via website	78%	66%
	Email	1%	10%
	Letter	0%	4%
	Snap Send Solve	0%	0%
	SMS/Text	0%	1%
	Social media	0%	0%
Unsure	2%	4%	



## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 32** Random versus Opt-in Results 5

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Requesting Council to do something</b>	Face to face	12%	7%
	Phone	43%	27%
	Online/via website	13%	22%
	Email	18%	17%
	Letter	2%	1%
	Snap Send Solve	7%	18%
	SMS/Text	0%	4%
	Social media	0%	1%
	Unsure	5%	3%
<b>Completing or lodging applications and forms</b>	Face to face	26%	22%
	Phone	3%	4%
	Online/via website	44%	44%
	Email	11%	20%
	Letter	3%	3%
	Snap Send Solve	0%	1%
	SMS/Text	0%	1%
	Social media	0%	0%
	Unsure	12%	6%
<b>Providing feedback on important or topical issues</b>	Face to face	13%	11%
	Phone	12%	8%
	Online/via website	31%	32%
	Email	23%	28%
	Letter	4%	6%
	Snap Send Solve	1%	1%
	SMS/Text	0%	5%
	Social media	4%	5%
	Unsure	10%	4%



## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 33** Random versus Opt-in Results 6

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Getting updates on road closures</b>	Face to face	2%	1%
	Phone	6%	5%
	Online/via website	27%	23%
	Email	10%	18%
	Letter	4%	4%
	Snap Send Solve	1%	0%
	SMS/Text	21%	29%
	Social media	18%	16%
	Unsure	11%	5%
<b>Water interruptions</b>	Face to face	2%	2%
	Phone	12%	17%
	Online/via website	10%	11%
	Email	8%	19%
	Letter	17%	8%
	Snap Send Solve	0%	2%
	SMS/Text	24%	27%
	Social media	8%	4%
	Unsure	20%	10%
<b>Preferred sources of information</b>	Local newspaper	10%	14%
	Rates notices	8%	28%
	Council website	38%	37%
	Local radio or TV	15%	26%
	Word-of-mouth (friends, neighbours etc)	11%	10%
	Social media (Facebook, Instagram etc)	32%	48%
	Council emails	35%	54%
	Other	2%	3%
Unsure	4%	2%	





## 8. APPENDIX: RANDOM VERSUS OPT-IN SURVEY RESULTS

**Table 34** Random versus Opt-in Results 7

Question	Response	Representative	Self-selecting
<b>Age</b>	18-39	13%	14%
	40-59	22%	36%
	60+	66%	46%
<b>Ratepayer status</b>	Homeowner	89%	92%
	Renter	10%	3%
	Prefer not to say	2%	5%
<b>Town closest to</b>	Bega	22%	20%
	Bemboka	3%	1%
	Bermagui	8%	9%
	Candelo	5%	3%
	Cobargo	5%	4%
	Eden	9%	8%
	Kalaru	0%	2%
	Merimbula	15%	14%
	Pambula	11%	8%
	Quaama	2%	3%
	Tathra	8%	5%
	Towamba	0%	1%
	Tura Beach	8%	10%
	Wonboyn	0%	0%
	Wolumla	4%	3%
Wyndham	1%	2%	
	Other/Refused	1%	8%
<b>Lived in BVSC LGA</b>	Less than 5 years	4%	9%
	5-10 years	12%	16%
	11-20 years	18%	20%
	More than 20 years	66%	55%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	37%	36%
	Female	63%	60%
	Other	0%	3%



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