

ASHBURTON DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL SURVEY OF RESIDENTS 2006/ 07

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Background

Ashburton District Council has commissioned an annual residents survey since 1993. The purpose of the survey is to provide objective data for audit purposes relating to the achievement of targets set in the Annual Plan and to provide Council with feedback on how the community views the conduct and performance of Council activities. In the 2007 survey additional questions were asked covering some quality of life issues of those living in the district.

2. Methodology

The annual survey of residents was held from 8 June to 17 June 2007. 406 residents over the age of 18 were sampled using a randomised selection method. Statistics New Zealand Census figures were used to determine the proportion of interviewees to draw from each ward – Ashburton 236, Eastern 71 and Western 99. 199 men and 207 women were interviewed. The margin of error is 6.9%, which means that if the same study was repeated using an entirely different randomly selected sample, the answers would most likely fall close to those obtained in this survey, but with decreasing likelihood, and may vary by up to 6.9%.

3. 2007 NRB Communitrak Survey - Summary

3.1 Peer Group Comparison (32 like councils)

Ashburton District Council achieved better than its peers in all categories in which comparisons have been made, except public conveniences. The community rated the Council as significantly higher (15% higher or better) than the peer group average in footpaths, water supply, wastewater, solid waste management, solid waste collection, employment and business development, tourism promotion, performance of Mayor and Councillors and performance of Council staff.

Ashburton District Council achieved better than the average of all councils surveyed in 14 of the 19 activities compared, with solid waste management, employment and business development, performance of Mayor and Councillors and performance of staff rating at least 15% higher in Ashburton District than the national average.

SERVICE/FACILITY	ASHBURTON 2007 % Very/Fairly Satisfied	PEER GROUP AVERAGE 2007 % Very/Fairly Satisfied	NATIONAL AVERAGE 2007 % Very/Fairly Satisfied
Roads	78	76	78
Footpaths	76	61	73
Stormwater Services	67	57	76
Water Supply*	85	57	82
Rubbish Collection	67	67	81
Landfill & Recycling	80	61	65
Public Toilets	66	73	70
Cemeteries	81	75	72
Dog / Animal Control	71	69	74
Library Service	88	87	92
Sportsfields & Playgrounds	89	88	90
Parks & Reserves	96	89	94
Employment/Business	72	51	52
Tourism Promotion	84	69	76
Rates Spending	77	63	70

Note: Peer Group and National averages were last collated in 2005.

Figure 1. Ashburton V Peer Group/National Averages - Service/Facility Satisfaction Questions ("All residents" figures. "Don't Knows" included)

4. Mayor, Councillors and Staff

4.1 Performance of Mayor and Councillors: Overall the community rates the performance of the Mayor and Councillors highly, although the rating of performance slipped back slightly from 2006 in the Very / Fairly Good assessment range but increased in the Just Acceptable rating. This years rating of 75% approval is the third highest recorded by Ashburton District and well above the 59% average of similar councils.

Excluding “Don’t Knows” lifts the satisfaction level to 77%. Approval rating in the rural wards dropped 5% on last year and remains highest in the urban area (80%) against 72% in the rural area.

Year	Very/ Fairly Good %	Just Acceptable %	Not Very Good/Poor %	Don't Know %	Rating - D/K excluded %	Goal Achieved
1998	73	21	3	3	75	70% ✓
1999	71	21	3	5	75	70% ✓
2000	66	27	4	3	68	70% x
2001	66	21	6	8	71	80% x
2002	54	31	9	6	58	80% x
2003	53	34	8	5	56	80% x
2004	71	22	4	3	73	80% x
2005	78	13	3	6	84	80% ✓
2006	81	12	4	3	83	80% ✓
2007	75	20	3	2	77	80% x
Peer Average	56	24	14	6		
National Average	54	29	11	6		

Figure 2. Satisfaction with the Performance of Mayor and Councillors.

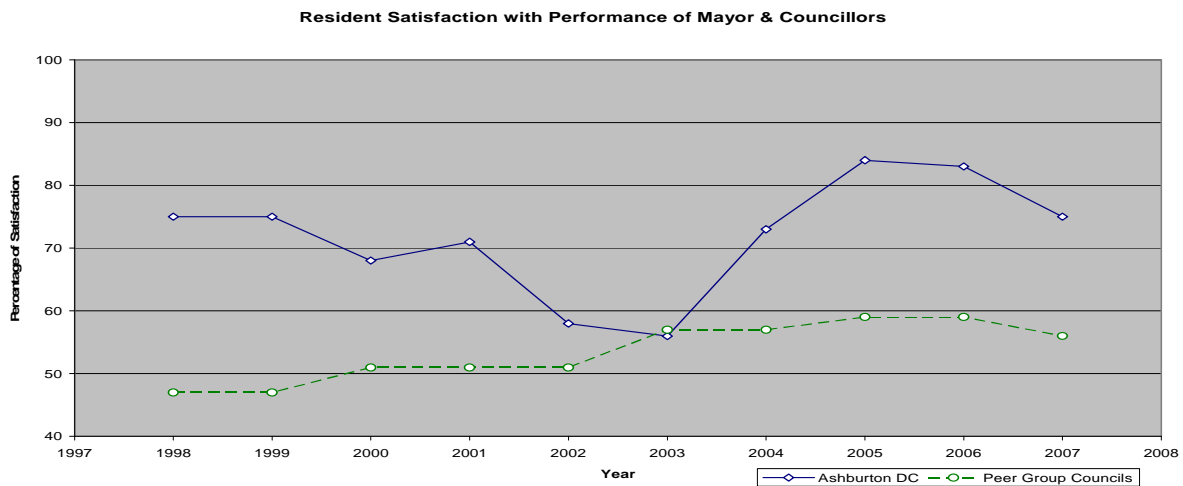


Figure 3. Resident Satisfaction with Mayor and Councillors/ Peer Group Average.

4.2 Performance of Staff: Staff performance ratings for 2007 are slightly down from 2006 with 78 percent of respondents rating the performance of council staff as very/ fairly good. With “Don’t Knows” excluded the staff performance rating slightly down from the previous year with 83% giving a very/ fairly good rating. This rating has Ashburton District Council staff remaining significantly above both the peer group average and the national average.

Year	Very/ Fairly Good %	Just Acceptable %	Not Very Good/Poor %	Don't Know %	Rating - D/K excluded %
1998	73	15	4	9	-
1999	71	21	3	5	75
2000	69	21	4	7	74
2001	71	17	4	8	77
2002	59	22	5	14	69
2003	56	22	7	15	66
2004	78	9	6	7	83
2005	74	13	4	9	81
2006	81	10	2	7	87
2007	78	12	3	7	83
Peer Average	60	20	11	9	NA
National Average	59	23	8	10	NA

Figure 4. Satisfaction with the Performance of Council Staff.



Figure 5. Resident Satisfaction with Council Staff/ Peer Group Average.

4.3 Approval/ Disapproval of Actions, Decisions and Management: Respondents were asked if there is one thing that comes to mind with regard to the Council’s actions, decisions or management in the last few months that they dislike or disapprove of. 45% of respondents answered yes and 55% answered no. Most common responses when asked which one issue this was were: rates issues/ increases/ too high for services received, roading/ traffic issues, building and regulatory control issues, sports stadium not necessary/ too expensive, No New Year’s Eve Street Party and water supply issues.

Respondents were also asked if there is one thing that comes to mind with regard to the Council’s actions, decisions or management in the last few months that they like or approve of. 45% of respondents answered yes and 55% answered no. Most common responses when asked which one issue this was were: New Sports Stadium, roading/ traffic issues, do a good job/ pleased with performance, cleaning/ tidying up the town/ general appearance, reinstated New Year’s Eve Street Party, water supply/ water storage issues, gardens and plantings Museum / Arts Centre and domain/ parks/ reserves.

5. Essential Services

5.1 Essential Services (All Residents): Council's essential services, rated on an all residents basis, all met or exceeded resident satisfaction targets, except roading. All essential services satisfaction ratings fluctuated up or down 1 – 4% compared to last year, within the margin for error, except for roading, which has fallen 9% in residents satisfied compared with 2006. This has resulted in the roading satisfaction returning to its long-term trend rating band between 70% and 80%.

<u>All Residents</u> <u>(Don't Knows excluded)</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>+/-</u>
Roading	80	76 x	87✓	78 x	-9
Footpaths	75	75✓	79✓	80✓	+1
Stormwater/Drainage	75	73 x	75✓	76✓	+1
Landfill/Recycling	80	93✓	89✓	89✓	-

Figure 6. Resident Satisfaction with Essential Services – Don't Know excluded.

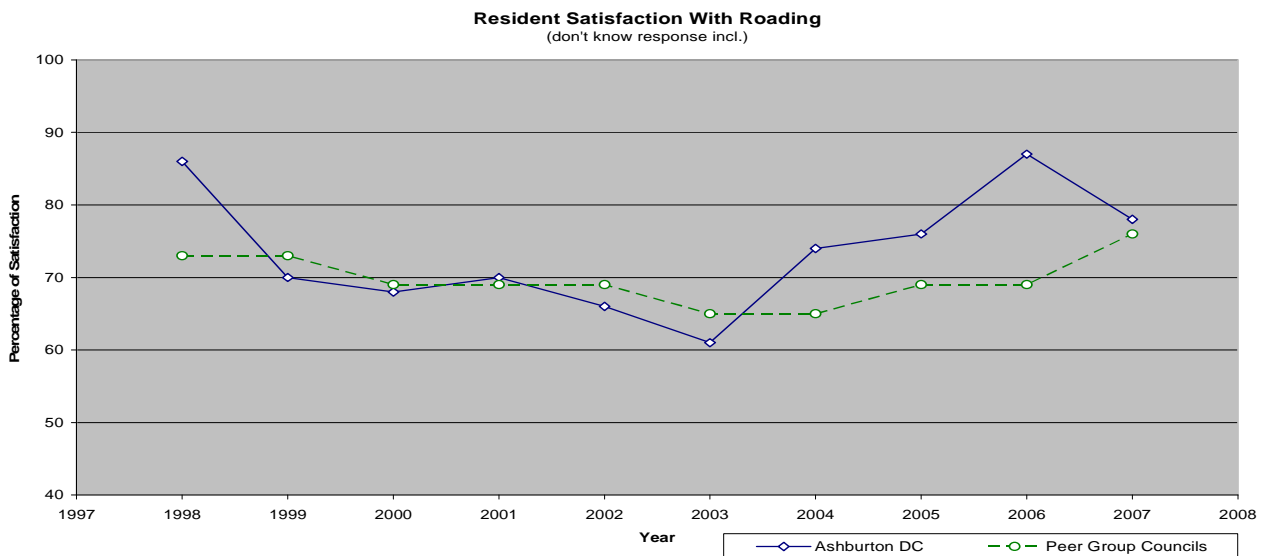


Figure 7. Resident Satisfaction with Roding/ Peer Group Average.

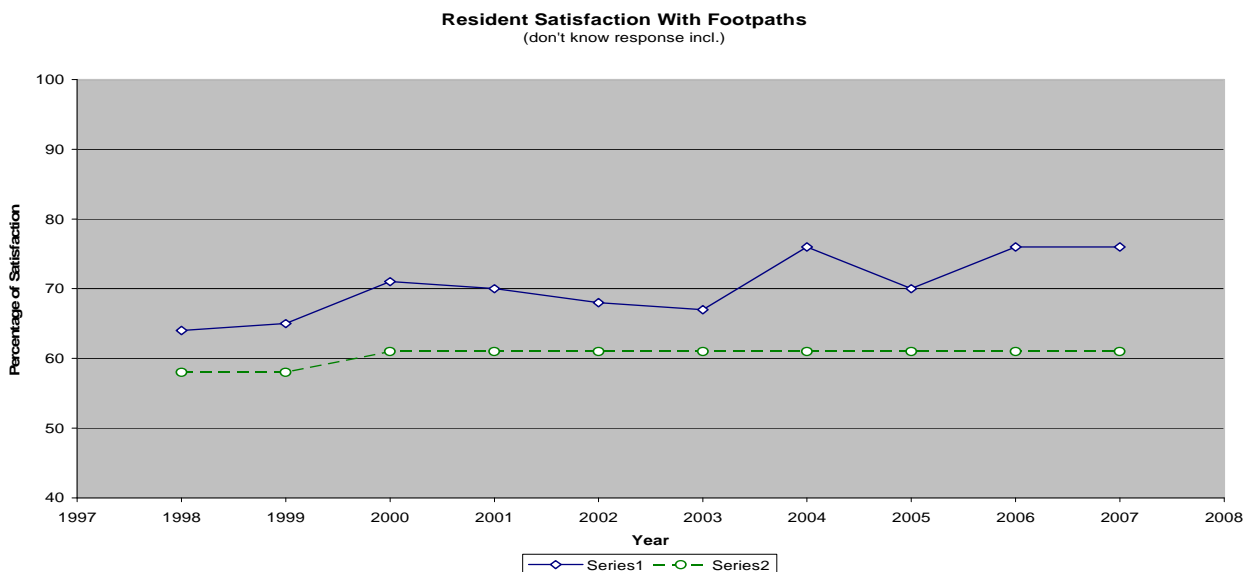


Figure 8. Resident Satisfaction with Footpaths/ Peer Group Average.

5.2 Essential Services – Users Only: Essential services measured by users exceeded target satisfaction in three activities, urban water supply, sewerage, and stockwater. Satisfaction targets in the rural water and rubbish collection activities were not met. Special note should be made of the improvement in user satisfaction with rural water supply rising 12% for this latest year on top of a 10% rise last year. The increases in satisfaction levels for urban water and stockwater were also significant.

<u>Users only</u> <u>(Don't Knows excluded)</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>+/-</u>
Water Supply (Urban)	NA	76✓	82✓	87	+5
Water Supply (Rural)	NA	54 x	64 x	72	+8
Water Supply - Overall	NA		80	85	+5
Wastewater	80%	94✓	94✓	94✓	-
Stockwater	80%	69 x	63 x	72 x	+9
Solid Waste Collection	90%	92✓	91✓	92 ✓	+1

Figure 9. Resident Satisfaction with Essential Services /Users Only (Don't Knows Excluded)

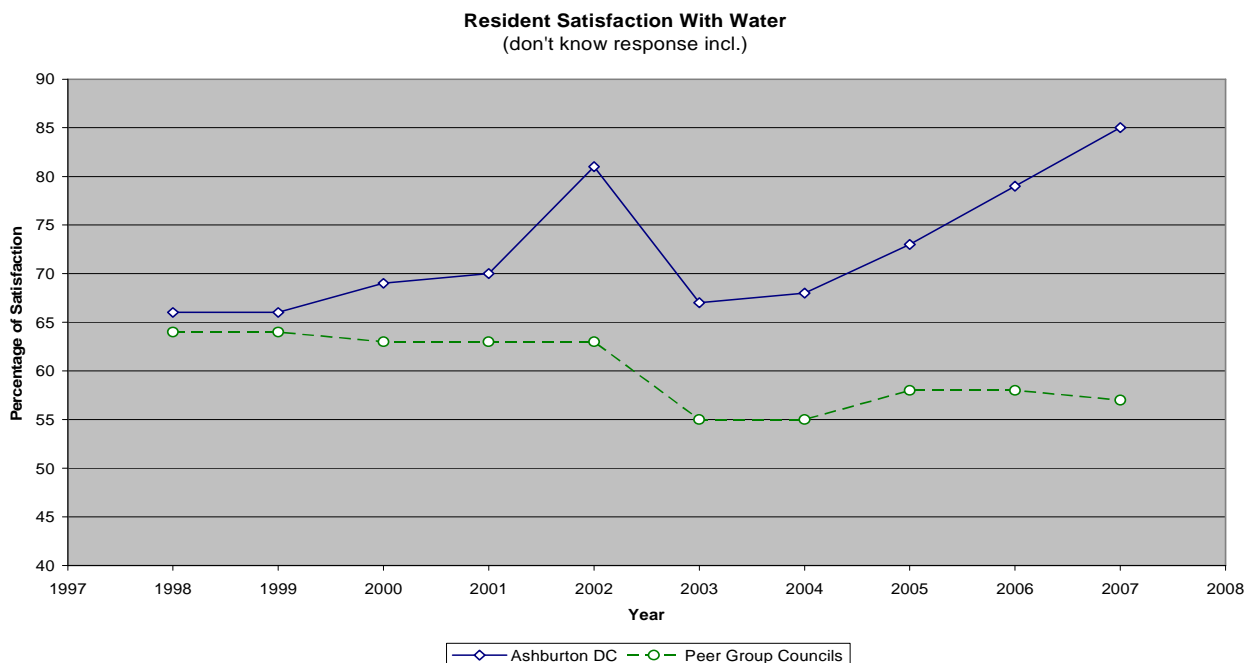


Figure 10. Resident Satisfaction with Water Supply/ Peer Group Average.

6. Environmental Services

Environmental monitoring recorded steady results and planning activities satisfaction rating fell 7%. Both activities did not achieve the target of 100% resident satisfaction. Parking enforcement also remained steady and is still comfortably over its 80% satisfaction target. Animal / dog control dropped 9% from 2006 and did not achieve its target satisfaction level. Resident satisfaction with Building regulation has dropped 14% in the face of a very demanding year caused by high building activity and a more stringent building regulation regime. Some of the dissatisfaction in this area may be attributed to the changes to the Building Act and Regulations – next years survey should start to show if this had an effect.

All Residents (Don't Knows excluded)	Target	2005	2006	2007	+/-
Environmental Monitoring	100%	85 x	85 x	86 x	+1
Planning Activities	100%	84 x	88 x	81 x	-7
Building Regulation	80%	87✓	87✓	73 x	-14
Parking Enforcement	80%	93✓	87✓	89✓	+2
Animal Control	80%	81✓	87✓	78 x	-9

Figure 11. Resident Satisfaction with Environmental Services (Don't Knows Excluded).

7. Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation activities all recorded high levels with variations from last year being well within the margin for error and all are comfortably above target satisfaction levels.

All Residents (Don't Knows excluded)	Target	2005	2006	2007	+/-
Parks, Reserves & Gardens	90%	98 ✓	99✓	98✓	-1
Ashburton Domain	90%	100✓	99✓	99✓	-
Rural Reserves	90%	97 ✓	97✓	96✓	-1
Reserves & Camping Areas	80%	96 ✓	99✓	95✓	-4
Cemeteries	80%	98✓	97✓	100✓	+3
Users Only (Don't Knows excluded)					
Sportsfields & Playgrounds	90%	96 ✓	96✓	97✓	+1

Figure 12. Resident Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation (Don't Knows Excluded).

8. Community Services

All activities in the community services area have maintained resident satisfaction levels above 90% and comfortably above their respective targets, except community events. Resident's satisfaction with Council's performance in community events has probably suffered from the decision to discontinue the New Year's Street Party. Satisfaction with the way rates are spent has remained remarkably constant at around 80%.

All Residents (Don't Knows excluded)	Target	2005	2006	2007	+/-
Arts & Culture	80%	93✓	94✓	93✓	-1
Social Services	85%	93✓	93✓	92✓	-1
Community Events	90%	96✓	93✓	86x	-7
District Library	85%	96✓	94✓	97✓	+3
Communication	No Goal	86	88	92	+4
Advocacy	No Goal	83	86	85	-1
Rates Spending	80%	80✓	81✓	80✓	-1

Figure 13. Resident Satisfaction with Community Services (Don't Knows Excluded).

- 8.1 Community Participation:** A significant portion of our community has used or participated in Council facilities, events and services. Interestingly, for most activities there is little difference in participation patterns between urban and rural residents, despite many of the District facilities being located in the urban townships. The library is used by close to three quarters of the residents in the district with urban and rural usage rates being almost identical. Overall, participation in community events and use of community facilities appears to be slowly rising each year. Worryingly, 10% of residents attended 2007 New Year's Street Party – despite the event not being held.

Activity	Used / contacted or taken part	Urban	Rural
Contacted Mayor or Councillor	26%	22%	31%
New Years Eve Street Party	10%	12%	5%
Concert in the Park	37%	42%	28%
Museum / Art Gallery	47%	51%	41%
Camping Grounds and Reserves	30%	31%	28%
Ashburton Domain	87%	89%	84%
Rural Reserves	53%	53%	55%
Sportsfields & Playgrounds	79%	76%	80%
District Library	70%	69%	71%

Figure 14. Resident Participation/ Usage Rates – Community Facilities and Events .

9. Economic Development

Resident satisfaction with the Council's performance in Employment and Business Development and in Tourism Promotion remains high, with little change from the previous year.

Council's Water Resources activity has improved significantly in terms of community satisfaction, with 74% of residents satisfied with the current performance, an increase of 13% from last year.

All Residents (Don't Knows excluded)	Target	2005	2006	2007	+/-
Employment & Business Development	80%	89✓	88✓	93✓	+5
Tourism Promotion	80%	92✓	93✓	93✓	-
Water Resources (Community Water Trust)	80%	67 x	61 x	74 x	+13

Figure 17. Resident Satisfaction with Economic Development (Don't Knows Excluded).

10. Communication

10.1 Obtaining Information About Council: Respondents were asked where they mainly get their information from about Council. Newspapers (77%) and the District Diary (11%) were the only sources to rate above 3%.

Respondents were asked whether they have seen or read any of the range of information Council publishes specifically for the community in the last 12 months, with 87% of respondents saying they had seen or read information. 91% of those who had read or seen information had seen the District Diary, 66% had seen newsletters delivered to the home, 38% had seen or read the Community Plan, and 27% had read or seen information available from the Council offices.

10.2 Internet: Two-thirds of respondents had access to the internet and one-third did not. Internet access is significantly higher in the rural wards than in the Ashburton urban ward. Residents aged under 60 had significantly higher access to the internet than those aged over 60 as did those with a household income of over \$30,000.

57% of those with access to the internet have dial-up access, and 40% have broadband, mostly through the phone network, with 2% having satellite broadband.

10.3 Council Website: 20% of respondents have visited the Council website in the past 12 months, with the majority visiting the website either about once every 3 months or about once every 6 months or less often. These figures are almost exactly the same as 2006. With the number of hits the Council is receiving and this number steadily increasing it looks as though most hits are coming from outside the District.

Of those who have visited the Council website 74% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the information and services provided by the Council website, 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 11% dissatisfied.

11. Summary of Target Achievements

Council achieved 21 of the 29 applicable targets set in the 2006 – 2016 Ashburton Community Plan.

The activities not to achieve community satisfaction targets are roading, stockwater, water resources, district planning, property information, building regulation, and animal control.

Previous Years

1994 - 95	7 of 10
1995 - 96	11 of 19
1996 - 97	11 of 20
1997 - 98	13 of 21
1998 - 99	17 of 23
1999 - 00	17 of 26
2000 - 01	18 of 28
2002 - 03	15 of 28
2003 - 04	22 of 31
2004 - 05	19 of 26
2005 - 06	21 of 24
2006 - 07	21 of 29

Figure 18. Target Achievement – 2007/ Previous Years.

12. Other Issues Surveyed

12.1 Community Diversity: Residents were asked whether they felt that the increase in the number of people with diverse lifestyles, and from a variety of countries and cultures, makes the Ashburton District a: much better; better; neither better nor worse; worse; or much worse; place to live. 53% of respondents felt the increasing community diversity made Ashburton District much better or better; 37% said it made the District neither better nor worse; 7% felt it made the District worse and 3% did not know.

12.2 Welcoming Community: Respondents were asked whether they think new arrivals to Ashburton district are made welcome and given adequate support to settle into the District. Just 12% thought new arrivals were made welcome and given adequate support, 63% said no, and 24% were not sure. Residents were asked what should be done to improve the situation for new arrivals settling in the District. The strongest responses were: locals need to change their attitude/ become more tolerant; provide more support/ help; provide information packs about Council services etc; up to new arrivals to learn English and integrate better; promote clubs/ provide easy access to clubs.

12.3 Health Services: Residents were asked how satisfied they are with health services in Ashburton District. 70% were either satisfied or very satisfied, 12% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 16% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction higher for rural residents, residents over 60 years, residents with a household income less than \$30,000 and those who have lived in the district ten years or more. Dissatisfaction was higher among residents aged under 60, those with a household income between \$30,000 and \$75,000 residents living in households larger than 3 people and residents who have lived in the district less than ten years. 16% of respondents reported there had been a time in the past 12 months when they, or a member of their household, wanted to go to a GP but didn't. The main reasons for this were: costs too much; couldn't get an appointment soon enough/ at a suitable time; it was after hours.

- 12.4 Education Services:** The survey asked how satisfied residents are with education services in the District. 71% were either satisfied or very satisfied, 9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 6% were dissatisfied. The community sectors which expressed higher levels of satisfaction were rural residents, men, residents aged between 40 and 59, residents with a household income over \$75,000, and residents who have lived in the District more than 10 years.
- 12.5 Most Important Issue:** The survey asked what respondents thought was the most important single issue facing the District in the next few years. This was extraordinarily clear-cut with 41% of respondents saying “management of water supply/ storage/ allocation for irrigation. Other issues that were mentioned by more than 5% of respondents were: coping with/ planning for the population growth; water pollution/ quality of water; health services/ hospital/ doctors; roading/ traffic issues; housing/ land for housing.
- 12.6 Social Services:** Respondents were asked whether they thought Ashburton District Council should provide funding from rates for some social services. 63% of respondents thought funding from rates should be used to provide some social services and 31% said no, and 6% did not know. When asked about specific social services 60% said it would be appropriate for Council to contribute to community policing; 46% for work or training schemes for the unemployed; 29% for non-specialist healthcare; 35% for pre-school and primary school facilities; 40% for cheap rental accommodation; 60% for emergency or short-term relief and 70% on youth initiatives.
- 12.7 Services or Facilities Council Should Spend More On:** Respondents were asked whether there any services or facilities they thought Council should be spending more on. Roading was the only activity to rate more than a 5% response (13%).
- 12.8 Services or Facilities Council Should Spend Less On:** Respondents were asked whether there any services or facilities they thought Council should be spending less on. The only responses rating more than 2% of respondents were: The Arts/ Arts Centre/ Museum/ Theatre; Council administration costs/ wages etc; sports stadium/ other sports and recreation facilities.
- 12.9 Community Spirit:** Respondents were asked “If we think of community spirit as being a sense of belonging and togetherness, a pride in the area and a good atmosphere among the people, how would you rate the community spirit of the Ashburton District?” 90% of respondents rated the community spirit of Ashburton District as either very good or fairly good, 8% thought it was just acceptable and 1% thought it was not very good. No respondents thought community spirit was poor.
- 12.10 Safe Place to Live:** Respondents were asked whether they thought Ashburton District is generally a safe place to live. 41% thought “Yes, definitely”, 55% thought “Yes, mostly”. 4% of respondents thought the District was “Not Really” a safe place to live and 1 respondent felt it was definitely not a safe place to live. More rural residents rate the District as definitely safe, with residents in the Eastern ward feeling particularly safe.
- 12.11 Community Involvement in Decision-Making:** Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the way Council involves the public in the decisions it makes. 67% were either very satisfied or satisfied; 21 % were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 9% were dissatisfied. Rural residents were more satisfied than urban residents; residents aged 40 and over were more satisfied than younger residents, and ratepayers were more satisfied than non-ratepayers.
- 12.12 Overall Quality of Life:** Residents were asked how, overall, they rated the quality of life in Ashburton district. 96% thought the quality of life in the District was either very good or good. 4% thought the quality of life was fair and one respondent thought it was poor.

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All Residents (Don't Knows Included)

Service	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 All	Ex Don't Know	Target Achieved 2007
Roading	86	70	68	70	66	61	74	76	87	78	78	80 x
Footpaths	64	65	71	70	68	67	76	70	76	76	80	NA
Stormwater	66	65	59	61	64	65	70	65	67	67	76	75✓
Landfill & Recycling	63	62	65	60	71	76	83	75	79	80	89	80✓
Public Conveniences	-	64	61	64	58	45	56	52	64	66	89	80✓
Employment & Business Development	63	74	71	72	75	70	80	68	70	72	93	90✓
Tourism Promotion	75	78	82	79	81	79	84	81	84	84	93	80✓
Water Resources	-	-	-	-	61	55	54	58	53	63	74	80 x
Library	77	74	83	84	80	80	83	86	82	88	97	85✓
Arts & Culture	78	73	76	74	72	72	77	76	70	79	93	80✓
Social Services	73	74	76	72	73	70	69	68	71	70	92	80✓
Communication	78	78	88	85	86	86	86	84	86	88	92	85✓
Advocacy	69	76	71	69	68	64	75	69	73	69	85	85✓
Community Events & Facilities	91	89	88	90	91	89	91	87	85	78	86	80✓
Parks & Reserves	97	98	98	98	98	97	98	96	98	96	98	90✓
Ashburton Domain	-	99	99	98	98	98	96	96	96	97	99	NA
Cemeteries	80	76	80	76	73	76	83	76	83	81	100	80✓
Rural Reserves	-	63	65	60	64	61	74	68	67	70	96	80✓
Reserves & Campgrounds	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	57	58	53	95	80✓
District Planning	-	-	-	61	61	59	65	65	69	64	81	100x
Property Information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	67	88	90 x
Building Regulation	-	-	-	-	-	-	68	61	63	57	73	90 x
Environmental & Health Services	-	-	75	72	78	64	74	73	76	76	86	85✓
Liquor Licensing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	93	90✓
Animal Control	-	64	68	78	74	70	81	73	81	71	78	80 x
Parking Enforcement	-	79	81	85	86	81	85	79	84	82	89	80✓
Rates Spending	78	77	77	78	75	72	76	76	78	77	80	NA
Mayor and Councillors	75	75	68	71	58	56	73	84	83	75	77	80 x

Service Users Only (Satisfaction Questions – 2007 NRB Survey)

Service	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 All	Ex Don't Know	Target Achieved 2007
Water Supply (Total)	66	66	69	70	81	67	68	73	79	85	85	NA
Water Supply (Urban)	-	-	-	73	81	67	69	76	82	86	87	NA
Water Supply (Rural & Other)	-	-	-	56	77	67	64	48	57	72	72	NA
Wastewater	-	-	-	-	-	97	95	92	87	75	97	80✓
Stockwater	-	-	-	-	-	52	61	27	61	71	72	80 x
Waste Collection/ Recycling	62	58	64	65	65	70	91	86	89	91	92	90✓
Sports & Playgrounds	88	87	88	91	93	88	95	94	94	93	97	NA
Library	77	74	83	84	80	80	95	97	91	96	97	90✓

Comparisons Between Ashburton District Council and Peer Group Average and National Average - 2007

Service	Peer Group Average Very/ Fairly Satisfied (Includes Don't Knows)			National Average Very/ Fairly Satisfied (Includes Don't Knows)			Ashburton District Council Very/ Fairly Satisfied (Includes Don't Knows)			
	2002	2005	2007	2002	2005	2007	2002	2005	2007	Peer+/-
Roading	65	69	76	73	71	78	66	76	78	+2
Footpaths	61	61	61	69	71	73	68	70	76	+15
Stormwater	55	56	57	69	70	76	64	65	67	+10
Water Supply	55	58	57	76	80	82	81	73	85	+18
Wastewater	57	61	59	78	79	82	-	92	75	+16
Solid Waste Management	55	56	61	62	64	65	71	75	80	+19
Solid Waste Collection	62	67	67	81	83	81	65	86	91	+24
Public Conveniences	68	64	73	63	64	70	58	52	66	-7
Employment & Business Development	51	58	51	52	58	52	75	68	72	+21
Tourism Promotion	73	72	69	74	74	76	81	81	84	+15
Library	87	87	87	89	90	92	80	86	88	+1
Parks & Reserves	89	88	89	94	94	94	98	96	96	+7
Sportsfields & Playgrounds	90	89	88	90	89	90	93	94	93	+5
Cemeteries	78	76	75	68	67	72	73	76	81	+6
District Planning	64	54	53	53	52	51	61	65	64	+11
Animal Control	67	66	69	69	71	74	74	73	71	+2
Rates Spending	62	69	63	72	74	70	75	76	77	+14
Mayor and Councillors	57	59	56	56	54	54	58	84	75	+19
Council Staff	56	62	60	58	61	59	59	74	78	+18