



**2026 Local  
Government  
Community  
Satisfaction Survey**

**Hepburn Shire  
Council**



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## Background and objectives

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**The Victorian Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) creates a vital interface between the council and their community.**

**Held annually, the CSS asks the opinions of local people about the place they live, work and play and provides confidence for councils in their efforts and abilities.**

Now in its twenty-seventh year, this survey provides insight into the community's views on:

- councils' overall performance, with benchmarking against other participating councils
- value for money in services and infrastructure
- community consultation and engagement
- decisions made in the interest of the community
- customer service, local infrastructure, facilities, services and
- overall council direction.

When coupled with previous data, the survey provides a reliable historical source of the community's views since 1998. A selection of results from the last ten years shows that councils in Victoria continue to provide services that meet the public's expectations.

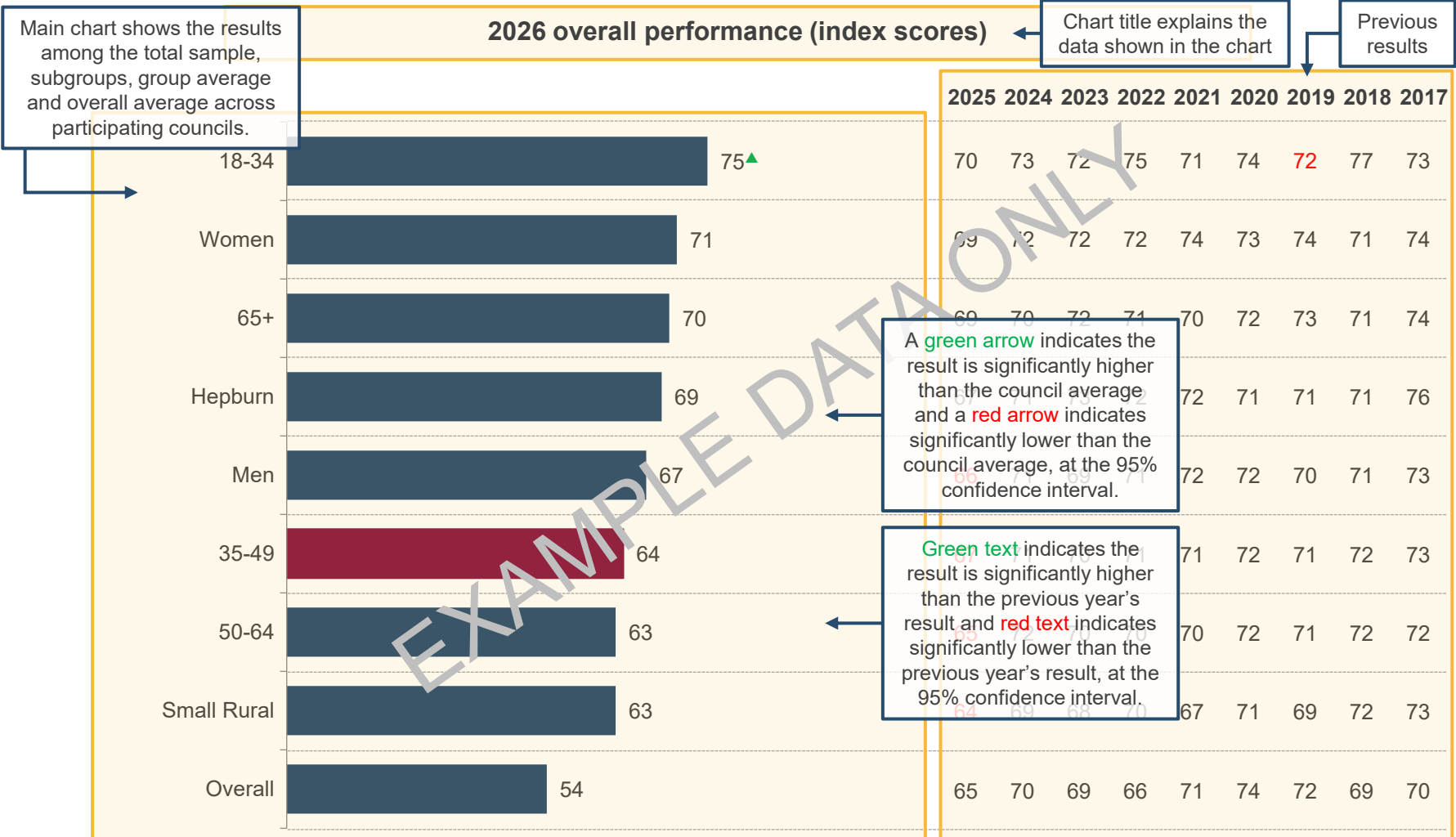
### Serving Victoria for 27 years

The CSS offers councils a long-term measure of how they are performing – essential for councils that work over the long term to provide valuable services and infrastructure to their communities.

Participating councils have various choices as to the content of the questionnaire and the sample size to be surveyed, depending on their individual strategic, financial and other considerations.



# How to read index score charts in this report



Question asked and base size(s)

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Hepburn Shire Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



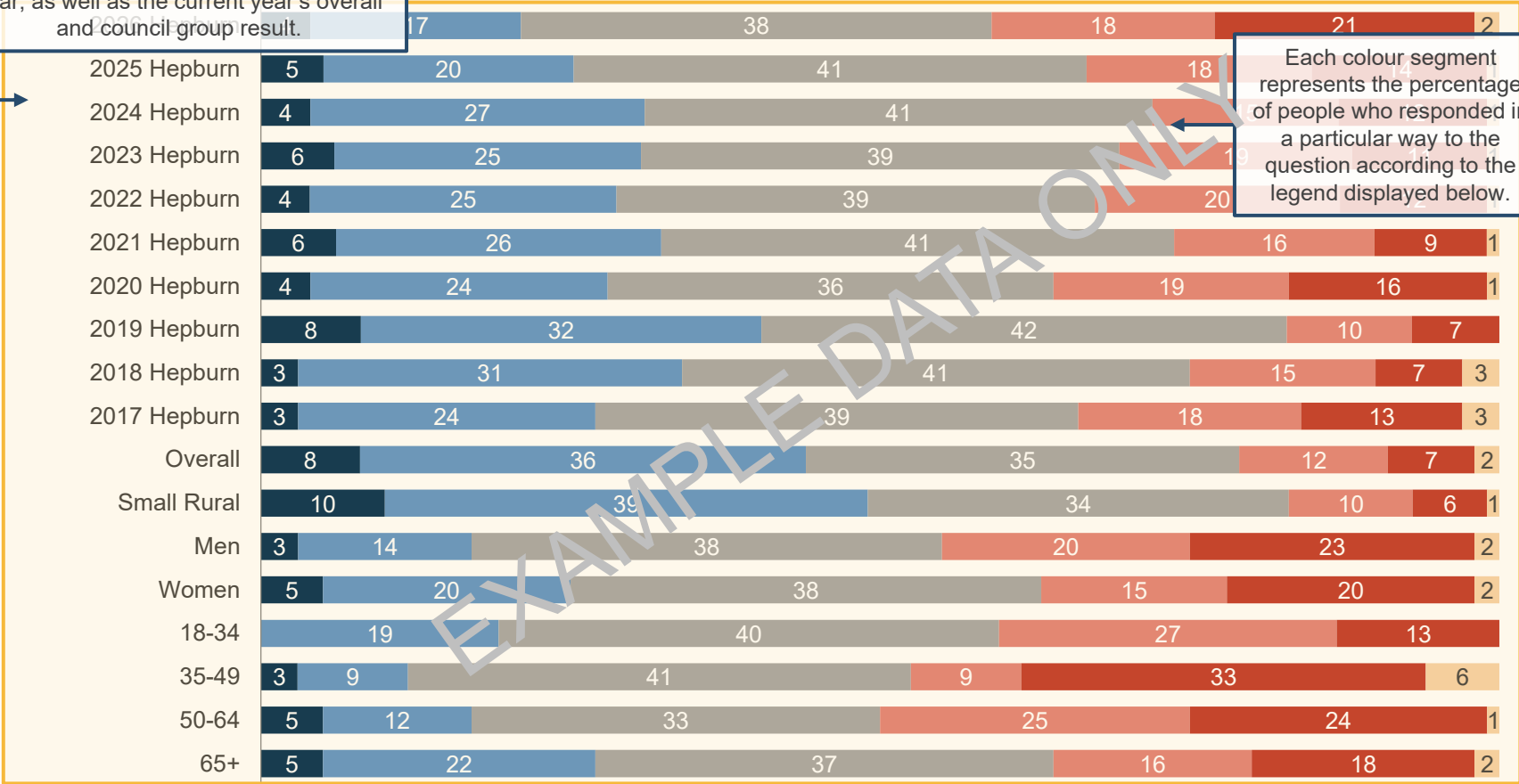
# How to read stacked bar charts in this report

Main chart shows Council's results for each year, and within demographic and geographic sub-groups for the current year, as well as the current year's overall and council group result.

**2026 overall performance (%)**

Chart title explains the data shown in the chart

Each colour segment represents the percentage of people who responded in a particular way to the question according to the legend displayed below.



Legend: Very good (dark blue), Good (blue), Average (grey), Poor (light red), Very poor (dark red), Can't say (yellow)

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Hepburn Shire Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?  
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

A large, dark blue, stylized letter 'W' graphic that spans the right side of the page. The 'W' is filled with a glowing, intricate network pattern of white and light blue lines, resembling a neural network or a complex data structure. The background of the 'W' is a dark blue gradient.

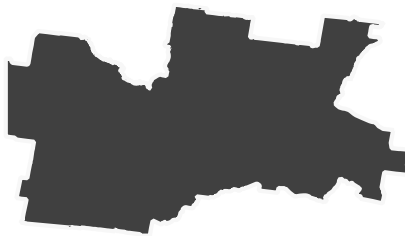
# **Key findings and recommendations**



# Hepburn Shire Council – at a glance

## Overall council performance

Results shown are index scores out of 100.



Hepburn 41



Small Rural 60



Overall 57

## Council performance compared to group average

Top performing areas		
	Libraries	▼ lower
	Waste management	▼ lower
Bottom 3 performing areas		
	Planning & building permits	▼ lower
	Sealed local roads	▼ lower
	Community decisions	▼ lower
	Customer service	= on par



# Summary of core measures

## Index scores

**Overall Performance**

**Value for money**

**Community Consultation**

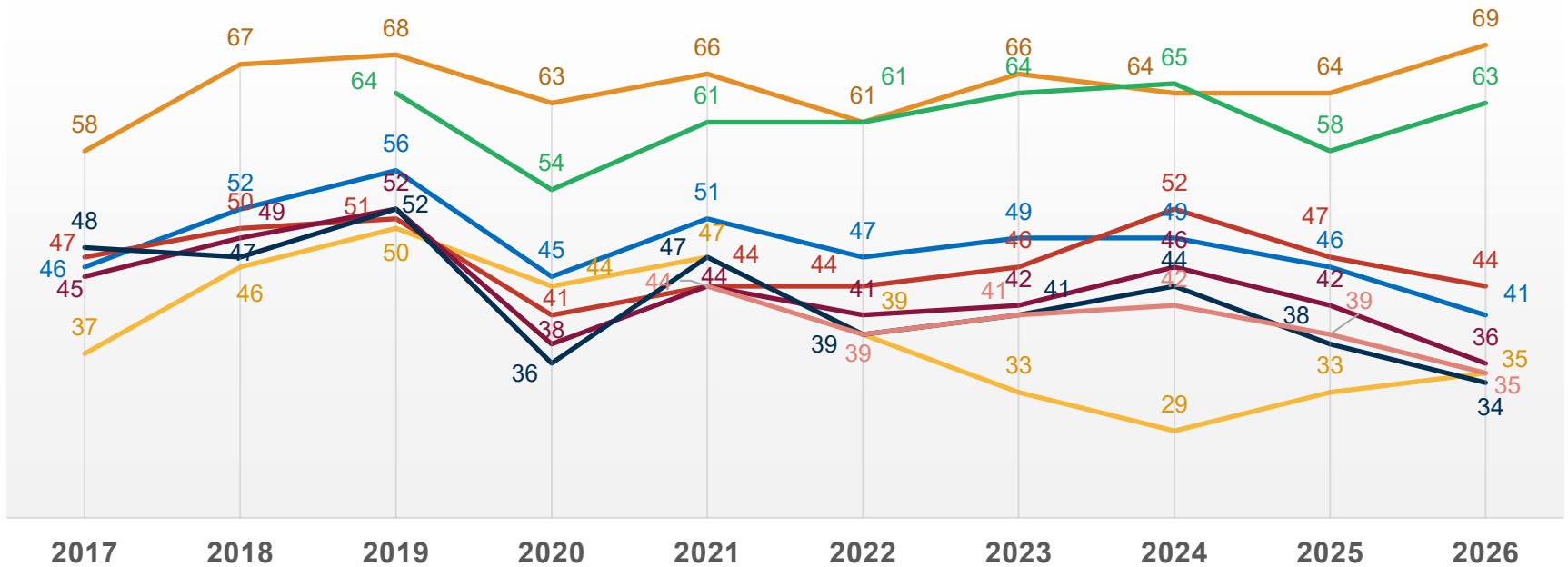
**Making Community Decisions**

**Sealed Local Roads**

**Waste management**

**Customer Service**

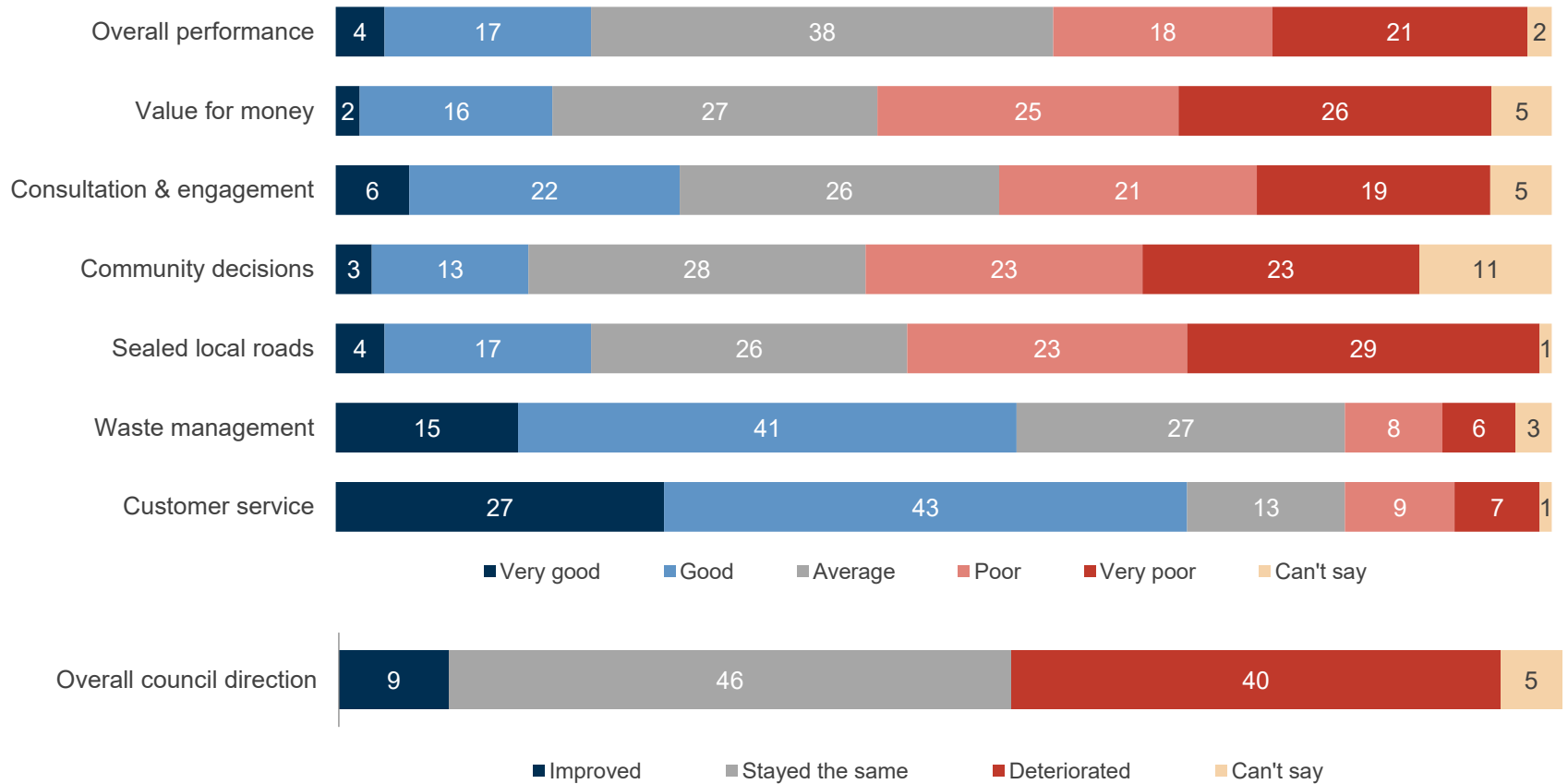
**Overall Council Direction**















# Summary of core measures

Core measures summary results (%)













## Summary of Hepburn Shire Council performance

Services	Hepburn 2026	Hepburn 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026	Highest score	Lowest score
 Overall performance	41	46	60	57	65+ years	35-49 years
 Value for money	35	39	52	49	65+ years	35-49 years
 Overall council direction	34	38	52	48	65+ years	35-49 years
 Customer service	69	64	70	69	35-49 years	18-34 years
 Libraries	70	-	77	76	50-64 years	18-34 years
 Waste management	63	58	71	69	65+ years	35-49 years
 Appearance of public areas	60	63	73	71	65+ years	18-34 years
 Tourism development	60	63	65	64	Women	Men
 Recreational facilities	57	60	69	71	65+ years	35-49 years
 Environmental sustainability	54	56	60	60	18-34 years	35-49 years



## Summary of Hepburn Shire Council performance

Services		Hepburn 2026	Hepburn 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026	Highest score	Lowest score
	Enforcement of local laws	52	55	60	60	18-34 years	35-49 years
	Business & community dev.	49	53	59	56	65+ years	35-49 years
	Consultation & engagement	44	47	57	53	65+ years	35-49 years
	Slashing & weed control	42	44	47	45	65+ years	18-34 years
	Lobbying	41	45	57	54	65+ years	35-49 years
	Community decisions	36	42	56	52	65+ years	35-49 years
	Sealed local roads	35	33	48	46	65+ years	35-49 years
	Planning & building permits	33	33	47	46	18-34 years	35-49 years



## Focus areas for the next 12 months

### Overview

Hepburn Shire Council's overall performance index score of 41 has declined five-points since 2025 to Council's lowest rating in 10 years. Contributing to this result are declines across most measures including a significant decrease in perceptions of value for money. On a positive note, perceptions of Council have significantly improved when it comes to waste management and Council is also seen to perform well relatively well in its customer service where perceptions have lifted slightly this year to be at a 10 year high.

### Key influences on perceptions of overall performance

Community decisions has the strongest influence on perceptions of overall performance but remains one of Council's lowest performing service areas. The related areas of planning and building permits, community consultation and lobbying, as well as sealed roads and slashing and weed control, are other influential but low rated areas. Improving communication, transparency and advocacy and addressing concerns around planning and road maintenance will help to strengthen perceptions of overall Council performance.

### Comparison to Overall and area grouping

Council performs significantly lower than the Small Rural group average and the Overall average across participating councils State-wide (the Overall average) in most areas evaluated. This will require a concerted effort from Council to correct if it is to endeavour to be on a comparative level with the Small Rural group average. Council rates in line with both the Small Rural group and Overall averages on customer service, and in line with the Overall average on slashing and weed control.

### Shore up efforts in tangible service areas

Council performs strongly on arts centres and libraries, and waste management ratings have significantly improved after a sharp decline last year. Council should maintain efforts in these areas in the year ahead. Public areas and recreational facilities are other strong performing areas however further minor declines this year have eroded significant gains made in 2024. Council should focus on improving performance in these areas, particularly on public areas which are a significant influence on the overall performance rating.

# DETAILED FINDINGS



# Overall performance



## Overall performance

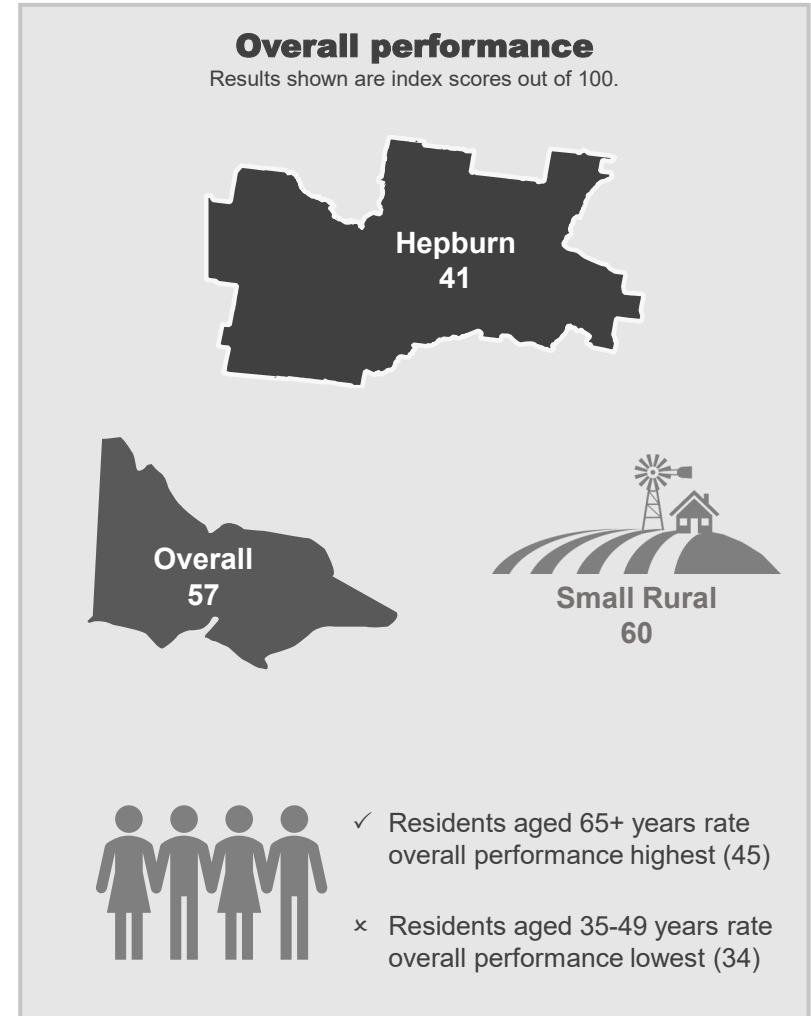
The overall performance index score of 41 for Hepburn Shire Council represents a significant five-point decline from the 2025 result. This marks the second consecutive year of decline and is Council’s lowest rating in 10 years.

- Ratings are significantly lower than the Council average among residents aged 35 to 49 years (index score of 34), decreasing by a significant 16 points this year.

Council’s overall performance is rated statistically significantly lower (at the 95% confidence level) than the Small Rural group average and the Overall average across participating councils State-wide (index scores of 60 and 57 respectively).

Less than one in five residents rate the value for money they receive from Council in infrastructure and services as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (18%, down from 20%). A slight majority rate Council as ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ (51%, up from 45%). A further 27% rate Council as ‘average’ on providing value for money.

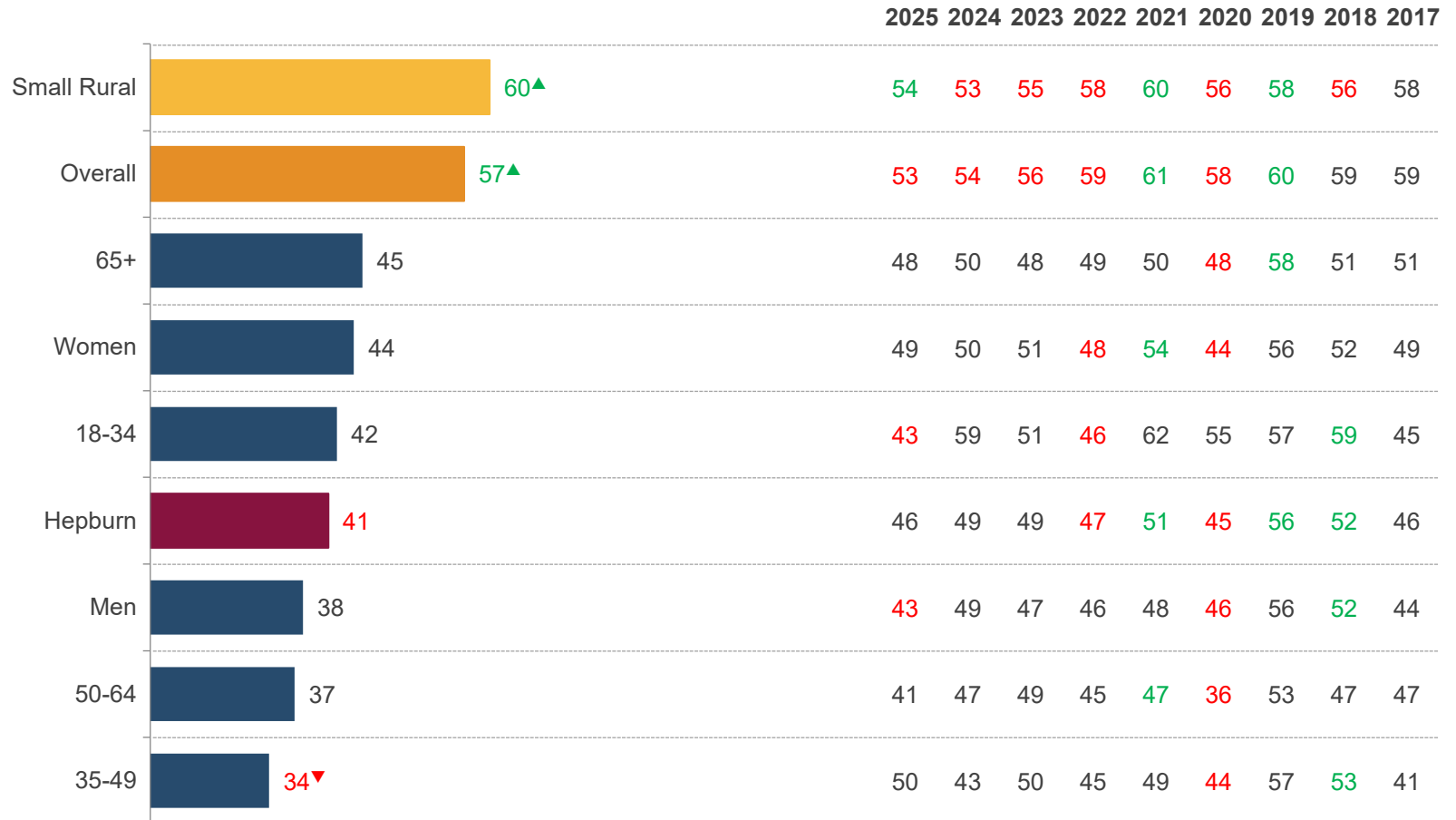
- Since the previous evaluation, perceptions of value for money saw a significant 12 index-point decline among residents aged 35 to 49 years.





# Overall performance

## 2026 overall performance (index scores)



Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Hepburn Shire Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?

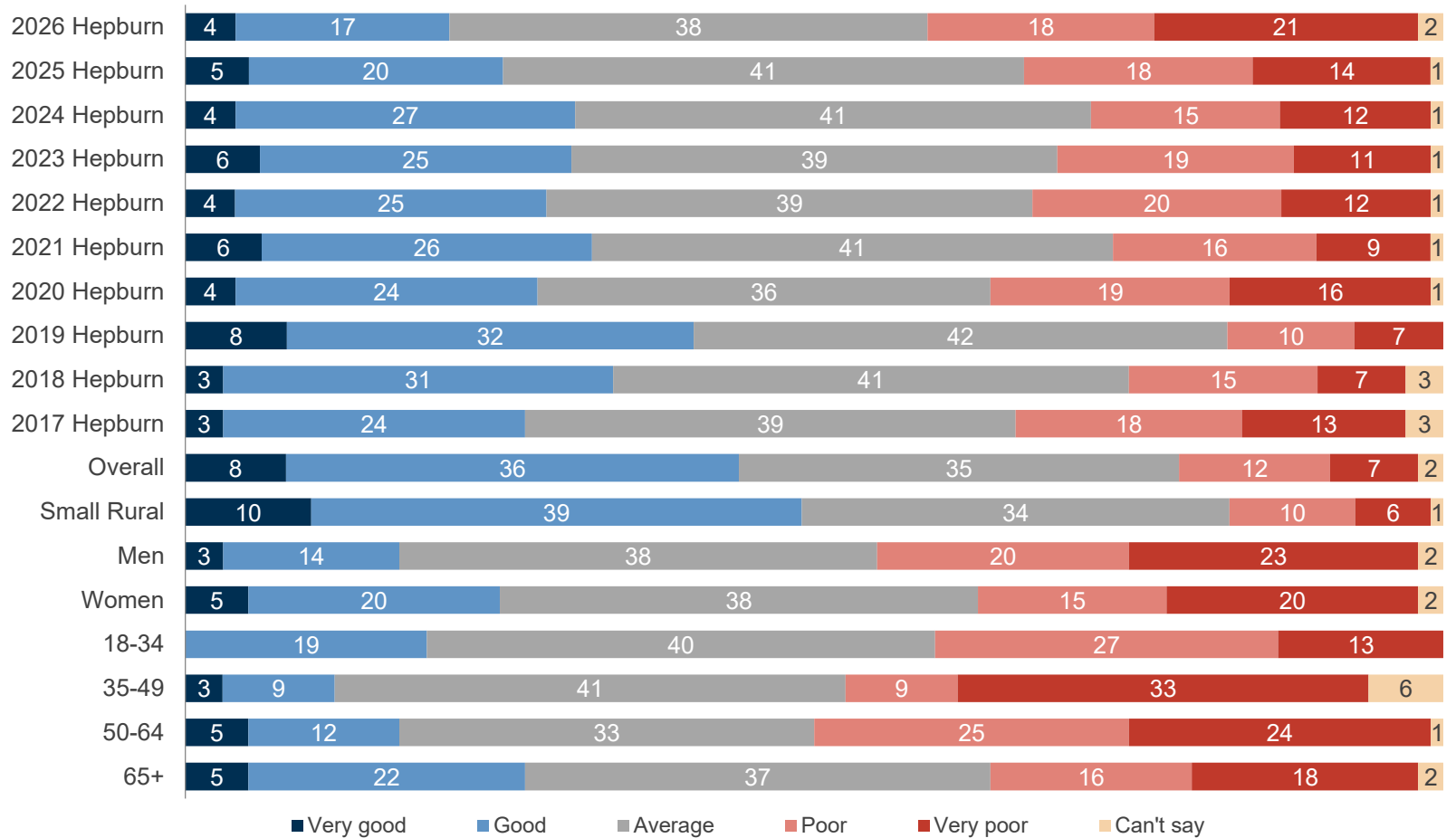
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Overall performance

2026 overall performance (%)

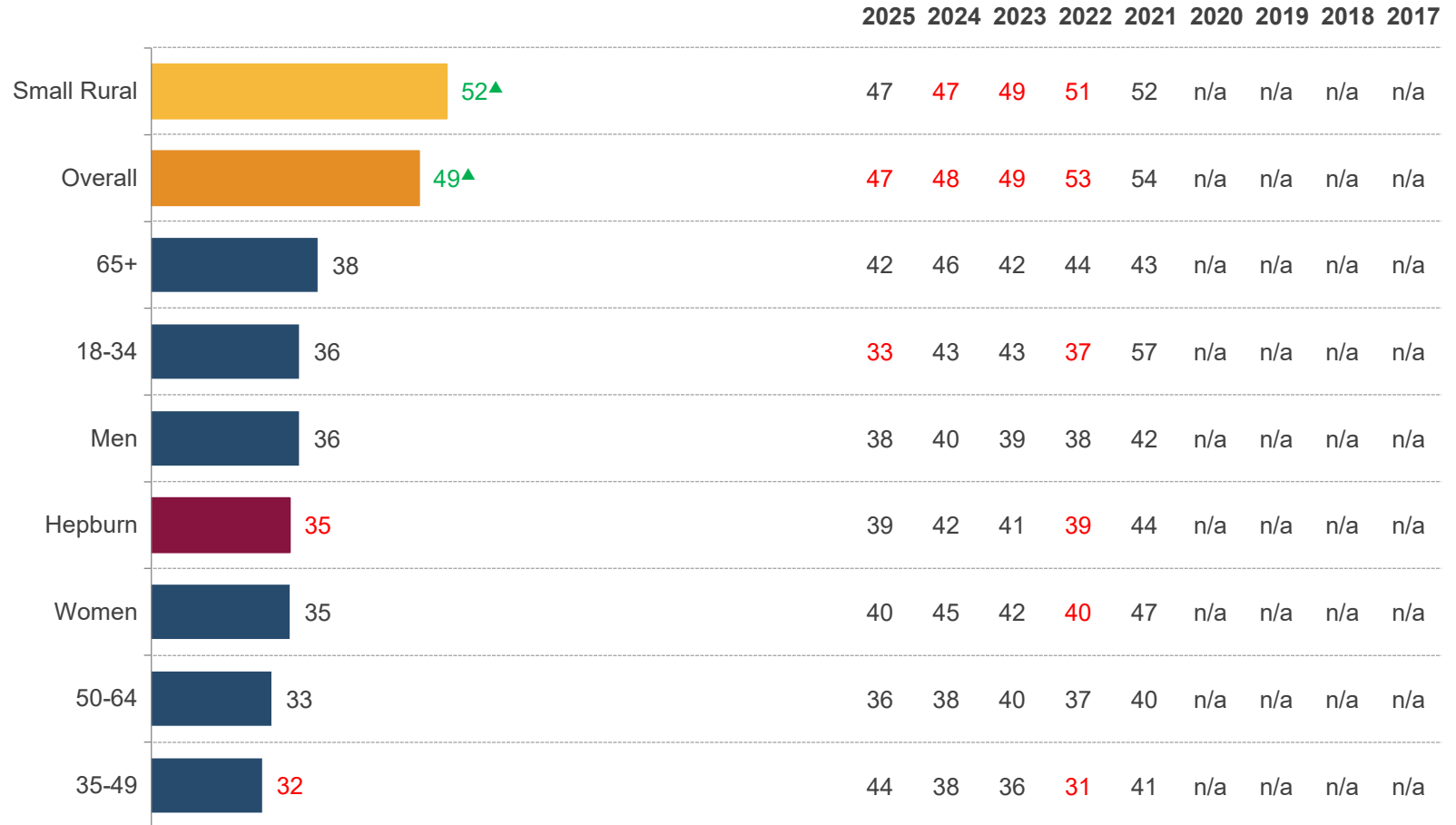


Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Hepburn Shire Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? Has it been very good, good, average, poor or very poor?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9



# Value for money in services and infrastructure

## 2026 value for money (index scores)



Q3b. How would you rate Hepburn Shire Council at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?

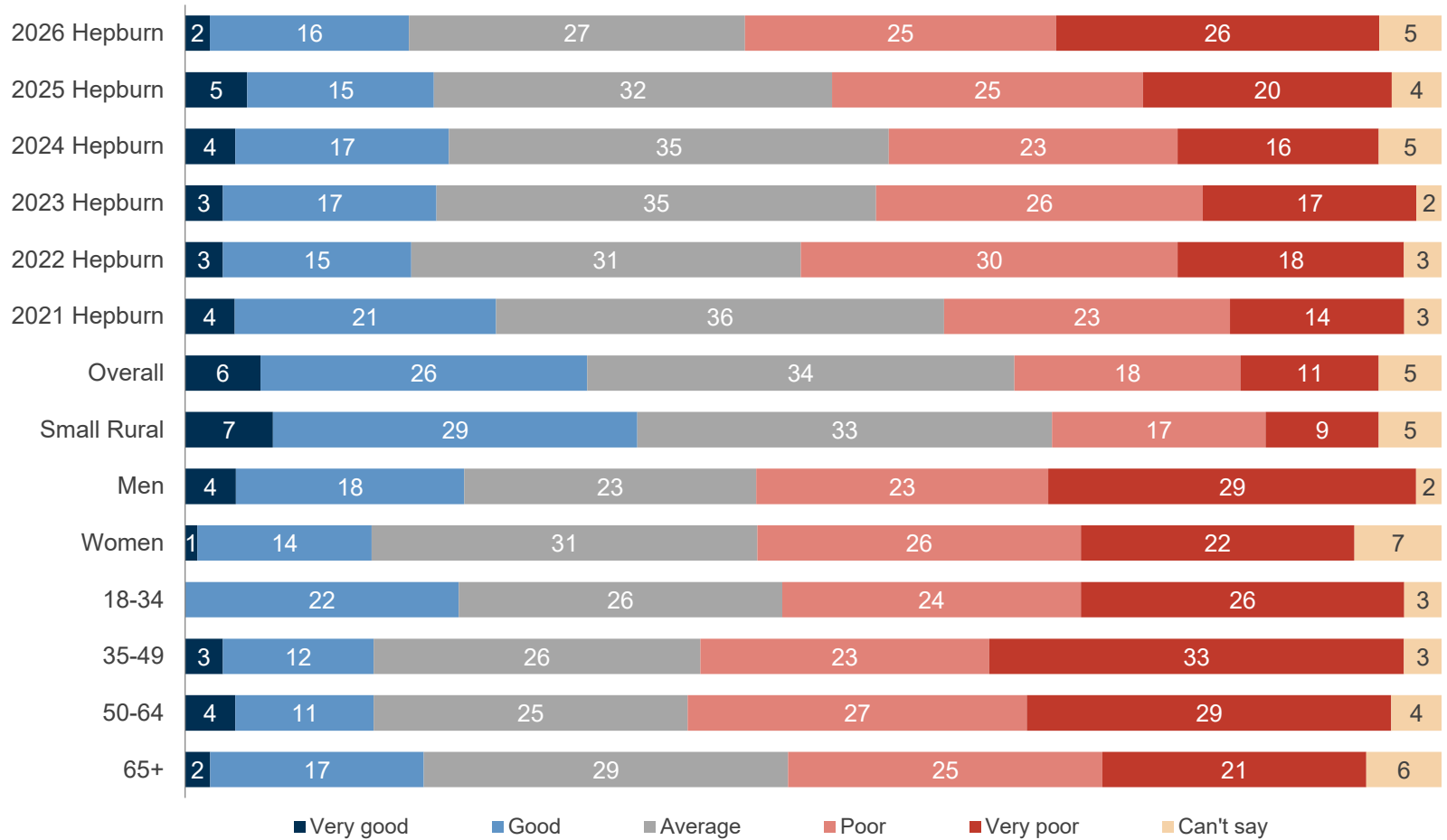
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 21 Councils asked group: 8

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Value for money in services and infrastructure

2026 value for money (%)



Q3b. How would you rate Hepburn Shire Council at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 21 Councils asked group: 8



## Top performing service areas

Libraries (index score of 70) is the service area where Council performs best in 2026.

- This is a new service area evaluated by Council this year, with positive ratings recorded across all demographic cohorts.

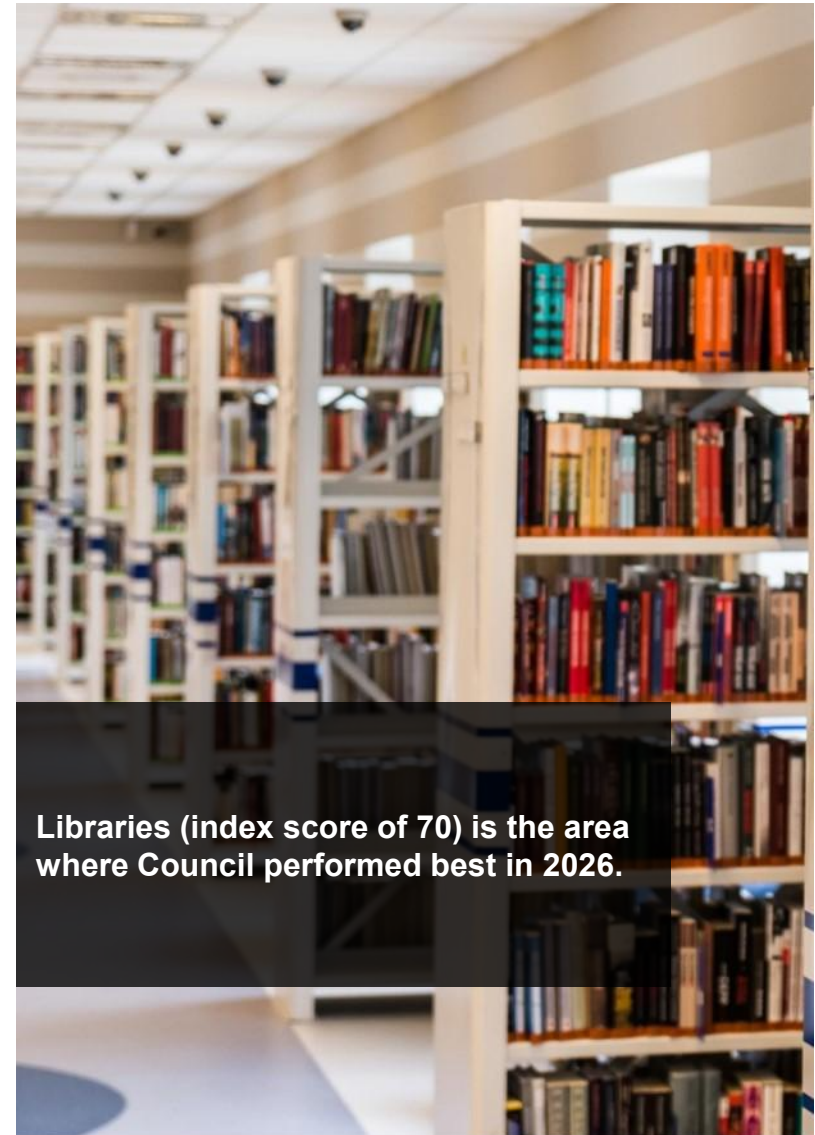
Waste management is Council's next best performing service area (index score of 63, up five points). Community perceptions are significantly improved, recovering most of the seven-point decline recorded last year.

- Notably, 6% of residents mention waste management as the best thing about Council, second only to customer service (9%).

Council's next best service areas are its top performers from 2025, the appearance of public areas and tourism development (index scores of 60 for each, down three points).

- Both areas have seen significant declines among residents aged 35 to 49 years, following increases among this cohort in 2025.

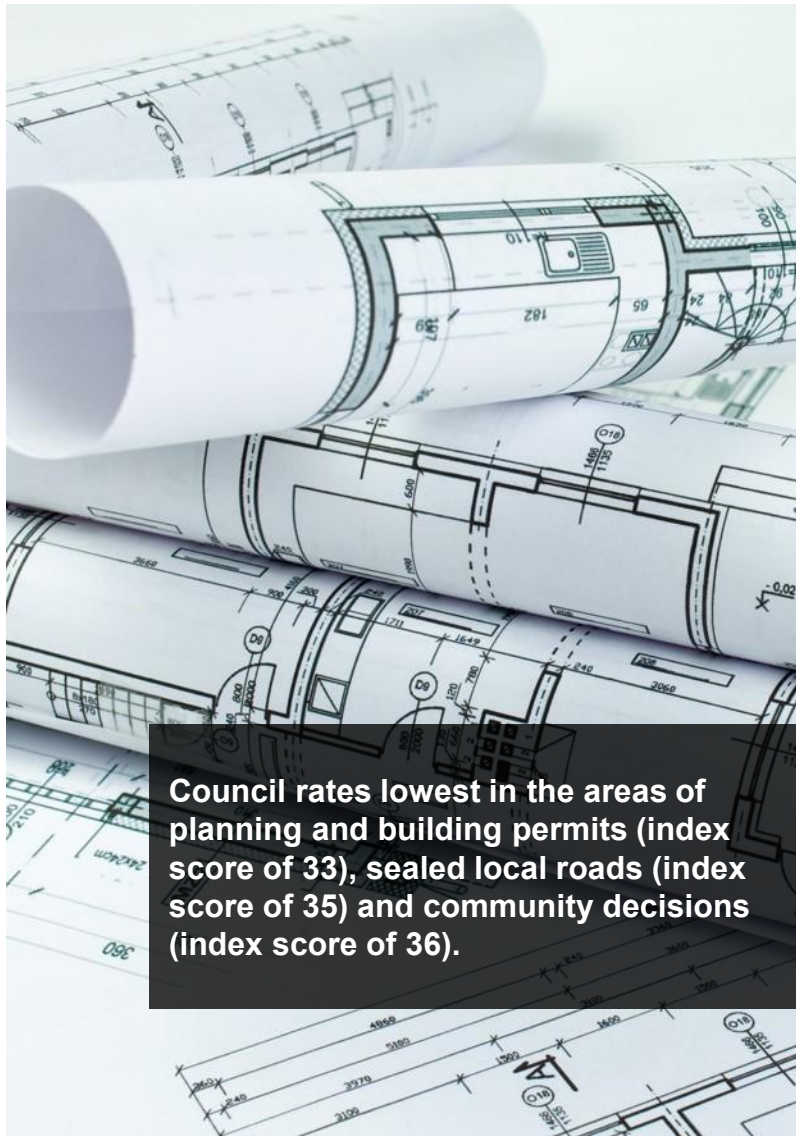
Council efforts should be maintained in these four areas as performance is rated below the Small Rural group and Overall averages.



**Libraries (index score of 70) is the area where Council performed best in 2026.**



## Low performing service areas



Planning and building permits remains Council's lowest performing service area (index score of 33), unchanged from 2025, following a four-year period of decline.

- This remains the service area showing the largest disparity between community perceptions of importance versus performance.

The next lowest rated area is the condition of sealed roads (index score of 35, up two points). Perceptions of Council performance continue to recover here, following a significant turnaround in 2025.

- However, more work is needed, with 13% of residents mentioning sealed road maintenance as the area where Council most needs to improve.

Perceptions of Council making decisions in the interest of the community (index score of 36, down six points) have significantly decreased for the second consecutive year to a 10-year low. Similarly, performance has continued to decline on the related area of lobbying (index score of 41, down four points).

- Perceptions of both areas have sharply declined since 2024 among residents aged 18 to 34 years but the largest declines over the past 12 months occurred among residents aged 35 to 49 years.



# Individual service area performance

2026 individual service area performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Libraries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste management	58	65	64	61	61	54	64	n/a	n/a
Appearance of public areas	63	64	60	62	67	64	67	n/a	n/a
Tourism development	63	61	62	63	63	63	69	n/a	n/a
Recreational facilities	60	61	57	59	60	61	62	n/a	n/a
Environmental sustainability	56	57	56	54	55	50	59	n/a	n/a
Enforcement of local laws	55	56	53	55	57	53	57	n/a	n/a
Business & community dev.	53	56	54	51	55	55	60	n/a	n/a
Consultation & engagement	47	52	46	44	44	41	51	50	47
Slashing & weed control	44	42	39	42	44	37	48	n/a	n/a
Lobbying	45	48	44	44	45	40	51	51	48
Community decisions	42	46	42	41	44	38	52	49	45
Sealed local roads	33	29	33	39	47	44	50	46	37
Planning & building permits	33	35	39	40	44	41	49	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] over the last 12 months?

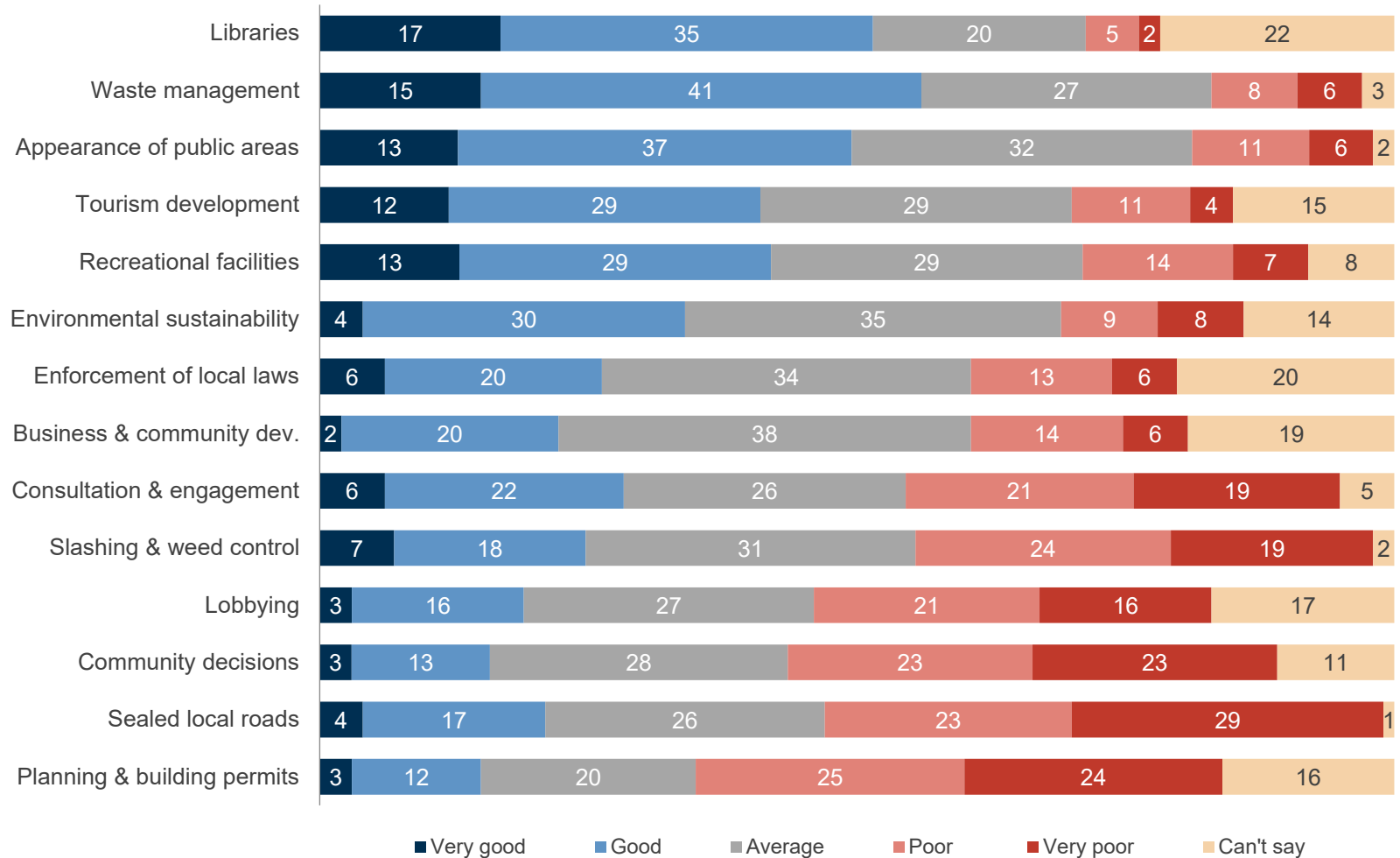
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Individual service area performance

2026 individual service area performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9



# Individual service area importance

2026 individual service area importance (index scores)

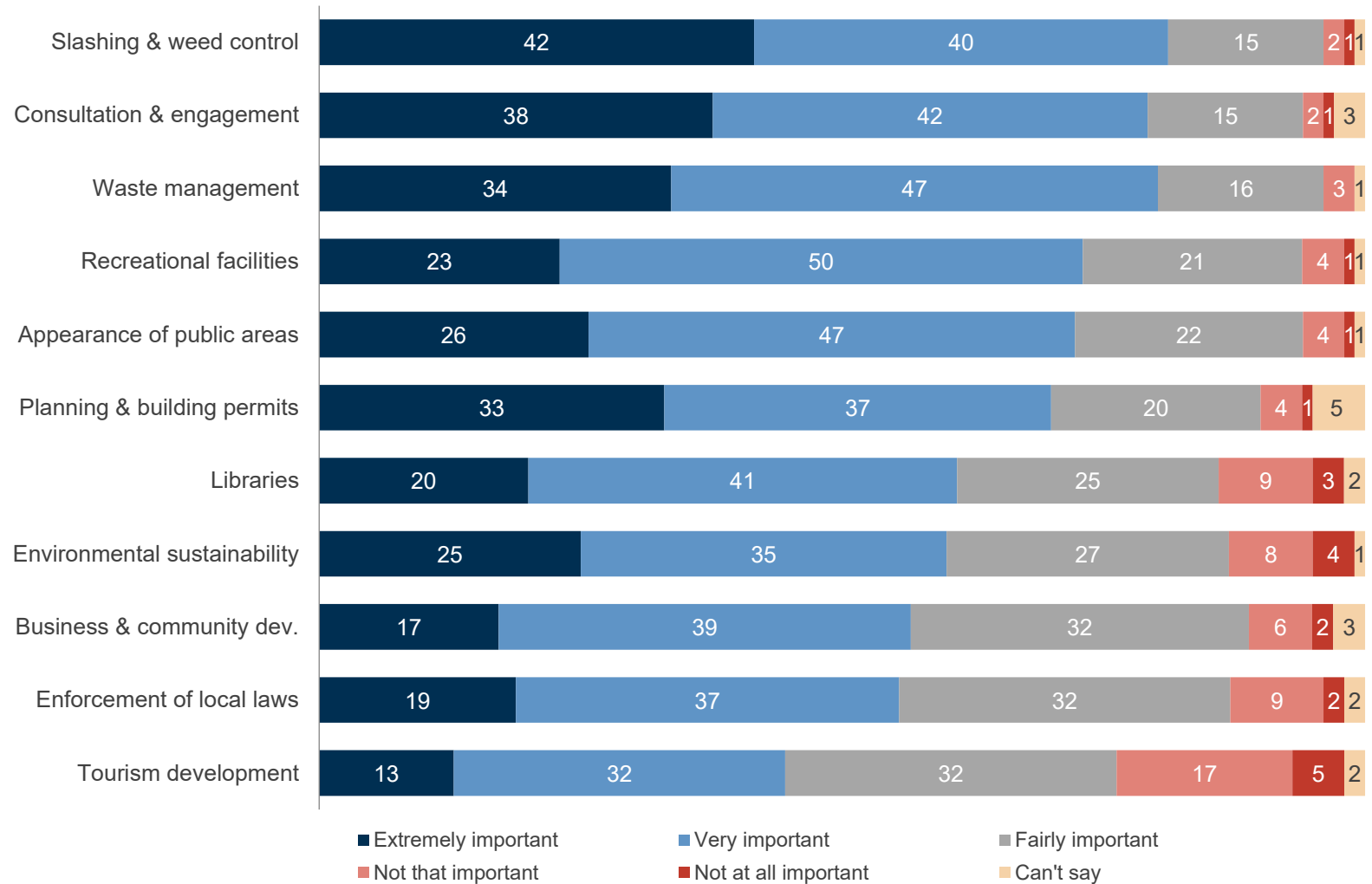
		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Slashing & weed control	80	82	82	82	81	82	80	78	n/a	n/a
Consultation & engagement	79	78	76	78	79	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste management	78	78	79	80	81	82	80	81	n/a	n/a
Planning & building permits	75	76	76	76	73	73	70	72	n/a	n/a
Appearance of public areas	74	75	74	74	74	75	72	72	n/a	n/a
Recreational facilities	73	72	71	71	72	74	69	72	n/a	n/a
Environmental sustainability	67	66	69	71	72	75	74	75	n/a	n/a
Libraries	67	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Business & community dev.	67	66	66	65	67	67	68	70	n/a	n/a
Enforcement of local laws	66	66	65	66	62	67	60	68	n/a	n/a
Tourism development	58	57	58	58	58	60	58	61	n/a	n/a

Q1. Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Individual service area importance

2026 individual service area importance (%)

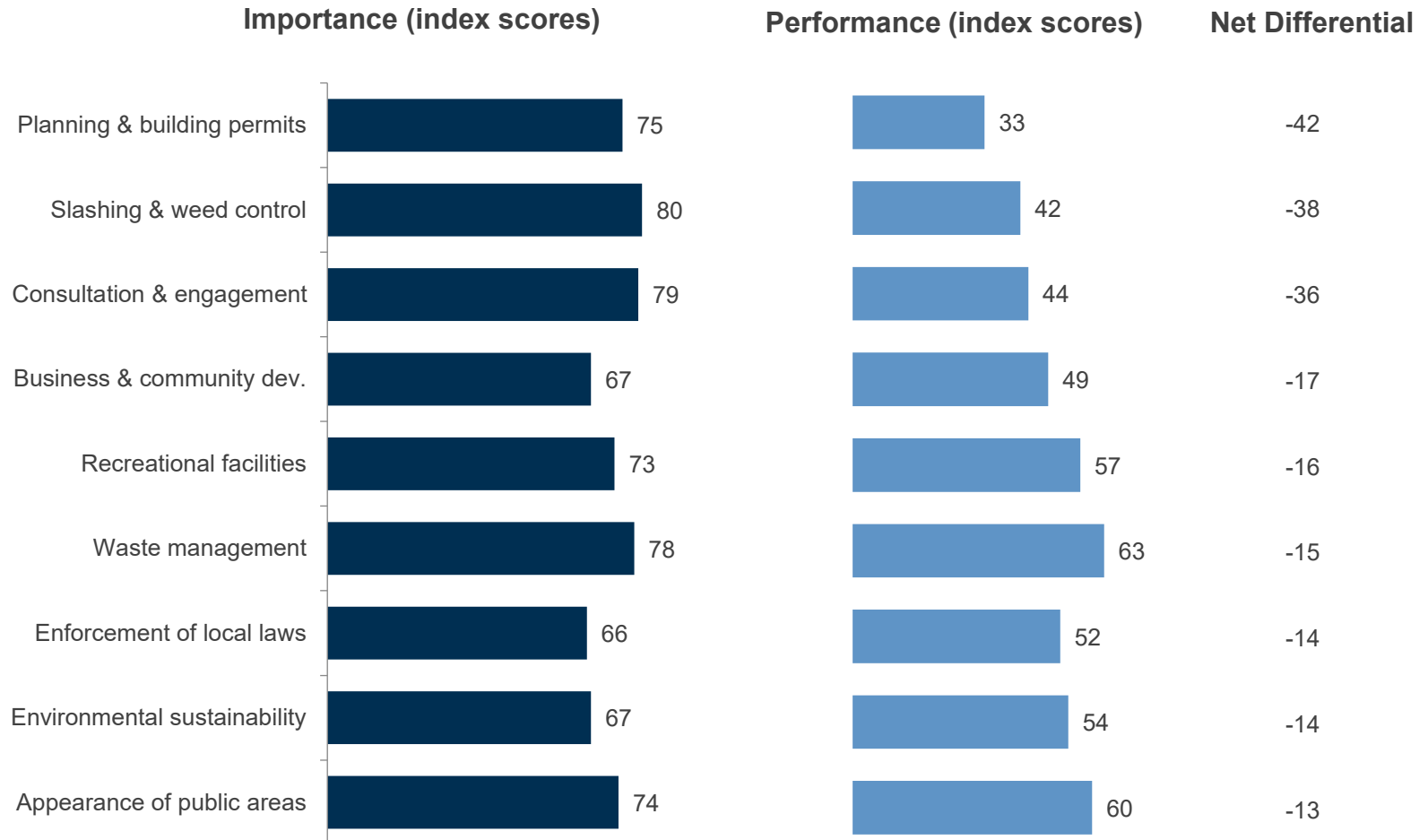


Q1. Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Individual service areas importance vs performance

Service areas where importance exceeds performance by 10 points or more, suggesting further investigation is necessary.



Note: Net differentials are calculated based on the un-rounded importance and performance scores, then rounded to the nearest whole number, which may result in differences of +/-1% in the importance and performance scores and the net differential scores.



## Influences on perceptions of overall performance

The individual service area that has the strongest influence on the overall performance rating (based on regression analysis) is:

- Decisions made in the interest of the community.

**Good communication and transparency around Council decision making provides the greatest opportunity to drive up overall opinion of Council performance. Currently, this is among Council's poorest performing areas (index score of 36).**

Following on from that, other service areas with a more moderate influence on the overall performance rating are:

- Planning and building permits
- The appearance of public areas
- Community consultation and engagement
- Lobbying on behalf of the community
- The condition of sealed roads
- Environmental sustainability
- Enforcement of local laws
- Roadside slashing and weed control.

Looking at these key service areas only, Council performs best on the appearance of public areas (index

score of 60), which is a moderate influence on the overall performance rating.

Maintaining this positive result should remain a focus – but there is greater work to be done elsewhere.

Other service areas with a moderate influence on overall perceptions, but where Council performs relatively less well, are environmental sustainability and local laws (index scores of 54 and 52 respectively).

**Continuing to promote initiatives which improve environmental sustainability and ensuring local laws are enforced can also help to shore up positive overall ratings of Council.**

However, in addition to Council's decision making, most in need of attention are other influential but poorly rated service areas. These include planning and building permits and sealed roads (index scores of 33 and 35 respectively), followed by lobbying, roadside slashing and weed control, and community consultation (index scores of 41, 42 and 44 respectively).

**It will be important to attend to the maintenance of sealed roads and roadside areas, to address resident concerns about planning and building permits, and to improve community consultation and advocacy to help improve overall perceptions of Council's performance.**



## Regression analysis explained

---

We use regression analysis to investigate which individual service areas such as community consultation and the condition of sealed local roads (the independent variables) are influencing respondent perceptions of Council's overall performance (the dependent variable).

In the charts that follow:

- The horizontal axis represents Council's performance index score for each individual service. Service areas appearing on the right side of the chart have a higher index score than those on the left.
- The vertical axis represents the Standardised Beta Coefficient from the multiple regression performed. This measures the contribution of each service area to the model. Service areas near the top of the chart have a greater positive effect on overall performance ratings than those located closer to the axis.

The regressions are shown on the following two charts.

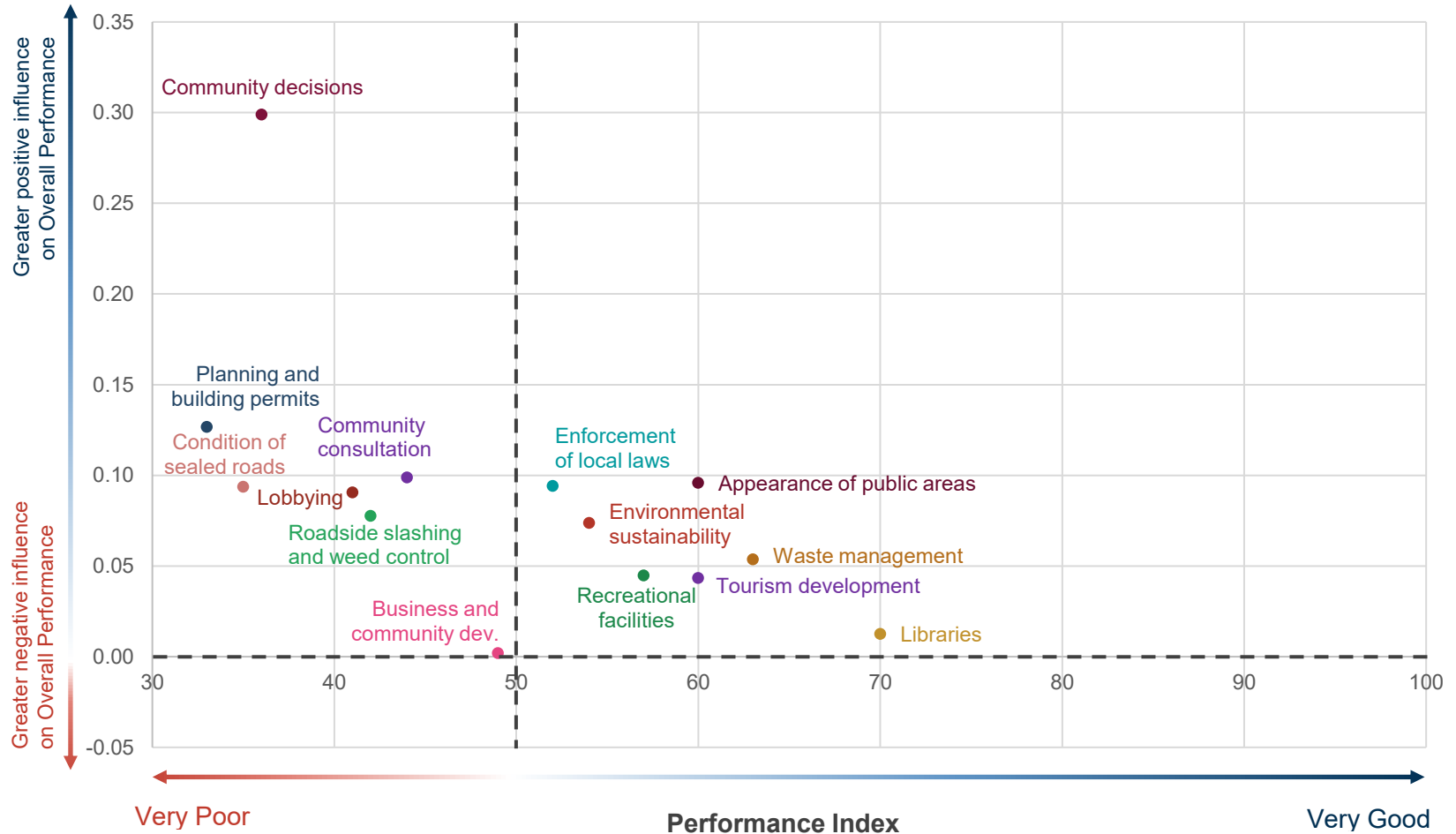
1. **The first chart** shows the results of a regression analysis of *all* individual service areas selected by Council.
2. **The second chart** shows the results of a regression performed on a smaller set of service areas, being those with a moderate-to-strong influence on overall performance. Service areas with a weaker influence on overall performance (i.e. a low Standardised Beta Coefficient) have been excluded from the analysis.

**Key insights from this analysis are derived from the second chart.**



# Influence on overall performance: all services

2026 regression analysis (all services)

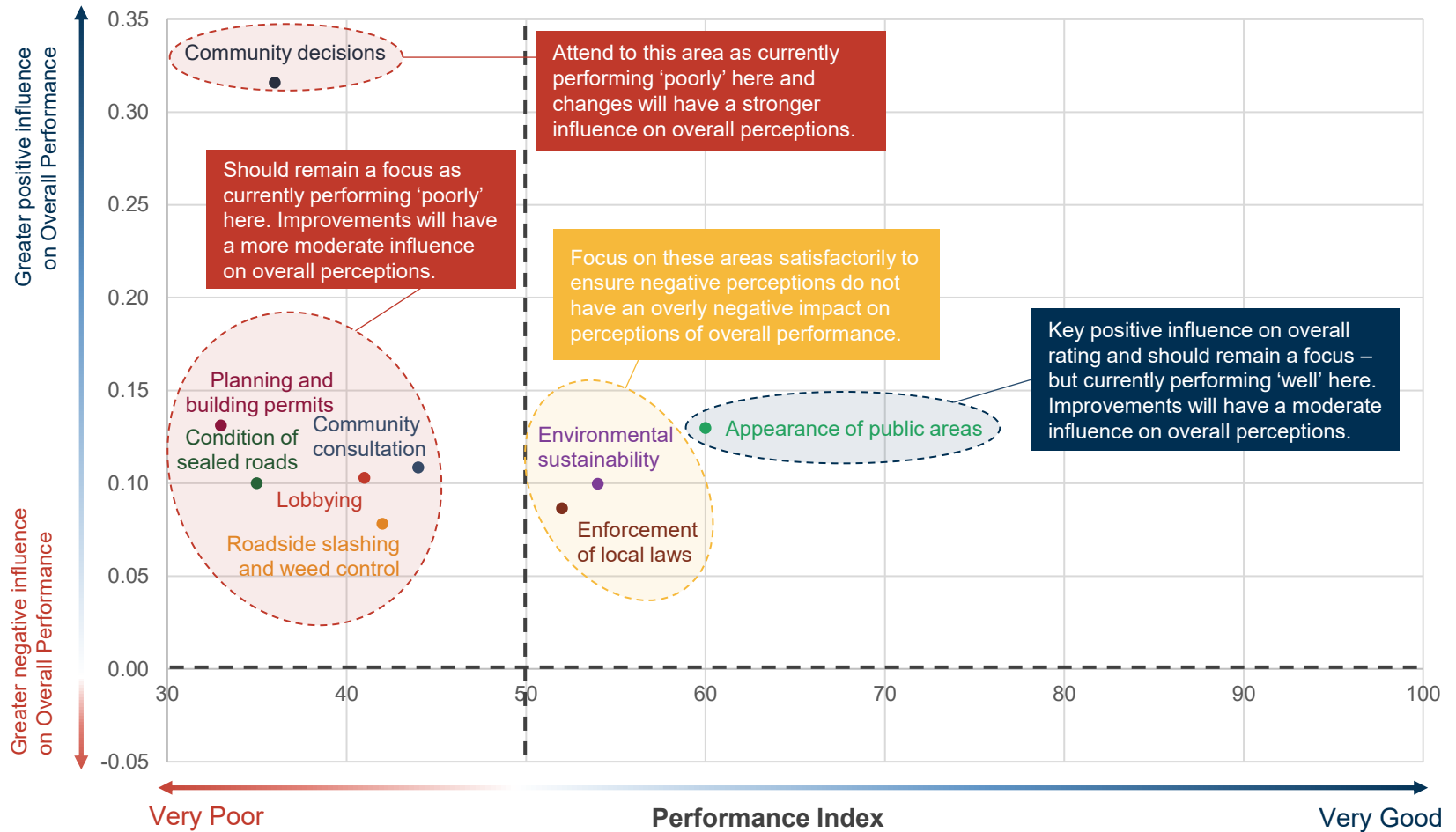


The multiple regression analysis model above (all service areas) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.647 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.634, which means that 63% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at  $p = 0.0001$ ,  $F = 50.38$ . This model should be interpreted with some caution as some data is not normally distributed and not all service areas have linear correlations.



# Influence on overall performance: key services

2026 regression analysis (key services)



The multiple regression analysis model above (reduced set of service areas) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.641 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.632, which means that 63% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at  $p = 0.0001$ ,  $F = 77.25$ .



# Best things about Council

2026 best things about Council (%)  
 - Top mentions only -



Q16. Please tell me what is the ONE BEST thing about Hepburn Shire Council? It could be about any of the issues or services we have covered in this survey or it could be about something else altogether?

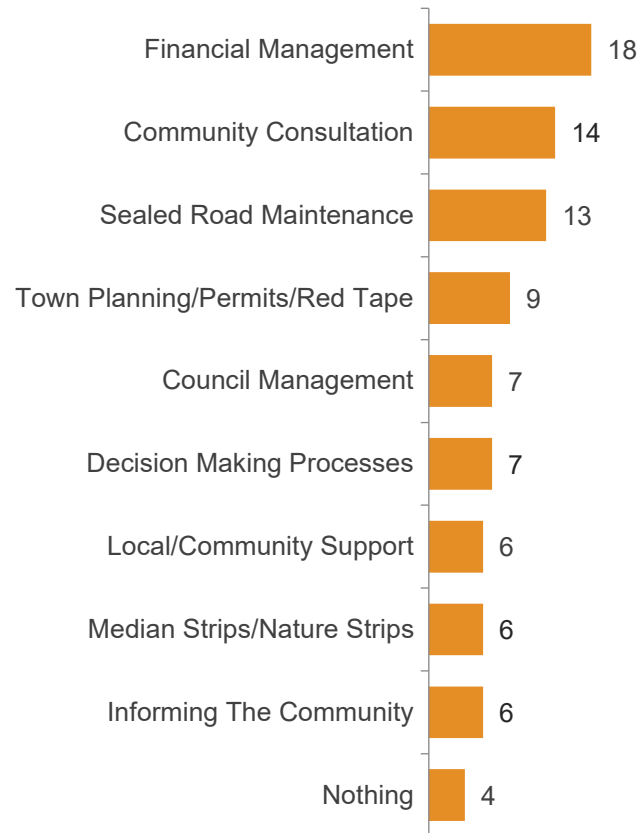
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 9 Councils asked group: 4

A verbatim listing of responses to this question can be found in the accompanying dashboard.



# Areas for improvement

**2026 areas for improvement (%)**  
*- Top mentions only -*



Q17. What does Hepburn Shire Council MOST need to do to improve its performance?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 14 Councils asked group: 6  
 A verbatim listing of responses to this question can be found in the accompanying dashboard.



# Customer service



## Contact with council and customer service

### Contact with council

Six in 10 Council residents (60%) had contact with Council in the last 12 months. This is a significant decline from 2025 (70%) and Council's lowest rate of contact in the last 10 years.

- Rate of contact is down across demographic groups and has significantly declined from 2025 among women and residents aged 50 to 64 years.

Telephone (30%) and in-person (28%) contact remain most common, followed by email (21%).



**Among those residents who have had contact with Council, 70% provide a positive customer service rating of 'very good' or 'good', including 27% of residents who rate Council's customer service as 'very good'.**

### Customer service

Council's customer service index of 69 represents a slight (but not significant) five-point increase from 2025 and Council's highest rating in 10 years.

Customer service is rated in line with the Small Rural group and Overall averages (index scores of 70 and 69 respectively).

- Perceptions among men improved significantly since last year (index score of 71, up 10 points).
- Customer service ratings are highest among residents aged 35 to 49 years (index score of 73), a positive result given this cohort also has the highest rate of contact with Council (71%).

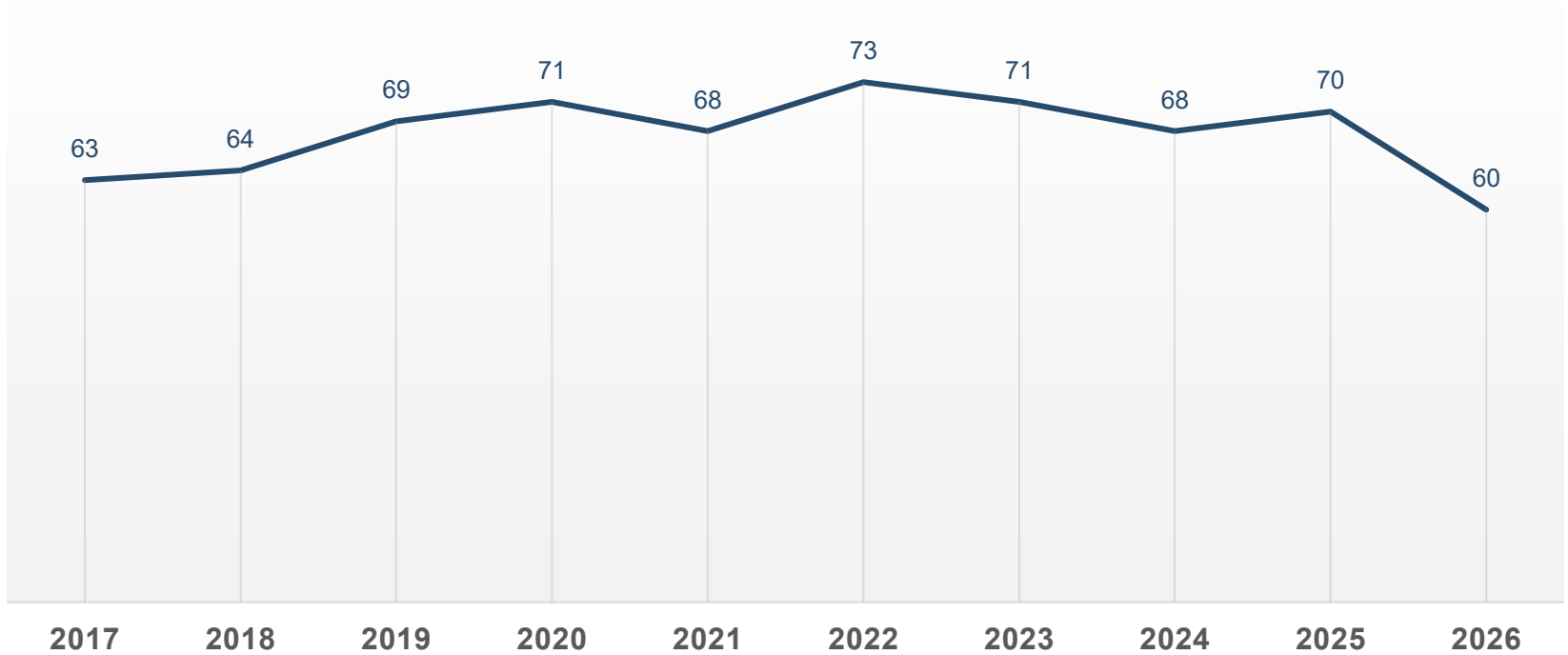
Based on the contact methods most recently used, residents who interact with Council via telephone or in-person provide the highest customer service ratings (index scores of 77 and 69 respectively).

Ratings for email, another more frequently used method of contact, remain relatively lower (index score of 58) but have improved over the past two years. Email communications should continue to be prioritised to improve customer service interactions with residents.



# Contact with council

2026 contact with council (%)  
Have had contact



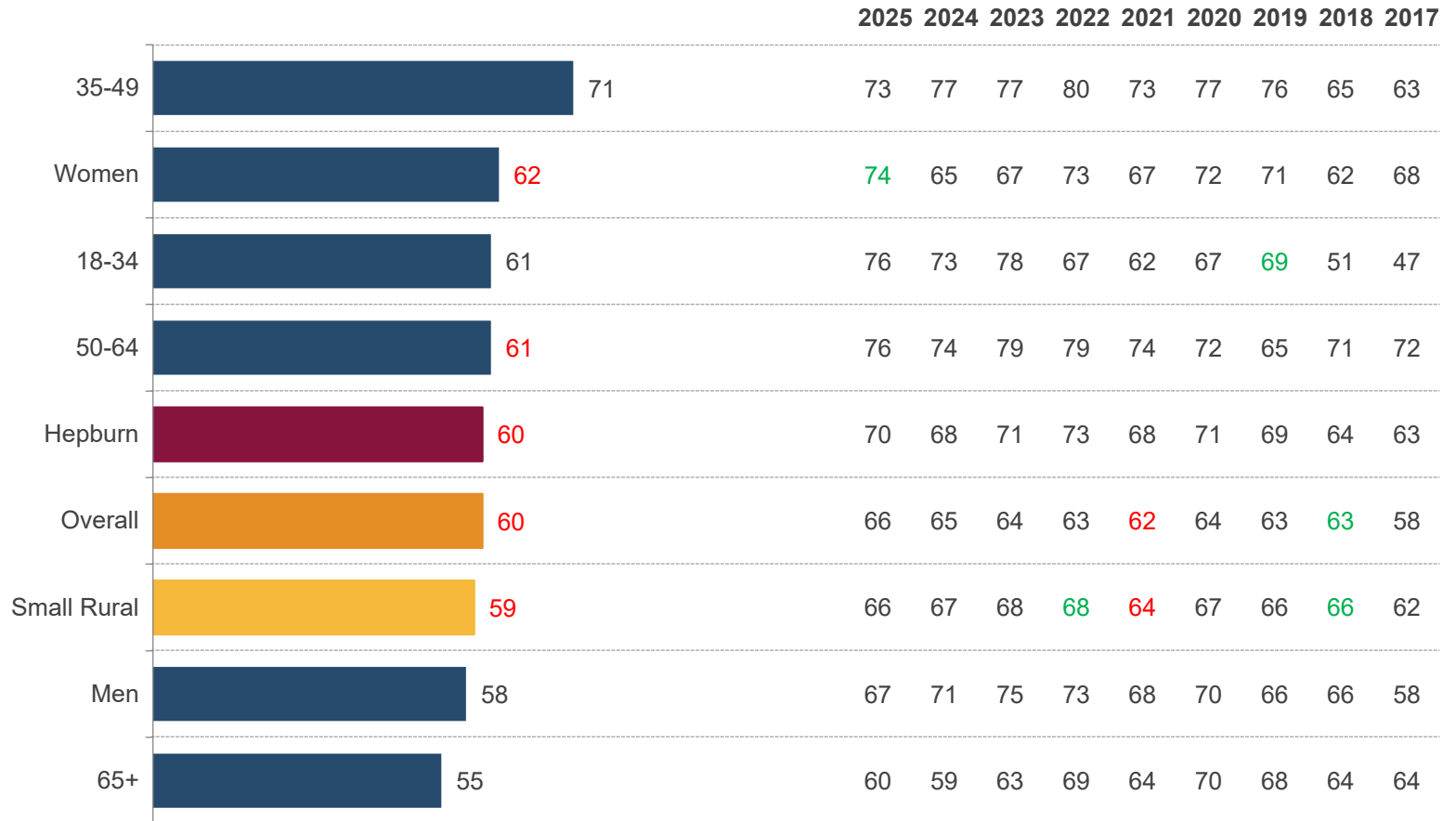
Q5a. Have you or any member of your household had any recent contact with Hepburn Shire Council in any of the following ways?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 2



# Contact with council

2026 contact with council (%)



Q5a. Have you or any member of your household had any recent contact with Hepburn Shire Council in any of the following ways?

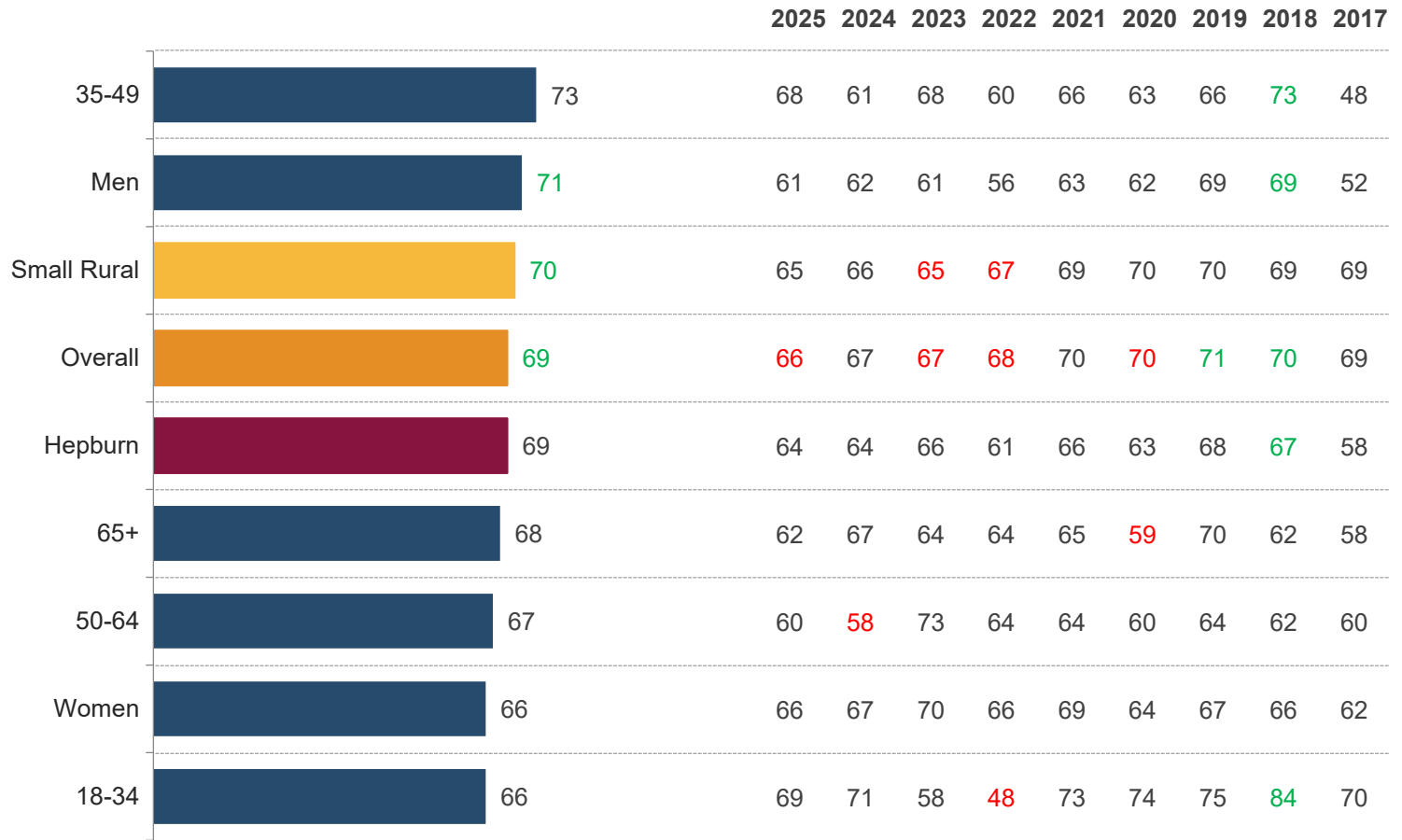
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 2

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Customer service rating

2026 customer service rating (index scores)

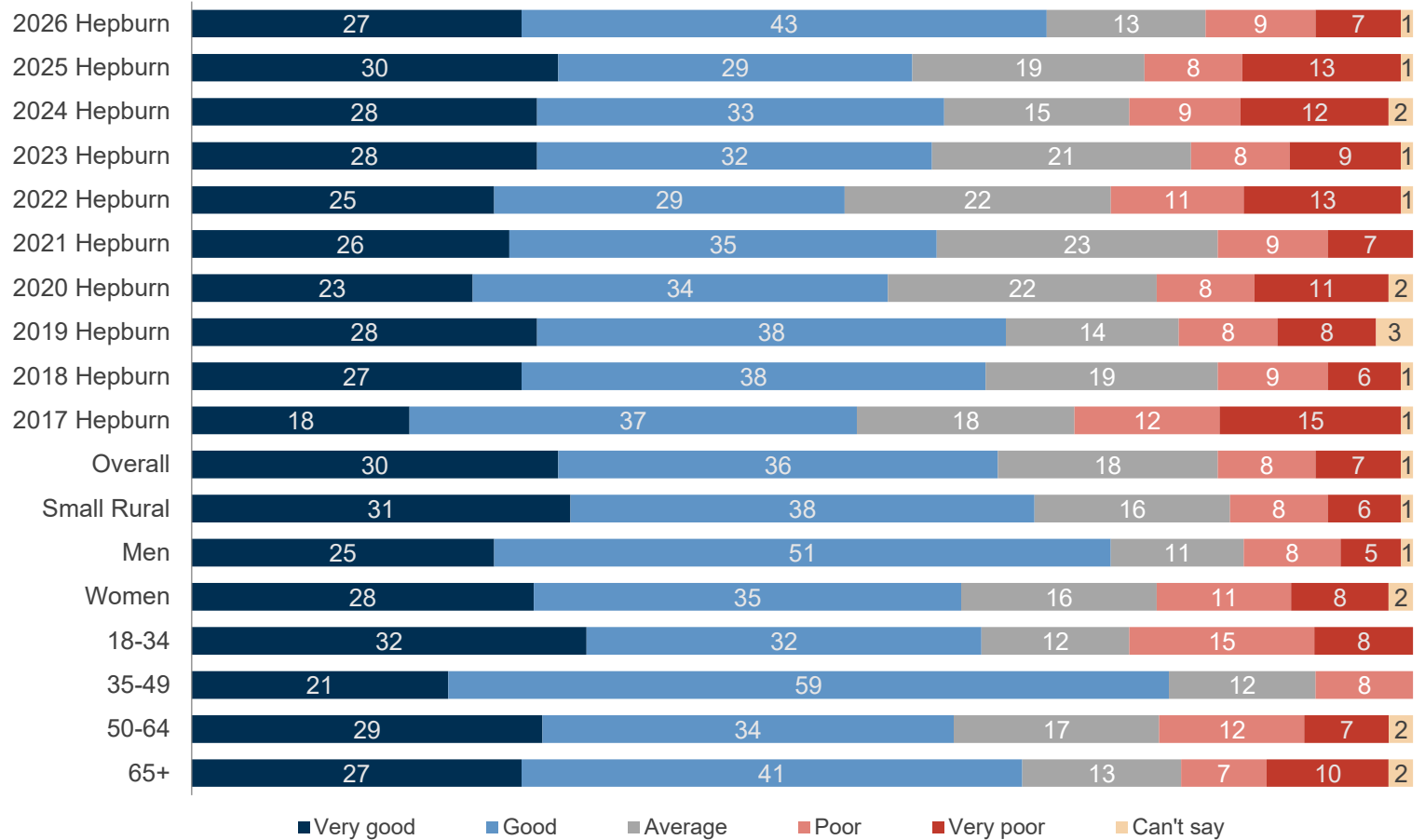


Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Hepburn Shire Council for customer service?  
 Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.  
 Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.  
 Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Customer service rating

2026 customer service rating (%)

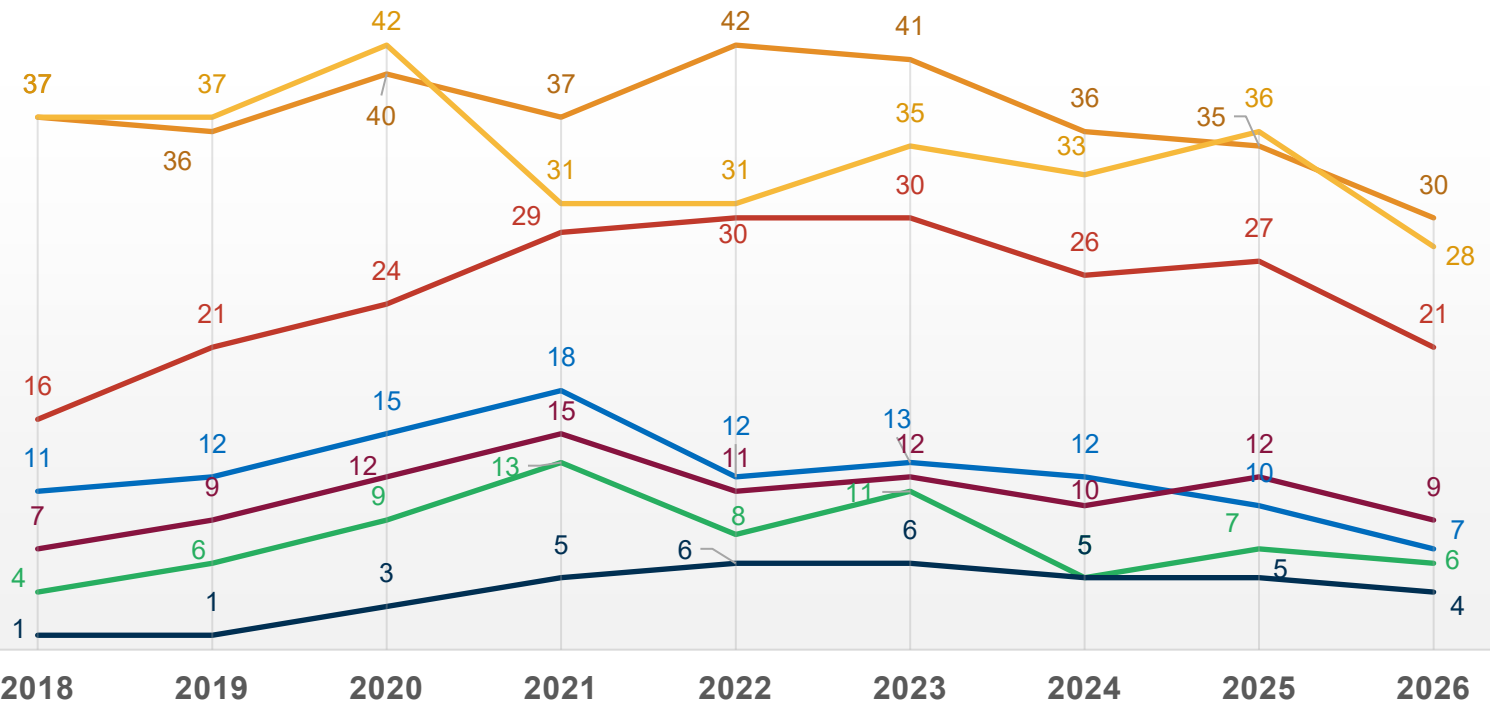
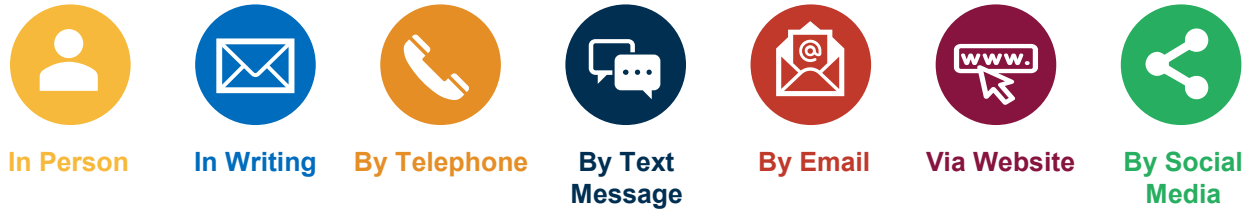


Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Hepburn Shire Council for customer service?  
 Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.  
 Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.  
 Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9



# Method of contact with council

2026 method of contact (%)



Q5a. Have you or any member of your household had any recent contact with Hepburn Shire Council in any of the following ways?

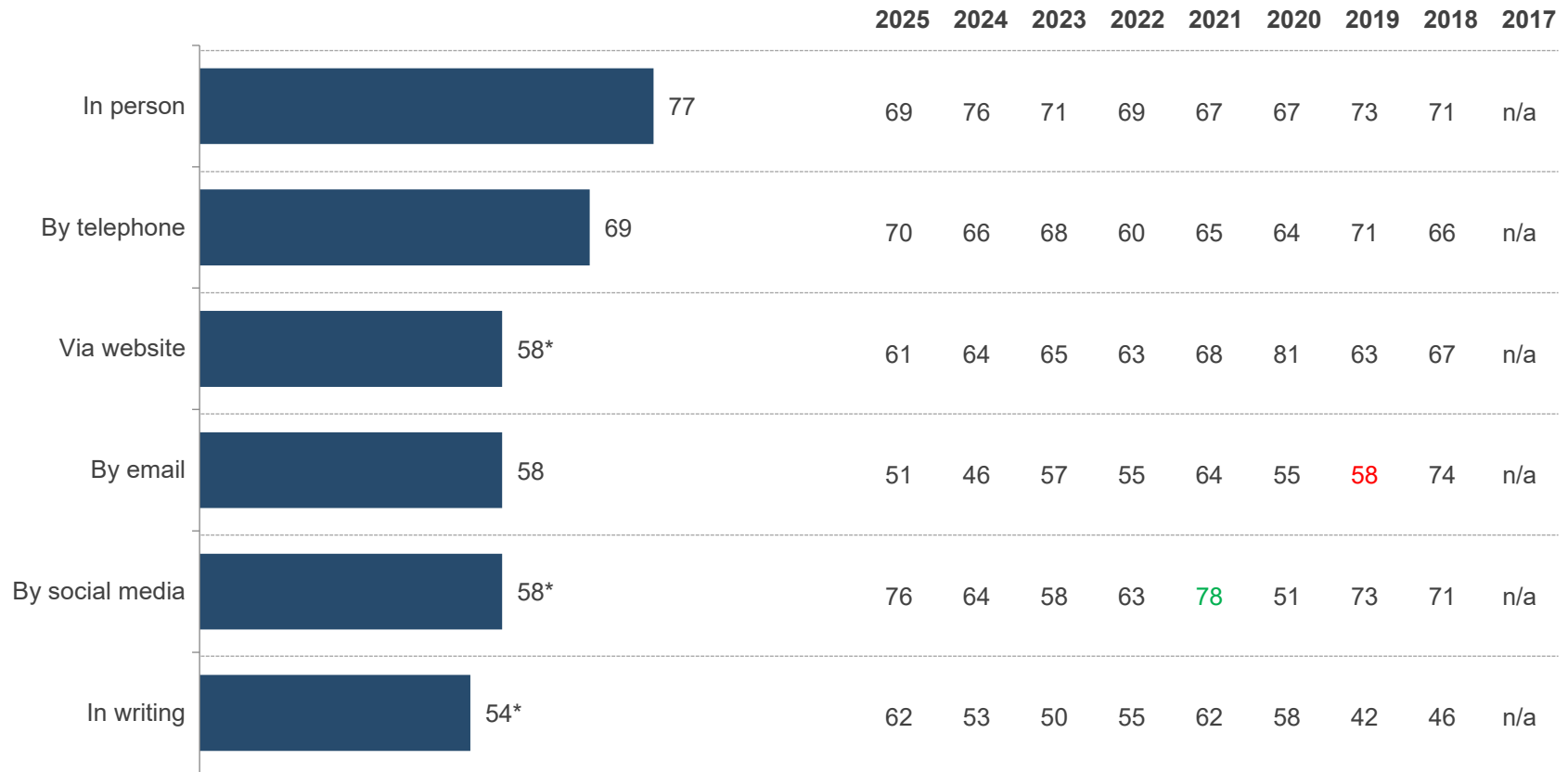
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 2

Note: Respondents could name multiple contacts methods so responses may add to more than 100%



# Customer service rating by method of last contact

2026 customer service rating (index score by method of last contact)



Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Hepburn Shire Council for customer service?

Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.

Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.

Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 2

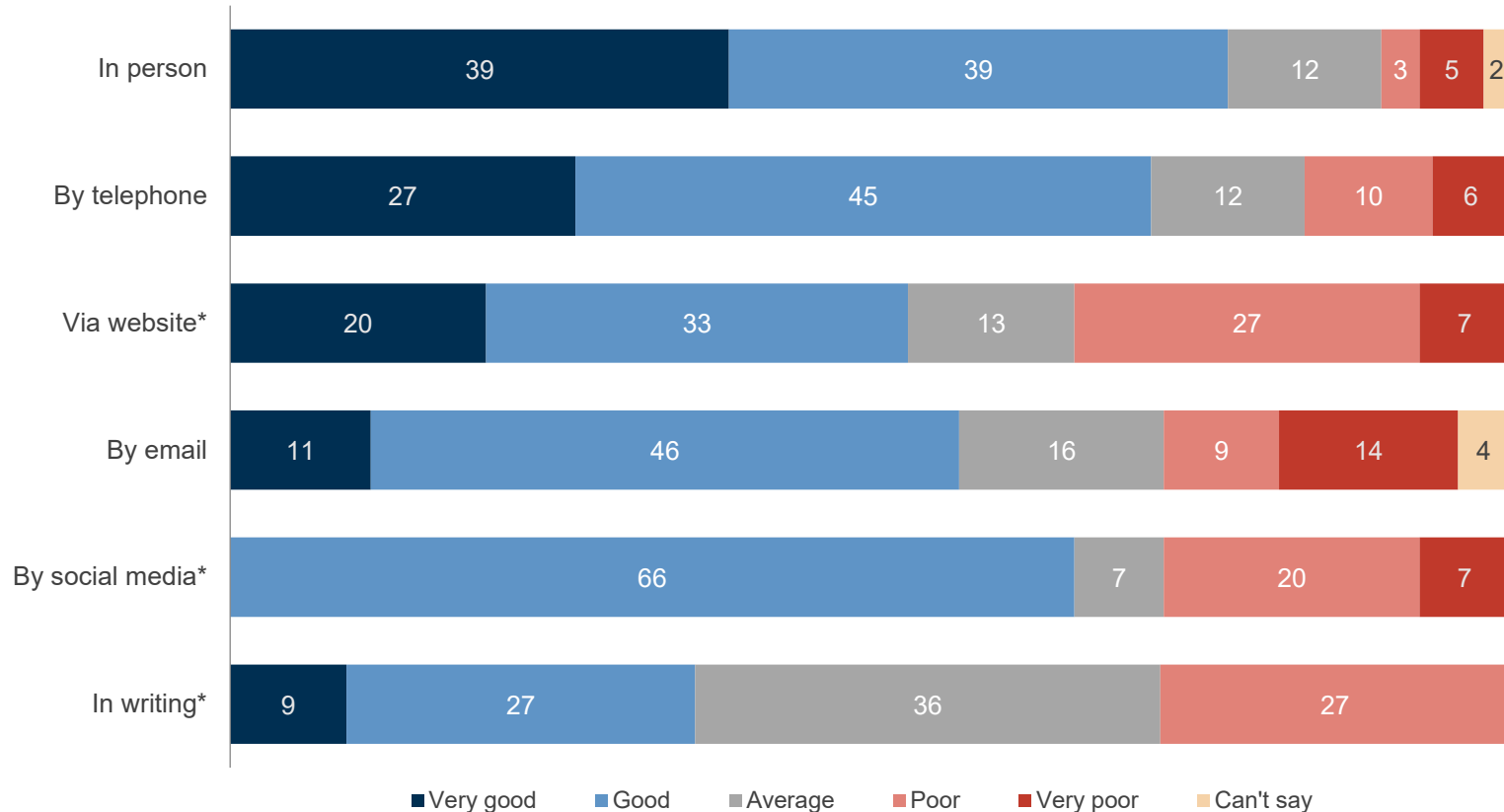
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Customer service rating by method of last contact

2026 customer service rating (% by method of last contact)



Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Hepburn Shire Council for customer service?  
 Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.  
 Base: All respondents who have had contact with Council in the last 12 months.  
 Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 2  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Communication

## Communication

Residents continue to prefer a Council newsletter sent via email (34%), followed by a newsletter sent via mail (27%) for communication about news and information and upcoming events. This has been the pattern for three years, although the preference gap between email and mailed newsletters has widened in 2026. Social media (14%) remains the next most preferred form of communication.

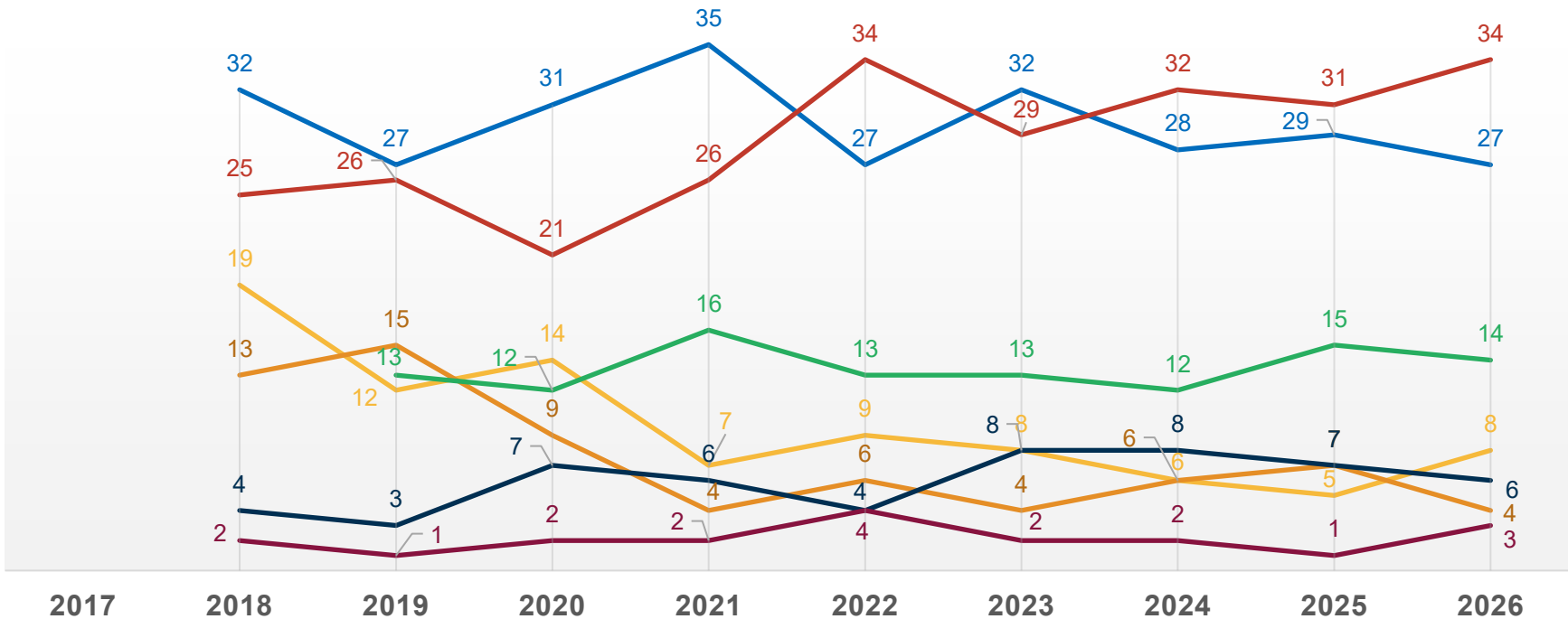
- Among residents aged under 50 years, Council newsletters via email are now the preferred form of communication (38%, up from 25% in 2025), overtaking both mailed newsletters (22%, down from 30%) and social media (16%, down from 27%).
- Those aged 50 years and over continue to prefer a Council newsletter via email (33%) slightly ahead of a newsletter via mail (29%), with preference for social media on the increase among this cohort (12%, up from 8%).





# Best form of communication

2026 best form of communication (%)

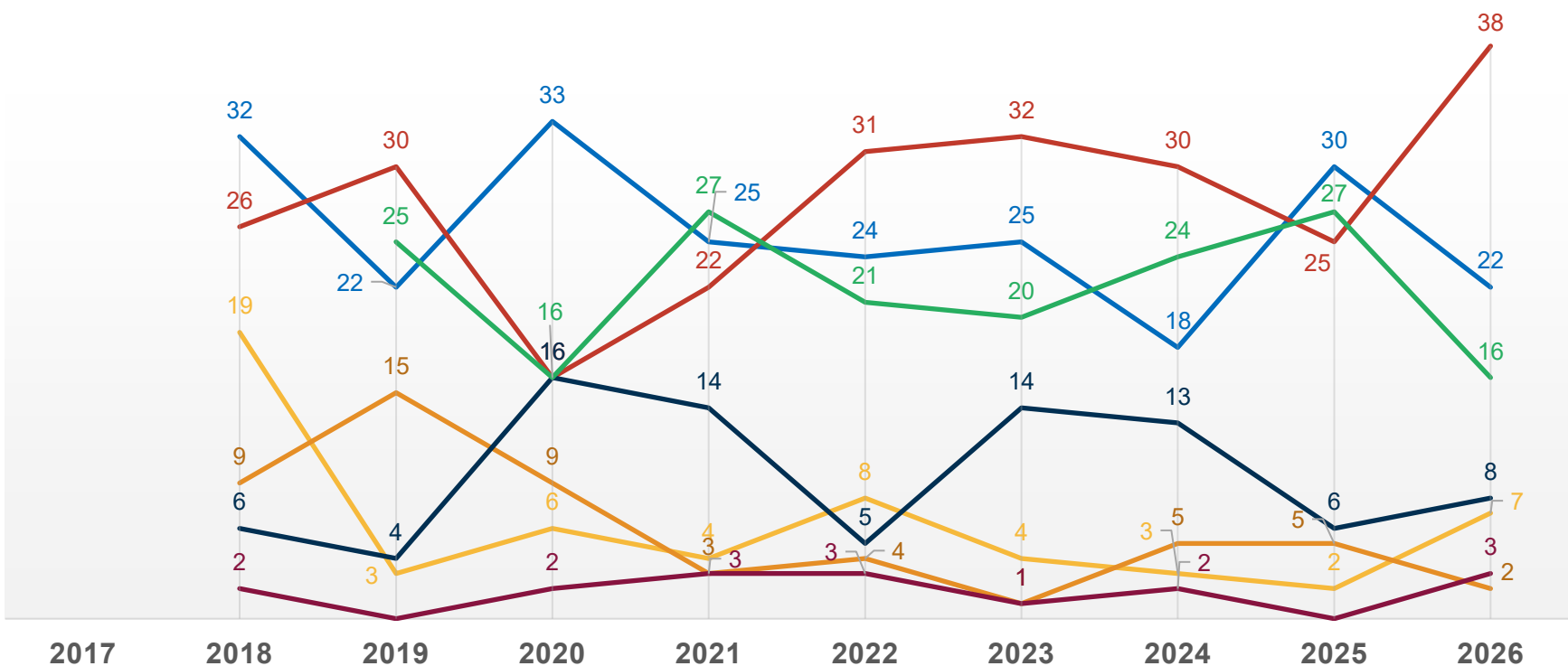


Q13. If Hepburn Shire Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 6  
 Note: 'Social Media' was included in 2019.



# Best form of communication: under 50s

2026 under 50s best form of communication (%)

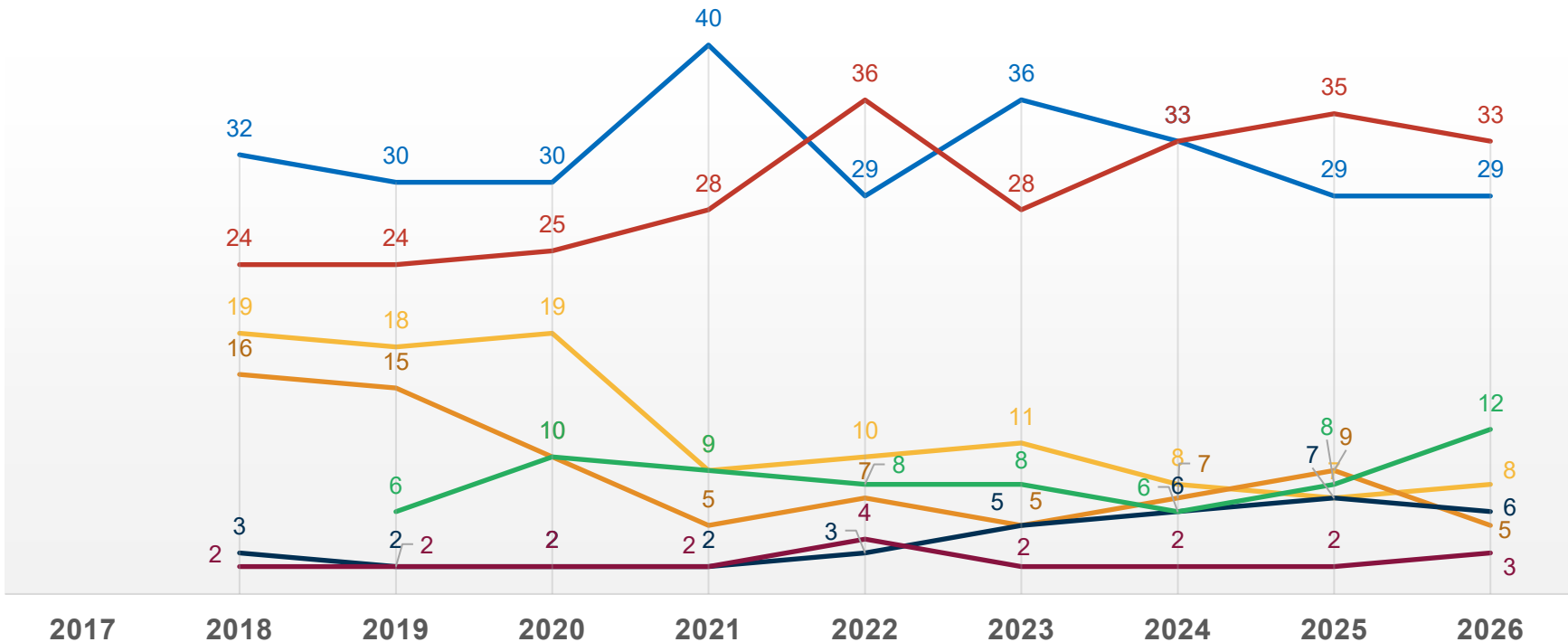


Q13. If Hepburn Shire Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?  
 Base: All respondents aged under 50. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 6  
 Note: 'Social Media' was included in 2019.



# Best form of communication: 50+ years

2026 50+ years best form of communication (%)



Q13. If Hepburn Shire Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?  
 Base: All respondents aged 50+ years. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 6  
 Note: 'Social Media' was included in 2019.



# Council direction

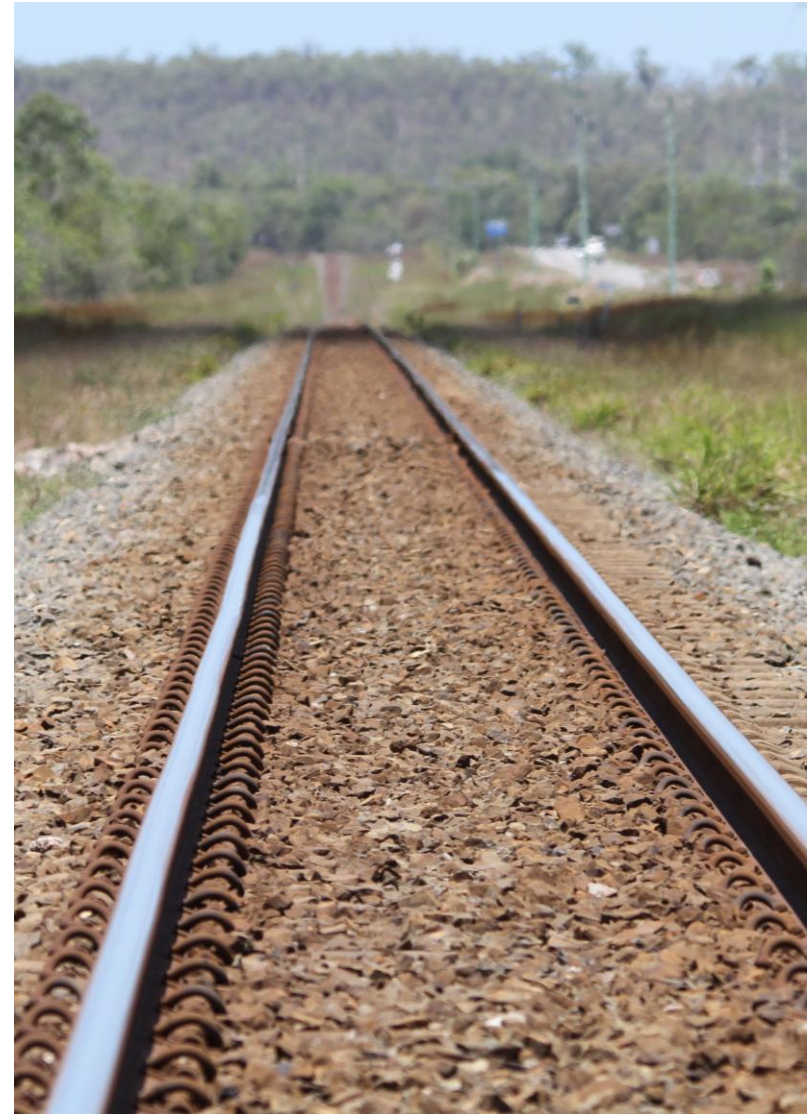
## Council direction

Perceptions of the direction of Council's overall performance (index score of 34) have decreased a further four index points in the past 12 months, following a significant six-point decline in 2025.

- Council performs significantly lower than the Small Rural group and Overall averages (index scores of 52 and 48 respectively).
- Perceptions of Council direction have significantly declined among women (index score of 32, down eight points) and residents aged 35 to 49 years (index score of 31, down 14 points).

Over the last 12 months, 46% of residents believe the direction of Council's overall performance has stayed the same (down from 51%), and 40% believe it has deteriorated (up from 32%). Just 9% believe the direction has improved (compared with 10% in 2025).

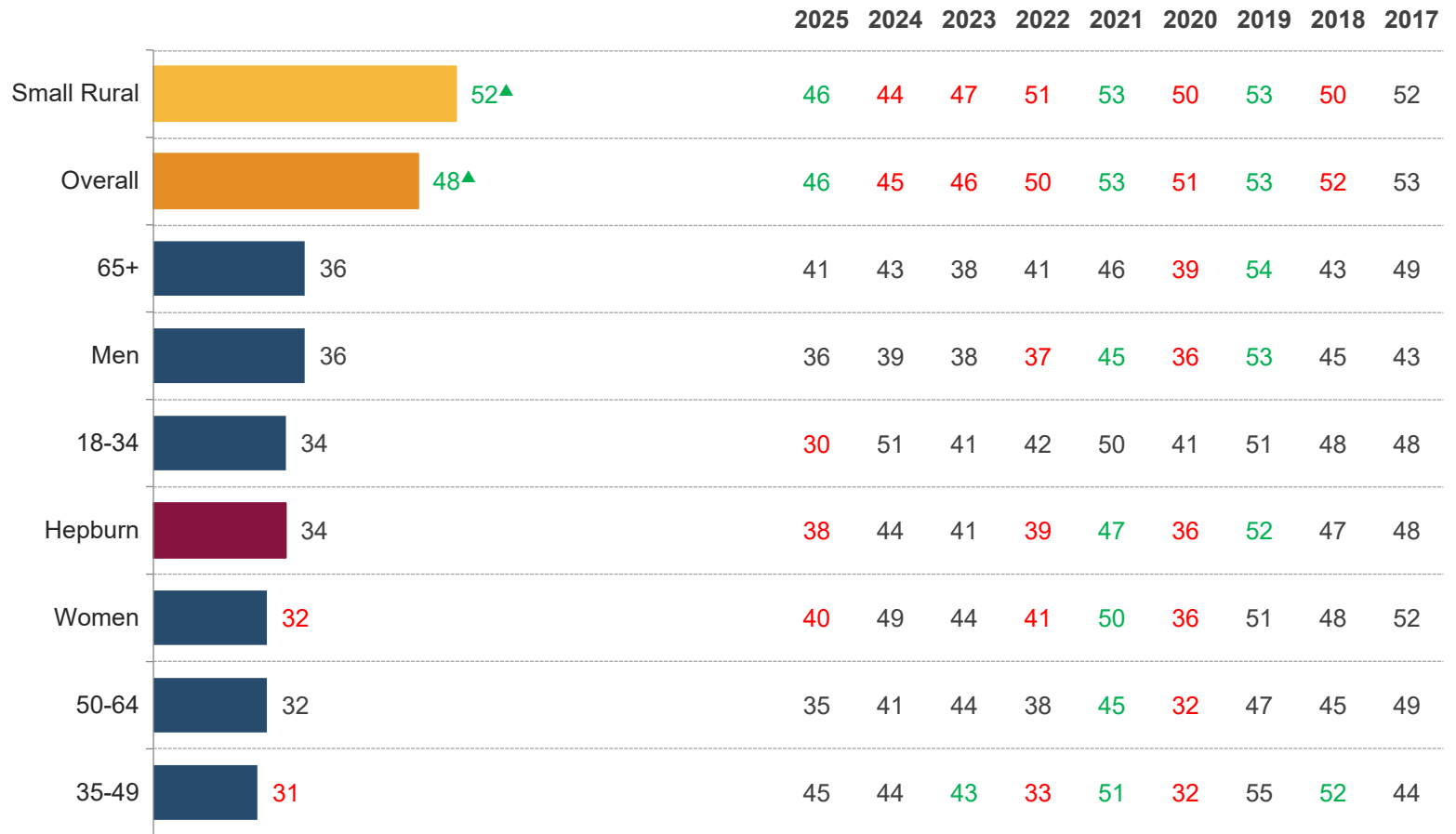
In a trade-off between council rates versus services, a majority (52%) of residents would 'definitely' or 'probably' prefer cuts in services to keep rates the same as they are now. This is more than double those who would 'definitely' or 'probably' prefer rate rises to improve local services (24%).





# Overall council direction last 12 months

2026 overall council direction (index scores)



Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Hepburn Shire Council's overall performance?

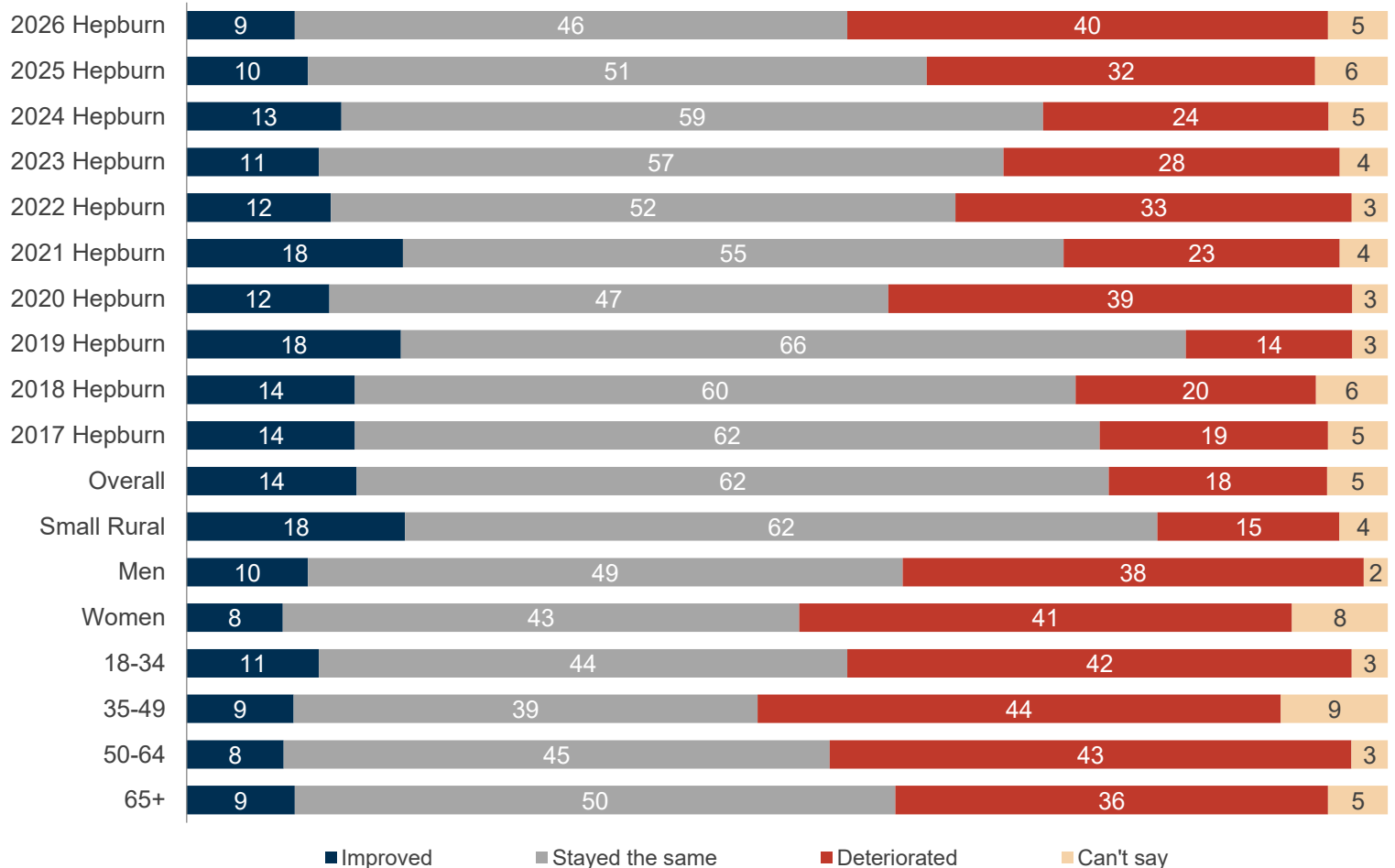
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Overall council direction last 12 months

2026 overall council direction (%)

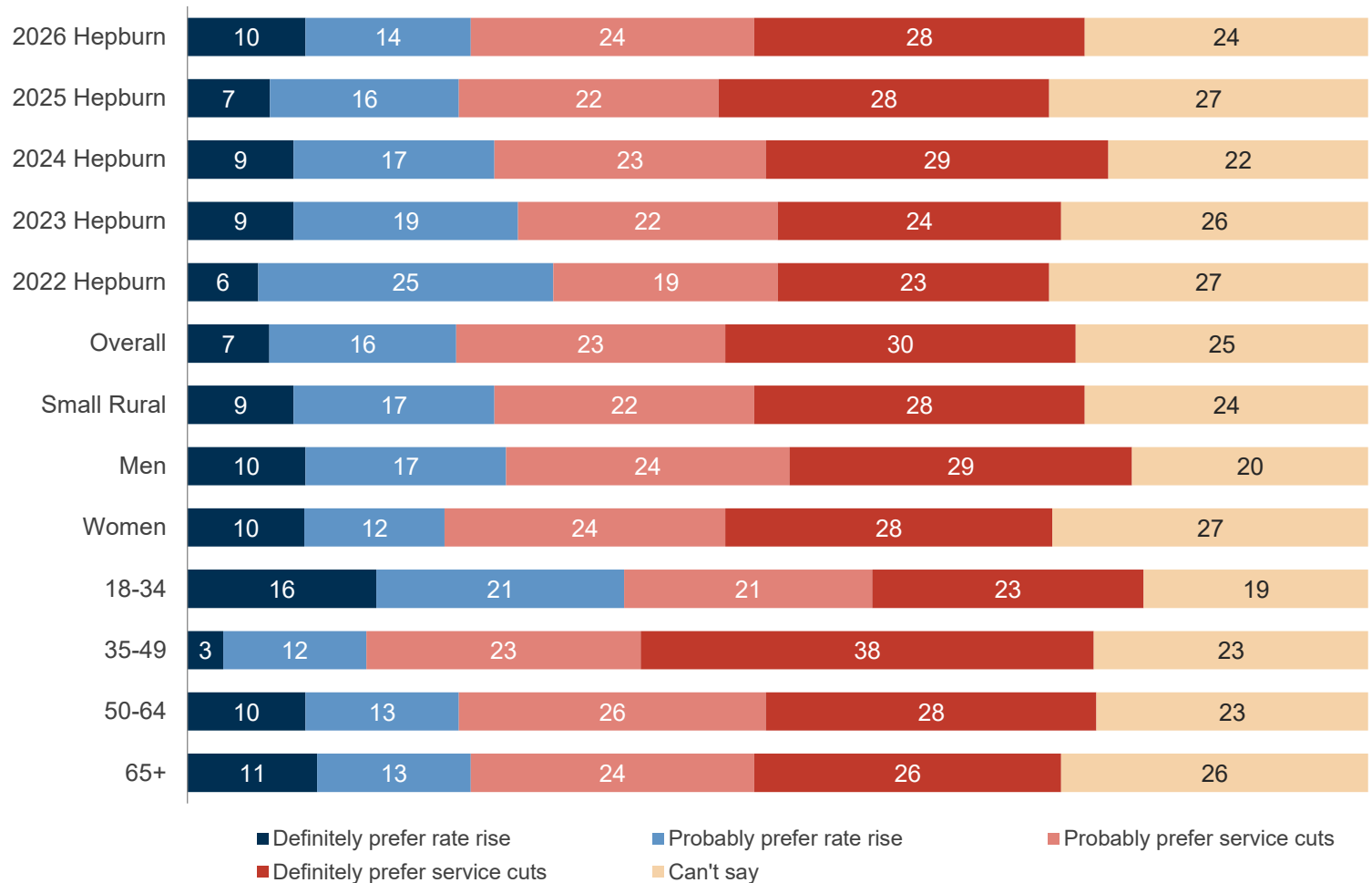


Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Hepburn Shire Council's overall performance?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9



# Rates / services trade-off

2026 rates / services trade-off (%)



Q10. If you had to choose, would you prefer to see council rate rises to improve local services OR would you prefer to see cuts in council services to keep council rates at the same level as they are now?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

A large, dark blue, stylized letter 'W' graphic that spans the right side of the page. The 'W' is filled with a glowing, intricate network pattern of white and light blue lines, resembling a neural network or a complex data structure. The background of the 'W' is a dark blue gradient.

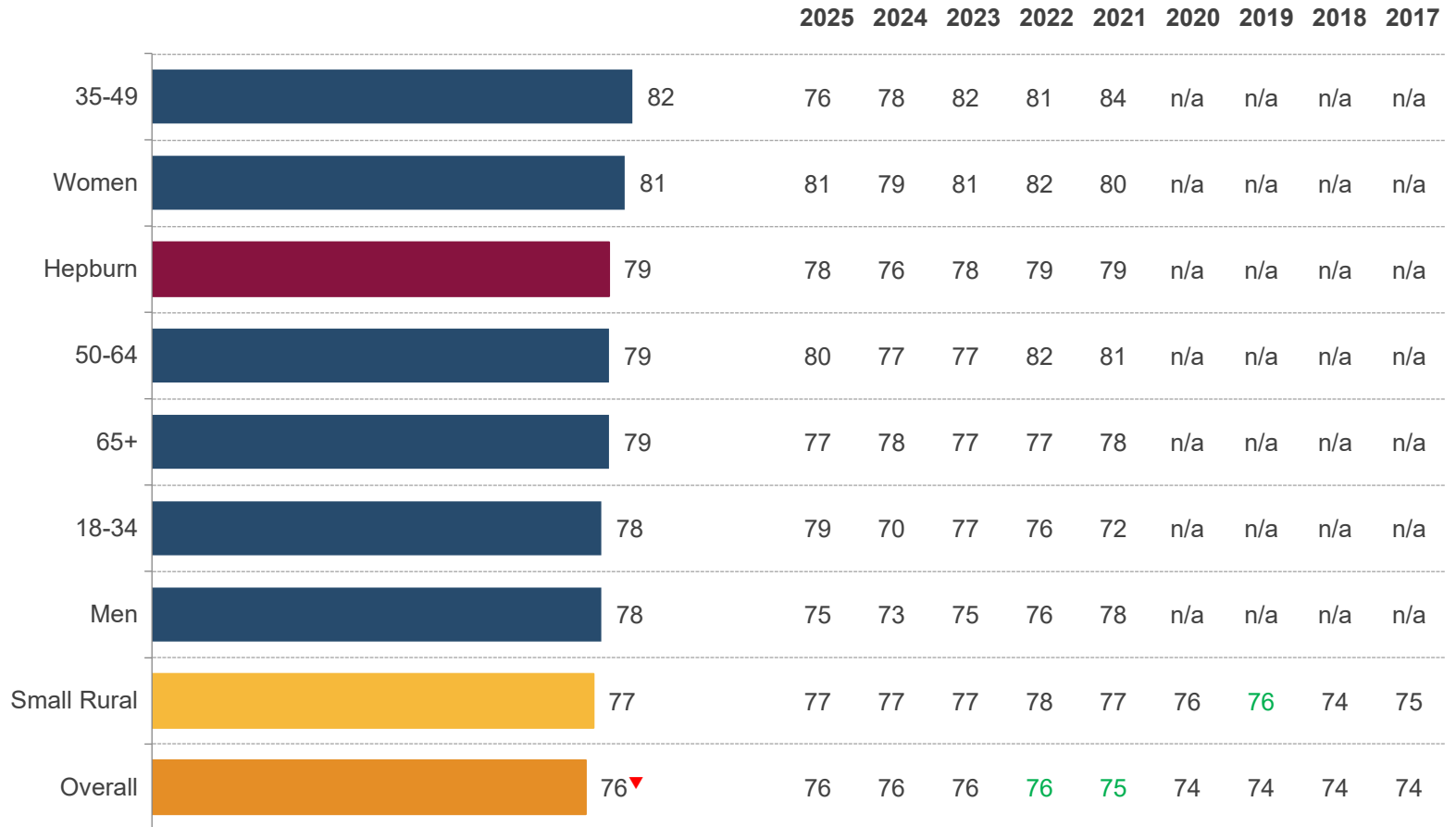
# Individual service areas



# Community consultation and engagement importance



2026 consultation and engagement importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Community consultation and engagement' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3

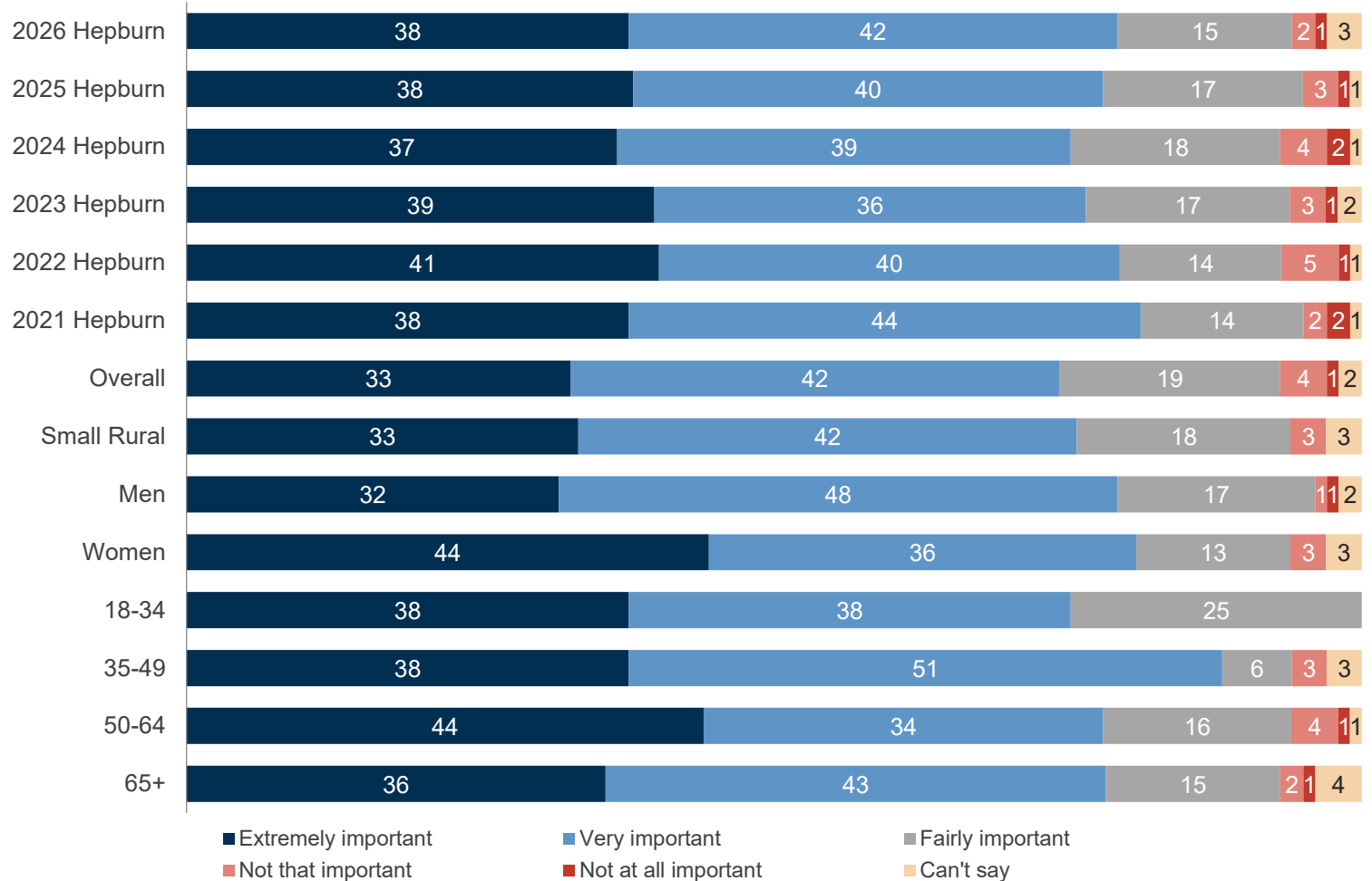
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Community consultation and engagement importance



2026 consultation and engagement importance (%)



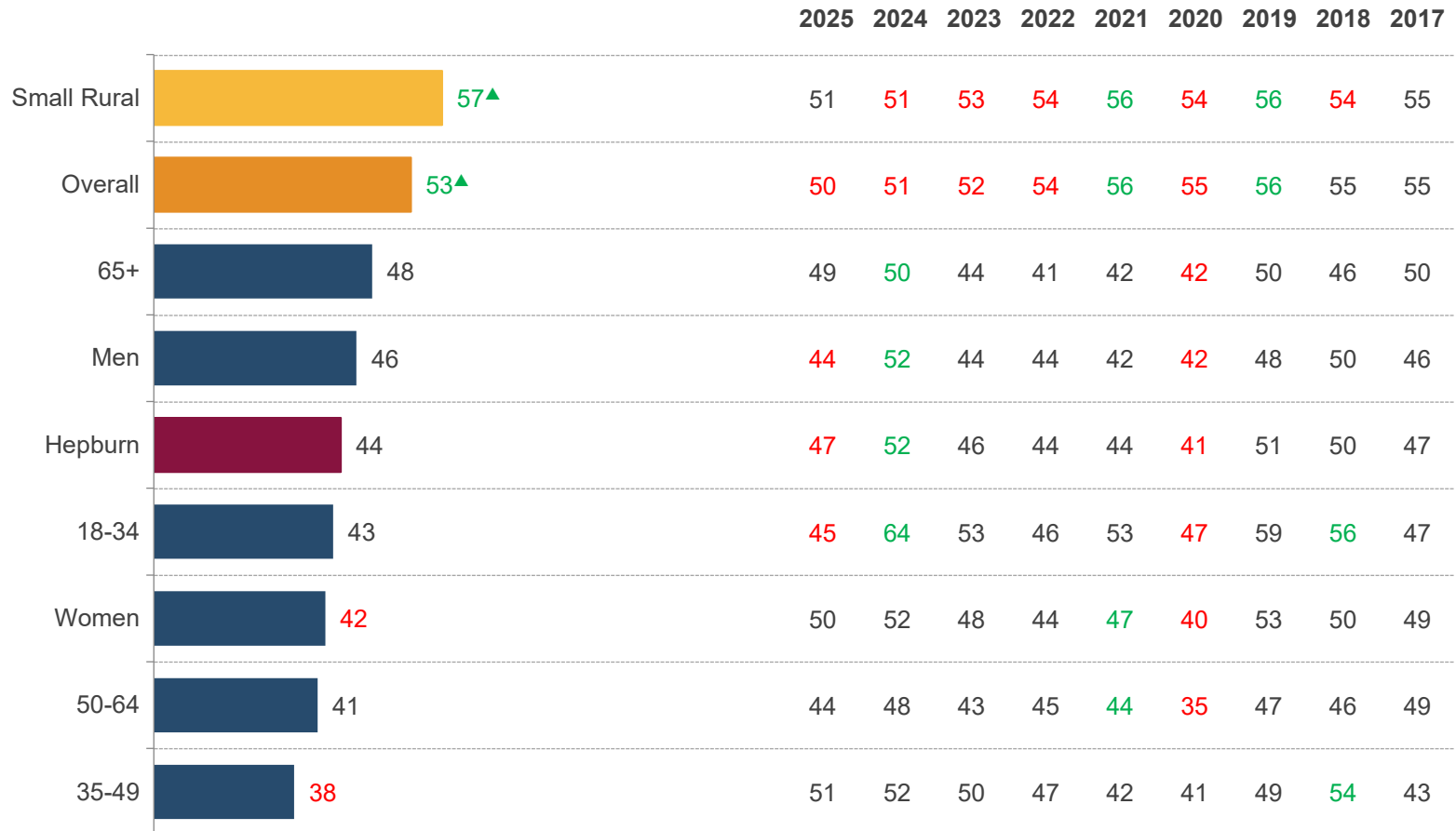
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Community consultation and engagement' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Community consultation and engagement performance



2026 consultation and engagement performance (index scores)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community consultation and engagement' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

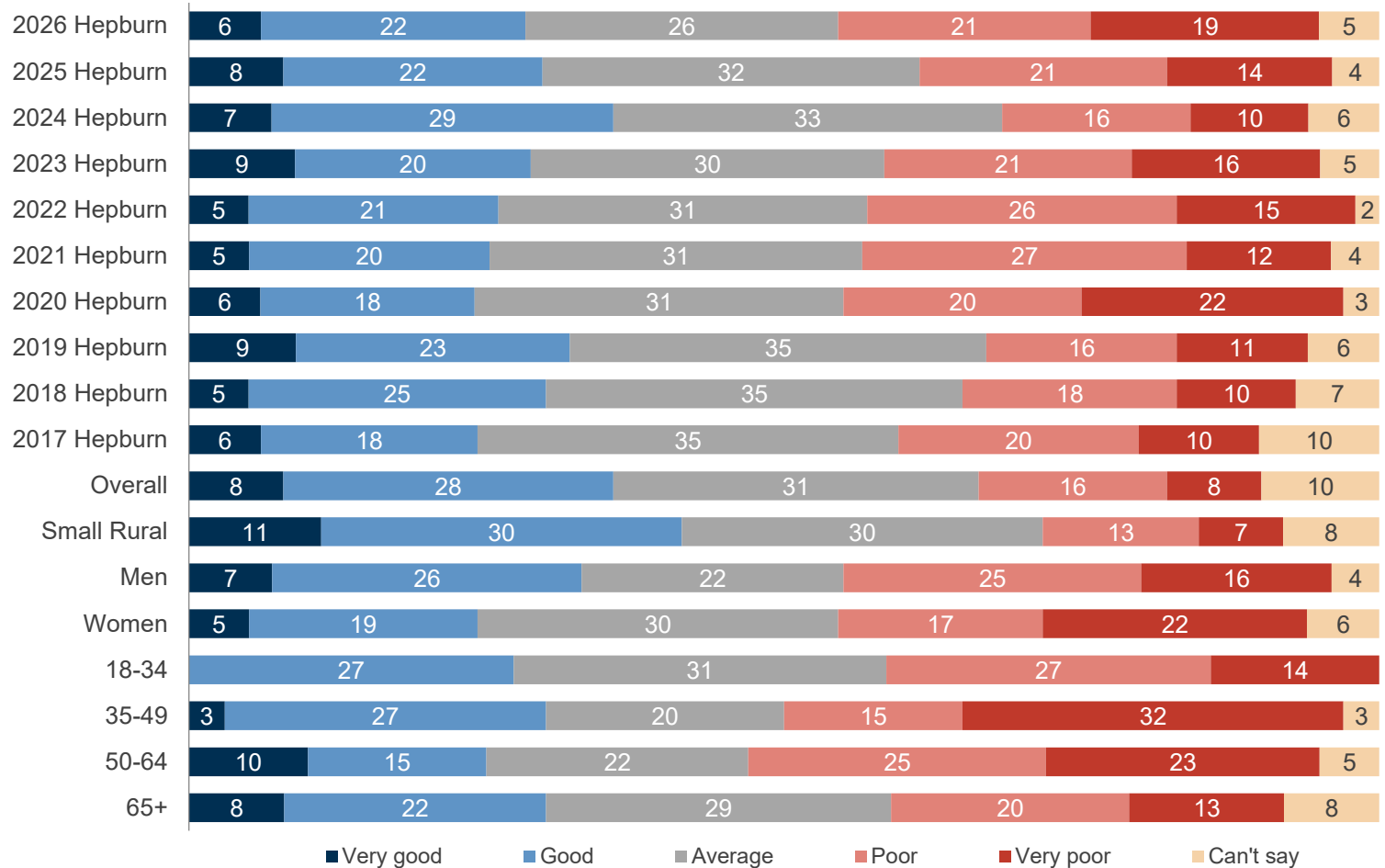
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Community consultation and engagement performance



2026 consultation and engagement performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Community consultation and engagement' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9



# Lobbying on behalf of the community performance



2026 lobbying performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Small Rural	51	50	52	54	55	52	55	53	55
Overall	49	50	51	53	55	53	54	54	54
65+	44	48	42	45	44	41	49	50	51
Women	45	50	45	43	46	40	51	48	48
50-64	45	47	47	45	43	34	48	46	45
Hepburn	45	48	44	44	45	40	51	51	48
Men	46	46	43	45	43	40	50	53	47
18-34	43	56	45	42	53	49	62	57	50
35-49	50	43	44	43	40	38	49	51	44

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 17 Councils asked group: 9

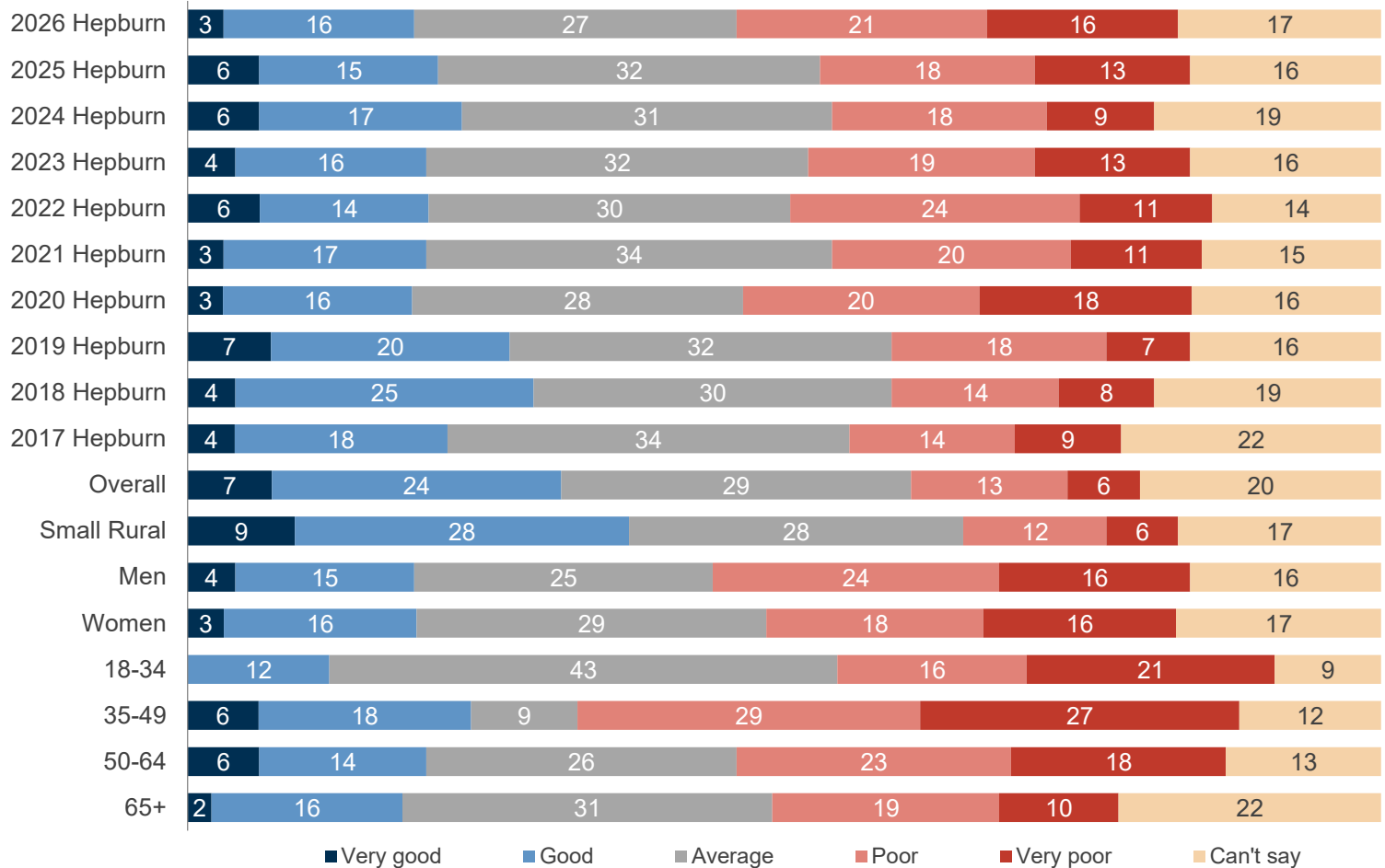
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Lobbying on behalf of the community performance



2026 lobbying performance (%)

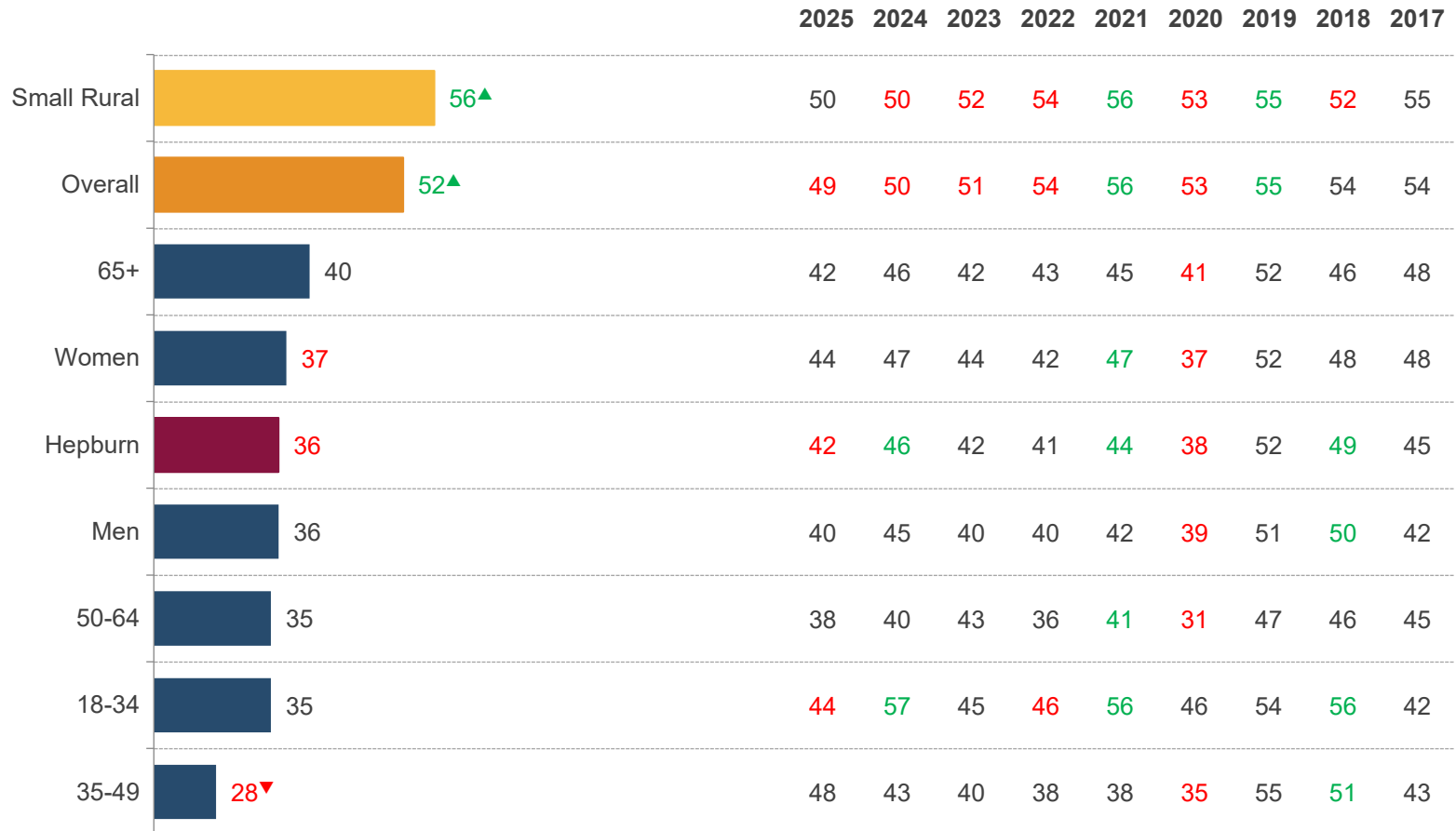


Q2. How has Council performed on 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 17 Councils asked group: 9

# Decisions made in the interest of the community performance



2026 community decisions made performance (index scores)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' over the last 12 months?

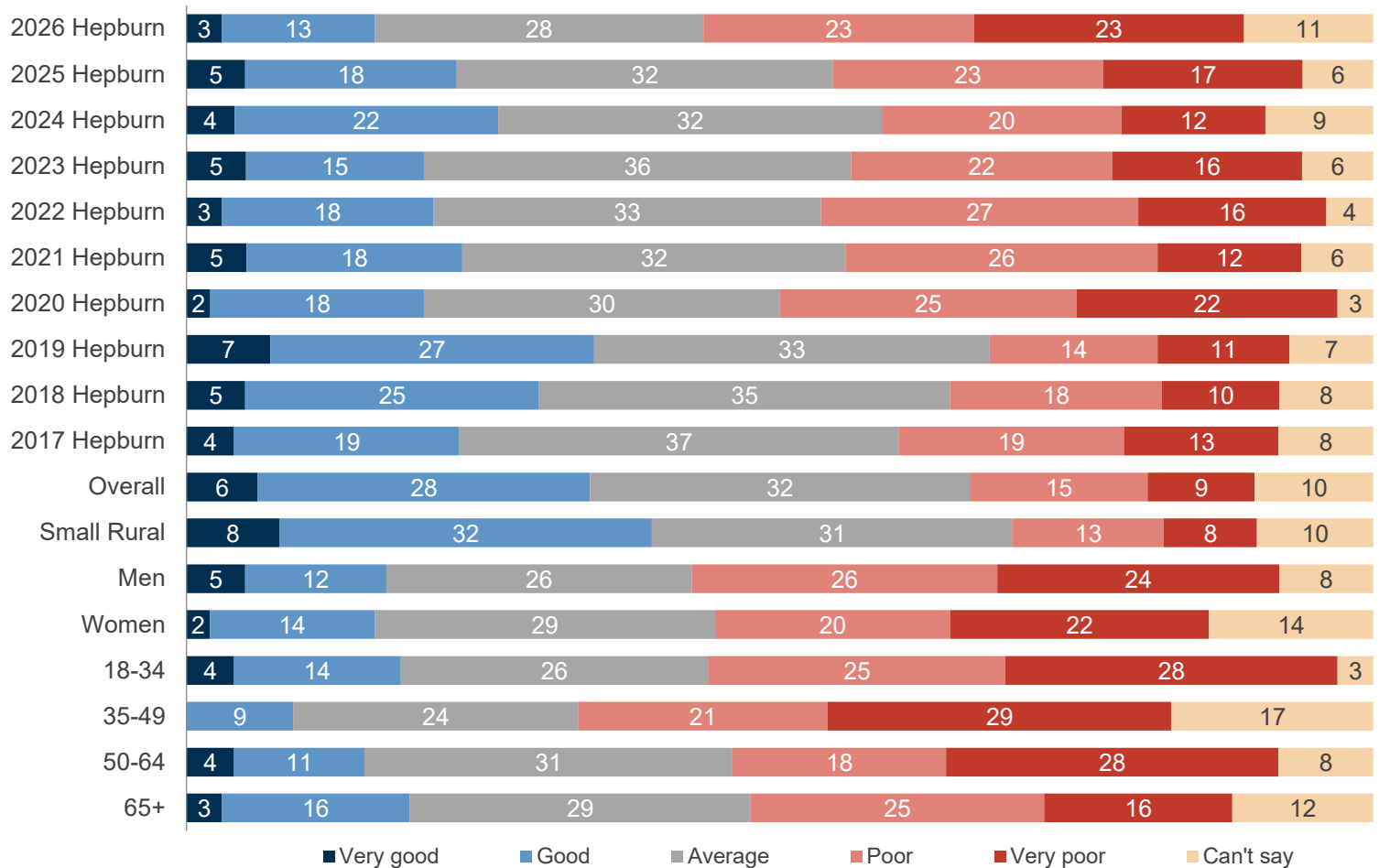
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

# Decisions made in the interest of the community performance



2026 community decisions made performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

# The condition of sealed local roads in your area performance



2026 sealed local roads performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Small Rural	44	41	44	50	53	51	53	49	50
Overall	45	45	48	53	57	54	56	53	53
65+	34	31	37	44	46	47	54	47	41
Women	35	28	35	41	48	44	51	46	38
Hepburn	33	29	33	39	47	44	50	46	37
50-64	30	28	33	39	43	43	45	44	36
Men	30	30	31	38	45	43	50	46	35
18-34	30	28	27	32	53	39	50	49	35
35-49	35	25	29	35	47	44	50	43	34

Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' over the last 12 months?

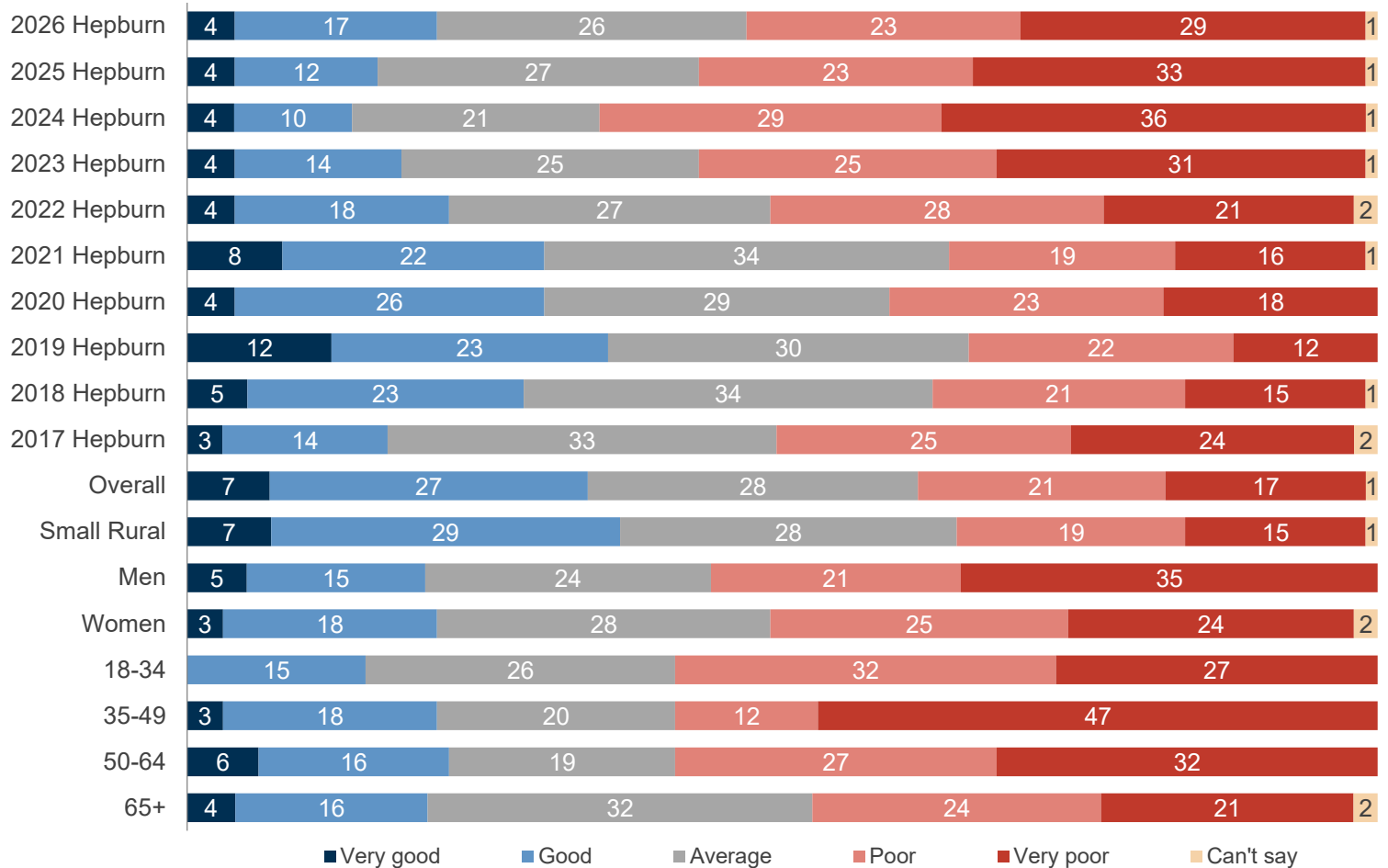
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

# The condition of sealed local roads in your area performance



2026 sealed local roads performance (%)



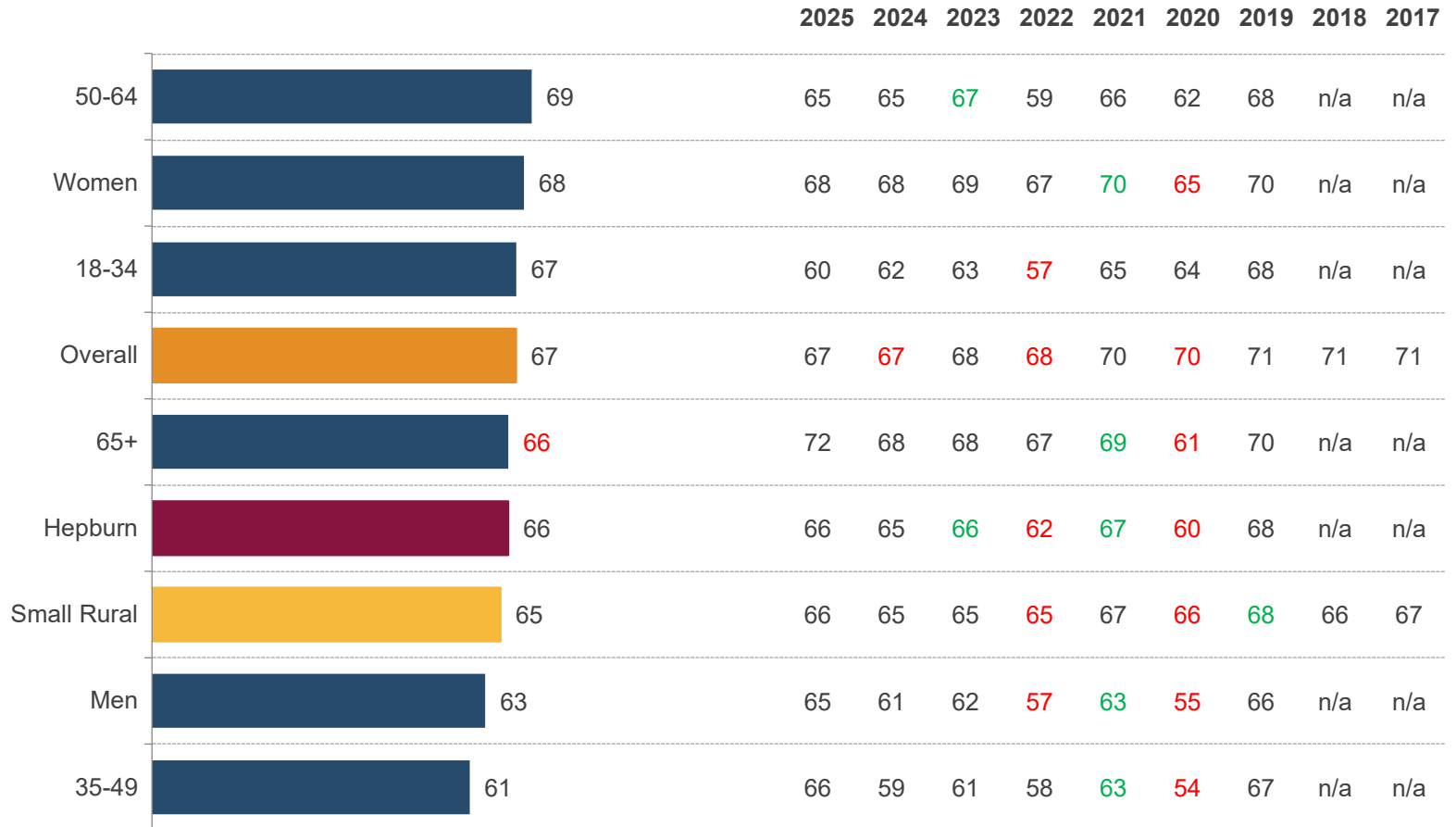
Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9



# Enforcement of local laws importance



2026 law enforcement importance (index scores)



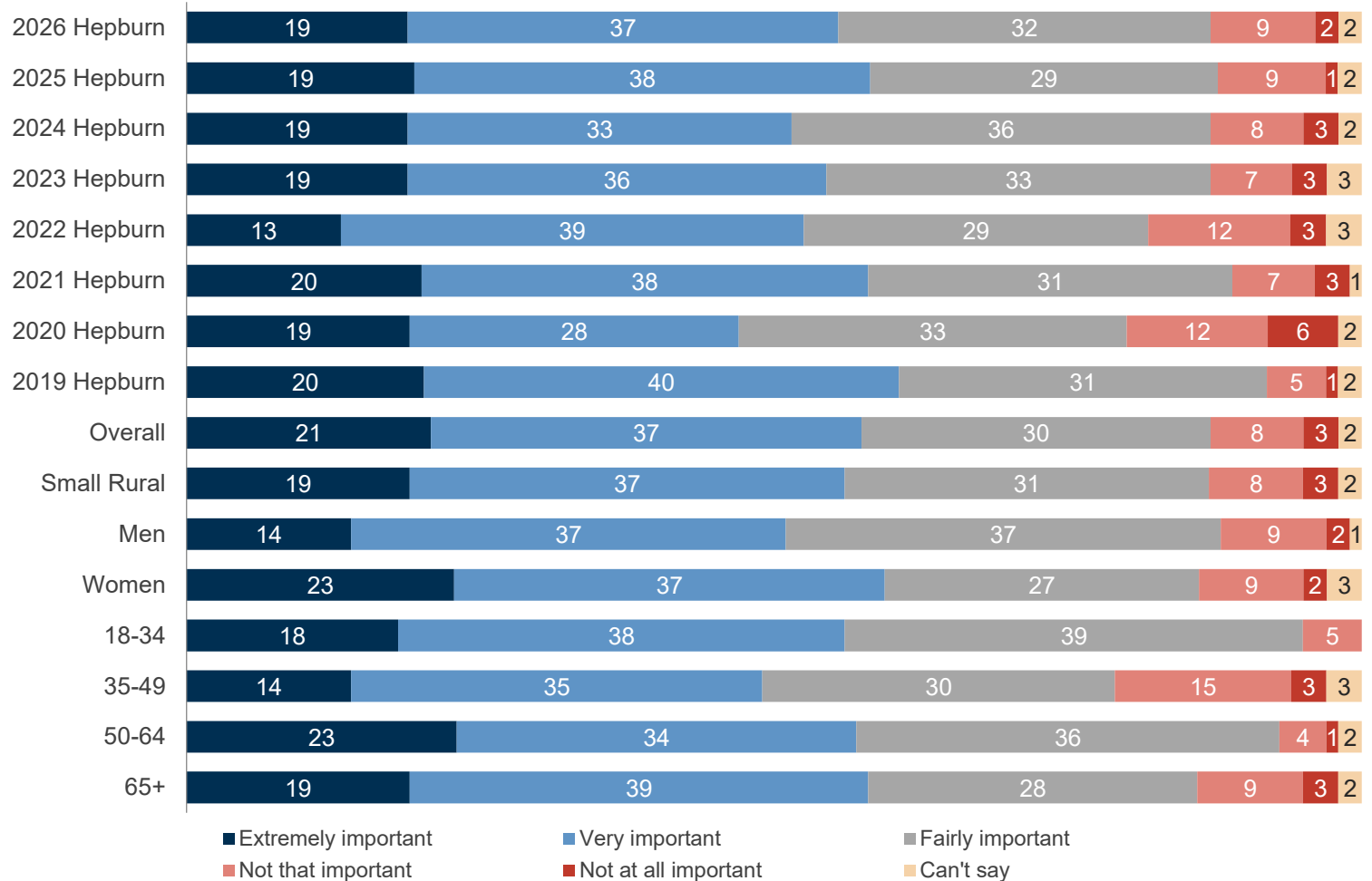
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Enforcement of local laws' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 2  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Enforcement of local laws importance



2026 law enforcement importance (%)



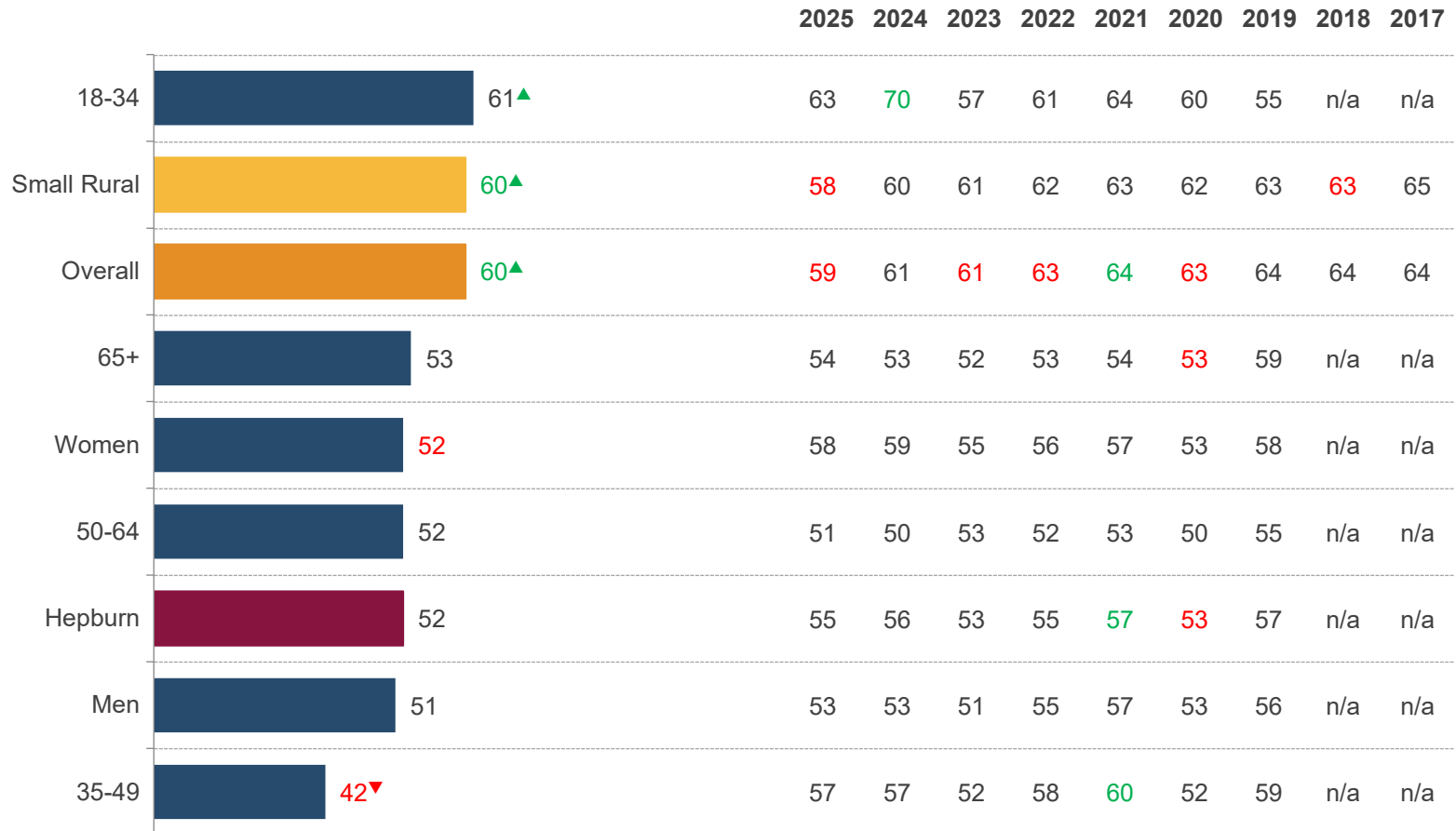
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Enforcement of local laws' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 2



# Enforcement of local laws performance



2026 law enforcement performance (index scores)



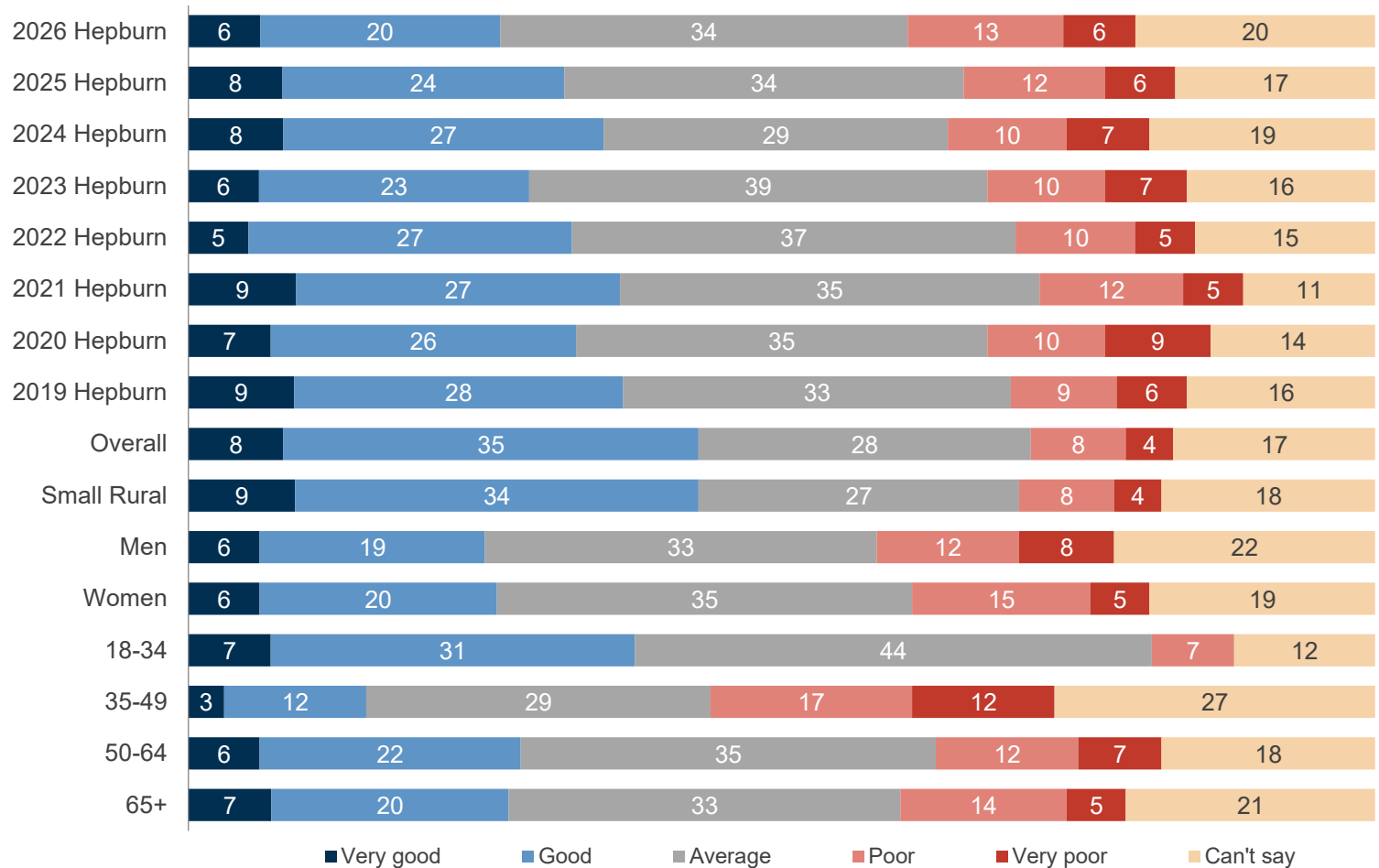
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Enforcement of local laws' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 5  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Enforcement of local laws performance



2026 law enforcement performance (%)



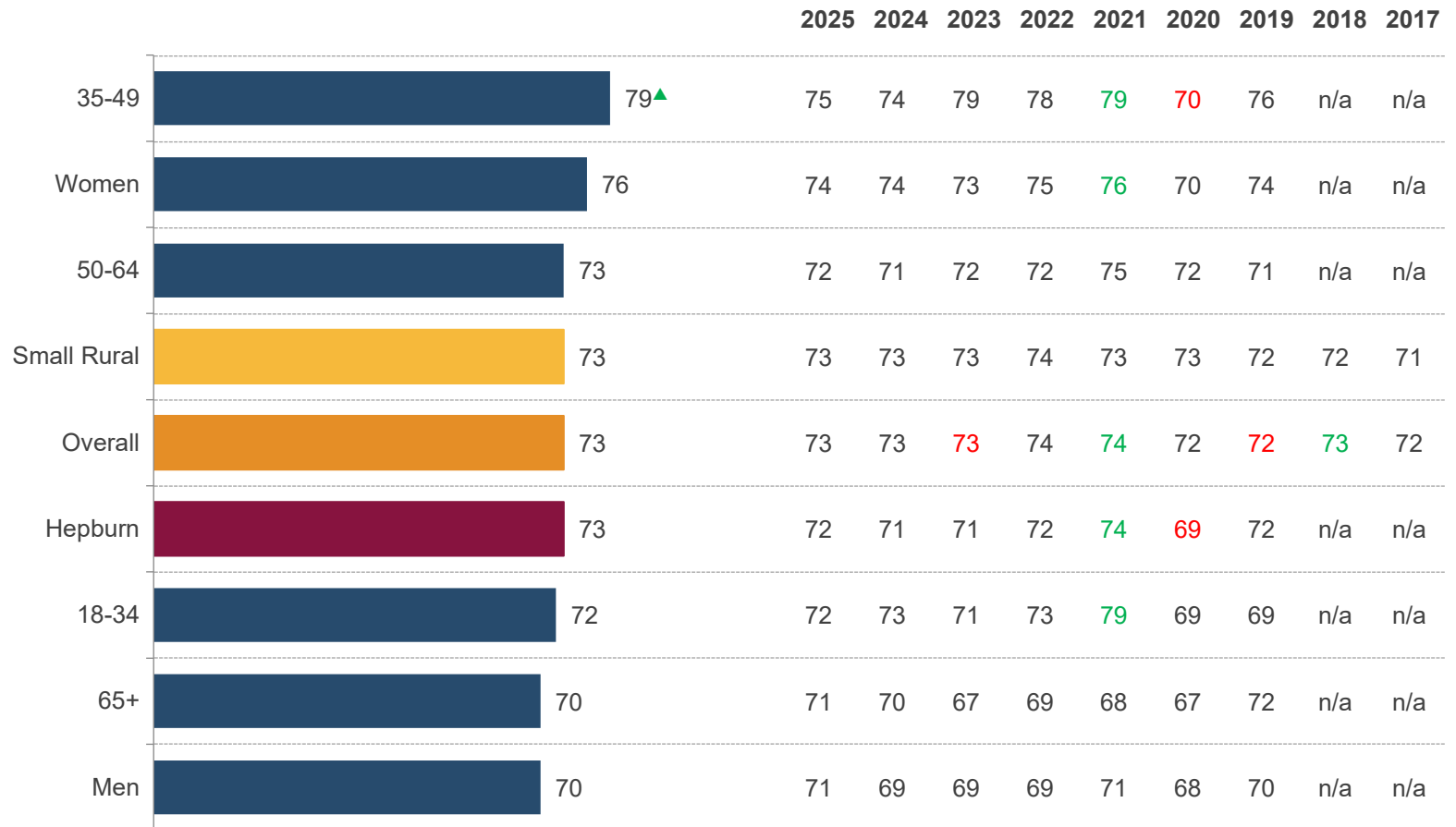
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Enforcement of local laws' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 5



# Recreational facilities importance



2026 recreational facilities importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Recreational facilities' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3

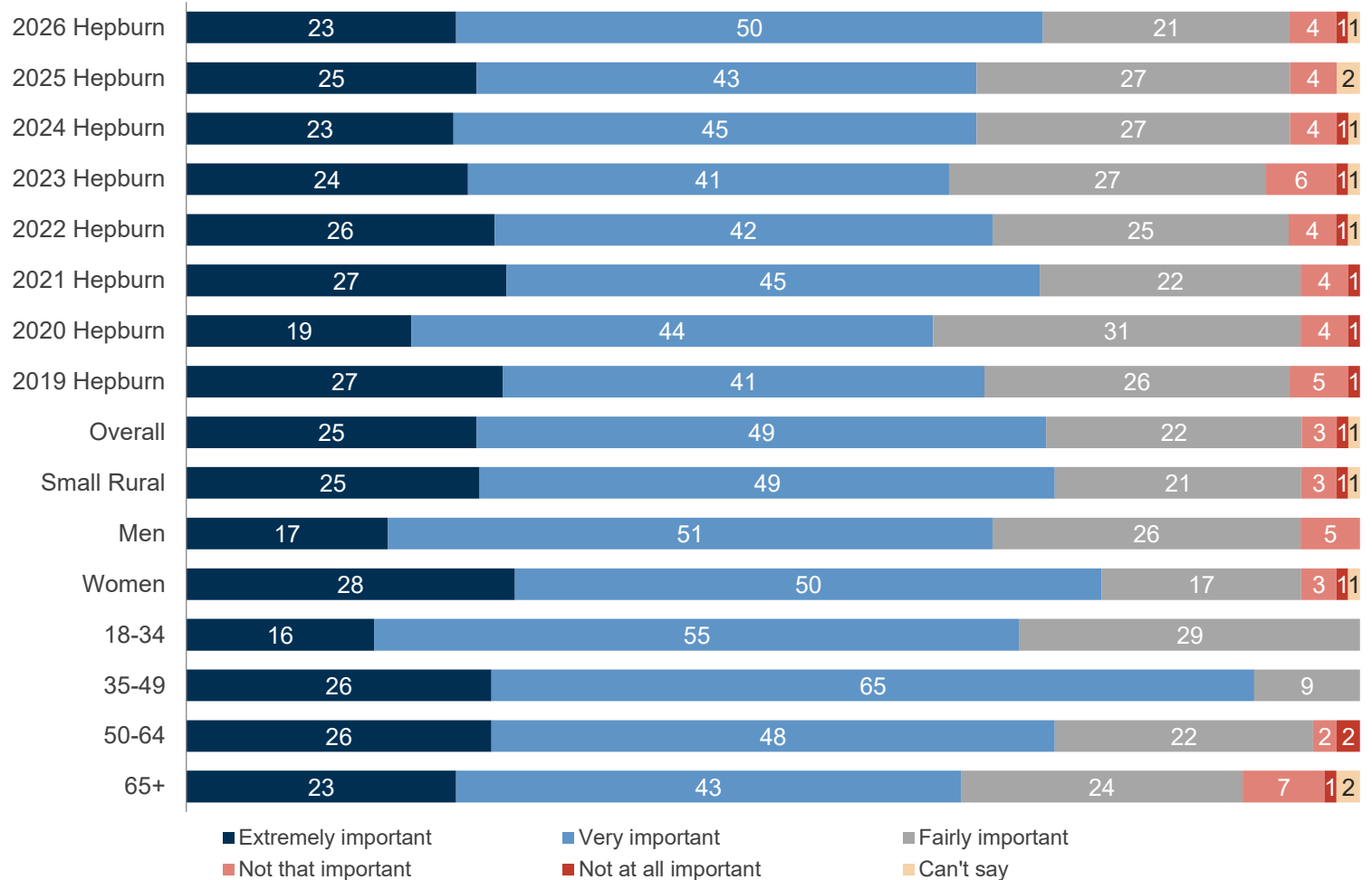
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Recreational facilities importance



2026 recreational facilities importance (%)



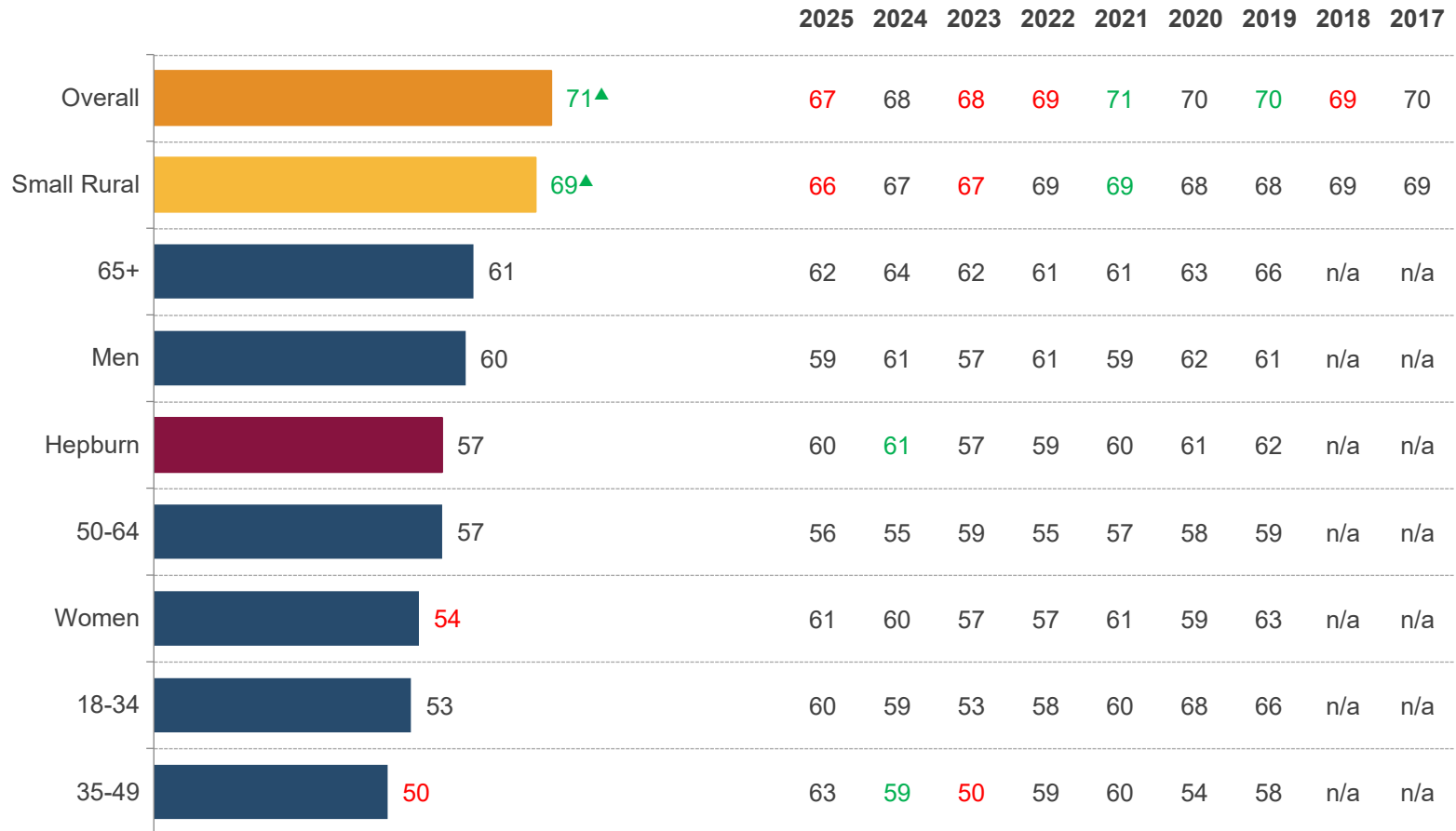
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Recreational facilities' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Recreational facilities performance



2026 recreational facilities performance (index scores)



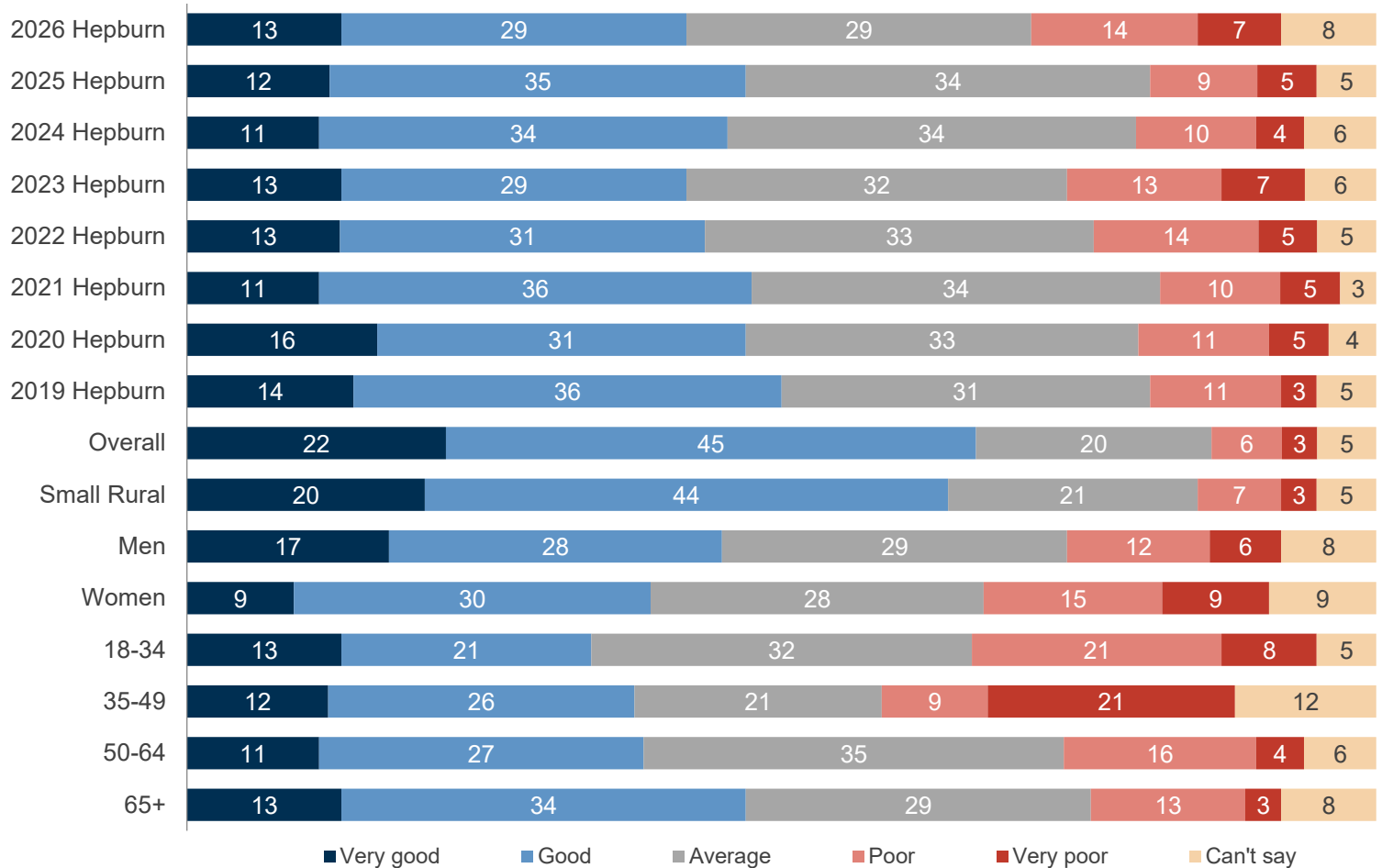
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Recreational facilities' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 16 Councils asked group: 8  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Recreational facilities performance



2026 recreational facilities performance (%)



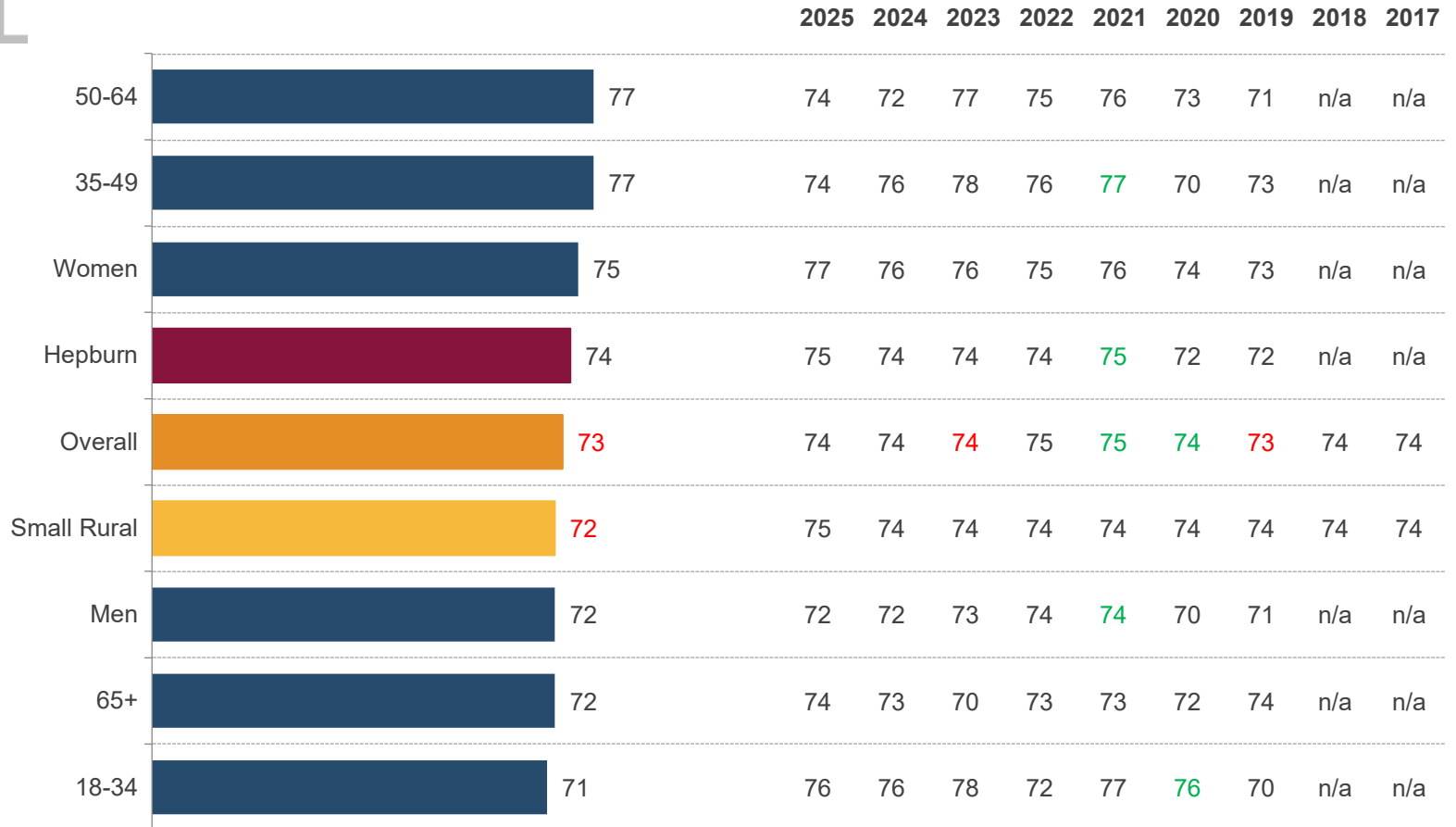
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Recreational facilities' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 16 Councils asked group: 8



# The appearance of public areas importance



2026 public areas importance (index scores)



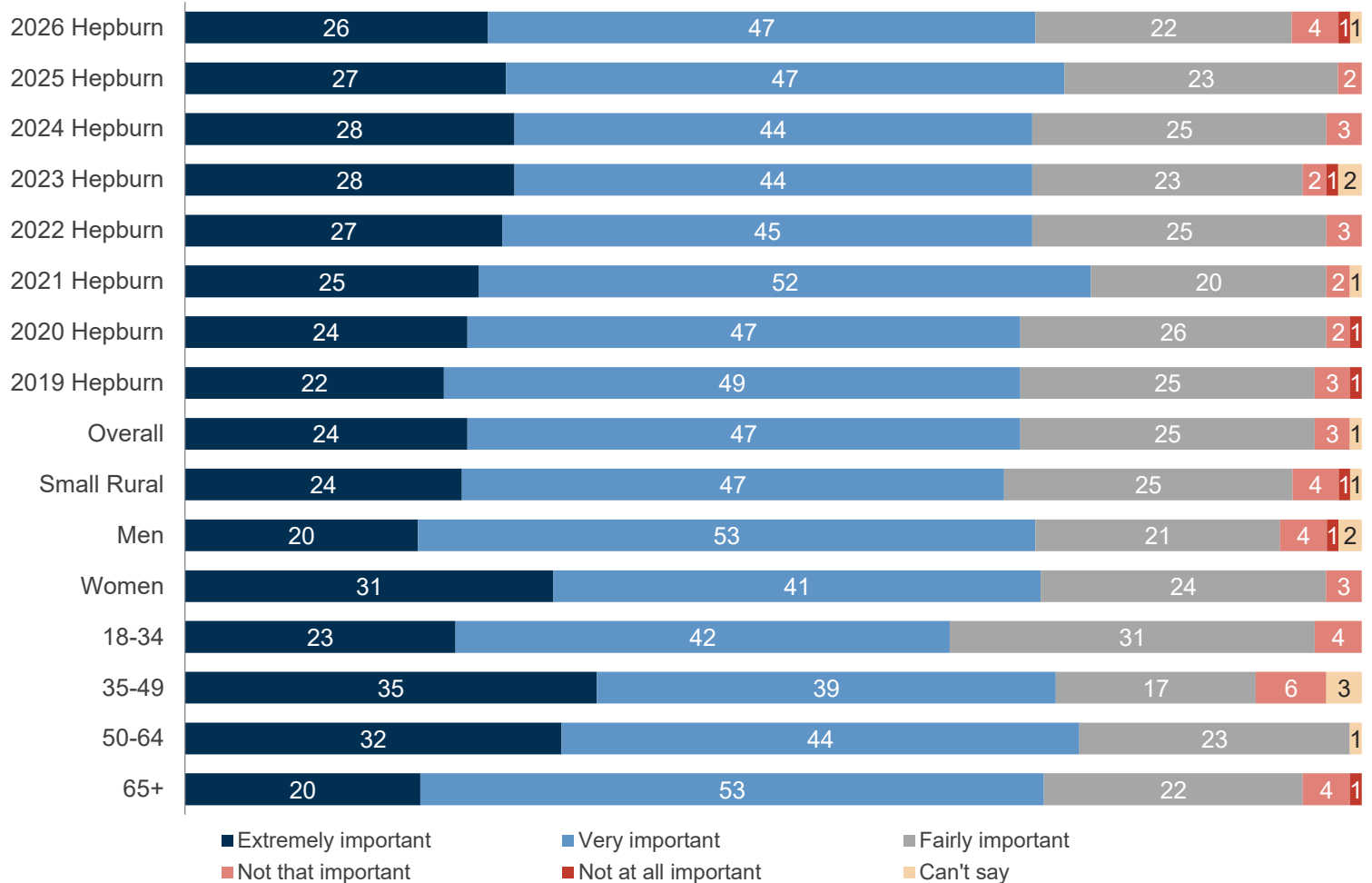
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The appearance of public areas' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# The appearance of public areas importance



2026 public areas importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The appearance of public areas' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# The appearance of public areas performance



2026 public areas performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Small Rural	70	71	71	73	75	72	73	72	74
Overall	68	68	67	71	73	72	72	71	71
65+	64	65	61	62	64	64	70	n/a	n/a
Women	63	65	61	61	68	63	67	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	63	64	60	62	67	64	67	n/a	n/a
35-49	69	64	55	65	69	64	68	n/a	n/a
Men	64	64	59	62	66	65	67	n/a	n/a
50-64	60	56	62	59	62	61	64	n/a	n/a
18-34	62	72	62	60	78	69	67	n/a	n/a

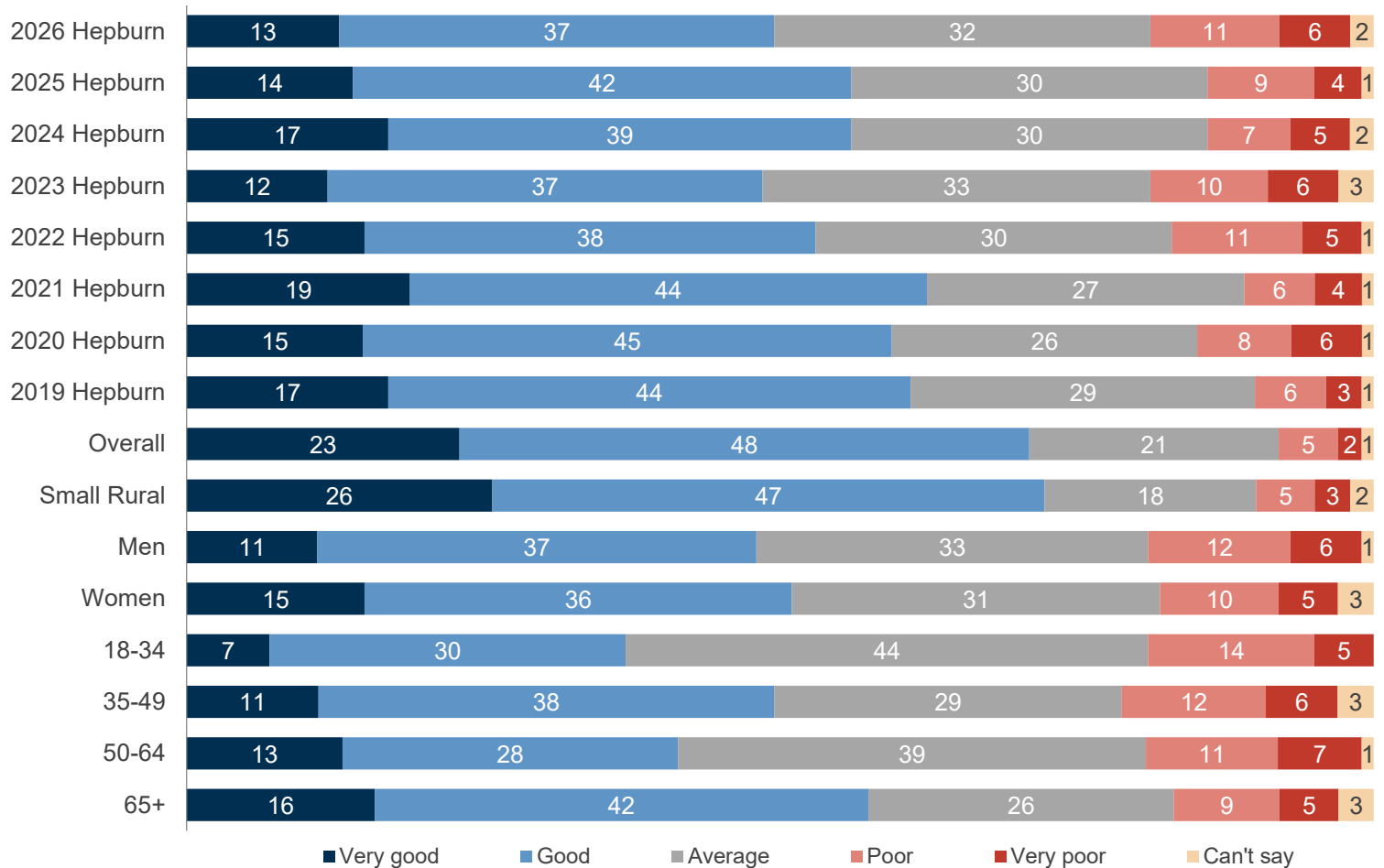
Q2. How has Council performed on 'The appearance of public areas' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 15 Councils asked group: 7  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# The appearance of public areas performance



2026 public areas performance (%)



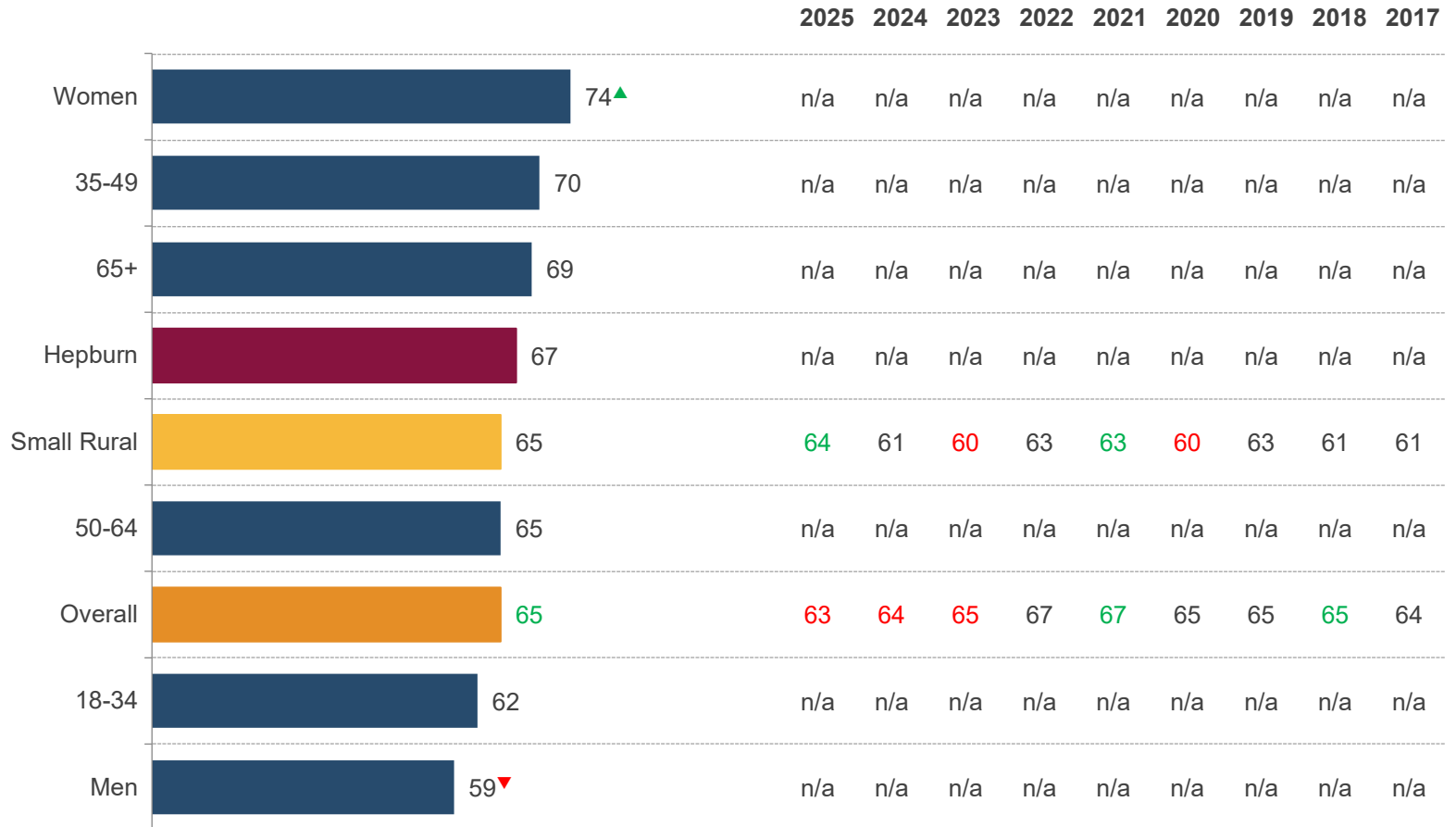
Q2. How has Council performed on 'The appearance of public areas' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 15 Councils asked group: 7



# Libraries importance



2026 libraries importance (index scores)



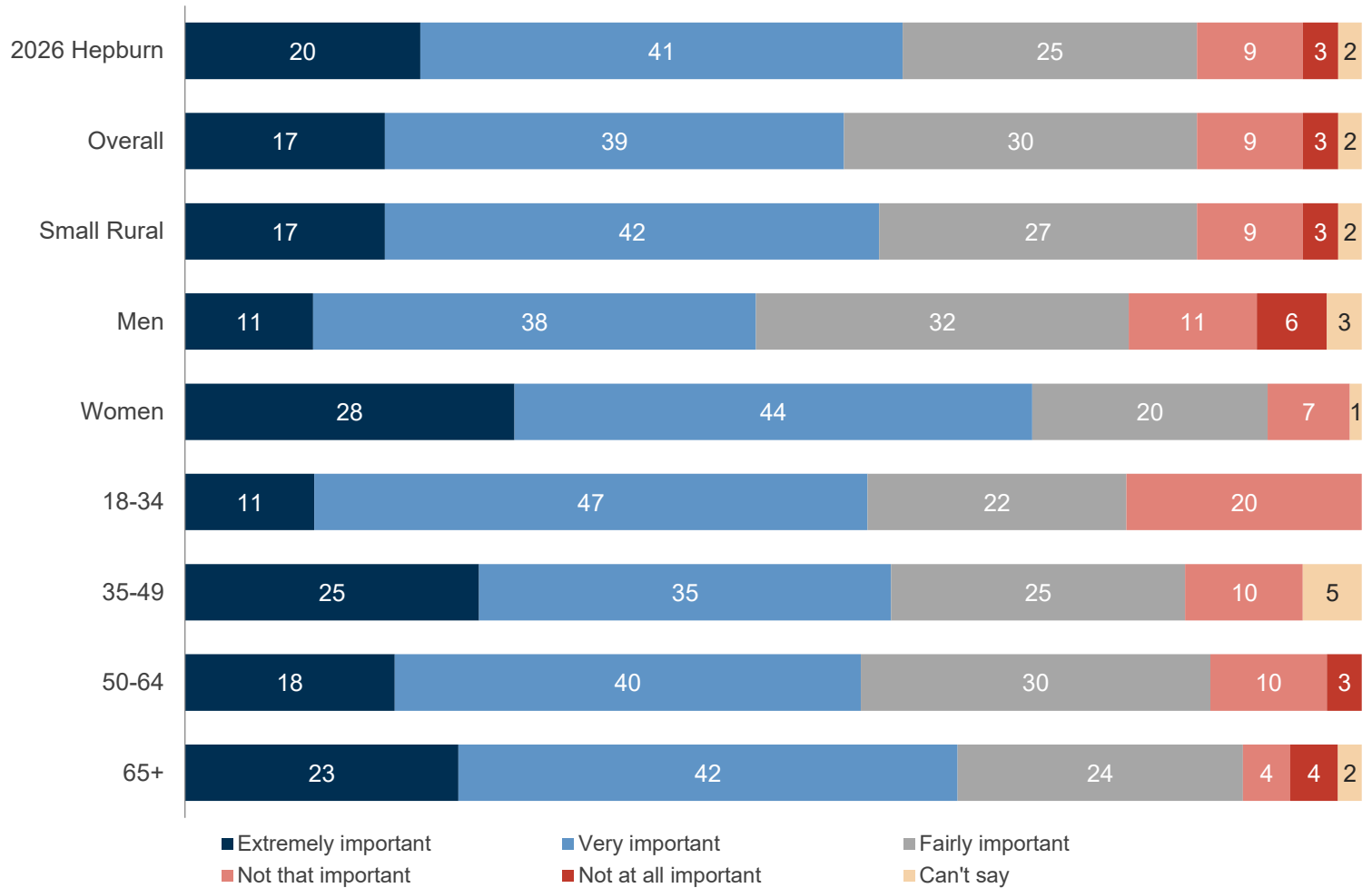
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Libraries' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 1  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Libraries importance



2026 libraries importance (%)



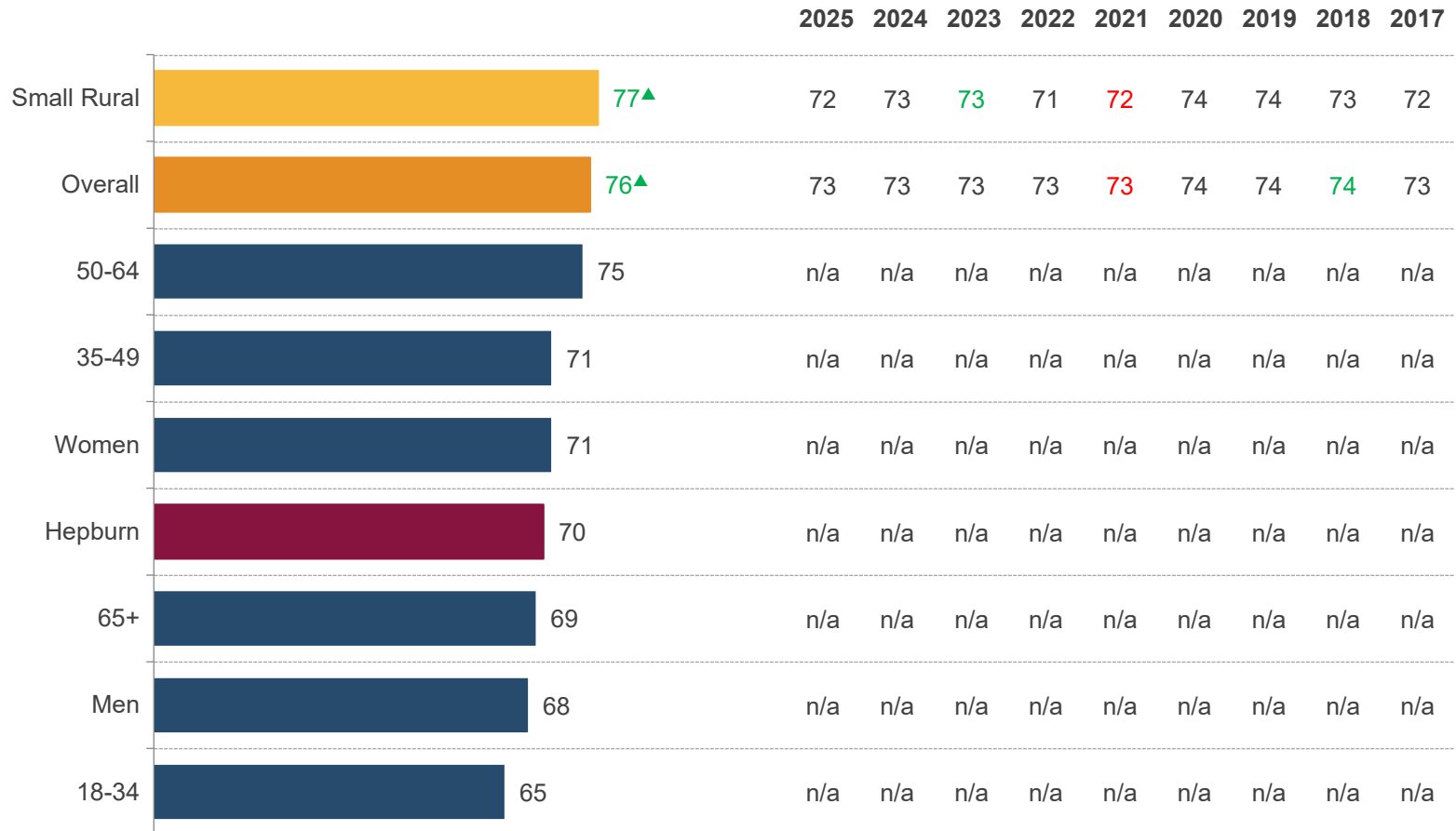
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Libraries' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 1



# Libraries performance



2026 libraries performance (index scores)



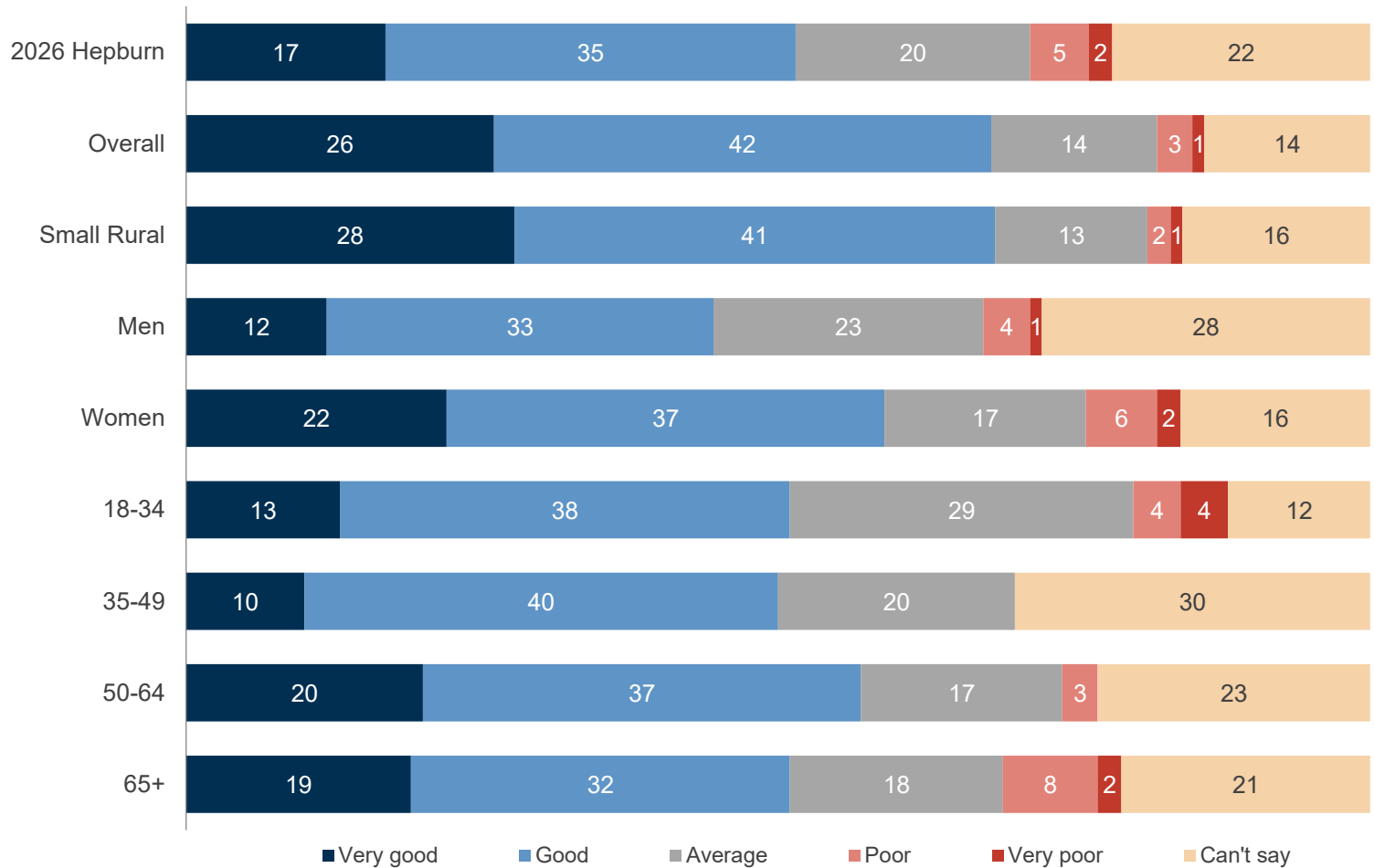
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Libraries' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 4  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Libraries performance



2026 libraries performance (%)



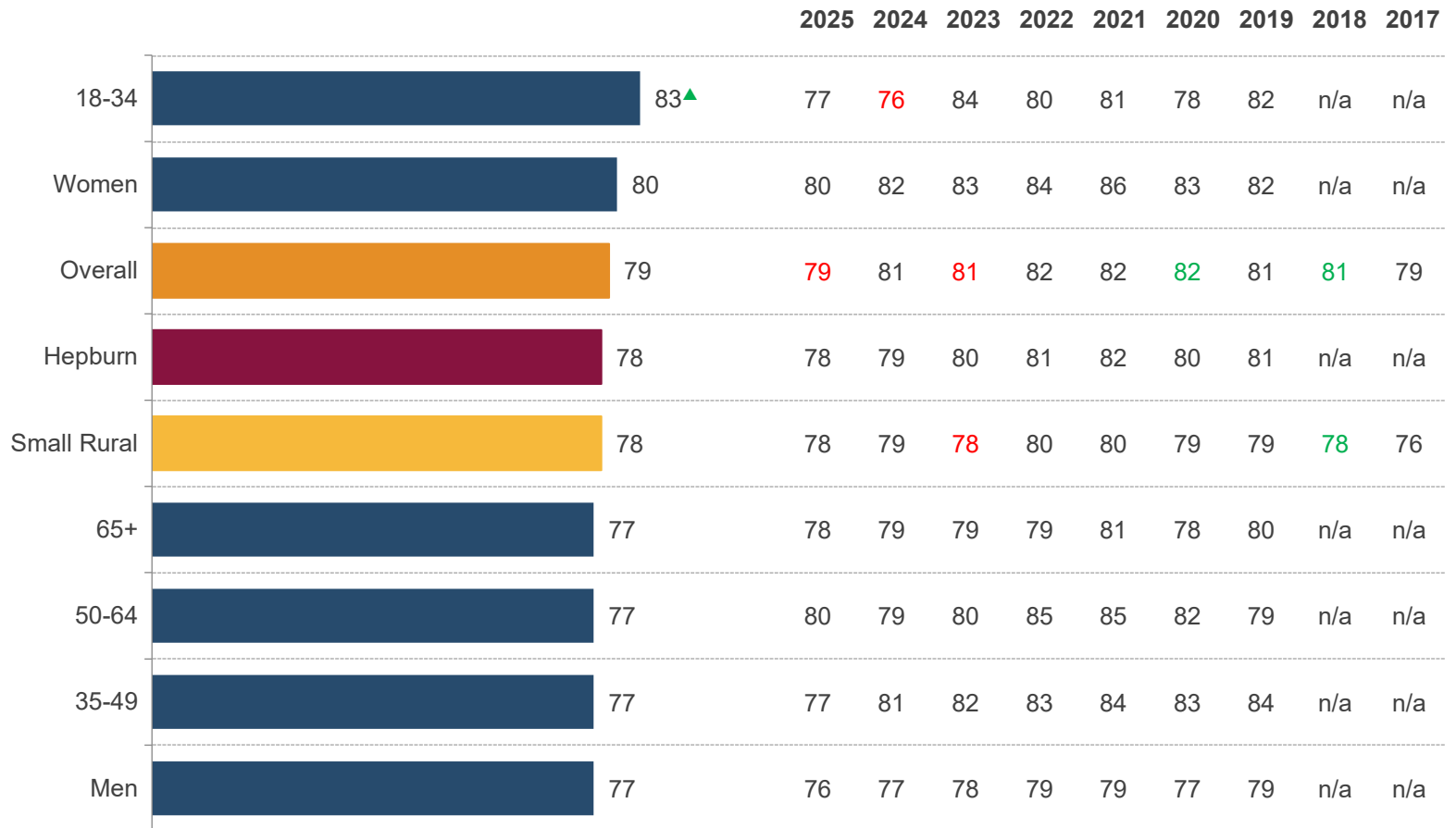
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Libraries' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 4



# Waste management importance



2026 waste management importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Waste management' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3

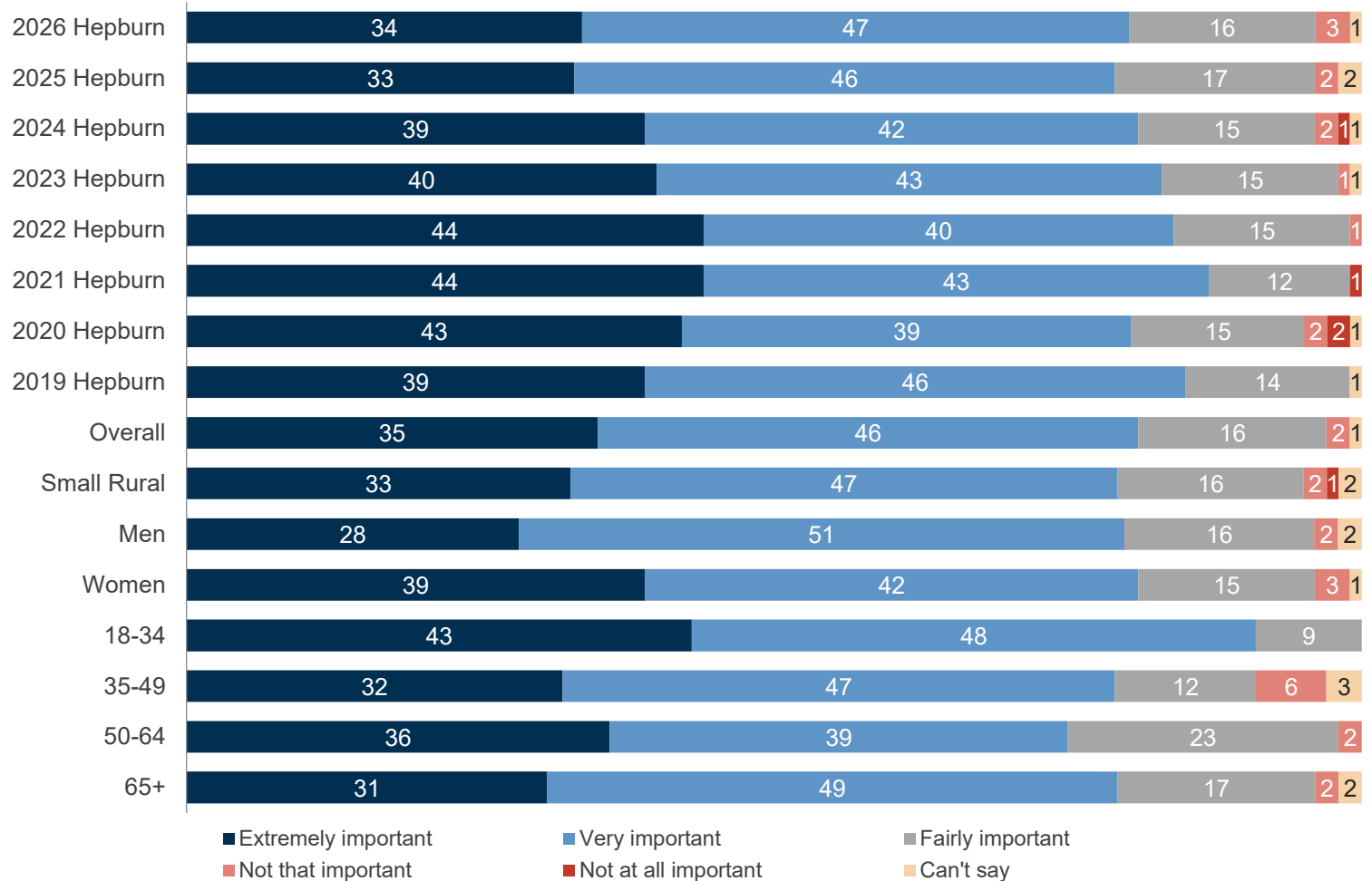
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Waste management importance



2026 waste management importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Waste management' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Waste management performance



2026 waste management performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Small Rural	71▲	66	67	66	68	68	64	66	69	70
Overall	69▲	65	67	66	68	69	65	68	70	71
65+	66	65	68	64	63	64	57	69	n/a	n/a
Women	64	59	64	62	61	60	51	60	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	63	58	65	64	61	61	54	64	n/a	n/a
Men	63	56	66	65	62	62	56	67	n/a	n/a
18-34	62	54	64	66	60	63	53	58	n/a	n/a
50-64	61	56	62	60	62	54	48	62	n/a	n/a
35-49	60	51	60	65	58	60	54	62	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Waste management' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9

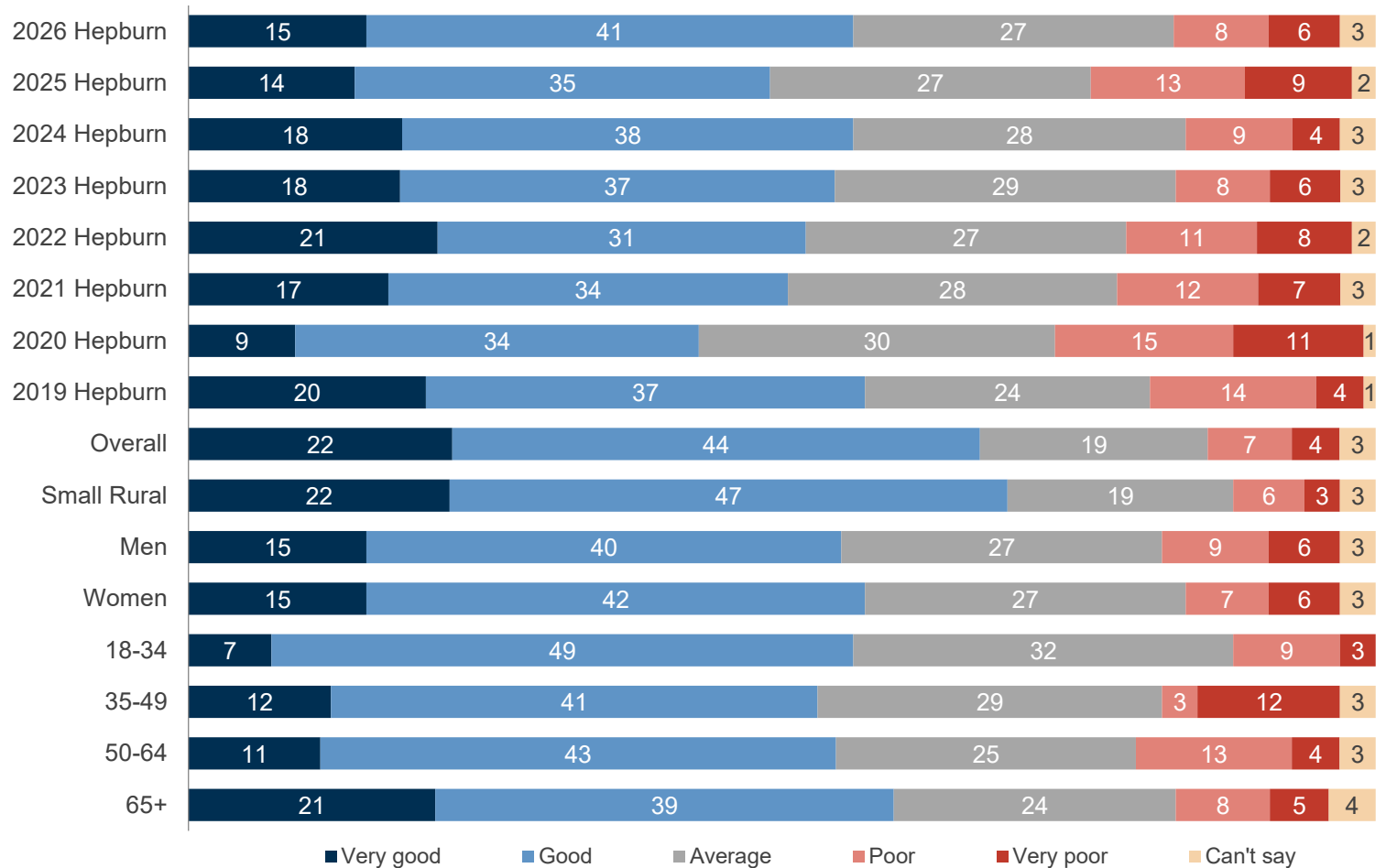
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Waste management performance



2026 waste management performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Waste management' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9



# Planning and building permits importance



2026 planning and building permits importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Women	79▲	78	80	78	76	75	71	73	n/a	n/a
35-49	78	74	76	79	73	75	70	71	n/a	n/a
50-64	78	78	74	76	75	77	71	74	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	75	76	76	76	73	73	70	72	n/a	n/a
65+	74	71	78	76	76	74	72	75	n/a	n/a
18-34	72	82	70	72	63	64	66	63	n/a	n/a
Men	72	73	71	74	70	72	69	70	n/a	n/a
Overall	70▼	71	72	72	73	73	71	71	71	72
Small Rural	69▼	70	70	71	73	71	68	70	68	68

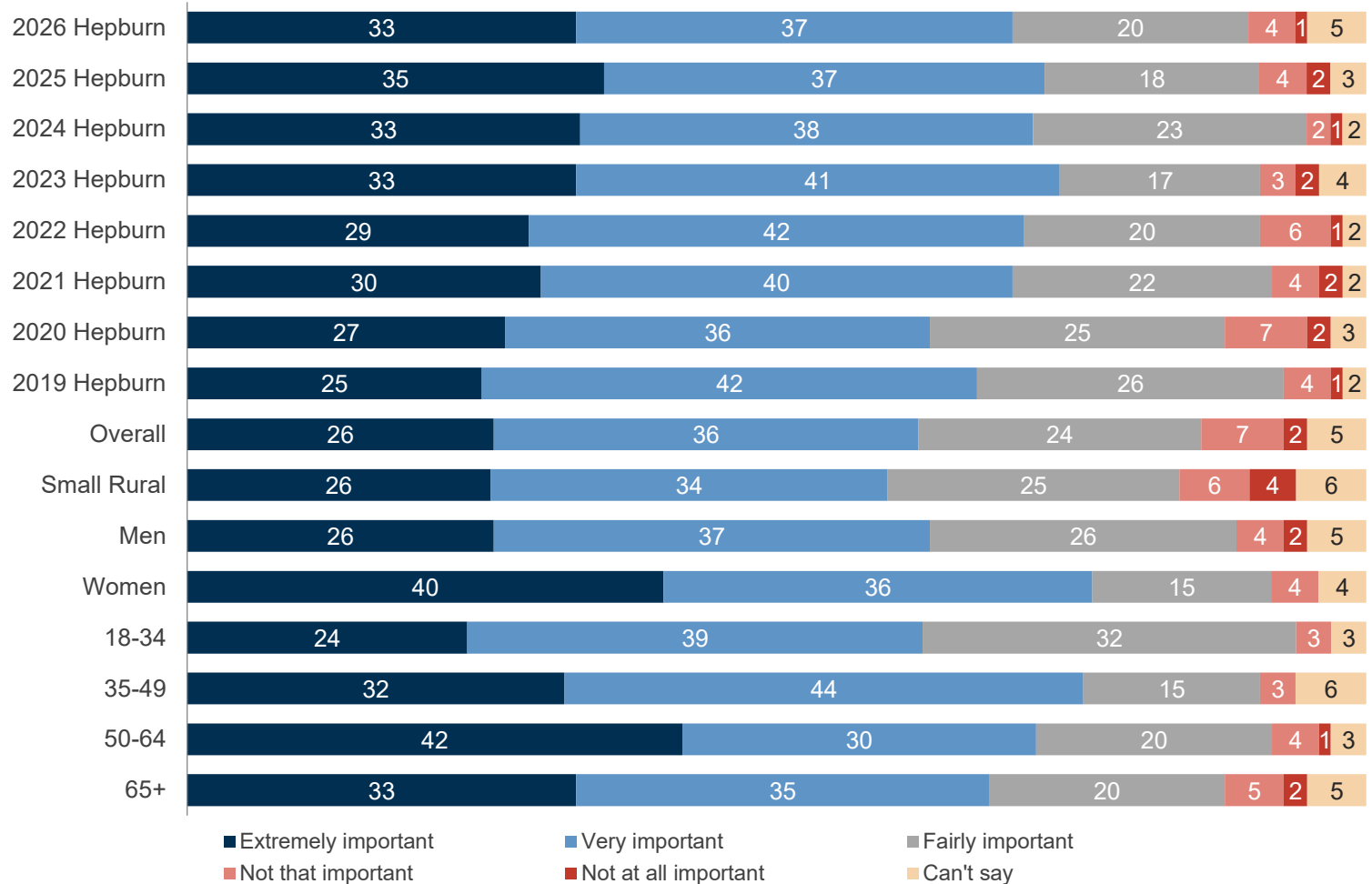
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Planning and building permits' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Planning and building permits importance



2026 planning and building permits importance (%)



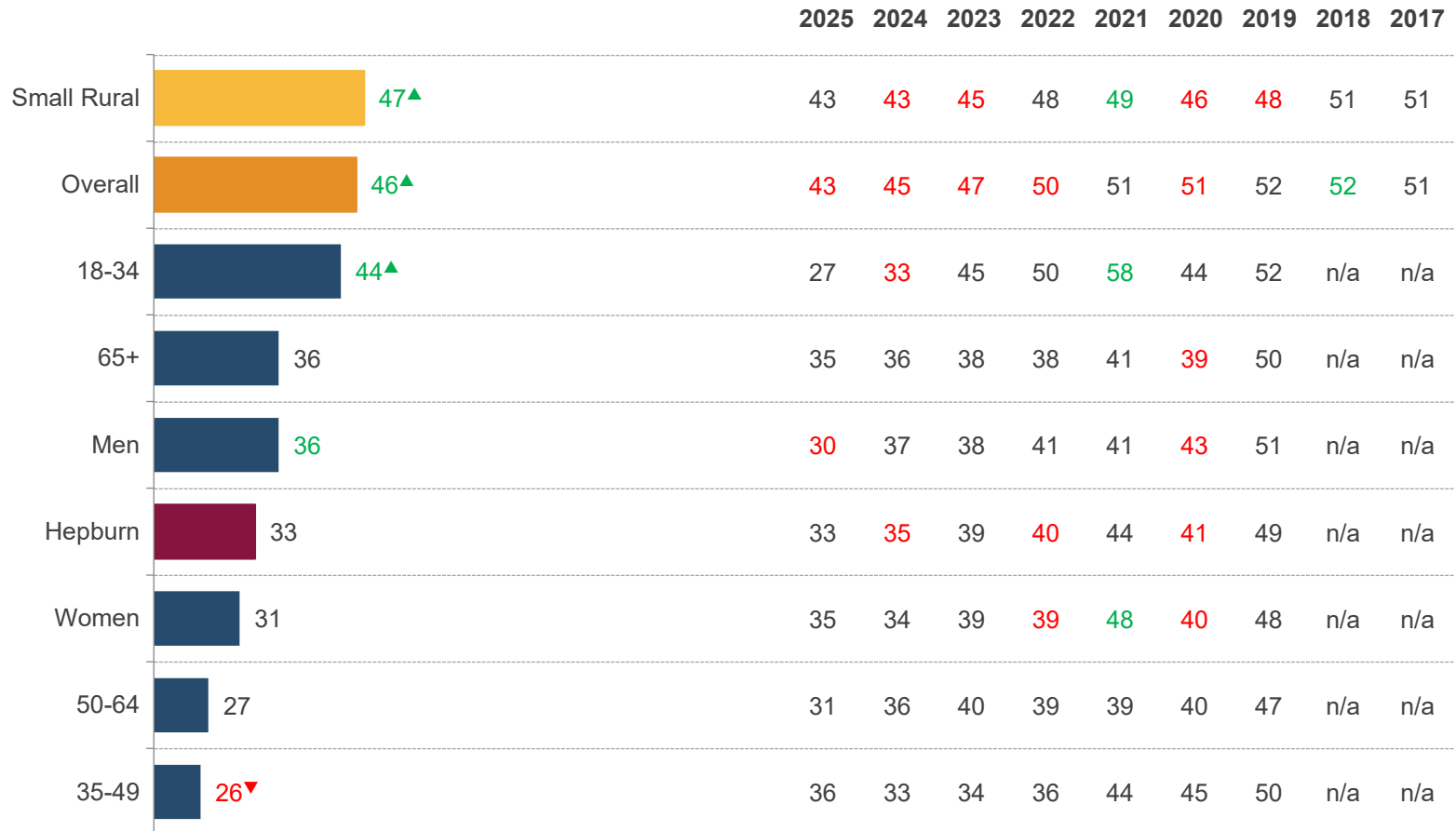
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Planning and building permits' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Planning and building permits performance



2026 planning and building permits performance (index scores)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Planning and building permits' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 5

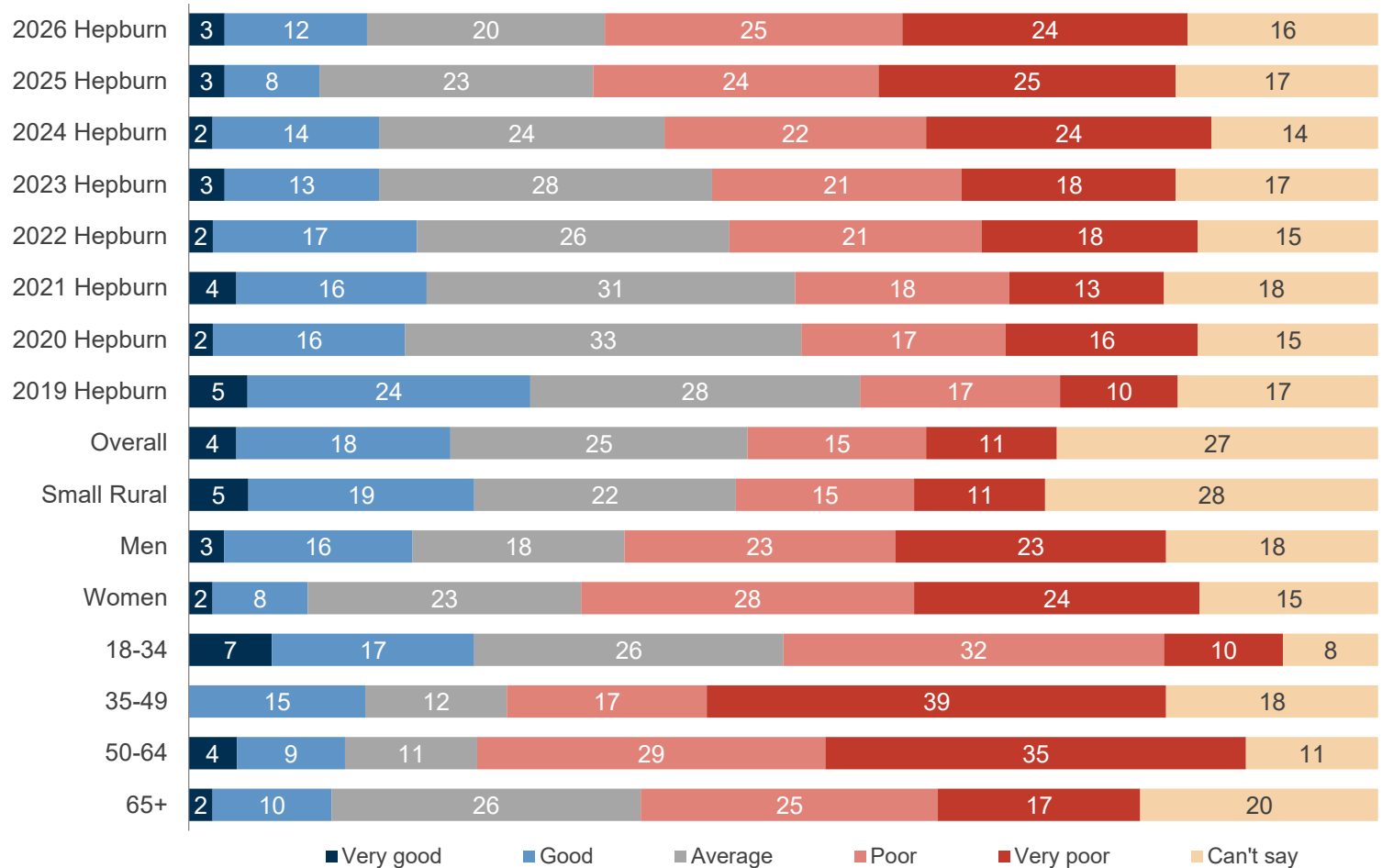
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Planning and building permits performance



2026 planning and building permits performance (%)



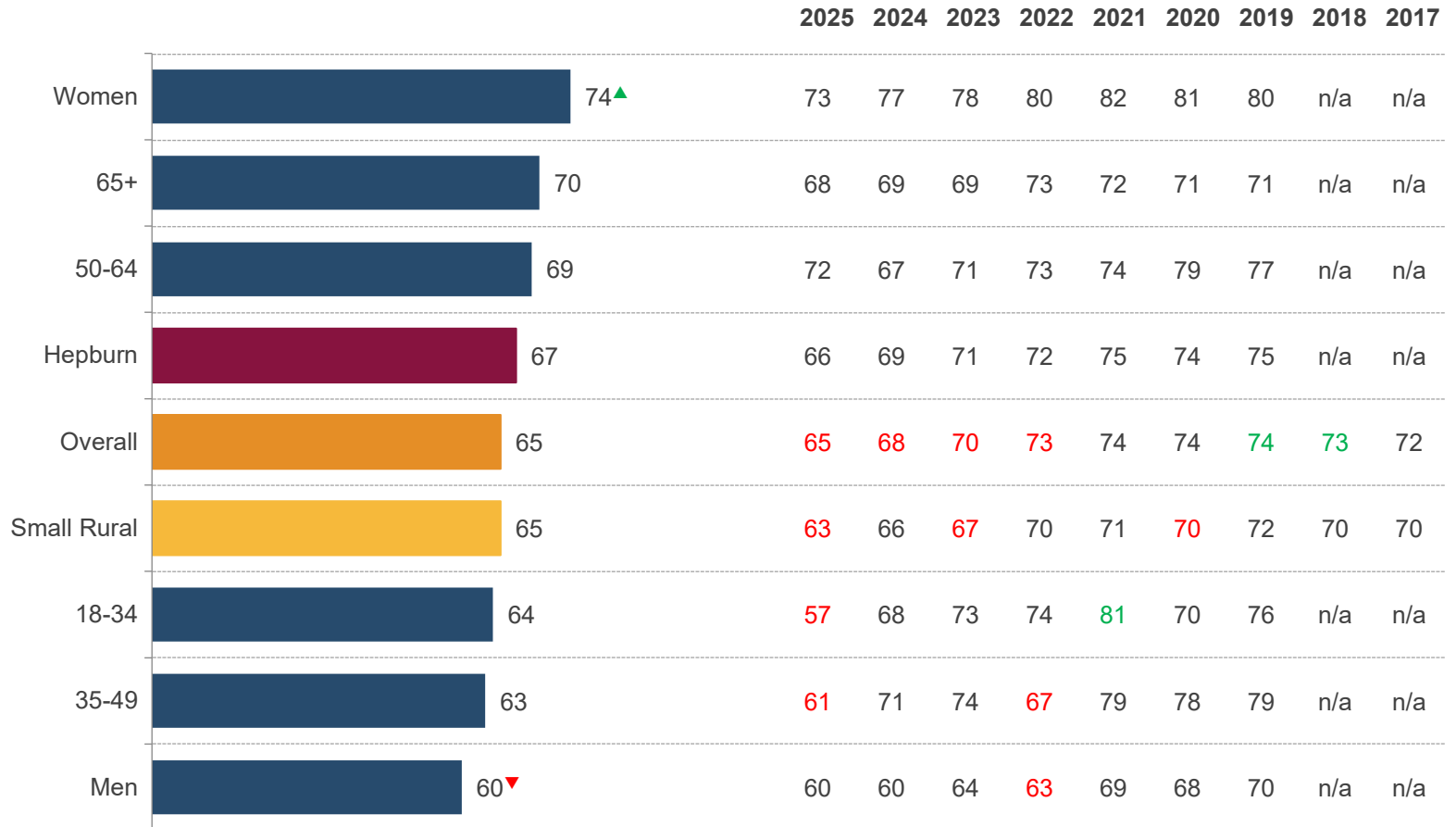
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Planning and building permits' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 5



# Environmental sustainability importance



2026 environmental sustainability importance (index scores)



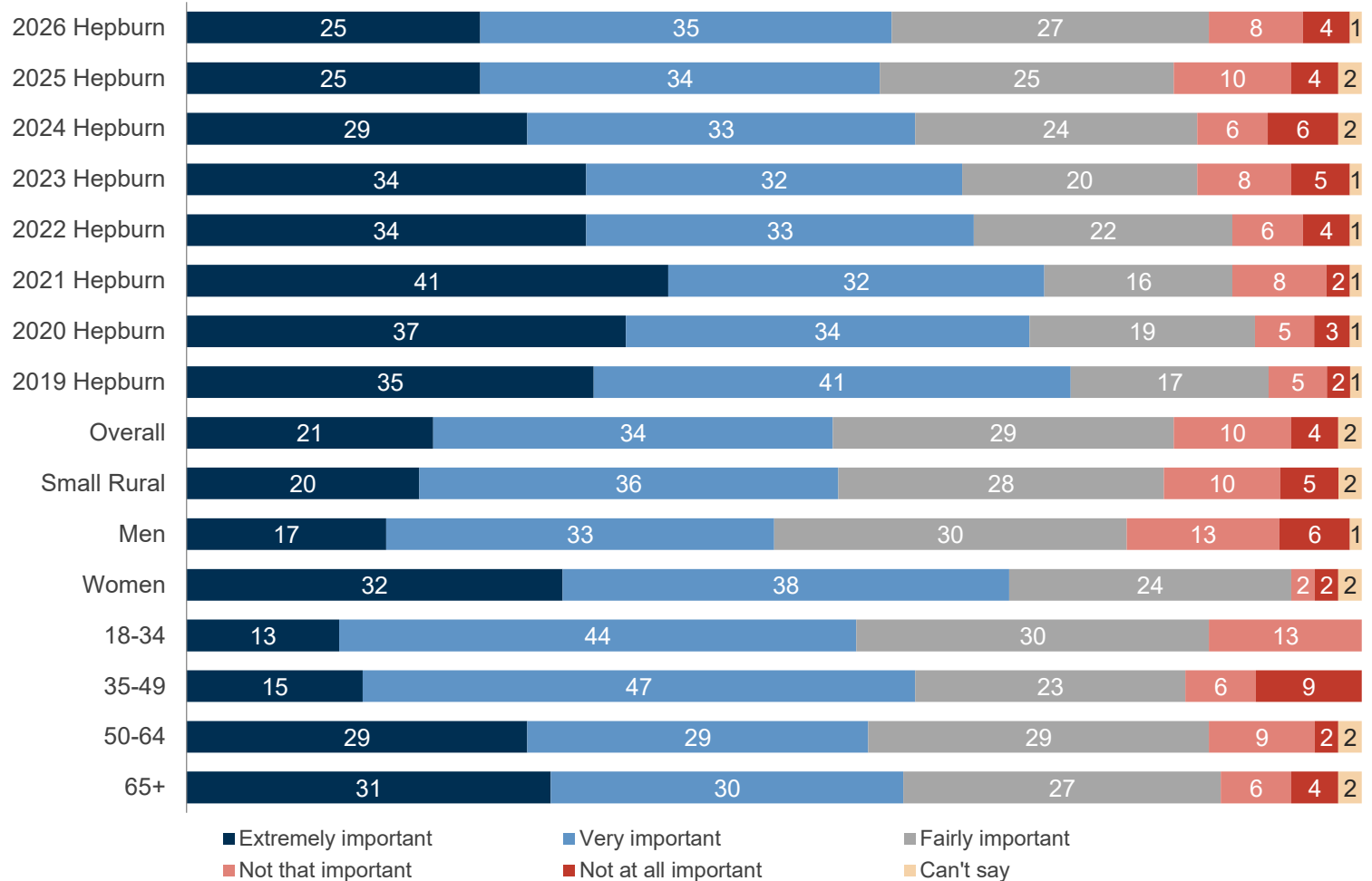
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Environmental sustainability' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Environmental sustainability importance



2026 environmental sustainability importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Environmental sustainability' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



# Environmental sustainability performance



2026 environmental sustainability performance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Overall	60▲	59	60	60	61	62	60	62	63	64
Small Rural	60▲	58	59	59	59	61	57	59	62	63
18-34	55	59	70	58	55	61	52	57	n/a	n/a
65+	54	52	56	54	54	55	51	62	n/a	n/a
Men	54	55	56	54	57	54	51	61	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	54	56	57	56	54	55	50	59	n/a	n/a
Women	54	57	58	57	51	56	49	58	n/a	n/a
50-64	53	54	54	54	53	54	45	56	n/a	n/a
35-49	52	63	52	59	53	54	53	61	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Environmental sustainability' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 12 Councils asked group: 5

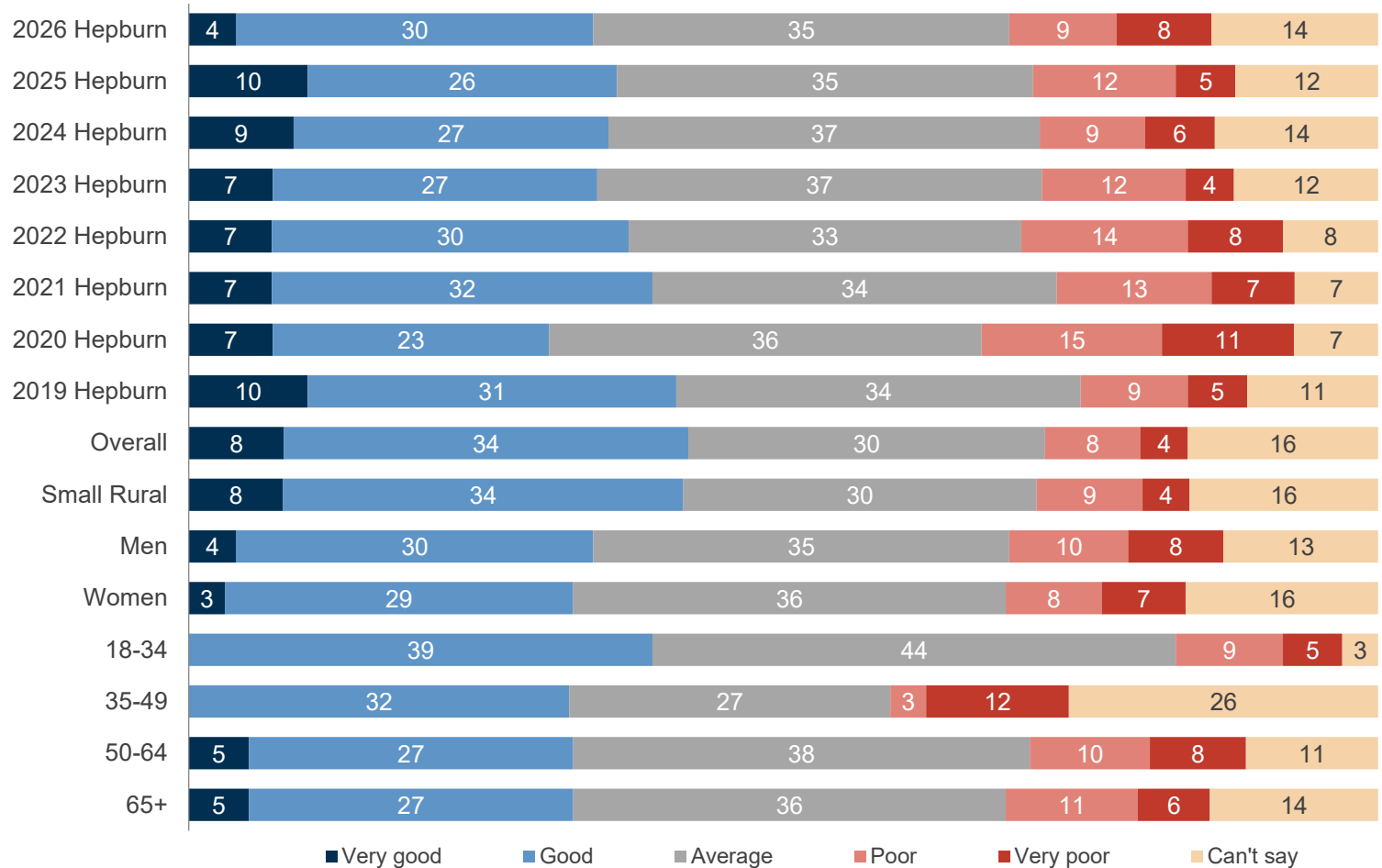
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Environmental sustainability performance



2026 environmental sustainability performance (%)



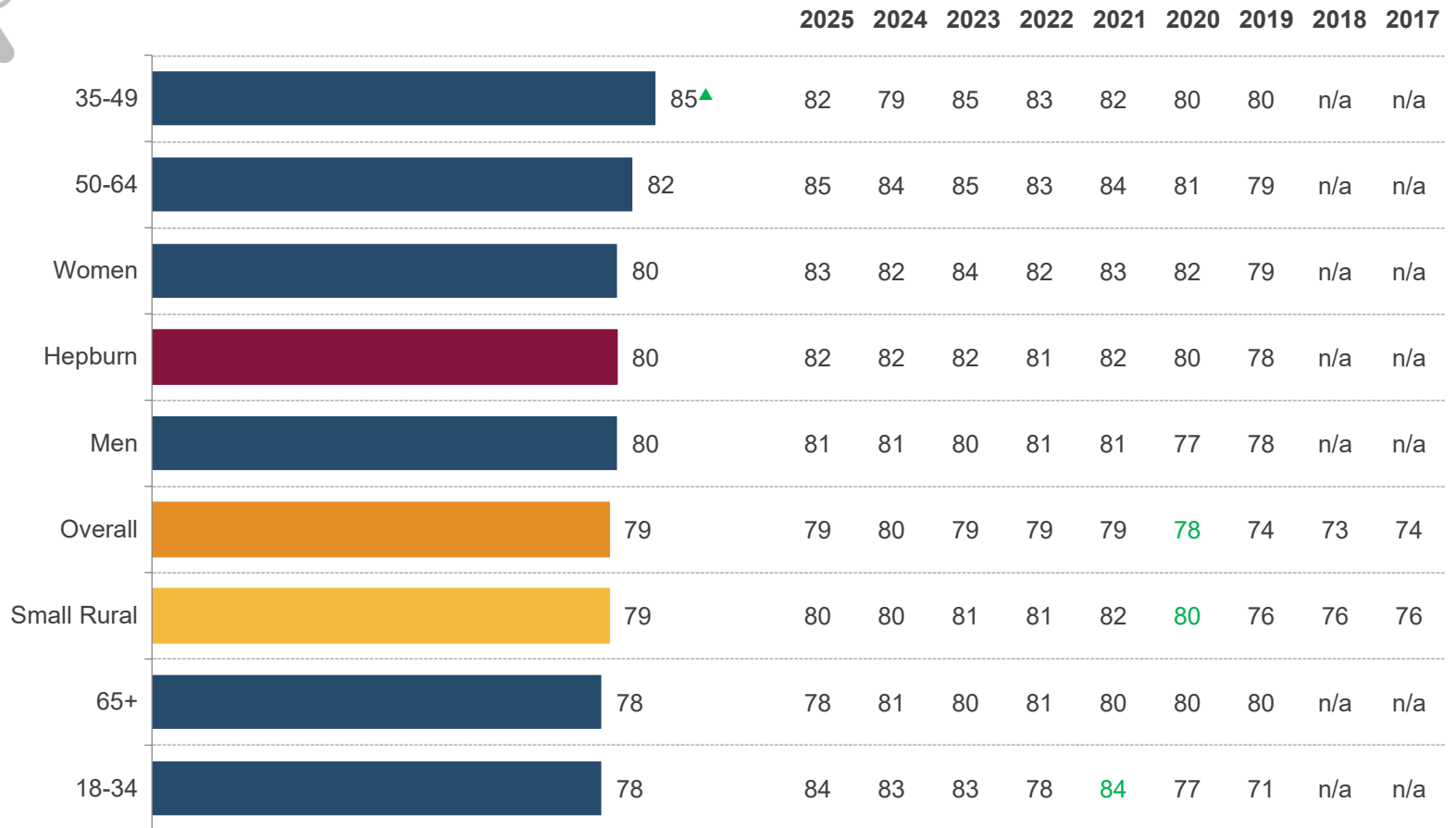
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Environmental sustainability' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 12 Councils asked group: 5



# Roadside slashing and weed control importance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Roadside slashing and weed control' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 4 Councils asked group: 2

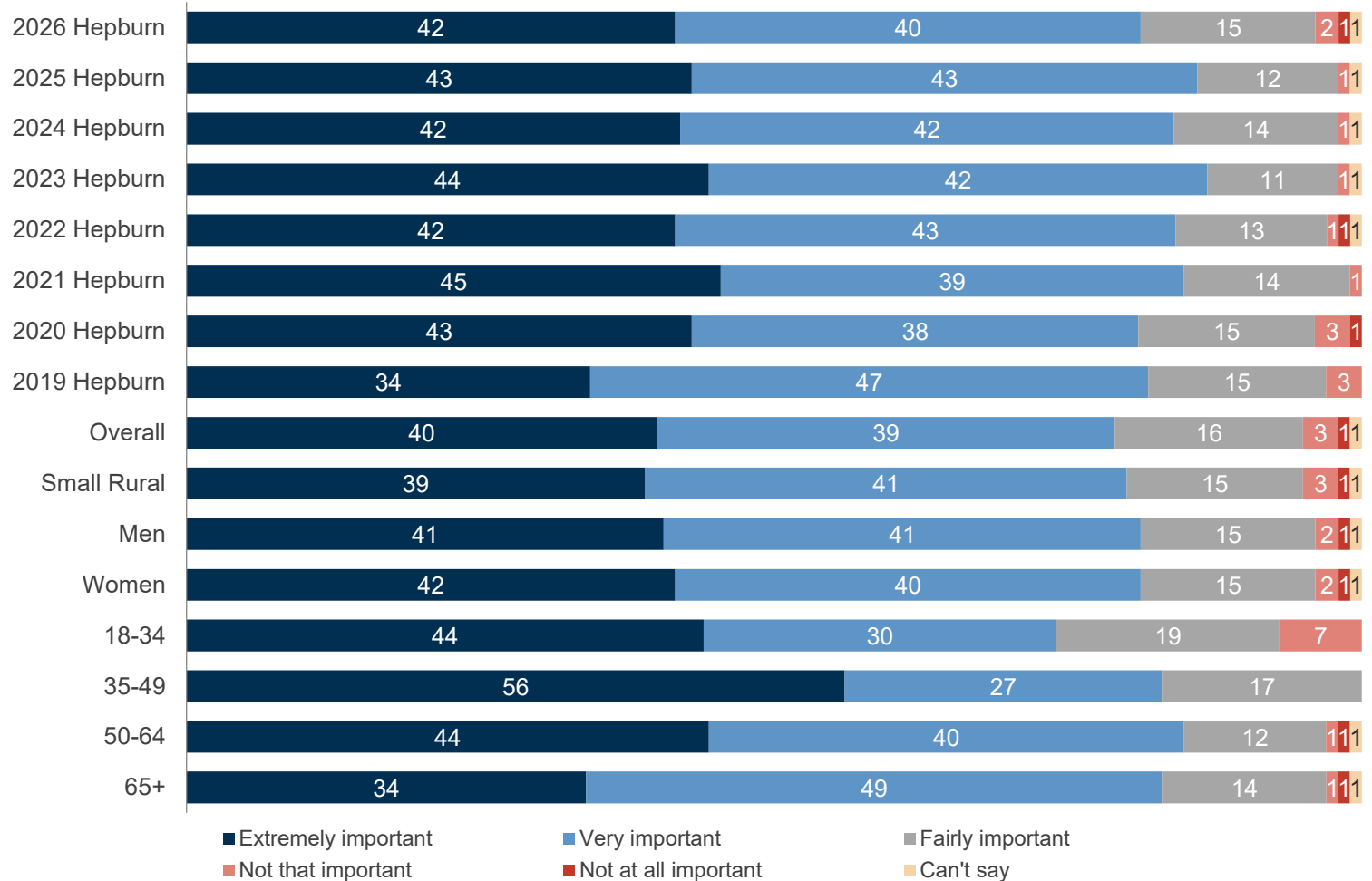
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Roadside slashing and weed control importance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control importance (%)



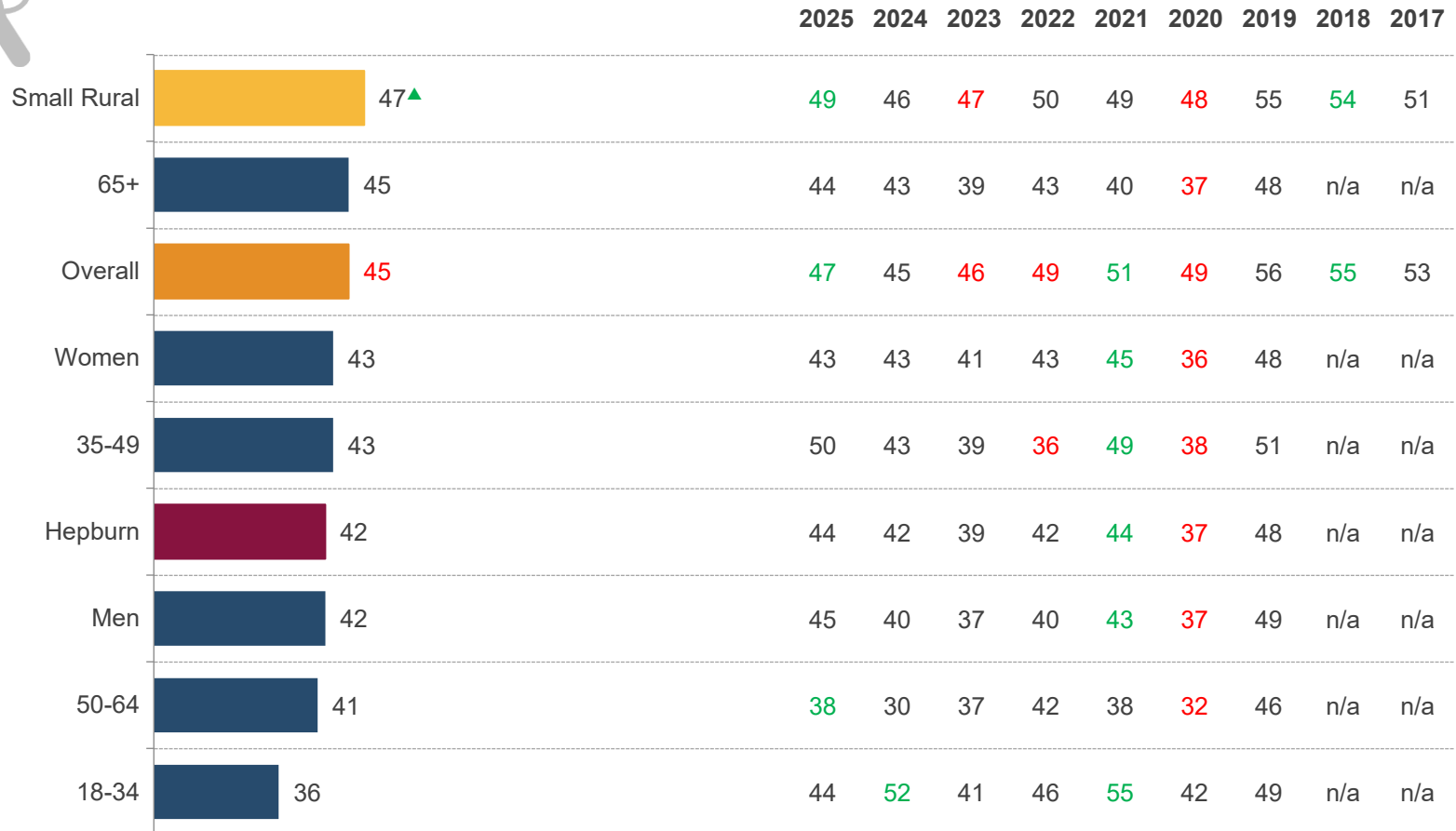
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Roadside slashing and weed control' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 4 Councils asked group: 2



# Roadside slashing and weed control performance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control performance (index scores)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Roadside slashing and weed control' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 3

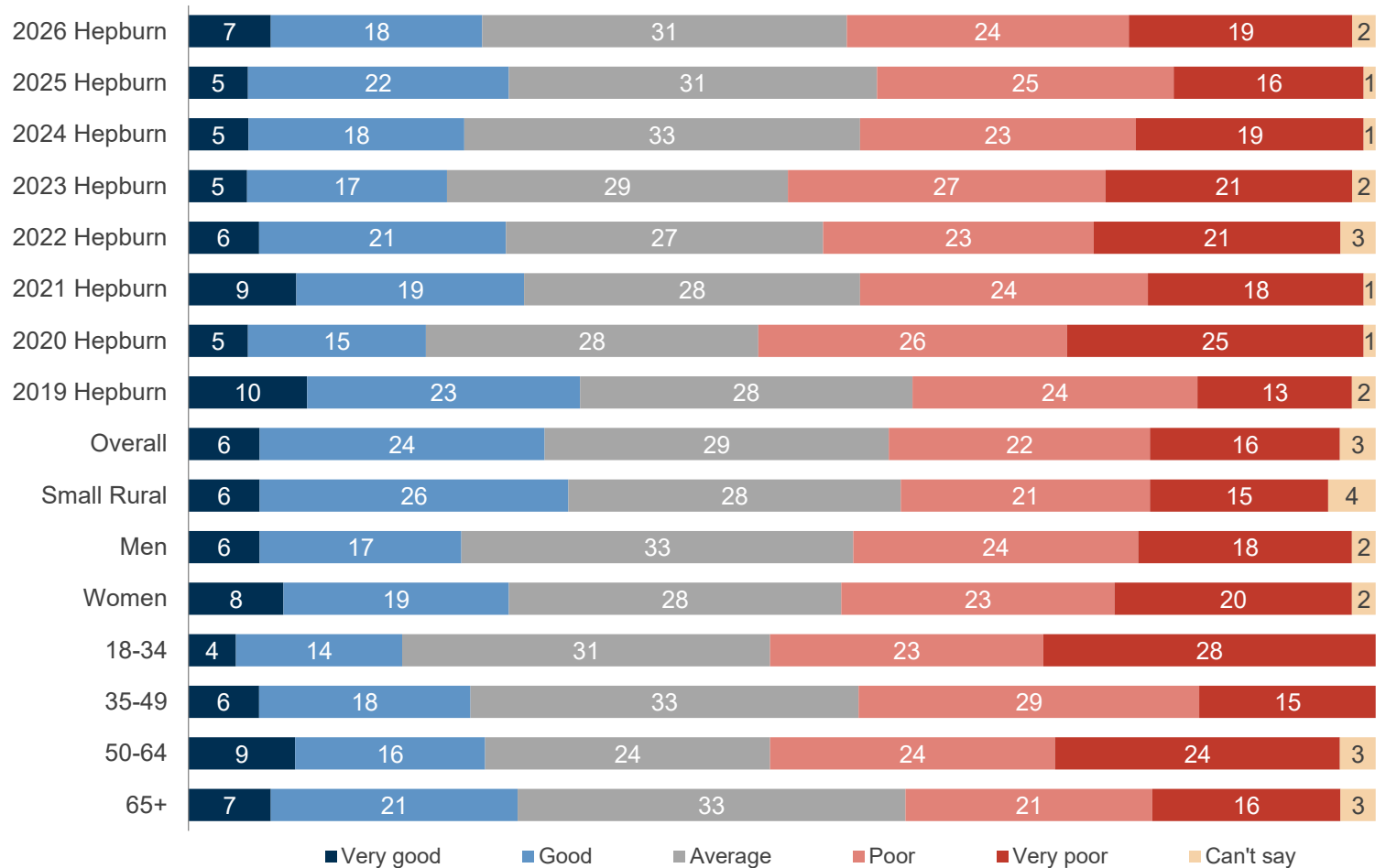
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Roadside slashing and weed control performance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control performance (%)



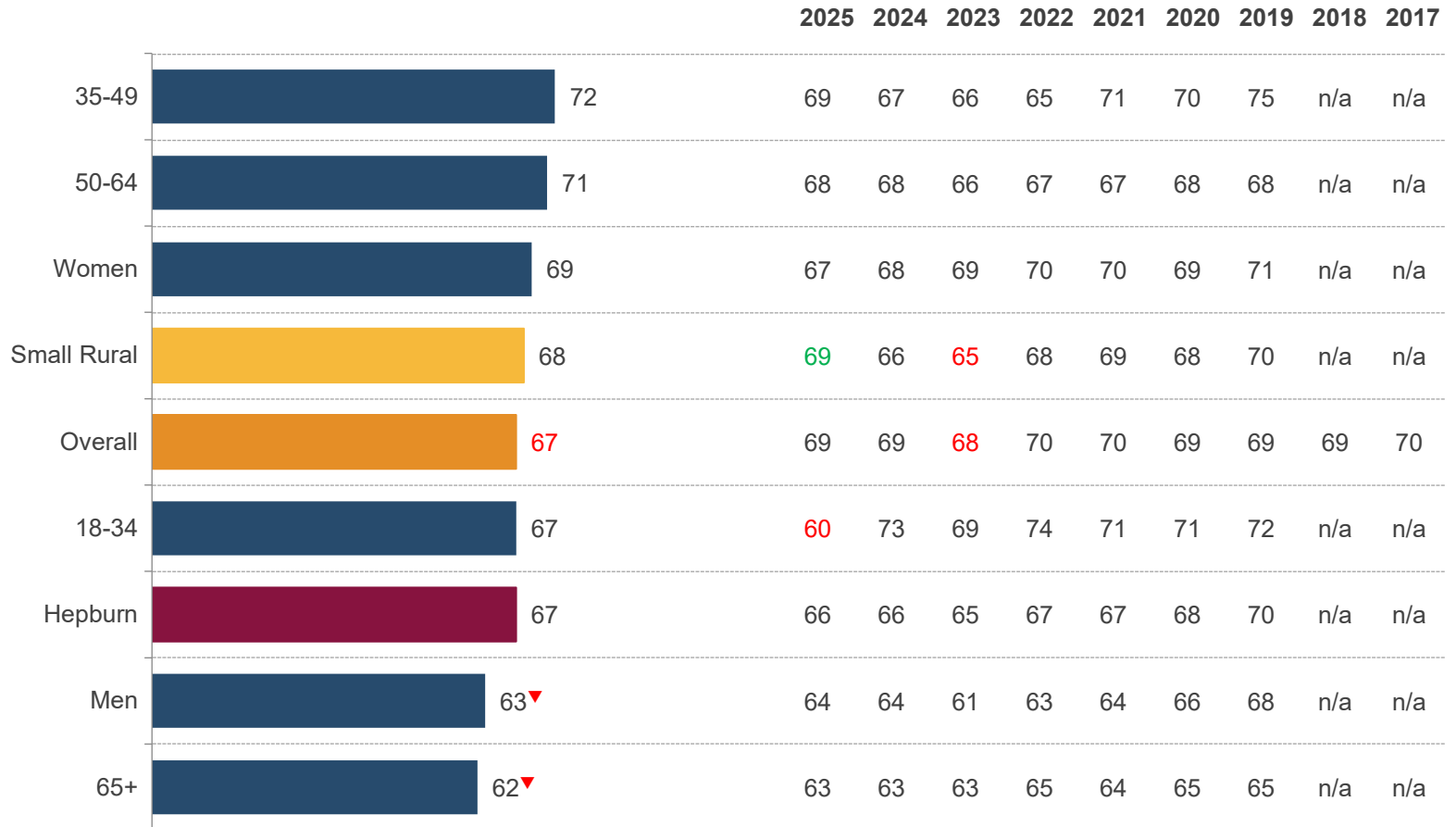
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Roadside slashing and weed control' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 3



# Business and community development importance



2026 business/community development importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Business and community development' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 2

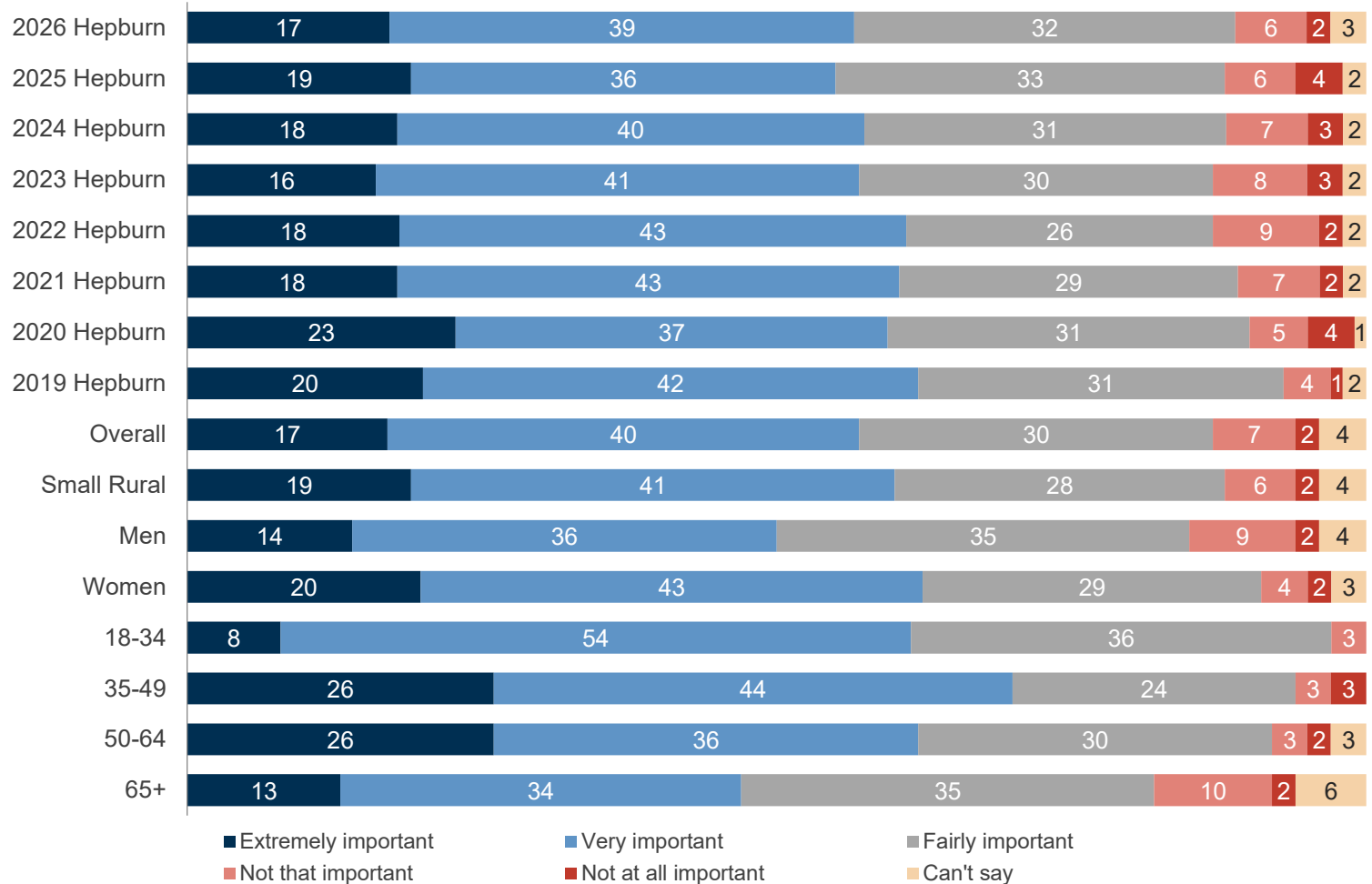
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Business and community development importance



2026 business/community development importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Business and community development' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 2



# Business and community development performance



2026 business/community development performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Small Rural	55	57	55	57	58	57	60	61	65
Overall	54	57	57	58	60	59	61	60	60
65+	54	56	53	53	54	52	61	n/a	n/a
Women	53	57	57	52	58	56	61	n/a	n/a
18-34	51	61	60	49	59	66	66	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	53	56	54	51	55	55	60	n/a	n/a
50-64	51	55	53	49	53	50	58	n/a	n/a
Men	52	55	51	50	52	53	60	n/a	n/a
35-49	55	53	52	52	56	54	58	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Business and community development' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 3

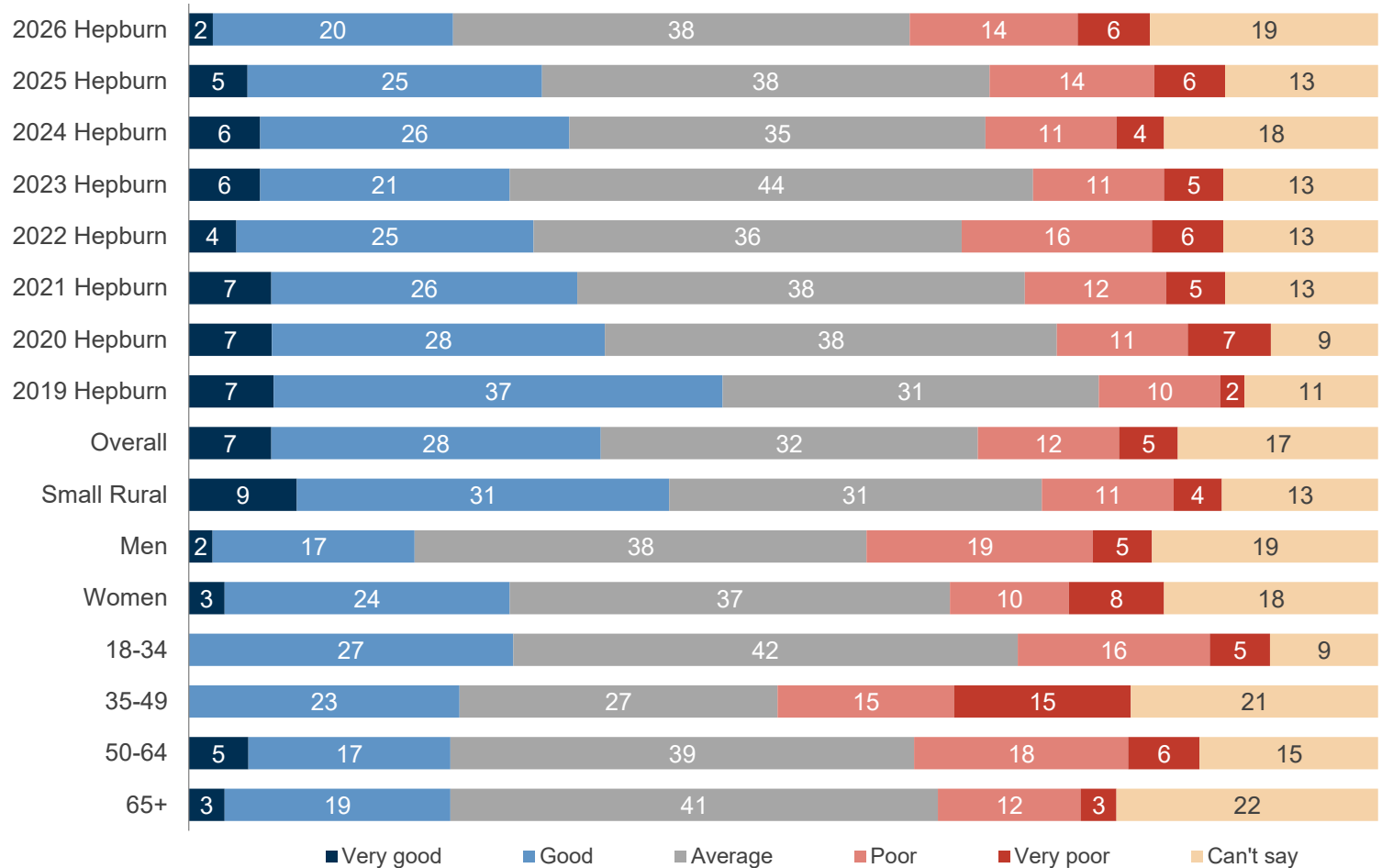
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Business and community development performance



2026 business/community development performance (%)



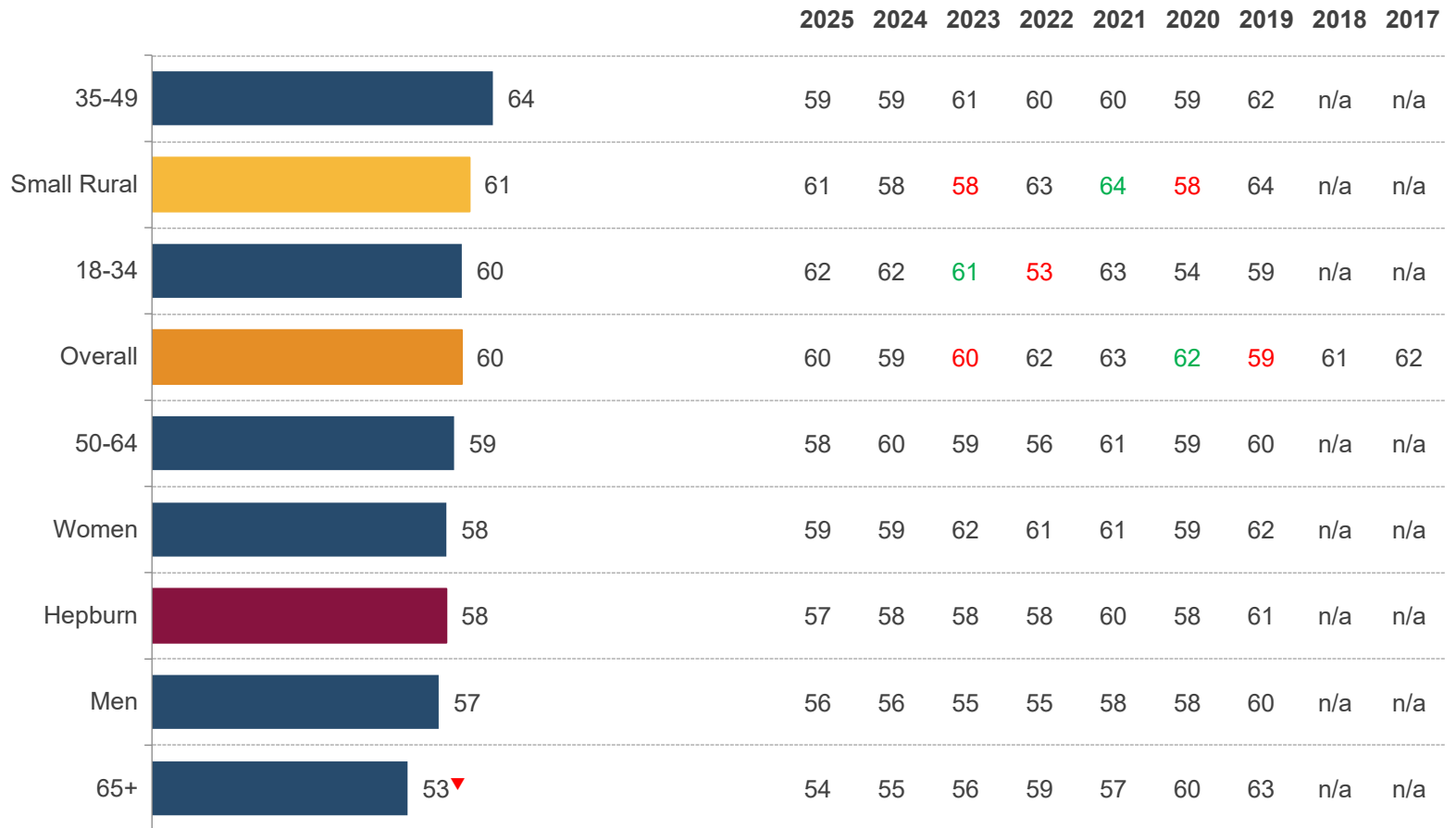
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Business and community development' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 3



# Tourism development importance



2026 tourism development importance (index scores)



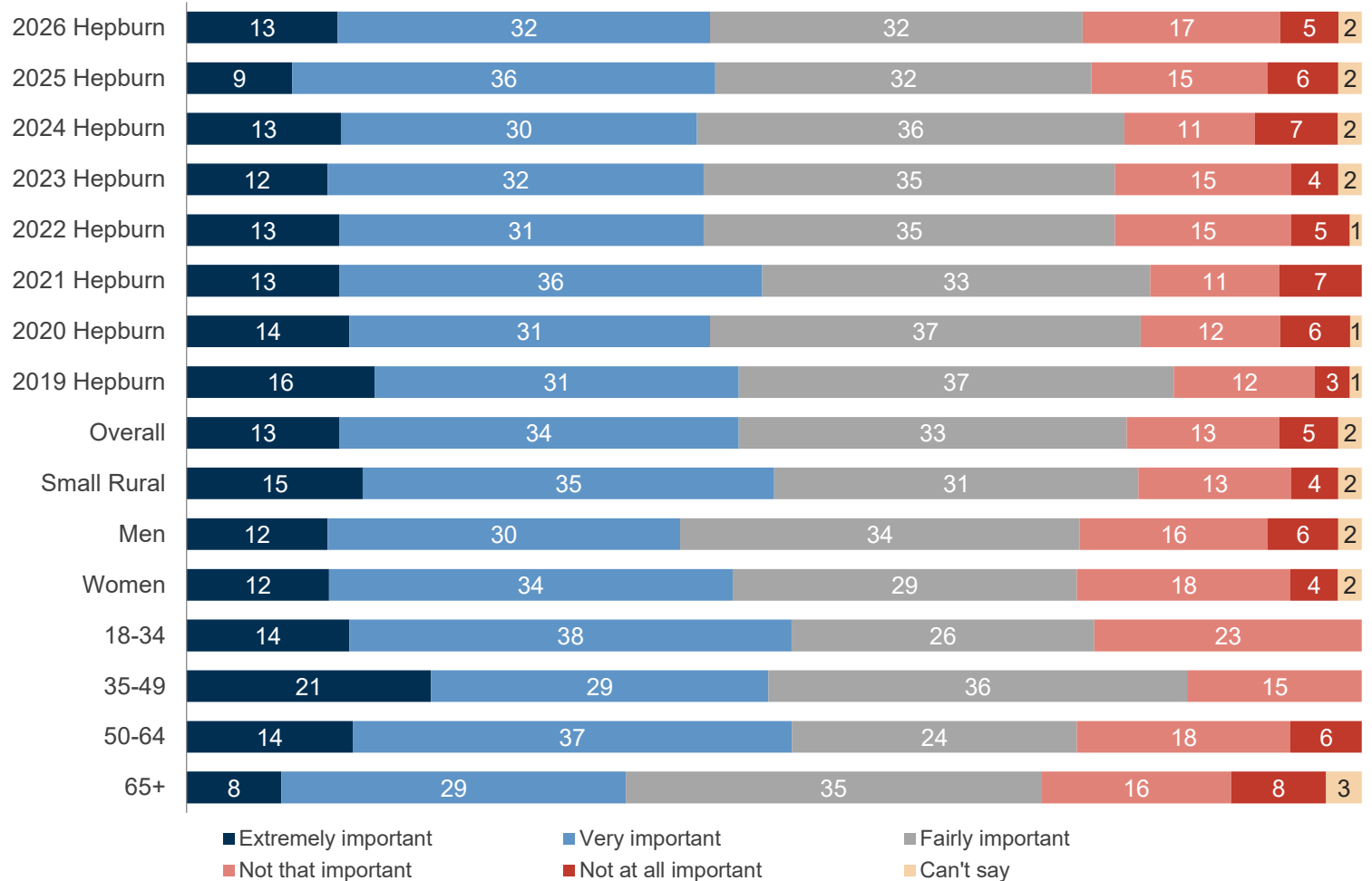
Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Tourism development' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 2  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Tourism development importance



2026 tourism development importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Tourism development' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 2



# Tourism development performance



2026 tourism development performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Small Rural	62	61	61	62	63	63	66	67	67
Overall	60	59	61	60	62	62	63	63	63
Women	65	64	64	64	65	66	69	n/a	n/a
65+	59	63	61	62	62	61	68	n/a	n/a
Hepburn	63	61	62	63	63	63	69	n/a	n/a
35-49	68	59	62	66	69	70	69	n/a	n/a
18-34	68	63	64	61	61	58	73	n/a	n/a
50-64	62	56	63	64	61	63	69	n/a	n/a
Men	62	59	60	62	61	60	69	n/a	n/a

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Tourism development' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 4

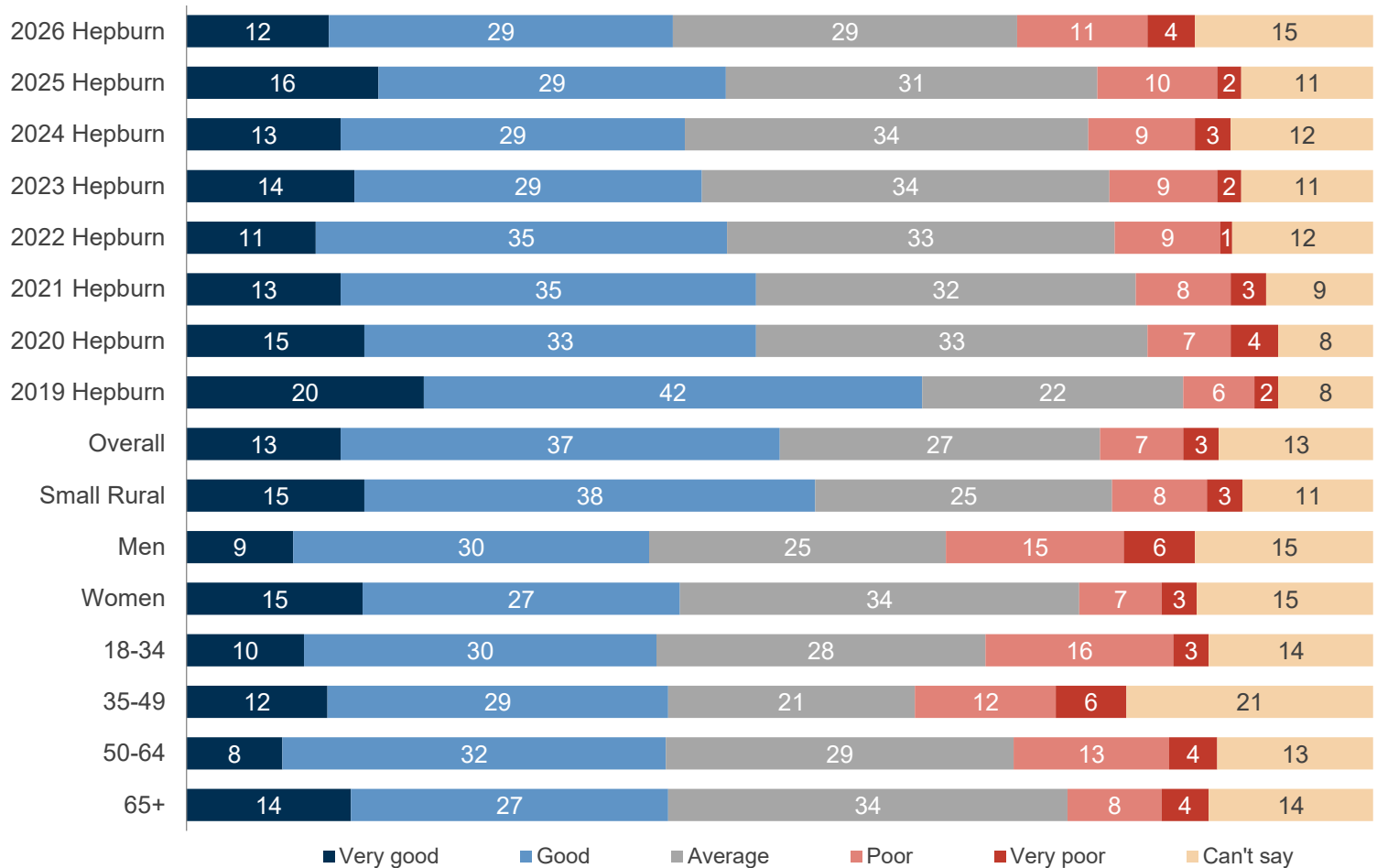
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.



# Tourism development performance



2026 tourism development performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Tourism development' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 4



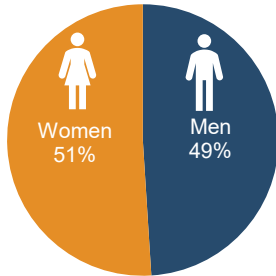
# **Detailed demographics**



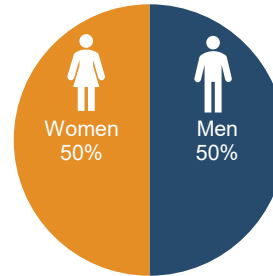
# Gender and age profile

## 2026 gender

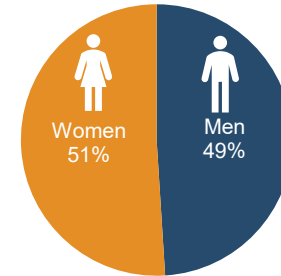
Hepburn



Small Rural

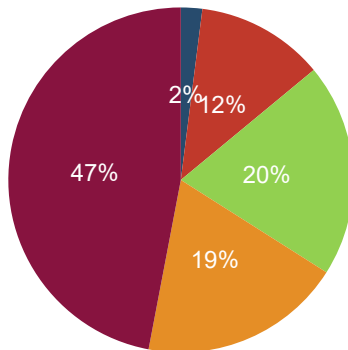


Overall

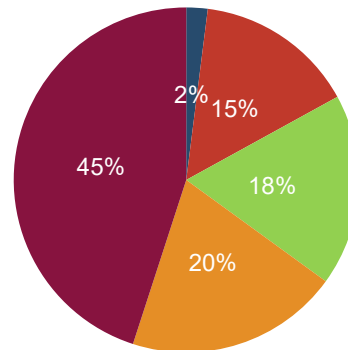


## 2026 age

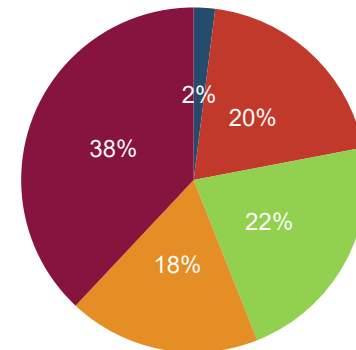
Hepburn



Small Rural



Overall



■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-49 ■ 50-64 ■ 65+

■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-49 ■ 50-64 ■ 65+


■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-49 ■ 50-64 ■ 65+

S3. How would you describe your gender? / S4. To which of the following age groups do you belong?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

An "Other" option has been included for gender, hence the results may not add to 100%.

Please note that for the reason of simplifying reporting, interlocking age and gender reporting has not been included in this report. Interlocking age and gender analysis is still available in the dashboard and data tables provided alongside this report.



**Appendix A:  
Index scores,  
margins of error  
and significant  
differences**



## Appendix A: Index Scores

### Index Scores

Many questions ask respondents to rate council performance on a five-point scale, for example, from 'very good' to 'very poor', with 'can't say' also a possible response category. To facilitate ease of reporting and comparison of results over time, starting from the 2012 survey and measured against the state-wide result and the council group, an 'Index Score' has been calculated for such measures.

The Index Score is calculated and represented as a score out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale), with 'can't say' responses excluded from the analysis. The '% RESULT' for each scale category is multiplied by the 'INDEX FACTOR'. This produces an 'INDEX VALUE' for each category, which are then summed to produce the 'INDEX SCORE', equating to '60' in the following example.

Similarly, an Index Score has been calculated for the Core question 'Performance direction in the last 12 months', based on the following scale for each performance measure category, with 'Can't say' responses excluded from the calculation.

SCALE CATEGORIES	% RESULT	INDEX FACTOR	INDEX VALUE
Very good	9%	100	9
Good	40%	75	30
Average	37%	50	19
Poor	9%	25	2
Very poor	4%	0	0
Can't say	1%	--	<b>INDEX SCORE 60</b>

SCALE CATEGORIES	% RESULT	INDEX FACTOR	INDEX VALUE
Improved	36%	100	36
Stayed the same	40%	50	20
Deteriorated	23%	0	0
Can't say	1%	--	<b>INDEX SCORE 56</b>

Please note that the horizontal (x) axis of the index score bar charts in this report is displayed on a scale from 20 to 100.



## Appendix A: Margins of error

The sample size for the 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey for Hepburn Shire Council was n=400. Unless otherwise noted, this is the total sample base for all reported charts and tables.

The maximum margin of error on a sample of approximately n=400 interviews is +/-4.8% at the 95% confidence level for results around 50%. Margins of error will be larger for any sub-samples. As an example, a result of 50% can be read confidently as falling midway in the range 45.2% - 54.8%.

Maximum margins of error are listed in the table below, based on a population of 14,100 people aged 18 years or over for Hepburn Shire Council, according to ABS estimates.

Demographic	Actual survey sample size	Weighted base	Maximum margin of error at 95% confidence interval
Hepburn Shire Council	400	400	+/-4.8
Men	187	195	+/-7.1
Women	212	204	+/-6.7
18-34 years	31	57	+/-17.9
35-49 years	34	80	+/-17.0
50-64 years	97	76	+/-10.0
65+ years	238	187	+/-6.3



## Appendix A: Index score significant difference calculation

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The test applied to the Indexes was an Independent Mean Test, as follows:

$$Z \text{ Score} = (\$1 - \$2) / \text{Sqrt} ((\$5^2 / \$3) + (\$6^2 / \$4))$$

Where:

- \$1 = Index Score 1
- \$2 = Index Score 2
- \$3 = unweighted sample count 1
- \$4 = unweighted sample count 2
- \$5 = standard deviation 1
- \$6 = standard deviation 2

All figures can be sourced from the detailed cross tabulations.

The test was applied at the 95% confidence interval, so if the Z Score was greater than +/- 1.954 the scores are significantly different.



# **Appendix B: Further project information**

## Appendix B: Further information

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Further information about the report can be found in this section including:

- Survey methodology and sampling
- Analysis and reporting
- Glossary of terms

### Detailed survey tabulations

Detailed survey tabulations are available in supplied Excel file.

### Contacts

For further queries about the conduct and reporting of the 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey, please contact JWS Research on

**(03) 8685 8555** or via email:

**[admin@jwsresearch.com](mailto:admin@jwsresearch.com)**



## Appendix B: Survey methodology and sampling

The 2026 results are compared with previous years, as detailed below:

- 2025, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
- 2024, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 - 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- 2023, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 27<sup>th</sup> January – 19<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2022, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 27<sup>th</sup> January – 24<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2021, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 28<sup>th</sup> January – 18<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2020, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 30<sup>th</sup> January – 22<sup>nd</sup> March.
- 2019, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> February – 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2018, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> February – 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2017, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 1<sup>st</sup> February – 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Minimum quotas of gender within age groups were applied during the fieldwork phase. Post-survey weighting was then conducted to ensure accurate representation of the age and gender profile of the Hepburn Shire Council area.

Any variation of +/-1% between individual results and net scores in this report or the detailed survey tabulations is due to rounding. In reporting, ‘—’ denotes not mentioned and ‘0%’ denotes mentioned by less than 1% of respondents. ‘Net’ scores refer to two or more response categories being combined into one category for simplicity of reporting.

This survey was conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) as a representative random probability survey of residents aged 18+ years in Hepburn Shire Council.

Survey sample matched to the demographic profile of Hepburn Shire Council as determined by the most recent ABS population estimates was purchased from an accredited supplier of publicly available phone records, including up to 47% mobile phone numbers to cater to the diversity of residents within Hepburn Shire Council, particularly younger people.

A total of n=400 completed interviews were achieved in Hepburn Shire Council. Survey fieldwork was conducted across four quarters from the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 until the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026.



## Appendix B: Analysis and reporting

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In 2026, 23 Councils throughout Victoria participated in this survey. For consistency of analysis and reporting, JWS Research has aligned its presentation of data to use standard council groupings. Accordingly, the council reports for the community satisfaction survey provide analysis using these standard council groupings. Please note that councils participating across 2012-2026 vary.

### Council Groups

Hepburn Shire Council is classified as a Small Rural council according to the following classification list:

- Metropolitan, Interface, Regional Centres, Large Rural & Small Rural.

Councils participating in the Small Rural group are:

- Ararat, Benalla, Gannawarra, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Loddon, Mansfield, Queenscliffe and Yarriambiack.

Wherever appropriate, results for Hepburn Shire Council have been compared against those in the Small Rural group, as well as against all other participating councils (“Overall”).



## Appendix B: Core, optional and tailored questions

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### Core, optional and tailored questions

Over and above necessary geographic and demographic questions required to ensure sample representativeness, a base set of questions for the 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey was designated as 'Core' and therefore compulsory inclusions for all participating Councils.

These core questions comprised:

- Overall performance last 12 months (Overall performance)
- Value for money in services and infrastructure (Value for money)
- Contact in last 12 months (Contact)
- Rating of contact (Customer service)
- Overall council direction last 12 months (Council direction)
- Community consultation and engagement (Consultation)
- Decisions made in the interest of the community (Making community decisions)
- Condition of sealed local roads (Sealed local roads)
- Waste management

Reporting of results for these core questions can always be compared against other participating councils in the council group and against all participating councils. Alternatively, some questions in the 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey were optional. Councils also had the ability to ask tailored questions specific only to their council.

Every council that participated in the 2026 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey receives a customised report. Tailored questions commissioned by individual councils are reported only to the commissioning council and not otherwise shared unless by express written approval of the commissioning council.



## Appendix B: Glossary of terms

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**Core questions:** Compulsory inclusion questions for all councils participating in the CSS.

**CSS:** 2026 Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

**Council group:** One of five classified groups, comprising: Metropolitan, Interface, Regional Centres, Large Rural and Small Rural.

**Council group average:** The average result for all participating councils in the council group.

**Highest / lowest:** The result described is the highest or lowest result across a particular demographic sub-group e.g. men, for the specific question being reported. Reference to the result for a demographic sub-group being the highest or lowest does not imply that it is significantly higher or lower, unless this is specifically mentioned.

**Index score:** A score calculated and represented as a score out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale). This score is sometimes reported as a figure in brackets next to the category being described, e.g. men 50+ (60).

**Optional questions:** Questions which councils had an option to include or not.

**Overall average:** The average result for all participating councils.

**Percentages:** Also referred to as 'detailed results', meaning the proportion of responses, expressed as a percentage.

**Sample:** The number of completed interviews, e.g. for a council or within a demographic sub-group.

**Significantly higher / lower:** The result described is significantly higher or lower than the comparison result based on a statistical significance test at the 95% confidence limit. If the result referenced is statistically higher or lower then this will be specifically mentioned, however not all significantly higher or lower results are referenced in summary reporting.

**Tailored questions:** Individual questions tailored by and only reported to the commissioning council.

**Weighting:** Weighting factors are applied to the sample for each council based on available age and gender proportions from ABS census information to ensure reported results are proportionate to the actual population of the council, rather than the achieved survey sample.

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