

# Special Rate Variation - Continuation of the Environmental Levy



**Online engagement platform and printed survey**

**Results of consultation**

**November 2018**

## Introduction

In accordance with the *Communication and Engagement Strategy for the Special Rate Variation - Continuation of the Environmental Levy* (July 2018), using Council's 'OurSay' online engagement facility, a consultation page was created to gain resident and business ratepayer feedback on Council's SRV application, with:

- i) A suite of information on the Environmental Levy and the Special Rate Variation application
- ii) an online survey (based on the representative residential survey that also formed part of the community consultation)
- iii) an opportunity to provide an email submission
- iv) registration for the opt-in consultation workshop scheduled for 23 October 2018

**The Our Say page was live from Friday 5 October 2018 to Sunday 4 November 2018.**

The online engagement platform and opt-in consultation workshop was promoted widely through Council's various communication channels, namely:

- Advertisements in the North Shore Times, Hornsby Advocate and Sydney Observer;
- Direct mail out to 773 business ratepayers, considering business ratepayers were not surveyed through the representative residential survey
- Six Facebook posts, reaching 10,591 people
- Tweets, reaching 533 people
- Email notifications to email subscriber lists, reaching 2,073 subscribers
- Notification in sustainability E-news (2,882 subscribers) and Ku-ring-gai E-news (9,336 subscribers)

Based on the online survey, a printed copy of the survey was available for completion and return at Council libraries and the customer service centre, designed for those without access or skills to complete the survey online.

The opt-in consultation workshop planned for Tuesday 23 October 2018 was cancelled due to lack of registrations.

**A total of 197 responses were gathered through the online and printed survey.**

# Copy of survey completed by respondents



## Welcome to the Environmental Levy Survey

### Before you complete this form

Thank you for accessing Ku-ring-gai Council's Environmental Levy resident and business survey. Before completing the survey please familiarise yourself with the information pack on the Levy accompanying this survey or visit [www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/elevy](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/elevy). The purpose of the survey is to measure our community's support for the continuation of the Environmental Levy. The survey will also ask some questions relating to what the Levy should fund in the future, if it continues. **We really appreciate you taking the time to participate.**

### 1. Importance of environmental programs and works

How important would you say it is for Council to continue to deliver programs and works that improve Ku-ring-gai's natural environment?

Very important       Somewhat important       Not important       Don't know

### 2. Awareness of the Levy

Before reading the information accompanying this survey, how aware were you of the Environmental Levy and what it delivers?

Very aware       Somewhat aware       Not aware       Don't know

### 3. Satisfaction with Levy programs

If you are aware of the Levy and what it delivers, how satisfied are you with the delivery of the programs and works it funds?

Very satisfied       Somewhat satisfied       Not satisfied       Don't know       Not aware of Levy programs

### Continuation of the Levy

The current Environmental Levy is due to expire on 30 June 2019. Under the current Levy the average residential ratepayer pays around \$80 and the average business rate payer pays \$65 as part of their annual rates. Council is considering applying to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the continuation of the Environmental Levy at the amount currently paid by Ku-ring-gai ratepayers. This would commence from 1 July 2019.

### 4. Options for the future

Which of the following options do you prefer? (tick one)

- Continue the Environmental Levy at the existing rate (around \$80 a year for the average residential ratepayer and \$65 a year for the average business ratepayer)
- Continue the Environmental Levy at a reduced rate – and reduce the environmental services and programs offered
- Discontinue the Environmental Levy – fund environmental programs and works from base rates and reduce other Council services

### 5. If you don't support an Environmental Levy please tell us why

## 6. Current Levy Costs

The current Environment Levy costs around \$80 a year for the average residential ratepayer and \$65 a year for the average business ratepayer. If you indicated that you would support the continuation of the Levy at a reduced rate, what proportion of the existing Levy would you be willing to pay? Please answer with a \$ amount.

Proportion of existing Levy willing to pay (residential ratepayer) \$

Proportion of existing Levy willing to pay (business ratepayer) \$

## 7. Proposed programs and works

Ku-ring-gai Council proposes to fund a range of programs and works through the Environmental Levy.

In the following table please rate your level of support for funding each program area on a scale of 0 (do not support at all) to 10 (very strong support).

Program	Rating from 0-10
<b>Water and catchment management:</b> to improve the condition of our waterways and creeks; to harvest and reuse water for the irrigation of our sports fields and ovals; and to improve the water efficiency of our buildings.	
<b>Energy management and climate change:</b> renewable energy (such as solar) and energy efficiency projects to reduce our energy use and carbon footprint and programs to help our community prepare for bushfire, floods and storms and heatwaves.	
<b>Biodiversity management:</b> bush restoration in high value reserves; burns to replicate the natural fire cycle and promote biodiversity; pest species management; native bee hives for residents; dumping prevention in bushland; and wildlife monitoring and management.	
<b>Bushfire risk management:</b> fire trail construction and maintenance.	
<b>Community engagement:</b> home sustainability rebates and advice services; events and workshops; environmental volunteering programs; educational signs; energy, water and waste audits; and community grants for environmental projects.	
<b>Business engagement:</b> advisory services; energy, water and waste audits; and plastic reduction programs.	
<b>Sustainable transport and community recreation:</b> the creation of cycle ways; maintenance of walking tracks; transition of fleet to electric vehicles; and provision of infrastructure for recreation in natural areas.	

## Your views on a permanent Levy

At the moment the Environmental Levy lasts for 7 years and then has to be applied for again. A permanent Levy will:

- Secure the delivery of Council's environmental programs and works at service levels that will ensure the long term protection of our unique natural environment it will ensure continued support for our community to live more sustainably, at the same time as maintaining all the other Council services;
- Allow Council to undertake coordinated, long term planning for environmental programs and works, ensuring we maximise environmental outcomes at the lowest cost;
- Guarantee funding for the ongoing maintenance of important environmental infrastructure delivered through the current Environmental Levy; and
- Make it easier for Council to secure grant funding to further support its environmental programs and works (often grants require matched funding).

## 8. Do you support the permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy?

Yes

No

Don't know

## 9. If you do NOT support a permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy:

If you indicated that you do NOT support a permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy, please tell us why

## About you

So we best understand the opinions of different groups in our community and so we can stay in touch, please provide the following information.

### 10. Are you a Ku-ring-gai

Tick one

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential ratepayer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident (non-ratepayer)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business ratepayer                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Local business (non-ratepayer)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential and business ratepayer | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these <input type="text"/> |

### 11. Location

Your residential / business suburb

### 12. Your gender

Male  Female  Other

### 13. Your age

Please tick: Under 18  18 - 35  36 - 50  51-70  Over 70

### 14. Email address

### 15. Any further comments

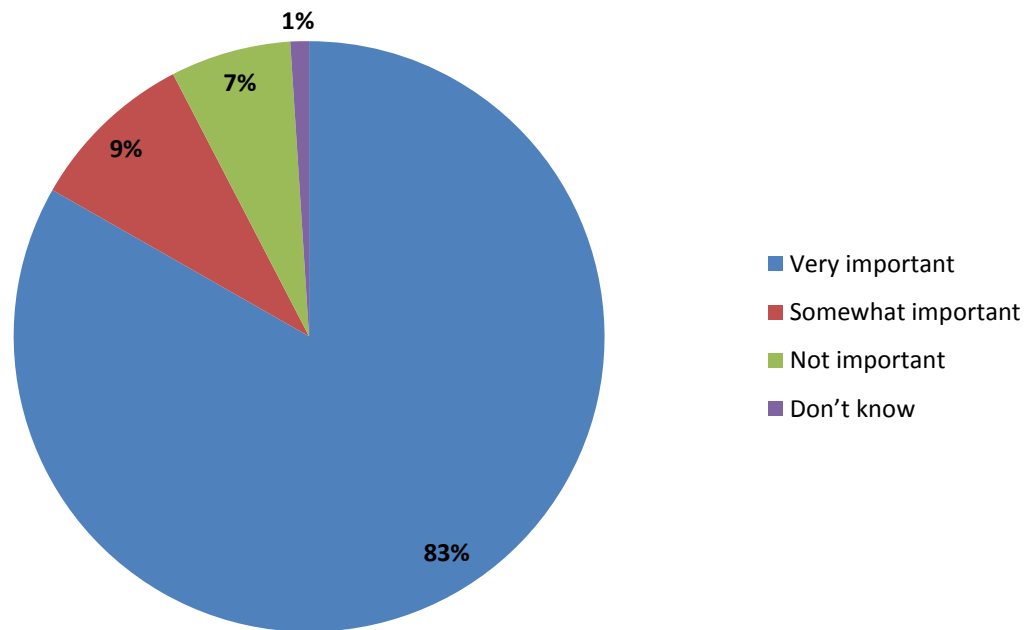
**Thank you for completing the survey.**

Your responses will help us decide how we progress with the Environmental Levy. If you have provided your email address, we'll be in touch with further updates.

# Online and printed survey results

## 1. Importance of environmental programs and works

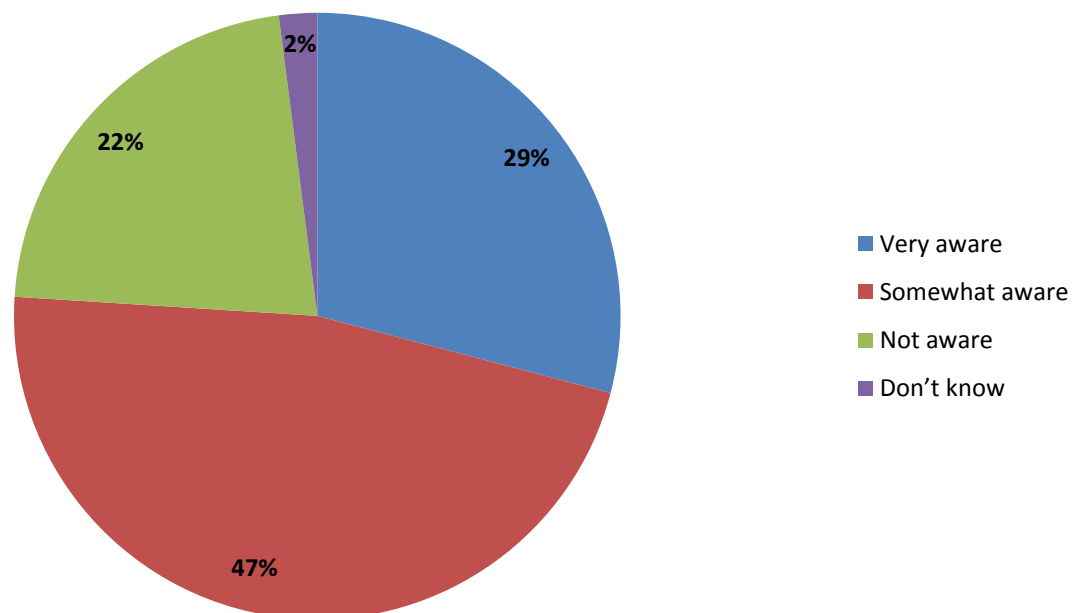
How important would you say it is for Council to continue to deliver programs and works that improve Ku-ring-gai's natural environment?



n = 197

## 2. Awareness of the Levy

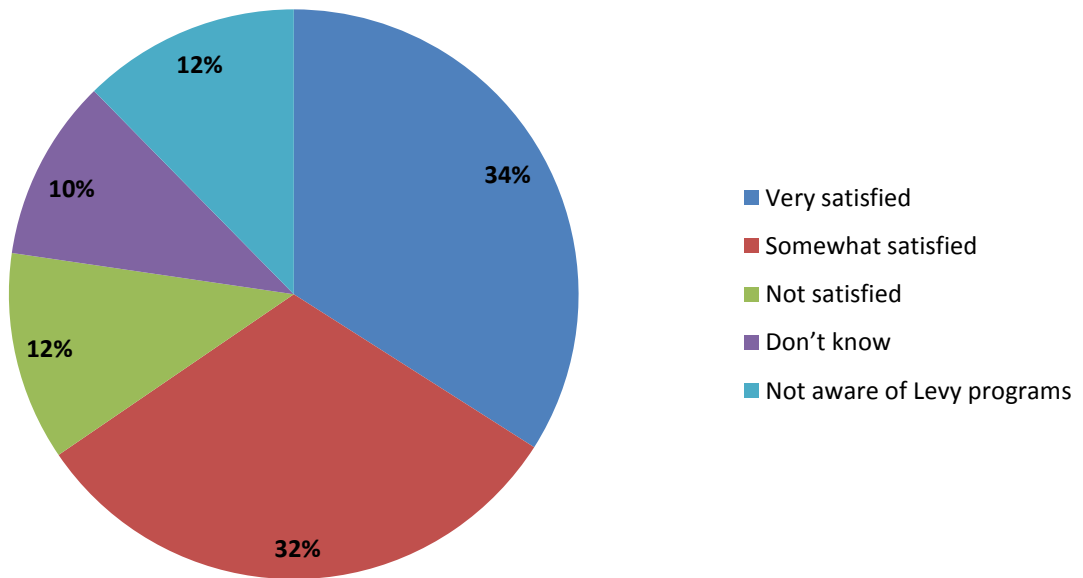
Before reading the information accompanying this survey, how aware were you of the Environmental Levy and what it delivers?



n = 197

### 3. Satisfaction with Levy programs

If you are aware of the Levy and what it delivers, how satisfied are you with the delivery of the programs and works it funds?

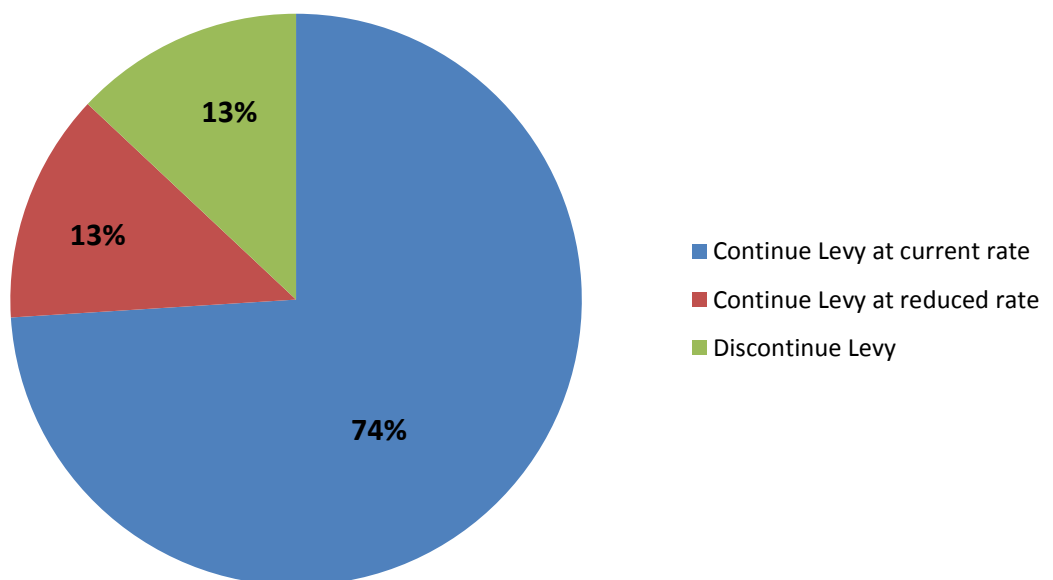


n = 197

### 4. Options for the future

Which of the following options do you prefer? (tick one)

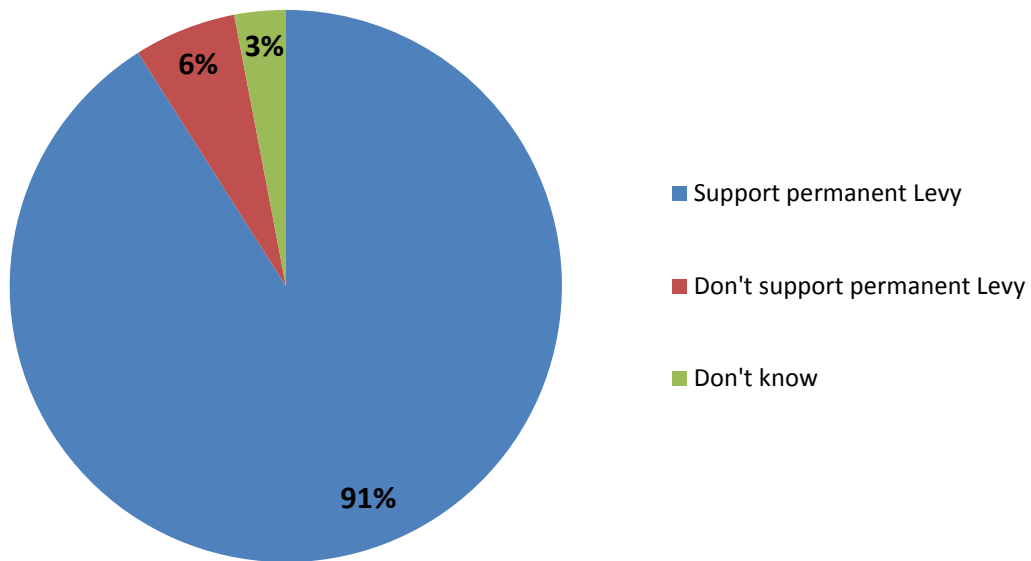
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n = 197

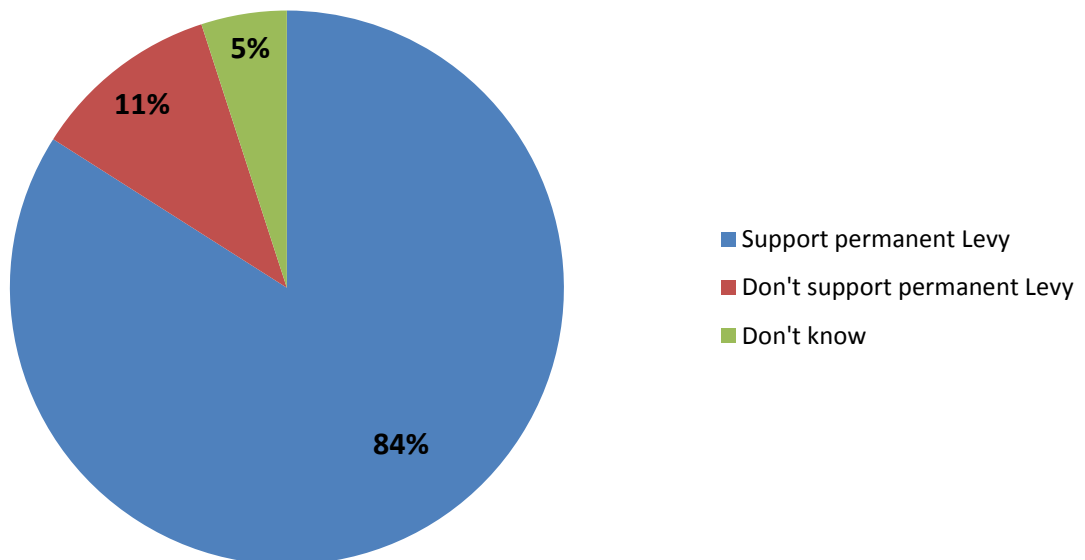
## 8. Do you support the permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy?

Amongst those supporting the continuation of the Levy at the current rate (74%):



n = 147

Amongst those supporting the continuation of the Levy at the current or a reduced rate (87%):



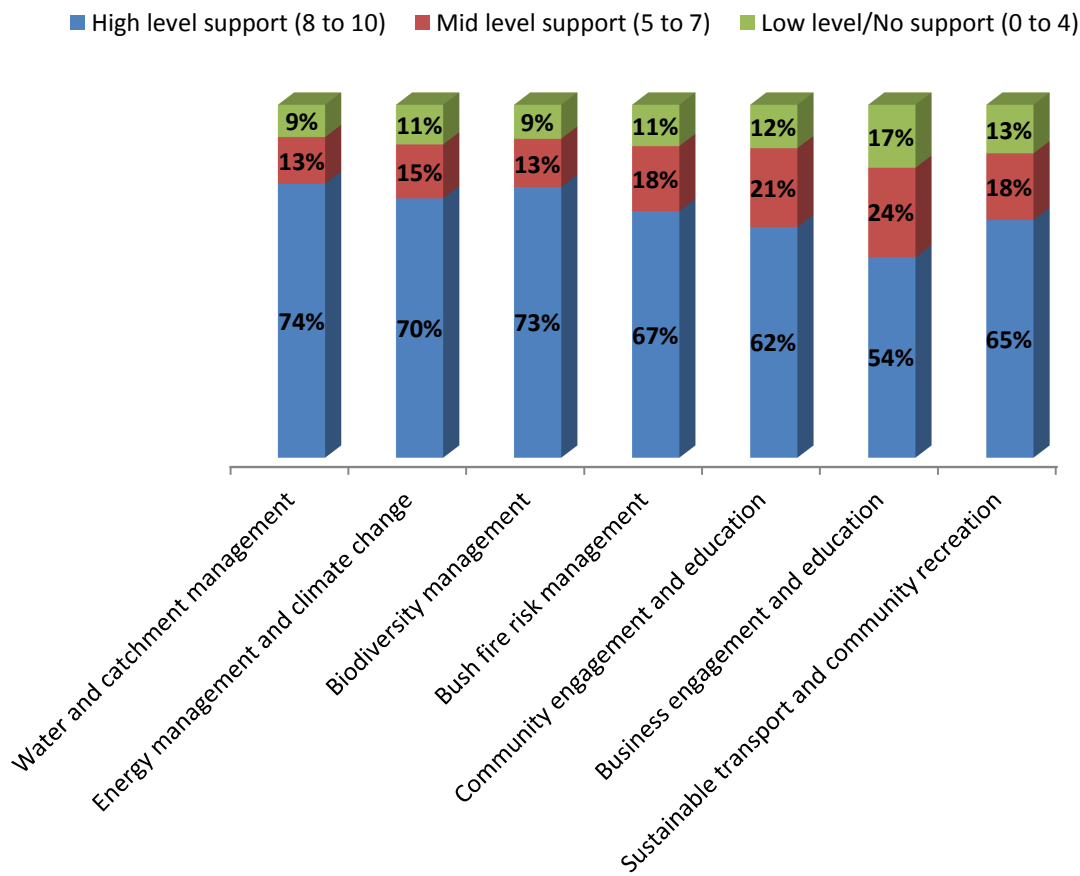
n = 170



Of the 11% of respondents who didn't support a permanent Levy (n = 19 respondents) the reasons given were:

- Prevent misuse and wasting of these funds
- Create accountability
- 7 years is a reasonable framework for planning purposes and it may not be needed at the same rate forever
- Allows continuous monitoring on how effectively the money is being spent
- Might just become part of the rates collected and would no longer be ring fenced for special projects
- Good to reassess

When asked to rank their level of support for funding each program area on a scale of 0 (do not support at all) to 10 (very strong support), the results were:



The online engagement platform and printed survey results indicated an even spread of funding support for the Water and Catchment Management, Energy Management & Climate Change and Biodiversity and Bushfire Risk Management Areas, with slightly lower levels of support, relatively, for the Sustainable Transport & Community Recreation and Community and Business Engagement program areas.

## Demographic profile of respondents

Suburb		Age group		Gender		Ratepayer category	
St Ives	13%	Under 18	5%	Female	60%	Residential ratepayer	84%
St Ives Chase	1%	18-35	10%	Male	39%	Business ratepayer	3%
Gordon	14%	36-50	30%	Other	1%	Residential & business ratepayer	4%
Pymble	11%	51-70	38%			Local business (non-ratepayer)	1%
West Pymble	5%	70+	17%			Local resident (non-ratepayer)	4%
Roseville	4%					None of the above	4%
Wahroonga	15%						
North Wahroonga	1%						
Killara	7%						
Lindfield	7%						
East Lindfield	5%						
Turramurra	10%						
North Turramurra	2%						
South Turramurra	1%						
Warrawee	2%						
Outside Ku-ring-gai LGA	2%						