



Hawkesbury City Council

Community Research 2023

Prepared by: Micromex Research
Date: November 2023



Research Objectives

Objectives (Why?)

- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council performance
- Assess and establish the community's priorities and satisfaction in relation to Council activities, services, and facilities
- Identify methods of communication and engagement with Council
- Identify the community's level of agreement with prompted statements surrounding safety/ housing suitability

Sample (How?)

- Telephone survey (landline N = 70 and mobile N = 332) to N = 402 residents
- We use a 5 point scale (e.g. 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)
- Greatest margin of error +/- 4.9%

Timing (When?)

- Implementation 16th – 24th October 2023

Summary Findings



In Summary:

The 2023 research highlights the diverse factors that contribute to residents' satisfaction with, and value of, their LGA, with a strong emphasis on rural living, community, and natural beauty. 96% rated their quality of life living in the Hawkesbury LGA as good to excellent and 70% satisfied with Councils performance overall.

Satisfaction with services provided by Hawkesbury City Council remains high, with 81% of residents expressing at least some level of satisfaction and 70% at least somewhat satisfied with the infrastructure provided. Residents feel safe in public spaces during the day, find their home sizes suitable to their needs, and feel secure in their local neighborhoods. However, there is room for improvement to lift satisfaction levels with communication from the council and consultation with the community.

In terms of priorities, road maintenance is the most pressing issue (particularly fixing damage from floods, building a bypass and ensuring accessible routes for evacuation). There is also desire for infrastructure to support population growth, which indicates the area's growth potential. Residents are also concerned about managing natural disasters, such as floods and bushfires, emphasizing the importance of preparedness.

The top drivers of overall satisfaction are the level of communication the council currently has with the community, the way the council consults with the community, long-term planning, transparent and accountable leadership, thriving town centres, and sewage management. These are the areas where Council can make the most impact on lifting overall satisfaction.



Satisfaction with Key Measures:



Overall Satisfaction

70% of Hawkesbury residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months



Satisfaction with Council's Level of Communication

67% of Hawkesbury residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the level of communication Council currently has with the community



Satisfaction with Community Consultation

57% of Hawkesbury residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the way Council consults with the community



Satisfaction with Services Provided

81% of Hawkesbury residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the services provided by Council



Satisfaction with Infrastructure Provided

70% of Hawkesbury residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the infrastructure provided by Council

Summary Focus Areas to Action:

Roads

- Addressing damage from everyday use and floods, such as potholes, etc.
 - Ensuring access in emergencies in and out of the LGA
- Traffic management and reducing congestion



Environment

- Sewerage management is a key driver of overall satisfaction
- High importance for kerbside collections
- Council's efforts in maintaining healthy waterways is not meeting resident expectations
- Emergency services planning – preparedness for and prevention of natural disasters



Key Areas of Focus

Development & Planning

- Long term planning and thriving town centres are key drivers of overall satisfaction
- Ensuring development is reflective of growth e.g., housing, infrastructure, services and facilities



Leading

- Communication and consultation have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction. Other contributors include transparent and accountable leadership, engaging the community in decision-making and lobbying on behalf of the community



Every interaction with Council is an opportunity to increase satisfaction levels, from initial contact points for your every day customer to high level leadership and planning.

Satisfaction Scorecard

For the most part, performance meets community expectations for general services and facilities. 4 areas were identified for improvement; road safety, road maintenance, leadership and long term planning.

A Great Place to Live
Senior centres and programs
Access to services and facilities for people with a disability
Programs for people from diverse cultures (including Indigenous Australians)
Supporting and valuing volunteers
Community events and festivals
Crime prevention
Road safety
Valuing and protecting the Hawkesbury's heritage areas and buildings
Companion animal shelter (pound) services
Footpaths and cycleways
Parks, playgrounds, and reserves
Public toilets
Libraries
Gallery
Museum
Sporting and recreational facilities
Public swimming pools
Community centres and community halls
Childcare centres
Youth centres and facilities
Improved services and infrastructure (generally)

Protected Environment and Valued History
Healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways
Protecting bushland, open space, and natural habitats
Tree preservation
On-site health inspections such as food and septic systems
Kerbside waste service (red or black lidded bin)
Kerbside recycling service (yellow lidded bin)
Kerbside garden organics service (green lidded bin)
Management of sewerage waste (pump out)
Provision of mains sewerage
Stormwater management and re-use

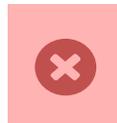
Strong Economy
Promoting local employment opportunities
Supporting business development
Supporting rural based activities
Supporting tourism facilities and industry
Helping to create thriving town centres
Supporting training and career opportunities
Road maintenance
Car parks
Reliable Council
Provide transparent, accountable and respected leadership
Supporting and valuing community organisations
Engaging the community in making decisions
Long term planning for the future
Lobbying State and Federal Government for funding and improved service levels
Building partnerships with residents, community groups, and institutions
Emergency services planning (including flood and fire)



Good performance
(T3B sat score ≥80%)



Monitor
(T3B sat score 60%-79%)



Needs improvement
(T3B sat score <60%)



Section One

Living in the Hawkesbury LGA

This section examines residents' most valued aspects about living in the LGA, priority areas for the next 10 years, commuting to work and agreement measures for living in the LGA.

Most Valued Aspects About Living in the Hawkesbury City Council LGA

The majority of respondents appreciate the rural aspect, country living, and the associated lifestyle with open spaces that their LGA offers (48%). This highlights a strong connection to nature and a preference for a non-urban setting.

Other areas of value include a strong sense of community connectedness (29%), the importance of accessing the environment/ outdoors (21%) and the enjoyment of a peaceful and calm-living environment (21%).

Example verbatims:

"Relaxed, laid back country vibe"

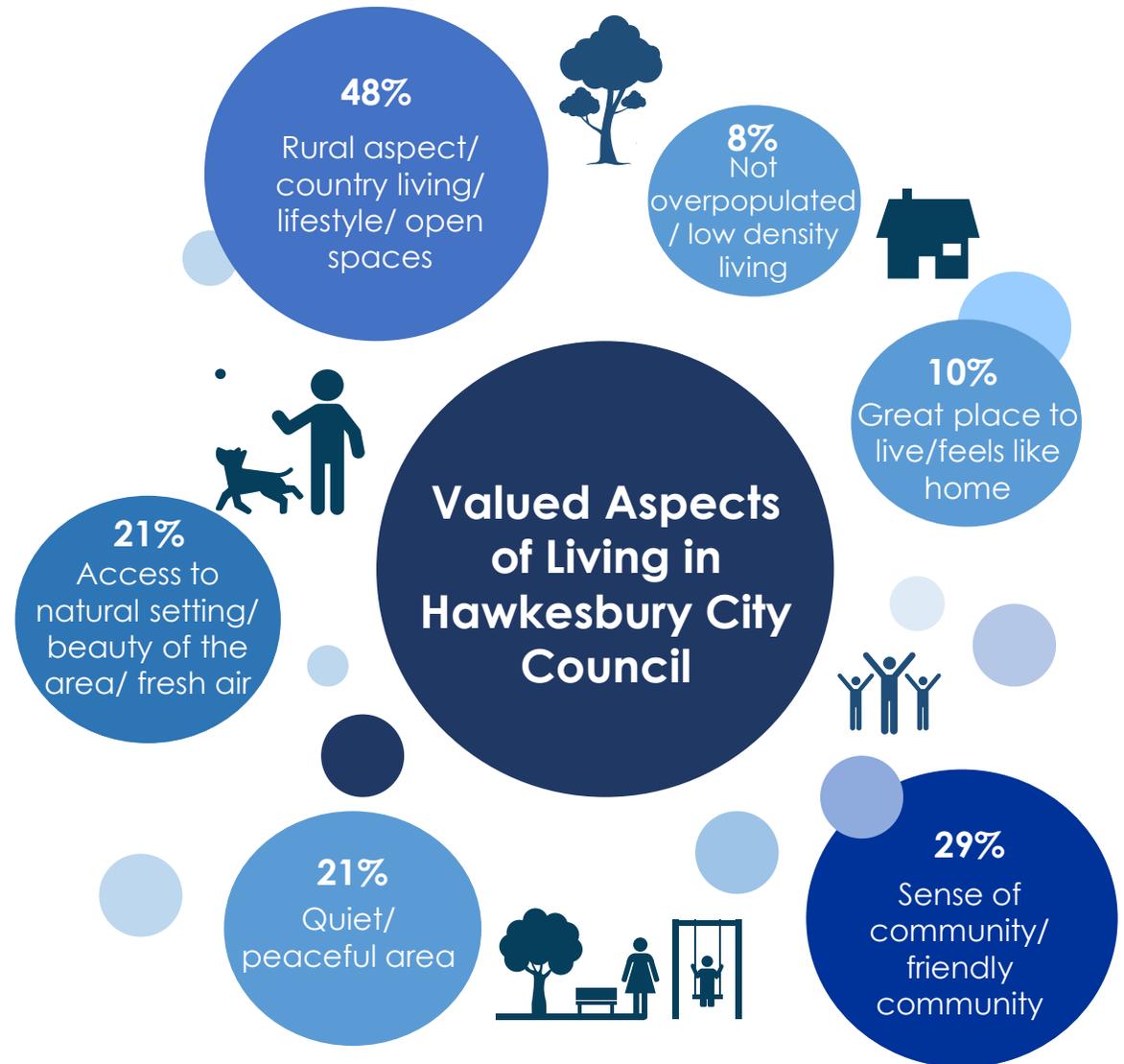
"Rural aspect of a quiet town"

"Sense of community and belonging"

"Close-knit local community"

"Beautiful scenery with natural waterways"

"The surrounding nature reserves"



Highest Priority Issues Facing Hawkesbury City Council



The majority of respondents believe that road maintenance and the development of supporting infrastructure, such as access roads, bypasses, and evacuation routes, are the highest priority issues (59%). This indicates a strong concern for the safety and accessibility of the local road network.

There is also a need to address the importance of preparedness and resilience in the face of potential environmental challenges (floods and bushfires). Ensuring effective planning for a growing community (e.g., infrastructure, services and facilities can accommodate population growth), addressing traffic management concerns and a desire to maintain the character and liveability of the local area by managing development and growth.

Example verbatims:

"Road maintenance of the entire road network to address damage from floods"

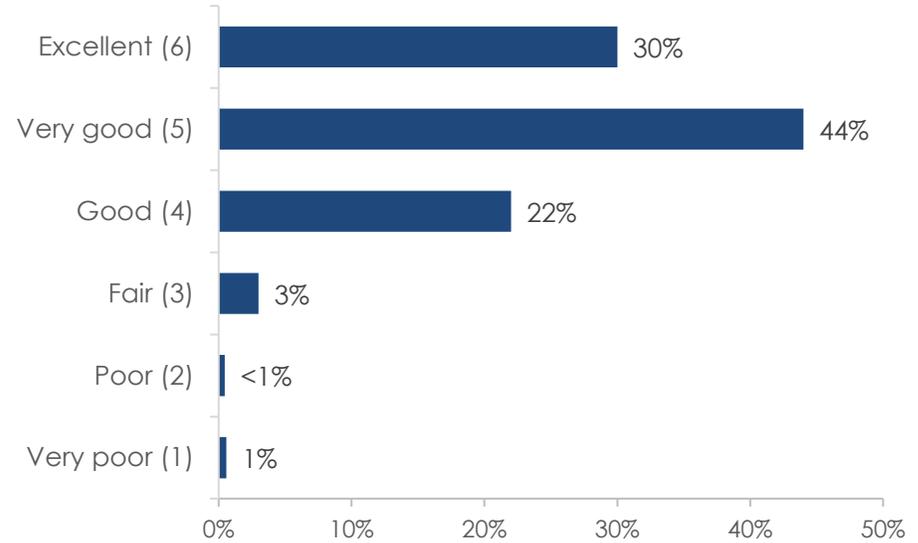
"Introduce flood evacuation routes to protect the area from land locking"

"Infrastructure and facilities i.e. shopping, schools, medical and health related services"

"Increase local development so the area can progress"

Quality of Life

96% of residents rated their quality of life as 'good' to 'excellent' living in the Hawkesbury LGA. Results are very similar across demographics.



Base: N = 402

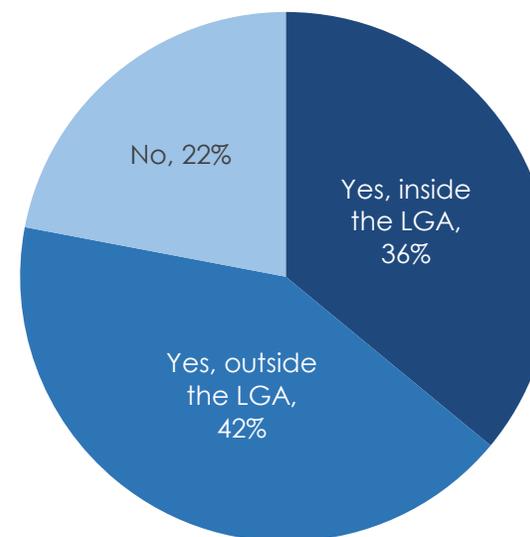
	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	96%	95%	96%	96%	95%	94%	97%	93%	96%	91%	96%
Mean rating	4.97	4.96	4.98	5.10	4.72	5.02	5.01	4.78	5.00	4.86	4.98
Base	402	177	225	103	128	93	78	41	361	26	374

Scale: 1 = very poor, 6 = excellent
A significantly higher/lower rating (by year/group)

Working Inside or Outside the Hawkesbury LGA

In line with previous years, 36% of residents work within the Hawkesbury LGA and 42% work outside the LGA. Females are more likely to work within the LGA, whilst males are more likely to work outside the LGA.

Those Working Either Inside or Outside the LGA



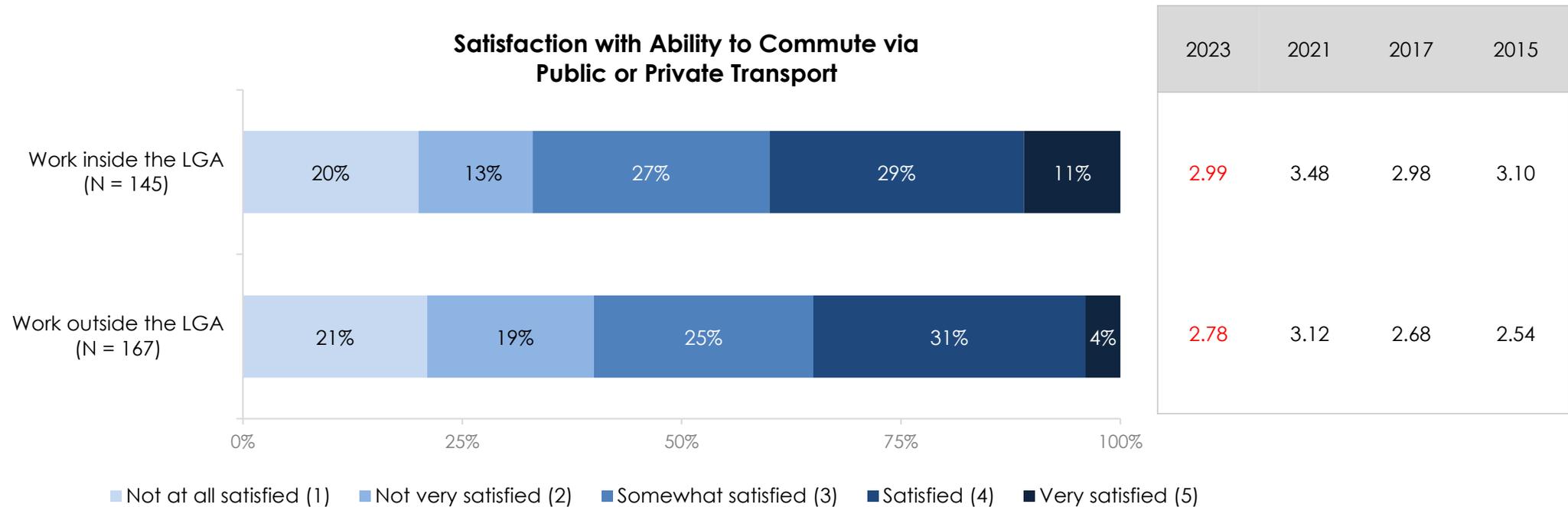
Base: N = 402

Work Location	2023	2021	2017	2015
Yes, inside the LGA	36%	36%	39%	35%
Yes, outside the LGA	42%	37%	32%	33%
Base	402	401	402	401

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes, inside the LGA	36%	31%	42%	41%	42%	45%	14%	22%	38%	35%	36%
Yes, outside the LGA	42%	51%	32%	51%	54%	43%	13%	21%	44%	40%	42%
No	22%	18%	26%	8%	5%	12%	73%	57%	18%	24%	22%
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373

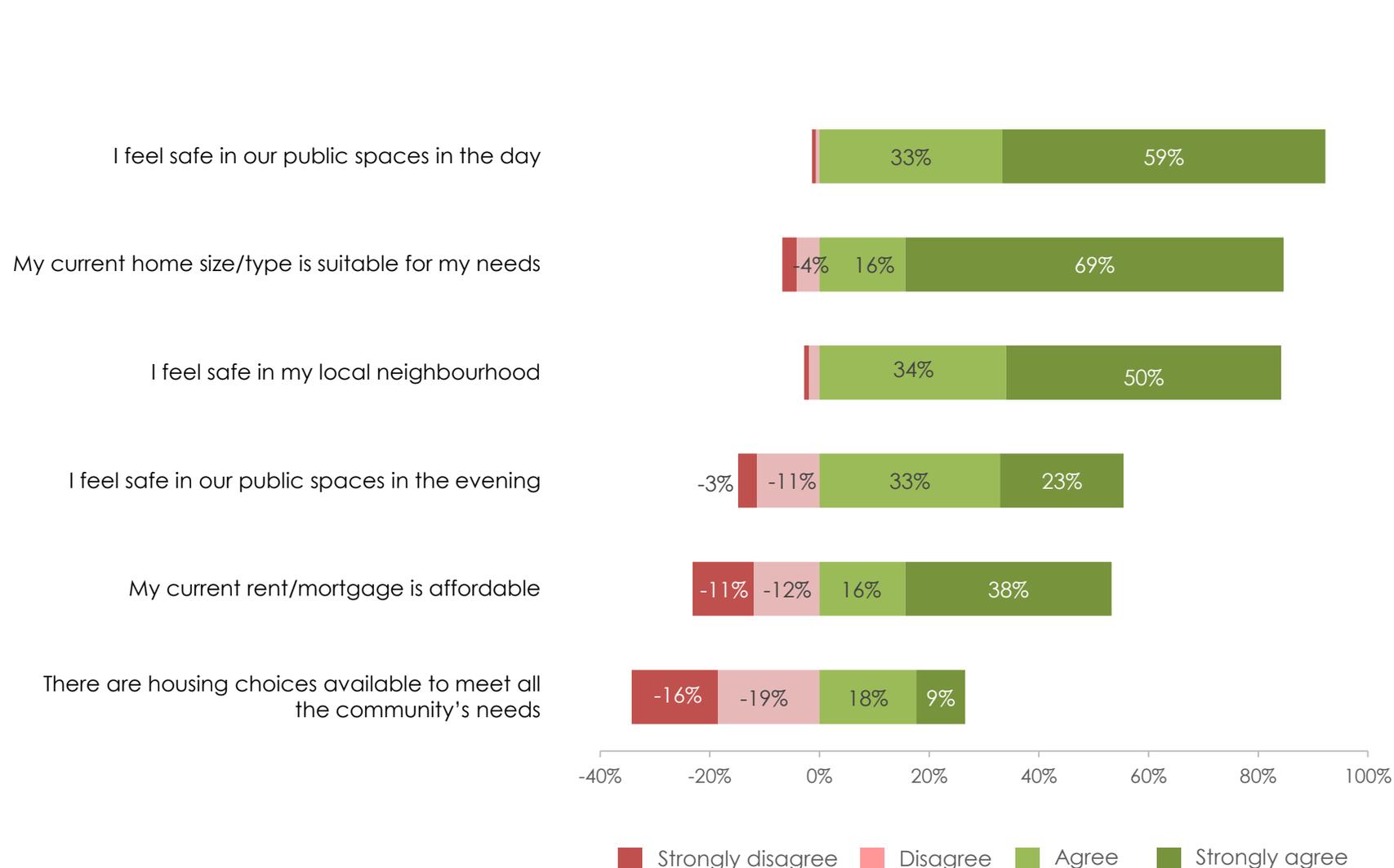
Commuting To/From Work

Satisfaction with the ability to commute via public or private transport has significantly reduced for both those working inside and outside the LGA. Slightly higher satisfaction for the commute amongst those working inside the LGA, with 67% at least somewhat satisfied compared to 60% of those commuting outside the LGA.



Agreement Statements

A high level of agreement for a sense of safety in public spaces during the day, increasing from 82% in 2017 to 92% in 2023 – a very positive result. Agreement with affordability and housing availability measures has significantly decreased this year.



T2B% (agree/strongly agree)		
2023	2021	2017
92%	89%	82%
85%	87%	85%
84%	88%	79%
55%	58%	48%
53%	74%	73%
27%	41%	33%

Note: Data labels have not been shown above for results 2% or less

Q14. Thinking about the local area, how would you rate your level of agreement with the following statements?

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



Council Performance and Engagement

This section reviews residents' satisfaction levels with Council's key performance measures.

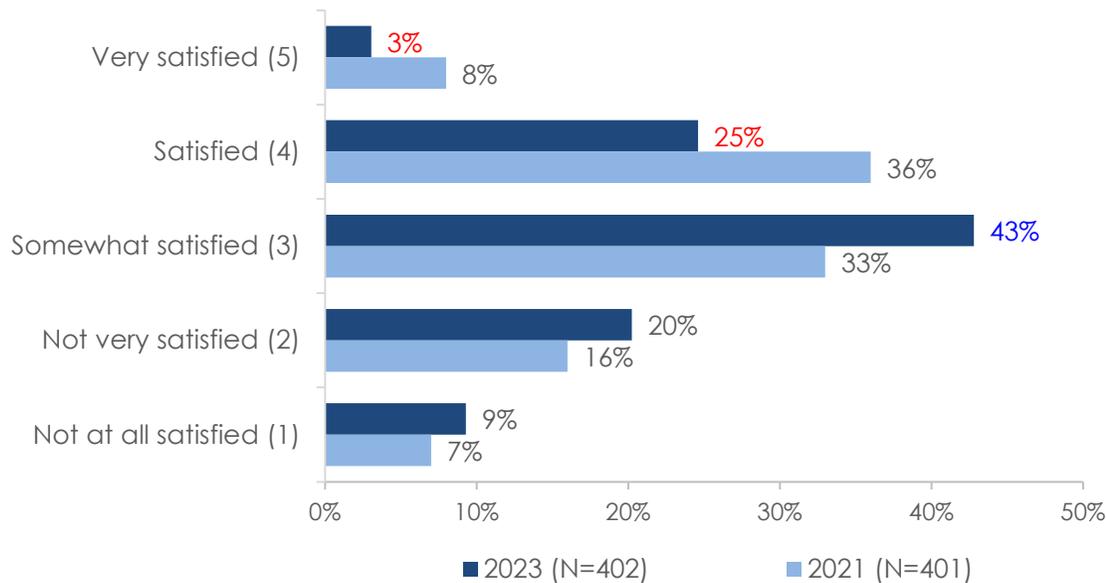
Section Two

Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction has softened from 2021, although in line with 2017 results.

Overall, 71% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Females and younger residents have higher satisfaction levels.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	71%	66%	74%	78%	65%	66%	72%	58%	72%	63%	71%
Mean rating	2.92	2.79	3.04	3.04	2.74	2.82	3.07	2.67	2.95	2.75	2.93
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373



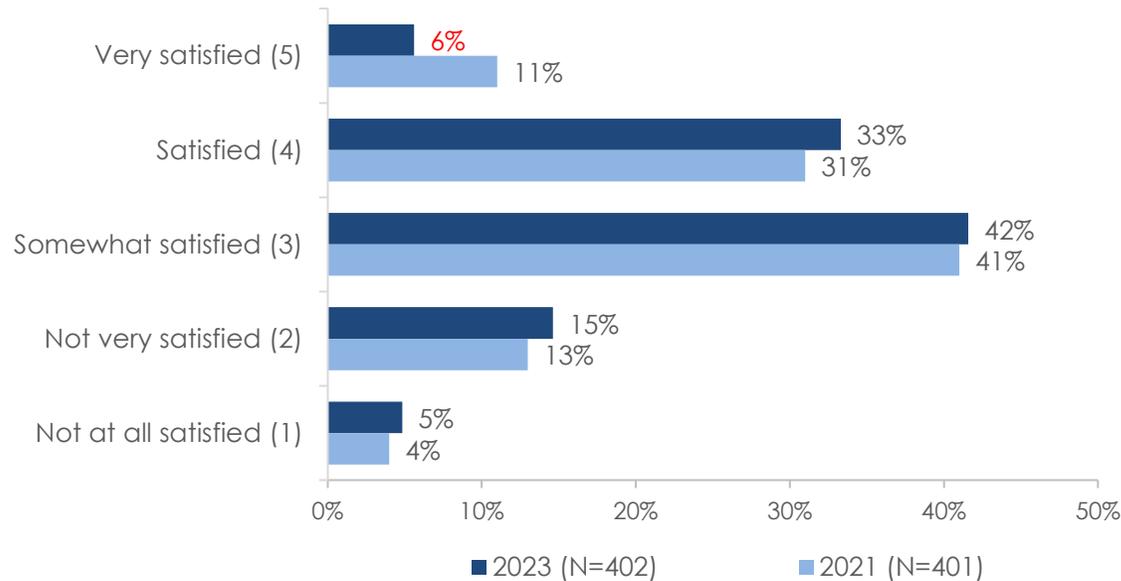
	2023	2021	2017	2015	2013	2011
Mean rating	2.92	3.22	2.97	3.11	3.09	3.31
Base	402	401	402	401	400	400

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by year/group)

Satisfaction with Services

81% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the services provided by Council, a slight drop from 2021.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	81%	79%	82%	85%	78%	76%	83%	77%	81%	85%	80%
Mean rating	3.20	3.12	3.28	3.31	3.07	3.10	3.33	3.25	3.20	3.05	3.21
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373



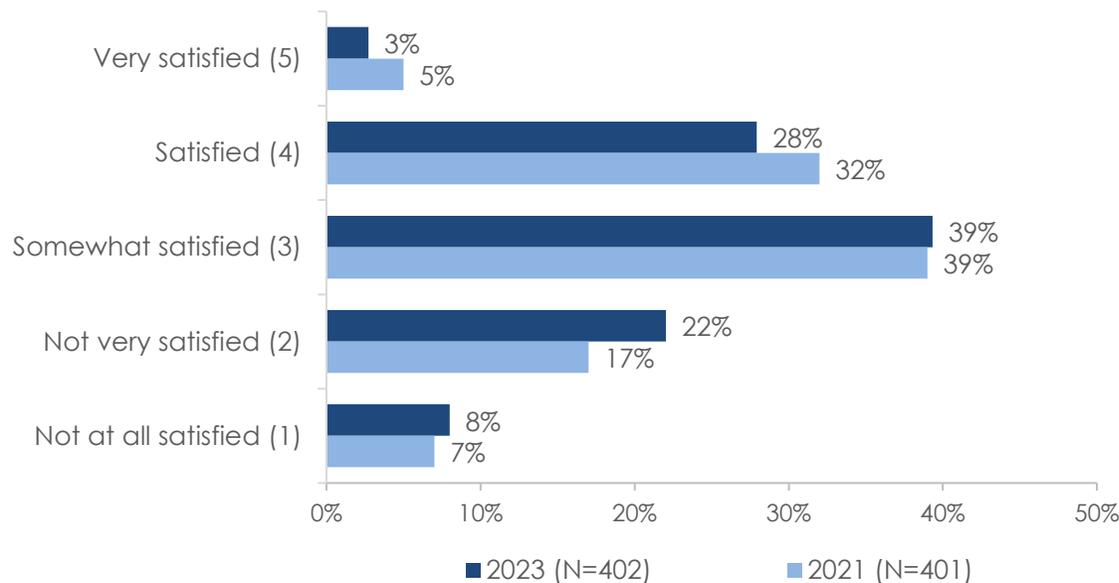
	2023	2021	2017	2015
Mean rating	3.20	3.31	3.07	3.23
Base	402	401	402	401

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by year)

Satisfaction with Infrastructure

Resident satisfaction with the infrastructure provided by Council has dropped significantly from 2021, with 70% at least somewhat satisfied. Satisfaction increases with age.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	70%	69%	71%	65%	67%	68%	83%	80%	69%	70%	70%
Mean rating	2.95	2.92	2.99	2.93	2.78	2.83	3.33	3.07	2.94	2.99	2.95
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373



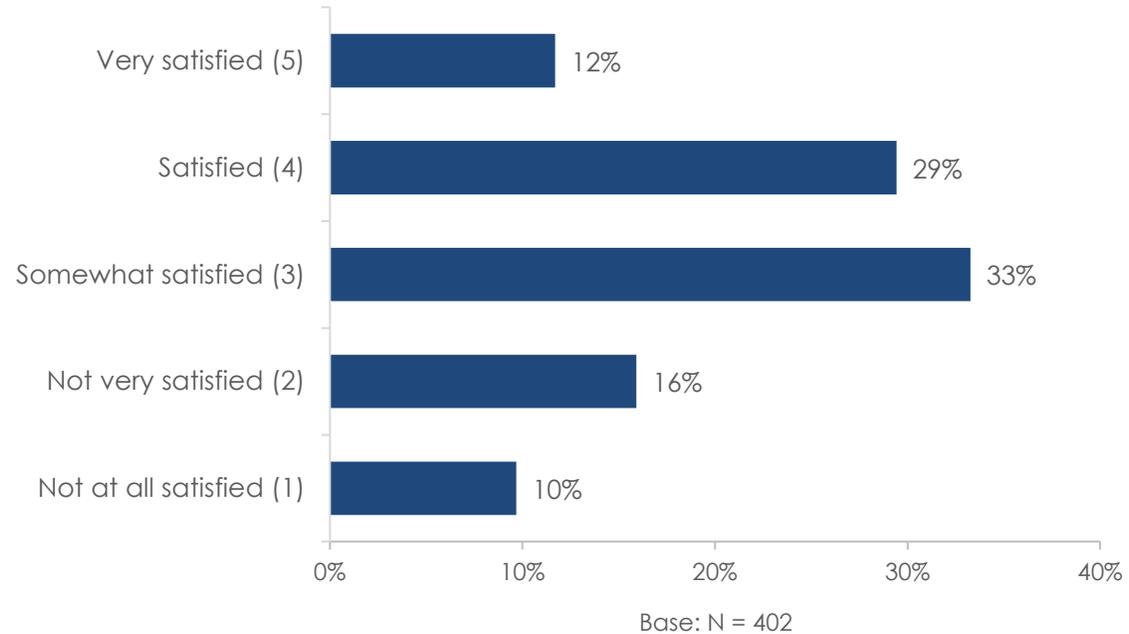
	2023	2021	2017	2015
Mean rating	2.95	3.12	3.07	3.23
Base	402	401	402	401

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by year/group)

Satisfaction with Council Support for Community Recovery

74% of residents are satisfied with Council's support for community recovery following the flooding events of 2021 and 2022.

Those who identify with a disability are significantly less satisfied with the level of support provided.



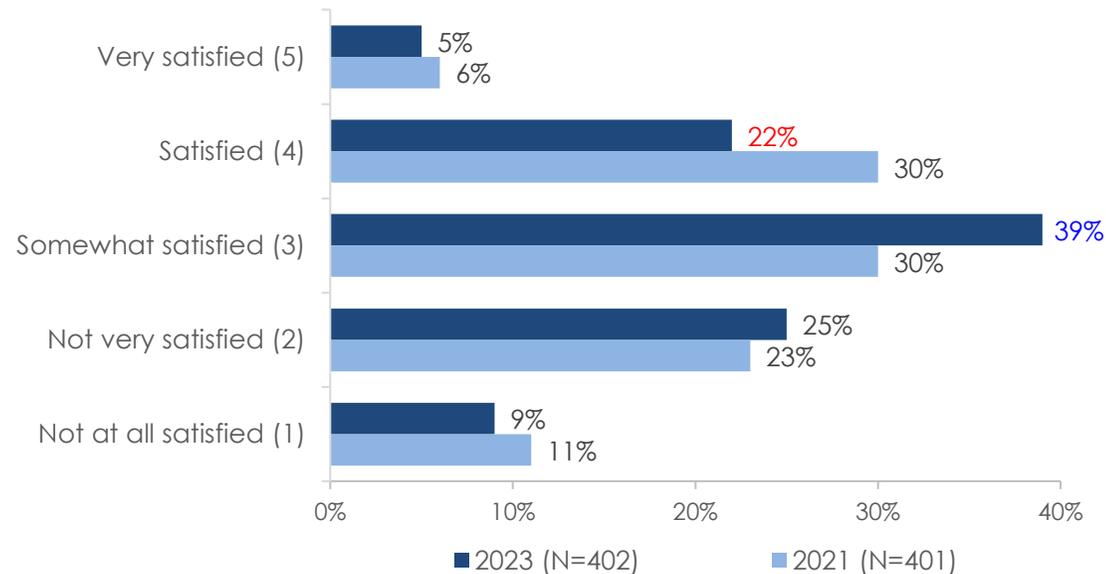
	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	74%	71%	78%	74%	74%	73%	77%	55%	77%	65%	75%
Mean rating	3.18	3.08	3.27	3.21	3.20	3.03	3.27	2.85	3.22	3.03	3.19
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by group)

Satisfaction with Level of Communication

Satisfaction with the level of communication Council currently has with the community has softened from 2021, with 66% being at least somewhat satisfied. Results are significantly lower than our benchmarks.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	66%	64%	68%	67%	60%	67%	74%	51%	68%	64%	66%
Mean rating	2.89	2.82	2.95	3.00	2.73	2.82	3.09	2.59	2.92	2.77	2.90
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373



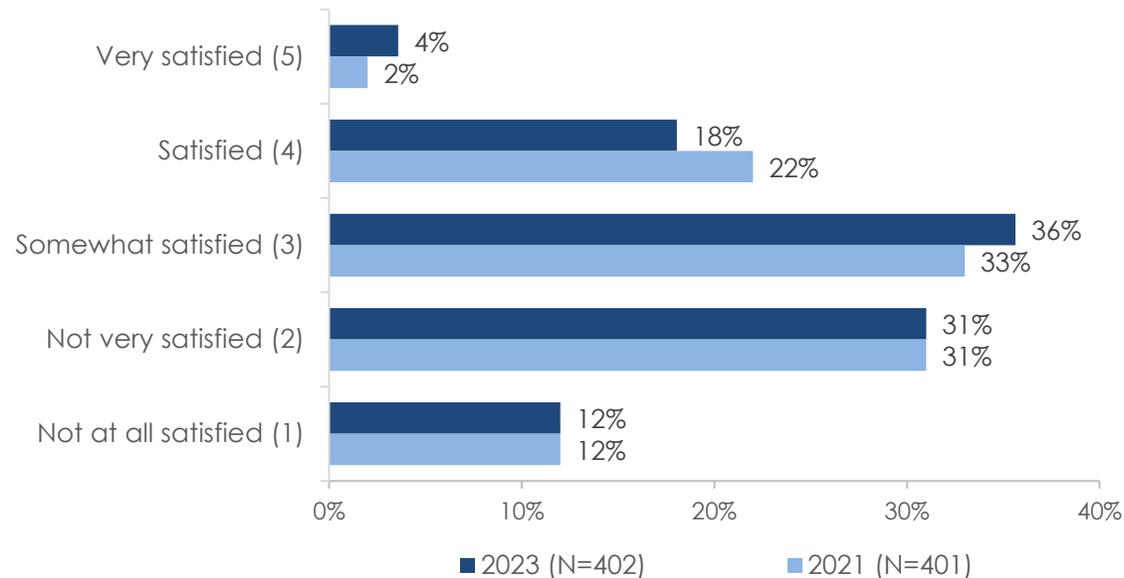
	2023	2021	2017	2015
Mean rating	2.89	2.95	2.90	2.95
Base	402	401	402	401

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by year/group)

Satisfaction with Community Consultation

Satisfaction with the way Council consults with the community continues the downward trend over the last 10 years, with 57% at least somewhat satisfied.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
T3B%	57%	54%	61%	61%	50%	60%	58%	47%	59%	67%	57%
Mean rating	2.70	2.62	2.79	2.91	2.46	2.66	2.76	2.57	2.72	2.78	2.70
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373

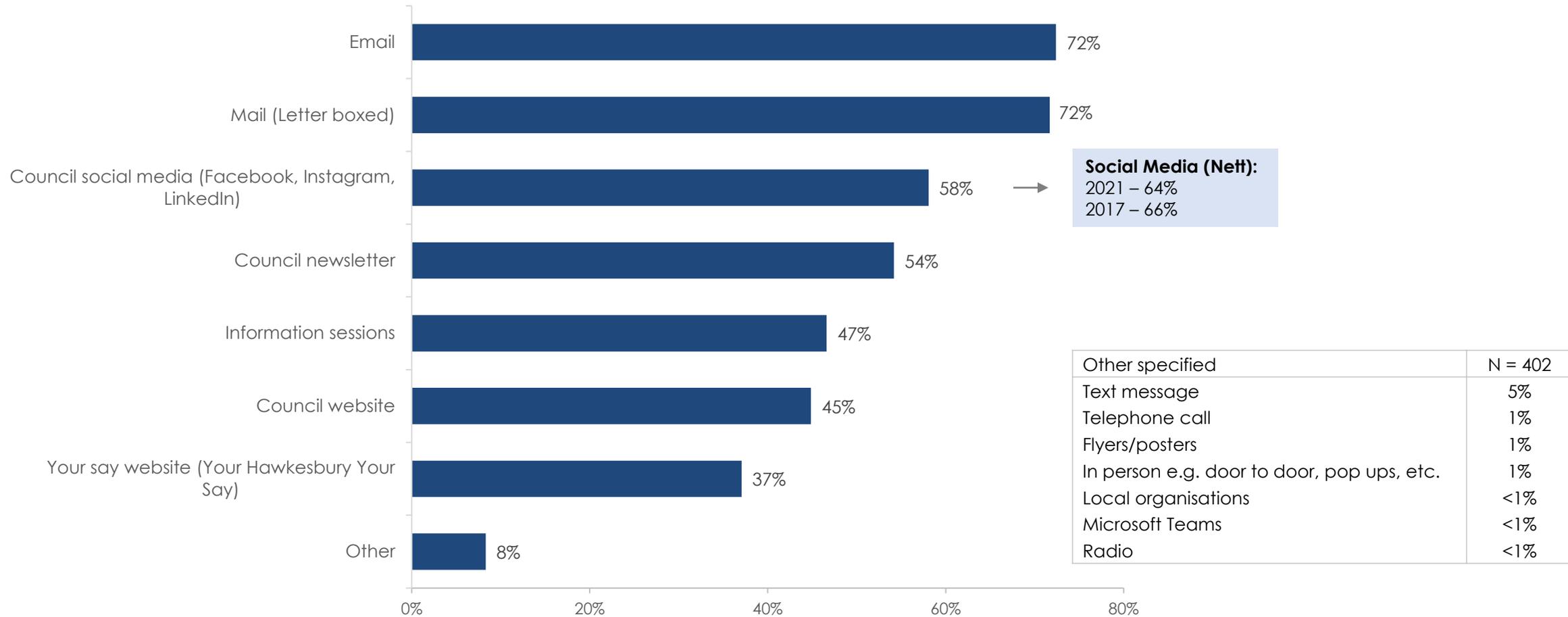


	2023	2021	2017	2015	2013	2011
Mean rating	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.86	2.94	3.13
Base	402	401	402	401	400	400

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower rating (by group)

Effective Communication Methods

Overall, residents believe email and direct mail are the most effective methods for Council to communicate with residents. Those under 50 are significantly more likely to find Council social media more effective than those over 50 (see Appendix 1).



Base: N = 402

Note: Due to changes in the survey, comparisons have not been made

Q11. When Council is trying to inform or engage you on local issues, which of the following methods would be the most effective in communicating with you?



Summary of Council Services/Facilities

This section summarises the importance and satisfaction ratings for the 46 services and facilities. In this section we explore trends to past research and comparative norms.

Section Three

Importance & Satisfaction – Highest/Lowest Rated Services/Facilities

A core element of this community survey was the rating of 46 facilities/services in terms of Importance and Satisfaction. The analysis below identifies the highest and lowest rated services/facilities in terms of importance and satisfaction.

Importance

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

Higher importance	T2 Box	Mean
Emergency services planning	95%	4.77
Road maintenance	94%	4.70
Kerbside recycling service (yellow lidded bin)	91%	4.57
Kerbside waste service (red or black lidded bin)	90%	4.56
Long term planning for the future	89%	4.55
Healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways	89%	4.54

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

Lower importance	T2 Box	Mean
Gallery	32%	2.98
Senior centres and programs	38%	3.04
Programs for people from diverse cultures	37%	3.11
Museum	42%	3.20
Access to services and facilities for people with a disability	54%	3.53

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

Satisfaction

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

Higher satisfaction	T3 Box	Mean
Libraries	98%	4.23
Supporting and valuing volunteers	93%	3.90
Companion animal shelter (pound) services	93%	3.81
Museum	93%	3.90
Gallery	92%	3.91
Kerbside waste service (red or black lidded bin)	92%	4.08

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

Lower satisfaction	T3 Box	Mean
Road maintenance	32%	2.16
Long term planning for the future	57%	2.73
Improved services and infrastructure (generally)	59%	2.76
Road safety	60%	2.89
Provide transparent, accountable and respected leadership	60%	2.80

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

Services and Facilities – Importance: Comparison by Year

The below chart compares the mean importance ratings for 2023 vs 2021.

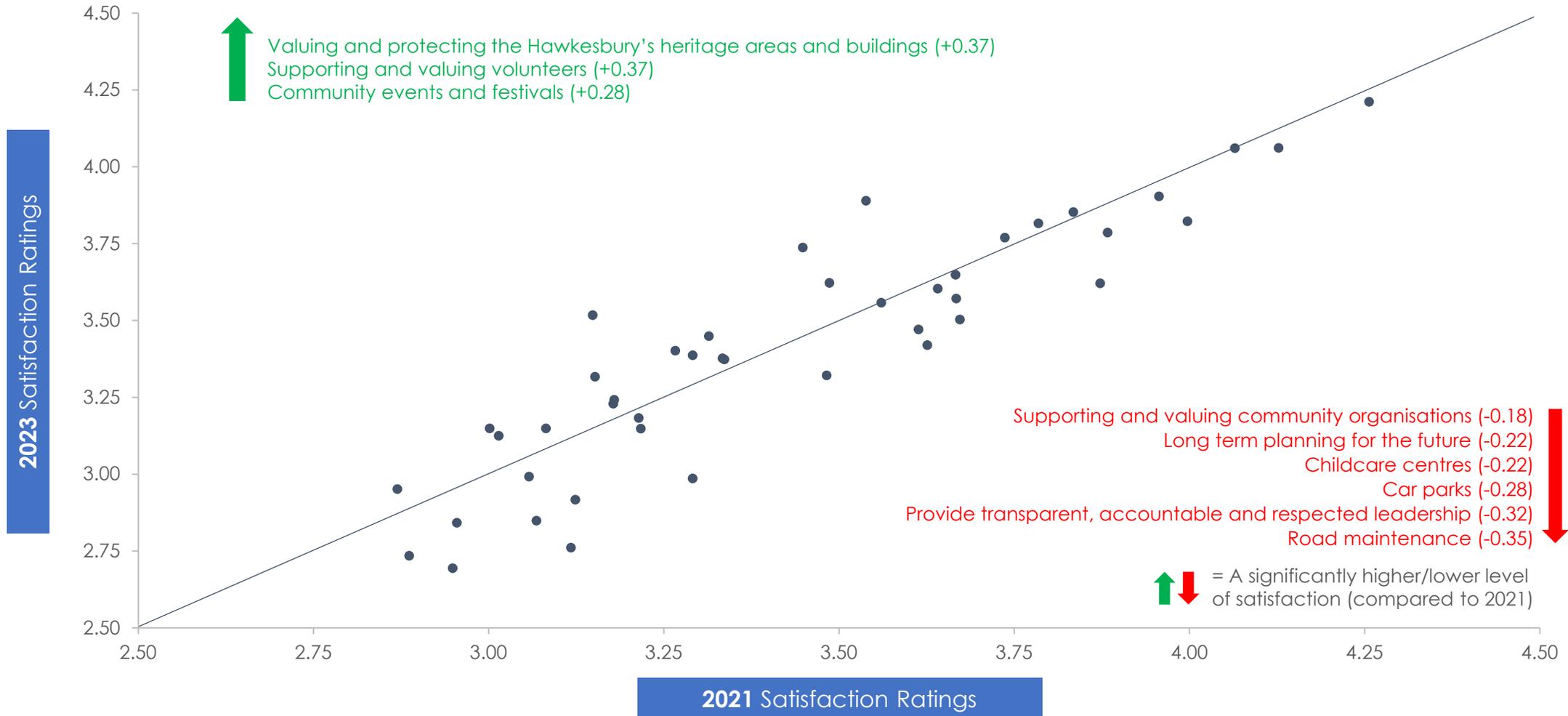
Importance significantly increased for 3 of the 45 comparable services and facilities, there were also significant decreases in importance for 10 services and facilities.



Services and Facilities – Satisfaction: Comparison by Year

The below chart compares the mean satisfaction ratings for 2023 vs 2021.

Satisfaction significantly increased for 3 of the 45 comparable services and facilities, there were also significant decreases in satisfaction for 6 services and facilities.



Performance Gap Analysis

When we examine the largest performance gaps, we can identify that all of the services or facilities have been rated as very high in importance, whilst resident satisfaction for all of these areas is between 32% and 80%.

Road maintenance has the largest performance gap overall of 61%, with 94% rating this area as important/very important and 32% being at least somewhat satisfied with Council's performance in this area.

Service Area	Service/Facility	Importance T2 Box	Satisfaction T3 Box	Performance Gap (Importance – Satisfaction)
Strong Economy	Road maintenance	94%	32%	61%
Reliable Council	Long term planning for the future	89%	57%	32%
A Great Place to Live	Road safety	88%	60%	28%
A Great Place to Live	Improved services and infrastructure (generally)	83%	59%	24%
Reliable Council	Engaging the community in making decisions	83%	61%	22%
Reliable Council	Provide transparent, accountable and respected leadership	82%	60%	21%
Protected Environment and Valued History	Healthy and sustainable Hawkesbury River and waterways	89%	70%	19%
Reliable Council	Lobbying State and Federal Government for funding and improved service levels	85%	67%	18%
Strong Economy	Car parks	81%	66%	15%
Reliable Council	Emergency services planning (including flood and fire)	95%	80%	14%

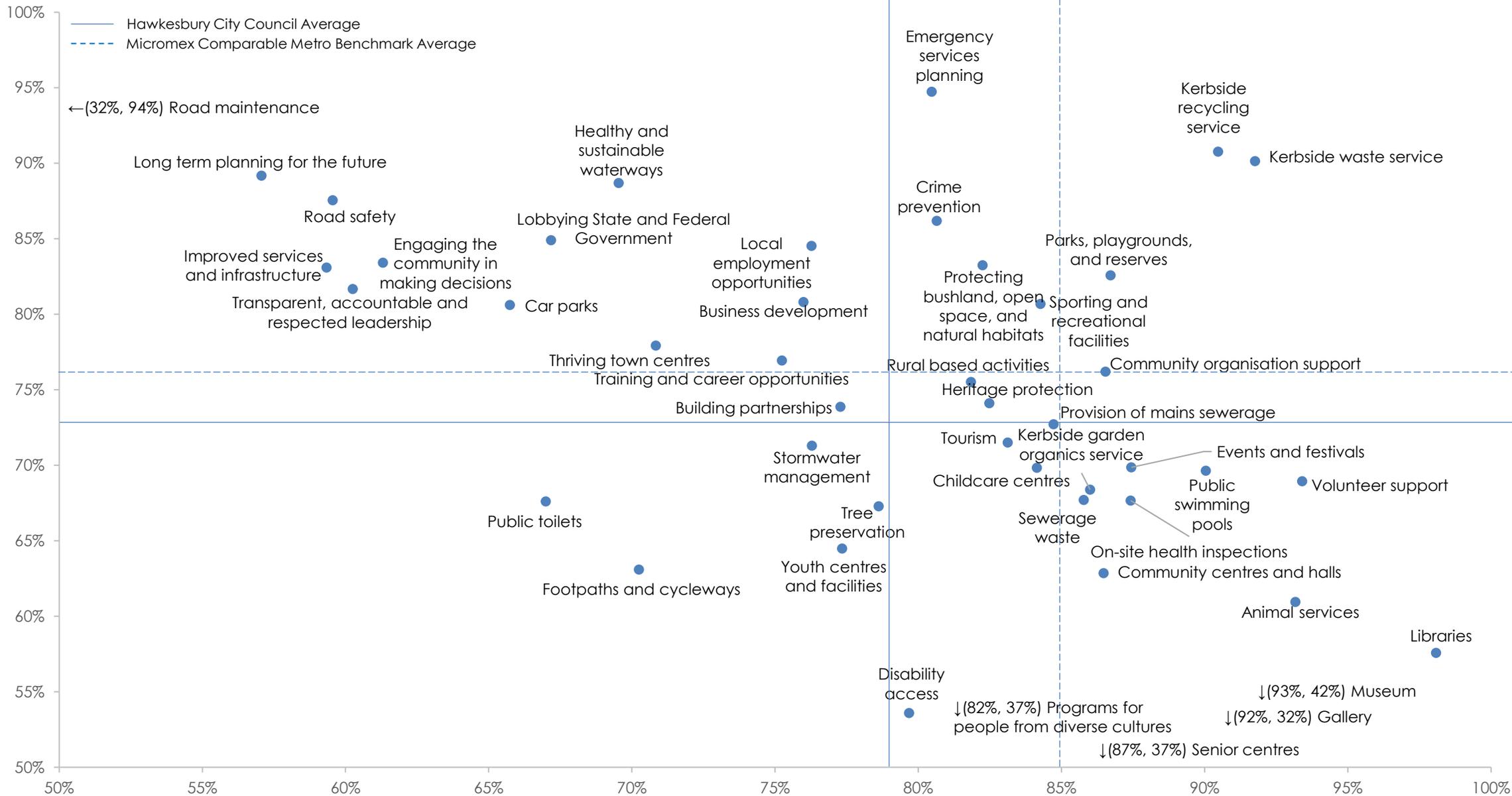
Note: Performance gap is the first step in the process, we now need to identify comparative ratings across all services and facilities to get an understanding of relative importance and satisfaction at an LGA level. This is when we undertake step 2 of the analysis.



Improve
Higher importance, lower satisfaction

Maintain
Higher importance, higher satisfaction

Importance



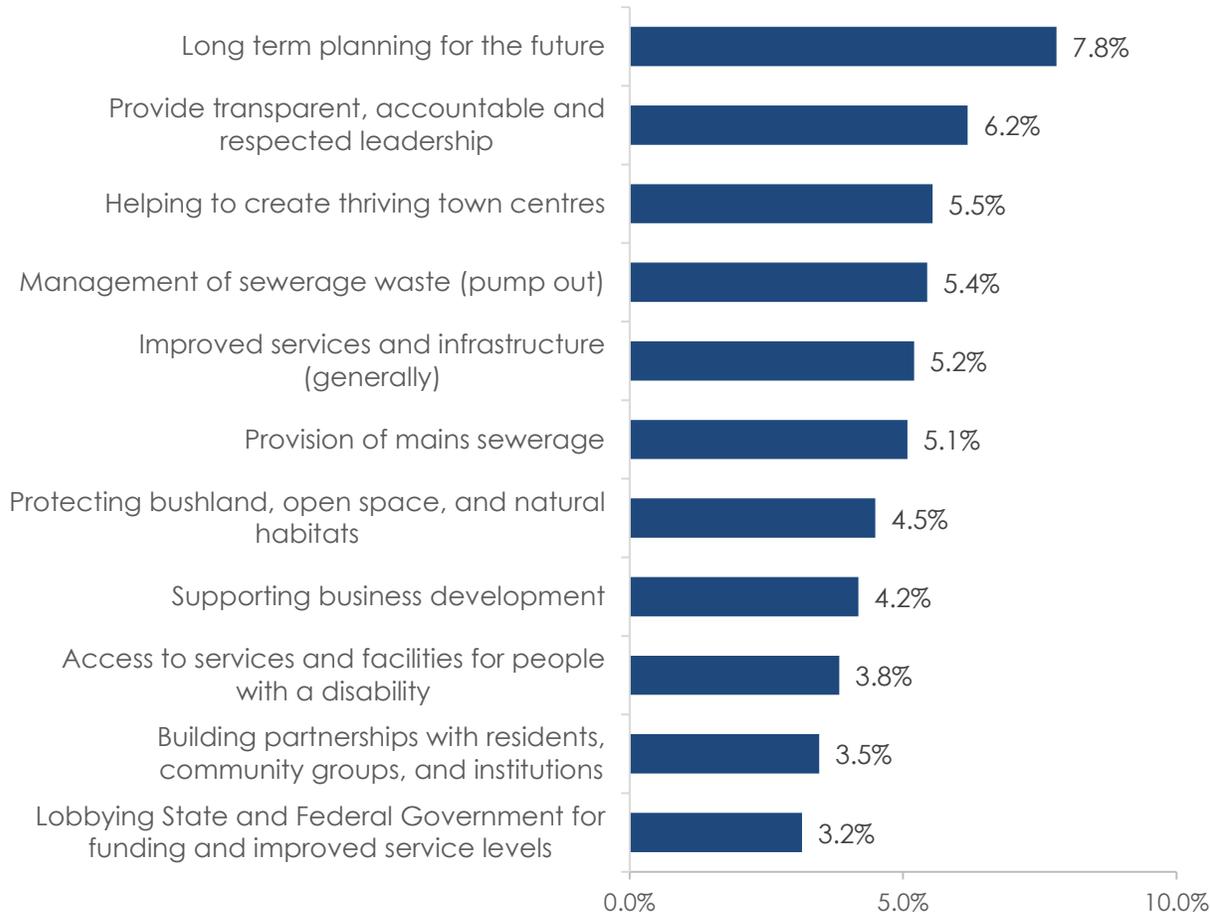
Niche
Lower importance, lower satisfaction

Satisfaction

Social Capital
Lower importance, higher satisfaction

Key Drivers of Overall Satisfaction with Council

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

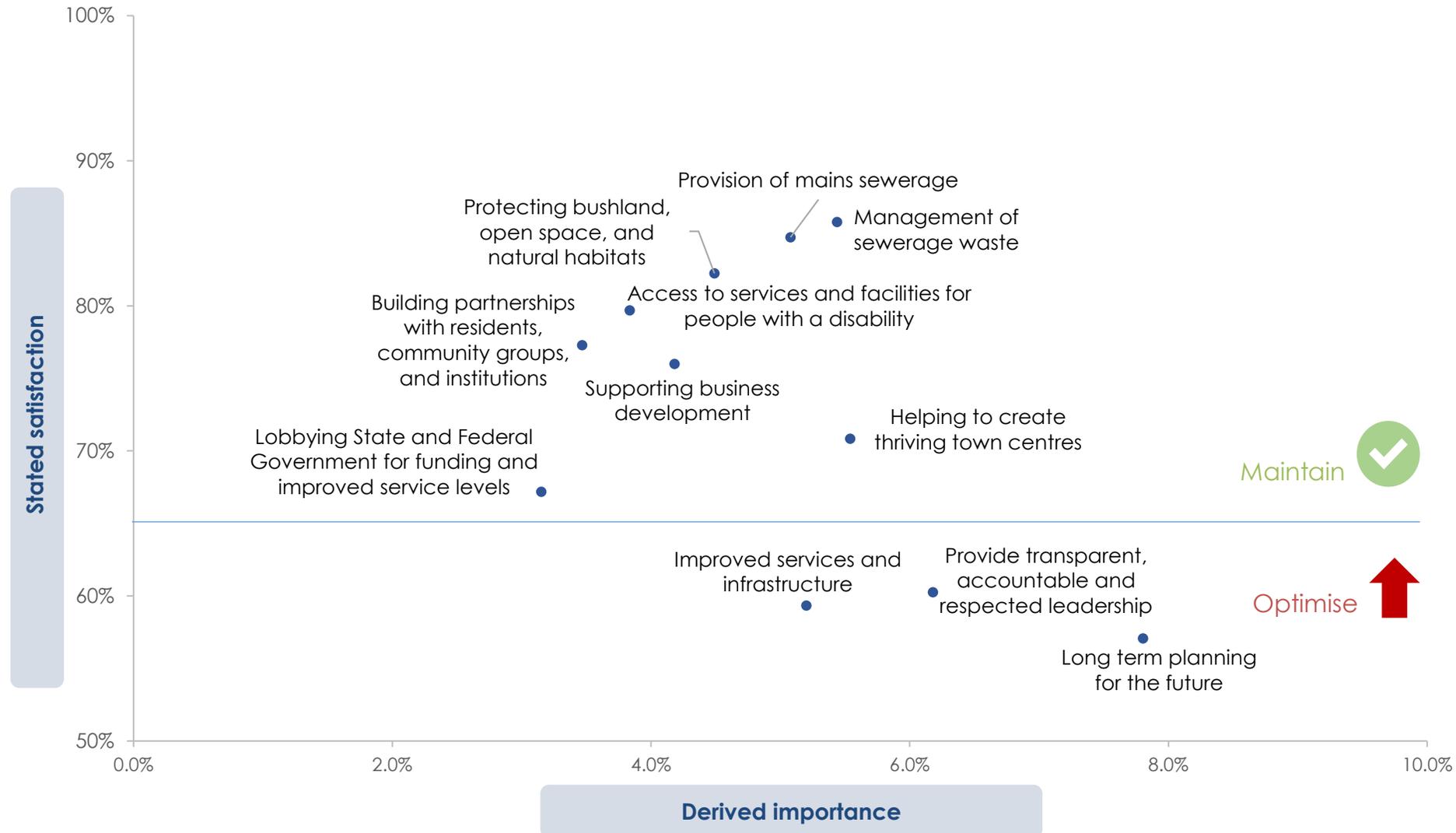


The results in the chart to the left identify which services/facilities contribute most to overall satisfaction. If Council can improve satisfaction scores across these services/facilities, they are likely to improve their overall satisfaction score.

These top 11 services/facilities (so 24% of the 46 services/facilities) account for just over 54% of the variation in overall satisfaction. Therefore, whilst all 46 services/facilities are important, only a number of them are potentially significant drivers of satisfaction (at this stage, the other 35 services/facilities have less impact on satisfaction – although if resident satisfaction with them was to suddenly change they may have more immediate impact on satisfaction).

Mapping Stated Satisfaction and Derived Importance Identifies the Community Priority Areas

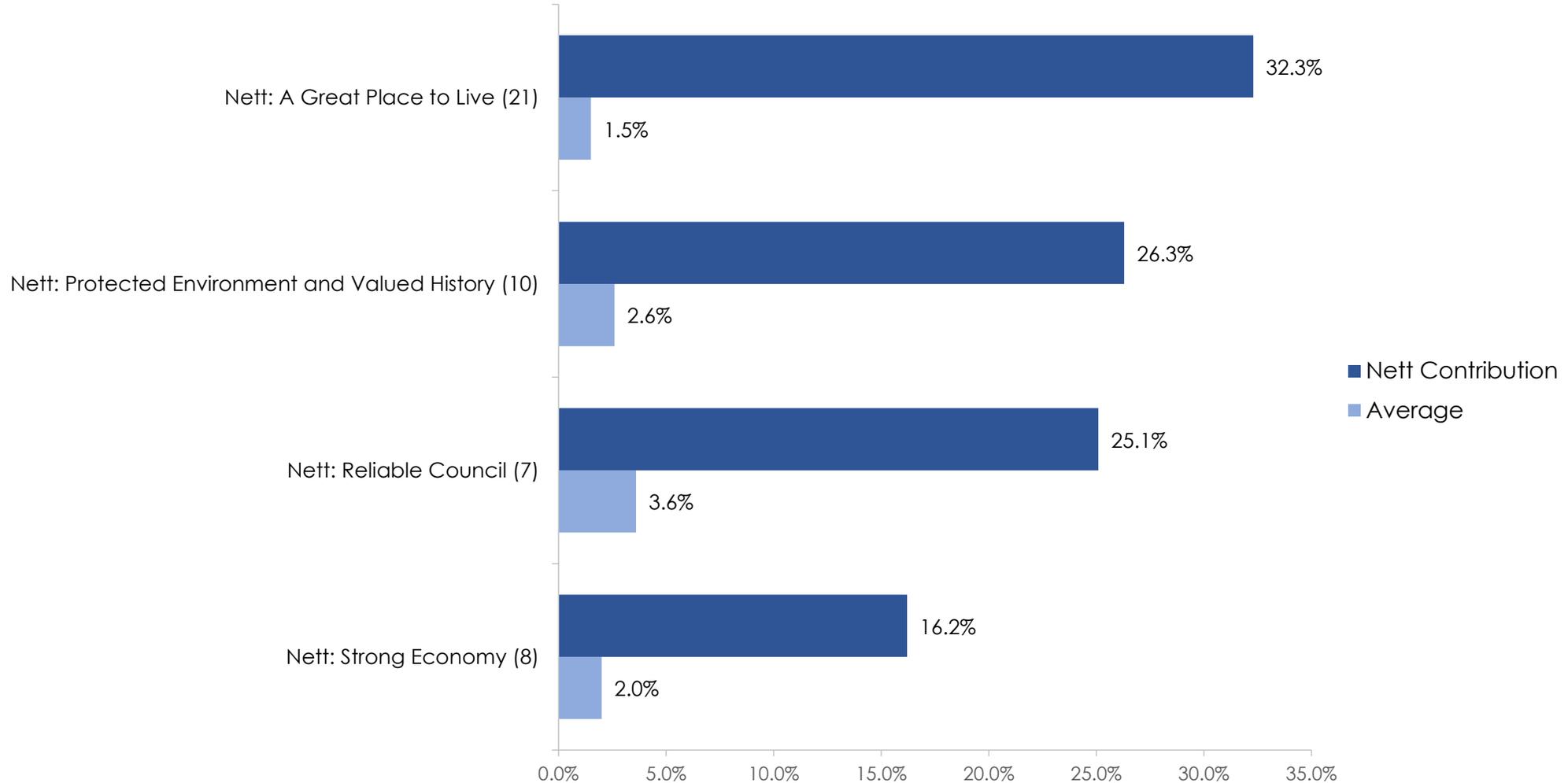
The below chart looks at the relationship between stated satisfaction (top 3 box) and derived importance (Regression result) to identify the level of contribution of each measure. Any services/facilities below the blue line (shown above) could potentially be benchmarked to target in future research to elevate satisfaction levels in these areas.



Contribution to Overall Satisfaction with Council's Performance

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

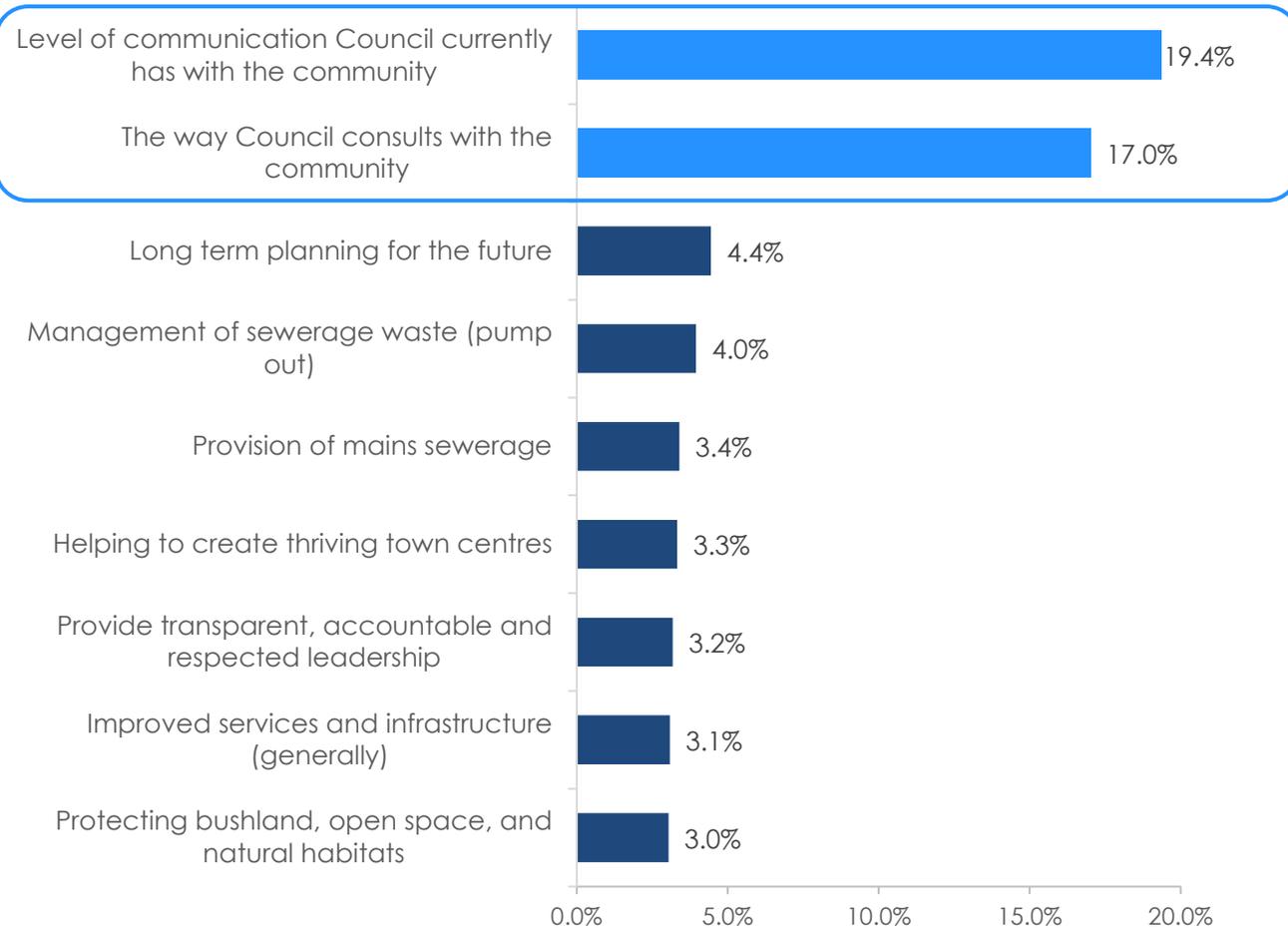
'A Great Place to Live' (32.3%) is the key contributor toward overall satisfaction with Council's performance, whilst the average derived importance of 'Reliable Council' measures is higher at 3.6%.



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of services/facilities within each service area

Key Drivers of Overall Satisfaction with Council – Re-run

The below chart is a re-run of the key drivers contributing to overall satisfaction, but with the inclusion of the question 'How satisfied are you with the level of communication Council currently has with the community?' and 'How satisfied are you with the way Council consults with the community?'.
The chart shows that communication and consultation are the most significant drivers of satisfaction, with communication accounting for 19.4% and consultation for 17.0% of the total. Other factors like long-term planning, sewerage management, and town centres follow at lower percentages.



Repeating the Regression analysis shown previously, with the inclusion of two new measures (communication and consultation) we can see the level of communication from Council and consultation with the community has a substantial impact on resident satisfaction with the overall performance of Council.

Therefore, continuing to focus on communication, engagement and consultation with the community will likely increase their satisfaction of key service areas, and overall.

R² value = 50.05

Dependent Variable: Q7. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, but across all responsibility areas?



Contact with Council

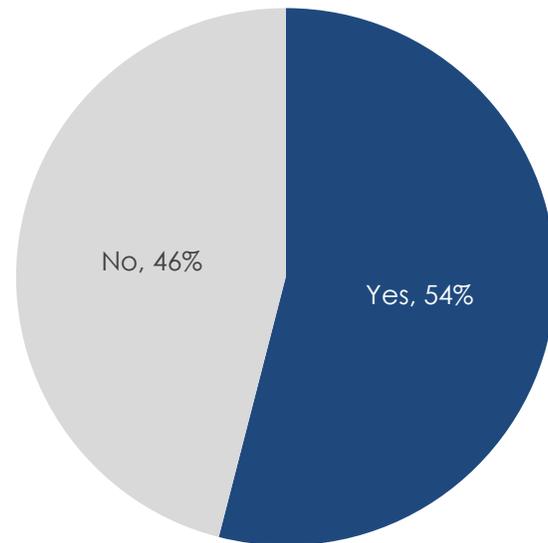
This section investigates residents' method of contacting Council, and satisfaction with customer service measures.

Section Four

Contact with Council in Last 12 Months

Compared to 2021, significantly more residents have contacted Council over the last 12 months. Those identifying as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander were significantly more to have contacted Council.

	Overall 2023	Gender		Age				Identify with a disability		Identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes %	54%	50%	58%	48%	62%	60%	45%	64%	53%	83%	51%
Base	402	198	204	115	96	104	87	43	359	26	373



Base: N = 402

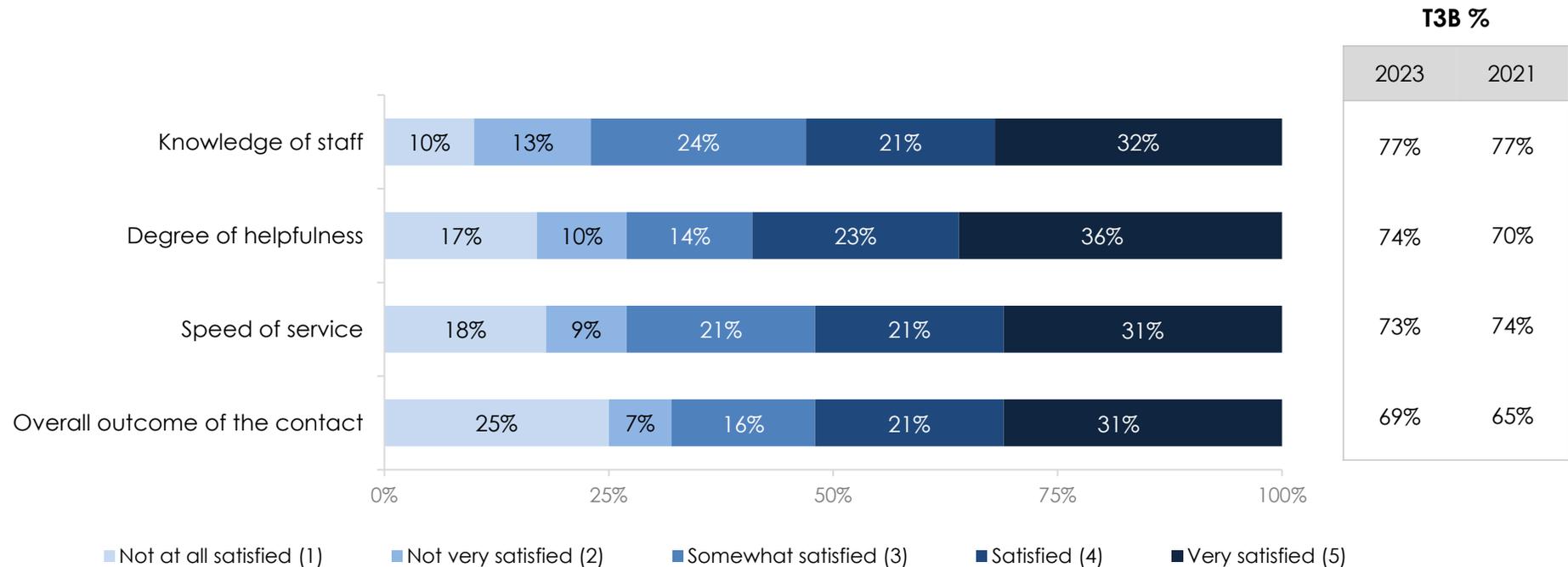
	2023	2021	2017	2015	2013	2011
Yes %	54%	43%	50%	54%	52%	48%
Base	402	401	402	401	400	400

Satisfaction with Customer Service Measures

For those who have contacted Council in the last 12 months, satisfaction was greatest for the knowledge of staff, with 77% at least somewhat satisfied. 69% were at least somewhat satisfied with the overall outcome of the contact, a slight improvement from 2021.

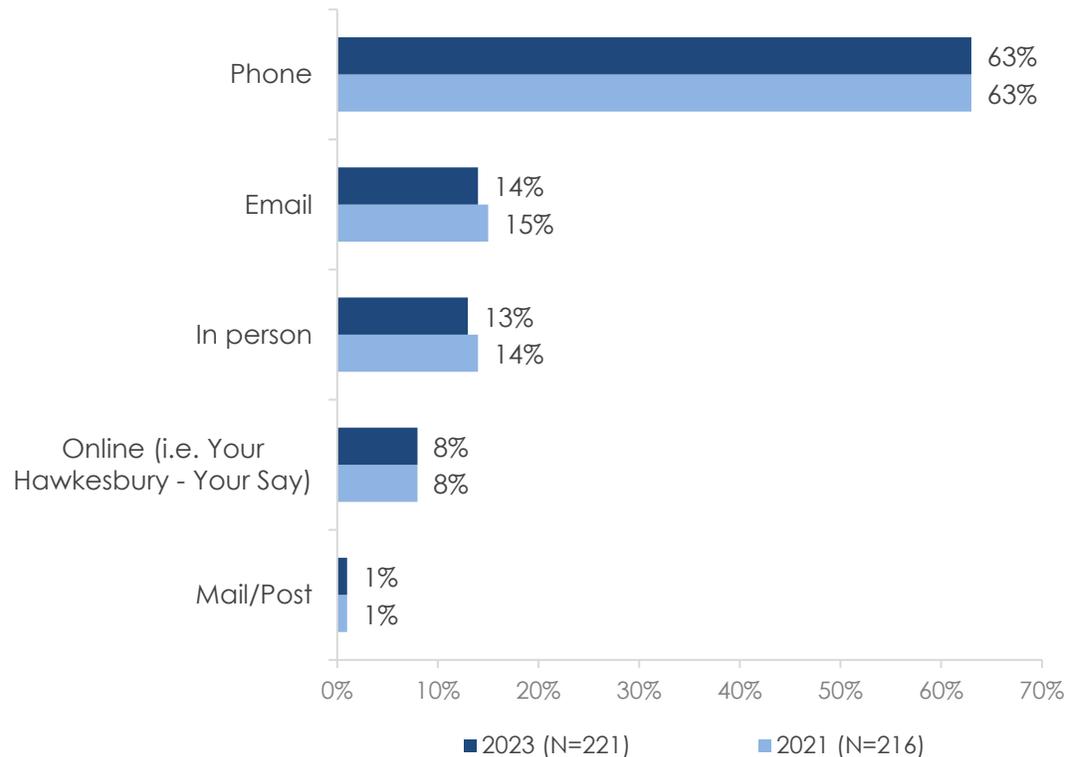
Satisfaction levels continue to soften from 2017 for speed of service.

Satisfaction mean scores	2023	2021	2017	2015	2013
Knowledge of staff	3.54	3.55	3.61	3.53	3.25
Degree of helpfulness	3.54	3.46	3.53	3.46	3.29
Speed of service	3.41	3.47	3.63	3.54	3.28
Overall outcome of the contact	3.32	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.09



Method of Contacting Council

Phone remains the most commonly used method to contact Council, with 63% of those contacting Council in the last 12 months contacting via phone. Satisfaction with the overall outcome of the contact is higher for those contacting in person and satisfaction with speed of service is significantly lower for those contacting via email.



Satisfaction by Method of Contact

Q12c. % at least somewhat satisfied	Q12b. Method of contact		
	Phone N=135	Email N=32	In person N=30
Knowledge of staff	78%	62%	92%
Degree of helpfulness	76%	61%	82%
Speed of service	75%	58%	87%
Overall outcome of the contact	68%	56%	87%



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