
2014 City of Greater Geraldton Community Satisfaction: Final Report

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Main points

- The 2014 City of Greater Geraldton Community Satisfaction Survey was conducted through phone interviews with 468 randomly selected residents.
- The results measure change in the community's rating of City services since the 2010 Community Satisfaction Survey.
- 92 per cent of respondents considered the City's overall performance to be at least adequate. The mean rating score is the same as it was in 2010.
- The library had the highest rating out of 25 City services, with a mean score of 4.5 out of 5. Other high rating services were sporting and recreational facilities, parks and gardens, arts and culture and support to community groups.
- Satisfaction with the City's efforts to take community's views into account, the library, arts and cultural programs and upkeep of parks and open spaces increased from 2010 to 2014.
- Open-ended questions about what services the City performed well prompted favourable comments about the Foreshore, rubbish collection, upkeep of parks and gardens and the library.
- Eight services had statistically significant declines in rating scores from 2010 to 2014; these are neighbourhood safety, waste management, representing the City to external stakeholders, promoting business development and tourism, creating employment, making the City more environmentally friendly and public health services.
- Respondents gave the lowest ratings to keeping neighbourhoods safe, building permits, taking community views into account in decision making, reducing energy use and promoting renewable energy and land use planning.
- The most common services cited as needing improvement were recycling, parking and footpaths.
- More than half of Mullewa residents said they wanted a bus service to Geraldton and half of City residents wanted recycling services.
- Using a derived measure of importance, the services that were most important to residents and considered to be performed poorly are: keeping neighbourhoods safe, taking community's views into account, reducing energy use and road, footpath and verge maintenance.

Introduction

The 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey is the fourth time Geraldton's local government has sought feedback on the quality of services through a survey. Surveys were conducted in 2003, 2006 and 2010.

As in the previous surveys, the 2014 survey measures residents' views of the City's performance in key service areas and activities. The results will help managers and members of the community monitor perceptions of service quality. The results may be used to allocate resources based on the satisfaction and importance of service areas.

The 2014 questionnaire was identical to the questionnaire used in 2010. Both include a mixture of structured and open-ended questions. The structured questions asked respondents to rate the quality of 25 City services on a five-point scale: very good, good, adequate, poor, and very poor. Additional questions asked about overall performance by the City and the quality of service they received from their last encounter with a City employee. Basic demographic information about respondents was also collected. The 2014 questionnaire is in Appendix 1.

Unlike the first two surveys, the 2010 and 2014 surveys were conducted by telephone and employed best practice in conducting population surveys. These samples come closer to a true representation of people over 18 years old living in the city than previous efforts. Details of the methodology, including a few differences between the 2010 and 2014 surveys are in Appendix 2.

In late 2010 plans were being made for the Shire of Mullewa to amalgamate with the City of Geraldton-Greenough to create what is now the City of Greater Geraldton. The 2010 Community Satisfaction was administered to a sample of Mullewa residents by phone. They were asked to rate their satisfaction with Shire services, using the same questions, where relevant, as asked in the Geraldton-Greenough questionnaire. To measure changes, if any, to Mullewa residents' satisfaction since the amalgamation, the 2014 survey interviewed the same number of Mullewa residents again. These residents, weighted to their proportion in the total population, are included in the overall results presented in this report. Their answers are also compared to the 2010 results from Mullewa residents. Details about the methodology used for the Mullewa sample is also in Appendix 2.

This preliminary report presents key findings from the 2014 survey. It includes the results of structured and open-ended questions identifying the services regarded highly by residents and which were perceived needing improvement. A measure of the relative importance of each service is derived and used to assess priorities for improvement. Major changes from 2010 to 2014 in public perceptions are highlighted and the limitations of the survey for decision making are described.

Results

A total of 468 residents were interviewed as part of the 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey; 406 were from the City of Greater Geraldton outside of the former Mullewa Shire boundaries and 62 lived in the former Mullewa Shire.

Emerging and topical issues

Among the first questions respondents were asked were to name two or three services the City of Greater Geraldton did well and two or three services the City did poorly or could do better. The answers were recorded using their words and then coded into similar topics.

Table 1 shows the City services most frequently mentioned as being done well. Comments by Mullewa and other Greater Geraldton residents are listed separately. A few people used this opportunity to make negative comments about the services, but the vast majority of comments were positive and the list of services performed well was fairly similar with only the order being different. Foreshore development and upkeep, road maintenance, rubbish collection, swimming pools, the library and parks and gardens were praised by residences in both locations.

Table 1: City services most frequently mentioned as being performed well.

Mullewa residents		All other City of Greater Geraldton residents	
Number of people making comments	42	Number of people making comments	374
Number of comments	75	Number of comments	735
Average number of comments per person	1.8	Average number of comments per person	2.0
Most frequently mentioned services (% of respondents mentioning)		Most frequently mentioned services (% of respondents mentioning)	
Road maintenance	24%	Foreshore	33%
Swimming pools	24%	Rubbish collection	24%
Foreshore	21%	Parks and gardens	20%
Parks and gardens	17%	Library	18%
Rubbish collection	14%	Road maintenance	12%
Library	12%	Swimming pools	12%
Negative comments	10%	Negative comments	7%
General cleanliness and tidiness of town	10%	Community events	7%

Tables 2 and 3 list the services considered poor or need improving. There are more services in these tables than in Table 1, indicating more variation in what residents think is not good compared to what they think is good. Mullewa residents were concerned about road maintenance, parking in the Geraldton CBD and bus transport to Geraldton.

Table 2: Mullewa residents list of City of Greater Geraldton services which they consider are poor or in need of improvement, number of persons making comments.

Road maintenance, including grading	11	Footpaths and pathways	2
Parking	9	Crime related	2
Buses/public transport	6	Parks and gardens upkeep	2
Tip and rubbish collection	4	Untidiness of public areas	2
Neglect of outer suburbs and rural areas	3	Cockatoos	2
More shops	3	Animal control	2
Better planning	3	Trees	2
Community engagement, consultation and communication	3		

Note: Based on a total of 48 Mullewa respondents who made comments and a total of 76 comments. Includes all comments made by more than one person, totals 89 per cent of all comments made.

Respondents living in Greater Geraldton but outside of Mullewa expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of recycling bins, parking spaces, the condition or absence of footpaths (often naming specific areas), crime and safety, high rates and road maintenance. There was also a cluster of comments related to the upkeep of public areas, including general untidiness and littering (especially in outlying areas) and upkeep and maintenance of parks and gardens. The need for more youth-oriented facilities and services was mentioned by 14 people and addressing beach erosion and coast care by 13.

Table 3: All other City of Greater Geraldton residents list of services which they consider are poor or in need of improvement, number of persons making comments.

Recycling	47	Buses/public transport	12
Parking	45	Money wasted on public art	9
Footpaths and pathways	45	Street lighting	9
Crime related	26	Customer service by City	8
Rates too high	22	Better planning	8
Road maintenance, including grading	20	Ranger services	8
Parks and gardens upkeep	18	Community engagement, consultation and communication	8
Untidiness of public areas / littering	17	Public toilets	7
Tip and rubbish collection	17	Bike paths	7
Neglect of outer suburbs and rural areas	15	Aquarena	7
Youth activities and services	14	Unightly public areas such as city entrance	7
Beach erosion / coast care	13	Cockatoos	6
More shops	13	Urban renewal / use of vacant buildings	6

Note: Based on a total of 366 respondents who made comments and a total of 621 comments. Includes all comments made by more than five people, totals 89 per cent of all comments made.

Residents raised similar issues when they were asked, near the end of the questionnaire, what additional services they would like the City to provide.

Out of the 62 Mullewa respondents, 35 made at least one suggestion. Among them ten said that they wanted a bus service between Mullewa and Geraldton, eight said they wanted

recycling services and another two wanted better rubbish collection services, five mentioned crime or safety related issues and another five asked for youth, children or family-friendly services.

Sixty-five percent respondents or 263 residents living outside of Mullewa suggested new services. Although many services were mentioned, only three were stated by more than ten per cent of people making suggestions. Just over half of respondents (51 per cent) said they wanted recycling services; 13 per cent said they wanted more activities and services for youth and another 13 per cent wanted parking issues addressed.

Rating City services

When City of Greater Geraldton residents were asked to rate service performance overall, 98 per cent gave an answer and for the majority that answer was positive. Although only five percent rated overall performance to be *excellent*, 51 per cent rated it as *good*, over one-third considered performance to be *adequate* and only eight per cent described it as *poor* or *very poor*. Unless otherwise indicated, the results in this section include all respondents, population.

Customer service is an important element of how the City provides services. The survey asked residents if they had contact with a City employee in the past 12 months; 51 per cent reported that they had. Of those 51 per cent, almost half indicated they had received *very good* service during that encounter and another 39 per cent described experiencing *good* service. Only 15 per cent felt they had *adequate* (10 per cent), *poor* (3 per cent) or *very poor* (2 per cent) service.

By giving each rating a score from 1 (*very poor*) to 5 (*very good*) it is possible to plot the mean score given by all residents (Figure 1). Respondents who said they didn't know or couldn't give a rating for any other reason were not included. Figure 1 plots these mean ratings. Details of these and ratings for 25 services are in Appendix 3.

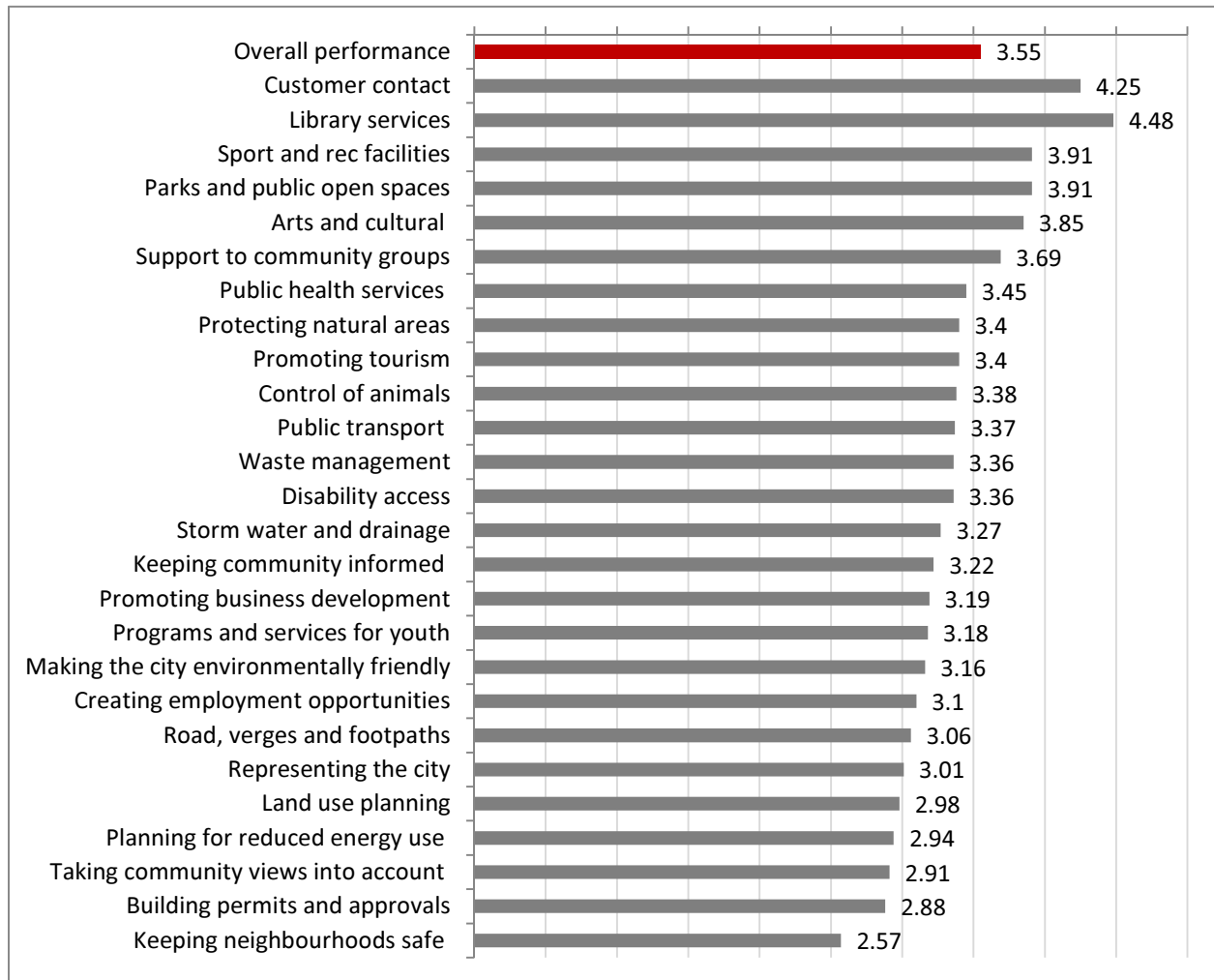


Figure 1: Mean performance ratings, City of Greater Geraldton services, 2014

The services fall into three broad groups: good to very good services; good to adequate services; and adequate to poor services. The highly rated services were customer service, library services, sports and recreational facilities, parks and public open spaces and arts and cultural opportunities. The lowest rated service was keeping neighbourhoods safe, a concern foreshadowed in the open-ended comments.

Priorities: balancing importance and quality

Managers need to know not only how satisfied people are with a service, but also how important the service is to residents. When resources are scarce, money and time will be better spent improving the quality of poorly performing service that is highly valued than another poorly performing services that is not as important. A method taken from marketing research derives the level of importance of a service to people based on their

answers to questions about satisfaction.

The method is based on the assumption that if a person thinks a service is very important, his or her rating of the overall performance of the City's services will be highly influenced by the rating for the important service.

Imagine a resident named Bridget. She is dissatisfied with road maintenance in her suburb and treasures her regular visits to the library. When she rates the overall performance of the City, her rating is closer to the one she gave to road maintenance than to the one she gave to the library because, although she loves the library, improving road maintenance is at the top of her mind when she gives the City a score.

The method used to derive importance is described in Appendix 2. The appendix also explains that the measure has been adjusted to reflect the proportion of people who gave a rating. This means that if an issue is very important to some people but a high proportion did not know anything about the service, it is considered to be less important than a service which was known about and rated by a high proportion.

Figure 2 plots the 25 services by performance (defined as the percentage of respondents who think it is adequate or better) and derived importance. The four quadrants are shown in the figure. These are arbitrarily set at one half the range of relative importance scores and 75 per cent performance. The range of importance scores is one half the range in the 2010 survey. That is, even the most important service in 2014 would have been in the lowest half of importance in 2010.

Figure 2 can inform management decisions as follows:

Bottom right quadrant: Key areas for improvement. These services are important to the community and are rated as underperforming. They include the community engagement role of taking community views into account when making decisions and neighbourhood safety. These areas are ones which should be considered a priority for improvement. Also in this quadrant are the service categories of improving roads, footpaths and verges, reducing energy use and encouraging renewable energy, and representing the City on behalf of the community.

Bottom left quadrant: Secondary areas for improvement. These services are ones with relatively low satisfaction ratings. Services in this quadrant are building approvals, land use planning, employment creation and waste management.

Top right quadrant: strengthen and consolidate. Services in this quadrant are important to the community and performed well. Most services fall in this quadrant, led by arts and culture.

Top left quadrant: maintain existing performance. Three services are in this quadrant: the library, buses and access for people with disabilities. They are services rated as performing well but are less important to community members. While it is tempting to consider reducing the quality of these services as a cost saving measure, it is likely that declining quality would result in a higher perceived level of importance.

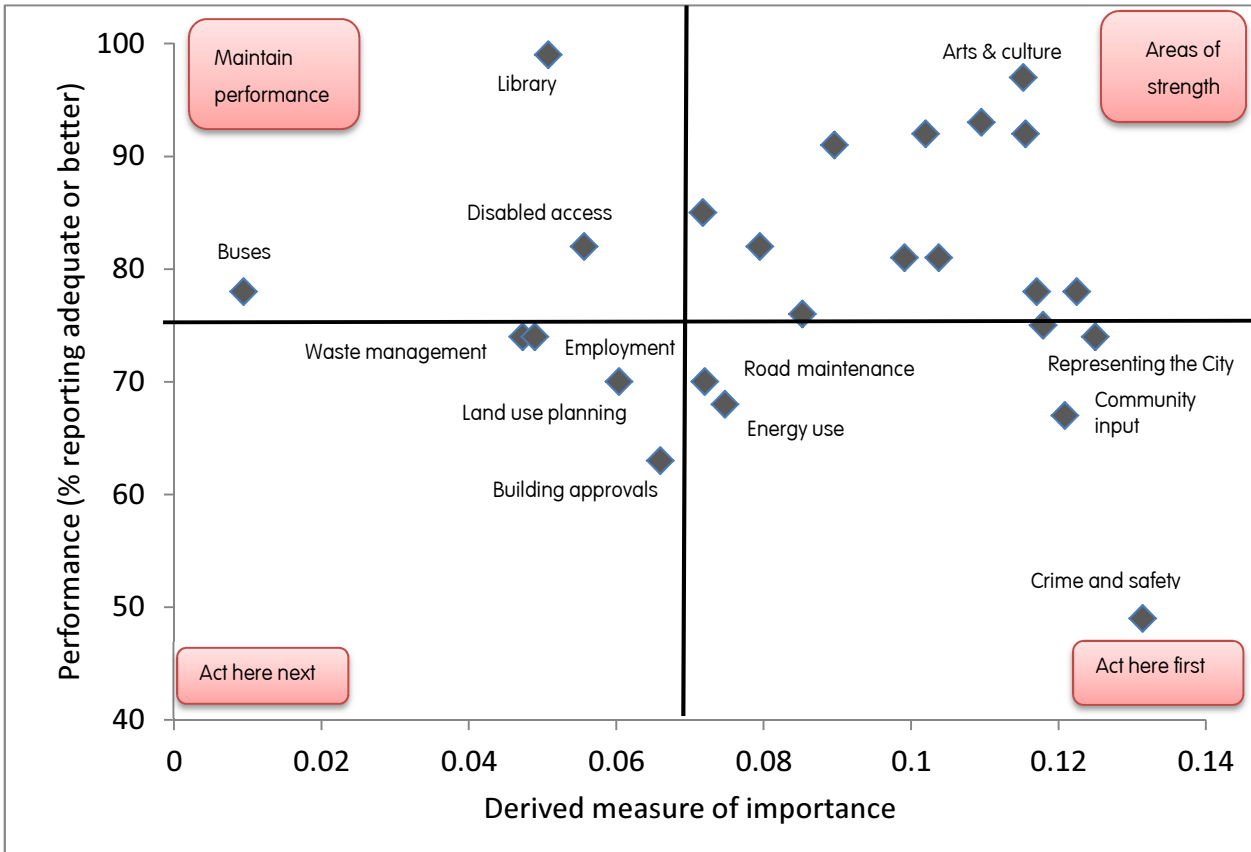


Figure 2: Priorities map based on performance and derived importance, City of Greater Geraldton 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey.

What difference does four years make? Major changes between 2010 and 2014

Service performance ratings

There has been no change in the perception of overall quality of services between 2010 and 2014. In 2010 residents of what is now the City of Greater Geraldton gave a mean performance rating of 3.51 for the overall quality of local government's services. In 2014 the same number of residents, asked the same question gave a mean score of 3.55. This small difference could have been the result of chance and is not large enough to be considered statistically significant.

The mean ratings for all 25 services plus overall performance and customer service are shown in Figure 3. Some services have higher rating scores in 2014 and some lower, but most remain very similar.

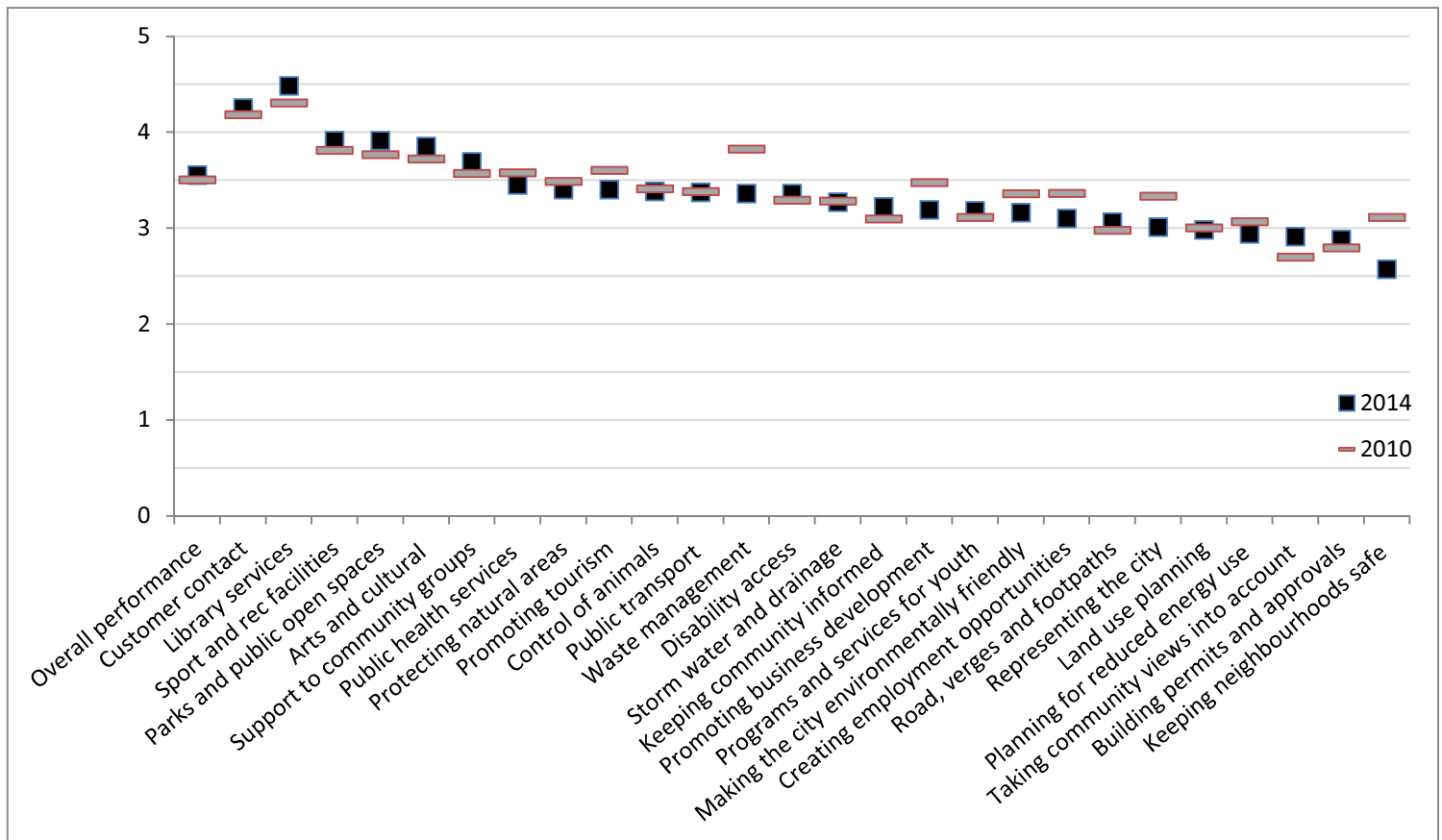


Figure 3: Mean ratings of local government services, 2010 and 2014.

The largest positive changes since 2010 which are statistically significant include taking community views into account (which still has a low rating), library services (topping its previous high score, probably because of the new premise), maintenance and upkeep of parks and gardens, and arts and cultural opportunities.

Services recording a statistically significant fall in rating scores are neighbourhood safety, waste management, representing the City to external stakeholders, promoting business development and creating employment, promoting tourism, making the City more environmentally friendly and public health services.

Mullewa pre and post amalgamation

In both 2010 and 2014 the Mullewa sample was recruited through a local phone directory as well as landlines and (in 2014) mobile phone numbers registered to people in Mullewa. This method produced a sample which was older and more likely to be living in farms than the total Mullewa population. The 2010 samples had no Aboriginal people and the 2014 sample had only two. This needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the results from Mullewa.

The ratings for services by the Mullewa Shire in 2010 are compared to the ratings for City of Greater Geraldton in 2014 in Figure 4. A shift away from reporting services to be *excellent* and *good* to *adequate* is pronounced. Still, only eight per cent of respondents described the services as *poor* or *very poor*, compared to four per cent in 2010. The mean rating score was 3.8 in 2010 and 3.5 in 2014. Because of the relatively small sample sizes, this difference is not statistically significant.

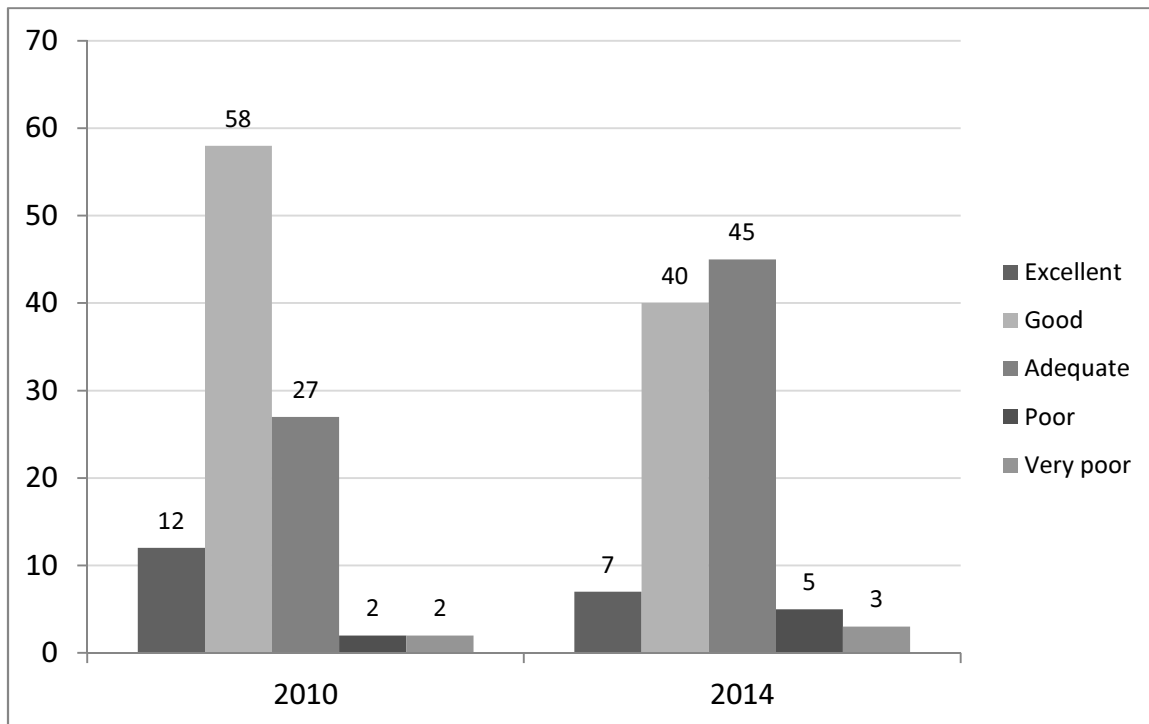


Figure 4: Ratings of Shire and City services in 2010 and 2014, percentage of Mullewa respondents

Changes in responses to open-ended questions about services

Open-ended questions provide a unique window into the topics that are the most topical. They can be a barometer of what issues are “hot” and either have or will flare up as sources of discontent. Open-ended questions can also highlight what aspects of the City makes residents feel most proud and connected.

The answers given in 2010 and 2014 were broadly consistent suggesting that perceptions of services have not changed much over these years.

Best performing services

The appearance and amenities of public areas and rubbish collection dominate the positive comments respondents made about City services in both surveys.

The relatively new Foreshore was mentioned by 18 per cent in 2010. In 2014 the Foreshore was mentioned by 33 per cent of residents living outside of the former Shire of Mullewa boundaries. In 2010 City of Geraldton-Greenough residents praised rubbish collection (63 per cent of all respondents making comments) and maintenance of parks, gardens and other public areas (32 per cent). Rubbish collection, while still the second most frequently nominated service was mentioned by only 24 per cent of residents in 2014. Up-keep of parks, gardens and public areas was mentioned by 20 per cent.

Prior to 2010 the Shire of Mullewa had made major improvements to the town environment, establishing and beautifying the town centre and parks. That was reflected in more than

half of the open-ended comments that year with 41 per cent mentioning upkeep of roads, verges and footpaths, 27 per cent mentioning up-keep of parks, gardens and public spaces and 23 per cent mentioning street cleaning.

In 2014 Mullewa residents mentioned a wider range of services that were performed well but, as shown in Table 1, road maintenance, the swimming pool, the Foreshore and parks and gardens top the list. In the summer of 2014, the three services mentioned as being performed well by the most respondents was road, verge and footpath maintenance (24 per cent), the swimming pool (24 per cent) and the Foreshore (21 per cent).

Services needing improvement

Overall there was more diversity in responses to the question about which services need improving in 2014 than in 2010, however most of the same issues were raised in both surveys.

Among residents of the former City of Greater-Geraldton there were a few differences in what services needed improvement between 2010 and 2014. In 2010 more than one-quarter (26 per cent) said that maintenance of roads and verges was poor. In 2014 this had dropped to the sixth most frequently mentioned, nominated by only five per cent. Other big differences included keeping public spaces clean, which was mentioned by ten per cent in 2010 and much fewer in 2014, and addressing crime related issues which appeared as the four most common comments although by only seven per cent in 2014. Footpaths and parking were mentioned by 10 to 15 per cent of respondents in both surveys and complaints about high rates were mentioned by eight per cent in 2010 and six per cent in 2014.

Half of Mullewa residents said that road maintenance and especially the grading of country roads needed improvement in 2010. In 2014 road maintenance was mentioned by only 26 per cent of respondents, parking by 19 per cent and public transport by 12 per cent.

Demand for new City services

Between 2010 and 2014 residents of Geraldton and Greenough were very consistent in the new services they wanted to see. In both surveys half of the people making a suggestion said they thought the City should offer recycling services. Youth services and parking were also mentioned often in both years.

In Mullewa the demand for public transport to and from Geraldton dominated the responses in 2014. In 2010 respondents gave a very long list of services. No particular need was mentioned by many people.

Level of satisfaction by socio-demographic characteristics

The survey collected some demographic data to ensure that the sample was representative of the population. (See Appendix 2 for a comparison of the sample with the 2011 census.) The survey was not designed to measure differences in the views of sub-groups of the population. However, if the differences in opinions were large enough, they would be statistically valid and important for City management.

Table 4 shows the mean rank satisfaction score by respondents' age, gender, time lived in the area, Aboriginal status, whether they live with children and where they live. There are only small differences in mean scores between groups and none of them were large enough

to be statistically significant or meaningful.

Table 4: Mean satisfaction with performance of City services by demographic characteristics

	Mean	Std Dev	Weighted N		Mean	Std Dev	Weighted N
Total	3.5	0.77	413	Rurality			
Age				Rural	3.5	0.54	33
18-29	3.8	0.65	81	Urban	3.6	0.81	380
30-39	3.4	0.64	73	Location of residence			
40-49	3.6	0.76	85	Inner suburbs	3.6	0.87	71
50-64	3.6	0.83	105	Northern suburbs	3.5	0.79	159
65 and over	3.4	0.85	69	Southern suburbs	3.7	0.85	90
Gender				Outer suburbs	3.3	0.70	61
Female	3.6	0.77	209	Rural communities	3.5	0.54	32
Male	3.5	0.76	205	Living with children or teenagers			
Years lived in the area				Yes	3.5	0.68	170
10 or more	3.5	0.79	283	No	3.6	0.82	243
2-9	3.6	0.71	105	Aboriginal			
Less than 2	3.7	0.72	25	Yes	3.7	1.07	8
				No	3.5	0.76	402

A closer look at differences in satisfaction for each of the 25 services did not uncover strong positive or negative views. There were only a few differences which approached statistical significance. Rural residents (Mullewa and Greenough respondents) were more satisfied with the City's support of community groups (4.03 versus 3.66) and business development (3.43 compared to 3.17) compared to urban residents. Rural residents were less satisfied with public transportation (2.90 versus 3.41). Men were less satisfied with animal control services than women (3.27 versus 3.49) and more satisfied with public transportation (3.50 versus 3.25).

The longer view: a decade of City services

The City of Greater Geraldton is fortunate to have four surveys measuring community satisfaction taken between 2003 and 2014, however, the trends over this decade should be interpreted with caution. Different methods were used to recruit participants. The 2003 survey was conducted by phone. Results were not weighted to reflect the age and gender composition of the City. The 2006 survey was distributed through community groups and at shopping centres. A quota system was used to ensure that the sample had the same demographic characteristics as the 2001 census, but there are inherent biases in the types of people who are approached and participate in intercept surveys.

Different methodologies mean that it is not possible to tell if apparent trends are a result of changes in opinion or differences in the respondents or differences in the mode of data collection.

Dissimilar questions also make it a challenge to interpret changes over time. Out of the 25 services or roles performed by the City of Greater Geraldton and included in the 2010 and 2014 surveys, eight were also asked in 2003 and 2006. Six other services were asked about in

ways very similar to the previous surveys. Three questions in 2003 and 2006 asked about more than one service; these were split into two questions in 2010 and 2014. Unfortunately there was no question in 2003 or 2006 about the overall performance of City services or about satisfaction with City employees.

There were five services or roles unique to the 2010 and 2014 surveys: issuing of building permits and approvals; land use planning; making the city and its surrounds more environmentally friendly; planning for reduced use of energy and greater access to renewable energy; and, representing and lobbying the state and federal governments and businesses on behalf of the community. These cannot be compared to previous survey results.

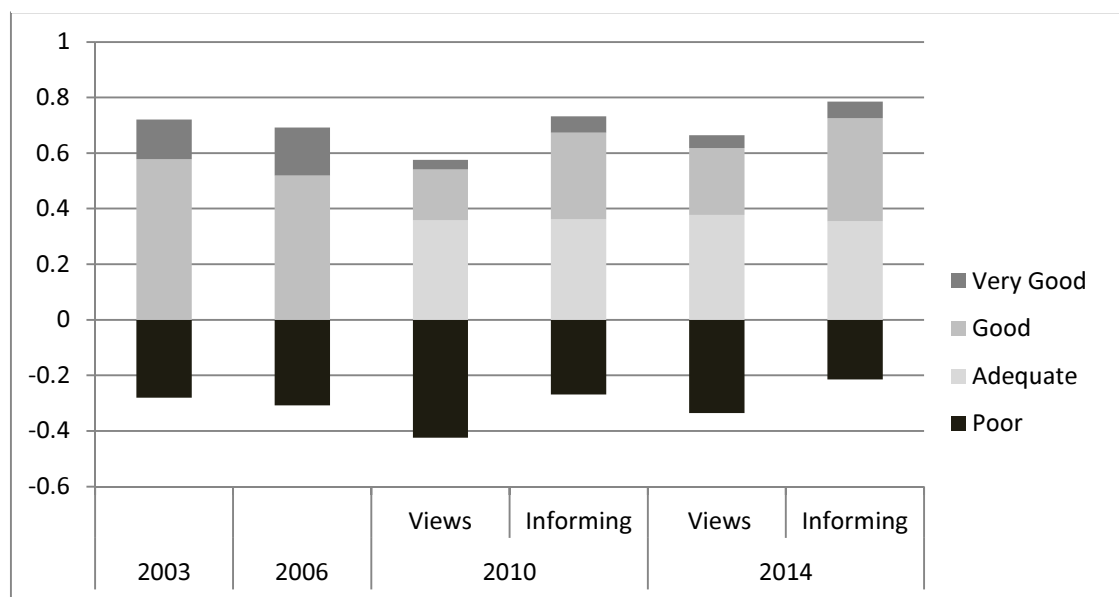
In the following graphs the 2010 results refer only to residents of the former City of Geraldton-Greenough. The 2014 results are for the City of Greater Geraldton, including the former Shire of Mullewa. As the population of Mullewa represents only 2 per cent of the total population of the City, this difference will not affect the interpretation of the results.

Changes in the percentage of respondents giving specific ratings such as 'very good' should be interpreted with caution. The number of respondents interviewed was not sufficient to measure this change with precision and some of the apparent differences observed may be due to random fluctuations.

General business of the City

In 2010 two questions replaces one broad question asked in 2003 and 2006 about community engagement. The question in the earlier surveys asked respondents to rate the City's performance on 'asking the community what it thinks and what it wants and giving it information'. This was split into 'taking community views into account when making Council decisions' and 'keeping the community informed about Council decisions and other important issues'.

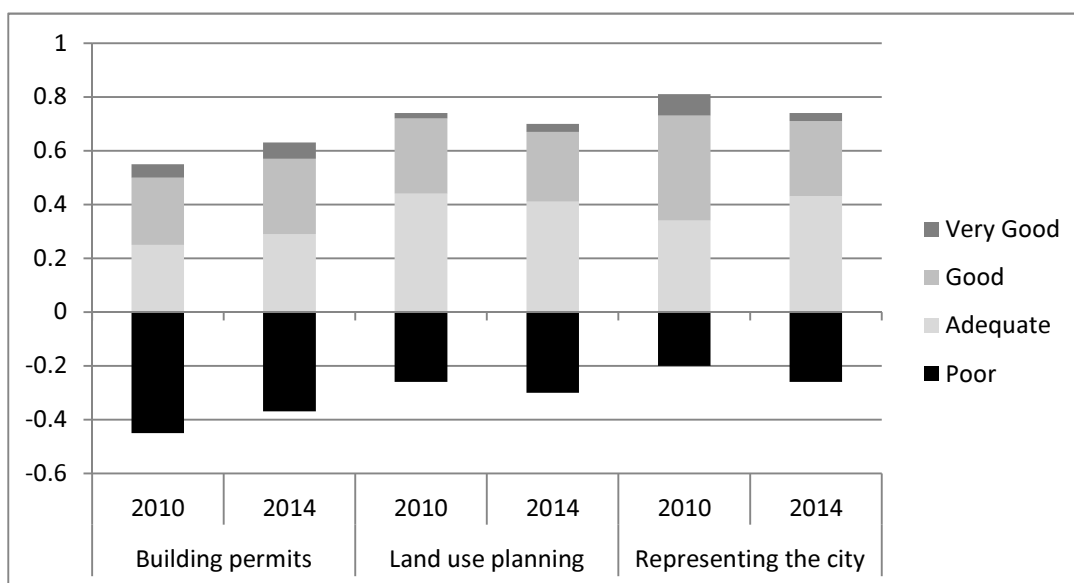
Figure 5: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in community engagement by listening to community views and informing about decisions



The 2010 and 2014 findings were consistent with the relatively low satisfaction with the City’s community engagement measured in earlier surveys (Figure 5). In 2010 about 40 per cent of residents rated taking community views into account ‘poorly’ or ‘very poorly’. Providing information about decisions had a somewhat higher performance rating. In 2014 the performance of both services was ranked higher although one-third still ranked ‘listening to community views to be ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ and 21 per cent gave informing the community a low rating.

Figure 6 shows some changes in how other core City services were rated. Respondents’ perception of the City’s performance in issuing building permits improved from 2010 to 2014 although 37 per cent still rated the service as poor or very poor. The percentage who considered the City’s land use planning to be at least adequate declined from about 75 per cent to 70 per cent. The City’s representation to state and national government, businesses and other external bodies was considered somewhat less effective in 2014 than in 2010.

Figure 6: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s performance in issuing building permits, conducting land use planning and representing the city.



Developing and maintaining community infrastructure

Parks, sporting facilities and roads are all vital parts of community infrastructure. Over the years the surveys combined these services in different ways making it a challenge to make direct comparisons. In 2003 and 2006 two questions grouped the following services:

- Sporting facilities, parks, playgrounds and aquatic facilities
- Parking, roads, paths and cycleways

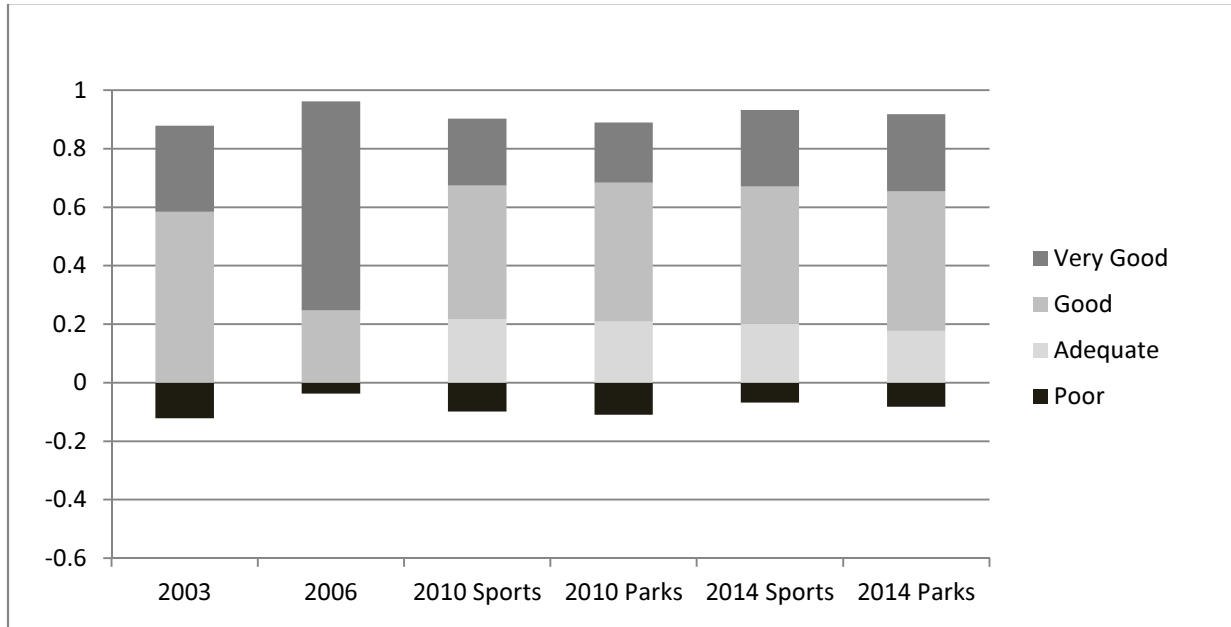
In 2010 and 2014 respondents were asked to rate the following services:

- Sporting and recreational facilities
- Layout and up-keep of parks and public open spaces

- Road maintenance, including verges and footpaths

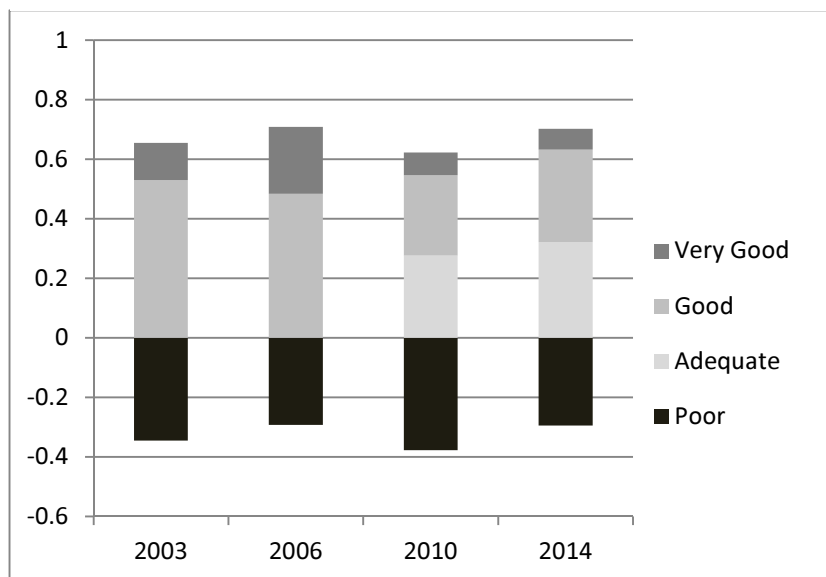
Approval of both sporting facilities and parks are very high; they consistently show approval levels of about 90% (Figure 7).

Figure 8: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s performance in maintaining sport and recreation facilities and parks and public open spaces



The maintenance of roads and paths are rated relatively poorly (Figure 8). This is especially true in 2010 and may be the result of the change in wording. Between 29 and 38% of respondents rated this service as poor in all four years. Approval was higher in 2014 than in 2010.

Figure 7: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s performance in maintaining roads and paths



Satisfaction with storm water and drainage (Figure 9) and with rubbish collection (Figure 10) is consistent across the three surveys with about 80 per cent approval for storm water management and 90 per cent for rubbish collection.

Figure 9: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in managing storm water and drainage

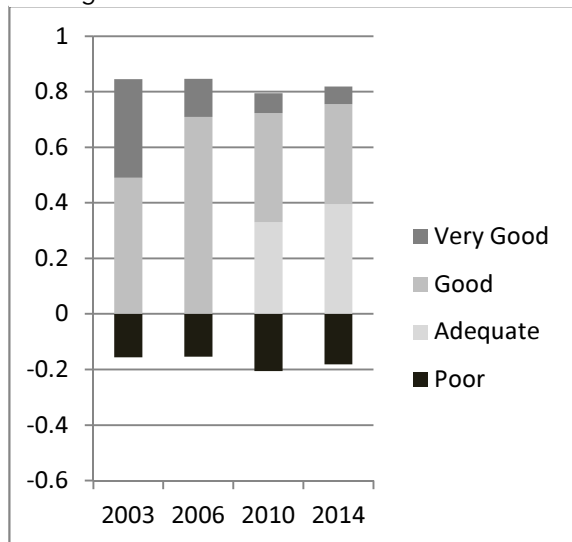
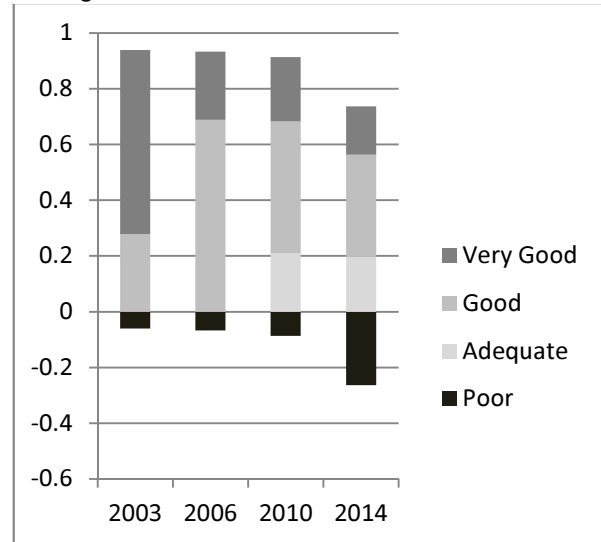
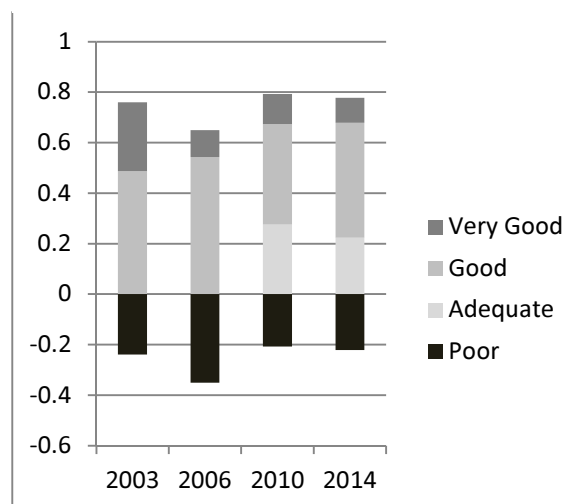


Figure 9: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in rubbish collection and other waste management



Public transport is another service which has been rated relatively poorly. In comparison to 2006, approval was higher in 2010 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in public transport



Social and community services

Four of the social and community services included in the 2010 survey were comparable to ones in the 2003 and 2006 surveys.

The library has consistently been shown to be very highly regarded by residents (Figure 12). As Table 1 and Figure 1 showed, library services had the highest mean satisfaction score of all

Figure 12: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s library services

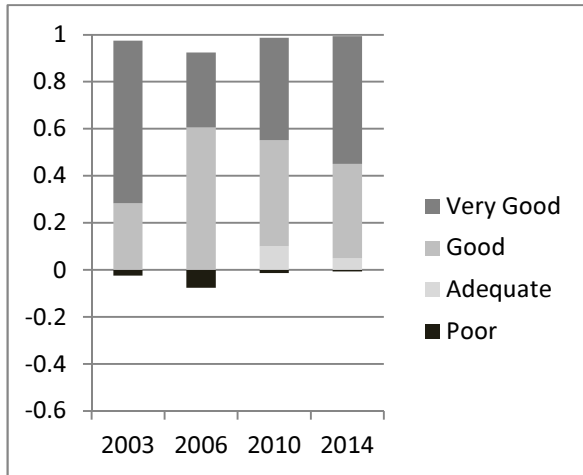
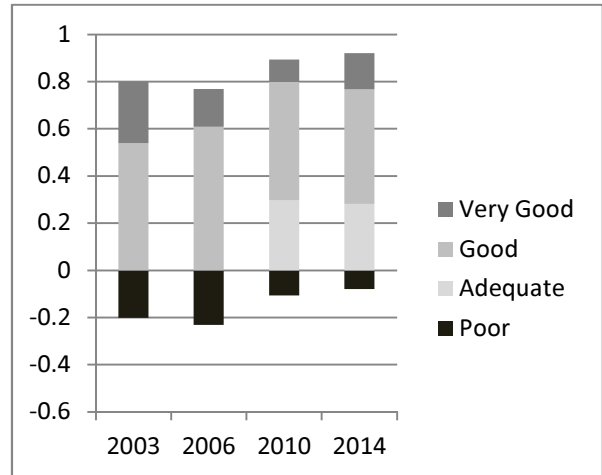


Figure 13: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s support and encouragement of community groups



City services.

Residents also highly rated the City’s performance in supporting and encouraging community groups (Figure 13). Approval had been around 80% in 2003 and 2006, increased to nearly 90 per cent in 2010 and is 92 per cent in 2014.

Approval ratings are slightly higher for youth programs (Figure 14) and services and for support for people with disabilities (Figure 15) in 2010 compared to the previous surveys and higher again in 2014. . Nevertheless, one-quarter of respondents in 2014 rated youth programs and services as poor or very poor.

Figure 14: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s programs and services for youth

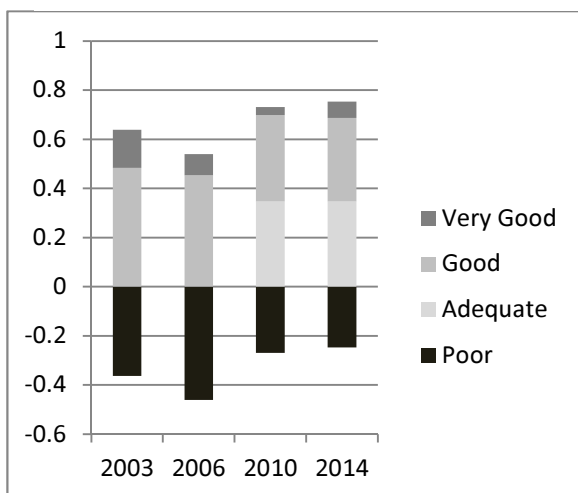
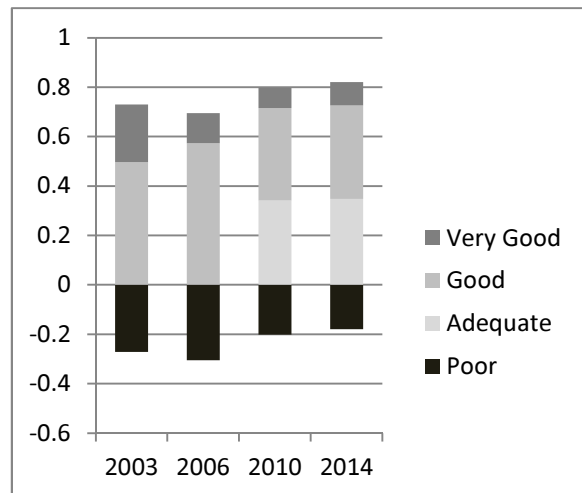


Figure 15: Views on City of Greater Geraldton’s performance in improving access for people with disabilities



The question about people with disabilities was slightly different in 2010 and 2014, asking about performance in ‘providing better access for people with a disability’ rather than the question in 2003 and 2006 which was about programs for people with disabilities.

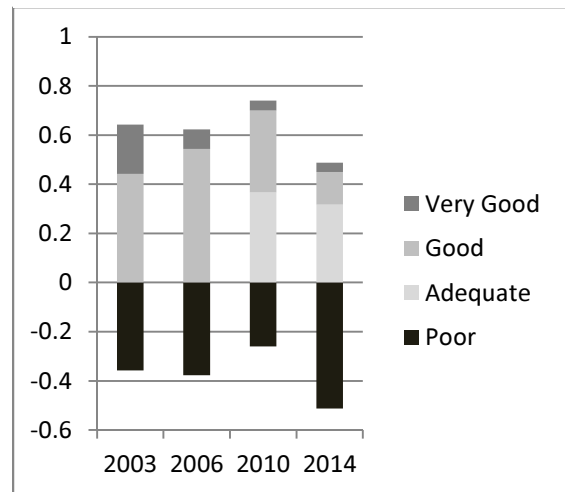
Respondents in the last two surveys were more positive about the City's involvement than in the first two.

Public health and safety

All three services included in the 2010 survey about public health and safety had similar questions in 2003 and 2006.

In 2003 and 2006 respondents were asked about how they rated the City's performance on keeping neighbourhoods 'safe and tidy.' This question was changed in 2010 to 'keeping neighbourhoods safe from crime and anti-social behaviour.' It is not possible to say if the higher approval rating in 2010 is due to greater satisfaction or the different question. However the same question was repeated in 2014 when more than half of respondents who considered the City's performance to be poor or very poor (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in keeping neighbourhoods safe



In the earlier surveys people were asked about their satisfaction with the 'control of animals and other pests.' In 2010 they were asked about 'control of dogs and other animals' because issues related to dogs is one of the most common reasons for people to contact the City. Approval has been fairly consistent at about 80% although it was lower in 2006 (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's control of dogs and other animals

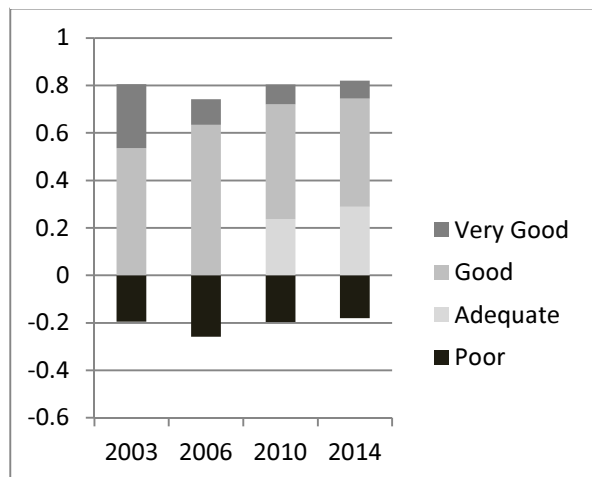
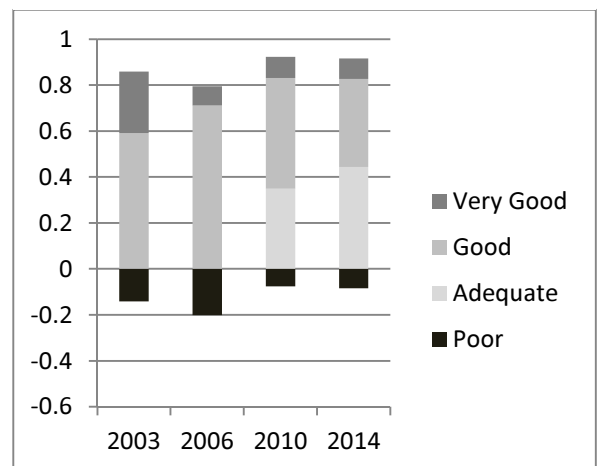


Figure 18: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance in protecting public health



The questions about public health services were also slightly different with the 2003 and 2006 surveys describing public health as 'rubbish, drainage, water and clean food' and the 2010 survey describing it as 'food safety, water quality, noise control). Approval was high, especially in 2010 when only 8% of respondents rated public health services as poor or very

poor (Figure 18).

Environmental issues

The 2010 survey had three questions on environmental issues but only one was similar to a service included in the 2003 and 2006 surveys. The question in 2010 was 'how do you rate the performance of the City on 'protecting natural areas including native plants and animals'. In 2003 and 2006 a more general question was asked about 'protection of the natural environment'. With the questions being so different, it is difficult to interpret the higher approval rating of 87% in 2010 and a similar level in 2014 (Figure 19).

Respondents in 2014 were less satisfied with the City's efforts to be environmentally friendly, which had been ranked very favourably in 2010 (Figure 20). About 30 per cent of respondents considered the City's efforts to reduce energy use and promote renewable energy to be poor or very poor.

Figure 19: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's protection of natural areas:

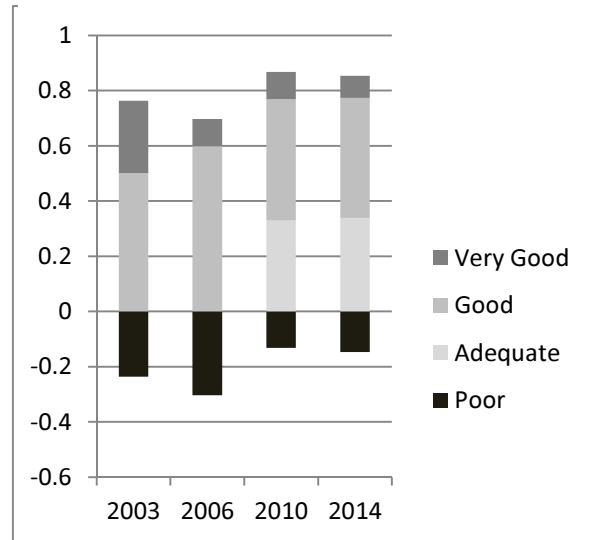
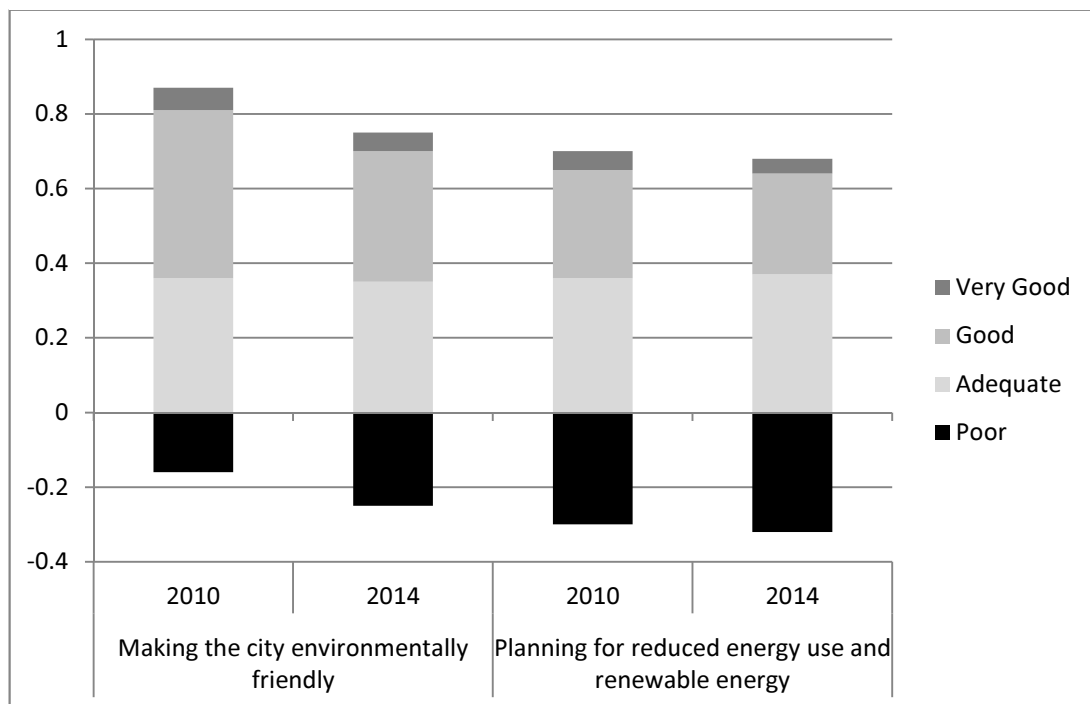


Figure 20: Views on City of Greater Geraldton's performance on environmental and energy issues



Economic and social development

The same questions about the City's performance in promoting business development (Figure 21) and creating employment opportunities (Figure 22) were asked in all three

Figure 21: Views on the City of Greater Geraldton's promotion of business development

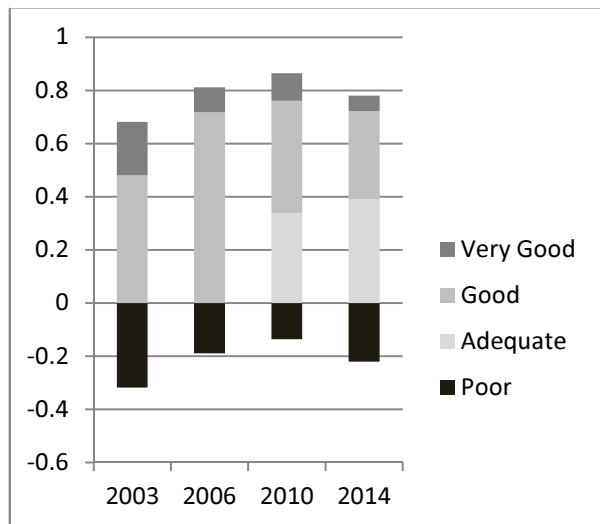
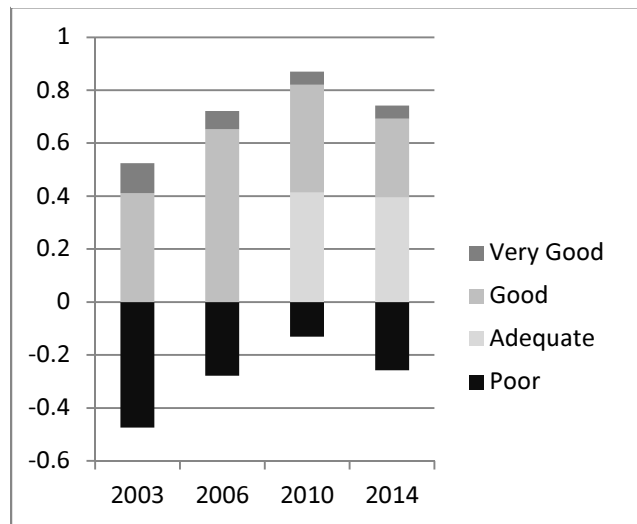


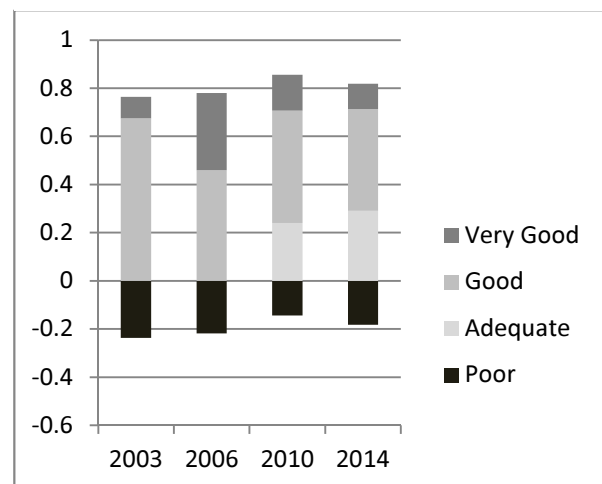
Figure 22: Views on the City of Greater Geraldton's creation of employment opportunities



surveys. A pronounced trend in increasing approval from 2003 to 2010 is apparent, especially for creating employment opportunities. The decline in approval in 2014 for these two services is equally apparent. Both trends may reflect the improving and then worsening economic climate rather than specific actions by the City.

Figure 12: Views on the City of Greater Geraldton's promotion of tourism

In 2003 and 2006 there was a broad question regarding performance in 'promoting heritage, culture and tourism'. Those ratings are compared here with the 2010 question about performance in promoting tourism. It is difficult to interpret the improved approval in 2010 and this may be due to the different question. Satisfaction with the promotion of tourism declined in 2014, returning to a longer term average level (Figure 23).



Limitations

Every study has limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. This study is no exception.

Even though the survey had a long list of 25 services, the services that were the most important to residents or managers of the services may not have been included or have been buried in a larger category such as 'waste management'. The open-ended questions give some opportunities for people to express their opinions freely, but many may have felt rushed and were not able to give the matter the consideration it deserves.

The latest Australian estimates are that about 21 per cent of Australian adults do not have a fixed-line telephone in their home.¹ That percentage increases to one-third or more for younger adults. Although the 2014 survey was able to call mobile phones, the list was not complete. There is no reliable way to know if respondents without landlines or mobile phone numbers have the same views about City services as the people who were contacted. We do know from national studies that people who rely on mobile phones only or who do not have any phone are more likely to be Aboriginal, young and have a lower income.

Conclusions

In the three and half years between the 2010 and 2014 surveys Geraldton has seen many changes. The Foreshore, already looking good in late 2010, by the summer of 2014 had even more amenities and was a source of local pride. The amalgamation with the Shire of Mullewa was several years old and there have been two rounds of Council elections, one returning incumbents and another voting them out following a rate increase.

The boom that would never end is over, leaving a City population that is a little larger and more diverse but necessarily more prosperous. Incidents of break-ins and physical assaults have been widely reported in local papers and social media in the months leading up to the 2014 survey.

These changes are reflected in the survey results. Concerns regarding crime, economic development and employments have increased and satisfaction with the Foreshore and arts and culture are mentioned more often.

But there is also continuity. Most people have a favourable opinion about services and were very satisfied with their last encounter with a City employee. Residents praise their library, parks and gardens and roadside rubbish removal. The condition of roads, verges and footpaths are important to them. They want their City officers and elected officials to listen to them and take their views into account when making decisions. Building approvals could be faster and they still want recycling bins.

¹ Australian Communications and Media Authority, *Communications report 2012-13*, Melbourne, 2013.

Appendix 1: Script for Community Satisfaction Survey 2014

General introduction:

Hello my name is and I am doing research for the **City** of Greater Geraldton. We are talking to people living here about the services they receive. This information will assist the City to improve the services it provides.

Would you please spare us some time to complete the survey? We anticipate that it will take about 8 to 10 minutes.

If no find out if there is another time when you can call back?

People sometimes refer to the City of Greater Geraldton as “the council” or even “the shire”. To keep things simple we will refer services being provided by the employees of the City of Greater Geraldton as “City services”

Q1 Record Gender...

1. Male
2. Female

Q2 I am going to list a range of ages, please stop me when I reach yours...

- 1 18-29
- 2 30-39
- 3 40-49
- 4 50-64
- 5 65 and over
- 6 Refused

Q3 What suburb or town do you live in?

(RECORD NUMBER FROM LIST – former Mullewa Shire localities identified)

CLARIFY THAT THE LOCALITY IS IN THE CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON

IF DOES NOT USUALLY LIVE IN CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON **TERMINATE** THE INTERVIEW

Q4 In your opinion, what are the two or three services the City **does well**? If 3 are not given, say – *“Can you think of Any others?”*

A _____

B _____

C _____

NOTE If the respondent says something like “no, they can't get anything right”, please record that.

Q5 In your opinion, what are the two or three services that the City **does poorly and should improve?** If 3 are not given, say – *“Can you think of Any others?”*

A _____

B _____

C _____

If the respondent says something like “no, all good” please record that

Q6 Have you had any contact with an employee of the City in the past 12 months? **(PROMPT)** This could be with receptionists, rubbish collector, planners, or other people by phone, writing, email or in person.

- 1 Yes -> GO TO Q7
- 2 No -> GO TO Q8

Q7 IF YES, thinking about your most recent contact, overall how would you rate the way you were treated?

IF UNSURE CLARIFY That is, were you able to speak to the relevant person and were they helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and responsive?

Would you say the service you had was:

- 1 Very good
- 2 Good
- 3 Adequate (neither good nor bad)
- 4 Poor
- 5 Very poor
- 6 Don't know/ Can't say

Q8 I am going to read you a list of City services, could you please rate how the City performs these services, is that READ LIST – ROTATE If you Don't know or can't say, please say so. ROTATE GROUPS AND OUTCOMES

- 1 Very good
- 2 Good
- 3 Adequate (neither good nor bad)
- 4 Poor
- 5 Very poor
- 6 Don't know/ Can't say

	Record Answer here	
A		Taking community views into account when making decisions
B		Keeping the community informed about decisions and other important issues
C		Issuing of building permits and approvals
D		Land use planning
E		Developing and maintaining sporting and recreational facilities
F		Layout and up-keep of parks and public open spaces
G		Road maintenance, including verges and footpaths
H		Waste management, including rubbish collection and management of the tip
I		Storm water and drainage
J		Public transportation such as local buses.
K		Library services
L		Providing arts and cultural opportunities
M		Providing programs and services for youth
N		Providing better access for people with a disability
O		Providing support and encouragement to community groups
P		Control of dogs and other animals
Q		Keeping neighbourhoods safe from crime and anti-social behaviour
R		Providing public health services (food safety, water quality, noise control)
S		Protecting natural areas including native plants and animals (known as biodiversity)
T		Making the city and its surrounds more environmentally friendly
U		Planning for reduced use of energy and greater access to renewable energy
V		Promoting tourism
W		Promoting business development
X		Creating employment opportunities
Y		Representing and lobbying the state and federal government and businesses on behalf of the community

Q9 What services should the City provide that they are not providing now?

Don't Prompt

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

99 None / Can't think of any

Q10 Thinking about City services not just in one or two matters but overall, how would you rate their performance?

- 1 Excellent service
- 2 Good service
- 3 Adequate service (neither good nor bad)
- 4 Poor service
- 5 Very poor service
- 6 Don't know/ Can't say

Now we would like to ask you a few things about yourself for statistical purposes.

Q11 How long have you lived in the area covered by the City of Greater Geraldton?

- 1 Less than 2 years
- 2 2 – 9 years
- 3 10 or more years

Q12 Do you live with any children or teenagers under age 18?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Q13 Are you Aboriginal?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Refused

Thank you very much for participating.

All of the information you gave will be completely confidential. I have not recorded your name, address or phone number.

In case you forgot, my name is _____.

The business commissioned to do this survey for the City is Social Dimensions, based in Geraldton.

(Contact details Ann Larson & Peter Howard.

Email: peter.howard@socialdimensions.com.au or 9965 3015)

The person who commissioned this work for the City is Jeff Graham. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey you can contact him. Would you like me to give you his number? (9956 6614)

Appendix 2: Methods

Sampling and statistical power

The 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey was a two stage random sample drawn from a list of land lines and mobile phone numbers.

A sample size of 400 was selected for the first stage of City of Geraldton residents living outside of the boundary of the former Shire of Mullewa. A sample of 400 produces reliable estimates of +/- 0.5% around a proportion of 50%. In other words, if the true percentage of a result was 50%, we can be confident that 95% of the time the sample estimate will fall between 45% and 55%. Most population surveys use 400 (or 380 which is the actual number required) as the sample size unless subgroup analysis is required.

In addition to the confidence level of the sample, it is also importance to consider if the sample has the 'power' to detect statistical difference between two measurements, in order to avoid the error of deciding that there is no difference between two measures when, in fact, they are different. The power of a sample can only be calculated after the data has been collected because the variation in answers is just as important as the mean. In the case of this survey there was relatively little variation in responses which means that the power to detect difference is high. For example, the mean value of overall satisfaction with the performance of the City was 3.55 with a standard deviation of 0.81. The sample has 90% power to detect a difference of 0.2 points in the mean rating. The 2010 mean rating for the overall score was 3.50; the sample sizes were not large enough to detect this small difference but some of the shifts in ratings of services were sufficiently large to detect change.

The second stage of sampling was for residents of what was the Shire of Mullewa in 2010. In order to have enough residents to compare with 2010 results, we conducted interviews with 62 residents. Even with this number, large differences are needed to detect statistically significant change.

The Mullewa respondents were weighted to reflect their proportion in the total City of Greater Geraldton population.

Survey administration

The survey script was based on the 2010 City of Geraldton-Greenough questionnaire and finalized in discussions with senior staff at the Hello Call Centre, which is owned by the Royal Life Saving Society. Interviews were conducted between 2-27 February, including late afternoon and evenings but not Sundays. Social Dimensions was available to answer questions throughout the data collection period.

A list of 25 services is daunting for respondents and it is a credit to the call agents and the commitment of residents that every survey was completed in full. To prevent 'question fatigue' call agents asked about the services in a random order so no services were consistently asked early or late in the interview.

To ensure the sample represented the background population in terms of age and sex a

number of demographic questions were asked as part of the survey. Quotas for men and women in each of the age groups derived from the demographic characteristics of usual residents in the 2011 census ensured the final sample was representative (see below). As the quotas filled the survey team was instructed to target people in the quotas not yet filled. In many instances this meant otherwise willing participants were disqualified because they were in a quota already filled. As the survey reached its conclusion greater effort was required to include younger people. Only one person per household was interviewed.

Quotas for a sample of 400 derived from the usual residents aged 18 and over, 2011 census. Greater Geraldton residents MINUS Mullewa residents			
Age group	Male	Female	Total
18-29	41	40	81
30-39	34	36	70
40-49	40	41	81
50-64	50	51	101
65 +	33	35	68
Total no. of respondents	199	201	400

Calculating derived importance of services

The measure of importance used to identify priorities for the City of Geraldton-Greenough and Shire of Mullewa was derived by first correlating the rating for each service or role with the rating for overall performance of the City then squaring the correlation coefficient and multiplying by the proportion of people who gave a satisfaction rating.

Sample representativeness

The final sample was broadly representative of the demographic characteristics of usual residents enumerated in the 2011 census.

Just over fifty per cent of adults usually living in Geraldton are female and this was also the composition of the sample (50.25 per cent in the census and 50.49 per cent in the sample).

Comparison of the age distribution of usual residents (over 18 years old) and respondents				
Age group	2011 Census		2014 Sample	
	Quota	%	N	%
18-29	81	20%	81	20%
30-39	70	18%	72	18%
40-49	81	20%	82	20%
50-64	101	25%	103	25%
65 +	68	17%	68	17%
Total	400	100%	406	100%

Aboriginal people were under-represented in the sample. Aboriginal people (including a small number of Torres Strait Islanders) comprised 7.5 per cent of usual residents but accounted for 2.5 per cent of respondents. In total 11 Aboriginal people were interviewed.

The geographic distribution of respondents is very similar to that for all usual residents in Geraldton although a smaller proportion of respondents lived in the eastern suburbs than would have been expected from the census.

Where people live: all usual residents in 2011 census compared to 2014 respondents, not including Mullewa residents				
	Census		Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Geraldton	12339	35%	137	34%
North	6496	18%	85	21%
East	7745	22%	70	17%
South	9169	26%	112	28%
Total	35749	100%	406	100%

Appendix 3: Detailed results

Appendix 3 Table 1: Satisfaction with City of Greater Geraldton services, 2014								
	Percentage giving each rating					Mean rating	Std err	Relevance
	Very good	Good	Ade-quate	Poor	Very poor			
<i>Overall performance of City services</i>	5	51	37	6	2	3.55	0.04	98
Treatment at your last encounter with a City employee	46	39	10	3	2	4.25	0.06	52
Taking community views into account	5	24	38	25	9	2.91	0.05	84
Keeping community informed	6	37	35	15	6	3.22	0.05	95
Representing the City on behalf of the community	3	28	43	17	9	3.01	0.07	50
Issuing of building permits and approvals	6	28	29	23	14	2.88	0.08	46
Land use planning	3	26	41	25	5	2.98	0.06	63
Sporting and recreational facilities	26	47	20	6	1	3.91	0.04	95
Layout and up-keep of parks and public open spaces	26	48	18	7	1	3.91	0.04	100
Road maintenance, including verges and footpaths	7	31	32	20	10	3.06	0.05	99
Waste management, including rubbish collection and management of the tip	17	37	20	17	9	3.36	0.06	98
Storm water and drainage	6	36	39	15	3	3.27	0.05	85
Public transport such as local buses	10	46	22	16	6	3.37	0.06	66
Library services	54	40	5	1	0	4.48	0.04	75
Providing arts and cultural opportunities	17	56	24	2	1	3.85	0.04	80
Programs and services for youth	7	34	35	20	5	3.18	0.06	66
Providing better access for people with a disability	9	38	35	15	3	3.36	0.05	76
Providing support and encouragement to community groups	15	49	28	6	2	3.69	0.05	75
Control of dogs and other animals	7	46	29	14	4	3.38	0.05	95
Keeping neighbourhoods safe from crime and anti-social behaviour	4	13	32	39	12	2.57	0.05	91
Providing public health services (food safety, water quality, noise control)	9	38	44	6	2	3.45	0.04	88
Protecting natural areas including native plants and animals	8	43	34	10	4	3.4	0.05	80
Making the city and its surrounds more environmentally friendly	5	35	35	21	4	3.16	0.05	91
Reduced use of energy and more renewable energy	4	27	37	24	8	2.94	0.06	61
Promoting tourism	10	42	29	13	5	3.4	0.05	91
Promoting business development	6	33	39	18	4	3.19	0.06	63
Creating employment opportunities	5	30	39	22	4	3.1	0.06	54

Note: Based on 468 respondents representative of the age and gender composition of usual residents in 2011 Census. Includes 62 Mullewa respondents weighted to reflect their proportion in the total population. The mean satisfaction score is derived from a five point scale in which 1=very poor and 5=very good. 'Do not know' and 'cannot say' responses are not included. Relevance is the proportion of respondents who rated the service, i.e., did not answer 'don't know'.

