

Our Community Report

Northern Areas Council (NAC) has undertaken a community survey to help inform our strategic direction for the coming years.

Conducted by research specialists Further Insight in late 2023, the survey received the highest number of responses to a Council survey to date. The excellent feedback and data will be used, along with other information, to develop a strategic plan that aligns with community views.

The survey asked a series of questions about life in the region, perceptions of Council's performance and the importance and satisfaction ratings on a range of Council services.

Respondents told us:

- The country lifestyle, family, friends and community are the best things about living in the Northern Areas.
- 78% are satisfied with the quality of life in the area.
- Council's performance was perceived positively by 44%, while 42% perceived it as 'neither good, nor poor'.
- 19% had seen an improvement in Council's performance in the past 12 months but 17% believed it had deteriorated.
- Road maintenance, public toilets, kerbside waste collection, parks, reserves and playgrounds and footpath maintenance were cited as the most important Council services.
- Lowest levels of satisfaction were in the areas of communication/consultation, unsealed road maintenance and footpath maintenance.
- Most important focus areas for Council were seen as roads, health and wellbeing and maintenance of community facilities.





Our Community Report

Respondents also shared their suggestions for improvement – all of which will be taken on board in the coming months and years.

This Community Report presents more information about the findings. Direct comments from respondents have not been included in the report but the Council Members have been provided with that feedback, along with all of the survey data, to help them make informed decisions.

Council truly appreciates the feedback provided and we are looking forward to working with the community to develop strategies to enhance services for all Northern Areas residents and ratepayers.



further**insight**

Northern Areas Council
Community Survey 2023 - Community Report

15 January 2024

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Results

Demographics

Gender	%
Female	57%
Male	39%
Other	-
Would rather not say	4%

Age group	%
18-29	10%
30-39	14%
40-49	13%
50-59	18%
60-69	24%
70+	20%

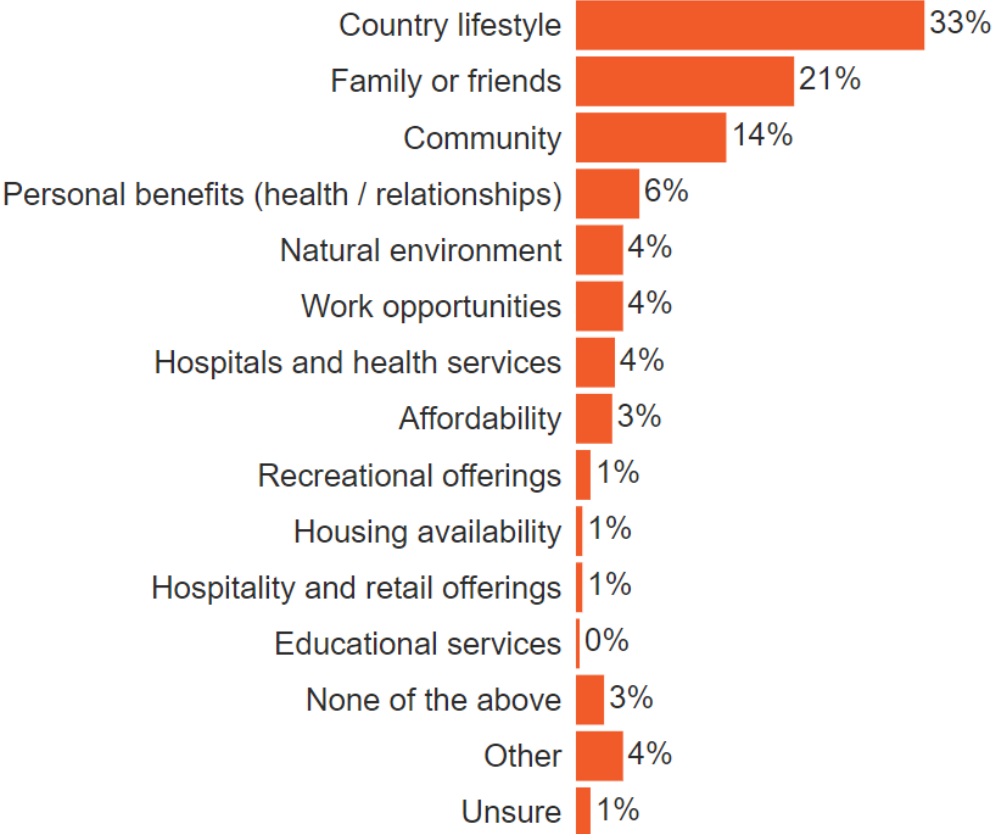
Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander origin	%
No	92%
Yes, Aboriginal	2%
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	-
Would rather not say	7%

Ward of residence	%	Count
Belalie Ward	43%	149
Broughton Ward	10%	34
Yackamoорundie Ward	5%	19
Rocky River Ward	42%	147
Total	100%	349

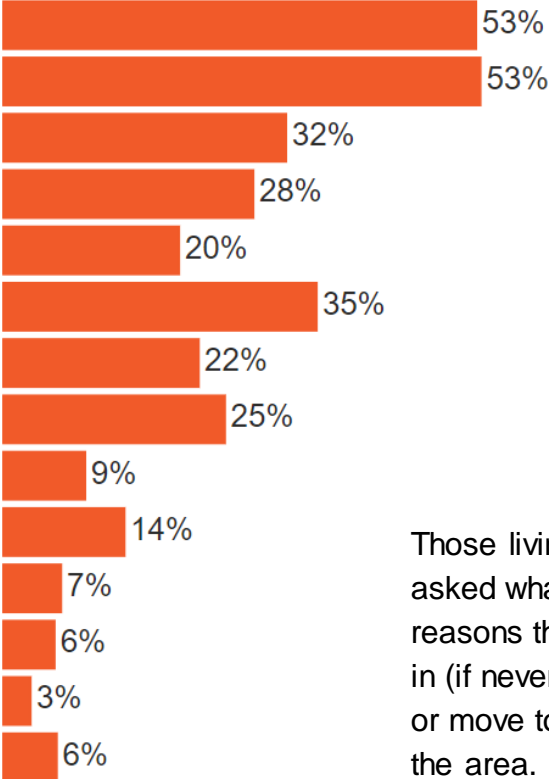
Note: When results of this survey are presented by subgroup, results with less than 30 participants are not displayed, as the low number participants are less likely to provide results that are reliable and representative of the views of the overall population for this subgroup. To avoid the results for Yackamoорundie Ward not being displayed individually, the results for the Broughton Ward and Yackamoорundie Wards are combined into one group.

NAC area attracting factors

Best thing about the area

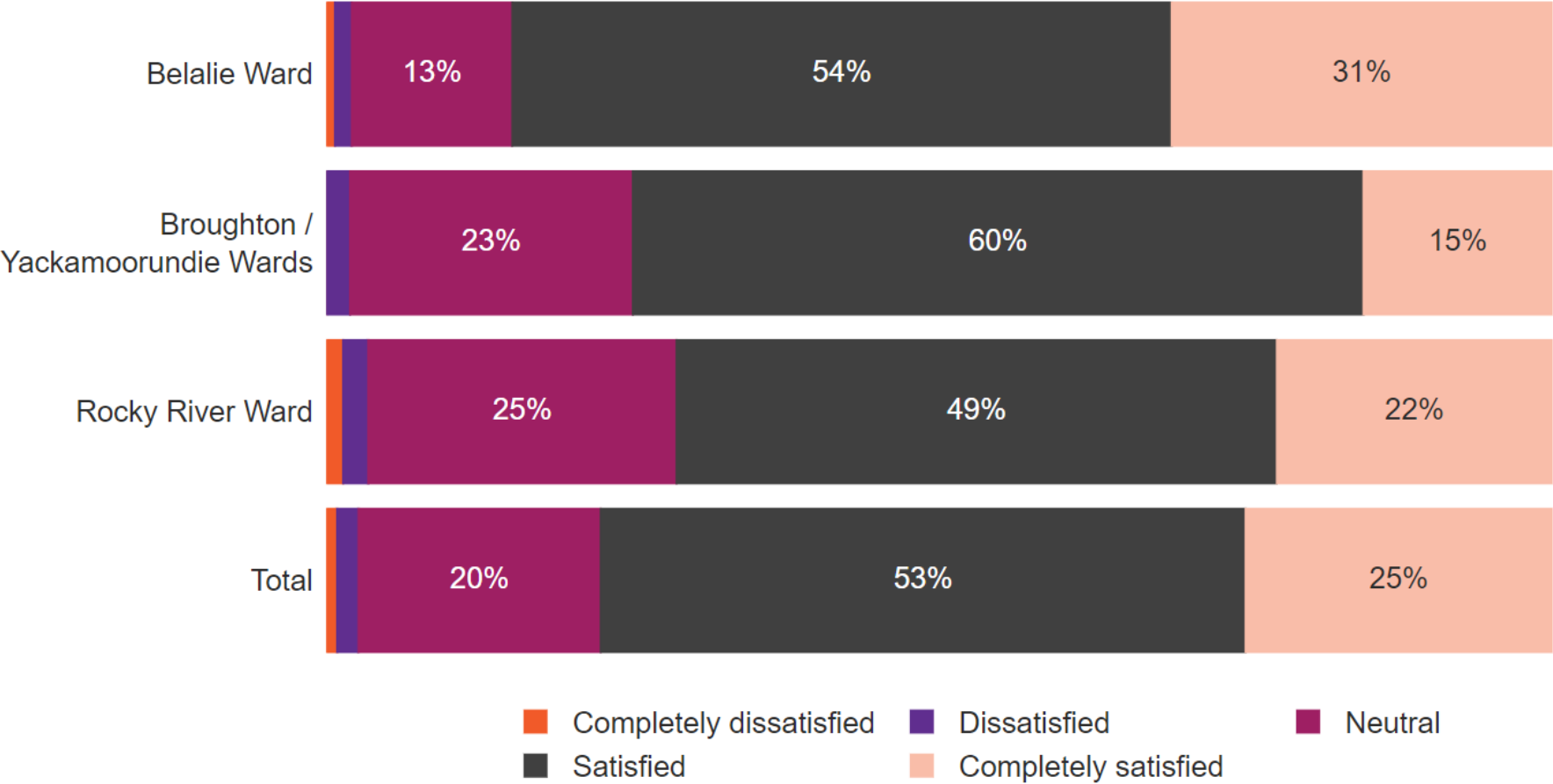


All attracting factors



Those living in the area were asked what were the main reasons that they decided to stay in (if never lived anywhere else) or move to (if lived elsewhere) the area.

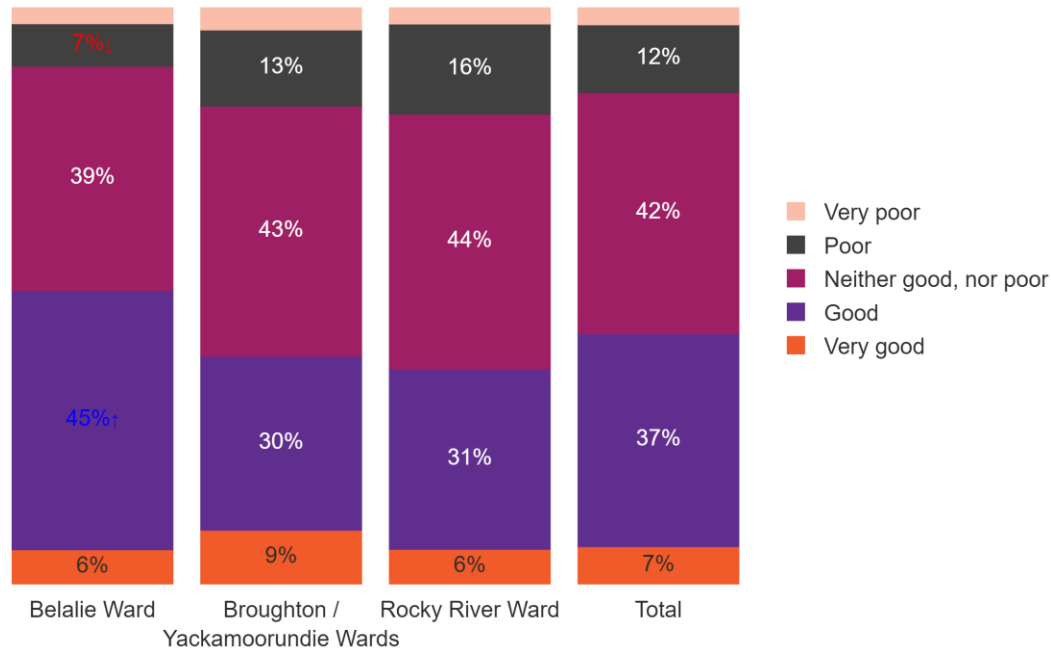
Satisfaction with quality of life in NAC area



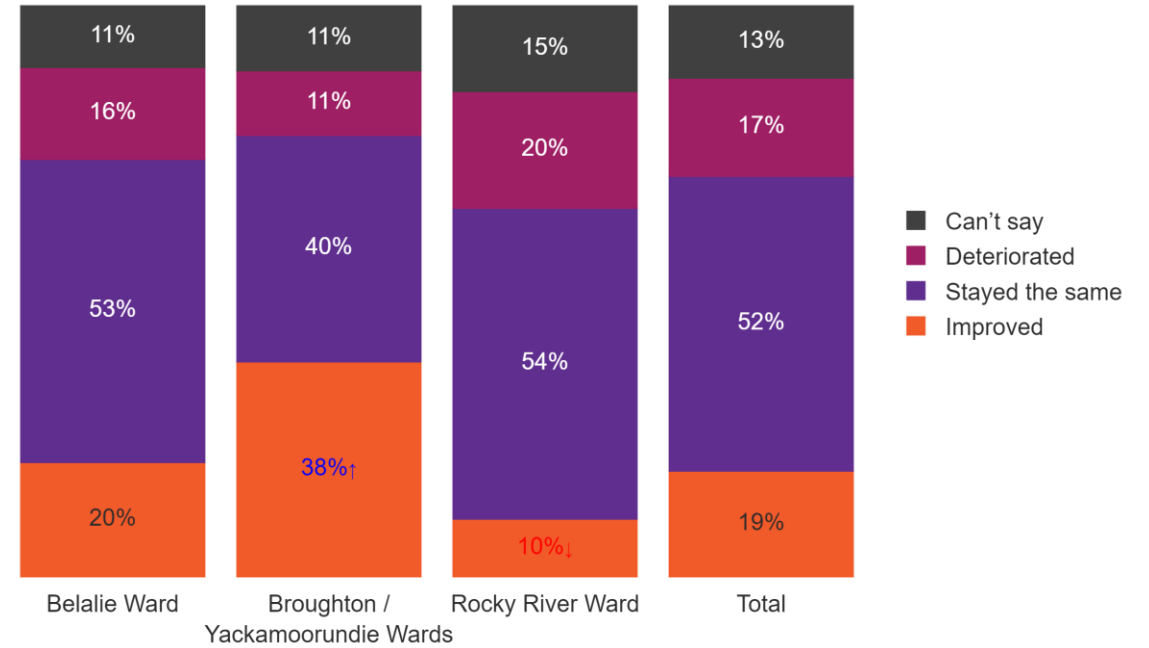
At an overall level, 25% of the residents are completely satisfied, and 53% of residents are satisfied, with the quality of life in the NAC area. This means as total 78% of residents are satisfied with the quality of life.

NAC performance

Current Council performance



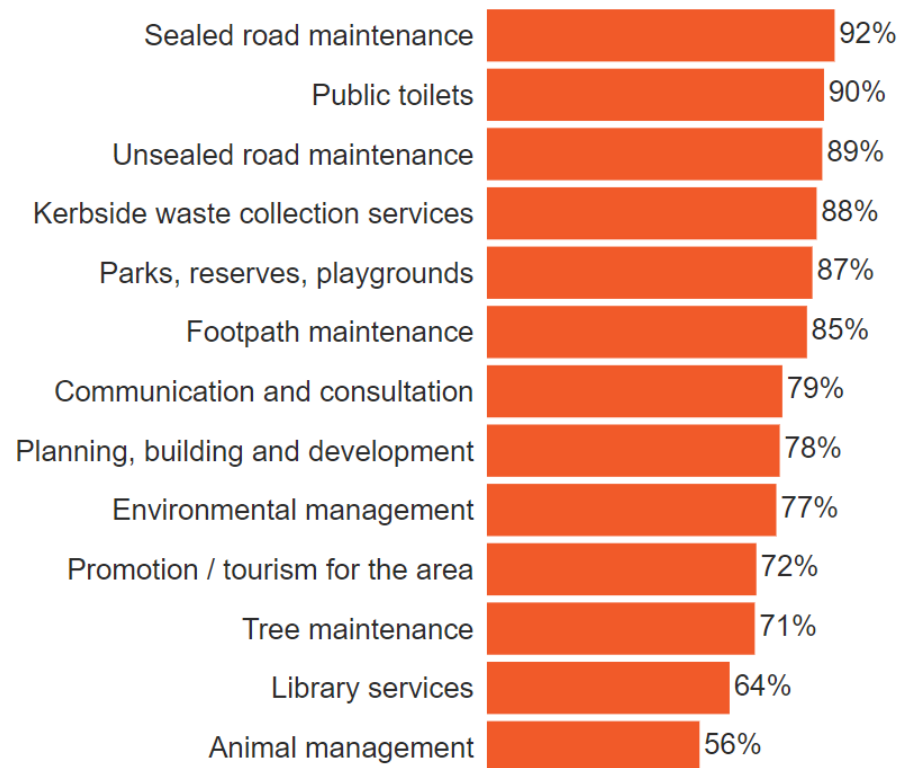
Council performance over the last 12 months



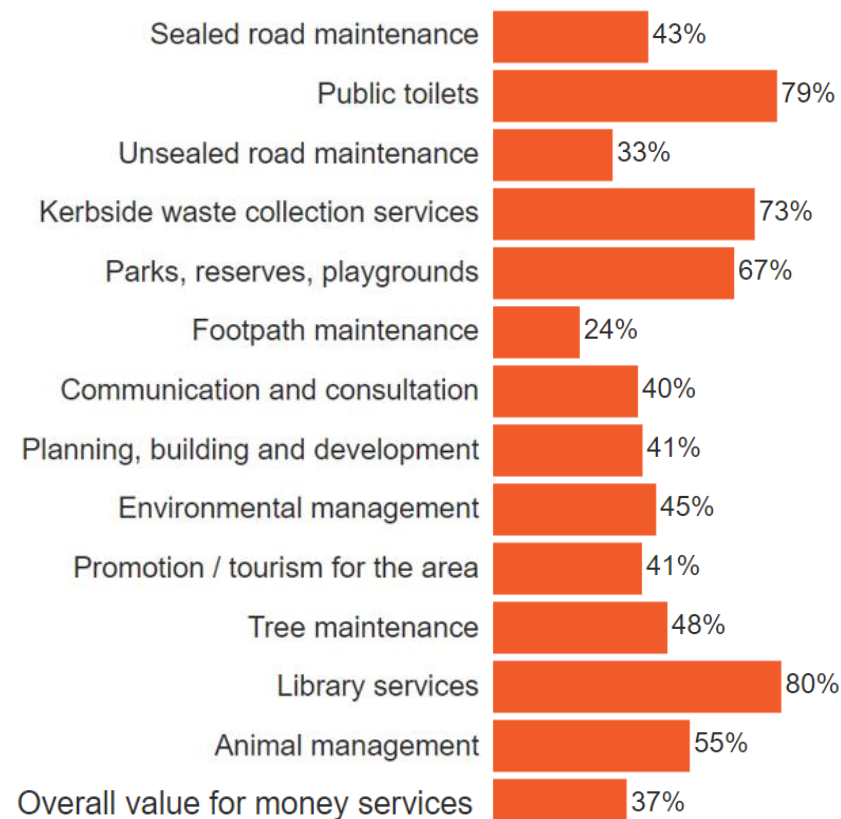
One in five Community members (19%) believe the Council's overall performance has improved in the last 12 months. About half (52%) believed it has stayed the same, and 17% believed it has deteriorated.

Importance of and satisfaction with NAC services

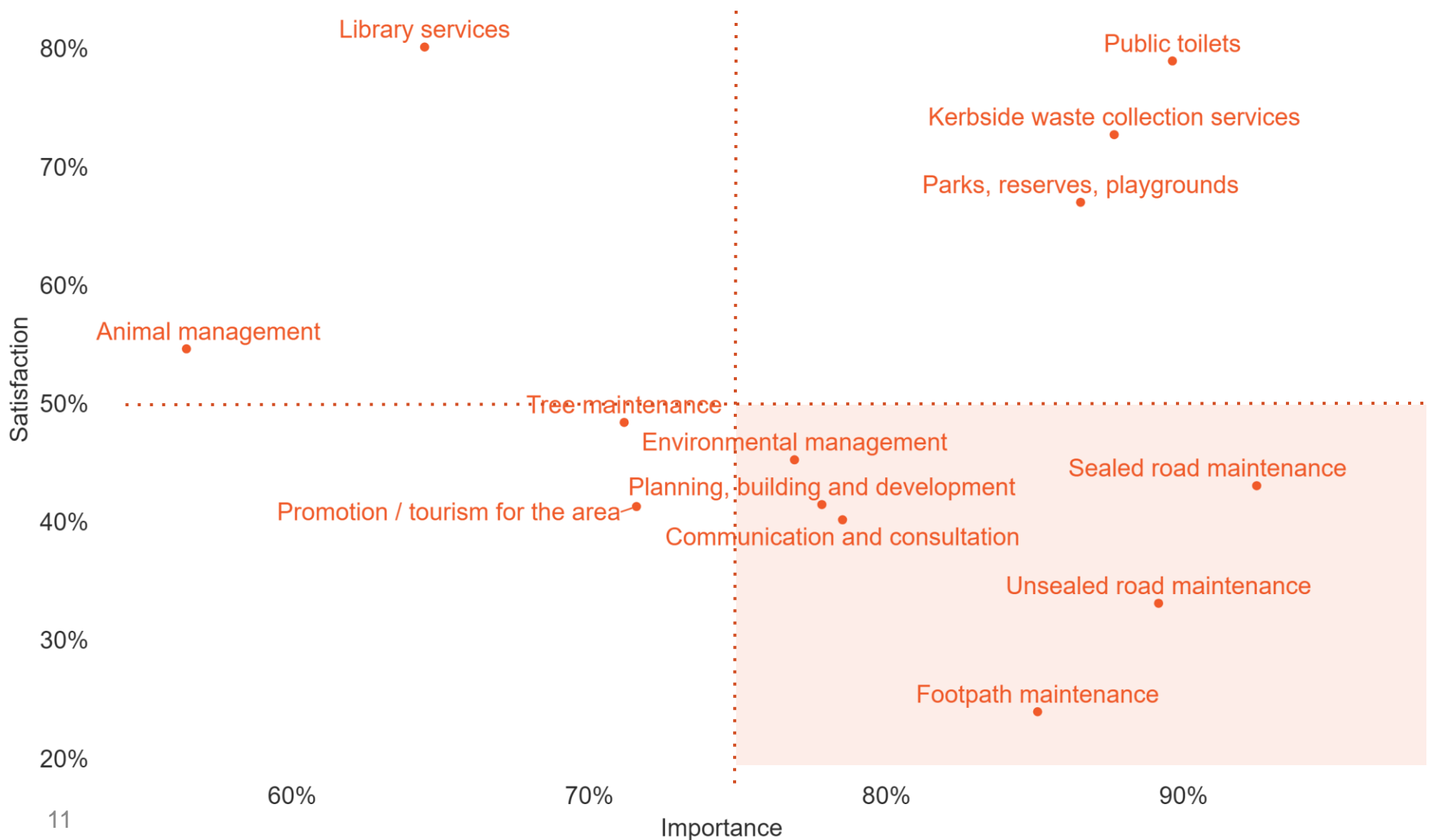
Importance of services



Satisfaction with services



Importance versus Satisfaction matrix



This matrix plots how important a service is to the community, vs their satisfaction level with that service.

The bottom right square shows where importance is high, but satisfaction is low (e.g. - footpath maintenance). This provides suggested high priority areas for improvement for NAC.

Suggested areas of focus for NAC

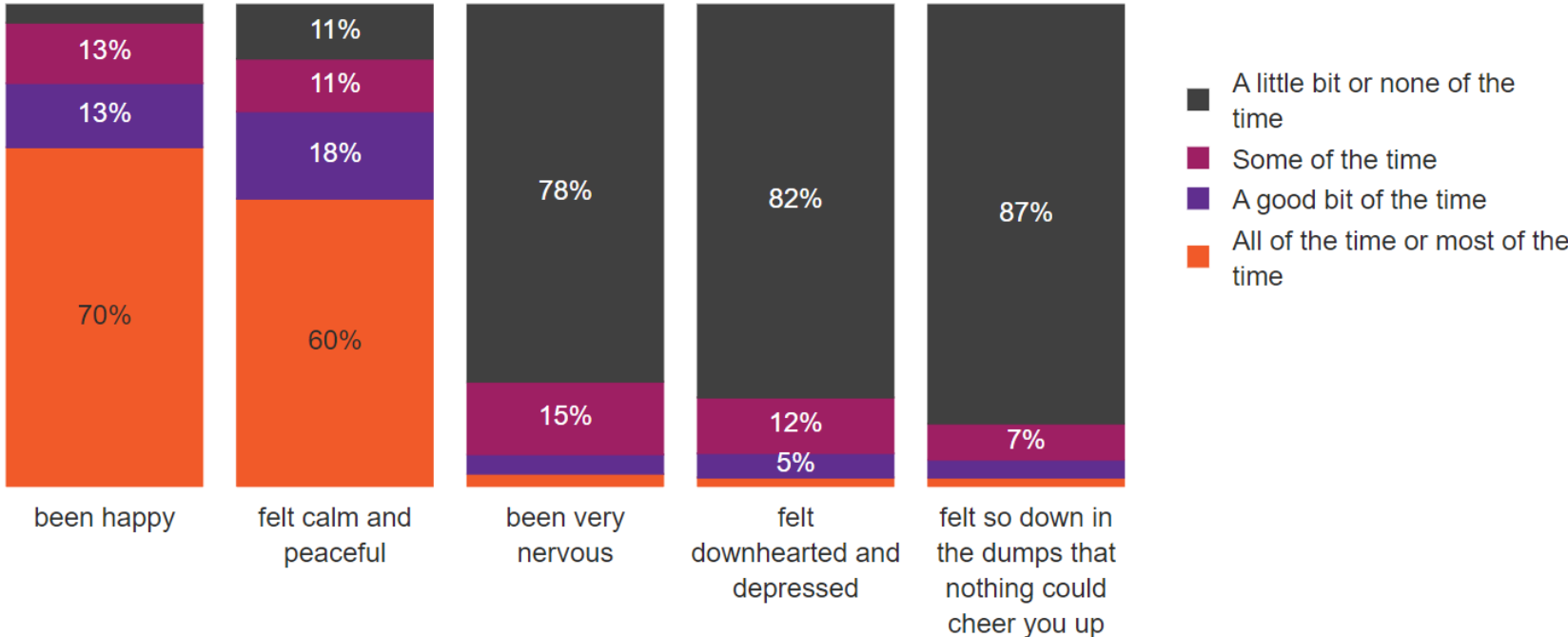
Column %	Belalie Ward	Broughton / Yackamoorundie Wards	Rocky River Ward	Total (average)
Roads	43%	58% ↑	42%	45%
Health and wellbeing services	46% ↑	35%	27% ↓	36%
Maintenance of community facilities	23% ↓	54% ↑	38%	34%
Presentation of towns and main streets	26%	29%	32%	29%
Local businesses	28%	19%	21%	24%
Infrastructure	17%	19%	18%	18%
Education / Childcare services	18%	10%	15%	16%
Waste management	15%	15%	15%	15%
Housing availability	19% ↑	6%	12%	14%
Tourism	9% ↓	17%	16%	13%
Community wellbeing	10%	17%	13%	13%
Stormwater management	11%	10%	15%	12%
Recreational spaces	11%	6%	11%	10%
Natural Environment	7%	8%	13% ↑	10%
Population growth	5%	6%	7%	6%
Inclusivity and accessibility of the community	11% ↑	0%	2% ↓	6%

Suggested areas of improvement for NAC



Community state of mental health

NAC Community
Overall state of Mental Health



Mental Health questions are an important opportunity to understand the psychological, emotional, and social well-being of our community and if services and support are meeting community needs.

The majority of the Community has been happy (70%) and has felt calm and peaceful (60%) most of the time recently.

Approx. one in five members of the community has recently at least sometimes or more often felt downhearted or depressed (19%), been very nervous (22%) or felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer them up (13%). At the same time, the remaining majority had not felt like this recently.

Methodology

This research aimed to measure the Northern Areas Council (NAC)'s community's views on living in the area and on the Council's current performance and future direction.

Quantitative research

The research utilised a combination of an online survey and paper-based surveys among the target audience of the NAC, residents, rate payers, those working in the area, and those visiting the area. The participants for the survey were recruited by the NAC team, through various channels, including email invitations and social media channels. Paper based surveys were made available through Council offices and other public buildings in the area.

For this survey only those aged 18+ were invited to participate, with those aged under 18 being provided an opportunity to share their views and feedback through community sessions at local educational institutions.

The questionnaire used for this research has been supplied separately.



Sample size and statistical reliability

Community surveys are a cost-effective method of collecting a very accurate understanding of the views of a community. The most accurate method would be to undertake a census – including all population members. A census method is however also a very expensive data collection method. This is why most organisations undertake surveys to gather the views of their communities. A survey does not include the full population but instead takes a sample of the population.

The statistical reliability of a sample is influenced by representativeness (discussed on the following page) and sample size. Generally, with larger sample size reliability of the findings increases. The reliability of survey findings relating to sample size is often expressed in the margin error. The margin error is a statistical concept that explains if a survey is undertaken among a sample of a population, what the result among the whole population is likely to look like.

The margin error is measured using the total population size (e.g. 3,952 residents aged 18+), the number of surveys completed (e.g. 400), a result from the survey (e.g. 50% of residents have contacted the council in the past 12 months) and the desired confidence level (95% is the generally accepted standard for community surveys). When looking at the above example, the margin of error is 4.6%. This means that if the same survey would be undertaken again among another sample of the same size of the same population, there is a 95% chance that the result for the same question about council contact would be between 45.3% (50%-4.7%) and 54.7% (50%+4.7%).

The margin error rate improves with increased sample size. However, the sampling error doesn't evenly decline with increased sample size, which means that a doubling of sampling size doesn't result in a halving of the margin error. This is illustrated below:

Population size	Survey sample achieved	Maximum margin error at 95% confidence level
3,952	n=200	6.8%
3,952	n=300	5.4%
3,952	n=400	4.6%
3,952	n=500	4.1%
3,952	n=600	3.7%
3,952	n=1,000	2.7%

As can be seen above, increased sample sizes generally don't lead to an efficient decrease of margin error. Because of this, in community research a sample size of n=400 is generally accepted as a reliable and acceptable sample for a community survey, providing a maximum margin of error of 4.6%.

For this survey a sample of n=400 was achieved. According to the ABS 2021 Census, the population aged 18+ was estimated to be 3,952. Based on this population size and sample size achieved, the maximum margin error for this survey is 4.6%.

Representativeness

Maximising representativeness

This survey was designed to maximise the representativeness of the sample, that includes those living in towns and on rural lands, residents from each of the four wards of Council, and a range of ages. To maximise representativeness of the sample the following actions were undertaken:

- A communication campaign was undertaken by Council staff to announce the survey.
- Both online and paper-based surveys were distributed. Paper surveys were made available in central public locations which included Council buildings and other public locations across Wards.
- Invitations to the online survey were distributed through email contacts, on the Council website and social media.
- An incentive is provided for participants. A(n optional) draw was organised among participants of the survey. The draw was for 4 * \$100 gift vouchers.

Results by Ward



When results of this survey are presented by subgroup, results with less than 30 participants are not displayed, as the low number participants are less likely to provide results that are reliable and representative of the views of the overall population for this subgroup. For this reason, when results of this survey are presented by Ward, the results for the Broughton Ward and Yackamoorundie Wards are combined into one group.

Reading quantitative results

Statistical significance testing

Throughout the report statistical significance testing was undertaken to understand differences between groups. The tests were undertaken at 95% confidence level. Where statistical differences between results were noted, they were indicated as follows.

Comparisons between results

An up arrow next to the percentage () indicates that the result is significantly higher than the total result for that question. A downward arrow next to a percentage () indicates the result is significantly lower than the total result for that question.

While all differences between groups were tested for statistical significance, when no differences were found, the results for subgroups are not shown or discussed in the report.

If a significant difference is found, it means that the difference between results are highly likely to be representative of the difference in results that would be found if the same survey would be repeated. It means that it is highly likely that the difference between groups is true for the total population as well.

In a hypothetical example, 60% of those aged 25 to 35 had recently contacted NAC, which is significantly higher than the 40% of those aged 35 to 45 who had recently contacted the NAC. In this example, the significant difference means that it is very likely that all residents aged 25 to 35 are more likely to have recently contacted NAC than all residents aged 35 to 45.

Thank you.

