

**FEBRUARY 2024**

# **CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY REPORT**

## **For: Residents of Port Phillip**



Peter Whitelaw Consulting Pty Ltd

ABN 79 957 257 737

PO Box 285 Albert Park Vic 3206

[peter@peterwhitelaw.com.au](mailto:peter@peterwhitelaw.com.au)

[www.peterwhitelaw.com.au](http://www.peterwhitelaw.com.au)

0411 107 039

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By Peter Whitelaw Consulting Pty Ltd [www.peterwhitelaw.com.au](http://www.peterwhitelaw.com.au) 0411 107 039

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Copy of verbatim responses to open questions (Confidential – restricted distribution)	Separate

# 1. Overview

This survey was instigated by the committee of Residents of Port Phillip (RoPP) who expressed concern about the results of an annual survey of ratepayers commissioned by the City of Port Phillip.

The council relies upon the results of the survey conducted by JWS Research and titled “2023 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey”. It can be access at:  
<https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/media/wthh5jtg/j01207-css-2023-port-phillip-city-council-report.pdf>

That survey report contains a section on “Customer Service” which appears to include only two questions:

*Q5a. Have you or any member of your household had any recent contact with Port Phillip City Council in any of the following ways?*

*Q5c. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Port Phillip City Council for customer service? Please keep in mind we do not mean the actual outcome but rather the actual service that was received.*

The report provides a “2023 customer service rating” that shows over recent years this rating has declined.

2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
67	66	68	73	74

The RoPP committee regularly communicates with a large number of residents and ratepayers in the Port Phillip local government area and is aware of considerable dissatisfaction with the City of Port Phillip customer service.

The committee agreed that an independent survey of residents’ views was needed. The objectives were:

- a. To conduct a survey of as many as possible residents of the City of Port Phillip using a detailed questionnaire to identify their views about the customer service practises of Council.
- b. To provide visibility of customer perceptions of City of Port Phillip Council in relation to customer service performance and their relationships with residents.
- c. To provide an opportunity for City of Port Phillip Council to be recognised for areas of service which are viewed as meeting or exceeding expectations and to highlight areas where there are opportunities for improvement.

The survey was designed on a no-charge basis by Peter Whitelaw, a resident, property owner and experienced customer centricity consultant. Several members of the RoPP committee assisted with the development of the on-line survey and the promotion of the survey to residents.

A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions was designed and made available online via the RoPP website utilising the Survey Monkey application.

The City of Port Phillip council has the benefit of access to all rate-payer’s contact details and therefore is easily able to provide the survey firm with a list of 900 survey participants. RoPP does not have that access and therefore has had to rely upon attracting residents to participate in the survey. This means that the survey is not a random sample of all residents.

Residents and business were invited to participate in the survey though a leaflet hand delivered to their location and through email, website and RoPP newspaper promotion. A total of 523 valid responses were received.

Because the respondents to the survey were self-nominating we anticipated that disaffected residents were likely to be willing to participate so that they could send a message to council.

What we did not expect was the overwhelming 82% of participants declaring that they were 'detractors' through the Net Promoter Score question.

We do not suggest that this response is indicative of the whole population of the city of Port Phillip, however it does indicate that there are issues that need to be addressed by council.

It is recommended that RoPP repeat this survey in two years to assess whether has been a significant improvement in scores and less negative responses.

## 2. Questionnaire

These are the questions submitted to residents on-line.

### Profile Questions

1. Please provide your contact details and we will send you the results of this survey. Please see our privacy statement.  
Postcode:  
Email Address:
2. Please indicate if you are a:  
Property Owner  
Property Renter  
Business Owner

### Net Promoter Score (NPS) Questions

3. How likely are you to recommend Port Phillip Council to a colleague or friend?  
A scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = Not Likely at all and 10 = Extremely Likely
4. What is your reason for giving this score?

### Performance/Relationship Statements – A scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

5. Port Phillip Council responds quickly and effectively to your needs.
6. You feel you are a valued customer of Port Phillip Council.
7. Service is delivered when promised.
8. Port Phillip Council is easy to do business with.
9. You consider Port Phillip Council to be innovative in what it does.
10. Port Phillip Council treats you fairly and respectfully.
11. Value for Money: Port Phillip Council represents good value for money.
12. You trust Port Phillip Council completely.
13. The services delivered by Port Phillip Council meet your expectations.
14. Port Phillip Council is perfectly honest with you.

### Strength/Weakness Questions

15. What is Port Phillip Council's single greatest strength?
16. What is Port Phillip Council's single greatest weakness?

### 3. Survey Responses

A total of 523 valid responses were received.

Postcodes provided were:

3206	Albert Park, Middle Park	26.1%
3182	St Kilda	20.0%
3207	Garden City, Port Melbourne	18.1%
3183	Balaclava, St Kilda East	14.0%
3184	Brighton Rd, Elwood	10.5%
3205	South Melbourne	8.0%
3004	Melbourne, St Kilda Rd	2.1%
3185	Elsternwick, Ripponlea	1.2%

Type of respondents provided were:

Property Owner	85%
Property Renter	10%
Business Owner	5%

It became apparent that it was not possible to deliver the leaflets to the majority of high-rise residential buildings, public housing complexes and businesses due to restricted access and/or the absence of letter boxes. This explains the small representation of Property Renters and Businesses.

## 4. Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Of 470 valid responses to this question, 19 (4.0%) were Promoters who gave a score of 9 or 10, 62 (13.2%) were Passives who gave a score between 7 and 8, and 389 (82.8%) were Detractors who gave a score between 0 and 6 (82.8%).

Net Promoter Score = 82.8 - 4 = minus 78.8

See Section 11. of this report for an explanation of NPS and comparisons with other organisations.

## 5. Themes from “Reasons for Net Promoter Score”

These themes were obtained by asking ChatGPT (Artificial Intelligence) to identify the main themes from the verbatim responses received to Question 4. in the survey.

### **Poor Service Delivery and Inefficiency:**

- Lack of responsiveness to resident concerns
- Difficulty in communication with council staff
- Inadequate or delayed response to requests
- Inefficient processes and bureaucracy
- Issues with garbage collection, street cleaning, and maintenance
- Overcharging for services without adequate delivery
- Waste of taxpayer money on unnecessary projects

### **Council Decision Making and Priorities:**

- Perception of council pursuing its own agenda rather than serving residents
- Lack of transparency and consultation in decision-making
- Prioritization of projects that don't align with resident needs
- Concerns about high rates compared to perceived low service quality
- Overemphasis on political issues rather than core services

### **Infrastructure, Maintenance, Safety:**

- Concerns about cleanliness, rubbish collection, and maintenance of amenities
- Need for improvements in parks, gardens, and recreational facilities
- Concerns about safety, crime, and cleanliness in public areas
- Issues with parking, especially for residents
- Calls for better maintenance of streets, footpaths, and public amenities
- Issues related to infrastructure, maintenance of public spaces, and the condition of roads and footpaths are raised by multiple respondents.
- Complaints about poor maintenance of roads, footpaths, and parks.
- Mention of broken infrastructure like gutters, uneven pavements, and overgrown median strips.

### **Community Engagement, Consultation and Decision-Making:**

- Perception of token or insincere consultation efforts
- Residents feeling unheard or disregarded in decision-making processes
- Calls for more meaningful engagement with the community
- Some respondents feel that the council is out of touch with the community, does not listen to residents' concerns, and makes decisions without proper consultation.

Residents feel unheard, with complaints about insufficient consultation and responsiveness to community feedback.

Criticisms of council decisions being made without consideration for resident input or preferences.

#### **Financial Management and Transparency:**

Criticisms of excessive rates and wasteful spending

Lack of transparency in budget allocation and expenditure

Concerns about value for money and accountability in financial management

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the council's financial management, including high rates, perceived wasteful spending on pet projects, and a lack of value for money.

#### **Political Dynamics and Governance:**

Perception of council being influenced by political considerations

Calls for more impartial, transparent, and resident-focused governance

Criticisms of individual councillors and their responsiveness to resident concerns

#### **Rubbish Collection and Waste Management:**

Many respondents express frustration with the council's handling of rubbish collection, including delays, inconsistency, and poor service quality.

Concerns about overflowing bins, dirty streets, and unkept nature strips.

Issues with littering, broken bins, and lack of street cleaning.

#### **Parking Issues:**

Concerns about parking, including difficulties with parking permits, credit card parking machines, and enforcement of parking regulations, are mentioned by multiple respondents.

#### **Communication and Customer Service:**

Several respondents mention poor communication from the council, long wait times for responses, and a lack of transparency or accountability.

Residents express frustration over slow response times to enquiries or requests.

Complaints about difficulties in contacting the council, unresponsive staff, and inefficient online systems.

#### **Political Agendas and Ideology:**

Concerns about the council prioritizing political agendas over the needs of ratepayers, as well as criticism of certain ideological initiatives like bike lanes, are expressed by several respondents.

#### **Safety and Crime:**

Issues related to safety, including crime, drug use, and vandalism, are mentioned by some respondents, particularly in specific areas like Fitzroy Street.

#### **Environmental Concerns:**

A few respondents express disappointment with the council's response to environmental issues, including climate change and waste management.



**High Rates and Mismanagement of Funds:**

Residents feel that the rates are excessive compared to the quality of services provided.  
Concerns about wasteful spending on unnecessary projects or initiatives.  
Lack of transparency and accountability in financial management.

**Neglect of Local Issues:**

Perceived prioritization of external or minority issues over local concerns.  
Lack of attention to basic services like rubbish collection, street maintenance, and parking.

**Poor Leadership and Governance:**

Criticisms of ineffective leadership, lack of accountability, and inadequate representation of resident interests.  
Complaints about political agendas, bureaucracy, and lack of consultation with the community.

**Inequitable Distribution of Resources:**

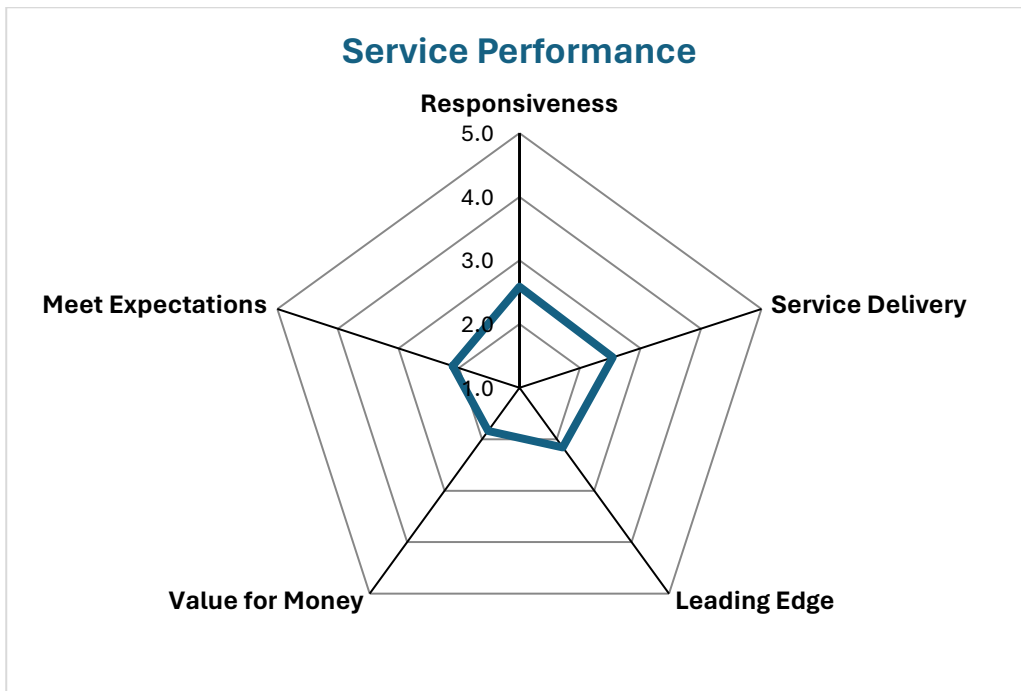
Concerns about resources being allocated disproportionately, with certain areas receiving more attention than others.  
Perceived neglect of specific neighbourhoods or demographics within the municipality.

**Positive Feedback:**

Despite the widespread criticism, some respondents also acknowledge positive aspects of the council's performance, such as responsiveness to certain issues, maintenance of public spaces, and professionalism in day-to-day interactions.

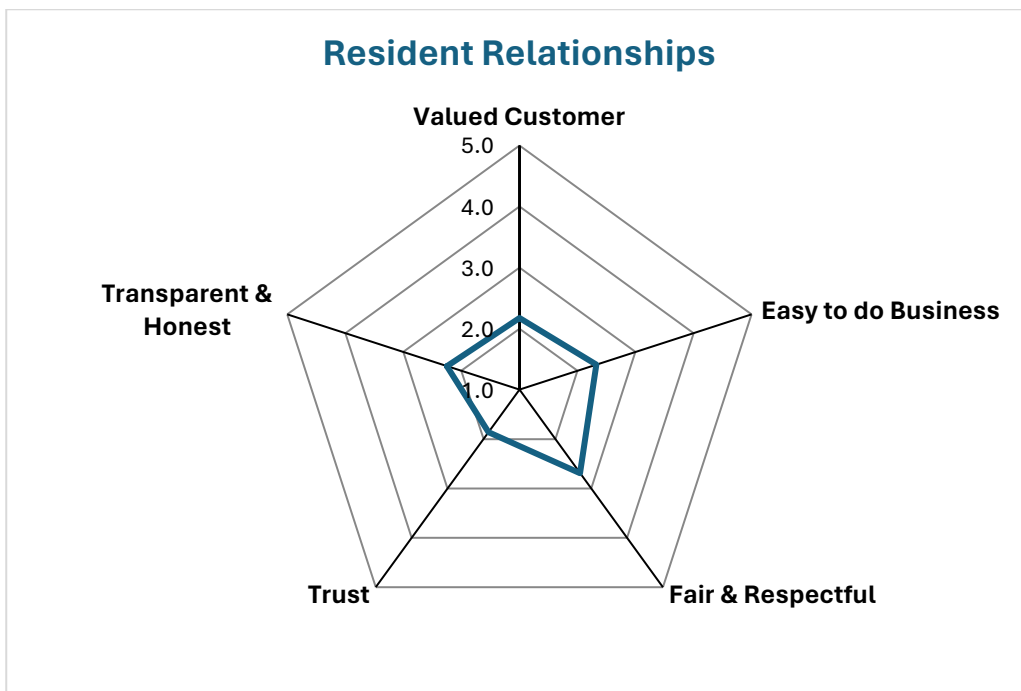
## 6. Quantitative Scores (Averages) for Service Performance (Range 1 to 5)

Responsiveness: 2.6 Service Delivery: 2.5 Leading Edge: 2.2 Value for Money: 1.8 Meet Expectations: 2.1



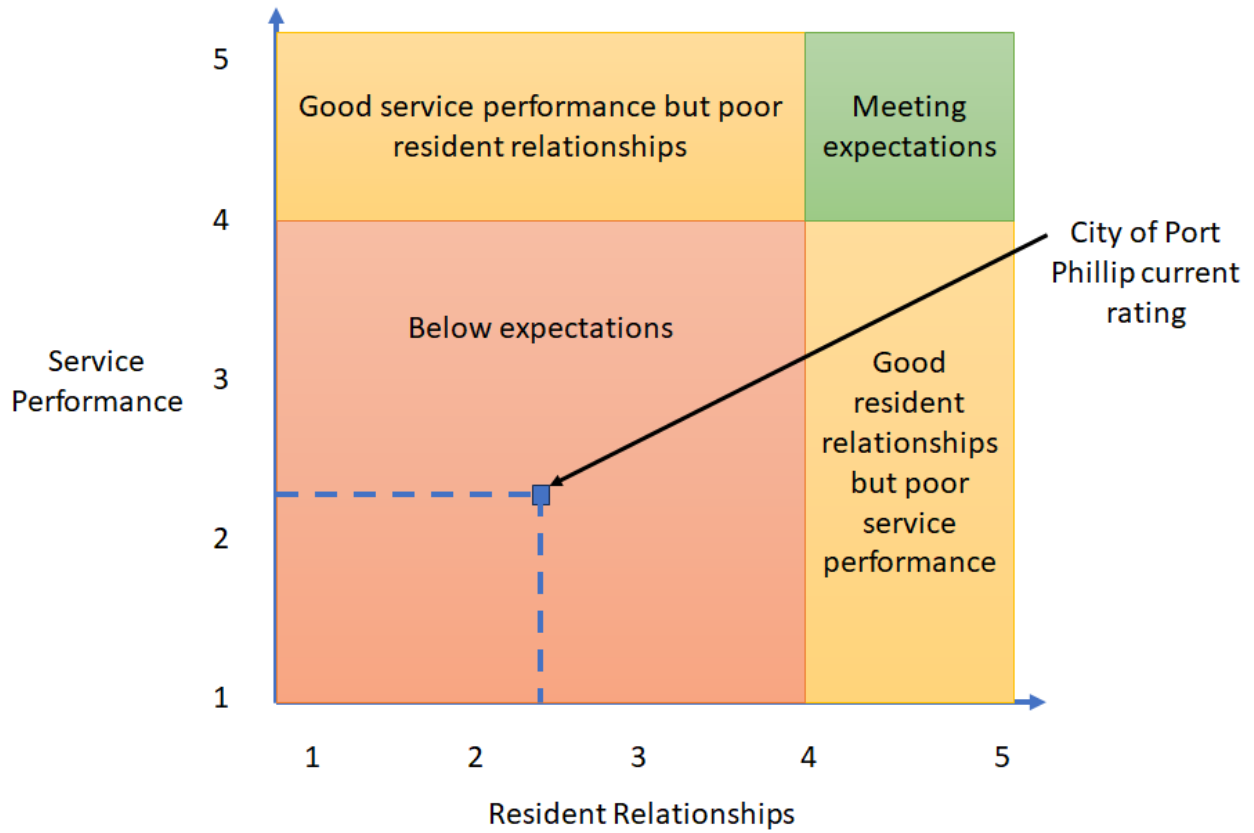
## 7. Quantitative Scores (Averages) for Resident Relationships (Range 1 to 5)

Valued Customer: 2.2 Easy to do Business: 2.3 Fair & Respectful: 2.7 Trust: 1.9 Transparent & Honest: 2.2



## 8. Overall Performance

Average Service Performance: 2.2 Average Resident Relationships: 2.3



## 9. Themes from “What is Port Phillip Council’s single greatest strength?”

These themes were obtained by asking ChatGPT (Artificial Intelligence) to identify the main themes from the verbatim responses received to Question 15. in the survey.

### Strengths:

- Parks & gardens maintenance
- Good customer service
- Commitment to arts and cultural activities
- Geographical location
- Revenue generation from a large ratepayer base
- Accessibility to services
- Aims to be inclusive and diverse
- Adequate funding for services
- Community events and support
- Environmental focus and sustainability efforts
- Provision of essential services like garbage collection
- Support for diversity and social equity
- Provision of aged care and in-home services
- Library services
- Staff professionalism and dedication

### Challenges/Issues:

- Lack of accountability and responsibility
- Poor communication and responsiveness
- Overcharging for rates
- Inefficiency in service delivery
- Frustration with bureaucracy and red tape
- Wasteful spending on non-essential projects
- Ineffectiveness in handling inquiries and complaints
- Political influence affecting decision-making
- Division within the community
- Neglect of certain areas or services
- Inability to meet the expectations of ratepayers
- Insensitivity to residents' needs and concerns
- Excessive staff numbers and associated costs
- Lack of transparency and honesty
- Resistance to change or improvement

## **10. Themes from “What is Port Phillip Council’s single greatest weakness?”**

These themes were obtained by asking ChatGPT (Artificial Intelligence) to identify the main themes from the verbatim responses received to Question 16. in the survey.

### **Weaknesses:**

#### **Community Engagement Communication and Consultation:**

Poor communication culture  
Lack of transparency  
Lack of responsiveness to residents' needs and requests  
Inadequate online systems  
Lack of meaningful consultation with residents.  
Failure to listen to and address resident concerns.  
Insufficient engagement with affected parties on decision-making.

#### **Financial Management, Rates and Accountability:**

Reputation for wasting money  
High rates for minimum services  
Lack of fiscal responsibility  
Excessive rates without value for money  
Inability to manage finances effectively  
Lack of financial accountability  
Concerns about financial management and wasteful spending.  
Complaints about rates being too high and unsustainable.

#### **Service Delivery, Core Functions and Maintenance:**

Failure to deliver basic services effectively (e.g., rubbish collection, street cleaning)  
Inadequate maintenance of infrastructure (e.g., footpaths, roads)  
Lack of focus on core municipal business  
Inconsistencies in garbage collection  
Poor management of facilities and leases  
Neglect of cleanliness and beautification efforts (e.g., graffiti removal, street and garden cleanliness)  
Failure to focus on core services such as roads, rubbish collection, and maintenance.  
Inability to provide basic services that residents expect.  
Prioritizing non-essential projects over essential services.

#### **Leadership and Governance:**

Appalling leadership  
Arrogance and disregard for residents' concerns  
Political bias interfering with decision-making  
Lack of leadership accountability  
Dysfunctional administration  
Overemphasis on political and social causes rather than core services

#### **Community Priorities vs. Council Agendas:**

Lack of alignment with residents' needs and priorities  
Focus on political and social agendas over service delivery

Ignoring the needs and interests of ratepayers  
Prioritizing minority groups over the majority  
Inability to represent and engage with the local community effectively

**Bureaucracy and Inefficiency:**

Bloated bureaucracy  
Excessive bureaucracy and paperwork  
Inefficiency in decision-making and action  
Lack of flexibility and adaptability  
Over-reliance on bureaucratic processes over personal service

**Environmental Concerns:**

Lack of care for the environment  
Failure to address climate-related issues  
Inadequate management of green spaces and flora

**Poor Maintenance and Cleanliness:**

Lack of cleanliness in council areas, including streets, paths, and gardens.  
Rubbish and long grass/weeds in public areas.  
Poor management of streets and rubbish collection.  
Inadequate maintenance of street trees.

**Communication and Responsiveness:**

Poor communication with residents and business owners.  
Slow response times to issues reported by residents.  
Lack of transparency in decision-making and planning processes.

**Political Influence and Ideology:**

Politicizing of council decisions.  
Allegations of councilors prioritizing personal or political agendas over resident needs.  
Concerns about political bias and lack of neutrality.

**Staffing and Management:**

Issues with staff competency and accountability.  
Complaints about council employees' attitudes and work ethic.  
Concerns about a toxic work environment and low morale among staff.

**Planning and Development:**

Poor planning decisions and lack of consideration for residents' needs.  
Overdevelopment or inappropriate development projects.  
Slow response times in handling planning approvals and applications.

**Miscellaneous Concerns:**

Complaints about specific issues like noise disturbances, inadequate parking, and ineffective tree management.

Criticisms regarding the council's focus on irrelevant issues and pet projects.  
Allegations of wasteful spending on non-essential projects.

## **11. Conclusions**

The scores and themes suggest a widespread dissatisfaction among the group of residents surveyed with various aspects of the City of Port Phillip's service delivery and relationships with residents. Addressing these concerns will likely require improvements in communication, transparency, service quality, and community engagement.

The themes highlight a range of challenges faced by the community, including dissatisfaction with service delivery, transparency in decision-making, financial management and allocation of resources. Addressing these concerns will likely involve improving communication channels, engaging residents more effectively, and ensuring that council priorities align with community needs.



## 12.About Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Net Promoter Score is a method of measurement commonly used in customer experience programs. NPS measures the loyalty of customers to an organisation.

Net Promoter Score is derived through asking a survey question that asks one question: How likely is it that you would recommend this organisation to a colleague or friend?

Respondents give a rating between 0 (not at all likely) and 10 (extremely likely) and, depending on their response, customers fall into one of three categories to establish a NPS score:

'Promoters' respond with a score of 9 or 10

'Passives' respond with a score of 7 or 8

'Detractors' respond with a score of 0 to 6.

NPS is calculated using this formula:  $NPS = \% \text{ of Promoters} \text{ minus } \% \text{ of Detractors}$

In this formula, the passive percentage is not used. Based on this, the organisation's NPS score will be a number from -100 to +100.

### 2023 NPS Benchmark for Business to Consumer (B2C) 2023(Source: [www.questionpro.com](http://www.questionpro.com))

Insurance: +71

E-commerce: +62

Retail: +61

Financial Services: +56

Healthcare: +38

Communications & Media: +29

Internet Software & Services +4

### Australian NPS Business to Business (B2B) 2022(Source: [www.evolvedthinking.com](http://www.evolvedthinking.com))

Banking and financial services +20.3

IT products, services and hardware +17.1

Education and training +12.2

Travel +7.1

Building management services +5.2

Legal services +3

Insurance +2.7

Employment & recruitment services +0

Engineering +0

Telecommunication services & equipment -8.5

Accounting services -18

Consulting services -18.2

### Australian Local Government NPS

City of Rockingham WA 2022 +25

City of Melville WA 2017 +18

Townsville City QLD 2019 +4

City of Port Phillip VIC 2023 -78.8