

Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBMISSION TO IPART ON ITS REVIEW OF THE REVENUE FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DRAFT REPORT

Introduction

The following submissions are made having studied the Draft Review and attended the consultation held by IPART in Wagga Wagga on 8 September, 2009.

In essence, we believe that for the most part the Review provides a fair and accurate summary of financial issues for NSW local government. But having done that, the Review charts a course for the future which does not take account of the new environment.

The world in which local government operates in 2009 is vastly different to that of 1977, some 32 years ago. Maybe at the time it was appropriate to govern the rating ability of councils but with the many ways in which councils are now required to demonstrate transparency and accountability and communicate with their communities, that need is long gone.

The 1993 Local Government Act changed the landscape vastly. We have financial reports which comply with International Accounting Standards. More and more opportunities for consultation with our communities are developing especially through email and websites, reinforcing more traditional means such as newsletters, annual reports and periodic surveys.

Most importantly of all, the introduction of **Integrated Planning and Reporting** makes this the perfect time to remove rate-pegging and let councils be accountable to their communities.

This submission does not pretend to be an exhaustive analysis of the **Draft Review**. We just hope to make a few points relevant to a small (6000 pop.) rural council such as ours.

32 Years of Existence as Justification

On page 6, IPART 'recognises the long history of rate-pegging and the need to protect consumers from excessive rate movements'. There is an acceptance of the 'familiarity' and 'relative simplicity' of the mechanism.

With respect, mere existence, familiarity and simplicity are not justification for a concept. We gathered the impression, at the Wagga Wagga meeting of 8 September 2009, that IPART thought that the removal of rate-pegging was a sort of 'bridge too far' for politicians of all stripes. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We can safely say that the absence of any sort of recommendation to remove rate-pegging will allow politicians to sit smugly behind a wall of respectable denial that has been dignified by an independent review. Is it simply a matter of telling the Government what it wants to hear?

Options A and B

When all is boiled down, the IPART recommendations entrench rate-pegging, albeit with some refinement. The best part of all the recommendations is the fallback position of local government cost index. Even that is flawed, with no discrimination between different types of councils.

Option B, frankly, is almost as bad as the present rates variation process in terms of the effort involved and, at four years, the term is too short. We submit that a 10-year timeframe, aligned with a properly compiled **Community Strategic Plan** is more appropriate.

But we believe we need to switch the presumption around. That is, a council with a properly framed Community Strategic Plan ought to be able to set its own rates. Only those councils which have demonstrated deficiencies or excesses should be subjected to some control from on high.

Junee Shire Council

Our council started the rate-pegging era 1977 on what we believe to be a low rates base and has not taken all the capping increases available to it since that time because of undue conservatism of its council in the face of hard times. Our town has had (and still does) a low fiscal capability and our rural area had its origins in a council that set its rates at a niggardly low. (We have one neighbouring shire whose rural rates are 90% or so higher.) We have a deficiency in rates revenue that we can never hope to overcome in the present or proposed regimes.

For the last 10 years or so, a more aggressive strategic approach has prevailed with spending on amenity resulting in a relatively low (current ratio 1.99) level of liquidity and relatively high (for a rural council) debt servicing ratio of 4.25%. We have an annual unfulfilled requirement for \$1.4m or so to properly maintain and renew our assets while making a modest dent in the capital backlog. The rate-pegging steps have been a source of great frustration during this period.

We are struggling to maintain an operating surplus before capital amounts with the pressures of fair value accounting and depreciation, and have lapsed into deficits for the last two years.

We have this year applied for a 10% increase rates variation and that has been approved. That increase will cater for 50% only of our annual need for resealing. In frankness, our rates increase need is in the region of that 10% plus a further 25%. Recognising political reality, we applied for 10% only.

(Incidentally, a community survey we conducted in 2006 showed a very high level of satisfaction in the Council's activities. There was external recognition too, in the 2003 AR Bluett Memorial Award).

Presumption that Rate-pegging is Good

Our main objection to the Draft Review is its presumption that rate-pegging is good and that most ratepayers favour rate-pegging. The Review essentially states that Parliament and Department of Local Government hold the view that rate-pegging protects ratepayers. Indeed, in its **Response to the Final Report and Recommendations of the "Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government"**, the NSW Government asserts that "rate-pegging has widespread support, further strengthened by the current financial strain that is being felt by most in the community.....".

Junee Shire Council accepts the point about 'current financial strain' but is able to submit evidence that the so-called 'widespread support for rate-pegging' is something of a furphy, at least in this Shire. We commissioned a survey in August 2006 (attached) by **Iris Research Ltd** which was designed to be benchmarked against the study conducted by **Iris** for the Allen Inquiry. Pages 35 – 43 of the survey deals with the subject of funding and the setting of rates. Residents were asked whether they would be prepared to pay higher rates for better services or facilities or whether they were prepared to accept fewer local services and facilities by keeping rate rises to a minimum.

In answer to the question: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement "I would rather see Council rates rise than see cuts in local services?"', 50% expressed a high preference and 30% expressed a medium preference.

In answer to question: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement "I would be happy to pay a little more in Council rates to fund essential improvements and services and facilities?"', 53% had a high preference and 28% had a medium preference.

In answer to the question: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement "Council rate rises should be kept to a minimum even if it means that local services are cut?"', 24% had a high preference, 44% had a low preference and 31% had a medium preference. That is, 75% had a low or medium preference for that question.

Community perceptions concerning who should be responsible for setting residential rates and the ability of local government to manage finances were measured in the survey. The respondents were first asked the following question: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement: "On the whole, I trust Junee Shire Council to set its own rates and charges and spend the money efficiently on relevant local services?"', 59% had a high level of agreement and 30% had a medium level of agreement.

In answer to the question: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement "I have more confidence in Junee Shire Council than the State Government when it comes to revenue raising and spending?"', 63% had a high level of agreement and 27% had a medium level of agreement.

Another objective of the survey was to measure community perceptions on local government consultation in the Junee Shire Council area and the following question was asked: 'To what extent do you agree with the statement "Junee Shire Council engages the community in discussions about possible to changes to rates and services?"', 43% had a high level of agreement and a further 33% had a medium level of agreement.

We have no reason to believe that attitudes have changed since late 2006.

All this, we believe, demonstrates that a council that is doing the right things by its residents and is able to achieve a high level of satisfaction in its activities, should be allowed to set its own rates in consultation with its community. Incidentally, we commend this survey as a model for community consultation and a justification or otherwise for the variation of rates and as a continuing bench-marking tool for a council to use in regard to community attitudes and priorities.

'Town Hall' types of consultation can easily attract pressure groups and reactionaries who are happy to keep rates as low as possible. A responsible council must however, do what is necessary, in order to improve services and amenities for the sake of survival in what is an increasingly challenging environment in rural areas.

Other Various Points

- **Backlog of Expenditure**

There is, page 6 a statement:

"Turning to expenditure, as IPART has noted, there appears to be a backlog of council infrastructure works in NSW that needs to be addressed. However, this also exists in other states and the evidence suggests that it is no worse than elsewhere. In short, the problem of rising demands on infrastructure spending and limited resources is common throughout Australia".

Is this just saying that it's OK to have an (intractable, structural) problem so long as everyone else has it?

- **Financial Performance**

On page 14, it is asserted that 'the financial performance and asset management criteria should include a track record of having positive operating results over the economic cycle'. This is hard to achieve these days with the pressures of fair value accounting and resultant depreciation added to rising costs and calls for increased services. In fact, the councils that cannot achieve positive operating results are the one who need rates rises; the ones that can, don't!

- **Special Variations**

Page 45 tells us that 78.5% of councils have applied for a special variation of rates. Is this not telling us that councils are screaming for extra revenue-raising capacity, (and having to turn themselves inside-out to achieve it).

Summary

Junee Shire Council believes it is time to tell the State Government that the rate-pegging has had its day. The introduction of **Integrated Planning and Reporting** and all its disciplines provides an ideal opportunity to get rid of it.

Option A and B are all very well but simply serve the purpose of entrenching rate-pegging. Some of the conditions and processes are almost as onerous as the present rates variation process.

The timeframe for Option B is too short anyway. A 10-year timeframe backed up by a properly compiled Community Strategic Plan is what a community needs.

It seems to us that any council that can tick all the boxes required to invoke Option B probably doesn't need a rates increase.

The presumption in respect of rate-pegging needs to be turned around. Councils need to be trusted to make (Community Strategic Plan-backed) rates variation decisions unless they have shown themselves to be unworthy.

We believe that a Council such as ours that would not necessarily tick all the IPART boxes is nonetheless deserving of freedom to set its own rates to redress a longstanding disadvantage. Our residents admire what we are doing and prefer a Council prerogative to a State one.

Junee Shire Council thanks IPART for the opportunity to submit its comments on the Draft Review.

Please contact me if there are any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'GFS Campbell', written over a light blue horizontal line.

GFS Campbell
General Manager

Att:



Providing research insight to
Business & Government

Junee Shire Council **Community Survey**

Monitoring resident satisfaction with Council
performance

Final Report

Prepared by
IRIS Research Ltd.

Oct 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall Satisfaction with Council Performance

The level of satisfaction amongst the community with Council's performance is impressive. Seventy six percent indicated Council's performance was high, 21% suggested it was medium and 3% provided a low rating. An overall mean score of 4.0 out of five was achieved which is significantly higher than the LGI rural benchmark study score of 3.5. Generally those people aged 65+ had a significantly higher level of satisfaction compared to other age groups.

Prioritising Services and Facilities

After asking respondents to rate the importance and satisfaction with 12 service/facilities provided by Council, analysis using an opportunity matrix revealed the following service priorities for Council:

- Construction & maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing
- Waste management
- Health and human services including aged, child and youth services
- Environmental activities including stormwater and land care

This list was arrived at by comparing residents' stated importance of services provided by Council against their satisfaction with the provision of the services. The above services are those that rated as high importance but low satisfaction.

Gap analysis was the second tool used to identify priorities for service improvement. In support of the findings of the opportunity matrix, gap analysis agreed there is a significantly large distance between the importance placed on each of the four services listed above compared to the satisfaction level assigned to these services.

Satisfaction levels were mixed when comparisons were made across the Shire's roads. A majority had a high level of satisfaction with town roads (52%), 41% rated high satisfaction with rural sealed roads and only 25% for rural unsealed roads. The major reasons for dissatisfaction with roads stem from general disrepair and frequency of maintenance, pot holes and the need for grading.



Value for Money

Overall, 63% of residents felt they received good value for their rate money, 29% had an ok perception of their value for rate money and 6% rated a poor value level. The perception of value for money compared favourably to the rural LGI benchmark. In addition, it was observed that value ratings different by area, with those in the Junee township having a higher rating than those in village or rural areas .

Likes, Dislikes and Major Issues of Concern

The greatest attractions for living in the Junee Shire are the friendly people and community spirit (36%). 16% mentioned the quiet lifestyle and 12% mentioned the rural environment. The major dislikes were the jail (11%), shopping facilities (6%) and undesirable element (5%). The major issue of concern in the Junee Shire area are roads (9%) and economic development (8%).

Local Government Financing

The issue of trading off reduced services for halting rate rises was not supported. A majority of people agreed (50%) they would rather have increased rates than see a reduced level of local services provided. When the same concept was presented in converse wording, more than 2 in 5 residents are not willing to trade off reductions in services for rate rises being kept to a minimum.

A majority of residents (59%) trust Junee Shire Council to set its own rates and charges and spend the money efficiently on relevant local services. Further, a majority of residents (62%) have more confidence in Council compared to the State Government when it comes to revenue raising and spending.

In line with the findings of the opportunity matrix, a majority of residents believe Council should spend more money on roads, footpaths and kerbing and on health and human support services. A majority of residents indicated that the current level of spending should be maintained for the remaining items examined.

Around 40% of residents have a high level of agreement with the statement "Junee Shire Council engages the community in discussions about the possible changes to rates and/or services".

Around 2 in 3 residents agree user pay charges should be levied on players using sports fields with the average charge of \$2.4 per player being determined.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This survey was commissioned by Junee Shire Council to provide the foundations of an on-going community assessment of Council's performance in the delivery of key services and facilities. Overall, the survey aimed to provide Council with an understanding of the perceptions and needs of the local community with respect to both Council's services and facilities and to customer service.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The broad objectives for the Community Survey were to:

- To measure the importance of and satisfaction with, services and facilities provided by Council.
- To establish benchmark levels of satisfaction for Council services and facilities.
- To assist Council in identifying service use priorities for the community.
- To generate feedback for the strategic planning issues for the Junee Shire Council area and identify major issues of concern.
- To identify what specific services or facilities residents believed their local Council should spend more or less on.
- To determine whether ratepayers are willing to pay more rates and charges for an improved range of services and facilities in their local area.
- To assess whether ratepayers are happy with paying less rates and charges with the knowledge that cuts in services and facilities in their local area will occur.

1.3 SURVEY RESPONSE

A total of 330 completed interviews were collected from a random sample of residents from throughout Junee Shire Council area. Sampling procedures ensured that the selected respondent was 18 years and older and a key adult household decision maker or ratepayer. Target respondent



quotas were set to ensure respondent characteristics mirror those of the adult population of the area. The data were weighted according to the age/sex distribution of the Junee LGA.

A research imperative was to enable Council to compare the attitudes and perceptions of residents in the Junee Township to those in village or rural areas. Hence to achieve large enough samples for meaningful comparisons a geographically disproportionate stratified sampling technique was employed. Consequently weighting factors were applied to the final data. These factors are shown in Table 1.1. The weights were applied to the analysis when grouping the two geographical units together to form the overall Council area.

TABLE 1.1 WEIGTHS APPLIED TO FINAL DATA

Survey Unit	Population		Sample Achieved		Weighting factor
	No	Proportion	No	%	
Junee Township	3592	72.0	229	69.4	1.044
Rural Area	1363	28.0	101	30.6	0.899
Total	4955	100.0	330	100.0	

* Weighting is based on 2001 census data

1.4 SURVEY ACCURACY

The results of the Junee Shire Community Survey are based on a sample of permanent residents within the L.G.A. A sample of 330 was chosen to provide accurate survey results that can be applied to the broader population. However as with all sample surveys, the results will be subject to some amount of sampling variability. When analysing results for the entire sample (330 responses), the maximum error rate will be about + or – 5.5% at the 95% confidence level, if a proportional response of 50% was achieved for any of the survey's questions. That is, we can be confident that if the survey were to be repeated there are approximately 95 chances in 100 that the new results would be within + or – 5.5% of the result achieved in this survey.

However, various breakdowns of the survey results by area, age, sex, tenure, home ownership and income have also been provided. As these groups are based on smaller samples, a general rule of 10 percentage points or more should be employed before assuming differences across groups are significant at the 95% confidence level. ANOVA and Chi-square tests have been applied and only variations where a statistically significant difference was identified have been highlighted in the report.



1.5 ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

In the first section of the survey, a series of 12 Council services and facilities were read out to respondents. For each of the 12 attributes, respondents were asked to give both an importance and satisfaction rating. Results from these ratings form the basis of much of the analysis in this report. The importance and satisfaction rating scales used in the survey are exhibited below:

Importance scale

- 1 = Not important
- 2 ...
- 3 ...
- 4 ...
- 5 = Very important

Satisfaction scale

- 1 = Very dissatisfied
- 2 ...
- 3 ...
- 4 ...
- 5 = Very satisfied

For all rating scales, those respondents who could not provide a rating, either because the question did not apply to them or they had no opinion, were coded as a non-response (i.e. 6 = Can't say).

Rating scale results have generally been presented in two basic forms. Firstly, the results have been presented in terms of the proportion (%) of respondents giving a particular rating for a specific service or facility. These results are presented in collapsed category contingency tables, where proportions have been assigned to one of the following categories: *N/R (non-response)*, *low*, *medium* and *high* - based on the attitude rating given by the respondent. Secondly, the numeric values recorded for each attribute have been converted into an *overall mean score* out of five. To derive the mean score for an attribute, all respondents' answers are 'averaged' to produce an overall rating that conveniently expresses the result of scale items in a single numeric figure. This makes data interpretation considerably easier when comparing multiple services and facilities. The mean score excludes those respondents who could not give a valid rating (i.e. 'Can't Say').

1.6 COMPARISON TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT INQUIRY STUDY

IRIS Research was commissioned by the Independent Inquiry into the financial sustainability of Local Government in New South Wales to conduct a telephone survey to canvass community expectations on the role of local Councils across New South Wales. Where it is appropriate, the results for Junee Shire Council's performance are compared to the benchmark set by the rural component of that study. Throughout this report the rural benchmark results are indicated under the heading LGI – Rural.



SURVEY RESULTS



2 ROLE AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNCIL

Respondents were asked to rate the importance to them of key services and facilities that Council provides to the community. They were then asked to rate their satisfaction with Council's provision of these services and facilities. Services and facilities were grouped under headings relating to *key service delivery areas*.

In all, there were 12 key service areas measured:

1. **Construction and maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing** (excluding highways and main roads).
2. **Health and human services** (e.g. aged child and youth services.).
3. **Recreation services and facilities** including swimming pools, sports fields.
4. **Culture and education facilities** including libraries and public buildings for cultural use.
5. **Waste Management.**
6. **Appearance of public areas** including provision and up keep of local parks.
7. **Traffic management and parking facilities**
8. **Enforcement of by Laws** including food and health and animal control.
9. **Economic Development** including business and tourism promotion.
10. **Environmental activities** including storm water and land care.
11. **Town planning** and timely processing of building applications.
12. **The provision of commercial services** and facilities such as sewerage services and caravan parks.

Section 2.1 presents the results in terms of the *importance* placed on the services and facilities by residents. Section 2.2 assesses Local Government performance in terms of resident *satisfaction* with the provision of these services and facilities. Finally, Section 2.3 prioritises these services and facilities, giving the Council actionable information that can be used to allocate resources and make informed policy decisions.



2.1 IMPORTANCE RATINGS

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the 12 council services and facilities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = 'not important' and 5 = 'very important'. Section 2.1.1 provides a detailed account of importance ratings for individual services and facilities. Section 2.1.2 shows an overall summary of mean scores for all services and facilities.

2.1.1 Council services & facilities importance ratings

TABLE 2.1.1 IMPORTANCE RATINGS FOR SERVICES & FACILITIES

Service / facility (rank order)	Importance rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)	Mean Score (out of 5) LGI - Rural
	N/R	Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)		
Appearance of public areas	0.0	4.8	9.3	86.0	4.40	4.37
Waste Management	1.0	4.8	9.9	84.3	4.40*	4.63
Construction and maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing	0.3	3.2	10.6	85.8	4.36	4.50
Health and human services	1.3	8.7	9.6	80.5	4.25	4.37
Recreation services and facilities	0.3	10.7	8.3	80.7	4.21	3.96
Environmental Management	1.9	6.5	12.3	79.3	4.20	4.21
Economic Development	0.9	9.8	17.6	71.7	3.98	4.06
Culture and education facilities	1.2	11.1	16.8	70.9	3.98	4.02
Traffic management and parking facilities	1.1	12.0	15.9	71.0	3.94	4.04
Enforcement of By Laws	1.7	13.4	20.7	64.3	3.81	3.97
Provision of commercial services and facilities	3.5	19.8	18.2	58.5	3.65*	4.53
Town planning and timely processing of building applications	5.4	22.1	19.6	52.9	3.50*	3.80

* denotes significant differences between benchmark and Junee



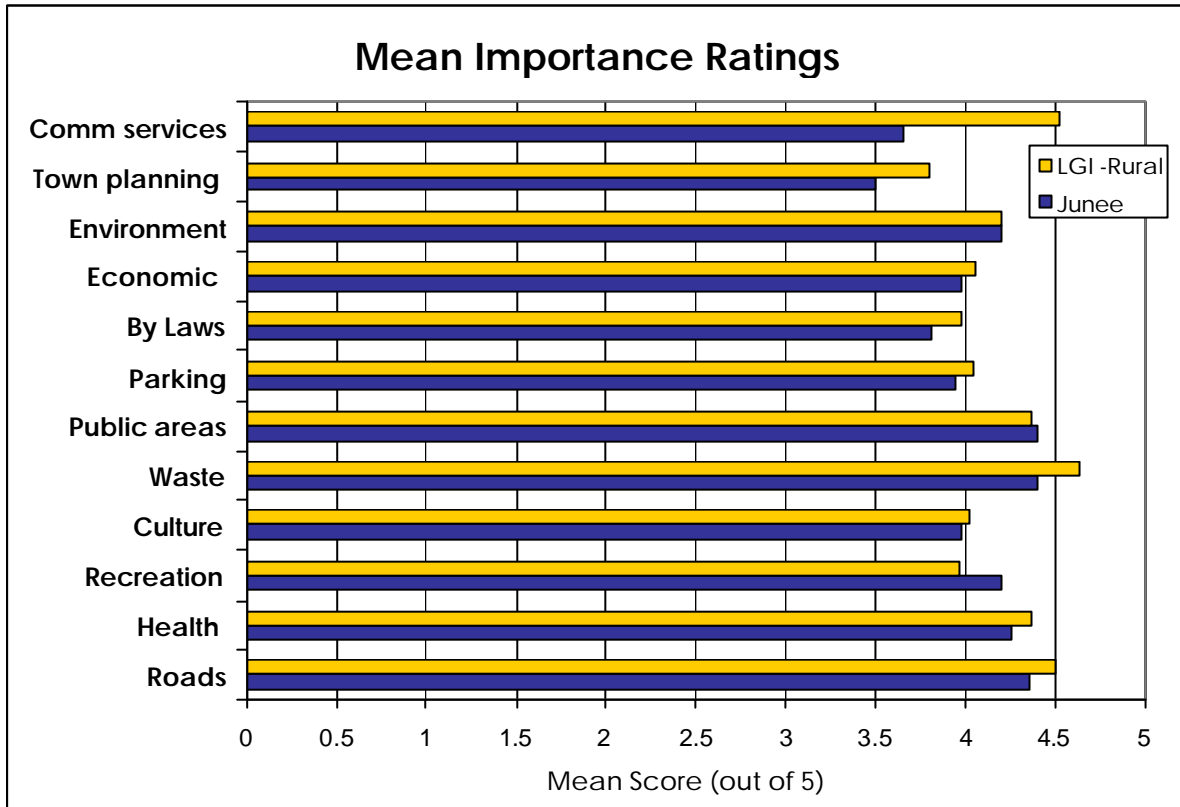
Key results:

- Overall the top three services in order of importance are appearance of public areas, waste management and construction and maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing.
- Junee residents rated 3 items as being of significantly lower importance compared to the LGI study and these are; Waste Management, Town planning & timely processing of building applications and Provision of commercial services and facilities.
- Importance levels varied by residential location on 5 of the 12 items. In each instance residents in the township rated higher than those in rural areas in regards to; Provision of commercial services and facilities, Appearance of public areas, Waste Management, Culture and education facilities & Recreation services and facilities.
- Analysis showed that 8 of the 12 items varied by sex with females rating these items higher than males in each case including; Health, recreation services, cultural facilities, waste management, appearance of public areas, parking, By laws and the environment.
- The 18-29 age group rated a significantly lower importance on 6 of the 12 items compared to other age groups and these areas included; Health, waste management, appearance of public areas, environment, town planning and commercial services.
- Residents in the \$50 000 to \$75 000 income brackets rated the importance of the environment lower than other groups. Those earning less than \$25 000 place a higher importance on cultural facilities.



2.1.2 Summary of Importance Ratings

FIGURE 2.1.1 MEAN SCORE IMPORTANCE RATINGS COMPARED TO BENCHMARK LGI STUDY





2.2 SATISFACTION RATINGS

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Council's delivery of the 12 key service and facility functions on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = 'very dissatisfied' and 5 = 'very satisfied'. Section 2.2.1 provides a breakdown of satisfaction ratings for individual services and facilities. Section 2.2.2 shows an overall summary of mean scores for all services and facilities.

2.2.1 Council services & facilities satisfaction ratings

TABLE 2.2.1 SATISFACTION RATINGS FOR SERVICES & FACILITIES

Service / facility (rank order)	Satisfaction rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)	Mean Score (out of 5) LGI - Rural
	N/R	Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)		
Appearance of public areas	0.5	2.8	8.1	88.5	4.47*	3.72
Recreation services and facilities	2.1	4.5	11.6	81.8	4.32*	3.63
Provision of commercial services and facilities	8.2	6.0	21.9	63.8	3.96*	3.69
Culture and education facilities	4.0	8.5	25.3	62.3	3.84	3.71
Waste Management	3.7	15.9	19.2	61.1	3.73*	4.04
Traffic management and parking facilities	2.8	10.8	28.5	57.9	3.70*	3.35
Health and human services	3.8	13.5	25.3	57.4	3.66*	3.40
Economic Development	1.9	12.3	28.6	57.2	3.64*	3.35
Environmental Management	3.4	10.3	32.2	54.2	3.62*	3.23
Construction and maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing	0.6	21.9	26.7	50.8	3.40*	2.73
Enforcement of By Laws	5.6	15.7	31.7	47.0	3.47	3.33
Town planning and timely processing of building applications	14.6	10.8	29.2	45.4	3.59*	2.99

* denotes significant differences between LGI rural benchmark and Junee



Key results:

- Appearance of public areas, recreational services and commercial services have the highest levels of satisfaction with Council residents. A majority of people rated a high level of satisfaction with the performance of their local Council in the delivery of roads, health services, recreation services and facilities, culture and education facilities, waste management, appearance of public areas, parking, economic development, environmental management and provision of commercial services and facilities.
- Junee residents rated their satisfaction with 10 items as being significantly different compared to the LGI study with 9 being more satisfied and 1 being less satisfied than the benchmark study. The 9 items that have a higher satisfaction included; roads, health services, recreation services and facilities, appearance of public areas, parking, economic development, environmental management, town planning and provision of commercial services and facilities. Waste management was the one area where Junee residents have a lower level of satisfaction compared to the LGI study.
- Satisfaction levels varied by residential location on 4 of the 12 items. In each instance residents in the township rated higher than those in rural areas in regards to; Roads, culture and education facilities, waste management, and provision of commercial services and facilities.
- Women rated a higher level of satisfaction compared to men on 2 items and these are; Enforcement of By Laws and Economic Development.
- When results were analysed by age group it was found that 8 of the 12 items differed across these groups. Generally the age group of 65+ rated higher levels of satisfaction with Council performance than did the younger age groups on the following areas; roads, health services, culture and education facilities, waste management, Enforcement of By Laws, environmental management, town planning and provision of commercial services and facilities.
- Those households that have an income of \$25 000 or less tended to rate a higher level of satisfaction with health services and waste management compared to other households. Households that earned \$75 000 to \$100 000 had a significantly lower level of satisfaction on culture and education facilities compared to other groups.
- Those households that pay their own Council rates have a higher level of satisfaction with the appearance of public areas and parking.



- Households that have lived in the Council area longer than 15 years have a higher level of satisfaction with the appearance of public areas. Those households that have tenure of less than 5 years but greater than 1 have a lower overall level of satisfaction with town planning, compared to other groups.



2.2.2 Summary of Satisfaction Ratings

FIGURE 2.2.1 MEANSATISFACTION RATINGS COMPARED TO BENCHMARK LGI STUDY





2.3 PRIORITISING SERVICES & FACILITIES

Given the range of services and facilities Council has to manage, it can often be a difficult task to prioritise. The sheer number of services and facilities under management can diffuse focus and distract attention away from the areas of critical importance to improving resident satisfaction. This section of the report aims to identify the key drivers of resident satisfaction via a deeper analysis of the importance and satisfaction scores presented in the previous section.

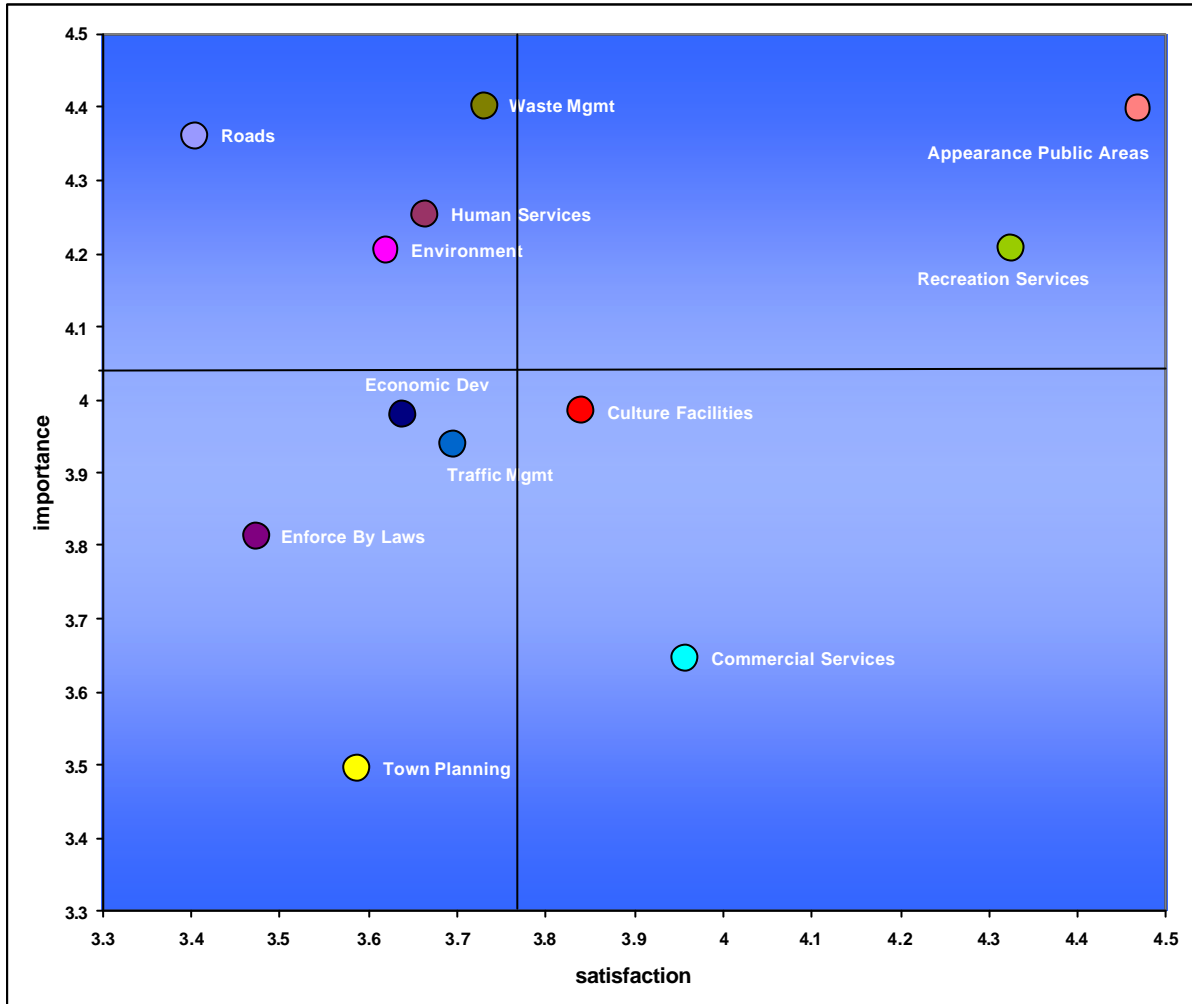
2.3.1 Quadrant analysis

Quadrant analysis is a useful way of simultaneously analysing the stated importance a service holds for residents against their satisfaction with the provision of that service. To do this, mean satisfaction scores are plotted against mean importance scores for each council service or facility. In order to form the quadrants (or opportunity matrix) that separate higher and lower level priority services combined mean importance and satisfaction scores were calculated for the entire set of 12 council services and facilities. These scores were: *Importance score* = 4.0 & *Satisfaction score* = 3.8. Thus, for example, services or facilities with a mean importance score of less than 4.0 (i.e. a score lower than the overall mean importance score), were classified as having 'lower' importance. Conversely, services or facilities with a mean score above 4.0 were classified as having 'higher' importance. The results of the quadrant analysis are displayed in figure 2.3.1. Each of the four quadrants has a specific interpretation:

1. The upper right quadrant (high importance and high satisfaction) represents current council service strengths.
2. The upper left quadrant (high importance but relatively lower satisfaction) denotes services where satisfaction should be improved.
3. The lower left quadrant (relatively lower importance and relatively lower satisfaction) represents lower priority services.
4. The lower right quadrant (relatively lower importance and high satisfaction) is often interpreted as representing 'overkill' services where effort exceeds expectations.

The attributes in the upper left quadrant are all candidates for immediate attention. Residents placed a high importance on these attributes but also reported relatively lower satisfaction.

FIGURE 2.3.1 OPPORTUNITIES MATRIX FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICEAREAS



Key results:

- ‘Waste management’, ‘Roads’, ‘Health services’ and ‘Environmental activities’ are important serviceareas where resident expectations are not being met.
- ‘Recreational services and facilities’ and ‘Appearance of public areas’ are important areas where residents’ expectations are being satisfied.



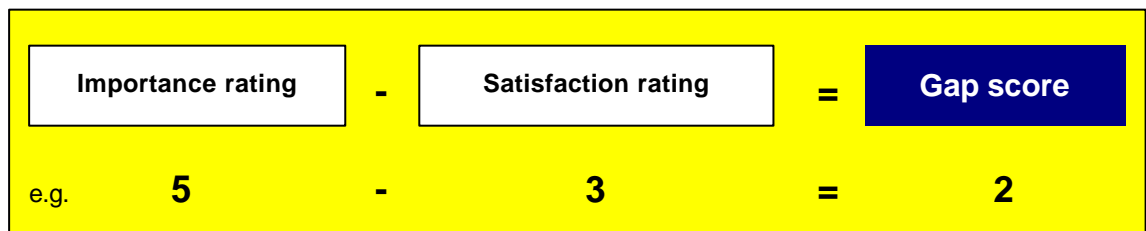
2.3.2 Satisfaction Gap Analysis

Despite its usefulness, quadrant analysis is not a complete priority assessment tool. For example, it does not explicitly identify the gaps between importance and satisfaction. It is possible that a large gap could exist between importance and satisfaction, even though a service may appear in the 'high importance and high satisfaction' quadrant.

Consequently, satisfaction gap analysis was used as the second component in analyzing the results. Gap analysis measures perceived service deficiencies by measuring the level of performance the public expects in relation to a particular service area, and what level of service they perceive is actually delivered. It indicates where effort can best be focused to improve resident satisfaction.

Gap measures were calculated by subtracting the mean satisfaction rating from the mean importance rating for each attribute.

Example:



Usually, ***the larger the gap between importance and satisfaction, the larger the gap between performance in provision of a service and residents' expectations.***

Gap scores for the twelve service areas included in this survey are presented in Figure 2.3.2. The chart ranks service areas from highest gaps to lowest gaps. Those service areas with a gap score significantly above the mean gap score for all services ($\mu = 0.3214$) were categorised as top priority. Services with a gap score statistically equal to the mean gap were given second priority and services with a gap score significantly below the mean gap were given third priority.



FIGURE 2.3.2 SERVICE AREA PERFORMANCE GAPS*

Council Services & facilities	Performance Gap*	Priority Level
Construction & maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbing	0.9569	1
Waste Management	0.7235	1
Health & human services	0.6380	1
Environmental activities	0.5992	1
Enforcement of By Laws	0.3595	2
Economic development	0.3504	2
Traffic management & parking	0.2918	2
Culture & education facilities	0.1987	2
Town planning & processing of building applications	-0.0054	3
Recreational services & facilities	-0.0705	3
Appearance of public areas	-0.0635	3
Provision of commercial services & facilities	-0.2163	3

*Calculated by subtracting satisfaction scores from importance scores for each respondent to give a 'performance gap'.

Key results

- 'Roads', 'waste', 'health' and 'environmental management' were the key service areas where there was a significant gap between resident expectations and local government performance. These represent priority areas for Council's attention.



3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

3.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION

At the end of the first section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the overall performance of Junee Shire Council. The results are provided in table 3.1.1 by demographics of respondent.

TABLE 3.1.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL PERFORMANCE

Service / facility (rank order)	Satisfaction rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)
	N/R	Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Overall	0.0	3.0	20.7	76.2	4.0
Age Group*					
18-29	0.0	0.0	29.2	70.8	3.8
30-49	0.0	2.9	27.5	69.6	3.8
50-64	0.0	4.9	16.0	79.0	4.0
65+	0.0	3.1	6.3	90.6	4.4
Sex					
Males	0.0	3.1	22.1	74.8	3.9
Females	0.0	3.0	19.6	77.4	4.0
Area					
Junee Township	0.0	2.9	19.5	77.6	4.0
Rural Area	0.0	3.4	23.6	73.0	3.9

* denotes significant differences



TABLE 3.1.2 PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS WITH OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

LGA	Satisfaction rating (% of respondents)			Mean score
	Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Junee (2006)	3.0	20.7	76.2	4.0
Penrith (2005)	9.1	37.3	53.6	3.5
Bathurst (2003)	9.0	41.0	50.0	3.5
Parramatta (2002)	8.6	38.7	52.8	3.5
Eurobodalla (2004)	17.0	41.0	42.0	3.3
Goulburn (2006)	19.0	40.3	40.7	3.2
Blue Mountains (2004)	20.0	44.4	35.0	3.1
Benchmark Metro NSW (2005)	14.9	35.5	49.5	3.4
Benchmark Regional NSW (2005)	14.8	33.0	52.3	3.4
Benchmark Rural NSW (2005)	12.3	35.8	51.9	3.5
Benchmark Total NSW (2005)	14.7	35.0	50.3	3.4

Key results:

- Overall 76% of residents surveyed across the Council area provided a high satisfaction rating for the performance of Junee Local Council. A further 21% provided a medium rating, while the remaining 3% indicated a low rating. This translated into an overall mean satisfaction score of 4.0 out of 5.
- The average satisfaction score with Council's performance is in the high range compared with research conducted by IRIS in other Local Government Areas
- Benchmark figures are also displayed for reference. A comparison of Junee Shire's outcome can be compared with the Rural NSW group.
- No significant difference in satisfaction levels was identified across localities or with sex.
- Residents aged 65 years and above were identified to be the most satisfied (91%), with Council's performance.



3.2 SATISFACTION WITH SHIRE'S ROADS

I would like to focus on the Shire's local roads. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the condition of the Shire's...

TABLE 3.2.1 SATISFACTION WITH SHIRE'S ROADS

Service / facility (rank order)	Satisfaction rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)
	N/R	Low (1-2)	Med (3)	High (4-5)	
Town Roads	0.6	17.1	30.3	52.0	3.4
Rural Sealed Roads	2.2	22.7	33.7	41.4	3.2
Rural Unsealed Roads	10.7	32.1	32.0	25.2	2.8

Key results:

- A small majority of residents had a high level of satisfaction with the roads in towns. Around 2 in 5 rated a high level of satisfaction with rural sealed roads, whilst 1 in 4 had a high level of satisfaction with rural unsealed roads. The mean scores are 3.4, 3.2 and 2.8 out of 5 respectively.
- Town roads:
 - Females had a higher level of satisfaction compared to men
 - Satisfaction levels are higher the older resident, with 65+ being the most satisfied.
 - Households with an income less than \$25 000 were more satisfied than other income groups except those earning more than \$100 000.
 - Those households in the Junee Township had a lower level of satisfaction with town roads compared to those in village or rural areas.
- Rural Sealed roads:
 - Again satisfaction levels are higher the older resident, with 65+ being the most satisfied.
 - Households with an income less than \$25 000 were more satisfied than other income groups
 - Households within the Junee Township had a higher level of satisfaction with rural sealed roads compared to those in village or rural areas.



- Rural Unsealed roads:
 - Satisfaction levels are higher the older the resident, with 65+ being the most satisfied.



3.3 DISSATISFACTION WITH SHIRE'S ROADS

Why are you dissatisfied with the condition of the Shire's (town)(rural sealed)(rural unsealed) roads?

In an attempt to further explore the key drivers of resident dissatisfaction with the Shire's roads, respondents were asked to briefly explain the reasons for their dissatisfaction rating with roads. The responses to this question have been presented below for those that gave a satisfaction rating of 2 or less.

TABLE 3.3.1 DISSATISFIED RESIDENTS - TOWN ROADS (RATING OF 1 OR 2 FOR SATISFACTION)

Reason	Count	% of Population	Sample Comment
General disrepair & frequency of maintenance	21	6.4	"Not kept properly due to heavy traffic"
Pot holes	16	4.8	"There are holes in the road everywhere, it's shocking"
Uneven surface	15	4.5	"Road in main street has lumps and pot holes"
Other*	8	2.4	n.a.

* contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases

TABLE 3.3.2 DISSATISFIED RESIDENTS - RURAL SEALED ROADS (RATING OF 1 OR 2 FOR SATISFACTION)

Reason	Count	% of Population	Sample Comment
General disrepair & frequency of maintenance	28	8.5	"Not fixed properly, not fixed quick enough"
Pot holes	19	4.8	"Pot holes throughout the road"
Roads are too narrow	7	2.1	"Too narrow for two way traffic"
Shoulder needs repair	6	1.8	"Shoulders too elevated on some roads"
Required improved traffic management & signage	5	1.5	"No white line on left hand side of road"
Other*	14	4.2	n.a.

* contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases



TABLE 3.3.3 DISSATISFIED RESIDENTS - RURAL UNSEALED ROADS (RATING OF 1 OR 2 FOR SATISFACTION)

Reason	Count	% of Population	Sample Comment
General disrepair & frequency of maintenance	22	6.7	"Not good enough roads"
Grading	21	6.4	"Too long between grading"
Corrugation	15	4.5	"Too corrugated, need grading and rolling regularly"
Pot holes	14	4.2	"Pot holes are not repaired properly"
Dangerous driving conditions	8	2.4	"Some are dangerous in wet weather"
Rough road surface	7	2.1	"Road surfacing – needs attention"
Not sealed properly	5	1.5	"Time they got sealed"
Other*	22	4.2	n.a.

* contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases

Key results:

Of those that answered these three questions the most popular reason for dissatisfaction with roads was the general disrepair and frequency of maintenance of roads in the Council area. Pot holes were mentioned frequently in relation to sealed roads in both the town and rural areas. High on the list for rural unsealed roads is the frequency of grading to deal with the corrugation.

3.4 VALUE FOR MONEY

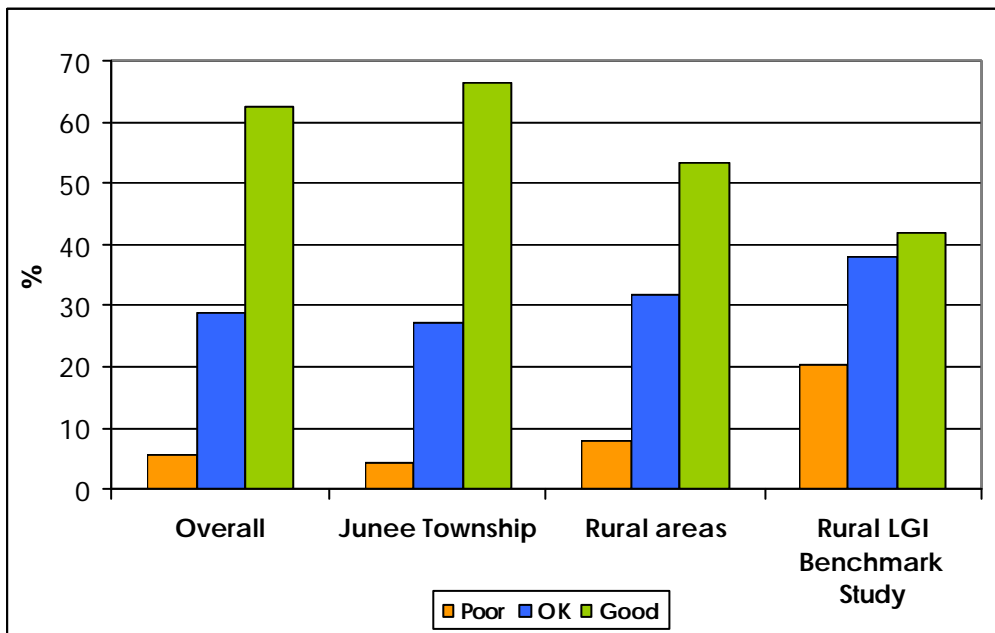
Please tell me if you think that the services provided by Junee Shire Council are value for money in terms of what your household pays in rates and other Council charges. Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you think the services provided by Council are very poor value and 5 means they are good value.

TABLE 2.2.1 VALUE RATINGS FOR COUNCIL SERVICES

Service / facility (rank order)	Value for money rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)	Mean Score (out of 5) LGI - Rural
	N/R	Poor (1-2)	OK (3)	Good (4-5)		
Overall	3.0	5.7	28.6	62.6	3.8~	n.a
Junee Township	1.7	4.6	27.4	66.4	3.8*	n.a
Rural areas	6.8	7.9	31.8	53.4	3.6*	n.a
Rural LGI Benchmark Study	1.3	20.3	38.0	41.8	n.a	3.3~

*~ denotes significant differences

FIGURE 4.3.1: RESIDENT OPINION ON 'VALUE FOR RATE DOLLAR'





Key results:

- Overall around 63% of residents indicated the rates they paid to Council were good value for the range of services and facilities they received. Although high evaluations were reported by both the Junee Township and surrounding rural areas, it was seen that Junee township residents rated a higher value.
- Compared to the rural component of the LGI benchmark study, Junee residents have a significantly higher perception of value for Council's service versus the benchmark.
- The 65+ age group rated the value significantly higher than other age groups.
- No other significant differences were found against the remaining demographic variables.



4 STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN THE JUNEE SHIRE AREA

Whether it was directly related to services provided by the Council or not, residents were given the opportunity to nominate what they liked and disliked about living on the Junee Shire Council area.

FIGURE 4.1.1: LIKES FOR LIVING IN THE JUNEE SHIRE

Reason	Count	% of Cases (n = 330)	Sample comment
Friendly people / Community spirit	120	36.4	"Friendly & warm people, close community"
Quiet lifestyle	54	16.4	"Quiet & peaceful"
Rural Environment	40	12.1	"Rural community life"
Proximity to large urban centres	23	7.0	"Close proximity to Wagga"
Overall like the lifestyle	19	5.8	"Easy living"
Access to important services & facilities	16	4.8	"Has a good range of facilities"
Safety	15	4.5	"It is good & safe for young families"
Clean & tidy town	15	4.5	"Town is very tidy and wonderful"
Sports facilities	9	2.7	"Sports recreation centre"
Relaxed atmosphere	7	2.1	"Laidback lifestyle"
Progressive Council	7	2.1	"Council is pro-active"
Proximity to family & friends	7	2.1	"Close to family"
Other *	14	4.2	n.a

*contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases

Key results:

The most popular reason to like about living in the Junee Shire is the friendly people/Community spirit (36%) followed by the quiet lifestyle (16%) and the rural environment (12%).



4.2 DISLIKES ABOUT LIVING IN THE JUNEE SHIRE AREA

FIGURE 4.2.1 DISLIKES FOR LIVING IN THE JUNEE SHIRE

Reason	Count	% of Cases (n = 330)	Sample comment
Jail	36	10.9	"The jail & the people it brings to town"
Shopping facilities	18	5.5	"Lack of shopping variety"
Undesirable element	16	4.8	"ex-jailed people now living in the area"
Isolated	11	3.3	"Too far from Wagga"
Water	10	3.0	"Weather conditions with the drought"
Roads/road safety/footpaths	10	3.0	"Improvements to roads"
Employment opportunities	8	2.4	"Lack of employment"
Youth facilities	7	2.1	"Not much to do for kids"
Healthcare	6	1.8	"Lack of medical facilities"
Public transport	6	1.8	"Lack of public transport"
Entertainment/recreation facilities	5	1.5	"Lack of entertainment in the shire"
Small town mentality	5	1.5	"Small town gossip"
Other*	39	11.8	n.a

*contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases

Key results:

The major dislikes about living in the Junee Shire is the Jail (11%) followed by the shopping facilities (6%) and the undesirable element (5%).



4.3 MAJOR ISSUE OF CONCERN

Residents were asked to nominate the major issue of concern to them. This section provides a summary of the major issues mentioned by respondents for this question.

Major Issue	% of Cases (n = 330)	Typical themes
Roads	8.5	Condition & maintenance of roads Kerb & guttering Time taken before roads repaired
Economic development	7.9	Stimulate employment to keep youth in area Attract population for growth of area
Unemployment	6.7	Young people forced to leave for employment
Facilities for youth / children	6.7	Need entertaining Getting into mischief Traveling to Wagga Wagga for entertainment
Jail & Undesirable element	6.0	Presence of drugs in the community Family of prisoners relocate to town Ex-prisoners remain in town after release Safety
Healthcare	3.6	New hospital More doctors & dentists
Aged care	2.1	Require more aged care Retirement villages
Population	1.8	Growth will generate economic development
Water	1.8	Concerns of supply due to drought
Transport	1.8	Not enough services available
Rates	1.8	Increasing rates Value for money
Housing development	1.5	Shortage of residential land Affordable housing Overdevelopment
Funding for Council	1.5	To improve roads Maintain current facilities
Other *	15.8	n.a

*contains all reasons with counts less than 5 cases

Key results:

The major issues of concern for the Junee Shire are roads (9%) economic development (8%) and unemployment (7%).

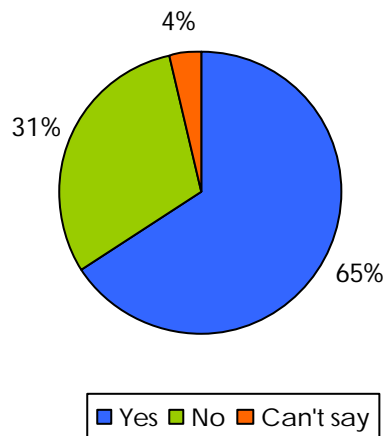
4.4 PROVISION OF SPORTS FIELDS

Respondents were asked about their attitudes towards the source of revenue used for the provision of Council sports fields. Chart 4.4.1 illustrates the proportion of resident's agreement to introducing a user pays player fee.

In the Junee Shire the provision and up keep of sports fields are paid for out of general income. Do you agree with the principle of recouping part of this cost by introducing a small general player fee of around a few dollars?

CHART 4.4.1

Provision of Sports Fields - Agreement with Player Fee (%)



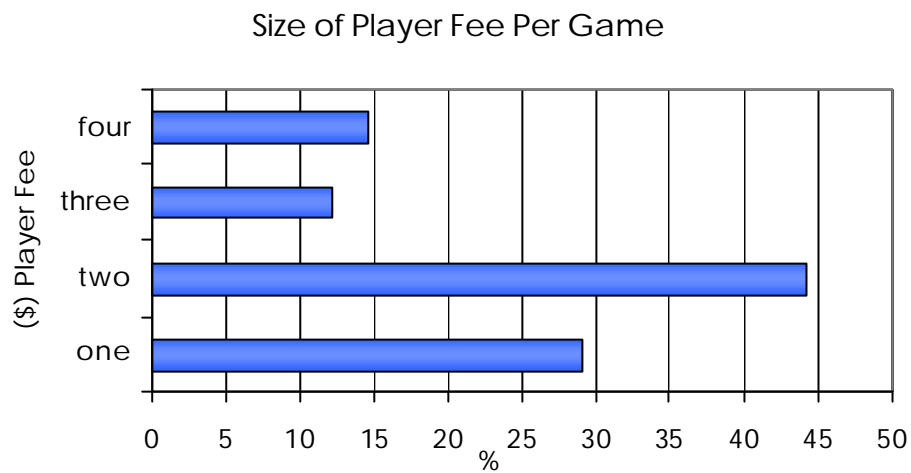
Base: All residents

Key results:

- Around 2 in 3 residents indicated agreement that a small fee should be charged to players.

Chart 4.4.2 illustrates the proportion of residents supporting a range of potential fees for players.

CHART 4.4.2



Base: % of people agreeing a player fee should be levied

Key results:

- Of the people that agreed a small fee should be charged to users of sports fields, 29% believe the levy should be \$1, 44% believe the player levy should be \$2, 12% think the player levy should be \$3 and around 15% believe it should be \$4.
- The average charge is \$2.4 per player to use the sports field per game.
- No difference was seen in the average price charged by any of the demographic variables.

5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCING

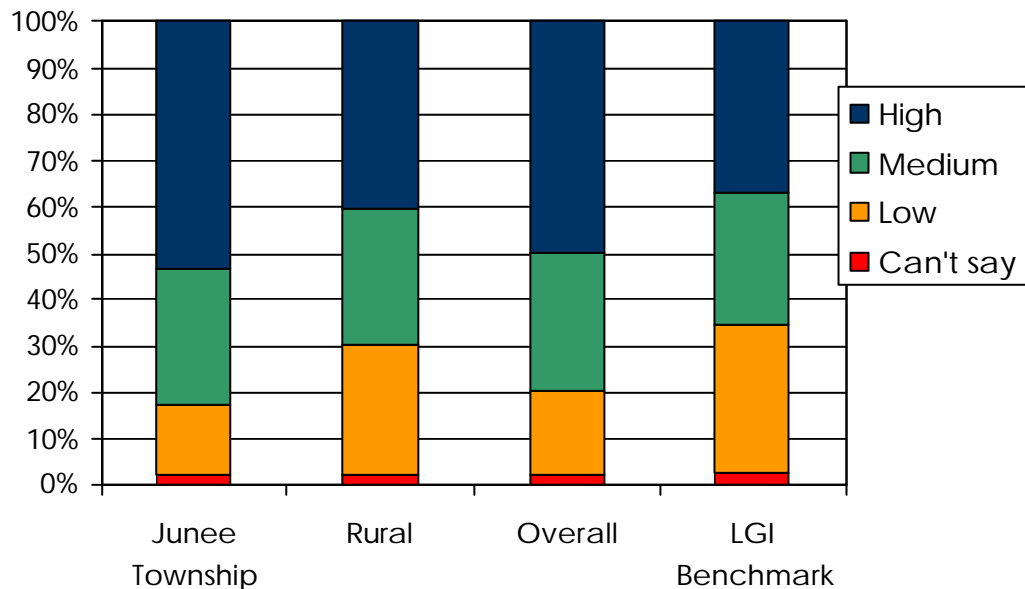
5.1 SERVICE PROVISION AND RESIDENTIAL RATES

The services provided by Local Government need to be funded properly and delivered in a way that meets community standards.

A particular challenge facing Local Councils is the funding of essential community services and infrastructure. Residents were asked whether they would be prepared to pay higher Council rates for better services or facilities or whether they were prepared to accept fewer local services and facilities by keeping rate rises to a minimum.

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "I would rather see Council rates rise than see cuts in local services?"

FIGURE 5.1.1: RESIDENT PREFERENCE FOR HIGHER RATES RATHER THAN SERVICE CUTS



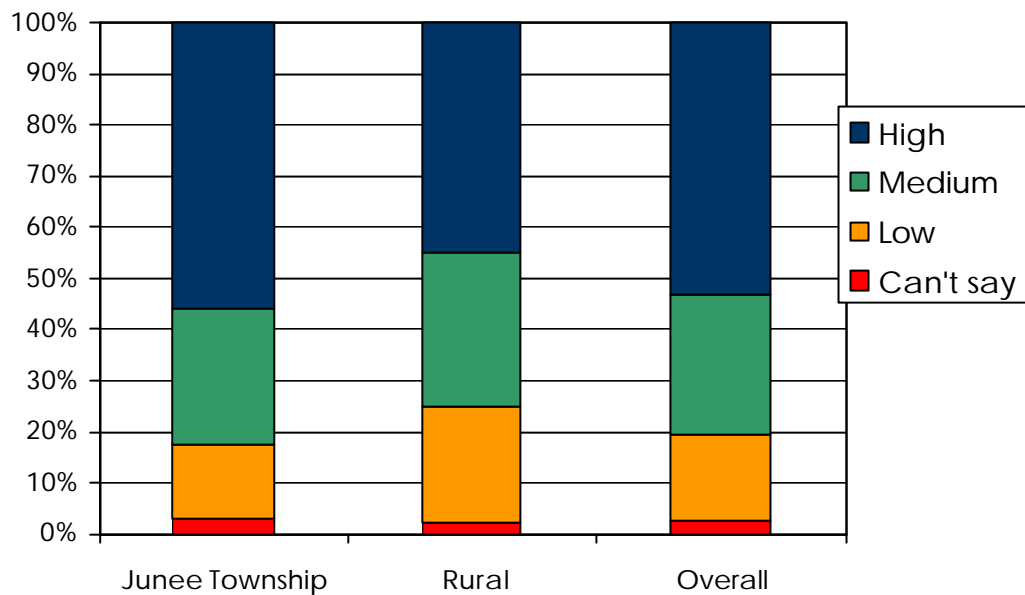


Key results:

- Overall 50% rated a high agreement to the statement 'I would rather see Council rates rise than see cuts in local services". Nineteen percent opposed the idea, with 29% providing a moderate rating. It would appear that if Junee Council were to increase residential rates to avoid any major cuts in the range of Council Services and facilities, as high as 80% of residents would either be neutral through to strong agreement to such a proposal. The mean agreement score for the idea was 3.4 out of 5.
- Junee residents overall were more likely to agree with the statement compared to the rural benchmark LGI study.
- Analysis showed that residents in the Junee Town centre are more likely to agree with the statement than those living in a village or a farm.
- No other major significant differences were identified by other demographic variables.

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement “I would be happy to pay a little more in Council rates to fund essential improvements in services and facilities?”

FIGURE 5.1.2: RESIDENT PREFERENCE FOR HIGHER RATES TO FUND ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

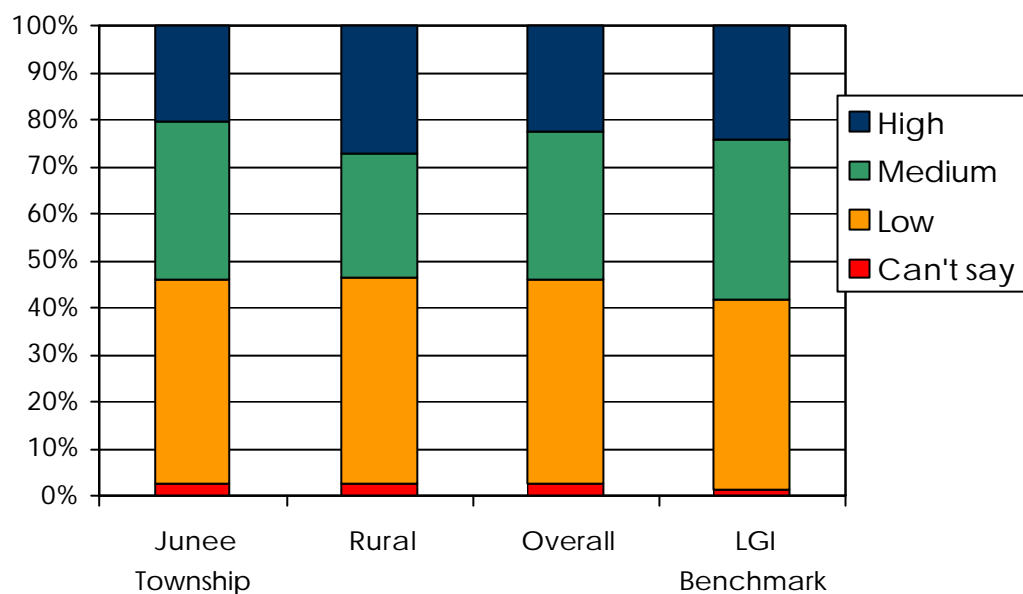


Key results:

- Again when residents were presented with a slight variation of the proposal, a similar level of support (53%) was shown for the retention of critical local government services and facilities despite a necessary rate increase. Around 1 in 6 residents surveyed disagreed with the proposal to increase rates to fund essential services (17%). Whilst 28% have a moderate level of agreement with the proposal. The mean agreement score for the idea was 3.5 out of 5.
- Residents in the Junee Township were more likely than those in villages or on farms to agree with the concept of paying a little more to fund essential services and facilities.
- No other major significant differences were identified by other demographic variables.

To what extent do you agree with the statement “Council rate rises should be kept to a minimum even if it means that local services are cut?”

FIGURE 5.1.3: RESIDENT PREFERENCE FOR MINIMUM RATE INCREASES EVEN IF IT MEANS LESS SERVICES



Key results:

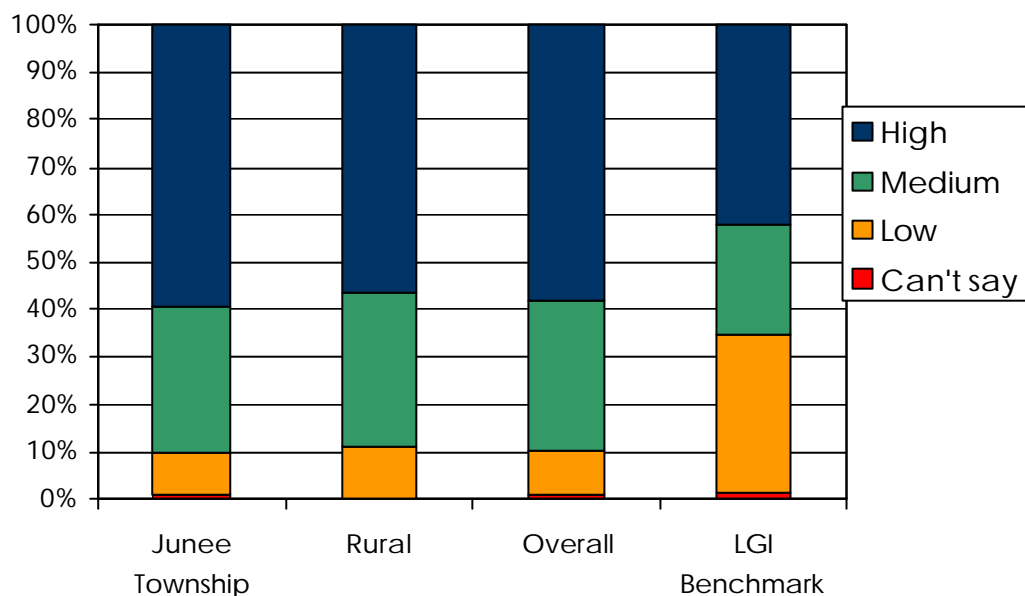
- More than 2 in 5 residents surveyed were not willing to trade-off reductions in service provision by local government, even if it means the level of rate rises are kept to a minimum. Around 1 in 3 residents have a moderate level of agreement with the proposal whilst only 1 in 5 strongly supported the proposal. The mean agreement score for the idea was 2.7 out of 5.
- There were no differences between the views of Junee Council resident and those obtained in the rural LGI benchmark study.
- Analysis by income group showed those residents with a household income of less than \$50 000 are on average more likely to have a higher agreement than other income groups towards the proposal.

5.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIXING RESIDENTIAL RATES

Community perceptions concerning who should be responsible for setting residential rates and the ability of local government to manage finances were measured in the survey. Respondents were first asked the following question.

To what extent do you agree with the statement “on the whole I trust Junee Shire Council to set its own rates and charges and spend the money efficiently on relevant local services?”

FIGURE 5.2.1 RESIDENT TRUSTWORTHINESS IN COUNCIL SETTING ITS OWN RATES AND SPENDING PROCEEDS EFFICIENTLY



Key results:

- A majority of residents agreed (59%) compared to those that disagreed (10%) with the concept of “trusting’ their local Council to set its own rates and charges and spend the money efficiently. Around 1 in 3 Junee Council residents provided a medium level of agreement (score of 3). The mean score for the question was 3.6 out of 5.
- Junee Council residents were more likely provide a higher agreement rating compared to the LGI rural benchmark study.



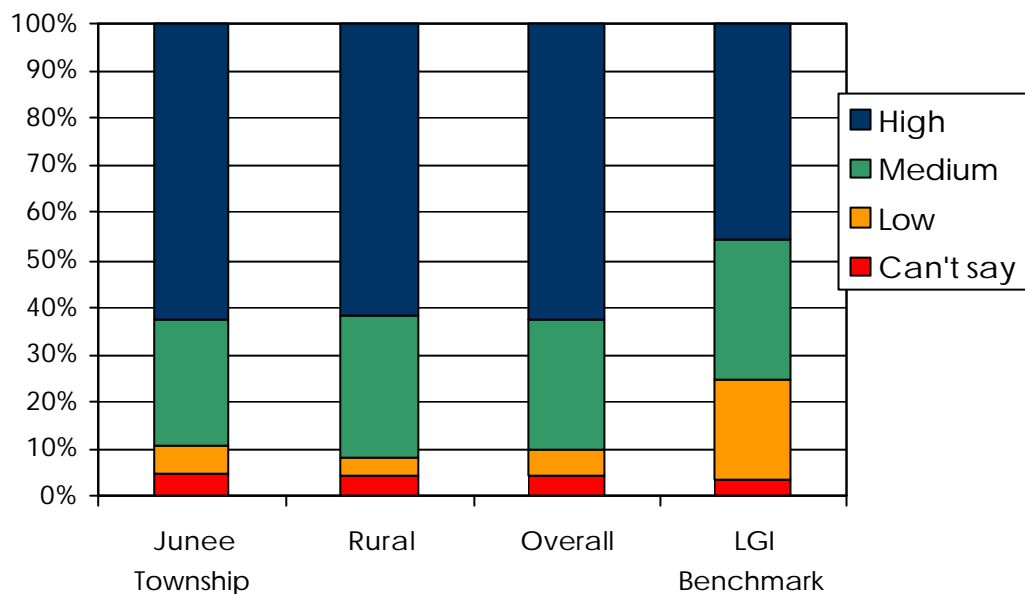
- Agreement appears to vary by household income with those earning less than \$25 000 most likely to agree and those earning greater than \$100 000 the least likely to agree with the concept of trusting Council to sets its own rates and charges for spending efficiently on relevant local services.



The following question was also proposed.

To what extent do you agree with the statement "I have more confidence in Junee Shire Council than in the State Government when it comes to revenue raising and spending?"

FIGURE 5.2.2 RESIDENT CONFIDENCE IN COUNCIL VS. STATE GOVERNMENT TO RAISE REVENUE AND SPEND IT



Key results:

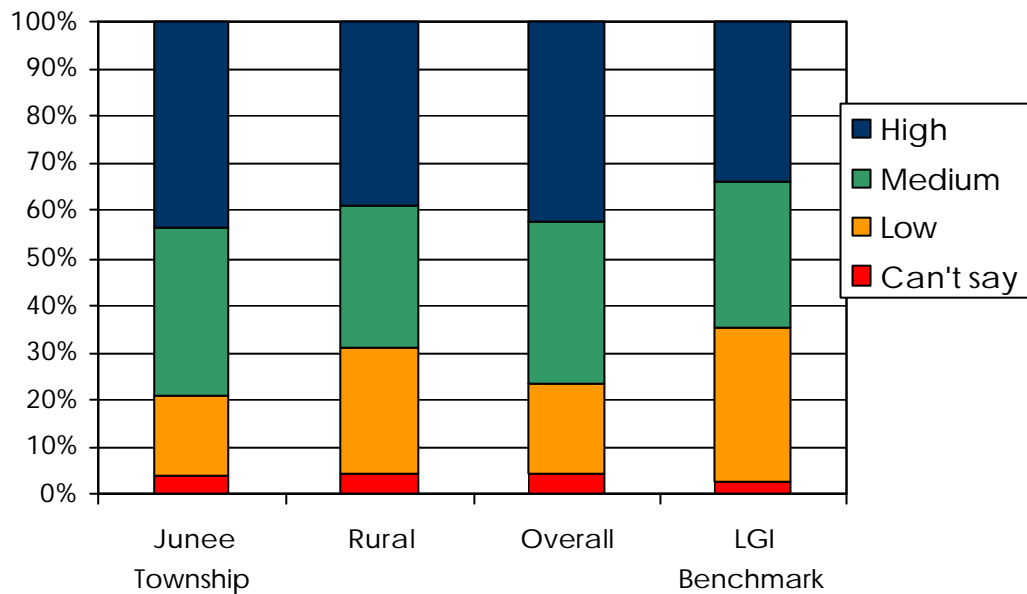
- Overall, the majority of residents (62%) have a high level of agreement on the issue of community trust of Local over State government when comes to financial management. 6% suggested they have less confidence in their local council while 28% provided a medium agreement rating. The mean score for the question was 3.8 out of 5.
- There is evidence of a positive correlation between age group and confidence in Local Council. In particular the 65+ age group is most likely to have a high level of agreement with this statement compared to other younger age groups.
- Those residents with a household income less than \$25 000 are more likely to rate a higher agreement than other age groups.

5.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An objective of the survey was to measure community perceptions on Local Government consultation in the Junee Shire Council area. The following question was asked.

To what extent do you agree with the statement “Junee Shire Council engages the community in discussions about possible changes to rates and/or services?”

FIGURE 5.3.1 RESIDENT PERCEPTION OF WHETHER LOCAL COUNCILS ENGAGE THEIR COMMUNITY



Key results:

- Around 2 in 5 households within the Council area have a high level of agreement in regards to Junee Council engaging them in community consultation. Only 19% believed that Council did not provide avenues for community engagement whilst 1 in 3 had a moderate level of agreement to the statement. The mean agreement score was 3.3 out of 5.
- Rural residents in the LGI benchmark study are more likely to rate a lower level of agreement on the issue on Local Council engaging them in consultation compared to residents in the Junee Council area.



- Analysis showed agreement varied by age group with the 65+ age group more likely to rate a higher level of agreement than some younger age groups.
- Agreement also varied by income groups, with those households earning less than \$25 000 being more likely to agree than other income groups.



5.4 PRIORITIES FOR COUNCIL SPENDING

I am now going to read out a range of services that Local Councils provide to the community. Can you tell me for each area whether you would like your Council to spend more, spend the same or spend less?

TABLE 5.4.1 SPENDING ON COUNCIL SERVICES & FACILITIES-ALL AREAS

Service Area	Proportion of Respondents (%)			
	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less	Can't Say
Health and Human Support services	57.4	41.2	1.2	0.2
Roads, footpaths and kerbing	55.2	42.0	2.5	0.2
Culture and education	47.8	49.5	2.7	0.2
Environment	46.4	50.4	3.0	0.2
Economic development	45.5	51.3	3.2	0.2
Waste management	33.4	64.0	2.4	0.2
Recreation	30.4	63.4	6.2	0.2
Traffic management and Parking	28.5	62.2	9.0	0.2
Commercial services	27.9	69.6	2.6	0.2
Town Planning	25.1	68.1	6.8	0.2
Appearance of Public Areas	18.2	78.3	3.6	0.2
By laws	15.3	73.6	11.1	0.2

Key results:

- In line with the benchmark LGI study, a majority of Junee residents surveyed believed their local council needed to spend more money on health and human support services and on roads, footpaths and kerbing.
- For the remaining items a majority of Junee residents suggested that spending should remain at current levels.
- Around 10% of the community indicated that Council could spend less in the areas of Traffic management and parking along with the enforcement of By laws.
- Town planning and recreation services and facilities were identified by more than 5% of respondents as possible areas for reducing Council expenditure.



Appendices

APPENDIX 1:
Survey Methodology

APPENDIX 2:
Survey Response

APPENDIX 3:
Questionnaire

APPENDIX 4:
Survey accuracy & confidence interval estimation



APPENDIX 1: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE DESIGN

A telephone-based survey, aiming to secure a response from approximately 330 residents (around 101 from village and rural areas and 229 from Junee Township) from throughout the Junee Shire LGA, was used. The survey unit was permanent residents of the Junee Shire Council area for 6 months or longer. Respondents also had to be aged 18 years or older to qualify for an interview. The 2001 Census was used to establish quotas to ensure a good distribution of response by age and sex was achieved (See Appendix 2).

The sample base for the survey was the electronic White Pages. This sample is known to be sub optimal, as the churn of telephone numbers due to people moving and new numbers being added as dwellings are occupied affects about 12% to 15% of possible numbers. To deal with these issues, we began with the population of numbers listed in the telephone book and added new and unlisted numbers using a technique called the 'half open' method. In this method, all numbers were incremented by five to create new numbers in the 'gaps' between the listed numbers. The resultant universe of numbers was then de-duplicated to remove any numbers that may be repeated. This process was repeated five times to create a new, theoretical universe of telephone numbers. This provided the opportunity for all potential numbers to be selected in the sample. This equal and known opportunity for selection is the first criterion of good random sampling.

Once the potential universe of numbers had been generated, a computer programme was used to randomise the database. Following this, another computer programme was used to take a sequential sample (e.g. every 110th number) from the database. Unique strata within the numbers universe were developed for each planning area. Therefore the sample was geographically stratified and evenly distributed within strata. This process gave a very even distribution of potential numbers across the whole survey area and within the two survey sub areas. Every household therefore had an equal and known chance of selection and every part of the survey area received a fair proportional representation in the final sample drawn.



DATA COLLECTION

Interviews were conducted over the period 19th September to 21st September weekday evenings between 4.30 and 8.30 p.m. If the selected person was unavailable at that time to do the survey, callbacks were scheduled for a later time or day. Unanswered numbers were retried three times throughout the period of the survey. These procedures ensure a good sampling process from the sample frame used so that statistical inferences could be made about the entire resident population.

Following the close of the main survey period, additional interviews were conducted, according to need, in those age groups that were under represented. During this part of the sampling process, a quota sampling procedure was employed to ensure that adequate numbers in all age groups were selected for interview. This eliminated the need for heavily weighting the survey data.

Non-private numbers and faxes reached during the selection process were excluded from the sample.

The survey was implemented under IQCA quality guidelines. Interviews were conducted using our computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. Continuous interviewer monitoring was used and post interview validations were conducted within five days of the close of the survey.



APPENDIX 2: SURVEY RESPONSE

RESPONSE PERFORMANCE

At the end of the survey period, 330 completed interviews had been collected. Table A2 below shows the compliance rate achieved for the entire sample. The compliance rate is the number of refusals as a proportion of completed surveys plus refusals. A compliance rate of 73% is excellent for a survey of this type.

Table A2 Survey compliance rate

Response sequence	Outcome
Interviews	330
Refusals	122
<i>Valid contacts (Excludes disqualified – businesses, out of area, under 16yrs etc)</i>	454
Compliance rate	73%

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Location

At the end of the survey period, 330 completed interviews had been collected. Table A 2.1 illustrates a breakdown of response by geographical location of respondent. When compared to ABS 2001 Census figures, this breakdown broadly reflects the general population distribution in the LGA.

Table A4 Regional stratification of sample

Sample groups	Target Response	% of sample	Actual Response	% of sample
Junee Township	239	72.0	229	69.4
Rural or village	91	28.0	101	30.6
Total	300	100.0	330	100.0



Demographics

Table A2.2 shows the sex and age composition of the sample compared to the ABS 2001 Census figures. The table demonstrates a very good age by sex distribution was achieved. Given the level of response to the survey and the fact that it represents a good random cross-section of the Council area the findings presented in this report provide a sound basis for gauging community opinion.

Table A2.2 Junee Shire Council area - Age by Sex Distribution

Age	Proportions (%)					
	Males		Females		Total	
	Sample	Census	Sample	Census	Sample	Census
18-29 years	4	7	6	7	10	14
30-49 years	17	21	22	21	38	42
50-64 years	15	13	14	12	28	25
65+ years	10	8	12	11	23	19
Total	46	49	54	51	100	100



APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE



INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is from IRIS, a community research organisation. We are conducting a survey about services and facilities provided by Junee Shire Council and we are interested in the views of a person in your household.

Could I speak to the permanent resident of this household who had the most recent birthday, and is 18 years or older? [IF NOT AT HOME ARRANGE A CALLBACK]

[IF RESPONDENT IS NOT THE FIRST CONTACT, REPEAT INTRO]

Just to give you some background, the information provided by respondents is completely confidential and will help Council to better understand and meet the diverse needs of its residents.

SCREENING

Before we start, I just have to make sure you qualify for an interview.

Firstly, is this household in the Junee Shire? [IF NOT TERMINATE]

And, have you lived in the Junee Shire for longer than 6 months? [IF NOT TERMINATE]

Great, you qualify for an interview! I just have to inform you that my supervisor may monitor this call for feedback and training purposes.

Do you live in Junee Township, a village or on a rural farm or property?

1. Junee Township
2. Village
3. Rural farm or property
4. Not stated



SECTION 1: ROLE & PERFORMANCE OF COUNCIL (IMPORTANCE & SATISFACTION RATINGS)

Q 1.1

In this first section I will read out a list of service and facilities provided to the community by Junee Shire Council .

For each I will ask you how important the service is to you personally on a scale of 1 to 5. In the scale, a score of 1 means that the service is not at all important and a score of 5 means that the service is very important to you.

I will also ask you how satisfied you are with Junee Council's performance in the delivery of these services and facilities. This will involve a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and 5 means you are very satisfied.

IMPORTANCE SCALE

- 1 Not at all important
- 2 ...
- 3 ...
- 4 ...
- 5 Very important
- 6 CANT SAY

PERFORMANCE SCALE

- 1 Very dissatisfied
- 2 ...
- 3 ...
- 4 ...
- 5 Very satisfied
- 6 CANT SAY

1. Construction and maintenance of Local Roads, Footpaths and Kerbing (excluding highways and main roads).
2. Health and Human support services and facilities including aged, child and youth services
3. Recreation services and facilities including swimming pools, sports fields.
4. Culture and education services and facilities including libraries, and public buildings for cultural use.
5. Waste management
6. Appearance of public areas including provision and up keep of local parks
7. Traffic management and parking facilities
8. Enforcement of By Laws e.g. food, health, and animal control
9. Economic Development e.g. business and tourism promotion.
10. Environmental activities e.g. including storm water, land care
11. Town planning and timely processing of building applications.
12. The provision of commercial services such as sewerage services and caravan parks



I would now like to focus on the Shire's local roads. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means highly dissatisfied and 5 means highly satisfied, how satisfied are you with the condition of the Shire's.....

1. Town Roads
2. Rural sealed roads
3. Rural unsealed roads

For respondents providing a rating of 1 or 2. ASK: Why are you dissatisfied with the condition of the Shire's....

1. Town Roads
2. Rural sealed roads
3. Rural unsealed roads

Q 1.2A

Given the answers you have just provided, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with Junee Shire Council as an organisation?

Again, we will use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=very dissatisfied and 5=very satisfied.

- 1 Very dissatisfied
- 2 .
- 3 .
- 4 .
- 5 Very satisfied
- 6 CAN'T SAY / DECLINED

Q 1.2B [SKIP IF Q 1.2A > 2]

You said that you were dissatisfied with Council's overall performance. In just a few words, what is your main reason for feeling that way?

[80 CHARACTER TEXT BOX]

Q1.2C

Please tell me if you think the services and facilities provided by Junee Shire Council are value for money in terms of what your household pays in rates and other Council charges. Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 mean you think the services provided by Council are very poor value and 5 means they are very good value. [IF THE PERSON RENTS REMIND THEM THAT THEIR RATES ARE INCLUDED IN THEIR RENTS]

1. Very poor value
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very good value
6. Can't say



SECTION 2: LIKES/DISLIKES & LOCAL/CITYWIDE CONCERNS

Council is interested in other issues not directly related to the services they provide. I am going to ask you to tell me about a number of issues related to quality of life in the Junee Shire area.

First I want to ask some questions about the Shire as a whole.

Q 2.1 What do you like MOST about living in the Junee Shire?
[80 CHARACTER TEXT BOX]

Q 2.2 What do you like LEAST about living in the Junee Shire?
[80 CHARACTER TEXT BOX]

Q 2.3A Now for the Junee Shire overall, what do you see as the major issue of concern?
[80 CHARACTER TEXT BOX]

Q 2.3B Why would you say that?
[80 CHARACTER TEXT BOX]

SECTION 3: COUNCIL FINANCES

Now I want to ask some questions about the financing of services and facilities by Junee Shire Council.

Could you tell me the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Rate your level of agreement with the statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree,

3.1 I would rather see council rates rise than see cuts in local services?

3.2 I would be happy to pay a little more in Council rates to fund essential improvements in services and facilities?

3.3 Council rate rises should be kept to a minimum even it means that local services are cut?

3.4 Junee Shire Council engages the community in discussions about possible changes to rates and/or services?

3.5 On the whole I trust Junee Shire Council to set its own rates and charges and spend the money efficiently on relevant local services?

3.6 I have more confidence in Junee Shire Council than in the State Government when it comes to revenue raising and spending?

3.7 I am now going to read out a range of services that Junee Shire Council provides to the community. Can you tell me for each area whether you would like the Council to spend more, spend the same or spend less? (RANDOMLY PRESENT)

- Roads, footpaths and kerbing
- Health and human support services
- Traffic management and parking



- Environment
- Appearance of public areas
- Town Planning
- Recreation facilities
- Commercial services
- By laws
- Culture and education
- Economic development
- Waste management

3.8 In the Junee Shire the provision and up keep of sports fields are paid for out of general income. Do you agree with recouping part of this cost by introducing a small general player fee of around a few dollars?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Cant say

3.9 **IF YES:** What do you believe is a reasonable player fee to levy per game? (READ OUT OPTIONS UNTIL RESPONDENT REACHES MAXIMUM AGREEMENT VALUE)

1. \$1
2. \$2
3. \$3
4. \$4
5. \$5
6. \$6
7. \$7
8. \$8
9. \$9
10. \$10
11. More than \$10

SECTION 4: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Finally, I'd just like to ask you a few questions to help qualify your responses.

SEX

Hearing your voice I presume you are a ...

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

AGE

Are you above or below 40 years of age? Which of the following age brackets do you fall into?

1. 18 to 29
2. 30 to 49
3. 50 to 64
4. 65+
9. Refused to say



INCOME

Could you stop me when I reach the annual household income of all people living in that dwelling?

- 1 Up to \$25,000
- 2 Over \$25,000 up to \$50 000
- 3 Over \$50 000 up to \$75 000
- 4 Over \$75,000 up to 100 000
- 5 Over \$100,000
- 6 Can't say/refused

RESIDE

How long have you personally lived in the Junee Shire?

- 1 Up to 1 year
- 2 Greater than 1, but less than 5 years
- 3 Greater than 5, but less than 10 years
- 4 Greater than 10, but less than 15 years
- 5 Greater than 15 years

LOCALITY

And what is the name of the town/locality where you live?

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| Bethungra | Junee Reefs |
| Dirnaseer | Marinna |
| Erin Vale | Old Junee |
| Eurongilly | Wantabadgery |
| Harefield | Wantiool |
| Illabo | Yathella |
| Junee | |

OWNERSHIP

Do you or your family pay Council rates or do you leave this to the landlord if your rent?

- 1. Pay Council rates ourselves
- 2 Land lord pays Council rates

NAME

Finally, could you tell me your first name as my supervisor audits 1 in 10 of my calls as part of our quality control process?

CONCLUSION

That completes our interview. As this is market research, you can be assured that it is carried out in full compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you provided is only used for research purposes.



Again, my name isand my supervisors name is Judy. If you have any questions about this survey, or would like further information about IRIS Research, you can call our office between 9am and 5pm weekdays on 4229-4777. Thank you for your time.

END.



APPENDIX 4: SURVEY ACCURACY & CONFIDENCE INTERVAL ESTIMATION

Survey accuracy

Some level of random error affects all estimates in this report. This means that although reported estimates may be close to the actual population parameter, they may still represent value which is over or under estimated. For example, it is highly unlikely that exactly the same results would be achieved should the study be repeated.

However, according to statistical theory it is possible to work out the accuracy of the results by creating a 95% confidence interval around each estimate. In doing so, one can be 95% certain that the true proportion of the population will lie somewhere within the calculated interval.

In order to work out a confidence interval, the size of the sub-sample must be known. The table on the next page can be used to work out the confidence interval for any estimated proportion.

Creating a 95% confidence interval

First, find the column that most closely corresponds to the sub-sample of interest (i.e. the number of people who answered that particular question). An 'n value', representing the size of the sub-sample, should be shown in your report. For example, if $n=329$, then use the column with 350.

Secondly, find the row that most closely corresponds to the percentage estimate around which you wish to build a confidence interval. For example, if the estimated proportion is 18%, then use the row with 20%.

Finally, to create your confidence interval, add and subtract the percentage value found in the table from your estimate. For example, if the suggested table value is 4.3% and your estimate is 18%, take $18 \pm 4.3\%$. In this case the interval would range from 13.7% to 22.3



Size of sub sample

Proportion	25	50	75	100	125	150	175	200	250	300	350	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000
5%	8.7%	6.2%	5.0%	4.4%	3.9%	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%
10%	12.0%	8.5%	6.9%	6.0%	6.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	3.2%	3.0%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%
15%	14.3%	10.1%	8.2%	7.1%	6.4%	5.8%	5.4%	5.0%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.6%	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%
20%	16.0%	11.3%	9.2%	8.0%	7.2%	6.5%	6.0%	5.7%	5.1%	4.6%	4.3%	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%
25%	17.3%	12.2%	10.0%	8.7%	7.7%	7.1%	6.5%	6.1%	5.5%	5.0%	4.6%	4.3%	3.9%	3.5%	3.3%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%
30%	18.3%	13.0%	10.6%	9.2%	8.2%	7.5%	6.9%	6.5%	5.8%	5.3%	4.9%	4.6%	4.1%	3.7%	3.5%	3.2%	3.1%	2.9%
35%	19.1%	13.5%	11.0%	9.5%	8.5%	7.8%	7.2%	6.7%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.3%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	3.0%
40%	19.6%	13.9%	11.3%	9.8%	8.8%	8.0%	7.4%	6.9%	6.2%	5.7%	5.2%	4.9%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%	3.1%
50%	20.0%	14.1%	11.5%	10.0%	8.9%	8.2%	7.6%	7.1%	6.3%	5.8%	5.3%	5.0%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%
60%	19.6%	13.9%	11.3%	9.8%	8.8%	8.0%	7.4%	6.9%	6.2%	5.7%	5.2%	4.9%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.5%	3.3%	3.1%
65%	19.1%	13.5%	11.0%	9.5%	8.5%	7.8%	7.2%	6.7%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.3%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	3.0%
70%	18.3%	13.0%	10.6%	9.2%	8.2%	7.5%	6.9%	6.5%	5.8%	5.3%	4.9%	4.6%	4.1%	3.7%	3.5%	3.2%	3.1%	2.9%
75%	17.3%	12.2%	10.0%	8.7%	7.7%	7.1%	6.5%	6.1%	5.5%	5.0%	4.6%	4.3%	3.9%	3.5%	3.3%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%
80%	16.0%	11.3%	9.2%	8.0%	7.2%	6.5%	6.0%	5.7%	5.1%	4.6%	4.3%	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%
85%	14.3%	10.1%	8.2%	7.1%	6.4%	5.8%	5.4%	5.0%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.6%	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%
90%	12.0%	8.5%	6.9%	6.0%	6.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	3.2%	3.0%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%
95%	8.7%	6.2%	5.0%	4.4%	3.9%	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	2.5%	2.3%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%

