



Rural City of
Wangaratta

Budget 2026/27

Community Consultation Summary

2 March 2026

Community Engagement for the 2026/27 Budget

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Engagement delivered through Connect Wangaratta via two methods:

1. Online survey on funding priorities and service areas

- Survey was open, accessible and registration was optional to reduce barriers and support inclusive participation
- The survey provides broad community sentiment and shared themes

2. Open budget submissions from individuals and groups

- 24 Project ideas submitted
- Community presented 14 of these projects to Councillors during February & March 2026

The Budget



How would you prioritise where funds are allocated?

Take this survey to rank in order of priority (starting with 1 being most important) the services you value the most and that you believe are critically important to a thriving community. You can rank as many or as few as you want.

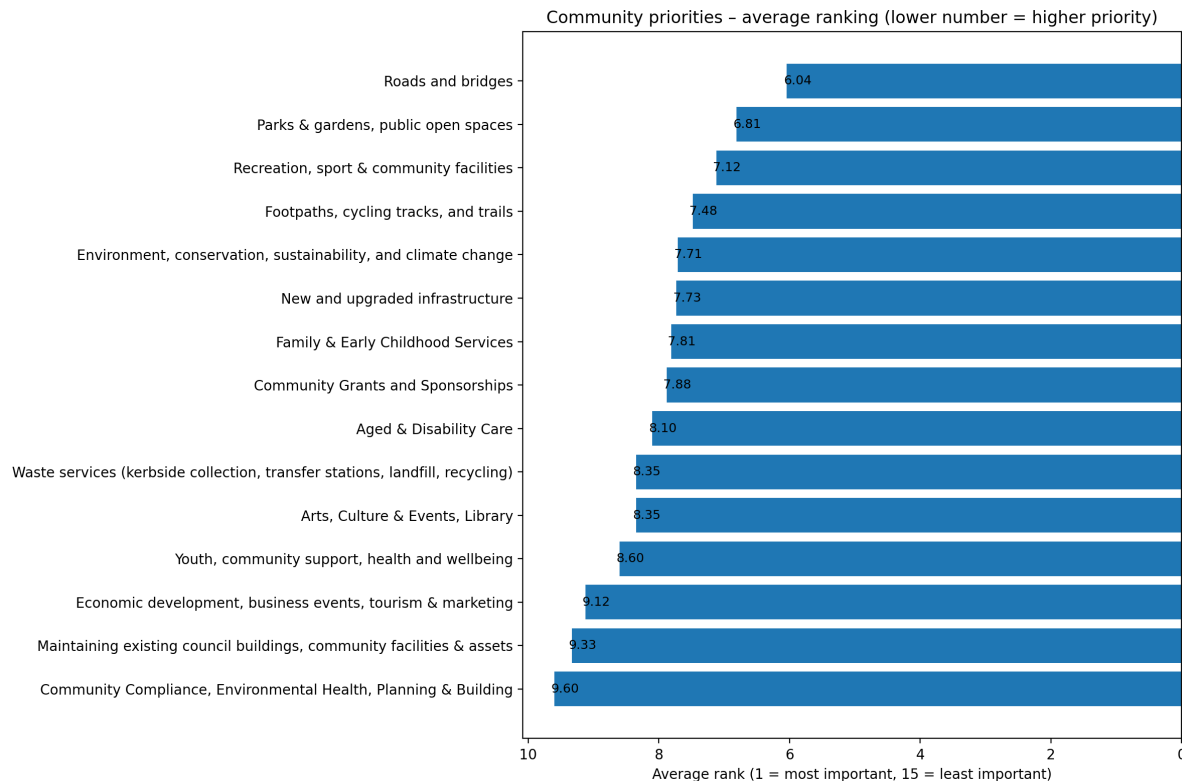
Online Survey

- Open from 1 November to 16 December 2025
- 52 responses were received
- Responses were primarily anonymous
- Respondents were asked to:
 1. Rank 15 service areas from most important (1) to least important (15) in prioritising funding allocation
 2. Indicate satisfaction with Council's current allocation of funds
 3. Provide optional written comments and suggestions

Ranking of Funding Allocation

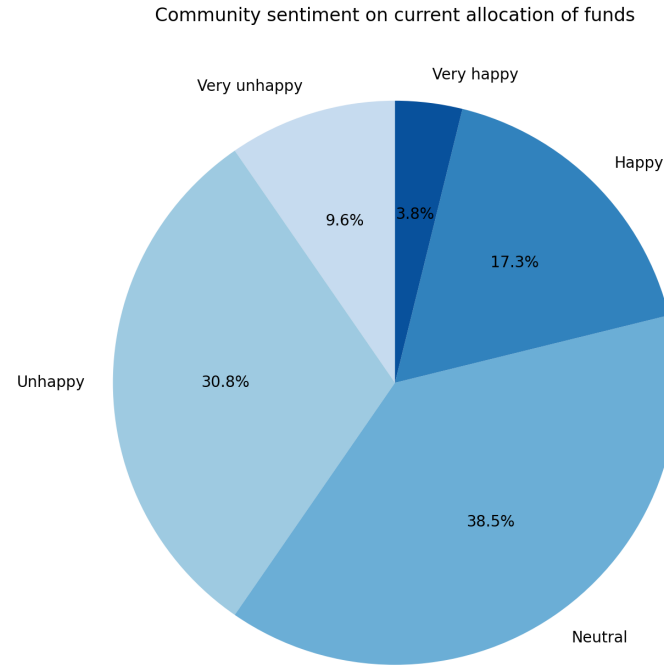
Based on ranking patterns across all responses, the following service areas frequently appear as the top tier of priorities:

1. Roads and Bridges
2. Open spaces
3. Recreation, Sport and Community Facilities
4. Footpaths, Cycling Tracks and Trails
5. Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
6. New and Upgraded Infrastructure



Satisfaction with Current Allocation of Funds

- Neutral sentiment was most common
 - 38.5% of respondents indicated they were neutral
- Negative sentiment outweighed positive sentiment
 - 40.4% were unhappy or very unhappy
 - 21.1% were happy or very happy
- Responses show mixed views, with no clear majority expressing strong satisfaction
- Results suggest limited endorsement of current allocations



Overall Sentiment

- **Roads and core infrastructure**
 - Strong focus on road condition, safety and long-term maintenance
- **Recreation, sport and community facilities**
 - Broad support, including facilities for youth and emerging sports
- **Footpaths, cycling tracks and trails**
 - Emphasis on maintenance, accessibility and connectivity
- **Geographic equity**
 - Repeated calls for fairer investment across towns and rural areas
- **Maintenance over short-term fixes**
 - Preference for doing fewer things well and reducing repeat spend

- **Arts, culture and events**
 - Strong support from some respondents, especially for Creative Precinct and library. Others question the level of funding compared to core services.
- **Environmental and climate initiatives**
 - Viewed as important by some respondents, but ranked lower by others
- **Social and community wellbeing services:**
 - Support for aged care and practical assistance, but mixed views on Council's role on such services
- **Economic development and tourism:**
 - Support for growth and tourism infrastructure, with different views on where and how investment should be focused.

What The Survey Tells Us In Summary

- The community wants investment in essential infrastructure, particularly roads
- Recreation and community facilities are highly valued
- There is strong interest in maintenance and quality of delivery
- Views differ significantly on arts, culture, and some social programs
- There is a clear call for fairness, transparency, and geographic balance
- Community priorities are not uniform

How is this feedback considered

- The survey provides broad insight into community priorities and sentiment
- Use results to inform overall budget direction and test alignment with community views
- Survey themes, alongside other data, to help guide project prioritisation



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Thank you