

Towong Shire Council

Group: small shire

This fact sheet uses graphs and data to examine this council's revenue, expenditure and financial sustainability over recent years. This information is intended to help readers understand the impacts of rate capping, which was introduced in 2016–17 to restrict the amount councils can increase their general rates and municipal charges in each financial year.

You can compare this council's data against its 'group' by looking at the fact sheet for small shires. Further information is available at <http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/outcomes-reports>, including an interactive version of this fact sheet, a reader's guide to help you understand key terms used in this fact sheet, and information about the sector as a whole.

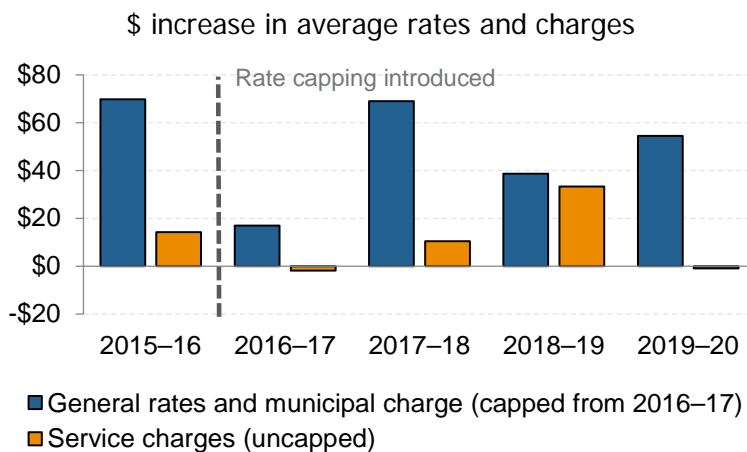


© OpenStreetMap contributors

Key facts	
Population (June 2019):	6,040
Size (km ²):	6,675
Length of local roads (km):	1,183
Population per km of roads:	5
Council employees (FTE, 2019–20):	84
Submitted an application for a higher cap for any year between 2016–17 and 2019–20?	Yes (see table below)

Rates

What has happened to average rates and charges (2019–20 dollars)?



Year	Average rates and charges	Applicable rate cap
2015–16	\$1,822	n/a
2016–17	\$1,837	6.34% ^a
2017–18	\$1,916	5.55% ^a
2018–19	\$1,988	5.55% ^a
2019–20	\$2,042	5.55% ^a

^a Approved higher cap.

Rates (continued)



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

Have council's average rates complied with the applicable rate caps?

2018–19 (5.55%)	2019–20 (5.55%)	2020–21 (5.55%)
Yes (approved higher cap)	Yes (approved higher cap)	Yes (approved higher cap)

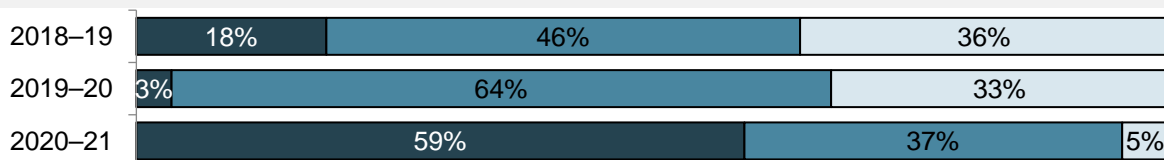
How have rates changed for different ratepayers?

Council's rating strategy 2020–21

Council levies 4 differential rates (for different types of property), a municipal charge and uses service charges to recover the cost of waste services. More information about council's differential rate categories and charges can be found in council's adopted budget.

Distribution of rates increases and decreases

The applicable rate cap is applied to council's average rate, which means some individual rates increased by more and some increased by less than the applicable cap (or even decreased).



- % of rates notices decreasing
- % of rates notices increasing by less than the applicable cap
- % of rates notices increasing by more than the applicable cap

Ratepayers by property class (2019–20 dollars)

	Residential ratepayers	Commercial & Industrial ratepayers	Rural ratepayers
	40% of ratepayers	5% of ratepayers	54% of ratepayers
	\$2.8m (31%) of rates and charges revenue in 2019–20	\$0.4m (4%) of rates and charges revenue in 2019–20	\$6.0m (65%) of rates and charges revenue in 2019–20
	2.6% average annual increase between 2015–16 and 2019–20	-0.5% average annual increase between 2015–16 and 2019–20	3.0% average annual increase between 2015–16 and 2019–20

Source: Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (unaudited data). Includes both capped and uncapped rates and charges. 'Other' category of property class has been omitted.

Revenue



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

Where is council's money coming from?

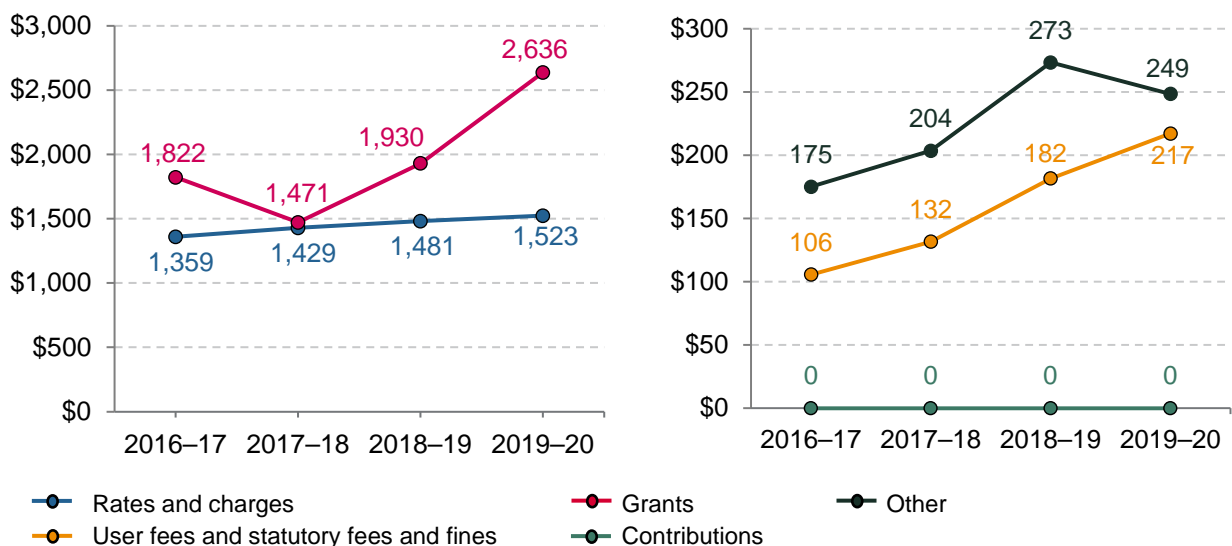
Revenue (2019–20 \$m and % of total revenue)

	2016–17		2017–18		2018–19		2019–20	
	\$m	%	\$m	%	\$m	%	\$m	%
Rates and charges	8.2	(39%)	8.6	(44%)	9.0	(38%)	9.2	(33%)
User fees and statutory fees and fines	0.6	(3%)	0.8	(4%)	1.1	(5%)	1.3	(5%)
Grants	11.0	(53%)	8.9	(45%)	11.7	(50%)	15.9	(57%)
Contributions	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)
Other	1.1	(5%)	1.2	(6%)	1.7	(7%)	1.5	(5%)
Total	20.9		19.5		23.4		27.9	

In real terms, Towong Shire Council's total revenue increased between 2016–17 and 2019–20, reflecting increases in all revenue sources (except contributions). Revenue from grants was higher in 2016–17 due to an advance payment of Commonwealth financial assistance grants, and in 2019–20 due to the receipt of bushfire relief and recovery grants.

Grants was the largest source of council's revenue, accounting for between 45 and 57 per cent of total revenue between 2016–17 and 2019–20.

Revenue per person (2019–20 dollars)



In terms of revenue per person (which adjusts for population growth), revenue from all sources trended upwards in real terms between 2016–17 and 2019–20. Council did not receive any revenue from contributions between 2016–17 and 2019–20.

Expenditure



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

How much money is council spending?

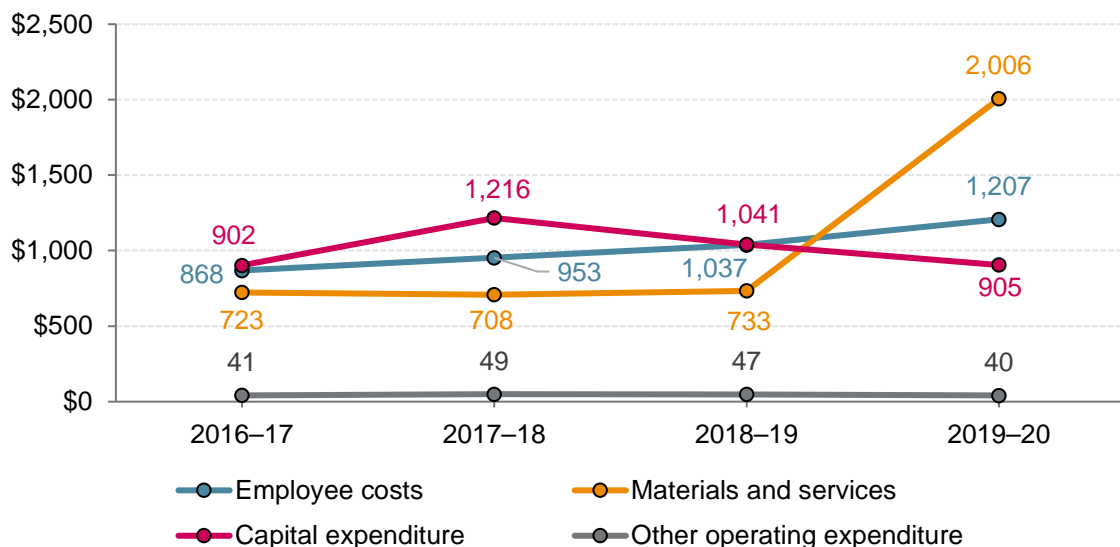
Expenditure (2019–20 \$m and % of total expenditure)

	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Operating expenditure	9.9 (64%)	10.3 (58%)	11.0 (64%)	19.7 (78%)
Employee costs	5.2 (34%)	5.8 (33%)	6.3 (36%)	7.3 (29%)
Materials and services	4.4 (29%)	4.3 (24%)	4.4 (26%)	12.1 (48%)
Other operating expenditure	0.2 (2%)	0.3 (2%)	0.3 (2%)	0.2 (1%)
Capital expenditure	5.5 (36%)	7.3 (42%)	6.3 (36%)	5.5 (22%)
Total	15.3	17.7	17.3	25.1

In real terms, Towong Shire Council's total expenditure increased between 2016–17 and 2019–20, particularly in 2019–20 due to an increase in expenditure on materials and services related to bushfire relief and recovery.

Capital expenditure was council's largest area of expenditure in 2016–17 and 2017–18, and equal largest (with employee costs) in 2018–19. However, following the increase in expenditure on materials and services in 2019–20, this was council's largest area of expenditure in that year.

Expenditure per person (2019–20 dollars)



In terms of expenditure per person (which adjusts for population growth), employee costs trended upwards in real terms between 2016–17 and 2019–20, as did expenditure on materials and services (with a significant increase in 2019–20 related to bushfire relief and recovery). Capital expenditure per person increased in 2017–18 before decreasing in real terms in 2018–19 and 2019–20.



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

Has council's capital expenditure pattern changed?

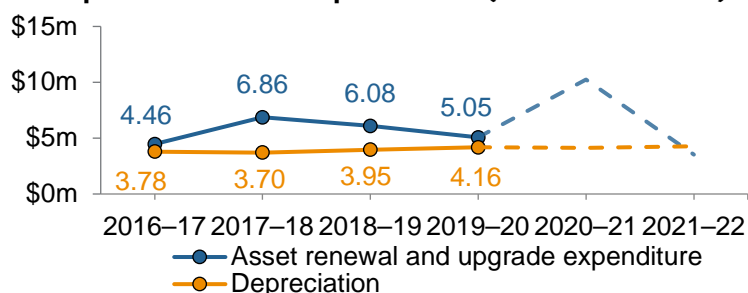
Capital expenditure (2019–20 \$m and % of total capital expenditure)

	2016–17		2017–18		2018–19		2019–20	
	\$m		\$m		\$m		\$m	
Renewal	3.9	(71%)	5.8	(79%)	5.0	(79%)	3.7	(67%)
Upgrade	0.6	(10%)	1.1	(15%)	1.1	(18%)	1.4	(26%)
Expansion	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)
New	1.0	(18%)	0.5	(7%)	0.2	(3%)	0.4	(8%)
Total	5.5		7.3		6.3		5.5	

In real terms, Towong Shire Council's spending on asset renewal trended downwards between 2017–18 and 2019–20, following an increase in 2017–18. Spending on new assets trended downwards in real terms between 2016–17 and 2018–19, before increasing in 2019–20. Spending on asset upgrades trended upwards in real terms between 2016–17 and 2019–20. Asset renewal remained the highest share of capital expenditure between 2016–17 and 2019–20 (accounting for 67 to 79 per cent of total capital expenditure).

Is council renewing its assets (such as roads, parks and buildings)?

Council assets: comparing renewal and upgrade expenditure with depreciation (2019-20 dollars)



Renewal & upgrade expenditure as a percentage of depreciation

2016–17	118%
2017–18	185%
2018–19	154%
2019–20	121%
2020–21	248% (forecast data)
2021–22	83% (forecast data)

Council's spending on the renewal and upgrade of its assets trended downwards in real terms between 2017–18 and 2019–20, following an increase in 2017–18. However, this spending remained above the amount of depreciation (the decline in value of council's assets caused by age and use).

Renewal and upgrade expenditure was forecast to increase further above 100 per cent of depreciation in 2020–21, before decreasing below 100 per cent of depreciation in 2021–22.

Services



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

Which service areas is council spending its money in?

Expenditure by function (2019–20 \$m and % of total services expenditure)

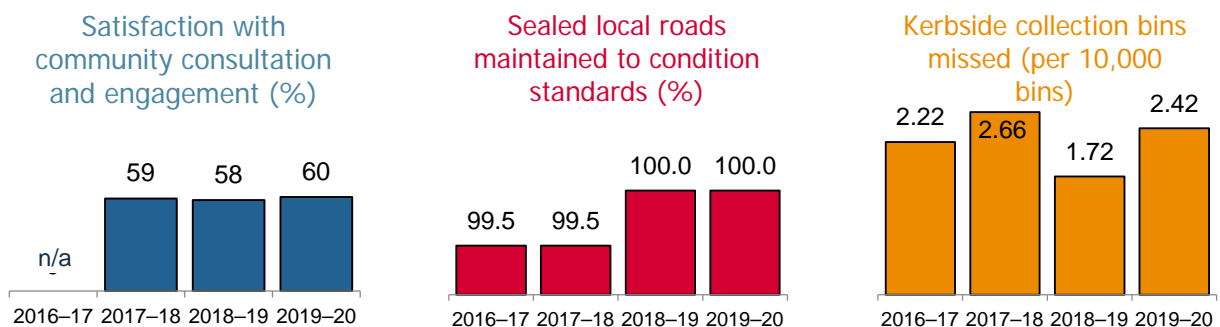
	2016–17		2017–18		2018–19		2019–20	
	\$m	(%)	\$m	(%)	\$m	(%)	\$m	(%)
Aged and disabled services	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.1	(0%)
Business and economic services	1.1	(8%)	1.1	(8%)	0.8	(5%)	0.8	(3%)
Environment	0.4	(3%)	0.2	(1%)	0.1	(1%)	0.4	(2%)
Family and community services	1.2	(9%)	1.2	(8%)	1.2	(8%)	1.6	(7%)
Governance	2.9	(22%)	3.7	(26%)	4.2	(28%)	9.4	(39%)
Local roads and bridges	5.4	(39%)	5.2	(37%)	6.5	(43%)	9.5	(40%)
Recreation and culture	1.6	(12%)	1.5	(11%)	1.1	(8%)	1.0	(4%)
Traffic and street management	0.1	(0%)	0.1	(1%)	0.0	(0%)	0.3	(1%)
Waste management	1.0	(7%)	1.2	(8%)	1.1	(7%)	1.0	(4%)
Other	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)	0.0	(0%)
Total	13.6		14.0		15.1		24.0	

Which service areas have experienced the biggest changes in spending?



Source: Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (unaudited). Council Annual Reports may provide further explanation of these expenditure changes.

Has there been a change in service quality and community satisfaction?

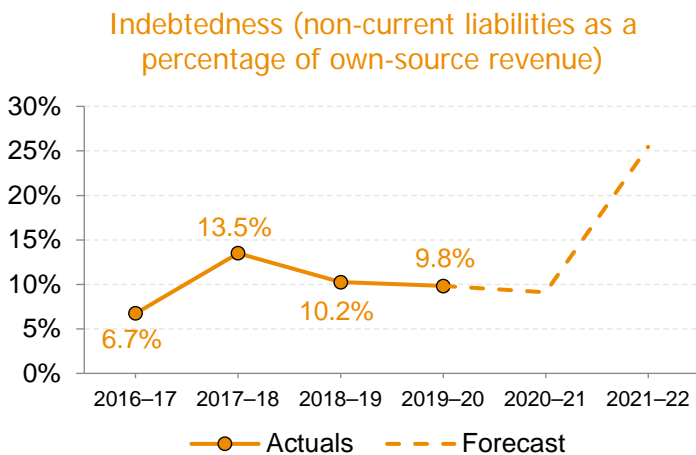
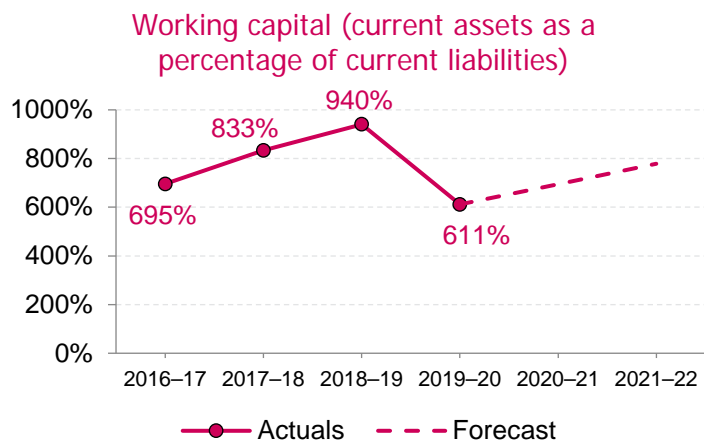
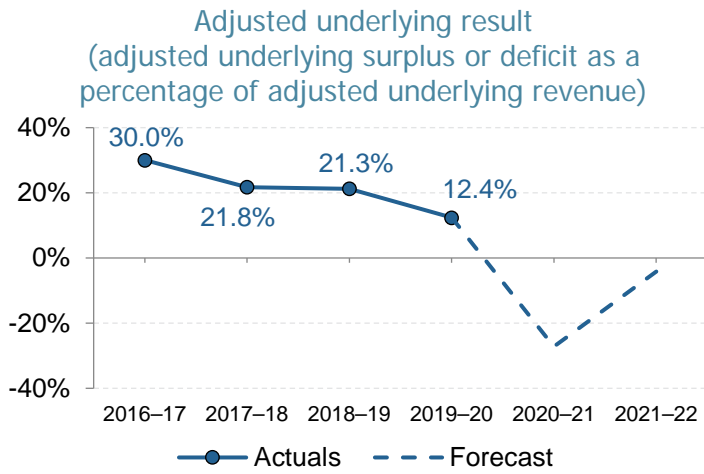


Financial position



See the reader's guide for data sources and useful information.
 Note: The numbers in this fact sheet have been adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 2019–20 dollars.

Is council operating sustainably?



Between 2016–17 and 2019–20, Towong Shire Council reported an average **adjusted underlying result** of 21.4 per cent. An ongoing positive result suggests there is enough ongoing revenue to continue to fund the current level of service provision. Variations over the period reflect the timing of receipt of grants.

Council could meet its current financial obligations with a reported average **working capital ratio** of 770 per cent between 2016–17 and 2019–20.

The reported average **indebtedness ratio** of 10.1 per cent between 2016–17 and 2019–20 places the council in the Victorian Auditor-General's low risk category for this indicator, which means there is no concern over council's ability to repay debt from the revenue it controls.

Note: Some of the year-on-year changes in these financial indicators may be due to the advance payment of Commonwealth grants (particularly in 2016–17) and changes to accounting standards or the impact of coronavirus (in 2019–20). See the reader's guide for more information.