



Litchfield Council

Community Survey 2018



Introduction



- The following is an analysis of the results of a community survey run by Litchfield Council in early 2018.
- In total, 300 respondents from the council area participated in the survey. The survey covered a range of topics, including:
 - The importance of and satisfaction with the services Council delivers.
 - The importance of and satisfaction with the roles that Council plays.
 - How people feel about living in the Litchfield area.
 - Views on the quality of recreational assets.
 - How safe people feel.
 - Council communications and customer service.
 - Views on the overall performance of council.
- On balance the survey was constructively completed by the community, providing positive and negative feedback.
- A summary of findings against council's strategic plan objectives is provided at the end of this document.

Performance against Council indicators:

From the 2017-18 Municipal Plan



| Safety |
|-----------------------------------|
| Goal: Satisfaction > 70% |
| Result: Satisfaction = 64% |

| Roads |
|-----------------------------------|
| Goal: Satisfaction > 60% |
| Result: Satisfaction = 72% |

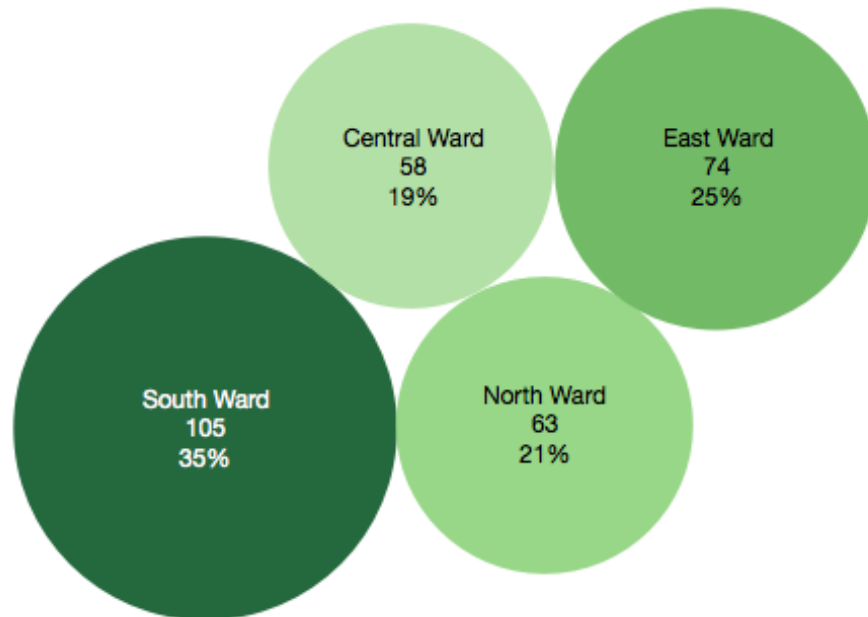
| Services |
|-----------------------------------|
| Goal: Satisfaction > 60% |
| Result: Satisfaction = 64% |

| Open Space |
|-----------------------------------|
| Goal: Satisfaction > 60% |
| Result: Satisfaction = 92% |

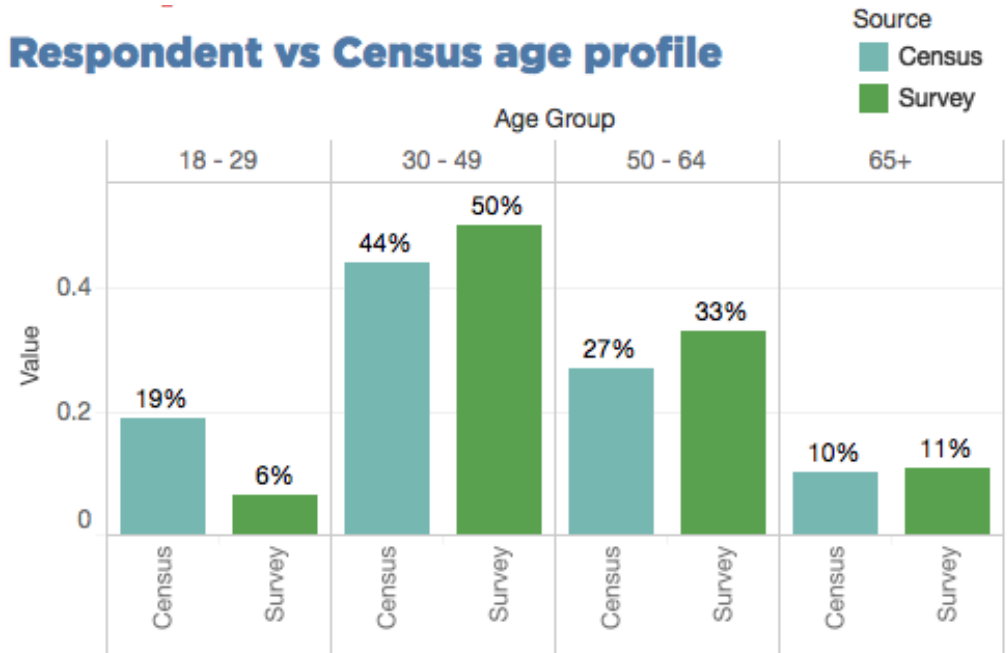
Respondent profile

- 300 responses were collected through Litchfield Council’s engagement website.
- Respondents were evenly distributed across the municipality, with the most coming from the Southern Ward.
- The age profile of respondents was generally consistent with the population of the area (see references) with the sample slightly older than 2016 ABS Census figures.

Ward

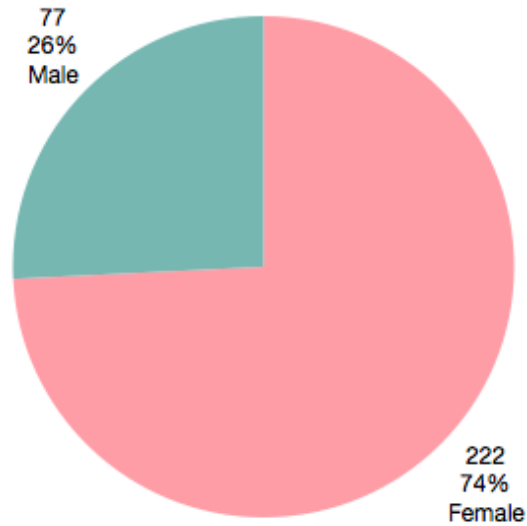


Respondent vs Census age profile

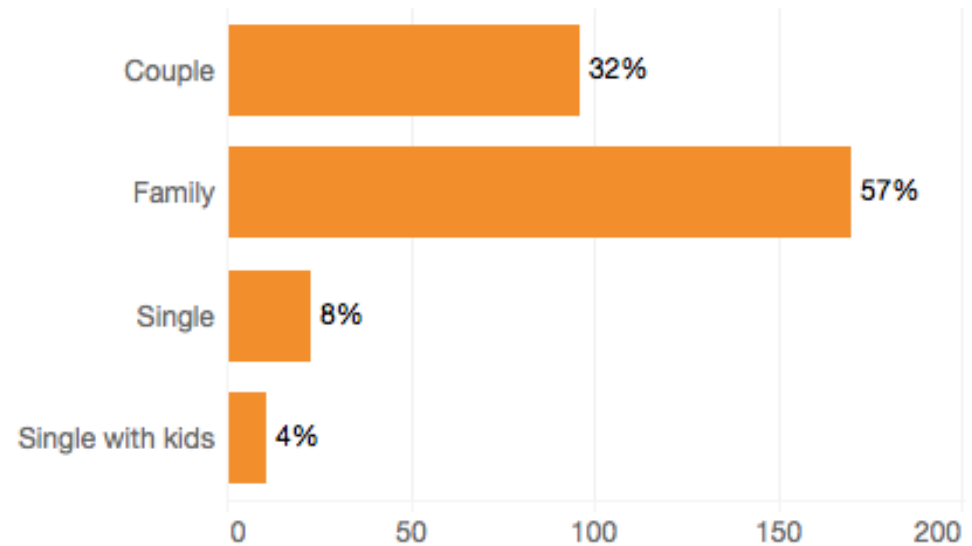


Respondent profile

- 89% of respondents were from couples and families.
- More women (74%) than men (26%) completed the survey. However, the gender breakdown of the Litchfield area given in the 2016 census shows there are more men (59.4%) than women (40.6%) living in the area (ABS 2016 Census).



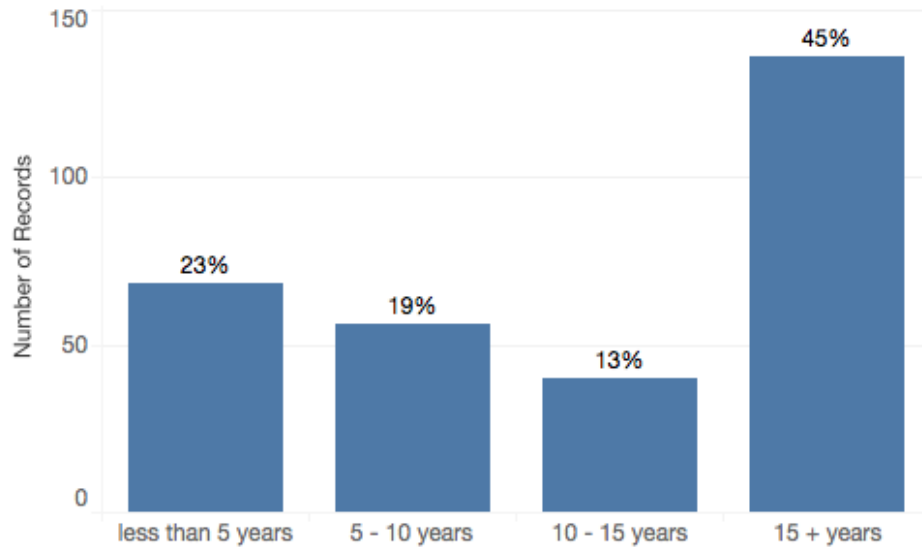
Family type



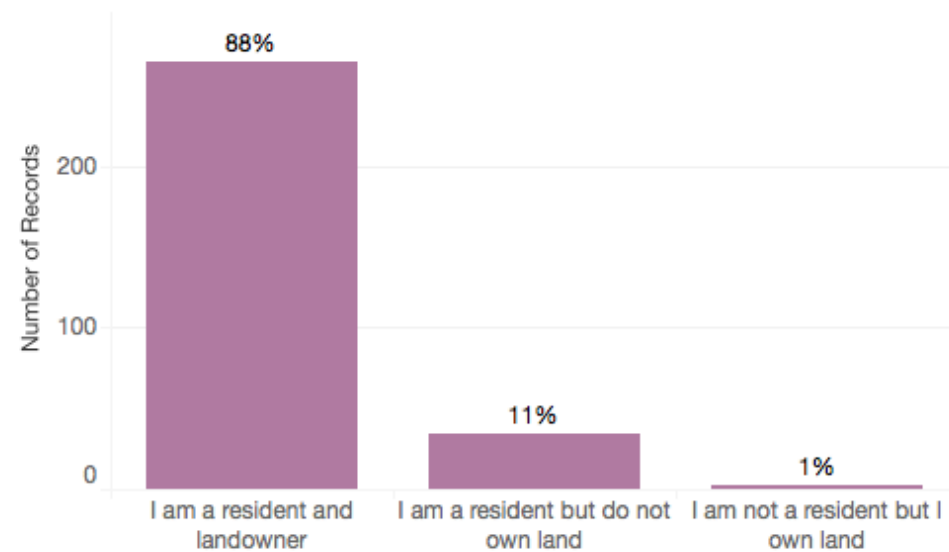
Respondent profile

- The highest number of responses are from people who have lived in the area for longer than 15 years.
- The majority of respondents own their own homes.

How long have you lived in the area?



Status



Importance and satisfaction: Council services



Ratings: Council roles are rated in order of their average 'importance' (green = positive, red = negative)

Observations:

- Most services are considered by respondents to be 'important' (but the variance between the most important and the 8th most important is not great). Respondents could score importance and satisfaction as high as 4, and did rate the top 5 most important services over 3.5
- Most services received a positive satisfaction score relative to their importance, with 'Weed management' having the largest gap between importance and satisfaction. 'Animal management' also received a low satisfaction score, but scored lower for importance.
- Deeper analysis revealed that respondents from the North Ward were slightly less satisfied around roads and waste services.

Services: Average scores

| Category | Importance score | Satisfaction score | Avg. Gap |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Maintenance of local roads | 3.7 | 2.8 | -1.0 |
| Waste transfer stations | 3.6 | 3.0 | -0.6 |
| Weed management | 3.6 | 2.4 | -1.2 |
| Road drainage | 3.6 | 2.8 | -0.8 |
| Waste recycling | 3.5 | 2.6 | -0.9 |
| Recreation reserves | 3.4 | 2.9 | -0.4 |
| Roadside maintenance (e.g. mowing) | 3.4 | 2.6 | -0.7 |
| Animal management | 3.3 | 2.3 | -1.1 |
| Thorak Regional Cemetery | 2.7 | 3.1 | 0.4 |

Importance and satisfaction: Council's roles



Ratings: Council roles were rated in order of their average 'importance' (green = positive, red = negative).

Observations:

- All roles are considered to be important with 'services' and 'engagement' most important, receiving almost the highest score possible (4).
- Three of the top four Council roles ranked by importance received a negative satisfaction score

Roles: Average scores

| Category | Importance score | Satisfaction score | Gap |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Service Delivery (maintaining roads drains recreation reserves waste community development) | 3.9 | 2.7 | -1.12 |
| Community Engagement (keeping the community informed and involved) | 3.7 | 2.3 | -1.40 |
| Advocate (Council lobbying on behalf of the community) | 3.5 | 2.3 | -1.17 |
| Regulate (Council's position to regulate at a local level such as road use, dog controls) | 3.3 | 2.3 | -1.01 |
| Fund (Council funds community activities and events through grants) | 3.2 | 2.6 | -0.62 |
| Partner (partnering with organisations that contribute to making Litchfield a great place to live) | 3.1 | 2.6 | -0.56 |

Importance and satisfaction: Council services



Matrix: Services are on two axes:

'importance' = horizontal
(further right = more important)

'satisfaction' = vertical
(higher = more satisfied)

Observations:

- Respondents are 'satisfied' with all but two services (in green)
- All but one service are considered to be important (>3)
- Weed and animal management have the lowest satisfaction scores
- Waste transfer stations have the highest satisfaction to importance ratio

Council Services: importance vs satisfaction



Importance and satisfaction: Council roles



Matrix: Services are on two axes:

'importance' = horizontal
(further right = more important)

'satisfaction' = vertical
(higher = more satisfied)

Observations:

- Respondents are 'satisfied' with 3 of 6 Council roles
- All services are considered to be important (>3)
- Community engagement is the poorest performer (2nd highest importance and lowest satisfaction)
- Service delivery has the highest satisfaction to importance ratio

Council Roles: importance vs satisfaction

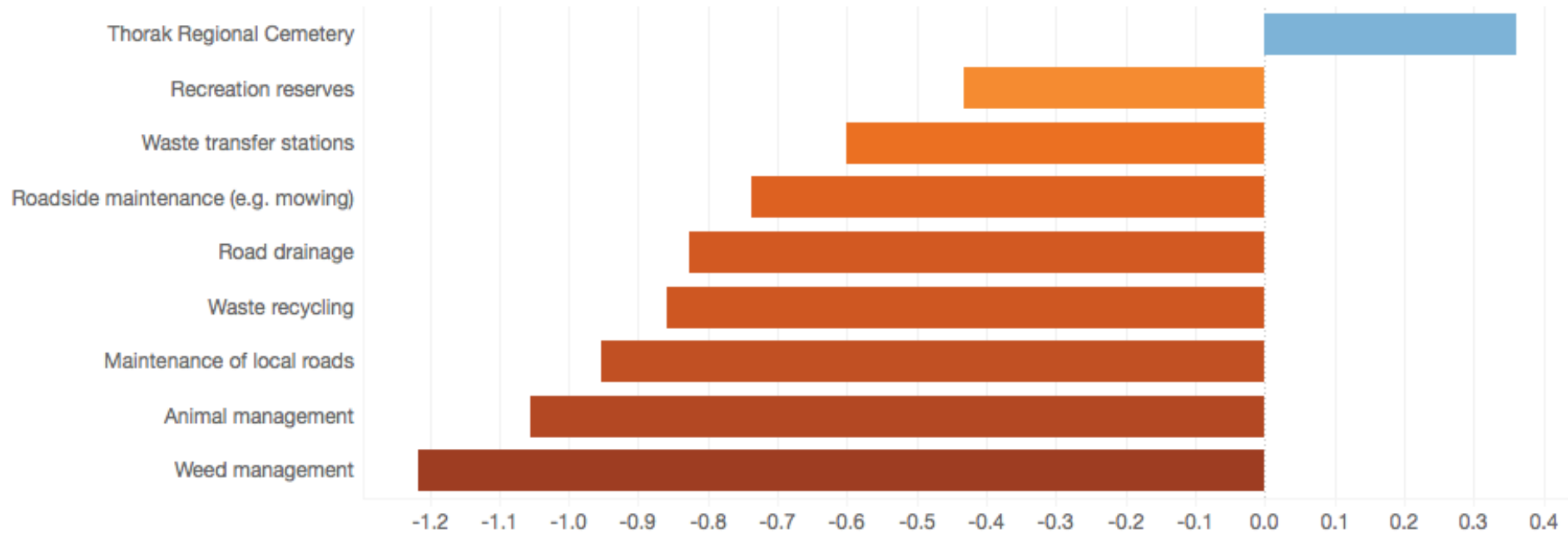


Council Services:

Gap between importance and satisfaction



Services - gap between satisfaction and importance

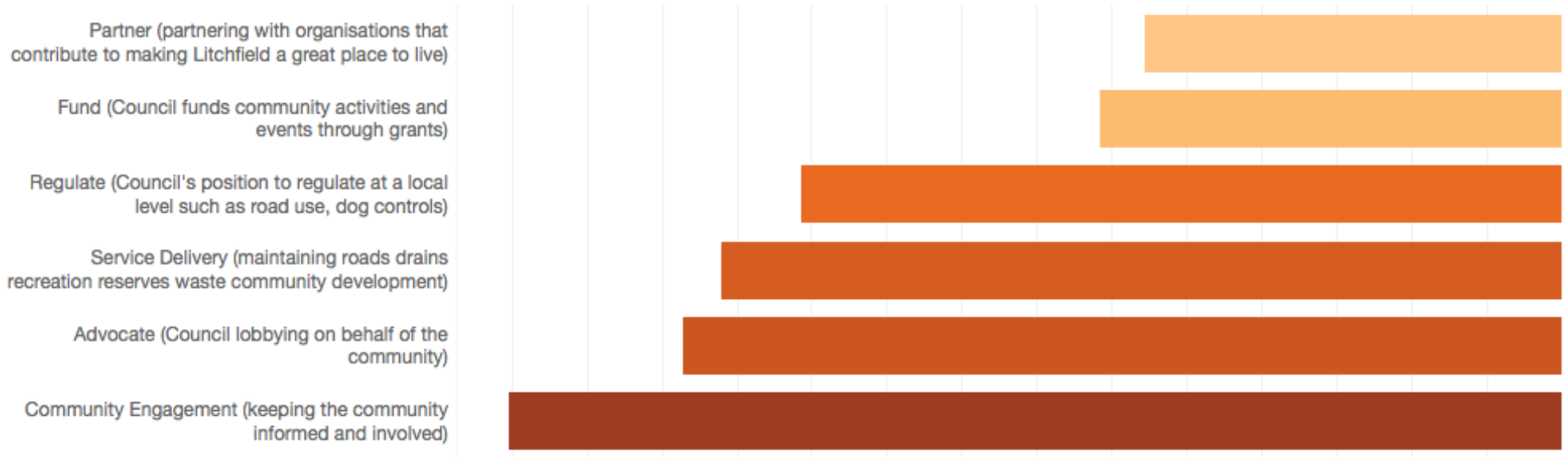


Council Roles:

Gap between importance and satisfaction



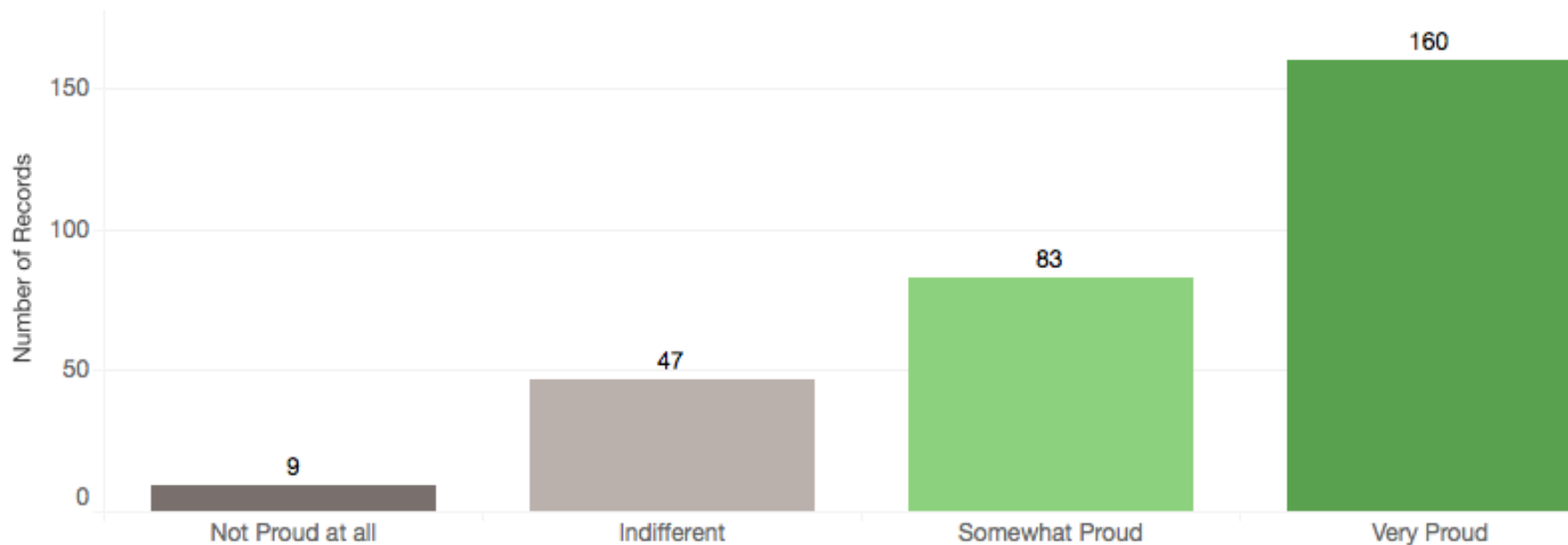
Role - gap between satisfaction and importance



Living in Litchfield

- Very few people (9) report not being proud to live in the Litchfield area
- 243 of the 300 respondents (81%) report to feel at least 'somewhat proud' to live in the area
- A very positive result

How proud are you to live in the Litchfield area



Living in Litchfield



This question prompted some confused responses. There is no correlation between the measure of 'pride' a respondent gave in the previous question and their answer to this question. Rather this has been used as an opportunity to make a 'free comment'.

In order to make sense of the responses, we have applied a measure of sentiment.

Negatives:

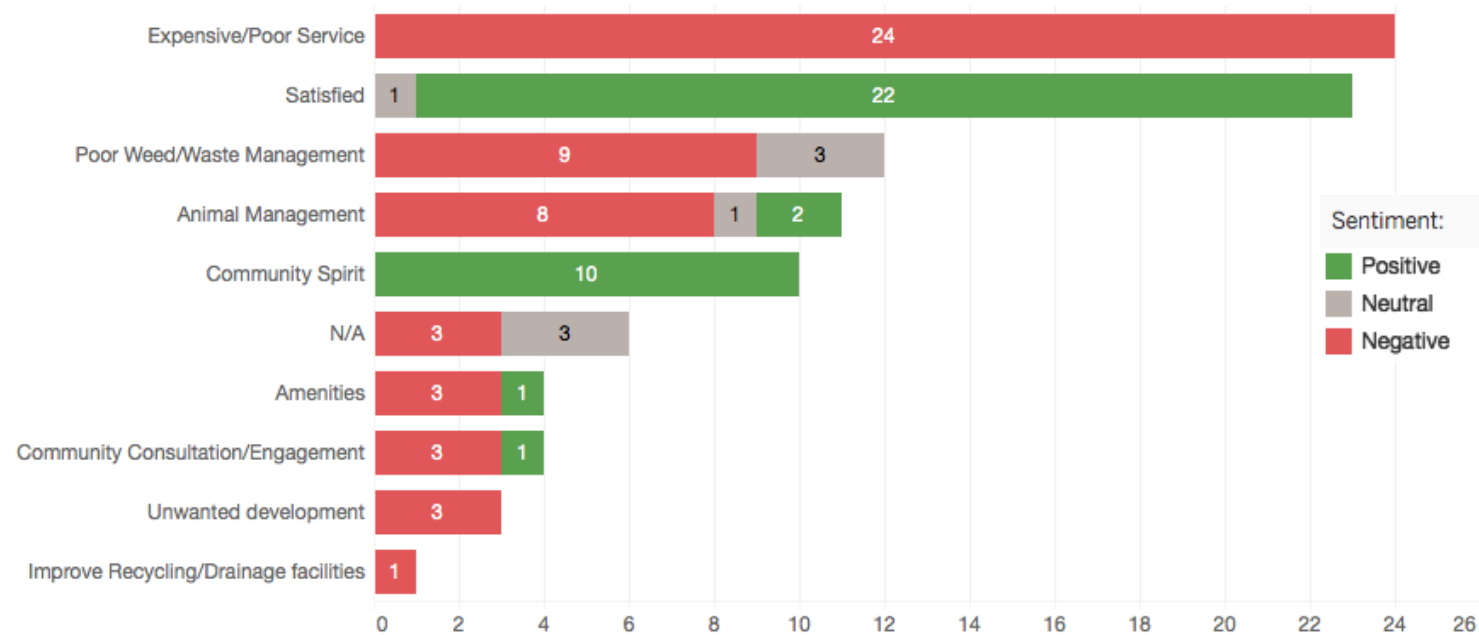
- 24 people complained of high charges and poor Council customer service across a range of issues
- To a lesser extent respondents all had issues with waste, weed and stray dog management
- There were some mentions of too much development, poor communications with Council and lack of amenities

Positives:

- Almost as many people (23) indicated they love living in the area with a range of generally positive comments
- Another group of people (10) specifically mentioned how much they value the community spirit they experience in the region

In all, only a third of respondents answered this question.

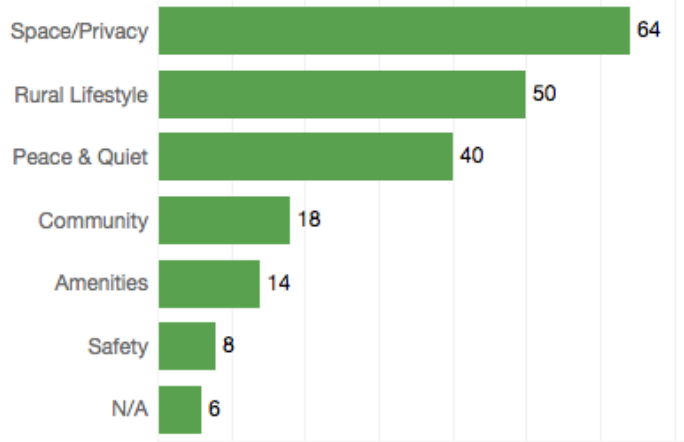
Please feel free to give some examples of the above question: (Why are you proud to live in the area?)



Living in Litchfield



Themes: What do you like most?



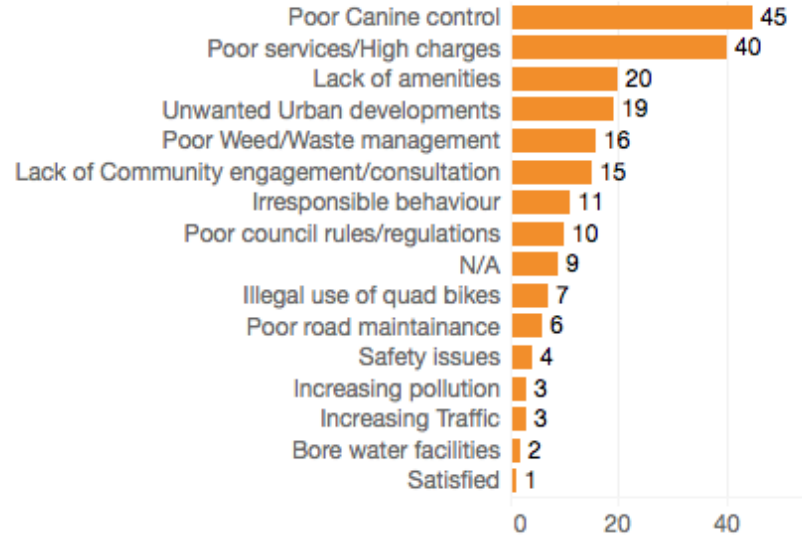
What do people like most? (200 responses)

People who live in Litchfield strongly value the quiet, private space they are accustomed to

What do people like least? (211 responses)

A wide range of qualitative responses were collected. It was difficult to minimise the number of themes to under 12

Themes: What do you like least?



(What do people like least - cont.)

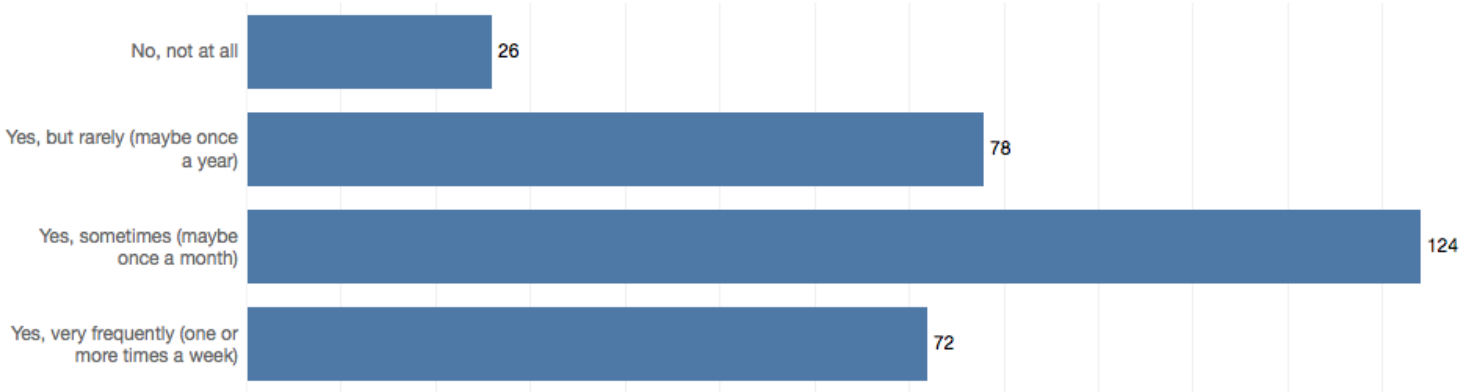
- Despite the extent to which the community members seems to strongly value a peaceful rural lifestyle (left), they also dislike some aspects of life in areas with lower population density (right), including:
 - Expensive goods and services
 - Lack of amenities which could be found in places with higher population densities
- Issues raised in which Council may have more control over include 'canine control', 'weed and waste management' and 'development pressures', although none of these issues were raised in large numbers.

Recreation



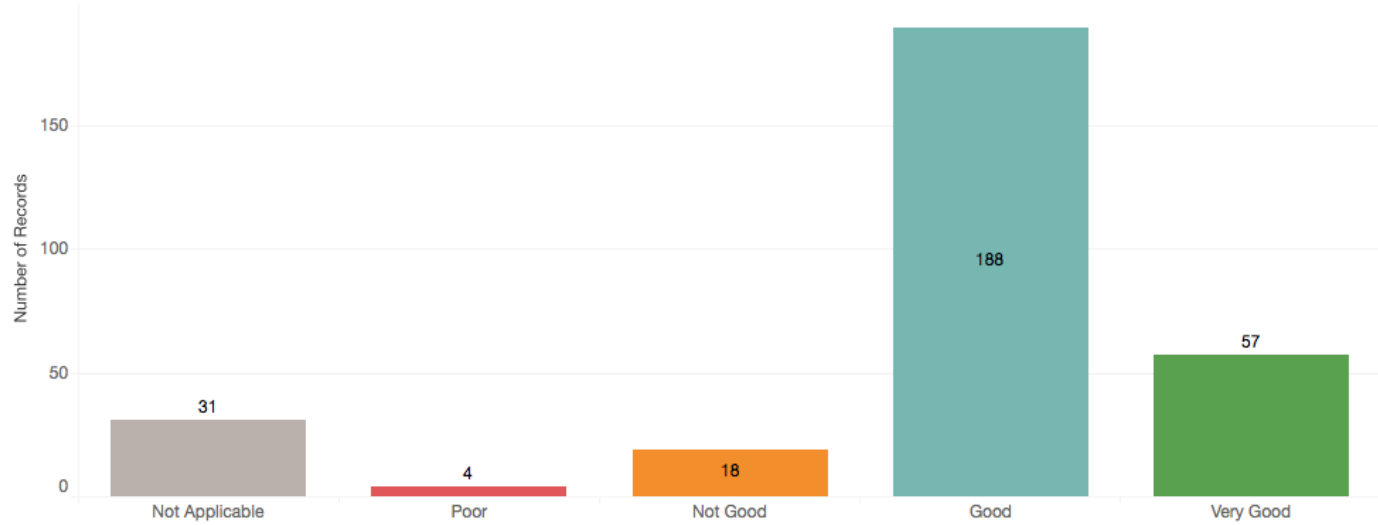
- Nearly all respondents (81%) use recreation assets at some time during the year. The majority use them at least monthly

How often do you use the recreation reserves?



- On the whole, most respondents (92%) believe that Council’s recreational facilities are in good or very good condition

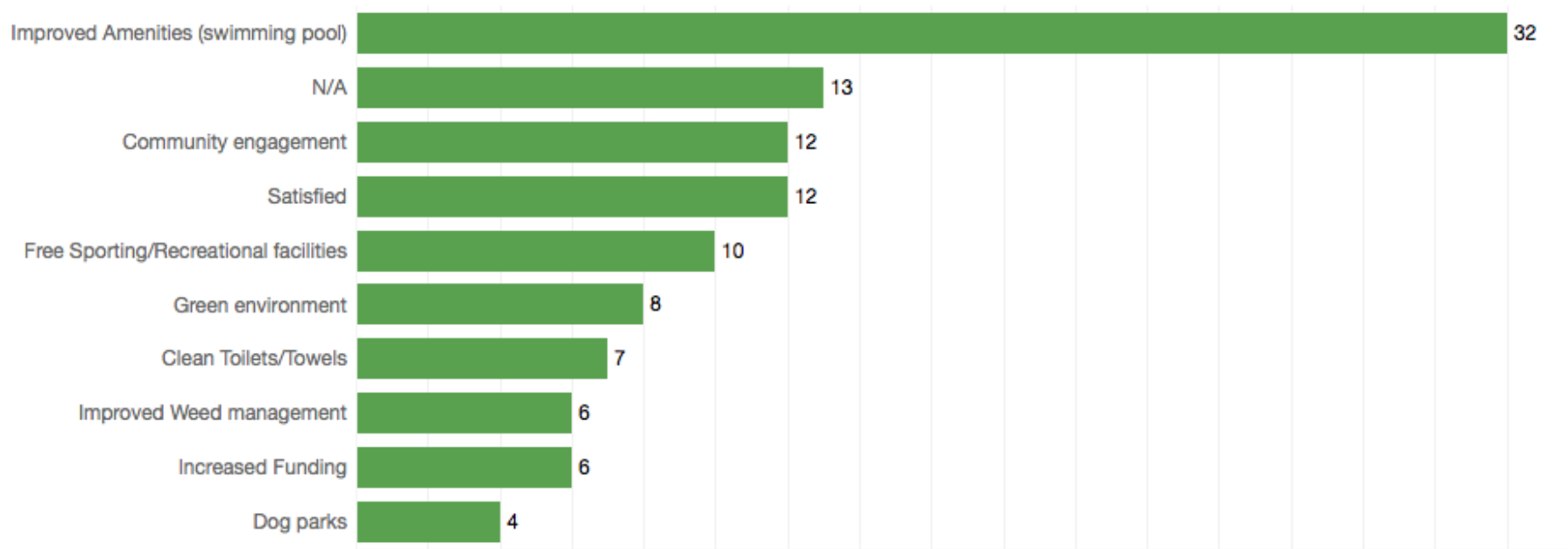
How do you rate the condition of the recreation reserves?



Recreation



Themes: How can council improve any of the recreation reserves?



- More people mentioned 'improved amenities' than any other topic related to this question
- 'Improved amenities' relates to a range of suggested improvements, such as water taps, bins and playgrounds. The most frequently mentioned amenity requested is a new swimming pool
- 'Community Engagement' largely relates to increased events and information about upcoming events
- 'Satisfied' indicates that the respondent indicated they are very happy with the reserves the way they are

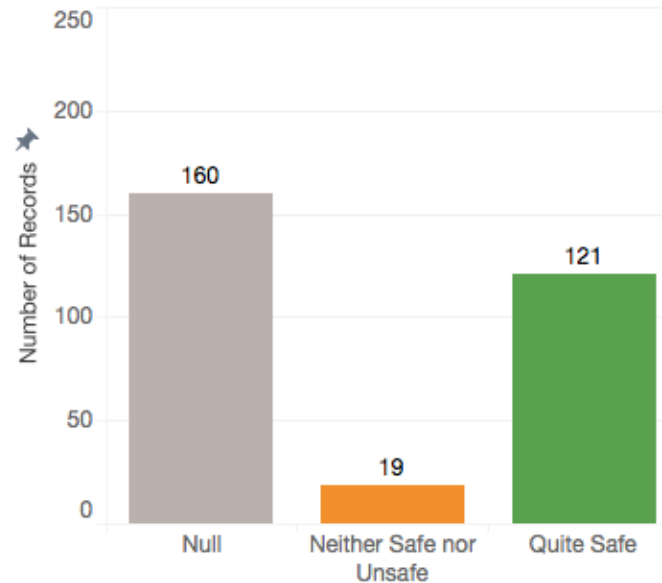
Safety



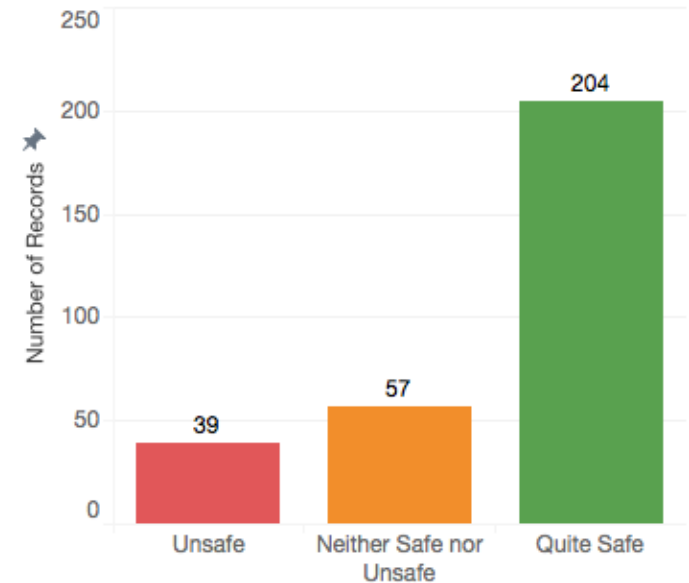
Day time safety concerns

- During the day, either when at home or out in the community, respondents generally indicated that they feel quite safe
- No respondents reported feeling unsafe while in their home during the day (many people did not even answer this question)
- Only a very small number of people (13%) reported they felt unsafe walking in their local area during the day. **90% of these were female.**

At home by yourself during the day?



Walking in you local area alone during the day?



90% of people reporting feeling unsafe while walking in their area during the day are female.

Safety



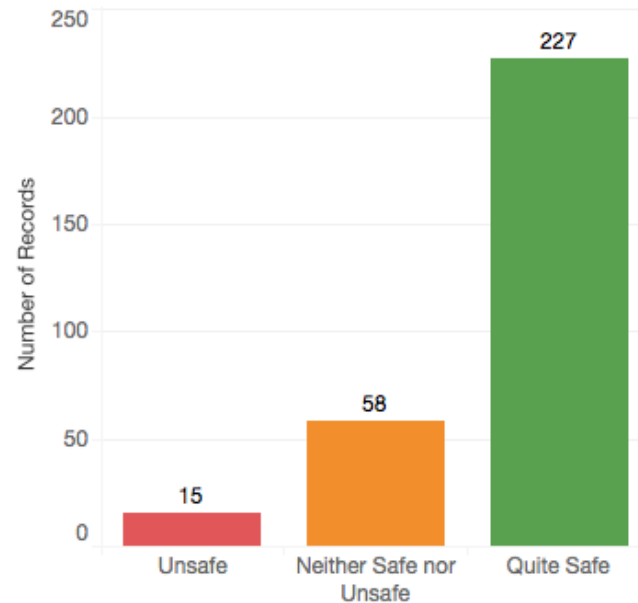
Night time safety concerns

- At night, the majority of people feel safe in their homes (5% report feeling unsafe)

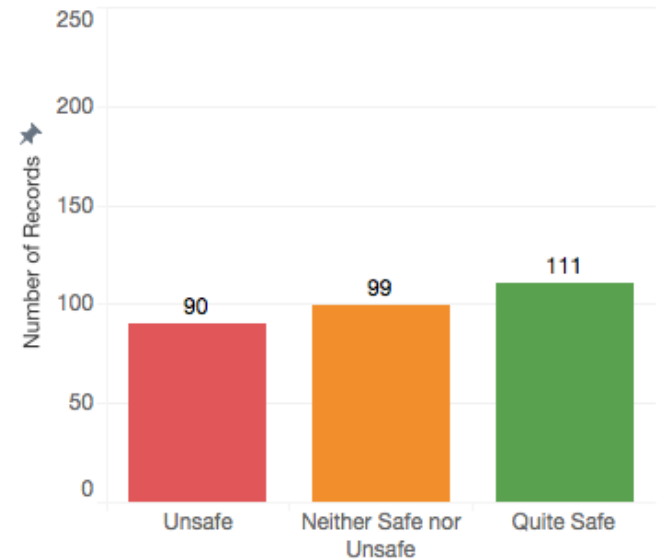
Walking the streets after dark is the issue of most concern

- 37% of people report feeling safe
- 33% are unsure
- 30% feel unsafe
- The response rate for 'unsafe' is highest at night
- The split between responses from male and female respondents is on the following page

At home by yourself after dark?



Walking in your local area alone after dark?



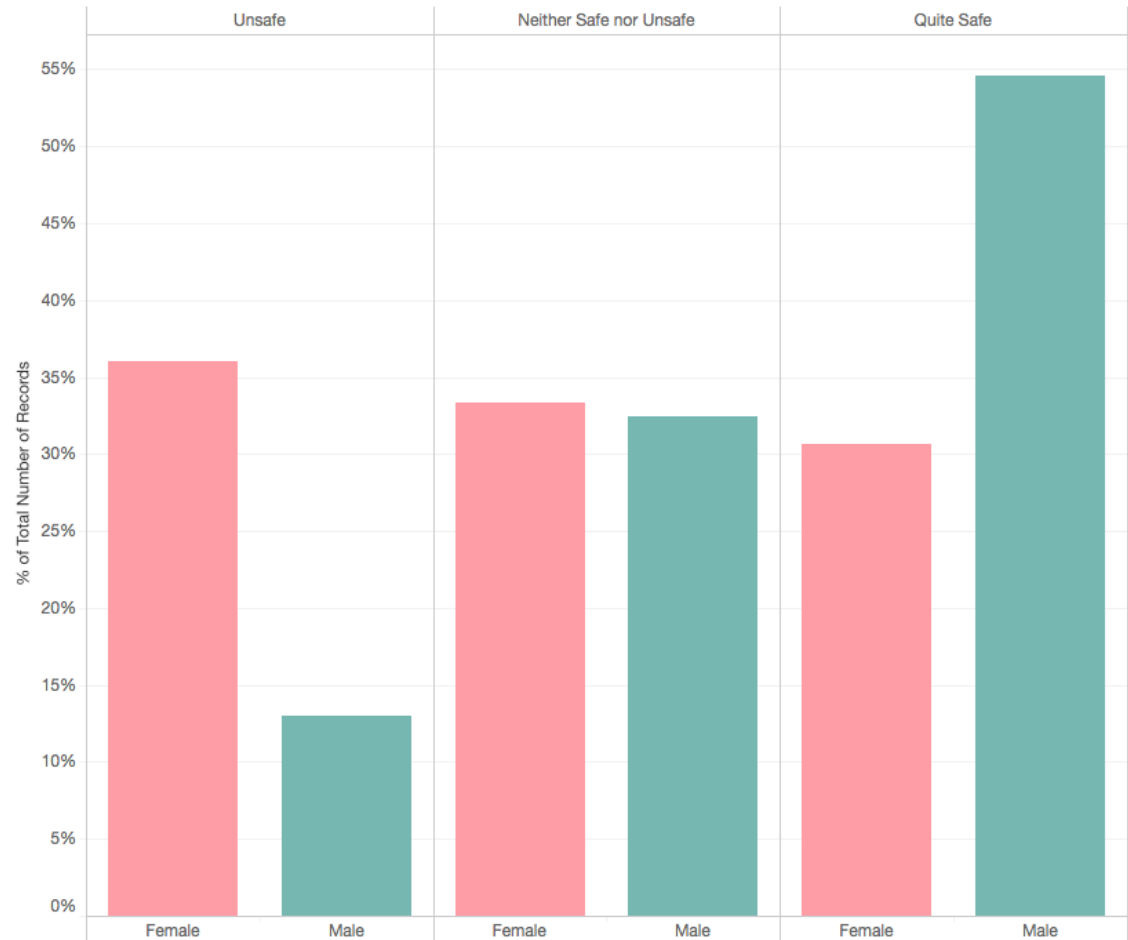
Safety



Specifically regarding walking alone at night

- Across this question, fewer people indicated they feel safe walking at night than any other time of day
- Men are much more likely to respond they feel safe walking at night
- Women are much more likely to respond they feel **unsafe** walking at night
- Both genders equally report they feel neither safe or unsafe
- **This indicates that there is a strong difference between how men and women feel walking at night**

Male and female responses

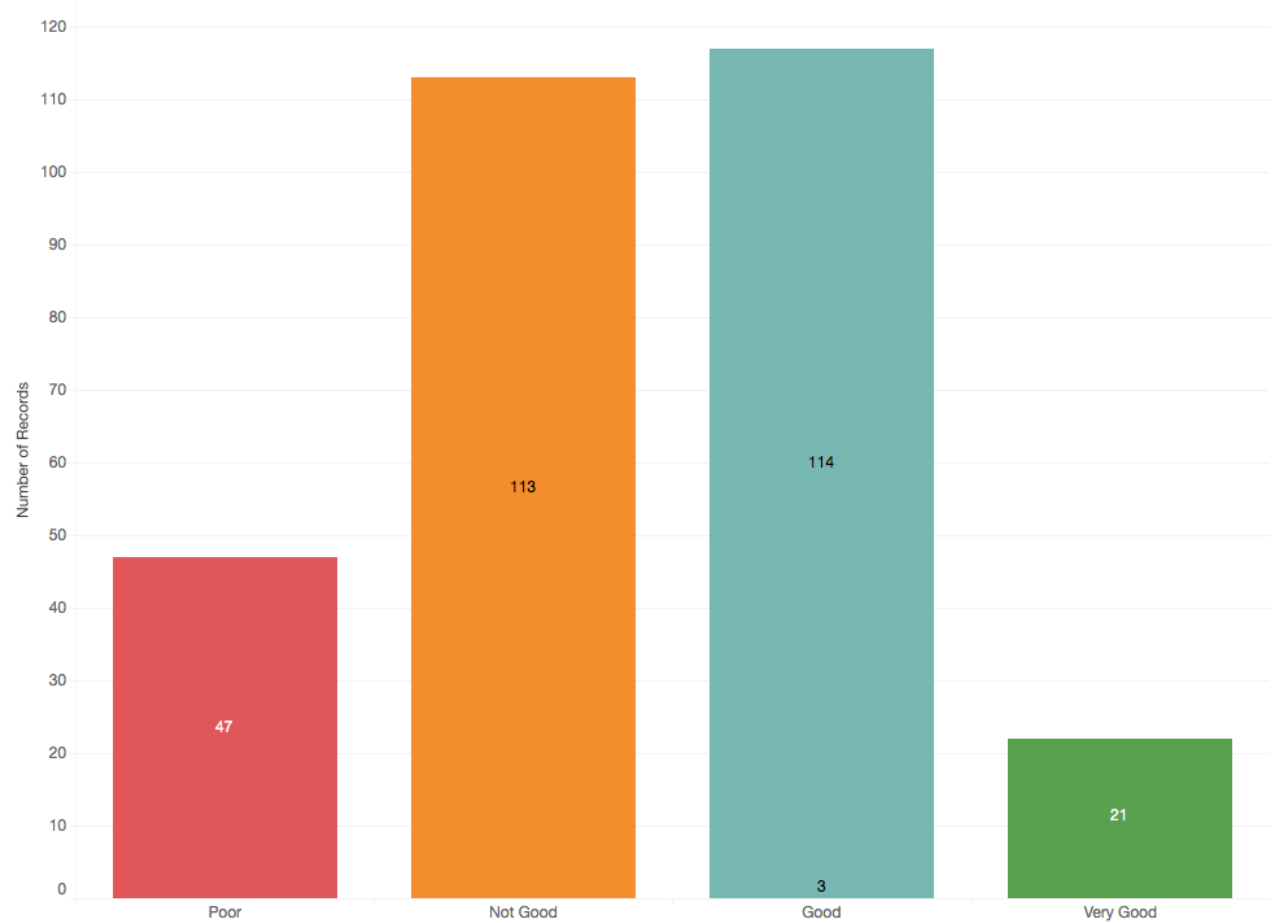


Council Communications



The community is divided regarding Council's performance on communications.

How is council at keeping residents informed of local issues, events and projects?



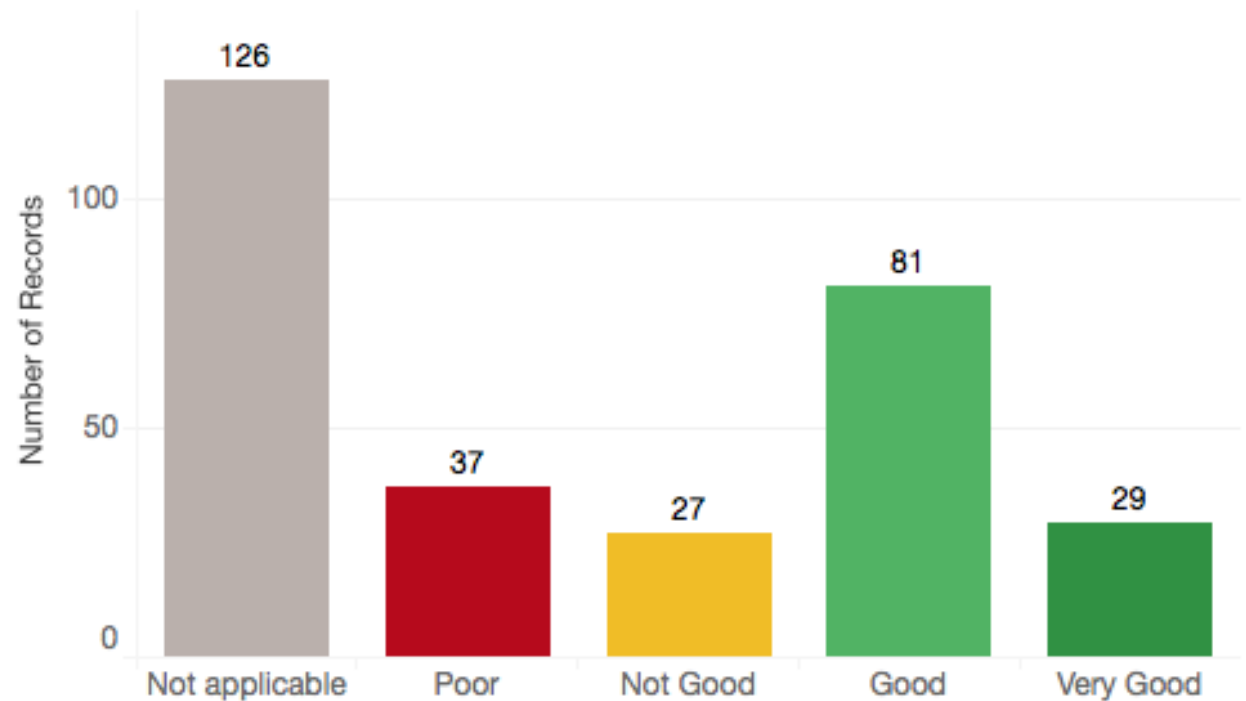
Council Customer Service



If you have contacted council in the last 6 months, please rate your service

While most people did not share an opinion, of those who did, they were more likely to have had a positive Council customer service experience than a negative one.

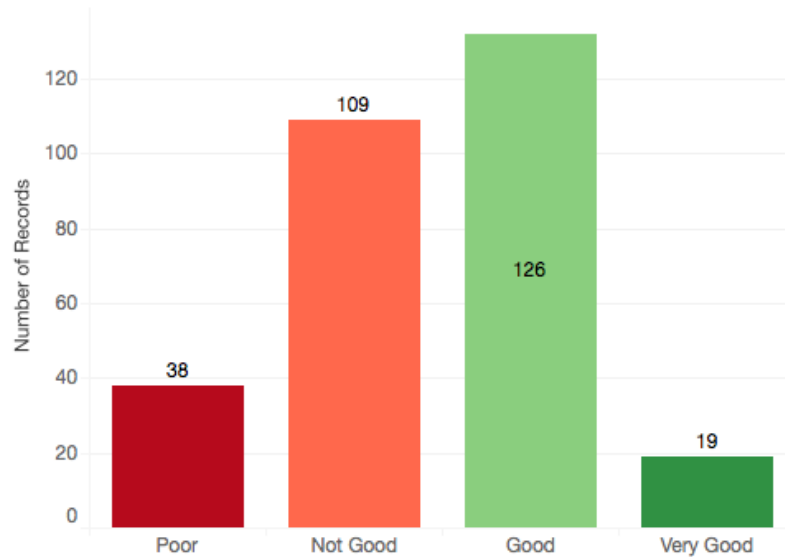
In other parts of the survey there were some complaints about Council customer service consistent with the response rate to this question.



Council Performance

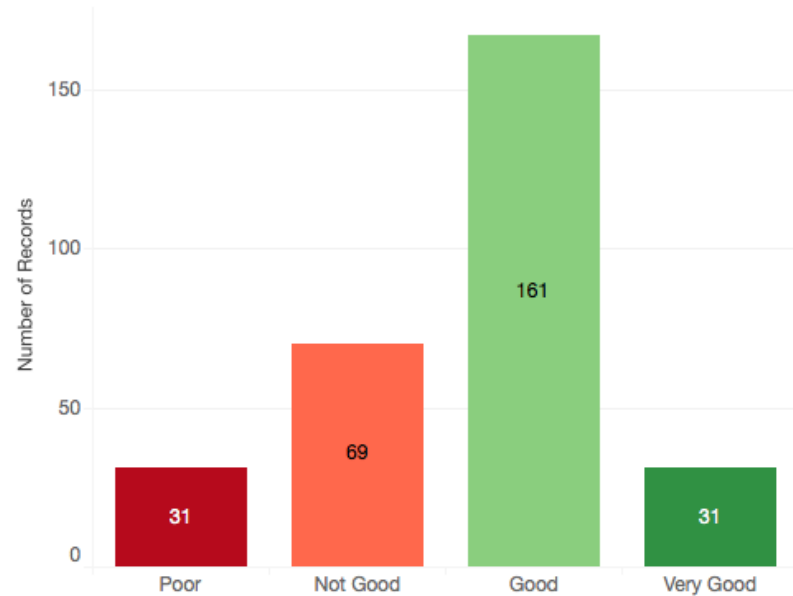


How well is Council contributing to making Litchfield the best place to live in the Top End?



- Respondents are divided on Council's performance on this metric
- Responses were split 50/50 with positive vs negative responses

How do you rate council's overall performance?



- The community is much more positive about Council's overall performance
- 64% indicated a positive response

Council Strategy: Indicators

| |
|------------------------|
| Positive feedback |
| Some good feedback |
| Some negative feedback |
| Investigate |



| Everything you need | | |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Roads and transport</i> | <i>Waste and Cleanliness</i> | <i>Community and economic prosperity</i> |
| Council's management of roads received the highest importance rating and one of the highest satisfaction ratings | Transfer stations received the highest satisfaction score of Council services | Many people report loving the 'community feel' of Litchfield Lack of economic opportunity was not raised as an issue |
| A great place to live | | |
| <i>Cultural and social life</i> | <i>Recreation</i> | <i>Development and open space</i> |
| Some respondents indicated that they would like more events in the area | The community feels that recreation reserves are in good condition However, many mentioned they would like a swimming pool | The community values open space and a peaceful lifestyle. There was very little mention of unwanted development. |
| Beautiful and safe natural environment | | |
| <i>Animals and wildlife</i> | <i>Natural environment</i> | <i>Water and drainage</i> |
| The issue of stray dogs and animal control was mentioned negatively several times | Neither asked about nor volunteered | Very few mentions of roadside drainage were raised |

| Advocacy | Community Engagement | Governance | Service delivery |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Received high importance but low satisfaction scores | Received the greatest negative gap between importance and satisfaction | Neither asked about nor volunteered | Received the highest importance and satisfaction scores for Council's roles |

Summary



- The results of Litchfield Council's annual survey are broadly positive. People report that they are proud to live in the area, they value the rural way of life and the strong community spirit.
- People value the services that Council provides, feeling that they are important and on the whole, believe that Council is delivering adequately on most of its promises. They are particularly satisfied with:
 - Waste transfer stations
 - Road maintenance
 - Recreational assets
- People were unsatisfied with Council's ability to manage:
 - Weeds
 - Animals
 - Community engagement
 - Advocacy
- Serious issues that Council should investigate further include:
 - A large number of female respondents completed this survey and many of them reported feeling unsafe walking at night. However, there was no opportunity to learn more about why this is the case.
 - There are a number of indications that there is a problem with stray dogs roaming the streets across the Council area
- On the whole the feedback received is positive and actions Council can take are clear.
- The response rate is good for a rural population of this size, with the only deviation from a sample reflecting the region's demographics being a lack of responses from males.

References



The following references were used to generate this report:

- Litchfield demographic profile: <https://profile.id.com.au/rda-northern-territory/population?WebID=180>



Contact:

**Don Sharples
Managing Director
0408 347 263
don@altometerbi.com**