



Fit for the future – Community Survey May 2015

Council distributed 1,500 surveys with accompanying information brochure to households by mail, and made the survey available online. Council confined background information in the brochure to facts and a link to the 'Fit for the Future' website for more information. We were very careful not to include leading statements. Two newspaper articles in the Tumbarumba Times and one each in the Corryong Courier and Khancoban Echo promoted completion of the survey. The survey was also advertised on Facebook. 434 completed surveys were received. This indicates the importance of their local council to residents in the Tumbarumba Shire.

Summary data is provided below.

To identify trends in the data, the Shire was divided into two regions based on postcode boundaries, with respondents indicating their postcode. The Shire's communities of interest are split into a northern and a southern area. 80% of the shire's population reside in the northern area, with 20% in the southern area. A large area in the south is contained within the Kosciuszko National Park. Responses clearly showed distinct communities of interest.

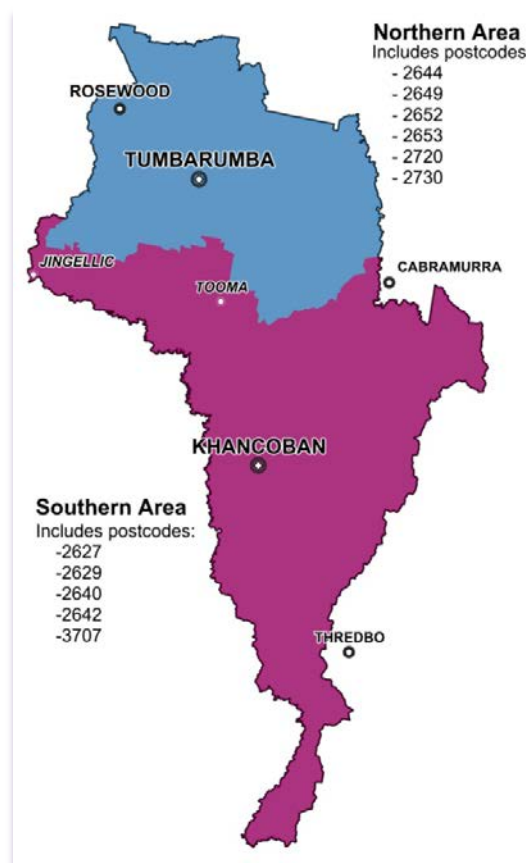


Figure 1 – Northern and Southern areas of Tumbarumba Shire Council.

Question 1 – What is your primary regional centre?

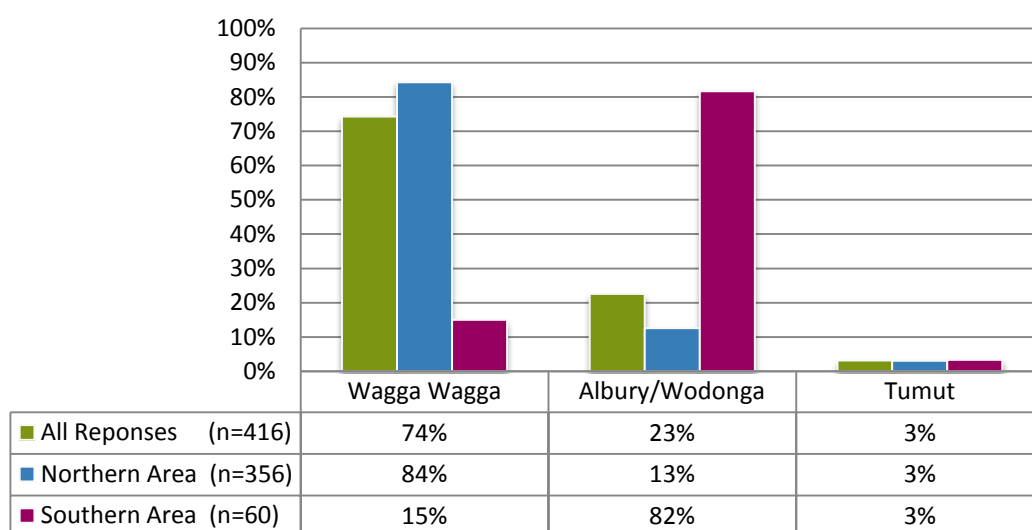


Figure 2 – External regional centres for residents in Tumbarumba Shire. (8 null responses)

Wagga Wagga is the dominant regional centre for the residents of Tumbarumba Shire, followed by Albury/Wodonga (Figure 2).

This is consistent with the population data, with northern residents accessing regional services in Wagga Wagga and southern residents accessing services in Albury/ Wodonga. There is a small crossover between these two regional centres. Tumut is not generally seen as a local or regional centre for Tumbarumba Shire's residents.

Question 2 – Where do you shop locally/access services?

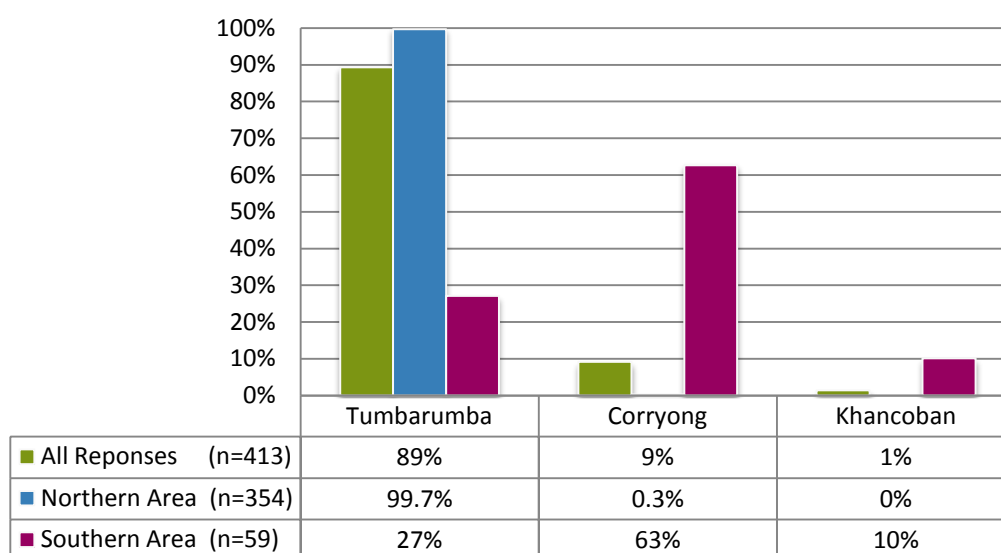


Figure 3 – Access to local shops and services (11 null responses)

Comment: Tumbarumba provides local services to the northern region, with Corryong in Victoria being the dominant local centre for southern residents, although 28% of southern residents also shop in Tumbarumba.

Question 3 – Which of the following would you prefer to deliver scale and capacity?

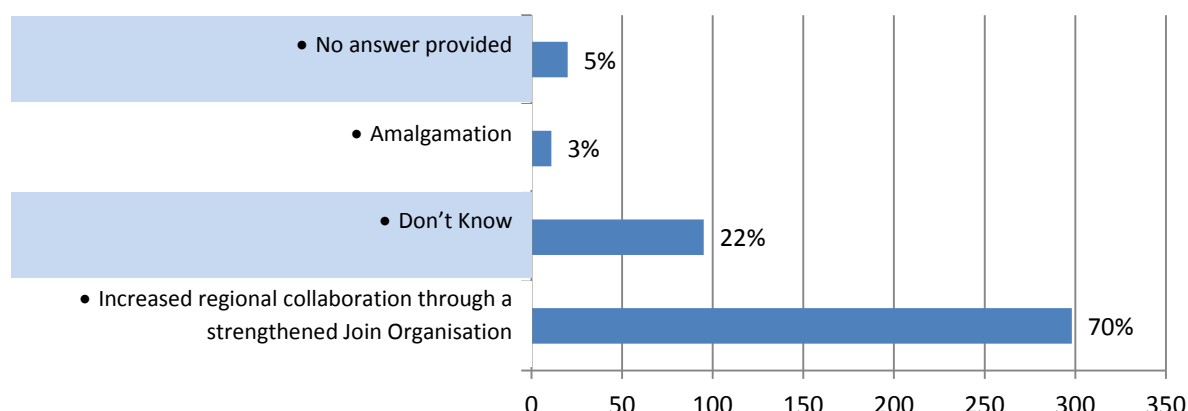


Figure 4 – Preference to increase Tumbarumba Shire Councils 'Scale & Capacity'

Comment: 70% of respondents indicated that they would prefer regional collaboration to an amalgamation with Tumut/ Gundagai, and only 3% indicated that merger was preferred. 22% didn't know what to respond to this question, although an explanation was provided in the accompanying brochure with a link to the Fit for the Future website for more information.

Question 4 – If there was to be an amalgamation with Tumut/Gundagai Shire Council, what do you believe the benefits potentially would be?

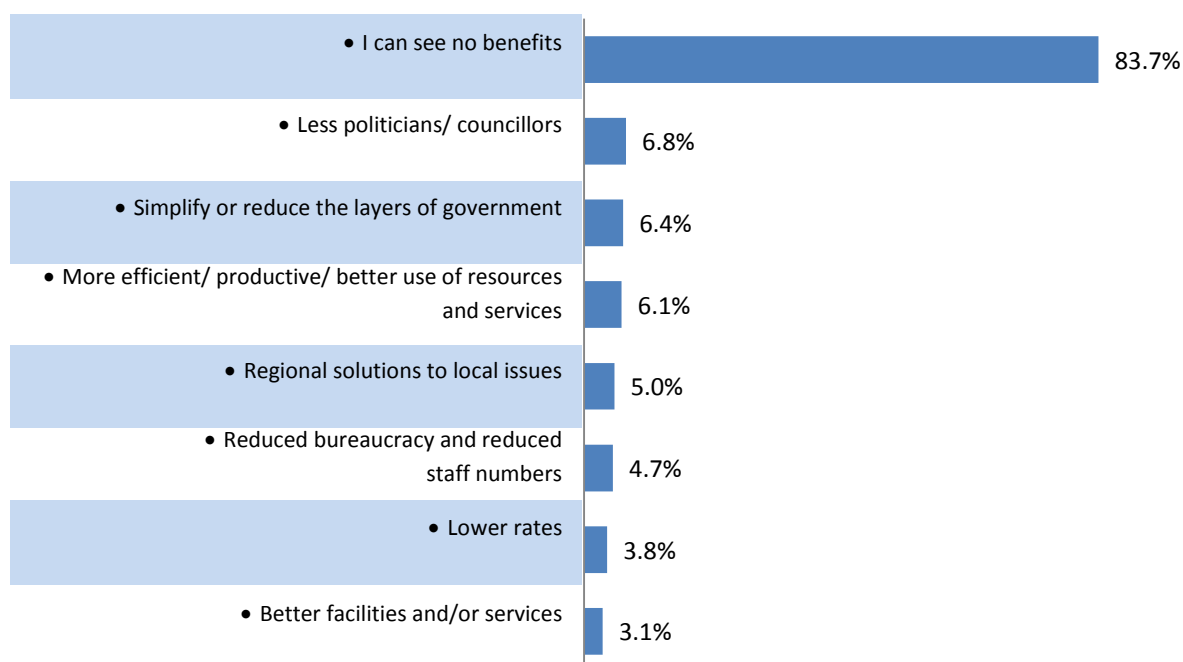


Figure 5 – Perception of potential benefits resulting from amalgamation

Question 5 – What would be the major disadvantages?

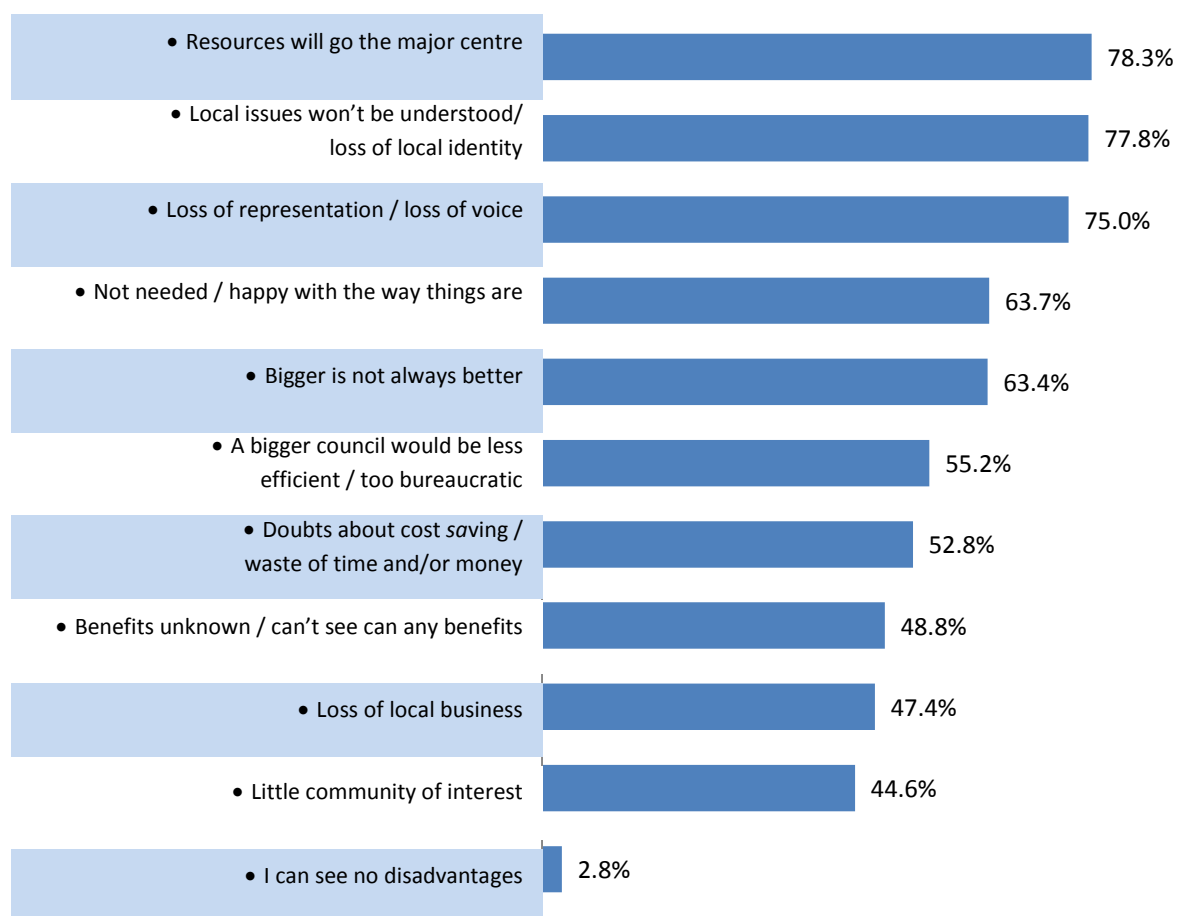


Figure 6 – Perception of potential disadvantages resulting from amalgamation

Comment: Questions 4 and 5 asked respondents to consider the benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation. 83% of respondents could see no benefits of amalgamation, with only 2.8% seeing no disadvantages. Respondents felt that in an amalgamated Tumut/ Tumbarumba/ Gundagai Shire Council resources would be concentrated in Tumut and there would be loss of understanding of local issues and loss of local voice. Detailed responses are shown in Figures 5 and 6 above.

Question 6 – To what extent do you generally support or oppose Tumbarumba Shire Council amalgamating with Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils?

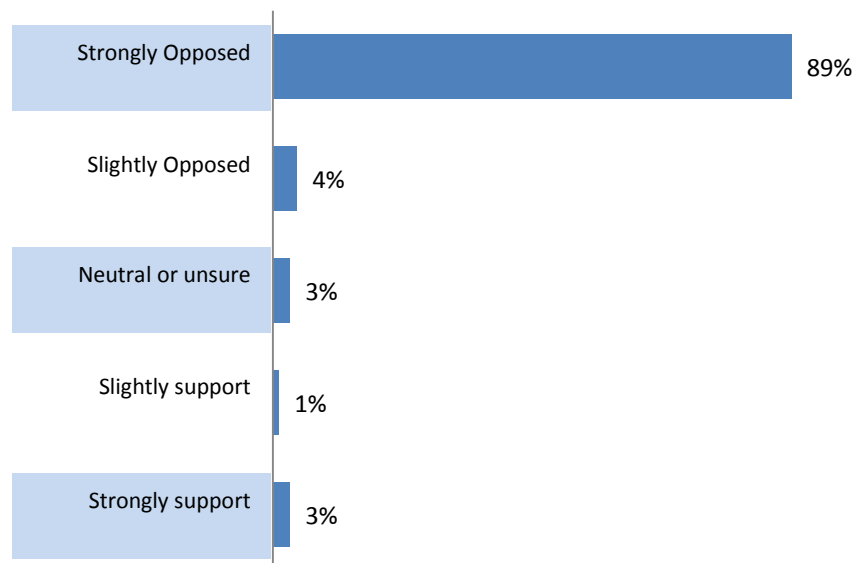


Figure 7 - opposition to amalgamation with Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils

Comment: 93% of respondents were opposed to amalgamation, with only 4% in favour and 3% uncommitted either way.

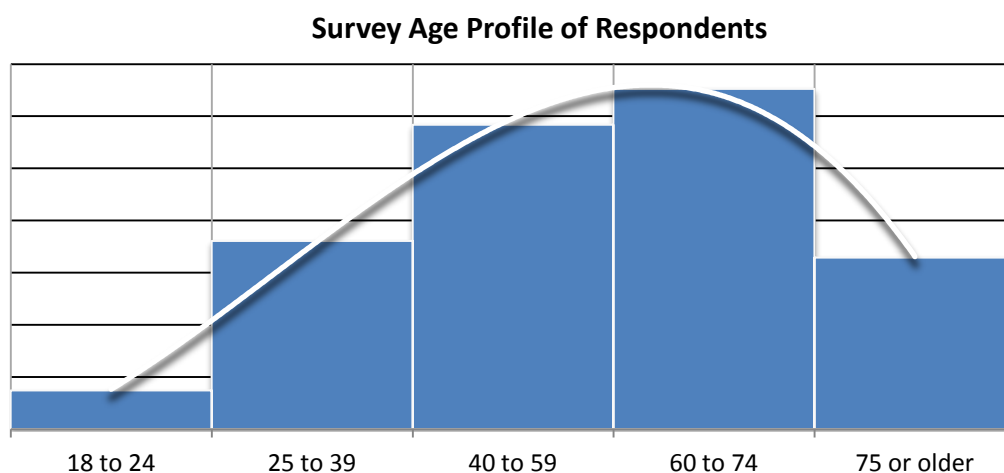


Figure 8 – Age profile of respondents

Comment: the age profile of respondents reasonably reflects the Shire demographic. Male and female respondents were equally represented.

Survey comments

Question 4 comments – benefits of amalgamation

- I think it would be a disadvantage.
- More salaries for staff of council. State Govt/Politicians happy.
- Better quality of roads.
- Tumut not interested in Batlow - would not be interested in Khancoban
- we pay equal rates in Khancoban; will be higher rates as is charged in Sutherland Shire (Cronulla) NSW
- bitumen roads may replace gravel roads (e.g. Lower Bago Road)
- These 'benefits are really 'wishful thinking' - there are no guarantees.
- May be small amount of the above however Tumba doing well without.
- Not sure
- Regional solutions to local issues could come at the expense of local solutions to local or regional issues.
- No benefit to Tumbarumba
- We would take a step backwards.
- I fear it would be all about Tumut and we wouldn't count.
- Unless Tumbarumba has control and takes a leading role amalgamation with these shires will be the downfall of our town/area.
- Our council does well
- More likely to attract funding or attention from state and federal governments. Sharing of heavy equipment rather than each council having to own and maintain.
- Stop duplication of admin services
- Tumut is not possible to run their own council and would swallow us.
- Tumut Shire Council has no regard for its surrounding towns
- What is wrong with the way we are now
- The benefits would only accrue if amalgamation was driven by a new Council and management team prepared to drive for efficiency gains and not be deterred by rent seekers.
- I don't consider any amalgamation would benefit our shire
- Amalgamation means reduction of services, benefits, representation & an overall dismissal of rural residents. If this process saves money it is solely aimed to benefit those living in the Sydney urban metropolis.
- I can see reasons for Batlow to join Tumba and for Tumut and Gundagai to form a working alliance
- IF WE DONT HAVE TO AMALGAMATE NOW IT MAY BE FORCED ON US AT A LATER DATE. BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW
- Having to pick up the slack of the other councils

Question 5 comments – disadvantages of amalgamation

- Tumut is a big fish and Tumba is a small fish. TSC will mean Tumut Shire Council (Not Tumbarumba Shire Council anymore).
- "Tumbarumba" is now a recognised brand name. Loss of identity would reduce impact.
- Presently unable to vote in Local Rep
- Khancoban doesn't have any representation; resources already go to the largest centre (Tumbarumba)
- It is a failed experiment - Kennett tried it in Victoria and had to undo his mischief.
- We do not need to amalgamate.
- Observe how Tumut treats Batlow and Adelong.
- I worked in Corryong when we first came to the area and was appalled when I contacted the Towong Council about using a venue and the streets that butted up to this venue and they didn't even know where it was or the street names! The Council used to operate out of Corryong and has been moved to Tallangatta, Could see the same thing happening or worse if we were amalgamated with Tumut/Gundagai Shire Councils
- bureaucrats will not understand local issues.
- Would lose identity.
- Tumut is in debt. We are not.
- Stay as we are.
- Tumut appears to be a vicious predator!
- Loss of some funding
- Loss of control of engineering department
- Forget it!!!!
- Loss of jobs!!!!
- How can talking to someone in Tumut be better than talking to someone in Tumbarumba?
- Distance, weather at laurel hill and road conditions, Tumbarumba shire council provides the community with a greater range of services,
- The town and district would be left without any control over its future
- What are the advantages of a strong financial council joining with two poorly performing organisations
- If the way Batlow/Adelong are considered by Tumut is any guide Tumbarumba Shire Council area will die a slow death
- Technology. Federal government will be happier
- Tumut always though they are better than Tumba, Batlow, Adelong because we are small towns in(sports/schools/shopping etc) STAND ALONE
- Distances are too great. We have nothing in common with Tumut or Gundagai. They wouldn't know anything about this neck of the woods. Since the Victorian amalgamations, rates across the border have gone up and up, and yet people in Corryong think they get nothing.
- Distance matters. Look at the poor share Batlow currently receives from Tumut Shire, or the dismissal that Wagga offers Tarcutta. Then consider that Gundagai is a world away from Tumbarumba. Love 'em or hate 'em - Tumba Council currently does a pretty damn good job maintaining the town. There is cohesiveness, communication & consequently pride with the community. That will instantly vanish if the administration centre is shared or located away. Council recently completed a major redevelopment of The Parade. Do we really think that we could have achieved the same not unreasonable result from a room full of strangers in Gundagai? We need Tumbarumba people working in a Tumbarumba office & at Tumbarumba facilities with resources & equipment based in Tumbarumba.
- A loss of Professional personnel to Tumbarumba and its community. The multiplier effect of the loss of staff in Tumbarumba.

General Comments

[Letter attached] Dear Sir/Madam, The contents of this submission is a result of my experiences with Shire amalgamation in Victoria some 20 years ago. In that period I was an active civil contractor dealing with many local shire councils. The efficient and proactive shires that were thrown together with less efficient and more lethargic shires were soon dragged down to their level. Should Tumbarumba Shire be consumed by Wagga Wagga or Tumut Shires, Tumbarumba would inevitably become the far away outpost receiving minimal attention. We would lose total **control** of our own "Blue Chip" financial situation and our unique and special identity will be lost. At a personal level, in the same era very quickly rates started to rise yet the services provided were nothing that were previously offered. The remote Victorian Shires of Mallacoota, Omeo and Corryong were amalgamated to other shires that were geographically and by distance vastly removed, the result being, they were left at very much a disadvantage for provision of services. Tumbarumba Shire is unique and in my opinion should remain a stand-alone entity. We are more than capable to offer locals and tourists infrastructure and services without the interference of Wagga Wagga or Tumut. The financial incentives offered by state government will very soon evaporate and we will be left wondering why the hell we considered amalgamation.

- [Survey completed by couple.] Rather than amalgamate councils I would prefer to see states amalgamated into one commonwealth.
- A bypass for trucks should be main agenda - Courabyra Road ?
- A comparison of most aspects of the other Council provision of services and engagement with their residents would show that Tumbarumba is streets ahead. Why not Wagga they mightn't suck us dry? Efficiency shouldn't be rewarded by lumping us with the proven inefficient.
- A finically stable and effective council should not have its financial resources merged with another, potentially less successful council. Tumbarumba Shires record indicates it is stable and able to stand alone, or take over neighbouring areas of existing shires such as the Batlow (Tumut Shire) or eastern parts of the Hume Shire.
- Amalgamations would lead to loss of local jobs and would be detrimental to our current centres.
- Anonymous decision making is one step away from dictatorship by those who think they know what is best for others.
- Are we being told the WHOLE story?
- areas are completely different with different needs and logistics. Tumbarumba able to stand alone. Well known that Tumut is just after Tumbarumba's money and assets
- As far as I can see the amalgamation of rural councils in Victoria reduced services to communities and it is debatable whether the amalgamation saved any money.
- As we are a financially stable council, we don't want OUR money frittered away on someone else's projects.
- Ask Batlow people about loss of facilities and reduced hours at pool and library etc... and loss of voice on council.
- Batlow's desire to join Tumba is another indication to stand alone and stay away from Tumut.
- Be independent
- Biggest problem is ongoing supply of committed (and progressive) councillors.
- Bring Batlow into Tumbarumba Shire.
- Cabramurra never considered for anything. Should be in Tumbarumba Shire. Our boundary should also be to the Hume Highway.
- Centralising power will cause uniformity in responses and concentrate wealth in Tumut.
- Come up with defensive strategy to drastically increase population of Tumba. By bringing rail lines/tourism producer such as adventure tree-top walking/gliding/seminar. Give mayor a good salary so that a leader comes.
- Commonalities with neighbouring shires, National Parks, waterways, employment, mountains, timber, agriculture, viticulture, horticulture, cross employment
- Council needs to cut out wasteful spending. Have a strong representative to state government.
- Currently, we have one of the best shires in NSW. A shire that is financially stable provides good services and is active in the community. Amalgamation may mean a loss of all these and perhaps the

viability of Tumbarumba both financially and as an aspiring community.

- Don't want or need an amalgamation
- Economies of scale are not always economic savings; more time may be spent driving to cover greater distances, also social dislocation.
- Efficiencies could be found in the way council handles some of its assets e.g. sportsgrounds.
- Even the investigating body found any advantage of amalgamation doubtful. Local volunteers and their organisations are best supported by a local council. We know and have ready access to all our Councillors.
- having said no to Q6, I think Tumbarumba have a good prospect if linked together i.e. sharing their festivals somehow.
- How do we get the other side of the story?
- I believe amalgamation would be a shame. Tumbarumba is a wonderful area and is maintained by Tumba shire perfectly! To lose our council would be a horrible thing for the community!!
- I can see no benefit in amalgamating with Tumut/Gundagai and seeing our future lost
- I feel there are other issues to address - does this affect our tourism as part of TSM? If amalgamation occurs - what is the key destination for our region?
- I have worked as a contractor for Tumba council and have observed the work practices of its employees. A lot of time and money has been wasted. Management has compounded this because they have risen from the ranks and are infected by the same virus. If our shire is to stand alone it must become more efficient in this area.
- I really feel it is not in Tumbarumba's best interests to join Tumut, we're viable, we have strong foundations & our focus is our shire, we'd simply become small fish in a big pond & be drained.
- I think amalgamation would lead to gradual loss of identity of the Shire which would lead in the long run to loss of growth. A gradual decline.
- I think merging councils is a bad idea
- I work with Tumut ratepayers who express their frustration with their Council as they are inefficient and have expensive rates
- if amalgamation occurs, Khancoban and Tooma should join Towong shire
- If it ain't broke - why fix it?
- If it is not broken do not try to fix.
- If savings by Govt (presumably federal) are needed, then get rid of State Govts - Australia is a 'nation', not a group of city states.
- If they amalgamate, Khancoban will get pushed further to the edge of obscurity.
- If Tumbarumba is forced to amalgamate with shires who are in a poor financial position we must continue to spend on our own infrastructure.
- If you are looking for better government get rid of the state
- Increase population of Tumbarumba by targeted immigration and create more tourism products. Extend passenger train line to Tumbarumba. Ask Federal government invest huge money to Tumba high school to make it one of the best futuristic schools in NSW.
- It is apparent that Tumbarumba council has managed the Shire extremely well, both fiscally & socially, so I don't see the need to amalgamate. However it might make sense to share/ hire equipment with neighbouring shires.
- It is good you are looking at efficiencies regardless of any outcome.
- It makes sense to amalgamate rather than small councils trying to attract government funding and assistance - competing with much larger regional and urban councils.
- Leave us as we are!
- Leave well alone
- Let other Shire Councils learn from Tumbarumba Shire Council
- Lived in the Tumut Shire (bridesmaid) town of Batlow for 25 years. I saw Tumut progress and Batlow decline. I don't want to live under the Tumut regime and watch Tumbarumba's decline. Tumbarumba Shire do a great job. We don't need to amalgamate!
- Local is good.

- Local services, infrastructure, and quality of life is likely to suffer under any amalgamation
- Look at the Victorian experience with amalgamation; mega councils does not necessarily result in efficiency.
- Look what happened to Corryong with the creation of Towong Council.
- Most of our shire is a long way from the boundaries of June or Tumut Shires. Isolation would mean forgotten!
- My community is little and I believe we would be forgotten if amalgamation took place.
- National Parks hopeless - shit at weekends - don't offer any publicity, just collect tolls
- Need to understand the issue clearly in order to decide which is the most suitable way to proceed that would ensure the long jeopardy of small country townships
- no amalgamation
- No amalgamation would benefit our community
- No rail trail
- One of the reasons we chose Tumbarumba and choose to stay here is due to strong *local* council. Moving council so far away will reduce the appeal of Tumbarumba for new people considering a tree change.
- Our council is already efficient and one of the best, keep it that way.
- Our Council needs to be much more efficient - our road building 'expertise' is a joke (Batlow Road). NO RAIL TRAIL - only few would benefit - the FEW bike riders. I don't see many riders out now, why then? Get properly qualified workers. Main street 'looks nice' but not very practical - garden beds unnecessary and too many - loss of car parking. Too narrow. What about a 'truck diversion' route? Crack down on trucks using jake brakes in built up areas - Council is well represented there. These are not necessarily amalgamation issues but examples of what our present council needs to look at.
- Our council still needs to do more for business outside of tourism and The Parade. Opportunities have been lost because our council has failed to provide reasonable assistance to new business. Also council must become more efficient in its delivery of services, eg I recently had to contact council 5 times to get a water leak addressed. This will be the 5th time I have advised council that the stretch of road between McMeekin St and Figures St needs sign posting. The last set of new "Bell St" signs have been installed on the part of Bell St that runs between McMeekin Sts and Albury St (which already had a sign that was taken down)! Council does not know enough about how business operates and what it needs, eg load limits installed without consultation has a detrimental effect on our business. We tender for work 5 years into the future based on routes as they are and the application of load limits during that time can effectively double the cost of the job which means we might go broke and we certainly won't win the next tender.
- Our town has been looked after - we have one of the best Shire Councils
- Please let Tumbarumba Shire Council get on with what they do best looking after and servicing the residents and ratepayers of the Shire.
- Please Tumba Shore Council, think about think about this decision very hard.
- Population should not be the only consideration!! (survey completed as husband and wife).
- Re: question 5, I fail to see a need for Joint Operation. Will mean loss of local employment.
- remain stand alone - there is room for improvements in the existing structure locally - work with other Shires that bound us on establishing regional cooperation on a needs basis
- Remove State Governments, and leave local and federal levels in place.
- Satisfied with our council's work.
- Stand alone and don't join the weak financial councils of Tumut and Gundagai
- stand up and be counted (TUMBARUMBA)
- State government should look closer to home and repair itself before moving the deck chairs of local government.
- Take the Khancoban Caravan park for example. What should be a major tourist attraction which was when first built is now an unmanageable disaster with a 3rd world reputation.
- The current system seems to work fine so why change it?
- The people of NSW should have been given a vote whether they wanted to amalgamate or not. Not for

the NSW Government telling us what they want.

- The possibility of expanding the shire i.e. including Batlow and Humula could help our position.
- There will be a lot of angry community members. Keep the towns separate!!!!!!
- Time to move up to the quality of works and services that larger, better managed shires expect.
- To strengthen your community you must make peace with the past when you honour the first peoples of this community all things will fall into place because you are not listening to the elders of tumbarumba the land is out of balance, rectify your wrongs and things will go smoothly.
- Track record over past few years is not as efficient as many previous years. Is it the plan to be so inefficient we want amalgamation?
- TSC has already shown that it is a viable and sustainable organisation. With more cooperation through the JO, we do not need a larger council stripping this shire-wide community of our physical, financial and social assets.
- Tumba council is doing a good job, keep it up.
- Tumba council please keep looking after us!
- Tumba is a well run shire keep it that way
- Tumbarumba is a small but very productive country town
- Tumbarumba locality uses Wagga Wagga and Albury Wodonga as its primary service areas and has already linked with RERO which already services the needs of combined and individual local Councils. This is a much more efficient way of providing district services to the varied Councils and negates the need of amalgamation.
- Tumbarumba may be isolated, but we have proven ourselves capable, in fact, much better than capable!
- Tumbarumba Shire Council has been managed superbly, it should be left alone to get on with the excellent job they are doing
- Tumbarumba shire council needs to. 1/. Run a bulldozer through Khancoban Caravan Park and make it a decent park. 2/. Footpaths require a lot of attention. 3/. General tidiness not at the same level as Tumbarumba. 4/. Derelict buildings in Khancoban that do not comply with building standards and are a major health hazard need to be abolished (get some balls). 5/. Entry to Khancoban roadside verges need to be kept mown properly instead of when lazy local council employees feel like it.
- Tumbarumba shire means Tumbarumba, forget the rest of the shire.
- Tumbarumba shire seems to have forgotten my community as we get no services as it is. A bigger shire will not help.
- Tumbarumba should approach as a leader we have the runs on the board , ensure equal representation for ALL local areas that merge , look at it as a positive thing . Isolation is not a valid excuse , the town is not going to grow at the family end of the scale but at the retiree end of the scale, so let's make use of this and let all the industry etc be in Tumut and the Tumbarumba area becomes a haven of peace and reflection building on the retiree industry
- Two people completed this survey.
- Want to know if our rates will be reduced and will our roads be maintained if an amalgamation happened. How many people would lose their jobs in Tumba Council?
- Was a council employee for 24 years. Stop all these closed door meetings, after all you are spending our money, we should know where and how!! Also stop all private use of council vehicles. It's a rort and always will be a rort.
- We are flat out trying to get things in Khancoban now so to go to amalgamation is of no advantage
- We have a good community spirit which I feel we might lose.
- We have a voice while Tumbarumba Shire Council exists. We would have nothing if local government was run from Tumut an hour and a half from here.
- We like it the way it is. Me especially.
- WE moved to Tumba because it stood out as a strong community.
- We would like Tumba Shire to stand alone as long as state government don't starve the Shire of funds. (survey completed by husband and wife).
- What happened to the other recommendation of the panel

- What happens to the quite considerable funds that we have at present, does that go into common funds?
- What representation would we have on amalgamating with Tumut and Gundagai?
- Who's bright idea was this
- Why change????
- Why not bring Batlow and Holbrook into Tumbarumba
- Why should our rates be used to pull another council that can't look after itself?
- Why should we have other councils draw from our finances.
- Will Tumba end up like Batlow a forgotten town?
- Without very strong reps on council, Tumbarumba would end up the poor cousins of the 3 shires.
- worry about volunteer organisations being taken over or undervalued as a community resource if amalgamation takes place
- would support amalgamation with Towong Shire - Keotong to Tooma
- Would Tumut ever amalgamate part of its sphere of influence with Tumbarumba or same with Gundagai.
- Yes, the government is not worried or interested all they want to do is save money, suggest to them we will start a notion to amalgamate the states, that really will stop them.