



WALCHA COUNCIL **YOUR VOICE**

A SUMMARY OF PAST
SURVEY RESULTS

Endorsed by Council 28 October 2020



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INTRODUCTION

Council exists to provide services to you and work for you. We are responsible for realising your vision for Walcha.

This report presents the feedback we received from the two most recent surveys about council services. It covers the 2018 survey regarding asset management and level of service, and the most recent 2020 survey regarding Council Facilities and our Youth.

Your feedback gives Council a great insight into how you experience our services and what is most important to you.

We are striving to create a culture of open communication and consultation between Council and our community. Closing the feedback loop for surveys we ask our locals to complete is part of that journey.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Reporting back to community on how we are progressing with these actions is critically important.

Many of the actions developed from these surveys are included as key initiatives in Council's 2020-2021 Operational Plan. Some will be incorporated into our new Community Strategic Plan (2030+) and Delivery Program (2021/22 to 2024/25) which will be developed over the next 12 to 18 months.

Council will use these planning documents, as well as our annual reports, regular progress updates provided in Council Meetings, and community newsletters to continue to keep residents informed of our activities and how we plan to address community concerns.

Over the next 12 – 18 months we will be asking for feedback to support the review of our strategic plans and develop new ones. Our next topic is the future of Walcha's waste which will commence November 2020.

Many residents have indicated their intention to continue to provide feedback when we need it, and to continue to respond to surveys like the ones completed in the past.

Thank you for committing to provide this feedback to us. Community feedback plays a critical role in shaping our work in local government.



2018 ASSET MAINTENANCE AND LEVEL OF SERVICE SURVEY

OVERVIEW

The survey covered items relating to council's level of service and asset management. It specifically covered the following categories:

- Roads
- Bridges
- Parks and gardens
- Water and Sewer
- Waste Management
- Kerb and Gutter
- Footpaths and cycleways
- Bus Stops and other transport facilities
- Lighting in public spaces
- Stormwater management
- Picnic Tables, Barbeques and seating
- Community Signage
- Cemeteries
- Playground Equipment
- Sporting Facilities
- Parks and Gardens

We asked some specific questions relating to Council's core service items such as roads, bridges, stormwater, water, sewer, waste and parks and gardens.

"Thunderbolts Road through town is in poor condition for a main road. For example surface, kerbs, gutter. The bridge culvert programme is very good."

136

responses were received for our 2018 Asset Maintenance and Level of Service survey

38

respondents confirmed that they lived on an unsealed road

51

respondents confirmed that they lived on a sealed road

66%

of respondents thought we were managing the current level (2018) of road maintenance our roads 'reasonably well' or better.

88%

of respondents were happy with how we maintain our parks and gardens.

76%

of respondents thought gate fees at our waste facility were unnecessary.

- Roads were rated the most important priority, closely followed by water, sewer and bridges.
- Many great comments received regarding improvement ideas



2018 – WHO RESPONDED?

136 respondents represent approximately 4.3% of our total Local Government Area population, and approximately 8.4% of all properties. Respondents were from:

Walcha Township	54
Yarrowitch	9
Niangala	9
Ingleba	0
Woolbrook	7
Walcha Road	0
Walcha Surrounds	24
Nowendoc	3
Unknown	29

Total respondents

136

2020 COUNCIL FACILITIES AND OUR YOUTH SURVEY

OVERVIEW

Council has received an unprecedented level of grant funding over the past two years, and there is now also potential for COVID-19 recovery stimulus packages still to come. It is now more important than ever that council has effective strategic plans to shape our community into the future. This survey asked specific questions relating to council facilities and our youth.

Council facilities include council owned and operated facilities such as our library, head office, Service NSW, works depot, pool, parks and green spaces, community gym, squash centre, Community Care and Visitor Information Centre etc. This survey has helped Council assess our current facilities and identify how they will need to change in the future to continue to support our community.

Your responses help us to understand how we need to change in the future to support the Youth of Walcha. This covers youth spaces, including parks, library and ovals, as well as youth programs and initiatives.

This work has expanded further beyond our initial survey to meet with local schools and youth groups to hear first hand what our youth are passionate about and to hear their ideas first hand. This helps us to shape “whole of community” plan to support our youth.

“The library has great staff and with more space this facility could offer more, particularly to youth as an indoor space. At the moment it’s greatest hindrance is its size.”

“The Lions Park has great potential, but is lacklustre and dangerous.”

“A nicer skate park or exercise area aimed at teenagers.”

“A basketball half court.”

“Musical opportunities – instruments. Cultural opportunities, speech, craft, art competitions and hobby workshops.”

205

responses were received, with approximately 60% of respondents completing a paper copy.

51%

improvement in participation compared to the 2018 survey.

90%

of respondents like hearing about Council news in the Apsley Advocate.

52%

of respondents said they visit our library

93%

said their chances of responding to future surveys was ‘likely’, with 40% confirming they ‘absolutely would’.

93%

of respondents were aged 30 years or over.

57%

of respondents have lived in Walcha for more than 20 years.

52%

of library goes visit at least once per fortnight

64%

of respondents use our levee bank walk “regularly” or “a lot”.

63

respondents would like to see improvements made at the pool.

126

respondents considered the priority of youth access to safe driving programs as important or higher.

142

respondents considered opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships important or higher.

ACTION PLAN

You have spoken, now it's up to us to take action. Your feedback and ideas guide us to develop Council's four year Delivery Program and one year Operational Plan. It is critically important that council balance community feedback and priorities, within available budget, resources and time. We would love to be able to do everything, however sometimes it is just not possible. But – if we can act on your ideas we will!

In Council's current year Operational Plan we are undertaking a number of key initiatives. These are shown below:

These strategies will help shape the framework to deliver for the community into the future for these items. Your recent feedback is especially important for the development of our Youth Strategy and Council Facilities Strategy.

While there are some plans to be developed as part of these strategies, we can act on some of your detailed feedback now. The tables below show council's actions supported by your feedback, and how we are tracking to complete these items for you.



TRANSPORT				
Ref	Feedback	Action	Status	Comment
1	The Thunderbolts Way needs improvement	Secure funding for Thunderbolts Way upgrades and deliver program of work.	In Progress	\$12million in funding secured and program on track for completion mid 2022. Current activities include 8km Section at Glen Morrison scheduled for completion late 2020 and works near town to commence early 2021.
2	Increased sealed sections of road on Kangaroo Flat Road	Program to complete 3.2km of new seal on Kangaroo Flat Road approved July 2020.	Complete	Works Complete early September 2020. Program to complete additional sections in the future to be considered in future works programs.
3	Ramps policy to be followed through with	Council to complete condition assessments of all ramps to identify any unsafe structures and implement the policy	In Progress	Full condition assessments completed July 2020. Identified high risk ramps have been notified.
STRONGER COMMUNITY				
Ref	Feedback	Action	Status	Comment
1	Parks could be improved	Review all outdoor spaces and determine strategy for youth spaces and program for improvement	In progress	Walcha Youth Strategy in development, and program of work to upgrade paths, tables, seats, picnic areas and some toilet facilities in progress
2	Additional seating at the end of levee bank walk near Walcha Central School	Consider options to install additional seating	Not yet commenced	Project to be considered as part of available funding programs
3	Lighting for levee bank walk and bridges	Design and install solar lighting on levee bank walk	In Progress	Funding secured, design work commenced and completion due late 2021
4	Improvements to our library facility, including access, shared spaces, and community priorities	Consider options to extend, redesign or relocate library as part of Council Facilities Strategy	In Progress	Strategy development is underway and due for completion late 2020/early 2021.
5	Upgrades to our Lions Park facility and toilets	Investigate and consider options to improve this facility as part of the Walcha Youth Strategy	In Progress	Project to upgrade toilets approved and underway with completion early 2021. Park upgrade works to be considered as potential project arising from the Walcha Youth Strategy
6	Upgrades or improvement at the skate park	Investigate options to expand skate park, improve visibility, add seating and potentially half court	Not yet commenced	Project to be investigated as a project arising from the Walcha Youth Strategy.
7	Improved accessibility and more covered seating in McHattan Park	Extension and improvements to footpath and install new seating, extend picnic shelter and replace picnic tables and seats.	In Progress	Design work is underway with work scheduled for completion late 2020.
8	Pool facilities review and upgrades	Investigate design options to upgrade pool amenities and opportunities to improve other areas of the pool facility.	In Progress	A number of improvement projects already scheduled, with plans being developed for upgraded amenities facilities.
9	Insufficient parking at community care	Consider options to improve this as part of new Council Facilities Strategy	In Progress	Strategy development is underway and due for completion late 2020/early 2021.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

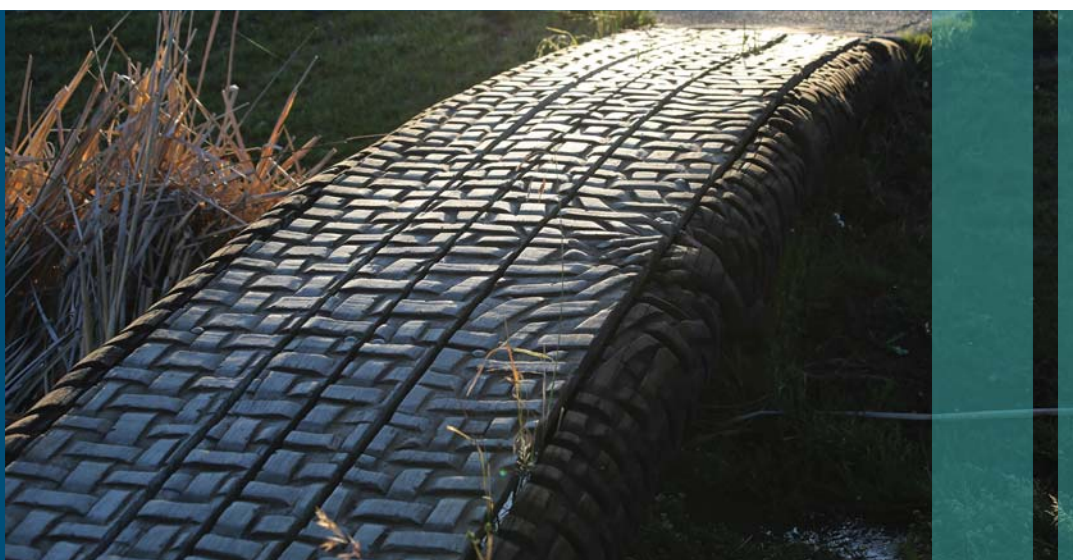
Ref	Feedback	Action	Status	Comment
1	Securing our Water Future by providing additional storage capacity.	Design and Construct a new off creek storage structure.	In Progress	The design of this project is well underway and advocacy for construction funding has commenced. Target completion for design is mid 2021.
2	Uncertainty regarding our future Waste Operations and practices.	Develop the Walcha Waste Strategy 2025 to design and guide our waste future. Ensure community input is provided to help shape future waste service options.	In Progress	Development of Walcha Waste Strategy 2025 has commenced and work is on track for completion April 2021. Community conversations about Walcha's waste to commence early November 2020. Be sure to have your say!
3	Uneven footpaths creating accessibility hazards	Review of Inclusive Access Plan for Walcha Council.	Not yet commenced	Identify funding sources in 2020 and project included in 2021-2022 Operational Plan.
4	Community request for aesthetic bin surrounds in main streets instead of traditional wheelie bins.	Design and install new bespoke Walcha art design bin surrounds	In Progress	Surrounds have been designed and work is underway to install these around town. Scheduled for completion November 2020.
5	Maintenance of levee banks is a priority	Complete drought recovery planting and care works of levee bank walk and gardens	In progress	Continue program of work to restore parks and gardens to fully recover from recent drought.
6	Improve dog control on the levee banks	Design and implement education campaign for residents regarding dog on lead and off lead areas.	Complete	Complete July 2020 using local print media and social media streams.

HEALTH

Ref	Feedback	Action	Status	Comment
1	Cigarette smoking in high foot traffic areas and main streets	Design and implement community education campaign advising of the legislated restrictions for smoking areas near parks and businesses	Not yet commenced	Scheduled to commence 2021
2	Lack of toilet facilities at the cemetery	Install new accessible public toilet at the cemetery	Complete	Commissioned May 2020
3	Nowendoc Toilet facilities in need of upgrade	Design and deliver project to upgrade Nowendoc public toilets	In Progress	Work is underway. Scheduled for completion November 2020.

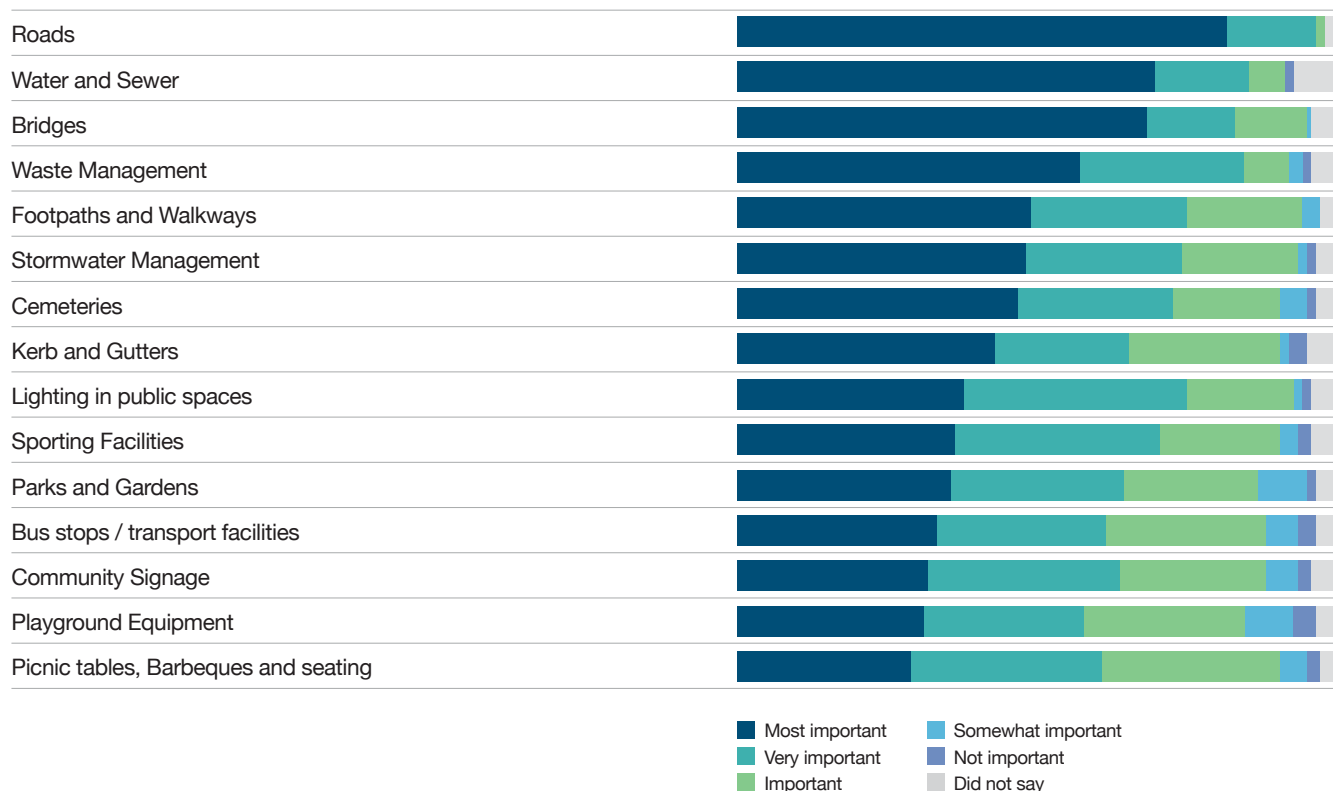
KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

Ref	Feedback	Action	Status	Comment
1	Improve safety on crocodile bridge	Investigate and determine option to direct pedestrians and path users to the alternative and safer route	In Progress	Consideration of preferred option completed by the Arts Advisory committee and council staff, with preferred solution yet to be identified. Scheduled for completion late 2020.
2	Pedestrian safety to between schools and ovals	Design and deliver a project to extend footpath to connect Walcha Central School to John Oxley Oval via footpaths and include new pedestrian crossing near preschool	In Progress	Design work commenced, and options for funding currently being explored. Budget not yet confirmed.
3	Improved pedestrian safety on Fitzroy Street (Blue Hogan) Bridge	Design and construct pedestrian safety rail along bridge sides and design and construct bridge underpass for levee bank walk	In progress	Design work is underway with work scheduled for completion mid 2021
4	Bridge underpass at Fitzroy Street for levee bank walk.	Design and construct a new pedestrian underpass at Fitzroy Street (blue Hogan) bridge.	In Progress	Design work commenced and completion due mid 2021.

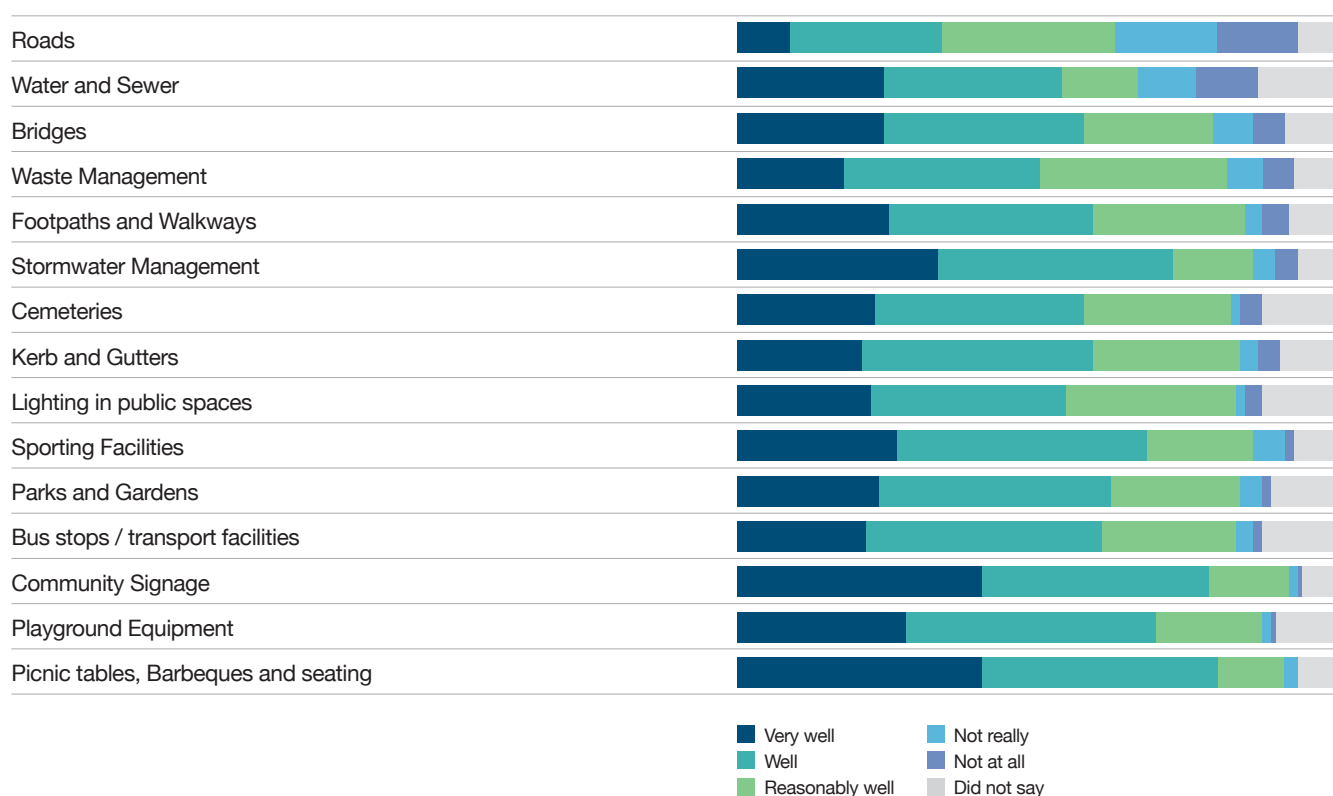


2018 RESULTS 1. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Q: How important do you think it is for Council to maintain these assets?



Q: Do you believe Council is currently meeting your expectations?



2. ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

We asked some specific questions about our sealed roads and unsealed roads.

Q: What type of road did respondents live on?



Sealed Roads	51	38%
Unsealed Roads	32	28%
Did not respond	29	35%

Q: Do you think that our sealed roads are in an acceptable condition?



Yes	66	49%
No	31	23%
Did not respond	39	29%

Of the 32 respondents that noted they lived on an unsealed road we asked what their current and expected levels of service were.



Satisfied with current grading schedule (2018)	32%
Expect one more grade per year	45%
Expect two more grades per year	13%
Did not respond	11%

Q: Do you believe culverts are in an acceptable condition?



Yes	77	57%
No	27	20%
Did not respond	32	24%



Q: Do you think that roadside vegetation is maintained appropriately?



Yes	65	37%
No	42	24%
Did not respond	71	40%

“Roads in the council area are in a state of disrepair”

“We would all like better, but where does the money come from?”

“The bridge at Walcha Road is too narrow, the same with Chimney Swamp Bridge”

“Ideally would love to see more sealed sections on Kangaroo Flat Road, Yarrowitch”

“I am aware that it is very difficult to maintain dirt roads when weather can damage them so easily. Bitumen roads entering Walcha have improved, but south is not so good. I know you rely on funding for these, so overall a good job.”

“The ramps policy needs to be followed through with.”

“Some ramps are very dangerous.”

3. WATER AND SEWER

Q. Do you believe Council provides an acceptable level of service for water and sewer services?



Yes	58	43%
No	34	25%
Did not respond	44	32%

“The most important priority for council is water security for the town.”

“Council needs to embrace more environmental practices. For example water conservation programs and education, waste education, apply for more environmental grants and schemes.”

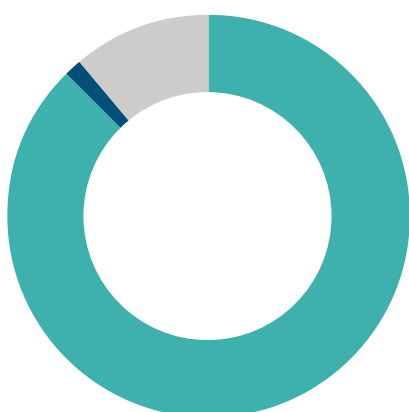
“Water needs to be a top priority for Walcha.”

“Walcha needs a dam!”

“We need more water without restrictions.”

4. PARKS AND GARDENS

Q: Do you think that our parks and gardens are well maintained?



Yes	119	88%
No	2	1%
Did not respond	15	11%

“Staff do an excellent job.”

“McHattan Park is an outstanding facility for locals and tourists.”

“All kept well, but a toilet at the cemetery is essential.”

“Nowendoc toilets are in a terrible state – not appropriate facilities.”

“The town centre needs proper, attractive rubbish bins, not wheelie bins as they are unhygienic and smell.”

“I am very unhappy with the footpaths in Fitzroy and Derby Streets. Very difficult to negotiate wheelchairs, mobile walkers and very uneven for the elderly and infirm.”

5. WASTE MANAGEMENT

We asked some specific questions about our waste services, and 71% of respondents told us that they were satisfied with the current waste services.

However, we understand that since this question was asked there have been some significant changes in our waste services. The conversation about waste needs to consider our current environment, and planning for our future.

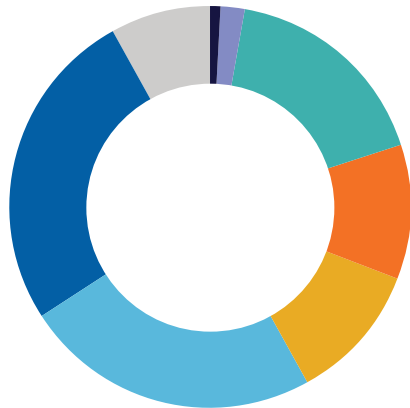
We have been listening to your recent feedback around waste facility opening hours, the introduction of gate fees, and equity in fee application.

Your continued input will help us shape the future of Walcha's waste. Council will soon launch a community conversation concentrating on Walcha's waste.



2020 RESULTS RESPONDENT STATISTICS

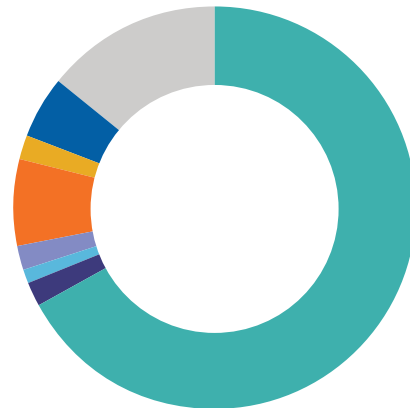
WHO RESPONDED?



AGE

Under 20	1%
20 – 29	2%
30 – 39	17%
40 – 49	11%
50 – 59	11%
60 – 69	24%
70+ years	26%
Did not respond	8%

LOCATION



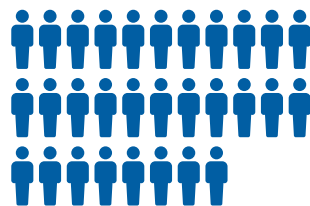
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Walcha Township	67%
Nowendoc	2%
Woolbrook	1%
Walcha Road	2%
Yarrowitch	7%
Ingelba	0%
Niangala	2%
Other	5%
Did not specify	14%



GENDER

Female	73%
Male	27%



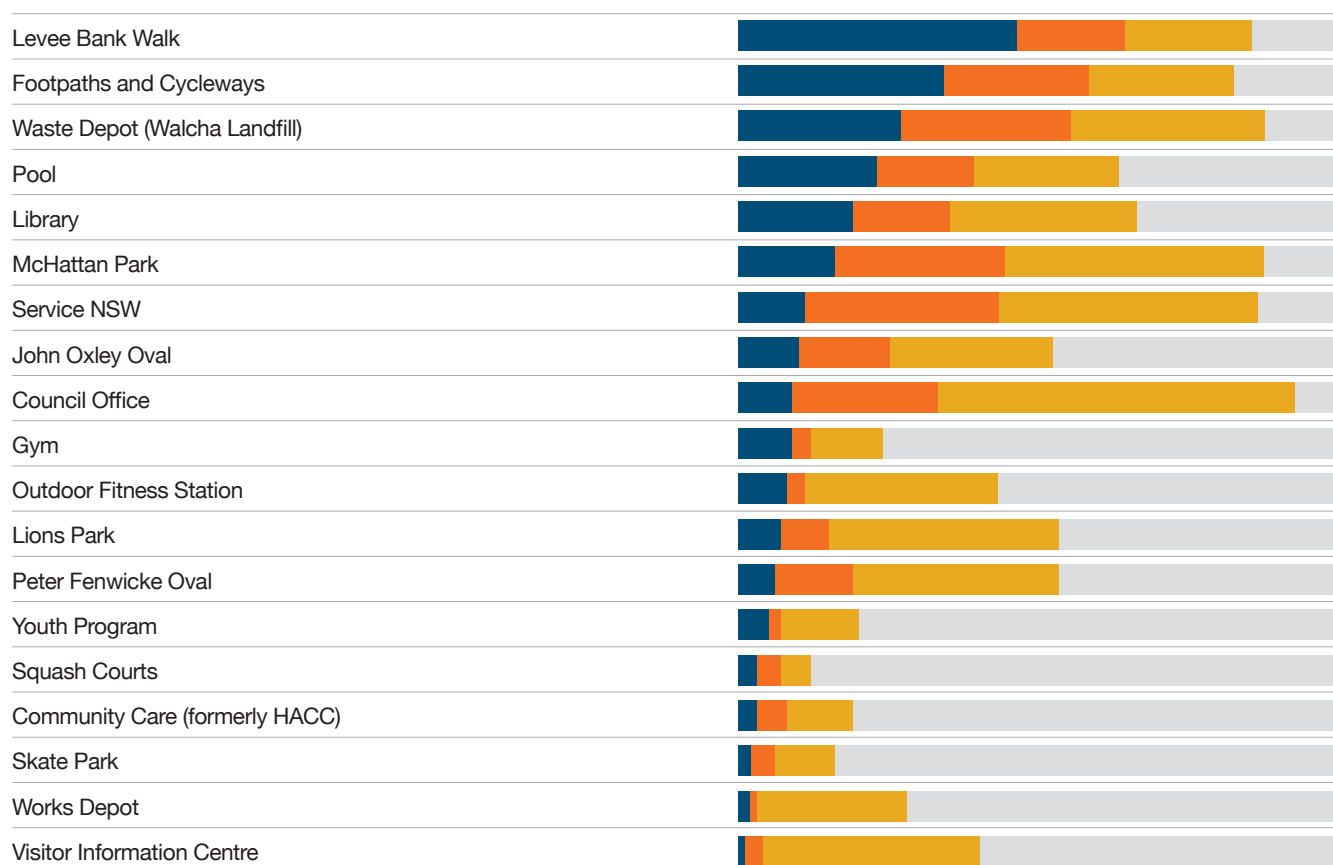
HOW LONG LIVING IN WALCHA COUNCIL AREA?

Less than 2 years	4%
2 – 5 years	7%
6 – 10 years	7%
11 – 20 years	19%
More than 20 years	57%
Did not specify	6%

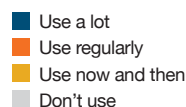
1. COUNCIL FACILITIES

Q. How often do you or members of your family currently use Council services and facilities?

Council facilities named in the survey are listed below



A number of respondents also nominated the golf course as one of their most frequently visited facilities. Although the golf course is not a council owned asset, it was pleasing to see that the golf course has a large following of support from the respondents to the survey.



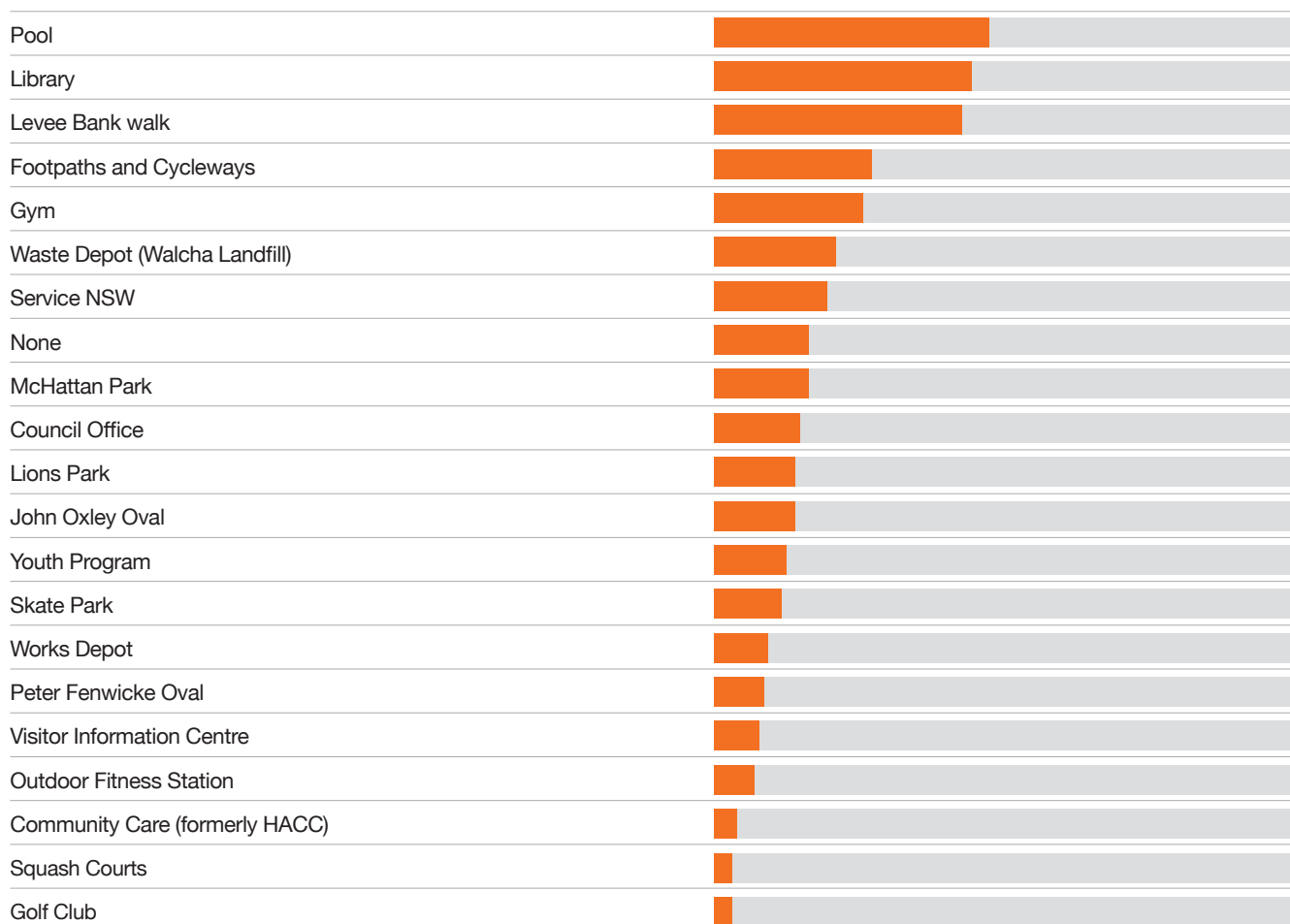
“Connect levee walk to the Koala walk.”

“We need more access to the Walcha waste depot because we only come to town monthly or fortnightly and the fees aren’t fair.”

“It would be great to have more cycle ways and footpaths – walking on the road is dangerous.”

Q. What are the top three council services or facilities that are important to you that you think need improvements?

These are listed below in order of priority from the respondents.



10%

10% of all respondents said that they were happy with the current standard of all council facilities and did not nominate any for improvement.

2%

2% of all respondents flagged a need for improvements were required at the golf club.

Response % per facility

“Given the aging population and the strength of swimming popularity, it would make such a huge difference to be able to swim in a hydrotherapy pool in the winter three days a week.”

“The library is the most important building in town. It would be great to see more books and this facility improved.”

Shining a spotlight on the facilities that were most popular for improvements, provided the following insights.

63

Walcha Swimming Pool: 63 respondents thought the pool needed repairs, extension or redesign, with repairs being the major focus sharing 53% of these responses.

57

Walcha Library: 57 respondents to this question thought that our library deserved improvements, with extension or redesign being the major focus measuring 96% of these responses.

55

Walcha Levee Bank Walk: 55 respondents suggested they wanted to see improvements, with 86% of these in favour of an extension to our levee bank walk.

35

Footpaths and cycleways: 35 respondents would like to see improvements to our footpaths and cycleways with 85% of these in favour of repairs and extensions to this asset.

33

Gym: 33 respondents would like to see improvements to our community gym with 95% of these in favour of extension and redesign works.

There were mixed feelings about the preferred option to improve the Skate Park with even support for relocation, redesign and extension options.

We also heard that some respondents would like to see extensions or redesigns of the following additional facilities and services:

- Youth program
- Service NSW
- Council Office
- Walcha Works Depot

“Service NSW needs a larger space, its very cramped and hard to access.”

“There is insufficient parking at Walcha Community Care.”

“We need dog control on the levee”

“The Gym needs to be a bigger space, but also needs to have on-site instruction available.”

“Pool facilities need an upgrade, including the showers and toilets.”

“Plant more natives.”

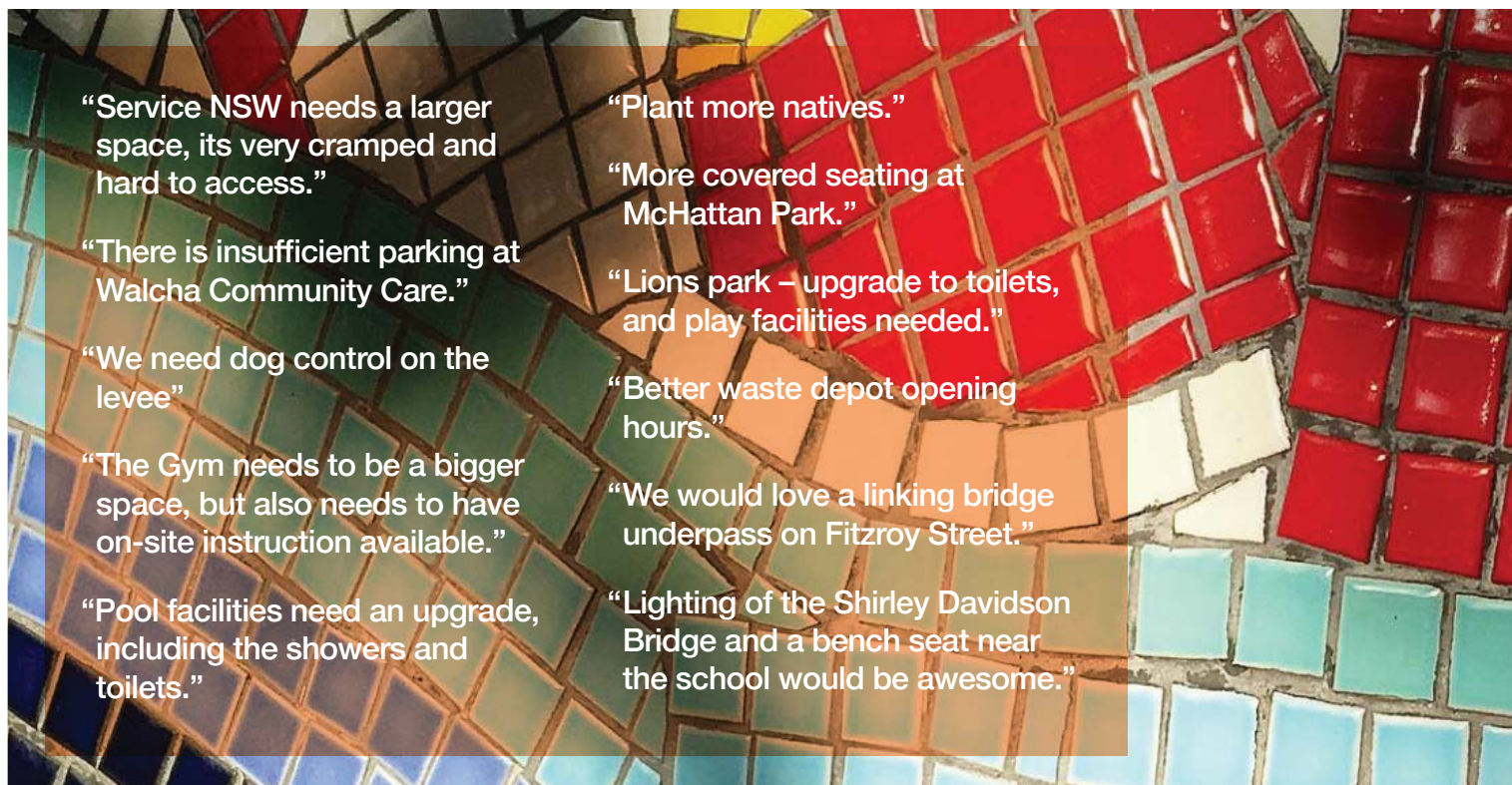
“More covered seating at McHattan Park.”

“Lions park – upgrade to toilets, and play facilities needed.”

“Better waste depot opening hours.”

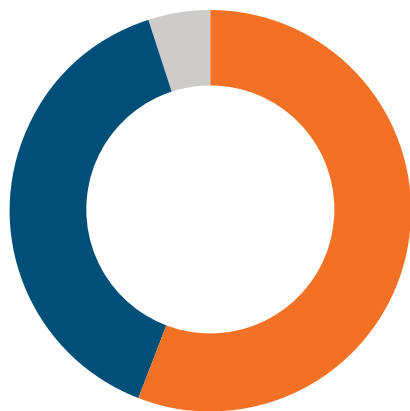
“We would love a linking bridge underpass on Fitzroy Street.”

“Lighting of the Shirley Davidson Bridge and a bench seat near the school would be awesome.”



2. OUR LIBRARY

Q. Do you use our Library?



Yes	56%
No	39%
Did not respond	5%

Borrowing books, dvds and items was the most popular activity completed at the library, with story time and school holiday program activities also popular amongst users.

The main reasons why some community members do not attend the library included not bring interested, not enough space to work or study, and because the opening hours were too restrictive.

Q. If you do use the Library, how often?



Couple of times a week	3%
Once a week	28%
Once a fortnight	21%
Once a month	18%
Less than once a month	30%
Did not respond	44%

“A new library building would be great”

“Maybe weekend access for people working 9.00am – 5.00pm who are out of town and can’t use

“Lunchtime to go to the library.”

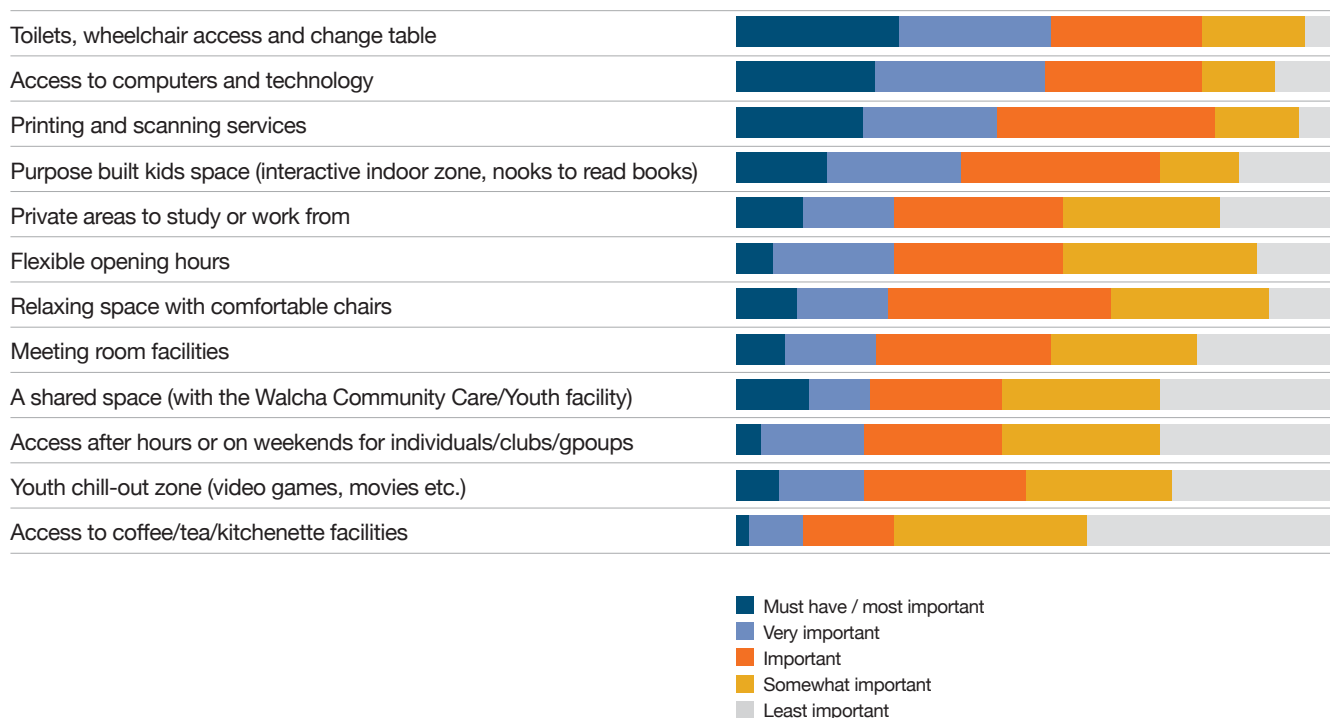
“Open 24-7 for residents.”

“Just a bigger multi-purpose space would be fantastic.”

“Outdoor space to meet people, have a break or take a phone call”

“A room for breastfeeding.”

The most popular Library facilities in order of priority were:



“A shared space would be awesome”

“Youth should be encouraged to read and expand their mind. Many youth come from noisy, disruptive households, libraries can provide a quiet contemplative environment to read and grow in. This is why flexible opening hours are important.”

“Can we open the library at Nowendoc again?”

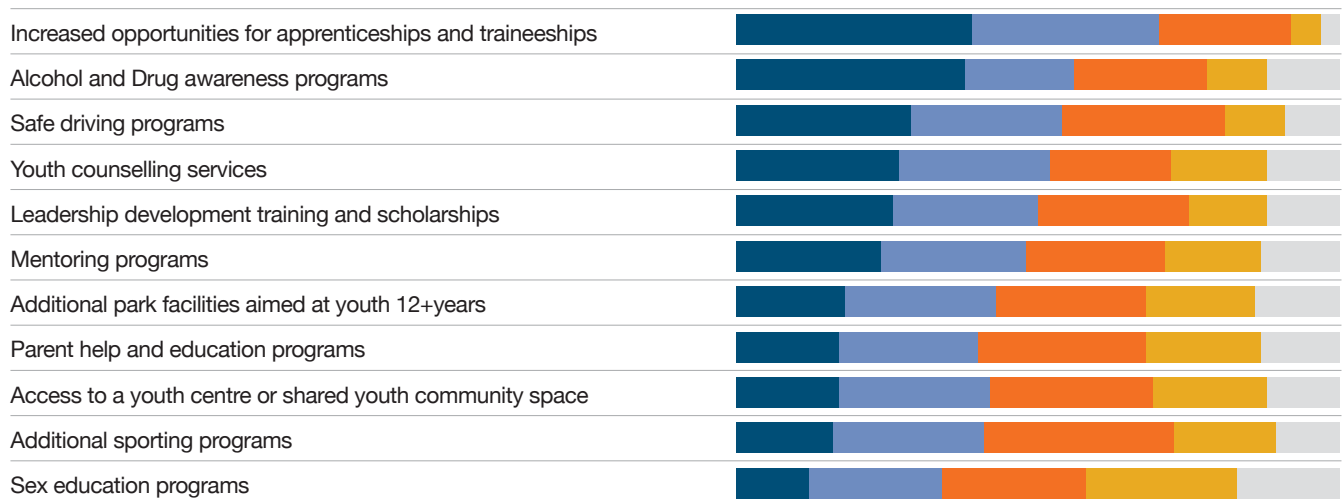
“The library needs a larger space. To be used as a multipurpose manipulable space to cover the needs of the whole community from kids to us oldies.”

“The library service is great, but the space lacks so much in comparison to other libraries (even small ones).”

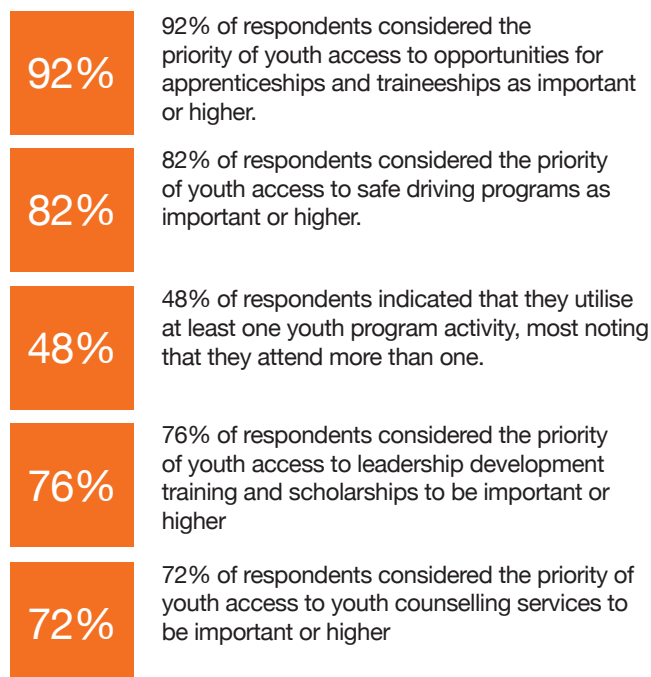
“More computers in the library”

3. OUR YOUTH

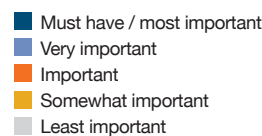
In relation to services, programs and facilities for our youth today, respondents considered the importance of a list of items. Respondent priorities were (in order):



Of the 163 responses to this question:



Other ideas for youth and support included after school care, after school homework sessions, a community garden, public art workshops and community art projects for youth.



“The skate park needs a big makeover.”

“The Lions park playground equipment and toilets are a disgrace. We need it fenced for safety. The new eating and BBQ shed is awesome.”

“The skate park area is dark during winter and is not visible and open.”

“Youth counselling = very important.”

“We would love a zip line! Ninja warrior style would be awesome!”

“A pushbike track away from main roads. For example out to Apsley Falls – a reasonable distance + family orientated.”

“Increased opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships is very important.”

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