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No. S 277 Friday 29 May 2026
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National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005
MINISTERIAL ORDER UNDER SECTION 63
Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

I, Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister responsible for administering the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005** (the 'Act'), make the following Order pursuant to section 63 of that Act.

PRELIMINARY

1. Commencement

This Order commences on the day it is published in the Government Gazette.

2. Definitions and interpretation

In this Order, unless the context otherwise requires, the following words have the following definitions:

Act means the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005**.

CESV Documentation means information and documentation that demonstrates how the Eligible Project is applying, or will apply, the Victorian Government's Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects.

Declared Transmission System has the same meaning as in the Law.

Note: See Ministerial Order under section 30 of the Act made 26 June 2009, published in Special Gazette No. S 222 on 30 June 2009, which defines the Declared Transmission System.

Law means the National Electricity (Victoria) Law.

REZ means a renewable energy zone declared under section 63 of the Act and, in this Order, means the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone.

Rules means the National Electricity Rules made under Part 7 of the Law, as amended or modified from time to time in accordance with Part 7 of the Law or the Act.

Transmission Hosting Capacity means the amount of Variable Renewable Generation (in megawatts) which can be connected to the Declared Transmission System by the end of the Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon to a specified level of curtailment due to network constraints forecast within the REZ.

Transmission Project Areas of Interest means the transmission project(s) specified in clause 4(a).

Variable Renewable Generation means generation systems that produce electricity from renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, whose output varies due to environmental conditions and cannot be precisely controlled or scheduled.

Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon means the time period set out in section 59(1)(a) or (b) of the Act (as applicable).

3. Declaration of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

The Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone is declared to be the area within the boundaries marked in blue in Schedule 1.

4. Transmission Project Areas of Interest

a) The preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest constitute:

- (i) the region surrounding a proposed transmission line upgrade (project 1.3 in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan), which involves rebuilding the existing (No. 1) 220 kV single circuit transmission line from Ballarat Terminal Station

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- to Moorabool Terminal Station into a new high-capacity double circuit 220 kV transmission line, approximately 63 km in length; and
- (ii) the region surrounding a proposed new transmission line (project 4.2 in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan), which involves constructing a new 500 kV double circuit transmission line approximately 200 km in length from Tarrone Terminal Station to Moorabool Terminal Station, passing through Mortlake Terminal Station, and includes the cut-in of the existing 500 kV transmission line between Heywood Terminal Station and Mortlake Terminal Station at the existing Tarrone Terminal Station.
 - b) Subject to sections 63 and 64 of the Act, this Order does not preclude further refinement or replacement of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest following further investigation or regulatory approvals.
 - c) Inclusion of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest in this Order does not constitute regulatory approval of any kind for the location of specific transmission infrastructure, if any.
- 5. Transmission Hosting Capacity**
- The intended Transmission Hosting Capacity for the Central Highlands REZ is 4.0 Gigawatts (GW).
- 6. Engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development**
- A person who intends to apply for a REZ scheme authority for the Central Highlands REZ must submit documentation to VicGrid in accordance with the engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development under section 63 of the Act, in accordance with the requirements of section 33K of the Act (including any CESV Documentation), and any requirements set out by VicGrid.

Dated 26 May 2026

HON. LILY D'AMBROSIO MP
Minister for Energy and Resources

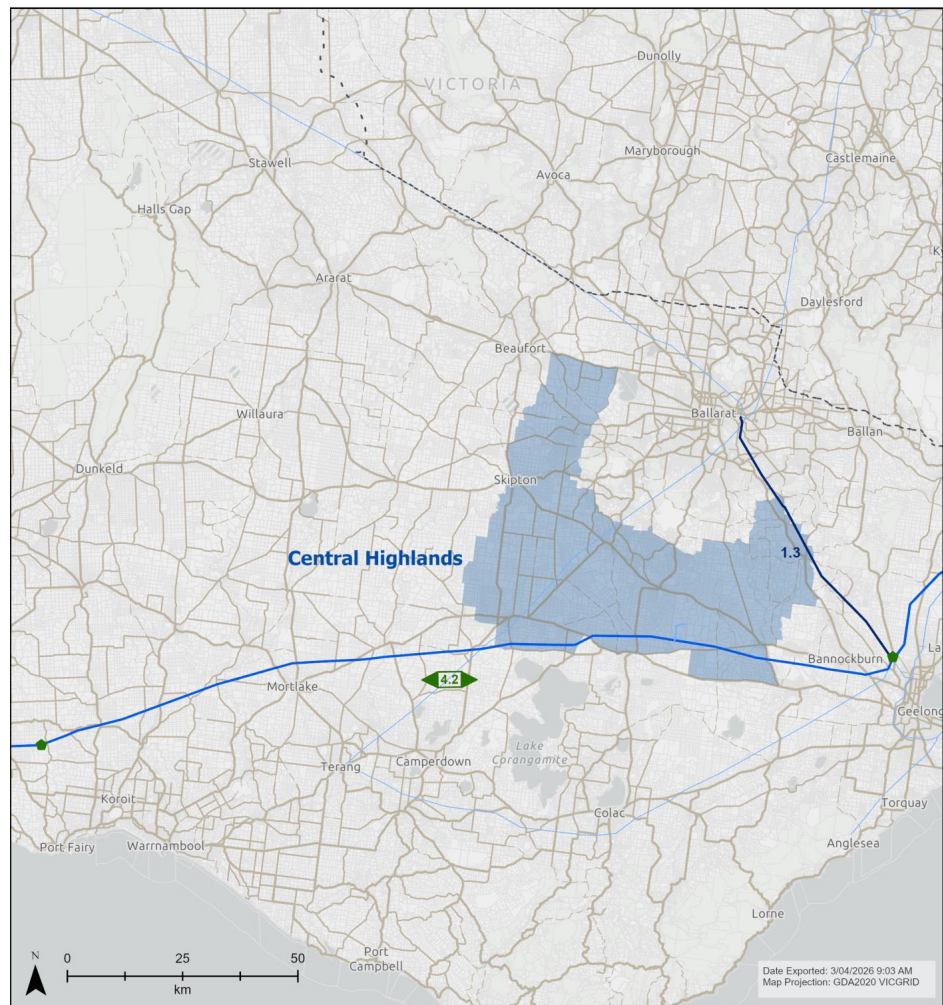
SCHEDULE 1

Figure 1 delineates the geographical boundaries of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone. Access to the corresponding shape file, REZ_2026, dated 29 May 2026, version 1, is available via the following link: <https://datashare.maps.vic.gov.au>

Transmission networks: existing high-voltage transmission lines and routes, compiled by VicGrid are from Geoscience Australia, National Electricity Infrastructure, <https://ecat.ga.gov.au/geonetwork/srv/api/records/3844c10c-ecfd-44a9-94f5-29222bb6d36d>

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Figure 1: Central Highlands REZ



Central Highlands REZ

Victorian Transmission Plan program** number

- 1: Western Victoria reinforcement program
- 1.3 Rebuild the existing transmission line from Ballarat to Moorabool into a 220 kV high-capacity double circuit
- 4: South West expansion program
- 4.2 New 500 kV double circuit line from Tarrone to Mortlake to Moorabool and Tarrone 500 kV turn in

*This includes transmission projects defined as Committed and Anticipated or Actionable under the Australian Energy Market Operator's 2024 Integrated System Plan.

** Please refer to the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan Appendix A for further details about proposed works included in each program. Each program includes multiple transmission projects.

- Central Highlands REZ
- New transmission connection point
- Upgrade to existing transmission network
- Transmission projects under development*
- Existing transmission network
- System Capacity
- 220 kV
- 500 kV
- Property Parcel
- Roads
- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road



Sources: Vicmap, ESRI, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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REASONS FOR MAKING THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONE MINISTERIAL ORDER UNDER SECTION 63 OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICITY (VICTORIA) ACT 2005

In accordance with section 63(1) of the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005** (NEVA), I, Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy and Resources, am authorised to declare an area of Victoria as a renewable energy zone (REZ) by making a REZ Order.

I make this statement of reasons for my decision to make the Central Highlands REZ Order in accordance with section 63(4) of the NEVA.

In this statement of reasons, **Central Highlands REZ Order** means the REZ Order which declares the area within the boundaries marked in blue in Schedule 1 of attached REZ Order to be the Central Highlands REZ.

Background

As acknowledged in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (2025 VTP), Victoria's transition away from coal-fired power requires new renewable energy, storage and transmission infrastructure to maintain a reliable and affordable electricity system as coal power stations close (pages 10 and 25). The 2025 VTP also identifies that many areas with strong renewable energy potential are constrained by limited transmission capacity, highlighting the need for coordinated transmission planning and development (page 28).

A REZ is an area identified as suitable to host renewable energy infrastructure, designed to coordinate generation development, and minimise the extent and inefficiency of required transmission network upgrades (2025 VTP, page 28). The 2025 VTP identifies REZs as a key mechanism to support Victoria's orderly transition from coal-fired power to renewable energy (pages 10 and 25).

By prioritising areas with existing grid infrastructure (2025 VTP, page 28) and planning targeted upgrades only where needed, REZs enable more efficient use of the transmission network and help reduce congestion (2025 VTP, page 18). This coordinated approach avoids higher costs from uncoordinated and duplicative infrastructure, while supporting a more cost-effective, reliable energy system and delivering regional economic benefits (2025 VTP, pages 21 and 28).

Currently, an 'open' access regime applies in Victoria under the National Electricity Market (NEM). In the NEM there are currently no restrictions on where generators can connect to the Declared Transmission System (DTS). Victoria is delivering a new access regime in which there will be an introduction of 'physical' access arrangements for projects seeking to connect to the DTS. Under the new Victorian Access Regime, a generating system or integrated resource system may apply to VicGrid to access the DTS through:

- a. a REZ scheme authority, where the project is an eligible technology and is inside a REZ; or
- b. a grid impact authority, where the project is not an eligible technology and/or is outside a REZ.

The Victorian Government's expectations for developers to engage with and create social value for communities, Traditional Owners and landholders will apply to all projects under both processes.

The Renewable Energy Zone scheme declarations is the mechanism that coordinates the new access regime for eligible generation and storage facilities within declared REZs.

A REZ Order declares the geographic area of the REZ. That declared area provides the foundation for the relevant REZ scheme declaration under the NEVA, and for VicGrid to grant and administer REZ scheme authorities under that REZ scheme declaration. This process governs how eligible projects obtain rights to access and connect to the DTS within the declared REZ.

Declaring a REZ Order

The Central Highlands REZ is located in central west Victoria, west and south of Ballarat, and covers parts of the Golden Plains, Corangamite and Pyrenees local government areas. Small sections of the REZ also sit within the Moorabool and Colac Otway local government areas.

The Central Highlands REZ is located within the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

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In making the REZ Order, I have considered information provided by Traditional Owners and First Peoples about Aboriginal cultural heritage, cultural values and related matters under section 64(2)(b) of the NEVA.

In developing the 2025 VTP and proposed REZs, VicGrid's 2024 VTP Guidelines emphasise partnering with First Peoples and treat cultural heritage and cultural values as key considerations, including through VicGrid's strategic land use assessment. The 2024 VTP Guidelines also note that Aboriginal cultural heritage information used at this strategic planning stage is limited to publicly available datasets and does not capture all known values, and that detailed regulatory requirements (including under the **Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006** (Vic.)) continue to apply to any future works and I took this into account in making this Order.

I also note that in accordance with section 4B of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** (Vic.), in performing any of my functions that may reasonably be expected to impact on biodiversity in Victoria, I must give proper consideration to the objectives of that Act and instruments made under that Act, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of my functions. I note the REZ Order establishes a strategic area for renewable energy development and that REZs will contain some sensitive areas that are not suitable for development. Declaring an area to be a REZ does not remove or otherwise diminish the need for future projects to comply with applicable environmental assessment, approval and offset requirements, such as the requirement to obtain approvals under the **Planning and Environment Act 1987** (Vic.) and, where applicable, the **Environment Effects Act 1978** (Vic.). A more detailed assessment of impacts of any future energy infrastructure will necessarily depend on the location, scale and design, and are more appropriately assessed at the project level. Any proposed development will continue to be subject to applicable planning approvals, environmental impact assessments and compliance with relevant legislation. Where issues related to biodiversity have been raised through the REZ development process, 2025 VTP process, and draft REZ Order consultation, these issues have been considered as part of any relevant decisions to amend or not amend REZ boundaries, to strike a balance between differing objectives of the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** and objectives of the NEVA.

Consistent with the 2025 VTP, I expect that declaring the Central Highlands REZ will support a more coordinated approach to generator access and connection to the DTS. This is expected to reduce the risk of inefficient or duplicative transmission investment and support efficient use of existing and planned transmission infrastructure, noting that the detailed access and connection arrangements will be established and administered through the relevant REZ scheme declaration.

Matters required to be addressed in a REZ Order

Section 63(2) of the NEVA requires a REZ Order to set out specific matters. These requirements have been addressed as follows:

- a. The boundaries of the REZ, including a map of the REZ. The Central Highlands REZ Order includes an appended map that shows the boundaries of the Central Highlands REZ within Victoria. In defining the boundaries of the Central Highlands REZ, I considered the submissions received on the draft REZ Order to the extent they raised issues relevant to the boundaries of the REZ.
- b. The intended transmission hosting capacity within the REZ. The Central Highlands REZ Order specifies the intended transmission hosting capacity within the REZ. The intended transmission hosting capacity describes, at a high level, the amount of renewable generation that the Central Highlands REZ is intended to accommodate through the coordinated access regime, having regard to the capability of the DTS and the transmission development identified in the current 2025 VTP. I specified the intended transmission hosting capacity on the expert advice of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and VicGrid based on energy market modelling and planned transmission capacity. In setting this value, I also considered the submissions received on the draft REZ Order to the extent they raised issues relevant to intended hosting capacity.

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- c. Engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development. Engagement requirements have been addressed by requiring that project proponents submit documentation in accordance with the requirements for a REZ scheme authority application under section 33K of the NEVA, including demonstrating how they meet the expectations set out in the Victorian Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects. These guidelines set out minimum expectations of project proponents in relation to community engagement and the creation of social and economic benefits for communities, Traditional Owners and landholders in Victoria, and provide a consistent benchmark for engagement and social value expectations for renewable energy and transmission projects in Victoria. I consider this appropriately fulfils engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development.

The REZ Order may also, in accordance with section 63(3)(a) of the NEVA, contain the preferred transmission project areas of interest:

- a. within the REZs for the development of major electricity transmission infrastructure; and
- b. between the REZ and the location of the DTS, or a part of that system, for the development of major electricity transmission infrastructure.

The REZ Order includes the preferred transmission project areas of interest to provide transparency to the community and industry on how the REZ is intended to be supported by future transmission infrastructure. These areas of interest identify broad locations where future major transmission infrastructure may be developed to support connections within the REZ and are intended to inform strategic planning and engagement rather than determine a final route or project design. I have included these areas of interest on the advice of DEECA and VicGrid, having regard to the Victorian transmission planning objective (VTPO) and the 2025 VTP, to indicate the most plausible transmission development pathways that could support the REZ over a 15 year planning horizon.

The REZ Order may also, in accordance with section 63(3)(b) of the NEVA, contain any other matters I consider appropriate. I have not included any other matters in the Central Highlands REZ Order.

Matters the Minister must consider when declaring a REZ

Section 64(2)(a) of the NEVA requires that, in making a REZ Order, I must have regard to:

- a. the VTPO; and
- b. the current VTP.

Victorian Transmission Planning Objective

The VTPO is set out in section 56(1) of the NEVA. The VTPO is:

- a. to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, electricity services for the long term interests of consumers of electricity with respect to:
 - i. the price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply of electricity; and
 - ii. the reliability, safety and security of the national electricity system.
- b. the delivery of transmission services, consistent with a least-regrets development pathway; and
- c. the achievement of targets set by Victorian legislation for reducing, or that are likely to contribute to reducing, Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions.

Victorian Transmission Plan

The VTP is developed under section 59 of the NEVA. The VTP sets out an optimal set of projects that address the planning and development needs over 15 years for the first VTP, and 25 years for each subsequent VTP related to new major electricity transmission infrastructure to facilitate connection of renewable energy zones to the DTS.

Other relevant information

Section 64(2)(b) of the NEVA permits me to have regard to any other information I consider relevant.

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In having regard to submissions and other information under section 64(2)(b) of the NEVA, I note that opposition to the declaration of a REZ, concerns about social licence, or a lack of willingness by some landholders or community members to host renewable energy infrastructure do not, of themselves, prevent the declaration of a REZ. Those matters are nonetheless relevant considerations that I have weighed together with the VTPO, the 2025 VTP and the long-term interests of Victorian electricity consumers.

Steps taken to develop the REZs

In developing the 2025 VTP under section 59 of the NEVA, VicGrid was required to comply with section 60(2) of the NEVA. In identifying the proposed REZs in the 2025 VTP (including the proposed Central Highlands REZ), VicGrid was required to undertake the strategic land use assessment, multi-criteria analysis, robustness analysis and cost-benefit analysis required by section 60(2) of the NEVA, and to undertake any consultation required by the 2024 VTP Guidelines and consider the results of that consultation (section 60(2)(d) of the NEVA). The steps described below summarise how VicGrid undertook these analyses and consultation in developing the proposed REZs in the 2025 VTP.

Consistent with this, the NEVA requires the VTP to include maps setting out the boundaries of each REZ and each proposed REZ. Accordingly, VicGrid's development of the 2025 VTP necessarily included identifying proposed REZs and settling proposed REZ boundaries for inclusion in the 2025 VTP.

First, VicGrid undertook the statewide strategic land use assessment required by section 60(2) of the NEVA, which incorporated community feedback alongside information about agriculture, land use, biodiversity, cultural and social factors. To gather early information about community values and preferences, VicGrid undertook a renewable energy planning survey and opened an interactive mapping activity in 2023 to help inform the identification of REZ study areas. VicGrid sought further community feedback on the REZ study areas and the draft VTP Guidelines in 2024, which was reflected in the draft 2025 VTP.

In developing the 2025 VTP, VicGrid undertook further analysis to narrow and develop REZ candidate areas, including energy market modelling and related calibration checks, spatial multi-criteria analysis (a mapping-based assessment that considers and compares multiple factors across different locations to help identify areas that are relatively more suitable or constrained), and preliminary generation resource planning. These steps informed VicGrid's consideration of proposed REZs and associated transmission pathways in finalising the 2025 VTP, consistent with the analysis requirements in section 60(2) of the NEVA.

VicGrid released the draft 2025 VTP for public consultation in May 2025 and invited feedback (including submissions) on the proposed REZs, modelling assumptions and transmission pathways. VicGrid considered the feedback received in finalising the 2025 VTP, released in August 2025, which includes six proposed onshore REZs and the Gippsland Shoreline REZ, and the proposed transmission projects needed from 2025–2040.

What VicGrid heard during the 2025 VTP consultation and adjustment to REZ boundaries

During consultation on the draft 2025 VTP, VicGrid received a range of feedback relating to the size and position of the draft proposed Central Highlands REZ. Submissions from some landholders and community members called for a reduction in the size of the draft proposed REZ to minimise impacts on productive farmland and agricultural activity and to protect biodiversity and the natural environment. Feedback relating to agriculture raised concerns about potential impacts on local horticulture production, particularly potato farming near Ballarat, and questioned the compatibility of farming practices with energy infrastructure. Submissions raising biodiversity concerns identified potential impacts on threatened and protected species and areas of high biodiversity and environmental value, including the Wombat State Forest, Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth.

Community members also raised concerns about the cumulative impacts of increased renewable energy development in the region, including in combination with the Western Renewables Link (WRL) project. In contrast, submissions from developers called for an increase in both the size and expected capacity of the REZ to reflect planned capacity and location of pipeline projects.

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VicGrid considered this feedback as part of finalising the 2025 VTP. Following the draft VTP consultation, adjustments were made to the boundaries of the proposed Central Highlands REZ in the final 2025 VTP. The northern section of the REZ was reduced, having regard to land-use sensitivities, limited land availability, and the anticipated preference of generators to connect to the 500 kV transmission to the south. The southern section of the REZ was slightly expanded to provide additional space in proximity to the 500kV transmission line, while continuing to avoid areas with a high concentration of wetlands and lakes.

The REZ Order consultation process

Consultation relevant to identifying and declaring the REZ occurred in three stages. The first stage occurred during VicGrid's statewide strategic land use assessment in 2024, the second stage when VicGrid released the draft 2025 VTP for public consultation, and the third stage when I published the draft REZ Order and invited submissions under section 64(1) of the NEVA.

Under section 64(1) of the NEVA, I am required to publish a draft of the REZ Order and invite submissions to be made within a period of not less than six weeks. A draft Central Highlands REZ Order was published on 20 November 2025. The end of the consultation period was extended from 22 February 2026 to 15 March 2026 to accommodate stakeholders impacted by the 2026 bushfires. In total, this consultation period ran for more than 16 weeks.

How feedback was considered and addressed

Consultation feedback received in response to the draft REZ Order was collated and assessed by VicGrid, in partnership with DEECA, to inform my decision. In making the REZ Order, I had regard to the matters set out in section 64(2)(a) of the NEVA, including the VTPO and the current 2025 VTP, and I also had regard to other information I consider relevant (section 64(2)(b) NEVA), including issues raised in submissions about potential impacts on Traditional Owners, the environment, land use and local communities and the efficient use of existing and planned transmission infrastructure. Some of the information provided by Traditional Owners and First Peoples was provided to VicGrid and to me on a confidential basis and is not for public disclosure. I have nonetheless had regard to that information to the extent I considered it relevant to my decision under section 64(2)(b) of the NEVA. I considered and weighed that information thematically together with the other submissions and information received through the consultation process.

VicGrid and DEECA assessed consultation feedback received in response to the draft REZ Order against the factors considered in determining the location of proposed REZs in the 2025 VTP, including agricultural land use, land use and landscape values, energy generation projects in planning, modelled generation build, transmission network requirements, engagement feedback, consultation with Traditional Owners, and regional development considerations.

In assessing any proposed boundary adjustments, VicGrid and DEECA applied a clear and consistent methodology to the assessment of all submissions received through the consultation period. This included applying consistent boundary change principles, undertaking objective analysis, and adopting a statewide approach where appropriate. Advice from DEECA and VicGrid on the proposed changes was provided to me for my consideration.

VicGrid documented submissions and feedback that, while noted, were not relevant to the matters that a REZ Order is required or permitted to deal with under ss 63(2) and 63(3) of the NEVA (including the setting of REZ boundaries, intended transmission hosting capacity and engagement requirements). This included matters better addressed through broader system planning processes (such as the VTP), transmission project design, environmental assessment and planning approval processes, or matters requiring longer-term analysis. VicGrid will carry that feedback forward to the development of the 2027 VTP. Matters raised in submissions that are relevant to any REZ scheme declaration or the granting of REZ scheme authorities will be considered as part of the design of those instruments and, where applicable, any public consultation processes.

Response to feedback

A total of 40 submissions relating to the draft Central Highlands REZ were received in this consultation phase.

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Submissions were organised by VicGrid into key common themes identified through a structured decision-making framework. These themes represent the vast majority of submissions and are:

- a. impacts on the region;
- b. impacts on agriculture and other land use;
- c. impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment, and
- d. boundary adjustments for individual projects and REZ hosting capacity.

A summary of these submissions, together with responses to the issues raised, are organised thematically and set out below.

In making the REZ Order, I have considered all of the submissions received and had regard to the matters set out in section 64(2) of the NEVA, including the VTPO and the current 2025 VTP, and other relevant information under section 64(2)(b).

Impacts on the region

Feedback focused on potential impacts on township growth, land use compatibility, landscape values, areas of historical significance and community wellbeing. Submissions raised concerns about potential effects on townships such as Meredith, particularly where renewable energy developments could constrain planned growth. There was also feedback regarding the potential and cumulative impacts of planned transmission infrastructure on Bannockburn.

Several submissions also raised issues regarding noise, visual impacts, shadow flicker, proximity of turbines and other impacts associated with existing wind farm developments in the region. In addition, some landowners also expressed concerns about the WRL project, citing potential risks to property access, firefighting safety, farming operations and mental wellbeing. Overall, feedback reflected apprehension by some community members that large scale infrastructure could alter landscape character, disrupt established land uses and recreation, affect local businesses and tourism, and place additional stress on rural communities.

Response to impacts on the region

I have considered these submissions and had regard to the VTPO and 2025 VTP, and in doing so I note some of these submissions raise similar issues to matters raised during consultation on the 2025 VTP. These issues were reconsidered and where they did not, on balance, necessitate further change, the outcome of the VTP assessment has been maintained.

I acknowledge the concerns expressed regarding the potential impacts of generation and transmission projects on the region covered by the Central Highlands REZ. I have balanced these concerns with the VTPO, and in particular the generation and transmission challenges facing Victoria arising from the planned retirement of thermal coal generators.

In this regard, I note the 2025 VTP identified that the Central Highlands REZ offers significant advantages to the community in terms of efficient investment in electricity services. The southern boundary runs close to the existing 500 kV transmission line from Moorabool towards Haunted Gully and takes in a section of the 220 kV line from Ballarat to Terang. The 2025 VTP also identified the area's high-quality wind resources and a greater prevalence of farming practices that are more compatible with renewable energy infrastructure.

The VTPO requires me to have regard to efficient investment in electricity services for the long-term interests of Victorian electricity consumers, the reliability and security of the electricity system, Victoria's emissions reduction targets, and the delivery of transmission services consistent with a least-regrets development pathway.

Consistent with the VTPO and the 2025 VTP, I note that the Central Highlands REZ is located in an area with existing and planned transmission infrastructure that may support a more coordinated approach to development. I have also had regard to information in the 2025 VTP concerning the potential for coordinated development to support reliable and affordable electricity services, and to the potential for development to attract investment, support regional employment, improve services, boost local economies, facilitate payments to landholders, and generate benefits for Traditional Owners and local communities.

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I have considered the concerns regarding cumulative impacts of development, including impacts on visual amenity. I note, however, that the detailed impacts of any future project will necessarily depend on its location, scale and design. These impacts are more appropriately assessed at the project level. In particular, the potential impacts on the Bannockburn Growth Zone and the Bannockburn South East Precinct Structure Plan relate primarily to the siting, alignment and design of future transmission infrastructure and are not determined by the geographic footprint of the REZ. These are matters that will be considered through applicable planning, design, environmental assessment and approvals processes. These processes are specifically designed to enable engagement with all interested parties and facilitate detailed and thoughtful consideration of the issues raised.

On balance, having regard to the benefits the Central Highlands REZ can provide to the local communities and the need to secure viable electricity services for the benefit of all Victorian electricity consumers over the long term at the most efficient cost, and given the existing nearby transmission infrastructure, I am satisfied that the REZ boundary as proposed in the draft REZ Order represents a balanced and appropriate outcome.

In reaching this decision, I have taken into account Victoria's electricity needs and the VTPO, as well as the opposing views expressed by some community members.

Impacts on agriculture and other land use

Feedback received focused on the impacts of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure on agricultural land use, food production and farm viability, including on intensive agricultural precincts such as the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct. Concerns were raised that renewable energy projects and associated transmission infrastructure could result in the permanent loss or fragmentation of productive farmland through easements, tower foundations, access tracks and safety exclusion zones, with cumulative impacts where multiple projects overlap.

Several submissions highlighted potential land-use conflicts between renewable infrastructure and existing agricultural and agritourism businesses, particularly where visual impacts, traffic, or prolonged construction activity could potentially undermine on-farm diversification or long-term business planning. Submissions also drew attention to the risk of property devaluation caused by proximity to turbines and transmission infrastructure, particularly in circumstances where land was a primary family asset and part of retirement or succession planning.

Some submissions noted reliance on groundwater bores as sole water supplies and sought assurances that deep excavation and large concrete foundations would not affect aquifers or water quality. Councils emphasised the need to align REZ planning with adopted rural land use strategies and land capability mapping, noting that productive agricultural areas had not been adequately avoided and that existing transmission proposals were already affecting a substantial number of farms through land acquisition and easements.

Other land use feedback focused on requests to remove Lethbridge Airport from the REZ due to concerns about operational constraints and preserving flexibility for potential future expansion of the airport.

Response to impacts on agriculture and other land use

I have considered these submissions and had regard to the VTPO and the 2025 VTP in doing so I note some of these submissions raise similar issues to matters raised during consultation on the 2025 VTP. These issues were reconsidered and where they did not, on balance, necessitate further change, the outcome of the VTP assessment has been maintained.

I acknowledge concerns with the impact on agricultural land and other land use, as well as the potential impact on land values. I recognise and respect the vital contribution that farming makes to Victoria's economy, to regional and rural communities, and to the food security and way of life of farming families. The compatibility of some farming practices with renewable energy infrastructure is a relevant consideration, however, it is not a standalone or determinative factor. Agricultural compatibility was weighed as part of the broader balancing exercise required by the VTPO, together with other matters identified in section 64(2) of the NEVA. In considering these matters, I balanced the concerns raised about agricultural land and other land use, and potential impacts on land values with the need to plan for an efficient, reliable and affordable electricity system for Victoria over the long term.

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Consistent with the 2025 VTP, I note that agricultural land use and existing land use patterns were considered in identifying the proposed REZ area. The REZ boundaries are the product of a rigorous, multi-stage process that has expressly considered agricultural land use at both statewide and regional levels.

VicGrid's strategic land use assessment considered farmland using data including farmgate output, soil quality, rainfall, access to irrigation water and farm infrastructure investment, as well as the compatibility of different types of farming with the co-location of renewable energy infrastructure.

The Central Highlands REZ offers strong connection opportunities to existing and future transmission lines, which makes it very likely that renewable energy projects will be interested in co-locating with agricultural land. This creates an opportunity to encourage coordinated investment that supports efficient investment in, and efficient operation and use of, electricity services in the long term interests of all Victorians.

I note the REZ Order establishes a strategic area for renewable energy development and does not authorise individual projects or determine the final location or design of future infrastructure. Any proposed development within or outside the REZ will continue to be subject to applicable planning approvals, environmental impact assessments and compliance with relevant legislation, including the **Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006** (Vic.). Potential site-specific impacts on agricultural operations and other land uses are therefore more appropriately addressed through subsequent project-level design, engagement, assessment and approvals processes. These processes are specifically designed to enable engagement with all interested parties and facilitate detailed and thoughtful consideration of the issues raised.

Accordingly, on balance, having considered the impacts raised in submissions relating to agriculture and other land use, and having weighed those matters with the VTPO, the 2025 VTP and the benefits the REZ will provide for the community, I have decided to retain the Central Highlands REZ boundary as proposed in the draft REZ Order in response to submissions under this theme.

Impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment

During the consultation period on the draft 2025 VTP, VicGrid received feedback on the sensitive areas around Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth. In response to this feedback, and having regard to a range of considerations, the northern section of the draft proposed Central Highlands REZ was removed.

Feedback received during the draft REZ Order consultation period continued to highlight potential impacts of renewable energy development on biodiversity and the natural environment. In particular, submissions from community members focused on impacts to landscapes such as Mount Beckworth, Mount Bolton and surrounding bushland as ecologically significant, supporting remnant forests, granite outcrops, wetlands and wildlife corridors that function as refuges following recent bushfires. There was strong support from community members for VicGrid's decision to remove the northern section of the REZ, including the area around Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth, between the draft and final 2025 VTP.

Submissions also highlighted the presence of threatened and protected species, including birds of prey and other bird species, as well as impacts on other fauna and areas supporting a high diversity of native flora. Additional concerns were raised about potential bushfire risk from ignition sources associated with infrastructure, such as electrical faults, lightning strikes or mechanical failure. Some submissions were concerned with the implications for aerial and ground-based firefighting activities, including potential obstruction of water bombing aircraft flight paths and concerns for ground crews navigating access roads, cables and structures during emergencies.

Response to impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment

I have considered these submissions and have had regard to the VTPO and the 2025 VTP in doing so. I note biodiversity values and natural hazard vulnerability were considered during the development of the proposed REZ. I note some of these submissions raise similar issues to matters raised during consultation on the 2025 VTP. These issues were reconsidered and where they did not, on balance, necessitate further change, the outcome of the VTP assessment has been maintained.

While the area around Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth is no longer part of the REZ, I note the sustained submissions from community members on the cultural significance and natural beauty of this area. The consultation processes on the REZ have been robust and ensured that these sensitive areas were known and factored into the proposed REZ. Balancing environmental considerations alongside

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the VTPO and the 2025 VTP's statewide cost-benefit assessment, I am satisfied the Central Highlands REZ boundary appropriately minimises environmental and land use impacts while enabling least-cost development that secures reliability and reduces emissions for the benefit of all Victorians.

As I have observed elsewhere in this statement, declaring an area to be a REZ does not remove or otherwise diminish the need for future projects to comply with applicable environmental assessment, approval and offset requirements, such as the requirement to obtain approvals under the **Planning and Environment Act 1987** (Vic.) and, where applicable, the **Environment Effects Act 1978** (Vic.). Detailed environmental impacts will need to be assessed at the project stage.

I acknowledge concerns raised in submissions regarding bushfire risk and emergency response, including concerns renewable energy development may increase fire risk, and pose challenges for aerial and ground-based firefighting capacity.

Bushfire risk and existing land use patterns were considered at a regional and statewide level in identifying the REZ areas, including through the strategic land use assessment and cumulative impacts analysis undertaken as part of the 2025 VTP.

The REZ Order is a strategic planning instrument and does not determine the final siting, layout or design of individual renewable energy or transmission projects. Consideration of bushfire risk, emergency access, firefighting requirements and potential impacts on aerial firefighting operations will occur at subsequent project planning, environmental assessment and statutory approvals stages, including further consultation with the relevant authorities and communities.

Victoria's transmission network is designed, operated and maintained in line with strict safety laws and regulations to reduce the risk of bushfires. Licensed transmission companies in Victoria must have an Electricity Safety Management Plan, which sets out how they reduce the risk of transmission lines starting fires. Energy Safe Victoria monitors compliance with these plans and holds transmission companies to account for any breaches or non-compliance. The Country Fire Authority has standard operating procedures for how its members can work safely around high-voltage transmission lines and large pylons.

On balance, taking into consideration the benefits the REZ will provide for the community, I have decided to retain the Central Highlands REZ boundary, as proposed in the draft REZ Order in response to submissions under this theme.

Boundary adjustments for individual projects and REZ hosting capacity

It was suggested by a range of stakeholder groups that the proposed boundary and transmission hosting capacity may not fully reflect the scale of renewable resource potential, or the level of project readiness already present in the region. Some submissions requested that the draft Central Highlands REZ boundary be extended to include projects that have progressed through landholder agreements, environmental and heritage assessments, and early planning pathways. Proponents noted that some projects are now partially or wholly outside the REZ, introducing additional complexity for delivery and access to transmission.

Project proponents also noted that future projects that locate adjacent to existing substations or transmission corridors may reduce the need for new easements or additional network infrastructure. It was suggested that aligning REZ boundaries more closely with established network assets could support efficient utilisation of transmission investment and reduce cumulative land-use impacts.

Response to boundary adjustments for individual projects and REZ hosting capacity

I have considered these submissions and have had regard to the VTPO and the 2025 VTP. I acknowledge the feedback from project proponents that future projects that locate adjacent to existing substations or transmission corridors may reduce the need for new easements or additional network infrastructure that support efficient utilisation of transmission investment and reduce cumulative land-use impacts. This feedback aligns with the VTPO and guided the strategic identification of REZs. The VTPO requires me to have regard to efficient investment in electricity services for the long-term interests of Victorian electricity consumers, the reliability and security of the electricity system, Victoria's emissions reduction targets, and the delivery of transmission services consistent with a least-regrets development pathway.

I note that the REZ Order is the outcome of a REZ-wide strategic planning decision rather than the aggregate of assessments of individual landholdings, projects or proponents. A REZ is a strategic planning tool designed to support coordinated planning for renewable energy and transmission infrastructure across the state. It is not intended to respond to individual site or project-specific

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requests. Therefore, while requests for boundary adjustments affecting particular sites have been noted, individual requests to adjust the REZ boundary for a particular project needs to be balanced with the VTPO and the 2025 VTP.

I observe, however, that matters relating to how projects will be assessed as located in a REZ and the process to obtain a REZ scheme authority for access in a REZ will be set out in the draft REZ scheme declaration for the Central Highlands REZ. As the responsible Minister, I will consult further on the draft REZ scheme declaration when this is published for community and industry feedback. The REZ Order establishes a strategic area for renewable energy development and does not authorise individual projects or determine the final location or design of future infrastructure. Proposed developments are still subject to planning approvals, environmental impact assessments and compliance with laws.

On balance, taking into consideration the benefits this Central Highlands REZ will provide to the region, and helping to secure viable electricity services for the benefit of all Victorian electricity consumers well into the future, I have decided to retain the REZ boundary as proposed in the REZ Order in response to submissions under this theme.

A more detailed account of the feedback will be set out in the *What We Heard* report, released alongside the final REZ Order and the statement of reasons.

Consultation with the Premier and Treasurer (section 64(1)(c) of the NEVA)

I wrote to the Premier and the Treasurer for the purposes of section 64(1)(c) of the NEVA. I have considered any responses received from the Premier and/or Treasurer in making the REZ Order.

Conclusion

Having considered the submissions received during consultation on the draft REZ Order, and having complied with the consultation requirements in section 64(1) of the NEVA (including publishing a draft REZ Order, inviting submissions for at least six weeks and considering the submissions received), and having regard to the matters set out in section 64(2)(a) of the NEVA, including the VTPO and the current 2025 VTP, I am satisfied that making the Central Highlands REZ Order supports efficient investment in and use of transmission services in the long-term interests of Victorian electricity consumers (including in relation to price, reliability and security of supply), supports achievement of Victoria's emissions reduction targets, and is consistent with the least-regrets development pathway set out in the 2025 VTP for transmission development in and around the Central Highlands REZ. In making this assessment, I have also had regard to other information I consider relevant under section 64(2)(b) of the NEVA, including issues raised in submissions about impacts on local communities, land use, the environment and Traditional Owners.

In refining the REZ boundaries, VicGrid applied a consistent statewide approach, aligning zone boundaries with existing administrative and planning features, including local government boundaries, roads, and designated planning areas. As a result of this refinement process, minor changes have been made from the draft to final REZ boundaries.

Where proposed changes would have undermined or delivered outcomes that were not consistent with the VTPO or the 2025 VTP, or conflicted with other mandatory requirements, they were not recommended. Where submissions proposed changes that are more appropriately considered against the wider strategic outcomes of the Victorian Access Regime, I have directed VicGrid to include these matters for consideration and further discussions as part of the draft 2027 VTP.

As part of considering the draft REZ Order, consideration has also been given to the cost-benefit analysis which was conducted for the optimal development pathway as outlined in the 2025 VTP. The cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that the net benefits of the proposed plan to Victorians as a whole are substantial, with a net present value of \$9.6 billion and projected reductions in household and business energy bills.

For the reasons given in this statement, and having regard to the matters referred to in this statement, I am satisfied that the final Central Highlands REZ Order represents a reasonable and appropriate outcome to support Victoria's long-term energy needs.

HON. LILY D'AMBROSIO MP
Minister for Energy and Resources

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VicGrid

Planning Victoria's renewable energy zones

Updated
February 2026

VicGrid is the body responsible for planning and developing the state's electricity transmission network and renewable energy zones.

Our job is to balance the need for new renewable projects that will deliver reliable, affordable power as coal closes with a range of other factors, including how we minimise impacts on landholders, communities, agriculture, the environment and power bills.

We have run an 18-month process of extensive consultation and technical work to identify 6 proposed renewable energy zones across Victoria, as part of developing the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

Renewable energy zones are areas we've identified as suitable for new solar, wind and

battery projects. The areas have access to the planned transmission network so energy can flow to homes and businesses across the state.

They are strategic areas that show developers and communities where future development should be focused.

The Victorian Transmission Plan also proposes a Gippsland Shoreline zone, which is a limited area where offshore wind developers will need to locate underground cables to connect offshore wind turbines to the grid. This zone is not designed to host onshore wind and solar farms.

Factors that have shaped decisions

In designing the zones, we considered:

- access to strong winds or sunshine that could produce renewable energy
- access to existing or planned transmission infrastructure
- if farming in the area could potentially co-exist with renewable projects
- impacts on the environment and biodiversity
- impacts on local communities
- impacts on Traditional Owners and culturally sensitive areas
- regional development opportunities
- interest from renewable energy project developers.

VicGrid



It's your choice

Renewable energy zones don't change landholders' rights to choose whether or not to host wind, solar or battery projects on their properties. It's your choice, and we encourage you to talk to your neighbours about it.

Community engagement has shaped the zones

A lot of consultation and technical work has gone into developing the zones, and we have been listening and responding to the input from communities, landholders, Traditional Owners and industry.

We started the process in early 2024 with a statewide strategic land use assessment that took feedback from the community into account

alongside information about agriculture, land use, biodiversity, and cultural and social factors.

This work identified a broad study area. Then we investigated parts of the study area to narrow in on the most suitable places for zones.

We invited feedback on the study area from July to September 2024, and then again on draft proposed zones from May to June 2025.

The process to refine and finalise renewable energy zones



Across the consultation periods, we received more than 1,500 feedback forms, 600 submissions and had conversations with more than 800 community members. All this feedback has shaped decisions about each zone's shape, size and location.

Some areas that were unsuitable for development have been removed from zones, and new areas have been added to some zones.

We recognise the need to engage communities in new areas of zones who have not previously been consulted and listen to local views.

Since the release of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan, we have been meeting with community groups and stakeholders in newly added areas to discuss the zones and hear their feedback. This feedback will be taken on board as we work to finalise the zones.

Declaring renewable energy zones

The Minister for Energy and Resources is inviting another round of feedback for consideration before formally declaring each zone.

Declaring zones will allow VicGrid to begin coordinating development within the zones, put in place new rules to manage how projects gain access to the transmission network, and ensure good standards of engagement and economic benefits.

What's in a draft renewable energy zone order?

The Minister issued draft renewable energy zone orders in November 2025 for consultation.

Each draft order sets out:

- a map of the zone
- transmission projects to enable the zone
- the intended hosting capacity that the planned transmission network could support in the zone.

Hosting capacity is the total space that will be available on the grid – for existing generation, committed projects, and new projects within the zone – once planned transmission upgrades are built.

Importantly, the orders make it a requirement that solar, wind and battery projects meet

government expectations for community engagement and deliver social value and economic benefits.

The boundaries of the renewable energy zones have not been finalised.

In the final zone orders, the boundaries will be aligned with nearby administrative or other existing boundaries, such as roads, local government areas or planning zones.

This process will be applied in a fair and consistent way across each zone. We will not make decisions about zone boundaries based on localised issues on individual properties or projects. These localised issues can be managed through existing planning and environmental assessments as projects move through approvals.

You are invited to make a submission

We are inviting feedback via submissions on draft renewable energy zone orders. Submissions have been extended and now close on **Sunday 15 March 2026**.

In designing the renewable energy zones, we're aiming to encourage development to meet Victoria's future energy needs while minimising impacts. In this round of consultation, we are seeking any significant new information about sensitive areas, potential impacts or areas suitable for development that we may have missed.

To find out more about each draft zone, provide feedback and to ask us questions:



Visit Engage Victoria

[engage.vic.gov.au/
renewable-energy-zone-
orders](https://engage.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy-zone-orders)



Call or email VicGrid

Phone us on 1800 418 341
or email [enquiries@
vicgrid.com.au](mailto:enquiries@vicgrid.com.au)

Next steps

VicGrid will review all feedback. We will incorporate relevant new information to help us define zone boundaries or other aspects of the draft orders.

We know renewable energy zones will contain some sensitive areas that are not suitable for development, however, we only need a small area of each zone for development.

Feedback about sensitive areas may not lead to changes to the zones if concerns can be managed through existing environmental

and planning assessment processes, which will continue to apply to all projects.

Feedback will be considered as part of the declaration process and will also continue to shape decisions as we develop renewable energy zones and the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan.

The impact and effectiveness of renewable energy zones will be assessed over time, as part of developing future Victorian Transmission Plan updates.

Contact us



Phone: 1800 418 341

Email: enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

Deaf, hearing or speech impaired? Please contact the National Relay Service on 133 677 or communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs



Need an interpreter? Contact Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 (within Australia) or visit www.tisnational.gov.au

Disclaimer: The information in this document is current at the time of printing, may be subject to change and should not be relied upon. Please visit vicgrid.com.au for the latest updates.



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Draft Renewable Energy Zone Declaration Engagement Report What We Heard

MAY 2026



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Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge and respect Victoria's Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partnering and meaningfully engaging with Victoria's Traditional Owners and First Peoples to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

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Executive summary

This report summarises feedback received during consultation on the draft renewable energy zone orders. This consultation was the final stage before the declaration of each zone and built on earlier engagement on the Victorian Transmission Plan delivered between 2023–2025.

Consultation on the six draft orders ran from 20 November 2025 to 15 March 2026, including a three-week extension due to bushfire response. The Minister for Energy and Resources invited public feedback on the following draft renewable energy zone orders:

- South West Renewable Energy Zone
- Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone
- Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone
- Western Renewable Energy Zone
- North West Renewable Energy Zone
- Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

VicGrid received feedback through written submissions, community and industry briefings, meetings with Traditional Owner groups, webinars and contact centre enquiries. In total, engagement comprised:

- **Written submissions:** 580
- **Community events and briefings:** 100
- **Industry meetings and briefings:** 36
- **Traditional Owner meeting and briefings:** 9

The zones mapped in the draft orders did not have defined boundaries. In the final orders, boundaries have been defined. The process to define boundaries considered consultation feedback and used a standard approach to align them with existing administrative and planning features, such as roads and local government boundaries.

The proposed Central North Renewable Energy Zone was not consulted on during this process. A draft order has yet to be prepared for this zone. Any feedback received relating to the Central North zone during this process has been recorded and will be considered following the formal consultation period, expected to commence in the coming months.



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Across all renewable energy zones, several common themes emerged.



Community and regional impacts

Many participants raised concerns about how large-scale renewable energy development may affect landscapes, amenity, wellbeing and local economies over time. Feedback often focused on combined impacts rather than individual projects.



Engagement and transparency

Participants emphasised the need for clear, timely and transparent engagement, particularly where they felt impacted by changes to zones. Many asked for clearer explanations of what a renewable energy zone declaration does and does not allow and how feedback informs decisions.



Agriculture and land use

Agricultural land was consistently described as a critical regional asset. Participants raised concerns about loss of productive land, fragmentation of farm operations, biosecurity risks and long term impacts on farm viability. Many asked that agricultural values be given ongoing weight in planning decisions.



Transmission and infrastructure

Concerns were raised about future transmission infrastructure, distance to existing networks, pressure on local roads and services, bushfire risk and emergency response. Submissions also highlighted preferences for infrastructure to be underground.



Biodiversity and the natural environment

Feedback highlighted the importance of protecting sensitive ecosystems, remnant vegetation, wetlands, waterways and habitat for threatened species. Concerns were also raised about large-scale infrastructure fragmenting ecosystems and habitats.



Certainty and fairness

Many submissions reflected concern about the pace and scale of change in regional areas, perceived differences in impacts between regions and metropolitan areas and the need for coordinated planning to avoid uncoordinated or incremental development.

Zone-specific views

While several themes emerged across the state, feedback also highlighted issues specific to each zone, including:

- **South West:** Feedback focused on biodiversity, agriculture, cultural heritage, landscape character, fire risk and distance from existing transmission. Many participants said the northern section (in the Dundas Tablelands) was included late and without enough early engagement.
- **Gippsland:** Feedback focused on impacts on farming communities, regional character and cumulative change. Submissions called for impacts to be considered at a regional scale.
- **Gippsland Shoreline:** Feedback centred on shoreline crossing locations, coastal and marine environments, and expectations for underground onshore connections. Many submissions asked for a clearer explanation of how alternative locations were considered.
- **Western:** Feedback reflected strong opposition in parts of the zone, particularly in the southern section, alongside support of industry for boundary changes to improve planning flexibility and transmission efficiency.
- **North West:** Feedback focused on agriculture, wetlands, floodplains, biodiversity and cumulative impacts from transmission and generation. Views differed on whether zone boundaries should be reduced or expanded.
- **Central Highlands:** Feedback focused on boundary decisions near sensitive landscapes, agricultural land, township growth and cumulative impacts. There were mixed views about certainty and development flexibility.

How feedback was considered

Renewable energy zone orders are a strategic planning tool. They do not approve projects, fix infrastructure locations or require landholders to host renewable energy generation.

We assessed all feedback using a consistent decision-making framework to ensure transparency and fairness. The assessment primarily focused on refining the boundaries of renewable energy zones, including the consideration of new information received about the zones. Feedback relating to other details in the draft orders was also considered when finalising the orders for example, the requirement to underground onshore connection cables in the Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone.

For each of the declared zones, the Minister for Energy and Resources has published a statement of reasons for the decisions, including information about how feedback relevant to the renewable energy zone orders was considered.

The statements of reasons are available at the [Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action webpage](#).

Feedback relevant to other matters, such as project design, transmission routes, access arrangements, biosecurity management and community benefits, has been recorded and will be considered through future planning and approval processes.

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What happens next

Declaring renewable energy zones is not the end of engagement. We will continue to work with communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, local government and industry as renewable energy zones move into implementation.

This includes:

- Developing renewable energy zone access and scheme arrangements
- The introduction of the Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds and governance arrangements
- Planning and designing transmission projects
- Project level environmental assessment and approvals
- Continuing engagement with landholders, communities, Traditional Owners and local government

The feedback summarised in this report will continue to shape these processes as Victoria progresses towards a coordinated and fair energy transition.

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Introduction

Victoria's transition to renewable energy is taking an important step forward with the declaration of renewable energy zones.

As Victoria's ageing coal-fired power stations reach their end of life and close, our energy mix needs to change and will include a significant amount of new renewable energy generation and storage capacity, supported by transmission network upgrades.

Renewable energy zones will:

- Ensure better coordination of renewable energy projects and reduce the need for unnecessary transmission infrastructure
- Enable VicGrid to implement clear rules that manage how projects gain access to the grid, including expectations for how developers engage with the community

- Provide greater certainty about how and where renewable energy projects should be built
- Unlock new economic benefits for regional communities and Traditional Owners

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan proposed six onshore renewable energy zones and a Gippsland shoreline zone to connect offshore wind projects in Gippsland.

Engagement has been embedded throughout the process of identifying, refining and proposing renewable energy zones.

Design of the renewable energy zones

The renewable energy zones were identified through a staged, statewide planning process, as outlined in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

In designing the zones, we considered:

- Access to strong winds or sunshine that could produce renewable energy
- Access to existing or planned transmission infrastructure
- If farming in the area could potentially co-exist with renewable energy projects

- Impacts on the environment and biodiversity
- Impacts on local communities
- Impacts on Traditional Owners and culturally sensitive areas
- Regional development opportunities
- Interest from renewable energy project developers

Feedback was gathered over several stages while the Victorian Transmission Plan was being developed. During this time, more than 10,000 feedback responses were considered, including submissions, survey responses and conversations.

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**November
2023 –
February
2024**



Renewable energy planning survey

This stage sought early input on community values, sensitive areas and locations that may be more or less suitable for renewable energy development. Feedback informed the renewable energy zone study area.

**September
2024**



Renewable energy zone study area

The study area showed the parts of Victoria that have potential to host new energy system infrastructure. We invited feedback on the study area to identify the draft proposed zones.

**May – June
2025**



Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan

The draft proposed zones were released as part of the draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan for further feedback. This feedback helped refine the zones.

**August
2025**



2025 Victorian Transmission Plan

We released the final 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan with the proposed renewable energy zones.

**November
2025 –
March 2026**



Draft renewable energy zone orders

The Minister for Energy and Resources invited further feedback on the zones to refine the final boundaries before formally declaring each zone.

**The findings
from this
stage are
the focus of
this report**

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Renewable energy zone declaration engagement

On 20 November 2025, the Minister for Energy and Resources invited feedback on each draft renewable energy zone order before formally declaring each zone. Consultation ran to 15 March 2026. This stage sought to identify if any significant new information had emerged since earlier engagement, particularly regarding sensitive areas, potential impacts or suitable locations for development.

Methodology for considering renewable energy zone order feedback

All feedback on the draft renewable energy zone orders was recorded, reviewed and analysed using a consistent approach to ensure transparency and fairness.

Feedback was grouped into common themes, allowing similar issues to be considered consistently across regions while still taking local context into account where relevant.

Each submission was then assessed against a set of criteria, including whether the feedback:

- Identified significant new information not previously considered
- Suggested changes that could reduce impacts on Traditional Owners, the environment, land use or local communities
- Affected the efficient use of existing or planned transmission infrastructure
- Supported or conflicted with broader system planning objectives set out in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan

The zones mapped in the draft orders did not have defined boundaries. The final orders have defined boundaries. The process to define boundaries considered consultation feedback and used a standard approach to align them with existing administrative and planning features, such as roads and local government bodies.

This approach was applied consistently across all zones where adjustments were required, using a statewide approach rather than responding to individual landholders or project-specific requests.

Feedback relevant to other matters, such as future Victorian Transmission Plans, transmission project design, renewable energy zone access schemes, community benefit frameworks or longer term system planning, has been recorded and will be considered through future planning and policy processes.



Engagement opportunities

From November 2025 to March 2026, VicGrid delivered a range of activities to seek feedback. This included community and industry events across regional Victoria, engagement with Traditional Owner groups, written submissions and responses to phone and email enquiries. We also engaged closely with local government and other government agencies.

This approach allowed participants to engage in ways that suited their circumstances and ensured feedback was gathered alongside technical and system planning analysis.

In total, engagement comprised:

580

written submissions

5

briefings with energy
industry peak bodies

57

briefings and meetings with
councils, community groups
and community members

31

meetings with renewable
energy developers

43

community events

9

Traditional Owner
Corporation briefings
and meetings

Introduction

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Through our engagement activities, we heard from:

Community members and landholders



Local councils and regional organisations



Traditional Owners and First Peoples



Agriculture groups and land use stakeholders



Renewable energy developers and energy industry bodies



Transmission and distribution network service providers



Government departments and agencies

We received feedback from individuals and organisations, collectively referred to as 'participants' in this report.

Limitations

All engagement processes have limitations. These are factors that may have constrained the activities delivered, who was able to participate, or how we report on what we heard.

The following limitations should be considered when reading this report.

- Participation was voluntary and contributors self-selected to share their views. As such, the findings do not represent a statistically valid sample of Victoria's population.
- This report summarises the key points and themes identified across a wide range of contributions. It provides an overview and does not capture each individual submission or perspective in full.
- Some information included in this report reflects participants' views and experiences and may be factually incorrect, infeasible or based on misunderstandings of the energy system. Where possible, feedback was considered alongside available evidence and existing data to support validation and interpretation.
- Individuals could participate in more than one activity, making it difficult to confirm the total number of individual participants. For example, a person may have submitted a written response and attended a community event.

We acknowledge and thank everyone who participated in the consultation and shared feedback.

Feedback provided valuable local insight that has helped refine the renewable energy zone orders and will continue to inform future planning and implementation.



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Thematic insights by zone

This section summarises feedback received across all engagement activities by zone. It reflects the views of those who participated.

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Thematic insights
by zone

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South West Renewable Energy Zone

We received 233 submissions about the South West Renewable Energy Zone. Feedback was provided by community members, local government, industry and Traditional Owners.



The draft South West Renewable Energy Zone included two sections:

- Southern section: South-west of Hamilton, between Macarthur and Darlington
- Northern section: North-west of Hamilton, between Casterton and Balmoral (known to the community as the Dundas Tablelands)

Most of the feedback received related to the Dundas Tablelands area.

Figure 1 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

Figure 1: Summary of the South West Renewable Energy Zone submission themes

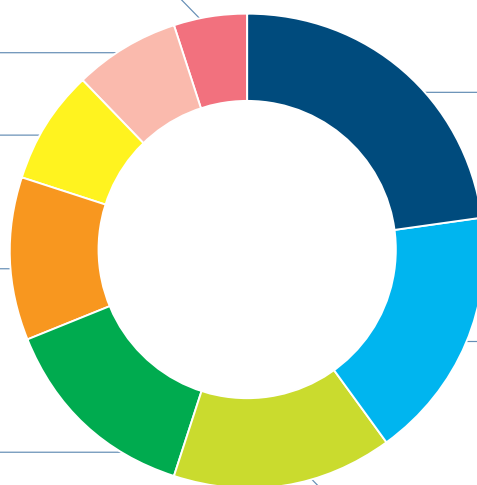
Project and boundary feedback: 5%

Distance to transmission: 7%

Impact on infrastructure: 8%

Fire and firefighting: 11%

VicGrid engagement
feedback: 14%



Biodiversity and
natural environment: 23%

Agriculture
and land use: 17%

Impact on the region: 15%

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Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback from community participants highlighted the ecological value of the South West, particularly across the Dundas Tablelands, Pigeon Ponds, Culla, Coleraine and surrounding areas. Submissions described the landscape as one of the most ecologically significant in Victoria, with remnant vegetation, wetlands and connected habitat corridors across both private and public land.

Connectivity across the landscape was another recurring theme. Participants described the region as a significant wildlife biolink, supporting movement between state forests, reserves, wetlands and the Grampians. Participants noted that decades of community-led revegetation and corridor planting have contributed to improved ecosystem health. They raised concerns about potential fragmentation from large-scale infrastructure and diminishing the value of sustained community-led work.

Many participants referred to the role of mature trees, including River Red Gums, Manna Gums and Yellow Gums, in supporting wildlife habitat, soil stability, shade, and cultural and landscape identity. These trees were described as forming long, continuous habitat corridors linking the Grampians, Black Range, Rocklands, Chetwynd, Dergholm and other forest systems. Some participants raised concerns about potential impacts on these features, particularly where infrastructure may require clearing or disturbance.

Concerns were also raised about the potential impacts of habitat loss on threatened and endangered species that rely on these landscapes. Participants referenced the Southeastern Red-tailed black cockatoo, Brolga, Wedge-tailed eagle, Gang-gang cockatoo, Plains-wanderer, Regent honeyeater, Australasian bittern, Western Victorian blackfish and Southern Bent-wing Bat. Many participants drew on long-term observations of birdlife, raptors, bats and other species across properties and the wider region.

Participants also highlighted the sensitivity of waterways, wetlands and soils. Feedback described parts of the Dundas Tablelands area as containing springs, creeks and tributaries feeding into the Glenelg and Wannon River systems, as well as wetland habitats for Brolgas and other waterbirds. Concerns focused on erosion, landslip risk and changes to drainage patterns. Some feedback noted that Landcare and catchment management authorities have undertaken long-term work to stabilise banks, manage salinity, fence wetlands and restore riparian zones.

Participants also raised concerns about the level of detailed biodiversity mapping available for the Dundas Tablelands and surrounding areas. Many called for further environmental assessment, supported by publicly available data and independent scientific review, before decisions are finalised.

Participants also described the area's distinctive landscape character, including tablelands, dense red gum woodlands, wetlands and uninterrupted views to the Grampians, largely free of industrial-scale development.

Participants raised concerns that turbines and transmission lines would change the character of the area and may conflict with existing guidance, including the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study and the Southern Grampians Shire Plan for Nature. Some suggested that infrastructure should instead be located closer to existing transmission networks or in areas with lower ecological sensitivity.

Thematic insights by zone

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In the southern section of the zone, participants raised specific concerns about Mount Rouse and the Stony Rises lava flow landscapes. These areas were described as supporting complex ecological systems shaped by fractured basalt, springs, soaks, and seasonal wetlands, which sustain biodiversity and longer-lasting wetland habitats than the surrounding plains. Participants also identified high hydrological sensitivity and raised concerns about potential impacts on drainage patterns, wetland function and downstream effects. Species mentioned in this context included the Brolga, Latham's Snipe, Growling Grass Frog, Plains-wanderer, Bent-wing Bat, and other native birds.

"The south-west region includes many crucial endangered and threatened bird species such as the Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo, the majestic Wedge-tail Eagle, the almost functionally extinct Plains Wanderer, the Australian Bittern, the beautiful and critically endangered Regent Honeyeater and the Brolga, which is culturally significant. I do not wish for these, and other bird species, to lose their lives to further human activities. In addition, this region cannot afford to lose any more mature trees. The local eucalyptus, including mature red gums, release important saponins and VOCs [volatile organic compounds] which help with cloud formation and rain, as well as increasing the water retention abilities of the soil."

– Community member

"The Brit Brit landscape contains remnant vegetation, paddock red gums, waterways, and wildlife corridors that have been protected over decades through volunteer Landcare efforts and partnerships with environmental agencies."

– Community member

Agriculture and land use

Community participants from across the Dundas Tablelands area raised concerns about impacts on agriculture, describing the region as one of Victoria's most productive agricultural landscapes. The area supports grazing, livestock and mixed farming systems, including lamb, beef, wool and cropping production. It plays a vital role in local livelihoods, regional economies and community identity.

Feedback highlighted the presence of high-quality agricultural land and the long-term investments families have made in soil health, pasture improvement, tree cover and water systems over multiple generations.

Concerns focused on potential impacts on agricultural productivity, farm operations and long-term viability. Submissions raised questions about the removal or fragmentation of productive land and the implications for ongoing farming activities and business planning.

Biosecurity risks were among the most frequently raised issues. Participants noted that many farming businesses operate under certification schemes linked to export markets, food safety and animal welfare standards. Concerns were raised about the potential for construction activity to introduce weeds, pests or livestock disease through the movement of machinery, vehicles and personnel across properties. Some also noted that disruption to established farming systems could affect production levels required to maintain accreditation, with potential long-term financial consequences.

Some submissions questioned the selection of agricultural land for renewable energy development and suggested that areas with lower agricultural value may be more suitable.

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"This area contains highly productive farmland that plays an important role in food and fibre production. Removing large areas of land from agricultural use would have a direct impact on food security and the long-term viability of local farming businesses. It also poses as a huge biosecurity risk to all agriculture properties involved."

– **Community member**

"The Dundas Tablelands is a renowned region for grazing livestock. The gentle topography, productive but fragile soils and the significant areas of indigenous vegetation provide ideal conditions for livestock production. These conditions also provide limitations for diversifying into other forms of agriculture as the soil types, rainfall and moisture holding capacity of the soils limit the land use to livestock production."

– **Community member**

Some submissions raised concerns about property values, future land-use flexibility and uncertainty associated with infrastructure planning. This uncertainty was identified as a factor influencing investment decisions and long-term planning for some landholders.

Amenity impacts were also raised, including noise, shadow flicker and changes to the visual environment. Participants expressed concerns about the potential impacts of construction and operational activities on day-to-day living and the use of homes and surrounding areas.

Social cohesion and wellbeing were another recurring theme. Participants felt that the proposed zone has created uncertainty and division, with some expressing concern about long-term stress, community tension and mental health impacts. Maintaining community cohesion was described as particularly important in an isolated region that relies on mutual support.

"The social impacts of the proposed development are already evident. A lack of transparency from VicGrid and wind energy proponents has already created anxiety and mistrust, and is growing the seed of division within the community."

– **Community member**

Impact on the region

Feedback from community participants indicated concern about the broader and long-term impacts of renewable energy development on the South West. Submissions referred to potential impacts on landscape character, amenity, local economies and community wellbeing.

Many described the region as a quiet, rural area. Feedback raised concerns about how new infrastructure, including turbines and transmission lines, may affect landscape character and views.

Participants noted that tourism relies on the region's natural landscape, farming identity and rural heritage. Some raised concerns that changes to the landscape could affect tourism and associated small businesses.

Thematic insights by zone

OFFICIAL

Community engagement

Community and local government feedback indicated that engagement in parts of the South West, particularly the Dundas Tablelands area, did not meet expectations for early, clear and accessible communication. Participants noted that the Dundas Tablelands area was not included in earlier consultation stages. Feedback indicated that this affected people's ability to engage early, understand potential impacts and participate meaningfully.

Some submissions stated that people were not aware of earlier consultation stages or did not receive information in time to participate fully. Others described needing to actively seek out information through neighbours, social media or community groups.

Access to information was also raised. Some submissions noted that communication materials were not always received directly or were received shortly before engagement activities. Others raised concerns about how information was presented, including maps and explanations of potential infrastructure, and whether this supported a clear understanding of what was proposed.

Broader concerns were raised about transparency and clarity in the engagement process, including uncertainty about how decisions were made and how feedback was considered.

"There are also serious concerns regarding the lack of transparency and genuine consultation with the local community. Many landholders have had to source their own information about the proposal, and the consultation process has not clearly outlined the full scale of infrastructure or its long-term impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and rural communities."

– **Community member**

"The locations of the proposed renewable energy zones within the Southern Grampians Shire Council appear to rely on high-level spatial modelling that overlooks the region's unique volcanic landscapes and rich Aboriginal cultural heritage. The area also has significant environmental sensitivities, amongst which is it being home to a number of endangered and vulnerable bird species. Council wishes to still advocate for a more locally informed and culturally sensitive evaluation process and greater engagement with the Traditional Owners."

– **Southern Grampians Shire Council**

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Fire risk and firefighting

Community participants described the region as fire-prone, with factors including frequent lightning, dry conditions, vegetation and complex terrain.

Some submissions raised concerns about potential ignition sources associated with infrastructure. These included lightning strikes on tall structures and electrical faults during extreme weather conditions.

The landscape was described as conducive to fast-moving grassfires and scrub fires. Steep gullies, rocky rises and dense vegetation limit access for firefighting ground crews in some areas. Access was identified as an ongoing challenge for emergency response due to the terrain and narrow, winding roads.

In the southern section of the zone, some submissions highlighted the Stony Rises landscape as particularly fire-prone and difficult to access.

Submissions noted that aircraft are often relied on to respond to fires in areas where terrain restricts ground access. They raised concerns that tall structures, including turbines and transmission lines, could affect aircraft movement, limit access, or introduce operational constraints during fire suppression activities.

Reliance on volunteer Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades was also highlighted. Submissions noted limited resources and raised concerns about increased operational demands, additional training requirements and safety considerations when responding to fires near electrical infrastructure. Questions were also raised about how volunteers may respond to fires involving or near large-scale infrastructure.

"Fire risk presents a further and significant issue. Generations of our family have served as volunteers in the CFA, including in leadership roles, and we remain active members of the Nareen Brigade. The proposed renewable energy zone is located in a high-risk fire and lightning zone, exacerbated by ironstone geology. The natural topography with steep gullies, dense with trees and creek lines of the renewable energy zone make fighting fires difficult in the current conditions. In a lot of areas, aircraft is the only effective tool for distinguishing fires."

– Community member

"We would also like to highlight the high bushfire risk evident in the recently created REZ in the north-western part of the shire and how the introduction of renewable energy facilities and associated infrastructure i.e. high voltage power lines could increase this risk substantially."

– Southern Grampians Shire Council

Thematic insights by zone

OFFICIAL

Impact on infrastructure

Community participants raised concerns about the capacity of local infrastructure, particularly the road network, to support construction and ongoing maintenance associated with large-scale renewable energy development.

Submissions described local roads in the Dundas Tablelands and surrounding areas as narrow, winding and often single-lane, with soft shoulders, limited capacity, and existing poor conditions such as potholes, cracked bitumen and erosion. Many submissions noted that these roads are bordered by remnant native vegetation, including mature trees, which may make widening or upgrading difficult.

Submissions raised safety concerns about interactions between heavy vehicle traffic and school buses, local families travelling to work, agricultural machinery, livestock carriers and emergency service vehicles. Some participants described limited passing opportunities, blind crests, sharp drop-offs and narrow shoulders as existing constraints that may increase safety risks if traffic volumes rise.

"The many single-lane roads in this proposed zone have remnant native vegetation running down both sides of the bitumen. The trees overhang the lanes in most cases to form a dense, cathedral-like canopy. To get the massive equipment and then the wind tower components in place will require significant clearing of the roadsides and major roadworks to increase the carrying capacity of the single-lane roads."

– **Culla Pigeon Ponds Land Management Group**

"Our local infrastructure was never designed for large-scale industrial activity. This is not merely a convenience issue for our community, it goes to the functioning of a productive rural district."

– **Community member**

Distance to transmission

Community and industry feedback highlighted concerns about the distance between parts of the proposed zone and existing or planned transmission infrastructure, particularly in the Dundas Tablelands area.

Community participants raised concerns that the Dundas Tablelands area may require significant new transmission infrastructure to connect local generation to the grid.

Some submissions highlighted that new transmission lines may need to extend across agricultural land and other areas outside the zone to reach the existing network. Concerns focused on potential impacts on landholders and communities along future transmission routes, including those who may not be located within the zone itself.

Participants questioned whether locating renewable energy development further from existing infrastructure would be expensive to build and maintain, and whether these costs would ultimately be borne by electricity consumers or taxpayers.

Some asked why locations closer to the existing 500 kilovolt (kV) and 220 kV transmission network – including Heywood or Portland – were not identified, noting potential benefits in reducing the need for new transmission and associated impacts.

"This raises a very basic planning question: if a region is remote from connection points and requires substantial new transmission across productive farmland and sensitive landscapes, is it really an appropriate location for further concentrated renewable development?"

– **Community member**

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"I am concerned that the Victorian Transmission Plan does not outline the transmission line that would connect the Balmoral and Coleraine renewable energy zone to the grid, therefore leaving the developers to establish this line."

– Community member

Local government participants noted that the region is well-positioned for renewable energy generation and grid-scale storage, due to existing transmission connections and industrial assets. Some councils said the current zone captures only part of this opportunity and asked for clearer justification of placement and stronger alignment with existing infrastructure and regional development objectives.

Project and boundary feedback

Feedback on project siting, zone boundaries and access arrangements came from community members, industry and local government. Common themes included concerns about boundary location, the treatment of projects outside the zone, the clarity of decision-making and cumulative impacts.

Industry participants provided feedback on zone boundaries, hosting capacity and access arrangements. Some noted that areas outside the zone remain attractive for development due to strong wind resources, lower housing density, proximity to existing substations and compatibility with grazing land use. Participants emphasised the importance of collaboration to manage impacts, including shared infrastructure and coordinated construction.

Industry participants also raised concerns about hosting capacity assumptions. Some noted that published figures reflect forecast future network conditions rather than the existing grid. They asked for clearer information about transitional arrangements, how committed projects will be treated and how hosting capacity may change over time.

"Glenelg Shire also presents a major opportunity for large-scale utility battery storage given established transmission infrastructure and industry assets. However, upon review, the latest mapped renewable energy zone, only incorporates a small section within the northern area of Glenelg Shire, despite the evident opportunity for renewable energy growth."

– Glenelg Shire Council

Thematic insights
by zone

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Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone

We received 23 submissions about the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone. Feedback was provided by community members, local government, industry and Traditional Owners.



Figure 2 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

Figure 2: Summary of the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone submission themes

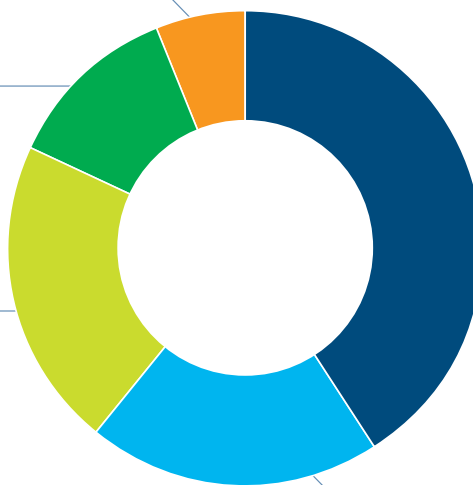
Hosting capacity: 6%

Fire and firefighting: 12%

Biodiversity and
natural environment: 21%

Impact on
the region: 41%

Agriculture and land use: 20%



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Impact on the region

Community participants raised concerns about potential regional impacts of the renewable energy development and associated transmission infrastructure across Gippsland. Feedback focused on regional character, mental health and wellbeing, tourism and cumulative land-use change.

Mental health and wellbeing were raised in relation to uncertainty about transmission routes, easements and land impacts. Some participants noted that prolonged uncertainty can affect families' ability to plan and may contribute to stress, particularly in farming communities. Participants also raised concerns about regional identity, tourism and confidence in investing or settling in the region. They noted that Gippsland's natural landscapes underpin tourism and local businesses and that cumulative visual and land use change could affect the region's character.

Several participants called for clearer information, recognition of local context and independent assessment of regional and cumulative impacts. This included consideration of offshore wind proposals alongside the onshore transmission required to support them.

"Tourism supports many small businesses, accommodation providers, local markets and service industries throughout the region. Any significant industrialisation of the landscape risks undermining the natural character that visitors come to experience. The potential economic impacts of changing the visual and environmental character of the region should be considered carefully before infrastructure of this scale proceeds."

– Community member

Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback from community participants focused on the fact that Gippsland contains diverse ecosystems, native vegetation and important wildlife populations that contribute to the region's environmental values. Some people raised concerns that large-scale transmission infrastructure could affect these values through vegetation clearing, habitat fragmentation and long-term ecological disturbance. They asked that sensitive areas be avoided and protected.

Participants raised concerns about threatened species, including the Strzelecki Koala. They noted that connected habitat is important to maintaining wildlife populations.

Participants also raised concerns about potential risks to waterways, wetlands and pasture from construction activities, including erosion, runoff and contamination. They asked that cumulative land and water impacts be assessed at a broader precinct or regional scale.

"The Gippsland region supports diverse ecosystems and important wildlife populations. Large transmission corridors typically require extensive vegetation clearing and ongoing maintenance zones. Habitat fragmentation can disrupt species that rely on connected landscapes, including birdlife and other native wildlife that form an important part of Gippsland's natural identity."

– Community member

Thematic insights by zone

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Agriculture and land use

Community and local government participants shared that agriculture is a key land use and economic foundation across Gippsland. They raised concerns that large-scale renewable energy and transmission infrastructure on farmland could reduce agricultural productivity, affect long-term farm viability and create cumulative impacts beyond individual project sites. Participants said these impacts should be considered at a district or regional scale rather than project-by-project.

Participants described Gippsland as containing some of Victoria's most productive farming land, supporting dairy, livestock and mixed farming systems. Some participants raised concerns that once farmland is converted to industrial-scale energy use, it may be difficult to restore. They emphasised that agricultural values should remain a central consideration in planning decisions.

Concerns were also raised about land use compatibility and infrastructure siting. Participants noted that some proposed infrastructure sits outside the zone boundary and feel that clear boundaries are important to provide certainty for agricultural businesses and landholders. Others highlighted the need to consider cumulative impacts on farm operations, including access, machinery movement and future adaptation.

Some participants also raised concerns about transmission infrastructure affecting established rural land uses, including long standing community activities. They said potential loss or restriction of land use could affect the ongoing viability of these uses.

"There has been a recent increase in proposals for renewable energy facilities (battery storage and solar) within the Shire, on land outside the draft renewable energy zone areas. These developments are occurring on and adjacent to land identified as highly versatile agricultural land. It is submitted that such proposals are permanently removing prime agricultural land from the state's agricultural base, which is inconsistent with state policy that attempts to protect productive agricultural land."

– Baw Baw Shire Council

"The current proposed route for the VicGrid overhead power lines within the club's boundary would have the potential to greatly impact the club's ongoing ability to conduct events; and therefore, greatly impact the ongoing viability of the club to continue to operate at our current site."

– Victorian Field and Game Association,
Traralgon branch

Fire risk and firefighting

Community participants are concerned that the region already experiences bushfire risk and that new energy infrastructure could increase ignition hazards and complicate emergency response.

Concerns focused on infrastructure outside of the renewable energy zone, particularly fire risks associated with batteries.

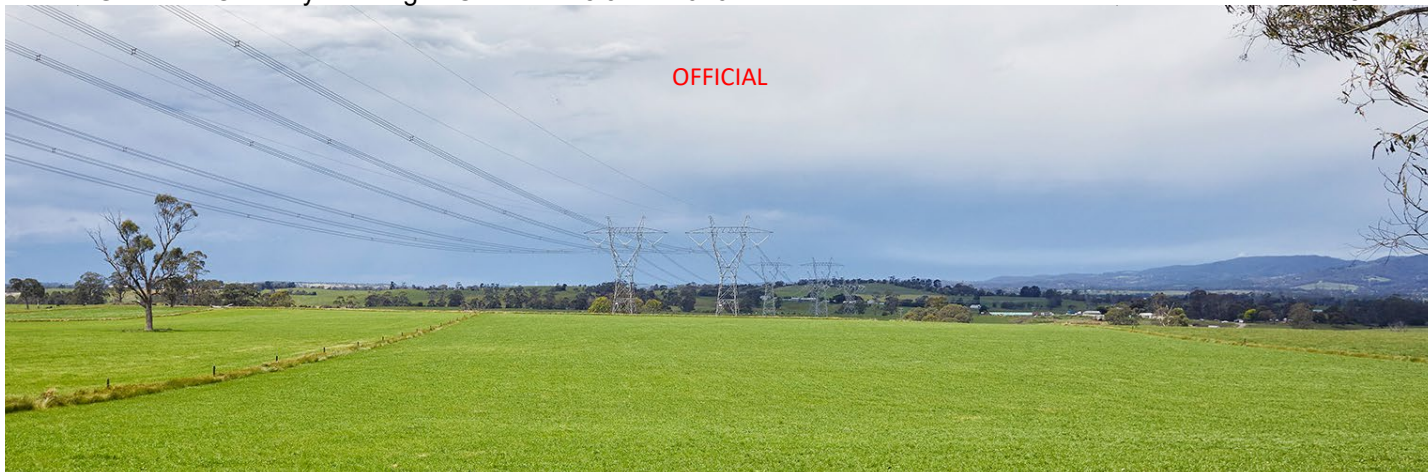
"Many farming zone areas outside the renewable energy zone, including Yarragon and surrounding districts, are located within Bushfire Management Overlays and designated Bushfire Prone Areas."

– Community member

Hosting capacity

There was some feedback from developers questioning whether the hosting capacity of the Gippsland zone can be realised. Submissions noted geographical constraints, community opposition and project viability.

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Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone

We received 65 submissions about the Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone.

The Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone is different from the other declared zones. The shoreline zone is not designed to host onshore wind or solar farms. It is a limited area where offshore wind farm developers will locate cables and connection infrastructure, linking offshore wind turbines with Victoria's transmission network.



Figure 3 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

Figure 3: Summary of the Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone submission themes

Fire and firefighting: 4%

Agriculture and land use: 7%

VicGrid engagement feedback: 8%

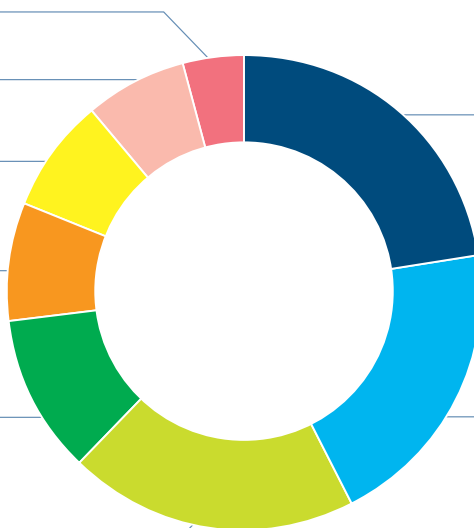
Feedback about the renewable energy order process: 8%

Feedback about offshore wind: 10%

Impact on the region: 20%

Shoreline crossings: 23%

Biodiversity and natural environment: 20%



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Thematic insights by zone

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Shoreline crossing feedback

Feedback on shoreline crossing locations focused on how areas were identified, the rationale for their selection and how environmental, cultural and community impacts are assessed.

Community participants raised concerns about how proposed shoreline crossing locations have been selected, particularly in areas near Reeves Beach, McGaurans Beach and Seaspray. Some participants stated that the draft order does not clearly explain how these locations were compared with less sensitive alternatives or how environmental, cultural and community factors were weighted alongside technical feasibility.

Feedback on specific locations was mixed. Several submissions asked that options near Seaspray be removed due to proximity to the township, Merriman Creek, community facilities and recreational areas, as well as the potential social, environmental and amenity impacts. Others supported further investigation of all identified locations, including Seaspray – or expressed relative preferences between options.

Across submissions from community, the feedback emphasised the need for clear explanations of site selection decisions.

Some community participants also requested that the renewable energy zone declaration order explicitly state that onshore transmission associated with shoreline crossings be installed underground to reduce visual impacts and protect coastal landscapes.

“The Merriman Creek crossover is far too close to the township of Seaspray. This then impacts the social fabric of the community and has adverse economic implications and disruptions. Locals and tourists use the facilities at the Seaspray Surf Lifesaving Club, the Seaspray Caravan Park and the Seaspray General Store.”

– Community member

Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback on biodiversity and the natural environment focused on potential impacts of shoreline crossings on coastal systems, marine environments and protected species.

Community participants told us that the Gippsland shoreline is one of Victoria’s most environmentally significant coastal landscapes. Community members raised concerns that proposed shoreline crossings for offshore wind transmission could affect dune systems, coastal habitats, marine ecosystems and protected species. Feedback emphasised the need to avoid sensitive areas and undertake more detailed assessments before locations are confirmed.

Concerns focused on sensitive dune systems and coastal processes, particularly near Seaspray, Merriman Creek, McLoughlins Beach, Reeves Beach and The Honeysuckles. Participants described dunes as highly dynamic and vulnerable to disturbance, noting their role in protecting wetlands, low lying areas and townships from erosion and inundation. Some noted concerns about cable landings and excavation destabilising dunes, altering coastal processes and increasing erosion risk.

Community participants also raised concerns about the impacts of construction and maintenance on estuaries, wetlands, protected marine environments and surrounding saltmarsh systems. They noted that these areas support important wildlife and are difficult to restore if disturbed. Concerns were also raised about impacts on threatened and migratory species, including waterbirds, shorebirds, amphibians and marine mammals, through habitat disturbance, noise, lighting and marine activities.

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Participants shared concerns about how construction corridors and ongoing maintenance could affect saltmarsh, grasslands and revegetated areas, including protected sites. Concerns included impacts on habitat, carbon storage and long term coastal resilience.

Cultural heritage was also raised, with participants noting that some shoreline areas are culturally significant and should be actively protected.

"The Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone represents a high-impact interface between offshore and onshore ecosystems — including Ramsar-listed wetlands, coastal reserves, dune systems, estuarine environments and culturally significant Sea Country. Although the zone is described as being "designed for connections not generation," shoreline crossings, underground export cables, terminal stations and associated access works are not environmentally neutral."

– Gippsland Coastal Assembly

Impact on the region

Feedback from community participants on impacts to the region focused on the potential social, economic and cultural effects of shoreline crossings and offshore wind transmission infrastructure, particularly in coastal communities.

Tourism and regional identity were raised as important considerations. Participants said coastal tourism along Ninety Mile Beach relies on a quiet, natural setting and supports local businesses and events. Some expressed concerns that shoreline infrastructure and construction activity could reduce the appeal of areas such as Seaspray and The Honeysuckles, and conflict with campaigns that promote low-impact coastal experiences.

Community participants also raised concerns about property values and long term planning. They were worried that uncertainty around infrastructure locations and easements could affect buyer confidence, limit future development or land use decisions, and create financial uncertainty for landholders.

Participants were concerned that construction activities could disrupt travel between coastal towns, affecting access to services, employment and recreation. Fishing, boating and coastal recreation were also described as central to local culture, with concerns that construction or exclusion zones may affect these activities.

Community participants consistently raised concerns about visual changes and sense of place. They said visible infrastructure, construction compounds and ongoing maintenance could alter the character of the coastline and reduce the natural qualities valued by residents and visitors.

Mental health and community cohesion were also mentioned. Some participants suggested that prolonged uncertainty and limited clarity about decisions are contributing to stress.

Thematic insights by zone

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Overall, participants asked that cumulative and long-term impacts across offshore wind, shoreline crossings and inland transmission be considered together. Many also called for clearer information, transparent decision making, independent assessment and early engagement with affected communities.

"Large infrastructure proposals can create significant social and psychological impacts on rural communities."

– **No offshore turbines Ninety Mile beach**

"There are two key businesses serving both communities, along with the small canteen shop at the caravan park. That is the scale of the local economy. It is fragile, seasonal and highly dependent on amenity, reputation and repeat visitation."

– **Community member**

Feedback about offshore wind

Community participants shared feedback on offshore wind proposals and focused on proximity to the coast, environmental and cultural impacts, visual amenity, economic effects and technical risks associated with Bass Strait conditions.

Concerns about early engagement and transparency were raised. Some participants said community consultation was inconsistent across proponents and did not always occur early or clearly. They said perceived gaps in transparency have affected trust and confidence in offshore wind development.

Proximity to the coast was a recurring theme.

Many participants said the locations of some of the proposed projects are not appropriate for a coastline valued for tourism, recreation and residential amenity. Some suggested greater offshore distances, noting that distance from shore was closely linked to acceptance of offshore wind development.

Environmental and marine impacts were also raised. Participants noted the importance of Bass Strait as a movement corridor for whales and other marine species. They raised concerns about underwater noise, vessel traffic and construction impacts.

Submissions also shared concern about community wellbeing and cohesion. Some participants said offshore wind proposals are influencing local dynamics in coastal towns and contributing to stress and uncertainty. For many, views on offshore wind were shaped as much by process, transparency and trust as by the physical infrastructure itself.

"The transition to offshore wind energy is important in securing renewable energy supplies for Australia, but the best possible outcomes are essential for government, wind energy companies and most importantly the local communities. Hence, wind farms should be located at least 25 kilometres offshore."

– **Community member**

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Feedback about the renewable energy zone process

Feedback on the renewable energy zone process focused on transparency, sequencing and the incorporation of environmental, cultural and community considerations.

Community participants shared concern that shoreline crossings and transmission corridors appear to have been identified before comprehensive environmental, cultural heritage and community assessments were completed. Some participants said locations were shortlisted without a clear analysis of alternatives and before Environment Effects Statement processes had fully considered cumulative impacts. Several submissions expressed concern that this approach may limit the assessment of alternatives and cumulative impacts.

Participants questioned the basis for decision-making, noting a lack of transparency in how locations were compared and how environmental, cultural and community values were balanced against technical feasibility. Several submissions suggested the process appeared to prioritise transmission considerations, with less clarity on how other impacts were addressed.

Across submissions, participants called for clearer, more transparent decision making, including how feedback informs outcomes. Participants emphasised the need for appropriate sequencing, with some suggesting that corridor decisions should be deferred until all relevant environmental and cultural assessments are complete.

“For works likely to have significant environmental effects, the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process exists to examine alternatives, cumulative impacts, and propose mitigation and monitoring, guided by the Ministerial Guidelines (2023). VicGrid and the draft order preselects shore crossings and a corridor without an upfront, transparent alternatives analysis, effectively prejudging outcomes that should be tested through the EES. The order should defer corridor declaration until the EES has properly examined reasonable alternatives and cumulative effects with meaningful public review.”

– Community member

Thematic insights by zone

OFFICIAL

VicGrid engagement feedback

Feedback on engagement focused on whether consultation for shoreline crossings and transmission planning was timely, clear and accessible, particularly for directly affected communities.

Some participants said consultation did not consistently reach affected landholders and residents. They raised concerns about limited notice, unclear or poorly timed communication, and information that was difficult to access or understand.

Others said engagement methods did not suit local conditions and did not effectively reach a broad or representative cross-section of the community.

"Although consultation meetings have been held, many community members feel the process has not amounted to genuine consultation."

– Community member

Participants also raised concerns about animal welfare and biosecurity risks associated with construction activity. They asked for clarity on how these risks would be managed and who would be responsible.

Several submissions emphasised the need to consider cumulative impacts across the region, noting that uncoordinated development by multiple proponents could fragment farmland and increase disruption over time. Some suggested shared corridors and coordinated planning to minimise impacts on agriculture.

"There would be loss of productive farmland and land development in this area if proposed plans are passed. Landscape changes would be significant and irreversible. Valuations would be impacted not in a positive way."

– Community member

Agriculture and land use

Feedback on agriculture and land use focused on the impact of renewable energy generation, transmission infrastructure and associated works on agricultural land.

Community participants shared that Gippsland supports highly productive farming systems and raised concerns that converting farmland to industrial energy use could reduce long-term agricultural productivity.

Some participants questioned the ongoing compatibility of energy infrastructure with farming. They said infrastructure, transmission easements and access tracks could disrupt pasture management, livestock movement, irrigation systems and future farm development. Concerns were also raised about potential impacts on soil structure, drainage and fertility from excavation and heavy machinery, particularly in irrigated or high-value farming areas.

Fire and firefighting

Feedback on fire risk and firefighting focused on potential bushfire risks associated with renewable energy generation, battery storage and transmission infrastructure.

Community participants highlighted that parts of Gippsland are already recognised as fire prone. Concerns focused on potential ignition sources from infrastructure and maintenance activities, increased fuel loads along easements, additional machinery and traffic and possible limitations on emergency response.



Western Renewable Energy Zone

We received 93 submissions about the Western Renewable Energy Zone. Feedback was provided by community members, local government, industry and Traditional Owners.

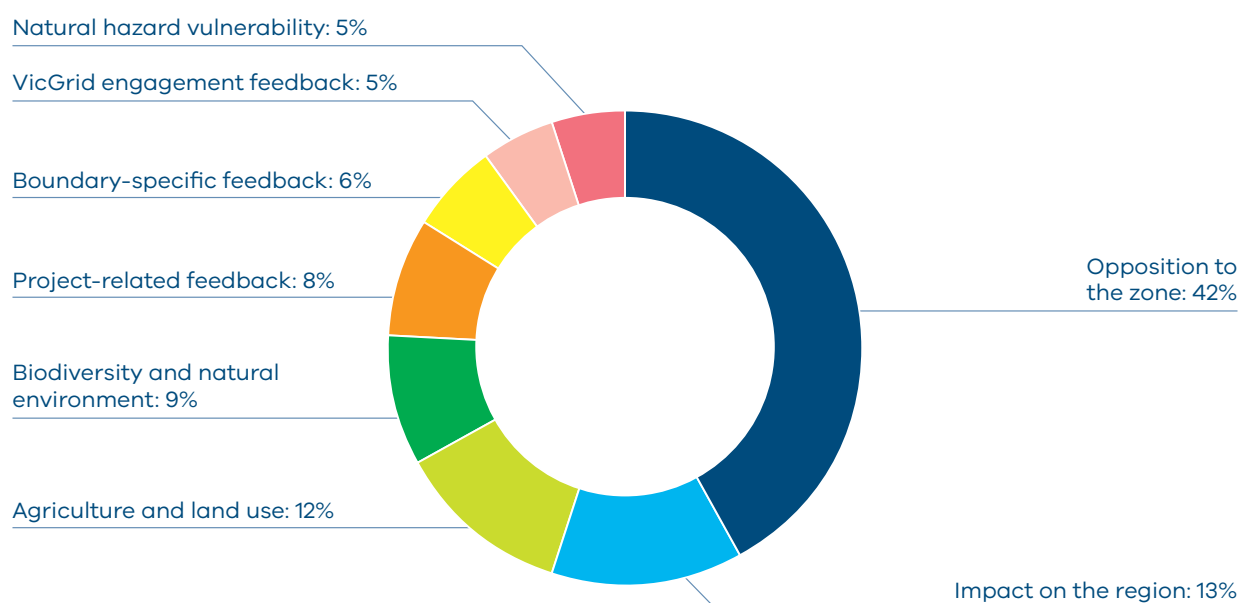


The draft Western Renewable Energy Zone included two sections:

- Eastern section: Between Stawell and Donald
- Western section: North of Horsham, between Dooen and Hopetoun

Figure 4 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

Figure 4: Summary of the Western Renewable Energy Zone submission themes



Thematic insights by zone

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Opposition to the zone

Feedback included strong opposition from some community members, particularly in the eastern section of the zone. Some stated that there is no social licence for large-scale energy development in the area.

A prominent feature of community feedback was a community-generated map prepared by landholders in the southern section of the zone. Submissions described this map as demonstrating organised and widespread non-participation in renewable energy development across a large area. Participants noted that the map was developed collaboratively, with individual landholders voluntarily identifying their own property boundaries and indicating whether they consent to hosting renewable energy infrastructure on their land.

Participants noted that landholders invested significant time and effort in preparing the map, and that the process strengthened the credibility of the information. The map was described as representing landholder sentiment across a substantial portion of the proposed zone.

Some participants raised concerns that this community-generated evidence had been dismissed or given insufficient weight. They said disregarding this material undermined trust in the engagement process and has led to a perception that participation was not valued.

The Northern Grampians Shire Council noted its opposition to the Western Renewables Energy Zone. Council noted that its position reflects concerns about the lack of social licence for renewable energy development in the area, cumulative impacts on agriculture, wellbeing and regional sustainability, and the adequacy of consultation to date.

Council noted that communities are already experiencing cumulative stress from drought, cost-of-living pressures, new charges and levies, and recent bushfire seasons. The submission noted that the proposed zone has added to community anxiety and reduced tolerance for large-scale change, with questions remaining about how the zone would affect land use, landscape values and local economies.

“Northern Grampians Shire Council’s position is based on a range of concerns, including the lack of social license from our community, the impact of the energy transition (and the uncertainty around it) on community wellbeing, the disruption to agriculture in the Shire, the adequacy of the consultation process to date, and the lack of strategic planning and investment to address the impacts of the transition on our Shire and region.”

– Northern Grampians Shire Council

“Please see the attached Renewable Energy Zone Map – the landowners have mapped their land saying that they do not want to be in a renewable energy zone and will not host any renewable energy projects. The large majority of landowners under the proposed Grampians Wimmera [eastern section of the] Renewable Energy Zone say NO!”

– Community member

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Impact on the Region

Feedback on impacts to the region focused on potential economic, land use and visual changes associated with large-scale renewable energy development, as well as the cumulative effects of infrastructure across the western plains.

Community concerns focused on reduced property values, uncertainty for agricultural businesses and the cumulative effects of large scale energy infrastructure in a region characterised by broadacre farming and open rural landscapes.

Participants noted that their financial security is closely tied to land ownership. Being included in a renewable energy zone – even without confirmed projects – has influenced perceptions on land value, future saleability and long-term planning.

Some participants described the scale of the proposed infrastructure as incompatible with the region's open landscapes and tourism appeal, noting that visitors are drawn to the area for its agricultural character and expansive views. Several submissions said cumulative development would reduce amenity across large areas rather than being contained to individual sites.

Participants also raised concerns about economic impacts on agriculture and local businesses. Some said that the region already hosts renewable energy facilities and is experiencing cumulative pressure, leading to perceptions that the area is being overburdened. Others questioned whether community benefit programs would offset economic losses for farming enterprises and small businesses, particularly where neighbouring landholders are affected but do not host infrastructure.

Community members and Northern Grampians Shire Council raised concerns about compulsory land access. Participants said the potential use of statutory powers to acquire easements or restrict land use contributes to stress and uncertainty. Issues raised included impacts on future development rights, constraints on building or subdivision, and increased insurance and public liability costs associated with proximity to large infrastructure. Some participants noted that these factors influence decisions about remaining in the region or passing land to future generations.

"The community are the people who will have to live with these developments when all the developers have left the area. The community will have their income reduced by these developments and their health and lifestyle threatened."

– Community member

Agriculture and land use

Feedback relating to agriculture focused on the perceived compatibility of large-scale renewable energy infrastructure with broadacre farming systems, food and fibre production, and the long term viability of agricultural businesses. Community and local government participants described the western region as a significant producer of food and fibre for Victoria, Australia and export markets. Submissions noted that broadacre cropping and grazing underpin local and regional economies and support surrounding townships, services and employment. Many noted that farmland is often held within families across multiple generations.

Participants described land as both a productive asset and a long-term family investment. They raised concerns about potential impacts on land values, reduced appeal to future buyers due to renewable energy zone designation and uncertainty affecting long-term business planning and farm succession.

Participants discussed how converting agricultural land to industrial infrastructure uses could reduce food and fibre production over the long-term and alter the character and function of farming districts.

Submissions stated that renewable energy infrastructure is not compatible with large-scale broadacre farming systems. Participants raised concerns about fragmentation of paddocks, loss of productive area and disruption to key farming activities such as sowing, spraying, harvesting, lambing and livestock rotation.

Thematic insights by zone

OFFICIAL

Participants also raised concerns about how renewable energy infrastructure would interact with modern farming technologies. These included potential impacts on GPS-guided machinery, precision agriculture systems and virtual fencing technologies. However, others noted that farming technologies can operate alongside existing transmission networks and asked for clearer technical information to address uncertainty and misinformation.

Food safety, market access and contamination were also raised. Participants asked for clearer information about food safety, biosecurity and market access implications associated with renewable energy infrastructure.

"Broadacre agricultural land is not compatible with renewable energy facilities. Australia, Victoria and particularly Western Victoria produce clean, contaminant free food for the world. This will be completely jeopardised by the renewable energy facilities on that farmland. There are already restrictions in selling livestock from paddocks that have been exposed to these contaminants."

– **Wimmera Mallee Environmental and Agricultural Protection Association Inc.**

Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback on biodiversity and the natural environment focused on the compatibility of the proposed zone with native vegetation, ecological systems and landscape-scale environmental values.

Community participants described the region as supporting some of Victoria's remaining high-value ecological systems, many of which are closely integrated with agricultural land. They said renewable energy development has the potential to affect environmental values across private and public land.

Participants raised concerns about extensive areas of remnant native vegetation on private land, Crown land and along roadsides included in the zone. They noted that this vegetation provides critical habitat and movement corridors for wildlife, particularly in landscapes already fragmented. Roadside vegetation was described as especially important because it often forms the last continuous link between habitat areas. Some participants said the potential loss of even small patches of native vegetation could have cumulative ecological impacts. Participants also highlighted the significant time and resources invested by landholders and local communities over decades to protect, restore and enhance native vegetation.

Participants raised concerns about species known to occur within the zone, including the critically endangered Plains-wanderer. Submissions referred to migratory and resident bird species protected under state and national legislation. Some participants expressed concerns that habitat modelling does not adequately reflect recent records or local knowledge, particularly for species that use broadacre farming landscapes for nesting, hunting and seasonal movement.

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Participants identified numerous wetlands and ephemeral swamps within the proposed zone, including sites managed by catchment management authorities and protected on private land. They expressed concern that construction of access roads, transmission infrastructure and associated works could alter natural water flow and drainage patterns. Some said that even minor changes to watercourses could increase flood risk or disrupt wetland systems that depend on seasonal inundation. Others said impacts may extend beyond individual sites and affect downstream farms and townships.

Participants also described the southern area of the region as containing landscape-scale ecological systems that link state forests, rivers and national parks, including the Barabool and Marma State Forests, the Mount William Creek and Wimmera River corridors, and the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd) and surrounding reserves. These areas were identified as part of continuous wildlife networks. Participants said infrastructure in these interconnected landscapes could fragment habitat and disrupt ecological processes at a regional scale. Participants want biodiversity considerations to be assessed across whole landscapes rather than on a site-by-site basis.

"In the western region we have the population of the critically endangered Plains-wanderer. It has barely been considered by anyone except us locals. We are all on this planet for a short period of time and we have a duty to pass it on to future generations intact."

– Community member

Project-related feedback

Feedback under this theme focused on renewable energy projects, transmission capacity and network planning for the zone. Feedback reflected differing views on the scale of development, the purpose and clarity of zone boundaries, and the adequacy of transmission planning to support long-term energy needs while managing impacts on communities and landscapes.

Some community participants questioned the clarity and intent of renewable energy zone boundaries. They perceived the zone as too small to contain the scale of development required and too rigid to prevent projects emerging outside defined areas. They felt this creates uncertainty about whether zones are intended as firm limits or indicative priority areas. Some participants noted that this ambiguity has contributed to confusion and reduced confidence, along with concern that boundaries may change over time without clear explanation.

Submissions from industry and infrastructure proponents focused on transmission capacity, hosting assumptions and long-term system efficiency. These participants said that clear inclusion within a renewable energy zone provides certainty and strengthens the business case for investment. They encouraged broader capacity planning, noting that future electricity demand is expected to increase due to electrification and the emergence of large loads. Some said building flexibility into transmission planning could reduce the need for repeated network upgrades and lower long-term costs.

Thematic insights by zone

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Some industry participants questioned whether published hosting capacity reflects physical limits of the transmission system and cautioned that overestimating deliverable capacity could lead to increased curtailment, reduced investment certainty and higher costs for consumers. Others encouraged future-proofing transmission design to improve efficiency, system stability and resilience.

"The current renewable energy zone boundaries are too small and too rigidly defined to reflect the scale of renewable development required for Victoria's energy transition. Communities can already see that."

– Community member

Boundary-specific feedback

People raised specific concerns about the proposed boundary, and its proximity to areas of recognised environmental, cultural and landscape value.

There were also requests from community participants to adjust the zone boundary to exclude land west of the Murtoa-Glenorchy Road (C237). People said this area contains protected habitat, wildlife corridors and culturally sensitive landscapes and plays an important role in linking state forests, waterways and national parks. Some said retaining this land within the zone is inconsistent with protecting connected environmental systems.

Additional land use constraints within the proposed boundary were also raised. These included proximity to nature reserves and protected species areas, mineral exploration or retention interests, and operational or safety considerations associated with existing land uses. Participants said these constraints should be more clearly reflected in zone planning and boundary definition.

A smaller number of industry participants raised project-related boundary considerations. These participants said expanding or adjusting the boundary could provide greater certainty for energy projects already under development, support more efficient use of existing or planned transmission infrastructure and improve overall system resilience. Some suggested that boundary changes could better align the zone with project footprints and connection points.

In contrast, some community members said further boundary expansion could increase cumulative impacts and reinforce the perception that agricultural regions are being industrialised.

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Engagement feedback

Community participants focused on how engagement for the zone was undertaken, particularly the timing, clarity and perceived effectiveness of consultation. Feedback highlighted concerns about a lack of early notice, information about what it means to be in a zone, and whether engagement has provided meaningful opportunities for communities to influence decisions.

Participants also noted that communities and councils felt unprepared for the release of the draft zone. Some said changes appeared without prior discussion or warning, and that feedback provided on earlier proposals was not reflected in later drafts. This contributed to perceptions that engagement happened after key decisions had already been made. Others said preparing submissions and taking part in the consultation required significant time and effort and it was not clear how their views were being considered. They said this affected confidence in the process.

"As a directly affected farmer, I feel consultation on renewable energy zones and project development, has been performative."

– Community member

Fire risk and firefighting

Community feedback focused on natural hazard risks, particularly bushfire risk and how renewable energy infrastructure may affect fire behaviour and emergency response.

Community participants highlighted parts of the region as already prone to bushfires, with large areas designated as bushfire overlays and dryland farming landscapes that are particularly vulnerable to fast-moving grass and crop fires. Some participants also noted low-lying terrain and altered water flow, saying these conditions may increase risk during severe weather events. They raised concerns that large-scale infrastructure could further influence fire behaviour.

Participants raised concerns about aerial firefighting. They noted that aircraft are critical for suppressing fast-moving fires across large properties, particularly where access tracks are limited. Some questioned whether turbines, transmission lines or other tall infrastructure could restrict aircraft movement or reduce the effectiveness of aerial operations. They noted that any reduction in aerial access would significantly affect firefighting capability across the region.

Participants noted that firefighting near large infrastructure may increase operational complexity and place additional pressure on local brigades, which already manage large areas with limited resources. Some questioned whether local services could manage this added complexity without further support, training or resourcing.

"I'm also concerned with the additional fire risk that we will be exposed to if/when one catches fire. I am deeply concerned that some malfunction 200 meters in the air on a high fire danger day will have a catastrophic effect on neighbours."

– Community member

Thematic insights
by zone

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North West Renewable Energy Zone

We received 64 submissions about the North West Renewable Energy Zone.



Figure 5 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

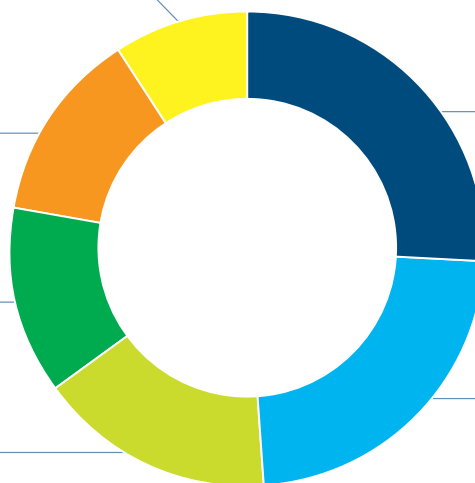
Figure 5: Summary of the North West Renewable Energy Zone submission themes

Boundary-specific feedback: 9%

VicGrid engagement
feedback: 13%

Agriculture and
land use: 13%

Biodiversity and
natural environment: 16%



Project-related
feedback: 26%

Impact on
the region: 23%

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Project-related feedback

Participants reflected differing perspectives about renewable energy development in the region, including project suitability, scale and location, and how projects are coordinated through transmission planning.

Some participants said community acceptance varies across the region and that opposition is more common in areas already experiencing significant development. Several submissions noted that project-level consultation has not consistently built confidence, and social licence should be assessed locally rather than assumed across the zone.

Transmission planning and hosting capacity were also raised. Community feedback included concerns about land access, compulsory acquisition, visual impacts, fire risk and accountability. Whereas, industry submissions supported transmission investment as a means of enabling regional participation in the energy transition.

Views differed on the proposed hosting capacity. Some industry and local government participants consider it constrained and support more flexible, technology-neutral or staged approaches that can adapt over time.

"Council seeks that you reconsider and expand the area to the north to be included in the renewable energy zone. The region benefits from access to existing transmission infrastructure, including the Wemen to Kerang 220kv line, and it is understood this line still has capacity to host renewable energy development."

– Swan Hill Rural City Council

"The Project is currently only partially located within the draft North West Renewable Energy Zone boundary and Atmos recommends that the draft North West Renewable Energy Zone boundary is adjusted to ensure the Project boundary is wholly within the zone boundary. Expanding the zone boundary to fully incorporate the Project will assist in providing clarity to all stakeholders, including neighbouring landholders and local councils, that the Project forms part of a coordinated, government-endorsed renewable energy development zone. This clarity supports transparent consultation, consistent messaging and alignment with regional planning narratives."

– Atmos Renewables

Impact on the region

Feedback focused on the broader social, economic and landscape impacts of including the north west region in a renewable energy zone, particularly community wellbeing, cumulative development pressure, rural character, local infrastructure and perceptions of fairness between regional and metropolitan communities.

Community participants raised concerns that prolonged uncertainty about transmission and generation proposals can contribute to stress, particularly for farming families whose livelihoods and identity are closely tied to land ownership. Some noted uncertainty about how future land use affects household decision-making and long-term planning.

Participants also raised concerns about cumulative impacts. They noted the combined effect of multiple generation, storage and transmission projects is not well considered when developments are assessed individually. Concerns included compounding impacts on amenity, traffic, land values and ongoing disruption in relatively small geographic areas.

Thematic insights by zone

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Impacts on landscape character and rural identity were also raised. Participants described the region as being defined by broad agricultural landscapes and open skies, noting that large-scale infrastructure could permanently alter these qualities. Some indicated that this may affect tourism and decisions about remaining in the region.

Feedback also included concerns about pressure on local infrastructure and services. People said construction activity could increase heavy vehicle traffic on local roads, affect council budgets, and put pressure on water resources, emergency services and health care. Some also raised equity concerns for neighbouring landholders who do not host infrastructure but may still experience impacts such as noise, visual change or limitations on land use.

"Research shows that diminished perceived control is strongly associated with anxiety, depression, and poorer mental health outcomes (Rickwood, 2012). For farmers, whose livelihoods depend on their land, the impact is amplified."

– Community member

Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback focused on the potential impacts of large-scale energy infrastructure on biodiversity and ecological values in the north west region.

Community participants raised concerns about proximity and impacts to wetlands, waterways and habitats, including Ramsar-listed sites, that support threatened and migratory species. Some questioned whether these sensitivities are adequately reflected in zone design and assessment.

Areas were identified as ecologically linked and vulnerable to changes in water flow, water quality and cumulative disturbance from infrastructure.

Participants noted the region's importance for migratory birds. They raised concerns about turbines and transmission infrastructure affecting movement, feeding and breeding behaviour. Threatened species mentioned included Brolgas, Plains-wanderers, raptors and woodland birds, with some participants noting that existing modelling may not fully reflect local or seasonal observations.

People also raised concerns about vegetation clearing and habitat fragmentation in already highly modified agricultural landscapes. They said removal of roadside and remnant vegetation, combined with multiple developments over time, could result in cumulative ecological impacts. Some submissions also noted that areas of high ecological value often overlap with cultural heritage values and should be assessed together.

"There are critically endangered and endangered bird species, which have been confirmed to live within the proposed North West Renewable Energy Zone. There is concern for the flow-on environmental and ecological impacts on the Ramsar-listed Kerang Wetlands (just outside the proposed renewable energy zone boundary)."

– Community member

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Agriculture and land use

Participants focused on how the zone may interact with agricultural land use, including productive farmland, irrigation systems and the long-term viability of farming businesses and rural communities.

Community participants noted that the region contains productive agricultural land that supports food and fibre production. Concerns included potential loss or restriction of productive land, fragmentation of paddocks, impacts on soil condition, and disruption to livestock and farm operations from turbines, easements and access tracks.

Impacts on irrigation and water management were also raised. Participants noted that infrastructure could interfere with channels, pipelines, drainage and land grading required for irrigation systems.

Biosecurity risks associated with increased vehicle access were another concern, with some participants questioning how risks would be managed and who would be responsible.

"The north-west region of Victoria contains some of the state's most productive broadacre farming and irrigated agricultural land. The districts surrounding Swan Hill, Kerang, and the Loddon-Murray region support extensive grain production, livestock enterprises, and irrigated cropping systems that contribute significantly to regional and national food supply. The proposed North West Renewable Energy Zone presents serious risks to the long-term viability of these large-scale agricultural operations."

– Community member

VicGrid engagement feedback

Participants focused on the transparency, timing and effectiveness of engagement for the zone, including how boundary decisions were communicated and whether community input influenced outcomes.

A recurring concern was that engagement did not appear to shape decisions. Community participants described investing time to prepare submissions and attend meetings, but did not see earlier feedback reflected in subsequent zone refinements. Some said this affected their trust in the engagement process and willingness to participate in future planning.

Timing and notification were also raised. Some community participants said they became aware of the process late and had limited opportunity to contribute. They noted a reliance on digital communication that did not reach all residents and expressed a preference for earlier notice and more direct communication methods.

"Countless unpaid hours away from family and business have been spent reading documents, getting educated, preparing for meetings and preparing submissions, as well as raising awareness of issues that VicGrid don't seem to want to address. All for what? To be listened to but to see no action taken."

– Community member

Thematic insights by zone

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Boundary-specific feedback

Many community submissions questioned the inclusion of agricultural land, floodplains, waterways and sensitive landscapes. Participants requested boundary reductions or the exclusion of specific areas, saying on-ground environmental, agricultural and landscape sensitivities were not adequately reflected.

In contrast, some submissions from project proponents, councils and landholders supported expanding the zone to include adjacent areas. These submissions supported boundary adjustments to enable renewable energy development, particularly where this would allow projects to align with existing or planned transmission infrastructure and be delivered more efficiently. Participants highlighted the potential for increased investment certainty, shared infrastructure and more coordinated delivery, with some local governments also expressing support for these outcomes.

Overall, feedback highlighted competing priorities between avoiding impacts on high-value land and enabling renewable energy development in locations some stakeholders viewed as more appropriate.

"We support extending the area of the North West Renewable Energy Zone further into the Swan Hill Rural City Council footprint. Exclusion of the region based on broad principles such as "protection of agricultural land or natural values" might risk potential investment that is welcome in the right locations within the broad zone. We have some concerns that those who support the energy transition in our region have not been heard and as such the zone has been reduced too much."

– Swan Hill Sustainability Group

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Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

We received 40 submissions about the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone. Feedback was provided by community members, local government, industry and Traditional Owners.



Figure 6 summarises the themes raised across the submissions. The following sections provide a summary of feedback received across submissions and other consultation activities by theme.

Figure 6: Summary of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone submission themes

Fire risk and firefighting: 4%

VicGrid engagement feedback: 6%

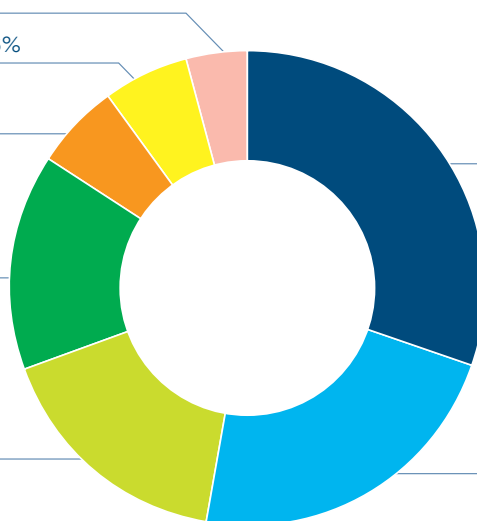
Project-related feedback: 6%

Biodiversity and natural environment: 15%

Agriculture and land use: 17%

Boundary-specific feedback: 30%

Agriculture and land use: 20%



Thematic insights by zone

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Boundary-specific feedback

Participants provided place-specific feedback on the proposed boundary of the zone. Feedback focused on alignment with existing infrastructure. Others discussed the need for coherence with local planning frameworks, consistent application of environmental mapping and assessment, sensitivity of land uses within the boundary, and transparency in how boundary refinements have been made.

Industry participants noted that excluding areas that already host operational or approved renewable energy assets and established transmission infrastructure – including sections of the existing 220 kV transmission corridor – reduces network optionality and limits efficient use of established assets. Some also suggested that this change could shift development pressure toward less connected greenfield areas.

There were some requests for targeted and proportionate boundary refinement. Participants requested including previously removed land parcels aligned with the existing transmission corridors. Industry participants indicated this approach could improve planning coherence and network efficiency without changing the overall intent or governance of the zone.

Councils emphasised the need to align boundaries with adopted rural land-use strategies and settlement planning frameworks. Concerns were raised about including productive farming land while excluding areas already affected by infrastructure.

Some community submissions highlighted concerns about cumulative impacts of uncoordinated infrastructure outcomes. Participants noted that unclear boundary logic can contribute to fragmented development and a 'spaghetti' effect of multiple projects and connections across the landscape. Calls were made for greater transparency and collaboration, including between VicGrid and local councils, to identify areas that are unsuitable for development, including taking into account agricultural value, biodiversity, cultural heritage, bushfire risk and emergency access.

"However, the township of Meredith does fall within the REZ boundary. Council are seeking to ensure that the development of the REZ doesn't impact on the ability to support growth and development of the Meredith township."

– Golden Plains Shire Council

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Agriculture and land use

Feedback focused on the role of productive farmland in supporting food production, employment, long-standing farming enterprises, aviation and tourism, and how renewable energy development may affect these systems.

Community and local government participants described agricultural land in the Central Highlands as underpinning local and regional economies and often representing long-term, multi-generational investment. Some raised concerns that changes to land use associated with renewable energy development could affect productivity, reduce investment confidence and complicate succession planning. There was an emphasis on ensuring agricultural land remains a priority consideration in planning decisions.

Submissions noted that agricultural land in the region is already affected by multiple forms of infrastructure, including transmission corridors that require easements or land acquisition. Community participants raised concerns about increasing infrastructure overlap and reduced efficiency where land is fragmented by linear infrastructure. Many said these pressures should be assessed at a broader landscape or shire scale, rather than at an individual project level.

Specific reference was made to areas supporting intensive agricultural activity across parts of Golden Plains and Moorabool. Participants noted that intensive farming systems rely on certainty and long-term land use stability and that land use conflict could affect investment decisions, expansion opportunities and workforce planning. Some noted the importance of mapping agricultural value alongside infrastructure planning and referred to local government strategies aimed at protecting food production precincts.

Concerns were also raised by community participants about compatibility with regional aviation operations. Participants noted that regional airports within or near the zone support training, charter services, maintenance, and tourism. They discussed how safe aviation operations depend on protected airspace and capacity for future expansion. They noted that tall structures could affect aviation safety and commercial viability and suggested defined exclusion areas around airports to ensure compatible land use.

Feedback also referred to historically significant farming areas. These areas were described as integral to local identity and community history, associated with long-established farming practices, and warranting recognition alongside contemporary land use planning. Requests were made to avoid or exclude certain historically significant farming areas from the zone.

Overall, participants asked for clearer justification for including productive farmland and reassurance that agricultural priorities have been appropriately considered. Requests included greater transparency about hosting capacity assumptions, clearer assessment of productive farmland, and confidence that agricultural values have been appropriately weighted in planning decisions.

"Key risks include land use conflicts where prime agricultural production coincides with energy infrastructure footprints."

– Golden Plains Shire Council

Thematic insights by zone

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Biodiversity and natural environment

Feedback focused on the potential biodiversity impacts in sensitive reserves, ridgelines and landscapes valued for their ecological, scenic and cultural qualities.

Concerns were raised by community participants about proximity to areas such as Mount Beckworth and Mount Bolton, which were described as supporting native vegetation, wildlife, recreation and nature-based tourism. Some participants discussed how large-scale infrastructure near these areas could alter the landscape character and diminish environmental values.

Community participants also highlighted flora and fauna values across the region, including native vegetation species of conservation significance such as orchids and birds of prey. Concerns included vegetation loss, habitat disturbance, and risks associated with tall structures on ridgelines affecting wildlife movement and behaviour.

"The Victorian Transmission Plan and renewable energy rollout will have devastating impacts on the surrounding areas, particularly Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth, both of which contain a huge biodiversity of flora and fauna with Mount Bolton having been officially recognised as an area of natural beauty and special significance. During the time we have lived here we have counted 87 different varieties of birds on Mount Bolton, including a resident breeding pair of Wedge Tailed Eagles, powerful owls, yellow tailed black cockatoos, many seasonal and migratory birds and also an assortment of bats, many of which will be at risk from transmission lines and wind turbine blades."

– Community member

Impact on the region

Feedback focused on how the zone may affect communities, townships, landholders and local businesses across the Central Highlands, including township growth and settlement planning, impacts on local enterprise and recreation, landscape change, community wellbeing and cumulative development effects.

Community concerns were raised about compatibility with township growth, particularly in Meredith, which is identified for future development. Participants said large-scale energy infrastructure could constrain housing delivery, service provision and planned population growth if not aligned with adopted settlement strategies. Local government submissions emphasised the importance of aligning zone planning with existing growth and land-use frameworks, including in Bannockburn.

Impacts on local business, tourism and recreation were also raised. Areas such as Mount Beckworth were described as important for recreation, nature-based tourism and community use. Some participants noted that industrial-scale development could reduce the appeal of these locations and affect tourism-related businesses and local clubs.

Participants also raised concerns about impacts on existing rural enterprises, transport access and safety. Issues raised included compatibility with farming, equestrian and aviation activities.

"We will face restrictions on what we can do with our property such as to make home extensions or adding additional structures such as a shed or second residence. The value of our property will also be significantly affected as it will go from highly desirable and unique, to unsellable."

– Community member

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"Previous documentation had referenced that this transmission line may be located within the vicinity of the existing transmission line. This existing alignment would run directly through the Bannockburn Growth Zone and of particular importance, the Bannockburn South East Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area (Bannockburn South East - VPA). Given the level of development of this PSP this is not something that would be supported by Council."

– **Golden Plains Shire Council**

Project-specific feedback

Some submissions, notably from industry, discussed the potential for excluded areas to be reconsidered following requests from project proponents. These participants emphasised maintaining revised boundaries to avoid prolonging community uncertainty or undermining confidence in the planning process.

A smaller number of submissions highlighted implications for projects that had progressed under earlier configurations. These participants noted risks to planning certainty for projects that may no longer align with revised boundaries and suggested the need for transitional arrangements or clear review pathways.

"It is a testament to VicGrid, that they listened to the many environmentalists, and local concerned community members who advocated for the protection of this Granitic Mountain, noted for its Remnant forest, Granite Tors on high ridges, native animals and vast array of birds. "

– **Community member**

VicGrid engagement feedback

The feedback on VicGrid's engagement approach emphasised the importance of clear, accessible information about the zone's risks, benefits and long-term implications. Participants said transparent and genuine engagement is important for maintaining community trust.

Councils acknowledged VicGrid's decision to extend the consultation period for the draft orders in response to recent bushfire impacts, noting it as a proactive step to support affected communities.

"The extensive number of stakeholders residing at Lethbridge Airport have not received any contact whatsoever from VicGrid regarding the proposed Central Highlands REZ."

– **Lethbridge Airport Stakeholders**

Fire risk and firefighting

The feedback received on bush fire risks and management noted that much of the region sits within a high bushfire risk landscape and emphasised the importance of considering how large-scale renewable energy infrastructure may influence fire risk profiles.

Particular importance was placed on maintaining effective aerial firefighting capability in areas with challenging terrain.

Councils highlighted the need for future renewable energy projects to incorporate comprehensive and independent bushfire risk assessments, and to demonstrate fire-safe design consistent with Country Fire Authority guidance.

"Fighting fire by aircraft will be restricted. We need all the firefighting abilities and equipment we can get if a fire threatened either Mount Beckworth, Mount Bolton or the bush land including the Dunach State Forrest."

– **Community member**

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Feedback from Traditional Owners and First Peoples

During renewable energy zone declaration consultation, VicGrid and the Minister for Energy and Resources received detailed feedback from Traditional Owners on the zones. Some of this feedback included culturally sensitive information and was shared in confidence. As such, details of this feedback are not included in this report. The following section provides a high-level summary of the feedback provided across the zones.

Feedback from Traditional Owners and First Peoples focused on protecting Country and communities through the renewable energy transition and on ensuring cultural knowledge is meaningfully incorporated into planning and decision-making.

Respondents emphasised the interconnections between cultural and ecological landscapes. They raised concerns around cumulative impacts, uncoordinated transmission development and the distribution of impacts across Victoria. Some participants expressed concern that large-scale renewable energy and transmission infrastructure may pose risks to cultural heritage and ecological systems if not carefully planned and informed.

Feedback also highlighted challenges in VicGrid's engagement approach, particularly in enabling meaningful involvement of Traditional Owners and integrating cultural knowledge. Participants highlighted capacity pressures arising from the scale and pace of developments across Country, as well as the need for realistic timeframes for engagement.

Participants also raised concerns about gaps in knowledge of biocultural values across the state. Some noted that current data gaps may indicate low sensitivity rather than a lack of cultural significance and emphasised the need for a broader understanding of cultural significance in and around renewable energy zones in partnership with Traditional Owners.

Feedback was also received through engagement on the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines and Victorian Access Regime. This feedback was considered through other engagement processes.

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Other feedback

Statewide feedback

We received 50 submissions that provided statewide feedback. These submissions included feedback relating to broader policy design, technical system performance and overarching renewable energy zone design.

These matters will be considered through other processes, such as:

- Development of the next Victorian Transmission Plan
- Design of the Victorian Access Regime
- Design and delivery of transmission projects

Central North Renewable Energy Zone

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan proposed a renewable energy zone for central north Victoria. This zone has not yet been formally declared.

While we were not consulting on this zone, we did receive 15 submissions regarding the proposed zone.

The proposed Central North Renewable Energy Zone remains an area of interest for renewable energy development.

Consultation on the Central North Renewable Energy Zone Order is intended to commence soon. The 15 submissions received on this zone will be carried over and considered in the next consultation process.

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How feedback was considered in defining the renewable energy zones

Community and industry views have been crucial to the design of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan and the declaration of renewable energy zones.

All feedback has been carefully considered, but not all community or industry requests have been acted on. The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan and the renewable energy zone declarations reflect difficult choices, made by weighing up many factors, to deliver a plan that best serves all Victorians.

Earlier consultation phases informed the design of the draft proposed zones presented in the draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan, and the finalised draft zones presented in the final 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

The most recent phase of consultation – undertaken to support the renewable energy zone declaration process – provided an opportunity to identify any new information on sensitive areas, potential impacts and areas suitable for development that we may have missed.

The zones mapped in the draft orders did not have defined boundaries. In the final orders, boundaries have been defined. The process to define boundaries considered consultation feedback and used a standard approach to align them with existing administrative and planning features, such as roads and local government boundaries.

Many of the issues raised in submissions were considered and incorporated during the development of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan and have not resulted in a change to the boundaries.

We recognise that the declared zones include sensitive areas that are not appropriate for development. Detailed assessment of concerns relating to environmental, agricultural, bushfire and social impacts will occur at the project level through consultation, planning, design, environmental assessment and approvals processes.

To read more about how feedback has influenced the renewable energy zone declarations visit [Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action webpage](#).

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Next steps

The declaration of renewable energy zones is a formal step required under the *National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005* to establish renewable energy zones in Victoria.

The declaration of renewable energy zones, and the implementation of the Victorian Access Regime, is intended to allow VicGrid to coordinate development in each zone, to minimise impacts, deliver meaningful social and economic benefits and keep costs down for consumers.

The Victorian Access Regime, once live, will set out new rules to manage how renewable energy and transmission projects are developed in each zone and sets clear expectations for how developers engage and deliver social value and economic benefits.

For each of the declared zones, the Minister for Energy and Resources has published a statement of reasons for the decisions, including information about how feedback relevant to the renewable energy zone orders was considered.

The statements of reasons are available at the [Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action webpage](#).

Feedback relevant to other matters, such as project design, transmission routes, access arrangements, biosecurity management and community benefits, has been recorded and will be considered through future planning and approval processes.

VicGrid will continue to work with communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, local government, industry and government agencies as renewable energy zones are implemented and as supporting transmission infrastructure and renewable energy projects are planned and assessed.

Developing renewable energy zone access and scheme arrangements

VicGrid will prepare a scheme and authorities for each renewable energy zone, and develop regulations, which will set out:

- Eligible technologies – what type of generation projects can apply for access within the zone
- Access limits – the maximum cap on how much space on the transmission network is available for new renewable energy projects within the zone
- Access fees – the annual fees developers may be required to pay, which are expected to contribute to the Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Fund and Traditional Owners Funds, and cover administration costs
- The access allocation process – how projects will apply through a non-price competitive tender process and be assessed based on set criteria
- Access conditions – what conditions projects must comply with to be successful in the tender and maintain their licence to connect to the network

Learn more about the Victorian Access Regime on [our webpage](#).

Next steps

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The introduction of new Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds

Renewable energy zones are expected to drive economic development in regional Victoria and enable new economic benefits over time as part of the Victorian Government's Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan.

The introduction of new Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds are expected to deliver investment directly into projects that improve local outcomes and create social value and economic benefits for communities in regions hosting energy infrastructure.

Local decision-making that responds to local needs and priorities will be a cornerstone of these funds. Decisions about investments will be made in consultation with regional community reference groups.

The final Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan is set to be released in 2027. Learn more on the VicGrid's [Engage Victoria webpage](#).

Planning and designing transmission projects

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan includes the transmission projects needed to unlock critical capacity along parts of the transmission network and support investment in renewable energy zones.

Since the release of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan, VicGrid has been progressing critical scoping work needed to plan and develop the transmission projects, with a focus on those needing to be delivered in the next few years.

Throughout the delivery of these projects, consultation with landholders, the community, industry, First Peoples and Traditional Owners will provide important feedback to help shape decisions. We expect to provide further updates over the coming months.

VicGrid will also work with project developers within renewable energy zones to help coordinate connections and reduce the 'spaghetti effect' of multiple powerlines crossing the landscape, minimising impacts on the environment and communities.

Learn more about our transmission planning work on [our webpage](#).



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Project level environmental assessment and approvals

Each proposed renewable energy project will continue to be subject to planning approvals.

Detailed assessment of concerns relating to environmental, agricultural, bushfire and social impacts will occur at the project level through consultation, planning, design, environmental assessment and approvals processes.

VicGrid and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action are soon to release the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines. The guidelines will set out the Victorian Government's minimum expectations of project developers in how they engage with communities and create social value and economic benefits.

Projects seeking to connect to the transmission network, both inside and outside renewable energy zones, will be required to meet the expectations outlined in the guidelines.

Learn more about the guidelines on [our webpage](#).

Continuing engagement with landholders, communities, Traditional Owners and local government

VicGrid is committed to ongoing, place-based engagement as renewable energy zones are implemented. Engagement will continue to evolve in response to feedback, local conditions and lessons learned, focusing on:

- Clear information about what renewable energy zone designation does and does not enable
- Early notice of planning milestones
- Timely, place-based opportunities participation
- Clearly showing how input informs decisions

The views and experiences shared through this consultation will continue to shape how VicGrid approaches renewable energy zone implementation and future transmission planning, as Victoria progresses toward an orderly, coordinated and fair energy transition.



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Contact us



Phone: 1800 418 341

Email: enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

Deaf, hearing or speech impaired? Please contact the National Relay Service on 133 677 or communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs



Need an interpreter? Contact Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 (within Australia) or visit tisnational.gov.au

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our website

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Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

GPO Box 4509
Melbourne,
Victoria 3001 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 9651 9999

Ref: BORG-2-26-51313

Jim Nolan
CEO
Pyrenees Shire Council
5-7 Lawrence St
BEAUFORT VICTORIA 3373
jim.nolan@pyrenees.vic.gov.au

Dear Jim

VARIATION TO GRANT AGREEMENT – PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL – BURKE STREET BEAUFORT WORKER ACCOMMODATION

I refer to the Grant Agreement between the State of Victoria, as represented by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and Pyrenees Shire Council (the **Recipient**) dated 21 October 2024, (the **Agreement**), for the Burke Street Beaufort Worker Accommodation (the **Project**).

Further to your recent discussions with the Department, the parties agree that the Agreement is varied as outlined in **Attachment A** to this letter, by deleting the text indicated in strikethrough and inserting the underlining text, and as follows:

Part A – Project Particulars

- Practical Completion from 15 June 2026 to 30 September 2026

Part C – Payment Terms

- Instalment 4 amended from 15 June 2026 to 30 September 2026

The terms used in this letter have the same meaning as the terms defined in the Agreement.

The variations to the Agreement in this letter are effective from the date the last party signs this letter.

Subject to the variations specified above, the Agreement remains unchanged and will continue in full force and effect.

Please confirm your acceptance of the variations to the Agreement by signing where indicated below and returning a scanned signed copy of this letter to erin.padbury@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Please contact Erin Padbury, Regional Worker Housing Specialist on 0460 415 952 with any queries in relation to the above.

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I wish you every success in completing the Project.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Henderson
Regional Director, Grampians
Regional Development Victoria
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

Date: 27/05/2026

I confirm acceptance of the above variations to the Agreement for and on behalf of **Pyrenees Shire Council** by its authorised signatory*:

Signed:

Name:

Dated:

*By signing this letter, the signatory warrants that the signatory is duly authorised to sign this letter for and on behalf of **Pyrenees Shire Council**.

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Attachment A**Part A – Project Particulars**

Grant Amount: (Clause 3)	An amount up to \$3,400,000 (exclusive of GST)
Project: (Clause 4)	Burke Street Worker Accommodation Project, including the undertaking of the Works and Project Outcomes at Beaufort, Victoria.
Project Outcomes: (Clause 4)	The construction of dwellings that will result in a net increase of 24 bedrooms in Appropriate and Affordable regional Housing or Accommodation for Key Workers and their families for a minimum of five (5) years following the Practical Completion Date.
Commencement Date: (Clause 4.1)	12 September 2024
Practical Completion Date	By June 30 2026 <u>30 September 2026</u>
Completion Date: (Clause 4.1)	30 September 2031

Part C – Payment Terms

Payment Deliverables	Instalment Amount	Due Date
<i>Instalment 4: Practical Completion, Certification and Occupancy</i> • (Tax Invoice) a valid Tax Invoice. • (Project Status Report) a Project Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including: (a) Evidence of any certification of the completed Works relevant to Approvals that have been achieved by an appropriately qualified/registered person, including a Notice of Practical Completion under the Building Contract for the Works; (b) photographic Evidence of finalised Works; and (c) demonstration of the Recipient's projected occupancy levels or plans, including the number of Key Worker bedrooms as described in Part A (Grant Particulars). • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming that: (a) the Recipient has incurred Project Expenditure of at least \$3,060,000 (exclusive of GST) on the Works; and (b) that the contents of the Project Status Report are true and correct.	\$340,000 (exclusive of GST)	15 June 2026 <u>30 September 2026</u>

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Payment Deliverables	Instalment Amount	Due Date
• (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site and completed Housing or Accommodation by the Department, where requested.		
<i>Instalment 5: Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation for Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand. • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the Recipient has incurred at least \$4,300,000 (exclusive of GST) of Project Expenditure on the Works; (b) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation currently occupied or planned to be occupied by Key Workers; (c) that Affordable Housing or Accommodation is to be made available or reserved for Key Workers for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand; (d) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (e) that the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct. • (Audit Opinion – Project Expenditure) an Audit Opinion (in the form provided in Annexure B), to the Department's satisfaction, evidencing at least \$4,300,000 (exclusive of GST) of incurred Project Expenditure on the Works. • (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.	NIL	31 October 2026
<i>Instalment 6 (Non-Financial): Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation for Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation that has been occupied by Key Workers in the previous 12 months; (b) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (c) the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct.	NIL	30 September 2027

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Payment Deliverables	Instalment Amount	Due Date
• (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.		
<i>Instalment 7 (Non-Financial): Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation for Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation that have been occupied by Key Workers in the previous 12 months; (b) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (c) the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct. • (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.	NIL	30 September 2028
<i>Instalment 8 (Non-Financial): Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation to Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand. • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation that have been occupied by Key Workers in the previous 12 months; (b) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (c) the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct. • (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.	NIL	30 September 2029
<i>Instalment 9 (Non-Financial): Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation to Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand.	NIL	30 September 2030

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Payment Deliverables	Instalment Amount	Due Date
• (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation that have been occupied by Key Workers in the previous 12 months; (b) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (c) the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct. • (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.		
<i>Instalment 10 (Non-Financial): Use of Housing or Accommodation and Reporting</i> • (Post-Practical Completion Status Report) a Post-Payment Status Report as described in Part B (Reporting Requirements), including Evidence that the Recipient has made available or reserved Affordable Housing or Accommodation to Key Workers and their families for a minimum of 70% of its Annual Period of Demand. • (Statutory Declaration) a Statutory Declaration (in the form provided in Annexure A), confirming: (a) the number of bedrooms of the Housing or Accommodation that have been occupied by Key Workers in the previous 12 months; (b) the Recipient is maintaining and operating the Housing or Accommodation; and (c) the contents of the Post-Practical Completion Status Report are true and correct. • (Site Inspection) an inspection of the Project Site by the Department, where requested.	NIL	30 September 2031
Total	\$3,400,000 (exclusive of GST)	

PROJECT
REPORT DATE

Burke Street Worker Accommodation Beaufort
27-May-2026

No	CLASS CC CLASS		RISK	L Code	LIKELYHOOD	C Code	CONSEQUENCE	ORIGINAL PROFILE			CURRENT PROFILE	
								Val1	RISK RATING	MITIGATION	Val2	REV RISK
1	1	Financial	Project viability	2	Unlikely	3	Moderate	6	Medium	Preliminary planning & investigation	2	Very Low
2	1	Financial	Cost over-run - project budget	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	Preliminary planning & investigation, procurement & contract administration	4	Low
3	1	Financial	Cost over-run - variations	2	Unlikely	1	Insignificant	2	Very Low	Detailed tender & specification	2	Very Low
4	1	Financial	Costs of un-resolved consultant's fee to Stantec	4	Likely	2	Minor	8	Medium	Correspondence sent to Stantec detailing their performance issues, no response to date	4	Low
5	1	Financial	Cost escalation - fuel price increases	4	Likely	2	Minor	8	Medium	Event is late in the project, can only impact proportion of unclaimed work	4	Low
6	2	Environmental	Damage to native vegetation	1	Rare	1	Insignificant	1	Very Low	Preliminary planning & investigation	1	Very Low
7	2	Environmental	Land contamination through construction	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	Construction Management Plans	6	Medium
8	3	Cultural Heritage	Damage to cultural heritage	1	Rare	3	Moderate	3	Low	Preliminary planning & investigation	3	Low
9	3	Cultural Heritage	Constructrion damage to CH	2	Unlikely	2	Minor	4	Low	Construction Management Plans	4	Low
10	4	OH&S	Workplace accident	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	SWMS & OH&S Systems	9	Medium
11	4	OH&S	Accident to member of the public	1	Rare	3	Moderate	3	Low	TMP & Workzone controls	3	Low
12	5	Project Governance	Failure to report	2	Unlikely	3	Moderate	6	Medium	PCG oversight of reporting	4	Low
13	5	Project Governance	Failure to complete on time, delays with service authority and building permit approvals resulting in late commencement of Lot 1 S2.	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	PCG oversight of project management, contingency planning with DJSIR, variation to grant agreement issued.	9	Medium
14	5	Project Governance	Failure to obtain permits and approvals	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	PCG oversight of project management, CEO intervention to facilitate approvals	9	Medium
15	6	Community	Community expectations not met	3	Possible	3	Moderate	9	Medium	Planning exhibition & community engagement	9	Medium
16	7	Time	Stage 2 Planning permit not issued in a timely manner - including endorsment of submitted plans	3	Possible	4	Major	12	High	Provision of suitable supporting documentation, management of objections, resolution of VicTrack land purchase	2	Very Low
17	7	Time	Civil & electrical design delays construction, authority permissions delay construction	4	Likely	3	Moderate	12	High	Relationship management with consultant, proactive management of obligations, design change to facilitate	9	Medium
18	7	Time	Road realignment - delay in DEECA managing process	4	Likely	3	Moderate	12	High	Further proactive engagement with DEECA officers, support from DJSIR re urgency of action	2	Very Low
19	1	Financial	Unbudgetted cost of developer contribution to Central Highlands Water for \$116,345.84	5	Almost Certain	3	Moderate	15	Very High	CEO advocacy for waiving of the contribution based on Willoby Street sewer works	15	Very High

Notes

- 1 #4 Costs or resolving Stantec fee claim reduced 4 points to "Low" - no response to date
- 2 #5 Additional cost risk associated with fuel price increase and associated industry impacts - remains unchanged
- 3 #13 Risk lowered 7 points resulting in "Medium" rating following application and receipt of grant variation
- 4 #16 Mitigated risk reduced to "low" based on planning permit in place and plans endorsed
- 5 #17 Risk associated with Powercor HV and LV works preventing final house completion, mitigated risk reduced to "Medium" based on redesign
- 6 #19 Additional risk added related to unbudgetted developer contribution.

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCES				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Australia-New Zealand Standard for Risk Management











Policy – Council Leases and Licenses

Date created/amended: January 2026
Date of next review: 4 years after approval
Adopted by: Council
Date adopted: [Month/year]
Responsible officer: [Director Corporate and Community Services]

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1. PURPOSE

Council is the custodian of land on behalf and for the benefit of its community. This land includes property owned by Council, Crown Land where Council is the Committee of Management (CoM) and land leased or licenced by Council for identified purposes.

This Policy has been developed to provide a framework for leasing and licencing of Council owned and managed land and buildings across the Shire.

Council is responsible for the sustainable management of assets and maximising the community benefit arising from its property use.

2. SCOPE

Council owned and managed land and properties are valuable public assets and it is essential that they are managed carefully to maximise social, environmental and economic benefits to the Pyrenees Shire community.

This Policy does not apply to:

- Adhoc or casual hire of facilities;
- Events on Council land;
- Unused roads and easements;
- Disposal and acquisition of property; or
- Where Council is the tenant or licensee.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Some Council-managed properties are leased for commercial purposes and generate market fees for Council. However, most properties are leased/licenced at subsidised rates for community and not for profit purposes to deliver a tangible community benefit.

This includes properties used for community centres, childcare, senior citizens, scouts, club rooms, recreation spaces and sporting facilities. These uses deliver a range of benefits to our communities, including health and well-being, recreation and community building and creating social connections.

This policy provides a foundation for the negotiation, establishment and administration of leases and licences, with the aim of meeting the following objectives:



3.1 Lease or Licence

Enabling exclusive possession and utilisation of a facility is not always necessary and may not deliver the greatest benefit of the facility to our community. To ensure that Council managed property is used to its greatest potential and to optimise access for all community groups, Council will encourage the shared use of facilities, therefore give preference to licence agreements rather than a lease. However, where it can be demonstrated that exclusive rights to a property is in the best interests of the community, then a lease will be offered.

Where a lease agreement is entered into the lessee shall be responsible for the payment of all outgoing (to the extent that they apply). Further terms and conditions will be contained within template lease agreements which will be utilised for all Council owned facilities and will be inclusive of maintenance responsibilities as and where appropriate.

Where Council is appointed to manage Crown Land either directly or as a Committee of Management, Council shall seek approval from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to enter into a sub-lease with a tenant. Council must ensure that in this instance, the sub-lease complies with DEECA's Crown Land Leasing Policy and Guidelines with agreements required to be in the DEECA prescribed agreements. Depending on the location of the land, Council may also be required to meet the obligations outlined within the Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA).



3.2 Lease or Licence Categories and Fees

Each Lease or Licence application will be assessed against the following categories to determine which fees/rates and terms will be applied within the relevant agreement.

The Victorian Government Land Transactions Policy and Guidelines 2016 (Land Transaction Guidelines) apply to all land transactions by Victorian Government agencies (other than licensing) and stipulate strict rent requirements for the leasing of land. The Land Transaction Guidelines also state that government agencies must not grant a lease at a price which is less than the current market rental value of the land except where the leased/licensed area is for a public or community purpose, as described within Category 1; Community Use of this Policy.

Category	Definition	Fee Range(s)
1. Community Use	a) Full Community Use The tenant is a community organisation which is not-for-profit, primarily run by volunteers. Primary Purpose: Community, cultural, sporting, recreational, social engagement/connection, public health or similar. Community Access and Benefit: Significant with no potential to generate income	Minimum Fee \$300 per annum up to \$499
	b) Mixed-use The tenant is a community organisation but conducts commercial/fee for service activities. Primary Purpose: Community, cultural, sporting, recreational, social engagement/connection, public health or similar. Community Access and Benefit: Medium to Significant with medium capacity to generate income	Subsidised Fee \$500 to \$2,499 per annum
	c) For profit The tenant is a community organisation but conducts commercial/fee for service activities that through income could cover lease/licence fee. Primary Purpose: Community, cultural, sporting, recreational, social engagement/connection, public health or similar. Community Access and Benefit: Medium with higher capacity to generate income/profit.	Subsidised Fee \$2,500 to \$5,000 per annum
2. Commercial	The tenant utilises the facility/site predominately for commercial or private purpose. Primary Purpose: Carry out activities for profit Community access and Benefit: Some benefit but restricted by higher fee for service	Market Fee
3. Residential Tenancy	Where Council has residential properties that may be developed or available for residential tenancy, Council will undertake relevant Expression of Interest to relevant providers that manage such agreements and obligations.	Market Fee
4. Peppercorn	Provides significant community benefit of which is in higher demand and accessibility by local community. Primary Purpose: Receives no funding from organisations other than Council Community access and Benefit: The type of community benefit provided could not be delivered unless supported by Council.	Subsidised Fee \$1 to \$299



3.3 Lease and Licence Register

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, Council will maintain a public register for Leases and Licences which will be available on their website. Where a lease or licence is provided to an individual (Eg; residential lease) personal or identifying information will not be included on the public register.

3.4 Fee Setting

Discretion may be used in exceptional circumstances to determine when a phased approach may be required in application of new costs during the first 18 months of this Policy. Annual fees will be set by the Category and will be subject to an annual increase via CPI All Melbourne Group rate. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be applied to all fees before being invoiced to lessees/licensees.

The level of subsidy to market fee will be considered in the context of assessment considerations and must be approved by the Executive Leadership Team prior to the lease/licence being granted. Council may publicise the amount of subsidy provided to any lease or licensee.

A market assessment will be undertaken prior to the commencement of each term where a commercial arrangement is being considered.

*Minimum fee takes into consideration the administration cost that Council incurs in managing leases/licences, including raising invoices, reviewing public liability insurance statements and annual reporting and audit requirements. Depending on the type of agreement and level of use, the lessee/licensee may need to apply for additional roadside waste services and these fees would be in addition to the lease/licence fee.

There is some discretion regarding the minimum fee and waiver or reduction to Category 1 lessees/licensees due to financial hardship or where in-kind contributions are agreed upon. Council will consider each application for waiver/reduction on a case-by-case basis. Any application for the waiver/reduction must be submitted on the relevant application form.

3.5 Risk, Terms, Liability and Insurance

Council insures Building asset(s) both as an owner and as a Committee of Management of Crown Land.

However, all lessees/licensees are required to maintain Public Liability Insurance as defined within their Lease/Licence and a copy of such insurance is to be provided to Council on an annual basis as evidence. If the lessee/licensee leave any possessions/assets in the facility that they lease/licence, it is done so at their own risk and subject to their own Contents insurance.

Council standard lease/licence agreements will include obligations regarding insurance and risk mitigation requirements, and it will be the responsibility of the lessee/licensee to ensure compliance with these terms and conditions.

Essential Safety Measures (ESM's) are the safety features required in a building to protect occupants in the event of a fire. ESM's may include fire detection and alarm systems (smoke alarms), fire doors, emergency lighting and fire hydrants. In order to comply with these requirements, lessee/licensees are required to keep emergency exit pathways clear and emergency fire equipment such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms operational and accessible at all times. It will be the lessee/licensee responsibility to arrange test and tagging to occur for any portable electrical items by an authorised contractor on an annual basis.

Lessee/Licensees cannot sublet or transfer a lease/licence. Community Asset Committees (CAC's) appointed under the Local Government Act 2020 are not permitted to issue Leases, Licenses or MOU's, this authority remains with Council.



Depending on the proposed use of the property, the lease/licensee will need to ensure that all appropriate permits are obtained in accordance with Council's Planning Scheme and any associated legislative requirements.

3.6 Asset Management and Maintenance

Council access, maintenance responsibilities and development of community assets will primarily be defined within lease/licence agreements and associated schedules. However, where improvements go beyond maintenance, consideration will need to be sought from Council in the context of broader vision and any financial constraints.

Council may undertake condition reports prior to any lease/licence and at the end of lease/licence and Council may require the lessee/licensee to reinstate the asset to its original form prior to commencement of the lease/licence. Lessees/Licensees are not to undertake any construction works or service connections without the written permission of Council as landowner or manager.

Where Council becomes the Committee of Management for a Government owned property, a formal Council resolution will be required supporting such responsibility to ensure that Council can continue to remain financially sustainable in the management of both Council owned and managed assets from both an infrastructure maintenance perspective and insurance coverage perspective.

Agreement Type	Maintenance guidelines
Lease	Maintenance schedules defining Council and lessee responsibilities will be scheduled to each Lease Agreement. This schedule will include structure, fixtures, fittings and grounds. Where a lessee fails to action required maintenance, Council reserves the right to undertake maintenance and issue an invoice to the lessee.
Licence	Due to shared use of the premises/facilities, licensees are required to be respectful of use by others and keep premises/facility clean, secure and free from rubbish. Any damage or uncleanliness caused by licensees will be rectified by Council at the Licensee's expense.

3.7 Breach of Agreements and Termination of Agreements

All agreements will have a termination clause that provides the terms under which Council can terminate the agreement. In addition to non-payment of fees, there are essential terms of the agreement that if breached are considered so serious that Council is entitled to treat the agreement as terminated. This includes undertaking changes/improvements without appropriate approvals or utilising asset/facility for non-permitted use.

3.8 Community Engagement

If Council proposes to lease land that is subject to section 115 of the Local Government Act 2020 and the lease was not included in the budget, the Council will undertake a community engagement process in respect of the proposal prior to entering into the lease. The Community Engagement process will be in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework, Policies and Procedures.

3.9 Delegation

Council is given the power to delegate any of its powers, duties and functions, other than for stipulated exceptions under the Act. Powers to lease land are delegated pursuant to the s7 Instrument of Sub-Delegation from CEO to Council Staff.



4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Agreement	Between landowner/manager and another individual/organisation which confers a right to use a specified property/facility for a specified use for as et period of time subject to mutually agreeable terms and conditions.
Committee of Management (CoM)	An entity, which may include a Council, appointed under the provisions of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 as responsible for managing property for the purpose for which it was reserved.
Council Managed Property	Property that Council is responsible for. This includes property owned or leased by Council and Crown Land where Councils is Committee of Management or has been appointed the Land Manager.
Crown Land	Lands reserved and/or administered under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978
Council	Means Pyrenees Shire Council.
Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA)	A Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) is a sub-agreement under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement. Both agreements form part of a settlement package between the State and Traditional Owners under the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> (Vic). A LUAA specifies the types of land use activities that may be carried out on or affecting Public Land in the Agreement area, and the level of consultation or negotiation required with traditional owners (routine, advisory, negotiation or agreement). The LUAA also outlines a formula for the payment of community benefits to traditional owners for certain negotiation and agreement activities.
Lease	A right granted by an owner or manager of a property/facility to another person/organisation (lessee) to have exclusive possession of that property for a fixed duration in return for defined fee.
Licence	A right granted by an owner or manager of a property/facility to another (licensee) to have shared use of that property for a fixed duration in return for defined fee
Not for Profit	For the purposes of this Policy, a not for profit is a registered and incorporated entity that does not operate for the profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people. Evidence that the organisation is registered on the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission will be required prior to entering into lease or licence.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council via Council Resolution	Chief Executive Officer	Directors	Staff
• Authorised to enter into leases that: • have a current market rental of \$100,000 per annum or more (and are for a term of 1 year or more); or • have a term of 10 years or more • subject to complying with Section 115 of the Act • appointment of dispute resolution mediator	• Is authorised to: • Execute leases which have a term of 5 years or greater and less than 10 years; and • are less than \$100,000 rental per annum • approve fee waiver for Category 1 lessees/licensees	• Are authorised to: • Execute leases which have a term of less than 5 years; and • Are less than \$100,000 per annum • Execute all licences • approve fee waiver for Category 1 lessees/licensees	• Not authorised to enter into or negotiate terms of leases/licenses with lessees/licensees • All lease/licence negotiation should be referred to Director Corporate and Community Services



6. REFERENCE AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Supporting Legislation
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Crown Land Policies – Leasing Policy for Victorian Crown Land 2023
Local Government Act 1989 and 2020
Best Practice Management Guidelines for Committees of Management
Managing Caravan and Camping Parks on Crown Land
First Nations Land Use Agreements

Document Reference	Document Description
	Lease Agreement Commercial
	Lease Agreement Community
	License Agreement
	Request for change
	Request for Waiver/Reduction of Fee

7. CONSULTATION & DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Pyrenees Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and its employees. This policy was developed involving the following:

Consultation / Assessment Activity	Requirement	Completed (P / X/N/A)
Consultation with elected employee health and safety representatives.	<i>Must include consultation for any OHS related policy or any workplace change that may affect the health, safety or wellbeing of employees.</i>	N/A
Consultation with external stakeholders (e.g., community members).	<i>Must include for any policies or changes requiring deliberative or community engagement under the Local Government Act 2020 or any other Act or Regulation.</i>	N/A
Consultation with relevant staff and consultative / advisory committees.	<i>For example, Staff Consultative Committee, Risk Management Committee, ICT Steering Committee.</i>	Appropriate Staff
Assessment against the rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006)	<i>This assessment is compulsory for all policies.</i>	
Diversity & Inclusion Impact Assessment (Also known as Gender Impact Assessment)	<i>Consideration of this is compulsory for all policies in compliance with the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)</i> Must be undertaken when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service provided that has a direct and significant impact on the public.	



<i>Is a Gender Impact Assessment Required to be undertaken for this policy?</i>	Yes ☐ No ☒	
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8. DOCUMENT CONTROL TABLE

Document Title		Lease and License Policy		
Register #				
Responsible Officer		Director Corporate and Community Services		
Document Owner		Director Corporate and Community Services		
Version Control				
Version Number	Modified by (position)	Date modified, approved or adopted	Approved by	Status
1.0	DC&Cs	Sept 2025		Draft

Pyrenees Shire Council

Community Satisfaction Report 2026

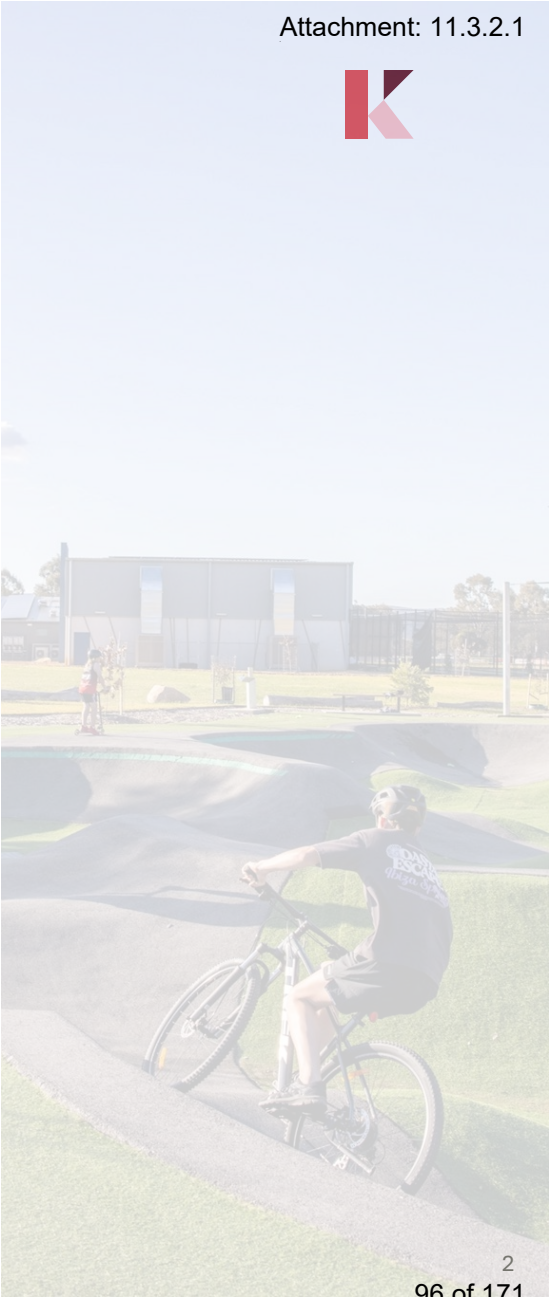


klein

Coordinated by the Department of Government
Services on behalf of Victorian councils

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Executive Summary





Pyrenees Shire Council Community Satisfaction

58

Overall Performance
- since last year

58 State Performance
+4 vs last year

53 Small Shire Performance
- vs last year

Key Takeouts



Pyrenees Shire City Council's overall performance is 58 in 2026, similar to last year. Sentiment is similar across age groups but significantly higher amongst female residents compared to male.

Top performing areas

74

Waste management*



73

Libraries



62
+1



54
-2

Aged 18-34 59 -1

Aged 35-49 60 -

Aged 50-64 57 +5

Aged 65+ 56 -3



Lowest performing areas

41

Maintenance of unsealed roads



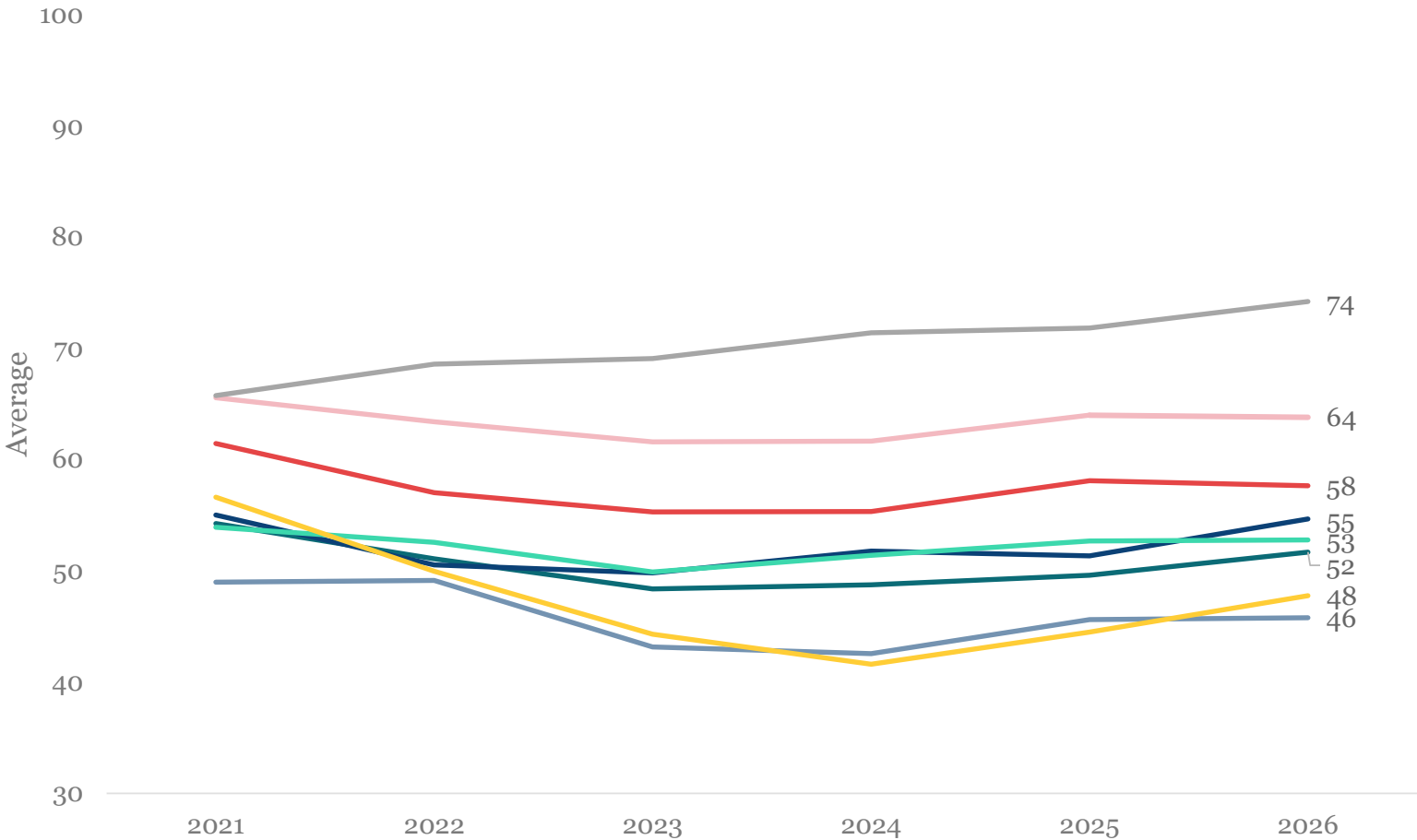
48

Sealed local streets*





Core Measures by Year



Change on Previous Year		
-	Overall Performance	
+2	Spending Public Funds*	
-	Direction of council	
-	Customer Service	
+3	Opportunities to give feedback*	
+2	Waste Management*	
-	Making Decisions*	
+3	Sealed local Streets*	

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.



LGV Core Summary

		Pyrenees SC 2026	Chg vs 2025	State 2026	Chg vs 2025	Small Shire 2026	Chg vs 2025
Overall Performance <i>Overall Performance of Council</i>		58	-	58	+4	53	-
Spending Public Funds* <i>Spending public funds... in ways that benefit the community</i>		52	+2	51	+4	47	-1
General Direction <i>Views on direction of council's performance</i>		46	-	48	+2	46	-
Customer Service <i>...on most recent contact, rate Council for Customer Service</i>		64	-	68	+2	65	-
Opportunities to Give Feedback* <i>Opportunities offered by Council to give your feedback on key local issues</i>		55	+3	55	+5	54	+2
Waste management* <i>Waste Management including garbage, recyclables and green waste</i>		74	+2	72	+6	71	+5
Making decisions* <i>Making decisions in the interest of the community</i>		53	-	52	+3	51	+1
Sealed local streets* <i>Condition of sealed local streets</i>		48	+3	54	+9	45	+1

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.



Performance of Council Services – Summary by Service Area

Governance, Engagement & Advocacy			Infrastructure & Maintenance			Community Services & Support			Planning & Development			Community Facilities & Recreation		
Service	2026	vs LY	Service	2026	vs LY	Service	2026	vs LY	Service	2026	vs 2025	Service	2026	vs LY
Opportunities to give feedback*	55	+3	The appearance of public areas	67	-3	Waste management*	74	+2	Emergency and disaster management	65	-1	Libraries*	73	NA
Making decisions in the interest of the community*	53	-	Condition of sealed local streets*	48	+3	Family support services	62	-2	Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	63	+6	Recreational facilities	65	-1
			Maintenance of unsealed roads	41	+2				Business and community development and tourism	61	-	Arts Centres*	63	NA

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

Pyrenees Shire Council

Executive summary | Strengths



Waste management is the Council's strongest performer

Waste management scored 74 — the Council's highest service rating — up 2 points year on year, 2 points above the State average and 3 points above the Small Shire benchmark. This consistent strength reflects reliable kerbside collection and waste services that residents value as a visible, day-to-day touchpoint with Council.



Emergency and disaster management is a high-influence strength

Emergency and disaster management scored 65 which is 9 points above the overall rating; noting the feedback is consistent with the State and the Small Shire benchmark. The importance of this aspect is heightened by its relative influence (which may be reflective of the January bushfires).



Enforcement of local laws shows the largest year-on-year improvement

Enforcement of local laws rose 6 points year on year to 63, opening up a 7-point lead over the State average and 3 points above the Small Shire benchmark. This is the largest positive movement in the Council's scorecard and the widest positive gap to State across all service areas measured.

Pyrenees Shire Council

Executive summary | Opportunities



Condition of sealed local streets is the standout improvement opportunity

Sealed local streets scored 48, the widest negative gap to State across all service areas measured (6 points below the State average of 54). The gap has widened year on year — Council moved up 3 points while State rose 9. Roads also dominated open-ended feedback, with 25% of residents nominating road conditions as the top area needing improvement, rising further among 50-64 year olds. This is a high-influence service area.



Opportunities for residents to give feedback is a high-influence opportunity

Opportunities to give feedback scored 55, level with the State average but flagged as a high-influence opportunity in the priority matrix. Male residents rated this notably lower (51) than female residents (58), and engagement and consultation was the second most-mentioned improvement theme in open-ended responses.



Making decisions in the interest of the community is also high-influence

Decisions in the interest of the community scored 53, just above State (52) and Small Shire (51) benchmarks, but high-influence in the priority matrix and stable rather than improving. The Direction of Council score (46) also sits 2 points below the State average.

Pyrenees Shire Council

Executive summary | Recommendations



Invest in sealed local roads

Sealed streets are the largest negative gap to State and the dominant theme in resident feedback (25% mentions). A visible program with communicated priorities and progress milestones may address both the service-level perception and the linked concerns around transparency and decision-making.

Broaden feedback channels

Opportunities to give feedback is a high-influence opportunity, and male residents and 18-34 year olds are notably less satisfied. Targeted online and in-person channels with a feedback loop would lift this measure and support the engagement and consultation themes in open-ended feedback.

Strengthen decision transparency

Decisions in the interest of the community and Direction of Council are linked, highly influential measures. Communicating the rationale, trade-offs and community input behind major decisions would directly address both.

Lift customer service experience

Customer service rated 64, below the State average of 68 and down 1 point year on year, with 18-34 year olds and male residents scoring lower. Customer service was also the most-mentioned positive in open-ended feedback (13%), confirming its prominence. Targeted service-standard improvements and staff capability investment may be required.



Summary of Approach



About the LGV CSS program

What the program is

Program overview

The **LGV Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS)** is a state-wide program that measures how residents rate the performance of their local council. It provides councils with an independent, consistent and comparable view of community perceptions across key service and performance areas, helping them to:

Understand strengths and areas for improvement	1	Track performance over time	3
Benchmark against similar councils and the wider sector	2	Support planning, service improvement and community accountability	4

The LGV CSS program provides a common framework for understanding and benchmarking council performance from the community perspective.





About Klein

What the program is and Klein's role in its next phase

Klein's appointment to the program

Klein is the newly appointed and Government-endorsed provider for the LGV CSS program. Our appointment through a robust and competitive procurement process provides confidence in the strength of the approach and the quality of delivery.



A new phase for the program

As the new provider, Klein brings energy, curiosity and a modern perspective — helping to refresh the program while maintaining the integrity, comparability and credibility that councils rely on.

Independent. Comparable. Credible. Refreshed for the program's next phase.

The LGV CSS program provides a common framework for understanding and benchmarking council performance from the community perspective.

About Klein

- 30 years' experience in community and customer satisfaction tracking.
- Diverse expertise in public-sector, local-government and stakeholder engagement, as well as commercial clients.
- Proven in managing large tracking programs.
- A “safe set of hands” - independent, transparent, and responsive.

Explanation of Survey Metrics

How the key survey measures should be interpreted



Key metrics included in this report

This report includes a range of measures to understand how residents view Council’s performance, services and role in the community.

Key Performance: Measures overall views of Council, including overall performance, value for money and direction.

Core measures: Covers key areas such as decision-making in the interests of the community, waste management, opportunities to give feedback, and the condition of sealed local streets.

Importance of council services: Measures how important different services are to residents.

Performance: Measures how residents rate Council’s performance in each area over the past 12 months.

Experience: Measures whether residents or anyone in their household has used particular services in the past 12 months.



Service reporting categories

For ease of interpretation, service results are grouped into the following categories

- Governance, Engagement & Advocacy
- Infrastructure & Maintenance
- Community Facilities & Recreation
- Community Services & Support
- Planning & Growth

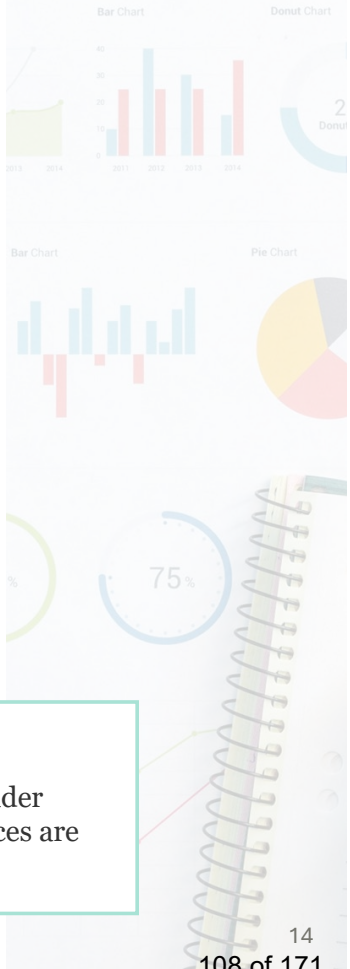


How results are reported

Results are typically shown for

- Total Council sample
- Demographic sub-groups within the Council such as age, gender and region
- Similar councils for benchmarking
- State-wide results for broader comparison

This report includes a range of measures to understand how residents view Council’s performance, services and role in the community.





Note on interpretation

Residents may rate Council based on either direct experience or broader perceptions. Both are valuable, as they help show not only how services are experienced, but also how Council is seen by the wider community.



Benchmarking and comparison

How Council's results are interpreted in context

Why Benchmarking matters	Benchmarking helps put Council's results into context by comparing performance with relevant peers, historical results and key resident groups.
What it helps show	Benchmarking helps answer four key questions: • How is Council performing overall? • How is Council performing compared with all participating councils? • How is Council performing compared with similar councils? • Which results reflect Council-specific issues versus broader sector-wide patterns?
Important note	Comparisons are based on a common methodology and question set. Where differences are observed, significance testing is used to identify whether Council is <i>meaningfully above or below</i> benchmark.

Benchmark comparisons used in reporting

Comparator	What it helps show
State-wide average	How Council compares with all participating councils across the program
Council group average	How Council compares with similar councils, providing the most relevant peer context
Previous years	Whether performance is improving, stable or declining over time
Resident sub-groups	Which groups score higher or lower, and where perceptions differ across the community



Pyrennes Shire Council is classified as a **Small Shire** council. The **Small Shire** group includes: Alpine Shire Council, Buloke Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, Indigo Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Towong Shire Council and West Wimmera Shire Council.

Benchmarking helps distinguish between council-specific performance and broader patterns seen across the sector.



Mixed method control

How online surveying was introduced while maintaining comparability

Methodology change

Why online was added

In 2026, the LGV CSS program introduced online surveying via social media recruitment alongside the traditional CATI (telephone) methodology.

Online was added to broaden participation and improve the representativeness of the sample, rather than relying only on residents who are reachable by phone.

This also provides greater access to younger, digitally engaged and other harder-to-reach residents.

CATI remains a core part of the methodology; online has been added to improve coverage and respondent mix.

How the mixed method approach is controlled

- Same questionnaire and measurement framework**
Telephone and online respondents answer the same questions, using the same scales and core question order.
- Mode review before merging**
Each response is flagged as telephone or online, allowing results to be checked by mode before they are combined.
- Comparison of results**
Klein reviews demographic profiles and key results across modes to identify whether any meaningful differences are present.
- Integrated weighting**
Once verified, telephone and online results are combined and weighted together to align with ABS population benchmarks.



What this means
The mixed method approach improves access, engagement and representativeness, while the control process helps maintain continuity and comparability with previous CATI-only results.

Online was introduced to improve reach and representation, with controls applied to preserve comparability and produce a single combined dataset.

Enhanced Questions

Question wording review and comparability assessment



CORE MEASURES



In consultation with Local Government Victoria and participating councils, a number of questions used in the Community Satisfaction Survey were reviewed and updated to improve clarity and relevance.

As wording changes can affect comparability with historical results, a split-sample approach was used to assess the impact of the main revisions. One group received the historic wording and another received the enhanced wording.

The following table summarises the changes made and the extent to which the revised wording affected results.

Enhanced Wording	Historic Wording	Estimated Impact	Outcome
How would you rate [COUNCIL NAME] at spending public funds on infrastructure and services in ways that benefit the community	How would you rate [COUNCIL NAME] at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?	N/A	Not tested. The historic question focused on perceptions of value for money, while the revised measure assesses perceptions of how effectively council directs public funds to generate community benefit. As these are related but not equivalent concepts, direct trend comparability was not assumed.
The opportunities offered by [NAME OF COUNCIL] to give your feedback or engage on key local issues.	Community consultation and engagement	+1pts	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Condition of sealed local streets in your area. This includes local streets but does NOT include highways and major arterial roads such as [INSERT UP THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES].	The condition of suburban sealed local roads in your area. This includes local streets and roads managed by your council but excluding highways and main roads that are managed by VicRoads.	+2pts	No material impact detected. Added specificity does not appear to have materially changed responses.
Waste management including the collection of garbage, recyclables and green waste	Waste management	+6pts	Material impact detected; revised wording appears to have increased positive ratings likely by making the measure more concrete and inclusive.
Making decisions in the interest of the community	Decisions made in the interest of the community	-1pt	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Advocating for, and representing the community to government and other organisations	Lobbying on behalf of the community	+2pts	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Developing and promoting local tourism	Tourism Development	-3pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation.
Developing and promoting the local economy	Business and community development	-3pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation.
Enforcement of local laws and Council regulations	Enforcement of local laws	-5pts	Potential material impact detected. Expanded reference to “Council regulations” may have broadened respondents’ frame of reference and contributed to lower ratings.
The condition of footpaths in your area	The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area	+2pts	No material impact detected. Revised wording appears comparable.
Keeping the community informed on council services, events and programs	Informing the community	+3pts	No material impact detected. Revised wording appears comparable.

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

Enhanced Methodology

The incorporation of Online and comparability assessment



In 2026, the LGV CSS program expanded beyond its traditional CATI (telephone interviewing) approach, with online surveying via social media recruitment available as an option for councils.

This reflected a desire to modernise the program while retaining the consistency and comparability of the long-standing methodology.

Where used, online broadened participation and improved the representativeness of the sample, particularly by improving access to younger, digitally engaged and other harder-to-reach residents.

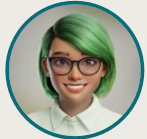
Index Score	Score Impact	Impact of including Online
Overall Performance	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Spending Public Funds	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
General Direction	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Customer Service	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Consultation/ Engagement	-1 pts	Material impact detected; the introduction of online approach may have allowed respondents to be more critical.
Waste management	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Making decisions	-2 pts	Material impact detected; the introduction of online approach may have allowed respondents to be more critical.
Sealed local streets	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation



After weighting for demographic differences, CATI and online results were broadly aligned.

Any remaining differences were generally small and mostly within expected variation. **Importantly**, the differences observed are generally small and not statistically significant, supporting a combined dataset that improves reach while maintaining comparability.

Elicitation of Qualitative Feedback



Open ended comments are a great way to capture information and insights.

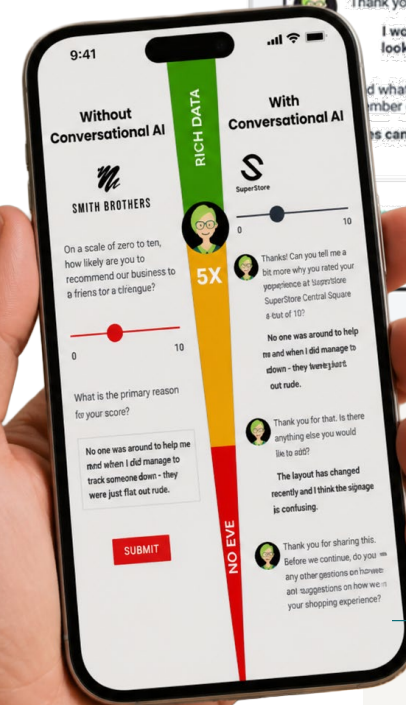
To encourage richer, more natural feedback, our survey platform utilises a technology called 'EVE' (Evolved Verbatim Engine).

EVE uses natural language processing to enable human-like interactions with survey respondents. It enables us to provide

- **Deeper and richer insights from open comments**
- **An improved respondent experience**

Think of EVE having a chat with the respondents (where there are open-ended question in the survey), allowing them to engage with an inquisitive feedback companion using two-way, automatically moderated conversation. 'EVE' probes them further in unique ways depending upon what the customer has said.

This leads to more reliable feedback and insights.



EVE
Evolved Verbatim Engine





How to interpret results

Statistical significance and margin of error

Statistical significance

Statistical significance testing at the 95% confidence level has been applied to key comparisons in this report.

Where a difference is highlighted, it is unlikely to be due to chance alone. Where no difference is highlighted, the results should be treated as broadly similar.

95%

Reading the charts and tables



Up arrow or green text = significantly higher



Down arrow or red text = significantly lower



Circle / marker or black text = not statistically significant, but may still be noteworthy

Approximate margins of error used in this report

All survey results are subject to a margin of error, which varies depending on sample size.

Sub-Group	Sample	Margin of error
Pyrenees SC	413	+/-4.8 pts
State	17,730	+/-0.7 pts
Small Shire	3,994	+/-1.6 pts
18 to 34	46	+/-14.4 pts
35 to 49	77	+/-11.2 pts
50 to 64	136	+/-8.4 pts
65+	154	+/-7.9 pts
Male	186	+/-7.2 pts
Female	227	+/-6.5 pts

Larger groups have a smaller margin of error; smaller groups have a larger one.

Margins of error are approximate and are shown to support interpretation of key results and sub-groups.



Why the sample size is appropriate

Understanding the Sample



Sample size

This survey includes enough interviews to give a reliable overall picture of community views.



Margin of error

All surveys have a small amount of natural variation. A bigger sample reduces this (and Councils have the option to increase sample size), but the improvement in accuracy becomes smaller as sample size increases.



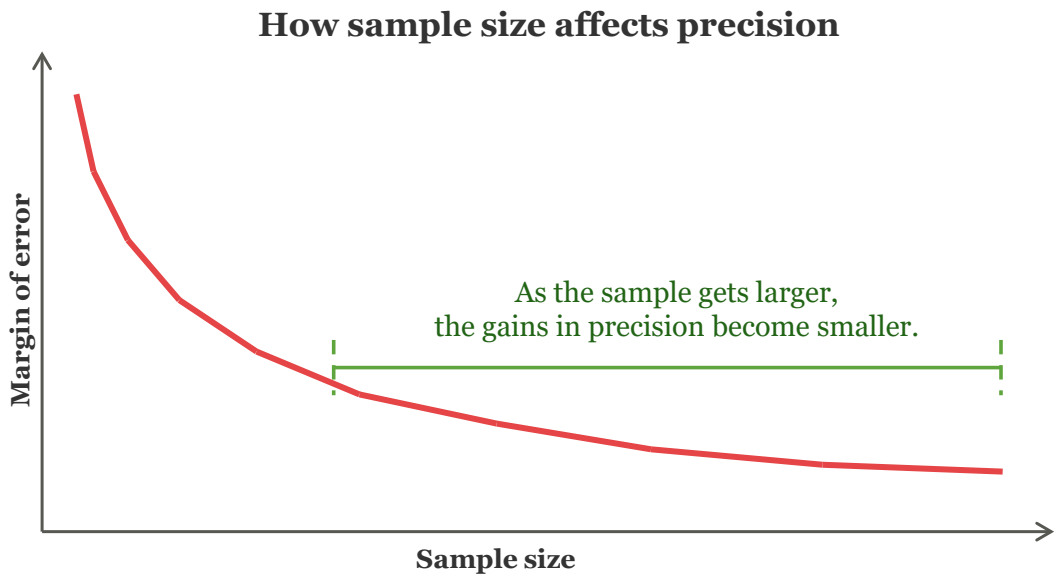
Confidence level

We use the standard "95% confidence level". In simple terms, this means we can be highly confident the survey gives a trustworthy picture of wider community views.



Statistical significance

In our analysis, we test whether differences and movements in scores are large enough to be meaningful, rather than just normal survey variation. These are highlighted through the report.



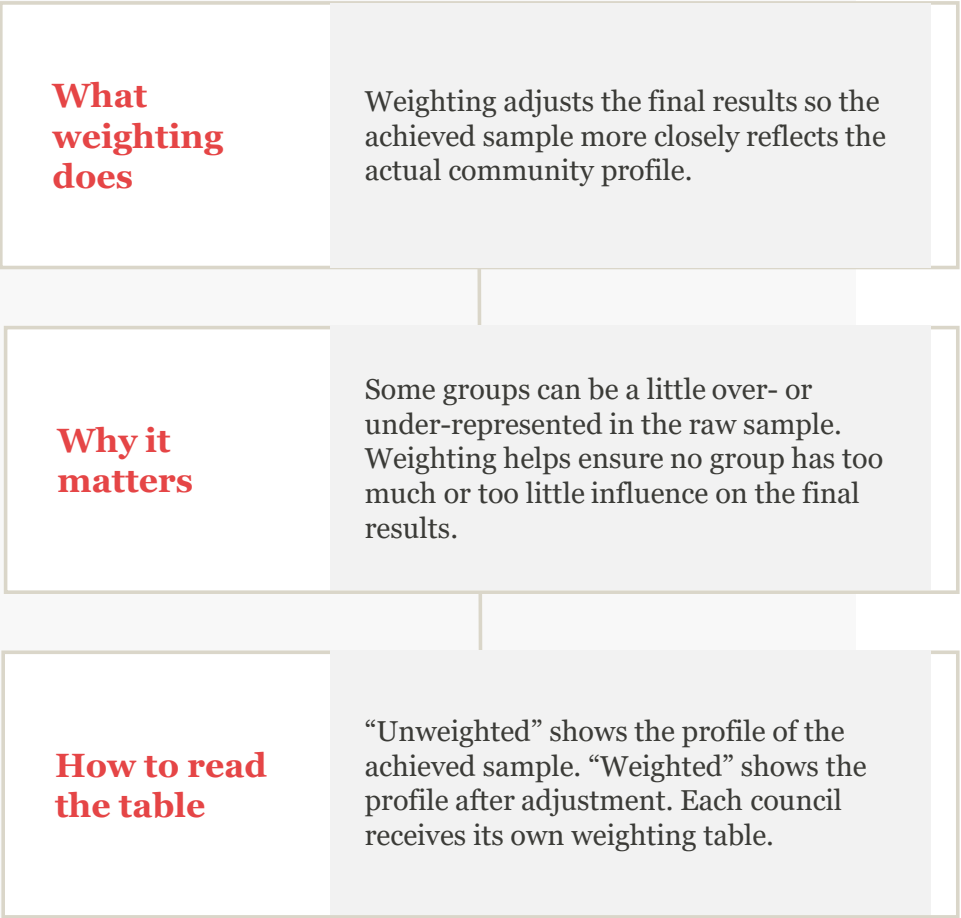
What this means

Larger samples can improve precision, but after a point they are unlikely to materially change the overall story.

Results are weighted to reflect the community profile (for example age and gender), helping ensure the findings are representative.



How weighting is used



Sample weighting

Age	Unweighted	Weighted
18-24	2%	3%
25-34	9%	14%
35-49	19%	21%
50-64	33%	29%
65+	37%	33%
NET	100%	100%

Gender	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	45%	53%
Female	55%	47%
NET	100%	100%



Weighting improves representativeness, but it does not change what respondents said. It simply helps ensure that each group is reflected in the right proportion in the final results.

Weighting tables are provided for each council to show how the achieved sample compares with the final weighted profile.

Comparative Benchmarks



In addition to the core LGV questions, each council was able to select additional service areas to assess. As a result, the number of councils in the benchmark for each questions varies. The following are the number of councils for each service area assessed within this report. Where there is only one other council in the benchmark, we have not provided a benchmark and labelled it as NA.

Performance	State	Small Shire
Art centres*	12	3
Business and community development and tourism	10	3
Emergency and disaster management	14	2
Libraries*	17	4
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	16	4
Recreational facilities	20	4
Family support services	12	2
The appearance of public areas	23	6
Condition of sealed local streets*	38	10
Decisions in the interest of the community*	38	10
Maintenance of unsealed roads	15	5
Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues*	38	10
Waste management*	38	10

Importance	State	Small Shire
Family support services	5	1
Recreational facilities	12	3
The appearance of public areas	12	3
Libraries*	8	2
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	8	3
Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area	7	3
Art centres*	6	2
Business and community development and tourism	7	3



How Performance Index Scores are Calculated

A simple guide to how 5-point ratings are converted into a 0 to 100 index

In simple terms

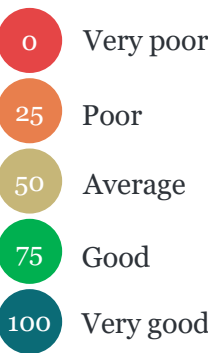
Performance is asked on a 5-point scale from Very poor to Very good.

Responses are then converted into an index from 0 to 100 so results can be compared consistently.

Scale



Index Values



Can't say is excluded from the calculation

Worked example

Each response ‘% share’ is multiplied by its index value. The contributions are then summed to create the score.

Response	Index Value	Share	Contribution
Very good	100	25%	25.0
Good	75	30%	22.5
Average	50	20%	10.0
Poor	25	10%	2.5
Very poor	0	10%	0.0
Can't say	-	5%	Excluded
Total index score		100%	60.0

How to interpret scores

Higher scores indicate stronger performance.

Band	Interpretation
85+	Very strong performance
75-84	Positive performance
50-74	Mixed or passable performance
40-49	Underperforming
<40	Clear community dissatisfaction

Direction in the past 12 months

The same principle is used for the Direction metric: Improved = 100, Stayed the same = 50, Deteriorated = 0. “Can't say” responses are excluded.



How to read the results slide - Performance Distribution

Guide to reading results

What this slide shows

This slide shows the overall result, the distribution of responses, and how results vary across benchmarks and key sub-groups.

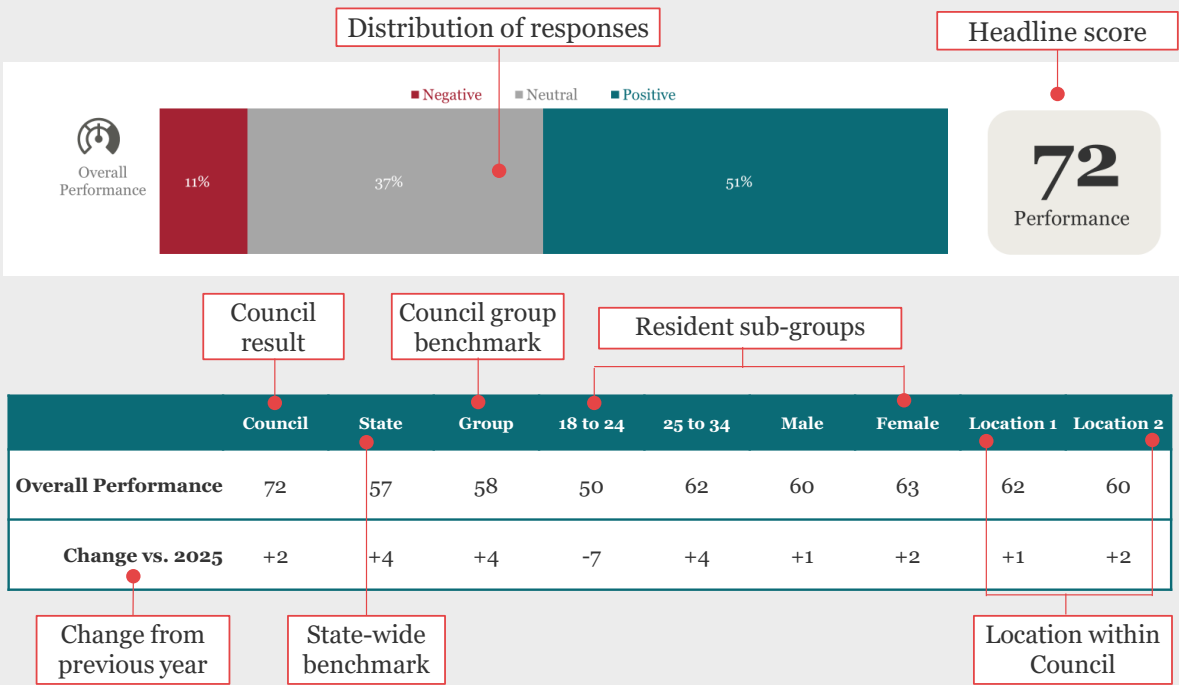
It helps the reader see:

- How Council is performing overall
- How the result compares with key benchmarks
- Which groups score higher or lower
- Whether the result has improved or declined over time

What the table categories mean

- Council** - result for this Council
- State** - average across all participating Councils
- Group** - average for similar councils
- Age / gender / location columns** - results for key sub-groups within the Council area
- Change vs. previous year** - movement since last year

Annotated example





How to read the line chart slide - Importance and Performance

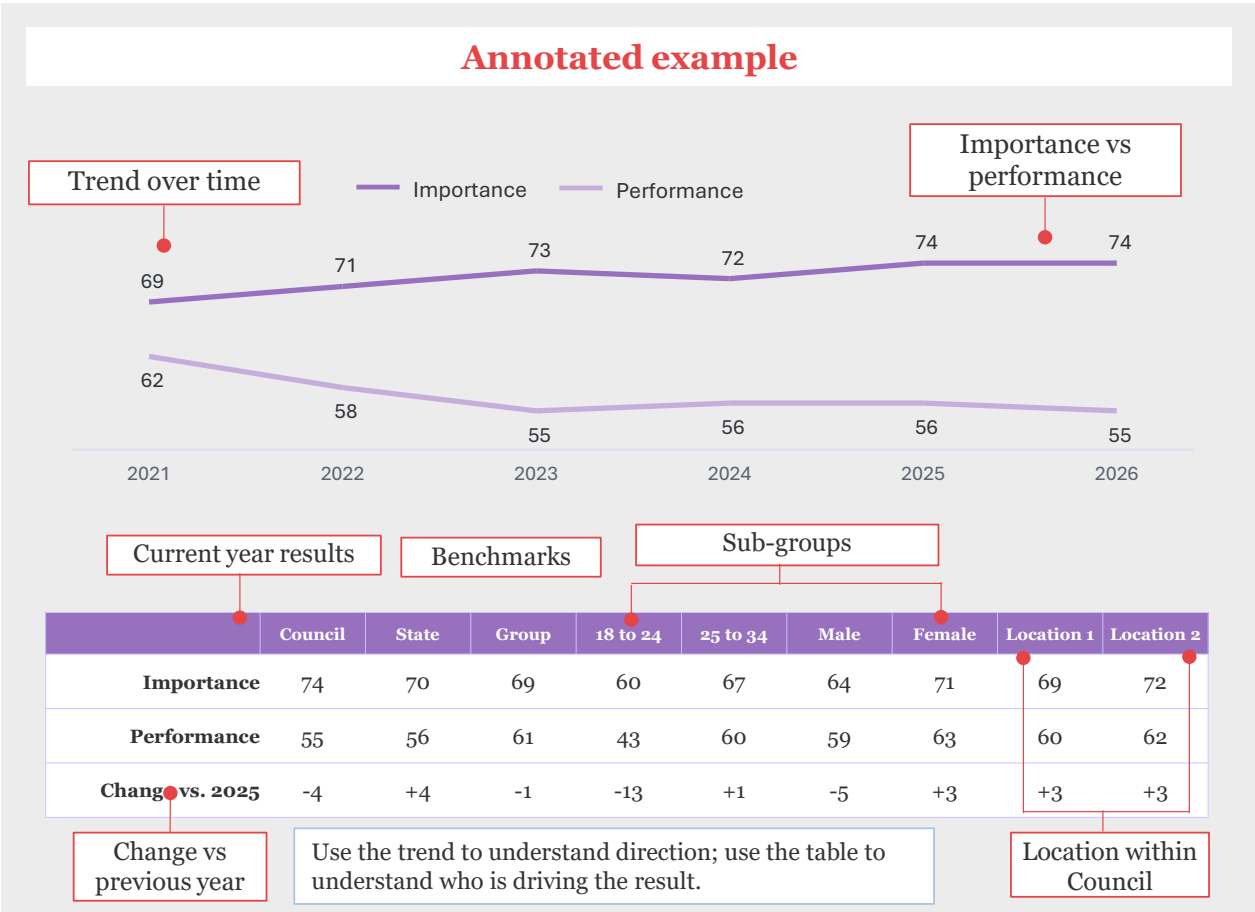
Guide to reading results

What this slide shows

- These slides show how importance and performance have changed over time, and how the current year result varies across benchmarks and sub-groups.
- The top chart shows the trend over time.
- The table below shows the current year results by benchmark and sub-group.
- The change table shows movement compared with the previous year.
- Importance = how much the area matters to the community
- Performance = how residents rate Council on that area

Table categories

Council, State and Group provide benchmarks; age, gender and location columns show resident sub-groups.



Fieldwork Summary

Who?	Residents of Pyrenees Shire Council aged 18+ Minimum quotas of gender within age groups were applied during fieldwork. Post-survey weighting was then conducted to ensure accurate representation of the ABS age and gender profile of the council area.
What?	10-minute survey Conducted by Telephone and Online
How Many?	n=413 n=317 Telephone recruited from sourced residential sample list n=96 Online recruited via social media
When?	Fieldwork conducted February/March 2026





Key Performance Measures





Overall Council Performance



Overview

This section provides a summary of overall community perceptions of Council performance. It presents key headline metrics and a high-level view of how Council is performing across the municipality.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Overall performance score
- Perceptions of Council direction
- Views on how well Council spends public funds
- Benchmark comparisons (where applicable)
- Results by key subgroups (e.g. age, location)

Together, these results provide a clear snapshot of overall community sentiment and set the foundation for the deeper insights that follow in the report.

Summary of results

Key measures:

- The latest result for overall performance is 58, unchanged from 2025.
- Council direction scored 46, also unchanged from 2025.
- Compared with 2025, spending public funds to benefit the community increased by 2 points to 52.

Vs. Benchmarks

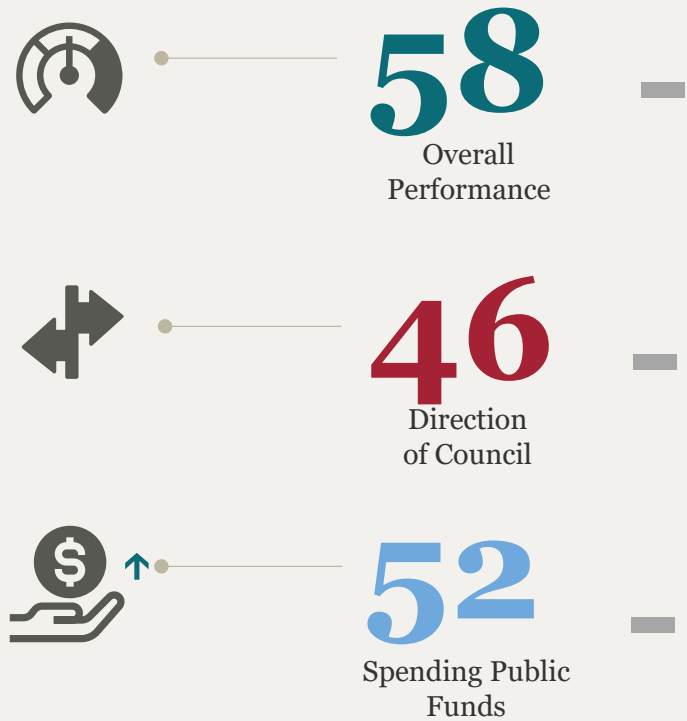
- Overall performance scores 58, sitting even with State (58) and above Small Shire (53).
- Council direction scores 46, sitting slightly below the State (48) but level with Small Shire (46).
- Council's score on spending public funds to benefit the community outperformed Small Shire (52 vs 47) and was comparable to State (52 vs 51).
- Compared with 2025, scores on spending public funds increased for both Council and State, by 2 and 4 points respectively, while Small Shire had a marginal 1 point decline.

Sub-group differences:

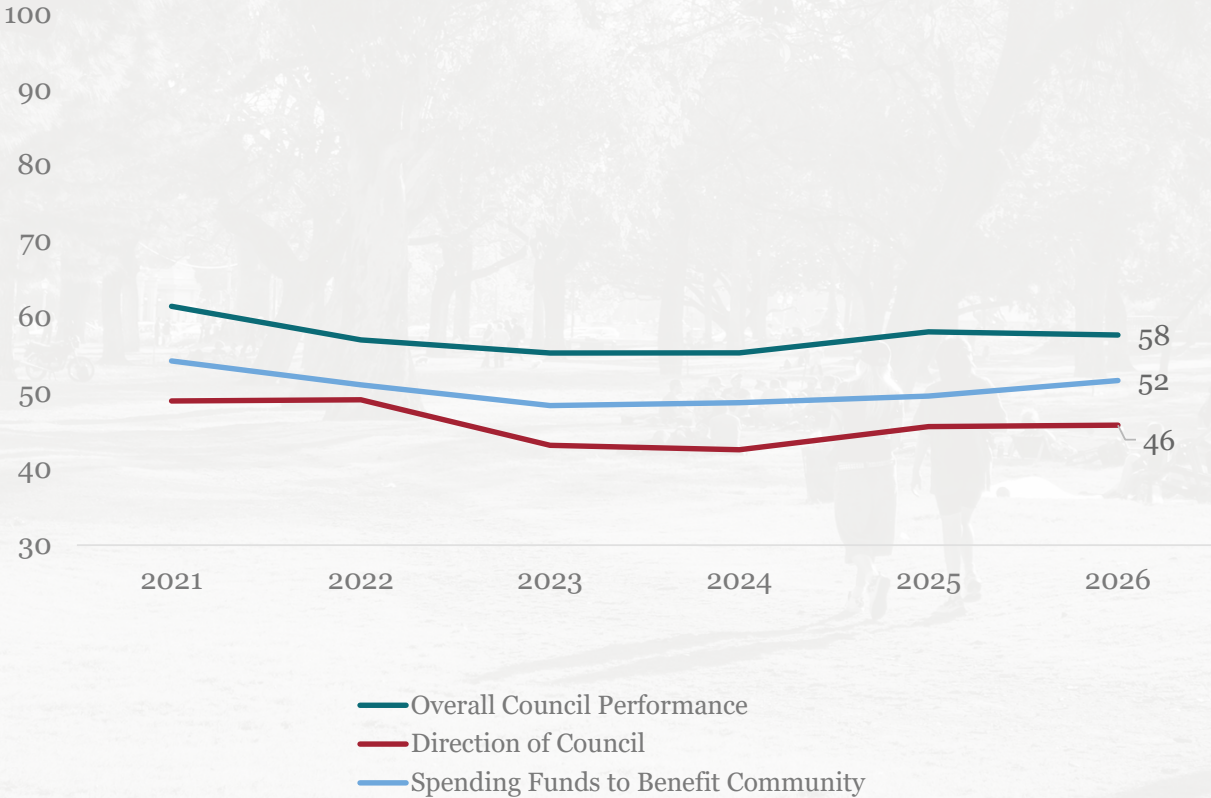
- Females were more positive on overall performance and Council direction than Males.
- 50-64 year old residents were more critical of Council's spending of funds than other age groups.

Performance Summary – At a Glance

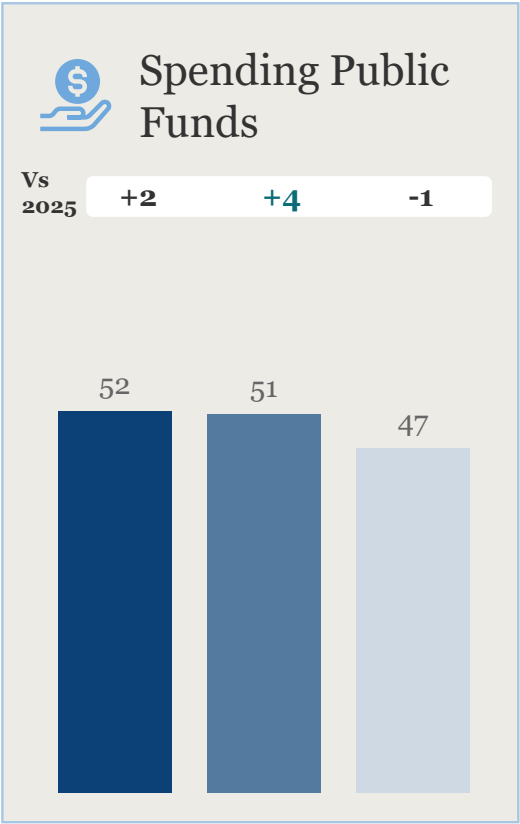
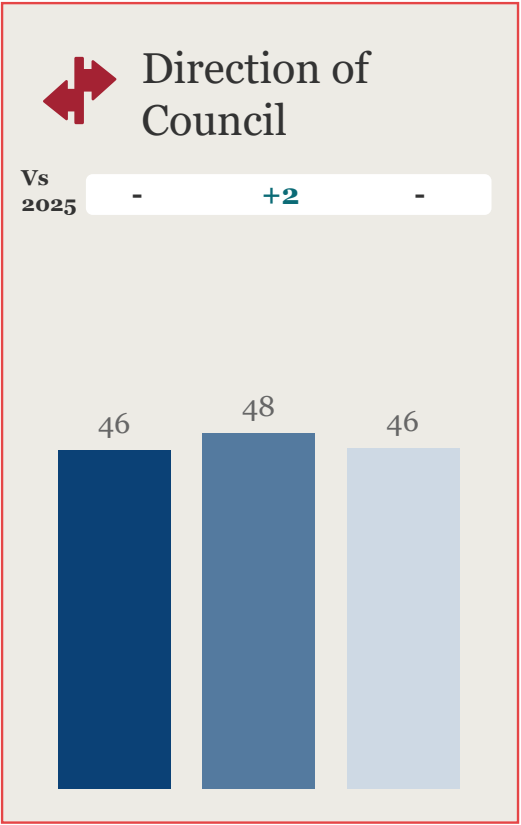
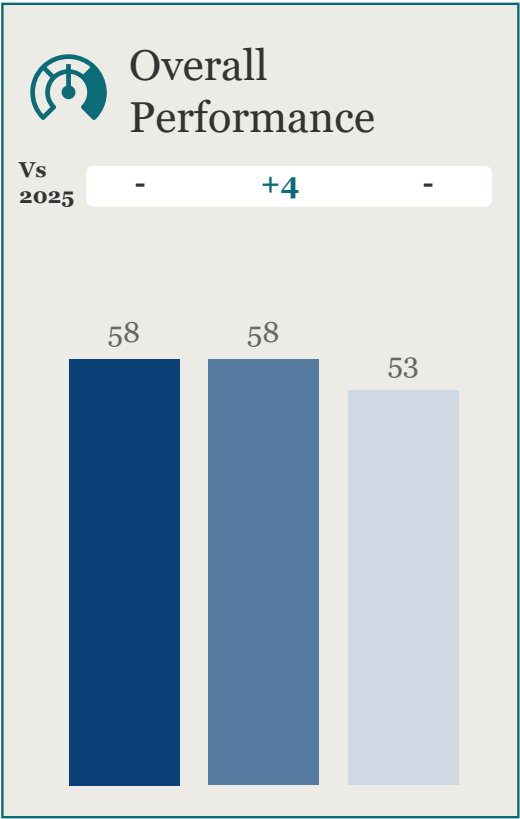
Council performance summary.
Results shown are index scores out of 100.



Council Performance by Year



Overall Performance – Council vs. Benchmarks

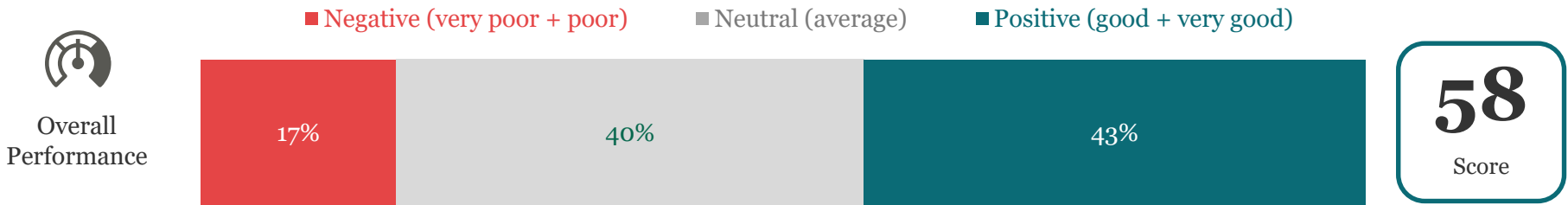


■ Pyrenees ■ State ■ Small Shire

Overall Performance – Distribution of Results 2026



These results show the distribution of responses for **Overall Performance** (categorized into negative, neutral and positive), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



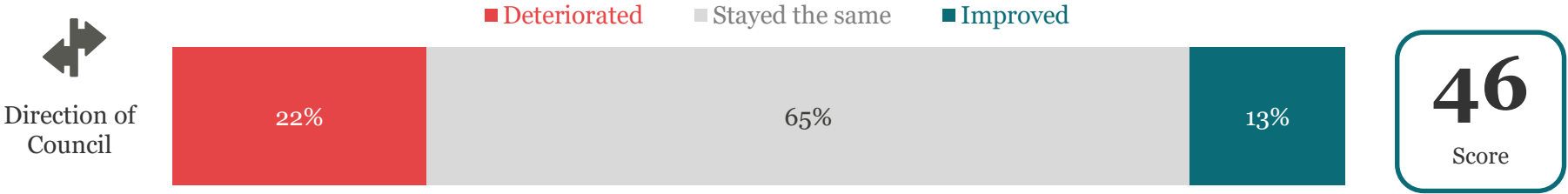
	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Overall Performance	58	58	53	59	60	57	56	54	62
Change vs. 2025	-	+4	-	-1	+0	+5	-3	-2	+1

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Direction of Council – Distribution of Results 2026



These results show the distribution of responses for **Direction of Council** (improved, stayed the same, deteriorated), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Direction of Council	46	48	46	46	47	45	45	44	48
Change vs. 2025	-	+2	-	-5	+5	+6	-3	-	+1

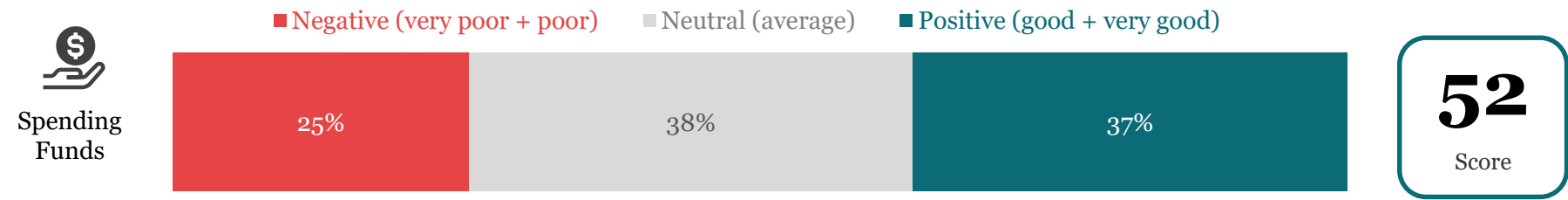
Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Council’s overall performance? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Spending Public Funds to Benefit Community – Distribution of Results 2026





These results show the distribution of responses for **Spending Public Funds** (categorised into positive, neutral and negative), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Spending Funds	52	51	47	54	52	49	53	52	52
Change vs. 2025	+2	+4	-1	-1	+5	+6	+1	+3	+1

Q3b. How would you rate Council at spending public funds on infrastructure and services in ways that benefit the community? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



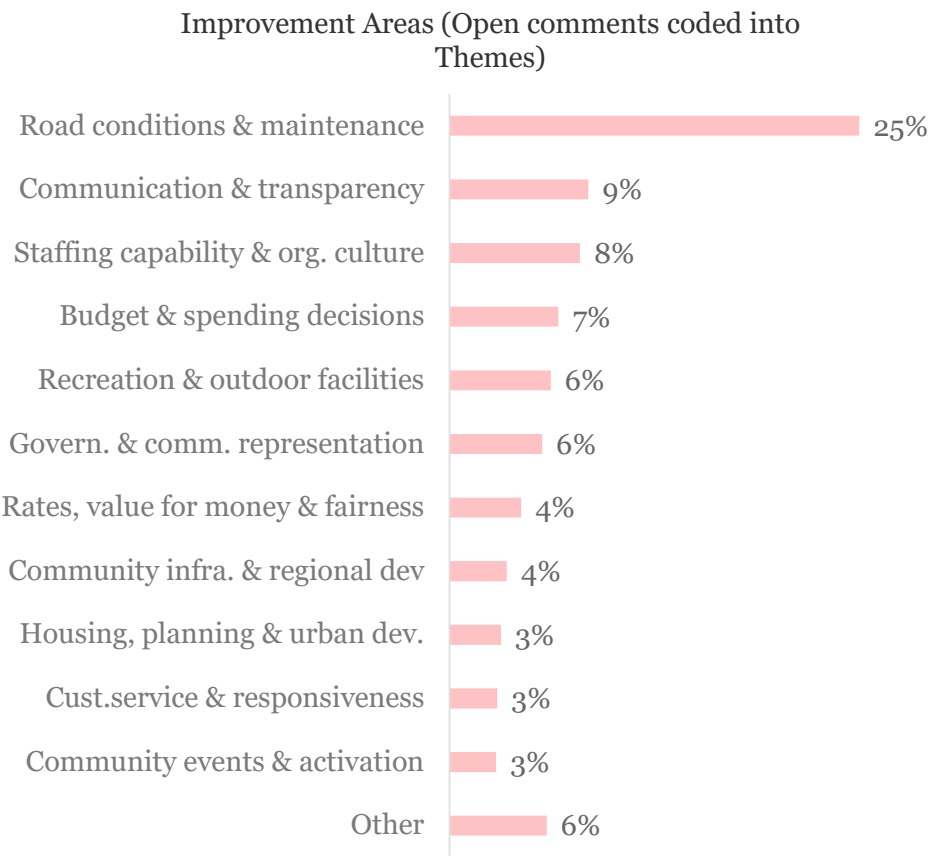
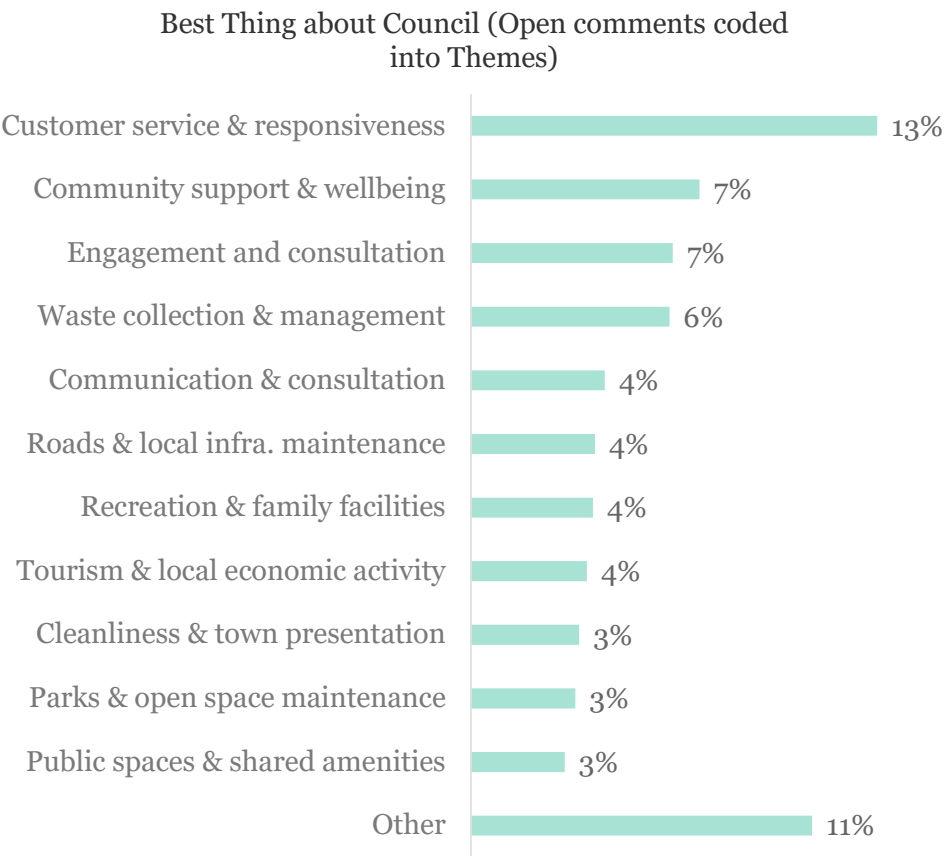
Open Ended Resident Feedback





Open ended Resident Feedback - Reasons for Sentiment

Verbatim Comments



Q16. In your own words, please tell me what is the BEST thing about [INSERT COUNCIL NAME]? Q17. What does [INSERT COUNCIL NAME] most need to do to improve its performance? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Open ended Resident Feedback - Reasons for Sentiment

Demographic Differences

Best Thing about Council ●

- Customer service and responsiveness is the most commonly mentioned strength across the municipality, particularly among residents aged 50 to 64.
- Community support and wellbeing, engagement and consultation and waste collection and management are also recognised positively, reflecting appreciation for visible day-to-day service delivery and local infrastructure.
- Community support and wellbeing and Waste collection and management is more commonly recognised by residents aged 25 to 34.
- Communication and consultation and roads and local infrastructure maintenance emerge as secondary positive themes raised by residents.
- Subgroup differences are otherwise relatively limited overall, indicating broad alignment in perceptions of Council strengths.

Improvement Areas ●

- Road conditions and maintenance overwhelmingly dominate improvement feedback across the municipality, particularly among residents aged 50 to 64.
- Communication and transparency, staffing capability and organisational culture and budget and spending decisions emerge as notable secondary concerns raised by residents.
- Recreation and outdoor facilities and governance and community representation are recurring but clearly secondary concerns relative to the leading issues.
- Subgroup differences are otherwise relatively limited, suggesting broad alignment in improvement priorities across the community.

Q16. In your own words, please tell me what is the BEST thing about [INSERT COUNCIL NAME]? Q17. What does [INSERT COUNCIL NAME] most need to do to improve its performance? *For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.*



Performance of Council Services





Performance of Council Services

Overview



This section provides a summary of community perceptions of performance across key Council service areas. It highlights how well residents believe Council is delivering services and where performance is strongest or may require improvement.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Performance ratings of Council services
- Trends over time

Council service areas are grouped into five key categories:

- Governance, Engagement & Advocacy
- Infrastructure, Waste & Maintenance
- Community Facilities & Recreation
- Community Services & Support
- Planning, Development and Growth

Summary of results

Key measures:

- Waste management was the strongest performing service area, scoring 74, followed by libraries at 73.
- The lowest service results were for maintenance of unsealed roads and condition of sealed local streets, scoring 41 and 48 respectively.
- Compared with 2025, enforcement of local laws and regulations had the largest improvement, growing by 6 points to reach 63.

Vs. Benchmarks

- Council outperformed the Small Shire benchmark on all service areas except libraries, where both scored 73.
- Compared with 2025, Council's result for enforcement of local laws and regulations increased by 6 points, while the State decreased by 3 points. This placed Council's 2026 result 7 points ahead of State (63 vs 56).
- Council scored notably lower than State on condition of sealed roads (48 vs 54).

Sub-group differences:

- 18-34 year olds were more positive on enforcement of local laws and regulations and maintenance of unsealed roads but more critical of art centres.
- Females gave higher scores than Males across most service areas.



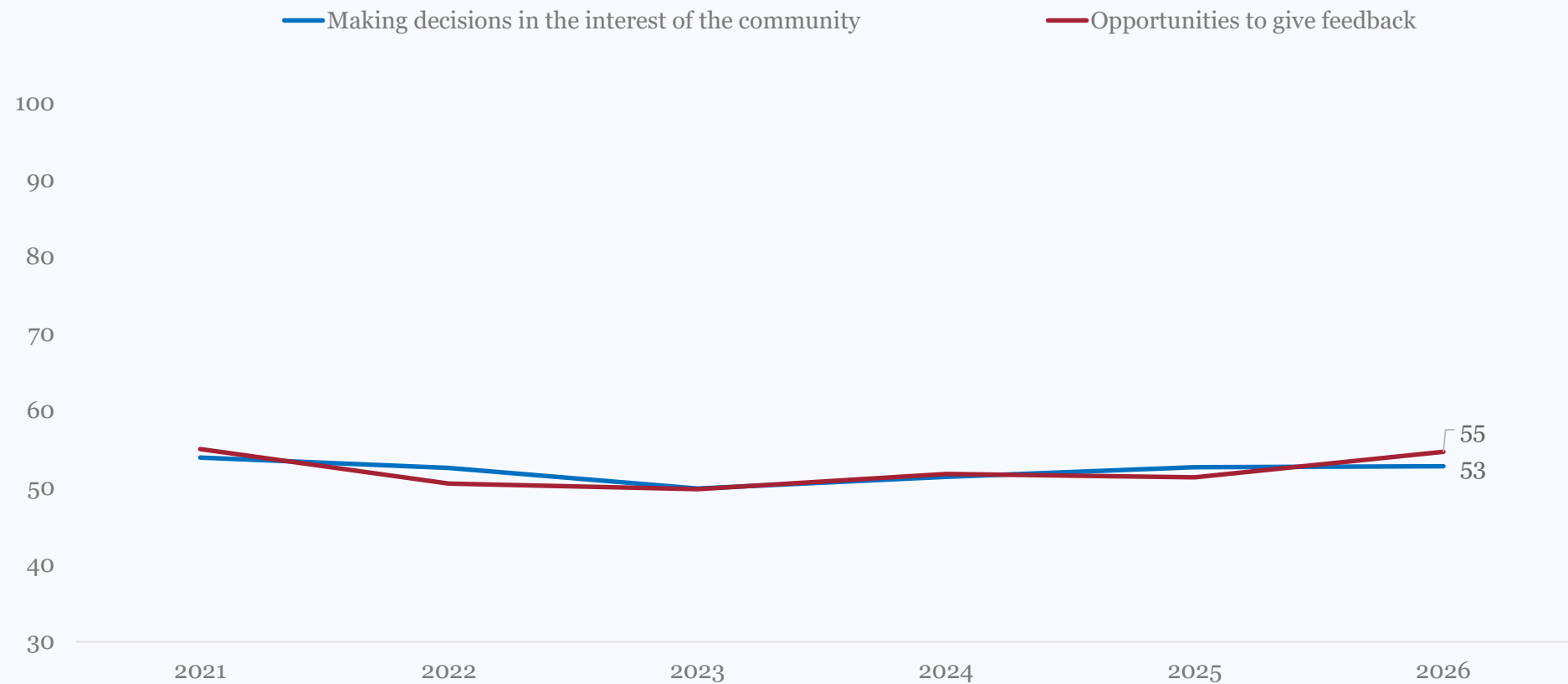
Performance of Council Services – by Year

	Pyrenees SC 2026	Chg vs 2025	State 2026	Chg vs 2025	Small Shire 2026	Chg vs 2025
Waste management*	74	+2	72	+6	71	+5
Libraries*	73	NA	75	NA	73	NA
The appearance of public areas	67	-3	63	-5	66	-4
Recreational facilities	65	-1	66	-2	64	-3
Emergency and disaster management	65	-1	63	-2	64	-2
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	63	+6	56	-3	60	+2
Art centres*	63	NA	64	NA	59	NA
Family support services	62	-2	61	-1	60	-2
Business and community development and tourism	61	-	59	+3	58	+1
Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues*	55	+3	55	+5	54	+2
Decisions in the interest of the community*	53	-	52	+3	51	+1
Condition of sealed local streets*	48	+3	54	+9	45	+1
Maintenance of unsealed roads	41	+2	42	+4	37	-3

Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



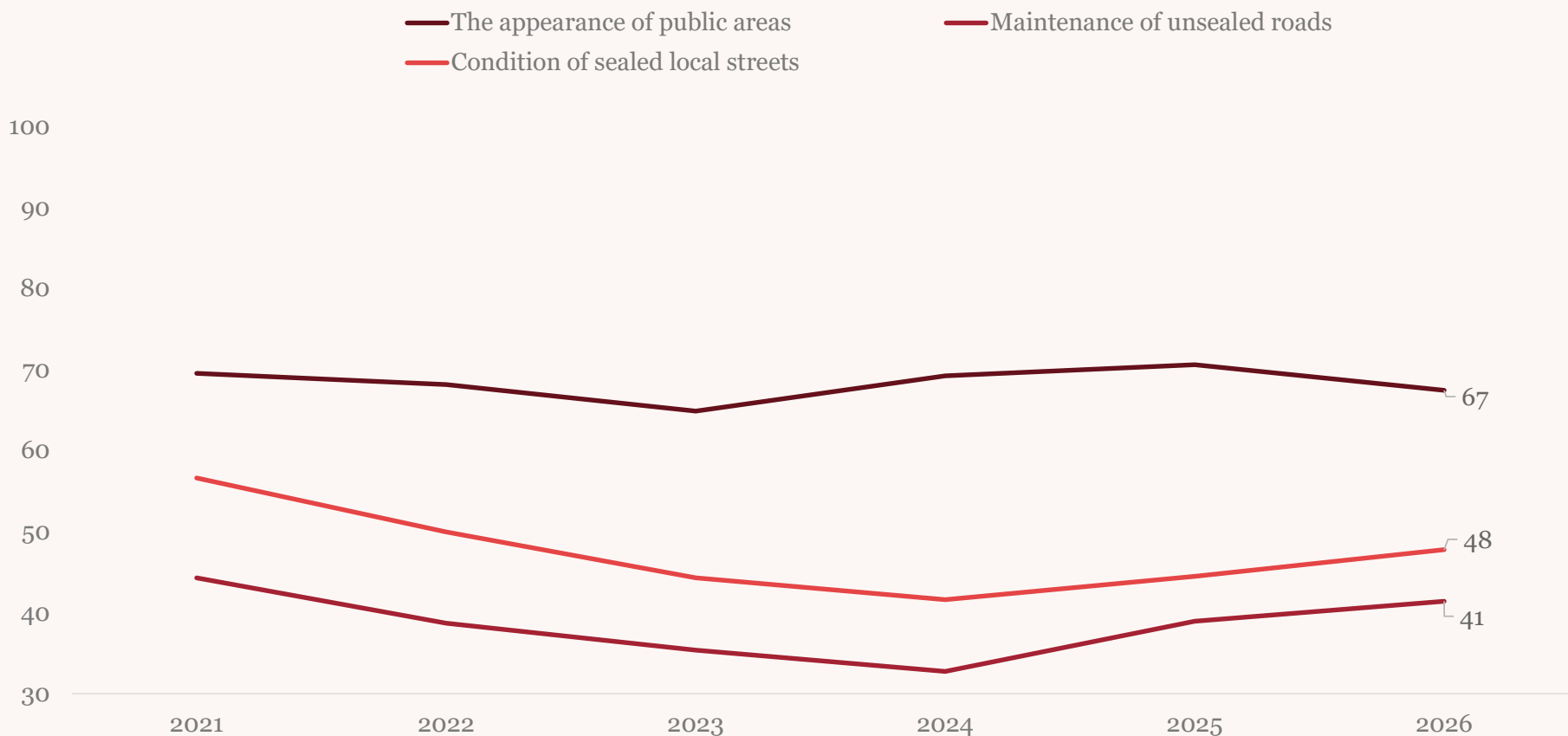
Performance of Council Services – Governance, Engagement & Advocacy



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



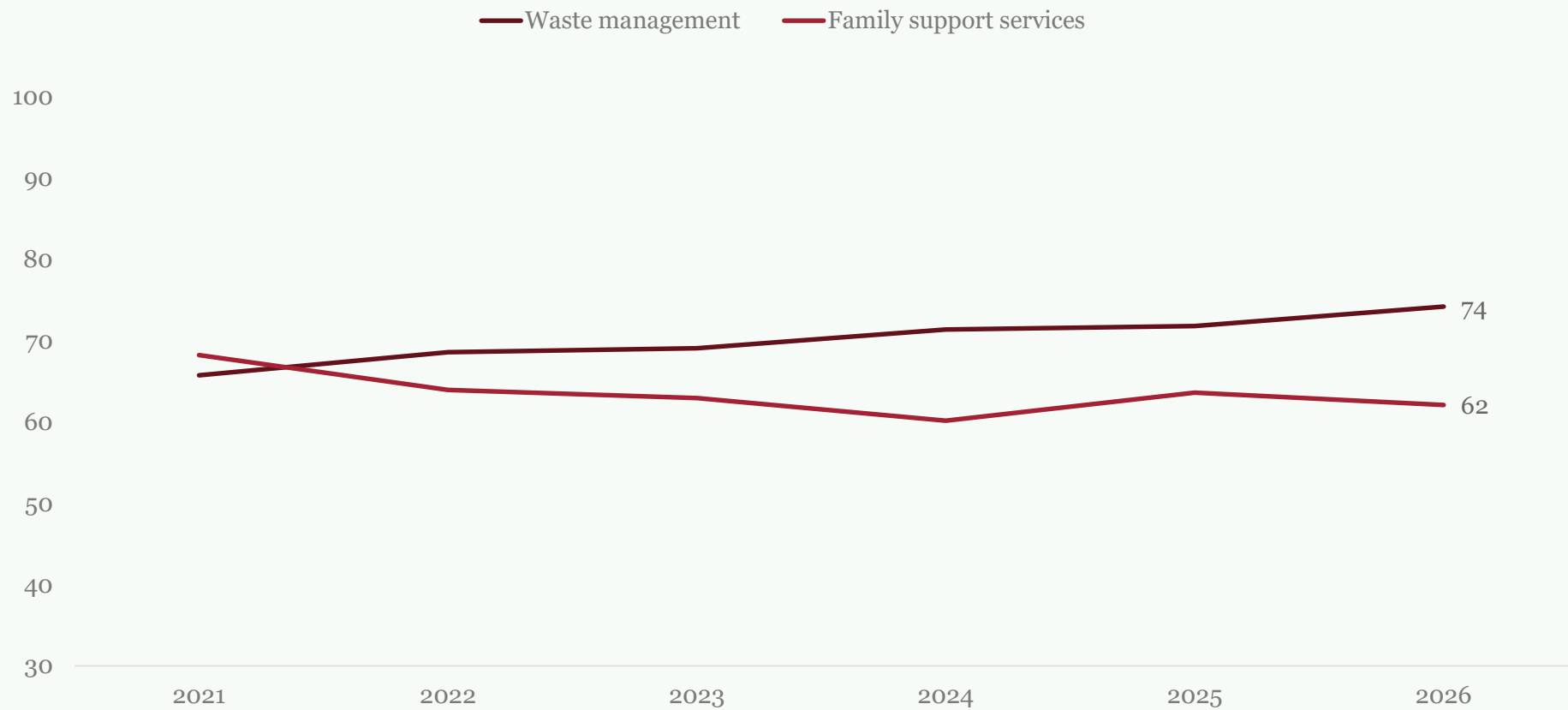
Performance of Council Services – Infrastructure & Maintenance



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



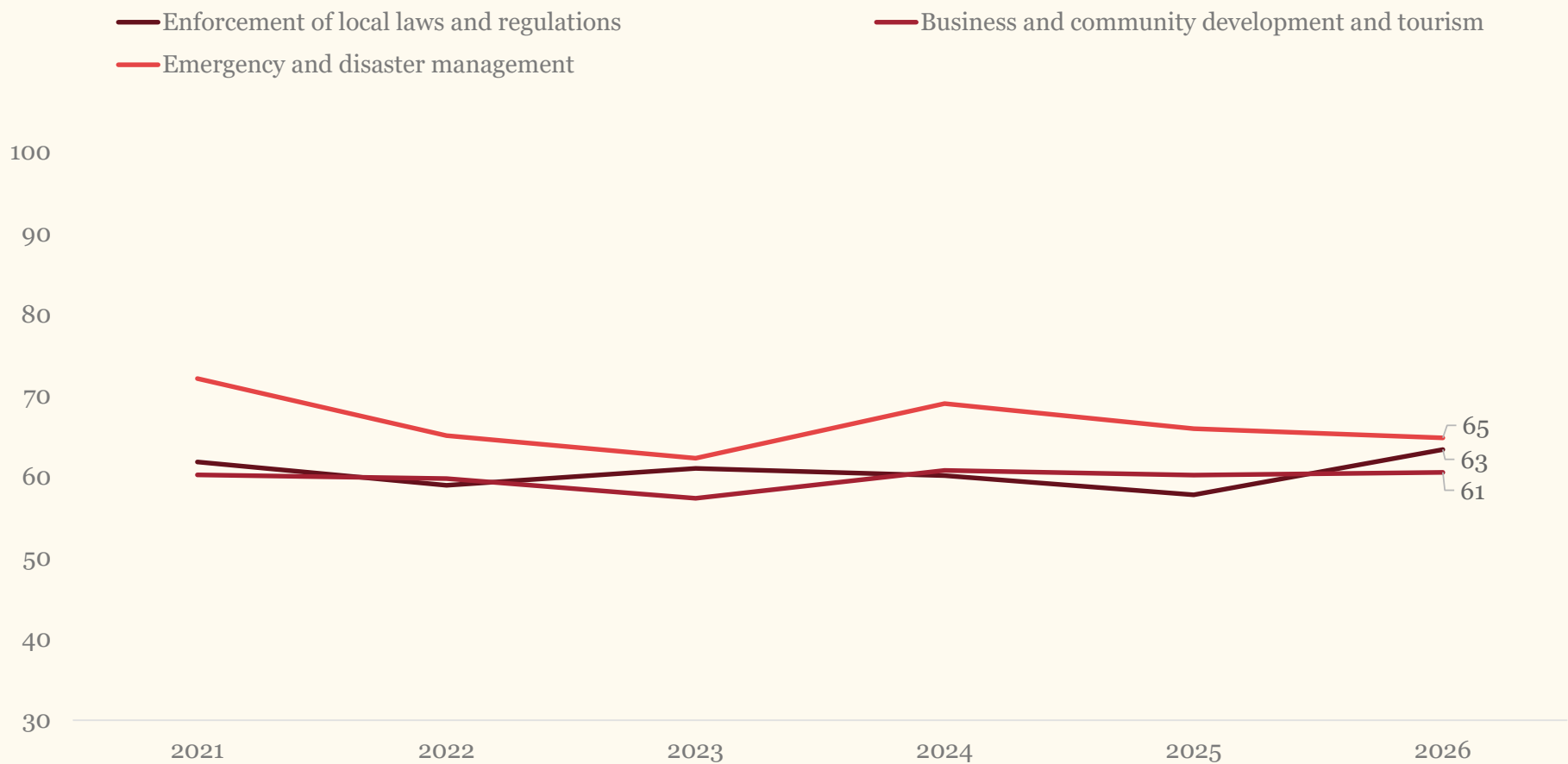
Performance of Council Services – Community Services & Support



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



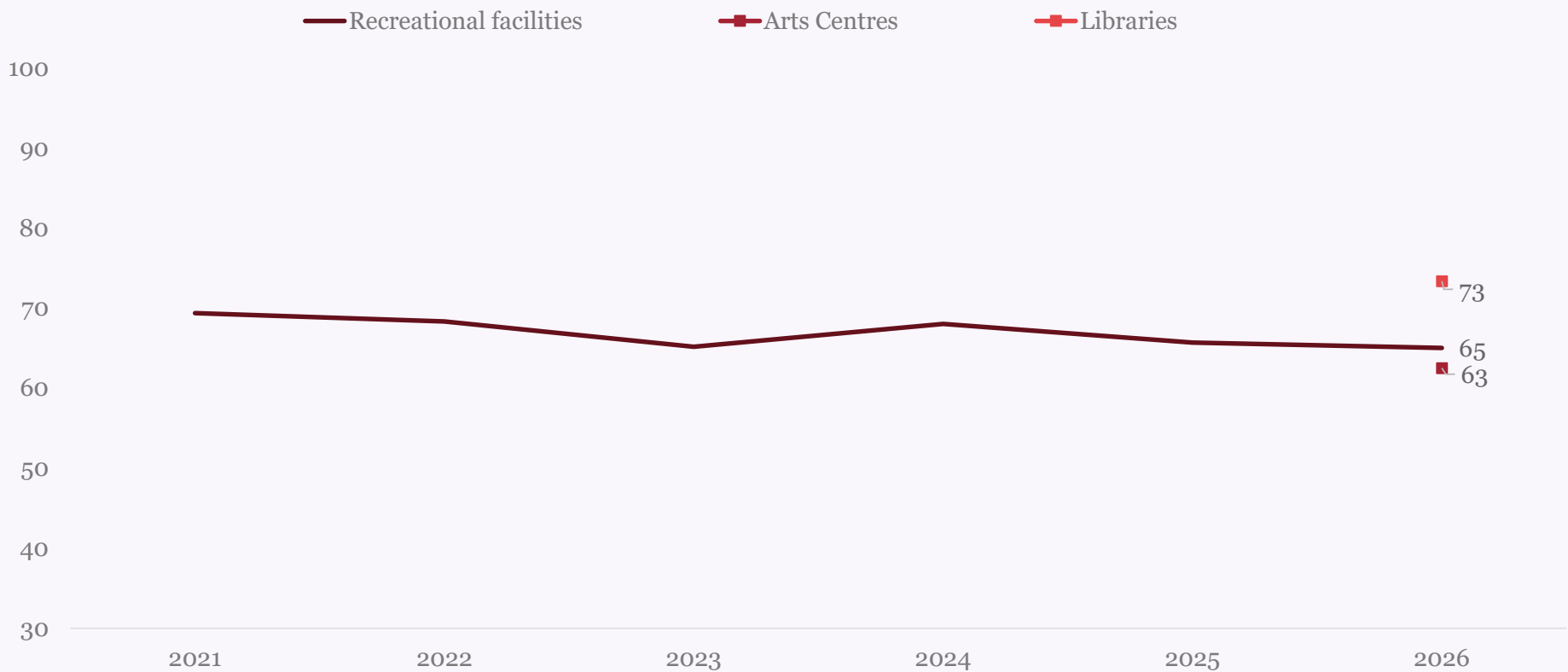
Performance of Council Services – Planning & Development



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Performance of Council Services – Community Facilities & Recreation



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Influence-Performance Matrix

Analysis Framework

How to read the Matrix

The influence-performance matrix helps show which areas matter most, and where improvement is likely to have the greatest impact.

- Influence**
is based on regression analysis, this indicates which attributes matter most to overall satisfaction. Derived influence is often preferred over asking directly (stated importance) because it uncovers subconscious drivers, hidden priorities, and actual behaviour. All aspects are important; some are more powerful at driving overall sentiment.
- Performance**
is based on respondents' ratings of Council on each attribute.

Together, these dimensions help identify priorities for action.

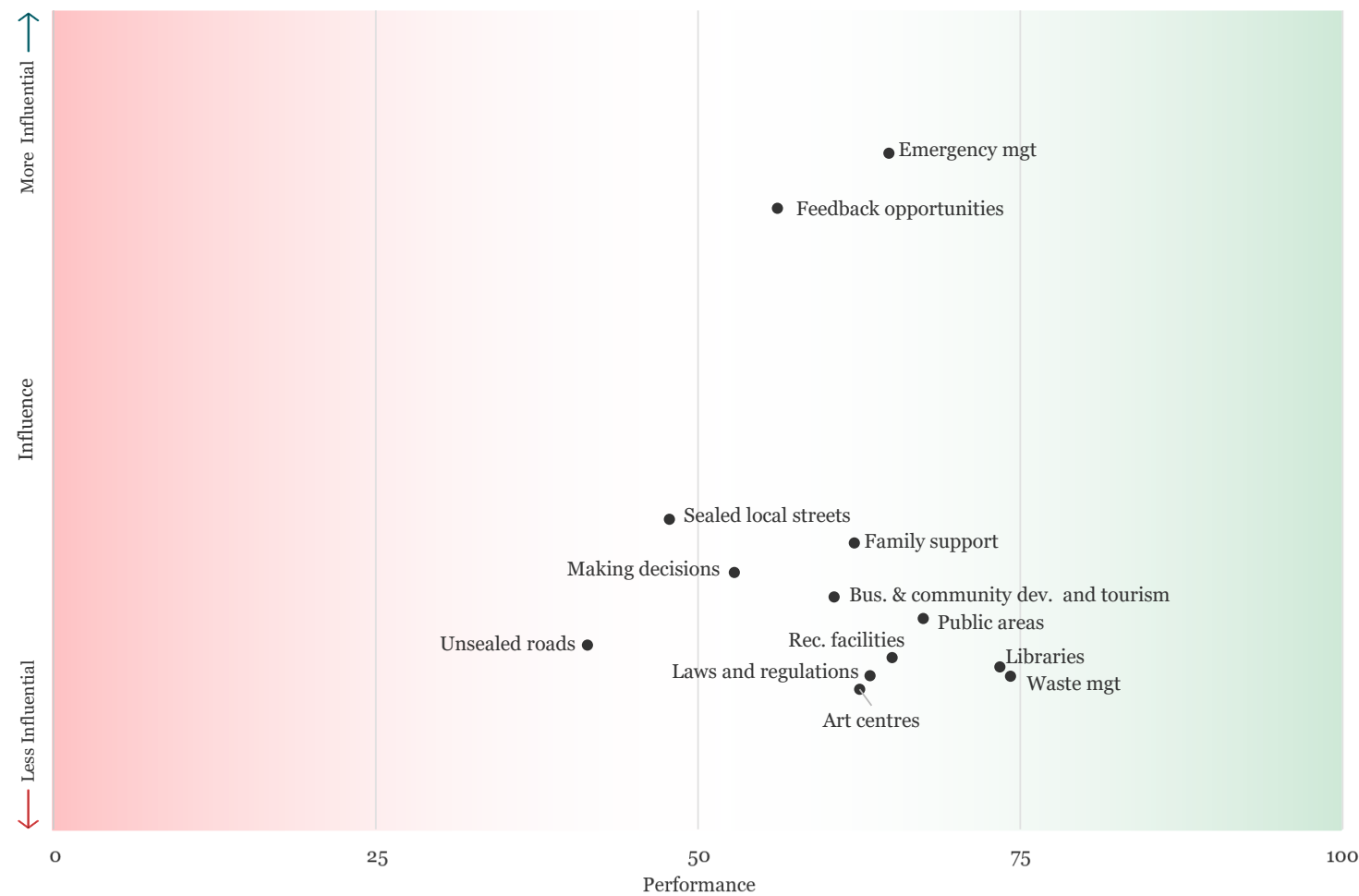
- High influence, high performance - important areas where Council is performing well
- High influence, lower performance - highest priorities for improvement.
- Lower influence, high performance - performing well, but less influential overall.
- Lower influence, lower performance - lower priority areas for improvement.

Influence on the matrix is derived from regression analysis, while performance is based on respondents' ratings of Council attributes.





Influence vs. Performance – Service Delivery 2026



The chart points to the areas where improvement is likely to have the greatest effect on broader community views.

The higher-impact opportunities appear to be:

- Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues
- Emergency and disaster management (albeit already a strength)
- The condition of sealed local streets
- Making decisions that benefit community

The lower score for unsealed roads is offset by its lower influence, indicating it is not a key priority for improvement.



Importance of Council Service Areas





Importance of Service Areas



Overview

This section provides a summary of the importance placed on key Council service areas by the community. It highlights which services residents value most and how these priorities are evolving over time.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Importance ratings of Council services
- Trends over time

Council service areas are grouped into five key categories:

- Governance, Engagement & Advocacy
- Infrastructure, Waste & Maintenance
- Community Facilities & Recreation
- Community Services & Support
- Planning, Development and Growth

Summary of results

Key measures:

- Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area remains the highest-importance service area despite a 4 point decline, scoring 82.
- The service area of lowest importance to residents was art centres, at 52.
- The largest change from 2025 was for enforcement of local laws and regulations, which decreased in priority by 5 points.

Vs. Benchmarks

- Residents felt most service areas were less important than the average across both State and Small Shire.
- Enforcement of local laws and regulations sits well below the State benchmark (63 vs 70) and marginally behind Small Shire (63 vs 65).

Sub-group differences:

- Females valued all service areas substantially more than Males.
- Residents aged 18-34 valued art centres and libraries much less than other age groups.

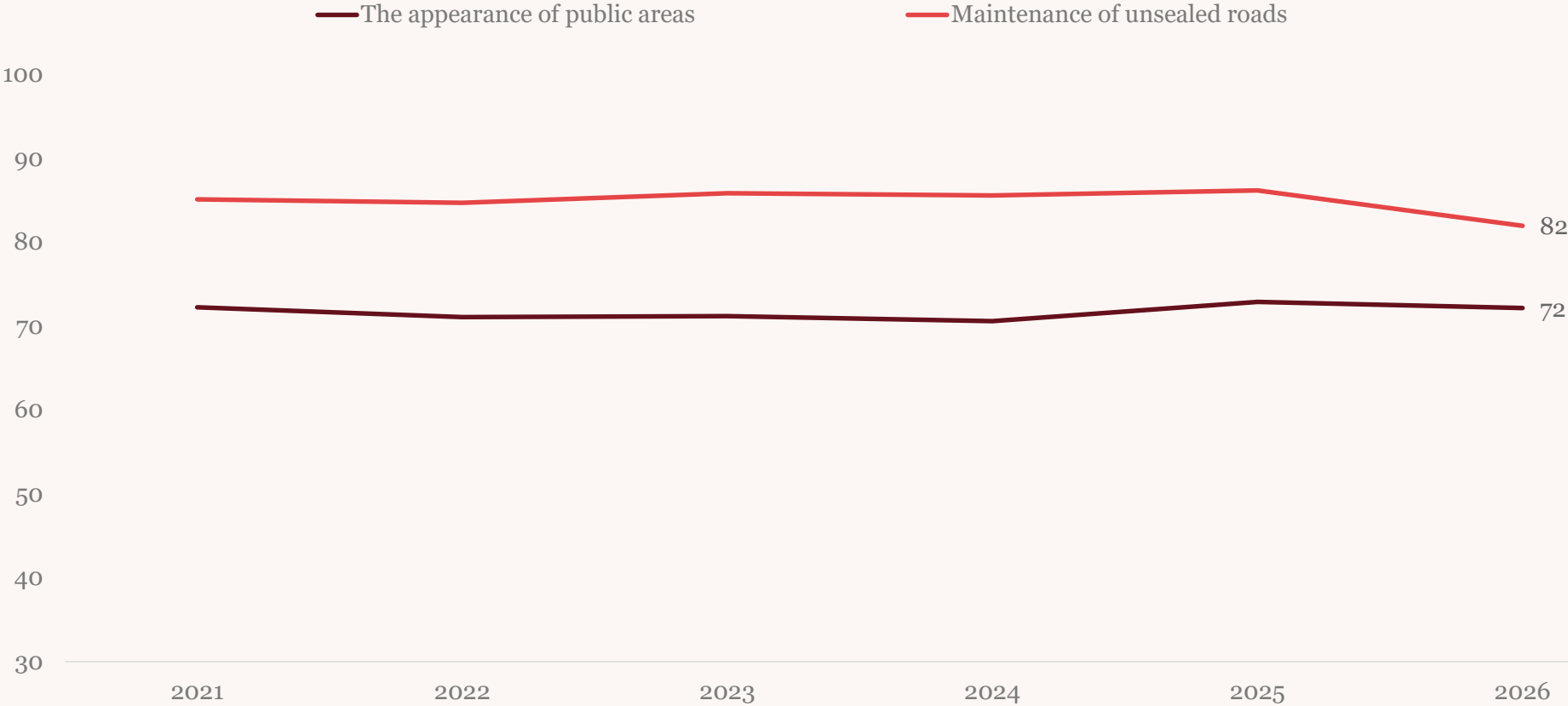
Importance of Council Services – by Year



	Pyrenees SC 2026	Chg vs 2025	State 2026	Chg vs 2025	Small Shire 2026	Chg vs 2025
Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area	82	-4	80	-3	84	-1
Recreational facilities	73	+2	75	+2	74	+1
The appearance of public areas	72	-1	77	+3	75	-
Family support services	71	-2	75	+2	NA	NA
Business and community development and tourism	70	-	72	+4	72	+1
Libraries*	64	NA	70	NA	66	NA
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	63	-5	70	+3	65	-1
Art centres*	52	NA	57	NA	52	NA

Q1. I would like you to rate the importance of areas for which Council has some responsibility. Firstly, how important should [SERVICE] be as a responsibility for Council? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

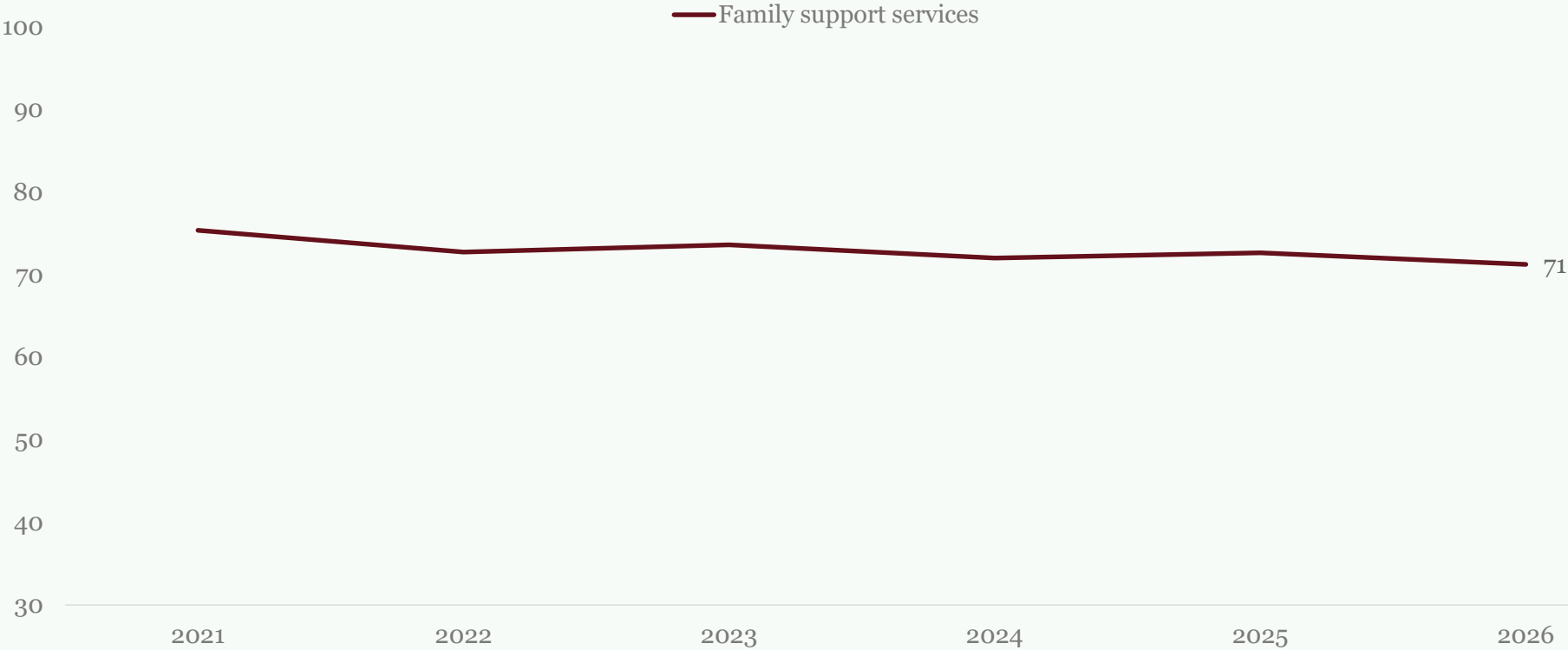
Importance of Council Services – Infrastructure & Maintenance



Q1. I would like you to rate the importance of areas for which Council has some responsibility. Firstly, how important should [SERVICE] be as a responsibility for Council? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

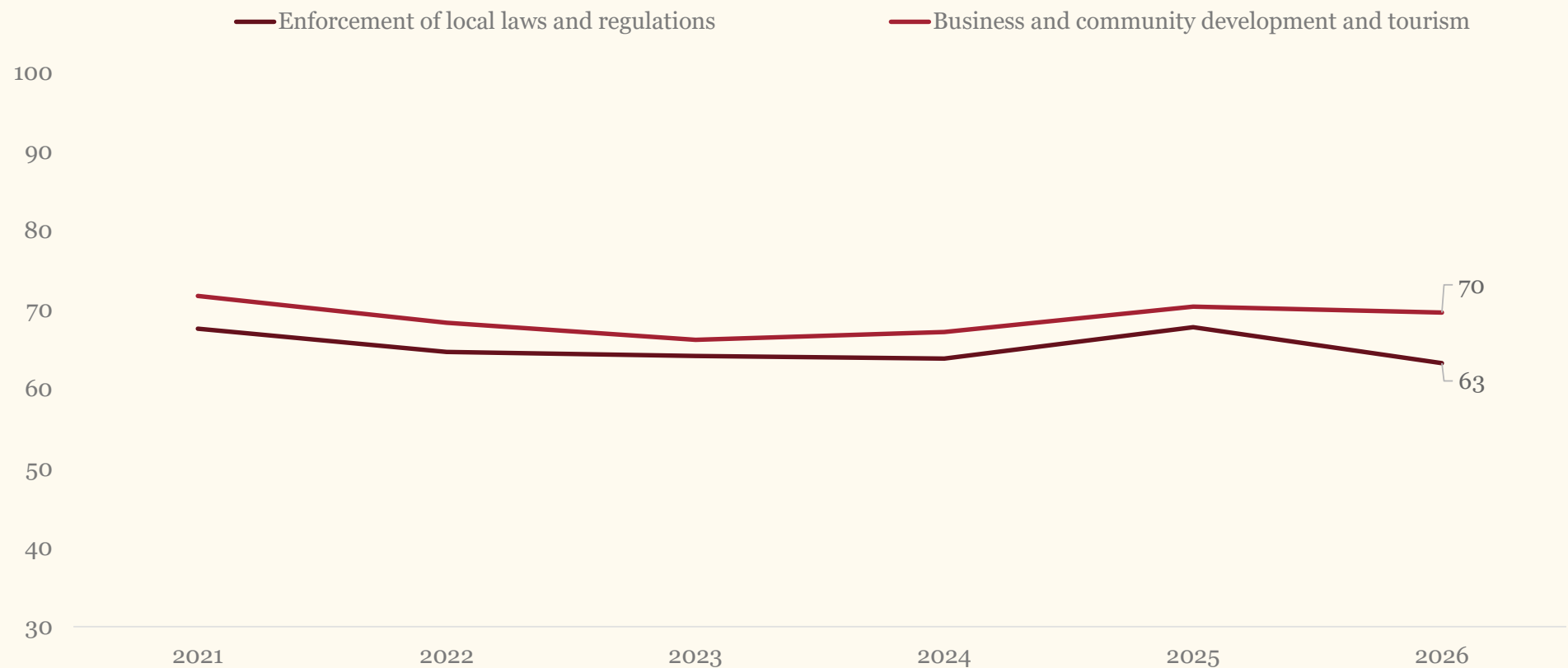


Importance of Council Services – Community Services & Support



Q1. I would like you to rate the importance of areas for which Council has some responsibility. Firstly, how important should [SERVICE] be as a responsibility for Council? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

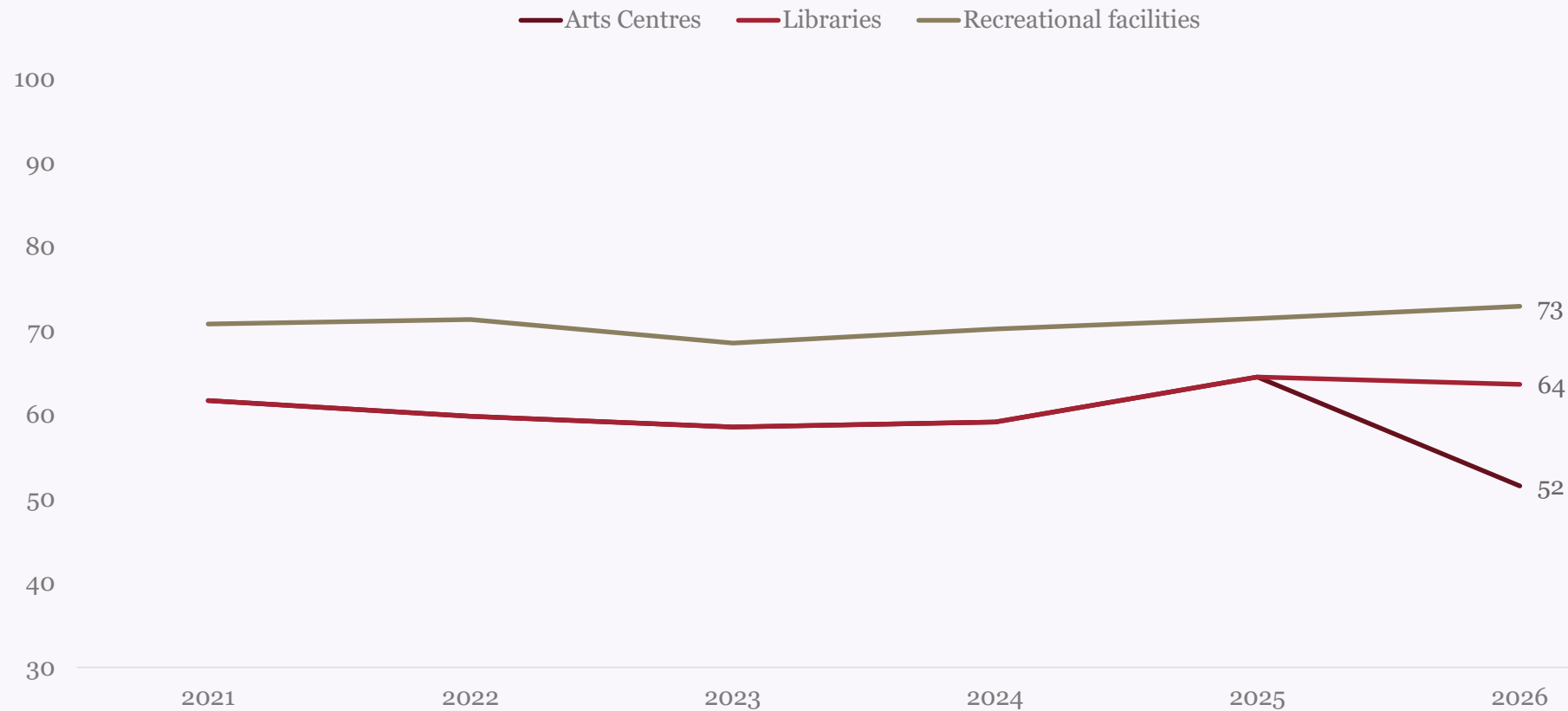
Importance of Council Services – Planning & Development



Q1. I would like you to rate the importance of areas for which Council has some responsibility. Firstly, how important should [SERVICE] be as a responsibility for Council? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Importance of Council Services – Community Facilities & Recreation



Q1. I would like you to rate the importance of areas for which Council has some responsibility. Firstly, how important should [SERVICE] be as a responsibility for Council? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Engagement with Council





Engagement with Council

Overview



This section provides an overview of how residents engage with Council services and their experiences when doing so. It highlights the extent of contact with Council, satisfaction with customer service, and how engagement differs across the community.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Contact with the Council in the last 12 months
- Satisfaction with customer service
- Importance and performance ratings, with comparisons between those who have contacted Council and those who have not
- Subgroup differences
- Preferred channels for accessing information

Together, these insights provide a clear view of how residents interact with Council, the effectiveness of current service delivery, and opportunities to enhance the customer experience.

Summary of results

Key Performance:

- Two-thirds of residents had contact with Council in the past 12 months (65%), increasing 1 point from 2025 levels.
- The customer service rating remained broadly stable at 64, indicating little shift in the quality of service experience.

Vs. Benchmarks

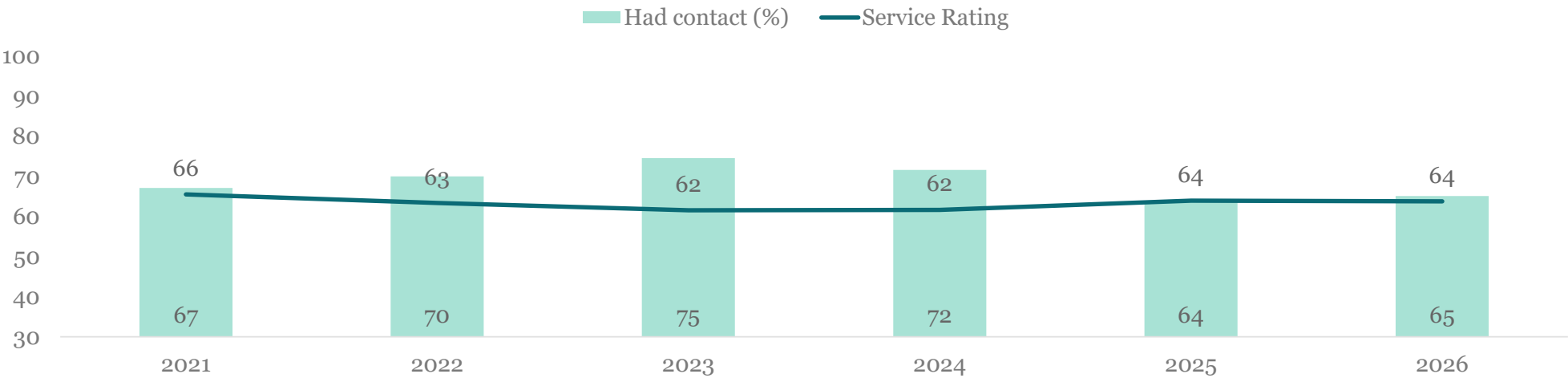
- More Council residents had contact (65%) than the State (58%) and Small Shire (63%) benchmarks.
- Council service rating performance for 2026 was below the State benchmark (64 vs 68) but relatively equal to Small Shire (64 vs 65)

Sub-group differences:

- While over two-thirds of residents in other age groups had contact with Council in the last 12 months, for 18-34 year olds this sat at under half (48%). Additionally, this age demographic gave lower service ratings.
- Males had a lower contact rate and service ratings than Females, although this gap was present in 2025 and remains unchanged.



Contact with Council and Satisfaction with Service During Contact



Contact with Council and Customer Service Rating: 2026 by Demographic Groups

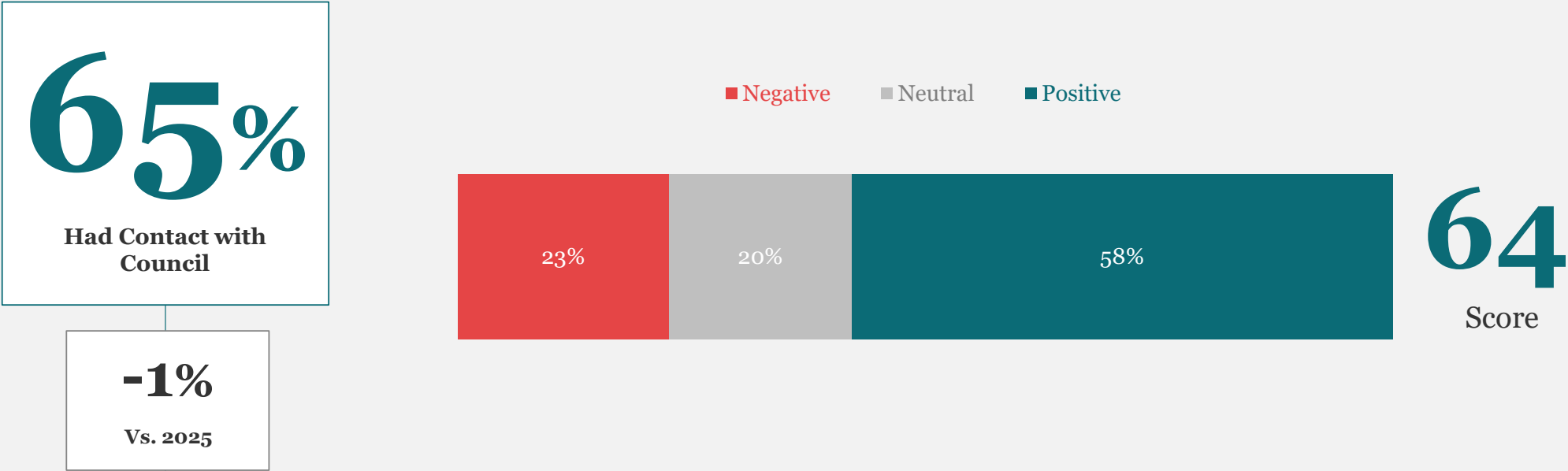
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Had contact (%)	65	58	63	48	70	70	67	64	67
Service Rating	64	68	65	54	63	65	67	60	68

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Had contact (%)	+1	-5	-	-12	+6	-3	+6	-3	+6
Service Rating	-	+2	-	-6	+3	+4	-3	-1	-1

Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with [INSERT COUNCIL NAME]? Q5A. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Council in any of the following ways? Q5C. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Council for customer service? Please keep in mind we do NOT mean the ACTUAL OUTCOME. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Satisfaction with Customer Service During Contact



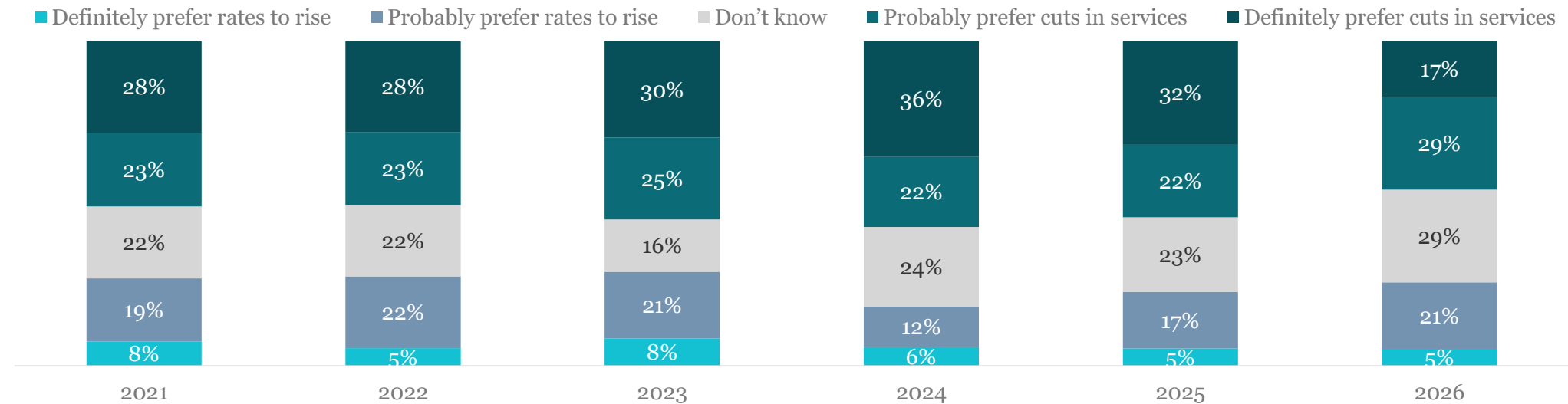
Q5C. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Council for customer service? Please keep in mind we do NOT mean the ACTUAL OUTCOME. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Bespoke Questions



Preference for Investment in Services vs. Impact on Rates – by Year and Sub-group



Preference for Investment in Services vs. Impact on Rates by Sub-group

Column %	Pyrenees SC	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Definitely prefer rates to rise	5%	6%	7%	2%	7%	5%	5%
Probably prefer rates to rise	21%	20%	24%	19%	20%	19%	22%
Don't know	29%	31%	25%	24%	34%	27%	30%
Probably prefer cuts in services	29%	25%	22%	37%	27%	29%	28%
Definitely prefer cuts in services	17%	17%	22%	18%	13%	20%	14%

Q10 - If you had to choose between Council rate rises to improve local services OR cuts in local services to keep Council rates at the same level as they are now, would you prefer? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Languages Other than English Regularly Spoken at Home – Results by Year

Column %	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
None – English only	96%	95%	97%	96%	95%
Italian	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Hindi	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Spanish	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Vietnamese	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Greek	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chinese	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
French	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Refused	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Q11 - What languages, other than English, are spoken regularly in your home? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Languages Other than English Regularly Spoken at Home – 2026 by Sub-group



Column %	Pyrenees SC	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
None – English only	95%	87%	94%	99%	98%	96%	95%
Italian	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Arabic	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hindi	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Spanish	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Vietnamese	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Greek	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chinese	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
French	1%	5%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Other	2%	3%	4%	1%	2%	1%	4%
Refused	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Q11 - What languages, other than English, are spoken regularly in your home? For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

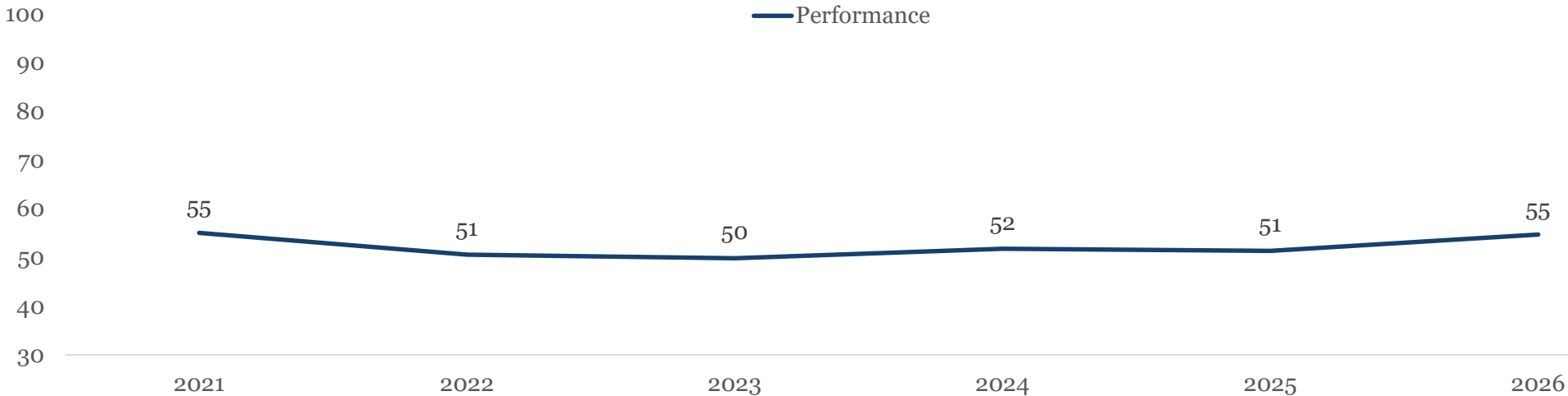


Council Service Areas

Importance and Performance by Year and Demographic Groups



Council Services – Opportunities to Give Feedback on Key Local Issues



Performance of Service 2026

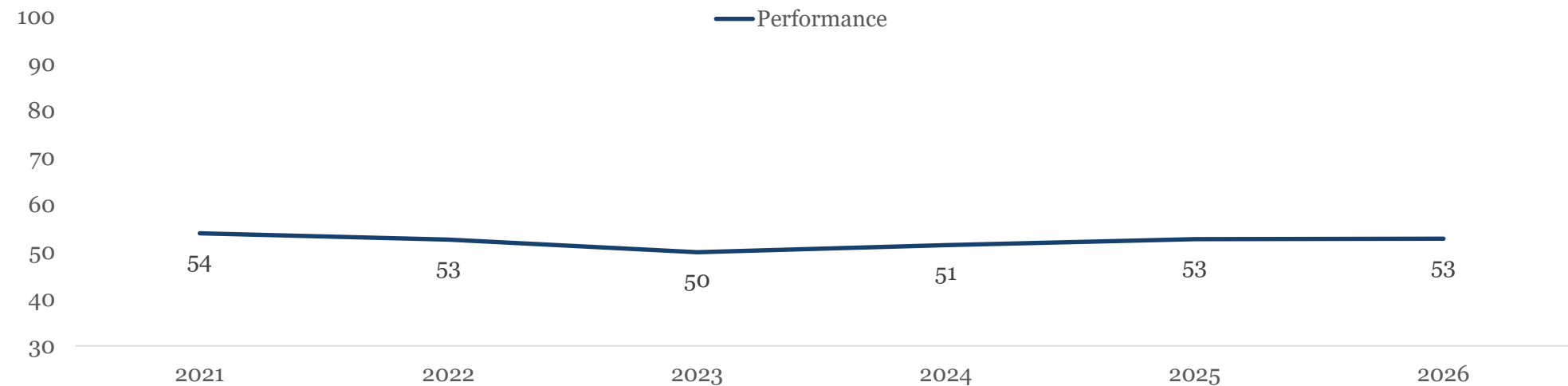
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	55	55	54	54	58	55	52	51	58

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	+3	+5	+2	-1	+7	+12	-1	+2	+5
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? The opportunities offered by Council to give your feedback on key local issues. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Making Decisions in Interest of Community



Performance of Service 2026

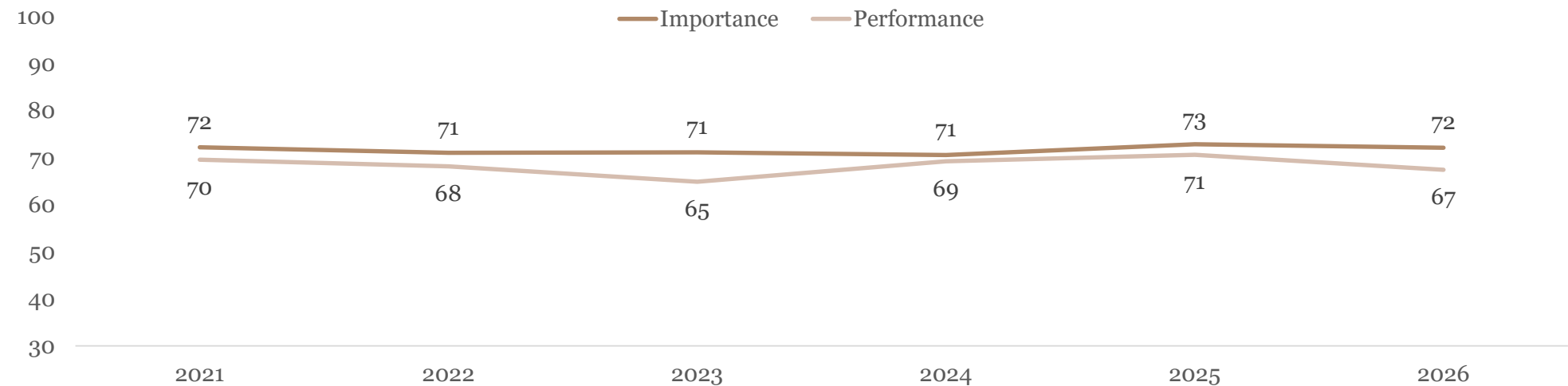
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	53	52	51	53	53	51	55	50	56

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-	+3	+1	-6	-2	+9	+1	-2	+2
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Making decisions in the interest of the community. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Appearance of Public Areas



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	72	77	75	70	73	74	72	69	76
Performance	67	63	66	67	68	69	66	65	70

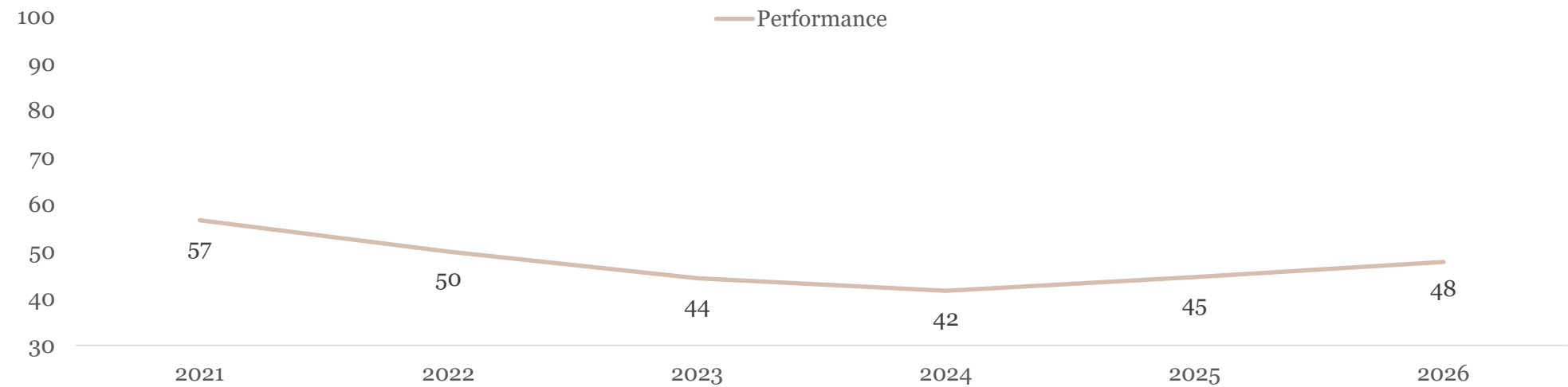
Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	-1	+3	-	+1	-2	-	-2	-2	-
Performance	-3	-5	-4	-6	-4	+4	-5	-5	-1

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? The appearance of public areas. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Council Services – Condition of Sealed Local Streets



Performance of Service 2026

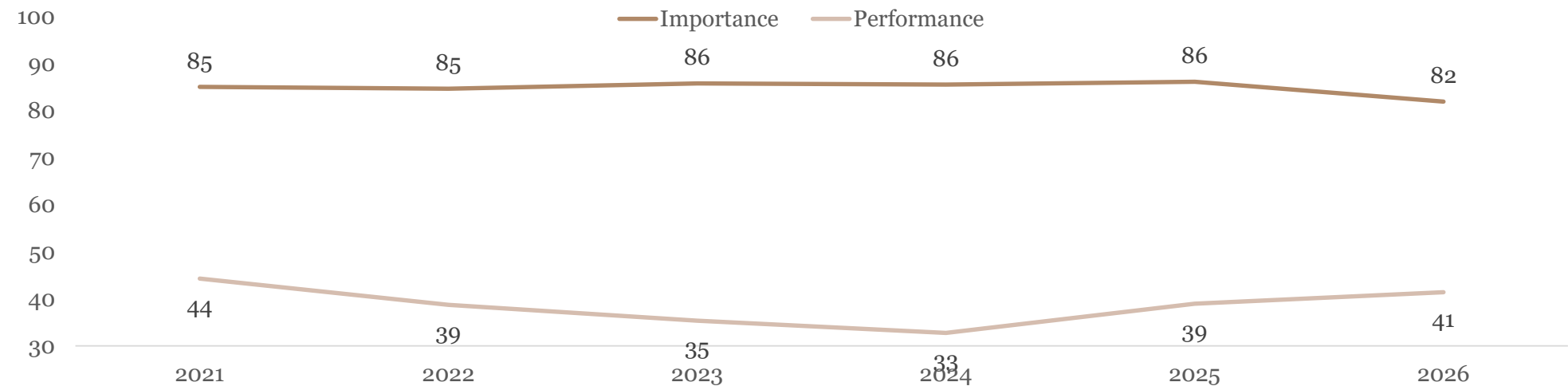
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	48	54	45	50	48	44	50	47	49

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	+3	+9	+1	+6	+9	+1	+2	+1	+6
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Condition of sealed local streets in your area. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Maintenance of Unsealed Roads



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

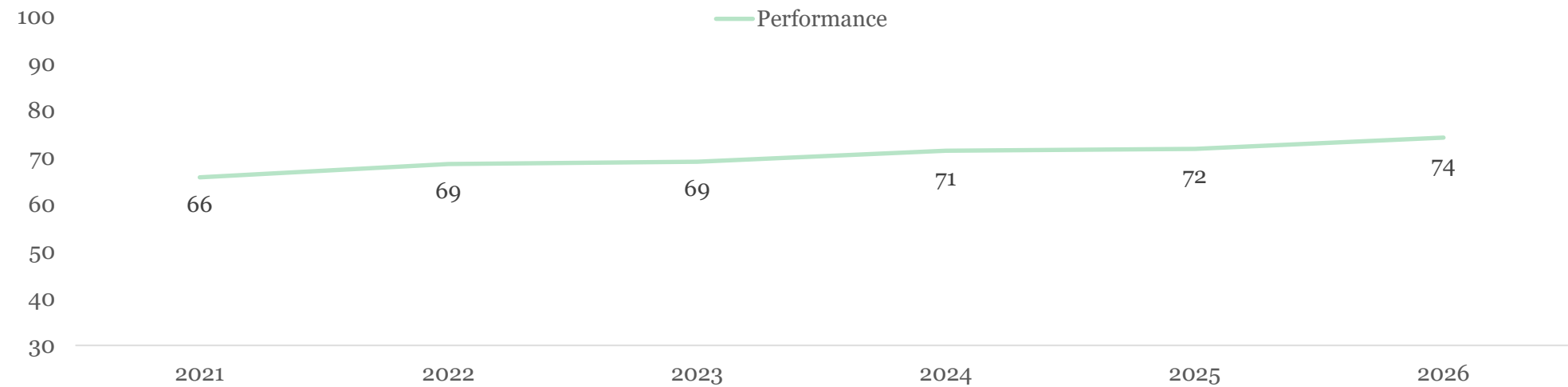
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	82	80	84	79	84	86	78	80	84
Performance	41	42	37	46	39	39	43	42	41

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	-4	-4	-1	-6	-3	-3	-7	-5	-4
Performance	+2	+4	-3	+7	+3	+4	+1	+2	+4

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Waste Management



Performance of Service 2026

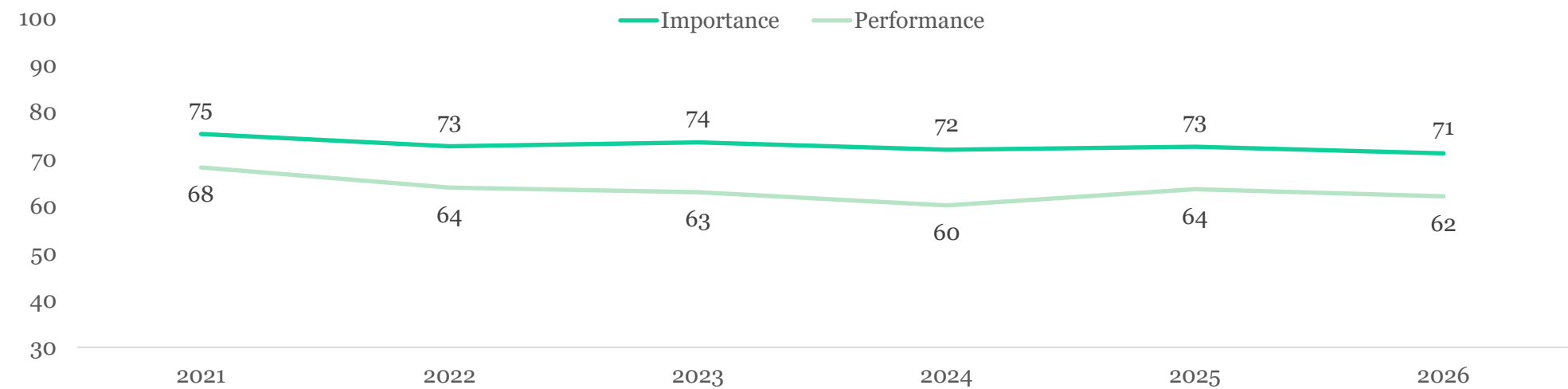
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	74	72	71	71	74	76	75	76	72

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	+2	+6	+5	+10	-2	+8	-1	+5	-
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Waste management including the collection of garbage, recyclables and green waste. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Family Support Services



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

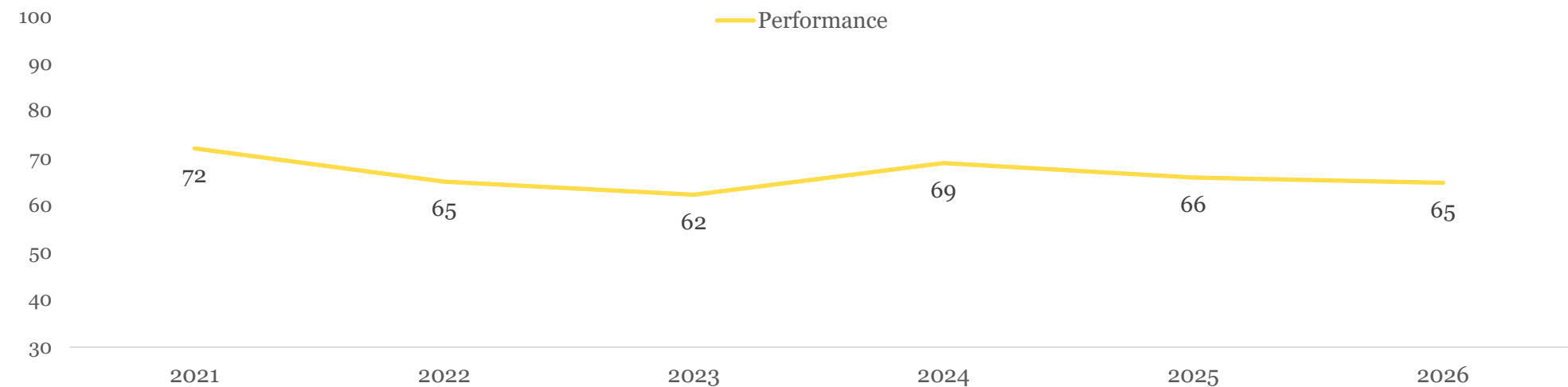
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	71	75	NA	73	72	72	69	65	78
Performance	62	61	60	60	63	63	62	62	62

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	+2	+3	NA	+12	-	-4	+2	-1	+6
Performance	+1	-1	-	-3	+3	+4	+3	+1	-

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Family support services. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Emergency and Disaster Management



Performance of Service 2026

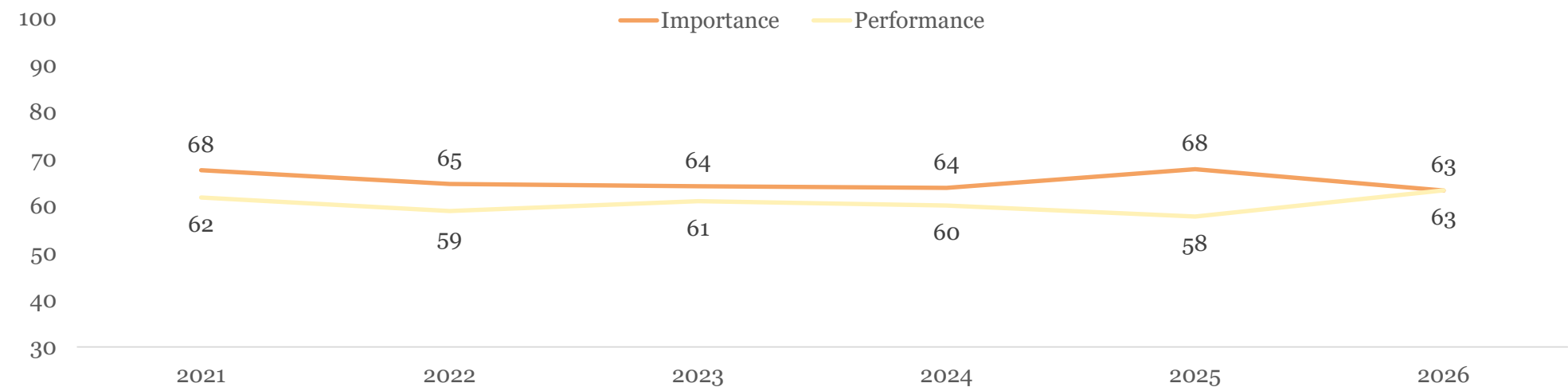
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	65	63	64	65	64	64	66	62	68

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-1	-2	-2	+3	-4	+3	-3	-0	-2
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Emergency and disaster management. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Enforcement of Laws and Regulations



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

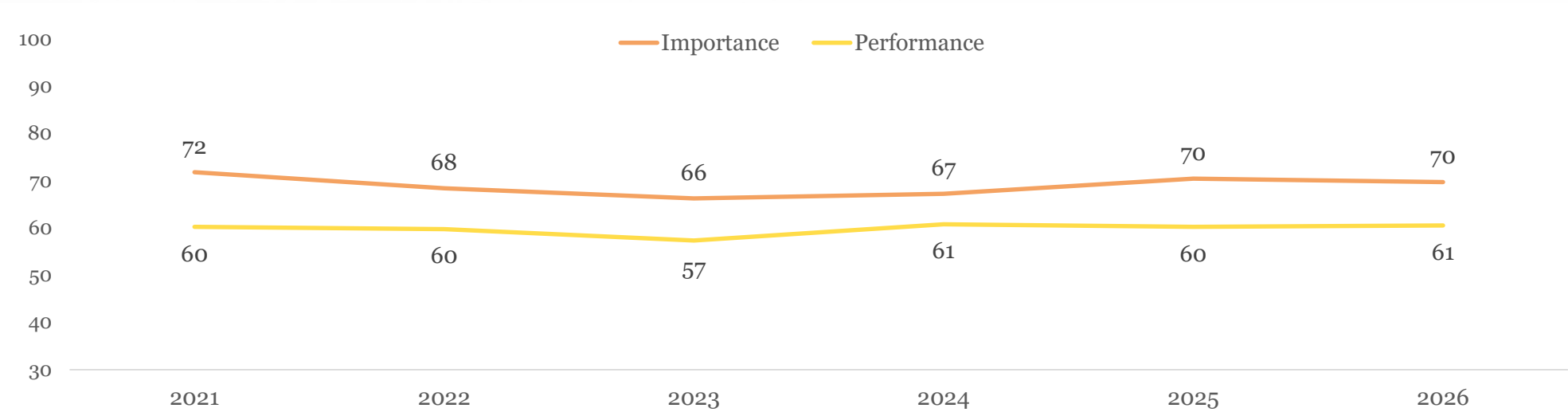
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	63	70	65	63	62	63	65	57	70
Performance	63	56	60	71	67	62	58	62	64

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	-5	+4	-1	-6	-2	-2	-6	-4	-5
Performance	+6	-3	+2	+14	+9	+7	-1	+5	+6

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Enforcement of local laws and Council regulations. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Business and Community Development and Tourism



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

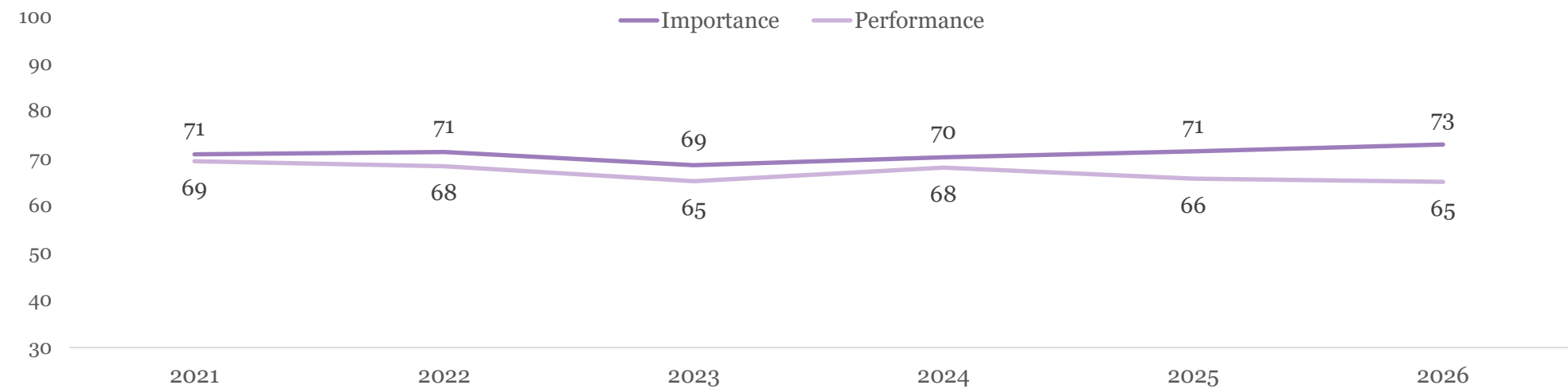
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	70	72	72	70	72	73	66	66	74
Performance	61	59	58	59	62	60	61	59	62

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	-1	+4	+1	+0	-0	-4	-2	-2	+0
Performance	-	+3	+1	+1	-0	+7	-3	+2	-2

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Business and community development and tourism. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Recreational Facilities



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

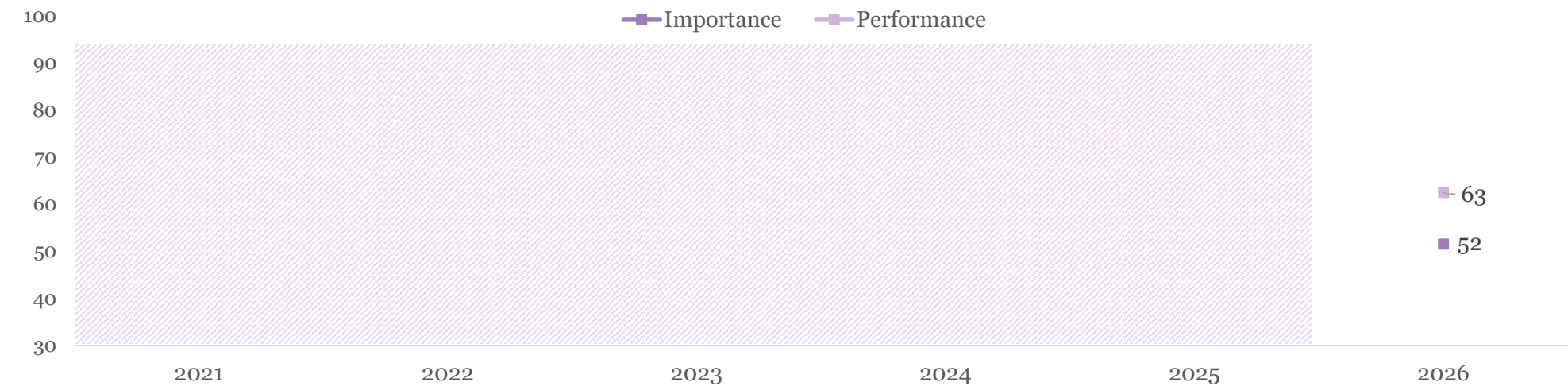
Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	73	75	74	75	75	73	70	70	77
Performance	65	66	64	63	67	65	65	64	66

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Importance	-4	+4	-1	-	-6	-4	-3	-5	-3
Performance	+1	-3	-	+1	+1	+3	+6	-1	+3

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Recreational facilities. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Art Centres



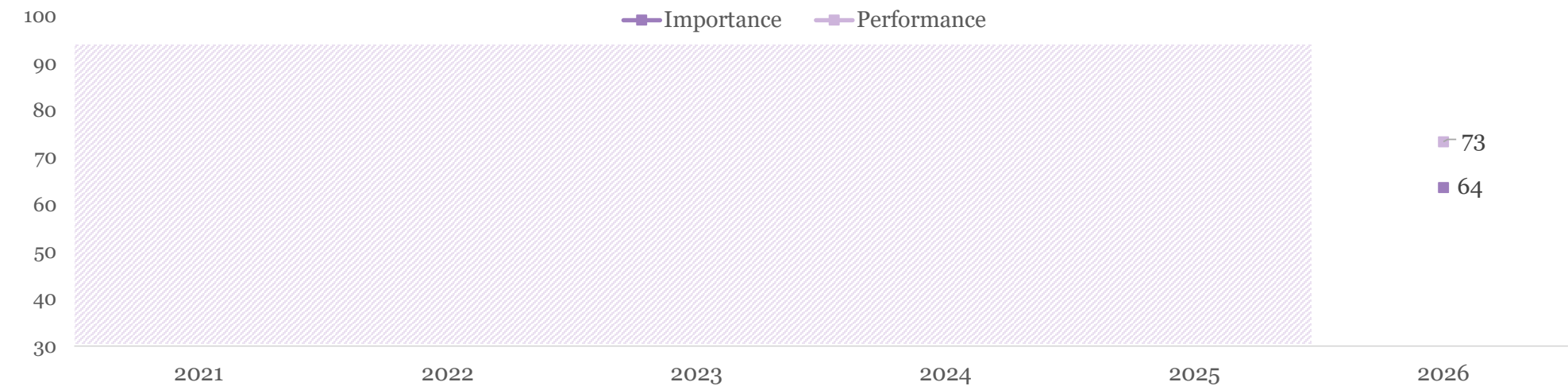
Importance and Performance of Service 2026

Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	52	57	52	44	49	54	55	46	58
Performance	63	64	59	57	62	65	64	59	66

Note: Art Centres has not been historically asked

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Arts centres. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.

Council Services – Libraries



Importance and Performance of Service 2026

Score	Pyrenees SC	State	Small Shire	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Importance	64	70	66	58	65	66	64	56	72
Performance	73	75	73	75	72	74	73	70	77

Note: Libraries has not been historically asked

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Libraries. For base sizes, please refer to slide 20.



Thank you

Contact us for more info:

General enquiries

viccouncils@kleinresearch.com.au

Address

Klein Research
Level 4
54 Wellington St
Collingwood
VIC 3066

Phone

+61 3 9087 7333