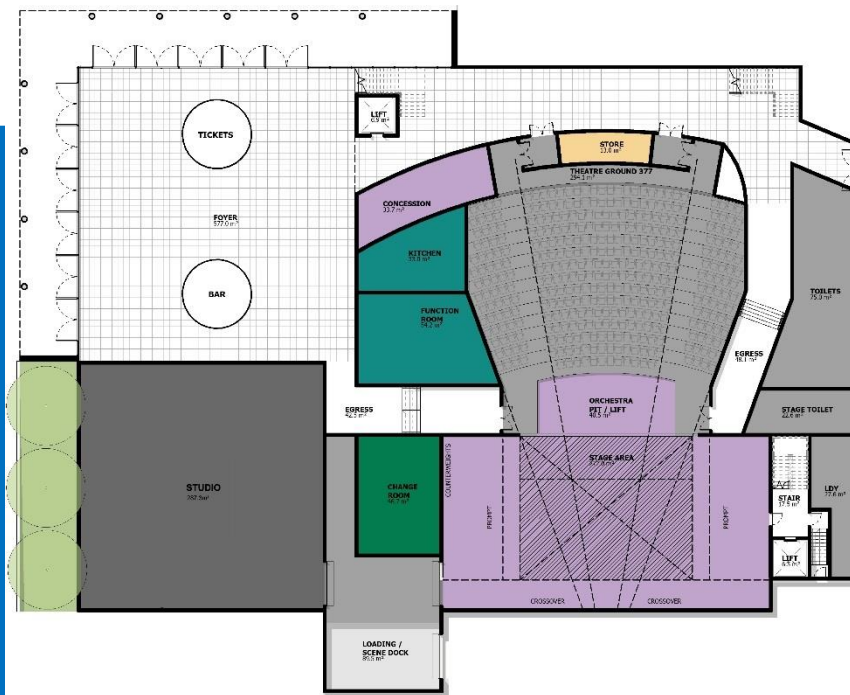


A poll of Muswellbrook Shire residents to measure support for a proposed Special Rate Variation



Results from a random and representative telephone survey of 467 adult residents, and a parallel online survey of 192 residents, conducted by Jetty Research for **Muswellbrook Shire Council**

Final report dated:
December 19th 2017



Contact:
James Parker
e: James.Parker@jettyresearch.com.au
p: 02 6650 9175

Level 1, 30 Industrial Drive
Coffs Harbour NSW
PO Box 1555
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

w: www.jettyresearch.com.au
e: info@jettyresearch.com.au
Coffs Harbour Sydney
ACN 121 037 429

Prepared by	James Parker
Reviewed by	Christine Dening
Date	19 th December 2017
Document Name	Muswellbrook Shire Council 2017 SRV Survey
Version	Final

Table of Contents

DISCLAIMER	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	6
BACKGROUND	6
METHODOLOGY	6
CATI (Telephone) survey.....	6
Parallel Online survey.....	7
SAMPLING ERROR	8
Table i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size.....	8
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.....	9
Graph i: Survey sample by age (unweighted).....	9
Graph ii: Survey sample by gender (unweighted)	9
Graph iii: Survey sample by postcode	10
Graph iv: Survey sample by urban vs. rural.....	10
Graph v: Survey sample by children at home.....	11
Graph vi: Survey sample by work, study or ratepayer within Muswellbrook shire	11
PART 1: AWARENESS OF SRV AND GENERAL MANAGER'S LETTER	12
Graph 1.1: Have you seen or heard anything about the proposed programs and SRV?.....	12
Graph 1.2: Can you recall where you saw or heard this?.....	12
Graph 1.3: Do you recall receiving a letter from Council about the facilities planned and SRV?.....	13
Graph 1.4: (If yes) Did you have a chance to read the letter?.....	13
PART 2: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SRV	14
Graph 2.1a: Do you support Council's application for a 10% SRV in 2018/19?.....	14
Graph 2.1b: Do you support Council's application for a 10% SRV in 2018/19? (excl. "unsure")	15
Table 2.1: Support/oppose by key variables (excluding "unsure").....	15
Graph 2.2: Can you briefly say why you think this?	16
Graph 2.3a: Is your opposition to the SRV mainly because you don't think MSC needs these facilities, or because you think the amount being asked is too high?	17
Graph 2.3b: Summary of support vs. oppose	18
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE	19
APPENDIX 2: WEIGHTING CALCULATION	23
APPENDIX 3: CATI VS. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS	24
Table A3.1: Demographic differences by methodology	24
Table A3.2: Awareness of proposal by methodology.....	25
Table A3.3: Support for SRV by methodology	26
Table A3.4: Reasons for support / opposition for SRV by methodology.....	27

Front cover photo: Floorplan of proposed Muswellbrook Entertainment and Convention Centre. (Photo supplied by MSC)



Disclaimer

While all care and diligence has been exercised in the preparation of this report, Jetty Research Pty. Ltd. does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within and accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered as a result of reliance on this information, whether or not there has been any error, omission or negligence on the part of Jetty Research Pty. Ltd. or its employees.

Executive summary

In October 2017 Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of residents, to understand community sentiment towards a proposed program of works and associated 10% special rate variation (SRV). The random telephone survey was accompanied by an identical opt-in online survey, allowing all those interested in the SRV with an opportunity to have their say.

The random telephone survey, of adult residents living in the 2328 and 2333 postcodes¹, was conducted from November 27th to 30th 2017 using a questionnaire devised by Jetty Research in conjunction with MSC (see Appendix 1). Residents were not initially informed of the survey's subject matter, to avoid response/non-response bias. The parallel online survey ran from November 23rd to December 11th inclusive.

Total sample size for the telephone survey was 467, with a random sampling error of +/- 4.4% at the 95% confidence level. Total sample size for the online survey was 192. (As this was a self-selecting rather than random sample, random sampling error cannot be applied to the results.)

For more information on survey methodology and sampling error, see pages 6-8. For information on telephone survey demographics, see pages 9-11.)²

Among the key findings of the telephone survey:

1. 79% of respondents claimed to be familiar with the proposed program of works and associated special rate variation. Of these, the majority (60%) recalled receiving a letter from Council while 21% has seen it on social media and 20% claimed to have read about it in the local newspaper.
2. Of ratepayers, 77% remembered having received a letter from Council regarding the SRV. Of these, 90% claimed to have read some or all of the letter.
3. **38% of respondents supported Council's application for a 10% SRV, while 53% did not support the variation and 9% were unsure. Excluding unswers, 41% were supportive and 59% were not.** Those in the 2333 postcode and urban residents were most likely to be supportive (at 45% and 47% respectively, excluding unswers).
4. Of those opposed to the SRV, the major reason was a perception that rates are already too high (noted by 13% of all respondents). However, a further 11% supported the SRV on the basis that it would benefit the community and the region's future.
5. Of those opposed to the SRV, 42% felt the amount being proposed was too high, while 7% felt Muswellbrook did not require the facilities being proposed. A further 35% of SRV opponents felt it was both factors equally.
6. Among *all* respondents: 38% supported the SRV, 5% opposed it solely or largely on the basis of facilities not being needed, 22% felt the amount was too high, and 18% opposed for both reasons equally.

Among online respondents, 25% supported the SRV while 72% were opposed (with 3% unsure).

¹ But excluding MSC councillors and permanent Council employees

² For a comparison of telephone and online survey demographics, see Table A3.1 in Appendix 3.

Introduction

Background

In October 2017, Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of 450+ Muswellbrook adult residents to understand their attitudes towards a proposed works program and associated 10% special rate variation (SRV) commencing in 2018/19.

Specific survey objectives comprised:

- Measuring knowledge of planned programs and associated SRV;
- Measuring awareness/reading of General Manager's letter to ratepayers (dated 13/11);
- Measuring support for/opposition to proposed SRV, and reasons for support/opposition; and
- Understanding how results varied by factors such as prior awareness, urban/rural, age, gender, postcode etc.

In addition to the random telephone poll, an identical online survey was constructed and publicised by Council to allow all residents with an interest in the proposed works and SRV to have their say.

Methodology

CATI (Telephone) survey

The survey was conducted using a random fixed line and mobile telephone poll of Muswellbrook adult residents. Respondents were initially selected at random from a verified and random telephone database of 2,452 residential fixed line and mobile telephone numbers within the LGA.³

Quotas were applied by region, with a minimum of 20% of the sample sought within the 2328 postcode (incorporating the town of Denman) and a maximum of 80% in the 2333 postcode (in which Muswellbrook is situated). This was designed to reflect differences in population size while still maintaining an adequate sample size for cross-analysis. No other formal quotas were applied, although attempts were made to ensure an adequate mix of respondents across age groups and sub-regions.

No mention of the survey subject matter was made in the survey pre-amble, to avoid response/non-response bias⁴. Instead, residents were merely asked if they would assist Council by completing a research survey on "an important local issue".

Respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 18 or over, residents of the Muswellbrook shire, and were not councillors or permanent Council employees.

³ Numbers were provided by SamplePages, a respected supplier of random valid numbers to the market and social research industry

⁴ That is, participation biased towards those with a pre-existing interest in the survey's subject matter



A survey form was constructed collaboratively between Muswellbrook Shire Council and Jetty Research (see Appendix 1), based on satisfying the above objectives.

Telephone polling was conducted between November 27th and 30th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI⁵ call centre. A team of 10 researchers called residents on weekday evenings from 3.30 to 8pm. Where phones went unanswered, were engaged or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to five occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

In all, 467 residents completed a telephone survey. Interview duration varied from 4 to 17 minutes, with an average of 7.3 minutes. Response rate was good, with 59% of those reached and potentially eligible agreeing to take part.

Please note that due to the nature of the survey, not all respondents answered every question. The number of respondents answering each question is marked as "n = XXX" in the graph accompanying that question.

Cleaned data was entered into statistical database Q for analysis. Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores, Chi-square or other analysis of variation (ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone. Unless indicated otherwise, significant differences are typically highlighted in blue (above mean) and pink (below mean).

Results have been post-weighted by age and gender to match the adult population profile of the Muswellbrook Shire in the 2016 ABS census. (See Appendix 2 for weighting calculation.)

Parallel Online survey

A self-selecting (i.e. opt-in) online survey, based on the telephone survey, was also constructed to allow all those wishing to have a say on the proposed works and associated SRV the opportunity to do so. This survey went live on Thursday, November 23rd and closed on Monday, December 11th.

The survey was displayed prominently on Council's website throughout the consultation period. It was also publicised on Council's Facebook page, via radio ads and in the local newspapers (Muswellbrook Chronicle and Newcastle Herald) and on an SRV fact sheet which was handed out at community Listening Posts, distributed to the Community Panel, posted to community groups and made available at Muswellbrook and Denman Libraries and the Council Administration Centre.

In all, 192 valid responses were received to the online version of the survey.⁶

The random CATI results have been reported side-by-side with the non-random online results – see Appendix 3.

⁵ Computer-aided telephone interviewing

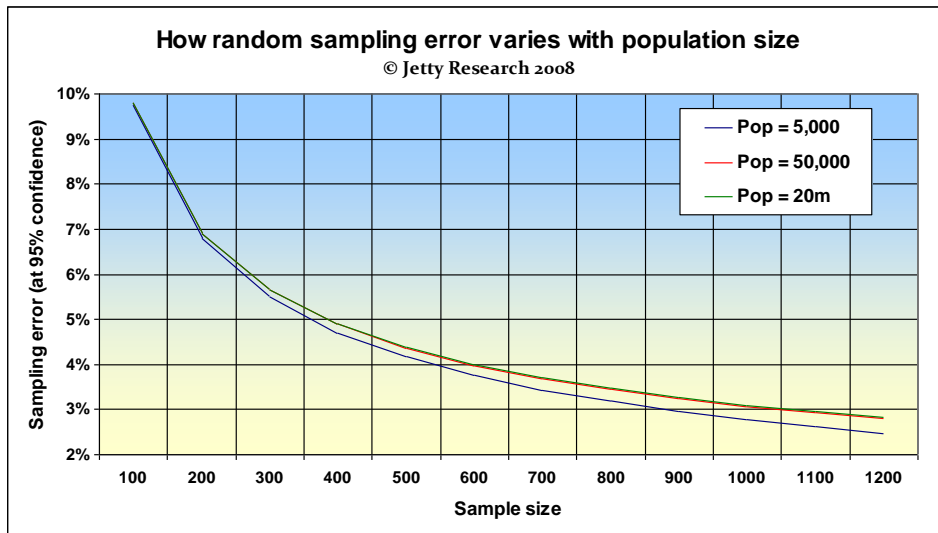
⁶ Note the actual total was slightly higher, but we have removed duplicates of identical responses from the same IP address

Sampling error

According to the 2016 ABS Census (Usual Resident profile) the total adult (18+) population of the Muswellbrook Shire was 11,851. Hence the sampling error of random CATI survey with an n=467 sample is +/- 4.4%. (This means in effect that if we conducted a similar poll 20 times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population to within a +/- 4.4% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.)

As Table i shows, margin for error falls as sample size rises. Hence cross-tabulations or sub-groups within the overall sample will typically create much higher margins for error than the overall sample. For example, using the above population sizes, a sample size of 100 exhibits a margin for error of +/- 9.8% (again at the 95% confidence level).

Table i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size



In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include respondents without fixed line phones, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.), social desirability bias⁷ and/or imperfections in the questionnaire. However, steps have been taken at each stage of the research process to minimise non-random error wherever possible.

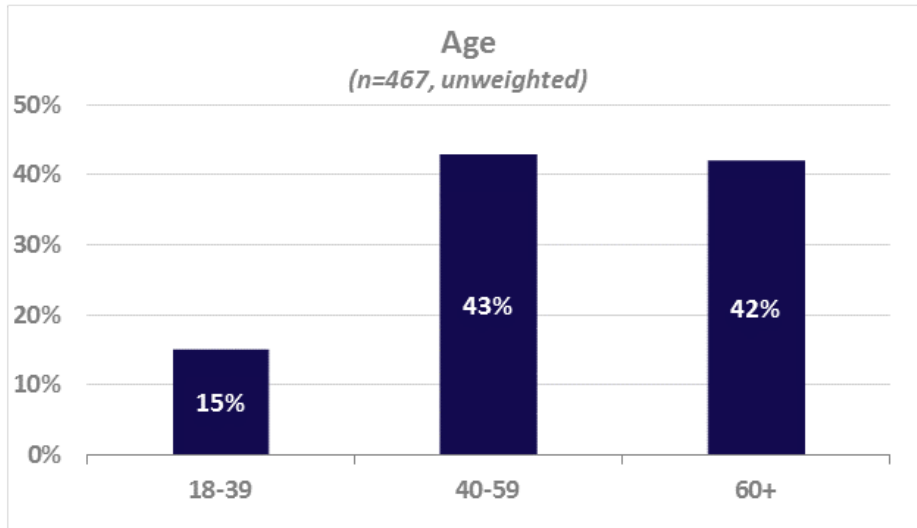
Note that random sampling error cannot be applied to the online survey result, as it is non-random/self-selecting in nature. In particular, opt-in online surveys tend to be completed by those with a stronger interest in the subject matter and hence are not necessarily representative of the "average" resident or ratepayer.

Online results cannot be extrapolated to the population at large, and instead represent just the views of those who have chosen to participate.

⁷ By which respondents provide answers that present themselves in a more favourable light

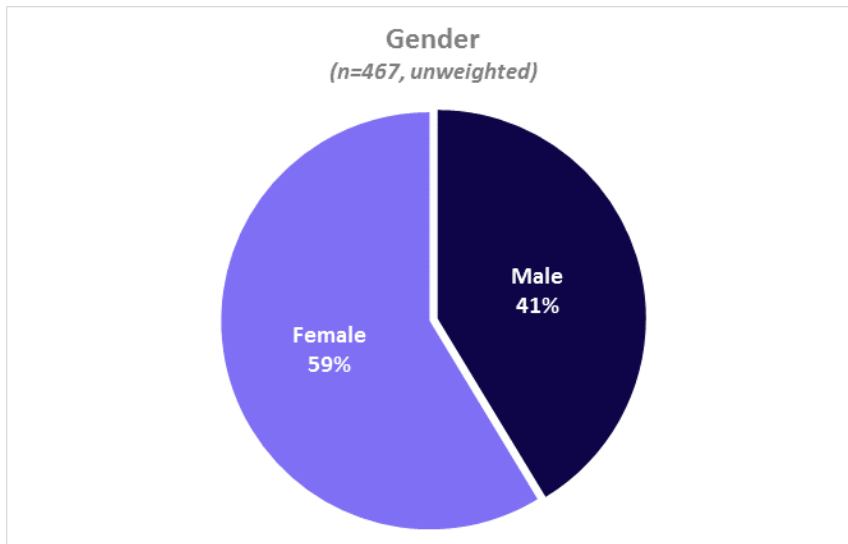
Sample characteristics

Graph i: Survey sample by age (unweighted)



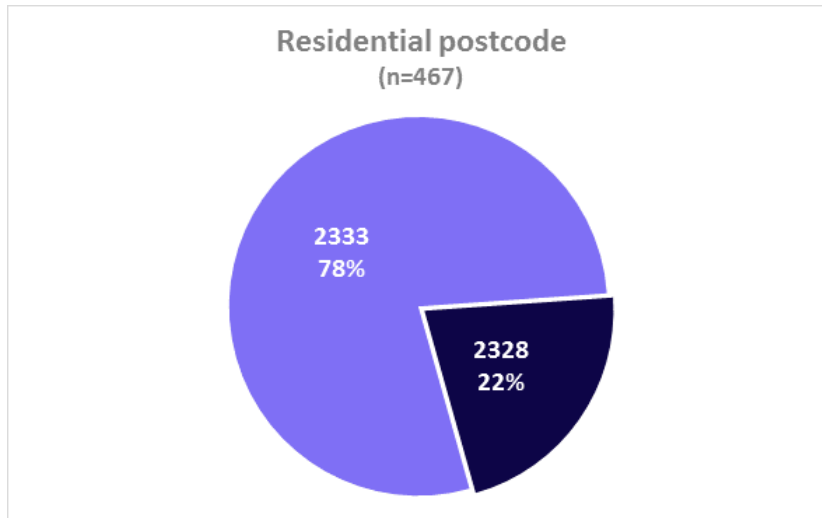
As is common in random telephone surveys for local government, the survey was biased towards older residents. However, this was corrected through post-weighting the survey sample based on 2016 Census data for age and gender.

Graph ii: Survey sample by gender (unweighted)



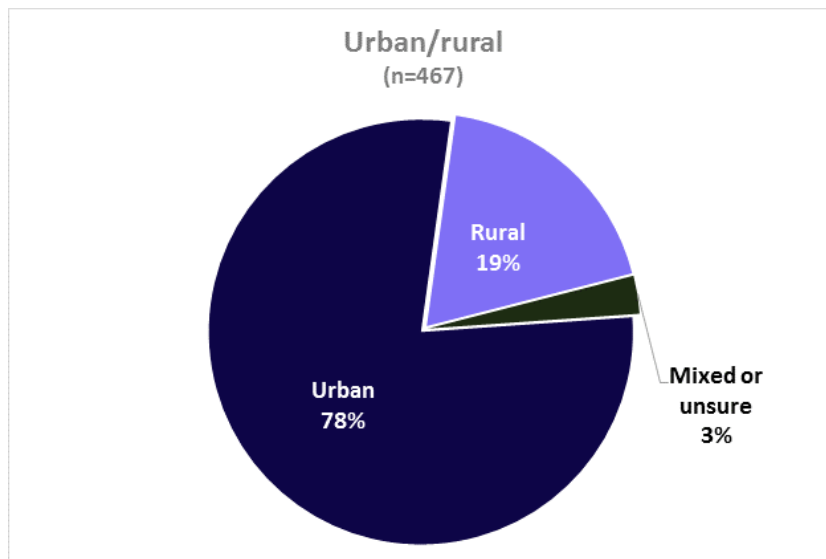
The sample was skewed slightly towards females. (However, this was again corrected through post-weighting to ABS Census data.)

Graph iii: Survey sample by postcode



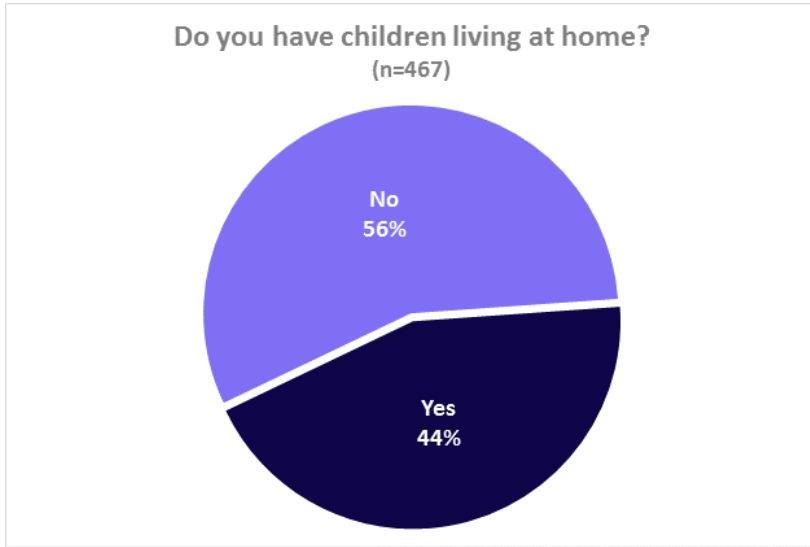
Just over three-quarters of the sample lived in the 2333 postcode, incorporating Muswellbrook and Sandy Hollow. The balance of respondents lived in the 2328 postcode, incorporating the town of Denman.

Graph iv: Survey sample by urban vs. rural



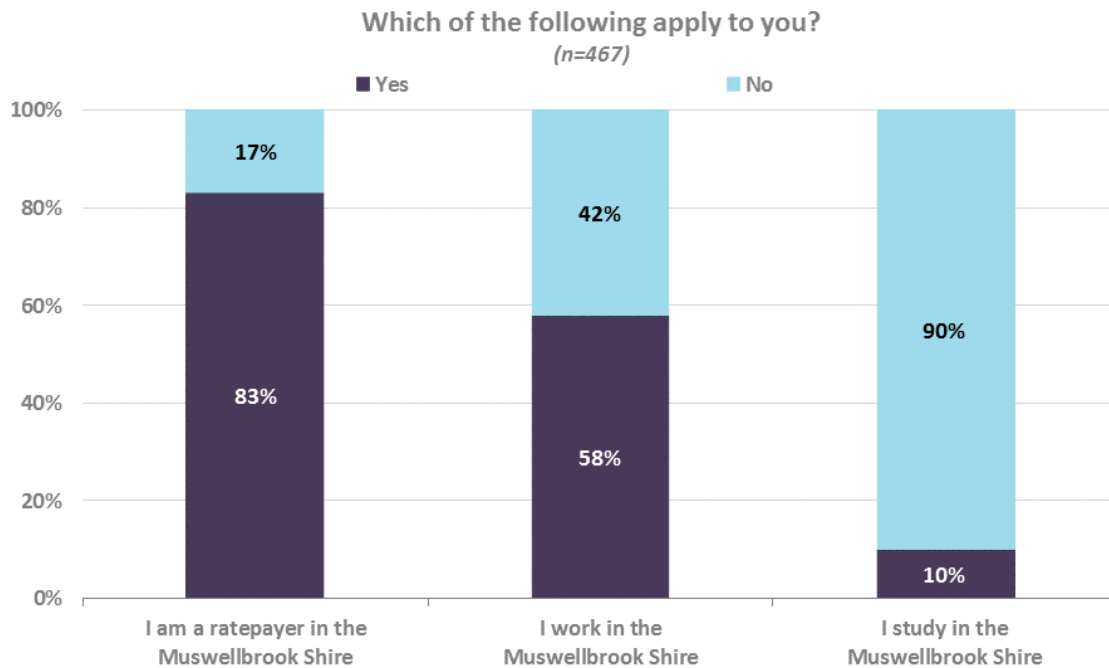
Almost four in five respondents said they lived in urban areas, with most of the balance living rurally.

Graph v: Survey sample by children at home



The sample was relatively evenly split between those with children living in the home, and those without.

Graph vi: Survey sample by work, study or ratepayer within Muswellbrook shire

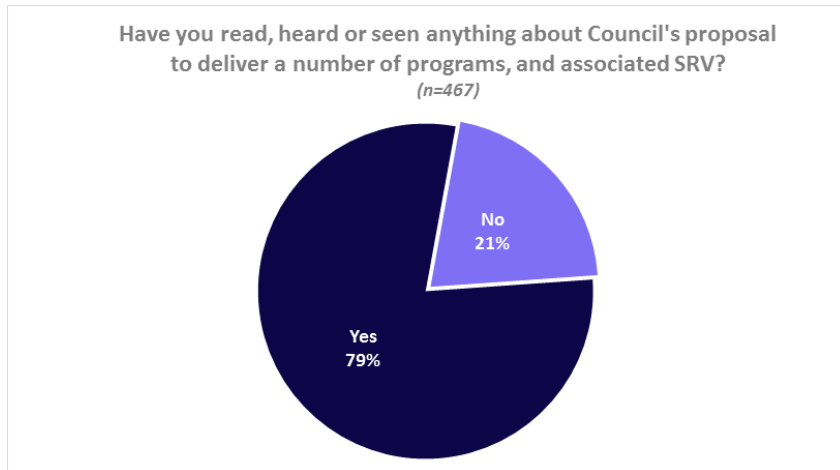


More than four in five respondents claimed to be ratepayers within the Muswellbrook LGA, while almost three in five also worked within the shire.

Part 1: Awareness of SRV and General Manager's letter

The survey commenced with residents being asked if they had...**"read, heard or seen anything about Council's proposal to deliver a number of programs and initiatives including an upgrade to stormwater drainage, improvements to the Olympic Park Precinct, building an Entertainment and Convention Centre, an expanded Job Creation Program, and Council's plan to fund them through a special rate variation?"**

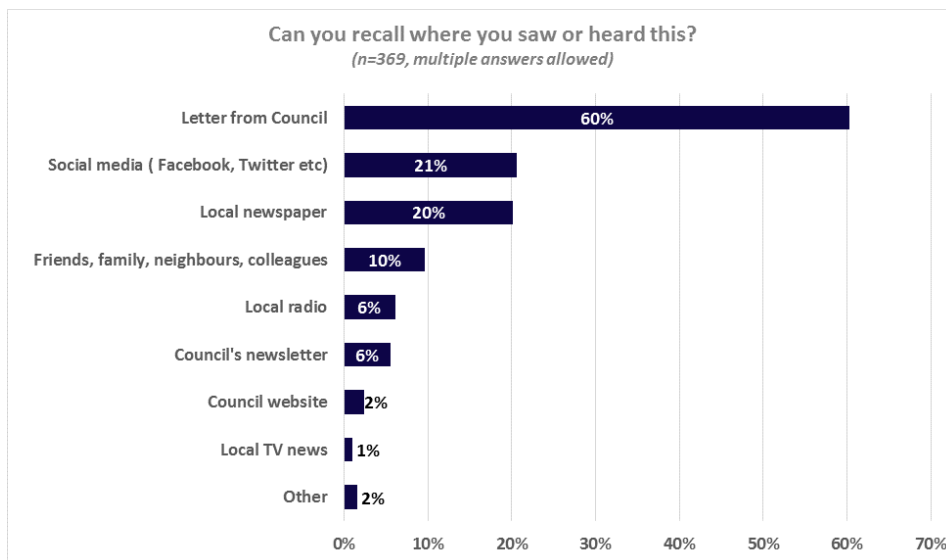
Graph 1.1: Have you seen or heard anything about the proposed programs and SRV?



Some 79% of respondents were familiar with the proposed programs and associated SRV. Awareness was highest among those aged 60+ (at 90%) and those without children living at home (86%). There were no significant differences by gender, postcode or urban vs. rural.

Those familiar with the proposal were then asked where they had heard about it:

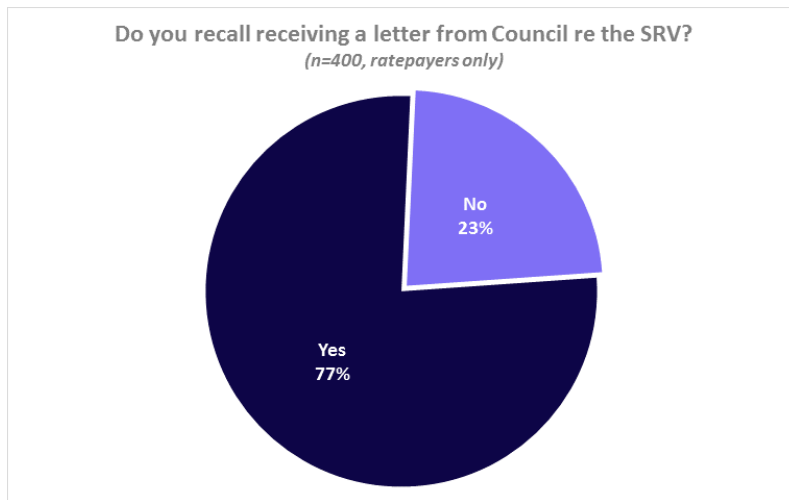
Graph 1.2: Can you recall where you saw or heard this?



While the majority had heard about the programs and SRV via the letter from Council, it is interesting that social media was the second most common news source – ahead of the local paper and word-of-mouth. (However as one would expect, age was a factor in the relative preference of social media vs. newspapers.)

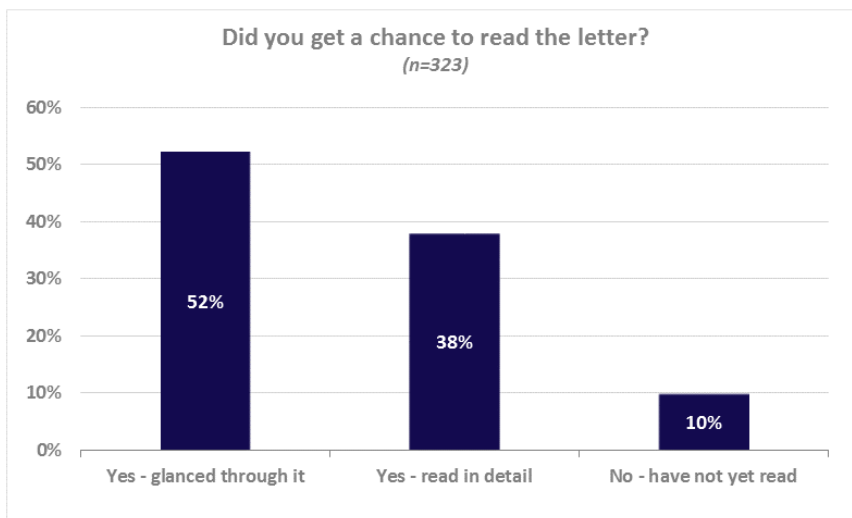
Ratepayers were then asked: "Council recently sent to all ratepayers a letter about the new facilities planned for the shire, and a potential special rate variation to fund it. Do you recall receiving this information?"

Graph 1.3: Do you recall receiving a letter from Council about the facilities planned and SRV?



Over three-quarters of ratepayers recalled receiving this letter. Awareness was highest among ratepayers 60+ (86% of whom claimed to have received the letter, against 66% of those aged 18-39).

Graph 1.4: (If yes) Did you have a chance to read the letter?



Of those receiving the letter, 90% claimed to have read it – though the majority of these said they had only glanced through it.

Part 2: Attitudes towards the SRV

At this point of the survey, respondents were read the following:

"Council is proposing a 10% special rate variation be applied in 2018/19 and ongoing plus the normal 2.5% inflation rate peg. This special rate variation would enable Council to deliver the following programs and facilities:

- An upgrade to stormwater drainage and additional funding for the roads and parks asset maintenance program.
- Development of the Olympic Park Precinct and an Entertainment and Convention Centre (including funds for operational maintenance).
- An expanded Job Creation Program and additional funding to allow for biodiversity offsets.

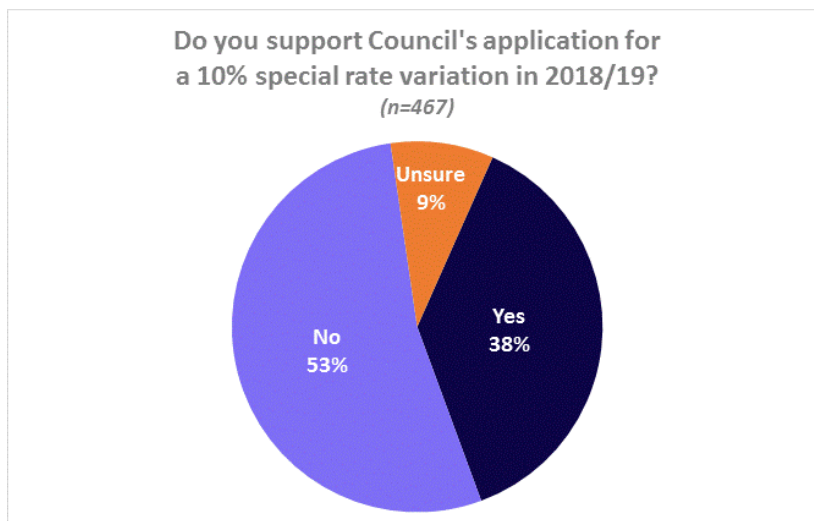
The cumulative impact on rates would average approximately \$87.22 per annum for each household in Denman and Muswellbrook, \$354.60 for general farmland, and \$295 for general business premises.

If the rate variation were not to occur, Council would still be able to do limited upgrades to stormwater drainage and contributions to the roads and parks asset maintenance program would occur; the Job Creation Program would not be expanded. The Entertainment and Conference Centre would not proceed. Delivering on the Olympic Park master plan would be significantly delayed.

With all that in mind, do you support Council's application for 10% special rate variation in 2018/19?"

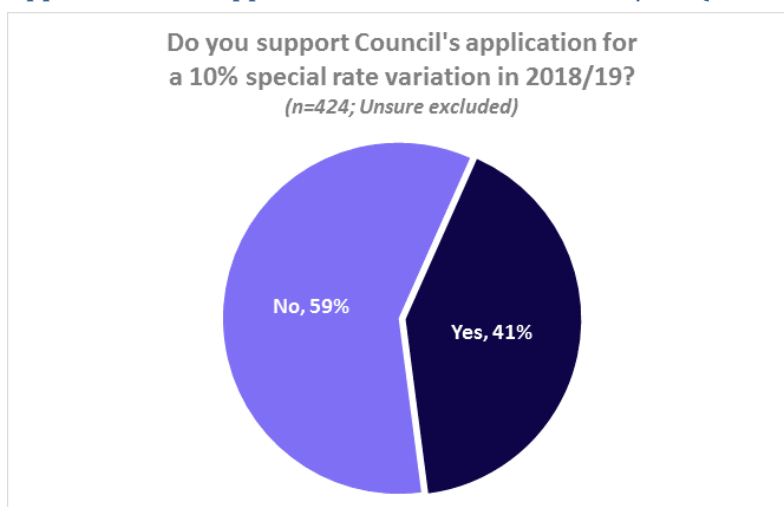
Results are shown below. Graph 2.1a shows the results for all residents, while Graph 2.1b summarises the results excluding those classing themselves as "unsure".

Graph 2.1a: Do you support Council's application for a 10% SRV in 2018/19?



Of all respondents, 38% supported the 10% SRV while 53% opposed it.

Graph 2.1b: Do you support Council's application for a 10% SRV in 2018/19? (excl. "unsure")



Excluding "unsure", 41% supported the 10% SRV while 59% opposed it.

Breaking this result down by key variables (statistically significant differences highlighted in blue and pink):

Table 2.1: Support/oppose by key variables (excluding "unsure")

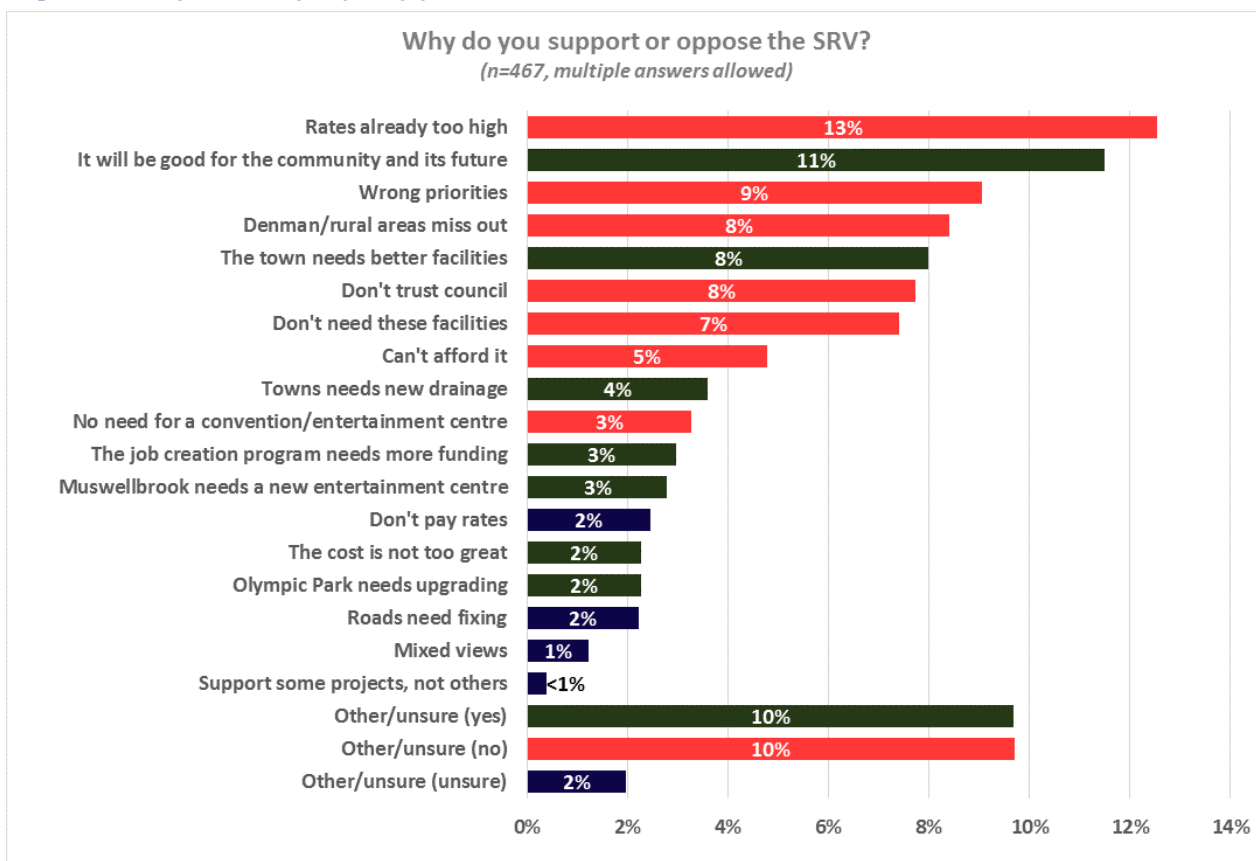
Demographic (n=403)	Response	Supports 10% SRV	Does not support 10% SRV
Postcode	2328	29.2%	70.8%
	2333	44.6%	55.4%
Have you read, heard or seen anything about Council's proposal?	Yes	41.4%	58.6%
	No	41.4%	58.6%
Read the letter?	Yes - read in detail	32.4%	67.6%
	Yes - glanced through it	42.3%	57.7%
	No - have not yet read	37.9%	62.1%
Urban/rural	Urban	46.5%	53.5%
	Rural	20.5%	79.5%
Age range	18-39	43.1%	56.9%
	40-59	41.6%	58.4%
	60+	38.5%	61.5%
Gender	Male	37.7%	62.3%
	Female	45.8%	54.2%
Children living at home?	Yes	40.2%	59.8%
	No	42.3%	57.7%

This suggests that results were relatively consistent by most demographic variables. However support for the SRV was strongest among those in 2333 postcode (45% supporting against 55% opposed) and urban residents (47% supporting, 53% opposed.)

There was no meaningful difference based on: (a) residents' prior knowledge of the SRV; or (b) having read the recent letter from Council in this subject.

Respondents were then asked, in an unprompted open-ended question, to briefly explain why they supported or opposed the proposed SRV. These comments have been coded (i.e. themed) and are shown below – with positive comments in green, negative in red, and those unsure in blue:

Graph 2.2: Can you briefly say why you think this?

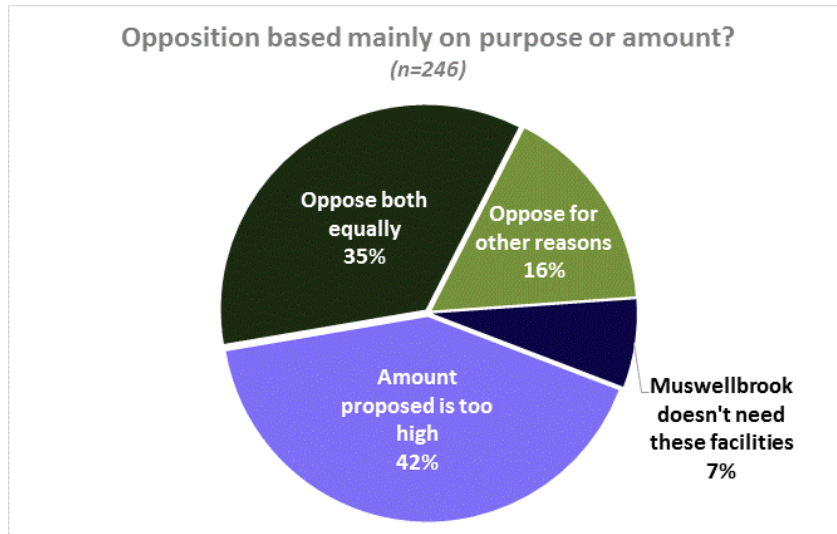


The major reason for opposing the proposed SRV was a perception by some that rates were already too high (mentioned unprompted by 13% of respondents). There was also concern from some about Council's spending priorities (9%), and a feeling among Denman and rural residents that they were missing out on additional spending (8%).

Among supporters of the SRV there was a perception that it would be favourable for the local community's future (mentioned unprompted by 11% of those surveyed), that Muswellbrook needs the facilities proposed (8%) and that it also required improved drainage (4%).

Finally, those respondents opposed to the SRV were asked whether their opposition was "**mainly because you think Muswellbrook doesn't need these facilities, or because you think the amount being asked is too high?**"

Graph 2.3a: Is your opposition to the SRV mainly because you don't think MSC needs these facilities, or because you think the amount being asked is too high?



The majority of opponents based their concerns on the proposed amount, while only 7% said (specifically) that Muswellbrook doesn't need the facilities proposed. (However, a further 35% opposed both equally.)

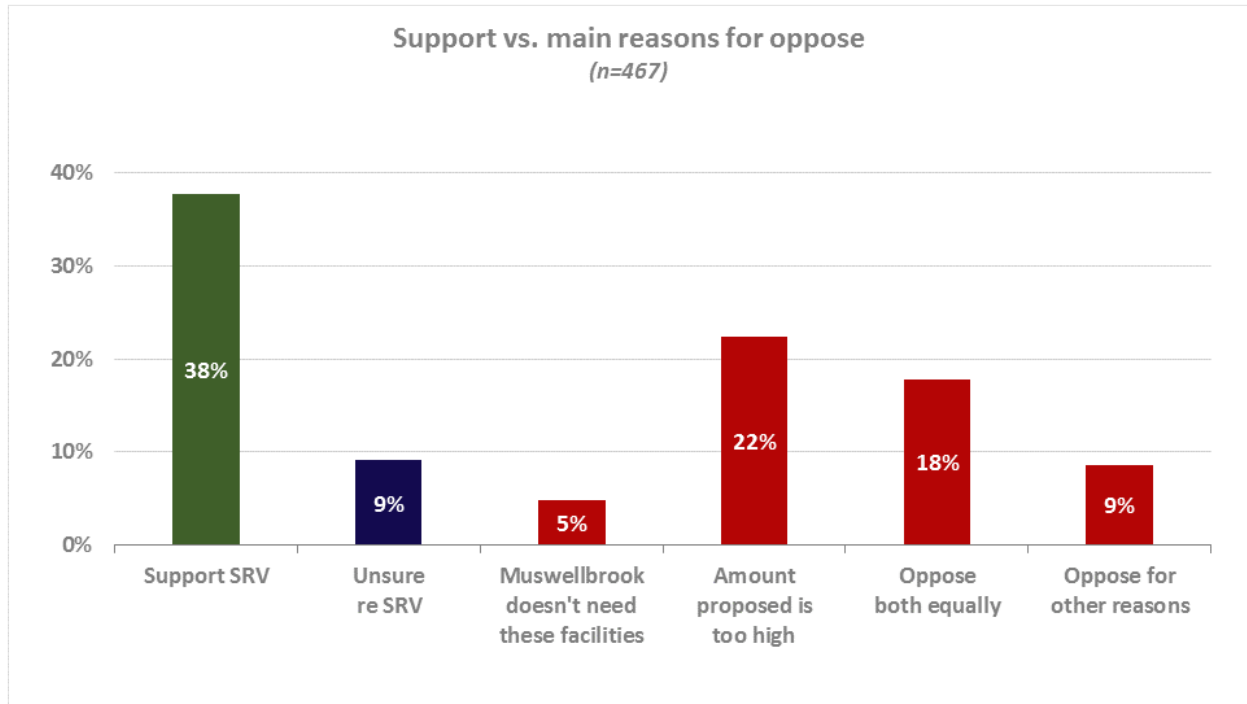
Among the "other" reasons cited were cynicism regarding Council's ability to manage the projects, a belief the local mines should be financing these sorts of projects, or a preference for some of the stated projects but not others.

Results were consistent by age, gender, postcode etc.

(Continued next page...)

Putting these results into the context of all respondents:

Graph 2.3b: Summary of support vs. oppose



This suggests that only 23% of residents⁸ believe that Muswellbrook doesn't need the facilities being proposed by Council.

⁸ i.e. 5% opposed solely + 18% opposed jointly with rate impact

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Version 1 Muswellbrook_SC_SRV_2017

Last modified:23/11/2017 4:24:42 PM

- Q1. Hi my name is (name) and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of Muswellbrook Shire Council. Council has asked us to call residents at random to conduct a short survey about an important local issue. The survey only takes around 5 minutes, all answers are confidential, and we're not trying to sell anything. Would you be willing to assist Council by completing a short survey this afternoon/evening?**

Offer a CALL BACK. Muswellbrook Shire Council contact is Melissa Cleary 6549 3715. If resident asks whether survey is related to special rate variation, can confirm

Yes	1	
No	555	

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

- Q2. Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening.**

- Q3. Before we proceed, can I confirm you live in the Muswellbrook local government area?**

Muswellbrook is their local council

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q2

Q3

- Q4. Are you a Councillor or permanent Council employee at Muswellbrook Council?**

Contractors and casual staff OK

Yes	1	Go to Q2
No	555	

Q4

- Q5. May I have your postcode?**

UNPROMPTED

2328	1	
2333	2	

Q5

- Q6. And your first name for the survey?**

Only so we can refer to you by name

Q6

- Q7. Thanks [Q6], to kick things off can you tell me which of the following apply to you:**

PROMPTED

	Yes	No
I work in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555
I study in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555
I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook Shire	1	555

Q7_1

Q7_2

Q7_3

Q8. [Q6], have you read, heard or seen anything about Council's proposal to deliver a number of programs and initiatives including an upgrade to stormwater drainage, improvements to the Olympic Park Precinct, building an Entertainment and Convention Centre, an expanded Job Creation Program, and Council's plan to fund them through a special rate variation?

Yes	1
No	555

Q8

Q9. Can you recall where you saw or heard this?

Answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q8 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED - probe and tick any that apply

Local newspaper	1
Local radio	2
Local TV news	3
Council website	4
Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)	5
Letter from Council	6
Council's newsletter	7
Friends, family, neighbours, colleagues etc.	8
OTHER	

Q9_1

Q9_2

Q9_3

Q9_4

Q9_5

Q9_6

Q9_7

Q9_8

Q9_0

Q10. Council recently sent to all ratepayers a letter about the new facilities planned for the shire, and a potential special rate variation to fund it. Do you recall receiving this information?

Answer If Attribute "I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook Shire" from Q7 is Yes

Yes	1
No	555

Q10

Q11. Did you get a chance to read the letter?

Answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q10 is SELECTED

IF YES - check if read in detail or only glanced through it

Yes - read in detail	1
Yes - glanced through it	2
No - have not yet read	3

Q11

Q12. Now [Q6], Council is proposing a 10% special rate variation be applied in 2018/19 and ongoing plus the normal 2.5% inflation rate peg. This special rate variation would enable Council to deliver the following programs and facilities:

An upgrade to stormwater drainage and additional funding for the roads and parks asset maintenance program.

Development of the Olympic Park Precinct and an Entertainment and Convention Centre (including funds for operational maintenance).

An expanded Job Creation Program and additional funding to allow for biodiversity offsets.

The cumulative impact on rates would average approximately \$87.22 per annum for each household in Denman and Muswellbrook, \$354.60 for general farmland, and \$295 for general business premises.

If the rate variation were not to occur, Council would still be able to do limited upgrades to stormwater drainage and contributions to the roads and parks asset maintenance program would occur; the Job Creation Program would not be expanded. The Entertainment and Conference Centre would not proceed. Delivering on the Olympic Park master plan would be significantly delayed.

With all that in mind, do you support Council's application for 10% special rate variation in 2018/19?

Read again if necessary

Yes (supports SRV of 10% p.a commencing 2018/19)	1
No (do not support SRV for this purpose)	555
Unsure	666

Q12

Q13. Can you briefly explain why you think this?

PROBE for a response

Q13

Q14. And is your opposition to the proposed Special Rate Variation mainly because you think Muswellbrook doesn't need these facilities, or because you think the amount being asked is too high?

Answer If Attribute "No (do not support SRV for this purpose)" from Q12 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED

Muswellbrook doesn't need these facilities	1
Amount proposed is too high	2
Both equally	3
Unsure/prefer not to say	4
OTHER	

Q14

Q15. Thanks so much [Q6], we're almost done. Can you tell me if you live in an urban or rural area?

Urban	1
Rural	2
Mixed or unsure	3

Q15

Q16. And is your age range between?

PROMPTED

18-39	1
40-59	2
60+	3

Q16

Q17. Gender?

DONT ASK

Male	1
Female	2

Q17

Q18. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?

Yes	1
No	555

Q18

Q19. And how long have you lived in the Muswellbrook Shire?

Record in years

Q19

Q20. And do you identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Yes	1
No	2

Q20

Q21. Just before we finish [Q6], Muswellbrook Shire Council is currently seeking to establish a randomly selected COMMUNITY panel of local residents. This panel is being established to provide feedback to Council on SERVICES issues of community importance. Is this something that may interest you?

Expressions of interest. Postal okay

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q24

Q21

Q22. Thanks that's great. Could I please have your name and email address, Council will be in touch shortly with further details.

Prefer EMAIL. Postal only if no email. READ BACK EMAIL letter for letter

Name	1	
Surname	2	
Email	3	

Q22_1_1
Q22_1_2
Q22_1_3

Q24. That's brings us to the end of the survey. Muswellbrook Shire Council greatly appreciates your views. Did you have any questions about the survey? Thank you and have a great afternoon/evening.

End

Appendix 2: Weighting calculation

It is common in random surveys such as this to weight results by age and gender. This avoids the need to sample by quota (which is far more expensive than purely random sampling), and ensures the data from under- and over-represented groups is adjusted to meet the demographic profile of the survey population.

Population weighting can only occur where the true survey population is known. In this case the population, defined as “adults 18-plus living in the Muswellbrook Shire”, can be accurately measured through the 2016 ABS Census⁹. We can hence weight the survey data by the known population.

To do this we divide the survey sample by gender (male/female) and across three age groups (in this case 18-39, 40-59, and 60-plus.) This divides respondents into one of six age and gender categories, as shown below:

2017 Sample by age and gender		
Age	Gender	
	Male	Female
18-39	5.1%	10.1%
40-59	18.2%	24.6%
60+	18.0%	24.0%

Meanwhile the 2016 ABS Census demonstrated the following adult (18+) age and gender breakdown:

2016 ABS Census by age and gender		
Age	Gender	
	Male	Female
18-39	20.3%	19.1%
40-59	18.7%	17.3%
60+	12.1%	12.5%

Dividing the “true” population by the sample population for each age and gender category provides the following weighting factors:

2016 Sample by age and gender		
Age	Gender	
	Male	Female
18-39	3.95	1.90
40-59	1.03	0.70
60+	0.67	0.52

These weightings are then assigned to each data record based on each respondent’s age/gender profile, and the raw data for each question is adjusted accordingly.

⁹ ABS Census for Muswellbrook LGA, Usual Resident profile.

Appendix 3: CATI vs. online survey results

Table A3.1: Demographic differences by methodology

Question	Responses	Phone survey (n=467)	Online survey (n=192)	Comment
Postcode	2328	21.8%	8.0%	Those residing in post code 2328 were underrepresented in the online sample.
	2333	78.2%	88.9%	
Urban/rural	Urban	78.2%	80.9%	The online and phone surveys had a similar mixed of urban, rural and mixed / unsure residents.
	Rural	18.8%	14.1%	
	Mixed or unsure	3.0%	5.0%	
Age range	18-39	15.2%	35.2%	The online survey had a higher proportion of those aged 18-39 years (and a corresponding lower proportion of 60 years+) than the phone survey.
	40-59	42.8%	47.2%	
	60+	42.0%	17.6%	
Gender	Male	41.3%	48.0%	Proportions of males and females were similar by methodology type...
	Female	58.7%	52.0%	
Children living at home?	Yes	44.1%	48.6%	...as were proportions with children living at home.
	No	55.9%	51.4%	
ATSI?	Yes	3.4%	7.1%	The online survey attracted proportionately twice as many Aboriginal/TSI residents
	No	96.6%	92.9%	
Wish to join Council FG panel?	Yes	37.3%	26.9%	The phone methodology encouraged greater sign-up to the focus group panel (likely due to interviewer prompting).
	No	62.7%	73.1%	

Table A3.2: Awareness of proposal by methodology

Question	Responses	Phone survey (n=467)	Online survey (n=192)	Comment
<i>I work in the Muswellbrook Shire</i>	Yes	57.8%	79.2%	Online respondents were more likely to work in the Muswellbrook Shire than phone respondents, but equally likely to study and / or pay rates.
	No	42.2%	20.8%	
<i>I study in the Muswellbrook Shire</i>	Yes	10.1%	14.1%	
	No	89.9%	85.9%	
<i>I am a ratepayer in the Muswellbrook</i>	Yes	82.9%	91.1%	
	No	17.1%	8.9%	
<i>Have you read, heard or seen anything about Council's proposal?</i>	Yes	79.0%	97.9%	Online respondents were more likely to have heard of the Council proposal - unsurprising given the link to the online survey was typically included within collateral relating to the proposal (thus is not a true reflection of community awareness). Online respondents were more likely, than phone respondents, to have heard about the proposal via online methods (including Council's website and via social media). They were also more likely to have heard about it from family, friends, neighbours or colleagues.
	No	21.0%	2.1%	
<i>Can you recall where you saw or heard this?</i>	Local newspaper	20.2%	26.6%	
	Local radio	6.1%	13.8%	
	Local TV news	1.0%	3.7%	
	Council website	2.3%	22.9%	
	Social media	20.6%	61.7%	
	Letter from Council	60.3%	61.2%	
	Council's newsletter	5.6%	21.8%	
	Friends, family, neighbours, colleagues	9.7%	29.3%	
Other	1.6%	3.7%		

Table A3.3: Support for SRV by methodology

Question	Responses	Phone survey (n=467)	Online survey (n=192)	Comment
Receive letter from Council?	Yes	76.7%	87.4%	High proportions of both online and phone respondents had received the letter from Council (86% and 77% respectively).
	No	23.3%	12.6%	
Read the letter?	Yes - read in detail	38.0%	85.0%	Online respondents were more likely to have read the letter in details than phone respondents who were more likely to have glanced through it.
	Yes - glanced through it	52.2%	11.1%	
	No - have not yet read it	9.8%	3.9%	
Support SRV at 10%?	Yes	37.7%	25.0%	Support was significantly higher among phone survey respondents than online (38% vs. 25%). Excluding "unsures", 41% of phone respondents supported the SRV against 26% of those completing online.
	No	53.3%	71.9%	
	Unsure	9.0%	3.1%	
Opposition based on purpose or amount too high?	Muswellbrook doesn't need these facilities	6.9%	8.0%	Online respondents were concerned with the amount proposed and lack of need for the facilities equally, while phone respondents were more concerned with the amount proposed.
	Amount proposed is too high	41.5%	31.2%	
	Both equally	35.5%	57.2%	
	Unsure/prefer not to say	.8%	3.6%	
	Other	15.3%	0.0%	

Table A3.4: Reasons for support / opposition for SRV by methodology

Question	Responses	Phone survey (n=467)	Online survey (n=192)	Comment
Why do you support or oppose the SRV?	<i>The town needs better facilities</i>	8.0%	6.8%	Those supporting the SRV did so as it will be good for the community and requirement in the town for better facilities - these reasons did not vary by methodology.
	<i>Muswellbrook needs a new entertainment centre</i>	2.8%	3.1%	
	<i>Olympic Park needs upgrading</i>	2.3%	0.0%	
	<i>The job creation program needs more funding</i>	3.0%	2.1%	
	<i>The cost is not too great</i>	2.3%	2.6%	
	<i>It will be good for the community and its future</i>	11.5%	9.4%	
	<i>Roads need fixing</i>	2.2%	0.0%	
	<i>Towns needs new drainage</i>	3.6%	0.0%	
	<i>Other/unsure (yes)</i>	9.7%	3.6%	
	<i>Can't afford it</i>	4.8%	10.4%	Those opposing the SRV did so due to the perception that rates were already too high, wrong priorities, can't afford it, don't need the facilities and do not trust Council - again these reasons did not vary by methodology.
	<i>Rates already too high</i>	12.5%	19.8%	
	<i>Don't need these facilities</i>	7.4%	8.9%	
	<i>Wrong priorities</i>	9.0%	13.0%	
	<i>Don't trust council</i>	7.7%	8.9%	
	<i>Denman/rural areas miss out</i>	8.4%	1.0%	
	<i>No need for a convention/entertainment centre</i>	3.2%	7.3%	
	<i>Other/unsure (No)</i>	9.7%	11.5%	And results for reasons for being unsure regarding the SRV also did not vary by methodology.
	<i>Support some projects, not others</i>	.4%	1.0%	
	<i>Don't pay rates</i>	2.4%	.5%	
	<i>Mixed views</i>	1.2%	0.0%	
<i>Other/unsure (unsure)</i>	2.0%	1.6%		