

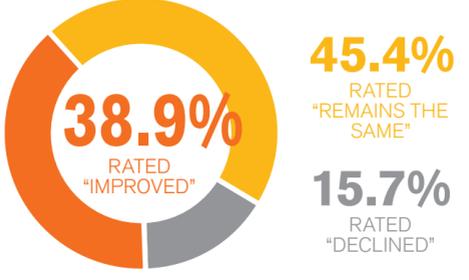


Positive signs for council scorecard

Results of a new Community Attitude Survey are in and our satisfaction rating is up since 2009 and performance has improved over the past two years

MACKAY Regional Council's scorecard is heading in the right direction when it comes to community satisfaction.

Not only is overall satisfaction with council up since the last Community Attitude Survey in 2009 (mean score up from 6.5 to 6.69) the current council has also struck a chord with residents.



PERFORMANCE IN PAST TWO YEARS

When asked about council's performance over the last two years, 38.9 per cent indicated it had improved. Another 45.4 per cent indicated no change, with just 15.7 per cent suggesting it had declined.

CEO Barry Omundson was appointed in February, 2013.

it is rewarding to think that a lot of the work we are doing is making a difference to our community," she said.

"Councillors were elected by residents to do a job, so it is pleasing to see the recent survey results," she said.

The latest community survey also showed nearly three-quarters of residents, or 72.4 per cent, had experienced contact with council staff at some time. Of that, a quarter,

"We never rest on our laurels and continue to look for areas in which we can improve, but

of 25.3 per cent, was in the last month.



Nearly 39 per cent of respondents to a Community Attitude Survey believe Mackay Regional Council's performance has improved in the past two years.

Of those who reported contact, 72.8 per cent were highly satisfied with that contact.

Only 6.3 per cent reported a "low" satisfaction score.

Of the respondents who reported contact with the mayor in the past 12 months, 58.9 per cent reported a "high" level of satisfaction

with her performance.

"Councillors are working incredibly hard and really do have the best interests of our community at heart," said Cr Comerford.

"We'll strive to continue to build on this survey result," she said.

>> View the full Mackay Regional Council Community Attitude Survey report at mackay.qld.gov.au/survey

All roads lead to residents' top priority

ROADS remain the top priority for residents.

Road infrastructure and maintenance was identified by residents in the Community Attitude Survey as their number one priority for council to deliver in the next five years, with 28.1 per cent of total responses.

This was more than three times higher than the next highest responses of infrastructure/services (9.3 per cent) and affordable rates (9.1 per cent).

More than \$680 million has been invested in restoring, rehabilitating and maintaining the road network since 2008.

That includes about \$420 million in council funds and around \$260 million in NDRRA funding, with major projects ranging from Paradise Street (\$5m) and Shakespeare Street (\$6m) to Midge Point Road (\$6m) and Stockroute Road (\$5m).

The last of the NDRRA work was completed in June last year.

That is despite a massive roads construction program in recent years, boosted by Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funding.

A major roads project in Connors Road, including \$4m to convert the Archibald Street roundabout to two lanes, was also completed by council last year.



Council has completed major roads projects like Paradise Street in recent years.

Roads and Drainage portfolio councillor Kevin Casey said ironically that massive roads construction program may have contributed to a perception that roads weren't up to scratch.

"The amount of projects we had on the go to meet NDRRA funding agreements meant there were a lot of roadworks throughout our region," Cr Casey said.

"Since 2008, we've restored and maintained the equivalent of the drive from

Mackay to Sydney, including more than 1500m kilometres of rural roads and a further 400 kilometres of the urban network."

Council does appear to be making some inroads though.

The satisfaction scores for the condition of sealed and unsealed roads had still increased significantly since 2009.

Cr Casey said council was also continually looking to improve.

"We recently undertook an independent review of our roads business and are implementing recommendations from that report," he said.

Looking for help in event of emergency

RESIDENTS feel disaster management is the most important council service and their expectations are being met.

every storm season, so it is understandable that living in the tropics places importance on disaster management," she said.

Management of emergency events, such as cyclones and floods, scored the highest mean score (9.21) for importance of all services and facilities.

"The recent experience of Cyclone Marcia and the devastating effects it had on Yeppoon, Rockhampton and other smaller Central Queensland towns shows how important it is to be prepared.

Residents were also "highly satisfied" with council's performance in this area.

"We have our Mackay Local Disaster Management Group that can be quickly activated in the event of an emergency.

Mayor Deirdre Comerford, who is also Emergency Management portfolio councillor, said it wasn't surprising that disaster management was at the top.

"We also actively encourage residents to do their own storm season preparations and assist with information, including our annual Emergency Action Guide."

"We had the 2008 floods and cyclones are a threat



When a natural disaster like flooding occurs, residents want to be able to turn to council.

Tourism part of council business

TOURISM promotion and encouraging and supporting local businesses remain key focuses of council.

The Community Attitude Survey showed these were among issues rated as high importance with respondents but low satisfaction.

Tourism and Economic Development portfolio councillor Greg Martin said there had been an emphasis on supporting tourism promotion and it was clear residents wanted more.



A shot of a kangaroo relaxing under a clothesline that features in the #MackayPride video produced by council.

"Our economic development department has been assisting with initiatives, ranging from promotion of activities around the Melbourne-Mackay and Gold Coast-Mackay air routes to agritourism locally," Cr Martin said.

Diversify Mackay Leadership Alliance last year, as well as the #MackayPride promotion."

Council now provided up to a 10 per cent local priced benefit for local business and suppliers under the amended policy, he said.

Finance, Asset Management and IT portfolio councillor Ross Walker said council had also recently adopted a revised "buy local" procurement policy.

Mayor Deirdre Comerford said council had also joined an alliance aimed at helping regional businesses cash in on resource industry supply

chain opportunities.

"Of course we also have the \$18 million City Centre revitalisation project, jointly funded by the Federal Government and council, due for completion later this year," she said. "We're working closely with businesses during construction."



Survey sample large

NEARLY 1000 residents were surveyed for the Mackay Regional Council Community Attitude Survey.

"A similar survey was done back in 2009 about 18 months after amalgamation, so it is interesting to compare the results," he said.

IRIS Research conducted the telephone survey in November, with 962 residents interviewed.

"The findings paint a positive picture of council in some areas and also identify areas in which we can improve.

"Most regionally-based surveys take a sample of about 600, so the sample size for this survey was comprehensive and rigorous," said CEO Barry Omundson.

"It was pleasing that the overall mean satisfaction score of 6.69 out of 10 was up on the score of 6.5 returned in 2009."

COUNCIL snapshots



RATED COUNCIL'S MOST VALUED & IMPORTANT SERVICE PROVIDED



GAIN INFORMATION THROUGH COUNCIL'S WEBSITE UP FROM 35% IN 2009



Sarina Sugar Shed (7.46) was just below them at the top of the medium satisfaction ratings.