



Service Review Project: Feedback from the Community
Interim Report, 30 November 2018





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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

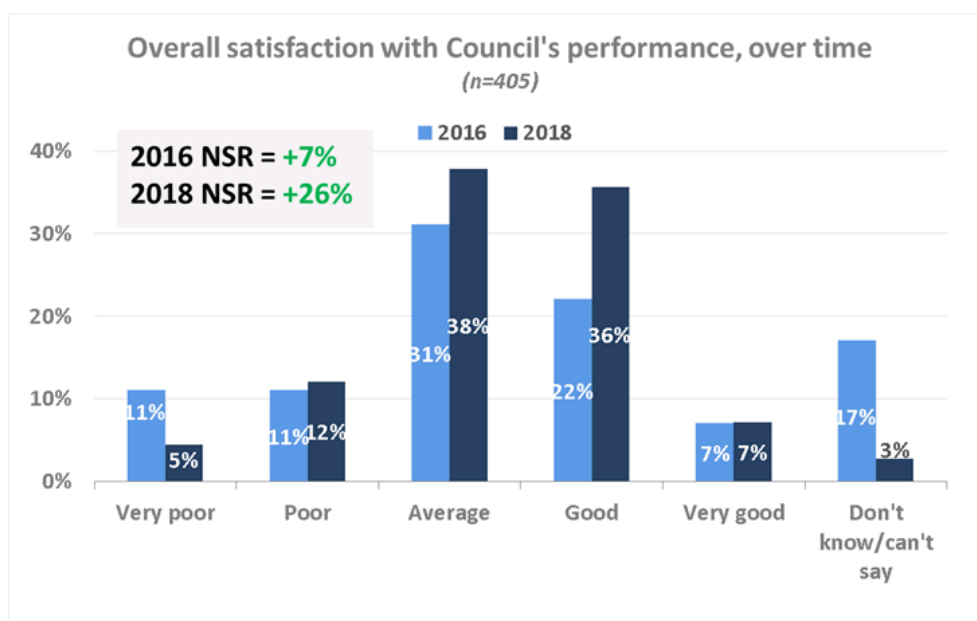
Snowy Valleys Council endorsed the Service Review Project on 28 September 2018. It is intended to facilitate a meaningful conversation about the services Council delivers that engages councillors, staff and the community utilising three separate processes:

- a telephone survey
- an online Budget Allocator tool and
- a Community Sounding Board.

Undertaking the project will help to ensure that Council is meeting the community's expectations and prioritising its available resources in a way that provides the best possible value to the community. It is also an important part of Council's overall efforts to achieve financial sustainability.

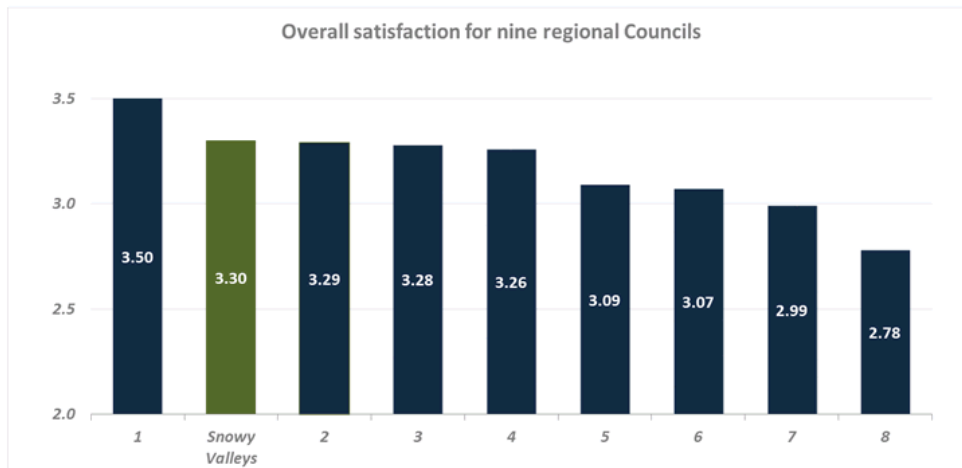
1.2 Feedback about Council's performance overall

The random Telephone Survey of 405 residents (giving a statistically significant picture of the views of the broader population to within +/- 4.8%) found that community satisfaction with Council overall is growing compared to the previous survey in 2016. The 'net satisfaction rating' (NSR) which is the proportion of residents who were more satisfied than dissatisfied, increased from +7% to +26% over the past two years.



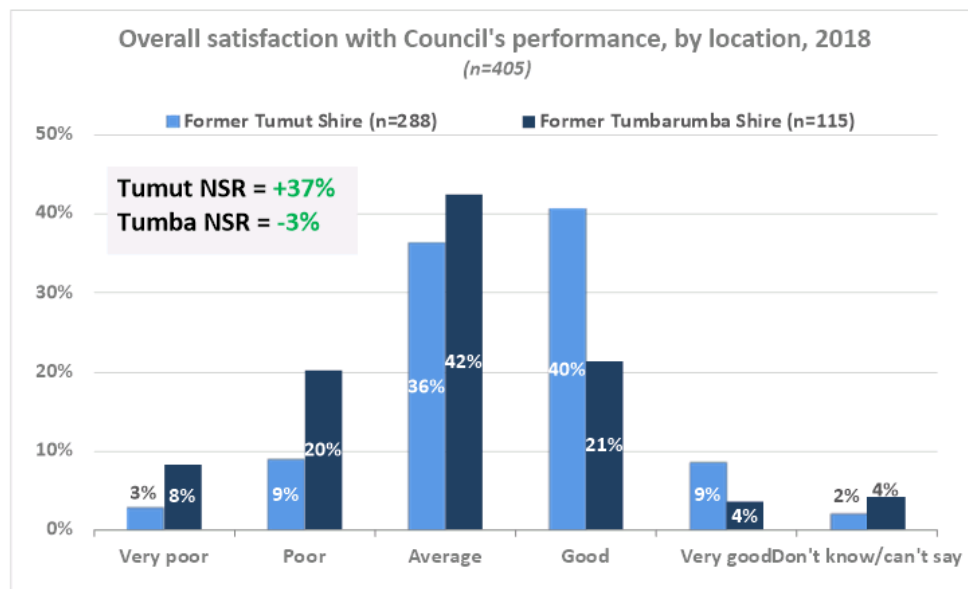
Source: Attachment 1, graph 2.2

It is notable that Council ranked second highest in overall community satisfaction compared to eight other regional councils surveyed by Jetty Research in the past two years.



Source: Attachment 1, graph 2.3

However, it is also important to note that while the satisfaction of all residents increased, results for those in the former Tumbarumba Shire Council remains far lower than the former Tumut Shire in relation to Council performance overall and for particular services.



Source: Attachment 1, graph 2.2b

Another key message from both the Telephone Survey and Community Sounding Board was that Council needs to improve the way it engages with the community.

43% of residents identified 'better communication with the community' as the most important thing Council needs to do over the next 12 months to improve its performance (the most common response by far). There was significant passion about this issue when it was discussed by the Community Sounding Board as well as some cynicism that meaningful community engagement outcomes will be ignored by councillors when making their decision. There was a strong sense that decisions need to consider and reflect the community engagement outcomes or explain why a different action was taken.

1.3 Feedback about particular services

Feedback about particular services from the Telephone Survey was generally positive, with satisfaction ratings increasing across the board. The survey also provides useful insights such as those groups within the broader community (those of differing age, gender, postcode, with or without children at home) who feel differently about particular issues. It also identifies a number of top priorities for Council resources and the key things Council can do over the next 12 months to improve its performance.

The Budget Allocator provided insights into some slight preferences for changes in service levels having regard to the cost of service delivery and priorities between services, although the most 'votes' for virtually all services was for the current level of service to be retained.

Feedback from the Community Sounding Board provided a rich array of commentary on all of Council's services. The group was comprised of people who are broadly representative of the local government area in terms of age and geographical location. They met over four Saturdays from October to December and were provided an opportunity to hear about and discuss each service. They then recorded their preference for the level of service and were invited to make other comments in relation to that service. The objective was to get a diversity of views from the community to help inform future decisions by Council – it was not to establish the 'right' answer about any particular issue.

1.4 Key issues and next steps

This interim report has been produced so that the outcomes of the project could be formally reported to Council's final meeting of the year (on 11 December 2018) and be made broadly available prior to Christmas. A final report will be produced after the final meeting of the Community Sounding Board on 8 December and tabled at a Council meeting in early 2019.

The next step for Council is to hold a workshop on 17 January to consider the contents of this report in detail, including both the broader issues of financial sustainability as well as feedback from the community obtained as part of the Service Review Project.

While feedback from the community is generally positive and there is an upward trend in satisfaction, Council needs to improve its financial sustainability if it is to continue to deliver these services at the expected level into the future. The current Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) forecasts that Council will remain in deficit until its final year (2027/28). This is based on various assumptions and doesn't factor in strategic projects that may increase the deficit.

Council does not need to achieve an operating surplus all at once (in one year), but it is suggested that Council pursue a small operating surplus within the next 3-4 years, rather than over the 10-year timeframe currently forecast in the LTFP. This will enhance the likelihood of Council meeting the community's expectations, as well as those of stakeholders like OLG and IPART, and potential performance audits by the NSW Auditor General. This also accords with the principle of intergenerational equity in the Local Government Act, i.e. that the current generation funds the cost of services it benefits from.

There are essentially three ways for Council to improve its financial sustainability:

- reducing service levels and therefore its expenditure (based on feedback from the community about its priorities)
- increasing revenues (such as through private works, as well as user fees and charges, but also retaining existing revenue streams e.g. the SRV due to expire in 2020/21)
- increasing efficiency and productivity (the focus of the business improvement program that Council has recently commenced).

A revision of Council's IP&R documents should set out how it intends to achieve a financially sustainable position by pursuing a mix of these options.

The objective of the workshop on 17 January will be to seek strategic direction from Council regarding service priorities and resource allocations to enable staff to prepare a draft annual operational budget for 2019/20 and a revised 10-year LTFP.

Noting again the lower levels of satisfaction for residents from the former Tumbarumba Shire and also the strong message from the community about better communication and engagement, it will be important that Council considers how these issues can be addressed in the way forward.

2. Context for the Service Review

2.1 Legislative Requirements

The *NSW Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to prepare a range of documents under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.

The framework is arguably centred on Council's Delivery Program, which describes the *principal activities to be undertaken by a council to perform its functions* (including implementing the relevant strategies set out in the Community Strategic Plan) *within the resources available* under the Resourcing Strategy.

The Act also establishes principles for local government, including that councils should:

- actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the IP&R framework and other measures
- plan strategically, using the IP&R framework, for the provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community
- carry out their functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers
- spend responsibly and sustainably, aligning general revenues and expenses
- invest in responsible and sustainable infrastructure for the benefit of the local community.

These principles (extracted from a broader list in the Act) summarise the central issues in this report that Council needs to consider in formulating its IP&R documents.

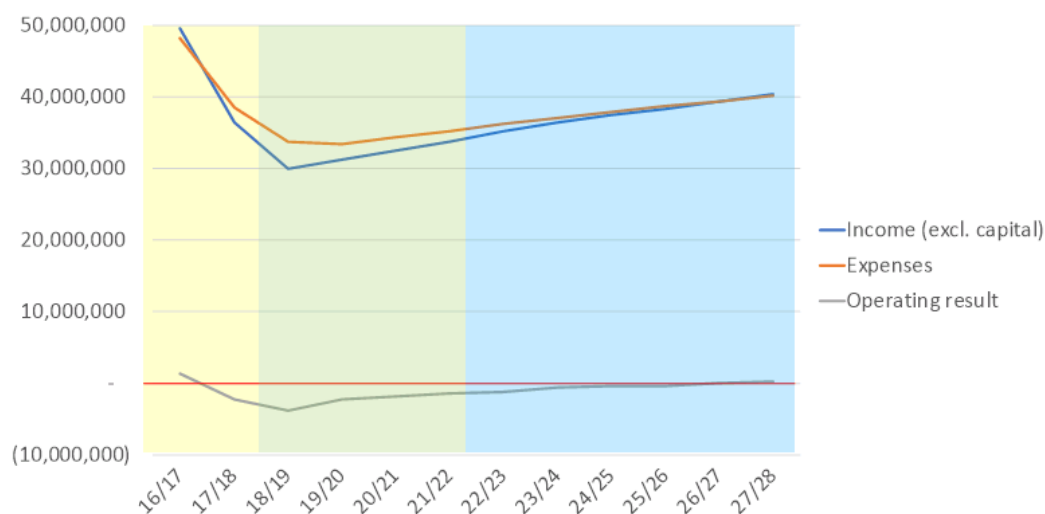
2.2 Financial Sustainability

TCorp's 2013 report *Financial Sustainability of the NSW Local Government Sector* defined sustainability as follows:

A local government will be financially sustainable over the long term when it is able to generate sufficient funds to provide the levels of service and infrastructure agreed with its community.

This reinforces the objectives of the Service Review project: Council is engaging the community to determine what levels of service and infrastructure it wants (and is willing to pay for) in the context of its ability to generate sufficient funds to deliver these.

Council's 10 year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is the key reference with regards to financial sustainability. In the 'planned scenario' for the General Fund (which excludes water and sewer), Council has forecast that it will achieve a small (\$165,000) operating surplus excluding capital grants and contributions in the final year of the Plan (2027/28) as shown in the chart below.



Source: Snowy Valleys Council Annual Financial Statements (16/17 to 18/19) and LTFP (19/20 to 27/28)

However, it is important to note the assumptions underpinning this scenario, which include:

- increases in revenues (assumed to be 2.5% p.a.) will exceed expenses (employee costs, materials and contracts, etc. assumed to be 2% p.a.) over the entire 10 years, which is equivalent to Council generating \$100,000-150,000 p.a. in savings each year
- revenues from private works will increase by \$500,000 p.a. for the first 4 years (this is achievable, but increases over and above this cannot be certain)
- depreciation expenses will increase by an average of 2.1% p.a. (although an allowance has been made for additional depreciation from the new grant-funded assets such as the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail, the new Batlow Library, recreational and sporting facility upgrades, caravan park upgrades)
- application to IPART for continuation of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) for the former Tumut Shire that expires in 2020/21 (this generates around \$650,000 p.a.).

If Council intends to apply for the continuation of the existing SRV, it must identify this in its IP&R documents, notify IPART of its intention to do so by November 2019 and consult with the community before submitting the final application in February 2020. Full details of requirements are published by OLG in the *Special Rate Variation Guidelines*.¹

A key requirement of the SRV application process is that Council clarifies the impact on ratepayers. This will depend on how rate harmonisation is handled across the former Tumbarumba and Tumut Shires. The four-year rate freeze expires in 2020/21 (the same time a new SRV would be implemented) and so these issues must be dealt with together.

An initial analysis of the impacts of rate harmonisation suggests that if Council was to simplistically apply a consistent ad valorem (property value based rate) based on current rating structures in each of the former councils across the new local government area, some will pay more and others will pay less, not just between the former Tumbarumba and Tumut Shires, but also between different categories (residential, business and farmland).

¹ https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/OLG%20-%20Special%20Variation%20Guidelines_3.pdf

In other words, there will be some 'winners' and some 'losers'. Council needs to consider these and other issues (such as phasing in any changes) when it formulates a proposal for an equitable rating structure for the whole local government area along with the SRV.

It is also important to consider other issues *not* identified in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) that may impact on Council's operating performance in the future, such as:

- additional depreciation expenses arising from new capital works
- reductions in operating revenues from the elimination of entry charges to pools (around \$150,000 p.a., currently funded from reductions in roads and parks budgets)
- operating subsidy for the proposed Tumut Multi-purpose Centre (estimated at \$400,000 p.a.)
- other strategic projects e.g. sealing of Brindabella Rd and consequent depreciation.

If Council is to include such new projects in a revision of its IP&R documents *and* also apply for an SRV, it will be important that Council justifies these new projects in its consultation with the community about the SRV and in its application to IPART for its approval (otherwise the argument could be made that Council should simply not pursue these projects and thus avoid the SRV). Given that a key focus of the existing SRV is infrastructure, it will be important that the application is supported with appropriate asset management plans.

It will also be important to show how Council will achieve an operating surplus at least within the 10 years of the LTFP (as noted above, the current LTFP only achieves a \$165,000 surplus in the final year of the Plan).

It is worth noting that IPART's *Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals*² suggests that merged councils should seek to achieve an operating surplus by 2024/25.

This provides vital context for the following discussion about the review of the services Council delivers. Reductions in some service levels is one means by which Council can reduce expenditure and so improve financial sustainability.

However, it is also important to recognise *Council has other options to improve its operating performance*. These include generating additional external revenues (as noted above, this is already factored into the LTFP) and improving efficiencies and productivity (which is the focus of the business improvement program that has recently commenced).

² https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/website/trimholdingbay/assessment_methodology_-_methodology_for_assessment_of_council_fit_for_the_future_proposals_-_june_2015.pdf Page 11.

3. Overview of Community Engagement Activities

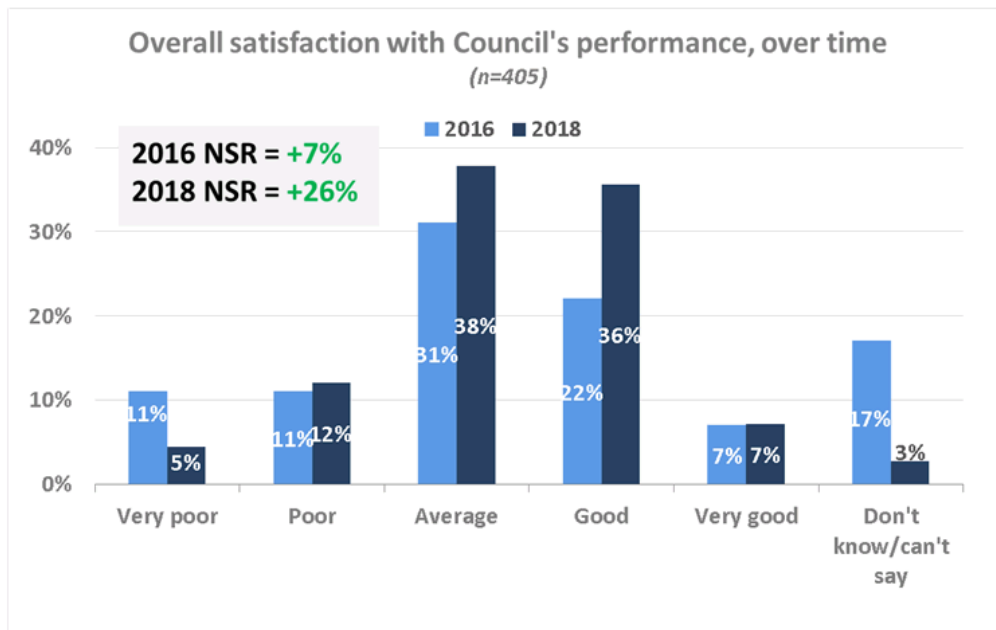
The Service Review project utilised three separate processes to facilitate a meaningful conversation about Council services with the community, councillors and staff:

1. a telephone survey
2. an online Budget Allocator tool and
3. a Community Sounding Board

3.1 Telephone Survey

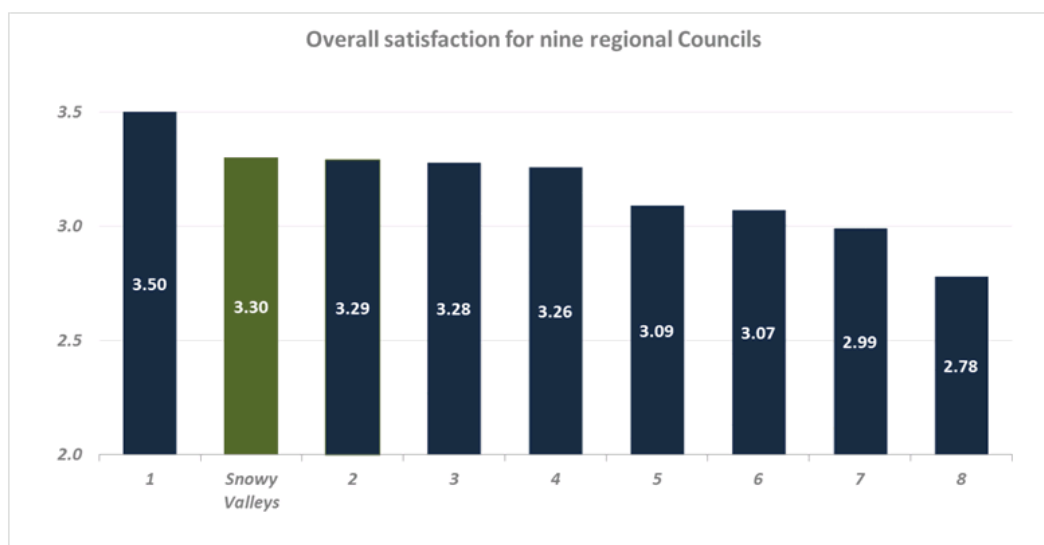
The telephone survey was undertaken by independent third-party provider Jetty Research to gauge trends in community satisfaction with Council and its services and compare that data to the initial survey conducted in 2016. The survey is statistically significant: the 405 participants are representative of the area as a whole.

A detailed report is provided in Attachment 1. In summary the survey shows a positive trend in the community’s overall satisfaction with Council’s performance:



Source: Attachment 1, graph 2.1

These results also compared favourably against eight other regional NSW councils surveyed by Jetty Research within the last two years:



Source: Attachment 1, graph 2.2

Trends in satisfaction measures of a general nature were also generally positive:

Satisfaction measure	2016	2018	change
Being a well-run and managed Council	2.94	3.39	+15%
Providing value for money for my rates	2.63	3.01	+14%
Having a clear vision for the future	2.85	3.22	+13%
Informing the community	3.16	3.33	+5%
Decisions made in the interest of the community	2.95	3.11	+5%
Community consultation and listening of the views of the whole community*	2.94	3.04	+3%
Ease of access to services	3.35	3.33	-1%

Source: Attachment 1, graph 1.1b

*Note: results of this question from 2016 are an average of two responses – refer Attachment 1, page 17.

The slight decline for ‘ease of access to services’ is discussed later in this report in relation to the service area of ‘customer service’.

Results in relation to particular services are included later in this report, but trends are positive (i.e. community satisfaction is improving) across all services.

A number of graphs and tables are referenced in the detailed discussion of particular services simply as, for example, (graph 2.1). The page numbers for these can be found in the table of contents.

It is worth noting that, when asked what Council most needs to do to improve its performance over the next 12 months, survey respondents noted the most important area by far was that Council needs to work on ‘better communication with the community’ (graph 5.1, page 34). This is arguably something that Council is already positioning itself to address through increased traditional and social media activity, a new interactive website and online engagement platform dedicated resources for communications and engagement and an increased focus on communication as one of the ‘General Manager’s Priorities’.

3.2 Budget Allocator

The Budget Allocator tool is the second community engagement technique used to inform the Project. This online tool gave community members an opportunity to select their preferred level of service across 15 Council services where service level and budget options were able to be clearly defined.

The tool provides the opportunity to consider the cost of service level increases in the context of Council’s overall budget, and also to provide feedback regarding priorities between services (for example, generating savings from service level reductions in one area that could be spent improving services in another area).

It is important to emphasise that Council shouldn’t simply endorse the highest number of ‘votes’ for a particular level of service and budget option, but rather view it as one of a number of tools (the telephone survey and feedback from the Community Sounding Board) for making an informed decision.


A screen shot from the online Budget Allocator tool is provided below.

Public Toilets

- Increased service
\$810k

Increased cleaning schedule (daily clean at more sites, full pressure washer clean annually at high use sites) and 1-2 additional refurbishment / renewal projects per year, increase opening hours for toilets. Tell us your priorities!
- Mid-range increase
\$760k

Increased cleaning schedule: daily clean at more sites, full pressure washer clean annually at high use sites and internal refit at 1-2 sites with improvements to accessibility. Tell us your priorities!!
- Current service
\$710k



Current cleaning schedule and 3-4 refurbishment or renewal projects per year. Tell us your priorities!
- Mid-range decrease
\$660k

Current cleaning schedule and 2-3 refurbishment or renewal projects per year.
- Decreased service
\$610k

Reduced cleaning schedule and 1-2 refurbishment or renewal projects per year.

HOW WOULD YOU SPEND ?

Budget
\$15.45m

Your Spend
\$15.72m

You are over budget! Consider reviewing your choices.

You are over budget. To deliver the services you've selected, Council may need to increase rates above the State Government Rate Pkg by 3.33%. Typically a 1% increase in average household rates equates to 17 cents a week or \$9 annually. You may like to review and select other budget options, or tell us how you think Council should address the issue (e.g. increase rates or user charges, improve efficiency and productivity, pursue business opportunities to generate additional revenues) on the final page of this budget process.

Despite a significant promotional campaign only 43 people utilised the Budget Allocator during the 8-week period that it was available on Council’s website. This means that the

results obtained are not statistically significant (i.e. cannot be taken as an accurate representative of the broader views of the community). However, the tool still produced a useful perspective on Council's services based on the views of those who participated.

More information about feedback from the Budget Allocator is included later in this report, however in summary while the Budget Allocator provided insights into some slight preferences for changes in service levels having regard to the cost of service delivery and priorities between services, the most 'votes' for virtually all services was for the current level of service to be retained.

The information shown in the Budget Allocator screen shot such as the service level descriptions and budgets is reproduced in the detailed analysis of particular services along with charts showing the proportion of participants voting for a particular option where the service was one of the 15 included in the budget allocator.

Comments made by participants in the Budget Allocator relating to particular services and Council as a whole are included in Attachment 2.

3.3 Community Sounding Board

The third element of community engagement was a Community Sounding Board, established via an expression of interest process. The aim was to form a reference group that was demographically and geographically representative of the local government area as a whole, although no one who applied was excluded (apart from the minimum age of participants being set at 16 years).

The tables below compare the demographics of the 44 nominees of the Community Sounding Board with those of the general population of Snowy Valleys Council. It is important to note that while the under 16 demographics aren't included in the Community Sounding Board, they actually make up 20% of the population. Comparisons between the Community Sounding Board and Council generally are made firstly in terms of age:

Age demographic	Community Sounding Board	Snowy Valleys Council
Under 16	Not included	Not included
16-25	8%	12%
26-40	15%	20%
41-65	35%	43%
Over 65	43%	26%
TOTAL (of 16 & over)	100%	100%

Secondly, comparing the two in terms of geographical location:

Location demographic	Community Sounding Board	Snowy Valleys Council
Adelong	7%	7%
Batlow	18%	9%
Brungle	0%	1%

Jingellic	0%	< 1%
Khancoban	2%	2%
Rosewood	2%	1%
Talbingo	7%	2%
Tooma	5%	1%
Tumbarumba	18%	13%
Tumut	32%	43%
Other localities/rural	9%	21%
TOTAL	100%	100%

The Community Sounding Board met fortnightly over four Saturdays (2 x 2 hour and 2 x full day sessions) in Batlow between October and December. Sessions were delivered by two independent facilitators with extensive local government experience.



Information on Council's services was provided based on 37 'Service Objectives' documents that were developed in collaboration with Council staff. These covered all Council services including external services (delivered directly to the community) and internal services (like finance, IT and human resources).

The Community Sounding Board was provided an opportunity to hear about and discuss each service. They then recorded their preference for the level of service and were invited to make other comments in relation to that service. The objective was to get a diversity of views from the community to help inform future decisions by Council – it was not to establish the 'right' answer about any particular issue.

Views expressed by the Community Sounding Board in relation to each service are summarised below. Detailed comments and responses are included in Attachment 3.

It is important to note that due to deadlines for submission of reports, feedback from the final session (held 8 December) was not able to be included in the Council business paper (this report), but it will be tabled at the Council meeting and available to inform Council's consideration of the entire feedback from this process at the workshop on 17 January 2019.

Community Sounding Board members were generally positive about the experience of participating in this reference panel. This highlights the value of such initiatives to improve Council's engagement with the community.

4. Feedback About Particular Services

Community feedback in relation to particular services is summarised below, drawing from the outcomes of each of the three elements of community engagement.

The list of external services is presented below. Internal services are discussed after these. Note that the budgets (revenue, expenditure and subsidy) are indicative only.

#	Service Description	14	Parks, Playgrounds and Reserves
1	Aged and Disabled Support Services	15	Planning and Development
2	Caravan Parks	16	Public and Environmental Health
3	Cemeteries	17	Public Toilets
4	Children's Services	18	Ranger Services
5	Community Buildings	19	Roads
6	Community Development and Events	20	Sewerage
7	Community Engagement	21	Sportsgrounds and Facilities
8	Customer Service	22	Stormwater Drainage
9	Economic Development	23	Street Trees
10	Emergency Management	24	Swimming Pools
11	Footpaths	25	Tourism
12	Libraries	26	Waste Management
13	Environmental Weed Management	27	Water Supply

1. Aged and Disabled Support Services

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$429k	\$404k	-\$25k

Council's role differs significantly across the local government area (LGA): in Tumbarumba Council operates a retirement village and delivers a range of support services (meals on wheels, community transport, home modifications and assistance, respite), but in Tumut its role is limited to community transport with other organisations providing other services.

It is interesting to note (table 1.1, Attachment 1) the Telephone Survey identified only small differences in satisfaction between participants from the 2720 postcode, which is Tumut, (3.63) and other areas (3.54). Overall, the trends in satisfaction and gap between importance (how important the service is to the person) and satisfaction (how satisfied they are with Council's performance, the service being delivered) are improving.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.42	3.58	4.20	4.29	-19%	-16%	Improving

It is notable that 43% of respondents identified 'elderly support services' as one of the top three most important uses of Council resources other than 'known criticals like roads, water supply and waste management (graph 2.5). This was by far the highest ranked of all services.

This service was not included in the Budget Allocator as it is funded by Federal and State governments as well as fees charged to users (it is funded on a cost-recovery basis). Options to vary current services will largely be determined by available assistance from other levels of government as well as the needs of service users in the community.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General support that people should be enabled to age 'in place' (i.e. stay within their community)
- It is not clear what proportion of aged/disability service provision across the LGA is provided by Council - is Council a major player or are many other providers in the mix?
- Some support for notion that it isn't Council's business - encourage private enterprise to meet this community need
- If Council is to provide aged and disability services, should be through receipt of grants and user pays rather than impacting budget.

2. **Caravan Parks**

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$230k	\$250k	\$20k

Council operates caravan parks in Adelong, Batlow, Tumbarumba and Tumut (parks in Khancoban, Talbingo as well as at Blowering are privately owned).

Caravan Parks were not specifically covered in the Telephone Survey or Budget Allocator. They are operated under lease arrangements and generally as a self-funding business unit (with minimal subsidy from ratepayers) although there is cross-subsidisation between sites.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Important for tourism. Some recognition of importance for seasonal workers who support the horticulture industry, etc. too
- Mix of views on running them as a business or privatising. Free camping / RVs also mentioned as important considerations
- Batlow in particular was identified as needing investment/upgrade or perhaps moving to another site.

3. **Cemeteries**

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$223k	\$229k	\$6k

Council operates cemeteries at Adelong, Batlow, Brungle, Khancoban, Rosewood, Tumbarumba, Tumut (Pioneer and New) and Welaregang. Burial fees basically cover all costs of operations. Maintenance at Tumbarumba is largely undertaken by inmates from Mannus Correctional Centre (who also assist with parks and other facilities around town).

Cemeteries were not specifically covered in the Telephone Survey or Budget Allocator .

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Pioneer cemetery (Tumut) singled out as needing additional attention
- Consideration to be given to public toilets, benches etc in cemeteries as a service to those visiting or attending funerals

- General agreement that a small increase in charges would help cemeteries to be financially sustainable
- Opportunity for community groups to be engaged in assisting with maintenance and upkeep of cemeteries.

4.	<u>Children's Services</u>	Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
		\$1258k	\$1267k	\$9k

Like aged and disabled support services (above), Council's role differs significantly across the LGA. Council auspices four children's services in the former Tumbarumba Shire which are funded through income streams from Federal and State Governments and fees charged to families. Similar services are run by other organisations elsewhere in the LGA.

Because the 2016 Telephone Survey did not ask specifically about this service, trend data isn't available. There was no significant difference between satisfaction from participants in Tumut (postcode 2720) compared to other areas.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.61	-	4.10	-	-12%	No data from 2016

It is notable that 24% of respondents identified 'children's services' as one of the top three most important use of Council resources other than 'known criticals like roads, water supply and waste management (graph 2.5). This was the fourth highest of all services.

This service was not included in the Budget Allocator as it is funded by grants and user fees.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General support for user-pays/cost recovery principle for provision of childcare
- Some commentary about equitable access for families across the LGA
- Note that access to childcare brings new families into the LGA and helps to sustain or grow the population
- Tumbarumba model could be expanded to other centres in the LGA

5.	<u>Community Buildings</u>	Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
		\$20k	\$390k	\$370k

Council has ownership and/or some level of control of around 35 community buildings. Some are used by a variety of groups while others are utilised by specific groups. There is significant variability in arrangements for use of the buildings (e.g. leases), responsibilities of users (e.g. for maintenance) and of Council (e.g. for renewal of the building).

This service was not included in the Telephone Survey or Budget Allocator as the options are not easily quantified or described at this stage.

It is important that Council ensures sufficient maintenance is carried out to prevent premature failure and minimise risks to users, but decisions about priorities for building

renewals need to be made in the context of a formal asset management plan (identifying works that are actually required, current usage, availability of alternative facilities, etc.).

There are often opportunities to secure grants to help undertake projects although the likely success of these is increased if pre-planning and analysis is undertaken.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General sense that community members could be better enlisted to assist in the maintenance of community buildings
- Some suggestion that some key buildings could be sold for private enterprise to utilise to boost the economy and attract visitors
- Support for addressing the cost of maintenance etc. through user-pays
- Suggest an audit of all buildings to identify usage and opportunities for efficiency

6. **Community Development and Events**

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$21k	\$517k	\$496k

Council undertakes a number of roles in community development and events.

Council employs a Youth Development Officer who supports Youth Councils, events and projects as well as running school holiday programs. Council either delivers or supports various community events (e.g. Australia Day and NAIDOC week) and provides support and assistance to community groups staging events such as Rosewood Country Roundup and Adelong Alive, including events focused on attracting tourists (e.g. Tumbafest, Ciderfest). The figures above do not include larger events as they are generally run on a break-even basis with their own bank account.

Results of the Telephone Survey for 'community cultural and youth events' were positive:

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.29	3.53	3.54	3.60	-7%	-2%	Improving

Those living in the 2720 postcode, i.e. Tumut, and with children at home were more satisfied with the service (table 1.1), while females and those with children at home saw it as more important (table 1.2).

Results from the Budget Allocator were strongly supportive of maintaining the current level of service.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	596,000	Greater support for community groups (e.g. with grants, skills development for events and organisations), growth of existing and creation of new events, additional youth development activities and events, additional cultural programs and activities, increased community grant and event funding opportunities. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	546,000	Moderate increase in support for community groups, growth in events, youth development, art and cultural activities, sponsorship and community capacity building programs. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	496,000	Maintain current support for community events and community service organisations, youth and cultural development, community grant programs and sponsorship.	
Mid-range decrease	446,000	Reduced community grants and events, youth development and support for community groups. No cultural activities.	
Decreased service	396,000	Loss of community grants program, reduction in youth development programs, no support for community events beyond promotion	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General desire to separate 'Events' from 'Community Development' into two distinct services (Events may be better joined with Tourism)
- See Council's role to support the community to do, rather than do itself.
- Support for an 'Events' officer to be employed by Council to support community groups with grant applications, insurances, risk management, coordination and publicity etc.
- Desire to see children and young people supported through community development activities of Council
- Reference to public toilets and parking as key to successful events.

7. Community Engagement

1 full time employee
+ many other staff involved

The Telephone Survey included two questions relevant to community engagement. The first was 'informing the community':

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.16	3.33	4.24	4.33	-25%	-23%	Improving

The second was 'community consultation and listening to the views of the community' (note that the 2016 figures are an average of the two elements as noted page 17, Attachment 1):

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
2.94	3.04	4.34	4.40	-32%	-31%	Improving

While the trends are improving, the gaps (difference between satisfaction and importance) are considerable.

It is notable that tables 1.1 and 1.2 highlight that the issue is of greater concern for participants located outside Tumut, i.e. 2720 postcode (i.e. satisfaction ratings are lower: 2.82 versus 3.30, while importance levels are higher for these people: 4.48 versus 4.31).

Further, both issues are strong drivers of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1) and 'better communication with the community' was identified as by 20% of respondents (by far the most of any issue) as the most important thing that Council needs to do to improve its performance over the next 12 months (graph 5.1).

This service was not included in the Budget Allocator as the options are not easily quantified or described at this stage.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Significant passion around this issue
- Concern that much of the debate in the lead up to councillor decision-making occurs in closed briefing sessions, instead of as part of the open meeting
- Interest in an ongoing 'sounding board' mechanism for future issues of significance to be discussed with the community
- Desire for councillors to be more visible and available across the whole LGA
- Some interest in seeing a brief summary of outcomes of council meetings published in newspaper, social media.

8. Customer Service

11 full time employees

The question in the Telephone Survey most relevant to customer service is 'ease of access to local government services'. Results show a very slight decline.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.35	3.33	4.14	4.16	-19%	-20%	Declining

It is notable that tables 1.1 and 1.2 highlight that the issue is of greater concern for participants located outside of Tumut, i.e. 2720 postcode (i.e. satisfaction ratings are lower: 3.23 versus 3.45, while importance levels are higher for these people: 4.23 versus 4.08).

Further, the issue is a reasonably strong driver of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1). Arguably, customer service will also help address 'better communication with the community' which, as discussed under community engagement, was identified as by 20% of respondents (by far the most of any issue) as the most important thing that Council needs to do to improve its performance over the next 12 months (graph 5.1).

It is also worth noting that 9% of participants (the third highest response) identified that one of the best things about Council is it is approachable / its customer service (graph 5.2).

Part 4 of the Telephone Survey report looks at the satisfaction levels of those residents who had contacted Council (other than to pay rates) in the previous 12 months. Of note (graph 4.2) is the growing number of contacts via phone and email and the decline of both in-person/front counter and letter/fax contacts. Also of note is that only 4% of contact was made via Council's website, and there has been no growth in this medium.

The majority of issues were resolved in one (41%) or two (19%) contacts, with 9% being resolved in three or more contacts and 9% being unresolved (graph 4.3). The overall satisfaction with the most recent inquiry was extremely high at 3.88 out of 5 (graph 4.7).

As would be expected, overall satisfaction with Council and satisfaction with the way the enquiry was handled was inversely proportional to the number of calls required to resolve it (table 4.1). This highlights that:

- there is clear evidence that the faster issues are resolved, the more favourably residents will assess Council's performance and
- for those residents who have interacted with Council, overall satisfaction with performance is more closely aligned to how well their interactions have been handled than to satisfaction with facilities and services generally (this point is also reinforced by the drivers of overall satisfaction in picture 2.1).

This service was not included in the Budget Allocator as the options are not easily quantified or described at this stage.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General consensus that front-of-house/reception customer service is of a high quality
- Concern that messages/correspondence are not responded to in a timely way by other staff in the organisation
- Need to ensure frontline customer service staff are regularly briefed on current issues and how to respond appropriately.

9. Economic Development

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$0	\$275k	\$275k

This function is considered distinct from Tourism (service #25), but there is a very close relationship between them. Activities undertaken by Council fall into two categories:

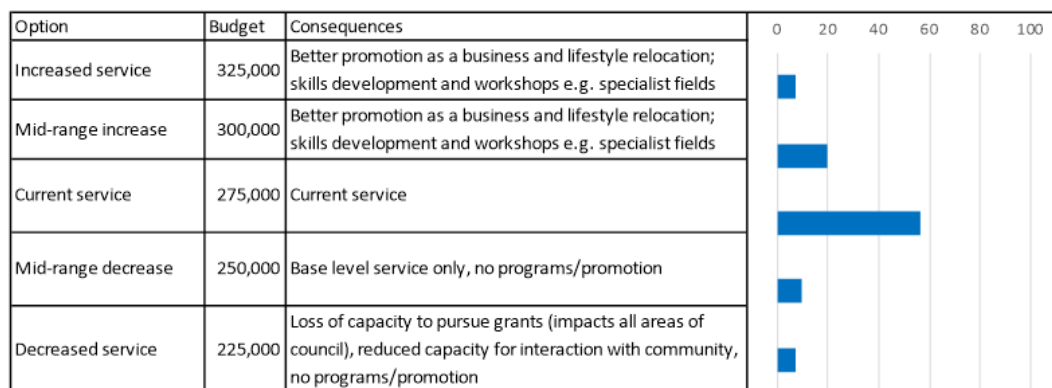
- the 'core business' of facilitating growth of new and existing businesses and attracting new investment and people to the region and
- strategic projects relating to opportunities to grow and diversify the economy (these are identified in the Economic Development Strategy and are generally only able to be progressed with additional investment e.g. grants).

The Telephone Survey found a significant increase in satisfaction ratings for 'business development'.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
2.77	3.18	3.89	3.99	-29%	-20%	Improving

11% of participants identified ‘business development’ as one of the three most important uses of Council’s resources other than ‘known critical’ services (graph 2.5) in addition to 23% who cited ‘tourism development’. Also of note was that Council’s performance in economic development was rated higher than the eight regional councils undertaking similar surveys in the past two years (graph 3.2) and that ‘business development’ was a medium-strength driver of overall satisfaction with Council (picture 2.1).

Results of the Budget Allocator were strongly supportive of the current level of service and perhaps even a mid-range increase.



Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General agreement that Council has a role to play in supporting businesses to establish and develop
- Cut red tape and make it 'easy to do business'
- Role for Council to be advocate in industry forums to promote the benefits of Snowy Valleys as a location for establishing a business.

10. Emergency Management

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$Xk	\$485k	\$Xk

Council’s role is providing support to the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) and Rescue Committee is via the Local Emergency Management Officer (filled by a manager from within Council, not a full time position) as well as practical support in a number of functional areas.

Legislation also requires councils to support the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service financially (this is reflected in the figures above) and to provide the SES with a local headquarters building.

Feedback from the Telephone Survey regarding ‘emergency and disaster management’ was positive:

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.83	3.93	4.32	4.26	-11%	-8%	Improving

This service was not included in the Budget Allocator as the options are not easily quantified or described at this stage.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Strong acknowledgement of the importance of the service
- General feeling the current service is OK, but a desire to ensure that all appropriate measures/resources in place.

11.

Footpaths

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$40k	\$200k	\$160k

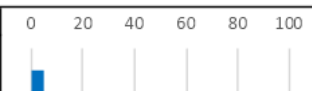




Council maintains a total of around 73km of footpaths around the local government area. These assets have a replacement value of around \$12M. Council spends around \$70k p.a. on maintenance (largely fixing trip hazards) and \$130k renewing paths in poor condition and building new paths with a focus on areas with higher pedestrian activity. Under the Local Government Act, Council can charge 50% of the cost to affected property owners.

The 2016 Telephone Survey sought feedback on ‘local streets and footpaths’ which is arguably not the same as ‘footpaths in your area’ (responses may be focused on streets, not footpaths).

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.22	-	3.63	-	-11%	No data from 2016

Satisfaction levels were higher for those in the 2720 postcode and for those with children at home (table 1.1). The importance of footpaths was notably higher among females, those without children at home and those over 60 years (table 1.2). 8% of participants cited footpaths as one of the three most important uses of Council’s resources other than ‘known critical’ services (graph 2.5). Comparisons with eight other regional councils who have undertaken similar surveys in the last two years suggests that Council is performing better than most of its peers in relation to footpaths (graph 3.1).

Results from the Budget Allocator indicates some support for a mid-range increase.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	300,000	Fix paths in poor condition, 2-3 extra projects to build new paths per year. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	250,000	Fix paths in poor condition, 1-2 extra projects to build new paths per year. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	200,000	Inspect for defects, fix paths in poor condition, some renewal and upgrades	
Mid-range decrease	150,000	Fix paths in poor condition, limited renewal, no funding for upgrades/new paths (including improving disability access)	
Decreased service	100,000	Fix paths in poor condition, very limited renewal, no funding for upgrades/new paths (including improving disability access)	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Many identified the importance of footpaths for an ageing population
- Various specific priorities identified, but Batlow CBD came up a lot
- Consider options for use of different (lower cost) materials for footpath construction.

12. Libraries

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$40k	\$200k	\$160k

Council operates five libraries across the local government area. Tumut and Tumbaramba (receiving 55,000 and 23,500 visitors p.a. respectively) operate 6 days/week; Batlow (18,000 visitors p.a.) operates 5 days/week and Adelong and Talbingo (1,000 visitors each) operate 1 day/week. A mobile library services Jingellic, Khancoban, Rosewood and Tooma.

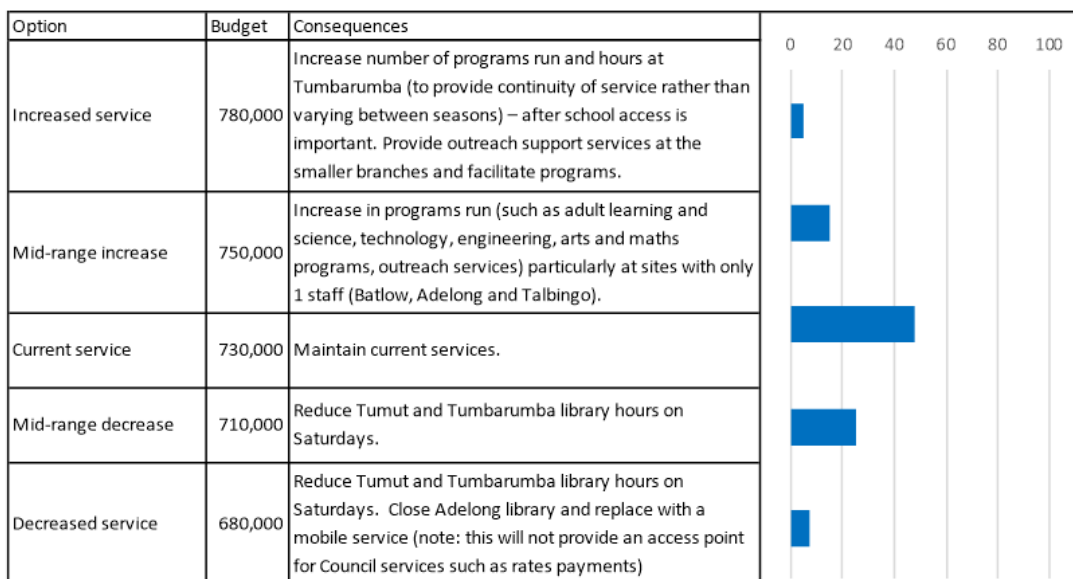
The 2016 Telephone Survey did not specifically ask about libraries, but the 2018 survey found they were one of only two services where the 'gap' was positive (i.e. satisfaction is higher than importance):

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	4.02	-	3.79	-	6%	No data from 2016

This positive gap for libraries is often found in similar surveys at most councils. The lower importance often reflects the fact that a significant proportion of the population don't use the library regularly (although there are almost 100,000 visitors p.a.). This needs to be balanced up against the fact that those who do use libraries value them highly: 7% of participants identified that libraries are one of the three most important uses of Council's resources other than 'known critical' services (graph 2.5).

Satisfaction levels were higher for those living in the 2720 postcode and those with children at home (table 1.1). Females saw them as more important than males (table 1.2). Comparisons with eight other regional councils who have undertaken similar surveys in the last two years suggests that satisfaction with libraries in Snowy Valleys is lower than that of its peers in relation to libraries (graph 3.1).

Results of the Budget Allocator indicates some preference for a slight decrease in services. However, (as noted above) this needs to be balanced against the fact that not everyone uses Council's libraries and those who do value them highly.



Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- A valued service across the region
- Need to keep pace with changing technologies and how that impacts on the type and mode of service delivered
- Recognition that libraries are essentially a community hub

13. Environmental Weed Management

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$45k	\$195k	\$150k

Council has several roles within this function: inspection and management of weeds via the Regional Weeds Action Plan (WAP), management of weeds as a land owner (or as a contractor on State roads) and undertaking works under other specific programs.

The WAP is effectively a contract between the State government and councils to undertake certain regulatory (inspections) and management (spraying) functions targeting high risk weeds. Council contributes \$150k, while the State contributes about \$45k (although its contributions are decreasing over time). Under the Biosecurity Act, weed management is tenure neutral (i.e. it applies to all lands).

Council actively seeks out grants for weed control that apply to Council and other lands, with over \$3M being secured over the last 5 years alone (in addition to expenditure above).

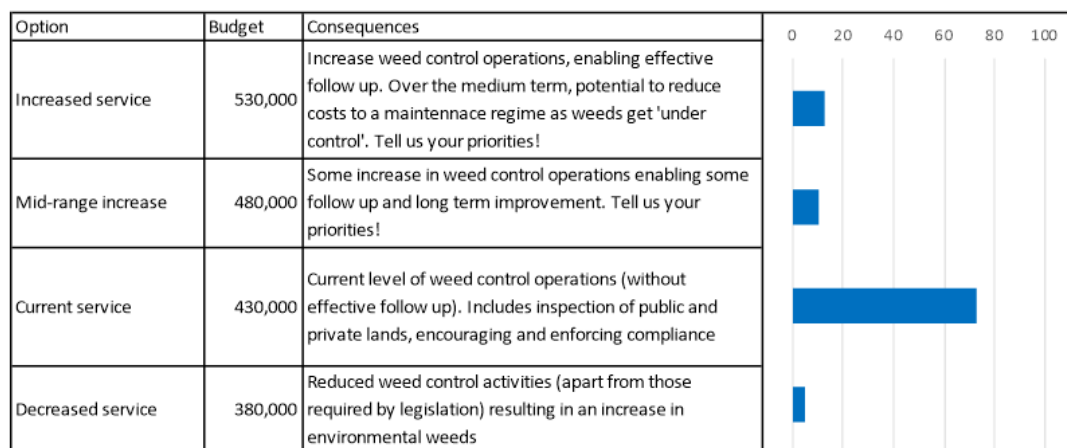
The 2016 Telephone Survey did not specifically ask about control of noxious weeds.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.35	-	3.97	-	-16%	No data from 2016

Control of noxious weeds was identified by 9% of participants as one of the three most important uses of Council’s resources other than ‘known critical’ services (graph 2.5) in addition to 13% of participants citing ‘protection of the environment’.

Also of note was that Council’s performance rated higher than the other eight regional councils undertaking similar surveys in the past two years (graph 3.1).

Results of the Budget Allocator were strongly supportive of the current level of service, with some support for an increase.



Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Strong support for Council to advocate for better weed control in State Forests and National Parks
- General recognition of the importance of the service, but mixed views if Council should spend more (prefer to seek out grants / support from other levels of government)
- Desire to see progress with control of weeds, not just stopping further spread.

14. Parks, Playgrounds and Reserves

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$0k	\$830k	\$830k

Council maintains over 400 hectares of open space across around 180 parks and reserves (not including sports facilities). These vary from open space with low usage and no infrastructure to parks in town centres which cater for lots of users and feature playgrounds, furniture, BBQs, footpaths and bridges, carparks, gardens and significant trees. Open space infrastructure includes around 400 items of furniture and structures and 150 items of play equipment valued at almost \$5M.

Council spends around \$720k on mowing and general park maintenance and \$110k on renewing infrastructure, as well as some upgrades. A Recreation Needs Study (covering parks and sportsgrounds) has been identified as an important means of prioritising current activities (e.g. maintenance works) as well as future renewal and upgrade projects.

The 2016 Telephone Survey included a question on ‘recreational facilities’ generally, while in 2018 the question was broken down into ‘swimming pools’ and ‘sports facilities’ as well as ‘parks, reserves and playgrounds’. This means trends aren’t directly comparable: the 2016 survey identified a gap of -13% for recreational facilities (which is quite significant).






The 2018 survey found that parks, reserves and playgrounds were one of only two services with a positive gap (satisfaction higher than importance).

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.92	-	3.86	-	1%	No data from 2016

Those living in the 2720 postcode generally more satisfied with the service (table 1.1) while females and those with children at home considered it more important (table 1.2).

The 2018 survey found that parks, reserves and playgrounds were a medium-strength driver of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1). Comparisons against the eight other regional councils surveyed in the past two years identified that satisfaction with performance was at the higher end compared to other councils (graph 3.1). 6% of participants consider parks to be one of the three most important uses of Council resources (graph 2.5).

Results for the Budget Allocator was strongly supportive of the current service:

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	930,000	Increased service levels for mowing and other maintenance, increased investment in infrastructure such as playgrounds and furniture. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	880,000	Increased service levels for mowing and other maintenance, increased investment in infrastructure such as playgrounds and furniture. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	830,000	Current levels of inspections and maintenance, 2 playgrounds per year replaced with some upgrades improving compliance with Australian Standards	
Mid-range decrease	780,000	Decreased maintenance, reduced renewal of infrastructure (playgrounds and furniture) with lower priority items that are no longer serviceable removed rather than replaced	
Decreased service	730,000	Decreased maintenance, reduced renewal of infrastructure (playgrounds and furniture) with lower priority items that are no longer serviceable removed rather than replaced	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General acknowledgement of importance of service for locals and visitors
- Many people cited the need to review prioritisation e.g. focus on higher use parks, reduce maintenance or even sell off low use parks or use for other activities

- Look at options to secure other resources to assist with maintenance such as general community members, Mannus Correctional Centre (which currently assists in the Tumbarumba area).

15. Planning and Development

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$375k	\$1160k	\$785k

Council's planning and development function includes:

- Development control (preparing and reviewing planning instruments i.e. the Local Environmental Plan which defines land zoning and Development Control Plans which prescribe further controls in particular areas) as well as assessing over 200 Development Applications per year
- Building certification (inspections at critical stages of construction following approval of a DA – this can be undertaken by private certifiers but is generally undertaken by Council in this area)
- Other regulatory functions including swimming pool safety, fire safety and enforcement of illegal building work and development.

The 2016 Telephone Survey didn't include a question about this function, but two services were included in 2018: 'development application processing' and 'enforcement of building regulations'.

Results for 'development application processing' suggests a significant gap as the only specific services which had larger gaps were sealed and unsealed roads.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.03	-	3.81	-	-21%	No data from 2016

Those in the 40-59 age bracket were less satisfied than those aged 18-39 years (table 1.1).

The survey also found that 'DA processing' was a strong driver of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1). In fact, it was the strongest driver of any specific service. 8% of participants identified it as one of the three most important uses of Council resources excluding 'known critical' services (graph 2.5). Comparisons against the eight other regional councils surveyed in the past two years found Council's performance was the highest of any of them (graph 3.2).

By contrast, the Telephone Survey found that the satisfaction gap for 'enforcement of building regulations' was among the lowest of any services, a positive result:

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.47	-	3.59	-	-3%	No data from 2016

Responses in the Budget Allocator were generally supportive of maintaining the current service, although there was also a spread of responses preferring an increase or decrease.

Option	Budget	Consequences	0 20 40 60 80 100
Increased service	1,210,000	Provide more resources to assist applicants and to improve turnaround times on applications. Improved future planning. Improved responsiveness to compliance issues. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	1,160,000	Determination of applications and provision of certification services; addressing compliance issues (unlawful building work, unlawful activities on land).	
Decreased service	1,060,000	Reduced capacity to adequately assess DAs and assist customers by reducing technical staff. This will increase business risk, reduce service to the community and reduce enforcement of unlawful development.	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Concerns raised over excessive 'hurdles' to development process - Council needs to encourage development, make the process simpler and faster, provide more support to applicants
- Neighbour notification in relation to DAs needs review
- Some support for user pays relating to application, but many raised concerns about implications of developer contributions e.g. to water supply, sewerage and other infrastructure discouraging development.

16. Public Health and Environmental Management

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$60k	\$198k	\$83k




Council undertakes a range of activities within this function, many of which are prescribed by legislation:

- Food safety inspections and compliance
- On-site Sewage Management inspections and compliance
- Other public health and environmental management activities.

The 2016 Telephone Survey didn't include a question about this function, but 'protection of the environment' was included in 2018. Unfortunately, this is not clearly aligned with this service as described and the description may need a review prior to the next survey.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.59	-	3.94	-	-9%	No data from 2016

Results from the Budget Allocator were notable in that there were no 'votes' for an increased level of service. There was also considerable support for a decrease.

Option	Budget	Consequences	0 20 40 60 80 100
Increased service	250,000	Additional activities to improve public health and the environment such as education programs for food safety (commercial kitchens, food for sale), woodsmoke and burning off in residential areas, update contaminated site register, improve database for commercial / industrial premises, Clean up Australia Day.	
Current service	200,000	Undertake Food Safety, Onsite Sewage Management other public health and environmental protection inspections	
Decreased service	150,000	Undertake minimum level of activities to comply with Government legislation	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Concerns raised about a variety of public and environmental health issues (refer Attachment 3 for details)
- Concerns about cost shifting raised - support for user pays and/or additional support from State government
- General support for food safety inspections in particular

17. Public Toilets

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$0k	\$710k	\$710k

Council maintains 27 public toilets (apart from 10 sports amenities, considered separately) with a total replacement value of around \$2.5M.

Priorities for the \$310k maintenance budget are based on usage, although standards need review for consistency. Priorities for the \$400k renewal / refurbishment budget are based on accessibility, improving presentation and ease of cleaning with higher use sites being a focus first.

There was no specific question in the Telephone Survey about public toilets (there was already a long list of services included, which meant the survey was approaching the upper limit of what people are generally willing to participate in – any longer and the number of people who hang up prior to its completion increases).

Responses in the Budget Allocator generally supported the current level of service, but there was a notable preference for a slight increase, too.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	810,000	Increased cleaning schedule (daily clean at more sites, full pressure washer clean annually at high use sites) and 1-2 additional refurbishment / renewal projects per year, increase opening hours for toilets. Tell us your priorities!	0 20 40 60 80 100
Mid-range increase	760,000	Increased cleaning schedule: daily clean at more sites, full pressure washer clean annually at high use sites and internal refit at 1-2 sites with improvements to disability access. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	710,000	Current cleaning schedule and 3-4 refurbishment or renewal projects per year. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range decrease	660,000	Current cleaning schedule and 2-3 refurbishment or renewal projects per year. Tell us your priorities!	
Decreased service	610,000	Reduced cleaning schedule and 1-2 refurbishment or renewal projects per year. Tell us your priorities!	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Significant proportion wanted to see an improved service, generally identifying specific toilets needing work
- Important for visitors
- Better signage
- Investigate contractor cleaning

18. Ranger Services

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$75k	\$175k	\$100k

Council undertakes a range of activities within this function including companion animal management, stock on roads (although removal of dead animals is covered under roads), parking restrictions and various other environmental compliance activities.

The 2016 Telephone Survey didn't include a question about this function, but 'enforcement of pets and stock regulation' was included in 2018. While this doesn't mention parking, it does cover most of this service. Results suggest a very low the satisfaction gap, i.e. Council is basically delivering on community expectations.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.52	-	3.63	-	-3%	No data from 2016

7% of participants identified enforcement of pets and stock regulations as one of the three most important uses of Council resources excluding 'known critical' services (graph 2.5).

Results from the Budget Allocator were generally supportive of the current level of service, although there was also considerable support for a decrease.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	195,000	Increased parking patrols (more available spaces), more companion animal control and increased public education (e.g. free microchipping days), other compliance issues (rubbish, noise, etc.). Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	175,000	Weekly parking patrols, enforce companion animals legislation (stray dogs and cats), enforce other legislation (rubbish dumping, noise, overgrown properties, etc.), respond to stock on roads	
Decreased service	135,000	Decreased parking patrols (less available spaces), less companion animals control (more stray dogs and cats), less enforcement of other legislation.	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Overwhelming consensus that Companion Animals (Responsible Pet Ownership) service of Council is delivered well
- General agreement that “we don’t want Council to be too officious with its parking enforcement”, but to strike a balance between people who work in the CBD and the people who shop and visit
- Lack of disabled parking in some areas (e.g. Tumut pathology)

19. Roads

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$3,500k	\$7,600k	\$4,100k

Council maintains around 700km of sealed roads and 475km of unsealed roads across the local government area as well as 144km of kerb and gutter and 160 bridges. This infrastructure has a replacement value of around \$230M. Council receives around \$3.5M p.a. in grants for road maintenance and construction from state and federal governments.

Various key routes are controlled by State government (RMS) and are not under Council control (e.g. Snowy Mountains Highway, roads in State Forests and National Parks) although others are maintained by Council under contract with RMS (e.g. Gocup Rd, Gilmore-Batlow-Tumbarumba-Jingellic Rd, Tumba-Rosewood-Wagga Rd, Alpine Way) – refer Business Units.

Council spends around \$3.1M p.a. on maintenance (fixing potholes, grading unsealed roads, controlling vegetation – prioritised based on risk) and \$4.5M p.a. on renewing roads and new construction (priorities are road safety and avoiding premature failure, particularly by resealing / resurfacing sealed roads, but also improving the quality of urban areas).

The Telephone Survey included two questions relevant to roads. Firstly, ‘condition of sealed local roads’, which is compared to ‘local streets and footpaths’ from 2016 in the table below, though these questions aren’t exactly the same (caution should be exercised in interpreting the results). However, the significant increase in satisfaction is notable and is echoed in relation to unsealed roads (below).

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
2.58	3.19	4.55	4.46	-43%	-28%	Improving

The survey also sought feedback on ‘maintenance of unsealed roads in your area’, which was included in 2016.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
2.51	3.03	4.16	4.02	-40%	-25%	Improving



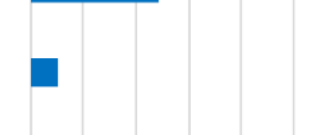


Those living in the 2720 postcode were generally more satisfied with both sealed and unsealed roads (table 1.1). Those living outside Tumut, i.e. the 2720 postcode, generally saw unsealed roads as more important (table 1.2).

While the significant decrease in the satisfaction gap for both sealed and unsealed roads is notable, it is also important to note that these services still have the biggest gap of any specific service (table 1.3). This is something most councils find with such surveys (similar to the high satisfaction / lower importance noted for libraries earlier).

The report found that maintenance of unsealed roads was identified as a relatively strong driver of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1). 24% of participants cited ‘maintenance of unsealed roads in your area’ as one of the three top uses of Council resources excluding known criticals, which includes sealed roads (graph 2.5).

10% of those giving a negative assessment of Council’s overall performance cited ‘roads and infrastructure needs improvement’ (graph 2.4), but compared to the eight other regional councils surveyed in the last two years unsealed roads were rated more highly than any other council and sealed roads were at the higher end of the scale (graph 3.1).

Feedback from the Budget Allocator saw more support for an increased level of service than any other service in the Allocator. The fact that roads was positioned first on the list is worth noting (it may be that people were more willing to spend early on, but were more restrained as they went over budget later on in the list).

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	8,780,000	Increased maintenance (e.g. potholes fixed faster), street sweeping, extra 2-3 projects per year (renewal and upgrade). Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	8,440,000	Increased maintenance (e.g. potholes fixed faster), street sweeping, extra 1-2 projects per year (renewal and upgrade). Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	8,100,000	Current maintenance and renewal of sealed and unsealed roads, kerb and gutter, bridges	
Mid-range decrease	7,760,000	Decreased maintenance (less response to problems), less renewals leading to deterioration of road condition. Minimal new/upgrade.	
Decreased service	7,420,000	Decreased maintenance (less response to problems), less renewals leading to deterioration of road condition. No new/upgrade.	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Majority support an increase in funding - various priorities identified

- Lobbying required to get RMS to improve key roads / intersections

20.

Sewerage

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$4,700k	\$4,700k	\$0k

Council maintains around 178km of sewerage pipelines and seven sewage treatment plants (Adelong, Batlow, Brungle, Khancoban, Talbingo, Tumbarumba and Tumut). The total replacement value of this infrastructure is around \$74M.

National Competition Policy requires water supply and sewerage services to be operated as distinct businesses where the costs of the service are paid for by users, or any subsidies are explicit. Best Practice Guidelines for Water Supply and Sewerage Services (issued by NSW government) reinforce the user pays principles.

Maintenance of pipes (clearing blockages, etc.) is undertaken on a reactive basis although Council also proactively inspects pipes using CCTV. Pipes are relined (inserting a plastic sleeve) as required to reduce the incidence of future problems. Scheduled maintenance of mechanical and electrical equipment is critical for reliability, as is the availability of generators to power pumping stations during power failures, to avoid overflows. Sewage treatment plants need to be operated properly to minimise impacts on the environment and to ensure compliance with EPA licence conditions.

Developer contributions are \$5,260 per property in the former Tumut Shire and \$2,027 in the former Tumbarumba Shire. **CLARIFY: for Tumba this is 'Newtown sewer connection' but then there's another figure of \$664 for 'standard residential lot' in Khan/Tumba.** Access charges are fairly similar (\$698 per residential property in the former Tumut Shire and \$674 in the former Tumbarumba Shire).

Council has identified 'investigate the feasibility of sewerage system for Rosewood' in its Delivery Program. This will be considered as part of preparing an Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy.

The Telephone Survey included water supply and sewerage services together.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.72	3.84	4.29	4.32	-13%	-11%	Improving

Those with children at home were generally more satisfied with the service (table 1.1) and females generally rated the service as more important (table 1.2).

Council's performance with regards to water supply was slightly below the mean compared to the eight other regional councils surveyed in the past two years (graph 3.1).

Water supply and sewerage services were not included in the Budget Allocator because of the difficulty in defining service level options at this stage. The consideration of such options will be part of the process to prepare a new Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy, the peak planning document for water supply and sewerage services.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board in relation to both water supply and sewerage:

- General support for maintaining current service and many for increasing if required
- Concerns about developer charges/contributions inhibiting development

21. Sportsgrounds and Facilities

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$20k	\$390k	\$370k

Council maintains around 60 hectares of open space across 20 or more sports facilities across the local government area (LGA).

Infrastructure includes 15 buildings and 60 other items of infrastructure (playing surfaces, skateparks, lighting, fencing, shelters, etc.) with a total replacement value of over \$5M. Facilities *not* maintained by Council include Tumut Basketball Stadium and Showground, any of the golf and bowling clubs in the LGA and Tennis Courts at Adelong, Batlow and Tumut.

There are differences across the LGA in relation to user fees for sports facilities and activities undertaken by Council staff versus what user groups do themselves. There is a small grants program in the former Tumut Shire that could be reviewed across the LGA.

Council has recently secured significant grants for several major projects. Grants are an important means of funding renewal and upgrade of facilities (reducing the burden on Council) and are often secured by user groups themselves.

A Recreation Needs Study has been identified as a vital means of prioritising maintenance activities as well as infrastructure renewals and future improvements across the LGA.

The 2016 Telephone Survey included a question about 'recreational facilities' in general (i.e. including parks, sportsgrounds and pools) but in 2018 this was expanded to include a specific question about 'sports facilities'.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.64	-	3.85	-	-5%	No data from 2016

Older participants in the survey and those living in Tumut, i.e. the 2720 postcode, said they were more satisfied with sports facilities (table 1.1), while younger participants and those with children at home rated the service more important (table 1.2).

6% of participants identified sports facilities as one of the three most important uses of Council resources outside the 'known critical' services (graph 2.5).

Council rated towards the lower end of performance for sports facilities compared to the eight other regional councils surveyed in the last two years (graph 3.1).

Results of the Budget Allocator were generally supportive of the current level of service, with a fairly even spread of support for an increase or a decrease apart from this.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	440,000	Increased service levels improving the quality of playing surfaces and facilities at Sportsgrounds and Facilities. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	415,000	Increased service levels improving the quality of surface and facilities at Sportsgrounds and Facilities. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	390,000	Current levels of maintenance and improvement	
Mid-range decrease	365,000	Decreased maintenance, reduced renewal of facilities with lower priority items that are no longer serviceable removed rather than replaced	
Decreased service	340,000	Decreased maintenance, reduced renewal of facilities with lower priority items that are no longer serviceable removed rather than replaced	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Recognition of the value of sportsgrounds to the community - general support to maintain current services, significant portion to improve them
- General, but not universal, support for user fees, should be tied to work undertaken / opportunities to increase service levels
- Very little support for Tumut multipurpose centre - concerns over affordability.

22. Stormwater Drainage

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$21k	\$285k	\$264k

Council maintains around 52km of urban stormwater drainage pipes. This infrastructure is valued at over \$35M.

Council generally takes a reactive approach to maintenance (responding to problems) due to the cost of CCTV inspections. Allocating more to street sweeping in autumn (covered under roads budgets) to collect leaves would reduce blockage problems.

Inspections of a sample of pipes has been undertaken primarily to assess the overall condition and broader scale data collection for the system is in progress. This will help identify renewal needs and also inform capacity modelling, which has only been undertaken on a limited number of catchments at this stage.

Revenues for the service are generated from a \$25 per year charge on urban properties in the former Tumbarumba Shire, which needs to be reviewed across the area.

This service was not included in the Telephone Survey or Budget Allocator as options are not easily defined at this stage.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Specific issues identified for increases, significant portion satisfied with the current service

- Significant (but not universal) support for \$25 charge at Tumbarumba to be extended to other areas

23.

Street Trees

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$0k	\$270k	\$270k

There are approximately 50,000 trees in urban areas on land owned and/or controlled by Council. The significant social, environmental and economic value of these trees is widely recognised. There are also significant safety risks if trees are not appropriately managed.

Council receives over 300 requests about tree maintenance issues each year. Council carries out inspections and maintenance based on industry standards focused on risk that consider the size, condition and type of tree as well as activities taking place beneath it.

Because the costs associated with undertaking extensive maintenance (pruning, removal of limbs, etc.) are significant, Council is often faced with the need to remove large trees rather than undertaking maintenance works because budgets are simply not available to do so except for significant trees in key locations. Council undertakes significant works to address elm beetles in all towns. Essential Energy undertakes maintenance of trees impeding on safe clearance distances from powerlines. That cost is borne by them.

The investment in new street trees includes not only the initial purchase, planting and guarding but watering for the first few years along with formative pruning. An adopt-a-tree program is being explored. Council generally imposes a requirement on developers to plant and maintain (for the first few years) street trees on land outside new developments.

As a minimum, when Council removes a street tree, it aims to provide one to replace it. Council has also identified street tree planting plans in many urban areas (consistent species selection has a significant visual impact) although the ability to implement these is very limited given current funding. Council generally plants around 150 street trees per year (some replacements, others new).

The Telephone Survey did not include a specific question related to street trees. The question about parks, reserves and playgrounds is arguably related.

The Budget Allocator did offer options for street trees, with a considerable portion of participants indicating they would prefer a higher level of service (note there was no reduced service offered as the current is considered the minimum in view of the risks).

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	395,000	Increased capacity to respond to tree maintenance requests. More street trees (30%) planted to both replace trees that are removed, and to provide new trees both individually and over entire lengths of streets. Tell us your priorities!	
Mid-range increase	345,000	Increased capacity to respond to tree maintenance requests. More street trees (15%) planted to both replace trees that are removed, and to provide new trees. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	270,000	Given the level of risk associated with street trees, the current service is considered the minimum level.	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Community would like to be consulted about the types of trees that are planted where, and when
- Issue of species of tree (introduced vs indigenous/native)
- Largely agree that street trees are important for visual amenity, shade and habitat
- Opportunities for community groups or residents to adopt a tree/s and support it to be watered and nurtured while growing, and pruned for safety as it matures

24. Swimming Pools

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$100k	\$1,019k	\$919k

Council operates pools at Adelong, Batlow, Khancoban, Tumbarumba and Tumut. These facilities including associated buildings, carparks, etc. have a replacement value of over \$10M although the most significant costs are involved in their operation (supervision, maintenance, water quality, some heating).

Opening hours (particularly start/end of season) are responsive to usage and listed on Council’s website. A swipe card system is in place at Adelong, Batlow and Tumut. In 2017, Council eliminated entry fees (revenue figures are from kiosk sales).

As noted in relation to the Sportsgrounds and Parks services above, the 2016 Telephone Survey did not specifically seek feedback on pools, but the 2018 survey (table 1.3) found that pools had one of the lowest gaps between satisfaction and importance, suggesting the service Council is delivering is close to meeting the community’s expectations generally.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
-	3.66	-	3.86	-	-5%	No data from 2016

Females generally considered the service more important than males (table 1.2).

The survey also found that 7% those surveyed consider pools to be one of the three most important uses of Council resources (graph 2.5); that satisfaction levels compared to other regional councils were about average (graph 3.1), and that pools are a weak driver of satisfaction with Council overall (picture 2.1).

Results from the Budget Allocator showed pools received among the highest ‘votes’ for a decreased level of service (this aligns with the telephone survey: if there is little or no gap in what Council is delivering relative to expectations, the community is more likely to accept a lower level of service so that funds can be freed up for other priorities). However, it is important to note that the majority of responses overall were in favour of the current or an increased level of service.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased operating hours	855,000	Increase opening hours (season) by 1 week and open all public holidays for all pools. Tell us your priorities!	0 20 40 60 80 100
Increased operating hours	840,000	Increase opening hours (season) by 1 week for all pools. Tell us your priorities!	
Current service	805,000	Current season and no entry fees	
Decreased operating hours	770,000	Decrease opening hours (season) by 1 week for all pools	
Decreased subsidy	655,000	Reinstate entry fees to pools (will generate \$150,000 in revenue to assist funding of pool operations)	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Divided opinion: about two thirds said they would prefer to see Council reinstate the entry fees, citing the ‘fair share’ principle (not everyone uses the pools and some people live too far away to use them, so those who are using them should contribute to the cost of running them) or stating they were happy to pay for using them
- Those who supported the continuation of free entry cited the health benefits of swimming and the social benefits of encouraging greater use
- Suggestions about options to minimise impacts of re-introducing fees (e.g. nominal / gold coin only, kids under 5 free, etc.)

25.

Tourism

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$115k	\$680k	\$565k

Tourism is considered separately, however there are strong linkages to economic development as well as community development and events.

Council has adopted a Destination Management Plan to clearly identify the roles, responsibilities and actions of the various stakeholders in the management of the destination to increase visitation and the length of stay of visitors.

A key focus of the Plan is product development (e.g. investment in cycling and mountain biking trails, experiences such as cidery and craft brewing, wineries, Snowy 2.0 and heritage as well as accommodation).

Council operates a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at Tumbarumba and pays a contribution to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for the operation of Tumut VIC. Council has an arrangement with NPWS for the Khancoban VIC where NPWS will lease the building for 20 years, after which time ownership will transfer to Council. This is cost neutral to Council other than \$10k p.a. for landscape maintenance.

Council undertakes marketing via tourism websites and is involved in a number of regional programs such as Taste Riverina, Thrive Riverina and Destination Riverina Murray.

The Telephone Survey sought feedback on ‘tourism development’.






Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.13	3.38	3.80	3.96	-18%	-15%	Improving

The significant increase in both satisfaction and importance is notable. Participants with children at home were generally more satisfied with the service (table 1.1) and saw it as more important (table 1.2). Those over 60 years generally saw the service as less important.

23% of participants saw tourism as one of the three most important uses of Council resources excluding ‘known critical’ services (graph 2.5) – one of the highest responses for any service. 6% of participants identified better tourism development as the most important thing Council needs to do over the next 12 months to improve its performance (graph 5.1), although it was found to be a weak driver of overall satisfaction (picture 2.1).

Comparisons against the eight other regional councils surveyed in the last two years suggest that Council is performing ‘above average’ in relation to tourism (graph 3.2).

Results of the Budget Allocator suggest a preference for an increase in the level of service.

Option	Budget	Consequences	
Increased service	830,000	Increased marketing, research and support for industry, additional regional tourism product development and regional tourism promotion	
Mid-range increase	730,000	Some increased marketing, research and support for industry, additional regional tourism product development and regional tourism promotion	
Current service	680,000	Maintain current support for marketing, research, product development, promotions, tourist information centres at Tumut, Tumberumba and Khancoban	
Mid-range decrease	630,000	Reduction in spend on Visitor Information Centres (opening hours, quality of service), regional tourism product development and regional tourism marketing	
Decreased service	530,000	Reduction in spend on Visitor Information Centres (opening hours, quality of service), little or no investment in regional tourism product development, reduction in regional tourism marketing	

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Successful tourism relies on quality service provision in other Council service areas - public toilets, streetscapes, parking, signage, road network (Brindabella Rd)
- Query the continued relevance of Visitor Information Centres in an age where people get their information online
- Potential to support funding for tourism through a business/tourism levy

26. Waste Management

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$2,365k	\$2,365k	\$0k

Like water supply and sewerage, waste management is treated as a separate business unit (domestic waste management must be treated as such by legislation). Revenues from fees and charges cover the full cost of the service.

Domestic waste collection consists of a weekly 120/140 litre bin for putrescible waste and a fortnightly 240 litre bin for recyclables. Collection areas include residential areas in towns and some commercial premises as well as rural areas that are on collection routes between towns, provided there is a safe place for the truck to stop. Auditing of bins to improve compliance with recycling have been generally positive, with 85% being good, 14% OK (some contamination) and only 1% of bins being rejected for excessive contamination, with follow-up being carried out).

Council operates supervised transfer stations at Adelong, Khancoban, Talbingo, Tumbarumba and Tumut and a landfill at Batlow. Opening hours have been refined over many years to balance the need to keep them open long enough to cater for peak periods while limiting the costs of supervision. Gate charges are set to encourage recycling.

At each change of season, Council waives gate fees for up to one visit per vehicle per day. While this is costly, it is considered a far better alternative than bulky goods collection or the risk of illegal dumping.

Council also undertakes waste education programs for around 1,000 kids each year in collaboration with REROC group of councils.

Even though the former councils collaborated in a number of areas, there is a need to prepare a Waste Strategy covering the new local government area to supplement the regional strategy prepared by REROC. This will also provide an opportunity to review opportunities to target particular waste streams, consider different services and improve landfill diversion and beneficial reuse of resources.

The Telephone Survey sought feedback on 'waste management'. Despite a small increase in satisfaction, the overall satisfaction gap increased due to a larger increase in importance.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.66	3.69	4.19	4.27	-13%	-14%	Increasing satisfaction Declining due to gap

Participants living in Tumut, i.e. 2720 postcode, and those with children at home were generally more satisfied with the service (table 1.1), while females generally rated it more important.

Council's performance was average in comparison to the eight other regional councils surveyed in the last two years (graph 3.2).

The Budget Allocator did not include options on waste management as it was not possible to define specific options at this stage.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Free waste drop-off weekends are great
- Equity of service needs review e.g. access for rural residents, charges
- Questions over destination of recyclable materials – later clarified that currently markets do exist

27.

Water Supply

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$5,100k	\$5,100k	\$0k

Council maintains around 250km of water supply pipelines and six water treatment plants (Batlow, Brungle, Khancoban, Talbingo, Tumbarumba and Tumut, which also supplies Adelong). The total replacement value of this infrastructure is over \$100M.

National Competition Policy requires water supply and sewerage services to be operated as distinct businesses where the costs of the service are paid for by users, or any subsidies are explicit. Best Practice Guidelines for Water Supply and Sewerage Services (issued by NSW government) reinforce the user pays principles.

Maintenance of pipes (fixing leaks and breaks, etc.) is undertaken on a reactive basis. Pipes are replaced on a risk basis, with critical supply lines given priority. Scheduled maintenance of mechanical and electrical equipment is critical for reliability. A Drinking Water Quality Management System is in place to ensure the safety of the supply, which is also monitored by testing of the supply and reporting to NSW Health.

Developer contributions are \$5,940 per property in the former Tumut Shire. There are no charges for developers in the former Tumbarumba Shire, although access charges are significantly higher (\$358 versus \$139 per property). Usage charges are similar up to 200kL, after which usage charges in the former Tumbarumba Shire increase significantly.

The Telephone Survey included water supply and sewerage services together.

Satisfaction		Importance		Gap		Trend
2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	
3.72	3.84	4.29	4.32	-13%	-11%	Improving

Satisfaction ratings were higher for those with children at home (table 1.1), and importance ratings were higher for females (table 1.2).

Council's performance with regards to water supply was slightly below the mean compared to the eight other regional councils surveyed in the past two years (graph 3.1).

Water supply and sewerage services were not included in the Budget Allocator because of the difficulty in defining service level options at this stage. The consideration of such options will be part of the process to prepare a new Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy, the peak planning document for water supply and sewerage services.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board in relation to both water supply and sewerage:

- General support for maintaining current service and many for increasing if required
- Concerns about developer charges/contributions inhibiting development

Additional points raised by the Community Sounding Board specific to water supply:

- Support for automated meter reading / access for customers
- Need for better notification before mains are flushed

Internal services

The list of internal services is presented below.

#	Service Description		
1	Business Units	6	Information Technology
2	Depot and Fleet	7	Infrastructure Asset Planning
3	Finance	8	Records Management
4	Governance	9	Risk Management
5	Human Resources	10	Workplace Health and Safety

These were not included in the Telephone Survey or Budget Allocator as they are not delivered directly to the community, but rather support and enable the 'external' services however feedback was sought from the Community Sounding Board.

1.

Business Units

Revenue	Expenditure	Net Cost
\$10,000k	\$9,500k	-\$500k

Council's civil contracting activities have historically made up around a quarter of total ongoing revenues and have generated a consistent dividend of around \$400,000 to \$500,000 p.a. that Council then spends on services delivered to the community.

The bulk of these are Road Maintenance Council Contracts (RMCCs) and associated ordered works (construction projects) for Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) on main roads in the area except for the Snowy Mountains Highway. They include a consistent \$1.4M p.a. for road maintenance, plus around \$7M in construction projects.

Council also undertakes commercial contracts for various external (private) customers including other councils, State government and organisations like Snowy Hydro as well as private customers. The value of these works was historically around \$3.5M p.a. but has decreased to around \$1.5M p.a. Council's Long Term Financial Plan forecasts revenue growth of \$500k p.a. from private / external works (i.e. other than RMS) for the next four years and a return of similar dividends to those delivered previously.

While the dividends are important to supplement Council's constrained revenues, there are a range of other benefits that are arguably just as important. In particular, the economies of

scale realised: Council's own infrastructure works are valued at around \$10M p.a. for operations and maintenance and \$7M for construction. Civil contracting activities (at around \$10M p.a.) thus significantly increase turnover which lowers overheads, increases plant utilisation (decreasing hire costs), attracts more staff and specialist resources and improves Council's emergency response capability.

This work also helps Council build a stronger workforce culture that is focused on costs, delivering agreed outcomes and manage scope changes. It minimises impacts of fluctuations in its own works programs (i.e. the need for Council to scale up and down, potentially). Local contractors often benefit from Council undertaking such contracts as the additional resources required to deliver major works are generally subcontractors, and it opens the door to works of a larger scale than they could bid for themselves.

It is important that Council manages the commercial risks associated with such work (in particular via adequate governance and financial controls and reporting) and is able to demonstrate compliance with National Competition Policy.

The loss of RMCC contracts is not an immediate threat, but it has been proposed by RMS and State governments in the past. It is important that Council minimises this risk by ensuring it has the capability to bid for this work if required given the impacts of the loss of this work on Council would be considerable in terms of economies of scale (above).

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- Considerable support for Council to pursue RMS/external works, recognising the benefits of doing so and risks of the loss of RMS work
- Some cynicism as to the benefits / value of Snowy Works and Services
- Emphasis should be on larger jobs, not competing with locals

2-10.

Internal Services

Approx. 40 FTE staff

Internal services make up a considerable portion of Council's overall budget. The majority of expenditure is associated with employee costs: there are around 40 full time equivalent staff employed in internal services (not including depot and fleet or senior management).

As noted in the introduction under Financial Sustainability, it is important to recognise that Council has other options to improve its operating performance other than reducing service levels and raising rates, fees and charges. These include generating additional external revenues (as discussed under Business Units) and improving efficiencies and productivity.

Internal services *enable* the delivery of external services, and so play an important role in the pursuit of efficiencies and productivity gains. Examples include the implementation of improved information technology, reducing risks, optimising the plant fleet (minimising down time, reviewing what Council owns, how long it is kept, etc.), improving long-term planning for infrastructure assets to reduce long-term costs of asset ownership, etc.

As noted earlier, Council's business improvement program has recently commenced, and it is expected that internal services will be an important focus for opportunities for further efficiencies to be identified.

Summary points in feedback from the Community Sounding Board:

- General desire to see Council pursue efficiencies, various suggestions about opportunities to do so
- Significant recognition of the need to comply with legislative requirements and managed risk.

5. Attachments

Snowy Valleys Council Community Satisfaction Survey: Jetty Research November 2018

Comments from online Budget Allocator tool

Comments from Community Sounding Board (by Service)