



**Litchfield Council**

**2020 Community Survey Report**

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## Overview

The Community Survey is conducted annually to provide Council with information to better understand the community's satisfaction in how Council manages services and facilities.

The results of the survey are used in future planning for the municipality.

The objectives of the survey are to:

- Measure importance and satisfaction of Council services and facilities
- Establish benchmarks
- Guide future priorities for Council
- Provide Council with suggestions

The survey was available for community comment for a period of 24 days from 20 August to 13 September 2020 and attracted 215 responses. The survey was promoted via the following:

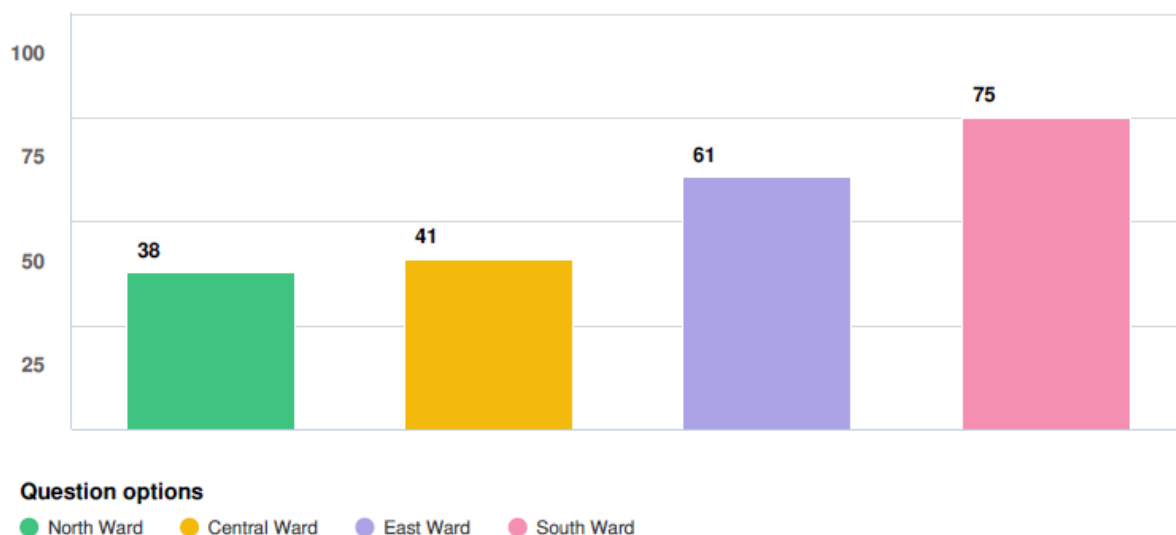
- Your Say Litchfield
- Litchfield Council website
- Facebook
- Emails to stakeholders, community groups and recreation reserves
- Radio interviews
- Litchfield Council Reception
- Taminmin Library
- Market Stall at Freds Pass

This report outlines the findings of the survey and provides some analysis and benchmarking to previous years' results.

## Findings

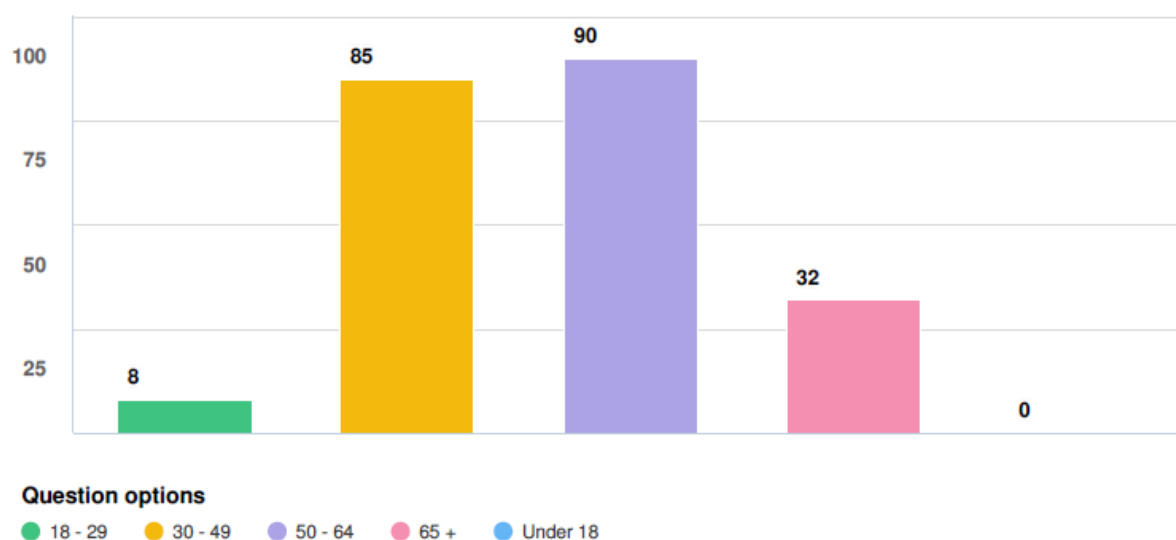
## Respondent profile

As seen in previous years, the majority of respondents (91%) are a resident and landowner, with the largest representation from the South Ward as shown in the table below.



Females residents accounted for 67% of the survey responses.

The table below shows the respondents age range were predominantly between the ages of 30 and 64, with 15% of respondents being over 65.



Just over half of the respondents said they have lived in the Litchfield municipality for more than 15 years (53%), with 12% living in Litchfield less than five years.

Interestingly, the results show that there is a correlation with longevity in the municipality and satisfaction levels. Respondents living in the Litchfield municipality less than five years rated their satisfaction with Council's services higher than those living here more than 15 years.

## Importance of Council services and facilities

Respondents were asked to rank how important Council's services were to them, with one being the most important and 10 being the least important.

For the past two years, maintenance of local roads (potholes, grading, sealing) was ranked as the most important service with Thorak over the past three years ranked the least important.

The table below shows the importance ranking in order for the year 2020 from most important to least important service.

Service	2018*	2019	2020
Maintenance of local roads	3.7	2.72	2.25
Road drainage maintenance	3.6	4.44	4.65
Roadside maintenances	3.4	5.02	4.69
Weed management on Council Land	3.6	4.76	4.72
Waste transfer stations	3.6	4.89	4.77
Recreation Reserves	3.4	5.96	5.20
Waste recycling opportunities	3.5	5.35	5.83
Animal management	3.3	6.20	6.24
Community Library	N/A	7.65	7.95
Thorak Regional Cemetery	2.7	8.02	8.46

\* 2018 survey question did not require a ranking, rather responding to the service importance level as important, very important, not important at all. Ranking has been developed from these responses.

## Satisfaction of Council services and facilities

Using a rating scale of very good to poor, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Council's performance in the services and facilities. An option was provided for respondents to express they are unaware of a particular service. Satisfaction levels were determined based on those who said they were aware of the service.

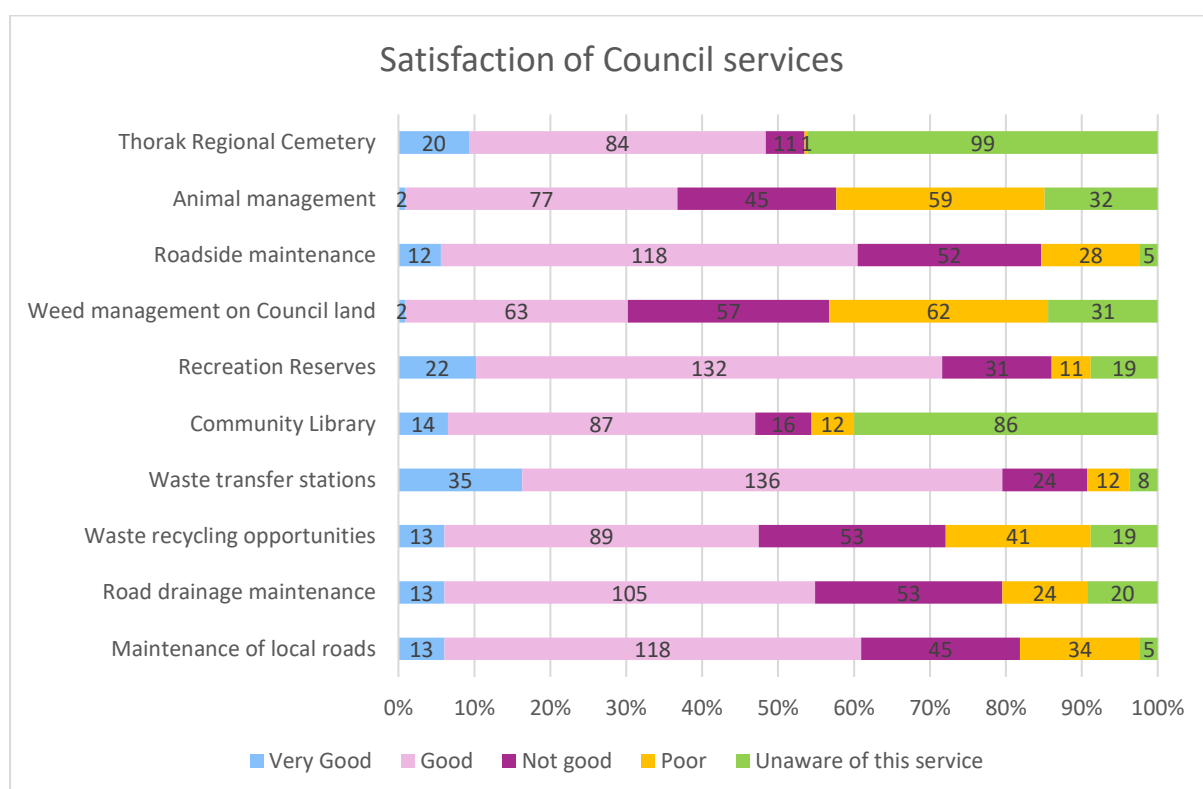
There were a large number of respondents that were unaware that the Community Library and Thorak Regional Cemetery were a Council delivered service. This was also evident in the 2019 survey, shown in the table below, however, it is pleasing that the level of awareness of the service has increased over the past 12 months.

Service	2018*	2019	2020
Community Library	N/A	57%	40%

Thorak Regional Cemetery	N/A	57%	46%
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\* The 2018 survey did not provide the option for respondents to say that they are unaware of a particular service, therefore there are no results for Thorak Regional Cemetery and the Community Library was not a Council service.

The table below shows the satisfaction levels for services and facilities including the figures for the services unknown to respondents.



The Waste Transfer Stations are rated the highest performing service for Litchfield Council with less than .5% of respondents unaware this is a Council service and of the respondents that are aware 83% rate the service as very good or good.

The table below shows the satisfaction of service that are rated as very good or good in order from highest performance to lowest for 2020.

Service	2018	2019	2020
Waste Transfer Stations	80%	81%	83%
Recreation Reserves	81%	83%	79%
Community Library	N/A	92%	78%
Thorak Regional Cemetery	93%	75%	76%
Maintenance of local roads	72%	66%	62%

Roadside maintenance	59%	62%	62%
Road drainage maintenance	69%	62%	61%
Waste recycling opportunities	60%	52%	52%
Animal Management	45%	52%	43%
Weed management on Council land	45%	65%	35%

When comparing the most important service against the lowest performing service, the table below has identified three gaps.

Weed management on Council land and maintenance of local roads were ranked high in importance but low in satisfaction levels. On the other end of the scale, Thorak Regional Cemetery is ranked as the least important service with a very high satisfaction rating.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	
Waste Transfer Stations	4.77	83%	
Recreation Reserves	5.20	79%	
Community Library	7.95	78%	
Thorak Regional Cemetery	8.46	76%	Gap identified
Maintenance of local roads	2.25	62%	Gap identified
Roadside maintenance	4.69	62%	
Road drainage maintenance	4.65	61%	
Waste recycling opportunities	5.83	52%	
Animal Management	6.24	43%	
Weed management on Council land	4.72	35%	Gap identified

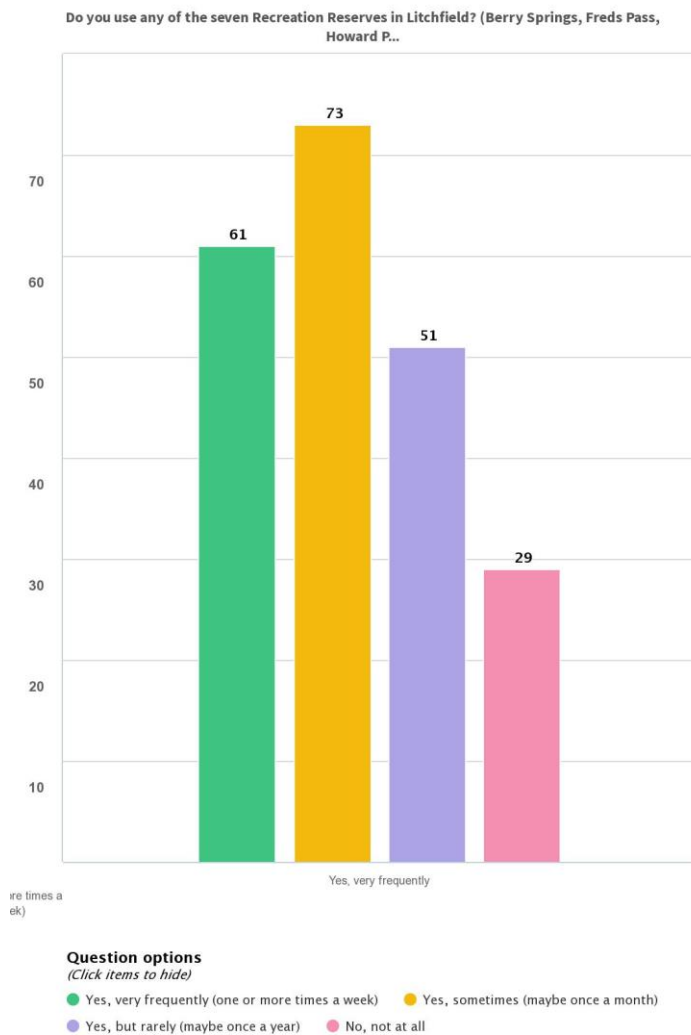
## Customer Service

Respondents were asked to rate the level of service they received if they had been in contact with Council in the past six months. Approximately 44% of respondents said that they had not contacted Council in the past six months. Of the remaining 56% of respondents who said they had contacted Council in the past six months, 46% rated the service as very good or good. This is decrease from 2019 with 62% of respondents rating the service very good or good as shown in the table below.

	2018	2019	2020
Very good or good		62%	46%

## Recreation Reserves

Recreation reserves in the Litchfield municipality are regularly and well utilised. Many respondents, 63%, said that they use one or more of the recreation reserves at least once a month or one or more times a week. Only 14% of respondents said that they don't use the reserves at all.



The table below shows the recreation reserve usage over the three years.



	2018	2019	2020
Attended the reserve at least once a year up to one or more times a week	81%	87%	87%

Respondents said they generally use the recreation reserves for sport, events, markets and socialising.

When asked how Council could improve any of the recreation reserves, below is a sample of the suggestions.



WordItOut

## Safety

Respondents were asked to rank how safe they feel in the Litchfield area, with 67% indicating that they feel quite safe and less than 0.5% said they feel unsafe.



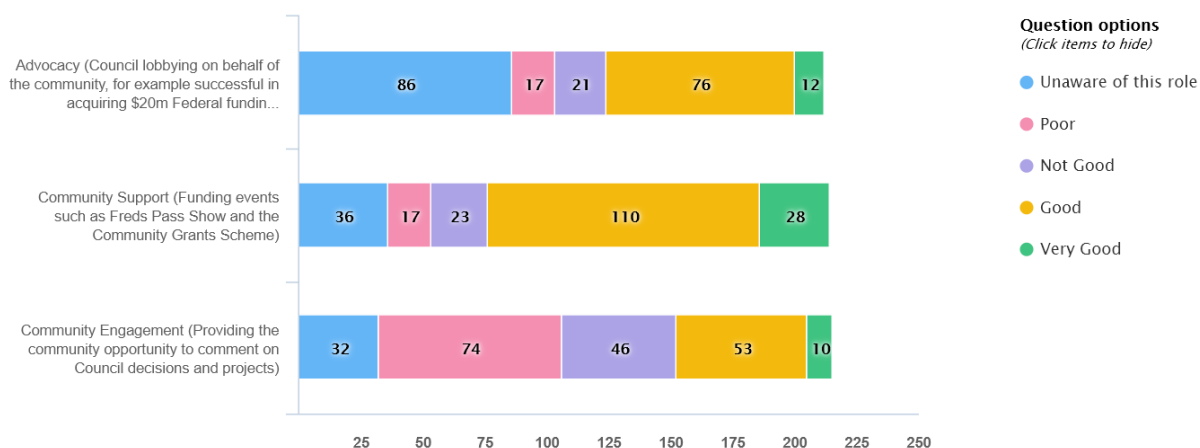
## Litchfield Council

### Satisfaction with Council roles

Using a rating scale from very good to poor, respondents rated Council’s performance in various roles, including advocacy, community support and community engagement. Respondents were able to outline if they were unaware of the role. Satisfaction was determined based on the responses from those who said they were aware of the role.

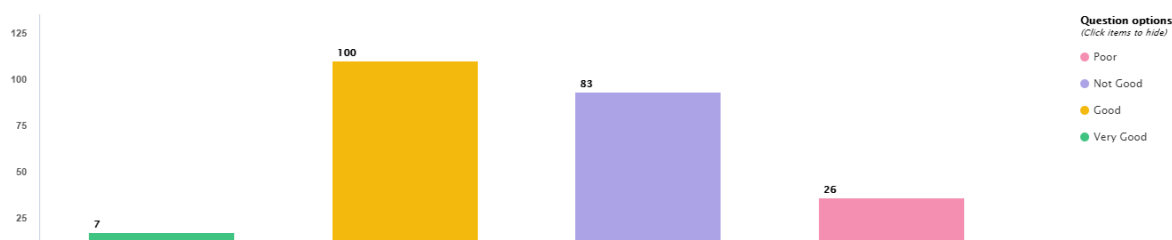
The table below shows that 40% of respondents were unaware that Council lobbies on behalf of the community for funding and support. Of those aware of Council’s role in advocacy 68% said Council was performing very good and good in this area. The recently released Litchfield Council Advocacy Strategy and actions from this Strategy should improve the awareness levels in this area.

Seventy seven percent of respondents think that Council is performing very good or good with supporting the community through events and funding. Only 34% of respondents think that Council is performing very good or good with community engagement.



### Strategic direction

Council’s strategic direction is to provide services and facilities to make Litchfield the best place to live in the Top End. Views on how well Council is contributing to its strategic direction showed 50% of respondents feel Council is doing very good or good and 12% stating that Council was poor in delivering its strategic direction.



## Corporate Communications

Council informed respondents that its communications channels included Facebook, the new website, Your Say, local noticeboards at shopping centre hubs and its new Connecting the Community Newsletter. When asked how well Council was communicating, 52% of respondents said very good or good.

Respondents provided suggestions for how Council could improve in this area. Some suggestions include, more interaction of other Facebook pages, increased promotion of the newsletter and letter drops into post boxes.

With more registrations on Your Say Litchfield, and increased promotion of the second edition of the newsletter will contribute to improved communications as suggested.

## Investment in the community

To gauge sentiment toward living in the Litchfield municipality, Council asked respondents to describe how proud they are to live in Litchfield and what they like the most and the least.

A large number of respondents, 42%, said that they were very proud to live in Litchfield with 38% being somewhat proud.

The table below shows the comparison from this year's sentiment of living in Litchfield against the previous two years of survey results.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Very proud or somewhat proud	81%	68%	80%
Not proud at all	10%	7%	6%

Respondents were asked to provide examples for why they are proud or not proud. One hundred and forty-one respondents skipped this question, with some of the notable comments being:

- Good community spirit – most of the time
- Rural lifestyle is great
- Like the area, room to move
- Accessibility of Council services
- Dangerous for kids using Freds Pass Recreation Reserve walking across the highway
- Same amount of Rangers that were employed years ago, Rangers are understandably too busy to assist
- I feel proud to take visitors to sites like McMinns Lagoon and to the Freds Pass Markets.
- Good community feeling
- This is a lovely area, close to town but still rural
- It's just getting to build up, too busy and noisy

- Berry Springs transfer station is great and well looked after
- Peace and quiet, large block, close to all amenities, rural living
- Poor value and services for rates

When respondents were asked about what they like most about living in the Litchfield municipality, the most common responses were:

- Quiet
- Rural lifestyle
- Space
- Community

When asked what they liked least, the most common responses were:

- Lack of enforcement of By-laws
- Wandering dogs
- Development and overcrowding with smaller block sizes
- Council and the rates for no services
- Quad bikes on roads or road verges

### Overall performance

Council’s overall performance for 2020 has been rated as very good or good by 56% of respondents with 12% rating it as poor.

The table below shows that satisfaction with overall performance remains consistent from last year to this year although it is still below that of 2018.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Overall performance rated as very good or good	64%	55%	56%
Overall performance rated as poor	10%	16%	12%

## Summary

The 2020 Community Survey results show some positive satisfaction levels with satisfaction of Council services and facilities and provided some good feedback around sentiment of living in Litchfield, recreation reserves and communication.

Areas that have identified gaps include weed management, maintenance of local roads and Thorak Regional Cemetery, although the Cemetery has identified a gap in the positive.

Results for Council roles, in particular, advocacy may see a change in the next community survey due to the current work that has happened in this area. The Mango Roads project commencing and being complete before the next survey and the adoption of the Advocacy Strategy that will involve promotion.

The introduction of the community newsletter will be beneficial to the 2021 survey and may provide some improvements in this area.

It is interesting to note, there are many similarities from last year's survey in regard to the most liked and least liked things about living in Litchfield. Rates, dogs wandering, and quad bikes are still very common complaints in the Litchfield municipality.

Overall, the results show that 56% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the performance of Council which has remained consistent over the past two annual surveys.