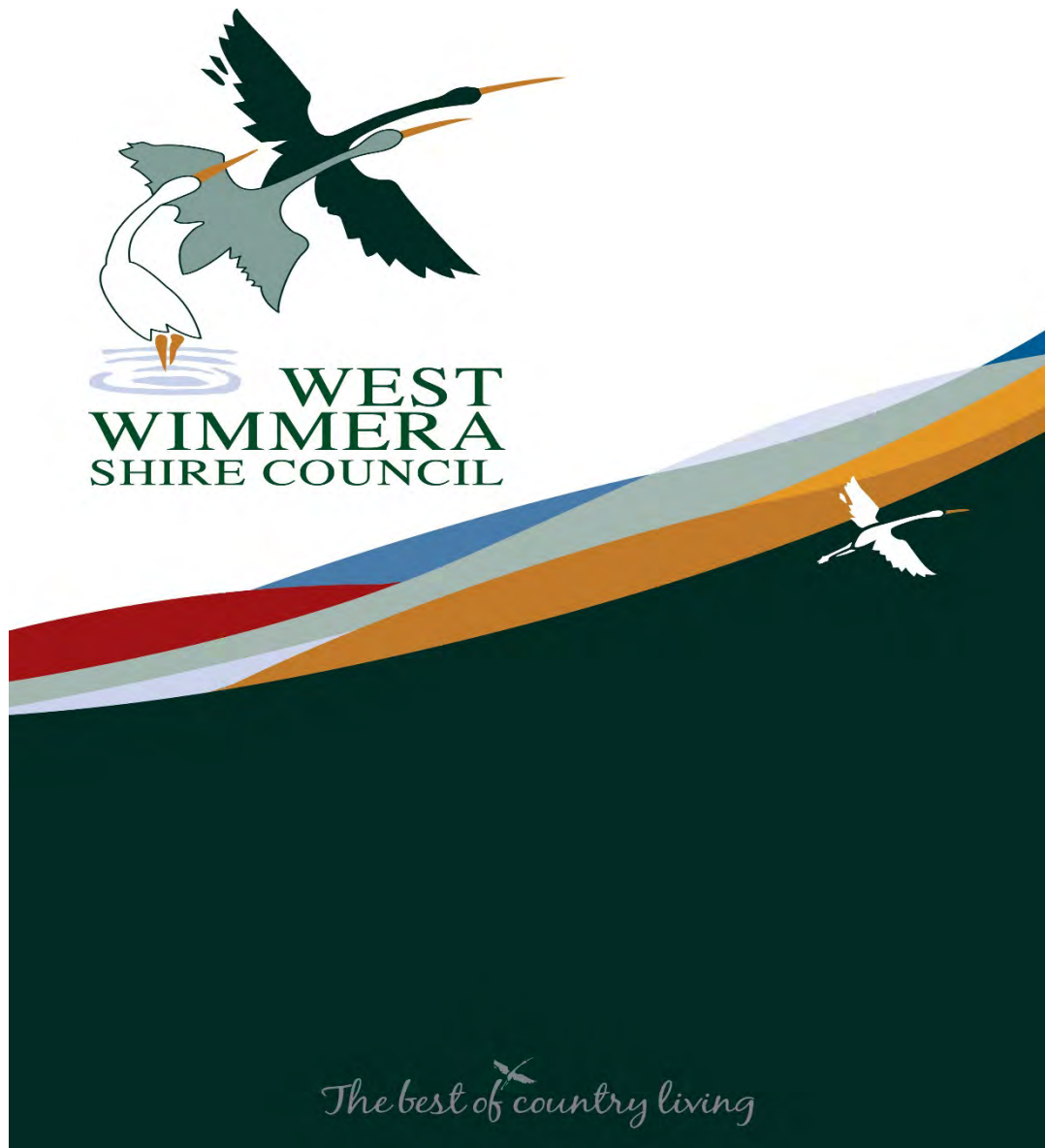


WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SATISFATION SURVEY
RESULTS 2017



SUMMARY REPORT

19 JULY 2017

Welcome to the report of results and recommendations for the 2017 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey for West Wimmera Shire Council.

Each year Local Government Victoria (LGV) coordinates and auspices this State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey throughout Victorian local government areas. This coordinated approach allows for far more cost effective surveying than would be possible if councils commissioned surveys individually.

Participation in the State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is optional. Participating councils have various choices as to the content of the questionnaire and the sample size to be surveyed, depending on their individual strategic, financial and other considerations.

The main objectives of the survey are to assess the performance of West Wimmera Shire Council across a range of measures and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery. The survey also provides councils with a means to fulfil some of their statutory reporting requirements as well as acting as a feedback mechanism to LGV.

KEY FINDINGS

West Wimmera Shire Council's **overall performance** rating **increased significantly, by six index points**, since 2016. After experiencing two years of declining ratings, Council's overall performance rating of **64 index points** is back in line with pre-2015 levels.

- West Wimmera Shire Council's overall performance is rated statistically **significantly higher** (at the 95% confidence interval) **than the average rating for councils State-wide and in the Small Rural group** (index scores of 59 and 58 respectively).
- Several groups experienced significant ratings gains, including **residents aged 50 to 64 years** (10 index points higher than 2016), **women** (eight index points higher than 2016), and **residents aged 65+ years** (seven index points higher than 2016).
- **Residents aged 35 to 49 years** (index score of 58) are **significantly less favourable** in their view of Council's overall performance than residents overall, though like their counterparts, they increased in their perceptions of Council's overall performance in the past year (albeit not significantly).

Residents are more likely to rate West Wimmera Shire Council's overall performance as 'very good' (12%) than 'very poor' (3%). More than two in five residents (44%) rate Council's overall performance as good, while a further 33% sit mid-scale providing an average rating. Another 6% rate Council's overall performance as poor.

Higher results in 2017
(significantly higher than 2016)

- Overall performance
- Consultation and engagement
- Overall Council direction

Lower results in 2017
significantly lower result than 2016

- Not applicable

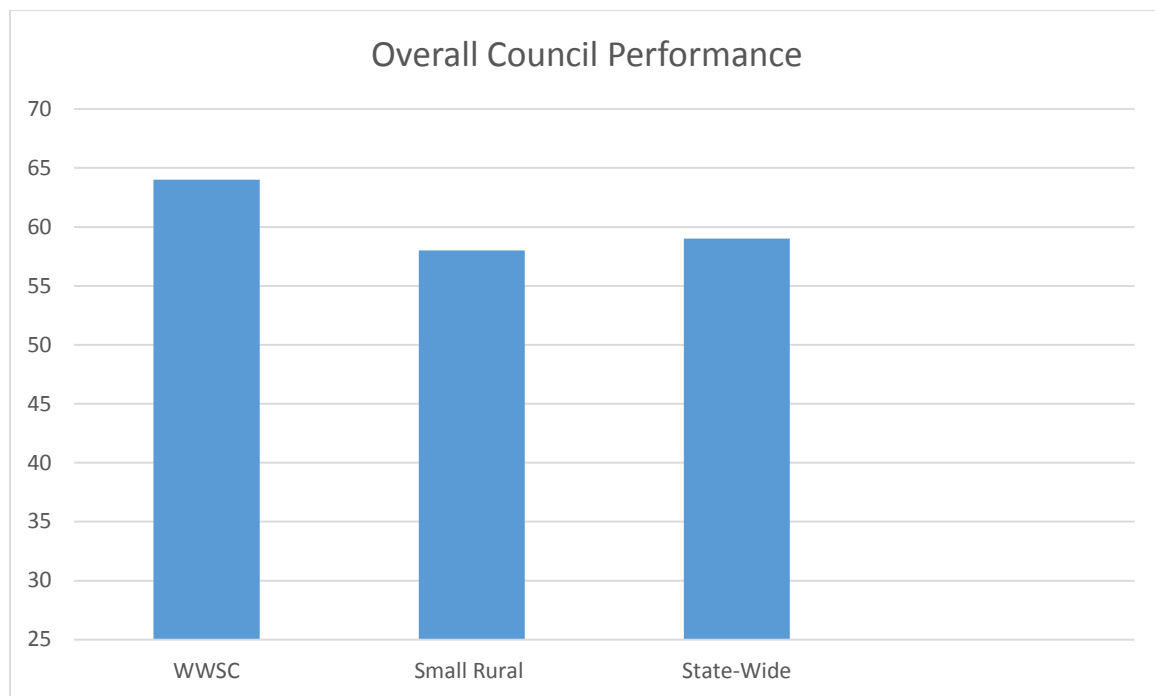
Most favourably disposed
towards Council

- Aged 65 + years

Least favourably disposed
to Council

- Aged 18-34 years
- Aged 35-49 years

Chart 1 shows the West Wimmera Shire Council overall performance score compared to state-wide and small rural group averages.



**Results shown are index scores out of 100.*

Chart 2 indicates the 3 Top performing areas

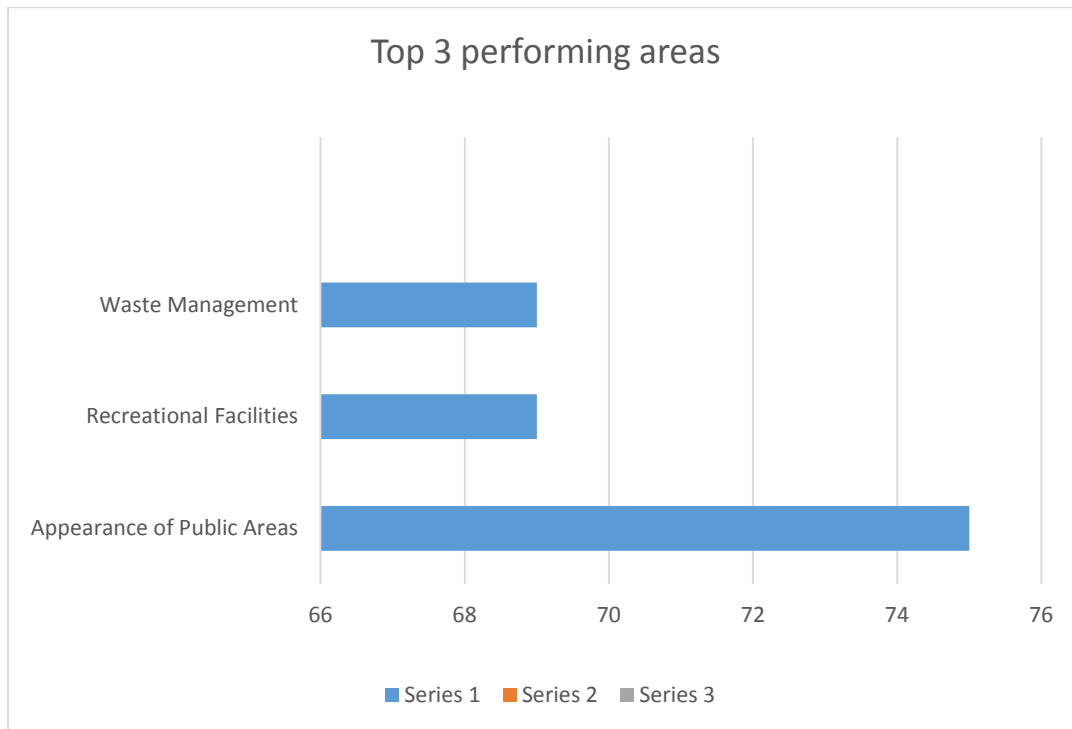
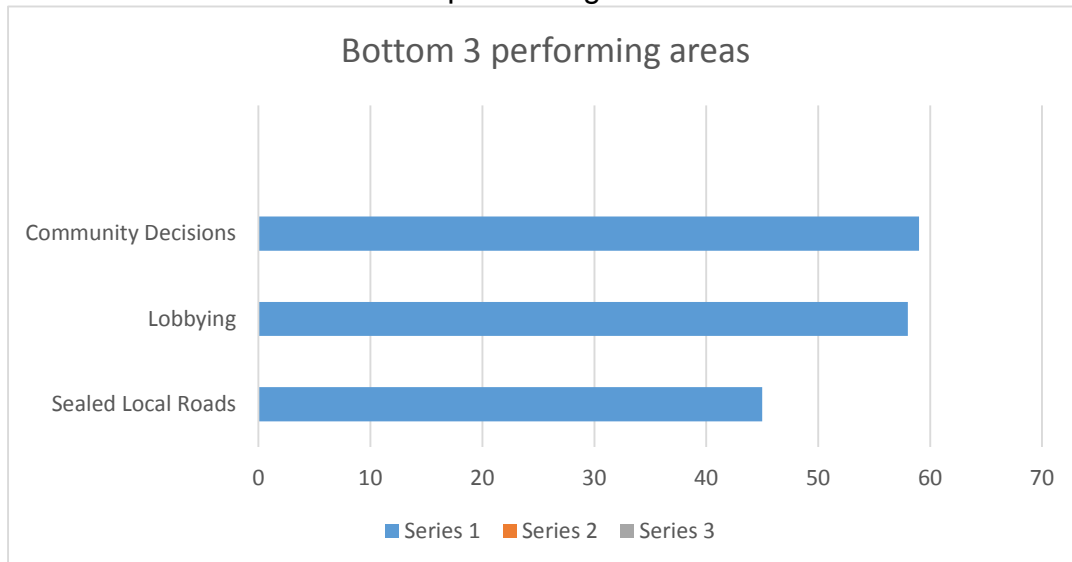
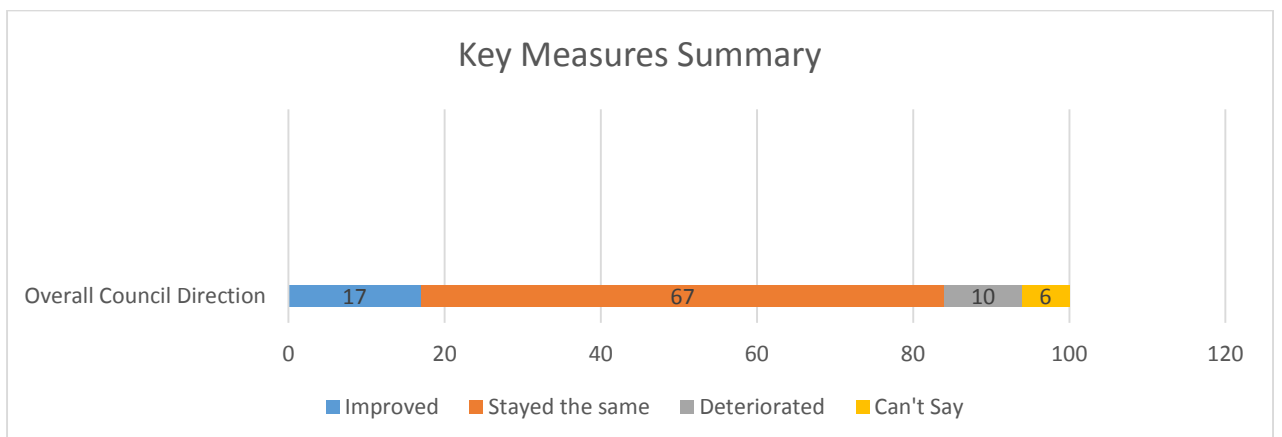
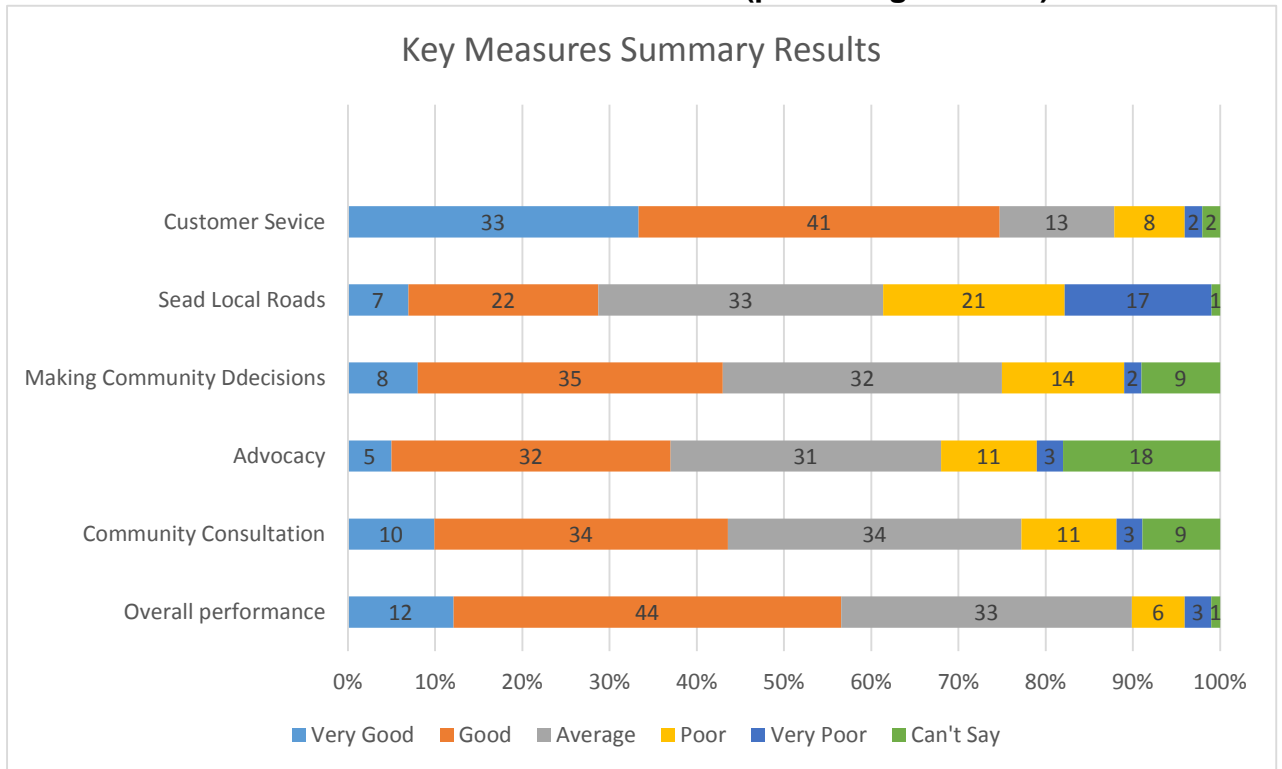


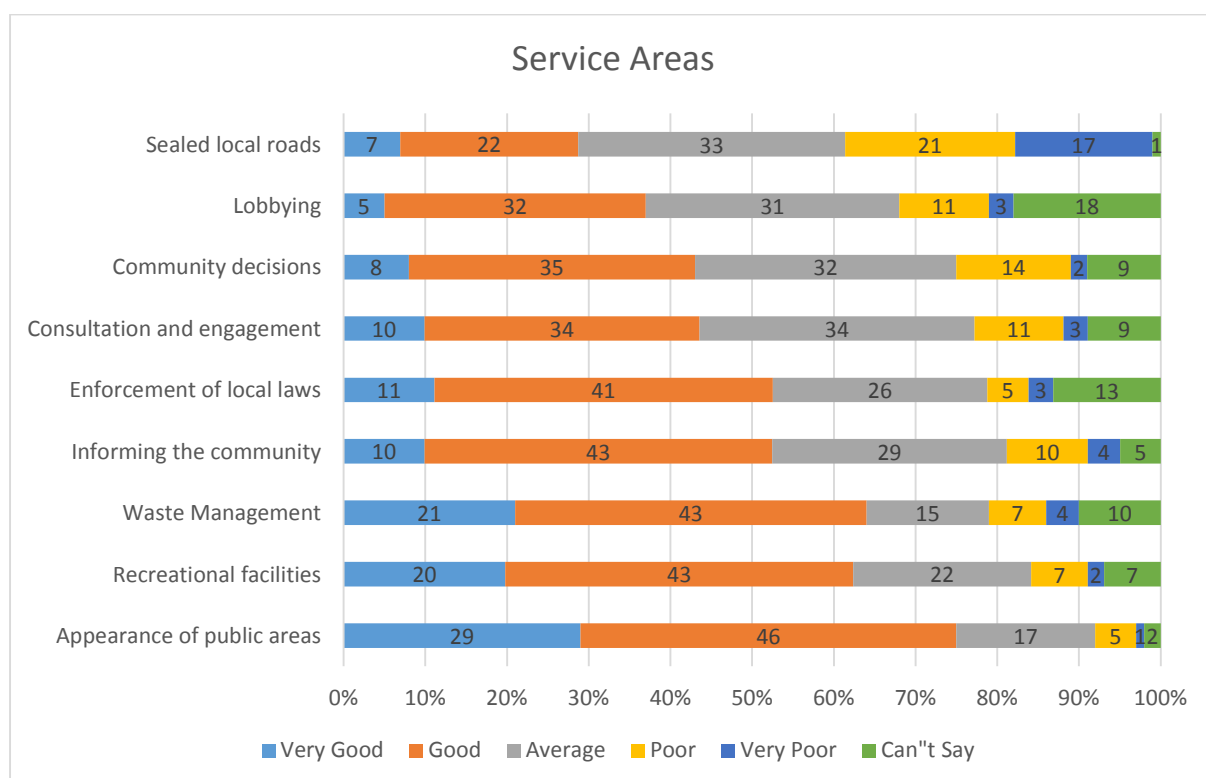
Chart 3 indicates the 3 Bottom performing areas



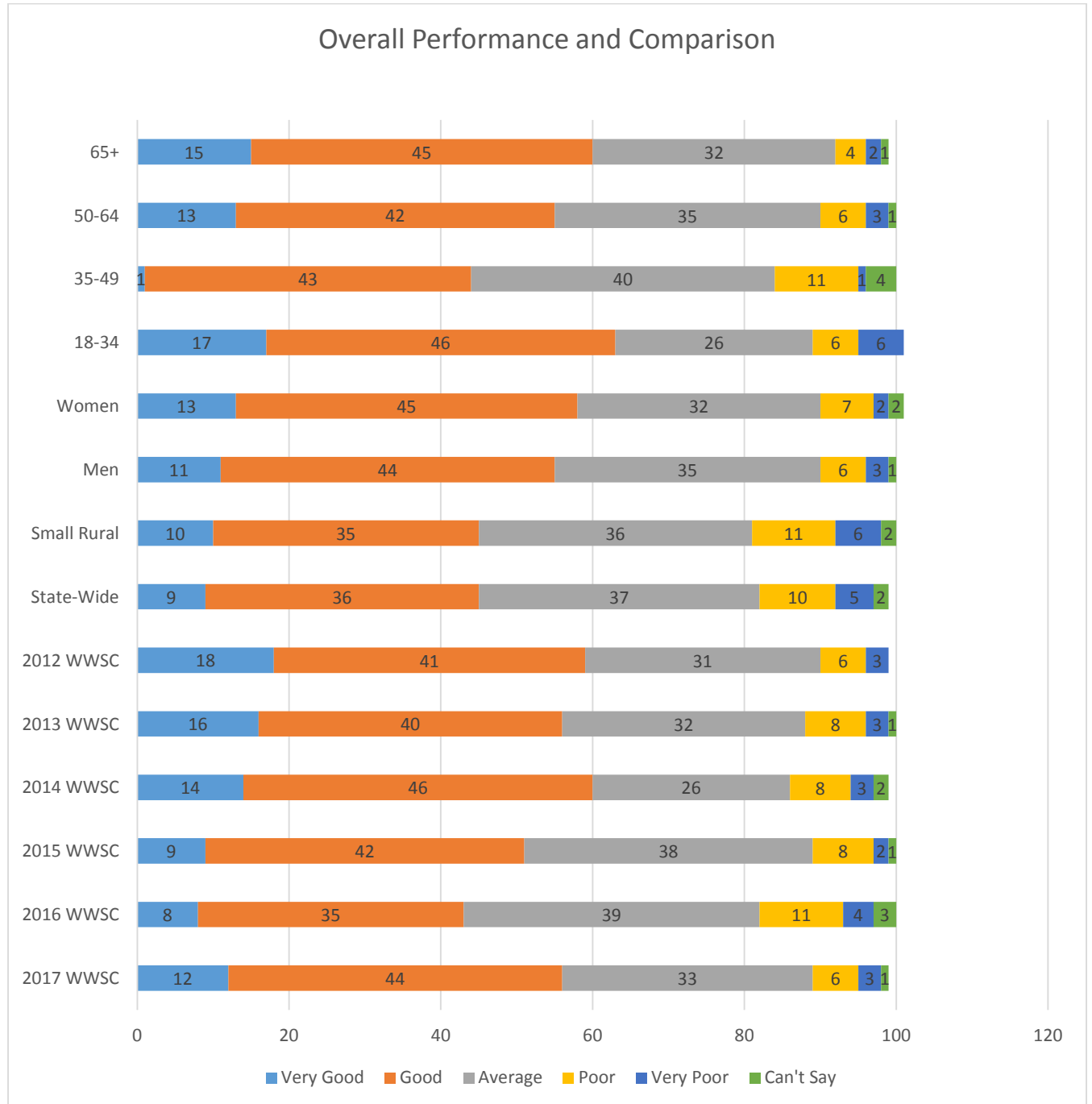
KEY MEASURE SUMMARY RESULTS (percentage results)



INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AREA PERFORMANCE



DETAILED OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS YEARS.



COMPARISON BY COUNCIL GROUP

Top Three Performing Service Areas

West Wimmera Shire Council	Metropolitan	Interface	Regional Centres	Large Rural	Small Rural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearance of Public Areas • Recreational Facilities • Waste Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Mngt • Art Centres & libraries • Recreational facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Centres & libraries • Waste Mngt. • Emergency & disaster mngt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art centres& libraries • Appearance of public areas • Emergency & disaster mangt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearance of public areas • Emergency & disaster mngt • Art centres & libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency & disaster mngt • Art centres & libraries • Community & cultural

Bottom Three Performing Service Areas

West Wimmera Shire Council	Metropolitan	Interface	Regional Centres	Large Rural	Small Rural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sealed roads • Lobbying • Community decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permits • Population growth • Paerking facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsealed roads • Planning permits. • Population growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking facilities • Community decisions • Unsealed roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsealed roads • Sealed roads • Slashing and weed control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsealed roads • Sealed roads • Planning permits

Council Groups

West Wimmera Shire Council is classified as a Small Rural council according to the following classification list:

- Metropolitan, Interface, Regional Centres, Large Rural & Small Rural

Councils participating in the Small Rural group are: Alpine, Ararat, Benalla, Buloke, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Indigo, Loddon, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.

Wherever appropriate, results for West Wimmera Shire Council for this 2017 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey have been compared against other participating councils in the Small Rural group and on a state-wide basis. Please note that council groupings changed for 2015, and as such comparisons to council group results before that time can not be made within the reported charts.

Margins of Error

The sample size for the 2017 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey for West Wimmera Shire Council was n=403. Unless otherwise noted, this is the total sample base for all reported charts and tables.

The maximum margin of error on a sample of approximately n=403 interviews is +/- 4.6% at the 95% confidence level for results around 50%. Margins of error will be larger for any sub-samples. As an example, a result of 50% can be read confidently as falling midway in the range 45.4% -54.6%.

Maximum margins of error are listed in the table below, based on a population of 3,000 people aged 18 years or over for West Wimmera Shire Council, according to ABS estimates.

Demographic	Actual survey sample size	Weighted base	Maximum margin of error at 95% confidence level
West Wimmera Shire Council	403	400	+/-4.6
Men	167	204	+/-7.4
Women	236	196	+/-6.1
18-34 years	26	63	+/-19.5
35-49 years	73	83	+/-11.4
50-64 years	117	98	+/-8.9
65+ years	187	155	+/-7.0

INDEX SCORE IMPLICATIONS

Index scores are indicative of an overall rating on a particular service area. In this context, index scores indicate:

- a) how well council is seen to be performing in a particular service area; or
- b) the level of importance placed on a particular service area.

For ease of interpretation, index score ratings can be categorised as follows:

Index Score	Performance implication	Importance implication
75 - 100	Council is performing very well in this service area	This service area is seen to be extremely important
60 – 75	Council is performing well in this service area, but there is room for improvement	This service area is seen to be very important
50 - 60	Council is performing satisfactorily in this service area but needs to improve	This service area is seen to be fairly important
40 – 50	Council is performing poorly in this service area	This service area is seen as somewhat important
0 – 40	Council is performing very poorly in this service area	This service area is seen to be not that important

Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Overall Performance Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2012	59	9	66.04
2013	57	11	65.09
2014	60	12	65.3
2015	51	10	62.2
2016	43	15	58.4
2017	56	9	64.23

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Community Consultation Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2012	52	13	63.02
2013	45	14	61.34
2014	52	12	62.4
2015	47	19	58.7
2016	36	20	54.9
2017	44	14	59.88

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Advocacy Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2012	46	12	61.66
2013	41	15	59.62
2014	43	11	61.5
2015	37	13	57.8
2016	36	16	56.1
2017	37	14	57.93

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Making Community Decisions Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2015	44	18	57.6
2016	41	19	56.2
2017	43	16	58.88

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Sealed Local Roads Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2015	31	31	48.6
2016	32	33	47.9
2017	29	38	45.32

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Customer Service Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD intData	TOTAL POOR intData	Index Score intData
2012	77	7	78.34
2013	79	9	76.95
2014	80	6	77.9
2015	79	5	77.9
2016	71	9	73.8
2017	74	10	74.21

Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Community Consultation Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD	TOTAL POOR	Index Score
	intData	intData	intData
2012	52	13	63.02
2013	45	14	61.34
2014	52	12	62.4
2015	47	19	58.7
2016	36	20	54.9
2017	44	14	59.88

Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
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Advocacy Chart

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	intData	intData	intData
2012	46	12	61.66
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2016	36	16	56.1
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Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Making Community Decisions Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD	TOTAL POOR	Index Score
	intData	intData	intData
2015	44	18	57.6
2016	41	19	56.2
2017	43	16	58.88

Landing Page_New

Parameter values	
Name	Value
Period	2017

Sealed Local Roads Chart			
Period	TOTAL GOOD	TOTAL POOR	Index Score
	intData	intData	intData
2015	31	31	48.6
2016	32	33	47.9
2017	29	38	45.32

Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Customer Service Chart

Period	TOTAL GOOD	TOTAL POOR	Index Score
	intData	intData	intData
2012	77	7	78.34
2013	79	9	76.95
2014	80	6	77.9
2015	79	5	77.9
2016	71	9	73.8
2017	74	10	74.21

Landing Page_New

Parameter values

Name	Value
Period	2017

Direction of Council Chart

Period	Improved	Deteriorated	Index Score
	intData	intData	intData
2012	16	12	51.71
2013	15	11	52.39
2014	19	8	55.6
2015	15	12	51.3
2016	11	14	48.5
2017	17	10	53.84



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COUNCIL POLICY			
COUNCIL GRANTS POLICY		Policy No:	
		Adopted by Council:	25 Nov 1999
		Next review date:	
Senior Manager:	Manager of Economic and Business Development		
Responsible Officer:	Tourism and Communications Officer		
Functional Area:	Community Development		
Introduction & Background	Each year, Council operates a number of grant programs which enables Council to work in partnership with the community by providing financial support to extend the capacity of groups, businesses and organisations to implement and sustain a wide range of local recreational, cultural, social, community and business support initiatives that make a positive contribution to the West Wimmera community.		
Purpose & Objectives	<p>To provide Council with an overarching framework for the various grants programs administered by Council to ensure that they are accessible, appropriate, fair and equitable across all groups in the municipality.</p> <p>To provide a common standard of grants administration. Each specific grants program has its own criteria depending on the specific purpose of the grant scheme.</p>		
Policy Details			
1.	Definitions		
	'Grant' is a payment to an organisation, which is directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with Council policy. The payment is conditional upon the recipient using the funds for specific purposes set out in the terms and conditions of the grant guidelines and application form.		
2.	Principals		
	<p>In administering the Council grant programs, Council undertakes to apply the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The administration and assessment of grant program will be conducted in accordance with accepted standards of public accountability, probity and transparency of decision making.▪ Council will apply the principles of democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.▪ The program will be administered on the basis of ethical and legal behaviour by		



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	<p>West Wimmera Shire Council (WWSC) Councillors and employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The grant programs will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains responsive to emerging themes, issues and trends in the community. ▪ Grant priorities will be set in accordance with Council's strategic objectives, budgetary resources and identified community needs. ▪ The total amount of funds available per application and the matching funding requirements will be set by Council resolution prior to the advertising of each round of grants.
3.	<p>Funding Exclusions</p> <p>Council will not fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retrospective funding for projects commenced prior to receipt of grant funding ▪ Applications for 100% funding, organisations are required to contribute financial and/or in-kind to the project within the requirements established in each specific grant program guidelines. ▪ Fundraising activities. ▪ Core business and operational responsibilities of the organisation. ▪ Staff wages and salaries and ongoing operational, maintenance or administrative costs. ▪ Ongoing projects or a duplication of existing services. ▪ Support for individual pursuit without community benefit. ▪ Projects that do not involve the WWSC community. ▪ Services or activities which are considered to be primarily the responsibility of the State or Federal Governments. ▪ Applicants that have failed to correctly acquit funding with Council in the past ▪ Applicants who have received funding from Council within the last 12 months.
4.	<p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council will consider grant applications from registered businesses and incorporated community groups that are legal entities based in West Wimmera Shire according to specific eligibility criteria and other conditions are outlined in the respective grants program guidelines. ▪ If the organisation is not a legal entity, an eligible organisation can apply on their behalf, through auspicing arrangements, provided the auspicing body has the necessary legal entity status to enter into a funding agreement with Council and agrees to administer funding on their behalf.
5.	<p>Application Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications will only be accepted on the forms made available by Council at the time the grant funding round is advertised. ▪ Complete responses must be provided to all questions on the application form. ▪ Applications not received by the closing date will not be considered. ▪ Applications must include all supporting documentation, where required, as per the guidelines ie. budget, Certificate of Incorporation, quotations, etc. ▪ Applicants who attend the education workshops prior to the closing date will be highly regarded.
6.	<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For each grant program, the appropriate Grants Assessment Team, will individually score applications received, based on meeting the agreed selection criteria for the



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	<p>specific grant program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications will then be ranked accordingly, based on defined scoring protocols and funds available and submitted to Council for decision regarding the distribution of grants funding. Decisions regarding the allocation or non-allocation of funding made by Council are considered final. Council reserves the right to part-fund an application.
7.	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful applicants will be contacted in writing and a Grant Funding Agreement will be prepared by Council to outline the responsibilities, obligations and identified outcomes required of the organisation. Funding must be expended within twelve months of when the funds were granted (unless otherwise stated and agreed to in the Agreement) or the funds must be refunded to Council. An extension may be sought before the 12 months has expired, by writing to the Council. Monies received must only be spent on the project as approved by Council. Any unspent funds must be returned to Council. To vary the purpose for the allocated grant funds, written permission must be obtained in writing from Council prior to spending the funds. Failure to abide by the grant conditions could jeopardise your organisation's chances of receiving further funds from Council. At completion of the project the grant recipient must submit a WWSC Grant Acquittal Report with all required accompanying documents.
8.	<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant programs will be widely advertised as per Council's Community Engagement Policy. All applicants will receive written notification acknowledging receipt of their application within one week of the grant program closing. Council will conduct a number of community information sessions across the municipality to highlight grant availability. All applicants will receive written notification about the success or otherwise of their grant application. Unsuccessful applicants will be encouraged to seek feedback from council in order to maximise their opportunity to obtain funding for future applications.

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 25/11/99	Minute Book Page 6906	RecFind
Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 25/07/02	Minute Book Page 10300	RecFind
	Ordinary Meeting 06/04/06	Minute Book Page 13682	RecFind
	Ordinary Meeting 11/03/10	Minute Book Page 17759	RecFind
	Ordinary Meeting 18/06/15	Minute Book Page 30619	RecFind 15/002328



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	Ordinary Meeting 19/07/17	Minute Book Page	RecFind
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COUNCIL POLICY			
DOMESTIC FIREWOOD COLLECTION POLICY		Policy No:	
		Adopted by Council:	17 Mar 2011
		Next review date:	19 Jul 2017
Senior Manager:	General Manager Infrastructure, Development and Works		
Responsible Officer:	Planning and Regulatory Services Manager		
Functional Area:	Customer Service		
Introduction & Background	The West Wimmera Shire will allow the safe collection of fire wood from roads sides under its control (local Roads) for private (heating and cooking purposes) use only.		
Purpose & Objectives	<div>1. Through the allocation of permits, allow residents access to fallen timber on roadsides for personal heating and cooking uses.</div> <div>2. To reduce the fire hazard fuel loading on its road sides.</div> <div>3. Ensure that trees (live or dead) are not unnecessarily cut down/fallen for fire wood.</div> <div>4. Provide safe but effective controls on fire wood collection which does not impede on the use of the roadway by road users.</div> <div>5. To maintain sustainable control over the quantity of wood collected from its roadsides.</div> <div>6. Ensure that the collector meets their Occupational Health & Safety obligations and that of the travelling public.</div>		
Definitions	<div>Resident:</div> <div>Person or Persons with proof of residency within West Wimmera Shire Council</div>		
Policy Details			
1.	Responsibilities of Applicant		
	It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they comply with all permit conditions.		



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2.	<p>Permit Conditions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) No fire wood is to be collected for 'commercial purposes' from 'Local Roads' within West Wimmera Shire municipal district. 2) No standing trees (dead or alive) are cut down and removed. 3) That Shire residents be limited to three cubic metres per permit and a maximum of three permits per calendar year per household. 4) That non-residents are not eligible. 5) The permit is applicable to local council roads only under its control and shall name the roads that the timber is to be collected from. 6) During the 'fire restriction period' the permit holder shall also have on hand a water fire extinguisher/knapsack. 7) No fire wood is to be collected on days of Total Fire Ban. 8) The collection vehicle/trailer or combination thereof shall be parked in such a way as not to impede the flow of traffic. 9) All loads to be made secure prior to leaving the collection area. 10) This permit is not valid on any road under the control of VicRoads and includes any 'A', 'B' & 'C' class road. 11) This permit is not valid on any road under the control of Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning or Parks Victoria who control bush land reserves and National/State Parks. 12) That no collection occur on that part of the Dergholm – Powers Creek Rd where signs indicate "Vegetation Offset Area"
3.	<p>Victorian Police</p> <p>Council will refer any permit holder suspected of breaking permit conditions to the Police.</p> <p>Council will refuse a permit to any resident at VicPol's request.</p>

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 17/03/11	Minute Book Page _____	RecFind 11/003035
Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 16/07/15	Minute Book Page 31431	RecFind 15/002904
	Ordinary Meeting 19/07/17	Minute Book Page	RecFind



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COUNCIL POLICY			
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY		Policy No:	
		Adopted by Council:	18 June 2015
		Next review date:	
Senior Manager:	General Manager Corporate & Community Services		
Responsible Officer:	General Manager Corporate & Community Services		
Functional Area:	Corporate & Community Services		
Introduction & Background	West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to engaging with our community. We recognise that community engagement is an inseparable part of our role as a Council (Local Government Act 1989, Sect 3D)		
Purpose & Objectives	The objective of the Community Engagement Policy is to clearly define the context of engagement so as to effectively plan and resource engagement with our community.		
Policy Details			
1.	Purpose		
	Council should clearly define the purpose any community engagement activities before planning, undertaking and reviewing engagement.		
2.	Planning		
	When planning community engagement activities Council shall consider the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target audience• Complexity of engagement required• Methodologies available• Measurement of outcomes		
3.	Methodologies and Inclusiveness		
	When implementing community engagement activities Council will seek to use such methodologies which include as broad and diverse a spectrum of community members as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, physical interaction and social media where appropriate.		



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4.	Communication and Feedback
	When engaging with our communities Council shall be open to two way communication and provide feedback where appropriate in a timely manner.
5.	Advertising and Timeliness
	Council shall give public notice and advertise all community engagement activities in line with the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> . All community engagement activities shall be undertaken in a suitable timeframe with reference to the target audience.
6.	Review and evaluation
	Council shall review of all community engagement activities at the end of those activities and undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the community engagement activities, taking into consideration the initial planned expectations of the engagement program.



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Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 18 June 2015	Minute Book Page 30672	RecFind 15/002327
Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 19/07/17	Minute Book Page	RecFind



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COUNCIL POLICY	
RATE RECOVERY AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY	Policy No:
	Adopted by Council: [date]
	Next review date:
Senior Manager:	Director Corporate and Community Services
Responsible Officer:	Rates Coordinator
Functional Area:	Corporate Services
Introduction & Background	<p>The West Wimmera Shire Council raises rates and charges against properties in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 ("the Act") and provides a number of options through which payments can be made.</p> <p>Council is committed to the timely recovery of rates and charges in order to ensure adequate funding of the ongoing services and capital work projects it provides for community benefit, and to fulfil its broader business management and corporate governance responsibilities.</p> <p>In the case of the recovery of overdue amounts, Council may avail itself of the options under Sections 180 and 181 of the Act. These recovery methods include legal action and ultimately the sale of the property in question should the amount owing satisfy criteria contained in this policy.</p>
Purpose & Objectives	<p>The key objectives of the Rate Recovery and Financial Hardship Policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to provide clear parameters to Council, Council Staff and the Debt Recovery Contractor to allow the effective and consistent recovery of overdue rates and charges; and to provide assistance to ratepayers experiencing financial hardship who are unable to make payments through the standard options provided. to work with affected ratepayers to implement an acceptable resolution for both parties. All of our customers are to be treated with dignity and respect, and sensitivity is required and an absence of value judgements is necessary, when working with customers experiencing financial hardship. Council has a social obligation to ensure that its vulnerable customers are treated fairly and that our actions will not add to the customer's burden.



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Policy Details	
1.	<p>1. POLICY STATEMENT</p> <p>The following key strategies may be used to achieve the policy objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue rate notices detailing amounts owing, due dates and payment methods available, issue courtesy reminder notices prior to the lump sum payment date and issue final notices following payment due dates; • Instigate legal action if the amount owing satisfies criteria contained in this policy; • Consider the sale of the property for significant debts where other recovery action has failed if the amount owing satisfies criteria contained in this policy; • Consider applications from ratepayers to deviate from the standard payment options by entering into Special Payment Arrangements, and where the ratepayer is experiencing financial hardship consider applications under Section 170 and 171A of the Act. <p>1.1 Standard Payment Options</p> <p>Ratepayers can avail themselves of one of the following standard payment options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lump sum payable on or before February 15 in accordance with Section 167(2B) of the Act; 2. Four instalments payable on or before the last day of September, November, February and May in accordance with Section 167(2) of the Act; <p>1.2 Late Payment Penalty Interest</p> <p>Interest will be charged on all amounts that are overdue in accordance with Section 172 of the Act at the rate set under the Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983.</p> <p>1.3 Recovery of Overdue Rates</p> <p>Where ratepayers do not make their payments in line with one of the standard options available and there is no approved special payment arrangement or approved financial hardship application action will be taken to recover the money owing to Council as follows:</p>



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1.3.1 Lump Sum Payments

Following the date set for payment under section 167 (2B) of the Act, a final notice requesting payment within 14 days will be issued for all properties where the amount owing is equal to or greater than the amount shown under item 1 of the schedule to this policy.

Failure to respond to the final notice (by making payment in full or requesting a suitable Special Payment Arrangement) will result in the matter being referred to Council's Debt Recovery Contractor who will send a Solicitor's letter demanding payment within 14 days. This demand letter will only be sent where the amount owing is equal to or greater than the amount shown under item 2 of the schedule to this policy.

Those ratepayers who fail to respond to the Solicitor's 14 Days demand letter (by making payment in full or requesting a suitable Special Payment Arrangement in accordance) will be referred to Council's Debt Recovery Contractor for legal proceedings to be commenced. This action will only be commenced for those ratepayers where the amount owing is equal to or greater than the amount shown under item 3 of the schedule to this policy as the cost of legal action is significant and is charged to the ratepayer. Once a debt has been placed in the hands of Council's Debt Recovery Contractor all negotiations with the ratepayer will be handled by them.

A Complaint is then prepared and lodged with the Magistrates Court for issue. Once the Complaint is lodged with the Court the associated legal costs become chargeable. Once the Complaint is issued by the Court it is then served on the ratepayer who must within 21 days from the date of service:

1. Pay the claim in full plus costs; or
2. Enter into a Special Payment Arrangement; or
3. Lodge a completed Notice of Defence with the Court (thereby giving notice of their intention to dispute the claim).

If, at the expiration of the 21 days, the ratepayer has failed to carry out any of the above, an application will be made to the Court for an Order against the ratepayer for the amount of the debt plus costs. Once an Order has been made the following execution proceedings to recover the debt will be considered depending on the history of the ratepayer:

1. Summons for Oral Examination (ratepayer is interviewed by the Clerk of Courts regarding their financial situation and intentions in relation to repaying the debt);
2. Letter to mortgagee (a Court Order is not necessary but this action would normally only be taken after a debtor has failed to respond to an order being obtained);
3. Rent Demand (on the tenant of a rented property);



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4. Sale of property

1.3.2 Four Instalments

Where rates remain unpaid 14 days after the final date for payment of the fourth instalment, recovery of the overdue rates may be instigated.

1.4 Special Payment Arrangements

Where a ratepayer is unable to make their payments by any of the standard options available under section 3 of this policy, a Special Payment Arrangement may be entered into. These arrangements can be made at any time during the recovery process but are subject to the following conditions:

1. All requests for Special Payment Arrangements are to be made in writing by the ratepayer;
2. Penalty Interest in accordance with section 1.3 of this policy will continue to accrue on all overdue amounts;
3. Any default in the terms of the Special Payment Arrangement may, without further notice, result in legal action being instigated.
4. Council will be flexible regarding the type of arrangement entered in order to best suit the ratepayer's circumstance, but as a minimum payments, over a 12-month period must cover the annual rate charge and any penalty interest charged. Ratepayers who are unable to make this minimum repayment should be assessed in accordance with the financial hardship provisions contained in this policy.

2.

1.5 Financial Hardship

Under section 170 of the Act, a person may apply to have the whole or part of any payment of a rate or charge deferred for a specified period. Council can grant that application, absolutely or subject to conditions, if it considers that payment would cause hardship to the applicant.

Under section 171A of the Act, a person suffering financial hardship may make application to Council for a waiver of the whole or part of any rate, charge or interest. Council may grant that application.

Where Ratepayers are unable to make their rate payments on time or at all, they can make application for deferral or waiver. If Council is satisfied that any applicant will suffer financial hardship, consideration will be given to deferral or waiver (or a combination of both).

The intent of this section of the policy is that any benefit granted is not meant to be an



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ongoing benefit, but is to give the applicant time to reassess their financial situation.

Generally, it is Council's policy position that some form of assistance will only be considered:

1. For a property used primarily for residential purposes or land classified as farm land, in circumstances where the applicant lives on the property and it is his or her sole or principal place of residence;
2. If the applicant establishes that he or she derives a low income (for example, is receiving a pension or unemployment benefits) by completing an application for hardship and deferment showing relevant financial details (including Income, Expenditure, Assets and Liabilities);
3. The current Capital Improved Value ("CIV") of the property in respect of which assistance is sought is less than or equal to the current average residential rating valuation. If the property is classified as farm land the CIV will be assessed as part of the overall financial position of the applicant in line with the next point; and
4. If considered necessary by Council, the applicant has attended an interview with a Financial Counsellor, where an application for hardship has been completed showing relevant financial details (including income, expenditure, assets and liabilities).

If an application is successful, generally the outcome will be that no interest will be charged or legal action taken in respect of any outstanding rates and charges for the duration of the period for which the application is made (generally 12 months).

1.5.1 Special Circumstances

Council acknowledges that special circumstances may exist where the applicant does not meet one or more of the above conditions. For example, where a large amount has been levied for a Special Charge Scheme or where the applicant is suffering from ill health or injury.

Where special circumstances exist and not all the above conditions are met, the application is still able to be approved at the discretion of the Manager Finance and Rates Coordinator.

1.5.2 Assistance Provided

Generally, if an application for deferral or waiver is made, and it is decided to provide a form of assistance, the assistance will take the following form:

1. No further interest will be charged on the outstanding rates for a period of 12 months from the date of application;



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. No legal action for the recovery of the outstanding rates will take place during the 12 month period; 3. Rate repayments are to be made over the 12 months to reduce the outstanding rates and therefore take advantage of the interest free period; 4. At the end of the 12 months the applicant will need to reapply if further assistance is required. <p>Again, special circumstances may justify a different form of assistance being made available.</p>
3.	<p>1.6 Sale of Property</p> <p>In addition to the debt recovery procedures available through the legal system, under Section 181 of the Act, Council has the power to sell property where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are rates and charges which are more than three years overdue; and 2. There is no current arrangement for the payment of the overdue rates and charges; and 3. There is a Court order requiring the payment or part-payment of the overdue rates and charges. <p>This action may be taken if the following criteria is satisfied, after giving regard to the ratepayer's debt repayment record and ability to repay the debt, their age, state of health and family situation:</p> <p><u>1.6.1 Vacant Land</u></p> <p>If land is vacant and the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 4 of the schedule to this policy.</p> <p><u>1.6.2 Improved Commercial and Industrial Land</u></p> <p>If a property is rated as Commercial or Industrial land and the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 5 of the schedule to this policy</p> <p><u>1.6.3 Residential Land</u></p> <p>If a property is a residential dwelling occupied by the owner and the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 6 of the schedule to this policy.</p> <p>If a property is a residential dwelling, not occupied by the owner (for instance a rental or investment property), and the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 7 of the schedule to this policy.</p> <p><u>1.6.4 Farm Land</u></p>



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	<p>If a property is rated as Farm Land with a residential dwelling occupied by the owner and the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 8 of the schedule to this policy.</p> <p><u>1.6.5 Other Land</u></p> <p>For all other land if the total amount owing is greater than the amount shown under item 9 of the schedule to this policy.</p>																																	
4.	<p>1.7 Review</p> <p>The Policy will be reviewed every three years with the exception of the dollar thresholds contained in the schedule to the policy. These dollar thresholds must be reviewed, and may be amended, annually by Council's Director Corporate Services. Any amendment must be the subject of notice to Councillors.</p>																																	
5.	<table><tr><th colspan="3">RATE RECOVERY AND HARDSHIP POLICY – SCHEDULE</th></tr><tr><th>Item</th><th>Rate Recovery and Hardship Policy Section</th><th>Amount</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Amount owing before issue of final notice</td><td>\$250</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Amount owing before issue of solicitor letter</td><td>\$500</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Amount owing before issue of Magistrates Court Complaint</td><td>\$1,700</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Amount owing before land can be sold</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr></table>	RATE RECOVERY AND HARDSHIP POLICY – SCHEDULE			Item	Rate Recovery and Hardship Policy Section	Amount	1	Amount owing before issue of final notice	\$250	2	Amount owing before issue of solicitor letter	\$500	3	Amount owing before issue of Magistrates Court Complaint	\$1,700	4	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000	5	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000	6	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000	7	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000	8	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000	9	Amount owing before land can be sold	\$5,000
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