



**2026 Local  
Government  
Community  
Satisfaction Survey**

**Ararat Rural City  
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.



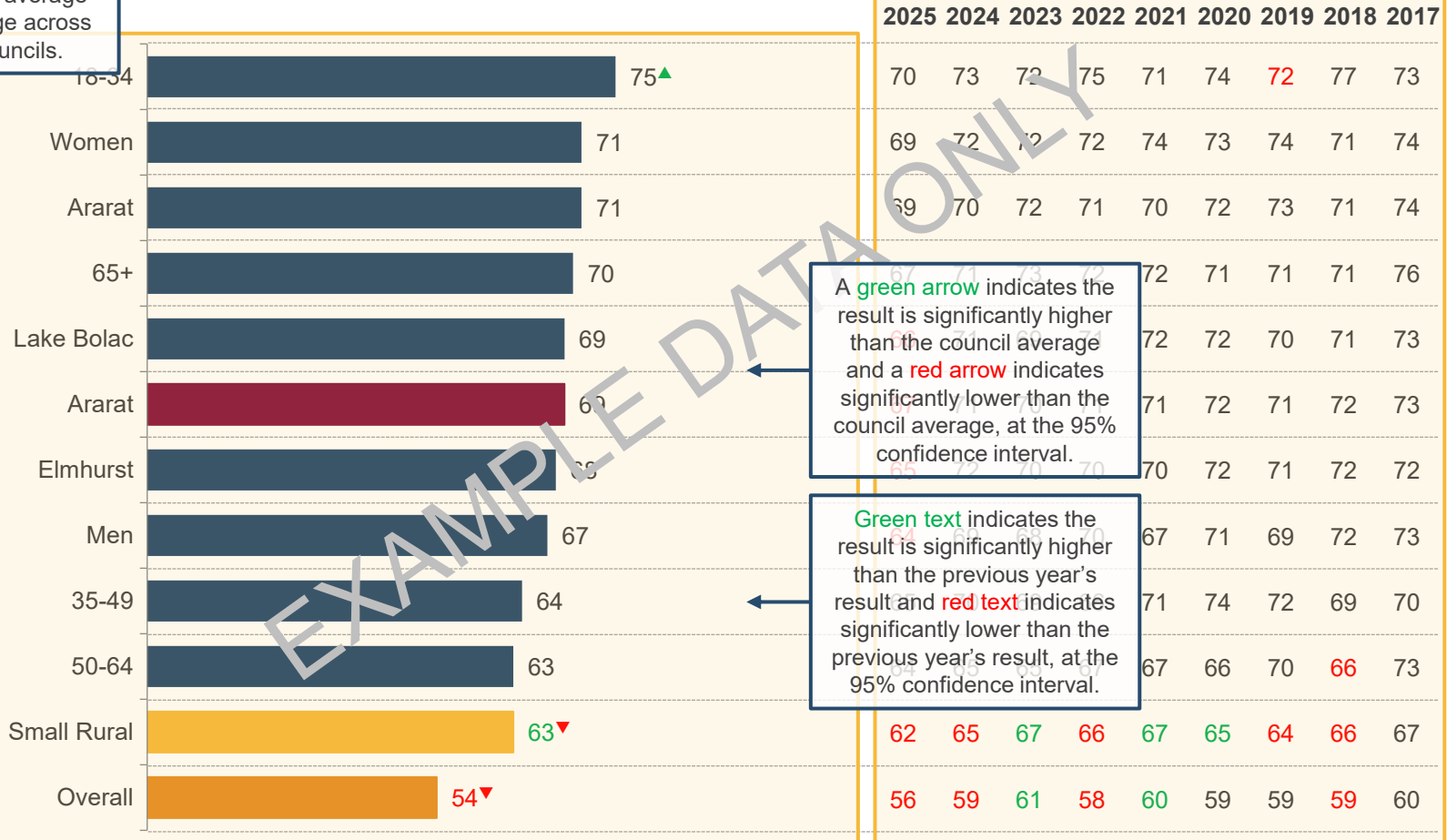
# How to read index score charts in this report

Main chart shows the results among the total sample, subgroups, group average and overall average across participating councils.

2026 overall performance (index scores)

Chart title explains the data shown in the chart

Previous results



A green arrow indicates the result is significantly higher than the council average and a red arrow indicates significantly lower than the council average, at the 95% confidence interval.

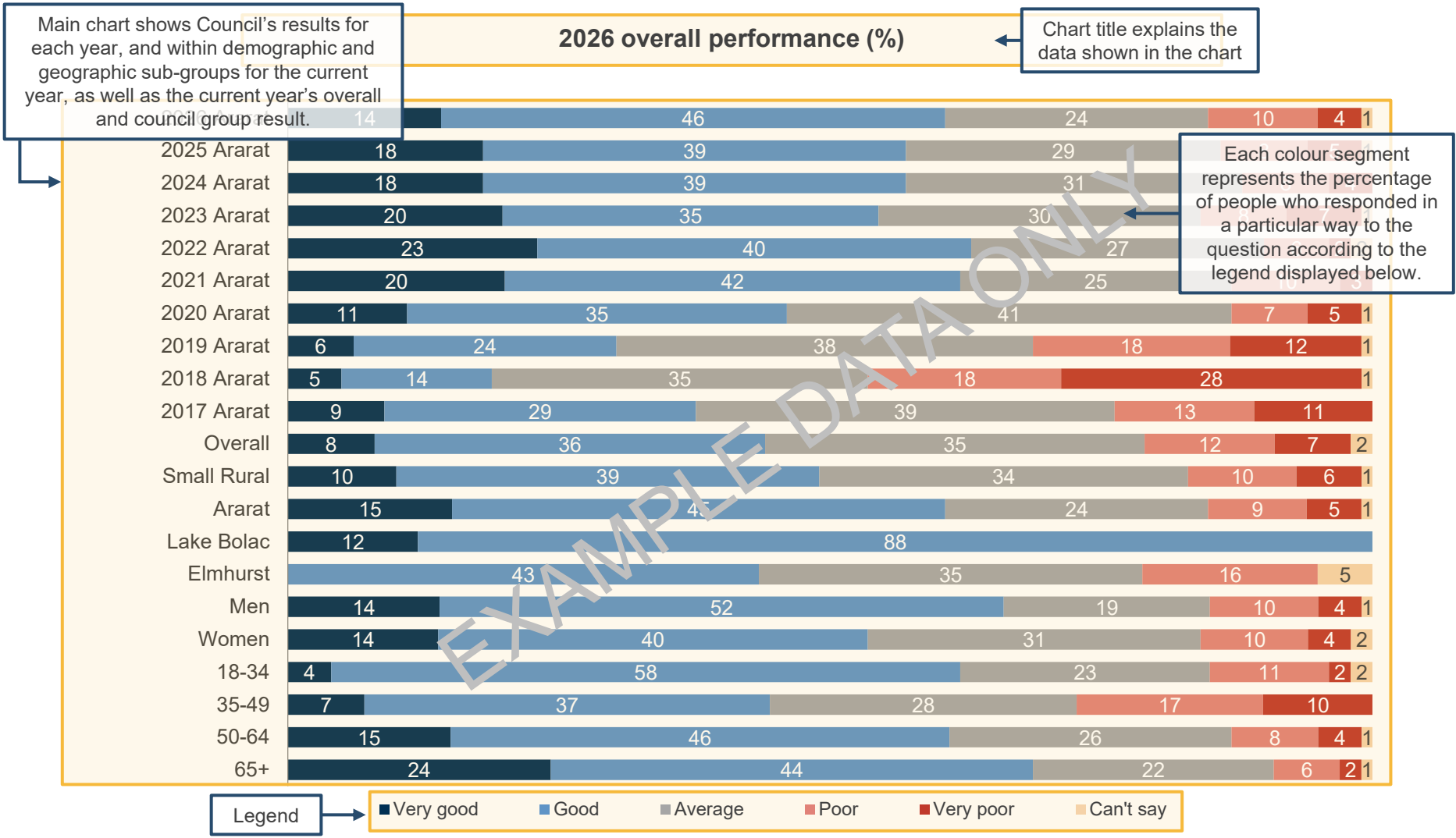
Green text indicates the result is significantly higher than the previous year's result and red text indicates significantly lower than the previous year's result, at the 95% confidence interval.

Question asked and base size(s)

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City 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



Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City 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



# **Key findings and recommendations**



# Ararat Rural City Council – at a glance

## Overall council performance

Results shown are index scores out of 100.



Ararat 64



Small Rural 60



Overall 57

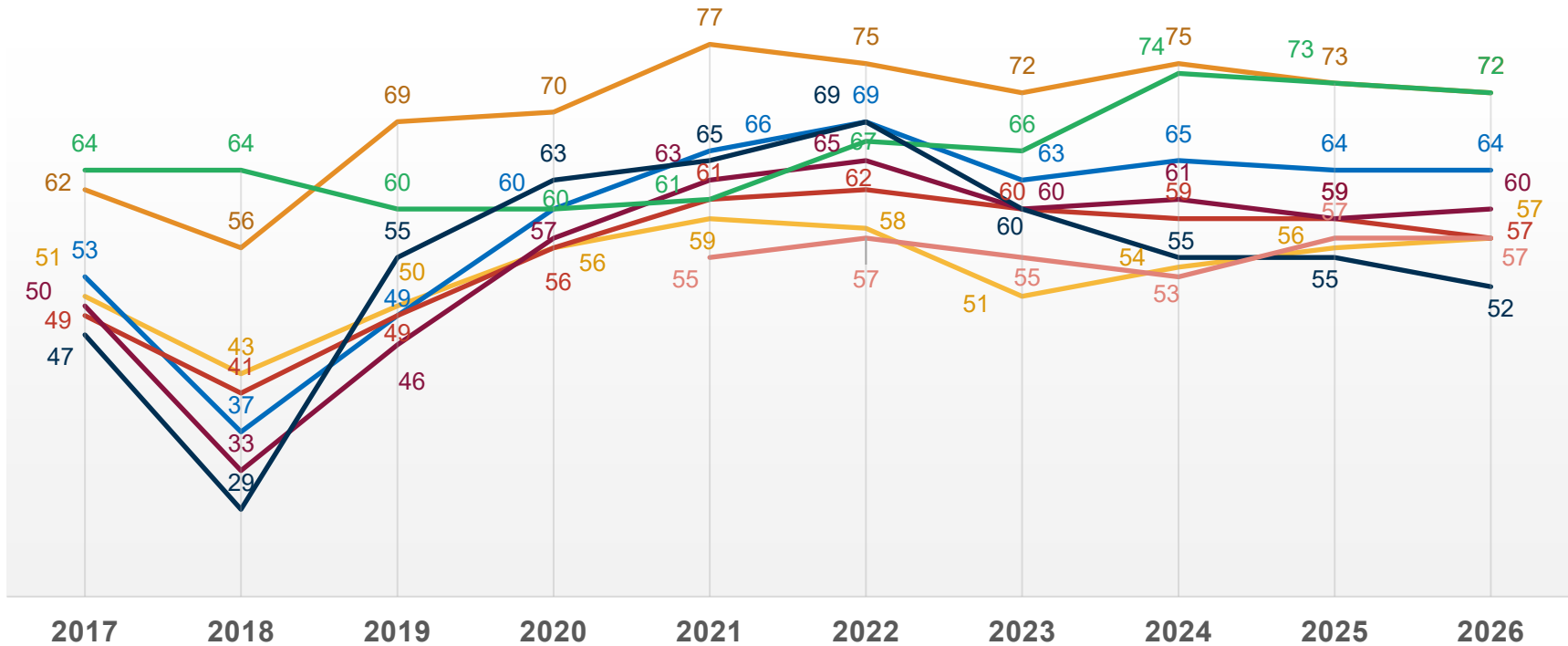
## Council performance compared to group average

Top 3 performing areas		
	Art centres & libraries	≡ on par
	Emergency & disaster mnngt	▲ higher
	Recreational facilities	▲ higher
Bottom 3 performing areas		
	Unsealed roads	≡ on par
	Slashing & weed control	≡ on par
	Planning & building permits	▲ higher
	Customer service	≡ on par



# Summary of core measures

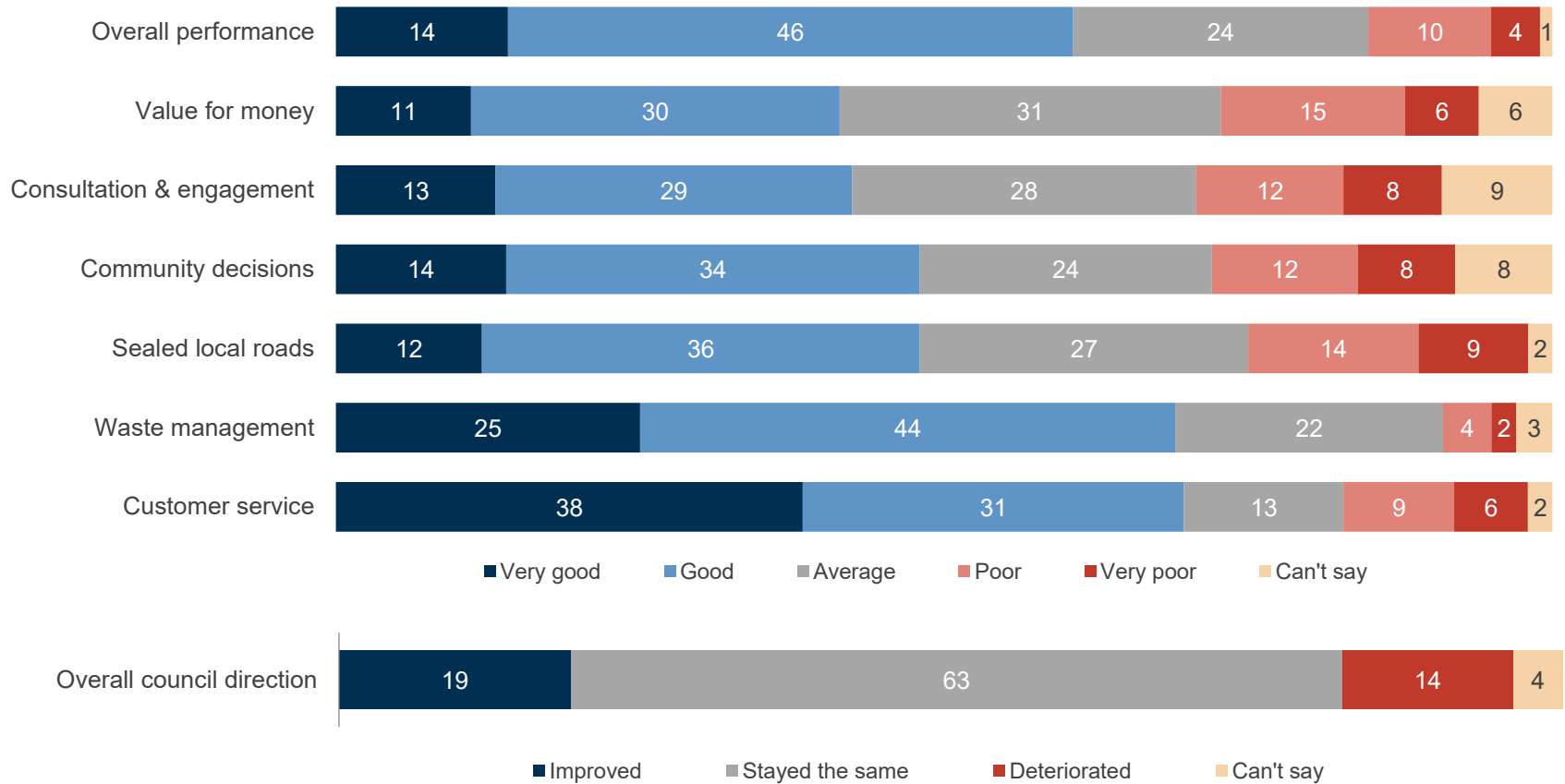
## Index scores















# Summary of core measures

Core measures summary results (%)















## Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance

Services		Ararat 2026	Ararat 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026	Highest score	Lowest score
	Overall performance	64	64	60	57	65+ years	35-49 years
	Value for money	57	57	52	49	65+ years	35-49 years
	Overall council direction	52	55	52	48	65+ years	18-34 years
	Customer service	72	73	70	69	50-64 years	35-49 years
	Art centres & libraries	77	75	77	76	Women	35-49 years, Men
	Emergency & disaster mngt	74	75	70	68	50+ years	18-34 years
	Recreational facilities	74	72	69	71	65+ years	18-34 years
	Appearance of public areas	73	71	73	71	Women	35-49 years
	Waste management	72	73	71	69	50+ years	18-34 years
	Community & cultural	69	66	70	67	65+ years	18-34 years





## Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance

Services		Ararat 2026	Ararat 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026	Highest score	Lowest score
	Elderly support services	67	67	67	62	65+ years	35-49 years
	Bus/community dev./tourism	66	63	60	59	65+ years	35-49 years
	Environmental sustainability	63	64	60	60	50+ years	18-34 years
	Informing the community	61	61	62	60	65+ years	35-49 years
	Lobbying	60	60	57	54	65+ years	18-34 years
	Community decisions	60	59	56	52	65+ years	35-49 years
	Local streets & footpaths	58	59	56	54	Men	18-34 years
	Consultation & engagement	57	59	57	53	65+ years	35-49 years
	Sealed local roads	57	56	48	46	65+ years	18-34 years
	Planning & building permits	56	51	47	46	65+ years	35-49 years



## Summary of Ararat Rural City Council performance

Services		Ararat 2026	Ararat 2025	Small Rural 2026	Overall 2026	Highest score	Lowest score
	Slashing & weed control	49	53	47	45	Men	35-49 years, Women
	Unsealed roads	49	48	46	40	65+ years	35-49 years



## Focus areas for the next 12 months

### Overview

Perceptions of Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance have remained steady over the last three years, with this year's result unchanged from 2025. Performance perceptions on most metrics evaluated are also in line with 2025 results, with the exception of planning and building permits, where performance ratings improved significantly, and roadside slashing and weed control where performance ratings declined significantly.

### Key influences on perceptions of overall performance

Council should focus on improving performance in the individual service areas that most influence perceptions of overall performance, namely, decisions made in the interest of the community and informing the community. Ensuring that Council is being transparent with residents around their decision making and prioritising information provision provide the greatest opportunities to drive up overall opinion of Council's performance.

### Comparison to Overall and area grouping

On the core measures of overall performance and value for money, Ararat Rural City Council performs significantly higher than the Small Rural group average and the Overall average across participating councils State-wide (the Overall average). Beyond this, Council rates significantly higher than the Small Rural group average on close to half of the metrics evaluated and is rated in line with the group average on the rest. Council rates significantly above the Overall average on most metrics.

### Opportunity to engage

Residents aged 35 to 49 years warrant extra attention in the year ahead as they rate Council lowest on several core measures, including overall performance and on many individual service areas. Residents in this age group have a high rate of contact with Council and provide the lowest ratings of customer service, so there is opportunity to use these service interactions to engage with them and work to rebuild positive perceptions.

# DETAILED FINDINGS



# Overall performance



## Overall performance

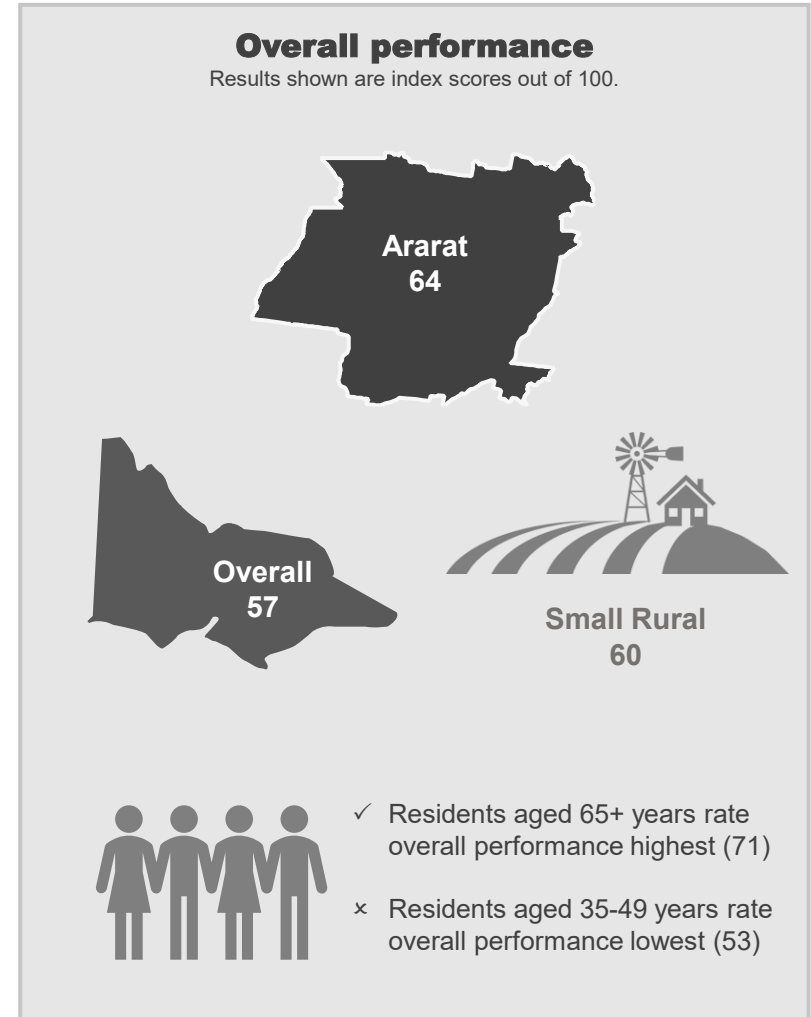
The overall performance index score of 64 for Ararat Rural City Council is equal to the 2025 result and has been relatively stable for the last few years.

Council's overall performance continues to rate statistically significantly higher (at the 95% confidence interval) than the Small Rural group and the Overall group average across participating councils State-wide (index scores of 60 and 57 respectively).

- Overall performance ratings remain highest among residents aged 65 years and over (index score of 71, significantly higher than average), and this year are lowest among those aged 35 to 49 years (index score of 53, significantly lower than average).
- Since the previous evaluation, overall performance ratings saw a significant seven-point improvement among residents aged 18 to 34 years, reversing the six-point loss that occurred in 2025.

Four in 10 residents (41%) rate the value for money they receive from Council in infrastructure and services as 'very good' or 'good'. This is nearly double the 21% who rate Council as 'very poor' or 'poor'. Value for money is rated as 'average' by 31% of residents.

- Residents aged 65 years and above (index score of 65) rate value for money significantly higher than the Council average (57), while 35 to 49 year olds (43) rate value for money significantly lower than average.





# Overall performance

## 2026 overall performance (index scores)

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	78*▲	67	83	74	70	72	32	29	19	48
65+	71▲	71	69	70	75	73	63	52	41	54
Men	65	64	66	63	69	65	58	48	33	50
50-64	65	66	62	61	66	63	61	50	39	54
Ararat	64	64	65	63	69	66	60	49	37	53
Ararat	64	64	64	63	70	66	61	51	41	54
Women	63	65	64	63	69	67	62	50	43	56
18-34	63	56	62	65	70	63	60	52	42	53
Small Rural	60▼	54	53	55	58	60	56	58	56	58
Elmhurst	57*	55	58	53	67	82	54	66	38	50
Overall	57▼	53	54	56	59	61	58	60	59	59
35-49	53▼	61	61	50	62	62	53	40	27	50

Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City 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

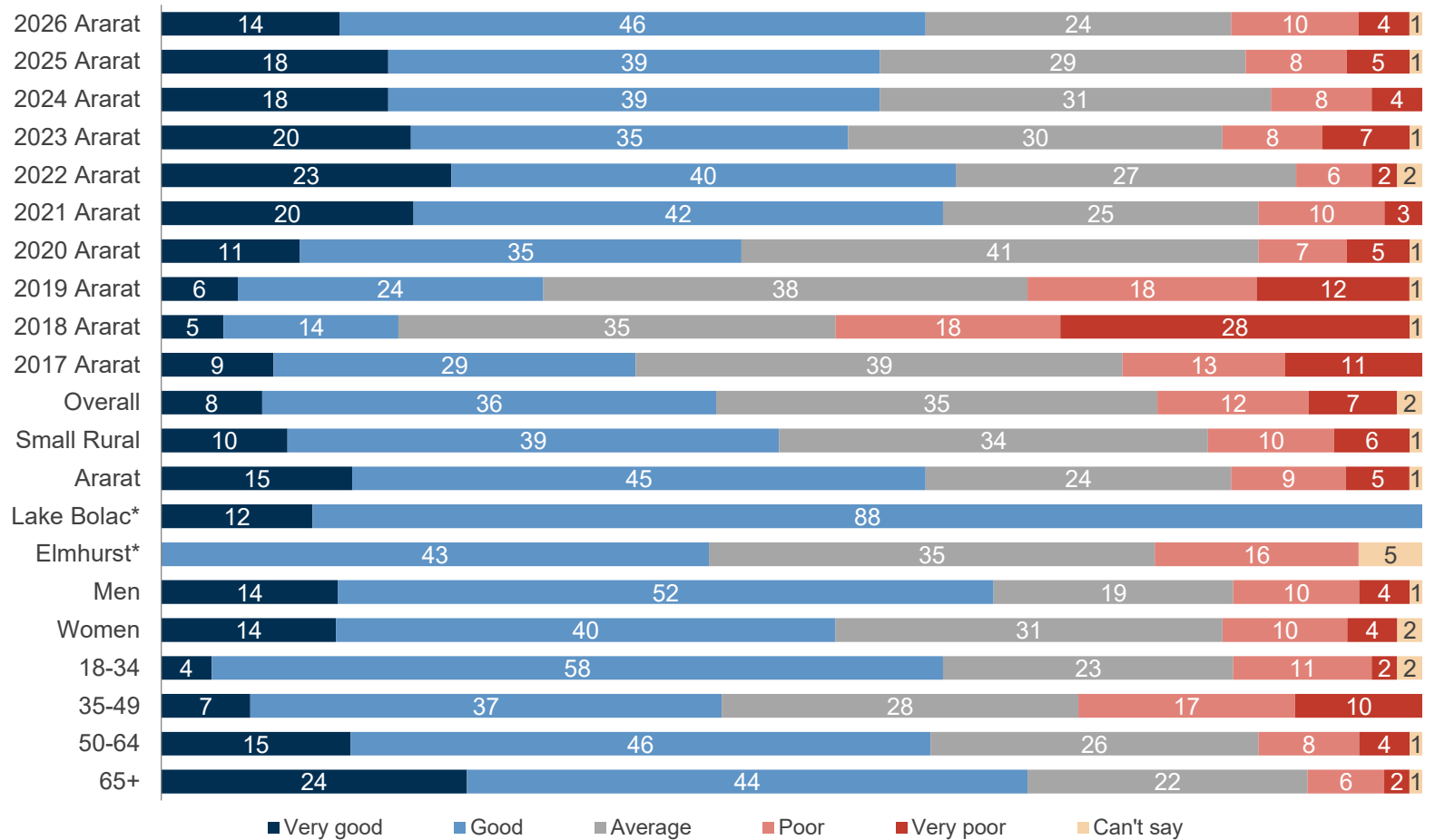
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Overall performance

2026 overall performance (%)



Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Ararat Rural City 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?

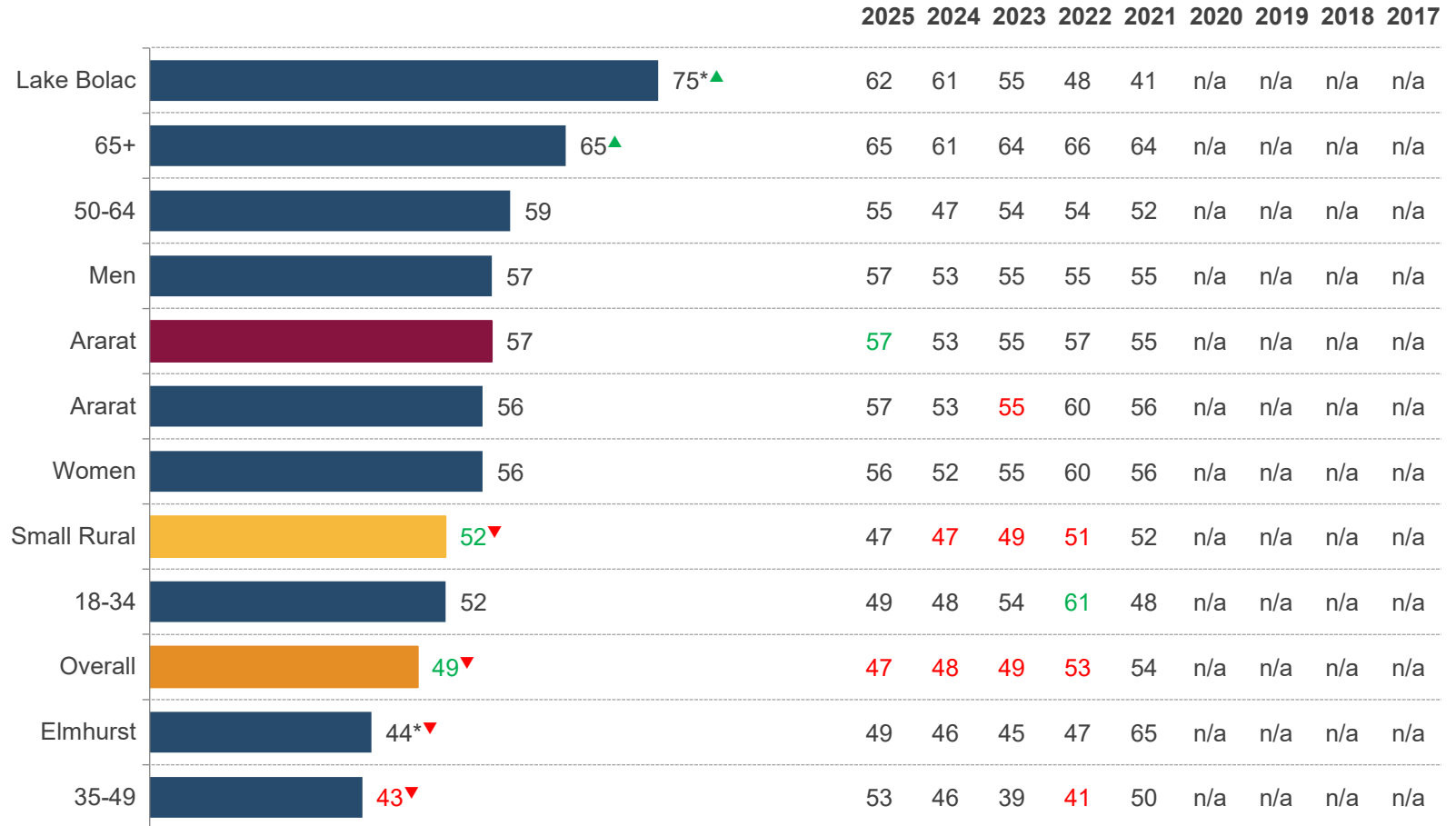
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Value for money in services and infrastructure

2026 value for money (index scores)



Q3b. How would you rate Ararat Rural City 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

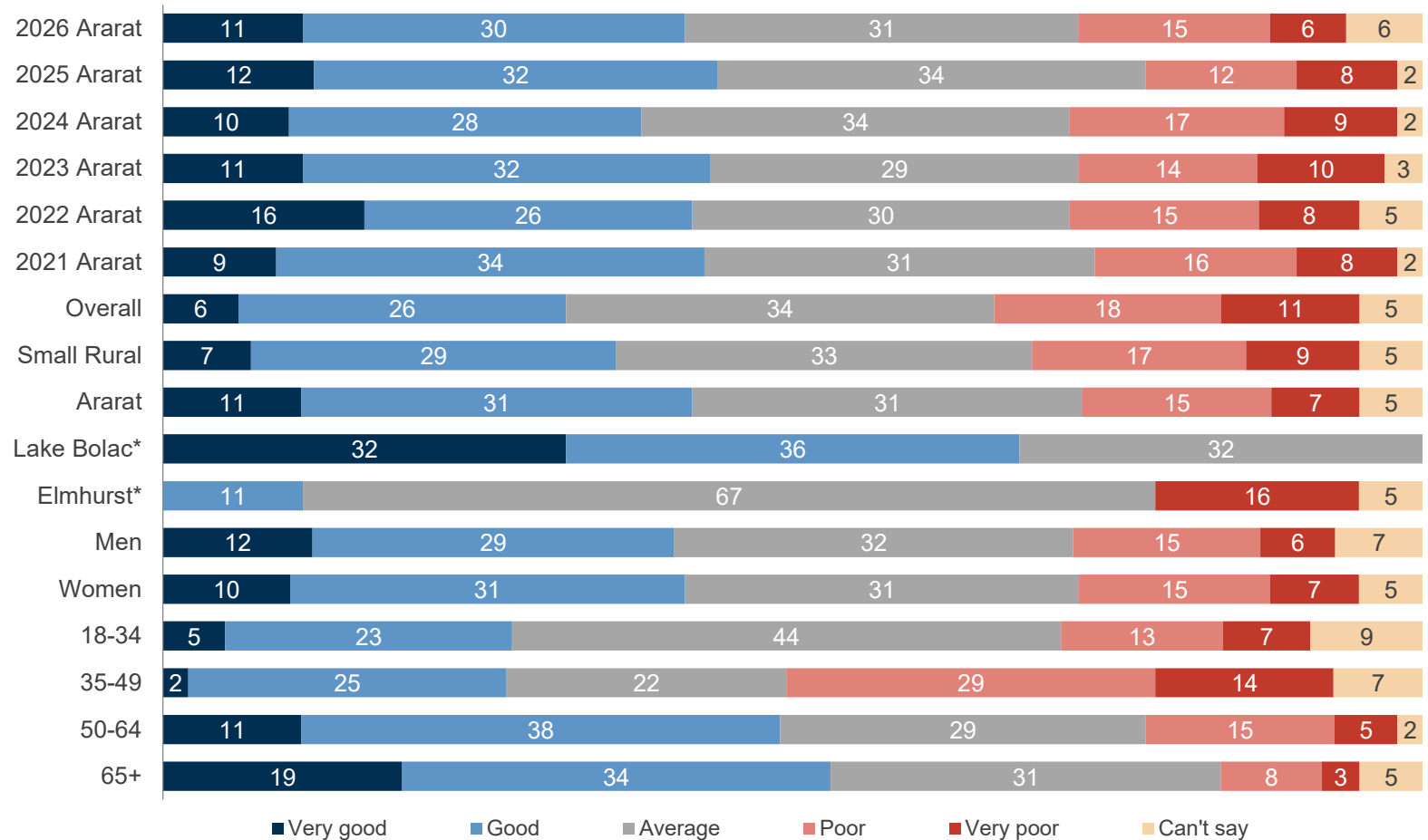
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Value for money in services and infrastructure

2026 value for money (%)



Q3b. How would you rate Ararat Rural City 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



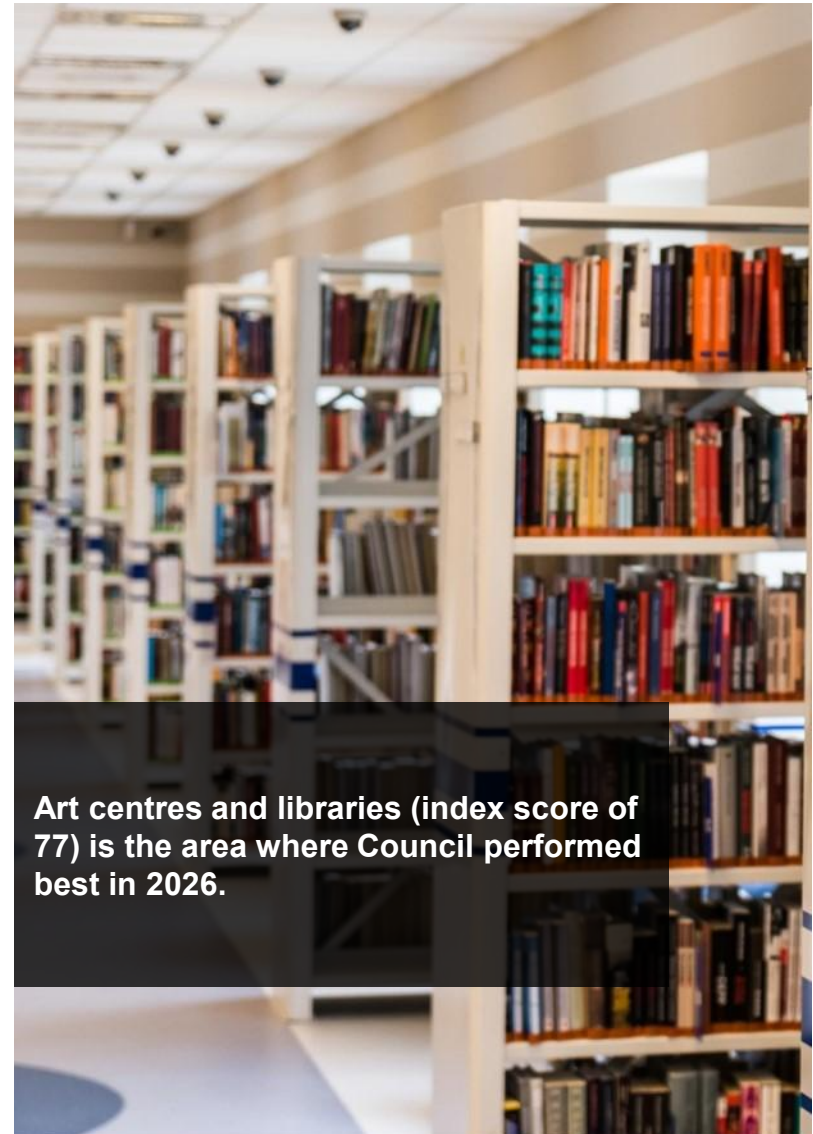
## Top performing service areas

Ararat Rural City Council continues to perform best in the area of art centres and libraries (index score of 77), improving slightly this year (up two index points) and reversing the three-point decline experienced in 2025.

- Council performs in line with the Small Rural group and Overall averages for councils in this service area.
- Ratings have improved significantly in the past 12 months among residents aged 18 to 34 years (index score of 79, up 11 points). This represents a turnaround from 2025 when ratings among this group were the lowest of all demographic groups.

Emergency and disaster management, and recreational facilities, are Council's next highest rated service areas (both with an index score of 74). Council performs significantly higher than the Small Rural and Overall average in each of these service areas.

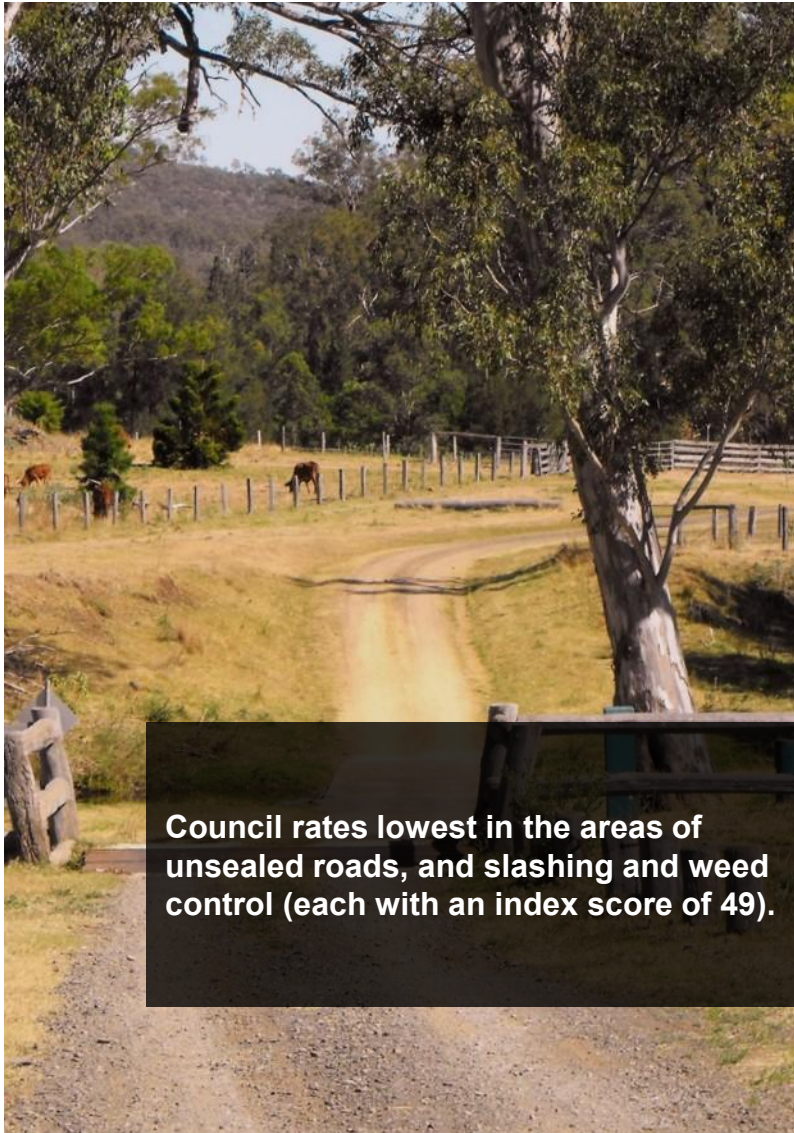
- In both service areas, ratings are lowest among residents aged 18 to 34 years and are significantly lower than the Council average.
- In contrast, in both service areas mentioned, ratings are higher than Council average among residents aged 65 years and over. In the case of recreational facilities, their rating is significantly higher than the Council average.



**Art centres and libraries (index score of 77) is the area where Council performed best in 2026.**



## Low performing service areas



The lowest performing service areas of those evaluated are the maintenance of unsealed roads, and roadside slashing and weed control (each with an index score 49). Council performs in line with the Small Rural group but significantly higher than the Overall average in both service areas.

- Notably, these service areas have the highest net differentials between importance and performance, suggesting further efforts to improve performance here is warranted.
- Perceptions of slashing and weed control declined significantly (down four index points) since the previous evaluation, reversing significant gains achieved in 2025. This is largely driven by significantly lower ratings among residents living in the Ararat area (index score of 50, down from 56), those aged 65 years and over (50, down from 58) and women (44, down from 51) relative to 2025.

Despite planning and building permits being Council's next lowest rated area (index score of 56), Council's performance is rated significantly higher than both the Small Rural group and Overall averages.

- Positively, results have significantly improved in the last 12 months (up five index points), marking the first improvement in perceptions of this service area since 2021.



# Individual service area performance

2026 individual service area performance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Art centres & libraries	77	75	78	75	75	74	78	76	70	70
Emergency & disaster mngt	74	75	76	72	74	75	74	73	70	72
Recreational facilities	74	72	73	71	75	74	71	68	64	65
Appearance of public areas	73	71	72	70	76	75	73	69	65	66
Waste management	72	73	74	66	67	61	60	60	64	64
Community & cultural	69	66	67	65	65	64	63	63	n/a	n/a
Elderly support services	67	67	68	66	71	72	68	65	64	67
Bus/community dev./tourism	66	63	66	65	69	65	61	61	57	60
Environmental sustainability	63	64	63	63	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Informing the community	61	61	61	60	64	63	58	49	44	50
Lobbying	60	60	60	61	64	63	56	50	44	53
Community decisions	60	59	61	60	65	63	57	46	33	50
Local streets & footpaths	58	59	57	55	63	62	62	55	53	55
Consultation & engagement	57	59	59	60	62	61	56	49	41	49
Sealed local roads	57	56	54	51	58	59	56	50	43	51
Planning & building permits	56	51	54	54	58	59	51	52	46	50
Slashing & weed control	49	53	48	52	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unsealed roads	49	48	45	42	47	50	44	39	33	38

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

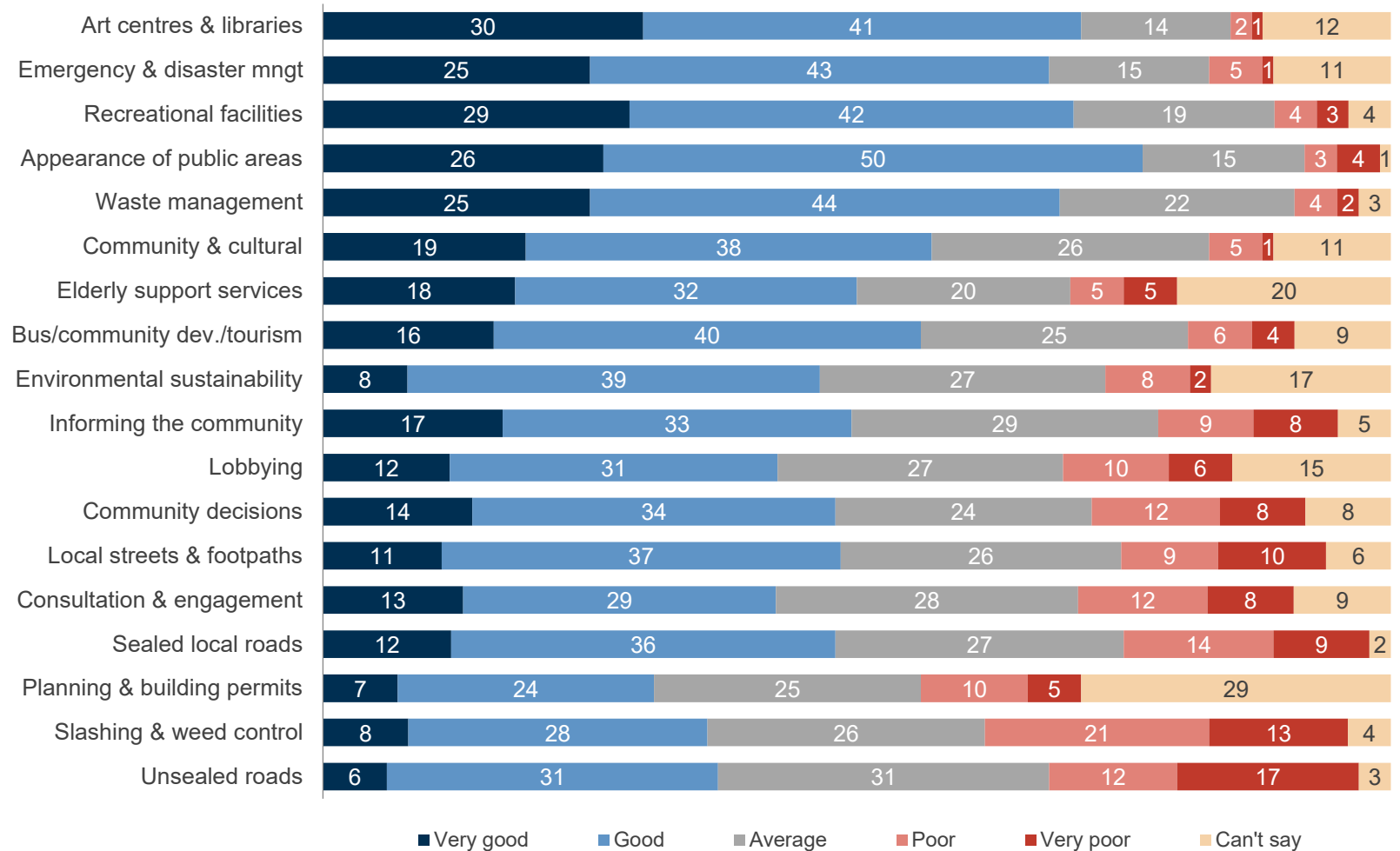
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9

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
Unsealed roads	82	84	83	86	85	81	81	84	86	83
Sealed local roads	81	84	82	84	82	80	81	82	n/a	n/a
Emergency & disaster mngt	81	83	85	81	80	79	82	81	80	83
Community decisions	80	80	81	83	80	78	83	82	n/a	n/a
Elderly support services	78	80	82	83	82	82	79	79	80	79
Slashing & weed control	78	79	79	80	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste management	78	78	82	80	81	80	80	79	79	76
Local streets & footpaths	77	80	78	80	79	77	76	77	77	77
Consultation & engagement	76	77	77	79	76	75	74	78	74	74
Informing the community	75	79	80	79	79	77	76	77	76	76
Recreational facilities	74	75	76	75	77	74	73	71	75	73
Appearance of public areas	73	76	75	76	76	74	74	72	74	74
Lobbying	73	73	74	75	74	71	71	69	70	70
Bus/community dev./tourism	70	72	74	73	73	72	72	68	72	71
Planning & building permits	69	72	70	73	71	69	68	65	68	66
Environmental sustainability	65	66	68	69	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Art centres & libraries	64	65	64	62	63	61	59	59	60	60
Community & cultural	62	62	61	64	64	62	60	60	n/a	n/a

Q1. Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?

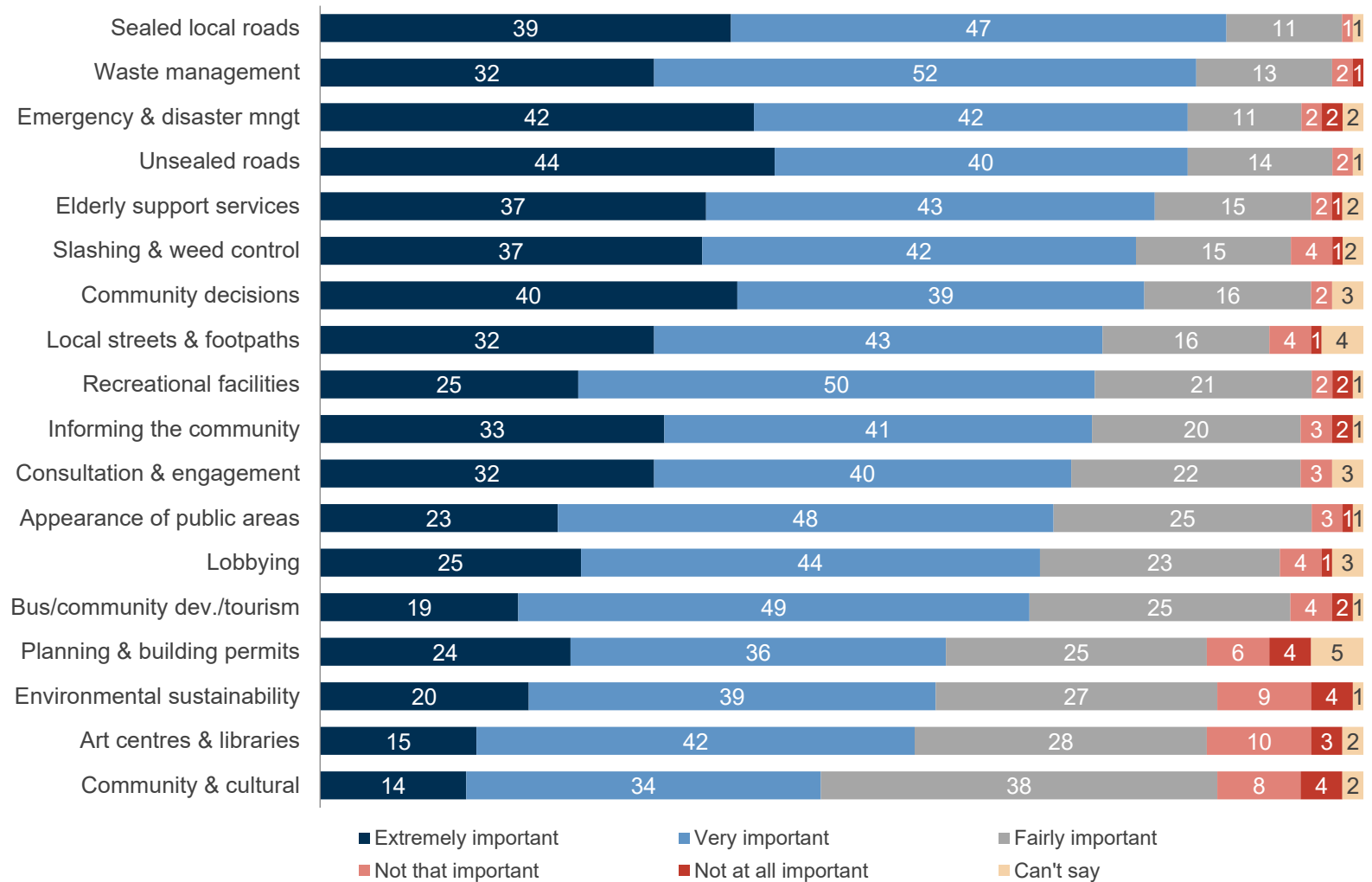
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3

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



# Individual service area importance

2026 individual service area importance (%)

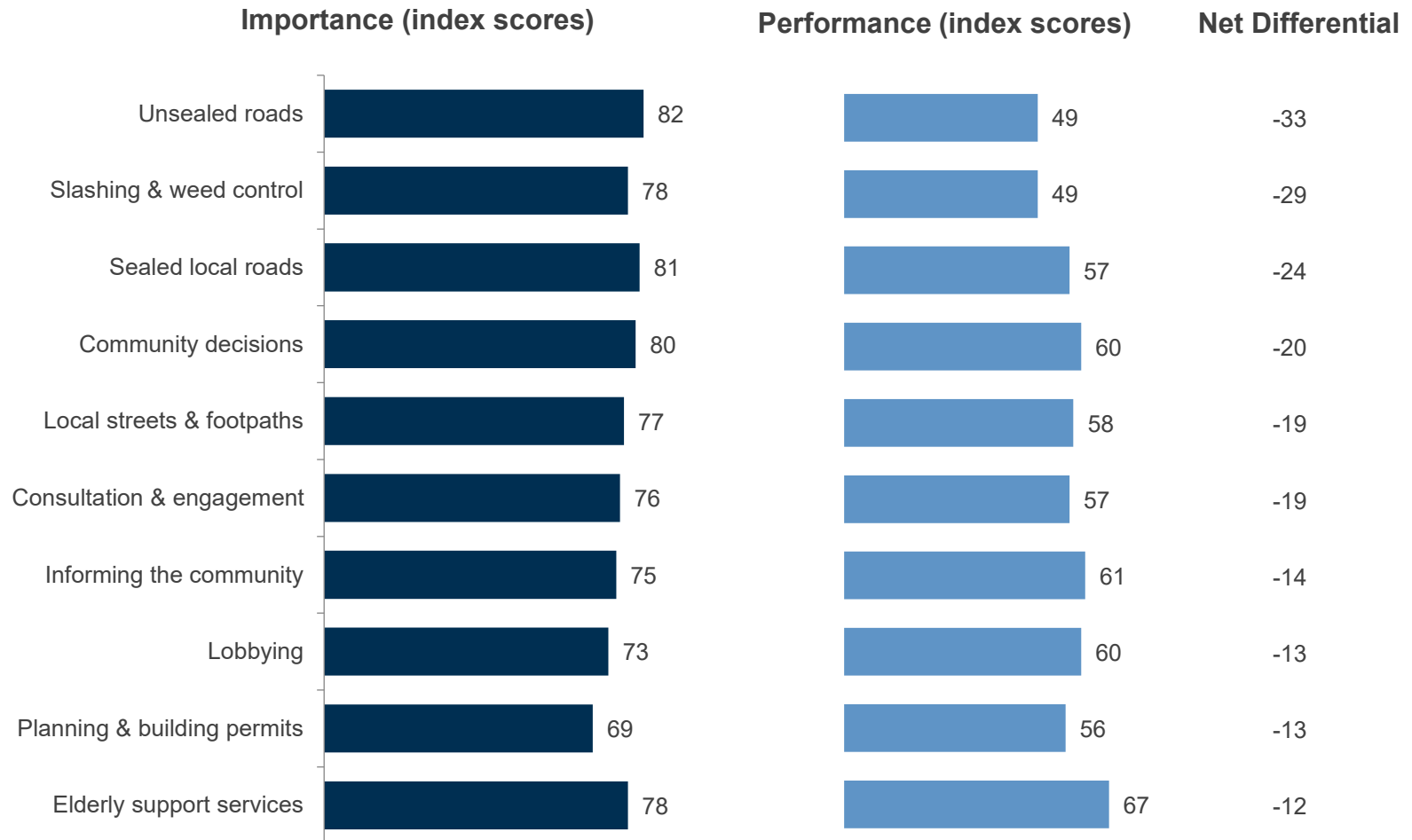


Q1. Firstly, how important should [RESPONSIBILITY AREA] be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 3



## 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

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The individual service areas that have the strongest influence on the overall performance rating (based on regression analysis) are:

- Decisions made in the interest of the community
- Informing the community.

**Good communication and transparency with residents around Council decision making and keeping residents well informed about key local issues and Council activities provide the greatest opportunities to drive up overall opinion of Council's performance.**

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

- The condition of sealed local roads
- The appearance of public areas.

Looking at these key service areas only, the appearance of public areas has a high performance index score (73).

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

Another key service area with a more moderate influence on overall perceptions, but where Council performs relatively less well, is the condition of sealed local roads (index score of 57).

**It will also be important for Council to continue attending to the maintenance of its sealed roads to help shore up overall ratings of its performance.**



## Regression analysis explained

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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.

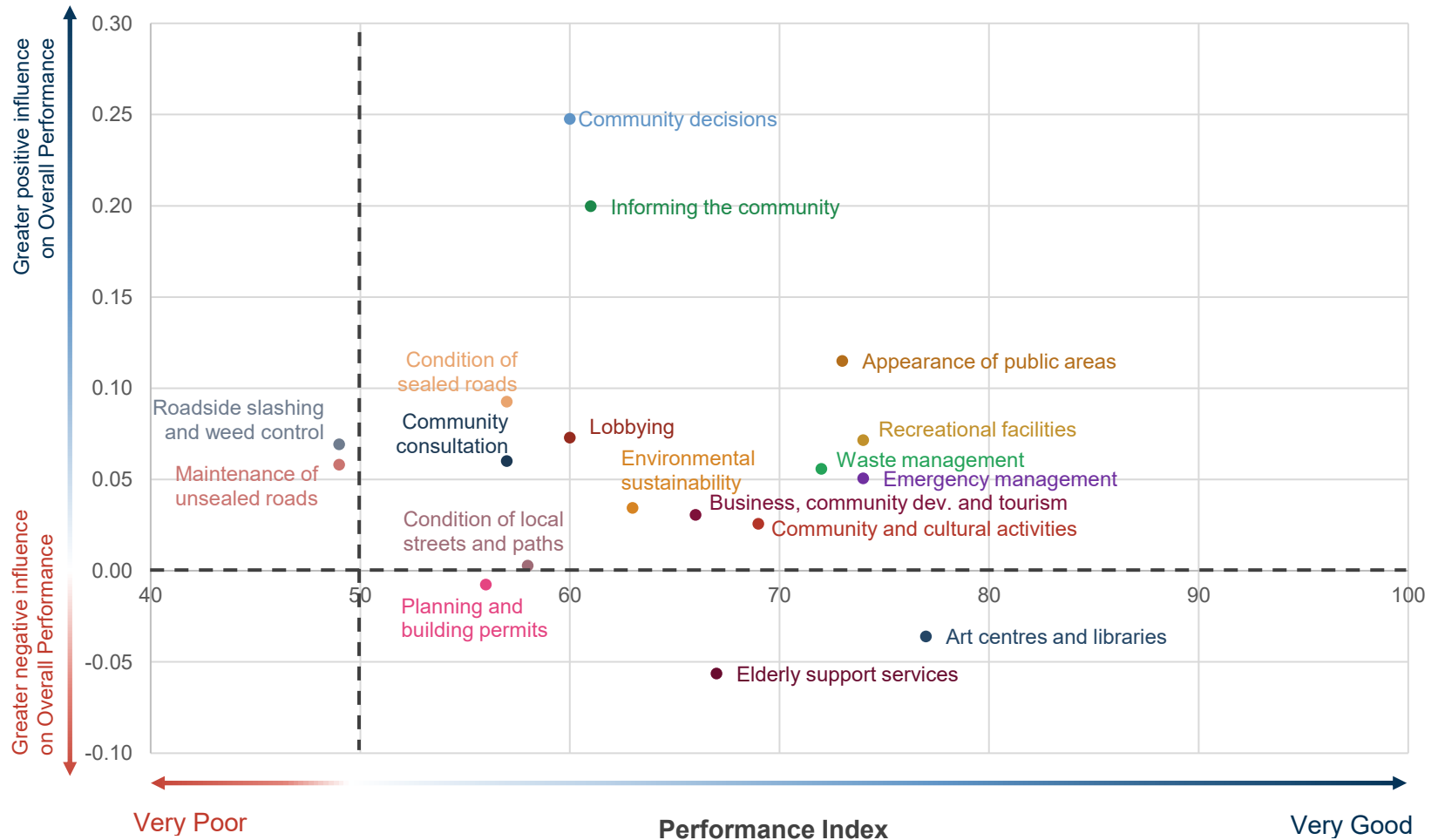
1. **The first chart** shows the results of a regression analysis of *all* individual service areas selected by Council.
2. **The second chart** shows the results of a regression performed on a smaller set of service areas, being those with a moderate-to-strong influence on overall performance. Service 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)

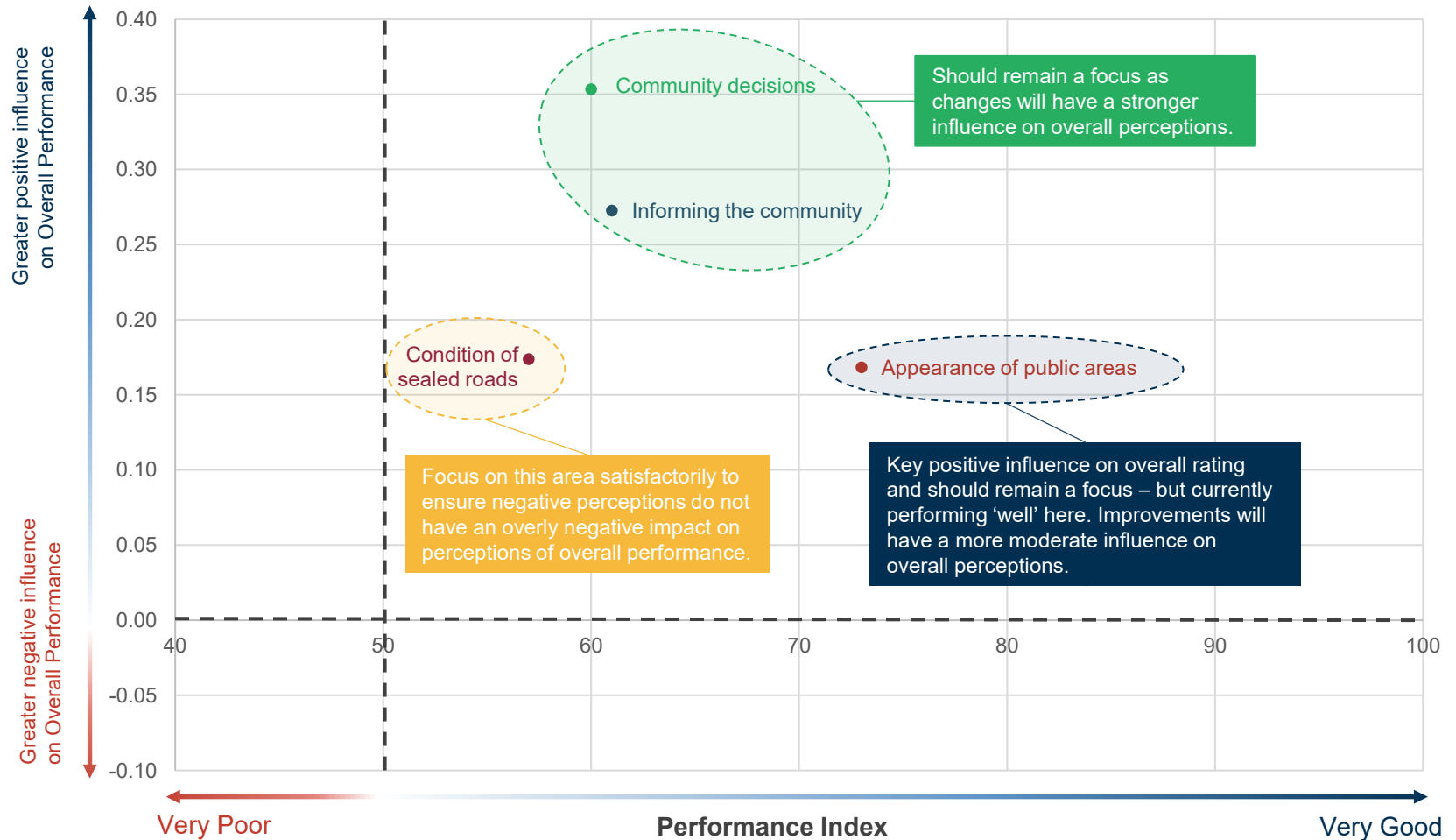


The multiple regression analysis model above (all service areas) has an  $R^2$  value of 0.654 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.638, which means that 64% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at  $p = 0.0001$ ,  $F = 40.02$ . 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 0.623 and adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.619, which means that 62% of the variance in community perceptions of overall performance can be predicted from these variables. The overall model effect was statistically significant at  $p = 0.0001$ ,  $F = 162.86$ .



# Best things about Council and areas for improvement

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



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



Q16. Please tell me what is the ONE BEST thing about Ararat Rural City 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

Q17. What does Ararat Rural City 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 these questions can be found in the accompanying dashboard.



# Customer service



## Contact with council and customer service

### Contact with council

Around three in five Council residents (59%) report contact with Council in the last 12 months, a slight (not significant) three percentage point decrease on 2025.

- Rate of contact among residents aged 35 to 49 years decreased significantly in the last 12 months (64%, down from 78%).
- Residents aged 50 to 64 years have the highest rate of contact with Council (67%), while those aged 65 years and over have the lowest (54%).



**Among those residents who have had contact with Council, 69% provide a positive customer service rating of 'very good' or 'good', including 38% of residents who rate Council's customer service as 'very good'.**

### Customer service

Council's customer service index of 72 is in line with last year's result and statistically similar to the Small Rural group and Overall averages (index scores of 70 and 69 respectively).

- While customer service ratings have not significantly changed in the last five years and have incrementally fluctuated from year to year, this year marks the first time ratings have experienced consecutive incremental (albeit non-significant) declines. Early attention here may be warranted to ensure results do not slip into an ongoing decline.

No significant differences in ratings were found among residents from different demographic or geographic cohorts compared to the Council average.

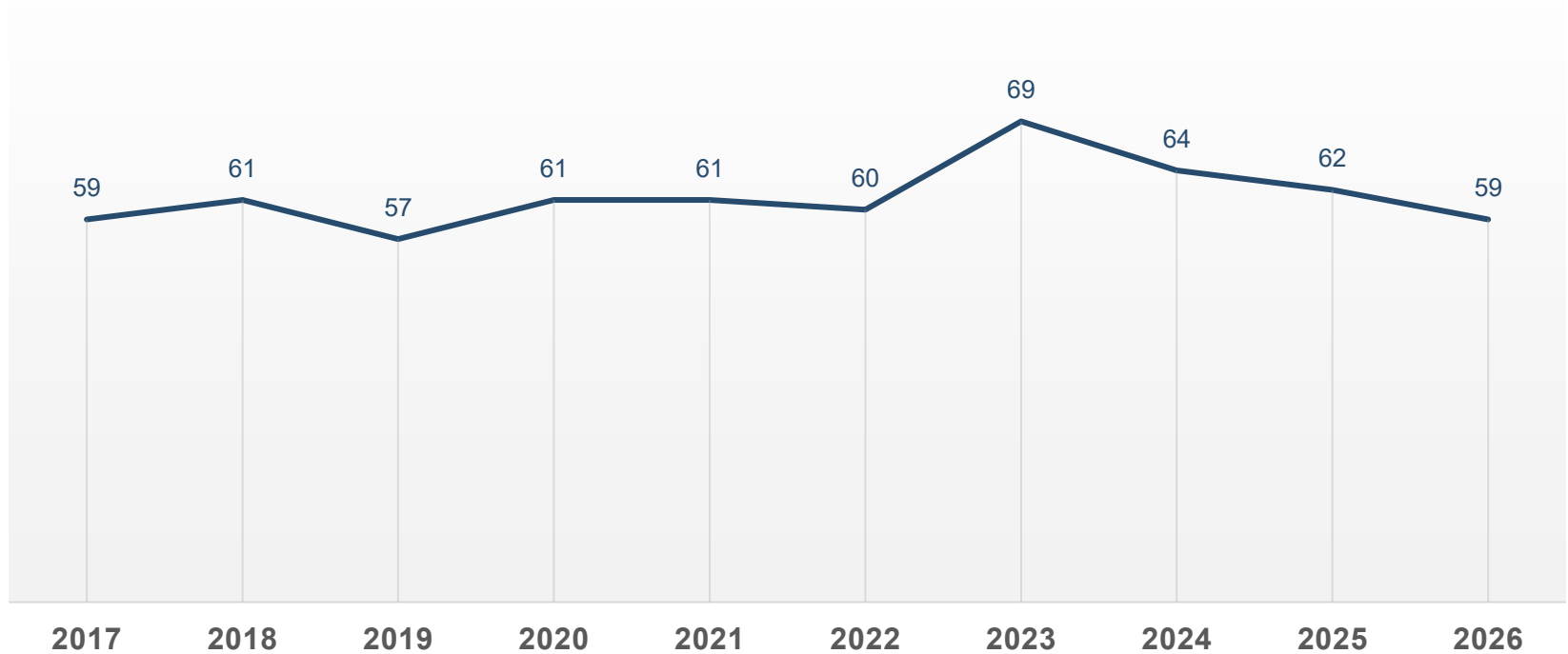
- Ratings are highest among residents aged 50 to 64 years (index score of 80) and lowest among residents aged 35 to 49 years (63).

Despite having had a high rate of contact with Council (64%), residents aged 35 to 49 years provide the lowest rating of customer service (63). Customer service ratings among this group are at their lowest level in six years. With this in mind, this cohort could be prioritised by Ararat Rural City Council for customer service improvement strategies.



# Contact with council

2026 contact with council (%)  
Have had contact

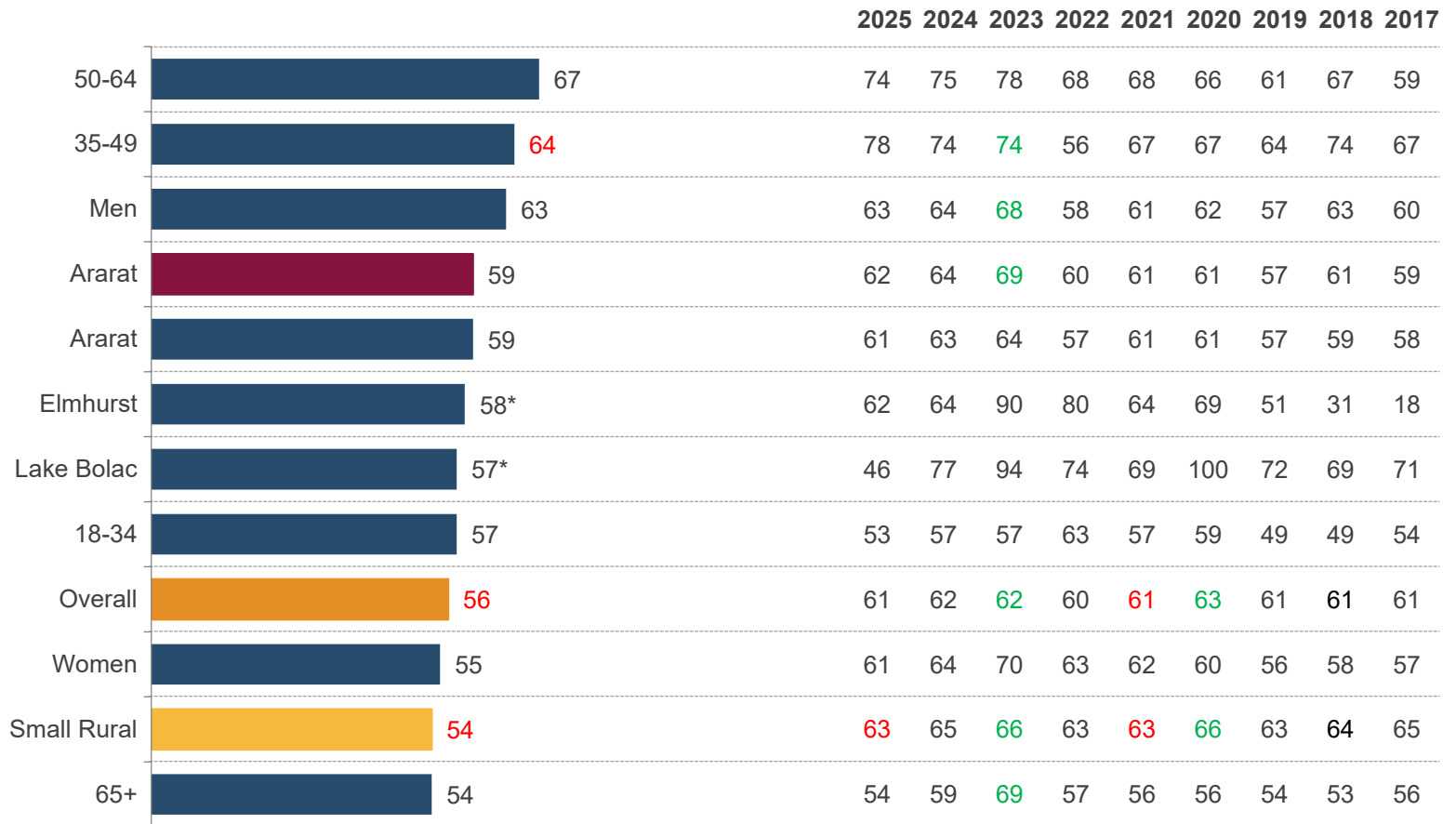


Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Ararat Rural City Council?  
This may have been in person, in writing, by telephone conversation, by text message, by email or via their website or social media such as Facebook or X (formerly known as Twitter)?  
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 14 Councils asked group: 7



# Contact with council

2026 contact with council (%)



Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Ararat Rural City Council?  
 This may have been in person, in writing, by telephone conversation, by text message, by email or via their website or social media such as Facebook or X (formerly known as Twitter)?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 14 Councils asked group: 7  
 Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Customer service rating

## 2026 customer service rating (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	100*	82	83	72	75	78	32	56	38	61
50-64	80	74	78	73	69	73	67	69	63	67
Elmhurst	76*	57	76	73	73	88	55	77	12	100
18-34	75	74	75	70	76	69	78	71	63	68
Men	73	71	72	72	73	74	71	69	51	61
Ararat	72	73	75	72	75	77	70	69	56	62
65+	72	74	77	73	76	85	73	74	56	64
Ararat	71	74	73	71	75	76	71	70	59	63
Women	71	77	77	72	77	80	68	70	61	64
Small Rural	70	65	66	65	67	69	70	70	69	69
Overall	69	66	67	67	68	70	70	71	70	69
35-49	63	72	69	70	77	77	61	63	44	53

Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Ararat Rural City 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

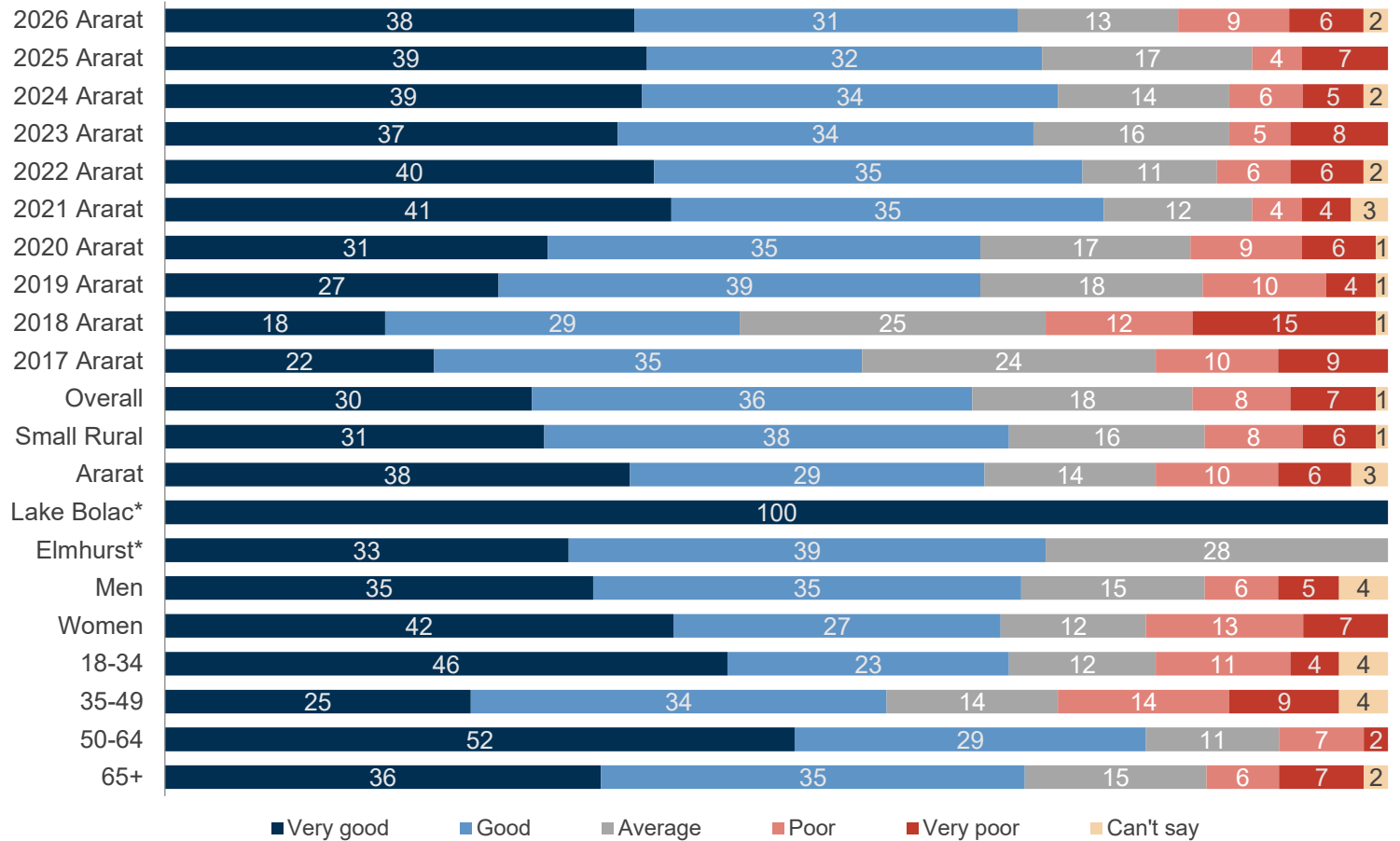
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Customer service rating

2026 customer service rating (%)



Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Ararat Rural City 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Communication

## Communication

A council newsletter via email (21%, down from 27%) or mail (21%, up from 19%) are the most preferred forms of communication from Council about news and information and upcoming events.

The next most preferred channels are social media (18%, up from 16%) and advertising in local newspapers (14%, down from 17%). Appetite for social media communications has remained steady for several years now after experiencing an uptick in 2024. In contrast, desire for advertising in a local newspaper has declined for two consecutive years and is now surpassed by social media preference.

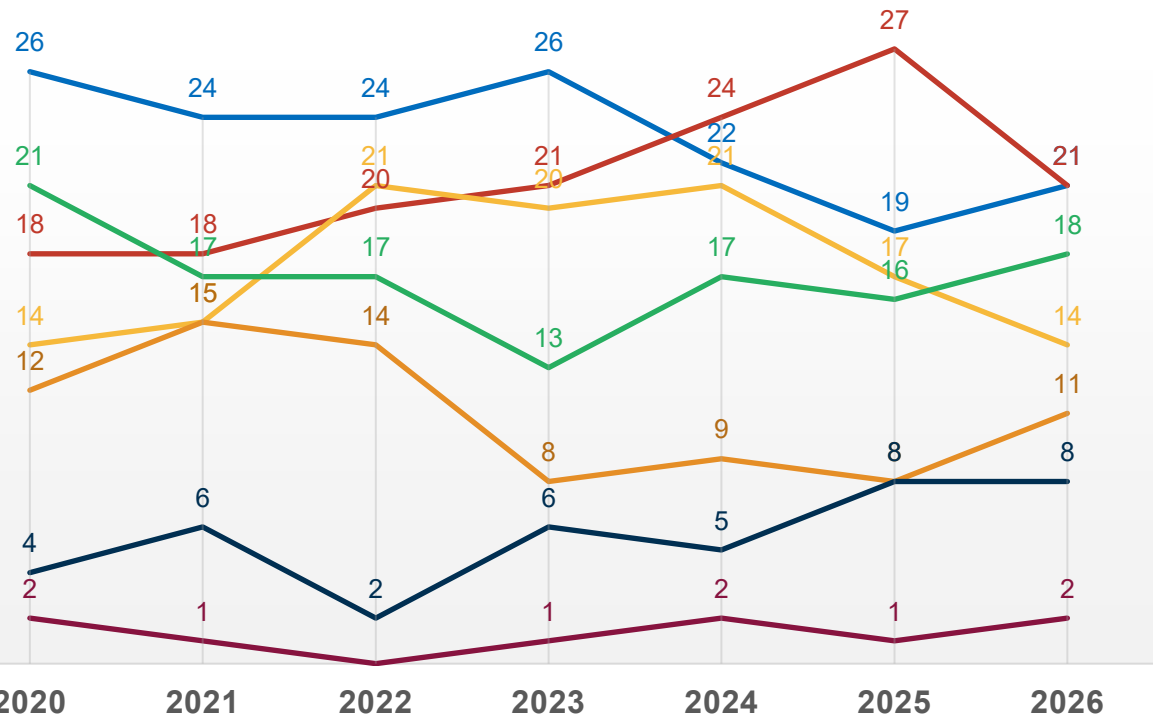
- Social media is the most preferred form of communication among residents under 50 years of age (31%, up from 23% in 2025). This is followed by council newsletters via email (19%, down from 27%) and mailed newsletters (18%, down from 19%).
- Among residents aged 50 years and older, council newsletters via mail (23%, up from 19%) have increased in popularity in the last 12 months, and now overtake preference for emailed newsletters (22%, down from 26%) and advertising in local newspapers (19%, down from 22%).





# Best form of communication

2026 best form of communication (%)

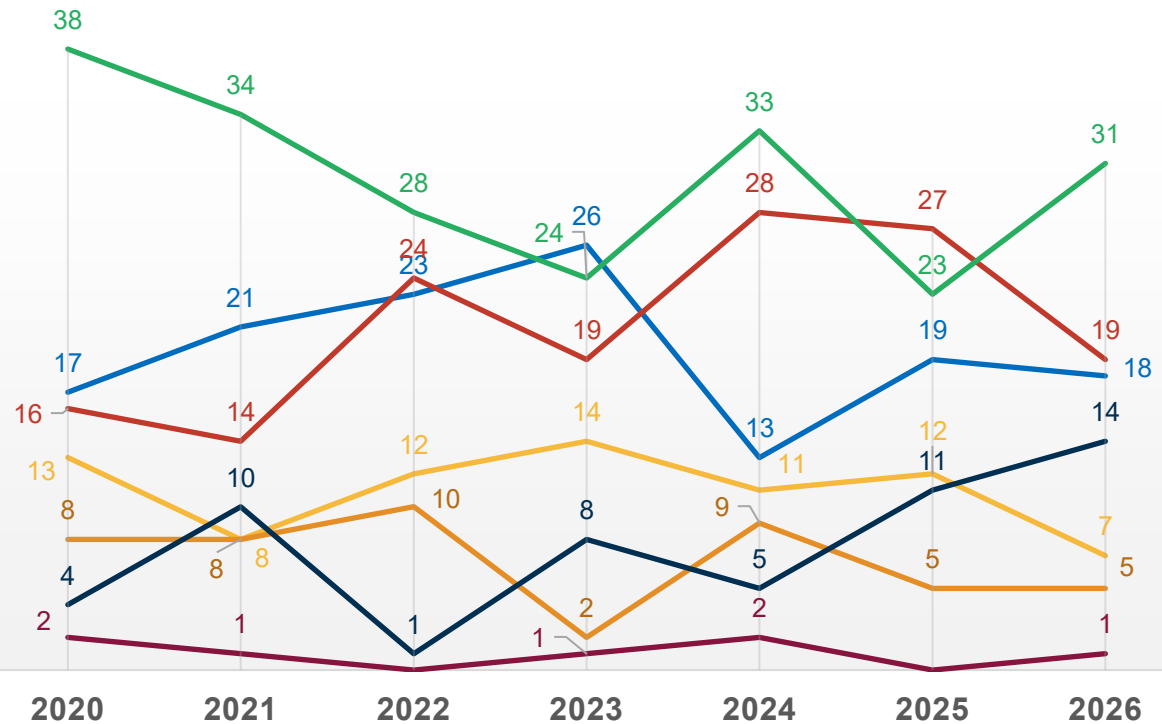


Q13. If Ararat Rural City Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 6



# Best form of communication: under 50s

2026 under 50s best form of communication (%)

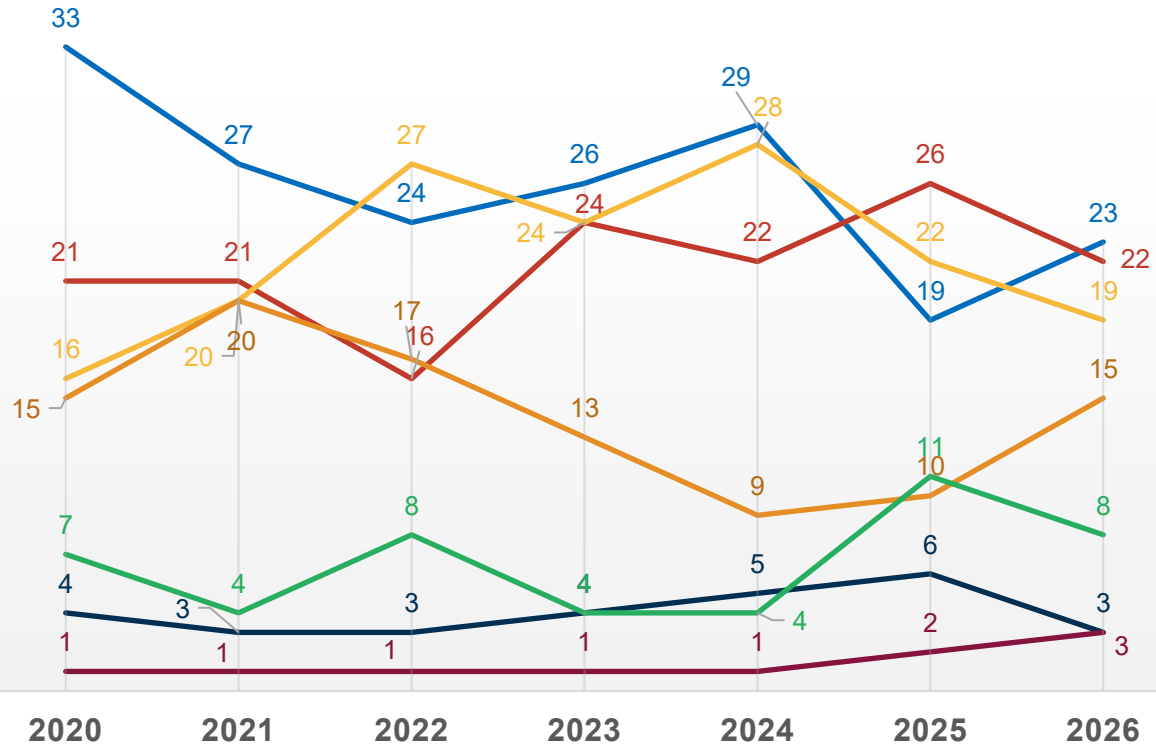


Q13. If Ararat Rural City Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate with you?  
 Base: All respondents aged under 50. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 6



# Best form of communication: 50+ years

2026 50+ years best form of communication (%)



Q13. If Ararat Rural City 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



# Council direction



## Council direction

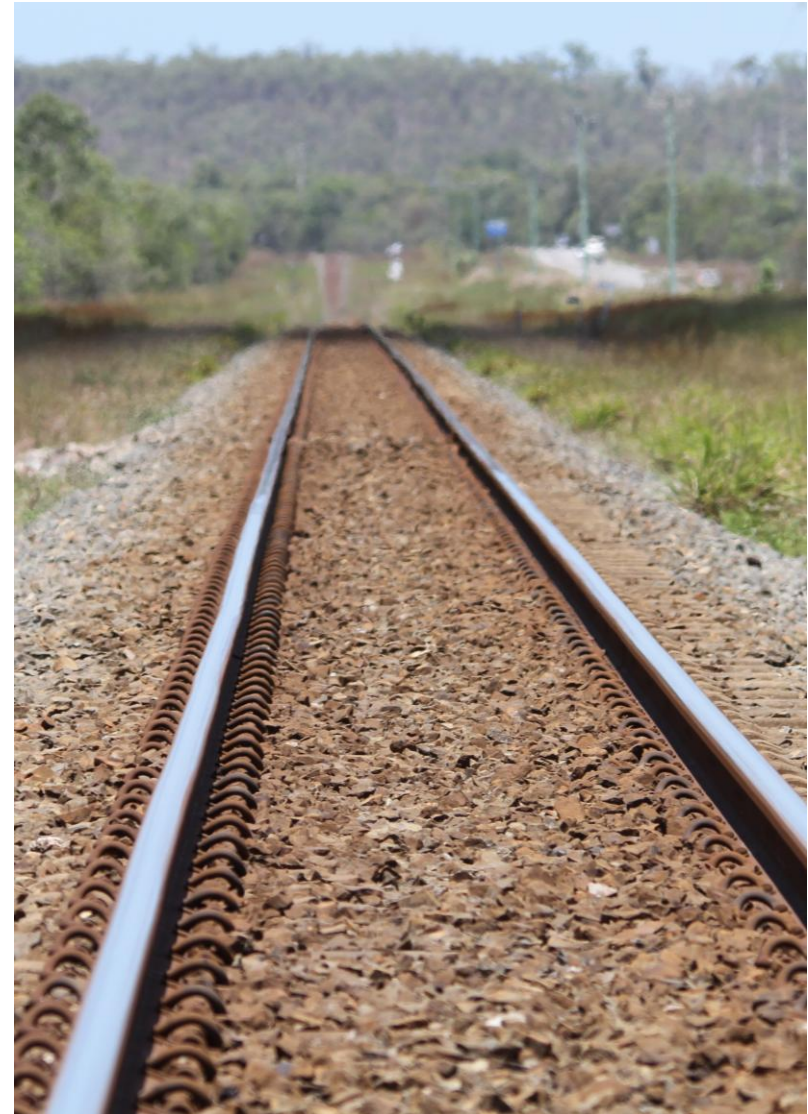
Ararat Rural City Council's overall direction index score of 52 is not statistically significantly different to last year's result (index score of 55). However, the three-point decline represents the continuation of a downward trend that emerged in 2023. It also means that Council has not been able to recover any ground lost after two years of successive significant declines in 2023 and 2024.

Despite this, Council is rated in line with the Small Rural average (52) and significantly higher than the Overall council average (48) for overall direction.

Six in 10 residents (63%) believe the direction of Council's overall performance has stayed the same over the last 12 months. While 19% of residents believe that overall direction has improved (down from 22% in 2025), 14% believe it has deteriorated (up from 13%).

- As was the case last year, residents aged 18 to 34 years (index score of 46) are the least satisfied with Council's overall direction and rate Council significantly lower than average on this metric.

Perceptions of the extent to which there is room for improvement in Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance have softened over the years and the majority (68%) say Council is generally heading in the right direction.





# Overall council direction last 12 months

2026 overall council direction (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	72*	48	71	70	69	81	82	47	26	57
Elmhurst	67*▲	51	52	55	71	91	60	41	32	50
65+	57	59	60	66	73	75	66	60	32	45
Women	54	54	54	58	70	65	64	55	34	49
50-64	53	54	50	58	64	61	65	55	29	45
Ararat	52	55	55	60	69	65	63	55	29	47
Ararat	52	54	54	59	68	63	63	57	30	45
Small Rural	52	46	44	47	51	53	50	53	50	52
Men	51	56	56	61	68	65	63	55	24	44
35-49	49	57	58	50	64	60	60	38	19	47
Overall	48▼	46	45	46	50	53	51	53	52	53
18-34	46▼	47	49	58	70	58	61	65	36	50

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

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

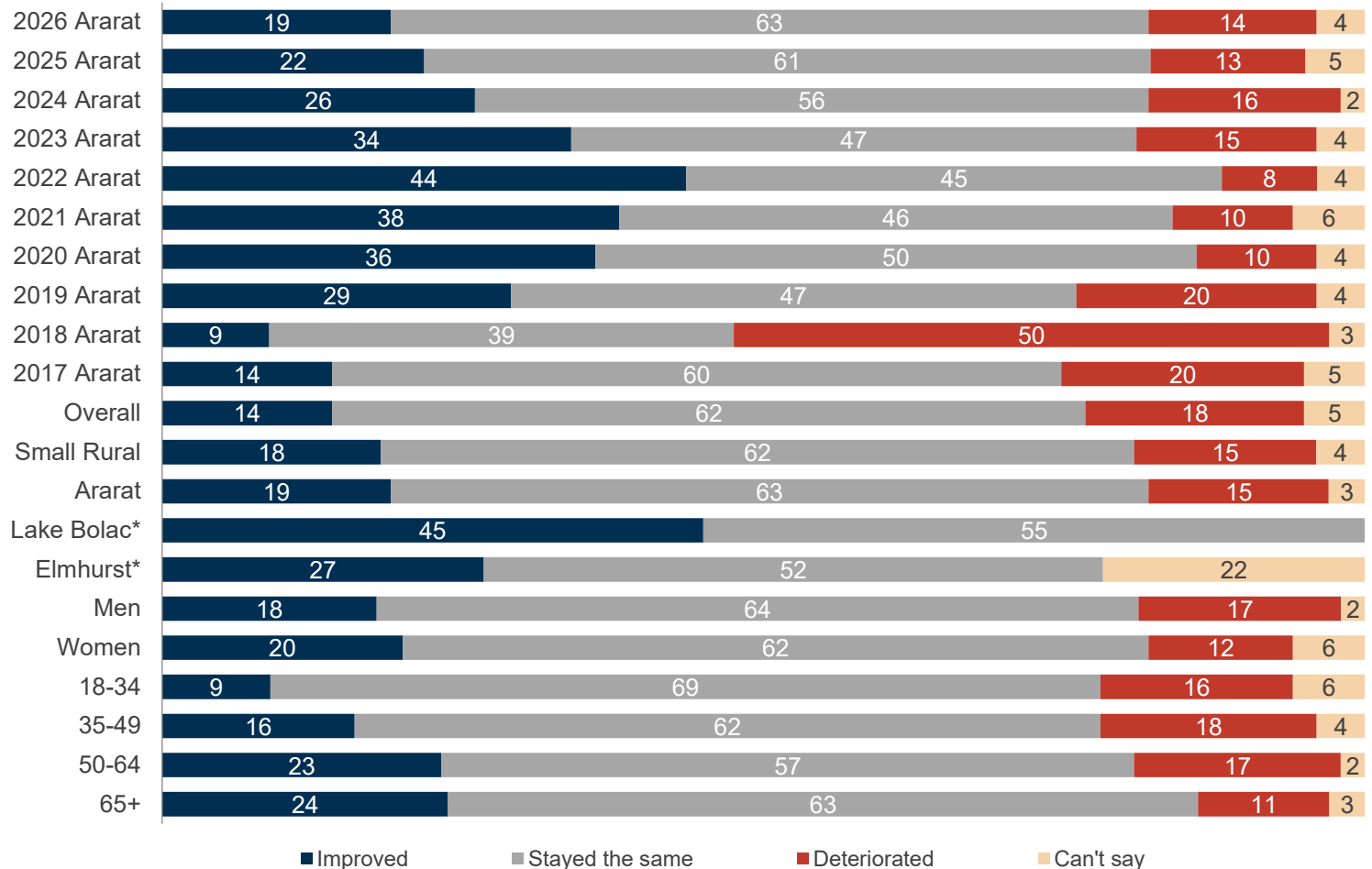
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Overall council direction last 12 months

2026 overall council direction (%)



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

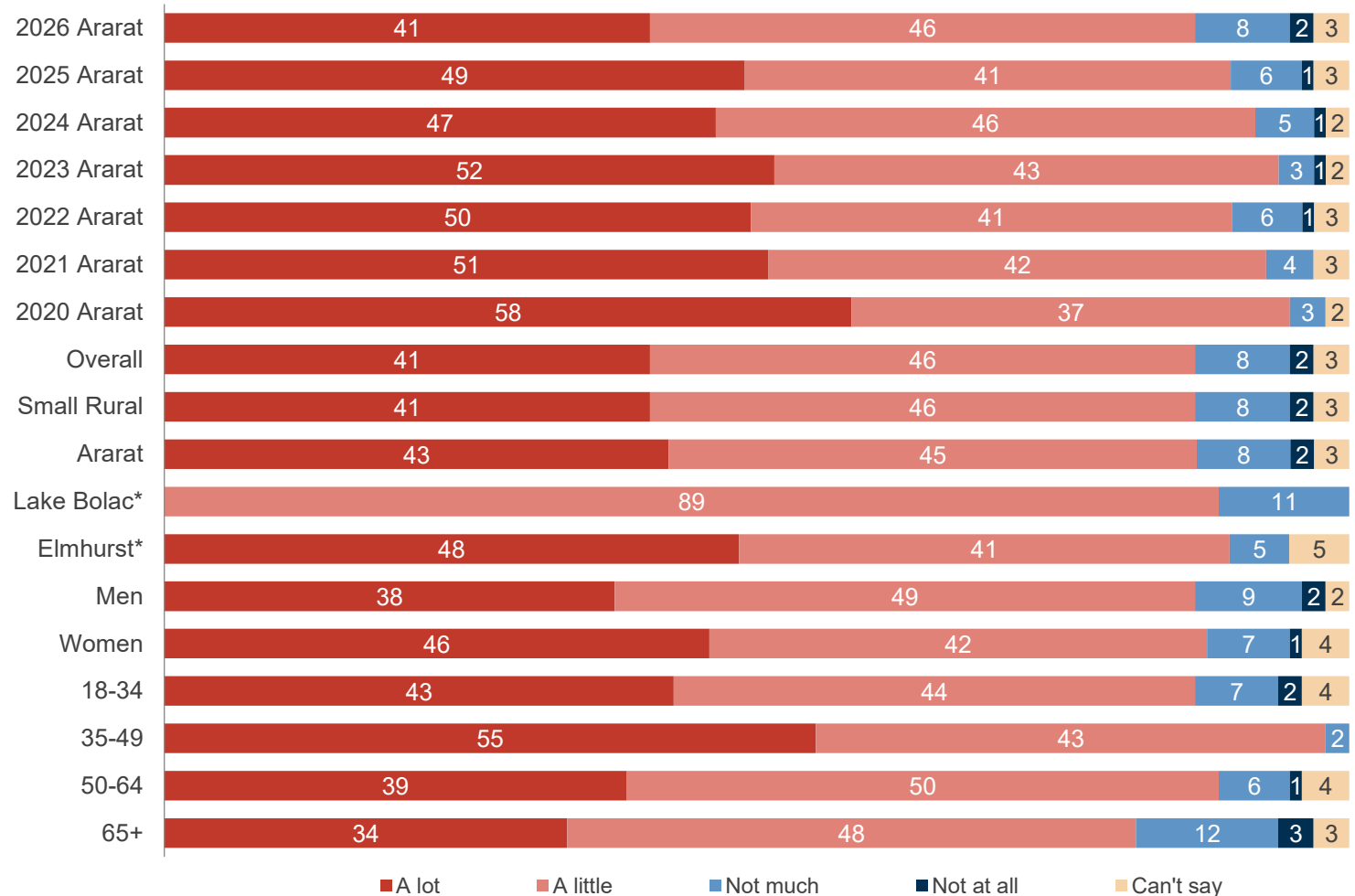
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 22 Councils asked group: 9

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Room for improvement in services

2026 room for improvement in services (%)



Q7. Thinking about the next 12 months, how much room for improvement do you think there is in Ararat Rural City Council's overall performance?

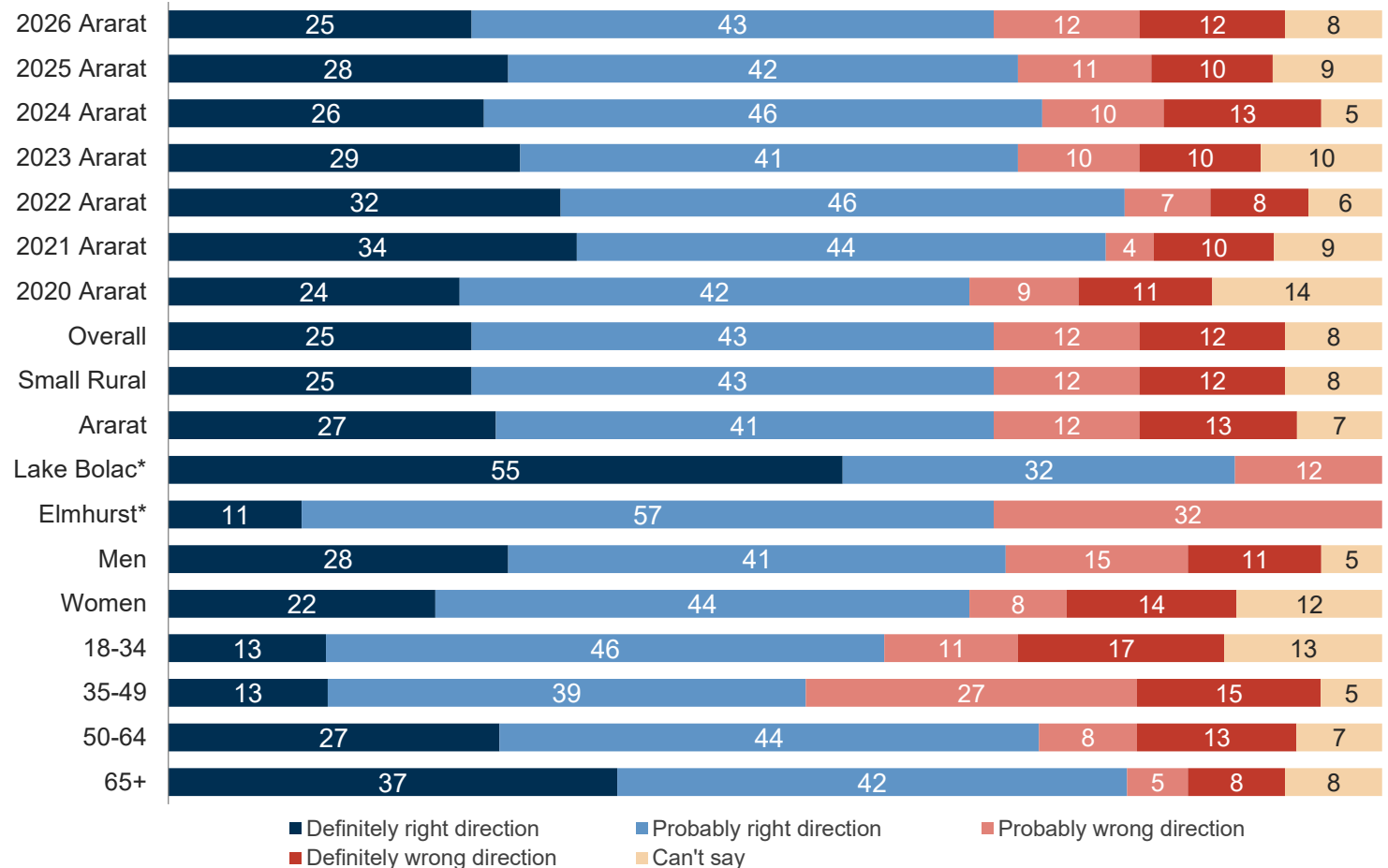
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 1 Councils asked group: 1

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Right / wrong direction

2026 right / wrong direction (%)



Q8. Would you say your local Council is generally heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 1 Councils asked group: 1

A large, stylized letter 'W' graphic that serves as a background element. It is filled with a dark blue color and overlaid with a glowing, light blue network pattern of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a data or communication network. The 'W' is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom.

# Individual service areas



# Community consultation and engagement importance



2026 consultation and engagement importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Elmhurst	83*	81	79	87	87	80	77	93	62	81
50-64	80	79	79	81	81	78	80	82	77	78
Women	80▲	79	78	82	78	79	77	79	77	78
35-49	78	81	77	83	80	74	74	80	79	78
Ararat	77	77	78	80	78	75	74	78	74	76
Small Rural	77	77	77	77	78	77	76	76	74	75
Ararat	76	77	77	79	76	75	74	78	74	74
Overall	76	76	76	76	76	75	74	74	74	74
18-34	75	74	79	79	70	73	67	74	66	67
65+	74	76	75	77	75	74	75	77	72	73
Men	73	76	76	77	75	71	71	78	71	71
Lake Bolac	66*	79	67	76	71	70	84	66	78	66

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.

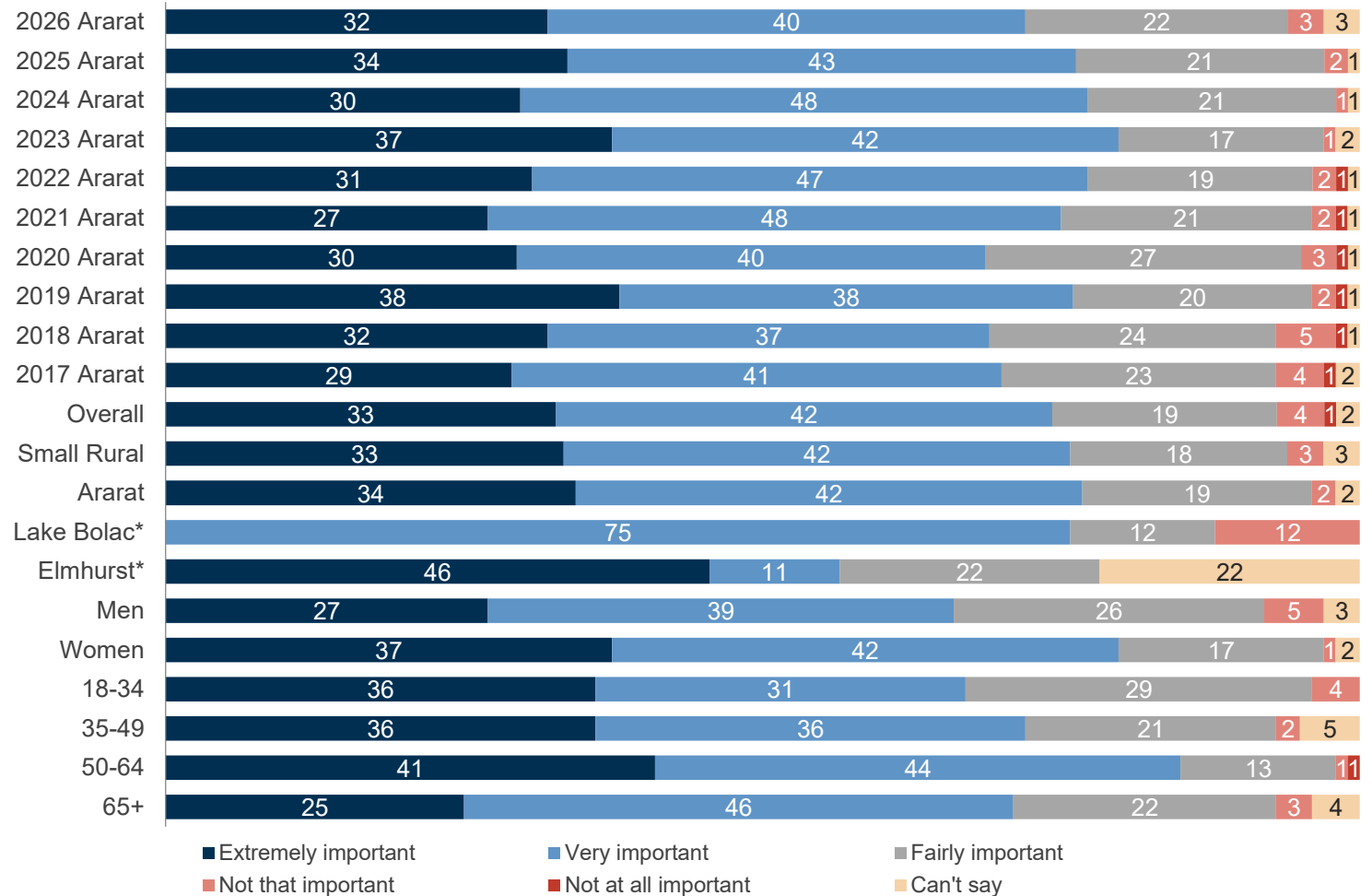
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Community consultation and engagement performance



2026 consultation and engagement performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	81*▲	60	58	75	67	77	16	47	22	51
Elmhurst	66*	56	52	61	48	81	55	48	53	51
65+	62	62	62	66	66	67	56	55	46	49
50-64	59	57	54	59	57	56	56	48	42	49
Men	58	59	59	63	63	62	57	49	39	46
Ararat	57	59	59	60	62	61	56	49	41	49
Women	57	60	58	57	61	60	56	50	43	52
Small Rural	57	51	51	53	54	56	54	56	54	55
Ararat	57	59	58	58	61	60	58	51	45	49
18-34	56	57	60	59	67	52	58	49	42	52
Overall	53▼	50	51	52	54	56	55	56	55	55
35-49	50	57	54	50	54	65	56	44	32	45

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.

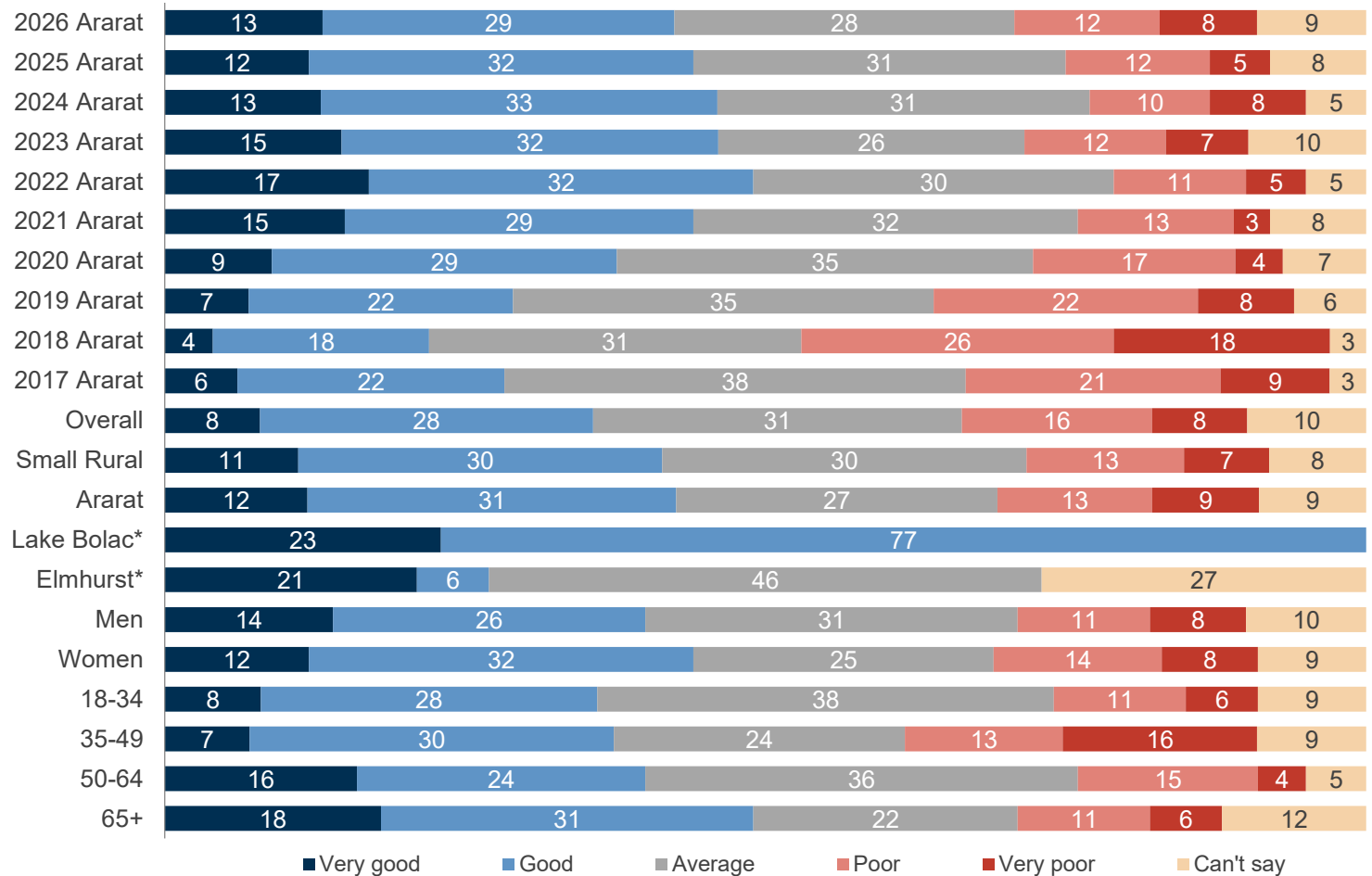
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Lobbying on behalf of the community importance



2026 lobbying importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Elmhurst	86*▲	82	77	71	76	68	77	76	56	70
35-49	78▲	79	76	78	78	69	72	72	72	73
50-64	74	73	72	78	78	74	77	73	71	71
Women	74	76	76	78	74	75	74	72	73	74
Small Rural	73	73	72	73	74	71	73	70	70	70
18-34	73	71	82	75	71	68	70	70	71	69
Ararat	73	73	74	75	75	71	72	70	71	72
Ararat	73	73	74	75	74	71	71	69	70	70
Men	72	72	72	72	74	66	69	67	68	67
Overall	70▼	70	68	68	71	69	68	67	68	69
65+	69	72	69	73	71	71	69	65	68	69
Lake Bolac	63*	66	64	83	60	65	34	60	69	63

Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 7 Councils asked group: 2

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

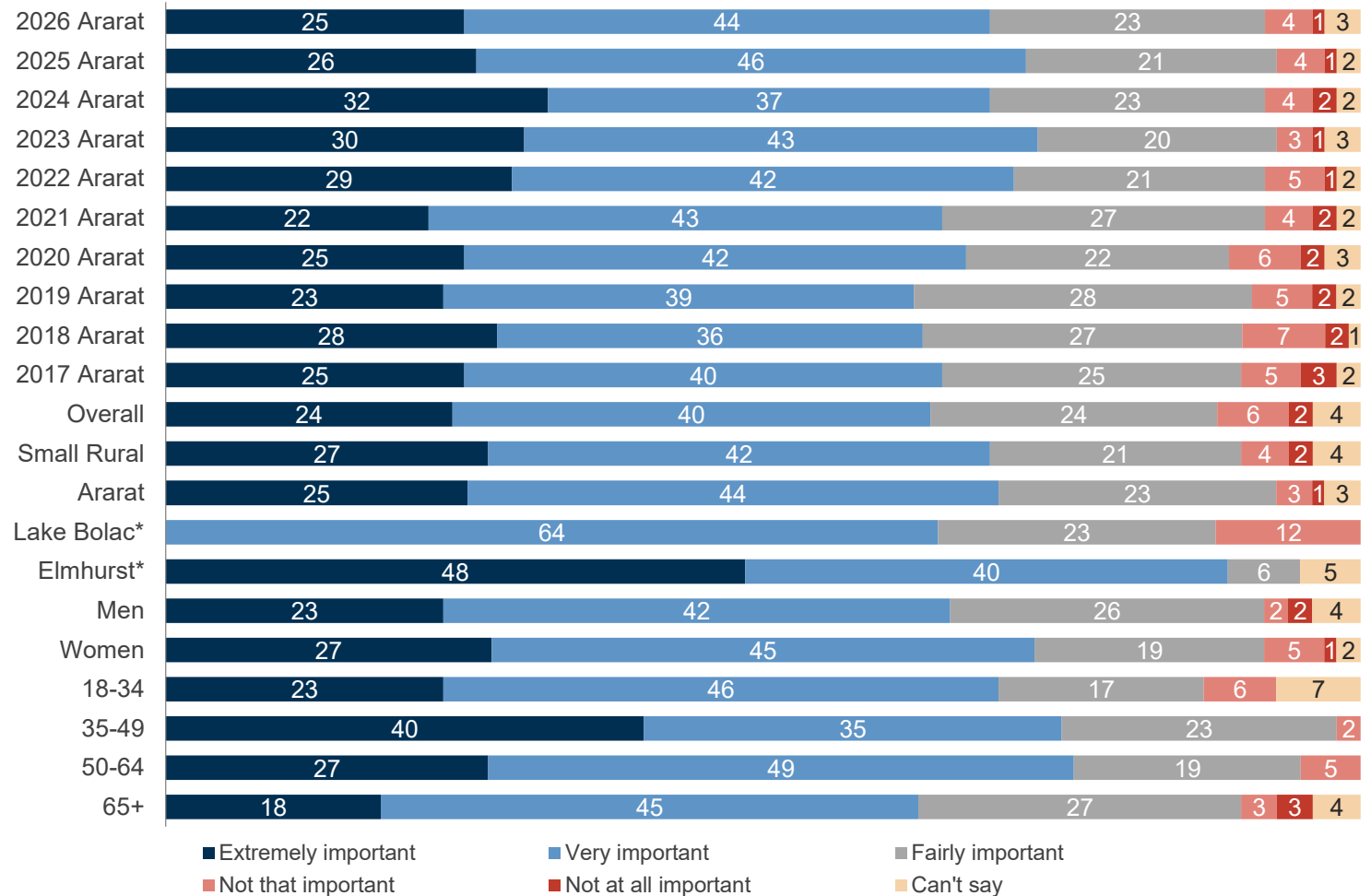
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Lobbying on behalf of the community importance



2026 lobbying importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Lobbying on behalf of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 7 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Lobbying on behalf of the community performance



2026 lobbying performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	64	67	60	70	64	n/a	42	24	46
65+	68▲	64	67	66	70	57	51	52	54
50-64	60	60	61	60	62	54	53	45	53
Men	61	62	63	65	65	56	50	42	52
Ararat	60	60	61	64	63	56	50	44	53
Ararat	58	60	61	64	63	56	52	48	54
Women	60	58	58	63	61	56	51	47	53
Elmhurst	54	44	56	56	75	58	48	40	51
Small Rural	51▼	50	52	54	55	52	55	53	55
Overall	49▼	50	51	53	55	53	54	54	54
35-49	54	52	45	58	61	54	44	34	49
18-34	54	62	62	68	54	56	53	46	54

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.

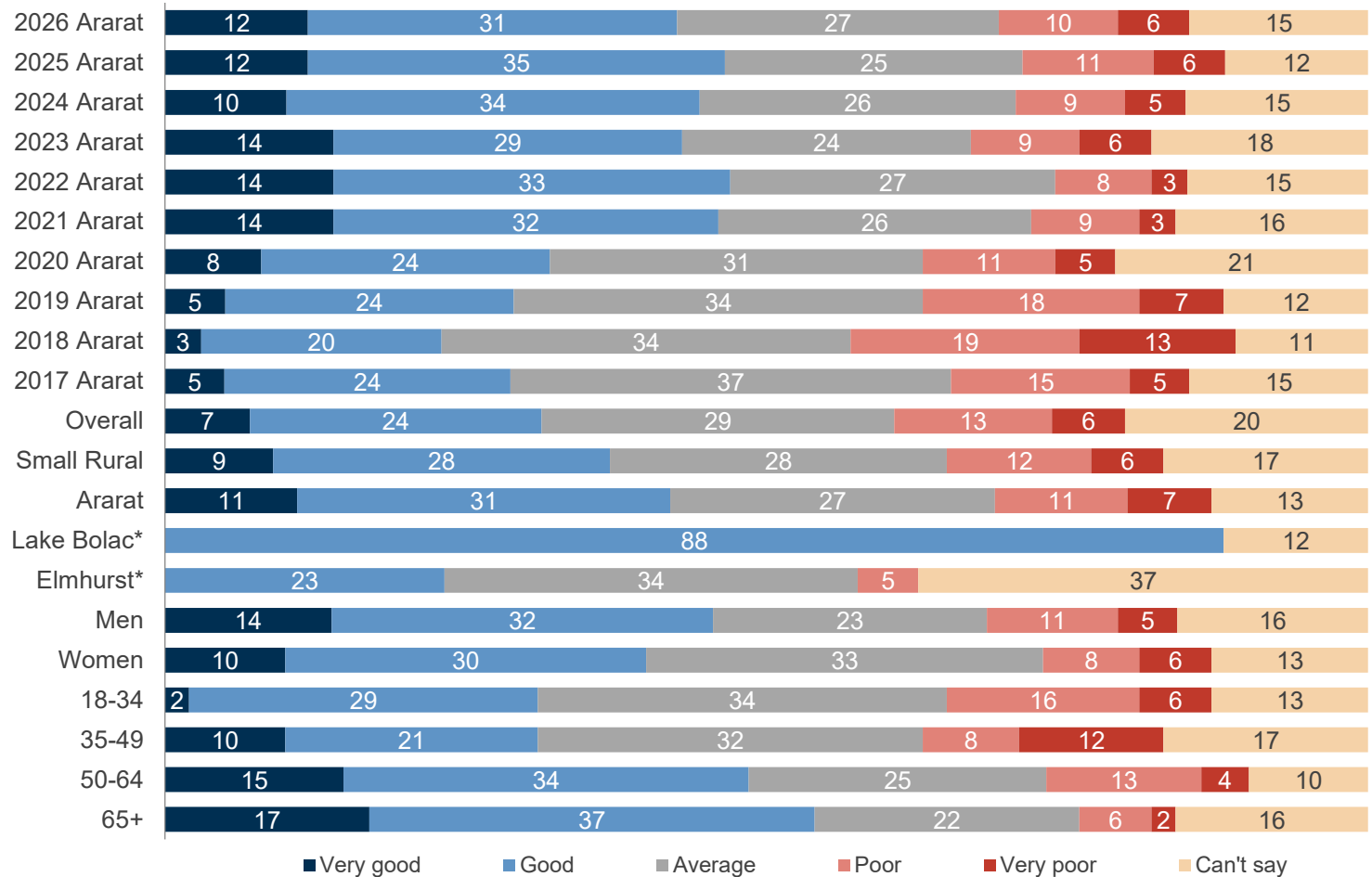
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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?

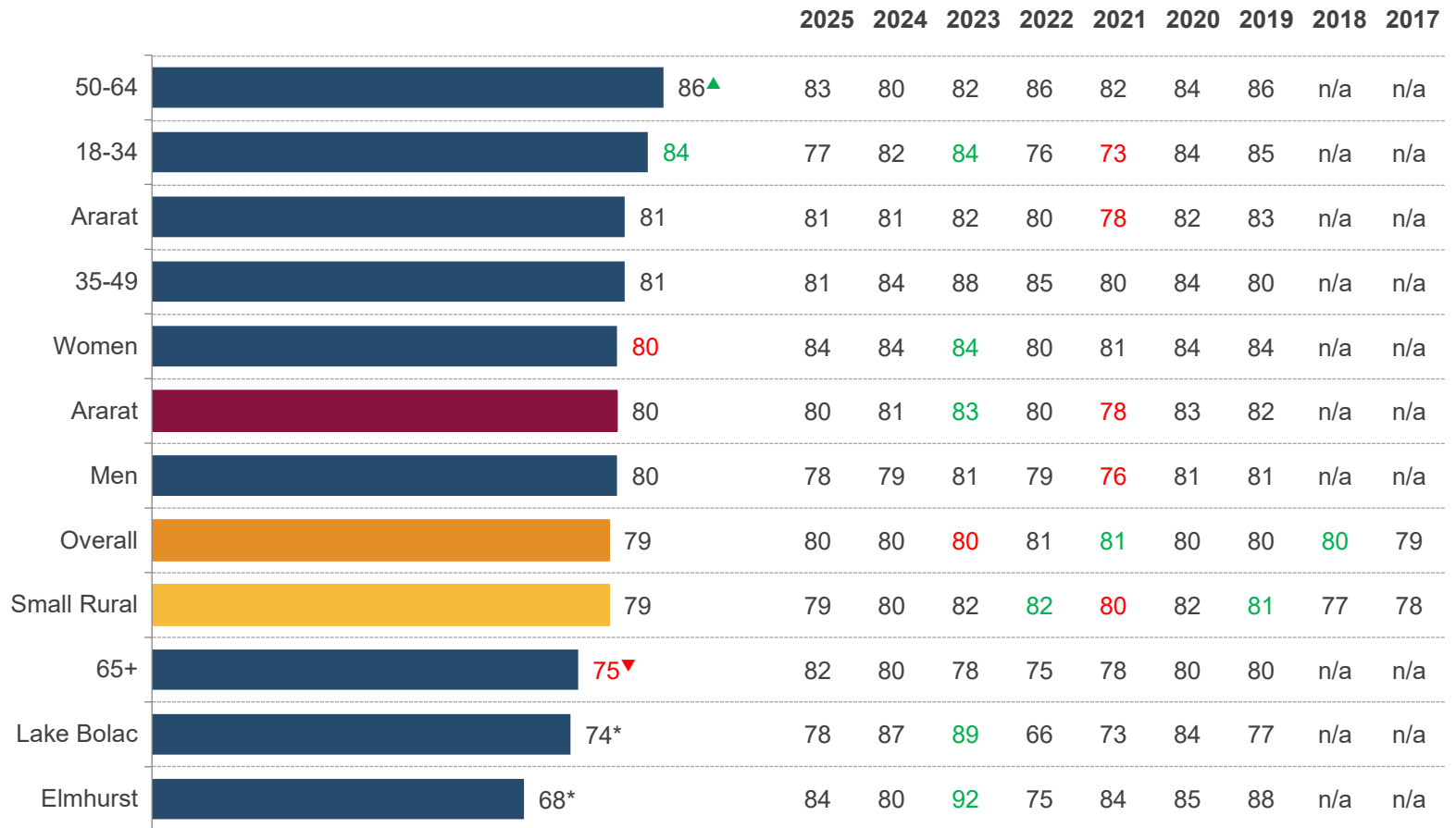
Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 17 Councils asked group: 9

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Decisions made in the interest of the community importance



2026 community decisions made importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

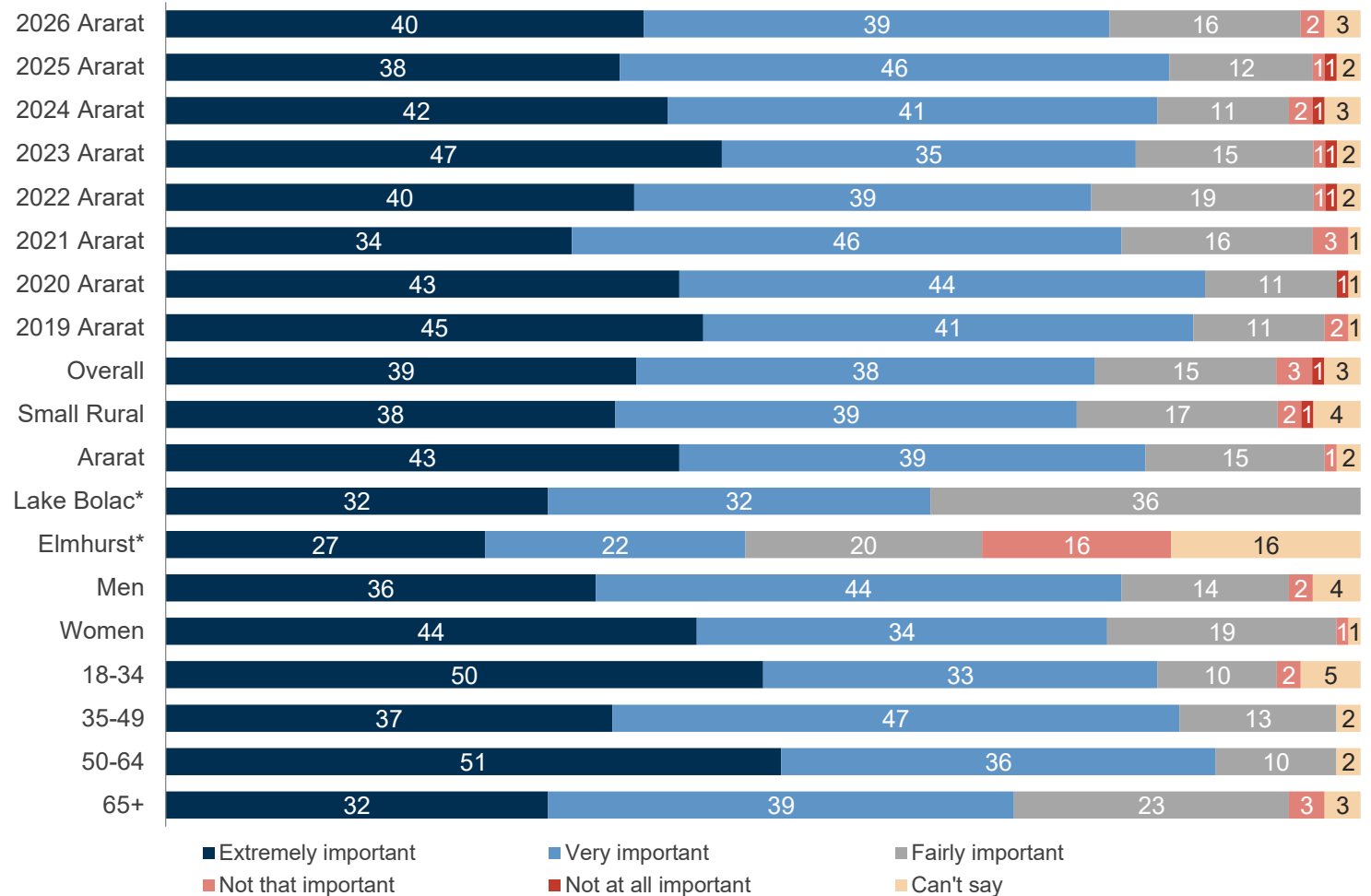
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Decisions made in the interest of the community importance



2026 community decisions made importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Decisions made in the interest of the community' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Decisions made in the interest of the community performance



2026 community decisions made performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	78*▲	69	70	71	68	79	32	21	17	48
65+	67▲	65	66	68	69	71	59	50	38	52
50-64	63	58	58	60	59	60	58	47	39	48
Men	60	60	61	61	66	64	56	45	28	48
Ararat	60	59	61	60	65	63	57	46	33	50
Women	59	58	61	60	65	63	58	48	39	51
Ararat	59	59	61	60	67	62	57	48	36	50
Elmhurst	57*	52	49	44	42	75	52	59	36	50
Small Rural	56▼	50	50	52	54	56	53	55	52	55
18-34	53▼	54	62	58	72	56	57	47	33	50
Overall	52▼	49	50	51	54	56	53	55	54	54
35-49	50▼	55	54	48	57	62	52	41	22	48

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

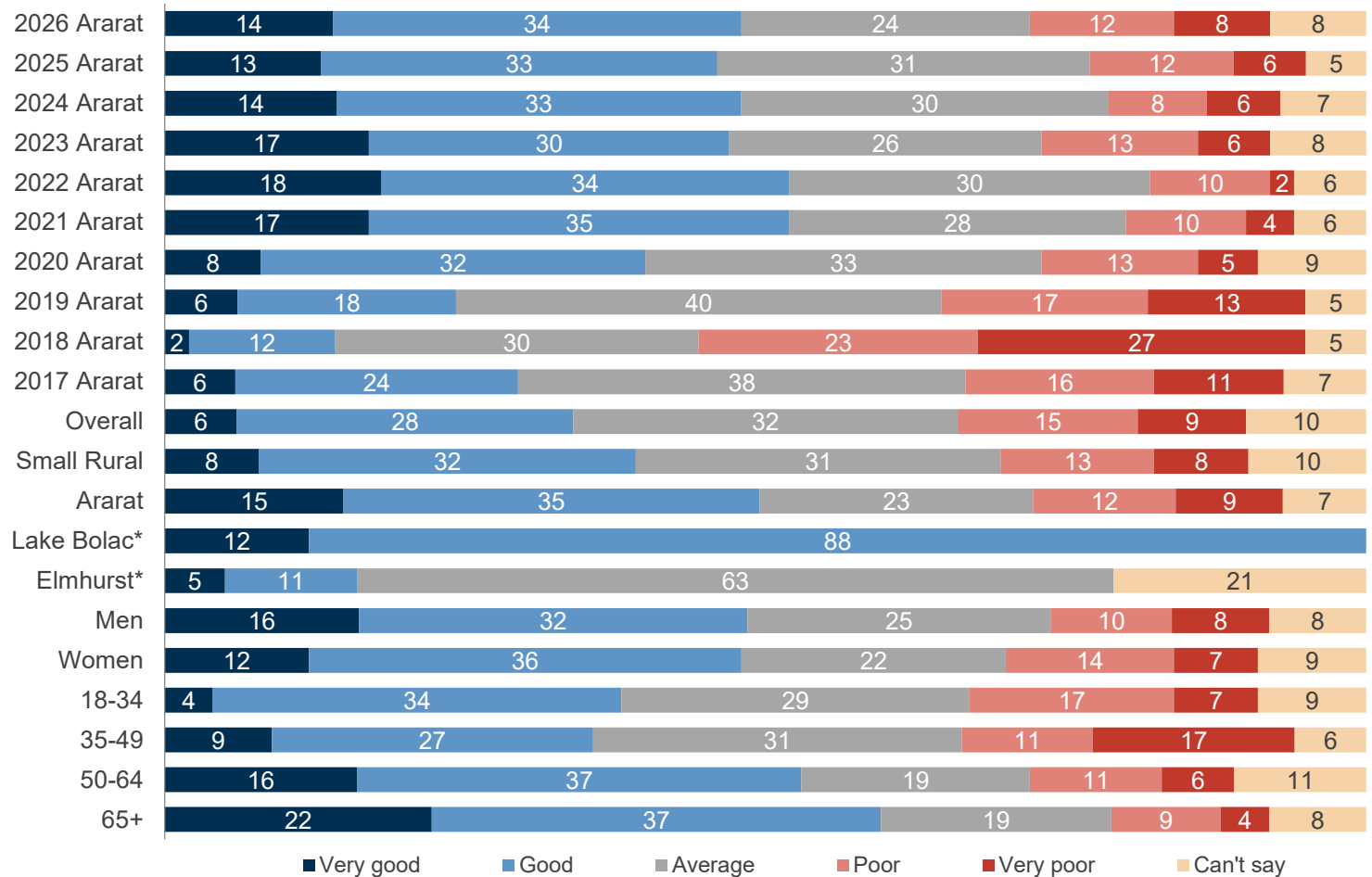
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of sealed local roads in your area importance



2026 sealed local roads importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Elmhurst	84*	88	83	87	74	80	84	81	n/a	n/a
35-49	84	86	82	88	86	84	82	85	n/a	n/a
18-34	83	84	82	85	80	77	81	76	n/a	n/a
50-64	83	84	85	82	84	78	87	86	n/a	n/a
Women	83	86	83	85	83	80	83	84	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	82	84	85	84	82	81	83	82	84	81
Overall	82	83	83	82	81	79	79	79	80	78
Ararat	82	82	82	83	83	80	80	81	n/a	n/a
Ararat	81	84	82	84	82	80	81	82	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	80*	90	77	88	78	80	75	94	n/a	n/a
Men	80	81	82	83	82	81	80	81	n/a	n/a
65+	78	82	82	81	81	82	79	82	n/a	n/a

Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 2

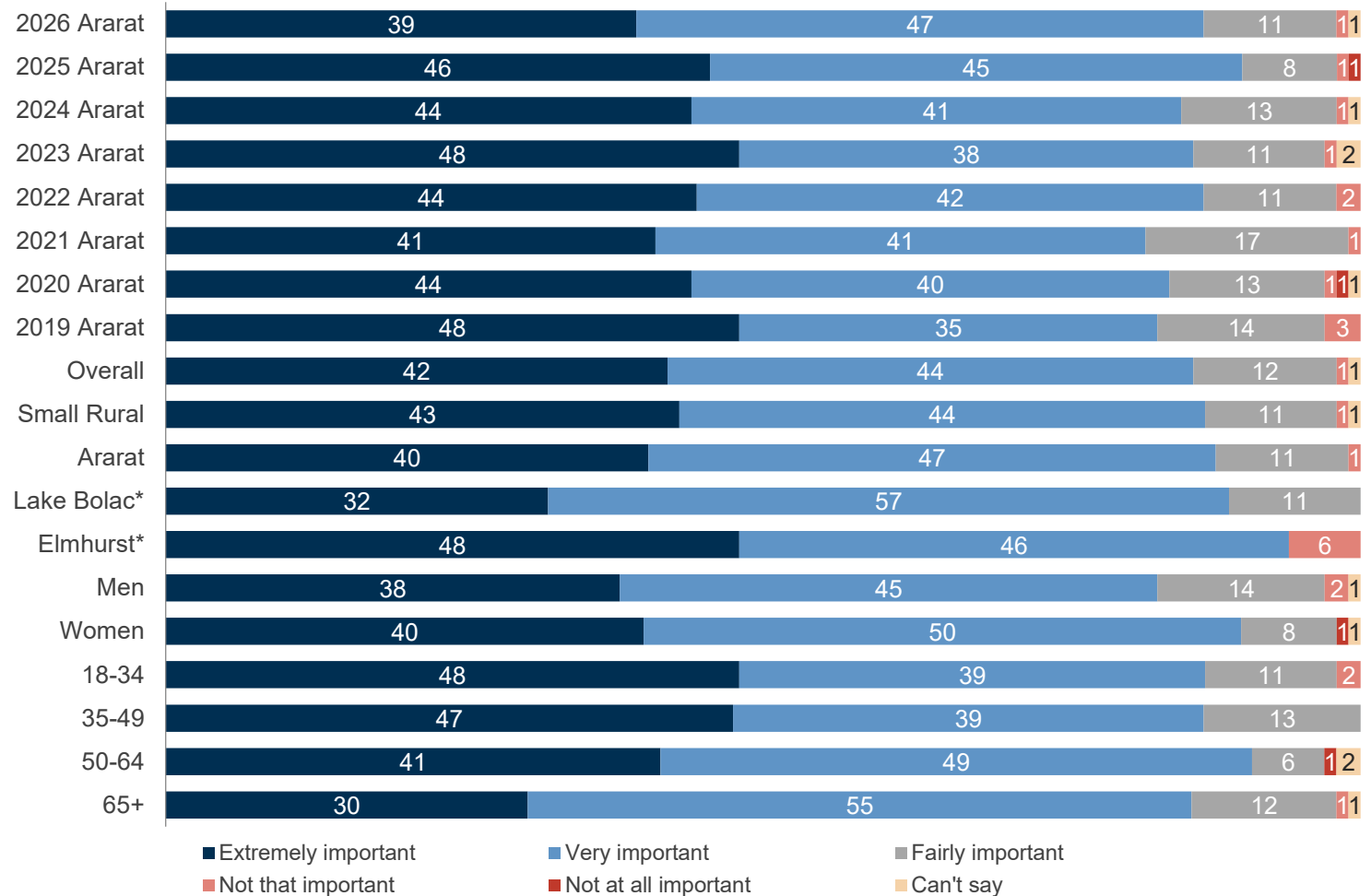
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of sealed local roads in your area importance



2026 sealed local roads importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# 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	
65+	61	62	58	54	63	63	61	55	49	55
50-64	59	64	53	52	60	60	54	51	44	47
Men	58	55	53	53	57	59	55	50	40	51
Ararat	58	57	55	53	62	60	59	53	48	56
Ararat	57	56	54	51	58	59	56	50	43	51
Lake Bolac	56*	48	55	39	54	59	32	29	20	27
Women	56	56	56	48	59	60	57	51	46	51
35-49	54	49	52	45	47	60	52	45	34	47
18-34	53	46	51	49	59	52	53	48	44	53
Small Rural	48▼	44	41	44	50	53	51	53	49	50
Overall	46▼	45	45	48	53	57	54	56	53	53
Elmhurst	44*	52	52	41	39	67	54	53	50	55

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

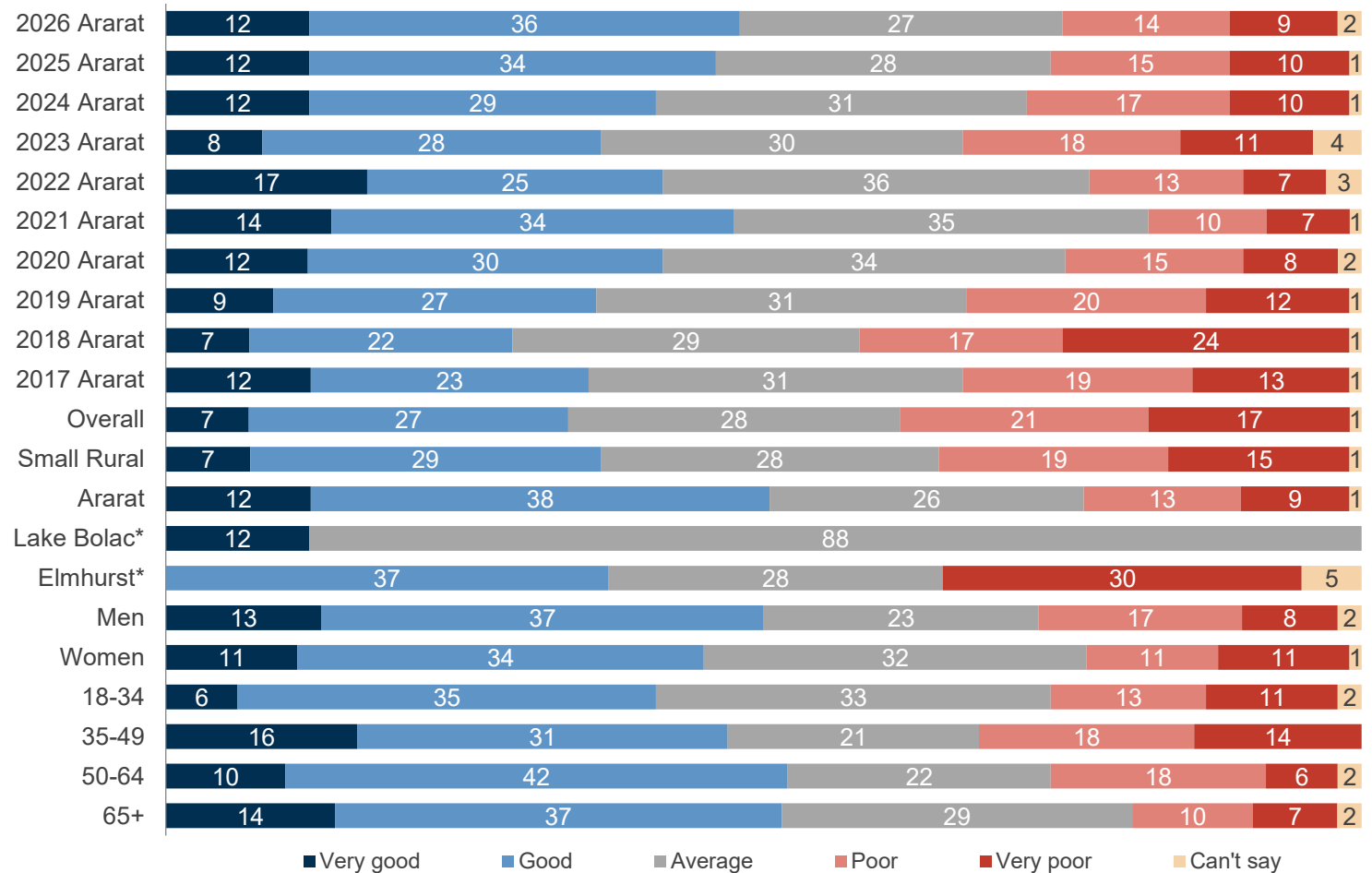
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of sealed local roads in your area performance



2026 sealed local roads performance (%)



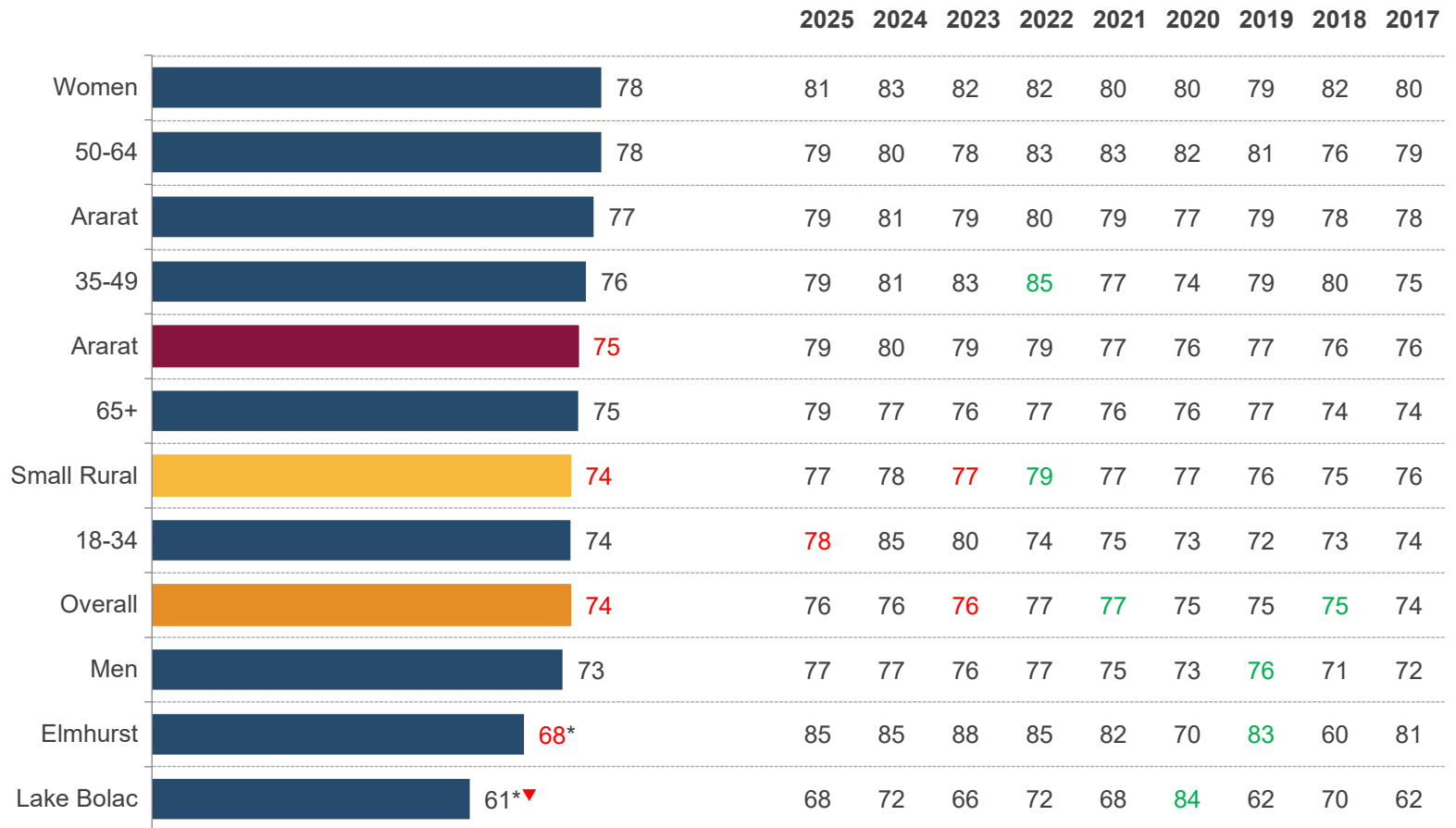
Q2. How has Council performed on 'The condition of sealed local roads in your area' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 23 Councils asked group: 9  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Informing the community importance



2026 informing community importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Informing the community' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

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

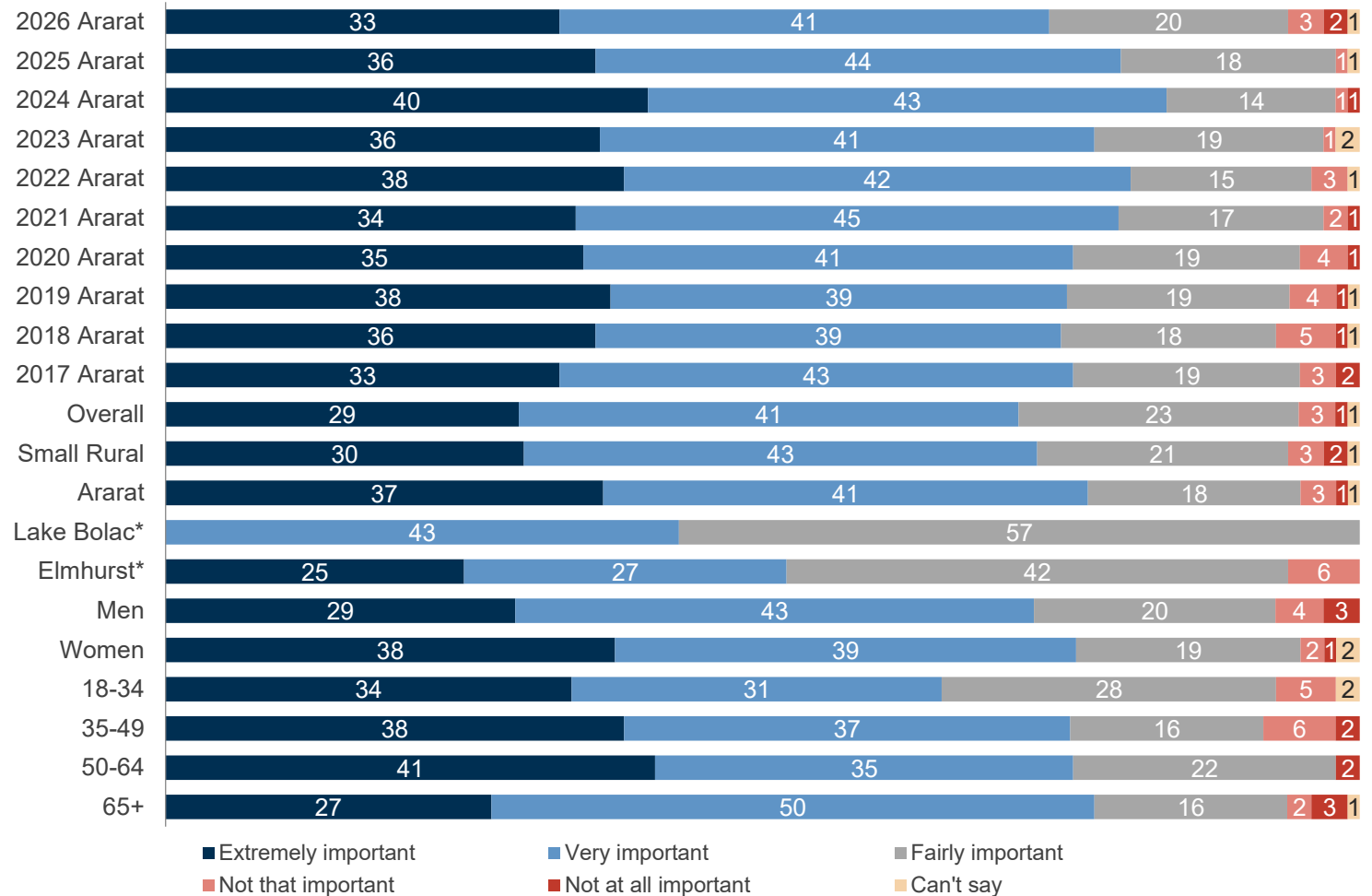
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Informing the community importance



2026 informing community importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Informing the community' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Informing the community performance



2026 informing community performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	73*	67	66	75	69	75	16	38	40	56
65+	65	65	66	67	68	69	60	49	48	51
Elmhurst	64*	54	55	50	45	81	49	57	53	56
50-64	64	57	56	61	58	56	59	52	42	50
Small Rural	62	57	56	58	59	61	58	58	56	58
Men	62	60	61	61	66	63	57	49	42	50
Ararat	61	61	61	60	64	63	58	49	44	50
Ararat	60	61	60	59	64	63	58	50	45	49
Women	60	61	60	59	62	63	59	50	46	51
Overall	60	56	56	57	59	60	59	60	59	59
18-34	58	60	59	59	69	62	61	52	48	49
35-49	54▼	57	57	49	57	62	52	45	37	50

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Informing the community' 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.

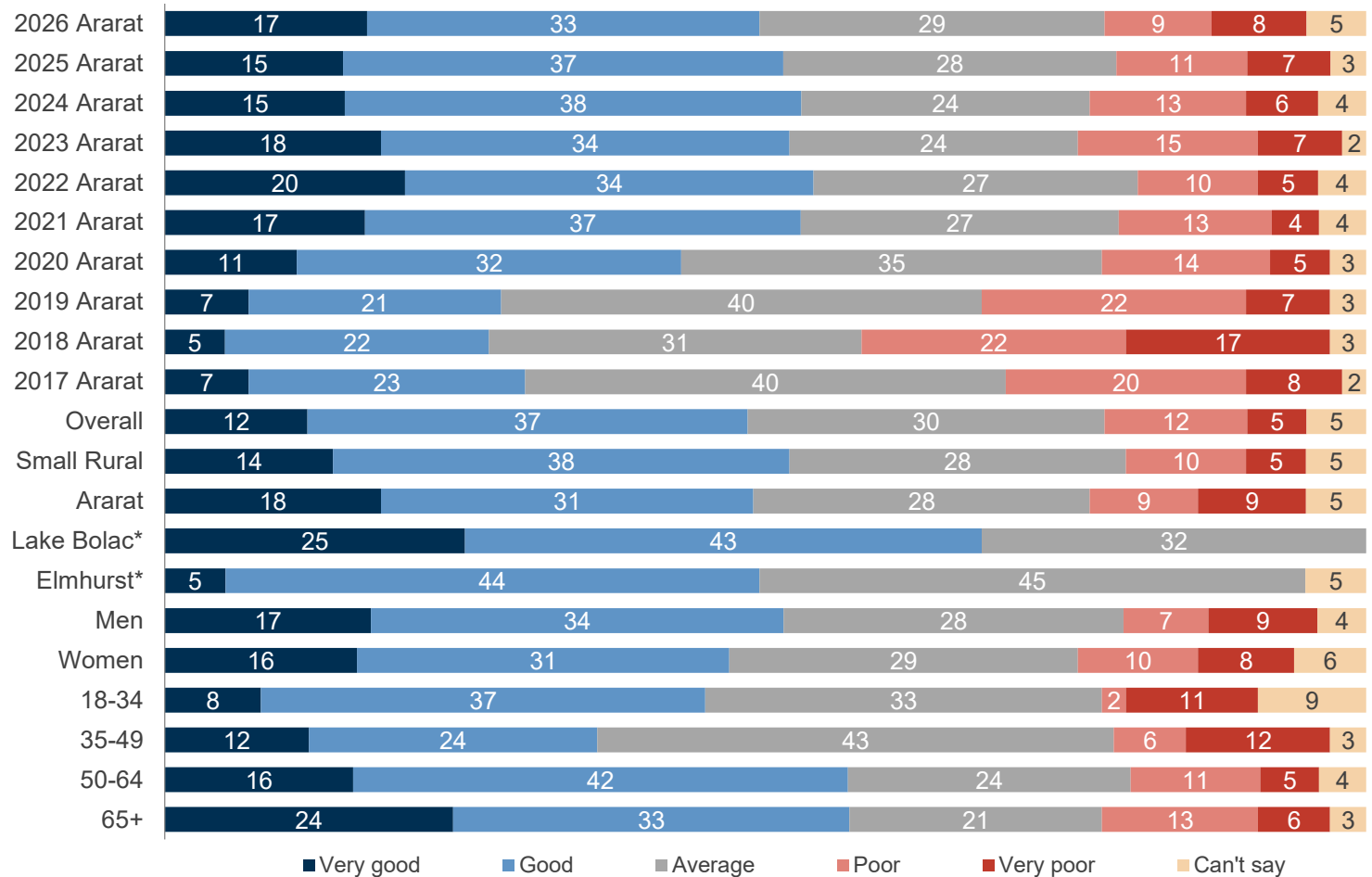
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Informing the community performance



2026 informing community performance (%)

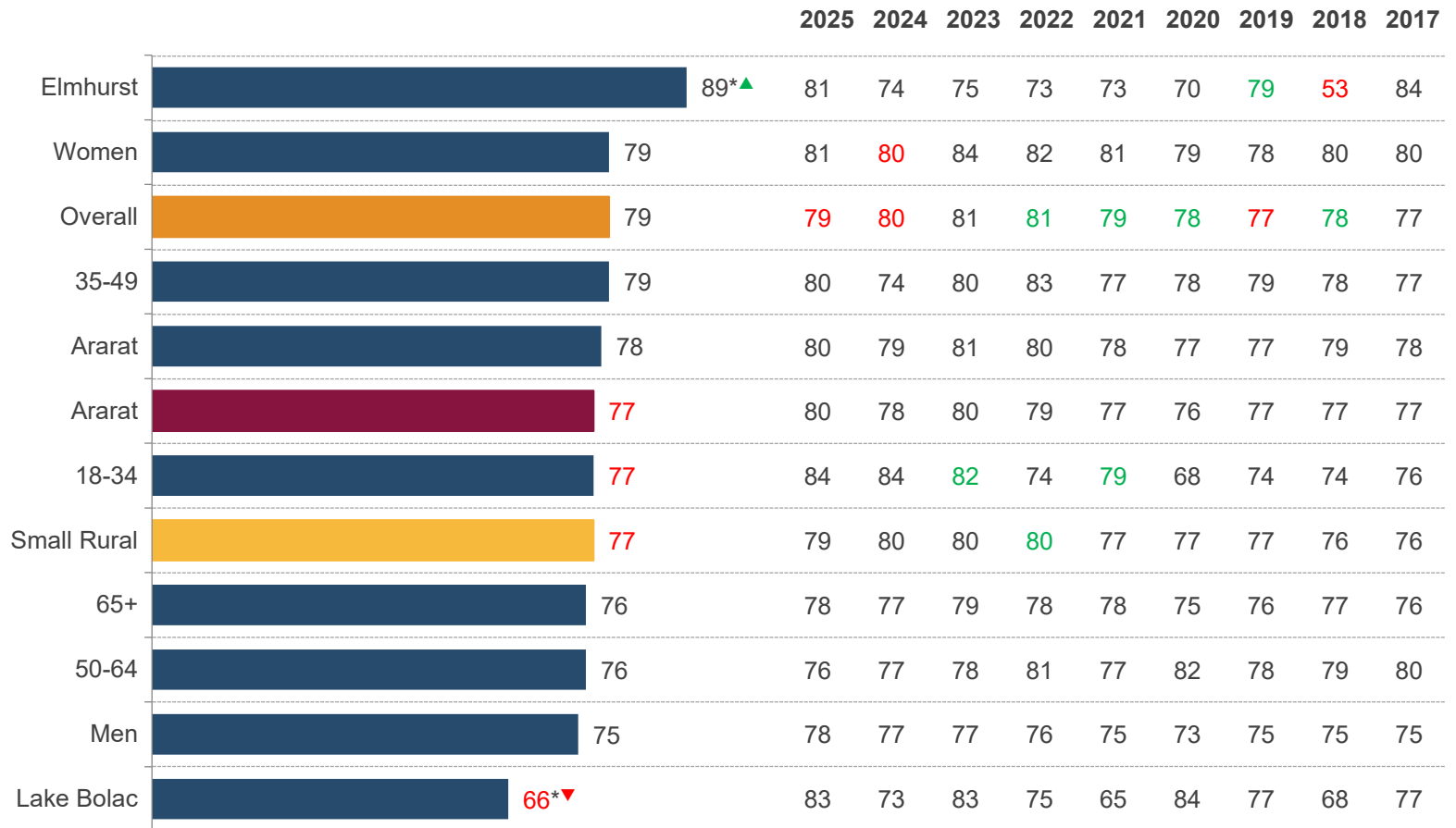


Q2. How has Council performed on 'Informing the community' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 12 Councils asked group: 5  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area importance



2026 streets and footpaths importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

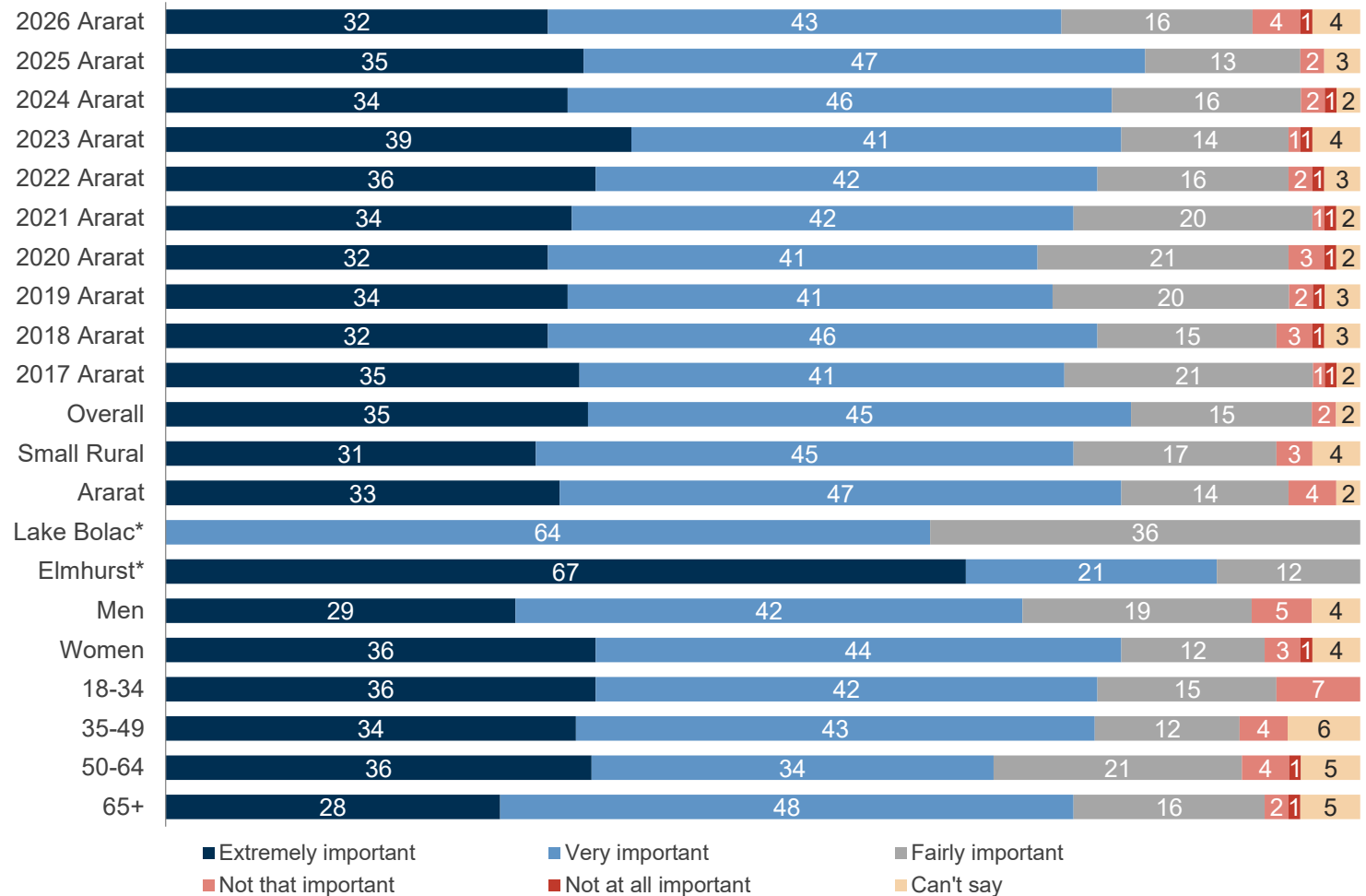
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area importance



2026 streets and footpaths importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area performance



2026 streets and footpaths performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	66	65	52	62	51	48	47	42	45
Men	59	57	59	65	66	62	55	51	55
65+	64	60	59	65	64	61	56	57	58
Ararat	59	57	57	65	62	62	55	56	57
50-64	64	58	57	63	62	62	54	57	55
Ararat	59	57	55	63	62	62	55	53	55
35-49	57	53	44	55	60	60	50	50	53
Small Rural	53	51	52	55	58	57	57	57	57
Women	59	57	51	62	57	61	54	56	55
Overall	52	52	52	57	59	58	59	58	57
18-34	50	55	57	69	60	64	57	49	53
Elmhurst	54	54	41	50	63	50	56	34	36

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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 4

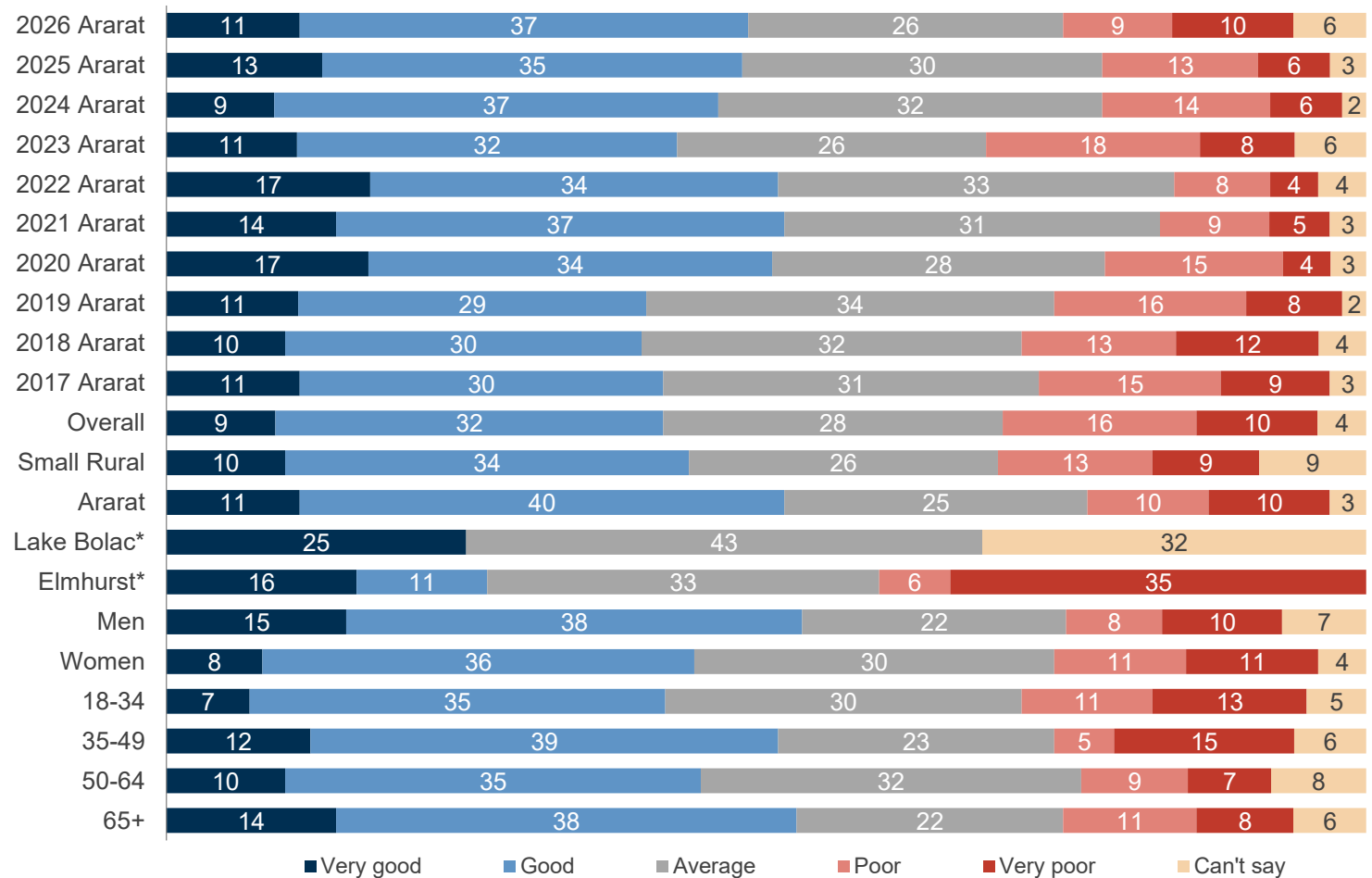
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area performance



2026 streets and footpaths performance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 4

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Elderly support services importance



2026 elderly support importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	85*	81	70	77	70	83	59	66	74	77
Women	82▲	83	86	86	84	87	85	83	84	85
18-34	82	81	87	85	82	82	76	76	78	74
50-64	80	77	81	81	83	84	82	87	82	85
Ararat	79	81	83	83	83	82	80	80	81	80
Ararat	78	80	82	83	82	82	79	79	80	79
Small Rural	78	80	82	82	82	83	81	80	80	79
65+	78	81	80	81	81	82	81	80	79	78
Overall	77	79	80	80	82	82	80	80	79	78
Men	75	78	78	80	79	78	75	76	76	74
Elmhurst	75*	80	80	85	86	90	80	78	52	85
35-49	74	81	80	85	82	80	78	74	80	79

Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Elderly support services' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 1

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

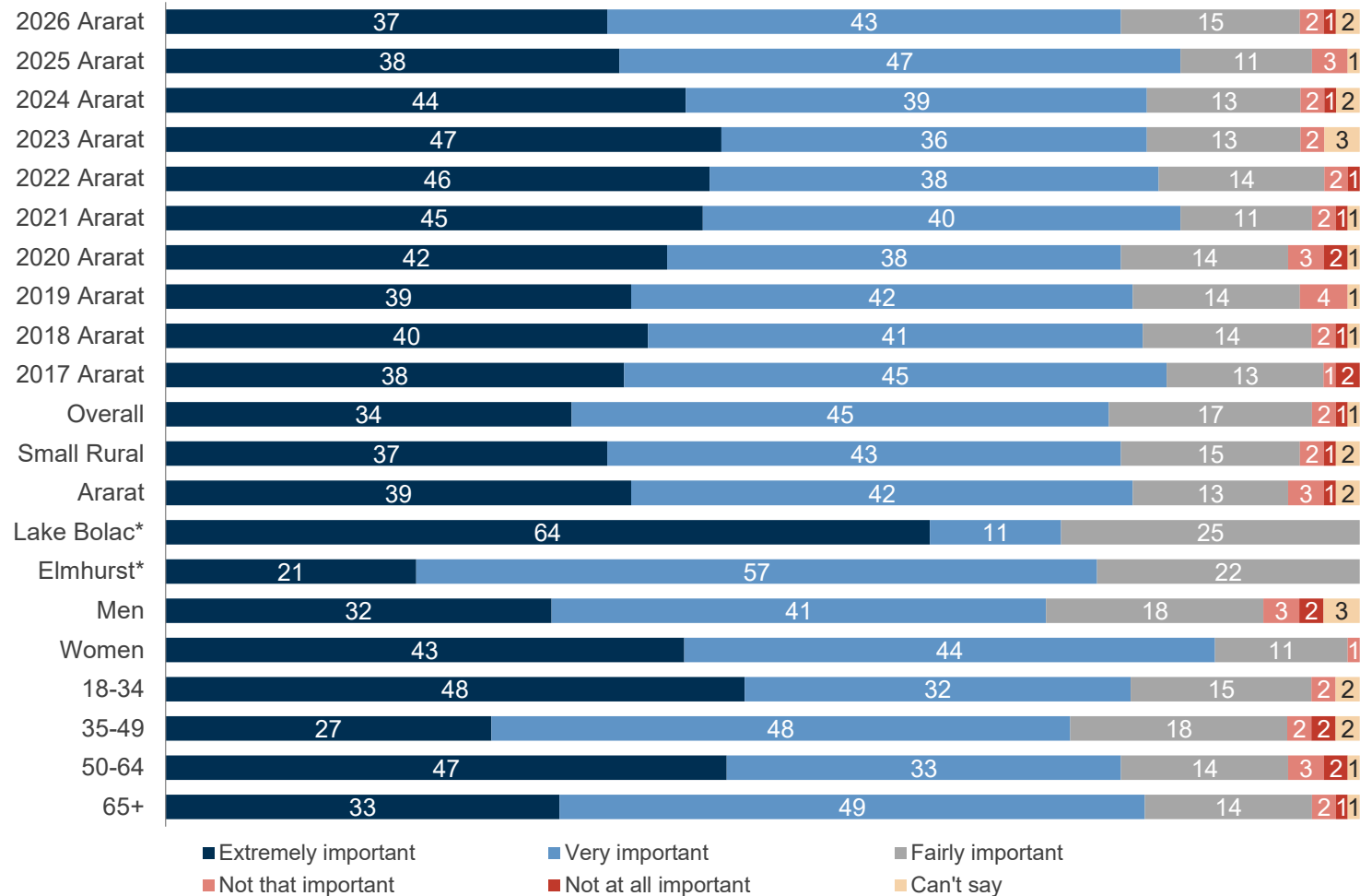
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Elderly support services importance



2026 elderly support importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Elderly support services' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 3 Councils asked group: 1  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Elderly support services performance



2026 elderly support performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	81*▲	72	63	63	80	74	n/a	65	51	62
65+	70	71	72	71	74	78	73	67	69	72
Men	67	69	69	70	72	72	71	65	62	66
Small Rural	67	66	65	66	70	72	71	71	69	71
50-64	67	69	64	65	66	70	70	67	65	66
Ararat	67	68	68	67	73	72	69	66	65	68
Ararat	67	67	68	66	71	72	68	65	64	67
Women	66	66	65	62	71	72	65	66	67	68
18-34	65	60	65	69	77	66	62	64	62	64
Overall	62▼	63	63	63	67	69	68	68	68	68
Elmhurst	61*	59	62	58	70	81	67	63	62	57
35-49	59▼	68	64	54	65	68	63	61	61	62

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Elderly support services' over the last 12 months?

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

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

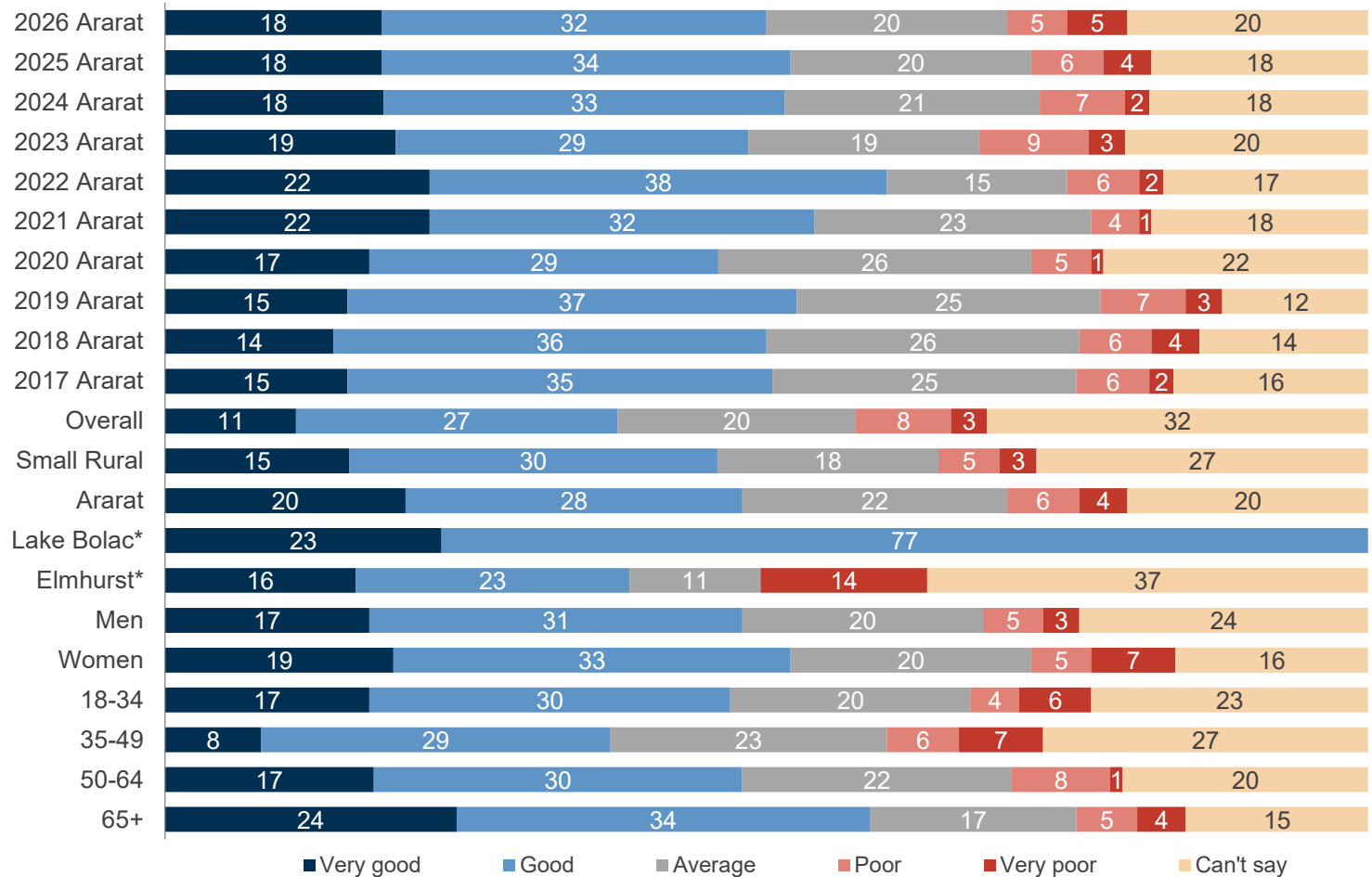
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Elderly support services performance



2026 elderly support performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Elderly support services' over the last 12 months?

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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Recreational facilities importance



2026 Recreational facilities importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
50-64	78	74	77	77	76	74	78	73	76	75
Women	77	76	79	76	77	76	74	72	77	75
Lake Bolac	77*	73	85	68	65	78	68	68	68	73
18-34	76	77	81	76	81	68	67	71	81	69
Ararat	74	75	77	76	78	75	73	71	77	73
Ararat	74	75	76	75	77	74	73	71	75	73
Small Rural	73	73	73	73	74	73	73	72	72	71
Overall	73	73	73	74	74	72	72	72	73	72
Elmhurst	73*	76	68	63	69	72	64	61	68	70
35-49	73	78	77	77	78	81	74	72	76	77
65+	72	73	72	71	73	73	72	69	70	72
Men	71	74	74	73	76	73	72	70	74	72

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.

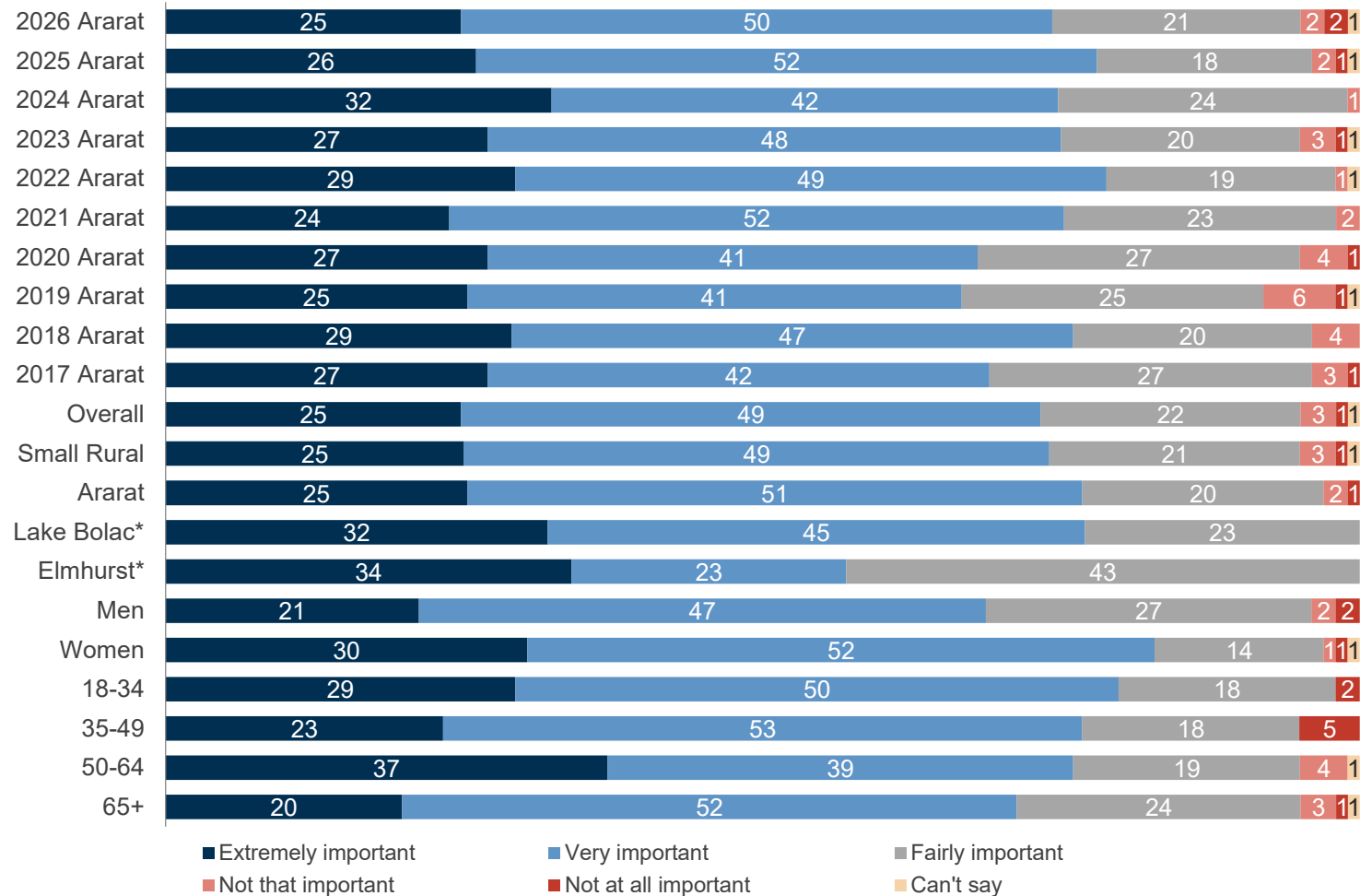
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Recreational facilities performance



2026 Recreational facilities performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	81*	62	69	86	80	70	41	58	61	62
65+	79▲	77	79	78	78	81	78	72	73	71
50-64	77	78	69	65	74	74	71	72	64	65
Ararat	74	73	74	71	75	74	72	69	65	65
Women	74	71	73	70	75	75	70	67	66	64
Ararat	74	72	73	71	75	74	71	68	64	65
Men	73	72	73	72	75	74	72	69	63	65
35-49	71	69	65	63	65	73	67	63	55	56
Overall	71▼	67	68	68	69	71	70	70	69	70
Small Rural	69▼	66	67	67	69	69	68	68	69	69
18-34	64▼	63	72	72	82	66	64	65	64	63
Elmhurst	52*▼	57	56	62	59	69	46	66	53	61

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.

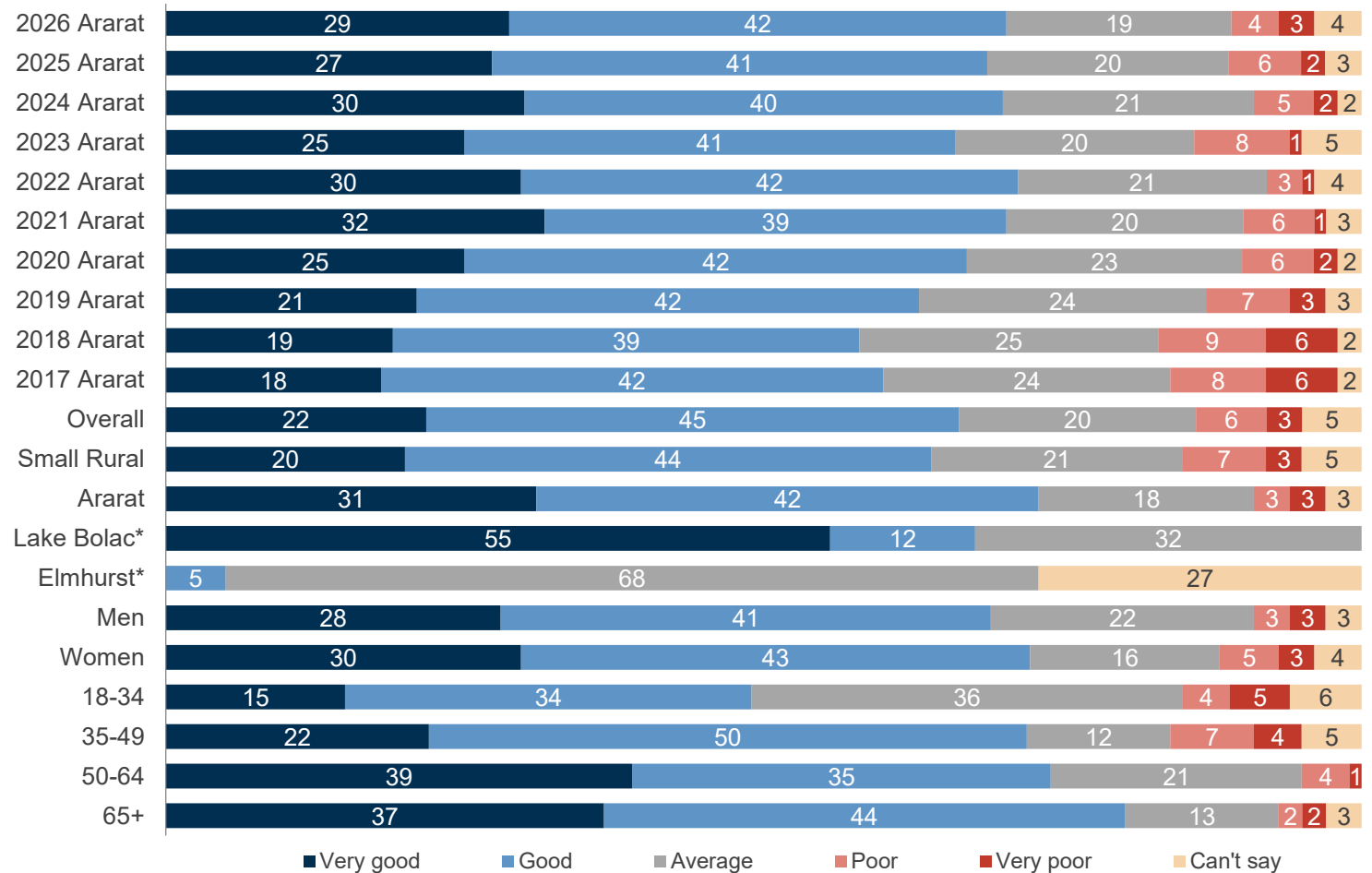
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# The appearance of public areas importance



2026 public areas importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Elmhurst	76	68	75	84	75	63	59	49	81
50-64	74	76	77	78	73	77	74	73	76
Women	79	78	77	78	79	75	76	78	76
65+	77	74	73	77	75	74	71	74	74
Overall	74	74	74	75	75	74	73	74	74
Ararat	76	76	77	79	75	75	74	75	77
Ararat	76	75	76	76	74	74	72	74	74
Small Rural	75	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
35-49	74	75	79	77	78	73	73	73	77
Men	73	73	76	75	70	73	69	70	72
18-34	76	75	79	73	70	72	71	74	68
Lake Bolac	78	65	66	69	82	59	59	72	67

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.

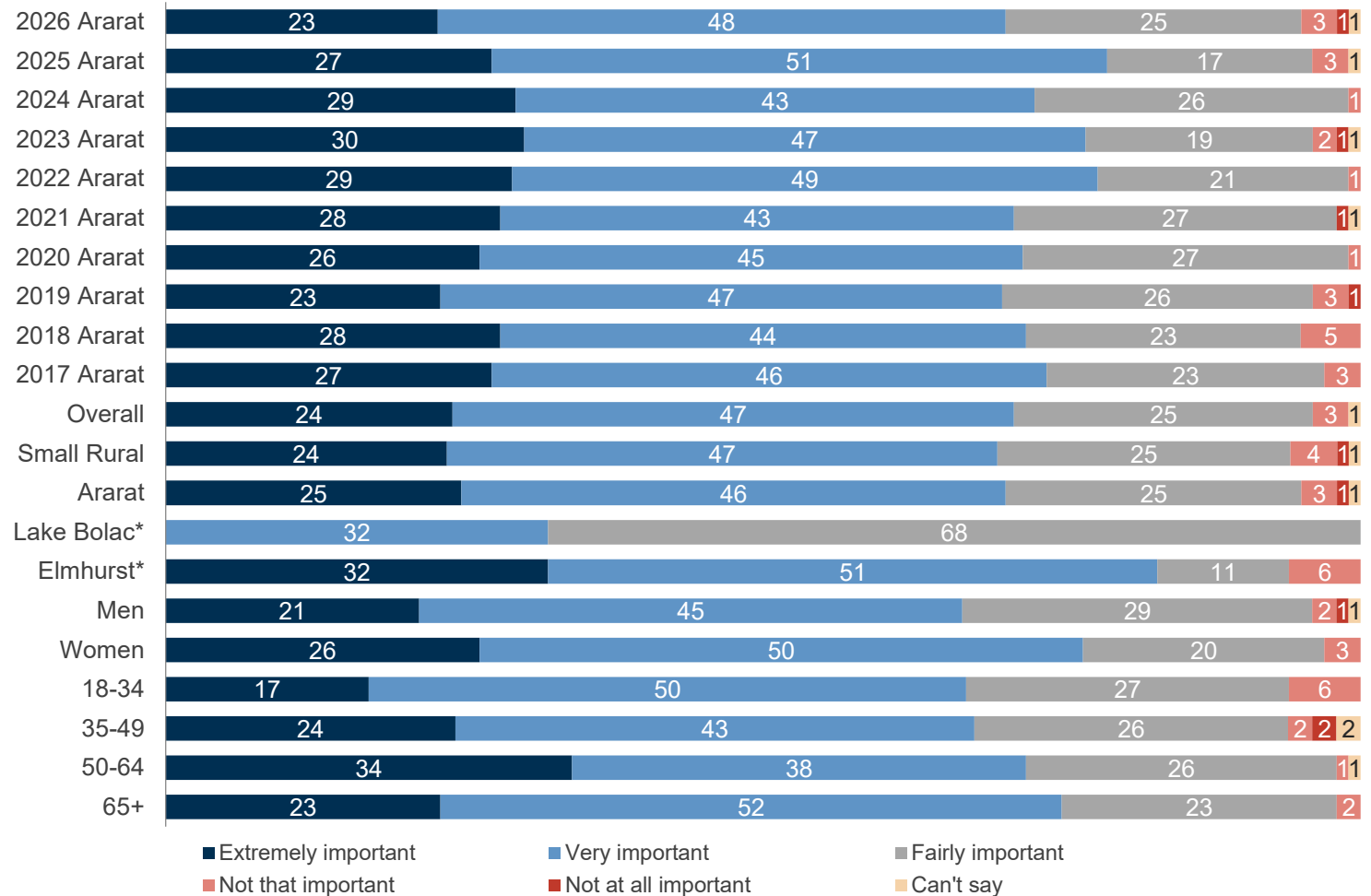
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# The appearance of public areas performance



2026 public areas performance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	81*	79	68	85	77	82	48	68	61	71
Elmhurst	78*	70	57	54	71	74	75	79	59	65
Women	76	73	71	67	75	75	71	70	68	69
50-64	75	75	72	67	74	75	73	69	64	64
65+	75	73	76	75	77	79	73	71	69	70
Ararat	73	71	72	69	76	75	73	69	66	65
Ararat	73	71	72	70	76	75	73	69	65	66
Small Rural	73	70	71	71	73	75	72	73	72	74
Overall	71	68	68	67	71	73	72	72	71	71
Men	71	70	72	72	77	76	74	69	63	64
18-34	70	66	69	67	79	74	70	71	66	60
35-49	70	70	67	64	72	73	73	66	60	69

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.

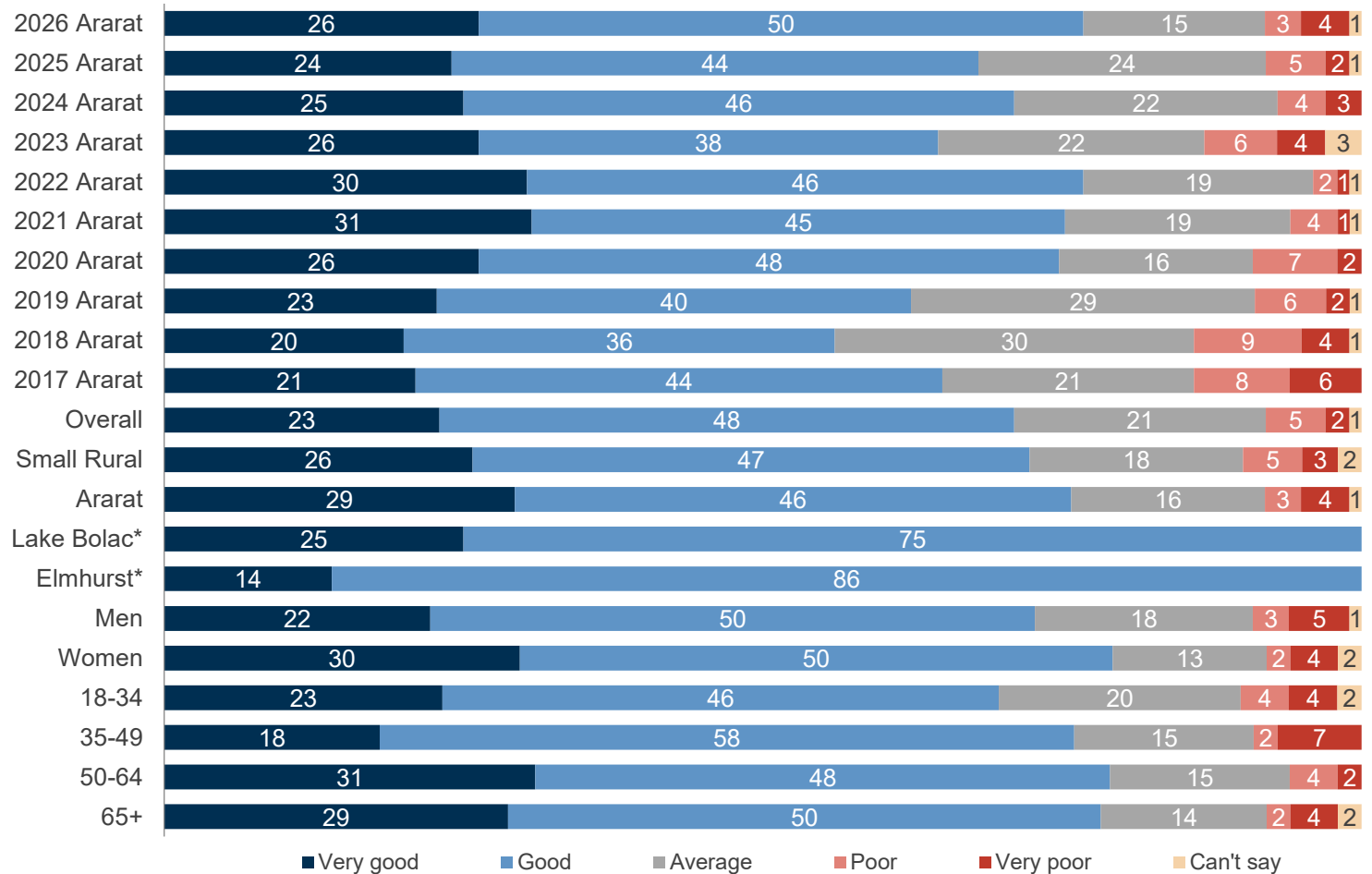
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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

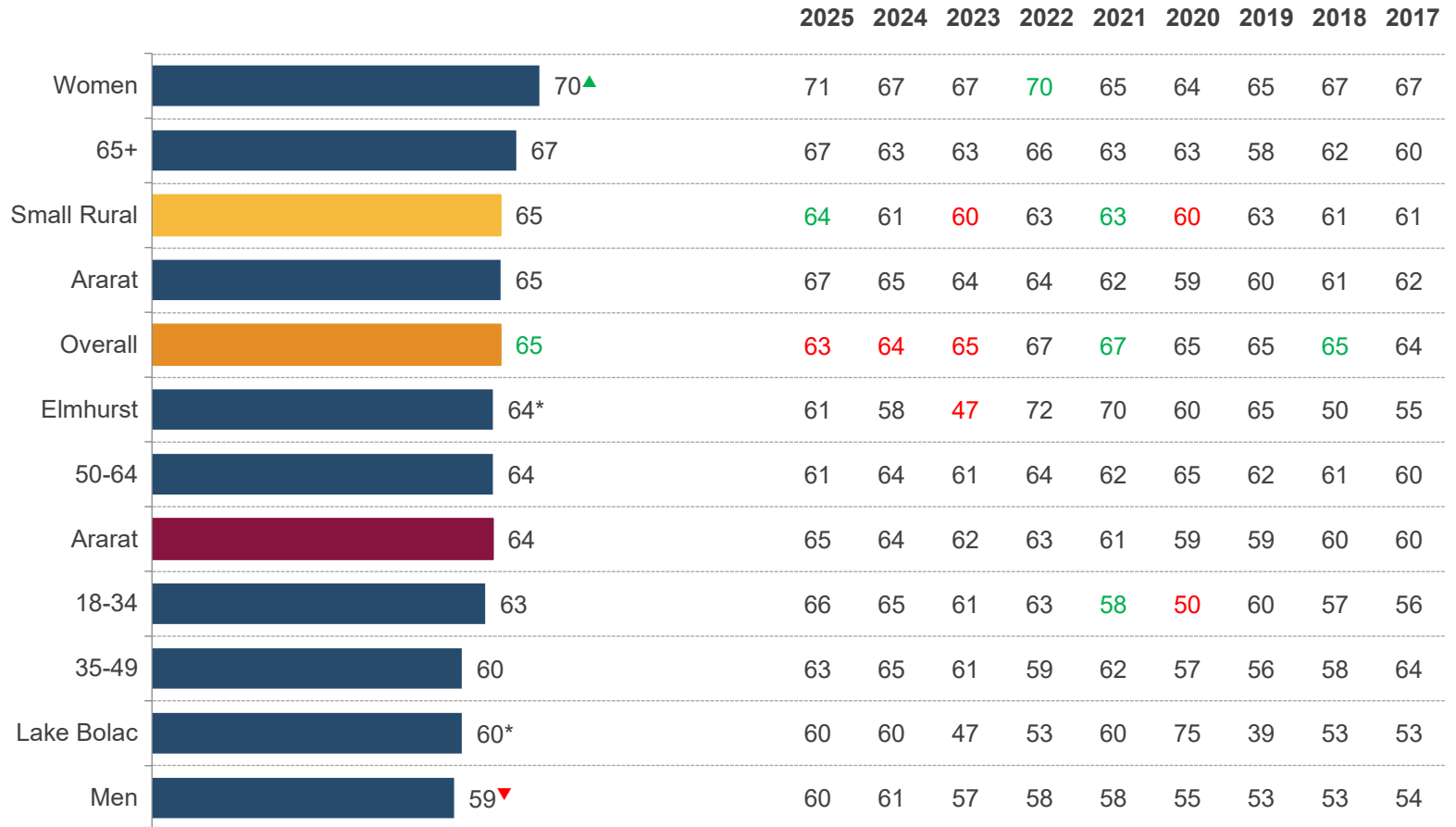
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Art centres and libraries importance



2026 art centres and libraries importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Art centres and 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.

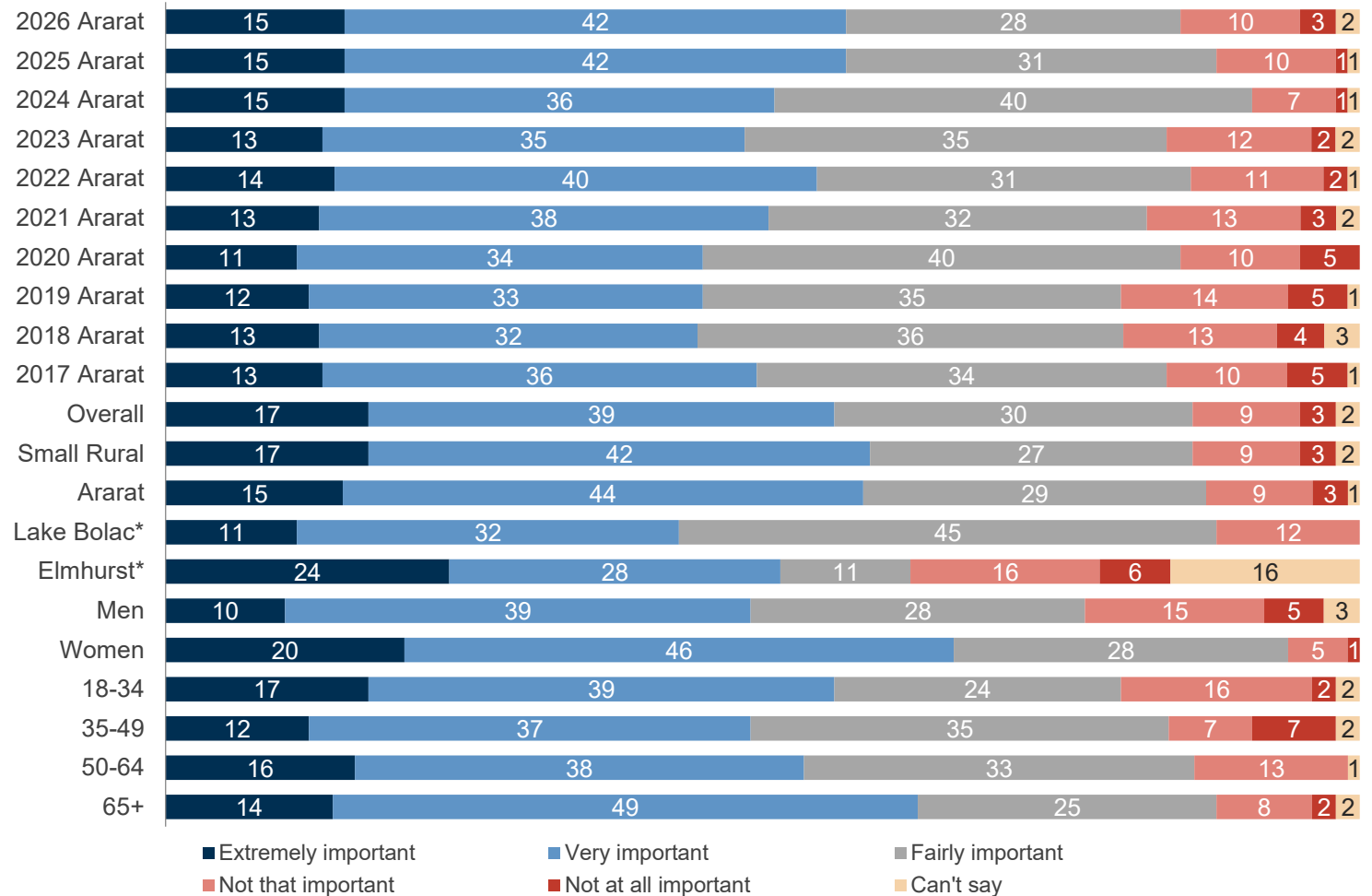
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Art centres and libraries importance



2026 art centres and libraries importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Art centres and libraries' be as a responsibility for Council?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 1  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Art centres and libraries performance



2026 art centres and libraries performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	94*▲	74	80	75	76	83	41	70	63	68
Elmhurst	87*▲	74	66	72	70	86	57	88	70	88
Women	79	78	81	76	78	77	79	77	74	71
18-34	79	68	79	77	78	67	71	77	69	66
Ararat	78	75	79	75	76	73	78	76	70	70
50-64	78	78	78	75	75	76	80	77	71	67
65+	78	78	79	76	78	78	78	77	73	76
Ararat	77	75	78	75	75	74	78	76	70	70
Small Rural	77	72	73	73	71	72	74	74	73	72
Overall	76	73	73	73	73	73	74	74	74	73
Men	75	73	76	73	73	73	76	74	66	69
35-49	75	75	76	71	69	75	81	72	65	69

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Art centres and 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.

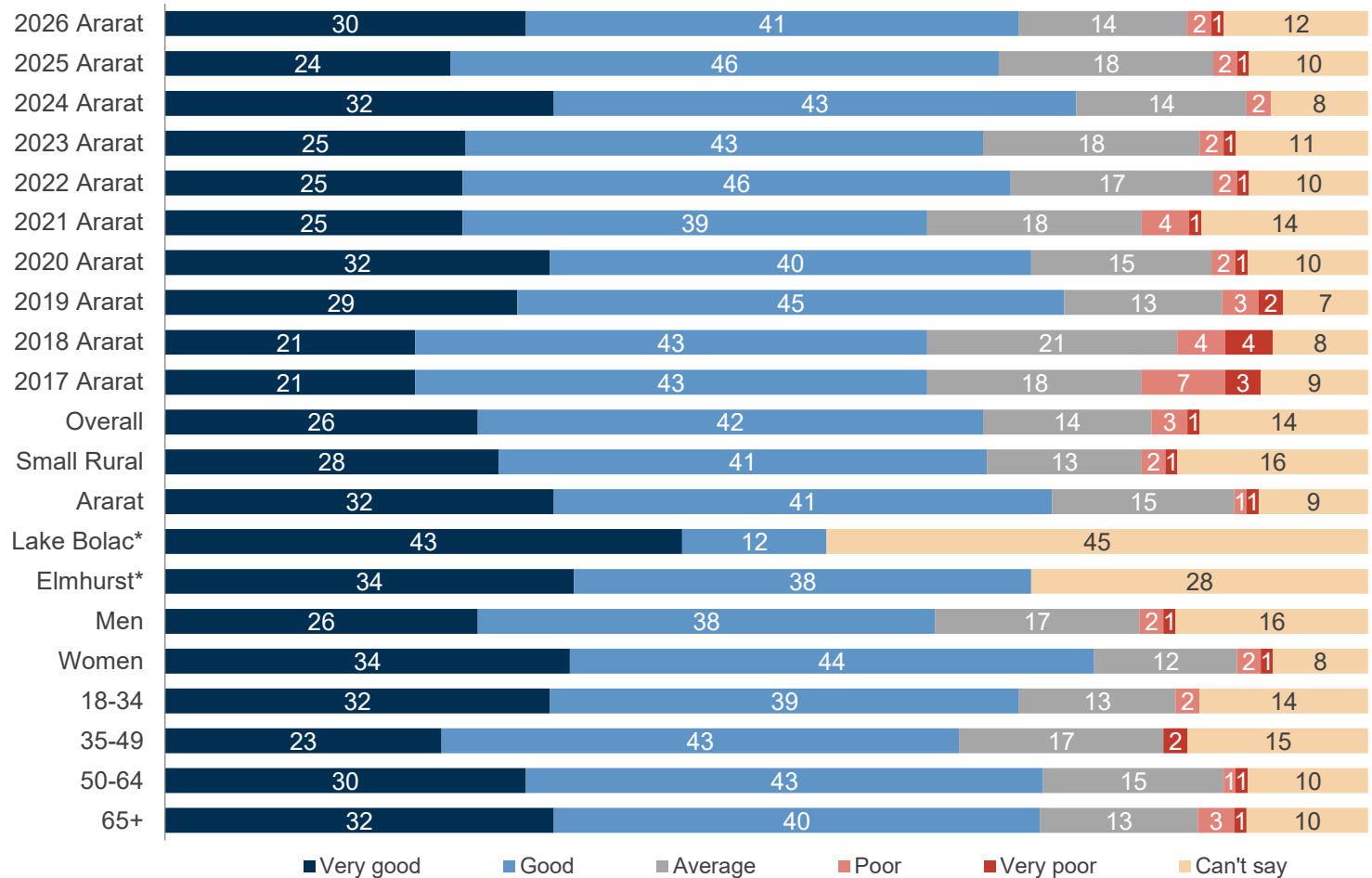
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Art centres and libraries performance



2026 art centres and libraries performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Art centres and libraries' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 11 Councils asked group: 4  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Community and cultural activities importance



2026 community and cultural activities importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Women	67▲	63	63	67	65	65	65	64	n/a	n/a
50-64	65	60	58	63	65	63	67	64	n/a	n/a
Ararat	64	62	63	65	65	63	61	61	n/a	n/a
18-34	63	59	68	67	66	57	57	64	n/a	n/a
65+	63	63	59	63	62	63	60	57	n/a	n/a
Ararat	62	62	61	64	64	62	60	60	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	62	62	61	64	64	62	60	62	60	62
Lake Bolac	60*	66	45	52	59	59	59	40	n/a	n/a
Overall	59▼	59	60	62	64	64	62	61	61	61
35-49	58	62	62	65	64	63	60	55	n/a	n/a
Men	57▼	60	60	62	63	59	57	56	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	47*	57	63	62	65	65	54	57	n/a	n/a

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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 1

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

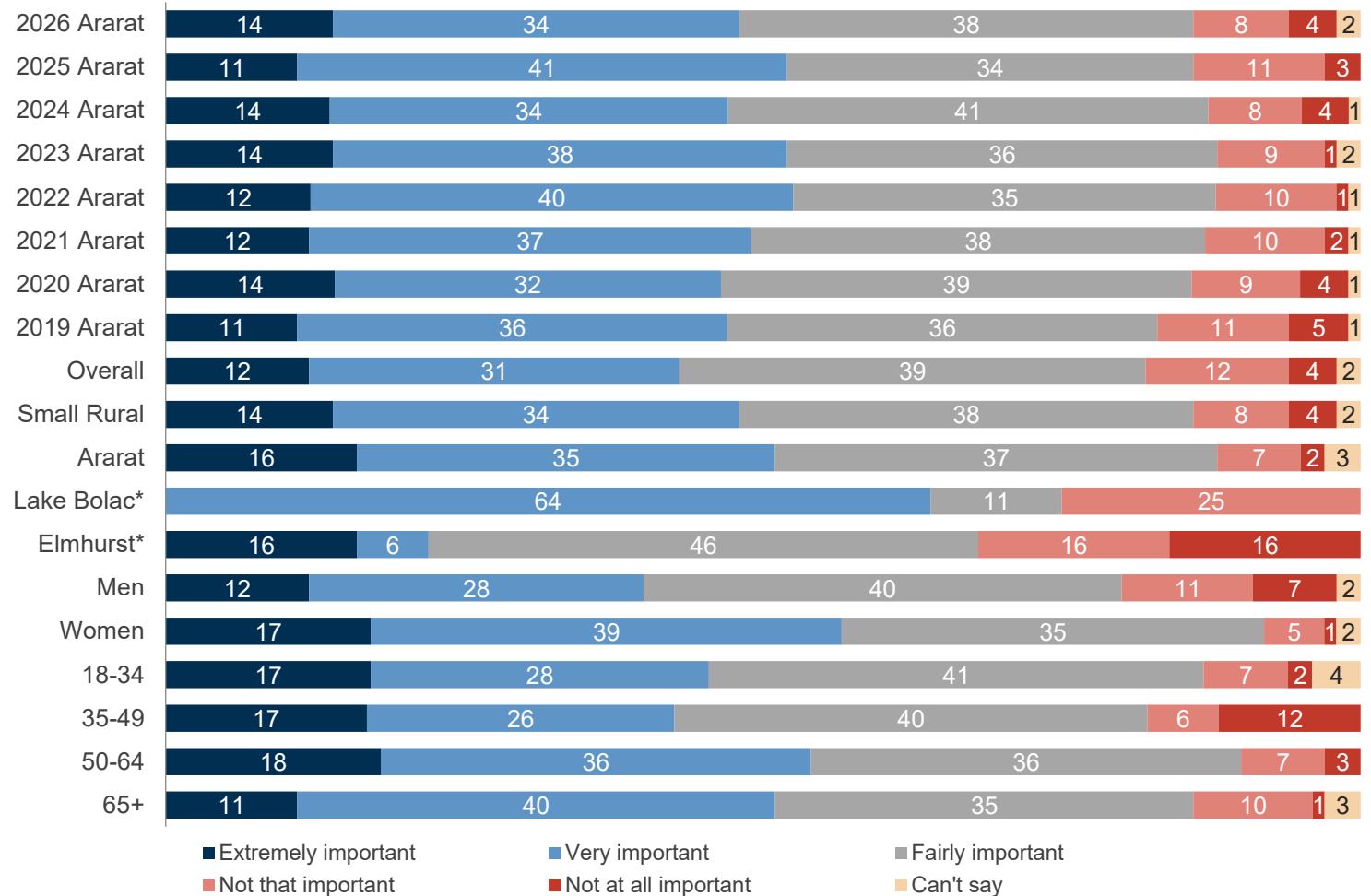
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Community and cultural activities importance



2026 community and cultural activities importance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 1

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Community and cultural activities performance



2026 community and cultural activities performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	84*▲	68	60	69	75	75	32	58	n/a	n/a
65+	73	72	71	70	68	68	67	66	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	73*	62	52	61	54	71	70	84	n/a	n/a
Women	70	66	65	65	66	63	66	64	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	70	68	69	70	68	67	68	66	69	69
Ararat	69	66	67	65	65	64	63	63	n/a	n/a
Ararat	69	66	68	65	65	63	63	63	n/a	n/a
50-64	69	65	61	63	63	64	63	65	n/a	n/a
Men	68	66	68	64	64	65	60	62	n/a	n/a
Overall	67	65	66	66	65	65	68	69	69	69
35-49	66	64	61	57	60	67	61	59	n/a	n/a
18-34	65	58	68	63	66	55	58	60	n/a	n/a

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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 9 Councils asked group: 2

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

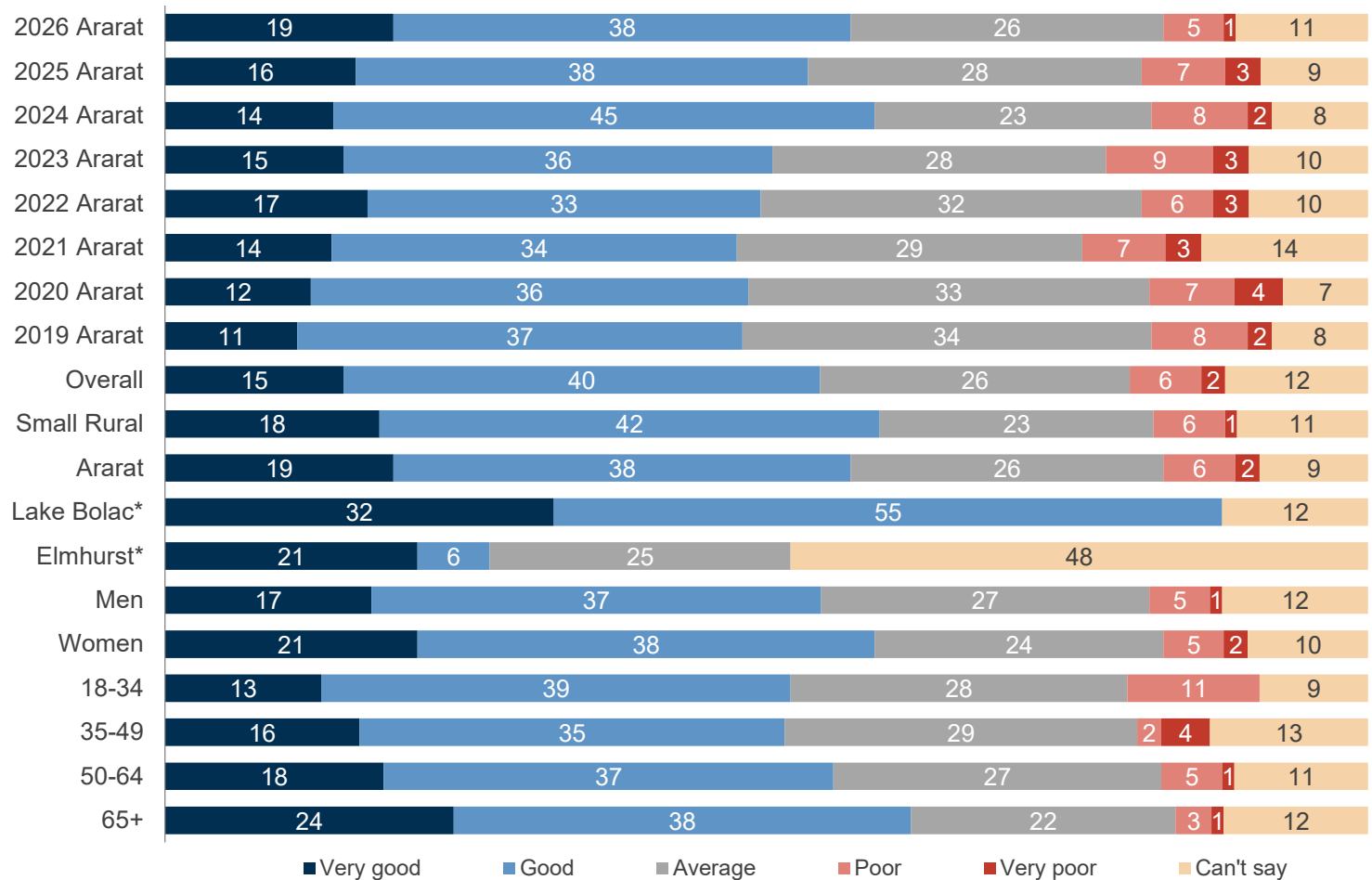
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Community and cultural activities performance



2026 community and cultural activities performance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 9 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Waste management importance



2026 waste management importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Elmhurst	85*	81	80	78	82	80	82	78	60	81
18-34	80	80	88	84	82	80	80	76	78	74
Women	80	81	82	81	84	84	85	80	85	78
Lake Bolac	80*	80	81	74	78	83	100	74	70	74
50-64	79	75	81	79	79	81	81	80	81	77
Overall	79	79	81	81	82	82	82	81	81	79
Ararat	78	79	82	81	81	81	81	80	81	76
Ararat	78	78	82	80	81	80	80	79	79	76
Small Rural	78	78	79	78	80	80	79	79	78	76
65+	78	79	80	77	79	80	79	79	79	75
Men	75	76	81	79	78	78	76	79	75	73
35-49	75	78	79	82	84	82	81	81	79	76

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.

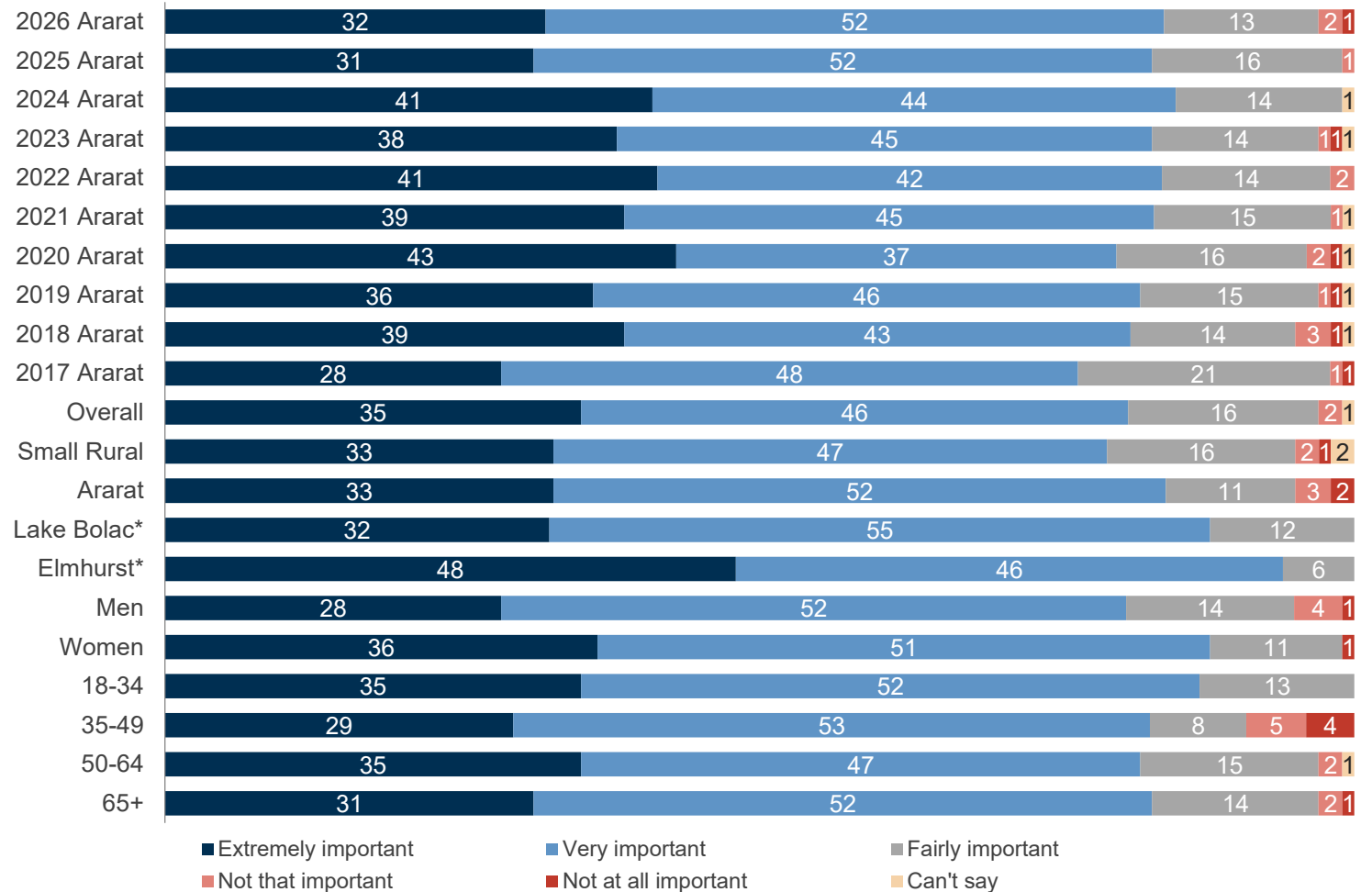
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Waste management performance



2026 waste management performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Lake Bolac	86*▲	79	78	90	64	65	16	49	49	55
50-64	76	76	75	64	63	57	59	58	61	61
65+	76	78	78	73	70	71	65	63	69	69
Men	74	73	74	69	67	62	60	61	66	63
Ararat	73	72	74	66	69	61	61	63	66	65
Ararat	72	73	74	66	67	61	60	60	64	64
Women	71	73	74	63	68	61	60	59	61	64
Small Rural	71	66	67	66	68	68	64	66	69	70
35-49	70	66	73	60	58	56	56	55	59	60
Overall	69▼	65	67	66	68	69	65	68	70	71
18-34	66▼	69	67	61	75	55	57	65	65	62
Elmhurst	61*	64	72	67	62	68	35	62	64	39

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.

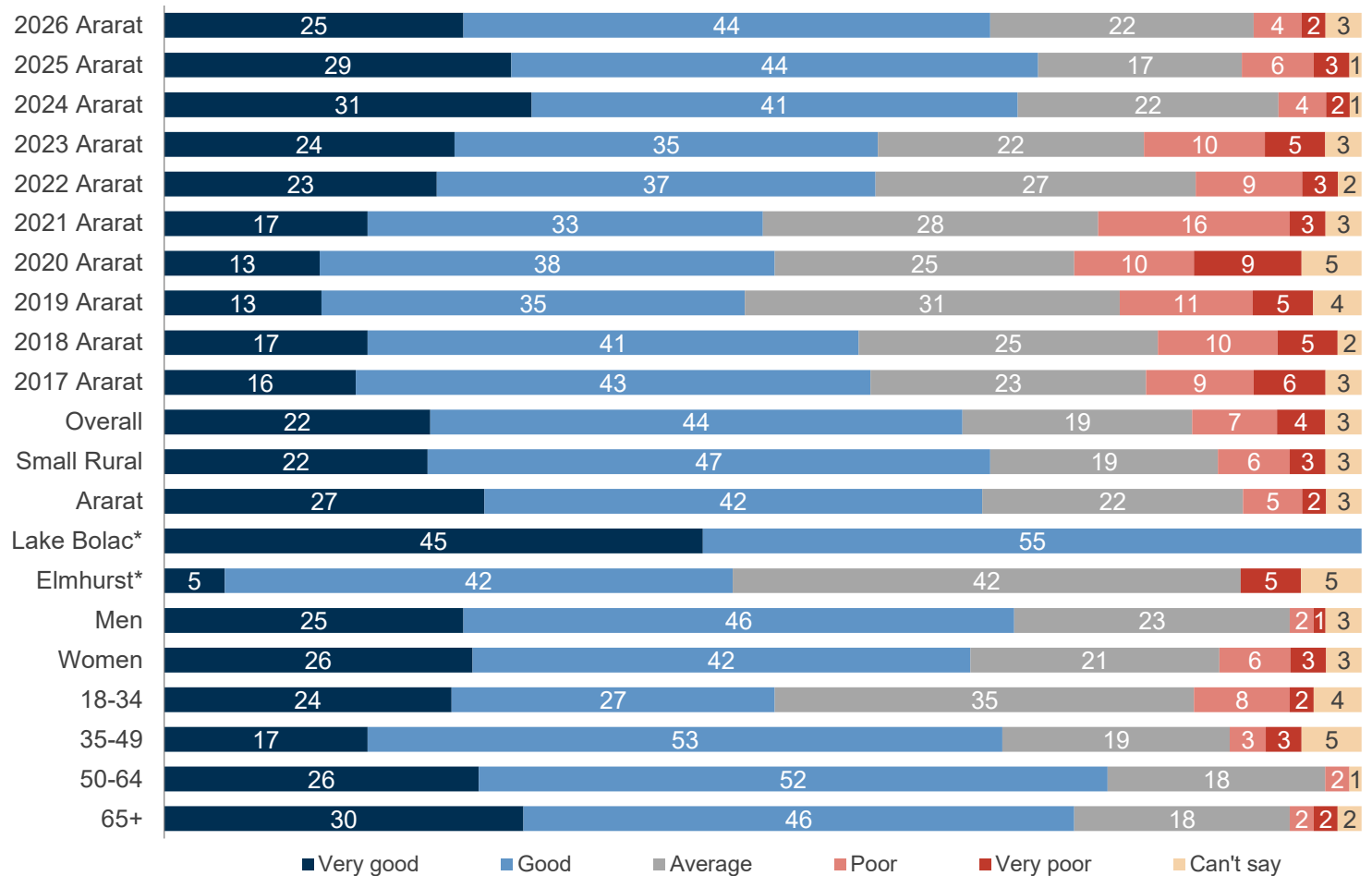
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Business and community development and tourism importance



2026 business/development/tourism importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Elmhurst	75*	80	69	70	64	70	56	79	61	85
50-64	72	72	71	69	74	74	78	73	76	72
Women	71	74	75	73	73	75	74	70	77	75
Ararat	71	73	75	75	75	73	74	70	74	74
65+	71	72	71	70	72	71	71	65	69	69
18-34	70	72	80	75	72	73	67	65	71	70
Ararat	70	72	74	73	73	72	72	68	72	71
Small Rural	70	71	70	71	72	74	74	71	71	72
Lake Bolac	69*	66	80	71	59	68	66	45	61	57
Men	69	72	73	73	72	70	72	66	67	68
35-49	66	74	74	78	74	72	75	69	71	74
Overall	66▼	69	67	67	69	70	67	65	66	67

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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 1

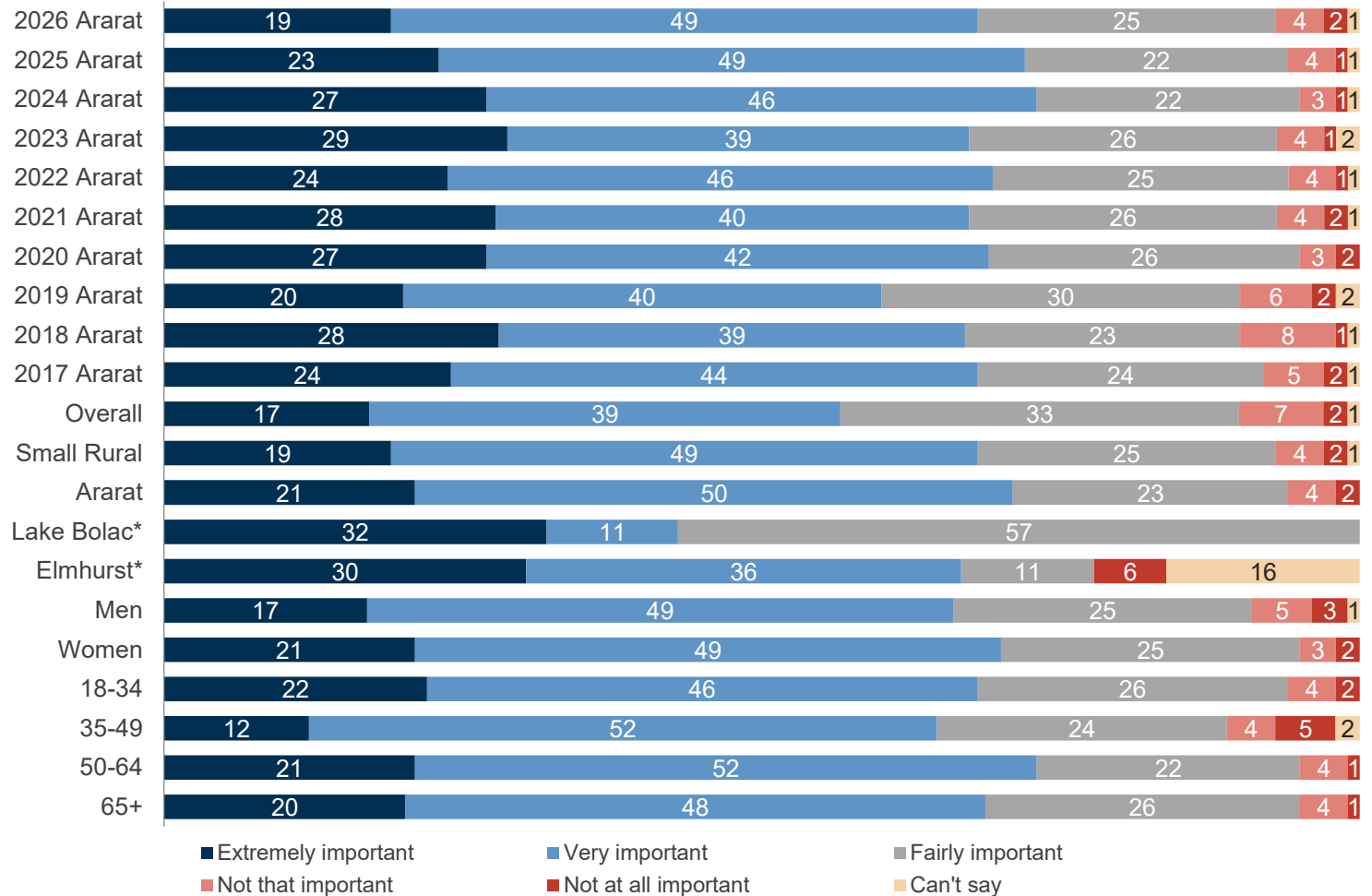
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Business and community development and tourism importance



2026 business/development/tourism importance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 1

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Business and community development and tourism performance



2026 business/development/tourism performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Elmhurst	71*	63	47	53	65	71	43	60	61	65
65+	70	67	70	70	72	71	64	63	59	64
50-64	69	62	64	63	65	64	62	60	56	59
Men	68	62	65	65	69	66	62	60	53	58
Ararat	67	63	67	66	70	65	61	62	58	61
Ararat	66	63	66	65	69	65	61	61	57	60
Women	65	63	67	66	70	65	59	62	61	62
Lake Bolac	64*	64	62	65	70	63	32	44	49	60
18-34	63	56	65	63	71	60	62	63	61	58
35-49	61	63	63	61	67	63	55	56	51	57
Small Rural	60▼	57	59	61	63	62	58	59	59	64
Overall	59▼	56	57	59	60	61	59	61	60	61

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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 4

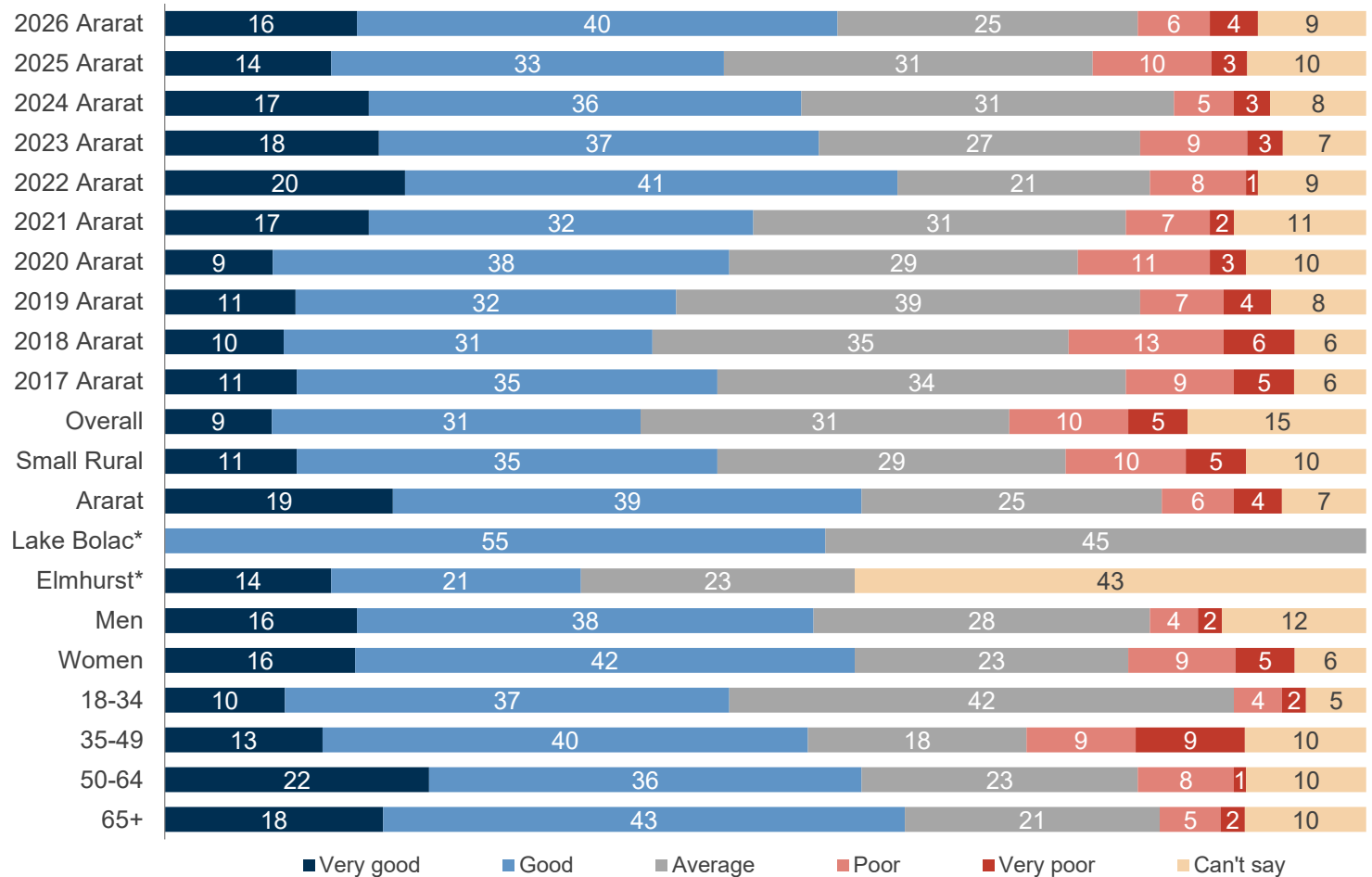
Note: Please see Appendix A for explanation of significant differences.

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30

# Business and community development and tourism performance



2026 business/development/tourism performance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 4

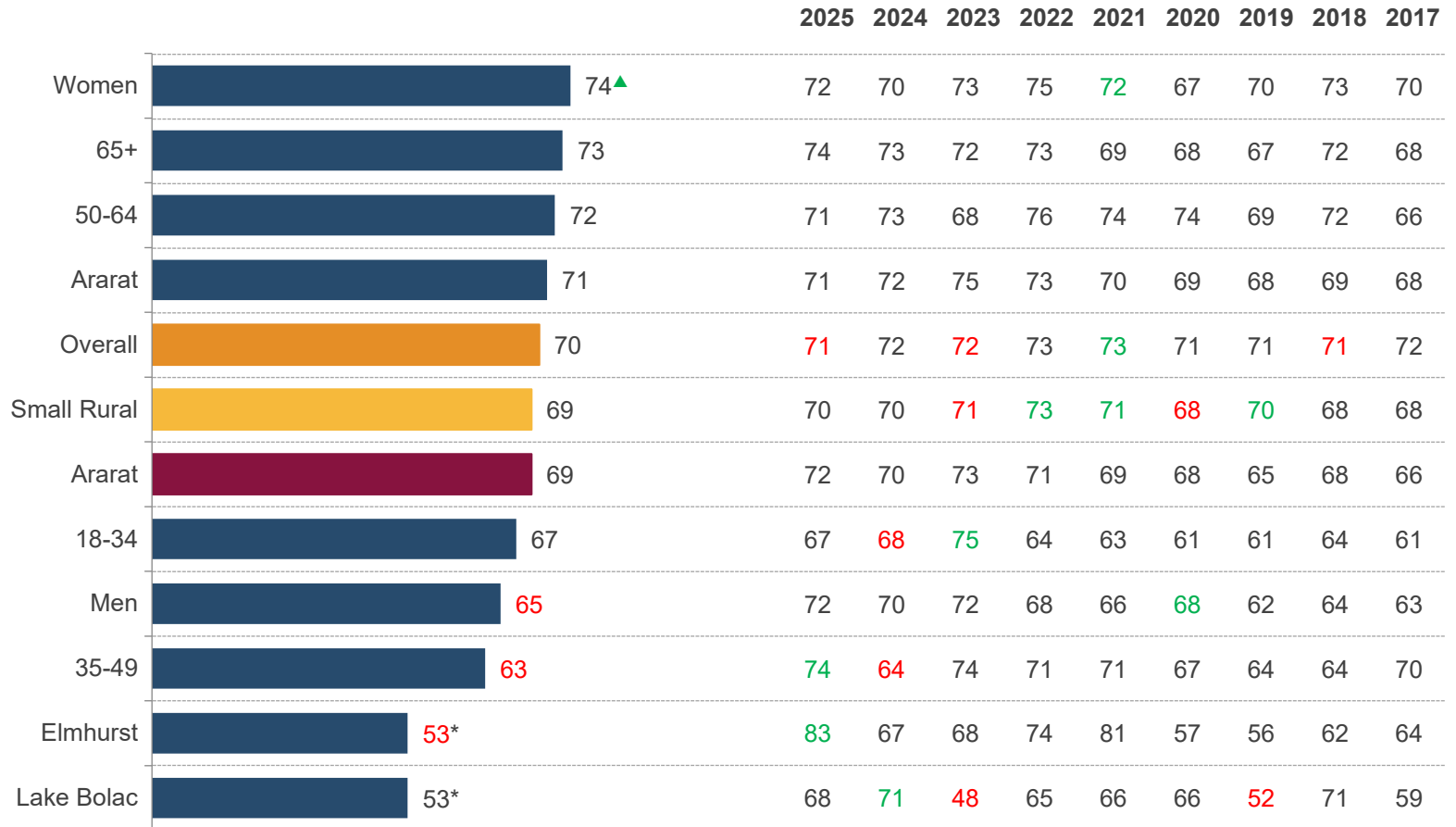
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Planning and building permits importance



2026 planning and building permits importance (index scores)



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.

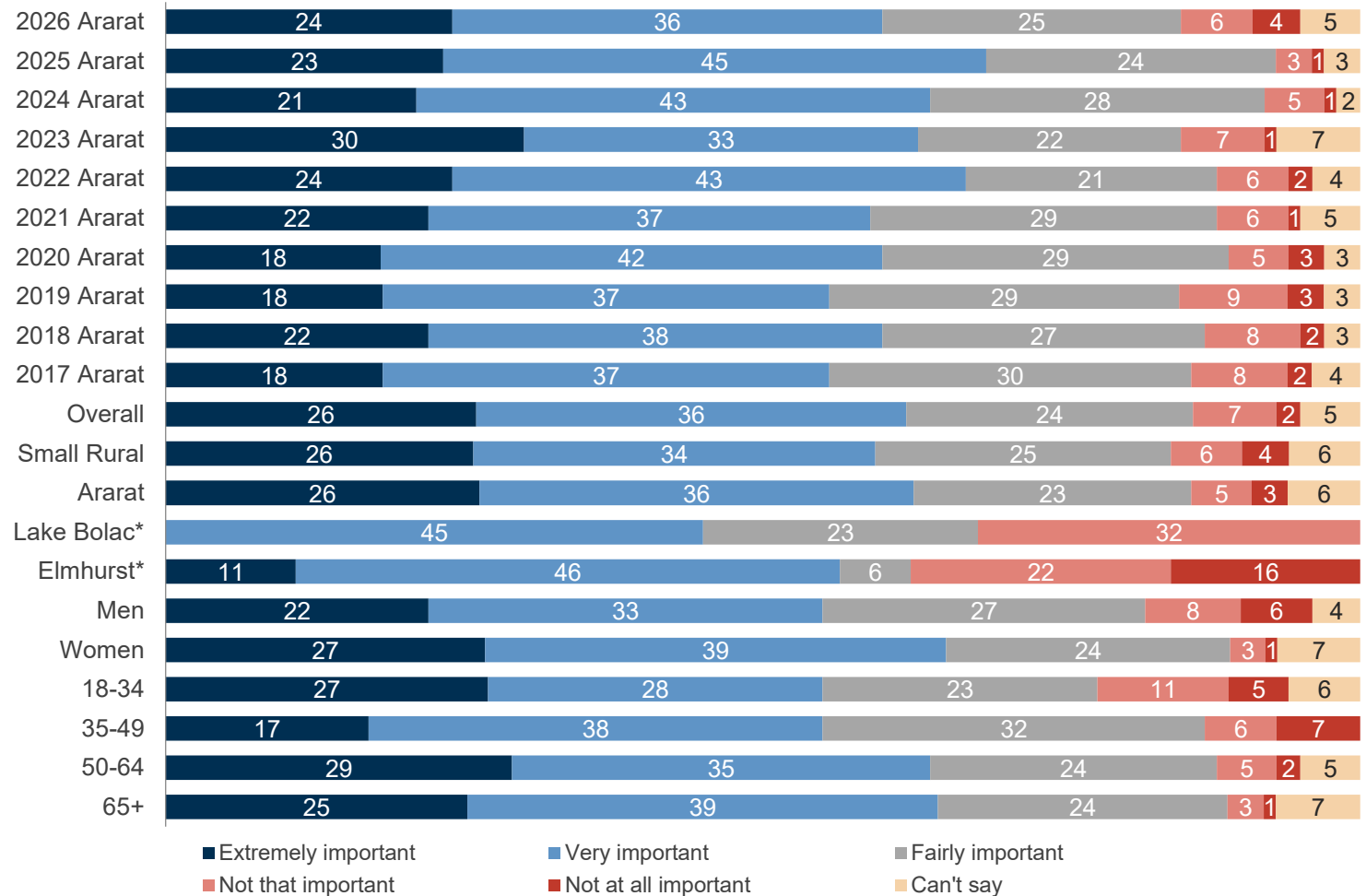
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Planning and building permits performance



2026 planning and building permits performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	48	49	65	65	56	n/a	29	43	44
Elmhurst	42	52	46	60	57	63	67	48	77
65+	54	58	62	63	63	54	54	47	51
Men	52	52	54	58	59	50	51	43	46
50-64	46	49	48	52	56	52	48	43	54
Ararat	51	54	54	58	59	51	52	46	50
Ararat	53	54	53	59	59	52	53	46	51
Women	50	56	54	59	58	53	53	50	55
18-34	48	53	53	64	57	56	56	54	47
35-49	52	50	45	49	57	42	48	41	48
Small Rural	43	43	45	48	49	46	48	51	51
Overall	43	45	47	50	51	51	52	52	51

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.

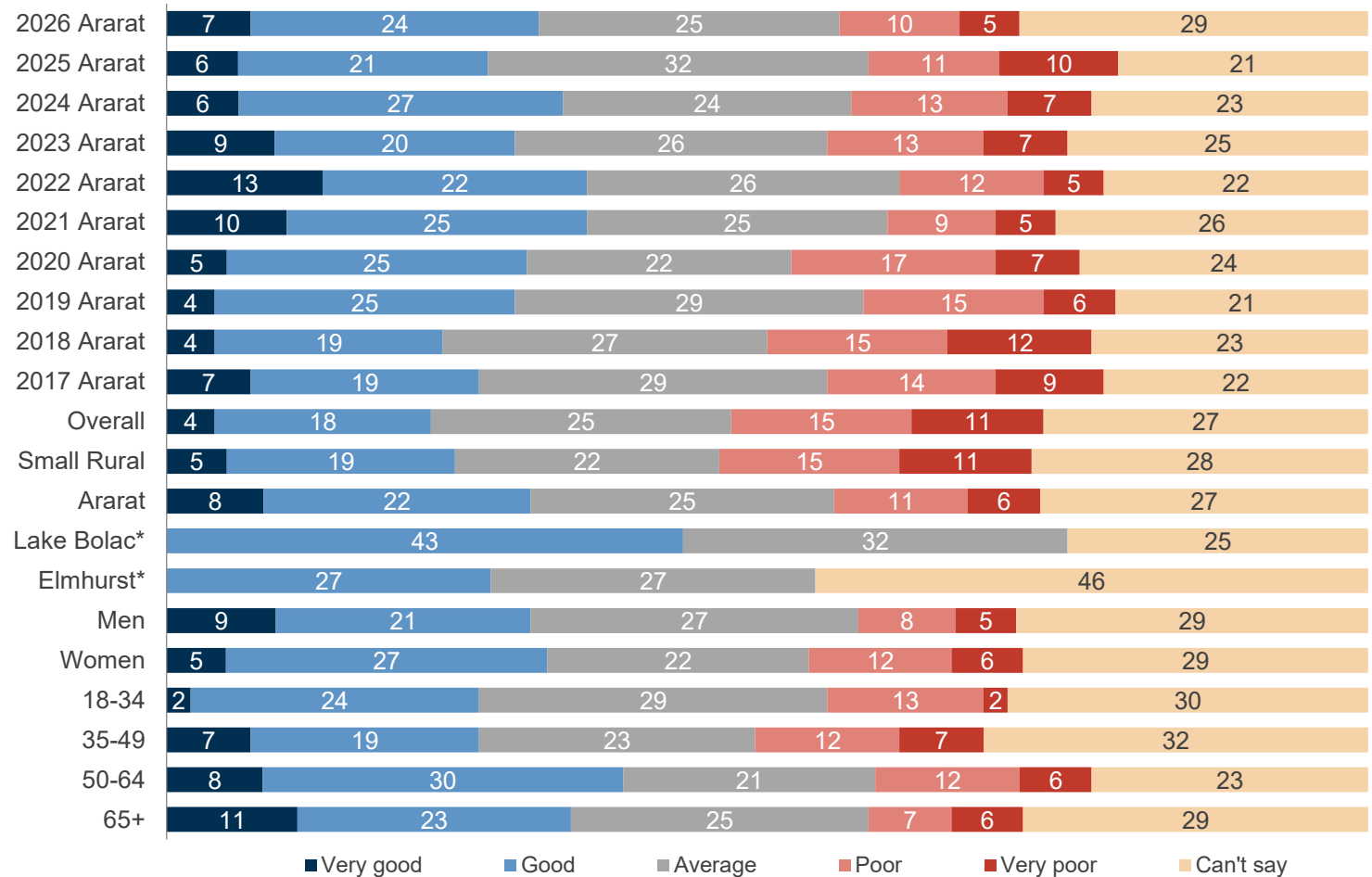
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Environmental sustainability importance



2026 environmental sustainability importance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Women	72▲	72	73	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	71▲	65	80	69	77	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	70*	68	62	68	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	67	67	69	69	73	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	66*	68	59	63	57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	66	69	64	67	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	65	66	68	69	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	65	65	68	70	73	74	74	74	73
Small Rural	65	63	66	67	70	71	70	72	70
50-64	63	64	68	69	73	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	62	64	64	71	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	60▼	61	65	65	69	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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.

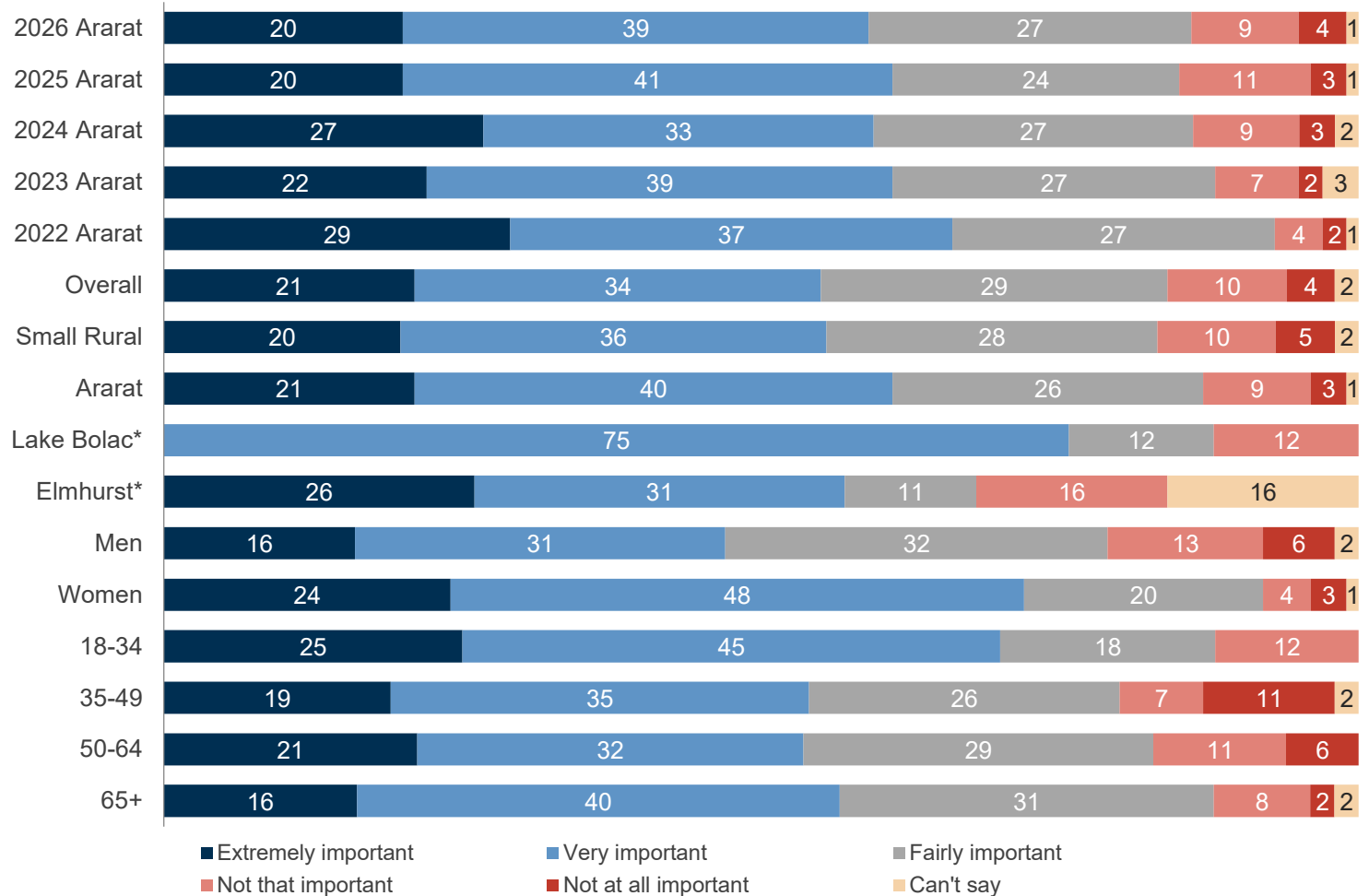
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Environmental sustainability performance



2026 environmental sustainability performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	75*	67	69	65	57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	65	66	62	63	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	65	64	67	66	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	63	63	61	64	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	63	64	63	63	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	63	64	63	62	63	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	62	64	65	61	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	61	61	56	53	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	60▼	59	60	60	61	62	60	62	63
Small Rural	60▼	58	59	59	59	61	57	59	62
18-34	59	63	63	65	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Elmhurst	57*	69	54	65	52	n/a	n/a	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.

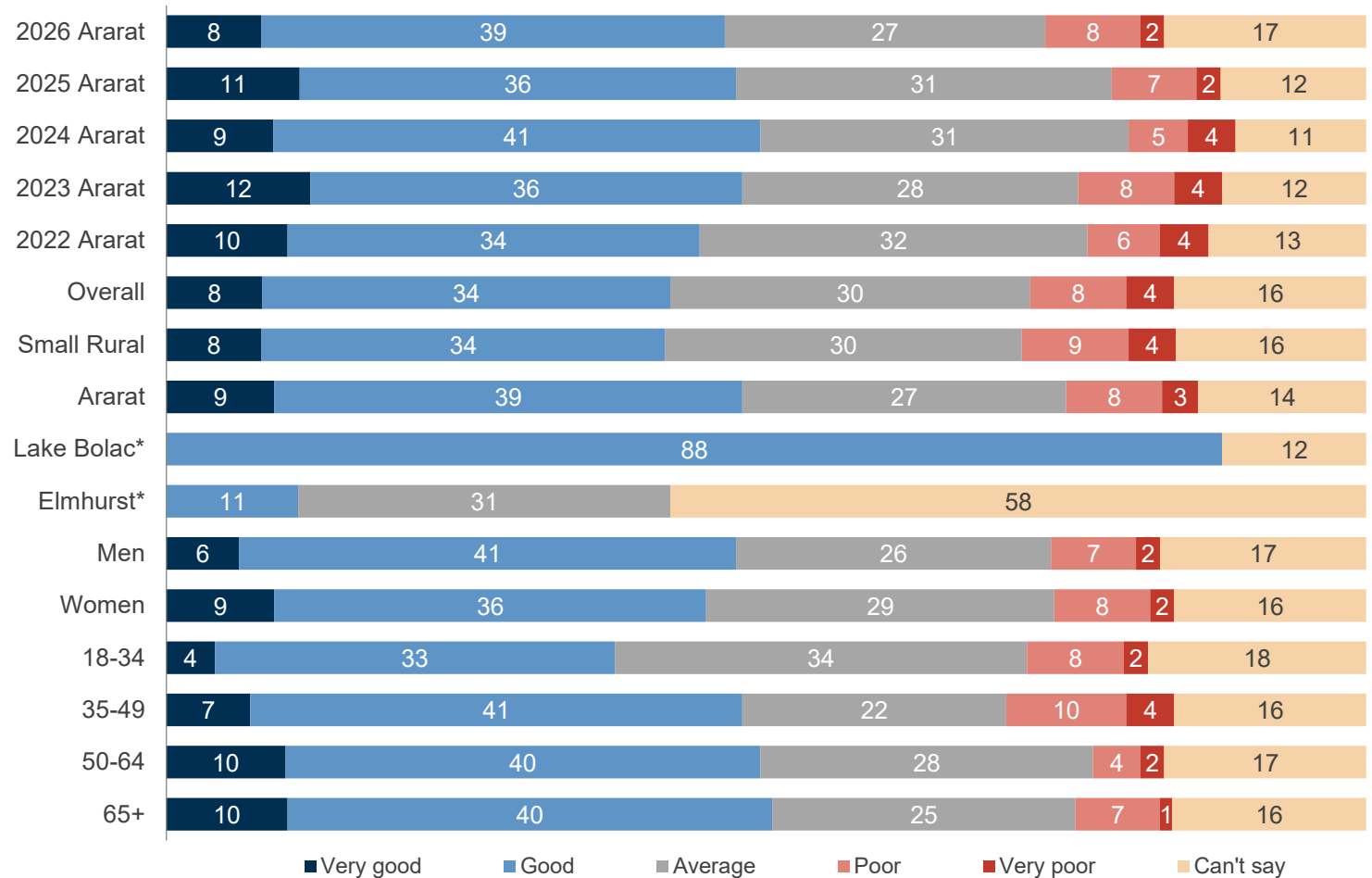
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Environmental sustainability performance



2026 environmental sustainability performance (%)



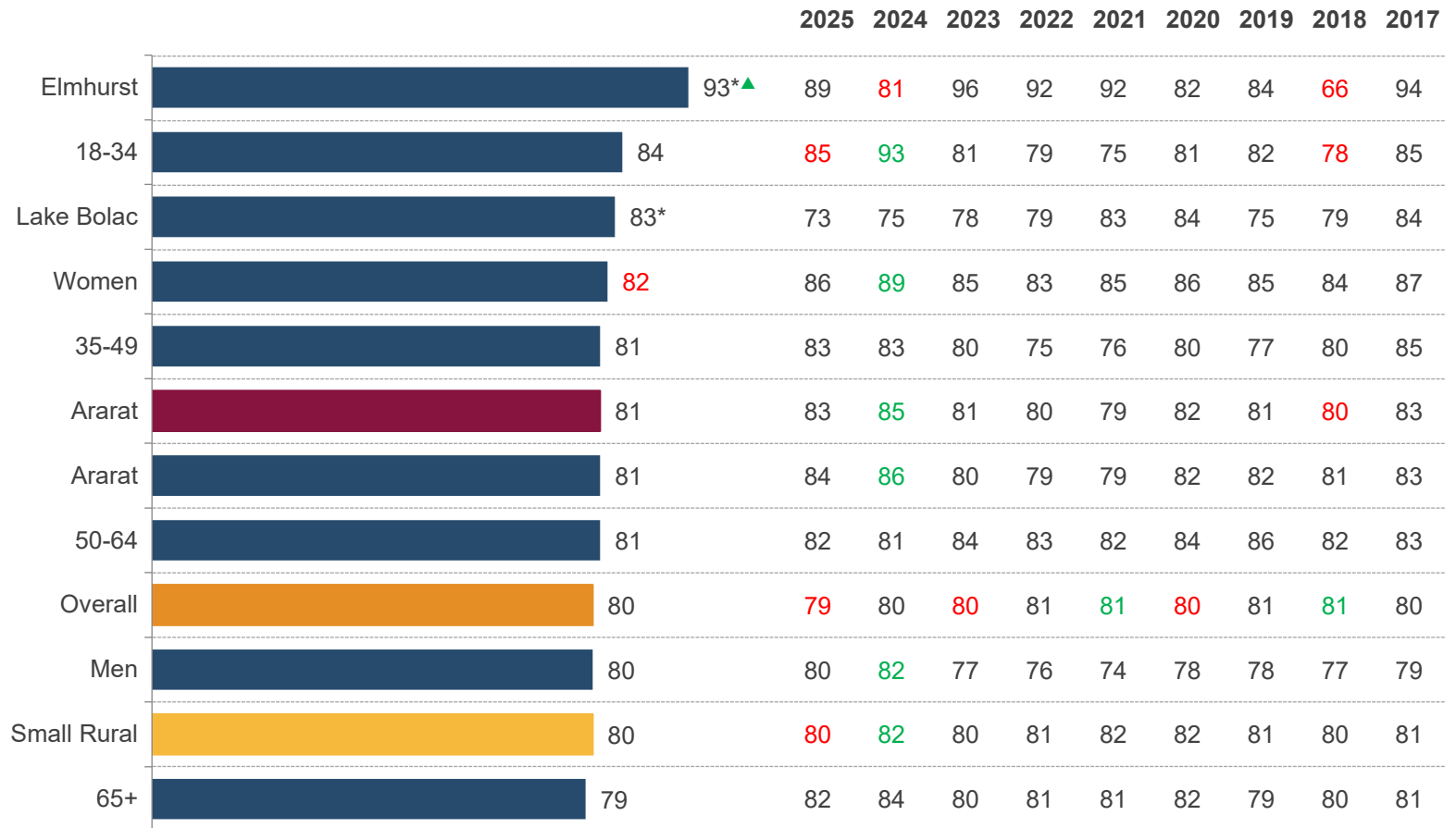
Q2. How has Council performed on 'Environmental sustainability' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 12 Councils asked group: 5  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Emergency and disaster management importance



2026 emergency and disaster management importance (index scores)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Emergency and disaster management' 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.

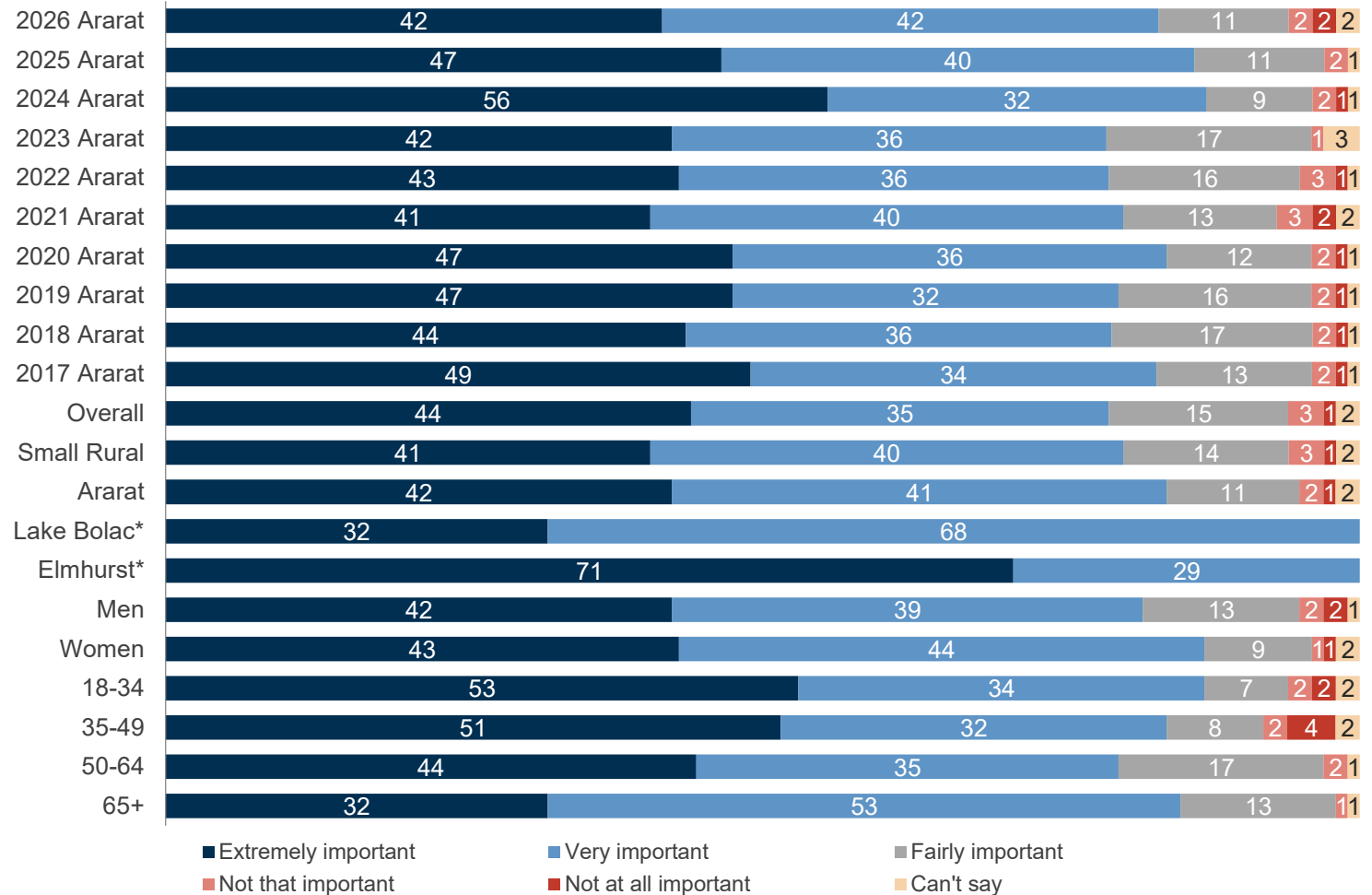
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Emergency and disaster management importance



2026 emergency and disaster management importance (%)



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

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 5 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Emergency and disaster management performance



2026 Emergency and disaster management performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	81	67	74	72	73	48	66	64	64
65+	81	77	76	79	79	76	73	72	76
50-64	76	75	74	70	76	75	78	74	71
Women	77	78	71	74	75	75	74	70	74
Ararat	75	76	72	74	75	74	73	70	72
Men	74	73	74	74	75	73	72	70	70
Ararat	75	77	74	75	75	75	73	72	74
35-49	67	71	65	67	72	69	69	63	68
Elmhurst	65	57	58	70	89	68	75	63	82
Small Rural	66	66	66	68	72	70	72	72	72
Overall	65	65	65	66	71	68	72	71	70
18-34	71	79	72	77	72	76	72	70	72

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Emergency and disaster management' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 4

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

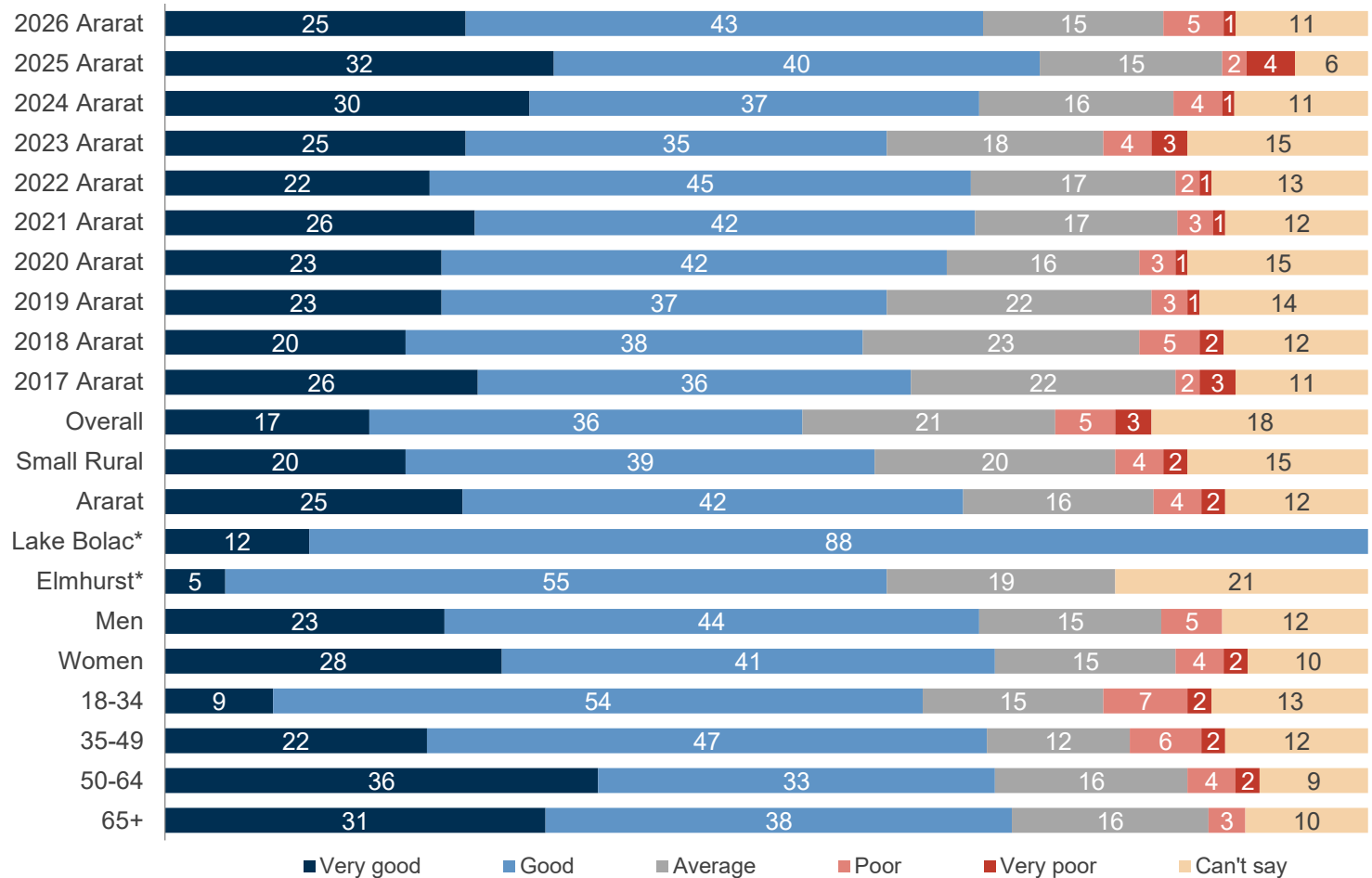
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Emergency and disaster management performance



2026 emergency and disaster management performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Emergency and disaster management' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 8 Councils asked group: 4  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Roadside slashing and weed control importance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Elmhurst	93*▲	88	87	94	93	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	86▲	77	81	82	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lake Bolac	80*	92	66	92	89	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Women	79	82	80	82	82	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	79	79	80	79	79	79	78	74	73	74
Small Rural	79	80	80	81	81	82	80	76	76	76
Ararat	78	79	79	80	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	78	80	81	83	76	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	77	77	78	79	78	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	77	76	79	78	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	77	78	78	77	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	75	82	80	80	86	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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.

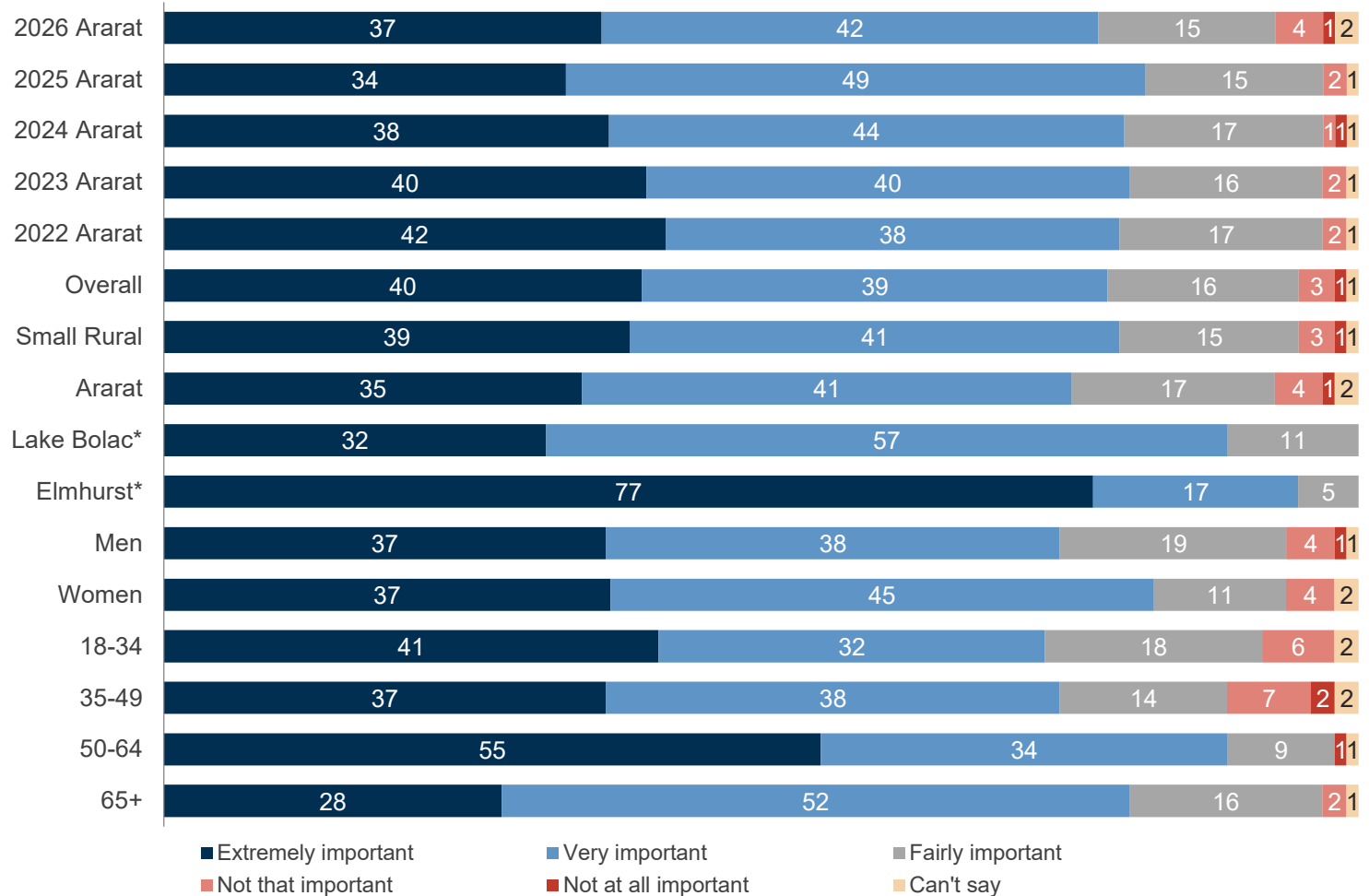
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Roadside slashing and weed control performance



2026 roadside slashing and weed control performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	35	43	39	58	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Men	54	49	54	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18-34	50	43	56	59	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
50-64	56	46	53	51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	56	48	54	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
65+	58	53	51	55	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ararat	53	48	52	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Rural	49	46	47	50	49	48	55	54	51
Elmhurst	52	42	49	30	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall	47	45	46	49	51	49	56	55	53
Women	51	47	51	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
35-49	45	46	50	44	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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.

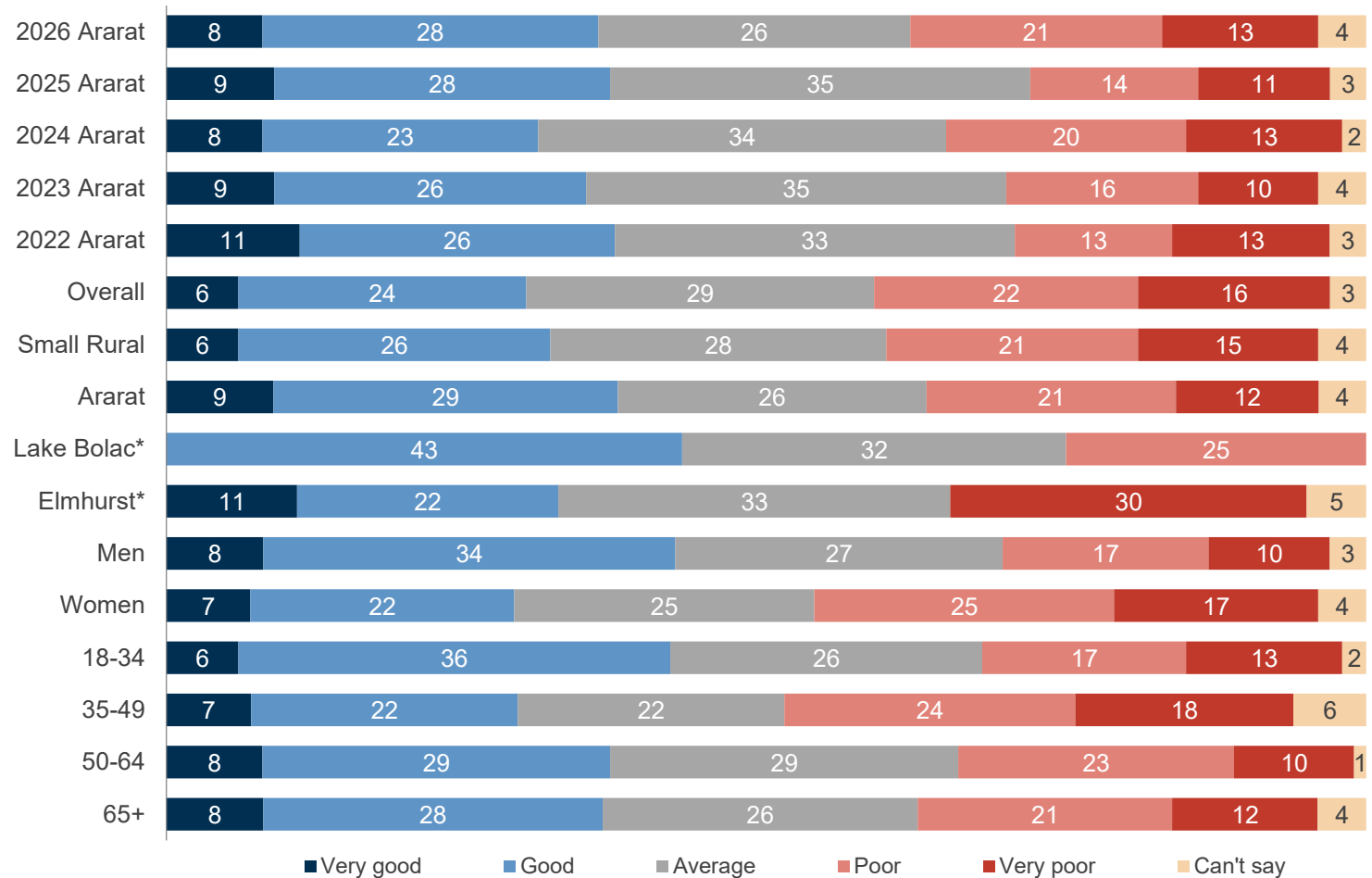
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# 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  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area importance



2026 unsealed roads importance (index scores)

		2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
50-64	86	82	89	87	85	81	86	87	86	83
Women	83	86	84	88	87	80	81	85	88	85
Small Rural	83	85	85	85	85	84	83	82	84	81
Overall	83	83	84	83	83	81	80	80	80	79
35-49	83	86	78	85	91	86	86	86	86	87
18-34	83	88	84	90	82	78	76	80	90	79
Ararat	82	84	83	86	85	81	81	84	86	83
Ararat	81	82	81	84	85	80	80	82	85	80
Men	80	82	82	83	84	83	81	83	85	81
Elmhurst	80*	91	90	89	95	89	87	89	89	90
65+	79	82	82	83	84	81	79	83	84	82
Lake Bolac	75*	94	92	93	87	98	100	88	94	92

Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

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

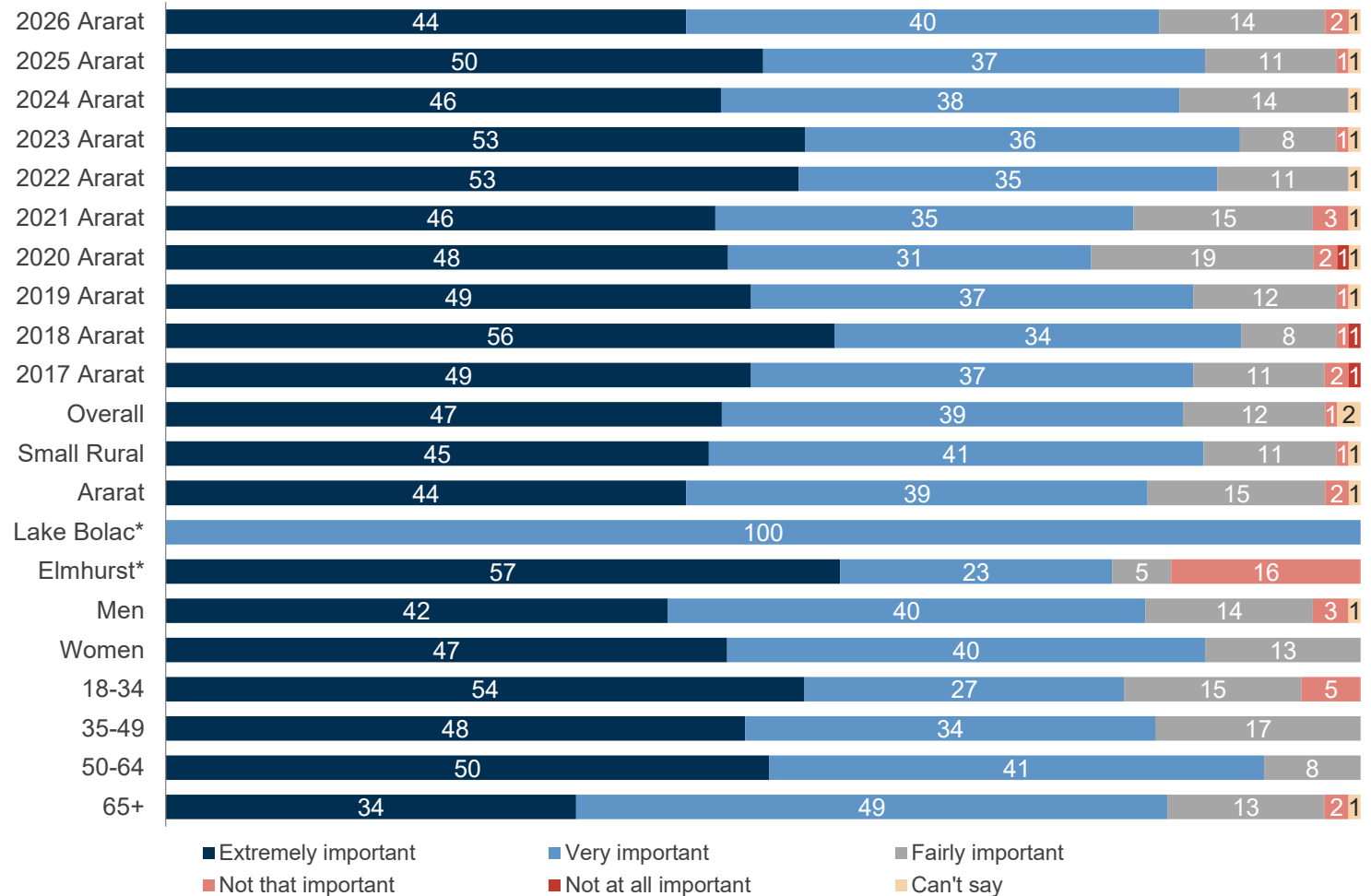
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area importance



2026 unsealed roads importance (%)



Q1. Firstly, how important should 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' be as a responsibility for Council?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 6 Councils asked group: 2

\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area performance



2026 unsealed roads performance (index scores)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Lake Bolac	49	56	34	52	46	16	14	19	24
65+	54	47	48	52	54	46	41	37	39
50-64	50	41	43	48	48	45	39	35	36
Men	50	44	44	45	51	46	41	29	36
Ararat	48	45	42	47	50	44	39	33	38
Ararat	49	46	45	50	50	45	42	36	42
Women	47	45	41	50	49	41	36	37	40
Small Rural	40	35	38	42	44	43	43	40	43
18-34	43	40	39	54	46	46	40	32	43
35-49	44	48	34	32	50	37	34	25	36
Overall	38	36	37	41	45	44	44	43	44
Elmhurst	44	34	24	26	51	34	39	21	25

Q2. How has Council performed on 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 4

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

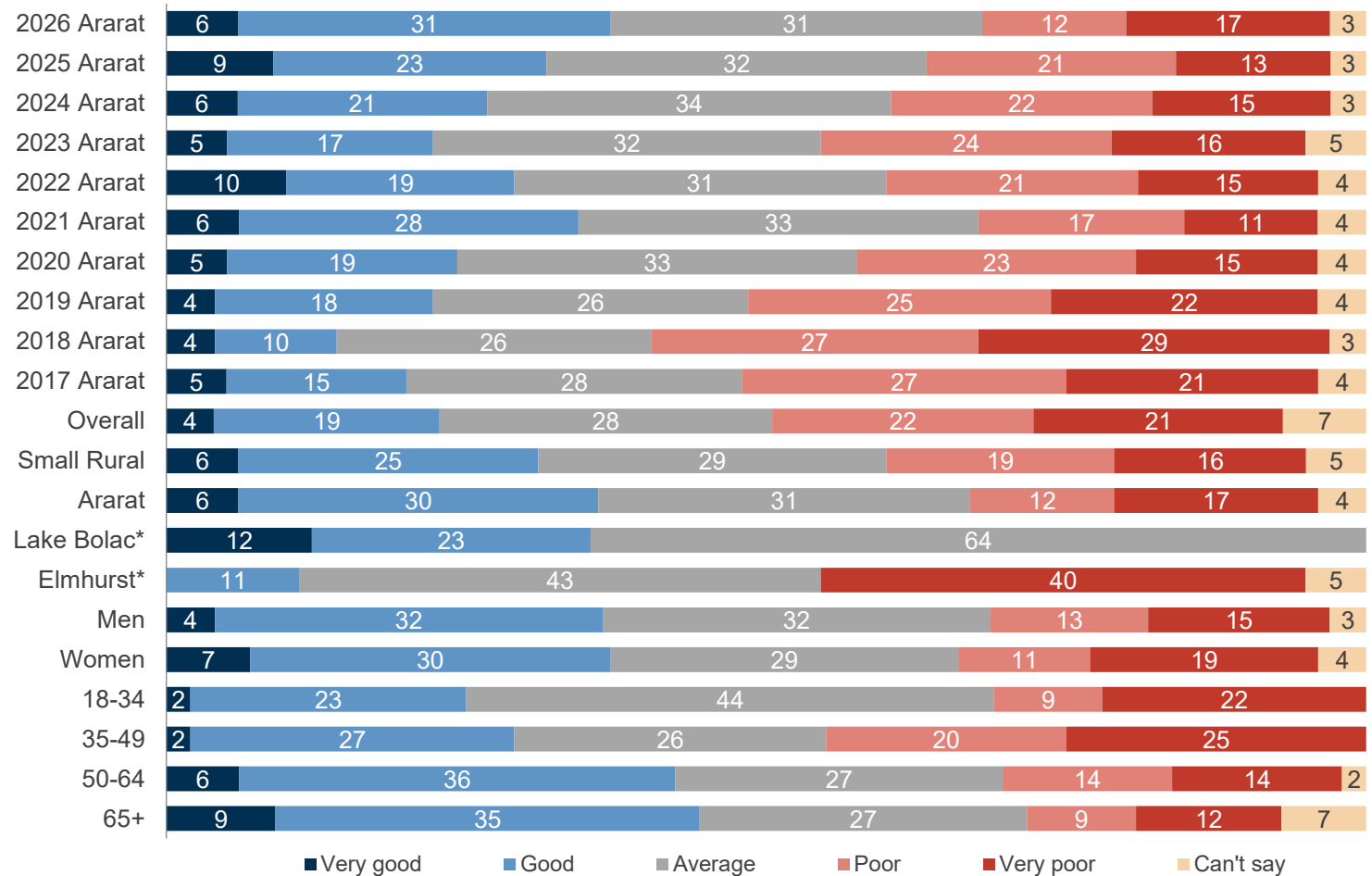
\*Caution: small sample size < n=30



# Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area performance



2026 unsealed roads performance (%)



Q2. How has Council performed on 'Maintenance of unsealed roads in your area' over the last 12 months?  
 Base: All respondents. Councils asked: 10 Councils asked group: 4  
 \*Caution: small sample size < n=30



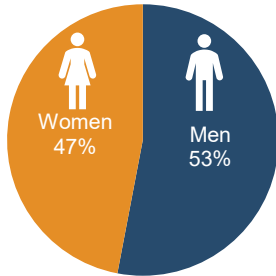
# **Detailed demographics**



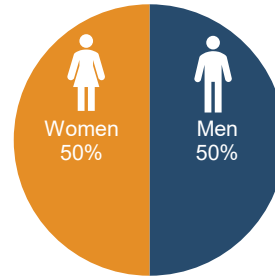
# Gender and age profile

## 2026 gender

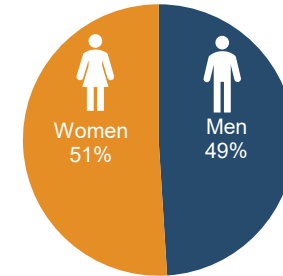
Ararat



Small Rural

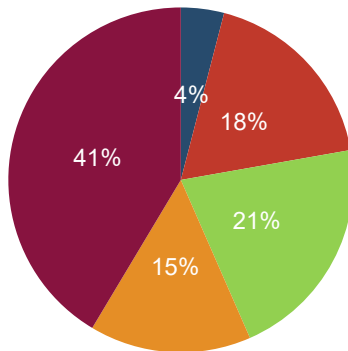


Overall

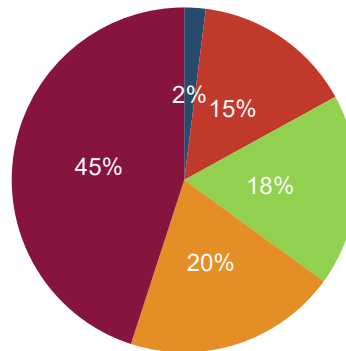


## 2026 age

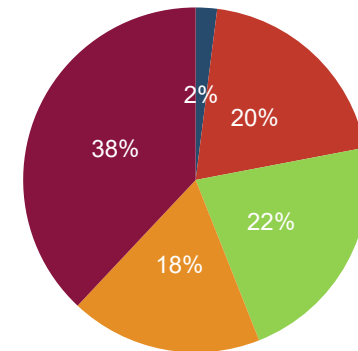
Ararat



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.

A large, dark blue, stylized letter 'W' graphic dominates the right side of the page. Inside the 'W', there are faint, light blue data visualizations including a line graph with a downward trend, a bar chart with several bars of varying heights, and a grid pattern.

# **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 Ararat Rural City 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 9,600 people aged 18 years or over for Ararat Rural City Council, according to ABS estimates.

Demographic	Actual survey sample size	Weighted base	Maximum margin of error at 95% confidence interval
Ararat Rural City Council	400	400	+/-4.8
Men	191	210	+/-7.0
Women	207	188	+/-6.8
Ararat	322	323	+/-5.4
Lake Bolac	5	6	+/-49.0
Elmhurst	11	13	+/-31.0
18-34 years	46	88	+/-14.6
35-49 years	49	86	+/-14.1
50-64 years	83	61	+/-10.8
65+ years	222	165	+/-6.5



## 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

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

- 2025, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 28<sup>th</sup> January – 16<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2024, n=400 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 29<sup>th</sup> January – 18<sup>th</sup> March.
- 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=401 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 28<sup>th</sup> January – 18<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2020, n=401 completed interviews, conducted in the period of 30<sup>th</sup> January – 22<sup>nd</sup> March.
- 2019, n=408 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 Ararat Rural City 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 Ararat Rural City Council.

Survey sample matched to the demographic profile of Ararat Rural City Council as determined by the most recent ABS population estimates was purchased from an accredited supplier of publicly available phone records, including up to 59% mobile phone numbers to cater to the diversity of residents within Ararat Rural City Council, particularly younger people.

A total of n=400 completed interviews were achieved in Ararat Rural City Council. Survey fieldwork was conducted in the period of February 2<sup>nd</sup> - March 15<sup>th</sup>, 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

Ararat Rural City 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 Ararat Rural City 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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