insyncsurveys

Mildura Rural City Council

Community Wellbeing Survey Report

November 2010

Mildura Rural City Council

Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Melbourne	Phone: +61 3 9909 9209 • Fax: +61 3 9614 4460
Sydney	Phone: +61 2 8081 2000 • Fax: +61 2 9955 8929
Address	PO Box 446, Flinders Lane, VIC 8009, Australia
Website	www.insyncsurveys.com.au

Table of Contents

FOREWORD 3

1. Executive Summary 4

Methodology 4
Scaling 5
Response Statistics 6

2. Detailed Results 8

Integration of people, groups and community organisations 9
Maintaining direction, energy and motivation 13
Substance and style of decision making 14
Resource generation and allocation 16
Pattern maintenance and tension reduction 17

3. Net Promoter Score 19

How likely is it that you would recommend Mildura as a place to live? 19

4. Overall Satisfaction 21

5. Comparisons with 2008 22

Integration of people, groups and community organisations 22
Maintaining direction, energy and motivation 23
Substance and style of decision making 24
Resource generation and allocation 24

6. Response Distribution 25

7. Qualitative Analysis 27

8. Discussion and Conclusions 28

Appendix A – Factor Loading 32

Appendix B – Qualitative Analysis 34

Living in your neighbourhood - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions? 34
How decisions are made - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions? 45
Community Resources - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions? 52

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

FOREWORD

Most people who take an interest in their community do not want to dabble in theory but rather want to see the lives of those about them enriched and improved as a result of local endeavours. They have a practical interest in achieving tangible improvements. Hence the willingness of many residents and organisations to take constructive action to remedy the specific problems identified by the Mildura Social Indicator studies published in 2006 and 2008. When a single theme, like deficient education, is seen to underlie many of the difficulties revealed by such studies then community leaders and engaged citizens roll up their sleeves and cooperate in searching for practical ways forward. That is precisely what the Australian Social Inclusion Board, of which I am a member, was privileged to see happening during our official visit to Mildura in July, 2010. May such an approach long be characteristic of Mildura's collective response to the many challenges it faces.

However, any practical leader of a business or communal organisation knows that sustaining problem solving activity requires regularly taking the 'pulse' of the overall state of the group that she or he leads and ensuring that essential group capacities are maintained in a healthy state. People often indicate their awareness that a group or organisation's energy, focus or maintenance of direction is flagging by attributing the fact that it is not travelling well to its *poor morale.* For this type of assessment to be worthwhile in terms of identifying both organisational or communal shortcomings and effective remedies, a more precise reading of pulse is necessary.

Decades of community studies have indicated four dimensions of well functioning communities that if monitored at regular intervals provide a most useful supplement to the more specific focus upon particular problems. These dimensions were incorporated in a 2008 study, the *Community Wellbeing Survey Report* which presented benchmark measures of the overall wellbeing of Mildura as a functioning community. The present 2010 report creates the opportunity for beginning to chart any alterations, positive or negative, in the community's standing with respect to four clusters of attributes that in combination help to sustain effective community functioning and which meet the expectations and relevant needs of community members:

(i) The substance and style of decision making,

(ii) Resource generation and effective allocation,

(iii) The integration of people, groups and community organisations, and

(iv) The maintenance of direction, energy and motivation.

Tony Vinson

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

1. Executive Summary

Methodology

The survey consisted of 32 questions which were derived from four broad themes as developed by Professor Tony Vinson, namely:

- *Integration of people, groups and community organisations*
- *Maintaining direction, energy and motivation*
- *Substance and style of decision making*
- *Resource generation and allocation*

These themes were consistent with those posed in the 2008 Community wellbeing survey Report, with the addition of a further factor:

- *Pattern maintenance and tension reduction*

The categories originated from the work of Professor Tony Vinson and indicate "four clusters of attributes of disadvantaged communities that require constant attention and monitoring in the course of community strengthening". Additionally, a sub-category of Integration of people, groups and community organisations known as Sentiment of attachment to the local area, was deemed to be worthy of investigation by Professor Vinson.

This report will present the percentage of all respondents who strongly disagreed; disagreed; neither agreed/nor disagreed; agreed and strongly agreed with each item in each of Professor Vinson's categories. The number of respondents and the mean score obtained for each item will also be presented for each category. Variance across demographic groups was also investigated. Where possible, data will be compared with that obtained in the 2008 study. However, it cannot be assumed that the sample population undertaking the study constitutes the same members as those interviewed in 2008.

Please note that negatively worded items, "Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood" and "I rarely have neighbours over to my house to visit" have been reverse scored in this report. Also note that this preliminary data has not been weighted according to any specific demographic groups.

Please see Appendix A for a full list of survey items, detailing how they load onto each of the factors. Descriptions of the aforementioned categories can be found in their respective sections throughout the body of the report.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Scaling

The adoption of a five level likert scale to measure the survey items provides valid discrimination of respondent attitudes. This bipolar scaling method is a sufficiently interval model which allows standard statistical tests to be applied to the means that are produced from such scales. Accordingly, the results produced involve analysis of the mean responses to the survey items.

Please note that the middle option (3) in the five point scale allows for respondents to neither agree nor disagree.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Response Statistics

Residents of Mildura Rural City Council area (MRCC) were contacted via phone over a four week period during August/September and invited to participate in the survey by an external call centre. In order to gain a random sample, calls were made to publicly-listed MRCC residents in alphabetical order. The calls were made to a random sample of areas across MRCC. This ensured that the participants were selected at random, thus increasing the likelihood of an evenly distributed sample. Calls were made seven days per week both during business hours and after business hours to further ensure an equal representation of all participant groups, particularly in relation to age. Regular monitoring of demographic profiles ensured that biases towards particular demographic groups were limited as much as possible.

The following table displays the number of respondents for each demographic category.

Mildura Rural City Council Wellbeing Survey Results, September 2010 Response statistics		
Total	405	%
Age		
18 - 24 years	9	2%
25 - 44 years	103	25%
45 - 64 years	176	43%
65+ years	116	29%
Unspecified	1	0%
Gender		
Female	263	65%
Male	139	34%
Unspecified	3	1%
Are you an Indigenous Australian		
Yes	15	4%
No	386	95%
Unspecified	4	1%
Most frequently spoken language		
English	398	98%
Other	6	1%
Unspecified	1	0%
Family structure		
Single	44	11%
Couple family with children	226	56%
Couple family without children	54	13%
One parent family	59	15%
Other	22	5%
Unspecified	0	0%

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Household income (per week)		
Decline	42	10%
$1 - $249	25	6%
$250 - $499	119	29%
$500 - $799	83	20%
$800 - $1199	74	18%
$1200 - $1699	30	7%
$1700 - $2499	21	5%
$2500 - $3499	8	2%
$3500+	2	0%
Unspecified	1	0%
Location		
Buronga	7	2%
Colignan/Nangiloc	5	1%
Ellerslie	3	1%
Gol Gol	14	3%
Greater Red Cliffs	49	12%
Irymple	33	8%
Mallee Track	11	3%
Merbein	35	9%
Mildura Central	199	49%
Ouyen	24	6%
Wentworth	25	6%
Unspecified	0	0%

A total of 405 MRCC residents participated in the current study. As can be seen from the response statistics table above, 176 (43%) of the respondents were aged between 45 and 64 years, followed by residents aged over 65 years (29%), and the 25 to 44 years age group (25%).

About two-thirds of respondents were female, and the majority (95%) were also not of Indigenous descent. An overwhelming 98% identified English as their most frequently spoken language, and just over half of the respondents (56%) were a part of a two-parent family with children.

Respondents were interviewed from various suburbs of the MRCC municipality. As data from the previous study was not able to be decisively split by location, calls were targeted specifically to diverse regions of MRCC in order to capture meaningful data. Respondents were prompted to divulge their postcode and suburb to avoid the general response of “Mildura” when asked where they resided (as found with the previous study). The highest proportion of responses were collected from Mildura central area (49%), however the smaller townships of Greater Red Cliffs, Irymple and Merbein were also well represented.

Interviews were conducted at an average length of 12.05 minutes, with 70% of call attempts proceeding with the interview. Ten percent of respondents also declined to divulge their household income. Those who chose not to respond to other demographic selections were classed as ‘unspecified’.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

2. Detailed Results

The survey consisted of 32 questions which encompass five broad themes believed to be key capacities integral to strengthening a community:

- *Integration of people, groups and community organisations*
- *Maintaining direction, energy and motivation*
- *Substance and style of decision making*
- *Resource generation and allocation*
- *Pattern maintenance and tension reduction*

Each category will be described in the following pages and the percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed; disagreed; neither agreed/nor disagreed; agreed and strongly agreed with each item in each category will also be presented.

Each survey item will be displayed revealing the number of responses to each statement, the percentage distribution across the agreement scale and the mean score. Levels of agreement are determined by combining the percentage of respondents who have nominated that they *agree* or *strongly agree* with the survey item.

Furthermore, items will be presented in descending order (i.e. the item obtaining the highest mean score will appear first in the table).

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Integration of people, groups and community organisations

A community that is striving to achieve its goals needs to, simultaneously, attend to the socio-emotional resources that can sustain that effort while meeting basic needs for human contact and attachment. These pursuits do not constitute a "tack-on" category of concerns that somehow supplement the provision of more primary human services and infrastructural improvements. They are critically important to strengthen a community.

The community needs to foster a sense of belonging among its individual, family and organisational members. This sentiment can find expression in, and be encouraged by, activities and occasions invested with community identity and meaning, particularly the celebrating of success in achieving widely shared goals. A community developing in this direction welcomes cultural diversity, accommodates differences and strives to ensure the inclusion of all groups in decision-making. It also provides means for celebrating and symbolising unity. At the organisational level, it seeks to synchronise the activities of different agencies around shared goals using a combination of value incentives and resource inducements.

Indicators of progress

There is a stronger:

- Sentiment of attachment to the local area
- Consciousness of community unity
- Participation in community affairs
- Spirit of mutual help and co-operation within the community
- Working relationship between organisations in the community
- Formation of alliances between local organisations
- Degree of trust between the people and organisations of the community

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The following table details the number of responses, the proportion of responses for each scale item, and the mean score for all statements in this factor. The items are presented in descending order with the item attracting the highest mean score displayed first in the table, and the item attracting the lowest mean score appearing last. Furthermore, the top five and lowest five performing items have been colour coded with those items attracting the five highest mean scores highlighted in green, and those attracting the five lowest mean scores highlighted in red.

The following table outlines the overall results for the category of integration of people, groups and community organisations.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
I believe my neighbours would help me in an emergency	402	1%	2%	2%	49%	46%	4.38
Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood	404	0%	3%	4%	54%	38%	4.26
I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood	404	0%	3%	7%	57%	33%	4.18
I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood	401	0%	4%	4%	66%	25%	4.12
I feel loyal to the people in my neighbourhood	401	0%	5%	9%	63%	24%	4.06
I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	402	2%	7%	8%	55%	28%	4.01
The friendships and associations I have with other people in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me	403	2%	11%	9%	52%	27%	3.92
I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood	401	2%	10%	4%	64%	20%	3.90
Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of community	402	1%	10%	10%	60%	20%	3.88
I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this neighbourhood	402	2%	10%	14%	61%	13%	3.74
Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood	404	5%	16%	6%	47%	26%	3.73
I think I agree with most people in my neighbourhood about what is important in life	401	0%	9%	22%	57%	11%	3.70
If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my neighbourhood	402	4%	21%	7%	52%	16%	3.55
A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in my neighbourhood	402	3%	18%	20%	51%	8%	3.44
I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours	400	6%	29%	10%	45%	11%	3.27
I visit my neighbours in their homes	401	7%	32%	9%	40%	11%	3.15
If the people in my neighbourhood were planning something, I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing	401	4%	33%	21%	31%	10%	3.08
I rarely have neighbours over to my house to visit	400	8%	47%	8%	30%	8%	2.84

Please note: Discrepancies in percentage calculations can be attributed to decimal rounding.

The top rating survey items relate to people's relationships with their neighbours, and their sense of belonging in their neighbourhood.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

In regards to people's relationships with their neighbours, 95% of respondents believed their neighbours would help in an emergency, 91% indicated that they would work together to improve the community, 87% of respondents indicated that they felt loyalty to people in the neighbourhood. With regard to the statements pertaining to the neighbourhood itself, approximately 92% of respondents agreed to feeling attracted to residing in the area. 90% of residents agreed and strongly agreed with feeling a sense of belongingness to the neighbourhood, and 83% expressed a solid desire to remain living in the area for many years to come.

At the other end of the scale are the bottom five performing items with which residents have indicated lower levels of agreement. These items were related to feeling deeply involved in the community, and visiting neighbours or having neighbours visit.

Just over half of the respondents (59%) indicated that they perceived a deep sense of fellowship between themselves and others in the neighbourhood. Just under half of the respondents (41%) of the residents felt that if people were planning something in the neighbourhood, it would be thought of as an inclusive and communal activity rather than an activity that others were doing. Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that they borrow and exchange favours with their neighbours, slightly fewer respondents (51%) visit their neighbours at home, and even fewer (38%) indicated that they rarely have their neighbours over to visit.

Only three of the 18 statements recorded above 20% for the *neither agree nor disagree* selection. This illustrates that a central tendency bias was not reflected in the data and that respondents genuinely had explicit positive or negative opinions. These statements were:

- I think I agree with most people in my neighbourhood about what is important in life
- A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and the other people in my neighbourhood
- If the people in my neighbourhood were planning something I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Sentiment of attachment to the local area

Sentiment of attachment to the local area is considered to be an indicator of progress in the integration of people, groups and community organisations and, as such, the following items believed to relate to sentiment of attachment have been tallied.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood	404	0%	3%	4%	54%	38%	4.26
I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	402	2%	7%	8%	55%	28%	4.01
Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood	404	5%	16%	6%	47%	26%	3.73

The highest rating item was related to the general attraction that respondents have to living in their neighbourhood with 92% of respondents indicating that living in their neighbourhood is appealing. Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that they plan to stay in their neighbourhood for some years; however, 73% of respondents also indicated that if given the chance, they would move out of their current neighbourhood.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Maintaining direction, energy and motivation

A community undergoing renewal and strengthening, while upholding people's right to self-expression, needs to encourage the preservation of that degree of order required to achieve progress. It does so by the periodic democratic review of rules and procedures and by holding individuals and groups responsible for their maintenance. It attempts to reduce the causes of disorder and offending and emphasises the community restoration of individuals and organisations wherever practicable. The community acknowledges that stress is frequently a by-product of debate and decision-making and therefore provides explicit opportunities for "bleeding off" tension and containing disruptive rivalries. It promotes a social environment free from fear.

Indicators of progress

The community:

- Ensures that differences of opinion are not allowed to cause projects to "go off the rails"
- Brings people together in ways that set aside their differences
- Is skilful at containing tensions that arise from time to time between individuals and organisations
- Periodically takes the opportunity to systematically review rules and procedures
- Provides opportunities to heal damaged relations by social contact or, where necessary, structured conciliation
- Promotes tolerance of variations in life-style and beliefs
- Encourages respect for other people's rights

The following table outlines the overall results for the category of maintaining direction, energy and motivation.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
My community accepts differences in lifestyle and beliefs	397	1%	8%	14%	65%	12%	3.80
Tensions and conflicts are not allowed to get out of hand in this community	395	3%	11%	15%	59%	11%	3.65

Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated they believe community is accepting of different lifestyles and beliefs, while 70% of respondents thought that tensions in the community generally do not get out of hand. The performance ratings for the items in this factor are slightly lower than those in the previous factors relating to community connectedness and attachment to the local area.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Substance and style of decision making

A cornerstone requirement of community strengthening is that orderly but open arrangements must exist for generating an action agenda. Those involved in wielding formal and informal leadership must acquire an understanding that community wellbeing demands disciplined commitment to finding common ground in the pursuit of community wellbeing.

Leaders, whether appointed officials, office holders, community stakeholders or local residents, must become skilled in creating a mix of goals of different durations and purposes, from resource generation and material services to bringing people together. Those seeking to exercise leadership should utilise objective data in decision-making but serious efforts should also be made to elicit, and give serious consideration to, opinions across community groups. Agendas, decisions and available information should be publicised to community members. Community stakeholders could include non-residents whose professional or commercial involvements with the community motivate them to want to contribute to its strengthening and who are prepared to work in a collaborative way with others.

Indicators of progress

Leaders:

- Guide the community in developing and using a vision for the its future
- Have the pulse of community needs
- Develop strategic plans to achieve goals conscious of the relevant resource demands and the feasibility of their attainment
- Draw upon factual information to help make decisions
- Ensure that documents bearing on prospective decisions are readily accessible
- Share decision-making with community members
- Constantly ask how each proposed initiative will serve to strengthen the community
- Planning adequately integrates social and economic issues, and
- Make an effort to include women, youth and members of cultural/ethnic groups in decision-making.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The following table outlines the overall results for the category of *substance and style of decision making*.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
Help the community to devlop goals for a better future	402	2%	19%	19%	56%	4%	3.41
Carefully consider community needs	402	4%	21%	22%	49%	3%	3.26
Develop sound plans to achieve goals	400	3%	20%	27%	48%	3%	3.26
Share decision-making with community members	397	7%	25%	26%	40%	3%	3.07

The item with the highest rating was related to MRCC's demonstration of wanting to help the community develop goals for the future when making decisions about the municipality. Sixty percent of respondents expressed agreement with this statement. The item that respondents had the lowest levels of agreement with (43%) was related to MRCC's demonstration of consultation with community members when making decisions.

A higher central tendency bias is shown in this cluster, with many more responses falling in the middle of the scale indicating an indifferent opinion. Agreement levels also appeared to be comparably lower to other categories.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Resource generation and allocation

A community that is finding its feet constantly reviews and marshals the resources that are available to support the community goals that have been set. It capitalises on intra-community "bonding" and "bridging" ties to generate and link additional resources, in the forms of relevant talents and willing hands, to community programs and goals. It cultivates and capitalises upon external connections ("weak ties" and social capital "linkages") to lever additional resources, utilising trusted and influential locals and/or stakeholders, as well as residents, in this process. It scans the political, philanthropic and grant organisations' environments to identify themes that could be the springboards for seeking additional tailored funding. It assigns tasks to organisations and brokers partnerships consistent with community goals on a contractual basis or, at a minimum, in accordance with explicitly agreed terms and assesses the fulfilment and continuing relevance of the agreements.

Indicators of progress

- Official funds are purposefully and equitably employed in support of community goals
- Services are delivered on a basis that attempts to ensure that all community members benefit
- Recipients of local funds and resources are required to have clear objectives and report on their progress
- Local people and organisations contribute financially and in kind to community initiatives
- The community is successful in accessing outside resources in order to address gaps and achieve community goals
- Partnerships between organisations are characteristic of the way the community works
- Informal leaders are given help to strengthen their contributions to the community

The following table outlines the overall results for the category of *resource generation and allocation*.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
Local organisations and people contribute financially and voluntarily to support community initiatives	398	0%	5%	11%	64%	21%	4.00
Official funds are used wisely and fairly in this community	400	2%	20%	26%	49%	3%	3.31

The variable relating to the support and contribution of local people and groups attracted the highest levels of agreement in this factor (85%). Of the people who responded to this item, none expressed that they strongly disagreed with the support present in the community, which is a positive result. The remaining variable in this factor was related to the equity of how official funds are allocated within the community. Just over half of the respondents (52%) agreed with this item, while a further 26% reserved judgement.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Pattern maintenance and tension reduction

A community undergoing renewal and strengthening, while upholding people's right to self-expression, needs to encourage the preservation of that degree of order required to consolidate general progress. It ordinarily does so by the periodic democratic review of rules and procedures and by holding individuals and groups responsible for their maintenance. It attempts to reduce the causes of disorder and offending and emphasises the community restoration of individuals and organisations wherever practicable. The community acknowledges that stress is frequently a by-product of debate and decision-making and therefore provides explicit opportunities for "bleeding off" tension and containing disruptive rivalries. It promotes a social environment free from fear.

However, community strengthening is not a magical process. It requires a minimum of order to achieve its purposes for the benefit of the majority. When the disruption of the measures outlined above is severe, special measures are needed if the community system is to have a chance of achieving goals determined in accordance with the procedures described in section (i) ("goals") and (ii) (resource allocation). An auspicing body must make it clear that intimidation of workers and some individuals and groups will not be tolerated and the standard provisions of the law must be applied. Persistently disruptive individuals should be excluded for a period from community management roles and an independent appeal procedure instituted to protect the rights of the people concerned. Clear meeting protocols and the offer of mentoring to community representatives, may help to address some of these issues.

Indicators of progress

The community:

- Ensures that differences of opinion are not allowed to cause projects to "go off the rails"
- Brings people together in ways that set aside their differences
- Is skilful at containing tensions that arise from time to time between individuals and organisations
- Periodically takes the opportunity to systematically review rules and procedures
- Provides opportunities to heal damaged relations by social contact or, where necessary, structured conciliation
- Promotes tolerance of variations in lifestyle and beliefs, and
- Encourages respect for other people's rights

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The following table displays the overall results of all items in the factor of *pattern maintenance and tension reduction*.

Statement	No. Of respondents	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean score
This community upholds the rights of others by encouraging social justice and equality	397	3%	11%	17%	62%	7%	3.59
This community periodically reviews its goals and aspirations for moving forward	399	2%	12%	24%	57%	6%	3.52
This community ensures that differences of opinion do not create tension between its members	399	2%	20%	24%	49%	5%	3.35

The item relating to social justice and equality being encouraged by the community was the top rating item for this factor with 69% of respondents expressing agreement with the statement. The lowest rating item for this factor was related to ensuring that differences do not create tension within the community. Just over half of the respondents (54%) expressed agreement with this item. A further 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

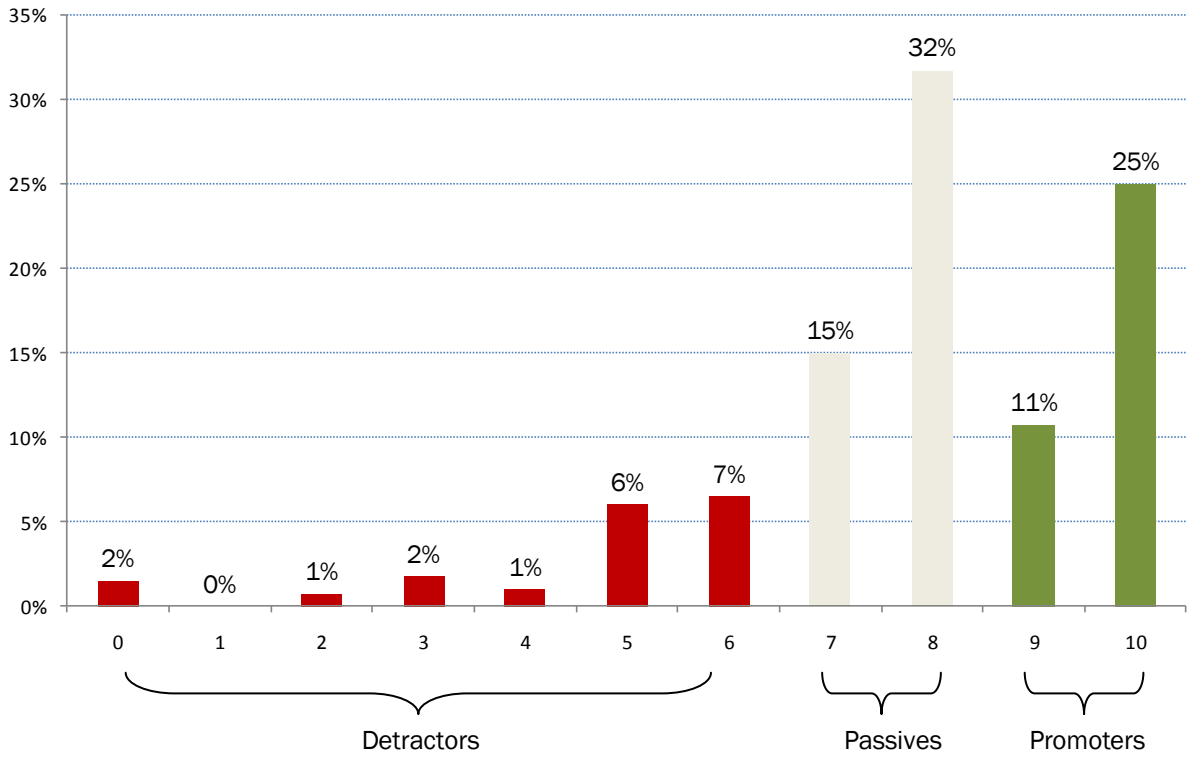
© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

3. Net Promoter Score

How likely is it that you would recommend Mildura as a place to live?

An additional important measure in community research is whether a resident would recommend their community, or actively discourage others from residing there. Residents of Mildura were asked how likely they would recommend Mildura as a place to live on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is "least likely" and ten is "most likely".

The following table outlines the distribution of scores across the eleven-point scale.

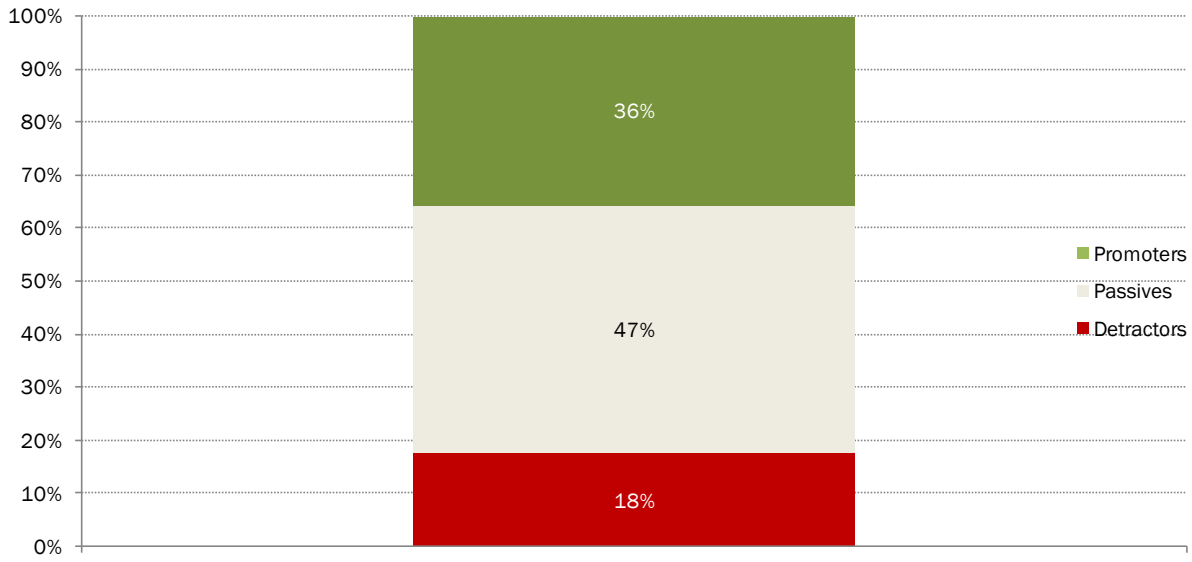


Using Reichheld's Net Promoter Score® (NPS) methodology, responses were clustered into three groups. The first group of respondents who would recommend Mildura as a place to live and gave scores of nine or ten are called "promoters". They are known as such because they are typically the source of a town's positive word-of-mouth. Respondents in the second group, who rated Mildura a seven or eight, are identified as "passive", suggesting that they are passively satisfied with living in their town but do not actively promote it. Their propensity to recommend is typically lower than those of the promoters. "Detractors", with ratings from one to six make up the third group. Detractors typically account for a vast majority of negative word-of-mouth.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Promoters:	Respondents who provided a rating of nine or ten are called "promoters" (green in the chart below). They are known as such because they are typically the source of positive word-of-mouth.
Passively satisfied:	Respondents in the second group, who rated a seven or eight (beige in the chart below), are "passively satisfied". Their propensity to recommend is typically lower than that of those of the promoters.
Detractors:	"Detractors", with ratings from zero to six make up the third group (red in the chart below). Detractors typically account for a vast majority of negative word-of mouth.

As can be seen in the below graph, the largest proportion of responses fell in the passive area which indicates that most responded with a seven or eight out of ten. While ideally this group would be smaller, this is a positive result for Mildura, as this suggests that there is 18% more positive word-of-mouth than negative word-of-mouth (calculated by the number of promoters minus detractors).

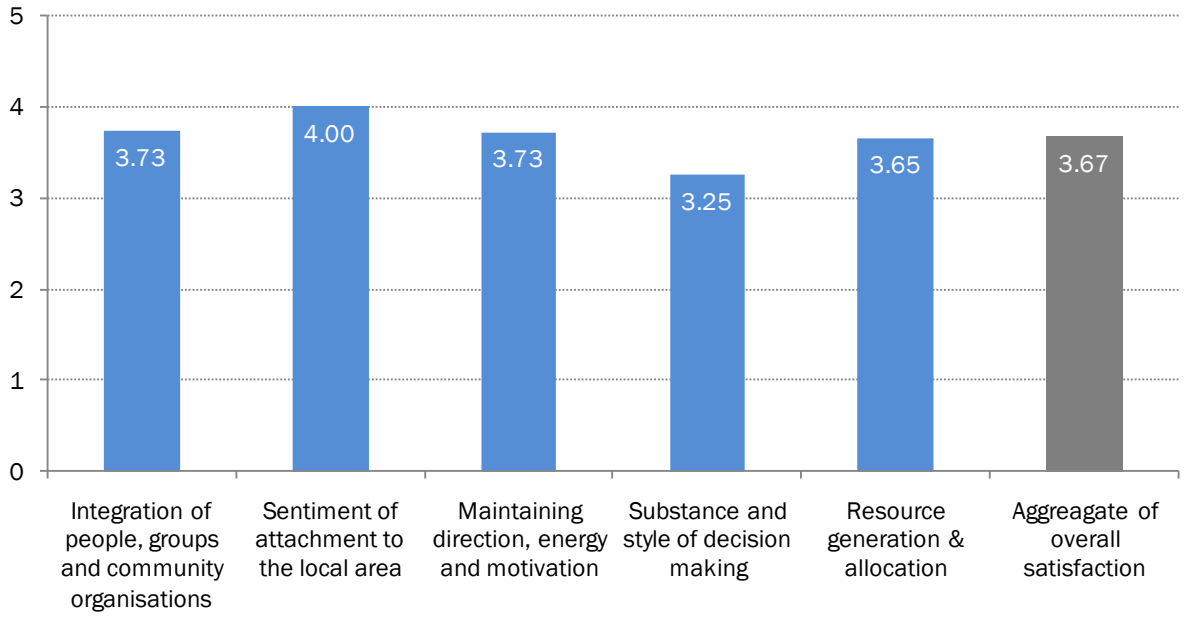


© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

4. Overall Satisfaction

Given that 'satisfaction' is such a subjective and varied concept, rather than try to determine a measure of satisfaction from posing one single question, a mean score has been calculated based on the aggregate of the five existing survey clusters. This was not previously measured in 2008, hence there is no comparison available.

The overall mean score derived from combing the five categories was 3.67 or 73%. Without benchmarkable comparisons, it can be assumed that this score is a moderate results which represents a sound level of satisfaction.



© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

5. Comparisons with 2008

This section details the shifts in performance between the current survey and the previous survey conducted in 2008. Since the *pattern maintenance and tension reduction* factor is a new inclusion for 2010, these results have been omitted from this section.

Integration of people, groups and community organisations

The table below shows the comparison between the results from 2008 and the current results for items in this factor.

Statement	Mean score (2010)	Mean score (2008)	Shift
Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood	4.26	4.05	0.22
I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood	4.18	4.01	0.17
I visit my neighbours in their homes	3.15	3.04	0.11
The friendships and associations I have with other people in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me	3.92	3.75	0.16
Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood	3.73	3.70	0.03
If the people in my neighbourhood were planning something, I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing	3.08	3.22	-0.13
If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my neighbourhood	3.55	3.60	-0.05
I think I agree with most people in my neighbourhood about what is important in life	3.70	3.69	0.01
I believe my neighbours would help me in an emergency	4.38	4.32	0.06
I feel loyal to the people in my neighbourhood	4.06	3.97	0.09
I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours	3.27	2.88	0.39
I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood	4.12	3.62	0.50
I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	4.01	3.86	0.15
I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this neighbourhood	3.74	3.64	0.09
I rarely have neighbours over to my house to visit	2.84	2.82	0.02
A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in my neighbourhood	3.44	3.50	-0.06
I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood	3.90	3.76	0.14
Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of community	3.88	3.76	0.12

As can be seen from the table, most of the items experienced very small, but positive shifts in performance. The items that showed the greatest improvement were related to people's willingness to work together in order to improve the neighbourhood (0.50 point improvement), exchanging favours with neighbours (0.39), and the overall appeal of living in the neighbourhood (0.22). Only three items demonstrated a decline in performance (as indicated by the red text).

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

These items were related to feeling included and communal when people in the neighbourhood are planning something (0.13 point decline), a feeling a deep fellowship in the neighbourhood (0.06), and seeking advice from people in the neighbourhood (0.05).

Sentiment of attachment to the local area

A comparison between the current results and the results obtained in 2008 for these items are presented below.

Statement	Mean score (2010)	Mean score (2008)	Shift
Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood	4.26	4.05	0.22
I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years	4.01	3.86	0.15
Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood	3.73	3.70	0.03

All three items showed an improvement in performance from 2008. The item showing the largest shift is related to the overall appeal of living in the neighbourhood (0.22 points). The item related to moving out of the neighbourhood if given the chance showed the smallest improvement with only a 0.03 point shift.

Maintaining direction, energy and motivation

The table below shows the shifts in performance for the two items in the variable between the current and previous surveys.

Statement	Mean score (2010)	Mean score (2008)	Shift
My community accepts differences in lifestyle and beliefs	3.80	3.79	0.02
Tensions and conflicts are not allowed to get out of hand in this community	3.65	3.75	-0.10

The item related to acceptance of people's differences showed an improvement in performance of 0.02 points. The other item in this factor was related to tensions not getting out of hand, which showed a decline in performance of 0.10 points.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Substance and style of decision making

The table below displays the comparison for all items in this factor between results obtained in 2008 and the current survey.

Statement	Mean score (2010)	Mean score (2008)	Shift
Carefully consider community needs	3.26	3.26	0.01
Help the community to devlop goals for a better future	3.41	3.32	0.09
Develop sound plans to achieve goals	3.26	3.27	-0.01
Share decision-making with community members	3.07	3.01	0.05

Compared to results obtained in 2008, all items showed very small shifts in performance. Three of the four items had small improvements. The largest improvement was seen for the item related to MRCC carefully considering the needs of the community when making decisions (0.09 points). The only item to show a decline in performance was related to MRCC developing sound plans for achieving goals, which had a 0.01 point decrease.

Resource generation and allocation

The table below shows the shifts in performance for the two items in the factor between the 2008 and 2010 surveys.

Statement	Mean score (2010)	Mean score (2008)	Shift
Official funds are used wisely and fairly in this community	3.31	3.13	0.18
Local organisations and people contribute financially and voluntarily to support community initiatives	4.00	3.34	0.65

The two items in this factor both showed improvements since 2008. In particular, the item related to community members contributing financially and voluntarily to support community initiatives saw a large increase of 0.65 points. This item had the greatest improvement of all the items in the survey. The remaining statement was related to the equitable use of official funds in the community, which showed an increase of 0.18 points.

Please note: Discrepancies in percentage calculations can be attributed to decimal rounding.

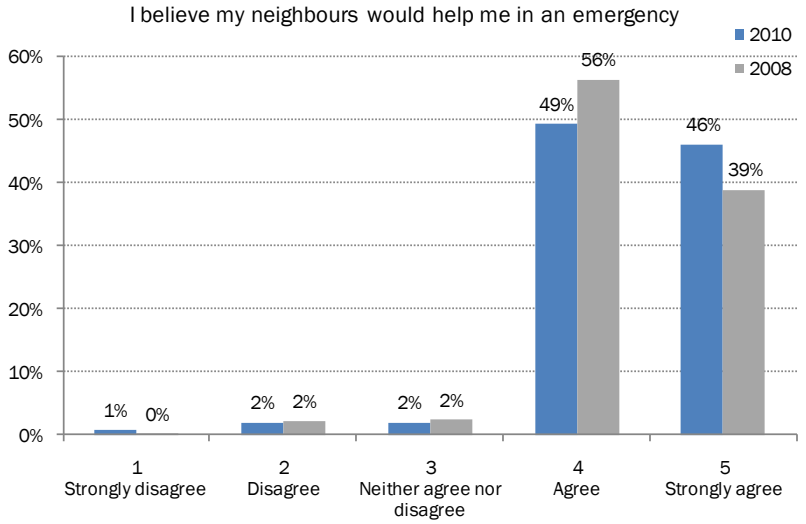
© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

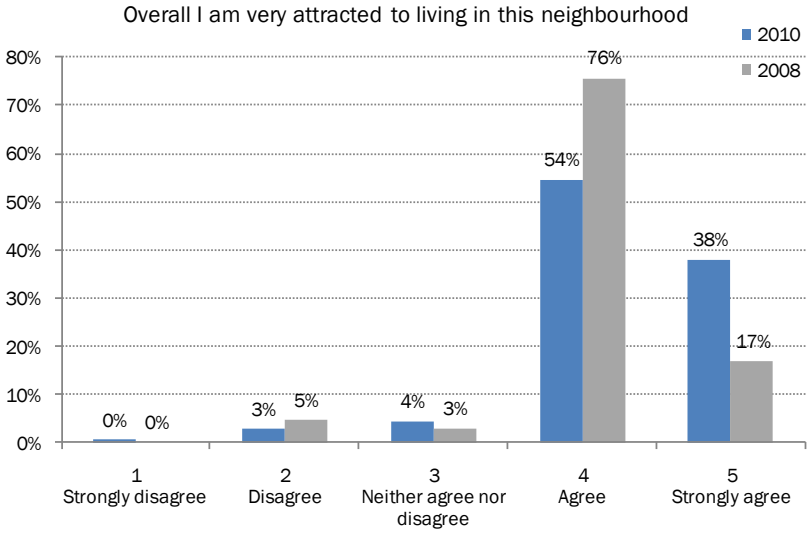
6. Response Distribution

The response distribution graphs for the five top rated items in the *integration of people, groups and community organisations* factor are presented below. The graphs show the proportion of responses for each scale item as well as a comparison to the distribution obtained in the 2008 survey.

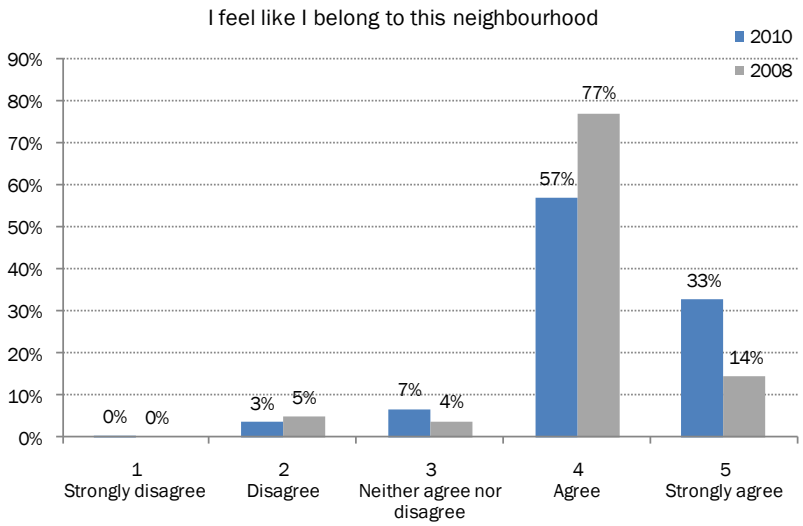
These items have high levels of agreement, and compared to the results obtained in 2008, a higher proportion of respondents have expressed strong agreement.

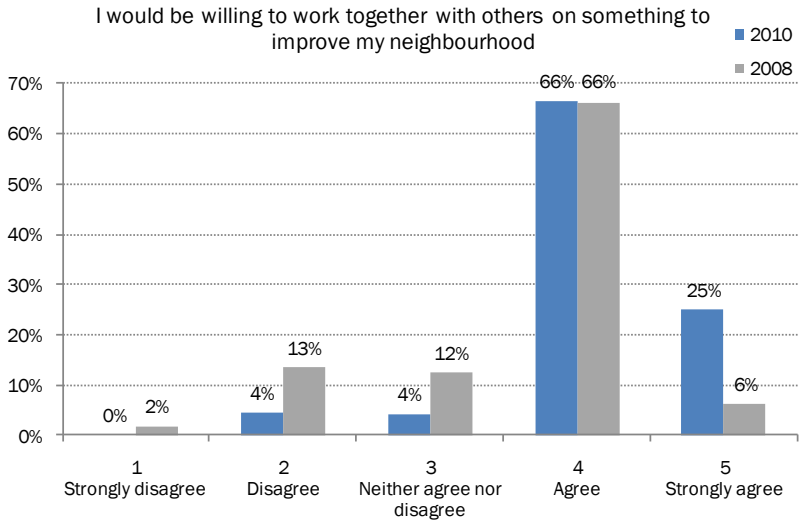
Response distribution graphs for all of the survey items and demographics are included in the detailed data report. Discrepancies in percentage calculations can be attributed to decimal rounding.

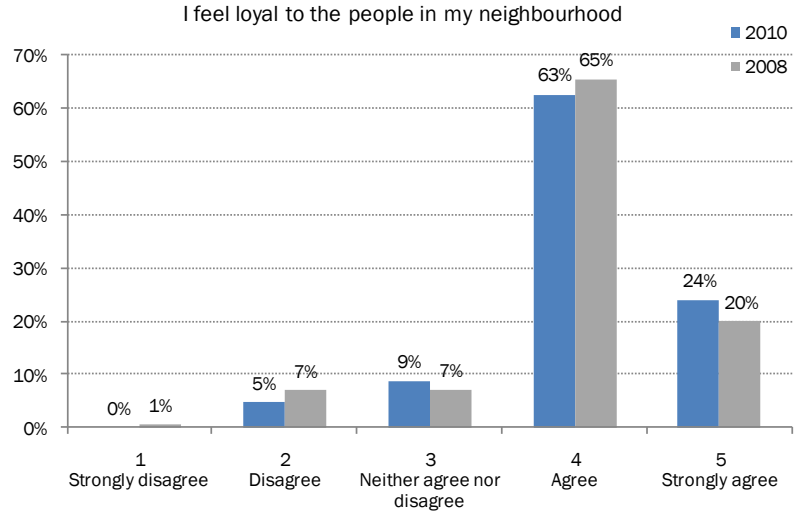




© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd







© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

7. Qualitative Analysis

Throughout the study, residents were asked to elaborate on what was most important in their minds when providing responses to the questions posed. As a result, a number of key themes were identified.

The themes have been summarised and a series of comments supporting those themes provided.

Due to the large number of responses, a comprehensive sample of comments are included in Appendix B.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

8. Discussion and Conclusions

A total of 405 MRCC community members completed the Community Wellbeing Survey in September 2010. The majority of the respondents were from Mildura Central. Responses of seven and below were given for three locations. Females made up around two-thirds of survey respondents, most respondents were aged between 45 and 64 years, and just over half of all respondents were a part of a two-parent family with children. Furthermore, almost all respondents predominantly spoke English and only 4% of respondents indentified themselves as Indigenous Australians.

Integration of people, groups and community organisations

The five top rating items were related to respondents' belief that their neighbours would help them in an emergency, the overall appeal of living in their neighbourhood, a feeling of belonging to the locality, their willingness to help the community improve the neighbourhood, and a feeling of loyalty to the people in the neighbourhood. These items attracted high agreement levels among respondents, and compared with the results obtained in 2008, a higher proportion of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed to these survey items.

Conversely, the five lowest rating items were related to respondents having a deep sense of fellowship with the community, exchanging favours with neighbours, visiting neighbours, feeling included in community activities, and having neighbours over to visit. Two of these items (*if the people in my neighbourhood were planning something, I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing* and *a feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in my neighbourhood*) showed decreases in performance means when compared to the 2008 results.

Sentiment of attachment to the local area is a key indicator for the integration of *people, groups and community organisations* factor. The three items in this indicator all saw small improvements in their agreement ratings compared to the 2008 survey. The highest rated item was related to the general attraction to living in the area, while the lowest rated item was related to respondents moving out of the neighbourhood if given the chance.

Maintaining direction, energy and motivation

Of the two items in this factor, one showed a slight improvement of 0.02 points when compared to the previous survey (*my community accepts differences in lifestyle and beliefs*), while the other declined by 0.10 points (*tensions and conflicts are not allowed to get out of hand in this community*).

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Substance and style of decision making

The four items in this factor showed relatively lower mean scores when compared to all other items in the survey. The items related to MRCC's consideration of community needs, MRCC's assistance in developing goals for the future, and MRCC's consultation with community members all saw slight improvements compared to the previous survey. The item related to MRCC developing plans to achieve goals saw a very small decline in performance.

Resource generation and allocation

The variable related to people contributing to support community initiatives saw the largest improvement from 2008 out of all the items in the survey (increase of 0.65 points). The remaining item, *official funds are used wisely and fairly in this community*, also saw an increase its performance rating score of 0.18 points.

Pattern maintenance

Pattern maintenance was a new factor introduced to the survey and as such, there is no data for comparison. The items in this factor relate to upholding people's right to self-expression and attracted moderate levels of agreement among respondents. The highest rated item for this factor was related to the community encouraging social justice and equality, while the lowest rated item was related to the community ensuring that differences among people do not create tension between community members.

Summary of qualitative comments

Throughout the survey, respondents were asked about their most important considerations when answering questions about living in the neighbourhood, MRCC's decision making process, and community resources.

When answering questions about living in the neighbourhood, an overwhelming number of respondents mentioned positive aspects of living among a friendly, supportive, and cooperative community. These respondents believe that the community spirit in the Mildura region is strong, which allows people to feel connected and safe. In addition, a large number of respondents also mentioned their love of living in the area. These respondents described their neighbourhood as a beautiful and peaceful place to live.

In regards to answering questions about MRCC's decision making process, many respondents took into account the level of community involvement and consultation, and the council's general performance. While some respondents thought that the council seeks a good level of consultation from the community and community groups such as Ouyen Inc., others believed that the council did not facilitate communication with the community. It may be of some concern that a group of respondents were thinking of equality between people in the region when answering questions about council's decision making. These respondents believe that they are forgotten because they live in smaller towns or in less populated areas of Mildura.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Finally, for survey questions relating to community resources, many respondents expressed that the most important considerations related to their love of living in the area, the strong community spirit, and the level of cooperation among community members. In addition to these issues, respondents also mentioned that council's past performance was an important consideration. For some respondents, the council was perceived to be communicating well with the community and looking after the needs of the community, however, other respondents were quite critical of the council's future planning, and their level of consultation with the community.

Summary

The results of the 2010 Community Wellbeing Survey allow MRCC to assess its performance in conjunction with the experiences and expectations of its community members, and in comparison to the previous survey. The survey has facilitated the capture of rich data that will be valuable in assessing and understanding the needs of the community as a whole, and also within different demographic groups and locations. Overall, the results of the 2010 MRCC Community Wellbeing Survey have been positive with many small improvements on the results obtained in 2008.

This year, the survey gathered 405 responses. Although this is fewer than the number of respondents who participated in the previous survey (504), it still provides a good level of confidence in the results obtained at the overall level. Improvements upon the previous survey include a more detailed capture of where respondents reside within the greater Mildura region, and the inclusion of an extra factor (*pattern maintenance and tension reduction*) that assesses the community's acceptance of personal differences and promotion of social justice. An overall measure of satisfaction was also determined by combing the aggregate scores of the five existing categories. This result of 3.67 indicates a sound level of resident satisfaction.

Of the 32 items in the survey, most had relatively high mean scores of 3.50 or above, which indicates high levels of agreement. In comparison to the previous survey in 2008, all but five items demonstrated small, but positive shifts in performance. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was the only aspect of the survey that experienced a major change with a decrease of 14 points. In 2010, fewer respondents were identified as promoters, while there was a slightly higher proportion of passives and detractors. While the NPS is still largely positive, it may be beneficial for MRCC to uncover the reasons for the decline in opinion.

As summarised above, the qualitative comments included in Appendix B provide a wealth of information for identifying any underlying issues for community members.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Overall Key Indicators	April 2008	November 2010
Mean scores above 4.00	4	9
Mean scores below 3.00	1	1
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	32	18

The results in this survey provide insight into the feelings and experiences of residents in the Mildura region. The results should be considered along with the qualitative comments in assessing where action should be taken. Overall, the survey suggests that Mildura residents have strong feelings of community and have a positive attachment to their neighbourhood. This survey should assist in maintaining and improving current levels of performance and community consultation for MRCC.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Appendix A – Factor Loading

1. Integration of people, groups and community organisations
    - Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood
    - I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood
    - I visit my neighbours in their homes
    - The friendships and associations I have with other people in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me
    - Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood
    - If the people in my neighbourhood were planning something, I'd think of it as something "we" were doing, rather than "they" were doing
    - If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my neighbourhood
    - I think I agree with most people in my neighbourhood about what is important in life
    - I believe my neighbours would help me in an emergency
    - I feel loyal to the people in my neighbourhood
    - I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours
    - I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood
    - I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years
    - I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this neighbourhood
    - I rarely have neighbours over to my house to visit
    - A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in my neighbourhood
    - I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood
    - Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of community

1a. Sentiment of attachment to the local area
    - Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood
    - I plan to remain a resident of this neighbourhood for a number of years
    - Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this neighbourhood

2. Maintaining direction, energy and motivation
    - My community accepts differences in lifestyles and beliefs
    - Tensions and conflicts are not allowed to get out of hand in this community

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

3. Substance and style of decision making
    - Carefully consider community needs
    - Help the community to develop goals for a better future
    - Develop sound plans to achieve goals
    - Share decision-making with community members
4. Resource generation and allocation
    - Official funds are used wisely and fairly in this community
    - Local organisations and people contribute financially and voluntarily to support community initiatives
5. Pattern maintenance and tension reduction (new factor introduced since 2008)
    - This community ensures that differences of opinion do not create tension between its members
    - This community periodically reviews its goals and aspirations for moving forward
    - This community upholds the right of others by encouraging social justice and equality

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Appendix B – Qualitative Analysis

Throughout the study, residents were asked to elaborate on what was most important in their minds when providing responses to the questions posed. As a result, a number of themes, presented in the bolded text below, were identified. Please note that a number of sample comments are also provided in the italicised text. These comments are produced in their verbatim form, displayed as residents have provided them with minimal corrections to grammar where appropriate. Whilst subjectively bias, the comments provide some further insight into what residents' considered when responding to questions.

Living in your neighbourhood - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions?

Church/Charity minded

Some respondents commented that their involvement with local churches or charitable groups helped them to feel connected to the local community. These residents placed a high importance on fellowship and giving back to the community to feel involved.

A big part of my life is involved in a church fellowship with different dominations, friends and family are very important.

I was thinking about the people we're in the community with, we have a really great church, and the churches in Mildura all work together.

I'm thinking about friendship in the community and the willingness of people to contribute to charity.

I'm in the lions club, fellowship in the community.

I'm a member over the local lions club, I'm pretty actively involved in the community.

Fellowship is very important.

The friendship and fellowship of this street.

Keep Distance but feel supported

Most said that they had close relationships with their neighbours and although they didn't live in each others' pockets, they could count on them for support if needed. They felt that although neighbours were there if they required assistance they did not have a huge involvement in their daily lives.

I just keep to myself, I don't mix with anyone else but they're there if you need them, you know?

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

When you move into a country town it takes years and years to get accepted. There are no trouble makers here. We got people around us, friends around us, we are not living in each other's pockets, but we're there for each other if we're needed.

The friendships that I have with my neighbours are fantastic, we help each other out but we aren't in each other's pockets, but we don't have trouble asking for help either.

we don't live in each other's pockets. Just the help; that we help each other and we've always been a good community when anyone's sick or when someone dies we help the family along.

The thing is that they look out for you but they are not intrusive.

I guess we all sort of keep our distance but we all talk and communicate, but don't live in each others' pockets.

We're all there to help one another but we don't have a lot of contact.

Close relationships with neighbours

A high number of respondents recorded having close relationships with their neighbours and grateful that they had each other living nearby. Many described their neighbours more as friends.

The closeness of some neighbours.

Just the friendship that we've got with our neighbours.

To be honest. I'm surrounded by people that I don't think I could improve on, I'm comfortable with my neighbours.

The fact that I am friendly with my neighbours.

It's just the fluency between the friends here, friendship and loyalty.

I love my neighbours.

I have good neighbours, I have a good street.

We have neighbours on both sides of us and they're both nice people.

Being able to get on with people. We can do that, very tolerable people around here.

Friendship I have with my neighbour is strong, we do lots of things together.

We do see out neighbours a lot.

To be very nice and have a helpful neighbourhood. It's very nice.

The relationships with the neighbours are important. Mine are good.

Just how many friends we have where we live

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Exchange Pleasantries

Some remarked that they exchanged basic pleasantries with neighbours and spoke to them at the local shops or when in their front yards, however the relationship did not go beyond this.

Just to say hello, and talk to the kids. Saying hello and how are you.

We don't have much contact, we don't live on top of one another, we don't get to see each other often, it's only if they happen to be walking past or if they are at the local shop etc.

People stop and talk to me when I'm in the front garden. All the neighbourhood is very nice and we have a nice area.

I'm usually at work all the time and the way our neighbourhoods structured we don't get a chance to see each other often. You say hello and that's about it.

Love living in the area

An overwhelming amount of responses were related to residents' love of the area and happiness to be living in Mildura. People described their region as a beautiful place to live where they were comfortable and content in their environment.

I love my neighbourhood.

I suppose just to have a good neighbourhood here, we have a good street.

Well this is where my home is, it's my base. When I die I'll be buried here. I'm comfortable here, I get along with most people.

We live in the best place in Mildura, the best street in Mildura, were so lucky. The whole street gets on so well, it's wonderful.

We're very happy here, were the same type of people even though some are younger than us. People are happy with the land and gardens.

I find that my neighbourhood is really good. I like living in Ouyen. They have given me a place to live and I try to give back what I can, as we came from outside the area.

Thinking I live in a very good neighbourhood.

Just that this is a nice place to live

I feel so comfortable here. So completely comfortable with my life here - It's a beautiful place with quality of people and activity. It's best the part of my life.

I think the aspect of living in the area I am in is that I enjoy where I live and I always have.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

It's a nice quiet neighbourhood and my children grew up here and I see the young neighbourhood kids enjoying it too.

Everything is good where I live, I have no complaints.

It's nice and quiet my town. I like living here. Good thing to have more surveys, I think it allows the people to have discussion about what we want on our street and in our town.

It's a good neighbourhood

Being satisfied with the environment that I live in.

Support

A strength of the local area appeared to be people's support of each other in tough times. Whether it be the death of a family member or looking after a neighbour's animals while they were away, Mildura residents are willing to pitch in and help others in need.

The good community spirit that we have and we get together and support each other in whatever way it may be.

I think that the friendships that your form in your neighbourhood are most important because you rely on them, and they are a good back-up.

How supportive and how helpful the community has been with me since I lost my husband 6 months ago.

I feel quite safe in this community and I know I can rely on my neighbours. I've always remained in good friendship with my neighbours where ever I've been.

People's commitment to each other, I think it's really important to have people that are there to rely on.

Just that a lot of those things don't affect me, but if someone needed help we would give it, and vice versa.

That your friends would help you if you were in need. That everyone gets along without conflict.

How well we all get along, we can call on each other if needed

It's just a community of support.

It's a little neighbourhood that don't live in each other's pockets but we always look out for each other. I feel very secure in this little neighbourhood.

Just thinking about the sense of community and that they would help you in if you were in trouble. It's easy to fit in and safe.

You know you can go to anybody for advice or help etc.

Just the closeness, that you can rely on them if something was wrong and vice versa.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

How people (in my neighbourhood) carry on and help each other and communicate and let each other know what's going on.

We're a quiet neighbourhood, and they've helped me a lot since my husband died.

Safety

Many residents reported feeling very safe living in the area and this was a predominant reason why living in the Mildura Rural City Council appealed to them.

That it's a good community, everything is close by and everyone looks after each other, mind houses when one person goes away. There is safety.

Safety and security.

Sense of community and that it's a relatively safe community to live in.

A safe community.

A safe neighbourhood.

Just about the neighbours you have contact with and feeling safe with your neighbours in an emergency.

Feeling safe in your neighbourhood.

A safe and secure neighbourhood.

The friendships, the neighbourhood watch feeling, the sense of belonging, and the sense of safety for families and the elderly.

Well I feel safe in this area.

I hope it's a safe neighbourhood where nothing goes wrong.

Peace. We feel safe and happy with where I'm living.

I believe I belong here now. I feel safe.

Privacy I suppose. Safety.

Not friends with neighbours

Others were not friends with neighbours and did not choose to interact with them much in the community.

That I haven't got any close neighbours.

Nobody speaks to anybody in this street so it's hard to answer these questions. It's very hard to answer them in this street.

I haven't got time for the neighbours. I don't know many of them.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I don't really have much to do with my neighbours.

That I don't catch up with the neighbours that often.

That I don't know any of my neighbourhood people.

I actually don't know many neighbours, the one we do know, we interact with a lot.

My neighbours, there are some good ones and bad ones.

We've got a lot of good neighbours and a lot of trouble neighbours too.

Community spirit

The sense of community felt in the local area was the overwhelming response when asked what was at the forefront of residents' minds. Community members thrived on the feeling of wellbeing and cohesion that is felt between them.

Feeling of community, agreeing to make improvements to the community.

Good wellbeing in the community.

There's a strong community here. I've gotten along very well in the community.

The community

Unity.

Community, it's nice to have a general feedback from the community. I try to get a couple of things going for our community. Involved in getting better broadband for Mildura.

Probably being more community spirited, so we can get to know each other rather than just waving in the street.

Community spirit.

I understand the definition of neighbourhood. But in our community the sense of neighbourhood extends beyond our street, I consider Ouyen my "Neighbourhood"

I like the most is just walking down the street and waving to everyone and everyone knowing each other, just that sense of community here.

Just being part of the community and being friends with the neighbours.

We have a really good atmosphere, we're all really close a knit community.

Sense of community.

Just the sense of community.

The community spirit.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The feeling of community.

Just a sense of community in my area.

I just think the sense of community is the best thing.

Working together

Many residents thought of how the community works together when answering these questions. Many mentioned that they simply get along well and work towards the common goal of improving the area in which they live.

I think the community is about working together and knowing your community.

Everyone gets along. If we have problems we talk about it together and solve it together.

Cohesion

We're a small community that get on well together.

My neighbours are from demographic group. Working people. We are all very similar so we get along. People also have children and things.

Probably relationships that are friendly with the neighbours. It's a good neighbourhood to live in, it's basically what we make it and we make it pretty good.

Thinking about people here and how we can help the people in the district, better lifestyle.

That we basically all get along, and we all help out one another.

The community working together as one.

Just friendship and working things out with one another.

We all like one another and agree with one another.

Just that we all stick together.

That we have differences but we don't let it get in our way. I just moved here, We were not far from here beforehand.

Belonging

When answering these questions, some respondents considered their feelings of comfort, friendship, and general sense of belonging in the area and within the community.

Community belonging and spirit.

Sense of belonging

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Feeling of belonging

I think you like to feel that you belong, and that we all belong.

How much I belong, my role and belonging.

I really like living where we live, I have been here for 7 years and I know everyone in the street and I feel like I really belong.

Family

Some respondents felt that the community seemed like a big extended family, and that this was a major consideration when they were answering these questions.

They're like an extended family.

Family and the whole community is like a family.

Just the sense of companionship around the village, were all sort of one big family.

Family.

Good people/friendly

Similarly, some respondents thought about their friendly relationships with others in the community. These respondents perceived locals as being helpful, easy to get along with, and generally good people.

Just that they're good people around here that's all. Friendly and good people.

Just how you get on with each other and how much you interact with the people that live around you.

Getting along, I get along well with my indigenous neighbours.

Our neighbourhood is loving and happy and sharing and we know one another and help one another. And peaceful.

Peaceful environment

Some respondents said that the quiet and peaceful environment of their neighbourhood was the most important consideration when answering these questions.

We're just all out here because it's quiet and peaceful.

I like my neighbourhood it's good, peaceful and quiet.

I like being here because it's so peaceful and quiet and I like my neighbours.

It's reasonably peaceful.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

It's just peaceful, and private.

Peaceful, quiet and friendly neighbourhood.

Difficult relationships

Several respondents mentioned tension in the area due to differences in race, culture and age. For these respondents, the difficulty caused by such diversity in the population was the most important consideration in answering these questions.

Tension and getting along with your neighbours.

That there is two rules. One for one colour and one for another. Some get away with everything and others cant, because the courts allow things to happen.

We live too far apart for fellowship. Probably the hassles I'm having up the road with people up the road, so they have unrestrained dogs and I have livestock, and I've lost one horse already and the council won't do anything about it. The bylaws people are the slackest people in the council, they are gutless.

Half the bastards shouldn't be here, they should be somewhere else.

I get on with most of the neighbours, except one neighbour you couldn't say anything wrong or you would be discriminated against, even putting up the Australian flag, you need to be careful.

Just the neighbourhood needs a re-fork, it's like the Bronx here.

The variety and differences of people in this neighbourhood and there isn't a lot of neighbourly affection.

We live in a neighbourhood with a mixture of people a lot of them are younger and they play their music and have no respect for their neighbours. The neighbours take their dogs for walks and they let their dogs leave droppings. No one has any respect for anyone.

The young immature neighbours have been fixed up by the local police, most of the people are fantastic.

Keep to themselves

Some respondents mentioned that people in their community tend to keep to themselves, and that they don't interact much with their neighbours.

I would like a happy friendly community that worked together as one, but everyone just keeps to their own business.

We don't have anything to do with our neighbours so there's no sense of community at all.

We don't have much to do with our neighbours and we keep to ourselves.

Privacy.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I didn't really have any importance to what you're asking me, we keep to ourselves and it's a nice quiet neighbourhood.

My neighbours are all working a lot so we don't see much of them.

That I don't interfere with other people, I'm just in the community and try to do my own thing.

I don't get involved with people down the road, your neighbours are your neighbours.

Snobbish street, otherwise nice and quiet. Everyone minds their own business.

A nice and quiet neighbourhood, and we keep to ourselves.

I strongly agreed with them, it's not necessary to be out talking to everyone, that's just because I mainly keep to myself.

New

A few respondents have only recently moved into the area.

Just to be helpful. Because we have just moved into this neighbourhood we are only just getting established.

I should probably get to know my neighbours a bit better even though I've only been here a little while.

To give the best answers I could. We have only been here a couple of years and don't really know anybody.

Isolated

A common theme in the comments was that many people felt they were too isolated to feel neighbourly in the traditional sense. Due to the size of their properties and the proximity to each other, numerous respondents described that they weren't close with their neighbours.

To be honest. It's nice to live out here when you haven't got someone right next door.

Out here in the rural area isn't really relevant.

How apart I am from the people in my neighbourhood.

It's hard to answer the questions because we're in a rural area, it's not a city suburb, which makes it hard to classify as a neighbourhood.

What neighbours we've got around, some close by and ones that aren't as close.

We're all farmers and we don't see each other often but we all get along.

It's probably a bit hard cos we live out on a block so we don't have a lot of contact with people, so I was just thinking about the contact we DO have with people.

Just about how far my neighbourhood stretches.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

At times I wish there was more we could do out here as a community because we are so far apart.

I'm a bit of a loner

Just the street I live in, I thought of my immediate neighbours and how we're quite rural, so we don't live in each other's pockets so some of these questions are a bit hard.

I don't really have close connections with neighbours because they're so far away.

Detached

Some respondents felt detached from the community and felt that the communal feeling has dropped off over the years.

Attitudes towards community. The community feeling has eroded. It's more of a "look after yourself" attitude now.

The community isn't what it used to be, no longer do people take on board community rules, they make their own rules. I feel that no longer do people respect those rules and decisions for the benefit for themselves and others.

Just the community feel in the area is probably lacking. The questions were irrelevant to that, especially this side of the river.

The fact that I love this little town but I just wish some of the people clean up their act.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

How decisions are made - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions?

Services and Facilities

Some respondents pointed to the availability of services and facilities to answer questions about council decision making. While some respondents were satisfied with the services and facilities that the council provides, other stated that certain services and facilities were lacking.

Lack of facilities, road facilities and things.

Recently that the local mainly for the kids in the area wanted a skate park and the council took all advice and did it fairly quickly.

As long as they supply me library and down to earth things I'm happy, but they don't do enough for farmers. They're the backbone of our community.

The community activities, family days and development including up-coming changes they want to make to certain areas.

They have just provided with assistance to one of the clubs my children is involved with. Without this they wouldn't have been able to progress.

We've been waiting for the council to give us a good park for the kids here for 10 years but the new areas got them straight away.

The kids having nothing to do, and having to fight to get the skate park up and running

Casino

Only a small number of respondents considered the casino when answering questions about council's decision making. These comments were mixed with some respondents stating that it would boost local business, while others thought that a casino would cause problems for the region.

If they bring the casino to Mildura it will help struggling famers and therefore help local business.

Some of the things they do round town, the casino. Didn't agree with casino production.

I was thinking more the casino, the train brought back in. They don't really listen to anyone. They listen to the wrong ones.

Against the casino. To get that train back for the elderly people so we don't have to go on the bus.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The council are very good, the mayor, they accommodate people very well. Otherwise we'd vote them out. I'm not for the casino, because somebody is going to suffer, and welfare people will have to come hand out food to people who gamble. I think charity is going to suffer. It makes it hard for these low income earners who think they're going to get rich at the casino. I don't think we require a casino. Caring for the community in general, and what the people want. The top old part of Mildura is dying.

They're contemplating opening a casino in Mildura and there's already a high crime rate and high drug use. Not a lot of people support the idea but the council will build it anyway.

Mainly thinking about the casino that's going to be built here.

Well if we get the casino in Mildura we will get our train back, but on the other hand it will make it harder for the other clubs that have poker machines/gambling facilities. Many people have gambling issues but it may help Mildura in the long term.

Community involvement

Many respondents took into account the level of community involvement when answering questions about decision making by the council. Most of these comments addressed the positive aspects of having a community voice in the decisions that the council makes.

Influence of Oyuen Inc gives local opinions to Mildura council and makes them notice this area more.

The most important thing is that all the community should be included in making more decisions in the community.

I was thinking of the community groups involved with the council.

I think they try their best to help the community.

Good community involvement and good communication between council and community.

We also have a community meeting Ouyen as well were we discuss things.

How involved Ouyen Inc is with Mildura council.

Thinking about things that have affected people in the community that could have been done better.

They help the community where needed, and you can approach them about anything when you need to.

It's really nice to hear all this things asking me regarding our community here. Giving me an opportunity to express how I feel, the happy community.

Just about our community that they are trying to do more for us and our kids.

The community that I'm involved in and the associations I have in the community, how they affect me.

Probably sharing with the community, same concerns I've always had, how will we survive with the drought, water is a big issue which has been mismanaged.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Their community meetings that they've held here to discuss the future of the community, we appreciated having them come to the meetings etc.

The community planning that's been happening, I've been happy with.

I think the council on the whole do their best but in some communities their hands are tied with diverse types of people.

They sort of are not involved in the community itself and I don't read the paper much. They could get involved in the community by knowing who you are when they see you, and saying hello.

Council performance

The majority of the comments related to council's general performance in regards to decision making. These comments were varied with some respondents saying that the council were responsive, approachable, and considerate, while others were more critical of council's decision-making process.

Main thing I thought of was that they can't make up their mind on anything,

Change of councillors has certainly gone a long way to help the community. They're more approachable now.

They (The council) always let people know what their plans are for the future.

Probably the fact that there's never any improvement in my area, no support from council.

Just the truth. I find the council reasonable and easy to work with.

I don't keep up very much with what the councils do, I have a very hectic life. The most I had to do with the council was to do with getting a permit. It was straight forward, they were quite good. They didn't stuff around, we got it really quick which was good.

We live very comfortably. They have different organisations for younger people here. They are a wonderful council.

If you have any problems you would go to them (The council) and they would help you. I don't have any problems with anything they do or don't do.

I think it's about that they are not cohesive and are divided in opinion and so they have a difficult road ahead.

If something is happening you can always ask the council workers what's going on and they always give you information about what's happening.

They look after the welfare of the people who live here, after all it is their jobs.

Just thinking that the council was doing a very good job, I'm happy with that.

That there's a lot of indecision in the council.

Considering that it's only a little community, the council is actually going okay.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Mainly just the council does think about the people and they're pretty thoughtful.

I think the council do a really good job.

With all the work going on with the new school here in Merbein and the elderly citizens club, I'm pleased with this work, I know that certain members of the council have had a lot of input in it.

Just the way we get treated when we want to get something done around here, don't get treated very well here at all.

The council, they do a lot of talking and sometimes it takes awhile to flow through into action.

They don't mow the grass around your house. Whenever we start to get new ideas about what's to happen they usually squash it. They never seem to allow things to happen. Like Big W took a long time to finally get started.

I would like the council to be more aware that there are more problems than they think in their community. Problems that are easy to fix like dog poo, and dog attacks and they do nothing positive about it. They care more for the tourism than the community. They do not focus on the community. They do not push for community spirit, well they do not show any.

I think the Mildura Rural City Council is fair and they look after the community.

I've always had satisfaction with the council.

We have had a positive experience with the nature strip program.

If you're willing to get involved, definitely the council do a good job. But if you're not then some people might think the council is doing a bad job.

The clarity of their decision making, whether it's clear to everyone why they're making certain decisions for everyone's benefit. They need to communicate better with the public.

Hopefully the council will be more aware of community decisions and be a part of them, because there's a difference between the community and the council.

Council and their lack of follow through after consulting with the community, for example the red cliffs skate park. They needed to act quicker to have constructed it. The council needs to be responsive to immediate needs of the community. The council has to consider everyone.

The council will help every community in Mildura so we can have a peaceful life, they make it safe to go out at night.

The needs of some disabled neighbours and how the council have helped them out with new footpaths.

Just thinking that the council would help me when I needed them.

Jobs and security, because the council do not try to get employment into this area, they lose employment rather than gaining it. Too much worrying about tourism. And security where I live is nonexistent.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Just basically where they ask for community input when it suits them. Only on certain projects. They do a lot of important decisions before asking the community.

The way the council do help. They're just wonderful.

Council's inability to actually see the issue rather than what they actually should do. Just sending out a standard template letter rather than assessing the situation.

Just what they have achieved so far and what they are aiming to achieve.

I see them as being impacted by the state government and not being able to operate as freely as they should. The council is very good to me. I have men come in and help me with the garden. I think that it's a wonderful service for the community. I have a council lady come in and help me around the house. It's a wonderful service for the elderly. I have help once a fortnight. It's wonderful and should be continued.

Well I don't think that they consider the older people in the community.

Rates

A small number of respondents indicated that they considered council rates when answering questions about how the council makes decisions. All of these comments expressed dissatisfaction about the recent increase in council rates and felt that it was not representative of the services that they receive.

I'd like the council to not put the rates up so much, for what we get for the rates we don't get much. But they work to the best of their ability.

At the moment we're not too impressed with the council, we just got a big increase in our shire rates.

That the city council rip us off with the rates and to me personally I don't think they do much anyway.

Communication and consultation

A large number of respondents considered council communication and consultation when answering questions about decision making. While some respondents felt that the council provided good opportunities for community members to contribute their opinions, other respondents believed that the council did not seek community advice in decisions.

Their ability to be able to communicate with the public, they're reasonably good at the moment.

They're trying but they could do a lot better. We're trying to get a community plan going and I've been to a few of their meetings so I do know that they're trying.

More communication needs to be made with residents.

There should be a lot more talk between the people and the council.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Thinking about how little the community is consulted on big decisions.

I have had personal experiences where the people's opinion was not listened do. They are not a bad council, but they could be better. They should be more progressive and open to new ideas.

I think the council make a lot of decisions on matters themselves rather than getting the community their point of view and what they want.

Nobody listens to us when they said they wanted a swimming pool, the cost didn't justify it. And they didn't listen to us when we didn't want Walpeup shire overtaken by the council. Walpeup was the biggest in the country, and now Mildura council are claiming they're the biggest shire and it seems unfair. we didn't want rubbish bins because we have a good tip down here, but they haven't given us anything to do about recycling which means they do what they want and not what the people want.

I suppose it's like lots of councils, they sit up there in their little offices and make decisions when they don't really care what the people in the country think.

So far they're doing a good job and they're valuing everyone's opinion so we're pretty content with what's going on.

I don't think the council really considers the wide choice of the community. They could improve by regarding the fluoride, that should have been up to a vote for the whole community. Same with the casino I think that should have been put to the community also, not just a few people.

We never hear anything from the council. I don't feel like I communicate enough.

They do listen to you, I went to the local council and asked if we could get a name street and they did it within 12 months which was very good.

I don't think the shire have got the everyday person's concerns for safety planning, and listening to aspects for safety in heart. And it's all about their own decisions.

Speaking about the midway centre and the help they have given the senior citizens. If you have a complaint they attend to it.

I think the council is fairly energetic and listens to the people's needs.

The fact that they should include us a bit more as a community.

Mildura city council are doing a good job of involving community members and meeting their needs.

That the council are open with their decisions and everything is up front, the council do keep the community informed.

The community as a whole, and their consultation with the council, and whether or not they actually listen to the community.

I believe the council need to listen to the people more, listen to the kids more because without kids we're lost, and we need industry for our kids so they will stay.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I think in terms of I haven't seen any individual responses, but they have sent letters around to people, but I don't have any direct involvement with the council other than paying bills to them.

I don't think there's much input at all, they don't do much for the town at all.

You don't hear a lot of what the council is doing.

Really the lack of information that I have about the overall community and council. My lack of knowledge of what's going on.

Well I've attended a couple of council meetings, and nobody's allowed to have anything to say in the meetings.

They do a good job, if you ring up and ask them to do something they do it straight away.

Looking at what my role is in education, I think the council falls short in the community consultation process. A lot more youth stuff is happening now, because of youth yelling at the council to demand it, where as that shouldn't need to happen.

Communication for council could be better because I'm not aware of what they do around here.

As long as they listen to the general public that's the main thing and they do that fairly well.

The fact that council don't consult the community a lot, they just do what they want to do.

Our rural city council here don't listen to what's going on in the district.

Well I think they should communicate more with the people before they make decisions.

They don't communicate properly with the community. They just do things without discussion with others

I feel that they don't really communicate with the community, all they care about is money.

Just thinking about all the discussions we've had about the rail-line and casino we've had, and the council is really taking on what the community want.

Council not really consulting that well with the community, they only consult when they want to get re-elected. They treat their staff badly, and their rates are far too expensive.

We don't really have any communication with the council, we're left to our own devices.

Thinking about projects that are happening and they haven't really consulted what the people want.

The communication with the council, they do what they want to do whether they communicate or not.

Probably that they don't confide in the local people enough. They could improve by getting out amongst the community, you never see them, get out amongst the people.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Community Resources - What was most important in your mind in giving the answers to these questions?

Love living in the area

Many respondents said in answering the questions about community resources, they had their love of living in the area in consideration. Many community members mentioned the lifestyle, the environment, and the people in the community.

It's a nice comfortable place to live and you have everything at hand. You don't have to travel around for hours to get to doctors and specialist.

Well I was thinking, ok I came here when I was one year old and I always come back here because there is always seasonal work here and it's just a good area and you are always welcome here.

I've been to other places, and I come back to Mildura.

Lifestyle, location, public services and distance from capital cities.

Personal quality of life.

People get along very well and the climate is good. It's a good area for us elder people.

Just thinking that it's really good place to live, that's it.

That I like living in Mildura, and happy to recommend it to anyone else who wants to come here.

I am very contented it's a very wholesome area to live in. It's a great place to raise a family in. I can only speak for my life and I don't think it could be better. People are not afraid to move forward. The town's got a very healthy attitude. The elderly are looked after very well.

The Climate, it's a hassle free area. The layout including its environment and parking, we have everything we need in this community, which is why I gave an 8. You could survive without leaving the town.

I just like Mildura, I haven't been born and bred here and I've stayed for 30 years.

Just mainly it is a good place to live.

It's a nice area, it's central and on the average nice people live here.

The environment and the area, the weather and it's a great healthy place to live.

I came to Mildura 50 years ago, to have a look at what it's like and I am still here.

I like the standard of living in this area.

Enjoying living in Mildura.

Mildura has got such a good lifestyle. Wonderful weather and great entertainment. Everybody is catered for.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I like the rural area, the lifestyle.

Lifestyle, there are limited opportunities but I think lifestyle draws people to the region.

Just that I do find it a good place to live.

I moved here 8 years ago and I've enjoyed it, it's great for the kids and it's a great place to be.

Just to be fair and honest with the questions and answers. I'm quite comfortable in this community, and I'd rather live nowhere else

I've been here for 4 years so I think it's a good place and good people.

Living in Mildura is the best place to live I suppose.

Just a nice place to live.

In general it's a great town to live in.

That it's where I've grown up, so I enjoy being here. I understand the background of how it all works too.

It is a good place overall. The weather is great here and there's plenty of stuff to do, we get plenty of tourists through here and give feedback to us.

Mildura is a good place to live.

I love Mildura.

Just knowing that it's a great place to live and have already recommended to family members to come live here.

We like living here.

I just like being here, I've got friends here and I like the town except the hot weather.

It is a really nice place to live, great weather and a river that runs.

Overall it's just a nice place to live.

The best thing about Mildura is the climate.

Thinking about Mildura on whole as a place to live.

I believe we have every opportunity in our area for a good life and family.

The weather conditions and the people up here, just the lifestyle is better.

Even if things aren't perfect, this is a good place to live and I would recommend it.

I don't know if the council help or not but I'd like to think they do. I just love living here.

How things have affected the community over the years, different decision making. Basically Mildura is a good place to live.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Because Ellersylie is a wonderful place to live on the banks of the Darling River, and it's very peaceful.

The security and happiness of my family and the people living around us.

We got space, we got weather, if the river stays full we have water. I think it's the best place to live.

We came here 30 years ago planning to only stay 5 years and we still haven't left. I'm proud to say that I am a Mildurian.

It's a good place to live and the community is good.

Community Spirit

Community spirit was a major factor of consideration for respondents when answering the community resources questions. It is clear that the majority of respondents feel that there is a strong sense of community. Several respondents said that they feel supported, that people know one another, and look after each other.

It's a friendly town. It's a nice place to live.

I've lived in Mildura all my life and I'm very happy to stay here. Everyone tries to communicate with each other and are willing to fund raise for charity.

The rural life compared to cities.

I think generally everyone gets along well. They all get along well. I'm connected to the cemetery and everyone gets in and helps out.

Just how loyal everyone is around the district when it comes to being down and out there's always someone there to help them.

Ouyen is very close little community. We are very tight-knit. Everyone knows everybody.

I think it's a good community. We all know each other and help each other, I think it's great.

How much of a community it is. It's a very tight-knit community.

That it's a good community to be in.

The community.

Just the friendliness of the people.

Just living in the community as a whole is really beneficial to us as it's a really close knit community.

Just basically how the community and the neighbourhood work.

Good community.

The community. The climate.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Thinking about the community.

The little town that I live in has approximately 500 people, we don't have to worry about traffic, and people have got time to stop and say hello. Whereas Mildura people are scared to say hello.

Where we live, I'm quite happy with the community.

Being part of the community and I feel involved.

Just the friendship of everybody, and loyalty. The ease of getting around.

Strong community focus.

What you see the community is doing to make things better.

I think that out here we are a very social community we try to get on. There is not much vandalism in my area. And it is a nice place to live.

Just the town spirit.

I came here in 1986 and I'm still here. The community is alright I believe.

They keep us looking pretty tidy, chopping dead trees etc. they are looking after us. I don't want to make them out to be bad people. no fights. I can't remember if we have neighbourhood watch here, but we do watch out for other people's places. One of the most favourable things about our community is that when we go out we don't lock the doors or car doors. So we do trust each other.

Community spirit was the most important thing on my mind.

Just again that Wentworth has a very strong sense of community. It is isolated from Mildura.

The community input.

Probably the security in town and the people that live there.

Family events like the New Year's parties are always provided by the council.

We're in a fairly good community.

The way people look at each other equally in the community, and whether or not they consider the beliefs of others.

Good neighbours.

I wanted to give a good accurate opinion of our district which I'm proud of. I think we've got a good community.

A good community.

We have a thing here for the Ouyen community called Ouyen Inc that plan things and inform people about what's happening. It's really good.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I was thinking of lots of multi-cultural people in Mildura. Thinking that everyone gets along, all the cultures.

Just being a better community.

About the community support.

Thinking about the diversity of cultures and how accepting most people are.

The weather, its good weather and a good community.

Just everybody seems okay here on this side of the shire, just caring for the elderly is the most important things.

We're very privileged here with all the resources we have here however some aspects could be improved. But the community as a whole does handle those areas very well.

Working together

Many respondents also mentioned that in answering the community resources questions, they were thinking about the community's capacity to work together. Several respondents gave examples such as the community pulling together towards fundraising, volunteering, and generally contributing the community.

I thinking about the community providing financial support, and the whole area is a good place to live, and the Mildura expansion will be a good place to move to.

That I might like a bit more cooperation around.

The community gets in and helps each other, financially and plans ahead together.

Just the way the community and the council help everything for the community.

It's a close little community and we're all striving for the same thing; to make it a nicer and better community to live in.

We always see everyone out trying to help.

I guess Mildura is a tight knit community and we all stick together, and we can rely on the businesses to pitch in if needed.

We have a great community that works together to achieve common goals.

Everyone works together. The community helping each other out.

Everyone's opinion towards the new school and all the other primary schools involvement and meetings have been positive.

The community interacting with each other, the different groups that we've got here. There are no issues with these different groups interacting with each other.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Just that the community is a small community and we try to contribute to everything, and the council could do a bit more if they wanted to, like fix up the gravel roads and stuff like that.

It's a very good community for backing up one another and helping one another.

People in this area contribute a lot, there is a democratic process in discussing what should happen.

We've got a local club here and Bendigo bank help the community, and the funds that go to those funds do benefit the community.

I just like the feel and sense of everyone pitching in.

That it's very much of a community place where everyone helps each other.

It showed me that the community does help with a lot of fund raising and that sort of thing.

We're all in the same community so we all stick together and try to do what's right for the community.

Were quite lucky we live where we are, and we have a strong community volunteer basis. We make up for lack funds with volunteers and community supporters.

There was a young couple whose house burned down. And now everyone is helping up with donations and helping them get back on their feet. The community though, is changing every year. We have so many different nationalities. Crime rate has gone up a lot over the past 10 years.

Just knowing that the clubs and Bendigo bank does contribute to the community.

The community works together to make it a better place.

Crime

Crime was a major consideration in answering questions about community resources for a small proportion of respondents. These respondents expressed concern about the lack of a police presence, drug and alcohol use in the region, and vandalism.

Honesty about the community. I believe Mildura can be violent/unsafe.

Talking about a Casino - oodles of tension. Talking about liquor outlets and the fact there are so many of them, there's oodles of tension. They make it easier and easier for people to obtain liquor, go out til 4 or 5 in the morning, and complaining about the lack of policemen. The problem is most of the bashings are done by people who are drunk and done towards people who are drunk - this is the problem, we need to address it. Upholding the rights of others and equality sounds like a pie in the sky and I don't really agree with it.

The lack of police in the area. We have a few things that go on around here that wouldn't if there was a regular police in attendance.

The MASP House it's about 3 doors down from us and it's a blight on the block. The lawns are never mowed, fights occur and it's a general eyesore. Apart from that everybody's lovely.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The most important thing in my mind was the crime. It needs to be cracked down in the community and stronger action against crime.

That they watch out for the drinking problems at the night clubs, and after they close.

I've lived all over Australia and this would have to be the one spot I should not have come to. There's drugs and alcohol, just not a great place to live.

Mildura is a nice place to visit but not to live in. I just think the town could do more with the neighbours. Full of Mafia. You mind your own business and don't cause trouble.

I was conscious again of not having enough information about the questions, because the information is not out there. There are a lot of loaded questions. There's nothing about what people are concerned about like vandalism. I don't have a problem with the council per se, because there's people who have given up their time to help people. The council are not very clear about the types of situations that they're dealing with. The whole survey has probably missed the point about what concerns people locally, it was more a feel good survey.

My main thing with this area is that the violence is getting out of hand, the older people band together and there are drug smokers around that don't care. There's a whole different range of people here. I was thinking about what type of people in the community to think about in the community when answering questions.

The lack of employment and health services. This prevents me from recommending Mildura as a place to live. The crime rate is also getting worse in Mildura city.

Equality

When answering the questions about community resources, a small number of respondents took equality in the region into consideration. Many of these comments were in relation to areas other than Mildura receiving council attention.

Whether Red Cliff gets its fair share.

We need a bit more things happening by the council in our area, not just Mildura itself.

We would hope that everyone is treated equally and justly.

Just that I think everyone should be given a fair go.

Upholding the rights of others and encouraging social justice and equality.

The fairness of council, it doesn't matter what background you're from they treat people evenly.

Everybody's pretty fair, and I see a lot being done for other people.

I don't think there's justice around here.

Social justice.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Equality, is very important, you have to have equality in life you can't have negative things.

Living in a village community where you have to have a car to get anywhere. Those who haven't got a car are not considered.

When you're talking about council and what it does for the community, if you don't play football or on the horses you get bugger all. They focus

Growing population

A small number of respondents answered the questions regarding community resources with the region's growing population in mind. These respondents commented on the rate of growth in recent years and the increased traffic in the area.

The town is growing well, a lot of people are moving here. Constantly expanding.

The road is reasonably good, yes. Used to be only an odd car going past me, and now half of red cliffs go to Mildura to work and vice versa.

They don't review their goals and aspirations for moving forward enough. If you're putting in a plan for something it takes too long etc. I am interested in helping promote the community, when I grew up there was 500 people in this town and its had a pretty huge growth rate in the last 20 years, any time I lived anywhere else I got homesick.

Thinking about the people that have come here since I have, it's a growing community.

If everybody agreed it'd be a funny old place to live. Yes Mildura has always had goals, what they want for the people, making work for other people. It's a beautiful city and it's grown very fast. It gives me something to think about (the survey) gives you time to reflect on things we could be doing elsewhere.

Decision making

Several respondents considered the council's decision making when making comments about community resources. While some respondents noted that the council attempts to include all stakeholders in their decision-making process, other did not think the level of consultation with the community was adequate.

Frustration with the council, if you disagree with something it takes a lot to get through to them.

The council do strive to include everyone in their decision making.

Just ensuring that councillors continue to consult the community and always doing what's best for the community.

Just that the council has got to think of the community more, think about the people more.

The council is certainly proactive in involving the community in decision making.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I think there needs to be more community involvement with decisions that go along to the actual areas that are appropriate. The community could be more involved, if there were a lot more community meetings with the council.

Just the ad-hoc way and bias way that decisions get made.

I could take it a lot of different ways, some people on the council that make decisions properly and some that don't.

Tension

A small number of respondents described difficult relationships in the area when answering questions about community resources. These issues were in relation to the cultural diversity in the Mildura region resulting in tension and dividing the community.

How fortunate I am to be in Mildura. People are very friendly towards us, but there is sort of a separation a little bit. Some people are okay but some people don't really mix well.

We have some racial tension from the aboriginal community.

Status of indigenous and ethnic communities, we celebrate them now and then but generally people's perceptions are not great.

We have a very divided community here. A lot of different nationalities.

Well I was thinking about the questions about everyone included and that's not true, because the aboriginals aren't looked after very much, and the un-employed youth aren't looked after very well.

Council performance

Many respondents took Mildura Rural City Council's performance into consideration when answering questions about community resources. Some responses praised the council for their consultations with the community, looking after community needs, and their support of the community. However, some respondents believed that the council did not communicate with the community enough, and lacked vision and planning.

It seemed to me how the council is looking after the community.

There is a lot of politics involved, the little person doesn't always get heard.

Running down the council. The council needs to be more experienced, they stuff around.

Good communication and listening between council and community. Council are pretty involved already.

Just that as far as what I've had to do with them, they've been pretty good and seem to help where they can.

We have a good set up in town, we have council meetings in town. The council sometimes come down here and meet the people and see if they have any problems, which is good.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

The council are there to help when need be.

They always help us in times of need, the council is always there for us.

Mildura needs better planning. Change the councillors from baby boomers to gen X, need young blood in there.

Communities having their say, communities having input is very important. The council need to make themselves more available to the various communities. If I had a teenager these days I wouldn't let them out in the dark but it WAS a wonderful place for her to grow up.

I don't believe we as a community have much of a say in major things that are going on in Mildura, seems to be a select board who makes the decisions. I disagree with the fluoride, and it should be my choice if I have that water. I think if you want fluoride, take tablets.

I think the council are very selfish in their actions.

There should be more clear and concise listening to the rate payers when they approach the council about a safety issue, and not be so high in their own in their own ideals.

The lack of council vision.

Once again, at the moment we are not looking at the big picture in Mildura. I think more needs to be done to attract people to live in this area.

The actual discussions going on at the moment about poker machines and the planning of the casino. They're not giving the general public a big enough say, they haven't asked for it yet.

Mildura has quite a few developments planned for the future, I think it will suit more the middle-aged or elderly people. I can't see it focused for the young ones.

I would think that the council does listen to community needs.

My feeling is that I would like to see some progress in the area, I think they are some old people on the council who don't accept progress when there is thinks offered.

The dealings on a family scale, more so with the young ones, community centre and the support they offer.

Probably our council rates, they charge us the world but the council doesn't help us. But Mildura is a great place to live.

We recently had legal issue with the council in the district, one council member said other council members were doing the wrong thing, but my problem with the issue was that it wasn't managed well. My one concern with council is with the greed aspect, more about themselves then community members.

The council is doing nothing, and as to living here I have never really liked the place. Got to get employment here in other ways.

That they need to talk to the community more.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

That I'd like the council to do a bit more for me.

About the fact that they should be centred more on community projects than anything else.

Just overall I think what the actual council does is a little bit more jaded.

Thinking about the lines of what the council does.

The way that they regularly look at community needs.

That I don't feel the city council don't support the district well enough.

Thinking about things that have been done around the place and how much they actually do communicate with the local community.

More consultations need to happen, with big major financial events. The councils are fairly well open to being contacted but need to be involved much deeper with individuals. be more sympathetic to volunteers who run the clubs and organisations and not put their iron foot in it, when you have about 5 places sharing a club, netball, cricket, football etc, they should have more control over the users and get together with the users more often, so that it's not too difficult. And the councils get paid so therefore more consultations need to be happening.

As far as the private sector they do, but the council shire isn't forth coming in trying to help others with trying to find money for something or a venue to raise money, there's very little input from the shire.

I strongly believe in social things, what goes on in council. They got to come all the way down to Underbool.

Just thinking of issues that haven't been addressed and things that have been promised

What the town is aiming to achieve and what the town is bringing to Mildura to entice tourists.

Planning issues. I'm thinking about the future a bit, particularly with the future, uncertain about how things will pan out in the next 5 years or so.

Facilities and services

Several respondents were thinking about the facilities and services in the region when answering questions about community resources. The most popular responses included the availability of sporting and recreational facilities, retail services, and community centres.

I'm trying to answer as accurately I can, I'm not very familiar with the council. But we have good sporting areas and shopping districts. All the facilities we could need.

One of the greatest resources we have is the Mallee Track Health and Community Resources, it's there for the whole community .It keeps elderly people here in town.

I guess the sporting activity is important, for old and young people. U3A programs.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

I think providing council services that are quite established and advanced and appropriate for the community.

It has all the sporting facilities for kids, it's been great and kept me busy.

Fairly progressive community and it has all the facilities that we require.

Mildura is good for us because it has all the major stuff but I would never live there in a fit.

Where we are right on the river. We're only 5 or 6 kms from Mildura. So we can miss all the Mildura traffic, we do all our shopping over there and entertainment. Sport as well.

I think that we have heaps of resources in red cliffs. Like community centres and resource centres. Everyone's involved and have their say.

If I didn't live here and have two kids. I don't know if it's a good place to come too for teenagers etc. There isn't enough for people to do. You really have to keep an eye on them.

Sometimes I think they focus on the development of 15th street rather than that of the mall in city centre. I'd like to see more development done down the river, a cafe or something to eat at.

Just what's available in Mildura for people to do and come to see.

I was thinking of the cleanliness, and the climate and the casual outdoor lifestyle. And the facilities available to a smaller city, also the price of housing.

The services are diminishing in smaller towns. Diminishing populations.

How many resources they are available for young families that are provided by the council.

too much on the big sports and not the smaller ones.

Casino

Only a small number of respondents cited the casino as a factor they considered while answering questions about community resources. Some of these comments noted the need for a casino to provide an attraction for people in the area, and people visiting the area. Other comments regarding the casino touched on the negative impact it would have on the community.

Mildura was a good place and won't be anymore, especially if the casino doesn't go up, they need it or the city will die.

We need a casino.

I am thinking about this latest thing about the Casino, it's a called the Jewel, I don't think it's a good idea. It would be good to attract a lot of people but it would change the way and the feel of our community.

I know people want a casino here and then people who don't, so there is a big conflict here. If we don't have a casino here, Mildura will become a ghost town, large population of people who are unemployed.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

Mostly thinking about the casino, besides that it's been a great area, say no to the casino.

Council spending

Several respondents cited council spending as a consideration for their comments about community resources. Most felt that council spending was inappropriate. However, there were respondents who felt that the council used its resources well to care for elderly residents.

Sometimes the local government don't get it right where they spend the money, being isolated we get forgotten.

The community resources are used fairly well, as far as caring and helping the aged people.

I would recommend people living here, but when it comes to council you don't know what's happening or where the money's going.

Personally some of the projects that are completed in the area don't mean much to myself, so I don't agree with how the money is spent.

That council waste money. And that our rates are too high compared to other areas.

I don't like the council. I don't think they spend their funds wisely. But in saying so, I still believe it is a wonderful place to live and I have no intentions of moving out.

I hope that money is spent wisely for safety and things like that.

There are parts of the community that get more spent on them then they should.

Transportation and distance

Several respondents considered transportation and distance in answering questions regarding community resources. The majority of these responses believed the region was a good place to live, but acknowledged that there were transport issues, which accentuates the distance between the Mildura region and Melbourne.

I'd like more things done for the kids, I think we need to have more industry here, and our train back to help the kids and pensioners.

Transportation to Melbourne should be sped up, I'd love to see the train come back. Because then you would see more people. We need a highway going north towards Darwin because we would get a lot more people here then.

The only thing going against living in Mildura is the distance to Melbourne.

To put that bloody train back to keep people going to and from Melbourne.

Just Mildura is a good place to live but we're too far away from the city.

Yes it's a good place to live but it would be better if we had a train to Melbourne.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd

We're a long way to travel for medical attention. I would recommend Mildura for active retired and families.

Because we're just on the outskirts of Mildura it's difficult to get involved with things in the city.

We live out of town, I don't have anything to do with Merbien and organisations within town.

© Insync Surveys Pty Ltd