



# 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey

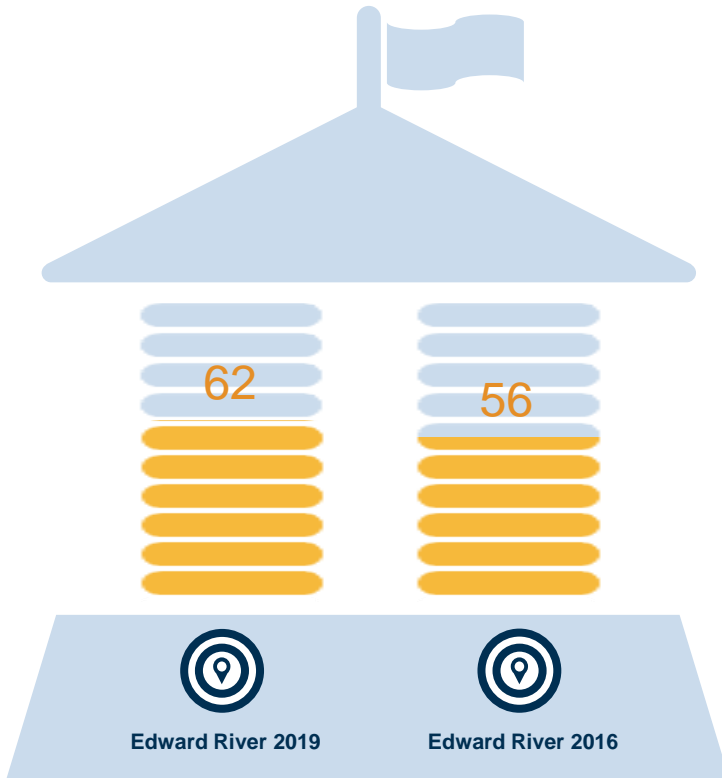
Edward River Council

June 2019





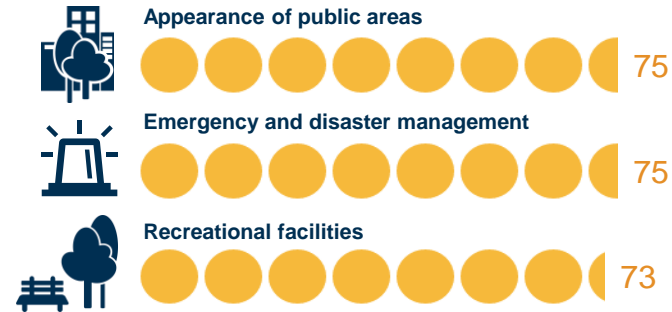
# Edward River Council – at a glance



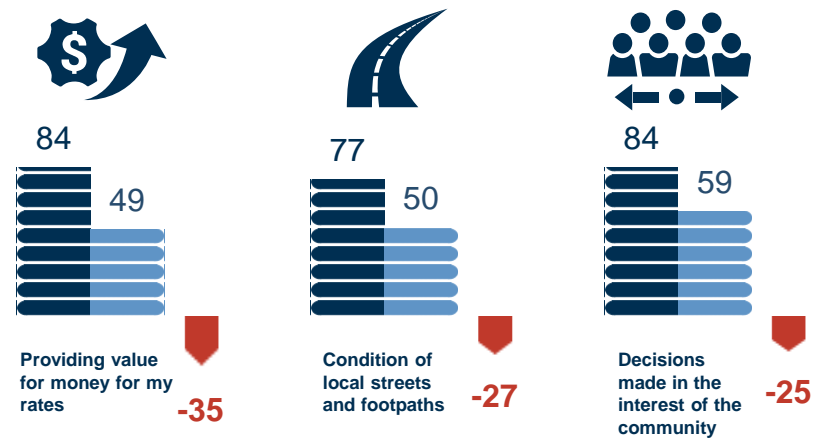
## Overall Council performance

Results shown are index scores out of 100.

## Top 3 performing areas



## Top 3 areas for improvement



Importance Performance Net differential

Note: Net differentials are calculated based on the un-rounded importance and performance scores, then rounded to the nearest whole number.



## Background and objectives

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This report outlines the results and recommendations of the 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey for Edward River Council.

In a first for the NSW Local Government sector, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) coordinated delivery of a Community Satisfaction Survey amongst newly established councils in NSW in 2016. The original survey was intended to produce data to assist new councils in measuring success of implementation.

The 2016 survey provided baseline information on community views towards, and satisfaction with, the services of council. The research is an important tool for councils to better understand what matters to their communities and enable them to focus their implementation activities to improve services, focus communications, enhance community perceptions of council and build stronger relationships between councils and their communities.

Following on from the 2016 survey, this 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey provides an update for Edward River Council on key performance measures. Findings will provide strategic insight **to inform priority areas for the upcoming 12 months.**



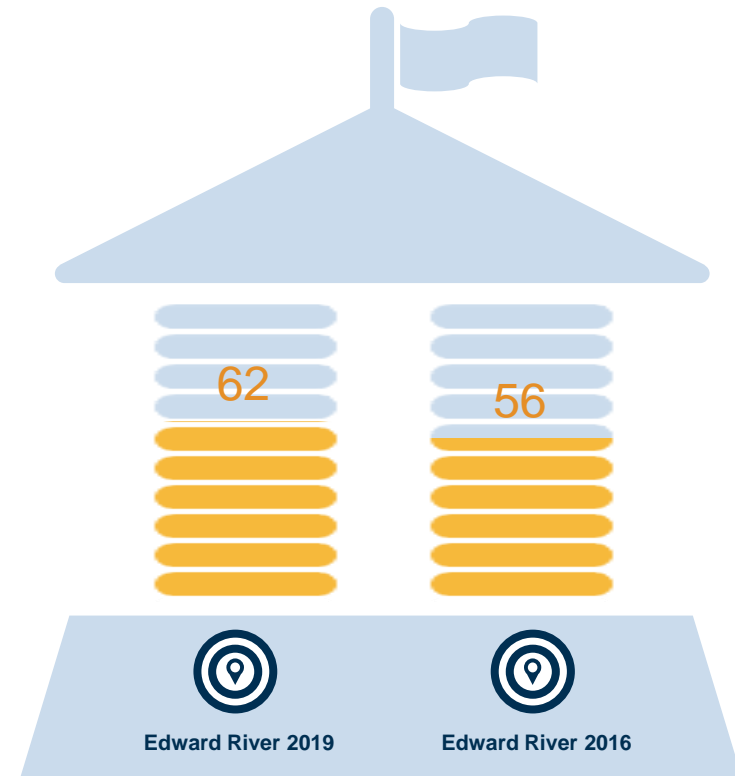
## Overall performance

The overall performance index score of 62 for Edward River Council represents a significant six point improvement (at the 95% confidence interval) on the 2016 result.

- Improvements in overall performance ratings are largely driven by women (index score of 64, up six points) and residents aged 40 to 64 years (index score of 60, up six points). Both cohorts significantly improved their rating of overall performance compared to 2016.
- Perceptions of overall performance also significantly improved among high users of council services (index score of 64, up six points).
- While there are no significant differences amongst demographics cohorts compared to the Council average, women and residents aged 65+ years (index scores of 64) rate overall performance highest.
- Conversely, men (index score of 59) rate Council's overall performance lowest.

Four times as many residents rate Edward River Council's overall performance as 'very good' or 'good' (52%) than those who rate it as 'very poor' or 'poor' (13%). A further 34% sit mid-scale, rating Council's overall performance as 'average'.

### Overall Council performance



Results shown are index scores out of 100.



## Customer contact and service

### Contact with council

Almost half of Edward River Council residents (46%) have had recent contact with Council. Rate of contact is slightly lower than in 2016 (49%), however this does not represent a significant difference.

- Residents aged 40 to 64 years had the most contact with Council (54%) in 2019.
- Conversely, residents aged 65+ years had the least contact with Council (39%).

The most common method of recent contact is 'in person' (32%, up a significant seven percentage points since 2016) and 'telephone' (15%, down five points).

Overall, newsletters sent via mail (25%, down four percentage points from 2016) and advertising in local newspapers (22%, up three percentage points) are considered the best way for Council to inform residents about news, information and upcoming events.

However, among residents under 50 years of age there is a stronger preference for digital forms of communication. 23% (unchanged since 2016) prefer newsletters sent by email and 19% (up two points) prefer social media updates, although 22% (down three points) still prefer newsletters sent via mail.

Traditional forms of communication are still favoured among residents aged over 50 years. Newsletters sent via mail (27%, down five points from 2016) and advertising in local newspapers (26%) are preferred among this cohort.

### Customer service

Edward River Council's customer service index of 75 is a significant improvement on the 2016 result (eight points higher).

Two-thirds of those who have contacted Council (66%) rate Council's customer service as 'very good' or 'good'. Almost half (45%) rate customer service as 'very good', representing a 15 point increase in 'very good' ratings compared with 2016.

- Perceptions of customer service improved among all demographic cohorts (although not significantly), with the largest increases occurring among residents aged 65+ years (index score of 79, up nine index points) and women (index score of 79, up eight index points). These cohorts also rate Council's overall performance higher than other demographic groups.
- A majority of women (56%) rate Council's customer service as 'very good'.

Customer service is one of Edward River Council's top performing service areas in 2019.



# Top performing areas and areas for improvement

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## Top performing areas

Outside of customer service, the top three performing service areas for Edward River Council are:

- Appearance of public areas (index score of 75)
- Emergency and disaster management (index score of 75)
- Recreational facilities (index score of 73).

Parks and gardens are volunteered by 15% of residents as the best thing about Council in 2019.

Notably, perceptions of performance on recreational facilities improved significantly compared to 2016 (up five index points), consistent with significant improvements across most core measures in 2019.

- The most improved measure is being a well-run and managed council (index score of 63) which increased by a significant 13 index points compared to 2016. With the exception of residents aged 18 to 39 years, perceptions of performance in this area significantly improved amongst all demographic cohorts.
- The next most improved measures are the condition of local streets and footpaths (index score of 50, up nine points) and providing value for money for my rates (index score of 49, up six points).

## Areas for improvement

Perceptions of Council performance have not experienced any significant declines from 2016. In fact, the only measure that has not improved significantly is informing the community (index score of 63, up four points).

Council's lowest performing measures are:

- Providing value for money for my rates (index score of 49)
- Condition of local streets and footpaths (index score of 50)
- Condition of sealed local roads (index score of 50)
- Maintenance of unsealed roads (index score of 50)
- Business development (index score of 50).

Providing value for money for my rates and the condition of local streets and footpaths stand out as two areas potentially in need of immediate attention. In both areas, rated importance exceeds perceived performance by a wide margin.

- However as mentioned, Council has managed to significantly improve performance in these areas compared to 2016. Council should aim to continue to build on these improvements and lift perceptions on these under-performing areas.



## Focus areas for coming 12 months

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**Council performance significantly improved in almost all service areas since 2016. This is a positive result for Council.**

In terms of priorities for the year ahead, Edward River Council should focus on maintaining and improving performance in the individual service areas that most influence perception of overall performance:

- Being a well-run and managed council
- Community consultation
- Providing value for money for my rates
- Working with State and Federal Government to deliver local priorities and services.

Focusing on good communication to residents on key service areas may help to further improve perceptions among the community. In particular, Council may want to focus on service areas that are currently performing lowest relative to other service areas:

- Providing value for money for my rates (index score of 49)
- Condition of local streets and footpaths (index score of 50)
- Condition of sealed local roads (index score of 50)
- Maintenance of unsealed roads (index score of 50)
- Business development (index score of 50).

Most of the aforementioned areas also suffer from a perception gap where stated importance exceeds perceived performance by a relatively wide margin:

- Providing value for money for my rates (margin of 35 points)
- The condition of local streets and footpaths (margin of 27 points)
- Decisions made in the interest of the community (margin of 25 points)
- Being a well-run and managed council (margin of 23 points).

More generally, consideration should also be given to residents aged 18 to 39 years, who appear to be driving negative opinion in a number of areas in 2019.

- It is also important not to ignore, and to learn from, what is working amongst other groups, especially women and residents aged 65+ years, and use these lessons to build on performance experience and perceptions.

On the positive side, Council should look to maintain and build upon its significant improvements on core service areas over the next 12 months.



# Summary of findings





## Summary of core measures

Performance Measures	Edward River Council 2019	Edward River Council 2016	Highest score	Lowest score
Overall performance	62	56	Women, 65+ years	Men
Being a well-run and managed council	63	50	65+ years	18-39 years
Decisions made in the interest of the community	59	54	65+ years	18-39 years
Community consultation and engagement	61	57	Women	65+ years
Informing the community	63	59	65+ years	18-39 years
Ease of access to services	67	62	65+ years	18-39 years
The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area	50	41	65+ years	18-39 years
Recreational facilities	73	69	65+ years	18-39 years
Providing value for money for my rates	49	43	65+ years	Men, 18-64 years
Customer service	75	67	Women, 65+ years	Men, 18-39 years



# Summary of key community satisfaction

Key measures summary results (%)

